



WESTERN PA



MUSHROOM CLUB

Volume 4, Issue 1
President: Dick Dougall

Editor: Becky Plischke
V, Pres: Glenn Carr
Sec: Joyce Gross

April May 2003
Treas: George Gross

MOREL MADNESS WEEKEND



Last year 135 people hunted morels with us at Mingo Creek Park, one of the beautiful Washington County Parks. Mingo Creek is in the southwest corner of PA near Washington, close to the Ohio and W VA borders. Well over fifteen hundred morels were found. We think we just scratched the surface. The area has many tulip poplars, ash trees and abounds in dying elm trees.

Check-in and registration for this year's huge event will be on **April 26** from 11:00 am to 1:00 at Shelter 6. At 1:00, nationally known mycologist John Plischke III will give a slide show on Morel Mushrooms and Their Poisonous Look Alikes. There will be a short break and at 2:30, we will split up into groups to hunt morels and other mushrooms. At 5:00, we will return to the shelter to identify, show and tell about our findings.

At 6:00, dinner will be on your own. At 8:00, John Plischke III will give his widely renowned slide show on Edible Wild Mushrooms and Their Preparation. At 9:00, there will be social time and open discussion around the main campfire. Many will be tent camping for the weekend. We will again hunt morels on April 27, Sunday morning from 10:00 till 12:00.

Last year this was probably the biggest morel foray on the eastern side of Michigan. Almost everyone met with success in finding morels. A number of other edible and poisonous mushrooms were also found.

The fee for non-members is \$5 program only and \$10 program and camping. If you show a

2003 WPMC membership card the program is free and the camping fee is just \$5.

For further information and pre-registration, contact Washington County Parks at 724-228-6867 or email emeryc@co.washington.pa.us The event is rain or shine. Oh yes, fungi, fun, and morels.

Editor's note: See the article, The First Morel and the Walk and Foray Schedule for directions.

DUES ARE DUE

Unless you have already renewed your WPMC membership for 2003, **your membership has expired and this will be your last newsletter.** It is time to sign up for the year 2003.

The Western PA Mushroom Club has grown to over 325 members. We have the opportunity to offer our members a large number of services.

Club President Dick Dougall has nine exciting meetings planned. Once again, Becky Plischke's five informative newsletters will be sent to club members. Thanks to our club mycologists and club identifiers, you will again have lots of opportunities to learn mushrooms at our many (last year we had 34) walks and forays.

Elizabeth Barrow is webmaster of our website. It is one of the country's top websites at: www.wpmc4.homestead.com While there check out Bob Lucas's revolutionary new Species List. Then click on our Yahoo Groups. It is a place to ask questions and share mushroom finds.

Because of these many opportunities, our club members have been learning edible and non-edible mushrooms at a tremendous rate.

That is a lot of bang for the buck. There is no place to get a better bargain for the cost.

Now is the time to fill in the membership form for the year 2003 and send it in along with your check so your membership continues. You don't want to miss out on Fungi, Fun, and Friends! **Don't delay, the time to do it is today.**

MOREL MUSHROOMS & some look alike and related fungi

by
John
Plischke III

THE EARLY SEASON MORELS



There is a lot of confusion with the Black Morels and a lot of disagreement on how many types there are, such as *Morchella elata*, *M. conica*, or *M. angusticeps*. It really does not matter what you call them as long as you know black morels are edible.

BLACK MOREL (Group)

(*Morchella elata*)

DESCRIPTION: Its height is from 1 ½ to 6 inches tall.

Cap: ¾ to 3 inches tall and ½ to 2 ½ inches wide at the base. It's tannish yellow when very young, then smoky gray becoming brownish black with age. The ridges are usually darker on the edges and can be lighter or darker than the pits. The whole cap turns dark with age. It is a darker color than the stalk. Its shape is like a conical or cylindrical bullet with a rounded tip. The cap is about twice as tall as it is wide. The pits are 1/16 to 3/4 inch tall and 1/16 to 1/4 inch wide and 1/8 to 1/4 inch deep. They do not go the whole way through the cap. The pits are usually taller than they are wide. The wavy pits and ridges are very irregular in shape. The base of the cap is connected to the stalk, but the cap can overlap the stalk about 1/8 inch.

Stalk: 1 to 4 inches tall and ½ to 1 ¼ inch wide. It is whitish to cream or creamy yellow and occasionally pure white and is lighter in color than the cap. It is narrower than the cap where they connect. The stalks on the smaller ones are wider near the base and on larger ones the stalks are usually wider near the top, but this is not always the case. The wall of the stalk is not very thick. As the mushrooms get taller, the stalks develop slight ridges or wrinkles. It pulled out, it is slightly lighter in color on the underground part where the mycelium connects.

WHERE TO LOOK: Under tulip poplar, elm and wild cherry. Tulip poplar is the most productive. When looking in the same woods, I find them twice as often under larger trees with huge trunks than the trees with smaller trunks. People often harvest them in burned areas such as logging burns but that species is called the Burnsight Morel (*Morchella atrotomentosa*). It has been reported to grow under conifers, pine, spruce, ash, and aspen. I do not find them there. I find more in rocky areas than other types of terrain. They can be growing through rotting leaf litter or not.

