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NOVEMBER MEETING

Our first winter meeting will be held Sunday, November 7, 2:00 p.m. at the Somerset County Environmental Education Center in Basking Ridge. It will feature a lecture on the Baltic Foray by Gertrude Espenscheid, Sue Hopkins and Melanie Spock.

Those entering slides in the photo contest should bring them to this meeting.

A REPORT ON FUNGUS FEST '82

by Ray Fatto

The Environmental Center's personnel estimated that 900 to 1000 people visited the location on October 3rd. Judging by the cars parked as far as could be seen in both directions along the road, that count was possible. Unlike other years, when we experienced a break in the flow of visitors, this year we had a steady stream from opening time at 11 A.M., until a slowdown around 4:30. We ran out of our 700 admission badges about 3:30.

The quality of our Fest was best described by the gentleman who refused to make the dollar donation when entering, but left a 5 dollar bill when leaving, saying that the event was worth it and commending our group for making such an excellent presentation. All this indicates that Fungus Fest '82 was an unqualified success and the best attended Fest thus far.

Three reasons come to mind as to why the attendance was the highest ever experienced by the Environmental Center. The publicity was unexcelled; more newspapers used the press release than in other years, additional announcements were carried in philatelic circles, and the Newark Star Ledger had a prominent and timely pictorial article about our annual picnic foray. Secondly, the weather was perfect, and lastly, no competition from professional football.

The approximately forty club members who labored prior to and during the Fest have my heartiest thanks. Rather than mentioning names and perhaps missing some, I'd like to believe it was a labor of love and an exhilarating experience for the people who contributed in such an unselfish manner. Just knowing that the job was performed to the best of their ability provides the greatest satisfaction and reward.

Now only one problem remains. What will we do next year as an encore?

THE ANNUAL PICNIC ** REVIEW by Anna Gerenday

On September 26th, Kittle Field in Stokes State Forest was once again the site of our annual picnic. The day began chilly and foggy, but as foray time of 10 o'clock approached, the fog lifted, and it turned into a pleasant sunny autumn day.

Grete Turchick led the foray. We combed the hemlock forest and the mixed woods. There was some grumbling that there was not much out there, but those who complained were referring to edibles which they hoped would expand the already rich and varied menu. In fact, the forayers were returning with such large numbers of specimens that two picnic tables were hardly adequate to display them all. Some specimens were identified quickly, some others had to be keyed out. A long conference was held over a Tricholoma which turned out to be T. saponaceum.

We were all busy identifying when a newspaper reporter arrived. He was quite intrigued with all the going ons, took many pictures and, during the week an article, accompanied by three photos, appeared in The Newark Star Ledger. It appeared just a few days before the Fungus Fest, and it turned out to be our best publicity.

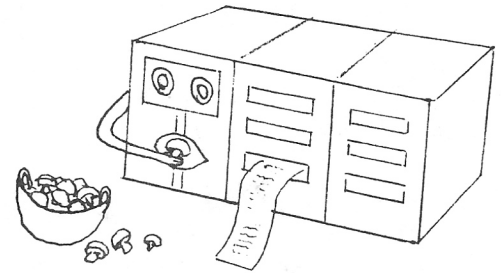
But for all of us except Ray Fatto who was so engrossed in identifying that he nearly missed lunch, the greatest interest of the day was laid out on two different picnic tables. So many different dishes were contributed by the fifty or so members, that a third table had to be set up for the desserts. The dishes were of many varieties, some old favorites of previous picnics, such as Barbara Ecker's Cream of Mushroom Soup and Kimi Tagawa's Nori Maki. Others, like the Snapping Turtle Soup of Sandra and Mark Miller and the Oriental Peanut Slaw of Mitch Goldman, were making their debut this year. Noone went hungry, although judging from the crowd around the food tables and from the speed by which all the food disappeared, we started out with many hungry picnickers.

We owe thanks to our many members who contributed time and effort to the success of our picnic.

