



Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club Newsletter August/September 2009



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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. 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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John Stuart

Vice President
Jim Wilson

Secretary
Mary Tadler

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Barbara DeRiso

Corresponding Secretary
Heather Maceiko

President's Corner

Our premier event is fast approaching, the 9th Annual Gary Lincoff Mid- Atlantic Foray on September 12, 2009 at the Rose Barn in North Park. If you had to pick just one club event to attend, this would be your choice. It offers an informative group of lectures, guided walks that consistently turn up over 120 species, a cooking course, a mushroom meal (one of the best in the country), and of course the international superstar of mycology, Gary Lincoff. We also have our own very knowledgeable group of mycologist/ identifiers (all are listed on the back cover), headed by John Plischke III and La Monte Yarroll. You can register and pay on line at

www.wpamushroomclub.org or send in the enclosed application with your check.

We welcome a new branch of the club, the Indiana County Chapter of the Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club, formed under the direction of Bob and Ginny Sleight. We look forward to sharing walks and activities with them in the years ahead. This opens up a new area for us to explore and

gives a focus and opportunity to the many active mushroomers who live in this region.

This year the club is honoring its founding member John Plischke III with a lifetime membership. He has been a tireless worker in many different avenues over the past 9 years. In addition to his outstanding identification skills, he has contributed articles for our newsletter, lectures for meetings, led our log cultivation program, given us photography tips from his award winning experience, created one of the largest morel forays in the United States, and led numerous walks all across Western Pennsylvania expanding the exposure of the club to thousands of people. We thank him for helping to grow the club from its original 20 members to over 400 and bringing the "fungi, fun and friends" motto to life. John Stuart --- President, WPMC

Here's a website to check out -
<http://mykoweb.prf.jcu.cz/polypores/>
There are many well done photos of polypores!

(Submitted by Jim Tunney)

Fungi Friends (BFF)

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; the next time you see them at a meeting or on a walk, say "Hello" and make a new friend.

Let's meet member **Jim Wasik**.

1. How did you become interested in mushroom hunting?

Living in Washington State introduced me to an abundance of mushrooms. My father-in-law took me out for chanterelles and I was hooked. In the Seattle area we had many types of edible, inedible and poisonous mushrooms



growing right in our yard. *Lepiota rachodes*, *Boletus zelleri*, *Coprinus*, *Amanita*, and 'Blewit' - all on a 1/2 acre. It was important to know which was which. I joined the Puget Sound Mycological Society and took the identification classes. These classes helped immensely in broadening my knowledge and identification of fungi.

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

I'll have to go through the club list to get a better answer, but am confident with at least 20. Going through the list I came up with 26. Not bad I'd say.

3. What is your favorite mushroom and why?

Morel - Morel - Morel (and maybe Chanterelle thrown in, too). The intense flavor of the Morel really stands up to cooking. I also make a mean Chanterelle soup.

4. When did you join the WPMC?

I think I joined in about 2001 or 2002. George and Mary Jane Yakulis introduced me to the club. After attending the Morel Madness foray for the past few years, my daughter recently joined the club also.

5. What is your favorite aspect of the club?

I enjoy the identification and scientific talks. The

annual cultivation program has provided me with several interesting kits to grow my own mushrooms. I have purchased kits in the past from Fungi Perfecti and Phillips. Each kit has been a new experience in watching mushrooms grow.

6. Biography.

I am a coating chemist developing new products for around the house use, both interior and exterior. I am involved in the technical society of coatings chemists serving on the board of directors at both the local and national level. Pastimes include golf (and mushroom hunting while golfing - I even found Chanterelles on one course) and yard work in the summer. The Pittsburgh Glass Center also holds my interest, where I have taken classes and workshops in making glass paperweights, ornaments, glass weavings, photography on glass, glass blowing, glass fusing. The world of both decorative and functional glass is fascinating and fun. My wife is a graphic artist and we have lived in Pennsylvania for 18 years.

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: I'll try to include them in the next interview.

By Joyce Gross



Toronto Sculpture Park nearby consists of one sculpture, a mushroom studio, in which an artist works.

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Announcing a Sister Mushroom Club

The Indiana County Chapter of the Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club got off to a rousing start at its inaugural meeting July 8, 2009 at Blue Spruce Lodge, near Ernest, PA.

