



WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA MUSHROOM CLUB NEWSLETTER

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October/November 2010

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The newsletter of the Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club is published five times a year: April/May, June/July, Aug./Sept., Oct./Nov., and Dec. Articles, photos, news items and other submissions should be sent to the editor at least 6-8 weeks prior to targeted distribution for the best chance of inclusion. The editor cannot guarantee that submissions will be included in the next newsletter. The editor reserves the right to make spelling or grammatical corrections and may suggest content changes to the author. Material published in our newsletters may be used in other non-profit publications only with expressed permission and with appropriate acknowledgements.

Club officers

President — John Stuart
Vice President — Joyce Gross

On the web:

www.wpamushroomclub.org

PRESIDENT'S CORNER

BY JOHN STUART

This will be my last President's Corner

page as my three year term limit as president of the Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club is up in November. The club has been a tremendous help for me in learning about these fascinating structures and I'm sure it will continue to be for years to come.

Thanks to the many people who are willing to share their knowledge and give their time at meetings or on walks. We are also lucky to live in an area that supports such a wide variety of species. There is always something to look forward to from morels in the spring to our premier event the Gary Lincoff Foray in the

fall. Mushrooming is one hobby where a little ef-

fort pays high dividends.

It connects you to nature with a goal and a purpose, each foray can uncover something entirely new and with experience you can become comfortable and confident in recognizing familiar good edibles.

When I first joined the club I laughed at the motto "Fungi, Fun and Friends" but that is exactly what happened.

I had great fun and met some very good friends. Despite the occasional political wrangling I wish the WPMC continued success in the future and hope others will find it as enjoyable as I did.

Top Lies Told by Mushroom Hunters

As told to Becky Plischke by members of the Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club Executive Board.

12. No, I never do a drive-by and pick mushrooms in people's yards at night.

11. I picked them in Dark Hollow, you know where that is.

10. Road hunt for mushrooms? You'll never catch me doing that.

9. I'm lost; I didn't see the No Trespassing sign. How do I get out of here?

8. I better pick those mushrooms in your yard so they don't poison your dog.

7. You saw mushrooms in a cemetery. You will never find me pick-

ing mushrooms in a cemetery.

6. Well, I found just a few trumpets in Frick.

5. I'm positive that is an A. caesarea. Trust me.

4. These mushrooms I'm cooking were as clean as anything you'd find in the supermarket.

3. Morels are poisonous I had better take these and dispose of them properly.

2. I'm running a search and rescue service. Please send detailed information regarding all your favorite hunting sites and you'll be found if there is ever any trouble.

1. My son is doing a leaf project in school. Where are all the oak and dying elm trees around?

2010 WPMC meetings

September 21—Title: Agaricus in Pennsylvania and Everywhere Else

Speaker: Rick Kerrigan, Director of Research for Sylvan Mushrooms

Summary: Rick is an expert in the study of the genus *Agaricus*. This is the genus of the common button mushroom.

However, there is a great deal of diversity in this genus which makes it hard for mycologists to discriminate among very similar species.

Recent use of DNA sequencing has helped sort out the species and relate the information back to old American names and concepts as well as to European species. Rick will give us the latest picture of the overall genus.

October 19—Title: Election of Officers & Open Forum

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

November 16 — Cooking with Mushrooms

Nicole Driver, a culinary graduate from Hawaii and club member, along with Brian Davis, co-founder of the Washington/Greene County Chapter, will use some store-bought oriental mushrooms such as shitake and oyster, to put on a cooking demonstration that will reflect a Hawaiian/Asian flair, such as mushroom spring roles in a soy based dipping sauce.

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

Indiana County Chapter meetings

October 13, 2010 – This will be the final meeting of the year. It will be an open discussion of the past mushroom season's successes and failures. Bring your (toughest) questions and try to stump Bob.

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

Washington/Greene County Chapter meetings

Sept. 28 — Mushroom tasting—Come taste what wild mushrooms are all about.

Oct. 26 — Our last meeting of our inaugural year. Come to a talk by Brian with hens, chickens, and a round-up of the past year and visions of the coming year. Who knows, enough samples to send home? Cooking instructions included.

