

EARTHSTAR

E X A M I N E R

Number 23, February 1992

The Missouri Mycological Society Newsletter

Gary Lincoff To Keynote Annual Winter Meeting and Potluck Extravaganza

Mark Your Calenders for March 1



The Winter Meeting and Mycophagist Luncheon is scheduled for 1:00 p.m. Sunday, March 1st at the Nature Center in Babler State Park. Members and non-members are welcome to attend.

For the past two years, the Luncheon is the event which attracts the biggest crowd for the group. The potluck spread of a variety of different wild mushroom and wild food dishes is unequalled.

What to bring? It's up to you. Turn those mushrooms you've been hoarding into something delicious, make that incredible salad recipe, bake your famous dessert. Please bring a card to identify your dish with its name, your name and a description of the ingredients.

There will be a raffle for some great prizes and a display about mushrooms.

A \$10.00 donation per head fee at the door will help pay for Gary Lincoff's flight from New York, rental of the meeting place, tables, decorations, wine, coffee, paper plates, etc. You may elect to deduct the cost of ingredients of your dish.

Space is limited and reservations are required. For reservations call Ken Gilberg at 458-1458. If you can help out with set-up, displays or what-have-you, please call Ken.

Special Program by Gary Lincoff

Gary Lincoff, author of the *Audubon Guide to North American Mushrooms* and other books, past NAMA president, teacher at the New York Botanical Garden and leader of world-wide mushroom study tours will be our keynote speaker at the luncheon. Gary will give a talk sure to interest both beginners and advanced mushroomers--Field Identification of Mushrooms. Find out why the *Audubon Guide* is laid out the way it is and gain some big insights on paths to identification.

Anyone who has heard Gary speak appreciates his humor and love for amateur mushrooming. We thank you for coming to Missouri, Gary.

Gary Lincoff on Mushroom Evolution: Saturday, February 29

The day before the Winter Meeting, Gary will give a special seminar on the evolution of fungi at the Freund Center at the Shaw Arboretum in Gray Summit at 1:30 p.m. The talk should interest novices and advanced alike. Members and guests are invited to attend. *The Freund Center is not open to the general public and is not accessible through the main gates at the Arboretum.* Take Old Grey Summit Road (behind the Phillips 66 station) at I-44 and Hwy. 100, then go 1.5 miles to the driveway to the Freund Center.

Morel Season At Hand



"Harvest Time: Omer Rodenhuesher, left, and Albert Rodenhuesher said they found the "mother of all mushroom patches" April 17 between Waterloo and Hecker. The two were able to fill more than a grocery bag with the Red Morels they found."

-Caption and photo above are from the *Waterloo (Illinois) Republic-Times* of April 24, 1991.

(Story continued on page 2)

Morel Season At Hand (continued from page 1)

Omer and Albert Rodenhuesher are John's Regnier's cousins. They told John, an MMS member, that they prepare the "red morel" by rinsing them and then deep frying them with pancake batter. They say they have eaten them all their lives.

Some *Gyromitra* species in this area are eaten by local rural people. They are commonly called "big red," "beef-steak mushroom" and "elephant ears" (quite confusing to someone who thinks as oyster mushrooms as "elephant ears")."

Field guides have lengthy and often confusing warnings about the "false morels", or lorchels, as they are also called. They contain varying amounts of MMH (monomethylhydrazine), a rocket fuel and carcinogen.

The question of whether or not to eat one is a question for an educated consumer. Consult the delightful *A Morel Hunter's Companion* by Nancy Smith Weber. Consult as many field guides as you can. Sign your Personal Responsibility Statement. Come to the Morel Madness Weekend and share poisoning stories with other Members.

By the way, we still have MMS "BIG RED - POISONOUS OR EDIBLE? T-shirts available.

Attention Foray Leaders

Foray leaders should coordinate schedule of forays for this year with Don Dill so that we can post the dates in the *Earthstar*.

Don has made up a form for foray leaders to record the facts for each foray so that coherent reports made be published in the *Earthstar*. Info will include a list of species, weather conditions, number of participants, etc.

