



Mycena News

Mycological Society of San Francisco

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Membership and Subscription Information

To join the MSSF and receive this newsletter, send a \$20 check, payable to MSSF (\$12 for seniors 65 and over and full time students), to MSSF, c/o Wade Leschyn, 1609 Valley View Ave, Belmont CA 94002. Please include some contact information such as home and/or work phone numbers and email addresses. New and renewal memberships will be current through December of 2000. To change your mailing address, please notify Wade. MSSF members may also join or renew membership in the North American Mycological Association at a reduced rate by including with their MSSF check a separate check for \$17 payable to NAMA. Send it to Wade at the same address. For further information email Wade at leschyn@rahul.net or call at 650.591.6616.

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More MSSF History – the MSSF’s First President, Sal Billeci

The first chapter of the MSSF’s history in the November, 1999 newsletter told of the first few forays, lead by Ralph Meyer, which brought about the formation of the MSSF. It closed with a quote from Herb Caen referring to our first President, Salvatore Billeci, as “rootin’ tootin’.”

Sal was indeed always rooting for the Mycological Society, and was also tooting its horn whenever and wherever he could. When Founder Ralph Meyer moved to Portland where the picking was a lot better, Sal saved the infant organization by leading it through its early years. Many strong society presidents also helped to invigorate the Society — of whom a surprising number are still with us; e.g., Charles Newman (1956), John Rusk (1959), and Ned Chapin (1961).

Here’s a little bit more background about our first president, Sal Billeci. Sal was born in Isola di Femmine in Sicily one hundred years ago. His sea-faring father was stranded in San Francisco just around the time Sal was born, and brought the family to the Bay Area in 1901. They lived in Pittsburgh (on the East Bay) where Sal graduated from high school. A chance meeting with the U.C. President during a ferry ride back from San Francisco challenged Sal to study in Berkeley where he started as a microbiologist but graduated with a degree in music in 1924. His interest in teaching music took him first out to the Central Valley in small towns along Highway 120 beyond Oakdale, and then later to a position at Balboa High

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Culinary Corner

The Culinary Group has had a very busy month. Our first event was the Mendocino Foray of November 19 – 21. We started the weekend with three different soups, salads and breads on Friday night. Although the helpers were too numerous to list, a special thanks to Frank Francone and Edith Oto for prep work in the kitchen. Early risers Bennie Cottone and Brad Brown presented sausage, gravy, biscuits, oatmeal and fruit salad for Saturday’s breakfast. After packing bag lunches, everyone departed for mushroom hunting. Saturday night, Zoe Caldwell and her team (Kelda Rinkleib, Pat George, Kathleen Madsen, Maria Moon and Shawn Johnson) served a sumptuous stuffed pork roast with baked potatoes and all the trimmings. The Firebaughs (John and Donna) served the most delicious cheesecakes I have ever tasted. What a nice, hearty meal after hiking in the woods all day! We wrapped up on Sunday morning with Canadian bacon, eggs, hash browns, oatmeal and fruit salad.

After a short respite for Thanksgiving (more cooking, more eating), the Culinary Group served the annual Holiday Dinner for the MSSF. A crowd of over 125 journeyed to the Snow Building for an evening of good food, good music and good company. Monique Carment set up the tables with festive tablecloths and lit up the fireplace. We started with hors d’oeuvres while the Rhodins (Carl and Inez) served an aromatic and warm glog. Then, Chef Lorenzo Leissner started dinner with a Cream of Chanterelles; a salad of lettuce, oranges, roasted peppers and pecans; and Bill Hellum’s wonderful bread rolls. We continued with bacon-wrapped filet mignons topped morel sauce and truffle oil, roasted winter vegetables and wilted spinach tossed with toasted pine nuts. For the vegetarians, Alvaro Carvajal

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President's Corner

I had intended to write about the monthly council meeting in this column, but the December council meeting was sparsely attended, and we didn't have a quorum present (this is pretty understandable due to the numerous forays, dinners, and Fair events that we've had in the past month). In fact, due to an excess of events in December I'm going to propose to the Council that, for future years, the December Council meeting be postponed to January.

Now that the fair is over it is time to give thanks to the many volunteers who spent countless hours making sure that things went smoothly. The fair turned out to be quite a success with a large increase in attendees and a lot of new energy in many of the display tables. I'd like to thank **Tom Chester** for being the chairperson for the fair. He refused to be called that all fall, but if the shoe fits, wear it. He was a great organizer and runs a tight meeting. I'd also like to thank **Monique Carment** for all of her work making sure that the logistics of the Hall of Flowers were all taken care of. Monique handled the nuts and bolts of the show. I'd like to thank **Jane Wardzinska** for the wonderful dinner on Friday night for the setup volunteers. Double thanks to **Loraine Berry** for feeding us on both Saturday and Sunday with turkey, salmon, ham, soup and beverages. Thanks to **Lisa Bauer** for the t-shirts, **Ken Litchfield** for the wonderful poster and T-shirt design, **Yu-Shen Ng**, **Robin Maclean**, **Bonnie Charyn**, **Paul Koski**, **Terri Beauséjour** and **Hilary Somers** for the publicity work that drew the large crowds, and **Chris and Nate Thayer** for selling books all weekend.

Thanks to **John Pisto** and **Frances Wilson** for two well attended and tasty cooking demonstrations and to the Fungus Federation of Santa Cruz for loaning us the large mirror. Thanks to **Mike Wood** and **Fred Stevens** for giving a photography workshop and to **Mike Boom** for a beginning fungi lecture. Thanks also to **Taylor Lockwood** for two new and very well attended slide shows and to **Scott Hajicek-Dobberstein** for his Saturday talk on mushrooms in the history of religions. Thanks to **Mo-Mei Chen** for running the medicinal booth and for lecturing both days and thanks to **James Arthur** for his presentations.

