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The Newsletter of the Pikes Peak Mycological Society  
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JUNE

### **MONTHLY MEETING:**

**WHEN? Monday, June 24th**

**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: "Random (?) Acts of Beauty...Some Ephemeral and Lovely Rocky Mountain Mushrooms" by Vera Evenson**

Vera lives near Boulder. She has been a member of the Colorado Mycological Society for over 25 years and she has presented a program for PPMS at least once in the recent past. She is currently the curator of the Herbarium of Fungi at the Denver Botanic Gardens. She has co-authored scientific publications with Dr. Alexander Smith and with Dr. Orson Miller. She is also the author of the book "Mushrooms of Colorado and the Southern Rocky Mountains" published in 1997. Vera says "I love to collect mushrooms for the Herbarium and I enjoy identification and microscopy." She is especially interested in alpine fungi, the genus *Hebeloma*, cup fungi, and mushroom photography.

"This program will be a slide show of all sorts of interesting, probably not edible, mushrooms I have found and photographed with my macro lens. I consider most mushrooms to be as beautiful and varied as wild flowers and certainly more mysterious."

**PRESIDENT'S NOTES:** for Dennis Craig by George Davis.

Dennis had to make a trip to Louisiana and he asked me to stand in for him for the President's Notes. He expects to be back in plenty of time for the meeting.

Dennis has been out and about in connection with his work and he observed the conditions to be absolutely tender dry. It is really scary he says. As bad as it is, most people who live up in the mountains have escaped the fury of the wildfire and they are surely a courageous bunch, as you would expect them to be if they choose to live in the rugged mountains of Colorado.

Dennis' family has some property near Lake George and he, along with some other family members, had to make an emergency run up to the property when the wind shifted to try to make sure that all that could be done had been done to limit damage to the property in case the wildfire headed back towards them as it appeared it would. When Dennis left for Louisiana the wind had shifted again and the property was still free of fire damage, but I don't how it is faring now.

The small amounts of rain we have had has not produced any significant fruitings anywhere that I know of. Ken Pals reports that in the Fountain Creek Nature Center there was a small fruiting of Pleurotus early in the spring but that has dried up. Most of the rains we have received stopped short of the center so it is really very, very dry. We have seen some mushrooms fruiting among wood chips next to houses. We, so far, have been unable to positively identify them. We will have mushrooms this season only if we get rains of the kind we normally experience in July and August. Keep your fingers crossed and your spirits up.

## Mystery Mushroom

Esther Price was the first to identify the mystery mushroom for last month (Lee Barzee recused herself). Esther called me and identified the little sucker well in advance of the meeting. After some discussion at the meeting it was decided that: (1) the person identifying the mystery mushroom will receive a cash reward of \$5.00. (2) The winner will be decided by a drawing of the entrants. If you think you know the identity of the mushroom write the genus and species name on a piece of paper and place it in the hat or such other container to be provided by the President at the meeting. Names will be drawn until one bearing the correct identification is drawn. This month's Mystery Mushroom is provided by Lee Barzee and can be found on page four.

## PLEASE PAY YOUR DUES

By-laws of the club state: "Members who have not paid their annual dues by the 15th of July will be dropped from the active membership list and will no longer be permitted to go on forays and they will not receive the monthly newsletter". Thank you to all who have paid their dues and to those who will before the deadline.

**BIOLUMINESCENCE FUNGI: LIVING LIGHT** Spores Illustrated, Conn.-Westchester Myco. Assoc., Summer 1999, via Boston Mycological Club Bulletin, Sept. 1999

Recorded observations of fungal luminescence date back to Aristotle and Pliny the Elder. Pliny identified an "Agaricke" that "grows on the tops of trees and shines at night." Renaissance philosophers wrote of "Fungus igneus, which shines like stars with a bluish light." In folklore, "Fairy sparks" in decaying wood indicated the place where fairies held their nightly revels. This, as well as "foxfire" and "torchwood," were folk names for bioluminescent rhizomorphs, tough strands of mycelia, visible as shining runners in wood. (The word "foxfire" has nothing to do with foxes but is derived from the French "faux fire," meaning "false fire.").

The honey mushroom, with its world-wide range, is the fungus most frequently responsible for streaks of foxfire in decaying wood. Other mushrooms produce only luminous spores, while *Collybia tuberosa* produces only luminescent sclerotia (underground knots of hyphae).

There was a time when bioluminescent fungi had greater currency than today. The time was World War II, and stories abound of GIs in the tropical jungles of Pacific islands using these mushrooms for a variety of unexpected purposes. Troops on patrol stuck them on weapons and helmets to avoid colliding with each other in the deeps of nighttime jungles.

The British mycologist John Ramsbottom reported that an American war correspondent on

assignment in New Guinea began a letter to his wife, "Darling, I am writing to you tonight by the light of five mushrooms."

And in a jungle of Sumatra a beguiled observer described a garden of unearthly light. "The stem of every tree blinked with a pale greenish-white light which undulated also across the surface of the ground like moonlight coming and going behind the clouds, from a minute thread-like fungus invisible in the daytime to the unassisted eye. Thick dumpy mushrooms display a clear dome of light, whose intensity never varied 'til the break of day. Long phosphorescent caterpillars and centipedes crawled out of every corner, leaving a trail of light behind them."

