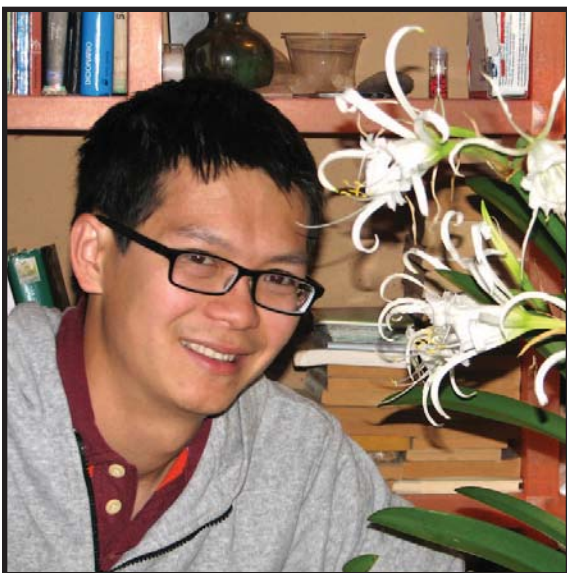




# S O M M A

VOLUME 24 : 1

SEPTEMBER 2011



## SPEAKER OF THE MONTH

**Nhu Nguyen**

September 15th at 7pm

## **Mycological symbioses: tales of fungi that live with insects, bacteria, and plants**

Nhu Nguyen is currently a graduate student at UC Berkeley and studies the symbioses between fungi and other organisms. His talk will cover two areas of interest. The first topic will discuss the diversity of the many yeast species that live symbiotically in the gut of insects. Nguyen says: *“Yeasts are organisms that are usually ignored, but when we start looking for them in the right places, we find a tremendously rich habitat for many new and interesting species”*. The second topic examines bacteria that live in association with mycorrhizal fungi and will highlight the identities of these bacteria, suggesting a potential role that they have in these intricate symbiotic structures.

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## CALENDAR

September 7th ————— Board Meeting at 7pm

September 15th ————— Speaker at Farm Bureau at 7pm  
*Nhu Nguyen, 2011 Scholarship Winner*

September 17th ————— Foray at Salt Point State Park  
*Cleanup/Pickup Day*

October 5th ————— Board Meeting at 7pm

October 20th ————— Speaker at Farm Bureau at 7pm  
*Leon Shernoff, Editor of Mushroom the Journal*

October 22nd ————— Foray at Salt Point State Park

## LIMERICKS BY CHARMOON

I once knew a guy named Al  
 He tried to grow boletes with a pal  
 But they had no success  
 They were under duress  
 Because boletes grow mycorrhizal

There once was a picker named Paul  
 He had a secret patch every Fall  
 Black trumpets galore  
 And oh, so much more  
 Then feral pigs destroyed it all

## EMERGENCY MUSHROOM POISONING ID



After seeking medical attention, contact Darvin DeShazer for identification at (707) 829-0596. Photos should be emailed to: [muscaria@pacbell.net](mailto:muscaria@pacbell.net) and need to 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% sure of the identification of any and all mushrooms before you eat them!

This is a free service for hospitals, veterinarians, and other concerned citizens of Sonoma County.

## FROM THE FRONT DESK

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## President's Letter

### DISPATCH FROM THE DUFF

September marks the beginning of the SOMA 2011/2012 season and we are looking forward to our usual good time events, as well as implementing a significant change for mushroom collecting on our forays, and in general.

A new Wild Mushroom Collecting Permit System for Salt Point State Park will go into effect for 2011/2012. There has been a Special Event Permit Application Process for Groups previously, but it was never fully used, which led to the park being "over-picked". To protect and maintain the valuable resource of wild mushrooms in SPSP, the current Ranger Staff have asked for public support to create a permit system for all mushroom collecting that can be used to the best for all. The request was made more immediate because of the budget cuts we've all read about. The Permit System will require those interested in collecting mushrooms to attend an introduction to the regulations and policies for mushroom collection. A group of the SOMA Board members has been working with the Ranger Staff to outline SOMA's tasks and responsibilities toward a common goal – keeping the park open to responsible wild mushroom collecting in one of our most beautiful state parks. There is more work to be done and we will keep you informed. The intent is to have all collectors practice sensible and ethical mushroom collecting by following a few necessary rules. All rules will be enforced by the Ranger Staff. If you are interested, we would like to hear from you for input and suggestions on the issue.

