



WESTERN PA



MUSHROOM CLUB

Volume 2, Issue 4

President: John Plischke

Editor: Becky Plischke

V. Pres: Dick Dougall

Sec: Valerie Baker

October/November 2001

Treas: Jack Baker

MUSHROOM MANIA 3 TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

- 7:30-8:15 Registration
 - 8:30-8:35 Welcome
 - 8:35-8:40 Introduction of Guests & Officers
 - 8:40-8:45 How to Collect Mushrooms
 - 8:45-8:55 Organize Walks
 - 8:55-9:00 Proceed to Cars
 - 9:00-12:00 Collect Mushrooms
 - 12:00-1:00 Lunch (on your own)
- We suggest you pack a lunch and drink.
- 1:00-2:00 Gary Lincoff Slide Show and Talk
 - 2:00-2:05 Organize Walks
 - 2:05-4:00 Collect Mushrooms
 - 2:05-6:15 Mushroom Identification
- Identification Team identifies the collection and puts them on display for you to learn
- 4:15-5:00 Mushrooms Under the Microscope
 - 4:15-5:00 Morels Demystified
 - 5:00-5:45 Mushroom Tasting - Mycophagy
 - 5:45-6:15 Review the Collection
 - 6:15-6:45 Gary Lincoff Table Walk
 - 6:45-7:00 Clean-Up (everybody helps)
 - 7:00 Leave (even if you have a 4 hour drive, you can be home by 11:00)

MUSHROOM TASTING

Mushroom Mania 3 will have mushroom tasting. As we all know the menu is subject to the kinds of mushrooms we find. Although the menu has not been finalized for this year, last year's menu included:

- Chanterelle dip
- Black Trumpet dip
- Sulfur Shelf Snack
- Wild Mushrooms Tuscan Style
- Spaghetti Sauce with Sheephead
- Boletes Seperans Soup
- Scalloped Potatoes with Sheephead
- Marinated Sheephead



**Last Chance
To Register For
MUSHROOM
MANIA 3**
GARY LINCOFF,
PRINCIPAL MYCOLOGIST
**Advance Sales Way
Ahead of Last Year**

A hundred people and hundreds of mushrooms are expected for Mushroom Mania 3 on September 22, 2001.

Gary Lincoff will be the principal mycologist at this day long mushroom event. A Pittsburgh native, Gary is the author of many mushroom books including the National Audubon Society's Field Guide to North American Mushrooms. He has written or edited many other books including Toxic and Hallucinogenic Mushroom Poisoning and Simon and Schuster's Guide to Mushrooms.

The Audubon Field Guide is the biggest selling mushroom book of all time. Bring your copy along or buy one at the event. You might be able to talk Gary into autographing your book.

The 1986 North American Mycological Association's Award for Contributions to Amateur Mycology was presented to Gary.

This is a once in a lifetime opportunity to meet and hunt mushrooms with the world's most famous mycologist. Registration is limited.

IT'S A BARGAIN

The cost for this day long (10 ½ hours of mushroom heaven) mushroom event is a real bargain.

You will be taught mushrooms by a top national and many regional mushroom experts. There will be scores and scores and scores of mushrooms for you to see and learn. If you are a new mushroomer, you will have the opportunity to

learn more mushrooms in one day than you could probably learn on your own in 5 years. To me, it is worth the price of admission just for the mushroom tasting. **Don't hesitate. Sign up today before the event is sold out.**

SPECIAL OFFER

The cost of this day long mushroom event is a real bargain. The price is only \$35 at the door for 10 ½ hours of mushrooming, mushroom tasting and good friendship, but if you send your reservation today, **the price for club members is just \$15. We must receive your filled in, signed, dated registration form along with a check by September 12, 2001.** After September 12, the price is \$30 pre-registered \$35 at the door.

WHILE YOU ARE AT IT

While you are at it you may as well save a stamp and sign up for your 2002 club membership. A family membership is only \$20 and individual membership just \$15.

