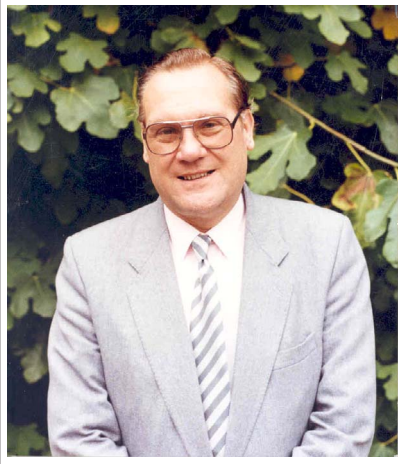


**Speaker for
November 16
MSSF Meeting**



Professor Bruce Ing

**Myxomycetes
of North America**

Professor Bruce Ing was born in London and educated at the Universities of Cambridge, St Andrews and Liverpool. He has been studying myxomycetes for 47 years and has published nearly 200 articles, covering all continents, including a detailed handbook of the species found in the British Isles. He has collected in over 30 countries in three continents. He is currently Professor of Environmental Biology at University College, Chester and combines his interests in ecology, conservation and mycology.

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Mycena News

The Mycological Society of San Francisco November, 2004, vol 55:11

Psst.... Let's talk smut today

Else C. Vellinga

Smut — 1. A fungous disease affecting various plants, esp. cereals, which are spoiled by the grain being wholly or partly converted into a blackish powder; also, one or other of the fungi (species of *Ustilagineæ*) causing the disease. 2. A black mark or stain; a smudge. 3. Bad, soft, earthy coal. 4. Soot or sooty matter. 5. Indecent or obscene language. (Oxford English Dictionary, online version)

Let's talk infectious diseases, let's talk huitlacoche, and blisters of black spores, and sex, sure sex is involved as well.

Ah yes, huitlacoche is a smut, by some considered a pest, by many others a delicacy; it is also a perfect lab 'animal' and its complete genome has been sequenced.

Common smut, Corn or Boil smut, huitlacoche and cuitlacoche, and *Ustilago maydis* in Latin, different names for the same thing, a fungus that grows on corn. Infected corn ears develop huge galls, part fungus, part plant, which eventually burst open and release the dark dusty spores. Less conspicuous is the presence of fungus on other parts of the plant, but it certainly is not restricted to the cobs.

Corn is not the only smut-infested plant valued by gourmets; tender young shoots of wild rice with the smut *Yenia (Ustilago) esculenta* are a much-prized delicacy in China. However, there is little good (from a human perspective) about most of the c. 1450 species of smut that parasitize around 4100 species of plants. Only a few tree and shrub species are prone to smut infections, and the same is true for ferns. Furthermore, the huge family of orchids is completely free of smut. However, where smut is at home is among sedges and grasses (corn, barley, wheat, and a whole array of non-cereals). We see it next to sidewalks here in Berkeley looking like dark powdery flower stalks in the Bermuda grass (see figure on page 4).

There is the usual variation in host specificity – the corn smut only occurs on corn (*Zea mays*), while others can be found on a wide array of plants. *Ustilago hordei* for instance infects not only barley as the name indicates, but a slew of other grasses. Water plants, like arrowleaf and water lily, have their own special fungal communities. Here it is the environment that shapes the species composition, rather than the identity of the host plants. There is even one species of smut or smut-like thing, *Malassezia furfur*, that is a human pathogen, and causes a skin rash.

Smuts can cause havoc in agricultural crops, especially on cereals like wheat, with losses in yield and in money. Karnal bunt is an example: when this Asian disease turned up

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MycoDigest is a section of the Mycena News dedicated to the scientific review of recent Mycological Information.

MSSF Discussion Group on Yahoo Groups

The MSSF email discussion group facilitated through Yahoo Groups is a great way to keep in contact with other members and is one of the primary ways in which members keep up on news about the Society. The list features often-intriguing discussion of fungal-related topics, tips about current fungal activity, and up-to-the-minute news about MSSF functions.

The list is available in both individual-message and digest formats. Additionally, you can also subscribe to the group in "Special Notices" mode. That means that if you wish to receive only official announcements from the society and not email traffic from other members, you can subscribe using this method. (Subscribers to the list in regular and digest formats also, of course, receive official announcements in addition to posts from other members.)

To sign up, go to:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/mssf/>

Follow the link that says "Join This Group". (You will need to sign up for a free Yahoo Groups membership if you do not have one already.)

Calling All California Mushroomers!

The first annual All California Club Foray (ACCF) will take place the weekend of February 4-6, 2005, at the Albion Field Station in Mendocino County. This will be a great opportunity to get to know your fellow mushroomers from all over our great state.

No matter what your interests or abilities, this foray will have something for you. There will be guided field trips to prime, local mushroom habitats, NAMA educational videos, slide shows and lectures by California mushroomers, mushroom ID, and fabulous food, catered by the inimitable Debbie Dawson.

Lodging is in comfortable, heated cabins, with full bathroom/shower facilities close-by. The cost is only \$100/person, and includes lodging, activities and all meals from Friday dinner thru Sunday lunch. To reserve your space, send a check, made out to Debbie Viess, to: Debbie Viess, 328 Marlow Dr. Oakland, CA 94605. Please include your e-mail address and mention ACCF.

This year's event is hosted by the Mycological Society of San Francisco. For more information, contact Debbie at amanitarita@yahoo.com or David Rust at incredulis@yahoo.com, or you can reach both by phone at 510.430.9353.

