

Next Meeting Sept. 8th, 2003

SPORES Afield

The newsletter of the Colorado Mycological Society

September 2003

A day (or so) with CNN

By William Windsor

It was late spring when I was first contacted by CNN. A CMS member gave the reporter my name and phone number and thus began a chain of events that resulted in my first exposure to televised media coverage.

The timing of the call was not exactly ideal. CNN wanted to film me finding some Morels and they needed to shoot within 3 days. I had already picked clean my Yellow Morel zones and low elevation Black Morel zones. Since I am not independently wealthy and must work to provide room and board, I could not devote a lot of time to locating an area that was currently fruiting.

Much of my higher elevation spots were still under snow and so I had to find a transitional area that was somewhere between 8,000 and 9,000 ft. and had already been clear of snow for a while. Norm Birchler and I spent some time searching after work and we came upon a single Morel growing near a creek. We searched the area thoroughly and found just one more morel. With a sigh, I said to Norm "I guess this will have to do". "Two mushrooms?" questioned Norm, "Your going to take CNN to a place that only has two mushrooms?"

My TV 'career' was off to a rough start.

The next day I sat waiting at the appointed meeting place and time in downtown Boulder. The CNN crew was late and I found myself recalling an earlier conversation with Norm. "Did you give

September Meeting: Cook & Taste

Please see page 6 of this issue for more information and call Vice President William Windsor with the type of mushroom dish you are going to bring.

CNN good directions?" asked Norm. After years of hunting mushrooms together, this was a very reasonable question for Norm to ask. My navigating skills and memory are not exactly proficient. "I bet you the film crew gets lost" stated Norm.

A half hour later I receive a call from the film crew. "We followed your directions and I think we must be close to Boulder" said the reporter. "Where are you now?" I asked. "Some small town called Ft. Lupton." she responded. Note to self - I gotta work at giving better directions to folks.

After finally getting together with the CNN crew we drive to the spot where Norm and I found the two morels the night before. The crew is both professional and friendly and I enjoy our conversation on the way up. The reporter explains that she will ask me some questions about myself and about hunting morels. After the interview, the cameraman will then want to get some shots of me finding morels. "Ummmm, are you expecting a lot of morels?" I timidly ask.

The crew wires me for sound and an appropriate backdrop is found for the interview. The cameraman comments that the bill of my cap is casting a shadow across my face and so I remove my cap.
(continued on page 3)

Upcoming Events

- Sept. 8th Cook and Taste, more information on page 6
- Oct. 13th To be announced
- Oct. 19th End of Season Mushroom Dinner

Editors Findings

I just wanted to let everyone know what we have been finding on our forays around the Front Range and beyond. Although 100% better than last year I would say that 2003 is shaping up to be a slightly below average year. The monsoon rains came a little late and were not that substantial.

With the abundance of moisture early William Windsor my wife Karen and I found the Yellow and Black morel hunting good, we found nothing in the recent burn areas.

Since late June we have been finding Boletes but not in great numbers and as of August 24th (today) I have not really seen any Lodge pole Boletes. Karen and I did find some today in Spruce/Fir.

Matsutake have been out in reasonable numbers since early August, with some areas better than others. Karen and I got 50 or so yesterday and had a feast at a Japanese friends house tonight.

On August 16 after a kayaking trip we went to my favorite Chanterelle spot and only found meager numbers.

All in all it's been a lot of fun and exercise that I really missed last year, and it's not over yet. Happy hunting!

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CMS Library

The Colorado Mycological Society has an extensive library available to all members. Please contact: Chris Hardwick 303-237-0356 to check out a book or find out more about our collection

Books For Sale

We also offer a variety of books for sale at each meeting. The books are usually available to members at a discount.

CMS Website

CMS is on the World Wide Web at: <http://www.cmsweb.org>. The website is full of information on the society's events, forays, and links to other sites in an easy to use format.

Spores Afield

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CMS website: <http://www.cmsweb.org>

(CNN continued from page 1)

The reporter stares at my bald head for a moment and diplomatically comments "Why don't you go ahead and put the cap back on...but wear it backwards".

