

WILDLIFE  
**NATURE  
 RAMBLINGS**  
 by Frank Thone



### Vanished Handouts

➤ BEARS in our national parks may wonder a little, during the coming travel season, what has become of the easy pickings they used to have for food. Time was, when even the laziest bear could get butter-fat in a summer, just turning up regularly at the hotel garbage dumps and stuffing himself with the nourishing (even if somewhat odoriferous) tidbits, while crowds of fascinated tourists looked on. Yellowstone Park in particular used to be famous for its "bear dumps" where you could see not only numbers of the ordinary American or black bears but also the much shyer and rarer species, the great grizzly.

A few years ago, a new park policy took the bears "off relief," closing all but one of the feeding grounds in each of the larger bear-frequented parks. This was intended for the bears' own welfare; it was considered best for the bruins to oblige them to return to their old, native ways of rooting for their own roots, grubbing for their own grubs. The few feeding grounds left open represented a compromise, a concession to the desire of the tourists who got a real thrill out of watching bears in the open, without any separation of bars or pits between them and the great wild beasts.

Bears at the feeding grounds ordinarily ignored the visitors; they were too busy eating. A few black bears, however, became more intimate with their temporary human neighbors, halting cars on the roads to beg for gifts of cookies, chocolate bars or anything else edible—they would even gulp down cigars, if offered.

Now all this is changed. Far fewer tourists are visiting the parks in the West during these war years—people are too busy, they haven't the necessary tires

and gas, and they're putting a good deal of what used to be vacation money into bonds and war stamps. Less travel of course means fewer guests in the hotels and camps, and that in turn means less garbage to dump out where the bears come to feast. Likewise, there are fewer cars for the "holdup" bears to stop, and because of sugar rationing those that they do hail will not be able to reward their begging with anything like the old-time largesse of chocolate bars and other sweets.

Bears have not only been taken "off relief"; they have been regimented into the national rationing system. They can count themselves lucky if they are not asked to present appropriately colored and numbered stamps when they come around at feeding-time!

*Science News Letter, June 12, 1943*

### SEISMOLOGY

## Two Quakes in Two Days Recorded on Seismographs

➤ TWO EARTHQUAKES in two days, one near the island of Mindanao in the Philippines, the other off the west coast of Mexico, were recorded at widely distributed seismological observatories on Tuesday and Wednesday, May 25 and 26. Data transmitted telegraphically through Science Service were interpreted by scientists of the U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey, who determined the epicenters.

The Tuesday earthquake, which was located in or near the deepest of sub-oceanic valleys, the Mindanao Deep, was rated as a strong shock, although it is unlikely that much damage ashore was caused. Its epicenter was located in latitude 7.5 degrees north, longitude 126.5 degrees west; time of origin was 7:07:36 p.m., EWT.

The earthquake on Wednesday had its epicenter in latitude 17.5 degrees north, longitude 106.5 degrees west; time of origin was 6:31:25 a.m., EWT.

Seismological data were sent in by government observatories in Sydney, Australia; Wellington, New Zealand, and Ottawa, Canada; the stations of the Jesuit Seismological Association at St. Louis University, Fordham University and Spring Hill College near Mobile, Ala.; the Des Moines Seismological Observatory; and the stations of the U. S. Coast and Geodetic Survey at Apia, Samoa, San Juan, P. R., Sitka, Alaska, Honolulu, T.H., and Tucson, Ariz.

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## RADIO

Saturday, June 19, 1:30 p.m., EWT

"Adventures in Science" with Watson Davis, director of Science Service, over Columbia Broadcasting System.

Dr. Walter J. Murphy, editor of Industrial and Engineering Chemistry, will talk about Chemistry and the War.

### BOTANY

## Oyster Mushroom Tasty As Well As Handsome

### See Front Cover

➤ CONSIDERABLE to-do is made of the fact that chemists are able to convert wood into edible substances. Many species of mushrooms have been doing that for uncounted centuries, with no fuss made about it. One of the most successful of such is the genus *Pleurotus*, which is always found growing on decaying trees or stumps. The flavor of this mushroom is, to most connoisseurs, definitely better than that of the ordinary mushroom of the markets, though its flesh is a trifle less tender. Because some fancy a resemblance in flavor to oysters, the commonest species of this genus is called *P. ostreatus*, or oyster mushroom.

That this mushroom can appeal to the esthetic as well as the gustatory sense is evidenced by the fact that the photograph reproduced on this week's SCIENCE NEWS LETTER cover has been awarded a prize at the Fifth International Salon of Nature Photography, conducted by *Hobbies*, official publication of the Buffalo Museum of Science. The picture is by Miss Juanita Schubert of Minden, Nev.

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### MATHEMATICS DICTIONARY

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