

SPORE PRINTS

BULLETIN OF THE PUGET SOUND MYCOLOGICAL SOCIETY
Number 486
November 2012



49th Annual PSMS Wild Mushroom Show



T. Basladyński



T. Basladyński



J. Goldman



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Spore Prints

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PUGET SOUND MYCOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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Annual dues: single or family **\$30**; full-time students **\$20**

CALENDAR

- Nov. 13 Membership Meeting, 7:30 pm, CUH
Spore Prints deadline (early)
Nov. 17 Board Meeting, 7:30 pm, CUH Board Room
Dec. 4 Membership Meeting & "Cookie Bash," CUH

YOUR DUES ARE DUE!

Ann Polin

It's that time of year again! The Puget Sound Mycological Society appreciates all of its members and hopes that you will renew at this time. If renewal is not received by December 31, current members will no longer receive a copy of *Spore Prints* and will no longer have access to the "Member's Only" portion of the website, including field trip information and class registration. (Members joining at or after the October show are good through 2013.)

You may renew by clicking on the link in the e-mail that was sent in September to all members up for renewal (check your junk mail folder if you can't find it in your inbox), OR you may renew online at www.psms.org. Either (1) click on "Renew Online," log in using your user name and password, and then click on "Pay Membership Dues/Fees" under the heading "Membership Information" and follow the prompts, or (2) click on "Join/Renew by Mail," print the renewal form, and after completing it send it along with a check (payable to PSMS) to Ann Polin, PSMS Membership Chair, 22265 34th Pl. W, Brier, WA 98036. Dues are \$30 for an individual or family membership and \$20 for a full-time student membership. Thanks in advance for your continued support of mushrooming activities in the Pacific Northwest!

MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Milton Tam

Tuesday, November 13, 2012, at 7:30 pm at the Center for Urban Horticulture, 3501 NE 41st Street, Seattle.

Note: There will be a memorial to Patrice Benson before the speaker.

Our speaker tonight is Alan Rockefeller, a mycologist who has been researching the taxonomy of macrofungi in Mexico for the past six years. His presentation will be on "The Mushrooms of Mexico," featuring Alan's best photos of edible, poisonous, and psychoactive mushrooms. It will also include his micrographs and photos of Mexican mushroom food.



Alan recently returned from five months of collecting in Mexico with extensive field work in the states of Jalisco, Colima, Michoacan, District Federal, Puebla, Veracruz, and Oaxaca. Alan is a moderator at the Shroomery Mushroom Hunting and Identification Forum and posts all of his mushroom photographs on www.mushroomobserver.org. When not photographing mushrooms, Alan, a network security expert, is busy sequencing fungal DNA, photographing the microscopic features of mushrooms, hacking electronics, and setting up pirate radio stations. Come say hello to Alan and be prepared to be fascinated by the diversity and range of fungi he finds south of the border.

Will members with last names beginning with the letters L-Z please bring a plate of refreshments to share after the meeting.

BOARD NEWS

Debra Lehrberger

Fall Show: Our treasurer presented a preliminary report for the Fall Show, with a final report to follow. We had 2,047 paid admissions (last year's was 2,042) and 30 complimentary admissions, in addition to that of members, many of whom volunteered at the show. Wow! We acquired 81 new memberships, including 5 student and 76 adult. We sold 66 T-shirts, 25 hats, and lots of books, posters, and cards. We had 88 on-line sign-ups for volunteer positions at the Fall Show. A volunteer opportunity is available to co-chair the 2013 Fall Show Committee, along with Milton Tam. A Fall Show review meeting will transpire on November 15; committee chairs, Board members, and prospective committee chairs are requested to attend. **Raffles:** Machel Spence graciously donated a framed photography print for which raffle tickets were sold at the show and will continue to be available for sale at the upcoming November-February monthly meetings. The winner will be drawn at the Survivor's Banquet and does not have to be present to win. Sasha Viazmensky donated a beautiful print, which will begin to go on raffle at Mushroom Maynia! and continue during proceeding monthly meetings and the 2013 Fall Show, with the drawing to held following the show. **Scientific Advisor:** A committee has been formed to investigate scientific criteria for recruiting a new scientific advisor. **NAMA Foray:** A proposal is being created by the NAMA Foray budgetary committee, to be presented at a future Board meeting. **ID Classes:** Larry Lee and Wren Hudgins have joined Denis Benjamin, Daniel Winkler, Danny Miller and Hildegard Hendrickson in teaching the October mushroom ID classes. **Scholarship:** A scholarship application for an upcoming mushroom ID class was approved. **Donation:** A \$500 donation to the Center for Urban Horticulture Botanic Gardens was approved, which matches our donation of the year prior. **Nomination Com-**