David Arora's Mendocino Mushroom Foray: Thanksgiving Weekend, Friday Nov. 26-Sunday Nov. 28

David Arora, author of *Mushrooms Demystified*, is once again offering his Thanksgiving weekend mushroom foray at Albion on the Mendocino coast. The foray begins Friday afternoon, November 28, with a mushroom hunt, and runs through noon Sunday. Back by popular demand are foraging Canadian chefs Jill Milton and Brigid Weiler (co-authors of *Recipes from Garden, Sea, & Bush*); they will prepare meals including home-made bread, and as always there will be other chefs and experienced mushroom hunters on hand to contribute their help and expertise to what is always a fun and fungus-filled weekend.

Scheduled activities include mushroom hunts, beginning and intermediate identification workshops on local mushrooms, cooking demonstrations, a potluck fungus feast, and glimpses of Arora's ethnomycological research in various lands.

The cost is \$150 per person including lodging (in cabins) and most meals. To register, or for more information, please contact Debbie Viess at (510) 430-9353 (days or eves 7-9 pm) or amanitarita@yahoo.com or 328 Marlow Dr., Oakland CA, 94605.

All experience levels are welcome, including beginners. When you register, please be sure to include an e-mail address if you have one. Space is limited, so early registration is advised!

Society Officers

President: Mark Lockaby	(510) 412-9964
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The Foragers' Report

November 2004

Patrick Hamilton

Due to a current right hand impairment that makes typing very difficult, the column this month will be instead one written by your reporter for "Mushroom the Journal of Wild Mushrooming" for the fall of 2001. But first a note on this recent unusual storm: This is the earliest rain of much mushroom producing (read "boletes") proportions in a long while—at least 5 years. Before you read this there will be porcini in the coastal woods—it says here. And now, back to another column. . . .

The Mind's Eye?

There is a good chance that many of the world's great ideas and inventions were first envisioned through what folks call the "mind's eye"—that quixotic sounding extraordinary locus of "seen" thoughts that seems to exist somewhere within the mysteries of our brains. But for me that brings up questions like: "Is it just one, like Cyclops had?" (We don't say the "mind's eyes") or, "How do we look at it—with our "mind's eye?"

I'm not sure but I do know that many of the world's great recipes, like those brought to you right here in "Mushroom the Journal," have been created smack dab in the middle of what this cook prosaically calls his "mind's mouth." Sort of centered right under the uvula—that dangling worm-like elongated tear shaped process in the center back roof of our mouths—this tasting zone is my palate's palette and plate that I mentally use to apply ingredients, supply flavor notes and "serve" to myself while composing recipes.

The other day I was talking to chef (and your normal avid mushroom hunting freak) Todd Humphries who is soon to open his new restaurant in St. Helena (Napa Valley). I was asking him for help to try match a certain Merlot that a winery had asked me to pair with dessert, any. We began by just talking and "tasting" the varying thoughts with our mind's mouths, tossing out some at first and including others for a second "taste," agreeing on none or maybe a combination of this and that. When I mentioned that what we were doing was using our minds' mouths he laughed, in a kind of polite Canadian guffaw that I get from him often and said that he appreciated being a part of history making. Not the recipe we were coming up with but that I might write about our conversation in this column. Maybe.

Incidentally, Todd is an Saskatchewanian but I don't believe that the new restaurant's menu will showcase his home locale's

food. I wrote about dining and wine service in British Columbia several years ago in this very same publication. If you've never read a San Francisco Bay Area foodie person's description of Canadian Provincial cuisine you can—in that back issue, available from our editor for a modest price (a good deal!).

Even in the salad days of my cooking youth I realized the ability to discern whether or not a recipe might be good just by reading it. I have almost always visualized tastes in the (now) well-known mind's mouth. Adding this or that herb or spice to a recipe is usually not trial and error for good cooks. A while ago when I attended the California Culinary Academy I found out that many others too can do that victuals visualizing. If you can't, well simply follow my cooking instructions at the end of this column and take my word for it. There are other things in life to be good at. (Like ending sentences with prepositions and then the getting away with).

That dessert consulted with Todd about was for a meal that I catered for Charmoon Richardson's Wild About Mushroom Company annual fungus dinner at White Oak winery in the beautiful Alexander Valley of Sonoma County. Denise, who runs the tasting room and special events, asked me to marry their wines she specified with each course. These are very nicely made, well structured with good fruit, \$20 dollar plus wines. But I had a problem—not the matching of wines with appetizers, soup, entree, or even a salad, but that they wanted to serve their Merlot with the dessert course and someone had told them that if you put chocolate on something like a torte, truffle, etc., then a dry red wine will taste good. Not hardly.

Yuck. Fallacy. I am really insistent about this. No way does that work in my mind's mouth nor in the very orifice itself. If it does to you then you should be reading the other cooking columnist for this magazine.

So I spoke to Todd and we came up with a dried fruit compote, barely slightly sweet, served on an almost unsweetened sponge (cake) with crème fraîche and a mint garnish. It still was not right. So I call another friend, Mark Ellenbogen, a wine list maker extraordinaire who put together the wonderfully eccentric and complex list for the famed Slanted Door restaurant in San Francisco. We immediately concurred that even though Todd's and my attempt was not bad considering the winery's request and proclivity for that match (Todd knew of this shortcoming too) it would not do. "How about aged Gouda?" (pronounced "ggkhowda" in Dutch), Mark gargled. I then suggested, and said in English, "Let's serve on the same plate some dried red fruits (pronounced "frutz"), like unsweetened cherries and fruit juice sweetened cranberries." "Yeah, that's the idea," this food/wine maven nodded in approval, "Nothing sweet to clash with the dry wine." I tossed in, "Should we try some

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Mycodigest**Continued from page 1**

in some counties in Texas, in 2001, within a day over 25 countries had banned the import of grains from the infected areas, with an estimated loss of \$ 27 million. This disease has such potential to cause economic damage that it is mentioned as a possible bioterror agent.