Thanks to **Len Coleman** for the grand information booth. I'm not sure how we lived without it for so long. Thanks to **Zoe Amey-**

Caldwell for managing the money and the door and to **Al Carvajal** for coordinating volunteers. Thanks to **Dulcie Heiman** and **Sherri Carvajal** for spending the weekend working in various places and the same to **Mark Lockaby** for always stepping up to take care of anything that needs to be done (I have your fire extinguisher by the way). It's appropriate that Mark loaned this as he is the one I turn to in a panic when a fire needs to be put out. Thanks also to **Terri Beauséjour** for an expanded and lively cultivation booth and to **Debbie Viess** and **David Bartolotta** for a crowded edibles table. Thanks also to **David Rust** for the extremely organized work that he did coordinating all of the tables. The same goes to **Irma Brandt** who managed the vendor tables. Thanks to **Paul Koski** for his knowledge and advice from having coordinated the fair so many times in the past and to **Larry Stickney** for the countless hours he has volunteered. Thanks to **Bill Freedman** for leading a foray and manning his toxicology table all weekend. Thanks to **Louise Freedman** for the wonderful kids drawing table which seemed more crowded than ever this year. Thanks also to **Steve Pencall** and his wife from LAMS who helped out all weekend. Thanks to **Herb Saylor** and **Mike Wood** for staffing the identification tables and to **Fred Stevens** who could usually be found standing behind one of the mushroom tables teaching people. Thanks to **Wade Leschyn** for running the membership table and for helping with **Dr. Dennis Desjardin** on the Friday evening mushroom identifications. Thanks also to **Norm Andresen** for organizing the forays and helping all three days.

Thanks also to **Janet and Richard Doell** of the California Lichen Society for their presentation on lichens on Saturday and Sunday and for the informative booth. Also, thanks go to **Miriam Rice** for her beautiful table of dyeing and paper making with mushrooms.

I'd finally like to thank everyone who volunteered at various time throughout the weekend and helped keep things running.

If I've forgotten someone who spent all day Saturday and Sunday helping out please let me know. It's through your generous donations of time and knowledge that we, as a group, are able to put on such a successful show. Best of luck mushrooming and I'll see you out in the woods.

— *Mark Thomsen*

January 18, MSSF General Meeting: J.R. Blair

Fungi related to Manzanita Trees

At the January general meeting the speaker will be J.R. Blair. J.R. is a past recipient of an MSSF scholarship and will be presenting his most recent work on fungi associated with manzanita.

The MSSF's general meetings are held on the third Tuesday of each month—September through May—at the Randall Museum on Museum Way (near Buena Vista Park) in San Francisco. Doors open at 7:00pm for mushroom identification and general conversation; the meeting proper begins at 8:00pm.

Learn to Draw Mushrooms

with Artist Louise Freedman

Sunday, February 6th, 10am-1pm, Please call Louise Freedman at 650.344.7774 for additional information. Cost is \$10 per person and covers paper and colored pencils. Class size is limited to 15.

Message from the MSSF Fungus Fair “Coordinator”

In Sum, well done!

Well, another Fungus Fair is finished and as we settle in to the stretch run of the mushroom season, it is a good time to think back on that frantic weekend and all of the work that went in to make it happen.

When Mark Thomsen approached me last summer about being fair chair, I was hesitant about taking the job. I had had a grand time the previous two years coordinating the Beginning Identification display, but I was leery about taking on the entire fair. From my experience in previous fairs, I had thought the Fungus Fair Chairman basically a thankless, stressful job. In the end, I reluctantly agreed to be the leader, because someone had to do it and I wanted to try my hand at the job. Although nominally “the leader,” I considered the position to be one of “Coordinator” rather than “Chairman.” I was not trying to split etymological hairs nor to abnegate responsibility of leadership. Rather, I made the distinction because I believe the fair should be an enjoyable, cooperative effort that brings together the knowledge and talents and resources of many, rather than be a stressful burden of a few poor suckers—particularly the Chairman—under the judgmental eyes of the rest.

By that measure, as well as by more traditional yardsticks of money and attendance, this year’s fair was a great success. We made money

and we had more attendees than in at least the last two years. Moreover, we gave the public a good time for their admission fee, and we presented ourselves as a capable organization with something interesting to share with the public. Most important, perhaps, we all had a good time. I don’t think any of our exhibitors, vendors, volunteers, or attendees went home unhappy.

We, who gave our time as organizers or helpers, for a few hours during the fair itself or for months beforehand, can be proud of what we did. Sure we made a few mistakes, but that is unavoidable, and the mistakes turned out to be minor anyway. What is important is that by working together in a cooperative effort we gave the public a good show, we succeeded by measures of attendance and income, and we had a good time doing it.

I thank you all. It was a pleasure to be Coordinator.

Now it’s time to start planning for next year! I’m serious.

If you have suggestions on how we might improve the fair next year, please call or email me. I’m all ears. Feel free to call me at 415.665.7520, or email tlc1@well.com (that’s TLC1). Thanks go to everyone in making this fair a success.

— Tom Chester

Mushroom Madness in Marin

Sunday, January 30, 2000

Lorraine Berry and Mo-Mei Chen are hosting a spectacular food fest afternoon — Mushroom Madness in Marin — on Sunday, January 30. The cost is \$27 for MSSF members, or \$30 for non-members. Reservations, which are required, can be made by contacting Lorraine at 415.454.0914 by January 23. This year’s event will continue the hands-on, participatory culinary tradition with an afternoon dinner at Lorraine’s lovely home in Ross, CA. Please arrive at 1:00pm, and please bring an apron and a beverage to share; the event truly is participatory. Microbrewed beers and house wines will be provided. *Lorraine generously donates all proceeds from the event to the Whited/Thiers scholarship fund of the MSSF.*

A Few Words from Our T-Shirt Queen

A long line of thanks are in order, as I see it from my corner of the MSSF (that’s the T-shirt corner).

First, I want to thank all the MSSF artists who submitted a wide range of attractive and interesting artwork for the 50th Anniversary T-shirt contest. The competition was stiff, the decision difficult. Which leads me to my next thanks. This one goes to our contest winner, and also Fungus Fair poster designer, Ken Litchfield. His design graced the front of our new T-shirts, which premiered at the Fungus Fair last month. Obviously, the judges who chose his work knew how wonderfully it would translate to a silk-screen for clothing.