175 YEARS OF IDENTIFICATION EXPERIENCE TO HELP YOU LEARN MUSHROOMS

Our club is blessed with many experienced mushroom identifiers who can identify hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of mushrooms. The following is a brief synopsis of some of our most experienced identifiers who will be working the identification tables at Mushroom Mania 3.

Gary Lincoff – Principal Mycologist - is one of the top mushroom identifiers in the world and has authored or edited many mushroom books.

Robert Boice – has been hunting and identifying mushrooms for years. He is a club identifier and has won photography awards from the North American Mycological Association. If you go on his walk, ask him for some tips on how to photograph mushrooms.

Jon Ellifritz – is the head identifier for the **Mycological Association of Washington** and has been so for many, many years. Although he doesn't talk a lot he identifies a lot and is an expert at it. We are very pleased to announce his coming.

Dorothy Fornof – For many years before our club started, Dorothy was a member of the Ohio Mushroom Society. Dorothy gives freely of her mushroom knowledge. She's hunted mushrooms longer than many people coming to the program have been alive. She is our club's head identifier at the identification tables at our meetings.

Roger Hummell – I think Roger must have been born with a mushroom in his hand. He has been hunting and identifying mushrooms since forever. Roger also came to us after being a member of the Ohio Mushroom Society for many years. He is one of the club's top identifiers.

Ray LaSala – is a 20-year member of the **Mycological Association of Washington** and has served as its VP, Sec, and Culinary Chair. He is founder of MAW's Camp Sequanota Foray and last year's chairman. A very experienced identifier, Ray has written articles for Mushroom the Journal.

John Plischke III – Last year in Mushroom the Journal, was singled out for his expertise by Gary Lincoff in a mushroom identification contest and won 3 of 5 first place awards in North American Mycological Association's Photo Contest. He has given many talks and programs on mushroom identification. He is our Walk and Foray Chairman.

Dr. Fred Schrock – He is a retired professor of biology at Indiana University of PA. A mushroom enthusiast for years, Fred has given many mushroom identification programs. Although we have heard Fred say he is more of a lab mycologist, we can attest that he is an excellent field mycologist. He makes learning fun

Mushroom Cook Coming

Gordon Callahan, the Culinary Chair of the **Mycological Association of Washington**, will be coming to Mushroom Mania 3 and will spend part of his time in the kitchen. Gordon is such a good chef that he could probably make the ground we pick mushrooms on taste good.

ARTICLES WANTED

We will welcome your article, recipe, joke, puzzle, story or cartoon for the newsletter.

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

BEECHWOOD FARMS NATURE RESERVE. . .

Is home of the Audubon Society of Western Pennsylvania. Our mushroom club is also headquartered at this very, very special place. Among its many features are an educational building, auditorium, store, bookstore, library, educational programs and Raptor Center. Come take a walk at this wonderful nature area full of trails. Visit them on the web at: <http://www.aswp.org/beechwood.html> and stop in to see them. Thanks Beechwood for the great relationship we enjoy.

MAW FORAY

The Mycological Association of Washington (MAW) is planning to hold its traditional weekend foray at the Camp Sequanota conference center, off Route 30, 20 miles east of Greensburg near Jennerstown, on Friday-Sunday, September 7-9, 2001. Camp Sequanota is located on 400 acres in the Laurel Highlands of Pennsylvania and contains a variety of mushroom habitats. In the past, they have collected hundreds of species, including numerous edibles, in a single weekend! This year, they have programs to satisfy a variety of mushroom interests.

Their guest mycologist this year will be John Plischke, III who has won numerous first place awards in NAMA's photo contest in the last two years and who has been featured by Gary Lincoff for his mushroom identification expertise. Not only will we be entertained by a first class slide presentation on Saturday night – *Mushrooms: Edible, Poisonous and Unusual* – but John will also set up *Mushrooms Under the Microscope* beginning on Friday evening and continuing through the weekend. This presentation will feature a microscope with TV hookup to examine some of the minute characteristics of mushrooms (spores and pores, tissues and more). We'll be able to view what's going on under the microscope on a TV screen.

