Well we did it again! The weather was perfect—two days of rain prior to MOMS annual spring morel day, then sunshine and 70 degrees for our hunt. It was glorious, just glorious. Oh, and 45 mushroomers picked 700 morels. Here is how the hunters fared:

2003 Madness King Shannon Stevens – 59 *esculenta*, 2 *semilibera* and 2 false morels. He edged out partner Mike Perks who had 59 *esculenta* and 1 *semilbera*. Because these two were so close, Shannon took the honor of King on the basis of total weight. This the second time in three years that Shannon has taken the crown. Should we move his stature to Lord? I guess next year will decide that issue.

Madness Queen, with 91 black and yellow morels is Julie Cole. Julie also took the coveted “Most Morels” plaque. This is Julie’s second time as Queen. We may be looking for a new designation for her as well. I will need some help with this new

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Morel Madness 2003

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Morel Madness Species List

- Auricularia auricula: Tree-Ear
- Coprinus atramentarius: Alcohol Inky
- Coprinus micaceus: Mica Cap
- Favolus alveolaris: Hexagonal-Pored Polypore
- Galerina sp.: Galerina
- Ganoderma lucidum: Ling Chi
- Gyromitra fastigiata: Thick-Stalked False Morel
- Hapalopilus nidulans: Tender Nesting Polypore
- Lentinus tigrinus
- Morchella angusticeps: Conical Morel
- Morchella esculenta: Yellow Morel
- Morchella semilibera: Half-Free Morel
- Peziza sp.: Brown Cup
- Polyporus arcularius: Spring Polypore
- Polyporus conchifer: Little Nest Polypore
- Polyporus squamosus: Dryad’s Saddle
- Psathyrella sp.: Schizophyllum commune: Common Split Gill
- Tremella mesenterica: Witches’ Butter
- Trichaptum biformis: Violet-Toothed Polypore

Later that afternoon, I was again reminded of the power of the morel at the awards ceremony. Each year I am amazed at the diversity of species that can be found in a single morel garden. The judges select their top picks based on the overall appearance of the morels, and each year there are new challenges to overcome. This year, the judges were faced with a particularly difficult decision in selecting the Tallest Morel category. After much deliberation, they selected Bill Perks’ entry as the winner. The judges then moved on to the Smallest Morel category, which is always a tough call. This year, the judges selected Rachael Cole’s entry as the winner. The Largest False Morel category was awarded to Shannon Stevens, and the Most Species category went to Chuck Yates. The judges had a difficult time selecting the Honorable Mention category, and in the end, they selected Sam Shemwell as the winner.

Then there was the food. A five-pound tenderloin grilled on a charcoal pit after being rubbed with Michael Perks’ secret rub. Pork tenderloin, fried walleye and mahimahi, homemade salsa (to die for). I’m getting stuffed again just relaying this to you. I can’t go on with the fifty other incredible dishes that we enjoyed with three gallons of vodka to mix with Angelika’s home-
made bloody mary mix. And if I missed thanking our four cooks, Angelika, Shannon, Mike and Doris, I want to do so now. You helped make this weekend the success it was. Thank you!

And lastly, but actually the best, was our speaker Elio Schaechter. It was fun having him follow me in the woods in the morning and listening to him and Dr. Bob Gessner talk about everything and anything while they hunted. He stayed glued to me like he was on a rope and as everyone knows that is not an easy feat to accomplish. Thanks for your great presentations, Elio!

I’d like to thank everyone for coming this year. I know that staying at the Lay Field Station cost everyone a little extra if you stayed both nights, but I hope the Board of Directors will vote to have Madness 2004 back at Lay. MOMS members, please cast your vote for Lay. Thanks again.

Smallest morel—the hardest of all awards to win was picked by the eagle eye of Rachael Cole.

Our new friend

by Maxine Stone

To us, he is our friend, Elio. To the larger world, he is Moselio Schaechter, world-renowned researcher, educator, and writer.

Elio Schaechter generously gave of himself at Morel Madness this year. Not only did he offer fabulous presentations both Friday night and Saturday night, he also was an easily accessible presence for all.

On Friday, Elio spoke about “What are Morels (and other mushrooms), Anyhow?” He managed to engage us so well that we were mesmerized. What a pleasure to hear him. Did you know that morel spores are in the pits of the morel, not the edges?

Saturday’s talk was on “Mushrooms in Art”. He showed us many beautiful slides and one tidbit we learned was that the oldest piece of mushroom art known is a fresco from the first century A.D., depicting Lactarius deliciosus.

Elio was at Tufts University for 33 years and chaired the Department of Molecular Biology and Microbiology for 23 years. He won the Tufts University Medical Students’ Teaching Award 11 times, which obviously says something about his teaching capabilities.