Twenty-one people attended the meeting, including two surprise guests – “Big” John Plischke, who we all know well, and Jonathan Cingota, an Indiana-based mushroom cultivator and mycologist.

The meeting began with a short walk around the lodge area as a photographer from a local newspaper took photos for an upcoming feature story about the new chapter.

After the walk, co-founders Bob and Ginny Sleigh discussed mushroom basics as well as preservation, preparation and cooking techniques for wild mushrooms.

The attendees were very interested in the discussion and asked many questions about the information covered. A few attendees also brought along mushrooms they had found that they wanted to have identified.

Placed next to the sign-up sheet at the meeting was a small plate of Indian Pipes, which everyone obviously took note of. During Bob’s presentation on collecting, he asked the participants if anyone could identify what type of mushrooms they were. Many guessed Indian Pipes, but only Ronald Plachta of Bolivar correctly stated that they were NOT mushrooms. For his correct answer, he was awarded a four-pack of mesh collecting bags.

By the end of the meeting the newly formed chapter had gained five family and two individual memberships, totaling 15 new members.

Indiana County Chapter Walks

- July 25: Pine Ridge Park, Blairsville
- August 15: Black Lick Valley Natural Area, Dilltown
- August 29: Yellow Creek State Park, Penn Run
- September 12: Gary Lincoff Mid-Atlantic Mushroom Foray, North Park, near Pittsburgh
- September 19: Oaks Point, State Gamelands 276, Blairsville
- October 3: Hemlock Lake Park, near Smithport
- October 24: Blue Spruce Park, near Ernest, potluck picnic following walk

Indiana County Chapter Meetings

- August 12: Popular Edible Mushrooms
- September 9: Mushroom Identification for Beginners
- October 14: Final meeting for 2009 – Nutritional and Medicinal Benefits Of Wild Mushrooms

Mycological Sudoku Puzzle:

Just as the usual Sudoku puzzle uses the digits 1 to 9 this version uses the 9 letters M-Y-C-O-P-H-I-L-E. To complete the puzzle each block, each row, and each column must contain a jumble of the 9 letters.

	C	I				O		H
M	O			L			C	
	Y		H			M		L
O		C		M			P	
			O		P			
	H	P		Y		I		M
I		O			Y		H	
	P			I			Y	O
C		Y					M	

Lincoff Foray Coming Soon

Now is the time to register for the **Gary Lincoff Mid-Atlantic Mushroom Foray**. It will be held on Saturday, September 12, 2009, and will be based in North Park, a county regional park just north of Pittsburgh, PA. For anyone interested in wild mushrooms, this is an outstanding event.

Gary Lincoff, one of the country’s top mycologists, will again be our Principal Mycologist. Two highlights of the foray are Gary’s talk in the early afternoon and his table talk near the end of the foray where he discusses the mushrooms found that day. The photo on the next page shows Gary at last year’s table talk. Gary also enjoys interacting with foray attendees throughout the day, including one of the morning walks.

Other nationally known mycologists attending this year’s foray are Bill Yule, Noah Siegel, and, of course, our own John Plischke III. Bill Yule, of the Connecticut Valley Mycological Society, will talk about “The Boletes of the Northeast and Their Trees.” Noah Siegel, President of the Monadnock Mushroomers Unlimited in Keene, NH will speak on “Portraits from My Neck of the Woods”, a slide show and talk mainly about mushrooms from the northeastern US. Both of these

... Continued on Page 5

Monthly Meetings, 2009 W. PA Mushroom Club

Our meetings are held on the third Tuesday of each month from March through November. They begin at 7:00PM at Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve in Dorseyville. Please see their website (www.aswp.org) for directions and other information.

August 18th "How Many Mushrooms Do You Know?" by Dick Dougall. Many beginners and even experienced mushroomers don't think they can identify many mushrooms. Dick will demonstrate that most club members are familiar with more mushrooms than they think, even including their scientific names. Approaches will be demonstrated that will help everyone add new mushrooms to those they know well.

September 15th "Western Pennsylvania Landscapes" by Scott Detwiler, Audubon Society Naturalist. This talk covers the classification of the various regions making up western Pennsylvania which includes geology and forest types. There are unique ecological habitats. The talk will help mushroomers develop an appreciation of the uniqueness of the woods we are exploring.