The Washington/Greene chapter of the WPMC holds its meetings every 4th Tuesday at the Peters township library, 616 E. McMurray road in McMurray, phone 724-941-9430 from March thru November, from 6 to 8.

2010 Forays

SEPTEMBER 23 - 26

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

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

October 8-10

NAMA Regional Foray The 2010 Camp Sequanota NAMA Endorsed Weekend Foray This special foray will be co-sponsored by the Mycological Association of Washington, DC (MAW) and the Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club (WPMC), and has been endorsed by the North American Mycological Association (NAMA). Participants must be or become members of one of the co-sponsoring clubs or NAMA to register.

Camp Sequanota, located near Jennerstown in the Laurel Highlands of western Pennsylvania, has very comfortable, mostly two-bed, rooms in the Bowersox Enrichment Center, which will accommodate 40 to 45 people, and also houses a combination dining room/great room with a fireplace, where we'll get together for meals, socializing and mushroom programs. If a larger number should register, some overflow can be housed in dormitory style cabins.

Over the years, the Sequanota foray has come to be seen by its participants as a relaxed get-together with like-minded (about mushrooms) fungal foragers, whom we get to know better in the evening snacking, at meals, on the mushroom trails, and around the display tables. The more participants, the more species we're likely to find (our best year was a little over 260 species), and the more we're likely to learn, and possibly to eat! We'll have forays on and off the 600-acre campgrounds on Friday afternoon, Saturday

morning and afternoon, and maybe on Sunday morning.

To help identify more of those species and to present programs in the evenings, we'll have two excellent guest mycologists, WPMC's John Plischke III and Noah Siegel of Royalston, Massachusetts. John has a nationwide reputation as a mushroom photographer, with 80 regional and national awards to his credit, and has presented hundreds of mushroom programs for clubs, parks, schools, and other groups, and co-founded WPMC ten years ago, then only 20 members (now over 500 in ten western Pennsylvania counties). A recipient of NAMA's Knighton Award for service, and elected first vice president of NAMA last November, John wrote "Morel Mushrooms and Their Poisonous Look-alikes," edited WPMC's two mushroom cookbooks, and is one of the editors of *Fungi* magazine. He's also a trustee and faculty member for both NAMA and the North East Mycological Federation (NEMF), as well as chairman of the fungus section of the Pennsylvania Biological Survey.

Noah Siegel, too, is a nationally known mushroom photographer and identifier, and has been photographing and collecting mushrooms for almost 20 years. He is president of the Monadnock Mushroomers Unlimited in Keene, NH, and he too is a NEMF trustee, as well as a presenter and identifier for mushroom clubs all over the northeastern United States. He has also searched for fungi in California, the southern Appalachians, on the Gulf Coast, both sides of Canada, and Down Under.

The full foray weekend includes two nights' accommodations, linen service, and six meals, from Friday evening dinner through Sunday lunch. Double-occupancy participants pay only \$135 each, and those who opt for a room to themselves, \$174.50. Those who just want to come for the day, all day Saturday, including three meals, forays, wild mushroom dishes with dinner, and the evening programs, will pay only \$48.25. (The cost for children 3 to 10, occupying a room with their parents, is \$46.50, and if they're just there for Saturday, \$10.75.)

Registration forms can be found on the two clubs' websites, www.wpamushroomclub.org and www.mawdc.org, or contact foray registrar Connie Durnan (MAW's Membership Chair) at [memberships\[at\]mawdc\[dot\]org](mailto:memberships[at]mawdc[dot]org), by phone at (202) 362-1420, (202) 362-1420, or by regular mail at 4509 Windom Place, NW, Washington, DC 20016, and ask that she mail you a form.

October 8-10

Join the OMS for their Fall Foray - Penitentiary Glen Nature Center. See their web site for more information. www.ohiomushroom.org



Mushroom Tracks



Chanterelles by the basketsful

By Bonnie and Brian Davis

Welcome to the final 2010 season of mushroom tracks. Hope most have you have left a good deal of boot tracks at your favorite hunting grounds and plenty of cut stumps... and no other signs that someone was there such as wrappers or bottles.

Leaving boot tracks is pretty easy in the spring and early summer as there is plenty of moisture.

