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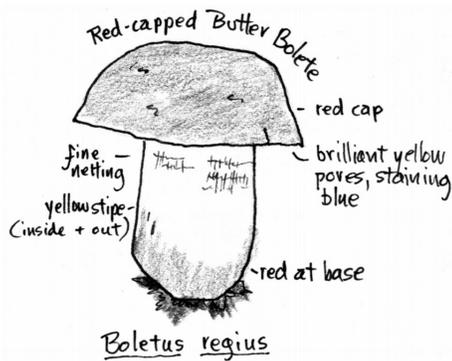
# Mycena News

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Mycological Society of San Francisco

September, 1999, vol 49:9

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by Debbie Viess

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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 2000. 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, email them to mycena-news@mpath.com.

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## Notes from a Sequoia National Forest Outing

For the past five years my husband David and I have camped during July at Stony Creek in Sequoia National Forest. At 6,500 feet elevation, the landscape is dominated by conifers, primarily sugar and Jeffrey pine, red fir and a smattering of incense cedar. Stony Creek itself starts as a spectacular waterfall in the Jenny Lakes Wilderness Area, then flows across a granite basin, carving potholes and deep pools, which the Forest Service stocks with trout. Alongside the creek wildflowers bloom in spectacular profusion. But best of all, this year it rained both before and during our trip. And as all you fellow mycophiles know, rain = mushrooms. Coming as it did in the heart of the Bay Area dry season this was truly a gift from the gods!

We learned that it had rained the Sunday before our Monday arrival, so we figured that we had several days before the mushrooms would be popping. Wrong! On a quick scouting mission around the Stony Creek campground on Tuesday evening, we discovered numerous large Butter Boletes, most far too old for the frying pan. Across a nearby meadow, David spotted the immense glowing forms of a cluster of *Lentinus ponderosus*. They were so tough and deeply rooted that I could barely pry one loose with a knife. Although purportedly edible, we undoubtedly had insufficient butter and fuel to complete the task.

Amanitas were out in force. *A. gemmata* was abundant and ubiquitous. We found a lovely *A. novinupta*, living up to its common name, the Blusher, and an attractive *A. muscaria* with a yellow and orange cap. From the thick duff alongside Stony Creek, I dug up a cluster of

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## Missouri Was Hot, Mushrooms Were Not, At The Annual NAMA Foray

Cape Girardeau, bordering the Mississippi river in Missouri, was the meeting place this year for the North American Mycological Association, the Edward Angus Burt Foray. About two-thirds of the usual attendance was counted, about 200 people. The MSSF contingent was small but they made themselves heard.

Mike Wood led a session on the use of the internet; Jane Wardinska, Jack Aldridge and Bill Freedman took part in a panel discussion about recent mushroom poisonings; Louise Freedman supervised the luscious cooking for the mycophagy session. Phyllis Cole and Lee Yamata helped with mushroom dish preparation. For Ann Garik and Matthew Kierle, this was an introduction into the mysteries of NAMA's Annual Foray and business meeting. We hope that they learned so much and enjoyed the experience so that they will return

as active members in the future.

The program was directed by energetic Ken Gilberg, President of the Missouri Mycological Society, who claims to eat at least 80 different kinds of mushrooms. The program's theme and title was "Show Me the Mushrooms". Alas, Missouri was experiencing the end of one of the hottest periods to be recorded in many years. Always well organized and a go-getter, Ken was unusually jolly and obviously loved his role as ring master. Later I learned that this had to do with more than the foray. He is deeply in love and preparing to marry a lovely fungal neophyte. There'll be no arguments over mushroom names in that family!

Only about 200 mushrooms were found, usually on logs and in shady nooks and

Continued on page 4

## President's Corner

Welcome to the 1999-2000 mushroom season. This is the 50th anniversary of the Mycological Society of San Francisco and to celebrate we are planning some special events. One is a 50th anniversary foray—date and time to be announced. The second is that we are planning an exciting lineup of speakers for the general meetings this year.

We're working on sharing speakers with the Fungus Federation of Santa Cruz and I should be able to announce some of the upcoming speakers in the October newsletter. We hope to have a mix of local and national guests.

Also, make sure to mark your calendar for the year's largest event, The Fungus Fair, which will be held on December 11th and 12th. And, by popular demand, we've had a name and location change this year; the fair will be held at the Hall of Flowers in Golden Gate Park.

