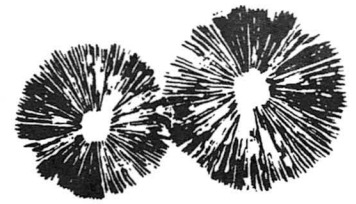


# SPORE PRINTS

BULLETIN OF THE PUGET SOUND MYCOLOGICAL SOCIETY  
Number 359 February 2000

KEEP



## Y2K SURVIVORS' BANQUET

Steven Bell



All of you who attended the banquet last year know what a fabulous dining experience we shared. This year, chef Walter Bronowitz, his staff, and students of the Culinary Arts Program will again amaze us with their gourmet skills. Dinner will be served in the dining facilities of Edmonds Community College at 20000 68th Avenue West in Lynnwood. Save the date: Saturday, March 18. Doors will open at 6:30 PM, and dinner will be

served at 7:30 PM. The cost is \$25 per person. You may bring your own wine. Glassware is provided. The menu will not be available until after this newsletter goes out, but it will be posted on the members page of our web site as soon as possible.

The evening's program will include announcements of new officers and the presentation of the "Golden Mushroom Award" for outstanding service to PSMS. Also, Ben Woo has agreed to be our speaker this year.

### Registration Information

Sign up at the February membership meeting or send your registration and payment to

Bernice Velategui  
2929 76th Ave. SE #504  
Mercer Island, WA 98040

Please include the name of each person attending and the entree desired. Call Steven Bell at (425) 788-8431 or Bernice Velategui at (206) 232-0845 if you have any questions or if you'd like to help with decorations or greeting (or helping people find the building!).

### Directions to the Banquet Site

From northbound I-5: Take Lynnwood exit 181, 44th Ave. W. Turn left off the exit onto 44th Ave. W. (go under I-5). Turn left at the next light, 200th SW. Go approx. 1.5 miles (crossing Hwy. 99) to 68th W. Cross 68th into the parking lot.

From southbound I-5: Take Lynnwood exit 181, 196th SW. Turn right off the exit onto 196th. Go approx. 1.75 miles (crossing Hwy. 99) and turn left at the 68th W. traffic light. Go four blocks and turn right into parking lot. The Banquet is in Brier Hall.



## BIOLUMINESCENCE FUNGI: LIVING LIGHT

*Spores Illustrated*, Conn.-Westchester Myco. Assoc., Summer 1999, via *Boston Mycological Club Bulletin*, Sept. 1999

Recorded observations of fungal luminescence date back to Aristotle and Pliny the Elder. Pliny identified an "Agaricke" that "grows on the tops of trees and shines at night." Renaissance philosophers wrote of "Fungus igneus, which shines like stars with a bluish light." In folklore, "Fairy sparks" in decaying wood indicated the place where fairies held their nightly revels. This, as well as "foxfire" and "torchwood," were folk names for bioluminescent rhizomorphs, tough strands of mycelia, visible as shining runners in wood. (The word "foxfire" has nothing to do with foxes but is derived from the French "faux fire," meaning "false fire.")

*Armillariella mellea*, the honey mushroom, with its world-wide range, is the fungus most frequently responsible for streaks of foxfire in decaying wood. Other mushrooms, like *Mycena rorida*, produce only luminous spores, while *Collybia tuberosa* produces only luminescent sclerotia (underground knots of hyphae).

There was a time when bioluminescent fungi had greater currency than today. The time was World War II, and stories abound of GIs in the tropical jungles of Pacific islands using these mushrooms for a variety of unexpected purposes. Troops on patrol stuck them on weapons and helmets to avoid colliding with each other in the deeps of nighttime jungles. The British mycologist John Ramsbottom reported that an American war correspondent on assignment in New Guinea began a letter to his wife, "Darling, I am writing to you tonight by the light of five mushrooms." And in a jungle of Sumatra a beguiled observer described a garden of unearthly light. "The stem of every tree blinked with a pale greenish-white light which undulated also across the surface of the ground like moonlight coming and going behind the clouds, from a minute thread-like fungus invisible in the daytime to the unassisted eye. Thick dumpy mushrooms display a clear dome of light, whose intensity never varied 'til the break of day. Long phosphorescent caterpillars and centipedes crawled out of every corner, leaving a trail of light behind them."

What evolutionary advantage would cause fungi to develop bioluminescence? In *New Scientist* (14 August) Michael McBain of the Australian Fungal Mapping Project points out that the phosphorescence attracts night-flying insects that disperse spores, and Victor Meyer-Rochow of Oulu University in Finland points out that it also attracts parasitic wasps that attack fungus gnats. He speculates that it may be a vestigial product of reactions that protected fungi from toxic concentrations of oxygen.

