

Winter 2005

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE WISCONSIN MYCOLOGICAL SOCIETY

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Hi, gang. Is it just me or does it seem that winter has gotten off to a booming start this year? Snow doesn't usually stick around long before Christmas but this year I've got a pile of the multicolored variety (brown, black, etc.) in my yard. It doesn't seem to want to go away. Regardless, late summer and fall were very nice. Who can forget the middle eighties in early October?

In spite of the fact that it was quite dry again this year I had good luck late in the season finding some interesting if not edible varieties. Things did seem a little later than usual, however. I found a good crop of shaggy manes (*Coprinus comatus*) in the Door County area in early October. I also found a motherload of giant puffballs (*Calvatia*) in the Milwaukee area in mid-October.

As the New Year approaches, thoughts turn to change, resolutions, etc. Well, it seems there will be a few changes for the WMS with the coming of the New Year. Some of our meetings will be taking place at a different location in 2006. The West Allis Library's Constitution Room will be the site of the February, March and April meetings.

by Chuck Fonaas

UPCOMING WMS EVENTS

January 18 (Wednesday) January Wine and Cheese Social. Bring a dish to pass

(No wild mushrooms, please) or slides or a CD of your photos to share (around 10 would be nice). Mitchell Park Pavilion, 7:00 pm.

February 28 (Tuesday) Mushroom Hunting in the Northwest United States, Steve Shapson. See his article in this newsletter! New location: West Allis Public Library Constitution Rm., 7421 W. National Ave., 7:00 pm.

March 21 (Tuesday) Mushrooms of Villas County and North--Central Wisconsin, Steve Nelsen. New location: West Allis Public Library Constitution Rm., 7421 W. National Ave., 7:00 pm. (Tentative)

April 25 (Tuesday) What's Eating You --- A Lighthearted Look at Mycophagous Insects, Britt Bunyard. New location: West Allis Public Library Constitution Rm., 7421 W. National Ave., 7:00 pm. (Tentative)

DUES REMINDER

Your 2006 Dues (\$15) are payable around January 1st. If your address label says 2006 Dues, our records indicate that you still need to pay. Please send your dues to: Fred Kluhsman, Secretary/Treasurer; 5315 S. Sunnyslope Road; New Berlin, WI 53151. Note that WMS dues are \$15 and that NAMA (North American Mycological Association) dues are an additional \$32.

THE SUMMER FORAY AND BEFORE

16 July 2005 by John Steinke

Another wonderful WMS experience has passed with most of you absent. We had ten members at the summer foray this year and a couple less last, how do we get more of you out in the woods ? (Time to take time and smell the roses, or mushrooms, if you will) Even though the woods had few species to WOW about, the weather and the walk were a great way to spend a Saturday morning. Edibles that were found included chanterelles, boletes and the wild raspberries that grew along the path. Surprisingly, this time of year a great diversity of mushrooms were found, Amanitas and Russulas leading the way. The sandy dry area caught one of the many scattered thunderstorms and produced. It proved to be a successful outing.

THE FALL MUSHROOM DINNER AT THE RIVERSITE RESTAURANT

by Debora Jansen

We enjoyed yet another wonderful November evening at the Riversite Restaurant in Mequon. Executive Chef Thomas Peschong wowed the crowd with exquisite tastes paired with unique and beautiful presentations for another once in a lifetime type of dinner. Thanks go out to all diners who provided valuable feedback and entertaining comments for this review. The first course was a ragout of golden chanterelle and lobster mushrooms with rock shrimp, vanilla cream and chives. "The vanilla cream sauce is heavenly and the perfect fit for the rock shrimp. Absolutely exquisite! The mushrooms are individually prepared to blend with lightly creamed sauce and perfectly cooked shrimp. Just a hint

