SOMA NEWS

SONOMA COUNTY MYCOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

VOLUME 26 : 7 March 2014

BEN WAITMAN

SPEAKS MARCH 20 on:Nitrogen pollution in Forests: How do ectomycorrhizal fungi factor in?

Ben Waitman is a PhD Candidate in Ecology at UC Davis. While his interest in mycology is relatively recent, he has a diverse taxonomic background in ecology. He holds an undergraduate degree in biology from the College of William and Mary in Virginia where he studied forest tree composition in bottomland forests. Having decided that his career was to be an ecologist, he then took a job working for the US Geological Survey in Las Vegas, NV.

For his dissertation research, he is studying how disturbance influences ectomycorrhizal community composition, and how this in turn impacts their plant hosts. In particular, he studies how ectomycorrhizal community composition is influenced by Nitrogen deposition in the San Bernardino Mountains of Southern California.

Ben will be speaking about the history of nitrogen deposition's negative impacts on ectomycorrhizal fungi and why this disturbance may have important consequences for both the trees that depend on ectomycorrhizae and forest ecosystems. He'll also share how N-deposition has affected ectomycorrhizal fungal communities at sites in Ponderosa pine forests in southern California.

Hear him at 8:00 at the Sonoma County Farm Bureau, in Santa Rosa. (***See the last page of this newsletter for map and directions***).

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

CALENDAR

March 15th, 8:45 AM----------Arcata Foray; HBMS
March 20th, 7:30 PM------Meeting Speaker: Ben Waitman; SOMA
March 22nd,10:30 AM----------Foray at Salt Point Park; SOMA
March 28th & 29th---------BioBlitz Festival, San Francisco; MSSS
October 9th----------Annual Foray, Eatonville,WA; NAMA

Photo of the Month

February Foray at Salt Point Park

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.

THE SONOMA COUNTY MYCOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION (SOMA) IS AN EDUCATIONAL ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO MYCOLOGY. WE ENCOURAGE ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS BY SHARING OUR ENTHUSIASM THROUGH PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AND GUIDED FORAYS.

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President's Letter

DISPATCH FROM THE DUFF:

SOMA Board Update: Two members volunteered and were voted onto the Board of Directors in February. Judy Angell will become a member of the Board and take on the responsibilities of Treasurer. Charles Thurston, our newsletter editor, will be a member of the Board at large. Please welcome them both to the group. Everyone appreciates their initiative and looks forward to working with them.

Karen Kruppa has served almost three years as Treasurer and performed the job excellently. She helped transform the club into our current stable financial condition through her knowledge and skill. Karen contributed in many ways, most often with very good advice and suggestions to improve SOMA's accounting procedures. One of her most difficult responsibilities was as the SOMA Camp Registrar. At best, a very demanding job, but her attention to detail and ability to solve problems in a timely manner helped everyone through some stressful moments. I pass on the many thank yous and kudos from the membership and Board members for her efforts.

The February Salt Point foray was held on another clear and sunny day but with somewhat little hope for finding fungi. The atypical rain pattern this year had everyone guessing what might emerge in the month of February. To everyone's surprise the number of specimens placed on the table for identification and discussion exceeded all expectations. (See list). Darvin gave another illuminating talk and had all foray participants involved as they listened and learned.

One more note: There are a number of additions to the Salt Point State Park Ranger staff. We met new Officer Lea, who made an immediate positive impression on our group of 7 or 8 people. If the opportunity occurs, please introduce yourself to the newer staff members and let them know you're from SOMA. They are very interested in the club and our activities. Also, please remember to complete the information requested on parking envelopes and display the tabs after depositing the envelope. On Saturday, everyone had a parking tag displayed but not all tags could be matched to an envelope because information on the tag or envelope was not complete. It is the practice of the State Park Officers to issue warnings rather than tickets. In the future please remember to follow all parking requirements and payment practices completely.

