

# MushRumors

Newsletter of the Northwest Mushroomers Association

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*Mycena sanguinolenta* is terrestrial with blood-red juice and reddish gill margins. Photo by Matthew Koons

## On fun-guy and fun-gal futures

Mark D. Johnson, scryer for hire

Yes, despite the hackneyed puns in the title, it appears we may have some more fun again as a club in the not-too-distant future. Back a month or so ago, based upon the slow roll-out of the vaccines at that time, it seemed like a tough bet whether or not we would have a fall show this year. But, with how things are now ramping up in the vax distribution department nationwide, there is reason to be hopeful. It will depend upon people actually taking advantage of the vaccines, and on whether the virus mutates sufficiently quickly to evade such protection. But, that is the fall. And we will have to wait and see how things unfold before making definite plans for the autumn.

In the more immediate future, we have some activity planned for this spring. There will be no Survivor Banquet this year, but we will have a few meetings via Zoom. The first one will be on 8 April at 7 pm. Keep your eyes open for the email invitation coming your way closer to that date. In a talk at the April meeting, Jack Waytz will be providing us all with detailed maps and GPS coordinates of all his *secret special locations for spring mushrooms* over the mountains to the east of us... okay, I am joking . . . but Jack will give us the low down on some

*Continued next page*

**Contents: [April 8 meeting](#) | [FunDis update](#) | [Photo faves](#) | [Morel recipe](#) | [Mushroom of the Month](#)**

## On fun-guy and fun-gal futures, continued

generally good places to go with your pod (or small group of also vaccinated friends). In addition, the April general meeting will be our official “Annual Meeting” at which we will be voting regarding some minor changes to our club’s bylaws. Look for an email in advance of the meeting detailing the changes so you will know what you are voting on.

The May and June speakers are yet to be determined, but I do see in my crystal ball that I won’t want to miss them. There will be no formal club forays this spring, but when you do go out on your own, or with your pod, please post what you find to [our instagram](#) account. To do that, just send your best photos to Mariella at [kerr.mariella4@gmail.com](mailto:kerr.mariella4@gmail.com)

If you joined the club or renewed your membership in 2019, you got last year as a freebee. If you joined the club in 2020, you get this year as a freebee. Otherwise, to keep yourself on the club’s group email list and to take advantage of all the upcoming activities, please pay this year’s club membership dues by 1 June 2021. The link to pay dues is on our [club webpage](#).

More prognostications: based upon my special psychic intuitive connection to the Wood Wide Web, I am predicting a bumper crop of funga this year of MANY DIFFERENT SPECIES! And a wonder-filled field and forest of flora and fauna (and microbes), too! And I predict a great upsurge of



Mark Johnson, skrying

positive emotion among the members of the species *Homo sapiens*! So find that basket of yours wherever it was you put it, dust off your mushroom ID books, download [MycoMatch](#). If you haven’t already, update your [iNaturalist](#) app, and be ready for a great year.



Dr. Mark Johnson, president, NMA

## Vote on changes to the NMA Bylaws

Linda Magee, NMA treasurer

At our Annual Meeting on Thursday, April 8, 2021 (via Zoom), the Board will present a package of three proposed amendments to our NMA bylaws to be voted on by the membership.

To see our current bylaws, go to our website [contact page](#) and click on the link [2019 bylaws](#).

### What will change if the bylaws are approved:

- The amendment to the bylaws would allow for the officers elected in November to be seated at the Annual Meeting that immediately follows the election.
- If approved by the membership, these bylaw amendments would become effective for the Board elections in November 2021.

### What is the rationale for this change:

- The Board believe seating the new officers at the Annual Meeting will allow members the opportunity to meet the new officers in a social setting and get acquainted with the new Board.



### What will each of these three proposals change:

- Change 1 will allow seating of the new officers at the 2022 Annual Meeting.
- Change 2 tweaks the election calendar so we are not voting during the busy Annual Show in October.
- Change 3 is a temporary, stop-gap measure that extends our current Board’s tenure until the seating of the new Board at the 2022 Annual Meeting.

### How to review the full text of the proposals:

- On March 19, all members who receive the NMA emails should have received an email from me, Linda Magee, dated March 19 and sent from this address: [360nmatreasurer@gmail.com](mailto:360nmatreasurer@gmail.com). This email includes the full text of the proposed bylaw amendments for your review.

If you have any questions or did not receive the email, please email me at the above address. See you on Zoom!