Our annual Mushroom Camp 2012 promises an additional and very valued feature with Dr. Andrew Weil as the main speaker. Dr. Weil is a recognized authority and educator on natural and preventative medicine. We think his presentation and wisdom will attract many applicants to be part of SOMA Camp. If you are planning to attend, please pay attention to signup dates and use the early signup option to ensure your place.

Please try to make the first SOMA foray scheduled on Saturday, September 17th. Remember, it will be a "pick-up/clean-up day" at Salt Point State Park. Please wear appropriate clothing and bring a pair of gloves, as well as your good attitude and enthusiasm. SOMA will provide trash bags and reflective safety vests to identify all in the crew.

Best regards,

Jim Wheeler

## EDITOR'S NOTES

Well, here it is, the first newsletter of the 2011-2012 SOMA season and the first with me behind the desk as editor. Special thanks to Tom Cruckshank for handing over the reigns and to Jim Wheeler and the rest of the SOMA crew who contributed to this issue and all future ones under my tenure. If you have any suggestions, criticisms, kudos, or contributions please send them my way. I appreciate any and all feedback: [SOMAnewseditor@SOMAmushrooms.org](mailto:SOMAnewseditor@SOMAmushrooms.org)

On a personal note, my graduate research was published over the summer in the HortScience journal 46(7):985-992 and titled *Influence of Summer Cover Crops and Mycorrhizal Fungi on Strawberry Production in the Southeastern United States*. If you would like a copy for personal use, please send me an email and I will reply with the PDF version: [ben@bengarland.com](mailto:ben@bengarland.com)

Until next time...

Ben Garland

## WHAT'S STIRRING IN THE DYE POT?

# A Mushroom Dyer's Passionate Palette

Dorothy Beebee

As mellow August unfolds toward Autumn, I must confess that I look forward to the first rains with mixed emotions. First of all, I love to be out in my sunny garden, but on the other hand, I eagerly look forward to the mushroom season... a difficult compromise for someone so hung up in the quest for color, hue and saturation...Sun and mushrooms just don't often seem to go together - except here in my garden in Forestville!

Come the first week of October, I have a "pet" *Phaeolus schweinitzii* down the backyard slope which never lets me down - the one true harbinger of Autumn, whether or not we've had rain. Granted that the dye's color intensity is fuller, and brighter if there has been some moisture, but it is a true beginning of the mushroom dye calendar for me.

Ever since being commissioned in 1974 to illustrate Miriam C. Rice's first little gem of a book "Lets Try Mushrooms for Color" (1974 Thresh Publications, Santa Rosa), I've been irrevocably hooked. Having experimented with natural dyes for years (even wrote a column for the dear ol' departed local "Stump" newspaper back in the 70's), nothing prepared me for the rich and lovely palette of adventures ahead under Miriam's enthusiastic tutelage. Or, trying to keep up with her, drawing the mushrooms and documenting procedures at an ever increasing pace of her creative capacities. When I thought we had exhausted the possibilities of the dyes, (after 2 more books, 8 International Exhibitions, and innumerable workshops & demonstrations), along came mushroom paper, and then just to keep me hopelessly tantalized - mushroom pigments for watercolors and crayons!

However, back to *Phaeolus*. First it appears as a small bright yellow velvety "burble" on the ground anywhere within a 12 ft radius of an old Douglas fir stump, sometimes right on the steps down to my laundry room where there's very little natural light. Within a day or two, it slowly evolves into thick concentric rings of lovely burnt-sienna suede, each ring with a different texture and hue, and always with a brilliant yellow outermost rim. The pores underneath (for this is a polypore) are also yellowish in the beginning, then brownish-yellow with age. The spore print is rusty brown. I've promised myself to someday do a daily watercolor or colored pencil studies of the next one to appear. Maybe this year...

