



# 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 8

April 2007

## 2007 SEASON CALENDAR

### APRIL

April 19 » Meeting  
Sonoma County Farm Bureau  
Speaker: **Darvin DeShazer**

April 21 » Potluck Foray  
Salt Point State Park



**SOMA**  
Steve Roach & Robert Rich  
Album Cover



### 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



### This Guy Look Familiar? “Edible Mushrooms & Their Look-a-Likes” April 19th, Farm Bureau

Our very own Science Advisor, **Darvin Deshazer**, will be our April speaker on the above topic. Come and get your questions answered and enjoy the club esprit.



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SOMA's *Amanita muscaria* logo by Ariel Mahon

## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

I attended the cultivation class along with more than a dozen other SOMA members. Everyone pitched in and helped with all phases of the kit building. We all have boxes of Portobello mushrooms evolving in our garages. Jean Pierre has a few kits left to sell (\$12) if you would like to get one please contact him at [topgun@sbcc.net](mailto:topgun@sbcc.net) Jean Pierre has worked tirelessly for more than a year to make the cultivation club work and it has been fun. Benjamin Schmidt has helped with set-up, cooking, take down and transportation of parts. Jean Pierre has appointed Benjamin Vice President of the cultivation club. Chris and Danielle Murray have been great supporters of the cultivation as with many things in SOMA as well. Next fall the plan is to begin again with Portobello kits and maybe a bunch of oak logs inoculated with Shitake is in our future. Benjamin and Jean Pierre are working on that.

March brought a beautiful foray and what now seems to be the bitter end of the winter season. Reports on the early emergence of A. Augustus is encouraging and spring Morels are waking up early along with everything else that loves to grow. I am looking to fill my first basket with the *Prince* for the first time in my personal mushroom career.

I hope you all enjoy our sport as much as I do and enjoy the great folks who are part of the SOMA experience.

-Bill Hanson

## FORAY OF THE MONTH

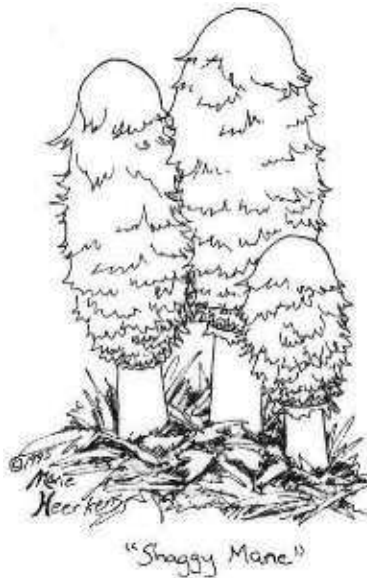
Saturday, April 21st

Meet 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



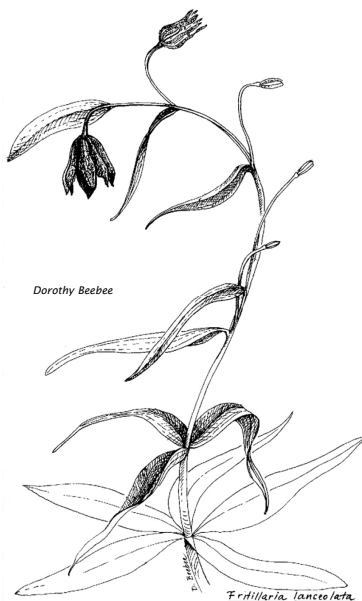
## Where have all the mushrooms gone? Gone to Flowers every one...

I must admit that this time of year I'm more likely to be checking out my *Fritillaria* patches rather than the *Phaeolus* hideouts.... *Calochortus* gives the siren call that two months ago I heard only from *Cortinarius*, and the *Iridaceae* are rapidly replacing *Omphalotus* in my heart of hearts.... Sacrilegious? Unpatriotic? No, just a change of season, and my quest, nay my passion, for color turns elsewhere.....

The dye porch is starting to smell a little weird (well, weirder than usual...) and some of the mushroom dyes carefully stored in labeled glass jars have either shed their labels or the ink has faded to the point of being illegible... What to do? Sometimes I mix them all together if they are in the same group - say a bunch of unidentified *Hydnellums*, try a dye and just call it "mixed *Hydnellum* species dye", or I just pour the whole unspecified mess into the compost. (I do NOT use any poisonous mordants). In the past I have thrown dyed-out *Dermocybes* into the pot where the living Christmas tree resides and been rewarded with a great spurt of growth, but no *Dermocybes*... yet.

Some dyes just seem to go into "limbo" if stored too long, and even though you can see a gallon of color there it just won't fasten to the fibers - *Gymnopilus spectabilis* was a big disappointment that way - same with *Phaeolus schweinitzii*. The viability of the pigment seems to change with age. One wonderful exception to this rule is *Pisolithus arhizus* (= *P. tinctorius*).

Now, there is a mushroom dye that I keep fermenting in the pots all year long and keep adding more of those puffballs as they come my way. This is best done in a stainless steel pot or large glass jar, because if you have the tiniest nick in an enamel pot, you may have sprung a rusty leak by the end of the season.



