



January 15  
General Meeting Speaker



## Else Vellinga

*"From Inventories to a Mycoflora for North America  
—Getting to Know California Mushrooms"*

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 were honored to have her as the author of last month's MycoDigest column.

This month, she'll be talking about the mushroom inventorying surveys she's been doing at Yosemite National Park and Pt. Reyes National Seashore and the need to have resources for identifying Californian and North American mushroom species.

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:

### Timeless Gems from Dr. Bill Freedman

#### When It's "Sleepy Grass" Time in the Rockies

(Reprinted from *Mycena News*, March 1993)

In the December 1992 issue of *Discovery* magazine, Keith Clay, an Indiana University Biologist, reports that a mold which grows on *Stipa robusta*, a native Rocky Mountain grass, can cause grazing animals to fall into a stupor for up to a week! Horses and cattle have learned to avoid the grass, so *Stipa robusta* is often one of the few edible plants that can be found standing erect and proud after all other greenery has been grazed.

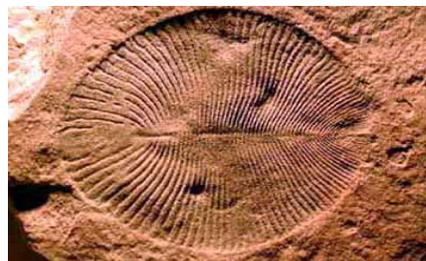


Sleepy Grass (*Stipa robusta*) Photo: Patrick Alexander

The Department of Agriculture has identified the responsible fungus as a species of *Acremonium* and the toxin it produces as lysergic acid amide. The chemical is a close relative of lysergic acid diethylamide (LSD), produced by the mold *Claviceps purpurea*, which grows on cereal grasses. Central American Indians are reported to quiet their infants by feeding them a single infested grass seed. In the 1950s, when drug companies interested in developing a new sleeping medicine learned how closely the toxin resembled LSD, they dropped it because of the problems associated with LSD. When I hike, I frequently chew on grass stalks to keep my mouth moist. From now on I'll have to choose my grass more carefully.

### Precambrian 565 Million Year Old Fossils Identified as Jellyfish May Actually Be Lichens

(Reprinted from *Mycena News*, November 1995)



Dickinsonia sp. (Ediacara Hills, Australia)

Fossil artifacts found in rocks world-wide have been interpreted as the remains of Ediacara jellyfish. University of Oregon Paleobiologist, Gregory Retallack, has been studying such findings and now suggests that the fossils were more likely to have been lichens than jelly fish.

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## PRESIDENT'S POST

Greetings MSSF Members!

Happy New Year and a reminder that membership dues for most of us are due by December 31st—depending on your membership plan. Renewals are sent out automatically by our membership chair Nathan Heilman, if you have any questions you can contact him at [Membership@mssf.org](mailto:Membership@mssf.org)

In my December post I was optimistic that the winter rains would continue and that we would have a good mushrooming season in Northern California. Looks like I was right on the rain and I am still optimistic for a good season of foraging in the months to come.

The 43rd Annual Fungus Fair in December at the Lawrence Hall of Science was a success! This was mainly due to the large number of volunteers who donated their time, some for all three days of the fair. I want to especially thank J.R. Blair for organizing the fungus fair again this year. I also want to thank all council members and every leader and volunteer who donated their time and expertise to make the fungus fair a success again this year. This was the fourth year that the fungus fair has been held at the Lawrence Hall of Science. I would like to see the fungus fair returned to the Oakland Museum of California next year, or possibly to the San Francisco County Fair Building. However, returning the fungus fair to San Francisco would require greater organization and more volunteers from the MSSF membership. The other two locations provide both economic and personnel support in assisting us with the fungus fair.