But what exactly is a smut, how does it grow, what are its closest relatives? Let us zoom in on the corn smut, and see how it lives.

We'll start with the spores that are formed in the gall. These are called teliospores and their appearance in huge amounts on the plant is in many cases the first and only signal that the plant is diseased. The dark thick spore wall indicates that these spores, which are carried by the wind, are adapted for dispersal and survival under adverse circumstances. There are other smuts, the anther smuts, in which the spores are transported from plant to plant by flower-visiting insects, but corn smut spores over-winter in the soil. When the teliospore starts to germinate, it acts like a basidium, the structure in which nuclei (the cell regulators) fuse. In this case, the binucleate teliospores produce basidiospores with a single nucleus. Mushrooms, from boletes to chanterelles, from conks to crusts, need special fruiting structures to produce spores. Smuts do it with a single cell.

These basidiospores have a saprotrophic lifestyle and can grow outside the plants; they are single cells which bud and behave like yeasts. This phase has been studied extensively in the lab, as you can grow these cells on agar plates. The spores are also the primary infection agents. When two basidiospores mate they fuse to form a new mycelium and the smut embarks on its parasitic phase. Infection takes place in different parts of the plant. It can happen via the silk of the cob, interfering with pollination, a race between pollen grain and smut spore: As the mycelium grows, within and between the plant cells, it causes these cells to divide like crazy and at the same time grow bigger; a gall is born. The teliospores are then formed as modified parts of hyphae. The plant epidermis breaks open, the spores appear, and the circle is complete.

Of course, other smuts do parts of this cycle in different ways. But, for most species the life cycle is not known in such detail as it is for the economically important Corn smut. Some species infect seeds, some grow throughout the plant and persist in it for the whole lifetime of the plant. As one example, take *Microbotryum violaceum*, which is a very interesting anther smut, specializing on carnation-like plants in the family Caryophyllaceae. Species in this family are often dioecious, which means that there are plants exclusively with female flowers and plants with male flowers. The anther smut only occurs on the male flowers and subverts the flowers to produce dark purple spores instead of pollen. This strategy should mean only a 50 % infection rate (only half of the plants are male), but, the smut has found a way to do better. It attacks



Figure: *Ustilago cynodontis* on Bermuda grass (*Cynodon dactylon*)

plants with female flowers by first performing a sex-change operation!

It took mankind quite a while to understand the real nature of the smuts. The classical Greek Theophrastus wrote: "Bunt or stinking smut of wheat is caused by the action of the burning rays of the sun falling on the heads that had been penetrated by abundant rain." It was only in the mid 1700s that this theory was proven wrong by a Frenchman, Matthieu Tillet, who did a bunch of nice experiments. First he planted a wheat plant in a pot which he kept really wet. The plant stayed infection free, contrary to the prevailing opinion that abundant rain would cause the infection. Secondly, he planted grains with smut spores in some plots and non-infected seeds in others and recorded carefully the number of diseased plants in each plot. The infected seeds produced infected plants, and most plants of the blanks stayed disease free. This method did not work for corn smut, as the infection does not happen via the seeds, so there he concluded that it was a character of the plant and the circumstances under which it was grown. Even when it was known that the smuts were not part of the plants, it still took considerable time to realize that they were fungi. Researchers did not see any hyphae among the spore masses. Even as recently as 1967, new *Silene* species were described based on the dark colour of the 'pollen grains'. We know now that this was merely due to an anther smut.

Fungi with so few apparent characters, mainly spores and hidden hyphae, are difficult to classify. The big breakthrough came with electron microscopy and with the use of molecular characters for identifying major groups. It then was realized that anther smuts are more closely related to rusts, another big group of basidiomycete plant pathogens, and that other

groups of plant infesting fungi are nested within the 'proper' smuts. *Exobasidium*s, for instance, the fungi which cause galls and misshapen leaves in *Rhododendrons*, *Vaccinium*s and Manzanitas. In other words, different groups of fungi have come up with the same idea of forming powdery spores in great masses on plants. When we look at family relationships with molecular techniques we find that rusts and some smuts haven't changed much since the common ancestor of all fungi with basidia. The other smuts had a somewhat more recent ancestor, but also haven't changed much. The branch that underwent extensive evolutionary change is the one that led to the familiar gilled mushrooms and boletes.

The question 'what exactly is a smut?' is harder than ever to answer; the best definition right now is: basidiomycete plant parasites which produce teliospores.

Yippee the rain is here!

Time to go north for MSSF mushroom adventure in Mendocino woodlands. The MSSF holds 2 large forays out of the area - one is the Mendocino foray, November 12-14, which we hope is the right weekend for boletes, that usually fruit a couple of weeks after the first real rain. This time of year and in this area we have also found chanterelle, white, black, and golden, matsutakes, trichalomas like man on horseback, suil, sparassis us of many kinds, amanitas, often cocoli.

The beginning of the season, we may catch the corals in there most striking, reds, sulfur yellows, and bright purples. Don't forget your russulas, shrimps and shrumps. Lactarius the milky caps will be out for grilling and pickling.

The MSSF has rented a camp with 30 private cabins (each with a fireplace) also a large dining hall and kitchen, hot showers, flush toilets. We will provide meals from Friday night to Sunday morning.

This is an opportunity to learn or hone your ID knowledge, with some of our most experienced mushroomers. The dining hall is where we commiserate with fellow collectors, exchange info and wine, discuss the proper recipe for this find or that mushroom.

For this we charge \$95 per person, with some adjustment for children under 12. Make your reservation now.

