



WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA MUSHROOM CLUB NEWSLETTER

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April/May 2010

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The newsletter of the Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club is published five times a year: April/May, June/July, Aug./Sept., Oct./Nov., and 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. 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.

Club officers

President — John Stuart
Vice President — Joyce Gross

On the web:

www.wpamushroomclub.org

President's Corner

BY JOHN STUART

Welcome to the start of a new mushroom season after a very snowy winter.

I'm sure the blanket of snow we had will encourage a bumper crop of morels so bring a large basket to Morel Madness Weekend at Mingo Park on May 1-2, 2010.

We have lined up an excellent list of programs for our monthly meetings, which are held at Beechwood Farms, including talks by our own John Plischke III who was recently elected First Vice-President of the North American Mycological Society; Esther Allen,

a legendary naturalist whose knowledge is extraordinary, as anyone who has been on one of her walks can attest; Rick Kerrigan, the director of research for Sylvan Mushrooms, well known as the world's expert on *Agaricus* species; and Dr. Frank Lotrich, MD, PhD chairman of our toxicology committee, who will update us on the role mushrooms have in therapeutics and health care, from treating cancer to boosting our immune systems.

This is in addition to our annual cultivation program teaching

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Let the madness begin

By BOB SLEIGH

Morel Madness, that affliction brought on by warm spring temperatures and frequent rainfall, which causes normally sane adults to spend countless hours perusing the woodlands, some on their hands and knees, searching for one of the world's most sought after and elusive fungi.

Morel Madness, one of the year's premier events for the Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club, where members gather in Southwestern Pennsylvania's number one Morel hunting area. Most are normally sane, some are not, others never will be again, but all converge on Mingo



Creek Park in Washington County with one thing on their mind.....
MOREL MUSHROOMS!!!

Ever dream of finding that mother-load of huge Yellow Morels that

could fill a laundry basket? Want to see more Elm trees in one place than you ever thought possible? Want to learn how, where, and when to find the biggest and freshest Morels, and what to do with them after the harvest? Do you enjoy meeting new friends, camping under the stars, and camaraderie with other fungi fanatics? Well, we've got a weekend you don't want to miss.

Morel Madness is an award-

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2010 WPMC meetings

March 16—Title: Some Interesting Mushrooms from Different Parts of the Country

Speaker: John Plischke III, Club Mycologist

Summary: John has an amazing collection of mushroom photographs, many which have won first places in major photo contests. He will select some of the most interesting mushrooms he found at forays located in Cape Cod, Quebec, and Louisiana for his talk. It is sure to broaden our mushroom knowledge.

April 20—Title: Morel Hunting Basics

Speaker: Dick Dougall, Education Chair and a Panel of Morel Hunters

Summary: Spring is the time of year to hunt for morel mushrooms. The WPMC has a wealth of experience hunting these delectable treasures. Dick is putting together a group of club members who will share their experiences and expertise with attendees. All the basic information that the beginning morel hunters need will be presented. However, you're on your own trying to pin down exact morel spots from the presenters.

May 18—Title: Mushroom Cultivation Program

Speakers: The WPMC Cultivation Team, Mark Spear & Rebecca Miller, WPMC members who work professionally on the commercial propagation of mushrooms, John Plischke III, Club Mycologist, and Jim Tunney, club identifier who does a lot of cultivation work.

Summary: A major portion of this program will be the assembly of kits to grow oyster mushrooms. Growing oyster mushrooms has been a very popular club activity, and the cultivation team has developed great kits which allows most people to generate a good supply of them. The cultivation team will also have some other surprises which always prove interesting and informative.

June 15—Title: What Fungi Do and How They Do It

Speaker: Esther Allen, Long-time Area Naturalist

Summary: Esther Allen has developed this new program which, rather than focus on identification or edibility, presents the essential role that fungi fill in the natural cycle of life. This is a timely topic which looks at how mushrooms function in our ecological systems. As always, she will share wonderful photographs and her phenomenal wealth of knowledge of nature. A real treat.

July 20—Title: Craft Workshop

Speaker: Bonnie Davis and the WPMC Workshop Team

Summary: Our members have presented many interesting craft projects over the years. We have all been amazed at the many artistic uses they have developed. They are busily planning for this year's project.

August 17—Title: Mushrooms in Allopathic, Naturopathic, Homeopathic and Holistic Medicine

Speaker: Frank Lotrich

Summary: Dr. Lotrich will compare and contrast how mushrooms are conceived of and used in these four different branches of health care. This survey will range from finding medicinal cures for cancer, to investigating supplements to enhance fitness, to immune stimulants for boosting disease protection, to improving ones combined spiritual and corporeal health.

September 21—Title: Agaricus in Pennsylvania and Everywhere Else

Speaker: Rick Kerrigan, Director of Research for Sylvania Mushrooms

Summary: Rick is an expert in the study of the genus *Agaricus*. This is the genus of the common button mushroom. However, there is a great deal of diversity in this genus which makes it hard for mycologists to discriminate among very similar species. Recent use of DNA sequencing has helped sort out the species and relate the information back to old American names and concepts as well as to European species. Rick will give us the latest picture of the overall genus.

October 19—Title: Election of Officers & Open Forum

Summary: Officers for next year will be elected. Club members will be encouraged to share mushroom stories, experiences and slides. Results of the club's photography contest will also be presented.

November 16—Title: Cooking with Mushrooms (Tentative Title—more information later)

See page 13 for information about the Washington/Greene County and Indiana County chapter meetings.

Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club meetings are held on the third Tuesday of the month from March until November. Meetings begin at 7 p.m. and are held at Beechwood Nature Reserve on Dorseyville Road, Fox Chapel. Please see their website (www.aswp.org) for directions and other information.

Gross receives Knighton Award

By Bonnie Davis
Publicity Chairman

For the third time in the last six years, a Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club member has won the prestigious North American Mycological Association's Knighton Award.



The award for Joyce Gross was announced at NAMA's annual meeting in Lafayette, LA in November 2009. Joyce is the 2010 vice president of the WPMC.

She has also served as a walk leader, walk identifier, secretary, club historian, sales chairman and workshop chair. Joyce also cooks for the WPMC's annual Mid Atlantic Foray.

The North American Mycological Association (NAMA) was founded by amateur mycologists in November 1959. The award is named after NAMA's founder and first chairman Harry S. Knighton and his wife Elsie.

The award is given annually to the person who has distinguished his or herself in service to their local club.

The NAMA organization is comprised of 70 mushroom clubs located throughout the U.S. and Canada.

In 2006 Dick Dougall the club's former president won the award and WPMC founder John Plischke III won in 2003.

The WPMC started in 2000 with 20 members and now has more than 500 active members with a branch chapter in Indiana County, PA.

The Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club promotes enjoyment, study and information exchange about wild mushrooms and their environment.

Additional information about the WPMC and its activities can be found at the club's website <http://www.wpamushroomclub.org/>.

Plischke elected to NAMA post

Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club founder John Plischke III was elected First Vice President of the North American Mycological Association at its annual meeting in Lafayette, LA. NAMA has more than 20,000 members across the country. John is well known throughout the United States and Canada, having given hundreds of mushroom programs to clubs, schools, parks, mushroom clubs and many other groups.



Ten years ago, he founded the WPMC with just 20 members. The club is now one of the largest mushroom clubs in the United States, with more than 500 members in Allegheny, Westmoreland, Washington, Butler, Armstrong, Fayette, Jefferson, Cambria, Armstrong and Indiana Counties. The club promotes the enjoyment, study, and exchange of information about wild mushrooms and can be reached at morelbp@aol.com or by calling 724-834-2358.

Plischke has previously received NAMA's Knighton Service Award. He wrote *Morel Mushrooms and Their Poisonous Look A Likes*, edited the two cookbooks of the Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club and has been a contributor to many other mushroom books. He has developed several educational programs, which can be rented from NAMA.

He is also a trustee and member of the faculty for both the North American Mycological Association and the North East Mycological Federation and is one of the editors for *Fungi Magazine*.

Plischke is the recipient of more than 80 national and regional awards for his mushroom photography.

He also serves as the chairman of the fungus section of the PA Biological Survey.

2010 Forays



AUGUST 12 – 15

The North American Mycological Association's (NAMA) annual foray will be held August 12-15 at Snow Mountain Ranch in Winter Park, CO.

Anyone interested in attending should contact Bonnie Davis (bonnie18davis@yahoo.com). Bonnie will be looking into group lodging options for anyone wishing to attend. Additional information about this event can be found at <http://www.namyco.org/events/index.html>

SEPTEMBER 23 - 26

The NorthEast Mycological Federation, Inc. (NEMF) hosts the 2010 annual Sam Ristich Foray September 23-26 in Kerhonkson, NY. This year's event is number 34 and it is expected to be well attended by members of the Federations 18 clubs. For additional information and sign-up, please visit <http://www.nemf.org/files/2010/2010.html>

The NEMF's clubs are the Boston Mycological Club (BMC), Cercle des Mycologues de Montreal (CMM), Central New York Mycological Society (CNYMS), Connecticut-Westchester Mycological Association (COMA), Connecticut Valley Mycological Society (CVMS), Eastern Pennsylvania Mushroomers (EPM), Long Island Mycological Club (LIMC), Mid Hudson Mycological Association (MHMA), Maine Mycological Association (MMA), Montshire Mycological Club (MMC), Monadnock Mushroomers Unlimited (MMU), Mid York Mycological Society (MYMS), New Hampshire Mycological Society (NHMS), New Jersey Mycological Association (NJMA), New York Mycological Society (NYMS), Rochester Area Mycological Association (RAMA), Susquehanna Valley Mycological Society (SVMS), and the Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club (WPMC).

President's Corner

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us how to home grow mushrooms, a lecture just on morels, a crafts program (stained glass mushrooms anyone?), and cooking with mushrooms to take good advantage of all the harvest you will garner from our weekly walks.

Our newsletter format will be showing some changes under our new editor-in-chief Ginny Sleight. Ginny and Bob started our first branch chapter in Indiana County last year and I am happy to report that Bonnie and Brian Davis have founded our second branch chapter that will encompass Washington and Greene Counties.

These branches will make it possible for mushroom enthusiasts in geographically outlying areas to participate in activities in their own back yards and also give all of us the opportunity to visit new territory and expand the species we will find in these new hunting grounds.

The branch chapter members (as members of the WPMC) also get to participate in our premier event, the Gary Lincoff Mid Atlantic Mushroom Foray scheduled for September 11, 2010.

The walks and meetings in all the branches and the mother Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club are open to all members.

Rebecca Miller has agreed to organize a photography contest for this year so save your best to submit to her in the fall for judging.

Dick Dougall, our Education Chairman, will be coordinating two classes, an "Introduction to Mushrooms" for beginners and an advanced class on how to identify those pesky Boletes.

