

nyms



Winter 2007 New York Mycological Society Newsletter

Best Ever

This is the final newsletter of 2006. The year has flown by, but it has also brought one of the best years for finding mushrooms, excellent mushrooms, that many can remember.

The fall newsletter contained stories of finds from the summer forays and from members' various bountiful experiences. The fall itself brought anecdotes of bumper hen-of-the-woods (*Grifola frondosa*) yields from Elinoar Shavit, Maria Reidelbach, and other members. Inside this issue are some of Elinoar's accounts and pictures. The newsletter has often reported from members' experiences. I am happy to be able to continue to include these reports and would ask for anyone who is keeping notes to consider contributing them to the newsletter in the future.

We've just finished a terrific array of members' hors d'oeuvres made from those amazing summer and fall finds at the banquet on December 2. A list of the scrumptious homemade fare is included in this newsletter. In addition, Ursula Hoffmann writes memoirs of banquets and cooking events past, remembering some favorite recipes and moments. Ursula will continue to write NYMS mycophagic memories with everyone's help—she asks anyone who remembers some stories from past and recent banquets and cooking events email her with those tales. And, along the lines of memories, a letter from John Cage to the NYMS is reprinted as well as some of his recipes.

Besides Society history and memories, we have the first art issue. Inside are David Work's photos and a review of member Frank Spinelli's new photo book.

Important New York Mycological Society business notes are on page 2. Gary Lincoff will kick off the Emil Lang Winter Lecture Series on Sunday January 28.

Enthusiastically,
Pam



Picture by Elinoar Shavit

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↘ Upcoming Events ↙

If you haven't yet, send in your yearly dues! \$15/25 to renew. \$20/30 new membership. The membership coupon for 2007 is on page 11.

Details on these events can be found inside the newsletter or on the NYMS web site.

MEETINGS and LECTURES

At the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH): Please note that we are meeting in three different rooms this year.

Sunday, January 28, 2007 in Room 319:
Speaker: Gary Lincoff

Sunday, February 25, 2007 in Room 319:
Business Meeting

Sunday, March 18, 2007 in Linder Theater: To be Announced

Sunday, April 15, 2007 in Kaufmann Theater: To be Announced

These events are all from 1:00 to 4:00 pm. The most convenient entrance is the museum's Security Entrance on 79th St., although you can use any entrance. Inform the guard that you are attending the New York Mycological Society meeting for free entry.



NYMS Newsletter

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Vice President—Dennis Aita

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All statements and opinions written in this newsletter belong solely to the individual author and in no way represent or reflect the opinions or policies of the New York Mycological Society.

Submissions for the winter issue of the NYMS newsletter must reach the editor by March 1, 2007. Various formats are acceptable for manuscripts. Address questions to Pam Kray, editor. See above for addresses.

BREAKING NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Society Notes

The most important news for the Society is that we will be electing two new officers at the business meeting on February 25 at the Museum of Natural History in Room 319. Both our President, Maggie Vall, and our Treasurer, Alice Barner, are stepping down after several years each of service in their offices. Alice gave notice as of the last newsletter that she will not be continuing as NYMS Treasurer. Paul Sadowski, NYMS Secretary, has described the position's duties:

Manage the Society bank account: make deposits (membership, banquet and activity receipts, etc.), balance checkbook, pay invoices. The treasurer keeps the books, prepares annual operating statements for the business meeting and coordinates with the secretary in keeping the membership rolls in good order.

We thank you again, Alice, for taking on these most important and detailed chores for these many years.

HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE PRESIDENT?

It's not that hard or time consuming—

It's necessary to have one—

The pay is non-existent, but the fun can be great—

It's good practice for a little public speaking—

It's the way to take ideas into action—

Our NYMS needs You—

After seven years as president of our NYMS I've decided that that was a good run. I'm out. Our Nominating Committee will appreciate any volunteers and suggestions which can be put forth at Annual Business Meeting on February 25 at 1 pm at the American Museum of Natural History, Rm 319. So, GO.

Until then, respectfully submitted,

Maggie Vall, President

All our offices are volunteer positions. If anyone is interested in sharing her or his talents in one of these posts, by all means make your intention known to the departing officer to get a better idea of the job particulars.

