



AMS NEWSLETTER

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President's Message

Dear AMS members,

As the 2016 summer mushroom hunting season finally ramps up after a late start, I'd like to speak to you about the current state of our organization. With last winter's retirement of the esteemed Dr. Chester Leathers, our Founding

President Emeritus, organized amateur mycology in Arizona found itself leaderless for the first time in decades. Many of the Arizona Mushroom Club's hard-working officers also chose to take this opportunity to step back from their longtime leadership roles, including Rosemary Leathers, Gary and Sandy Melgaard, and Terry Beckman. Since then, I have found out the hard way how difficult it is to replace all their diligent work, wisdom, and good fellowship. We owe them a debt of gratitude for the many years of dedicated service that have brought us to this point.



Luckily, other longtime members of the Club immediately stepped forward to take up the slack. We have successfully reconstituted ourselves as the Arizona Mushroom Society, Inc., a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt/tax-deductible Arizona non-profit corporation, and attracted substantial, gratifying support from you, our dues-paying members. I think we can truthfully say that at this point we're doing as well as we ever did before. Our new non-profit corporate structure will better protect the officers and members of the Society from liability, and contribute to its financial health as we seek out tax-exempt donations and grants. With a seven-member Board of Directors elected by the membership, and a number of other specialized committees and officers, we are better placed than ever before to respond to the varying desires and interests of our membership.

As I write this, we have 310 annual dues-paying members in 227 households. We also have 6 Life Members, and two Honorary Life Members (Dr. & Mrs. Leathers.) Our net assets currently amount to nearly \$9,000. You should be proud that our membership raised almost \$2,000 in donations for the family of our late member Katey Johnson Kowalewski since her untimely passing in the spring of this year.

Our Society sponsored 4 morel forays in April and May, three of them to the Slide Fire above Sedona and one to the North Rim. All of them had at least moderate success. When the spotty early summer rains finally arrived in July, we took a Medicinal & wood-Rotter foray to the Mogollon Rim, finding plenty of Reishi and other desirable species despite the scant rainfall. Katey's fund-raiser porcini foray in the White Mountains at the end of July was completely subscribed,

and while only one "ruby" was found in two days, we did pretty well on a number of other species including cauliflower mushrooms. The same weekend, our Foray Committee Co-Chair Mike Dechter called a snap one-day foray out in the Flagstaff area, with good results on oyster mushrooms and other early fruiterers.

We will soon be meeting again in the White Mountains for our major annual foray on August 13-14. We'll be joined by David Rust, the president of the North American Mycological Society, and Debbie Viess of the Bay Area Mycological Society, who will serve as our visiting foray mycologists. The rainfall looks like it will be sufficient for a good flush of mushrooms. Please try to join us if you can make the trip.

One of the new initiatives of our Society's Culinary Committee is a theme dinner on the Saturday night of the annual foray, Aug. 13. This year we'll be visiting the Sunrise Resort for a wild-food extravaganza with Chef Nephi Craig, who combines world-class training in classical French culinary techniques with ingredients and recipes inspired by his ancestors in the Apache and Navajo tribes. The dinner is already half full, so if you're interested we urge you to sign up soon.

There are many other fun and informative events in the works:

- At the end of August, we will hold our first-ever regional meeting in Tucson for our members in the southern part of the state. We'll be visiting the Gilbertson Fungal Herbarium, where Dr. Betsy Arnold will be showing scientific collection and microscopy techniques to those interested in more formal study of mycology. Afterwards, there may be an expedition to Mt. Lemmon or Mt. Graham if the weather has been cooperative.
- In late August or early September, Vice President Bill Warner is hoping to take a group on a long-range trip to the fabulous habitat of the Kaibab Plateau on the north rim of the Grand Canyon.
- In September, we are planning a northern Arizona meeting, with a mushroom preservation and cookery workshop under Chef Brian Konefal of the Coppa Café in Flagstaff.
- On December 3rd, we'll meet once again in the Phoenix area for our traditional winter potluck and annual member meeting.

We are in preliminary talks with a couple of eminent mycology experts who are eager to speak to us about their fields of interest at the meeting. There may also be some kind of workshop or instructional class earlier in the day, such as fabric dyeing, microscopy, or home cultivation.

