LONG ISLAND MYCOLOGICAL CLUB

L.I. SPOREPRINT

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

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VOLUME 20, NUMBER 4, WINTER, 2012

FINDINGS AFIELD

In the last Findings Afield's column, we described one of the three Coprinus species that fruited spontaneously in Peggy's potted plants on our rear deck, *Coprinellus flocculosus*. This column will provide identification details of the second, *Coprinus cortinatus,* quite similar macroscopically (to the naked eye) but with intriguing and delineating differences microscopically.

C. cortinatus, young

When they first emerged amidst the decaying wood chips covering the soil beneath the lettuce leaves, the cap, at this point less than 2 millimeters wide, was dark ochraceous, covered with white veil remnants which quickly dispersed and were distributed in a fairly regular radial pattern by the time of maturity, when the cap measured no more than one centimeter. At this time the color had faded to a dull white, only the disc retaining some buff pigmentation. The primary macroscopic feature to identify this species is the dense pubescence at the stipe base, sometimes appearing as multiple rings. As was the case with *C. flocculosus*, *C. cortinatus* continued to fruit multiple

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How the mushroom got its name

Else C. Vellinga *Mycena News*, April, 2011 (by permission)

What do 'spillcam', 'vuvuzela' and 'Connopus' have in common?

All three words were used for the first time in 2010. Spillcam is the videostream of the oil spill in the Coast of Mexico last spring; A vuvuzela is the plastic hooting instrument in use during the world cup football (soccer) last summer; *Connopus* is the name for a new genus of mushrooms, to accommodate *Gymnopus (Collybia) acervatus*. Now, we have a new genus name for *Gymnopus acervatus* but where do the other mushroom names we are using come from? The white-dotted red-capped species with a white stalk which is enlarged at the base and has a white ring is a good one to look at in detail.

The first person to call it *Amanita muscaria* was Lamarck, who included it in his 1783 catalogue of plants. He gave a lyrical description, with emphasis on the beauty of this mushroom, its wonderful scarlet cap, nicely covered with white plush dots. But he refers to older literature, in particular Linnaeus' book Species Plantarum, published in 1753, where Linnaeus called the mushroom *Agaricus muscarius*. Linnaeus gave it only a one-sentence description, with references again to older books, where phrase names were used, like the mushroom with the red cap and the bulbous stalk – just the way we still describe this mushroom for friends and family. Linnaeus introduced the system of using two names to identify a species: one, a genus name (in this case *Agaricus*), the other a species name (*muscarius*). This system is still in use. However, Linnaeus and Lamarck used their genera, *Agaricus* and *Amanita*, in a much wider sense than we do now – both their genus names could be used for any gilled mushroom.

After these early writings the name remained in use for the next two hundred and fifty years and this is the name we still use for this species. It turns up in the 1821 book by Fries, Systema mycologicum, which is considered the real beginning of mycological systematics. An early record for California is provided by Murrill, an

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MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM ENCLOSED!

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Greetings to all members. I sincerely hope that none of you lost too much due to Hurricane Sandy. It was a terrible time for many people on Long Island and hopefully all has returned to some level of normalcy.

Joel and I received many calls about dog poisonings in late summer. The culprits were Amanitas and at least one was a Inocybe species. The Amanita poisonings caused at least one death and the other dogs needed specialized care which cost thousands of dollars. (Some of the callers brought over specimens to be identified. This is the best way to know what treatment the vet should use. In the Inocybe case, the owner saved vomited specimens in a plastic container for our examination. Our I.D. saved the animal from needless procedures and it soon recovered.)

Although it is officially winter, there are still mushrooms out, ready to be picked and eaten, mainly Oyster mushrooms. They are being found on old, dead maples and have a gray cast to them. We've had two finds so far in December. (Since each one was small and perfect, I rolled them in flour, salt and pepper and fried them in olive oil. Great appetizer.) There are also some *Hygrocybe hypothejus,* which is about the only other edible around.

We are saying good-bye to 2012 and are about to celebrate a new year. I want to thank all of you who have helped out throughout the year. Whether you served on the board, donated an item, brought delicious food to our picnic, attended a foray, donated mushrooms and time at Mushroom Day or a recipe or two, you all have my gratitude. I also want to thank some of our new members who are so enthusiastic about finding mushrooms and identifying them that it invigorates all of us old timers.