The demand and interest in his design was unprecedented, and we ran out of several types of clothing before the end of the fair. Look elsewhere in this newsletter for information about placing special orders.

Finally, I wanted to thank several folks who made the small areas of the fungus fair in which I was involved a pleasure to coordinate. I definitely want to thank chefs John Pisto and Frances Wilson. In particular, John Pisto, who held a cooking demonstration on Saturday at the Fair, regaled us with amazing smells, interesting stories, and delicious risotto. Thank you, John, for sharing your joy of food, and fresh porcini, with us. Mike Boom, who answered our plea for donations of mushrooms for the demo, handed us two full pounds of choice dried edibles to add to the risotto. This was above and beyond the call of duty, and made the dish delicious. The tireless folks who volunteered with me to sell hundreds of pieces of clothing during the two days of the fair deserve more gratitude than I can fit in these lines: Lynn Morton, Dave Moore, his lovely wife and grandson, Dulcie Heiman, and Nate Thayer made our booth’s success possible. Thanks to all for so much good work and fun!

— Lisa Bauer

MSSF History, continued from page 1,

School in San Francisco in 1934. There, he taught music for 36 years (till 1970)! He even authored the Balboa Hymn, "All Hail, Balboa, Hail," which is still sung at the school today. To my ear, his most touching and dramatic piece of music is one dedicated to Yosemite's Fire Fall.

Sal, a lover of music, developed also a strong love for mushrooms. Sal learned to grow mushrooms from an Italian professional grower who had hired him to teach a son to play piano (in the late 1930's). During the World War II years, Sal even sold crates of mushrooms house to house—mushrooms that had been grown at a patch of land near the Cow Palace where a friend of his had some extra unused outside space. Sal grew not only mushrooms, but also worms, there, for he was also a dedicated trout fisherman (he spent 30 August summer camping trips to Yosemite's Lake Merced Camp well up the river beyond Nevada Falls).

Many of us remember learning from Sal at the Cow Palace site how to prepare compost and start *Agaricus* crops as late as the 70's. His cellar at home was often reeking of fungi—much to the distress of his fastidious wife, Isabelle. She never liked "those dirty things." He was forever cultivating new wild species there. His

last presidency over the MSSF in 1964 ended in an unfortunate dispute over money. Dues then were \$1.00 a year, so there couldn't have been much there for anyone to misuse. It was really, of course, a political rivalry between two strong personalities. Can you imagine anything like that happening in our club?

Sal dropped away for about ten years until a new and curious president (myself) sought him out and invited him to speak to the club. It was a happy reunion for Sal, and at an event when Ralph Meyer came to visit the club. Ralph proposed that Sal be awarded an Honorary Membership in The Society. It was at a once a year meeting at State College that this unusual motion was made and carried easily. This award brought Sal fully back into the organization which he had sustained so long, and cheered his last years.

After bouts with different kinds of cancer, he succumbed to prostate cancer in his 93rd year (1992), leaving his wife, one son, three grandsons, and a grand daughter—all musicians. At the packed memorial service at Balboa High in the Salvatore Billeci Little Theater on a sunny Saturday afternoon, many rose to praise his tutelage and influence on their lives. Outside in the grass near the entrance to the school several different kinds of agarics stood in a humble and poignant salute.

— *Larry Stickney*

Culinary Corner, continued from page 1,

concocted an entrée of roasted Portobellos stuffed with onions and Gouda cheese. As if all this was not enough, David Bartolotta produced a magnificent candy cap cake with a divine candy cap-caramel sauce served over vanilla bean ice cream. It tasted heavenly! All the while, a terrific Jazz trio provided musical entertainment. There were so many people who helped make this dinner possible that I cannot possibly mention them all. I must, however, thank Jeanne Campbell and Dulcie Heiman for their many hours in the kitchen. Also, the excellence of this dinner would not have been possible without the mushroom contribution and special deals received from Norm Andreson (morels), David and Jeanne Campbell (chanterelles) and Todd Spanier (truffle oil).

Later that week, we worked in various capacities at the Fungus Fair. As usual, Loraine Berry set up great spreads for the volunteers to munch on (the salmon was delectable and the fritatta with chanterelle sauce, totally delicious). Frances Wilson also contributed a candy cap cheesecake that was sensational. From the culinary point of view, the main attractions at the Fair were the Edibles table and the two cooking demos. Debbie Viess and David Bartolotta did a terrific job organizing and manning the Edibles table. It displayed a multitude of fresh, dried and canned mushrooms for Fair visitors to look and smell. Many other culinary group members assisted during the set up and the show. On Saturday, Monterey restaurateur, TV chef and cooking book author John Pisto demonstrated how to make a perfect mushroom risotto. On Sunday, Lalime's executive chef Frances Wilson prepared a candy cap crême brûlée and a leek and mushroom galette. Both presentations were well attended and well received by Fair visitors. Dulcie Heiman and Sherry Carvajal lent their expert assistance to the chefs both days.

Since we were all exhausted from the many activities, the menu for the January dinner is not quite complete but here is what we have so far:

Hors d'oeuvres
Soup
Salad
Baked Ham with a Candy Cap Glaze
(from Louise Freedman's book)
Acorn Squash stuffed with Portobellos
Vegetable
Bread and butter
Dessert and Coffee

Reservations by Thursday, December 30 are a must. Please call George Repinec at 415.731.5115 or Sherry Carvajal at 415.695.0466 to reserve a spot. Bring your own dishes, silverware, preferred beverage, \$12.00 per person and, most important of all, an hors d'oeuvre to share.

- *Sherry Carvajal*



Announcements from Our Fellow Fungophiles

UC Extension Mushroom Cultivation Class

For the first time, the nation's only undergraduate college course in mushroom production (offered annually at UC Davis) is being made available to the general public through University Extension, UC Davis. *Edible Mushroom Cultivation*, slated for March 4-5, provides an introduction on how to grow America's favorite fungus - from the common white button variety to shiitake, oyster, maitake, reishi and other specialty mushrooms.

The program begins with a discussion of the history of mushrooms as a food, medicine and religious tool. The instructor takes students step by step through the mushroom production process: culture maintenance, basic mushroom substrate preparation, spawn generation techniques, inoculation methods, harvesting, and pests and pest management.

