



# MYCENA NEWS

Mycological Society of San Francisco

May, 2001, vol 51:5

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### Membership and Subscription Information

To join the MSSF and receive this newsletter, send a \$25 check, payable to MSSF (\$20 for seniors 65 and over and full time students), to MSSF Membership, 2750 Market St. Suite 103, San Francisco, CA 94114-1987, Attn: David Bartolotta. Please include contact information: home and/or work phone numbers and email addresses. New and renewal memberships will be current through December of 2001. To change your mailing address, please notify David. 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 \$32 payable to NAMA. Send it to David at the same address. For further information email David at david@bartolotta.com or call at 415.621.3166.

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## San Jose Family Camp Morel Foray

by Tom Sasaki, foray organizer

The MSSF morel foray held at the San Jose Family Camp on May 4-6 concluded successfully from all appearances. Despite the minimum and late distribution of publicity, 60 people attended and most found some morels, even the first-timers. A few even found a basketful. In Norm Andresen's group, I heard that 5-6 people who followed each other in the woods found as a group over 10 pounds of morels. A few of the other mushrooms found, in addition to morels and false morels, were adolescent boletes, a beautiful *Lentinus ponderosus*, *Calbovista subsculpta*, and *Amanita gemmata*.

Special thanks to the people who contributed to the fun weekend: to Norm Andresen, Terri Beausejour, Mark Lockaby, and Tina and Thomas Keller for leading groups on Saturday; to Mark, Tina, Thomas, Karen Moller and the others who contributed their finds for tasting; and to Lisa Bauer for preparing them in such succulent ways.

### A Personal View of the Morel Foray

As I headed up toward Yosemite on Friday afternoon, a new tire (don't ask what kind) on my car blew out. Needless to say, that involved some activities I didn't prepare for and delayed my arrival in camp. I was beginning to think that my fortune for the weekend was not going to be too favorable. But fortunately, dinner was being served from 7:30 to 8:30 and I arrived at 8:00, so I hoped my luck would change.

Due to my late arrival on Friday, I had to pick up my mushroom hunting permit at the Groveland Ranger Station on Saturday morning. Of course, when I got there, there was a line and only one ranger was at the station. She said if she had known that number of people was going to show,

she would have asked for help. So let it be known to those who might arrange for future forays: let the rangers know of the potential onslaught.

By the time I returned to camp, it was after the time for the group gathering and Andresen's and the Keller's groups had left. Fortunately, I caught Mark Lockaby's group as it was leaving the camp. I joined them and hunted with Ron Pastorino. Tom Borup, manager of the San Jose Family Camp, was also part of the group. He wanted to learn more about mushrooms so he asked if he could join us. The MSSF was the only group in camp, which allowed him a little more freedom. (After our experience, I think it made him a morel convert.)

Due to my previous luck, I wasn't being too optimistic. After finding three morels in the first half and hour, I was elated. Unfortunately, finding them during the rest of the morning was more difficult. As we were returning to our cars at the appointed lunch hour, I was surprised to see people looking around the area we had parked. Of course, we had been there the first thing in the morning. To our surprise, however, people were finding a few. Mark then came back and he showed us his big basket half full! He said he and the few people that were with him had run into a big batch and were picking but left hoping to bring the main group to the spot after lunch. After lunch Mark led us to the spot, but too bad—the area didn't pan out. In the afternoon before returning to camp, I thought I would pick up the *Gyromitra esculenta* across the road from where we parked. Everybody had gone to see them but left them. Since everybody had been there, I was surprised to find among them a small morel.

San Jose continued on page 2



## Editor's Rant

Imagine my surprise to find myself back behind the *Mycena News* editor's keyboard once again, almost three years to the day after I thought I had left it for good. The future is unknowable, and often carries you unbidden to places you've been before—unless, of course, it's that really dynamite bolete spot whose precise location has somehow slipped your mind.

In this iteration, I am wearing an emergency editor's cap; we had a breakdown in the volunteer chain that puts this newsletter out. Such is, alas, sometimes the way of all-volunteer organizations that must depend entirely on their own members for the work that keeps the organizations going. It's a happy fact that most of the time we get our work done and everything rumbles along like a well-oiled machine—or at least well-lubricated, judging by some of our dinners.