of vanilla added to the overall presentation." Course 2 was a field and forest shiitake "Tart Tartin" with Late Harvest Arugula and Country Mustard. "The crisp warm underlay of tart topped with sauteed shiitake mushrooms perfectly compliments the country mustard arugula." The next course was shaved button mushroom salad with lemon, extra virgin olive oil and parmigiano-reggiano. Although the parsley was refreshing and light and served with pure white mushrooms, a lovely contrast, the consensus was that the parsley overpowered the dish and the diners would have preferred the addition of other greens. The entree, a roasted loin of pork with porcini and crispy sage, browned cauliflower and green whipped potatoes, was served screamin' hot. Another sign that attention to every detail is considered. "Crispy sage compliments tender pork loin, which rests in a flavorful brown sauce." I thought the crispy sage was something so unique and wonderful! I never had it before and thought it was exceptional. The dessert was a beautifully executed meringue of mushrooms with creme anglaise and fall fruits. This was truly a feast for the eyes. "The dessert was a fabulous finish to a plethora of tastes." One diner aptly summed up the meal: "What can be said? The tummy is full and the eye lids are closing. No better ending to a meal could be found."

MAUTHE LAKE FORAY

17 September 2005 by Alan Parker

The weather on this particular Saturday was close to perfect. The problem was a serious drought during the 2005 summer months preceding the foray. The correlation between abundant moisture and the appearance of most fleshy fungi sporocarps has been noted in various parts of the world for at least a couple thousand years.

Collecting in southeastern Wisconsin during fall 2005 was generally poor, and Mauthe Lake was no exception. About 24 hearty souls gave it their best shot, and the post-foray specimen display had a surprisingly good variety of species. Details may be found in the universal foray species list compiled by Colleen and Peter Vachuska. As people lunched and chatted, the collections were surveyed for anything unusual. Good examples of a number of interesting basidiomycetes were available for the less advanced members trying to learn more species.

On a personal note, I have a strong fondness for the Mauthe Lake area. I have been collecting there since 1982, and several of the forays were led by Dr. Sami Saad. This was Sami's favorite foray site, and for good reason. In moist years, the diversity of fleshy fungi could be spectacular for this part of the state. I have seen at least 10 reasonably rare Wisconsin species for the first time at Mauthe Lake. This annual WMS foray was named in honor of Dr. Saad after his untimely death in July 1999. Hopefully this traditional event will continue for many years.

CARNES PARK FORAY

24 September 2005 by Steve Nelsen

The foray at Dorothy Carnes Park in Jefferson County (off Highway 12 just west of Fort Atkinson) on September 24th brought out about 18 club members and guests. Carnes Park is only a couple of years old, so it is less familiar than many of the places the club goes for forays. It has a deciduous woods that has unusual amounts of hickory and black cherry as well as the usual oak. It has a nice, new shelter and washrooms, and in addition to wood chip trails through the woods and along the shore of a shallow lake, some trails through grassy areas that go past the family mansion from which the land for the park was donated. It was, of course, in the middle of a painfully dry summer. Rose Lake looked more like a swamp, and almost everything we saw was growing on the wood chip paths. I was disappointed to see only a couple of the *Phallus ravenelii* stinkhorns that I had promised (last year there were dozens), but there was one colorful (bright pink) *Mutinus elegans*. Unfortunately, I could hardly identify any of the mushrooms that we saw, including a stout-stemmed *Stropharia*, and a pretty patchy-capped *Lepiota* that is similar to *cristata* (but I don't think identical; the spores are elliptical and smaller).

The most interesting finds to me were several large *Ramaria* that start out in a tightly-packed inverted tear-shape, but end up spreading into a rounded mound of a rather non-descript tan color, with multiple branching and numerous white rhizoids connecting it to the chips. The bewildering number of tan *Ramarias* that look so similar in books nearly always keeps me from being confident about the proper name for any of them.

There was also a shortish-stemmed *Melanoleuca*, a fat-stemmed *Collybia*, and two types of *Pluteus* (not *cervinus*), a *Psathyrella* (orangey-tan, fragile veil), an *Inocybe*, both the common and striate birds' nest, and so forth. There were also a rather disappointing number of edible *Grifola*, *Armillaria*, and *Laetiporus* specimens (for mid-September, when you would hope they would be plentiful) found by some people, and spirited away soon thereafter. Maybe we will have better luck next year; these dry summers are becoming irritating.

