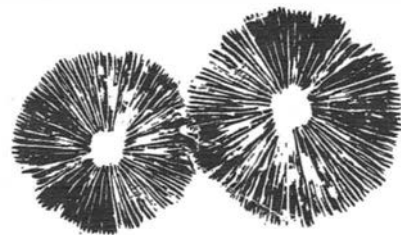


SPORE PRINTS

BULLETIN OF THE PUGET SOUND MYCOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Number 290

March 1993



SURVIVORS' BANQUET

Who done it?

After 2 years of potlucks and semi-potlucks, we are returning to a formal banquet. The date is Saturday, March 13. The place is the Glen Acres Golf and Country Club, 1000 S. 112th Street. The no-host social hour begins at 7:00, followed by a scrumptious buffet of prime rib and shrimp Creole. As a special attraction, we are featuring a mushroom murder mystery. Plan to arrive for the social hour, so you can witness the crime. During the social hour and dinner, PSMS members will work in teams to unravel the plot and track down the dastardly poison mushroom murderer!

It's an event you won't want to miss. So if you've put off getting tickets, call Mary Taylor, 839-2059, NOW, to reserve your spot.



THE FIRST FORAY

Agnes Sieger

All forays are fun, but the first is always special. Between the Oregon Society, the Vancouver Society, and the Pacific Northwest Key Council, Dick and I attend two or three a year. But whenever I think of forays, I think of Cispus II, in October 1975.

We were brand-new mushroom hunters, awed at the chance to hob-nob with the knowledgeable. We wound our way up the secondary road out of Randall, unsure what to expect, or even where we were going. We managed to find the Cispus Environmental Center, however, and the Foray Receptionist, Jennie Schmitt, who went on to become PSMS president. She greeted us warmly and assigned us our sleeping quarters and meal tickets. Other new arrivals, as confused as we, helped us find the right buildings and dump our sleeping bags on some unclaimed cots. With the help of our new acquaintances and a map of the grounds, we eventually figured out where all the events listed in the schedule would be held.

The mushrooms were displayed in the gymnasium at the far end of the grounds. Plastic covered a floor littered with tables holding mushrooms. Behind a screen in one corner, other tables held microscopes, books, and mysterious chemicals and other paraphernalia. Across from the mess hall, the maintenance garage, later remodeled into classrooms, sported bleachers and chairs and a slide projector. Our Australian Shepherd, Chutney, wanted to baptize them all. We convinced him he had to stay in the Scout and go out for runs, as no dogs were allowed.

In the morning, Kit Scates packed the bleachers in the garage, passed out copies of her picture key to genus, and announced that before we left we would know how to use it. Since the only success I had so far was identifying witches butter in the local park, I doubted it. But by the end of the session, everyone was shouting out answers, mostly right, as she flipped images on the screen.

After lunch, everyone took off to look for mushrooms. Dick and I collected the dog and wandered off through the brush. We smelled green corn all around us, but didn't see a mushroom anywhere. After 15 minutes of hide-and-seek, we finally found a little brown mushroom that reeked of green corn. How proud we were to come back to the gym that afternoon with seven prize collections, five of which Dr. Stuntz regretfully informed us were *Armillaria mellea*. He recognized the green-corn *Cortinarius*, but "I'm not sure if Alex has named it yet. Take it over and ask him." If Dick was awed to talk to Dr. Stuntz, he was thrilled to talk with the foray mycologist, Dr. Alexander Smith, one of the most eminent mycologists in the U.S. and author of *The Mushroom Hunter's Field Guide*, the premier i.d. book for amateurs.

Riding high, we gravitated to the corner, where Judy Roger and Scott Chilton were keying out more difficult fungi and holding an informal microscopy class. Fascinated, we watched as Judy picked up a razor blade and, almost without looking, sliced off a section so thin we could see individual cells. She offered to show us how, but no matter how hard I tried, my sections still looked like chunks of wood.

