



# SOMA News

VOLUME 22 ISSUE 4

December 2009

SOMA IS AN EDUCATIONAL ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO MYCOLOGY.  
WE ENCOURAGE ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS BY SHARING OUR ENTHUSIASM  
THROUGH PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND GUIDED FORAYS.

## 2009/2010 SEASON CALENDAR

### December

Dec. 11th » Members Potluck. Bring your best creation.

Forays in December on an ad hoc basis. Meet with friends and hunt for the potluck or whenever.

### January

Jan. 14th » Meeting—7pm  
Sonoma County Farm Bureau  
Speaker: Tom Volk

SOMA Camp January 16-18, 2010  
Tom Volk and Tom Bruns.

To volunteer at camp, you need to be a SOMA member. If you have not renewed, you probably can't read this anyway, but renew if you have not done so in September. (See page 9)

Just wondering...

...if you put a Queen Bolete and a King Bolete in a dark cupboard together, do you get a Prince?

marymalarkey



### 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.

**NOTE: Always be 100% certain of the identification of any and all mushrooms before you eat them!**

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

## SPEAKER OF THE MONTH

Friday, December 11<sup>th</sup>  
7 PM at the Farm Bureau

It's time for the annual **SOMA Wild Mushroom Potluck Dinner!** Every month during the season we have a foray with a potluck afterwards and the eats are always **great!** But the Wild Mushroom Potluck is different. This is for **members (and their guests) only**, and the members pull out all the stops creating wonderful mushroom dishes.

As always, we require a specimen of the wild mushrooms used in the dish and we provide a detailed information tag to inform people of the ingredients used in preparing your dish. If you'd like to fill out the ingredient information in advance, see the Potluck Dish Information form on page 6. We will have extra copies to be filled out at the potluck, if needed. Be sure to bring your own place setting. Hope to see you there!

### PLEASE NOTE:

No formal club foray this month. Forage with friends and bring to the potluck.



The Olsen's "tree"— 2008

## SOMA OFFICERS

### PRESIDENT

Jim Wheeler  
[wheeler.j.d@att.net](mailto:wheeler.j.d@att.net)

### VICE PRESIDENT

Vacant

### SECRETARY

Karen Kruppa  
[SOMAsecretary@SOMAmushrooms.org](mailto:SOMAsecretary@SOMAmushrooms.org)

### TREASURER

Julie Schreiber  
[SOMAtreasurer@SOMAmushrooms.org](mailto:SOMAtreasurer@SOMAmushrooms.org)

## COMMITTEES AND BOARD MEMBERS

### BOOK SALES

Vacant  
(707) 837-8028

### CULINARY QUESTIONS

Vacant  
[SOMAculinary@SOMAmushrooms.org](mailto:SOMAculinary@SOMAmushrooms.org)

### CULTIVATION CLUB CHAIR

Ben Schmid  
[SOMAcultivation@SOMAmushrooms.org](mailto:SOMAcultivation@SOMAmushrooms.org)

### FORAYS

Ben Schmid  
[SOMAforay@SOMAmushrooms.org](mailto:SOMAforay@SOMAmushrooms.org)

### MEMBERSHIP

George Riner  
[SOMAmembership@SOMAmushrooms.org](mailto:SOMAmembership@SOMAmushrooms.org)

### MUSHROOM DYE COORDINATOR

Dorothy Beebee  
[SOMAmushroomdyes@SOMAmushrooms.org](mailto:SOMAmushroomdyes@SOMAmushrooms.org)

### MUSHROOM PAPER COORDINATOR

Catherine Wesley  
(707) 887-0842

### SCIENTIFIC ADVISORS

Darvin DeShazer  
(707) 829-0596  
[muscaria@pacbell.net](mailto:muscaria@pacbell.net)

Chris Kjeldsen, Ph.D.

