



Spore-Addict Times

The Newsletter of the Pikes Peak Mycological Society

September 1991

Pegasus of Paradise Ranch

by Walter Johnson

Once upon a time, Dan and Caren Lacy were returning from a fortuitous foray of phenomenal fortune, their burdensome baskets overflowing with exotic edible mushrooms. It had been a glorious day, but the sun was starting to set, and the inevitable accompanying chill settled on the mountains near the sleepy town called Woodland Park, Colorado.

The Lacys had reached the clearing at the edge of the forest of Paradise Ranch; it was only a few more steps to the warmth and shelter of their R.V. Suddenly, Dan felt pressure on his already aching shoulders, accompanied by snorting, flaring nostrils and darting equine eyes scrutinizing the contents of his mushroom basket. After a few terrifying seconds, the horse seemed satisfied that the Lacys had not stolen any of his mushrooms, and he abruptly turned and headed back across the clearing toward the forest edge. The lustrous coat of the proud beast glistened in the golden-red glow of dusk in the Colorado Rockies.

The Lacys watched in awe as the massive mammal stumbled across the pasture, walking more like a crab, or a drunken sailor with four legs. The horse stepped over pebbles like they were boulders, and twigs as though they were fallen trees. Dan remarked

that the horse was not kicking up dust, there were no depressions of hoof prints in the emerald grass, and each step appeared to be a struggle to grasp the ground.

Dan and Caren stood holding the handles of their overflowing baskets, feeling the ache in their shoulders and the numbness in their hands as they watched the animal nuzzle a mushroom at the forest edge. "We have to follow him," Dan exclaimed, his curiosity heightened. The Lacys clutched the mountain-chilled fingers of each other's free hand and approached the unusual horse.

The horse had a mouthful of

muscaria, a ruby-red and milk-white spotted *Amanita* mushroom plucked from a fairy ring of the ruby mushrooms. In the center of the ring stood a lone aspen.

"Don't worry big fellow," said Dan, as he patted the horse's down-soft neck, "I'll always leave the ruby mushrooms for you."

The Lacys turned again toward home. Abruptly, the serene mountain silence was filled with the pounding of massive wings. Dan and Karen quickly turned and saw the winged silhouette of a horse-like figure as it proudly pawed the air and headed for the ever-darkening horizon. The Lacys had seen Pegasus of Paradise Ranch, who had been on a mushroom foray of his own.



Amanita pegasus. (Photo by Walter Johnson)

The Moral of the Story

by Walter Johnson

In the springtime, little honey-combed mushrooms magically appear like their magical namesakes—the elves who dance around them in the rites of spring. These elf mushrooms are also accompanied by forest brownies, you know, LBM—little brown mushroom—brownies.

One day someone yelled "Look, there are more elves," and

the name stuck. To this day, these spring mushrooms are called "more elves," or "mor'el's" for short.

In Alaska this year, there were more elves than ever before. The land of midnight sun became the land of midnight mushroom picking madness. In fact, twenty-four-hour-a-day forays are common. What is the moral of this story? More daylight means you can spot more elves.

NORAD the Dragon

by Walter Johnson

George and Frieda Davis recently found Soma in the Garden of the Gods—their backyard.

The ancient inhabitants of India worshipped a mushroom god called Soma, and their distant relatives crossed the Bering Strait ice bridge to Alaska. Upon reaching Colorado Springs, these ancient Americans found a garden of their god, Soma, whose body was protected by a giant frozen dragon the size of a mountain range. His head was Cheyenne Mountain with its rock horns, and his back was the hump and scales of Pikes Peak. His arms encircled a pot of gold called Victor and Cripple Creek. His mighty tail was called the Rampart Range and the littlest fin was the Garden of the Gods.

The dragon's head is now adorned with antennae. Its

computer brain and eyes are ever vigilant. But George and Frieda can still find Soma hiding in the scrub oak in his garden.



George Davis holding *Amanita soma hortideorum* var. *friedae*.

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Spore-Addict Times is published monthly from April through October by the Pikes Peak Mycological Society. Submissions of articles, book reviews, letters, artwork, recipes, and ideas are encouraged.

The Pikes Peak Mycological Society is a non-profit organization dedicated to advancing interest in, and understanding of, the field of mycology. Membership is open to all persons interested in mycology. A gastronomic passion for wild fungi is not required. Annual dues are \$10 for individual and family memberships.

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Forays

by Lori Ligon

The end of the fantastic 1991 mushroom season is upon us. And for the first time, many members don't care if they don't see another species for awhile!

