



# Mycena News

Mycological Society of San Francisco

December, 1998, vol 48:12



## Boletes in the Snow



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### Membership and Subscription Information

To join the MSSF and receive this newsletter, send a \$20 check, payable to MSSF (\$12 for seniors 65 and over and full time students), to MSSF, c/o Wade Leschyn, 1609 Valley View Ave, Belmont CA 94002. Please include some contact information such as home and/or work phone numbers and email addresses. New and renewal memberships will be current through December of 1998. To change your mailing address, please notify Wade. MSSF members may also join or renew membership in the North American Mycological Association at a reduced rate by including with their MSSF check a separate check for \$17 payable to NAMA. Send it to Wade at the same address. For further information email Wade at leschyn@rahul.net or call at 650.591.6616.

**Mycena News** is the newsletter of the Mycological Society of San Francisco and is published monthly from September through May. You can send newsletter submissions by the 15th of each month to Mycena News, 4148 Briarwood Way, Palo Alto, CA 94306, phone 650.813.9149. Or, most preferably, you can email them to mycena-news@mpath.com.

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It was a strange dream, and more than a little disturbing: I'm hiking through a green meadow in the mountains, listening to a chortling creek, enjoying a bright confetti of wildflowers. *Boletus edulis* dots the outskirts of the meadow, tucked up tight against the trunks of lodgepole pines, waiting to be picked. And there I am with my basket and knife.

But something's wrong. My vision is failing, dimming, filling with white specks that turn into hard pellets of snow. They cover the meadow, the flowers, the boletes, and the world with a sheet of frigid white. My hands turn into stiff claws and I can't unfold my knife. The boletes disappear while I look straight at them, fading to white.

Packs of vigilantes complete the hellish scene. They drive giant white pickups and silver SUVs. They carry rifles and scout the woods intently from the cab, waiting for the slightest motion. Every now and then I hear a rifle shot, and I know that they've killed another bolete picker. As I stumble deeper into the woods, I come across the bloody remains of a slaughtered boletophile who has been gutted

and dragged from the forest. Then I realize - this is no dream. It's real. It's September, I'm in the Sierras, and I'm hunting boletes with my friend Yutaka Wada. Fungal obsession has led me once again to the realm of the bizarre.

This particular excursion starts on a Saturday morning in Oakland when Yutaka and I pack up camping equipment and leave on a four-hour-plus drive to the Shaver Lake area, just northeast of Fresno. A friend of mine reported seeing a few boletes there the previous weekend, which is enough to send me into paroxysms of optimism. We leave under ominous grey skies -- but what the hell! Mushrooming is all about inclement weather anyway, isn't it?

As we turn out of the central valley and start climbing into the Sierras, we ascend straight into a thick fog bank that quickly turns into rain showers. Rain showers turn to steady rain, which turns to a downpour. No matter; we're equipped for rain, and we're even more optimistic now. But we've got lots more climbing left to do.

*continued on page 5*

## Come Join the Fair!

### Location:

Herbst International Exhibition Hall  
385 Moraga Drive  
The Presidio, San Francisco

### Dates and Times:

Saturday and Sunday,  
December 5 and 6, 11a.m.-5p.m.

### Admission:

\$6 general/\$3 for students, seniors.  
FREE for folks who volunteer 3+ hours!

### Speakers:

Paul Stamets, David Arora, and more.

## President's Greeting

I hope you didn't miss November's general meeting. Taylor Lockwood showed slides from a recent mushroom photography trip to South East Asia and then presented an updated version of his multi-media show "Treasures from the Kingdom of Fungi." Taylor's mushroom photos are stunning. This is the fourth time I've seen his show and each time I'm awed by his talent.

Don't forget the Mushroom Fair on December 5th and 6th. We have an interesting lineup of speakers this year including David Arora, the Lichen Society, Paul Stamets, cooking demonstrations, a scholarly presentation on psychedelic mushrooms in Buddhist tradition, beginning mushrooming classes and more. We can always use help with setting up the tables on Friday evening before the fair and keeping things running during the fair. If you'd like to volunteer please call Lisa Bauer at 415.695.8889. I'll see you there.

After two lean years, I've been told that it's looking like an abundant year for *Lactarius fragilis* (candy caps) in Southern Oregon. Hopefully we'll see the same locally. I've also been told that *Tricholoma magnivelare* (matsutake) buttons are starting to appear in Mendocino. So far nothing yet in the East Bay hills though I'm counting on some *Cantharellus cibarius* (chanterelles) to grace the Thanksgiving table. All in all things appear to be a bit later than in a normal year. If there is such a thing as a normal year.

There will be no general meeting in December. In its place we have the mushroom fair and the Holiday dinner. If I don't see you at either event or out in the woods, I hope to see you at the January general meeting. Happy Holidays!

- Mark Thomsen

### MSSF Cultivation Display at the 1998 Fungus Fair

We are planning a more ambitious cultivation display this year at the 1998 Fungus Fair and would really appreciate your contribution of any of the following:

- Cultivated fruiting mushrooms for display on December 5th and 6th (they will be well tended and returned to you on December 6th if needed). Any format will be gladly accepted: straw, blocks, logs, spawn jars, toilet paper rolls, etc!

- 'Mushrooms in the Garden' display material - cultivated on purpose, or not!

- Educational information - posters, articles, charts, videos, or books for display (they will be returned to you on December 6th if needed)

- Your expertise! Do you have cultivation experience and would you be willing to staff the table for a few hours to answer questions and distribute information?

Please call or email Terri Beauséjour, 510.278.5998 or email [beauset@autodesk.com](mailto:beauset@autodesk.com) regarding any of the above.

We will also have a sign-up sheet for cultivation committee interest, so even if you can't contribute to the display, please stop by and sign-up to receive information about the 1999 activities!

