



S O M M A

VOLUME 25 : 8

APRIL 2013

SPEAKER OF THE MONTH

April 18th at 7pm



Have Rake, Will Travel: Following the Ancestral Migration of Douglas Fir and its False-Truffle Associates

Alija Bajro Mujic is a doctoral candidate in the Department of Botany and Plant Pathology at Oregon State University. Alija's interest in Fungi was first cultivated through foraging as a member of the Santa Cruz Fungus Federation while he was completing his bachelor's degrees at the University of California, Santa Cruz. After undergraduate study, Alija found employment as a restoration ecologist where his interests in mycorrhizal fungi and conservation deepened and grew. These interests led Alija to pursue graduate study where he strives to develop a better understanding of mycorrhizal symbioses and their roles within forest ecology and conservation. You can find more information about Alija and his work at <http://people.oregonstate.edu/~mujica>

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

PRESIDENT'S LETTER..... p2
 WHAT'S STIRRING IN THE DYE POT?..... p3
 THE OLD MUSHROOMER..... p4
 THE SOMA EXPERIENCE..... p5
 A MEETING WITH CHARMOON p6

CALENDAR

April 18th ————— Speaker at Farm Bureau 7pm
Alija Bajro Muji, SOMA Scholarship winner
 April 20th ————— Foray at Salt Point State Park 10am
 May 16th ————— Speaker at Farm Bureau 7pm
Patrick Hamilton, the Mycochef
 July 21st ————— SOMA Volunteer Appreciation Day Picnic

LIMERICKS BY CHARMOON

I once knew a fellow named Dwight
His picking was not so bright
He would only choose
Mushrooms that were huge
Because he had a large appetite

Heard about the mushroom to dread?
The taste is so bad, it is said
If one takes a nibble
There will not be any quibble
You soon will wish that you were very dead

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.

FROM THE FRONT DESK

SOMA OFFICERS

PRESIDENT

Jim Wheeler
SOMApresident@SOMAmushrooms.org

VICE PRESIDENT

Vacant

SECRETARY

Gene Zierdt
SOMAsecretary@SOMAmushrooms.org

TREASURER

Karen Kruppa
SOMAtreasurer@SOMAmushrooms.org

COMMITTEES AND BOARD MEMBERS

BOOK SALES

Tom Campbell

CULINARY GROUP

Chris Murray
SOMAculinary@SOMAmushrooms.org

CULTIVATION CLUB CHAIR

Vacant

FORAYS

Michael Miller
SOMAforay@SOMAmushrooms.org

MEMBERSHIP

George Riner
SOMAmembership@SOMAmushrooms.org

MUSHROOM DYE COORDINATOR

Dorothy Beebee
SOMAmushroomdyes@SOMAmushrooms.org

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

SOMAcampinfo@SOMAmushrooms.org

SOMA CAMP REGISTRAR

Lou Prestia
SOMAregrar@SOMAmushrooms.org

SOMA NEWS EDITOR

Ben Garland
SOMAnewseditor@SOMAmushrooms.org

SOMA WEB MASTER

Martin Beebee
SOMAinfo@SOMAmushrooms.org

VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

Lee McCarthy-Smith
Volunteer@SOMAmushrooms.org

President's Letter

DISPATCH FROM THE DUFF

"If we had no winter, the spring would not be so pleasant; if we did not sometimes taste of adversity, prosperity would not be so welcome", wrote Anne Bradstreet. Although our winter was not that difficult, it seems the absence of rain in January and February made everyone think it was, "the worst in ___ years", (fill in your number). So, with low expectation, 35 people arrived at Woodside Campground to begin the March Foray in bright, clear air mixed with trepidation of not seeing many mushrooms. To our immediate surprise, we mingled with a large group from the California Park Foundation. They were there to do cleanup and trail repair in the campground. Fortunately, their coordinator saw the SOMA, "Special Event Permit", and quickly organized additional parking space and picnic tables to accommodate the large number of people. The trail repairers collected their group quickly and moved into the campground, while we divided into three foray groups. As it turned out, everyone, including about 15 first time forayers, found a number of desirable edibles that day. Many black trumpets and some hedgehogs were displayed on the collection table for everyone to see and discuss. Our potluck was, as always, outstanding and on the third day of spring, everyone had another enjoyable day at Salt Point State Park.

