



# SOMA News

THE OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE SONOMA COUNTY MYCOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

A NON-PROFIT 501(c)(3) EDUCATIONAL SOCIETY, DEDICATED TO THE MYSTERY AND APPRECIATION OF LOCAL FUNGI [SOMAmushrooms.org](http://SOMAmushrooms.org)

VOLUME 19 ISSUE 6

FEBRUARY 2007

## 2006-2007 SEASON CALENDAR

### FEBRUARY

#### February 10 » Mushroom Madness on Sonoma Mountain—Saturday

Explore the magnificent, moldy world of fungi with SOMA member Dr. Chris Kjeldsen. We'll hunt for and talk about edible, medicinal & common mushrooms, their amazing lifecycle, & when & where to find them.

Leaders: Dr. Kjeldsen & Autumn Summers

*Moderate hiking; slow pace; possible tasting of edible varieties*

Most outings run from about 9:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.

Reservations are required for this free, public event. For sign up and for meeting location, contact the District's outings coordinator, LandPaths, at: [outings@landpaths.org](mailto:outings@landpaths.org), (707) 524-9318

#### February 17 » Potluck Foray Salt Point State Park

#### February 22 » Meeting Sonoma County Farm Bureau Speaker: Coleman McCleneghan



### EMERGENCY MUSHROOM POISONING IDENTIFICATION

After seeking medical attention, contact Darvin DeShazer for identification at (707) 829-0596. Email your photos to [muscaria@pacbell.net](mailto:muscaria@pacbell.net). Photos should show all sides of the mushroom. Please **do not** send photos taken with cell phones—the resolution is simply too poor to allow accurate identification.

A free service for hospitals, veterinarians and concerned citizens of Sonoma County.

## SPEAKER OF THE MONTH



### Coleman McCleneghan

#### February 22nd at the Farm Bureau

**S**. Coleman McCleneghan, Ph.D., began her interest in mycology in 1988 when she stumbled onto a King Bolete that was as tall as her knees. Shortly thereafter she did a mycological master at Humboldt State University in northern California. Moving east in 1991 she continued her mycological endeavors at the big orange University of Tennessee in Knoxville where she spent years collecting fungi in the Great Smoky Mountains (GSMNP) for graduate research in the genus *Pholiota* (Family Strophariaceae). Over the last decade she has taught numerous fungal courses including mycology, fleshy fungi, and lichen courses at Appalachian State University, the Smoky Mountain Field School, and the Smoky Mountain Institute at Tremont. Coleman also leads walks for the annual Wildflower Pilgrimage and the Roan Mountain Naturalist Rally. Current research involvement is with the All Taxa Biodiversity Inventory (ATBI) being conducted in the GSMNP and cliff-face studies in the Cumberland Plateau. Coleman has been involved with amateur mushroom clubs including; North American Mycological Association (NAMA), Asheville Mushroom Club (AMC), and Blue Ridge Mushroom Club (BRMC). She has been giving presentations and leading forays for the Asheville Mushroom Club annually since 1995. Ken McGill, a seasoned AMC'er, commented about the April 2006 presentation; "Thanks for another excellent program. I learn something new every time you give a talk, even when it's a beginners program."



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SOMA's *Amanita muscaria* logo by Ariel Mahon

## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

**T**he 2007 Winter Camp was a roaring success. Those attending overwhelmingly gave the experience a two-thumbs up. Unfortunately one of those thumbs was not stuck in a mushroom. The ID tables were spare this year and the typical mid-winter edibles were few and frazzled. Record setting cold broke the pipes and froze the fungi in a standing position. In spite of the lack of cooperation on the part of the weather, we ate like kings, slept like babies and played with our mushroom friends for three days. Gary Lincoff had a wonderful time with his SOMA friends; his talks and workshops were roundly enjoyed. Elio Schaechter highlighted the Saturday evening program, he was a delight. He wrote back that he had the 'time of his life' and is looking forward to his next visit. There were some new friends at Camp, Dr. Else Vellinga led an advanced class Titled: Mushrooms, Toadstools and beyond. New friend Lawrence Millman was here on assignment to do a story on SOMA and gave a revealing talk on mushrooms as tinder and their many uses by ancient peoples. Linda Morris led registration with excellent management and assistance. Patrick Hamilton headed up the kitchen for the weekend. Sunday night, when the kitchen crew came out for a bow, there was a rousing ovation by the participants. Mark Todd outdid himself again with a fantastic selection of exotic cheeses. Darvin DeShazer led ID and truffles. Bill Wolpert led forays; he is really getting into a groove now; SOMA forays are the talk of the fungal world. Dorothy Beebee and Catherine Wesley headed up dye and papermaking classes and the ever popular cultivation class was manned by Charmoon Richardson and Jean-Pierre Nunez, our cultivation club director. In all, it was a great time supported by people who truly love SOMA and all that it stands for.

As I write this, it is raining; we may have a decent winter season yet. Keep your fingers crossed for all that the rain promises. Have I heard that somewhere? Be ready for the February foray; I hear there are some great eats coming and the mushrooms may show up.