HOW OFTEN THEY'RE FOUND: occasional.

HOW THEY'RE GROUPED: They are found singly to scattered or in small groups.

SOCIAL PLANTS: I have seen them growing beside grapevines, Jack in the pulpit, black cohosh, Mayapples and wild blackberries. There can be social plants present or not.

WHEN TO LOOK: April and May. This is the first morel to fruit.

LOOK ALIKES: The other edible Black Morels (*Morchella angusticeps*) and (*Morchella conica*). The edible Yellow Morel, the edible Tulip Morel (*Morchella esculenta*), the edible Giant Morel (*Morchella crassipes*), and the edible White Morel (*Morchella deliciosa*) all differ by having lighter

colored caps that are not black. The edible Half Free Morel (*Morchella semilibera*) differs by a cap that is only half attached to the stalk. The poisonous false morels (*Gyromitra* sp.) look like a wrinkled brain and lack the sponge like holes. The two species of poisonous Thimble Cap Morels (*Verpa* sp.) differ by having caps without holes that are only attached to the stalk at the top of the cap. The poisonous (*Helvella* sp.), those that resemble morels, are saddle shaped or lobed and don't have the sponge like holes, they also usually have a different season. NOTE: Occasionally Black Morels can be found as large as the Giant Morels.

EDIBILITY: Edible and Choice. I think this is the most flavorful of all the morels.

MORELS, EGGS, AND HAM



This dish is fairly simple to make. First clean then chop up your morels. Sauté the morels in butter for a few minutes. Then crack open a few eggs, add them to the morels and scramble. (The 2 uncooked morels in this photo are for show only. Morels must always be cooked before consumption)

THE RIBBED STALKED CUP (*Helvella acetabulum*)



This mushroom appears a little earlier than the black morel. It has ribs all over its stalk. Keep an eye out for it. It is uncommon in our area and is definitely not edible.

Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club

Name: _____ Phone: _____ e-mail _____

Address: _____

WE NEED YOUR HELP

WHAT AREA WOULD YOU LIKE TO HELP WITH?

PLEASE CHECK THREE POSSIBLE ITEMS OF INTEREST

- Scout for walk locations
- Help organize forays
- Lead walks
- Work on newsletter committee
- Contribute articles, photos, etc. to newsletter
- Assemble and mail newsletters
- Help with web page
- Line up speakers for meetings
- Host guest speakers and mycologists
- Record meetings, discussions, events
- Sell club items, tee shirts, cookbook, etc., at meetings
- Publicize meetings, forays, events
- Club Historian
- Recruit members, maintain list of members
- Outreach-- speak to other clubs, nature centers
- Call or e-mail members
- Give a program at Club monthly meeting
- Produce or acquire teaching materials, resources, handouts for meetings
- Welcome and orient new members
- Coordinate coffee/refreshment
- Participate in special projects
- Record mushrooms that are found
- Conduct research on questionable mushrooms
- Present or assist with a club workshop
- Help with sign in at walks and meetings
- _____
- _____

Find something you would like to do. Check the appropriate boxes. We can have a lot of Fungi, Fun, and Friends but it takes your participation to make it happen.

Return completed form to: George Gross, 58 Seventh St. Ext, New Kensington, PA 15068

1/03

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2003



MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA MUSHROOM CLUB

The purpose of the Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club is to promote the enjoyment, study, and exchange of information about wild mushrooms. Everyone who has an interest in wild mushrooms is welcome to become a WPMC member. Members are entitled to:

- The WPMC newsletter
- Nine monthly WPMC meetings
- Free participation in WPMC Walks
- Fee discount for WPMC Forays
- Fee discount on WPMC sponsored merchandise

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Interests: Learning Mushrooms Microscopy Club Committees
 Eating Wild Mushroom Toxicology Cultivating Mushrooms
 Mushroom Walks Books Dyeing With Mushrooms
 Mushroom Photography Taxonomy Mushroom Art

How many wild mushrooms do you think you know? _____

How many wild mushrooms do you think you know well? _____

Other _____

Dues enclosed: \$ _____ (\$20 Family, \$15 Individual, \$10 Full time student)

RELEASE

I (We) realize that when engaged in wild mushroom activities, that serious physical injury and personal property damage may accidentally occur. I (We) further realize that there is always the possibility of having an allergic reaction to or being poisoned by the eating of wild mushrooms and that these adverse reactions to eating wild mushrooms range from mild indigestion to fatal illness.

Knowing the risks, I (we) agree to assume the risks, and agree to release, hold harmless, and to indemnify the Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club, and any officer or member thereof, from any and all legal responsibility for injuries or accidents incurred by myself or my family during or as a result of any mushroom identification, walk, foray, field trip, excursion, meeting or dining, sponsored by the club.

