



# SOMA NEWS

SONOMA COUNTY MYCOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

VOLUME 27 : 1

September 2014

## Stephanie Jarvis SPEAKS AT SOMA MEETING September 18th:

### "Trufflere, Truffle Cultivation in Modern Times"

Stephanie Jarvis is the proprietor of Napa Valley Fungi, and self-proclaimed mushroom 'geek,' Stephanie tests vineyard soils for beneficial fungi (mycorrhizae), consults on truffle orchard projects, and cultivates medicinal and culinary mushrooms using wine industry waste products. She is a certified Arborist and Tree Risk Assessor through the International Society of Arboriculture (ISA). Stephanie was awarded a SOMA Graduate Student Scholarship in 2009.

Hear her speak on September 18th at 8:00 at the Sonoma County Farm Bureau, in Santa Rosa.

(See the last page of this newsletter for map and directions).



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**EMERGENCY MUSHROOM POISONING ID:** After seeking medical attention, contact Darwin DeShazer for identification at (707) 829-0596. Email photos to: [muscaria@pacbell.net](mailto:muscaria@pacbell.net) and be sure to photograph all sides, cap and of the mushroom. Please do not send photos taken with older cell phones – the resolution is simply too poor to allow accurate identification.

NOTE: Always be 100% sure of the identification of any mushroom before you eat it!

THE SONOMA COUNTY MYCOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION (SOMA) IS A NON-PROFIT (501C) EDUCATIONAL ORGANIZATION DEDICATED TO MYCOLOGY. WE ENCOURAGE ENVIRONMENTAL AWARENESS BY SHARING OUR ENTHUSIASM THROUGH PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN MEETINGS AND IN GUIDED FORAYS.

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## President's Letter

### DISPATCH FROM THE DUFF:

Greetings to all, welcome to another potentially great wild mushroom season. I hope everyone had an enjoyable summer...and is coping with the dry weather conditions of Northern California. Here are updates on a number of topics on the agenda from this spring:

- Judy Angell is now the SOMA Treasurer and newest Board member. Please welcome her to the group, if you have the opportunity.
- Please note the last mailing of the SOMA newsletter was in May 2014. If any member needs a different arrangement, please write or phone me.
- Wild mushroom collection permits have been obtained for Salt Point State Park on September 20th, October 18th, November 15th and December 20th. The December Foray is limited to SOMA Members only, therefore, please plan accordingly. Please note the changes to the permits made last year. The collection limit is now 3 pounds per person and alcohol is excluded on SOMA sponsored forays. We have attempted to increase the number of people allowed on a foray, (from 40 to 50 people) and will have that confirmed in the next week or so.
- Jackson State Demonstration Forest now requires a permit to collect wild mushrooms. I could not find any details on their website, so perhaps phone the office, in Fort Bragg, at 707-364-5674 before traveling all that distance.
- Six SOMA Graduate Scholarships were awarded in 2014. Look for the details in Rachel Zierdt's article on page nine. The amount awarded to University Graduate Mycology Students and High School Science Fair Participants increased from \$2,500 to \$9,000 over the last few years. The total of scholarships awarded from 2006 to 2014 is about \$32,000. We will complete the details of the earlier programs and will publish the information at SOMA Camp 2015.
- The SOMA Camp 2015 Committee completed its tasks and will make their recommendations to the Board this Wednesday, September 3rd. All information will be published in October and November. Several announcements will be released through the newsletter email recipients list. Stay tuned for the important details.
- The Board authorized a group to plan and recommend changes to the SOMA website. The thinking at the moment is to make it easier to post pictures and make the site more accessible to those using remote devices. Also, frankly, to appeal to a younger population and give them the opportunity to participate in SOMA activities. Perhaps even join the membership. The first discussion regarding changes will be this week. If you have experience with website design or maintenance and are interested, we need to hear from you. Please write or phone any Board member for more information. Thank you.

Best regards,

Jim Wheeler

# The Desert *Agaric* in Napa Valley

By Meredith Sabini

Mushrooms that grow in bright sunlight, in hot weather, out in the open? They do, and they were, in abundance. Picture this: a flat acre of poor soil dotted with clusters of tall, gilled mushrooms that looked like sepia-toned bouquets of flowers. The specimens turned out to be the newly named *Agaricus deserticola*, previously listed as *Longula texensis*. The location: Clover Flats Road, entrance to the Up Valley dump, just off the Silverado Trail in St. Helena. No need to keep this venue a secret; go and have a look, it's a sight to behold.

