



PLATE II. Fly Agaric (*Amanita muscaria*). P. HENNING

Mycena News

Mycological Society of San Francisco

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Membership Information

To join the Mycological Society of San Francisco, send a \$20 check, payable to MSSF (\$12 for seniors 65 and over and full time students), to Wade Leschyn, 219 Sequoia Ave., Redwood City, CA 94061. If you are a new member, please include contact information such as home and/or work phone numbers and email addresses. New and renewal memberships will be current through December of 1998. 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. For further information email Wade at leschyn@visa.com or call at 650-432-3304 (w) or 650-364-1494 (h).

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Mendocino Musings

by Larry Stickney

The wretched, rotting world of fungi has been putting on the most fantastic art show of the century up in the Mendocino woods where club members spent the weekend of November 14-16. Reports from the northwest during the past month didn't prepare us for the wonders we saw for three days. *Edulis* had been destroyed by warm weather and pelting rain, and any remaining carpophores were decorated with colorful forms of a secondary fungus known as *Hypomyces*. Chanterelles of every species, color and size were in prime condition and in dizzying numbers. Ranks of *Xylaria hypoxylon* stood at attention on downed twigs and branches. *Gymnopilus spectabilis* climbed and covered dead stumps offering to bring the whole world a laughing if not uplifting holiday time. And the rains continued...

The effort to name and list what we found which we started on Friday night collapsed, as the tables nearly did, under the weight, size, and multitude of the collections. Early afternoon arrivals found the camp site alive with great white edible chanterelles begging to be gathered up in loving and appreciative arms. Lust was in the air, and it was tumescent. And the rains continued...

In more than 25 years we have never seen such dazzling beauty in those woods before. And it wasn't just the cartons of wines we stopped to procure enroute either. It was the warm but wet storm cells, passing only at night during our stay, but then in thundering downpours made not with lightning but the thud, thud, thudding on our roofs that might have been hail but was only hard, hard, heavy rain. By Sunday morning mud was oozing down the hillsides, but we already had the tables groaning under the weight of massive mushrooms crowded onto the display table. Massive and many they were, and few felt the need to hunt for more in the soggy forests where the rain continued...

The Mendocino Woodlands was a stunning mycological fairyland and a nearly complete gastronomic success, marred only by the failure of the coffee machines Sunday morning. The all-woman kitchen crew was not only professional, but socially warm and friendly. As fast as we emptied wine bottles they stuffed them with candles and lit them, making the dining rooms mellower than the central fireplaces alone can do. Christmas strings of lights brightened the kitchen, and tasteful music added (usually) pleasant sounds to the kitchen clatter, both inside the walls and on the roof as the rains continued in the darkness...

Taylor Lockwood lived up to all our expectations and proved once again that half an hour with his music and slides leaves one cleansed and fortified, uplifted by an art form akin to the ballet, opera, or symphony. Some thought there were tears in our eyes during this show, and perhaps there were, but considering the late after-dinner hour and all the empty candled bottles standing around, the moisture might have been white wine overflowing from those who had stoked too heavily, up to their eyeballs. The red wine bibbers only showed their excesses the next morning as they saw daylight through red-colored corneas.

Hey, all 90% of you members who weren't there, we could have found room for many of you had you only made plans to join us. We've had up to nearly 200 on forays before. Don't miss next year's invitation. We cannot promise a repeat performance, but whenever our membership gets together we always have a heck of a lot of fun despite El Niño's watery fury.

The next best membership activity at which we will be having nearly as much fun, and even more mushrooms is during the yearly

Continued next page



Fungal Emanations From the Big Cheese

The cheese is aging gracefully this month and is indisposed to emanate. Check back next month for emanations.

Panic Attack at Archives

by Archivist Emmy Lou Miller

In October I discovered a gap in the Council Meetings Minutes collection going from Aug. 1986 to June 1987. Happily, they were found, all nicely bound, in a “miscellaneous box,” and now that very important file is complete.

Thanks to the donation of several private collections, the Mycena News file and Roster files are complete. The Culinary Group notices file and the very early Fungus Fair poster file still have gaps. But, I still have hopes. If you have any of these items, please call me at 415.493.7589 or send email to elmiller@rahul.net.

Soon, if El Nino turns wet-wet-wet, the Archives itself will need a new and safer, warmer, dryer site. Let me know if you are interested!



North American Mushroom Conference Comes to Town

Don Simoni, the MSSF's cultivation chair, reports that this February the American Mushroom Institute will hold the 13th North American Mushroom Conference and Expo in San Francisco. The Conference alternates annually among different North American cities. According to Don, this is the event to attend if you're really serious about cultivating mushrooms, a place to rub shoulders with the pros and learn how a successful mushroom-cultivation business is run.

The AMI brochure shows that the conference will take place on February 21–25 in the Fairmont Hotel in the city. Registration runs from \$200 to \$550 dollars depending on the program you choose, with a \$50 discount for registration before January 19 and another major discount if you're an AMI member. You can get a registration form and further information by contacting the AMI in Washington, DC at 202.842.4344, email at ami@mwmlaw.com.

Session topics include Insect Pests and Their Management, Efficiently Growing Shiitakes, Reishi, Growing Black Perigord Truffles, and Commercial Cultivation of Morels among others. Another big mushroom event this season in the San Francisco Bay Area...



