



SOMA News

VOLUME 23 ISSUE 8

April 2011

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

WINTER/SPRING 2011 SEASON CALENDAR

April

April 21st » Meeting—7pm
Sonoma County Farm Bureau
Speaker: **Langdon Cook**

**Foray April 23rd » Point Reyes
National Seashore (See Page 2)**

May

May 19th » Meeting—7pm
Sonoma County Farm Bureau
Speaker: **Bob Cummings**

Foray May: Possible Morel Camping!
Watch email and next month for info.

Limericks by Charmoon:

While picking chanterelles one day
A banana slug troop came my way
It was time, I could see
For a new recipe
Just blend the two to make a pate'

I once knew a squirrel named Ruffles
He used to get into scuffles
Was it territory? No
Lady squirrels? Not so
He wanted to eat all the truffles.



EMERGENCY MUSHROOM POISONING IDENTIFICATION

After seeking medical attention, contact **Darvin DeShazer** for identification at (707) 829-0596. Email your photos to 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

Langdon Cook

"From Woods to Plate: Wild Mushroom Cookery."

April 21st—7pm



Langdon Cook is the author of "Fat of the Land: Adventures of a 21st Century Forager," which the Seattle Times called "lyrical, practical and quixotic." He has been profiled in Bon Appétit, Whole Living, and Salon.com, and his writing has appeared in numerous magazines and newspapers, including Sunset, Gray's Sporting Journal, Outside, The Stranger, and Northwest Palate. Cook was a senior book editor at Amazon.com before moving off the grid to live in a cabin with his family. He is now a freelance writer, blogger, lecturer, and columnist for Seattle Magazine. Cook lives in Seattle, WA, and blogs at:

<http://fat-of-the-land.blogspot.com/>.

Book: <http://www.amazon.com/Fat-Land-Adventures-Century-Forager/dp/1594850070/>

Twitter: <http://twitter.com/langdoncook>

SOMA OFFICERS

PRESIDENT

Jim Wheeler

SOMApresident@SOMAmushrooms.org

VICE PRESIDENT

Vacant

SECRETARY

Karen Kruppa

SOMAscretary@SOMAmushrooms.org

TREASURER

Julie Schreiber

SOMAtreasurer@SOMAmushrooms.org

COMMITTEES AND BOARD MEMBERS

BOOK SALES

Gene Zierdt

CULINARY GROUP

Chris Murray

SOMAculinary@SOMAmushrooms.org

CULTIVATION CLUB CHAIR

Ben Schmid

SOMAcultivation@SOMAmushrooms.org

FORAYS

Michael Miller

SOMAforay@SOMAmushrooms.org

MEMBERSHIP

George Riner

SOMAmembership@SOMAmushrooms.org

MUSHROOM DYE COORDINATOR

Dorothy Beebee

SOMAmushroomdyes@SOMAmushrooms.org

MUSHROOM PAPER COORDINATOR

Catherine Wesley

(707) 894-7725

SCHOLARSHIPS

Rachel Zierdt

scholarships@SOMAmushrooms.org

SCIENTIFIC ADVISORS

Darvin DeShazer

(707) 829-0596

muscaria@pacbell.net

Chris Kjeldsen, Ph.D.

(707) 544-3091

Chris.Kjeldsen@sonoma.edu

SOMA CAMP DIRECTOR

Linda Morris

SOMAcampinfo@SOMAmushrooms.org

SOMA CAMP REGISTRAR

Lou Prestia

SOMAregistrar@SOMAmushrooms.org

SOMA NEWS EDITOR

Tom Cruckshank

SOMAnewseditor@SOMAmushrooms.org

SOMA WEBMASTER

Martin Beebee

SOMainfo@SOMAmushrooms.org

VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR(S)

Gina Kuta and Lee McCarthy-Smith

Volunteer@SOMAmushrooms.org

SOMA's *Amanita muscaria* logo by Ariel Mahon

PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dispatch from the Duff

Please welcome Ben Garland, who will become the next SOMA Newsletter editor. After the March Epicurean dinner meeting, a few of us had paused and relived the excellent meal just consumed. While admiring the downtown Graton skyline, someone carefully planted the topic of the open newsletter editor position. Ben expressed interest and voila! He was immediately recruited and triumphantly landed for the job within minutes. Ben is a transplanted Georgian and has lived in Sonoma County a couple of years, via a short sentence to Oregon. He has taken root here and insists he won't be moving anywhere else forever, or at least, not too soon. The transition between Ben and Tom Cruckshank, our editor for many years, will take place over the next few months and we are certain the high quality and standards Tom has set will continue under Ben's capable stewardship. Welcome Ben!