October 17th "Election of Officers & Open Forum." Officers for next year will be elected. Club members will be encouraged to share mushroom experiences, stories, and slides. Results of the club's photography contest will also be presented.

November 17th "Cooking with Wild Mushrooms." This program presents interesting aspects of cooking with wild mushrooms. This is a topic that is always of great interest to club members.



MED and T. Chulick



Gary Lincoff describing a mushroom



Kim's award winning Bolete Photo

speakers have been featured at mushroom events throughout the US.

We should not forget about John Plischke III, one of our own club mycologists. John leads one of the morning walks and leads the mushroom identification efforts in the afternoon. John is one of the top mushroom identifiers in the US and Canada. He has also won many, many awards for his mushroom photography. He gladly gives our members tips on improving their photographic efforts.

This foray leads our attendees on carefully selected walks. Based on past forays, a multitude of different mushrooms will be found. Because of the mycological expertise present, attendees will be able to examine over 150 carefully identified mushrooms. These include most of the choice edibles and a wide range of poisonous species available in the autumn.

If cooking and eating wild mushrooms is your main interest, see the article on the Mushroom Feast in this issue.

How do I go about registering? Applications are available in this newsletter and on our website, www.wpamushroomclub.org. Through the website, it is also possible to pay on-line via PayPal.

Walks and Forays -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

August 1 - 10:00-12:00, Harrison Hills, Allegheny County. Meet **George and Joyce 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 5 - 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. After entering the park, bear right on Woodchuck Drive. Meet at Baneberry shelter on your left.

August 8 -- 10:00-12:00, Frick Park, Allegheny County. Meet **Jim Tunney**. Meet in the Environmental Center parking lot. Directions to Frick Environmental Center, 2005 Beechwood Boulevard: **From the North:** Follow PA -8 into Pittsburgh and turn left on Penn Ave. Turn right onto S. Dallas Ave. Turn left onto Beechwood Boulevard. FEC will be on your left. **From the East:** Follow I-376 W into Pittsburgh and take exit 7 toward Edgewood/Swissvale. Turn right onto S. Braddock Ave. Turn left onto Forbes Ave. Turn left onto S. Dallas Ave. Turn left onto Beechwood Boulevard. FEC will be on your left.

August 9 - Join the **West Virginia Mushroom Club** at the Kanawha State Forest in Charleston, WV. Check their website for more information. wvmushroomclub.org

August 15 - 10:00 - 12:00 **Emmerling Park**, Allegheny County. Meet **Dick Dougall**. 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 in the large parking lot in the park.

August 22. - Join the **Bakers** for a foray in **North Park**. Meet at the swimming pool parking lot at 10:00 AM.

August 29 - 9:00-11:00 Join **Bob and Ginny Sleigh** and the Indiana County Chapter at **Yellow Creek State Park** in Indiana County. From the Pittsburgh take either Route 22 East to Route 119 North to route 422 East or Route 28 North to route 422 East, to Indiana. From Indiana proceed 10 miles East on Route 422 and turn right onto Route 259 south. There is a sign for the park here, it will be about 2 miles from the end of the four lane portion of route 422. Follow 259 South 1.2 miles to the park's main entrance and turn right into the park. Meet in the picnic area on the right just after a small bridge and walk/drive to locations from there.

August 27-30 - COMA's 32nd annual **Clark Rogerson Foray** will be held at the Cave Hill Resort in Moodus, Connecticut. Gary Lincoff will be our chief mycologist. Other experts will include Leon Shernoff, Rod Tulloss, Dr. Roz Lowen, Sandy Sheine, and John Plischke III.

September 5 –10:00-12:00, South Park South Park. Meet Harriett Yarroll and 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 6 – Join the West Virginia Mushroom Club in Greenbrier State Forest in Lewisburg, WV. wvmushroomclub.org

Sept 12 – Gary Lincoff Mid Atlantic Mushroom Foray Don't miss it, register today!

Sept 11-13 Ohio Mushroom Society's Fall Foray. Hocking Co. at Clear Creek Metropark Nature Preserve. Andrea Moore (740) 969-8049

September 26 - 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 Pgh 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. 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 and follow the road to the top, you will see a parking area and the pavilion.

