



Volume 9, Issue 3  
August/September 2008

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The newsletter of the Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club is published and distributed 5 times per 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. However, all submissions will be included in future newsletters as long as it relates in some way to fungi. The editor reserves the right to make spelling or grammatical corrections and may suggest content changes to the author. Material published in our newsletters may be used in other non-profit publications only with expressed permission and with appropriate acknowledgements.

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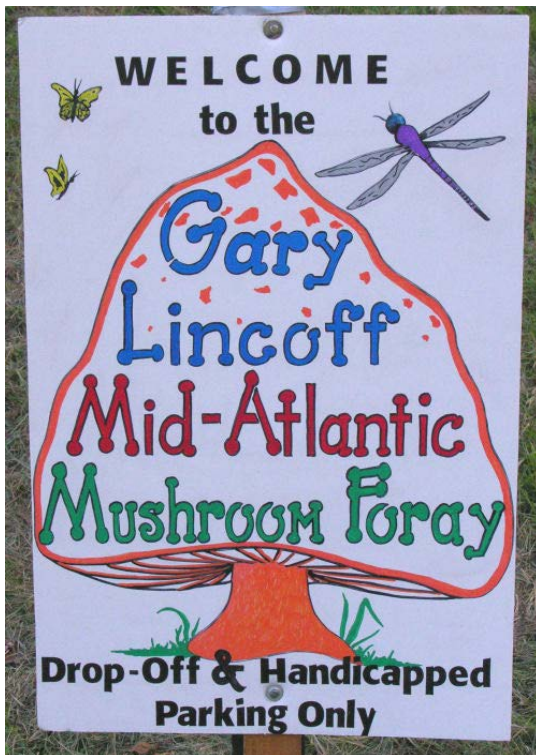
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*Newsletter Editor*

**Jim Strutz**

## 2008 Gary Lincoff Mid-Atlantic Mushroom Foray September 20, 2008



*Article by Dick Dougall*

Whether you are a beginning mushroomer or long-time mushroom enthusiast, the Gary Lincoff Mid-Atlantic Mushroom Foray is the best way to expand your horizons. This all-day event on September 20 will take place in the North Hills of Pittsburgh, PA. The activities will be centered at Parish Hill in Allegheny County's North Park. (For MapQuest directions to the park and a park map, go to the website:

[www.county.allegheny.pa.us/parks/npfac.asp](http://www.county.allegheny.pa.us/parks/npfac.asp).)

People registering for the foray will receive a packet of detailed directions and list of events. To obtain a registration form, find the form in this newsletter or go to the club's website: [www.wpamushroomclub.org](http://www.wpamushroomclub.org).

This major event of the Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club gathers about 150 club members and guests in one location at the same time. There are limitations on the number of people that can be handled at the facility. Therefore, it is important to get your registration in promptly. The cost of the event is \$25 advance or \$50 at the door (membership not included).

## Events

- **Morning & afternoon guided mushroom walks** in the local area (During previous forays, walk leaders and identifiers have discovered a wide variety of productive mushroom habitats.)
- **Informative talks** by nationally recognized mycologists. (Gary Lincoff's talk has always been a highlight of the foray.)
- **Mushroom cooking demonstration** by Tom Chulick, Executive Chef of the Back Door Café in Johnstown, PA.
- **Mushroom feast** by club cooks who have consistently supplied a wide variety of dishes featuring choice wild edible mushrooms
- **Mushroom identification** by expert and club mycologists. A display of over 100 identified species is typical. Gary Lincoff does a table walk in which he comments on the various mushrooms that were found.

## Schedule

- **Registration** starts at 7:30 AM.
- **Program** begins promptly at 8:30 AM.
- **Morning walk groups** leave at 8:45 AM
- **Lunch** on your own from noon to 1:00 PM.

Continued on Page 4, see "Mushroom Mania"

## President's Corner

By John Stuart

We have a simple question with a not so simple answer. The question is - What characteristics make up a genus and how do you recognize it in the field. Or can you recognize it in the field at all without the help of microscopy, stains, or DNA analysis. The binomial nomenclature of Elias Fries is being replaced by a cladistic higher level phylogenetically based classification system brought about by an explosion of molecular data. DNA "bar codes" are being used to separate species. Most field guides are oriented to species, with limited or no attempt to give generic characters. Largent, et al, put together a series on How to identify Mushrooms to Genus (vols. I - VI, 1977-88) and Volumes I and II are based on macroscopic features only. This is now very old fashioned and out of date but being able to recognize certain mushrooms by eye, using no special equipment still has a timeless appeal for the amateur mushroomer who enjoys foraging in the woods and fields. With this in mind and knowing that the mushroom doesn't care what you call it, as long as you can recognize it, we have gone ahead and put together a course that will be based on macroscopic features that allow you to identify many of the genera that are commonly found locally. By spreading out the work load through several club members we have scoured the literature in multiple field guides and internet sites to glean as many nuggets of helpful information as we could. This is in no way a scholarly endeavor but rather an attempt to give the amateur club member a little push further down the road of mushroom identification. So if you want to know which genus has an astonishing ability to revive in water, or leaves a waxy residue on your fingers, or is immediately recognizable by the matted white mycelium around its base, or is distinguished by mottled gills with a hand lens, or has a scaly cap, brown spores and is found on wood, or has a cap which splits radially with ridiculous ease, or many other pearls of identification wisdom please come to the Fern Hollow Nature Center for an all day workshop on September 6, 2008. There will be a terrific handout, lunch, and even a small introduction to microscopy. On September 7, 2008 we will also be putting on a 3 hour "Introduction to Mushrooming" course for the beginner covering a lot of very interesting information on mushrooming in general, how and where to hunt them, what toxic species to avoid, what are some of the best edibles and the rules to follow to keep you out of trouble. Hope to see you there. *Editor's note: See page 4 for registration details.*

## WPMC News Items

### WPMC Mushroom Items For Sale

A number of mushroom-related items are sold at our meetings: caps and t-shirts, mushroom cookbooks, loupes, waxpaper bags, and Field Guides to Mushrooms (both Lincoff's and Russell's). See Mary Ellen Dougall at the sales table at our meetings.

### 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 other things. Also find award winning photos in the 'Photo' section, and articles, lists, and other files in the 'Files' section.

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/wpamushroomclub/>

### WPMC Website

Reference our professionally designed website for information and links pertaining to our club: walks, meetings, species lists and Java data miner

among other things. [www.wpamushroomclub.org](http://www.wpamushroomclub.org)

### WPMC Wild Mushroom Cookbook, Volume 3

We are working on compiling WPMC Cookbook, Volume 3, but we need more recipes. We are waiting for your addition to Vol. 3. Volumes 1 and 2 have been great successes and are both available for sale. We cannot use copyrighted material or anything you have not tested and enjoyed. Send your recipes to Becky Plischke at [morelbp@aol.com](mailto:morelbp@aol.com) or mail to 129 Grant St, Greensburg, PA 15601

### Monthly Meetings

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

**July 15: Craft Workshop** with *Joyce Gross, Workshop Chair*. Did you know that some mushrooms can be used as a component in homemade soap? Come to this workshop and learn more about the process.