CORAL WOODS FORAY 09 October 2005 by Beth Jarvis

Thank you to all the Wisconsinites who headed south to Illinois for this fall foray. After such little rain I had my doubts that we would find much in this oak/maple woods. Despite the dry conditions, a group of about 20 optimistic folk headed out on the hunt. After a couple of hours, the group reconvened and spread out their findings. It turned out that the woods were loaded with aborted *Entoloma* (*Entoloma abortivum*). Oddly though there were no *Armillaria* brought in. Other edibles of note included: Sulfur Shelf (*Laetiporus sulphureus*), Oyster Mushrooms (*Pleurotus ostreatus*), and Giant Puffballs (*Calvatia gigantea*). Two Lacquer Polypores were found, young and in beautiful condition. Another polypore that made an appearance, one that I enjoy finding even though it is not edible, was the Oak Polypore (*Daedalea quercina*). In total, 42 species were found, not bad considering how dry the woods were. Thanks again to those who came out, hopefully we'll meet again in Illinois next fall.

ARE WE IN CHANTERELLE HEAVEN? WMS Members Tour the Great Northwest In search of Boletus edulis, Matsutake and Chanterelles by Steve Shapson

With an opportunity to visit the Seattle area last fall, my wife (MJ) and I had the good fortune of hooking up with very friendly and accommodating mycological folk from the Great Northwest.

As soon as I heard MJ had to go to Seattle for a Blood Center seminar, I quickly jumped on the ole computer and started searching for mushroom folk and any events during our stay. Luckily, there were going to be two mycological shows at that time. One was the Snohomish County Mycological Society (www.scmsfungi.org) and the other was the Puget Sound Mycological Society (www.psms.org). We also visited a meeting of the Kitsap Peninsula Mycological Society (www.namyco.org/clubs/kpms).

While MJ was busy at her seminar learning all about how to get people to give up their blood (humor), I was off in the woods hunting for shrooms under the expertise and guidance of local mycological experts.

Getting up very early (for me) in the morning the day after our arrival in Seattle, I drove in the dark to Snohomish where I met Igor Malcevski. He knows his mushrooms well and where to find them after many years. I was to help Igor hunt specific mushrooms for the Snohomish show the upcoming weekend. He knew exactly where to go to gather the mushrooms he wanted. I was told it was a drier year, and the hunting would be a bit more difficult. We hiked and hiked and hiked and we did find many varieties of mushrooms for the show. Igor told that in a good year there are chanterelles everywhere in specific forests, under specific brush. We found some chanterelles, both white and yellow, huge specimens. The famed and highly prized matsutake was a bit more difficult to find, due to the lack of rainfall. Igor informed me that the matsutake in some years is so plentiful that you trip over them trying to gather them up. Matsutake is mostly sold to Japan, where they are highly valued. The Matsutake bring a hefty dollar on the market. But this year, I was not to find any. My time with Igor was exciting and educational.

I visited the Snohomish wild mushroom show during the weekend where I met many other friendly mushroom folk. At the festival dinner I was introduced to the group from Washington. I used a little humor to break the ice, as I was a bit apprehensive that these Pacific Northwest folk might think I was there to take all their shrooms from them. I explained that in Wisconsin, at this time of year, we also had many mushrooms popping. First the white cheddars come out, followed by the yellow cheddars, then finally, us Wisconsin myco-nuts are treated to little cheese curd shrooms popping all over. They laughed at my humor as I brushed some sweat from my brow. This humor worked so I used it at the other shows.