Finally, we also need various kinds of duff—conifer, oak woodland, redwood, etc.—for species and habitat displays. If you can contribute any of these, please contact Terri Beauséjour well in advance of the fair.

### Next MSSF Meeting: January 19

With the Fungus Fair, MSSF Holiday dinner, forays, more forays, and the holidays themselves -- all occurring in December -- there's so much going on that there will be no MSSF general meeting this month. Have fun and enjoy the holidays!

### Volunteering for the Fair

It's still not too late to lend a helping hand with the MSSF's biggest event, the annual Fungus Fair.

All levels of mushroom and other expertise are welcome and needed. We need workers for the culinary/edibles, children's, toxicology/ecology, beginning ID, Ask-me and species tables. We also need help with admissions, membership and cultivation areas. We further need some design talent for the central display and artistic talent to help with decorations throughout the hall. And finally, we need folks to help with forays, logistics, lighting and t-shirt/book sales. Whew! In a word, we need YOU!

Volunteering at least 3 hours will cover the cost of your admission to the fair. We'll even feed you. Come find out why some of us keep doing this year after year: IT'S FUN and you learn a lot. Contact Lisa Bauer at 415.695.8889, [recycqueen@aol.com](mailto:recycqueen@aol.com), come to the final fair planning meeting on Tuesday, December 1 (see the calendar on the back page), or show up on either Saturday or Sunday morning to help. If you want to help with Forays, contact Henry Shaw at 925.943.3237 or Mark Thomsen at 510.540.1288. You'll be glad you did.

### 1998 Fungus Fair Schedule

Friday Dec. 4,	
	10 a.m. - 10 p.m. Setup & Pre-Fair Forays
Saturday Dec. 5,	
	8 a.m. - 11 a.m. Setup & Forays
	11 a.m. - 5 p.m. The Fair
	5 p.m. - 7 p.m. Cleanup/Prep
Sunday Dec. 6,	
	8 a.m. - 11 a.m. Setup & Forays
	11 a.m. - 5 p.m. The Fair
	5 p.m. - 7 p.m. Cleanup

# New Leadership for Cultivation Committee

## *Don Retires as Cultivation Committee Chair*

After several dedicated years as MSSF Cultivation Committee Chair, Don Simoni has retired from his Cultivation Committee Council seat this year to devote more time to his new 'Mushroom Adventures' enterprise. Don has been both pioneer and mentor to many of us with an interest in cultivation, and will continue to serve as a valued advisor to the Cultivation Committee on an ongoing basis. Thank you, Don!

## *Terri Steps in as New Chair*

After a year of preparation, Terri Beauséjour will step in as the new Cultivation Committee Chair. The new cultivation committee's first project will be a more ambitious cultivation display at the 1998 MSSF Fungus Fair. Then, beginning in 1999, we will schedule quarterly Cultivation Committee gatherings consisting of either a talk or workshop followed by an informal information exchange. Details will be published in the *Mycena News*.

The Cultivation Committee will also participate in other events such as the upcoming Landscape Garden Show. If you are interested in cultivation, would like to participate in the upcoming activities, or can share your experiences and expertise with the committee, please make contact with Terri Beauséjour at 510.278.5998 or beauset@autodesk.com to express your interest.

## Mushroom Madness in Marin January 10, 1999

The tradition lives on! This year, Dr. Momei Chen and Loraine Berry will be hosting a very special Mushroom Madness in Marin — American Chinese Style. The event will be a hands-on, participatory culinary demonstration and afternoon dinner at Lorraine's lovely home in Ross, CA. Dr. Momei Chen is the special guest co-host this year; she is a plant and forest pathologist from Beijing and teaches mushroom cultivation at the University of California, Berkeley. The usual bachannalian consumption of foods and beverages may be expected.

The cost of the event is \$22 (which includes wine or home-brewed beer), and reservations are recommended.

**All profits are generously donated to the Whited/Thiers Scholarship fund of the MSSF.**

Please call Loraine for reservations and particulars: 415.454.0914. Your check will serve as your reservation.

The exact date and time of this event are Sunday, January 10, 1-6 p.m.

# SOMA Scholarships

The Sonoma County Mycological Association (SOMA) is pleased to announce the offering of three educational scholarships during the 1998-99 mushroom season.

## *The Collegiate Scholarship*

The Collegiate Scholarship is a cash award of \$500. The winning applicant is obligated to give a presentation dealing with some aspect of mycology to the membership of the Sonoma County Mycological Association at one of their regular meetings during the next 12 months. The subject matter of the presentation can be quite diverse and original but should be related to the winning applicant's unique focus and interest in mycology. SOMA will award the successful applicant with \$100 upon notification and an additional \$400 the night of their presentation.

Interested students should submit:

1. A brief letter on why they are attracted to studying fungi, what they are studying and whom they are working under. Also include a list of college courses taken about fungi and state your declared major.
2. A statement confirming their willingness to present a talk/slide show at a monthly meeting of SOMA in Santa Rosa, CA.
3. A letter of recommendation from someone connected to their academic pursuits.

## *The High School Scholarships*

The two other scholarships are for high school students. These High School Scholarships are intended to stimulate secondary students who have an interest in fungi to continue their interest and possibly pursue a college degree in biology.

Students may apply by submitting a poster, drawings, science project or an original report on fungi. All work submitted becomes the property of SOMA and may be displayed as educational material at its annual Mushroom Festival or used as art work on future T-shirts or newsletters. Artistic credit and copyright will always remain with the student. The successful applicants will be awarded a \$50 gift certificate good for field guides, cultivation books or T-shirts and is redeemable only at the SOMA Bookstore.