September 26, 10AM. Jack and Valerie Baker will lead a walk for the Westmoreland Bird and Nature Club combined with the Westmoreland Botanical Society at the Ackerman farm in New Alexandria. All members from the WPMC are invited to attend. This is a combination mushroom foray and Westmoreland Bird & Nature Club picnic, so all attendees are encouraged to take a dish to share for the picnic. Directions: At the intersection of Rt. 22 and Rt. 981 (New Alexandria), turn North on Rt. 981, proceed about 1 mile--the Ackerman stone pillar/iron gate is on the right of the road. Follow the long driveway up to their parking area.

Mushroom Identification Program Underway By Dick Dougall

The **John Plischke III Award for Mushroom Knowledge** (the "Button Program") is underway. Fifteen members have earned buttons for their mushroom identification skills as of the end of June, 2009. The breakdown of buttons awarded are:

50 Species Button – Ron Donlan, Bob Sleigh

25 Species Button – Rick Barbario, Mary Ellen Dougall, Ben Grzesiak, Eugene Kadar, Sandy Sterner, & Sandy Sterner

10 Species Button – Sam Boll, Bonnie Davis, Brian Davis, Jim Krumenker, Bill Lindenfesler, Holly Lindenfesler, Michael Recklitis, Stephen Wilson, Terry Finnegan, & John Tadler

Several of these people are actively working toward the next higher button. Other club members are encouraged to start compiling their own species lists so then can qualify for buttons.

The process to qualify for the initial button is fairly simple. **(1)** Obtain some **Specie Identification Forms** from our website or at a club meeting or at a foray.

(2) Write the names of the mushrooms you know on these sheets (or a sheets of your own type). **(3)** Present your list to a club identifier for verification. **(4)** Present the list to me to receive your button. For the 10 & 25 species buttons, common names are fine. (At the 50 species level, some Latin or scientific names should be added to more precisely indicate some of the mushrooms known.)

A good way for more experienced club members to generate their initial lists is to use the club's website, www.wpamushroomclub.org. On the website, click on the **Species List** icon to start this process. It is easy because mushrooms can be added by clicking on either the common or scientific names from the Club's Life List. Then, you can e-mail your list to me at mush2prof@verizon.net. Don't forget to keep a copy for yourself!

You are encouraged to become a part of this program. If you have any questions, please contact me or any of our club identifiers listed on the back page of this newsletter.

Mushroom Tasting / Mushroom Feast at Lincoff Foray

In the late afternoon at the **Gary Lincoff Mid-Atlantic Mushroom Foray**, the program lists an event which is often called a "Mushroom Tasting." If you ask club members who have attended this foray, one of the things they might agree on is that the event is mislabeled. It is really a **Mushroom Feast**. You will not go home hungry.

Our dedicated club cooks have amazed us through the years. It seems like they add more dishes every year. The dishes ranged from appetizers, soups, and substantial entrees to desserts and drinks. Last year there were a total of 37 items. These were:

Reishi Tea	Chanterelle Soup	Mushroom Turnovers
Marinated Mushrooms	Black Trumpet Pea Salad	Baked Oysters
Honey Soup	Chanterelle Dip	Chanterelle Cookies
Chanterelle Cous Cous	Mushroom and Spinach	Hen Cracker Spread
Mushroom Medley	Zucchini Casserole	Noodles and Hericium
Bread Pudding	Chicken Cacciatore	Puffball Potatoes
Truffle Salad	Bolete Lasagna	Chanterelle Citrus Salad
Morel Quiche	Hen Chile	Mushrooms Au Gratin
Bolete Fried Potatoes	Mushroom Pierogies	Mushroom Spinach Dip,
Mushroom Pie	Candy Cap Cakes	Stuffed Mushrooms
Two Pate's	Chocolate Truffles	Mushroom Cracker Spread
Chanterelle Risotto	Italian Marinated Mushrooms	
Mushroom Risotto (by Tom Chulick)		

There is a core group of cooks, Co-Chaired last year by Kim Plischke and Valerie Baker, who will again oversee the process. The dishes vary depending on availability of mushrooms. However, some favorite edible mushrooms seem to be included every year. These include Chanterelles, Hen of the Woods (called Sheep's Head in W. PA), Boletes, and many people's favorite, Black Trumpets. This mushroom feast alone is worth the registration price for the foray.

