

Telluride 2012... another great year!

Once again it was another great year at the Telluride Mushroom Festival with a strong turnout from my home club, the Los Angeles Mycological Society (LAMS). While a few members chose the comforts of the lodging system, some of us braver members converged on the campground just at the edge of town, a day or two before the festivities began. The first thing we did was go to the library and get a card. For ten dollars a year you not only get full use of the facilities, computers and free internet, but you can also check out free bicycles, which is the best way to navigate this quaint little town.

Those of us that got there early were ready for the pre-festival foray led by

one of the country's premiere mushroom hunters, Larry Evans. Later that evening, we were lucky enough to get invited to a tradition at the festival, a multi-mushroom feast, on the top of a mountain with an almost 360 degree view of the Rockies, at the home of one of the best known local mushroom guides in Telluride, John Sir Jesse. The meal was incredible. We sampled probably fifteen different types of mushrooms, some I had never seen before. I was extremely comforted to wake up the next day!

Once the Festival gets going, the only tough part is deciding whether to go on

one of the many daily foraging expeditions or stick around town and enjoy the variety of options the program offers. The speakers are always top notch, one of them being the keynote speaker, Gary Lincoff. There's also a variety of featured workshops, panels, lectures, movies and cooking demonstrations. Plus, under

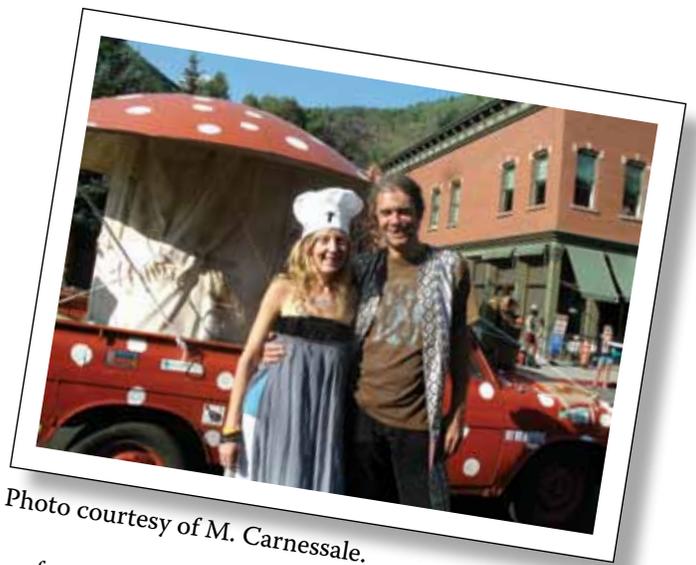


Photo courtesy of M. Carnessale.

