



Mycena News

Mycological Society of San Francisco

October, 1998, vol 48:10

Land's End Foray Coordinator and Volunteers Needed

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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.

One of the abiding traditions of the Society is our beginners' walk on Sundays during the rainy season at Lincoln Park in San Francisco (aka Land's End). These walks are one of the most valuable educational functions of the Society, and are often the first experience new or potential members have with our hobby/passion. Indeed, I still fondly remember my first fungal "finds" of *Agaricus fuscofibrillosus*, and *Lepiota rachodes* under the expert tutelage of Larry Stickney on Land's End walk one beautiful Sunday morning 14 years ago. I was hooked immediately.

Last year, I led most of the walks (on weekends alternating with Norm Andresen's walks at Joaquin Miller Park in Oakland), with assistance from Norm and Fred Stevens. Unfortunately, other commitments will make it extremely difficult for me to lead as many walks this season. Thus, I am seeking assistance from the membership so that the tradition can continue. Ideally, I would like someone to take over responsibility for scheduling and leading (or finding leaders for – the coordinator need not lead all the walks him/herself) the Land's End walks. Failing this, I will continue to act as coordinator, but really will need volunteers to help with leading the walks. You need not be an "expert" to be a leader. Believe me, if I can do it, so can you! The society has a nice listing of all the species you are likely to encounter, and identification of 99% of the specimens your fellow walkers will find is a simple matter of elimination. Needless to say, it's a great way to learn to identify a few species yourself.

The walks have traditionally begun at 10am on Sundays, and last about 2 hours. (At least my walks did.) It's a wonderful way to spend a Sunday morning in one of the most beautiful spots in San Francisco.

If you would like to volunteer as the coordinator or as a leader, please contact me (Henry Shaw) at 925.423.4645 (days) 925.943.3237 (evenings) or via e-mail at shaw4@lml.gov.

-- Henry Shaw

Yuba Pass Foray

October 9-11, 1998



As in recent years, the Society will hold its first official foray of the fall season in the Yuba Pass area of the Sierra Nevada. After the long summer drought, this foray usually attracts several tens of eager mycophiles, ready to get an early start on the season. This time of year was a favorite of Dr. Harry Thiers, and continues to be favored by Dr. Dennis Desjardin for his SF State mycology class field trips to the Sierra. A wide range of fall fungi is usually present. In recent years, we have found an array of *Russula* species, including

R. mustilina and *R. xerampulina*; several *Albatrellus* species; *Bondarzewia montana*; and numerous beautiful *Boletus* species (*B. haematinus*, *B. calopus*, *B. abieticola*, and even *B. edulus*, but they are rare at this time of year).

This year, we will car camp at the Chapman Creek Campground. Cooking will be a group event. Bring food and beverages to share for

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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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President's Greeting

Well the mushroom season has started in earnest. I'm about to head up to the High Sierra for a weekend of mushrooming and camping. This will be my last chance of the season to cross Tioga and Sonora passes before they are closed by the first snows. This is my favorite time of the year to visit the high country as the summer crowds are gone, the weather is cool enough to make sitting in hot springs enjoyable, and *Boletus edulis*, *B. barowsii* and other choice edibles can almost always be found. Few things taste better than grilled porcini over the coals of a campfire on a cold fall evening. I'd like to thank Fred Stevens, Larry Stickney and David Campbell for the pointers on late summer and early fall collecting in the Sierras that they gave at the September general meeting.

Thanks as well for generously sharing your hunting spots. If you don't make it to the mountains before then, the Yuba Pass camping foray on October 9-11 usually offers an abundance of species and a good chance to find things that aren't seen in the spring nor in coastal mushrooming.

Help! We still need a fair chair. The fair is only 10 weeks away and there is a lot of coordination that still needs to happen. If you'd like to volunteer to help out please contact me at 510.540.1288 and I'll

point you to the right person. The fair is our one chance each year to show off to the public what we love whether it be identification, cooking, medicinal mushrooms, drawing or any other area that we're involved in. It is our most visible event, draws publicity and is a chance for our membership to catch up with old friends and new happenings. It is also our most important fund-raiser especially from book and t-shirt sales and is the time when we sign up the largest percentage of new members.

If you missed the general meeting, the society is looking for some donations. The first is a PC printer. Either an ink-jet or a laser printer. If you have an old one around the office or at home it would be a much appreciated donation. We are also looking for a storage space about the size of a car parking space or approximately 10x10x8. We are currently paying \$1200 per year for storage and could better use the money for a longer newsletter, our education display, replacing the mushroom display cases, etc... Anywhere within about a 20 mile radius from San Francisco will do.

Best of luck mushrooming and I'll see you at the October general meeting.

- Mark Thomsen

Lost Cane While Seeking Mighty Morel...