The array of mycologists was formidable. In addition to Dr. Stuntz and Dr. Smith, David Largent of Humboldt State College in Arcada talked on mushrooms of Northern California. Edmund Tylutki of the University of Idaho compared the distribution of mushrooms found at Cispus II and Cispus I several years earlier. David Horsford of Central Washington State talked on the diversity of Gasteromycetes. By late Saturday evening, we were so sated we decided to skip the final session and go to bed. We found out later that the late evening sessions naturally evolve into the social hour, where oldtimers and newcomers, novices and experts sometimes smooze into the wee hours of the morning.

I'm sorry now we missed it. Looking back, what I remember most about the foray is the wonderful people we met. Many would become lifelong friends.



Alexander Smith, Helen Smith, and Daniel Stuntz at Cispus II

Spore Prints

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Membership Meeting

The meeting this month will be held during the Survivor's Banquet on Saturday, March 13, 1993, at the Glen Acres Golf and Country Club, 1000 S. 112th St., Seattle (see article on page 1).

MEET JOANNE YOUNG

Inga Wilcox



The 1990 poster for our annual exhibit caught her eye; she came to the exhibit and joined. Joanne has always been interested in mushrooms and had been hunting on her own or with friends. She collected everything she found, and with the help of *The Savory Wild Mushroom* by McKenny/Stuntz identified her finds. After joining, and the Beginner's Class, she found more and more of the choice mushrooms. Springfield trips and hunting with Kern and Elizabeth Hendricks put her on the right track. She found enough morels to eat and to save. One fall she and other PSMS members came upon an area that yielded about 40 lb of *Boletus edulis*. They even left the big ones standing!

Joanne has been living in Seattle since she was 10 years old. She had her own business in the graphic arts field and is currently taking some time off. She loves to travel to far away places and has visited Tibet.

She has worked on publicity for the 1992 exhibit. It was then that the King County Arts Commission asked her to submit art work done by a PSMS member. This led to the art show at the Christmas party. Joanne would like this to become a regular event—without the pressure of having to supply an entry to the Commission. Poster and T-shirt design are right in her field. She worked on the poster for the UW Burke Museum Centennial Exhibit "A Time of Gathering."

Joanne likes to stay involved. She anticipates hosting at forays, serving on the Board sometime, and keeping the art show going. She finds monthly meetings interesting and loves to meet other members who share their knowledge. Information gained at lectures allows her to speak about conservation, for instance, in an informed manner.

She has learned that "The more you do for the Society, the more enjoyable it is belonging to PSMS."

CALENDAR

- March 7 Conservation meeting, 6:00 p.m., Ron Post's, 9017 Corless N., Seattle, 525-9082
- March 9 Herbarium Committee, 6:00 p.m., Hitchcock
- March 13 Banquet and Annual Meeting, 7:00 p.m., Glen Acres Country Club
- March 14 Cultivation Group meeting, 8541 13th Ave. N.W., Seattle, 789-1959
- March 15 PSMS Board meeting
- March 16 Herbarium Committee, 6:00 p.m., Hitchcock
- March 20 ~~Patrice Benson and Kathy Casey, KCTS Channel 9~~
- March 26 *Spore Prints* deadline
- April 3 MacDonal Park Field Trip
Beatrix Potter Exhibit begins, Pacific Science Center
- May 14-16 Cispus IV Spring Foray, Randall, WA

HERBARIUM COMMITTEE

Dick Sieger

On February 2nd, members of Kathleen Cottrell's Herbarium Committee met at the U.W.'s Hitchcock Hall for an orientation session led by Sara Gage.

On February 10th, and again on the 17th, they met at the herbarium from 6:00-9:00 p.m., and started working — marking locations, dates, collectors, and collection numbers on boxes and performing autopsies on insects before embalming them. Attendees included Kathleen Cottrell, Carl Hermanson, Steve Mongovin, Lisa Pedigo, Dick Sieger, and Pat Williams.

INTO THE WOODS WE GO

Mary Lynch



The first field trip of 1993 will be Saturday, April 3, at MacDonal Park near Carnation. MacDonal Park is on the Tolt River about 1/2 mile south of Carnation in King County. Enter the park on N.E. 40th Street from State Hwy. 203. Watch for PSMS signs on the corner and use the day-use parking lot. We will meet at the main shelter across the suspension bridge at 9:00 a.m. for a general introduction to mushroom hunting. Then we will break into small groups and go out to gather specimens. Identifiers will be available around 10:30 a.m. There should be *Verpa bohemica* under the cottonwoods in the surrounding area. Please bring a mushroom basket, knife, brush, whistle, and compass. Wear shoes suitable for soggy ground and bring rain gear. We will meet rain or shine.