Last December, the Ranger Staff at Salt Point State Park invited SOMA to meet and discuss a number of their concerns about collecting wild mushrooms in Salt Point State Park. Their staff had documented many incidents that reflected poorly on folks collecting mushrooms. The staff was very quick to point out they felt strongly those responsible were not members of any of the local mushroom organizations. The problems included, not necessarily in order: people collecting more than the permitted amount, those wandering onto neighboring private property to collect and causing damage, and some evidence people were selling wild mushrooms collected at Salt Point for profit. Over the last few years, the traffic of mushroom collectors has grown significantly and the amount of waste and debris left in the park by visitors, as well as areas of disturbed or trampled habitat, have increased unacceptably. Based on discussions with the Ranger staff, the current SOMA Board has agreed, in principle, to support an effort to protect and preserve the resource. There will be more meetings and discussions to organize and implement a plan to address the concerns listed and attempt to eliminate potential causes of problems. We need 4-5 people to volunteer 4-10 hours a month to help with this effort. Please write or phone me if you have the interest and time to help.

March Foray Find:

Jacket . . . excellent condition, Nike Swoosh logo, grey/silver . . . size men's large, nicely lined, and recently laundered.

Best regards,

Jim Wheeler

FORAY OF THE MONTH

Saturday, April 23rd

Final Foray & Famous Festive Fete

Just like last year, the final foray of the season will take place on the Point Reyes Peninsula, rather than our usual location, Salt Point State Park. And, the noontime potluck will again be at the home of Jim and Mary Olsen. Courtesy of your favorite mushroom club, we will again be bar-b-que-ing Drake's Bay Oyster Company's oysters.

These are in addition to the always fabulous culinary offerings of our members.

During the 18 months we've lived in Inverness, we have discovered many mushroom-friendly hikes, especially on Inverness Water District's fire roads, which we are eager to share. To that end, please meet at 10AM at a parking lot 2.1 miles past the Inverness Post Office, just before the sign that announces "Point Reyes Nat'l Seashore", on Sir Francis Drake. There will be cars parked there, and the SOMA mushroom banner will be clearly visible. This is on your left. We will have maps prepared for several different hikes. We will split up and carpool to trail heads, so please try to be prompt.

If you like, feel free to drop off your potluck offering at our house before the foray. Address: 75 Escondido Way. From Sir Francis Drake, go to the right on El Camino del Mar, take your first left, go up the hill and turn right on the SECOND opening for Escondido. We are the second house on the right. You'll see the mushroom banner. You can park along the road, and in our neighbors' driveways. Anyone who doesn't want to hike can hang out at the house with me and help set-up.

Everyone is welcome, including children! If you have any questions please feel free to call me at (415) 669-9872 or email at: marymalarkey@sbcglobal.net.

Looking forward to a fun party!

Mary Olsen

Between *Phaeolus* and *Fritillaria* (revisited)

From a Dyers Journal.....by Dorothy Beebee, March 2009

This is the time of year when I'm torn again in 2 different botanical directions – between *Phaeolus* and *Fritillaria*..... Julie brought in a prime specimen of the former from the recent SOMA Foray at Salt Point, and the latter are sprouting their little pointy leaves just down my road. A solitary walk in February 2003 in overcast Armstrong Woods looking for “Trillium” and “Calypso orchids”, revealed only one blooming “Redwood Sorrel” next to a brilliant red waxy mushroom, *Hygrophorus puniceus* ... Wait a minute! Is this article for the California Native Plant Society or for the **Sonoma Mycological Association**? You can see the dilemma...

And then, as if to further complicate my impending schizophrenia, I picked a small bucket full of little cinnamon colored orange-gilled *Dermocybes* growing in grass under Monterey Pine down at Patrick's rancho in Cotati, to dry and save for SOMA Camp next year! Usually there are lots of these little guys up in time to use for the dye baths at SOMA Camp, but NOT this year – no, nary a one...This is a “population” that I've been picking and studying for 6 years now. Darwin and I think that those orange-gilled *Dermocybe* actually may be 2 different species – *D. cinnamomea* and *D. malicoria*. But until a few weeks ago, I had never had a chance to make any kind of detailed color drawings of them. One group has bright orange gills when young – the other has yellow/gold gills, so picking a few really young ones with their brilliantly colored gills, preferably with the *cortina* intact, is requisite for ID purposes.