HONEY MUSHROOMS and SICK STOMACHS by Sam Ristich

And another "honey eater" bit the dust! The tale goes as follows. Circa 9/19 five people in my class picked A. mellea from birch and hemlock stump. Each of us ate a batch of these young sporophores - some were parboiled others not. Everyone was satiated and I had a second batch with bread crumbs. The next day one enterprising lady pick a peck of A. mellea. Her drooling neighbor begged a batch. Kitt reminded her of my prophetic words: "don't eat the honey mushrooms raw". Unmindful of my warning she ate a copious quantity raw in a salad. She was very sick! Kitt ate the same batch sauteed and lived happy ever after. The lesson is obvious.

NAMA 1982



The following people have contributed to this review: Bernice and Ray Fatto, Len and Erica Frank, Dorothy Smullen, Melanie Spock and Anna Gerenday.

The 1982 NAMA foray honoring Dr. Samuel E. Ristich was held August 19-22 at East Stroudsburg State College. The foray was hosted by the Northeastern Mycological Foray (NEMF), and since NJMA is a participating group of NEMF, our members served at many functions. Dorothy Smullen and Jim Richards were recorders, Bernice Fatto was in charge of NJMA sales, Grete Turchick was a key participant in the mycophagy session, Linda Manailovich and Paul Meyer helped at the many social activities, and many others served as foray leaders.

There was not much rain before the foray, but the amount of mushrooms collected was overwhelming. On a preliminary count the recorders reported over four hundred identified species, which included many unusual specimens, such as Bolbitius callistes which Al Northup found, and which Roy Watling identified. B. callistes is a small fungus, growing on wood. It has an olive green slimy cap, and stipe which is gray, powdery, and bluish at the base.

The sorting and pre-identification of specimens was organized by the Connecticut Valley club. It was very well organized. As the buses returned from the forays, each had its own table with its foray number where the collection was to be placed. As protection from the rain, the tables were set up under a giant tent. Unfortunately, the tent not only protected from the rain, but it also trapped the wind, and a number of times the paper plates with their specimens were sent flying into the air, mixing the unmixable and scattering identified specimens on the grass, many never to be recovered. Eventually the identification table with the attending mycologists were moved indoors.

The organized manner in which the presort was done as well as the efficient system the recorders were using left the recorders with plenty of time on their hands, and to their delight, they were even able to attend lectures and forays.

The display of specimens was not quite as well organized. Their arrangement in the hall made access to them rather difficult at times, and there seemed to be no system in the way of arranging them by spore color or by any other means. The arrangement of non-gilled fungi on laboratory benches was better. It allowed room to move about and to study the collection.

The activities during the day were many. It was difficult to decide whether to attend the lectures or to go on forays. In addition, there were meetings to attend and the display and sales area to probe for bargains.



Lectures and workshops were offered on a wide variety of topics. Senior Foray Mycologist Dr. Orson Miller provided insight into ecology as an aid in identifying fungi. Other experts spoke on their specialties. Clubs and coral fungi were covered by Dr. Ron Peterson, Lepiotas by Dr. Walter Sundberg, Bolbitiaceae by Dr. Roy Watling, Helvellaceae by Dr. Nancy Webber and Tricholomas by Dr. Clark Ovrebo.

In his Mycohistory lecture, Dr. D.P. Rogers spoke of mycologists who collected in the vicinity of the foray site. Dr. J. San Antonio lectured on mushroom cultivation, and Dr. Watling's pre-foray course centered on mushroom cultivation techniques, as well as on developmental features of fungi. In addition, Kit Skates gave a class in how to key mushrooms to genus, and Gary Lincoff gave one on introduction to microscopy. Ken Cochran hosted a toxicology session, and there were other workshops and lectures on mycophagy and photography. In addition, the professionals, especially Drs: Miller, Homola, Clark Rogerson, William Bridge Cooke and, of course, Sam Ristich, were also active in helping amateurs with identification.

A new and unique meeting at the foray was attended by people with experience and interest in computers. They met to explore the possibilities in the use of computers in mycology. Their discussions centered on the design of computer programs which could be used in the classification of mushrooms. Several approaches were considered, but the consensus was that it was still too early to think about a complete identification system, but rather everyone should work with limited taxonomic groupings, and share their ideas with others of the group.