The mushroom t-shirt quilt raffle concluded on Sunday at the fungus fair and was a total success with over \$1300.00 in ticket sales. This easily paid for the making of the two quilts. Thank you, MSSF members, for your donation of t-shirts which went into making the two quilts. One quilt will be maintained for display at future fungus fairs and special events. The winner of the quilt raffle was Deda Devine, a new e-member in the MSSF.

The MSSF fungus fair shirts this year with the “9-Edibles” designed by Lucy Martin were very popular. Many sizes sold out on Saturday at the fungus fair, so we have decided to order more if there is enough interest from MSSF members. A minimum of 48 shirts is required for a re-order; please see the article in this issue of the *Mycena News* for information on placing your order for a shirt.

Another annual event held in December was the MSSF Holiday Dinner. This year it returned to the Hall of Flowers in Golden Gate Park. I want to thank the dinner organizer, Al Carvajal and his crew of paid and volunteer staff who supplied the 80-plus attendees with a gala fungal feast. [See this month's Culinary Corner for more on this event. -Ed.]

**NOTE: Due to a scheduling conflict, the January general meeting at the Randall Museum will be held downstairs in the Buckley Room from 7 to 10 p.m., instead of in the theatre.**

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

--Curt Haney, [President@mssf.org](mailto:President@mssf.org)

## CULINARY CORNER

Mushrooms, mushrooms, mushrooms—they finally arrived, making December a grand month for the hunt and for the table. One place to enjoy mushrooms is at the MSSF Fungus Fair's Soup Kitchen. This year was no exception. Volunteers made and served unique, delicious soups to fairgoers. I've even heard it said that a major reason some attend the fair is to visit the soup kitchen, often more than once.

Under the inspired and capable leadership of David Eichorn, volunteer cooks created huge pots of one-of-a-kind soups, their personal favorites, and brought them to the fair. I talked with David about getting volunteers for this big project. “Somehow I draw them to me,” he said.

And the volunteers came through. “We made sure they all had 12-quart pots, chicken stock, etc. Monterey Market donated 60 pounds of mushrooms and Far West Fungi donated also. Acme donated 200 loaves of their very good bread and thanks go to Stephanie Wright for arranging pickup. Permits had to be gotten as well as basic supplies such as butter and bowls, napkins, utensils, etc.”

David and his coordinators Peggy and Dave Manuel helped the cooks, servers Remo Arancio, Eric Multhaup, Vicki Frankel and Jeanette Larson serve about 600(!) bowls of soup to eager fair goers, with some of us other volunteers popping in for tastes.

The soup kitchen also had to be cleaned and prepared for the next day—another job done by MSSF volunteers. Thirteen soup chefs contributed. Jeanette Larson, George Collier, Andy Still, Vicki Frankel, Bill Hellums, Eric Multhaup, Seth Peterson, Anna Danich, Loraine Berry, Dave Manuel, Pascal Pelous and Pat George all made huge pots of their favorite soups, full of all kinds of mushrooms. There were soups with grains, cream of mushroom soups—some made with morels or chanterelles—Thai soups, soup with ham hock, beans and candy caps, vegan vegetable soup and others I forgot to write down. Making 12 or more quarts of artisan soup is not a simple task, what with the slicing, chopping, math for measuring, and tasting, tasting, tasting during the preparation.

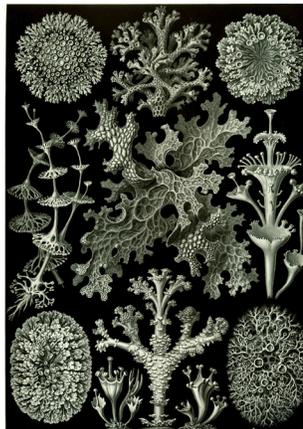
The soup kitchen was located near the culinary demonstrations, the auditorium and the big room full of fresh mushroom displays—very convenient for the big crowds we had this year. And wonderful on rainy days like we had this year.

