

Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club

Volume 13, Issue 1

March/April 2013

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



WPMC President

Jim Wasik

ELCOME to another year of mushrooming. Last year some people had bountiful finds of morel, chanterelles, boletus, chicken- and hen-of-the-woods, while oth-

ers came back empty-handed. (I'm in that category). Let's hope that we find a lot of mushrooms as soon as the weather warms up. Punxsutawney Phil prognosticates an early Spring, for around March 21st. If he had seen his shadow, we would have expected 6 weeks of winter with Spring arriving around March 21st. Just like all good weatherman would predict. So much for Phil.

We are sorry that due to a change in plans at Mingo Creek County Park, Morel Madness will not take place there this year. At this time we are looking for alternative sites or Morel Mushroom Walks.

Please plan to attend the meeting each month—the schedule has been adjusted a little. **John Hayes** from the *Pittsburgh Post Gazette* will be speaking in June about Invasive Species. It should be an interesting talk. **Jeff Berkowitz**, our resident chef, is moving to August, hopefully right in the middle of prime wild mushroom season—maybe chanterelles or boletus. The **Lincoff Foray** is scheduled for Sept. 21; and to top off, a **Pot Luck Dinner**. *Ahhhh, more food*.

Remember this is *your* Club and we need *your help* to make it successful. If you can help, please contact me. We have a new Newsletter Editor, contact **Bea Drodge** if you have any mushroom-related information.

I thank all of my predecessors, and especially **Ginny Sleigh**, for all of the work that she did with the Newsletter over the last few years. Also, thank you to **Richard Jacob** and **Todd Kaufmann** for the up-dates to the website.

Now it's time to get out into the forests, yards, meadows and parks and start looking for mushrooms.

Fungi, Fun and Friends!

JIM WASIK - PRESIDENT 2013

DNA Barcoding Committee

by Richard Jacob

FTER THE RECENT presentation from Claire Burns on DNA barcoding and the donation of a PCR machine last September, a number of WPMC members have been thinking about how to implement the technique at WPMC. To recap the presentation for those that missed it, work on categorizing animals showed that comparisons of a region of DNA or a gene that shows a high rate of evolution can be used as a barcode that identifies and differentiates individual species. The use of DNA barcoding has enabled identical looking species to be separated into separate species. A recent example of a slightly different use of DNA barcoding was in the identification of horse meat in preprocessed "TV dinners" in the United Kingdom.

In the last few years there have been an increasing number of DNA barcoding studies of common and commercially interesting fungi species. The studies range in size from the identification and recharacterization of three species of Cantharellus to larger studies of a family of mushrooms like the recent taxonomic revision of true morels (Morchella) that described 19 North American species, 14 of which were new.

The WPMC has set up a committee to investigate DNA barcoding for the use of identifying and revising the taxonomy of local mushroom species. We might use the technique to confirm the identity of local Morchella (morels), or analyze the small yellow chanterelle like species that we observe locally. We will also be asking club members for sample suggestions. Like all techniques there are certain limitations, we can only compare the DNA barcodes that we generate from our samples to species that have been already analyzed. DNA barcoding of an unknown little brown mushroom is unlikely to produce any meaningful results, while comparing a number of similar looking Russula would allow us to differentiate between the species even if there is no matching sequences in the DNA databases.

The DNA Barcoding committee has reviewed the scientific literature and communicated with a number of companies that provide DNA sequencing and related services. We have come up with three main approaches that require different amounts of sample preparation, equipment and costs.

You can find a proposal on the work in the file section of the WPMC yahoo groups site, http://tech.groups.yahoo.com/group/wpamushroomclub/files/DNA%20Barcoding/.

We plan to try an approach that involves the simplest sample preparation and only a modest cost as a proof of principle. Once we are more familiar with the techniques we will look to carrying out more of the sample preparation ourselves so that we can reduce the cost. We hope to report the exact methods used and initial results in future issues of the newsletter and at the monthly meetings.

