

The North American Truffler

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**Nancy Weber,
1943-2020**

With heavy hearts we announce the passing of dear friend and longtime NATS member Nancy Weber. If you have a remembrance of Nancy that you would like to share with the NATS group at large, please contact us at NATrufflingsociety@gmail.com and we will publish it in the next edition of The North American Truffler.

Due to the continuance of the COVID-19 pandemic, in-person NATS meetings are indefinitely postponed. We will continue to host monthly speaker meetings via ZOOM as per for fall meetings. For more information about ZOOM logistics, please see PAGE 6.



IT'S A NEW YEAR!

Wishing a joyous year
of truffling for all our
NATS members!!

ZOOM IN FOR NATS Winter 2021 Speakers

January 5, 2021: Dr. Matthew E. Smith

Biogeography and Diversity of Ectomycorrhizal Fungi in South America



Dr. Matthew E. Smith is an Associate Professor in the Department of Plant Pathology at the University of Florida and is curator of the Fungal Herbarium at the Florida Museum of Natural History (FLAS). Dr. Smith studies fungal ecology, evolution, and systematics and is a recognized expert on the biology and systematics of hypogeous fungi and the ecology of plant-symbiotic ectomycorrhizal fungi. Over the last 15 years, Dr. Smith has collected truffles in North America, Asia, and South America.

Dr. Smith will talk about recent research on the diversity and biogeography of ectomycorrhizal fungi from South America, including a diverse array of truffle-like fungi. His research highlights some of the broader biogeographic patterns for fungi and how they are similar to those of plants and animals. As you will see from his photos and discussion, the diversity of truffle like fungi in South America is quite high and includes many undescribed species.

February 9, 2021: Late Breaking News!



Dr. Hugues Massicotte from the University of Northern British Columbia will give a talk titled, “Mycological Tales from the Northern Front.” Further details to be posted soon on [NATruffling.org](https://www.natruffling.org).

March 9, 2021: Marcos Vinicius Caiafa

South American truffles & their feathered fellows: exploring the mycophagy of two native birds from southern South America

It is widely known that truffle-like fungi rely on mammals for spore dispersal. But what about fungivorous birds?



If you haven't considered this, don't feel bad; little is known of the potential role of fungivorous birds in dispersal of fungi. But DO tune in to the NATS speaker meeting on March 9, 2021, during which Marco will share findings from his doctoral research regarding the mycophagy of two ground-foraging bird species (Chucao Tapaculo and the Black-throated huet-huet) living in the temperate rainforests of Southern Chile.

Originally from North Central Chile, Marcos obtained a bachelor's degree in Biology from the Universidad de Chile in 2013. In Mexico he obtained a master's degree at the Instituto de Ecología A.C. researching the functional diversity of macromycete fungi along environmental gradients. Marcos is now a PhD candidate in Dr. Matthew Smith's lab at the University of Florida. His research focuses on the ecology and evolution of truffle-like fungi. Read more about his research here:

<https://www.audubon.org/news/truffles-arent-just-foodies-some-birds-love-them-too>

Remembrances of John Lafky, By Mysti Weber

John Lafky, long-time associate of NATS, died June 26, 2019, at his home in Alpine, Oregon. John screen-printed NATS T-shirt designs for over 30 years, the most popular being the “Totem T-shirt.” His ability in combining color with design was uniquely inspiring. As a master printer and artist in his own right, he coupled print graphics and all manner of materials including (but not limited to!) cloth, glass, metal, wood, and mineral. His photography skills weren’t bad, either. He opened his first business, Printing to Perfection, in Eugene, ultimately moving his family to a property in Alpine, OR, in the mid 1980s. He founded his next company, Horizon Screen Print, in a lean-to of sorts attached to his home there.

John was born in Roswell, New Mexico but grew up in Anaheim, California, where his father taught economics and his mother was a sociology professor. The family home in Anaheim was essentially across the street from Disneyland, and every evening as a youngster he watched Tinkerbell fly back down to the ground from atop the Matterhorn for the night.

Perhaps that is why walking around his property in Alpine felt like walking around a fairyland. It was always fun to see what John was doing, and he was happy to show me and other friends (like NATS members Sylvia and Betty) around whenever I went to see him. On one such visit we took a walk in the woods, finding Buddhist shrines scattered around in the most unusual beautiful places, a reflection of Buddhist beliefs he’d held since encountering a monk at the age of 16.

