



NJMA NEWS

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE NEW JERSEY MYCOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION
Volume 39-6 November-December 2009



NJMA OFFICERS

President – Nina Burghardt
Vice-President – Igor Safonov
Secretary – Terri Layton
Treasurer – Bob Peabody

DUES

Payable on calendar year
Individual: \$15.00
Family: \$20.00
Mail checks (payable to NJMA) to:
Bob Peabody
50 Alfalfa Hill
Milford, NJ 08848-1727

NJMA WEBSITE

www.njmyco.org
Bob Hosh, Jim Barg, Rob Robinson

NJMA NEWS

Editor: **Jim Richards**
211 Washington Street
Hackettstown, NJ 07840-2145
email: jimrich35@mac.com

Art director: Jim Barg
email: jimbarg@bssmedia.com

Circulation: Jim Richards

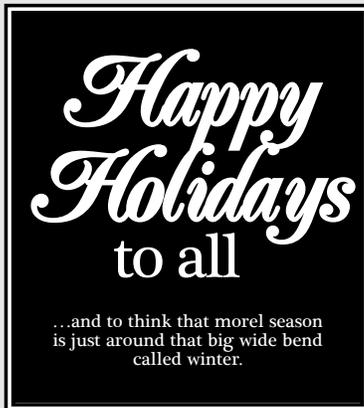
Deadline for submissions:
10th of even-numbered months.

Send ONLY newsletter submissions to the editor. All other correspondence should be sent to the secretary:

Terri Layton
1319 Reed Lane
Kintnersville, PA 18930-9433

NJMA EVENTS HOTLINE

908-362-7109 for information on NJMA events or cancellations due to bad weather.



CALENDAR OF UPCOMING EVENTS

Sunday, October 25
10:00 am

FORAY: Wells Mills County Park
Leader: Nina Burghardt

Sunday, November 1
1:00 pm

FREE EDUCATION CLASS at the Frelinghuysen Arboretum
Glenn Boyd will present his talk entitled "Introduction to Polygenetics and DNA"

Sunday, November 1
2:00 pm

MEETING AND LECTURE at the Frelinghuysen Arboretum
*Guest speaker: Michael Kuo (author of several books and webmaster of mushroomexpert.com)
Michael's topic will be "But Why Identify Boletes?"*

Sunday, November 1
4:00 pm

PHOTO CONTEST DEADLINE
All 2009 photo contest entries must be received by the close of our meeting (around 4:00 pm)

Saturday, November 7
6:00 pm

NJMA CULINARY GROUP DINNER "A Taste Of Luzianna"
Unitarian Society, Tices Lane, East Brunswick
[NOTE: This event is fully booked. To be added to the waiting list, contact Jim Richards (jimrich17@mac.com) 908-852-1674, or Bob Hosh (gombasz@comcast.net) 908-892-6962]

Saturday, November 14
1:30 pm - 4:00 pm

NJMA EDUCATION CLASS: Evolution of the Bitunicate Ascomycetes
Instructor: Dr. Eric Boehm. \$10.00 fee. Pre-registration is required. See the March-April 2009 issue of this newsletter or visit the NJMA website at www.njmyco.org to find a registration form.

Sunday, December 6
2:00 pm

2009 HOLIDAY PARTY, PHOTO CONTEST, & ELECTION OF OFFICERS at the Unitarian Society, Tices Lane, East Brunswick
Registration form on page 11. To volunteer to help with the party, contact Rhoda Roper at 908-277-6175.

Sunday, January 3
2:00 pm

MEETING AND LECTURE at the Frelinghuysen Arboretum
Guest speaker: Dr. Joan Bennett, Associate Vice President for the Promotion of Women in Science, Engineering and Mathematics at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, where she is a teacher and researcher in the Department of Biology and Plant Pathology. Her topic will be "New Orleans and the Molds of Hurricane Katrina."

Sunday, February 14
2:00 pm

MYCOPHAGY at the Unitarian Society, Tices Lane, East Brunswick
Our annual demonstration with (and tasting of) fungi in the kitchen

Directions to the Frelinghuysen Arboretum, Morristown

Traveling from the South: I-287 Northbound to Exit 36A (Morris Ave.). Proceed East approx. 1/2 mile in the center lane, past Washington Headquarters (on left). Take left fork onto Whippany Road. Turn left at 2nd traffic light onto East Hanover Avenue. Proceed for about 1/4 mile. Entrance is on left, opposite the Morris County Library.