Mushroom Cultivation

by Jim Tunney

CULTURING MUSHROOMS ON AGAR THAT HAS BEEN POURED INTO PLASTIC SOUFFLÉ CUPS.

WROTE AN ARTICLE about using small jars for agar for the Mycophile that was published in the Sept/Oct 2006 issue. I still use this method sometimes, but it has a big drawback--the jars take up a lot of space. What I do use the 8 ounce jars for though is grain spawn; as a container for grain spawn they are relatively small. Two years prior to this article I received as a gift a case of 500 60-mm Petri dishes. These lasted me about 3 years. I would pour 40 to 60 plates to have around in case I came across something that I felt like growing. When I tried to get another case, they wouldn't sell to me. So I thought about the plastic soufflé cups that I use at work.

I buy them at a party store. They come in plastic sleeves of 125 and in different sizes ranging from a half ounce up to 5 ounces. It costs me about \$.07 for a cup and a lid, about one-third the price that I'd pay for plastic Petri dishes.

The recipe I'm following now for my potato agar is: one-half gallon of potato broth; 36 grams of agar; about 2 grams of nutritional yeast; and about 10 grams of sugar. The only thing about this recipe that I follow to the letter is the ratio of agar to broth. Sometimes I just put in a pinch of yeast, sometimes I weigh it, and the sugar is sometimes table sugar and sometimes some other sugar. I've used Maple sugar, honey, brown sugar, palm sugar, agave sugar, pretty much whatever sugar strikes my fancy when making up the agar. Every time I use a new sugar, I'm thinking, oh the mycelium is going to love this one, but I haven't noticed a difference in the way the cultures I've grown behave from sugar to sugar.

The process of pouring agar in soufflé cups is very similar to the one used to pour Petri dishes. I sterilize the agar in beer bottles, 9 ounces of Potato agar in 16 ounce beer bottles or 7 ounces of Potato agar in 12 ounce bottles. In the opening of each bottle I put some polypropylene pillow filling and cap it loosely with a small piece of aluminum foil and then into the pressure cooker. The soufflé cups are made out of number 5 plastic, polypropylene, and will not melt when agar is poured into them. The lids are number 4 plastic and are not as heat resistant as the cups and will warp if the agar is poured and capped when it is too hot, so I let the agar cool to somewhere near 140 Fahrenheit before I pour. In my glove box, I pour my agar into the soufflé cups from the sterilized beer bottles full of potato agar pouring about 2/3 of an ounce in each 2 oz. cup, quickly putting a lid on it and stacking them. When I first started using the soufflé cups, I was concerned that they might not be sterile, but apparently they are. I have had few contaminants show up in the cups. In fact, the last two batches I poured 160 cups and there was no contamination.

The poured cups have a good shelf life; I've used cups that had been poured 5 months prior with good results. The cups with the lids on are pretty airtight and there is very little shrinkage of the agar media from evaporation even after 5 months.

Some of the species I've cultured in these containers and later fruited on different mediums are Lentinus tigrinus, Pleurotus populinus, Pholiota aurivella and Lepista tarda.

Meeting Events:

| March 19 | Annual Meeting | |
|----------|-------------------------------|--|
| | How Many Mushroom Do You Know | |
| | Button Program | |

SPEAKERS Jim Wasik, Dick Dougall, John Stuart, Joyce Gross

Whether you're new to mushrooming or just rusty from being cooped up all winter, you'll enjoy this Introduction and Refresher by WPMC Identifiers and NAMA Knighton Award winner Joyce Gross plus Dick Dougall and John Stuart. Joyce, Dick and John will review mushroom terminology, classifications, and other essential information for our upcoming walks.

April 16 NAMA / NEMF meeting report

SPEAKERS John, Becky, John III and Kim Plischke

The Plischke family will bring us up to date on North American Mycological Association (NAMA). They will also present a slide show of the 2012 NAMA in Scotts Valley, California.