Guest mycologist, John Plischke III will also conduct a photo workshop/walk to help you learn how to photograph mushrooms.

If you are interested in this event and would like to receive a registration package please email Ilona Conolly at ITCLLC@AOL.COM Include your name and address in your email. The cost for the weekend will be \$95 or just \$35 for Saturday (no accommodations).

OUR WEBSITE

You can find club information and pictures of club events on the site at

<http://www.wpmc4.homestead.com/index.html>

To share information about mushroom finds, carpooling, or share a mushroom story or pictures, use our mushroom Yahoo Groups. This is also the place to get the latest up to date information about additions or cancellations of club activities.

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

The official email for the club is wpamushroomclub@aol.com

ART DONATED

By Valerie Baker

Jack Voytko, well-known artist and WPMC member, has donated two of his original Gouache mushroom watercolors to the Club.

The watercolors are of *Marasmius oreades* (Fairy Ring Marasmius) and *Coprinus comatus* (Shaggy Mane), each priced at \$100.

Mr. Voytko is a self-taught artist who has illustrated several textbooks on fishing and has illustrated as well as photographed for "Trout Magazine." His fish carvings are on display at the International Angler showroom in Aspinwall. Two of his beautiful mushroom woodcarvings were displayed at WPMC's July meeting.

Mr. Voytko earned his chemical engineering degree at University of Pittsburgh and began working for Westinghouse. A year later, he joined the Air Force where he was a jet interceptor pilot. Afterwards, he rejoined Westinghouse and became the Manager of Environmental Engineering, a position he has held for 20 years.

Several biologists were working with him and through them he became interested in all facets of nature. When he moved to the Westinghouse Pensacola Division, he and his wife were the leaders responsible for getting 13 miles of the Gulf Islands National Seashore preserved, an accomplishment of which he is most proud.

We are fortunate to have Jack as a new member of our Club and lucky to be the recipients of his generosity.

WILD MUSHROOM COOKBOOK FOR SALE

The WPMC has compiled a wild mushroom cookbook. This 40-page soft cover book is 5 1/2 by 8 1/2 inches in size.

The first section covers picking and field cleaning mushrooms. The second section is on preparing and preserving mushrooms. The third section contains 50 wild mushroom recipes. Some of the recipes are: Morels Stuffed with Crabmeat, Black Trumpet Dip, Stuffed Horse Mushrooms, Unfried Breaded Oyster Mushrooms, Sparassis Roast of Beef, and Puffball Lasagna.

You can have your Mushroom Cookbook for \$6, tax included. Club member's get a \$1 discount. Send your check payable to the WPMC to 129 Grant Street, Greensburg, PA 15601. You can save the shipping and handling charges by picking up a copy of the cookbook at Mushroom Mania 3 or a club meeting or walk.

WPMC Meetings/Programs

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

September 18: **John Plischke** will show some slides of other forays, including Washington's and the Northeast Foray and will put the final touches on Mushroom Mania 3. At the last minute the previously scheduled photographer demanded money and therefore, has cancelled.

October 16: Will be the **election of officers**. There will also be **show and tell**. Bring your mushroom pictures and copies of your recipes that you have made to pass around. Bring your stories of mushroom adventures and any mushroom art you have made.

November 20: **Dr. David Jett**, Club member, will present a program on edible and medicinal plants. At present, he is head of Frick Woods Nature Reserve and he has studied this subject for years. Sometime when you are hunting mushrooms and just can't find any, having a backup to go to might be a good thing to know.