(707) 544-3091  
[Chris.Kjeldsen@sonoma.edu](mailto:Chris.Kjeldsen@sonoma.edu)

### SOMA CAMP DIRECTOR

Linda Morris  
[SOMAcampinfo@SOMAmushrooms.org](mailto:SOMAcampinfo@SOMAmushrooms.org)

### SOMA CAMP REGISTRAR

Lou Prestia  
[SOMAregistrar@SOMAmushrooms.org](mailto:SOMAregistrar@SOMAmushrooms.org)

### SOMA NEWS EDITOR

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

### SOMA WEBMASTERS

Dorothy Beebee and Martin Beebee  
[SOMAinfo@SOMAmushrooms.org](mailto:SOMAinfo@SOMAmushrooms.org)

### VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

Gina Kuta  
[Volunteer@SOMAmushrooms.org](mailto:Volunteer@SOMAmushrooms.org)

SOMA's *Amanita muscaria* logo by Ariel Mahon

## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dispatch from the duff

October and early November marked an excellent start to the fungi season as boletus and other edibles appeared in abundance in Sonoma County. Salt Point State Park and local sites produced a large harvest for those who got out in the fabulous weather and kept their eyes on the ground.

Our November Speaker Meeting at the Farm Bureau attracted a capacity crowd. More than a hundred people came to hear William Rubel and David Arora speak about their experiences preparing and consuming *Amanita muscaria*. David's introduction gave us an appreciation of his knowledge and wit as he described early adventures with fellow mycophiles. He also noted an interesting strategy for building anticipation to selected foray sites while protecting their location. You should ask him for the details. William talked about the early literature regarding the edibility of *A. muscaria* and the contents and style of old and new field guides to mushroom identification. He reviewed selected mycological writings and pointed out some of the details that were common and debatable throughout history. These topics carried William through an hour lecture and an additional 40 minutes of questions. William and David plan to add instrument based, quantitative measurements of toxins in *A. muscaria* to the discussion.

Saturday's foray brought most of Friday's Farm Bureau crowd up to Salt Point. By my unofficial count more than 90 folks attended. There were at least 6 organized foray groups and probably 2 or 3 informal efforts. Specimens collected exceeded table area available for display. So, large and varied collections were laid out on tarps or blankets, and on the ground. Regrettably, a number of our regular foray supporters were ill. Many, many thanks to all the members who stepped in to help others with their collections. At lunch time, we not only spread out everyone's delectable dishes, but sliced abalone appeared . . . the grill was fired up and we were in for a treat! To top it off, Aaron and Mike Miller sautéed a very, very fresh boletus and shared it with a number of newcomers. Perhaps converting more of the willing along the way . . . at least until the next foray.

December's Pot-Luck will be another opportunity to feast from nature's harvest and from the knowledge and experience of our members. Please make sure your membership is current, that you've completed the recipe form listing the type of mushroom used (see page 6). Please save an example of the mushroom used and bring it along with your dish. We do have access to the Farm Bureau kitchen, let me know if you will need to use it. We are asking for a few volunteers to help clean up after dinner. Please let me know if you could help.

Look forward to seeing you there.

Found at the November Foray:

- Faux tortoise shell barrette comb; in excellent condition
- A green SPC Solar bag with cooking oil, bread crumbs, REI water bottle, eating utensils, and paper towels.
- A white, unlabelled paper shopping bag containing a ceramic dish (black on the bottom, olive colored dots on the upper edge and the inside the same olive-like color): appears to be a quality dish. In the bag were a pie server with a broken handle and a recently purchased knife: very good condition . . . stainless steel, 5 inch blade with a serrated section on the cutting edge. Wood handle . . . definitely a working knife, not for show.

Please let me know if any of the items belong to you.

Best regards,

-Jim Wheeler

## FORAY OF THE MONTH

### PLEASE NOTE!

Members are encouraged to forage on an ad hoc basis in December to collect for the potluck. Or join the russula blitz on the 12th (see p. 9)

The next organized club foray (aside from camp) will be in February. Look next month for details.

It's that magical time of the year again, when mushrooms start mysteriously appearing unannounced on my doorstep... and then there are always the friends who come to the SOMA meetings bearing gifts ~ giant golden *Pholiota spectabilis* ("Laughing Gym"), deep chocolate, golden rimmed *Phaeolus schweinitzii*, ... - Gary Lincoff even stopped by today (via Mike Wood and Jane) to bring me some fresh *Omphalotus olivascens* just collected in the East Bay hills a few days ago, similar to the one brought by Josef to the meeting. Anna Moore is bringing red-gilled-to-dye-for-Dermocybes from Oregon, Tim Horvath promises more bags of dried *Omphalotus olivascens* from over toward Napa, with their enticing promise of violet and green dyes. SOMA Camp is going to have some very colorful times again up at Harriman Hall this year!