**August 19: Foray in the Grocery Store** with *Mark Spear & Jim Tunney, Club Cultivation experts*. Grocery stores sell a variety of mushrooms. How are these related to wild mushrooms? Can any of these be used for cultivated at home? Learn more at this meeting.

**September 16: Mushroom Trivia** by *Frank Lotrich*. Fungi are members of the fifth kingdom. Relatively little is known about them, yet it is a hugely important kingdom. What role do mushrooms play in the social conflicts between Tibet and China? Which organism is far larger than the largest Redwood? Hint, it is a mushroom. Some mushrooms reproduce sexually at night, but asexually during the day. How? Over 1000 animals, including humans, have had their genomes sequenced and over 1000 plants, but only a couple fungi. Which ones and why? Which fungi do ants harvest, and why? Find out the answers to these questions and more. Come to this talk and be at the cutting edge of knowledge as we explore things about fungi that few people are aware of.

**October 21: Election of Officers & Open Forum** 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 18: Mushrooms and Art** by *Joyce Gross, Workshop Chair*. TBD.



*Chicken-of-the-Woods (Laetiporus sulphureous) Photo by Jim Strutz*

## 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](http://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.*

**July 19 - 10:00-12:00 Chanterelle Mania at North Park, Allegheny County.** Meet **Valerie and Jack Baker** at Deer Browse #2 pavilion beside the Swimming Pool parking lot. A picnic will follow the walk. Last year this spot produced beautiful chanterelles. There were also a good number of boletes and other species. You never know what the season will bring, but it could be very good again. North Park has a variety of habitats, although the area abounds in large oaks there is a large variety of trees and habitats that make this an exceptional place for hunting mushrooms. Directions below.

**July 19-20 - Dawes Arboretum, Meet the Ohio Mushroom Society** for their Summer Foray near Newark, Ohio. Walt Sturgeon has told us this is an excellent place to find mushrooms. For further info check their website at: [www.ohiomushroom.org](http://www.ohiomushroom.org)

**July 26 - 10:00-12:00 North Park, Allegheny County.** Meet **John Stuart and LaMonte Yarroll** at the intersection of Babcock and Pearce Mill Road near Beaver Shelter. North Park has a variety of habitats; we always find mushrooms here. Directions below.

**July 31 - August 3 - the 32nd ANNUAL NORTHEAST MYCOLOGICAL FORAY.** The Connecticut Valley Mycological Society takes pleasure in inviting all mycophiles to join them at - **the Samuel Ristich Foray** - at Connecticut College in New London, CT. See their website for details. <http://www.nemf.org>

**August 2 - 10:00-12:00 Harrison Hills Park, Allegheny County.** Meet **Joyce and George Gross.** Pick up PA Route 28 towards Natrona Heights (Allegheny Co. Belt System [red, green, yellow or blue], PA Route 910, Route 356, PA Turnpike [Exit 48 - Allegheny Valley], or Interstate 270-Route 422). Get off Rt. 28 at Exit 16 (Millerstown/Freeport) and turn right if you've been traveling northbound, or left if traveling southbound, onto Route 908 for approximately 0.8 mile. You will come to a flashing red light at an intersection of a four-lane highway. Turn right (Freeport Rd.) and get into the left-hand lane. The entrance to Harrison Hills Park is 0.8 miles on the left, just beyond the Harrison Hills Fire Dept. (large, single story buff building) and Harrison Hills Chiropractic on the right.

**August 9- 10:00-12:00 Emmerling Park, Indiana Township, Allegheny County.** Meet **Jim Tunney.** Enjoy this mushroom walk along a part of the Rachel Carson 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.

**August 9** Join the **West Virginia Mushroom Club at Kanawha State Forest in Charleston, WV.** For more information, please email Shelly Conrad at [geezere@comcast.net](mailto:geezere@comcast.net) or check their website: [www.wvmushroomclub.org](http://www.wvmushroomclub.org)

**August 16 9:00-12:00 Regional Environmental Education Center, Boyce-Mayview Park, Upper Saint Clair. Fee: \$15 or \$10 for mushroom club members with a current membership card.** John Plischke III will present a slide show and lead a walk. Bring mushrooms from home for identification. To register, contact Jessica at (412) 838-0064. From Rt. 19, Heading north (from Washington County): Follow Rt. 19 to intersection with Boyce Road. Turn left onto Boyce Road. Follow Boyce all the way to the intersection with Mayview Road. Turn right on Mayview. Follow Mayview past Mayview State Hospital, across Chartiers Creek, until you see the barns and the sign for 1571 Mayview Road on your right. Turn right at the 1571 sign. Follow the road to the parking area, then walk through the parking area to the REEC. See their website for more information, other directions and a park map. [www.regionaleec.org](http://www.regionaleec.org)

**August 15-17** Join the **New Jersey Mycological Association** for their annual **Victor Gambino Foray**, at the King's Gap Environmental Center in Carlisle, PA. They settled on this location for its fine foray sites, great accommodations, and great food. You can find more information and download a registration form on their website. [www.njmyco.org](http://www.njmyco.org)

**August 23 - 10:00 - 12:00 Hartwood Acres, Allegheny County.** Meet **Glenn Carr** 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. Directions below.

**August 30 - 11:00 am Brady's Run Park, Beaver County.** Meet **John Plischke and John Plischke III** for a program and walk. Head on the Parkway West out of Pittsburgh toward the Airport/Route 60. Pass the Airport on Route 60 and continue on to the Chippewa exit. It is the last exit before 60 becomes a toll road. When you exit at Chippewa, make a Right at the light onto Route 51, south. Continue on Route 51 (about 2 miles) until you come to the red light in front of the entrance to Brady's Run Park. Make a right into the park. About 1 mile down the road (near the lake and beach) you will see a turn up the hill to your right and a sign that says "Ed Calland Arboretum". Turn here and follow the road all the way to the top; you will see a parking area and the pavilion.

**September 4-7 The North American Mycological Association Foray** will be Hosted by the Southern Idaho Mycological Association in McCall, Idaho. See the NAMA website for more information and a registration form. [www.namyco.org](http://www.namyco.org)

**September 6-7 - Meet the Mycological Association of Washington** at Camp Sequanota in Jennerstown, Somerset County, which is where they've had excellent foray weekends in September of every year but two since 1988. The record number of species there was about 260, and sometimes found vast quantities of choice edibles (well, pretty good amounts) like black chanterelles, horse mushrooms, and Boletus separans. Details will be at [www.mawdc.org](http://www.mawdc.org)

**September 6-7 Join the West Virginia Mycological Association at Greenbriar State Forest in Lewisburg.** Walt Sturgeon will be the taxonomist again this year. For more information, please email Shelly Conrad at [geezere@comcast.net](mailto:geezere@comcast.net). Or check their website at: [www.wvmushroomclub.org](http://www.wvmushroomclub.org)

Continued on Page 10, see WPMC News, Walks

## Mushroom Identification Courses

By John Stuart

We are presenting these courses in conjunction with Fern Hollow Nature Center.

