

## Connecticut-Westchester Mycological Association



**FALL  
2011**



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## COMA Programs – Fall 2011

**Thursday, September 15; 7:30 pm**

**Appreciating Relationships: Mushroom-Tree Associations** – In this talk COMA member Stephanie Scavelli will share her story of how she discovered mycology and the appreciation of mushrooms. She will discuss the importance of environmental perspectives in seeking mushrooms in the woods, focusing particularly on the importance of trees. You will take from this discussion an enhanced perspective on trees in woodland environments, their inter-relations with the fungi, and some basics of field identification of the characteristics of trees.

**Thursday, October 27; 7:30 pm**

**How To Banish Evil Spirits: Uses of Fungi by Northern Peoples** – Explorer-author-mycologist Lawrence Millman will discuss various ways northern indigenous people use mushrooms—as fire-starters, as smudges, as disinfectants, and as tobacco substitutes, but almost never as food. The talk will include a show-and-tell display of the aforementioned mushrooms as well as an introduction to ethnomycology (the cultural use of mushrooms). It will include a demonstration of how the Siberian Chukchi use polypores to rid their homes of evil spirits. Don't miss this painlessly informative event!

**Tuesday, November 15; 7:00 pm**

**COMA's Year-end Banquet** – Food, friends, fungi, festivity! Join us for our annual year-end banquet – a pot-luck dinner unlike any other. The COMA year-end banquet gets better every year! (We say this every year, but it's really true!) All COMA members are asked to donate a dish (see flyer insert). Please join your friends and fellow mycophiles for this traditionally and inevitably enjoyable evening. Don't miss out on the fun! See you there!

All meetings will be held at the **Friends' Meeting House** in Purchase, NY. Meetings are scheduled for 7:30 p.m. and are open and free to the public. Bring samples of your fungi finds to share. The banquet is at 7: p.m.

**Directions to Friends' Purchase Meeting House: From I-684** - Exit 2 to stoplight at Route 120 (Purchase St.). Turn right and go 1 mile to a sharp left turn (following Route 120). The Friends' Meeting House is on the left at the corner. House is on the right just before the intersection.

**Note from the President:**

As of September 1<sup>st</sup>, Membership Chairperson, Beverly Leffers will be taking your membership registration forms and check for the 2012 season. Please send it in ASAP. I also want to remind everyone that following our fall programs, we will be having the annual COMA potluck banquet in November. Get your forms in to Don Shernoff along with the name of a dish you will be bringing.

At the banquet, the membership will be voting for officers for the 2012 year. If there is any position you would like to occupy, including president, kindly e-mail me. We particularly need a club secretary. The club secretary sends out e-mails to remind members of upcoming walks, programs, forays and our annual dinner. If you enjoy communicating with mushroom people, it is the perfect position for familiarizing yourself with the membership. Except for taking notes at club meetings, I have essentially been doing these things and more since I joined the COMA board of trustees eight years ago. Since I will be moving out of the area in three years once my husband retires, it is essential that all the activities I have taken on be transferred to other members, so that the club runs smoothly and efficiently without me. I would like to see them completely within your capable hands within the next two years, including keeping up with our photo web site (which is why I am encouraging you to send in your best shots). Maintaining the mushroom count walk list is especially important. This is a job perhaps best suited to a student(s) of COMA's Mushroom University. I also want to see more members be involved in community education. I would like to work with interested volunteers and show you how to put a good presentation together, that can be shown at nature preserves, schools, and guided walks. Contact me if you would like to learn how to do this. (<mailto:diannasmith@optonline.net>)

Our newsletter editor, Rena Wertzer, is in the process of moving from her house to a smaller home, so I offered to assemble this Fall issue of SI for her. I asked our members to write a paragraph or two on why you joined COMA, your experiences at mushroom forays, and memorable stories about each other and about fungi. Your response was immediate and I know you will enjoy reading these wonderful contributions. We even have a mushroom recipe by the Brandts.

**Lisa Solomon: Spreading the word about COMA and Amateur Mycology****How I got involved with COMA**

Five or six years ago, I heard that Steve Brill would be leading a foraging walk in a local park, teaching folks how to identify wild edible and medicinal foods (including mushrooms). Since I enjoy cooking, I thought the walk sounded like a perfect opportunity to expand my culinary repertoire. From the very first walk, I was hooked, and became a Wildman walk regular. Soon, Wildman told me about COMA; I've been a member of the club ever since.