mittee: A volunteer is needed for the Nomination Committee for the upcoming election of five Board Members, two Alternates, and a Vice President and Secretary. Present Board members Reba Tam, Andrea Rose, Teddy Basladynski, and Luise Asif have volunteered to run for a second term. Congratulations to Nick Herschberger, who was appointed to the Board to serve out Tim Sage's term.

RECAP OF THE PSMS 49TH ANNUAL WILD MUSHROOM SHOW Kim Traverse

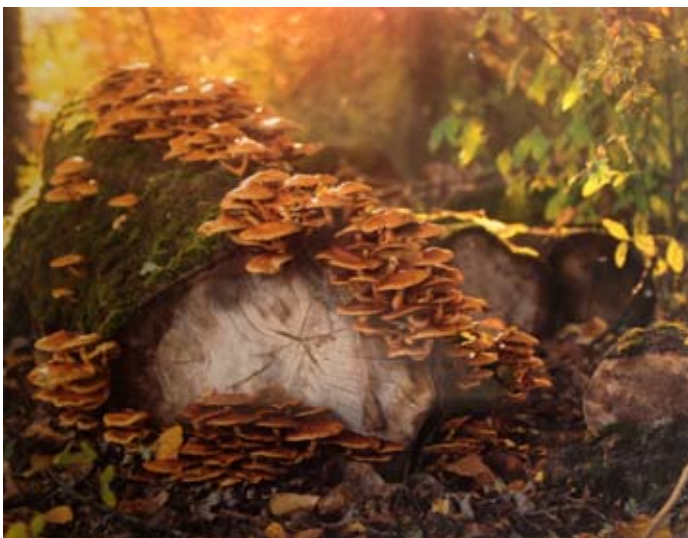
I think we had a great show. The very respectable number and variety of mushrooms collected by our volunteers were a happy surprise. With so little rain over the past several months, many of us had wondered if the show was going to consist of a guided tour of the mushrooms on John Goldman's pants! Attendance was about the same as last year. Well over two thousand people came through, and those I polled as they left had nothing but glowing comments. Speakers Tom Volk, Taylor Lockwood, and Curt Haney spoke to packed houses, and watercolorist Alexander Viazemsky demonstrated his skill once again for hundreds of people.

A special thank-you to Lisa Page Ramey and Machel Spence for the poster this year. Lisa designed the graphics for the poster and Machel donated the use of her photograph.

I want to thank all the volunteers that I have worked with during the five years that I chaired the show. Without you *nothing* gets done and I can't overstate how much fun I had working with you all. Truly five of the best years of my life! I also want to make something clear that might get missed—often we have more volunteers than the number of tasks that need to be done, especially during the time we are open to the public. Those of you who might have felt underutilized should know that it is impossible to have "just enough" people available. Situations change for those who sign up and emergencies occur. But, most important, having extra volunteers is about a million times better than having too few!

PHOTOGRAPH RAFFLE Marian Maxwell

Machel Spence has kindly donated a beautiful framed photograph of *Gymnopilus* for a raffle to raise funds for PSMS. Raffle tickets are \$3 each or four for \$10. Raffle tickets will be sold at the November general meeting and each month until the Survivor's Banquet in March, when the winning ticket will be drawn.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE Marian Maxwell

Thank you to everyone who volunteered at or brought in mushrooms for our Annual Wild Mushroom Show and made it a success! With the dry weather things had looked grim, but we pulled together and everything worked out well.

I would like to thank Kim Traverse for chairing the Show for the past five years. Kim did a great job! Please be sure and thank him personally. Kim is stepping down, so we will be looking for a new chair to direct this effort by next year. We have one person who is willing to co-chair the event but wants to share the job with someone else. Please contact me or another Board member in person, by phone, or by e-mail if you are interested in helping in this capacity, as a shared position or chairing it alone.