**For all three scholarships, the deadline for applications is March 15, 1999.**

Either bring the material to a monthly meeting of SOMA or send all documents to: Scholarship Committee, Attention Darvin DeShazer, 406 Pleasant Hill Rd., Sebastopol, CA 95472. <biologist@metro.net> (Do not mail materials to the Farm Bureau.)

The Sonoma County Mycological Association (SOMA) meets on the third Thursday of the month, September to May, at the Sonoma County Farm Bureau, 970 Piner Rd., Santa Rosa, CA. Mushrooms are displayed at 7 p.m. and the speaker/slide show starts at 7:30 pm.

# DISCOVER NEW & REVIEW OLD MUSHROOMS

WITH FRED STEVENS AND BILL FREEDMAN IN MILLS CANYON

An annual activity that our group has enjoyed for many years is the Saturday morning foray into creekside Mills Canyon in Burlingame. It will happen this year on Saturday, January 9, 10:00 a.m. Rain or shine.

To get there, take Route 280 and exit on the Trousdale Avenue offramp. Turn right immediately onto Skyline Boulevard. The first through street on the left will be Hillcrest Drive; turn left onto this Hillcrest Drive. Continue to the second arterial stop, which is Adeline Drive. To your left, you will see autos and parking area. Park here. If you pass the green "Kohl Mansion" sign, you have gone too far. Bon voyage!

We have accumulated a list of about 120 identified varieties of mushrooms including occasional edibles such as chanterelles. There are minimal restrictions on collecting. (Bill is Chairman of the Friends of Mills Canyon!)

Wear wet-weather or lug-soled shoes. Although we are improving the trail every year, sections do get wet and muddy, especially from the impact of vandalizing dirt bike users who have been making new and unwanted trails to go downhill, cutting through existing trails.

We have never set a limit to our party, so you needn't sign up. We usually finish about 1:00 p.m. Other fungal-uninitiated participants from the public are expected to be attracted to this event.

To open one's eyes to a deeper level of understanding, bring a pocket lens with you to examine those fine details which will help you to better identify fungi, as well as to aesthetically reveal the small but

hidden beautiful forms and colors that natural objects can take. If you don't already have such a pocket lens, consider buying one inexpensively at a stamp collectors' store.

Fred Stevens is our knowledgeable guest lecturer and is experienced at teaching novices about basic mycology, using the examples on hand. It is an ideal beginners' introduction trip. If you want more information, contact Bill Freedman at 650.344.7774, 650.344.2227 (fax), or loufreed@aol.com (email).

—Bill Freedman



## MSSF Email List



Michael Wood has created a mailing list for the membership of the Mycological Society of San Francisco. The purpose of this list is to discuss MSSF activities and the mushroom scene in the San Francisco Bay Area.

If you are interested in joining this discussion, you can subscribe to the list in one of two ways:

1. via browser at <http://www.onelist.com/subscribe.cgi/mssf>
2. by sending an empty email message to the following address: [mssf-subscribe@onelist.com](mailto:mssf-subscribe@onelist.com)

### *Scoop, continued from page 9*

participated. Special thanks to Patrick, Kathleen and Charmoon, all of whom shared with the group the lovely fresh *B. edulis* specimens they had found further to the north. We found only one soggy specimen where we hunted. Conditions were typical of early in the season – the picking was poor, fungal fruiting bodies were scarce. Nonetheless, the species list which follows attests to the fact that this is a phenomenal mycological area. Many thanks to Norman Andresen and Terri Beauséjour for carrying the load of identifying all these obscure and perplexing (at least to me) species:

*Pholiota flammans*  
*Cantharellus formosus*  
*Boletus edulis*, *B. erythropus*, *B. piperatus*  
*Fistulina hepatica*  
*Clitopilus prunulus*  
*Russula sanguinea*, *R. silvicola*, *R. bruno-violacea*, *R. maxima*,  
*R. brevipes*, *R. brevipes* var. *acrior*  
*Dentinum repandum*  
*Hygrophoropsis aurantiaca*

*Gomphus floccosus*  
*Suillus subtomentosus*, *S. ponderosus*, *S. brevipes*  
*Tricaptum albitinus*  
*Amanita gemmata*, *A. franchetti*, *A. pachycolea*  
*Pluteus cervinus*  
*Mycena subcana*  
*Xeramphalina cotastanelus*  
*Lepiota cristata*  
*Psathyrella* sp.  
*Bondarzevia montana*  
*Rhizina undulata*  
*Chroogomphus vinicolor*, *C. rutilis*  
*Lyophyllum decastes*  
*Ramaria formosa*  
*Tricholomopsis rutilens*  
*Naematoloma fasciculare*  
*Rhizopogon craceorubens*  
*Biospora myrosura*  
*Stereum hirsutum*  
*Marasmius quercophylla*, *M. calhounii*

*snow boletes continued from page 1*

At around 7000 feet, I note with alarm that the car thermometer reads 34 degrees. That's okay; there's lodgepole pine forest out there and some forest service roads leading out from here, so I crank the steering wheel hard left and we bounce our way in. It's curiously crowded with traffic on roads that I'm used to seeing deserted in the spring morel season. We catch a glimpse of camouflage through their windshields and then remember: it's deer-hunting season in the Sierras. And these guys aren't going to let a little rain stop them.

Well, neither are we. After a few false starts we finally make it up to 8000 feet where the temperature hovers at 33 degrees and the rain keeps pouring. As I put on my rain gear, I wish I hadn't traded my nice red rainsuit for discreet green. I crave high visibility and can feel antlers growing out of my head. But Yutaka spots a cluster of four nice young oversized boletes growing right along the road, so it's a quick plunge out of the van and into the wet and wooly wild.