We are in store for a very interesting and informative year.

Newsletter submissions welcome

As the new editor of the Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club newsletter, I encourage and welcome submissions, ideas, requests, suggestions and photos from any of our members.

All submissions, etc., for the newsletter should be emailed to me at iccwpmc@comcast.net. By doing so you give the WPMC permission to publish your submission.

Ginny Sleight



Mushroom Tracks

What to bring on a mushroom walk

By Bonnie and Brian Davis



Welcome to Western Pennsylvania's Mushroom Club's Mushroom Tracks. We thought you would like to know why the column is called mushroom tracks. Mushroom tracks are what our group leaves behind after pursuit of fungi; lots of footprints (and hopefully a lot of cut mushroom stumps). This column will be helpful to the novice shroom hunter. More importantly the reader will learn about what not to bring or wear.

The excitement building all winter for the first walk is evident at the first meeting of a new mushroom season. Spring is here, the flowers and trees are starting to bud and the ground is warming up to the target 50 degrees. We cannot wait for the first apple blossoms and red buds to bloom, which is a sure sign the morels are up. For the avid fungi member, the feeling is better than the Steelers winning the Super Bowl and hitting the lottery on the same weekend.

It's now time to get into the car (that won't be washed now for quite awhile) and drive to the first foray. The group meets and after the, "how have you been all winter?" greetings, everyone teams up and sprints into the woods to begin collecting morels and the many other species that are fun to harvest and identify.

The WPMC website prepares us for all walks and forays by offering the following suggestions.

- ▶ Walks generally start on time. Please come 15-30 minutes early and socialize.
- ▶ Bring water and food, since we are often out for several hours.
- ▶ Dress for the weather. Layers are suggested.
- ▶ Bring a basket or something to carry the mushrooms in and wax or paper bags to store them.
- ▶ Other useful items include a whistle, compass, chair, hand lens, and books for identification.
- ▶ Bring your membership card and a friend or two.
- ▶ The following guidance was taken from personal observations and comments from club members.
- ▶ Do not wear shorts. The woods are full of briars (called JAGGERS if you are from this area), poison ivy, and other harmful plant species that can ruin your adventure. A walker last year got stuck in a briar patch wearing shorts while gathering morels. Although several morels were collected (making the unfortunate incident worth it), the member needed an orangutan's help to remove all the briars.
- ▶ Do not wear tennis shoes, wear comfortable hiking boots. Tennis shoes will get wet and briars,

thorns, etc. can penetrate this type of footwear. A walker last year wearing tennis shoes attempted to jump across a creek (crick – another colloquialism used by folks from this area) and landed squarely in the mud, left one tennis shoe behind, and had to limp back to the car in a soggy sock.

- ▶ Use bug spray. The woods are full of ticks and other annoying bugs. A good bug spray containing DEET or PICARIDIN will repel most insects. A walker last year did not use bug spray and spent the whole walk waiving both hands in the air to avoid gnat attacks. In addition to scaring the wildlife the person's hands were moving so fast that a nice bunch of black trumpets were tramped beyond recognition.
- ▶ Do not bring a large plastic garbage bag to collect your mushrooms. The bag can get torn and tangled in the briars. It is not uncommon for a bag to rip open. Last year a walker arrived at the end of a walk with an empty bag; a trail of cut mushrooms was left behind the unsuspecting hunter. Know also that a plastic bag can also cause your mushrooms to turn into a big pile of inedible mush if left for too long a period of time.
- ▶ A pen- or plastic knife is particularly useful. The exposed mushroom is actually the fruiting body of the mycelium that lies beneath the surface. It is best to not disturb the mycelium so cutting rather than pulling the fruiting mushroom from the ground is preferable. The knife can be used to trim (field dress) dirt and damaged spots on the mushroom, keeping your harvest clean and leaving spores for future fruiting.
- ▶ Several vented plastic containers (grocery store berry containers) are good to have in your basket. A general rule is not to mix edible and inedible mushrooms. When finding an unidentified mushroom, it is best to place it in a separate container for later identification.

Hopefully these tips from experienced fungi hunters will help make your foray in the woods hunting mushrooms more enjoyable. Actually FINDING mushrooms is a totally different experience; so even if you adopt every suggestion in this article you may still need to visit your local grocer when craving mushrooms, or better yet, befriend an experienced wild MUSHROOM FINDER.

Bonnie Davis is the Publicity Chair and Brian Davis is the Sales Chair of the WPMC for the 2010 season.

2010 WPMC walks and forays

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. All walks & 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 by going to our Yahoo Groups at groups.yahoo.com/group/wpamushroomclub

April 17 – 10:00-12:00 Hampton Township Park, Allegheny County. Meet **Dick Dougall and Dick Duffy** at the swimming pool parking lot. From Route 8, turn onto Wildwood Road Extension (not toward North Park). Then turn right onto School Road to Hampton Middle School. Go past the school to the end of the parking lot where the road makes a hard left. Turn left into park at sign to Tennis Courts, just across from Hampton High School. Turn left at another sign to the Tennis Courts. Turn right at the stop sign to the swimming pool.

April 24 – 10:00-12:00 Five Star Trail, Youngwood, Westmoreland County. Meet **John and Kim Plischke**. There is a parking lot on Route 119 at the traffic light for Buncher Commerce Park between Youngwood and Greensburg. The light is .9 miles from the traffic light at Sheetz in Youngwood. It is .7 miles from the King's Restaurant south of Greensburg.