MSSF Fetes Stickney

In last month's newsletter, you may have noticed that the November general meeting description mentioned a “special surprise.” That surprise was not so much for the general membership of the MSSF, but for Larry Stickney, longtime MSSF member. The meeting was a tribute to Larry's contributions to the society and to mushrooming and, if appearances aren't deceiving, it took Larry completely by surprise.

Lisa Bauer assembled a roster of twelve speakers that included Dennis Desjardin, David Arora, Patrick Hamilton, David Campbell, Mark Norton, Henry Shaw, Mark Thompson, Roger Bland, and Norm Andresen. The speakers kept us entertained by relating stories about Larry's contributions. They include numerous stints at almost all of the MSSF offices and council positions, introducing a huge number of novices to mushroom hunting, sending fungal specimens to the Thiers Herbarium, inspiring action to keep parks open to mushroom collecting, and helping us all better enjoy ourselves with fungi. Larry received numerous tokens of appreciation: a mushroom shirt from David Bartolotta and Lynn Morton, a beautifully inscribed artist's conk from Marina Hsieh, an honorary membership in ASS (the American Stinkhorn Society) from Ben Maleson, and—from the MSSF—a lifetime membership.

As MC for the event, I was asked to compose a limerick in Larry's honor which I did on the drive from Oakland to the city. I was also asked to print it in the newsletter, so here it is:

*Said a novice in tremulous query,
“I'd like some advice now from Larry.
When mushrooms are served,
What rites are observed?”
Said Larry, “Eat, drink, and be merry!”*

Thanks, Larry.

Mike Boom

Mendo Musings continued from page 1

Mushroom Show next weekend. Get up off your couches and catch up on what you missed all season. Go back to the North Coast and collect some of those spectacular specimens. Call Terri and say you will do penance for missing the foray, catch up on lost pleasures, and appear at the show for some time during that weekend. Parking is ample and close. Or call me if Terri's glamorous visage brings you terrified to your knees. I'll find something for you to do—while the Little One continues to make it rain, and rain...at last.

Message from the Fair Chair

The Bay Area is about to see a very exciting fungus fair this year! We have a highly impressive cast of speakers including David Arora, who will honor us with his dazzling slide presentation and share his many experiences of mushroom hunting around the world. We've scheduled his talk for 5:30 on Saturday to ensure that all of the volunteers will have an opportunity to attend. Paul Stamets will give a scintillating talk on those little brown, black-spored blue staining "trouble-makers" on Saturday, and on medicinals, those "potent allies from the forest," on Sunday. Bill Freedman will tell us how the dreaded death cap is invading the U.S., Taylor Lockwood will share his "Treasures of the Mushroom World" slides with us on both days as well. Dr. Joe Powell will challenge and delight us with "footprints" and "vectors," and Mo-mei Chen will teach us about cultivation.

We will, as always, display around 300 identified species collected from throughout the Bay Area arranged by family: 14 tables in all, in addition to a number of species displayed in their natural habitats, plus a special garden habitat to show how mushrooms can be cultivated and incorporated into our own landscaping.

Our lineup of chefs will this year demonstrate camp-cooking at its finest, and will whet your appetite for the delectable offerings from Chez Chanterelle.

And what better setting to do your Christmas shopping than a fungus fair? We will have a wide variety of books and t-shirts and several new posters this year, including two brand new ones from David Arora! And many other items such as knives, baskets, aprons, artwork, cards, mushroom growing kits—the list goes on, but we will certainly have something for everyone on your list and some more, of course for yourself! Oh, and we also have a limited edition printing of this year's beautiful fair poster printed on quality stock, certainly a collector's item!

So do come along, bring your family, tell your friends, and enjoy! And a special thank you to all of you who have volunteered countless hours, and have contributed ideas, enthusiasm and support. It has all come together for what will undoubtedly be a fantastic and memorable event!

Terri Beausejour

Chez Chanterelle Menu

Roasted Portobella Burgers with Garlic-Basil Mayonnaise and Roasted Red Peppers

Wild and Cultivated Mushroom Barley Soup with White Wine and Thyme

Italian Minestrone Soup with Porcini and Cremini Mushrooms

Winter Funghi and Vegetable Focaccia with Chanterelle, Oyster and Domesticated White Mushrooms, Carmelized Onions and Garlic

Joseph Schmidt "Mushroom" Truffles with Dark Chocolate-Amaretto Mousse Filling and White Chocolate Coating

Sparkling and Still Waters and Coffee

Attention all Fair Volunteers

If you will be volunteering at the fair, it is essential that you contact Tom Sasaki at 415.776-0791 so he can add your name to the volunteer list if he hasn't already done so. This list will be at the door to facilitate your admittance and receipt of nametag, etc.

Also, you are highly encouraged to don your finest mushroom-related attire - hats, shirts, ties, or whatever!

Forest Fungi For Fair

by Bill Freedman

One of our Fungus Fair demonstrations is a collection of fungi associated with forest trees. The exhibit is permanent. Naturally, the specimens die, wear out and need renewal. Some replacements are picked up at the time of the Fair. But this is not enough.

This is a request for the donation of any such fungi, especially with wood attached to their bases. I will be attending the General and Council Meetings and would be grateful to receive your contributions there.

Don't loan your pets to me; I can't assure their return. I am looking for a branch with *Nectria cinnabarinus* coming out through the bark, for instance. Call Bill Freedman at 650.344.7774 for pick-ups or delivery.