# A walk in the woods Christine Roberts

We have been enjoying some spring sunshine after being deluged for most of this winter, so off I go into Chuckanut Community forest which is close to home. There were not too many fungi out so I thought I'd try my hand at a photo montage, having installed a new battery in my phone. (After 2+ years of being taped together I could now close my phone.)

Here below is my walk in Chuckanut Forest mid-March: clockwise from top left: *Fomitopsis* sp., flamboyant *Stereum* cf *ochraceoflavum*, cedar with stripped bark, *Trametes versicolor*

chowing down on birch, squirrels' dining table, happy woodpecker hole, *Mycena galariculata* gp. (centre left) tasty new nettle with *Usnea* sp. lichens enjoying their tasty stick.

*Next month I invite other mushroomers to tell of their walks in the woods. It can be technical or chatty—pending disasters not necessary. Contact [Christine](#), with the subject line, "Woods walk."*



## Member corner

# How I finally joined NMA

Martha Dyck

Mushrooms always intrigued me. But growing up on pre-Intalco land near Ferndale I don't remember seeing fungi that really grabbed my attention. I knew I loved nature, however. When I saw my first trillium on our woods I excitedly called my mother at work (I was probably 10 at the time) and told her I'd found an exotic flower. I was introduced to the existence of actual identification books after I'd left home.

When my partner and I moved to Coos Bay, Oregon, in 1980, I saw my first *Cortinarius violaceus* growing in the fields around our rented house. This mushroom looks like it's made of crushed purple velvet. It seemed unreal to me. I could not believe nature could create such textural beauty. I was hooked.

We lived in a funky run-down cabin near one of the estuarine sloughs that run off Coos Bay. Tiny mushrooms grew on one windowsill. Nothing stayed dry. We tramped the fields and marshes where our landlords eked out a living gathering sword fern fronds and salal for florists. In our wanderings we came upon an incredible variety of fungal shapes, colors, textures, sizes. I'd never witnessed this much variety.

So I started gathering ID books on fungi. I familiarized myself with a few edibles but felt too much a novice to try anything questionable. Moving back to Whatcom County, where I'd grown up, I continued to look for mushrooms, trying to ID ones I found interesting. Most of my friends were mycophobes. They considered my fascination with mushrooms amusing and perhaps foolhardy.

Academically, I'm at the bottom of the heap. My memory is shot, especially for names, and most especially for Latin names. But I finally realized that I wanted to know more about mushrooms than just their potential edibility. I decided to take my mushroom fascination seriously and joined NMA. ID classes with Fred have opened the door to discipline my mind to more thorough examination of mushrooms, though I know I'll never be more than the most rank amateur. For one thing, the artistic beauty of fungi often initially captures my imagination and

*Oyster log. Photo by Martha Dyck*



Martha with turkey tails, wow. Photo by Camille Ciancanelli

wonder. Realizing their characteristics and all their intricacies, how they reproduce, the microscopic differences in their spores, the complexity of gills and pores, the minute chromosomal differences in species, has just added to my appreciation of their beauty. And it's great being around other mycophiles!

About eight years ago, after I'd joined the club but was not fully active in it yet, Jim and I were traveling over the Cascades in late fall. We stopped in a high-elevation campground east of Rainier, and stumbled on Fungi Fantasia. Every few feet we ooh'ed and ah'h'ed at huge boletes, ramaria, russulas, polypores. We almost stepped on a mass of black chanterelles in the trail, which we collected and ate later. This "peak" experience has been multiplied over and over in forays and campouts with NMA. Speakers at our meetings have opened my eyes to new dimensions in the mycological world. I am so glad I joined NMA and will continue learning about fungi (however slowly, given my aging brain), through the club.



This image is Stereo RL (cross your eyes for 3-D viewing)

## Report on Stimpson FunDis project Fred Rhoades

The hundred samples we sent in last year have been put through the sequencing process (with the help of some financial support from the Northwest Mushroomers Association—thank you very much). These have been analyzed by the BOLD (Barcode of Life Data System) platform at the University of Guelph in Ontario, Canada ([information here](#)). This process looks at the ITS (internal transcribed spacer DNA) sequences amongst the DNA coding for certain lengths of ribosomal RNA. This region of DNA is often examined in fungal studies.