The Mushroom Identification to Genus, a day long workshop, is on Saturday Sept. 6, 2008 from 9:30 to 4:30. Cost is \$30 and will include a "Guide to Mushroom Descriptions", a "Key to common Gilled Mushrooms", an extensive handout on over 30 genera, the book "How to Identify Mushrooms to Genus II : Field Identification of Genera" by David Largent and Harry Thiers, an introduction to microscopy, and lunch.

Introduction to Mushrooms is a 3 hour course on Sunday, Sept. 7, 2008 from 1:00 to 4:00 and will cover mushroom collection, basic classification and identification, how to do spore prints, Lincoff's 12 mushroom groups, dangerous mushrooms to avoid, mushroom toxicity, good edible mushrooms and rules to follow to keep out of trouble. The cost is \$5.

Pre-registration is required for the mushroom workshops. To register call John Stuart at 724-443-6878 or e-mail at [jstuart@nauticom.net](mailto:jstuart@nauticom.net). Checks should be made out to WPMC and mailed to WPMC, 1848 Fairhill Road, Allison Park, PA, 15101.

Any questions or comments about Fern Hollow Nature Center or if you would like to become a member, please call 412-741-6136 or visit [www.fhnc.org](http://www.fhnc.org)

### Directions to Fern Hollow Nature Center

From PITTSBURGH

- Take Route 65 North to I-79 North exit.
- Make a right at stop sign.
- Proceed  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile and make a left on Deer Run Road.
- Proceed on Deer Run Road, which becomes Merriman Road to second stop sign and make a left on Glen Mitchell Road.
- Fern Hollow Nature Center is on the right at the crest of the hill.
- Proceed  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile to the Fern Hollow Nature Center on the right at the crest of the hill.

From the SOUTH

- Take I-79 North to Mt. Nebo Road exit.
- Make a left at end of ramp to Blackburn Road.
- Proceed  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile to top of hill and make a left onto Scaife Road.
- Proceed 2 winding miles to Glen Mitchell Road and make a left.

From the NORTH

- Take I-79 South to Mt. Nebo Road exit.
- Make a right at end of ramp onto Blackburn Road.
- Proceed  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile to top of hill and make a left onto Scaife Road.
- Proceed 2 winding miles to Glen Mitchell Road and make a left.
- Proceed 1 mile to the Fern Hollow Nature Center on the right at the crest of the hill.



"Mushroom Mania", Continued from Page 1

- **Cooking with Mushrooms** with Tom Chulick begins at 2:00 PM
- **Mycologist Speakers** from 2:30 PM - 5:30 PM
- **Mushroom Tasting** starts at 5:30 PM.
- **Table Walk** of mushroom collection by Gary Lincoff at 6:30 PM.
- **Cleanup** by everybody, 7:00-7:30 PM.
- **After foray party** at Marzoni's restaurant



One of the featured events of Mushroom Mania is the feast! It alone is worth the cost of admission. A small army of our club's cooks each prepare several mushroom dishes. The food is prepped and served smorgasbord style. Plate your food and dine with the mycologists (Bill Russell in foreground above). Obviously I didn't take this picture because I'm in the background fooling with my camera, so I'm not sure who to give photo credit to - Becky Plischke?



These plates on the table aren't about food. Our mushroom hunters return to "mushroom HQ" with their finds from the morning walks. Mushrooms of all kinds are plated and identified by our mycologists. Each plate contains mushrooms and written comments, including the Latin and common names, pertaining to the species. The guest mycologists later discuss interesting points about the mushrooms and answer questions. It's a great opportunity to learn directly from the experts.

# 2008 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 (please print) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ County \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

- Interests:**
- |  |   |  |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Learning Mushrooms    | <input type="checkbox"/> Mushroom Walks | <input type="checkbox"/> Club Committees       |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Eating Wild Mushroom  | <input type="checkbox"/> Toxicology     | <input type="checkbox"/> Cultivating Mushrooms |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dyeing With Mushrooms | <input type="checkbox"/> Mushroom Art   | <input type="checkbox"/> Mushroom Photography  |

How many wild mushrooms do you think you could identify? \_\_\_\_\_

**WE NEED YOUR HELP!** 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. Please check 3 boxes below.

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Scout for walk locations-lead walks       | <input type="checkbox"/> Compile meeting & walk sign in sheets   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Help organize forays                      | <input type="checkbox"/> Outreach-speak to clubs & organizations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Print club materials, flyers, etc.        | <input type="checkbox"/> Call or e-mail members                  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Work on newsletter committee              | <input type="checkbox"/> Give a program at Club monthly meeting  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Contribute articles, photos to newsletter | <input type="checkbox"/> Produce or acquire teaching materials   |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Help with webpage & e-group moderator     | <input type="checkbox"/> Welcome and orient new members          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Line up speakers for meetings             | <input type="checkbox"/> Work on hospitality committee           |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Host guest speakers and mycologists       | <input type="checkbox"/> Participate in special projects         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Record meetings, discussions, events      | <input type="checkbox"/> Record mushrooms that are found         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sell club items, tee shirts, cookbooks    | <input type="checkbox"/> Door prize committee                    |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Publicize meetings, forays, events        | <input type="checkbox"/> Present or assist with a club workshop  |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Club Historian                            | <input type="checkbox"/> Help with sign in at walks and meetings |

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

Return completed signed and dated form with check payable to WPA Mushroom Club to:  
Bonnie Bailey, WPMC Membership Chair, 120 Mt. Blaine Dr., McMurray, PA 15317

(Over)

**Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club  
2008 Release and Indemnification Agreement**

This Release and Indemnification Agreement (the "Agreement") is entered into by and between the Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club, as it is presently organized and may be later structured ("WPMC") and the undersigned Member (the "Member") on this \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2008.

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

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

WHEREAS, in cases where WPMC charges a fee for its forays, walks, lectures and other events (collectively "WPMC Events"), it is doing so only to cover its direct costs and does not operate in a for-profit capacity; and

WHEREAS, the Member understands that there is inherent and unavoidable risk in outdoor activities relating to hunting and consuming wild mushrooms. These risks include but are not limited to the dangers of hiking in difficult terrain, the possibility of misidentifying a wild mushroom, and the possible allergic or toxic reaction that some individuals may have to otherwise edible mushrooms.