The philosopher Nelson Goodman wrote influentially on the subject of how forged art and documents can infect the historical record. He once compared the relationship between a genuine painting and a forgery with that between an edible mushroom and a poisonous one. To think that the difference is merely esthetic or superficial is to be dangerously ignorant. "We can either look harder for the difference," he wrote, "or avoid paintings and mushrooms entirely." The New York Times, 5/28/99

SUV

# Spore Prints

is published monthly, September through June by the

## PUGET SOUND MYCOLOGICAL SOCIETY

Center for Urban Horticulture, Box 354115  
University of Washington, Seattle, Washington 98195  
(206) 522-6031 <http://www.psms.org>

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SCI. ADVISOR: Dr. Joseph F. Ammirati

EDITOR: Agnes A. Sieger, 15555 14<sup>th</sup> Ave. N.E.,  
Shoreline, WA 98155

Annual dues \$20; full-time students \$10

## MEMBERSHIP MEETING

Tuesday, February 8, at 7:30 PM at the Center for Urban Horticulture, 3501 NE 41st Street, Seattle

Our program is "Ugly Mushrooms of Spring." Using slides and a handout, Dick Sieger will tell how to find and identify morels and their friends. A pop quiz follows.

Dick became fond of Ascomycetes after attending classes given by Dr. Daniel Stuntz in 1980. He is a past president of PSMS and wrote a key to *Lepiota* species of the Northwest for the Pacific Northwest Key Council.



Would members whose last names begin with the letters H-K please bring a plate of refreshments for the social hour?

*cont.*

Add the fact that both the deadly few and the toxic many are widely distributed—and in many cases may bear at least superficial resemblance to certain edible species—and a fuller perspective begins to emerge. A little fear of fungi may not be such a bad thing, if it leads to safe and careful foraging.

Undoubtedly, the best way to break into mushroom hunting is to apprentice under a knowledgeable forager. But be careful in your choice of mentors. Most of the 10,000 to 15,000 cases of mushroom poisoning recorded each year in this country involve people who thought they knew their mushrooms. Trust as a guide only someone who has years of experience foraging the region, and even then, proceed carefully.

With or without a mentor, you should first learn the mushrooms that can hurt or kill you. Topping the list is the deadly *Amanita threesome*: *A. phalloides*, commonly known as the death cap; *A. virosa* and *A. ocreata*, of the destroying angels—names that should provide a clue to their poisonous nature. Eat even a small amount of these mushrooms (which are said to be deceptively delicious) and you may die, though symptoms generally don't appear until six to 24 hours after ingestion.

Unless you are a skilled mycologist, it's also wise to avoid what are known as LBMs—little brown mushrooms—of which there are dozens of species found growing ubiquitously in a variety of moist habitats. These small fungi, which range from beige to bright brown to slightly gray, have button caps and thin stems, and are extremely difficult to identify with certainty. Many are toxic.

Another one to learn is the false morel, *Gyromitra*, which has a brainlike cap that careless foragers have confused, sometimes fatally, with edible species.

Also keep in mind that gills beneath the cap are not indicative of toxicity—many edible species possess them. Nor are vivid colors necessarily a warning. Chanterelles, for instance, can be a beautiful orange to yellow-orange. Chanterelles, puffballs, morels, oysters, lawyer's wigs, shaggy manes, and many other fine-tasting mushrooms are actually easy to identify, once you really learn them.

A knowledgeable instructor can teach you more about wild fungi in one day than you can learn in months of self-study.



## CALENDAR

- Feb. 8 Membership meeting, 7:30 PM, CUH
- Feb. 14 Board meeting, 7:30 PM, CUH Board Room
- Feb. 25 *Spore Prints* deadline
- Mar. 18 PSMS Survivors' Banquet, Brier Hall, Edmonds Community College

## BOARD NEWS

Agnes Sieger

We still need a field trip chair. Lynn Phillips is working on a financial statement, which will be published in *Spore Prints*. Jean Chin is updating the PSMS roster. The plan is to distribute it at the Survivor's Banquet. Patrice Benson of the Nominating Committee reported that five members had agreed to run for the board. She will prepare ballots for inclusion in *Spore Prints*. Lynn Elwell reported that plans for the flower show were proceeding well, but she still needed a few volunteers.

## PICK WISELY

Anthony Acerrano

*Sports Afield* via *Hearst Magazine* for AP Special Features

Wild mushroom enthusiasts like to remind more timid foragers that only six of the several thousand types of fungi on this continent are deadly. While this is essentially true, it's only part of the story.

Let's not forget that there are also at least 70 species linked to "gastrointestinal irritation," which can be severe to fatal—18 known to contain the toxin muscarine, which can disrupt bodily functions, and 30 others that cause hallucinations ranging from distressing to outright dangerous.

*cont. on next column*

This year we are voting for a President, Treasurer, and five Trustees. Please read the following profiles carefully and mark your choice on the enclosed ballot. Return your ballot to "PSMS Election," 3818 Cascadia Ave., Seattle, WA 98118. A ballot box will also be available at the February meeting. Each family membership is entitled to two votes, and each individual membership to one vote.

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**Joanne Young** *President*

Since joining PSMS in 1991, I've participated in many of its activities. I've been a board member, was Exhibit Chair for 3 years, and am completing my second term as Vice-President and Program Chair. I look forward to working with the fascinating people in our society.