Whatever the case, I find myself with a lot of empty pages to fill in one day's time so you can get this newsletter in your hands sometime before the mushroom season completely dries up. I offer profuse thanks to the contributors for this edition of the *Mycena News* and to David Rust, my co-editor, who rounded up their articles, contributed a bit of his own, and gave everything a first pass to clean it up. I also offer apologies to this readership, who have been more than patient with the delays and omissions of this newsletter.

I'd like to depart the editor's desk with a request for volunteers to put out next year's *Mycena News*, which resumes publication in September when mushrooms and rain are once again on the horizon. It really isn't that hard if you keep up on it and don't mind kicking your computer from time to time. The duties are easily divisible into editorial (finding and editing contributions and regular features) and production (laying everything out in a form we can send to the printer). It works very well to have more than one person behind the desk dividing responsibilities. Other folks with experience putting out the newsletter can help in a pinch; all you have to do is ask.

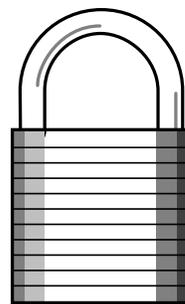
What editorship really requires is a commitment to giving the MSSF a full voice once a month. And, of course, a slightly crazy streak. To volunteer, call David Rust at 510.430.9353.

- Mike Boom

*San Jose continued from page 1*

That night at dinner, Lisa Bauer announced she was cooking up the donated true and false morels. During the cooking time, there was talk and warning about the rocket fuel compound in the mushroom. Lisa prepared the true morels two ways, sautéed and barbecued. Both ways were delicious. Thanks to those people who donated the morels, there were plenty to taste. The morels and Lisa's cooking provided the highlight of the evening.

*Tom Sasaki*



## Trapped Behind the Yellow Gate Or The Dangers of Morel Hunting in Early May

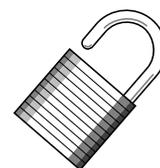
by Catherine Greer

Yes, we were all trapped behind that yellow gate. Two separate groups, four cars and ten people were all mistaken when we followed the beautifully-graded road past the yellow gate right into private property. A few hours later, we were all cursing. "These loggers don't have the right to put a gate on a public road! How dare they lock us in here nine miles from the nearest civilization!"

It took four hours of waiting, two calls to 911 and one to fire emergency to get us out. Enraged, I was sure to give this guy a piece of my mind (that is, after he unlocked the gate) when he politely pointed out to me that we weren't on the main road - that was 50 feet away. The main road was the one that the forest service doesn't have enough money to maintain, so it barely looks passable, but our rescuer went on to explain that he had just plowed it out last week, so he knew for certain we could get to the top of the mountain, at which point the snow got too deep and we would have to turn back. That is, if we were to go back to the spot on Sunday, since it was already 8:00 p.m. when we finally got out of there.

We did return the next day. I found nine morels, all on private land and not a single morel at the burn. We walked through the snow 1.5 miles to get there.

*Author's Note:* The devil is YELLOW. The forest service is GREEN and sometimes RED. Don't make the same mistake. If you go up to Devil's Gap (which is not recommended until late in May), be sure to take the left turn BEFORE the yellow gate at 8.7 miles, measured from the intersection just past the campgrounds.



## Presidential Preamble

Hello Friends:

This newsletter has been prepared by an emergency editorial team. I sincerely appreciate the efforts of David Rust and Michael Boom for pitching in on short notice to help produce it.

This is the last newsletter of the 2000/2001 season, and the issue in which we usually announce the slate of council nominees based on the recommendations of our nominating committee. This normally allows the general membership ample time to put forth additional candidates, if they so desire, prior to the opening of our annual meeting on the third Tuesday of May. Unfortunately, this publication will not be in your mailbox in time this year. Therefore, the council has voted unanimously, according to the procedures set forth in our bylaws, to call a special meeting of the membership for the purpose of electing the 2001/2002 council. The date of this meeting, the list of nominees and other details covering the election procedures are elaborated elsewhere in this newsletter.