-Bill Hanson

## FORAY OF THE MONTH

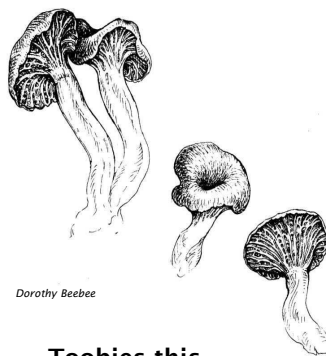
Saturday, February 17th

**M**eet at the southern end of Fisk Mill Cove in Salt Point State Park at 10 AM.

**Bring a potluck dish to share;** vegetarian dishes are always welcome! Please bring your own glasses, plates and eating utensils. Besides the positive environmental reasons and benefit to the gastronomic experience, it will help minimize the amount of trash to be hauled out. Contact foray leader Bill Wolpert at (707) 763-3101 for more information.

Members are asked to avoid hunting the club site for at least two weeks prior to a SOMA event. It's only through your cooperation that all members can enjoy a successful foray and experience the thrill of the hunt!

-Bill Wolpert

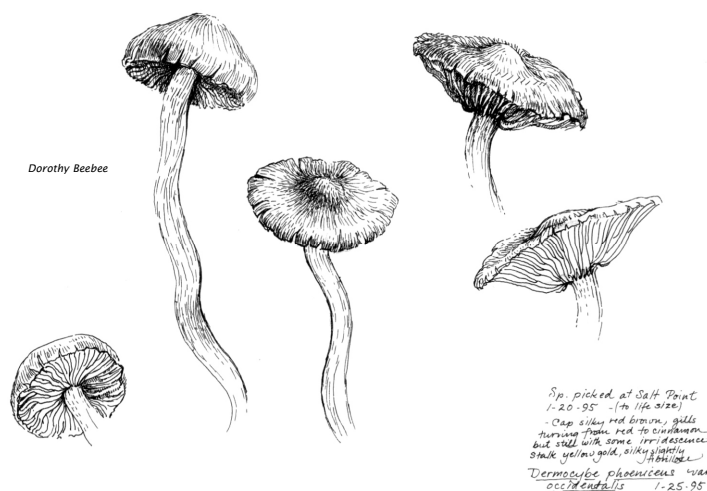


Toobies this month?



**Seven Years of Mushroom Dyes at SOMA Camp:**

I've kept samples and notebooks of all of the SOMA Camp dye classes presented for the last 7 years now....and it's a pleasure to see some of the same old fungal dye workhorses keep coming in the door year after year, almost with predictable results – but always exciting to those new or unfamiliar with fruiting of the fungal dyepots .... I never tire of the intensity of golden yellow produced by *Phaeolus schweinitzii*, or the unbelievable lavender, purples and forest green from the wealth of *Omphalotus olivescens*. And of course, there is always the excitement of anticipation of coral and rose hues, maybe even RED from the *Dermocybes*.



It seemed almost in anticipation of dry and uncertain weather conditions, that many SOMA friends began collecting dye mushrooms early on for us to use at SOMA Camp. As the fresh fungi came in the door, I would either dry them in paper bags hanging behind the wood stove, or plop them into 1 gallon plastic containers. Nice fresh yellow-rimmed *Phaeolus schweinitzii*, that easy no-hassle "dyers' polypore", were the first to appear at the forays

back in September and October. I brought them home, broke them up into small chunks, and put them into the 1 gallon plastic containers which I collect year-round from friends or at the Thrift stores. Then I poured boiling water over the fungi and set them out into the sunlight to "ferment".

The same for *Pisolithus azhirus* (= *tinctorius*), which seems to turn up on bare ground all year around in Sonoma County, - never any shortage of these weird puffballs that have so many unsavory "common names", like "dead man's foot" – Ugh – give me the melodious Latin name ANY day! – but produce such gorgeous range of color from deep gold on silk to almost "reddish-brown-purple black" on wool, (just try describing some of these hues in common terms!) ...depending on the age of the critter. Like the *P. schweinitzii*, young specimens of this obnoxious-spored puffball give the most intense color when picked fresh before spore production renders their hydrophobic selves almost impossible to contain in the dye pot. Outdoor dyeing is an absolute must with this one because of the spores and the "fragrance"! The most exciting possibilities emerged when our mordant-painted silk scarves were dipped into the *Pisolithus* bath. (see *Jeanne Porcini's account!*)

The *Dermocybes* never disappoint – The orange gilled caps of *D. malicoria*, collected fresh before the freezing weather set our teeth on edge, rewarded our unmordanted wool with bright coral shades – we threw a dollop of white vinegar in, intensifying the color by making the dye bath acidic, and then put the stipes went into a separate dyebath to produce a warm pale yellow the color of sunlit wheat....fresh *Dermocybe phoeniceus* never made an appearance to the dyepots this year, but thanks to some dried ones that Anna Moore had collected and mailed from Oregon, we were able to get some lovely rose hues on wool in the "advanced" dye class, under the tutelage of Tina Wistrom who also supervised an alum mordant bath for those who had brought their own wool to "potluck dye".