You may achieve immortality by permanently contributing to the education of foresters, tree surgeons and those interested in saprophytic, parasitic and symbiotic forest fungi. Thank you.

Seeing Stars on Your Mailing Label?

The MSSF membership year is from January to December. New members joining this fall (September through now) are automatically extended through 1998, everyone else's dues expire at the end of 1997. Since many MSSFers renew at the December Fungus Fair, dues renewal letters will not go out until after the fair renewals are counted. However if we have not yet received a renewal from you this year, this month's mailing label will show a series of stars, your first reminder that we hope you will be renewing your membership for next year. If you renew at the fair, fine, otherwise please send in your membership dues at this time. Rates are \$20 for adults and families, and \$12 for seniors (65 and over) and full time students.

Some MSSF members also choose to join NAMA.. The MSSF pays NAMA a club dues based on our total membership, in order for us to be considered an affiliated club. In turn NAMA offers MSSF members a 15% discount for joining NAMA. NAMA dues are \$17 when included with your MSSF dues. NAMA dues sent without an MSSF renewal cannot be processed. Also please note that an error in several previous Mycena News reported that the NAMA dues for MSSFers was \$12. Such payments will be returned.

Wade Leschyn, Membership Chair

Bahl Harpins for Ite-Steak Seekin Boontling and Fungi

Those of you who drove to the Mendocino foray last month probably passed through the town of Boonville on the southern edge of Mendocino county in the Anderson Valley. If you looked closely, you may have noticed that the pay phones have signs on them that read "Buckey Walter." If so, you've just had your first lesson in Boontling, a private lingo that flourished in Boonville from 1880 to 1920 and still pops up from time to time.

Boontling was originally developed by Booneville residents (Boonters) as a way to speak privately in front of others without eavesdroppers understanding the conversation. It's a witty and inventive language, phonetically twisting standard English words, inventing others, and making extensive use of references to local Anderson Valley locales and inhabitants, who all seemed to have had very descriptive nicknames. Harping the ling (speaking Boontling) was not only a great way to shark the bright lighters (befuddle city dwellers), but was a great linguistic game that allowed Boonters to invent new words on the spot according to lingo rules and still be understood by other harpers.

My fascination with Boontling came when I met an ab-diving Boonter in Jenner who told me about a recent scrap with his non-Boonter girlfriend. He was talking to a friend on the teleef (telephone) in front of her, discussing gormin on mollies (which will go untranslated in this family newsletter). The girlfriend, who had a good memory, bought a Boontling dictionary and gave him a bahl ear settin (a good tongue lashing). Since then, I've been on the lookout for new Boontling terms, especially ones that could be used for mushroom hunting, an endeavor that often mixes communication and secrecy in equal measures—the perfect use for Boontling.

Imagine my delight, then, to find a 1980 issue of the Mendocino *Mushroom Forager*, listed as "The Boont Ite-Steak Greeley Sheet" on its masthead and sprinkled throughout with Boontling, including column titles such as "A Deek on the Socker Ite Steaks" and "The Bahlers and the Nonchers." A harper named Chipmunk (aka Bob Glover) included the following Boontling glossary:

Ite steak: a fungus growth, either edible or toxic
Bahl, bahler: good, a good one
Nonch, noncher: bad, a bad one
Dusties dust: poison
Seek, seekin: hunt, hunting
Gorm, gorms: to eat, food
Pike: to walk or travel
Greymatter: smart, to study
Deek: look at, to examine
Socker: big, large, excellent
Bok: book

He gave the following sentence as an example: "You must do much greymatterin fore pikin for seekin Ite steaks to gorm, cause the sockers might not be bahlers, but nonchers with dusties dust, so deek your bok well."

That inspired me to do some more research in a wonderful book entitled *Boontling, An American Lingo* by Charles C. Adams. You can pick up a copy in Boont at the grocery store next time you drive through. In it I read that "Ite" means Italian, leading me to believe that Ite steak is so named because Italians love to eat fungi. I also picked up a number of other terms that you can use next time you're seekin Ite steaks among the fog eaters (on the Mendocino coast):

Milky: foggy

Peerl: to rain, drizzle

Trash mover: a heavy rainstorm (because it cleared the trash out of the gutters)

Log lifter: an unusually heavy rainstorm (because it lifted the logs out of the creek beds)

Rojer: a big storm

Livvie cambles: rubber knee boots (after a man named Livvie Campbell who wore them all the time)

Tidrick: a get-together, a meeting, a party

Beleegrin: underground

Weel: wild

Harp granny on someone: Claim someone can't see something in front of their eyes.

Eeble: Scrutinize

And my favorite:

Too much hog butcher and limp in Jesus: This area has been cleaned out. Derived from the fact that two Boonters nicknamed Hog Butcher and Limpin Jesus were such good deer hunters that anyone who came into an area after they were there couldn't find any deer.

I think that we should all honor local customs whenever we're seekin Ite steaks near Boont. Speak Boontling—or at least try. And next time you're seekin weel Ite steaks near Mendo and find too much hog butcher and limp in Jesus, the Ite steaks might be beleegrin, it might be milky, but I'd be inclined to harp granny on you.

Mike Boom

P.S. If any of you are harpers of the ling and can correct me or help me with Ite-steak harpins, please contact the editor of the Frisk Ite-Steak Greeley Sheet at the teleef number on the front page. Thanks!



