

inoculum

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Members are heartily encouraged to submit news, views, tips, graphics, and other material for the newsletter. *Inoculum* will be mailed four times a year – in January, April, May/June/July (according to the dates of the MSA Annual Meeting), and October. Submission deadlines are the second Fridays of September, December, March and of April, May or June when the Annual Meeting occurs in June, July, or August, respectively.

I welcome and encourage you to submit items by electronic mail or, for extended or complicated items, on 3.5" computer disks (together with hard copy).

NB: Disks are NOT needed for simple or short items! Include a self-addressed, stamped envelope if you want the disk returned. Disk labels should list disk format (Mac or DOS) and file name(s); formatted word processing files created by MS-Word (Mac or DOS versions), WriteNow!, MacWrite, or WordPerfect or unformatted ASCII text files are acceptable.

Dear Inoculum ...

An Yet Another Word From E.M. Fries

The following item appeared in my e-mail, but I have been unable to send a reply (his e-mail address comes up as "address unknown"):

To: rpk1@cornell.edu
From: EMagnusFr@heaven.edu (Elias Magnus Fries)
Subject: Thank you to MSA for Invitation to Celebrate my 200th Birthday

I have been unable to locate an e-mail address for the Mycological Society of America, though they do have a record of your address (perhaps you are slated to join me here and they are not?), and so hope that you will forward these thanks to the appropriate person(s) involved:

It was for me a very great pleasure to receive your invitation to a 200th birthday party for me that you held during the MSA Social and Auction at Vancouver during the Fifth International Mycological Congress. You will realize that permission to leave here and to attend such a function is most difficult to come by, but apparently my good works and deeds allowed those in charge to permit me that one evening with my "descendents" and followers.

To have a chance to address so many mycolgists after such a long silence was also very heartwarming. I was only slightly disappointed with the kind introduction by the retiring President of your Society, Professor Ronald H. Petersen, since I had thought that with such a fine Swedish name he would know better how to pronounce my name. He was apparently convinced that I am known as "ee-LIE-as M. Fries," whereas he certainly should have know that my name is "A-lee-as MAGNUS Fries" and, as I pointed out, with the decline in the use or even basic knowledge of Latin, those present at my party might not be aware that "Magnus" means "The Great."

I apologize for spending so much of my brief talk in reminiscing about my life, and reminding the assembled mycologists that even though there is today a Scandinavian mycological "boy wonder" that I was the FIRST boy wonder, having entered the University of Lund in 1811 at the age of 17, and graduating three years later with a Ph.D., being immediately appointed to the faculty at that University.

There was another disappointment for me at Vancouver, for when I asked how many present knew about or had read my autobiography not a single hand was raised. True enough, my autobiography was published in a small edition of 100 copies in Latin, which of course you today don't read, but that is no excuse for the lack of knowing my autobiographical details, for the Danish Mycological Society published an ENGLISH translation of that on the occasion of their 50th anniversary, in volume 5 of the journal they wisely called *FRIESIA*. Perhaps the apparently illiterate modern-day mycologists will now have a chance to read it.

It would have been dishonest of me not to have reported that I have been looking down on all of you for over 100 years, and that I have not always been very pleased with what you have done with my classification! I shall continue those observations, and hope you will realize the error of your ways.

As you might suspect, I listened to the talks at Vancouver with great interest, and I was particularly taken with the controversy which you seem to be having with what you have called "anamorphs" and "teleomorphs." I could not help thinking about what I had written in my autobiography, published in 1857, which I quoted and quote here again, since there may be a lesson to be learned:

In 1812, the second year of my studies at the University of Lund, "I collected especially HYPHOMYCETES and epiphyllous fungi, which had so far been neglected, but I soon realized that the greater part of them are nothing but elementary stages of the, as we now say, higher ones; and these species always seemed to me mean and insignificant and not worthy of being recorded separately, except perhaps by those glad merely to increase the number of species."



Let me again express my deep appreciation for the invitation. Mycology has little to fear as you progress in the studies of fungi, based, as you know, on my system. Perhaps you will invite me back for my 300th birthday party — if that happens I hope I can again attend such a festive occasion.

In all humility I remain,
Elias Magnus Fries

Richard P. Korf
Cornell University

Perspective on the National Biological Survey

In her article in the July, 94 issue of *Inoculum*, K. Elaine Hoagland, Executive Director of the Association of Systematics Collections notes that government funding for the National Biological Survey Program and basic biological field research is in trouble because private property owners fear that discovery of new or rare species on their land will prevent development and reduce the land's economic value. The owners are right.

Hoagland urges the readers of *Inoculum* to contact their representatives and oppose proposed rules which will make it harder for biologists to do research on private land.

While few, if any, scientists would oppose the expansion of scientific research and knowledge, the fears of the property owners are well-founded. As the Endangered Species Act is currently written, if an endangered species is found on your property, its rights take precedence over yours, as far as development is con-

cerned. The fact that you paid money for the land in order to use it is your tough luck.

The problem with the Act is that it forces a few selected individuals to bear the full burden of what is considered to be a public good.

In the old days, society used to buy land from individuals that it needed for public purposes. If the law were modified to require the government to buy land that was needed to preserve an endangered species, I'm sure the current opposition to biological field research would disappear. Readers of *Inoculum* should contact their representatives to suggest that the present law be changed so as to require fair compensation for property used in this way.

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Job-Hunting, Deadlines, and Dignity

There was a job advertisement in the July 1994 edition of the *Inoculum* which was mailed to me in August. I applied for the job the same day I received my newsletter only to find out that the applicants were already screened and interviewed and an offer was about to be made to the successful candidate.

My request to you is that from now on, if possible, please publish the application deadline, or do not publish the advertisement. To be unable to find an employment in spite of having a Ph.D. with teaching and research experience is humiliating enough. We do not want to feel worse by going for jobs long after the application deadline.

In this context, my opinion is that the MSA Placement Committee should be made more effective than what it is now. The Committee on Curriculum (Teaching of Mycology) should also be revamped. The number of graduate or undergraduate students willing to take mycology courses has been very low for a number of years. This is because courses are designed by many of our teachers not to train students for jobs, but to satisfy the ego and competence of the teachers. In many cases, mycology teachers make very little attempt to learn new and upcoming techniques and use them to enhance the acceptability of the students to the job market. I know, many of us will be upset to hear such arrogance, but believe me, this is true.

Unless something is done very soon to change the dismal situation about placement and curriculum in mycology, we will see more frustration and disappointment among our graduates, and more apathy among the new students. The question is, do we care?

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[Editor's note: It has always been my goal to print only job advertisements that are current and for which deadlines for submissions are still far enough ahead to warrant their inclusion. Offerings without such dates are now listed with their date of receipt. Please note in the Committee Reports that the MSA Placement Committee voted itself out of existence because of the greater effectiveness of the Bulletin Board.]