As the mid summer heat and drought arrive, it can be somewhat difficult to leave any lasting tracks in the parched earth and even more challenging to find mushrooms worth harvesting.

Although the early warm spring was arguably responsible for one of the worst morel seasons in recent memory, it seems to have extended the season for the summer mushrooms.

Down here in Dixie (Washington and Greene counties), us southerners have enjoyed early and plentiful black trumpets and Chanterelles.

Seems as if we have been getting storms often enough for there to be reasonable moisture resulting in continuous fruiting of my favorite, the chanterelle.

When you approach a ravine and the first thing that comes to mind is that there's a brush fire cause the hillside is bright orange, you know conditions are favorable throughout the immediate area. When you go back a few days later or to another location and find the same orange ravines and hillsides, you know it's a great season.

However, I can't stress enough the importance of rain this time of year. Many of the thunderstorms are hit and miss...one area getting flooded while several miles away they get little or no rain.

This is another reason why it is important to continuously hunt new areas. If I go on a trail and it's dusty, chances are any mushrooms found will

be way past their prime so if I'm planning on grilled chanterelles wrapped in foil seasoned with onions, garlic, olive oil, butter, and S &P, it's time to put Trevor the mushroom dog back in the mushroom coach and head to another one of many county or state parks in the area and try again.

When I'm leaving good deep tracks on the trails and the creeks are flowing(sorry, I meant CRICKS for you Yanks up in the burgh), I know my pen knife and I will have a great day together, and my basket will be happy.

So, I'm often asked what do I do with 4 or 5 baskets of Chanterelles.

Sell them?

No, that would make the hobby too much like work.

Give them away?

Yeah, right.

No, I bring them home and brush off any dirt, debris or bugs (known as good protein to mushroom enthusiasts), and sort them by size and freshness. The really fresh ones get devoured for dinner with a few more meals' worth placed in a paper bag in the fridge. The rest get sliced and placed in one of the five trays of the by now tired dehydrator.

Depending on the mushroom size and tray rotation, a batch of chanterelles takes 10 to 12 hours to fully dehydrate. So I place them in the dehydrator early evening, remove them early morning, fill trays, remove early evening, and so on till all of the orange morsels of delight are properly dried or consumed.

By then it's the weekend, and after a week of following the Doppler radar, it's time once again for Bonnie and I to load some water and the mushroom dog in the truck and head out to a sight where we're pretty sure we'll be successful at leaving MUSHROOM TRACKS.

WPMC walks

September 23-26 - The Northeast Mycological Federation 2010 annual Sam Ristich Foray
See page 4

September 25 - 10:00-12:00, - Deer Lakes Park, Allegheny County, Russelton. Meet Jim Wilson. From the PA Turnpike get off at the Allegheny Valley Exit 5. Turn toward New Kensington. Turn left (east) onto Freeport Road. Follow to Pearl Avenue and turn left. Continue on Pearl Ave, it becomes Russelton Road. In Russelton, turn right at the first intersection. Look for a drug store, bank and liquor store and turn right. Go a short distance to a Deer Lakes Park sign, turn left into the park. Just past the first lake, there is a large parking lot; meet there.

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/changes by going to our Yahoo Groups at groups.yahoo.com/group/wpamushroomclub

Washington/Greene County chapter walks

September 25 — Ryerson Station, Greene County, Meet Brian and Bonnie Davis at the park office at 9:45 a.m. The hunting site will be determined at that time. The walk will begin around 10 a.m. Ryerson has proved to be a wild, un hunted, moist forest full of many varieties of fungi.

Indiana County chapter walks

September 25 — 9 a.m.— Pine Ridge Park near Blairsville. Meet Bob and Ginny Sleigh in the large parking lot at the end of the park road by pavilion #2. We will drive and/or walk to locations in the park from there. Pine Ridge Park covers 635 acres including large stands of mature hardwoods. The eastern boundary of the park abuts State Game Lands 276, adding many acres of varying terrain for the more adventuresome. More information can be found at <http://www.indianacountyparks.org/parks/bs/bs.html>.