The dyes which the pigment in *P. schweinitzii* produce are just as spectacular as the fungus' own autumnal appearance. We use potassium alum as a "mordant" (A mordant is a "metallic salt" which attaches itself to the scales of the wool or silk fibers when simmered in water for an hour. See Miriam's book: Mushrooms For Color for details and proportions), to hold the color lightfast and wash-fast on wool and silk. The dye pigment in the mushroom then "fastens" onto the mordant on the fibers to lock in the color. Many dyes can be used without any mordant, including *Phaeolus*, but a mordant can also change the shade of the original dye thereby opening up the possibility for a wider range of hues from one dyebath. The only other mordant which Miriam is sanctioning the use of is ferrous sulfate (iron) which will darken the original color. Subsequent dye baths will produce lighter colors. Yet, there is nothing to equal that first outrageous daffodil yellow dye of *Phaeolus*, which transforms a



silk scarf or woolen hat into shimmering gold! Older specimens of this fungus (when the yellow rim has darkened) will produce equally lovely, but more subdued bronze and umber hues.

My daughter also had great success using it to dye basketry reed, and it makes a lovely deep rusty-brown mushroom paper. *Phaeolus schweinitzii* is definitely the "fungus of choice" for a no-fail entree into mushroom dyeing. Give it a try and share the results at our next meeting!

**Update, August 2011** – It has been a year now since Miriam left us, but she still hovers gently over my dyepots... I will be taking dried *Phaeolus schweinitzii* among other dried fungi to share at the Taos Wool Festival October 1 and 2, 2011.

<http://www.taoswoolfestival.org/2011-natural-dyeing-workshops/>

To see our splendid mushroom dye results at last year's Taos Wool Festival, check out the gorgeous colors at:

<http://www.mushroomsforcolor.com/Taos-2010.htm>

# North to (Almost) Alaska

Patrick Hamilton

It was obvious that too many Bald Eagles were hanging out in the uppermost branches of the Sitka Spruces alongside Hecate Strait. The Ravens, relegated to hunkering down lower in the trees, acted like they couldn't fully relax and crow about all the clams and small crabs revealed once again during yet another 22 foot tide ebbing on the north end of Moresby Island--the largest southern island of the Queen Charlotte archipelago.

In spite of the seemingly rare (to us) spectacle of avian avarice taking place between those lofty birds one can certainly argue that this almost mystical island group is much more well known for the chanterelles that fruit there in amazing abundance. . . .

The adventure began by traveling to Eugene, Oregon, for a friend's wedding that we catered. It was bright eyed whole BBQ Sockeyes stuffed with fennel bulb, Walla Walla onion and lemon slices served with a horseradish lemony whipped cream plus more good stuff.

(Just for the heck of it--while there we happened to stay in the home of "Bungalow Bill" of the Beatles song who is, by the way, a real person!)

Then on to Anacortes, Washington, and the ferry to Sidney, Vancouver Island, British Columbia. Here we hiked a protected parkland with a friend of ours, Bryce Kendrick, the author of *The Fifth Kingdom* and the docent of that forest. He was like having a field guide compendium along with us for each flower, shrub, tree, moss, lichen, smut, slime, rust, smell, et. al. for whenever we needed information. Quite a guy, quite a walk. For his great book on fungi and for information on a variety of other mycological subjects he can be reached via e-mail: [mycolog@pacifcoast.net](mailto:mycolog@pacifcoast.net)

After a tasty lunch we presented his wife, Laurie, with a pint of reduced morels from home. I had been asked by Bryce about my availability of that rather rare (there) mushroom and figured that an intense sauce from Sierra morels would be a fitting offering to bring.

To make this I chopped a half pound of dried morels that had been rehydrated in warmed water, squeezed dry, then sautéed in olive oil and butter. Next, the soaking liquid was added, cooked down to about half the original volume and seasoned with Kosher salt. (Don't salt sauces to be reduced until they are--they might end up being way too salty!) Into the blender it went and ultimately cooled in the refrigerator. Upon presentation I told them to freeze it in ice cube trays and when hard, pop them into baggies to be used one at a time to flavor a variety of dishes. This can also be done with pesto (sans cheese--it doesn't freeze well), Bolete reductions, etc.--almost any sauce that survives the freezer.

