

See you at the
Fungus Fair!



Agaricus

Mycena News

Mycological Society of San Francisco

December, 1999, vol 49:12

Join Bill and Fred's Excellent Adventure!

(to a Mills Canyon, San Mateo County, Foray)

Elsewhere In This Issue...

President's Corner.....	2
In Memorium: Paul Vergeer	2
Culinary Group History	3
Culinary Corner	4
Fungal Follies	6
Review of Dyeing Symposium.....	7
Poison Oak Warning	7
Fungus Fair News!.....	8-9
Calendar	10

Society Officers:

President: Mark Thomsen	510.540.1288
Vice Pres: Terri Beauséjour	510.278.5998
Secretary: Lynne Zickerman	510.654.0783
Treasurer: Zöe-Amy Caldwell	510.569.1554

Select Committees:

Forays: Norm Andresen	510.278.8998
Book Sales: Chris Thayer	510.283.4858
Membership: Wade Leschyn	650.591.6616

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.

Editors: Yu-Shen Ng & Jessica Koeppl
Page Layout: Hilary Somers
Printing/Mailing: Mother Lode Printing,
Jackson, CA

An annual activity our group has enjoyed for many years is the Saturday morning Foray into creekside Mills Canyon in Burlingame, San Mateo County. It will happen this year on January 8, 10:00 A.M. Heavy rain cancels.

Take Route 280. Exit at Trousdale Ave. in Burlingame and turn south on Skyline Drive to Hillside Drive. Hang a left, (Kohl Mansion sign nearby). Down the Drive 'til you come to Adeline Ave., the second arterial stop sign. Looking left, you will see us.

About 120 varieties of fungi have been identified, including occasional edibles such as chanterelles. We have minimal restrictions. (Bill is Chairman of the Friends of Mills Canyon.) If you'd like to help us, bring a bag for trash removal.

Wear wet-weather or lug-soled shoes. Although we keep improving the trail, sections do get wet and muddy, especially from the impact of vandalizing dirt bikers who are misusing the trails.

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

To open one's eyes to a deeper level of understanding, we recommend a pocket lens to examine fine details to better identify fungi, as well as to aesthetically reveal the small but hidden beautiful forms and colors that natural objects can assume. Buy a wide one inexpensively at a stamp collectors' store.

Fred Stevens is one of our few expert amateurs, a very knowledgeable guest lecturer and a great teacher for novices about basic mycology, using the examples on hand. It is an ideal beginners' introduction trip. For more information, contact Bill Freedman 650.344.7774; Fax: 650.344.2227; E-mail: loufreed@aol.com.

—Bill Freedman

Cultivation Committee Update

Expanding the culture library

First, we hope to conduct ongoing inoculation of cultures during the fair, primarily for installation in the MSSF culture library. The wide diversity of species collected at the fair will provide a golden opportunity to collect numerous interesting cultures for use throughout the year. It would be far more challenging to do the same in the field. The necessary equipment and some laminar flow hoods will be set up and available for use by interested members. If you would like to collect some cultures for your own use, all you need to bring are some sterile agar-filled tubes and/or petri dishes. Since we are a small committee of volunteers with limited resources, if you can donate or bring sterile agar-filled tubes and/or petri dishes to help us expand our collections, your efforts will be greatly appreciated, and will surely win you future appreciation and awards by the cultivation committee.

Mushroom Growing Kits for Sale

This year, MSSF will offer several new varieties of mushroom kits at the cultivation display. At the time of this printing, we have already secured the following varieties in the form of kits: Enoki, Hericium, Blue Capped Oyster, Golden, and Pink Oyster, Shimeji, Maitake and Nameko.

Continued on page 5

President's Corner

Recently on the onelist email list (which MSSF members may join by visiting <http://www.onelist.com/subscribe/mssf>), a concern came up that the general membership may not know what was going on with MSSF finances and with the MSSF Executive Council. We talked about how to make this information more readily available and one of the suggestions was to print our yearly financial statement after our August budget meeting. You can expect to see that beginning next year. The Council meets monthly from August through May on the second Tuesday of the month, generally at the Randall Museum. The August meeting date sometimes varies. All Council meetings are open to members and you are welcome to submit in writing items that you would like placed on the agenda. Council minutes are also available to members upon request. The minutes are reviewed and approved at the following council meeting and are available at that time. Please contact the secretary for copies of the minutes.

As part of keeping members aware of what the council is doing I thought that I would begin giving a summary of the most recent

meeting. At the November 9th council meeting we discussed moving our items into a storage site in Burlingame. We currently do pay \$100 per month to store items that are mainly used for the fair. The new storage company will deliver storage boxes to the fair site, and will pick them up after the fair. The Council also voted unanimously to purchase a new insurance policy presented by Margaret Grace. Our current policy was to be cancelled as of November 15th. The insurance cost is about \$2 per member per year. We purchased a standard policy plus a rider covering directors and officers for approximately \$1900. Membership fees may need to be slightly increased at a future date to cover increased insurance costs. Previous insurance cost \$500, but provided insufficient coverage. A motion passed to increase the budget for speakers at the general meetings this year by an additional \$900.00 to cover expenses. We will be looking at some future point in making meeting minutes and other MSSF documents available online.

I'll see you out in the woods.

