



President's Message



Richard Jacob
WPMC President

I'VE BEEN ENJOYING the warmer weather and occasional thunderstorm and all that it brings. Mushrooms are starting to pop up everywhere. The slight differences in the weather and growing conditions mean that every year we find species not previously recorded in the Western Pennsylvania region. Some may have always been there, but we never noticed—like the Mayapple rust recently identified on a weekday walk—while others have never been found or identified.

Last year Gary Lincoff suggested that we should use more images of mushrooms collected locally on our website. Over the winter a number of members have been working on improving the club's species list and, as part of this effort, we plan to use the list as a starting point for a catalog of local species with matching images on the website. So at this time I would like to put out a public call for pictures of local fungi species. If you have suitable pictures, see the article (right) on how to donate them to the catalog.

Upcoming meetings include an introduction to fungal microscopy in July with La Monte Yarroll, a DNA barcoding update in August from me, and a cooking demonstration in September with Kate Lasky and Tomasz Skowronski from the under-construction Eastern European Kitchen "APTEKA".

Morel season is definitely over and we are in a lull before chanterelle season takes off. Although I did not have the best of Morel seasons, I heard a number of success stories from members who attended walks or talks and were able use the information they learned to find Morels on their own, so we—or rather they—are doing something right! Let's hope the chanterelles are more abundant, and I look forward to your joining us in the woods to find them.

Introducing the Species Catalog Project

AT THE END OF WALKS and meetings, you will often see one or more people identifying the mushroom species that have been found. We record these species and make the lists available on our website. Over the lifetime of the club, the total number of species identified has grown to over 1400 entries, and we add a handful of new ones every year. During the winter a number of members started to clear up this list by updating the Latin names and removing duplicates. This list forms the foundation for a number of WPMC projects that are currently in development.

The first project that uses the list is the new **Species List Generator**. A walk leader can enter a list of species that was found on a walk. This list is converted into a post for the website and we add a few pictures if we have any and maybe a walk report. In the website post, the species name currently links to a Google image search. This means that even if we didn't take a picture of the species on that day, you can still see what it looks like from other pictures on the web.

At Gary Lincoff's suggestion, rather than linking to a Google search of images, we should really be using images of mushrooms collected locally. This brings me to our second project related to the species list: a **Species Catalog**. The Species Catalog will contain entries for all the species taken from the club's lifetime list found here in Western Pennsylvania. The catalog entries will contain images of the species and links to other websites such as Index Fungorum, Michael Kuo's MushroomExpert.com, Google images, and Wikipedia. DNA sequencing results will also be included in the catalog. Such an online catalog would be searchable on our website and by the web in general.

Future projects that will use the species list and catalog include sets of index cards of the commonly occurring species that we can use for labels when identifying species at the end of a walk. We also plan to release a program which uses the species list for recording species you have identified for the ButtonID program. A more ambitious project for the future would be a local guidebook using club members' contributions.

Initially only a few entries will include pictures, but over time we hope to fill out the catalog with one or more images for each species. To do this, we will need to use images contributed by WPMC members. The entries will not include any text about the species to begin with, but we welcome original descriptions.

You can see an example species entry at <http://wpamushroomclub.org/shop/amanita-cokeri/>. Hopefully, entries for the complete life list will be available soon. We will need clear, focused, high resolution images. If you are sending a large quantity of images, the easiest way is to use a free file transfer service such as WeTransfer (www.wetransfer.com). If you are only sending a few, they can be emailed. Send all files to: site-admin@wpamushroomclub.org. You can also collect your images and put them on a jump drive (flash stick) or CD/DVD and bring them to club meetings. Use the photographed species, with a short description, as the filenames. For example: H_furfuracea-gills.jpg, H_furfuracea-cap.jpg, H_furfuracea-stem.jpg.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 3