



Agaricus sylvaticus

Mycena News

Mycological Society of San Francisco

May, 1998, vol 48:5

Elsewhere In This Issue...

Editor's Rant	2
Officer Nominations	3
MykoCD	3
Thank You	3
Thiers Foray Recap	4
Higher Fungi of the Sierra Course	5
California Boletes In Print	6
General Meeting Announcement	6
The Mushroom Scoop	7
Calendar	8

Society Officers:

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

Select Committees:

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

Membership and Subscription Information

To join the MSSF and receive this newsletter, send a \$20 check, payable to MSSF (\$12 for seniors 65 and over and full time students), to MSSF, c/o Wade Leschyn, 219 Sequoia Ave., Redwood City, CA 94061. Please include some contact information such as home and/or work phone numbers and email addresses. New and renewal memberships will be current through December of 1998. To change your mailing address, please notify Wade. MSSF members may also join or renew membership in the North American Mycological Association at a reduced rate by including with their MSSF check a separate check for \$17 payable to NAMA. Send it to Wade at the same address. For further information email Wade at leschyn@rahul.net or call at 650.364.1494.

Mycena News is the newsletter of the Mycological Society of San Francisco and is published monthly from September through May. You can send newsletter submissions by the 15th of each month to Mike Boom, 4323 Sequoyah Rd., Oakland, CA 94605, phone 510.635.7723. Or you can email them to mboom@ascend.com, or fax them at 510.553.1578.

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

A Brief Sermon from Miss Morel Manners

Around many a foray campfire, amidst wine bottles and the skeletal remains of fine food, one topic returns to haunt several of us: mushroom hunting etiquette. Although it may bore the life out of others, fungal theologians Mike Boom, Lisa Bauer, Terri Beausejour, and I continue to wrestle with the issues. Mike Boom's splendid ranting article (2/98) should be reprinted annually.

As the seasons and species change, so can our communal harvesting strategies. While the snatching of prime little *Boletus edulis* buttons makes perfect sense, the cutting of baby morels does not. I think back two years ago with some horror to the fine picking on the Sawmill logging block outside of Yosemite. Herds of society members, knowing that others would be picking there in the following days, still picked morels as small and smaller than the tip of a pinkie finger. I was relieved that there were not commercial circuit pickers there for a surprising reason. Had they been there, many of you would have had your hands slapped by rough-looking men accusing you of the fungal equivalent of child molestation.

Commercial pickers, buyers, and the mushroom companies have wrestled for years with the conflict between competition to get any morels versus getting morels of a proper adult size. Intense competition and a genuine need for cash has resulted in the past harvest of baby morels despite all parties' best intentions. Miraculously, the pickers and buyers have somehow forged a disciplined system of harvesting. Some of us lucky enough to visit the great morel grounds of Eastern Oregon—and many of us who hunted in Lake County last year—have seen carpets of very young morels left behind by some commercial hunter who just walked through. If you'd looked in the commercial hunter's buckets, you'd have seen morels thumb-sized and larger.

I've been mightily impressed with this discipline of harvesting in the midst of the fever of the "morel rush" by ferociously independent people. This unwritten strategy works because of the understanding that the pounds harvested can easily double by the simple acts of communal patience and selective harvesting.

Since our best California morel hunting is in burned areas and logging blocks, we are already confined to limited zones of good morel hunting. If we can adopt this strategy, there will be more pounds of morels for everyone. Wouldn't it be lovely if you could head up to a zone you knew was hunted on the weekend and know that the tiny morels left behind, now doubled in size, are probably ready for your knife?

I've seen white pickers with very hostile attitudes towards Asians sharing the same morel ground with Cambodians. They grumble, look in each others buckets checking the size harvested, and somehow this unwritten agreement holds on. If such incredibly different competitors—all depending on a successful morel haul to put gas in their truck and food in their stomachs—can restrain themselves from clear-cutting morels of every size, our society members should be able to do the same.

Short of calling out the morel police, it wouldn't hurt one bit to start now with a little MSSF peer pressure. We'll all come out ahead.