Cooking Demonstration at Lincoff Foray

Our cooks are somewhat available during the feasting to talk recipes, cooking techniques, and favorite dishes. However, with over 100 people present, you may not get much individual time with them. There is another activity which does focus on teaching foray attendees about mushroom cooking.

Tom Chulick, owner and executive chef of the Back Door Café in Johnstown, PA has given about an hour long presentation at the foray on some aspect of cooking with wild mushrooms for several years. Last year he demonstrated the preparation of Mushroom Risotto during the class and gave out a detailed recipe. Lincoff Foray mushroomers have found Tom's presentations very worthwhile and look forward to what he will be cooking when he returns this year.

(Tom Chulick's restaurant, **The Back Door Café**, is located in Johnstown, PA with directions on the web or by calling 814-539-5084.)

Editor's note: Here's an article I enjoyed from the newsletter of the Connecticut club. It reminded me of the one mycology class I took at the Univ. of Maine and how I dangled out from the cold river bank to scoop up a jar of foam that I took to class to look for spores of aquatic fungi. I remember seeing some marvelous star shaped spores.

Aquatic Fungi: A New Frontier
by Roz Lowen, Ph.D.

(With Thanks to the Conn. Valley Myco. Soc.,
used with permission of the author)

I was fortunate to attend the seminar held at Eagle Hill this summer on Fungi in freshwater and marine habitats with support from the Maine Mycological Association. The session was conducted by Dr. Carol A. Shearer, professor at the University of Illinois. She was assisted by her delightful and capable post doc, Huzefa Raja. An introduction to aquatic fungi follows.

In 1942 Dr. C. Terrence Ingold in the UK was searching for chytrids, zoosporic fungi often found in water, when he discovered fungal spores floating in the water that had unusual shapes. They had arms (branches), coils, or were S shaped. He cultured and named many of the fungi and thus the study of aquatic fungi was born. Over 300 species of *Ingoldian* fungi, as they are referred to, are now known. Relatively few mycologists study aquatic fungi. Some researchers in England, John Webster, for example have been active. Dr. Ingold, though over 100 years old continues to produce articles. In Spain, Enrique Descals has contributed many studies. Kevin Hyde and associates in Asia study aquatic fungi. Dr. Shearer and her lab in the US have greatly expanded our knowledge of aquatic fungi.

Aquatic fungi are found in fresh and salt water all over the globe. The greatest species richness has been found in temperate latitudes, but that is where most collectors are also found. Although some species at the same latitude are circum-global, fungi found in the Arctic are usually different from those found in the tropics.

Two species of aquatic fungi familiar to many mushroom collectors are *Mitrula elegans*, found in stagnant water and *Vibrisssea truncorum*, found in fast running streams. These fungi are in meiosporic or teleomorphic or perfect state. But most aquatic fungi found are mitosporic ascomycetes (hyphomycetes, imperfect fungi). A few are basidiomycetes. Most aquatic fungi need to be magnified for us to observe their structure.

Aquatic fungi commonly occur on fallen leaves. The conidia (spores) are dispersed into the water and float. The high oil content and the intricate shapes that trap air contribute to the bouyancy of the spores. They get caught in foam. The conidia often have gelatinous sheaths and appendages that stick to leaves or submerged wood. They quickly germinate and help to decompose the leaves and wood in water. They are important decomposers. The decomposition products enrich plant debris by increasing protein content. This predigested food source is important for water invertebrates.

By growing conidia in culture the whole life cycle has been discovered for many fungi. Many more are only known in their mitosporic (imperfect) state. Fungi found in water are mostly discomycetes (111), pyrenomycetes (257) or Loculuoascomycetes (162). Although they are very diverse, they are studied together because of their ecological commonality. That is, they are found in water --lakes, streams, oceans. They are not a taxonomically related group.

There are several ways to collect aquatic fungi. A simple way to observe Ingoldian fungi is to dip a cover slip into foam and observe the conidia directly on a microscope slide. Another method is to filter the water. Filters are then stained with dilute cotton blue and examined with a microscope. Many variously shaped conidia are trapped by this method. Fungi can be discovered by collecting dead, submerged woody debris and herbaceous material. The collections are placed in plastic bags with white paper towels to absorb excess moisture and to

keep the collection moist. Then the collections can be incubated in moist chambers (plastic containers). Usually interesting fungi develop after a few days to several months. Baiting, another method, is done by placing woody or herbaceous material in water for various times and then examining the material later. Molecular techniques have also been used.