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## Mycodigest continued

He has been unable to find evidence of organs such as mouths, digestive or circulatory systems, or anuses to support the claim that they belonged in the animal kingdom. Retallack has carried out experiments to study how early organisms might have responded to the extreme compression encountered as they were squeezed for 565 millions years. Soft, jelly-like animals would not have been able to produce the impressions found in the rocks he has examined.

In the Fall 1994 issue of *Paleobiology*, he announced his conclusion that tissues of organisms containing chitin could have persisted in the forms identified as Ediacara. Jellyfish could not. Chitin is the typical skeletal supporting compound found in the mycelial walls of fungi “which we know to be one of the two basic organisms living together as a lichen. Fungal tissues symbiotically surround and protect algae which produce sugars and other substances to nourish the surrounding fungus. Supporting evidence comes from fossils found in Namibia and China which have preserved microscopic tubular structures similar to filaments found in modern lichens.” Retallack refers to the late Precambrian period as the “Age of Lichens”. He pictures a “world dominated by lichens and microbial ecosystems that have since ceded most of their territory to the wildly successful plant kingdom.”



“Lichenes” from Ernst Haeckel’s *Artforms of Nature*, 1904

Mycological theorists have previously proposed that the first energy stable life forms capable of photosynthesis to succeed in surviving on terrestrial earth were lichens. If lichens already existed in the sea, they may have been prepared to survive on dry land during droughts because of the protection the fungus afforded the algal forms from desiccation, toxic chemicals, the rigors of wind and intensive sun exposure. Retallack gives us more arguments to support the concept that lichens were capable of evolving into the first forms of life to leave the oceans and become ‘landlubbers’. [Note: Retallack’s hypothesis on the nature of Ediacaran fossils is not universally accepted and is fiercely debated among paleontologists to this day. -Ed.]

## Poisoning with Amanita Ocreata One of the Risks of Spring Wild Mushroom Picking



*Amanita ocreata* Peck under coastal live oak near Capitola, CA. Photo: Ryane Snow

(Reprinted from Mycena News, May 1996)

Near Medford, Oregon on April 16th, a man and his wife collected the first *Amanita ocreata* they had ever seen growing in their back lawn near an oak tree. They ate several caps.

These people had eaten and fed wild mushrooms to their children for years without ever looking at a field guide. Lethal mushrooms are not common there. This is “Mushroom Roulette”. They’ve been lucky.



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Past issues of *Mycena News* can be read online at [www.mssf.org](http://www.mssf.org)

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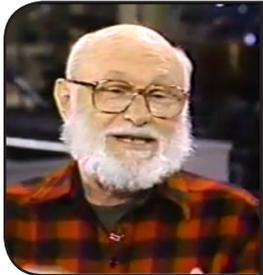
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## Mycodigest continued

Both were hospitalized, treated supportively and recovered. Doctors considered the man for liver replacement on the 2nd hospital day, but his liver tests had improved, the following day. He was discharged on the 7th day and his wife the day after. She was semi coherent 3 days after hospitalization and had prolonged abdominal distention and diarrhea, but recovered with therapy.

We may be able to generalize a bit after the series of poisonings we have reviewed in the recent past. For one thing, it looks as if patients who are alive on the 5th or 6th day will recover without specific treatment. This explains why scarring or cirrhosis of the liver does not occur later. Not enough time occurs for such changes to take place. Second, we must somehow make stronger efforts to get doctors to be more suspicious of the possibility of mushroom poisoning because treatment options are greater if begun within the first 48 hours.

Let us hope that this heralds the end of a very busy toxicology season. And be careful.



Dr. Bill Freedman has been an MSSF member since 1968 and has been the Toxicology Committee Chairperson for well over 20 years. He's relentless in keeping up with the latest in poisonings, treatments, *Amanita phalloides* fruitings, and anything else related to mushroom toxicity. Through Bill, MSSF continues to enjoy a longstanding relationship with the California Poison Control System and has been our liaison with San Mateo County Parks regarding collecting mushrooms on their land for our Fungus Fair. Bill is a former society president, current council member and occasional contributor to Mycena News. A steady and energetic volunteer, Bill is one of our most well-received speakers and educators and has even appeared on the David Letterman Show.

