SOMA

VOLUME 25 : 7 MARCH 2013

SPEAKER OF THE MONTH

Noah Siegel

March 21st at 7pm

Mushrooms of the Redwood Coast

Northern California is known for its seemingly endless wet winters and its majestic forests full of mushrooms. Not only do we have the biggest trees we also have the largest known Chanterelle and Porcini! With Noah's breathtaking photos, this lecture will introduce you to some of California's specialties; from the common edibles to some of the spectacular rare gems from the northern coast.

Noah is currently working on, with Christian Schwarz, *A Guide to Mushrooms of the Redwood Coast*, a comprehensive book to northern Californian mushrooms. He serves as a trustee for the Northeast Mycological Federation and is the northeast representative to NAMA, as well as the chair of the NAMA Foray Committee and also serves on NAMA's Photography Committee.

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March 19th — Healdsburg Science Fair
March 21st — Speaker at Farm Bureau 7pm
Noah Siegel
March 23rd — Foray at Salt Point State Park 10am
April 18th — Speaker at Farm Bureau 7pm
Alija Bajro Muji, SOMA Scholarship winner
April 20th — Foray at Salt Point State Park 10am
July 21st — SOMA Volunteer Appreciation Day Picnic

LIMERICKS BY CHARMOON

There once was a picker named Laura
She thought she knew her Arora
Until one sad day
I'm sorry to say
She picked phalloides instead of coccora

I overheard a morel expound
"There's some hunters coming around"
And quick as a wink
The patch started to shrink
As they retracted into the ground

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 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.

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President's Letter

DISPATCH FROM THE DUFF

The General Meeting speakers in January and February delivered highly interesting and engaging presentations. Todd Osmundson, a post doctorate graduate researcher at UC Berkeley, spoke to about 25 people in January on the importance of the collaborations between amateur and professional mycologists, and the excellent opportunity to play a more important role. We have had numerous SOMA scholarship recipients demonstrate and discuss their graduate thesis projects during the last 4-6 years. Their work centered on the use and benefits of DNA analysis of various species to better understand the biology of fungi. Todd began with an outline of the basics of the science of genetics using illustrations of both human and fungi examples. He also covered why genetics is a powerful and popular tool in understanding fungal biology. Techniques such as DNA barcoding, metagenomics, genome sequencing and transcriptomics have increased understanding of not only the identification and taxonomy of fungi but also their history, diversity, geographical distributions, and ecology. Todd then discussed the North American Mycoflora project, and papers written that described the reasoning for the project. A number of leading mycologists and other interested scientists have written about the value in having a comprehensive mycoflora for the continent and outlined the steps needed to achieve it.

The SOMA Board has discussed contributing to the project by providing funding for DNA sequencing analyses. Our interest is to use the funds that have been collected from camp for the advancement of the science of mycology. To be candid, we have had difficulty attracting a sufficient number of scholarship applications the last several years to meet the goal of awarding two graduate level scholarships per year. Our effort now is to insure the funds we propose to spend will be used in a manner the membership understands and supports. If you have an interest or a comment regarding the topic, please contact me. For more information see:

NAMA: McIlvainea | Working Toward a North American Mycoflora
namyco.org/publications/mcilvainea/.../Toward_NA_Mycoflora.html
North American Mycoflora Project | A Collaboration of Scientists
www.northamericanmycoflora.org

The February Meeting was an opportunity for Walt Sturgeon to speak to 40 people about a seldom described technique used to identify mushrooms. He said his talk was, "a non-technical look at wild mushrooms from an olfactory perspective". Walt is President of the Ohio Mushroom Society and was a significant contributor to the Audubon Society's *Field Guide to North American Mushrooms*. Since this was his first trip to California, we arranged to have 5 of the most spectacularly clear, warm days in February during his visit. Walt is also a very good mushroom photographer and there were many examples of his work in the presentation. He suggested mushroom scents could clinch identification. He gave directions how to properly check for a mushroom's odor but also noted the subjectivity of smell identification. The power of suggestion from others to name a smell is a strong influence and the question, "what does it smell like to you", has led to many a friendly debate. While vegetable and fruit odors such as "radish", "cucumber", "cabbage", "pear", "apple", "citrus" were frequently used, terms used to characterize dead or decomposing flora or fauna were much fewer. But everyone tried to recall the aromas described and where they had smelled something that was similar. I heard a few sighs and groans from the group. A couple of words not used during the talk were "ambrosial" and "amnosic". We'll just have to find mushrooms that can be described as such …. or not.

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WHAT'S STIRRING IN THE DYE POT?