DIRECTIONS

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

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

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

WPMC WALKS & FORAYS by John Plischke III

September 2 - 2:00- 3:00??, Sunday, Keystone State Park, Westmoreland County. Meet **John Plischke III** at the James Kell Visitor's Center. From Rt. 22, New Alexandria, turn onto 981 south at the traffic light. Go south for 2.8 miles (ignore the first park sign you see). Turn left onto Slag Road. Go .8 miles and turn right at the park's contact station. Follow this road for .6 miles and turn right at the James A. Kell Visitor center sign.

September 7-9 – Meet the Mycological Association of Washington for a weekend at Camp Sequanota near Somerset, PA. Details are in this newsletter.

September 16 – 2:00-4:00, Sunday. Frick Woods Nature Reserve. Meet **Elizabeth Barrow** and **Bob Lucas** at the building. The entrance is at 2005 Beechwood Boulevard, near the corner of Beechwood Boulevard and Forbes Avenue

http://www.city.pittsburgh.pa.us/cp/html/frick_park_map.html

September 22 – Mushroom Mania 3 at Beechwood Farms Nature Reserve

September 30 - 2:00-4:00, Sunday. Powder Mill Nature Reserve, Program and walk.

Directions: Beginning at Irwin / North Huntington Route 30 exit of turnpike. Take rt. 30 w to Westmoreland Mall in Greensburg, which is 10.7 m. Stay on Rt. 30 w to the second red light in Ligonier, which is an additional 16.3 m. Continue on Rt. 30 for 2 m. turn right on Rt. 381. Go 2.9 m. to Rector. At Rector, don't turn left, don't turn right, zigzag ahead for a few yards and turn left at the Weaver Mill / Powdermill signs. Go 2.7 m. to a stop sign. Go straight ahead 1.6 m. to Nimick Nature Center, which sits on the right.

October 6 – 10:00-12:00 (?) North Park, Allegheny County. Meet **Yourself and other club members** at the Swimming Pool parking lot. We will go to a secret location. This walk will test your mushroom identification skills. You will identify the mushrooms and club identifiers will check your work. One of the best ways to learn mushrooms is to take a stab at identification. The safest way is to have our mushroom identifiers check your work. You get the best of both. Come, give it a try!

Growing Your Own Shiitake Mushrooms

By Paul Goland

Instructions for logs inoculated with wide-temperature-range varieties, which respond to forcing by immersion overnight in cold water.

In Asia shiitake mushrooms have been cultivated and used for centuries. Highly prized as gourmet fare and folk medicine, they are called "the ginseng of mushrooms" and "plant of immortality" because of their health-giving properties. Now, Americans are becoming familiar with these mushrooms, and they are available in many markets. Their distinctive, woody flavor and firm, meaty texture make them a welcome addition to many recipes.

You can learn to grow your own crop of these tasty treats. If you have some woodlands, or a shady back yard, you can grow your own shiitake.

Choosing Your Logs Shiitake is grown in hardwood logs. White oak is the favorite choice, but other kinds of oak, sugar maple, sweet or black gum, or ironwood can be used.

Logs should be cut from young, healthy, disease-free trees. Don't use deadfall or damaged trees. Be careful of the bark when cutting, and don't use logs with thin or damaged bark. Choose trees that will give you logs from 3" to 5" across, and cut them 3' to 4' long.

The best time to cut trees for shiitake is winter, but anytime from August through April is fine in West Virginia. Trees cut in winter may be held until spring before inoculating.

Growing shiitake should be part of a timber stand improvement program. This is done by thinning trees from a crowded woodlot, leaving the lot in better condition, because the remaining trees have more room to grow.

Inoculating The process of introducing the shiitake fungus to your logs is called inoculation or spawning. Rows of holes are drilled around the log. Holes are 6" to 8" apart in a row, and rows are about 3" apart. Holes are 1 to 1 1/2" deep. Diameter of holes: 7/16" for sawdust spawn, 5/16" for dowel spawn.