**NOW THEREFORE, THE MEMBER HEREBY AGREES TO THE FOLLOWING:**

- 1. THE MEMBER ASSUMES ALL RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH WPMC EVENTS. THE MEMBER EXPRESSLY ACKNOWLEDGES THAT IT IS THE MEMBER'S SOLE RESPONSIBILITY TO HIKE SAFELY AND TO DETERMINE WHETHER A WILD MUSHROOM MAY BE CONSUMED.**
- 2. THE MEMBER RELEASES, HOLDS HARMLESS, AND INDEMNIFIES THE WPMC, ITS OFFICERS, DIRECTORS, IDENTIFIERS AND REPRESENTATIVES FROM ANY AND ALL LIABILITY RELATING TO ANY INJURY OR ILLNESS INCURRED BY THE MEMBER OR THE MEMBER'S FAMILY MEMBERS AS A RESULT OF PARTICIPATION IN A WPMC EVENT.**

This Agreement shall be governed by the laws of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. If any portion of the Agreement is declared for any reason to be invalid or unenforceable, such invalidity shall not affect any other provision of the Agreement. **This Agreement shall apply to all WPMC events for the calendar years 2008.**

MEMBERS:

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Please sign name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Please sign name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Please sign name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(If Member is under age 21, Parent's signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Please sign name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Please sign name)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Please sign name)

THE SEVENTH ANNUAL  
GARY LINCOFF  
MID-ATLANTIC MUSHROOM FORAY  
Saturday, Sept. 20, 2008  
7:30-8:15 Registration, 8:30-7:30 Program

SPECIAL EARLY 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 (NAMA). He is a very charismatic and entertaining speaker and has a way of making learning about fungi fun and interesting. His end-of-the-day table walk discussions are not to be missed.



**Coleman McCleneghan, Ph.D.**, Speaker, mycology education at Humboldt State University, CA and University of Tennessee. She has taught numerous mushroom and lichen courses at Appalachian State University. She has been involved in Biodiversity Studies through the Great Smoky Mountain Institute at Tremont, TN.

**John Ellifritz**, Speaker, President of the Mushroom Association of Washington, DC. Jon has been a regular at the Lincoff Foray serving as a speaker and identifier. He has a wide knowledge of the natural world with emphasis in fungi, plants, and ecology.

Join us for an exciting day of fungi, fun, and friends and mushroom exploration. It's a day filled with foraging, learning, feasting and fun!

**Fungi Fun Friends**

**Foray Fees:** \$25 for members registered & paid by Sept. 1<sup>st</sup>; \$50 at door, for non-members, and for members paying after Sept. 1<sup>st</sup>. (Membership fees: Individual \$15, Family \$20, Student \$10)

For more information, contact foray co-chairs: **Dick Dougall**, 412-486-7504, [rsdme@imap.pitt.edu](mailto:rsdme@imap.pitt.edu); **John Stuart**, 724-443-6878, [jstuart@nauticom.net](mailto:jstuart@nauticom.net)

**Signing and dating the release is an absolute requirement for attendance.** No refunds. Make check payable to: **Western PA Mushroom Club**. Mail check, registration, and membership form to: WPMC, 1848 Fairhill Road, 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 \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

# THE LYCOPERDON PART 2 OF 2

Article and Photos by John Plishcke III



**Black Puffball** (*Lycoperdon nigrescens*) Persoon (*Lycoperdon foetidum*)

**Other Common Names:** Dark Puffball

**Family:** Lycoperdaceae

**Description:** 1 to 2-1/8 inches tall and  $\frac{3}{4}$  to 1- $\frac{1}{2}$  inches wide. This mushroom has brown-black spines and forms a single hole in the center of the top for the spores to release. The interior flesh is white, ageing yellow-olive, then finally brown. Its often lighter colored, sterile base is about 1/3 the height of the mushroom.

**Range:** North America but more common in the west.

**Where To Look:** On the soil or humus under conifers.

**How Often They're Found:** Occasional in west.

**How They're Grouped:** Singly or in small groups to scattered.

**When To Look:** January in California.

**Look-alikes:** (*Lycoperdon molle*) and (*Lycoperdon umbrinum*), see descriptions in text.

**Edibility:** Unknown.

**Microscopic Features:** Spores 3.5 X 5um, they are globose.



*Puffballs & Potatoes: this dish was served at Mushroom Mania last year.*



**Gem-Studded Puffball** (*Lycoperdon perlatum*) Persoon (*Lycoperdon gemmatum*) (*Lycoperdon perlatum* var. *bobordeni*) (*Lycoperdon perlatum* var. *nigrescens*)

**Other Common Names:** Devils Snuffbox, Gemmed Puffball

**Family:** Lycoperdaceae

**Description:** 1 to 2- $\frac{1}{2}$  inches wide and 1-1/8 to 2-7/8 inches tall. The exterior is white and can have some yellow, or shades of tan to beige, often darkening at or near the top. It becomes yellow-brown to brown with age. Shape is round except for the noticeable sterile base, with the exterior surface forming little raised spine or wart like areas. It forms a single hole in the center of the top for the spores to release. The interior is white, turning pale yellow-green, then olive-brown to yellow-brown, finally to brown. It has white stringy mycelium that may be seen if pulled out of very loose soil.

**Range:** North America. OH, PA, WV

**Where To Look:** On the soil in the woods and in semi open wooded areas and fully wooded areas, in mixed woods. It grows less commonly in fields and pastures and other farm type areas. Sometimes they may be found along back dirt roads or along wooded paths.

**How Often They're Found:** Common.

**How They're Grouped:** Typically in groups and clusters or scattered but sometimes singly. Often they can be found in quantity.

**When To Look:** July - October. Winter in CA.

**Look-alikes:** (*Lycoperdon marginatum*) skins flakes away when old. (*Lycoperdon pyriforme*) differs by growing on wood. (*Lycoperdon umbrinum*) differs by having a blackish colored outer surface.

**Edible:** Edible and Choice if white when cut in half.



**Microscopic Features:** spores 3.5 X 4.5 um, round.



**Pear Shaped Puffball (*Lycoperdon pyriforme*) Schaeffer :**  
*Persoon (Morganella pyriformis)*

**Other Common Names:** Pear-Shaped Puffball, Puffball

**Family:** Lycoperdaceae

**Description:** It is shaped like a pear hence the name. *Mushroom:* 1/2 to 1- $\frac{3}{4}$  inches wide and  $\frac{3}{4}$  to 1- $\frac{7}{8}$  inches tall. It is shaped like an upside down pear. The exterior is whitish when very young then it becomes yellowish brown color with some white and tan in it with age and that is the way that is it usually found. It has small warts or granular particles on it but it still feels a little smooth. It develops a single hole at or near the center of the top for the spores to release with age. The interior is white when fresh and turns yellowish green to yellowish brown or greenish brown with age. The sterile base is very small and has white string like mycelium that can be seen when pulled out of loose rotted wood. *Spore Print:* greenish brown to brownish.

