



Mycena News

Mycological Society of San Francisco

April, 1998, vol 48:4

Elsewhere In This Issue...

<i>Big Cheese Speaks</i>	2
<i>Editor's Rant</i>	2
<i>MSSF Morelfest</i>	3
<i>NAMA Species Database</i>	4
<i>Editor Quits</i>	5
<i>Chaparral Chanterelles</i>	6
<i>April Meeting</i>	6
<i>Mushroom Madness</i>	6
<i>The Fungal Bard</i>	7
<i>New MSSF Internet Name</i>	7
<i>Calendar</i>	8

Society Officers:

President: Norman Andresen	510.278.8998
Vice President: Tom Sasaki	415.776.0791
Treasurer: Monique Carment	415.474.7220
Secretary: Amy Goldman	415.647.7430

Select Committees:

Forays: Henry Shaw	510.943.3237
Book Sales: Chris Thayer	510.283.4858
Membership: Wade Leschyn	650.364.1494

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, 219 Sequoia Ave., Redwood City, CA 94061. 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@visa.com or call at 650.364.1494.

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 Mike Boom, 4323 Sequoyah Rd., Oakland, CA 94605, phone 510.635.7723. Or you can email them to mboom@ascend.com, or fax them at 510.553.1578.

Editor and Page Layout: Mike Boom
 Printing/Mailing: Mother Lode Printing,
 Jackson, CA

Don't It Just Burn Ya? How Forest Fires Increase Morel Fruiting

by Bill Freedman

As mushroom collectors and fungal students, if we are lucky, we observe the exciting and profligate flourishing of morels following forest fires. So far, we have no conclusive explanations for this: Is it due to carbon dioxide seeping into the soil, or the release of sulfur oxide, nitrous oxides and other gasses as the surface of the soil cracks with the escape of water from the heat? When bull-dozers turn the soil over and loosen it during lumbering operations, do they help to introduce gasses? Nitrogen is largely lost from the soil after fires. Heavy gases such as carbon dioxide hug the ground, lighter ones escape. The looseness of the soil may allow increased oxygen or other gases to sink to deeper levels. Explanations such as this have been very speculative. The causes are poorly understood and difficult to test.

From Sweden, according to Peter D. Moore, from King's College London, as reported in *NATURE*, Vol. 384, Nov. 28, 1996, comes another possible explanation for the morel response to fire. Investigators have observed that large amounts of charcoal produced in forest fires adsorb phenols. As you may remember, lignin, the backbone support for plant tissues and trees, is composed mainly of polymerized cellulose molecules held together by phenol rings. In the process of combustion, these phenolic chemicals are released into the soil and removed by the charcoal.

In a stable forest environment, plants, bacteria, insects, and fungi, such as the mold *Penicillium*, release inhibitory compounds (antibiotics) into the soil. Tannins and other compounds containing phenol are produced by plants and repress the growth of plant seedlings and the activities of mycorrhizae.

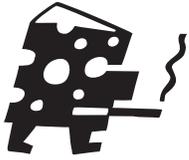
After a fire, charcoal accumulates in the soil and removes these phenolic compounds. The growth of plants and fungi is thereby allowed to return without suppression. In time, the charcoal becomes saturated and can no longer remove phenols and protect the organisms influenced by antibiotic action. With the removal of competitors, this may explain why morels are abundant for only one year after a fire. In subsequent years, competitors return, reducing fungus fruiting.

Before a fire, tannins in the humus repress the growth of bacteria, some of which provide nitrogen for plants and fungi. When the humus is destroyed in the fire, bacterial communities are stimulated to grow rapidly. Nitrogen fixation by bacteria assists regeneration of the area after a burn and plays an important role in forest recovery. Removal of phenolics probably contributes to this phenomenon. Bacteria do not like phenols.

Many studies have been made of soil changes after fire. Perhaps some of these can help us understand morel behavior: burning removes organic matter and nutrients from the soil. Doesn't this remind us that the last step in the commercial cultivation of morels is to stop feeding them to stimulate fruiting?

There is a flush of positive charged ions into the soil, such as potassium, sodium, calcium, magnesium etc. As pH rises, it becomes more alkaline and morels prefer this; fine, relatively inert charcoal particles enhance the water retentive properties of the soil which now can support wetland plant communities. The soil loses its porosity. It becomes more like clay and withholds moisture. The earth in which we find morels is usually quite wet. Part of

Fire and Morels continued on page 3.



