



*Mycena alcalina*

# Mycena News

Mycological Society of San Francisco

September, 1998, vol 48:9

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

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## Fair Seeks Chair

The annual mushroom fair is the society's most popular event. It intrigues and informs the public about the role of fungi in the scientific, ecological, and culinary realms. Each year, a seasoned team of devotees share in the labor of love that creates the fair.

But every team needs a captain. The personal energy and creativity of the fair chair is instrumental in its success. Fair chairpersons over the years have enjoyed the friendship, encouragement and support of the most knowledgeable and dedicated society members. Who will earn the accolades for bringing the 1998 fungus fair to fruition? Who will captain the big ship?

If you will consider this unique adventure, please call Mark Thomsen at 510.540.1288.

## Pushing Up Mushrooms

by Mike Boom

Summer's here! Azure skies, serenading birds, brilliant sunshine in cloudless skies, golden brown hills and crackly forest floors, warm evening breezes, and all those damned pesky flowers covering dried and shriveled fungi--in short, the pits. What's a mushroomer to do when you long for gloomy skies and a good drizzle? The answer in the Bay Area: microclimates.

It's a fact that it can be hot and sweaty in Walnut Creek while a few miles over the hills in Berkeley you can freeze to death of fog while wearing a sweater. Palo Alto can sizzle like the chips of a Wintel computer calculating Bill Gates' net worth while just over the ridge in Half Moon Bay the air is as chilling as Kenneth Starr's smile. There is no bright and cheerful spot here that doesn't have a drizzly and gloomy counterpart somewhere a few miles away.

This August, sweltering in the 90+ heat of Oakland, I reckoned it was time to visit Oakland's dour doppelganger, a parallel universe of fog and drip somewhere along the breath of the chill Pacific. Fred Stevens, a denizen of often dank Daly City offered his service as guide. Fred met Mike Wood, his wife Jane Wardzinska, and me on a ridgetop overlooking a fog bank roiling below. The fact that it was sunny and 92 degrees here

was a bit unsettling, but we were in a cemetery, which cheered me up a little.

Cemeteries can be fungally fabulous. They are typically a vast expanse of grass surrounded by stately pines, cedars, and oaks. They have running sprinklers whenever necessary to keep the grass green, and if they're located close enough to the coast they can get a constant drizzle of fog condensation. If there happen to be no mushrooms there, you've always got some reading material nearby on the tombstones.

This particular cemetery was promising for many reasons, not the least of which was a gentele shabbiness. The grass was a little shaggy, there were tufts of grass around tree trunks, and occasional swampy spots where the watering system was out of control--nothing like the well manicured turf surrounding the graves of the rich and fabulous at more tony cemeteries. There's nothing worse for fungal grass inhabitants than a regular lawn mower and a fastidious gardener wielding trimmers.

The day was off to a promising start when Mike found a small *Agaricus augustus* underneath a Monterey pine. It was sweet and

*Continued on page 7*

## President's Greeting

By the time August is over I'm always ready to go mushroom hunting. I get antsy watching the papers for the end of summer thunderstorms of the Sierras. A late August or early September trip to the high Sierras always produces enough *B. edulis* and *barrowsii* to grill for dinner over the campfire, often with enough left over for breakfast or to dehydrate at home. By the time the newsletter comes out, the late summer boletes should be starting to appear, followed shortly by a crop of Bay Area mushroomers. For the September general society meeting, Fred Stevens will lead a panel on late summer and early fall mushrooming—covering species you can expect to find and some general areas where you might find them. If you've never hunted in the Sierras in September, there will be enough time following the first meeting to do so.

Now, speaking of early-season mushroom hunting, I was just recently (in late August) in the Mercat de la Boqueria in Barcelona—one of the world's great food markets. In the far left corner of the vast hall is the Petras Fruits del Bosc (Fruits of the Forest) wild mushroom stand, covered with baskets of dried boletes, morels and black chanterelles and hundreds of different sized jars of home pickled *Marasmius oreades* and boletes. The only fresh mushrooms that

Mr. Petras had that day were chanterelles. There were boletes coming from the Pyrennes but they were full of worms because of the hot weather. "Come back in September or October," he said. At the height of the season the stand sells 1,000 to 2,000 kilograms of wild mushrooms per day, all coming from the Pyrennes. Much of it goes to Barcelona restaurants. We saw two of the five trucks that make deliveries and pickups for the stall; they were colorfully painted with amanitas, chanterelles and morels! Mr. Petras left me with a postcard showing the shop with at least 15-20 different species of wild mushrooms stacked in boxes from floor to ceiling. What a find in Spain!