This particular fruiting probably began with a short, heavy rain in late April; three days of 90° weather the following week then rapidly dried out the crop while it was in full bloom. I've never seen anything like it: mushrooms dried in place. With their woody stalks and no larval infestation, these unique specimens will last a long time.

I heard about the fruiting when talking with Bill Dyer, who'd just read the group email about it. My interest was piqued because I was to meet for lunch the next day a friend who lives near Clover Flats. I called Rick, also a fungophile, and asked if he could bring a few specimens. He happened to have a cousin visiting, a biologist from Chico, and they easily found the desert *Agarics* and verified their identification on site using her smartphone.

As Rick opened the paper bag to show me, I was flabbergasted by their curious form: looking like portobellos on a tall, bulbous stalk, they had almost no flesh on the cap and their very thick gills had turned entirely upward, like wings ready for flight. They had a typical earthy agaric odor, with no hint of phenol. The buttons were also thick and hefty, with gills more mauve than pink. When handled or cut, both the cuticle and the stalk turned not the bright yellow of California agarics but the stable honey-orange that *Macrolepiota rachoides* turn when cut. Both cap and stalk were seriously squamous.

I keyed them out and they matched Arora's description of *Longula tex.* exactly (see Mushrooms Demystified, pg. 729 and photo on 730). Arora had

grouped them with other gastroids (gilled mushrooms that do not forcibly discharge their spores) and noted that, in general, spore prints are not obtainable from gastroids. This puzzled me, as spores of the *Longula/*

*Agaric* were all over the place, creating a sooty brown-black dust that I imagined might once have been a source for ink. This particular gastroid doesn't have to forcibly eject spores: it has extruded its entire gill structure!

Intrigued by a species would appear during a heat wave, I decided to drive to Clover Flat and have a look for myself. The sight was truly a wonder: hundreds of specimens, some solitary, most in clusters of a dozen or so, growing out of a central point the way Honeyeats (*Armillaria*) sometimes do. Caps averaged 4-6" across,

stems 6-8" tall. From a distance, one might think these were flowers freeze-dried by a winter storm, like bouquets of mums left at gravesites. But it was early May and these were mushrooms flash-dried by a heatwave. The desert *Agarics* look like some geneticist's science fiction fantasy. They combine aspects of the shaggy *Lepiotas*, the scaly *Pholiotas*, the robust *A. augustus* and *A. crocodilinus*, plus the black underside of *Coprinus*. Add to this mélange the ability to turn itself completely inside out, and you have a sense of this wild, wacky varietal.

I hadn't expected to find any fresh specimens, but there were some, poking their heads out of the crude, unfertile soil. In addition to dried specimens, I collected as many fresh ones as I could find and went home eager to do a taste test. Influenced by hearing of them via a vintner, I adopted the "swish and spit" method used for sampling wines. I cooked up a "small" button—two inches across and equally high—in ghee, my preferred medium for sautéing. With hardly any flesh on the cap, what got cooked up were the massive dense gills, dark as pure cacao. They became chewy, even crisp, and absorbed plenty of ghee. The flavor was strongly agaric, like an old portobello, but with a definite almond undertone. When slicing off the woody base, I discovered the almond scent is concentrated in the stalk, as clean and sharp as if out of a bottle of extract.

Step one was determining if the flavor was





## The Desert Agaric (continued from p.2)

acceptable; it was. With a little guidance from Patrick H., I went on to step two: a true taste test. Best time for it was late morning, when my stomach would be empty and I could monitor GI reactions throughout the coming day. I ate one bite from a well-cooked button; there were no consequences for my GI tract. The next day, I ate two larger bites; again, no reaction. On the third day, I decided to incorporate the mushroom into a simple omelette. The mildness of the egg balanced out the strong agaric flavor, making a fine meal. Again, no GI consequences.

If you read Arora's full entry for the *Longula*, you'll realize that what I had was the giant version, *texensis* var. *major*. This is one hefty baby. The gill formation alone measured 2" thick at maturity. And these weren't gills in the ordinary sense of being blade-like; they looked more like compressed honeycomb. Also, they don't disintegrate upon being cooked, but remain substantially intact. What I ate was a meal mostly of gills. We can't generalize about edibility from a sample of one; not that anyone else would be as eager as I was to try such a peculiar specimen. But I hope my tale will provide you with an excuse to venture

to the Napa Valley.