Mushroom Dyeing and Felting to continue their work/experimentation on as "independent study" rather than in a "formal" (as formal as it gets at SOMA!) workshop situation. The advanced dyers can do "dye your own" projects using fibers brought from home, maybe even some "mordant painting" on silk or whatever direction they want to go. Both Marilyn and I will be there for extra guidance as needed, BUT you might find me more often wandering over to the **NEW workshop** being taught by Gayle Still: **COILED BASKETMAKING**, utilizing yarns dyed in the Intro class the day before. I am really looking forward to this new direction of our mushroom dyed fiber arts. I envision lots of innovative sorts making art around the wood stove in Harriman Hall on Sunday afternoon, working up appetites for The Feast being created by Patrick Hamilton and his cadre of kitchen slaves!

Join the Fiberarts  
Fun at  
SOMA Camp



Thanks to all of you!

And speaking of SOMA Camp, Tina Wistrom is again planning to teach the "Introduction to Mushroom Dyes", on Saturday afternoon, and then Sunday morning and afternoon, I'll take on the "Intermediate Mushroom Dyes" and the "Advanced Dye - Open Studio" workshop for those folks who are already experienced with mushroom dyes and want to experiment independently with their own yarns, or try new mushrooms that have come in from the forays or play with pH changes at a creative level. I plan to have some new fibers for the advanced experimentation - mohair, soy-silk, hemp, and bamboo, and even some banana fiber from Nepal!

Also, on Sunday morning we are again offering an introductory workshop in **FELTING** to be led by Marilyn Buss.. The emphasis will be on seamless felting around a form, creating a bowl or bag. The use of fibers dyed with mushroom dyes the day before can be incorporated or used as ornamentation. This is very exciting for me to have these energized new instructors come into the fold. To see what transpired in these SOMA Camp workshops last year, go to [www.mushroomsforcolor.com](http://www.mushroomsforcolor.com) to check out the colorful results!

**What is "Open Studio"?** On Sunday afternoon this will be the opportunity for those who were in the morning workshops of

This year **POLYPORE PAPERMAKING** classes will be going on **all-day on Sunday**, and once again will be held in the large downstairs classroom under the main building, with the guidance of our *paper-maestra*, Catherine Wesley, and her able assistant Jeremy Thorsness. This is an all day workshop, with the first half of the class being devoted to learning about and the careful preparation of the polypores, (chopping, and blending) and the second half to actually making the paper. The first half is a prerequisite to participating in the second half! All day of papermaking heaven to your heart's content!

This year as in previous years, we are asking campers interested in taking the workshops listed above, to pre-register ahead of time, because of limited space requirements. There will be room for only 10 to 15 folks each session. After you have completed your regular Camp registration process online on the SOMA Website, then go to the "Workshop Schedule" page, and click on the appropriate class for which you wish to pre-register. <http://www.somamushrooms.org/camp/schedule.php>

That click will send your request directly to me and I will sign you up on a "first come -first served" basis.

Looking forward to a very colorful time at SOMA Camp! Hope you will be a part of it! To see photos of last year's SOMA dye & felting experiences, check out [www.mushroomsforcolor.com](http://www.mushroomsforcolor.com)



I was an ambidextrous, omni directional, thumb twiddler while waiting impatiently for this season to begin and now that is here in full swing my hands are tied—so to speak.

Remember those gaily colored, made from some sort of organic material so-called “Chinese finger prisons?” Well somehow that’s what happened to me but it was only the other hand’s fingers intertwined with the other hand’s digits with no pretty colors involved. Another thumb twiddling accident. Weird. Apparently the East Bay has been exploding. I have not heard many reports of the same happening here (oops—that was written 11/27/09 but now I am hearing lots of great amounts of fungi found locally, 11/29/09). Boletes are still being picked along the coast (but in smaller numbers than even just last week) and it continues to be a great chanterelle year in Oregon and

Washington.

There are so many groups on the Internet now where anyone can access good information that the foragers’ part of this column is becoming moot. But it is still fun to write—and hopefully to read. Been doing these things for over 15 years now in various publications.

This time of year your reporter becomes your Camp chef and is very busy composing a menu theme, gathering donation promises, seeing what recipes might be made best including those (free) goods, setting up the kitchen volunteers, meeting with the chef at CYO—that kind of stuff.

So the narrative, mushroom reporting, part of this column is over (for this month.)

But we still have a recipe. This is along the theme of “Asian Street Foods” for Camp this year.



