



Newsletter of the **FRIENDS**
OF THE
FARLOW

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L.B. Berard, editor

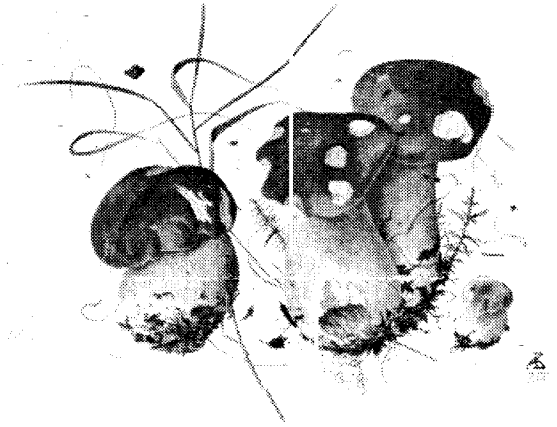
Mushroom Portraits Visit the Farlow

Lisa DeCesare
Reference Librarian

Alexander (Sasha) Viazmensky was born in Leningrad (St. Petersburg), Russia in 1946. He originally trained as an electrical engineer but soon changed careers and began to work as a freelance artist in 1976, eventually attending the Art Academy in St. Petersburg from 1988-1991.

Sasha's work has been exhibited in Europe and the United States, including the 7th International Exhibition of Botanical Art and Illustration at Carnegie-Mellon University in 1992. In 1995 at the Millstream Arts Festival in St. Joseph, Minnesota, he won the "Best of the Show Award". In *Contemporary Botanical Artists: The Shirley Sherwood Collection* his portraits are described as "exuberant", "accurate", and "larger-than-life", and he has received a favorable review in the *New York Times Magazine* (January 30, 1994).

On November 21, 2000, Sasha brought his work to the Farlow Herbarium of Cryptogamic Botany for a special exhibit and sale. The exhibit consisted of over 30 fungi watercolor portraits. "I call my watercolors



"Just as human portraits reflect one's personal surroundings, my mushroom portraits are composed with scattering of elements from their natural environment."

Alexander Viazmensky

'Portraits of Mushrooms'. For my portraits, I select not the most typical but the most pleasant and happy looking individuals. And I paint them life size." His portraits are accurate but also charming with many of the mushrooms showing evidence of slugs or other creatures nibbling on their

Clara Cummings Walk
Saturday, June 23, 2001. See page 5.

edges. Each portrait also contains pine needles, moss, leaves, bits of dirt, and other things that Sasha picks up during his collecting trips.

In addition to his fungi portraits Sasha brought watercolors depicting the forests in Russia where he collects as well as a few Russian newspaper articles about his work and some photographs of himself and the mushrooms he paints.

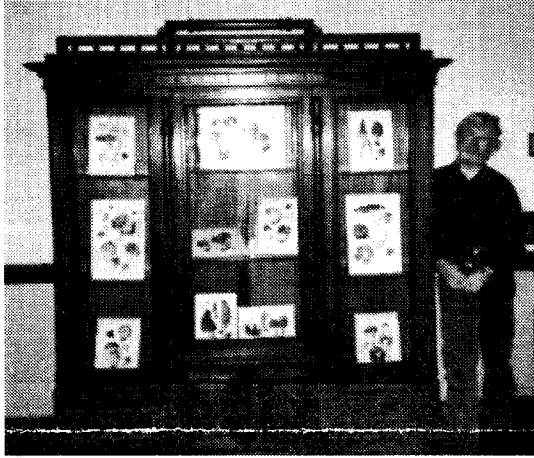


Photo courtesy of Lisa Decesare

The exhibit was very successful, with over 50 people attending from all over Massachusetts, including many members of the Boston Mycological Club and the Friends of the Farlow. Sasha moved among the guests discussing his work and describing the difficulties of collecting mushrooms in Russia. (For a detailed account of the difficulties of collecting in Russia, go to *Mushroom*, issue 30, vol. 9, no. 1, Winter 90-91.)

Before the end of the evening Sasha made a short speech thanking Professor Don Pfister and the Botany Libraries staff for hosting and setting up the exhibit. He presented both Don and the Library with a mushroom portrait. The Library purchased two additional portraits that are now part of the Farlow Library collection.

By the end of the night, quite a few watercolors had sold and Sasha promised to try to return in 2002 with more of his wonderful portraits.

2000 FOF Annual Meeting and Lecture

David Hibbett

The Annual Meeting of the Friends of the Farlow on November 4, 2000, featured a lecture titled "Elucidating Lake Histories Using Algal Microfossil Remains", by Dr. Peter A. Siver of the Botany Department of Connecticut College.

