



January 15
General Meeting Speaker



Else Vellinga

Else Vellinga, Ph.D., is interested in mushroom taxonomy and has been studying parasol mushrooms from California and beyond for years. She is a frequent contributor to *Mycena News* and we are honored to have her as the author this month's *Mycodigest* column.

She is fascinated by interactions between fungi and other organisms. Her speaking topic for January will be announced soon and it is sure to be spellbinding.

Dr. Vellinga is a professor at U.C. Berkeley's Department of Plant and Microbial Biology. She is dedicated to conserving the richness of nature, raising awareness of the importance and complexity of fungal lifeforms and rightfully bringing the study of fungi into the mainstream of biological science.

In her free time she knits, and knits, and knits!

For more of her work, see: <http://nature.berkeley.edu/brunslab/people/ev.html>

MycoDigest:

Dried Mushrooms – What's the Deal?

Else C. Vellinga

The last few years Tom Bruns et al. have been organizing many forays and collecting trips to Point Reyes National Seashore, Yosemite National Park, and the Mendocino area. The purpose of these trips is partly to teach students about the different species that can be found in these areas, partly to inventory these parks and regions. And the way we carried out the inventory part was not just by making a list of all the species we saw, but by collecting mushrooms, photographing them, making notes, drying them in a food dryer, and then preparing those collections for permanent storage in the university's herbarium, which is a dry and cool resting place for dried specimens. More often than not, a dried up mushroom loses its shape, its colors, and its smells when submitted to the dryer, but its microscopic characters stay intact, and its DNA as well (if the collections are properly cared for).

The reasons for keeping the specimens are clear: we can get back to the specimens, look at them under the microscope, get the DNA out and compare it with that of other species and specimens. Did we get the name right in the first place? Perhaps not, but we can update the identification.

Specimens can be, and in fact are, used to describe new species.

If we didn't have these specimens but had only a list of species that had been collected, we might keep guessing about the reality of the names we had been using. We might be talking about totally different species with our mycologists at the other side of the country, without realizing it. The Europeans who arrived in North America called a bird with a red breast 'robin': they used a European name for the American species now called *Turdus migratorius*, whereas the European robin, *Erithacus rubecula*, is equally red-breasted but quite

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A herbarium cabinet at UC Berkeley, showing folders with packages and trays with boxed collections. Photo by ecv.

PRESIDENT'S POST

Greetings MSSF Members!

The fall and winter rains have returned to us! Looking back over the last year, it seems like everywhere I went, the mushrooms were later than the year before, mainly due to lack of moisture. Colorado in August—there were no chanterelles when the year before we had plenty. Seattle in October—no porcini, matsutake or chanterelles to speak of. Eighty-one straight days of no rain may have had something to do with it! Global warming? Drought? Stars not aligned properly? Whatever! I am still optimistic that we will have a good mushrooming season in Northern California, and the Bay Area, as long as it continues to rain.

I want to welcome Lisa Gorman as the newest member of the MSSF Council. Lisa has been a dedicated volunteer over the last few years as a member of the hospitality committee and filling positions at the fungus fair. She has now volunteered to lead the Education Committee for the society. Paul Koski and Alice Sunshine will also remain on the education committee in support of Lisa. All volunteer positions on the council are now filled, but we are always looking for members to step forward to assist with existing committees. And don't forget, the Fungus Fair in December will need many volunteers.

The Mendocino Foray Camp in November was sold out and was a total success! Due to the late October and early November rain, fungi were fruiting for us, but not in the quantity we would have liked. However, we had great entertainment. The meals provided by Deb Dawson and her staff at *Good Thyme Catering*, were superb! I want to thank the foray leaders and the entire staff for all their hard work as dedicated volunteers. We will continue the adventure again next year.

The *Far West Fungi* cultivation foray and pot luck BBQ near Moss Landing on October 28th was scary and fun! Many thanks to Ken Litchfield, David Gardella, and the Garrone family for making this semi-annual educational event and gathering such a blast!