Creating Yellow and Green with *Gymnopilus spectabilis*

Myra Beebee ©2013 www.hookedanddyed.com

While cleaning up from the workshop at SOMA Camp, I convinced my Mom to haul a large of pot of stinky, yellow *Gymnopilus spectabilis* dye (covered with a precarious lid) home in her car. If we didn't, its fate was to be dumped over the side of a hill. And since my Mom raised me to not waste, this fate just wouldn't do.

She told me a story of when she decided to not waste a pot of the worst smelling mushroom dye, *Pisolithus arhizus*, and it spilled in her car. Imagine the smell of rotting mushroom in your car upholstery. Exactly. Not an ordeal anyone would risk repeating! However – I'm persuasive. If she drove slowly, I promised to keep the pot safe between my feet. If dye splashed out, it would hit my leather boots first.

We are happy to report not one drop spilled.

A few days later, I went to her house to make dyes using the bounty of leftover mushrooms from the workshop. We had several options: *Omphalotus olivascens*, *Dermocybes*, *Gymnopilus spectabilis*, plus that pot of *Gymnopilus* dye we carefully hauled home.

Omphalotus and *Dermocybes* will freeze well for later use, but Gymnopilus is best when used fresh. And boy did we have a lot of it.

We broke up the mushrooms, added them to a pot of hot water,

and noticed the color change immediately. We added two skeins of wool: one natural white and the other gray.

Gymnopilus usually makes a buttery yellow; therefore we were surprised when our white yarn turned rich butterscotch within minutes. Well, my Mom says butterscotch, but I say it's more Scotch, than butter.

While our first skeins of white yarn were this Scotch yellow, the last few skeins turned the expected pastel yellow.

The first skein of gray yarn became an intense greenish-amber. As the dye became less saturated (pigment was absorbed by the yarn), the skeins of gray became a clearer green.

We assume the saturated color was the result of the large quantity of mushrooms we used for the dye. We made the mistake of not weighing the mushrooms and measuring the water, therefore we don't know the exact ratio. It's easy to get caught up in artistic excitement, and forget that it's also important to treat the dye process like a science experiment: carefully measure and document what you do if you hope to repeat the results.

By the end of the day we had produced a variety of yellows and greens.

It wasn't until we were cleaning up, that I noticed the pot of our saved *Gymnopilus* dye, right where we left it after carefully trekking it home. Ah well, another dye for another day.

PRESIDENT'S LETTER continued...

We are still working on a system to allow and distribute permits to collect mushrooms at Salt Point State Park. Representatives of the SOMA Board met last week with the State Park Rangers at Duncans Mills and a contract facilitator from the California State Park System. Finally, the groups met across the table and explained their thinking behind the documents that had taken such a long time to write. We agreed beforehand that we had arrived at a mutual standstill … if that is possible. SOMA will resubmit the document written last year and begin to work and finish a contract. During the meeting, a number of opportunities were mentioned that might better meet the needs of SOMA. There are many, many other non-profit groups supporting the California State Park System that have agreements with it. We would like to learn more about the responsibilities and duties of those organizations, especially those in Sonoma County. The plan is to complete the work approved by the Board and determine the cost of establishing a permit system while negotiating to complete a contract with the state.

SOMA Camp 2014 will soon be upon us ….. or at least the planning for camp. We are offering the opportunity to join the 4-5 people that plan SOMA Camp. The group meets monthly, beginning in March and lasting through September. The position will consume about 4 hours a month in meetings, plus an hour or so for non-meeting tasks. Computer skills are essential. All SOMA members are eligible to submit an application and participate. Please feel free to write or phone any Board Member if you are interested or have questions.

Best regards,
Jim Wheeler

A Brief History of Mycochef's Over 40 Year Span of Mushroom Hunting in Sonoma County, Oregon, Idaho, Nevada, Washington, British Columbia, The Queen Charlotte's, Alberta, Yukon, Alaska, New Mexico, Arizona, New York, Colorado, Ireland, Costa Rica, and All Over Mexico Too

The Old Mushroomer

I was talking with Patrick Hamilton the other day and asking for ideas and thoughts and not just about life in general or my take on it in particular (he don't seem to care a whit) but what folks reading the "SOMA News" might want to hear about this month and we came up with an interview. A talk with Mycochef, Patrick suggested. An exploration, so to speak, into what makes for a good picker of mushrooms and identifier of habitats that are reachable to many and perhaps too far away too to others too. Whew.

TOM (The Old Mushroomer): So, Mr. Mycochef, let's start with how did you get such an affected name as that? Hmm?