Okay! Boletes, and plenty of them -- at least at first. But they peter out, and we spend a lot of time tramping up and down a creek flowing through the meadow, covering our baskets with plastic bags so the boletes within don't get waterlogged. I gradually notice that the motion of the airborne water molecules is slowing and they're pining for crystalline structure. Sure enough, the rain gets a little -- shall we say -- hard, and starts to turn white. The meadow takes on a crust of snow. To make matters more challenging, a thick fog kicks up and the gloom of twilight sets in. Boletes keep our blood hot, though, so we keep searching and picking until the bitter end, when it's almost too dark to see our way back to the van.

We retreat to lower altitudes where it's not snowing and wisely give up on cooking out. We eat at Shaver Lake's finest dining room surrounded by locals, deer hunters, and walls of knotty pine. One advantage to picking mushrooms in deer hunting season: no one looks askance at two grubby-looking guys dressed in rainsuits. As we leave, the sky opens up to reveal a web of stars; all just a ploy to goad us back into an optimistic frame of mind. In the middle of the night I awaken to the sound of a heavy downpour and can think only one thought: 3000 feet higher this is snow, and it's blanketing all the boletes there.

The next morning the rain has stopped. It's foggy, but we have hopes the snow might be melting. We decide on a late morning start to give it some latitude. I take the opportunity to buy a red neckerchief to wear for visibility, and the Spanish lady behind the counter -- hearing that we're mushroom pickers -- rhapsodizes over the boletes she used to eat in Spain. We deftly avoid telling her where and what we're picking right now, then hightail it to the heights to continue our search for bigger and better boletes.

There's plenty of snow, you betcha. Patches of ground start to open up, though, and we find a few boletes in a forest racked by the garbage of a ski run. We decide to return to yesterday's twilight zone, and are fortunate on ascending higher to find that the snow has thinned out. The hunters have not, however, and now that the visibility is better they're shooting more. Whenever we're walking on the road, they stop their vehicles to ask us if we've seen any deer. After several of these encounters, it dawns on us: these hunters have no legs! They are, in fact, the mechanized centaurs -- human gun-carrying torso on top, truck, jeep, or SUV below. Add to that a visual oxymoron: they all wear camouflage jackets, even though they never leave the confines of the cab for the forest.

As we tramp up and down the snow-sogged meadows and creek beds picking occasional boletes, we see plenty of deer signs -- a lot of them half-eaten boletes literally scored with buck teeth. Yutaka points out that "a hunter could sit right at the top of this meadow with a good book and a thermos of coffee and go home with a deer at the end of the day." No such good sense here, though. The deeper we go into the woods, the more secure we feel that we won't be bothered by deer hunters. Whatever happened to the wily woodsman who knows his prey intimately, tracks it high and low, reads scat like the morning paper, and comes home every season with fresh venison and tales of the woods? Extinct, no doubt, at the hands of motorized centaurs.

By the end of Sunday, Yutaka and I are wet, cold, and thoroughly exhilarated. We hit the road buoyed by modest success: we each have a grocery bag filled with young, well-refrigerated boletes. And for at least a couple of days we were enmeshed in the minutia of the forest. Perhaps that's the truly strange phenomenon these days.

- Mike Boom

## Cooking Tip

The purpose of sauteing mushrooms is to lock in their flavor. When sauteing mushrooms, be sure that you do not try to cook too many at the same time. If you get too many in the pan you will wind up steaming instead of sauteing and that delicious flavor will be lost.

From the Spore-Addict Times

Oct 1998

**Note about the photos in this issue:** Hilary and Yu-Shen, two editors of this newsletter, recently visited the Arunyik Mushroom Center in Bangkok, Thailand. The photo on page 1 is one of the many mushroom inlays in the Center's tile floor. The photo on



page 10 is a real mushroom set against a real, 150 ft. tall statue of the Standing Buddha, located across the street from the Arunyik Mushroom Center; the mushroom is actually only inches tall. The photo to the left is of Boonchock, one of the 15 brothers and sisters who own the Arunyik Mushroom Center. You may recognize Mr. Boonchock from last year's NAMA foray in Monterey. Boonchock was a very gracious host to us while we were visiting.

*Calendar, continued from page 10*

leader; please consider volunteering by contacting Henry Shaw.

**Forays to the North of SF:**

*Samuel P. Taylor State Park (Marin Co.)* – Meet at 10:00 a.m.. Foray leader: Henry Shaw (925.943.3237, shaw4@llnl.gov)

*Tomales Bay State Park (Marin Co.)* – Meet at the Heart's Desire Beach parking lot at 10:00 a.m. Foray leader: Mike Boom (510.635.7723, mboom@dnai.com)

*Salt Point State Park (Sonoma Co. Coast)* – Meet at Stump Beach parking lot at 10:00 a.m.. Foray leader: Anna Moore (510.643.9518, amorel@uclink4.berkeley.edu)

*Mendocino (Mendocino Co. Coast)* – We need a foray leader; please consider volunteering by contacting Henry Shaw.

*Willits (Mendocino Co.)* – A foray on 400 acres of private land owned by MSSF member, Jan Donaghy. Terrain is steep and rugged in places. Foray leaders are Jan Donaghy (janman955@aol.com, 510.339.1569) and Mark Lockaby (pozer900ss@aol.com, 510.412.9964)

**Saturday-Sunday, Dec. 5-6: During-Fair Forays.** We will conduct short beginners' walks around the Presidio on both Saturday and Sunday. These forays will occur about every 2-3 hours, and will leave from the Exhibition Hall. Volunteers are needed for leading these forays. Contact Henry Shaw (925.943.3237, shaw4@llnl.gov) if you would like to help out.

**Saturday-Sunday, Dec 5-6: MSSF Fungus Fair** This is one of the society's biggest annual events. See inside for details and information about volunteering and participating.

