



Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club

Newsletter Volume 7, Issue 1
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Group photo of attendees at 2005 Morel Madness, photo by Becky Plischke

Morel Madness Weekend

By John Plischke

This is probably the biggest morel foray on the eastern side of Michigan. Although, last year with the lack of rain it was a little slow. This is usually a huge foray with almost everyone finding morels.

It will be held on April 29 and 30 at Mingo Creek Park, near Washington, Pa and close to the Ohio and WV borders. The area has many tulip poplars, ash and abounds in dying elms.

Check-in and registration for this year's huge event will be on **April 29** from 11:00 am to 12:00 at roadside near the Henry House. At 12:00, welcome, instructions and agenda review. 12:15 nationally known mycologist John Plischke III will give a slide show on Morel Mushrooms and Their Poisonous Look A-likes. There will be a short break at 1:00. At 1:15, morel hunting excursions by yourself or with a group leader. At 5:00, morel madness roundup, return to shelter 8 for show and identification. At 5:30, free time, dinner, camp set up (on your own). This will be followed by a walk with

Jeff, super naturalist and head of the Washington County Parks. At 8:00, evening slide show, Edible Wild Mushrooms and Their Preparation. At 9:00, campfire social time at shelter 8 fire circle. **Many will be tent camping for the weekend.** We will again hunt morels on **April 30**. Continental breakfast at 8:00. Morning morel hunt at 9:00, meet at shelter 8.

The fee for non-members is \$5 program only and \$10 program and camping. If you show a 2006 WPMC membership card the program is free and the camping fee is just \$5.

You must pre-register with the Washington County Parks at 724-228-6867 or email Christine at emeryc@co.washington.pa.us The event is rain or shine. Oh yes, fungi, fun, friends and morels.

[Editor's note: See the other articles on morels, and the Walk and Foray Schedule for directions.]

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From the Editor

By Jim Strutz
strutzj@strutz.com

The Plischkes are among the handful of people who founded our mushroom club. Under their leadership we have grown from literally nothing to one of the most active mushroom clubs in the country with now more than 400 members. John served as our first vice-president and later as president while Becky has been the newsletter editor from the very beginning. They have also worn many other hats through the years, way too many to list here. Nobody has done more for the club than they have.

The club is structured and grown to the point where John and Becky are 'passing the torch' to other people on the executive board and to committee chairs. Most obviously, I have volunteered to become the new newsletter editor. The shoes that Becky is leaving are huge and I can only hope to fill them adequately. You will notice some format changes in this newsletter. You may notice some other changes in future newsletters as I grow into this job.

One of the things I hope for during my tenure as newsletter editor is more involvement from **YOU**. I would like to hear your comments and suggestions for what you want to see in the newsletter. I also am asking you to write and submit articles on anything involving mushrooms: your favorite recipe, that rare mushroom you found last year, your most memorable mushroom adventure, or an explanation of current taxonomy changes. And, of course, you can tell us all where your favorite mushroom hunting spots are! Seriously, this newsletter is the voice of our club and there's nothing more terrifying to a newsletter editor than having nothing to publish. So please help me out and submit an article.

We also need to fill several committee chair and member vacancies (see "Volunteer Opportunities", page 3). These are volunteer positions that serve important functions in our club, such as collecting and archiving information about our club, attracting new members, and displaying mushroom tables at our events. Our committees are coordinated by active members who make our club what it is. These things don't happen by themselves. Please think about volunteering your time and/or resources to keep our mushroom club going strong.

Help us 'pass the torch' to the next generation of leaders...



Photo from 2005 Gary Lincoff Mid-Atlantic Foray

2006 Gary Lincoff Mid-Atlantic Mushroom Foray

By Dick Dougall

Plans for the Lincoff Foray (commonly called Mushroom Mania) are coming together. It will be on September 16, 2006 at the Parish Hill Facility in Allegheny County's North Park. This is the same site as we used last year. It should again be one of the biggest forays in the eastern United States, so mark your calendars.

Gary Lincoff will again attend and give the featured presentation. We are really lucky to have him since he is in great demand as a speaker. Gary is the author of the **Audubon Field Guide to North American Mushrooms** and member of the Editorial Advisory Board of **Mushroom, The Journal of Wild Mushrooming**. The talks he has given at previous Mushroom Manias have been outstanding as well as are his table walk discussions of the mushrooms found during the foray.

We will also have some other nationally known mycologists at the foray. Right now we have commitments from Dr. Rod Tulloss, Jon Ellifritz, and our own John Plischke III.

Rod Tulloss is an expert on the genus *Amanita*. He is the person who is consulted about new species being discovered in this genus. His willingness to share this expertise at our foray is greatly appreciated.