Norm Andresen
510-278-8998
or send check to
16096 Selborne Dr.
San Leandro, CA 94577

Cultivation Corner

Ken Litchfield



Recently on mssf@yahoo.com, the e-group discussion group for MSSF members, there was a conversational thread about mushroom fairy rings which you can read at messages 6831, 6837, and 6839.

Suburban folks with lawns are gradually, despite the enforcement rules of neighborhood associations, seeing alternative ways to cultivate their property. Even developers don't always realize that the tract home uniformity of houses and lawns on compact adjacent parcels they are selling is a mini-manor reflection of the old estates of Europe. It isn't always easy to see the forest for the trees, or the meadow for the lawn grass. If you have enough property for a lawn, why would you want to spend your time mowing it, fertilizing it, spraying it, just so it will match the uniformity of your neighbors' lots? At least put in a few fruit trees and vegetable gardens and break up the monotony of the lawn with clovers and other low growing flowering plants. Most of the lawn could be converted to native and horticultural plants needing less water and care, and providing more shelter and food for mini-beasts like bees and butterflies, lizards and hummingbirds. The small, practical part you keep for lounging and barefoot traipsing can be much less manicured and much more meadow-like, making your whole domain a more personal and produce bearing paradise.

One simple thing the current lawn owner can do, to at least change their own viewpoint of the lawn, is to not only let mushrooms grow in it, but actually encourage them to grow in fairy rings. These fungi won't actually do anything to the grass but live in the dead thatch and other organic matter underneath. Occasionally, the mycelial mat will get so robust that it blocks water from passing through. This is easily countered with extra fine spray watering to break the surface tension and fill the mat with water so it fruits.

At last year's SF Flower and Garden show we had a mushroom fairy ring in the MSSF's mushroom garden display and it was very popular, especially with the kids. Below you can read the sign we put in the garden to give the public a little tongue-in-cheek explanation of fairy rings. This being San Francisco and all, some folks were so ecstatic to know that other people found fairies in their backyard, too. This year our cultivation group is working to put on a much bigger display in the main hall of the Cow Palace, competing for prizes by being judged with the big guys. We will have lots of duties for folks by the time the show rolls around so if you would like to participate at any stage please contact me.

Mushroom Fairy Rings

Yes, some people say that these mushrooms are the seating arrangement for the cushions where little fairies rest their butts during their overnight dancing and partying. Many people claim that these little critters went extinct because they never see

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Foragers' Report**Continued from page 3**

whole roasted pecans for texture and to appease the tannin gods. . .?”

We were doing it—the mind’s mouth thing—and it was working well. I hung up and began to put together the rest of the menu. On a roll (pun intended, as always in this persiflage) I thought about what type of bread to serve with the appetizers. And what appetizer. Hmm.

How ‘bout “Fire Roasted Morels” (Connie Green’s, from an Idaho burn, grilled on charcoal after tossing with olive oil, melted butter, salt and pepper) put on baguette rounds lightly spread with a Sherry-softened cream cheese, blanched chopped spinach, toasted walnut pieces and minced shallots combo to have with their big luscious Zinfandel, all passed in the barrel room of the winery? Yes!

Next on my mental plate was a soup course that they wanted to pair with a Chardonnay. I used one gallon of their wine (dinner was for 80 guests) in my regular recipe for “North Coast Mushroom Soup.” This too can be found in a past issue and is well worth seeking out.

We grilled marinated very fresh salmon fillets as the entree. The winery was serving a Merlot, a Zinfandel and the Chardonnay with this course so creativity was again required in the food. We presented a salad with sweet and bitter greens, shaved fennel, sweet onions and avocado with a citrus vinaigrette made with orange juice, balsamic vinegar, good olive oil, oregano and some of their Chardonnay.

Some very good Mexican chanterelles were available so we dreamed up “Golden Chanterelle Risotto with Tarragon and Apricot.” Ever made risotto for 80 people? It is a lot of stuff going on. You have the hot stock (we used six gallons), the onions and the rice, the other ingredients, all wanting to burn if you don’t watch closely. This creamy combination of heavenly parts is synergistic. One of those “the whole is greater than sum of its parts.” Anyhow, it is difficult for the average cook to master but who amongst you readers is average?

But the *pièce de résistance* of the meal was what we made to top the salmon, perhaps my best work so far. Mark, who eats great food often, actually drooled his approval. Not a very sophisticated look, really, but the ingenuousness was appreciated.

Imagine a *marchand du vin vis a vis beurre blanc rouge trompe de morte* dreamy potion. Hmm, let it flow through your minds’ mouths and wrap around the uvula, dripping down on your taste buds, forming temporary stalactites and stalagmites of wondrous sensations. Ooh, yeah.

I took 5 bottles of their Zinfandel and reduced it with fennel seeds, black peppercorns, bay leaf, red onion and shallots to 1/2 volume. As this was happening one pound of dried black chanterelles was hydrating. I strained about 1 1/2 gallons of the first water and then reduced that to 2 cups. (This is quite a reduction.) The very black, very thick and extraordinarily flavored syrup that resulted was then stirred into the strained wine reduction.

So what do you do with such stuff? All you cooks out there I think know the answer—add lots and lots of chunks of chilled good unsalted butter, whisking them in, until a foamy elixir of incredibly intense tastes results. Don’t let it break and keep it hot until service.

A similar sauce recipe can be found in any good cookbook. It will be under “*Beurre blanc*.” Substitute whatever they are reducing with red wine like I explained above and add some reduced black chanterelle syrup. Follow the instructions for whisking in the butter. Super good.

You won’t find the following recipe though anywhere but here. It may seem a tiny bit of a tedium, but, hey! so is reading this column. So plod ever onward dear readers/cooks. This is a very tasty dish. It is a good main course—try with a good Chardonnay or Sauvignon Blanc and a salad.