After a second trip up Old Stage Road, I even remarked at how small and dirty the chanterelles were. I only wanted those with caps three to four inches wide that needed little cleaning. I simply wished for what I found the week before and my wish came true. I carried home five pounds. Last year I would have been happy with some dirty little specimens.

Meanwhile, Don Berrigan, George Singer and the Canadys drove to Gunnison for an overnight trip. They were in search of matsutake and chanterelles, but the area was dry and unproductive. When they returned home, they found—almost in their own backyards—pounds of chanterelles. Vi Garrett canned some in exchange for half the yield.

Lee Barzee's husband returned home from the hospital two weeks ago. Because Lee had been unavailable for mushrooming for a couple of months, Esther Price and her grandchildren graciously took Lee on a foray. They were treated to eight different species of edibles and a beautiful day.

Susan and Jack Richards searched the area around Gold Camp Road to find their first boletes this year. They also collected two pounds of chanterelles, two pounds of choice *Dentinum repandum*, *Lactarius deliciosus*, and *Clavaria purpurea*.

This winter should find most of us with enough preserved mushrooms to make the season bearable as we look ahead to spring and back on the greatest season we've had in five years.

Meeting News

September. The Society meeting this month will be held, as usual, on the fourth Monday of the month, 23 September. The meeting place will be the Junior League office at 2914 Beacon Street. The meeting will begin at 7:00 p.m.

Colorado Mycological Society member-at-large Marilyn Shaw will be our guest speaker this month. Marilyn Shaw has taught mushroom identification classes and is a consultant to the Denver Poison control Center. The topic of her program will be mushroom poisoning. Don't miss it!

Last Month. Thirty-six members and guests attended the meeting on 26 August.

Much of the discussion concerned recent forays. Three groups went out to different areas on 17 August to collect specimens for the Mushroom Fair in Denver. Dennis Craig led the way to the Cripple Creek area, George and Frieda Davis went to Ice Cave Creek and Rampart Range, and Ester Price took a group to Gold Camp Road. In other forays, the folks who went on the La Veta trip found boletes, chanterelles and others, but also found evidence of previous picking. Dan and Caren Lacy and Lori Ligon travelled along Eleven Mile Road from Lake George and found bag after bag of *Boletus barrowsii*. Frieda reported finding a bolete at the surprising elevation of 12,500 feet. Lori and Elsie Pope found a load of puffballs and gave a five-pounder to the Garretts. George Singer and Don Berrigan found twelve and a half pounds of chanterelles and Noel Damon said that he had two trash cans full of nothing but leftover spores from all the mushrooms he found!

No one managed to grow morels in the kits that Walter Johnson put together. He suggested planting them outside and crossing fingers for springtime growth.

Work continues on the first aid kit waiver form.

Copies of Jay's orienteering information and of the current mailing list were handed out.

George Singer reported that fifty-one persons attended the picnic. He then raffled two left-over packages of steaks. George also donated a large coffee pot to the Society.

Pat suggested buying some new cookbooks for the library before the end of the year. She recommended *Joe's Book of Mushroom Cookery*. Noel suggested *A Passion for Mushrooms*.

The program for the evening was an open forum on how to preserve and use your mushrooms, with many tips and recipes shared by everyone. Doris Bennett initiated the discussion with an account of her recent experience with giant puffballs.

Stems and pieces



PPMS membership list.

Membership lists will again be available at the monthly meeting. If you are unable to attend and still need a list, or if you have corrections for the list, please contact the newsletter editor.

Mushroom photo contest results.

The Colorado Mycological Society will show all of the slides entered in their photo contest at their next meeting on 14 October. CMS members submitted entries in three categories: pictorial, technical, and activity. PPMS members with interest in photography should contact a CMS member for details of time and place.

Mexican Mushrooming. Bob Kerekes, a twenty-five-year veteran of wild mushroom hunting, is looking for persons interested in joining him on an extended mushrooming tour of the mountains of Michoacan. He plans to depart sometime after mid-May of 1992. If interested, contact

Bob Kerekes
14985 Reedley Street
Moorpark, CA 93021

Rain Report

Total rainfall for August was 4.57 inches, almost two inches more than normal.

In the first sixteen days of September, Colorado Springs had received 0.39 inch of rain, less than half the normal of 0.84 inch for that period. So far this month, *The Old Farmer's Almanac's* prediction of substantially below average rainfall has proven true, while the National Weather Service missed the mark with its forecast of slightly above normal rain.

What can we expect in the next thirty days? The National Weather Service anticipates normal temperatures and normal precipitation (0.95 inch for 17 September to 16 October). *The Old Farmer's Almanac* predicts below average rainfall for October.

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