**January Foray Report—Mycoblitz 4**

Saturday the 20<sup>th</sup> was delightful – cool, clear and slightly warmer than it had been. I arrived at the Bear Valley Visitors' Center early. As I am fond of doing, I picked a trail I was unfamiliar with, the Bay View Trail. But, I knew it had maturing Bishop pine as the predominant tree specie. The trail followed a fairly straight course west and slightly downhill. Mushrooms were apparent immediately, but much withered. Still, I managed to find good specimens of Pine Spikes (*Chroogomphus vinicolor*), Black Elfin Saddles (*Helvella lacunosa*), various Amanitas, and suillus. I found a number of unusual fungi, including a mutated form of suillus that looked like a truffle. I also spotted my first Big Hedgehog (*Hydnum repandum*).

After reading Darwin's MycoBlitz report that included fresh, young boletes, I went out Sunday afternoon to see if I could find some of my own. I was amazed at how little was out. My bolete area was bone dry and I only saw two leathery russulas. I charted some new area and got under some live

oaks. There I found my first viable mushroom. Sure, it was an Amanita, but it looked different somehow. It resembled a coccora, but I knew it was too late for them. I keyed it out and it seemed to fit the description of *Amanita velosa*, but I had only seen one once, and it was on a dinner plate. I also found a weird bolete with a very dark cap and stem with roots. It was not too late, so I went back to the Visitor Center and found David Rust and Debbie Veiss still there at the Mushroom Fair. David was very interested in the bolete and informed me it was a *Tylopilus porphyrosporus*. Debbie confirmed that I had a velosa...the first one she had seen this season and her favorite edible. So, I found two mushrooms and went home with none.

Remember those hedgehogs that I found on Saturday? They got sautéed in butter and thyme and placed over pan-fried Petrale sole on a bed of fresh spinach. Delicious.

-Bill Wolpert



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## Mordant Painting at SOMA Camp 2007

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I was thrilled to be part of Dorothy's Advanced Dye Making Class at SOMA Camp. We were going to experiment with "mordant painting". Dorothy encouraged us to relax, that this was not a test. So, of course, I immediately made it a test for myself. We took up our brushes and painstakingly tried our hand, while Dorothy smiled, and said, have fun, play with it! Dorothy is the kind of teacher we all wish we had in school.

There were several dye pots going, producing beautiful colors, but one in particular stood out - *Pisolithus tinctorius* (try saying that three times quickly) -- commonly known as Dead Man's Foot (much easier). It made an incredibly gorgeous iridescent gold-bronze color suggestive of amber.

I had been having some less-than-meaningful mordant moments; it wouldn't take to the silk, or else it would run away. I couldn't help but think that mordants, like mushrooms, are wild; they show up when they want to. Liann, my workshop friend, suggested we not stir the solution and dip the brushes into the bottom where it had settled and was concentrated. Sounds like a plan.



I looked at the clock. Uh-oh, running out of time - I had a cooking demonstration to go to. So I grabbed a piece of unmordanted silk, and freely, carelessly and very quickly painted a series of what were meant to be spirals using ferrous sulphate (iron). Next, I dried the silk with a steam iron, and then dipped it in cool water. Now it was ready for the dye pot. And here the "pot" thickens. We had been leaving items in for 15 minutes, and when we took them out, our mordant efforts were either barely visible or invisible! So Liann threw silk in the pot and took it out in a couple of minutes. Into the *Pisolithus* pot went my scarf. A watched pot may never boil, but a watched pot cannot consume your mordant. I pulled the silk out and voila! There, as bold as berry stains, were the mordant designs I had so carelessly applied, on a background of a still gorgeous, shimmering, albeit lighter, gold-bronze.

It took less than 15 minutes to create that scarf. I guess haste does not necessarily make waste. But it took 4 hours to get that 15 minutes. I love it. Mushrooms, whether in the woods or in the dye pot, are like life - it's about the journey.

-© Jeanne Porcini



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## THE SOMA WILD MUSHROOM CAMP FORAY REPORT

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This winter has certainly seen some cold weather. In fact, record lows have been recorded around the Bay Area. I picked my first solid-frozen mushroom in December and again in Occidental at SOMA's Wild Mushroom Camp over MLK weekend. In spite of the cold and below normal rainfall, mushrooms at Camp were fairly abundant. There were not a lot of edibles as we had hoped, but an abundance of unusual and beautiful fungi were recorded.

There were a total of 12 forays over two days to 6 locations, not counting individuals poking around Camp on their own. With keen foray leaders such as Gary Lincoff, Elio Schechter, Fred Stevens, David Campbell, Norm Andresen, Don Bryant, Darvin DeShazer and Peter Werner, foragers were taken to explore locations at Tomales Bay State Park, Westminster Woods and Salt Point State Park. The commutes to northern and southern destinations raised no complaints. The vistas were infinite along the coast and with very little wind on the ocean, it just shimmered beautifully. The conditions were perfect for spotting whales. By lunch time, the temperatures were down-right pleasant as we enjoyed our bag lunches in the sun before returning.

In addition to the distant trips, there were several forays over Saturday and Sunday venturing around the expansive CYO Camp. It was there that we found the first Black Trumpets and Golden Chanterelles. If there was a featured mushroom that proved to be prominent everywhere, I would have to say that the Candy Cap was it. They were all over and in great condition. Everyone that wanted to was able to gather at least a small bag. Of course, there were

those who thought they had an abundance of Candy Caps only to return to the ID tables to find they had a mixed bag. *Lactarius rubidus* had been confused with *L. xanthogalactus*. Be sure of your identification. Check ALL of the identifying features. When in doubt, get a second opinion or throw them out. Your vital organs are a terrible thing to experiment with.