Signature _____ Date: _____

Signature _____ Date: _____

Return completed signed and dated form with check payable to W PA Mushroom Club to:

George Gross, 58 Seventh St. Ext, New Kensington, PA 15068

1/03

(over)



**THE THIRD ANNUAL
GARY LINCOFF
MID-ATLANTIC
MUSHROOM FORAY
Saturday, Sept. 20**

**7:30-8:15 Registration
8:30-7:00 Program**

**SPECIAL REGISTRATION FORM
FOR CLUB MEMBERS ONLY**

Featured speaker will be Gary Lincoff, author of the Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Mushrooms. Gary is the nation's best know mushroom expert. He is past president of the North American Mycological Association.



Join us for an exciting day of fungi, fun, and friends and mushroom exploration. We will hunt and field-identify mushrooms. Gary Lincoff will give a slide show, talk and autograph his book. We will show mushrooms under the microscope and taste mushroom cooking.

Cost is only \$50 at the door or \$20* each pre-registered and paid by June 15. Children 11 & under free. Registration is limited. We sold early the last two years, and turned people away. If you have any questions contact Chairman John Plischke at 724-834-2358 or morelbp@aol.com

Come and enjoy this exciting day with the
Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club !
(With the cooperation of Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve)
*does not include club membership

No refunds

**THE THIRD ANNUAL
GARY LINCOFF
MID-ATLANTIC MUSHROOM FORAY**

FUNGI FUN FRIENDS

SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2003

BEECHWOOD FARMS NATURE RESERVE
(HOME OF THE AUDUBON SOCIETY OF WESTERN PA)
614 DORSEYVILLE ROAD · PITTSBURGH PA 15238
412-963-6100 HTTP://WWW.ASWP.ORG

Make check payable to: Western PA Mushroom Club,
58 Seventh St Ext, New Kensington, PA 15068

Foray Registration Form

Name 1 _____

Name 2 _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____

E-mail _____

RELEASE

Knowing the risks, I (we) agree to assume the risks, and agree to release, hold harmless, and to indemnify the Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club, and any officer or member thereof, from any and all legal responsibility for injuries or accidents incurred by myself or my family during or as a result of any mushroom identification, field trip, excursion, meeting or dining, sponsored by the club.

Signature _____ Date: _____

Signature _____ Date: _____

DIRECTIONS: 12 Minutes from PA Turnpike Exit 5, Allegheny Valley (New Kensington/Pittsburgh) after tollbooth go south 1.2 miles on Freeport Road towards Pittsburgh. At the fourth stoplight (Eat'n'Park Restaurant on the right) turn right onto Guys Run Road. Go 4.1 miles to the second stop sign. Notice, part way on your journey Guys Run Road will become Fox Chapel Road without any notification. Fox Chapel Road dead ends into Dorseyville Road. Turn left on Dorseyville and go .7 of a mile to Beechwood, on the right.

NEW CLUB OFFICERS

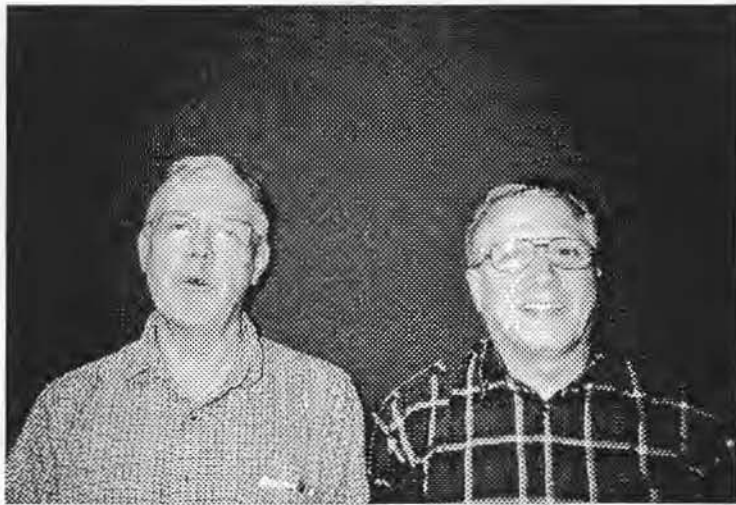
By Mary Ellen Dougall

Glenn Carr, our new Vice President, is a Pittsburgh native (O'HaraTwp.). He and his wife, Gay live in the North Hills. They have one daughter; he also has three sons. He retired 1 ½ years ago from his systems technology job with PPG; he was with them 35 years.

His interest in mushrooms started many years ago. He once lived in Aspinwall, where there was a large elm stump in the yard. Many sheepshead grew there and an elderly Italian lady would ask whether she could have them. Glenn would be rewarded with a plate of her delicious mushroom chop suey.

When Glenn & Gay lived in Barcelona, Spain, he found the same mushrooms there, so he cooked them. (At that time, he believed the Old Wives Tale of cooking them with a dime to determine whether they were edible.) His wife & daughter were upset about his plan to eat them. He decided to first try them out on his cat who had a penchant for mushrooms. The cat enjoyed them (though not as much as canned mushrooms) and suffered no ill effects, so Glenn ate them too.

Glenn volunteers at Beechwood Farms, working on bird seed sales and special events like Apple Jamm and the Maple Sugar Festival. It was there he met Jerry Price, who told him about the Mushroom Club and invited him to join.