The Healdsburg and Sonoma County Science Fairs were moved to February, a month earlier than previous years. Three SOMA members served as judges at both events. (See Rachel Zierdt's article on the Healdsburg Fair). The Sonoma County Fair is now fully funded for the next 3 years by a non-profit group, SYNOPSYS. The Science Fair staff can now spend more time organizing and then coordinating the event. The changes this year were very welcome and improved the judging process very much. More than 250 students completed 110 projects for display at Sonoma State University. There were many interesting and very high quality student investigations and experiments. This year the strongest projects were in electricity and physics. We plan to attend all Sonoma County student science fairs in the next years and recognize deserving projects in sciences that are closely related to the educational objectives of SOMA.

A number of members have asked about a foray in the spring to collect morels in the Sierras. There is a lot of interest. Other clubs have written to the State asking permission to participate in planned specimen collection in the burn areas that received so much publicity last fall. They have not had a reply to their inquiries. SOMA will look at other potential sites as well as those noted and try to organize a foray in May. We will keep all informed.

As rain continues to fall, a very interesting, although late, wild mushroom year is possible. A year perhaps different than all others.

Best regards,
Jim Wheeler

FEBRUARY FORAY: Identification List by Darvin DeShazer

We had over 85 species on the ID table at Salt Point State Park and there were some striking notables missing this month. Everyone noticed that Craterellus cornucopioides was missing and it was the first time anyone could remember that it had not been found in February. It apparently absconded with Hydnum repandum and Boletus edulis. The disappointment was compounded by the lack of Claviceps purpurea which had been present at the last two SOMA Forays. However, the following species were present and thrilled the public as everyone found some fungi in this drought year and that brought delight (smiling faces) on this very pleasant day.

Agaricus subrutilescens
Amanita augusta
Amanita porphyria
Calocera viscosa
Cantharellus formosus
Caulorhiza umbonata
Ceratiomyxa fruticulosa
Chromosera cyanophylla
Chroogomphus ochraceus
Clavulina cinerea
Clavulina coralloides
Cortinarius cinnamomeus
Cortinarius smithii
Craterellus neotubaeformis
Crepidotus mollis
Cryptoporus volvatus
Cystolepiota seminuda
Dacrymyces chrysospermus
Endocronartium harknessii
Fomitopsis pinicola
Galerina sp.
Gomphidius oregonensis
Gomphidius subroseus
Gomphus clavatus
Gymnopilus bellulus
Gymnopilus luteofolius
Gymnopilus sapineus
Gymnopus subpruinosus
Helminthosphaeria clavariarum
Helvella vespertina
Hemimycena sp.
Hydnellum aurantiacum
Hydnum umbilicatum
Hygrocybe coccinea
Hygrocybe flavescens
Hygrophoropsis aurantiaca
Hypholoma capnoides
Hypholoma fasciculare
Hypomyces cervinigenus
Inocybe fastigiata
Inonotus triqueter
Jahnoporus hirtus
Laccaria proxima
Lactarius rubidus
Lactarius xanthogalactus
Leccinum manzanitae
Leotia lubrica
Leucopaxillus gentianeus
Lycogala terrestre
Lycoperdon perlatum
Macrocystidia cucumis
Marasmiellus candidus
Mycena sp.
Mycena leptocephala
Mycena pura
Mycena purpureofusca
Nidula candida
Nolanea sericea
Onnia tomentosa
Otidea leporina
Phaeolus schweinitzii
Phellodon atratus
Pholiota sp.
Pholiota velaglutinosa
Pisolithus arhizus
Pseudohydnum gelatinosum
Pucciniastrum goeppertianum
Ramaria sp.
Rhizopogon
Rhizopogon occidentalis
Rhizopogon ochraceorubens
Russula sp.
Russula albidula
Russula cerolens
Russula cremoricolor
Simocybe centunculus
Sparassis radicata
Stereum hirsutum
Suillus brevipes
Suillus caerulescens
Suillus pungens
Suillus tomentosus
Tricholomopsis rutilans
Turbinellus floccosus
Xerocomellus zelleri

Craterellus neotubaeformis /Michael Wood

Sparassis radicata /Soggydan

Lactarius rubidus/Mycoweb

Leccinum manzanitae/Hugh Smith

THE FORAGER'S REPORT: March 2014 By The Old Mushroomer

I've been asked lately on forays out at the coast what will be happening now that we've gone through two drought-type seasons in a row. "Just what will be coming up, you old fart" was chortled in charming queries by the folks who sign up to come out with me and the other leaders. I know that they're being sweet to ask sagacious advice and of fungal forecasts but all I can say is that you'd have to be at least 150 years old to know the last time on record it was so dry and I ain't that old even though I did first start looking at mushrooms around here in 1971.