So, how to do mushroom dyes in the Summer? In Winter, I've applied and extended Miriam Rice's technique of pouring boiling water over the *Dermocybes* (to check the dye color), then I let the protein fibers (wool, silk, or mohair) continue to steep in the dye for 24 - 48 hours at the back of the warm wood stove - no cooking. This method has produced some truly amazing color! I'm trying to do this with all of my mushroom dyes, and the resulting hues have a clarity and brilliance not matched by the cooking method! Patience is the lesson, and it is richly rewarded!!! So in summer, I use this method with dried mushrooms in a large gallon glass jar, like the kind used for making "Sun tea" - (about \$1 at the thrift stores). Pour some boiling water to cover the mushrooms, add either unmordanted or pre-mordanted wet fiber, shake well and set the jar of mushrooms and fiber out in the sun for a week or longer. **Voilà - Solar Mushroom Dyes!** (Bye, bye PG&E...) I have

yet to do a comparative test on the light-fastness of "solar" dyes versus "cooked" tests using the 2 methods.... Maybe this summer.....

## March Foray Report

I can't help myself; I'm a natural-born optimist. I do remember standing up at the last SOMA meeting and saying that the mushrooms were still up and the upcoming foray should be bountiful. The truth was we had not had any significant rain and things were drying out. (In fact, I paused for a moment when I realized that the Big Top that we string up to provide some cover during rainy forays has not been out of the bag this season.) The forecast was calling for yet another pleasant, sunny day for our gathering. Secretly, I was praying we found some mushrooms.

Foray Day and driving out through Bodega Bay, the fog got thick enough that I needed to switch on my Outback's wipers and fog lamps. It made me wonder how high the "ceiling" was and whether I could get above it. Perhaps it was just my imagination, but as I approached Meyers Grade, I thought I could detect just the slightest shade of blue above. That was enough for me to take the turnoff. Before I had gone another mile, I was under brilliant blue sky, warm sun and looking out across a sea of fog. A very nice detour indeed! As I got close to Timber Cove, I started to dread descending back down into the dampness. But I was surprised again to find Timber Cove clear and sunny, too. No wonder they refer to this area as the "Banana Belt".

A fair number of people were arriving at Fisk Mill Cove. One couple from Graton had brought some recent morels

to show. But no one was finding "tubies" in the campground like last month. We headed back to the ridge top as we had last month. There were several new faces and they were eager to find something edible. The adventurous ones went further out and further down to try and find the "undiscovered" lands. The mushrooms were scarce. I did my best tutoring, finding the best mix of tan oak, redwoods, and madrone, and getting down low under the huckleberries. After half an hour, I had pointed out only a couple hedgehogs and a small handful of yellow-foot chanterelles. One black chanterelle had been found, but not by me. My protégés were still eager to beat the steeper slopes. I had a very sore Achilles tendon from earlier in the week and left them as I took an easier path back up. I felt badly for the short supply.

As I slowly worked my way up to the trail, I was trying to think if there were not a few good places to try on the way back. It looked like there were going to be some empty baskets. I started dreaming, "There is that spot on the other side with the deep pine duff..."

"Hey, Bill! Check these out!" It was a voice deep within the huckleberries.

One of our hardy foragers had not even followed me to the

(Continued on page 4)



(Continued from page 3)

end of the trail before diving off into the steep and deep. He had half a basket of black chanterelles.

