



EARTHSTAR

E X A M I N E R

Number 19, April 1991

Newsletter of the Missouri Mycological Society

Annual Meeting by Jim Low

[Note: Jim Low, from the Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC), attended our winter meeting. His report was issued as a news release by MDC in their "All Outdoors" series. Ken's name and number were included in the photo caption. The photo shows some of us putting food on our plates.]

ST. LOUIS -- They came with discriminating palates and exotic dishes featuring sulphur shelves, paddy straws, shiitakes, champignons and boletes. They were the few, the brave, the mycophagists.

Mycophagist is just a fifty-cent Greek word for "mushroom eater." Each winter, members of the Missouri Mycological Society get together for a day of programs and discussions about their favorite subject, topped off by a mycophagous potluck.

This year's fungus feast at Tower Grove Park in St. Louis featured cloud-ear mushroom pasta with a sauce of olive oil, shiitake mushrooms, baked red peppers and garlic. Also available were mushroom and turmeric cream cheese dip, Polish black mushroom soup, steamed chicken with paddy straw mushrooms, mushroom quiche, brick cap mushroom soup and Pate Pentin de Fontainbleu (mushroom and onion pate in French pastry.)

In addition, amateur mycologists (people who study fungi) listened with intense interest to biochemist Greg Bogosian's program about how toxin in several poisonous mushrooms work. Afterwards, a couple of mushroom enthusiasts had a chance to pick Bogosian's brain about how and why some mushrooms glow in the dark.

Among the many bits of mycological wisdom imparted to those at the Society's winter meeting was the adage, "There are old mushroom hunters, and there are bold mushroom hunters, but there are no old, bold mushroom hunters." Aspiring mushroom hunters would be wise to heed this sentiment before sitting down to their first meal of wild mushrooms.

Society President Ken Gilberg says a good field guides is a must for novice mush-

roomers. He says a great deal can also be learned from experienced practitioners.

"The Society welcomes beginners who are interested in learning about mushrooms," says Gilberg. Most mycophiles (mushroom lovers) are missionaries with a secretive streak. They love to share their hobby, but at the same time, they're protective about their favorite mushrooming spots. Their generous side usually wins out."

Member News

Leland von Behren wants everyone to know about the annual mushroom (i.e., morel) festivals. The one in Mansfield, Indiana runs April 27 - 28, 1991. For more information, call Leland or write Frank Hutcheson, 202 Greenwood Dr., Greencastle IN 48135. Mansfield is a 3 1/2 hour drive from St. Louis. Also, the annual National Mushroom Hunting Championship is held in Boyne City, Michigan on the second weekend of May. Write the Boyne City Chamber of Commerce, 28 S. Lake St., Boyne City MI 49712.

(Those of you who have been members for a while may recall my report on the Missouri Mushroom festival held on the same weekend in Richmond, which is about 1 hour's drive east of Kansas City.)

Ken Gilberg will again teach an introductory course at Shaw Arboretum in Gray's Summit. It will be May 18th and 19th.

Don Dill reports that he is taking pictures and documenting fungi in the Climatron at the Missouri Botanical Garden. Since shredded hardwood mulch is used, mushrooms so far have been local ones. Don has identified *Lepiota americanus*, *Mutinus caninus*, *Pseudocolus fusiformis* and *Coprinus radiatus*. (Obviously, Don looks with great care. According to Arora, *C. radiatus* has a minute cap, 2 - 8 mm high and 1 - 4 mm broad before expanding. The stalk is 1 - 5 cm long. Under edibility, Arora says, "Who knows? Who Cares?" [p. 351]) If enough tropical plant litter accumulates, he hopes to see some tropical fungi.

Buddy Samuels forwards an advertisement for a 5 volume set on Cortinarius, each with 60 photographs. The first volume is now available. Estimated cost for all five is 180 British pounds, plus postage. For more information, write Svamp Konsult, Klovervagen 13, S-864 00 Matfors, Sweden. The authors are Brandrud, Lindstrom, Marklund, Melot and Muskos, all but one Scandinavian. (If I could afford to spend that much on mushroom books, I would still wait for the reviews and let Lubrecht & Cramer import the set. Erika says that their prices for German mushroom books are comparable, if not less, than the prices in Germany.) Buddy also received 10 copies of the Paul Stamets catalog. If you want one, send her a SASE with postage for 2 oz. (now \$0.52).

Thanks for the news. Please keep sending in notes about your activities!

Mushrooming Survey

Following Jim Low's article, Daniel J. Witter, a Resources Planner at MDC, sent Ken information about a survey. The first phase was sent to adults (21 and over) in seven Missouri cities (including suburbs). Surveys were sent to people with driver's licenses in St. Louis, Kansas City, Springfield, Columbia, St. Joseph, Joplin and Cape Girardeau. In St. Louis and Kansas City zip codes with large Black populations a proportionately larger number of surveys were sent out.

Out of 7,800 questionnaires sent out, 3,427 were returned. For a survey of this kind, the return rate is acceptable.

People were asked if they had *ever participated* in 29 selected recreational activities. Mushroom gathering, at 17%, tied for 26th with backpacking and Wildlife/Outdoor group membership among whites. It tied for 27th at 6% with Wildlife/Outdoor group membership for non-whites. This rises to an astonishing 24% when people were asked if anyone in their household had ever gathered mushrooms.