CULTIVATION GROUP

Scott Lieske

Mike Hess hosted almost 30 members for our Valentine's Day meeting. The mushroom of the day was



Pleurotus fabelatus, the "strawberry oyster." Instead of our usual heat pasteurization of the straw substrate, Mike introduced us to something different. Some of the straw had been kept under water for 3 days in order to kill any air-loving contaminants. Other straw was only soaked in water with a mild solution of bleach buffered with a little calcium carbonate for 2 hours. He had bags of beautiful pink oysters which convinced us that his methods work.

After an informative and hectic afternoon of mixing and bagging, we retired upstairs to a pleasant (mostly pink) potluck and good conversation before heading for home. Many thanks, Mike, for your expertise, materials, and hospitality.

The next Cultivation Group meeting will be on Sunday, March 14, at Scott and Colleen Lieske's home, 8541 13th Ave. N.W., when we'll attempt *Lepiota rachodes*. All PSMS members are welcome at the Cultivation Group's activities. For more information or directions, call Scott or Colleen at 789-1959.

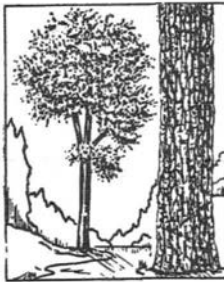


THE "EARLY MOREL"

Agnes Sieger

Before long, we will hold our annual pilgrimage to the Tolt River to pay tribute to the first mushrooms of the coming season, *Verpa (Ptychoverpa) bohemica*. Not the choicest of mushrooms, maddeningly hard to spot amid the debris of the previous fall, sometimes causing severe reactions in its consumers—but the first! The sign that all is again right with the world, that mushroom bounty will follow mushroom bounty until next summer.

Often called the early morel because of its timing and superficial resemblance to the true morels, *Verpa bohemica* fruits from late February through April, depending on the season. In the Pacific Northwest, it is associated with cottonwoods, often fruiting right around the drip line of mature trees "when the cottonwood leaves are the size of a mouse's ear." Once you learn to recognize the cottonwood, a tall, dark, poplar-like tree with wrinkled bark that grows in damp river bottoms throughout western Washington, you can spot your hunting ground from afar. Finding your quarry, however, isn't that easy.



The first time my husband and I went *Verpa* hunting, we spent an entire day scouring the leaf cover beneath the cottonwoods in a flood plain near Rockport without catching so much as a glimpse of a mushroom. Finally, half an hour before sundown, we spied something suspicious peeking up through the debris around the tree roots. Our first *Verpa*. After that, we spotted a few more, and then some more. We had been walking over hundreds all day.

Verpa bohemica is a medium sized (3-8 in. tall), tanish mushroom with a wrinkled, bell-shaped cap which is attached only at the top, forming a skirt over the stem. The stem is long, at first whitish to cream in color and becoming tan with age, and filled with cottony fibers.

In contrast, true morels have pitted, not wrinkled, caps that are attached to the stems at the bottom (or in some cases part way up); their stems, while hollow, are empty.

Unlike other verpas, and most large Ascomycetes, *Verpa bohemica* has only two spores per ascus instead of eight. For that reason, modern taxonomists have split it into its own genus, *Ptychoverpa*. What each ascus lacks in numbers, however, it makes up for in size; the spores are huge.

Although considered a good edible by many, this mushroom causes gastrointestinal upsets and loss of muscular coordination in some people and should be approached with caution. Many field guides recommend parboiling it and throwing away the water and eating only small amounts at a time. The effects may be cumulative, so don't pig out on it several days in a row, even if it is the only edible mushroom out at the time.



