

SPORE

PRINTS

BULLETIN OF THE PUGET SOUND MYCOLOGICAL SOCIETY
200 Second Avenue North Seattle WA 98109
March 1973 Number 90

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 its place and function in the scheme of things and will cover the Morels, Helvellas, and Cup Fungi. If time permits, the genus Amanita will be introduced.





SPORE PRINTS is published monthly except July and August by the PUGET SOUND MYCOLOGICAL SOCIETY, c/o The Pacific Science Center, 200 - 2nd Ave N., Seattle, Washington 98109. Mail copy, art, or photos to (Ms.) Auriel Harris, Editor, 4029 E. Madison, Seattle, Washington 98102.

OFFICERS	Howard Melsen	President
	Charles Woodruff	Vice Pres
	Helen Wasson	Treasurer
	Helen Hewitt	Secretary

TRUSTEES Michel Allain, Scott Chilton, Dina Chybinski, Claude Dilly, Milton Grout, James M. Hara, Don Peterson, Dee Poole, Charles Proctor, Isabelle Waite, and Robert W. Ramsey (Immediate Past President)

ALTERNATES Cliff Carpetner, Virginia Kessner, Charles Kessner.

SCIENTIFIC ADVISOR Dr. Daniel E. Stuntz

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 C. 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 Howard Melsen 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 Hanni 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." Hanni Bogdan had a fine article on Tussie-Mussies in the Winter issue.

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



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 muscaria] 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. So far as I could observe, attacks of great animation alternate with moments of deep depression. The person intoxicated by fly-agaric sits quietly rocking from side to side, even taking part in conversations with his family. Suddenly his eyes dilate, he begins to gesticulate convulsively, converses with persons whom he imagines he sees, sings and dances. Then an interval of rest sets in again. However, to keep up the intoxication additional doses of fungi are necessary. . . . There is reason to think that the effect of fly-agaric would be stronger were not its alkaloid quickly taken out of the organism with the urine. The Koryak knows this by experience, and the urine of persons intoxicated with fly-agaric is not wasted. The drunkard himself drinks it to prolong his hallucinations, or he offers it to others as a treat.

Another mushroom-eating practice deserves mention. Ever 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.

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.

Still another fascinating example of the power of muscaria concerns the Vikings and the Berserks of the North Countries. Berserk was a mighty hero in Norse mythology, renowned for his bravery and for the fury of his attack in battle.

From before the ninth on into the twelfth century in Iceland and the Scandinavian countries the Berserks, a predatory group of brawlers and killers bearing the same name as the legendary warrior, disrupted the peace of the Viking community repeatedly.

GOING BERSERK

IT IS now accepted by Scandinavian scholars that *Berserksgang*, or the act of going berserk, which was the hallmark of their discordant behavior, probably came from eating our Siberian friend, the *Amanita muscaria*. "Going berserk" was no childish aberration of behavior in its original and true form. There is a vivid description of it in a nineteenth-century Scandinavian account:

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 "*Berserksgang*," 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 1123 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 banished if they do not bind him; but if they bind him, none are punished. If this is repeated, then the punishment occurs."

Berserksgang 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)



ED ARNO

March 31

Don't forget to send in for your tickets. The deadline is March 24th. Tickets will not be sold at the March meeting because there isn't one. They are not sold at the door. The only way you can get them is to send your mail order to Helen Wasson, 16545 Des Moines Way S., Seattle 98148; or phone orders and questions to Belle Swaffield at CH 4-2559. Don't delay. Hana!

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 bufotenine, 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 anti-social 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.



Resembling a flattened *helvella* cap or a wrinkled Swedish pancake flopped on the ground, this month's **Mystery Mushroom** qualifies for the adjective "sessile" since it has no conventional stipe. Attached only at the center, it may be found on sandy soil, probably growing on underground wood. The underside and rim are unshiny, pearly white. While a more common, more well-known member of the same genus differs in being a deep brown on the top surface, our **Mystery Mushroom** is more subtly shaded—a soft, greyed golden-brown, and showing a translucent lavender cast when held up to light. Both are edible and extremely tasty.

Answer: *Discina perlata*. The brown species is *Discina anclilla*. Fred Jay Beaver lists these two as one species, *Discina anclilla*. Like the morels and verps, these are Ascomycetes, and have the spore-bearing surface on the outer side top of the cap. *Discina* is in the cup fungi group—Pezizales.

COOKING MUSHROOMS

From The Something-Went-Wrong-What-Do-I-Do-Now Cookbook by John & Marina Bear.

Too bland: The best seasoning to bring out the flavor is marjoram: add a generous dash. Or have you got the thyme?

Too dark: Wipe them with a damp cloth, rub them with lemon juice, and store in refrigerator. Or steam them in milk and butter in the top of a double boiler for 20 minutes. Or add lemon juice (a few drops) to the cooking liquid.

Too light: Mushrooms will darken if cooked in butter in a black iron skillet on high heat. (If you don't want dark mushrooms, stop using your black cast iron skillet).

Shriveled: Peel them with your fingers. Beneath every shriveled mushroom lies a somewhat smaller smooth mushroom waiting to be found. (Use the peelings to flavor soup or sauces.)