EDITOR'S RANT

Ah, the new, slimmer newsletter! 10 pages. Whew, much easier to put together, although I do find myself sitting in side working on a beautiful weekend when I'd rather be out tromping the woods with friends. I'd like to thank everyone for their contributions this month, and encourage more for next month when our busy December activities are no longer filling up the pages.

I do have a few things I wasn't able to squeeze in this month, including info about the Coyote Point forays in January (although they did make the calendar) and a particularly nice photo of a famous fungal personality in not-quite-compromising position. Keep your eyes out for them next month. And consider once again getting the Mycena News by email only to save postage and paper. Just send email to mboom@ascend.com with the phrase "mycena by email" in the header. Thanks!

Mike Boom

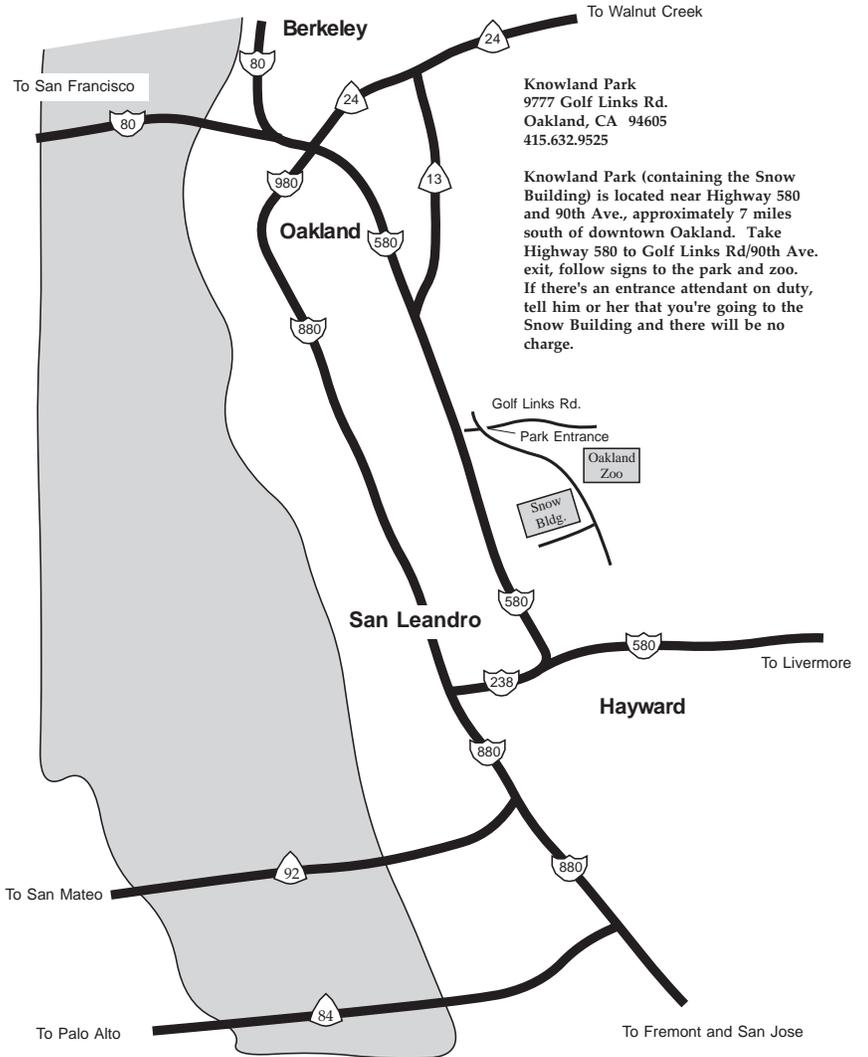
December Dinner in Oakland

This year's December dinner is on Monday, December 15th, at 7:00 p.m. at the Snow Building in Knowland Park. Reservations with advanced payment are mandatory so we can plan the dinner appropriately as well as pay for the building rental, materials, and food.

The preliminary menu includes truffled beef roast, truffled salmon, mushroom soup, salad, twice-baked potatoes, polenta with mushrooms, a mushroom vegetarian entrée, and dessert. It may change at the main chef's inspiration or the new availability of especially tasty ingredients.

We will need volunteers to help put on the dinner! If you're looking for action and camaraderie, the kitchen is the hottest spot at the dinner. To volunteer for food preparation, etc., call Anna Grajeda at 415.564.4811 in the early evenings.

Bring your own place settings, dishes, soup bowls and wine or whatever else you would like to drink with dinner. You're encouraged also to bring an appetizer that shows off wild mushrooms to their best advantage.



Reservation Form for December Dinner

Your Name:

Number of people attending:

Your Phone:

Number of those needing vegetarian meal:

Amount enclosed:

Please list the names of those attending in your party and put an asterisk after each MSSF member:

For reservations, please write a check for \$25 per person (\$30 per non-MSSF member) made payable to "MSSF." Send the check to Monique Carment, 1730 Jackson St. #212, San Francisco, CA 94109, phone 415.474.7220. The deadline is Thursday, December 4th. After that date call for space availability.

Earliest Land Plants Had Fungi in Their Tissues 400 Million Years Ago

by Bill Freedman

As you read reports on the subject of paleo-mycology (prehistoric fungi or how it all used to be), you can see repeated references to the "findings in the Rhyne chert." I reviewed this 5-year-old document from the Proclamations of the Academy of Science, U.S.A., V.91, Dec, 1994 recently just to see why this rock formation is so famous and often referred to.