**Range:** North America. OH, PA, WV

**Where To Look:** It grows on wood. Look on fallen trunk and logs and also on dead stumps, which are usually somewhat rotted. I have also seen it growing up the base of an oak. The wood can have the bark on it or it can be bark-less. Occasionally it can be found on the soil but then there has to be buried wood. It also can occasionally be on mulched paths in the woods. On dead hardwood.

**How Often They're Found:** Common to very common.

**How They're Grouped:** in groups and clusters or large groups and often-over 100 can be picked on a decaying fallen log. They are typically touching at places. It can be found singly but rarely.

**Social Plants:** Moss can be growing nearby but is not usually present.

**When To Look:** July to November.

**Look-alikes:** The edible Gem Studded Puffball or Devil's Snuff Box (*Lycoperdon perlatum*), which grows on soil and has particles that easily rub away or come loose in the hand. The Spiny Puffball (*Lycoperdon echinatum*), which grows on the soil and has spines. Remember that there are also other puffballs that have the spines. (*Morganella subincarnata*).

**Edibility:** Edible and Choice if white when cut in half.

**Cooking Instructions:** Only eat when white inside and make sure to cut them in half because if small ones are swallowed whole they reportedly float in the toilet. They are good cooked in butter with chopped up potatoes, onions, and peppers or breaded. Also great in puffball potato pancakes made by adding puffballs that have been cooked in butter to mashed potatoes and adding a little cheese in the middle to make it extra delicious. They are also good cut into bite sized pieces then dipped in egg, then breadcrumbs or flour then deep fried. They do not dry well but can be frozen.

**Microscopic Features:** spores 3-5 um round.

**Soil Temperature:** Wood temp 57 degrees.



**(*Lycoperdon umbrinum*) Persoon**

**Family:** Lycoperdaceae

**Description:** 1 to 3 inches tall and 1 to 3 inches wide. Is roundish except for the stalk like bottom that can be lighter in color. The exterior has brownish spines. The interior is white turning yellow to grayish brown with age often starting at the top and changing color going downwards. *Stalk:* a stalk like bottom that is lighter in color.

**Range:** North America.

**Where To Look:** On the soil. Under evergreens.

**How Often They're Found:** Uncommon.

**How They're Grouped:** Singly to in groups to scattered.

**When To Look:** August - October.

**Look-alikes:** (*Lycoperdon molle*) see text.

WPMC News; Walks, continued from Page 3

**Edibility:** Edible when white when cut in half.

**Microscopic Features:** Spores 3.5-5um. They are round



(*Lycoperdon pusillum*)

**Family:** Lycoperdaceae

**Description:** It is white becoming brownish with age. It gets a single hole in the center of the top for the spores to release. It does not have a stalk like base.

**Range:** North Eastern United States.

**Where To Look:** on the soil.

**How Often They're Found:** uncommon to occasional.



*Mulched Trail & Thousands, the light colored areas on this trail are puffballs.*

**September 13 - 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.

**September 19-21 The 2007 Charles Horton Peck Annual New York State Mushroom Foray** will be held at the Brauer Field Station of SUNY of Cortland near Albany, New York. For more information check the web at: [ppathw3.cals.cornell.edu/CUPpages/Peck/main.html](http://ppathw3.cals.cornell.edu/CUPpages/Peck/main.html)

**Sept 20 - Gary Lincoff Mid Atlantic Mushroom Foray** Don't miss it, register today!

**September 27 - 10:00 - 12:00 Upper Dock Hollow, Freeport, Armstrong County.** Meet Don Stone. Enjoy this mushroom walk along a trail that also has two beautiful waterfalls. Follow Main Street. Go through a tunnel under the railroad and park in the parking lot at Riverside Park. Meet at the Gazebo.

**September 26 - 28 Join the Eastern Penn Mushroomers for the Helen Miknis Memorial Foray.** This year's annual EPM foray will be held at King's Gap Environmental and Training Center near Carlisle, PA. Contact Bill Miknis at [fiverbill@verizon.net](mailto:fiverbill@verizon.net) or see their website for more information <http://www.epennmushroomers.org>

#### **DIRECTIONS to North Park**

[www.county.allegheny.pa.us/parks/parkphon.asp](http://www.county.allegheny.pa.us/parks/parkphon.asp)

From Pittsburgh go north on Rt. 8. Turn left onto Wildwood Road onto the Yellow Belt. 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 walk location.

**DIRECTIONS to Hartwood Acres:** From PA Turnpike: Take Allegheny Valley (Exit 48). 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. This is about a mile and a half from Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve.

**Sept 20 - Gary Lincoff Mid Atlantic Mushroom Foray** Don't miss it, register today!

*Mushroom walks begin promptly at the designated time and place. Your walk leader will brief you on walk details and when to return. The walk identifier, at the end of the walk, will name and discuss the mushrooms found, and answer any questions. You are responsible for bringing your own lunch, water, mushroom gathering paraphernalia, camera, notebook, compass, whistle, etc. Dress for the weather and for comfort. Most importantly, identify any mushroom you intend to eat very carefully. We are not responsible for the consequences of you eating the wrong mushrooms.*

#### **Mushroom Haiku**

Soaking rain  
Hyphae mingles below  
Fruit dance

## Fungi Friends

By Joyce Gross

Our club motto is "Fungi, Fun and Friends." We find plenty of mushrooms, and we always have lots of fun, but what about the friends? This club consists of many wonderful people with diverse interests, talents and backgrounds. Let's get to know them and, the next time you see them at a meeting or on a walk, say "Hello" and make a new friend.

Let's meet club member **Marie Latagliata**.



### 1. How did you become interested in mushroom hunting?

My grandfather hunted mushrooms and we always ate them at our Christmas Eve dinner. I wanted to recreate the taste of our Slovak mushroom soup with wild mushrooms rather than using the store bought ones.

### 2. How many mushrooms do you think you have learned?

I probably feel comfortable with the common names of about a dozen mushrooms that I could identify.

### 3. What is your favorite mushroom and why?

I wish I could say Morels because finding them is on my "bucket list." But since I have never found any on my own, I would have to say the Hen of the Woods and the Armillariella mellea (honey mushrooms).

### 4. When did you join the WPMC?

Shortly after it started. A colleague brought me the PPG newspaper article about the group forming. Mary Woehrel was president and when I spoke with her, she remembered mushrooms from her childhood also.

### 5. What is your favorite aspect of the club?

The unselfish willingness of the members to share their knowledge. Once, John Plischke, Sr. drove all the way to Cranberry Township to identify my paper bag full of prime Armillariella mellea mushrooms. It was my first find on my own. No one in my family would eat them, until I told them John had personally looked at them. The members are extremely knowledgeable and come from all different walks of life.