Jon Ellifritz has been a regular attendee at this foray. He is president of the Mycological Association of Washington, DC. He has given a talk for the 2004

Continued on page 9, see Mid-Atlantic Foray

WPMC News Items

2006 Membership Registration!

If you aren't already registered for 2006 then now is the time to renew. Club membership includes walks/forays almost every weekend during the mushroom season, 8 informative meetings, and 5 newsletters. It's also a great way to meet people who are knowledgeable about mushroom identification, cultivation, crafts, and cooking. It's a great value for only \$15 for the year. Please see the membership form included in this newsletter.

WPMC Mushroom Items

Our club sells several mushroom items to raise money to fund club activities. We have club T-shirts available for \$15, club cookbooks for \$5. Loupes and boxes of wax bags are also available. Our resident artist, Joyce Gross, also crafts very fine handmade mushroom themed jewelry and birdhouses. Please contact Joyce at 724-339-8547 or jagart@verizon.net for more information about any of these items.

Monthly Meetings

Our meetings are held on the third Tuesday of every month between March and November. They begin at 7:00pm at Beechwood Nature Reserve in Dorseyville. Please see their website (www.awsp.org) for directions and other information.

March 21st – "Mushrooming on the Internet" by Dick Dougall. Dick will talk about mushrooming resources on the internet, including our own club website.

April 15th – "Still Hunting for Morels" by Mike Lloyd. Mike will talk about the basics of morel hunting and will entertain us with stories of his own experiences.

May 16th -- "Microscopes and Mushrooms: The Field Mycologist Goes to the Lab" by La Monte Yarroll, WPMC Club Mycologist

Volunteer Opportunities

We need a few volunteers to fill committee roles for our club. Please contact our president Joe Luzanski (president@wpamushroomclub.org) if any of these committees sound interesting to you. We need help!

Historian – collects and organizes photographs, newspaper articles, and other club related memorabilia. Experience with computer archiving methods will be useful.

Membership Chairman – responds to inquiries, sends out information, and involved in promoting the club to gain new members.

Mushroom Display – responsible for displaying mushrooms at monthly meetings and at club events.

WPMC Yahoo Groups

Yahoo Groups is a great resource for our club members and other mushroom enthusiasts from across the country. There are always interesting discussions in the 'Message' section on all kinds of subjects involving wild mushrooms. Find out what mushrooms are up, where people are finding them, recipes, weather, latest announcements, and everything else. Also find award winning photos in the 'Photo' section, and articles, lists, and other files in the 'Files' section. For more information, <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/wpamushroomclub/>

WPMC Website

Yet another great resource to club members is our professionally designed website. There you will find information and links pertaining to our club, including our famed walk/foray species lists and Java data miner. Don't forget to read the President's Blog while you're there. Please see www.wpamushroomclub.org for more information.

Walks and Forays

Walks and forays are held almost every weekend from April through October. They are led by a walk leader and an identifier. Each walk will be at a designated location where participants will forage for wild mushrooms of all species. After the walk the identifier will discuss the mushrooms that were found and answer any questions. Walks usually last 2 or 3 hours and participants are welcome to stay longer if they want. It's a great way to learn about wild mushrooms. Please see our website www.wpamushroomclub.org and our yahoo groups message board for updated information.

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. All walks and forays will be held rain or shine. All walks start on time.

April 22 – 10:00–12:00 at **Knob Hill Community Park** in Warrendale. From Route 19, turn into Thorn Run Industrial Park, left at the light onto Brush Creek Road, right at the light onto Knob Road, travel about 1 mile, park is on left (second entrance). Meet at the back of the parking lot. Glenn Carr and LaMonte Yarroll will lead this walk.

April 22 – 12:00–4:00 at **Westmoreland Earth Day**, St. Vincent College in Latrobe. From Pittsburgh and points west, take I-76 (PA Turnpike) east to exit 67 (old exit 7) Irwin/North Huntingdon, bear right at the exit ramp, take U.S. Route 30 east for 15 miles, turn left onto Fraser Purchase Road (unmarked) at the light at St. Vincent

Continued on Page 10, see Walks & Forays

The Coprinus

Article and photos by John Plishcke III

Many of mushrooms that used to be Coprinus in our favorite field guides are not Coprinus anymore. Some of the names that are now replacing our favorite Coprinus are Coprinellus, Coprinopsis, and Parasola, but there is still some debate on what goes where and for now I am still using Coprinus. It just makes things a lot simpler.

Most people think of Coprinus as a summer to fall mushroom but I also collect the Shaggy Mane in the spring during morel season, just in smaller numbers. When hunting morels I also see a lot of Mica Caps and sometimes even Coprinus romagnesianus.