I've been foraging for forty years and one thing that keeps me going into the field is the thrill of finding a specimen that's new to me, especially one that's unusual. One year it was the lattice stinkhorn on Rick's land; another, it was a scrambled egg fungus covering a rock in my yard; last year, at the Dyer's, I

stumbled over my first *Pisolithus*. The find for 2014 will be this giant desert Agaric.

In late July I revisited the Clover Flat site. A tractor had made a rough pass over weedy grasses but beyond its flattened circle, there they were: newly dried buttons. I added a few more desert Agarics to the cardboard boxes in my garage; I'll bring some to a fall meeting or to the December potluck.



Desert Agaric

Credit: Rick Merchant



Longula texensis

Credit: Wikipedia

### Authors Note:

After 30 years of collecting mushrooms at my cabin in the woods, I have decided to sell it. Should any of you be interested in more information, please contact me at 510-849-8511 or Dream Institute at [dreaminstitute@gmail.com](mailto:dreaminstitute@gmail.com).

Thank you, Meredith.



# The Forager's Report: September 2014

By Patrick Hamilton

*"You don't pick 100% of the mushrooms you don't go look for, Grasshopper"*  
(Shaolin Sacred Saying of Sorts)

Here we go into another mushroom season with hopes either high--elevated by the possibility of El or La Nino or Nina--or expectations low due to the opposite(s). Or not?

If you're mushroom savvy you will have been picking long after our last past SOMA News and right now again too. Just because this rag stops each year to allow for stuff to realign and noses to blow and shoes to re-sole doesn't mean you got to stop looking for fungi, folks. There are places to look even in our dry season.

A few club members went down into Mexico and spent time either in the woods of Michoacán or deep the Copper Canyon, others over to Telluride, CO for whooping (cushioned, maybe); we've even heard of lucky maidens around here simply stumbling upon Princes, while a twosome traveled into the Northern Rockies to hike in the hemlock, pine, larch, and spruce forests there for whatever might they see. There are mushrooms to be regaling among, my friends, if you simply go to their party.

Waiting around to hear from those expert posters ("imposters?") on the on-line lists isn't necessarily the best way to know how to get mushrooms into your baskets. You still got to go no matter what.

How many times did you venture up into the Sierras in May or June or August looking for spring and then fall boletes? Any of you look this summer at SPSP for

what we call those maybe fog-drip generated- "pinetrells?" A few of you stroll down in The City at Land's End or along the Presidio trails for the occasional summertime surprises?

So what if you sat on your own duffs rather than search the woods because there are now porcini to be picked under Lodgepoles' own duff. Perfectly plump piggies have been taken in curious quantities, some days just a few and other times many brown bags full. But if you didn't go then I bet "100% of you who didn't look found zero mushrooms" (current Cotati maxim).

Start looking around here for sulphur shelves. One year on Bay Hill Rd coming down into Bodega Bay in that copse of eulaypts on the north side there protruded almost rudely this oozing egg yolk yellow and Caltrans orange monster God fungus that smugly knew was out of reach of yearning and grabby hands. It was big--maybe a 50 pounder. (Way back when, famed forager David Campbell and this boyo picked over 75 pounds off a fallen Doug-fir up near Redwood National Park. Whoa, the bounty! And they were so dumb in the ways of stuff then they thought it saleable even though the leading edges were tough as their brains were thick.)

Anyhow--as with the beginning of a baseball or football season there should be nothing but hope for a good year but if you don't get out there you will pick none of mine.

Ps. Our monthly forays up at SPSP are a real good place to learn a whole lot about a bunch of fungal things. This year we can have up to 50 participants and remember that "pot luck to die for." (Not "at" or "during.")



**Bolete From the Sierras**

**Credit: SOMA**



**Sulphur shelf**

**Credit: Charles W. Thurston**

# Recipe of the Month: Grilled Corn & Mushrooms

By Patrick Hamilton

For the first recipe of the season we present a super good grilled corn (GMO or not) and dried mushroom (GMO or not) from your stash (GMO or not) cornbread:

## Cornbread with Wild Mushrooms and Chiles

Serving Size: 6 Preparation Time: 1:00



Amount	Measure	Ingredient	Preparation Method
3/4	cup	dried wild mushrooms	rehydrated, chopped small
1/4	cup	jalapenos, etc (optional)	finely chopped
1	tbl	olive oil or butter or mix	
3/4	cup	AP flour	
3/4	cup	cornmeal	
1/4	cup	sugar	
1	tsp	sea salt	
1/2	tsp	baking soda	
1/4	tsp	black pepper	
1/2	cup	unsalted butter	
2	each	eggs, lg	
1	cup	buttermilk	
1/4	cup	whole milk	
4	ears	corn, fresh	grilled, kernels removed
1/4	cup	scallions	chopped



Oven 350. Grease 9x13 Pyrex dish.