Spawn is the mycelium, or plant body, of the fungus growing in a base of sawdust or on

wooden dowels. Spawn is prepared in a laboratory under sterile conditions. It should be kept refrigerated until a day or two before use.

With dowel spawn, one plug is put in each hole and tapped in with a hammer. With sawdust spawn, a small amount is packed in each hole with a spawn plunger, your fingers, or a wooden prod. Each inoculation point is then covered with wax, to keep the spawn from drying out and to keep other organisms out. (See our yellow order form for "Thimble" spawn, another type of shiitake starter, which doesn't require sealing wax.) It is a good idea to put an identification tag on each log showing the inoculation date and kind of spawn used.

Spawn Run The logs are now ready for the spawn run. This is the time it takes for the fungus to completely colonize the log--anywhere from 5 months to 2 years. In our area it is usually a year to 18 months. In deep shade, logs are leaned with one end on the ground and the upper end against a rail, fence, shed, etc. They can be fairly close, but there should be room for air to circulate around each one.

You may need to provide some moisture during this time, if you see excessive cracking at the top of the log. If mold grows on the bark, your logs are too damp and should be moved to a less sheltered area.

Weed Fungi on Shiitake Logs You need not be concerned about lichens growing on logs when the trees are harvested, nor about the black or brown jelly/cup fungus (*Bulgaria inquinans*) which often sprouts on the bark of logs just the first summer after inoculation with shiitake spawn. Both lichens and *Bulgaria* occupy only the bark, not the cambium layer and sapwood that shiitake colonizes. Green molds and slimes, however, show that insufficient air has circulated around the logs, so you should rearrange or move the logs until these growths fade. Please call us if you have concerns about other growths appearing on your shiitake logs.

Production When you see white, slightly fuzzy patches at the ends of your logs, you will know they are ready to produce, and are waiting for an event to encourage fruiting. In nature, this event would be a thundershower with a rapid drop

in temperature and hard rain. You can create similar conditions by dunking a warm log (about 85°F) into cold water (about 65°F). Keep logs submerged for 12 to 36 hours. Replace logs in their leaning position, leaving enough space for mushrooms to emerge. The mushrooms should start to pin in 3 to 4 days, and be ready to pick 4 to 7 days later.

If the log doesn't produce, repeat the soaking process in 3 weeks, and repeat every 3 weeks until mushrooms appear. When the log does produce, it needs to rest for 6 to 12 weeks before fruiting is induced again.

Harvesting and Using Pick your mushrooms when they are about 70% open, regardless of size. Yes, it is possible for other kinds of mushrooms to grow on your logs, but you will not mistake them for shiitake, because they do not look anything alike.

Fresh shiitake can be used in any recipe that calls for mushrooms. They store well in the refrigerator, kept in a paper or cloth bag, never in plastic.

Any home dehydrator can be used to preserve shiitake for later use. Dried shiitake should be kept in a tightly sealed jar, but refrigeration is not needed. Also, cooked shiitake can be frozen.

Health Benefits Shiitake mushrooms are a rich source of minerals, vitamins, all essential amino acids, yet low in fat and calories. Shiitake is Japan's largest agricultural export and is now the most popular specialty mushroom in the world. In Chinese medicine shiitake is taken as a remedy for upper respiratory diseases, poor blood circulation, liver trouble, exhaustion and weakness, and to boost energy. Today shiitake is recognized for its anti-tumor action and its property of enhancing immune function, including significant cancer-fighting properties.

Hardscrabble Enterprises, Inc.
P. O. Box 1124
Franklin, West Virginia 26807
304-358-2921
hardscrabble@mountain.net

Editor's Note: Paul is a club member from West Virginia. He gave us a very fine talk and demonstration at our June meeting.