It was always amazing to see what new feature or building popped up on John’s property between visits. He loved having lots of like-minded people around him, building small cabins on his property to house these friends. He built an almost magical cabin for his grandchildren to stay in when they came to visit. John befriended the previous owner of the property, an elderly man for whom John cared until his death. Upon his death the man, so grateful for the years of kindness he’d witnessed in John, bequeathed to him the last of his own property. On that property sat a crude cabin that John and others added to for many years, referring to it as “built by committee.” The home was never quite finished but all the same it felt like a home, thanks to John.

He will be missed.



Above: One of the many designs John translated to cloth during his 30-year involvement with NATS. Totem design by Christine Roberts

Dave Pilz Presents: The Mycological History Lecture Series

Twenty-three years ago, somebody organized a series of Mycological History Lectures on the Oregon State University Campus in Corvallis, Oregon. Neither I, nor anyone I have asked, has claimed to know who organized the series. Perhaps it was the speakers themselves; Dr. James Trappe, Dr. William Denison, and Dr. Nancy Smith Weber. Two of these presentations were recorded at NATS meetings.

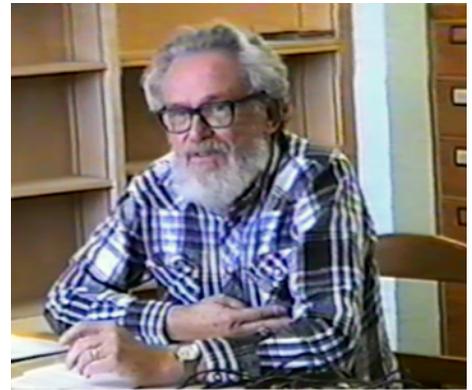
At that time, on a whim, I decided that these lectures would be worth recording and I borrowed videotape equipment from the Forestry Help Desk to do so. It was the first time I had ever done something like this, so the quality of the recordings leaves a lot to be desired. That said, the talks are full of information on the early history of mycology at Oregon State University and in Western North America. The sound tracks are audible and I was able to zoom in on most of the slides.

Distribution of the videos was another matter. Originally, it took a long time to copy tapes. When digitization first became readily available, they still could only be shared widely by laboriously burning DVDs. When easier digital distribution came along, I was busy with work.

After I retired, I had more time, but for a few more years, I stayed busy with other endeavors. This project remained low on my to-do list. Then in the Autumn of 2018, I was approached by a Portland videographer (Tristan Stoch) about an interview for a film he was making that would include the history of Pacific Northwest mycological research. Tristan kindly agreed to digitize the original videotapes, add titles to the beginning of each, and provide them to me in both DVD (VIDEO_TS) and computer (MP4) formats.

Once I had the files in formats that could be readily distributed online, I obtained permission for their distribution from Jim Trappe, from Margaret Denison (& her family) and from Marvin Weber (Nancy's representative).

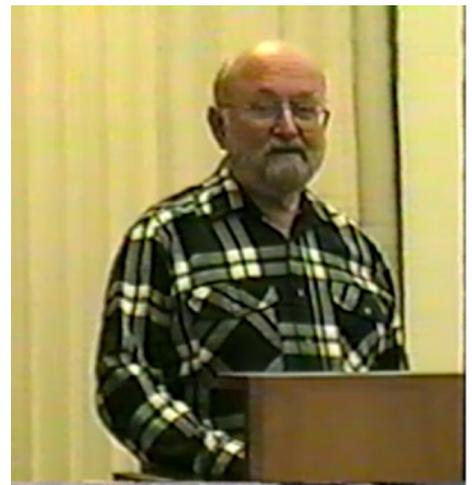
These individuals graciously gave their permission to allow the videos to be freely copied and distributed. That said, the videos, and any excerpts from them, are intended for non-commercial educational use only.



The much missed Dr. Bill Denison



Dr. Bill Denison, Dr. Nancy Weber, Jamie Platt, and Dr. Joey Spatafora, enthralled.