After lunch we drove 300 miles up island towards Port Hardy for another ferry. Along the way we dined in a recommended restaurant and inquired about wines served by the glass. The waitress explained each of the only two offered were "medium." "Hmmm, medium, huh," This Northern Californian thought bemused. "What does this mean?" The size of the glass? The color? Price? The amount of alcohol? The temperature it will be served. . . ? "Of course not," she said smug in her obvious knowledge of the vine, "Medium is how sweet it is. Where are you from?"

In addition to this type of fine dining every small town in British



Columbia seems to have a Chinese restaurant. If you haven't already seen these prepare yourself for the signs that say, "Chinese and Canadian Food." Ah, that great winning pick-up line, "Hey honey, let's go out for some Canadian food tonight."

The ferry boat took 15 hours on the lovely but long "Inside Passage" to get to Prince Rupert, B.C. The next morning we boarded yet another ferry for the 8 hour trip out into the Pacific across wild Hecate Strait to the Queen Charlotte Islands.

Here we were, really a long way from home and close to so many beautiful Bald Eagles. I learned there that it takes those birds four years to get the characteristic plumage of the white head and almost black body with white tail. Up until that time they look rather odd, like big "ugly ducklings," all browns, mottled and not too majestic.

"The Charlottes," are also home to a "World Heritage Site"--Ninstints--the greatest remaining example of an ancient settlement and totems of the Haida people. Evidence suggests that they inhabited these islands for more than 10,000 years. To visit the heritage site you must take a float plane an hour down islands then board a motorized Zodiac raft to cross another very choppy and oftentimes foggy strait wearing the required clumsy rubberized survival suits.

While flying above those beautiful islands I asked the bush pilot what else does he do for income (very few folks come and travel all the way to Ninstints). "Well," he offered quietly yet not without local pride, "I am hired to spot Chanterelles from the air." From the air?

"By whom?," I was barely able to sputter as our motor purred over the Hemlock and Spruce forested mountain tops. "Commercial pickers, island folks mostly, who mark on maps where the 'fields of gold' are concentrated," ole Don stated as he reached over and helped close my gaping mouth.

"Now let me get this straight Don," I rallied. "Through the trees these mushrooms can be seen from the air?"

"Well yeah. That's what I said," he did say.

'Nuf said, sez me. Jeez. . . .

We later drove to mile marker "9" on the Skidegate (pronounced "ske de git") Lake road. We climbed and hiked up fairly steep terrain and spotted, growing along moss covered forest animal trails, zillions of Chanterelles. Tis true. Yup. O.K., maybe only 10,000 buttons emerging as we stared and small flying things entered our mouths. Oh yeah, Boletes were also fruiting but not nearly as many.

This ain't Kansas anymore. . . .

And since it wasn't, a just-caught Coho from nearby Rennel Sound was brought to me to prepare for a crowd at the B&B where we all were staying. (I should name here Connie Green of Wine Forest Mushrooms in Napa who was integral in planning our trip as well as Kathy Faircloth of Woodacre, my constant mushroom buddy).

We oven roasted that fabulous fish and served it with, among other things, a really good rendition of an old time favorite that we called . . .

*Continued on page 5*

## Skidegate Scalloped Potatoes with Baby Chanterelles and Big Boletes

6 servings

This is a very easy recipe to make — it just may appear difficult. It is deliciously satisfying (ergo, not a diet food) and a great way to taste the mushrooms.

Preheat oven to 350

Cook in salted boiling water:

- 4 medium peeled and thinly sliced potatoes

You want the water boiling first to “gelatinize” the carbohydrates on the exterior of the slices. Cook them just enough to be almost cooked through — about 8 minutes. Be careful not to allow them to become close to mushy — not even mushrooms should be mushy. Drain well.

Chop coarsely, sauté for 10 minutes in olive oil and butter, set aside:

- 4 oz Chanterelles (non wet)
- 4 oz Boletes

Chop coarsely:

- 1 large onion and begin to sauté it with:
  - 2 tbl of butter
  - 1/4 tsp dried thyme

Make a roux in the same pan as the onions with:

- 2 tbl of flour and 2 more tbl of butter and a little salt.

Cook til golden brown and the onion is softened then “break the roux” (this means add the liquid) to make a sort of Bechamel sauce with a mixture of:

- 1/2 cup vegetable or chicken stock
- 3/4 cup whole milk

Continue to cook until the whole thing is beginning to thicken — about 5 minutes. Set aside.