On the afternoon of the second day, Eddie Cortez, grower and owner of a shiitake mushroom farm near Davis, will speak in class about his experiences starting and operating a specialty mushroom business. The class will then depart for a tour of Cortez' mushroom farm. By the end of this weekend course, students will have the knowledge and skills needed to cultivate their own edible mushrooms.

"I've been teaching this course at UC Davis for three years," said R. Michael Davis, Cooperative Extension specialist with the UC Davis Department of Plant Pathology. "But with the growing popularity of specialty mushrooms today, we thought an introductory version of this class would have a broader audience appeal - to farmers market growers, specialty food enthusiasts and anyone interested in exploring mushroom cultivation for enterprise or hobby."

The course takes place **Saturday and Sunday, March 4-5, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.**, in Davis. The \$250 fee includes course materials and box lunches. To request more information about this course or to enroll, call toll free 800.752.0881.

26th Annual Santa Cruz Fungus Fair

Jan. 15-16, 2000

Couldn't get enough of the MSSF's own Fungus Fair? The Santa Cruz society is hosting a Fungus Fair too, and you're more than welcome to attend.

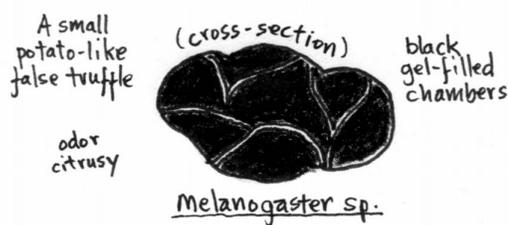
The Santa Cruz Fungus Fair is open to the public 10am to 5pm on Sat. Jan. 15 and Sun. Jan. 16. The location is the Loudon Nelson Community Center, Center at the corner of Laurel street, in downtown Santa Cruz.

Mother Nature willing, hundreds of wild mushrooms will be on display. Each day, there will be four terrific programs:

- 10:00 Basic Identification
- 11:30 John Pisto: Cooking Demo and Book Signing
- 1:30 Christopher Hobbs: Medicinal Mushrooms
- 3:30 Joseph Schultz: Cooking Demo and Book Signing

There will be the usual outrageous mushroom food plus new food vendors. In addition to the vendors selling guide books, cultivation kits, mushroom photos, spore prints, dried mushrooms and more, there will be a Fungal Fotos booth that produces photos of people into mushrooms. Also, coincident with the Fungus Fair, a mushroom-related art show will be on display at the Loudon Nelson center (throughout the month of January).

The Fungus Fair is a fund-raiser for the Santa Cruz City Museum of Natural History. For more information, contact the museum by phone at 831.420.6115.



SOMA Winter Mushroom Camp in Mendocino

Just a reminder that the SOMA Winter Mushroom Camp will be taking place on **January 15-17, 2000** (MLK weekend). Forays, classes, workshops, and evening presentations will take place, along with fantastic wild mushroom feasting from chef Rick Sajbel. The camp will be held near Philo, in Mendocino county, amongst redwoods and wineries.

Miriam Rice, with her mushroom dyes and pigments, & Mike Wood, of MykoWeb fame, will be sharing their knowledge. Other local myco-luminaries will be teaching oyster mushroom cultivation, polypore paper-making, making mushroom medicines, and mushroom ID. Evening slide shows will be presented as well, along with discussions of the specimen collections.

This camp is a great event for learning more about our fungal friends, and sharing mushroom camaraderie. Cost for the event is \$135. This covers all meals, lodging, workshops and classes. To register, please send a check to "SOMA" to: SOMA Camp, P.O. Box 1088 Forestville, CA 95436. For questions, please contact Charmoon, the SOMA Camp coordinator, at 707.887.1888, or <charmoo@trr.metro.net>.



There is a certain grace for a fungal reporter in the dry season leading up to the fall rains. Slim pickin's in the mushroom department leave me with plenty of time to weave fanciful rhapsodies about obscure fungi such as, well, *Pisolithus tinctorius* to take one example.

Grace is now just a distant dream. In the last four weeks I've been bombarded with burgeoning boletes, pelted with plenteous *Pleurotus*, crushed by a cavalcade of coccoli, and run ragged by rampant *Russulas*. The trick this month is not to fill up this column, but rather to squeeze everything in tighter than Bette Midler's bustier.

I'll start by getting something off my chest: I have indulged in *Boletus edulis* during the last four weeks, and I feel no shame. I started slowly, waiting for the season to begin. A few reports trickled in during mid-November: David Campbell's excellent Salt Point foray found a few *edulis* in a species list of 78 that includes a smattering of other early season fungi such as *Amanita gemmata*, *Suillus caeruleus*, *Lepiota flameotincta*, *Lepiota rubrotincta*, and *Mycena capillaripes*. Bob Mackler reported a half week later that he found numerous young bolete buttons in Salt Point accompanied by *Amanita muscaria*, *Sparassis crispa*, and others.

By the time of the MSSF Mendocino foray the following weekend, this season's warm, plentiful, and relatively gentle rains had kicked the bolete season into high gear on the Mendocino coast. I was gripped by a boletic frenzy bolstered by the fact that for the first time in years we found boletes in good quantities at the Mendocino camp. This was particularly remarkable when you consider that the locals certainly aren't ignorant about bolete picking, that there were 80 plus people at the MSSF foray, and possibly another 100 or so in the area for mycology class forays from SFSU, UC Berkeley, and UC Davis.

The Mendocino species list numbered around 70, but the majority of specimens were early-season species such as *Agaricus praeclarequamosus* (up everywhere), small *Lepiotas*, spongy *Suilli*, spring-tail-munched *Pleurotus ostreatus* (oyster mushrooms), and—of course—*Boletus edulis*. Later-season fungi such as *Cantherellus cibarius* (yellow chanterelles), *Tricholoma magnivelare* (matsutakes), and even the assorted *Russulas* made slim appearances, proof that this year's mushroom season is late in arrival—but profuse in its early offerings.

