

# Spore-Addict Times

The Newsletter of the Pikes Peak Mycological Society September 1993

## My first foray (Frieda's too)

by George Davis

Our first foray was on a Saturday in mid-July of 1983. Don Berrigan was the leader. Frieda attended a class taught by Don on the preceding Wednesday (I was too busy, but she filled me in). I'm sure Don mentioned all the necessary precautions during class; I am just as sure that the euphoria of the impending hunt was more than adequate to completely erase that portion of our mental memory bank.

The trip up to the Craggs was memorable. We arrived at the parking area and disgorged from our cars with all the dignity of a pack of fox hounds being restrained by their master. It was unusually cool and quite damp. A nearly perfect spider web glistened with dew in the early morning sun. Mushrooms were everywhere (1983 was a spectacular year for 'shrooms).

Don said, "The best place to find lots of mushrooms is across the stream and all along the hillside all the way to the top." So off we went...except Don, who went up the stream. I remember I felt a momentary flash of compassion. "Poor guy," I thought, "He can't make it up the hill so he'll miss out on the action".

As we crossed the stream and headed up the hillside a lady just

ahead of us picked a large brown-capped mushroom (*Lecanum*) and said, "Oh I just love these, they are so wonderful in salads!" She then took a big bite out of it and handed it to me to share. Being a polite sort of fellow, I too took a big bite and called to Frieda to join in my good fortune. We felt so lucky to be with someone who knew all about mushrooms.

We had soon filled our two grocery bags to the brim with every kind of mushroom that was fruiting in that very fruitful year. We didn't have knives, so we broke them off or gouged them out with our fingers. Dirt, leaves, pine needles, and twigs all found their way with equal priority into our bags.

Back at the lunch site, Don had us all lay out our bounty on the picnic tables. We gathered around to learn how to tell the good ones from the bad ones. Don said, "First, NEVER EAT ANY WILD MUSHROOM RAW." The sound of his voice seemed to echo off the hills. I looked at Frieda and was relieved to see her still standing. She looked distraught and worried. "How do you feel?" we asked in unison. Don proceeded to sort out our edibles from the others. He also gently lectured us on how best to separate them and the importance of separating the different kinds from each other. All the while

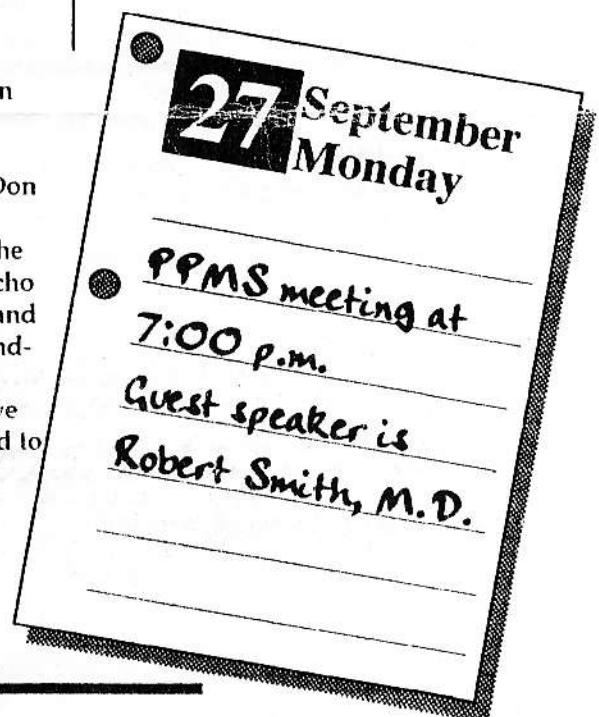
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## Meeting News

The guest speaker at the PPMS meeting on 27 September will be Robert L. Smith, M.D.

A former PPMS member, Dr. Smith currently teaches mycology courses at Pikes Peak Community College. The program will consist of a demonstration of the course content including general mycology, species identification, and mycophagy.

The meeting will begin at 7:00 p.m. The meeting place is the Junior League office at 2914 Beacon Street.



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P.O. Box 7432  
Colorado Springs, CO 80933-7432

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. Annual dues are \$10 for individual and family memberships.

President.....Dan Lacy.....(719) 636-2470  
Vice President.....Lee Barzee.....(719) 634-4715  
Secretary.....Annette Campbell.....(719) 593-9912  
Treasurer.....Lori Ligon.....(719) 635-2213  
Foray Coordinator.....Esther Price.....(719) 632-5880  
Newsletter Editor.....David Watson.....(719) 593-9912

### First foray, *continued*

Frieda and I continued to ask each other how we felt. The psychology of it all kept us from being absolutely sure we were okay.

When we got home we cleaned our harvest with an exuberance not experienced since. Frieda sautéed all of our six different kinds of edibles (by the time Don had tossed out our non-edibles and we had thrown out the wormy ones, we didn't have that many left). Frieda arranged the mushrooms in six mounds on a large platter and we began a well-earned feast. We were both astounded at the difference in flavor between each mushroom and in comparison with the domestic variety. As a test, I asked Frieda to give me a taste of each in random order to see if I could identify them. Amazingly (to us at the time), I identified each correctly. In retrospect, that was not such a feat. The mushrooms were puff balls, *Leccinum*, *Pleurotus*, *Lactarius*

*deliciosus*, *Hydnum imbricatum*, and a coral fungus. Each of these is distinct in its taste and texture. We didn't have any *Boletus edulis*. "Poor old Don" was the only member of the foray to find any of those. It was much later that I figured out the strategy of the hunt so skillfully employed by Don.

After gorging ourselves and eating the very last morsel, I was thumbing through the *Audubon Society's Field Guide to North American Mushrooms*, by Gary Lincoff, when I came across the section on mushroom poisoning. Lincoff says, essentially, eat only one kind of mushroom at a time and in small quantities. Save some of the fresh mushrooms so that experts can tell what you have eaten if you have to go the hospital. GO TO THE HOSPITAL?

By this time I had started to sweat, a classic symptom of some mushroom poisoning. I read the

passage to Frieda to see if it would cause her to sweat also. It didn't. The conclusion of a wonderful day was spent nervously watching each other for any symptoms of kidney failure, liver damage, hallucinations, and death.

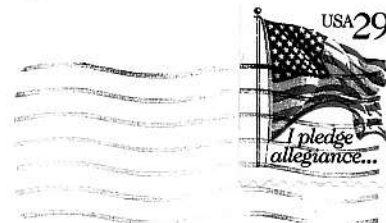
The enduring highlight of our first foray was the friends we made: Don, the leader and fungi guru, and Lori Ligon who was also on her first foray on that unforgettable day.

## Stems & Pieces

### Nominations needed

It's that time of year again. The Society needs nominations for all offices except President for 1994. Please bring your ideas for nominees to the September meeting and consider accepting a nomination yourself.

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Lee Barzee

38 Friendship Lane  
Colorado Springs, CO 80904