Shaggy Mane



This mushroom gets its common name because it resembles a shaggy mane. It is considered one of the foolproof 4 and is one of the safest mushrooms.



Its cap starts turning to ink from the bottom up. Its stalk is hollow and pithy.

(*Coprinus comatus*)

(*Coprinus ovatus*)

Other Common Names: Inky Caps, Lawyer's Cap, Lawyer's Wig, Shaggy Caps, Shaggy Ink Cap

Family: Coprinaceae

Description: The largest Shaggy that I have seen was an exceptionally large one that measured 18 inches tall. While looking for them at one of my spots in late fall once, about half the leaves had already fallen from the trees and at first I did not notice any of the mushrooms were up. While looking around I noticed the leaves were raised at the places where the mushrooms were underneath. A stick can be used to remove the leaves to see if they are there. At colder times of year the mushrooms can take a while to turn to ink.

Flesh: Its flesh is thin and white when fresh.

Cap: 1 3/4 to 9 inches tall with up to 6 inches tall being more typical and 1 to 2 inches wide. It is white and covered with shaggy areas that can become darker with age. The cap starts turning to ink working from the bottom up as the cap become smaller as it starts to drip away. Once the sides of the cap are gone you will often see a quarter sized or so area that is left and still attached to the stalk which has upturned edges that are inky. As the cap starts turning inky it gets somewhat wider especially at the base. Occasionally the cap can have some hints of pink but this is not typical. The center part of the top of the cap can be tannish and smooth and shiny until it breaks apart and becomes shaggy like the rest of the cap as the mushroom expands.

Gills: Free and extremely closely spaced. They are whitish becoming grayish then black and inky with age. Sometimes the can have a pinkish tinge to them.

Spore Print: Black.

Stalk: 2 to 10 3/8 inches tall with up to 7 inches tall being more typical and 3/8 to 3/4 inch wide. It gets wider going down towards the base. It is whitish in color. The interior is about 1/3 hollow and somewhat cottony. The partial veil leaves a faint ring on the lower part of the stalk. It is a little swollen or bulb like at the base. The cap covers most of the stalk except near the soil.

Range: North America.

Where To Look: In yards usually in grass. Occasionally they can be found growing up through asphalt or gravel roads. Sometimes they can be found in mulch, which is often buried, such as a mulched planting area that the park covered up with top soil and planted grass so they would not have to weed it. They usually appear in the same spot for several years. This is one of the better mushrooms to road hunt for. I also find them on the soil at the bases of huge compost piles that church camps and parks make, where they pile up leaves for several years and once the pile is half turned into soil. The organic material and juice

often runs off the pile and makes the soil around the sides rich and an ideal location. Disturbed areas such as along side a road.

How They're Grouped: They can be scattered throughout the area or in small groups, clumps and clusters. Sometimes if you are lucky 500 or more can be found in a yard.

How Often They're Found: It is common.

Social Plants: Grass and other lawn weeds can be present. Or there can be no social plants

When To Look: May - June in lesser quantities than the fall. A spot that produces 100 mushrooms in the fall may only produce 10 mushrooms in the spring, if any at all. I would say only about 5% of the spots produce in the spring. Re-fruiting again in August - October which is the main flush. Remember to look in the morning since the sun on hot days often turns many of them to ink by noon. In warm climate locations they fruit October - January

Look-alikes: The edible with caution Alcohol Inky (Coprinus atramentarius) which is not as shaggy.

Edibility: Edible and choice.

Cooking Instructions: It is good fried in butter or cooked with eggs. I prefer it in scrambled eggs or omelets. It can be frozen but not dried since it will turn to ink. To freeze them just cook them in butter then drain and put them in a Ziploc freezer bag. The stalk should be removed before cooking because it is tough and I often remove it in the field while field cleaning them by snapping it off

Coprinus comatus in Pan



This mushroom must be used as soon as you get it home because it will soon turn to ink. We often joke that as soon as we pick them we must speed 65 mph all the way home and cook them immediately and even then a few of them could have begun to turn to ink. Once cooked the process stops so the can be frozen or they can be prepared in a dish.

Alcohol Inky



(Coprinus atramentarius)

Other Common Names: Alcohol Inky Cap, Tippler's Bane

Family: Coprinaceae

Description:

Flesh: Its flesh is white to cream turning gray with age and not nearly as thick as the gills.

Cap: 1 1/8 to 2 7/8 inches wide and 1 to 3 inches tall. It is like an egg in shape and then becoming convex with age. Its margin is incurved when immature. It is grayish brown colored. It often has a whitish dusting or whitish scaly areas in places when immature, and then when it is mature it is scaly in the center area. The skin can peel to the slight knob on the middle of the cap.