"Conn" is an outstanding liberal arts college whose science faculty not only teach with enthusiasm, but also engage undergraduates in cutting-edge research projects. Several of Dr. Siver's former students (who are not FOF members) came up to Cambridge for the talk. This testifies to the impact he has had on undergraduates in biology at Conn. These former students joined a large number of FOF members and guests who filled the Herbarium seminar room to capacity.

Dr. Siver's research focuses on freshwater diatoms and "golden algae" (chrysophytes). These photosynthetic protists are members of the stramenopiles, a highly diverse clade that also includes giant kelps and the infamous *Phytophthora infestans*, the organism responsible for the Irish Potato Famine.

The organisms that Dr. Siver studies are single-celled or colonial phytoplankton, which have intricately detailed cell walls that are formed of glasslike silica compounds. Using light and electron microscopy, Dr. Siver is able to discriminate species of diatoms and golden algae based on the shapes and markings of the cell walls.

FOF Annual Meeting November 1, 2003

This year's annual meeting will begin with a business meeting at **3:30 PM on Saturday, November 1** in the Herbaria Seminar Room. Professor Jean Ristaino of the Plant Pathology Department at North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC will speak on "A Window to the Past: Historic Migrations of the Irish Potato Famine Pathogen Revealed with Herbarium Materials." Refreshments will follow. Please join us!

News of the Farlow

Scott LaGreca

This spring, graduate student **David Hewitt** passed his qualifying exam, his committee approving his proposed dissertation research on fruiting body development in Ascomycetes. From mid-June to mid-July, he traveled to New York City and Europe to consult mycologists, herbarium specimens, and paleobotanical collections in connection with his research.

Late this spring **Don Pfister**, postdoc **Karen Hansen**, and graduate student **Brian Perry** were pleased to learn that their grant proposal, "Phylogenetics in Pezizales Emphasizing Pyronemataceae," was funded by the National Science Foundation. Brian and Karen launched the new project with collecting trips to California and Norway, respectively.

In May Professor **Meredith Blackwell** (Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge) visited the Farlow for a few days. She delivered a well-received departmental seminar on ecological strategies of fungi.

In July **Don Pfister** and graduate students **Kris Peterson**, **Brian Perry**, and **David Hewitt**, with postdocs **Karen Hansen** and **Kathy LoBuglio**, attended the annual meeting of the Mycological Society of America at Asilomar in California.

In August the Farlow was fortunate to host

a distinguished lichenological visitor, Professor **Mark Seaward** (University of Bradford, United Kingdom). While here he searched the Taylor and Tuckerman Lichen Herbaria for lichen specimens from Ireland and Hong Kong, respectively, as part of floristic studies of these two places. He also delivered an interesting seminar on the destruction of monuments and other art objects by lichens.

August also saw the end of the Biolabs' courtyard as we know it: construction teams began work on an underground mouse genetics facility. **Scott LaGreca** and **Eileen Wozek** watched with great sadness as workers toppled the beautiful *Halesia* tree, which had dignified the front of the Farlow with its white flowers every summer for years. At present the entire courtyard is occupied by earthmovers, shaking the venerable Farlow building to its foundation. As a result seismographs have recently been placed throughout the building to monitor against serious architectural damage.

From August 24-29 **Don Pfister** and **Meredith Blackwell** taught a class on "Fungi and Their Associates" at the Humboldt Field Research Institute at Eagle Hill in Maine.

Recently graduate student **Kris Peterson** joined her husband, **Mathias Carfalo**, in Kansas City, where she will write her dissertation. We have greatly enjoyed working with Kris. She is missed!

Curatorial assistant **Eileen Wozek** has nearly finished the integration of the Bartram and General Moss Herbaria. In addition she tells us that she and her husband, Jack, are looking forward to their first child in December. Congratulations, Eileen!

This fall the Farlow gained a new mycology graduate study, **Hsin-Hung Chou** (David). David comes to us from National Taiwan University, where he majored in plant pathology, after which he continued his studies as a research associate in zoology. Please join us in making David feel welcome.



Exploring the Gaspé Peninsula 1923

New Exhibits on the Botany Libraries Web Site

Lisa Decesare
Head of Archives and Public Services
Botany Libraries

The Botany Libraries have a new section on their web site. It is a collection of on-line exhibits, all of which draw their inspiration and content primarily from library and archival materials residing in our collections. They showcase materials such as book illustrations, manuscripts, photographs, correspondence, diaries, field notes, specimens, and unpublished drawings.