**What evolutionary advantage would cause fungi to develop bioluminescence?**

In *New Scientist* (14 August) Michael McBain of the Australian Fungal Mapping Project points out that the phosphorescence attracts night-flying insects that disperse spores, and Victor Meyer-Rochow of Oulu University in Finland points out that it also attracts parasitic wasps that attack fungus gnats. He speculates that it may be a vestigial product of reactions that protected fungi from toxic concentrations of oxygen.

*NOTE: The purpose for the development of bioluminescence is a mystery waiting to be solved. Until it is, it is certainly fun to speculate. Editor*

**NAMA '02 FORAY** October 10-13, 2002 Diamond Lake, Oregon

In 2002 NAMA will foray where it has never forayed before - southern Oregon. In particular, we will be staying at Diamond Lake which is near the famous Crater Lake. Diamond Lake is 85 miles northeast of Medford, Oregon and just north of Crater Lake National Park. The conference will be held at Diamond Lake Resort. The resort is nestled in the forest alongside the lake. It includes a main lodge for meetings and meals.

There are 3 types of housing: 40 motel rooms have one queen bed and one double bed; 10 studio-housekeeping units have either a queen bed or two twins; 24 cabins have two bedrooms, one with a queen bed, the other with two twins.

For those who are interested in alternative accommodations, there are several nearby campgrounds and an RV park with hookups. The RV park is typically open until Oct. 15, but it depends on weather. You can contact the RV park after May 15 at (541)793-3088.

Dr. Jim Trappe from Oregon State University will be the Chief Mycologist. Dr. Trappe is a specialist on underground fungi. If you've ever wondered about "truffling", this will be a great opportunity to interact and collect with some of the best trufflers around. Dr. Nancy Weber from OSU, who is well known for her work on Ascomycetes, and Dr. Mike Beug from Evergreen State College will be there. We will have presentations from several graduate students including: Brandon Metheny (U. of Wash.), Matt Trappe (OSU), and a group working on wild mushroom stewardship at OSU (Rebecca McClain, Eric Jones and Sue Alexander). Several other mycologists have been invited and have expressed interest, but have not yet been able to commit. Of course there will also be the wonderfully diverse members of NAMA all gathered together to collect, study, eat and talk about mushrooms!

Early Events: The trustees will arrive on Oct. 9 and meet 9-5 PM on Thursday, October 10. People arriving about noon on Oct. 10 will have the option of attending the early bird foray.

In addition to enjoying all the mushroom talks, there will be several forays each day. The local forests are mostly conifers including Douglas fir, ponderosa pine, lodgepole pine and western hemlock. This area of Southern Oregon is best known for the White Matsutake (*Tricholoma magnivelare*) which grow with the lodgepole pine. The Douglas fir are associated with the Oregon White Truffle (*Tuber gibbosum*) and the Giant Golden Chanterelle (*Cantharellus formosus* and relatives). The western hemlocks are known for the wide variety of coral mushroom associates (*Ramaria* spp.). Oregon is also known to have some of the few known individuals of the only officially endangered mushroom species: *Bridgeoporus nobilissimus*. While we will not intentionally reveal the locations of any of these individuals, it is possible that with so many sharp mushroom oriented eyes that some previously unknown individuals could be discovered. In addition to hunting for these stars of the mushroom world, we will have forays particularly oriented towards beginners, a photography workshop and some special forays for truffles. Back at the resort we will have a selection of vendors enticing you with their wonderful mushroom-wares. Evening events will include several socials, our traditional raffle and the always excellent NAMA Photo Contest hosted by Dean Abel. You should try to register early as we expect to sell out. Lots of people have been asking about the foray and we can only accommodate 250 people.

(At present, the weather patterns seem to be favorable for a good crop of a wide variety of mushrooms at the foray site).

If you are interested in attending this foray log on to the NAMA web site or contact George Davis @ 630-7140. I will provide you additional information and the forms you will need to fill out and send in to NAMA

## **FIFTH ANNUAL MUSHROOM FAIR** **August 17, 2002**

The Pikes Peak Mycological Society and El Paso County Parks are partnering again for the 5th year in hosting a Mushroom Fair. The fair will be held on Saturday, August 17 from 9:30 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. at Fountain Creek Nature Center. This event will provide adults with opportunities for viewing exhibits and learning more about fungi of Colorado. There will be exhibits and crafts designed for the enjoyment of children as well.

There is a \$2 cost per person this year. The revenue will be used to enhance interpretation in El Paso County Parks. Please be sure to mark your calendar, pray for rain and begin to spread the word about the fair. It is a great time and offers an excellent opportunity to gain new members for the PPMS.

### **Mystery Mushroom by Lee Barzee**

My cap is 4 - 12 cm broad; strongly convex; grayish brown to dark brown. My surface is smooth to radially streaked with flattened brown fibrils. My gills are free; crowded to close, white at first (when young) soon turning pink from maturing spores.

My straight stalk is 5 - 12 cm long x 0.5 - 2 cm wide and easily separable from my cap; equal or slightly larger at the base. It is pallid with brownish longitudinal fine fibrils. My spore print (deposit) is dull pink to salmon color. I have no annulus (ring); no vulva (cup at base). I can be found growing singly on old stumps (sometimes out of knot holes!), from buried wood or from sawdust piles (of usually hardwoods). My flesh when pinched sometimes has a radish like odor. I am edible. However, my soft flesh soon spoils in warm weather, thus preparation and refrigeration as soon as possible are a must.

I am charmingly photogenic in habitat and close-up!

**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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