You can look for yourself at our project repository. Go to [iNaturalist](#). From “Community” on the menu bar above, choose “Projects.” Then, in the search box, type “Stimpson,” hit enter and then choose: “Stimpson Family Nature Reserve—a Fungal Diversity Survey project.” This project includes all species seen by all people to visit the location. [Experiment](#) with how to display things. Clicking on “SPECIES” in the central, horizontal menu will list all the species found by all. Then click on “# observations” below each photo to see the different observations of each in the Stimpson. Finally, from this list, click on a photo to see the details of each observation. Those of our 100 that we sent to have sequenced will have a WWB (WWU’s herbarium code) number in the Observational Fields: Voucher Number(s) field. If you want to be able to just see those in your list, email me for the relatively simple (but wordy) process to do so. For the sequenced samples particularly, there is often a lively discussion in the Comments as to exactly what the sequence and other information all means. To begin to sort out the mysteries, over the last few weeks, we have begun to look at some of the mystery specimens. In addition,

we have heard from other local mycologists, particularly Danny Miller from the Puget Sound Mycological Society with invaluable information about previous Pacific Northwest sequencing results that point the way for the identification of some of our specimens.

Of the 100 sequenced (as of 3/20/21—these numbers are changing as we look at things):

- 48 of the specimens have been identified to a species or species complex.
- 32 of the specimens failed in sequencing: there was contamination or otherwise a decent DNA sequence was unable to be obtained.
- 20 of the specimens need further work to determine species identification. Some may be what we initially guessed or another, related species and some may be unknown or at least their sequences may not yet have been reported by others.

One species Dick Morrison is currently working on is illustrated **above**. We have called this *Mycena laevigata* but the DNA sequence suggests it is *Mycena overholtsii*, a species we actually know to be quite different (it inhabits moist logs at high elevation near melting snow late in the spring and in early summer). Dick will have more on this conundrum in the future. There are many other such interesting mysteries and getting to the bottom of everything will require more sleuthing. Stay tuned . . .

If you would like to help in this ongoing project, read more about it in the [Dec 2020 newsletter](#) and [email me](#).

# A gallery of spring mushroom favorites

Photos by Richard Morrison



As spring unfolds in the high country, snowmelt mushrooms, like *Mycena nivicola*, begin to fruit, some even pushing up through the snow.



*Gyromitra montana*, the edible Walnut or Snow Mushroom, can be found in the high country during snow melt.



The Snow Bank Orange Peel Fungus, *Caloscypha fulgens*, is an attractively colored, early spring fruiting cup fungus.



The brilliant red color of our western Scarlet Cup, *Sarcoscypha coccinea*, identifies this early spring species. Fruiting on decaying hardwood sticks, it is often hidden under winter's forest debris.



The Early Morel, or Thimble Morel, *Verpa bohemica*, is found under cottonwood in early spring. Although a popular edible, there are precautions to learn about if you intend to eat it.



The name *Gyromitra esculenta* suggests this species is edible, yet it contains a potentially deadly volatile toxin and is not recommended.



*Morchella eximia* is one of the burn site morels fruiting in abundance the year after a forest fire. It is highly sought after, but as with all morels, should be eaten with caution.



Snyder's Morel, *Morchella snyderi*, is a common and tasty black morel found under conifers and in mixed forests in mountainous areas.



The Spring King Bolete, *Boletus rex-veris*, is a montane species found under conifers, particularly pine and fir.



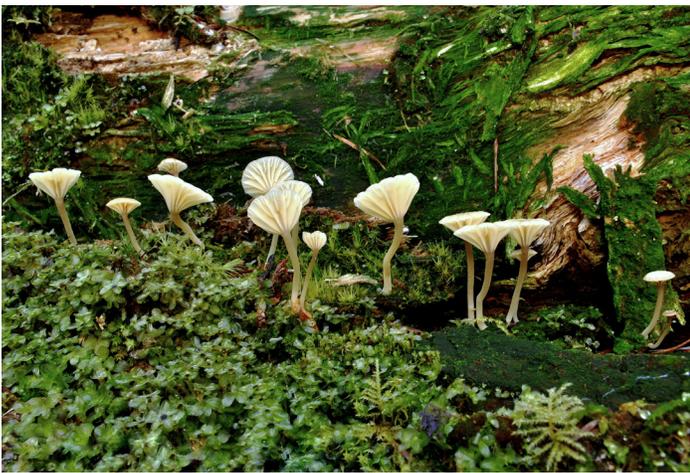
*Butyriboletus primiregius*, a butter bolete favoring fir forests in the mountains of Oregon, California and Idaho, is not yet known from Washington.