Other News—

During the business meeting we will also discuss some potential cooking and tasting events. They have been extremely successful (not to mention delicious) gatherings in the past. And the future promises even more exciting adventures in mycophagy. So, come to the business meeting, to participate in this discussion as well as to elect our officers for the next year.

The winter lecture dates are in, but the March and April speakers have yet to be determined. For the April meeting, in the Kauffman Auditorium, Gary has suggested that we try to book someone who can fill the larger space. Anyone who has an interesting speaker in mind should contact Gary Lincoff (garylincoff@earthlink.net or 212-662-2651).

Maria is planning some winter restaurant outings for a small group, if you are interested, please contact Maria via email: maria@hoopla.org.

NYMS Wayback Machine

Editor's note: the following is an excerpt from a letter from John Cage to the Society in 1964, unearthed by Lynn Payer in 1993, and submitted for republication now by Paul Sadowski. At this time of change of officers, it is interesting to get an idea of the founding thoughts and framework for our existence: keeping it simple. As we look into our history, we can see what stays and what changes over time.

UNREST IN THE NEW YORK MYCOLOGICAL SOCIETY (1964)

Most of you remember Florence Tarlow, who died last year. Florence's sister Ricki found this letter (see next page) from John Cage among Florence's belongings, and passed it on to the rest of us.

Stony Point, New York

December 11, 1964

Shortly after returning from my recent six-months tour, I had several conversations and read some correspondence which made it clear that there is a certain unrest in the New York Mycological

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It Was a Very Good Year

By Ursula Hoffmann

We are blessed this year with good mushroom weather and great mushroom collections—"what have I found and is it edible?"—so let me delve a bit into our club's culinary past.

In his "An Autobiographical Statement," *Southwest Review*, 1991, John Cage says that he left the city for the country in the fifties, and "there I found Guy Nearing, who guided me in my study of mushrooms and other wild edible plants." In 1962, John Cage and three other friends founded the New York Mycological Society.

The society's predecessor was the New York Mycological Club, founded in 1896(?). It seems, at least from the glimpses provided in the archives of the *New York Times*, that the original club members, too, cherished culinary moments from the very beginning. (I am referring below to material I used in more or less chronological order, interspersed with my own memories—these of more recent times, of course.)

In May 1897 the NYMC members met with the New York Association of Teachers of Cookery and feasted in Chinatown on mushrooms "in all the various ways which Chinese ingenuity could devise."

According to another article of the same month, Prof. Underwood of Columbia University talked about the mushrooms brought in by club members and declared one to be inedible. A woman objected saying that yes, it was not very tender but, cooked in a ragout, it added a delicious flavor. I wonder what the species was.



Now let's make a leap in time to 1965, but the emphasis is still on mycophagy:

"Bold Hunters Dine on a Wild Prize, The Mushroom" was in the *NYT* of 12/15/1965. The previous year, John Cage had to chop frozen oyster mushrooms from a tree to supply fresh mushrooms for the banquet. This year, he flew in matsutake he had found in California. In addition, everyone feasted on salmon, venison, and bread that had been baked in huge mushroom shapes. Moreover, the article mentions some of the early members of NYMS:

Art Bailie, highway supervisor for the town of Bedford, NY and a good mushroom collector (though, ironically, he kept getting lost on almost every club walk I remember) brought pickled *Grifola frondosa* collected three months earlier and Guy Nearing brought homemade wine. He always did, on every club walk, because he did not trust commercial products—and, let me tell you, all of us others tasted it just once.

The dessert was persimmon ice cream, shaped into a huge mushroom, with candied chanterelles. (Recipe: cut 1 pound chanterelles into 1/8" slices. Bring syrup of 4 cups sugar and 1/2 cup water to 245 degrees, add mushroom slices, cook about 4 minutes.)

Two composers, Walton Multer and Hugh Aitken, rendered their Mycologists' Anthem, "Deep deep in the murky shadows, there where the slime most creeps,/ With joy the stout mycologist his pallid harvest reaps./ Mycology! Mycology! Great Goddess of decay!"

In October 1969, Craig Claibourne, the late great and much-missed food editor of the *NYT*, published an article on the kitchen of the painter couple Giorgio Cavallon and Linda Lindeberg and some of Giorgio's (non-mushroom) recipes. Giorgio was a wonderful cook but not comfortable cooking mushrooms—that was my job while he was doing the pasta or risotto—though he collected assiduously: for years, we went out three days every weekend during the season. On one club walk, a woman held an *Amanita virosa* up to him and asked, "Is it edible?" With a poker face (and just a twinkle in his eyes), he replied, "Yes," adding softly, "just once."

