



Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club

Fungi, fun and friends!

Cecily Franklin, President

I've been a member of WPMC since 2009, and I first joined the Board in 2011. I was elected President in October 2017, to become effective at the beginning of 2018. Fortunately, our Bylaws limit the President to three consecutive terms, so this will be my last year.

Before I even took office, one of our beloved members died. Then in March of 2018, our Honorary Member Gary Lincoff died. At the end of the same year, one of our founding members passed away. And in April of 2019, one of our Past Presidents died. I was beginning to feel like the Grim Reaper!

I've always believed that the most important job of the President is to have the right people in the right jobs, to keep them happy in those jobs, and to give them the resources they need to be successful. We have some very talented members who do an incredible amount of the work, and I'm always grateful when they agree to keep doing it. But while it's great to have continuity, it's even more important to have a succession plan. After all, we're an all-volunteer organization, and anyone can quit at any time, for any reason.

So far this year, we have a new Treasurer, a new Toxicology Chair, and two new Sales Co-Chairs. But I'm still looking for people to take

over the Membership, Hospitality, and Scholarship Committees. It's an ongoing challenge, but we've been very successful. Here are some of our recent accomplishments:

- Since 2015, WPMC has steadily increased its membership level every year, surpassing 1,000 members by the end of 2019.
- During 2019, WPMC led 47 walks in 31 different parks in 10 Pennsylvania counties. Many of these were in partnership with other organizations, including Allegheny Land Trust, Friends of Murrysville Parks, Indiana Friends of the Parks, Pennsylvania Department of Conservation and Natural Resources, Phipps Conservatory, and Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy.
- Every year, WPMC hosts Mushroom Education Day, the annual Gary Lincoff Foray, and nine monthly meetings. These events feature WPMC experts, as well as outside speakers.
- WPMC administers an ID Button Program, to recognize members who can identify mushroom species at different levels. In 2019, eight WPMC members earned ID Buttons for their mushroom knowledge, ranging from 25 to 150 different species.
- Many WPMC members

contribute their time and expertise by leading mushroom walks, making presentations, holding workshops, or hosting display tables for other organizations. These include other mushroom clubs, garden clubs, and retirement communities.

- WPMC holds an annual Photo Contest to recognize photographic talent within our membership. Many of the photos taken by WPMC members appear on widely respected mycology websites, including Michael Kuo's mushroomexpert.com and Gary Emberger's Fungi Growing on Wood.
- In 2019, WPMC established a new Fungarium at the Carnegie Museum of Natural History. This museum has been added to the list of Partner Fungaria for the North American Mycoflora Project.
- In 2019, several WPMC members assisted doctors at Allegheny General Hospital with an ongoing toxicology research project. The results have been submitted to the American College of Medical Toxicology.

Tell us about YOUR club! Got some interesting history, hardships or challenges overcome? We want to hear about it. Next time: The Mid Hudson Mycological Association. †