My next visit was with Lowell Dietz from the Kitsap club. I took the ferry from Seattle to Bremerton to visit Lowell and his wife Audrey. I was informed

that Bremerton is a priority one location for a nuclear strike. Bremerton's main employment is decommissioning nuclear subs and ships for the navy. It was exciting to know I was staying at a potential ground zero location. The Dietzs are very active in their local mycological society. Lowell also cultivates edible and medicinal mushrooms from scratch. I brought him fresh *Grifola frondosa* and *Laetiporus sulphureus*. He then showed me how he uses his own homemade agar to grow mushrooms in a Petri dish. He recently informed me that he had a successful first growth, so I should have some photos of the cultivated mushrooms soon.

After our cultivation workshop, Lowell, along with a buddy of his who is a mycological genius, drove us to a logging area where we found hundreds of chanterelles in a forest of middle aged Douglas fir trees. Apparently, this is the natural habitat for the local chanterelle mushroom.

Later that week, we attended the Kitsap Peninsula Mycological Society's meeting where both Lowell and his wife Audrey did a short skit on foraging in forests. Safety was the focus of their skits and humor was used to emphasize how to survive in a large national forest. We learned many practical lessons about walking around in forests.

MJ and I attended the Puget Sound Mycological Society's wild mushroom show. There were mushroom dishes being cooked with explanations of how to cook mushrooms, a slide show, children's exhibits and a display of collected mushrooms.

During our 10 days stay in the Great Pacific Northwest, I took over 400 photos, and edited them down to about 270 for an upcoming presentation Feb 28th at: West Allis Public Library Constitution Rm., 7421 W. National Ave..

I don't want to give away too much more of our exciting mushroom adventure, so you'll just have to come to the presentation.

MYCOBRIEFS

by Peter Vachuska

* *Cordyceps*: For 2000 years *Cordyceps sinensis* has had a place in Chinese medicine. The spores of *C. sinensis* infect caterpillars of *Thitarodes* ghost moths. The caterpillars spend winter underground, feeding on roots. But by springtime they have been killed by the *Cordyceps* which sends a stalk up to produce more spores to infect the next generation of caterpillars.

Population growth and recently the SARS outbreak in Hong Kong have increased demand for this unusual medicinal fungus to the point where prices have reached \$7000 per kilogram (only about half that of gold). In 2002 it is estimated that 2000 kilograms of fungus-infected caterpillars were poached from Bhutan. In 2003 this figure has jumped to 6000 kilograms, which since each caterpillar weighs about a gram, amounts to about six million animals.

Paul Cannon, a biologist from CABI Bioscience in Egham UK, who has studied this fungus in Bhutan says This "exploitation of the caterpillar is almost certainly unsustainable." He says "Regulation of collection is the most important thing." Since 2004 the Bhutanese government has permitted a limited trade, but poaching continues. One option is to farm the caterpillar and its fungus which may be a boon for villagers in Bhutan. (New Scientist, 3 Sept 2005)

* Salty Fungal Genes: Scientists have isolated the genes of a fungus that can live in the Dead Sea where the water is ten times saltier than ocean water and successfully transplanted them into another organism.

Most plants will quickly dehydrate and die if exposed to too much salt, but this fungus has survived by producing glycerol, as many organisms that live in salt lakes do. At the University of Haifa in Israel, researchers isolated the gene associated with this glycerol production and inserted it into brewer's yeast, *Saccharomyces cerevisiae*. The yeast then did show more tolerance to salt, and certain other extreme conditions, than normal.

It would be profitable to put this gene into crop plants, for many places on earth are becoming saltier and it is becoming harder to maintain high yields under these conditions. But many botanists maintain that because of the differences between plants and fungi, the gene shows little promise. (NewScientist.com News Service, 19 December 2005)

BLEEDING MYCENA PINMOLD

by Steve Nelsen

Few lower fungi are of much interest to people that walk in the woods looking for mushrooms, because most are microscopic. The Bleeding *Mycena* pinmold is an exception that is big enough to see easily, and is relatively common. The Bleeding *Mycena*, *Mycena haematopus* (Fries) Quelet, is called "without question one of the commonest and one of the most easily identified of all *Mycenae*" in Bessette, Bessette, and Fischer, *Mushrooms of Northeastern North America*, p. 212, and it appears in essentially all handbooks. The cap color varies from pinkish to reddish-brown with age, but it is the dark red-brown juice that oozes from the stem when it is broken that makes this species easy to identify.