CLUB OFFICERS

President: **John Plischke** 724-834-2358
morelbp@aol.com 129 Grant Street, Greensburg, PA 15601
Vice President: **Dick Dougall** 412-486-7504
rsdme@imap.pitt.edu 202 Wadsworth Dr, Glenshaw, PA 15116
Treasurer: **Jack Baker** 412-367-7696
1413 Parkmont Road, Allison Park, PA 15101
Secretary: **Valerie Baker** ybbaker8@hotmail.com

COMMITTEES

Cultivation Chairman: **Mark Spear** 724-297-3371
mspear@penn.com RR4, Box 237E, Kittanning, PA 16201
Historian: **Jane Duffy** 412-492-0104
230 Indiana Drive, Glenshaw, PA 15116-3012
Mushroom Display: **Dorothy Fornof** 412-767-9925
225 Indianola Road, Cheswick, PA 15024
Mycological Recorder: **Bob Lucas** 412-422-8976
VNLUCAS@microspell.com
5840 Northumberland St., Pittsburgh, PA 15217
Newsletter Editor: **Becky Plischke** 724-834-2358
morelbp@aol.com 129 Grant Street, Greensburg, PA 15601
Photography Chair: **Steve Simpson** 724-327-1455
photoart4@aol.com 5718 Pontiac Drive, Export, PA 15632
Publicity Chair: **Mary Woehrel** 412-828-3266
marigold@sqi.net 43 Meadowvale Dr, Cheswick, PA 15024
Refreshment Chair: **Moni Wesner** 412-731-7393
moniwesner@aol.com 3844 Henley Drive, Pittsburgh, PA 15235
Walk & Foray Chair: **John Plischke III** 724-832-0271
fungi01@aol.com 201 Culbertson Ave, Greensburg, PA 15601
Welcoming Chairman: **Jerry Price** 724-444-6472
2805 Florence Drive, Gibsonia, PA 15044
Workshop Chair: **Kim Plischke** 724-832-0271
fungi01@aol.com 201 Culbertson Ave, Greensburg, PA 15601

IDENTIFIERS

Esther Allen 412-366-0786
107 Idaway Drive, Pittsburgh, PA 15237
Robert Boice 724-446-0524
152 Beeno Road, Irwin, PA 15642
Doug Dickman 724-626-1542
larshalfass@yahoo.com 1428 Springfield Pike, Connellsville, 15425
Dorothy Fornof 412-767-9925
225 Indianola Road, Cheswick, PA 15024
Roger Hummell 412-364-9510
9493 Peebles Road, Allison Park, PA 15101
John Plischke III 724-832-0271
fungi01@aol.com 201 Culbertson Ave, Greensburg, PA 15601
Mary Woehrel 412-828-3266
marigold@sqi.net 43 Meadowvale Dr, Cheswick, PA 15024

WALK LEADERS

Jack Baker 412-367-7696 ybbaker8@hotmail.com
1413 Parkmont Road, Allison Park, PA 15101
Dick Dougall 412-486-7504 rsdme@imap.pitt.edu
202 Wadsworth Drive, Glenshaw, PA 15116
Dick Duffy 412-486-3913
2841 McCully Road, Allison Park, PA 15101
Robert Fornof 412-767-9925
225 Indianola Road, Cheswick, PA 15024
John Plischke 724-834-2358
morelbp@aol.com 129 Grant Street, Greensburg, PA 15601
Mary Lou Riegel 412-487-1527
mriegel@federatedinv.com 3104 Ponderosa Dr, Allison Park, PA 15101
Don Stone 412-441-2027 dastonearch@yahoo.com
5933 Wellesley Ave, Pittsburgh, PA 15206

Scientific Advisor: **Walt Sturgeon**

2002



MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA MUSHROOM CLUB

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

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

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Interests: Learning Mushrooms Microscopy Club Committees
 Eating Wild Mushroom Toxicology Cultivating Mushrooms
 Mushroom Walks Books Dyeing With Mushrooms
 Mushroom Photography Taxonomy Mushroom Paper Making
 Other _____