Distinguished Dr. Jim Trappe presents in one of the recordings

To download digital files of the Mycological History
Lecture Series visit:

<https://www.pilzwald.com/MycHistTalks>

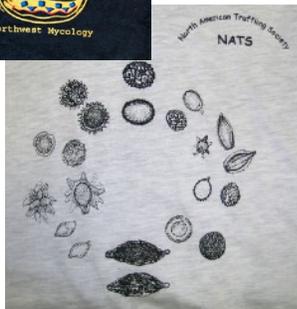
Follow the easy directions to enjoy the videos in two different formats.
Select the appropriate format from two directories:

Downloading Options

Video_TS
(Burn DVD of
Lectures)

MP4 Format
Suitable to
watch on most
computers

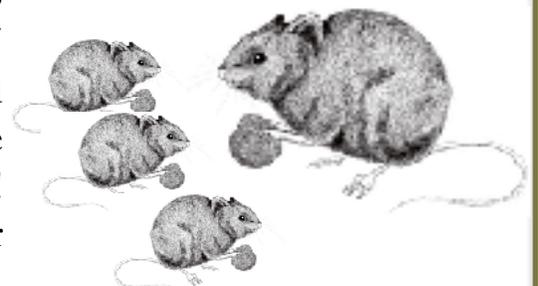
Very special thanks to Dave Pilz for his foresight in filming these priceless interactions, as well as his hard work in making them available to a new generation of NATS members.



Do you still have gift money left from the holidays? Because of Covid-19 NATS no longer sells books or T-shirts at events, so please consider purchasing them from our website. Learn how to buy one of these great shirts at natruffling.org: click the “Truffling Accessories” link on the left sidebar. Send an email through the link on the website to learn about current availability of designs, colors, and sizes.



Many thanks to the kind NATS members who donated to the Pavelek scholarship fund in lieu of membership dues for 2021. Donations to the fund are tax deductible and most importantly, future mycology students will appreciate your generosity! It's not too late...start your tax deductions for 2021 now!



Coronavirus, Zoom, and Winter Meetings Update

Congratulations to NATS organizers and members alike for successfully engaging in a series of online monthly speaker meetings last fall! We appreciate your patience and attendance as we navigate difficulties presented by the ongoing pandemic.

For the foreseeable future, NATS monthly speaker meetings will continue via Zoom. Meetings consist of two sessions. The first, at 7:00 pm, is the NATS business meeting. Anyone interested in participating is very welcome to do so. If this content is of no interest to you, simply tune in to the speaker portion of the meeting which follows at 7:30 pm. The speaker will be introduced, fascinate us with their subject material, and linger for follow-up questions/discussions. In an effort to keep meetings short, speakers will present for 40 minutes or less. Members will be able to interact with audio or through the Zoom chat.

When you receive your monthly NATS email about upcoming meetings, you will be asked to send an email to NATrufflingsociety@gmail.com if you would like to receive an invitation to that month's Zoom meeting. Our meetings are hosted through Oregon State University, and we will be very sure to keep them securely password protected to avoid uninvited guests.

If Zoom is a mystery to you, or you aren't comfortable using it, you are certainly not alone; please write to NATrufflingsociety@gmail.com, and we will try to answer any questions you may have.

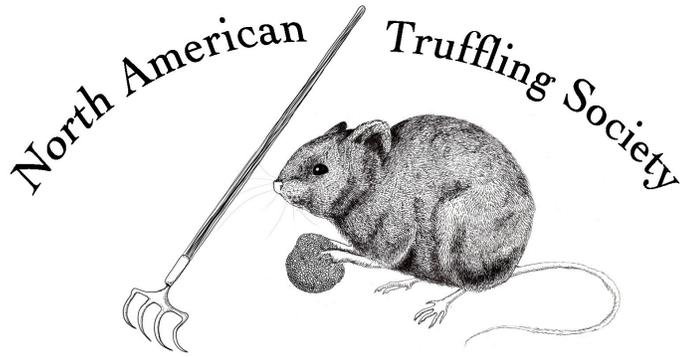
Do you want to share your Zoom meeting
invite with an interested non-NATS
member?

Don't forget to let us know their name
and email address so we will allow them
into the meeting!



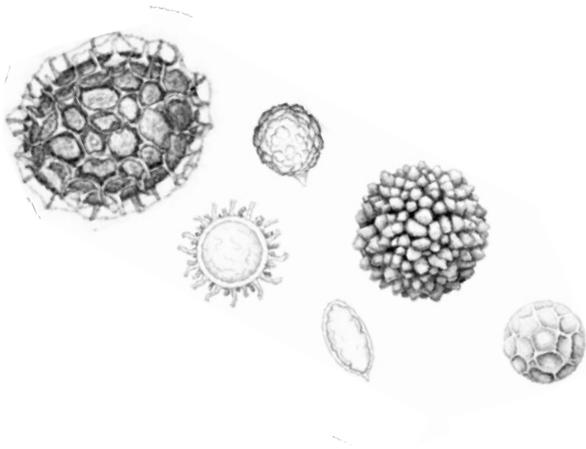
**The 2021 NATS Annual Potluck dinner,
typically held in February, is cancelled.**

This celebration is our biggest opportunity to collect funds for the Pavelek Scholarship. Assuage your desire to bid on funky, beautiful, table centerpieces by donating to the scholarship fund. Visit NATruffling.org for details.



