

### MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

My March message optimistically speculated that spring would arrive shortly and winter would quickly become a faint memory. Wrong again. All of the events associated with spring seem well behind a normal year. That includes the morel season, which is off to a slow start and will be somewhat condensed in at least southern Wisconsin. As reported later in this newsletter, the morel championship in Magnolia, Illinois on 4 May saw thousands of morels collected. Those morels were small, early season forms of *Morchella esculenta* (at least all that I saw), and Magnolia is about 100 miles south of the WI border. If one subscribes to the premise that spring moves north about 100 miles a week, then it should be here. The hard part is defining what spring is; average air or soil temperatures, phenology of various plants, last frosts, etc.? My personal spring involves lilacs, May apples, morels, and fields of dandelions. I managed to collect just over 100 morels on 16 May west of Madison — the entire batch only partially filled two paper sandwich bags. Similar results, around 85, were obtained the next day just over the border in Illinois. As I'm writing this, I'm mapping out my strategy for the week of 20–24 May; then I'll retire for the year and move on to all my neglected plants. This year will go down in the morel data book as strange but well above average.

This will be my last message as president; another able body will assume the various presidential tasks after the 15 June 1996 Annual Meeting and picnic. One year of trying to coordinate our various activities is enough to remind me of how burned out I was after a previous two-year term as president in 1984–86. As has always been the case, the real work of the Society is carried out by the board members and numerous other members that have always been willing to volunteer their time and expertise. We've always had the luxury of having many people willing to do both large and small jobs to keep the Society going. I'm sure this will continue as long as people enjoy the great variety of pleasures derived from wild mushrooms and other fungi. My sincere thanks to all who have contributed to the strength of the Wisconsin Mycological Society during the past year and every other year since 1982.

There are a number of Society events coming up in the next few months, starting with the summer foray in late July and the mid-August photography foray. Keep in mind that you don't need to take photos or even own a camera to go on the August foray. Then come the September-October forays, which are the most important part of the year for many. I look forward to seeing you in the woods this summer/fall, especially if I'm lost and you know the way out.

With best regards, Alan Parker

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### UPCOMING WMS EVENTS

June 15 – Annual Business Meeting and Picnic, Falk Park in South Milwaukee; see enclosed announcement.

July 27 – Midsummer Foray, South Kettle Moraine, led by John Steinke.

August 18 – Photography Foray, Scuppernong Springs Natural Area, led by Chuck Fonaas. (Note: this is a Sunday foray.)

October 6 – 13th Annual Mushroom Fair, Milwaukee Public Museum.

More detailed announcements on the July and August forays will be mailed sometime in July.

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## TENTATIVE FALL FORAY SCHEDULE

Sept. 7: Monches Woods

Sept. 14: Mauthe Lake

Sept. 22: Point Beach (Note: this is a Sunday foray.)

Sept. 28: ?

October 5: South Kettle Moraine pair of forays with post-foray common display of collections

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### PHOTOGRAPHY FORAY

by Chuck Fonaas

Recently John Steinke asked me if I would be interested in doing a photo foray again this year. I responded with an enthusiastic yes, but last year's turnout immediately came to mind. Although last year's turnout was rather slim, those in attendance had an enjoyable and productive day. So, it is at this time that I would like to say that fancy, high-priced equipment is not needed to enjoy this outing.

Much depends on what you want to do. My interest is in close-up natural history photographs. This, indeed, will require more specialized equipment but this does not have to result in the exclusion of all those with point and shoot cameras. Some fungal species are large enough to be photographed with a camera lacking close focusing ability. Furthermore, you don't always have to be that close. Consider a still life type shot or a scenic shot with a fungal theme.

One interesting project for a 'shroom hunter with limited photographic interest or equipment is a photo log of fungal finds. You can do it in life-list fashion much as a birder would, in annual form or by locale. As long as your camera can focus close enough to get a reasonable photograph this can be a fun and useful project. I believe most cameras would be capable of this, although the subject is not going to fill the frame. A recognizable photo for the record is all you will need.