May 1, 2 – 11:00 am Morel Mushroom Madness Weekend, Mingo Creek, Washington County. Meet **John Plischke and John Plischke III**. Registration 11 am, program at 12:00 sharp. This is the biggest morel slide show and hunt in the eastern US. There will be an evening program on Edible Wild Mushrooms & How to Prepare Them. Sunday morning we will hunt morels. Camping will be available for \$5. 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. Check in roadside near Henry House. **TO PRE-REGISTER WITH THE PARK.** CALL 724-228-6867. We found morels at this program last year. <http://www.washpatourism.org/parks.html>

May 8 – 10:00-12:00, Deer Lakes Park, Allegheny County, Russelton. Meet **Jim Wilson** From the PA Turnpike get off at the Allegheny Valley Exit 5. Turn toward New Kensington. Turn left onto Route 28. Follow to Pearl Avenue and turn left. Continue on Pearl Ave, it becomes Russelton Road. In Russelton, turn right at the first intersection, look for a drug store, bank and liquor store and turn right. Go a short distance you will see a Deer Lakes Park sign, turn left into the park. Just past the first lake, there is a large parking lot; meet there.

May 15 – 10:00-12:00 North Park, Allegheny County. Meet **John Stuart** at the Swimming Pool Parking Lot. From Pittsburgh go north on Rt. 8. Turn left onto Wildwood Road onto the

Yellow Belt (Ford Dealer and Boston Market on the right). Go 1.3 mi. to a red light; go straight (W Hardies). Continue another 1.6 mi. to a red light at North Park Entrance, road name changes to Ingomar Road at this intersection, Turn left on Babcock Blvd. Follow the signs to the Swimming Pool parking lot and find the car with a mushroom basket and walking stick.

May 22 - 10:00-12:00 Hartwood Acres, Allegheny County. Meet **Glenn Carr and Shirley Caseman** at the parking lot in front of the Mansion (on the opposite side of the park from the Performance Center). We will hunt mushrooms and help you identify them. From PA Turnpike: Take Allegheny Valley (Exit 5). Stay right on the exit ramp. Turn right onto Route 910 West. Go 4 1/2 miles and turn left onto Saxonburg Blvd. at the red blinking light. Follow Saxonburg Blvd. about 2 1/2 miles; entrance will be on your right.

May 29 – 10:00 – 12:00 McConnell's Mill, Butler County. Meet **Joyce & George Gross**. From the North or South: Take I-79 to the PA 422 exit. Go West on 422 for about a mile, turn left at the sign to McConnell's Mill onto McConnell's Mill Road. The sign is not obvious and is immediately at the turn. Follow this road to the parking lot and picnic area at the end. This area has been very productive on past walks.

June 5- 10:00-12:00 Emmerling Park, Indiana Township, Allegheny County. Meet **Dick Dougall**. Enjoy this mushroom walk along a part of the Rachel Car-

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2010 WPMC walks and forays, *continued*

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son Trail. From Route 8, go east on Route 910, or from Route 28, go west on Route 910. The park is on Cove Road almost directly across from the Indiana Township Municipal Building. Meet at the large parking lot in the park.

June 12 – 10:00 -12:00, South Park, Allegheny County. Meet **LaMonte Yarroll** Brownsville Rd & Corrigan Dr. See their website at: <http://www.county.allegheny.pa.us/parks/facility.asp> Take Route 51 South. Turn slight right onto Fairhaven Road/Provost road. Provost Road becomes Brownsville Road. Continue to the Park. Meet at the Nature Center. We will drive to the walk location in the park.

Washington/ Greene County chapter walks

April 25

10 a.m. at the Claysville game lands, Washington County, with Jeff Donahue of the Washington County Parks and Recreation. We will meet at the Exxon station located just off the I70 exit ramp at 9:30 a.m., then drive to the game lands to meet Jeff at the walk site.

May 9

10 am at Ryerson Station, Wind Ridge in Greene County with Alan Johnson, Park Manager. Take I79 south to Waynesburg exit, thru Waynesburg to Route 21. Go west on Route 21 for about 25 miles. Signs for the park will appear about 15 miles out to guide you to the park. Go left off 21 on to Bristoria Road. Park office is on the right about 1 mile from the turn off Route 21.

Indiana County chapter walks

April 17: Pine Ridge Park, Blairsville. Walk leaders Bob & Ginny Sleigh. Meet in parking lot at the end of the park road.

May 1: Morel Madness - Mingo Creek Park, Washington County. This is a combined walk with the WPMC, sponsored by Washington County Parks and Recreation department. See pages 8 & 9 for more information.

May 8: Pine Ridge lodge, Blairsville. Bob & Ginny Sleigh will present a program on Morel mushrooms and guide a walk for the Indiana County Friends of the Parks beginning at 2 p.m. Meet at the Pine Ridge

Lodge off of Chestnut Ridge road. This popular event for Friends of the Parks regularly draws 50-60 attendees.

May 22: Blue Spruce Park, near Ernest. Walk leaders Bob & Ginny Sleigh. Meet at the large parking lot on left just past the ball fields. Blue Spruce park harbors a great variety of mushrooms throughout the year.

June 5: Blacklick Valley Natural Area, Dilltown. Walk leaders Bob & Ginny Sleigh. Meet at the Dilltown Access for the Ghost Town Trail. This will be a split walk with groups hunting both the North and South portions of the park.