The annual Holiday Dinner is scheduled for Sunday, 9 December 2012, at the Hall of Flowers in Golden Gate Park. Al Carvajal is in charge of this year's fungal feast. If you have not yet signed up, there may still be some spaces available. Go to www.mssf.org. The event is posted on the home page under upcoming events. Sign in as a member, register, and pay for the event before the cut-off date, December 5th.

On a similar note: in order to keep your membership up to date, especially if you are an e-member and you change your e-mail address, you need to update your member profile in the members only area on the MSSF website.

Sales of raffle tickets for the beautiful one-of-a-kind" mushroom design, queen size, 25-t-shirt quilt remain very brisk, with over \$500.00 sold so far. We plan to continue selling tickets until the last day of the Fungus Fair in December. Get your tickets while they last: 1 for \$5.00, 3 for \$10.00, and 7 for \$20.00. See Curt for tickets. (Quilt value is over \$500.00.)

I hope to see many of you in the forest soon, or at a future MSSF event!

--Curt Haney, President@mssf.org

CULINARY CORNER

The Joy of the Foray in Mendocino Woodlands

The annual MSSF Mendocino Woodlands foray this year began Friday with a late afternoon sortie into Camp 2 to begin the weekend's mushroom study and collecting. Not too much to be found there, but the beauty of the area and the incredible freshness of the air made the foray more than worth the lack of abundant fungi.

The evening brought the warmth of reuniting with old friends and meeting new ones as well as the enjoyment of a wide range of appetizers and a satisfying dinner centered around a Bouillabaisse style fish chowder with sides and, of course, a vegetarian choice. Dinner was available for late arriving participants. Our caterer was *Good Thyme Catering* from Mendocino. They do a good job!

Saturday was the big foray day. Out went carpoolers with permission to pick in Jackson State Forest and other areas around the Mendocino/Fort Bragg area. Fungi were up and foragers were happy. Collections were brought to the big tables in the rec. room and we all gathered up near the dining hall for a splendid pre-dinner appetizer extravaganza using fungi found that day as well as fungi provided by those stellar friends of the MSSF, John and Toby Garrone of Far West Fungi. A big fire in the ring was burning heartily, and tables were set up with equipment provided by MSSF member Chef Andy Still. Chef Andy and wife Gayle, that talented crafts artist and cook, prepared several amazing treats for us onlookers. Joining Andy was MSSF member Chef Seth Peterson; strong-armed and good natured. These guys must lift weights on their off hours. The pans and cooking equipment were big! Curt Haney, our Pres., was not content to just be a spectator/sampler but grilled big shiitake on a barbecue for us. Over on the tables, Andy and Seth cooked up Risotto al Fungi and blended mushroom soups with the help of Seth and Ken Litchfield's mushroom cultivation classes at Merritt College.

Andy's cooking exhibition used mushrooms, onions, garlic, vegetable broth, rice, parmesan cheese, salt, pepper, cream, butter and olive oil. He says: "The whole idea is to get caramelization from onions and mushrooms extended into the stock or the rice. The Shiitakes are simple as it gets and oh so good".

Andy's recipe here serves 4. He uses a pressure cooker for the risotto, something I will try soon myself.



Risotto al Fungi Ingredients: mushrooms—we happened to have fresh porcini and black trumpets (from Curt's freezer, I think), 1 onion, 1 big shallot chopped fine, 2 cups veg. stock, 1 cup risotto rice, finely chopped garlic, porcini powder, grated parmesan, olive oil, salt, pepper and cream to finish.

Cut the mushrooms into medium to small pieces and dry sauté in the pressure cooker (no lid on) until water is almost gone, then add butter, shallot and onion and cook to caramelize. Add

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Mycodigest continued

different, and yet, they now both go under the name 'robin'. The same is happening in mycology: names given to species occurring in Europe are used for California species. Sometimes this is correct (e.g., for the hedgehog, *Hydnum repandum*), but in most cases it is not. For instance, the local purple laccaria which we called *Laccaria amethystina* was renamed *Laccaria amethysteo-occidentalis*, as it is quite different from the European species. But if we do not have material at hand to check, we will never find this out. Hence, a herbarium comes in handy.