After everything is set up, the reporter first asks me to introduce myself and then asks "How much do you earn per season selling Morels?" "I don't sell Morels," I respond, "I eat them." Surprised, the reporter asks, "Aren't you a commercial picker?" "Nooooo," I reply, "I just like to find and eat Morels". "We were told you were a commercial picker." The reporter states in a disappointed tone. She stops to think for a moment and then says to the Cameraman, "Okay, we can still use this."

The reporter asks a lot of questions about the cost of Morels compared to other mushrooms and about the amount of time I devote to finding Morels. Then she asked how I find Morels and I begin to explain the balancing act between timing and environmental factors. "Your being too technical," she explained, "keep your answers shorter." I thought about this for a while and came up with a shorter version about environment. "Too Technical" the reporter responded.

I walked over to one of the two mushrooms I had found the previous night and was relieved to see that several others had come up during the night. I picked the larger Morel and showed it to the reporter. "How do you know that's a Morel?" she asked. I started to explain how mushrooms are identified by a number of characteristics when I was interrupted by the reporter saying, "Too Technical!" I then rephrased my explanation to being specific to Morels. "Too Technical" she responded.

"Is hunting Morels safe?" she asked. I responded that as long as the person knows how to make a positive identification, that all mushroom hunting is safe. "Too Technical"

the reporter informs me. At about this time the reporter and I both realize that I am not a 'sound-byte' kind of guy.

We continue to walk the area finding Morels in many locations. I am amazed and delighted that the area changed so much in just one day. While picking, the reporter attempts asking the same questions again. I know she is hoping to get the concise sound-bytes that modern news shows require to hold the attention of finicky viewers. Unfortunately, I cannot find a way to answer her questions that is not deemed "Too Technical". We wrap-up the afternoon and the reporter informs me that the shoot was good and that she expects the report to be a national spot. She will call me when the piece is to be aired.

About five weeks after filming I receive a call from the reporter. She informs me that they had some technical problems with the camera and they want to re-shoot some of the scenes. "We just need some location shots" she explains. She reminds me to wear the same clothes as before and arrangements are made to meet the cameraman. The cameraman is a different person from the previous shoot and I take him to the same place that we initially filmed. I ask the cameraman what he needs to re-shoot and he informs me, "Just find some morels".

I momentarily forget that I am dealing with someone who does not have any experience with mushrooms and I wonder if this person expects me to magically conjure up a morel. I explain to the cameraman that Black Morels can no longer be found at this elevation and that I had already hunted everything in the area up to and above 9,000 ft. elevation. I offer to take him to higher elevations and search some new areas but his time is limited so we drive to high grounds and check out a couple of spots that I had already picked, or that had not produced yet. Unfortunately, there are no Morels to be found. He films me looking around and explains that he will cut these shots in with the first filming where we found morels. On the way back down the mountain the cameraman phones the reporter. "No," I hear him report, "all we did is go for a walk in the woods".

(continued on page 4)

(CNN continued from page 3)

Six weeks after the second filming I receive another call from the reporter. "They love the piece and its going to air on the national news." She informs me. "Cool!" I respond, "when will it be on?" "In 45 minutes" she tells me. There is a moment of silence on my side of this conversation as I try to figure out how I was going to see the piece, or even let friends and family know about it. At the time she called it was early afternoon I was in the middle of a business meeting that was not scheduled to end for another hour or so. "Understanding my silence she added "Don't worry, we will send you a tape of it."

The tape arrived just a day or two later and I was excited to see what they had done. The entire 'article' was about two minutes long and included comments from a retailer, a chef and about four words from myself. The reporter creatively ran a narrative on the desirability of morels over some shots of me walking and one shot of me finding a morel. While the piece turned out to be nothing more than a short 'fluffy-fill-in', it was still a lot of fun to be a part of producing it and to experience the amount of work that goes into even a minor and unimportant national level news story.