**Korean Spinach Salad (She Gum Che Namul--Sort Of)**

Serving Size: 2 Preparation Time: 30 minutes

Amount/Measure	Ingredient	Preparation Method
2 Bunches	spinach, fresh	leave pink stems intact
2 Cloves	garlic	minced
1 Ea	scallion	minced
½ Cup	black Chanterelles, dried, rehydrated,	chopped
(Or, 1 Cup	fresh Chanterelles	chopped)
1 Tbl	peanut oil	
½ Tsp	sesame oil	
4 Tsp	soy sauce, low sodium (or not)	
½ Tsp	sugar	
½ Tsp	toasted sesame seeds	



1. Blanch spinach for 5 seconds. Drain and rinse under cold water to cool. Squeeze out the water and cut into six chunks. Set aside in bowl.
2. Sauté the black chanterelles in the peanut oil and set aside to cool.
3. Mix the mushrooms, garlic, scallion, oil, soy sauce, and sugar. Blend in the spinach with hands. Taste, adjust, and sprinkle with seeds. Cover and refrigerate until chilled.

This could also be served warmed. -----

**FUNGI FOUND**

Fungi WERE found at the November foray; dozens and dozens of specimens were found. Alas, there was no club expert or science advisor present to create a species list. I have reprinted a list from 2 years ago below which should work as a proxy.

SOMA is alive and well! The November meeting drew as big a crowd as perhaps ever and has us wondering if we need to find a larger venue for the monthly meetings. The foray was flooded with new folks and the interest has never been so strong. SOMA is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization. We are all volunteers and no one gets paid. For a club like ours to work like a well greased machine, it takes the participation of everyone. Your attendance at meetings and forays is a form of participation, but it would be great if you could do a little more. Stick around and help clean up; help carry stuff. The Board is largely a group of gray hairs and we certainly would benefit if more youth stepped up in all facets of the club.

It was great to see Caitlin at the foray as she has been absent for a while. She has volunteered to get more active again and the club will be better for it. Welcome back Caitlin! It was also great to see members cooking at the foray on their own for others!

How can you get involved? Ask anyone, especially a Board member. Volunteer for camp and save on costs. Jump in and you won't be disappointed. It requires some work each month to keep the club going but not that much and you will enjoy it! We are always looking for new members for the Board who will shoulder more of the work. How about you?

Club greets like Patrick Hamilton are nearing the end of their run and are looking for people to stand up. I would love to find an enterprising sort to take over editing this monthly rag. Email me please if interested. We have many other openings, so feel free to jump in and help out.

And now...the not-so-usual species list from a previous November by **Darvin DeShazer**, SOMA Science Advisor:

I t was a great day at Salt Point, but too bad the mushrooms didn't show up. What did fruit was cauliflower, chicken of the woods, penny buns (some were buttered and some were queens and kings), candycaps, oysters, hedgehogs, charcoal burners, plums & custard, coccora with whip cream on top, beefsteak, wine caps, giant horse mushroom, honey, pine spikes, poison pie, earth stars, slippery jacks, red shrimp, turkey tails, western grisettes, matsies, and I did see one person with some chanterelles - a real mushroom!

## Fungus-treated violin beats Strad in blind test

Sept. 15, 2009  
Courtesy EMPA  
and World Science staff

A researcher has put a newly developed, fungally treated violin in a blind contest against one made in 1711 by the most famed violin maker of history -- and the newer fiddle won. The event took place Sept. 1 at an annual conference on forest husbandry, the Osnabruecker Baumpflegetagen, in Osnabrueck, Germany.

Scientist Francis Schwarze of EMPA, the Swiss Federal Laboratories for Materials Testing and Research, developed the new violin by treating it with specially selected fungus, which he says improves the sound quality by making the wood lighter and more uniform.

In the test, the British star violinist Matthew Trusler played five different instruments behind a curtain, so that the audience didn't know which was being played. One of the violins Trusler played was his own "Strad," or instrument made by the most storied violin maker of history, Antonio Stradivari, in Italy in the 18th century. The other four were all made by Swiss violin maker Michael Rhonheimer -- two with Schwarze's fungally-treated wood, the other two with untreated wood.

A jury of experts, together with the conference participants, judged the tone quality of the violins. Of the more than 180 attendees, almost half, or 90, felt the tone of a fungally treated violin dubbed "Opus 58" the best. The Strad reached second place with 39 votes, but 113 members of the audience thought that "Opus 58" was actually the Strad. "Opus 58" was the one made from wood that had been treated with fungus for the longest time, nine months, Schwarze said.

