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THE NEWSLETTER OF THE WISCONSIN MYCOLOGICAL SOCIETY
December 2000
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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Today, as I write you this letter, the temperature is below zero with a minus 30 wind chill. The only part of my body that feels warm is my ear because the editor is going to miss her deadline if my letter isn't done soon. Now I know why people retire and move to Florida. Unfortunately, people who have retired there say the diversity of mushrooms is much greater here.

I like to spend this time of year checking book stores (especially used or 1/2 price) for mushroom books. The internet has an overwhelming array of mushroom books, depending on how you set up your search. New, used, cookbooks, authors, even rare mushroom books can be found easily. But, like any book, if you don't read or use your mushroom books, they are just taking up space and you don't get the full enjoyment from them. Use the quiet time of winter to enjoy your books.

This fall I had the opportunity to try a salted version of preserving mushrooms prepared by some of our members who are of Russian descent. Truskowski Deli, which is one block north of Layton on Highway 100, has a large selection of different mushrooms imported from Poland. I can't tell you exactly what they are because the writing is in Polish, but if they are anything like the rest of the food in the store they should be wonderful. I even found canned portabella mushrooms at Pick and Save. If you keep your eyes and ears open there are always culinary opportunities that surprise you. This year we will again be having a mushroom dinner in April. They are still working out the dates and details but it is always a good time.

The winter meeting dates are set. We are fortunate to have two renowned mycologists who will be speaking at our meetings in February and March. Of course, I hope to see everyone at our January social, too.

Stay warm; read a good book, try new mushroom recipes, bring a friend to enjoy our mushroom club, or leave the meeting having made a new friend.

by Chuck Soden

UPCOMING EVENTS

- January 17 (Wednesday) -- January Slide Show & Social Meeting
- February 15 (Thursday) -- Lecture/Slide Show by mycology graduate student Dan Czederpiltz
- March 14 (Wednesday) -- Lecture Slide Show by Forest Service mycologist Hal Burdsall
- Week of April 23rd -- Mushroom Dinner at Heaven City Restaurant (have not confirmed date, as yet)
- April -- Field Trip to Mushroom Farm/Grower (Exact date will be announced)
- May 12 (Saturday) -- Morel Foray
- June 23 (Saturday) -- Annual Picnic & Business Meeting
- July 21 (Saturday) -- Summer Foray

Members should receive announcements with details and directions to each of the above events.

MUSHROOM MANIA
by Kris Ciombor

Mushroom Mania, our new version of the mushroom fair, was a big success. Almost 200 people attended the event at Falk Park Pavilion. Nature walks, mushroom identification, shiitake growing, reference books, and mushroom munchies were among the points of interest. Numerous society members spent the day from 11:00 A.M. to 4:00 P.M. helping people identify mushrooms from a variety of sources. Specimens from the Smith Foray and the Mauthe Lake Foray helped stock the ID table. Joe Krawczyk and Mary Ellen Kozak sold books and mushroom kits as well as educating all comers about mushroom growing. The Mitchell Park Domes provided mushroom labels, publicity, and table cloths. Nature in the Parks provided two volunteers to lead the nature hikes. All in all, it was a very successful cooperative effort. Many thanks to all who came.

PHOTO FORAY REPORT
by Chuck Fonaas

On Sunday, August 13th, roughly a dozen members gathered for the 2000 version of the Annual Photo Foray, which was once again held at the Scuppernong Ski/Hiking Trails near Eagle.

I must confess to forgetting about a foray summary and when Colleen asked me about it, I remarked that my information was a bit lacking. It turns out she had a list of finds from that day which she was kind enough to email to me. Upon seeing it, I was quite surprised to see 33 species listed! I really hadn't thought the day to be that productive.

Among the finds were two of my favorites: *Asterophora lycoperdoides* and *Auriscalpium vulgare*. There is something very fascinating about a fungus on a fungus! Seeing that little mushroom shape (the *Asterophora*) perched atop a larger mushroom really illustrates a strange twist in the food chain. Next is *Auriscalpium* with its odd shape and choice of habitat. Throughout the plant and animal kingdom, there are many organisms with highly specialized lifestyles but finding this funny little fungus growing exclusively on pinecones is particularly unique. Other finds were (just a small selection) three species of *Amanita*, two *Collybia* species, *Laccaria ochropurpurea*, *Lepiota cristata*, *Mycena pura*, and *Agaricus praeclaresquamosus*. Wow! That last one was a mouthful! It's a good thing that some of our members are not only expert at identification but also at linguistics!