Thanksgiving weekend followed, and there was much to be thankful for. My wife Lynn and I spent a considerable time on the Sonoma coast with good friends traipsing through sunny fields dotted with Bishop pines—that is, whenever we weren't tripping over boletes. Because I've always been a bit of a piker when it comes to boletes, I was astounded and delighted at the variety of sizes and shapes *Boletus edulis* comes in, a good example why morphology (visible characteristics) aren't always the best guides to determining species. Patrick Hamilton introduced me to a completely new set of morphological

terminology: "puddin' heads" for the older boletes with soft flesh, "barstools" for some of the specimens we picked with caps over a foot wide. Lynn and I took to referring to trimmings of a bolete picked by someone before us as *Boletus deletus*.

There was plenty for everyone, and lots of indicators where they could be found, one of which was trimmings in the area. The old maxim about *Boletus edulis* and *Clitopilus prunulus* turned out to be another good indicator: whenever I found *edulis* I often found *Clitopilus*, so I know now that *edulis* is an indicator species for *Clitopilus*.

Joe Dougherty provided raw material for another important scientific experiment. Hypothesis: If we drink fungal waste products while searching for boletes, we will get in touch with our Inner Fungus and increase our sensitivity to boletic photons pelting our retinas. Preliminary results show that stumbling through the woods with a glass might be a good idea; that boletes might be particularly partial to crisp white German wines.

We weren't the only folks giving thanks. Koa Pickering, a runner in Marin County, reported running into *Boletus regius* (tasty), *B. satanas* (poisonous), *B. aereus* (tasty again), and *Leccinum manzanitae* (boringly edible) near Mt. Tam; then following up in Salt Point by picking five pounds of *Boletus edulis*. Ron Pastorino, also of Marin, reported *Boletus regius* and the first *Tricholoma magnivelare* he's seen this season. He noted no chanterelles, though, and wondered where they might be.

Further north, in inland Mendocino county, Mark Lockaby reported from the holdings of his friend Jan Donaghy that there were numerous young *Boletus aereus* (queen boletes) and some small *Boletus appendiculatus*. No chanterelles or matsutakes, however, which is what Mark expected to find. Even further inland, Eric Baker reported *Boletus edulis* in the low Sierra foothills over Thanksgiving, proving they weren't just profuse—they were far-flung to boot.

As we entered December, Bob Mackler reported that the north side of Mt. Tamalpais had become a version of fungal heaven with a wide variety of early-season fungi including grisettes (*Amanita vaginata*), an array of small *Lepiotas*, huge patches of *Suillus lakei* and *caeruleus*, *Hygrophoropsis aurantiaca* (false chanterelles), accompanied by various *Agaricus*, puffballs, and assorted small fungi. In the East Bay, Mark Thomsen reported his first *Amanita phalloides* (death cap) sighting, two perfectly shaped miniatures approximately one inch high and fully mature. He also bucked trends and found seven chanterelles, although he reports it's the fewest he's ever found at this time of year.

A. calyptrata made it to the East Bay for the first time in my knowledge, fruiting under coastal live oak with some mixed madrone. Debbie Viess and David Rust reported it; Mike Wood and I went out to photograph it. We found a staggering 50 fruiting bodies in beautiful condition with at least 25 eggs scattered throughout. Debbie and David report that it was also a very fruitful spot for *Boletus regius*.

Boletus edulis also made it down to the East Bay, and I finally had a chance to indulge my boletic frenzy with only a short trip to local trees. A strange occurrence for me: I also found the typical spring species *Macrolepiota rhacodes* and a huge *Agaricus augustus*. Lynn

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baked the Prince into a frittata appetizer for the MSSF Christmas dinner. It was inhaled within five minutes (no kidding!) by the feeding frenzy that's become the Christmas dinner.

Because this bustier is about to burst, I'll put a halt to the Fungal Follies. At this writing we just finished the Fungus Fair with good collections, but fewer species than normal; a species list appears elsewhere in the newsletter. The current state of fungi is that it's still early in the season. Boletes are beginning to peter out; chanterelles, matsutakes, and black chanterelles have yet to make a significant appearance on the horizon, although David Campbell reports some black chanterelles finally coming out in Mendocino.

Alas, here in the Bay Area it's abysmally sunny with no rain forecast. Connie Green (whose secret shame is that she took editors of *Martha Stewart Living* out on a mushroom foray) reports that the mushroom season in Washington and Oregon was bad, that northern California is where it's happening this year. With that thought, let's hope for more rain as we trip the annual odometer into the 2000's. And may the Y2K bugs stay out of your mushrooms.

— *Mike Boom*

FREE MUSHROOM ICONS

from Taylor Lockwood

see <http://www.mcn.org/2/tfl/ICONS/icons.html>

Got T-Shirts?

The new, 50th Anniversary T-shirts and other clothing flew off the table at the Fungus Fair. Many of you wanted to get sweatshirts or long sleeve crew neck shirts, and could not because they were sold out.

I am doing a special-order—a reordering of both sweatshirts and long sleeve shirts. If you would like one or more of these items, e-mail me at recycqueen@aol.com, or send me a note at: T-shirt reorder c/o MSSF, P.O. Box 882163, San Francisco, CA 94188-2163.

Please specify the size and type of shirt you want. Sizes range from small to XXX large. The prices are as follows:

- Longsleeve crewneck shirt, 100% cotton - \$20.00
- Sweatshirt, 90% cotton, 10% poly - \$25.00

For XXXL, please add \$2.00 per item. I accept cash and checks only. The deadline for ordering is **February 1, 2000**. Shirts will be available to be picked up at the February and March General Meetings only. Get them while you can, because once they're gone, they'll become collector's items.

— *Lisa Bauer*

One Woman's Titillating Run-in with Calyptrata

On the first day of December, I awoke early, threw some sweats on and thought I'd take a hike before going to work. The place I go is in San Rafael and frequented by many — joggers, mountain bikers, parents, kids, dogs, etc. I do not expect to find much in the way of mushrooms as I can count on one hand the mushrooms I have picked there over the years; the area simply does not support mushrooms.