Traveling from the North: I-287 Southbound to Exit 36, following signs for Ridgedale Avenue (bear right in exit ramp). Proceed to traffic light, then turn right onto Ridgedale Avenue. At 2nd traffic light, turn right onto East Hanover Avenue. Proceed for about 1/4 mile. The Arboretum entrance is on the right just past the traffic light at the Morris County Library.

Traveling on New Route 24: New 24 West to Exit 1A, (also labeled as Rt. 511 South, Morristown) onto Whippany Road. Stay in right lane. Turn right at 1st traffic light onto East Hanover Avenue. Proceed for about 1/4 mile. Entrance is on left, opposite the Morris County Library.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

This is my last column as president. It has been an honor to serve as your president for the past two years.

Fungus Fest was very successful. Dorothy Smullen and Terri Layton did a great job of organizing. Several people complimented us on the wonderful frames that Phil Layton made for hanging posters and signs. Jim Barg did an excellent job promoting the day, as well as printing out signs. We had over forty volunteers who all worked very hard. Thank you all. There were about 300 visitors who stayed a long time and asked many questions. At last count, we had signed up 35 new members.

The wet weather meant that it was a banner year for mushrooms. We found mushrooms that were not in our database, as well as ones that have been found only once or twice.

One recent oddity was a *Lactarius paradoxus* found at Cattus Island. This curious mushroom has a silver blue cap with blue flesh. The gills bruise red except at the very edge of the cap where they bruise green. We also found a pretty red *Cortinarius* in the moss, which we think is *Cortinarius sanguineus*. We sent it to Dr. Joseph Ammirati of the University of Washington for confirmation.

And, for those who are interested in *Lactarius*, Alan Bessette has just published a new book, entitled *Milk Mushrooms of North America: A Field Identification Guide to the Genus Lactarius*. It is available via most of the usual online book websites and directly from the Syracuse University Press online.

A small orange mushroom which Susan called *Entoloma farlowii*, was found at Herrontown Woods. Dr. Tim Baroni confirmed the name and said that it was very rare. As I write this, we still have two more forays to go, who knows what rarities we will find?

Our Annual Holiday Party, Photo Contest, and Election of Officers meeting will be organized by Rhoda Roper. She is already getting everything ready. If you want to help, contact her at rhodyrob@comcast.net. If you have never been to our holiday party, you are missing a good time. We have a photo contest which is judged by a professional who is not a member of NJMA. We elect our officers, eat really great food and meet new and experienced members.

Terri Layton and I are busy organizing the winter meetings. Our first meeting of 2010 will be on January 3, at the Frelinghysen Arboretum, from 2:00pm to 4:00pm with Dr. Joan Bennett from Rutgers.

I hope you all have a good holiday season.

– Nina Burghardt



EDITOR'S NOTES

Once again I sit down at the computer to write an Editor's Message (Notes, Rant – whatever you choose to call it) and, once again, the same topics keep coming to mind. I feel that I do nothing but repeat myself. But, that probably is not a bad thing because not many of you read the newsletter anyway. At least that is the impression that I repeatedly get, especially when Jim Barg or I get emails from members or hear them asking about things that have already been published in the newsletter, many times more than once.

But since we have about fifty new members (thirty-five new memberships from Fungus Fest), I will give it another try. As I told Susan Hopkins back when I offered to take on the editorship of *NJMA News*: While I am willing to edit this publication, I have no interest in writing every issue. My goal, when I began this job, was to make this publication one that is generated by members of NJMA and not simply a rehashing of articles and information from other club's newsletters, as good as they may be. And in a large part, I have succeeded, thanks to the contributions of a handful of members. John W. Dawson has been terrific in contributing his ongoing series ("Who's in a Name," of which Part 16 in this issue). His essays are models of scholarship: well-documented and concise, with appropriate illustrations and footnotes (which we have misplaced on occasion). Terri Layton, Mike Rubin, Dorothy Smullen, and Gene Yetter have all contributed two or more articles to *NJMA News* over the past two years. John Burghardt has taken over the publication of the species finds from the Boyds. And, of course, we have had Nina's President's Message in each issue. Joining those authors for the first time in this issue is John Sheldon with his Newbie Report on Fungus Fest 2009 (which, as an aside, was one of the best organized we've had in many years. And, as a plus, the meal after Fungus Fest, for and by the volunteers, was the best potluck I have ever been to in the more than 30 years that I have been a member of NJMA. By the way, Dorothy Smullen has reported that NJMA volunteers put in over 500 hours of work time during the leadup to and on the weekend of Fungus Fest. Wow! Amazingly, we keep getting better at bringing this off. And it continues to grow, year after year after year.)