1. Quickly sauté mushrooms and chiles (if using) in butter or olive oil. Remove, cool.
2. Whisk dry ingredients. Stir in eggs and milks, add mushrooms and chiles (if using) and corn, stir until mixed, fold in scallions. Transfer batter to dish, tap to level and remove air bubbles.
3. Bake 30-35 minutes until knife comes out clean.

This is a soft yet crunchy on top cornbread that goes real well with just about anything. That's all folks!

## WOULDN'T YOU LIKE TO BE A MEMBER OF SOMA? JOIN TODAY!

Membership in the Sonoma County Mycological Association, or 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? Head to <http://somamushrooms.org/membership>; this the mushroom season is just beginning!

Head to <http://somamushrooms.org/membership> and sign up!



# Mushroom Dyes: 'Tis *Pisolithus* Season

By Myra Beebee

While weeding my driveway one foggy morning, I spotted a brown lump tucked beneath a struggling Santa Barbara daisy. Whoa there – that's a *Pisolithus arhizus*! I found one of my favorite dye mushrooms only feet from my front door.

I start finding these "dyer's puffballs" in August in disturbed dry grassy areas, and lucky for me, my small city has many such areas woven into its urban and suburban landscape. And lucky for us mushroom dyers, these guys will pop up with or without rain. If the mushroom is young and fresh it will look almost sticky. These give the deepest browns. The older mushrooms look dry; the insides full of fluffy brown spores, or sometimes the top will split releasing the spores. These give a golden-brown to brown dye. One mushroom contains a lot of spores, and those spores contain a lot of dye, and that dye will color a lot of yarn.

As a matter of fact, it's almost impossible to exhaust a *Pisolithus* dye bath; keep throwing yarn in and it will continue to turn that yarn a shade of brown. Once you run out of yarn, store the leftover dye for later use.

I inherited this habit of saving left over mushroom dyes from my mother, Dorothy Beebee. You wouldn't believe her collection: jars of every size filled with a mysterious mix of something mushroom-like. It was in one of these murky jars of *Pisolithus arhizus* that I discovered a forgotten skein of yarn. It must've

been stewing for six months or more. The smell was... you can imagine. The color however was a dark chocolate brown.

Inspired by the yarn I discovered at my Mom's house, I popped open one of my own jars of saved *Pisolithus* dye, added a small skein of wool, and placed it in sunny part of my yard.

The longer the dye sits in the sun (the more patience you have) the richer the shade of brown. Contrast the results from a solar dye I left for a few weeks, versus the yarn discovered in my Mom's yard.

I will admit to not having ample patience and will often start a solar dye, only to rush the results with a burst of heat from the stove. This skein of alpaca was created using the later method. After the yarn sat in the sun for over a week, I poured the dye into a pot and let it simmer on the stove for about 30 minutes.

Either dye method you choose, solar or stove, this dyer's polypore will not disappoint. It's easy to use, and easy to find. It's the perfect start to mushroom season.





# Photo of the Month: North Dakota Fungi

By Charles W. Thurston

Cowboy Dean has been known around the Northern California scene for over a decade, and he has been roping and starting colts since he was a boy in North Dakota. He is not particularly known for his exaggeration or practical jokes, but then again, he is a cowboy who has won his share of the big prizes and has worked with some of the biggest names in the horse business. Dean trained various colts -- including a number of rescued youngsters otherwise headed to the slaughter house -- at our Luna Tierra Ranch in Cotati this Spring, but he got the itch to get back home to North Dakota once the July burn finished off our pastures.

Dean sent me this photo from back home, wondering if this monster was edible. I fired off the single, fuzzy shot to Mushroom Observer, and only two souls were brave enough to attempt to ID it; *Agaricomycetes*



*Agaricomycetes doweld*

Credit: Cowboy Dean

*doweld* was the best that could be reckoned without a photo of the gills or whatever was hiding beneath it. As far as I know, the shoe was placed for size reference, and not unintentionally left by someone who died there and was later consumed by the fungi. I'll check back with Dean.