**Passing on fungi fascination to the next generation**

After every walk, I share my mushroom finds with my 8-year-old son, Max. He always joins me on the Mother's Day morel walks at Tallman State Park, and attends various other walks throughout the summer and fall. (My 12-year-old daughter, Zoe, prefers to stay home: to borrow a line from Woody Allen, she's at two with nature.) While Max loves the thrill of the (mushroom) hunt, in true 8-year-old fashion, his favorite part of every outing is the picnic that takes place after each walk.

### **Spreading the word far and wide**

I try to get others interested in mycology by posting about my fungal adventures on social networking sites like Twitter and Facebook. Since amateur mycology is not a particularly common hobby, it stands out in the minds of my friends and colleagues. In fact, a professional acquaintance recently tweeted: "I can't see a mushroom growing (even in my own backyard) and not think of @lisasolomon. Am I alone?"

In August 2010, I launched an e-newsletter for my law practice; it currently goes out monthly to more than 900 professional contacts. When you're marketing a professional services business, it's a good idea to show your personality. I show mine by sharing my passion for mushrooms by including a column entitled "Lisa's Mycology Update" in each issue. I've written about a wide range of topics, including mushrooms named after body parts; mushrooms on the move (slime molds); mushroom-hunting equipment; and our annual potluck dinner.

### **The First Years of the COMA Foray by Sandy and Jerry Sheine**

Jerry and I missed the first COMA Foray in 1975 but heard such wonderful stories about it that we eagerly looked forward to the 1976 Foray. We had been studying with Sam Ristich for 6 years by then and looked forward to spending a weekend with Sam, Clark Rogerson, Barry Wulff and Gary Lincoff as well as our COMA friends who had become members of our new club. We have attended every COMA Foray since and each year look forward to the camaraderie of our fellow mushroom enthusiasts.

The first four COMA forays took place at the White Memorial Foundation in Litchfield, CT where Barry Wulff, a professor at Eastern Connecticut State University had been giving summer ecology courses. Barry, and Bud Schwartz then COMA President, arranged for the first forays there. The site was ideal, having many fungi habitats near a river and with a huge old growth forest available to us for collecting and study. The facilities were not so ideal but we were just happy to be there. We had two unheated dorms, one for women and one for men. We barely slept because in the women's dorm we had Sylvia Stein and other ladies keeping us up with experiments such as filling bottles with *Panellus stipticus* and a little water and watching to see the mushrooms glow in the dark.. At one foray, a small group of people joined us from the very old Boston Mycological Club, including Margaret Lewis, the founder of the Club. She gave her famous lecture on the Tricky Tricholomas but also regaled us with funny stories during the entire night. It was no better in the men's dorm where Phil Stein and Jack Guberman would trade jokes until dawn. The washing and toilet facilities consisted of outhouses and outdoor sinks and showers, cold water only. We had one small classroom building and cooked our own meals in the basement of the park office. Judy Bothwell always brought the food to cook, as well as eight pies that she had previously made and baked. We all had to sign up for kitchen duty. We learned about mushrooms and insects from Sam Ristich, ascomycetes from Clark Rogerson, ecology from Barry Wulff and learned about fungi and plants from other knowledgeable participants. Gary Lincoff was in charge of high jinks, such as our arrival at the foray after dark and joining us in going out to find mushrooms using our flashlights. At one foray, we were all about to leave when we discovered that Jerry was missing. He finally turned up soaked up to his chest. He had an

allergy attack, took too many antihistamines and wound up in a swamp. The cold water woke him up!

After four exciting years at White Memorial we learned that they were planning to tear down the old buildings to build a new conference center. By that time we had outgrown the White Memorial Foundation Center because we had many new COMA members. We miss many of our old mushrooming friends who have since passed away, but over the years many new, wonderful members have joined COMA and enjoy our forays. Every year Jerry and I look forward to the next COMA Foray where we know that many more memorable events will occur.

### **The 2011 NAMA Foray at Clarion University in Clarion, PA—August 4-7 by Ursula Hoffmann**

About 250 people from all over the US and Europe attended this extremely well organized foray run by the Plischke Family. The campus was mountainous like a ski area: lots of ups and downs and stairs but without lifts so we could walk off the calories taken in at our meals when going to collecting mushrooms and/or information at lectures, workshops.