My quandary is how to get some of you new and other members to begin to "add your two cents" to this newsletter. Our hobby is certainly weird enough to furnish you with inspiration. Where else would you find a bunch of people who are happy to be outside, standing under umbrellas in the rain, trying to identify some tired, soggy finds (as I saw at Stephens and Fungus Fest and, I'm sure at other occasions this year) or even

(continued on page 4)

IT'S TIME TO ENTER THE 2009 NJMA PHOTO CONTEST!

by Jim Barg

Time's a-wasting, and all those photos you took of mushrooms and at NJMA forays are sitting there on your desk, in your digital cameras or on memory cards, or on your computer. What did you take those pictures for, anyway? Does your pet iguana enjoy looking at them? I'll bet there are a *lot* of *people* (your fellow NJMA members) who would *love* to see your stuff!

Why not show off your photographic efforts in the NJMA 2009 Photo Contest? Don't be embarrassed – you'd be totally surprised at what comes in from our members; it's quite a range. You'd be even more surprised that people who didn't think they'd win are walking off with some nice "fat" prizes, not to mention the admiration they'll get from their fellow club members. C'mon...give it a shot...it's easy to enter, and like they say with the lottery, you can't win it if you aren't in it! The deadline for entry is at the close of our November 1st meeting at the Frelinghuysen Arboretum. (You can also mail in your entries by that date.)

Our photo contest awards prizes in two divisions: Novice, which is for non-professionals who haven't won in previous NJMA Photo Contests, and Advanced, which is for those who have won previously or who earn all or part of their living working with photography. New for this year, we have added a "Creative" category, which allows you to do just about anything to your photos using whatever methods you wish. A complete official description of the divisions, categories, rules, and prizes is available, along with an entry form, in the September-October 2009 (vol. 39-5) issue of this newsletter (If you can't find your copy, it's available in PDF format at www.njmyco.org/newsdownload.html).

The judge for this year's contest will again be Klaus-Peter Steitz, who is an experienced photojournalist, professional photographer, and Photo Editor for *The Record* Newspapers of North Jersey. Klaus is recognized in professional circles for his unique "eye" for the obvious and not-so-obvious qualities that make up a great photo. For the past two years, our members have found his opinions and tips to be most valuable when all the entries are presented at our annual Holiday Party and Photo Contest meeting. For the Technical categories, a recognized NJMA mycological expert will choose the winners and Klaus will lend a hand with his aesthetic judgement, if necessary.

So now is the time to "get to it". Sort through those photos, fill out the entry form and send them in – we know you have them! (It seems we notice a lot of people with cameras at our forays. *Some people even seem to be taking pictures!*) Enter your best, and we wish you the best of luck.



HOW MANY SPORES ARE THERE?

by Bryce Kendrick (from *Fungifama*, South Vancouver
Island Mycological Society, February 1998)

One specimen of the common bracket fungus, *Ganoderma applanatum*, can discharge 30,000,000,000 spores a day from May to September, for a total of 4,500,000,000,000 spores.

One fructification of the wood-inhabiting ascomycete *Daldinia concentrica* can shoot 100,000,000 ascospores a day.

A single wheat grain infected with stinking smut, *Tilletia caries*, contains 12,000,000 spores.

One 2.5cm-diameter colony of the green mold *Penicillium* can produce 400,000,000 spores.

And I have just done a rough calculation showing that a large specimen of the giant puffball, *Langermannia gigantea*, may contain about 1,000,000,000,000,000 spores, give or take a decimal place or two.

So you will not be surprised to learn that the air we breathe sometimes contains as many as 10,000 spores per cubic meter!

REHYDRATING DRIED MUSHROOMS

by Jim Richards, adapted from *Cook's Illustrated*

Many recipes require you to re-hydrate dried mushrooms and reserve the liquid to impart flavor into your dish later.

1. The preferred technique is to just cover them with water in a microwave-safe bowl covered in plastic wrap with several small slits cut into the covering. Microwave them on high for 30 seconds and let stand until the mushrooms soften, about 5 minutes.
2. Lift the mushrooms from the soaking liquid with a fork so that the grit stays in the bowl.
3. The best way to remove the grit at the bottom of the bowl is to pour the soaking liquid through a small mesh strainer that has been lined with a single paper towel. The towel traps the dirt and absorbs a minimum of the precious liquid.



to be happy with all the rain that we have had. Most people complain when it rains a lot. Not 'shroomers! Who else would be fascinated by things that grow on dung? Who else gets ecstatic when finding rather unprepossessing underground lumps? (We do not get the really good ones that cost thousands of dollars a pound – those grow in Europe – or North Carolina.) What other group of people scrupulously hides its scavenger hunts in the woods from all but their nearest and dearest? Many of you are more than generous with sharing your finds with others. But, the *locations*? That's a *very* different story.