At first I thought that the yellow-gold gilled specimens were just immature stages of the orange-gilled ones – but now every February over the last 6 years. I have collected enough young

ones to note that they do have distinctly differently colored gills. The dyes over these years from both the yellow/gold-gilled ones and the orange-gilled mushrooms are consistent and similar, year after year – a sort of “warm peachy-beige” using both alum and iron mordants. BUT, if ones adds a dollop of white vinegar to “acidify” (changing the pH of the dyebath from “normal” 7pH down to pH4), the colors turn toward brilliant, almost “neon orange” in hue. My understanding is that adding the acid strips the glucose from the pigment molecules, which in turn release a more brilliant color. I'm sure a dye chemist could/would correct or elucidate this in more complete chemical terms...

But you know what? No matter what “They” call a mushroom, the dyes don't lie! They either contain a certain pigment(s) – (which reacts to a certain mordant) or not, and that is what counts! To heck with the “names”!!! A dye mushroom is a dye mushroom, no matter by what name we mortals call it.....

Update – March 2011 ~ A short walk down my road this morning revealed the first *Fritillaria lanceolata* in BLOOM! Along with some “Milk Maids” and the promise of “Diogenes Lantern” to come, but nary a mushroom. That's ok – I still have left over dye from *Sarcodon fuscoindicus* (thanks again, Marilyn!) and I just pulled an iron-mordanted skein of wool that was left in the dyepot for 3 weeks while I was on “medical leave”, and it was totally BLACK, with maybe the slightest hint of green in the sunlight – a color I have never achieved before in all of my years (over 40) of natural dyeing!! So I cannot let that go by without trying another skein in there, “just to see”. Besides, Myra is finding mushrooms for me down in Cotati to try.... So much for “taking a break from mushroom dyeing” ~ the quest for Color overrules common sense once more...

**Mushroom Obsession/Fungimantal Frustrations**

Mary Olsen © 2011

Dear MM,

Every time I've been to the French Laundry (restaurant in Yountville - Michelin 5 star) lately, they have some new exciting foraged mushroom dishes on their menu. Coincidentally, this is always just after some SOMA culinary event. I think they are sending out spies to find new and exciting mushroom recipes which they then copy. Is this legal? Suspicious in Sonoma



Recipes are intellectual property and they could be sued if their spies can be caught. So SOMA could bring a Class Action Lawsuit. Perhaps they'd settle for an 8 course prix fixe meal for each SOMA member, dues paid up, of course. On the other hand, it is possible that The French Laundry just purchased a copy of Connie Green's Cookbook, *The Wild Table*, which is loaded with great recipes for wild mushrooms. I hope it's the former.

MM

You can send your questions and pleas for advice to:

marymalarkey@sbcglobal.net.

Dear Suspicious:

Gosh, another laundry-themed question. Although I know absolutely nothing about the law, I'd say, no, this isn't legal.

This begins the first installment of the newly found
(and thought lost by a hopeful many):

"Chronicles of the Old Mushroomer."

Further columns will be published herein as are located.

"I don't think I can understand someone not bewildered or at least confused a bit by me." The Old Mushroomer declared through wine purpled teeth to his campfire companion while roasting a skewered fat burn over the not so slim fire.

"What the heck does that mean?" His foraging buddy offered, puzzled kind of, as he looked up from cooking a buttered forest fire morel on a blackened twig of his own.

"Exactly, and that's why we're such good friends."

That conversation was then done for a while.

The Old Mushroomer went on later with some new musings: "When I sometimes sit down to write I feel a convergence of Murphy's Law, the Peter Principle, and maybe a Rube Goldberg invention too. And then some more odd things occur that I can't just now put my finger on.

"Seems that after so many years of trying to let folks know about this damn hobby of mine that I don't know if I should ever have done so in the first place. I mean, how many Sunday pickers are there now in spots not known to them before I wrote in an article where and when to go? Darn thing confuses the heck out of me. Am I a good person or not?"

"Well I certainly can't judge that but you sure have made folks' lives a lot fuller and funner. And that's something, ain't it?"

"Yeah something all right but there's friends of mine that still haven't gotten over the time I said that matsutakes grow in Marin. Seems they wanted to keep that a secret all to themselves. As if the Gods of Mushrooms reached out from their Heavens, Cistine chapel like, to speak to only them. And that's not the way I see it. And it certainly ain't the way I was taught by The Late Great Big Larry Stickney.

"You know that I played fiddle in the band for Ronnie and the Ronettes, right? And I wrote that line, 'For every kiss you give me I give you three.' And what did that get me?"

"I thought you'd told me once that you wrote that line for Del Shannon's 'Run Around Sue.' That what went, 'Dee down down dee down down.' Right? You wrote that too?"

"Maybe so and maybe not so. I'm tired of telling it like it is. Got in too much trouble saying this or that about what's coming up here and when. Thought I'd take a liberty with all things honest and all.