Another new interest group was led by Bill Long of Michigan. Sixteen members with an interest in mycophilately met for the first time at a NAMA Foray. At the meeting NJMA member Len Frank talked about the mycophilatelic activities NJMA was planning for Fungus Fest '82. He encouraged those who purchased the NJMA stationary featuring Boletus edulis to send samples through the mail, and so, for the first time, to philatellically commemorate the NAMA foray.

While the meetings were going on, there was brisk business in the display and sales area. Ann and Harry Lubrecht's books occupied two tables. The books were offered at 20 percent discount, and the supply they brought along was quickly exhausted, so that most of us had to be content with filling out long lists of mail orders. But there were other displays as well. Daisy Hein's jewelry case was a popular stopping place, where she was offering silver and brass mushroom pins, pendants and rings. Notepaper and post cards were offered by Emily Johnson of NAMA, Dorothy Beebe of California, and Gerry Miller. Kit Skates' identification charts could be had for \$1.00. Bill Long's mycophilately table also drew a great deal of attention.

NJMA had its own table with Bernice Fatto in charge. Our Boletus edulis stationery was making its debut. We were also selling our "Mycology is Mushrooming" bumper stickers. Bernice's water colors and Grete's crocheted mushroom pins were also among our sale items. But the most popular items in the room were Geoffrey Kibby's colored drawings which were sold even before they reached the display table.

As in prior years, Gene Yetter was in charge of forays. Gene's work began in the winter, when he obtained topographical survey maps which he studied for suitable foray locations. In the spring and early summer he visited these to study the habitat, and to obtain permission from owners and park rangers. He scouted more than a hundred sites which he eventually narrowed down to the thirty sites visited by the foray participants. The scouting had its disappointing moments. Ray Fatto was visiting a site with him, an ideal mushroom picking area. The trees were marked, and upon inquiring, Gene and Ray found out that the trees were marked for harvesting the following week. Permission was not always easy to get. In Pennsylvania the rule against picking anything in state parks strictly applies to mushrooms, and Gene had to do a lot of writing and talking to park rangers who eventually gathered in a state-wide meeting, and finally decided to permit our activities in their territories.



TAXONOMY

This month's taxonomy meeting will be held on Saturday, November 20, from 10:00 a.m. until noon, at SCEEC, downstairs. Dried specimens from the past year's forays will be reviewed. Those interested in attending should call Dorothy Smullen,

CORRECTION

We apologize for an inadvertent error in the Obituary Notice that appeared in our October 1982 issue. The name of the deceased, a long time Club member who resided in Great Neck, N.Y. is David Morris.

MYCOPHOBIA

The following article written by Dick Sieger is reprinted from Spore Prints, the Bulletin of the Puget Sound Mycological Society, September 1982.

"Please, no more. That is gross!!" is a reader's response to a National Geographic article and photographs showing the spectacular beauty of Mixomycetes. That reader is a victim of mycophobia. Mycophobia comes from the Greek words "mykes", a fungus, and "phobos", dread. Mycophobics avoid, dislike, or fear fungi, particularly as food.

Mycophobia is not limited to humans. There are also mycophobic animals. When Desmond Morris, a British animal behavior expert was testing the food preferences of a chimpanzee, he observed an unexpected, dramatic reaction. The ape sniffed a mushroom and immediately fled from the room in great fear, screaming and defecating. It hid cowering in a corner and refused to re-enter the testing room, whimpering when coaxed to do so. Later, a tamer chimpanzee was given a mushroom. It first sniffed, then attacked the mushroom and tore it apart, throwing the pieces away. In further tests, the ape showed no reaction to a wooden mushroom, but rejected a banana smeared with mushrooms. Neither ape had previous experience with mushrooms, and Dr. Morris concluded that the simian mycophobia was instinctive.