Somewhere near Highway 50 (you know the place). Distinctive characteristics are that it is small, for a petite person, and it has a silver ring around the top of the cane that looks like a cigar band. I'll be ever grateful if it turns up. Please call Irma Brandt at 415.927.4748

Fungus Fair Planning Meetings

Who: 1998 Fair Committee and All Other Interested Parties
Where: Presidio Child Development Center
387 Moraga Drive at Montgomery (near main post office)
Presidio, San Francisco
When: Tuesdays at 7 p.m. on the following dates: October 6,
November 3, December 1, 1998

Whited/Thiers Scholarship 1998-99

The MSSF offers scholarships each year in honor of Esther Colton Whited and Dr. Harry Thiers. The requirements are as follows:

- 1) Full time attendance at a local university/college with a major in mycology.
- 2) Two letters of recommendation one of which must be from a professional mycologist.
- 3) A brief statement describing the applicant's research project.
- 4) An agreement to present the results of the research project at a MSSF general membership meeting.

Please Note: The committee favors graduate students working with the genera common to this region. Send your material to Robert Mackler, 157 Mesa Court, Hercules, CA 94547.

The deadline is December 20, 1998.

Salt Point Collecting News

The proposed plan to require permits to collect Mushrooms at Salt Point State Park has been delayed, at least for this season. The staff there is still looking at possibilities for minimizing perceived impacts from mushroom collecting. Among plans being considered is a plan of rotational closures to collecting (allowing one area one year, another the next). If this plan is implemented, permits will be required. But for this year, there will be no change in existing policy—no permits required, and 5 pounds per person per day will be allowed to be collected. The neighboring Kruse Rhododendron Reserve and Fort Ross State Park remain closed to collecting.

-- Mark Norton

Yuba Pass, continued from page 1

the feast!

We expect that some people will leave to go up Friday afternoon and camp that night. Alternatively, one can leave early on Saturday morning and meet the group at 9:30am.

Warning! Snow is not unheard of in Yuba Pass at this time of year (*e.g.*, our foray was snowed upon last year.) Bring clothes for both warm and cold weather, and adequate sleeping equipment.

Directions from the Bay Area:

- Take Hwy. 80 east towards Truckee.
- Turn north on Hwy. 89
- Follow Hwy. 89 to Hwy. 49
- Turn west on Hwy. 49 and follow it to Chapman Creek Campground, which will be on the north side of the road. Driving time from the Bay area is about 4 hours.

Salt Point Rendezvous

Free But Not Cheap

by David Campbell

By virtue of tradition established at the inception of this annual event some several years ago, no remuneration (\$) is collected or expected by myself or MSSF from attendees. Free, that's right.

Now, let's read the fine print for I, and we, do charge every munchkin of you with certain expectations and responsibilities.

First, be a paid up member of MSSF.

Next, understand that our primary group mission is to collect edible mushrooms for Saturday evening's mushroom cookout extravaganza. In a boom (not you, Mike) year, this is seldom an issue, and one may, at worst, suffer the indignity of *not* having some of one's bounty accepted into the Big Show. In a lean year, however, when we have found only one or five ceps betwixt the lot of us, they belong to all of us, and it may be necessary for individuals in possession to give them up. If not voluntarily, a cepectomy may be exacted and, failing that, a name may become indelibly etched upon David & Mark's scatlist.

All participants are personally responsible to satisfy State Park regulations. Register and park your car legally, secure your own campsite, and obey the Salt Point mushroom collection policy. MSSF will secure a site for meeting and group cooking, the location of which will be posted on the kiosk at the campground entry.

Further, you are obliged to be brave and true and JUST SHOW UP. That's what the mushrooms do, and so should you. I do not take reservations, and I am disinclined to give directions to Salt Point State Park, Woodside campground, Sonoma coast, 10 A.M., November 7, 1998.

When we organize Saturday morn, seasoned veterans of the woods may be asked to lead a platoon, as we'll try to break up into groups of ten or so. Beginners will be expected to bring their luck and unjaded perspective. Tweeners are to find a niche, some mushrooms, and smile a lot.

After a day's scrum in the wilds, we'll retire to Chez Outback, where WE will create a gastronomic fungal fantasia. Bring to share a prepared dish, or appetizer, or ingredient(s). Be ready to cook, prep, serve, clean-up, build fire, and/or pull cork. There's always room for participation and talent.

Over the years, this event has grown into a showcase for the remarkable creativity and resource of our membership at play with the best ingredients money can't even buy.

Bring firewood, if you can. See you when you get there.

Ooops! Corrections: In the September 1998 issue, Mike Wood submitted the M. oreades recipes. Yum! Also in the September 1998 issue, Fred Stevens was the photographer of the Marasmius oreades. Credit is due to him. Thanks Fred!

Scoop, continued from page 9

Leccinum insigne; L. holopus; L. testaceoscrabrum; Tyiopilus chromapes, a stunningly pink boletoid, stalk and cap, with a chrome yellow "foot".

Rozites caperata, the gypsy mushroom, which was one of the more plentiful edibles fruiting, distinguished by its tawny color, whitish bloom at the center of its cap, the cap with a tendency towards being wavy, gently wrinkled, and with age striated at the margin, a median membranous collar like annulus, and a tender frequently moisture laden stalk which offered only slight resistance to my trimming blade. Spore print: rusty-brown. They grew interspersed, typically, with Cortinarius armillatus, a very similar appearing mushroom when viewed from above, a fact which inspired me to refine my observations, for I never trust a Cortinarius to be user friendly. The gypsy cooks up nicely with a tender crispness, pleasant flavor, excellent presentation potential, and a cool name. The gills turn a distinctive grey tone soon after hitting the skillet, which serves as one last check point for mycophagal assuredness.