The Spring Agrocybe is a member of the *Agrocybe praecox* complex. A cosmopolitan fungus, it can fruit in abundance on wood chips, humus, grassy areas, and other locales.



This meaty looking mushroom is *Inocybe praecox*. Found with conifers and in mixed woods, it is only known from western Washington State. Like most *Inocybes* it is likely poisonous.



The little Lichen Agaric, *Lichenomphalia umbellifera*, can begin fruiting in early spring on lichen covered decaying conifers, where it is a symbiont with the lichen *Botrydina vulgaris*.



Often identified as the European species *Hygrocybe flavescens*, our PNW look-alike is thought to be an undescribed species.



The Mica-cap, *Coprinellus micaceus*, though small, can fruit in large numbers on or near decaying hardwood trees and stumps. Edible, it can make a tasty sauce or addition to a stew.



Fruiting later in spring as weather warms, the Pale Oyster Mushroom, *Pleurotus pulmonarius*, is most commonly found on dead alder. It is both tasty and relatively easy to identify.

*A recipe to spring into action*

## Kicked-up stuffed morels Jack Waytz

*Recipe furnished by Ermeril Lagasse*

### Ingredients

1 cup lump crabmeat  
3 tablespoons mayonnaise  
1½ tablespoons heavy cream  
2 tablespoons chopped chives  
1 egg yolk  
2 tablespoons finely grated parmesan  
1½ tablespoons dry breadcrumbs  
Salt and white pepper to taste  
12 to 16 large morels, cleaned  
8 tablespoons butter  
2 teaspoons minced garlic  
1 tablespoon chopped parsley

### Directions

1. Preheat the oven to 375°F.
2. In a mixing bowl combine crabmeat, mayonnaise, heavy cream, chopped chives, egg yolk, parmesan, and breadcrumbs and stir to mix well.
3. Season with salt and pepper and stuff each morel with the crabmeat filling.
4. Heat an oven-proof skillet or saute pan and melt 4 tablespoons of the butter. Transfer stuffed morels to the skillet and quickly saute, turning on all sides to ensure even browning. Add remaining butter and garlic and continue to cook for 1 minute.
5. Transfer pan to the oven and bake for 8 minutes, or until heated through and morels are golden brown.
6. Remove from the oven, sprinkle with the chopped parsley and serve immediately, with some of the garlic butter drizzled over the top.

This is one of my all-time favorite morel recipes!



Morels come in all shapes and sizes. These are burn morels.  
Photo by Jack Waytz

## Mushroom of the Month

# *Conocybe aurea* (J. Schaeffer) Hongo Buck McAdoo



The genus *Conocybe* is defined by Meinhard Moser as “small, fragile types with conical to thimble shaped caps.” The caps are usually in the ochre brown to rusty brown range in colors and can be smooth or velvety. Spore prints are rusty to rusty brown to rusty ochre. In other words they look like *Mycenas* that went rusty. They are such quintessential LBM’s that they usually get overlooked, even at forays.

But this particular collection sort of stood out. They fruited in a flower pot at Tom Wilmore and Linda Magee’s home on January 3, 2021. It was a cheerful sight. The apricot yellow fruiting bodies gregariously decorating the dirt. I took the photo you see here and promised I’d try to get a name for them.

They were duly described in their fresh state and dried in the dehydrator. Then I phoned up Dr. Richard Morrison. He has that golden touch with the camera. Linda had said more should be fruiting soon, So Dick went over a day or two later only to discover the fungi weren’t cooperating. Either too old or too young. This meant he wouldn’t be co-authoring this story, but he contributed mightily anyway by keying out the species. Once the name surfaced I realized I had met the species once before . . . up in Vancouver with Paul Kroeger on one of his urban *Amanita phalloides* walks. Paul had said it was common throughout the city around urban gardens.

*Conocybe aurea*, a.k.a. The Golden Dunce Cap, surfaced first as *Galera aurea* back in 1930, introduced by German mycologist Julius Schaeffer. Then in 1963, Japanese mycologist Tsuguo Hongo moved it to *Conocybe*. One gets the impression the range was significant.