June 19: Buttermilk Falls, near Clyde. Walk leaders Bob & Ginny Sleigh. Buttermilk Falls is located approximately 5 miles east of Blairsville off of Rt. 22.

All ICC WPMC walks begin promptly at 9 a.m., unless otherwise noted. For directions or more information call Bob and Ginny Sleigh at 724-349-9173 or e-mail them at ICCWPMC@comcast.net. Information about Indiana County Parks can be found on the Web at <http://www.indianacountyparks.org/>.

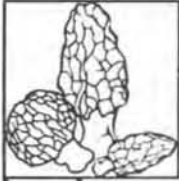
For all walks and forays, bring water and lunch. Dress for the weather. Bring basket, wax or paper bags (no plastic) to keep mushrooms separated, whistle, compass, chair, hand lens, insect repellent, cell phone, and books for identification.

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

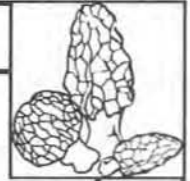
Bring your membership card and a friend or two.

You are responsible for not getting lost; if you have that tendency stick like glue to others. We won't wait for you, and we won't come look for you. Don't take the identification of the person standing next to you, they might not know as much as you do. 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 put on paper plates and the Walk Identifier or Club Mycologist will put names on only the mushrooms that they know well.



Morel Madness Weekend



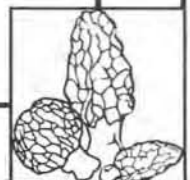
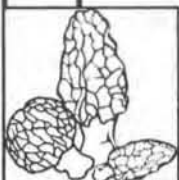
SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Saturday, May 1st

- 11:00 a.m. Check-In / Registration
(Roadside near the Henry House)
- 12:00 p.m. Welcome, Introductions & Agenda Review
- 12:15 p.m. Slide Show "Morels and Their Poisonous Look-alikes"
- 1:00 p.m. Morel Hunting Excursions
(on your own or with a group leader)
- 4:00 p.m. Morel Madness Round-Up.
Return to Shelter 8 for Show & Tell and
Mushroom Identification
- 4:30 p.m. Dinner, Camp Set-Up (on your own)
- 6:00 p.m. Evening Mushroom Hunt with Park Staff;
Meet at Shelter 8
- 8:30 p.m. Edible Wild Mushroom Slide Show at Shelter 8

Sunday, May 2nd

- 8:00 a.m. Rise and Shine Continental Breakfast at Shelter 8
(coffee, juice, donuts, muffins, etc.)
- 9:00 a.m. Morning Morel Hunt; Meet at Shelter 8
- 12:00 p.m. Program Ends - The rest of the day is on your own.



Let the madness begin

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winning program put on by the Washington County Parks and Recreation department every spring at Mingo Creek Park, part of the Washington County park system. The park, located 12 miles east of the city of Washington, encompasses 2600 acres of prime Morel habitat and is easily accessed from Route 136.

Check-in for the event begins at 11 a.m. and things really get rolling shortly after noon with a presentation by nationally renowned mushroom photographer John Plischke III entitled, "Morels and Their Poisonous Look-Alikes." Whether you are new to Morel hunting or an experienced picker, the program has something for everyone, including the opportunity to get your questions answered directly by the experts.

Immediately after the presentation the fun begins as attendees have the option of joining a walk leader to scour a portion of the park or go off on their own to areas of their choosing. With 2600 acres to explore the odds of finding your quarry are quite high if Mother Nature cooperates. Some years the Mushroom Gods smile on the foray and Morels abound while at other times it can take some close scrutiny to find these elusive fungi - one of the causes of the initially mentioned Morel Madness.

By 4 p.m. everyone gathers to show off their finds and identify any other mushrooms found throughout the day. Dryad Saddles and Inky Caps are two edible mushrooms that frequently show up along with Morels. This is a good time to get a close-up and personal look at some of the false Morels that are covered in the earlier presentation, as they are frequently found also.

At 4:30 the program takes a break as attendees are on their own for dinner and camp setup. There are a few eateries close to the park or one can take the short drive to Washington where food options abound. Park personnel are familiar with the area and can assist with directions and/or information.

Six p.m. gets us back to where we all want to be, in the woods, and for some of us on our hands and knees. I won't say who, you'll be able to figure it out yourself. This time it will be the park personnel leading our excursion, and who would you think knows the park better than anyone else? BIG HINT; as if you needed it.

By the time darkness falls on the event, John Plischke III and his father Big John are firing up the slide projector for a look at what other edible mushrooms attendees can expect to find throughout the coming year. Beginning at 8:30 p.m., they will present "Edible Wild Mushrooms and How to Prepare Them" covering nearly 50 species of edible mushrooms.

After the slideshow you can always find a group of friendly fungiphiles gathered around a campfire nearby hashing over the day's events and bragging about their finds. Just don't ask them where they found them because they probably won't tell you, and if they do, they're



Attendees at the 2009 Morel Madness weekend enjoyed a slide presentation by John Plischke III and Big John Plischke before heading out to the woods.

probably lying to you. If you don't believe that, you have a lot to learn about Morel hunting. Never fear though, if you got this far and didn't find your first Morel, there are plenty of experienced pickers in the club more than willing to help out a discouraged beginner.

Sunday morning starts bright and early at 8 a.m. with a Rise and Shine Continental Breakfast before heading back out for one last organized hunt. This is a good time to find some of those experienced pickers and get hooked up for an educational, and hopefully, fruitful morning.