So, if you're thinking that you won't enjoy this outing because your camera isn't flashy enough or because you aren't an avid photographer, think again. You may give rise to a new interest or find the camera to be a useful tool for mycological studies.

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### MUSHROOM FAIR

Plans are underway for the Thirteenth Annual WMS-MPM Mushroom Fair to be held October 6 at the Milwaukee Public Museum. Kevin Lyman of the Botany Dept. at the Museum will be in charge of the fair this year. As some of you may know our past president and director Martyn Dibben, who has organized the fair since its beginning in 1984, has moved on to directing the Schlitz Audubon Center, leaving Kevin to ably manage the fair this year. If you have any suggestions or ideas concerning the fair, Kevin would like to hear from you. Call (414)278-6142 or write the Botany Dept., Milwaukee Public Museum, Inc., 800 W. Wells St., Milwaukee, WI 53233, or (for those of you with email) his internet address is: kl@mpm1.mpm.edu. Volunteers are always welcome.

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### FUNGI COURSE AT UW-WAUKESHA

9 September — 28 October 1996. One-credit course on the identification of higher fungi meeting at UW-Waukesha for 8 Monday nights from 7-9 p.m. The class will be listed as Botany 291 — Identification of Mushrooms and other Large Fungi. This course may be taken for credit or through special student enrollment for audit credit (no exams, just the fun part). Those people signing up for audit will receive a real bargain — just \$30 for the entire eight-week class (the course is \$70 when taken for credit). Fungal groups covered will include cup fungi, the *Xylaria* family, morels and false morels, gilled mushrooms, boletes, corals, tooth fungi, leather fungi, polypores, jelly fungi, chanterelles, puffballs, and puffball relatives. Fresh material collected over weekends will be used whenever possible. There will be at least one field trip opportunity. If you would like more information about enrolling, I can complete most of the registration process for you ahead of time; call me, Dr. Alan Parker, at home (542-7688) or call me at the University and leave a

message (521-5495). The class is limited to 24, so make your plans early. You do not need any college background or previous classes to enroll in this class.

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### **FALL FUNGI COURSES IN WEST BEND**

Dr. Sami Saad will teach the following fungi courses at UW-Washington Co. in West Bend during the fall semester beginning the week of Sept. 3. Botany 291 Special Topics: Fungi, Other Microbes, and Humans is a 2-credit course which gives a general account of fungi, bacteria, and other microorganisms and their impact on our daily lives with emphasis on their ecological, pathological, and industrial importance. It will meet Friday mornings from 9 to 10:50 a.m. The other course, Botany 291 Special Topics: Survey of Plant Diseases, is a 1-credit course which gives a general survey of the most important plant diseases of vegetables, shade trees, field crops and ornamentals of Wisconsin. Control measure recommendations including biological control will be emphasized. The class will meet Tuesday evenings from 6:00 to 7:50 p.m. If you are interested in taking one of these courses, you can contact UWWC at (414) 335-5250 for more information on how to enroll, either for credit or as an auditor.

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### **OTHER FUNGI WORKSHOPS AND DISPLAYS**

**7-8 September.** A two-day workshop at the UW-Milwaukee Field Station (west of Saukville) taught by Dr. Alan Parker. Title: Mushrooms and Other Fleshy Fungi: Identification and Ecology/. An intensive introduction to higher fungi with emphasis on field collection and identification; slide lectures, displays, and handouts. Meets 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. both days. Field trips at the field station and at North Kettle Moraine. To register call the UWM Field Station at (414) 675-6844 or Alan Parker 542-7688. This workshop is designed to accommodate people with a broad range of experience, from beginners to more experienced amateurs.

**15 September.** An afternoon introduction to higher fungi at Lapham Peak State Park; slide lecture, display, field trip in the park. A brief introduction (1-4 p.m.) to common edible and poisonous wild mushrooms and other fleshy fungi in southern Wisconsin. Taught by Dr. Alan Parker; for more information call 542-7688.