It has been an honor to serve as your president this year. I have decided to take a break from council responsibilities for a time. The nominees for the incoming council are enthusiastic, insightful, and capable individuals. Please give them your full support during the election and throughout the coming year.

Thanks to all of you who have helped to make this year a success!

- Terri Beauséjour



## MSSF Summer Potluck Picnic

WHEN: Sunday, July 15th from noon until you decide to leave.

WHERE: Joaquin Miller Park in the Oakland Hills. Meet at the Redwood Glen picnic area at Sequoia Arena.

DIRECTIONS: Take Hwy 580 to Hwy 13. Take Hwy 13 north. Exit Joaquin Miller Rd. Drive East up the hill. Turn left on Skyline Blvd. Drive 1.2 miles up Skyline. Turn left at the sign for Sequoia Arena. Take an immediate left and follow the road to the parking area. There will be signs posted to help you find the picnic spot.

WHAT TO BRING:

- Anything you would like to grill.
- Your own drinks, plates, eating utensils, tablecloth, etc.
- A dish to share with the group (something with fresh morels would be welcome).
- Warm clothes are a good idea, as this area can be foggy.

This is an informal potluck. Bring what you need and something to share. There are picnic tables, a grill, and water.

SEE YOU THERE!

## Important Notice:

### Special June Meeting of the General Membership to Elect Officers

Our usual procedure is to announce the slate of incoming council nominees in the May newsletter, which should normally be delivered during the first few days of May. This is so that the general membership will have the opportunity to put forth additional candidates, if so desired, and to vote on the nominees at the May annual meeting. However, due to the unforeseen circumstances causing late delivery of this publication, it is necessary to call a special meeting in June this year for the purpose of electing officers. Here are the meeting details:

Purpose: Election of Officers for 2001/2002

Date: Tuesday, June 19<sup>th</sup> (3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of June)

Place: Randall Museum

Time: 7pm

Details: Nominees will be presented and officers elected. Reception to follow.

Members of the nominating committee this year are Norm Andresen, Sherry Carvajal and Mark Thomsen. I thank them for their time and thoughtfulness in preparing the following slate of nominees:

President: David Rust

Vice-president: Mark Lockaby

Secretary: Jeanne Campbell

Treasurer: Sherry Carvajal

Councilor: David Campbell

Councilor: Enrique Sanchez

Here is how the election process will work:

Additional nominations may be made in writing to the Secretary and will be considered valid if signed by five members and approved by the nominee and presented to the Secretary or President prior to the close of nominations at the beginning of the special June meeting.

Those officers and councilors who are uncontested shall be declared elected. If a quorum of the membership is present at the meeting (a quorum consisting of four percent of the members duly recorded five working days preceding the date notice of meeting is given), election shall be by a majority of the members present and voting. The new council will then be officially in place as of July 1<sup>st</sup>.

Any positions that are contested, if a quorum is not present, shall be voted on by written ballot, which shall be mailed to the members not later than July 1. In this case, election shall be by a majority of votes received by the Secretary not later than August 1, and the new council will be officially in place as of August 1st.

- Terri Beauséjour

## Bureaucracy Takes on Mushrooms

*an editorial*

May is the month for morels. This year, May has another meaning as well, as in “May I please pick some morels?”

The answer in every local U.S. Forest Service district is “Yes, but...,” followed by a response that almost always begins with “...first you need a permit...” and then degenerates into a confusing list of requirements that varies depending on who you’re talking to, what office you’re in, and what time of day it is.

In the Plumas National Forest District, you’re required to buy a \$10 personal-use mushroom permit that’s simply a commercial permit with “personal use” written in at the top and a list of conditions that, among other things, require you to wear your permit in plain sight at all times (it’s a big 8.5-by-11 inch paper) and prohibit you from camping in recreation areas while picking. When I asked the USFS employees present if the permit covered a whole family, they thought so but weren’t certain—and told me that I could keep the permit in the car and not carry it on my person. Other folks trying to get a personal permit at other Plumas stations reported restrictions such as not being able to collect on consecutive days. None of these restrictions appeared on the permit.