"You know when folks all of a sudden insert into a perfectly good going conversation the word 'honestly?' Well, what's to have taken place up to that point in that dialogue? I mean—were we lying up til then? Could, but not probably so.

"You know that I came up with that line, Something's got a hold of me?"

"Huh?"

"Met him on a Sunday and my heart stood still. They do run run run they do run run."

"What?"

"Oh, and his name is Bill."

"What the Hell?"

"Skirmishes of the brain might be better than actually saying something.

"So from here on out no more mushroom information except to folks worthy of such understandings."

"How in the heck are you going to judge that, Yer Honor?"

"With the same fairness that I gave everyone who'd over the years given me private info so that I could write it up and let others know too. I can be fair over that. They'd tell me a little something and I'd tell them some stuff.

"And thanks for calling me Your Honor. I liked that."

"But this makes little sense, Your Judgeship."

"Exactly, and that is how this column started."

"So who gets the news about morels and where folks'll have to go to find lots of them?"

"Anyone who is a SOMA member and can wait until next month's column."

"But what if they don't want to wait, can't wait, won't wait? Could be confusing to them."

"Well—those are the ones I understand."

The Recipe Part of the Column:

Mycochef here: This recipe was part of a mushroom cooking demo that was offered at the talk Connie Green and I did for SOMA last month. It uses *Lepista saeva* var. *personatum* but any blewits will do. We wanted to show off the mushroom's flavor so that is why they were not blended into the sauce or folded into the noodles. They were sat on top to show off their great flavor (and the chef's fine knife skills).

The ingredient list may look a little long but they are all familiar (except for the bluefoot, maybe) and go together very easily. Note: Always assume freshly ground black pepper, fresh orange juice, unsalted butter, fresh herbs unless otherwise noted, etc.

CLIP & SAVE

Bluefoot in Crème Fraiche (SOMA meeting 3/17/11)

Serving Size: 4 Preparation Time :0:30

Amt/Meas.	Ingredient	Preparation Method	Amt/Meas.	Ingredient	Preparation Method
1/4 each	leek, large	diced	1 tbl	butter	
1 clove	garlic	minced	1/2 tbl	olive oil	
1 tbl	butter			sea salt and pepper	
2 tbl	Italian parsley	chopped fine	1/2 cup	crème fraiche	
1 tbl	dill,	chopped fine	3 ounces	egg noodles, dried, high quality	
1/4 cup	hard cider, dry			Maldon salt and pepper	
1/2 tsp	orange juice		1 tsp	dill for garnish	chopped fine
1/2 tsp	white wine vinegar				
1 pint	L. saeva (bluefoot) or blewits	sliced 1/4" thick (or a bit less)			

(Continued on bottom of page 5)

Like so many Salt Point forays this season we woke up early Saturday morning to rain, chilly temperatures and ominous weather forecasts. We tapped our dwindling reserves of Inner Fortitude, packed our gear and headed west. And, like our previous forays, we arrived at The Promised Land (A.K.A. Salt Point) with nary a sprinkle of rain. We also tapped our Inner Wisdom, which said "it ain't gonna last" so we set up the big tent and grabbed our raincoats. We missed the presence of our Fearless leader Jim but Chris Murray stepped up to pinch hit for him and delivered all the parts required to erect our shelter. 41 people joined us at the Woodside Campground.

Pickings were a bit slimmer than last month but everyone found a reasonable variety of fungi. There were several hunters, however, who didn't understand that the edible mushroom season was winding down. Ernie Bellenbaum, a SOMA regular, returned with a nice basket full of gigantic Rapandums but he has done this many times in the past. Chris Beck, a student from St. Mary's and his father Fred came all the way from Martinez for their first foray at Salt Point and returned with two grocery bags 1/3 full of Black Trumpets and hedgehogs. We asked "how did you do it?" and they replied that they simply hiked "one ridge farther" than the rest of the group. This shows that a good pair of Mushroom Eyes and some determination can win the day over

us Old Timers who have been going to Salt Point for years. George Riner displayed his knack for finding far more mushrooms in a single spot than I can locate with miles of crashing through the brush.

A light sprinkle of rain commenced after our return to the Woodside Campground but with the tent erected and a dry place to sit everyone got cozy for our Pot Luck. We all sorely felt the absence of MycoChef Patrick Hamilton, but he had cooked sensational dishes for the previous several forays in a row AND was the Cook/Speaker and General Guru on Thursday Night at the Farm Bureau. The man has to take at least one day off. Lucky for all of us, our friend Finola out-did herself again by bringing a Caribbean shredded chicken curry dish with loads of side dishes and condiments. Mr. Campbell brought onion soup and many other excellent cold dishes were donated by others. George Riner and Aaron Miller provided ID and a species list.

