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The Newsletter of the Pikes Peak Mycological Society
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JULY

MONTHLY MEETING:

WHEN? Monday, July 22nd

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

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.

PROGRAM: Our Program for July will be a presentation by Jon Sommer. Jon trained as a mycologist under David Largent and Kenneth Wells in California, where he received his master's degrees in 1980 and 1983. He has also performed additional studies with Orson Miller in Montana as well with other noted mycologists. He has taught mushrooming classes and workshops and led forays in California, Montana, Vermont and Colorado. He has been actively studying, photographing, and collecting fungi since 1975. Jon currently owns a real estate company in Aurora, and collects mushrooms in his spare time.

Jon's talk is titled:

“Learning to Identify the Most Common Edible and Poisonous Colorado Mushrooms”

Recognition of the most important features is critical for the identification of all mushrooms. Jon's program will introduce for the novice collector (and reinforce for those more experienced) the most important macroscopic features used in identification. While there are advanced techniques like the use of a microscope used to secure a specific identification for many mushrooms, in his talk Jon will discuss techniques that even the beginner out in the field can learn. These will aid in the identification of some of our most common edible and poisonous fungi

PRESIDENT'S NOTES: What's the old axiom? "No news is good is good news!." I wish I had some news to report, so that it would be GOOD news, but I don't. I have not heard of anyone being out and about to find any of those elusive characters. They know where the coolest and not so dry place is to stay. Just went out and took a quick foray of my yard, the only place that seems to have any signs of mush-rooms. I still have a few *Agaricus campestris*, small white ones with dark brown gills and some *Marasmius oreades*, nothing more, nothing less. Anyone else growing them or finding them?

If you made it to our last meeting, we saw a fine slide presentation (in spite of some technical difficulties) of "Lovely Rocky Mountain Mushrooms" by Vera Evenson. Thanks Vera for presenting your slide presentation.

Jon Sommer will be our speaker for this month, he will give a talk and slide presentation titled "Learning to Identify the Most Common Edible and Poisonous Colorado Mushrooms." Let's come out and see what we are supposed to find.

I went to the monthly CMS meeting and got reacquainted with familiar faces and saw some new ones. Conditions and weather seem to be about the same up there. They went on a foray into the mountains in their stomping grounds, not much was found. About the only place anything has been found is in the city and on private lawns. Tom Ruzicka CMS president sent members an e-mail about the concerns for the annual fair. It's going to be a week-to-week watch to see what the weather does (or doesn't do) on whether Denver will have one or not. We need to have an alternative plan in case ours has to be canceled. Ken Pals, the person that has the say so, is in Alaska on a well deserved vacation and I am sure he has put our weather woes out of his mind. I think we need a contingency plan in case the fair has to be canceled. As Tom Ruzicka said: What a year to be president!. See you at the meeting.

Mystery Mushroom

Esther Price identified the mystery mushroom once again. This time it was under the new rules published last month in the newsletter. Congratulations to Esther for winning the five dollars that is awarded to the winner. There were a total of five entries; all were placed in a hat and the speaker for the evening drew the winning entry. Pat Gustavson, Vita Weiniger, Mary Will, and Rhea Woltman were the other four entrants, all of which were correct. The ladies now have 6 correct entries and the men have none. Esther Price agreed to provide the Mystery Mushroom for this month. You may find it on page four. Remember, you must identify the mushroom to Genus and species, write it on a piece of paper (provided at the meeting) and we will draw the winner from a hat (also provided at the meeting). The first correct entry drawn will be declared the winner.

'shrooms, fires by Noel Damon

(The following was not intended for publication however I thought his many friends in the club would like to hear from him, and his letter, dated June 25th, is interesting reading for all. There may be some sage observations/advice we can apply for the future in view of the wildfires we have had this year).

We get very little news of Colorado Springs here in Idaho. The tidbits of news we do get is either national, international or about the local potato crop.

From the 'net it seems that the local fires are mostly contained and they are not coming any nearer to our homes, true?? In any event I would guess that between the fires and the drought the mushrooming would be poor. Perhaps down south in the Wet Mountains later on?

I would like to call upon your experience for council on two items: 1) Do you have any pet recipes for the use of dried morels? 2) After 4 years of diligent search for an Idaho (local) source of morels we finally hit the jackpot. Today Genevieve and I gathered over 900 morels (she insisted on counting them) in an hour and a half. The trick was not finding them, but not stepping on them.

We had a fairly good ground fire in the hills not far from here last year and we thought that would be a good place to look. Unfortunately, nobody seemed to be able to tell us where the burn was or how to get to it. Finding the burn took a lot of scouting. Final success involved the use of telescoping the ridges for signs of dead trees and cross country bushwhacking for a mile through a lot of downed timber.

Here's the question, have any of you had experience in burned areas searching for the little devils?

I want to run a theory by you. First of all, in areas where there was a hot burn, we found none. Immediately adjacent to areas where there was a burned area we found none. Only in those spots where ground cover had been burned adjacent to trees did we find them.