For your \$10, the Plumas district gives you a roughly photocopied and undetailed map of the boundaries of the Storrie fire, which burned through the area last year. The map neatly cuts off wherever the fire crossed over into the adjacent Lassen National Forest, which—of course—has its own permitting policies that the Plumas offices know nothing about.

Further south, near Yosemite National Park where MSSF members have searched for morels for years, the Stanislaus National Forest District isn’t just confused about permits this year—they want money for what you pick. Personal use permits there allow you five pounds for free, then charge you \$4/lb. for everything over that. Besides putting the USFS in the ludicrous position of a grocery checkout stand with produce scales, it also charges more per pound than some commercial makers get at buying stands during the height of the morel season!

Newspaper articles from Oregon and Montana, where commercial picking is more prevalent, report a slightly more rational approach to personal-use permitting: you don’t need a permit for personal-use morels. You do, however, have to cut each morel in half to show that it won’t be sold commercially. A whole morel in your possession means that you’re a commercial picker, so don’t plan on picking any stuffers for baking.

Why has the USFS suddenly trained their gaze on mushroom pickers, whom they ignored for decades, and turned what was a free yearly renewable gift from the forest into a heavily regulated cash resource? I can only offer my own conjecture: the USFS needs the money, and the districts have a mandate to find new revenue sources.

For years, the USFS has existed—in David Arora’s words—for three reasons: “Selling trees, selling trees, and selling trees.” To that, you can add “at a loss.” The USFS has traditionally existed as a subsidy for the U.S. logging

industry, building roads at into forests at USFS expense for commercial logging access, then charging far less for extracted timber than it cost to build the roads. The U.S. Congress, lobbied heavily by the logging industry, has given the USFS the money to keep it from going bankrupt.

Today’s USFS is, to its credit, trying to change its business model to one that manages its forest resources for recreation as well as timber. Unfortunately, if it doesn’t sell timber, Congress isn’t nearly as willing to give it the large sums of money they have in the past. The public has to pay directly instead, and the USFS is trying to figure out where those bucks are coming from in places where it doesn’t allow logging.

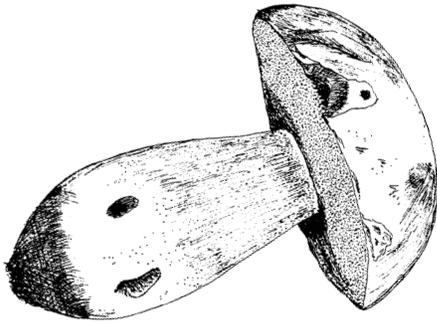
“Extractive use” of the forest is an extremely attractive target, one that the USFS understands, or thinks it does, because of its past support of timber extraction. The focus has turned now to quickly-renewable forest products such as berries, pine cones and, of course, mushrooms because they have such tremendous press coverage and presence in expensive gourmet settings. The USFS reckons that people make money extracting these resources, so they should pay for them. And unlike the timber industry, which has deep lobbying pockets, these folks should pay a handsome price for them, even if the USFS doesn’t have to lay out any money at all for their extraction.

Enter now recreational mushroom pickers, who might be commercial collectors in disguise trying to extract mushrooms without paying. What’s a district to do? Regulate. And maybe even try to make some more money while they’re at it.

The result is the current mish-mash of USFS mushroom collecting policies, which are still being formed, and are so arcane in many cases that even the USFS employees charged with implementing the policies don’t understand them fully. They lead to situations like this:

- Picking in a burn that straddles two different USFS districts requires two different permits with wildly different policies, only available in by applying for them in person at offices far distant from each other.
- Weekend recreational pickers coming from a distance find it impossible to buy permits because district offices aren’t open on the weekend, and permits must be picked up in person.
- Recreational pickers are charged more money per pound for mushrooms than they would have to pay someone to pick those mushrooms for them commercially.
- Recreational collecting is banned altogether from some promising mushroom zones.
- Pickers who would like to obey the regulations find it impossible to do so because available USFS employees don’t know what those regulations are or they aren’t qualified to sell permits.
- Law-abiding mushroom pickers learn to ignore USFS regulations because they aren’t clearly spelled out, make no sense when they are, and are often not fairly applied to mushroom picking.