MC (Mycochef): Charmoon Richardson gave it to me; I believe it was on an Arora Morel Madness foray up at the Cleveland Burn back in 1993, I think.

TOM: Don't you think it's a bit affected? I mean, really—"Mycochef?"

MC: Nah. It's been effective. It differentiates me from every other person who cooks mushrooms. "He's the Mycochef," folks say and, "he must be special!"

TOM: They do?

MC: Could. Some might have, I think. You never heard that? Really? Huh.

TOM: Ah, no, but let's get back to the beginning, a place we haven't been to yet with you. Where did you first get interested in things fungal? I love it when I talk that way.

MC: "Things fungal?" That is an odd way of just saying "mushrooms." Listen, you old fart, you use words in weird ways and I think that is an affectation.

TOM: Unh uh. Nope. What it is that I do with or to words is kinda like a little girl's playing with dolls. The toy is presented but what she does with it is up to her. A reader hears my words and then can decide what to do with them. Where to put them so they make sense. Or further disturb them. It's up to them.

MC: I see--not. Anyhow, my first recollection of mushrooms was the toadstools which grew on my parent's lawn in Glendale, down in Southern California. Probable were actually the very edible *Agaricus arvensis* or *campestris* but they were all toadstools to my Irish fungophobic family. We never, ever, ate them. Years later, up in Rio Nido, I lived in a very nice little cabin up on Canyon 4 and every Thanksgiving we'd have a feast, smoke some Maui Wowie doobies, and go hiking rather hazily up to that old fire lookout atop Mt Jackson and along the way we'd walk through typical Sonoma County redwood forests and oak woodlands and grasslands and noticed some real cool stuff growing there. Mushrooms! Coral-looking ones and ones that looked like big store-bought ones, and red ones and funny shaped orange ones and even ones with red caps and white specks. Lots of ones. Way cool, Dudes! Friggin' f-a-r out!

We'd dance with them, put them on our heads, the women would cover their nipples with the caps. They liked to go topless hiking back then in the early 1970's and they were lovely. The women were too. Yikes! Mind if I stop and ponder on those visuals here for a second? Okay, we had some fun. Did not have a clue if they were edible but we did try some anyway. (Heck, we didn't know if the LSD handed out at the Fillmore was any good but we'd eat that too.) And hey—these mushrooms were natural made by God and we were natural and made by God, so, by God, they wouldn't hurt us. We were loaded!!!

TOM: Ah, wow! I guess. Um, that's how it began for you in Sonoma County? Jeez and you're still here. Hmmph.

So what was next in your newly discovered world of weird things that grew in wet parts of the woods and fields? Did you ever try to identify them?

MC: No, but we tried to identify with them. We were all God's creations so we needed to live together on planet Earth. We had to all just get along, wow, share the same colors and light and spirituality and. . .

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TOM: . . . You having an acid flashback?

MC: Nah. Just funnin' ya. Fun, huh?

TOM: Sure. So when did you really take up the mushroom part of your life, seriously.

MC: Seriously? I hate that part of life. It was years later. I became a hog farmer, raised horses and turkeys and chicken, vegetables, and such, out on Thorn Road in Sebastopol but got tired of hauling all that damn feed around and getting bitten by horseflies and fighting off rats in the barn and gophers in the garden so I took up and traveled far away and saw and did things I'd never seen nor done before. Even learned how to be a real chef.

It wasn't until 1991 that I got back into mushrooms and this time deep. Met David Arora, became his foray chef, cooked all over for mushroom events of his and others too and learned habitats in most western states, Alaska, and down as far as Costa Rica later on.

TOM: What were or are your favorite places for mushrooming?

MC: The jungles way down south are pretty neat with monkeys but monkeys throwing poop at you is not so neat. Parrots are cool too but so are sloths and macaws and the grizzly and black bears up north and mushrooms growing right amongst them all. Spruce and hemlock forests with mossy forest floors are hard to beat when bright biscuits—those *Hydnum rapandum*—are right there for the taking along with golden chanterelles.

In Ireland once I found teeny chanterelles right on a busy wood's path that the other Irish folk were not interested in. In a jungle in Chiapas overhead howler monkeys bombed us with their butts while we were picking little boletes. Messy.

In the Queen Charlottes we were spotting chanterelles from a bush plane. Pilot called them "fields of gold." And later avoiding huge black bears along paths just crammed with chanterelles was a bit of dicey business.

Hanging out with the commercial circuit pickers at burns all over the West is one heck of a hoot and a giggle. Real friendly folks who loved to share their camps and trade stories and even tell us the best places to look for morels. True.