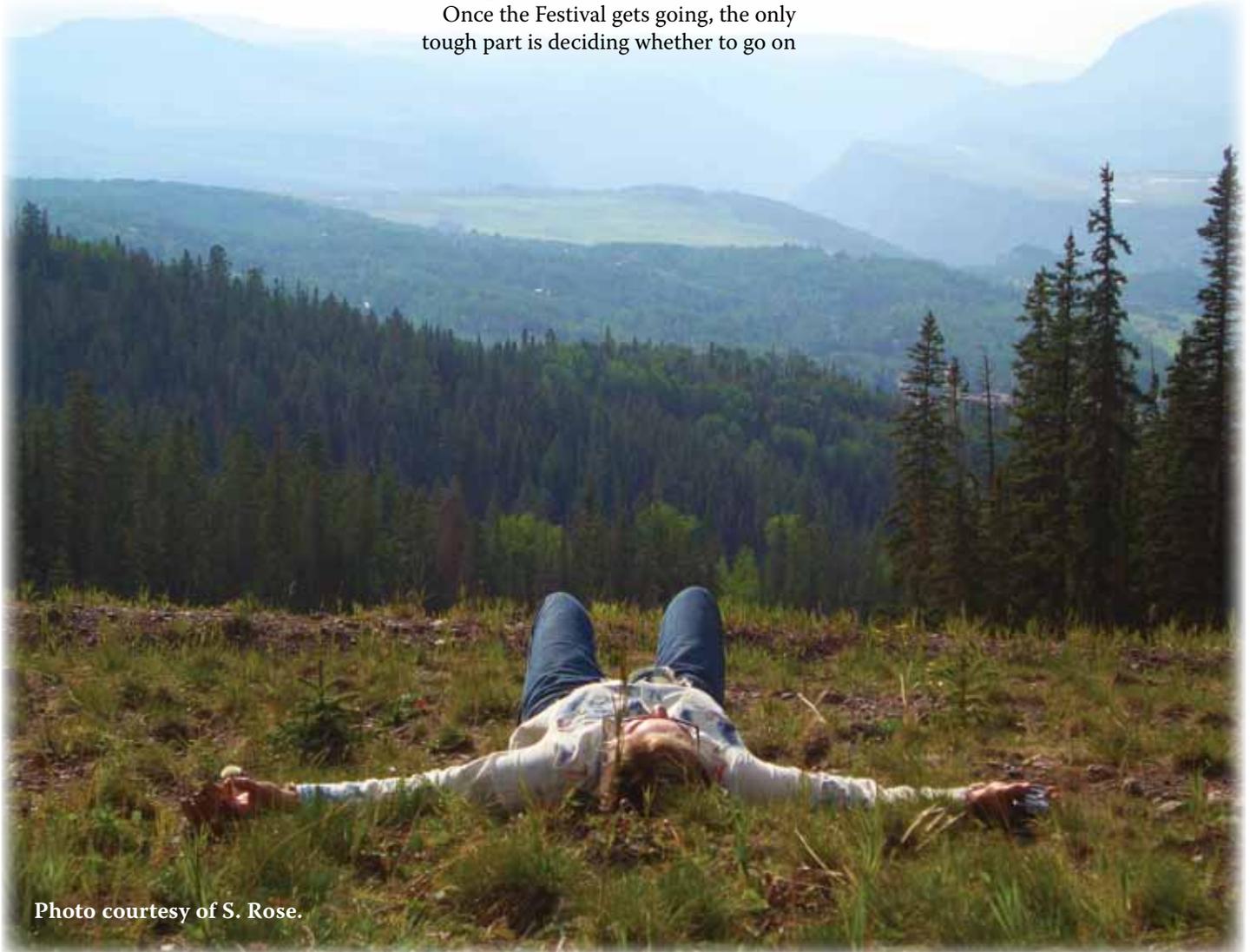


Photo courtesy of S. Rose.

the large white tent in the center of town, you'll find free mushroom ID and cook-your-own tables to sample your own bounty. One of the highlights of the Festival is when the city closes down the only road through town and turns out for the mushroom parade. (There are very few spectators as most people seem to participate.) The grand marshal and leader of the parade is the winner of the much revered mushroom cook-off; some of Telluride's best restaurant chefs compete. Apparently this year they didn't

stand a chance. That title was soundly snatched from them by LAMS members, Andre Kohler and Erica Wohldmann (pictured, partially in-costume). Their totally-foraged meal of hawk's wing mushroom (*Sarcodon imbricatus*) pâté with bluebell flower greens on acorn crackers stole the show.

For anyone considering going to the festival next August (2013), I would highly recommend it. There's been a real effort the last few years, especially under the new festival director, Scott Koch, to