In our next issue there will be reviews of two new books. One is quite a surprise...no hints!

I wish you all a healthy and happy 2013. We will still go walking in the woods and, of course, looking. Maybe I'll see you along the trails.

EDITOR'S NOTE

It is tempting to say that it has been a strange year for mushrooming, but like Dickens' unhappy families, every year is strange in its own way. Despite this having been a drought year over most of the USA, it was not extreme in the Northeast, where rainfall in NYC was 25% below normal. After a dry, bare-bones spring, above normal summer rains, particularly in eastern Suffolk, produced prodigious fruitings of Chanterelles but also other less desirable species, resulting the unfortunate incidents mentioned above.

In addition to finding Oysters, December is a good month to go afield searching for novelties, since most collectors are cozily tucked away at home. I collected two: *Hygrophorus subsordidus,* another southerly denizen that seems to have strayed North; and *Lycoperdon pusillum/dermoxanthum,* a tiny, overlooked Puffball with worldwide distribution.

And speaking of being cozily tucked away, the Winter is a good time to bone up a bit, so as to improve our collecting and identification skills. Have a favorite genus? Concentrate on it and try to learn to distinguish all the species we have encountered in the past, using our online checklist as a base. Even without specialized works, there is so much available on the web to increase our reach.

MATERIAL FOR THE SPRING, 2013 EDITION SHOULD REACH THE EDITOR BY MARCH 1

(Submissions may be forwarded by email in any format or typed.)

 (All unsigned articles authored by editor.)

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HOW THE MUSHROOM GOT ITS NAME (Continued from page 1)

east- coast mycologist who visited the states of Washington, Oregon and California in the fall of 1911. Murrill wrote that he saw 'Brilliant orange and red sporophores of this deadly species' in the pine barrens of Newport, Oregon, and that fresh specimens were shown to him by Professor Setchell in Berkeley. Every guidebook has a picture of the fly agaric (its common name), and its bright red caps can be found all over the Northern Hemisphere, and even in the pine forests that have been planted on a huge scale in South America, Africa, New Zealand and Australia.

Linnaeus and Fries, both Swedish scientists, wrote their books in Latin. Lamarck on the other hand wrote his book in French. Linnaeus just gave a one sentence description, no picture, nothing, though, as an aside, he mentioned that the species 'kills bugs and eradicates them promptly'. With Fries it is the same story, no picture, and a very brief account of this species. Lamarck is the exception with his vivid description in florid language. Nowadays, there is a set of rules for describing new species and genera, the International Code of Botanical Nomenclature, which applies to plants and to fungi. The rules keep changing and new versions are prepared by committees on the nomenclature of different organismal groups (there is a committee that looks carefully at the proposals concerning names of fungi) and then are voted on by the attendees at botanical congresses.

Some of these rules: All names for plants and fungi have to be unique; for instance: the name *Melaleuca* for a mushroom genus had to be changed, as there was already a tree genus called *Melaleuca* (widely planted in our area) and the mushroom genus is now called *Melanoleuca*. However, the names can be shared by animals and plants or fungi: European beachgrass and a sand wasp are both called *Ammophila arenaria*. Also within a genus, every species has to have a unique name, and in big genera such as *Cortinarius* and *Russula* this might ask for a creative and imaginative mind.

The name has to be published, on paper and distributed to libraries. This rule is at the moment under reconsideration, as many journals will soon be on-line only, without any paper copy. There are journals, such as Mycotaxon and the free journal North American Fungi, that still print some copies of the journal and send them to libraries, but will not send paper copies to subscribers.

The description of a new species still has to be in Latin. A diagnosis suffices, i.e. a short comparison with other species. This requirement is also constantly attacked, and the last 25 years have seen a stream of proposals to get rid of this requirement. The on-line translation services can translate from almost any language into another, but Latin – no, that is not in their repertoire. It is now almost as difficult for an English speaker as it is for a Chinese or Estonian person to write in Latin.