One thing that has puzzled me for quite a while is that anytime I attend an event in NJMA, whether a foray, Fungus Fest, a culinary group meal, etc., I see many of you busily taking photos. But, what do you do with them? There are only a few of you who send them in for the newsletter, or to our website www.njmyco.org (where Rob Robinson has been trying since early in the year to get a page of NJ fungi photos established). And there is but a small handful that enter our Annual Photo Contest (see article on the previous page).

We do have a handful of people who are regular contributors of photos to *NJMA News*: Terri, Dorothy (do the names see familiar?), Susan, and from time to time, some new members like Don Recklies and the Sheldons (whose photos appear for the first time in this issue). And, by the way, the fact that your photos are published in *NJMA News* has no bearing whatsoever on your ability to enter those photos into the Photo Contest.

One of the requests that I made at the Executive Committee meeting last January was that someone should write an article for *NJMA News* after every foray on the most interesting fungal find (just a short article), hopefully with an accompanying photo. That did not happen. Please try to keep this in mind when you are on a foray in 2010, whether as the Foray Leader or just one of the participants...we'd love to hear about those things.

I know that a lot of you have probably been reluctant to contribute to this newsletter because you feel that your writing skills are not great. Not to worry! That is what I get "paid" for – to make you look great! As editor, it is my job to tweak your contributions, but without removing your personal voice from the article. And then I give them all to Jim Barg who comes along and makes all the pieces fit and look their best (and who also edits *my* articles!)

On another note, I brought up a topic earlier in the year regarding how you wish to receive your copies of *NJMA News*. I asked you to let us know if you'd prefer to receive this newsletter only online or if you'd prefer to continue receiving it via snail-mail. There has been no, as in *zero*, response to my request (OK, Jim tells me that *one* member has responded). Presently, you get a copy in the

mail, but you also have the opportunity to read it online a few days before it is delivered. It seems that, in this day of instant electronic communication and concern about paper waste, some of you would be more than happy to only receive the newsletter electronically. Our concern is this: Regular mail keeps getting more and more expensive. The cost of printing and sending the newsletter to you is rising rapidly as postage costs go up. Mailing the newsletter is a major expense to the club, and while your dues cover the cost for now, it leaves NJMA with little else to work with for guest speakers, presentations, and events. By reducing the number of newsletters that we actually have to mail out, we are keeping club dues affordable for all.

So, again I ask: If you would prefer to receive *NJMA News* online only, please contact Bob Peabody (PagProlog@aol.com) so that he knows your preference and to make sure that he has your correct email address.

And speaking of email addresses: If you want to make sure that you are receiving club updates, notifications of last-minute changes, and short items of club interest in between newsletter publication dates, please contact Jim Barg (jimbarg@bssmedia.com) with your information.

NJMA has always been one of the best mushroom clubs in the country, and we have one of the best newsletters. Please share your mycological thoughts, knowledge, experiences, and photographs – help to make it even better!

One more thing: What's with all this interest in "Luzianna"? Look around you – Our (overbooked) Culinary Group Dinner on November 7th, the 2009 NAMA Foray running from November 26-29 in Lafayette, Louisiana, and our first lecture of 2010: Dr. Joan Bennett on "New Orleans and The Molds of Hurricane Katrina" – all share a common geographical bond!

– Jim Richards

*R*aindrops glistening
The forest is so quiet;
Where are they hiding?

– Nick Iadanza

CONTRIBUTE YOUR PHOTOS TO THE NJMA WEBSITE!

by Rob Robinson

Current NJMA members are invited to contribute their digital photos to the NEW "Fungi Finds" Photo Page of the NJMA website. The goal is to provide a pictorial guide to fungi found in New Jersey, while showcasing the photographic talents of NJMA photographers.

Just visit the NJMA website at njmyco.org, and click the Photo Page button for details on how to contribute your photos. Happy snapping!



FUNGUS FEST 2009 – IMPRESSIONS OF A NEWBIE

by Paul Sheldon

Fungus Fest 2009 opened auspiciously with that weather so beloved by mushroomers: dreary and overcast, with a light rain. More than 300 visitors came to Haggerty Education Center of Frelinghuysen Arboretum, enticed by the prospects of seeing the displays and learning about mushrooms and other fungi. These guests were welcomed by NJMA members at the entrance to the main hall and given orienting information. My first impression: Things were well organized and very much under control, and much credit goes to the organizers for that.