As I was hiking up the fire road, a 'shrump and some white caught my eye and there was *Amanita calyptrata*! I got pretty excited, noted the spot and decided I would get it on the way down. Further up the road, more white caught my eye... mmm. Another 35 feet... another 'shrump. Still further up, *A. pachycolea*! Then *Clitopilus prunulus*!! (The only mushrooms I had ever found along the road were *Lepista nuda* and *Russula* sp.) I could barely contain myself. I had neither knife, nor bag, nor basket with me, I was looking at several yummy calyptrata, and it was 3 miles to my car!

Between a stick, car keys and my hands, I dug up the calyptratas. As I was thinking I'd just take my sweatshirt off and carry them in it, I realized it was chilly and windy, and I was quite sweaty, and I would be better off carrying them in my T-shirt (and wearing the sweatshirt). So right there on this very public road, I peeled my sweatshirt and T-shirt from my damp torso, and of course, they came off in a tangled, twisted mess! So there I stood, bare-chested, trying to untangle these garments... and along someone comes. I succeeded in just the nick of time! A very titillating experience to say the least! I have no doubt the mushroom gods were laughing... as was I.

And you boys think you are fun-guys...hah!

— *A flushed female MSSF member,
who prefers to remain anonymous*



MSSF Email List



To subscribe to the official MSSF email list, use your web browser to visit <http://www.onelist.com/subscribe/mssf> and follow the instructions there. It's a pretty active discussion area!

A note about Internet email list etiquette: please be careful when using this email list. Please use it solely as a forum for objective discussion, and do not carry on any personal discussions. Please also beware of an easily-made mistake: responding to any message that publishes your response publicly to the entire group, rather than to only the original author of the message... so please write with care and caution.

Given the warnings, do use the list. It's a great tool, and a great forum for discussion about the latest mushroom news and information.

Calendar, continued from page 10

Wilson of Lalime's Restaurant will be teaching this class—covering hunting for seasonal wild mushrooms in local stores and markets and successfully preparing and pairing them with dishes. Cost is \$45, and reservations can be made by calling 408.395.6946.

Saturday, January 22: Joaquin Miller mushroom walk, Oakland. Meet at 10am in the Sequoia arena area of Joaquin Miller Park. To get there, take the Joaquin Miller Road exit off Highway 13. Follow Joaquin Miller Road up hill, turn left at Skyline. Continue 1.5 miles to Sequoia area on the left. Meet near the bathrooms.

Sunday, January 23: Land's End Foray, Golden Gate Park. Spend your Sunday morning walking with mushroomers through Golden Gate Park. Meet at 10am at the Palace of the Legion of Honor for this 2 hour walk.

Thursday, January 27: Cooking with Wild Mushrooms and Truffles. At 6:00pm, at the Sur Le Table store in San Francisco, Chef Frances Wilson of Lalime's Restaurant will be teaching this class—covering hunting for seasonal wild mushrooms in local stores and markets and successfully preparing and pairing them with dishes. Cost is \$45, and reservations can be made by calling 415.732.7900.

Sunday, January 30: Land's End Foray, Golden Gate Park. Spend your Sunday morning walking with mushroomers through Golden Gate Park. Meet at 10am at the Palace of the Legion of Honor for this 2 hour walk.

Sunday, January 30: Mushroom Madness in Marin. See inside for details about this special afternoon of cooking and eating.

Saturday, February 5: Joaquin Miller mushroom walk, Oakland. Meet at 10am in the Sequoia arena area of Joaquin Miller Park. To get there, take the Joaquin Miller Road exit off Highway 13. Follow Joaquin Miller Road up hill, turn left at Skyline. Continue 1.5 miles to Sequoia area on the left. Meet near the bathrooms.

Sunday, February 6th: Mushroom Drawing Class with Louise Freedman. 10am-1pm, Cost is \$10 per person. Please call Louise Freedman for additional information. Cost covers paper and colored pencils. Class size is limited to 15. 650.344.7774.

Monday, February 7: Culinary Group's Monthly Dinner. For information or reservations, contact George Repinec at 415.731.5115 or Sherry Carvajal at 415.695.0466.

Saturday – Sunday, March 4 – 5. UC Davis Extension class on Mushroom Cultivation. See inside this newsletter for full details.

Friday - Sunday, April 28-30, 2000. MSSF 50th Anniversary Foray. This special 3-day foray marks the MSSF's 50th anniversary, and will be filled with special guests, special events, and lots of good fun. Forays begin on Friday. The exact location is to be determined, but will most likely be in the Sierras. To volunteer contact Tom Sasaki at 415.776.0791.

Fertilizing with Fungi

Mike Amaranthus opened the glass door of a refrigerator case that once stocked cold beer in a convenience store and peeled back the top of a big blue plastic container to reveal a musty brown powder. "Two tablespoons of this powder contain more spores than there are people on earth," he said. "You can imagine what you can do with 50 pounds."

Amaranthus and a handful of other entrepreneurs are selling the spores of mushrooms, puffballs and truffles as an alternative to chemical fertilizers and pesticides - not just because they are organic and nature, but because 430 million years of evolution can't be wrong. They help plants grow.

As proof, Amaranthus offers test plants - roses, maple trees and marigold - grown with and without the fungi. Those inoculated with spores are bigger, leafier and have more blooms.

"Most people relate fungi to moldy bread and itchy toes, but 90 percent of the world's plants form a beneficial relationship to fungi that we call the mycorrhizae," Amaranthus said. Hence the name of his company, Mycorrhizal Applications, Inc.

The relationship can be traced to the earliest fossils of land plants, leading scientists like Amaranthus to theorize that fungi helped ancient aquatic plants make the jump to the hostile environment of dry land. Simply put, the fungi attach to the roots of the plant and help the plants take in moisture and nutrients through a network of tiny filaments called hyphae that spread through the soil, increasing the root mass 10 to 10,000 times. The plants feed the fungi in return.