*Bureaucracy continued on page 6.*



## The Foragers' Report

compiled by Patrick Hamilton

Seemed kind of quiet out there this past month. Not too many species for our tables sprout after the last chanterelles have gone away. At least not until late April and May. Our foragers reported less about the little they were finding up until just very recently, when some folks started talking about poking around. Looking down along Highway 120, around Evergreen Road near Yosemite, near Highway 4, up in the Trinity area, over in Pollock Pines and anywhere between the 3,000- and 4,500-foot elevations of the Central Sierra.

There was stuff going on for those who were curious and energetic (as usual). The last weekend of March, Lorrie Gallagher tried last year's Lewiston burn and was able to gather about 200 morels. Bob Pitas found about 20 morels in the Storrie burn in the Plumas National Forest off Caribou Road on April 5.

Larry Stickney (Mr. Morel to me) posted on our yahoogroups list the following report: "Just returned from a first morel trip of the season, on Highway 120. Only find was just off Smith Station Rd at 3100' elevation near Frank Hammer's former residence on Rock Hammer Rd. I found a handful of tiny ones in the old roadway before the creek crossing above the pot farm" (huh?). "Following my instructions, Ron Bosia collected 20-30 fine dark brown mature specimens (with live stock)" (huh?, again) "on the trail on the south side of the creek at a little flat between two dry waterways at the western edge of the national forest property line. Not that the particular area was dry; it was really quite damp and cool, well shaded. We found these before noon having left my house about 7 a.m.

"No more patches turned up for the next seven hours which included searches of Hell's Hollow, Moore Creek at 2900' (had three), the Coulterville Rd. (J132), Sawmill Mountain Rd. or the San Jose Camp at 2800' (totally closed right now). Ron saw six small Snow Mushrooms (*Gyromitra gigas*) and a *Verpa conica* at what appeared to be a new burn along Sawmill Mt. Rd. at 3900', and two likely *Amanita calyptroderma* in the San Jose Camp. Lots of puddles and mud on forest roads all over the area; almost no snow around, and what was there was tiny patches in the coldest places from the last snowfall a few days ago. Middle Fork of the Tuolumne River is rather quiet.

"Wednesday I expect an overnight hunt out of Dorrington, Highway 4, at Boards Crossing at 3900', a place well known to produce early fruitings of

morels. Should peek around Calaveras Big Trees State Park at 4700', but that may be too high an elevation right now." Hmm, I don't know, Larry. Isn't Calaveras Big Trees one of those places where we aren't supposed to hunt? Oh, excuse me—my bad—you said, "peek."

For those of you who do not know Board's Crossing let me reveal a well-known secret. It was one of the first places Larry and I hunted together. If you can figure out the maze of forest roads near Dorrington (get a forestry map) look for the river and the Crossing and go head southeast down the good dirt road (a sedan can make it) which takes you to a campground at the river. Look in and amongst the tables, tent areas and fire pits—anywhere where ground has been disturbed. Then peek (as Larry would say) around the flowerbeds of the rundown summer cabins nearby. Can be rewarding.

And, even better, they have logged that area for years and lots of morels can be found on road cut banks and in the slash (Arora and I had a great time there one day). I have found blondes, red mahoganies, dark brown, almost any color except the elusive greys or greens there.

Saturday and Sunday, April 14 and 15, Kathy Faircloth and I met up at the 4000' level along Highway 50 and the gathering was pretty darn good for naturals. Maybe a couple hundred total varying in size from large thimbles to 6" were found, some on grassy slopes near manzanita and black oaks, and then also under pines and Douglas firs. Some were in wide-open exposure and others were just the opposite. East side, west side, all around the mountain, but not a bunch in any one place.