**Friday-Sunday, Dec. 11-13: Guided foray in Mendocino** with David Campbell and Charmoon Richardson. This is a limited enrollment foray, sponsored by the Wild About Mushrooms Co. A \$75 fee will be charged to cover food and lodging costs. See the Nov. *Mycena News* or contact Charmoon (707.887.1888) for details.

**Monday, Dec. 14: MSSF Christmas Dinner** See inside this newsletter for all the scrumptious details.

**Sunday, December 20: Deadline for applications for MSSF's Whited/Thiers Scholarship.** Please see last month's issue of the *Mycena News* for details.

**Thursday – Sunday, Dec. 31 – Jan 3: New Year's Weekend Foray** (Manchester, Mendocino Co.). This is a limited enrollment foray sponsored by the Wild About Mushrooms Co. A \$150 fee will be charged. See the Nov. *Mycena News* or contact Charmoon Richardson (707.887.1888) for details.

**Saturday, January 3: Joaquin Miller Park** (Oakland Hills) beginners' walk. Meet at 10:00 a.m. at the Sequoia Arena. Call Norm Andresen for details: 510.278.8998 (These walks will be held every other Saturday — unless otherwise noted — until the end of the local mushroom season.)

**Saturday, January 9: Mills Canyon Foray.** 10 a.m. Fred Stevens will be leading this foray. See inside this newsletter for details.

**Thursday, January 14: Lands End Walk,** Lincoln Park, San Francisco Meet at 10:00 a.m. by the water fountain in the parking lot in front of the Palace of the Legion of Honor. Call or e-mail Bob Gorman (650.340.8986, mycoforager@att.net) for details.

**Saturday - Sunday, Jan 16-17: Point Arena foray** (Mendocino Co.). Foray on the private land of one of our members. Camping space is limited. Contact Henry Shaw (925.943.3237, shaw4@llnl.gov) for details and to reserve a camping spot.

**Saturday – Monday, Jan 16-18: Sonoma Co. Mycological Association Winter Mushroom Camp** in Philo, CA (Mendocino Co.). See Nov. *Mycena News* for details. Cost is \$125/person. Send reservations and payment to: SOMA Camp, P.O. Box 1088, Forestville, CA 95436.

**Saturday, January 23: Joaquin Miller Park** (Oakland Hills) beginners' walk. Meet at 10:00 a.m. at the Sequoia Arena. Call Norm Andresen for details (510.278.8998).

## Memorable Mendocino Moments & Thoughts

**Marco**, on the food prep team at the Woodlands Camp, felt that our MSSF group was “one of the best camps this year” and he really liked the group of people. Marco calls mushrooms the “Devil's Fruit” but likes them anyway. He sometimes finds mushrooms in the Mendocino woods and is awed by the beauty and diversity of the mushrooms he finds. He also likes how the rain encourages the mushrooms to grow; he considers this process quite tranquil.

**Terri Beausejour's** most memorable experience was “the surprise and glee exhibited by our fellow forayers at having (almost) all walked right past a beautiful fruiting of fresh new *Boletus edulus* buttons lined up like so many plump little soldiers standing at attention right along the trail!”

**Mark Lockaby** enjoyed “connecting with other people” most about the Mendocino Foray. Since he and his son **Jake** foray together

many weekends throughout the season, they look forward to the group forays to get to know the other MSSF members. Jake most enjoys “being with Dad.” Mark and Jake found lots of edibles and donated them ALL to the Saturday's dinner.

**Joel Risch** and his daughter **Jennifer**, who are not yet members of the MSSF, “didn't find much” but thought “the company was great.” Overall they felt the foray was “just wonderful!”

**Cindy Koepfel** flew out from the east coast to attend the foray with us. Cindy reports that her most memorable moment on the foray was “finding my first crop of chanterelles, which were quite hidden.” “But,” she added, “they just kept coming after the first one. It ended up being 6 or 8 - fresh, beautiful, wonderful - it was very exciting.”

-- *hilarly somers*

## Mushroom Sightings

**11/4/98, Herb Saylor:** Walked across my front lawn this morning to get into the car on the way to work, and spotted two beautiful specimens of *Coprinus*. Not sure of the species, very delicate, white pileus with yellow tints, see through in spaces between gills, ribbed from disc to margin. Also got some *Lysurus mouskin* (not sure of spelling) at our local union hall in Sunnyvale. I have seen it there a few times before, and collected some about a month ago.

**11/5/98, Larry Stickney:** Last Saturday three of us spent most of the daylight hours foraging around the deserted housing tracts in the Forest Service leased areas along Highway 50 around Strawberry. The amount of mushroom fruiting was astounding, probably because of the steepness of the American River canyon sloping down to the river itself which thereby keeps the hunted area moister than most of the area from the natural drainage patterns. Almost everything out in the open was frozen stiff. I guess *Cortinarius* species were the most common, and of course *Russula*. Slime molds dotted old logs with color. *Pluteus cervinus* peered out from beneath the same logs. Late *Boletus edulis* numbering six stood close to and under an L P gas tank at Lot 1 in the 41 Mile Tract. A single taste of a large light brown squat mushroom proved to me it was *Leucopaxillus amarus*. At least two kinds of *Ramaria* were seen: one was a whitish gray tightly branched sort with the provisional name of *R. thiersii*; the other was a dark reddish, purplish, tightly branched coral.

We found: *Suillus punctatipes*, a large appressed haired cap with dots on its short stipe; a tall brown staining *Tricholoma* specimen; Honey Mushrooms, *Armillaria mellea*. There are many different styles of *melleas*; A big white soft round topped carpophore which looked like *Russula delicata* in color and size but without the deep depression in the center.