Overall, a good foray and a great time was had by all, despite the lateness of the season and the inclement weather. This is a good reminder for us: If you're sitting at home and looking out forlornly at the cold and rain outside and feeling a little sorry for yourself, head out to the coast for a SOMA foray and you will return fulfilled and joyful. It always works for me.

Fungi Found March 19, 2011 Salt Point State Park

Annulohypoxylon thourasianum
Auriscalpium vulgare
Cantharellus formosus
C. tubaeformis
Clavulina cineria
C. cristata
Cortinarius sp.
Craterellus cornucopioides
Dacromyces palmatus
Dermocybe phoenecia var. *occidentalis*
Hydnullum aurantiacum

Hydnum rapandum
Hydnum umbilicatum
Hygrocybe punicea
Inocybe sp.
Lactarius fragilis
L. xanthogalactus
Lenzites betulina
Leotia lubrica
Marasmius sp.
Mycena sp.
Nolanea sp.
Onnia tomentosa
Phaeolus schweinitzii

Pluteus ostreatus
Pluteus cerbinus group
Pseudohydnum gelatinosum
Rhodoxanthus palmatus
Russula compacta
R. cremoricolor
Stereum hirsutum
Suillus sp.
Thelephora palmate
Trichaptum bifforme
Trichoglossum hirsutum

Thanks to: Aaron Miller & George Riner



(Continued from page 4)

1. Caramelize the leeks with the garlic in the butter. Add the parsley and dill, cider, orange juice, and vinegar. Reduce almost au sec and set aside.
2. Meanwhile, sauté the mushrooms in the butter/oil until crispy and golden brown. Salt and pepper a little while cooking.
3. Cook the noodles as per package instructions. Drain, add a little butter and oil to prevent sticking together. Set aside.
4. Add the crème fraiche to the leek mixture, heat through. Pour the sauce over the noodles, toss lightly, add the mushrooms on top.
5. Garnish with the dill.

Mycoremediation of the Japanese Landscape After Radioactive Fallout

Many people have written me and asked more or less the same question: "What would you do to help heal the Japanese landscape around the failing nuclear reactors?"

The enormity and unprecedented nature of this combined natural and human-made disaster will require a massive and completely novel approach to management and remediation. And with this comes a never before seen opportunity for collaboration, research and wisdom.

The nuclear fallout will make continued human habitation in close proximity to the reactors untenable. The earthquake and tsunami created enormous debris fields near the nuclear reactors. Since much of this debris is wood, and many fungi useful in mycoremediation are wood decomposers and build the foundation of forest ecosystems, I have the following suggestions:

- 1) Evacuate the region around the reactors.
- 2) Establish a high-level, diversified remediation team including foresters, mycologists, nuclear and radiation experts, government officials, and citizens.
- 3) Establish a fenced off Nuclear Forest Recovery Zone.
- 4) Chip the wood debris from the destroyed buildings and trees and spread throughout areas suffering from high levels of radioactive contamination.
- 5) Mulch the landscape with the chipped wood debris to a minimum depth of 12-24 inches.
- 6) Plant native deciduous and conifer trees, along with hyper-accumulating mycorrhizal mushrooms, particularly *Gomphidius glutinosus*, *Craterellus tubaeformis*, and *Laccaria amethystina* (all native to pines). *G. glutinosus* has been reported to absorb – via the mycelium – and concentrate radioactive Cesium 137 more than 10,000-fold over ambient background levels. Many other mycorrhizal mushroom species also hyper-accumulate.
- 7) Wait until mushrooms form and then harvest them under Radioactive HAZMAT protocols.
- 8) Continuously remove the mushrooms, which have now concentrated the radioactivity, particularly Cesium 137, to an incinerator. Burning the mushroom will result in radioactive ash. This ash can be further refined and the resulting concentrates vitrified (placed into glass) or stored using other state-of-the-art storage technologies.

By sampling other mushroom-forming fungi for their selective ability to hyper-accumulate radioactivity, we can learn a great deal while helping the ecosystem recover. Not only will some mushroom species hyper-accumulate radioactive compounds, but research has also shown that some mycorrhizal fungi bind and sequester radioactive elements so they remain immobilized for extended periods of time. Surprisingly, we learned from the Chernobyl disaster that many species of melanin-producing fungi have their growth stimulated by radiation.

The knowledge gained through this collaborative process would not only benefit the areas affected by the current crisis, but would also help with preparedness and future remediation responses.

How long would this remediation effort take? I have no clear idea but suggest this may require decades. However, a forested national park could emerge –The Nuclear Forest Recovery Zone–



Gomphidius glutinosus hyper-accumulates radioactive Cesium 137

and eventually benefit future generations with its many ecological and cultural attributes.