## Girl Scout Troop Donates to MSSF Scholarship Fund!

Girl Scout troop #31169, (Juniors) based in San Leandro, recently made a donation to the MSSF scholarship fund. Here is what they had to say:

*Last spring my Girl Scout troop raised money through the sale of Girl Scout cookies and voted to donate a share of their earnings to charity. They voted to help Haiti (and donated to the Red Cross), and to support letterboxing in the U.S. (and donated to Letterboxing U.S.A.). And, thanks to my 11-year old daughter Cora Armstrong, who has been a huge fan of mycology for a couple of years now, we have enclosed herewith a donation to the MSSF scholarship fund.*



The Troop



Cora with shelf fungi



Shelf fungi that started her interest in mycology



Cora in Halloween costume

*Enclosed is a donation in the amount of \$20.00 of hard earned cookie sales money for your scholarship fund to help support a mycology student planning on possibly making the study of fungi a career. Thank you to the entire organization for putting together the annual Fungus Fair at the Lawrence Hall of Science. It is such a gift to our community. We look forward to this event each and every year, and it has broadened our appreciation of mushrooms (and lichen!) with each visit. Best Wishes, Madeleine Budnick, Leader, Troop #31169*

Madeleine suggested we place a Pay-Pal button on the MSSF website homepage so that others interested in donating to our scholarship fund can easily do so. With the help of our webmaster, Dave Bell, and our treasurer, Henry Shaw, it is now a reality. Thank you girls.

## START THE NEW YEAR WITH THE BEGINNER'S FORAY INTO THE S.F. WATERSHED SUNDAY, JANUARY 13TH, 2013

For many years now, beginners have joined Bill and Louise Freedman in discovering the fungi which the San Francisco Water Department has arranged for us in the S. F. Watershed. We have found about 155 varieties so far. It is an eye-opening way to start the new year. We meet at the western end of Edgewood Road just past the exit to Hillsborough along Route 280 going south. The end is on Canada Road. Park where the bicyclists park. We join at 10:00 a.m. and usually leave by 12:30 p.m. Space is limited, so call Bill at 650-344-774 or [loufreed650@yahoo.com](mailto:loufreed650@yahoo.com) for a reservation. The foray is for members only. It may be wet underfoot; wear proper shoes. This is a study rather than a collecting trip. The Water Department doesn't supply water, so bring your own. Heavy rain cancels.

## Culinary Corner continued

Here's a soup that was a big favorite this year. Thank you, Pascal, for your recipe.

### Thai Mushroom Soup

4 lemongrass stalks, roots trimmed	1 generous cup of mushrooms (I used pioppinis, oysters, shiitake and chanterelles). Separate clusters and halve if large
2 14-oz. cans coconut milk	¼ cup lime juice
2 cups chicken stock	3 tablespoons Thai fish sauce
1 (1 inch) piece fresh galangal, peeled and sliced 1/8"	1 teaspoon of Mae Ploy red chili paste and/or dry chili flakes
10 black peppercorns, crushed	1 green onion, chopped
10 kaffir leaves plus the zest from one kaffir lime	2 tablespoons chopped fresh cilantro
8 oz. skinless, boneless chicken breast cut into thin strips	salt

Cut the lemongrass stalks into 2 inch pieces. Bruise the pieces of stalk with the flat edge of a knife or a kitchen hammer.

Into a 1 square foot piece of cheesecloth put the lemongrass, galangal, peppercorns and the kaffir lime then make tight knots with the opposite corners of the cheesecloth.

Mix the Mae Ploy paste with the coconut milk and add to the chicken stock in a large pan over medium heat. Bring to a boil then add the cheesecloth with the lemongrass, galangal, peppercorns and lime. Reduce the heat to low and simmer gently for 15 minutes.