Some other big news this year: Norm Andresen will be coordinating this fall's forays, the first of which will be in October.

Finally, as part of the MSSF's fiftieth anniversary we would also like to put together a slide show that celebrates 50 years of Bay Area mushrooming. If anyone has slides and commentary that they would like to contribute or if you're a long time member and would like to participate in this, please contact me. I look forward to working with everyone and to seeing you at some of the numerous events that the MSSF has planned for the year. See you out in the woods!

— *Mark Thomsen*

## September General Meeting: Dr. William Freedman

### ***Everyone Is Eligible To Be Exposed To The Poisons Of Stachybotrys Atra***

General meetings of the MSSF occur regularly on the third Tuesday of each month, at the Randall museum in San Francisco. Guest speakers start at 8pm, but many other activities begin at 7pm (including open library hours, special exhibits, and general conversation). We're starting up our first general meeting this September 21 with our own toxicologist, Dr. Bill Freedman.

Bill will review your chances of being poisoned by a shiny black mold named *Stachybotrys atra*. All it requires to grow is a constantly moist area providing cellulose—such as ceiling tile, carpets, paper or the backing of gypsum board. Bill has collected newspaper and e-mail material demonstrating that cases are being reported all over the USA and the world. If you have an unfixed drainage problem in your home or at work, you are a potential candidate for stachybotritis, a "Sick Building" disease. Children have died from it. A professional video about children taken from the Learning Channel will be shown as well as slides dealing with the disease in adults. Find out why the City Hall in San Martin and the Sheriff's Forensic Laboratory in San Mateo have been abandoned until they can be cleaned up or replaced.

## Mushroom Madness in Marin — Sunday, September 19

Loraine Berry is continuing her spectacular food fest tradition — Mushroom Madness in Marin. Save this date: Sunday, September 19. The cost is same as last year, \$22, and reservations are required. Please contact Loraine at 415.454.0914 for reservations.

This year's event will continue the hands-on, participatory culinary tradition with an afternoon dinner at Loraine's lovely home in Ross, CA. Please arrive at 1:30pm, and please bring an apron and a beverage to share; the event truly is participatory.

Loraine generously donates all proceeds from the event to the scholarship fund of the MSSF.

## Mycena News Celebrates MSSF's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary

As Mark mentions, the 1999-2000 mushroom season marks the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Mycological Society of San Francisco. Yes, the society was founded in 1950! The Mycena News will be celebrating all season long with special articles and mementos of the past 50 years of our history. Recent years have seen a marked upswing in the popularity of wild mushrooms, as we've started seeing wild Chanterelles as a matter of course in our local grocers; even Hedgehogs are beginning to be a common sight in the produce section. Restaurants more frequently feature dishes with wild mushrooms, and folks who used to avoid mushrooms are now seeking out the new trend in food. MSSF can deservedly take some credit for helping the Bay Area become more educated and open minded about mushrooms through its wonderful yearly mushroom fairs and other educational activities!

We'd like to dedicate a special section of each newsletter this season to remembering MSSF's history. We'll be digging through the newsletter archives for material, but we'd especially like for long-time members to submit articles and mementos. What are some of your favorite foray memories? What was your most spectacular find? What did MSSF do that you find particularly memorable? Send us pictures, letters, old memoirs, anything that represents MSSF's past that you'd like to share! Send submissions to the Mycena News; contact information for the Mycena News is listed on the front page. There's some chance we'll use your submissions in the newsletter, and there's also some chance that your submissions will be used for a special 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary commemorative event that the society is planning. We hope to hear from all the old-timers; you all have memories and stories to thrill, delight, and educate us. MSSF is always looking to the future and furthering the public's education and enjoyment of mushrooms. Let's spend a little while looking back on, enjoying, and appreciating our past.

— *Editors of the Mycena News*

# I THINK I THREW AWAY A TRUFFLE!

I had heard that Northern New Mexico was a great place to find Porcini in August, so I took my brother on a weekend trip to Santa Fe. I kept warning him that I was going to look for mushrooms. My brother groaned, but we agreed that he could go hiking and I could take the car and pick him up later. We were only there for 2 days and I kept asking everyone, do you know where I can find mushrooms? Most people rolled their eyes, as usual, thinking I was yet another California weirdo looking to get high. When I did find a knowledgeable source, they were very tight lipped, warning me that land owners have guns and use them.