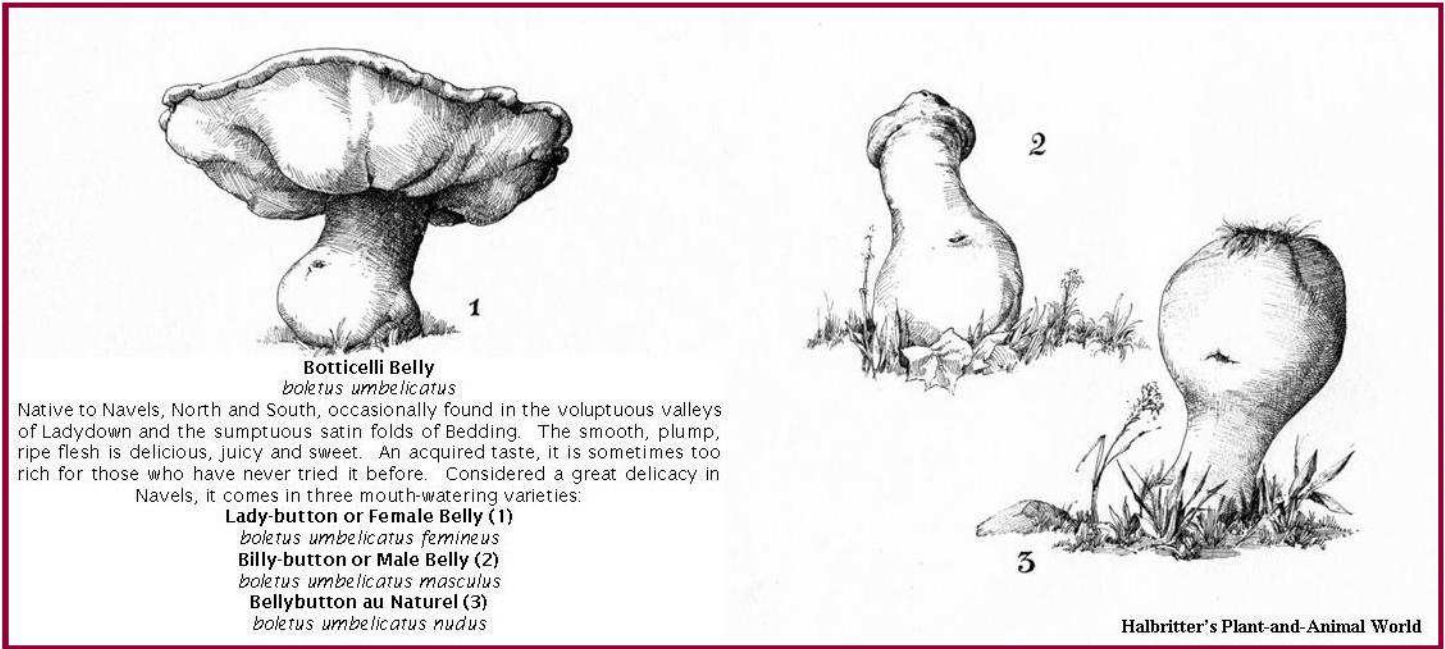
"We've been digging around under the huckleberry bushes like you suggested. We started seeing them as we came back up the hill." As he was talking, I noticed another black between his feet. He noticed it, too. And then there were more to the side. Another couple came up that I had last seen at the bottom. They had a couple wax bags full of blacks. "Where did you find those?" I asked. They were near where we last saw you.

More people converged. They had hedgehogs. Others had yellow-foot chanterelles. Everybody had something. So, now it was clear. Everyone was finding mushrooms AFTER they stopped following me.

After my ego stopped whimpering, I realized that the foray had turned out just right. It's like the parable: Give a person a mushroom; they will eat for a day. Teach them to find mushrooms.....

It's raining as I write this. See you next time.

-Bill Wolpert, Foray Leader



### More Foray Views

**T**he SOMA foray at Salt Point was excellent yesterday. The weather was perfect and the fungi were fruiting, although not in large quantities. Members collected oysters, yellow feet, black trumpets (including some yellow ones), pig's ears, baby hedgehogs and spring coccora. It looked like almost everyone, about 50 people took home something fresh to eat.

Homemade ice cream pie, with candy caps, was one of the OUTSTANDING dishes at the pot luck lunch. Thanks Caitlin!

A wide variety of fungi was collected for the specimen table - blue tarp.

I thought Plectania melastoma was one of the unusual finds of the day.

<http://mushroomobserver.org/2829>

-Darv  
Science Advisor

**F**or those fungi hunters from yesterday who are experienced enough to take home spring coccora for the table, I highly recommend the Italian method of button prep, usually used for the fall coccora.

We just kitchen tested this last week, with David's brand new birthday mandolin (a somewhat overpriced kitchen gadget designed to slice veggies and mushrooms very very thinly). If you are a really clever forager, you can even dig

wild fennel bulbs (but be sure not to mistake them for poison hemlock!), harvest a little sea salt at Salt Point, and steal lemons from a neighborhood lemon tree (you didn't hear that from me!) Or just go the mundane route and buy all the non-fungal ingredients; we'll never know.

This is a great counterpoint to a risotto.

CLIP & SAVE

### "Spring Coccora and Fennel Salad"

Thoroughly IDed Coccora buttons, stripped of their veil, wiped clean

Equal amounts of fennel bulb

Slice mushrooms and fennel very thinly. Salt, sprinkle with fresh lemon juice and your favorite, flavorful extra virgin olive oil to taste. Allow to stand for about 15 minutes, to allow lemon to "digest" mushrooms. Serve immediately.

Bon appétit.

Note: Although eating raw mushrooms is not generally recommended, amanitas tend to be highly digestible anyway (hence their short life-span in the field as well as your fridge) and the lemon juice helps to break down the cellulose and chitin, much like it "cooks" fish in a ceviche.

-Amanitarita  
-(a.k.a. Debbie Viess)

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## SOMA—What's in a Name? — Redux

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**S**oma is a substance written about in the Vedas, an ancient sacred religious text which was used in the area known today as Afghanistan, Pakistan and northern India around 2000 BCE.

A collection of hymns - the Rigveda - is the earliest of the Vedic texts. Among the thousand hymns in the Rigveda, many portray soma variously as a god, a sacred plant and a celestial drink, transporting those who drink it into ecstatic, transcendental realms. The Vedic texts are obscure on the identity of this plant drug and give no explicit descriptions, but the methods of preparation of soma, and some of its uses, can be inferred. It is clear that it was a plant found near mountains, which was gathered by moonlight, then crushed to produce a golden liquid. Soma was used in a fire ritual in which three gods are celebrated: Agni (fire), Indra (god of the sky) and Soma (a god considered to be the divine personification of the soma liquid, and also the moon). Although the fire ritual continued to be observed after the Vedic period, the use of soma waned, perhaps due to supply difficulties, and soma instead became a philosophical concept, coming to mean any offering burnt on the ritual fire, the contents of the material world, or the 'life-force'.