The second reason to keep material is to get a historic record. Thanks to herbarium specimens, the presence of the death cap (*Amanita phalloides*) in California could be traced back to 1938, when it was collected in the grounds of the Del Monte Hotel in Monterey; older specimens under that name turned out to be different species. Other examples of the value of specimens come from Europe, where changes in distribution, fruiting time, and occurrence frequency have widely been noted. Meticulous record keeping and herbarium collections give an ongoing account of the state of the mushroom world. For instance, in the Netherlands, the hawkswing mushroom, *Sarcodon imbricatus*, has drastically declined, and where it was once widespread it is now only known from a handful of sites (see www.verspreidingsatlas.nl/395010); nitrification, acidification and changes in forest management are the culprits for this dramatic decline. Herbarium records in Norway were used to predict changes in the distribution patterns of species, and research on changes in fruiting period and time relied heavily on records and specimens that were collected over a long period of time in the U.K., Switzerland and Norway.

The two local university herbaria are part of a nation-wide effort to make all the herbarium records of the macrofungi (all fungi with visible fruitbodies) available on line. The Harry D. Thiers herbarium at San Francisco State University has an estimated 60,000 collections, with a heavy focus on California mushrooms collected by the late Harry Thiers, his students, and his successor Dennis Desjardin and his students. The University herbarium at UC Berkeley has a collection of around 50,000 fungal specimens that go back to the late 1800s with many early collections from Point Reyes, Mount Tamalpais, and Cooke's collections from the Shasta area. By exchange, gifts and purchases, other parts of the U.S.A. are represented as well.

The full name of the project is "The Macrofungi Collections Consortium, Unlocking a biodiversity resource for understanding biotic interactions, nutrient cycling and human affairs", spearheaded by Barbara Thiers and Roy Halling of the New York Botanical Garden, and funded by the National Science Foundation. It is a 3-year project and the goal is to get the label data for all macrofungal collections of around 35 herbaria on line. The first 400,000 records and several thousand photographic images and images of field notes, are already available at the Mycological Collections Portal web site (www.mycportal.org), curated by Scott Bates. The labels of the collections will be photographed. These photos will generate database records, including the name of the specimen, when, where and by whom each specimen was collected. Creating records from images will be not so much of a problem for the typed labels, but the many handwritten scribbles might be more difficult to interpret. For around 10% of the collections, the dried mushrooms themselves will be photographed. Even though shape, sizes and colors of gilled mushrooms change after drying, there is still important information left and polypores and puffballs do not change much at all during their stay in the aridity of the herbarium.

Notebooks, field record books and notes on cards with macroscopical descriptions will also be digitized. Again these are, for the most part, hand-written.

The task of decyphering mycologists' handwriting where technology fails will be

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Please e-mail photos, comments, corrections, and correspondence to mycenanews@mssf.org

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Past issues of *Mycena News* can be read online at www.mssf.org

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MycoDigest continued

in the eyes and hands of volunteers – those of you who love reading mushroom facts and descriptions and are good at seeing the words through the up-and-down strokes of fountain pens – let us know! Harry Thiers' notes will be included, and his hand writing is notoriously difficult to interpret.

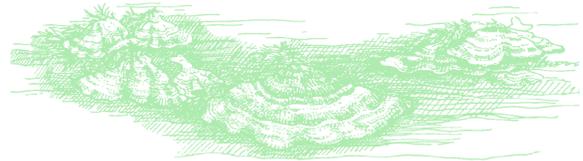
Students, both undergraduate and graduate, will work on the project participating in all kinds of capacities. They put bar code labels on the boxes and folders holding the specimens, photograph the material, type the main info (species name, collector's name) into the database, and get to know their herbarium and its contributors. The ultimate goal is to get them enthusiastic about living fungi. Summer interns at NYBG wrote fascinating posts on mycologists and fungi (links to these pages are in the left bar of <http://sciweb.nybg.org/science2/SteereHerbarium.asp.html>).