First, the term, "chert," used by primitive people for arrow heads, cutters and scrapers, is second in choice to obsidian use in hardness and sharpness. Chert is a brown quartz-like layer of sediment formed from oceanic oozes containing mega-collections of radiolarians (one-celled protozoans) after being compressed for millions of years and then altered by later chemical and physical tectonic changes. These organisms combine silica in their bodies as do diatoms. When chipped or polished, the rocks become translucent and have some of the properties of glass. You may say that cherts are the product of ancient living creatures, as is the calcium in the White Cliffs of Dover in England.

The Rhyne chert is over 400 million years old, an early Devonian rock. In it we find one of the earliest identified prehistoric land plants, *Aglaophyton major*. This plant had features found in both the vascular plants of today and the bryophytes of yesteryear, such as the ferns and mosses. Contained within the plants' cell walls were well defined endomycorrhizae in the form of haustoria, (curled up masses of hyphae), arbuscles (little trees), and vesicles (blisters). We refer to them as "VAMs." This report represents the earliest living land form so far found with fungal association, and this leads to all sorts of speculation. For instance: does this suggest that VAMs and mycorrhizae preceded the appearance of fleshy fungi in history? Scientists have identified VAMs in the roots of ancient cycads (tall tree-like ferns with open seeds growing in moist conditions) dating from about 300 million years ago. After uncountable numbers of these trees and others died, their organic material was geologically compressed for millions of years and produced the oil deposits in current use. Is there an evolutionary relationship between the endomycorrhizae reported in this article and the presumed marine algae, *Ediacara*, dated about 565 million years ago, (see Mycena News, Nov. 1995)?

Or did they each arise from different genetic beginnings?

VAM characteristics are: thick walled spores; coiled hyphae; nonseptate mycelium; thin walled spheres resembling cysts; "vesicles," which usually contain an oil; and tree- or bush-like structures called "arbuscles." Slides made of the stems of the plants revealed typical endomycorrhizae. Since the plant was embedded in silica (like glass), pieces were attached to microscope slides and ground down until thin enough to be viewed with the microscope. Arbuscles were seen in all stages. From their gross appearance, they look identical to those we see today. They grow like small bushes inside of the cells and are gradually digested by the plant. As they vanish, the residue looks lace-like or stippled. It's estimated that today about 85% of all plants, fruit trees, and vegetables are supported by this partnership. Not forest trees, such as conifers and hardwoods, which are usually nourished by ectomycorrhizae.

The tips (meristems) of the plant roots seem to be particularly active in incorporating the fungi inside cells. It is as if they are ingesting them, as do most orchid roots, which require their initial nutrition from VAMs. You have noticed that orchids have root-balls and do not spread out into the soil. Their root tips are square. This is an adaptation with which they munch on VAMs.

It's generally assumed that fungi can be dated at 1 billion years ago using bits of nonseptate hyphae and septate spores in Cambrian and Silurian sediments. Nothing has yet been reported about how these cells are organized or of association with other life forms. The artifacts of older Silurian plants are limited to impressions and compressions. No plant tissues remain which will allow us to peer into the past and learn whether fungi were living inside their cells. Perhaps this could be done by studying DNA patterns.

The Rhyne chert findings represent unique evidence of prehistoric symbiosis between vascular plant and fungus, and partial parasitism with the fungus as the host. Further discoveries may clarify the manner in which these organisms have adjusted to a communal partnership.

Fred & Bill's Excellent Foray

An annual activity our group has enjoyed for many years is the Saturday morning Foray into creekside Mills Canyon in Burlingame. Reserve January 10, 10:00 A.M. to 1:00 P.M. on your calendar. Foray takes place with moderate rain or shine.

To get there, take Route 280. Exit at Trousdale Av. and turn south until you come to Hillside Drive on the left, (Kohl Mansion sign there). Down the Drive till you come to Adeline arterial stop sign. Turn left and there you are.

We have recorded a cumulative list of about 120 varieties of mushrooms including occasional edibles. There are no restrictions. (Bill is Chairman of the Friends of Mills Canyon.)

Wear wet-weather or lug-soled shoes. Although we are improving, parts of the trail get wet and muddy, especially from the impact of vandalizing dirt bikers who chain-saw trees down and make new and unwanted downhill trails cutting through existing trails. We have never set a limit to our party, so you needn't sign up. We'll be joined by members of the public who want to learn what this mushroom stuff is all about.

We will be looking for the reappearance of a coconut-sized *Hericium ericineus* seen last year on tree stump overhanging the creek.

Fred Stevens is our guest lecturer and teaches novices about basic mycology, using examples on hand. It is an ideal introductory trip for beginners. If you want more information, call Bill Freedman at 650.344.7774.

Bill Freedman

Mushroom Madness in January

On Sunday, January 11th, at 1 pm, Loraine Berry will hold another of her sumptuous Mushroom Madness dinners at her home at #4 Ames Ave. (cross street is Shady Lane), in Ross (Marin county). This past fall she held Mushroom Madness dinners in October and November. As an example of the menu served, these items were listed in the November menu:

Macademia nut, pecan, and mushroom paté on frnech bread; portobello pizza; sweet and sour rock cod with wood ear mushrooms; matsutake and shrimp broth; white porcini, chicken, and rabbit cacciatore with fettucine; roast pork loins with platinum chanterelles and portobellos; roast Yukon gold potatoes; homemade applesauce; baby greens salad with Stilton dressing; candy cap and home grown apple spice cake; cheese platter with zesty sprouts; chocolate mushroom truffles; microbrewed beer, various wines, waters, and juice; coffee and tea.