Through his doctoral work in forest ecology at Oregon State University and later work for the U.S. Forest Service's Pacific Northwest Research Station, Amaranthus helped unravel the secret life of trees and mycorrhizal fungi. In 1997 he left the woods to bring mycorrhizae to the marketplace. He ran through his retirement savings getting started but is now making a profit and employing five people full time. The nonprofit organization Sustainable Northwest, which promotes ecological use of natural resources, recognized him as a Founder of the New Northwest this year. Amaranthus won't divulge financial information but says last year Mycorrhizal Applications sold enough spores to inoculate 200 million plants. The company is gearing up to produce enough for 1 billion plants.

Plants link up with specific fungi so Mycorrhizal Applications makes custom mixes for commercial clients in a liquid, powder or gel. The spores can be dripped on through irrigation, sprayed on by cropduster, or dropped in the soil at planting time. "The results produced by fungi could be achieved applying fertilizer every two weeks but 70 to 90 percent of nitrogen applied in nurseries is not absorbed by the plants and ends up getting washed into rivers where it is a pollutant," Amaranthus said.

One inoculation of fungi lasts all year, costs pennies a plant, and produces a bigger root system that also is resistant to disease.

— *By Jeff Barnard, the Associated Press, Medford Mail Tribune, August 15, 1999. First reprinted in Fungifama, newsletter of the South Vancouver Island Mycological Society, 10/99 volume 6.7.*

(Recommended by Larry Stickney)

Fungus Fair 1999 Species List

Collected and Identified at this year's December 11-12 Fungus Fair

- | | | | |
|---------------------------------|--|---|---|
| 1 Agaricus arvensis | 66 Cortinarius alboviolaceus | 130 Laccaria fraterna | 193 Ramaria botrytis |
| 2 Agaricus augustus | 67 Cortinarius cedretorium | 131 Laccaria laccata | 194 Ramaria conjunctipes |
| 3 Agaricus bernardii | 68 Cortinarius clachrous | 132 Lactarius alnicola | 195 Ramaria fennica var. violaceibrunea |
| 4 Agaricus californicus | 69 Cortinarius cylindripes | 133 Lactarius deliciosus | 196 Ramaria formosa |
| 5 Agaricus campestris | 70 Cortinarius glaucopus | 134 Lactarius pseudomucidos | 197 Ramaria myceliosa |
| 6 Agaricus cupreo-brunneus | 71 Cortinarius infractus | 135 Lactarius rubidus (fragilis var. rubidus) | 198 Ramaria stuntzii |
| 7 Agaricus hondensis | 72 Cortinarius iodes | 136 Lactarius rubrilacteus | 199 Ramaria vinosimaculans |
| 8 Agaricus praeclaresquamosus | 73 Cortinarius percomis | 137 Laetiporus sulphureus | 200 Rhizopogon ochraceorubens |
| 9 Agaricus subrutilescens | 74 Cortinarius ponderosus | 138 Leccinum manzanitae | 201 Rhizopogon parksii |
| 10 Agaricus xanthodermis | 75 Cortinarius prasinus | 139 Lepiota atrodisca | 202 Russula amoenolens |
| 11 Agroclype pedicels | 76 Cortinarius pseudobolaris | 140 Lepiota cristata | 203 Russula aurantialutea |
| 12 Alboleptonia sericella | 77 Cortinarius regalis | 141 Lepiota roseifolia | 204 Russula basifurcata |
| 13 Aleuria aurantia | 78 Cortinarius rufo-olivacea | 142 Lepiota rubrotincta | 205 Russula blacktondiae |
| 14 Amanita calyptata | 79 Cortinarius scaurus | 143 Lepiota sequoiarum | 206 Russula brevipes |
| 15 Amanita franchetii | 80 Cortinarius sodagnitus | 144 Lepiota ventriosospora (clypeolaria) | 207 Russula cessans |
| 16 Amanita gemmata | 81 Cortinarius superbus | 145 Leptonia parva | 208 Russula cyanoxantha |
| 17 Amanita muscaria | 82 Cortinarius vanduzerensis | 146 Leucopaxillus albissimus | 209 Russula eccentrica |
| 18 Amanita pachycolea | 83 Crepidotus herbarum | 147 Leucopaxillus gentianeus | 210 Russula graveolens |
| 19 Amanita pantherina | 84 Crepidotus mollis | 148 Lycoperdon perlatum | 211 Russula laurocerasi |
| 20 Amanita phalloides | 85 Crucibulum laeve | 149 Lycoperdon umbrinum | 212 Russula maxima |
| 21 Amanita silvicola | 86 Dacrymyces palmatus | 150 Lyophyllum decastes | 213 Russula nigricans |
| 22 Amanita vaginata | 87 Daldinia grandis | 151 Macrocystidia cucumis | 214 Russula olivacea |
| 23 Armillaria mellea | 88 Dermocybe phoenicea var. occidentalis | 152 Macrolepiota rachodes | 215 Russula sanguinea |
| 24 Arrhenia bryophilum | 89 Entoloma bloxami | 153 Marasmiellus candidus | 216 Russula semirubra |
| 25 Auriscalpium vulgare | 90 Entoloma rhodopolium | 154 Marasmius quercophilus | 217 Russula sublutacea |
| 26 Battarraea phalloides | 91 Flammulina velutipes | 155 Melanoleuca melaleuca | 218 Russula turci |
| 27 Bolbitius aleuriatus | 92 Fomitopsis cajanderi | 156 Morchella deliciosa | 219 Russula versicolor |
| 28 Bolbitius vitellinus | 93 Fomitopsis pinicola | 157 Mycena galericulata | 220 Russula xerampelina |
| 29 Boletopsis leucomelas | 94 Galerina atkinsoniana | 158 Mycena haematopus | 221 Schizophyllum commune |
| 30 Boletus aereus | 95 Galerina autumnalis | 159 Mycena maculata | 222 Scleroderma cepa |
| 31 Boletus amygdalinus | 96 Galerina unicolor | 160 Mycena pura | 223 Scleroderma geaster |
| 32 Boletus appendiculatus | 97 Gandoderma tsugae | 161 Mycena purpureofusca | 224 Stereum hirsutum |
| 33 Boletus chrysenteron | 98 Geastrum fimbriatum | 162 Mycena speirea | 225 Strobilurus trullisatus |
| 34 Boletus dryophilus | 99 Geastrum fornicatum | 163 Omphalotus olivascens | 226 Stropharia ambigua |
| 35 Boletus edulis | 100 Gomphidius oregonensis | 164 Panaeolus foenicicii | 227 Suillus brevipes |
| 36 Boletus flaviporus | 101 Gomphidius smithii | 165 Panus conchatus | 228 Suillus caeruleus |
| 37 Boletus piperatus | 102 Gomphus clavatus | 166 Paxillus involutus | 229 Suillus fuscotomentosus |
| 38 Boletus pulcherrimus | 103 Gomphus floccosus | 167 Paxillus panuoides | 230 Suillus granulatus |
| 39 Boletus regius | 104 Gymnopilus luteocarneus | 168 Peziza vesiculosa | 231 Suillus lakei |
| 40 Boletus rubripes | 105 Gymnopilus luteofolius | 169 Phaeocollybia attenuata | 232 Suillus ponderosus |
| 41 Boletus satanas | 106 Gymnopilus sapineus | 170 Phaeocollybia californica | 233 Suillus pungens |
| 42 Boletus subtomentosus | 107 Gymnopilus spectabilis | 171 Phaeocollybia olivacea | 234 Suillus tomentosus |
| 43 Boletus truncatus | 108 Gymnopus (Collybia) dryophilus | 172 Phaeolus schweinitzii | 235 Trametes versicolor |
| 44 Boletus zelleri | 109 Gymnopus (Collybia) villosipes | 173 Phellinus gilvus | 236 Tremella mesenterica |
| 45 Bulgaria inquilans | 110 Hebeloma crustuliniforme | 174 Pholiota malicola | 237 Tricholoma dryophilum |
| 46 Calvatia lycoperdoides | 111 Hebeloma mesophaeum | 175 Pholiota scamba | 238 Tricholoma flavovirens |
| 47 Camarophyllum russocoriaceus | 112 Hebeloma sinapizans | 176 Pholiota terrestris | 239 Tricholoma fracticum |
| 48 Cantharellus cibarius | 113 Helvella lacunosa | 177 Pleurotus ostreatus | 240 Tricholoma imbricatum |
| 49 Cantharellus tubaeformis | 114 Hohenbuehelia petaloides | 178 Pluteus cervinus | 241 Tricholoma magnivelare |
| 50 Caulorhiza umbonata | 115 Hydnum repandum | 179 Polyporus badius | 242 Tricholoma myomyces |
| 51 Chroogomphus vinicolor | 116 Hygrocybe conica | 180 Polyporus squamosus | 243 Tricholoma pardinum |
| 52 Clathrus ruber | 117 Hygrophoropsis aurantiaca | 181 Psathyrella candolleana | 244 Tricholoma saponaceum |
| 53 Clavaria vermicularis | 118 Hygrophorus eburneus | 182 Psathyrella gracilis | 245 Tylopilus humilis |
| 54 Clitocybe (Lepista) nuda | 119 Hygrophorus subalpinus | 183 Psathyrella hydrophila | 246 Tylopilus pseudoscaber |
| 55 Clitocybe deceptiva | 120 Hypholoma aurantiaca | 184 Psathyrella spacicea | 247 Volvariella speciosa |
| 56 Clitocybe inversa | 121 Hypholoma fasciculare | 185 Pseudohydnum gelatinosum | 248 Xeromphalina campanella |
| 57 Clitocybe nebularis | 122 Hypomyces chrysospermum | 186 Psilocybe cyanescens | 249 Xeromphalina caucinialis |
| 58 Clitocybe (Lepista) tarda | 123 Inocybe albodisca | 187 Ramaria abietina | 250 Xylaria hypoxylon |
| 59 Clitopilus prunulus | 124 Inocybe geophylla | 188 Ramaria acriscescens | |
| 60 Conocybe lactea | 125 Inocybe geophylla var. lilacina | 189 Ramaria araiospora var. araiospora | -- Mike Wood |
| 61 Coprinus comatus | 126 Inocybe pyriodora | 190 Ramaria araiospora var. rubella | |
| 62 Coprinus micaceus | 127 Inocybe sororia | 191 Ramaria aurantiiscescens | |
| 63 Coprinus niveus | 128 Jahnporus hirtus | 192 Ramaria botryoides | |
| 64 Cortinarius cylindripes | 129 Laccaria amethysteo-occidentalis | | |
| 65 Cortinarius albidus | | | |

