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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

With the ground snow-covered and the holidays so near, mushroom hunting is probably one of the farthest thoughts from your mind. Hopefully, you have enough dried, frozen or canned mushrooms to get you through the long barren winter. Colleen and I tend to dry quite a few mushrooms each year to use all year 'round. Not every mushroom can be satisfactorily dried, but for some it actually enhances the flavor. One problem we have is tending to dry more in a year than we use. Over the years one can accumulate quite a bit -- we have almost an entire cabinet devoted to dried fungi. Be sure to write the kind of fungi and the date on each container. The kind of mushroom is especially important if you also dry non-edible fungi for other purposes like artwork, or for that day that you'll find time to look at them more closely.

If you enjoy eating fungi and get a hankering for some that are fresh, you might try growing your own. Paul Stamets' company, Fungi Perfecti, has a brochure of fungi growing kits and supplies which you can get by writing to: Fungi Perfecti, P.O. Box 7634, Olympia, WA 98507 or calling 1-800-780-9126 and asking for their brochure. (They also have a larger 80 page catalogue which sells for \$3 + \$1.75 S&H.) In the brochure there is a wide variety of common to exotic mushrooms including shiitake (*Lentinula edodes*), three varieties of oyster (including a tropical pink variety), *Herichium*, and *Enokitake* (*Flammulina velutipes*). Some are easy to grow and some difficult. Stamets even has a kit for growing a morel patch! Most kits sell for between \$17 and \$20 and provide for a fun winter mushroom activity.

For other fun winter mushroom activities, bring your mushroom slides and come to our wine and cheese social in January or come to any of our winter lectures below. See you there.

Best Wishes,
Peter L. Vachuska

WMS WINTER SCHEDULE

January 17 - Slide show and wine & cheese social. Please bring up to 10 slides to share with other members.

February 21 - Slide show/lecture by Steve Nelsen.

March 21 - Slide show/lecture by Alan Parker on North American mushroom field guides and their evolution. More detailed notices on these events will be sent out separately.

RENEWAL TIME

It's time once again to renew your membership with Wisconsin Mycological Society for 1995. There is a dues form accompanying this newsletter for you to fill out and return to Secretary John Steinke. You can also renew your NAMA membership at the same time. Also, we are doing something new this year: giving away a prize to one lucky member. Be sure to fill out the other side of the dues form, and you will have a chance to win a field guide.

LOOKING FOR THAT LAST-MINUTE CHRISTMAS GIFT?

A warm and cozy WMS sweatshirt would make a great gift. There still are a few left. If you would like to buy one very soon, please call Tula

Erskine at (414) 964-0818. Otherwise, they will be available for purchase at the January social.

The morel season is only about 130 days away! If you're looking for stocking stuffers, Schwartz's Bookshop in Lohman Plaza has a great little cookbook in a mushroom shape - Totally Mushroom Cookbook, Siegel & Gillingham, ISBN-89087- 727-0 for \$4.95.

UPCOMING FUNGAL EVENTS

Course: "May is for Morels - Spring Mushrooms in Wisconsin" An introduction to the most highly sought-after wild spring mushroom in the Midwest. A slide lecture and display of Wisconsin morels with discussion on how to collect, identify, and cook these gourmet delicacies. Several other edible wild mushrooms that appear in Wisconsin from June through September will also be considered.

The course will be instructed by Dr. Alan Parker, biology professor at UW-Waukesha and will be given at UW-Waukesha on Wednesday, April 12, 7:00-9:00 p.m. There is a course fee of \$10. Call (414) 521-5460 for more information.

MAUTHE LAKE FORAY September 10, 1994

The day of the Mauthe Lake foray greeted us with slightly overcast skies but pleasant temperatures. We had a good turnout of people, and as is usually done at the Mauthe Lake foray, the WMS mushroomers divided up into two groups, one group exploring the hardwood forest north of the main parking lot, and the other the predominantly pine forest to the south. There has been a great deal of tree-cutting in the pine woods in the last few years, so that the trail is not as pretty as it once was. Nonetheless, overall we collected a good variety of gilled and non-gilled fungi. The variety was such that we were able to collect from the display table a bag of samples of different fungal groups for Sami Saad to use in his "Fungi and Man" class, and still leave a lot of species behind. Probably the most interesting find to me was *Gyromitra infula*, a false morel that differs from the usual *Gyromitra* in that it fruits in the fall rather than the spring. Also, a nice cross-section of edible fungi were found (though not in quantity), including chanterelle, giant puffball, *Grifola frondosa*, *Armillaria mellea*, *Hericium* and *Hydnum repandum*. There was a lot of interest in identifying the fungi collected and members lingered at the display table well into the afternoon.