Our upcoming November meeting will include a tribute to our dear friend Patrice Benson, who passed away unexpectedly this past summer. The tribute will be before our guest speaker Alan Rockefeller's presentation.

Field trips are wrapping up for the year as this is going to print. It has been dry and we have not seen the variety of mushrooms to which we are accustomed in the Pacific Northwest. Hopefully next year will have more of the rain that we need at the critical times for the development of the mushrooms.

In the next few months we will be adding some interesting committees to our line-up, and we will be soliciting chairs for these various committees. We felt that there was a need to provide an avenue for cultivating the wide variety of interests that our group has in regard to mushrooms. We will keep you posted about these developments.

Unfortunately, because of his work schedule Board of Trustees member Tim Sage has been unable to attend the Board meetings and has had to resign from the Board. There are no more alternates to replace outgoing Board members, so a member has been appointed to the Board until March 2014. Our replacement board member, Nick Herschberger, is new to PSMS and is a student. The Board felt that it would be helpful to have someone to represent the interests and perspectives of newer members and students. Welcome to the Board, Nick!

We have formed a Nomination Committee for the next election but will need at least one member from the general membership to complete it. Please contact Randy Richardson or Debra Leherberger if you are interested in either serving on the Nomination Committee or running for a Board position next election. We will be electing five members for the Board as well as a Vice-President and a Secretary. We will open the floor for nominations at the November through January meetings. The slate must be complete by the end of the January meeting, so the ballots can go out in the February newsletter.

LIBRARY BOOK SALE Danny Miller

At our November meeting, we will continue the PSMS Library Book Sale of extra volumes, including some from the library of Ben Woo, our first president. Most books are \$5 or less. This is a great chance to pick up an inexpensive copy of a cool mushroom book on a diverse range of topics or maybe just a memento of a book that Ben used to own. A few of the more special books are being sold as a silent auction at the end of the November meeting. Almost a hundred books were sold at the October meeting, and there are probably a hundred or more left, so happy hunting!

FIELD TRIP REPORT, SEPT. 21–23 **Brian Luther**

Despite the “gloom and doom” reports in the media about intolerable and dangerous conditions in both Chelan and Kittitas counties because of the wild fires, we had a really fun field trip. It was a little bit smoky, but not anything like in Leavenworth or areas farther east, and nobody in particular complained that it was a problem. Twenty-four people came.

I had planned to have a big campfire in the fireplace hearth at the shelter in the morning, as usual, but two days earlier I received a phone call from the Forest Service concessionaire telling me that all open fires of any kind were banned.

Conditions were super dry, and a brief tour through the extensive forested areas and the paths of the campground resulted in no mushrooms. But, I knew fungi were out at the higher elevations because I had recently been on a couple of alpine hikes and mushrooms were all over the place.

Joe Ammirati came early and because I needed to hold down the fort, I asked him to lead the whole group back up the pass to an area I knew would have fungi to collect. This was a successful idea, because 90 species of fungi were brought back and displayed on the picnic tables.

Some of the more unusual or interesting fungi included several magnificent and very big collections of picture-perfect *Gomphus kauffmannii* from up near Stevens Pass and two large (9-inch diameter) and meaty specimens of *Neolentinus ponderosus* from Icicle Canyon. Good edibles included The Prince (*Agaricus augustus*), Steinpilz (*Boletus edulis*), Chanterelles, and a single Matsutake.

About an hour before potluck, Jon Hall and Elizabeth Perpetua thinly sliced and sautéed the Matsutake and the Chanterelles that Jon had found, and it was finger food for everybody. Both were cooked to perfection (in butter), but the Matsutake was especially good. The potluck was great, but we all got a special treat because Hans Drabicki brought a huge BBQ feast from a new place in Ballard. Along with several different, very tasty meats, he had salads and side dishes. I actually think we all could have easily just eaten what Hans brought and had an incredible meal. Thanks, Hans, for your generosity—it was appreciated!



Elizabeth Perpetua and Jon Hall cooking chanterelles.

FIELD TRIP REPORT, SEPT. 28–30 **Brian Luther**

Saturday morning we were all met with a welcome selection of breakfast muffins, snacks, and hot coffee thanks to our hosts, Sandy Bartell and Jim Boril. They set up in a gorgeous, secluded spot near the river. Thanks, Jim and Sandy, for feeding us and waking us all up.