May 21 Cultivation Project

SPEAKERS Jim Tunney, Mark Spear, Rebecca Miller

WPMC Mycologist Jim Tunney will show WPMC members how to grow their own Oyster Mushrooms. Bring your WPMC membership card and a clean plastic shopping bag. You must be a current WPMC member to receive a mushroom kit.

Check our website for a compete list of the year's events. Details and updates for the following events will be included in future newsletters.

| June 18 SPEAKER | Invasive Species John Hayes, Pittsburgh Post-Gazette |
|----------------------|--|
| July 16 SPEAKER | Agaricus / Lepiota / Coprinus La Monte Yarroll |
| August 20 SPEAKER | Cooking Wild Mushrooms (demonstration) Jeff Berkowitz |
| Sept. 17 SPEAKER | Lincoff Foray Update: Barbara DeRiso, Dick Dougall Fungi: Toxins and Therapies Frank Lotrich |
| Sept. 21 | Lincoff Foray, North Park |
| Oct. 15 | Photography Contest, Rebecca Miller Election of Officers |
| Nov. 19 | Member Photos / Open Forum Pot Luck Dinner |

Walks & Forays

PMC REQUESTS that no one hunts a walk or foray location for *at least two weeks* prior to that walk or foray. It is only through your cooperation that we can have successful walks and forays. All walks and forays will be held rain or shine. Come 15-30 min early and socialize. All walks start on time, so be early, if you are late we will already be in the woods. You can find last minute additions or changes at Yahoo Groups: groups. yahoo.com/group/wpamushroomclub

For all walks and forays, bring water and lunch. Dress for the weather. Bring basket, wax or paper bags (no plastic) to keep mushrooms separated, whistle, compass, chair, hand lens, insect repellent, cell phone, and books for identification. Also bring a knife to dig up mushrooms for identification or to cut edibles off to keep them clean. Try to dig up 3 of the same species at different

APRIL 6 / 10AM - 12PM

Hampton Township Park, Allegheny County Meet Dick Dougall and Dick Duffy, swimming pool parking lot.

DIRECTIONS: From Route 8, turn onto Wildwood Road Extension (not toward North Park). Turn right onto School Road to Hampton Middle School. Go past the school to the end of the parking lot, the road makes a hard left. Turn left into park at sign for Tennis Courts, across from Hampton HS. Turn left at another sign to the Tennis Courts. Turn right at the stop sign to the swimming pool.

APRIL 21, EARTH DAY / 12 - 4PM

Frick Park Nature Center Meet Jim Tunney.

There will be 4 walks, each starting on the hour and lasting about 45 minutes. Jim will be posting this on the yahoo groups, he is asking for volunteers to help lead some of the walks.

APRIL 21

Ryerson Station State Park Contact Brian Davis at magnumdavisb@verizon.net for more info

APRIL 27 / 10AM - 12PM

Twin Lakes Park, Westmoreland County Meet John Plischke III and Kim Plischke

DIRECTIONS: Take Rt. 30 towards Greensburg. Turn onto Donohoe Rd. at the traffic light at Wendy's in front of Westmoreland Mall. From the east, this is a right turn. From the west, it is a left turn. Follow the road to the right towards the Toys R Us store. Continue straight through a traffic light and two stop signs. Turn left after the second stop sign onto Twin Lakes Road and follow the signs to Twin Lakes Park. Park in the Tamarack Parking Lot.

MAY 4 / 10AM - 12PM

Frick Park, Pittsburgh PA Meet Jim Wasik

Meet near the Blue Slide Playground (Beechwood and Nicholson). In the past several years, Morels have been found in Frick Park.

stages of development. Don't pick old mushrooms; leave them to drop their spores.

Bring your membership card and a friend or two. You are responsible for not getting lost. Use the 'Buddy System' when hiking through the woods. Don't rely on the fungi identification of the person standing next to you. Only club mycologists and identifiers should be used for advice.