— Mark Thomsen

In Memorium: Paul Vergeer

Paul Vergeer died November 1, 1999 of a lung cancer. Paul was a volunteer, Council member, leader, and friend to the MSSF, and was recognized in 1996 as an honorary lifetime member. Paul started gathering mushrooms with his family in the Netherlands before World War II. After reading about our Fungus Fair in the S.F. Chronicle in 1972, he joined the Society. He served as an MSSF Councilor for the two years that followed. With a major interest in toxicology, he founded the Toxicology Committee; co-edited the Society's report on poisonings in California in 1977, which were widely published; introduced the toxicology table to the Fungus Fairs; offered and developed MSSF services to the S.F. Poison Control Center; served many years with Poisindex, a national group of consultants for Regional Poison Control Centers; was a member of the NAMA Toxicology Committee. Paul's long-time commitment and spirit of volunteerism will not be forgotten.

Paul also made significant contributions to mycology, and is one of the Society's most often quoted members in the scientific journals. He helped develop the Wieland-Meixner test for toxic Amanita poisoning; wrote a paper comparing the Wieland-Meixner test colors obtained here with those obtained by Ruth Seeger in Germany; and conducted experiments in amanitin potency at the S.F. City and County Hospital. Working with Dr. Singer, Paul provided specimens of Psilocybe, and co-authored with Dr. Gast articles for issues of Mycotaxon. His articles and contributions to books on toxicology have been listed in the Index Medicus, the cumulative reference on significant contributions to medicine.

— *Written with input from Thomas J. Duffy and Bill Freedman*

Final Issue of the Mycena News

If you don't renew your MSSF membership now, this will be your final issue! Membership runs out at the end of December. To renew 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 home and/or work phone numbers and email addresses. New and renewal memberships will be valid through December of 2000. To change your mailing address, 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 more information email Wade at leschyn@rahul.net or call at 650.591.6616.

**There is no December General Meeting.
See you at the Holiday Dinner, Tuesday Dec 7th!
The next Meeting is Tues, January 18, 2000.**

50th Anniversary T-Shirt

At the Fair this year, don't forget to pick up a beautiful, 50th anniversary MSSF T-shirt. The T-shirt sports the winning entry from our recent design contest.

These lovely T-shirts will be available on both days of the Fungus Fair, and are sure to become an instant collector's item. They will be available only for a limited time, so don't miss them!

— Lisa Bauer

Origins of the Culinary Group

This is the 35th anniversary of the San Francisco Culinary Group of the Mycological Society, so I thought it would be appropriate to write a bit about its history.

I joined the Society in 1961 and became a friend of Esther Colton Whited who had been the Society President in 1957. I became her chauffeur and drove her to meetings and Forays. In early November, 1964, we were on a Foray on the Crystal Springs Watershed property with Art and Ellen Braitto and past President Charles Sharp (1962). We had collected a number of edible mushrooms/ edulis/ chanterelles/ agaricus etc. and were discussing cooking and preserving them when Charles Sharp suggested that we get together on Monday to prepare a dinner with our mushrooms and pickle them. With this casual comment was born the Culinary Group dinners. Ellen Braitto said she worked at an Oakland recreation facility that had a kitchen and we could use it.

I drove Esther Whited to Oakland where we joined Charles and Melba Sharp, and Ellen and Art Braitto with our contribution to a gourmet mushroom dinner. Charles Sharp showed us how to bone a chicken breast and we prepared a chanterelle sauce to go with the chicken breast.

From then on we continued mushroom dinners on the first Monday of every month during the fruiting time with more members joining including Lorraine and Bob Berry. We kept growing until our membership was too large for the small Recreation Center space in Oakland and we found a dining room and kitchen through the San Francisco Recreation and Park Department in the "Boat House" at Lake Merced.

East Coast *Lecinum scabrum* Found on the West Coast

This season, I've found this "east coast" mushroom, *Lecinum scabrum* in abundance. And, I am continuing to find them! This slow starting warmer winter weather must be imitating the "normal" fall pattern back east cause they are in profusion. I have found 30+ pounds and they're still fruiting in "our area."

It's been an exhilarating fungal experience given the malaise of the very long, dry non-productive season we've been having so far. I've discovered that one shouldn't wait to pick them cause they're best when they are young & firm (as stated in Arora) - the older ones become spongy and the pores get very large and overtake the meat of the cap - although the stipe is still very tasty when *scabrum* is removed.

Another curiosity about this mushroom is that the photo and id looks like the *L.scabrum* in Arora, but in *The Wild Mushroom* by George McCarthy (England) it looks more like the *L.variicolor* - which is not even described in Arora. After talking to some folks at the general meeting, however, it's most definitely the *L. scabrum*. The ones I've been finding are not at all buggy either!

— Irma Brandt



After a few years there, the S.F. Recreation and Park Department rented the "Boat House" facility to a private restaurant and offered us the use of the Stern Grove kitchen and dining room. Stern Grove was ideal. The kitchen was large and we had as many as 80 members attending our Monday dinners. After a number of years, the Recreation and Park Department raised our rent for the use of Stern Grove and we began looking for another place for our dinners. After some negotiations, the Recreation and Park Department offered the use of the Library at the Hall of Flowers (County Fair Building) and we have been having our monthly dinners there ever since.

This has been an ideal location. We made a log fire in the fireplace on cold winter nights. We obtained our own dishes and silverware and had a locker to store our supplies. We had a person to wash our dishes. He was the son of one of our members!

I remember one night we had a Hawaiian feast and Anna and I obtained a whole roast pig weighing 100 pounds. To transport it to the dinner, we carried it on a large piece of plywood and put it in the trunk of the car.