Noah Siegel spoke to SOMA on Thursday, March 21st. Noah has extensive experience collecting and photographing macrofungi throughout the United States. He has spent most of the last years working and traveling between Massachusetts, California, and Washington. His interests also have taken him to Canada, New Zealand, and Australia. In addition to his extensive knowledge of mushrooms, Noah is regarded by many as one of the premier mushroom photographers in the United States. His work has been recognized by many groups and received many awards. He is currently working on, with Christian Schwarz, "A Guide to Mushrooms of the Redwood Coast", a comprehensive book to northern California mushrooms. We will feature it in the SOMA Bookstore as soon as it's published. Noah was welcomed to the group and spoke on, "Mushrooms of the Redwood Coast". Noah's notes best describe his presentation and I quote, "Northern California is known for its seemingly endless wet winters that make the mushrooms that grow there flourish and its majestic forest. Not only do we have the biggest trees we also have the largest known Chanterelle and Porcini! With Noah's 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". His presentation was exactly as described and his photographs among the best I have seen. It was an excellent introduction and overview of the macrofungi found in the special area that we are so fortunate to live in and enjoy.

To The Membership:

Mushroom Permit System

SOMA met with the Ranger group last week at Duncans Mills. We continue to explore an arrangement that provides manageable limits to SOMA's liability as a potential service provider to those who use the state park at Salt Point. I mentioned earlier that our basic non-profit insurance policy meets all State requirements to qualify, but if we took on different tasks, we must understand all the implications and avoid any "unintended consequences", that could cause problems for our group. I remain optimistic we can learn, understand, and participate in a program that the membership will approve. The Board will discuss the topic next week and then post their decision in the next newsletter, or in a special mailing. The outcome is unknown, but I do see a conclusion to the effort in April.

Continued on bottom of next page...

WHAT'S STIRRING IN THE DYE POT?

Looking for Relevance in the Dyepot

Dorothy Beebee ©2003 (Updated April 2013)

I sit here, now, struggling to find some relevance in my daily dyeing activity, besides being thankful that I have my own roof over my head and Swiss Chard growing in the garden.... But what is the point of doing mushroom dyes in times like these?

This letter to me (and the International Mushroom Dye Institute) came from a teacher in India and gives me comfort and hope:

Colourful mushrooms have always fascinated me...

*We would be grateful to receive your literature on chemical aspects of the mushroom dyes. I have worked on the mushrooms of Goa, for my doctorate in Microbiology, in this beautiful tourist state on India's west coast and we maintain a fungus culture collection at Goa University despite funding and space constraints. **Dyeing with mushroom pigments could be one promising area to provide jobs. For the poor people without employment opportunities in rural parts of my state this knowledge of the use of dyes would come handy.** We have several colourful basidiomycetes here springing with rains. But there are not enough mushroom crops to sustain a mushroom dye business. So, it would be valuable to receive information from IMDI, about the extraction and application of the mushroom dyes, their chemical nature etc. and whether we could get dyes from pure cultures. We have abundant crops of *Pisolithus tinctorius* here during monsoon and I found that it gives a bright golden yellow pigment. "*

-with best wishes

Dr. Nandkumar Kamat

Scientist, Goa University fungus culture collection and research unit

Department of Botany

Goa University"

One of our 2003 SOMA scholarship winners, (and an IMDI member), Megan Romberg, is also interested in the same process of extracting dyes from mycelia, and so I put one in touch with the other, hoping for a meaningful connection...

And indeed a response from Dr. Kamat which was received on March 26th, 2003:

*Yes, I received some information from Dr. Sundström and Ms. Megan indeed was like an angel to bless me with reprints of some useful research papers which might have cost her a small fortune in postage. We have successfully applied on small scale dyes extracted with alkali from *Pisolithus* and *Ganoderma*. *Ganoderma* fruitbodies give a beautiful brown shade." We are working on several other basidiomycetes and waiting for the tropical monsoon to get a good crop for further experimentation which may begin in July.*

This idea certainly was near and dear to the heart of Miriam C. Rice, that champion of self-sustainability and the art of recycling, as demonstrated by her wonderful idea of turning left-over mushroom dye materials into mushroom paper! She continually spoke about the possibilities of cottage industries of mushroom dyers and paper-makers evolving world-wide! Maybe this is just a beginning...

Hope springs eternal.... In 2008, as well as 2003!

Footnote: At the 14th "International Fungi & Fibre Symposium" in Sweden, 2010, a presentation was made by Dr. Sagarika Devi about just such an exciting project going on now in Chennai, India. Please check out this website to read more about their experimentation with fungal pigments for dye on cellulose fabrics.