The Walk Leader will tell you when to be back at the walk starting place where the mushrooms will be displayed and identified by Club Mycologists and Identifiers. Take notes and pictures to help you remember the mushrooms. You should go home and check books yourself. The decision to eat a wild mushroom is ultimately yours alone.

OTHER WALKS & FORAYS:

JULY 20-21

Ohio Mushroom Society Penitentiary Glenn, Holden Arboretum & Chapin Forest www.ohiomushroom.org

AUGUST 9-11

4th Annual CPWMC Wild Mushroom Foray. www.centralpamushroomclub.org/events

AUGUST 25

Outdoor Classroom, Boyce-Mayview Park www.theoutdoorclassroompa.org

AUG 30-SEPT 2

COMA 35th Annual Rogerson Foray Connecticut-Westchester Mycological Association

SEPT. 21

WPMC Gary Lincoff Mid-Atlantic Mushroom Foray – North Park

SEPT. 27-29

Mycological Association of Washington, Camp Sequanota, Jennerstown, Somerset County www.mawdc.org

OCT. 24-27

NAMA: Shepherd of the Ozarks, Arkansas www.sotocamp.com





2012 Outstanding Service Award

Cecily Franklin (L), Awards Chair, presents Ginny Sleigh (R) the WPMC 2012 Outstanding Service Award for her work as Newsletter Editor and Indiana County Chapter Co-Chair.

Identification Button

Dick Dougall,Past-President, presents Cecily Franklin,Recording Secretary, her 75 Mushroom Identification Button.

Rose Presentation

Valerie Baker (C) presents 'Roses of Appreciation' to Kim Plischke (L) and Shirley Caseman (R) for their service in 2012 as Lincoff Foray Kitchen Wizard and Monthly Hospitality Chair respectively.

Membership Report:

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL IS DUE NOW.

NOT A MEMBER? JOIN TODAY

To date (mid-February) we have 178 new and renewing members. Please look in your inbox or mailbox. You should have received an e-mail or hardcopy renewal notice around the end of January. Please return it as soon as possible.

Can't find the notice? No problem. An application is included in this Newsletter or you can download one from the WPMC website: **www.wpamushroomclub.org**, click on *Join the Club.*



Educational Program

Introducing Fungi: Hunting and Identification June 29, 2013

Join us on June 29, 2013 at the Harrison Hills Environmental Center, for *Introducing Fungi: Hunting and Identification* with members of the Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club.

Learn the basics of mushroom hunting, identification and edibility from 10:00-12:00. After lunch (bring your own lunch) and informal discussion, put your new-found skills into practice with a walk along the trails at Harrison Hills Park. See how many fungi you can learn, as we identify and label what we have found.

Cost is \$10 per person, 10 years and older. Program is open to WPMC Members and the Public.

SpongeBob... the MUSHROOM



photo credit: Tom Bruns, Mushroom Observer

A new species of mushroom has been named by its discoverers after the cartoon character SpongeBob Square Pants. The fungus, named Spongiforma squarepantsii by the researchers at San Francisco State University (SFSU), was found during an expedition to the forests of Borneo.

S. squarepantsii is shaped like a sea sponge and, say its discoverers, has a fruity or musty smell. Details are published in the scientific journal *Mycologia*.

The new mushroom is only one of two species that belong in the genus Spongiforma. The other one is found in central Thailand, but differs in its color and odor.



Chef Jeff Berkowitz prepares Mushroom Bisque at November 2012 Meeting





You'll find them in the WPMC Cookbooks, Volume 1 and 2

Soft-cover 5½" x 8½" book is printed in black and white. \$6 (\$5 for WPMC members), including tax, + \$1.50 S/H Cookbooks are available at club meetings and forays, and can also be purchased at the Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve.