Russulas were well represented, two that I identified were R. fragrantissima, and the decidedly green R. redolens.

There were jelly babies (Leotia lubrica); honey mushrooms (Armillaria mellea group); countless Ramaria sp.; angel wings (Pleurocybella porrigens); sulfur tufts (Naematoloma fasciculare); bearded milk caps (Lactarius torminosus); golden spindles (Clavulinopais fusiformis); stalked puffballs (Lycoperdon pyriforme); the man on horseback (Tricholoma sejunctus, a cousin of our T. flavovirens); and the gorgeous Suillus pictus.

Every time we stopped the car and jumped into the woods, there was a different look to the forest, a dazzling complexity of arboreal mixtures running from oak and beech to larch, maple, birch, with the underbrush herbs, grasses, and moss... ever changing and ever beautiful. I wanted to find matsutake, and Alan told me to look with the hemlock. Finally, at Jefferson Notch, at the highest point on a public road in New Hampshire, 3002 ft., we found a small hemlock forest with moss so deep that it compressed several inches with every step. Probably the correct habitat, all right, but we were early. Yellowfoot chanterelles were the only collectibles we could find. Grifola frondosa, another species on my wish list, managed to avoid me on this trip as well, so, I'll be back!

We used aluminum foil to collect specimens, a technique suggested in a lecture I attended by Lorelei Norvell a couple years ago, creating a wrinkly nest for each unit, providing ventilation and structural protection as the boxes filled up. Seven days later, we were able to show up at the general meeting in SF with appx. 60 fresh White Mtn. species! An unexpected plus of the foil in the woods was its adaptability to create light reflectors for mushroom photography. That's right, I've got slides, someday maybe I'll get a chance to share them with you.

As of this writing, the recent rains in the Sierras are feeding a significant fall fungal flush. Fred Stevens had specimens and photos to share at the September meeting, including some mon-

continued on page 6

THE EARTHY PERFUME AND TASTE OF TRUFFLES MAY BE GEOGRAPHIC RATHER THAN GENETIC

-- Bill Freedman

Interest in developing an American truffle industry is building up. So far, only two farms have harvested enough to place them on the market. One, Franklin Garland, in Hillsborough, North Carolina, has recommended that their cultivation be offered as an alternative to replace tobacco crops grown in the Southeastern USA. The second farm lies east of Mendocino, where William Griner of Laytonville grows "Black Diamonds". He has been selling his home grown black truffles at the MSSF fungus shows. Now that Charles Cleland, Director of the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture's Small Business Innovation Research Program has learned this, he has begun studying just how to produce a sustainable yield so that they may be made more available to the public and so that the price can be reduced. (See Page C2, S.F. Chronicle, 9-9-98). This would give the government (and us) an opportunity to discontinue the wasteful subsidies and incentives for growing tobacco.

On another continent, a team of scientists from the Montpellier University in France, have been trying to explain the differences in taste and aroma they have noted in truffles grown in different areas of Europe. Are the differences due to habitat, or to genetics? To date, the fungi have not been cooperative enough to germinate under laboratory conditions so that we can study them. After sampling 207 wild tubers from Spain and Italy, as well as France, using molecular genetic techniques, the investigators report in NATURE, August 20, 1998, that black truffle quality had everything to do with where truffles grew, and was not due to significant genetic factors. We have seen the same habitat response with *Laetiporus sulphureus* and *Lepiota rhacodes*. Usually choice specimens of these two species are enjoyed and well tolerated, but *rhacodes* growing among *Eucalyptus* trees and *Laetiporus* brackets growing on such trees have caused considerable gastrointestinal distress. Habitat is important.

Ten species of European truffles were studied. Findings: the best flavors were sensed in the black Perigord truffle, *Tuber melanosporum*, the summer truffle, *T. aestivum* and the burgundy truffle, *T. uncinatum*, the last of which we are not familiar with in the U.S. There was little variation in DNA in black truffles taken from various geographies to explain differences in taste and odor. There was much genetic variability in the summer and autumn truffles, which also tend to interbreed. The investigating scientists reluctantly pleaded

guilty that after removing small samples of each specimen for study they did in fact eat the remains of the truffles.

In France, the production and exportation of truffles is serious business. About 10 to 30,000 kilograms of black truffles are sold each year now. However, more than a million kilograms were harvested in the last century. Truffle output has been steadily decreasing for reasons unknown. As the output dwindles, the price rises. They retail now for \$900 a pound. Truffle-bearing trees produce for about 15 years, then must be replaced.

The difference in genetic variability is explained in this way: the black truffle ripens in winter and is not tolerant to frost. Their restricted appearance in southwestern Europe is thought to be due to glaciation about 10,000 years ago. As the glaciers moved southward, they wiped out most of the broadleaved hardwoods on whose roots the black truffle depended for nutrition. The glaciers melted before reaching the shores of the Mediterranean Sea, depositing soil, seeds and spores for both trees and fungi. The lack of genetic variation found in this report suggests that the origin of the black truffle came from a limited, perhaps recent, source. Perhaps only a few trees initially survived being carried down from the North and the fungus may not have had time to experience significant genetic changes. Its rapid colonization of southern Europe may have too swift to experience such changes. The reproductive system of the black truffle is a very closed mechanism capable of self-fertilization. The haploid, (reproductive), cells are very much alike, so that offspring would express characteristics similar to the parent fungus.

