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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

I was collecting *Grifola frondosa* (Hen of the woods) one time, with my good friend Paul Horn, down on a river bottom. If you can find big oaks in these bottoms, during the right year, the hunting is very good. On this particular trip we had collected way more in an hour than we could carry out. The find, as wonderful as it was, had become baggage; we had to reduce it by at least 2/3 just to be able to carry it out. It was not a sight your average pot hunter wanted to see -- carved up carcasses of huge hens -- while any yellowed or less than perfect specimens were left behind.

Life is like this sometimes too. Sometimes you can repack your baggage, and then the carryout, though a struggle, becomes possible. Other times you need to reduce the baggage, not to carryout, but to carry on your life with the finest of specimens, gleaned from what has become baggage.

by John Steinke WMS President

WMS WINTER EVENTS

- January 22 -- January Wine and Cheese Social.
- January 23 -- Lecture and Slide Show by Alan Parker, (Introduction to Mushroom Hunting/Growing/Mycology), 7:00 pm, Olbrich Gardens, Madison, co-sponsored by Madison Area Master Gardeners Association.
- February 18 -- Mushrooms of Point Beach, Slide Show and Lecture by Steve Nelsen.
- March 18 -- Morels of the Midwest -- A Life-long Passion, Slide Show and Lecture by Darrell Cox.
- April 9 -- Membership Slide Show.

All events except the January 23rd meeting will be held at the Mitchell Park Pavilion and begin at 7:00 p.m. Members should have received announcements with more details and directions.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

WMS Dues: Your 2003 WMS dues are due on January 1st. Checks can be mailed to John Fetzer at 1309 S. 73rd St., West Allis, WI 53214. Note that WMS dues are \$15 and that NAMA (North American Mycological Association) dues are an additional \$32.

T-shirt Designs Sought: Please send any T-shirt design ideas to John Fetzer at the above address. The design can be rough or professional. Get those creative juices flowing.

Web Page Additions: If you're a web surfer, stop by the WMS web page at <http://www.geocities.com/Yosemite/Trails/7331/index.html>. Recently added are photos from some of our fall forays and a page on *Psathyrellas* with photos and text by Steve Nelsen. There is also the archive of the newsletters and even a page on making tempeh. Lots of good stuff.

THE ANNUAL MYCOLOGICAL PICNIC by Laura Ellis

Well, the annual Mycological Society Picnic was held on Saturday, June 22, 2002. The place was none other than our President John Steinke's farm. It was

a success despite the heat. The temperature was 96 degrees, with no breeze to speak of. Forty-four brave heat-bearing members showed up for an afternoon of drinks, food, and friendship. There was plenty to eat and to drink. Everyone brought a dish to pass that ranged from appetizers to side dishes to desserts. There were several salads, noodle dishes, taco dips, and home made breads to choose from. There was cake, and brownies, and cookies, so even the kids had something to look forward to. There were Russian crepes we filled with homemade currants, and topped with homemade whipped creme. Cold beer was on tap, while iced cans of water and soda helped cool the hot summer evening. Choices for the main course included chicken breast, brats, hot dogs, and portabella mushrooms all prepared on the grill. There was even a mushroom salsa. It was store bought due to no wild mushroom dishes being allowed. Granted, I did not have the desire to try it, but others said it was quite good. Let's just say no one at the picnic went away hungry.

After dinner we all gathered for our meeting. John called the meeting to order, and we proceeded to discuss the fall forays and the success of our other outings completed this year. John indicated that we needed a new board member due to a seat recently vacated. Martin Sendera was nominated for this position, which he accepted. When it was put to a vote, Martin Sendera was unanimously voted onto the board. Thank you, Martin, for your willingness to serve. After all the officers discussed the issues of concern, the meeting was adjourned. When we all were full, many people took in the sights of the farm. The kids and adults alike seemed to enjoy all the animals. John has geese, chickens, and turkeys. There were pigs, a pony, dogs, and cats. My kids in particular loved the baby pigs, and the kitten that chased them as they ran. John also showed off his green thumb. Several people walked through his greenhouses. John has quite a collection of flowers, vegetables, and herb plants. For those members who live in the city, this was probably quite an adventure. The only drawback was the heat that we have grown accustomed to this summer. Overall, the entire picnic was a success. Thanks, John, for allowing us to invade your farm. I'm sure everyone enjoyed the day. I know I did, and look forward to next year.

ANNUAL PHOTO FORAY by Chuck Fonaas

On Saturday, August 24th, the Annual Photo Foray was once again held at the Scuppernong Ski/Hiking Trails. I'm pleased to say that this year's turnout was the largest yet. Although I didn't actually take a count, I believe we had a record number of cameras, too! The weather was beautiful and the bugs weren't bad either. Due to some recent rains we found more fungi than in recent years, though not as much as I had hoped.