PHOTO BY PAUL SHELDON

The setup crew setting up

One entered the hall by a beautiful diorama of the Fifth Kingdom that was both artful and educational. Surely many folks had been busy collecting specimens during the week and then making final preparations on Saturday and early Sunday morning.

Some visitors came with their mushrooms, and it was particularly heartening to see families arrive with children bearing mushrooms. They would head to the nearby Sort and Identify Table with their treasures. From there, they could improve their mushroom education by looking at many identified samples that were on display tables at the left of the hall. These samples were accompanied with informative placards that described the features of the genera they represented. These tables, with comparable specimens side by side, were particularly helpful to this neophyte, as I struggle to differentiate “true” Turkey Tail from False Turkey Tail and the like.

The major interests of NJMA members were well represented, with tables for mushroom microscopy, slime molds, poisonous fungi, medicinal fungi, cultivated fungi, and dying with fungi, to mention some particular examples. One could also learn about the commercial

production of mushrooms. My wife Fran augmented her fungi library at the book sales table. Additional craft tables were downstairs, representing fungus art and paper making. Slime molds entranced some, while others studied mushroom spores through the microscope. The poisonous fungi seemed to hold a particular interest for attendees. That, and big orange Chickens and Jack-o-Lanterns.

It was interesting to watch the reactions of visitors. Should they touch the mushrooms? What if they picked up a mushroom and then put their fingers in their mouth, would they get sick? Children had fun at the Children’s Corner; another instance that impressed me with the degree of organization and planning that goes into Fungus Fest.

For the mycophagists, there were tables on the right side of the hall supplied with helpful brochures describing the Foolproof Four, augmented with slide shows and Bob Peabody’s talks on edible mushrooms. This was culinarily enhanced by Bob Hosh’s cooking demonstrations downstairs.

Additionally, downstairs, there was Glen Boyd’s entertaining and educational slide show on mycology. He impressed the listener with some startling facts such as that without mushrooms, 90% of trees couldn’t grow successfully due to their dependence upon a mutually beneficial relationship with fungi. On the other hand, if we did not have mushrooms that help to decompose these trees when they die, we would be effectively buried in tree refuse. In another informative lecture, a



PHOTO BY DON RECKLIES

Terri Layton works on setting up the diorama



PHOTO BY DON RECKLIERS

One of our newer members, Pat Miller, was responsible for collecting many of the specimens which were on display.

digitized version of Ray Fatto's classic slide show *Mushrooms of New Jersey* was presented.

This author participated in three fungi walks at Fungus Fest. The first was so interesting, I couldn't stop with just that and had to go back for a second, and my second so interesting, I had to go back for a third. Leaders were Rhoda Roper, Dave Wasilewski and Glenn Boyd. Each tour leader had a slightly different approach, and it was also interesting to observe the different interests of the walkers. In addition to those fungi that had been "planted" for the event, walkers found Hen-of-the-Woods and Chicken Mushrooms for some real life experiences for those inclined to hike a bit further. A Bird's Nest mushroom was pointed out in the parking lot, and one of the youngest walkers began her mushroom career well by finding a *Russula*, which Glenn Boyd aptly described to her.



PHOTO BY PAUL SHELDON

Rhoda Roper working at the ID table

The close of Fungus Fest 2009 heralded the much-anticipated dinner that followed. Oriental braised vegetables with shiitakes, oyster mushrooms with dill sauce, morel potato salad, maitake rice noodles, vegan tomato bread pudding, blackberry cobbler, fig tarts, lemon cake, chicken with almonds, Italian-style grifola, were some of the dishes that this author was able to record. More than fifty NJMA members attended Fungus Fest 2009, and the number of all attendees (about 360) was reportedly the largest group to attend any event at Frelinghuysen Arboretum this year. Fungus Fest was a valuable educational display for the public, providing visitors with information about both the safety of mushrooms and the value of mushrooms for our environment. Additionally, a good time was had by the members of NJMA in attendance. Representing a range of interests from taxonomy and environmental science to applied aspects of farming and crafts, and of course, mycophagy, Fungus Fest 2009 offered something for everyone. Much thanks goes to the prime organizers, Terri Layton and Dorothy Smullen, as well as to all the others whose contributions made the day possible. 



PHOTO BY DOROTHY SMULLEN

Even the kids had fun assembling a morel puzzle!

See our color pages for more members' photos from Fungus Fest 2009



PHOTO BY JIM RICHARDS

Frank Marra signs up a new member

WHO'S IN A NAME?