The *MyCoPortal* web site is the serious brother to *Mushroom Observer*; at both sites maps can be produced, but at the former, these are based on identified and vouchered material. At the latter, they are based on observations with identifications that can range from a long night spent with books and microscopes to a quick look at the photo by someone in another part of the world. Right now, both sites show that big swaths of the U.S.A. are under-researched, and that the more difficult fungal groups definitely need our attention too.

The last four months I have spent quite some time at the UC herbarium; updating names, sticking barcodes on, and giving the collections some well-needed love and care. I came across material that has been in the hands of famous mycologists, such as Setchell (after whom *Setchelliogaster* was named) and Murrill. I saw many old collections from Point Reyes and Mount Tamalpais and I would love to know whether these species are still around in our area. This brings me to the present day again, where I started this writing: modern collections are as valuable as the old ones; they hold the key for our knowledge and understandings in the future!

Some background reading –

- The western purple *Laccaria* story: Mueller GM, 1984. New North American species of *Laccaria* (*Agaricales*). *Mycotaxon* 20: 101–116.
- History of *Amanita phalloides*: Pringle A, Adams RA, Cross HB, Bruns TD, 2009. The ectomycorrhizal fungus *Amanita phalloides* was introduced and is expanding its range on the west coast of North America. *Molecular Ecology* 18: 817–833.
- Two examples of European research: Kausrud H, Heegaard E, Büntgen U, Halvorsen R, Egli S, Senn-Irlet B, Krisai-Greilhuber I, Dämon W, Sparks W, Nordén J, Høiland K, Kirk P, Semenov M, Boddy L, Stenseth NC, 2012. Warming-induced shift in European fruiting phenology. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 109: 14488–14493.
- Wollan AK, Bakkestuen V, Kausrud H, Gulden G, Halvorsen R. 2008. Modelling and predicting fungal distribution patterns using herbarium data. *Journal of Biogeography* 35: 2298–2310.
- A presentation on the MaCC project by Barbara Thiers: http://www.northamericanmycoflora.org/images/pdf_folder/Thiers%20FESIN.pdf
- Important web sites:
www.mycportal.org
www.mushroomobserver.org
www.nybg.org



WILD MUSHROOM CAMP

The Sonoma County Mushroom Association (SOMA) will be celebrating the wonders of fungi at their renowned annual encampment next Martin Luther King weekend (January 19-21, 2013) to be held again at the CYO Retreat Center near Occidental, California. This expansive rural setting is yet snuggled amid 200 acres of beautiful coastal redwoods and majestic Doug-firs with madrones, tanbark oaks, true oaks and huckleberry shrubs. The center has trails throughout its hills and glens with mushrooms both for the specimen tables and for the dining room too.

This is SOMA's 15th annual camp and has been called by many well-known mycologists and just plain folk likewise the very best of all such, anywhere. The Sunday Night feast and the cheeses, wines and ales offered gratis help make this a fabulous reason to gather.

Come join in and learn pretty much all you might ever want to know about mushrooms. Be taught how to find, identify, and then watch chefs cook these little wonders as well as participate in fungal fiber arts, papermaking or needle felting, learn their DNA, do microscope work, inoculate logs and straw to grow your own, be shown how to draw them, take a class on medicinal mushrooms and you can even go on a private tour of the nearby exotic Gourmet Mushrooms facility. How about lichen studies? We'll have them too!

To learn more about this special fun weekend contact SOMA at: SOMAmushrooms.org and navigate to "Camp."

Culinary Corner continued

rice and cook for another few minutes. Stir in porcini powder and garlic for about a minute, then add the stock and bring to a boil, stir, put on the lid of the pressure cooker and bring to pressure to cook. After 7 minutes turn off the heat, remove pressure from cooker according to directions and remove lid. Check for doneness and seasoning. Add cheese, cream and serve with a fat rib eye steak, or not (says Andy).

Blended Mushroom soups: Ingredients: sauteed mushroom varieties. We had blewits, yellow feet and chanterelles. Any mushroom will do. Ours were frozen-precooked from Curt's freezer. Onions and shallots and hot stock. High powered food blender. Very simple.