Club President, Dick Dougall and Vice President, Glenn Carr

Joyce Gross, our new Secretary, spent most of her life in the New Kensington area. Almost 10 years ago, while living with her grandfather in Lower Burrell, there was an extremely good year for mushrooms. Joyce was enthralled with all the mushrooms that kept popping up on his property. Her curiosity led her to buy a mushroom field guide so she could identify

them. Her grandfather knew the honey mushrooms and the blewits, both of which he picked since childhood.

In 2000, Joyce saw an article announcing Mushroom Mania II; even though she was 9 months pregnant, she and her husband, George, attended. Their daughter, Jill, was born 3 days later.

Joyce is amazed at the number of people who attend forays and meetings and at the wide variety of their ages and backgrounds. She is impressed with how new members keep appearing and credits the club's excellent publicity.

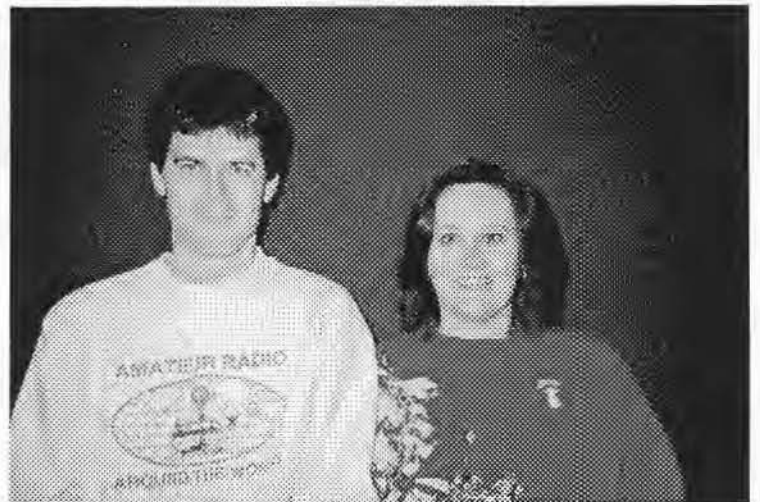
Right now, Joyce is a stay-at-home mom. She is fortunate to be able to also express herself through artistry. She thrives in painting large things ... murals, building exteriors and life size things. She previously worked for an ad agency. Joyce also enjoys crafts, right now rubber stamping being a particular interest.

George Gross, our new Treasurer, is a Senior Repair Technician for Dymax Corp. He repairs medical equipment such as the portable ultrasound. After high school, he spent 4 years in the Army, 2 of them in Germany. He also is a native of New Kensington.

George is very involved with the Skyview Radio Society, an area ham radio club for which he serves as secretary. He has won numerous awards for his morse code knowledge and possesses the highest class of license for ham radio operators. George has done quite a bit of remodeling on their home, and according to Joyce, is a great handyman.

Like his wife, George enjoys hiking. Though not yet very knowledgeable about mushrooms, his keen eyesight spots them faster than Joyce. He leaves the identification to her.

We all welcome Glenn, Joyce & George and look forward to a long association with them.



Treasurer, George Gross and Secretary, Joyce Gross

THE LATE SEASON MORELS



There is a lot of confusion with the Yellow Morels and a lot of disagreement on how many types there are. Some people consider that there is only one yellow morel but others feel there are also a White Morel, a Tulip Morel, and a Giant Morel. It really does not matter what you call them as long as you know yellow morels are edible. Always cook morels.

YELLOW MOREL GROUP

(*Morchella esculenta*)

DESCRIPTION: Its height is usually 2 ¼ to 5 ¾ inches tall.

Flesh: Thin and a little brittle.

Cap: 1 to 3 ½ inches tall and ¾ to 2 inches wide. It is light tan to yellowish or yellow brown and can sometimes be darker in the pits with age or drying. It gets wider near the base. It is a darker color than the stalk. Its shape is like a conical bullet with a rounded tip. The cap is typically about twice as tall as it is wide. The pits are usually taller than they are wide. The pits are 1/8 to 3/4 inch tall and 1/8 to 1/4 inch wide and 1/8 to 1/4 inch deep. The pits and ridges are very irregular in shape. There is a slight ring like moat where the stalk goes into the cap on mature specimens. It can be bent over the stalk from age and moisture. It is hollow.

Stalk: 1 ¼ to 2 ¼ inches tall and ½ to 1 1/8 inch wide. It is white to cream in color and it is lighter in color than the cap. It is not as wide as the cap where they connect. The wall of the stalk is not very thick. It is not as tall as the cap. It can be granular. It is hollow and can often become a little wider going towards the base.