- Connie Green





EDITOR'S RANT

This month's editorial ranting has been directed for the most part toward my computer, the world's greatest time-wasting timesaver. When I upgraded my system software two weeks ago, I fell into a snake pit of incompatible extensions and applications that resulted in corrupt system files, a reformatted hard drive, an incomplete backup file, and—as a result—the complete loss of all my former *Mycena News* files. I got to rebuild the *Mycena News* template not just once, but twice, effectively tripling the time it usually takes to turn out an issue of this newsletter. If you're reading this a little later in the month than you normally do, you know the reason why.

All that is, I hope, in the past as I crank out this issue, the last of the mushroom season. The *Mycena News* now goes on its annual hiatus until next September, when an as-yet-unknown editor takes over the reins. Or doesn't, as the case may be. The MSSF, as an all-volunteer society, depends on the willingly offered help of its members, and when no one volunteers, jobs fall through the cracks. If any of you are interested in taking over the newsletter, give me a call at 510.635.7723 and I'll fill you in on the details. You don't have to get fancy; the newsletter at its heart is simply a calendar of events that comes out on time (we hope) once a month.

§§§§§

This issue marks the official retirement of Bob Gorman as a long-time contributor to the *Mycena News*. He's faithfully reported on fungal fruitings in *The Forager* for many years now, and is stepping down to pursue his wine business with a possible wine book in the future. Thanks, Bob, for all your elegant writing and reportage. You've brought us all to a better knowledge of the overall fungal picture in the Bay Area.

This issue also marks the debut of David Campbell's column, *The Mushroom Scoop* (on page 7). David has graciously volunteered to step up to the spot vacated by Bob, and brings with him a wealth of experience in the field. David's one of the best mushroom hounds I know. You'll find him prowling around more mushroom habitats than you may know exist in the Bay Area, and to far-flung areas up north and in the Sierras. He shares his experiences with us in his column. Just hope you don't find him in your secret chanterelle spot!

§§§§§

Those of you interested in the denouement of the "Grover Case" should be entertained by Grover's day in court. As you may recall, Grover DiMarinis was hauled into Oakland Municipal court with a possible \$675 ticket for picking chanterelles in the East Bay Regional Parks. When he finally appeared before judge Jack Gifford, he got interesting results. I'll let Grover's father, Paul, tell the story in his own words:

"We showed up for court at 9 AM last Wednesday [March 25]. After sitting through an hour of other cases (in Oakland these were mostly substance abuse, parole violations, etc.), Grover was called up before the judge who read his charges as 'picking plants in the park.' A titter went over the motley audience of urban dope fiends and bail jumpers.

When the exact charge 'mushrooms' was read, our unwilling audience roared with laughter. Even the judge couldn't keep a straight face. He dismissed the charges 'in the interest of justice' and admonished Grover on the dangers of eating wild plants. We let that slide and went across the street for dim sum."

Although Grover got off in the end, keep in mind that he had to appear in court four times before his final judgment, and that the city of Oakland had to appoint a public defender for him. It's an amazing waste of time and money to prosecute a law that shouldn't be on the books in the first place. Let's hope that Judge Gifford's decision sets some sort of precedent, that EBRPD rangers won't be so bright-eyed and bushy-tailed at the prospect of nailing criminal mushroom pickers.

§§§§§

Because this is my last issue as editor, I feel a few final words are in order. Well, okay, more than a few final words because I've got space to fill in this newsletter and I have to admit I enjoy blabbing.

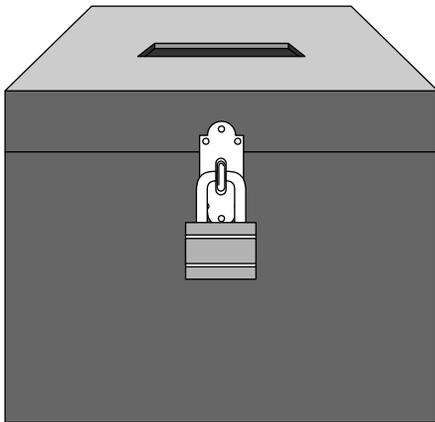
My first order of business is to thank everyone who's helped me put out the *Mycena News* this year. Once I edit, write, and lay out the newsletter, my wife Lynn Morton applies her eagle proof-reading eyes to the results before they go off to the printer, sparing me from embarrassment more times than I care to recall. Barry Duncan at Mother Lode Printing in Jackson (in the Sierra foothills) prints out the final results and assembles newsletters, applies mailing labels, and mails them out to you. And Wade Leschyn, MSSF membership chair generates the mailing labels once a month so Barry can apply them. Thank you Lynn, Barry, and Wade for getting this newsletter into the hands of MSSF members.