As expected, everything was quite dry here, as confirmed by the South Fork of the Stillaguamish River being noticeably low. Forty-four members signed in, and several people camped both nights.

Thanks also go to John and Andrea Goldman, who volunteered as mushroom guides Saturday morning and asked people to carpool, if possible. They went here and there and even with the really dry conditions about 63 species of fungi were collected, brought back,

and displayed on a couple of large picnic tables. Most collections of Chanterelles were noticeably stunted in growth or moldy. All three color forms of *Amanita muscaria* were collected, and two very large, mature specimens of the poisonous *Boletus pulcherrimus* came in.

I called the Verlot Ranger Station the day before to check on the fire restrictions and was told that campfires were OK in designated fire pits. About 20 stayed for the Saturday potluck and then had an extended evening in front of the campfire well into the night.



Despite the dry weather, we did find mushrooms.

Since this was a brand new site, I polled those present after potluck to get an idea of how they liked it. The majority of members thought it was wonderful. They loved the beautiful location by the river and wanted to come back again in more favorable conditions when the fungi would be abundant.

FIELD TRIP REPORT, OCT. 6 **Brian Luther**

Only thirteen members signed in at this beautiful location, and it was the driest I can remember in over 40 years. The combination of the distant location and unfavorable conditions resulted in a small turnout.

I again called the local Ranger Station (Naches) to find out if we could have a fire in the shelter fireplace, and the answer was no. All open fires of any kind were prohibited: fireplace fires, BBQ fires, and camp-site fire-pit fires. This was unfortunate, because at 3,200 ft this venue gets really cold at night. We really missed the fire to warm us up both in the morning and at potluck, and this is the first time I've gone here and not been able to have one. Cathy McPeck had a propane hand warmer, and there was a bit of competition for its use.

JoAnn Ireland and her son Eric were our hosts for the day, and they arrived early Saturday morning with lots of breakfast goodies and hot coffee, etc. This was especially welcome because we were all cold, since we couldn't have a fire. Thank you, Joann and Eric—you made the day!

Forty species of fungi were collected and displayed around the shelter ledge, but edible fungi were scarce. In spite of the conditions, Teddy Basladynski and some others went out together and came back with a half shopping bag of Chanterelles, all in pretty good shape. Thanks to Adrian Lee for helping with identification.

It was a small group for the potluck, but all the food was great.

THANK YOU, FALL 2012 PSMS FIELD TRIP HOSTS **Debra Lehrberger**

A warm welcome, and appreciation, to our new field trip hosts Sandy Bartell and Olga and Tom Olufs, who, in addition, have enjoyed their time so much that they have each offered to host again during our upcoming 2013 season!

A resounding gratitude to Jon Hall, Jim Boril, Kitty Loceff, Andrea Rose, John Goldman, and JoAnn Ireland and her family, each of whom have hosted field trips before and have once again hosted one of our fabulous PSMS field trips this Fall season!

Much appreciation to our 2012 volunteer field trip guides Wren Hudgins, John Goldman, and Andrea Rose, each of whom has volunteered as such, on several field trips this year.

Brian Luther, Field Trip and ID Chair, has spent many hours planning, reserving, organizing, and actively leading each of our numerous field trips and even scouted out and added a new site over the summer, when it was discovered that one of our reserved sites might begin construction renovations just prior to our arrival!

Wow! How lucky we are to have such an incredible volunteer team, making our club and our field trips so extra specially wonderful! Thank You!

WHY THE CURRENT FUNGAL MENINGITIS OUT-BREAK MAY BE SO DEADLY

David Brown

The Washington Post, Oct. 22, 2012

Most fungal infections occur on the skin and are easily treated. Inhaling fungus-contaminated dust sometimes causes pneumonia in healthy people. Fungal infections in the brain, however, are almost always confined to people whose immunity has been suppressed by AIDS, cancer, burns, or organ transplants. Until now.

The current epidemic of meningitis—linked to contaminated steroid injections in 281 otherwise healthy people—is an event without precedent. To date, 23 people have died. New cases appear every day; the count went up by 13 Saturday. In all, 14,000 people in 23 states received injections around the spine or a joint with the anti-inflammatory drug methylprednisolone acetate from three contaminated lots distributed by a Massachusetts company.