The January dinner will probably feature American bison Wellington with platinum Chanterelles and albacore tuna with black trumpets.

The charge for the dinner is \$30 for MSSF members, \$35 for non-members. The dinner is limited to 16 people, and is a participatory event; bring an apron and a decent bottle of wine to share. Loraine will provide microbrewed beer, waters, and some wine plus coffee and tea.

To attend, make a check out to "MSSF" and send it to Loraine at P.O. Box 1106, Ross, CA 94957. Your check is your reservation.

For more information, call Loraine at 415.454.0914.

SOMA Holds New Year's Mushroom Camp

The Sonoma County Mycological Society (SOMA) is pleased to present a three-day Wild Mushroom Weekend. The event, a benefit for SOMA, will be held January 2-4, 1998, at a camp near Boonville in Mendocino county. Forays, classes, evening programs, and fungal feasting will take place. Forays and programs will be presented by members of SOMA, and other local mycological groups. Mushroom cookery will be provided by Mycochef Patrick Hamilton and his able kitchen companions.

The picturesque camp, rather rustic and simple, is situated in hills of beautiful habitat that we can hunt (oak, madrone, Doug fir, redwood, tanoak). There will also be forays to the Mendocino coast, and other locations. Attendance will be limited—register now to ensure a place. \$95 fee covers all events, cabin space, and meals (except lunches). To register, send a check made out to SOMA to:

New Year's Mushroom Camp
490 Liberty Rd.
Petaluma, Ca. 94952.

You will receive directions and further information. For questions, please contact Charmoon at 707.887.1888 or e-mail to charmoo@trr.metro.net.



Campbell's Campout

The latest Salt Point club foray was my first according to David Campbell. Perhaps it is the on-the-ground sleeping which lessens the attraction of the event, but between the wonderful weather, the many mushrooms, the flavorsome food, bounteous beverages, and friendly forayers this veteran of thirty years of mushrooming won't miss another.

David and Patrick Hamilton had just returned from the Breitenbush Halloween extravaganza in Oregon bringing with them a truckload of fungi from that green country. They cooked up a storm for several hours, and when they stepped aside Yutaka Wada began all over again. Last time I looked he was preparing matsutake sake. Over it all a lovely half moon cast pale shadows in the woods, beckoning the surviving mushrooms to come forth and dance with the fairies.

I say surviving because the day's collecting was remarkable, not for a great quantity of edibles, but because there were so many different kinds to be found: from yellow chanterelles to yellow foots, white and black ones, too. Name your bolete and it was there. Riddled with larvae because of the very warm weather, but still, mostly, there. *Amanitas* were doing well, from *Amanitopsis* to *calyptrata* and *muscaria*. *Russulas* and *Hygrophorus*, those weeds of the woods, dominated most trails, but there were some of the usual nice things, enough for everyone to see and taste even if the majority of edibles may have come from farther north.

The pot luck had many features, but probably the most unusual offering, and eventually the most satisfying, was a freshly opened prickly Durian fruit from Thailand. Some people can't stand the smell of garlic or truffles, but no one likes the odor of Durian in a closed environment. On a picnic table it wasn't so bad, and the custardy interior won the praise of all who got to taste it.

When David announces next year's Salt Point Foray you should get to taste it too. You will be as full of praise as were all of us who enjoyed it this year.

Larry Stickney

NAMA Foray Volunteers, Please!

Calling all volunteers! The MSSF, in conjunction with The Fungus Federation of Santa Cruz, will be hosting the NAMA conference on Presidents' Day Weekend, 1998. This event, more fun and more mushroomy than you can imagine, is predicated on the volunteer efforts of folks like you. We need people to sign up for short, two-hour shifts, greeting returning forays, helping with setup and breakdown of the exhibit hall, working with the professional mycologists to shuttle samples to appropriate display tables, and to operate and "host" lecture sessions where a small amount of AV knowledge would be good. Please call Lisa Bauer at 415.695.8889 or e-mail recycqueen@aol.com if you are interested in any of these tasks. You'll be glad you did. And thanks for volunteering!

Fungal Fundamentals in the Kitchen

by David T. Bartolotta

Those Holiday Meals

Ah, yes. 'Tis the time to soak our hearts in butter again. I thought we might think otherwise this year.

Fortunately, those of us in northern California have the finest fungi fruiting during the holidays. We are blessed with chanterelles, boletes, and many other fine tastes from the forests and grocers. With the bounty we have, there are many opportunities to try all sorts of new ways to cook our favorite things. I've tried a few experiments and wanted to share some thoughts with you.

With the advent of decent non-stick pans (the coating stays on the pan, not chipped off into the food), it is now possible to cook with a good deal of inventiveness without the use of extra fats or oils. My favorite way to sauté chanterelles and boletes is to dry cook them until they have caramelized on the outside. That is to say that they have gently browned and they give off a nutty fragrance.