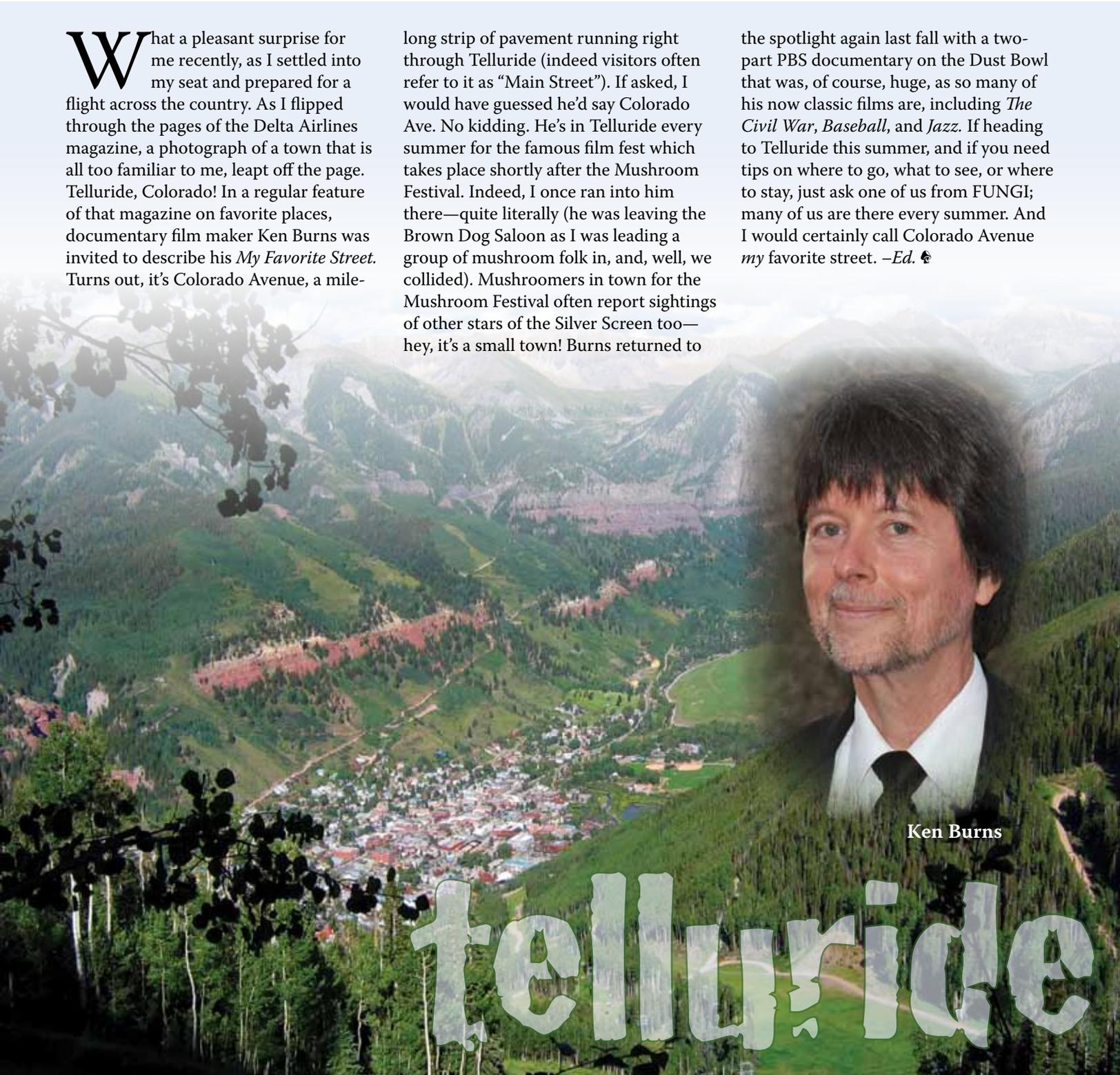
make this an event for the entire family. This year a lot of respectable people went, as the program has become less focused on psychoactive mushrooms and more focused on the finer aspects of mycology. Plus, there's a reason people make their way from far flung places to visit this tiny hamlet in the Rockies for their favorite summer festivals: it is amazingly beautiful here! For more information visit: shroomfest.com ♣

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What a pleasant surprise for me recently, as I settled into my seat and prepared for a flight across the country. As I flipped through the pages of the Delta Airlines magazine, a photograph of a town that is all too familiar to me, leapt off the page. Telluride, Colorado! In a regular feature of that magazine on favorite places, documentary film maker Ken Burns was invited to describe his *My Favorite Street*. Turns out, it's Colorado Avenue, a mile-

long strip of pavement running right through Telluride (indeed visitors often refer to it as "Main Street"). If asked, I would have guessed he'd say Colorado Ave. No kidding. He's in Telluride every summer for the famous film fest which takes place shortly after the Mushroom Festival. Indeed, I once ran into him there—quite literally (he was leaving the Brown Dog Saloon as I was leading a group of mushroom folk in, and, well, we collided). Mushroomers in town for the Mushroom Festival often report sightings of other stars of the Silver Screen too—hey, it's a small town! Burns returned to

the spotlight again last fall with a two-part PBS documentary on the Dust Bowl that was, of course, huge, as so many of his now classic films are, including *The Civil War*, *Baseball*, and *Jazz*. If heading to Telluride this summer, and if you need tips on where to go, what to see, or where to stay, just ask one of us from FUNGI; many of us are there every summer. And I would certainly call Colorado Avenue *my* favorite street. —Ed. ♣



Ken Burns

telluride