“This kind of fungal meningitis has not been reported in the medical literature...,” said Benjamin Park, a physician in the fungal-diseases branch of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

“The truth of the matter is that we don’t have any experience with this,” agreed Arturo Casadevall, an expert on fungal infections and chairman of microbiology and immunology at Albert Einstein College of Medicine, in New York.

Fungal infections of the brain are as feared as they are rare. They come on slowly and are hard to diagnose. They require at least three months of therapy with often unpleasant drugs. Treatment failure is common. Survivors are often left with disabilities.

The infections are rare, in part, because most fungi don’t grow at body temperature. *Exserohilum rostratum*, the organism responsible for all but a few of the current cases, is an exception.

One of the reasons they are difficult to treat is that fungal cells are similar to human cells in many structures and enzymes that are targets for antimicrobial drugs. “The last thing you would think of when you look at a fungus is, ‘I have a lot in common with that organism,’” said Robert Cramer, a molecular mycologist at Dartmouth Medical School. “But we have many more genes and proteins in common with fungi than we do with bacteria. Animals and fungi are more closely related than animals and plants.”

Some fungi are especially hard to kill because they produce melanin—one of nature’s strangest protective substances.

Melanin is best known as the pigment that darkens skin and protects it from the damaging effects of too much sunlight. Its usefulness was discovered via single-cell organisms. Fungal species that grow on leaves and grass (as *Exserohilum rostratum* does) make it for the same reason people do—to protect against ultraviolet light.

In fact, melanin absorbs virtually all wavelengths (which is why it is black) and some ionizing radiation. Melanin inactivates “free radicals,” which are highly reactive chemicals made by cells of the immune system and used as molecular hand grenades to punch holes in bacteria, viruses, and other pathogens. Granules of melanin in the cell walls of fungi also absorb certain substances—including many drugs—preventing them from gaining access to the interior.

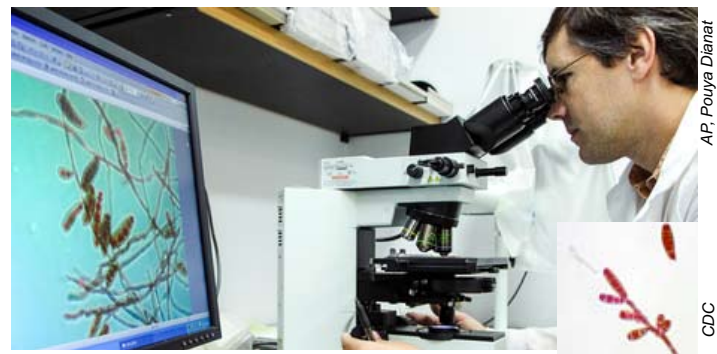
“Imagine putting activated charcoal on the outside—it’s kind of like that,” Casadevall said.

As it turns out, a few antifungal drugs aren’t stopped by melanin. One of them is voriconazole, which is being used to treat the meningitis patients.

Some of the meningitis patients have suffered strokes, especially in the back of the brain—the first stop for organisms migrating up the spinal canal. The fungus invades blood vessels, which clot off and deprive brain tissue of oxygen and blood flow.

Cramer thinks that fungal cells may be able to detect oxygen “gradients”—minute changes in concentration—in the cerebrospinal fluid they are floating in. The cells then grow toward the source—oxygen-rich capillaries—like slow-moving sharks homing in on a bleeding swimmer.

It’s a hypothesis he’s now exploring in his laboratory.



Shawn Lockhart examines the meningitis-causing fungus *Exserohilum rostratum* at the mycotic lab at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta.

NEW VERSION OF MATCHMAKER

Version 2.1 of MatchMaker, the popular Pacific Northwest mushroom-identification program for the PC, is now out. It contains descriptions of over 4,000 species with over 5,000 photographs. Of greatest value is the matching function that, unlike paper keys which often ask you questions you don’t know the answers to, allows you to tell the computer what you *do* know about the mushroom; it then gives you a list of possibilities and color photographs for most of them. It also contains a function with the ability to quiz you in several different ways on photographs of mushrooms from whatever list of mushrooms you would like to practice with.