Sauté the onions and shallots until cooked; add the thawed mushrooms and cook until caramelized. Add the contents to the blender with the hot stock and blend on high for 3 to 4 minutes. Pass through a chinois or fine strainer if you have one, especially if your blender is not super powerful. The object is a silky smooth soup. Check for seasoning and re-blend for 5 seconds to mix if needed. Serve with a little cream and a garnish of your choice.

Grilled Shiitake Mushrooms. In a big bowl place large shiitake and toss with olive oil, salt and pepper. Grill on a hot BBQ or pan to get a smoky flavor. Once the shiitake start to lose water they are good to go.

After the appetizer feast, we went into the dining hall for our lovely dinner, centered on Cornish game hens with mushrooms and with vegetable sides with lots of mushrooms, homemade bread and fruit crisp for dessert. Again, there was a delicious vegetarian choice. I wanted it, too, but loved my little chicken. Thanks so much for the good time, Good Thyme. The breakfasts were toothsome, too.

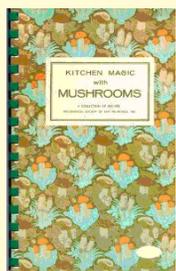


The food this Mendo foray weekend was memorable to say the least. Saturday's cooking and eating festivities kept going until Sunday morning. As traditional, Ken Litchfield's students from Merritt as well as other energetic lovers of fungi took over the kitchen late Saturday night for *MycoMendoMondo*. With chefs Andy, Seth, Holly Bazeley, and Jason Kapzinsky supervising, educating and guiding, more amazing mushroom-centered creations were prepared and enjoyed. Seth organized a seafood paella with octopus, clams and lobster mushrooms. Mushroom dips and sautées were created using chanterelles, porcini, man on horseback, black chanterelles, royal velvet chanterelles (oreilles de cochon, or pigs ears to most of us), scarlet lace chanterelles (scaly chanterelle), manzanita bolete, dried morel, cauliflower (*Sparassis*), and chicken of the woods. Comparison tastings were made between porcini and manzanita bolete (no, I don't know which one won). A prickly pear candy cap cheese cake and a chicken of the woods curry were also whipped up in that late night kitchen. They started at 10:30 and finally finished about 3 am. Too late for me and I was gastronomically overwhelmed by earlier feasting.

I can't sign off without encouraging everyone to attend the Holiday Dinner on December 9th. The menu is fabulous and we'll have our usual groaning table of culinary group prepared appetizers. I think I'll make my usual chicken liver pate with currants and calvados. Go to the MSSF website calendar for December to see the menu and sign up. Happy holidays, everyone. --Pat (Photos: Ken Litchfield)

AN EXCITING DONATION

The Culinary Group of MSSF recently received an exciting donation from Richard and Catherine Larsen: 40 brand-new copies of MSSF's first published cookbook, "Kitchen Magic with Mushrooms", published in 1963. This collector's item is full of mushroom recipes and will be sold at the Fungus Fair, Dec. 1-2, to benefit the Society. The book was the creation of Richard Larsen's stepfather, Charles Sharp. Honorary member Pat George recalls him during the 60's as a "guiding light of the Culinary Group" and a great chef. Richard Larsen recalls:



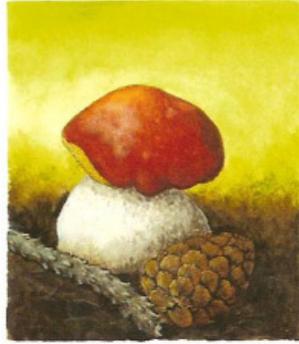
Charles W. Sharp was a man with vision. He had a number of careers and interests. My mother, Melba Larsen, met Charles at an Oakland printing company in 1951. When they married, they ran a typesetting company, Art Compositors, which produced the cookbook – typeset by Melba using what was then an innovative typewriter, the VariTyper. Charles' other interests included cooking – hence his interest in mushrooms. He could have been a master chef at any of the fine restaurants and he knew most of the local chefs. The following was written by my mom when Charles died:

He loved the Mycological Society of San Francisco. We heard about this small group who were studying wild mushrooms, going on field trips. We found their meeting place and joined them. I believe that was in 1958-59. Charles formed "Les Companions des Champignons", the culinary group, to prepare and put on an annual banquet when the new President took office. (When Charles took office we met in a Chinese restaurant where it was so noisy you couldn't hear the speakers.) The first two banquets were held at historic "Roberts at the Beach". The banquets became so famous that a number of people joined the Society just to come to the banquets. Charles edited and we typeset, printed and published the original "Kitchen Magic with Mushrooms". The recipes with a small square in the beginning are his original recipes. The purpose of the sale of the mushroom books was to purchase mycological books for the Society's library.

Charles died on May 4th, 1984.



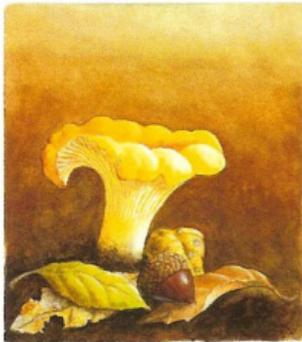
Honey Mushroom *Armillaria mellea*



King Bolete *Boletus edulis*



Black Trumpet *Craterellus cornucopioides*



Chanterelle *Cantharellus californicus*



Black Morel *Morchella elata*



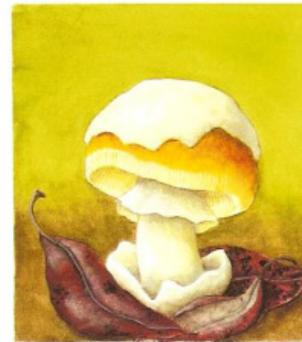
Prince *Agaricus augustus*



Elfin Saddle *Helvella lacunosa*



Candy Cap *Lactarius fragilis*



Coccora *Amanita calyptroderma*

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A Celebration of Wild Mushrooms

43rd Annual Fungus Fair

Join the weekend festivities as mushrooms take over the Lawrence Hall of Science!

See and touch a variety of fresh, wild specimens. Enjoy cooking demonstrations, hear lectures and taste delicious mushroom soup.

Saturday and Sunday
December 1 and 2, 2012
10:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.

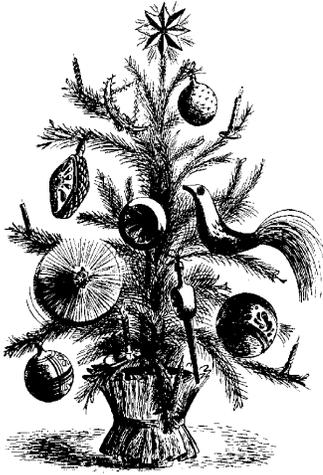
mssf.org | The Fungus Fair is presented by the Mycological Society of San Francisco |

lawrencehallofscience.org/fungus |



THE LAWRENCE
HALL OF SCIENCE
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, BERKELEY





To Celebrate the Holiday Season, the

Mycological Society of San Francisco

Invites you to the

Annual Holiday Dinner

Location: Hall of Flowers, Golden Gate Park, San Francisco
Time: Sunday, December 9, 2012, Appetizers at 7:00 p.m., dinner at 8:00 p.m.
Cost: Members \$45, Non-Members \$50, children under 12 \$25
Chef: Sunita Dutt, Executive Chef at Marin's Walker Creek Ranch.

MENU

-Mushroom Appetizers and Punch (provided by MSSF volunteers).

Then

-Miso Soup with Shiitake, Maitake, Enokitake and Matsutake mushrooms.
-Garden Salad with Pomegranate, Persimmon, shaved Porcini and a Raspberry Vinaigrette Dressing.
-Dinner Rolls and Truffle Butter.

Then

-Beef tenderloin fillet with a Morel & Chestnut Sauce OR, by Advance Request, Vegetarian Wild Mushroom Strudel.
-Roasted Fingerling potatoes and Yellow Foot with Truffle oil.
-Creamed Spinach with Black Trumpets.