A newsletter, of course, is nothing without content, so I'd like to thank the contributors, both regular and irregular, who have kept you readers informed and entertained this year. First, the stalwarts: Patrick Hamilton for his culinary column, proving that a tongue isn't just for tasting but also for keeping firmly tucked in the cheek; Bob Gorman for his eloquent fungal reportage; Terri Beauséjour for keeping us fully informed about this season's Fungus Fair; Henry Shaw for tempting us with foray descriptions; Norm Andresen for speaking as the big cheese; Bill Freedman for his scholarly tomes; and last, but not least, Larry Stickney, for his lyrical reflections on mushrooms and those who hunt for them. Many others have contributed substantial articles, including Tom Duffy, Lisa Bauer, Wade Leshchyn, and David Campbell—who's now signed on as a regular. And many more of you provided fillers, referred me to interesting articles, and wrote short, spicy contributions. Thank you, one and all.

It's been my pleasure to work with everyone on this project, and my privilege to keep the voice of the MSSF in the ears of its members and associates. Now that I'll actually have some free time, I hope to see some of you in the woods. Just leave a few mushrooms for me...

- Mike Boom





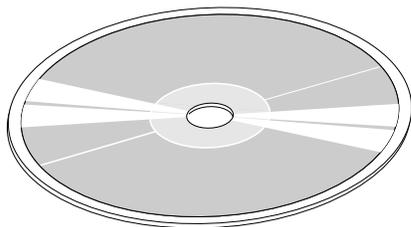
98–99 Officer Nominations

The MSSF's nominating committee, after much work talking with many active MSSF members, has nominated the following slate of officers for the 1998–99 year:

President: Mark Thomsen
Vice-President: Terri Beauséjour
Secretary: Anna Grajeda
Treasurer: Zöe-Amy Caldwell
Councillors (1998–2000): Tom Chester and Bennie Cottone

The election will be held at the May general meeting. If any other MSSF members want to run for office, they can do so by gathering the signatures of five other MSSF members and submitting them to MSSF secretary Amy Goldman.

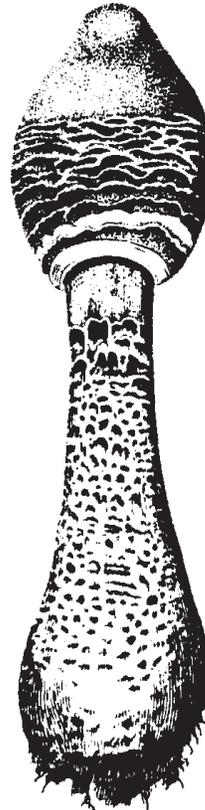
Our thanks to the nominating committee members Loraine Berry, Chester Laskowski, and Len Coleman for their work in assembling this year's slate.



MykoCD For Sale

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

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



The Mushroom is the Elf of Plants-
 At Evening, it is not-
 At Morning, in a Truffled Hut
 It stop upon a Spot

As if it tarried always
 And yet its whole Career
 Is shorter than a Snake's Delay
 And fleeter than a Tare-

'Tis Vegetation's Juggler-
 The Germ of Alibi-
 Doth like a Bubble, antedate
 And like a Bubble, hie-

I feel as if the Grass was pleased
 To have it intermit-
 This surreptitious scion
 Of Summer's circumspect.

Had Nature any supple Face
 Or could she one contemn-
 Had Nature an Apostate-
 Tha Mushroom- it is Him!

1874 Emily Dickinson

MSSF Funds at Work!