Amanita phalloides: The Death Cap
Credit: Mykoweb

Back then mushrooms were rarely sought except for the hallucinogenic ones and those were generally most easily found at rock concerts where party-goers would often take them along with a naïve understanding that they were all good ones and not some thing(s) else. Of course I remember mellow-with-minds-like-Jello hippies saying things like "Mother Nature wouldn't poison us" or "they're natural, man, and natural is cool." Really? Cool.

LSD was big back then and was only made illegal in 1966, if I remember correctly. Speaking of which: You've all either heard of "flashbacks" or had them yourselves, yeah? Well for some, "flashback memories" are all they have. The only way to access events of the past is "flash back" to them in short burst of energy and illumination much like those multi-sided rotating mirrored lights in the middle of discos' dance floors shined rapidly blinking lights upon all. Yep--like that.

Mushrooms were different. Some would say that psilocybin trips were lighter than LSD. That maybe with mushrooms you kind of bought the ticket to the movie and maybe you'd be treated to a multi-screen theater experience. All at once if you chose. With LSD you also willingly bought the ticket to the show but you couldn't just get up and leave or change what was in your viewing screen, no matter what.

But the mushrooms we'd find and pick in the mountains above the Russian River were corals and chanterelles and they were the only ones we knew. We knew them clearly but especially before someone would break out the Maui Wowie.

Those doobies were nasty way rad and it was not uncommon during a Thanksgiving supper for someone to go face down into the mashed potatoes and gravy with chunks sittin' just so on parts of their mugs after a fat big hit. Kind of added a certain punctuation to stories being told and being made too.

Combine magic mushrooms or LSD, the Maui madness, and a glass or two of wine and we'd be good and ready to get out onto the trail beyond upper Canyon 4 in Rio Nido and hike to the water tower. We were young ("but we were improving--say yeah, yeah yeah"). Along that way we'd pass through redwoods, madrones, oaks, bays, fairies, elves, gremlins, some trolls too and even wood nymphs all in motion dancing fantastically (and a few oddly diabolically funnin') around us. Whoa!

It can be well argued that in those states of minds the forayers were not best prepared to identify which forest fungi were fit to be brought back to eat and that is why we stuck to easy corals and golden chanterelles. Nobody was trying to decipher one Agaricus from another or from a Lepiota, or any Amanitas or Corts or any nothin' else and a good time was had by all, if I remember correctly.

That is all obvious but it is difficult to argue against eating mushrooms safely taken while not taking drugs or drinking or just being dumb.

Soon there could be some real tasty Amanitas around here and up in the Sierras and if you know what you are doing and not mind-altered they are pretty easy to identify. The consequences of eating a deadly poisonous one are much, much, worse that just being glued to your private movie show chair as mentioned can happen on certain hallucinogenic drugs. There is nothing magical about eating poisonous mushrooms.

This being said I still get asked on forays if this or that is a magic mushroom but not nearly as often as: "Can I eat this?" It is what 99% of people who choose to go out with us into the woods want to know.

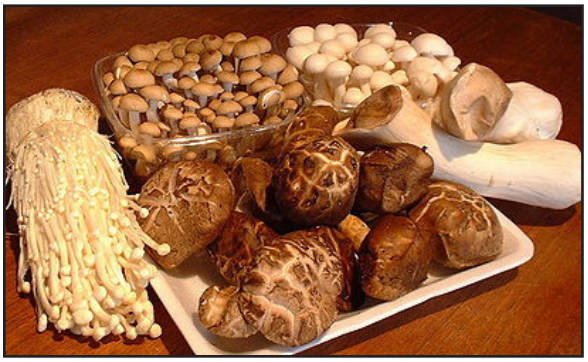
Not for science nor for any other non food friggin' reason do the many 100's of folks who've been in the forests of America with me truly want to know about. It's almost always an uncomplicated, "Can I eat this?"