Do you have an interesting Mushroom Recipe you'd like to share? Send it to our newsletter editor and it might be included in our Recipe Corner.

Recipe Corner

Cooking Mushrooms with Jeff Berkowitz

Rant for the day: I am so sick of people thickening a soup with roux and calling it bisque. I will go on the record as saying that this is incorrect use of the term "bisque". Bisque implies (if not outright demands) that the soup be thickened with rice. People can do as they wish, of course, but calling a simple creamed soup thickened with roux a bisque is the height of pretension and demonstrates a complete lack of knowledge and skill. On to more important things...

As you know, I have a ton of cooked mushrooms. This is a blessing, not a curse. Today, as I was thinking of the plethora of mushrooms in my possession, I suddenly had a hankering for cream of mushroom soup. One small complication is that my lovely wife is not eating gluten, making necessary a small adjustment to my recipe. I decided to thicken the soup with rice instead of flour and butter. Once the base was made I added the mushrooms and had a delightful mushroom bisque (see rant above) in about 30 minutes.

Mushroom Bisque

- 2 Tbsp extra virgin olive oil
- 1 large onion, peeled, diced
- 1 clove garlic, mashed
- 1/2 cup Arborio rice
- 1 tsp curry powder
- 2 quarts Water (or your stock of choice: chicken, vegetable, celery juice etc.)
- 2 cups sauteed mushrooms, any variety or combination that pleases you, with their accumulated juices
- 1/4 cup heavy cream
- 2 tsp sea salt (or to taste)
- freshly ground black pepper
- a pinch of thyme

1. Heat the sauce pan, add the oil and saute the onions and garlic until they are translucent.

2. Add the rice and the curry powder stirring until the curry powder becomes quite fragrant.

3. Add the water or stock stirring to make sure nothing is stuck to the bottom.

4. Bring this to a boil and then simmer for about 25 minutes until the rice is quite soft.

5. Using an immersion blender blend the soup until it is perfectly smooth and has the consistency of a light bechamel sauce.

6. Add the mushrooms and season with the rest of the seasoning.

You can finish the soup with heavy cream or even egg yolks for extra richness, but frankly, it should not need it.

Enjoy!

Servings: 4 bowls or 8 cups

Check out more of Jeff's recipes at: www.culinaryphilosopher.com



Washington & Greene Chapter:

Meetings: 6:00 – 7:45 pm 724-941-9430 www.ptlibrary.org Peters Township Public Library 616 East McMurray Road McMurray, PA 15317

MEETING SCHEDULE:

- April 21 Ryerson Station State Park / Contact Brian Davis for more information: magnumdavisb@verizon.net
- April 23 Spring meeting with Morel slide presentation
- July 23 Slide presentation on summer mushrooms like Chanterelles & Trumpets
- Sept. 24 Fall meeting; recap of past season and focus on Hens, Honeys, and Chickens.

OTHER EVENTS

March 2 Bonnie Davis at Washington County Spring Master Gardener's Seminar 8 am to 1 pm / Trinity Middle School, Scenic Drive, Washington PA

MUSHROOMING IN WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA

Have an interest in mushrooms? Have you ever attended a mushroom walk or foray? Learn about the variety of wild mushrooms that can be found in our parks and even your yard.

MUSHROOM WALKS

Several walks in Ryerson Station State Park with park manager Alan Johnson are being planned.

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WPMC MEMBERSHIP FORM

Anyone who has an interest in wild mushrooms is welcome to become a WPMC member.

COMPLETE THIS FORM PRINT CLEARLY, SIGN AND MAIL

Members are entitled to:

The WPMC newsletter • Nine monthly WPMC meetings • Free participation in WPMC walks • Fee discount for WPMC forays

| | _Date | | |
|---|----------|--|--|
| | | | |
| State | _Zip | | |
| _Phone 2 | | | |
| | | | |
| Interests (e.g.: foraging, identification, cooking, etc.) | | | |
| | _Phone 2 | | |

Please print in plain block lettering. Take special care with email addresses: numeral "1", uppercase "i" and lowercase "L" look the same.