WHERE TO LOOK: On the soil under apple trees (*Malus*) and in old apple orchards. The apple trees have to be dying or at least partially dead. My spot is an old abandoned orchard that has turned into a woods. The other species of taller trees there crowd out the apple trees. Don't bother hunting in healthy and maintained orchards, you will usually not find any morels there. If you find a single apple tree in the woods that has morels, once it dies you will not find morels there any more. Also, look under dead and dying elms that are infected by the Dutch elm disease. Morels will appear several years after the elm has died. Tulip poplars are also productive trees that should be checked. Occasionally, morels grow under ash, hawthorns, beech, cottonwood, sycamore, oak and fruit trees, such as pear, and in old burned areas. In some parts of the U.S., they can be found under alder and evergreens. Railroad tracks can be productive if you are not afraid of toxins such as DDT that may have been sprayed there. A local well-respected mushroom expert picks them in quantity along river bottoms, but I have never found them there.

HOW OFTEN THEY'RE FOUND: occasional or common.

HOW THEY'RE GROUPED: It is found singly to scattered or in a small group.

SOCIAL PLANTS: Mayapples can be found growing beside the morels and overgrow and cover them in the later season. Garlic mustard, grass, honeysuckle vines, jewelweed, multiflora rose, privet hedge, spicebush, trillium and purple violets can also be found growing alongside them.

WHEN TO LOOK: The middle of April through May. May is the best month for quantity. If you really push it, every few years you can find one the first week of June, but it is not worth the trouble. It is best to look when the soil is damp. They appear after the black morels have started.

LOOK ALIKES: The edible Giant Morel (*Morchella crassipes*) is taller and has a thicker foot. The Tulip Morel cap is not as distinct and its stalk gradually connects to the cap on a slope. The smaller edible White Morel (*Morchella deliciosa*) differs by having whitish colored ridges. The edible Black Morel group (*Morchella elata angusticeps, conica, etc.*) has a black cap when mature. The edible Half Free Morel (*Morchella semilibera*) differs by having a cap that is only half attached to the stalk. The poisonous false morels (*Gyromitra sp.*) that look like a wrinkled brain or are saddle shaped and lack the sponge like holes. The two species of poisonous Thimble Cap Morels (*Verpa sp.*) differ by having caps without holes that are only attached to the stalk at the top of the cap. The poisonous (*Helvella sp.*), those that resemble morels, are saddle shaped or lobed and don't have the sponge like holes, they also usually have a different season.

EDIBILITY: Edible and Choice. They have a meaty flavor that reminds me of steak.

THE MID SEASON MOREL



THE HALF FREE MOREL

The Half Free Morel is the only morel with its cap hanging half free from the stalk. All edible fungi should be cooked.

(*Morchella semilibera*)

DESCRIPTION: Its height is from 1 ¾ to 5 ¼ inches tall.

Flesh: It is thin.

Cap: From ¾ to 1 ¼ inches tall and ¾ to 1 ¼ inches wide. It is tan to yellowish brown becoming light then dark brown in color with age. It is even in color to darker on the ridges once it starts turning older. The cap shrivels up with age, the ridges can become blackened and the stalk seems too large for the cap. It is darker in color than the stalk. The cap is as tall as it is wide. The pits are 1/8 to 3/4 inch tall and 1/16 to 1/4 inch wide and 1/16 to ¼ inch deep. The pits are usually taller than they are wide. The pits and ridges are very irregular in shape. The cap overlaps the stalk from 1/4 to 3/4 of an inch. Its outer margin often becomes cracked with age.

Stalk: 1 ¼ to 4 ¾ inches tall and ¼ to 1 ¼ inches wide. It is whitish or cream color or creamy yellow and lighter in color than the cap. It is fairly even in width, or a good bit wider near the base. It is narrower than the cap where they connect but sometimes not a lot, with the exception of when the cap is all shriveled up. The wall of the stalk is not very thick. On older specimens, the stalks may have slight ridges near the cap. It is taller than the cap. Occasionally, on older specimens, the stalk gets so big that it causes the cap to pop off and all that is found is the stalk. This is the only morel that this usually happens to.

FIELD OF MORELS



Elm trees are the most productive for finding the Giant Morels. This elm tree had over 100 giant morels under it. This photo was taken on one of the club morel hunts last year. Make sure to come hunting morels with the mushroom club this year because we will be going back to this spot.

DRYING MORELS



To dry my morels I like to use a food dehydrator. I use one made by Nesco called American Harvest. I purchased it at Wal-Mart several years ago for less than \$50.00. Just use a brush to remove any dirt from the mushrooms then slice them in half and place them in the dehydrator. Never wash your morels before drying them or they will become too soggy and will not dry properly.

FALL MORELS?

Have you heard people say that they find morels in the fall? True morels do not grow in the fall. In that season you will only find poisonous false morels or morel look alikes, two of which are pictured below.

Gyromitra infula



I found this *Gyromitra* in October when I was coming home from a club walk at Cook Forest State Park growing on wood. It is poisonous and should not be eaten. Note that its cap is saddle shaped or lobed and lacks the sponge like holes of a morel.

Helvella lacunosa



This *Helvella* grows in the fall. Its edibility is unknown. Don't eat it. Unlike morels, it has ribs on its stalk.

OUR FIRST MOREL

BY MIKE LLOYD

The Spore...

Sometimes the seeds (or spores) of passion have long incubation periods. You often hear of couples who have known each other since childhood, were close friends (or sometimes not)— only to find a single moment in which their dormant attraction for each other blossoms into romance. Although not quite the subject matter for a spicy novel, my interest in mushrooms had a similar gestation period.