If you would like to see even more of these sorts of organized activities take place going forward, I urge you to get involved in one or more of our committees. There is much work to be done, and even those with little or no experience in mycology will find plenty of opportunities to make use of their talents as volunteers for the various facets of the Society's activities.

Sociable people who enjoy meeting new folks and making them feel welcome should join our Venue and Hospitality Committee. Left-brain thinkers may prefer the Scientific Committee, which is now studying the physical and genetic taxonomy of Arizona's morels and cauliflower mushrooms. Literary types and computer jockeys could put their skills to good use on our newsletter and web site via the Communication Committee. The Program and Education Committee, Culinary Committee, Membership Committee, Development Committee, Cultivation/Medicinals/Mycoremediation Committee, and Foray Committee could all use your varied talents. Financial wizards would be especially welcome to participate on our Audit Committee and assist our Treasurer with the bookkeeping details of the organization. If you feel so inspired, you might even consider running for a seat on the Board of Directors at our annual meeting in December.

This Society belongs to you. If you find it is not fulfilling your expectations, you have it within your power to improve it or change it, but only if you step forward and participate.

In closing, I would like to thank you all for helping to make my brief term as President of this Society such a successful, pleasant, rewarding experience. It has been a delight to share the joy of discovery in the great outdoors with so many dear people. I look forward to seeing each of you out in the field soon.

Christopher C. May, M.D.

President, Arizona Mushroom Society, Inc.

Mushroom of the Month

2015 brought Arizona another bumper crop of burn morels in multiple areas. In late May, club member Terri Clements sent 8 samples of our northern Arizona morels to a lab for DNA sequencing. Terri, and the other club members that collected the mushrooms felt they had more than one species of burn morel at the least and were excited to document Morchella taxon from Arizona as it has apparently never been done. In this issue we are going to tease you with Terri's comments. Be sure to read a full write-up of the findings in our next newsletter.

Have you ever wondered if there is more than one kind of burn morel? If so, what species did we find on our AMS forays at the Slide and Locust Fires? According to two recent studies of morels we have four species of burn morels that may occur here. One is very distinctive: densely packed pits and ridges that are hairy and dark when young (*Morchella tomentosa*). The other three, as it turns out, are impossible to separate one from the other without DNA analysis. Seems odd doesn't it? Surely that patch of black morels you found peeking through the snow are all one species. And those pallid ones you found earlier in the open grass under ponderosa pine must be a different species you think. It turns out that as these three species mature they all go through similar stages—from pallid to brown to gray or black. Habitat can affect appearance as well—whether a mushroom matures in an open area or hidden in a stump hole for instance. So if we want to know what species occur in burn areas we'll need to do DNA analysis. I've done that on one specimen and found that we definitely have *Morchella sextelata* at the Slide Fire. Recently we sent eight samples of morels off for DNA sequencing—from both burn and non-burned areas. The AMS is funding the cost of this and I'll report back to the AMS once we get the results.



-Terri Clements, Culinary Committee, Foray Committee &

Scientific Committee

Mushroom of the Month is a feature provided by the Scientific Committee of the Arizona Mushroom Society. If you are interested in the science behind mushrooms and helping to further scientific research of mycelium consider joining them. [Click here for more information.](#)

Culinary Corner

On the Saturday night of our annual foray, we'll be visiting the Sunrise Resort at the foot of the ski area, where Apache/Navajo chef Nephi Craig is gaining nationwide renown for his culinary inventiveness. A classically trained chef who used to work at the famous Mary Elaine's at the Phoenician, he has returned to his ancestral homelands to combine the best European cooking techniques with the bounty of wild-foraged ingredients that the Native Americans depended upon for millennia.

From elk and trout, to locally foraged porcini and chanterelle mushrooms, to acorn flour, squash blossoms, and amaranth, his cooking combines the best traditions of the Old and New worlds.

Combined with a selection of superb Arizona wines, this should be a night to remember. [Click here for more information.](#)



Here's a nice recipe using chanterelles which are just starting to appear. Chanterelles are light and fragrant and easily overpowered. This recipe showcases the uniqueness of this beautiful mushroom (from "Fields of Greens" cookbook).