### 6. Have you ever gotten sick after eating a mushroom?

Yes. A friend of mine gave me a box of mushrooms she had picked. I thought they were Chicken mushrooms, but they were Jack O 'Lanterns. BIG DIFFERENCE!!! One has gills - one doesn't. I know that now. Fortunately, I didn't share the mushroom, and I was cautious in the amount I ate. That involved another call to John!! :)

### 7. Biography:

I am a retired high school music teacher. I love to travel, read, and garden....also like cooking with mushrooms. Two life long goals are to speak Italian fluently and to find my own Morel patch. Last October, I went to Sicily on a wine tasting tour.

As this article series progresses if there is any questions you would like to see answered about your fellow members' mushroom interests (besides the GPS location of their secret spots) let me know and I'll try to include them in the next interview.

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## Wild Mushroom Etouffee

By Jim Strutz

4 cups fresh wild mushrooms, coarsely chopped  
1 medium onion, chopped  
1 green pepper, chopped  
3 stalks celery, chopped  
4 cloves garlic, chopped  
1/3 cup olive oil  
1/3 cup flour  
4 cups mushroom stock  
2 bay leaves  
1 cup flat parsley, chopped  
Cajun seasoning to taste  
Salt, pepper to taste  
Hot sauce to taste  
Scallion greens (optional), chopped for garnish

1 cup brown basmati rice  
2 cups water

In a Dutch Oven, saute the onions, pepper, and celery in the olive oil until the vegetables begin to soften. Add the garlic and the mushrooms and saute for a couple of minutes longer. Toss with the flour and cajun seasoning. Stir in the mushroom stock while making sure to scrape the bottom of the pan. Bring to a boil, reduce heat to medium-low. Add the parsley and bay leaves and continue to simmer until the sauce thickens (1/2 hour or more to blend flavors). Adjust seasonings before serving.

Steam the rice until done, about 40 minutes. Plate the rice and top with etouffee sauce. Garnish with chopped scallions (optional). Serve with crusty bread and green salad.



## Wikipedia: Mushroom Poisoning

Contributed by Jim Strutz

Mushroom poisoning refers to symptoms that can vary from slight gastrointestinal discomfort to death resulting from ingestion of toxic substances present in a mushroom. The toxins present are metabolic byproducts produced by the fungus. Typically, mushroom poisoning is the result of an eater of wild mushrooms mistakenly identifying a toxic mushroom as a non-toxic or edible species. Because some edible and poisonous fungi have very similar appearances, mistakes are usually the result of misidentification based on superficial characteristics. Even very experienced wild mushroom gatherers are sometimes poisoned by eating toxic species, despite being well aware of the risks.

There is much folklore providing misleading tips on defining features of poisonous mushrooms, such as:

- Having bright flashy colours. (False: some very toxic species are pure white, such as the destroying angel).
- Lack of snail or insect infestation. (False: while a fungus may be harmless to invertebrates, it could be toxic to humans. The death cap for instance is often perforated by insect larvae).
- Becomes black when touched by silverware or an onion. (False: most mushrooms tend to darken as they wither).
- Poisonous mushrooms smell and taste horrible. (False: some poisonous mushrooms taste delicious, according to victims).
- Any mushroom becomes safe if cooked enough. (False: the chemical structure of some toxins are very stable, even at high temperature).

In reality, there are no simple guidelines to identify poisonous mushrooms. The only completely foolproof rule for preventing mushroom poisoning is of course abstinence — it's better to be safe than sorry. A common rule followed by mushroom hunters is "when in doubt, throw it out". In general, being experienced, having both taxonomic and distributional knowledge, and not taking chances is the only way of minimizing the obvious risk. Actually, even this could be insufficient as mushrooms are sometimes contaminated by concentrating pollutants, like heavy metals and radiation (see Chernobyl disaster effects). Some academic mycologists in fact do not eat wild mushrooms, despite their professional knowledge, and very knowledgeable collectors are sometimes poisoned.

Persons who gather wild mushrooms should follow some practical guidelines (see mushroom hunting). In particular, they should **NOT**:

- eat any mushroom they cannot positively identify
- allow small children to gather mushrooms for consumption
- mix known edibles with questionable species while gathering, since parts may break off and intermix. A single poisonous mushroom can poison an entire basket.

In addition:

- cooking mushrooms before eating is safer
- alcohol consumption should be limited when eating previously untried wild mushrooms since some species, most notably certain inky caps (*Coprinopsis atramentaria*) can cause an adverse reaction (good mushroom books document this reaction for the species involved, and remember that you must always know what species you are eating -- but caution is still advised for any mushroom species tried for the first time);

- when anyone tries a species that he or she has not eaten previously, portions should be kept small: no more than 150 grams per person at one sitting.

An experienced mycologist or mushroom picker will know which mushrooms have dangerous look-a-likes that might cause confusion resulting in an accidental poisoning. In Europe, especially in forested regions, many people have local knowledge of one or two fungi that have been picked and eaten for generations and used in the regional cuisine. In Italy and France, for instance, several species of porcini (Italian name; cèpe in French) have been picked and enjoyed at least since Roman times. These are members of the genus *Boletus*, which can be identified in part by the fact that they have pores rather than gills, species for which few poisonous look-alikes exist. In some regions in Europe, mushrooms are not eaten at all; in other regions, such as Finland, Scandinavia and Russia, which traditionally have suffered from food shortage in winters, strong local knowledge on edible mushrooms exist and mushrooms form a remarkable part of cuisine. Yet many mushroom enthusiasts limit their pickings only on easily recognizable mushrooms, such as chanterels and boletes, and leave agarics unpicked. False morel (*Gyromitra esculenta*) is often called the "fugu of the Finnish cuisine", and not without reason; it is deadly poisonous when raw, but delicious if properly prepared.



*These emerging mushrooms are too immature to safely identify as edible or toxic*

As mentioned, however, specimens looking similar to known edibles at home may be deadly in another place and should not be collected without good local knowledge of the biota. For instance, the tasty *Cantharellus* is enjoyed by many people in Scandinavia where no risk of confusing this mushroom with deadly species exists. However, in North America, this ground-dwelling mushroom has been known to be mistaken for the wood-decaying Jack O' Lantern mushroom (*Omphalotus illudens*), which may indeed seem to grow from the ground if there is buried wood present. Note also recent reports of confusion between *Volvariella speciosa*, a popular edible species in Asia, and *Amanita phalloides*, a deadly poisonous species in North America and Europe.

Another common problem derives from the fact that developing (newly formed) destroying angel (*Amanita virosa*) mushrooms very much resemble the well-known champignon, or button mushroom, the

mushroom widely sold in markets and used on pizzas. Similarities between these species lead to a few deaths every year in Scandinavia alone. Recommendations that one should follow:

- Know the characteristics (shape, color, growing terrain, etc.) of all the toxic mushrooms growing in the area. In Europe and North America, these include the deadly *Amanita phalloides* and *Amanita virosa*, as well as the non-lethal *Amanita pantherina* and *Amanita muscaria*; but this list is not exhaustive, and any unknown mushroom must be treated as dangerous.
- Stick to collecting mushroom species you know and that have no risk of being confused with toxic species.