Stradivarius violins are regarded as being of unparalleled quality even today, commanding prices in the millions. Stradivari himself knew little of wood-attacking fungi, but Schwarze claims the master received inadvertent help from a "Little Ice Age" which occurred from 1645 to 1715. During this period Central Europe suffered long winters and cool summers which caused trees to grow slowly and uniformly creating ideal conditions for the fungus to attack. For the new violins, Schwarze uses Norwegian spruce wood treated with the fungus *Physiporinus vitrius* and sycamore treated with *Xylaria longipes*.

The result means that "in the future even talented young musicians will be able to afford a violin with the same tonal quality as an impossibly expensive Stradivarius," said Horst Heger of the Osnabrueck City Conservatory.

Schwarze said the new instruments would probably run about \$25,000. "Compared to a conventional instrument, a violin made of wood treated with the fungus has a warmer, more rounded sound," he added.

[http://www.world-science.net/othernews/090915\\_violin](http://www.world-science.net/othernews/090915_violin)



Swiss violin maker Michael Rhonheimer with one of his "biotech" violins. (Photo: Empa) The 5 violins in the test shown below left.



When the cowboy went to his dresser drawer to get a handkerchief, he realized they were all missing. So the Man-on-Horseback threw the Elfin Saddle on his Giant Horse Mushroom, and took off to find them. He did, finally...they were all on the I.D. Table at SOMA Camp.

marymalarkey

**SOMA Camp Cometh — Don't Miss it!**

Did you ever notice how interesting, earthy, eclectic, intelligent, individualistic and fun-loving, mushroomers can be?

No??

Well, come to SOMA Camp. See for yourself and be part of the experience.

It's easy as 1-2-3, virtually.

Register online at

<http://www.somamushrooms.org/camp/registration/index.php>

or via US mail or call 707-778-9877 for more information. You'll be glad you did!!

**SOMA Mushroom Camp**  
*Wild*  
 NEXT EXIT   
**January 16-18, 2010**  
 Martin Luther King weekend

Forays, Classes, Workshops, Wild Mushroom Cuisine  
 by *Mycochef* PATRICK HAMILTON

Register Here  
 www.somamushrooms.org

Guest Speakers  
 TOM VOLK Ph.D.  
 TOM BRUNS Ph.D.

Sonoma County Mycological Association presents  
 the 13th annual SOMA *Wild* Mushroom Camp

**Potluck Dish Information**

Name of dish \_\_\_\_\_

Cook's name: \_\_\_\_\_

Contains:

- mushrooms - what kind? \_\_\_\_\_
- meat
- fowl
- dairy
- seafood
- wheat
- eggs
- nuts
- soy
- alcohol
- refined sugar

special ingredients please note here: \_\_\_\_\_



← Here is the info form for your potluck dish.



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**SOMA News Editor's Note:** Final installment from Life Magazine article, June 10, 1957, on the remarkable adventures of R. Gordon Wasson. More drawings or if you want to read the entire article here:

<http://www.imaginarium.org/wasson/life.htm>

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For a day following our mushroom adventure Allan and I did little but discuss our experience. We had attended a shamanistic rite with singing and dancing among our Mixteco friends which no anthropologist has ever before described in the New World, a performance with striking parallels in the shamanistic practices of some of the archaic Palaeo-Siberian peoples. But may not the meaning of what we had witnessed go beyond this? The hallucinogenic mushrooms are a natural product presumably accessible to men in many parts of the world, including Europe and Asia. In man's evolutionary past, as he groped his way out from his lowly past, there must have come a moment in time when he discovered the secret of the hallucinatory mushrooms. Their effect on him, as I see it, could only have been profound, a detonator to new ideas. For the mushrooms revealed to him worlds beyond the horizons known to him, in space and time, even worlds on a different plane of being, a heaven and perhaps a hell. For the credulous primitive mind, the mushrooms must have reinforced mightily the idea of the miraculous. Many emotions are shared by men with the animal kingdom, but awe and reverence and the fear of God are peculiar to men. When we bear in mind the beatific sense of awe and ecstasy and *caritas* engendered by the divine mushrooms, one is emboldened to the point of asking whether they may not have planted in primitive man the very idea of god.