The December 1970 *NYT* article is about the NYMS banquet, "The Guests brought their own Hors d'Oeuvre," mushrooms and more, some recipes, and a mention of some of the members. (That was the time when the annual banquet was held at the Academy of Sciences, and we members contributed the appetizers.)

Marge Morris, botanical illustrator, brought in a mushroom shaped casserole of

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Remember!

Stay responsibly in touch with us. If your telephone number, mailing or email address changes, please contact Paul Sadowski, Secretary with your new information. An additional note for listserv users: please remember to set your spam filter to be able to receive listserv emails.

NYMS walks policy: We meet when public transportation arrives. Check the walks schedule for other transportation notes. Walks last 5-6 hours and are of moderate difficulty except where noted. Bring lunch, water, knife, and a basket for mushrooms. Leaders have discretion to cancel walks in case of rain or very dry conditions. Be sure to check your email or contact the walk leader before a walk to see if it has been canceled for some reason. Non-members' attendance is \$5.

Warning: Many mushrooms are toxic. Neither the Society nor individual members are responsible for the identification or edibility of any fungus.

The new, improved NYMS site:

www.newyorkmyc.org

Frank Spinelli's book site:

www.thegloriousmushroom.com

David Work's gallery:

www.fiddlehead.smugmug.com/gallery/691083

Korean restaurant (review p. 7), the "kitchen" page has several enticing mushroom recipes:

www.hangawirerestaurant.com

Digital fungal art game:

www2.20q.net/fungus.html

New York State mushroom artist Marie Heerkens: <http://members.aol.com/heerkens/mushartg.htm>

Roxy Paine's 1990's fungal art:

<http://www.feldmangallery.com/pages/exhsolo/exhpai99.html>

Jonathan Miller Studio:

www.millerstudio.us

Mushroom links:

<http://www.agromantar.com/link.html>

We are sad to report that one of our members, Joan Arcari, passed away suddenly during this fall. While the exact date is unknown to us, it is clear that Joan regarded the New York Mycological Society as important and was planning on coming to the annual banquet. The Society mourns her passing.

Good Year, cont. from p. 3

chicken mushrooms. (She had served the same at a garden club meeting "and one of the women said she had picked out all of the chicken and left the rest!" "But there was no chicken in the dish," added Marge with her typical dry wit.)

George Waitkins, research chemist, came with both pickled *Polyporus frondosus* and *sulphureus*, commenting that one was firmer.

Franny Neale, textile designer, brought a spread of morels as well as small balls formed of cooked sulphur mushrooms, cheese, and nuts. (To the year's beach picnic, another great occasion for NYMS feasting, she had brought a memorable noodle casserole with *Polyporus frondosus*.) I have wonderful memories, collecting chanterelles with Franny and Maggie in Vermont, helping Franny to print t-shirts with mushroom designs, and being her sous-chef in mycophagy sessions at various weekend forays. Mrs. Peysey said: "I didn't bring anything but I wore my new mushroom print dress."

In her article about another banquet, "Taming the Wild Mushroom" (*NYT*, 9/27/1987), Sara Ann Friedman prints two of Fran Shinagel's mushroom recipes and writes about the appetizers brought by club members to the annual banquet: "The feast is a collection of odd-sounding dishes such as sulfur Newburg, pickled grifola, strobilomyces pâté and slippery jack soup. The ingredients look more like coral and soccer balls than what most people think of as mushrooms. But no matter. Within 15 minutes the nine-foot-long buffet table displaying these delicacies is picked clean—and, so far, the club reports no ill effects."

A couple of my "odd" contributions to the banquets—they were so much fun to prepare and share. One year, every weekend for an entire season, I collected perfect baby mushrooms, pickled them and stored them in the fridge. A day before the banquet, I made a colorless aspic with gelatine, water, salt, cider vinegar, and used a large bowl so the mushrooms would appear to float. This was ridiculously complicated and took a whole day: when the aspic was too soft, the mushrooms floated to the top, when too hard, it did not look clear—but at the banquet, the dish was miraculously obedient to the attempt to "disembowel" it to a platter, the result being very beautiful and was demolished in five minutes! I guess my long-range planning paid off.