As a gymnast for the University of Pittsburgh, I lived in Panther Hollow, a close-knit ethnic community in Oakland. One of our favorite neighbors was an Italian immigrant who would bring us a large mushroom each fall, known simply as the "sheep-head." He cooked a portion of the mushroom for us in butter and garlic. We loved it! I was more interested, however, in where these mushrooms could be found and asked many questions about their location. Not knowing that I had committed the first of many mushroom-hunting faux pas, my neighbor would simply smile, say "in the woods" and promptly leave.

The spores were planted and the mycelium was growing...

After years of outdoor activity, my interest in mushrooms finally sought escape through my new learning tool, the internet. I learned as much as I could during my lunch hours and eventually discovered our fair Club. After joining the Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club last fall, it was fate that my first mushroom discovery was a beautiful Hen-of-the-Woods.

Throughout the winter I developed a fascination (some might call obsession) with the mysterious morel. I read many books and articles on morels during those long winter months. The passion had spread to my daughter, Jennifer, a junior naturalist and my hiking buddy.

By the end of March we were already out looking for the first signs of the black morel. We worked hard at identifying elm, ash and apple trees without their leaves and spent many hours contemplating southern slopes and distinctions between apple and crab apple trees.

As March gave way to April and April to May, we found ourselves completely frustrated, covered with poison ivy and yet to find our first morel. I was beginning to think that perhaps the whole morel persona was a collective "snipe hunt." As a last ditch effort, Jen and I joined our Club for the foray at Mingo Creek.

We were greatly impressed that most of our foray peers found a few morels almost at once. We were hopeful that we may be so lucky, but after two hours without success became discouraged about the prospects of being skunked for an entire season. We were told to keep looking, we just needed to "develop an eye" for morels.

With 20 minutes to go before our scheduled departure time (actually a full hour after we had promised the rest of the

family we would be home), I called Jennifer over to discuss our final search pattern. As she approached, she suddenly locked up "on point" in the manner of a champion English Setter. She did it! She found a most beautiful 6 inch yellow morel at the base of an ash tree.

If our find had been a million dollars, our celebration would not have been more exuberant. We high-fived, hugged and sang our own morel song. It was truly a moment that I will never forget. We carefully cut the morel and placed our solitary soldier carefully in our basket. Then with the same precautions used by demolition experts carrying live bombs, Jen and I, together, carried our prize to show John Plischke. Jen wanted him to see her find as he and his family had been so kind to her earlier.

As we called out for John, he replied "over here — watch where you step." He was sitting under a tree with pipe in hand looking very much like the wise elder. John displayed proper enthusiasm for Jen's morel and then told her to carefully look around her current location. In our excitement, we had not noticed that we were literally standing in a patch of beautiful yellow morels. John was very kind to share his spot with us and we felt wonderful returning home with a full basket of morels.

The sickness in full bloom...

Later that same weekend, my family took a bicycle hike on one of the local trails. My wife was pulling a trailer with our feisty two-year old and a neighbor toddler. I was supposed to be supervising the rest of our children including our five year old's first attempt of riding a "big-girl bike" on a real trail.

As I was mostly keeping track of my crew, I happened to spot a little yellow morel. I finally had the "eye!" I immediately stopped the bike, ran into the woods and discovered a patch of 20 or more yellow morels. At the same time this happened, however, my wife discovered that the two darling children in the trailer were screaming and pulling each other's hair out of their heads. In addition, the 5 year old had somehow gotten ahead of me and was proceeding at a very rapid pace down a steep hill to the parking lot apparently unsure of the braking process. Unbelievably, my wife expected me to leave the morel patch and join the excitement at her end of the trail.

In retrospect, I realize now that the politically-correct decision would have been to run to the aid of my family. But in the end, it all worked out. The two year old has a complete head of hair again, the five year old is now an expert at using her brakes and we found a great morel patch for next year. Its location? It's in the woods...

So, for Jen and I, thank you WPMC for the information, encouragement and outlet for our new hobby.

THE GARY LINCOFF MID-



Pictured on the left is Gary Lincoff teaching mushrooms to the gang. Shown are only part of the mushrooms that were positively identified. Gary is the best know mushroom expert in the world and author of the National Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Mushrooms.

Pictured to the right is one of the pre-sort tables. As dry as it was, a lot of mushrooms were found. The picture features Becky Byerly who took a number of these pictures. Other Mushroom Mania photos were taken by John Plischke.

Gary will be back this year on **September 20** for the third straight year. This is one of the largest fall mushroom forays in the USA. Don't miss out, join the Western PA Mushroom Club today.

Last year the WPMC had 9 very special mushroom meetings, 34 walks and forays, and 5 informative newsletters. Join today.



ATLANTIC MUSHROOM FORAY



The picture above, on both pages, was taken with a panoramic camera and is joined with another picture on the right. It shows only about 45 of the 150 people that were in attendance. We are sorry if your picture was not shown, but we didn't have a camera that would take a picture big enough to show everyone.