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

RELEASE

I (We) realize that when engaged in wild mushroom activities, that serious physical injury and personal property damage may accidentally occur. I (We) further realize that there is always the possibility of having an allergic reaction to or being poisoned by the eating of wild mushrooms and that these adverse reactions to eating wild mushrooms range from mild indigestion to fatal illness. **Knowing the risks, I (we) agree to assume the risks, and agree to release, hold harmless, and to indemnify the Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club, and any officer or member thereof, from any and all legal responsibility for injuries or accidents incurred by myself or my family during or as a result of any mushroom identification, walk, foray, field trip, excursion, meeting or dining, sponsored by the club.**

Signature _____ Date: _____

Signature _____ Date: _____

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

Jack Baker, 1413 Parkmont Rd, Allison Park, PA 15101

Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club

Name: _____ Phone: _____ e-mail _____

Address: _____

WE NEED YOUR HELP

WHAT AREA WOULD YOU LIKE TO HELP WITH?

PLEASE CHECK THREE POSSIBLE ITEMS OF INTEREST

- Scout for walk locations
- Help organize forays
- Lead walks
- Work on newsletter committee
- Contribute articles, photos, etc. to newsletter
- Assemble and mail newsletters
- Help with web page
- Line up speakers for meetings
- Collect membership dues and record them
- Record meetings, discussions, events
- Maintain contact with other mushroom clubs
- Publicize meetings, forays, events
- Club Historian
- Recruit members, maintain list of members
- Outreach-- speak to other clubs, nature centers
- Call or e-mail members
- Give a program at Club monthly meeting
- Produce or acquire teaching materials, resources, handouts for meetings
- Welcome and orient new members
- Coordinate coffee/refreshment
- Participate in special projects
- Record mushrooms that are found
- Conduct research on questionable mushrooms
- Help with mycophagy (mushroom cooking)
- Help with sign in at walks and meetings
-

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

Return completed form to: Jack Baker, 1413 Parkmont Road, Allison Park, PA 15101

10/00

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

BY JOHN PLISCHKE

Hunting mushrooms is one of my favorite things to do. Many mushrooms are beautiful and make great subjects to photograph. Trying to identify mushrooms can be exciting, like solving a crossword puzzle or playing chess. Hunting those elusive mushrooms can teach you more about the woods than any other thing I know. However, many mushrooms can poison you and some can cause death. Other mushrooms are edible, or are they?

Some of our club members want to eat and eat and eat mushrooms. I do too, but with great caution. The North American Mycological Association (NAMA), of which our club is a member, tracks mushroom poisonings. In the March/April 2001 issue of their newsletter, *Mycophile*, they report that last year there were 27 known mushroom poisonings in Pennsylvania. The actual number of poisonings is probably three to four times greater than the reported figure. Don't become the next statistic.

We are including NAMA's top twenty list of mushrooms causing poisonings. Get out your field guide and study these mushrooms carefully. To learn mushrooms well, go on club walks and forays. Remember, there are many other mushrooms that can poison you that are not on the NAMA list. Note that six mushrooms listed are considered edible in field guides. I have eaten all of them without any problems--you may not. Thousands of mushroomers eat *Armillariella mellea* (stump mushrooms), *Morchella esculenta* (morels), and *Grifola frondosa* (hen of the woods). So why are these so-called edible mushrooms on the poison list?

It is difficult to say. We know that just like some people are allergic to milk or chocolate others are allergic to specific kinds of mushrooms. A close relative of mine, eating out of the same cooked batch of hen of the woods as I was, had a great deal of lower intestinal activity. This is one of the best know and most eaten mushrooms in western PA.

All mushrooms should be well cooked. It could be those people who ate the *Morchella esculenta* did not cook it or cook it well enough. Whatever the cause, of the thousands who eat this mushroom a few were poisoned.

My mushroom hunting friend, Larry Whalen, once after eating *Laetiporus sulphureus* (sulfur shelf), had his tongue go numb as if injected with Novocain. He never had a problem before and has not had a problem since. Why? Was it the chemicals in the ground at that location? Who knows! Don't eat mushrooms from an area sprayed with chemicals.