This is why all these mushroom clubs are so peopled now--peopled mostly with foodies and not with science types; but you can be a cross-over, a half-breed so to speak, or maybe a quarter-breed like me who started with magic mushrooms, made it into culinary mushrooms and from there into the science behind it all. Even this old fart now likes the science part.

So, if I might so address myself, "Mr. Science Old Fart: What does the remaining mushroom season look like?" Good question and saying "good question" makes one sound smart! It looks like it's going to be another "follow the numbered dots game" but with no numbers. You just have to figure out the sequence yourself. Make it appear rosy as in the petals or rosy as in the thorns. You can do either because I do not know the answer nor do any whom I've asked because even my friends aren't' old enough to know.

Wow--"Maui Wowie." That is a flashback memory too. Are those the Bee Gees jive-talkin' across the room. . . ?

Hippocrates is considered by many to be father of modern medicine. Although this is true, the irony is Hippocrates did not believe in drugs; he considered them to be harmful to the human body in the long run. Instead he believed that all the human body need is adequate rest, proper diet, exercise, clean air and herbs. Although today some people might disagree with his view, truth is this is what your doctor means when he says you need rest and exercise. For centuries people have been trying to merge natural remedies like herbs with conventional medicine and they have consistently failed especially when trying to cure diseases like cancer, allergies or preventing side effects.



Some of the misconceptions about mushrooms are that they carry little nutritional value. However this is further from the truth. Apart from being a low calorie highly nutritional food source, mushrooms carry unique compounds such as for example an antioxidant called L-ergothioneine. Also 5 little button mushrooms contain more potassium than an orange!

And since some mushrooms are extremely toxic, avoid putting yourself and your dinner guests at risk by buying mushrooms from professionals who are conversant on mushrooms and their medicinal benefits.

Medicinal Mushrooms, Chinese medicine / Herbal medicine

The Chinese and the Egyptians were among the first people to appreciate the value of the mushroom. Egyptians associated mushroom with immortality and since they revered their Pharaohs, they included mushroom as a specialty in the diet of the royal family. Many countries in Asia and Eastern Europe too have been fascinated by the mushroom for years. China in particular associated it with longevity. As such, these cultures included it in their diet and had fun with it in the process, by organising communal mushroom hunting errands.

Others like the Romans, however, went to the extreme by castigating the mushroom for its poisonous potency since it apparently killed their Emperor Claudius in a premeditated murder.

Today, the mushroom is part of expensive cuisines in luxurious restaurants all over the world. It is also used as medication as it provides precious ingredients for modern medicine. Mushroom is also used as an effective leavening and fermentation agent in food processes. In 2008, UC Davis published a review of medicinal mushroom research and encouraged further research by way of clinical trials.

Subsequently, the mushroom has ceased to be just a wild incidental growth from decomposing material, and has taken up its place as a commercial crop. Of course the species that are best suited to wild growth are left to continue in their habitat, and still get hunted reminiscent of the good old days.

How can you tell a mushroom is safe to eat?

Mushrooms come in different shapes and sizes and different varieties. Since different varieties share similarities in shape and size, it takes a trained eye to identify a particular mushroom with precision. While some common mushrooms are safe to eat, some others are extremely toxic and can be fatal to eat. Therefore the task of picking mushroom for consumption should be left to the experienced or those trained in the agrarian field. It is otherwise an impossible task for an ordinary person to tell what type of mushroom a particular piece is.

The methods of identification in use today include a combination of ancient plus modern methods. Long ago, a keen expert eye would observe the spore prints made on a surface by the powdery stuff emitted from the mushroom gills, where both colour and patterns were extremely significant. The colours to look for included mostly white, but there was also black, brown, yellow, purple-brown, and cream. Modern categorisation of mushroom involves scientific testing of samples in a laboratory.

Considering the possible repercussions of eating a poisonous piece of mushroom, it is wise to cook only mushrooms sourced from an expert.

Research has shown that some mushrooms exhibit in vitro anti-viral properties.

Mushrooms have been scientifically proved to having anti-bacterial and anti-viral properties which assist the body in fending off diseases like Polio, Hepatitis B, HIV, Influenza, HSV-1 and HSV-2 as well as the small pox virus.