I always start with clean mushrooms. If they have been around a lot of moisture, I wrap them in a terry towel and place them in the refrigerator for a day. Then I slice them thin (1/8 inch to 1/4 inch) and put them into a hot non-stick sauté pan or wok and toss them for about 1 minute. At this point I throw in a pinch of salt for taste and to draw out any moisture that is still in the mushrooms. If a little moisture is released, it will evaporate soon. If a lot of moisture is released, please pour it off and save it for a soup ingredient. Don't try to let it all boil away, you'll just overcook and ruin the mushrooms.

The mushrooms should start to squeak as they are tossed in the pan. This is a good sign. You will notice some residue on the pan at this point. I add just a splash of wine (white or Marsala or experiment with your favorite) to deglaze the pan. I add a bit of shallot and a small pinch of pepper. You may want to put in a small clove of garlic, some scallions, fresh parsley etc. Please don't add so many things that the taste of the mushroom is obliterated. When your last ingredient is in, just toss for about 30 seconds and take the pan off the heat. The entire procedure should not take more than 4 or 5 minutes.

Now you have some delicious mushrooms that have been cooked without the addition of fat. You can let them cool and put them in a salad; put them on crackers and eat right away; put them over broiled chicken breast; toss them on top of a light pasta dish. It is all up to your imagination at this point. And anything done with your imagination is valid.

Make sure that you combine your mushrooms with things that *you* like to eat. Look for things that are fresh and local in your area. There is no reason to spend a fortune on food that is out of season. You can make very delicious meals without spending much money.

Enjoy yourselves in your kitchens!

A Celebration of Wild Mushrooms

by Larry Stickney

A chef writes to her customers: It has long been a fascination of mine to forage for food in the wild. Each season in Ireland brought its own bounty. Spring was the time to go pick elderflowers that my mother made into elderflower champagne, which tastes not unlike a Gewürtztraminer. Tender nettle and hop shoots made great stir-fries. The summer was spent taking the boat out fishing for mackerel and heading up into the mountains to pick fraochain or billberries to make pies. Wild blackberries for bramble jelly, sloes for sloe gin, and elderberries for wine were autumn's prize.

Mushroom hunting had always interested me, but I had never had an opportunity to try it.

Last year I was invited to go on a chef's foray by the Mycological Society of San Francisco to promote their annual fair. One outing and I was hooked! I went hunting for candy caps and chanterelles in the Berkeley hills in December, black trumpets and hedgehogs up near Salt Point in April, and then the highlight in May: a weekend morel hunting trip just outside Yosemite. This year promises to be a great one if we get all the rain that is predicted. So if you enjoy good food, good company, and a walk in the woods, contact the MSSF to go on one of their guided forays. Better yet, join us at Lalime's on Thursday, November 13, for a dinner featuring wild mushrooms. MSSF members will be on hand with a display of wild mushrooms, and can answer all your questions.

Frances Wilson
Chef/Owner of Lalimes
Berkeley

On Thursday, November 13, even club leaders accepted Frances' invitation and answered a lot of questions, drank a lot of wine, and ate a lot of fine fungal food. After a complimentary glass of champagne, we ordered the prix fixe dinner with wine tasting selections. The first course was a phyllo parcel stuffed with curry-scented chanterelles served with a dill creme fraiche on the side. Placed close to the phyllo parcel on one end of the plate was a leaf of red cabbage stuffed with a mixture of salad greens. The arrangement mimicked in appearance a large brown-stemmed bolete with a reddish top. The accompanying wine was a 1995 Arnaldo Caprai, Grecante. The second course was a plethora of Liberty duck legs, braised with porcini mushrooms and cognac, over a rich wild mushroom risotto (Hedgehogs, Tromp de Morte, and more) accompanied by a serendipitous 1995 Franus, Zinfandel.

Candy cap angel food cake with candy cap cream and banana rum compote composed the dessert offering, served with a delicious 1995 Domaine de Durban, Muscat de Beaumes de Venise. That most tender angel food cake suffused with the maple flavor of the dried little red *Lactarius* was superb, the flavored cream sublime. That last touch was made by soaking the candy caps in hot cream until it was thoroughly infused. Then the fungus was removed and the cream reduced. Large meringue agarics on the plate were just overkill. (*Editor's note: not in this diner's opinion!*) In attendance were: President Norm Andresen, Terri Beausejour, Lisa Bauer, Lynn Morton, Mike Boom, Mark Thomsen, and Larry Stickney. Lisa and Mark, who provided the dried candy caps, each took home a whole angel food cake for their sacrifice.

The Forager

by Bob Gorman



Editor's note: The Forager couldn't get a report together this month because he was pressed for time and key fungal informants neglected to get information to him. He wants everyone to know that chanterelles are out all over at this time; other than that, you'll have to chat up other MSSF members to get specifics.

Remember that the success of this column depends on *you* letting Bob know what you find out there. To contribute, call Bob at 415.340.8986, email him at mycoforagr@aol.com or post your findings on Wade Leschyn's Natural World Bulletin Board at 415.261.1212.

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will start at 11:45am. Additional details on the Saturday forays will be announced in the Dec. Mycena News.

Saturday & Sunday, December 6 & 7: San Francisco Fungus Fair, Herbst International Exhibition Hall, Moraga Drive, Presidio, San Francisco. Setup starts at 7 a.m. each day, forays start at 9 a.m. on Saturday, doors to the Fair are open 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. each day. Call Terri Beasejour at 415.927.9623 for details.