By saving your Earthstars over the years, you'll have a good idea of when to look for your favorites.

Beginning Class at Arboretum

An introduction to mushrooming, "Mushroom Mystique," will be offered at the Shaw Arboretum in Grey Summit on May 16 and 17. On either day there will be a slide talk and then a foray on the Arboretum grounds. This will be the third year Ken Gilberg has done the class which has brought many new members into our fold. Contact the Arboretum for information about classes--1-742-3512.

Fall Campout in Planning Stage

Currently we're working on a plan to meet around Missouri's Mingo Swamp Refuge area for this year's Fall Campout. Dr. Walter Sundberg has looked into his crystal mushroom and a 1941 copy of *The Yearbook of Agriculture* and has determined that edibles and all manner of fungi will be fruiting to beat the band the weekend of September 12

We are inviting other clubs to join our group and hope to coordinate with neighboring states' clubs. Jay Justice of the Arkansas Myco Club has expressed an interest. How

about you there in Illinois? Here's something easy for your Southerners to get to.

Jack and Marty Toll will be our guides. They spent many years around Mingo where Jack was Wildlife Manager. The area offers a terrific diversity of habitats for all types of wildlife and is an area to find Southern and Northern examples of mushrooms.

If you are interested in helping organize and plan the expedition, please call Ken at 458-1458. Last year, Carol and Larry Hazelip organized the spectacularly successful Fall Campout. It's someone else's turn.

A Passion for Mushroom Hunting by Erika Petke

I never have enough time to enjoy all my hobbies and interests. Painting porcelain dolls, knitting sweaters, wind surfing, making cone wreaths, and mushroom hunting are only a few of the things I like to do. Mushroom hunting began as a vacation pastime in Germany and grew into a passion for mushrooms and a mushroomer in Jefferson City.

Many years ago, when my son was about 12 years old, we spent our vacation in Bavaria. The cottage was in a vacation village with a number of attractions for children, one of which was learning about mushrooms. We did not know anything about mushrooms, so we decided to go. Our guide was an elderly, white bearded man dressed in old *lederhosen* and a checked shirt. After a few words about fungi, he urged us to cut every one. When we came back, he glanced at them, tossed the good ones in our baskets and threw the inedibles away. I still hear his voice, "*Steinpiltz, Holzritterling, Pfifferling, Holzritterling*, etc." Although the mushrooms appeared so different, in color, shape, and size, he labeled most of them *Holzritterlinge* [*Tricholomopsis*]. I admired him; the wish to know more grew, but I didn't think I would be able to accomplish it. It was a dream.

When we were home again, we could hardly wait to go foraging, but we did not recognize what we found. For assistance, I looked through magazines, papers and books until I found the address of a school near the town where my parents lived. That was wonderful, since I could go to school and visit my parents. I registered for the next spring. On the first day, we learned to take only fresh young specimens of the edibles and to clean them in the woods, cutting away the buggy parts. Since some choice mushrooms contain poison when raw, we were told not to taste them if we didn't know them. Armed with wicker baskets and kitchen knives and split into small groups, we plunged into the woods. The leader stayed with us and answered our questions. From the unknown, two or three specimens were taken for later identification.

Back in school, we learned to prepare the different kinds of mushrooms and cooked them. After eating we were told how to identify the unknown ones. We learned theory and how to identify the different genera by their characteris-

tics especially for the poisonous ones. For example, *Amanita phalloides* is a white mushroom which smells good and looks quite harmless. Yet it is so poisonous that those who eat it can frequently be saved only through a liver transplant. *Amanita muscaria* is one of the most beautiful, having a saucer-shaped cap with white spots. It likes to grow in fairy rings. There are others you can eat without problems as long as you don't drink alcohol with your meal. They contain a substance very similar to antabuse. *Paxillus involutus* may cause an allergic reaction. Some people eat it all their life, others only once. The only professional mycologist ever to have died of mushroom poisoning ate this one. Two co-workers ate it and assured me that it was flavorful. I never dared to try it. One of my favorite mushrooms, *Kuehneromyces mutabilis*, a small tawny-edged, orange-brown one growing on dead wood, has a fatal look alike, *Galerina marginata*. They can be distinguished only by smell. I never trusted my family. I checked every single mushroom myself before fixing the meal. Only knowing the characteristics of poisonous mushrooms will keep the pot hunter alive. We used chemicals and microscopes when we couldn't identify inconspicuous specimens. In addition to the German names we practiced the Latin, which I was not very interested in. Sometimes, when there were no mushrooms in the woods, we used the time to talk about protecting nature, learned about acid rain and other environmental problems. We also identified medicinal herbs and wild flowers and studied their uses.

