

From: Pikes Peak Mycological Society <PPMSmail@gmail.com>
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The Newsletter of the Pikes Peak Mycological Society
April 2003

VOL. XXVIII ISSUE 1

MONTHLY MEETING:

WHEN? Monday, April 28

WHAT TIME? 7:00 PM; the meeting will come to order at 7:30 PM

WHERE? Pikes Peak National Bank, 2401 W. Colorado Ave. (across from Bancroft Park). Enter at the door on Colorado Ave. just west of the bank door. There you will find stairs and an elevator. You may use either. The room is on the second floor near the head of the stairs.

PROGRAM: Lee Barzee will present a program about spring mushrooms found in Colorado. Expect anecdotal comments from Lee and others for a lively presentation.

This is also the meeting where, in accordance with the by-laws, we vote to accept and install the new officers and returning volunteers.

PRESIDENT'S NOTES: by Bud Bennett

Hello fellow mushroomers. I am honored to be the PPMS president for the 2003 season. This is new for me, having never held office in an organization like this before. Therefore I ask for your help and patience as I learn the ropes. I don't consider myself anywhere near an expert on mushrooms, so I rely upon the knowledge and expertise of the club members to augment my considerable shortcomings in hunting mushrooms and then identifying them. It was on club forays that I found my first Albatrellus, chanterelles and Lactarius deliciosus. My confidence has slowly grown to where I can readily identify quite a few common species now and truly delight in finding rare or beautiful specimens that I trip over upon occasion. Some of these I have shared with you in the pages of past newsletters. I hope that my luck continues and there will be many more to share. Speaking of sharing; this club flourishes with the support of its membership. I will probably need your help to make this year a success. If you have ideas for a program or guest speaker, can present a mushroom-of-the-month at an upcoming meeting, lead a foray, donate some refreshments or participate in some other way, please volunteer on the participation survey at the April meeting. Lee Barzee and Dennis Craig have agreed to organize the April and May programs. Ken Pals has agreed to resume the Fountain Creek Nature Center Mushroom Fair, which we support with mushrooms and volunteer mushroom identifiers.

PPMS is also in need of a few more officers. The Vice Presidency is still an unfilled position, as well as the Foray Coordinator (though there is some talk about eliminating this position, since foray information is now published in the Spore Addict Times). The Veep's main job is to fill in for the Pres. if he is unable to attend a meeting.

At the board meeting in March, concerns were raised about the possibility of large numbers of mushroom hunters from out of state coming to Colorado to take advantage of the recent wildfires. Some of these people may have commercial interests. The PPMS members should be concerned about the potential damage to the already stressed environment. Our state government has indicated that it will respond to our concerns, but it may require some sacrifice on our part. You may hear more about this issue at the April meeting.

This coming mushroom season is looking better after last year's abysmally dry weather. Our snow pack is nearly normal and the early spring snowstorm that dropped more than three feet of snow in some areas was a good start. Let's hope that the upcoming season will be memorable in a more positive way.

PLEASE PAY YOUR DUES: In accordance with the By-laws, dues, **in the amount of \$15.00**, are due and payable on or before the **April monthly meeting**. Please pay at the meeting or mail the payment to **PPMS, PO Box 39, Colorado Springs, CO 80901-0039**. Your prompt attention to this helps us know how many members we will have for the coming season and how we can best serve the needs of our membership.

Bumper Mushroom Crop Expected: Well, maybe! by George Davis

Over the winter months the Associated Press reported, "Forest Service officials are bracing for an onslaught of mushroom gatherers who might be drawn to the western slope". The attractant would be the possibility that copious amounts of the highly desirable black morel will be fruiting in the burn areas in the western part of our state. There was no mention of concern for the same type of activity along the Front Range, which would include the Hayman burn area.

According to the article, officials are making plans to issue permits, set aside camping areas, map out off limit areas, publish an informational brochure and post a Web site. The areas mentioned were White River, Routt, Grand Mesa, Uncompahgre, San Juan and Rio Grande National Forests. They go on to hedge their bets by saying that we could have a really wet spring or not enough moisture, which, in either case would not support a good fruiting. As we know, the conditions have to be just right for a good morel year, at least in this area and I suspect the same is true for the western slope.

A word of caution: The last time I checked the web page; the Hayman burn area was still closed to the public. So check with the NFS before you go.

Hayman Burn Not Expected to Produce a Bumper Crop of Morel Mushrooms this Spring: Park, Douglas, El Paso and Teller Counties, Colorado. The following is a reproduction of the information that is now posted to the web page for Pike et al national forests on this side of the state.

{http://www.fs.fed.us/r2/psicc/hayres/morel_mushrooms.htm}

Mushroom experts agree that the soils within the Hayman burn are typically too dry to produce a good crop of morel mushrooms. The succulent morels were not present in large numbers before the wildfire last summer. In addition, both the Buffalo Creek fire in 1996 and the Hi Meadow fire in 2000 did not produce morels. These fires are in the same general areas and elevation as the Hayman.