This particular collection had caps 0.7–3 cm wide, broadly conical to bell shaped with finely striate margins. They were smooth becoming a bit nodulose (lumpy) at disc. Ochre at the margins becoming tawny ochre at the centers. The gills were adnexed, subdistant, buff at first, then straw color before turning rusty from spores. Stems ran up to 7½ cm long and 3–4 mm thick. They were smooth, hollow, and equal until the rounded white bulb at the base. The upper half were a pale straw color, the lower half red-brown until the white tomentum above the basal bulb. I found the odor to be a bit peculiar but found that no one in the literature commented on odor except for Breitenbach & Kranzlin who noted it was “faint but pleasant.” The spore deposit seemed actually brown.

Microscopically, the spores were broadly ellipsoid bordering on almond shaped, thick walled, and with a distinct germ pore. They measured 11–13.2 x 6–7 microns. The cheilocystidia and caulocystidia were lecythiform. They looked like bowling pins with small rounded heads. The gill trama was interwoven and the pileipellis consisted of clavate to pear shaped cells resembling a hymenial surface.

Other authors noted a few more features. According to Ian Gibson, the gill edges are white floccose, there is no velar material, and clamps are present. On the other hand, neither Breitenbach & Kranzlin nor Roy Watling found clamps. No one found pleurocystidia, but Watling described the stipes as pruinose-striate. Siegel & Schwarz have an excellent photo showing the caps to be hygrophanous.

As for edibility, avoid it like the plague. Close relatives in the genus *Pholiotina* are potentially deadly. And there are a number of look-alikes with ‘edibility unknown’ tags. The most common is probably *Conocybe tenera*, now thought to be a complex of species. It fruits in lawns and differs by its rusty brown stem. *Conocybe leucopus* has a similar white stem, but no bulb at the base. *Conocybe subovalis* also has the abrupt bulb but has longer stems up to 11 cm long and larger spores at 12–16 x 7–9 microns. And finally, *Conocybe rickenii* is also found in flower pots but has smaller caps of a beige to tan color.

According to Andy Overall & Vivien Hodge, *Conocybe aurea* can be found in central to southern Europe, Asia, and South America. It is widespread but not historically common. Roy Watling mentions that prior to 1982 there had been only one report of it from the British isles. A sighting from southeast

Scotland. Now it is becoming almost common along the west coast from British Columbia down into California. It prefers nitrogen rich soils such as one might find in composts and flower pots.

Ironically, considering the red flag on edibility, Dr. Watling described the cap color of *Conocybe aurea* as “deep yellow tinged apricot, saffron, or peach.” Makes you hungry just reading about it.

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## Profiles of Northwest Fungi

*Buck McAdoo's new book takes you on a journey through more than 500 species and images. The prose is witty and delectable, and I am an unabashed fan. Get your own copy through Amazon. –Ed.*

“The mushroom bug. It hits people in all walks of life. Once you are fairly well down that road with no hope of getting off it, you might take the time to look back and try to identify the markers that led you there. In my case it was not an academic trail. I exist today as a sort of bridge between the mycology docs and the general society of our local mushroom club, and that is where I belong.”

–Buck McAdoo, from “About the Author,” *Profiles of Northwest Fungi* (2020)

## Save the date

**Thursday, April 8, 7–9 p.m.** Jack Waytz divulges his “Ecological keys to discovering your own springtime secret spots.” (Find recordings of Zoomed member presentations on [NMA's Vimeo](#) channel.)