It rained the entire 2 days. Apparently, they have had lots of rain, more than usual. I was getting upset. Finally, I got a tip - New Hyde Park. The best thing was that it was only 20 minutes from our hotel. But my brother wanted to hike the canyons 2 hours south. No rain there! No mushrooms! This was a dilemma.

As luck would have it, Sunday lunch took a long time. We had to catch a plane. Only two hours left. I told him New Hyde Park! He was disappointed but we drove up the road. I looked for promising signs and finally chose a legal parking spot by a vista. As I stepped out of the car I stepped on a suillus. Bingo! As I walked into the woods, a carpet of mushrooms unfolded in front of me. They were everywhere. My brother abandoned his hike, he followed me around chanting "What's this one? What about this one? Can you show me what the magic ones look like?" (He's twenty-one.) We hunted on our knees crawling from mushroom to mushroom. Gomphus floccosus (scaly chanterelles), suillus granulatus, suillus lakei were everywhere. I also identified Cantharellus cibarius (chanterelles), Coprinus comatus (shaggy manes), blewits, rosy russula, short-stemmed russula, tricholoma flavovirens man on horseback), Hygrophoropsis aurantaica (false chanterelles), Lactarius deliciosus, blewits and butter boletes. I was trying to look in my book but it was pouring rain and we keep sliding in the mud. So I just start throwing things in the basket. There must of been over a 100 types of mushrooms, many different unidentified aminitas and agaricus, in a 2 acre area alone. Boletes were hard to find though. Maybe someone beat me to them.

I picked up a big white ugly thing that was buried in the ground. It was very hard. I cut it open and it smelled musty. I thought it was an old mushroom and chucked it. Later on, looking through the book, I noticed the tuber gibbosum picture. Damn! That was it. I threw away a truffle! I just never expected to find one.

In any case, I wrapped up my wet mushrooms in newspaper and packed them in my suitcase. We raced to catch the plane and but had a major delay in Phoenix. My mushrooms were the biggest, foulest pile of slime I have ever encountered. Oh well... it was still the best mushroom hunt ever and now my brother understands me. I am going back next year with my dehydrator. Want to come?

— Peggy Ozol

P.S. John Corbin sends encouraging news from the Jemez area of New Mexico: "This appears to be one of the best seasons I have ever seen. Also, lots of new stuff I haven't seen before."

## Culinary Group Monthly Potluck

Tuesday, September 14

Due to a conflict with Labor Day, the culinary group's September potluck dinner will be held specially on September 14 (a Tuesday), instead the usual first Monday of the month.

The Culinary Group, led this year by Bill Hellums, invites all MSSF members to September's, or any month's, potluck dinner.

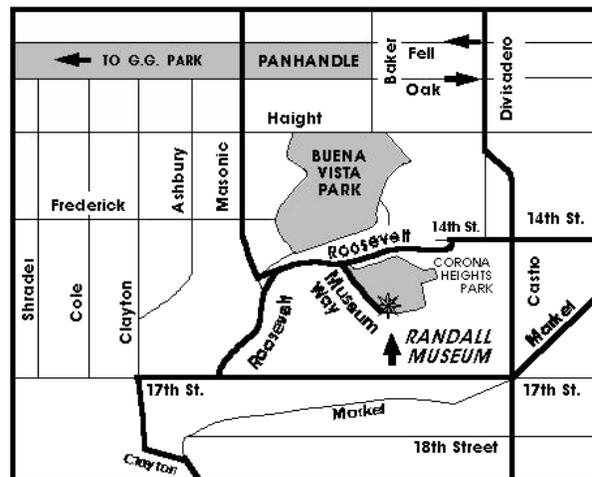
The location is always the Hall of Flowers, in Golden Gate Park, San Francisco, and the dinners are normally held on the first Monday of each month. The intention of the potluck is that each person brings something to share, and is also requested to contribute \$5 to help cover costs for other prepared foods. For more information, contact Bill Hellums at 415.255.4950.