Fungal Emanations From the Big Cheese

Ah, spring is in the air and a young man's mind turns to morels. I've got last spring's bounty still engraved on my (mind)? and what a bounty it was: Cottonwood Valley and the trail to it producing unpickable quantities, literally all one could carry.

Also on my mind are images of happy, tired faces at the end of the day working on treats for the meal: fire-roasted morels, salmon- or polenta-stuffed morels, morels in cream to name just a few. People at first share a few mushrooms, then more, and at last they throw open the Sierra Madres-like hordes. The communal table is soon awash in this precious fruit.

Stories start around the fire: bears and dogs, mountain lions, and wondrous spots. Always the comparisons with spots of legend. Was Rose Creek or Barker Mountain more prolific? How are they fruiting right now? East slope or north? Canopy or in the open? Slash or natural morels? The campfire has always been the chalkboard of the morel hunter. The newcomer can listen and learn; the old hands can hone their skills over a glass of port.

You can work on your own morel memories this year. Don't forget to contact our foray chair Henry Shaw to get details on this year's trips.

-Norman Andresen, President

§§§§§



EDITOR'S RANT

This issue, as you may be able to tell, is dedicated for the most part to the morel in hopes that we'll have a morel season at least half as good as last year's and at least twice as good as 1996's—high and low water marks on the yearly morel gauge. Terri Beauséjour and Boleslaw Kuznik got a jump on the season by picking a few scattered morels along the creek in Soquel State Forest—all under the envious eyes of Norm Andresen, who'll have to wait for his usual gargantuan haul in the Sierras to sate his morel appetite.

Although I'm very eager for the morel season to start (I love being snowed on in the Sierras), I've been having a very good time around the Bay Area as the mushroom season enters spring. El Niño, that copiously weeping babe, has let up enough to make it easy to get around the East Bay hills. He's left relatively few mushrooms in his wake, however, preferring to help the tiny poison oak leaves to bud forth in profusion instead. There's still fungi to see here in the Oakland hills, though, including *Amanita velosa*, some big fruitings of the blushing *Amanita novinupta*, and one of my favorites, *Helvella acetabula*, which looks like a brown cup fungus until you look at the base and see that it really looks like a brown goblet with veins running up the sides—like something from a Gothic horror film.

There are, of course, edibles still in the hills: yellow chanterelles, some firm and robust, others melting over the oak duff like a Dali watch. Here and there you'll find candy caps (*Lactarius fragilis*) dropping spores like white flour all over the ground beneath them. And down south, I saw more black chanterelles in two hours in Soquel State forest than I've seen in years, growing in big black bouquets littered through downed branches under tan bark oak. These babies were huge, thick-skinned, and had an intoxicating smell. I was unfortunately a little late for some of them who had "flowered" as the commercial pickers say—they were splayed apart like the end of a recently exploded cigar, and not great for picking. By the time you read this, it will be three weeks later and I doubt that there'll be many left in good shape. Mushrooms—the ephemeral treat.

My thanks to all the contributors to this month's newsletter—to Bill Freedman for his treatise on morels, to Henry Shaw for lining up forays to visit those morels. To guest columnist Stephen Bowen reporting on unusual chanterelle fruiting patterns this year, and to David Campbell indulging in some fine April firstery with a bardic foray through Elizabethan fungiphilia. To Wade Leschyn for an insider's report on species lists and specimen vouchering, accompanied by a full species list of the February NAMA foray in Monterey. Thank you all. And thank you, David Campbell, for volunteering to take over the Forager column next fall.

§§§§§

In last month's issue, I got my blood up over the East Bay Regional Park District's \$675 ticket given to Grover DiMarinis for picking two pounds of chanterelles. Since then, I've received more information about the case—Grover called me with the details. He was cited as he exited the Sibley Park exit by a ranger who had his truck hidden behind the bushes. The ranger came out with lights flashing and gave Grover his ticket, claiming that he let him off of the "serious" charges he could have brought against him. It turned out that he didn't, that Grover's ticket was for a misdemeanor charge of damaging/removing plants, ordinance 38.804.

This ordinance reads as follows: "Plants. No person shall damage, injure, collect or remove any plant or tree or portion thereof, whether living or dead, including but not limited to flowers, mushrooms, bushes, vines, grass, turf, cones and dead wood located on District parklands. In addition, any person who willfully or negligently cuts, destroys or mutilates vegetation shall be arrested or issued a citation pursuant to Penal Code Section 384a."