It is no accident, perhaps, that the first answer of the Spanish-speaking Indian, when I asked about the effect of the mushrooms, was often this: *Le llevan ahí donde Dios está*, "They carry you there where God is," an answer that we have received on several occasions, from Indians in different cultural areas, almost as though it were in a sort of catechism. At all times there have been rare souls--the mystics and certain poets--who have had access without the aid of drugs to the visionary world for which the mushrooms hold the key. William Blake possessed the secret: "He who does not imagine in... stronger and better light than his perishing mortal eye can see, does not imagine at all." But I can testify that the mushrooms make those visions accessible to a much larger number. The visions that we saw must have come from within us, obviously. But they did not recall anything that we had seen with our own eyes. Somewhere within us there must lie a repository where these visions sleep until they are called forth. Are the visions a subconscious transmutation of things read and seen and imagined, so transmuted that when they are conjured forth from the depths we no longer recognize them? Or do the mushrooms stir greater depths still, depths that are truly the Unknown?

In each of our successive trips to the Indian peoples of southern Mexico, we have enlarged our knowledge of the use of the divine mushrooms, and as our knowledge has increased, new and exciting questions keep arising. We have found five distinct cultural areas where the Indians invoke the mushrooms, but the usage varies widely in every area. What is needed is a perceptive approach by trained anthropologists in every area, cooperating with mushrooms specialists. Of these latter there are in the whole world relatively few: mushrooms are a neglected field in the natural sciences. In this field Professor Roger Heim is known the world over. He is not only a man with vast experience in the field of mushrooms: he is an outstanding scientist in other fields, a man steeped in the humanities, the head of the Muséum National D'Histoire Naturelle in Paris. At an early stage of our inquiries he had lent us his counsel, and in 1956 our progress had been such as to justify him in accompanying us on another field trip. There came with us also a chemist, Professor James A. Moore of the University of Delaware; an anthropologist, Guy Stresser-Péan of the Sorbonne; and once again our loyal friend Allan Richardson as photographer.

This time the immediate problem was to identify the hallucinogenic mushrooms and to command a steady supply of them for laboratory study. This is harder than a layman would think. Though the early Spanish writers wrote about the divine mushrooms four centuries ago, no anthropologist and no mycologist had been sufficiently interested to pursue the problem until our own generation. Those who know these mushrooms are Indians belonging to tribes farthest removed from us culturally, locked in their mountains remote from highways, locked also behind the barrier of their languages. One must win their confidence and overcome their suspicion of white men. One must face the physical discomforts of life and dangers of disease in the Indian villages in the rainy season, when the mushrooms grow. Occasionally a white face is seen in those parts in the dry season, but when the rains come, those rare beings--missionaries, archaeologists, anthropologists, botanists, geologists--vanish. There are other difficulties. Of the seven *curanderos* that by now I have seen take mushrooms, only two, Eva Mendez and her daughter, were dedicated votaries. Some of the others were equivocal characters. Once we saw a *curandero* take only a token dose of mushroom, and there was another who ate and served to us a kind of mushroom that had no hallucinogenic properties at all. Had we seen only him, we should have come away thinking that the famed properties of the mushrooms were a delusion, a striking instance of autosuggestion. Do we discover here an effort at deception, or had the dried mushrooms through age lost their peculiar property? Or, much more interesting anthropologically, do some shamans deliberately substitute innocent species for the authentic kinds in a retreat from what is too sacred to be borne? Even when we have won the confidence of a skilled practitioner like Eva, the atmosphere must be right for a perfect performance and there must be an abundance of mushrooms. Sometimes even in the rainy season the mushrooms are scarce, as we have learned from costly experience.

We now know that there are seven kinds of hallucinogenic mushrooms in use in Mexico. But not all the Indians know them even in the villages where they are worshiped, and either in good faith or to make the visitor happy, the *curanderos* sometimes deliver the wrong mushrooms. The only certain test is to eat the mushrooms. Professor Heim and we have thus established beyond challenge the claims of four species. The next best thing is to obtain multiple confirmation from informants unknown to each other, if possible from various cultural areas. This we have done with several additional kinds. We are now certain as to four species, reasonably sure about two other kinds, and inclined to accept the claims of a seventh, these seven belonging to three genera. Of these seven, at least six appear to be new to science. Perhaps in the end we shall discover more than seven kinds.

