

Bio for Ryane Snow, Ph.D.

It all began in earnest while I was a postdoctoral fellow at Stanford University in 1970. I was a synthetic organic chemist, having recently earned my doctorate from U. C. Berkeley. My research interests were centered on the chemistry of natural products, particularly those that exhibited medicinal properties. It was here at Stanford that I teamed up with colleague Ron Parry (now a professor at Rice University) for weekly “botanizing” excursions, where we would collect, identify, and research wild plants that caught our attention. These forays were so enjoyable that we continued our weekly trips through the rainy season, where our focus shifted to fungi, which were much more interesting and mysterious. Thus was born my passion for mushrooms and the natural world in which they abound. Daily walks in the vicinity of my lab resulted in an abundance of edible mushrooms including chanterelles, blewits, and horse mushrooms (*Agaricus arvensis*). Wow!! This fungal fare was soooo much better than store-boughts. My palate was hooked as well.

I then joined the Mycological Society of San Francisco and soon found myself serving on the Toxicology and Taxonomy Committees. I also wrote articles for the *Mycena News*, mostly having to do with the chemistry of fungi. At about the same time I became executive director of PharmChem Research Foundation, a nonprofit organization dedicated to the analysis of “street drugs” and drug education. This time period was the height of the “psychedelic revolution” and I had the opportunity to analyze many samples of purported hallucinogenic mushrooms, the majority of which were grocery store varieties laced with LSD. I also analyzed mushrooms collected by serious scientific investigators such as Paul Stamets and Gaston Guzman. I also developed a close friendship with Dr. Andrew Weil at this time, and we shared a number of noteworthy mushroom forays.

Soon people were knocking at my door to have me identify the “strange fungus” growing in their backyard or the mushroom they ate which gave them an upset stomach. Somehow I became known as “The Mushroom Man”. It was then that I decided that people needed to be educated about fungi and I started leading mushroom walks for groups such as the Environmental Center in Palo Alto and the California Native Plant Society.

In 1982 I moved to Mendocino County (mushroom heaven) and taught at an alternative high school (Mendocino Community High School). One of the

courses I developed and taught for many years was entitled Natural History of the Mendocino Coast. Needless to say, the Fall semester focused on fungi. Former students still stop me to thank me for teaching them about mushrooms.

I am presently a practitioner of Chinese medicine specializing in Chinese herbs, a number of which are fungi. I teach Qi Gong and surfing. I wildcraft medicinal and edible fungi, plants and seaweeds. I have led numerous mushroom walks and identification workshops and have presented a number of talks about mushrooming and medicinal mushrooms. I am presently a member of the Sonoma County Mycological Association (SOMA) and the Bay Area Mycological Society (BAMS) and I assist David Arora at his Thanksgiving weekend workshops in Albion, CA. Last summer (2010) a small group of mycophiles including myself traveled to Yunnan Province in China and experienced the mushroom adventure of a lifetime under the leadership of David Arora.