If morels are to occur, they will fruit in June at the 7500 to 8000 foot elevations in the light to moderately burned areas of the Hayman. The right amount of moisture at the right time will increase the chance of a good crop. The most common variety in this part of Colorado is the black morel or smoky morel (*Morchella elata*): The ridges are gray or tan when young, but darken with age until nearly black. The pits are brown and elongated. These morels are best when picked young; discard any that are shrunken or have completely black heads.

For more information try one of the many web sites on morels such as:

www.bright.net/~wildwood/info.html

The above article was written by Barbara Timock {btimock@fs.fed.us} and was posted to the web page in late March.

Bits and pieces: by George Davis

When mushroomers go anyplace it seems they can't resist the compulsion to look for mushrooms and they are often rewarded. Such was the case for our new President on a recent trip to Australia. It was there that he took the first attached picture. Notice the clarity of the webbing at the base! Thanks Bud, for sharing this picture. (See the first attachment) We mushroomers will indeed travel great distances for the chance to hunt for and maybe find mushrooms. They are not always edible but they are a joy to find nonetheless.

Frieda and I went to the NAMA Foray and Conference at Diamond Lake, OR last October. We found a lot of mushrooms (including our first Matsutake) even though it had been pretty dry in Oregon until about 10 days before the date for the meeting. On the first foray the group brought in enough to fill all the tables and use more than half the paper plates All in all it was a wonderful experience and I highly recommend attending NAMA conferences held away from your normal stomping grounds because you are going to find mushrooms you only read about in books. Our prize edible find was a fruiting field of white chanterelles (*Cantharellus subalbidus*). We rented a motel with kitchen facilities in Reno where we stayed for two days to clean, sauté and put our find in plastic bags and on ice for the trip home.

(Each of the flags in the second attached picture is the location of a fruiting White Matsutake. WOW!)

Otis Clifton, a member of PPMS until last year passed away on January 5, 2003. Otis loved to join us on our forays and hunt for just about anything that might be fruiting. He was also a good source for "edible city mushrooms" found in his backyard and, strangely, not in his neighbors' yards. All who knew him will sorely miss him.

Following a suggestion made by Dan Lacy, the club would like to build a way to contact our members by e-mail when needed. If you have an e-mail address and would like to be included in this effort please send me your e-mail address. My e-mail address is listed on page 4. I will then devise a way to relay messages at the same time to all members who have given me their e-mail addresses.

Recipe for April 2003

Country ham bread pudding

1-tablespoon butter

8 ounces sliced mushrooms (we used our White Chanterelles)
10 slices white bread, crusts removed
4 ounces country ham, cut into 1/2 -inch pieces
1 1/2 cups grated Swiss cheese (Half Cheddar and half Pepper Jack works great)
6 large eggs 2 cups milk (not low or nonfat)
1 teaspoon dried thyme
1 teaspoon ground dry mustard
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon black pepper

Melt butter in a medium skillet over medium-high heat. Add mushrooms and sauté about 5 minutes. Add country ham pieces and continue to sauté about 5 more minutes.

Butter a 9-by-13-inch glass-baking dish. Line bottom with half the bread slices, cutting to fit. Top with the mushrooms and ham and 1 cup of the grated cheese. Cover with remaining bread slices.

Whisk eggs, milk, thyme, dry mustard, salt and pepper together in a large bowl. Pour over bread. Cover and refrigerate overnight. (According to the basic recipe it may be frozen at this point. If frozen, defrost in the refrigerator for at least 24 hours before baking. I have not tried that nor would I.)

Bake at 350 degrees until puffed and golden, about 1 hour. Sprinkle remaining 1/2 cup cheese over top and bake until cheese melts, about 3 minutes. Cool slightly before serving.

Makes 6 to 8 servings.

I used Potato bread and it was great!

I am convinced that you can use any edible mushroom in this dish, wild or domestic.

Do you have a favorite mushroom recipe you would like to share with the club? Send it to me and I will publish it and give the credit to you!

Mystery Mushroom

I like to come out early in the year and a good buddy of mine is the *Gyromitra gigas*; mainly because we hang out in the same areas at the same time. My color is described as some shade of brown. Not being a fish, I don't have gills. I am considered to be very broad and not thin skinned, and I am quite large. I usually have a short stalk. I may be solitary or gregarious on the ground or around old rotting stumps and sometimes on rotting wood. I have a very uncomplimentary common name. I am not considered to be edible, a reputation I really appreciate with all those sharp-eyed mushroom hunters that frequent where I live. If you are in my area when I am there, you may get cold feet!

WHO AM I?

Identify this mushroom correctly and you may win \$5.00. In case of ties, correct entries will be drawn from a hat to determine the winner. You must identify the mushroom to Genus and species. The winner provides the write up for the next Mystery Mushroom.

The Pikes Peak Mycological Society, a nonprofit organization dedicated to the advancement of

mycology, publishes Spore-Addict Times monthly from April through October. Membership is open to anyone wanting to study mycology. Annual dues are \$15 for individual and family memberships. Submissions of ideas, articles, reviews, letters, artwork and recipes are welcome.

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