Dear MSSF Members,

I would like to offer my sincere thanks to all of you for awarding me the Esther Colton Whited & Dr. Harry D. Thiers Scholarship both this year and last year. While the financial support of this scholarship has been an immense help in the funding of my research and education, the mental support has been even more valuable. Knowing that the members of the MSSF value the research I am conducting is both inspirational and gratifying. Thank you for providing such a needed opportunity to students of mycology. I look forward to the completion of my research so that I may present my results to you and finally provide you with a guide to all of those pesky *Mycenas* you continuously encounter. Thanks again!

Brian A. Perry

Dr. Harry Thiers NAMA '98 Foray: WE DID IT!

Editor's Note: This article, summing up this year's NAMA foray, should have made it into last month's Mycena News but didn't due to an email slip-up on my part. I present it now with apologies. -MB

For those who have not yet heard, from February 13 through 16, the Fungus Federation of Santa Cruz (FFSC) and the Mycological Society of San Francisco (MSSF) hosted a foray of the North American Mycological Association (NAMA) in honor of Dr. Harry Thiers, chair emeritus of the biology department of San Francisco State University. This annual foray moves from place to place each year: this was the first NAMA Foray in California since 1978.

A sell-out crowd visited beautiful Asilomar State Park, just south of Monterey, adjacent to 17-Mile Drive. Many forays, lectures, panels, and workshops were augmented with a theme of mycophagy (the eating of mushrooms) that included four cooking demonstrations and a chef's panel. Special events included a wine tasting hosted by Jeff Emery and Jerry Moss, a tour of Monterey Mushrooms hosted by employee/FFSC member Ron Sabourin, and a luncheon foray with chef John Pisto preparing the meal.

Dr. Dennis Desjardin of the Biology Department at San Francisco State was the chief mycologist for the foray and also created the poster display honoring Dr. Thiers. His efforts were ably supported by many of the professional mycologists attending the foray as well as the four graduate students supported by NAMA—Cathie Aime, J.R. Blair, Brandon Matheny, Michelle Seidl—and the 8 grad students supported by the NAMA '98 Steering Committee—Sarah Bergemann, Martin Bidartondo, Kelly Collins, Wil Franklin, Sharmin Gamiet, Brian Perry, Kristin Peterson, Atik Retnowati. Thanks to you all.

It's hard to imagine how things could have gone better. Despite terrible weather forecasts, Mother Nature cooperated. We had help from many, many people, some of whom had little or no connection to our group (like our neighbor, Ken Campbell) who spent many hours helping. We have not come close to naming all of you below, and accept responsibilities for any errors of omission or commission.

Registrar Shea Moss capably handled a multitude of details, questions and concerns, and was extremely effective in reassuring people concerned about El Niño's effect on the foray. In the Registration Committee, thanks to Kris Olsen and Axel Kratel who made information about NAMA CE98 available on the World Wide Web. Shea and her able assistants smoothly registered and assisted 450 people—the largest NAMA foray ever! Thanks are owed to Margaret Carpenter, Flick Christiansen, Marilyn Diamond, Toni Gillespie, Debbie Johnson, Richard Rammer, Andrea Webster, and Marjie Young.

Program Chair Mark Norton (MSSF) almost single-handedly created the program. He even volunteered to write thank-you notes, which went out to all presenters except those from FFSC and MSSF.

Socials Chair Debbie Johnson did such a wonderful that we had enough mushrooms donated (special thanks to John Brown) to carry through to some of the wonderful dishes served at last week's wine and mush-

room gala. The food and drink at the evening socials were superb. Thanks to all who helped, including Bridget Binko, Margaret Carpenter, Fred Chin, Flick Christiansen, Jeff Emery, Toni Gillespie, Barb Hanson, Ford Johnson, Hensl Lise, Phred Molnar, Shea and Jerry Moss, Rich Newby, Richard Rammer, Bob Sellers, Jean Vecchiet, Andrea Webster, Carol and Wendell Wong, and Marjie Young.