This program can be download free from the Internet at <http://www.matchmakermushrooms.com>

AN INTRODUCTION TO FUNGUS-ILLUSTRATED CINDERELLAS

© Brian S. Luther

Cinderellas are paper ephemera that are not postage stamps but can look like them and may even have perforations along the margin or gum on the back. However, this category is quite open and variable, containing a variety of collectible paper items. They're called cinderellas simply because they're pretty or attractive (like Cinderella). Since they are not related to postage stamps, they are not treated in any of the international postage stamp catalogs. There are amazing and beautiful cinderellas with fungi, again both as the main illustration and as MIDs (mushrooms in the design of the illustration).

Some of the numerous items included in this category are poster seals, advertising seals, various stickers, decals, labels, polio, TB or Red Cross seals, matchbox labels, cigarette cards, cigar bands, cigar box labels, chocolate seals/cards, other advertising cards (often called trade cards, but these also fit into the category of postcards), National Wildlife Federation (NWF) seals, etc. The NWF seals are often referred to as "stamps," but the word *stamp* should be restricted to international postage to avoid any confusion. Because they are not postage stamps and are not denominated, their value is determined by rarity and condition.

Some of the items listed above were produced to promote a product or to give the purchaser a bonus when buying a specific product. Chocolate cards are one example. In the late 19th century and early part of the 20th century, these cards were put inside the wrapping of a chocolate bar, as a gift. They often featured a colorful or interesting picture of something or someone, usually had a description on the back, and were often very informative. The cards were numbered, so you could determine whether you had a complete set or not. Since you never knew what you'd get when you bought the chocolate bar, it encouraged people to buy more of that product to see what the freebie was inside. It was actually a smart promotional strategy, playing on our natural human curiosity and interest to collect things and to learn.

Another example is matchbox labels. Smoking was much more prevalent decades ago, and people bought large numbers of matchboxes and used them quickly. The manufacturers, again, offered different sets of related labels that were removable and collectible.

All of these similar items have been collected by people for over a century. Eventually, complete sets of the topic subject were found or exchanged with other people doing the same, resulting in really neat collections covering many different subjects. Different sets vary in number, with 10 to 20 or more seals in complete sets. Some are from about 1890 to the 1920s, others are more contemporary. All are attractive and collectible.

Also, many wannabe countries, or regions having considerable independence from the dominant country, recently have produced a lot of false postage or pseudo-stamps, which are in fact cinderellas, but some have denominations on them. Just a few examples of many are the Bernera Islands of Scotland—Staffa, Easdale Isl., Eynhallow, etc. These are often called British locals. A few of the worldwide examples include Batum, Buriatia, Surf Islands (Australian local), South Ossetia, Abkhazia, etc.

It can be confusing to someone just getting interested in mycophily to sort out valid international postage from cinderellas. To complicate matters, some real countries are issuing what appear to be valid postage stamps, but they are not produced in quantity

and thus are not recognized by the international postage stamp cataloging companies as genuine postage. They are nonetheless available on eBay and similar sources.

Used phone calling cards are another category that is just emerging. They really don't fit in with cinderellas or postcards. Actually, they're not even paper ephemera, but rather "plastic ephemera." There are many available in the market place that are illustrated with fungi. This is one category I have not had any interest in collecting, mostly because I like dealing with real paper and much older stuff.

Below is a small selection of these beautifully illustrated products to encourage your interest. There are hundreds of related or similar items that aren't shown. As the title of this article indicates, this is merely an introduction to the subject of cinderellas.



All photos by Brian Luther

- 1 - 1925 Irish Christmas seal - Health is Wealth. This is an MID item, since the main illustration is the Leprechaun with the Irish Cross.
- 2 - 1956 NWF seal - Amanita caesarea. Only one seal each on two sheet variations - NWF Conservation Stamps & Wildlife Stamps, each with 36.
- 3 - 1974 Danish Red Cross seal. This is one of a sheet of 16 different fungi. Size 49 x 35 mm.
- 4 - 1983 East German (DDR) Red Cross seal. This is one of a sheet of 10 different fungi. Detailed description on back. Size 54 x 32 mm.
- 5 - 1992 Zimbabwe TB seal. RAPT = Rehabilitation and Prevention of Tuberculosis. Sheets of 25 different fungi, titled Mushrooms of Zimbabwe.
- 6 - Back cover of matchbook of item 14. The inside offered a recipe book for 10¢ and 1 lb of fresh mushrooms for 50¢ or 3 lb for a buck, postpaid.
- 7 - Dutch cigar band - Willem II Series, no. 2865, Stropharia aeruginosa. Set has 144 different bands. Latin, common names, and No. on back.

