membership meeting

There will be no regular membership meeting this month. Instead there is the Annual Survivors' Banquet on Saturday, March 31 at 6:00 pm, in the Exhibition Hall, Seattle Center. Send in your mail order before it is too late.

THE VERPA ARE A'COMING
by Martin Hansen

It is a little difficult to plan too far ahead and hit the top of the Verpa bohemica fruiting season. Last year we were about a month early (April 8 & 9). This year we have a smaller snow pack, so it could be that we will have to have our first field trip earlier. Watch your April Bulletin for date and place. We'll be looking forward to as good a year as last year—so get your raingear ready.

Below you will notice the events of March passing on parade as depicted by Dina Chybinski. First the Mad March Hare. Then the good Olde Board going out like the meek innocent lamb. The regal, majestic New Board follows it, coming in like a lion, full of fight and noble resolve. Last, the St. Patrick's Day Pig on his way to a luau. Nui Le'ale'a, no?

BEGINNERS CLASS
Taught by Milt Grout

The spring beginners class in mycology will be given at the Eames Theatre, Pacific Science Center, beginning on Monday, March 26, 1973 at 7:30 pm. Classes will be held at the same hour for five successive Mondays, excluding the regular meeting night. The class is open to all members of PSMS and their guests. There is no charge for the classes.

Classes are designed to lead the beginner through many of the common genera with the objective of assisting in the identification of a number of edible and choice mushrooms as well as the identification of the poisonous or troublesome ones. No particular background or training is needed, however, careful study of the genera to be discussed prior to the class will greatly speed learning.

The class schedule will be 7:30 to 9:00 pm March 26, April 2, 16, 23, and 30. The first meeting will discuss fungus and it's place and function in the scheme of things and will cover the Morels, Helvelias, and Cup Fungi. If time permits, the genus Amanita will be introduced.
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SCIENTIFIC ADVISOR
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CALENDAR

Mar. 12 NO REGULAR MEMBERSHIP MEETING AT ALL. Go to the Annual Survivors' Banquet (below)
Mar. 19 Monday 8:00 pm Board meeting
Mar. 23 Friday Sporeprints news deadline. For sure. 4029 E. Madison, Seattle WA 98102.
Mar. 26 Monday 7:30 pm Beginners Class.
Mar. 31 Saturday 6:00 pm Survivors' Banquet
Apr. 2 Monday 7:30 pm Beginners Class.
Apr. 9 Monday 8:00 pm Membership meeting

ELECTION CHANGES

Yes, it's a little late if you have already cast your votes, but nevertheless. Fred Wasson, running for Vice President against Phil Roger (who may demand equal time), has been in charge of Book Sales this past year and Treasurer for the two years preceding this past year. Oh, Fred is also running for the Board.

Helen Wasson, who is running for Treasurer, was Treasurer this past year and Book Sales Chairman the two years preceding this past year.

Charles J. Woodruff, who is running for Prexy against Howard Melsen, was Exhibit Chairman in 1969, and Commercial Chairman for the past three Exhibits.

These errors were not the fault of the candidates, who in fact protested, but of the typist, for which the typist is humbly (somewhat humbly) sorry and apologizes. Anyone who feels that they could have done it without erring is more than welcome to volunteer for next year. In fact, we can find some work for this individual right now. Contact Editor.

To the candidates: Those who find their bio. sketches shortened or revised have said more than fifty words worth, and rather than just stop after fifty words an attempt was made to retain the original meaning. Next year...

THE BOARD IS WINDING DOWN (WINDING UP)

With only one more board meeting ahead of them the Board continued with its work. For those of you who don't know, the Board meetings are open to visitors. For your own safety we might suggest that you avoid the next two board sessions if you want to visit—changes are generally traumatic.

At any rate, Joy Spurr is having 10 sets of slides made for sale to those who want. A very special surprise has been created for the Annual Banquet, March 31. The membership is currently hovering somewhere in the 540-people area. Emory Bronner, as Acting Chairman for the Election Committee, announced that the ballots were done. Milt Grout's Beginners Class was announced. Martin Hansen (and Estella) will be in charge of our Field Trips again this year—goody. A Symposium at Exhibit time for new myco-societies is in the works. Pins, tie tacks, and shoulder patches should be available for purchase in a couple of months.

OUR TALENTED MEMBERS

Jan Silver, Editor of the Northwest Companion Planter, a magazine on organic food and agriculture in the northwest, writes, "Bill Pollard's interesting article on grass mulching will appear in the March, 1973 issue of Companion Planter. In the April issue HowardMelsen will have an excellent and informative article on gathering edible Spring mushrooms. Joyce Spurr's photographs accompany the article and are just beautiful.... Also in the April issue will be an article by Hannie Bogdan on dandelion harvesting and recipes; and an article by Lorna Peterson (non-member) on a new drying machine invented in Issaquah—she discusses mushroom drying in that article." Hannie Bogdan had a fine article on Tussie-Mussies in the Winter issue.
TOADS, MUSHROOMS, AND SCHIZOPHRENIA

This is an excerpt from an article with the above name by Howard D. Fabing, M.D., and published in the May, 1957 issue of Harper's Magazine.