The specific examples that I have given regarding *Laetiporus sulphureus* and *Grifola frondosa* were by two very experienced and knowledgeable mushroom hunters.

Some mushroom poisonings are strictly psychological, like the first time I tried escargot. I got sick just looking at it. The symptoms, however, can be real just like any other mushroom poisoning.

Some mushroom poisonings are caused by misidentification. A friend cooks a deadly *Amanita virosa* (death angel) for his family and friends, thinking it's the common and delicious field mushroom and they all die. Avoid at all cost potluck mushroom events. You may not live through the experience. (Did everybody that brought mushrooms to the event really know what they were??) *Ingesting alcohol with certain mushrooms causes some poisonings.* I am sure there are many other reasons.

So what are we to do? Never eat a mushroom unless you can absolutely positively identify it. Never mix species the first time you try a new mushroom. Always keep a fresh uncooked sample of what you have eaten in the refrigerator to aid the doctors in identifying your mistake. Always spore print your mushrooms. Never eat mushrooms that a new mushroomer has identified. Don't follow any old wives' tales about picking and eating mushrooms. Always clean and cook mushrooms thoroughly. The first time you eat a new mushroom only eat a small quantity. Never gorge yourself on mushrooms, you may get sick from eating too many. Make sure the mushrooms are fresh, not rotting or insect infested. The insects can poison you too.

Am I trying to scare you? You betcha! I have eaten wild mushrooms since I was a young boy, but I never ever eat a mushroom without following these rules and being absolutely positive of what I am eating. Am I going to continue to eat mushrooms? **Absolutely, but I always err on the side of caution.**

"Largest Mushroom Club in the Five-State Area"

Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club
1413 Parkmont Road
Allison Park, PA 15101

MUSHROOM MANIA 3

MYCOLOGICAL WONDERMENTS

GROWING SHIITAKES

MUSHROOM POISONINGS

MUSHROOM POISONINGS

From *The Mycophile*, March/April, 2001
NAMA and Mushroom Poisoning

Table 1

Twenty Most Reported Species*
(data through 31 Dec 2000)

<u>Species</u>	<u>Cases</u>
<i>Chlorophyllum molybdites</i>	142
<i>Amanita pantherina</i>	83
<i>Amanita muscaria</i>	80
<i>Qmphalotus olearius</i>	70
<i>Armillaria mellea</i> †	41
<i>Laetiporus sulphureus</i> †	39
<i>Gyromitra esculenta</i>	55
<i>Amanita phalloides</i>	34
<i>Amanita virosa</i>	22
<i>Panaeolus foenisecii</i>	19
<i>Morchella esculenta</i> †	17
<i>Gymnopilus spectabilis</i>	15
<i>Psilocybe semilanceata</i>	15
<i>Amanita bisporigera</i>	13
<i>Leccinum aurantiacum</i> †	13
<i>Lepiota rachodes</i> †	13
<i>Tylopilus eximius</i>	13

<i>Cantharellus cibarius</i> †	12
<i>Pholiota squarrosa</i>	12
<i>Agaricus xanthodermus</i> complex	10
<i>Grifola frondosa</i> †	10

- * Single mushroom species cases,
good or probable species identification
† Frequently regarded as edible

Table 1 summarizes reports of unfortunate occurrences and the data do not (and probably cannot) include numbers of total ingestions. A very few mycophagists may tolerate *Chlorophyllum molybdites*; many, but not all, enjoy *Morchella esculenta* or *Cantharellus cibarius*. Most importantly, one should note the number of species usually considered edible listed in the table. As a new collecting season approaches one should recall the standard advice to be cautious and test sample new species or old species in new environments.

Editor's Note: NAMA, the North American Mycological Association has a website that can be reached through our club's website at:
www.wpmc4.homestead.com/index.html