**21 September.** Retzer Nature Center Apple Festival, Waukesha. Included in this celebration of the apple will be an educational display of common higher fungi, mostly fresh material, from southern Wisconsin. This exhibit is sponsored by UW-Waukesha with great help from WMS volunteers John Steinke, Rich Miller, and Diana Parker. The biggest problems with this project are limited display space and a need for really high quality specimens. If you would like to contribute fresh collections of wild mushrooms or other fleshy fungi, please call Alan Parker. The Wisconsin Mycological Society receives some good free exposure through this event, which draws about 4,000 people.

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### **FEBRUARY WMS MEETING**

Just as happened several years ago for another WMS meeting, NAMA failed to come through with the slide show we had requested for showing at our February meeting. Nonetheless, Bill Blank and Alan Parker saved the day, and members attending were treated to a couple of excellent presentations.

Bill began by giving a talk on the use of psychedelic mushrooms by Mexican Indians. The talk was based on a May 13, 1957 Life magazine article by R. Gordon Wasson called "Seeking the Magic Mushroom." Wasson, a banker, along with his Russian-born physician wife, spent many years investigating the historical uses of mushrooms among different cultures, particularly the uses of mushrooms for spiritual purposes. Their most famous work is the two-volume Mushrooms, Russia, and History, published as a limited edition in the 1950's and undoubtedly very expensive today. This particular article discussed the experiences Wasson and Allan Richardson had while experimenting with "sacred mushrooms" as part of rituals conducted by Mexican Indians. While Bill spoke, pictures from the article were displayed via video tape. Bill concluded his part of the presentation by showing a broadcast of an old television program called "One Step Beyond". The episode involved a person consuming an unspecified hallucinogenic mushroom and his being

observed to see what effect it had on him, in particular testing his extrasensory powers. Both parts of Bill's presentation were interesting for the unusual attitudes towards mushrooms that they depicted.

During the last part of the evening, Dr. Alan Parker gave a slide show/lecture on poisonous mushrooms that can be found in Wisconsin. One of his slides showed the deadly "destroying angel" *Amanita verna/virosa*/ together with another white, but edible, mushroom, *Leucoagaricus naucinus*/, and it served as a chilling reminder of how hard it can be to distinguish the two species. Another thing that Alan pointed out was that the Midwestern variety of the poisonous, psychedelic *Amanita muscaria*/, actually contains little hallucinogen. Alan also discussed some poisonings or averted poisoning cases he had been involved with.

Thanks to both Alan and Bill for doing such a fine job of covering on short notice. Hopefully, the next time a show is requested from NAMA, it will arrive, and no one will have to pinch hit.

Colleen Vachuska

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### WMS MOREL FORAY

After several weeks of mostly cool, overcast weather, people were happy to see a nice clear day come along and we had an excellent turnout for the annual morel foray on Saturday, May 18. Participants met at Mauthe Lake and then caravanned to the foray site, the New Fane Trail. We had expected this foray might be a bust because of the lateness of spring this year, but we were also comforted by the thought that even at a bad foray, somebody usually finds something. Fortunately, this turned out to be the case, and about 150-200 mostly smaller specimens of *Morchella esculenta* were collected among the elm trees of the site. As usual, some members collected morels for the first time in their lives, which is always fun to see. One of the park rangers at the Trail seemed to know there were a few morels to be found and even encouraged us to come back another day, after joking of course about how she thought the morels were her secret. Overall, everyone either found some morels to take home or enjoyed an outing on a nice sunny spring day.

Peter and Colleen Vachuska

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### NOTES ON HYPOGEOUS FUNGI (TRUFFLES AND THEIR ALLIES)

by Dr. Alan Parker

Long-time WMS members may remember a fall 1983 foray at Bristol Woods Park in Kenosha County. The highlight was a number of true truffles collected under a group of hawthorns. Many forayers had never seen truffles before, and two questions immediately surfaced: How in the hell did you see those little things? Are they edible? Then a more critical and technical question: What species is it and has it been found before in Wisconsin?

