



PIKES PEAK MYCOLOGICAL SOCIETY
NEWSLETTER

It seems that as soon as our early bulbs begin to bloom and the flowering trees put forth their blossoms, and we start bending earthward searching for the elusive fungi, nature blots it all out with snow and a frost. However, be hearty, me maties, Spring, and subsequently Summer, will bring forth our expected harvest.

MONTHLY MEETING

On Monday next, April 26, we will come together once more at Rastall Center at 7:30 to hear our own past president, Dave Smith, expound on his vast knowledge of mycology. He will explain the Kit Scates' key for quick identification in the field and have the keys for sale after the slide presentation for \$1.50.

The meeting will include the election of officers for the 1982-1983 year.

- The proposed candidates are:
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| President | Judith Baranowski |
| Vice-President | Mary Will |
| Secretary | Barbara Laura |
| Treasurer | Viola Garrett |
| Foray Chairm. | Dennis Craig |

The new officers will begin with our May meeting. If there are any late nominations, they could be brought before the club at the monday night meeting. We trust that all members will try to become involved with a Committee Chairmanship, or at least work on a committee during the coming year. We think you will enjoy the group more if you offer your services.

Thanks to Judy Baranowski for the delicious refreshments at the March meeting. Everyone is welcome to contribute their delicacy. Surprise us, or call Nannie Lee Griffith (who has kindly consented to remain our Refreshment Chairman for the coming year). Her number is 634-6705.

As you know, the dues are from January through December, \$5.00 per member or family. If you have not renewed your membership, this will be your last newsletter. The next newsletter will contain a list of members, addresses and phone numbers for your convenience. Barbara Laura, Pres. 633-9447, Pat Gustavson, Vice-Pres. 495-4344
Darlene Hinton, Sec. 599-7430, Viola Garrett, Treas. 634-5248

Pigs, truffles and mystery

One of the great mysteries of life, finally has been explained: How pigs find truffles.

For generations, nobody quite understood why pigs are able to sniff out the rare fungi that grow as much as three feet below ground. Now some West German researchers have figured it out. As with many of life's other mysteries, it involves sex.

Truffles, almost impossible to plant and grow on purpose, are highly prized by gourmets. The scientists have determined they contain large quantities of a substance also produced in the testes of boars. During the pigs' courting process, that substance is secreted in the animal's saliva. That does wondrous and exciting things to sows.

Since the same chemical is abundant in truffles, the searching pigs, apparently convinced they are about to find true happiness, find fungus instead. That experience has parallels

in real life, but the researchers have found other significances as well.

The chemical, 5 α -androst-16-en-3 α -ol, also can be detected in human beings, which has nothing to do with their ability to root out truffles, but does have an effect on their libidos. To measure this phenomenon, photographs of women were shown to a group of men and women, who were asked to grade them for their attractiveness. When the judges were given a whiff of the chemical, they gave higher marks to the photos. Some men and women exude more of the substance than others, which could account for their sex appeal, according to the research.

The problem with resolving great mysteries of life is that one answer invariably leads to another question.

How do truffles respond to a rutting boar?

(The following article by D. Sztunder, is reprinted from the Jan.-Feb. 1982 issue of The Mycelium, Newsletter of The Mycological Society of Toronto.)

LADY IN A CRINOLINE

R. Krumbholz, a writer, during his travels in South America, came out of a forest one day and almost stepped on a strange egg. The egg was pure white and stood out against the green moss. At first he thought that this was the egg of a Brazilian ruffed grouse, but then he reasoned that surely no sensible bird would lay an egg in the raw moss. Maybe it was the egg of a giant lizard? The puzzling object was covered with a leathery membrane and was resilient to the touch.

As he was about to pick it up for closer examination, the egg . . . started to grow. Before his eyes, it increased in size and then the membrane split at the top. The split grew larger and divided the membrane into two hemispheres. As the opening widened, a bright shiny orange cap emerged. It was sitting on a snow-white stem, which lengthened rapidly, about three sixteenths of an inch every minute. The riddle was solved: it was a fungus. In the span of two hours it grew twenty inches high, an orange cap on a straight white stipe.

Then something else unusual struck the traveller: from beneath the orange cap, out popped a white membranous veil almost reaching the ground and like a crinoline, enveloping the stem. In the same instant, a strong odour emanated in all directions. Attracted by it, various flies and other insects appeared on the scene. In a few minutes they were so numerous that the traveller had to step back in order to make room for them. Meanwhile, darkness had fallen and he now perceived that many of the insects were luminescent and looked like tiny mobile lanterns. Also, the fungus itself, from under the cap, was emitting an emerald light which reflected delicately from the membrane. Our witness to this strange phenomenon spent a good part of the night on the scene. Next morning when he returned, all that he could see was a lump of slimy matter.

The tropical fungus found by the traveller is a gasteromycete, very closely related to stink horns. Its botanical name is Dictyophora indusiata. Local people call it "A lady with a veil", and there is a belief among them that misfortune will befall anyone attracted by this luminescent fungus.