

# SPORE PRINTS

BULLETIN OF THE PUGET SOUND MYCOLOGICAL SOCIETY  
200 Second Avenue North, Seattle, Washington, 98109  
January 1977

Number 128



## BANQUET NEWS

Louise Rautenberg

On Saturday, March 19, 1977 PSMS members will gather at the Officers' Club on Pier 91 for the March Membership Meeting which will be in the form of a Spring Dinner Dance with the motto: "Paris in the Spring".

Tickets at \$7.50 per person can be obtained at the January and February Membership Meetings, or by sending your check, plus a self-addressed, stamped envelope to Helena Kirkwood, 8324 - 12th Ave. NW., Seattle, 98117 or to Ronna Randall-Brown, 4201 - 78th S.E., Mercer Island, 98040.

Since it is against the Officers' Club's regulations to BYOB, there will be special tickets for wine (75¢ per glass) and liquor (\$1 per drink) available when you purchase your dinner tickets, and also during the evening of the dinner dance. It is advisable to purchase some drink tickets in advance to avoid delay on the evening of the event.

Musical entertainment will be provided by Ed Farmer.

The Dinner will be buffet style with sufficient serving tables to substantially shorten the queues.

Notice the change in location: The banquet will be held at the Officers' Club on Pier 91. Detailed instructions on how to get there will be provided in the February and March issues of Spore Prints. (By the way, the correct phone number for Louise is, 542 - 5109).

## MUSHROOM NOTES FROM MEXICO

Scott Chilton

While passing through Mexico City last summer I stopped at La Merced, a farmers market like Seattle's Pike Place Market, but bigger. Inside the market building about thirty stalls were selling ears of corn containing the bloated, bluish-gray kernels indicative of parasitization by the smut Ustilago maydis (= U. zae). This smut is a common vegetable dish in Mexico, known as "huitlacoche." My host in Mexico City served it fried in oil and herbs. So spiced, it is quite good and of a pleasant texture. Outside the market building about two dozen women were selling mushrooms piled on cloths spread on the sidewalk. I attempted to photograph some of these piles of mushrooms, but the women refused permission, so I merely walked around and identified what I could. I saw morels, red Lactarius, Amanita caesarea, Boletus edulis, white Russulas, light red Russulas (emetica?), R. xerampelina, Agaricus campestris, Laccaria lacata, Cantharellus floccosus (I know we don't recommend eating that one), numerous Ramaria Lycoperdon, Russula parasitized by red Hypomyces, Helvella lacunosa, Tricholoma equestre, a brown Tricholoma, and some LBMs.

I did not see such variety in small market towns of Mexico, but I did consistently see Amanita caesarea, A. flavaconia and Boletes on market days in Oaxaca State.

I collected for about a week at 8,000' in the Sierra Madre Oriental. These are green, worn mountains covered with open pine mixed with occasional live oaks and madrona. I kept a careful look out for Amanita spp. Those that I saw were A. muscaria (var. flavivolvata), A. pantherina, probably A. gem-

mota, an Amanita close to A. cokeri, A. rubescens, A. vaginata, A. verna (or virosa), A. flavaconia and A. caesarea. I actually saw several clearly different species in the A. cokeri - A. strobiliformis group. The large yellow-orange A. caesarea were particularly attractive and were welcomed in filling out our somewhat short field rations. We had them fried in oil with a little garlic and stuffed in wheat rolls -- they were quite tasty.

## REPORT ON THE 1976 STUNTZ FORAY

Ben Woo

Camp Merriweather, on the Oregon Coast, south of Tillamook Bay, was the site for the 1976 Stuntz Foray during the weekend of November 12 - 14. Named for the esteemed PSMS advisor and father figure, Dr. Daniel E. Stuntz, the event annually brings together teaching mycologists from the western United States, many of them former Stuntz students, now with their own grad-students in tow. The host this year was genial Dr. Jim Trappe, specialist in truffles and other underground goodies, whose witty and fact-filled lecture on European and American hypogeous fungi was enjoyed at our October meeting.