— by Leland Guth

Birch Boletus Sighted in North Bay

November 12, 1999: I am a Junior in Biology at Dominican College, San Rafael — not to mention a mycology enthusiast! Just last Monday (11/8/99), as I was walking to my Chemistry class, I noticed some beautiful mushrooms under a birch tree. To my surprise, they were Birch Boletus!

Immediately, I went to Dominican's Lab Manager. Together, we looked in *Mushrooms Demystified* to investigate. I was excited to read that (at least at the time of publication) Birch Boletus had not yet been found in California — but here they were!

My father is a recent member of the MSSF. He thought I ought to let the society know of our little discovery here in San Rafael! I hope you're as excited as I!

Mycology enthusiast,

— Reena Ferrera (missreener@yahoo.com)

Ooops! Apologies from the Editors

Last month's issue of the Mycena News misspelled two people's names. The correct spelling of the names are Dulcie Heiman and Frances Wilson. We, the newsletter editors, apologize for the error. We apologize also to everyone, and especially Mike Boom, for omitting a speaker announcement in last month's newsletter. Mike Boom gave an excellent talk on mushrooms and their habitats in Northern California.

Culinary Corner

We had another well-attended meeting and dinner on November 1st. The hors d'oeuvres were probably the most sumptuous I can remember. Although too numerous to list completely, there were such delicacies as mushroom caviar, salmon and dill mousse, mushroom brioches, crab canapés, portobello duxelle wraps, cherry peppers stuffed with smoked cod and marinated mushrooms. Remo Arancio brewed us a heavenly aromatic mulled wine. We began the dinner with a Chanterelle, Lobster and Oyster Mushroom Bisque by David and Jeanne Campbell, fresh greens by Leon and Juanita Illniki and rolls and butter brought by Bill Hellums. The main course consisted of broiled salmon fillets with a mushroom ragout by Al Carvajal, steamed new red potatoes cooked by Peggy Ozol, and blue lake green beans with porcini by Lucia Paulazzo. The dinner was capped with Zöe Ann Caldwell's outstanding Tart de Poires a la Normandie and coffee brewed by Inez and Carl Rhodin.

Participants/Volunteers Needed

We still need volunteers for the regular January culinary meeting on January 3, 2000. Please contact George Repinec at 415.731.5115 or Sherry Carvajal at 415.695.0466 to volunteer and to reserve.

Holiday Dinner Announcement

The Culinary Group will be hosting the annual MSSF Holiday Dinner on Tuesday, December 7th at the Snow Building in the Oakland Zoo. This is the Golden Anniversary (50th) of the MSSF and we want to make this occasion a special celebration. We have had the good fortune to retain Lorenzo Leissner as the chef but volunteers are still needed for the appetizers. Appetizers will be served at 7:00 PM. Reservations are required. To reserve, please call Zöe Ann Caldwell at 510.569.1554. Bring your own dishes, silverware and preferred beverage. The cost is \$30.00 for members and \$35.00 for guests.

-- Sherry Carvajal

Menu for the MSSF Holiday Dinner

Hors d'oeuvres

Glug (a Scandinavian tradition)

Cream of Truffle and Wild Mushroom Soup

Mixed Greens with Enoki, Roasted Peppers,
Oranges and Pecans

Filet of Mignon with Morel Sauce **OR**
Roasted Portobello with Gouda Stuffing

Rosemary Roasted Winter Vegetables

Wilted Spinach with Toasted Pine Nuts

Bread & butter

Ginger Carrot Cake

Coffee and Tea

Lark Creek Inn

A Fabulous Dinner It Was!

An extraordinary culinary mushroom event occurred Nov. 9 -11, 1999 in Marin County at The Lark Creek Inn where Chef Bradley Ogden hosted diners to a wild mushroom extravaganza. Not only were there many fungi in the food, but numbers of them, fresh, dried, painted, and sculpted were placed on display in the dining room. Behind the exhibit counter each night two MSSF members were on hand to discuss whatever aspects of mycology curious customers chose to ask about. They sniffed dried Candy Caps, and a fresh *Russula fragrantissima*, fingered fresh *Pleurotus ostreatus* and a hard black polypore with pink pores, pondered Don Simoni's ponderous portobellos, and caressed a single small porcini. Over 400 diners joined in the succulent celebration.

Mushroom offerings were many. Featured full dinner included: Creamy Chanterelle Soup, Nantucket Bay Scallops with Shiitake Mushroom Ragout, Grilled NY Steak, with White Rose Potato Puree and Chopped Portobello mushrooms, Pumpkin Creme brulee set with Tiny Chocolate-filled Meringue Mushrooms.

Additional menu items featuring fungi were:

Country Style Pate, Roasted Wild Mushrooms, Warm Huckleberry Vinagrette. Homemade Ravioli, Shredded Ham Hock, Red Chard, Mushrooms Tomato Broth. Oven-Baked Onion Flatbread with Arugula, Balsamic Soaked Portobello, White Cheddar Seared Day Boat Sea Scallops, Sugar Pumpkin Risotto with Truffle Essence. (oil -Ed.) Grilled Atlantic Salmon, Black Chanterelles and Nape Cabbage Strudel, White Prawns. Roasted Rack of Colorado Lamb, Yukon Gold Potato Cake, Artichokes, Porcini on Grilled, Corn Fed NY Steak, Confit Potatoes, Alba Mushrooms, Baby Spinach. Roasted Free Range Chicken Breast, Butter Braised Organic Potatoes, Chanterelles. Sweet Potato, Parmesan Ravioli, Spiced Walnuts, Wild Mushroom Broth.