The literature for aquatic fungi is scattered in articles in many journals. This makes identification difficult. General books describing mitosporic fungi have mostly nonaquatic species. Fortunately there is a work in progress by Enrique Descals to provide a key to all known aquatic fungi. A comprehensive key will greatly aid in identification. Molecular studies have been useful in placing many fungi with their nearest relatives. There is a world database at http://fungi.life.uiuc.edu/about/mitosporic_fungi compiled by Shearer, Raja and colleagues.

In conclusion, aquatic fungi as a group have only been studied since the 1940's. They are found in most aquatic habitats. It is a challenging group because there are relatively few mycologists studying them and the literature is scattered. The rate of new species discovery is high. This is surely a new frontier.

Opportunity Available

The position of Sales Chair is open. Applicants for this position should have a cheerful temperament. Duties include hanging out at the sales table during meetings while showing folk the nifty stuff they can purchase. Compensation includes meeting new people, participating in the functioning of your club, and being eligible to wear either of the two hand-crafted aprons that are supplied to this position.

There's a lot to be learned from the Cornell Mushroom Blog.

You can check it out at <http://blog.mycology.cornell.edu/>

Here's one article by Bob Mesibov which I lifted from the site:

If you studied the traditional sort of biology, you're probably carrying around an unfortunate prejudice.

You see terrestrial habitats as a simplified nutrients-and-energy pyramid. At the bottom are green plants, feeding on sunlight, carbon dioxide and soil water and minerals. Next layer up on the pyramid is the herbivore mob: leaf and stem eaters, sapsuckers, root nibblers, seed and fruit gobblers. Above these green feeders are a couple of layers of predators. And that about sums up the world, right?

Wrong. That's only part of the world, and a small, very specialised part of it, too. To begin with, most animals can't eat green food. Herbivores are dietary specialists among the insects, mollusks, birds and mammals. Your average green leaf or stem doesn't show much herbivore damage, and for good reason. It's mainly water boxed in by cellulose and other structural carbohydrates, which are impossible or extremely hard for animals to digest. Other nutrients are present, but at low concentrations. You need to eat a great mass of indigestible green stuff to get a decent return of elements like nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium and calcium. As for animals eating wood, which makes up most of the biomass in a forest - well, there are termites, and...um...termites...

The truth is that in the real world outside the biology classroom, only a tiny proportion of terrestrial primary production goes through the stomachs of the few evolutionary lineages brave enough to tackle what green plants produce. In any terrestrial habitat, the great bulk of primary production just does not get eaten. It sits, instead, at the bottom of a very different food pyramid. I call it the Dead Plants Society (DPS), as opposed to the Green Feeders Guild (GFG).

In the absence of fire, all that uneaten primary production is first attacked by fungi and bacteria. By 'attacked' I mean 'converted from low-nutrient indigestibles to concentrated yummys', i.e. fungal and bacterial bodies. Stacked on top of this microbial layer in the pyramid are microbivorous layers of nematodes, mites, springtails, earthworms, millipedes and other soil animals. On top of those are

predators - but picture 'centipede', not 'eagle'.

The GFG and DPS animal communities differ in many ways. To begin with, in any given habitat the GFG has very high species diversity (think of plant-eating insects) but low higher-taxon diversity, while the DPS has great higher-taxon diversity (lots of strange sorts of animals), but low species diversity. Next, GFG herbivores tend to specialize on particular plants, while DPS microbivores will eat anything that's rotting nicely. There are also a lot of winged GFG members ('gotta find that particular plant I like...'), whereas almost no DPS members have wings, at least in their younger, feeding stages. There's an architectural difference, too. The GFG extends well up in the air, to ca. 100 m in some tall forests, while the DPS is largely confined to the ground.

Then there's the matter of heritage. The earliest DPS fossils are of mites, springtails and millipedes, and they're more than 400 million years old, from a time when terrestrial vegetation was mainly mossy and ground-hugging. The first solid evidence for green feeding (early insects with spores in their guts) appears much later in the fossil record, from coal swamp times. The DPS is vastly older than the GFG, and when you handle richly organic soil you're holding animal communities which are spectacularly ancient and robust. You can almost imagine a springtail thinking: 'Seen the dinosaurs come and go, mammals are nearly done. Wonder what great lumbering dopes we'll see in the next 100 million years? Yum, love these hyphae with yeast sprinkles!'