An in-depth analysis of mushrooms a few decades ago also led to some interesting discoveries. Scientists discovered that some enzymes present in the stipe can be used in the manufacture of detergents. On the other hand, toxic elements in some mushroom species that the plant presumably uses to deter predators (including humans); can be used to produce environmentally friendly pesticides.

Mushrooms also seem to have great potential in the field of biotechnology. It is already being used to spur plant growth and or lower the level of bacterial contamination in water. The US patent and Trademark Office has registered different patents in relation to the specialised fields of mycoremediation, a cleaning process where contaminants are biodegraded to clean the environment and mycofiltration, a filtration process that gets rid of disease causing elements like the bacteria, e coli and the protozoa, plasmodium falciparum.

In 2013, the US Davis School of medicine in collaboration with US Davis Comprehensive Cancer Centre continues to do research on the impact extracts from mushroom have on patients of prostate cancer, and they are very optimistic about the results.

The Mushrooms and Health 2012 report that was prepared by the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) confirmed the health benefits of the mushroom. CSIRO is Australia's biggest food research organization.

It is therefore evident from all its various uses, medical and most importantly its dietary benefits it is clear that mushroom is the most significant fungus after penicillin.

SOMA Camp 2014 Recipes

By Julie Schreiber

Coconut curry with mushrooms and chickpeas — Serves 2-3

1 small onion
4 cloves garlic
2 Red chilies, seeds removed
2 bunches cilantro
1/2 t ground cumin
1 t garam masala
1 T cooking oil
10 oz. shiitake mushrooms
14 oz. can chickpeas
14 oz. can coconut milk
black pepper

First prepare your curry paste. Cut the onion, garlic and chilies into large chunks and put them in a food processor. Pulse several times until a coarse paste is formed, then add one bunch of cilantro (including stems), cumin and garam masala. Process until well mixed.

Heat the oil in a large saucepan. Add the shiitake mushrooms and cook until liquid evaporates and mushrooms start getting brown. Then add your curry paste. (I recommend starting with half and see if you like the amount of heat, rather than adding all of the curry paste at the start). Cook over a low heat until the mushrooms are almost tender. Add the remaining ingredients, and increase the heat to medium. Cook for a further 5 – 10 minutes, until the sauce is hot and slightly reduced. Thin the sauce with water if it feels too thick for you. Season the dish with soy sauce, to taste. Serve with quinoa pilaf and top with more fresh cilantro.

Maitake Pate — Serves a party

3 T butter
4 cups maitake mushrooms, broken or sliced into chunks
½ white onion, sliced
3 bay leaves
4 juniper berries
1/3 cup hard apple cider (dry)
Squeeze of lemon juice
1/3 cup cream

Sauté the maitake in 2 T of butter over medium-high heat for about 5 minutes, until they start to brown. Season the mushrooms with salt and pepper. Cover, and lower the heat. Cook gently for 10 to 15 minutes, stirring from time to time - this will draw out their moisture.

Remove the lid, add 1 T butter, the white onions, the bay and the juniper (put spices in cheese cloth to make them easier to pull out later). Increase heat to medium. Continue cooking till onions are golden. By now the pan bottom will start browning. Increase heat to medium-high and deglaze with the cider, stirring to scrape up the brown bits.

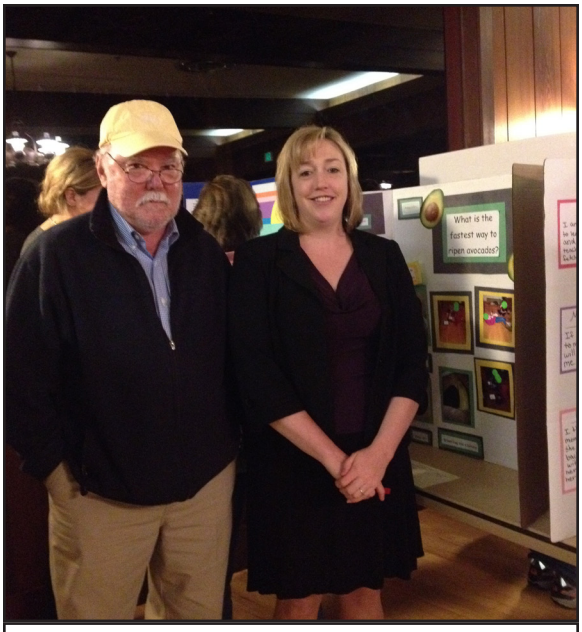
Allow the liquid to cook off completely, then add the lemon juice and stir. Lower the heat to medium and add the cream. Cook gently for another 5 minutes. Taste again. Allow to cool, remove the bay leaves and juniper, and blend to a rough paste in a food processor. Pack in small jars and refrigerate.