Now, returning to Bay Area issues, we are still searching for a fair chairperson. Quite a few of the volunteer slots for the fair have already been filled, except for the most important one. If you have any desire to take this on please let me know. Terri Beauséjour and I are set to help you out. I'm looking forward to seeing familiar faces in September and to meeting the unfamiliar. See you at the general meeting. Or, better yet, out in the woods!

- Mark Thomsen

### Whited/Thiers Scholarship 1998-99

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

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

Please Note: The committee favors graduate students working with the genera common to this region.

Send your material to Robert Mackler, 157 Mesa Court, Hercules, CA 94547. The deadline is December 20, 1998.

## 1998 Fungus Fair News

### Planning Committee Meetings

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

### General Information

The Fungus Fair will be held at the Herbst International Exhibition Hall, Presidio, San Francisco, 385 Moraga Street (at Montgomery, follow signs to the main post) Building 385 of the main post

Friday, December 4	10 a.m. - 10 p.m. Setup
Saturday, December 5	8 a.m. - 11 a.m. Setup
	11 a.m. - 5 p.m. The Fair
	5 p.m. - 7 p.m. Cleanup/Prep
Sunday December 6	8 a.m. - 11 a.m. Setup
	11 a.m. - 5 p.m. The Fair
	5 p.m. - 7 p.m. Cleanup



## Four former MSSF presidents and a good reason for using anti-fungal shampoo

*From left to right: Fred Stevens, Mike Boom, Mike Wood, and Norm Andresen*

### **Call for Content**

*The Mycena News welcomes content contributions from all corners of the mycological world. What's more, you don't have to be an expert to contribute. If you have ideas, stories, feedback, news, art (especially drawings), or anything else to contribute, please contact [mycena-news@mpath.com](mailto:mycena-news@mpath.com). Or call 650.813.9149. We welcome all content and contributions.*

### **Humorous Mushroom Tidbit...**

“After noticing a large mushroom growing in the roots of a fallen tree in her yard in West Point, Ind., Virginia Emerick allowed it to grow, carefully mowing around it until it was two-feet wide and weighed 40 pounds. Then she harvested it and presented it to Purdue University’s plant and fungi collection to be dried and used as an educational specimen. When it turned out to be too wide to fit in the department’s largest dehydrator, three of the school’s scientists sautéed it in butter and ate it.”

*- David Bartolotta*

Q. What do you call a mushroom that buys all your drinks?

A. A fungi to be with

### **Welcome Back...**

Once again these three intrepid travelers from this most adventurous group—the MSSF—are going north to hunt for mushrooms. The reason is somewhat simple: There are not too many fruitings occurring here now, but on the island called Prince of Wales in the Yukon, and around Juneau, stuff is going on. Upon our return I shall write oodles about things wonderful and of culinary deeds done by us to impress the locals.

Kathy Faircloth (my partner), Connie Green of Wine Forest Mushrooms (our traveling buddy) and I, MycoChef Patrick Hamilton, author of the food column in “Mushroom the Journal of Wild Mushrooming” welcome each and all of you to another year of the “Mycena” — a year again full of the promises of mushroomers b.s.ing about exploits both done and dreamed up. As long as it is entertaining.