Gills: Up to 7/16 inch deep. They are free and very crowded. They are whitish turning grayish then finally black and then to ink.

Spore Print: Black.

Stalk: 1 1/2 to 6 inches tall and 1/4 to 3/4 inch wide. It is fibrous when pulled apart. The veil leaves a faint ring on the lower part of the stalk. It is white, hollow, & pithy.

Odor: mild., **Taste:** mild.

Range: North America

Where To Look: On the soil in lawns, there are usually no trees present. They can be growing on buried wood or buried mulch or mulch that is not buried. Growing around maple stumps in neighborhoods in the grassy area between the sidewalk and curb where the trees are cut down after a couple of years.

How Often They're Found: It is common.

How They're Grouped: In groups, clumps, and clusters that are often touching at places.

Social Plants: Grass, clover, dandelion, violets and broad leaf plantain can be present.

When To Look: May to October in the east, October-April in West Coast.

Look-alikes: The edible Mica Cap (Coprinus micaceus). The edible Shaggy Mane (Coprinus comatus)

Edibility: Edible and choice with caution.

Cooking Instructions: Alcohol should not be consumed 48 hours prior or after eating this mushroom or you can become very sick. It has a similar affect as the medication that they give to alcoholics to keep them from drinking. I met a woman who intentionally gave feed this mushroom to her husband several times with out him knowing of its affects to get him to stop drinking and to have revenge. She said it made him very sick but did not cure him. It is good cooked in scrambled eggs. I often discard the stalk before cooking since it can be a little tough.

Mica Cap



(Coprinus micaceus)

Other Common Names: Glistening Coprinus, Glistening Inky

Family: Coprinaceae

Description: from 1 to 3 1/8 inches tall. Its veil leaves small particles on the cap. This is a complex of species.

On very hot days at noon I often see it shrunken and dried out. If collected in a paper bag they can become a broken mess if you are not careful.

Flesh: Its flesh is whitish, very thin and becoming cap colored with age.

Cap: 1/2 to 2 inches wide and bell shaped with the cap edges going outward with age. It has small shiny sand like particles on it that disappears with rain and age. It is yellowish brown to orangish brown or grayish in color. It has small lines called striations running from the middle to the outside edge. The cap can be curled upwards with age.

Gills: 1/8 to 3/16 inch deep. White then gray becoming black and eventually turning gooey. They are attached to the stalk, crowded but with age they can become free.

Spore Print: blackish.

Stalk: from 1 to 2 3/4 inches tall and 1/8 to 1/4 inches wide. It is fragile. They are often growing together in clumps. It is whitish and hollow.

Odor: mild., **Taste:** mild.

Range: North America.

Where To Look: At the base of dead trees and stumps. It often grows in large clusters that are touching at places. I have found them often growing on maple and elm. I

occasionally see them growing on buried wood or at the base of fallen and rotting logs.

How Often They're Found: common.

How They're Grouped: in clusters that are often touching at places. Sometimes by the 1000's.

Social Plants: Grass, sour grass, and ground ivy can sometimes be found beside it. Very seldom moss is present and is not typical.

When To Look: April to October in the east but in warmer areas, when moist, all year.

Look-alikes: (Panaeolus sp.). The edible with caution Alcohol Inky (Coprinus atramentarius), which is taller and wider. The edible Non Inky Coprinus (Coprinus disseminatus) which is lighter colored and less substantial and does not turn to ink or have sand like particles on its cap. The Orange Mat Coprinus (Coprinus radians) has orange mycelium at the base. (Coprinus sylvaticus) which grows in the Pacific Northwest.

Edibility: Edible.

Cooking Instructions: Although this mushroom is not typically collected because it is so small, it can be made into soup.

Macrochemical Reactions: KOH, sodium hydroxide and ammonia pinkish the stalk somewhat and off pinkish red the cap.

Scaly Inky Cap



(Coprinus quadrifidus) = (Coprinus variegatus)

Family: Coprinaceae

Description: It can develop an unpleasant smell with age. It becomes ink.

Cap: 1 to 2 7/8 inches wide and 2 to 3 1/16 inches tall. It is grayish brown. It has scales that are pieces of the veil that got stuck to the cap. It is shaped like an egg then bell shaped with age. Its starts turning to ink beginning with the outer edge, at which time the cap becomes wider near its base. It can be up-curved with age.

Gills: White becoming grayish then black and like ink with age. They are free.

Spore Print: blackish.

Stalk: 2 to 4 1/2 inches tall and 1/4 to 3/8 inches wide. It is whitish and becomes hollow.

Range: Eastern United States.

Where To Look: On rotten wood such as rotting stumps and buried roots, sometimes where trees have been cut down several years prior.