I have to pause for a testimonial. This was my third experience with SOMA's Wild Mushroom Camp. Frankly, when I first heard about it, I could not imagine spending three days focused on mushrooms. But now I can easily say that if you enjoy anything about mushrooms and have not attended Camp, you are missing out on an incredible experience. Each year, more people are coming from all over the country and a few from other countries. The expertise is world-class. So whether your mushroom interests are focused on science, arts, health, cultivation, or cuisine, your knowledge will grow by leaps. And, it is more fun than you can imagine.

I am working on another members-only foray to a private property. I plan to be scouting over the next week and if it looks good, we may get something arranged by March. Please remember, members-only means just that. Stay tuned.

Visualize rain!

-Bill Wolpert  
SOMA Foray Leader

SOMA News February 2007

## Species Displayed at Camp

167 Species

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Agaricus hondensis	Fomitopsis pinicola	Lactarius rufulus	Russula corinthiirubra
Agaricus subrutilescens	Ganoderma applanatum	Lactarius xanthogalactus	Russula cremoricolor
Agrocybe sp.	Gomphidius oregonensis	Laetiporus gilbertsonii	Russula dissimulans
Aleuria aurantia	Gomphus clavatus	Lentinus edodes	Russula eccentrica
Amanita sp.	Gomphus floccosus	Lentinus velutinus	Russula gracilis
Amanita constricta	Gymnopilus sp.	Lenzites betulina	Russula nigricans
Amanita franchetii	Gymnopilus sapineus	Lepiota sp.	Russula olivacea
Amanita gemmata	Gymnopilus dryophilus	Lepiota spheniscispora	Russula pelargonia
Amanita muscaria	Gyromitra infula	Leucopaxillus albissimus	Russula sanguinea
Amanita pachycolea	Hebeloma sp.	Leucopaxillus gentianeus	Russula silvicola
Amanita phalloides	Hebeloma crustuliniforme	Lycoperdon umbrinum	Sarcodon sp.
Armillaria ostoyae	Hericium ramosum	Melanoleuca melaleuca	Sarcodon fuscoindicus
Bolbitius vitellinus	Hexagonia sp.	Nidula niveotomentosa	Schizopora paradoxa
Bovista pila	Hydnum aurantiacum	Nolanea sp.	Sparassis crispa
Callistosporium sp.	Hydnum repandum	Octospora sp.	Stereum hirsutum
Camarophyllus pratensis	Hydnum umbilicatum	Oligoporus caesius	Stropharia ambigua
Camarophyllus russocori- aceus	Hygrocybe acutoconica	Otidea alutacea	Stropharia riparia
Cantharellus cibarius	Hygrocybe conica	Otidea concinna	Suillus brevipes
Cantharellus formosus	Hygrocybe flavescens	Paxillus involutus	Suillus caeruleus
Caulorhiza umbonata	Hygrocybe miniata	Peziza arvernensis	Suillus tomentosus
Clavulina cinerea	Hygrocybe psittacina	Phaeocollybia sp.	Tapinella panuoides
Clavulina rugosa	Hygrocybe punicea	Phaeolus schweinitzii	Trametes pubescens
Clitocybe nebularis	Hygrocybe singeri	Phellinus gilvus	Trametes versicolor
Coprinus atramentarius	Hygrophorus olivaceoalbus	Phellinus pini	Tremiscus helvelloides
Cortinarius sp.	Hygrophorus pudorinus	Pholiota sp.	Trichaptum abietinum
Cortinarius alboviolaceus	Hygrophorus purpurascens	Phylloporus arenicola	Tricholoma sp.
Cortinarius rubicundulus	Hygrophorus roseibrunneus	Pisolithus arhizus	Tricholoma atrovioleaceum
Cortinarius vanduzerensis	Hypocrea pulvinata	Pleurotus ostreatus	Tricholoma dryophilum
Craterellus cornucopioides	Hypomyces cervinigenus	Pluteus cervinus	Tricholoma flavovirens
Craterellus tubaeformis	Hypoxylon thouarsianum	Polyporus elegans	Tricholoma fracticum
Crucibulum laeve	Inocybe sp.	Pseudohydnum gelatinosum	Tricholoma magnivelare
Cyathus sp.	Inocybe geophylla	Ramaria acrisiccenscens	Tricholoma portentosum
Dacrymyces chrysospermus	Inocybe lilacina	Ramaria formosa	Tricholoma saponaceum
Dermocybe malicoria	Inocybe sororia	Ramaria leptotomosa	Tricholoma virgatum
Dermocybe phoenicea	Jahnoporus hirtus	Ramaria rubiginosa	Tricholoma rutilans
Entoloma sp.	Laccaria amethysteo- occidentalis	Ramaria rubicarnata	Tyromyces chioneus
Entoloma bloxami	Lactarius alnicola	Rhizopogon sp.	Xerocomus chrysenteron
Entoloma ferruginans	Lactarius argillaceifolius	Rhizopogon ochraceorubens	Xerocomus truncatus
Entoloma rhodopolium	Lactarius deliciosus	Russula sp.	Xeromphalina campanella
Fomitopsis cajanderi	Lactarius deterrimus	Russula aeruginea	Xylaria hypoxylon
	Lactarius pallescens	Russula amoena	
	Lactarius rubidus	Russula amoenolens	
	Lactarius rubrilacteus	Russula brevipes	-Darvin DeShazer
		Russula cessans	Science Advisor