by Colleen Vachuska

FIFTH ANNUAL MADISON AREA FORAY October 1, 1994

It was another beautiful day for mushrooming in Wisconsin, with sunny weather and good company. About 20 people turned out for the fifth annual Madison area foray at Blackhawk Ridge in northern Dane County. Although we had much rain previous to the foray, the sandy soil at this area does not hold water very well. There was a great variety of fungi found, about 96 species by my count, but there were not great quantities of edible (or other) fungi to be found. One interesting edible find was at least one large, pristine specimen of *Boletus edulis*. Or something close to it anyway, probably *Boletus separans*. Participants in the foray brought their collections back to the new Blackhawk Ridge parking lot, where they were displayed on a table. Arguments ensued over the proper classification of many of the fungi. The most colorful specimens were beautiful *Laccaria ochropurpurea* and *Tricholoma flavovirens*, as well as some unusual *Agaricus* species. Several edible boletes were found, including the not-too-common-in-this-area *Gyroporus cyanescens*, as well as some large specimens of *G. castaneus* and at least three *Suillus* species. Some nice *Leccinum* species were also found, later to be eaten. Although it has been reported that all *Leccinum* are edible, there has been a recent report (on the Internet) of poisoning by a western *Leccinum* species, apparently caused by an individual's personal reaction to the species or perhaps undercooking over an open campfire. This underscores the fact that different people react differently to different food, whether this be mushrooms, strawberries or tuna salad or whatever, so you should be careful with anything that you eat.

Several people on the foray also picked up some interesting polypores, including several *Trametes* and *Polyporus* species. (Yes, there are still some species left in *Polyporus* in its restricted sense: those that are centrally stipitate and have trimitic hyphal system.) The birch-preferring polypores *Piptoporus betulinus* and *Fomes fomentarius* were also found in abundance.

The most interesting find (to me) were some INCREDIBLY large specimens of *Helvella crispa*, the white *Helvella*. Usually this forms an innocuous part of the mycoflora, standing 2-3 inches tall, but the largest of the specimens found were near 10 inches tall! They made a very nice display for my Mycology class.

So we had another successful foray in the Madison area and we added about 15 species to the list of fungi of Blackhawk Ridge that we are compiling in association with the Wisconsin DNR, bringing the total to more than 350 species. I hope the tradition of successful Madison area forays will continue into the future.

by Tom Volk

POINT BEACH FORAY
October 2, 1994

Wisconsin's changeable weather rarely makes any promises. So, when a "great" day arrives with clear skies, mild temperatures, and the wind under control, we consider ourselves lucky. Why lucky? Lucky to have a five-mile length of forested land with such diversity as Point Beach has only 95 miles from Milwaukee. Such variety in an area's flora is usually accompanied by an equally diverse amount of fungi. Typically, large quantities of *Leccinum*, *Amanita*, *Armillaria*, and *Grifola* are found at Point Beach. This year we came a week or two too late for quantity, but in good years when the moisture and the temperature hold out, it would also be possible to find *Catalathesma*, *Gomphidius*, and *Cordyceps*.

When you next come to Point Beach to hunt (mushrooms, of course), consider exploring other areas besides the top mile or two. Be challenged by any surprises you might discover exploring farther south or east.

by Tula Erskine

1994 MUSHROOM FAIR REPORT
by Martyn Dibben

The Eleventh Annual Mushroom Fair was held on Sunday, September 25, 1994. Nine hundred and thirty-nine museum visitors strolled through the displays.

Twenty-four competitors submitted 121 slides for the Photographic Competition. This year's winners were from Illinois (Downers Grove) and Wisconsin (Columbus, Madison, Menomonee Falls, Milwaukee, New London, Plymouth, South Holland, Waukesha, Waupaca & West Allis). The winner of the Frederick W. Hainer Trophy Award was Charles Fonaas (West Allis, Wisconsin) with his artistic shot of *Coprinus disseminatus*. As usual, the quality of photographs entered was excellent, and made the judge's final decisions harder!