While Sanskrit scholars have shown little interest in the identity of the soma plant, the subject has been much debated among entheogenic explorers in the west. In 1971 Gordon Wasson published 'Soma: Divine Mushroom of Immortality' (1), setting out his theory that soma is the Amanita Muscaria mushroom.

Wasson suggests that soma is a mushroom because in the Rigveda no mention is made of leaves, roots nor branches in relation to the plant, and it is referred to as 'the Not-Born Single Foot' which fits with the way mushrooms spring up suddenly and without seed, while 'single-foot' and 'one-legged' are widespread euphemisms for mushrooms. To support his argument that soma is the species of mushroom Amanita Muscaria, he points to passages in the Rig-

veda which allude to urination, given the practice of recycling the urine of one who has consumed Amanita Muscaria amongst Siberian tribes. He points to one in particular:

"Those charged with office, richly gifted, do full homage to Soma. The swollen men piss the flowing [soma]".

This, however, does not actually link soma and urine drinking. Other criticisms of Wasson's theory relate to the geographical availability of soma.

The true identity of soma continues to be debated but it is clear that it was a psychoactive substance and that it was used as part of a religious rite.



### What is Amanita Muscaria?

Amanita Muscaria is a bright red mushroom, speckled with white, known also as the 'Fly Agaric' (said to derive from the belief that flies can be killed by it). Many people will recognize it as the 'fairy toadstool' often seen in fairy tale illustrations, suggesting ancient magical use of the mushroom.

The best-known ritual use of this plant is by shamanic tribes to induce religious trance. In some tribes only the shaman would eat the mushrooms, while in others all the men of the tribe would partake, but in all tribes where it was used it was central to their religious practices.

The mushrooms were usually dried, increasing their psychoactivity five-fold, and then chewed. The principal psychoactive ingredients in Amanita Muscaria are ibotenic acid and muscimole, an

alkaloid which remains active even when passed through kidneys. The psychoactive constituents remain present in the urine of person who has eaten the mushroom, leading to the practice of 'recycling' the effects of the mushroom through urine-drinking.

### Notes

(1) Wasson, R.G (1971) Soma: Divine Mushroom of Immortality. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich

<http://www.csp.org/>



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## Picking Meadow Mushrooms at MFK Fisher's

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**T**he Meadow Mushroom (*Agaricus campestris*), is, to the best of my recollection, the first wild edible mushroom I picked. It was the mid-70's, and I was working once a week for the well known and respected food author MFK Fisher, taking her grocery shopping, to visit friends, for medical appointments, and the like. I was also just beginning my studies of wild mushrooms. One day while out driving with MFK (or Mrs. Fisher, as I called her back then) I spied some tempting-looking mushrooms from the driveway leading into the Bouverie Ranch, near Glen Ellen, Ca., where she lived. With Mrs. Fisher's excited approval, I stopped to pick them. When we got back to her house, we examined them. MFK was by no means a mushroom expert, but she was a food expert, and she said these were the one mushroom she could positively identify. She called it a "pinkie", and said she'd picked them while living in France. She said nothing else grew in the meadows that

resembled them. So we divided them up, and I took some home. Being the cautious sort, I checked my mushroom books, and sure enough, they perfectly matched the description for the Meadow Mushroom. They were delicious!

However, years later, I learned that we could have easily made a mistake. While it is generally true that on this continent, and in Europe, there is no other mushroom that looks exactly like the pinkie, there is a mildly poisonous look-alike that is found only in California (*Agaricus californicus*). It is not a mushroom that will kill you or cause liver damage, but it could lead to significant gastrointestinal distress. The two mushrooms look virtually identical, and grow in the same habitats, at similar times. They look very much like the store-bought button mushroom, although usually larger, with a white cap, and bright pink gills when

(Continued on page 6)

(Continued from page 5)

young. The only way to tell them apart (other than with a chemical or microscopic test) is to examine the very youngest specimens. You need to look at a mushroom so young that the veil covering the gills is still completely intact. You then tear open the veil, and look at the gills. If the gills are bright pink, it is the pinkie. If the gills are a pallid color, it's *A. californicus*, the bad guy. The trick is, as soon as the

veil begins to rupture on *californicus*, the gills turn bright pink, just like the pinkie. Often, when they are found, it is too late to even find a button that still has an intact veil, and so there is no easy way to tell one from the other.

So MFK was right for most of the world, but wrong for California. I'm glad we did not have to learn that the hard way.

-Charmoon Richardson  
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## THE FORAGERS' REPORT

Patrick Hamilton © 2007

"Due to recent hand surgery and difficulties therefrom with typing Patrick has submitted this "classic" column from years ago. Plus there isn't much to write about. . . .