I do not know of any other practical remedy. I do know that we have an unprecedented opportunity to work together toward solutions that make sense.

For references, see the selected list below and please consult my latest book, *Mycelium Running: How Mushrooms Can Help Save the World* (Ten Speed Press, Berkeley or www.fungi.com). Utilizing search engines of the scientific literature will also reveal more corroborative references.

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As summer nights lengthen into autumn, the forests of the Catskill Mountains in upstate New York fill with magical, mystical, medicinal mushrooms. "Toadstool" is a quaint name for the many mushrooms that spring forth between rains, while "fungi" is the more technical term.

Fungi are plants, but plants without flowers, or roots, or chlorophyll (which makes plants green). Strange shapes (some quite sexually suggestive), the ability to grow (and glow) in the dark, and psychedelic colors make mushrooms an obvious addition to any witches' stew. But you will want some other reasons to make mushrooms a steady part of your diet. Is outwitting cancer a good enough reason?

It's true. All edible fungi--including those ordinary white button mushrooms sold in supermarkets--are capable of preventing and reversing cancerous cellular changes. We aren't exactly sure why.

Perhaps it's because fungi search out, concentrate, and share with us the trace minerals we need to build powerful, healthy immune systems. Or perhaps it's because of their wealth of polysaccharides, interesting complex sugars that appear to be all round health-promoters. It could be because mushrooms are excellent sources of protein and B vitamins with few calories and no sodium. Or we could single out the anti-cancer, anti-tumor, and antibacterial compounds found in the stalk, caps, gills, and even the underground structures (mycelia) of every edible mushroom.

So be sure to cook your mushrooms through; avoid eating them raw. Scientists at the University of Nebraska Medical School found that mice who ate unlimited amounts of raw mushrooms (*Agaricus bisporus*) developed, over the course of their lifetimes, significantly more malignant tumors than a control group.

Everywhere I go in August and September--whether walking barefoot on vibrant green mosses or stepping lightly across the deeply-scented fallen pine and hemlock needles, whether climbing rocky outcrops festooned with ferny whiskers or skirting swamps humming with mosquitoes, whether following the muddy bank of a meandering stream or balancing on old stone walls inhaling the scent of righteous rot--I am on the lookout for my fungal friends.

My woods are especially generous to me with chanterelles, beautiful cornucopia-shaped mushrooms with a delectable taste. I find both the delicious little black ones--jokingly known as "trumpet of death" due to their eerie coloration--and the very-tasty and much bigger orange ones. Sometimes we return home naked from our mushrooms walks; if we find more 'shrooms than we have bags for, we have to use our shirts and pants as carriers to help haul dinner home.

The bright orange tops and sulfur yellow undersides of sulphur shelf mushrooms (*Polyporus sulphuroides*) are easy to spot in the late summer forest. Growing only on recently-dead oaks, these overlapping shelves make a great-tasting immune-enhancing ad-

dition to dinner. I have harvested the "chicken of the woods" in oak forests around the world. In the Czech Republic, I saw a particularly large example as we drove a country lane. Stopping, I found a portion of it had been harvested. I took only a share, being careful to leave lots for other mushroom lovers who might come down the lane after me.

You don't have to live in the woods and find your own mushrooms to enjoy their health-giving benefits. You can buy them: fresh or dried for use in cooking and medicine, and tinctured or powdered as well. Look for chanterelles, cepes, enoki, oyster mushrooms, portobellos, maitake, reishii, shiitake, chaga, and many other exotic and medicinal mushrooms in health food stores, supermarkets, specialty stores, and Oriental markets.

Maitake (*Grifolia frondosa*), is more effective than any other fungi ever tested at inhibiting tumor growth. It is very effective when taken orally, whether by lab rats or humans dealing with cancer. The fruiting body of the maitake resembles the tail feathers of a small brown chicken, hence its popular name: "Hen of the Woods." If you buy maitake in pill form, be sure to get the fruiting body, not the mycelium.

Reishii (*Ganoderma lucidum*) is one of the most respected immune tonics in the world. Reishii is adaptogenic, revitalizing, and regenerative, especially to the liver. Even occasional use builds powerful immunity and reduces the risk of cancer. In clinical studies, use of reishii increased T-cell and alpha interferon production, shrank and eliminated tumors, and improved the quality of life for terminal patients. Reishii and shiitake are great partners, the effects of one enhancing the effects of the other. Reishii is best taken as a tincture, 20-40 drops, 3 times daily.