Grate and set aside:

- 1/3 cup white cheese (Jack, Teleme, Fontina, etc.)

Assemble the dish by layering the potatoes in a buttered casserole dish. After one layer toss in some of the cheese, a little sauce and some of the mushrooms. Continue until all the stuff is gone but save some sauce and cheese for the top. Bake til bubbly and delicious.

And, by the way, this would go very well with a bubbly yeasty California white wine.

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## MUSHROOM OBSESSION / FUNGIMENTAL FRUSTRATIONS

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Mary Olsen

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Dear MM,

On a recent outing with mushroom people I began to question some peoples’ foraging habits. My wife and kids were finally loaded in the car when, I, the driver, discovered that a car from our group was blocking the only egress. We waited patiently for 15 minutes. Other folks were also blocked. After 45 minutes we discovered that Jack and Jill had taken off for a spontaneous last minute fungal foray. How would you handle this?

Patience in Petaluma

Dear Patience,

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to discuss the real reason many people join mushroom clubs: the well-known aphrodisiac

properties of mushrooms. It just so happens that I witnessed this Incident from the sidelines. Faced with a long ride home, the young couple was overcome by a desire for one last foray into the wilderness. They just didn’t think about where their car was parked or how many people they might be blocking. This is understandable. They had just eaten a morel mushroom omelet with a shiitake gelée, or Gelée de champignons, and some incredible sticky buns for breakfast. Apparently you didn’t partake of the breakfast or you and the wife wouldn’t have been anywhere near your car. We all need to develop a bit more tolerance for each other.

MM

You can send your questions and pleas for advice to:

[marymalarkey@sbcglobal.net](mailto:marymalarkey@sbcglobal.net)

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## JOIN SOMA!

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Membership in the Sonoma County Mycological Association (SOMA) is a great way to meet and interact with other mushroom enthusiasts, learn more about identifying fungi, and share interests such as cooking and cultivating mushrooms. Sure, most of what SOMA does is open to the public, but wouldn’t you rather join SOMA and get all the goodies?

Check out our membership page on the web...

<http://somamushrooms.org/membership/membership.html>

# OREGON COAST REPORT

Anna Moore

Such a slow start to the summer/fall fungal fun that usually is underway by mid July. After a very wet and cold spring, August ushered in summer and the woods dried out - no rain in sight. Only a few small chanterelle buttons (mostly rainbow chants) have showed up, but most puzzling of all is there were no lobster mushrooms until about the second week in August.

All along my driveway they are now showing their bright orange caps. I haven't been out in the woods too much lately so I'm probably missing things. It was a good year for the non-chlorophyll plants like *Alotropia* in the matsutake habitats and *Monotropia* (Indian Pipe) in the deep woods. The dye mushrooms (fragrant *Hydnellum* and relatives) are already out. I've been told that you can find a matsutake just about any month of the year and I did find a handful in July and August. Once the fall rains start there will be plenty of them. So far I can't tell what kind of season it will be, except late. The lakes are warm and the wind is dying down at the beach and the woods promise more to come. But my mind is on bolete hunting in the Kenai in Alaska.



## NEWS OF INTEREST

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### NON-SOMA EVENTS

Provided for informational purposes only.

#### *For the Love of Mushrooms: A Weekend Foray*

Hosted by the Oakridge Hostel  
Oakridge, Oregon (45 miles SE of Eugene)  
October 14-16th; \$300 per person  
<http://www.oakridgehostel.com/events/mushroom-foray/>

*Activities include lectures on mushroom ecology and sustainable harvesting practices, expert guided forays in the forests surrounding Oakridge, and a demonstration by a local chef on the culinary uses and preparation of mushrooms.*

#### *2011 Breitenbush Mushroom Conference*

At Breitenbush Hot Springs, Oregon  
October 20-23rd; \$185 per person plus lodging  
<http://www.breitenbush.com/events/oct20-23.html>

*Guided field trips, evening lectures, cooking, art, and identification workshops for all levels of mycology enthusiasts fills the days with time in between for soaking in the hot waters of the natural springs. Treat yourself to an educational, delicious, and relaxing autumnal event in the midst of the old growth forests of Oregon.*