WANTED

Creative suggestions for newsletter topics, comments about articles, your opinions about any truffle and/or fungi related topic. Send contributions to: newsletter editor Sarah Shay at NATrufflingsociety@gmail.com



Information contained in *The Truffler* is to be used at your own risk. NATS Inc., its officers, editors, and members are not responsible for the use or misuse of information presented herein. If you are unsure of mushroom identification or safety, **please** consult an expert! In addition, attending and participating in a NATS event is entirely at your own risk. No person associated with NATS is either directly or indirectly responsible for anything that occurs during, or in transit to/from, a NATS event. Be responsible.

UNIDENTIFIED TRUFFLE?

What to do?

Visit www.natruffling.org for a printable field data card (hand-written submissions on awesome stationary certainly welcome). Please provide a description of significant characteristics of the habitat immediately surrounding the collection site, including the dominant trees and other vegetation species and slope/exposure. Also include site coordinates (GPS data, if available) and, when possible, color digital images showing a surface view and an interior section, cut top-to-bottom, through the center of the truffle.

Prior to submission, gently remove loose soil from the specimen. DO NOT scrub briskly or use a stiff brush; an intact outer skin is important for identification. Dry thoroughly using a food dehydrator OR by refrigerating samples in a loosely closed paper bag for a couple days. For faster drying, cut truffles in half to reduce moisture trapped by the outer skin.

Mail your dried specimen to:

~~Dr. Jim Trufflin' Trappe
USFS Forestry Sciences Lab
3200 Jefferson Way
Corvallis, OR 97331~~

DUE TO COVID19, please hold onto your specimens and we will post a new mailing address when we are able to work in the lab again!

The North American Truffling Society, Inc.

The North American Truffling Society is a non-profit organization based in Corvallis, Oregon that brings together amateurs and professionals who are interested in fungi that fruit below ground. The mission of NATS is to enhance the scientific knowledge of North American truffles and truffle-like fungi, and promote educational activities related to truffles and truffle-like fungi.

NATS is the only organization of its kind in the world devoted to gathering truffles and enhancing our knowledge about them. Primary activities include educational meetings and truffle-collection forays. NATS members collect truffles worldwide, thereby contributing to our understanding of their habitat and range, identification and classification, and edibility. NATS specialists also provide truffle identification services.

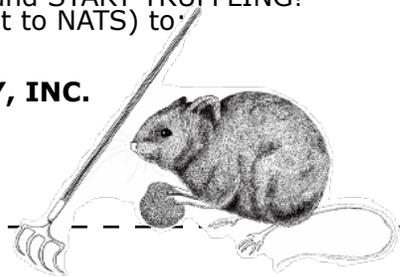
NATS offers:

- Forays (field trips) to collect truffles.
- Monthly educational meetings (autumn through spring) on varied mycological topics.
- A periodic newsletter, "The North American Truffler: Journal of the North American Truffling Society", describing recent truffle finds, program meetings and other topics.
- An annual potluck dinner.
- The excitement of participating in valuable scientific research.
- New and interesting friends.

NATS welcomes new members. As a nonprofit, membership dues are tax exempt and deductible. Dues may be paid by cash (in person) or by check (US Mail). If you pay by check, please retain your canceled check as your receipt for tax purposes. You can also pay online with a credit/debit card via Paypal at www.NATruffling.org/renew.htm.

For further information on truffles and membership, contact NATS and START TRUFFLING!
Please return completed form (with check made out to NATS) to:

THE NORTH AMERICAN TRUFFLING SOCIETY, INC.
P.O. BOX 296
CORVALLIS, OREGON 97330
www.natruffling.org



Name(s): _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____ Country: _____
(Province) (Postal code)

Email address(es): _____

Annual membership fees: \$15 first family member, \$10 each additional family member in the same household. Businesses: \$15. Individuals/Businesses from other countries: \$20, **payable in US funds.**

Annual contribution categories: Donor: \$15-\$49; Contributor: \$50-\$499; Sustaining \$500+