Another year, I invited the Lincoffs and John Bergman to my apartment to create a great quantity of marzipan mushrooms for after dessert. What a fun evening! I kept making almond paste, Gary and John were shaping tiny mushrooms, and Irene painted them. We lined cookie sheets with chocolate sprinkles to simulate pine needles (there is no green chocolate), put the mini marzipan mushrooms on top, and carried them around for the banqueters to pick.

In recent memory, there have been morel breakfasts and great tasting sessions—of a number of different mushrooms at the Culinary Institute, of morels at Maria Reidelbach's home (the chef was Dennis Aita)...

The *NYT* archives also include quite a few articles on morels.

Here is the menu of a May feast, including the names of the wines paired with each course ("An Elite of Mushrooms Reigns over Five Courses." May 1975)—a special dinner prepared at the Statler Hilton Hotel, with Executive Chef Haakon Blanken assisted by Dr. Tornusciolo of the NYMS:

Potage Morilles du Ardennes—morel soup

Eggs Morilles Royale—hardboiled eggs filled with morels and ham, and sauced

Poulet en Cocotte Morille—potpie with chicken, chicken livers, bacon, morels

Morilles en Salade à la grecque—artichokes, avocado, morels

Crepes with morel filling

Dessert: chocolate mousse with meringue on top in the shape of morels.

Doesn't this sound wildly outrageous? 🍄

[Please e-mail any other banquet memories to ursula.hoffmann@lehman.cuny.edu]

David Work wins NAMA Photo Competition Awards

NYMS member and president of the Mid Hudson Mycological Association, David Work has produced many award-winning photos of mushrooms. Some of these were featured in the most recent issue of the *Mycophile*, NAMA's newsletter. We are lucky to be able to print some of them here, but we can't do them real justice. You can view these gorgeous pictures large and in color, plus more of David's photographs, at his web site, and in the PDF version of this newsletter on the NYMS web site.



* Field Notes *

October 11, 2006

Regretfully (or not at all so) I am in San Francisco and not in New York, as was originally planned. I didn't know you discussed different habitats of *Grifola frondosa* last Monday [at the study group] or I would have sent you these pictures before.

First, my largest this season was a 50 pound one singular fruit-body, growing out of one "stem," dragged into my car by the people who allowed me to remove it (still young and very good) and weighed by Eyal. It doesn't touch the old record from 2 years ago of a single *Grifola* weighing 75 pounds, found when Dave and Susie Rose from COMA were staying with us.

This year was the first time I saw *Grifola* growing with a tree other than oak, where it was undoubtedly growing with that tree. In the attached picture you'll see a *Grifola* growing 9 fruiting bodies in a circle around the thick trunk of a Red Maple.

I stopped collecting two weeks ago, but during the week that Taylor Lockwood stayed with me to video the process, I collected over 1500 pounds of *Grifola*, which represent over 350 fruiting bodies. My final count was over 600, and in terms of weight—it came to quite a bit over 2,000 pounds, thanks to a 30 pounder found with Noah Siegel and that 50 pounder, and the general large size of the end of the season ones. Unlike the New York area—out here it will all be over soon. As for the mushrooms themselves—whatever I do not keep or give to others, goes to a research center for cancer near Boston.

Photo credit: 2006 award-winning photographs by David Work

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44th Annual Banquet:

Hors d'Oeuvres of the Season's Catch

By Pam Kray

The annual banquet took place on Saturday evening, December 2, at Giovanni's Atrium, a restaurant tucked away in lower Manhattan. If you're not in that part of town, it's easy to forget how narrow the streets are and how "on the verge" of change the space between Broadway and Battery Park is. Walking there from Broadway we were treated to the exquisite lobbies of buildings around Trinity Church, with their enormous Christmas trees and no crowds of people in attendance. The night felt special right from that start.