Risotto with Golden Chanterelles and Tarragon

Serves 4 with 12 ounce servings

For the Mushrooms:

2 Tbsp butter

1 Tbsp olive oil

1/2 cup onion, white, finely diced

1/2 lb golden chanterelles, chopped small

1 1/2 Tbsp tarragon, chopped fine

salt and pepper

4 oz apricot nectar (optional—use if chanterelles are not fruity enough)

For the Rice:

1 1/2 qt stock (mushroom, veggie, etc)

2 Tbsp butter

1/3 cup onion, yellow, finely diced

1 1/2 cup Arborio or other good Italian short-grained rice

1/2 cup white wine, dry

1/3 cup cream

1/2 cup Parmesan cheese, freshly grated

1/4 cup Italian parsley, chopped

Cooking notes: Use a wide, heavy bottomed pot (yes, big bottoms are good for certain things) and well-flavored mushroom stock is a necessary plus and sets us apart, once again, from others.

1. Cook onions with the butter over medium about 5 minutes or until they are softened. Add mushrooms, raise heat, cook until liquid is gone. Add (optional) apricot nectar, tarragon, salt and pepper. Cook until most liquid is gone. Set aside.

2. Put stock on heat to simmer. Cook onion in large pan with butter until soft. Add rice, stir to coat, and cook for a few minutes. Add wine and simmer until wine is *au sec* ("jam-like" in consistency). Add 1/3 of the hot stock, cover, cook bubbly until the stock is absorbed. Begin to add the stock in increments less than the original amount, stirring constantly until each addition is absorbed before adding the next one. About 1/2 way through adding all the stock, add the mushrooms. After the last addition, add the cream and parsley (and more tarragon if you like) and stir vigorously. Adjust seasonings. Turn off the heat and add the cheese. Serve at once. (Risotto should be able to be poured slowly out of a spoon so you might need to add some more hot stock.)

TIP: To make this dish (mostly) ahead-cook the risotto up to the last two additions of stock (before the mushrooms, etc), spread out on sheet pans to cool and stop cooking. Refrigerate. Resume cooking by adding 1 extra cup of hot stock per 4 servings.

Porcini and Prawn Panino

Serving Size: 4 Preparation Time: 0:20

Ingredients:

1 1/3 cup porcini mushrooms, sliced 1/4" thick
 1 qt extra virgin olive oil
 3/4 cup butter, unsalted
 1/4 cup Italian parsley, minced
 1 1/3 Tbsp shallots, minced
 1 clove garlic, minced
 1 1/3 loaf baguette or other for sandwich
 2 eggs
 1 1/3 cup bread crumbs
 28 shrimp, medium, tail-less, butterflied
 2 cups fresh greens
 salt and pepper

1. Prepare aromatic spread by beating the butter with parsley, shallot, garlic, some sea salt and fresh ground pepper until creamy—set aside.

2. Heat a grill pan until medium hot. Slice the bread halves lengthwise and grill for 3-4 minutes, cut side down.

3. Beat the eggs, place in one bowl, place crumbs in another.

4. Heat the oil to med. hot. Dip the porcini and the prawns in egg, then in crumbs. Fry until golden, about 3-4 minutes, turning once. Remove to paper towels and pat dry.

5. Spread the butter mix on both halves of the grilled sides of bread. Toss the greens over the bottom half and top with 7 prawns and equal porcini for each sandwich. Grind pepper atop.

Do not let these sit for more than 3-4 minutes before eating.

NOTE: These are large sandwiches and can be cut for appetizers.



NAMA Photo Slide Programs

Starting in November, NAMA photo slides on mushrooms will be shown in the auditorium preceding the General Meeting. The program, 'Introduction to Fall Mushrooms', will start at 7:00 pm and will end in about 45 minutes. The focus will be on the common basidiomycetes found during the fall season with comments on tape about both habitat and ease of identification. The mushrooms represented are from throughout North America with a slight bias towards the species found in the Pacific Northwest.

Two other programs have been selected to be shown in January and in February, 2005. In January, we will feature 'Introduction to Mushrooms' for the benefit of new members anticipated from the Fungus Fair. The program in February will be 'Introduction to the Major Groups of Mushrooms'. As in November, the photo slides will be shown before the start of the general meeting.

The slide programs were compiled by NAMA (North American Mycological Association) to enrich its meetings and for teaching purposes and are made available to member clubs. The programs we have selected are geared towards beginners but all members are welcome. J. R. Blair, our resource person, will be available to comment and answer questions regarding the mushrooms shown.

If people are interested, we may continue the series by showing programs on gilled mushrooms grouped by spore coloring and on the different types of non-gilled mushrooms that may be found. For further information, contact Tom Sasaki, 415-776-0791 or email, sasakitom@aol.com.

Cultivation Corner

Continued from page 5

them any more. However, this is partly due to poor observation technique from staying up late indoors watching TV or surfing the net. It is also due to the un-fairy-friendly lawn care techniques often practiced these days.

To get the fairies to come and party in your back yard this is what you do:

1) - Diversify your lawn flora by adding clovers and other low growing and creeping ground covers that also flower. This will attract the fairies to come smell the flowers and hang out with the bees and butterflies that party on the flowers. Fairies favor meadows over mono-cultured sterile grass.

2) - If you have to mow your lawn, set the blades to the highest setting to stimulate more different kinds of plants to grow, and provide some shade for critters that the fairies like to hang out with. Also, when the blades are set high there is less chance of clipping the fairies' wings or decapitating them when they are sleeping during the day.

3) - Don't use chemical fertilizers because it burns the fairies' feet. Imagine how difficult it would be for *you* to dance and skip around if *you* had painful blisters and boils all over *your* feet.