Examples of human mycophobia abound. A reader survey in Pacific Search magazine revealed that mushrooms were their most controversial topic, and that some readers had a definite dislike of the subject. The editor observed that among all living things, snakes and mushrooms seemed to arouse the strongest feelings of hostility. Pacific Search subsequently discontinued its excellent monthly mushroom features.

All of us know persons who will eat neither canned nor fresh mushrooms from grocery stores for fear of poisoning. Even casual statements about mushrooms are prefaced by warnings to avoid them. Someone recently told me, "my cousin died instantly from smoking a magic mushroom." A newspaper interviewed a Tacoma "expert" who said that handling Amanita muscaria causes poisoning. A cartoon has a condemned man saying, "and for my last meal I'd like to eat mushrooms. I've always been afraid to try them before."

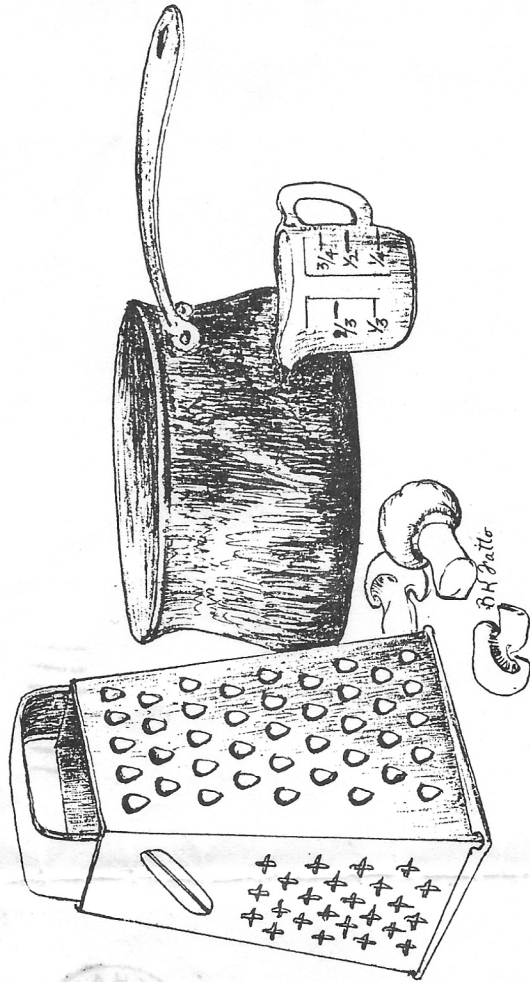
In Mushrooms and Other Fungi, Roger Phillips says that the British have a deeply felt, traditional fear of mushrooms, although they are surrounded by nations that relish them. He wonders if this tradition is from Druidic times when mushrooms were considered to have magical properties and hallucinogenic mushrooms were eaten. Vincent Marteka divides the European cultures into two camps: the mycophobic (Iberian, British, Greek, Scandinavian) and the mycophagic (Italian, French, Polish, Russian) who search for them.

Because of widespread mycophobia in this country, choice, edible mushrooms often grow undisturbed in peoples' yards, and give mycophagists the opportunity to collect them right within the city.

Mycophagist's Corner

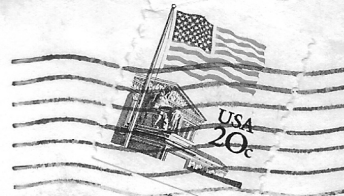
MUSHROOM BORDELAISE

- 1 lb. mushrooms, quartered
- 1/3 cup corn oil
- pepper
- 1½ Tbs. butter
- 1/3 cup fresh bread crumbs
- 3 Tbs. shallots, minced
- 3 Tbs. parsley, chopped



Heat the oil until quite hot. Add the mushrooms and a grind of pepper. Cook over high heat stirring and shaking until crisp and brown (about 15 minutes). Drain mushrooms in a colander, and discard the oil. Reheat the skillet. Heat the butter until foaming. Add the mushrooms. Cook, stirring, for three minutes. Add the bread crumbs and stir. Add the shallots and continue to cook for one minute. Add parsley, stir and serve.

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c/o Anna Gerenday, Circulation



FIRST CLASS