Fungally,

*- Patrick Hamilton*

# ON THE DANGERS OF KISSING YOUR DOG

In 1998, I have seen more media attention to microscopic fungi such as molds, than to the fleshy mushrooms. Some of the reports involve familiar mold problems, others are more exotic. Here are two examples:

In St. Louis, a 23-year-old brick mason appeared at a hospital with a 3 month history of sores on his upper lip. Bald spots were appearing where the hair on his beard fell out. There were draining pustules and a boggy, crusted nodule above his upper lip. Five months before, he had noted that the muzzle of his dog, a Boxer, was infected and that its hair had fallen out. Cultures taken from man and dog (?) grew readily and were identified as *Trichophyton mentagrophytes*, a common cause of skin, nail and hair infections in man and beast. It is a member of the *Monilia* yeast family—similar to thrush in children and monilial infections in adults. The patient improved after 200 mg. of ketoconazole twice daily for a month and now sports a full, more attractive mustache and is much more kissable, depending on who he kisses.

Photographs shown on page 735 in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, Vol. 338, No. 11, show strikingly similar lesions and locations on their upper lips. We are reporting this for those of our members who own or are familiar with animals. Many diseases can be transmitted from animal to man and vice-versa. They are called “zoonoses”. This one came very close to the nose, didn't it? Fungal infections of the scalp, skin and mucous membranes of children and the immuno-compromised are frequently mediated by animal contact. As we watch animals lick themselves in their grooming behavior, it is difficult for me to imagine people kissing their dogs lips and tongue, but they don't seem to mind it. We mistakenly treat the animals as if they were human, who are bad enough. So treat this as a warning. Animal, reptilian, avian, amphibian and other kinds of pets can harbor sometimes lethal viruses, poisons (toad skin), bacteria, prions, parasites, as well as invasive fungi.

The second story reported in the same issue of the *NEJM* involved washing one's hands. Introduced in Austria as a new medical concept in 1849 by Dr. Semmelweiss, to prevent the widespread death of mothers from childbirth fever, it provoked serious opposition at that time as an apparent insult to the proud professional medical community. But even today, hand-washing and clothes-changing after handling birds, animals and between infected patients is occasionally neglected, as you will read in the following report:

Between 1993-94, at the Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center intensive care nursery, there was an outbreak of 15 white infants, mostly premature and underweight, found to be infected with the mold, *Malassezia pachydermus*. Blood stream infections were found in 8 children, 2 with urinary infections and 1 with meningitis. One child died later of unrelated causes. The blood-stream infected children and some others were treated for at least 10 days with IV amphotericin B, a common, well-tolerated fungicidal drug. Organisms were recovered from the pharynx of 2 other infants, as well as from the tip of an intravenous catheter and on the skin. All were free of the fungus after treatment. Their symptoms included fever, skin color

changes, rapid heart rate and the need to replace feeding and intravenous tubes. But that isn't the important part of this small epidemic.

This is a rarely diagnosed disease. The earliest report of human contamination I could find was in 1978 in an ear infection, although the organism was first identified as infectious from a case of exfoliative (shedding) dermatitis in a captive Indian rhinoceros in 1925. Doctors can't be expected to be on the alert for it. Veterinarians are accustomed to identify it as a cause of middle and inner ear infections, (especially in floppy-eared dogs), and dermatitis. The fungus is considered to be part of their natural flora, but was not recovered from all the dogs ears tested as part of the epidemiological survey done following the hospital outbreak.

The newborns were being tube-fed and given intravenous nutritive fatty emulsions and antibiotics, much to the delight of lyophilic *Mallassezia*, which obtains carbon from fats. This explains why it causes skin and ear infections and why other hospitalized infants who did not receive this food supplement were not contaminated.

An intensive epidemiological study was conducted. The pets of the hospital workers, dogs, cats and horses were examined. Four strains of the fungus were recovered from 31% of the tested dogs following DNA studies. Only dogs were incriminated. All hospital workers were tested. Studies showed 1.: that the most common site of invasion was in arterial catheters, and 2.: that Nurse “A” was in attendance. Paradoxically, “A” had no pets! So she had may have carried the fungus from infant to infant. Same story as with Typhoid Mary.

Quietly, the ward personnel were monitored to see how often they washed their hands. One nurse, “A”, only washed 50% of the time. Others failed to wash before and after every patient contact. Why? “Too busy”, “Immediate attention needed”, “My hands were too dry”. But after in-service education, follow-up observations revealed that nurses did comply with this rule better. And no further evidence of the disease has occurred. *Mallassezia* was only found on Nurse “C”. It was presumed that she had brought the fungus into the nursery and that nurse “A” and perhaps others may have spread it among the infants by failing to wash their hands and wearing home clothes as they tended to the babies. The lessons learned in this report are that hospital workers who have animal pets should change their clothes before entering the hospital and put on a clean uniform when they get there. And that it is difficult to wash your hands with soap and water too often.