<http://www.amm-mcrc.org/Programmes/Biotech/Pigments.html>

PRESIDENT'S LETTER continued...

SOMA Camp 2014

If any member has a recommendation for a guest speaker(s) to SOMA Camp 2014, please contact the board. So far, two people have been suggested and recorded. The intention is to have the Camp Planning Committee make their recommendations to the Board for approval and invitations to speak sent before the end of July.

No names were submitted to the Board to participate in the Camp 2014 Planning Group. The Board will ask for volunteers and publish the names of those interested and approved.

Morel Foray 2014

There is keen interest in a morel foray into the Sierras this spring. Well, at least, keenly expressed interest. The last morel foray into the mountains was May, 2011. The attempt last year was postponed too much snow, and then canceled as June came and went. Many went out on their own, or with others and reported success

in early June and July. Present reports are not too promising, but we will keep all informed through a special mailing. There will not be an organized group camp this year. We'll give the membership a location, or maybe three, and then all will be free to make their own arrangements. Of course, if there is interest from first time morel forayers, we can arrange an informal meeting spot and assist them to insure they have an enjoyable day, or three.

March Foray Finds:

- used, but good quality wooden serving spoon
- "Hampton, Silversmith", serving spoon
- "Pampered Chef", paring knife

Best regards,
Jim Wheeler

The Old Mushroomer's Wife

The Old Mushroomer's Wife, Melody

Here it is, Easter Sunday, and—once again—instead of hiding eggs for the grandkids The Old Mushroomer is off not hiding little treasures for the delight of the children but he is looking for treasures hidden by the mushroom Gods underneath old apple trees out in West County for his own damn delight (pardon my French). My God—when will he ever grow up? When will he ever change?

Seems like just 45 years ago when he approached me in a laundry mat and asked if those were hiking clothes I had spinning in the dryer. I said: “What’s it to you?” He had long hippy hair tied back with what we called “Charlie’s,” had on blue and white striped bell bottoms and was wearing one of those knitted Pakistani forerunners to today’s “hoodies.” He was obviously looking for an opening to something entirely different and merely tossing a red herring clothed in the form of an otherwise innocent question. So I demurred in a hippy Mother Earth way and told him to shove it. Not so long after he’d told how much that response made him fall immediately in love with me that I realized he was a partner made in heaven for me.

And this somehow has led to today where he is once again doing something I do not appreciate and me in a snarky way having told him to not do it and then listened to him hum on about how much my use of language makes him goofy all over. (And he even made a sexual reference not to be re-told here in this column rated PG 8.) Weird old fart, huh.

If I might use this rare opportunity with him gone and not writing his column to discuss human relationships and what helps make them work and what might not: In our case it has been mushrooms. Damn, damnable, dastardly mushrooms. (No magic in them either, I feel I should add, otherwise folks could get the wrong idea about all hippies and all their fungi all the time.)

He and his almost constant foraging have just about driven me frigg’in’ nuts. (I can say that here, yes?) Some folks travel to play different golf courses, some to stay at fancy resorts or see certain sights or some go simply to go. My Old Man goes for mushrooming. He either drives or flies “hither and yon” (fun to say, BTW) or when we lived down and over in Inverness he’d just go out the door and be gone for hours and come back with so much stuff in his basket (now don’t those look dweebie, or what?) that I did not and do not give a whit about. Not even a little bit of a whit. Mushrooms? Sheesh.

He complains that I enjoy doing things that he does not and so his mushrooming is a fair trade. A balance so to speak that evens stuff out. Not. Not even not. Not close to not

What I like to do is go shopping at 2nd hand stores looking for reminders of my childhood. You know old shoes with ragged laces and dirt still on their soles and dog-eared shirts with rumpled collars, hoop skirts with broken hoops—that kind of stuff. But I do digress.

So he says that my activities (there’s others too which might be a tad too weirdly lurid for here) balance his on that levered fulcrum that sits in his head like some Archimedes principal. Says that a good and healthy relationship is based on “equal time for equal time.” He’s such a articulate guy, my Old Man.

He’s, of course, once again out looking for morels—the yellowish ones—which tend to come up under scraggly Gravenstein trees about this time. Makes him feel real good and proud to come home with troves of those.

And what’s been another part of his life for a long time is the recipe part of his (mine now?) column. So what to do, what to cook, what to what, fer Chrissakes? Ooh, ooh—I got it! This is a favorite of even mine, is fun to make, and will make you be a hero for all those in your life who can’t cook too well.