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50 YEARS!

Last newsletter unless you had renewed for 2000!

January, 2000 vol 50:1

See Membership and Subscription Information on page 1 for details if you need to renew.

Calendar

Sunday, January 2: Land's End Foray, Golden Gate Park. Spend your Sunday morning walking with mushroomers through Golden Gate Park. Meet at 10am at the Palace of the Legion of Honor for this 2 hour walk.

Monday, January 3: Culinary Group's Monthly Dinner. Details inside. 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.

Saturday, January 8: Joaquin Miller mushroom walk, Oakland. Meet at 10am in the Sequoia arena area of Joaquin Miller Park. To get there, take the Joaquin Miller Road exit off Highway 13. Follow Joaquin Miller Road up hill, turn left at Skyline. Continue 1.5 miles to Sequoia area on the left. Meet near the bathrooms.

Sunday, January 9: Land's End Foray, Golden Gate Park. Spend your Sunday morning walking with mushroomers through Golden Gate Park. Meet at 10am at the Palace of the Legion of Honor for this 2 hour walk.

Thursday, January 13: Cooking with Wild Mushrooms and Truffles. At 6:30pm, at the Sur Le Table store in Berkeley, Chef Frances Wil-

son of Lalime's Restaurant will be teaching this class—covering hunting for seasonal wild mushrooms in local stores and markets and successfully preparing and pairing them with dishes. Cost is \$45, and reservations can be made by calling 510.849.2252.

Saturday-Sunday, January 15-16: Santa Cruz Fungus Fair. See inside for details.

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. See inside for details. Or contact Charmoon Richardson at 707.887.1888.

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

Thursday, January 20: Cooking with Wild Mushrooms and Truffles. At 6:30pm, at the Sur Le Table store in Los Gatos, Chef Frances

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>