## MSSF Scholarship

The Mycological Society of San Francisco offers scholarships each year in honor of Esther Colton Whited and Dr. Harry Thiers. Scholarships are available to full-time graduate students majoring in mycology and performing studies on the higher fungi of the Pacific states. Other requirements include two letters of recommendation, one from a professional mycologist, a brief statement describing the research project, and an agreement to present the research results at a general meeting of the MSSF. Send inquiries/materials to Robert Mackler, 157 Mesa Ct. Hercules CA 94547. **The deadline for applications is December 10, 1999.**



*Editors' Note: The artwork on the first and last pages of this issue was drawn by Debbie Viess as part of her foray journal (see front page article). We couldn't fit all of her art into this issue, so look forward to it next month. Thanks for sharing your artistic talents with us, Debbie!*



*Don't Forget! General society meetings are held at the Randall Junior Museum — on the evening of the third Tuesday of every month.*

*NAMA continued from page 1*

swamps. All the successful mushroom hunters tucked in their sleeves and pants and sprayed themselves with protective pesticides to keep tiny mites, “chiggers”, from penetrating their fabrics. The others suffered painful bites usually treated with finger-nail polish. A few specimens not found before are being studied. All identified material was then photographed and samples of each variety will be sent to the Field Museum in Chicago to be entered into the Botany Herbarium. So far, 2717 species have been collated from the combined findings from 32 previous NAMA forays to many parts of the USA: 54% of these were found on but 1 foray; 89% found on 5 or fewer forays; 0.4% (10 species) from 23 or more forays.

Here are the 5 most commonly recorded fungi:

1. *Laccaria laccata* (persona?)
2. *Pluteus cervinus* (Missouri specimens were white, with central stems?)
3. *Xeromphalina campanella*
4. *Cantherellus cibarius* (they had two varieties, each as large as your thumb)
5. *Ganoderma applanatum*

The educational program was diverse. Talks covered “Mushroom diversity in oak forests”; “The largest fungi”; “How to best use the hand lens”; “Fungal sex”; “Cooking Mushrooms—Fried & Dried”; “Research studies on the distribution of poisoning by *Gyromitra escuelenta*”; “Mexican Mycology” (NAMA supported); and other lectures on a wide variety of subjects. I came away with the general

*Amanitas continued from page 1*

apricot-colored *Pholiota*. Here I also spotted a tiny bolete whose cap, stem and pores were all a rich ochre color.

But the best find of the day was a mushroom that was as pleasing to the eye as it was offensive to the nose: *Hygrophorus caeruleus*. Its cap and gills were a firm and eerily attractive blue-green, its stipe streaked with a slimy brown. Its spermatic odor became increasingly more offensive with time; within an hour of picking it, even in the open air with a good breeze, the stench was intolerable. Since I'd already sketched it, David disposed of it in a safe and sane manner (I believe he threw it under the picnic table of our obnoxious neighbors, but that's another story.)

Now it was time to find a mushroom to fill our bellies. And that, of course, meant *Boletus edulis*. We had heard that Boletes like the edges of meadows, so to the meadows we went. We were teased by the profusion of purple asters in ideal *Boletus edulis* habitat, remembering the photograph in MDM showing King Boletes amidst a cluster of them. But squint as we might, we failed to get any to materialize.

Our last stop for the day was the aptly-named Big Meadow. Surrounded by Lodgepole Pines, it seemed the perfect habitat, aside from the abundance of big cow pies (luckily we were already watching the ground). There were numerous *A. gemmata*; but again, no Boletes. David came to show me an *A. muscaria* button that he'd found when suddenly it hit me – this was where a Bolete would appear. (Prescience or just observation of Bolete associations; you be the judge.) We determined to return to that very tree on the morrow, and find our King.

Not wanting to appear overeager, and to give our 'shroom a chance to grow up, we headed to King's Canyon the next morning. After a

sense that most of the recent broad studies seem to indicate that habitat and geography play a prominent role in determining the flavors, sizes, varieties and toxicities of fungi.

NAMA has lost money for several years now, so they thought it necessary to raise dues by ten dollars across the board and to variously increase dues in some special membership categories. An Educational Endowment has been established in the name of late Founder Harry Knighton. Grants from this fund will be made to those carrying out research on fleshy fungi. It is tax-deductible. Donors are sought from those of you who wish to honor Harry's name or contribute to worthwhile mycological advancement may send your money to Joe Miller, Executive Sec'y, 10 Lynn Brooke Place, Charleston, WV 25312-9521, (304.744.1654).