By noon Sunday everyone gathers together one final time for mushroom show and tell, at least those that are not still in the woods picking. The rest of the afternoon is up to each individual attendee, but since you are already geared up and in the middle of a Morel haven, well, I know what I would do.

The fee for all this fun and education is \$5.00 which is waived for card-carrying WPMC members thanks to Washington County Parks and Recreation. There is also a \$5.00 fee for camping. All attendees are required to pre-register by calling the park at 724-228-6867.

Morel Madness, the event, is the largest Morel foray in the eastern U.S. And regularly brings attendees from many states including W.V., Va., Md., De., N.Y., Oh., and Wi. The program has previously been awarded the Most Outstanding Outdoor Program Award for a Pennsylvania-based program.

"Fungi, Fun and Friends" in one of the state's top morel-hunting areas during the prime of spring mushroom season, guided by experts in the field - what more could you ask for to start off the 2010 mushroom-hunting season. Join us May 1st and 2nd at Mingo Creek Park and let the madness begin.

Mushrooms ...A second look

By Joyce Gross

It's inevitable. "Can you eat it?" they ask. "No," is the answer. Then it happens. The little spark in their eye is extinguished and off they go to find a more worthy specimen.

That's a shame because there is a lot more to experience from many mushrooms than just eating them. Some of the most overlooked and seemingly lowly little ones can be the starting point for a lot of craft projects or art. In our club's workshop meetings we have used some of these mushrooms to make everything from paper to jewelry.

Turkey Tail (*Trametes versicolor*) and False Turkey Tail (*Stereum ostrea*) mushrooms are two useful and very abundant examples. Artist Conks (*Ganoderma applanatum*) are probably the most recognized choice for displaying images and have been used for centuries to provide the basis for everything from crude scratchings to elaborately detailed pictures.

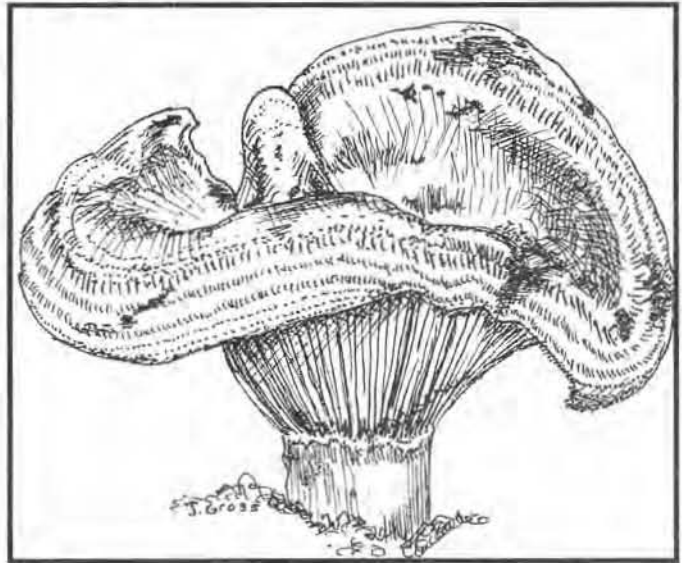
Some mushrooms are gathered for their ability to render beautiful colors used in the process of dyeing fibers as a more natural alternative to chemical dyes. In fact, most of the mushrooms that we've used are not of the edible variety.

I have found from my own experience of trying to learn the names of mushrooms that my artistic appreciation for them has grown immensely. When you pick a mushroom to identify it, you have to really look at its features. Look at the cap. Do you see zones of color? Look at the stalk. Is it striped or is there a certain pattern? Some of the above mentioned little polypores are absolutely beautiful when viewed from behind the lens of a loupe or magnifying glass.

Photographing mushrooms is an excellent way to learn more. You have a photo to look at and refer to the next time you think you have encountered the same mushroom. While you're at it, how about honing your photography skills and you will end up with a perfect subject to perhaps frame and display.

Another way to not only learn the mushroom, but appreciate its beauty is to sketch them. At the 2005 NEMF foray, I met a woman named Debra Veiss (aka Amanita Rita). She was sitting off in a corner by herself drawing individual pictures of specimens that were East coast varieties unfamiliar to her (she is from the West coast). At her disposal were a small sketch tablet, some pencils and colored pencils. She was putting down on paper the main features, colors, etc. of each mushroom so that when she got home the details would be easier to recall. This is an excellent way to emphasize the things that you feel will help you identify the mushroom the next time you see it. The features that help you may be different than features that someone else requires.

We all visually record things in our own way. A lot of



For those of us with artistic ability mushrooms can provide a very diverse subject matter. This sketch of a *Lactarius* sp. mushroom was done by the author.

times an artist can capture minute details that perhaps don't quite translate well in a photo. How many times have you gotten that picture printed only to find that the developing process has somehow converted that delicate lilac color to a ruddy pink?

In my opinion, mushrooms are some of the most fascinating things in nature to draw because they can be so different even within the same species. They are truly products of their environment. A dry mushroom will appear different from a wet mushroom thus changing the colors perceived.

Some specimens will be affected by nearby objects, like sticks or grass, which have been incorporated into the body of the mushroom. Some will be forced into an unnatural pose by an unyielding obstacle. Embrace these "by chance" occurrences and your drawings will be enhanced with even more artistic appeal.

Here in our world of all things fungi, we know the appeal of the fleshy fruiting bodies that peek their heads above the ground.