The mushrooms are not used as therapeutic agents: they themselves do not effect cures. The Indians "consult" the mushrooms when distraught with grave problems. If someone is ill, the mushroom will say what led to the illness and whether the patient will live or die, and what should be done to hasten recovery. If the verdict of the mushroom is for death, the believing patient and his family resign themselves: he loses appetite and soon expires and even before his death they begin preparations for the wake. Or one may consult

(Continued on page 8)

(Continued from page 7)

the mushroom about the stolen donkey and learn where it will be found and who took it. Or if a beloved son has gone out into the world--perhaps to the United States--the mushroom is a kind of a postal service: it will report whether he still lives or is dead, whether he is in jail, married, in trouble or prosperous. The Indians believe that the mushrooms hold the key to what we call extrasensory perception.

Little by little the properties of the mushrooms are beginning to emerge. The Indians who eat them do not become addicts: when the rainy season is over and the mushrooms disappear, there seems to be no physiological craving for them. Each kind has its own hallucinogenic strength, and if enough of one species be not available, the Indians will mix the species, making a quick calculation of the right dosage. The curandero usually takes a large dose and everyone else learns to know what his own dose should be. It seems that the dose does not increase with use. Some persons require more than others. An increase in the dose intensifies the experience but does not greatly prolong the effect. The mushrooms sharpen, if anything, the memory, while they utterly destroy the sense of time. On the night that we have described we lived through eons. When it seemed to us that a sequence of visions had lasted for years, our watches would tell us that only seconds had passed. The pupils of our eyes were dilated, the pulse of ran slow. We think the mushrooms have no cumulative effect on the human organism. Eva Mendez has been taking them for 35 years, and when they are plentiful she takes them night after night.

The mushrooms present a chemical problem. What is the agent in them that releases the strange hallucinations? We are now reasonably sure that it differs from such familiar drugs as opium, coca, mescaline, hashish, etc. But the chemist has a long road to go before he will isolate it, arrive at its molecular structure and synthesize it. The problem is of great interest in the realm of pure science. Will it also prove of help in coping with psychic disturbances?

My wife and I have traveled far and discovered much since that day 30 years ago in the Catskills when we first perceived the strangeness of wild mushrooms. But what we have already discovered only opens up new vistas for further study. Today we are about to embark on our fifth expedition to the Mexican Indian villages, again seeking to increase and refine our knowledge of the role played by mushrooms in the lives of these remote peoples. But Mexico is only the beginning. All the evidence relating to the primitive beginnings of our own European cultures must be reviewed to see whether the hallucinogenic mushroom played a part there, only to be overlooked by posterity.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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En Busca del hongo mágico

This is the final installment of this adventure. More mushroom drawings can be found at the website listed at the top of this article.

## Rare vision-giving fungi shown for first time

On his latest expedition to seek out and study the hallucinogenic mushrooms, Wasson was accompanied by Professor Roger Heim, an old friend, one of the world's leading mycologists and head of France's Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle. Wasson had sent Heim specimens from three of his previous trips. Now Heim was able to study the mushrooms in the field, eat them with the Indians and work out techniques for growing some of them in the laboratory. LIFE here publishes Professor Heim's life-size water-color paintings of the seven kinds of hallucinogenic mushrooms so far discovered. Four of these are species new to science and two others are new varieties of a known species, *Psilocybe caerulescens* Murrill.

At the present time no one knows what drug it is in these mushrooms that causes the eater to see visions, and until its properties are clearly defined the hallucinogenic mushrooms must be treated with extreme caution. Among the Indians, their use is hedged about with restrictions of many kinds. Unlike ordinary edible mushrooms, these are never sold in the market place, and no Indian dares to eat them frivolously, for excitement. The Indians themselves speak of their use as *muy delicado*, that is, perilous.



WITH professor Heim, Wasson (right) searches a mountainside near the village for specimens of the sacred mushrooms. They found two species here.



## SOMA Membership Application and Renewal Form

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), Corporation dedicated to the promotion of the knowledge and appreciation of local fungi.



(Please Print)  New Member  Renewal  
Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone(s): Home: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: \_\_\_\_\_  
E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

SOMA will not share your info!

- Date: \_\_\_\_\_
- \$25 for family membership (mailed SOMA News, plus website download if desired)
  - \$20 for family membership who do not require a mailed newsletter (website download only)
  - \$20 for seniors with mailed newsletter (60 years +) (plus website download if desired)
  - \$20 for seniors—website download only, (help SOMA and the environment out!)
  - \$250 for Lifetime Membership with website download!