Poisoning by *Amanita phalloides* (the death cap) is characterized by a delay of between 6 and 24 hours from the time of ingestion to the onset of symptoms. During this time, the cells of the kidneys and liver are attacked. There is no antidote for poisoning by *A. phalloides*, and mortality is between 50 and 90 percent. A lethal dose is considered to be about 30 gram, or the equivalent of one whole mushroom.

### Symptoms

Serious symptoms do not always occur immediately after eating; often not until the toxin attacks the kidney, from minutes to hours later. In rare cases, symptoms leading to death may not appear for days after eating a poisonous mushroom. Symptoms typically include:

- Lethargy
- Headache
- Dizziness
- Cold sweat
- Vomiting
- Sharp abdominal pains
- Jaundice
- Severe diarrhea

If treated promptly, death can usually be avoided. Otherwise, with some toxins, death could result within a week or a few days, if the species ingested is a potent one.

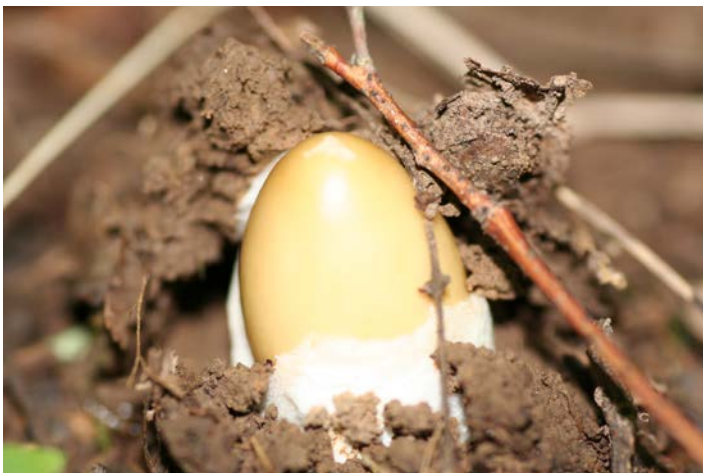


Photo by Jim Strutz. This is one of my Judge's Option entries in the 2007 Photo Contest. I titled it "Not for Omelets", referring to its similar appearance to an egg. I'm not sure which variety of *Amanita* this is. If I recall correctly, it was photographed in the vicinity of some deadly *Amanita virosas*. It has the coloring of *Amanita muscaria*, though it doesn't have the characteristic veil patches.

### Poisonous species

Three of the most lethal mushrooms belong to the genus *Amanita*: the death cap (*A. phalloides*) and destroying angels (*A. virosa*, and *A. verna*); and two are from the genus *Cortinarius*: the deadly webcap (*C. rubellus*), and the fool's webcap (*C. orellanus*). These species cause the greatest number of fatalities. The principal toxins are alpha-amanitin in the genus *Amanita* and orellanine in the genus *Cortinarius*. The following species may cause great discomfort, but are less often lethal.

- *Amanita muscaria* (fly agaric) - poisonings rare, possibly because its unique and obvious appearance make it easily identifiable; however, its long history of use as an entheogen and new reports suggesting it is less toxic than once thought may suggest otherwise.
- *Amanita pantherina* (panther mushroom) - Contains similar toxins as *A. muscaria*, but in higher quantities; first signs of distress occur after 8 to 12 hours; 80-85% of victims survive.
- *Amanita muscaria* var. *regalis* - symptoms generally mild
- *Entoloma* the pinkgills. - highly poisonous, such as *livid entoloma* (*Entoloma sinuatum*), *Entoloma rhodopolium*, and *Entoloma nidorosum*. First symptoms appear after 20 minutes to 4 hours.
- *Galerina* - Some species contain alpha-amanitin (deadly poisonous)
- Many *Inocybe* spp. such as *Inocybe fastigiata* and *Inocybe geophylla* contain muscarine, while *Inocybe patouillardii* is the only one known to have caused death.
- Some white *Clitocybe*, including *C. rivulosa* and *C. dealbata*; First symptoms after 15 to 20 minutes
- Tiger *Tricholoma* (*Tricholoma tigrinum*) - no lasting effect after 2 to 6 hours of great pain.
- Man-on-horseback (*Tricholoma equestre*), until recently thought edible and good, can lead to rhabdomyolysis after repeated consumption.
- Sulfur tuft (*Hypholoma fasciculare*) - poisoning may be serious
- *Omphalotus olearius* - mild
- False morel (*Gyromitra esculenta*) - may not affect some people at all. Deadly poisonous when raw; harmless and delicious if correctly prepared.
- Brown roll-rim (*Paxillus involutus*) - once thought edible, but now found to be destructive of red blood cells with regular or long-term consumption.
- Devil's bolete (*Boletus satanas*)
- Purple bolete (*B. rhodoxanthus*)
- *Conocybe filaris* contains amatoxins, sometimes thought to be a *Psilocybe*.
- Some species of *Agrocybe* contain deadly amount of toxins.
- *Hebeloma crustuliniforme*, commonly known as Poison pie or Fairy cakes, can cause gastrointestinal symptoms such as nausea and vomiting.

*Editor's Notes: I have heard of some folks eating Gyromitra esculenta (one of the so-called "false morels") with no apparent ill effects. Although this article suggests that this mushroom is a delicious edible when cooked, I would not suggest it. My understanding is that the toxins accumulate in the body over time and the consumer will eventually become ill.*

*Wikipedia is a collection of reference documents on the world wide web. Articles are constantly being updated so please follow the link below for the most current version.*

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mushroom\\_poisoning](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mushroom_poisoning)

## Reflections on Mushroom Mania, 2001-present

By Jim Strutz

I'd always been interested in both the outdoors and in cooking and so the mushrooms I saw on hikes fascinated me. I don't remember exactly where I saw an advertisement for Mushroom Mania but I attended my first one in the fall of 2001. I had already bought the Lincoff book so I sort of knew who he was. Back then Mushroom Mania was headquartered at Beechwood Farms Nature Center where the club meetings are held. I remember the first smiling face to greet me was Val Baker's. She still does that job. The foray was a bit overwhelming at first but I was up for the adventure. One of the walks at North Park attracted me because of my familiarity with the place. I remember finding some beautiful gold colored mushrooms with patches on top and wondered if they were edible or not. I brought them back and asked Gary Lincoff about them at the table walk at the end of the day. He told me they were *Amanita muscaria* which I learned were poisonous. I also found a nice cluster of oyster mushrooms which I gave up for the table walk and didn't retrieve later. Another guy showed me his find: a beautiful, oozy orange fungus that he seemed to prize, guarding it carefully in his bag. I remember being impressed with Gary Lincoff's knowledge and his communication skills. He even signed my copy of his book, which I still have.