How Often They're Found: It is occasional.

How They're Grouped: in groups or clusters that are often touching at places.

Social Plants: usually none unless it's coming up from underground wood under grass.

When To Look: June - September.

Look-alikes: The Alcohol Inky (Coprinus atramentarius).

Edibility: unknown.

Woolly Stalked Coprinus



(Coprinus lagopus)

Family: Coprinaceae

Description: Its total height is from 1/2 to 5 inches tall. This mushroom does not dissolve but dries up and shrivels away starting with the cap shriveling up and disappears often by noon. I went to take a photo of the young specimens at 7 am but the mushroom was all shriveled up by then.

Cap: 3/8 to 1 3/4 inches wide and 1/2 to 1 3/4 inches tall. It is bullet shaped with the cap edges going outwards with age and then becoming almost flat. When fresh it is light gray and covered with small white hairs, which rub off or come off easily when touched. It has groves running from the middle to outer edge.

Gills: They are attached to the stalk becoming free with age. They are closely spaced. They are whitish then light gray becoming black with age.

Spore Print: Black.

Stalk: 1 1/4 to 5 inches tall and 1/16 to 1/2 inch wide. It is whitish with white hairs on it but they are not as distinct when immature. It is very delicate, hollow, and easily broken. When just starting the stalk looks over twice as thick as when mature and the cap is flat. Occasionally on one side of the stalk it almost appears to be Siamese because it has a fold making it look that way when immature. It is wider at the base.

Range: North America.

Where To Look: In wood mulch and rarely at the bases of standing rotting trees in the woods. A lot of times when older rotting ones are found in the mulch you can gently dig down 1/4 inch in the mulch with your hands and see immature ones, which will usually be up the next day.

How Often They're Found: occasional to common.

How They're Grouped: I usually find it growing in large groups often near each other but occasionally I find it singly to just a few.

Social Plants: usually none.

When To Look: June to September.

Look-alikes: (*Coprinus lagopides*) spores differ in size. The Magpie Mushroom (*Coprinus picaceus*). The edible but not recommended Scaly Inky Cap (*Coprinus quadrifidus*).

Edibility: unknown.

Orange Mat Coprinus



(*Coprinus radians*)

Other Common Names:

Family: Coprinaceae

Description: sometimes just the orange mycelium can be found.

Flesh: white.

Cap: 3/4 to 1 1/8 inch wide. It is yellowish orange and can be scaly at places but often more so near the center.

Gills: They start off white but become black and turn to ink.

Spore Print: Black.

Stalk: 1 to 2 3/4 inches tall and 1/16 to 1/4 inch wide. It is white and fragile. It has lots orangish mycelium that can be seen on top of the wood.

Range: North America.

Where To Look: On fallen and often rotting wood and less often to rarely in mulch piles soon after a rain.

How Often They're Found: occasional.

How They're Grouped: signally or in small groups.

Social Plants: usually none.

When To Look: May – October.

Look-alikes: (*Coprinus laniger*).

Edibility: Unknown.

Non-Inky Coprinus



(*Coprinus disseminatus*) (*Psathyrella disseminata*)
(*Pseudocoprinus disseminatus*)

Other Common Names: Little Helmets, Trooping Cap

Family: Coprinaceae

Description: This mushroom is found in large quantities and often over 100 can be found in just one spot.

Flesh: It is white colored.

Cap: 1/4 to 5/8 inches wide and 1/4 to 5/8 inch tall. It is convex or bell shaped with the cap edges going outwards with age. It is white to cream colored becoming brownish or gray with age. It does not turn to ink.

Gills: They are attached to the stalk. They are white becoming gray to black. They do not turn to ink.

Spore Print: Black.

Stalk: 1/2 to 1 1/8 inches tall and 1/32 to 1/16 inch wide. It is hollow and white colored.

Odor: Mild., **Taste:** Mild.

Range: North America.

Where To Look: On deciduous wood. Look on buried roots, logs, and the bases of stumps and lawns. I have seen it on white birch stumps and maple stumps. In the woods on fallen and moist, half rotted logs. In the city, I find it in the grassy area between the sidewalk and the curb on and around stumps where trees were cut down (often by the power company) a few years back.

How Often They're Found: occasional to common.

How They're Grouped: In clusters they can be found by the 100's. They are typically touching at places.

Social Plants: Usually none but grass can be growing beside them if growing from roots or underground stumps.

When To Look: in the east and central and upper north June - October. November - February in the West Coast.

Look-alikes: (Coprinus sp.). Such as (Coprinus micaceus) which turns inky. (Panaeolus sp.). (Psathyrella sp.).

Edibility: Edible.