Orange cups and dark purple cups were popping open in the variety of habitats and often, right nearby, would be some morels too. Morels—what else matters? Hey, how about *Boletus pinophilus*, Sierra spring boletes? Harder than rocks (well, gypsum, and a lot tastier) these red-capped and bulbous-stiped puppies are just now poking their heads above the ground for a look-see, groundhog style. Checking out stuff. Shadows of *Morchella*. Wondering if it isn't too early for them to appear and take away some of the thunder of morels. We found some, at a 4000' elevation, right in and amongst morels. Not a bad sight. One orange-red little guy with just the top of its 3" bald sunburned looking head sticking out of the pine duff was plucked and along with him came a whole nursery of babies stuck around his bottom. Fairly typical with these, but what was not (for us) was that over the next 12 hours we noticed that two of these babies grew to almost the size of their big twin. Whoa.

Earlier Saturday morning a friend called to say that some odd-appearing mushrooms were growing under one of his apple trees in Sebastopol. "Hmm," I hummed over the phone, and intoned that I would soon be there to assist. Right there under his ol' apple tree were some of the prettiest blonde beautiful morels I have ever seen, anywhere. A couple of them were over 8" tall with big fat stems and some were just coming up. So, on that day I was lucky enough to pick morels in a Sonoma county apple orchard and in the El Dorado National Forest. You can be fortunate, too—you just got to go to know. Or read about it here.

That's all for now folks. See you next year with more news from our foragers.

## Mz. Myco-Manners

Gentle Readers:

It is that time again when the rains stop and our best fruiting season is over. The next month or so will be devoted to picking morels (NOT morals). If you've kept tabs on the arsonists from last summer/fall you will do well. Odd how something good comes out of everything. After you've got your bounty dried and stored in sparkling jars on your shelves, don't forget to use them. The fungi are NOT museum pieces. Fungi are for consumption with your friends. Mz. Myco-Manners knows a nameless woman who is such a hateful cow that she shows off and boasts about her hoard—never sharing with anyone. During the next earthquake she'll probably get clunked on her head from all the falling jars. I dare say that she deserves it.

Throughout the summer and early fall, don't forget to look at the fog-drip areas. You will find some *Lepiota* and *Agaricus* species, and have fresh 'shrooms to add to the dried and re-constituted ones collected during the late fall/winter/spring season.

Mz. Myco-Manners suggests that you fully prepare yourself for the next fruiting season. She urges you to go to the library, and borrow a book of Magic Tricks. Perfecting sleight-of-hand is a valuable tool for gathering

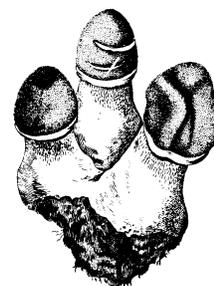
a bounty from friends' baskets. If you sew, or have a friend who does, put a dozen or so large pockets on the inside of your coat. The "lifted" mushrooms won't be evident to your friends, since they don't show up in *your* basket. Oh, my fertile mind just tickles me.

Remember that this will be the last *Mycena News* of the season. Mz. Myco-Manners wants to thank our editor, Beth Sampson, for all of her hard work during this past year. When you see any of the volunteers for the MSSF, please take a moment to thank them. They make this club the joy that it is. A nice gesture would be to give the volunteers half of all your mushrooms. I know you will consider this.

Mz. Myco-Manners must be on her way. Please send me some questions to answer. They will appear in the September 2001 issue. I'm always here to guide you. With that I bid you farewell until next season.

*Sincerely yours,*

*Mz. Myco-Manners*



*Bureaucracy continued from page 6.*

Is the problem fixable? I don't know. The current U.S. administration seems bent on returning the USFS to its old scorched-earth logging model, but I don't think those plans include dropping restrictions on other extractive use by groups without deep lobbying pockets. I think the best we can do is to work with district foresters to help draw up reasonable policies as they flail around trying to find something that works. We might also try to apply pressure on our legislators to drop USFS fees for recreational use of the forest, especially when—as in the case of mushrooming—they require no USFS expense.

The MSSF urgently needs to resurrect its Collection Policy committee to help influence local USFS district policies while they're still being formed. And the North American Mycological Association (NAMA) should abandon its complete passivity regarding collection policy and attempt to work with the USFS at a national policy level to implement sane collecting requirements if requirements there must be.