After spending many weekends in school we had improved enormously. It was fun going into the woods recognizing a variety of species and picking them. While filling the basket, we forgot about the work to come — cleaning, cutting, cooking, frying, freezing. Year after year, probably through pollution, there were fewer and fewer mushrooms in the woods.

Nevertheless I did not forget mushroom hunting. When I first came to America in 1989 and visited a cemetery and saw all the mushrooms, I felt the fever and addiction again. I wanted to pick them, but I knew I shouldn't since similar looking species could be good in Germany yet poisonous in America. First, I went to a bookstore to get a mushroom book. I got lucky.

Next, I got a flier advertising a Fall Festival at a nursery with several attractions, one the Missouri Mycological Society. Mycological? I remembered enough Latin to know that it was a mushroom club. Through the nursery, I was connected with Ken Gilberg, president of the club. Ken organized a mushroom hunt for the following Sunday in my honor! I was blissful, finally I had found somebody who knew mushrooms. Ken and I became very good friends. With him I experienced the American woods for the first time. I saw the beauty and the abundance of nature, not only mushrooms, flowers, snakes and mosquitoes, but also turtles. I remember well when he said, "Look, there's a turtle."

"Turtle? What is a turtle?" Of course, I knew the word, yet a turtle in the woods was beyond my imagination.

He also taught me to have more fear of chiggers than snakes.

Soon I found out that mushroom hunting in America differs from the way I had learned — more adventurous. Tasting a little bit was frightening to me, yet I learned to accept it, since nobody died. In Germany, every mushroom has a common name. America, bigger and geographically more diverse, has a far greater fungal flora; so they usually employ Latin names. For example, the genus *Suillus* has about six German species but over thirty American species. Indeed, some common American names are applied to different mushrooms in different parts of the country.

In October of last year, we camped out in South-Central Missouri. I did not dare drive that far, since I had bought my car only six weeks previously, and had not driven for the last twenty-five years. So Ken took me with him. It was a cold and rainy weekend. We did not find many mushrooms, but I found Philip. Even though I enjoyed living in St. Louis, I followed him and moved to Jefferson City. We got married in November, 1991.

All in all, my dream has come true. Now after all these years I realize that my first teacher was not as familiar with mushrooms as I had thought. Now I am able to recognize many mushrooms, including the "*Holzritterling*" (*Tricholomopsis*) which are seldom found and look very much alike. So, mushroom hunting played a very important part in my life. It not only opened my eyes to the beauty of nature, but involved me early in environmental protection. Nature, with its horn of plenty, gave me more than mushrooms, berries, and cones, it also gave me the love of my life, Philip.

Disappearing Mushrooms: Another Mass Extinction

A sobering article by Jeremy Cherfas appeared in a recent issue of *Science Magazine* (Vol. 254) describing the gradual disappearance of mushrooms in areas stretching from Scotland and England to the Netherlands through Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland and Hungary. Not only have the mushrooms decreased dramatically in number but also in size.

Eef Arnolds, a fungal ecologist at the University of the Netherlands comes to the distressing conclusion after considerable research, that fungal species are in catastrophic decline throughout Europe.

John Jaenike, an ecologist at the University of Rochester is also concerned that the same may be true in the United States, however we lack the long historical records to confirm Arnold's theory. Arnolds has ruled out overpicking because both the edible and non-edible species are in decline.