The Pecos Wilderness in New Mexico is incredibly beautiful and has lots and lots of *Leccinum insigne* which are my favorite of that genus. Tasty suckers!

Colorado has a very short bolete season and it occurred for me way up high out of Boulder at about 10,000 feet. Lots of Lactarius around Telluride and boletes too.

Breitenbush, deep in the forest near Detroit, Oregon, has an amazing assortment of fine edibles. Matsutake, chanterelles, shrimp Russulas, corals and more. And more naked people too. I bet there are some up there right now. . . .

TOM: Come back. . . .

MC: But—you know what? Right here at Salt Point State Park and out at Point Reyes National Seashore we are blessed, and I mean truly blessed, by the mushroom Gods. You don't really have to go far at all. Nope. You just have to go.

TOM: Okay. I think I've got enough for a column. How about your very, very, favorite recipe for wild mushrooms?

MC: Does it have to be with wild mushrooms?

TOM: What?

MC: You heard me. Check this out.

Button Mushrooms, Steak House Style

Serving Size: 4 Preparation Time: 10 minutes

Amt	Measure	Ingredient	Preparation Method
1/2	lb	button mushrooms	sliced 1/4" thick
2	Tbl	butter, unsalted	
2	cloves	garlic	minced
1/4	tsp	Worcestershire sauce	
2	Tbl	Italian parsley	chopped fine
		salt and pepper	

Saute the mushrooms over medium high until they lose their water and begin to brown. Add the garlic and Worcestershire sauce and continue to cook for 1 minute. Add the parsley and the salt and pepper to taste. Serve.

JOIN SOMA!

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?

http://somamushrooms.org/membership/

February Foray Report and Species List

Michael Miller

Our winter has been very dry and we all expected mushrooms to be thin in the woods for our February foray. Over 50 people showed up on a glorious sunny day at the coast, with over ½ of them newcomers. While the dry conditions kept some people away, the sunny day and the article in the Press Democrat about mushroom hunting and cooking more than made up for it.

Darvin was hoping for black trumpets and took a group up to the Upper Stump Beach trail. George took a group around the lower reaches of the Woodside campground and I brought a group up the Central trail to see if we could find hedgehogs in the huckleberry bushes. 49 species were found and plenty of people found hedgehogs and tubies though not a lot of volume.

The best action was found at the ID tables with George and Darvin answering questions and regaling hunters with stories. George barely made it back in time to get anything to eat. Many people commented that this was exactly why they came to this SOMA foray; to learn more about mushrooms, and despite not finding pounds of edibles, everyone was satisfied.

The pot luck was great as usual with excellent chicken brought by Finola Diaz and lots of other dishes contributed by the others, including homemade wine and beer. As usual, even if there are not tons of porcini and chanterelles, everyone has a great time hiking through the woods, enjoying gorgeous weather at the coast and having great food. Please join us for our next foray in March.

List compiled by Darvin DeShazer and George Riner

Aleuria aurantia
Annulohypoxylon thouarsianum
Chlorociboria aeruginosa
Chroogomphus ochraceus
Clavulina cristata
Clavulina rugosa
Coltricia cinnamomea
Cortinarius cinnamomeus
Cortinarius rubicundulus
Cortinarius smithii
Craterellus cornucopioides
Craterellus tubaeformis
Cuphophyllus pratensis
Dendrothele candida
Fomitopsis pinicola
Ganoderma oregonense
Geoglossum
Gomphus floccosus
Gymnopilus
Helminthosphaeria clavariarum
Helvella lacunosa
Hohenbuehelia petaloides
Hydnum repandum
Hydnum umbilicatum
Hypholoma fasciculare
Hygrocybe coccinea
Hygrocybe conica
Hygrocybe flavescens
Hygrocybe minutula
Hygrocybe psittacina var. californica
Lactarius fragilis var. rubidus
Lenzites betulina
Leotia lubrica
Onnia tomentosa
Phaeolus schweinitzii
Phellinus
Pholiota velaglutinosa
Phylloporus arenicola
Rhizopogon occidentalis
Russula albidula
Russula nigricans
Russula rosea
Russula silvicola
Stereum hirsutum
Suillus caerulescens
Suillus fuscotomentosus
Suillus tomentosus
Thelephora palmata
Trametes versicolor

Sonoma County Science Fair 2013

Rachel Zierdt

The 2013 Sonoma County Science Fair was held in a new venue this year. Jim Wheeler and I spent Saturday, February 23rd at Sonoma State judging our third science fair on behalf of SOMA. As in the past, we were both amazed at the depth and quality of the entries we were asked judge. Of about 100 projects, Jim and I each judged 6 or 7 different projects in the areas of Biology and Environmental Sciences.