When broken down by age, income, education and sex, differences among individuals were minor. The largest is that 19% of those with incomes of less than \$20,000 gather mushrooms while only 9% of those with incomes of over \$40,000 do so. Sixteen percent of those with intermediate incomes gather mushrooms. Since college graduates generally earn more than people who have not graduated, it is not surprising that 10% of college graduates have ever gathered mushrooms while 17% of those who have not graduated had done so. As we know from

our own forays, men are more often the mushroom hunters. In the survey, 17% of men gather compared to 13% of women. Differences in "any member of the household" are quite similar.

Of the seven cities, St. Joseph (43%) and Columbia (29%) have many hunters while St. Louis, Cape Girardeau and Joplin all come in at 10%. Kansas City and Springfield are intermediate. When asked about any member of the household, St. Joseph goes up to 64% which ranks it 14th among the 29 activities. At the other extreme, only 15% in St. Louis have a household member who has ever gathered mushrooms. This ranks 28th, (next to last), ahead of trapping which ranks last in every urban area.

What are we to make of this? In my opinion, we see the popularity of spring mushrooms (true and false morels) rather than a general interest in mycology or mycophagy. For the people who work at my office who have any interest in mushrooms, it is thought of as a spring activity. I believe that most of my co-workers have a rural or small town (Jefferson City) background. On the other hand, most MMS members gather mushrooms in the summer and fall as well. It is interesting, and tends to confirm this difference between people surveyed and club members, that neither the Missouri nor the Kansas club has a single member from St. Joseph despite so many people there reporting that they have gathered.

A similar survey is now underway for rural Missouri. This will be reported when results are available.

I would appreciate information on this topic from other clubs.

Questions for You

In order to help us organize better forays and programs, please take the time to answer three questions. Send your answer to Phil Roos (address on membership list). We hope this will allow us to schedule forays and other activities which are convenient for more members.

Instructions: All you need to write on your postcard is "MMS Survey" and the numbers 1, 2, 3 accompanied by the letters of the options which apply to you. For example, if you are available to foray any time, you would write 1a, 1b, 1c, 1d, 1e. Etc. Of course any further suggestions will be appreciated. Thanks for your cooperation.

1. When are you able to go on forays?
 - (a) weekdays
 - (b) Saturday mornings
 - (c) Saturday afternoons
 - (d) Sunday mornings
 - (e) Sunday afternoons.
2. When would you prefer to go on forays?
 - (a) weekdays
 - (b) Saturday mornings
 - (c) Saturday afternoons
 - (d) Sunday mornings
 - (e) Sunday afternoons.
3. What kinds of non-foray programs, in addition to the annual meeting, would you be interested in attending in the St. Louis area?
 - (a) None
 - (b) Just socialize
 - (c) A lecture by one of our members
 - (d) Bring in mushrooms for identification
 - (e) A lecture by a paid outside speaker
 - (f) Other (specify on your postcard).

**Treasurer's Report
by Phil Roos**

Thanks in large measure to Ken's work on the T-shirts, our club is in excellent financial health. I report here on both Fiscal 1990 (which ended on October 31) and the winter meeting. Since we paid for the T - shirts in 1989 while many remained unsold until 1990, the profit did not appear until 1990. The disbursement to the IRS is a one - time charge so that we could receive our limited [sec. 1041(c)(4)] tax exempt status. The income and expense of the 1990 winter meeting is not properly accounted for; however, we did better for the 1991 winter meeting.

**1990 FINANCIAL SUMMARY
EXPENSES**

NAMA Dues	\$25.00
Postage	\$118.45
Copying	\$97.72
IRS	\$151.00
Long Distance Phone	\$130.46
Winter Meeting	\$143.33
Miscellaneous	\$66.21
	=====
TOTAL	\$732.17

INCOME

Balance Forward	\$293.85
T - Shirt Sales	\$871.47
Interest	\$27.78
Dues	\$273.55
	=====
TOTAL	\$1,466.65

Balance Forward to 1991 \$734.48

The winter meeting was also a financial success thanks in large measure to the raffle donations. Leland von Behren was the lucky winner of Don Dill's mushroom dryer. Instead of taking the cost of their food out of their admissions, people took raffle tickets. That made a big difference. We also had several new and renewal memberships which might otherwise not have been received.

WINTER MEETING

Beverages	\$77.41
Book for Raffle	\$9.00
Postage	\$8.60
Center pieces	\$66.85
Stupp Center Fee	\$157.00
Long Distance Phone	\$17.83
Miscellaneous	\$11.24
	=====

PAID OUT \$347.93

RECEIVED \$444.00
Profit \$96.07

Second Annual Overnight

Jack and Marty Toll have invited us back to their house on the Jack's Fork River for a second annual overnight foray. It will be held on the weekend of Oct. 12th and 13th. Some eager souls will show up on Friday night the 11th. We had a great time in 1990. This is plenty of notice so you can plan ahead. More information later and reservations will probably be required.

**.Dues are Due!
But Only for a Few**

Most of you paid your dues. For a few, this is your last newsletter. See your address label.

**Business Meeting
by Phil Roos**

As usual, our annual meeting included a very brief business meeting. We raised the dues for an associate membership to \$3.00. We gave Ken a big "Thank You" for all the work he did in making the meeting a success.

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