Truffles, along with a very heterogeneous group of other hypogeous fungi, do occur in Wisconsin, but are rarely collected. Their hypogeous (beneath the soil) fruiting patterns usually exclude them from being found by more traditional collecting methods. They are most likely spotted when fruiting bodies occasionally poke above bare soil surfaces under trees or when accidentally uncovered while digging plants in woodland soils. Most are quite small (roughly 0.5-5(8) cm. diameter) with surface colors in various shades of tan through dark brown. Hypogeous species are found in both Ascomycetes and Basidiomycetes, and most if not all are ectomycorrhizal with trees and shrubs. Many are associated with conifers and others with hardwoods; the great majority of species are found in the Pacific Northwest, but the occurrence of a number of species remains to be documented in the Midwest.

The 1983 Bristol Woods truffle and two collections made by John Steinke near Mukwonago have all been identified as *Tuber candidum* –/ which is soon to undergo a name change. Although these are the first records of *T. candidum*/ from Wisconsin, it appears to be a rather common North American species. Steinke found one ascocarp of another truffle during 1990 at Point Beach. This was IDed as *Hydnотrya tulasnei*/, also not rare in this country but possibly a state record. Also of interest is a beautiful hypogeous basidiomycete collected by Peter and Colleen Vachuska during a

WMS foray at Monches Woods. This species, determined as *Melanogaster broomeianus*/, has a dark brown peridium with a black, gelatinous, almost glistening gleba (center) in cross-section.

All of the above identifications are courtesy of Dr. James Trappe of Oregon State University. Dr. Trappe is a world authority on hypogeous fungi and mycorrhizal associations. He has kindly agreed to examine additional Wisconsin collections of truffles and their allies. If you think you've found a truffle, send it to Alan Parker. I'll tentatively ID it and forward it to Dr. Trappe if it appears to be in the right group. The more Wisconsin records the better to document the overall distribution and abundance of these fascinating fungi. All of the above cited collections have been deposited in the permanent fungi collection (herbarium) at Oregon State University.

If you do decide to try your luck at finding hypogeous fungi, most standard field guides do little to describe either collecting methods or to illustrate representative species. A large number of truffles and allied genera are pictured in Keys to Spores of the Genera of Hypogeous Fungi of North Temperate Forests by Castellano, Trappe, Maser, and Maser. This volume is not, however, on most amateur's bookshelves in the Midwest. Another good introduction is British Truffles, A Revision of British Hypogeous Fungi by Pegler, Spooner, and Young. Again, not a standard book in most people's reference collection. For those belonging to NAMA, the recent 1995 Vol. 12, No. 1 issue of McIlvainea has an article by Jane Smith that is a good introduction to hypogeous fungi.

A final word on the subject. With reference to both truffles and other hypogeous sporocarps, I'm often asked how you ever know if you've found one. If it vaguely resembles a miniature potato and is softer than a rock, it may be one. Cut it in half; note the internal color, texture, and aroma. Also, record the exterior color and any color changes while fresh and bruised. The best way to preserve these fungi for future study is drying — basically the same way you dry morels or gilled mushrooms.

If you're determined to find a truffle, consider the following quote that I use in my science major's courses. Louis Pasteur, while speaking on early advances in the germ theory of disease, stated "chance favors the prepared mind." One can know a great deal about truffles without ever having seen one. And then one day ....