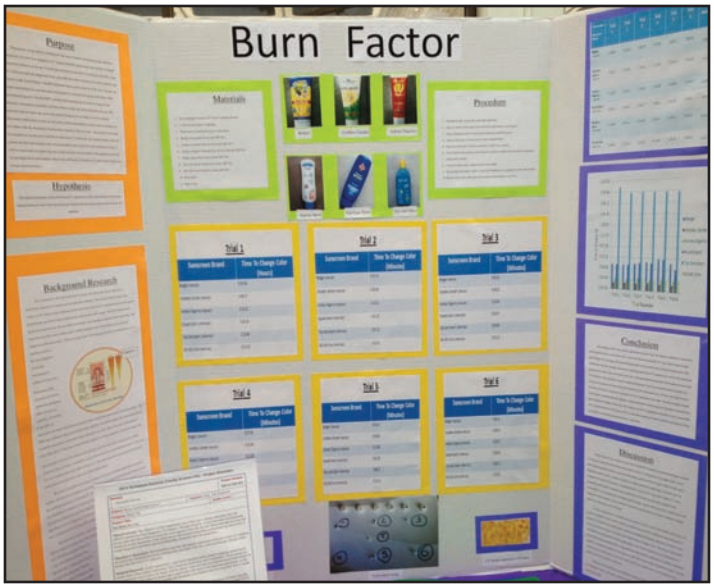
SOMA was pleased to be able to award three participants and their teachers $100 each for excellence in scientific studies and research techniques. Our entries covered a huge spectrum from trying to prove or disprove the old saying that it's OK to eat food that dropped on the ground if it has only been there for 5 seconds to a project that contended that can you tell if a person is lying by checking their eye pupil size.

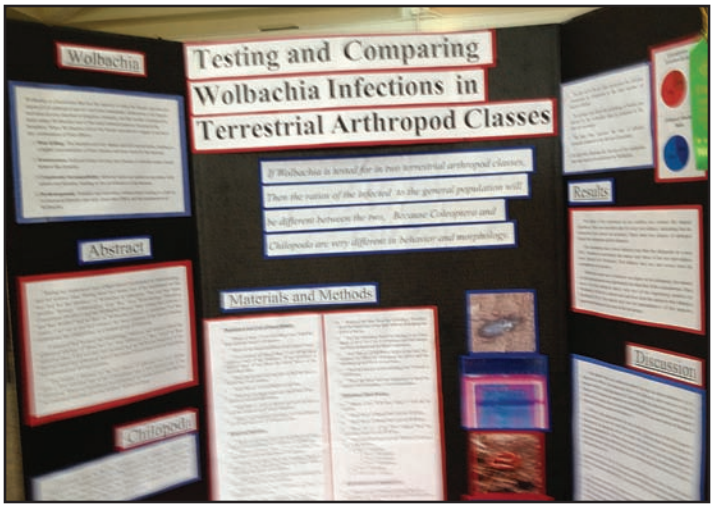
Our three winners this year had equally different ideas to test. Eleventh grader Aidan McCuan from Technology High School did an amazing job with his very elaborate project *Testing and Comparing Wolbachia Infections in Terrestrial Anthropod Classes.* Since his high school is on the Sonoma State Campus he was able to use sophisticated materials and equipment that helped bring his research to a very high level and his findings are astounding. His teacher is Mr. Weaver.

Our next two winners are both ninth graders at Maria Carrillo High School. Their teacher is Ms. Van Dordrecht. Sierra Winter is a charming and passionate young lady worried about animals and the environment. She studied the scum on Spring Lake in Santa Rosa because she was concerned about Microcystis (a poisonous organism) affecting the plant and animal life near the lake. Her project was named *The Toxic Lake – Study and Effect of Microcyctis on Plant Life.* Allesandro Brown, a water polo player, decided to study the effect of certain sunscreens in his project called the *Burn Factor.*

All three of these winners have been recommended to attend the regional science fair being held in San Francisco and some may go onto future fairs on the state and international level. Last year, our winner, Garrett Soiland, used his $100 award to do additional refining of his project on carnivorous plants and went onto the international competition. We will be looking for other worthwhile candidates when we go to Healdsburg to judge their fair in March.

Attendees who pay for SOMA Wild Mushroom Camp help generate funds for these scholarships. It is our hope that our small contributions will help instill the love of exploration and discovery in the area of science. We thank all participants at our camp who help make these prizes possible.





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Issue 25:7 MARCH 2013

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 around 7:30 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