October 9 — 9 a.m.— Hemlock Lake, near Glen Campbell - Meet Bob and Ginny Sleigh at the eastern shore of Hemlock Lake, we will walk or drive to locations in the park from there. As the name implies there are large stands of Hemlock in the area mixed in with a substantial amount of hardwood trees. For directions or more information call 724-349-9173 or email ICCWPMC@comcast.net.

October 23 — 9 a.m.— Meet Bob and Ginny Sleigh at Blue Spruce Park in the large parking area on the left just past the ballfields. We will drive and/or walk to locations in the park from there. Blue Spruce has a wide variety of habitat that makes the chance of finding some kind of fungi growing very good. Call 724-349-9173 for more information.

All ICC WPMC walks begin promptly at 9 a.m., unless otherwise noted. For directions or more information call Bob and Ginny Sleigh at 724-349-9173 or e-mail them at ICCWPMC@comcast.net.

Newsletter submissions welcome

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

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

Drawings show youngsters' views of mushrooms



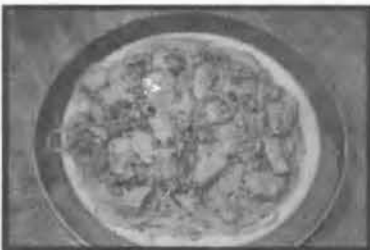
Artwork submitted by Becky Plischke. They were drawn by two of her students.

2010 Indiana County Chapter photos

Hunting for mushrooms can be so much fun...



Finding them is even better ...



Then there is the joy of eating the fruits of your labors ...



But the best thing of all is spending time with all the new friends you make.

Fungi joined forces with ancient plants

Fungal (myco) Roots (rhizae)

BY JOHN STUART

One of the many amazing things I've come across learning about fungi is how ancient their association is with the earliest plants that climbed out of the primordial soup in the Devonian period 400 million years ago.

Plants found a rather inhospitable environment and very early on joined forces with fungi in a mutually beneficial relationship which has persisted to the present day.

The plant providing energy and nutrient sugars produced by photosynthesis and the fungus providing the means of expanding and enhancing the root collection system allowing better extraction and uptake of elements like phosphorus, sulfur, and nitrogen.

There is early evidence of fungal structures encased in a 400 million year old fossil that is strikingly similar to what is seen at the present time.

Studies have shown that 90% of plants rely on these fungal interactions to attain healthy growth. They are obligatory biotrophs in that they can survive only in a dual culture with a host plant.

Other mycorrhizal benefits to plants include production of a growth hormone that promotes thicker and more branching growth and providing protection by releasing chemicals into the soil that prevents attack by predators.

Today we see the addition of mycorrhizal components to commercial fertilizers. Although these "micro fungi" or endomycorrhizae are not much interest to us as they do not produce fruiting bodies, we do see a similar symbiotic partnership of fungi with trees.

This complex "macro fungi" or ectomycorrhizal interaction with trees and fungi is also critical to a tree's well being and some tree species simply cannot survive and prosper without their fungal counterparts.

One tree can have several different species of fungi concurrently attached to its root system and on the other hand it is possible that one fun-



gus species can be actively involved with several trees at the same time acting as a carbohydrate sink or directing nutrients from one tree to another or providing one or more trees with minerals it could not normally gather for itself. In a large forest area these intertwining connections must be huge, all occurring in a vast underground grid that we are only aware of when a fruiting body pops out of the soil.

The existence of this gigantic underground mycelial grid was only fairly recently discovered by happenstance in 1881 by a German mycologist Professor A.B. Frank who had been commissioned by the German government to try and improve the harvest of truffles.

In the course of his investigations he discovered the beneficial fungus (myco) roots (rhizae) and debunked the then held view that fungi were detrimental to plant growth. There are now some 5,000 species of fungi (mainly Basidiomycota and a few Ascomycota) known that service about 2,000 species of trees and are essential in their survival.

I would recommend two good reference works that were the source of much of the above information -- "The Fifth Kingdom -- All About Fungi", by Bryce Kendrick and "Life in the Soil - A guide for Naturalists and Gardeners" by James B. Nardi.

**WESTERN PENNSYLVANIA
MUSHROOM CLUB**

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