Dormant in the winter, ripening later in the year, in spring and autumn, it is presumed that the two other species were able to germinate and persist in later, warmer seasons, retaining the mutations and variations in their genetic code acquired during their entire evolutionary history. These species also have variable flavors and aromas, which, if this theory is correct, may be explained by their history and by habitats satisfying their nutrient needs.

Real estate salesmen chant as they offer their wares the same moral as we find in this article: "location, location, location".

Marie Heerkens' Mushroom Art Gallery

The beautiful mushroom artwork on page 8, in the middle of the Thanksgiving Foray announcement, and the Amanita picture in the circle on the cover were created by Marie Heerkens. Marie is a wonderful artist and photographer of mushrooms. I came across her web site from a link on www.mykoweb.com. More of her lovely art can be viewed at her web site at:

<http://members.aol.com/heerkens/mushartg.htm>

October Meeting: Speaker TBD

The speaker for the October meeting is still TBD at this time, but we do have this announcement for Mushroom Book Lovers!

Did you know? Open access to the MSSF library is available from 7:00 to 8:00pm just prior to every general meeting. The library includes classic mushroom books, scientific books, spiritual and artistic books, cookbooks, and all sorts of other mycological goodies. Also, newsletters from other mycological societies across the country are available. Many materials are available for checkout.

Alaskan Gold (It's a Big Thing)

-- Patrick Hamilton

Connie Green, Kathy Faircloth and I, the so-named MycoChef, recently journeyed to Alaska's Southeast for whatever stuff they had going on. Jeez they had a lot.

We felt like we were in one of those National Geographic documentaries produced by Exxon Oil where birds such as terns, gulls, Phalaropes and Marbled murrelets are squawking loudly in weird strange tongues, Stellar sea lions are roaring, Puffins are puffin', Humpbacks are, well, humpin' (not really—they do that in Hawaii). Dall's porpoises, which look like orcas, were doing that deal where they romp in front of the boat, cutting this way and that and finally breaking off to play elsewhere. Bald eagles were doing some stuff too—erie things, and real killer whales were eerily gliding their big black fins in and out of the deep water swimming in a hunting formation looking perhaps for a slow harbor seal. Brown bears (Grizzlies. . .) were flopping around in the streams kinda like big cuddly overgrown teddy bears, but you could clearly hear these fur balls crunching down on the skulls of live salmon. Ravens were being the tricksters of Tlingit and Haida myths and mountain goats were cud-chewing up on cliffs doing that balancing where their dainty little cloven feet seem too small for them to not fall. Alaska's Southeast is my kind of place.

But possibly the most important stuff for us taking place there is the joyous fact that there are shrooms!!

Yes, yes, how 'bout those Alaskan Golds a.k.a. *Phaeolepiota aureus*? Incredible beauties, pure golden in color, covered in a blond dust and shaped exactly like er, well, have you ever seen one? We joke a lot about the phallus shape of some shrooms but these look just like one, albeit a golden one. (David Arora and I were talking on the phone this morning planning the Thanksgiving Albion event and he chuckled unabashedly as he too remembered their shape). Plus, they grow big and they taste good so size does matter, in a culinary sense.

In Juneau we were the guests of Ken Moss for a foray into the forests of nearby Douglas Island. Along with us was Bob Armstrong, au-

thor of Birds of Alaska and co-author of *The Nature of Alaska's Southeast*. He knew his stuff and it was a pleasure to hear him describing not only the feeding wading birds but also what they were feeding and wading on. Knowledgeable to be sure, but not necessarily so much on the local fungal edibles.

That's one reason why we were invited along—to help in identifying their local fungal treats.

All the woods here are composed of just a few trees—Sitka spruce, Western hemlock, Black cottonwood, willows and alders, tons of berry types, and little else. Mushrooms grow close to the sea because everything is either right next to the water, on a steep mountainside, or up on a glacier (and not a lot lives up there except for glacial worms).

This absolutely gorgeous hike allowed us to introduce our new friends to some new fungal friends. *C. infundibuliformis* and *R. ssp.*, especially the xerampelina "types", were there in enough quantity for table picking. But what surprised us the most was when we came upon a great fruiting of *C. cibarius*; only one amongst our group knew that they grew here at all! And it was his patch. . . and he hadn't told anyone else about it, of course.

That gave me a great moment to share with them how my friends and I, in magnanimous style, share our combined patches of edibles. Remember the night the MSSF feted Larry Stickney, and David Arora recalled how it was Larry who started the business of telling others about his patches and how they in turn began giving up some of their caches? Well I told them all how that can work and they looked at me like I was some kind of lunatic. Happens a lot in my life.

Mycochef says to go for the gold and also to read his regular cooking column in "Mushroom the Journal of Wild Mushrooming"—the only national magazine dedicated to the subject we all love so much. Every member should get this eminently readable rag. For subscriptions contact them at: 861 Harold St., Moscow, Idaho. 83843.

P.S. We who write for it do it for free.