4) - *Never, ever* spray pesticides in your backyard, especially where you want the fairies to hang out. Just think how unpleasant it would be for *you* to sing and dance if *you* were gagging and hacking up pieces of lung. Also, fairies have great difficulty partying and having happy times when they are surrounded by the cadavers of their playmates. It's very depressing.

5) - Leave the old dead grass blades in place on your meadow lawn to build up a nice thatch. This is where the mushrooms grow that make the fairy ring, right there on the dead and composting leaves of the thatch. They don't hurt the grass at all. That's why you don't need fungicides; it kills these pretty and beneficial mushrooms that are an integral part of your backyard ecosystem, that also provide the party site for the fairies. In fact, to grow your own fairy ring spread extra grass clippings and wood chips on your meadow lawn, thinly so the grass doesn't get smothered, but regularly and often so a nice thick layer of organic matter builds up around the base of the plants. If no mushrooms are in your backyard, you can get them started by getting some mature grocery store button mushrooms, the ones with open gills that have turned black, or portobello mushrooms, and lay them gillside down in a spot where you would like to have the center of your fairy-ring-to-be. They will drop their spores like seeds there and start growing in the thatch. As they eat up and decay the rough clippings and chips, they will turn it into compost, growing out in successive rings like a bull's eye target. Each season the ring will get larger as the mycelium of the mushroom works its way outward from the center. And each year you will have a bigger and bigger area for more and more fairies to party in.

Many species of mushrooms can make fairy rings, some edible, some poisonous.

Fungus Fair

Volunteer Call

Ken Litchfield

If you are coordinating an area we need to know your list of volunteers for Friday night and during the show that you have recruited. Please send this list to Gary Wolf, our new volunteer coordinator. If you want to volunteer, contact Dan or myself to be assigned where we need you the most. If you know which area you want to volunteer for. We want to keep a good bead on the numbers especially for Friday night so we know how many to feed then and throughout the weekend. The food folks provide an important service to all of us and we want everyone to help make it easy for them to make provisions. Sign up early, please.

Every year we get late receipts for unexpected expenses. This year we want to keep a good accounting of the expenses which has been getting better each year. Please let Shawn Johnson the treasurer know your plans *before* you buy stuff if you are coordinating an area. If you are helping in an area check first with the head of your area, who is the first person listed below.

One change for this year: due to the elimination of a Mastodon exhibit in bay 7 we will have that bay this year also.... so the Mushroom Taxonomy tables will be in bays 5, 6, & 7, the Mushroom Specialty tables will be in 1, 2, & 3 as usual, and bay 4, in the middle of the action, will be the indoor vendors. Last year's vendor hall between the lobby and the main theater will have an art exhibit showing on the walls and will be unavailable to us.

As is usual Mike Wood is heading up the areas of Friday night's forayed mushroom ID process, the 3 bays of Taxonomy Tables, and the continuing ID during the Fair. We're also looking for greeters for the welcoming table at the front entrance.

The names below include their emails. You can get their phone numbers from the current roster in the members only section of the mssf.org website.

Fungus Fair

Co-chairs -

Ken Litchfield <klitchfield@randallmuseum.org>

Dan Long <danlong@astound.net>

Volunteer Coordinator -

Gary Wolf <gary@aether.com>

ID Process, Taxonomy Tables, Continuing ID -

Mike Wood <mgwood@mykoweb.com>

Matsutakes and Limericks- Report from Oregon

Dan Long

A few days ago I returned from a foray in Oregon. It was sponsored by Wild about Mushrooms Company, and Charmoon Richardson and David Campbell taking responsibility for my temporary living quarters and making sure I got enough to eat. They did a good job. They even directed me to endless habitat to witness the cornucopia of mushrooms that are popping up in great numbers this year in Oregon. It has to be a good year because it would have been impossible for it to be any better. Some of you "older" members most likely have seen things like this before, but I never have. I didn't pick too many chanterelles, not wanting to dry them, and trusting that my spots in the Bay Area would supply me for my needs. I still have frozen, dry sautéed Chanterelles from last year.

I must have walked by a hundred pounds of *C. cibarius*. David took us to a spot that had a different variety of Chanterelles that had a thinner flesh and a longer trumpet, very cool. The *C. subalbidus* was out in huge numbers also, but what really made my day was seeing *Polyozellus multiplex*. It was almost common. *C. tubaeformis* showed its face along with *Clavariadelphus truncatus*, *Gomphus clavatus* and *G. floccosus*. In fact I think I saw more *G. floccosus* than everything else. I downloaded my digital pictures when I got home and it was in the background numerous times. *Russula brevipes* was everywhere also yet I only saw about four Lobsters. We also saw a lot of *Lactarius*. We took some red bleeders back and fried them up at night, they were surprisingly good. We also brought back *Agaricus silvicola* and *Tricholoma flavovirens* that were there, but not in numbers.

We were traipsing around doing our limerick thing on the radios when we came upon a fallen log that was a good thirty feet long with *Hericium abietis* popping out all along it. Mark Lockaby was so fixated on his quest for "other mushrooms" that he didn't see it, although he was two feet away! What focus he has! Let me address the limericks. My Alice limerick was far better than yours, Charmoon. Limericks can always be improved and it's O.K. to admit when you have been bested.

Back to the mushrooms. We found a *Sparassis crispa* and both hedgehogs that I am familiar with, *Hydnum repandum* and *H. umbilicatum*, along with *Sarcodon imbricatum*. I also keyed out some other *Sarcodon* but can't remember what it was. Those that know me are not surprised by that admission. We found two *Boletus edulis* and dozens of *B. mirabilis* eating up the dead Hemlock. Some *B. fibrillosus* were picked also. *Amanita smithiana*

was frequent and easy to I.D. with its huge split base, and its flattened warts.