Attending these sessions was very rewarding, both socially and scientifically. The most advanced and concerned members of the national mycological community, such as Dr. Orson and Hope Miller, Gary Lincoff, Walt Sundberg, Dr. Andy Methven and Walt Sturgeon are examples of the kinds of persons MSSF often invites to talk to you for our general membership programs. Tentatively, for instance, we hope to hear from Dr. Miller in October. We encourage a larger MSSF contingent to take advantage of the year 2000 meeting in Texas next summer.

—Bill Freedman

lovely breakfast amidst hummingbirds at King's Canyon Lodge, a rocky scramble beside Ten Mile Creek, and a tour of Boyden Cavern, we were ready to hunt Boletes. Our anticipation was palpable as we drove back to Big Meadow. I checked an area where I'd seen a muscaria the day before (alas, trampled by cows) while David went to check “his” tree. Sure enough, there was a mushrump, and a beautiful fat King Bolete. Another boletivore had beaten us to it, but being of the Sciurid family, he didn't take a very large bite. Besides, the claw marks that he left behind made for an interesting drawing, and didn't affect the flavor one bit.

Replete with Bolete, we went back to our search for specimens. Deep within the duff of a pine forest, I found another beautiful yet mysterious Bolete. Large and robust, it had a cracked brown cap, yellow pores, and a rich brown-yellow stipe with a distinct red ring at the apex. The stipe's flesh was dusky brown. I didn't sample it, as I am not quite as bold as some of our members, so I cannot attest to its flavor. David found an identical specimen. Descriptions of *B. rubripes* and *calopus* do not quite fit, so I'm open to theories as to its identification.

Other noteworthy mushrooms were a yellow *Lentinus lepideus*, superficially resembling an oyster mushroom, but with a delicate veil remnant and serrated gills, a handsome pink-stiped *Gyromitra californica*, and an interesting little false truffle, *Melanogaster sp.*, with black gel-filled chambers and a citrusy odor.

All in all, it was memorable mountain mushrooming. Thanks to Mike Wood for helping key out our cooler of mushrooms. Any questions or comments can be sent to my email address: amanitarita@yahoo.com. Happy hunting!

—Debbie Viess

# The Mycena News in the 1950's

The First Issue Ever, 1950!

*Here's an eccentric memory from our society's past - from the Newsletter, March 1955. It's interesting that the MSSF members enjoyed such casual ties to Europe. Submitted by Emmy Lou Miller, MSSF Archivist:*

## VALUABLE HOUND FOR SALE

Those who attended meetings in late summer of 1954 will remember "Boby", a valuable dog flown here from Italy who was trained in hunting truffles. Very recently word has been received that his owner, Mr. Adolph Motta, who is quitting the restaurant business, is desirous of selling this dog [as of 1955]. For those who haven't yet seen Boby, he is unusually friendly, gentle, likeable, and should prove an ideal pet. As for his appearance, he is about the same size and color of the world-famous Victor dog. We are glad to run this notice, as we want to do our part towards helping such a fine dog get a good new home. Those who are interested should get in touch with Mr. Adolph Motta, 30 Northview Ct., San Francisco, Telephone Graystone 4-0284. [This phone number no longer works. It's only 5 digits!]

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*-- from 1959, The MSSF "Bulliten"*

## Chanterelle Named Official State Mushroom

Legislators for the state of Oregon this year declared the chanterelle the official mushroom of Oregon.

Senators debated, then adopted a resolution declaring that the Pacific golden chanterelle should become Oregon's official mushroom. Although there was also much debate about the value of the time spent debating this issue, as compared to other pressing issues, the chanterelle did get pushed through to win its official status. It passed with just one vote over a majority.

Major backers of the bill included Senator Peter Courtney, D-Salem, and Senator Veral Tarno, R-Coquille. Senator Courtney even made a case for adding a fungus to Oregon's official state emblems,

saying, "We have found that both from a culinary standpoint, from a medicinal standpoint, an agricultural standpoint, it is the leading mushroom in the state of Oregon." Senator Tarno added some facts: "If you want to have a mushroom as a state symbol, this is the best that you can find. It does not grow wild in a field with a cow patty.... This is a clean plant that grows in the forest."