8 - Dutch Lucifers brand matchbox label showing *Pholiota squarrosa*. This is No. 20 in the set of 20. Size 35 x 52 mm.

9 - Nestle milk chocolate bar seal - Poisonous Mushrooms. Latin, French & German common names at top. Actual size 52 x 40 mm.

10 - Carl Steinmetz seal. Gift given when you bought from his stores. *Cantharellus cibarius* with German common names. Size 73 x 52 mm.

11 - Polish matchbox label from *Bystrzyca*. *Bolete*, 1 of 7 in set. Issued by other cities, such as Gdansk, Sianow, Czestochowa, etc. Size 50 x 35 mm.

12 - Rare South African polio research seal, showing *Amanita muscaria* and *chanterelles*. Size 38 x 23 mm.

13 - Seal from *Steckenpferd* brand soap. This MID seal was inside a bag of soap when you bought it. Mushrooms with faces. Size 45 x 34 mm.

14 - Vintage matchbook cover promoting cultivated mushrooms. Eastern State Sales Co., Kennett Square, PA. Back is shown in item 6.

15 - Will's cigarette card, found in a pack of their cigarettes. The British used to call poisonous fungi toadstools and edible fungi mushrooms.

MAGIC MUSHROOMS

Erica Rex

The Independent Times of Oman, Oct. 21, 2012

Hallucinogenic drugs showed great promise with cancer treatments before they were banished from the clinical scene in the 1970s. Now they're back.



This happened within the first hour of my swallowing a capsule of psilocybin, the psychoactive ingredient in "magic" mushrooms.

I'd volunteered to be a scientific-research-study subject at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine's Behavioral Pharmacology Research Unit (BPRU) as part of a clinical trial to test the hypothesis that psilocybin can help cancer patients to regain a sense of existential meaning in the face of their disease.

This study is designed to measure how well the drug does in alleviating the anxiety and depression associated with cancer. There are currently only two such clinical studies under way using this drug, both of them in the US.

Another is scheduled to begin here in the UK early next year. The drug is not available legally for any other use in the UK or in the US. I was diagnosed with breast cancer in 2009. A year on from a lumpectomy and radiation therapy, now on aromatase inhibitors, my prognosis seemed good.

But rather than cheerfully getting on with life, I was spending most days at my desk crying. I began searching the web for a way to kill myself that wouldn't be either messy or too painful.

Prior to their 1970s prohibition, psilocybin and LSD were prescribed to around 40,000 research subjects, among them people with cancer, alcoholics, and those suffering from depression and obsessive-compulsive disorder.

The results showed remarkable promise in helping people to overcome pain, fear, compulsive behaviors, and psychological isolation. Scientists have been waiting a long time for the tide to turn.

"We had 30 years to practice exactly what we tell study subjects before their psilocybin sessions," said Dr. Bill Richards, one of the researchers at the BPRU who successfully treated terminally ill patients with hallucinogens at the Maryland Psychiatric Research Centre from the early 1960s until the centre was shut down in 1977. "Trust, let go, be open."

Volunteers for the psilocybin scientific-research trial visit the Baltimore clinic twice, receiving a low dose of psilocybin on one visit and a moderately high dose on the other.

We're screened for mental, emotional, and physical problems before we're officially admitted into the study. Giving psilocybin to people who have underlying psychotic disorders or schizophrenia can be catastrophic.

I filled in more than 50 pages of questionnaires, including assessments of optimism and pessimism, pain scales, depression scales, and queries about my lifestyle and my habits, as well as one called Assessment of Spirituality and Religious Sentiments.

The drug's therapeutic value depends entirely upon the patient's feelings and perceptions during the session and the way he or she processes the memories afterwards.

"The drug is a skeleton key which unlocks an interior door to places we don't generally have access to," Richards said. Giving hallucinogens any other way is "a recipe for paranoia, anxiety, and disaster," Richards said.

LOST MUSHROOMERS

Randle, Washington

A 79-year-old Tacoma man who got lost in the forest while picking mushrooms on Sunday was found alive and uninjured Tuesday afternoon, two days and cold nights after becoming separated from his family near Randle.