## Lichens and more

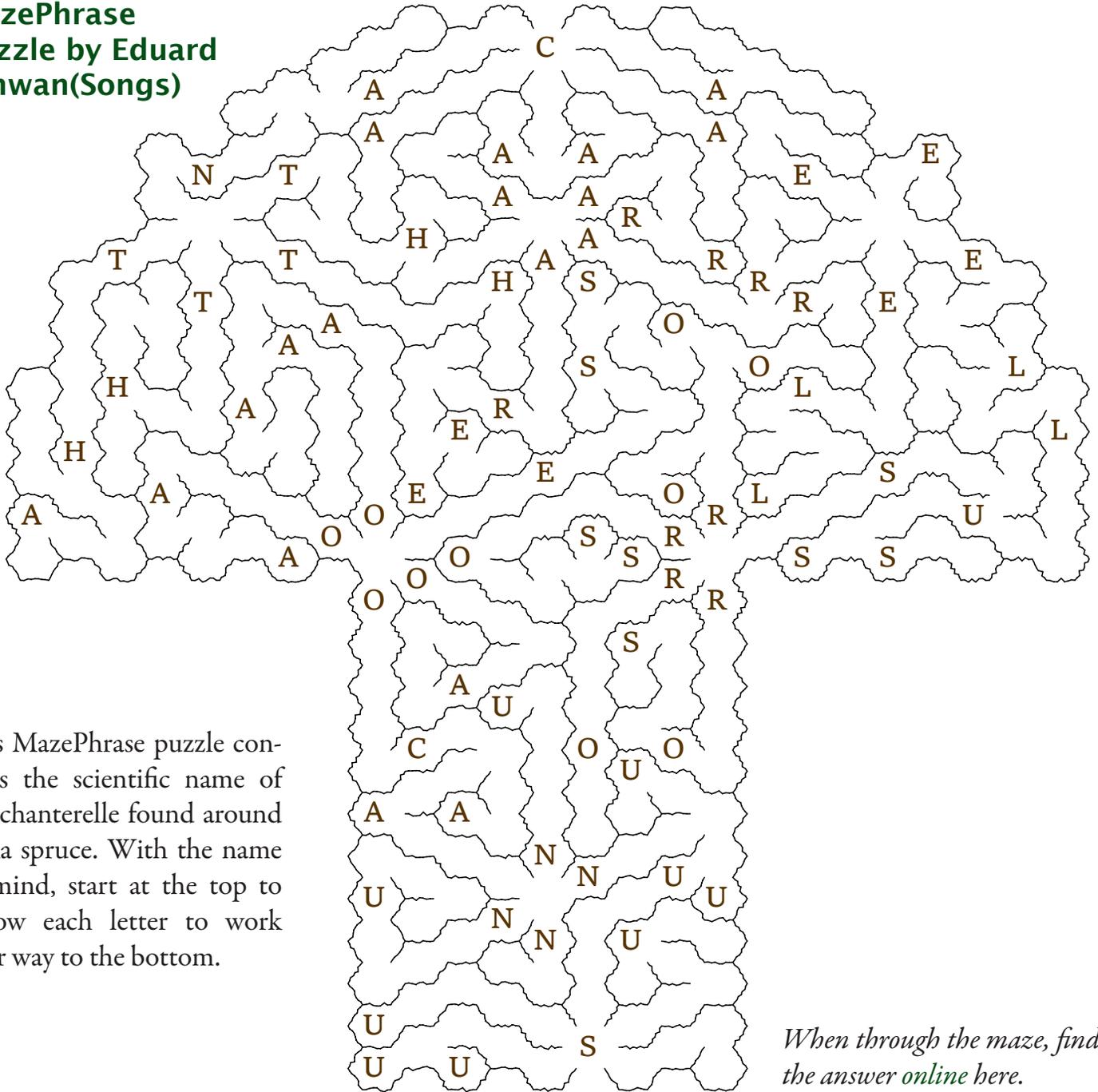
The March 2021 issue of *Whatcom Watch* has an in-depth article by NMA's science advisor Dr. Fred Rhoades on two lichens that give you a clue about the purity of the ambient air: *Lobaria pulmonaria* shows up where the air is relatively clean, while *Hypogymnia physodes* is found in less pristine air-quality sites (such as most of Bellingham). In addition, says Fred: “All my old articles in the “[Life Before Flowers](#)” (very occasional) series are available online, with the illustrations in color!”

*About the photographer:* NMA member Matthew Koons is a professional carpenter and amateur mycologist based in Seattle. He is interested in taxonomy, community science, and connecting with the regional mycological societies and finding mushrooms all throughout Cascadia. These and the cover specimens were found in the Redmond watershed preserve, a lovely place to observe mushrooms, reptiles, and amphibians in the foothills.



*Mycena rosella.*  
Matthew Koons

**MazePhrase**  
puzzle by Eduard  
Schwan(Songs)



This MazePhrase puzzle contains the scientific name of the chanterelle found around Sitka spruce. With the name in mind, start at the top to follow each letter to work your way to the bottom.

*When through the maze, find the answer [online here](#).*



**Northwest  
Mushroomers  
Association**

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Northwest Mushroomers Association promotes the understanding and appreciation of mushrooms, furthering the study of fungi, their identification, natural history, ecology, and conservation. We serve mushroom enthusiasts in northwestern Washington State, including Whatcom, Skagit, and Island Counties.

In 2020, NMA switched to online meetings and forays. On a monthly basis, our Board reevaluates when to resume in-person get togethers, classes, and events. Stay apprised of events and more by joining NMA and our googlegroups email list.

Or visit: [website events](#) ~ [instagram](#) ~ [facebook](#) ~ [vimeo](#)

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