Psathyrella candolleana

by John Dawson (sixteenth in a series)

One of the foremost botanists of his time, Augustin-Pyramus de Candolle is commemorated in the names of over 300 plants and several fungi, of which *Psathyrella candolleana* (Fr.) Maire is the most familiar example. The author of almost 180 memoirs, monographs and other works, de Candolle contributed to many areas of botany and mycology, including ecology, phytogeography, paleomycology¹, biometry, agronomy, and plant physiology. In addition, he wrote some important biographical memoirs of other scientists, as well as articles on political economy and statistics. In Geneva, he “founded the Museum of Natural History ... , renovated the botanical garden, and established the Conservatoire Botanique, which ... includes the world’s largest herbarium” (over 5,000,000 specimens).² His *magnum opus*, published in seven volumes and continued by his son Alphonse and others after his death, was *Prodromus systematis naturalis regni vegetabilis [Systematic Guide to the Vegetable Kingdom of Nature]* (1824-39), which he had originally envisioned as a descriptive catalog of all known plant species, but which he later realized was too vast an undertaking to carry out.

The son of a magistrate, de Candolle was born February 4, 1778 in what was then the Republic of Geneva; the family was a distinguished one, whose forebears had fled to Geneva from Provence in the 16th century to escape religious persecution. In his teens, De Candolle began making botanical expeditions in the Jura, and he soon determined to become a professional botanist. Nevertheless, he acceded to his father’s desire that he obtain a medical degree, and entered the Collège de Calvin with that intention in 1794. He continued to botanize, however, and soon made the acquaintance of Jean Pierre Vaucher, Jean Sennenier, and Horace-Bénédict de Saussure, who became important mentors.

In 1796, de Candolle left Geneva to study natural science and medicine in Paris, and there made contact with that city’s greatest scholars, including Georges Cuvier and Jean Baptiste de Lamarck. Under their influence he abandoned medicine and began publishing the results of his botanical investigations. His first paper

appeared in 1798, followed in the years 1799-1802 by his first major work, *Platarum historia succulentarum* (issued in twenty sections).

In 1808, de Candolle was appointed to the chair of botany at the Ecole de Médecine and Faculté des Sciences in Montpellier, a post that he held until 1816, when he accepted a chair in natural history that had been created for him at the Academy of Geneva. He remained in

Geneva the rest of his life, playing an active role in civic and political affairs. In addition to the Museum of Natural History and the Conservatoire Botanique mentioned earlier, he was involved with the Geneva public library, the Société des Arts and the Musée des Beaux-Arts. He served as rector of the Academy during the year 1831-2, and was a member of the cantonal body of representatives from 1816 until 1841.

Upon de Candolle’s retirement from the Academy in 1835, his son Alphonse was appointed to the chair of botany, and later his grandson Casimir (Alphonse’s son) would extend the family of botanists into a third generation.

The final six years of de Candolle’s life were spent in declining health. He died at the age of 63 on September 9, 1841, widely revered and mourned.



Augustin-Pyramus de Candolle



PHOTO BY JOHN DAWSON

Psathyrella candolleana

¹ According to the article on de Candolle in the *Dictionary of Scientific Biography* (the principal source for the present note), he was “the first to analyze fossil mushrooms”. He is also credited with having introduced the term ‘taxonomy’.

² Quoted from Duane Isely, *One Hundred and One Botanists* (Iowa State Univ. Press, 1994).

WHO PUT THE FLY AGARIC INTO CHRISTMAS?

reprinted from The Mushroom Log, #33-5, Ohio Mycological Society

Santa Claus is really a complex personality. One part is the old North European pagan goblin, the spirit of our ancestors. He was living on the farms preferably in the cow-houses or stables – protecting the animals and crop from evil ghosts. However, he demanded that the farmer should serve him bread or porridge from the best part of the harvest every midwinter eve. If not, he would be very nasty! Usually he is depicted as a little, square-built, bearded man wearing knickers, knife, and a red cap. In Scandinavia, Father Christmas is often depicted more like the pagan goblin than Santa Claus.