*— submitted by Lynn Marsh, written up by Yu-Shen Ng*

**mykoweb.com** A note about Mykoweb. Mike Wood's excellent website just surpassed 100,000 hits, which shows what an excellent resource it is and what a wonderful service Mike provides for MSSF and the mycological community. Thank you, Mike, and congratulations! — *David Rust and Debbie Viess*

# Fungal Follies

- Mike Boom

Three days ago I sat in a cemetery lawn under a blazing sun, snipping *Marasmius oreades* caps with my scissors. As I tossed them into my basket and tried to look appropriately mournful (there was a funeral taking place 50 yards away), my brain was engaged in happier thoughts: it's a benign universe that makes it possible to collect mushrooms twelve months of the year.

The Bay Area spoils mycophiles, and I'm happy to be spoiled rotten just so it doesn't spread to the mushrooms I pick. Other locales may have more bounty and perhaps more variety, but I can't think of another spot where fungi fruit year round. Move too far north of here and winter puts the kibosh on the mushroom season after a few months of fall bounty. Too far south and summer's heat dries up even the heartiest mycelia. East of here offers spring and late summer mushroom seasons, but only a chance to twiddle your thumbs and read mushroom books in between.

So swaddle us in summer fog, roil up those thunderstorms in the Sierra Nevadas, flail the storm fronts in fall and winter, drizzle down the spring showers. It's my job now to avoid any threatening sun and chronicle the fungal follies throughout the year. You can help me by dropping me a piece of email or giving me a call with reports of fungi that poke their heads up into our hypergeous world you'll find a phone number and email address at the end of this column.

## The Sierra Nevadas

Many associate May with morels in the mountains we assume that because June doesn't start with an M to help out the alliteration, there won't be any more morels out there. Not true. Mushrooms, like wildflowers, follow the bloom of spring uphill as the summer progresses. David and Jeannie Campbell spent a couple of weekends at around 7500 ft. in late June south of Lake Tahoe. They came back with over 100 lbs. of morels for their troubles, but had to pay a blood fine to the local mosquito agency. David is now convinced that morels don't necessarily need spring showers to fruit they can also come up with just snow melt.

As summer progresses, parts of the Sierras get drenching afternoon thundershowers that perk up the *Boletus* mycelia waiting in the pine tree roots. If the right conditions of moisture and warmth occur, you can see some truly awe-inspiring *B. edulis* fruiting under pine in the high altitudes. It's not guaranteed each year, though.

Current reports from the field include Dulcie Heiman, who found a single *edulis* in the eastern Sierras and wails where were all the other ones? Debbie Viess reported a single *B. edulis* in Sequoia National Park in mid-July, and just found another singleton along Highway 50 near South Lake Tahoe in mid-August. Anna Moore found a group of crack-capped, yellow-pored, blue-staining boletes of indeterminate species while backpacking at 9000 ft. I personally saw nothing but a single tortured *Tricholomopsis rutilans* (sometimes called Plums and Custard) at 7500 ft. near Highway 50 when I was camping there in the beginning of August. We may yet get fungi up high,

but there's nothing exciting at this writing.

## The West Bay

Unusually cool weather with plenty of fog drip even a small August shower has made for good fruiting in San Francisco and south along the peninsula. Fred Stevens weighs in with a detailed report. He found decent mushrooming this summer if you knew where to look. Parks, cemeteries, playing fields, anywhere that was watered produced at least a few mushrooms. The secret was to cover a lot of ground.

A bit of a surprise: mushrooms fruited earlier than usual, perhaps a hint of things to come. Grassland mushrooms led the way with *Agaricus campestris*, *A. xanthodermus*, *A. californicus*, *Marasmius oreades*, *Agrocybe pediades*, and *Panaeolus foenisecii*, all abundant. Less common was *A. arvensis*, and an interesting small pinkish mushroom, *Calocybe carnea*. As the season progressed and fog drip moistened the cypress and pine duff, *Agaricus augustus* showed up along with some confused winter mushrooms *Clitocybe nuda*, *Russula amoenolens*, *R. sanguinea*, *Suillus pungens* (mostly parasitized), and *Chroogomphus vinicolor*. Wood chips produced a few malodorous basket stinkhorns, *Clathrus rubescens*, as well as the brightly-colored *Hypholoma aurantiaca*.

The summer mushroom season typically peaks in August. For me the high point was a nice fruiting of blonde morels, *Morchella esculenta*, in the landscaping of an upscale Daly City restaurant.