So I thought I'd check on what the World's Biggest Mushroom was, and low and behold, in August 2000, an *Armillaria ostoyae*, or honey mushroom, was found to have been spreading through the Malheur National Forest, in eastern Oregon for an estimated 2,400 years. Analyzed by DNA, the mushroom covers 2,200 acres, is 3.5 miles across, extends three feet into the ground and covers 1,665 football fields. The discovery came in 1998 after Catherine Parks, a scientist at the Pacific Northwest Research Station in La Grande, Oregon, heard about a big tree die-off from root rot in the forest east of Prairie City and studied it by air, then at a variety of sites before determining it was a single organism.

Not bad for July, Dean.



# SOMA Calendar & Notes:

## Call For SOMA News Contributions

We are interested in hearing from our members and others in our broader community about their recent experience with mushrooms, be it an academic project, a cooking success, a foray, an art project, a meeting, a restaurant, a book review or just photos, for publication in the SOMA News. The monthly deadline is just before the first of the month. One page is about 500 words, which is a good starting point for tall tales, but short notices also are welcome. Photographs should be high resolution, close to 300 dpi high resolution or a jpg file of close to 1MB; credit is given. In a case where your idea for a contribution might be duplicated by some one else -- like a book review -- we suggest that you check in before writing. We can not guarantee that anything will be published, and we reserve the right to edit as we see fit for print, but fear not. Please send your contributions to: [SOMAnewseditor@SOMAmushrooms.org](mailto:SOMAnewseditor@SOMAmushrooms.org).

## SOMA Calendar 2014

**September 3rd -- Board Meeting at 6:30pm**  
**September 18th -- Meeting Speaker Stepanie Jarvis; at Sonoma County Farm Bureau, Santa Rosa; 7PM**  
**September 20th -- Public Foray & Cleanup Day (limit 40); Salt Point State Park, Sonoma County; 10AM**

**October 1st -- Board Meeting at 6:30pm**  
**October 16th -- Meeting Speaker TBA; at Sonoma County Farm Bureau, Santa Rosa; 7PM**  
**October 18th -- Public Foray (Limit 40); Salt Point State Park, Sonoma County; 10AM**

**November 5th -- Board Meeting at 6:30pm**  
**November 20th -- Meeting Speaker Dr. Denis Desjardin; at Sonoma County Farm Bureau, Santa Rosa; 7PM**  
**November 22nd -- Public Foray (Limit 40); at Salt Point State Park, Sonoma County; 10AM**

**December 3rd -- Board Meeting at 6:30pm**  
**December 13th -- Pot Luck Dinner; at Sonoma County Farm Bureau, Santa Rosa; 7PM**  
**December 20th -- Members Only Foray at (Limit 40); at Salt Point State Park, Sonoma County; 10AM**



## SOMA Financials

In order to comply with SOMA bylaws, the annual financial statement for the year ended July 31st, 2014 has been posted on the organization website [www.somamushrooms.org/about](http://www.somamushrooms.org/about); members need to use the user name and password sent in the email with this newsletter alert to access the information, or you may contact me for these.

These statements were prepared without an audit from the books and records of the Sonoma County Mycological Association, a not-for-profit 501(c)3 corporation. This annual report is certified by an authorized officer of the Corporation.

July Angell -- SOMA Treasurer  
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# Obit: Charmoon

By A SOMA Friend

Out the road in late April to the still-closed Yellow Jacket Campground we saw him with that slightly shy yet sly grin as he came out from beyond the picnic benches with his basket sort of behind him as if he could hide what he was doing: the duct tape on his knees also kind of gave away his activity.

That was a big part of this little guy's uniform for mushroom hunting: the tape to reinforce those old jeans' knees, a flannel shirt and the knit hat all secure but still looking wobbly atop his thinning pate. And the big smile when he saw you and asked about your mushroom luck.

One of his funny (to me, a bit) not so lucky times took place when some of us were up picking the Star Fire, hanging with some commercial pickers, Connie Green, several others and a damn bear ripped off the window of his little sedan in the middle of the night. Charmoon was really upset about that (it was funny, buddy) but more even about the campground bathrooms getting somehow backed up, the septic loudly sucking, the whiffs, the noise, the bear-ripped window. . . But hey--didn't we all get lots of morels?

He and I would cross paths in the woods more often really than if we had actually planned on going together but we did meet out there a lot but now seems like not quite enough.

He came to my 50th birthday party (with Linda Morris as a pal) and gave me this very neat bronze morel which I do cherish even more, now.