Shiitake (*Lentinus edodes*) is highly medicinal and tastes good enough to eat in quantity. I go to an oriental market and buy the big, big, big bag of dried shiitake mushrooms for a fraction of what I would pay for them in a health food store. To use, I just rehydrate them by pouring boiling water over them or by dropping pieces into soups. Those who make shiitake a regular part of their diets, increase their production of cancer-fighting alpha interferon, reduce inflammation throughout their bodies, prolong their lives, and improve their ability to produce and utilize vitamin D.

Chaga (*Inonotus obliquus*) is a rather ugly and intensely hard fungi found on birch trees. Baba Yaga and other Russian herbalists favor it as an immune nourisher, cancer preventive, and an aid to those dealing with melanomas.

Mushrooms are not just for food and medicine; they are renowned for their ability to alter our perceptions of reality. Psychoactive psilocybin mushrooms were used by the famous shaman/healer Maria Sabina in Mexico. The red-capped mushroom with white dots usually drawn next to the witch's house is the mind-altering *Amanita muscaria*, sometimes called manna, and widely used in Siberian shamanic rites.

Whether you use fungi to make a mushroom soup or as a remedy for someone dealing with cancer, whether you stir them up in a witch's cauldron of spiraling power or sew them into a spirit bag, mushrooms offer magic and mystery, good health and good cheer.

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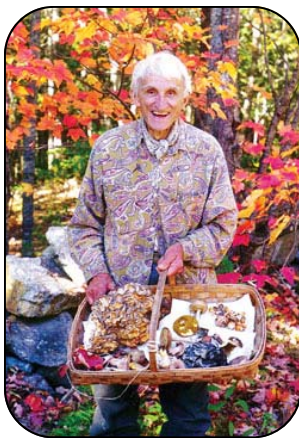
http://www.susunweed.com/herbal_ezine/August08/healingwise.htm

<http://www.molliekellogg.com/works/>

Thanks to Lisa Bacon



Art by Mollie Kellogg



A mushroomer extraordinaire!

By George Riner

Sam Ristich (1915 - 2008) was a phenomenal man in mycology. The "Guru of Sligo Road" as he was known around his home area in North Yarmouth, Maine. His official degree was a Ph.D. in entomology from Cornell, but Sam was a consummate observer. A skill that served him well across areas of natural history - an interdisciplinary approach to science. However, not the quiet and lone observer of nature, Sam eagerly met people and introduced them to each other across various fields. But what he is known for in northeast mycological circles is his enthusiasm and encouragement to all who approached amateur mycology. His trademark phrase when encountering something new and different was "Holy Cow!" He shared his "wonderment" at nature with all. Upon figuring out a puzzle or a new relationship in the fungal world, the exclamation was "Hallelujah!" On field trips and walks, one could hear Sam's excited cries of 'Holy Cow!' and 'Hallelujah' through the woods.

One of the stories about him that his daughter Ruthie told at the Northeast Mycological Foray (NEMF) in 2007 gives a hint of Sam's indefatigable curiosity about the natural world around. At their home, the window over the sink would become dirtied with the spots of flies that had landed on the glass and died.

After a while someone cleaned the window and Sam exclaimed in horror, "What'd you do that for!?" It was then explained that he was watching those fly corpses for the development of the fungal threads that adhered the flies to the glass and that would send forth their spore-bearing fruiting bodies from the body of the dead fly. So was one lesson in observing nature wherever and whenever she occurred.

An Amanita was named after him, see: <http://www.amanitaceae.org/index.php?Amanita%20ristichii> (Sam grudgingly tolerated the honor. I think he was a believer that names should be descriptive.)

The annual NEMF foray is named after him. (See page 9.)

See and read lots about Sam at <http://samristich.com/>

Sam's regular column in the newsletter of the Maine Mycological Association has been bound up and made available for sale as "Sam's Corner" from the V. F. Thomas Co. (see:

<http://www.mushroomthejournal.com/mma/SamsCorner.html>) Reading this collection of Sam's columns gives a clear feel for his wide-ranging interest and careful observations - the "wonderment" of it all.

Sam's daughter, Ruthie, is creating a compilation of film clips of Sam in action. Small previews of these can be seen at:

<http://vimeo.com/ruthieristich/videos/sort:alphabetic>

Darvin DeShazer adds:

Sam was no stranger to the Farm Bureau or to the California fungi. Since Ruthie lived in Santa Rosa, and has been a SOMA member, he would drop in for meetings and forays when in town visiting his family. 'Holy Cow!' was actually used coast to coast!