Japanese Umbrella Inky



(Coprinus plicatilis)
(Pseudocoprinus plicatilis)

Other Common Names:

Family: Coprinaceae

Description: It is from 2 1/8 to 3 3/4 tall when cap is opened. This mushroom does not turn to ink and often the opened ones disappear by noon. I have seen one species of this mushroom without the collar.

Cap: 1/16 to 1/8 inch thick when unopened and 3/4 to 1 5/8 inch wide when opened and flat. It is often translucent when opened. It has ridges running from the outer edge to the center and a darker round dot mark in the center of the cap, which does not have the ridges, and it is sunken around it but the dot is raised. The cap before it opens is brown and bell shaped once opened it is light tan to grayish to almost black with extreme age.

Gills: Gray becoming blackish with age. They are not attached to the stalk.

Spore Print: Black.

Stalk: 1 1/2 to 3 5/8 inches tall and 1/16 to 1/8 inch wide. It is white to cream. It is hollow and very fragile. It has a round whitish ring around the stalk at the top and the gills are attached to this ring.

Odor: mild, **Taste:** mild.

Range: North America.

Where To Look: Growing on soil in grass in lawns and yards and occasionally in mown fields. Occasionally in mulch but not very often. On the edges of mulched paths.

How Often They're Found: common.

How They're Grouped: Occasionally singly but usually scattered or in small groups.

Social Plants: grass can be present.

When To Look: May to September in the east and central but over the winter in warmer west coast.

Look-alikes: I often see it with the edible and possibly Hallucinogenic Lawn Mowers Mushroom (Psathyrella foenicicii) but they don't look alike. The edible Non-Inky Coprinus (Coprinus disseminatus) grows on wood. The edible but not recommended White Dunce Cap (Conocybe lactea).

Edibility: Edible.

Mid-Atlantic Foray, continued from page 2

Lincoff Foray. He regularly leads one of the morning walks. He eagerly shares his vast knowledge of mushroom species and other aspects of nature with all attendees of this foray

John Plischke III will again coordinate the identification of mushrooms found during the foray by working with the national mycologists and our own club mycologists. John continues to be an invited speaker at important mushroom events all over North America. If you have any questions about mushroom photography, John is the man to answer them.

We will again have an afternoon demonstration on cooking with wild mushrooms. Thomas Chulick, owner and executive chef of the Back Door Café in Johnstown, PA, who presented this session at last year's foray, will return. This program was well received, and Tom assures me he has many new ideas to share with our enthusiastic mushroomers.

It's shaping up to be another great foray. So send in your registrations early for the Gary Lincoff Mid-Atlantic Mushroom Foray for 2006 on September 16th.

Drive, travel ½ mile to campus entrance sign, turn left into campus, follow signs to Westmoreland Earth Day parking and event. The club will have a booth at this event.

April 29~30 – 11:00 am – **Morel Madness Weekend** at Mingo Creek in Washington County. Mingo Creek Park is located along Route 136 midway between Washington and Monongahela. Check in at the Henry House. Call Christine (724-228-6867) to pre-register with the park. This is the largest morel foray in the region. John Plischke and John Plischke III will present a slide show and lead the event.

May 6 – 10:00~12:00 at **Moraine State Park** in Butler County. From Route 422 exit at P.A. 528, turn north and immediately turn left onto Old Route 422 before the lawn & garden store with the John Deere sign, meet at the boat landing at the end of the road – we will drive to a secret location. This walk will be led by Jim Tunney and Susan Baker.

May 13 – 2:00~? at **Pine Ridge Lodge** in Indiana County. Follow Route 22 east past Blairsville, exit at Route 119 and travel north, pass the Chestnut Ridge golf course and veer right onto Strangford Road, turn left onto Chestnut Ridge Road as you round a sharp curve, travel about one mile and look for the Pine Lodge sign on the left. This walk will be led by John Plischke and John Plischke III.

May 20 – 10:00~12:00 at **Mingo Creek Park** in Washington County. See directions for Morel Madness above. This walk will be led by John Plischke and John Plischke III. Meet at shelter 4.

May 27 – 10:00~12:00 at **Hartwood Acres** in Allegheny County. Hartwood Acres is located on Saxonburg Blvd near Dorseyville. This walk will be led by Dick and Mary Ellen Dougall. Meet in the parking lot in front of the mansion.

June 3 – 10:00~12:00 at **North Park** in Allegheny County. Valery and Jack Baker will lead this walk. Meet at the swimming pool parking lot off of Babcock Blvd in the North Hills, look for a car with a yellow ribbon on the antenna - we will drive to a secret location.