Among the finds were *Amanita muscaria* and *virosa*, *Omphalotus olearius*, *Pholiota flammans*, *Cantharellus cibarius*, two types of puffball, and three types of *Coprinus*.

Also present, again, was my favorite, *Auriscalpium vulgare*. This is the little guy that likes to grow on pine cones and is frequently found at this location. Strangely absent this year was another mushroom that likes to grow in an odd location, *Asterophora lycoperdoides*, which is often found here on *Russulas*.

In all, I think it was one of the better Photo Forays we've had and I hope those of you with cameras got some nice shots. Perhaps we'll see some of them at the January Slide Show/Wine and Cheese event.

2002 LABOR DAY FORAY Part 1 by John Steinke

With steaks in hand, we arrived at Bob and Cindy's cabin near Phillips. Our singular identity at this point was "pot hunter". To our disbelief, it was very dry, with no table fare to be found on the high ground, so into the swamps we went. *Cantharellus infundibuliformis* saved the day. Pam Watson, John Fetzer and I spent the better part of an hour searching and collecting these little brown jewels in the carpet of jade-green sphagnum. On our return to the cabin, John found an area that contained a very nice collection of the fine edible *Lactarius thynos*. This was more than enough to complement the steaks and sweet potatoes that were to be torched appropriately by the camp fire.

The poor showing by the fungi, on this part of the weekend, was completely overlooked thanks to the isolation and the camaraderie. We will get them next year, or maybe we will not.

2002 LABOR DAY FORAY Part 2 by John Fetzer

Again, as was the case last year, we had the opportunity to visit another foray site during the WMS Labor Day Foray Weekend. In addition to the forays immediately around the Phillips cabin, WMS member, Kurt Reed, offered his "Mud

Lake Field Station" property (just outside of Clam Lake) to those hardy WMS members making the trip north for the long weekend. This year, however, the invitation came with an offer to spend the night, and enjoy some of the amenities.

So on Saturday, we trekked toward Clam Lake from the Phillip's cabin, about a 70 mile drive through Wisconsin's great north woods. The roadsides looked lush and green and the anticipation was high for a bountiful harvest.

Upon arrival, we were met by our host who let us know the blackberries that surrounded us were on the breakfast menu for a local bear that morning. At least during the rest of our visit there were no further sightings, a good thing.

After settling in a bit, we were off to the woods. The findings were abundant, as hoped.

The Reed property has many cross country ski trails cut into it that provide a wonderful matrix of lush green walkways through the woodlands. Mushrooms were found and collected for identification back at the cabin.

After the foray, supper was prepared, and enjoyed by all. Later, some canoe trips on Mud Lake were taken by those interested, a very relaxing way to allow supper to settle. Afterwards, some members climbed into the hot tub for a soak. Apparently, this too was very relaxing because afterwards everyone went to bed, leaving only two on the deck to watch the stars go by (Jesse Steinke, John's son, and yours truly). It was a very nice evening, although shorter than normal on this weekend.

The next morning, after a wonderful breakfast, we wandered back into the woods. The woods provided much, including the well known and sought after *Boletus edulis* as well as *Hypomyces lactifluorum* (lobster mushroom).

Last year, we were asked to provide a species list of our findings, and a site survey of 49 species was given. This year, we added 52 species to the site survey being prepared for the field station.

Special thanks to Kurt Reed for his hospitality. I look forward to reciprocating anytime you are anywhere in southern Wisconsin. Can we pester you again, next year?

BRISTOL WOODS FORAY
September 7, 2002
by David Menke

The day started out hot and sunny, after a wet week beforehand. We divided about fifteen attendees into three groups as usual and covered each branch of the path where it diverged about 100 yards into the woods.

Picking was sparse, but 36 different species were found, though none in abundance. The extended drought in mid to late summer this year was probably responsible, despite the early September rains.

The species found numbered three more than for last year. We also had an extended drought last year in midsummer. A comparison of the species list shows a significant variation in species found from year to year. Only seven of sixty one species were found both years!

After the hunt, we found a table in the shade and identified the species collected. As always, the edibles received much attention with the *Hydnum repandum* being the prize this year. A nice fruiting of *Laetiporus sulphureus* was also admired and divided among several members.

After lunch we discussed plans for the next forays, and after much good conversation the group dispersed.

SAMI SAAD MEMORIAL FORAY AT MAUTHE LAKE RECREATION AREA
September 14, 2002
by Chuck Soden

The day for the Mauthe Lake foray began with beautiful weather and a large gathering of old and new mushroom friends. The woods were dry, so large fleshy edible mushrooms were rare. The exception was a half dozen *Grifola frondosa* which are always a pleasure to find.