Another and more direct antecedent is Saint Nicholas (271-343), an archbishop born in Patara in Lycia, southwest Turkey. He was kind to children and poor people, offering them gifts. He also performed all kinds of miracles: averted famine, saved children from being boiled etc. Emperor Justinian built the first church in honour to Nicholas. The archbishop was canonized in the ninth century. Saint Nicholas was patron of Russia, Greece, Germany, Austria, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, and Sicily. He was the protector of the downtrodden and the desperate, even thieves and murderers. At various times he has also been patron saint of fishermen, sailors, virgins, students, and merchants. For more than three centuries, from late 1100 to mid 1500 when the Protestant Reformation began, St. Nicholas was the foremost saint in Europe. Popes, Czars, and even Commissars (Nikita) have been named for him. In 1972, the mortal remains of Nicholas, no longer a saint according to the 1969 report to Pope Paul IV, were donated to the Greek Orthodox shrine of St. Nicholas in Flushing, New York. In catholic lands, the day St. Nicholas died, December 6, is still celebrated as the day of Nicholas, and the children get Christmas gifts. This tradition possibly began in France as early as 1200.

The Protestants tried to abandon the St. Nicholas day, but the tradition of a gift-bearing, child-protecting figure with roots in Roman and pagan midwinter rites remained disguised as Father Christmas, Pere Noel, or Weihnachtsmann. This figure had, in the beginning, more in common with the goblin, but gradually it mixed ancient rites with Christian traditions and became a rather evil looking creature, called Black Peter or Schwarz Peter. He was robed in a black or red mantle, had horns, fiery eyes, and a long, red tongue. He discovered children who had been naughty during the year and punished them. Today this tradition still lives when children visit neighbors and relatives during Christmas days disguised as goats or other creatures.

In Central Europe from 1400 to 1600, it was common that a man dressed like St. Nicholas visited the homes on December 6 or Christmas Eve, often followed by the vicious Black Peter. The first gave gifts to the kind children, the second punished the bad children or gave them birch rods instead of gifts. In time, these two figures became one

person, Rough Nicholas or Ru Klaus. In the beginning a fearsome character traveling alone, he frightened the children, yet bestowed the kind ones with Christmas gifts. Then he became more and more kind and gradually developed to Santa Claus, a “secular St. Nicholas”, usually depicted as a stooped, old man with a long, white beard, carrying a basket or sack filled with toys and candy on his back. Our modern looking Santa Claus was eventually released in USA designed by Coca Cola in the 1930s.

Santa Claus literally consists of three personalities; the pagan goblin, St. Nicholas, and Black Pete, but still there are some peculiar features: Why is he robed in red and white, enters and leaves by the chimney, carries the gifts in a sack, can fly, has reindeer, and lives on the North Pole? None of these features can be traced back to the mentioned three figures.

Here the Fly Agaric enters the story!

The first travellers to Siberia observed that many tribes used Fly Agaric as a drug. They were shocked by the custom that the urine of those intoxicated by the toadstools was collected in bowls or skin bags, to be drunk later. Specially the poorer classes, who could not devote time to gather the toadstool, regularly drank the urine of the better-off for a little light relief. Reindeer also have a taste for the Fly Agaric. When the Swedish explorer, Georg Steller, visited Kamchatka in 1739 he noted that reindeer were sometimes intoxicated.

The Koryak people tied up such animals until their condition subsided. Then they killed them. All who ate the flesh became intoxicated. Jonathan Ott, an American mycologist, suggested in 1976 that the use of the Fly Agaric in the midwinter festivals of deepest Siberia may have inspired some of the modern features of Santa Claus. The Siberian winter dwelling, or yurt, had a smokehole in the roof, supported by a birch pole. At the midwinter festivals, the shaman would enter the yurt through the smokehole, carrying a sack with dried Fly Agaric or urine from already intoxicated people, perform his ceremonies, and ascend the birch pole and leave. Ordinary people believed that the shaman could fly, either himself or on flying reindeer. Therefore, Santa Claus is robed in red and white, the colour of the Fly Agaric; enters the chimney; can fly in a reindeer sleigh; carries the gift in a sack; and lives on the North Pole. The remote areas in Siberia are as good as the North Pole for Central Europeans. Moreover, in Central Europe the Fly Agaric is linked with chimney sweeps, who have adopted it as their emblem, perhaps echoing the Siberian ritual.

The Fly Agaric has appeared on Christmas cards in Central Europe for a long time. In Kocevje, in the southern parts of former Yugoslavia, people believe that on Christmas night, Wotan, the king of the gods (same as the Norse Odin), rides through the woods on a white horse, pursued by devils. The red and white spots of foam from the horse's mouth fall to the ground and grow into next year's fruitbodies of Fly Agaric.



The weather we all love!



PHOTO BY TERRI LAYTON

PHOTO BY JIM RICHARDS



Beech mushrooms

PHOTO BY DON RECKLIES



Does this look presidential?

fungus fest 2009



Cooking demo

PHOTO BY JIM RICHARDS



Are you sure?