We used to cook in the Sierras or at the earliest SOMA Camps or his other events with sometimes David Arora, Larry Stickney, David Campbell, Rick Sjabel, and many other now old-timers or late and great dead guys.

We had some good times my friend--thanks for coming by.



## Collected by Charmoon© (or How “Dermocybeebie” got her name)

By Dorothy Beebee

I think it was almost 15 years ago— January 2000 or whenever it was that SOMA Camp was held at Well-Springs up in Philo. In those days Camp was only a few years old, and a comparatively simple event – no real “classes” or workshops per se, except the mushroom dye and papermaking innovative melées over which Miriam Rice held delightful and imaginative reign. Charmoon had become our Camp Director at that point, and that particular year Miriam couldn't come to teach at Camp, so Charmoon invited me to “fill in” for Miriam (gulp ~ those were mighty impressive shoes to try and fill...) I convinced Catherine Wesley to take on the polypore papermaking aspect and I would tackle the mushroom dyeing – All in one 8 x 10 ft supply closet as I remember, but fortunately with a hose and faucet just outside the door...

I remember arriving with my little car filled to the brim with dyepots and washbasins (or was it Elissa's little car?) ANYWAY when we finally arrived, I remember Charmoon shouting “Dermocybeebie is here!” He nicknamed me there on the spot because I was always compulsively seeking those little red, orange, and yellow-gilled *Cortinari*-us mushrooms (called “*Dermocybes*” back in ancient times) that made the red, rose and coral hued dyes! Charmoon had become fascinated with finding these as well, and ever after, as he was off seeking edibles with one hand, with the other, he always generously collected *Dermocybes* for me – wherever he hunted – from Oregon to Salt Point, under the pines near “Ya-Ka-Ama”, or along hidden roadsides in Sebastopol, I would get a phone call to “Dermocybeebie – I have mushrooms for you!” – to which I responded with all alacrity and anticipation, to the “*Dermocybe* Express”, dutifully made sketches, and executed my dye experiments with each new specimen, sharing all of the resulting dye samples over the years with an appreciative Miriam Rice. Pages and pages of my dye records say “found by Charmoon.” Many of these *Dermocybe* species we never fully identified; some we even sent up to Joe Ammirati at U of W., for his ID expertise. But all these many mushroom dye pages were and continue to be treasured, most especially because of their source – my generous and ever smiling compatriot and collector over the years – Charmoon! Happy Hunting, Dear-Heart!!!



# SOMA Graduate Level Scholarship Winners for 2014

By Rachel Zierdt

SOMA is very proud of its scholarship program. This year has been indeed extraordinary. We have been able to provide scholarships to six graduate students in mycology.

Our first winner is Claire Willing. As a PhD student at UC Berkeley, she is studying “fungal ecology and plant ecophysiology of the coast redwood system.” That is, she is looking at the interactions between mycorrhizal fungi and redwood trees that they are associated with.

Anna Bazzicalupa is studying at the University of British Columbia. In PhD thesis about *Russulas* of the Pacific NW, she is comparing the biogeographic relationships of these mushrooms with species found in Europe.

Fletcher Halliday is a local man who is now studying at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He began at studying fungi at Santa Rosa JC where he was researching the rust fungi found at Pepperwood Preserve. He is currently studying fungal infections in wild grasses for his PhD thesis.

Christopher Grace is pursuing his MS at California State University East Bay where is studying the taxonomy and systematics of 32 different *Marasmius* from Africa.

Joshua Harrison is working on a PhD at the University of Reno. His dissertation is about the diversity, distribution, and the ecological role of fungal endophytes. Endophytes are fungi that live within plant tissues without causing any overt signs of harm to the plant.

Natalie Humbalek is from Oregon State University. She is a PhD candidate studying *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis* (hope I spelled that right – it’s a chytrid fungus) which is wiping out populations of amphibians. On a personal note, I met Natalie when she and I were both judges at the Sonoma County Science Fair.

The team of Nic Janson, Lee McCarthy Smith, Jim Wheeler and Rachel Zierdt (chairperson) read all the applications and were able to convince the SOMA Board that this year six awards were in order. SOMA is fortunate that the past few SOMA Wild Mushroom Camps have provided enough funds to increase our awards from one or two in the past to four last year and six this year. We thank all those participating at camp for making this possible. We look forward to the upcoming camp 2015. Sign-ups should be beginning early October. Don’t miss out.

## SOMA MAP & DIRECTIONS

**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 Road

#### 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!