Twenty WMS volunteers helped out this year. All are to be thanked for their contributions of time and talent, along with the fair's chefs, face painter, and commercial growers. As a new twist for this year, the Museum's Gift Shop moved a Garden Cart sales counter to the second floor hall. This was a huge success. The Museum Gift Shop and Garden Cart combined sold \$1,480 worth of mushroom-related items during the day. Stan Tekiela was also available to sign his book 'Start Mushrooming'. This was again a real success for the second year.

As usual, the cooking demonstrations were a big draw and received many positive comments. Any suggestions for next year's cooking demonstrations are welcome. Contact Kevin Lyman at the museum (278-6142) with your ideas. And the Mushroom Brunch, which ran from 11:30 a.m. to 1:15 p.m., was a grand success. The cafeteria went through 10 cases of fresh mushrooms.

This year, the Shiitake Growers Association of Wisconsin (SHIIGAW) held their annual meeting at the museum during the fair. Approximately 75 SHIIGAW members attended. During the day, two members presented two separate demonstrations on growing shiitake mushrooms (on sawdust blocks & logs). Both programs were well received by the public.

Probably the best presentation was Taylor Lockwood's repeated lecture "Treasures from the Kingdom of Fungi." His photographic presentation set to baroque and classical music captivated those who attended.

The 1995 Mushroom Fair (Twelfth Annual) should be even better, building on many of the current activities. But a new central theme is still needed, so please try to come up with some topic suggestions. Adult areas will, as usual, include arts and crafts, cooking demonstrations, field and collecting techniques, fungus flicks, identification tables,

mushroom-growing kits, stamps, photography, poison information, morels, and WMS membership. Any suggestions for a lecture concept would be much appreciated. However, speaker/topic data is needed well in advance in order to meet scheduling needs.

It is also essential to have more volunteers the day before and the day of the Mushroom Fair. This is the best opportunity for new members and your friends to get involved (and provide new ideas).

Next year's event will be on Sunday, October 1, 1995. The deadline for next year's photo contest will be on Wednesday, September 6, 1995. Mark your calendar now and sign up immediately as a 1995 volunteer with the fair's coordinator (278-6142). The fair will only be as successful as the WMS members make it!

FUNGAL BRIEFS

* For the first time, chemists at the state University of New York - Albany have synthesized the precursor to flavorants in shiitake mushrooms. The compound also shows antitumor activity. Perhaps we can look forward to artificial shiitake flavoring in our food or on our supermarket shelves! (Chemical and Engineering News, May 9, 1994)

* Early in the 1990's the FDA directed a two-year survey of wild mushrooms in commercial distribution. For the survey, samples of about two dozen species of canned, dried, and fresh imported and domestic mushrooms were collected at ports of entry and from stores and other commercial establishments. Of the 344 samples collected, toxic mushrooms were found only among the morel samples and the mixed mushroom samples. Nine out of 42 (7 from France, 2 from India) morel samples contained toxic species, while 2 out of 13 mixed mushroom samples (both from France) contained toxic species. The article did not specify exactly what toxic mushrooms were found, but those found in the morel samples were probably *Verpa bohemica*, which can have an unpleasant muscle relaxant effect if eaten in quantity, or *Gyromitra* species. (FDA Consumer, October 1994)

* The show "Scientific American Frontiers" (PBS) ran a segment on morel cultivation in an early November episode on food. Probably the highlight of the show was when host Alan Alda tasted two morel dishes, one made from wild morels, the other from cultivated morels. Alda expressed a preference for the more delicate flavor of the cultivated dish, referring to it as "Mozart" while the wild dish was "rock and roll," evidently because of its more pungent flavor. However, a viewer recently stated on the Internet that the difference in flavor may partially have been due to the fact that the wild morels were *Morchella angusticeps*, while the cultivated ones were *Morchella esculenta*.