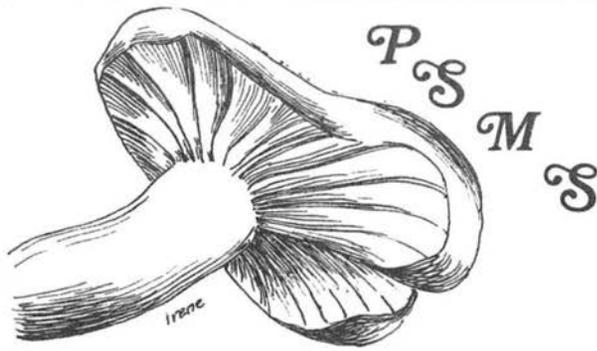
Despite near-drought conditions which drastically inhibited the normally exuberant Oregon coastal fungus flora, collecting was interesting. Within a short distance from foray headquarters could be found sahara-like dunes, sphagnum bogs, spruce-hemlock forests, numerous campgrounds and pie-filled pastures. Among the table displays were some un-named Agaricus, a rare red-staining Leccinum manzanitae, sandy lumps of subterranean fungi raked up by Trappe disciples, a smattering of chanterelles, a small herd of Boletes, a trickle of Tricholomas and, thank heavens, just a sampling of Russulas. The weather, which was sunny on Friday, turned to a drizzly rain on Saturday, and became a raging gale Sunday.

Sidelights: The Oregon Coast is a feast for the senses -- emerald headlands spiced by the smells and sounds of the sea. The Melsens' trailer was ripped-off, and the Sheriff came. A young student from California was lost at Cape Lookout for a cold, wet six-hour ordeal. The featured lecture was a fascinating glimpse at the wee crawlies with whom we share our mushrooms, complete with monster close-ups and their unpronounceable, insectious names. Coleman Leuthy's 240D Mercedes is a joy to ride in.

Among the 140 or so attendees were delegations from Washington, Oregon, Idaho, California, and Utah. Also invited were members of the Northwest Key Council, there to pursue their studies, among them PSMS members Howard and Fay Melsen, Dave and Jennie Schmitt, Charlie Volz and family, Coleman Leuthy, Kit Scates, Reynaldine Sandahl, Nettie Laycock, Judy Roger, Fred Van DeBogart, and forgive me if I overlooked someone. And of course, Dr. Stuntz was there, which made it all worthwhile.

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LAST CALL -- PAY YOUR 1977 DUES: Ronna (232-8998) is preparing the membership roster this month and if you are not paid up, you will not be included.



## Spore Prints

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 Milton Grout (immed. past president)

**ALTERNATES** Margaret Holzbauer; Mitchell McGuinness.

**SCIENTIFIC ADVISOR** Dr. Daniel E. Stuntz

### CALENDAR

- Jan. 10 Monday, Membership Meeting, 8:00 pm  
 Jan. 24 Monday, Board Meeting  
 Jan. 28 Actual Deadline for Spore Print Material. Send all  
 articles, art work, and recent photos to the editor,  
 at 4029 E. Madison, Seattle, Wa., 98102  
 Feb. 14 Monday, Membership Meeting, 8:00 pm  
 March 19 Saturday, The 13th Annual Survivors' Banquet

### LETTER FROM THE LINCOLN COUNTY MYCOLOGICAL SOCIETY, Bill Burley

The Lincoln County Mycological Society had an active season this past year; unusually mild winter weather here on the Central Oregon Coast is finding Society members still wandering the spruce-hemlock forests and trampling through salal thickets for the last fungal delights (the letter was dated Dec. 14th, ed.) The highlight of the season was the November 7th Annual Mushroom Show: over 450 local residents (and a few "outsiders") came to view the 140 species of fungi on display in Newport City Hall. In February, the Annual Survivor's Banquet (mushroom dishes only) will be held, always good for pruning membership rosters before the next year's spring season. Our Society welcomes correspondence from other mycophiles, and news and newsletters from other mycological societies. (Bill Burley's address: Box 94, Siletz, Oregon, 97380)

# Membership Meeting

Monday, January 10, 1977, 8:00 pm, Eames Theater,  
 The Pacific Science Center.

**Program:** This time we will hear Ben Woo, first president and founder of our Society, who will probably speak on a genus. Ben is our expert on Boletes, and presently studying the genus *Russula*. I'd rather not second-guess Ben, and just enjoy the program he will present us.

### BOARD NEWS

H.R.H.

This refers to the Board of Trustee meeting held November 22, 1976. Louise Rautenberg gave a report about the plans for the spring banquet, and asked the Board for its opinions in this matter.