Club participants at this Fungus Fair Promotional Night were arranged and assisted by Irma Brandt, Executive Assistant to Mr. Ogden, and David Bartolotta, Lisa Bauer, Don Simoni, Larry Stickney, Mark Thomsen. Active club members seen at the tables were Mr. and Mrs. Robert Berry, Dr. and Mrs. Robert Sommer of Davis, Pat George, Dulcie Heiman, and perhaps several others. All active mushroom table tenders were treated to the menu items and wines of their choice after three hours of very pleasant "work."

It must be said that the ambience, service and food at Lark Creek Inn is remarkable, that the management couldn't be more helpful and courteous, and that Mr. Ogden's magnanimity, already known to our club because of his gift to the Scholarship last year and this year, has no known peer in the Bay Area's Food business. And the next time you're planning a big night out, make reservations at The Larkspur Inn.

— by Larry Stickney

Cultivation, continued from page 1

Due to the generosity of our friends at Western Biologicals, Inc. we are able to offer these kits at the fair at a very reasonable price: \$10 each for members, \$12 for non-members. Personally, I have fruited the kits from Western Biologicals on several occasions, and they are very reliable and given reasonable conditions, will produce several nice fruitings and can even be successfully incorporated in the garden for seasonal enjoyment if properly nourished.

We will also have kits available from Fungi Perfecti and Gourmet Mushrooms, which will include a multitude of additional varieties (think: morels, stropharia, etc.) also provided at a discount for MSSF members. Stop by the cultivation display to see if your mushroom of desire is available to grow yourself! Don Simoni will also have several different varieties available at the "Mushroom Adventures" table. If you have something particular in mind and would like to pre-order it, you may email your request to me at russula@home.com

Show-n-Tell

Ok, so, like, grow some mushrooms, and get to be a great-big Show-Off at the fair! The display will have plenty of room for show-n-tell - and anyway, isn't that the fun part of growing mushrooms - sharing the results? If you have or can grow something yourself between now and the fair, we will roll out the red carpet for your offering!

But, if you didn't happen to plan that far ahead, "cheating" is allowed. Anyway, it isn't really cheating, because the objective is to learn more about the mushrooms that are willing to share our intimate spaces - i.e. home and garden. If you happen to find some interesting mushrooms in your home and garden just before the fair, please bring them along, preferably with a portion of their habitat, and we will see if we can learn something about why they were willing to share their space with you, and we will likely incorporate them in either the "Mushrooms in the Garden" display or in the "Home Cultivation Display".

Beating the Drum for Volunteers

If you have the slightest inkling or inspiration to cultivate mushrooms, or to share your experiences in this area, please consider this an open invitation to "the other side" of the cultivation display at the 1999 MSSF fair. Volunteers are needed to staff the display (i.e. ensure that there is at least a communicative warm body available to keep things rolling - no experience in being a warm body necessary). Also, help with setup and teardown always earns extra mushroom-brownie points with the cultivation committee, and possibly free-admission to upcoming cultivation workshops (of which there are many to come between Jan and June of 2000!)

Please email russula@home.com to determine our own personal raison-d'être at the cultivation committee display.

— Terri Beauséjour



Calendar, continued from page 10

Saturday – Monday, MLK Weekend, January 15-17, 2000: SOMA 2000 Winter Mushroom Camp. SOMA (the Sonoma County Mycological Association) is hosting its 3rd Annual SOMA Winter Mushroom Camp at Wellsprings, in Philo, Mendocino county. Details about exact cost to come in a future newsletter. Or contact Charmoon Richardson at 707.887.1888.

Monday, January 3: Culinary Group's Monthly Dinner For information or reservations, contact George Repinec at 415.731.5115 or Sherry Carvajal at 415.695.0466.

Saturday January 8: Mills Canyon Foray. Join Fred Stevens and Bill Freedman in the annual foray into creekside Mills Canyon in Burlingame. See inside this newsletter for more details or contact Bill Freedman at 650.344.7774; fax: 650.344.2227; email: loufreed@aol.com.

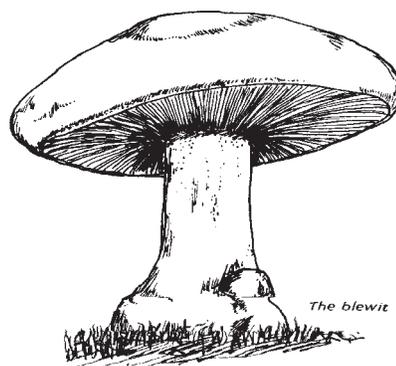
Sunday, January 16th: Chef's Foray. Tomales State Park. Interested volunteers, please contact David Bartolotta at david@bartolotta.com or 415.621.3166. This foray is primarily for grocers, chefs, and is educational in nature. Volunteers are needed to assist with cooking, cleanup, and leading forays.

Friday - Sunday, April 28-30, 2000. MSSF 50th Anniversary Foray. Forays begin on Friday. Location to be determined. To volunteer contact Tom Sasaki at 415.776.0791.

**Questing for my queen
in the cypress groves -
buggy bitter brown blewitts
Bah!**

A. obscurus

Submitted by Bob Galvin . .