* Fungus spores may offer farmers a safer way to fight weeds than with chemical herbicides. A plant pathologist at the University of Florida is working on identifying fungi that attack weeds that are agricultural problems and then developing these into so-called "bioherbicides." The EPA requires bioherbicides to be registered as pesticides and they must undergo stringent safety tests before approval. So far, large corporations have not shown an interest in bioherbicides, but smaller biotech companies are looking into them. (USA Today, June 1994)

MUSHROOM READING

There's some enjoyable fungus-related reading in recent issues of popular magazines: *Natural History* (Jan. '95, p. 18) has an article on corn smut, emphasizing historical tidbits; *Eating Well* (Jan.-Feb. '95, p. 92) has an article on shiitake, emphasizing several recipes; and *Discover* (Jan. '95, p. 24) has an interesting anecdotal article about mucormycosis, a rare fungal infection of the sinuses.

MUSHROOM PHOTOGRAPHY CAN BE HAZARDOUS

by Charles Fonaas

Sometime not too long ago there was an invitation to share mushroom-related stories within the pages of the WMS newsletter. I thought perhaps the members of WMS might enjoy reading of my hair-raising adventure of a few years ago.

Usually nature photography is quite peaceful and serene. Now and then you might be on the receiving end of a curious look, but that's about it. Well, a few years ago while photographing some mushrooms I found myself in a ... unique situation.

I had been enjoying a fairly successful day shooting mushrooms when I found a specimen in a rather difficult spot. In order to shoot it, I would have to lay over a large log. This proved to be not only

uncomfortable but to have real potential for embarrassment should anyone see me. As I was positioned for my shot my posterior jutted into the air and created a somewhat ridiculous view.

No sooner had that realization struck me than I heard a noise. Maybe a twig snapping? Perhaps a deer nearby? Possibly someone walking the trails? I quickly sat up and turned toward the sound to see a casually dressed, rather fatherly-looking man pointing a revolver at me! "Police. What are you doing?" I think he said. What a relief it was to hear him say that. For that brief moment of frozen silence before he identified himself I was in total shock.

When I told him that I was photographing a mushroom, he replied rather incredulously, "This I've got to see"!

As it turned out, someone had actually been shot by a person that had been sniping in the area only a few days earlier. Perhaps he saw the metal of my camera and thought it was a gun. Was it an over-reaction on the policeman's part? Maybe. Was I embarrassed and scared out of my wits? Definitely. I was so shook up that I forgot to rewind my film before opening my camera and I exposed the roll! Since I didn't know to what extent I had exposed the shots I decided to shoot them over. This time I took someone along to watch my back!

RIDERS REVISITED
by Steve Nelsen

Having brought up in the March '94 newsletter the question of who Lundell is and why he changed the name of *Tricholoma equestre*, I feel obliged to provide some sort of answer. Seth Lundell (1892-1966) was a very distinguished mycologist who worked at Uppsala University in Sweden. He did not write comprehensive flora or genus monographs that get into bibliographies, but he was an especially active mushroom taxonomist. Species named for him include a *Russula* (by Singer), a *Cortinarius* (by Moser), a *Crepidotus* (by Pilat), a *Phellinus* (by Niemela), and a *Hypochnicium* (by Bourdot). One of Lundell's most lasting projects was the initiation of *Fungi Exsiccata Suecici* with J. A. Nannfeldt in 1932. FES provides ten sets of dried, authenticated specimens for each species included, which are distributed to major centers world-wide, as well as detailed descriptions available more widely. They are extremely useful in enabling mycologists to mean the same thing when they use the same name. FES is the largest such project in the world, and has now reached 3,500 species (see *Mycologist* 1994, 8:1, 48).

What happened with *Tr. equestre* is described in Breitenbuch, J.; Kranzlin F., *Fungi of Switzerland*, Vol. 3, 1991, p. 328. Lundell preferred a species to be a small, narrow group, and he felt that *Tr. equestre* was too broad; there are slender and more robust varieties, which he decided needed different specific names. He dusted off the name *Tr. flavovirens* (Pers. ex Fr.) for the slender ones, and used *Tr. auratum* (Fr.) for the more robust ones. The name *Tr. flavovirens* had completely fallen out of use; it does not even appear in Masee's 1902 compilation of 2750 European species; Masee did not include synonyms, and the equation of *flavovirens* with *equestre* had presumably been accepted by then. Confusingly, Masee does list *auratum*, but as a separate species from *equestre*, which he included in a different group of the genus (so in 1902, *auratum* did not refer to any portion of *equestre*, according to one of the principal mycologists of the day).