John Mudge, our treasurer, gave a report on the finances of PSMS, and counseled the Trustees on the complicated topic of tax status of a non-profit organization like PSMS. Due to the success of our 1976 Exhibit, the finances are in good shape, and John suggested that PSMS offer to its members the mycological and related books at a discount. In a later issue of *Spore Prints* we will get a written report on finances. The Board also approved a donation to Oakpatch Unlimited, the camp for the mentally retarded boys where we usually hold the final fieldtrip of the fall season.

The Board Meeting for December was cancelled since it would have occurred so close to Christmas and members have many other tasks to accomplish.

P.S. In December 1975 no quorum was achieved at the December board meeting.



Mr. Ken Galway holding the 18 lb. puff ball he found on his land.

### GIANT PUFFBALL

Jim Bennett

Jim Bennett's son who lives in England sent the following article, with a picture attached.

The *Lycoperdon gigantea* (as it was properly identified) grew in a field in the middle of a bunch of nettles. It weighed 18 pounds and measured over two feet in diameter. The location was the Hallaton and Medbourne area of Leicestershire. The puffball was eventually cut up and offered to any club members who wanted a piece. Over 60 slices were cut out of the enormous fungus. To the finder's dismay, his mushroom was less than half the size of the record puff ball listed in the Guinness Book of Records which measured 5' 2" in diameter and stood 18" high, and was found at Mellor, Derbyshire in 1971.

## FIELDTRIP TO LAKE ARROWHEAD

Jennie Schmitt

On October 23 and 24 we had a real good turnout of our regular members and workers. The fine fall weather tempted Frank Paduano and Ken Simpson to come out. Both had been laid up for a long time for health reasons. It was good to see them. Another welcome sight was the tent on top of Bill and Pauline Pollard's car. It told us that Bill is feeling better and ready to rough it again. Keep it up Bill!

We can also report an extra-ordinary good turnout of newly signed members (even if it did take some of them half a day to find the place). We are sorry about that, and will have more detailed directions or maps printed for another year. New members were taken out by Fay Melsen and Doug and Ruby Carmichael.

Ninety-two plus specimens were brought to the identification table. Dave and Jennie were hosts along with the able help of Joy McKnight, Florence Eberhard, and Fay Melsen, who did an excellent job of serving at the best ever potluck. Seventy-two members and friends were in on the feed.

Everybody who went out and hunted, found something to take home for the table. Most of the edibles were Chanterelles, Coprinus atramentarius, topped by Mrs. Miller's gorgeous Sparassus.

We were also told that Howard Melsen combined mushrooms and Hondas on this trip. He bought another Trail 90 on the way. Fay was quite surprised that he was willing to part with their old one (named Mildred) since both had become quite fond of "her." Now they are off to new adventures with the new Trail 90.

## OAKPATCH FIELD REPORT

H.R.H.

It is always a pleasure to go to Oakpatch, usually the last fieldtrip of the fall season. In one sense it makes you feel good to bring a day's change from the routine in the lives of the mentally retarded men who are living there under the excellent care and supervision of Bob Strand, and usually it is a successful outing for the pothunter. This year, on Oct. 30 and 31 we were either too late to find the Leccinum aurantiacum or they did not fruit, although Bob Strand said that he used "mushrooms" several weeks ago to practice his golf swing.

On Saturday, all morning long we hunted in the wet, thick salal, wearing rain gear, although the day was nice and dry, finding mostly specimens for the identification table where 60 plus specimens were ably identified by Howard Melsen. Not until the afternoon did we succeed in finding some firm, some soggy, white chanterelles. And this was generally the experience of the other participants.

A total of 60 persons, including the boys from Oakpatch crowded into the dining room and office for the delicious potluck dinner. Marlene Friend treated us to one of her wok specialties which included fresh chanterelles.

Hosts for the fieldtrip were Betty and Andy Yuhl, who barely made it back from the eastern Washington apple country. They were assisted by Simone and George Lane, PSMS members from Tacoma. Thank you for a very enjoyable finale to the 1976 mushroom season.



Martin and Estella Hansen have just returned from a trip to the South. They visited with Estella's sister in San Diego, then rendezvoused with Dorothy and Ted Viers. Together they called on Herb and Arva Boroughs, PSMS members, who make their home in Yuma, Arizona.

## MORELS, MORELS, MORELS.....

Dorothy Viers

Relatives sent the following article, which appeared in a St. Paul, Minnesota, daily, and was authored by Oliver Towne. (On account of the many forest fires last season, we are anticipating a more bountiful crop of morels in the Northwest than the people back in the Midwest. But it never ceases to amaze me how excited people can get over wild mushrooms.)