Foray Committee Chair Henry Young and his crew pulled off the forays in fine style, despite the fact that three forays had to be rescheduled at the last minute because of problems due to the weather. FFSC CEO Marjie Young was responsible for the display area. Nathan Wilson worked with the vouchering project, as did recorder Wade Leschyn (MSSF) and local Voucher Coordinator Herb Saylor (MSSF). Additional thanks go to Phil Carpenter, Mark Gillespie, Djuna Ivereigh, Bill Maxfield, Dan-O Orange, Bob Sellers, and Keith Vandever.

As Chair of the Logistics Committee, Phil Carpenter was ably assisted by many people including, during the foray, Lee Yamada. Vendors were ably coordinated by Athena Reschke and Bill Maxfield. Ken Sommers went above and beyond the call of duty in putting in many hours working out contracts for foray buses, only to have to start all over again (more than once!) due to circumstances beyond his control. Sandy Hain ably did a super job and coordinated the first attempt to provide videos of a number of presentations. Additional thanks to Lisa Bauer (MSSF), Matt Binder (MSSF) and Vince Viverito.

Treasurer for NAMA '98 was Richard Rammer. The NAMA '98 Steering Committee decided that having a great party was the main focal point, not to make money. As a result, Richard had many unplanned checks to write, since as it became clear we were under budget we gave \$100 to the many presenters who had not received a board-room-foray fee waiver. Thanks, Richard!

The foray itself was wonderful, but there was one major glitch in our preparations. Hundreds of foray graphics were distributed with the honoree's name misspelled "Theirs" instead of "Thiers." Despite this, no one (including Dr. Thiers, his wife, son-in-law and numerous colleagues who received the misspelled graphic) pointed this out until almost all the T-shirts were printed! The shirts were reprinted, so you'll see some spelled one way, some the other. Misspelled shirts were sold at cost (\$7 including tax) at the foray; the remainder are being distributed to MSSF and FFSC (see below).

The Steering Committee agreed that FFSC and MSSF would split proceeds 80%/20%. The bottom line (allowing for a few minor outstanding bills) is we have \$3400 and 375 T-shirts to be apportioned as follows: FFSC will receive \$2720 and 300 T-shirts; MSSF will receive \$680 and 75 T-shirts.

- Co-Chairs Phyllis Cole and Lee Yamada

P.S. Contrary to a popular rumor we have *not* agreed to coordinate all future NAMA forays!

Higher Fungi of the Sierra Nevada: Higher by About 7000 Ft.

May 31 - June 5, 1998

Location: The Sierra Nevada Field Camp of San Francisco State University, Sierra Co., CA, on Hwy 49 west of Yuba Pass and northeast of Sierra City (one mile from Bassetts).

Instructor: Dr. Dennis E. Desjardin, Systematic Mycologist, Assoc. Professor of Biology, San Francisco State University. Telephone: (415) 338-2439 FAX: (415) 338-2295; e-mail: ded@sfsu.edu. Web Site: <http://www.mycena.sfsu.edu/>

General Description: Students are introduced to the different kinds of mushrooms and other large fungi that occur in the spring in the Sierra Nevada. Emphasis is placed on the analysis of macro- and micro-morphological features, as well as ecological roles, to aid in the identification of taxa. The daily class routine is an 8:30-10:30 am lecture followed by a field trip until approximately 3:00 pm. Transportation on the field trips is by car pooling. Upon return to the camp, collections are examined and identified in the laboratory (3:30-6:00 pm) in collaboration with the instructor and a knowledgeable graduate student assistant. All equipment, microscope slides, cover slips and reagents required for accurate determination of specimens are provided. In the evenings, several lectures and slide shows are presented, and the laboratory is open for additional work on collections. If sufficient quantities of edible fungi are collected, they are prepared for consumption and served to the class by the camp's chef. Participants should plan to arrive Sunday afternoon, 1 June, in time to attend an orientation lecture Sunday evening at 8:00 pm. The last class meeting will be 12:00 noon, Friday, 6 June.

Optional Textbooks:

HOW TO IDENTIFY MUSHROOMS TO GENUS I: Macroscopic Features by David Largent

HOW TO IDENTIFY MUSHROOMS TO GENUS III: Microscopic Features by David Largent et al.