Over medium heat, add the chicken and mushrooms. Simmer gently, stirring occasionally, until the chicken is cooked, about 10 minutes. Remove the cheesecloth with its contents.

Stir in the lime juice and fish sauce; season to taste with salt; ladle into warm bowls and serve garnished with chopped onions and cilantro.

I can't let you go until I write a bit about the MSSF Holiday Dinner. It was grand. The S.F. County Fair Building (Hall of Flowers) was decorated nicely for the season and set up by Curt Haney and Carol Reed and other volunteers. We even had live, mellow music with Vicki Frankel and her group.

We began with Norm Andresen's eggnog, warming and cheerful and a bit potent. We moved on to the groaning long table of appetizers made by members of the Culinary Group. We had pates, terrines, pizzas and tarts, mostly made with mushrooms.

There were pickled mushrooms and even home prepared olives. After a bit of a rest for the tummy, our chef, Sunita Dunn, rallied us to come for dinner.

With our menu centered on beef fillet with morel and chestnut sauce, a wild mushroom strudel for our vegetarians, we ate and ate and ate. We had a glorious miso soup with mushrooms and a salad with shaved porcini and other goodies, then on to the main and sides. Along with our mains we had roasted fingerling potatoes with yellow foot mushrooms and truffle oil, creamed spinach with black trumpets and bread from Tartine with truffle butter. Miraculously, we were able to get ourselves over to the dessert table for candy cap cheesecake with berry sauce. And coffee. It was a remarkable feast. I am so very gratified that I attended. How could anyone miss this? I asked myself.

So, here's to a vibrant, joyous New Year filled, above all, with good will and peace on earth.

See you in woods or at MSSF events.—Pat



**2012 Medocino Woodlands Foray: A Parting Shot**  
Folks in the Mendocino Woodlands kitchen during MycoMendoMondo, late Saturday night, cooking into the wee hours. Photo: Seth Peterson.

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

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## MSSF Calendar January

**Monday, January 7, 7 p.m. - Culinary Group Dinner**  
S. F. County Fair Bldg, Golden Gate Pk, 9th & Lincoln, S.F.  
A pork extravaganza with featuring pork roast with boletes, bacon, and currants. Be sure to bring your tableware and a beverage. The SFCFB does not provide dishes, etc. The next dinner is February 4.

**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](mailto: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.  
**NOTE: Meeting is downstairs in the Buckley Room**  
7 p.m. - Mushroom identification and refreshments.  
8 p.m. - Speaker: Dr. Else C. Vellinga

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

## MSSF Fungus Fair T-Shirt Re-Order!

The "9 Edibles" t-shirts sold this year at the 43rd annual fungus fair were designed by artist Lucy Martin and were very popular with MSSF members. So much so, that we have decided to place a re-order if there is enough interest to meet the minimum re-order requirement of 48 shirts (any sizes and styles). To keep the cost down, shirts ordered will be available for pick-up at a general meeting at the Randall Museum, or by special arrangement. Orders can also be mailed for an additional fee.

To place your order, go to the MSSF website homepage at [www.mssf.org](http://www.mssf.org) and click on "STORE" then make your selection and payment through PayPal. You can also go to "STORE" in the **Members Only** area to place an order. Or you can mail a check to: MSSF, c/o Curt Haney, 150 Sadowa St., San Francisco, CA 94112. If you want your shirts mailed, you must place your order by check. Send an additional \$10.00 to cover shipping and handling. These are the styles and sizes of T-shirts and sweat shirts available:

Men-short sleeve:	S,M,L,XL,2XL	\$18.00
Men-long sleeve:	S,M,L,XL,2XL	\$22.00
Ladies-short sleeve:	S,M,L,XL	\$18.00
Youth-short sleeve:	S,M,L,XL	\$18.00
Crew, long sleeve sweat shirt:	S,M,L,XL,2XL	\$28.00

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