After about a week at home, I got hungry and lonesome for French croissant (those distinctive breakfast rolls). So I went to visit my favorite French twin sisters, Germaine and Marie, who run the RAESS (mostly French-European) food market on St. Clair near Fairview.

My postcard sent from their native Strasbourg was on the wall under the \$50 tin of truffles from Perigord and the croissant were fresh from Fauchon's in Paris. But they dragged me into a back and secret room, whispering about 'something we have bought, Monsieur, while you were gone - the most expensive food in all of the Twin Cities.'

And Louie, their Man Friday and also Saturday, pulled out a cardboard box, baring the contents - Six two-pound packages of dried morels from Switzerland, the kind hundreds search for in Minnesota every spring, and few find.

'Guess how much that box of morels is worth,' whispered Marie, buttering a cracker with a slice of Port du Salute cheese for me.

'I wouldn't dare,' I said.

'These are the best morels in the world,' said Germaine.

'That box cost us \$550,' hissed Marie. 'For 12 pounds of food.'

They are selling the morels at four ounces for \$12.50.

And Louie is taking them home every night and hiding them until morning.

'Don't you think we're a couple of sports,' they said.

'Nuts is better,' said Louie.

'Would you believe we have already sold two pounds?' said Marie.

Business in morels is mushrooming.



## LETTER FROM THE JCMS

John Parker

The November monthly meeting of the Jefferson County Mycological Society was held in the new Tri-Area Community Building in Chimacum, and a very large attendance was recorded. Mr. Greg Wright gave a very fine talk and identified the specimens brought in by the members.

A fieldtrip was arranged for the following day, and to our surprise many cars full of people turned out. We also were surprised how many mushrooms popped up, after we had thought that they had exhausted themselves earlier. One couple found two buckets full of white Chanterelles. The outstanding specimen was a large Sparassus crispa.

One of our ladies wandered off into the woods and shortly we heard her loud screams. She screamed and screamed, and we hurried to where she was, and fully expected to find her foot caught in a bear trap, or some other hazard, but she excitedly shouted that she had found her first Chanterelle. We asked her how loud she would have screamed if she had caught her foot in a bear trap?

While at our house, Greg made a large meal out of Amanita solitaria, form pellita. At this writing, three days later, he has suffered no after effects.

We can only guess how ancient and prehistoric men learned to distinguish wholesome foods from dangerous and poisonous ones. Before they discovered which of the fungi they found everywhere in woods and meadows were harmless, countless lives must have been lost as a result of eating of poisonous varieties. No historical record tells us anything about this or about the beginning of human culture. Indications that prehistoric peoples ate or used fungi are rare, though O. Heer (1866) and others have found traces of puff-balls and other fungi in stone-age dwellings in Switzerland, Württemberg and Austria which may have been used as tinder to light fires.

In ancient India, Egypt, and Babylonia, and then, in classical times, among the Greeks and Romans, poisonous fungi were known as well as several, much sought-after, edible varieties. It is only from classical times that various names of fungi have been handed down to us: 'Bolites, Agarikon, Amanita'. Theophrastus of Eresos on Lesbos about 312 or 320 B.C., the Greek naturalist and pupil of Aristotle, mentions fungi ('mykes'), truffles? ('hydnon'), puff-balls? ('pezis') and Dung-fungi. Nicander (150 B.C.) writes of fungus poisoning and the Roman poet, Horace (born 65 B.C.), in one of his satires, praises 'pratenses', presumably field mushrooms, as the best of the fungi. Cornelius Celsus, a writer on medical matters about 38 B.C., mentions strange remedies for fungus poisoning. Dioscorides, the Greek doctor and writer on Natural History, about 60 B.C., describes Truffles, praises them as good to eat, and mentions the cultivation of fungi as well as poisonous fungi. The Roman naturalist, Pliny the Elder, who died in 79 A.D. exploring Vesuvius, devotes more than one chapter of his Natural History to fungi. He deals in detail with Truffles, describes the Amanita caesaria and the Boletus edulis as delicacies and also their preparation - which the masters did not leave to their slaves but carried out themselves, using costly cutlery of amber and expensive silver utensils.

Pliny recalls frequent deaths among the families of Roman consuls due to fungi. He knows Tinder-fungi, Puff-balls, the Fomes fomentarius, and other woodland fungi. The ancient Romans were as sophisticated in the pleasures of the table as they were in the fine arts and the luxurious and extravagant feasts of Lucullus have become deservedly proverbial. So there are likely to have been not-infrequent cases of fungus poisoning, by accident or design. One (unconfirmed) legend claims that Euripides, the Athenian poet, lost in one day his wife, daughter, and two sons through fungus poisoning.