This ordinance means that if you pick a blackberry in an EBRPD park and pop it in your mouth, you may end up \$675 poorer with a criminal record. (This is a misdemeanor offense, not simply a fine.) Read strictly, it means that all those softball players sliding into home might be cited with the same penalties for destroying grass.

The upshot of the matter is that Grover has now been before the Oakland municipal court three times, has been appointed a public de-

Rant continued on page 3.

The 1998 MSSF Morelfest

May 1-3, 1998,
San Jose Family Camp

The wildflowers are beginning to bloom, the fruit trees are starting to flower, the rainstorms are coming less frequently, and all that can only mean one thing: the Sierran morel season is almost upon us!

Once again the society will be holding a "social" foray at one of the developed camps in the Sierra. As we have for the past few years, the foray will be held at the San Jose Family Camp, which is located just off of Highway 120, east of Buck Meadows outside of Yosemite Park. Meals are served in a large dining facility that also serves as the center for socializing into the evening. The camp itself is located in a beautiful setting along the Middle Fork of the Tuolumne River, which provides a soothing sonic backdrop for the festivities.

Although there were no major fires in the Sierra last year, morel collecting should still be good in the areas east of Evergreen Road that burned the year before last. Collecting in those areas was spectacular last year, and it is likely that the same areas will produce again this year, especially if there has been some salvage logging. As usual, the weather is key, but the long-term forecast is for a warm, wet spring, which bodes well for an extended mushroom season.

The cost of the foray this year will be \$80 per person, which includes all meals from Friday dinner through Sunday lunch. Accommodations at the camp are in platform tents equipped with camp cots. The camp has hot shower/washroom facilities. Bring a sleeping bag or blankets (nights can be cold), a towel, toiletries, a flashlight, rainwear, good footwear, and collecting gear (knife, basket, etc.)

To reserve your place at the foray, send your check made out to "MSSF" to Henry Shaw at 155 Sharene Lane #214, Walnut Creek, CA 94596. You may also contact him at 510-943-3237 or send email to shaw4@llnl.gov for more information.

-Henry Shaw, Foray Chair

Rant continued from page 2.

fender, and has yet to be able to enter his plea of not guilty. The judge hearing his case will have the opportunity to dismiss charges or to set the fine to an amount lower than \$675. Whatever the outcome, the amount of time and money wasted by both sides to prosecute an environmentally and socially inoffensive act is ludicrous. And if Grover is convicted, he'll have a criminal record: a criminal mushroom picker.

This is complete nonsense, but it won't be easy to change. I see three major problems: ignorance, puritanism, and laziness. Ignorance on the part of the public and many park officials about the way mushrooms grow—they aren't plants. Puritanism in public opinion that regards any consumptive use of park resources, no matter how benign, as sinful; and laziness on the part of park law enforcement officials, who don't want to have to discriminate between environmentally friendly and environmentally damaging consumptive use: "Ban 'em all so we won't have to sort 'em out."

The MSSF has always been involved in public education to combat ignorance, teaching fundamentals like mycelia, fruiting bodies, and sporulation. We've got work to do on other fronts. Perhaps it's time for those of us who belong to the Sierra Club to work within the local chapter for change; EBRPD board members listen closely to the Sierra Club when setting policy. And it's time to question board candidates closely during elections about their position on consumptive use of park resources.

It all boils down to this: When we pick mushrooms we're locked in embrace with nature, we are a part of that nature. It nurtures us and we nurture it in return, committed stewards of the environment that gives us such bounty. It's time to let us practice our passion freely. Mushroom pickers are not criminals.



Fire and Morels continued from page 1

the reason may be seasonal, but they are seldom found on dry soil or during the dry season. It is not uncommon for unseasonal morels to be brought to our public demonstrations in December and January having been found growing on damp cellar floors or disturbed moist sandy soil in San Francisco.

From MSSF cultivators Don Simoni and Fred Stevens, and Paul Stamets' book *The Mushroom Cultivator* we gain supporting insight into post-fire morel growth, especially for *Morchella angusticeps*. Morels avoid competition.

They prefer alkaline soils. They germinate rapidly and invade litter or growth medium vigorously, using up most of the nutritional material. Then they form sclerotia, hard knots of asexual material, sometimes brown and sometimes golden. These subterranean bodies have the capacity to either form mycelia, if food is present, or to erupt as

fruit. They prefer a cold intervening season after fires, simulating winter. As the temperature warms, they fruit in response to the stresses they encounter. Soil nutrients have been used up. This is one source of stress. Burns destroy much of the nutrition-bearing litter. Preferring soil with 60-70% moisture, they are stimulated to fruit as the snow pack melts, or the seasonal rains hydrate the soil. Fire has also inhibited the return of competing life forms and this acts as a growth stimulant. Carbon and nitrogen, growth inhibitors for morels, have been reduced by fire, and potassium, calcium, etc. have been increased, making the soil more alkaline. Stamets advises that preparing beds for morels in burned areas and adding clean wood ashes to his inoculation sites improves the production of these fungi.