He has written many books on molecular biology and microbial disease. However, “In the Company of Mushrooms” is his mushroom masterpiece, all written in a very readable, conversational style.

Elio tromped through the woods with us at Morel Madness staying quite close to our morel maniac, Willie May, and said that he had never been on a morel foray. Imagine that? Having lived in Boston much of his adult life, then moving to San Diego, that is understandable.

He has written to me thanking me for the weekend with MOMS and I have this paragraph that he has allowed me to quote: “This was turkey season, and several of the people there were torn between the two pursuits. Bright vests were handed out, just in case. After all, it is easier for a turkey hunter to confuse a mushroomer for a turkey—than for a mushroomer to confuse a turkey hunter for a mushroom…. This was not a casual walk through the woods but a well-organized and planned search expedition. Perhaps we did not shock and awe the morels, but we certainly gave them fair warning.”

With all of this said, and this merely touches the surface of Elio Schaechter’s life and times, he graced us with his presence on his birthday. What a guy!
Sweat ‘n Chanterelles 2003

**July 18th-20th at Meramec State Park**

Come join us for the Sweat ‘n Chanterelles Foray cosponsored by Meramec State Park in Sullivan, Missouri

**General Schedule of Events**

**Friday, July 18**

9:00AM
Meet at Shelter #1 to check in and find with whom you’re hunting. We’ll try to have the red-and-white MOMS mushroom sign up to make the shelter easier to find. We’ll discuss proper chanterelle picking etiquette, the varieties of chanterelles and other mushrooms you’re likely to find (or not ). Maps will be distributed for those wanting them. Dress appropriately. It’s hot, but long pants and a hat are recommended. The ticks and brambles are out in full force! Bug, tick and bramble repellant are a must. Try treating socks and pants a day ahead with Permanone, but read the directions!

9:30AM-12:00PM
Go find ‘em! Bring back whatever you find interesting. We’ll have plenty of mycologist-types to help us sort and ID our finds.

12:00PM-1:30PM
We’ll meet back at Shelter #1 for lunch. Be sure to bring your picnic lunch and something to share, if you’d like. Besides chanterelles, my favorite, *Lactarius volemus* are out this time of year and are scrumptious. If there are enough, we might cook some up!

1:30PM-4:30PM
Continue hunting or spend some time relaxing, hiking or swimming in the cool spring waters of the Meramec. Don’t venture too far upstream or you’ll be late for dinner!

5:00PM
Meet on the veranda at Meramec Park Lodge at the top of the hill. We’ll have cocktails outside before adjourning to a great meal inside. The Lodge “fancied” up their menu last year and offers many different entrees as well as the salad bar. As I recall, the trout was heavenly!

7:00PM-9:00PM - Gather at the Fischer Cave Amphitheater, near the campground entrance (in case of foul weather, we’ll be at the Visitor Center) for our evening program. This year the Park will provide the speaker. Bats, wild flowers, coyotes—whatever the topic, it’s bound to be good.

9:00PM - ??? - Campfire & snacks back at the campground.

**Sunday, July 21**

9:00AM-12:00PM - No schedule, you’re on your own. Foray some more, swim, hike, whatever. Break camp at noon, although you’re welcome to stay in the park until ready to go home.
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by David Yates
Foray Coordinator

Directions and Accommodations

Meramec State Park is three miles south of Sullivan, MO on Highway 185, approximately one hour west of St. Louis following I-44.

If you’re not a tent camper, cabins are available in the park for groups of 2 to 8 people. Call ahead to make reservations - (573) 468-6519. Also, Sullivan has several inexpensive motels. For something nicer, twenty-five minutes away in Bourbon is the Greer Hollow Farm B&B – (573) 732-4979.

For meals other than Saturday night, bring your own. For country-style comfort food on the way home, try the favorite Du Kum Inn on the north outer road.

This weekend is open to everyone, members and non-members alike, and is free (except meals). We thank Meramec State Park for their continued help, generously co-sponsoring this event and providing the camping area, shelter, amphitheater, and park staff. All questions should be directed to David Yates - (314) 457-0939, dyates@bondwolfe.com or the Meramec State Park – (573) 468-6072.

See you there!

by Joe Walsh

 Recent Forays

Babler State Park

April 12 was a warm sunny day. Several MOMS members met with Lois and I at Babler State Park for a nice, early season morel foray. These included (in no special order) Bob Siemer, Ann Early, Claudia Joyce, Maxine Stone, Olga Neuolenko, Sylvia Rolloff, David Yates, Patrick Lennon, Ghilaine Chabelt, Jon Casey, Bill and Elaine Coulson, and Charlie Raiser. Very few morels were found, as it was still very early in the season.