One collection, in a public herbarium, has to be designated as the type collection for the species. In this way the name is connected to a real specimen, which can be studied to resolve disputes. At first it seems common sense to have this in the code, but times are a-changing in this respect too. DNA sequencing has changed the way new taxa are discovered. DNA is not just in entire specimens – dried fruitbodies –but also in spores, hyphae, or material isolated from soil, wood or water, without any knowledge of what the organism looks like. Instead of material to keep in a herbarium, there is now just some DNA in a tube, somewhere. Recently, a hitherto completely unknown group of soil fungi was discovered, and given the provisional and prosaic name 'Soil Clone Group I'. Shouldn't it be possible to name such widespread organisms that are known from their DNA signatures? To give you an idea about the scale of this problem, in 2009 more than half the batches of ITS sequences deposited in Genbank came from environmental samples, without specimens. This number has steadily been increasing over the last ten years. New sequencing techniques will make this number grow ever more rapidly in the coming years.

And yet, in 2009 more new fungal species were described without DNA sequence data than with. In some cases it does indeed not seem to be necessary to have molecular data. When I described the local species *Pseudobaeospora aphana*, there were only DNA data available for one species in the genus, a species that is morphologically quite different. So, I decided that molecular data for the new species were not needed (but produced them later anyway). In a group of species with few morphological differences, where the variability within a species and between species still has to be determined, it helps enormously to have sequence data to sort things out.

Getting back to the example of the fly agaric with which we started: Collections of that species from Europe, Japan, Siberia, and throughout North America have been investigated and sequence data from several parts of their DNA have been compared. What we thought what was one species that could vary in colour from deep red, through pale orange, to yellow, turn out to be divided into several distinct

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HOW THE MUSHROOM GOT ITS NAME

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groups: One group occurs throughout Europe and Asia and spreads into Alaska, while a second big group occurs in North America, with a subgroup in the Northeast. Besides these two big units, there are several smaller distinct groups, one in the southeast of the USA, and three on Santa Cruz island off Santa Barbara. The colour variations do not correlate with the DNA groups. At the moment, we are left without a species name for the widespread North American taxon – the name "*Amanita amerimuscaria*" is used informally, but it has not been published under the rules set out above. It looks like more work has to be done to establish the boundaries of this taxon and see whether those local variants and groups also have morphological characters so they can be more easily distinguished.

Fungal taxonomy remains a subjective business. Some French mycologists even say that a taxon is good enough to be a species when they can recognize it. Others say that a species has to differ in at least two morphological traits from its neighbours and others claim that a certain percentage of similarity in the ITS-region is all you need (the ITS is a specific part of the DNA that is widely used in fungal species recognition).

Yet, describing fungal diversity is more needed than ever. Though the exact number of undescribed species of gilled mushrooms is unknown, we do know that here in California many are still nameless, or only known under old and wrong names from elsewhere, such as *Amanita muscaria*. With easier rules, better infrastructure (including more data freely available on the web), and more people working in this field (this is wishful thinking on my part), it will happen! One final remark, there is no rule in the code that says the person who describes a new species has to be a professional biologist. In Europe, most new species are described by people with other professions, from shop keepers to veterinarians. Yes, you can be involved too!

(Else is a mushroom taxonomist describing species from California and beyond. She is also interested in conservation, introduced species, and mushroom diversity. Her scientific writings can be found at http://pmb.berkeley. edu/~bruns/people/ev.html. Mushrooms take up a lot of her time, but knitting is a good second.)

ERNST BOTH

June 1, 1930- Aug. 26, 2012

An enormously accomplished man, with degrees in astronomy, biology, modern and medieval languages, he wore his learning lightly, and was always approachable, casual and personable while displaying an old-world dignity and charm. After an early career teaching these subjects at various colleges he became curator of astronomy at the Buffalo Museum of Science in 1959, and thereafter director from 1984 until his retirement in 1995. Curator of Mycology was added to his title in 1977 and the museum consequently expanded its mycological research, resulting in a significantly expanded boletological herbarium. He returned as director in 2000 for nine months, and afterwards had an office there where he worked and collected his email.