The wet weather of the last few years, caused by flooding and increased rain, has brought to our awareness the presence of other new significant pathological mold diseases previously unidentifiable and undiagnosed, therefore unrecognized by the medical profession at large. *Stachybotrys atra* is an example of an airborne

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## Fairy Ring Mushroom Recipes

Although insignificant in size, the fairy ring mushroom (*Marasmius oreades*) is not wanting in flavor. Their full flavor makes them wonderful in a wide range of dishes: soups, stews, sauces, even cookies. A basic way to cook the fairy ring mushroom (and an excellent way to try them for the first time) is to sauté them in butter for about 5 minutes, add a generous squeeze of lemon juice and simmer for another 10 minutes.

The tough stipes of *Marasmius oreades* are not good eating. Cut them off with scissors, either in the field as you collect or later at home. After removing the stipes and cleaning off the adhering grass, these mushrooms can be prepared fresh or preserved by drying. Dried and reconstituted *Marasmius oreades* have the texture and flavor of the fresh mushroom.

For a description and some photographs of *Marasmius oreades* visit the *Fungi of the San Francisco Bay Area* on the world wide web: [http://www.mykoweb.com/BAF/species/Marasmius\\_oreades.html](http://www.mykoweb.com/BAF/species/Marasmius_oreades.html)

Enjoy these two fairy ring mushroom recipes!

- Mike Boom

### Fairy Ring Mushroom Pasta Sauce

- 1 cup dried *Marasmius oreades* (Fairy Ring Mushroom) or equivalent quantity fresh mushrooms
- 1 ½ cup peeled and diced tomatoes (use 1 can peeled and diced tomatoes unless you have vine-ripened fresh tomatoes)
- ½ teaspoon Herbs d'Provence
- ¼ cup chopped Italian parsley
- 1 tablespoon extra virgin olive oil
- 1 tablespoon butter
- ¼ teaspoon hot sauce (adjust for your taste and the hotness of your sauce)
- salt and pepper to taste
- ½ lb. good quality pasta (farfalle, fusilli, penne, rigitoni, etc.)

Soak the dried mushrooms in hot water until soft. Drain, reserving liquid. Heat the butter and olive oil in a sauté pan. Add mushrooms and Herbs d'Provence. Cook slowly for 15 minutes. Add reserved soaking liquid and reduce over high heat until about ¾ of the liquid is gone. Add tomatoes and parsley and cook for 3-4 minutes.

Cook the pasta in boiling salted water until done but still firm to the bite. The mushroom sauce over the pasta serves 4 as a starter course or side course, 2 as a main course.

### On the Dangers... continued from page 4

mold which has taken the lives of 12 infants in Cleveland and is probably more prevalent than realized. The MSSF should do as much as possible to bring these to the attention of doctors. The best treatment is prevention and this requires the cooperation and advice of the Environmental Pollution Agency experts.

1850 to 1998—We cannot forget the lessons we have learned at great cost in the past.

- Bill Freedman

### Fairy Ring Mushroom Risotto

- 1 cup dried *Marasmius oreades* (Fairy Ring Mushroom) or equivalent quantity fresh mushrooms
- 1 ½ cups Arborio rice
- 5 cups stock (chicken or vegetable, or preferably a combination of both; include the soaking liquid from the mushrooms)
- 2 tablespoons chopped shallots
- 3 tablespoons butter
- 3 tablespoons extra virgin olive oil
- 2/3 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1/4 cup balsamic vinegar

Soak the mushrooms until soft in hot water. Drain and use the soaking liquid as part of the stock. Sauté the mushrooms slowly in half the butter and olive oil for 10 minutes and set aside. Bring the stock to a simmer while the mushrooms cook. In a heavy 2 ½ quart sauce pan, sauté the shallots in the remaining butter and olive oil until soft and lightly colored. Add the rice and stir until well coated by the oil. Cook for about 1 minute. Add ½ cup simmering stock and continuously stir the mixture over medium heat. When the rice dries out add another ½ cup stock and continue to stir. You will repeat this process until the rice is cooked. This will take about 30 minutes. Risotto cooked too quickly will not cook evenly and risotto cooked too slowly will be gluey. Good risotto is creamy but still firm to the bite (*al dente*).