Although it was rather cloudy and we did encounter one rain shower, the weather cooperated reasonably well and it cleared off nicely by the end of the foray.

After all the finds were identified, photographed, etc., several members gathered at a local pub for food and conversation. Thanks to all for making this an outstanding day!

BRISTOL WOODS FORAY REPORT
by Dave Menke

A joint foray with Parkside Mycology Club was held on September 9, 2000 at Bristol Woods, a Kenosha County park. The day was warm and sunny, with moderately dry conditions prevailing. A wide variety of fungal specimens were found, as evidenced by the attached list. Although this was a joint foray, only a few Parkside members were at hand. This was made up for by the presence of some Illinois Mycological Society members.

About fifteen members were present, and I found out later that several Parkside members arrived while we were in the woods but we just failed to connect. We split up into four parties and scoured most of the eastern half of the woods, coming up mostly with specimens of "scientific" interest, although a few edibles were found.

After the hunting part of the foray was over, we gathered at a picnic table, identified specimens, and enjoyed a surprise birthday cake, melons and other edibles in honor of Harold Korslin's birthday. The cake and melons were brought by John Steinke.

After about an hour and a half of enjoyment of food and conversation, the party gradually broke up. It is safe to say that everyone attending had an enjoyable day in the woods.

POINT BEACH FORAY
by Alan Parker

Tula is officially gone. On Saturday, 7 October 2000, a hearty band of cold-tolerant WMS forayers and guests dedicated the day to Tula Erskine. A brief memorial service was held at the beginning of the annual Fred Hainer Point Beach State Forest Foray. Fond memories of Tula's love of fungi and forays, and her unique ways of interacting with friends, were properly noted. The WMS board has discussed plans to re-name this foray to honor both Fred

Hainer and Tula Erskine. Fred and Tula were dear friends for many years, driving forces in various versions of the WMS, and equally enthusiastic about promoting amateur mushroom study in Wisconsin. An extensive written memorial to Tula was published in the June 2000 WMS Newsletter.

The fungi were present in fine numbers, and people scattered to their favorite spots to search for edibles and more interesting species. At the day's beginning we had to ask people to stop picking Blewits long enough to have the memorial service! The species list for this foray appears elsewhere in the newsletter. There were a number of nice collections, and we had the good fortune of being able to use the north shelter/concession building for our post-foray collection displays. The person running the food counter was kind enough to build a roaring fire in the huge fieldstone fireplace. This not only provided great atmosphere, but also a spot to warm up. People ate lunch, looked over the fungi display, and visited well into the afternoon. Those that stayed until the last hurrah had to scrape a couple inches of snow from their windshields. All in all it was a great day and a very fitting tribute to Tula at her most favorite foray site.

BRIEF REPORTS ON OTHER FORAYS by Colleen Vachuska and Bill Blank

On September 9, 2000, a fairly good-sized group of mushroom hunters gathered in a parking lot at UW-LaCrosse to go on the first ever La Crosse area foray for the WMS. Many forayers were from the local area but a fair number of us from eastern Wisconsin made it in. The group, led by UW-LaCrosse mycologist Tom Volk, then caravaned out to Goose Island County Park. Unfortunately dry weather conditions had prevailed in the weeks before the foray and pickings were slim; much of what was found was growing on wood. Some of the more distinctive species found included the bright orange polypore *Pycnoporus cinnabarinus*, the ash-tree bolete *Gyrodon meruloides*, and the small but charming bright-red-capped *Boletus campestris*. Whatever fungi anyone could find, even if it was a pretty dried up specimen, was looked at intently and passed around the group. The foray was more or less a sort of walk-lecture and Tom did a very good job of discussing each find as we walked along. That actually is a good way to handle a foray -- have the entire group walk together and discuss each find -- especially when there are beginners in the group or when conditions are too poor for picking lots of edibles. Hopefully, we will be able to have more forays in southwestern Wisconsin in the future when conditions are better. (CV)

On September 17, about 20 mushroomers trekked up the Ice Age Trail by Monches Woods. A couple of times in past years we found chanterelles right at the entrance to this woods, but alas none was found this time. Farther up the trail, past the horse barricades, the woods did yield a few edibles. Most of the mushrooms seemed too far gone to pick and I can't remember there being any great quantity of *Armillaria* or *Lepista* or anything for that matter. It was kind of disappointing for most of us. The facilities were severely lacking at this spot in the Ice Age Trail, the highway traffic very fast and somewhat dangerous. Perhaps the Little League baseball park being built will offer some relief next year. (BB)