Check out Bob Mesibov's other many-legged

Eating mushrooms every day may cut cancer risk by two thirds

(Report from Telegraph Online. 16th March 2009).

Scientists found that women consuming at least a third of an ounce of fresh mushrooms every day were 64 percent less likely to develop a tumor. Dried mushrooms had a slightly less protective effect, reducing the risk by around half. The study, carried out in

China, also showed women who combined a mushroom diet with regular consumption of green tea saw an even greater benefit. The risk among women in this group was reduced by almost 90 percent. Researchers say the latest findings, published in the *International Journal of Cancer*, do not prove eating mushrooms will stop cancer and more studies are needed to confirm the results, but laboratory tests on animals

do show the fungi have anti-tumor properties and can stimulate the immune system's defenses. Some evidence suggests mushrooms act in a similar way to breast cancer drugs called aromatase inhibitors, which blocks the body's production of the hormone estrogen, which can encourage the development of cancer.

Editor's note : This intriguing article does not mention which species of mushrooms the women ate. The mushrooms commonly found in Chinese markets are more varied than the selection we see in American grocery stores.

Here is a brief abstract of an interesting study conducted in Japan: A double-blind, parallel-group, placebo-controlled trial was performed on 50- to 80-year-old Japanese men and women diagnosed with mild cognitive impairment in order to examine the efficacy of oral administration of Yamabushitake (*Hericium erinaceus*), an edible mushroom, for improving cognitive impairment, using a cognitive function scale based on the Revised Hasegawa Dementia Scale (HDS-R). After 2 weeks of preliminary examination, 30 subjects were randomized into two 15-person groups, one of which was given Yamabushitake and the other given a placebo. The subjects of the Yamabushitake group took four 250 mg tablets containing 96% of Yamabushitake dry powder three times a day for 16 weeks. After termination of the intake, the subjects were observed for the next 4 weeks. At weeks 8, 12 and 16 of the trial, the Yamabushitake group showed significantly increased scores on the cognitive function scale compared with the placebo group. The Yamabushitake group's scores increased with the duration of intake, but at week 4 after the termination of the 16 weeks intake, the scores decreased significantly. Laboratory tests showed no adverse effect of Yamabushitake. The results obtained in this study suggest that Yamabushitake is effective in improving mild cognitive impairment.



THE SEVENTH ANNUAL GARY LINCOFF MID-ATLANTIC MUSHROOM FORAY

Saturday, Sept 12, 2009 - 7:30-8:15 Registration, 8:30-7:30 Program
At The Rose Barn, North Park, Pittsburgh, PA

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.

Bill Yule - The Boletes of the Northeast and Their Trees. Bill has studied and hunted mushrooms for 20 years and while interested in all things fungal, he has specialized in Boletes. Bill has been an officer of the Connecticut Valley Mycological Society, foray mushroom identifier, and education chair.

He has given dozens of mushroom talks to other clubs, NEMF forays, Colleges and Universities. He leads mushroom walks for his club and other organizations but Bill's proudest achievement is helping other mushroomers learn to identify and appreciate fungi.

Noah Siegel is a nationally known, award-winning photographer and mushroom identifier. He is currently President of the Monadnock Mushroomers Unlimited in Keene, New Hampshire; a trustee for the North East Mycological Federation and a lecturer and identifier for clubs all over the northeast. Noah will be speaking on "Portraits from My Neck of the Woods;" a slide show and talk of mostly fungi from the northeast US.



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! For question and further information, send e-mail to: mush2prof@verizon.net.

Fungi Fun Friends

Cost is \$30 for WPMC member up to September 1. Cost at door: Members pay \$35. Nonmembers pay \$35 plus 2010 membership fee (\$15 individual \$20 family). Children under 6 are free. Children ages 6-11 pay \$5. Mushroomers aged 12-18 cost \$10 each.

Mail Registration to: Barbara DeRiso (see address next page).

Signing and dating the release is an absolute requirement for attendance. No Refunds
Make check payable to : Western PA Mushroom Club

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 _____

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