At the restaurant, members familiar and not so familiar to me were mingling. The company of tasters grew at the hors d'oeuvres table as the dishes kept coming in. Many of the plates' labels included ingredients and the contributor's names and/or where the mushrooms were found. Here is an inventory of the samplings:

Pickled Grifola frondosa, by Dennis Aita

Chicken liver terrine with black morels and trumpets, by Ursula Hoffman: cream, cognac, duck fat, eggs, shallots, spices, a bit of sand—sorry about that—dried fungi from Europe

Country-vegetarian paté with Craterellus fallax, by Claudine Michaud: tempeh, cognac, shallots, garlic, salt and pepper, soja sauce, olive oil, thyme, black trumpets

Wild mushroom soup with Madeira, by Claude and Sara Martz: dried morels, dried ceps, fresh white buttons with Madeira wine, chicken and beef stocks, leeks, onions, butter, flour, rosemary, salt and pepper; optional: crème fraiche

Paté Maison, by Laurette Reisman: black trumpets, chicken livers, butter, Calvados, onion, and spices

Spinach and mushroom roll, by Paul Sadowski: eggs, milk, nutmeg, spinach, blewits, portobellos, porcini, Boletus bicolor

Pickled Armillariella mellea (honey mushroom) and Grifola frondosa (hen of the woods), by Stan Durka

Mushroom pie, by Marija Zeremski-Seferovic and Vanja Seferovic: supermarket mushrooms

Mushroom spread, found at Pelham Bay 10/06, anonymous: horse mushrooms (*Agaricus arvensis*), truffle butter, cream cheese, butter, shallots, garlic, parsley, salt and pepper

Black trumpet butter and corn bread (two kinds, gluten free), submission not signed

The rest of the evening went by in a wine and conversation-fueled whirl: several courses of food, including dessert. But no dessert compared with the marzipan *Boletus edulis* that Arlene Jacobs made for us.

Gary Lincoff made booklets for this our 44th annual banquet. The booklet included recipes from John Cage, the transcript from a 1974 lecture by Emil Lang: "A Consumer's Guide to Edible Mushrooms & How to Make Them More Edible (Project Edibility)". One plan is to put this transcript and the project online at our website so that we can update Emil Lang's work. The booklet also contained "A Hymn to Mycology," words by W. Multer and music by H. Aitken, but we would not sing. Dead silence, almost. Maybe next year if there's a piano (at least that is what we promised Gary...)

Thank you, Dennis and Claudine, for organizing another special banquet night. Thank you, Gary, for again giving us history and inspiration to keep it going. And thank you to the members who shared their mushrooms and recipes with us all, including the marzipan mushroom delights. 🍄

SPINACH AND MUSHROOM ROLL
EGGS, MILK, NUTMEG
BLEWITS, PORTABELLO, PORCINI
BOLETUS BICOLOR
PAUL SADOWSKI

Pickled
Armillariella Mellea
(Honey Mushroom)
+
Grifola frondosa
(Hen of the Woods)
Stan

PELHAM BAY 10/06



MUSHROOM SPREAD

- Horse mushrooms
- Truffle butter
- cream cheese
- butter
- shallots
- garlic
- parsley
- salt/pepper

PATÉ MAISON
BY LAURETTE REISMAN
BLACK TRUMPETS, CHICKEN
LIVERS, BUTTER, CALVADOS,
ONION AND SPICES.

COUNTRY-VEGETARIAN
PATÉ WITH BLACK
TRUMPETS
(CRATERELLUS FALLAX)

INGREDIENTS:

- TEMPEH
- COGNAC
- SHALLOTS
- GARLIC
- GARLIC
- SOJA SAUCE
- OLIVE OIL
- THYME
- BLACK TRUMPETS

Wild Mushroom Soup with Madeira
Mushrooms:
Dried morels
Dried Ceps
Fresh white buttons

Other ingredients:
Madeira wine
Chicken - beef stock
Leeks
Onions
Butter
Flour
Rosemary, salt & pepper

Ursula Hoffman's

Ursula Hoffmann's
**Chicken Liver Terrine
with
black morels & trumpets**

Other ingredients in case you have allergies:
cream, cognac, duck fat, eggs, shallots, spices, a bit of sand - sorry about that: dried fungi from Europe

Recipes from John Cage

Reprinted from Gary Lincoff's archives in the the 44th Annual Banquet booklet.

Mushroom Dogsup

John Cage once read in a book that "catsup" is a thin liquid. So, as he likes it thick, he calls his recipe "dogsup." This can be done with any kind of edible mushroom and must be kept at least a year before being used.