About 10 minutes before the risotto is done, add the reserved mushrooms. About 5 minutes before the rice is done, add the Parmesan cheese and balsamic vinegar. If you run out of stock before the rice is done, you may use hot water.

Serve immediately. Serves 4-6 as a side dish, 2-3 as a main course.





*Pushing Up Mushrooms, cont. from page 1*

golden with the perfume of almonds, but not what we came for: we were in search of *Marasmius oreades*, the fairy-ring mushroom, also called the scotch bonnet.

If you're unfamiliar with *M. oreades*, it's a humble lawn inhabitant that merits closer attention. True to its common name, it often grows in rings on the lawn. Its mycelium starts in a central spot and grows outward, eating nutrients in the sod. The area immediately behind its expansion, no longer fungally nutritious, doesn't support the mycelium, so it dies off there. As a result, the mycelium expands in a ring, reaching further and further until it hits an obstacle, the end of the lawn, or an overly ambitious gardener.

The mushrooms that fruit forth from the mycelium are a classic example of the *Marasmius* genus. They drop a white spore print, something you can often see in the grass as you pick them. The gills issuing the spores are well formed, widely spaced, and are never decurrent—they may be attached directly to the stem or free from the stem, but never run down the stem. If you look closely between the gills in a mature specimen, you can often see slight ribbing between the gills that look something like veins or the blunted gills of chantrelles.

The cap of *M. oreades* begins life with the shape of a bell, but as it grows and spreads it becomes broadly umbonate, a plane disc with a small dome rising in the middle. To my eyes it looks very much like an old-fashioned Chinese broad-rimmed straw hat. Because the cuticle (covering) of the cap is hygrophanous, the cap can have two different colors: a delicious caramel brown when wet and a pale buff when dry. If you look at the cap while it's drying, you can sometimes see both colors simultaneously: a center of light tan (the dry area) surrounded by the dark brown of the moist edges. If the edges are moist enough, they may be striate so you can see the lines of the gills below through the top of the cap.

The stem of *M. oreades* doesn't look particularly unique—it's relatively long, thin, even, and usually the same buff color as the dry cap. When you try to separate the cap from the stem, you come directly up against a special characteristic: it's damned hard to pull the stem off! *Marasmius* stems are typically wiry and tough, which is why you don't want to eat them. It's also why you hunt *M. oreades* with scissors.

The taste of *M. oreades* (you were wondering when I'd get around to this, weren't you?) is nothing like its smell, at least to my nose. When I put a fresh scotch bonnet up to my nose and sniff, I usually detect overtones of chlorine, not a particularly appealing smell. It fortunately disappears when the mushrooms are sizzling in a sauté pan, leaving a panful of mushrooms that have a rich, mushroomy taste that, to my palate, has overtones of butterscotch without any cloying sweetness. It's a mushroom that's not to everybody's taste, however. It's one of the few mushrooms that ace mushroom hound David Campbell will walk by, and there are others who share an equally passionate disinterest in scotch bonnets.

Finding scotch bonnets in a cemetery is primarily a matter of walking around with a basket and scissors looking for small whitish mushroom caps. In a shaggy lawn like the cemetery where we were looking, it was important to look deep into the grass where large clusters



*Marasmius oreades*  
(from Mike Wood's Mykoweb)

could hide.

Sure enough, we started to find scotch bonnets. Where we found one, we usually found many more, some in slug-eaten tatters past their prime, others just starting life as tiny bell-shaped caramel dots, others just right for the dinner pot. If you stepped back to look at the pattern of their growth, you could often see they were part of a ring; by projecting the ring to other parts of the lawn you could find many more. After some experience, we began to look for the dark green rings of the lawn. For some reason, *Marasmius* mycelia stimulate lawn growth, a good tip-off for scotch bonnets within.