One interesting find was *Camarops Petersii*, an ascomycete growing on old decaying wood. This rarely found specimen has a shiny black pore surface. It looks like a black wet gum drop. The fact that this was found by one of our new members shows that curious eyes many times come up with the biggest finds.

Over sixty mushrooms listed is one measurement of how many mushrooms we found

and identified. However, I also like the measure by the number of interested friends willing to spend the morning in search of new knowledge relating to the field of mycology. I hope we have many forays as successful as this one

PIKE LAKE FORAY
September 21, 2002
by Bill Blank

It was a nice day on this Saturday in September when about 20-25 mushroom hunters met at the new parking lot at Pike Lake. I have fond memories of the old parking lot that was right on the Ice Age Trail. The area is still accessible from a trail beginning at the new lot, but you can't bring your car.

The woods looked promising as we entered them, but the old hen of the woods oak tree right at the start of the trail yielded no *Grifola frondosa*. Further in, some giant puffballs, *Calvatia gigantea*, were found, and a green russula (*Russula virescens*) grouping of about 4 or 5 mushrooms appeared. These were picked and later eaten by some lucky members of the group I was in. "Very good" came the report back from the following week foray at Southern Kettle Moraine. "Not real powdery either" as is sometimes the case with the few Russulas that are edible. Back at the beach where we met for lunch, the *Russula virescens* joined a rather sparse collection of *Amanitas*, *Coprinus atramentarius*, which was in abundance, *Hygrophorus*, *Lactarius*, and a "hen of the woods."

The decision to meet at the beach had its consequences though, since the combination of food and people brought on the yellow jackets with a vengeance. Five people were stung in a short period of time.

All this commotion and I still think the beach is a good place to meet after the hunt. It brings back memories of one of the first Pike Lake forays that I attended, back in the mid-eighties. A strange thing happened then when directions as to where we would meet were unclear. Tula Erskine met with a group at the beach, she later said. I went to the Ice Age Trail spot and spotted a group there. The two groups didn't know about each other at the time, had simultaneously walked in the woods, and nobody ever met each other. The whole event was a mystery until Tula asked where were all of the people that weekend. As I looked at the Lake and the picnic area with tables that are relatively unchanged in fifteen years, I wondered where did they meet and what did they find and, oh yes, did they encounter those hungry yellow jackets.

"Bye for now" as Tula would say.

SOUTH KETTLE FORAY
September 25, 2002
by John Steinke

This was one of those forays that you think is going to be real bad when you are out collecting, but when everybody gets together and displays what they have collected, it turns out real good. It is always great to be out in the woods, but this time the real joy came from looking through all the fungi displayed on the tables. There was a collection of *Omphalotus olearius* (the Jack-O-Lantern) that looked just like a chanterelle. I had always wondered how anyone could get these two confused, now I have seen how. *Gyroporus cyanescens* was collected by a few people; this mushroom is always fun to break apart and see how it turns rapidly from an almost white to a purple-blue. Many of the collections went without names, but one species I felt I should know and did not want it to join the nameless. It looked just about like a *Mycena*, but the stipe was tapered and firmer than *Mycena*. I wrapped it in wax paper with a piece of white paper, in hopes of getting a spore print. At our foray, in Illinois, the next day I dug it out and we had a pink spore print. This was the piece of the puzzle we needed to nail it down to *Macrocyttidia cucumis*.

Great people, great fungi, and great weather made for a great day.

McHENRY COUNTY FORAY
September 30, 2002
by Beth Jarvis

Thank you to all the Wisconsinites who headed south to Illinois for this fall foray. We lucked out with a beautiful day after a dreary week. Illinois had missed out on much of the autumn rain and as a result the fungi findings were on the slim side.

After a yummy breakfast, a group of 20 or so headed out into the rolling oak/hickory woodlands of Glacial Park. After a couple of hours, the group reconvened and spread out their findings. Many folks went home with some nice edibles including *Grifola frondosa*. A handful of *Armillaria* were also brought in. Several specimens of a small, slimy mystery fungus were also found. This little guy has been stumping me for a while now; it was hypothesized to be a

Pholiota or Omphalina. If anyone who took a sample home was able to key it out, I would sure be happy to hear what it was.

In total, 35 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.

THE TULA ERSKINE -- FRED HAINER MEMORIAL FORAY
October 5, 2002
by Chuck Soden

Point Beach is definitely one of my favorite mycological forays. It's far enough from home that a breakfast is called for before your day begins. Meeting a few friends for breakfast can sure set the pace for the rest of the day.

Point Beach seems to have its own micro-ecosystem. Situated on Lake Michigan, its temperature is moderated, along with slightly more moisture. The sandy ridges interspersed with marshes and sand dunes from long ago make an interesting landscape and an area that is sometimes the only place we find certain mushrooms.