The vivid colors and ephemeral qualities of mushrooms entice us to gaze upon their upturned caps and squat stems thus drawing us into their world of magical existence.

If you've never taken the time to appreciate the beauty that lies just beneath the grass or hidden within the moist recesses of the forest, I invite you to pick up a camera, sketch pad, or loupe and challenge yourself to take another look at a mushroom with not the eye of a hungry forager but the eye of one who seeks all things that are beautiful.

WPMC cookbooks available; recipes needed

The WPMC has published two great wild mushroom cookbooks, filled with recipes that have been cooked and taste-tested by the "chefs" who submitted them.

Many of the recipes have been prepared and served at the Gary Lincoff Mid-Atlantic Mushroom Foray. Everyone is looking forward to another one with great anticipation.

Volume 3 is close to being ready for publication. We need more recipes from YOU! Get published in a cookbook; show your family that you are a true gourmet cook. Your recipes must be ones that you have tried and enjoy. It cannot be one that has been published by someone else unless you have made changes to make it your own.

Please email your gourmet wild mushroom recipes to Becky Plischke at morelbp@aol.com or mail them to 129 Grant Street, Greensburg, PA 15601.

Here is a sample recipe from Volume 1:

Puffball Potato Pancakes By Becky Plischke

3-4 cups mushrooms
3 medium potatoes
Salt & pepper
1 cup self-rising flour
1-2 tablespoons butter
1 cup cheddar cheese
Milk

Peel and chop the puffball fine then sauté. Set aside. Cook the potatoes; add salt and pepper, then mash. Sift the flour and rub butter into the flour. Add the flour to the mashed potatoes.

Add the cheese and mushrooms. Mix in a little milk to make a firm consistency. Make potato pancakes that are about ½ inch thick and 3 inches in diameter.

Heat a lightly greased pan. Cook the pancakes about 3 minutes on each side or until golden brown.

Washington/Greene County Chapter meetings

March 23: Bonnie and Brian Davis, co-founders of the Washington/Greene County Chapter WPMC will hold their inaugural meeting from 6 to 8 p.m. at the Peters Township Public Library 616E McMurray Road, McMurray, Pa. 724-941-9430. Topics discussed will include an introduction to the WPMC, morels, and items to bring on mushroom walks. Dick Dougall will present a talk and slide show titled "Mushrooms of Western Pa," which will include edible and poisonous mushrooms commonly found in Western Pa.

April 27: Discussion will focus on morels.

May 25: Cooking and tasting of morels and dryad's saddle, and possibly oysters.

June 22: Take a closer look at some mushroom families, such as polypores and boletus.

Indiana County Chapter meetings

April 14: Morels presented by John Plischke and John Plischke III. The Plischkes will present a very informative program entitled "Morels and Their Poisonous Look-Alikes."

May 12: Mushroom Cultivation by Bob Sleigh. Learn the basics of mushroom cultivation indoors and out from the ICCWPMCs resident cultivation guru.

June 9: Gary Lincoff's Twelve Basic Groups of Mushrooms presented by Dick Dougall. Dick is an identifier and past president of the WPMC. His talk covers a system of classifying all mushrooms into 12 distinctive categories.

July 14: Art & Crafts presented by Joyce Gross. Learn about the many crafty uses for non-edible mushrooms from the WPMCs current vice president.

All meetings begin at 6 p.m. at Blue Spruce Lodge, Blue Spruce Park, near Ernest. For directions or more information call Bob and Ginny Sleigh at 724-349-9173 or e-mail them at ICCWPMC@comcast.net.

Mushrooms Found During 2009 Lincoff Foray

By Dick Dougall, Education Chair

The mushrooms cooperated at last year's Gary Lincoff Mid-Atlantic Foray. This event set a record for the number of species found. The years 2006 (154 species), 2007 (181 species) and 2009 (202 species) have all exceeded the previous highest totals of different mushroom species found. The one exception was 2008, with only 106 species. This was due to the extremely dry weather before the foray, making it difficult to find many mushrooms at all. (See Dec. 2008 issue of Newsletter for more details.)

Records have been kept of the mushroom species found for the nine Lincoff Forays from 2001 through 2009. The total number of different species now stands at 507. Thus, the 202 types of mushrooms found in 2009 is about 40% of this total. Of these 202 different mushrooms, 63 are new additions to our list!

Our attendees brought in loads and loads of mushrooms for identification. Our guest mycologists, Noah Siegel and Bill Yule, as well as our club mycologists/identifiers were up to the challenge of putting names on most of them. The tables containing the Chicken Mushroom (*Laetiporus sulphureus*), White Chicken Mushroom (*Laetiporus cincinnatus*) and Hen of the Woods (*Grifola frondosa*) were particularly impressive. The one surprise was that no Honey Mushrooms (*Armillaria mellea*) were brought in. Some combination of weather factors probably was responsible for their not fruiting during the foray.

As usual, three groups of mushrooms lead in having the largest representative samples of mushrooms found: gilled mushrooms (97 species), polypores (32 species) and boletes (23) species. The results for polypores and boletes were right around the top numbers found for these groups. However, the 97 gilled mushroom species found was a dozen higher than the previous best total. Also, of these 97 species, about 1/3 (37) were new species!

After the 2007 foray, Gary Lincoff looked at the mushrooms we had found over the first seven years. He put together a list of 35 mushrooms that were the most frequently found, thirteen that were found every year and twenty-two that were found 6 of the 7 years.