When in Alaska one should sample the wonderfully fresh salmon available. But what if you are called upon to sauce the fish in a way that Alaskans have never before enjoyed? What would you do? MycoChef offers this humble recipe to help.

Salmon with Sauce of Black Chanterelles in Yogurt

Bake, Broil, barbeque or pan roast some salmon.. Then put this under the sauce...

1/4 lb. black chanterelles, rehydrated, chopped and sauted

1/4 cup cilantro, chopped

1/4 cup onion, chopped coarsely

2 tbl sorrel, chopped

1 tsp rosemary, fresh, chopped coarsely

1/2 cup yogurt, plain

2 tsp nuoc mam (Vietnamese fish sauce)

1/4 cup half and half

2 tsp lime juice, fresh

1 tsp ginger root, chopped

Kosher salt and fresh ground black pepper

Directions: except for the black chanterelles, mix all ingredients together in the blender, add the mushrooms and taste. - serves 8

This will make you an Alaskan King of Salmon. I promise.

Scoop, continued from page 3

ster ceps, (*Boletus edulis*), and chicken o' the woods, (*Laetiporus sulphureus*). He suggested this may be an uncommonly good year because of the earliness of the rains, it has not yet gotten all that cold in the mountains.

Bennie Cottone e-mailed me with this report of a local find:

While checking on the Leppies today I found something really odd. I began to wonder if it was a fungus at all. So I brought it home and went first to the photos in MD and there it was. It's also listed {without photo} in Lincoff's Audubon guide.

So, before I tell you what I think it is I shall describe it.

Found on a gentle slope in ordinary-looking dry, dusty dirt at Land's End. Entire fungus approx 10" tall. Stalk about 1/2 inch in diameter and very fibrous. Entire fungus dry. Underside of cap hard,

smooth and white. Underside of cap has no gills, no pores, and apparently no spores. No volva or any other rings present. TOP of cap covered with spores which cling to everything they touch, even waxed paper. Top looks like it's covered with powdered cinnamon. Cap about 1&1/2 to 2" in diameter.

Sounds pretty odd to me... I almost called in Mulder and Scully. But MD photo #187 is it, minus the volval patch on top. So I think it's *Battarrea phalloides*. [MD pg 717]

Yes indeed, Bennie, you've found the scaly-stalked puff ball on a stick, *Battarrea phalloides*, a member of the *Tulostomateles* group, discussed in MD (pg. 717) just after *Pisolithus* & *Dictyocephalos* (oddballs), just before the *Podaxales*. What else can I say, except that I don't think you should eat it. This species is not all that uncommon around the Land's End area in SF.

Mendocino Woodlands Foray

Nov. 13-15, 1998

It hardly seems possible that a year has passed since the Society's last Mendocino Foray, and what a difference a year makes! Last year at this time (early September), we had already seen the first rains of what turned out to be a year marked by both prodigious rainfall totals and prodigious chanterelle fruitings. Now, the forecast is for a return of "la Niña", which may mean a return to cooler, dryer conditions, but it's impossible to predict what that will mean for the mushroom season. Two years ago was the "year of the matsutake". Last year it was the chanterelle's turn. Will some other species once again come forth in abundance this year? (This author is hoping *B. edulis*, which had such a meager showing last year, will be this year's winner!)

The Mendocino Woodlands foray is historically our largest fall event, opening the coastal mushroom season and providing the opportunity for our members to catch up with old friends, both human and fungal. Newcomers to the Society are especially welcomed to this event, as it provides a great opportunity to meet many of the Society's "old hands", as well as providing a wonderful introduction to the diversity of fall and early winter fungi that can be found in the coastal habitats of California. Even in dry years, the evening display tables are spread out with specimens of dozens of different species. In good years the number can soar to well over 150.

The habitats in the area cover the gamut from coastal pines, to mixed oak-madrone hardwoods, to dense stands of redwood, to the unique Pigmy Forests. Elevations range from sea level to over 1000 feet. Each habitat offers a different assemblage of characteristic fungi. A typical year will have an assortment of *Agaricus*, *Amanita*, *Boletus*, *Suillus*, *Russula*, *Lactaria*, *Gomphus*, *Gomphidius*, *Ramaria*, *Chroogomphus* species. Highly sought after are the delicious porcini (*B. edulis*), yellow, white, and black chanterelles (*Cantharellus cibarius*, *C. subalbidus*, and *Craterellus conucopides*), matsutake (*Tricholoma*

magnivelare), cauliflower mushroom (*Sparassis radicata*), and many other edibles.

The cost for the weekend will be \$85. Included in the fee are two nights lodging, all meals from Friday dinner to Sunday lunch, and an abundance of camaraderie. As with most Society functions, food and drink are always a vitally important part of the weekend. Deborah Dawson's Good Time Herb Co will once again handle catering. As those who attended last year's foray can attest, the food and ambiance provided by this hardworking crew help make this a warm and festive occasion. As befits our passion, the evening meals will feature a selection of fungal delights. Donations of mushrooms will be solicited from the (we hope) bountiful harvest of the group. The fee covers the costs of non-alcoholic beverages; if you partake, you will need to bring your own. Be sure to bring some to share!