On a ten-point scale I would rate the summer collecting at an eight, definitely better than the last couple of years. Two no-shows worth noting: *Macrolepiota rhacodes* was rare, and *Lepiota cepaestipes*, a fairly common chip dweller was completely absent. Thank you, Fred.

I'll confirm his peninsular reports of *M. oreades*, the (in my opinion) delicious Scotch bonnet mushroom, along with *A. augustus* (yum!) and *Panaeolus foenisecii* (yuck at least gastronomically speaking). I also found quite a few pear-shaped *Vascellum pratense* fruiting in a cemetery lawn, and was about to collect a few of these smallish puffballs when I was chased away by a monster lawn mower bent on striking down funereal fungal transgressors. I was also surprised to find (along with Bolek Kuznik) a large fruiting of *Russula sanguinea* above Daly City along with a few *Hygrocybe conica* (witch's hats) under cypress. It made me feel like it was still January. Or maybe it was just the frigid wind whistling up from Pacifica.

## The East Bay

The East Bay, which often has a reputation for dry summer weather, has had some good fog drip this year. The best evidence of this was turned in by Debbie Viess and David Rust, who had the misfortune to be laden by the hard work of collecting 28 specimens of *Agaricus augustus* fruiting under bay laurel in the Oakland/Berkeley hills in early August. David also reports *Marasmius*, *Mycenas*, and *Russulas* of indeterminate species, so there is fungal activity if you know where to look. Anna Moore confirms this by reporting a few *Marasmius oreades* in east-bay lawns. I myself haven't seen anything but dried up turkey tails, but that may be because I've been lurking around too much on the peninsula this summer.

*Continued top of next page...*

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## Up North

Patrick Hamilton and Kathy Faircloth, skulking around through Salt Point State Park, found a single chanterelle button in fog drip. They took their revenge by collecting buckets of elderberries further inland. Mark Thomsen also went to Salt Point and sextupled their take: he got six small chanterelles. Back near home, Kathy saw quite a few mushroom buttons that looked vaguely like *Agaricus*, but when she and Patrick had time to check them closer they had disappeared no doubt removed by some local good citizen for the public safety.

## Elsewhere

Connie Green, ace mushroom supplier for some of the finest epicurean beaneries in the Bay Area, was back in Florida recently and came across two *Chlorophyllum molybdites* that looked scrumptious until she noticed the pale ocean-green spore print. Another collection for the regurgitorium, I'm afraid. Connie also reports that the large blond morels you might have seen recently in produce stores come from the Yukon. They're actually grey morels that have gone blond with age, just the reverse of an aging starlet.

In New Mexico the rains have been heavy and early this year. I don't have reports yet on what that's done for fungal fruiting, but it's got to be interesting. If anyone comes back with good stories, please bend my ear. (This is an unsubtle hint for L and B.)

## Call Me

I have only, alas, two eyes and two feet that can take me to but a small portion of the Bay Area and surroundings. I'd like to give everybody a much larger picture of our fungal follies, so I depend on you (yes, you!) to give me the lively lowdown on lowlife fungi. You can call me at 510.635.7723 if you have some hot tips. Or, if you prefer, drop some email to boom@dnai.com. Reports close the 15th of the month work best, because that's when this column is due, and I like to make it as timely as possible.

I promise to be the soul of discretion if you have secret spots to protect, as long as I can give general habitat descriptions. Or I can trumpet a great mushroom spot to the world! Stick with me next month when I tell you *exactly* where to find huge fruitings of *Suillus pungens*. Slippery jacks *rule!*

## Dutch Business Delivers a Different Kind of Mushroom

July 13, 1999

ZUTPHEN, Netherlands (AP)

They'll get to your house as fast as a Domino's pizza. But these mushrooms aren't pie toppings. They're hallucinogens, the latest Dutch treat in this country famously tolerant of "soft drugs." Staying one step ahead of the law, a shop in this quiet eastern town is offering home delivery of herbal ecstasy, organic "designer drugs" and at least 600 other mind-expanding and mood-enhancing substances, including psychedelic mushrooms.

"You might not want to eat them on a pizza because that could weaken the effect, but you can fry them up with eggs or set a pot of tea," entrepreneur Alex Krassenberg said. "Those are the weaker of the two kinds we sell," he said, pointing to a jar filled with dried Mexican fungi. "The Hawaiian ones are really strong."