## MANY THANKS TO SOMA CAMP DONORS—VISIT THEM!

### ♦ All Our Great SOMA Camp Volunteers!!

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Amycel Spawn-Mate, Watsonville</li> <li>♦ Cheesedude Productions, Inc.,<br/>3<sup>rd</sup> planet from the sun (maybe)...</li> <li>♦ Clover Stornetta Farms, Petaluma</li> <li>♦ Davis Bynum Winery, Healdsburg</li> <li>♦ Ferrari-Carano Vineyards and Winery,<br/>Healdsburg</li> <li>♦ G &amp; G Foods, Santa Rosa</li> <li>♦ Gourmet Mushrooms, Sebastopol</li> <li>♦ La Tortilla Factory, Santa Rosa</li> <li>♦ Lagunitas Brewing, Petaluma</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>♦ Luddite Vineyards, Healdsburg</li> <li>♦ Mycochef, Outer Space...</li> <li>♦ Oliver's Market, Cotati</li> <li>♦ Our friends at the Mycological Society of<br/>San Francisco</li> <li>♦ Sterling Vineyards, Calistoga</li> <li>♦ Stryker Sonoma, Geyserville</li> <li>♦ Triple T Ranch and Farm, Santa Rosa</li> <li>♦ Twin Peaks Orchard, Newcastle</li> <li>♦ Wellington Vineyards, Glen Ellen</li> <li>♦ Wine Forest Mushrooms, SF/Napa</li> </ul> |
|--|---|

### "Post-Campum Depression"

**I**n junior high and high school I had years of Latin. Way too many for a young lad who'd rather been studying young girls than conjugating future past participle verbs. It was difficult for me in that I was never the truly studious type. But it was good because Latin grammar has even more rules than English grammar and so English classes were easier for me. That's why I'm such a good writer and get paid so much.

What Latin textbook writers did as a learning device was to make up really stupid attempts at humor to sort of allow the lessons to slide through our brains and down our throats more easily.

One such lesson was "Picus Nicus," a story about a lovely feast packed in a basket and eaten on the side of one of the glorious Seven Hills of Rome. Bubbly "cocam colam" was served. This type of humor has helped make me what I am today.

A simple pleasure of mine is to make up words (like the above, but way better). You can play this game too.

"Histortion" is a favorite that I can share here. My in-brain made-up-words-dictionary states: "Histortion—a distorted view of an historical event, most oftentimes incorrect, if not downright absurdly difficult to understand. Such as: My experience of SOMA Camp 2007 was not truly exceptional because of all the work involved. Or, my experience of SOMA Camp was truly exceptional because of all the work involved."

So I am wondering if any of you have got your panties twisted over now we are done with Camp. Have your jockeys become thongs? (If so—yikes!)

I was very tired on Camp Monday but not now. Now I miss making recipes, begging for donations, shopping, standing up forever, drinking free wine, being a kitchen person, bossing around volunteers.

Post-Campum Partum depression blues. Can't we do something, say, in March?

For next year's menu I am leaning toward either Thai (maybe *yam het bpa* [wild mushroom salad], coconut milk mushroom soup, e.g.), Japanese (with mushroom soba and mushroom tempura, etc.), or Indian (ah, not Navajo—think curries and lentil dishes).

Any and all suggestions will be filed in the appropriate files.

And now for the Foragers' Report part of this column: SPSP is mighty dry, but still strong enough to produce candy caps in quantities enough for a fine foray. Just last weekend (Jan. 20-21) a matsutake in good shape and some early winters and even some blacks were picked. Red Russulas were very abundant but nobody cared. Not much.

Maybe the rains yesterday and last night will whet and tease us into going out again soon. (Don't recall a January as dry as this in my 37 years of living here in Sonoma County.)

Actually we, as in us mushroom freaks, don't need much reason to get ourselves out into the winter woods. Do we?

Don't you love the all day shadows created by the low southerly sun? The sparkling light beams coming through and bouncing off the tanoaks, madrones, redwoods, Doug-firs, black oaks, et al add to the free and wonderful experience of just being, as Leon Russell once sang, "Out in the woods."

The cooking part of the column is just down below and worth the wait (and the money you paid for this rag).

One of "chefs' tricks" is to oven-roast certain vegetables to gain flavors unavailable cooking with other methods. You can take green beans past their prime, toss with olive oil and salt and pepper, then roast in a hot oven to transform them into chewy, crispy, sugary, sticks of caramel colored delight. Or—eggplants, root vegetables, cabbages, and cauliflower.

This wintry soup is perfect for those days when you just can't get into the woods but want something to remind you of your good times there. Try it with a red pepper, gruyere, and aioli panini and Gloria Ferrar brut. Yummy!