The weather in mid-November can be anything from balmy to cold and blustery during the day. Rain is always possible at that time of year. (Last year, we were treated to nightly downpours but dry days.) Nights are chilly, so bring appropriate clothing and sleeping gear. The cabins at the Mendocino Woodlands camp provide rustic, fire-place-equipped lodging on camp cots. There are hot showers in the camp's washroom/w.c. facilities. Bring your sleeping bags, towels, toiletries, rain gear, a flashlight, and, of course, mushroom collecting gear.

For more information, contact Henry Shaw at 510-943-3237, shaw4@lnl.gov, or send your reservation to him at 155 Sharene Lane #214, Walnut Creek, CA 94596. All checks should be made out to the MSSF. Cabins are assigned on a first-come, first-served basis (*i.e.*, when payment is received). Close-in cabins go quickly, so reserve early!

-- Henry Shaw

MSSF Study Group – Review and Preview

-- Chester Laskowski

In the spring of 1994, Bill Freedman proposed at a General Meeting that a group be formed to study any and all aspects of mushrooms beyond the obvious collecting and cooking. About 20 people attended the first meetings that spring which consisted of discussions on the operating principles of the group. In general, the expectation was that members would pursue their own interests, studies, and readings, individually and in small groups as mutual interest became apparent. Meetings would consist of people reporting their findings to the group at large. Another possibility was also proposed: that the group as a whole might set a course of study or project of limited in duration and at its conclusion report back to the general membership.

Summer, 1994, intervened, but regular meetings of the Study Group began in September with reports monthly by the more-regularly-attending members on their own interests. Simultaneously, plans were laid for MSSF volunteers to pursue long-term species surveys in the Golden Gate National Recreation Area under the direction of Dr. Dennis Desjardin, our MSSF science advisor. Difficulties in studying mutually acceptable goals with the GGNRA canceled the survey, but monthly meetings continued for the next four seasons.

Many members volunteered to lead monthly meetings on topics that they had personally pursued. For example, Larry Stickney spoke on rare and unusual fungi he had seen prepared culinarily. Miki McGee led a beginner's microscopy class. Fred Stevens brought in his collection of slime molds. Anna Moore and Herb Saylor led discussions on timely collecting strategies – Herb's on spring Sierra ascomycetes. The person who took most seriously the injunction to study a topic and report on it was Norm Andresson, who used the U.C. Berkeley library to prepare a report on morels just before the beginning of the

'95 spring morel season.

The person who led more of the Study Group sessions than any other was, naturally, Bill Freedman. He offered reports on local Amanita poisonings and on the effects of various mushroom poisons on the human physiology. Students of Dr. Desjardin led some of our most technical discussions. Experts who generously agreed to address the group included: 1) Janet Doel, founder and president of the Lichen Society, 2) Darvin DeShazzer, science advisor to the Sonoma Mycological Association, who traveled from Sonoma County to show us some of the more unusual and exotic mushrooms we could encounter on the north coast, and 3) Dr. William Saunders from U.C. Berkeley, who addressed us on lichenology. The only Study Group meeting more popular than Dr. Saunders' was that conducted by Robert Forte and Clarke Heinrich, both recent authors on psychotropic mushroom topics. Forty-three people attended that meeting. It looked like a small version of a General Meeting and had to be conducted in the auditorium!

The success of the Study Group has been in touching upon special interests of MSSF members. The various topics have brought out new faces, people not regularly seen either at General Meetings or at other sessions of the Study Group. But a core group has not formed to ensure the longevity of a group to study wide-ranging aspects mycology. Instead, the work has fallen to a few. For the Study Group to continue, it must truly be desired by enough members to keep it operating. For this mushroom season, there will not be monthly meetings of the Study Group, but instead, one or two special events sponsored by the Study Group. In order to democratically address the interests of MSSF members, you are asked to fill out the following questionnaire.

What would interest you enough to draw you to a Study Group meeting? Choice of topics for this year's special events will be guided by your responses. Vote for all of your interests, but please number your prime interest #1.

Topics of interest to me are:

- Culinary
- Cultivation
- Taxonomy-identification
- Toxicology
- Mycorrhiza
- Medicinal Mushrooms / Nutrition
- Physiology / Reproduction
- Books and Literature
- Evolution
- Other: _____

Topics I'd personally wish to study and report on:

Name: _____

Street: _____

City: _____

State: ____ Zip: _____

Phone: (____) _____

Please mail your response to: Chester Laskowski, 3012 Deakin St. #E, Berkeley, CA 94705.

Feel free to call Chester at 510.843.6537 or include comments with this questionnaire.

Calendar, cont from page 10

Saturday-Sunday, Nov 21-22: Workshop on Mushroom Cultivation. Expert and fungiphile Paul Stamets is teaching a hands-on two day course about growing gourmet and medicinal mushrooms. Learn tissue culture, spawn generation techniques, substrate preparation, inoculation, strategies for maximizing yields, and more. Fee is \$325. For more information, call 408.763.3848.

Friday-Sunday, Nov. 27-29: Foray with David Aurora. David will once again be conducting a Thanksgiving weekend foray and culinary extravaganza somewhere near Mendocino. Contact Larry Stickney (510.465.7963, fungilarry@aol.com) for reservations.