The first exhibit *A Wreath to the Memory of Dr. Farlow: The Creation of Icones Farlowianae, 1889-1930* examines the creation of William Gilson Farlow's work, Icones Farlowianae: Illustrations of the Larger Fungi of Eastern North America. It took forty years to complete this book and involved no less than four botanists, two professional artists, two commercial printers, one warehouse, and numerous photographers and editors.

This exhibit consists of three sections. The first, titled *The Creation of Icones Farlowianae*,

illustrates the creation of the book from conception in the 1880s until it was finally published posthumously in 1930. The second section provides short biographies of everyone involved, and the last section, *From Specimen to Plate Armillaria imperialis*, closely examines the creation of one of the 103 plates used.

This exhibit includes many items from the Farlow Herbarium archives including: correspondence between Farlow and the artists he commissioned; Farlow's notes dealing with the specimens; photographs, notes and correspondence belonging to the botanists that took over after Farlow died; photographs of the original specimens, glass plate negatives, and drawings done by the artists as well as Farlow's sketches; and documents belonging to the printer, publisher, and storage company where the original plates were stored.

The second exhibit, *Seaweed Prints by M.A. Robinson, 1885*, discusses the history of a beautiful scrapbook of mounted specimens of marine algae and seaweed that is a new addition to the Farlow Herbarium Archives. It is believed that the plants were collected in Cottage City, now called Oak Bluffs, on the northeastern coast of Martha's Vineyard, Massachusetts. The scrapbook contains 75 plates of various sizes and approximately 15 of the specimens are illustrated with scenes of coastal life. This exhibit discusses the scrapbook itself as well as providing a brief biographical sketch of Mary A. Robinson (1826-1898); an interesting history of Cottage City, one of the early camp towns; and a brief explanation of the techniques of creating sun pictures, cyanotypes, electrotypes, and plant pressing. It also contains a collection of images of the algae printings. All 75 plates can be viewed as thumbnails or quarter-sized images.

The third exhibit is titled *A Collection of Chinese Botanicals from the 1800s*. It showcases a collection of Chinese botanicals from the Archives of the Arnold Arboretum. This collection of 27 images was painted on pith paper in China in the mid-1800s. Each plate contains

**Clara Cummings Walk
Monadnock State Park
Saturday, June 23, 2001
10 am - 4:30 pm**

Directions: Find your way to Jaffrey, New Hampshire, and join us! Travel +/- 2 miles out of Jaffrey on Route 124 West. Take a right at the Monadnock State Park sign at the junction of Route 124 West and Dublin Rd. Follow Dublin Rd +/-1/2 mile to the Monadnock Bible Conference. Turn left up Poole Rd to the park entrance. At the booth indicate that you are on the Clara Cummings Walk, and pay the \$2.00-\$2.50 /person admission (the only fee for this walk). We will meet in the parking lot.

We will have several walks planned and be ready to adjust our plans to the weather conditions. **Collecting is not permitted on the mountain.** We hope to have checklists of the common species compiled from historical floras such as R. J. Howe's 1906 lichen checklist. The experts on the walk will be Raymond Abair, Scot LaGreca, Elisabeth Lay, Phil May, Donald Pfister and David Hibbett, who will all be available to do field identifications.

Bring: Friends and relatives but no dogs please (a park rule), sturdy footwear, foul-weather gear, water, lunch, snacks, sunscreen, and insect repellent.

Carpooling: Parking is limited at the entrance. Elizabeth Kneiper is coordinating carpooling. Please contact her if you need a ride or have one to offer.

RSVP: Please let us know if you will join us. It will help us plan. Please contact Elizabeth Kneiper at Ekneiper@aol.com or 781-235-8440 or Doug Greene at Atmame77@aol.com.

Emergency Contact Phone Number:
Monadnock State Park: 603-532-8862.

Late arrivals: Trail maps of walk routes will be left at the entrance booth for late-comers. Ask for FOF materials.

This announcement is also posted at <http://www.herbaria.harvard.edu/foffriends.html>.

**FoF Financial Report
July 1, 1999 - June 30, 2000**

Beginning Balance	\$11,210
Income	
Membership*	546
Book Sale	1,610
Total	2,156
Expenses	
Library Displays	112
Library	68
Visiting scholar	660
Membership letter	41
Christmas Cards	163
Annual Meeting	508
Newsletter (2)	308
Book sale	297
Clara Cummings Walk	0
Misc	125
Total	2,282
Closing Balance	\$ 11,084
Pofcher Fund	
Starting Balance	\$ 1,760
Income**	0
Closing Balance	\$ 1,760
Endowment	
Balance 7/1/99	\$ 34,791
Increase	4,441
Balance 6/30/00	\$ 39,232

*Membership contributions solicited in August this year; most not received during this fiscal year.

**Income not applied before 6/30/00.

Phil May, Treasurer