CUT HERE 

### Roasted Cauliflower and Black Chanterelle Soup

Serving Size: 4 Preparation Time: 1:00

Amount	Measure	Ingredient	Preparation Method
1	ea	cauliflower	cut into 1/2" slices
		olive oil	
		sea salt and black pepper	
1	cup	blacks, dried, Rehydrated	chopped small
1	Tbl	unsalted butter	
2	ea	shallots, large	minced
1	tsp	coriander seed	
¼	tsp	celery seed	
¼	tsp	allspice berries	
3	cups	stock (chicken or vegetarian)	
1 ½	cups	half and half	
		S & P	



1. Drizzle some olive oil on the sliced cauliflower and add some S & P and roast in a hot (475+) oven for 15 minutes until dark brown in spots but not burned. Turn the pieces over and roast until just tender (not mushy). Remove from pan and chop small. Set aside.

2. Meanwhile sauté the mushrooms in the butter. Add the freshly ground spices and shallots. Cook for another two minutes.

3. Put everything together in a soup pot and allow the flavors to mingle (at least 20 minutes). Adjust the seasonings.

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## Notes on the Ingestion of *Amanita Muscaria*

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**B**oiled to remove its toxins, *Amanita muscaria* can usually be eaten with impunity. David Arora serves it on his forays; Russians call it mukhumor and delight in its nutty flavor; and the Japanese reputedly prefer it to *Boletus edulis*. Recently, Lawrence Millman and Tonya Haff had an experience of *A. muscaria* somewhat different from the purely culinary experience they intended to have.

Tonya cut two large (18 x 8 cm) muscaria buttons into ¼" strips and placed them in two quarts of boiling water. The mushrooms were cooked for 3 ½ minutes (they were actually in the boiling water for 5 minutes), and after they were drained, both of us sampled a few pieces. We found the taste pleasant, indeed agreeably nutty, although Lawrence thought they also had a slightly metallic aftertaste. We browned several more slices in olive oil and found them quite pleasant, too. The remaining slices were breaded, then browned. Altogether we ate almost all of the two buttons.

Twenty minutes later both of us started to feel distinctly "off." Lawrence found himself staring vacantly at some LBMs we were trying to identify. Tonya noticed that he was holding his stomach and looking uncomfortable. Once we agreed that muscaria was the culprit, we called David Arora and asked him what we should do. "Take notes!" David said. So what follows are the notes we took during the experience:

18:56. We ate *A. muscaria* at 6:00PM. Tonya was initially feeling hot, but now she's feeling cold. Her sense of smell is heightened. Lawrence can't seem to concentrate on identifying our mushrooms.

19:09. Tonya is slurring her words. Her pupils are dilated, and there's a lump in her throat. She finds the cedar-like odor of *Camarophyllus russo-coriaceus* quite cloying. Her upper lip is sweaty. Her stomach is mildly queasy, while Lawrence's stomach is very queasy.

19:15. Tonya's fingers are clammy. She says her arms are unusually goose bumpy. The cedar-like odor of the waxy cap is really bothering her now. Music is bothering her, too ("Bob Dylan driving me up a wall"). Lawrence retreats to the bathroom.

19:23. Having vomited up some of the muscaria, Lawrence says he feels a bit better. Or at least his stomach feels a bit better. The rest of him feels buzzed and more or less out of it. He also feels quite hot.

19:27. Tonya is experiencing a heightened sense of touch. Lawrence's fingers on her forehead seem to be burning a cold hole in her. There's an acute pain in her eye, but it soon goes away. Lawrence still has a slight buzz, very different, he says, from the experience of being drunk. He remarks that he's glad he's not a Siberian shaman. (Note: Siberian shamans eat muscaria for ritualistic purposes.)

19:38. Our "highs" seem to have stabilized. Lawrence is again trying to identify some of our mushrooms. Tonya says she feels almost normal, whereas Lawrence says he can't feel normal because he isn't.

19:53. Tonya is starting to feel a bit hungry. Lawrence's head feels like foam.

20:00. Tonya feels dizzy when she rolls her eyes. Also sort of sleepy. Lawrence succeeds in identifying a *Mycena*.

20:30. Tonya's feeling clumsy and poorly coordinated, but otherwise okay. Lawrence can't seem to dial a friend's phone number, and likewise can't close the sliding door without getting his hand stuck in it. Also, he says the mushrooms we're trying to I.D. are talking to him.

21:15. Lawrence has been silent for a while, listening to the mushrooms. All of a sudden he's very talkative, although he's not making much sense. "Smooth circus" -- neither of us knows what that means. "Mushrooms are people, too," he says.

21:29. Both of us feel euphoric, Lawrence especially so -- he says he hasn't felt this good in years. We decide to go out to dinner, but first we call David Arora to tell him that we're all right. "Whatever you do," David says, "don't drive." So we appoint Tonya's roommate Mikey the designated driver.

21:54. At a Chinese restaurant. Tonya thinks our food has a consciousness of its own as well as a texture that's "very real." She also thinks everyone in the restaurant is high, and that Lawrence likes Republicans, although he's earlier made it clear that he doesn't.

22:10. Lawrence is drinking a beer and says he can relate to the bottle, that the bottle can relate to him, and that the two of them are actually enjoying each other's company.

22:15. Our food feels very textured, and we seem able to commune with each grain of rice. We also feel that we're moving fast, but that our thoughts are moving slowly. Lawrence keeps dropping his chopsticks. Coordination difficult for both of us.

22:10. Both of us seem to be suffering from short term memory loss. Lawrence feels that his critical sense, usually very much in evidence, has gone on vacation. The word "euphoria" keeps popping up in our conversation.