I remember the summer of 2002 was really hot and dry. Few people found any mushrooms that year. I didn't find many either, until one day I happened across a section of woods widely scattered with chanterelles. I was comfortable IDing chanterelles because I had learned their defining characteristics the year before and I also knew their dangerous look-alikes. They weren't all riddled with worm holes either being that it was so dry. I took them home and carefully trimmed them, cooked them in butter, and bagged them for freezing. There were dozens of 2 cup bags, so many that I offered some to the club for Mushroom Mania. The Plischkes weren't really acquainted with me before then, but that sure caught their attention! I handed off the chanterelles at one of the club meetings, still frozen, and packed in a Styrofoam ice chest. I've donated mushrooms to the foray every year since then.

The following summer I found another mother load of mushrooms in the Laurel Highlands. This time they were members of the king bolete family and some bi-color boletes. There were bags and boxes full of them. I remember calling Becky Plischke offering some of them to the club. She asked me if any of them turned blue when cut and I told her yes. She apologized that she couldn't accept them, and I understood why despite knowing they were good edibles. I remember it had also been dry in the



weeks leading up to Mushroom Mania that year. The prospects for finding many mushrooms were dismal. So I thought I'd be smart and skip out to the Laurel Highlands to collect more of my boletes. Didn't work, I returned empty handed.

People in the club got to know me, and in that time I learned a lot about wild mushrooms. I was asked to lead a walk for Mushroom Mania the following year. Fred Schrock was assigned to be my identifier. Fred is a retired professor who taught mycology at one of the regional universities. I hadn't met him before but he was an easy person to get to know. We rode together in my car to Hartwood Acres and talked about mushrooms, places, and birds among other things. The walk went well and all of our mushroom hunters met back in the parking lot afterwards and Fred discussed the finds and answered questions. He was very good.

The next year was 2004 and I had volunteered to house guest mycologist Tom Volk. This was a pretty big deal since Tom is a nationally known mycologist and professor at the University of Wisconsin LaCrosse. He is actually from our area and has family living nearby (Gary Lincoff also is from our area and has family living nearby). Tom embraces the amateur mycology community and is a highly demanded speaker at forays such as ours. We were very lucky to have him as our featured guest mycologist. He is pretty much at the cutting edge of mycology in the world and has a way of explaining complicated things on a basic level. He and Gary Lincoff are the best two speakers on the subject of mycology that I have so far encountered. His visit didn't start out very well however. His plane arrived in the midst of Hurricane Ivan. It's a good thing I had a Jeep because I needed the 4 wheel drive and high ground clearance to get around all the obstacles created by the hurricane. Getting out to the airport was adventurous as Montour Run had overflowed its banks cutting off several alternate routes to the airport. Even the cell phones were overloaded by stranded people calling their families. Getting back to my house was an even bigger challenge as the flood water continued to rise. I live near Carnegie where Chartiers Creek flooded the surrounding community. The waters arose half way up buildings and cars were picked up and carried by the current into other cars. One person died. We saw people milling about the rain-soaked streets holding their pets and whatever other valuables they could carry. We splashed through the flooded roads and finally made it back

to my house. The usual 15 minute drive took us more than 2 hours. There was no electricity at home and so we had to cook dinner on a camping stove and dine by candlelight. Some friends from out of town also spent the night and we all had a nice time despite the rain. The next morning brought a better look at the devastation of the flooding. I've never seen anything like that, and I hope never to see it again. We arrived at the foray expecting a low turnout. It did start out slow but things picked up soon. Tom did an excellent slide show presentation on the characters of fungi, and our mushroom tables filled nicely with all kinds of fungal specimens. Of particular interest was one rare Stalked Cauliflower mushroom that one of my friends found at Hartwood Acres. Only John Plischke III knew what it was despite never having seen one before. Tom photographed it and collected the sample to send off to one of his colleagues at Harvard University. It was quite a memorable day.



One of the annual fixtures of our Mushroom Mania foray is Jon Ellifritz from the Mushroom Association of Washington DC. (MAW). Jon is a quiet guy with a subtle sense of humor but is extremely knowledgeable on many aspects of nature and the environment, including mushrooms. I had the pleasure of leading a walk in North Park with Jon as my identifier and with Frank Lotrich as one of the walk members. Frank, as some of you may know, is a psychologist who specializes in studying brain chemistry. He knows a quite a lot about mushrooms and toxicology. He has given some excellent lectures at our meetings and has written some excellent articles for our newsletters. Talk about luck of the draw! We walked around the triangle in North Park formed by Babcock Blvd and new and old Ingomar roads. The diverse landscape there includes: oak-hickory, evergreen, swampy, and grasslands. We found quite a few mushrooms and it was a pleasure to discuss them with Jon and Frank.

I also doubled as one of the cooks for the mushroom feast that year. I had prepared two or three dishes ahead of time so that they needed only to be heated at the foray. I, as a vegetarian, always question what people put into food at these kinds of events. Happily, we started the practice writing up ingredient cards for each of the dishes so no more questions are necessary. The fun thing about this feast is everything has mushrooms in it, including: entrees, salads, appetizers, and even deserts. Last year, Becky Plischke brought ground up chaga mushrooms for tea (which she reports has helped ease arthritis in her joints). Seriously, I have never seen another event like this one. To give you an idea of how much food there was, we had attendance of over 150 people that year. Every attendee went through the line at least once and some for seconds and thirds (I have to admit having at least two helpings of that cake with the candy cap lactarius frosting - yum to whomever made that). And people took home whatever was leftover. Think of that



family member who always makes too much food - times about ten! That's a lot of food. And what's better is that somebody had actually rinsed my dishes sometime during the post-foray cleanup.

The "table walks" end the day. The available mycologists and identifiers work frantically putting names and comments on the plated mushroom specimens during the afternoon sessions. This is a lot of thankless work but is a vital part of our Mushroom Mania agenda. If you've ever been to one of our meetings, think the table walk at the end of the meeting also times about ten. There are probably a couple of hundred species of mushrooms, grouped, plated, sorted, and identified. Our guest mycologists spend time discussing the various specimens and answering questions. I don't know about you, but there have been many times when I needed a certain piece of information and wondered where I could find a reliable source, and perhaps interact with a series of follow-up questions and responses. How many times I wished I could just cut to the chase and ask a real person dedicated to providing that information. This is it - a truly rare opportunity to do exactly that.

I collected my pots and pans after the foray. I couldn't find my ladle (which did turn up at the next meeting). It's a good thing I labeled everything with my name because there was enough cooking hardware there to fill a small store. My arms filled, I hauled my things out to the car which was parked in the drop-off area. In front of me was a late 30-something couple talking about their day. I wondered if it was their first foray. I couldn't help overhearing them remark what a great time they had and they were sure to attend the foray next year. I thought back to my first foray. I did return the following year and every year after that, just a little bit more knowledgeable each time.



**Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club**  
129 Grant Street  
Greensburg, PA 15601

Non-profit Org.  
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Permit #1057

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