Looking at these 35 mushrooms with two additional years of information, it seems reasonable to expand the list of commonly found mushrooms to 40. All but two mushrooms from the original list remain. The two to be dropped are: Purple-gilled Laccaria (*Laccaria ochropurpurea*) and the Rooted Collybia (*Xerula furfuracea* or *Oudemansiella radicata*). Seven additional mushrooms would be added. Now, the frequency of how often these mushrooms were found is:

Found all nine years — 12 mushrooms
Found for 8 of 9 years — 14 mushrooms
Found for 7 of 9 years — 14 mushrooms
Total — 40 mushrooms

Gary Lincoff Mid Atlantic Foray Mycologist Matching

By Becky Plischke

Match the mycologists to one of their specialties. Think you know them all? Send me your answers. The first correct one received will win a mushroom book. You need to pick it up at one of the next two meetings.

_____ Gary Lincoff	A. Truffles & Russulas
_____ Jon Ellifritz	B. Hygrophorus
_____ Tom Volk	C. Boletes
_____ Bill Roody	D. Professor
_____ Tina Ellor	E. Hypomyces
_____ John Plischke III	F. Mushroom of the Month
_____ Noah Siegel	G. Polypores
_____ Renee Lebeuf	H. Boletes
_____ Donna Mitchell	I. Amanitas
_____ Barrie Overton	J. Mushrooms of Mid Atlantic
_____ Rod Tulloss	K. Generalist
_____ Rick Kerrigan	L. Color
_____ Bill Yule	M. Spain
_____ John Plischke	N. Australia
_____ Dave Miller	O. Cultivation
_____ Ernst Both	P. Agaricus
_____ Bill Russell	Q. Commercial
_____ Walt Sturgeon	R. World Expert

The 7 new mushrooms added to the expanded list are:

- ▶ Ash-tree Bolete (*Boletinellus (Gyrodon) merulioides*)
- ▶ Eyelash Cup (*Scutellinia scutellata*)
- ▶ Fawn Mushroom (*Pluteus cervinus*)
- ▶ Hexagonal-pored Polypore (*Polyporus mari* or *Favolus alveolaris*)
- ▶ Milk-white Toothed Polypore (*Irpex lacteus*)
- ▶ Mustard-yellow Polypore (*Phellinus gilvus*)
- ▶ Oyster Mushroom (*Pleurotus ostreatus*)

The original list of 35 mushrooms and this expanded list of 40 mushrooms will be posted on our website (www.wpamushroomclub.org) for those wanting to look at the complete lists.

Of the new mushrooms that appeared on the Lincoff Foray lists for the first time, I found one intriguing.

It is the Pendulous-disc Polypore (*Perodisculus (Polyporus) pendulus*), the smallest of the polypores being typically 5 mm in length. It is fairly common in occurrence. I suspect that our foray participants have been overlooking it because of its small size.

If you want to learn more about it, check the species list on Gary Emberger's website about Mushrooms on Wood. You can go to his website using the links section on the WPMC website.

The Tenth Annual Gary Lincoff Mid-Atlantic Mushroom Foray

Saturday, Sept. 11, 2010



Featured speaker will be Gary Lincoff, author of the *Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Mushrooms*. Gary, Past-president of the North American Mycological Association (NAMA), is the nation's best-known mushroom expert. He's a charismatic and entertaining speaker and makes learning about mushrooms fun and interesting. His end-of-the-day table-walk discussions are not to be missed. Join us for an exciting day of fungi, fun, friends and mushroom exploration — a day filled with foraging, learning, and feasting . . . but most of all, *fun!*

Program: Guided morning & afternoon mushroom walks; guest speakers: Gary Lincoff, Matthew Foltz, Walter Sturgeon, & Tom Volk; cooking demonstration; auction; mushroom feast: our club cooks prepare a real treat, with *dozens* of unique mushroom dishes to delight your taste buds. This all-day foray will be headquartered at *Parish Hill, North Park* 10 miles north of Pittsburgh, PA.

Morning and afternoon walks will be conducted in North Park and in other woodlands nearby. The habitats for these foray walks have resulted in well over 100 species collected each year.

Admission:

- ▶ Until September 1st the fee is \$30 per person for WPMC members
 - ▶ Members pay \$35 per person at the door
 - ▶ Non-members pay \$35 per person plus the 2011 membership fee (\$15 for an individual for \$20 for a family)
 - ▶ Students (with ID) and children under 18 are \$10 each
- (Please note: signing and dating the release form is an absolute requirement for attendance.)

To register and pay by check:

- ▶ Make check payable to: *Western PA Mushroom Club*
- ▶ Mail check and registration form to: WPMC, 244 Lytton Ave, Pittsburgh 15213.
- ▶ New members: please include membership application and 2010 dues.

To register and pay online:

- ▶ Go to the club website: <http://www.wpamushroomclub.org>
- ▶ Click on the 2010 Foray information.
- ▶ Choose the Paypal option (you may pay either using a credit card or a Paypal account).
- ▶ You will receive a release form to sign at check-in.

Registration & Release

Name 1 _____ Name 2 _____

Name 3 _____

Address _____ City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____ E-mail _____

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 of its officers or members, 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: _____

Signature _____ Date: _____

For more information, contact foray chair: Brian Davis, magnumdavisb@verizon.net

**WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA
MUSHROOM CLUB**

129 Grant Street
Greensburg, PA 15601

Return Services Requested

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