His passion for mycology developed as a result of foraging for wild mushrooms at the end of World War II in Austria. Although he taught mycology, he was always fond of describing himself, somewhat waggishly, during lectures, as "not a mycologist, but a boletologist". His contribution to the study of Boletes was enormous, with the publication of more than 25 papers on the subject, and the monumental 1993 volume, "The Boletes of North America- A Compendium." For many years, he and his wife Billie (who died in 2007) attended NEMF forays where his lectures and identification skills were highly prized. In honor of his contribution to the field, a new genus of bolete, *Bothia*, was erected in 2007.

He was unstinting with his time, always accessible to amateur inquiries as well as graduate students, and as a consequence widely respected and beloved. His passing leaves an unfillable gap for many, both in the personal and professional spheres. His memory will not soon fade, and he will come to mind each time we encounter *Bothia castenella* in the field.

■ **MAD COW & LICHENS:** Mad Cow, Elk Wasting Disease and Creutzfeldt-Jakob in humans are all caused by prions, misfolded proteins that infect the brain and persist in the environment, even outliving their host organism. Previously, they have appeared to be indestructible, with no agent demonstrated to be effective against them. Now a team of researchers has shown that extracts of some common lichens such as Reindeer Moss *(Cladonia rangifera)* and Lungwort Lichen *(Lobaria pulmonaria)* are capable of destroying prions. Moreover, simply exposing prions to intact lichens in solution for 24 hours also degraded them, suggesting that lichens could be acting in the natural environment. (*PLOS ONE 6(5):e19836. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0019836)*

■ **RADIOACTIVE MUSHROOMS:** Preliminary data from a recent study conducted on the West Coast by Dr. James Trappe, measuring the amount of radioactivity in Chanterelles to determine whether the fallout from the Japanese nuclear disaster impacted wild mushrooms, was negative. The radiation measured fell below 500 Bq units, the level at which the FDA considers them contaminated, the majority measuring below 30 Bq/kg. Some of the higher and more northern sites produced readings in the hundreds, the highest being 495 Bq in a specimen of *Ramaria botrytis,* in Mary's Peak, OR. By contrast, some recent readings from eastern Sweden, 25 years after Chernobyl, were as high as 68,000 in *Cantharellus cibarius* and 186,000 in *Cortinarius collinitus*. *(Mushroomer, Winter 2012-13, newsletter of the Snohomish County Mycological Society.)*

■ **LACTARIUS LIGNYOTUS RE-EVALUATED:** A molecular study at the University of Ghent, Belgium, focused on European species of *Lactarius* in the *Plinthogalus* group, but also considered the North American taxa most closely related to them: *L. fallax,* and *L. lignyotus* and its several varieties. These fell into a grouping of their own and were not conspecific with their European congeners, while conspecificity was demonstrated between European and northern (but not southern) Asia. This intercontinental conspecificity was considered to be explained by the continuous boreal forest stretching from Europe to eastern Russia. Results did not permit resolution of the NA taxa, and the authors suggest more detailed observation of context discoloration, which sometimes is delayed by several hours or even overnight. Further more extensive sampling is thought necessary to further delineate intercontinental conspecificity. Until then, we can continue to use the names we are familiar with. *(Lactarius subg. Plinthogalus: the European taxa and American varieties of L. lignyotus re-evaluated, D. Stubbe & A. Verbeken, Mycologia, 104(6), 2012, pp. 1490–1501.)*

■ **FORTUNE FAVORS THE YOUNG (PINES):** An observation by our president, Peggy, to the effect that mushroom productivity appeared to be greater among younger stands of our native pitch pine, *Pinus rigida*, than older pines, has been shown to have empirical backing. An observational study was conducted over a 24 year period in the Netherlands, in habitat known as drift sands, which are populated by Scots pine, *Pinus sylvestris.* Here are found many of the species we are familiar with from our own Pine Barrens: *Tricholoma portentosum, Tricholma equestre, Tricholoma focale, Cortinarius mucosus, Hygrophorus hypothejus*, and others, all of which were more likely to be found, and in greater number, in stands of from 5-15 years of age than with older trees. Some of these are considered "red-listed" or critically endangered in the Netherlands while some Hydnaceous fungi, such as *Bankera fuligineoalba* have gone extinct. The authors recommend the cutting of older stands when a younger stand is found nearby. (*Fungi in spontaneous stands of Scots Pine in drift sands, A.J. Termorhuizen & M.J. Veerkamp, Field Mycologist, Vol. 13 (4), Oct. 2012)*