August 17~20 – **2006 NAMA** at VentureScape Wilderness Retreat (formerly Blue Lake Centre) about 20 minutes north of Hinton, Alberta, Canada, in the heart of William A. Switzer Park. See www.namyco.org for more information and registration.

September 1~4 – **2005 NEMF** at Saint Anthony's Hermitage, Lac Bouchette, Canada, about 250 miles north of Montreal. There will be lectures, workshops, and forays all day Saturday and Sunday. No membership is required. See www.nemf.org for information and registration.



WILD MUSHROOM AND GOAT CHEESE TART

Ingredients:

Your favorite pie crust (pre-made or handmade)
1 ½ cups heavy cream
5 large garlic cloves, peeled
1 large egg
salt and white pepper, to taste
1 T. olive oil
8 oz. fresh wild mushrooms, sliced
2 sprigs fresh thyme (stem removed), chopped
4 oz. soft goat cheese, at room temperature (or you may use feta, Swiss or gruyere cheeses)

Process:

Pre-heat oven to 450° F. Blind bake* crust in 9" tart pan with removable bottom. Set on rack to cool. (*Press crust into tart pan. Place a layer of aluminum foil on crust, then a layer of dry beans, glass marbles, etc., to keep crust from shrinking as it bakes.) Pre-bake until crust is set. Reduce oven temperature to 375° F. Bring cream (seasoned with salt and pepper) and garlic cloves (whole) to a boil. Reduce heat and simmer until mixture is reduced to 1 cup. Cool, puree and blend in egg. Spread goat cheese over bottom of pre-baked crust. Sauté wild mushrooms in olive oil, adding thyme, salt and pepper. Sprinkle mushrooms over cheese in tart pan. Pour cream mixture over all. Bake until custard is set and light golden color, about 20 minutes. Serves 8-10 as a starter.

**Presented at the Mid-Atlantic Mushroom Foray,
September 10, 2005 by:**

Thomas M. Chulick C.E.C.
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Turning the Corner into Spring Mushroom Season

By Jim Strutz

My theory about people who suffer from Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) is that they just don't get outside enough in the winter. Admittedly, winter's overcast skies and frozen slush can damper the moods of even the most cheerful. A long walk in the woods can help to remedy the onset of SAD for many people. Feeling the soft crunch of snow underfoot, checking the progress of swelling buds on trees and bushes, tracking the prints left in the snow, watching the birds flit from branch to branch, and just moving around outside can lift just about anyone's spirits. Winter is also a great time to prepare for the coming mushroom season.

I have been foraging for mushrooms for a few years. I've come a long way in my ability to identify mushrooms, but I have an even longer way to go. I came across a list of mushrooms that beginners should be able to identify and counted about two thirds of them that I could identify without using a reference. As a club identifier, I should be able to identify at least 100 of the most commonly encountered mushroom species and their dangerous look-alikes. So I spent some time over the winter trying to learn some new mushrooms using the beginner's list as a guide. Once the mushroom season starts, much more time will be spent hunting for mushrooms, processing them, and preserving them.

Winter is also a great time to scout new places to hunt for mushrooms, and to check on the old mushroom spots. Not just mushroom spots, but also places where I have found edible wild plants: ramps, cattails, Japanese knotweed, garlic mustard, lamb's quarters, nettles, cress, and other delectables of nature. The same caveat to foragers of fungi applies to foragers of plants: **be sure to identify mushrooms and plants correctly before eating them.** A difference worth noting is that fungi have mycelium while plants have roots, bulbs, and rhizomes. This means that, unlike mushrooms, plant colonies can be easily damaged by over-harvesting. This works against us with native plants like ramps, nettles, and cress but works for us with exotic invasive plants like Japanese knotweed and garlic mustard. It's not good to over-harvest mushrooms either but at least the mycelium isn't usually damaged by it.

As we turn the corner into spring, I look for "morel trees" wherever I go: elm, tulip poplar, ash, and aspen. I look at the general shape of the tree, the bark color and texture, and on the ground for leaves. Once when a friend and I were morel hunting during our first season, I noticed one tree with silvery bark that appeared to be separating from the tree in sheaves. Its leaves were toothed and alternate. Just as I said to my friend "I think this is an elm tree", she looked down and found a morel mushroom! It was the first morel we found on our own, and was one of those magic moments that we will always remember. Since that day we have discovered

many great morel spots. Morel hunters won't likely tell you where their favorite spots are so you will have to find your own. It really pays to do your legwork before the morel season starts.

Morels may be dried or frozen. I usually dry them because they're one of the kinds of mushrooms that seem to intensify in flavor when dried. Plus there is the bonus of using the liquid used to re-hydrate them in to flavor whatever you're making. The morels don't seem to lose any flavor or texture in the process, so it's almost like getting something for nothing. I prefer to buy fresh ramps in the spring from a grower in West Virginia. They freeze pretty well for most purposes so you can use them throughout the year. One of the classic ways to use morels and ramps is in a baked casserole. Substitute green onions if ramps aren't available.