Only about 7 or 8 of us decided to come out for the WMS foray to South Kettle Moraine on September 23. But that actually seemed to be a nice size group for the foray: we all pretty much stayed together and because of the camaraderie had a very good time. Fortunately, conditions had been wet enough prior to the foray and we were able to find a good variety and quantity of fungi. Most of our collecting was done in pine woods, some in hardwoods. Some of the more distinctive fungi found were *Agaricus silvicola*, an anise-smelling woodland *Agaricus* whose cap becomes yellowish or reddish with age, *Strobilomyces floccopus*, the dark & shaggy old man of the woods bolete, and *Suillus sphaerosporus*, a large *Suillus* found only in the Great Lakes area and having a thick and tough partial veil, and *Cystoderma amianthinum*, a small tan gilled mushroom with a grainy cap and stem whose cap edges are often scalloped by remnants of veil tissue. After the foray, our group headed to a restaurant in Eagle to enjoy lunch and a few beers. (CV)

We had a good turnout for the September 30 foray at Mauthe Lake and collecting was reasonably good. I think we found a better sampling of edibles than at some of the other forays, though not necessarily anything in quantity. Some of the edibles found included *Armillaria mellea*, *Cantherellus tubaeformis*, *Lepista nuda*, *Coprinus comatus*, *Craterellus cornucopioides*, *Flammulina velutipes*, *Hygrophorus russula*, *Lactarius deliciosus*, *Laetiporus sulphureus*, and even *Rozites caperata*. We also found *Tricholoma caligatum*, a rather distinctive mushroom that we find only at Mauthe Lake. This is a fairly robust mushroom with a brownish-scaled cap on a pale ground and with a heavily sheathed stem and a somewhat spicy odor. Much of what was collected was saved for display at the Mushroom Mania program the next day. (CV)

MYCO-BRIEFS by Peter Vachuska

- * **Mold & the Terra Cotta Army:** The China Daily reports that more than 40 types of mold are attacking China's famed 2,200 year-old army of terra cotta warriors. The 8000 life-sized statues of soldiers and horses were made by China's first emperor to protect him in the afterlife. The lost tomb was rediscovered accidentally by farmers in the 1970's and has since become one of China's leading tourist attractions. An agreement has been made with Belgium-based Janssen Pharmaceutical NV to combat the mold.
- * **Space Fungus:** The Boston Globe reports that the Soviet Mir Space Station is being overrun with fungi. The fungi appear to be slowly digesting many areas on the aging space station. The most prevalent kinds of fungi found included the common genera of *Aspergillus*, *Penicillium* and *Cladosporium*, but scientist fear that with the heavy radiation of space, these are mutating into more virulent forms. ("Astronauts vs. Fungus", by Gareth Cook, Boston Globe, 10/1/2000)
- * **Sudden Oak Death:** The culprit has finally been identified to the disease Sudden Oak Death which has been destroying the oaks of California for the last 5 years and it is a new fungus of the genus *Phytophthora*. Knowing the fungus does little to combat its spread. (Science Now, 8 August 2000)
- * **Fusarium Head Blight:** Scientists have come up with a new strategy to attack fusarium head blight of wheat: a cocktail of bacteria and yeast which when applied to the plants, competes for food with the fusarium. Fusarium head blight is an old and widespread fungal disease. (Science Now, 23 August 2000)
- * **GM Spuds:** In the battle to fight *Verticillium dahliae*, a widespread fungus which attacks dozens of crops, scientist have transferred genes of resistant alfalfa to the susceptible potato creating a more resistant potato. This is the first time gene transfer between plants has carried fungal resistance. (Science Now, 1 December 2000)
- * **The Super Melon Fungus:** Indiscriminant use of the fungicide benlate by Texas melon growers in fighting the fungal disease known as gummy stem blight has led to the responsible fungus becoming resistant to benlate. This has resulted in melon losses above 50% and several lawsuits by farmers against the fungicide manufacturer. (The Amicus Journal, Winter 2000)
- * **Age of Fungi Pushed Back:** Fossils from a Wisconsin roadcut helped researchers in Madison push back the time fungi invaded the land by 55-60 million years. Scientists now believe that fungi invaded the land about 460 million years ago at about the same time as plants. (Science, 15 September 2000)
- * **Giant Sparasis:** A record-breaking *Sparasis crispa* was found in southeastern France. The fungus weighed in at 63.4 pounds and will be frozen and put on display at mushroom fairs around France. (Los Angeles Times Syndicate story)

ANOTHER PIECE OF WISCONSIN MYCOLOGICAL HISTORY
by Alan Parker

In a previous article I discussed my search for papers on Wisconsin fungi and one minor accomplishment in finding Dorothy Brown's Mushroom Pamphlet from the 1940's. The present note considers another quite obscure publication entitled: Field Record of the Wisconsin Mycological Society for the seasons of 1912, 1913 and 1914.