Then

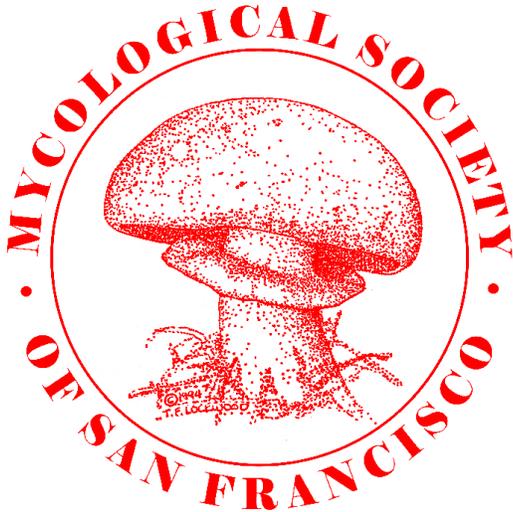
-Candy Cap Cheese Cake topped with Huckleberry or Blueberry Sauce.
-Decaffeinated Coffee or Teas.

Please bring your own dishes, silverware and beverages.

*Reservations are required. Please register at <http://www.MSSF.org>
For questions or additional information, please contact Alvaro at alvarocarvajal@sbcglobal.net
[net](mailto:alvarocarvajal@sbcglobal.net) or at (415) 317-1970*

Mycological Society of San Francisco
c/o The Randall Museum
199 Museum Way
San Francisco, CA 94114

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MSSF Calendar December

Saturday, Dec. 1- Sunday, Dec. 2 - 43rd Annual Fungus Fair
Lawrence Hall of Science, 1 Centennial Drive, Berkeley.

Sunday, Dec. 9, 7 p.m. - MSSF Annual Holiday Dinner
Hall of Flowers - Golden Gate Park, 9th Ave. & Lincoln, S.F.
Contact Person Alvaro Carvajal at 415-317-1970

Thursday, Dec.13-Sunday, Dec. 16 - Annual NAMA Foray
Santa Cruz Mountains. *NOTE: Registration is full.*

Tuesday, January 8, 7 p.m. - MSSF Council Meeting

Saturday, January 12, 10 a.m. Quick Start Foray
Golden Gate Park, S.F. Beginner's Foray -All welcome.
Meet at South Drive & Sunset Blvd. Contact Paul Koski at
pkoski04@yahoo.com or 415-990-5358

Sunday, January 13, 10 a.m. - S.F. Watershed Foray
Western end of Edgewood Road, just past the exit to
Hillsborough along Hwy 280 south.
Contact Person Bill Freedman at 650-344-7774

Tuesday, January 15, 7 p.m. - MSSF General Meeting
Randall Museum, 199 Museum Way, San Francisco.
7 p.m. - Mushroom identification and refreshments.
8 p.m. - Speaker: Dr. Else C. Vellinga

NOTE: there is no MSSF General Meeting in December.

Check the MSSF online calendar at:
<http://www.mssf.org/calendar/index.php>
for full details, latest updates
and schedule changes.

MSSF MEMBERSHIP UPDATE ALERT!

MSSF members are slipping through the cracks!

Every month, I send out e-mails to all MSSF E-MEMBERS with the electronic version of the Mycena News attached. And every month, I get bounced back messages from our database that some of the e-mails are invalid. In addition, when members sign up for special events on the website like Mendocino Camp, Forays, Culinary/Holiday Dinners, you will not receive followup information about those events if your e-mail has changed.

To keep your membership current, you must keep your personal information up to date in your member profile. All you have to do is log on to WWW.MSSF.ORG, sign in under the "Members Only" area, enter your username and password, and then update your profile. If you forgot your password, just enter your e-mail address and it will remember you. Remember you may need to use the e-mail you originally registered with in order to log in.

Thank you for doing your part in keeping the system current, so that we can keep you informed!

--Curt Haney, President@MSSF.org

The submission deadline for the January 2013 issue of Mycena News is December 15th. Send all articles, calendar items and other information to: mycenanews@mssf.org.