The cost to join the Western PA Mushroom Club is only \$15 individual and \$20 family. The cost for Mushroom Mania for members who register early is only \$20 each. Many mushroom forays of this size cost \$300-350. What a bargain!



Here are some of the attendees having lunch in the back lawn of the beautiful facilities of Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve, home of the Audubon Society of Western PA. A bird's eye view of the facilities can be viewed at www.aswp.org/beechwood.html. It is one of the premier nature facilities in the US. The area abounds with large oak trees.

MUSHROOM TASTING?



15 DIFFERENT MUSHROOM DISHES

Morel Dip
Chanterelle Dip
Sulfur Shelf Snack
Bolete Soup
Marinated Mushrooms
Hen of the Woods & Egg
Mayan Enchiladas (Corn Smut)
Chanterelles in Cream Sauce
Chicken Mushroom Cacciatore
Sparassis Cheese Squares
Oyster Mushrooms, Crab & Béarnaise Sauce
Shittake, Portobello, Spinach & Feta Cheese
Chicken & Morels in Cream Sauce
Portobello, Sulfur Shelf & Flatbread
Quiche with Portobello & Chanterelles



We called it Mycophagy or mushroom tasting. These people called it a mushroom feast! The food just kept coming and coming!



THE AFTER PARTY



All those who worked the Mushroom Mania 4 event were invited to the after party. Of course, in this club you had to buy your own refreshments. Club members pictured left to right are, club president Dick Dougall, Peter Baker and Mary Woehrel. Gordon Callahan, the Executive Chef of the Mycological Association of Washington, DC, did a mushroom cooking demonstration. Jon Ellifritz, the head mycologist of the Mycological Association of Washington, DC was a tremendous help with identification. Many of you may not know that Mary Woehrel, our club's first president, came early and stayed late to make sure that Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve stayed open much longer than it normally does.

Do they look a little tired? They ought to. They just had 12 hours of Fungi, Fun and Friends. They and 36 others worked so hard so that everyone could learn mushrooms.



In this picture are Cindy Gaulin, Steve Gaulin, Mike McFadden, Bob Lucas, our mycological recorder, and Elizabeth Barrow, our webmaster.

WILD MUSHROOM COOKBOOK

Volume 2

We are working on compiling Vol 2, but we need more recipes. We are waiting for your addition to Vol. 2. We cannot use copyrighted material or anything you have not tried and enjoyed. Send your recipes to Becky Plischke at morelbp@aol.com or mail to 129 Grant St, Greensburg, PA 15601.

WILD MUSHROOM COOKBOOK

Volume 1

There are still some copies of Vol. 1 available. If you haven't gotten yours, send for it today before they are all gone.

Members can have a Mushroom Cookbook for \$5, tax included, or \$6 nonmembers, plus shipping and handling of \$1.50. Send your check payable to the WPMC to 129 Grant Street, Greensburg, PA 15601. You can save the shipping and handling charges by picking up a copy of the cookbook at a meeting or walk.

TAKE US FOR A WALK

If you want to lead a mushroom walk in your area, we would be glad to come. Find a place to have a walk and scout it out. If it is a park or nature area, make sure we are permitted to collect mushrooms there. Call our Walk & Foray Chairman, John Plischke III at 724-832-0271 or email fungi01@aol.com. He will put the walk on our schedule. Club Identifiers will help with the identification.

CLUB TEE SHIRT

We are pleased to announce a club tee shirt is now available. You can wear your WPMC tee shirt and let everyone know about our wonderful club. At the December meeting, members voted on 8 designs that were submitted. Most people felt it was too hard to decide, there were so many excellent designs that represent our club.

Get yours at a walk or meeting for only \$15 for members, \$20 for non-members.

ARTICLES WANTED

Email them to Becky Plischke today morelbp@aol.com or mail to 129 Grant St, Greensburg, PA 15601.

We anxiously anticipate your article, recipe, joke, puzzle, story or cartoon for the newsletter. Tell us about a mushroom hunting outing.

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

by Dick Dougall

I would like to wish all our old and new members good luck in their mushroom hunting efforts in this new year. I hope the club can help in increasing the enjoyment of your experiences afield. Remember our club motto is: Fungi, Fun, & Friends.

I would like to welcome our new officers for the coming year: Glenn Carr, Vice-President; Joyce Gross, Recording Secretary; George Gross, Treasurer; and Valerie Baker who is switching to Corresponding Secretary and Publicity Chair. I am looking forward to working with them and the rest of the Executive Board in the coming year.

We are working on an exciting set of program meetings and walks. We want to expand our Executive Board to help the club in a variety of ways. We will be asking for your help. More information will be coming.

I would like to alert our members to some additions to our club website: <http://www.wpmc4.homestead.com>. Bob Lucas has been expanding its capability greatly. He has added a list of mushrooms that have been found on club walks and forays. This is what birders call a "Life List." The nice thing about this list is that it has been linked to photographs of mushrooms and other references. We as individual club members might be able to generate our own "life lists." We will be checking with Bob on ways to use this tool in club activities.