Dapeng Yang was located at about 2 pm Tuesday walking near Forest Service Road 26, within a mile of the search and rescue teams' base camp, according to a news release by the Lewis County Sheriff's Office. It is unknown why he did not hear or respond to the search crews yelling or whistling.

Yang had no obvious injuries; He was transported to a hospital for dehydration.

—Stephanie Schendel, *The Chronicle*, Oct. 11, 2012

Pamelia Lake, Oregon

Lynette Gail Cubic, 61, from Salem, Oregon, got lost in the wilderness overnight Sunday as she was picking mushrooms with a companion around the Pamelia Lake trailhead. She was found alive but incoherent Monday morning by deputies and members of the Linn County Sheriff's Search and Rescue Post. When found, she was dressed only in undergarments and suffering from advanced hypothermia. Medics from the Lyons and Gates fire departments transported her to a Salem Hospital. Her condition was not known at the time of the news report.

—KVAL News, Oct. 22, 2012

Bamfield, B.C.

Catherine Thompson and James Spencer, along with their dog, became lost in the woods Sunday while looking for chanterelles and hedgehog mushrooms. Friends reported them missing and began looking for them. A search and rescue team from Port Alberni arrived later. In the morning the couple started walking toward the sound of searchers. Eventually they started to recognize landmarks. Then the dog took off and they followed. They came out onto the road into the middle of what looked like their whole community. "They were willing to put their lives at stake to come look for us," Thompson said. "It was pretty amazing."

—Sandra McCulloch, *timescolonist.com*, Oct. 20, 2012

ADVENTURES OF A MYCOLOGY TOXICOLOGIST

Marilyn Shaw

SporesAfield, Colo. Myco. Soc., Oct. 2012

All over Europe people can take their mushrooms to a central location, often the post office, on a certain day of the week, to have an expert check them for edibility. I was told by a man who had been stationed in Finland that he was in the post office one day when a woman came in with her haul of mushrooms. She asked that question we have all heard from neophytes, "Are these edible?" With serious demeanor the expert replied, "Madam, all mushrooms are edible ... some only once."

In another case a London cockney was visiting relatives in Aurora, Colorado. To give him a feel for the West and the mountains, they took him to Estes Park. There, prior to 9 am, he had wandered the nearby woods, picking and eating any mushrooms he came across. Somewhat later that morning they visited a rock shop and watched as rocks were being sliced. As they left the shop he encountered an Indian who was taking a bite from a mushroom. But, strangely, his teeth were whirring around like the circular saw he had just seen. Alarmed (no one else saw the Indian), his relatives took him to the local medical clinic. By then he was acting inebriated, even though he had had nothing to drink but tea. He then collapsed and was twitching violently.

I was called and determined, by the very distinctive set of symptoms, that he had eaten an ibotenic acid/muscimol-containing mushroom, probably *Amanita muscaria* or *A. pantherina*, which causes an alarming set of symptoms but is not a terribly serious, life-threatening type of poisoning. By that time the medics had

loaded him onto a helicopter and were flying him to University Hospital in Denver. They wanted no part of this. I was alerted when the helicopter arrived about 2:30 pm. I lived just four or five blocks away. I went to the hospital about 5:30 pm to see how the patient was doing and to interview him for additional information.

He was the stereotypical big, ruddy-complexioned, cockney-speaking Londoner, recently having awakened from the typical coma-like sleep, prone and helpless on a hospital bed. As we talked his muscles were still twitching every minute or so. When the interview was over and I assured him he would be OK with no lasting effects from the experience, he stated, "In the UK the papers are always warning you not to eat mushrooms. Why don't you warn people here?"

I could barely get out of the room before collapsing in hysterical laughter.

THE \$250 HALLOWEEN TREAT Charles Passy

MarketWatch, *The Wall Street Journal*, Oct. 12, 2012

With Halloween just around the corner, some highbrow hosts may be pleased to know they have a new option for their neighborhood ghosts and goblins: a chocolate-covered fungus!

"La Madeline au Truffe," a \$250 bonbon from the Connecticut-based Knipschildt Chocolatier, is made from an actual truffle (the kind that pigs sniff out from the dirt). The fungus is coated in a decadent ganache (made with Valrhona dark chocolate) and fine cocoa powder, and packaged in a fancy box—for a gift that surely elevates the question "Trick or treat?" to high art.

page 8



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