ANNUAL DUES: 🗆 \$15 Individual 🗅 \$20 Family

\$10 Full-time Student

Amount enclosed: \$___

Please return completed, signed and dated form (with check payable to Western PA Mushroom Club) to:

WPMC, c/o Jim Wasik, 70 Woodland Farms Road, Pittsburgh, PA 15238 e-mail contact: WPMC.membership@gmail.com

or visit www.wpamushroomclub.org to pay using credit card.

Please indicate your meeting location preference: D Pittsburgh (Beechwood Farms) D Washington/Greene County

Please indicate your newsletter/event announcement preference: D Electronic via e-mail

Hardcopy via US mail

Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club Release and Indemnification Agreement

This Release and Indemnification Agreement (the "Agreement") is entered into by and between the Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club, as it is presently organized and may be later structured ("WPMC") and the undersigned Member (the "Member") on this ______ day of ______ day of ______.

WHEREAS, WPMC is a non-profit educational organization that has as its principal purpose the sharing of mushroom-related information among its members; and

WHEREAS, all officers, directors, identifiers and members serve WPMC in a voluntary capacity and receive no remuneration for their services; and

WHEREAS, in cases where WPMC charges a fee for its forays, walks, lectures and other events (collectively "WPMC Events"), it is doing so only to cover its direct costs and does not operate in a for-profit capacity; and WHEREAS, the Member understands that there is inherent and unavoidable risk in outdoor activities relating to hunting and consuming wild mushrooms. These risks include but are not limited to the dangers of hiking in difficult terrain, the possibility of misidentifying a wild mushroom, and the possible allergic or toxic reaction that some individuals may have to otherwise edible mushrooms.

NOW THEREFORE, the Member hereby agrees to the following:

- 1. The Member assumes all risks associated with WPMC Events. The Member expressly acknowledges that it is the Member's sole responsibility to hike safely and to determine whether a wild mushroom may be consumed.
- 2. The Member releases, holds harmless, and indemnifies the WPMC, its officers, directors, identifiers, and representatives from any and all liability relating to any injury or illness incurred by the Member or the Member's family members as a result of participation in a WPMC Event.

This Agreement shall be governed by the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. If any portion of the Agreement is declared for any reason to be invalid or unenforceable, such invalidity shall not affect any other provision of the Agreement. This Agreement shall apply to all current and future WPMC events.

| MEMBERS: | | | |
|---|--------------------|--|--|
| Signature (if Participant is under age 21, signature of Parent or guardian) | Please print name: | | |
| 1 | 1 | | |
| 2 | 2 | | |
| 3 | 3 | | |
| 4 | 4 | | |

Signed release form will be in effect from date of membership until termination of membership.



Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club

202 Wadsworth Drive Glenshaw, PA 15116

Volunteers Needed!!

The **13TH ANNUAL LINCOFF FORAY** will be held on Saturday, Sept. 21, 2013 at Rose Barn in North Park. Volunteers are need for a variety of tasks...

- Setup / Cleanup
- Hospitality / Greeters
- Walk leaders
- Identifiers
- Auction
- Audio visual support
- Cooking

To volunteer, please contact Barbara DeRiso: barbaraderiso@gmail.com *C'mon, we need your help!*

Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club



The newsletter of the Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club is published five times a year: March/April, May/June, July/Aug., Sept./Oct., and Nov./Dec. Articles, photos, news items and other submissions should be sent to the editor at least 6-8 weeks prior to targeted distribution for the best chance of inclusion.

Fungi, fun and friends!

The editor cannot guarantee that submissions will be included in the next newsletter. The editor reserves the right to make spelling or grammatical corrections and may suggest content changes to the author.

Material published in our newsletters may be used in other non-profit publications only with expressed permission and with appropriate acknowledgements.

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