### Eating Crow or Other Low-falutin' Stuff

**A**s we all know, and probably ponder on often, there are gopher goings on and then there are gopher goings on.

This morning I'm sitting here trying to shake out at least a little of the brain residue (is it like skin that turns scaly and falls off?) from two bottles of Veuve Clicquot Ponsardin brought by a lady friend to go with the fish tacos and morel/tomato/shallot/tarragon/salsa I made last night for dinner and I look like one of those bobble-headed dolls that can occupy the space above the back seat of really stupid vehicles. With my obviously oversized and pained head now feeling only a little smaller than my headache I gaze off with eyes sort of floating adrift in their red sockets, struggling to focus through the large living room window towards my garden looking south in-between the already (late June) high Silver Queen corn, Indian maize, popcorn, Midnight Sun sunflowers and other interesting-to-me stuff and here comes this big raven flying low, left to right, across my field of vision and it has got some thing squirming in its mouth. Whoa.

And chasing the big bird are smaller black birds darting and dashing at it like those biplanes attacking King Kong while he was holding that little woman. But this is different, again.

I can't really tell but it looks to me that maybe a baby bird got nabbed from its nest by this very large black bird. So I grab my binoculars which I keep by the front door for exactly such circumstances as this incident (they seem to occur in my life with certain regularity) and make quickly down the deck steps and then step quietly around the garden fence (green mason's string strung on redwood stakes to keep my dog, Danny Boy, out--it works) so as to not scare off the raven which has alighted atop a good edibles mushroom-producing 60 foot Monterey pine in a stand down my dirt drive about 75 yards away.

Hmm, I wonder while approaching the tree, is it really a raven or a very large crow? I creep happy and smug with the knowledge from childhood remembering that which a wise person once told me about ravens and crows. "Ravens walk and crows hop." Yep, that's what he had said.

Or was it the other way around?, I am starting to think. "Crows hop and ravens walk?" Yeah, that's it.

No, damn, that's the same thing. Hmm, now I am not nearly so smug nor as happy anymore but fortunately that does not get in the way of closing in on the bird with the

unhappy creature in its mouth in my tree and definitely not in the way of writing my column.

I once wrote for a different publication about another bird incident involving an osprey with a large trout in its talons that could not land without dropping the fish. I watched it fly around and around and around in ever decreasing circles trying to figure out stuff. It got confused in all that circuitous traveling brainwork and slammed into the windshield of our truck and I then wrote about a recipe for breast of flat headed osprey with black chanterelles.

It must be pleasing to some how mushrooms do keep popping up in this mushroom cooking column which sometimes starts out there, way out there, but eventually comes back like a wayward child but with TLC for its caregivers.

I was real close now to the crow/raven and small animal show and saw that it was a gopher with the bird sharing the tippy-top branches of that pine.

But this was not a mutual consent cohabitation--nothing sweetly domestic like that was going on up in this tree. No, this was a one sided deal. An understanding or decision apparently was made where the raven/crow was going to eat the gopher just as I made it to the base of the trunk when, from its murderous beak, the darn bird drops the little guy and he free falls about five feet before hitting the first of what seems like every branch on the way down, little arms and legs flailing, mouth wide open, silently screaming I bet gopher expletives as he crashes from one jagged and piercing limb to another, grabbing the air, and I'm looking up at what branch is the next he'll be smacked on and I see that it is a very close one, only fifteen feet or so above me, and right then my dog makes some weird noise like, "Yikes," with canine inflections and intonations which distracts me for just an instant but I snap back my head to continue tracking the pathetic descent above and I see he misses that lowest branch and plops right on my upturned head. Jeez.

I have a broken gopher on my face and I feel bad for him and more than a little silly for myself.

Danny is staring at me I can tell by peeking through the teeny broken extremities and I am hoping that no other living creature sees what has just happened. The gopher can not see.

My dog, now hours later, still glances at me from time to time. Can an Australian Shepherd smirk?

Thankfully this morning's incident took no more time than it did to write about it so we have lots of time left for the rest of the column.

Wired members (you know, that has had different meanings at different times in my life) of the Mycological Society of San Francisco use an internet bulletin board called "onelist"

(Continued on page 7)



*(Continued from page 6)*

to communicate news of mushrooms to the group as a whole. It has been only a little over a year now and lots of data, most of it good, is sent and read almost daily by lots of mushroomers. Last month (May) I was able to monitor mucho morel hunting information regarding the burned areas of last year's fires in the national forests and decided finally when and where to go.

Connie Green and I drove up one Saturday morning very early for the 4 1/2 hour trip to an area entirely new to us (in that we had no knowledge of spring boletes, natural morels, fall boletes, etc., from this area). It was Memorial Day weekend but we didn't care about potential crowds because this place was not real close to any body of water and therefore very few folks would be there. Only mushroom loonies--you know the type.

The forest was drop dead gorgeous leading up to right before we reached the volcanic area surrounding where the burn was. Doug-firs, Sugar and Ponderosa pines, Western cedars, Black oaks, Western dogwoods in bloom, the usual beauties were all there. But it seemed that this time the trees came in second in specialness, they were outdone by these many lovely little patches of violet tufted wild onions, apparently placed perfectly in the absolutely flawless spots in and amongst the lava flows by the hand of God, or Martha Stewart. It was a good thing.