A bibliophile extraordinaire brought this species list to my attention. While corresponding with William Burk, University of North Carolina, about Gasteromycetes and other fungal matters, he asked if I had seen the above-titled paper. I had not. If I remember correctly, he had discovered it while doing research at the Farlow Herbarium/Library at Harvard. Bill kindly sent a copy.

The paper consists of four pages with no page numbers, and it is impossible to determine if it was a reprint from a journal or a privately published very short "pamphlet". It seems unlikely that it was a journal article or I would have found a cross-reference in other papers, plus there are no page numbers. It was possibly printed by the Society for the benefit of its members and any other locals interested in fleshy fungi. Whatever the origin or intent, it's packed with information about numerous fungi found around Milwaukee at the turn of the century.

The introduction is particularly short and straightforward, and is printed below in it's entirety:

The dates given are those of the earliest and latest collections brought in at our weekly meetings.

The territory covered is in an area of about 30 by 30 miles in the vicinity of Milwaukee.

The Society is indebted to Prof. W. A. Murrill, of the New York Botanical Garden, for the identification of several specimens which we do not find described in our text-books.

The two authors are listed at the end: W. E. Shier, Secretary, 714 Prairie St., Milwaukee, Wis. and Lewis Sherman M. D., President, 418 Jackson St., Milwaukee, Wis.

The species list is impressive, with a total of 372 species - mostly Basidiomycetes. Although many of the species names don't reflect modern nomenclature, it's fairly easy to associate most taxa with current names.

It's very significant that the Wisconsin group consulted with W. A. Murrill at the New York Botanical Garden. Murrill was a leading authority on many Basidiomycetes during that era, and would have been an ideal resource. Unfortunately, there is no indication of which species Murrill verified.

Among the most unusual non-gill mushrooms species listed are *Fistulina pallida*, *Myriostoma coliformis*, and *Sparassis crispa*. All in all, collecting within a 30 by 30 mile area in the vicinity of Milwaukee during the early 1900's was certainly a highly productive endeavor! It's hard to envision the overall landscape of the time, but I would guess there was more wooded land and poorly developed roads in many areas. If space permits, the entire article reviewed here may be reprinted in a future issue of the newsletter.

ON THE EDIBILITY OF RED-PORED BOLETES by Steve Nelsen

It was even dryer in Germany than in Wisconsin during the second half of August when I visited in 1999, but friends hauled me to the woods for mushrooming a couple of times. Franz and Gita Neugebauer took me to a wonderful spot in the Pfalzerwald. The Pfalzerwald is even larger than the Schwarzwald (Black Forest), if a lot less well-known in the US. It is in the extreme western part of Germany, on the west side of the Rhine. The spot we visited is several kilometers west of Speyer. Despite the weather, we saw some mushrooms, of which the best were Boletes: a single Steinpilz (*Boletus edulis*) button, and a pair of very colorful mature *Boletus* with light brown caps, stems that shade from red at the base to yellow under the red pores, and yellow flesh that turns dark blue rapidly. Franz grabbed them eagerly for their next day's lunch, calling them Tannpilz. Having seen many warnings about eating Boletes with red pores in American books, I was surprised they would eat them. The Smith and Thiers philosophy on eating red-pored Boletes is expounded upon in *The Boletes of Michigan* (1971) in a discussion of *Boletus frostii* (not found in Europe), p. 344: "This species is supposedly edible, but we advise against trying it in spite of the ease with which it can be identified. It is in a dangerous group." I couldn't find Tannpilz (literally fir(tree)-mushroom) in any book I had, but Franz told me by email that this is an Austrian folk-name, not a German one, and that Volume I of the German version of Bruno Cetto's books, *Der grosse Pilsfuhrer* (1977, translator Wilhelm Mair, an Austrian) calls it *B. erythropus* Fr. (species 276), listing as its folk-names Schusterpilz (shoemaker) and Donnerpilz (thunder) grouping it with *B. luridus* Fr., the Netzstieleriger Hexenrohrling (net-stemmed witch's mushroom, species 275). On page 86, there is a table detailing how to tell the dangerously poisonous *B. satanus* from the edible *B. luridus* and *erythropus*; Europeans obviously don't dismiss the edible red-pored Boletes, in contrast to Americans. The caps of the edible species are nut-brown to dark brown instead of pallid with yellowish-green tones, *erythropus* has no reticulations but does have some red flockiness and shallow grooves in the upper stem, and *luridus* has a well-developed brown net of reticulations, while the net on *B. satanus* is red, and the flesh of the edible species is yellowish (stronger in *erythropus*) and both are strongly bluing, while that of *satanus* is pallid and only weakly bluing. The newer 1200 Pilze in *Farbfotos* by Marie Dahneke (1993) recognizes three taxa in what used to be *B. erythropus*, with a confusing shift in scientific names. It and other books also use Hexenrohrling with various modifiers as folk-names for *B. erythropus* varieties as well as *B. luridus*. This is perfectly reasonable because *erythropus* was originally described by Fries in 1821 as a variety of *luridus*. *B. queletii* Schultz, now according to Rauchert (1987) supposed to be called *B. erythropus* Pers. is the Glattstieleriger (smooth-stemmed) Hexenrohrling, *B. erythropus* (Fr.:Fr) Pers. = *miniatoporus* Secr. is now supposed to be called *B. luridiformis* Rostk. and is the Flockensteiliger (flocky-stemmed) one, while a variety of the latter with the same specific name, that looks just like the ones Franz took is called (we are expected to believe) the Zweifarbigiger (two-colored) Flockensteiliger Hexenrohrling, quite a mouthful, it seems to me. I'm afraid the "folk" that named these had taxonomy journals ready at hand.