The Unexpected Dangers of Mycophagy

From the poisoning reports in McIlvainea, the journal of NAMA, 1995 edition:

Amanita pantherina (case #9407): A 65-year-old physician collected what he thought were "shaggy mane" mushrooms on the San Juan Islands in the state of Washington. Approximately half an hour after exposure, he began to exhibit symptoms of ataxia, dizziness, and disorientation. Thinking that he was going to die, he made certain "death bed" confessions to his wife which, upon recovery, he soon regretted.

Both of these books are published by Mad River Press, 141 Carter Lane, Eureka CA 95501-9528, 707.443.2947 and must be ordered directly from the publisher. They are not available in local bookstores!

Keys: Photocopies of *Keys to the Spring Fungi of the Sierra Nevada* written by Dr. Dennis E. Desjardin and Kris Shanks may be purchased from the instructor at the Field Camp (approx. \$10). Other references will be available in the laboratory, including monographs of selected genera, common field guides, picture books, etc.

Required Equipment: Collecting basket; wax paper; a sturdy knife; a small hand cultivator or garden trowel (for digging truffles); a pair of fine forceps; a 10X hand lens.

Credit: The course carries one unit of college credit and may be taken for a letter grade or Credit/No Credit.

Registration: All registration is handled by the Camp Manager and, if possible, should be completed two weeks prior to the beginning of the course.

NOTE: Please register early! Last year's class of 23 students filled up early and many potential participants had to be turned away. If weather conditions are uncooperative, a decision on whether or not to cancel the course will be made two weeks before the course begins.

Please direct all questions concerning registration procedures and fees to:

Mr. James Steele, Sierra Nevada Field Camp Director, Department of Biology, San Francisco State University, 1600 Holloway Ave., San Francisco, CA 94132 Evenings phone: 415.738.1814



California Boletes

Back In Print

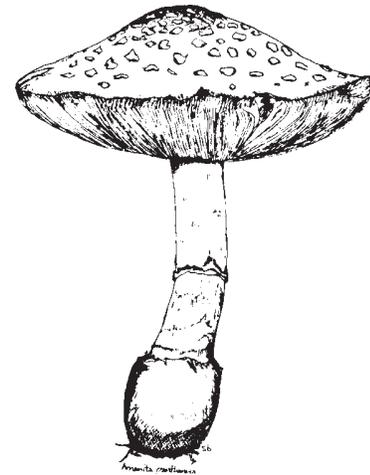
(in a manner of speaking...)

In 1975, MSSF scientific adviser emeritus Harry Thiers published a landmark field guide: *California Mushrooms: A Field Guide to the Boletes*. This book is unusual in that it addresses both professional and amateur mycologists. On one hand, it provides detailed technical descriptions of taxonomy and species within the family *Boletaceae*; on the other hand it provides a practical field key and introductory remarks for beginning boletologists.

Within the pages of Dr. Thiers' book you'll find many boletes not described in other field guides, along with a microfiche of bolete pictures to aid in identification. It's a key tool for identifying California boletes. It's a shame, then, that *California Boletes* has been out of print for many years now, a victim of publishing houses unwilling or unable to keep books in print that appeal only to a relatively small segment of the population.

MSSF webmaster Mike Wood has come to the rescue, spending many hours of his time to scan the contents of the book, translate microfiche pictures into computer graphics, and turn the keys into interactive HTML pages: in short, turning *California Boletes* into a web site with Harry Thiers' permission. Fellow MSSF members Fred Stevens and Mike Boom helped with additional content; other MSSF members helped proofread the scanned pages.

If you want to check out *California Boletes*, you'll find it online in Mike's new and improved Mykoweb at <http://www.mykoweb.com>.



Mushroom Scoop continued from page 7.

about a half mile along Highway 580 in San Leandro. There were literally almost a million fruiting bodies, each cup about 3–4 mm wide, lacing the ground like spongeworks. The peridioles (the “spore eggs” in the cup) that had splashed out to the surrounding wood chips were so profuse that I first mistook them for fine-chipped gravel!