And those little wild bulbs would be great later on the grill alongside wild salmon steaks brought from Bodega Bay, sauced with sautéed "burns" in a shallot sherry cream.

Connie and I soon found the correct turn off, having had great specific directions from Mike Boom (a past president of the MSSF and very good friend of ours), and we stopped at the first crossroads and went right. Wrong. We took a short walk downhill through park-like acres of burned forest with pillows of brown needles buoying our steps and making me feel a little like a kid bouncing on a mattress. Fun, but no morels.

Back up the now steep hill (didn't seem to be on the way down) to the vehicle we'd been cooped up in for those 4 1/2 hours of getting here--the same van Connie used the day before to deliver Hens of the Woods, morels, spring Porcini, Bulgarian chanterelles and more treats to places like Zuni Cafe, Lark Creek Inn, The French Laundry, etc.

We decided to then drive a ways in the other direction until we'd find something that looked productive.

I am not the best mushroom picker around but I am very good at finding just the right habitat. A fishing guide buddy of mine always tells his clients that, "I'll put you over fish." Well, I can put you over mushrooms but it's up to you to further find them.

I spotted a stream coming down though a valley right at a place to pull over and park but it appeared, of course, that others before us might too have seen this to be possibly good.

So what--d'ya think they would have gotten 'em all? I don't think so and besides, if you don't go you won't know. Period.

We put one, then decided to grab another, handled brown grocery bag in the back pockets of my Carhartt coveralls. Connie had her white 5 gallon picking bucket with holes drilled all over the bottom and we started upvalley poking around under the blistered-bark willows and charcoaled

dogwoods allowing our eyes to adjust to the burn environment and to tune themselves to be able to discern objects (like morels) which should seem very out of place and usually very hard to see in this already surreal landscape.

I don't know about you but when my head is tuning into stuff and I am mushroom hunting there's a song from "The Wizard of Oz" that sometimes starts to run, sort of reel to reel, really, through my brain. It's the one that goes, "Come out, come out, wherever you are." And it could make me feel silly but it's the kind of thing that I always keep to myself.

We noticed very few footprints and those were just at the beginning of the valley. None were further up the deer trail where we were walking. But morels were. . . .

This day they began to appear reluctantly only one at a time at first. So slowly that we almost returned to the vehicle to drive some miles north and a few hundred feet higher to a different burn thinking that where we were it was too warm, too many folks had been here, too dry, too blah, blah, blah. But too many times we had left too much before truly looking enough and this was not going to be one of those times. Nope.

Another morel, then a group of a couple way in close to the base of a multiple stalked blackened willow. "Look over here, a cluster of fifteen." "No, check this." "I mean it, come here and see these next ones by the. . . ."

It was not too long afterward that I thought to myself that now the memories of this can begin.

We filled up the two bags and the bucket in about an hour and a half then decided to climb down the mountain, drive, and arrange our camp back up the road from where we had come in.

We made a camp easily in a beautiful spot right across the forest road from all those patches of wild onions. After snacks and a few cool ones there was enough time to go back foraging and we decided that a little further up the hill from where we had stopped picking might be very good.

If I was a preaching man perhaps I could say, "I have been to the top of the mountain and I have seen The Glory." Or maybe, "God was looking down and smiling on us that day." Others might insist that I must of sold my soul to the devil because of what we were about to stumble upon.

Hiking past where we had quit earlier I crested a little mound in the hill belly well below a peak. If you'd seen me right at that instant you could be one of the chosen few who has witnessed me nonplussed. I mean, dumbfounded. Speechless.

Nah, that's not the right way to describe it. (Heck, I wake myself up in the morning by talking). But anyway, I was struck hard by such a sight.

What happened was I started to spot some morels. A few here, some more here, some more over there, more here, some up there, there, there, there and there. Damn. I felt like my mother was comforting me. "There, there now Patrick. It's going to be all right."

Indeed.

I actually had to sit down and take stock of this situation. Connie was too far down across the hill to see or even hear me. I began to count the mushrooms I could see as a way

*(Continued on page 8)*

(Continued from page 7)

to organize stuff--accomplish some simple task in order that the greater job at hand might not seem so daunting. When I rounded two hundred and was heading toward three I called out for her.

She got up to where I was and we both gawked. Ever honestly gawked? It makes your mouth form into gaping-like hole and your eyebrows sort of lift up a little and thrust out too, and is not a very good look. Neither of us had ever seen so many good-sized-in-perfect-shape morels. You can talk about "carpets of mushrooms" and "forest roads paved with them." Hmm, matter of fact we did find chanterelles just like that in the Queen Charlottes.

But these were "burns" and, to me, the best of the best. This was morel heaven, the summum bonum of fungal heavens and we got down and picked Kama Sutra style. (Minors may leave this column for a few sentences now).