■ **FIRE AND FUNGI:** Forest fires have shaped the evolution of tree species and pines, for example have become adapted to repeated fires. The authors of a Swedish study suggest that fungi have become fire-adapted as well, and to demonstrate this subjected 12 species of wood decaying fungi (half of them fire-associated) to 4 heat levels, varying from 212° F to 428° F. All fire-associated species (e.g., *Gloeophyllum sepiarium)* were able to survive temperatures up to 284° F for 25 minutes and 428° F for 5 minutes. None of the nonfire-associated group could duplicate this, only one, *Fomitopsis pinicola,* surviving 5 minutes at 356 ° F, thus exhibiting a clear difference between groups in mycelial survival. *(Increased heat resistance in mycelia from wood fungi prevalent in forests characterized by fire: a possible adaptation to forest fire, F.Carlsson et al, Fungal Biology 116 (2012), p.1025-31.)*

(Compiled by editor from named sources.)

IF NO MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION IS CONTAINED HEREIN, YOUR DUES ARE UP TO DATE.

FORAY RESULTS SUMMARY

OCT. 6, MUTTONTOWN EQUESTRIAN: A total of 65 species was collected. Mostly a mixed collection with no genus strongly predominant, and only a few edibles (Brick Tops, Honeys). There were 5 species of Amanita (incl. one *A. phalloides*), 4 of Mycena, and 3 Tyromyces. New to the list were *Clitocybe truncicola* and *Macrotyphula juncea,* a straw-like coral (or club) mushroom, noticeable only because fruiting gregariously in large number. Also a tiny white *Hemimycena,* which was not identified as to species.

Clitocybe truncicola

OCT. 13, BROOKHAVEN S.P: 73 species this time, with a good number of edibles, particularly Gypsies (formerly *Rozites*, now *Cortinarius caperatus);* also *Albatrellus ovinus, Cantharellus ignicolor, Fistulina, Hydnum repandum, Lactarius corrugis* and *Sparrasis crispa*. New species were *Boletopsis subsquamosa, Hygrophorus pudorinus, and Tricholoma vaccinum*. There were 10 species of Tricholoma (none edible), 7 of Russula and 8 each of Cortinarius and Lactarius.

OCT. 20, EDGEWOOD PRESERVE: With rain continuing in near normal amounts, autumn collecting was good. We found 64 species on this date, and more than enough edibles to go around. Edibles included Suillus species, including *S. grevellei; Tricholoma equestre, Cantharellus ignicolor, Leccinum,* Brick Tops, Graylings, and Puffballs. Interesting species were *Asterophora parasitica,* and the tiny Black Jelly Oyster *Resupinatus applicatus*.

Tricholoma vaccinum

OCT. 27, PECONIC HILLS &CRANBERRY BOG: 62 species was the combined total for the two sites, with approximately one-third of them appearing in both places. Gypsies were the star of the show, but Brickcaps, Honeys and *Cantharellus ignicolor* added to the list of edibles, among which were several species of Suillus. One of these was new, *Suillus neoalbidipes,* previously dismissed as a color phase of *S. brevipes*. Also new were *Hygrocybe lacmus* (aka *H. subviolacea*), and *Cortinarius rubrocinereus,* previously encountered but not identified. (Interestingly, Peck's type specimen originated from the Riverhead area.) A large fruiting of *Tricholoma Zelleri,* aka *focale,* was encountered here, for only the second time. The caps were exceptionally large, and since reports of its edibility varied, we tried it and found it acceptable, but not outstanding. *Gymnopilus penetrans* fruiting on a pine cone was unusual.

Hygrocybe lacmus

NOV. 3, ROCKY PT PRESERVE: Collecting was good, this dune area of small pines not having suffered any visible damage from Hurricane Sandy, but did not equal the prodigious harvest of last year. With the season's decline, only 37 species were collected, but edible *Tricholomas* were abundant, and included *equestre, ponderatus, portentosum and niviepes.* Other edibles were *Hygrophorus hypothejus* and *Cantharellula umbonata.* Three species of toothed fungi were collected, two *Bankera,* and one new to the list: *Sarcodon fuligineo-violaceum*.