In the Oakland hills, there were still a few yellow chanterelles out, but the really notable fruiting was *Amanita novinupta* (nee *rubescens*) blushing in profuse numbers under oak (well, profuse for Amanitas). A few of these Amanitas were truly huge—enough for quite a dinner if you're sure of your Amanitas.

The real story for edibles is in Livermore, where Henry Shaw found quite a few morels in wood mulch around Lawrence Livermore lab, and Rod Camp found 50 or so choice specimens, also in wood mulch. There were also Internet reports flying about morels coming up in mulch in San Jose and the Oakland hills—but I, alas, wasn't there to verify or eat.

May Meeting: Dennis Desjardin and Spring Fungi of the Sierras

Dr. Dennis Desjardin, SFSU mycology professor extraordinaire and the MSSF's scientific adviser, has been tramping the Sierras around Yuba Pass for many years now—first as a student, now as the teacher of SFSU's spring fungi class. During those years he's amassed an enviable knowledge of the spring mycota of the Sierras along with an impressive collection of slides. Join Dennis in the next general meeting as he discusses some of the interesting species his class has collected lately, species he hopes to collect this year, and contributions that amateur collectors can make to the science of mycology.

If your experience with spring Sierra fungi is limited mostly to the morels you hope to see in burn areas, then you'll discover some new

fungi interests in this talk: the prolific spring boletes that often come up around the Yuba Pass camp, the snowbank fungi, the oddly-formed secotoid fungi adapted for dry conditions, tiny but statuesque *Mycenas*, and more. And if you've never heard Dennis talk, you're in for a treat—he's one of the most dynamic lecturers to stand in front of the MSSF.

This month's general meeting is on Tuesday, the 19th of May, at 8:00 p.m. It's held in the Randall Jr. Museum in San Francisco. Doors open at 7:00 p.m. for pre-meeting schmoozing, book sales, and poking and sniffing the mushrooms we all bring in. See you there!

THE MUSHROOM SCOOP

By David Campbell



Hello, goodbye. Spring is here, I really must be going. If and when this winter nip in the air and in the ground finally quells, off for morels I'll be. Come autumn, though, I'll return to this column and commence to share with you the various mushroom hunting endeavors and finds as reported by our fellow members, along with a little bit of what I've been up to lately. Perhaps as well some offerings of tips and insights concerning that challenging and marvelously artful game we do so love to play as mushroom hunters, as mycophiles.

I was on my game March 26, straight up the mountain from Upper Lake, in the second year burn at 3600' to 4000' elevation. Coming in on the heels of the only warm spell, (about a week's worth), we've yet seen this season, I was harboring keen memories of last year's March morel bonanza here. At the higher elevations, where I made camp upon arrival, there was no hint of significant fungal activity, fewer cup fungi and other snow edge mushrooms than I had seen in my visit 12 days earlier, in fact. I decided to drop to the lowest possible burned elevation, to the most solar heated aspects I could find.

I first visited the spot where I had discovered the patch of giant *Gyromitra* (sp. unknown, macroscopic ID lurking menacingly somewhere between *esculenta* and *infula*) on the 14th, and bingo. I was just starting to feel like I was going to strike out again, that there were no morels here. I was too early, it's a second year burn anyway—unreliable, what was I thinking? Then a rather well developed strawberry blonde morel materialized from the jumbled litter underfoot, and then another. Remarkable how my mood shifted.

I got home with a half kilo, managed to stretch the rather perfect and plump morels into three dinners, and then proceeded to watch (and feel) the incessant weather reports of cold, cold, cold. It has, in fact, snowed three times since in that morel zone. I've not been back, though others have with some trickle of success, similar to mine there. Norm the prez found a few panfuls, for instance, restoring his faith in fungdom. Slim pickings, overall, but boding well for the warm spell which seems to be developing as of this writing.

Back home in Marin, I found an *Amanita velosa* here, a *Macrolepiota rachodes* there, a miraculous April fruiting of *Dentinum repandum* with firs out by the lakes.