Law enforcement authorities in the Netherlands - where marijuana and hashish, though technically illegal, are widely sold in small amounts without fear of prosecution - are taking a decidedly mellow approach. Dutch law doesn't prohibit the sale or use of the drugs sold by Krassenberg, but the government is reviewing its policy while researching the potential health risks.

Although so-called "smart drugs" have already become a booming million-dollar business in the Netherlands, Krassenberg's store is the first to deliver to the customer's door.

On a good day, Krassenberg makes up to 10 mushroom deliveries in Zutphen and surrounding villages. Each order costs 30 guilders (\$15) and includes home delivery. Out-of-town orders, which can be placed until midnight on weekends, cost an extra dollar per mile.

Krassenberg also sells natural alternatives to popular drugs such as

speed, ecstasy and cocaine. He encloses instructions and recommended dosages with the products he peddles.

Dutch authorities say they haven't encountered any adverse social or health problems linked to the drugs. Zutphen's only hospital said it hasn't had a single complaint.

Krassenberg insists he's doing the partying public a favor. "Perfect alternatives like these should have been introduced a long time ago," he said. "They are reliable, non-addictive, and they don't give headaches or hangovers like the real thing."

## Another New Marin County Resident

### *Shiitakes in the Wild*

We knew it would happen eventually! While hiking recently, on May 3, 1999 deep up Madrone Canyon in Larkspur, CA, Fred Ferrara encountered a log with several wood-decaying mushrooms on it. He carried the entire log back to town and called long-time MSSF member Dr. Robert West. Bob correctly identified the specimens and sent them on to me for confirmation.

Yes indeed, they represent a thick-fleshed, dark brown, evenly areolate population of shiitake. This is the first report that has come to my attention of a naturalized population of *Lentinula edodes* in California. I suspect that the species has escaped (as aerially dispersed spores) from the confines of someones home-cultivated shiitake culture.

Good find Fred! With the molecular techniques at hand, we could trace its origins to a particular strain of shiitake, and maybe even show that its parents were purchased by a Marin County resident at a MSSF Mushroom Show... but we'll leave that bit of detective work to an aspiring mycology student.

— Dr. Dennis Desjardin

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# 50 YEARS!

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## Calendar

**Tuesday, September 14: MSSF Culinary Group Monthly Dinner.** After a summer break, the MSSF's scrumptious potluck dinners resume anew. This month's is on a special date. See elsewhere in this issue for more information.

**Sunday, September 19. Mushroom Madness in Marin.** A culinary affair, starting at 1:30pm. See inside this newsletter for more information. Please call Loraine Berry at 415.454.0914 for reservations.

**Tuesday, September 21: MSSF General Meeting.** The MSSF kicks off its 50<sup>th</sup> mycological year with an exciting general meeting. Plans for the year will be discussed, and toxicologist Bill Freedman will educate and entertain us. See inside for details.

**Sunday – Thursday, September 26 - 30, 1999, W.A.M. Foray to Oregon Cascades.** Wild About Mushrooms Touring Co. (not affiliated with the MSSF) is leading a five day foray to the Central Oregon Cascades. Lead by David Campbell. Cost: \$250. For registration or more detailed info: contact Charmoon at 707.887.1888, charmoon@trr.metro.net.

**Monday, October 4: MSSF Culinary Group Monthly Dinner.** For information or reservations, contact Bill Hellums at 415.255.4950.

**mid-October Foray.** The MSSF is planning a foray to Yuba Pass in mid-October. Exact information is not yet available. To keep abreast of the latest updates about October and November forays, check the

calendar in next month's newsletter, or call the MSSF hotline at 415.759.0495.

**Saturday, November 13, 1999: W.A.M. and Herb School-sponsored Myco-Activities Day.** Workshops on mushroom cultivation, paper-making, dyeing, ID, cooking, and medicine making are sponsored by Wild About Mushrooms and the California School of Herbal Studies. Note: both of these organizations are not affiliated with the MSSF. Cost: \$40 for workshops/classes, \$15 extra for dinner & slides. Location: Herb School, in Forestville, Sonoma County. Call 707.887.1888 for more information or reservations.

## MSSF Library is Open!

There is a full MSSF library downstairs and a little portable library upstairs. Both of these are open to all members from one hour previous to each general meeting until the meeting starts.

--Lorrie Gallagher

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>