I can't understand why mycologists put up with a set of nomenclature rules that discards a name for an important species that was used for a century, just because a more modern mycologist decides that he would prefer to split earlier mycologists' concept of a species more finely. I would think that reasonable rules would keep the already clearly accepted name for at least some portion of the newly-split pair (or group) of species, to avoid confusion. It is rather clearly not that Lundell discovered a 'mistake' by Linneus, Fries, and the hundreds of mycologists who followed them in using *Tr. equestre*. Fries knew about the slender ones and published a name for them; Moser says he called them 'equestre forma pinastri'. Lundell apparently just felt that this form should be raised to a species. This is a matter of opinion that not everyone will share. Indeed, B&K mention that A. Riva decided in 1988 that *flavovirens* and *auratum* really are different varieties of one species (again).

Some mycologists apparently quite like name-discarding. Also, in B&K is the information that R. A. Maas Geesteranus and H. Schwobel decided in 1987 that *Agaricus alcalinus* Fr. "cannot be interpreted and should therefore be suppressed", which makes *Mycena alcalina* ss Kuhn invalid. I presume what they mean is that one can no longer tell which of their "new species" Fries had in his hand when he named *alcalinus*, because every mushroom book containing *Mycena* that has been published since Fries' day

has included Fries' species, making the contention that the name cannot be interpreted somewhat silly. They therefore make up two new names, *silvae-nigrae* (Vol. 3, sp. 365) and *stipita* (Vol. 3, sp. 367), for what people have been calling *My. alcalina* for generations. Neither name refers to the odor which is a principal feature of both the new "species". Sigh. Since I believe that none of Fries' type collections still exist, I would presume that anyone liking small species can do this to any Friesian species. Why mycologists want to have this happen seems to me to be a reasonable question.

Man On Horseback
(*Tricholoma flavovirens*)

Other Names: Canary Trich, *Tricholoma equestre*.

Key Features:

1. Gills evenly yellow and notched (dipping in) where they join the stalk.
2. Cap entirely yellow or brown to reddish-brown with a yellow edge.
3. Surface of cap bald and sticky when moist, usually with adhering debris when dry.
4. Stalk white or pale yellow, without scales.
5. Stalk >3/8 in. thick, not snapping open cleanly like a piece of chalk (i.e., at least somewhat fibrous).
6. Veil, ring, and volva absent.
7. Flesh white.
8. Spores white.

Other Features: Medium-sized; cap at first broadly domed with the edge tucked under, eventually flat or wavy; odor pleasant.

Where: On ground in woods, usually in groups but often visible only as "shrumps" (low humps) in the humus; wide--spread and common in cool weather under pine, spruce, and aspen.

Edibility: Delicious, but greatly underappreciated.

Note: This mushroom is as appealingly yellow as the blewit is purple. Uncovering some in deep pine needle duff can be like digging up nuggets of gold. A related mushroom of uncertain edibility, *T. sejunctum*, shows less yellow in the gills and has dark fibers at the center of the cap. *T. sulphureum* is also yellow, but has yellow flesh and smells obnoxious.

Taken from All That the Rain Promises and More ... by David Arora

RECIPE:

CABBAGE AND MUSHROOMS, POLISH STYLE
by Joanne Pasek

1 pound canned sauerkraut or 2 cups cooked cabbage
2-3 ounces dried mushrooms
2 tablespoons butter
1 onion, finely chopped
1-1/2 tablespoons flour
salt and pepper

1. If using sauerkraut, place in heavy sauce pan and add 1 cup water. Bring to the boil and then allow to simmer until tender. If using cabbage, slice thinly, add 1 cup water and simmer till tender.
2. Place the mushrooms in a separate pan and add enough water to cover. Cook over gentle heat until softened and tender. Slice the mushrooms and set aside. Save the liquid.
3. Melt the butter in a frying pan and when foaming add the onion. Cook in the butter until golden brown. Sprinkle the flour into pan and mix thoroughly.
4. When the sauerkraut or cabbage is tender, strain the cooking liquid over the butter mixture. Stir very well and bring to a boil. Cook until thickened. Add the kraut or cabbage, along with the mushrooms and liquid. Stir and heat through.

Enjoy.

THE END