Amanitas were well represented with brunnescens, citrina, vaginata, verna/virosa and bisporigera. A nice collection of Helvella including crispa, lacunosa and macropus was on display. A nice specimen of Gyromitra infula was also brought in.

This foray always has many unique fungal specimens. It also reminds me of past friends and members who were near and dear to me and the Wisconsin Mycological Society.

A "DR. BAXTER" MEMORY
by Bill Blank

EDITOR'S NOTE: An important person in local mycological history passed away recently. As many of you may know, an earlier version of the Wisconsin Mycological Society was active in the 1960's and early 1970's. A former president of that group, John Baxter, died this past August, in Ashland, Oregon. Baxter had been a faculty member at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee from 1956 until his retirement in 1983. Baxter, who specialized in rust fungi, was introduced to the pleasures of wild mushroom hunting for food and fun, by a north shore-neighbor, Fred Hainer (one of the namesakes of our Point Beach Foray and the first president of this earlier WMS). While at UWM, Baxter taught botany, including an introductory mycology course and a general interest "Fungi and Man" course. He and his wife Jane became famous for their annual "Fungi and Fermentation Feasts", dinners centered around fungal-related food and drink. In the following note, Bill Blank, who took a course with John Baxter, shares some memories of him.

I took Dr. Baxter's 2 credit "Fungi and Man" course at UW-Milwaukee in the early 1980's. I believe it was his last year of teaching before he retired. This class is what got me started in mushroom hunting. He devoted about a third of the semester to the mushroom collecting at which he was a master. Slides of him collecting in the Rocky Mountains with a back pack carrying his child, and a large shelf fungus that he said required the use of a ladder brought to him by a park attendant near Bradford Beach are some of the things that I recall.

His lectures were very interesting. One day, during the medical section of the course, he talked about athlete's foot, and then stopped, reached down to his shoe as if to take it off, and said "I'd show you some of this fungus, but it would make you all sick." He said he'd suffered from athlete's foot fungus ever since he was in the "armed service" many years ago. Two credit courses were easier to teach than the lab courses, where there was too much time standing for him to bear.

At that time he invited the class to a wild mushroom meal one day during class and then also mentioned that he would be showing slides at an upcoming meeting of the Wisconsin Mycological Society. I attended that meeting and came back amazed and somewhat confused at the dual naming of mushrooms: Latin and common names. As the semester progressed, he talked of Wyoming and Fred Hainer. If we had any mold growing in the refrigerator or cupboard or wherever, bring it in and let's see what it is. All we could come up with was coffee ground mold and some rotting oranges; nothing of great interest.

Rumor had that he gave us all A's, before retiring. But I received a lot more than an A grade. It was an honor to meet him, and although he suffered from bouts of depression, he never showed it. I saw him at the WMS meetings for a few years after the class, until he moved to Wyoming. Then in the mid 1990's he visited Milwaukee, attending one of the last mushroom fairs at the Museum. It was great to see that he still had that amazing curiosity about fungi.

GOLF AND FUNGI
by Gustav Shomos

Local golf courses are a wonderful source of mushrooms. Being an avid golf player and a died-in-the-wool hunter of edible fungi, I have been fortunate to fill up my larder with the most delectable of species, mostly in late summer and autumn. Fellow golfers are not too keen on my hobby. "Where's Gus? He's in the woods, digging in the dirt, or halfway up a tree or in another fairway collecting. For crying out loud, is he going to play golf?" The solution is to have your friends help you pick. To save time, I've taught them to recognize certain species and call my attention to them, or better still, bring them to me. I've converted some to actually pick for themselves. One of my favorites is the Marasmius oreades, a delicious, but very tiny mushroom that is truly tasty in a raw state. It grows in a fairy ring mode and is not an abundant species. I sometimes add them raw to a salad or saute them lightly and eat them as a side dish. My wife Veronica makes sure I do not leave for the course until I take a paper bag and knife.

RECIPE: MUSHROOM SOUFFLE
from The George Bernard Shaw Vegetarian Cook Book
by Alice Laden and R.J. Minney

1/2 pound fresh mushrooms
6 tablespoons butter
3 tablespoons flour
Salt and pepper
1 cup milk
3 egg yolks
3 egg whites

Preheat oven to 325 degree F. Wash, dry, and chop the mushrooms very fine and saute lightly in the butter in a saucepan. Stir in the flour and seasonings. Gradually add the milk, bringing to a near boil and stirring until thickened. Allow to cool, and then beat in the yolks of the eggs singly. Beat the whites stiff and fold in. Pour into a souffle dish or deep, buttered baking dish and bake for 30 minutes. Serves 4.

EDITOR'S NOTE: I tried making this dish, and thought that it was good and used ingredients one usually has around. I used sulfur shelf for mushrooms, because it can be chopped into very small pieces, and also adds a nice color.

END