The presenters included Josephine Bacon, Doug Bassett, Alan Bessette, Arleen Bessette, Jay Justice, Rick Kerrigan, Renée Lebeuf, Gary Lincoff, Frank Lotrich, Roz Lowen, Dale Luthringer, Shannon Nix, Martin Osis, Becky & Kim Plischke, Bill Russell, Noah Siegel, Dorothy Smullen, Mark Spear & Tina Ellor, Ron Spinoso, Rod Tulloss, Jim Tunney & Rebecca Miller. And there were no technological glitches because Jerry Sheine was in charge.

Collecting was in all the many nearby areas. At the start, it was hot but cooled off day by day. There was very little on Thursday, more on Friday, masses on Saturday. Quite a few people several times went to Cook Forest, a privately owned old-growth forest with majestic trees, dark and mysterious as the woods in a fairytale where on a good day you cannot take a step without stepping on a mushroom. The final checklist included 350+ species. An excellent foray. Thanks to all the people who helped create it.

### **A Brief Mycophagy Report on NAMA's 2011 Foray: by Joe and Kathy Brandt**

Along with many others, we had the good fortune to attend NAMA's 2011 Dr. Richard Homola Memorial Foray at Clarion University, in Clarion, PA. As the other attendees can attest, the mycophagy on August 6th was absolutely terrific. As ardent "foodies," we wanted to offer a short review of the event for those less fortunate among us, who did *not* get to come.

The mycophagy was coordinated by Ursula Pohl, with the able assistance of many others, including her husband, Herbert. There were a dozen different dishes, including foray-foraged treasures like *Sparassus herbstii*, *Laetiporus sulphureus* (chicken mushrooms) and *Pleurotus ostreatus*. Other choice edibles had been found at an earlier date and were offered up by their finders for our grateful consumption, such as the chanterelle vodka, made by a NAMA member from eastern PA who found a great crop of goldens in early July, an unusual fruiting for her area. We had some favorites among the many tasty dishes. Certainly the sparassis, simply cooked in butter with a touch of cream, was incredible. There were so many coming up in the area while we were there, we actually left several right where they were growing! The specimen room had some great ones to admire, while we were lucky enough to munch

on the ones that found their way to mycophagy. (Our able cooks told us they were murderously hard to clean, but we were *so* glad they did it!)

Some of the chicken mushrooms were prepared "Thai" style, with ginger and spices in a splendid coconut cream sauce, an outstanding presentation. Also delicious was a dish featuring fresh chicken mushrooms sautéed in butter with a very mild tomato sauce and garlic, allowing the chicken mushroom to stand out. We generally eschew summer oysters, as they lack the strong flavor and texture of their fall counterparts, but the oyster preparation at this event has us reconsidering that position. The oysters were chopped and sautéed with a few green peppers, some onions, and seasonings (alas, we failed to obtain recipes! - perhaps the myco-chefs will send them in?), and it was really, really tasty. A morel and chanterelle soup was also a great hit - a creamy base with nice large pieces of the choice edibles, so we knew what we were tasting.

There were also pickled mushrooms— some boletes, some mixed, a sautéed bicolor bolete dish, *Tylopilus indecisis* with potatoes, tempura "chicken", sautéed hen of the woods, and a Western porcini mushroom dish, with mushrooms imported from California. If all this doesn't make you run out to the woods with your frying pan at the ready on the stove, we can't imagine why you're still reading! We, on the other hand, are always ready to *get out there* and forage up something wild and wonderful for dinner!

**The 2011 NEMF Foray at Paul Smith's in the Adirondacks, NY—August 11-14** by  
*NEMF President and COMA web master Ursula Hoffmann*

This place is still as wonderful as many of us remember it from previous forays 30 years ago or so. Yes, there are new buildings and therefore less forest on the campus. But we were still in the beautiful Adirondacks and still had the good food produced by the Hotel Management/Culinary section of this college. Driving to and from Paul Smith's also allowed us to see more of the beautiful scenery.

About 250 people registered at this foray, And, I hope, all of them were as happy as I was. Yes, there were many mushrooms. The final checklist numbered 350+ species, plus 15 or so yet unknown.

The temperature was low and there was little rain, so we were very comfortable both in the woods and on campus. Driving home going south on Sunday toward a record rain fall of about 8 inches was another story.

The program of activities was rich, and it was really hard to decide on what we wanted to choose to do from among several tempting possibilities all scheduled at the same time. The presenters were Milt Adams, Tim Baroni, Jim Gouin, Roy Halling, Kathie Hodge, Susan Hopkins, Gary Lincoff, Roz Lowen (by video feed), Andy Methven, Ruthie Ristich, Noah Siegel, Dorothy Smullen, Walt Sturgeon, Rod Tulloss, Bill Yule--as well as three demonstrations with tastings of preparing mushrooms gourmet & restaurant style by three Paul Smith's chefs.