Mushrooms are nature's gift to us all, a gentle offering of the forest that lifts us out of a world where everything is a commodity to be bought and sold. Let's hope we can help shape a USFS mushroom collection policy that will help us keep that feeling intact.

*- Mike Boom*

### Fungal Resources

*by David Rust*

If you haven't already subscribed, check out *Mushroom, The Journal of Wild Mushrooming*, an excellent quarterly magazine with articles by such luminaries as Paul Stamets, Gary Lincoff, Steve Trudell, and other nationally known mycologists. Send a check for \$19 for one year or \$49 for three years to:

*Mushroom, the Journal of Wild Mushrooming*  
861 Harold St.  
Moscow, ID 83843

You love beautiful pictures of mushrooms? **Taylor Lockwood** has almost completed his new mushroom photography book. Until it is available, he has a fabulous website with pictures from around the world, including Africa, Australia and New Zealand, India, Indonesia, Scotland to Russia, and the Amazon. Check it out at: <http://www.fungiphoto.com>.

Webmaster **Mike Wood** has added a new area to **MykoWeb** called "Systematic Resources," a page of taxonomic and nomenclatural resources for the higher fungi, intended to help amateur mycologists go beyond the field guide in their study of identification and classification. Mike is going to chair a new Systematics committee for the MSSF, which will enhance the scientific mission of the Society through advanced identification workshops, publication of a species catalog, and possible mycobiotic projects in the Bay Area. (A mycobiota is a fungal inventory of the species in an area under study.) To learn more about the committee, contact Mike at [mwood@mykoweb.com](mailto:mwood@mykoweb.com).

## Culinary Report

The Culinary Group held its May dinner Monday evening May the 7th. This one was notable for both the high quality and great quantity of foods, and for the fact that it was our last gathering at the Hall of Flowers for the foreseeable future. But more on that later.

The theme was “Mexican Fiesta Feast” (siete de Mayo?), and mushrooms found their way into several dishes. Among the many excellent appetizers I recall two as being particularly tasty and easy to prepare. One was baked polenta with morels and pea sauce, done by the Campbells. The other was a surprise treat of sautéed fresh *Grifola frondosa*—otherwise known as “hen of the woods,” provided and prepared by John Garrone. I think this was the first time I had tried this fungus, and it was delicious. I’m told it is common in the eastern US and rare around here, so I hope all of you who were present had a chance to sample it. (And maybe someone found out where John got these.)

These treats were accompanied by a margarita-style punch done by Dave Surballe. Soon to follow were a large mixed green salad from Toby Garrone, huitlacoche dip and hot tortillas from Bill and Carol Hellums. Then something I never thought I’d see at one of these gatherings—an appetizer of fresh abalone, in a mild picante sauce (mild picante sauce? did I really say that?), from Carol Reed. Tender, tasty, and in enough quantity for everyone to enjoy, this was worth the price of admission for the whole year combined!

Then Dave Eichorn said, “I hope you don’t mind, this isn’t on the menu, it’s some menudo I thought I’d make.” Damn good menudo too! Quite a kick to it and a good hearty flavor, with the requisite ah—cow ingredients—very tender, not chewy as is often the case.

Next was Dave Bell’s smoky black beans, loaded with smoky chipotle flavor. Then Anna Uznanska brought out her guacamole & chips.

Are we stuffed yet? Of course! But who cares, because here comes Al Carvajal with the main course—roasted sea bass with homemade tomatillo salsa (gringo or picante), anaheim chiles, and morels from Mark Lockaby. This was served along with Spanish rice from Tom Sasaki. Some time after all of that there was a very good flan from Monique Carment and Honoria Sarmiento, and Remo’s killer coffee.

Now, about June. There will not be a dinner this June. The Hall of Flowers is soon to be closed for repairs or maintenance or both. I forget for how long they say, but you can be sure it will be for longer than whatever they say. So—if you have any ideas or suggestions as to somewhere for us to move to for the next year or so, please send them along to the culinary chair. This could be an opportunity for you East Bay types to shift the dinner to your neck of the woods. (Is there a “neck of the woods” fungus?)