According to Pliny, the Roman Emperor Claudius was poisoned in 54 A.D. by his wife Agrippina with a dish of fungi. A little later, Nero's Prefect of the Guard, Seneca, a friend of Seneca, with several other officers of the Imperial Guard also lost their lives as a result of fungi.

Pliny also describes how fungi can cure certain illnesses and Martial, famous for his epigrams, in one of them, praises his host, who was as gluttonous as he was mean, for the Amanita caesarea he was offered, and grumbles about the Boletus luridus.

Suetonius (75 - 160 A.D.), historian of the Imperial times, recounts the generosity of Tiberius towards the poet Sabinus for a prize poem in fable form in honor of the Amanita caesarea. The famous physician, Galen (born 131 A.D.) praises the Amanita caesarea and the Champignon as the best of the fungi and recommends chicken droppings as a remedy for fungus poisoning. (Can this suggestion by the celebrated physician perhaps be a premonition of the very latest therapy

using Moulds and Ray Fungi?).

Much later, Paracelsus, who died in 1541, prescribed something not very different - perhaps because of the ancient tradition as well as for valid reasons.

Athenaeus, Greek Sophist and Grammarian about 228, knew that Champignons could be dried and writes, almost in a modern manner, about fungus cultivation.

Cassianus Bassius of Bythynia who published by command of the Byzantine Emperor Constantine VII, an encyclopaedia - the twenty books of the Geoponica - with extracts from numerous works by ancient agricultural writers, is more detailed and describes a method of cultivating fungi reminiscent of modern experiments in growing fungi on tree trunks and branches.

As far as we know today, the Middle Ages did little to enlarge the knowledge of the Ancients on Botany, and therefore on fungi. There was little personal observation and, apart from the Church, unconditional belief in tradition was the absolute rule. Bishop Thietmar of Merseburg reports in his Chronicle of the year 1018 a case of serious fungus poisoning of which seven journeymen were the victims. St. Hildegard of Bingen (died 1180), the first researcher into Natural History and a versatile doctor, has little new to say about mycology and the little she adds is cloudy and uncertain. Nevertheless, she does know several fungi, both from the point of view of edibility as well as for their medicinal properties: among others the Elaphomyces and various Tree Fungi, as well as the Merulius lacrimans, all too well known today as 'Dry Rot'.

The Dominican monk and Bishop of Regensburg, Albertus Magnus, who died a hundred years after St. Hildegard, brilliant as he was in other directions, kept entirely to tradition as far as mycology was concerned and simply copied Dioscorides. As a doctor, Albertus Magnus gives the first medical description of a case of fungus poisoning. In his work 'De Vegetabilibus libri septem' he does mention fungi and distinguishes clearly between them and other plants, but he is not yet clear about their nature. He knows certain 'little round mushrooms which appear in the Spring and disappear in May', but whether he is referring to Agarics, the St. George's Mushroom or to Morels is impossible to know. He also describes certain features as indicating that a fungus is poisonous; mentioning a sticky, or clammy, moist cap, and color changes after picking, and he refers to the Fly Agaric as poisonous. He also knows the Truffles and how to prepare them, but he does not think much of them, or of fungi in general.

Konrad of Megenberg, a Canon of Regensburg about 1350, the first German writer on Natural History, refers to the Spring mushrooms of Albertus Magnus, probably correctly as Morels. The Middle Ages end, from the point of view of Natural History and Mycology, with the 'Fathers of Botany', those authors of the magnificent 16th century Herbals: Bock, Matthioli and Clusius. These scholars were already close to the present day in their approach, showed independent observation, and began to test and experiment seriously.

Among historical personages who died of fungus poisoning are: Buddha (about 480 B.C. in India); the Emperor Diocletian (unconfirmed), 313 A.D.; Pope Clement VII, 1534; the emperor Karl VII, 1740, as well as the patron of Mozart, Jean Schobert, with his wife, child, and three friends.

The above article was taken from Wild Mushrooms, by Linus Zeitlmayr, published 1968 by the Trinity Press, Worcester and London. This book is available in the PSMS own book collection.

(P.S. And just before Christmas I saw a new printing of this book available at the UW bookstore).