This adventure was a great example of how mushrooming and my association with the Colorado Mycological Society has enriched my life. I get some pretty strange looks from most folks when I talk about mushrooms and mushroom hunting. But friends, this cherished pursuit of ours has provided me many a great meal, heartfelt camaraderie, intellectual stimulation and a sense of awe of the wondrous world we live upon. These benefits are not something that can be captured in a sound byte or a two minute clip. But they are the 'real' story of mushrooming, waiting to be revealed. Good forays to you all.

Found

Someone left a yellow serving tray in my vehicle at one of the morel forays. If it is yours call me and I will bring it to the next meeting. The Editor

Mycology on the Internet

fungi.0catch.com/recipes.htm

By Ed Lubow

Since the next meeting will be the Cook and Taste, this seems like a good time to suggest the Internet as a source of recipes.

The main reason most people hunt mushrooms is to eat them, so it should come as no surprise that there are also tons of recipes to go with all those mushrooms. Which is good, because finding a recipe for a wild mushroom species can be difficult. Look in any regular cookbook, and, while you will find recipes using mushrooms or even featuring them, recipes with the various wild mushroom species are not to be found. This is unfortunate, as each species has its own unique flavor and texture to contribute.

You can certainly try substituting your wild mushrooms into a general recipe that uses mushrooms, but the results are often not what you would hope for. The difference in strength of flavor alone can cause major problems. Some wild mushrooms have fairly subtle flavors that are easily overwhelmed, and others have intense flavors that rapidly dominate the dish. Failing to compensate for this can result in a dish in which your mushrooms are undetectable; hardly the fate desired after you spent all that time and effort hiking through the woods to find them.

There are many sites on the Internet providing recipes for wild mushrooms. The one I've selected for this month is notable for listing its recipes by mushroom species. The title of the page is B.W. Freyburger's Collecting and Cooking Wild Mushrooms in the Southwest (Arizona and New Mexico). The majority of the recipes are actually links to other sites' recipes, which makes this site a sort of index to mushroom recipes around the world.

Have you found a huge fruiting of *Lactarius deliciosus*, but you're not quite sure how to prepare them? I counted 71 recipe links for this species alone.

(continued on page 8)

Colorado Mycological Society Member Roster Update August

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SEPTEMBER MUSHROOM TASTING

SEPTEMBER 8, 2003

We are planning a wild mushroom Cook & Taste for the September meeting. The cook & Taste will be held at 7:30 in Mitchell Hall at the Denver Botanic Gardens. Members are encouraged to bring a mushroom dish to share with other members. Those who have no time to cook or cannot cook may bring drinks, desserts, salads, or bread (prepared food from the grocery is fine.) The cook and Taste is being organized by Vice President William Windsor. Contact him at 303-544-6069 to let him know what you are bringing. We don't want all the same dish.

Only the following mushroom species may be used:

Boletus barrowsii

Boletus edulis

Cantharellus cibarius

Commercial mushrooms from a grocery

Coprinus comatus

Dentinum repandum

Flammulina velutipes

Hydnum imbricatum

Lactarius deliciosus

Marasmius oreades

Matsutake - Tricholoma magnivelare or Tricholoma caligatum

Morchella angusticeps

Pleurotus ostreatus

All the dishes brought to the Cook & Taste must follow these rules:

- 1) All mushrooms must be well cooked. Raw mushrooms will not be allowed in any dish.
- 2) Use only one species of mushroom in each dish.
- 3) A written recipe prominently showing the species of mushroom in the dish and the cook's name **MUST** accompany each dish.
- 4) *Leccinum* species are not allowed!
- 5) If you have a supply of a good, common edible species of mushroom that you would like to use in a dish, but it isn't on the list above, call Marilyn Shaw at 377-1278. All exceptions must be approved in advance of the Cook & Taste.

(Internet continued from page 4)

On the negative side, the majority of those recipes are not in English. If you can't read French or Spanish or Italian, try using Babelfish to translate the recipe (if you don't already know where it is, search for it using Google). While the results of Babelfish translation are often humorous, they will be very usable for recipes.

So if you're looking for something different to bring to this year's Cook and Taste meeting, see if the Internet might provide you with some ideas.