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### MYCO-BRIEFS

by Colleen Peter Vachuska

- In the salt marshes of the North Carolina coast lies a fungus capable of propagating itself by shooting a "blob of jelly" when moistened. While it is nothing new for a fungus to fire off spores mechanically, this fungus *Glomerobolus gelineus*/ is not firing off spores, but rather a vegetative piece of itself called a propagule. The propagule is surrounded by 3 or 4 knobs which swell when moistened, causing the center propagule to pop out. It can fly out at least a foot. If it lands on dead plant tissue, it sinks mycelium in and continues to grow. This discovery of a "spitting fungus" was made by Jan and Brigitte Kohlmeyer of the University of North Carolina and represents a new genus. (Discover, May '96)
- A mass extinction of life on earth occurred about 250 million years ago at the end of the Permian period. So many trees died that for a brief geologic span, fungi "inherited the earth", feeding on the enormous amount of dead wood then available. Evidence for this fungal peak comes from fossil fungi dating between the Permian and Triassic periods. While during most periods, plant pollen and spores outnumber fungal remains in sedimentary rocks, research in the Alps and Israel done by paleobotanist Henk Visscher of the University of Utrecht in the Netherlands and his colleagues shows that fungi proliferated wildly at the end of the Permian period. In support of this theory, the geologic literature also shows that simultaneous fungal peaks occurred in many other parts of the world, including Siberia, Australia, India, Asia, and north and east Africa. (Science News, March 16, 1996)

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### TAXONOMIC RINGS AROUND THE UNICORN

by Steve Nelsen [a – see footnotes at the end of the article]

The "Unicorn Entoloma" is *Entoloma murraili* [b] (Berk. Curt.) Sacc. in Moser's system, but *Rhodophyllus murraili* (Berk. Curt.) Sing. in Singer's, facts which I shall spin into a considerable shaggy dog tale. Peck first found it at

Sandlake, NY in August of 1871, and published it as a new species of *Agaricus* in 1872, when people were still following Fries by placing gilled mushrooms in one gigantic genus with many tribes. Peck named this plant *A. cuspidatus*, which although concisely descriptive, proved not to be an acceptable name.

It became obvious to everybody that keeping gilled fungi in one genus was silly, and Fries' tribes *Nolanea*, *Leptonia*, *Eccilia*, and *Entoloma* were first raised to the level of genera by Kummer in 1871 [ c ]. Saccardo made the first specific combination *E. cuspidatus* in 1886 (accounting for the `Sacc.' above: Kummer classified European fungi, where the Unicorn does not occur). I have not seen who first realized that the Unicorn had been validly published as *A. murrayi* by Berkeley and Curtis in 1859. According to the Rules of Nomenclature, this required that Peck's descriptive species name be replaced by one which conveyed no information, so it was.

"Lumpers" were never satisfied with these Friesian tribes being raised to genera, arguing that they were too similar to warrant such distinction. For example, Kauffman commented in 1918 that the Unicorn sure looks like a *Nolanea*, but left it in *Entoloma*. Quelet had chosen the descriptive name *Rhodophyllus* for a single genus to contain the re-united tribes in 1886. Although this appeared to be an excellent solution and was widely accepted, *Rh.* ran into Rules of Nomenclature problems. Mycologists who favored keeping *Rh.* included Singer, Smith, Kuhner, Romagnesi, and Horak, but it lost two battles for conservation at International Botanical Congresses, nominally because the spelling is too close to a genus of algae, *Rhodophyllis*. This interpretation of what I do not doubt was argued appears suspicious. Rules are necessary, but anyone dealing seriously with nomenclature knows that they sometimes should be broken; that is why one can petition the Congress. These Congresses include the guys who unblushingly accept genera which are (with as little misspelling) based upon private body parts (both *Phallus* and *Clitoria*), drug paraphernalia ( *Hypoderma* ), and tragic human diseases ( *Melanoma* ). They also call a genus comprising 90 rather minor members of the pea family *Lotus* (none has anything whatsoever to do with the plant named lotus in English; this surely is, I'm sorry, stupid), and who retain *Pyrenom* ... and *Pyronem* for quite unrelated higher groups of Ascomycetes. *To be accepted, botanical names apparently need not avoid confusion, which ought to be the guiding principle behind any nomenclature, or even avoid casual absurdity. I can only conclude that the refusal to ratify Rh. as a valid name was the result of petty power struggles, lost by the good guys twice [ d ]. Singer also attempted a double reverse to score approval of a different unambiguous united genus name, by dusting off Fries' Acurtis, a name validly published in 1849 which was not being used [ e ]. This attempt was ill-considered in retrospect, and also failed. The losers in this minor tragedy obviously felt that they had no valid reason not to use Rh., and continued to do so. Other "lumpers" felt a moral obligation not to use an officially rejected name. Donk had exercised what is the right of anyone who cares to unite groupings of the same rank into one group of the same rank; one can simply choose any of the previously existing names under which to unite them. Donk perfectly "legally" renamed the rejected Rh. as Entoloma in 1949. Both Hesler in his 1967 monograph [ f ] and Moser employ Entoloma Kumm. emend. Donk as the name of the united genus. For these workers, the "legality" of substituting a different meaning for a technical word which had been employed for over a century outweighs the confusion arising from the fact that Entoloma Kumm. included less than a quarter of the species of the new Entoloma (and was therefore substantially different in definition).*