I love walking in the East Bay hills in the fall. The vegetation puts on a glimmer of the color that folks in the eastern parts of this continent take for granted. Sporadic maples drop large yellow leaves and small helicoptering seed pods; the poison oak is girt in red, finally offering the warning it should put out through the rest of the year. Plants

that don't indulge in flashy leaves are busy with the business of reproduction, dangling shiny round berries in reds, oranges, glistening blue-black, and pure white. A beautiful show. But I'm infatuated with something in the trail that looks like a large horse turd with roots.

Pisolithus tinctorius isn't a common beauty. Okay, some people call it butt-ugly. But I love it irrationally the same way that other people listen to Barry Manilow or cast votes for Jesse Ventura. Which is not to demean *Pisolithus*—it's a regular joe among fungi, a plain-stated fungus without pretensions. It pops up regularly in the fall on the outer edges of horse trails above my house, a bit of earthly tumescence elbowing aside adjacent meadow muffins. When mature, its blunt snout houses a cinnamon brown spore mass just begging to be kicked and spread to the wind—as well as all over your boots and pants. Below the peridium is a sterile base as contorted and husky as a decaying oak branch. The base is subterranean, which gives *Pisolithus* an appearance of being well-rooted.

If you find a young *Pisolithus*, you can cut it open to see its true beauty. The inner chamber is filled with pea-sized peridioles, a network of spore-generating chambers that are held in place by a matrix of sticky black tissue. The younger immature peridioles near the base are honey golden. As they mature, they turn first cottony, then fill with a solid black that turns finally to the cinnamon brown spore mass you see at the top of the fruiting body.

So why is so much of this column devoted to an ugly fungus you can't eat? Who knows? Maybe it's just because I can afford to pay close attention to its fascinating details without imagining it in a cream sauce with sautéed shallots.

The Bay Area

Aside from *Pisolithus*, the East Bay hasn't produced a lot of fungi. I've seen a few welcome *Laetiporus sulfureus* (sulfur shelves) fruiting bright yellow on eucalyptus stumps, a trio of sorry-looking *Macrolepiota rhacodes* (shaggy parasols), and a small fruiting of unIDed *Rhizopogons*. At this writing, though, the recent rains have put us on the cusp of the mushroom season, not yet in it. But I can sense incipient boletes and chanterelles...

Elsewhere in the Bay Area, spots with regular fog-drip seem to have been tipped over into the mushroom season. We've had reports of small chanterelles in the South Bay by Edward Spiegel, in the North Bay by Irma Brandt, and around Pt. Reyes by David Rust. Bob Gorman took a stroll around Golden Gate Park and Sunset Blvd. in

San Francisco and found himself amidst numerous *Agaricus*—mostly the phenolic-smelling *xanthodermus*, but a few nice *arvensis* and *bernardii* among them. He also spotted some other familiars: *Chroogomphus vinicolor* (pine spike), *Hypholoma fasciculare* (sulfur tufts), *Russula sanguinea*, *R. pectinatoides*, *Tricholoma pessundatum*, the ever-popular *Suillus pungens* (slippery jack), and a nice fruiting of *Macrolepiota rhacodes*.

Doggie Digression

Fred Stevens reports *Stropharia coronilla* making an appearance in a round-about way: back up through a canine digestive tract. He reports it under the headline "Bulimic Beagle Barfs On Stropharia." Fred's vet asked him for an ID after a local peninsula beagle ate lawn mushrooms and felt poorly. Since *S. coronilla* is listed as hallucinogenic in some texts, the beagle must have had some very large pupils. The patient has recovered perfectly; I don't think the same can be said of the *Stropharia*.

Last up in the Bay Area, we have a report of *Coprinus comatus* (shaggy manes) poking their deliquescent heads up in undisclosed spots around the Bay Area. If anyone has specifics, please let me know.

North of the Bay

The real interest right now (which is two weeks before you're probably reading this) is in mushroom fruiting that's descending south into our area from Oregon. The drought there has finally broken and they're seeing a late-season flush of fungi. The sweep of rain to northern California has also started some beginning fruiting here.

Closest to the Bay Area are reports from Bob Mackler of scattered fungi around Salt Point State Park and points north. On November 11th, he found a few *Amanita calypttrata* buttons, a couple of *Amanita franchetii*, a scattering of *Clitopilus prunulus*, tiny *Suillus* buttons (mostly *brevipes*), and some *Hygrophoropsis aurantiaca*. No *Amanita muscaria* or their typical escort *Boletus edulis*.

A day or so later, Bolek Kuznik ventured to the same area and found carpets of small *Mycenas* accompanied by *C. prunulus*, *Russula brevipes*, *Amanita vaginata*, some unidentified *Russulas*, and a passle of small *Lepiotes* that included *rubrotincta* and *flammeotincta*. He also found a few *Amanita muscaria* and—object of many people's desire—a couple of young *Boletus edulis*. He reports at least a dozen other people in the woods on a Thursday looking for the same objects of fungal lust.

Patrick Hamilton ventured further north to areas above Anchor Bay. He reports, "I caught two nice boletes north of Anchor Bay insouciantly sunning themselves between some pines—or perhaps they were enjoying the view of the grand Pacific just below their perches. Whatever, it really didn't matter to this cold-hearted hunter. I bagged 'em and put them away kicking and screaming. They can be so energetic early in the season." He continued his safari the next day, driving by numerous *Pleurotus*



Continued next page

Continued from previous page.

ostreatus (oyster mushrooms) behind nasty barbed wire fences in the Olema Valley to Pt. Reyes, where he found some nice young—but very small and well hidden—chanterelles.