At 23:00 we leave the restaurant. Lawrence says that objects have no meaning, but simply exist. We see a dead deer on the road, and he says the difference between a dead deer and a living one is negligible. Tonya still feels elated, exuberant but at the same time relaxed. She falls asleep around midnight without any difficulty. For the next three days her right ring finger tingles when she hits it with her thumb, but otherwise she notices no symptoms relating to the muscaria ingestion. Lawrence has a deep sleep and wakes up the next morning feeling refreshed.

Later we asked David Arora why we experienced the ups and downs of an *A. muscaria* trip when all we'd wanted to do was experience the culinary delights of a muscaria hors d'oeuvre. His explanation: that the mushrooms were far too big for the pot in which they were boiled, with the result that only as much of the toxins were dissolved in the water as the water itself could hold. Thus our trips included a certain disarray of the senses, but not the full disarray experienced by Siberian shamans; and thus, too, our trips did not require a different sort of trip -- i.e., to the hospital.

-Lawrence Millman and Tonya Haff



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## Lemon Lamb Stew with Morels

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**T**hanks to the donors of all the kitschy/cool raffle items! Here is a tasty stew that I made with the morels won in the camp raffle! This family recipe is vaguely of Italian origin and I have not seen it anywhere else. It takes two evenings to make to allow the fat to be removed and flavors to mingle:

1 ½ lbs. lamb stew meat (more if it is very bony)  
2 cloves garlic  
1 tbsp. flour  
¾ cup dried morels (or 1 ½ cups fresh crimini)  
boiling water  
2 cups stock (chicken, mushroom, or vegetable)  
1 lemon, cut into thin slices circumferentially (rind and all)  
¾ cup white wine

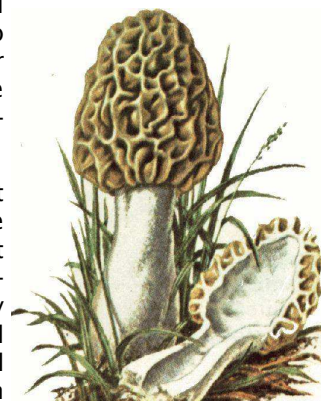
Pour boiling water over dried morels. When reconstituted, remove the morels and save the liquid. Brown lamb stew meat in a heavy skillet at medium heat. Sprinkle flour over lamb pieces, and add garlic and salt and pepper to taste.

When thoroughly browned, add the morel-liquid and stock to cover the stew meat. Simmer for about an hour, covered, remove from heat, and refrigerate overnight (longer is OK).

The next day, remove the fat from the lamb, and if you are really into it, remove the meat from the stew-bones. Sauté morels or crimini until thoroughly cooked. Add the stew meat and gravy to the mushrooms, as well as the white wine and lemon slices. Simmer until thoroughly reheated.

The recipe serves 4, over rice or orzo pasta or egg noodles.

-Tina Wistrom



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## False Confidence—A Cautionary Tale

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**I**'d like to tell you little story about what I have come to call "false confidence". One time, I had taken a group into the woods to hunt for mushrooms. After a while, one of our folks appeared through the trees, with a big basket brimming with beautiful purple capped mushrooms. He had a big smile on his face, and as I came into earshot, he said "Look at all of blewits that I found!" "Ok ", I said, "Let's take a look", as I could tell immediately that the mushrooms may or may not be blewits. As he offered me the basket, I picked up one of the mushrooms and turned it over. Right away, I recognized the distinctive rusty brown fibrous webwork on the underside, which says that the mushroom is in a group called *Cortinarius* (named for the *cortina*, or curtain, that remains when the veil ruptures). While they easily looked like blewits from the top, they were not. I told him they were some sort of *Cortinarius*.



"*Cortinarius*?" he replied, "What's that?"

I explained that it was a large group of purple-capped mushrooms, most of which would make you really sick if you ate them. He turned a little pale.

Now, of course you see the situation. He didn't ask me if these were blewits. He *told* me they were blewits. But he was wrong. This is what I call false confidence. He thought he knew

what he had, based on past experience. But his experience had not yet grown to the point where he knew about *Cortinarius*. Now, if he had found these while out hunting on his own, I see two possible scenarios that may have occurred. He takes them home. If he was wise and cautious, he would open his mushroom book to the description for blewits, where a photo of the underside, or the description of the gills, should be enough to alert him to the possibility of error. If there was still any doubt, the best thing to do would be to take a spore print. Blewits have a pale lilac or lavender spore color, while Corts have rusty-brown spores—thus the color of the cortina. The spore color would be the definitive demonstration.

Or, he may have been so certain of his knowledge, that he didn't bother to look them, but just went ahead to cook them up. Maybe he'd invite over a few friends, since he had so many. I would not want to be a part of that dinner party!

Now I don't say this to scare you away from mushroom hunting. But it is good information to keep in mind when you are first starting out (which is generally a period of at least several years). There may be 'bad' mushrooms out there that you don't yet know about, that resemble good mushrooms that you do know about. It's recommended to always double-check the identity of a mushroom you think you know, until you have picked it so many times that there is no doubt. And you are right.

-Charmoon © 2006

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

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### MORELS IN THE SIERRA!!