Mushrooms	Allspice
Cayenne	Mace
Salt and pepper	Brandy
Ginger root	Bay leaf

Break the mushroom caps in small bits; slice the stem. Place in an earthenware jar with an ounce and one-half of salt for each quart of mushrooms. Let stand in a cool place for three days, stirring and mashing several times a day. On the third day, put over a low fire, in an enamel or Pyrex pan, until the juices flow freely. This takes about one-half hour. At that moment, a "catsup" is strained through a sieve; the "dogsup" is just mashed. Simmer for 20 more minutes. Measure the mash, add to each half pint: 1 ounce ginger root, chopped our grated; a blade of mace; a bay leaf, broken up; a pinch of cayenne; 1 ounce each of black pepper and allspice. Boil down to half the quantity. Add, for each half pint, a teaspoon of the best brandy. Bottle, cork, and seal. 20 quarts of mushrooms, he adds, will produce 4-5 quarts of "dogsup."

Mushroom Salad Dressing

Juice of 1 lime or ½ lemon	A pinch of cayenne
Kosher salt	Black pepper, freshly ground
2 tablespoons mushroom "dogsup"	¾ cup heavy cream

This is served with a salad of peppergrass, watercress, chopped horseradish leaves, catbrier and bitter cress.

Matsutake Mania

By Maria Reidelbach with Will Donzelli

On the fringes of the midtown little Korea neighborhood that hosts a large concentration of good restaurants, Hangawai, 12 E. 32, is an atmospheric contrast. The interior is warm and colorful, with elegant, rustic and spare architecture and art. Removing your shoes, as requested, and padding on floor mats to your sunken table adds a tactile element to the sensual mix. Based on traditional ancient Korean cuisine the menu is vegetarian and composed of mountain produce: roots, greens, grains, and, luckily for us, lots of different mushrooms.

In December the restaurant featured a special matsutake menu. A variety of techniques and sauces emphasized different flavor notes of the delicate, yet resonant, piney flavor of this species. Here's what we had:

Matsutake soup: a light briney broth with thin slices of Matsutake buttons, crisp at first, softening and flavoring the broth over time, a good introduction to the pure taste of the mushroom.

Ginseng salad: ginseng rootlets: thin, chewy and bitter, thin crisp rice noodles, a shredded cabbage vegetable and watercress in a slightly sweet, creamy, citrusy-pineapple dressing.

Matsutake mushrooms and scallions on stick: thoroughly cooked but crisp scallions, thick slices of matsutake in a thick, clear, savory brown sauce a great marriage.

Grilled Matsutake mushrooms on pine leaves: these seemed more steamed than grilled and were served with a potent sesame-oil dip that needed a light hand.

Matsutake stone bowl rice : a beautiful bowl on legs, filled with sticky but not sweet rice studded with chunks of mushroom and served with a spicy, red pepper-flecked sauce, perhaps too bland on its own, but overpowered by the sauce.

Two kimchees, one white and mild, one green and spicy.

Chocolate pudding with pine nuts that echoed the piney matsutake flavor. 🍄



Elinor Shavit with her matsutake finds (see p. 5).

Field Notes, cont. from p. 5

This certainly was the very best mushroom year on my records, starting with the most amazing morel season, continuing through a prolific summer right into a record Matsutake season and these Grifola. In terms of the non-edibles—I will probably have to spend the whole winter by the microscope and reading books just to get through the strange “variations on a theme” I collected this year.

One interesting thing is that there is an area where I collect where each one of the many oaks in that area has a Grifola growing with it. I sent samples to a researcher in North Carolina to find out if all of these mushrooms actually are one organism connecting all the trees in that area.

Have a wonderful mycophagy, wish I was there, try my marinated Grifola recipe—it is tasty even when still warm.

My best to all,
Elinoar [Shavit]

October 16, 2006

Since you wish to share my previous e-mail with others, then here are the final numbers from this Grifola frondosa season which started for me on September 3rd, ended on September 30th, yielded around 600 mushrooms weighing in at about 2.5 lbs each (average weight rose as the season progressed). Then there were those end-of-season giant fruit-bodies weighing over 10 lbs, 20 lbs, and 2 over 30 lbs each (and one weighing in at 50 lbs). All together, my estimate in the previous e-mail was on the high side. I calculated the actual total weight and the final weight came in at “only” around 1650 lbs., collected primarily from ‘traditional spots’ in Connecticut, Massachusetts, New-Hampshire and Vermont.