I'm leaving out a lot of mushrooms, so let me name a few. Gypsy, Sulfur tuft, Angel wings, Honeys, Fried chicken mushrooms, not forgetting all the purple *Russulas* and *Lepiotas*. These are what I know but there were just as many that I didn't have a clue about. What am I forgetting? Matsutake! We found them every day and ate them every night. There was no shortage of these guys. I never found evidence of other people picking where we picked. I saw about five buying stations in Bend. We stopped at a station just across the Oregon border on highway 97 to see what was up. There was a woman lamenting to anyone who would listen, that the buyer would only give her \$1.00 a pound for number ones! I wanted to look and she offered to give me a button. I refused her gift, knowing we were on our way up and I would get plenty. I should have accepted it because I think I gave her the feeling that she couldn't give them away.

The Rangers are more knowledgeable than the brainiacks that we have down here. It's kind of like Andy Taylor verses Barney Fife. They have more activity up there and I'm sure they have heard just about every story pertaining to why you have Matsies in your basket without a Matsutake permit. We only saw one ranger on all the logging roads we were traveling and he was going the other way.

The days started with a lavish breakfast cooked by Sven, the creative chef. We would leave around 9:30 and pick till the early evening. It's incredible how we seemed to get home at the cocktail hour every day. We would then fire up the grills and eat things some of us have never eaten. Sven and his helpers would be preparing dinner consisting of more mushroom inspired dishes during this time. And the wine flowed.

I didn't see it, but somebody snuck up behind Norm Andresen one evening and jerked his short pants down to his ankles while he was in the middle of an interesting story. We ought to find that person and tie them up with duct tape. Norm is such an asset on these trips with his ability to identify hundreds of mushrooms. I'll help you find that dirty rat. I hope to go again next year and a special thanks to Charmoon, David, and all my new-found friends and some old ones too. You guys are great.

Mycena News is the newsletter of the Mycological Society of San Francisco and is published monthly from September through May. Please email newsletter submissions to: mycenanews@mssf.org.
Editor: William Karpowicz
Layout: Ruth Erznosnik
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Calendar**Continued from page 12**

Tuesday, November 16: MSSF General Meeting. Randall Museum, doors open at 7:00 pm. Bruce Ing will speak about mxomycetes.

Tuesday, November 16: NAMA Photo Slide Program. Randall Museum. NAMA 's 'Introduction to Fall Mushrooms' will be shown in the auditorium preceding the General Meeting. The program will start at 7:00 pm and ending in about 45 minutes. For description of the program, see article on page 7.

Friday, Nov. 26-Sunday Nov. 28. David Arora's annual Thanksgiving weekend Mendocino Mushroom Foray in Albion. See page 2 for details.

Saturday and Sunday, December 4 & 5: Fungus Fair. Oakland Museum 10-5 Saturday, Noon-5 Sunday. Speakers, cooking and dyeing demos, mushroom oriented vendors, kid art projects, mushroom soup sales, and fungal displays galore. For more information or to be part of the planning committee contact Ken Litchfield at klitchfield@randallmuseum.org, 415-863-7618 or Dan Long at danlong@astound.net, 925-945-6477.

Monday, December 13: MSSF Annual Holiday Dinner: 7:00 PM. at the Snow Building at the Oakland Zoo, located at 9777 Golf Links Road, Oakland. For information, please contact Alvaro at (415) 695-0466 or at alvaro.carvajal@sbcglobal.net. For reservations, please mail a check, payable to the MSSF, for \$30 per person to Shawn Johnson, 74 Sanders Ranch Road, Moraga, CA 94556.

Saturday, December 18 and Saturday, January 15: Muir Woods Foray. MSSF member Robert Mackler will offer a beginners' class and foray. The session will begin at 10am with a slide show/lecture "Mushrooms 101" and then walk the trails of Muir Woods until 2pm. This program is for adults only. Reservations must be made by contacting Muir Woods at 415-388-2596. The program is free but there is an admission fee to the park.

Saturday, January 15-Monday, January 17, 2005: SOMA Camp. Featured speaker Dr. Tom Volk, with special guests Gary Lincoff, Paul Stamets and Jim Trappe. For more information visit www.somamushrooms.org or call 707-887-1888.

Friday-Sunday, Feb.4-6, 2005. All California Club Foray, at Albion Field Station in Mendocino County. See page 2 for details.

2004 FUNGUS FAIR

December 4th. & 5th.

We need your help*Small tasks for all levels of experience*

Friday set-up, December 3rd. 3-7 pm or 8-11 pm.

*Volunteers especially needed Saturday 10-5 & Sunday 12-5*Dinner will be provided Friday from 7-8 pm., as well as snacks and lunch on Saturday and Sunday.
Shift obligation for free admission is three hours.Contact Gary Wolf at gary@aether.comIf you would be able to distribute a few posters in your area,
Contact Ken Litchfield at klitchfield@randallmuseum.org
Or Dan Long at danlong@astound.net**SOMA Winter Mushroom
Camp Coming Up!**

The Sonoma County Mycological Association (SOMA) invites you to the 8th annual SOMA Winter Mushroom Camp. The Camp will be held on M.L.K. weekend, January 15-17, 2005, near Occidental in Sonoma County, about one hour north of San Francisco. This year, SOMA is very pleased to have Dr. Tom Volk return as our keynote presenter. In addition to Tom, we will have 3 special guests with us, including Gary Lincoff, Paul Stamets, and Dr. Jim Trappe.