Late Saturday afternoon had a wonderful mycophagy session followed by the banquet. Many people skipped one or the other because there was just too much food. And some people swam or canoed in the lake. Marcia's, Rod's, and Tim and Nina's grandchildren were delightful. They had a special walk with Sandy Sheine and climbed anything climbable— stairs, steep hillsides, trees.

Every evening concluded with a very popular “Social” that was located in a café with a cash bar where we could buy beer or wine. What a great idea to end the days talking, relaxing and getting ready for a good night’s sleep!

All in all, a wonderful foray! Congratulations to all who helped create it.

**NAMA and NEMF Lineage Lessons:** *by Dianna Smith*

I sat in on three to five presentations/lectures a day at each four-day foray and came away with the certain knowledge that nearly every scientific fungus name that I know, will be shown to have been misapplied by the revered ‘saints’ of American mushroom taxonomy. Hey, it was not their fault! Currently used European names, as well as many uniquely American names will need to be replaced whenever it is proven by DNA analysis that the mushrooms of one region of the world, (which look virtually identical to the mushrooms in others), are in fact different. We have to learn to adapt to the fact that accepted species names are often applied to ‘species complexes’ (the members of which also look a lot like each other), which implies there will be more names. If they want to include in their writings information about a mushroom’s ancestry and relationship to another’s, taxonomists will be dependent on the ever-expanding findings of research scientists. Given that there are so few researchers tackling the task, and so few modern taxonomists to describe each mushroom, it is clearly going to take years before we have those many thousands of shiny new fungi names. I wish there was an international committee of wise guy mushroom shamans to embrace this work and instantaneously rectify this mind-boggling state of affairs. Hah! Then I might strive to learn and understand all their names, - old, current and new – while I still have my wits. But if the wizards of nomenclature give us numbers instead of taxonomic names – I am already doomed. I suppose it should be comforting to remember that even if this lineage and naming business is ever all sorted out, the mushrooms still won’t care what we call them. I wonder what changes the next revolution in our myco-world-view will bring to the study of macrofungi – perhaps that similar-looking mushrooms given different names are more closely related than thought?

**MEETING AUTHOR GARY LINCOFF** by JJ Murphy

Ever since I bought [Gary Lincoff’s National Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Mushrooms](#), I’ve been looking for an opportunity to meet him. I got my chance last night.

Lincoff was a guest speaker of the Bedford, NY Audubon Society. These area naturalists are dedicated to documenting biodiversity in the Hudson Valley. Members are interested in birds, mammals, insects, plants, and fungi. The room was packed.

It’s one thing to be knowledgeable. It’s another to be a talented speaker. Lincoff has the timing of a stand-up comic and the skill of a lead-singer. He knows his mushrooms so well that he can weave basic ID information, like where it grows, spore print color, and season into personal anecdotes, plays on words and recipes.

He has traveled the world. I nearly rolled off my chair as he described his trek to Kilimanjaro. “Why bother going to the summit? No mushrooms grow above the tree line.”

Anyone who can remain passionate and joyous during a 30-year study of fungi – or any aspect of nature – has my deepest respect. Lincoff blows me away, because he makes it look so simple.

Of course I brought my field guide for him to sign. This was better than going to a book signing. He wrote a note and a drawing along with his signature in two places. I’m still on cloud nine.

As a writer and a naturalist, I strive for perfection. I know what can be and am often impatient with my own progress. I’m feeling woods-deprived. With all the nature classes and courses I’ve been taking, I haven’t camped out this year. Yikes!

The older I get, the less I want to sit tethered to my laptop indoors. I wish my laptop could function despite humidity, campfire smoke, temperature changes and plant fibers.

Meanwhile, I hope it rains, so I can discover the mushrooms featured in Gary Lincoff’s lecture.

Don Shernoff’s Stories from COMA walks, meetings and Rogerson forays.

#### Sylvia Stein

When I first joined the club, I always stayed close to Sylvia on a walk and would bring her things that I would find. One day I found a beautiful flower and brought it to Sylvia. To my surprise, she scolded me, telling me that I had picked a protected wild orchid. I was thoroughly abashed until she asked, “Can I have it?”