BOARD NEWS

Agnes Sieger

The Survivors' Banquet on March 13 has been declared the PSMS Annual Meeting. Ron Post will make backups of all the PSMS videos. The Foray Committee will visit Cispus to check out the facilities for the Foray May 14th. Mark Schnarre offered Metro our help in any follow-up survey of heavy metals in mushrooms growing in forests treated with sludge.

PSMS is storing excess books from the North American Mycological Society in our library. After Bill Bridges inventories them, Dr. Ammirati will fill in gaps with duplicates from Dr. Stuntz's collection, and they can be checked out by PSMS members. The board approved sharing our library with the Oregon Mycological Society so books from both clubs can be checked out through the clubs' librarians.

We sold \$264.70 worth of books in February. Almost 30 people attended the Cultivation Group meeting February 14. Eight or nine turned out to work on the microscopes. A retired microscope technician (Russ Parker) has volunteered to help. It looks like we will have two binocular and six monocular scopes with oil lenses. The Herbarium Committee will meet on Tuesdays except on PSMS meeting nights, when it will meet Wednesday.

PLEUROTUS OSTREATUS GOLD CRISPS

Colorado Mycological Society

1 TBs water
1 egg
Bread crumbs
Salt
Pepper
1/4 lb butter
Parsley



Separate caps into smaller pieces after short bath in salt water; drain immediately but do not dry. Add water to egg and beat. Dredge moist mushrooms in bread crumbs. Dip them in egg mixture and once again in bread crumbs. Saute in butter and dust with salt and pepper, turning them as they cook until tender and golden brown. While draining mushrooms on absorbent paper, put parsley fronds and stems into the hot butter. Heap mushrooms on a heated platter and garnish with the parsley which is now crisp and bright green.

FUNGUS FAIRY WINE WILL DELIGHT AND CURE

BEIJING, Feb. 12, Reuter - After years of painstaking research, a Chinese scientist has come up with a brew which he hopes will win over the world's connoisseurs of fine liquors: fermented fungus "fairy wine."

Xiao Helong, a biologist from central Sichuan province, spent years mashing together combinations of edible fungi, including hedgehog hydnum and straw mushrooms, trying to find an alternative to grain-based alcohol. Xiao finally worked his magic in 1989 and came up with "Fairy Circle Liquid," which the *China Daily* described as an all-natural wine which will boost immunity to sickness.

Now being manufactured by two breweries in Sichuan, the fairy wine won rave reviews from the 1989 International Symposium on Edible Fungus and was pronounced "apparently satisfactory" by Beijing Medical University, the newspaper said.

"Xiao gives his creation an impressive analogy with music: The liquid is like traditional melody, slow and mild, which fine tunes the human physical mechanism."

WANTED: Phone Answerer and Mail Picker-Upper

PSMS needs someone who would be willing to monitor and pass on messages left on the Society's answering machine. This can be done from home, via the telephone. We also need someone to pick up mail during office hours at CUH. This could be the same person or two different persons. If interested, call Dick Sieger, 362-6860.

It's time to start thinking about reserving the weekend of May 14-16 for the PSMS Spring Foray.

MUSHROOMS AND SIGMUND FREUD

Bulletin,
Boston Mycological Club

Sigmund Freud's daughter Anna: "When they went collecting mushrooms he always told them to go into the woods quietly and he still does this; there must be no chattering and they must roll up the bags they have brought under their arms, so that the mushrooms shall not notice; when father found one he would cover it quickly with his hat, as though it were a butterfly. The little children — now his grandchildren — used to believe what he said, while the bigger ones smiled at his credulity; even Anna did this, when he told her to put fresh flowers every day at the shrine of the Virgin which was near the woods, so it might help them in their search. The children were paid in pennies for the mushrooms they found, while the best mushroom of all (it was always Ernst who found it) got a florin. It was the quality, not the quantity of the mushrooms that mattered."

From *The Sigmund Freud and Lou Andreas-Salome Letters*, E. Pfeiffer et al., eds. (Harcourt-Brace-Jovanovich, New York, 1972).



***Warning:** If your mailing label has an asterisk (*) on it, your dues have lapsed and this will be your last Spore Prints. We'll miss you at the spring field trips, the Cispus Foray, the NAMA Foray, and the annual exhibit.

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