It's important to be sure of your identification when picking *Marasmius*. There are many other lawn-loving mushrooms, including some that we saw in the cemetery: small *Coprinus*, *Panaeolus*, *Agrocybe*, and other Little Brown Mushrooms that were hard to identify. Some look very similar to scotch bonnets if you don't look closely at gills and spore color, and many of them grow in rings. Although we didn't see anything poisonous in the lawn, it's best to avoid unpleasant surprises and liver transplants.

Other important aspects of *Marasmius* hunting in a cemetery: sun screen for the hot sun on an open lawn, something cool to drink, and a serious demeanor on your face so you don't disturb the families there to visit graves. Many folks in the cemetery come with gardening tools to spruce up their relatives' tombstones, so we didn't stand out as much as you might think. We did, however, get a few odd stares.

I found that it helped my sombre visage to read the tombstones as I sat next to them scissoring *Marasmius* heads: the arc of a lifetime condensed to a couple of lines in marble or bronze. "Beloved husband," "Daughter and wife," or my favorite, "Gone fishing." If I have a tombstone at my death, I hope it reads "Pushing up mushrooms: please help yourself!"

-Mike Boom

*calendar, cont from page 10*

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

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

**Saturday-Sunday, Nov. 7-8: MSSF Salt Point Foray.** David Campbell will once again lead a camping foray/food-fest at Salt Point State Park. As in previous years, there will be a gourmet pot-luck dinner on Saturday evening. Details will appear in next month's edition of the *Mycena News*.

**Friday-Sunday, Nov. 13-15: MSSF Mendocino Woodlands Foray.** Our traditional fall cabin-camping fest will be held (we hope) at the peak of the Mendocino-coast bolete season. Details will appear in next month's edition of the *Mycena News*.

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

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

**Friday-Sunday, Nov. 27-29: Foray with David Aurora.** Lay plans now to attend the annual Thanksgiving Weekend Foray and culinary extravaganza with David Aurora, somewhere near Mendocino. Location and cost TBD.

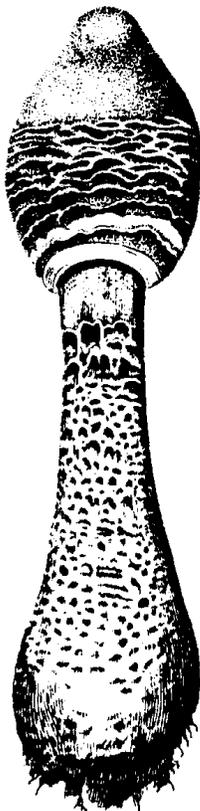
**Tuesday, Dec 1: Fungus Fair Planning Meeting,** Presidio Child Development Center, Presidio, San Francisco. Call Mark Thomsen at 510.540.1288 for details.