NOV. 10, BETHPAGE SP: Cancelled, as the park remained closed due to storm damage.

Cortinarius rubrocinereus

NOV. 17, EDGEWOOD PRESERVE: This pine barren remnant continued to produce for us, but only 38 species. Edibles were much the same as on our Oct. 20th visit, Tricholomas predominating among the edibles. Three species of *Mycena (epiterygia, griseoviridis, and mirata)* carpeted the forest floor, contrasting with the bright yellow *Neolecta*. Disappointingly, the expected flush of *Coprinus comatus* failed to materialize.

Gymnopilus penetrans on pine cone

NOV. 24, WELWYN PRESERVE: Cancelled due to a lack of fungal fruiting.

PAT'S PICKLED MUSHROOMS *by Patricia Guarino*

Ingredients:

Wild mushrooms- preferably Hen-of-the-Woods
1 TBS Hot pepper flakes (to taste)
Mason jars
3 cloves Garlic (minced)
Kosher salt for washing (1/4 cup) & marinating mushrooms (1 TBS)
1/4 cup Apple cider vinegar
3 TBS Olive Oil

Directions:

Clean all the dirt off the mushrooms, and cut into small strips. Then fill a large pot halfway with water and let it come to a full boil.
(To clean: Fill your sink with cold water, put the mushrooms in the sink & pour 1/4 cup kosher salt over them. quickly rub the mushrooms between your hands to get the dirt out then squeeze out some of the water. Or use an alternate method.)
Put the mushrooms in the pot of boiling water, for about 10 minutes, then drain them in a colander.
When the mushrooms are cooled down enough to handle, take a cotton dish towel, put some of the mushrooms inside, close the corners, and wring them as dry as you can.
Put these in a clean bowl. Repeat.
Boil your jars and tops for about 30 min.
Combine apple cider, 3 TBS olive oil, and spices in a bowl, a bit at a time, to taste. Add the mushrooms and let sit and taste for spice level. Fill jar and add additional olive oil to cover. Allow air bubbles to escape to prevent spoilage. Refrigerate.

FINDINGS AFIELD *(Continued from page 1)*

times over the course of a month, although each fruiting lasted only a few days. This continued access offered the opportunity to check details of each stage many times.

Coprinus cortinatus, mature

Again, the online key provided in Kees Ulje's "Studies in Coprinus" was indispensable, still maintained on the Mushrooms and Fungi of Poland site now that the author is deceased. (Most easily accessed by googling "kees ulje Coprinus studies".) Although this key is European, many of the species are found here (including the familiar *C. comatus, Parasola plicatilis*, etc.) and since there is no equivalent North American treatment this is the best available. Any conclusions we come to based on other than North American material is somewhat uncertain, and although some species are undoubtedly transcontinental, DNA analysis in the future may reveal the presence of cryptic species.

Following Ulje's key places our specimen in the subsection Nivei, which contains species having globose veil elements that are smooth, and unornamented spores. Spore size is the next differentiating character, and ours were less than 10 µm long and ellipsoid, which characterizes the next group. Of that group only one lacks cystidea, *C. cortinatus*, for which I was grateful , since it saved me from having to differentiate among another half dozen similar species. As it turned out, *C. cortinatus* can occasionally have cheilocystidea of a certain type, but thankfully our obliging specimen was unequivocal..

There appears to be no record of this species in North America, although a web search turned up one report at the University of Veracruz, Mexico. Ulje did not consider it rare in the Netherlands, although other European authors (Gierczyk et al, *Rare species of the Genus Coprinus,* Acta Mycologia, V. 46 (1): 27-73, 2011) do. The latter authors place it in *Coprinopsis* as *C. cortinata*, although this name has not been validly published, and others (Nagy, Mycologia V. 104 (1) p.254-275, 2012) retain it in *Coprinus* because of "ambiguous affinities". Gierczyk notes that, "It is probably overlooked", a sentiment we can easily agree with.

This may possibly be the first record in the United States, and we tentatively add it to our Long Island checklist.

IN THIS ISSUE

"**Through naming we *notice* the diversity of life.**"
Anna Tsing, Arts of Inclusion, or, How to Love a Mushroom,
Australian Humanities Review, Issue 50, 2011

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