Do these European mushrooms have anything to do with ones found in Wisconsin? I believe so. Singer maintained that *B. erythropus* does not occur in North

America, but as summarized by Ernst Both in *The Boletes of North America* (1993), no one appears to agree with him. Smith and Thiers say that it is common during warm, wet weather in both maple-beech and oak forests in Michigan. Although Both says what they had was *B. discolor*, which was described as another variety of *B. luridus* by Quelet, but raised to specific rank by Bigeard and Guillemin in 1909, he also notes that Rauschert maintained it as a subspecies of *B. luridiformis* (1987), so according to the most recent nomenclature, S & T's species indeed falls into what we called "erythropus" in 1971. Smith and Thiers say that *B. luridus* is common in Michigan but usually not found in any quantity. "Reports can be found in the literature that this is an edible species, but Singer, who certainly knows the fungus as well as anyone, has tried it and found it poisonous. We repeat, again, that the mycophagist should not experiment with any red-pored bolete (p. 347)." Far be it from me to recommend eating poisonous mushrooms, but it would appear to me that if the *B. erythropus* and *luridus* are poisonous in America, they must be mis-named (which appears quite possible), because they are reasonably popular edibles in Europe. Of course, people now know that the old technique of eating a little the first time and gradually increasing the dose as you get your courage will not locate mushrooms with cumulative but not acute poisons, and people like McIlvaine and Peck recommended eating a lot of mushrooms that are now known to be poisonous. The weekend I returned to the US, Adrienne and I found a large number of mature *B. frostii* around the sand blow on Pine Island (mentioned as an exceptional place for mushrooms in the June 1999 newsletter), where it had rained while I was gone (but stopped for a month when I returned). We didn't eat any, despite the fact that all books I have seen classify *B. frostii* as edible.

RECIPE: SWEET AND HOT MARINATED MUSHROOMS
contributed by Greta Menke
--- a unique taste for the advanced palate

1/3 cup honey
1/4 cup wine vinegar
1/4 cup white wine or vegetable broth
2 TBS vegetable oil
1 TBS soy sauce
1 clove garlic
1 tsp grated fresh ginger root
1/2 tsp grated orange peel
1/4 tsp ground red pepper
1 lb fresh small button mushrooms
1 TBS sesame oil
1 small green onion chopped

Combine honey, vinegar, wine, vegetable oil, soy sauce, sesame oil, garlic, green onion, ginger root, orange peel and red pepper in a small saucepan. Cook and stir mixture over low heat until hot. Place mushrooms in a heatproof bowl and pour hot marinade over mushrooms. Cover and marinate for 3 hours or overnight in refrigerator, stirring occasionally. Garnish with orange twists and/or parsley.

DUES REMINDER

If you have not already sent in your WMS dues for 2001, please do so. Checks should be mailed to John Fetzter at 1309 S. 73rd St., West Allis, WI 53214. Note that dues for WMS alone are \$15, but that a combined membership to WMS and NAMA (North American Mycological Association) costs \$47.

END