### AROUND THE WEB

#### STUDY EXPLORES THE ROOTS OF COOPERATION BETWEEN PLANTS AND FUNGI

*Research published Aug. 12 in the prestigious journal Science sheds light on free-market style cooperation between plants and fungi in what is arguably the most important symbiosis on Earth.*

<http://www.newswise.com/articles/study-explores-the-roots-of-cooperation-between-plants-and-fungi>

#### GEEKY STATS ABOUT MAGIC MUSHROOMS

*Psilocybin produces not only mystical experiences, but joy, happiness, and positive social effects. And it does it for a long time: in followup interviews 14 months after the study was completed, nearly all the subjects still reported positive changes in their lives.*

<http://motherjones.com/kevin-drum/2011/06/magic-mushrooms-safe-still-illegal>

#### “SPONGEBOB” MUSHROOM NAMED

*“It’s just like a sponge with these big hollow holes,” San Francisco State University’s Dennis Desjardin said in a statement. “When it’s wet and moist and fresh, you can wring water out of it and it will spring back to its original size. Most mushrooms don’t do that.”*

<http://newswatch.nationalgeographic.com/2011/06/16/weird-wild-spongebob-mushroom-named/>



## GRADUATE LEVEL SCHOLARSHIP AWARD WINNERS

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Rachel Zierdt

SOMA has been awarding graduate level scholarships since the year 2000. Profits for camp provide the funds for this award. This year we are pleased to announce the two winners of our \$1500 awards. Nhu Nguyen from UC Berkeley and Jessie Uehling from Humboldt State University.

Nhu is a student of Dr. Tom Bruns at UC Berkeley. He obtained his BS in Biology at Louisiana State University doing undergraduate research studying yeasts that live inside the gut of insects. He is currently a PhD graduate student concentrating in Microbiology. He has taught Diversity of Plant and Fungi and Fungal Biology at Berkeley. He is interested in the interactions of fungi with other organisms. Currently he is working on two main projects, one is the bacteria that are associated with mycorrhizal root-tips and the other is spore ecology of ectomycorrhizal fungi. By receiving our scholarship, Nhu will be able to perform experiments outside his professor’s funding source specifically to extend the sampling of bacteria-fungi project. This increased sampling will provide a much stronger support for

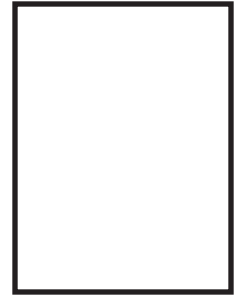
his research paper. Additionally, he will be upgrading his computer hardware to run analysis programs.

Jessie just received a Bachelor’s of Botany from Humboldt State University studying under Dr. Terry Henkel. She is currently the Research Assistant on Dr. Henkel’s NSF funded Ectomycorrhizal Fungal Diversity of the Guiana Shield study. For her thesis she will be examining the systematics and molecular ecology of the Cantharellales from the Guiana Shield, and in particular the coralloid genus *Clavulina*. Since there are approximately 25 morphospecies of this type of fungi, her situation creates a unique opportunity to investigate intraspecific and generic relationships using both morphological and molecular data. She will use her scholarship money to help pay for tuition, books, and living expenses as well as travel costs and field equipment for data collection.

We will have a chance to hear from these very impressive students during the year at our regular meetings at the Farm Bureau...Nhu in September and Jessie in March. These evenings should be very informative.

# SOMA

PO Box 7147  
Santa Rosa, CA 95407



## Issue 24:1 SEPTEMBER 2011

**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

From the south:

- Go north on Hwy 101
- Pass the Steel Lane exit then take the Bicentennial Way exit
- Go over Hwy 101 (heading west) and then right on Range Ave
- Turn left on Piner Rd and go about 1/4 mile
- Turn left into Farm Bureau parking lot at 970 Piner Rd

From the north:

- Go south on Hwy 101
- Take the first Santa Rosa exit for Hopper Ave/Mendocino Ave
- Stay left on the frontage road (it becomes Cleveland Ave)
- Turn right on Piner Rd and go about 1/4 mile
- Turn left into Farm Bureau parking lot at 970 Piner Rd