Bessette, Bessette and Fisher's *Mushrooms of Northeastern North America* is the only book I have that names and illustrates the pinmold that the Bleeding *Mycena* gets, as *Spinellus fusiger*. It is a member of a large group of lower fungi called *Zygomycetes*, which includes bread molds, fly fungi, animal traps, and *Pilobolus*, the spore thrower. It is a Subphyllum, Class, or Subclass (with slight difference in endings sometimes), depending on where you look. Especially the higher groupings of fungi appear to be totally a matter of taste, and hardly anybody seems shy about raising or lowering groups to suit

himself. Zygomycetes have an aseptate mycelium, that is, the threads that make up the main part of the fungus (and are hidden in what is growing upon) are long tubes instead of being divided into sections with partitions, like higher fungi. The pinmolds are in Family Mucoraceae (the Fly Fungus family), one of nine in the large Order Mucorales, which contains such economically important fungi as the bread molds. Pin molds are characterized by producing fruiting bodies with relatively long tubes having an enlargement at the end bearing the spores. This pin mold is much larger than most, relatively common in wet weather, and striking when the light catches the "hairs". You should look for it whenever you see Bleeding Mycena, which is likely on decorticated logs in oak woods anytime from late May until frost. A Google search showed that it was Tom Volk's March 2004 Mushroom of the Month (Tom decided they reminded him of Albert Einstein), and gives other pictures of it on Mycena epipterygia and M. pura.

RECIPE:

Forest mushrooms in phyllo, with roasted garlic sauce (Atwater's Restaurant)
submitted by Chris Reyes from The Portland Oregonian

Sauce:

1 head garlic
3/4 c. white wine
1 shallot, minced
1 1/2 c. whipping cream
salt and pepper to taste

Filling:

14 oz. chopped assorted wild mushrooms
1/2 c. butter
2 shallots, minced
salt and pepper to taste
1/4 c. cognac
1 lb. thawed phyllo dough
1/2 c. melted butter
1/2 bunch chopped chives

Sauce: Preheat oven to 325. Place head of garlic in roasting pan and nearly cover with water, bake for an hour. Remove from pan and cool. Simmer wine and shallot in small pan until reduced to about 2 T. Squeeze each clove of garlic into pan, then add cream. Simmer until sauce reduced in half. Remove from heat. Puree in blender or food processor and strain [if fine consistency desired, I consider it optional]. Season to taste and keep warm while preparing other ingredients.

Filling: Saute mushrooms in butter for 5 mins, add shallots and salt & pepper and cook 3 more mins. Add cognac and simmer until nearly dry (about 10 mins). Set aside.

Preheat oven to 350 and butter or spray baking sheets. Brush one sheet of

phyllo with melted butter. Place 4 more sheets on top, buttering between each layer. Cover unused phyllo with damp cloth. Cut buttered stack of phyllo into 4 long strips. Place 1 heaping T. filling at the end of one strip, then fold one corner across to form a triangle. Continue folding the triangle over and over down the strip until triangle completely wrapped. Repeat with 3 remaining strips. Follow same procedure with next set of phyllo layers until filling is used up. Place triangles on baking sheet and bake 20-22 mins until lightly browned. Serve with sauce and sprinkle with chives.

Makes 16-20 appetizers (6-8 servings).

Enjoy!

NEWSLETTER MATERIAL NEEDED

The editors are still looking for mushroom--related articles and recipes. If you have anything you would like to share, such as adventures you've had mushroom hunting, or your favorite mushroom, or the best places to find morels this spring, please send it to us at: Colleen and Peter Vachuska, 440 North Street, West Bend, WI 53090 or email pvachuska@nconnect.net

END