I am interested in participating in the following activities (Check):

Culinary Group \_\_\_\_\_ Mushroom Forays \_\_\_\_\_ Cultivation \_\_\_\_\_  
Mushroom Dyes \_\_\_\_\_ Mushroom Papermaking \_\_\_\_\_ Newsletter \_\_\_\_\_

Other ideas/comments: \_\_\_\_\_

Checks to: SOMA  
P.O. Box 7147  
Santa Rosa, CA 95407

[www.SOMAmushrooms.org](http://www.SOMAmushrooms.org)

**YOU CAN NOW RENEW/JOIN ONLINE AT THE WEBSITE!**

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### Russula Blitz

#### Salt Point State Park

Saturday, December 12, 9:30 a.m.

Meet at the Woodside Day Use parking lot at 9:30 a.m. Items to bring will be posted on the BAMS yahoo group list. Dr. Mike Davis from UC Davis will be our mycologist. This is an effort to collect as many Russula species as possible, then spend time at the Bodega Bay Marine Lab doing identification. If you plan to come to the lab portion of this event, contact Debbie Viess 510-430-9353 or [by email](mailto:debbieviess@ucdavis.edu). Free.

**Deadline for the January 2010 issue of SOMA News is December 21<sup>st</sup>.**

**Please send your articles, calendar items, and other information to:**

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

### Point Reyes Fungus Fair

January 30, collecting foray | January 31, fair Bear Valley Visitor Center

This will be the fifth annual Point Reyes Fungus Fair at the Bear Valley Visitor Center. The public is encouraged to bring mushroom collections from anywhere in Marin to the Red Barn on Saturday afternoon at 1:00 pm; the best and most beautiful examples will be used for mushroom displays for Sunday's Fair, 10:00 am to 4:00 pm. BAMS members are encouraged to help with set up and talking to the public about mushrooms. Free.

For those interested in visiting Tibet and experiencing the fantastic mushrooms there, MushRoaming tours will be hosting two trips in 2010.

1. Cordyceps Expedition to East Tibet **May 24 to June 6, 2010**
2. Fungal & Floral Foray in Tibet **July 14 to 27, 2010**

More info at: [www.MushRoaming.com](http://www.MushRoaming.com)

SOMA friend Daniel Winkler leads these tours and I am sure they are a lifetime experience. A very interesting article by Daniel can be found at link below.

"The Mushrooming Fungi Market in Tibet exemplified by *Cordyceps sinensis* and *Tricholoma matsutake*"

<http://snipurl.com/tg8lv> [www\_thlib\_org]

Another good article can be found below.

"East Bay Amanitas: The Good, the Bad, and the Beautiful" by Debbie Viess

<http://snipurl.com/tg8rc> [www\_bayareamushrooms\_org]

## VOLUNTEER

Our next big volunteer event will be the 13th Annual SOMA Mushroom Camp from January 16 to 18. This is a very popular and well attended event and we only have a limited number of work exchange positions. In order to secure your position, please contact me at the email address below. I will email you an application form to be completed and returned to me. Once I have your application, I will try my best to find a suitable position for you and contact you about registering through the SOMA website

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

### Requirements for Work Exchange

**Membership:** Each volunteer **MUST** be a member of SOMA and register separately on the SOMA website. You will not be considered for work exchange unless you are a registered member.

**Work Exchange** - All volunteers are required to work a total of 8 hours in exchange for attending the Camp for free. There will be a fee of \$60 for each volunteer who requires on-site accommodation in the shared cabins at the camp.

Thank you all for volunteering and I am looking forward to seeing you all at Camp!

Gina Kuta  
Volunteer Coordinator  
[Volunteer@SOMAmushrooms.org](mailto:Volunteer@SOMAmushrooms.org)



A Hubble mosaic of the Crab Nebula

## SOMA News

P.O. Box 7147  
Santa Rosa, CA 95407

SOMA  
DIVINE MUSHROOM  
OF IMMORTALITY  
& Golden Wares



## SOMA Members

The December 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 Ave.
- Turn left on Piner Road.
- At about ¼ 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, Hopper Ave/Mendocino Ave.
- Stay left on the frontage road, (it becomes Cleveland Ave after you cross Industrial Drive).
- Turn right on Piner Road.
- At about ¼ mile, turn left into parking lot at 970 Piner Road.

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