Observations such as these suggest new avenues for experimentation with morel cultivation. Perhaps Dr. Moore's observations can provide us with some fresh clues to ensure the consistent cultivation of larger and more flavorful morels as we learn to reveal more of nature's secrets.

Species Database / NAMA-98

by Wade Leschyn, species database chair

What is the species database committee all about and what role did it play at the recent NAMA foray in Monterey?

Foraying for mushrooms for our mushroom fairs is followed by a serious effort by the best identifiers present to put accurate names on all collected specimens. The MSSF is, of course, seriously indebted to Dr. Dennis Desjardin and his graduate students for all the help they provide to the society during the mushroom fairs, particularly in the area of taxonomy.

It is the species database committee's responsibility to keep track of the identifications made and compile them into a species list. For the MSSF fairs, the committee also generates the display labels you see with the mushrooms on display. In addition we spend considerable effort keeping track of originating locations for as many specimens as possible so we can create species lists by forays. Often it is the promise of a local species list that helps us secure a collection permit in many areas.

So what is the difference between an MSSF mushroom fair and a NAMA foray when it comes to how the mushrooms are identified and handled? One difference is that a variety of specialists usually come to the NAMA forays which allows for more detailed identification to species to occur in certain genera. This year the specialists at NAMA were Rod Tulloss on *Amanita*, Cathy Cripps on *Inocybe*, and Nancy Smith Weber on *Discomycetes*.

Another difference is that many specimens from the NAMA foray get vouchered. What is vouchering? I didn't know myself until after I was asked by the NAMA-98 committee to be responsible for the species database task at this year's NAMA foray.

Vouchering is the process of recording and permanently preserving one specimen or collection for each found species. Preserved with the specimen are the accompanying field collection label and a photograph of the fresh specimen. Each vouchered specimen or collection is dried in a dehydrator, sealed in a plastic bag, and delivered to a herbarium at the Chicago Museum of Natural History under the supervision of Dr. Patrick Leahey.

Vouchering preserves for posterity a record of collected material and their identifications. Since NAMA forays take place across the country, over time a significant collection of a variety of fungi will be accumulated. Imagine that the taxonomists decide to split a species into two. Researchers could go to the NAMA voucher collections, pull the relevant material, and after study they might conclude that the split is valid and occurs along geographic lines. Or they might discover some other pattern, or lack of pattern, which either way could be helpful in a better understanding of the scheme of things.

Volunteers at the NAMA foray helped in photographing collections, organizing, drying, identifying specimens, and making sure all collections had field labels attached with at least a location filled in. Recording at least some basic information such as the foray location on the field label is critical to the usefulness of the collection for vouchering. A number of nice-quality unique specimens could not

be vouchered because the collector did not fill out his or her collection tag.

In the end, for most of us, the result is a species list. Species lists from past forays are helpful to use as checklists on future forays to help with identification. NAMA-98 recorded 235 species listed as follows:

Agaricus augustus	Clitocybe sp.
Agaricus benesi	Clitocybe suaveolens
Agaricus bernardii	Collybia subpruinosa
Agaricus californicus	Conocybe tenera
Agaricus fuscovelatus	Coprinus atramentarius
Agaricus gennadii	Coprinus narcoticus
Agaricus lilaceps	Coprinus spp.
Agaricus silvicola	Cortinarius cedretorum
Agaricus subrutilescens	Cortinarius duracinus
Agaricus xanthodermus	Cortinarius erthrinus
Agrocybe pediades	Cortinarius spp.
Agrocybe praecox	Craterellus cornucopioides
Aleuria aurantia	Crepidotus mollis
Amanita calyptratoides	Crepidotus sp.
Amanita constricta	Cryptoporus volvatus
Amanita franchetii	Cyathus olla
Amanita gemmata	Cyathus stercoreus
Amanita magniverrucata	Cyathus striatus
Amanita muscaria var. flavivolvata	Cystoderma amianthinum
Amanita novinupta	Dacrymyces palmatus
Amanita ocreata	Daldinia grandis
Amanita pachycolea	Dasyscyphus virgineus
Amanita pantherina	Dermocybe crocea
Amanita phalloides	Dermocybe sp.
Amanita silvicola	Elaphomyces granulata
Amanita smithiana	Entoloma cinereolamellaform
Amanita sp. "spring calyptroderma"	Entoloma lividoalbum
Amanita velosa	Exidia glandulosa
Amanita velosa - white	Exidia nucleata
Armillaria ostoyae	Flammulaster sp.
Asterophora parasitica	Flammulina velutipes
Astraeus pteridis	Fomitopsis pinicola
Auricularia auricula	Galerina atkinsoniana
Bisporella citrina	Galerina marginata
Bolbitius reticulatus	Gloeoporus dichrous
Bolbitius vitellinus	Gymnopilus sapineus
Boletus chryserteron	Gymnopilus villosipes
Boletus dryophilus	Gyromitra infula
Boletus flaviporus	Hebeloma crustuliniforme
Boletus subtomentosus	Hebeloma sp.
Boletus zelleri	Helvella acetabulum
Calocybe onychina	Helvella elastica
Calvatia cyathiformis	Helvella lacunosa
Cantharellus cibarius	Helvella sp.
Chromosera cyanophylla	Hemimycena sp.
Chroogomphus rutilus	Hericium erinaceus
Chroogomphus vinicolor	Hericium ramosum
Clavariadelphus occidentalis	Hydnum umbilicatum
Clavulina cinerea	Hygrocybe conica
Clavulina cristata	Hygrocybe flavescens
Clavulina rugosa	Hygrocybe psittacina

Hygrocybe punicea
 Hygrocybe singeri
 Hygrophoropsis aurantiaca
 Hygrophorus brunneus
 Hygrophorus roseibrunneus
 Hypholoma aurantiaca
 Hypholoma fasciculare
 Hypomyces chrysospermum
 Hypomyces cervigenices
 Inocybe geophylla
 Inocybe geophylla var. lilacina
 Inocybe nigrescens
 Inocybe pudica
 Inocybe pyriodora
 Inocybe rimosa
 Inocybe sp.
 Inocybe splendens group
 Inocybe stellatospora
 Laccaria amethysteo-occidentalis
 Laccaria fraterna
 Laccaria laccata
 Laccaria proxima
 Lachnellula sp.
 Lactarius alnicola
 Lactarius argillaceifolius
 Lactarius fragilis var. rubidus
 Lactarius rufulus
 Lactarius substriatus
 Lactarius xanthogalactus
 Lentinellus ursinus
 Lenzites betulina
 Leotia viscosa
 Lepiota cristata
 Lepiota sp.
 Lepista nuda
 Leptonia chalybaea
 Leucopaxillus albissimus
 Leucopaxillus gentianeus
 Leucopaxillus paradoxus
 Lycogala epidendrum
 Lycoperdon foetidum
 Lycoperdon perlatum
 Lyophyllum decastes
 Macrolepiota rachodes
 Marasmiellus candidus
 Marasmiellus ramealis var. californicus
 Marasmius androsaceus
 Marasmius calhouniae
 Marasmius plicatulus
 Marasmius quercophilus
 Melanoleuca lewisii
 Melanoleuca melaleuca
 Merulius tremellosus
 Morchella elata
 Mycena acicula
 Mycena adscendens
 Mycena californiensis
 Mycena haematopus
 Mycena pura

Mycena purpureofusca
 Mycena rorida
 Myxomphalia maura
 Nolanea cetrata var. mediospora
 Nolanea fusco-ortonii
 Nolanea hirtipes
 Nolanea inoxma
 Nolanea pseudopapillata
 Nolanea sericea
 Nolanea stricta
 Oligoporus fragilis
 Omphalina ericetorum
 Omphalina pyxidata
 Omphalina sp.
 Omphalotus olivascens
 Otidea onotica
 Panus conchatus
 Paxillus panuoides
 Peziza arvernensis
 Phaeolus schweinitzii
 Phaeoamarasmius erinaceus
 Phellinus gilvus
 Pholiota velaglutinosa
 Phyllotopsis nidulans
 Pleurotus ostreatus
 Pluteus phleboborus
 Pluteus cervinus
 Pluteus flavofulgineus
 Pluteus lutescens
 Polyporus elegans
 Polyporus tuberaster
 Psathyrella candolleana
 Psathyrella longipes
 Psathyrella spp.
 Pseudopithyella minuscula
 Psilocybe coprophila
 Psilocybe sp.
 Ramaria mutabilis
 Ramaria rasilispora var. rasilispora
 Ramariopsis kunzei
 Rhizopogon occidentalis
 Rhizopogon ochraceorubens
 Rhodocollybia butyracea
 Russula abietina
 Russula californiensis
 Russula paxilloides
 Russula raoltii
 Russula silvicola
 Schizophyllum commune
 Scleroderma polyrhizon
 Scutellinia scutulata
 Sparassis crispa
 Stereum hirsutum
 Stropharia ambigua
 Stropharia riparia
 Suillus acerbus
 Suillus brevipes
 Suillus pungens
 Tarzetta catinus