Jochelsen, who travelled among the Koryaks in 1900-01, wrote:

Fly-agaric [the common English name of muscari] produces intoxication, hallucinations and delirium. Many shamans, previous to their seances, eat fly-agaric to get into ecstatic states. Under strong intoxication the senses become deranged; surrounding objects appear either very large or very small, hallucinations set in as do spontaneous movements and convulsions. If I could observe attacks of great animation alternate with moments of deep depression. The person intoxicated by fly-agaric sits quietly rocking to and fro, even taking part in conversations with his family. Suddenly his eyes dilate, he begins to gesticulate convulsively, and on one occasion he even danced. Then an interval of rest sets in again. However, to keep up the intoxication additional doses of fungi are necessary. It is not the hallucinations in brilliant colors, an ecstatic state, which was the hallmark of their dissociation periods lasting six hours or more.

Mr. Wasson, a partner in J. P. Morgan & Company, who has been investigating mushrooms for many years, has identified four different kinds of Mexican mushrooms used for their hallucinatory properties. The chemistry of these mushrooms is not known, but it would be interesting to determine whether or not they contain bufotenine.

Another mushroom-eating practice deserves mention. Even since the Spanish conquest of Mexico in 1522 there have been references to a sacred fungus, teonanacatl, employed by the Aztecs and other Mexican Indians. This "fungus of the devil," as the early Spanish priests called it, is currently being studied by Gordon Wasson of New York City and his wife. The Wassons have eaten the mushrooms and report visual hallucinations in brilliant colors, an ecstatic state of heightened perception, loss of time and space perception, and a serene feeling of inward peace while being drawn into an "other-worldly detachment" during dissociation periods lasting six hours or more.

In the old Norwegian historical writings it is mentioned, in many places, that in olden times there was a specific kind of giants who were called Berserks. That is, men who at certain times were seized by a wild fury, which, at the moment, doubled their strength and made them insensible to bodily pain, but which also deadened their humanity and reason, and made them like wild animals. This fury, which was called "Berserkgang," occurred not only in the heat of battle, but also during laborious work. Men who were thus seized performed things which otherwise seemed impossible for human power. This condition is said to have begun with shivering, chattering of the teeth, and chill in the body, and then the face swelled and changed its color. With this was connected a great hot-headedness, which at last went over into great rage, under which they howled like wild animals, bit the edge of their shields, and cut down everything they met, without discriminating between friend or foe. When this condition ceased, a great dulling of the mind and feebleness followed, which could last for one or several days.

In Thorlak's and Ketil's Icelandic Christian Law, which was adopted in 1223 A.D., there is the following decree: "If someone goes berserk, he is punished with three years of banishment, and the men who are present are also punished if they do not bind him; but if they bind him, none are punished. If this is repeated, then the punishment occurs." Berserkgang ceased after this law was passed.

Arthur Drew of the Department of Neurology in the Medical School told me about a modern Viking who went berserk in Michigan recently and fell into the hands of the medical profession. His patient, a middle-aged tavern keeper, picked (cont. over)
some wild mushrooms—later identified as *A. muscaria*—and ate them at ten o'clock one night in October 1955. Two hours later he had an explosive onset of diarrhea, profuse sweating, and dizziness. He fell asleep and awakened at two in the morning completely disoriented, irrational, and violent.

When he was admitted to University Hospital his face was purplish and he was alternately somnolent and excited. He thought he was in Hell and identified the intern, nurses, and attending physicians as Christ, Satan, God, or angels. Thrashing about in bed, he talked constantly and irrationally. As the day wore on, his hallucinations and illusions remained almost entirely religious. He persisted in identifying a tall resident physician as Christ. He declared at one moment that he was in the Garden of Eden, at another that he had gone to Hell. As evening came, his mental processes cleared, he lost his excitement and felt relaxed. The following morning he appeared to be recovered and was discharged.

LAST year my friend and associate, Dr. J. Robert Hawkins, and I decided to see for ourselves how bufotinone, which the ancients used with such noisy effectiveness, would work on normal men of our times. At the Ohio Penitentiary in Columbus we got the permission of the authorities and the consent of six intelligent, co-operative, and quite charming, healthy young murderers to inject the chemical into their veins. We began with the small dose of one milligram. As we proceeded from murderer to murderer, raising the dose each time, we developed more confidence and more data.

A studious-looking young man who got eight milligrams developed an immediate sensation of light-headedness, burning in the face, rapid breathing, deep purple facial color, and a sense of calm. At the end of the injection, he blurted, "I see white straight lines with a black background. I can't trace a pattern. Now there are red, green, and yellow dots, like they were made out of fluorescent cloth, moving like blood cells through capillaries." Six minutes later he reported that he felt relaxed and languid. In retrospect he said, "Even at the height of this, my mind felt better and more pleasant than usual."

When we got up to sixteen milligrams, a very clean-cut murderer who had committed his antisocial slip at a Saturday night party in a fraternity house, developed severe purpling of the face, facial sweating, a tingling sensation throughout his body, a feeling that his chest was crushed, and the onset of hallucinations of purple spots on the floor—all in rapid succession before the injection was completed. His space perception was impaired and he complained of difficulty in concentrating. He could not do even simple subtraction. During the next hour his face remained deeply purple and he was unable to express himself in words, stating that his mind felt crowded. He was restless and overactive and kept complaining that he wanted to "walk it off" and that "my body feels nervous." His time sense left him, and he made such statements as, "I am here and not here."

All six men reported a feeling of relaxed placidity and languor for as long as six hours after the injection. They lay contentedly in bed, explaining that they felt a lack of drive rather than a sense of fatigue.