I also plucked a passel of Shaggy Manes from dirt lined forest roads up in the nearby hills. They became a sparkling soup for several with

a cup of cream and one large white onion, all lightly sauteed and blended.

Unless everything gets covered with snow this weekend, as seems likely, Sierra Fall forayers have a treat awaiting them around Strawberry. There's more still at the Lodge bar on the edge of the big meadow in town.

**11/15/98, Fred Stevens:** Sunday, Mike Wood, Jane Wardzinska, and I forayed to Memorial Co. Park just inland from Pescadero on the Peninsula. This is a mix of tanbarkoak and redwood that often produces interesting collecting. On this day, the forest floor was literally carpeted with various *Mycenas*, *Strobilurus trullisatus*, *Marasmius quercophilus*, etc. Wood rotters were also very much in evidence, e.g. *Armillaria mellea*, *Hypholoma fasciculare*, *Hygrophopsis aurantiaca*. Quite a few *Lepiotas* were fruiting, as you might expect from an early season outing but not many *Russulas*, *Amanitas*, or *Lactarius* species. We did find, however, one large *Agaricus praeclaresquamosa*, lots of *Pholiota terrestris*, several clusters of *Lyophyllum decastes*, a fruiting of a beautiful *Galerina* species, growing from dirt, not wood, *Caulorhiza umbonata* specimens with strangely short rooted stipes which tended to be on wood, and an impressive display of the orange peel fungus *Aleuria aurantia*.

All in all, a very enjoyable day and we managed to corral several potential new species for BAF: *Calocera cornea*, *Mycena oregonense* and *Naucoria vinicolor*, the latter the largest fruiting I've ever seen. By the way, please note that Memorial Park is a county with a no collecting policy.

**11/17/98, Bob Mackler:** I went to Salt Point on Friday 13. It was very unproductive: almost nothing fruiting. It will take a couple of inches of rain to make things happen. Good amounts of Honey mushroom on Mount Tam.

## Don't Miss the MSSF's Holiday Dinner!

The holiday dinner this year will be a festive and fun food extravaganza with camaraderie and celebration. Like previous years, the venue will be the Snow Building in Knowland Park, Oakland. Mark your calendar for one of the society's most exuberant events: Monday, December 14<sup>th</sup>. We'll have "The greatest cook! And, the greatest menu!" says Lucia. Please plan to arrive by 7:00 p.m.

Please note: you will need to bring your own place settings, dishes, bowls, utensils, and wine or other beverage. Some festive drinks will be provided. Also, we need volunteers for hors-d'oeuvres – especially those with all the wild mushrooms you can find. Please bring appetizers to share with others.

Like most MSSF events, this dinner is a volunteer effort. And, volunteers are needed! To help out in food preparation, serving, or organizing, contact Lucia Paulazza, chair of the culinary group, at 415.584.0852.

**Reservations are a must.** Please send the form below and checks for \$25 per person to Zöe-Amy Caldwell, 35433 66<sup>th</sup> Avenue, Oakland, CA 94605. Reservations must be received by December 10. Don't delay! Last year's dinner was sold out.

### Reservation Form for the MSSF Holiday Dinner

Your Name:	Number of people in your party needing a Vegetarian meal:
Your Phone #:	Names of people in your party (excluding self):
Amount Enclosed:	

# THE MUSHROOM SCOOP

This monthly column solicits input concerning mushroom collections of particular interest, rarity, or amazement. E-mail me at [yogidog@earthlink.net](mailto:yogidog@earthlink.net) to contribute.

- David Campbell



As challenging a task as it is to identify a wild mushroom to be edible for one's self or others, the wary mycophagist's assuredness checklist is often not completed until the "how" of preparation is paired with the "what" of identification. A pair of recent public presentations got me rolling on this bent...

Darvin Deschazer, in his October MSSF general meeting slide show/talk on weird and exotic mushrooms of California, stated that he prefers most mushrooms which he eats to be in their raw state (and collected in pristine button stages of growth), asserting that the act of cooking them destroys many inherent qualities which he considers to be central to their culinary excellence. Specifically, he mentioned *Boletus edulis*, *Macrolepiota rachodes*, *Matsutake*, and the various edible *Agaricus* species, as fungi he enjoys *au naturel*.

Then, in a foody article in the *SF Chronicle*, author Marlena Speiler offers a recipe for "Truffled Wild Mushroom Salad," which calls for uncooked *Boletus edulis* drizzled with truffle oil. In addition to the ceps, Marlena further lists portobello, chanterelle, shiitake, *Amanita caesaria*, and enoki as recommended (raw) garnishment.

So, if a mushroom is listed as edible, you can just eat it, right? Not quite. You need to know a little more than that if you value your health, comfort, and well-being. Many mushrooms require cooking to render them non-toxic and/or palatable, and it is my understanding that sporocarp tissues are basically indigestible if not broken down by heat. Here, based on my personal experiences, written material (of which I've not found much), specific people's insight, and, necessarily, a certain amount of hearsay, I offer some comments and opinions concerning cooking requirements on the above-mentioned, and other, mushrooms.

*Boletus edulis* (Porcini or Cep), when consumed raw, is known to cause gastro-intestinal (GI) irritation in many people. It is, however, delicious as a rock-hard button thinly sliced. I eat it in Lilliputian quantities only, without problem. I would not recommend eating a Brobdingnagian pile.

*Macrolepiota rachodes* (The Shaggy Parasol) is an edible and choice mushroom that many people are allergic to (GI). I've long suspected that negative reactions are frequently tied to consumption of overripe specimens and/or lack of thorough cooking. Darwin is the first I've heard of eating raw buttons.