Monday, December 15: Christmas Dinner. 7:00 p.m., Snow Building, Knowland Park, Oakland. Details on p.7 & 8.

Tuesday, December 16: No general meeting in December! Take a break and go mushroom hunting...

Friday-Sunday, January 2-4: SOMA Mushroom Camp near Boonville. For questions, please contact Charmoon at 707.887.1888 or e-mail to charmoon@trr.metro.net.

Saturday, January 10: Mills Canyon Foray. Fred Stevens and Bill Freedman lead this annual foray into creekside Mills Canyon in Burlingame. It goes from 10 am to 1 pm. For more information, call Bill Freedman at 650.344.7774

Saturday, January 17: Memorial Park Foray. Fred Stevens leads this foray to collect examples of fungi in preparation for a hands-on teaching session the following morning at Coyote Point Museum. The foray may last until 3:00 P.M. This will be a collecting outing. Bring baskets and waxed bags. On Sunday, bring beverage and food if you plan to stay late. Call Chester Laskowski at 510.843.6537 for details.

Sunday, January 18: Huddart Park Foray. Leader: Norman Andresen. This is a Coyote Point teaching foray where there will be no collecting. Call Chester Laskowski at 510.843.6537 for details.

Sunday, January 18: Memorial Park Foray. Leader: Chester Laskowski. This is a Coyote Point teaching foray where there will be no collecting. Call Chester Laskowski at 510.843.6537 for details.

Tuesday, January 20: General Meeting at the Randall Junior Museum in San Francisco. Doors open at 7:00 pm for mushroom ID and book sales; meeting proper begins at 8:00 pm. The speaker has yet to be determined.

Sunday, February 1: Wunderlich Park Foray. Leader: Herb Saylor. This is a Coyote Point teaching foray where there will be no collecting. Call Chester Laskowski at 510.843.6537 for details.

Saturday & Sunday, February 7 & 8: Cultivation class taught by Dr. Mo-Mei Chen. The title of this class is Mushrooms: Farming, Spawn Production, and Marketing. It's offered at UC Berkeley, on the Berkeley campus. The class room is 3030 Valley Life Sciences Building. Contact UCB for more info.

Friday-Monday, February 13-16: 1998 NAMA Foray at Asilomar on Monterey Bay. Your chance to meet fungi fans from around the nation! You must pre-register to attend; call Shea Moss, Registrar, at 408.353.2906 for details or check the NAMA web site at <http://countrylife.net/ffsc/nama98/>.

Saturday-Wednesday, February 21-25: 13th North American Mushroom Conference and Expo held by the American Mushroom Institute at the Fairmont Hotel, San Francisco. This is a conference for serious (mostly professional) mushroom cultivators. For more info, call the AMI at 202.842.4344 or send email to ami@msmlaw.com.

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.

No December Meeting: Take a Mushroom Walk Instead!

December's jam-packed with the Fungus Fair, the MSSF Christmas dinner, and—of course—general holiday madness. The MSSF traditionally does *not* hold a general meeting in December, so take a

break and take a walk through those wet woods far from the holiday bustle. See you January 20th at the next general meeting.



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Calendar

Tuesday, December 2: Fungus Fair planning meeting, Presidio Child Development Center, Presidio, San Francisco. Call Terri Beauséjour at 415.927.9623 for details.

Thursday, December 4: Pre-Pre-Fungus Fair foray: Call Calvin Goddard at 415.454.6101 for details.

Friday, December 5: Pre-Fungus-Fair Forays. The following forays have been scheduled to collect specimens for display at the San Francisco Fair on Dec. 6-7. For information on a specific foray, please call the listed foray leader. Unless otherwise noted, all forays begin at 10:00 am. If you would be willing to lead a foray to one of the locations listed that does not yet have an identified leader (or to a different location), call Henry Shaw at 510.423.4645(work) 510.943.3237(home) or e-mail him at shaw4@lnl.gov.

Huddart Park: Wade Leschyn 415.650.3304 (daytime)

Crystal Springs Watershed: Bill Freedman 415.344.7774. Attendance limited; call foray leader to reserve a place.

Memorial/Sam McDonald Parks: Mike Wood 510.357.7696 and Fred Stevens 415.994.1374

Other Peninsula Parks: Bob Gorman 415.340.8986

Soquel Demonstration State Forest: Need volunteer

Tomales Bay State Park: Mike Boom 510.635.7723

Marin County: Calvin Goddard 415.454.6101

Salt Point State Park: Anna Moore 510.643.9518 (daytime) or amorel@uclink4.berkeley.edu Weather permitting, members of this foray are invited to camp at Salt Point on Thursday evening so as to get an early start on Friday. The foray will reconvene at 10:00am on Friday at the Stump Beach parking lot to rendezvous with people who prefer to drive up on Friday morning.

Mendocino area: Norm Andresen 510.278.8998. Drive up on Thursday or meet on Friday morning. Call for details.

Saturday-Sunday, Dec. 6-7: During-Fair Forays. We will send out an intermediate to advanced collecting foray early Saturday morning to try to find species that were underrepresented or uncollected by the Friday forays. We also hope to send out a collecting party from the Fair at mid-morning on Saturday. The location will likely be somewhere relatively nearby. Finally, we will conduct beginners' forays around the Presidio on both Saturday and Sunday. These forays

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

<http://www.mykoweb.com/mssf>