We have been told that the year following the burn is the best time; future years don't produce much. We will go back next year and check this. I believe that it is not the chemicals in the ash, but rather the heat that does the trick. I think that when the ground heat lightly damages the mycelia, the fruit is sent forth to propagate and strengthen the future growth of the parent whose existence may be threatened. If the heat is too high, the mycelia is severely damaged and may even be killed, hence no fruiting. What is your thinking?

(In an e-mail a week later) Our kids and grand kids are visiting us now for a week so we took them out to show them what morels look like in the wild at the "burn." They found another hundred or so, but they have grown in the past week and were much larger.

I can now imagine what it must be like for those people living where morel gathering is an annual ritual and where those pictures showing pickups full of them are taken. Our find is not that good but it's been paradise for us folk who have never come home with more than 5-10 of the little things. I hope you are all well and safe; say hi to all at the club for us.

Noel and Genevieve (noeldamon@hotmail.com)

NOTE: I hope publishing Noel's e-mail, under the circumstances, is not an act of cruel and unusual punishment to the readers of this epistle. Editor

Mushroom Fair 2002 (Ken Pals 520-6745) Mark your calendars now and plan to attend the Mushroom Fair 2002 at Fountain Creek Nature Center on Saturday and Sunday, August 17th from 9:30 a.m. - 2:30 p.m. Co-sponsored by the Pikes Peak Mycological Society (PPMS) and El Paso County Parks, the fair provides an excellent venue for sharing and discovering the fascinating world of mushrooms with people throughout the region. Ken Pals is off on a grand adventure to the wilds of Alaska. Maybe he will return with lots of mushrooms for the fair (just kidding). At the present time the Pike National Forest remains closed and the conditions are not conducive to the abundant fruiting of fungi. AS we all know, that situation could change with some sustained rains in the areas where we hunt them. And, should we get the sustained rains necessary for mushroom fruitings, I would expect the Pike NF to reopen and things to return to normal very quickly. We will need all the help/participation we can get to make this a successful experience for us and for the people who come to the fair. For those of you who signed up to help at the fair, please mark your calendars and plan to attend.

The fair will be held at Fountain Creek Nature Center, which is about ten miles south of Colorado Springs. To get there, take I-25 south to Exit 132. Go east on Highway 16 for about one-half mile and exit right to Highway 85. Turn right on Highway 85 and go south for one-half mile and turn right (west) onto Cattail Marsh Road and proceed to the nature center.

CMS's 27th Annual Mushroom Fair is being planned for Sunday, August 11th, 2002. Bring any mushrooms you find to Mitchell Hall at the Denver Botanic Gardens, on Saturday afternoon after 1:00 PM, or on Sunday morning between 8:00 AM and 10:00 AM. The fair will be open to the public from 11:00 AM to 5:00 PM Sunday. Contact: Jae Lucas 303 697-4417

Telluride Mushroom Conference will be held August 22-25th, 2002. The Telluride Mushroom Festival is designed for persons interested in expanding their knowledge of edible, gourmet, medicinal, poisonous and entheogenic wild mushrooms. Major consideration will be given to the cultivation of diverse mushroom species, emphasizing practical principles and techniques. Nationally recognized authorities on mushrooms will present lectures and workshops. Daily forays will be held in the surrounding mountains to collect edible and poisonous species and study their field characteristics. Conference facilities include appropriate meeting rooms and campsites. More elaborate accommodations are available locally. Meat and non-meat nutritious meals will be served.

For further information, contact Fungofile: P.O. Box 480503, Denver, CO 80248-0503. Ph. 303-296-9359. Mention the Mushroom Festival for discount lodging through Telluride Resort
Accommodations: Out of state (800) 538-7754; In State (970) 728-6160.

Creede, CO Annual Foray: Date to be announced. Contact Mineral County Chamber of Commerce (719) 658-2374 or, if you have a computer, go to: <http://www.creede-co.com/>.

Bits And Pieces:

Our thanks to Doris Bennett and Eve Hart for providing the delectable goodies, also known as refreshments, for the June meeting. Christa Howard and Vita Weiniger will provide the refreshments for the July meeting.

Thanks are also in order to Winnie Fairbanks and Frieda Davis for acting recording the minutes for the past two meetings while the Secretary, Ilse Stratton, was on an extended visit to Europe.

MYSTERY MUSHROOM by Esther Price

I popped up on the fourth of July! - in a rock garden among strawberry plants, grass and hen & chickens. My cap was about 4 cm across and shaped like a marshmallow. It was also white and smooth. By the sixth of July my cap had expanded to almost 9 cm, had a crack from the cuticle to the top and it was a bit bumpy and uneven on the edges with some small brown scales toward the edges. My free gills (1) were pink and then turned purple-brown-black. My spore print (2) was very heavy and was dark brown to black. I did not stain in Drano. My stalk was about 6 cm long and 1 cm wide, smooth with a thin annulus (3). I have no distinctive odor or taste. My common name gives me away!

See glossary in *Mushrooms of Colorado* by Vera Evenson for items (1), (2), & (3).

WHO AM I?

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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