Maxine seemed to have the best luck. She had 8 morels, including 6 tiny grays, one small half-free, and a black. Sylvia found the first one, a tiny gray, and she also found the first false morel, a *Gyromitra caroliniana*. Lois also found one of those. Patrick and Charlie each had one tiny yellow. Bob, Jon and Ann also each found one tiny gray beneath an ash tree. In all, I believe just about everyone had at least one mushroom. This seems not to have been a very good year for the half-frees (*M. semilibera*). Of all the 500(+) morels I found so far this season, only one was a half-free, and it was tiny. Very few were found during Madness. On April 11, I found the largest *Gyromitra* that I have ever seen. It was a foot tall, and weighed four and one-half pounds. It was growing in the bottom of the crater formed when an old dead oak tree toppled. I think this season has been far more productive than last year was.

Incurable Epicureans

The Incurable Epicureans got together again at Barb and Gary Steps’ home to dig into the subject of Arabian food. While this seems very “CNN News of the Moment,” in fact, it was planned long ago. As always, the enthusiasm and creativity of the club was evident in every wonderful dish and in the clothing for the evening. A number of Arab and Middle Eastern cultures were represented among the outfits worn for the evening.

The group was also rewarded with a surprise entertainment—a visit by Karen and Bruce Lowry’s daughter, Cora, on her way to another engagement as a belly dancer. Her visit added texture and fun to the evening, and everyone enjoyed her work while nibbling on wonderful appetizers.

Included in the beautiful and tasty menu were yogurt/leak soup and Ramadan soup, lentil dip with fresh flat bread, several exotic salads, and number of side dishes based on eggplant, zucchini, and chard.

At the center of the meal for the evening was a dish of lamb and chicken Tagine with couscous. Beautiful to look at, but too good to look at for long.

As if we needed any more food, desert followed, represented by a yogurt cake, a Middle Eastern version of flan, and filled dates. All supported with plenty of hot mint tea.

In all, it was another spectacular success for the IE. We add another great memory to our lengthening list of amazing events. And here we come again—the next IE dinner will be held at Jeri and Bill Kwapy’s house on August 23rd. The theme is a Hawaiian Buffet. You think we can dig a hole in the back yard and barbeque a whole hog in a pit? Where will we find all the banana leaves to wrap it up? Stay tuned!
2003 Forays & Events

Sun. 6/8  10AM Mushroom Identification Class at Rockwoods Reservation.
Sat. 6/14  10AM Foray at Rockwoods Reservation. Gary Steps, leader
Sat. 6/21  10AM Foray at Forest 44 Conservation Area. Pat Lennon, leader
Thurs. 6/26  10AM Foray at Greensfelder County Park. Claudia Joyce, leader.
         Bring sack lunch. Meet at Interpretive Center.
Sun. 6/29  12 noon Foray at Tyson Research Center. Gordon White, leader
Tues. 7/1  Board meeting (call Maxine if you wish to attend).
7/12-7/13 Sat. - Sun. Dry July at Andrea Vadner's Farm (limited to 25 persons)
         Call Andrea at 314-647-0167 to reserve a spot.
Sun. 7/13  10AM Mushroom Identification Class at Rockwoods Reservation.
7/18-7/20  Fri. - Sun. Sweat 'n Chanterelles at Meramec State Pk. Dave Yates
Sun. 8/10  10AM Mushroom Identification Class at Rockwoods Reservation.
Sun. 8/17  10AM Mushroom Identification Class at Rockwoods Reservation.
Sat. 9/13  10AM Foray at Engelmann Woods Conservation Area. Elaine Fix.
9/18-9/21  MOMS Annual Fall Foray, Mingo National Wildlife Refuge
Sun. 10/5  10AM Strategies for Mushroom Identification at Rockwoods
Sat. 10/11  10AM Foray at Hazlett St. Park, IL. Leland von Behren
         and Shannon Stevens, coordinators
Sun. 10/26  10AM Foray at Pickle Springs Natural Area near Farmington, MO

Forays and classes meet at the Visitor’s Center or parking area, unless otherwise specified, 15 minutes before the indicated departure time. Bring a sack lunch so that you don’t go hungry while indentifying the finds.

Mushroom Identification Classes meet at Rockwoods Reservation. All classes taught by Don Dill.

Next Earthstar Issue

The deadline for the August issue of the Earthstar will be July 1. Anyone who wishes to submit should e-mail MOMSearthstar@aol.com, subject matter: Earthstar story. Thanks!

Missouri Mycological Society
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Gyromitra found April 11, 2003
by Joe Walsh; 1 foot high, 4½ pounds