Trametes versicolor
 Tremella encephala
 Tremella foliacea
 Tremella mesenterica
 Trichaptum abietina
 Trichaptum bifforme
 Tricholoma flavovirens
 Tricholoma imbricatum

Tricholoma myomyces
 Tricholoma saponaceum
 Tubaria confragosa
 Tubaria furfuracea
 Verpa bohemica
 Volvariella speciosa
 Xylaria hypoxylon

The Penultimate Issue

This, folks, is my penultimate issue of the *Mycena News*; the May issue will be my last. It turns out that trying to put out a decent newsletter while running my own business is impossible without severe burnout. I am attached, I'll have to admit, to making a living, so I have to hand the *Mycena News* off to another dedicated soul.

I'm looking for that dedicated soul (of course) and hope that one of you may be it. Although being the newsletter editor requires steady work on your part, it also comes with some great perks. You'll be at the center of all the news going on in the MSSF, you'll know about mushroom finds and upcoming forays before anyone else except the reporter, and you'll get a chance to stand on your soapbox from time to time and rave at the wind.

Putting out the *Mycena News* requires wearing two hats: editor and publisher. Although Rose Flaherty (the previous editor) and I have worn both hats, they have in the past been successfully split apart so two people take on the newsletter.

The editor's job is to provide content. He or she prods people for articles, looks for interesting articles to reprint, types in submissions that come in on paper, makes sure the regular columns are written, fills in the calendar, and sometimes—space permitting or demanding—writes his or her own material. The editor also edits submissions, cleaning up grammar and spelling when necessary while keeping the submitter's original voice. There are a few occasions when the editor has to quash an article or ask for a rewrite if the original contains personal attacks on other members or just isn't pertinent for the MSSF readership.

The publisher's job is to put the content on paper, have it printed, and get it mailed to the MSSF membership. He or she typically uses a page layout program to lay out the articles and columns along with graphics to keep the newsletter lively and fun to read. Once the newsletter is laid out, the file goes to our ace printer, Mother Lode Printing, who prints the issues, puts the address labels on, and mails them. The publisher has to remind the membership director to send the mailing list to the printer.

All this takes place once a month for nine months; summertime is vacation time. Owning a computer is an obvious plus—it provides email contact for the editor and makes layout much easier for the publisher. I have a fully developed PageMaker template for layout that takes care of much of the work.

The *Mycena News* is an important voice that keeps the disparate members of the MSSF tied together. If you can help keep that voice speaking next year, please give me a call at 510.635.7723 or send email to mboom@ascend.com.

-Mike Boom, Editor

Chaparral Chanterelles

Some Reflections on the Current Season

by Stephen Bowen

I'm sure most fungophiliacs will remember the '97-'98 chanterelle season as one with the heaviest crops in years. I personally have collected over 800 pounds as of March 1st. There have been, however, some very interesting observations made by people who, like myself, are constantly in the woods. This season I started collecting approximately two weeks before Thanksgiving, and have noted some distinctive designs in locales where I have been collecting for the past twenty years. The growing patterns of chanterelles this season have become increasingly clear.

Probably the principal pattern is what I have seen time and time again when I make my weekly visits to what I call my primary fruiting areas: I have consistently noted there a rather dismal crop. However, not far from these primary places there have been dazzling displays of chanterelles.

What is a primary area? For me these spots are usually the first to fruit, and from year to year are the most consistent producers. In these belts, which mostly consist of live-oak and mixed forests in the Santa Cruz Mountains, the fungi started fruiting early and produced poorly. In fact, some sectors closer to the coast never fruited at all. I have heard similar reports from members of the Santa Cruz Fungus Federation and the Sonoma County Mycological Association.

For me, most of the great collecting this season has been in what I call secondary fruiting areas. These are ordinarily marginal habitats. The fungi here do not come up every year. Perhaps these zones tend to store sustenance longer than the primary areas, and when the correct conditions come along—like “El Niño”—they can produce awesome fruitings, meaning whole hillsides surrounded with circles of *cibarius*.