*Tricholoma magnivelare* (matsutake) raw? MSSF stalwart Yutaka Wada informs me that in Japan, where the matsutake are apparently more important than money, they are always cooked in some fashion, as are all other mushrooms, including enoki and shiitake. I put a lot of weight on the value of

cultural wisdom, and, in fact, all over the world mushrooms are predominately cooked before consumption. Of course, now that I've heard someone say how great they are raw, I will most likely sample one thin slice of the very next plump matsutake specimen that I encounter, though not until I've taken great care to separate any possible earthy contamination from the pristine flesh. Mother was right, you know – that part about eating dirt can be bad for you. Especially raw dirt.

*Cantharellus cibarius* and *C. formosus* (Golden Chanterelles) in their raw state are known to be a GI irritant to many people. Some people note a disagreeable peppery taste. Larry Stickney makes a great sorbet (uncooked) from this mushroom, of which I always partake when I can, with no ill effects. Not a dish to eat by the bucketful. I am not aware of anyone else ever having had a problem with it. As a guess, I would offer that perhaps the act of freezing the chanterelle slurry may somehow render the mushroom more tummy-compatible.

*Amanita caesaria* is traditionally served raw in Italy, and elsewhere. It is not known to grow in the U.S., though it does have close cousins: *A. jacksonii* on the East coast, and *A. cochisiani*, found in the mountains of the Southwest. It is virtually never available commercially. Many people have commented negatively towards the irresponsibility of the published recipe for so blithely suggesting that a mushroom with such sinister, and similar looking, relatives should be included on the ingredient list of a salad for the unsavvy public at large. I have heard of people eating *A. calyprata* raw, basically mimicking the European applications of *A. caesaria*. *Amanita pachycolea* (The Western Grisette) is listed as a fine edible, *if well cooked*. Of utmost importance concerning the ingestion of any *Amanita* is absolute and positive identification. Cooking does not destroy deadly amanitan toxins; whether an *Amanita phalloides* (The Death Cap) is eaten raw is never an issue, because it is always poisonous.

Then we have Portabellas – sure, the pumped up *Agaricus bisporus*, (Button Mushroom) – we've seen this mushroom sliced raw as a "gourmet" salad topping ever since we can remember. Surely they must be OK raw, otherwise everybody wouldn't be doing it, eh? Well, not so fast – lest we be caught thinking like lemmings. I recall Andrew Weil mentioning, at one of the Breitenbush conferences years ago, that virtually all mushrooms contain certain potentially carcinogenic compounds which are easily destroyed by heat, and therefore one should always cook them. He specifically mentioned *Agaricus bisporus* in that talk. Further, I recently collected, via Larry Stickney, this tidbit (along with others) off the e-mails that were bouncing around in response to the raw mushroom salad recipe. From Bryce Kendrick: "I would not recommend eating any macrofungus raw, the ones tested so far all seem to contain mutagens."

*continued on next page*

*Scoop, continued from page 8*

Some mushrooms are traditionally eaten raw. Cooking would destroy the gelatinous flesh of *Tremella mesenterica* (Witch's Butter) and *Phlogiotia helvelloides* (Apricot Jelly Mushroom), though it wouldn't much hurt their flavors, as they have none. Truffles, especially the *Tuber melanosporum* (White Truffle) are barely heated, just enough to release the ambrosial aroma as it nears the lucky diner's olfactory sensors. *Agaricus augustus* (The Prince), along with other edible wild *Agaricus* species, is frequently enjoyed uncooked. Todd Spanier's e-mail mentioned his mycophagal indulgence of munching on raw *Marasmius oreades* (Fairy Ring Mushrooms) between classes at Hayward State. *Fistulina hepatica* (The Beefsteak Fungus) is typically eaten raw . . . or tartare, I guess you could say. It lends itself very well to sushi-type treatments.

There are many mushrooms listed in books as edible, however, which most definitely require some form of cooking prior to ingestion. Morels, for instance, will make most people sick if not cooked. I read once of a policeman's banquet in British Columbia where the ostensibly unwitting chef served a party of approximately 100 of Vancouver's finest a salad topped with raw morels. Some 75 became ill. The other 25 gendarmes may very well not have liked mushrooms and brushed them aside. *Laetiporus sulphureus* (Sulphur Shelf) should never be eaten raw, and not at all (according to many) when it is found growing on laurel or eucalyptus. *Helvella lacunosa* (The Elfin Saddle) is eaten by many people; it contains toxic helvellic acid which is readily destroyed by cooking. I have a friend who once poisoned himself sampling the edible *Leccinum madronae* raw. I recommend thorough cooking of all *Leccinum*. I have taken from conversation with David Aurora that many *Boleteaceae* contain poisonous compounds that may be effectively broken down by prolonged cooking. He tells the story of once eating the known to be poisonous *Boletus satanus* (Satan's Bolete) with Andrew Weil (who, he says, always gets him out on the edge), after cooking it ad infinitum. They did not get sick, but David says it didn't taste very good, and he would not eat it again. This can be a very dangerous mushroom. I heard of a fellow that ate it in the mountains while backpacking; without the benefit of basic nursing support, he nearly died.

Ibotenic acid can apparently be leached from *Amanita Muscaria* by boiling them and then discarding the water, leaving a rather soggy detoxified Fly Agaric, which may then be incorporated as desired into a meal. I ate some, without problem, as did some 60 others at last year's David Aurora Mushroom Foray at Albion; Mycochef Patrick Hamilton, acting under strict advisement, actually boiled them twice, just to be double-dog sure, then sautéed them. They weren't bad – if I am ever starving, I will wring them out and try them again.