Prime suspects in these declines so far are nitrogen, sulfur and ozone in the air. In Holland, the main offender appears to be farming which uses vast amounts of nitrogen fertilizers.

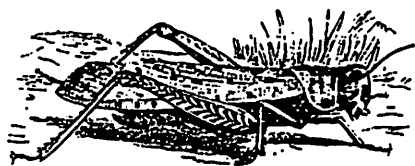
The mycorrhizal relationship between fungi and trees further suggests that the decline in European forests is also

involved. Jaenike also feels that fungal population in the U.S. would be a prudent and worthwhile project for amateur mycologists to undertake.

-Don Dill

New Word Coined

Kris Klocke, MMS member, has coined a word that may become lingua franca among mushroomers. When we fungophiles go out in the woods hunting for mushrooms, we're not just looking for food, as the word foraging implies, but *mycolunking*. Obviously derived from *spelunking*, the exploration of caves—common usage could easily make it *mushlunking*. When we're out mushlunking, we're interested in the shapes, growth habits, ecology, classification and a hundred other facets of mushrooming.



Entomophagy Newsletter

Everyone has to love mushrooms—but insects? Leland Von Behren had sent to me *The Food Insects Newsletter*. This review is from the *Whole Earth Review* and written by Ted Schultz:

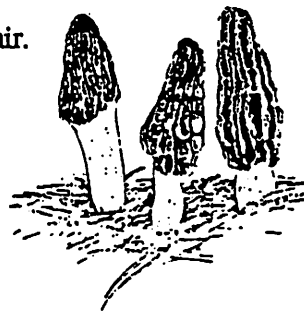
In almost every culture on the planet, insects are eaten as a delicious part of the diet. Not only do they provide essential nutrition to humans foraging in marginal environments, but certain species are sought-after gourmet items that demand top dollar in Oriental markets and upper-crust Mexico City restaurants. Among the few exceptions to this wide-spread entomophagy (eating of insects) are the European-derived cultures, which are increasingly imposing their misplaced squeamishness upon indigenous peoples—and malnutrition is the unfortunate result. As one Mexican agronomist observed, "More Mexicans would be eating bugs were it not for decades of ad campaigns by international companies pushing white bread and Spam."

The Food Insects Newsletter, originating at the Department of Entomology at the University of Wisconsin at Madison, is an effort to reverse this trend. News items, short articles, and book reviews advocate the use of insects for food for both humans and livestock. Doesn't it make more sense, for example, to eat locusts (as generations of Africans and Native Americans have done) than to dump tons of pesticides on them? (And from all reports, they are quite tasty, similar to fried shrimp.) In fact, pound for pound, insect pests are often more nutritious than the crops they eat!

Though the authors are quite serious about their subject, the tone of *The Food Insects Newsletter* is friendly and informal. And there are frequent excursions into the light-hearted, as in the article "Entomophagy in the Movies" and in numerous recipes for such neglected delicacies as meal-worm quiche, grasshopper fritters, and rice with cooked wasps.

Morels by William Jay Smith from *The Tin Can and Other Poems*

A grey wet day—rain falling slowly, mist over the valley,
mountains dark circumflex smudges in the distance—
Apple blossoms just gone by, the branches feathery still as if
fluttering with half-visible antennae—
A day in May like so many in these green mountains, and I
went out just as I had last year
At the same time, and found them there under the big
maples—by the bend in the road—right where they had
stood
Last year and the year before that, risen from the dark duff of
the woods, emerging at odd angles
From spores hidden by curled and matted leaves, a fringe of
rain on the grass around them,
Beads of rain on the mounded leaves and mosses round
them,
Not in a ring themselves but ringed by jack-in-the-pulpits
with deep eggplant-colored stripes;
Not ringed but rare, not gilled but polyp-like, having sprung
up overnight—
These mushrooms of the gods, resembling human organs
uprooted, rooted only on the air,
Looking like lungs wrenched from the human body, lungs
reversed, not breathing internally
But being the externalization of breath itself, these spicy,
twisted cones,
These perforated brown-white asparagus tips—these morels,
smelling of wet graham crackers mixed with maple
leaves;
And, reaching down by the pale green fern shoots, I nipped
their pulpy stems at the base
And dropped them into a paper bag—a damp brown bag (their
color)—and carried
Them (weighing absolutely nothing) down the hill and into
the house; you held them
Under cold bubbling water and sliced them with a surgeon's
stroke clean through,
And sautéed them over a low flame, butter-brown; and we
ate them then and there—
Tasting of the sweet damp woods and of the rain one inch
above the meadow:
It was like feasting upon air.