Science Fair Season Is Upon Us

By Rachel Zierdt

We may not be finding lots of edible mushrooms right now, but at SOMA we do find February and March a busy hunting season for science fair projects. For the past four years, we have been presenting monetary awards to worthy science students in grades K-12 here in Sonoma County. This year a group of SOMA Board members will be judging at two events….Healdsburg Science Fair and Sonoma County Science Fair. Our team includes Jim Wheeler, Lee McCarthy-Smith, Patrick Hamilton, and Rachel Zierdt (chairperson).

Last night three of us attended the Healdsburg Science Fair. This is a home grown affair that has been presented for 30 plus years. The fair encompasses the entire spectrum of public schooling in Healdsburg. In fact for 7th and 8th graders, producing a project is often a required assignment for science class. As in the past, projects were divided into two categories, physical and life sciences….(there is a third category…Rube Goldberg which features building a project to accomplish specific goals which is judged separately …) We usually present our winners with a cash award and recognize their teacher's efforts with a like amount to help provide science materials for classroom use.



Jim Wheeler and Lee McCarthy-Smith reviewing project candidates at the fair. Credit: Rachel Zierdt

This year Lee, Jim and I spent an evening surveying all the projects in life sciences. We were able to identify three projects that we felt were worthy of recognition. Fourth graders, Jennifer Doherty, Adriana Novak, and Genevieve Guty received $25 each and their teachers Ms. Uresti-Regan and Ms. Caprio were awarded $50 for their efforts in producing a project that examined the fastest way to ripen an avocado…. The project found that a brown paper bag was the most effective way to quickly ripen the fruit. This is a handy piece of information to have……

We judged that the project was well constructed, visually pleasing, and followed good scientific processes.

In the 7th grade category, Zuzu T. Morgan, in her project The Yeast Beast, examined which sugar enabled yeast to grow the quickest….Coconut Sugar and Agave Nectar were tested. The yeast responded best to the Agave Nectar. Zuzu reasoned that the nectar had a higher sugar content and that was the reason why it was more effective. Future cooks could apply this knowledge in their baking. Zuzu and her teacher, Ms. Licea were both awarded $50.

Finally, the 8th grade project by Abigail Cody, studying The Affects of Orange Juice on Blood Sugar Levels, produced some interesting results. Abigail had her mother follow a strict diet for several weeks. Each day of the week she would drink a different type of orange juice and on some days she would exercise and some days she wouldn't. Her blood sugar levels were tested twice daily, once fasting and once after the juice consumption. To her surprise, Abigail discovered that the better quality OJ really elevated the blood sugar levels the most. Her reasoning was that the better the quality juice(and therefore by assumption was considered healthiest) contained more of the fruit and had higher sugar content. She found Sunny D which had the least calories and fewest grams of sugar, as well as the least amount of real fruit, elevated her mother's sugar levels the least. This study might help us to evaluate what is considered healthy. We felt that Abigail's notebook was exceptional and added much to our understanding of the project.

As usual, we enjoyed the evening. It is always refreshing for us to view how our students are achieving in science. It renews our commitment to raising funds to continue to recognize up and coming scientists.

March 1st is the Sonoma County Science Fair which being held at Sonoma State University. Look for an article about this soon.

Correction:

The "All in a Name" column adapted for the January edition of SOMA News should have cited the author as Jed Douglas, the editor of Humboldt Bay Mycological Society's Mycolog newsletter.

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SOMA News

Edition 26/7 March 2014

SOMA usually meets on the third Thursday of the month throughout the year (September through May), at the Sonoma County Farm Bureau , 970 Piner Road, Santa Rosa, California, 94931. 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