What I mean is we postured ourselves every different way just to explore every sensuous sentient detail of this morel majesty. On my back with arms extended beyond my head I "back-picked" myself. Lying on my side propped up by an elbow I picked with Roman forum form.

It probably would have been difficult for others to witness but for those who do like to watch this should have been videoed, and perhaps us arrested.

This time we brought a bunch of brown bags, two plastic buckets and a day pack . We filled a many as we could carry and my reveling only increased as I started to think of making dinner.

I had brought a wire basket to grill morels and as soon as our campfire was in coals we tossed some of the medium sized mushrooms in a bowl with melted butter and olive oil, salt and pepper, and started to toast them over some Black oak . Boy, these are good this way.

A delightfully wise, yet young but not shy, Pinot soothed us while we popped crunchy, buttery and salty burn beauties and we began to plan tomorrow's trip home.

One of the first things we did at Connie's house was to weigh our booty. Is that right? Or is it bounty? Anyhow, some scaling and taring was done by her and the result was numbing even to me. One hundred and twenty two pounds we brought off that mountain from an area no bigger than 200 yards by 150 yards, in no more than 7 hours of work. Many were almost dried on the stem so the actual number of individual morels was way high.

Some might complain that we shoulda, coulda left some, etc. yakety-yak. Well, it was Sunday and hot and no one was likely to get up that mountain soon enough to find good ones. And besides, they were worth ten dollars a pound to Connie and that is what she gave me for my half. Yikes, I sold them and the complaint department is now open for business.

Seriously, if you would like to initiate a dialogue (or just plain yell and scream at me) concerning your concerns over this little fun mushroom hunting trip which turned into a commercial venture please write a letter to our editor and I will gladly reply. Or, you may not want me to. . . .

This is the part of the column where I usually tie the disparate elements into a nicely tight and easily understood article and begin the recipe section. What if we simply get into that section without tying too much of the above together? I mean, do you really want a recipe for Morels and Raven

Hams? How about Gopher Pieces Stuffed Morels?

I will tell you again that the very best way to prepare morels is in a basket like we did over that hardwood fire, served with a Pinot, after a hard day of picking a big pile of those puppies.

There is a recipe that I made recently and would like to share with those still reading the column. If anyone you know has quit it already you can go get them and let them see that there really is a recipe in the cooking column.

My mom told me recently that food at my house is too complicated for her palate. So she sends me recipes in the mail for food she wants me to prepare when she comes over. Only Mom could do that to me.

What follows is my adaptation of a dish she suggested. Hers was plain, mine is not. Don't tell her anything about this, please.

CLIP & SAVE 

### Jarlsberg BLT (Cheese, Boletes, Lettuce and Tomato)

Recipe By: Patrick

Serving Size: 4

Preparation Time: 0:30

Amount Measure Ingredient -- Preparation Method

non-stick olive oil spray

1 ½ cups—Jarlsberg—shredded

12 ea—bolete slices—sautéed in olive oil until crisp—¼ " thick x 2"

2 cups—assorted greens (arugula, lettuce, etc)—torn, large pieces

3 ea—tomatoes, red ripe—sliced

4 ea—rolls, French, Italian, or baguette

½ cup—pesto mayonnaise (add some pesto to your favorite, to taste)

salt and pepper

1. Spray oil on non-stick pan.
2. Place some of the shredded cheese in the shape of a piece of bacon in pan. Fill pan with similar shapes and heat over medium-high until crisp—about 3 minutes. Place on paper towels and blot. Wipe down pan with paper towels between batches.
3. Assemble sandwiches. Strips can be made beforehand and refrigerated, then warmed in a 300 degree oven, cooled on wire rack and used.

NOTES : any size bolete slices will do as long as you have enough. I bet that morels would be good this way too. Heck any good edible would be, but don't tell my mother.



The Ant Nebula—Hubble Photo



## 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

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- 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**

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### HOW ABOUT A RESPONSE COLUMN??

**Readers!** How about a place to write in and give your opinion in the Newsletter? Letters to the Editor, comments from members, etc. Just a place to post? Ask questions and I will try to get answers from our Science Advisor, Culinary Poobah, Dye Pro, etc. SO FEEL FREE TO FORAY ON IN!!

### SOMA NEWS EDITOR

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

or

[SOMAnewseditor@SOMAmushrooms.org](mailto:SOMAnewseditor@SOMAmushrooms.org)



### Mycology Course in New York

State University of New York College at Cortland is offering a Field Mycology course at Raquette Lake in the Adirondacks from July 13-27, 2007. Instructor: Dr. Timothy J. Baroni, Professor of Biological Sciences. For detail contact Dr. Baroni at [BaroniT@cortland.edu](mailto:BaroniT@cortland.edu).