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

Friday, Dec. 4: Pre-Fungus-Fair Forays. We would like to schedule a variety of forays to collect specimens for the San Francisco Fair on Dec 5-6. If you are willing to lead a foray to one of the locations listed below (or to a different location), call Henry Shaw at 510.423.4645(work) 510.943.3237(home) or e-mail him at shaw4@llnl.gov. Traditional foray locations: *Huddart Park, Crystal Springs Watershed, Memorial/Sam McDonald Parks, Portola/Big Basin, Soquel Demonstration State Forest, Tomales Bay State Park, Pt.*

Reyes, Samuel P. Taylor State Park, Salt Point State Park, Mendocino area, your favorite (legal) collecting.

Saturday-Sunday, Dec. 5-6: During-Fair Forays. We will send out an intermediate to advanced collecting foray early Saturday morning to try to find species that were underrepresented or uncollected by the Friday forays. We also hope to send out a collecting party from the Fair at mid-morning on Saturday. The location will likely be somewhere relatively nearby. Finally, we will conduct beginners' forays around the Presidio on both Saturday and Sunday. These forays will start at 11:45am. Additional details on the Saturday forays will be announced in a future *Mycena News*. Volunteers are needed for leading these forays. Contact Henry Shaw (510.943.3237, shaw4@llnl.gov) if you would like to help out.

Saturday-Sunday, Dec 5-6: MSSF Fungus Fair Herbst International Exhibition Hall, Moraga Drive, Presidio, San Francisco. See inside for more details...

Friday-Sunday, Dec. 11-13: Guided foray in Mendocino with David Campbell and Charmoon. This will be a limited enrollment foray. A fee will be charged to cover food and lodging costs. Contact Charmoon at 707.887.1888 for details.

THANKSGIVING WEEKEND FORAY WITH DAVID ARORA

November 27-29, 1998

by Larry Stickney

Unless your Thanksgiving plans are taking you out of California, you should do the next best thing over that weekend which is joining David Arora, Patrick Hamilton, David Campbell and their many friends for the finest in wild fungi and food presentations at Albion's riverside biological field station campus three miles south of Mendocino. Not only is the mushroom hunting usually at its peak, but all forays are led by fully knowledgeable and experienced amateur mycologists in collecting groups small enough for you to find out what you want to know about each discovery. In the event something unusual or rare turns up, we have the worldwide expertise of the dedicated David Arora to label and fully discuss such finds.

Every California collector owes himself or herself at least one such foray. Many return year after year to update themselves with David's latest slide shows from the many international study trips he undertakes each year, to learn new and different ways to prepare and eat the many edibles we collect under the proficient and amusing tute-

lage of MycoChef Patrick Hamilton, and to meet the always delightful assemblage of the determined and faithful followers of these two gifted guys.

You will find the heated cabins and latrines much more comfortable than most such foray sites, well worth the price in what often may be cold or wet weather. Most rooms accommodate four persons in a pair of bunk beds, but other configurations with queen and bunks or hideaways are available. For your personal preference, and to be assured a spot on this foray, register early (e.g. now!) by sending your check for \$150.00, made out to David Arora. Please send your check to Larry Stickney at 2431 Valdez St. Oakland, CA 94612. Further inquiries and requests may be directed to Larry at 510-465-8529

or online at FungiLarry@aol.com. Rooms may be occupied Friday noon thru Sunday noon. Potluck dinner Friday night with hearty mushroom soup proffered by the inimitable MycoChef.



THE MUSHROOM SCOOP

This monthly column solicits input concerning mushroom collections of particular interest, rarity, or amazement.

E-mail me at yogidog@earthlink.net to contribute.

- David Campbell



In 1900, America's great pioneering mycologist, Charles McIlvaine, published ONE THOUSAND AMERICAN FUNGI, a phenomenal compilation of two decades worth of describing and tasting "toadstools" (an endearing term, as he used it), mushrooms of unclear or unknown identity and nature. In his preface he writes:

"My researches have been confined to the species large enough to appease the appetite of a hungry naturalist if found in reasonable quantity; and my work has been devoted to segregating the edible and innocuous from the tough, undesirable and poisonous kinds. To accomplish this, because of the persistent inaccuracy of the books on the subject, it was necessary to personally test the edible qualities of hundreds of species about which mycologists have either written nothing or have followed one another in giving erroneous information. While often wishing I had not undertaken the work because of the unpleasant results from personally testing fungi which proved to be poisonous, my reward has been generous in the discovery of many delicacies among the more than seven hundred edible varieties I have found.

... A tramp after them is absorbing, study of the interesting, and eating of them health-giving and supremely satisfying."

Early September found wife Jeanne and I visiting her family and our daughter near Boston, and in the week following Labor Day, we sojourned north into New Hampshire to the White Mountains on a four day mushroom hunting fling. Near North Conway, we benefited from the use of a charming country home made available to us by a wonderful friend and invaluable MSSFer, Dulcie Heiman.

After the first day of hunting and collecting, I could feel the spirit of McIlvaine riding on my shoulder, for we had become immersed in a wonderland of mushrooms, and I barely knew squat about most of them.