Pasta with Chanterelles and Leeks

Ingredients:

8 oz. fresh chanterelles, cleaned and cut into large pieces

1 leek, (white and tender green only), cleaned and thinly sliced, about 1 1/2 cups

2 tablespoons unsalted butter

2 garlic cloves, finely chopped

1/3 cup white wine

2 teaspoons fresh thyme, de-stemmed

Freshly grated aged parmesan to taste

Linguine or other pasta

Melt butter in a large saute pan, add leeks, 1/2 teaspoon salt and a grind of pepper.

Saute over med. heat for 3 to 4 min., until leeks begin to wilt; add garlic, lower heat so the leeks don't burn, cover and cook until tender, about 5 min. Add the chanterelles and white wine, gently simmer, uncovered, for about 10 min or so. Meanwhile cook pasta. Drain and toss with mushroom mixture and thyme. Garnish with the cheese.

Recipe courtesy of Terri Clements

The Culinary Corner is a feature provided by the Culinary Committee of the Arizona Mushroom Society. If you are interested in organizing and directing dinners, tastings, cooking workshops, and other mycophagy-related events consider joining them. [Click here for more information.](#)

Cultivation & Medicinal/Mycoremedia

The Cultivation & Medicinal/ Mycoremedia Committee plans and implements activities for those interested in studying mushroom cultivation, the medicinal and health effects of wild mushrooms, and mycoremediation with fungi. They will be providing articles of interest to Arizona Mushroom Society

members as a regular feature for this publication. If you are interested in contributing to these activities, consider joining them. [Click here for more information.](#)

Workshops and Education

The 2016 Telluride Mushroom Fest will be on August 17th - 22nd in Telluride, Colorado. While the AMS will not be officially participating, we encourage members to take advantage of the multiple learning opportunities the festival offers. A schedule of events can be found [here](#).

The North American Mycological Society has an extensive list of recommended books on fungi, both region specific and specie specific. [Check out this great resource.](#)

The Program and Education Committee organizes and directs educational classes, workshops, exhibits, mushroom festivals or fairs, and other such educational activities, and coordinates the Society's participation in similar activities sponsored by outside organizations. If you are interested in bring this type of opportunity to the Arizona Mushroom Society consider joining them. [Click here for more information.](#)

Newsletter Contest

With the reorganization of the club into the Arizona Mushroom Society, Inc. we thought it was time to give the old club newsletter, *The Arizona Fun-Gi* a makeover.

This includes the addition of features like the President's Message and Cultivation & Medicinal/Mycoremedia.

As part of that makeover we are looking for a unique name that describes this publication and we need your help. Suggestions include: *E1 Setero*, *The Mountain Mushroom*, *The Mountain Mycophile*, *The Southwest Mycophile*, or we could stay with *The Arizona Fun-gi*... or perhaps you have a great idea for a moniker.



To enter, submit your idea for our newsletter name by



September 1st
at news@arizonamushroomsociety.org.

We'll put all entries to a vote in early September and the winner will be credited in the next issue. Who knows, maybe this will be the start of your new career...

Did You Know?

WESTERN WILD ORCHID:

Many of you may have seen this beautiful wild orchid while you were hunting burn morels in the Slide Fire in May and now in non-burn areas at higher elevations in Flagstaff and the White Mountains. Known as the spotted or summer coralroot (*Corallorhiza maculata*) it is typically wine red in color and looks very much like red asparagus before it flowers. The petals are white with red spots, hence the name. This plant is as fascinating as it is beautiful. For one thing it lacks the one ability we think of when we think of plants: the ability to photosynthesize. But that's not the most exciting part. Because it lacks chlorophyll and consequently can't convert the sun into fuel, it gets its nourishment by parasitizing the mycelium of fungi, called myco-heterotrophy. What's more it is pretty particular about which mushrooms it likes, all are in the *Russula* family. This is where the story gets useful for those of us who love to hunt mushrooms: This little plant is an indicator that the mycelium (think of it as the tree) of certain *Russula* family members is present, and where there's mycelium there's the potential for mushrooms (the fruit of the tree) when conditions are right. So be sure to return to these spots regularly. Who knows... you may find some nice lobster mushrooms or green *Russulas*!



Courtesy of Terri Clements

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