"Splitters" had no quote-worthy comments I have seen about these squirmings of the "lumpers" (I can't believe they don't chuckle). Largent enlarged the number of "Entalomatoid" genera on the west coast of North America to 13 in his 1994 monograph, but does not mention how many genera he thinks exist world-wide.

*In addition to not being able to agree whether a typical genus ought to have a handful or hundreds of species, taxonomists working with this group have not been able to achieve much agreement that I can detect on the question of how inclusive the species ought to be. Each appears sure that in some cases previous workers have erred in both directions on species breadth (which is doubtless true).*

#### Footnotes:

- [ a ] I lack any credentials to support opinions I have on taxonomy, but professional taxonomists often have very wide ranges of opinion themselves. As an organic chemist, I have considerable experience with scientific jargon, and admit to definite opinions about the purpose of naming things.
- [ b ] Noordeloos (only, that I have seen) spells it *murrayi*, which appears preferable. This plant must have been



named after a Murray, and ungracefully “latinized” to produce a name looking like a misprint, lacking internal clues for pronunciation.

- [c] I’m not sure when *Claudopus*, erected as a subgenus by W. G. Smith in 1870, was moved to *Entoloma*.
- [d] I say “good guys” because even if you want a score of “Entalomatoid” genera, it would obviously be useful to have a clean name for all of them together, if only because people have never been able to agree in which genus to put many of the plants when several are used. Whether a group should be a subgenus or a genus is clearly something about which people differ widely in opinion. It cannot be usefully negotiated by Congresses no matter who “wins”.
- [e] *Acurtis* arose from Fries’ proposal to rename *Clavaria gigantea* Schw. as the type of a genus to “fill the gap between *Sparassis* and *Clavaria*”, an idea which now appears silly but was not at the time. Burt (1922), Singer (1962), and Hesler (1967) sectioned Schweinitz’s type (which must be getting a bit worn by now) and agreed that it is sterile. Singer established that one can find *Rh.* basidia and spores if you look in other finds of what everyone agrees Schweinitz had, but Hesler, Smith, and Thiers united in opposing this name to replace *Rh.* because it is “based on a monstrosity”. Discussions by Hesler and by Smith and Thiers (inserted into a discussion of monstrosities of *Tylopilus rubro-brunneus* in their *Bolete* monograph) unfortunately appeared before Smith’s group showed conclusively that *Acurtis* was *E. abortivum* which is infected with *Armillaria mellea* (or *Armillariella*? I refuse to rise to this well-chewed bait).
- [f] Hesler abandoned using the Friesian tribe names at any level, and also proposed no new names for his subgroupings. He subdivided this now large genus using the presence or absence of cystidia as the main cut, pileus depression or lack thereof as a second, and stipe color as a third. This resulted in his separating by dozens of pages species he thought were very closely related, and having ones not closely related next to each other. I have seen no one who thought that Hesler’s classification was very satisfactory.