So what does one do with such ridiculous quantities of wormless, mud-less, young to middle-aged prime “hen’s meat”? Some went to Efrat who uses them daily. Some are kept for our use, much went (and will go) to friends in the US who love them but don’t have Grifola growing around them (like California) or can’t go looking for them. But the bulk were donated to three future projects, one involves commercial growing (an effort to improve flavor and certain “medicinal” properties). Another is a project involving cancer patients undergoing chemotherapy (the previous trial used certain substances extracted from lab-grown Grifola frondosa, this time around they want to use the entire dried fruit-body of naturally grown Grifola). The third involves a pharmaceutical company conducting a search into certain UV protective properties (we’ve all seen almost white Grifola frondosa fruit-bodies growing in total shade next to dark gray fruit-bodies growing in full light a few inches away, both most likely produced by the same fungus).

The attached photo is with Susie Rose (from COMA) holding a small-medium young Grifola most likely missed by a professional collector. In a conversation with that “professional picker” two weeks ago, he said that he was of Eastern European origin, employs others (or maybe they are family), uses two pick-up trucks, and collects throughout the Northeast. He pays fines regularly when caught by park rangers, and generally provides Maitake to companies that provide wild foods to restaurants. He said that his numbers for Grifola collected this season were in the “many thousands,” as were Matsutake, Boletus edulis (most came up early and were wormy this year – “fit for drying,” he said). He was ecstatic about the bonanza of different kinds of edible mushrooms this incredible fall mushroom season had provided him with. “But I work like a dog during fall,” he said. Ever interested in how people prepare their mushrooms, I asked him how he liked to prepare his favorite mushrooms. “I wouldn’t put one in my mouth if you paid me,” he said.

So there you have it.

Regards to all, Happy Tasting,
Elinoar

👁️ Book Review 👁️

The Glorious Mushroom by Frank Spinelli

Reviewed by Will Donzelli

I am sure that we have all tried to convince some of our non-mycophile friends about the wonders of mushrooms. Often our attempts to get them into the woods for a mushroom hunt end up in failure, and the great dishes we cook up with our finds go untasted. If they show any sort of interest, often we lend them some of the classic books and references to read. Invariably a few weeks later the books are returned with the eyes of the reader glossed over by the in-depth biological terms, complex keys, and somewhat clinical photographs. Perhaps a more subtle approach is needed.

The next time a slightly interested friend comes over, place a copy of Frank Spinelli's *The Glorious Mushroom* on the table and let the book do the work. This large-format soft cover book, published by the Catskill Press, will certainly help win them over. Based on the author's walks around the Catskill Mountains of New York, each page is faced by a full color photograph featuring a mushroom in its natural environment, all expertly photographed by Mr. Spinelli. The plates are very large and of very high quality, and cover a large range of species. The mushrooms are fresh, looking like the author caught the mushrooms at the optimal time. Most of the photographs are close-ups, taken with a macro lens on the camera, so some of the tiny details really



come out. Be warned, however, that this book is not an identification guide, so most of the shots have a more artistic quality than the more technical shots found in the standard references. Some lucky slugs and toads also get their fifteen minutes of fame, perched on or near the subjects of a few plates. They do not detract at all from the mushrooms, but rather give the photographs a more organic feeling.

Associated with each plate is a write-up on some aspect of mushrooms. This is the other area where this book really shines. The photographs lure our friends in, the text drives the ideas home. The text is divided neatly into chapters, with the associated pictures falling into this organization. The first chapter deals with the biology of the mushroom and introduces the reader to the basic concepts and workings of the mushroom. Mr. Spinelli has chosen not to bombard the reader with too much information, but rather explains the biology in more of a layman's way. Likewise, the history section explains both the fear and love of fungus over the years, sometimes using excerpts from classic literature. Another chapter deals with the edibility of mushrooms, both the highly-prized delectables and the deadly poisonous species. Still other chapters show

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Society. The following is an attempt to improve the situation. As you will note below, members may simply ignore this letter, reply to it in writing, or call for a meeting in which the various matters mentioned below and others, if wished, could be discussed. If this way of dealing with problems is found to function, it can be taken as a precedent and followed in the future by any member when he feels that some problem has arisen that requires attention.