Porcini Sage Pâté

thanks to Karen Tate

¼ cup currants
1 cup + 2 T dry Marsala
2 ½ lbs fresh chicken livers
s+p
2 T olive oil
1 lb unsalted butter @ room temp.
2 large shallots, minced
3 garlic cloves, minced
1 oz dried Porcini, reconstituted in hot water (save soaking liquid) chop finely
5 anchovies
¼ cup finely chopped sage

- ♦ This recipe makes enough for 50 people as an appetizer
- ♦ I made ½ this recipe for the March foray of 30 foragers.
- ♦ Chill 6 hrs before serving. Keeps 5 days in the refrigerator.

Put currants in bowl & soak in 2 T Marsala

Season raw livers with s+p. Heat 1 T olive oil & 1 T butter in large sauté pan over medium heat. When the butter stops foaming, add livers & cook until medium-rare.

Drain in colander & allow to cool.

Heat remaining 1 T olive oil & 1 T butter over medium heat. Add shallots & garlic. Cook 2-3 min. Add porcini, porcini soaking liquid & 1 c Marsala. Cook until liquids have reduced to a glaze (~9 min). Cool to room temp.

Put livers in a food processor & process to a paste. Add Marsala reduction, anchovies & sage. Pulse 3x's. Add 1lb butter, one stick at a time, processing until incorporated. Transfer paste to a bowl. Fold in currants with the Marsala they were soaking in.

Season with s+p to taste.

Line a pan, dish or mold with plastic wrap. Pour pâté into container. Cover & chill for 6 hrs.

To serve, carefully lift the pâté out of the container by holding the edges of the plastic wrap. Peel away the plastic wrap. Garnish with fresh sage branches, cornichons & small onions with a side of grainy mustard, a sliced baguette, wine & mushroom folks.

Bon appetite!

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

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!

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone(s): Home: _____ Cell: _____

E-mail: _____

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

YOU CAN RENEW/JOIN ONLINE AT THE WEBSITE!

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Deadline for the May 2011 issue of SOMA News is April 21st.
Please send your articles, calendar items, and other information to:
SOMAnewseditor@SOMAmushrooms.org

The **2011 Freestone Fermentation Festival** will be held on **May 21** this year at the Salmon Creek Elementary School -- just one driveway down from the CYO camp, home of SOMA mushroom camp. This is a unique opportunity to explore the world of fermentation. Many types of fermentation involve the family of fungi known as Saccharomyces, which ironically is consumed very much, but spoken of very little at a mycological association camp. We would absolutely love to have somebody give a technical workshop or lecture on the very important fungal family containing yeast, called Saccharomyces. Thank you again for a great SOMA camp!

We are delighted to announce The Third Annual Freestone Fermentation Festival -- the **ONLY** faire of its kind in California! This year we are brewing up the most spectacular line up of educational speakers, delicious cuisine, DIY workshops, and captivating live music! We are ecstatic to welcome author of Wild Fermentation and self-proclaimed "fermentation festhish" Sandor Katz to our event this year. After a wildly-dyscussed ten page article on Katz in the November issue of The New Yorker, we expect an outstanding response to this unique festival. We are combining a truly elite opportunity to hear Katz speak, with a fantastically fun family event.

This year, all of our proceeds will benefit The Ceres Community Project. Each year, they prepare thousands of beautiful, delicious and organic meals for individuals and families facing cancer and other life threatening illnesses.

Check www.freestonefermentationfestival.com for updates

2011 NAMA

Dr. Dick Homola Memorial Foray

Thursday, August 4 – Sunday, August 7

Hosted by The Western PA Mushroom Club

An excellent foray is planned for you.

We are going to be using 4 new air conditioned buildings on campus.

The area is a great place to hunt mushrooms and favored by Walt Sturgeon, John Plischke, Emily Johnston, and others.

There will be 20 walks to choose from.

There will be 25 exceptional mycologists and presenters to help you learn mushrooms.

Join us for a long weekend of Fungi, Fun, and Friends!

As the foray is set up, it is limited to 225 people. It is going to sell out early, so don't hesitate, get your registration form signed and send it along with a check today. You must be a member of WPMC or NAMA to attend. You can find a membership application on either club website.

More info:

<http://www.namyc.org/events/index2011-0.html>

Paul Smith's College is hosting the **35th Sam Ristich NEMF Foray** from **Thursday, August 11 through Sunday, August 14, 2011**, at Paul Smith's, NY. NEMF (North East Mycological Federation) is a group interested in expanding knowledge of mushrooms to any and all who are interested. There will be forays into the nearby woods and all are welcome to attend.

<http://www.nemf.org/files/2011/2011.html>



SOMA News

P.O. Box 7147
Santa Rosa, CA 95407

SOMA

DIVINE MUSHROOM
OF IMMORTALITY

R. Gordon Watson



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 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.