Patrick Hamilton and Kathleen Faircloth, in their relentless monitoring of the Earth's fungal activity, found a smattering of morels near Pollock Pines, a blewit, (*Lepista nuda*), and a pretty fair run of Sierran puffballs in a roadside meadow. Sauté this *Calvatia subsculpta* with onions in butter; it is an excellent comestible.

Near the water treatment plant in San Geronimo Valley, Patrick reports a major fruiting of the ostensibly edible *Dictyophora indusiata*, the basket stinkhorn, but he admits to eschewing the chance to harvest them for the table, remembering previous unsavory attempts. They

showed also along the freeway on-ramp southbound from Corte Madera, but I, uh, couldn't quite reach them as I motored by. I did, at least, enjoy wondering if they might be trying to take over the planet, or Marin, or who knows what.

Charmoon Richardson recently found just a handful of tired black chanterelles (*Craterellus cornucopiodes*) up in the Sonoma woods, but fetched a fine dinner out at the coast: a squad of *Agaricus crocodilinus* basking in the seaview meadows.

Connie Green came upon a striking cluster of Inky Caps (*Coprinus atramentarius*) in her rounds of Napa and continues to collect residual quantities of golden chanterelles in her private oak groves there. She mentions a serious collector friend who tells of harvesting a naturally occurring morel, apparently *esculenta*, that grows in the madrone groves of the northern California coastal mountains, and not necessarily riparian inclined. Now there's an excuse to keep you out in the local woods while you're waiting for the Sierra's massive snowpack to melt!

When you're in the mountains, don't neglect to be alert for a trio of unsung delectables—*Lentinus ponderosus*, *Peziza proteana* var. *sparassoides*, and the fuzzy truffle, *Geopora cooperii*. Look 'em up.

This summer, remember that it's always mushroom season somewhere in America. The numerous mountain ranges of the Pacific northwest carry spring mushrooms through July and pick up their fall pattern in August. I like to be in the Oregon Cascades around September for chanterelles white, (*C. albidus*), yellow, (*C. formosus*), and blue, (*Polyozellus multiplex*); for the white matsutake, *Tricholoma magnivelare*; for the exquisite *Hericeum abietis*; and for the virtual explosion of other intriguing fungi. Sometimes I even find myself in cep timber then, too. East coast habitats run a July through September program, and the alluring mountains of the Southwest usually erupt with boletes in August. What's more, there's always our beloved fogdrip and the sprinkler systems around town if you're not going far. Happy trails.

Editor's East Bay Addendum: El Niño seems to have spawned a case of gigantism in the East Bay hills this year, either through gigantic fruiting, gigantic fruiting bodies, or both. The most striking fruiting was huge clusters of *Agrocybe praecox* almost anywhere there were wood chips, especially alongside the freeways. This normally modestly sized mushroom has appeared in dinner-plate-sized bodies. Too bad they're such an unappealing edible; there were enough to feed hordes.

Mike Wood stumbled upon another El Niño gigantism: the largest fruiting of the tiny bird's nest fungus *Cyathus olla* I've ever seen. They fruited in a bed of wood chips 10 to 15 yards wide that stretched for

Mushroom Scoop continued on page 6.

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



May, 1998 vol 48:5

Calendar

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

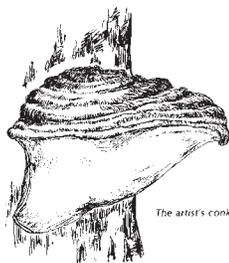
Saturday–Sunday, May 9–10: Sierra morel camping foray. Location to be determined depending on conditions, probably Evergreen Road/ Stanislaus National Forest. Call or e-mail Henry Shaw for details: shaw4@llnl.gov, 510.943.3237.

Tuesday, May 19: General Meeting at the Randall Junior Museum in San Francisco. Doors open at 7:00 pm for mushroom ID and book sales; meeting proper begins at 8:00 pm. The speaker this month is Dennis Desjardin, the MSSF's scientific adviser.

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

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

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



For the most current Calendar information, call the MSSF hotline at 415.759.0495 or check the MSSF web site at:

<http://www.mssf.org>