**May—June »** We may be able to use the Santa Rosa Ski Club Chalet in Truckee in May or June for a Sierra Morel foray. Please contact Bill Hanson by email if you have an interest in attending. The lodge can accommodate up to thirty sleepers for a weekend. Cost will be food share, shared transportation and \$15 per night for lodging.

-Bill Hanson: [idiv4ab@pacbell.net](mailto:idiv4ab@pacbell.net)

### MUSHROOM MADNESS ON SONOMA MOUNTAIN

Explore the magnificent, moldy world of fungi with SOMA member Dr. Chris Kjeldsen. We'll hunt for and talk about edible, medicinal & common mushrooms, their amazing lifecycle, & when & where to find them.

Contact LandPaths, at: [outings@landpaths.org](mailto:outings@landpaths.org) 707-524-9318

See the Calendar Section for more info.



## SOMA Membership Application and Renewal Form

### THE SOMA PLEDGE

Regardless of what others may think of me, I wish to become a member of the **Sonoma County Mycological Association**; a non-profit 501(c)(3), educational society, dedicated to the mystery and appreciation of local fungi.

NAME

DATE

STREET or P.O. BOX

APARTMENT #

CITY

STATE

ZIP

☐ HOME

☐ WORK

PHONE

EMAIL

- ☐ New member
- ☐ Please change my mailing label and membership roster info
- ☐ Please do not release my information outside of the club

Please indicate below, any particular areas of interest or committee functions you may like to serve:

Membership dues are \$20 per household, and run a full fiscal year from time of application or from the date of expiration if renewing early. Please make checks payable to SOMA.

Return this form with your check to:

**SOMA**  
P.O. BOX 73  
Cotati, CA 94931-0073

Check out the **SOMA website**  
for fabulous member benefits!

**SOMAmushrooms.org**

## MORE ANNOUNCEMENTS

### RICK SAJBEL

August 23, 1945  
January 7, 2007

Rick Sajbel unexpectedly passed away the week before the SOMA Camp. Rick, who was an enthusiastic mushroom hunter and appreciator, was the head chef at the first SOMA Camp in 1998, and served as chef for the following several years of Camp. Since then, he has contributed to the Sunday dinner production numerous times. He will be remembered as a truly unique individual, and we at SOMA will greatly miss his special culinary flair, sense of humor, and heartfelt generosity.

-Charmoon



Benjamin Schmid, and JS. (Editor was unable to identify) Proceeds benefit our scholarship program.

Also, many thanks to SOMA members who made it great! Volunteers include Judy Christensen for putting it together and set-up along with Karen Aguiar, and Julie Schreiber; ticket sellers Chuck Baker, Michelle Fuerst, Danielle Murray, and Sunali Sikand; and Michelle Fuerst & Mark Sgarzi for drawing the winning tickets.

Awesome job everyone!



### VOLUNTEER CORNER OPPORTUNITIES

To all of the volunteers that worked at this year's Wild Mushroom Camp. Thank you all for your participation and hard work. I have gotten nothing but glowing reviews for all of the work you did. You made the camp run very smoothly. Your time and effort is greatly appreciated.

We had a large number of SOMA members that have volunteered in the past decide to help out again. In addition we had new SOMA members who had never been to camp before decide to do work/trade. I believe that every person who volunteered had a great time learning about mushrooms, sharing their knowledge of mushrooms, and meeting new people, too.

I would also hope that those of you who didn't volunteer this year look for ways to be more involved in SOMA. We can always use a hand at monthly meetings, monthly forays, and other activities that happen throughout the year.

-Julie Schreiber  
SOMA Volunteer Coordinator

### SOMA CAMP 2007 RAFFLE

The raffle at SOMA Camp was a marvelous success! We received many prizes from SOMA members of books, cards, kitsch and gewgaws, 4 walking sticks by JS, crafted items, dried mushrooms and miscellany.

Thanks to contributors Dorothy Beebee, Gene Broderick, Judy Christensen, Darvin DeShazer, Patrick Hamilton,

**SOMA News**

P.O. BOX 73  
Cotati, CA 94931-0073

**SOMA**  
DIVINE MUSHROOM  
OF IMMORTALITY  
R. Gordon Wilson

**SOMA Members**

The February Issue of  
**SOMA News** has arrived!

SOMA usually meets on the third Thursday of the month throughout the year (September through May), at 7 PM, at the Sonoma County Farm Bureau, 970 Piner Road, Santa Rosa, California.

Fungi are displayed at 7 PM, and speakers begin at 7:45 PM. Bring in your baffling fungi to be identified!

**Directions to the Sonoma County Farm Bureau****Coming from the south**

- Go north on **Highway 101**.
- Past Steele Lane, take the **Bicentennial Way** exit.
- Go over **Highway 101**.
- Turn right on **Range Avenue**.
- Turn left on **Piner Road**.
- At about 1/4 mile, turn left into parking lot at **970 Piner Road**.

**Coming from the north**

- Go south on **Highway 101**.
- Take the first Santa Rosa exit, **Mendocino Avenue**.
- Stay on the frontage road, (it becomes Cleveland Avenue after you cross Industrial Drive).
- Turn right on **Piner Road**.
- At about 1/4 mile, turn left into parking lot at **970 Piner Road**.

**970 Piner Road** is marked by a star on the map at right.