Probably the most amazing scenes I have sighted were secondary areas surprisingly far from the moist sectors where most folks search for Chanterelles. Where then? Along the ridges and hillsides with a southern exposure that are covered with shrubs and chaparral including the xeric Manzanita and Coyote Brush. Although there always seem to be a few oaks mingling nearby, I have seen massive quantities of beautiful yellow chanterelles in nothing but manzanita and toyon or other low growing bushes where most people would never even look.

These zones are very dry all summer, and plants adapted to these conditions must be very drought tolerant, their associated fungi even more so. To me, this kind of condition characterizes the most severe “secondary sites,” spots where in normal years one would be very unlikely to find water-loving *Cantherelli*. Perhaps these places may be even tertiary territory, fruiting only every ten years or so. Perhaps in the drier times there is enough moisture for these fungi to store nutrients so that when we have conditions such as we have seen this winter, these marvelous mushrooms mushroom in amazing numbers. At the time of this writing in mid-March, I am collecting only in chaparral sections of the mountains. Beneath the beautiful red-barked manzanita shrubs there could well be a golden harvest still waiting now to be collected. If there is no manzanita nearby, I won't even bother to look.

Stephen Bowen was a student of former MSSF president Joe Mandell in the South Bay in the 80s, then became a biology teacher at Leland High School in San Jose. He sends 50–100 of his students each year to Bay Area fungus fairs for extra credit every winter. He takes students in the woods to collect, a very popular activity, and was and is Alice Waters' number one wild mushroom provider. He is a frequent collecting companion of Larry Stickney.

May Mushroom Madness

Loraine Berry is presenting another in her series of illustrious Mushroom Madness dinners on Sunday, May 3rd at her home in Marin County. The dinner starts at 1 p.m., is limited to 16 people, and is a participatory event; bring an apron and a decent bottle of wine to share.

To reserve a place, send a check made out to “MSSF” to Loraine Berry, P.O. Box 1106, Ross, CA 94957. Cost is \$32 for each MSSF member, \$38 for each non-member. Your check is your reservation and receipt. The money made at this event goes to the MSSF scholarship fund.

The proposed menu (which depends on the availability of morels) includes smoked tofu and shiitake appetizers; truffle surprise appetizer; toasted croissants with morel omelet; chicken with morels; Coquilles St. Jacques à la Parisienne; Beef Wellington with mushroom duxelles; coral mushroom and spinach salad; candy cap biscotti and black walnut ice cream; microbrewed beer, wine, and waters.

I'm hungry already!

April Meeting: In the Company of Elio Schaechter

The speaker for the general meeting this month is Elio Schaechter, the author of the critically acclaimed book *In the Company of Mushrooms: A Biologist's Tale*, published by the Harvard University Press in 1997. Many people know Elio as the indefatigable newsletter editor for the Boston Mycological Club, putting out year after year of impressively high-quality publications. Others know him as a Distinguished Professor of Molecular Biology and Microbiology, Emeritus, at Tufts University School of Medicine. And still others know

him as a recent immigré to the warm climate of San Diego. Come meet him yourself and listen to some of Dr. Schaechter's fungal tales. If you want more when the meeting is over, you'll find copies of his book for sale at the MSSF's book table.

The general meeting is on Tuesday, the 21st of April, at 8:00 p.m. It's held in the Randall Jr. Museum in San Francisco. Doors open at 7:00 p.m. for pre-meeting schmoozing, book sales, and poking and sniffing the mushrooms we all bring in. See you there!

All the World's a Substrate

Friends, roaming boletivores,
lend me your wood ears.

I come to braise Caesar's mushrooms,
not to poach them!

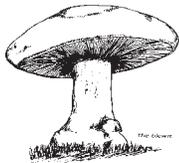
The weevils and worms do thrive and long vex us,
yet, with good ceps most oft we feed our bones.

To be there, or be square,
that is the quest upon us befell,
Though, for the truth, as to where,
how woods I know! I really chanterelle.

Whether 'tis nobler in the mind of Sparassis
to join with the augustus amongst us?

Or, for morel reasons,
or worse, for lack thereof,
to lichen ourselves to slime and mold?
"Out!" we cry, "Out of my damned spot!"

Yet, the fault, dear Pluteus,
lies not in muck duff, but in ourselves,
that we do not glean the underlings.



Alas, poor Agaric,
we've known him well.