Asparagus, Morel & Leek Escabeche

Serving Size: 4-6

Preparation Time: 15 minutes

Amt	Measure	Ingredient	Preparation Method
3	tbl	extra virgin olive oil	
3/4	cup	morels, medium	sliced in halves
2	bunches	asparagus, med, 4” pieces	trimmed, washed
1	ea	leek, small, white part only	thinly sliced wheels
2	Tbl	Italian parsley	chopped fine
3	Tbl	garlic	thinly sliced
		sea salt and pepper	
8	ea	chiles, red, dried	
4	ea	thyme sprigs (leaves from)	
1/2	cup	sherry, dry	
1/4	cup	red wine vinegar	
1	tbl	Italian parsley	chopped

Heat oil in sauté pan with morels and asparagus (actually put all into a cool pan and then heat together). Toss as pan heats up. As it sizzles (after 5 minutes) add garlic and leek. Add salt and pepper. Cook 3-5 minutes more. Add chiles and thyme and increase heat to high. As pan sizzles add the sherry and vinegar and boil until only a few tablespoons of liquid are left, 5-7 minutes. Stir in the parsley and serve or jar for later.

The SOMA Experience

Lee McCarthy-Smith

It occurs to me that I have never really written an article for the SOMA newsletter before. It has been intimidating to write something, not being a mushroom expert, wondering if I could write something articulate which others might want to read. I have been involved with SOMA now for about five years and on the Board for three so it is time to give it a try.

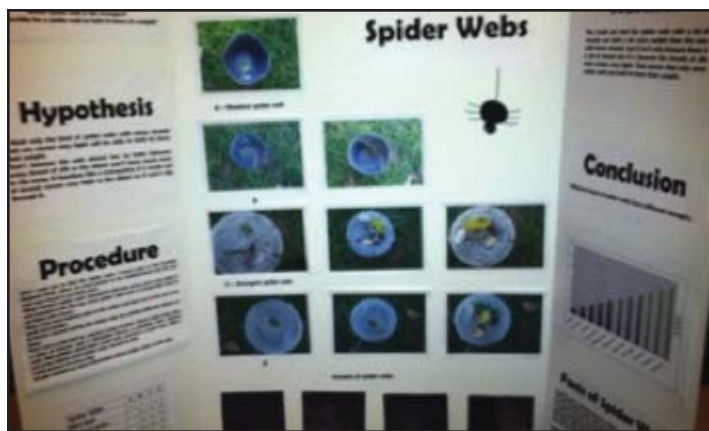
The allure of the Sonoma County Mycological Association isn't just the fungus but the emphasis that the SOMA organization puts on nature, science, and education, three things worth being passionate about. It is also a lot of fun and has provided a many great and memorable experiences.

SOMA is full of amazing people, educated about the science of mycology, who conduct forays in the woods, teach people how to pick mushrooms responsibly and how to positively identify edible mushrooms. That alone was enough to inspire me to join, however SOMA also invests in the community, using the money they make from membership fees, donations, and through their annual wild mushroom camp for educational scholarships.

This year, for the first time I joined Rachel Zierdt and Michael Miller from SOMA in judging the Healdsburg Science Fair [<http://healdsburgsciencefair.com/hsf/>] which almost was cancelled this year because of lack of volunteers. There are typically 80 local professionals that participate in judging the Healdsburg science fair and approximately 350 projects.

Judging the science fair was another great SOMA experience. It was fun to see the different projects and how the students were learning about scientific principles and problem solving.

The awards for Best Botany/Mycological Projects sponsored by SOMA were presented to the following students: Sofia Sarshar, Aidan Perez, Nicole Rauch, Tanya Carrado, Andrea Moya, Onaka Lutz, Lilla Nagy, Natalia Querez and their teachers Mrs. Osequera, Mr. Pinney, and Br. Blumert. Their four winning projects were:



1) What type of spider web is strongest and can a spider web hold 10-times its weight? – By Sofia Sarshar – 4th grade

Student's finding: The tighter woven the web the stronger and not all types of spiders can create webs that can hold 10-times their weight.



2) What produces compost the fastest? – By Aidan Perez – 4th grade

Student's finding: a combination of newspaper, lettuce, and dirt at an average of 68.5°F produced compost the fastest and water slowed down the decomposition process.