*Treasurer*

**Lynn Phillips**

In my 15 years with PSMS I have served as Field Trip Chair, Annual Exhibit Co-Chair, Trustee, and Vice-President, and am finishing my first term as Treasurer. We are still solvent. Money is coming in and going out at appropriate intervals. I am learning how to conjure up reports on Quicken. I'll be happy to continue if you'll re-elect me.

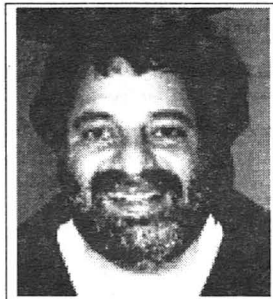


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*Trustees*

**John Goldman**

My wife and I were introduced to mushrooming 5 years ago and joined PSMS 3 years ago. I have not found anything that pleases me on so many levels: being outdoors, exploring Washington in my RV, the adventure of the unknown, science and learning, food and cooking. I will bring this joy and excitement to the job.



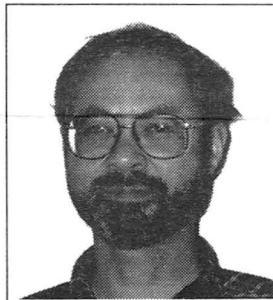
**Karin Mendell**

I'm very excited by the prospect of serving on the Board of Trustees. As a PSMS member since 1998, I can attest to the fact that increased new member participation is a key to maintaining active membership. I would like to help to promote participation of new members in our many activities. Thanks for this opportunity to serve!



**D.V. Corey**

I have enjoyed being on the PSMS Board as both an alternate and regular trustee and would like to continue serving PSMS. I will continue to look for new ways to boost interest, incorporate new members, and lower property taxes.



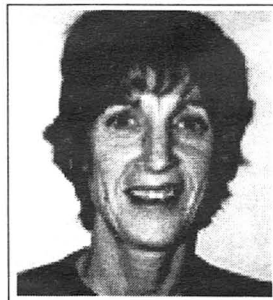
**Bernice Velategui**

Looking for mushrooms has been part of my life since childhood. I joined PSMS in 1970 and have been Membership Chair for the past 10 years. A former member of the Board, I would like the opportunity to serve PSMS in that capacity again for another 2 years.



**Marcia Hiltzheimer**

I have enjoyed PSMS so much, and through it have gained such an appreciation of mycology. I teach young children and was inspired to do a fungi unit last year. I would like to get more children involved in the art of foraging and expand our knowledge and understanding of fungi, as both a science and a hobby.



**PSMS BALANCE SHEET AS OF 12/31/99**  
**Lynn Phillips, Treasurer**

Account.	Balance
<b>ASSETS</b>	
Cash and Bank Accounts	
Checking	7,900.05
Savings	<u>7,301.62</u>
TOTAL Cash and Bank Accounts	15,201.67
Other Assets	
Time Deposit	11,930.31
Treasury Note	<u>10,000.00</u>
TOTAL Other Assets	21,930.31
Investments-Building Fund	
Safeco Equity Fund	11,684.81
TOTAL Investments	11,684.81
TOTAL ASSETS	48,816.79

**EXPENSES**

Annual Exhibit	5,273.12
Bank chrg.	262.01
Banquet exp.	2,237.46
Book Sales exp.	2,573.66
Education exp.	810.00
Field trips	175.81
Flower Show exp.	114.50
Foray exp.	406.60
Insurance	1,133.00
Library	161.79
Membership exp.	578.77
Monthly meeting	825.05
Office	500.86
Roster exp.	254.12
Spore Prints	2,896.83
T-shirt exp.	795.69
Tax & License	895.00
Telephone	848.04
WWW Account	623.00
Uncategorized Exp.	0.00
Building Fund	<u>3,600.00</u>
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$24,965.31

TOTAL INCOME - EXPENSES                      \$661.26

*\*Exhibit income does not include book and T-shirt sales*

**PSMS FINANCES - 1999**                      **Lynn Phillips, Treasurer**

**INCOME**

Banquet	2,300.00
Books	5,843.45
Donations	30.00
Dues	11,059.50
Education	1,160.00
Exhibit*	3,037.80
Misc. sales	34.15
T-shirts	1,226.00
Div.	56.33
Int.	<u>879.34</u>
TOTAL INCOME	\$25,626.57

**DYEING WITH LICHENS CLASS**                      **Lynn Catlin**  
 Camp Long Nature Center, Saturday, Feb. 26, 10:00 AM-4:00 PM

Join Forest Service lichenologist Chiska Derr in a fascinating exploration of the art and ecology of lichens. In this hands-on class you will learn specific techniques and recipes for natural dyes and leave with lovely, wool accent colors for your next knitting or weaving project. While the dyepots simmer, you'll learn about lichen ecology and identification techniques. Bring a sack lunch. 10 person limit. **12 yrs. and up. \$25.00 includes materials.** Call (206) 684-7434 in advance to register.

page 4



**Puget Sound Mycological Society**  
 Center for Urban Horticulture  
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 Seattle, Washington 98195

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