Yea, who amongst us would not,
in such a thrice,
his basket's bounty yield?

But for chance to corral that gold-streaked horse,
those fungi we find in the field.

A horse? A horse!
My King Boletus for your horse mushrooms,
and, I beg, those shaggy manes, too.

Would we then cry havoc,
unleash 'gainst those dogs who pick so full bore?

Exact our pound of flesh,
then find how they be
not that much unlike me,
with such interests so similar to yours?
Methinks we do protest too much!

Think, how much nobler would it not be,
but to bend our hearts more towards commonality,
to stride through these times with our pili aligned,
and fetch as we may such sweet fungi we find?

For all the world's a substrate,
and all the men and women
merrily picking.

-David Campbell

MSSF Web Site Now at mssf.org

Hard-working MSSF webmaster Mike Wood reports that he's just registered the domain name "mssf.org" for the MSSF and has moved the MSSF web pages to a new Internet Service Provider account at DNAI. The move frees up room at Mike's own web site for more mushroom photos in Mykoweb and gives the MSSF more room for other web-related projects we may care to undertake in the future.

The new domain name means that we now have a new location for the MSSF web pages: <http://www.mssf.org>. It also means that if we ever institute email accounts through our Internet service provider, messages can come to email addresses such as johndoe@mssf.org.

Check out the new MSSF web site location. And don't forget to drop Mike Wood some email to thank him for all the work he's done on our behalf.

MykoCD For Sale

Mike Wood has put the contents of his very successful Mykoweb site on CD-ROM. It contains over 800 full-color mushroom photos and 220 species descriptions in a fast-loading format that requires no Internet connections and will run on Windows or Macintosh computers.

To order a MykoCD, send \$15 + \$1 postage (in the U.S.) to Mike Wood, 14856 Saturn Dr., San Leandro, CA 94578. Any proceeds from this very inexpensive CD-ROM help Mike maintain MykoWeb and run the Bay Area Fungi project. For details, write to Mike or send email to mwood@mykowood.com.

The Forager is taking a break this month. We hope Bob Gorman will be back next month for a crack at the spring mushroom season in the Sierras.

April, 1998 Vol 48:4



Mycological Society of San Francisco
P.O. Box 882163
San Francisco, CA 94188-2163

First Class Mail
U.S. Postage
PAID
Jackson, CA
Permit No 29

Calendar

Saturday & Sunday, April 18-19: Sierra morel camping foray. Location to be determined depending on conditions, probably Evergreen Road/Stanslaus National Forest. Call or e-mail Henry Shaw for details: shaw4@llnl.gov, 510.943.3237.

Tuesday, April 21: General Meeting at the Randall Junior Museum in San Francisco. Doors open at 7:00 pm for mushroom ID and book sales; meeting proper begins at 8:00 pm. The speaker this month is noted mushroom author Elio Schaechter.

Saturday & Sunday, April 25-26: Sierra morel camping foray. Location to be determined depending on conditions. Call or e-mail Henry Shaw for details: shaw4@llnl.gov, 510.943.3237.

Friday-Sunday, May 1-3: San Jose Family Camp morel foray. See article this issue. The cost this year will be \$80/person for the weekend. Checks should be made out to the MSSF and sent to Henry Shaw at 155 Sharene Lane #214, Walnut Creek, CA 94596. Call or e-mail Henry Shaw for details: shaw4@llnl.gov, 510.943.3237.

Tuesday, May 19: General Meeting at the Randall Junior Museum in San Francisco. Doors open at 7:00 pm for mushroom ID and book sales; meeting proper begins at 8:00 pm. The speaker has yet to be determined.

Thursday-Sunday, May 28-31: Oregon Mycological Society Spring Mushroom Study Foray, in northeastern Oregon (Wallowa Lake) with Orson & Hope Miller and Nancy Weber. Price \$76-\$86 per person. Contact Maggie Rogers at 503.239.4321 for details.

Monday-Friday, June 1-5: Fungi of the Sierra Nevada Class at the SFSU field campus in Yuba Pass in the Sierras. This is an official San Francisco State University class taught by MSSF scientific adviser Dr. Dennis Desjardin. Registration, room, and board comes to just a little over \$300. For details, call Jim Steele at 415.338.1571.

Monday-Thursday, July 6-9: Asia-Pacific Mycological Conference in Thailand. For details you'll have to break out the web browser and check out <http://www.biotec.or.th/diary/mycology/mycology.htm> or send email to mycology@biotec.or.th.

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>