The boletoides were especially confounding, as every time I turned around yet another new-to-me species presented itself, sometimes languishing in a mattress of moss, or pushing decaying beech leaves asunder, or tucked innocuously amongst the herbs and larch matte. I recognized that there were *Leccinum*s, *Siullus*, *Tylopilus*, *Boletus*...but distinguishing them even to genus was a frequently fuzzy proposition, as their characteristics continually segued in and out of distinctive traits. On many mushrooms, for instance, we could not decide whether we were looking at *scabrum* on the stipe (thus *Leccinum*), or scaling, reticulation, cracking or what have you. The *Boletus edulis* were a welcome and comforting discovery, but I couldn't very well relax with their ID either, after one specimen so identified produced a blue stain to its sponge! Whoops.

The nature of the boletoid stains is a study in itself. Not only is there a range of different colors to be evaluated, but many species progress through two or more colors, the location on the specimen

of that stain must be considered, and noting the length of time for the stain to appear when bruised may be critical. In *EDIBLE WILD MUSHROOMS OF NORTH AMERICA*, by David Fisher and Alan Bessette, (the only book I thought to bring), a key differentiation between *Boletus bicolor*, a choice edible, and *B. sensibilis*, a severe GI toxic species, is that *bicolor* bruises blue slowly, not immediately.

I placed a call to the Bessettes in Rochester, NY. Alan and Arlene are no strangers, friends in fact, to many of us in the MSSF, and Alan was most helpful in helping me sort out some of the mushrooms I had collected, and reinforced for me my understanding that I could eat the unidentified boletes with relative safety, provided I avoid those with red sponge and the blue stainers. Some that we sampled were very tasty, and we managed to avoid any toxic or allergic impact. I should clarify that when experimenting in this manner, only small portions should be consumed, and it is best not to confuse the issue by eating several unknowns in succession. Further, consuming unknown species from other families, especially the Amanataceae and Cortinariaceae, could be lethal. The only really safe way to eat a mushroom is to clearly identify it as a known edible species.

Alan informed me that what I really needed was his recent publication, *MUSHROOMS OF NORTHEAST AMERICA*, and I do intend to procure it before my next Eastern swing. Sensing my enthusiasm for the area, he told me that next year's Northeast Foray will be held in western Maine, with habitats similar to those of the White Mtns., and he will be the principle mycologist for the event, Labor Day weekend. He asked me to extend an invitation to our society at large, and provided me with contact person info. Contact me if you'd like the address, etc.

Fungal highlights of our trip included:

The authentic *Cantharellus cibarius*, with a fragrance that we do not experience in our west coast chanterelles; *C. tubaeformis*, the yellowfoot, also known as *C. infundibuliformis*; and *C. ignicolor*, a tiny orange flame-colored species.

Herichium coralloides and *Herichium americanum*, incredibly delicious mushrooms that suggest crab or lobster on the palate, and love a swim in lemon/cream sauce.

Several Amanitas, those identified include *A. virosa*, the destroying angel; the gorgeously egg-yolk toned *A. flavoconia*; *A. rubescens*, close relative of what is now called *A. novanupta* in our area; the golden-orange version of *A. muscaria*; and *A. fulva*, an edible amanita which I have yet to taste, because, so far, I am just not sure enough to take that first bite!

Boletus edulis, truly the king of boletes, for so many reasons;

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Calendar

Tuesday, Oct 6: Fungus Fair Planning Meeting, Presidio Child Development Center, Presidio, San Francisco. Call Mark Thomsen at 510.540.1288 for details.

Friday-Sunday, Oct. 9-11: MSSF Yuba Pass Foray. Foray begins at 9:30 am on Saturday the 10th. We will camp at the Chapman Creek Campground beginning Friday night. See article in this issue for details, or contact Norm Andresen (510.278.8998) or Henry Shaw (510.943.3237, shaw4@llnl.gov) if you have any questions.

Tuesday, Oct 20: General Meeting at the Randall Junior Museum in San Francisco. Doors open at 7:00 pm for mushroom ID and Books Sales; meeting proper begins at 8:00 pm. October's presentation TBD.

Thursday-Sunday, October 22-25: Oregon Mycological Society Fall Foray, Camp Tapawingo, OR (west of Salem). Contact Connie Thorne 503.281.0500, mushroom29@juno.com) for details.

Tuesday, Nov 3: Fungus Fair Planning Meeting, Presidio Child Development Center, Presidio, San Francisco. Call Mark Thomsen at 510.540.1288 for details.

Saturday-Sunday, Nov. 7-8: MSSF Salt Point Foray. David Campbell will once again lead a camping foray/food fest at Salt Point State

Park. As in previous years, there will be a gourmet pot-luck dinner on Saturday evening. See article in this issue for details.

Friday-Sunday, Nov. 13-15: MSSF Mendocino Woodlands Foray. Be sure to reserve early for our traditional autumn cabin-camping foray, which will be held at the peak (we hope) of the Mendocino-coast bolete season. The cost this year will be \$85/person. Call or e-mail Henry Shaw (510.943.3237, shaw4@llnl.gov) for more information, or send your reservation to him at 155 Sharene Lane #214, Walnut Creek, CA 94596. See article in this issue for additional details.

Tuesday, Nov 17: General Meeting at the Randall Junior Museum in San Francisco. Doors open at 7:00 pm for mushroom ID and Books Sales; meeting proper begins at 8:00 pm. November's presentation TBD.

calendar continued on page 8

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>