### SUDDEN OAK DEATH—Learn About This Deadly Fungus

Space is filling up for our next round of **Phytophthora ramorum Wildland Trainings!** Even if you've attended one of our sessions in the past, please note that these new sessions will present updated research information for managing and treating *Phytophthora ramorum* infections in oaks and California's wildlands. Morning sessions are indoors and afternoon sessions are out in the field. Topics include current disease status, treatment updates, and management efforts in California's forests and landscapes. Each session is free of charge and is open to everyone. Credits

from SAF, ISA and DPR will be available. Links to more information and online registration are below, or at: [http://nature.berkeley.edu/comtf/html/comtf\\_training.html](http://nature.berkeley.edu/comtf/html/comtf_training.html)

### 4/24/07- North Bay

Pt. Reyes National Seashore, Red Barn Classroom  
1 Bear Valley Road, Pt. Reyes Station, CA 94956

### 5/01/07- South Bay

Presentation Center  
19480 Bear Creek Road, Los Gatos, CA 95033

### Registration for both sessions

[http://nature.berkeley.edu/comtf/html/wildland\\_online\\_registration.html](http://nature.berkeley.edu/comtf/html/wildland_online_registration.html)

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## VOLUNTEER CORNER

### COME TO THE MAY MEETING!!!!

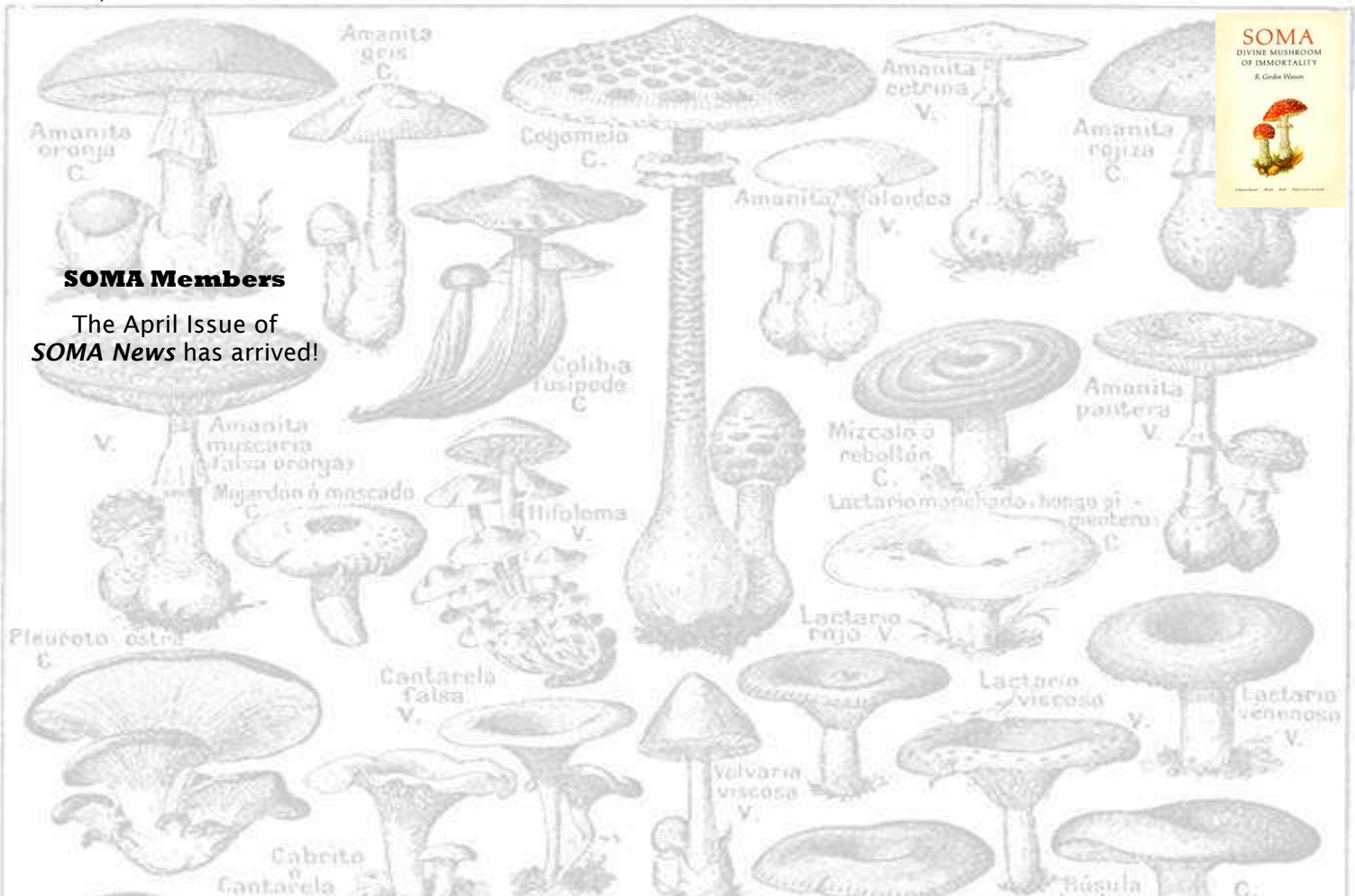
We need your vote for SOMA Board positions. We need you to serve on the Board. We need you to help make our club a better club. We need and want your input.

**PLEASE COME AND PARTICIPATE!**



**SOMA Members**

The April 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.