Finally, I would like to keep encouraging members to always be on the lookout for mushrooms. Robert Fornof reports that he has been finding Brick Tops growing on maple stumps now (late December) and is still generating oyster mushrooms from his kit he got at our July meeting! He added more straw as a growing medium. John Plischke also reminds us that he finds oyster mushrooms on trees even in the winter of year.

WALKS & FORAYS by John Plischke III

We request that no one hunts a walk or foray location for at least two weeks prior to a walk or foray. It is only through your cooperation that we can have successful walks and forays. You can find last minute additions or changes by going to our website at <http://www.wpmc4.homestead.com> and click on the link to the Yahoo Groups.

April 12 - 1:00-??, Pine Ridge Lodge, Indiana County. Meet **John Plischke** and **John Plischke III**. Take rt. 22 east past Blairsville to the intersection at rt. 119; bear right on 119 south and then an immediate left at Chestnut Ridge Inn onto old rt. 22. Veer right onto Strangford Road, as you round a sharp curve, turn left onto Chestnut Ridge Road. Go about 2 mi. look for Pine Lodge sign on the left. Meet at the lodge. <http://www.indiana-co-pa-tourism.org/recreat.html> This is a site that my dad, Robert Boice and I have hunted morels in the past. Morel slide show and hunt.

April 26-27 - 10:00 am Morel Mushroom Madness Weekend, Mingo Creek, Washington County. Meet **John Plischke** and **John Plischke III**. I 70 to Exit 9 Eighty Four/Glyde. Take Rt. 519 N for 2 miles. At a red light turn right onto Rt. 136. Go 4.4 miles and turn left at a sign to Mingo Creek Park. Follow signs to the park. Turn right then cross a covered bridge that is just before the Park Office. Meet at Shelter # 6. Free to members with 2003 membership card. Fee for non-members, \$5. Morel slide show, mushroom hunts, Edible Mushrooms & Their Preparation Slide Show, and lots more. Camping is available for the weekend for \$5. We found morels at this program last year. <http://www.washpatourism.org/parks.html>

May 3 - 10:00-12:00(?), Blue Run Trail, Allegheny County. Meet club President **Dick Dougall** and club Vice President **Glen Carr** at Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve and then proceed to Blue Run Trail. Directions can be found at the bottom of the page.

May 10 - 10:00-2:00, Return to **Mingo Creek**, Washington County. Meet **John Plischke** and **John Plischke III** in the parking lot of Shelter 4. See the directions on April 26. We will hunt mushrooms.

For all walks and forays, bring water and food. Dress for the weather. Bring basket, wax bags, whistle, compass, chair, hand lens, and books for identification. Come 15-30 min early and socialize. Check web site or Yahoo Groups for changes. Bring your membership card and a friend or two

WPMC Meetings/Programs by Dick Dougall

Meetings/Programs begin at 7:00 pm at Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve.

March 18: Major Categories of Mushrooms, Dick Dougall, president of the WPMC. This program will help mushroomers learn more about identifying mushrooms. Identifying mushrooms can be confusing for beginning mushroomers. Dick will share information about mushroom classification.

April 15: Mushroom of Hawaii, and Morels of PA presented by **John Plischke III**, club mycologist and award winning photographer. Both last year and this year he visited Hawaii to study and photograph mushrooms, some are the same, some are different. There will also be an interactive morel program.

May 20: Cultivation, Collection and Uses of Reishi Mushrooms, Mark Spear & Rebecca Miller, from Sylvan Mushrooms, Inc. The Reishi mushroom (*Ganoderma lucidum*), also known as ling chi and mannentake is called by the ancient Chinese the "mushroom of immortality" or the "herb of spiritual potency" (quotes from Lincoff). The speakers will discuss modern day cultivation, collection and uses of this mushroom. They will also show an example of a little homemade cleanbox that can be used for doing mushrooms culture work in the kitchen. These club members are two of the top mushroom cultivationists in the world. They studied under Dr. Dick Homola at the University of Maine and at Penn State University. They will continue their demonstration on the ease of which you can grow mushrooms on your own. Based on their success on last year's presentation on oyster mushrooms, this promises to be an exciting program.

DIRECTIONS

DIRECTIONS to Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve: (<http://www.aswp.org/beechwood.html>)

12 minutes from PA Turnpike Exit 5, Allegheny Valley (New Kensington/Pittsburgh) after tollbooth go south 1.2 miles on Freeport Road towards Pittsburgh. At the fourth stoplight (Eat'n'Park Restaurant on the right) turn right onto Guys Run Road. Go 4.1 miles to the second stop sign. Notice, part way on your journey Guys Run Road becomes Fox Chapel Road without any notification. Fox Chapel Road dead ends into Dorseyville Road. Turn left on Dorseyville and go .7 of a mile to Beechwood, on the right.

"Largest Mushroom Club in the Ten-State Area"

Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club
58 Seventh St. Ext.
New Kensington, PA 15068



Complimentary
Issue

**DUES ARE DUE
MORELS, MORELS, MORELS
MID-ATLANTIC FORAY PICTURES
OUR FIRST MOREL**

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