The Camp, a benefit for SOMA, is full of mushroom forays, specimen tables, slide shows, and speaker presentations, as well as classes & workshops on mushroom dyeing, paper-making, cooking, medicine making, photography, cultivation, truffle hunting, and more. Of course, great wild mushroom cuisine will be provided by the SOMA culinary group and MycoChef Patrick Hamilton.

The spacious, modern camp buildings are set amongst 225 acres of oak, madrone, tan oak, redwood, and Doug fir. The shared cabins are heated, and are bright, clean, and airy, with hardwood floors and stylish bunks.

Fees: \$195 until Nov. 15, \$225 after. Registration closes on Wed. January 5. Includes lodging, meals, and all classes & activities. Sunday only fee: \$110, includes all the day's activities & presentations, and dinner feast. To obtain a registration form, or for more information, go to SOMAmushrooms.org, or call 707-887-1888.

Now is the time to Renew Your Membership for 2005

November is the best month to renew your membership for 2005 (or beyond) and we have included a handy envelope for that purpose. Just fill out any new information on the form on this page and put it, along with a check made out to "MSSF Membership," in the envelope enclosed in this issue of the *Mycena News*. If you use your own envelope, address it to MSSF Membership, c/o The Randall Museum, 199 Museum Way, San Francisco, CA 94114. You can also use the PayPal option on the MSSF website.

Membership rates are:

Multiple year membership rates approved by MSSF Council for renewals beginning Jan. 1, 2005:

	1-yr	2-yr	-5% 3-yr	-10% 5-yr	20 x 1-yr Lifetime
Regular	\$25	\$50	\$71.25	112.50	500.00
Senior	\$20	\$40	\$57.00	90.00	400.00
Student	\$20	\$40	\$57.00	90.00	n/a
Electronic	\$15	\$30	\$42.75	67.50	300.00

Regular members receive the yearly *Roster* of members and the *Mycena News* by mail.

Senior members must be over 65 and enjoy all the privileges of regular membership.

Student membership is for full-time students who receive both the membership *Roster* and the *Mycena News* by mail.

Electronic members must download the yearly *Roster* of members and the *Mycena News* for themselves from the MSSF website.

Members in all categories are eligible to sign up for inclusion in the information sharing Yahoo group. Consult the MSSF website www.mssf.org for information.

A few of you have already renewed for 2005 (and beyond), so be sure to check the mailing label on your *Mycena News* to find out if your membership expires in December of 2004.

MSSF Scholarship

The Mycological Society of San Francisco offers scholarships to full time graduate students majoring in mycology attending colleges and universities in northern California. These scholarships vary in amount from \$500 to \$1,500 and are given in the name of Esther Colton Whited and Dr. Harry Thiers. All research proposals are welcomed, but special consideration will be given to taxonomic studies of the higher fungi of the Pacific States.

Requirements include two letters of recommendation, one from a professional mycologist, a brief statement describing the research project, and agreement to present the results at a general meeting of the MSSF. Send inquiries/materials to Robert Mackler, 157 Mesa Ct., Hercules CA, 94547. Deadline for applications is December 10, 2004.

MYCOLOGICAL SOCIETY OF SAN FRANCISCO – Membership and Membership Renewal Application

New Members please fill out as much information as you can. Members who are renewing need to fill out only the blanks for which information has changed within the last year. Please check the current *Roster* to see if any of your address, phone, and email need updating!

Name 1: _____ Home Phone: _____
 Name 2: _____ Business Phone: _____
 Street/Apt#/PO: _____ Cell Phone: _____
 City: _____ Email 1: _____
 State: _____ Email 2: _____
 Zip Code: _____ Interests: _____

New Membership? _____ Renewal? _____
 Membership type: _____ Adult/Family (\$25) _____ Senior/Students (\$20) _____ Electronic (\$15)
Please mail the filled out form along with your check made out to 'MSSF membership' to MSSF Membership, c/o The Randall Junior Museum, 199 Museum Way, San Francisco, CA 94114

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c/o The Randall Museum
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San Francisco, CA 94114

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MSSF Calendar, November, 2004

Monday, November 1: Culinary Group's Monthly Dinner: 7:00 PM. Meeting and dinner at the Library of the Hall of Flowers in Golden Gate Park in San Francisco. The theme will be a Lamb Feast. For reservations or information, please contact Phil Brown at (510) 526-4325 or at towltek2000@msn.com Future culinary group dinners (all Mondays): January 10, February 7, March 7, April 4, May 2, June 6, 2005.

Saturday, November 6: Annual Salt Point Foray. Meet at 10 am at Gerstle Cove Campground in Salt Point State Park. Attendees responsible for own campsites and adherence to State Park parking and picking regulations. Potluck cookout Saturday night featuring what you brought plus scads of fresh edible mushrooms collected. Specimen collection discussion Sunday AM. No pre-registration required with event leaders David and Jeanne Campbell. Make like the mushrooms and just show up.

Thursday, November 11-Sunday, November 21: Mendocino Wine & Mushroom Fest. Eleven days and nights of mushroom and wine themed events throughout Mendocino County, including special mushroom dinners, winery presentations, seminars, B&B events, walks & forays, tastings, classes, and much, much more. SOMA members will be doing cooking demonstrations, along with other presentations and public outreach, at the Ford House, in downtown Mendocino, on Saturday November 13. For a complete schedule of Fest events, visit www.gomendo.com or call toll-free 866-466-3636.

Friday-Sunday, November 12-14: Mendocino Woodlands Foray. \$95 per person, includes private cabin, hot showers and all meals from Friday night through Sunday morning. More info on page 5 or contact Norm Andresen at 510-278-8998 or n.andresen@comcast.net.

Continued on page 10

Note: Deadline for the December 2004 issue of Mycena News is November 24.
Please send your articles, calendar items and other information to:
mycenanews@mssf.org