Morel Madness

The weekend of April 11 at Meramec State Park is the date and place picked by organizers Jim Winn and John Regnier for our first ever Morel Madness Weekend. Member and non-member alike are welcome.

Schedule of Events

Friday, April 10 - Campers arrive before 10:00 p.m. Look for MMS signs in campground, but you may choose any campsite, find MMSers by campfire.

Saturday, April 11

9:00 a.m. - Meet at Shelter #1 marked with MMS sign.

We will discuss morel hunting, the status of current crop and get strategies and tips from the "pros."

9:30 til 12:00 noon - Search with the "pros" (if they'll let you), join a group of your choice or chart your own course.

12:00 til 1:30 p.m. - Identification of finds and lunch at Shelter #1. Pack your own picnic or (for optimists) bring a skillet, eggs, etc. Some will provide camp stoves, you provide recipes and ingredients. There'll be more talk... tips on preserving, recipes, etc.

1:30 til 4:00 p.m. - The Great Morel Hunt. On your own or in small groups

4:00 til 4:30 p.m. - The official weigh-in at Shelter #1.

Morels will be weighed, measured and classified and other found fungi will be identified.

7:00 p.m. - Madness Dinner at Meramec Park Lodge will be buffet style from their buffet but we'll be seated in a private room. We may well have a mushroom talk with slides, etc.

8:30 p.m. - Move to campfire in campground

Sunday, April 12 - More Morel Madness for those who stay over, choose your own groups and departure times.

9:00 a.m. - Wildflower hunt and identification led by park naturalist. Meet at visitor's center.

Meramec State Park is located 3 miles south of I-44 on Hwy 185 at Sullivan, Mo. Driving time from Clayton, MO - 1 hr. 15 min., Jeff City - 1 hr. 30 min., Springfield - 2 hr. 30 min.

This large state park, combined with even larger nearby Meramec Forest offers an incredibly varied and productive hunting ground. Trails are mapped and well marked. This is a great place for kids of all ages. The new visitor center is great and guided cave tours are available several times per day. Last year's morel crop was the most abundant that locals could ever remember.

Accommodations

Cabins - The park has 20 small cabins that they rent for \$40 to \$60+ for 2 to 8 people. (Prices vary as to the size of cabin and number of people.) Call (314) 468-6519 for additional information and reservations. The cabins sell out early, so call as soon as possible if interested.

Camping - There are over 200 camping sites in the park. The 1992 price is: full hookup - \$11.00, electric - \$10.00, and basic - \$ 6.00.

The procedure is to enter, pay fee at gate (or if unoccupied, go to any unoccupied site and set up camp - fee will be

collected at site). Our favorite sites (recommended for MMS campers) are #181 to #188. We do not think it will be necessary to reserve a site at this time of year, but to do so call (314) 468-6519. Reservations pay an additional fee and are given a site in the #60 to #111 area. Senior citizen discounts are available to those over 65. Two tents or one trailer and one tent are permitted per campsite. Quiet hours are enforced at 10:00 p.m. til 7:00 a.m. The main entrance is shut down for the night at 10:00 p.m. so schedule your arrival accordingly. Pets are allowed on a leash throughout the park, including in the campground. So bring your morel sniffing hound or cat.

Those not staying overnight - The park closes at 10:00 p.m., so if the party goes from dinner to the campground (as it most likely will), you will turn into an ugly stepsister at precisely 10:00 p.m. if you haven't started home.