3) Does electricity affect plant growth? – By Lilla Nagy and Natalia Querez – 8th grade

Students' findings: Mild electric stimulation via a 9-volt battery did help the radish to germinate and grow faster.



4) How does a seed's shape affect the distance it travels? – By Nicole Rauch, Tanya Carrado, Andrea Moya, and Onaka Lutz – 7th grade

Students' findings: Smaller, rounder light-weight seeds traveled farther.

This is one of many amazing experiences that being part of SOMA has afforded me to attend. Of course, the winter monthly forays, the meetings at the Farm Bureau, the January wild mushroom camp, and of course, the FOOD, all have been incredible experiences. I look forward to being able to participate and contribute to this organization for many years to come. I hope you do too.

A Meeting With Charmoon

Rachel Zierdt

It's way too dry and hot for March 13th especially for a mushroom hunter as myself. With no mushrooms to hunt, what better way to spend an afternoon than visit with one of the iconic souls of SOMA, Charmoon Richardson?

Following Charmoon's detailed directions, I wended my way through the back country of Sebastopol turning right at the yellow house, and then following the left fork in the road just after the fence. I found myself in Charmoon's front yard. Lee McCarthy-Smith had arrived ahead of me.

Charmoon had invited several of us to visit because he wanted to meet some of the newbies involved in running his "baby" SOMA mushroom camp. (Lee being volunteer coordinator, and I being scheduler.) Curiosity got the best of me, and I started the conversation off asking him how he received such an unusual name. Was it a family name or one he had given himself sometime in the past? I learned that the name came to him one afternoon, by complete surprise, as he was meditating.

The conversation drifted here and there - Should there be permits to hunt mushrooms? (probably, inevitable) Should club forays be just for members? (probably, yes) With politics decided, we finally settled down to get to know Charmoon. We found out that he followed his childhood loves of rock collecting and mushrooming to help shape his two careers. His love of rock specimens is in evidence as you look around his living room. His other business, 'Wild About Mushrooms' was borne out of his enjoyment for collecting and sharing knowledge about mushrooms. Currently he is selling mushrooms to different restaurants.

Despite being unable to move his extremities, it is evident that

Charmoon's disease has not affected his wit or wisdom. He spoke about how he first originated the policy that everyone on a SOMA foray should carry and use a whistle. This need arose when a friend got lost during a foray at Salt Point. Fortunately they were reunited after 1 ½ hour search by others in his group as well as park rangers.

When asked about how SOMA Wild Mushroom Camp came about, he relayed this story. In 1997, Darwin asked if he would like to create a mushroom camp for the club. At that time, Charmoon had organized three similar events for David Arora.

The first camp, 1998, was in the Anderson Valley at an old soccer camp...with only about 38 attendees ...Charmoon described how one gentleman (the late Herb Saylor) had a microscope hooked up to a large screen TV, and the campers were treated to images of highly magnified Perigord truffle spores, as they enjoyed a fresh Perigord truffle risotto. The camp was a success aided by the fact that there were huge carpets of chanterelles fruiting on the hillside above the camp (that got me drooling). That venue proved unsatisfactory due to poor accommodations and camp was moved to two other locations near Booneville in the upcoming years.

It was then decided that instead of traveling up to Mendocino County, a venue closer to home would work well. At the suggestion of (former Camp Director) Linda Morris, CYO was chosen. There, camp has grown from about 150 campers to our current 250 attendees.

Darvin's original inquiry and Charmoon's vision of a place where mushroom lovers could come and have a myriad of class selections has certainly come to pass. This last camp had 50 presentations with over 35 presenters. We thank Charmoon for laying the groundwork for one of the best (if not the best) camping and learning opportunities in the mycology world.

Charmoon will be giving a talk titled *Miscellaneous Reminiscing* at the annual Sonoma County Herb Association meeting and fundraiser April 27, 6-9pm, at the Masonic Hall in Sebastopol.

Charmoon collected and studied wild mushrooms for over 30 years, before becoming physically disabled by neurological illness. He is a former CSHS staff member, a past president of the Sonoma County Mycological Association, the founding director of SOMA Camp ("The best mushroom camp in the country"), and is the owner of Wild About Mushrooms, which offers a variety of mushroom forays and classes.

Join Charmoon as he takes a rambling stroll through his herbal/fungal memory banks, in search of amusing & instructive anecdotes and recollections.



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/>

SOMA

PO Box 7147
Santa Rosa, CA 95407

Issue 25:8 APRIL 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