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

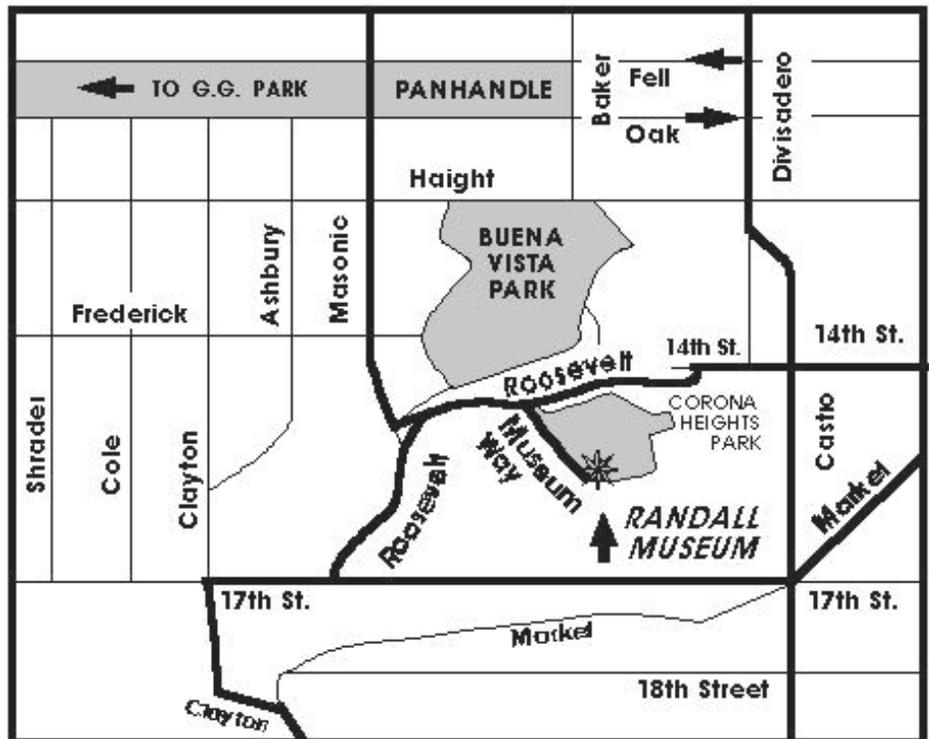
**Friday-Sunday, Dec. 11-13: Guided foray in Mendocino** with David Campbell and Charmoon. This will be a limited enrollment foray. A fee will be charged to cover food and lodging costs. Contact Charmoon at 707.887.1888 for details.

## September Meeting: Expert Collectors Panel

Septembers General meeting will feature a Panel discussion, led by Fred Stevens. Please see Fred's article *Mushrooms: The Preseason* on page 6 for a preview on this fun and educational Panel.



### Map to the Randall Museum



# THE MUSHROOM SCOOP

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

E-mail me at [yogidog@earthlink.net](mailto:yogidog@earthlink.net) to contribute.

- David Campbell



*Webster says: Mycology - 1. A branch of botany dealing with fungi. 2. Fungal life.*

Here at the MSSF, the “M” stands for mycological, though precious few of us actually are specialists with degrees in that “branch of botany.” All of us, however, have in one manner or another immersed ourselves in the fungal life.

I mention this because of a conversation I had at this year’s NAMA convention with my friend and mushroom hero, Jim Trappe, a great man who qualifies strongly in the “specialist with degree” category. There I was exercising my fungal expertise, whacking on a mountain of mud and slime, rendering it into a mole hill of pristine chanterelle flesh. At one point in our chat, between wry observation and profound disclosure, with that omnipresent twinkle in his eye, Jim informed me that I, too, was a mycologist!

“I am?” I responded, blinking dumbly. To put Ph.D. after my name, after all, it would have to stand for Phungal Desperado!

It took a while to sink in; months, in fact. Eventually though, I realized that Jim’s generous offer of title to me provided a resolution to a paradox I’ve grappled with concerning our society from the get-go. That is, if “we” are a mycological society a thousand strong and only a handful of us are “mycologists”, who are the rest of “we”, chopped beefsteak fungus (*Fistulina hepatica*)? I’ve sometimes thought that “mycophilic” would be a more accurate moniker, significantly more inclusive of the entire membership, but it really just doesn’t have that ring.

If Jim is right, however, in dubbing me a mycologist — well, that’s a horse mushroom (*Agaricus arvensis*) of a different color. That would mean that many of my society fellows are also worthy of that distinction of mycologist. Certainly, each of us with our relentless curiosity and sense of discipline about mushrooms, coupled with a propensity for sharing what knowledge we’ve accumulated, has earned our place on the scientific path. Eating a wild mushroom is like a final exam, every time. Most of us make that decision, that critical identification, on our own behalf; many of us make it for friends, relatives, community. We frequently shoulder this awesome responsibility of being correct, or else.... It is an honor and indeed a challenge, and clearly we are all indebted for much of our ability, and ongoing education, to the “University” of MSSF, its rich legacy of shared knowledge, and its legitimately titled scientific advisors, such as the Drs. Theirs and Desjardin.