Morel and Ramp Casserole

4 cups re-hydrated or fresh morels or other wild mushrooms
1 can Cream of Mushroom Soup
2 cups ramps, white parts and green parts chopped (see below)
1 large potato, diced
1 medium onion, chopped
2 ribs celery, chopped
1 cup peas
2 cups Pepperidge Farms breadcrumbs
2 cups Gruyere cheese, grated
thyme, salt, pepper, to taste
water

Boil the diced potatoes in about 2 cups of water until done. Reserve the liquid and use it to re-hydrate any dried mushrooms you are using. Chop the re-hydrated and/or fresh mushrooms into coarse pieces. Sauté the onions and celery in some fat until they begin to soften. Add the mushrooms and continue to sauté until they are cooked through. Transfer to a casserole dish. Add the cream of mushroom soup, ramps, potatoes, peas, breadcrumbs, and the reserved liquid, mix well. Season to taste. Sprinkle the grated cheese on top and bake at 350° for about 40 minutes. Serve as a main course, as a side, as a topping, or use as a pie filling (bake in the shell, of course).



A bowl full of morels, photo by Jim Strutz



THE FIFTH ANNUAL GARY LINCOFF



MID-ATLANTIC MUSHROOM FORAY

Saturday, Sept. 16, 2006

7:30-8:15 Registration, 8:30-7:30 Program

SPECIAL REGISTRATION FORM FOR CLUB MEMBERS ONLY*

**Let the Hunt
begin!**

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 (NAMA).



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 taste mushroom cooking.

Special guest mycologist, Rod Rulloss, is an expert on Amanitas. He is the person who is consulted about newly discovered species in the Amanita genus.

Special guest mycologist, Jon Ellifritz, is president of the Mycological Association of Washington, DC. and a regular attendee of this foray.

A host of other mycologists will be on hand to help you learn mushrooms, including: Dr. David Miller, Dr. Fred Schrock, John Plischke III, Robert Boice, Kim Plischke, Dorothy Fornof, and La Monte Yarroll.

FUNGI FUN FRIENDS

Cost is only \$50 at the door or only **\$25* each pre-registered and paid by May 10**, (*does not include club membership). Children 11 & under free. Registration is limited. We sold out early the last two years, and turned people away. So get your registration in today!

Contact **Dick Dougall** 412-486-7504 rsdme@imap.pitt.edu or **Glenn Carr** 412-369-0495 gbrown2carrs@cs.com

Signing and dating the release is an absolute requirement for attendance. No refunds
Make check payable to: Western PA Mushroom Club, 4879 Christopher Drive, Allison Park, PA 15101

Name 1 _____

Name 2 _____

Name 3 _____

Address _____ City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

RELEASE

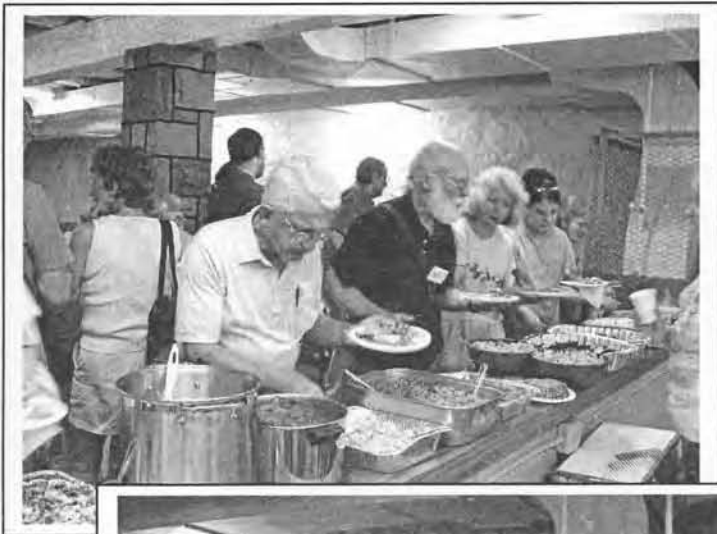
Knowing the risks, I (we) agree to assume the risks, and agree to release, hold harmless, and to indemnify the Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club, and any officer or member thereof, from any and all legal responsibility for injuries or accidents incurred by myself or my family during or as a result of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

Signature _____ Signature _____

Signature _____ Date: _____

More Pictures From 2005 Gary Lincoff Mid-Atlantic Mushroom Foray

Photos by Becky Plischke and Kim Plischke



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