*Gyromitra esculenta* (False Morel) is universally listed as a deadly toxic mushroom, and it no doubt is. Many people, however, unabashedly enjoy its esculence by a special cooking method – again, usually boiling the specimens and tossing the water, then sautéing thoroughly. The poison involved is monomethylhydrazine, MMH, an important component of rocket fuel; it is extremely volatile, and is readily released upon introduction of heat. Great care must be exercised to avoid inhalation of the cooking pan's fumes – concentrations there may be lethal! Larry Stickney has long championed the excellence of this species as a comestible, and maintains that even the simple drying process sufficiently releases the dangerous elements

to the atmosphere. That being the case, one had best be careful around the old dryer, too! I enjoy their fine flavor and texture on occasion, but do not serve them at group functions. If people have the slightest worry about a mushroom they eat, it *can* make them sick.

*Dentinum repandum* is on my list of mushrooms which must be thoroughly cooked. Years ago, I suffered the only mushroom poisoning I've ever actually experienced. I ate a large helping of not-all-that-cooked Hedgehogs and woke up later that night, and stayed up for the rest of the night. The nasty GI disturbance plus agitated nervous and muscular systems symptoms subsided the following afternoon, the time pattern suggesting that it was not a flu bug causing me the discomfort. A short time later, I met a person who cautioned me that Hedgehogs should always be well cooked; since then, I have indeed treated them so. Recently, in conversation with the attendant at the Brookings, OR, ranger station, I was told of another suspected poisoning. This woman had eaten *Dentinum repandum* raw and, later that night, went into what she called a seizure, a full body clench. She was taken to the hospital, and ended up having her driver's license suspended for 3 months while they checked her out for further complications. No certainty was established by the medicos that the raw mushrooms had caused her attack, but she was clear in her mind that they were fully culpable.

Cooking sanitizes mushrooms. Hazardous conditions such as dirty hands, bird and animal droppings or saliva, insect or larvae infestation, and bacterial and vermin contamination – all can be controlled or neutralized by a blast on the burner. There was a story from Hawaii concerning some unfortunate souls who let themselves in for a bout with nematodes, having consumed "magic" mushrooms with wanton disregard for that particular *psilocybe's* coprophilic mode. A little substrate contaminant removal and a little pan fry could have worked some far more important magic for them, I reckon.

Cooking can be an aid in the identification process. The phenol odor released from a sizzling *Agaricus californicus* could save you from losing your lunch. The maple syrup odor from a panful of *Lactarius fragilis* confirms the ID of the Candy Caps you are about to wow the crowd with. Visually, different mushrooms react to cooking in distinctive manners and, once known, offer further reinforcement of the identity comfort zone which needs to be established in order to righteously allow a wild mushroom to pass one's lips.

So, cook those edibles always, I say, except for the exceptions you're willing to accept. And do try not to ruin them in the process. Mushrooms can be, after all, a very special food.

**Report on Salt Point Rendezvous . . .**

The recent Salt Point Rendezvous was yet again a smashing fun event. Foray attendance was light, presumably due to torrential downpours that were occurring everywhere else. We didn't get rained on all day. The crowd swelled for dinner, which featured porcini barley soup, abalone, grilled porcini, Beefsteak fungus tartare, smoked marlin, and campfire-seared salmon. As a potluck cookout, the event functioned perfectly, with all participants pitching in with creative dishes, swell ingredients, and great energy. Thanks to all of you who

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**December, 1998 vol 48:12**

## Calendar

**Tuesday, Dec 1: Final Fungus Fair Planning Meeting, 7 p.m.** Presidio Child Development Center, Presidio, San Francisco. Call Mark Thomsen at 510.540.1288 for details.

**Friday, Dec. 4: Pre-Fungus-Fair Forays.** We have scheduled a variety of forays to collect specimens for the San Francisco Mushroom Fair on Dec 5-6. For more information about a specific foray, contact the foray leader listed below. Bring baskets, knives, waxed paper bags and/or rolls of waxed paper. Wear lug-soled or mountain shoes as it may be wet underfoot. Hand lenses also help. If you plan to collect specimens for the fair on your own, please try to get them to the Herbst Exhibition Hall in the Presidio by 5:00 p.m. on Friday so they can be identified and distributed to the appropriate tables.

### Forays to the East of SF:

*Joaquin Miller Park (Oakland Hills)* — Meet at 10:00 a.m. at the Sequoia Arena. Foray leader: Norm Andresen (510.278.8998)

*Nevada City (Nevada Co.)* — Meet at 9:00 a.m. at the Pioneer Park picnic area in Nevada City. Foray leader: Jerry Bloom (530.265.9544 between 4-9 p.m., luddite@jps.net).

### Forays to the South of SF:

*Huddart Park (San Mateo Co.)* — Meet at 10:00 a.m. in the main

parking lot, just past the entrance kiosk. Foray leader: Wade Leschyn (650.591.6616, leschyn@rahul.net)

*Crystal Springs Watershed (San Mateo Co.)* — Attendance limited to 35 people; call foray leader to reserve a place. Meet at 10:00 a.m. at the S.F. Water Dept. Pulgas Water Temple off Canada Rd past Rt. 92. No water available on trail; bring something to drink! Foray will end by 3:00 p.m. as the gates will be locked at that time. Foray leader: Bill Freedman (650.344.7774, FAX 650.344.2227, loufreed@aol.com).

*Memorial/Sam McDonald Parks (San Mateo Co.)* — Meet in the Memorial Park parking lot, just past the entrance kiosk. Foray leaders: Fred Stevens (650.994.1374, fstev@wco.com) and Mike Wood (510.357.7696, mwood@mycoweb.com).

*Soquel Demonstration State Forest (Santa Cruz Co.)* — We need a foray

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**For the most current Calendar information, call the MSSF hotline at 415.759.0495 or check the MSSF web site at: <http://www.mssf.org>**