So what Jim meant, I guess, is that I’ve developed a workable understanding of how some mushrooms interrelate with their habitat, which is my laboratory, if you will. The accuracy of my abstract and tangible theorems allows me to show up in the same time and place as

my elusive mushrooms of choice. I actively promote a knowledgeable discipline of collecting, identifying, handling, processing, sharing, storing, preserving, and cooking them. I occupy an important niche in the great mandala of the mushroom world, actually, for I am a professor of bringing good mushrooms from the forest to the table.

So here’s to us — my fellow mycologists — amateur and pro alike. May we all aspire to be worthy of such a title.

- Bob Klock and wife Peggy, of Fairfax, CA flew to Anchorage, Alaska and rented an RV for two weeks at the end of July. After experiencing considerable aggravation at the impenetrability of the stunted forest walls, they finally spotted some *Leccinum estaceoscabrum* ballooning roadside as they drove; Bob’s a great drive-by spotter. Once they stopped, those scaber-stalked boletes were everywhere. So were the worms. *Testaceoscabrum* is visually distinguished from *L. insigne* and *L. arantiacum* by a display of a pronounced blackishness to the scabers of even the youngest stalks. Known to associate with birch, it has a reputation of being a mushroom that some people can’t eat due to adverse gastrointestinal reaction. Thorough cooking of any *Leccinum* is highly recommended.

Near Takeetna, Peggy popped up with a pair of *Boletus edulis* she’d found growing next to their rig at the campground. An immediate surveillance of the surrounding territory produced several more, running a bit smallish by our California standards, but hey, it’s porcini! They went great with the Sockeye salmon Bob had angled that morning.

Bob reports there was a little too much daylight, something wrong with the sun — it sprang up in the 5 a.m. slot and stayed at 10 a.m. until about 11 p.m. But they hardly saw it, there was a bit much rain. And they drove a wee far, about 1500 miles. Otherwise, the trip was a marvelous jaunt through an ecosystem at maximum metabolism, a land of throbbing change, Alaska in July.

- Closer to home, Patrick and Kathy report the first nudge of chanterelles at fog drip spots along the North Coast.
- David Bartalotta found a scatter of shrivelled *Amanita muscaria* while on a musical gig at Mammoth Lakes in August. It had rained in volume a couple of weeks earlier, and such various fungi that had sprung from that dousing now showed like petrified relics of a bygone era, the earth now dry as chalk. David also delivered Larry Stickney to the entry point nearby for a five week high mountain backpack retreat into a place Larry knows from before, a place called Fish Camp. Wow! What a man, our Larry! He should have some great new stories for us – perhaps he’ll share a few at the September meeting.

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## Calendar

**Tuesday, Sept 15: General Meeting** at the Randall Junior Museum in San Francisco. Doors open at 7:00 pm for mushroom ID and Books Sales; meeting proper begins at 8:00 pm. This month's presentation is a panel discussion on preseason hunting, led by Fred Stevens. (See column for more details.)

**Friday-Sunday, Sept. 18-20: Connecticut Westchester Mycological Assoc. 23<sup>rd</sup> annual Clark T. Rogerson Foray** at Hebron, CT. Contact Don Shernoff 914.761.0332 for details.

**Friday-Sunday, Sept. 18-20: Mycological Soc. of Toronto annual Cain Foray**, Haliburton Hills, Ontario. Contact Velio Scoots 416.444.9053 for details.

**Thursday-Sunday, Sept. 24-27: Missouri Mycological Society State Foray**, Mingo, MO. Contact Ken Gilberg 314.458.1458, [mycofolk@fia.net](mailto:mycofolk@fia.net) for details.

**Friday-Sunday, Sept. 25-27: Spokane Mushroom Club Foray**, Priest Lake, ID. Keynote speaker will be Dr. Thomas O'Dell. Cabins, RV space, and campsites will be available. Contact Doris Distad 509.328.7973 for details.

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

**Friday-Sunday, Oct. 9-11: MSSF Yuba Pass Foray.** We will either camp at the Chapman Creek Campground, or (pending notification that it will be available) the Sierra Nevada Field Station of SF State Univ. Contact Norm Andresen 510.278.8998 or Henry Shaw 510.943.3237, [shaw4@llnl.gov](mailto:shaw4@llnl.gov) for details and final location.

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

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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.mssf.org>