Some of you have no doubt noticed that I have not been present for about half of this seasons’ dinners. My various orchestral commitments have kept me from being more hands-on with these dinners, so I have decided to step down—while I still have some good-nature left. So by popular vote (no recounts!) your new culinary leader is the one and only Al Carvajal.

My sources tell me that Al and his cabinet of advisors may have ideas about those of you who come to the dinners regularly (which is great) but who never cook or help with prep (not so great). You know who you are, and you may want to go buy an apron before the next dinner!

Now go do a rain dance and get those morels!

BC out...

- Bennie Cottone

## May Guest Speaker: Dr. Thomas J. Volk

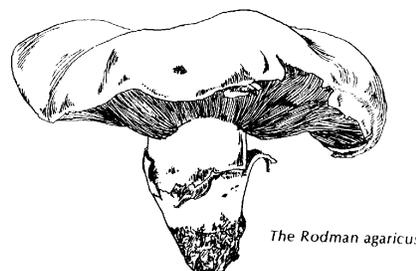
Our guest speaker for the May general meeting will be Dr. Thomas J. Volk, associate professor (tenured) and director of graduate studies in the department of biology at the University of Wisconsin, La Crosse. Dr. Volk presented his Ph.D. dissertation in 1988 on the life cycle of the genus *Morchella*. (His first morel hunt was in 1983 and was quite a success!)

Dr. Volk is also an honorary fellow in the University of Wisconsin-Madison department of botany. Besides extensive ongoing work with *Armillaria* and other wood-inhabiting fungi, he has created an excellent web page describing the life cycle of the morel, which includes a paper originally published in *McIlvainea*. He also continues to collaborate with CFMR personnel and Dr. Karen Wikler on a project involving biodiversity of wood decay fungi of Israeli forests.

In addition to his professorial work, ongoing research and numerous publications, Dr. Volk is very active with both the Wisconsin and Minnesota Mycological Societies. He has served as guest mycologist on numerous mycological society forays, and will serve as chief mycologist for the 2001 NAMA foray hosted by the Minnesota Mycological Society.

The activities and accomplishments of this eminent mycologist are remarkable. You can see for yourself by visiting his remarkable website, for which he has received many honors and awards, including a “Cool Images Site” award in the February 5, 1999 issue of *Science Magazine* by the American Association for the Advancement of Science. The URL is: <http://www.wisc.edu/botany/fungi/volkmyco.html>.

Dr. Volk will speak on the topic of morels (it is May, after all). Please join us at the general meeting on Tuesday, May 15 at the Randall Museum. The doors open at 7:00 p.m., and the meeting begins at 8:00 p.m.



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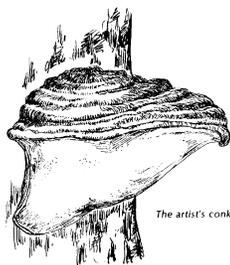


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## Calendar

**Tuesday, May 15: General Meeting at the Randall Junior Museum in San Francisco.** Doors open at 7:00 pm for mushroom ID and book sales; meeting proper begins at 8:00 pm. The speaker this month is Dr. Tom Volk.

**Friday, June 1: Membership information changes due** for inclusion in the new MSSF membership roster, due for publication in mid-June. If you have address, phone, or email updates, contact membership chair David Bartolotta. See membership details on page 1.



**Sunday–Friday, June 10–15: Fungi of the Sierra Nevada Class** at the SFSU field campus in Yuba Pass in the Sierras. This is an official San Francisco State University class taught by MSSF scientific adviser Dr. Dennis Desjardin. Registration, room, and board comes to just a little over \$330. For details, call Jim Steele at 415.338.1571.

**Tuesday, June 19: Special meeting to elect officers for the coming year.** No other business concluded at this meeting, but it is followed by a general reception. 7:00 pm, Randall Junior Museum. See page 3 for details.

**Sunday, July 15: Summer Potluck Picnic** in Joaquin Miller Park, Oakland. See page 3 for details.

**Tuesday, September 18: 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 will be announced in the next issue of the Mycena News.

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>