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## THE ILLINOIS MOREL CHAMPIONSHIP

by Alan Parker

It was a dark and stormy night ... it really was! We left Waukesha Friday evening, May 3rd, in anticipation of being sideline observers the next day at the 1st Illinois State Morel Mushroom Hunting Championship. Our motel was at the Peru, Illinois area junctions of I-39 and I-80, about 20 miles north of the championship headquarters in Magnolia. We arrived about 9 p.m. in a rainstorm, and were impressed by the large numbers of motels and almost no restaurants. Finding food late Friday night in the rain with lack of bearings wasn’t nearly as bad as being lost in Nicolet Forest while morel hunting, but both are unpleasant. We did encounter familiar faces from the WMS, Norm and Sunny Rupnow, and we visited about the prospects for the following day’s festival being soggy.

Saturday morning started cloudy and cold, but at least dry. To avoid the initial crowds, we arrived in Magnolia shortly after approximately 750 official contestants had departed at 9 a.m. on a whole bunch of big yellow school buses (one of my tasks was to count the buses when they got back and I lost track in all the excitement). Magnolia is very small, population about 300, but good parking was abundant and everything was easy to find. A pamphlet entitled “A Visitor’s Guide to Marshall and Putnam Counties” describes Magnolia as “a sleepy hamlet with a post office, tavern, community fire protection district, and a church.” Activities centered around the fire station (emptied for the occasion) and the village park behind. About 20 vendors had set up booths to sell morel-related items and various crafts, T-shirts, bumper stickers, etc. Morel Mania had an excellent display of items from their catalogue, and were doing a brisk business. I managed to get off cheap with a basket of three morels and a magnet fashioned from butternut shells and a Christmas ornament of dough morels. The carved morels and morel walking sticks that Nauman’s are becoming well known for were admired by many. The Illinois Mycological Association had a booth promoting their amateur group and selling some nice-looking T-shirts. A primary activity of the morning was trying to keep warm; the hot coffee met with mixed reviews, but most liked the hot chocolate. We holed up in the fire station and visited with the Rupnows and others until the buses return around 12:30. Our friends from graduate school days in Champaign-Urbana had entered the contest, and we saw a familiar arm waving out of bus number eight or nine or ten. Carol and Darrell had success, but not that of champion proportions — what they had that I was dying to see was the official map of the secret morel

hunting site. I stared at it with amazement — so simple yet so clever. The perfect solution to sending 750 people into the woods at the same time and getting them all back — a golf course. The official winner had about 287 morels, second place about 230. I again forgot to record the numbers — they were broadcast over the crowd to a great deal of cheering.

I had anticipated a rather chaotic day of crowds and lines, but what we found was a very organized and well-run festival. The local people running the concession stands were exceptionally helpful and polite — a small town friendliness that was genuine. Our overall evaluation was that it was well worth the trip — a very pleasant and relaxed day celebrating the wild morel in north-central Illinois. Would we ever enter the contest? No. Would we return to another year's festival? Yes.

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**RECIPE:**  
**LOW-CAL SQUASH-ZUCCHINI-MUSHROOM**  
**DIP OR SPREAD**

by Joanne Pasek

- 2 onions, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced
- 1 tablespoon oil
- 2 tablespoons water
- 1 pound each of zucchini and yellow squash, cut in 1/2" chunks
- 1/2 teaspoon thyme
- black pepper and salt to taste
- 1 cup sliced cooked mushrooms

*Saute onions in oil and water for about 7 minutes on high in microwave, until onions are translucent. Add the squashes, thyme, garlic, black pepper and microwave on high for about 12 minutes until vegetables are just tender, stirring halfway through cooking time. Add the mushrooms and cook 2-3 minutes more. Add more water in small amounts if needed during cooking. (If desired, puree.) Serve with Italian bread.*