PHOTO BY JIM RICHARDS



The Fungus Fest two-step

PHOTO BY PAUL SHELDON



Mike Rubin, poison guy

PHOTO BY DON RECKLIES

more fungus fest 2009



Rhoda Roper ID'ing

PHOTO BY PAUL SHIELDON



The Dye Ladies: Melanie, Viola, and Ursula

PHOTO BY DOROTHY SMULLEN



Children's creations

PHOTO BY DOROTHY SMULLEN

CATTUS ISLAND FORAY

PHOTOS BY ANTHONY ZANGARI



Directions to the Unitarian Society, Tices Lane, East Brunswick

From New Brunswick via Route 18: Take U.S. Highway 1 south, exit at Ryders Lane to East Brunswick, continue to the second light, and turn left onto Tices Lane. The Unitarian Society is the 2nd drive on the right before you go under the NJ Turnpike.

From the south via the Garden State Parkway: Take Route 18 north toward New Brunswick to Tices Lane exit (take jughandle from right lane of Route 18 across to Tices Lane). Follow Tices Lane until you pass under the Turnpike. The entrance is in the woods on the left just after you leave the underpass.

From the NJ Turnpike: take Exit 9 to Route 18. Take Rt 18 South into East Brunswick. From Route 18, turn right onto Tices Lane at the third traffic light. Follow Tices Lane until you pass under the Turnpike. The entrance is in the woods on the left just after you leave the underpass.



Holiday Dinner 2009

The NJMA requests the pleasure of your company at our annual Holiday Dinner, Photo Contest, and Election of Officers meeting to be held at the Unitarian Society in East Brunswick on Sunday, December 6, 2009 at 2:00 p.m.

Please bring a favorite dish (sufficient to serve 8 to 10 people) for the buffet table. If you plan to bring a dish containing wild mushrooms **you must get clearance for the mushrooms and dish from Bob Hosh**, who is coordinating the buffet menu. You may contact him via e-mail at gombasz@comcast.net or by phone at (908) 892-6962. Dishes must be labeled to show ingredients and should arrive ready for the buffet table with serving utensils. All questions concerning the buffet menu should be directed to Bob. The club provides beverages.

A donation of \$10.00 per person is required to offset the buffet costs. In order that we may cater the party properly, please respond by DECEMBER 3, 2009!

Directions to the Unitarian Society are printed above and are also available on the NJMA website at www.njmyco.org

PLEASE NOTE THAT YOU MUST REGISTER IF YOU WISH TO ATTEND, WHETHER OR NOT YOU'RE BRINGING FOOD WITH YOU.

NJMA Holiday Dinner Registration Form

Fill out this form, make your check payable to NJMA, and mail both, before December 3, to:

Bob Hosh, 209 South Middlebush Road, Somerset, NJ 08873

Questions? Phone: 908-892-6962 E-mail: gombasz@comcast.net

NAME(S): _____

TELEPHONE: _____ E-MAIL: _____

NUMBER OF PEOPLE ATTENDING _____

x \$10.00 each = \$ _____ (Don't forget to enclose your check for this amount)

I will bring sufficient to serve 8 to 10 people (please specify below):

_____	Hors d'Oeuvres	_____	Meat dish
_____	Vegetable dish	_____	Green salad
_____	Potato or pasta dish	_____	Dessert

I will help with: _____ Setup _____ Serving _____ Cleanup

NJMA NEWS

c/o Jim Richards
211 Washington Street
Hackettstown, New Jersey 07840

FIRST CLASS MAIL

NJMA is a non-profit organization whose aims are to provide a means for sharing ideas, experiences, knowledge, and common interests regarding fungi, and to furnish mycological information and educational materials to those who wish to increase their knowledge about mushrooms.

In this issue:

- **2009 HOLIDAY DINNER**
- **IMPRESSIONS OF FUNGUS FEST**
- **WHO'S IN A NAME - PART 16**
- **DRIED MUSHROOMS**
- **FLY AGARIC IN CHRISTMAS?**
- **PHOTO CONTEST UPDATE**
- **EDITOR'S NOTES**

...plus more!

The genus *Geastrum* (The Earthstars)

These fungi are members of the group of "stomach fungi," which also includes the puffballs and bird's nest fungi. Their spores are developed inside a thin-walled spore case, which is surrounded by thick arms which (in many species) open at maturity to expose the case. In at least one species, the arms open and close in response to moisture. Spores are spit out through the beak-like opening at the apex whenever hit by drops of rain or blasts of wind, much in the same way that spores are dispersed by their puffball cousins.



PHOTO BY JIM RICHARDS