Reports From Afar

As we find ourselves entering mushroom season, folks in other regions see the season ending. As a result, I haven't heard much from regions east of us. Dulcie Heiman reports, however, that a friend in New Hampshire stumbled across a large patch of matsutake (*Tricholoma magnivelare*) in October, picked 10 pounds of them, and left the rest behind. That's quite a change from the matsutake season in the Pacific Northwest, which has suffered from a noticeable lack of matsutakes combined with extremely low prices for those collecting commercially. Connie Green reports that indicators show that northern California (along with New Hampshire, evidently) will be the only U.S. location with a decent matsutake fruiting this year. If you love that cinnamon/old-laundry odor, you'd better check your patches out now.

The high Sierra Nevadas are heading into snow and ski season, so I've heard of very little happening there. Lower down, however, Herman Brown—who lives close to Lake Almanor—reports some interesting finds. Near the shore he saw *P. ostreatus*, *Gomphus bonari* (or *floccosus*), *Gomphus kauffmanii*, *Hygrophoropsis aurantiaca*, *Gomphidius subroseus*, *G. glutinosus*, and scatterings of numerous varieties of *Russula* and *Cortinari*. He also found *Coprinus comatus*, which seems to be coming up everywhere right now except where I'm looking.

See you all out there in the rain. I'll be the guy with pockets full of *Pisolithus*.

-- Mike Boom

Don't Get P-O'ed

Poison Oaked That Is!

With the start of the foraging season, I have learned a very expensive lesson - not just in medical bills but in terms of major discomfort.

Last year, in a casual survey, I bragged about my immunity to poison oak... at least, I had always thought I was immune. Crawling on my belly and bumming through all kinds of duff, dirt, and thicket, I had always come through unscathed.

Until this year. The *one* chanterelle I have found so far this season has changed all that. For the first time ever, I found my legs were infected with screaming red blisters. I finally gave in to being treated with steroids to keep from climbing the walls and jumping out of my skin. So just a word of precaution: don't ever think you are immune to poison oak cause if and when it catches you by surprise, it ain't fun. Humbly yours,

— Irma Brandt

Mushroom Dyeing Symposium in Norway -- A Review

One week in August, 1999, while walking down the main street of Honefoss, Norway, (about 55 km northwest of Oslo) I encountered an astonishing phenomenon: people squealing and laughing in recognition as they ran up to each other from long blocks away - recognition, not of familiar smiling faces but by the colors they were wearing! In many cases, these were complete strangers - known only to each other by the familiar hues of their clothing. No, this was not a face-off of "gangs" staking out their territories, but a gathering of 120 Mushroom Dyers from all over the world, converging in Honefoss at Ringerike Folkschool to celebrate COLOR - with Miriam Rice and each other at the 9th International Fungus & Fibre Symposium.

And what a stunning celebration it was: of Miriam's inspired work, and of the countless textile and fiber artists whom she in turn has inspired over the last 25 years since the publication of her little jewel of a book: "Let's Try Mushrooms for Color" (Thresh Publications, 1974). Weavers, knitters, feltmakers, painters and papermakers; fiber artists of all imaginable craft and background have converged in a different host country every two years to teach, learn, and share what wonderful new experiences they have gleaned from the world of fungal fiber and pigment. Little did Miriam realize where it all would lead with that one little toss of the *Naematoloma fasciculare* mushrooms into the dye pot.....

Inspired by Miriam's experiments with mushroom dyes on wool and silk, and the making of paper from polypores, this year's dedicated hosts in Norway offered a wonderful array of organized classes and field trips, and an exquisitely designed Symposium Exhibit of mushroom dyed fiber art contributed by many of the attendees. Mushroom dyeing groups showed careful attention to temperature and pH factors in changing color hue, while encouraging experimentation on every level. There were also excursions to local museums to see quilting, weaving and painting exhibits, and fungal forays into the gnome-inhabited forests, enhanced by evening lectures about the geology of that region of Norway and the chemistry of mordants.

Miriam herself introduced her newest passion for pigment and presented a class in making watercolor paint from fungal pigments thereby coming full circle in her original intent of making inks for her own printmaking. Add to all of this incredibly colorful texture, lots of music and laughter, the warmth and hospitality of our Norwegian hosts. And in 2 years we will do it all over again in the northern Lapp region of Finland!

— Dorothy Beebee



The MSSF's 35th Annual Fungus Fair

New Dates and Times:

Saturday and Sunday,
December 11th (10am-5pm) &
December 12^a (11am-5pm)
(2nd weekend of December)

New Location this year!

County Fair Building
(Generally known as the Hall
of Flowers)
Golden Gate Park, San
Francisco

Admission:

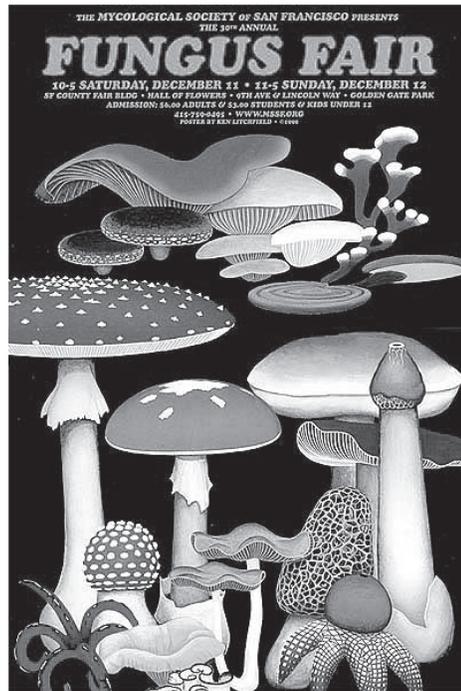
\$6 general/\$3 for students
with id, seniors.