By way of preface, it may be remarked that the Society has no constitution or parliamentary law, and no officers other than the Secretary and the Treasurer. There are, however, five Founding Members who established the Society, set the dues and fees and who have arranged the lecture and walk schedules and done the various things necessary to get information out and membership in. What was wanted was a fairly unorganized anarchic situation, without responsibility being placed heavily on anyone's shoulders. This desire arose from two circumstances: a visit I made with Guy Nearing to a new Jersey Garden Society where, during an extended parliamentary meeting, members took the opportunity to haggle with one another and to produce several hours of mutual misery and (for someone like myself who was not concerned) boredom. The second circumstance was the fact that the Society was formed following several years of Mushroom Identification Classes which were taught at the New School by Guy G. Nearing, myself, and Lois Long. In this class situation, enrolled students quite rightly depended on the teachers and leaders. This brought about an adolescent rather than adult social situation and the responsibility—in view of possible poisonings not only from mushrooms but from wasps and snakes too and accidents from falling rocks, crumbling cliffs, etc.—was greater than the leaders cared to continue having. Therefore the classes were stopped and the Society was established. The dues were set rather high in order to ensure a serious membership and to give the Society funds with which to operate: to engage lecturers, rent necessary rooms, and to celebrate the conclusion of each year's hunting with a banquet. All of this was determined undemocratically by the Founding Members. Though the intention was and is to bring about a free, so-to-speak unruled or anarchic group, this intention was had by a few people: the Founding Members. One might complain that politically speaking the New York Mycological Society has been and to a lesser extent still is an oligarchy.

But there is no need for this state of affairs [*sic*] to continue. Let it be remembered, however, that the Society will surely continue and prosper only if the members do not get involved in the various activities that make people miserable: disagreements about this and that. Difficulties between people should be avoided. All that is necessary is an annual program of lectures and walks and a banquet. Hopefully we will all more or less reap the benefits which include more experience and knowledge of mushrooms, pleasant hours and days in the woods and fields away from concrete and metropolitan air and the society of people who spend their working hours in a great variety of ways. (I get, for instance, to be with people who aren't composers of experimental music, and this is refreshing.) As Mr. Nearing says, the Society works and there is much reason to keep it working. Now there is some dissatisfaction among some of the members. On top of this during the past months there were scarcely any mushrooms. In view of all this, please think about the matters listed below and let me have your remarks. Space is also provided for your bringing up matters not listed. 🍄

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the mushroom in relation to nature, and even some of the more oddball mushrooms the author has come across. The reader will not walk away from this book expecting a quiz at the end, as if it were a text book. The reader, on the other hand, may walk away from this book and ask when the next foray is, or if any of the black trumpet pasta is left for a snack.

The Glorious Mushroom is certainly welcome on any mycologist's bookshelf. It clearly states that it is not an identification guide. It is, however, a nice break from the standard reference guides, when the season is over and the woods are covered in snow. The quality of the photographs will make even the most shut-in winter lover yearn for a few months in the future, after a light rainfall. 🍄

[Visit www.thegloriousmushroom.com for more info and photographs.]

Recent Art and Design



The beauty, variety and complexity of fungus has always been an inspiration to artists. Here's a small selection: Jonathan Miller's blue table, an homage to "grow your own" kits, Danielle Dimston's installation on an existing structural pipe and Mid-Hudson Mycological Association member Cynthia Winika's work, which is made of fungus.

Jonathan Miller, *Mushroom Table*, 2005
Finger-jointed pine, blue dye and glazed stoneware.

Danielle Dimston, *A Walk in the Woods*, 2006
corrugated cardboard, hot glue, paper and ink on rusted blackpipe
Installation at Smack Mellon Gallery, Brooklyn

Cynthia Winika, *Turtle*, 2006
Artists conk with encaustic and transfer

Cover: Cynthia Winika, *Crowded Parchment & Other Polypores*, 2006
Fungus on birch panel



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Release

I hereby release the New York Mycological Society, any officer or member thereof, from any legal responsibility for injuries or accidents incurred during or as result of any mushroom identification, field trip, excursion, meeting, or dining, sponsored by the Society.

Your signature(s): _____

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