Morel Madness Dinner - The club member who brings in the most edible morels, total weight (Big Reds excluded) will be crowned the 1992 Morel King or Queen at the Madness Dinner and will be treated accordingly, in addition to receiving a small prize. The member finding the largest single specimen of an edible morel will be crowned Prince or Princess and receive a similar prize.

Since everyone is aware that all mushroom people are a little crazy, there will be no need to dress normally for the Madness Dinner. In fact, it will be mandatory to wear something a little "crazy" to dinner. Madness of all types will be tolerated. Dancing elves and fairy princesses, woodsmen and Robin Hoods, Indian maidens, and scuba divers will be in attendance. This is not a full scale masquerade party, but each member must show some degree of madness to be allowed into the inner sanctuary of the Morel Madness Dinner. Don't worry about costumes, a morel in the ear or Bullwinkle mittens will suffice.

What if it rains? We'll be there anyway. See above.

What if morels are not out yet? We'll be there anyway.

What if when you get there, everybody looks like people you wouldn't want to associate with? We'll be there anyway. See above.

Costs - Due to cost of renting the shelter for the day, the small prizes (and the expense of growing massive amounts of morels and planting them through out the park!), there will be a reservation fee of \$2.00 per person for each person attending the Madness Dinner. The Saturday night buffet at the lodge will cost \$6.95 plus drinks and tip (payable to the lodge that night). You may order items from the menu from \$4 to \$10. Though no alcoholic beverages are served, you may "brown bag" wine if done discretely.

It is absolutely mandatory that you make a reservation for dinner no later than Friday, March 27, 1992 by calling John Regnier at (314) 532-8012. Those not making a reservation may not be able to sit with the group for dinner. If you choose not to come to the Madness Dinner, please feel free to join us for all other activities. No reservation fee or advanced notice is required for this option.



Culinary Corner

Erika Petke, well known to this group as an excellent culinary artist submitted this recipe:

Mushroom Soup for a Variety of Mushrooms

bacon	mushrooms
onions	flour
garlic	broth
carrot	sour cream
celery	parsley
leek	

Quantities of ingredients or ingredients themselves may vary depending on what you have found or have at hand. This is supposed to come out differently each time you make it.

Cut vegetables and mushrooms in small pieces. Put bacon in the pot with the onions, garlic and cook on a medium heat until onions have become a golden color. Add vegetables, stir, and cook and cook about five minutes. Add the mushrooms and cook another five minutes. Add a tablespoon or so of flour and cook until light brown. Add broth to the pot, stir in some salt and pepper and cook five minutes more. Before serving, add sour cream and parsley. If you like, add beer, wine or cheese to the soup.

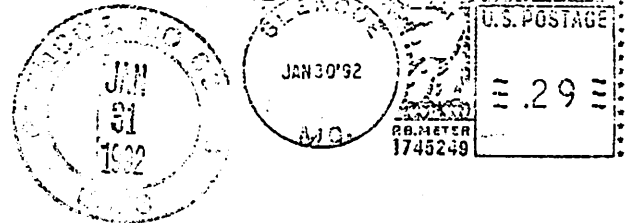
"If it doesn't taste good when it's done--add something!"

Errata: I left out a half stalk of celery, chopped fine, from the list of ingredients for Mushroom Barley Soup in the last Earthstar (#22)

-Ed.

MISSOURI MYCOLOGICAL SOCIETY

c/o Ken Gilberg, Editor
2888 Ossenfort Road
Glencoe, MO 63038



SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

- Saturday, February 29, 11 a.m. - Gary Lincoff on Mushroom Evolution at the Freund Center in Shaw Arboretum, Gray Summit, Missouri
- Sunday March 1, 1:00 p.m.- Winter Meeting and Mycophagist Luncheon at Babler State Park
- Saturday, April 11 - Morel Madness at Meramec State Park
- August 13-16 - NAMA Foray in Angel Fire, New Mexico
- September 13 & 13 - Fall Campout at Mingo National Wildlife Refuge, Puxico, MO

LAST NOTICE FOR DUES, PLEASE PAY
*DON DILL
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*ST. LOUIS MO 63117