Speakers:

Many speakers, including Mo-
Mei Chen, Taylor Lockwood,
several speakers on
ethnocultural aspects, Janet
Doell, Michael Boom. See
inside for details

Forays:

To participate in the pre-Fair Forays on Friday and
Saturday, see later or call the MSSF hotline at
415.759.0495



Join Us and Invite Your Friends

Join us at the Fair for a gay time. And, invite your friends, co-workers, or others who you think might enjoy seeing, hearing about, learning about, tasting, and enjoying mushrooms.

Volunteering

The Fair is a volunteer effort. It can't happen without the support of members like you, and it's still not too late to lend a helping hand with the MSSF's biggest event.

All levels of mushroom and other expertise are welcome and needed. We need help with display tables (culinary/edibles, children's, toxicology/ecology, beginning ID, species tables, etc), coordination (admission, membership, speaker assistance, etc.), and decor.

Volunteering at least 3 hours will earn you a free admission to the Fair. Plus, we'll even feed you.

If you want to volunteer for some specific table or display, read on. Or, if you're flexible (or if the display that you're interested in is not mentioned below), please contact Al Carvajal at 415-695-0466. (If you have previously already signed up to volunteer, please contact Al one day prior to the Fair).

Also, if you are interested in helping with preparations prior to the Fair, please join us at the final Fair planning meeting, scheduled for December 1, and to be held at the Randall Museum at 7pm. Please call Tom Chester at 415.665.7437 to confirm the date and location of this final planning meeting.

Operator of medicinal mushroom table needed. We've been unable to find anyone with the knowledge to staff the medicinal mushroom table. Is anyone aware of club members who might have the knowledge and interest to do so? Please contact Mark Thomsen if you know of someone.

Special Displays/Workshops at This Year's Fair

Photography workshop at Fungus Fair. For the Fungus Fair, Mike Wood and Fred Stevens have volunteered to offer a slide show/demonstration on mushroom photography.

General Information

The Fair features cooking demonstrations, displays of thousands of local specimens, slide shows, mushroom-related items for purchase, and informational kiosks about mushroom hunting, ecology, poisoning, textile uses, medicinal uses, and identification.

Speakers at the Fair will focus on various roles of mushrooms in our society. Multiple speakers will address ethnocultural aspects of mushrooms, including psychedelic mushrooms. Internationally-renowned photographer Taylor Lockwood will present a multimedia show about exotic mushrooms from around the world: "Treasures from the Kingdom of Fungi." Dr. Mo-Mei Chen, Professor of Mycology at the Chinese Academy of Forestry in Beijing, and currently a visiting professor at UC-Berkeley, will discuss California's rich mushrooms heritage. Janet Doell, of the California Lichen Society, will give a multimedia presentation on "Lichens Exposed." And, Mike Boom, past president of the Mycological Society of San Francisco, will teach beginners how to safely hunt and identify wild mushrooms.

We've also organized activities for kids, culinary demonstrations (with chefs Frances Wilson of Lalime's in Berkeley and more), and, as always, pre-Fair forays to collect mushrooms to display at the Fair!

Artists at the Fair. Irma Brandt is coordinating a number of artists to show their works at the Fungus Fair. If you have any favorite artists that you'd like to recommend, please contact Irma at irbrandt@pacbell.net.

New information kiosk. Len Coleman has volunteered to create an information kiosk to help visitors get directions, help, and general information.

Special Requests

The information kiosk needs submissions from you. It'll try to have as many brochures, papers, etc. as is practical to present; however, it will not have stacks of flyers for mushroom related products nor can it be a library where someone can spend the day doing research. Please send 1) informational materials that would be of help to Fair attendees (e.g. who is speaker schedules, speaker biographies, maps of booths, lists of volunteers, lists of mycological groups in the U.S., bibliographies, etc.) and 2) suggestions about other materials to Christine Shirley at 650.349.0330 or Len Coleman at 415.564.3082. If you're interested in volunteering to staff the information kiosk, please contact Len Coleman.

The cultivation display is seeking to be as ambitious (and we hope, as successful) as in previous years. See the cultivation column in this newsletter for specific needs. Additionally, if you have and can bring any of the following to the Fair, please contact Terri Beauséjour at 510.278.5998 or beauset@autodesk.com:

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

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

Duff needed. Duff – tree leaves, mulch, wood, etc, — from various habitats are needed for the “natural” displays at the Fungus Fair. If you are out in the woods, or live in areas with many trees (especially with trees that have many mycorrhizal mushrooms—trees such as conifer, oak, tan oak, cypress, pines, redwood etc.), we need lots of duff! Please contact Terri Beauséjour well in advance of the Fair if you have (and can bring) these.

Beginning identification table. Volunteers are needed to help staff the beginning identification table. Contact Beth Sampson at SampsonB@Anesthesia.ucsf.edu.

Schizophyllum and blue Leptonia mushrooms needed for dyes. Miriam Rice (see the article about her in this and last month's newsletter) requests that people bring to the Fair as many specimens of Schizophyllum as possible for experiments rendering pigment material for art work. She advises that, properly treated, a fine blue dye can be derived. Also the blue Leptonias are requested. Blue pigments are not common in fungi. Miriam will be appearing at the Fair, as usual.

Pre-Fair Forays

There will be a number of forays on Friday, December 10. These forays are of key importance, because they enable us to bring a diversity of mushrooms to the Fair. Also, they're just plain fun! For the latest pre-Fair foray information, call the MSSF hotline at 415.759.0495.

Unless you make special arrangements with the foray leader, all forays below meet at 10:00am at Ranger's stations in each park. Bring boxes, waxed bags and wrapping paper. And lunch and beverages. We'll collect even in the rain.

Foray leaders: please call Wade Leschyn to obtain specimen collection id forms with the correct foray codes!

Attendees: please contact the foray leaders in advance to confirm your attendance. We usually limit the group to 35 persons, so please call to reserve your spot on each foray.

San Mateo County, Memorial/Sam McDonald Park foray. Fred Stevens: 650.994.1374 or Mike Wood: 510.357.7696. Meet at the Memorial Park Ranger station.

Woodside, San Mateo County, Wunderlich Park Foray. Herb Saylor: 408.756.2479 (w).

Woodside, San Mateo County, Huddart Park foray. Wade Leschyn: wade@moggies.org or 650.591.6616.

Woodside, San Mateo County, Crystal Springs Watershed foray. Meet at the Pulgas Temple on Cañada Road. Bill Freedman: 650.344.7774.

Salt Point, Mendocino County foray. Anna Moore: 707.433.5221.

Willits, Mendocino County, Rock-n-Ridge Ranch foray. Near Willits, CA, a foray will be held at a property owned by MSSF member Jan Donaghy. The property contains mixed woods — mostly Tanoak and Madrone. Contact Jan Donaghy at 510.339.1569 or janman955@aol.com. Otherwise, contact Mark Lockaby at 510.412.9964, or pozer900ss@aol.com.

Soquel Demonstration State Forest. Please call the MSSF hotline at 415.759.0495. A volunteer may be needed to lead this foray. Contact Norm Andresen at 510.278.8998.

Tomales Bay State Park. Please call the MSSF hotline at 415.759.0495. A volunteer may be needed to lead this foray. Contact Norm Andresen at 510.278.8998.

Marin County Area. Please call the MSSF hotline at 415.759.0495. A volunteer may be needed to lead this foray. Contact Norm Andresen at 510.278.8998.

This years beautiful Fungus Fair Poster shown on previous page by Ken Litchfield. The real thing in color is even more spectacular. Posters may be on sale at the fair, so come early so you can get one before they're gone!

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



50 YEARS!

December, 1999 vol 49:12

Calendar

Tuesday, December 7: MSSF Holiday Dinner at the Snow Building at the Oakland Zoo. Dinner at 7p.m. \$30/members, \$35/non-members or at the door. Reservations to Zoe Caldwell, 3543 66th Avenue, Oakland, CA 94605, or 510.569.1554. Details inside this issue.

Friday, December 10: MSSF Scholarship application deadline. See previous months newsletters for details.

Friday, December 10: Pre-Fungus Fair Foray: San Mateo County, Memorial/Sam McDonald Park foray. Fred Stevens: 650.994.1374 or Mike Wood: 510.357.7696. Meet at the Memorial Park Ranger station.

Friday, December 10: Pre-Fungus Fair Foray: Woodside, San Mateo County, Wunderlich Park Foray. Herb Saylor: 408.756.2479 (w).

Friday, December 10: Pre-Fungus Fair Foray: Woodside, San Mateo County, Huddart Park foray. Wade Leschyn: wade@moggies.org or 650.591.6616.

Friday, December 10: Pre-Fungus Fair Foray: Salt Point, Mendocino County foray. Anna Moore: 707.433.5221.

Friday, December 10: Pre-Fungus Fair Foray: San Carlos, San Mateo County. Crystal Springs Watershed foray. Meet at Pulgas Temple on Cañada Road. Bill Freedman: 650.344.7774.

Friday, December 10: Pre-Fungus Fair Foray: Willits, Mendocino County, Rock-n-Ridge Ranch foray. Near Willits, CA, foray will be held at a property owned by MSSF member Jan Donaghy. The property contains mixed woods — mostly Tanoak and Madrone. Contact Jan Donaghy: 510.339.1569 or janman955@aol.com or Mark Lockaby at 510.412.9964, or pozer900ss@aol.com.

Friday, December 10: Possible Pre-Fungus Fair Forays: Soquel Demonstration State Forest, Tomales Bay State Park, Marin County Area: Please call the MSSF hotline at 415.759.0495. A volunteer may be needed to lead these forays. Contact Norm Andresen at 510.278.8998.

Saturday - Sunday, December 11-12: San Francisco Fungus Fair. Explore the world of mushrooms. See thousands of mushrooms on display, learn to find and identify mushrooms, cook with wild mushrooms, and listen to experts on psychedelics, poisonings, medicinal uses, and more. County Fair Building (generally known as the Hall of Flowers) in Golden Gate Park, San Francisco. See inside this newsletter for full details.

continued on page 5

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>