Betsy and I were going on a picnic with Sylvia, walking through some woods to a picnic table, when Sylvia stopped and said, “Wait, there’s a plant that I don’t know.” I realized then that Sylvia knew almost every plant, as well as every mushroom. She then went to the plant and tucked some parts of it into a notebook, saying, “I have to learn this plant.”

We were near the end of a spring morel walk and Sylvia became tired and sat down to rest. (She was in her 80’s.) Someone found a morel and Sylvia jumped up, saying “Maybe there’s more around here.”

#### Sam Ristich

Early one morning, about 7 am, at the COMA foray I woke up and looked out from my bedroom window at the Hemlocks. It was pouring rain outside. To my surprise, I saw Sam standing outside, examining a mushroom. He was wearing a full set of raingear, including a wide-brimmed hat. The water was running in streams off his hat and he was carrying a large basket filled with mushrooms.

Sylvia and Sam

Sam Ristich and Sylvia were working at different sorting tables at a COMA foray. They were about 20 feet apart. Suddenly Sylvia held up a mushroom for all to see and said “I haven’t seen this mushroom in 30 years.” Sam looked over and said immediately “I haven’t seen it either.” No one else said anything.

We were on a fall walk at Rockefeller State Park. It was cold and there were no leaves on the trees. As we get out of the car in the parking lot, Sam looks at a tall, leafless tree about 200 feet away and says, “Who can name that tree?” Sylvia named the tree. Sam then picked out a large leafless tree of a different shape and asked the question again. Sylvia named the tree. This was an amazing display of botanical knowledge by two of my favorite people, but after four trees, I unappreciatively asked, “Can we go find some mushrooms now?” And we were off.

Sam and Sandy

One summer day we were walking among the enormous trees in Rockefeller State Park. Sandy Sheine was the leader and Sam was with us. Sam was so intrigued by the trees that he was falling behind the group. Sandy looked back and yelled “Sam!!” Sam replied, “Coming, Mother.”

Gary Lincoff

I was at the sorting tables during a COMA foray with Gary. We were having the worst drought that I had ever seen and the tables were sparsely populated with mushrooms. I said to Gary, “I think that we should pay you by the species this year.” Without hesitation, Gary picked up a plate with several pieces of *Laetiporus sulfureus* and said, “I have 5 species of chicken right here.”

Ray Fatto

Ray Fatto, an expert on russulas, was a member of the New Jersey club and attended all our forays and identified all our russulas. When someone brought a difficult russula to Gary, our Chief Mycologist, he would invariably say “Take it to Ray”. When I started administering the foray, I noticed that Ray had not been receiving an honorarium, like our other experts. I thought that this was not fair. When I brought him his honorarium check, he declined it. Ray did not do this for money.

Sylvia and Gary

Sylvia was quite enthusiastic and unrestrained in her words and actions. Gary described her lovingly as “The youngest oldest person that I know.”

Phil Stein

Phil Stein, Sylvia’s husband was a sweet, gentle man. I first met Sylvia and Phil when Leon and I went to a mushroom slide talk that Sylvia gave at the Scarsdale Public Library. Phil manned the projector for Sylvia. After she finished discussing a slide, Sylvia would cue Phil to change the slide. If Phil was not paying attention, she would say his name. But Phil was a little hard of hearing, so Sylvia would eventually yell “Phil!!” and the slide would change.

Phil came to the walks with Sylvia and I often walked and chatted with him. I offered him some bug spray one time and he declined, saying, "It attracts bugs."

Another time someone asked Phil where to look for morels. Phil said, "Morels are where you find them."

### Sam and Rod

Sam was giving a talk on polypores to a small group of people in the sorting room at the COMA foray. Rod Tulloss wandered over to listen. Sam held up a *Daedalea confragosa* and asked the audience "Why is this called the maze polypore?" Rod called out, "Because it tastes like corn."

### George Johanson

George is a great forager and most generous person that I know. He often brings wild nuts and exotic fruit to share with people at the walks. He sometimes disappears on side trips of his own. One fall day he disappeared for quite a while and then emerged carrying 30 pounds of *Grifola frondosa*, using his shirt to carry them. We all took home *Grifola frondosa* that day.

### Dianna Smith

I was at a walk with Dianna one day and an oriental couple were passing by and chatting. Someone asked me if they were speaking Chinese (Like I would know.) I said, "I guess it could be Chinese." Dianna said, "It's Chinese. It's Cantonese Chinese"

You never know what people know.

### Unknown Beginner

I was on a walk at Fahnestock State Parks when a beginner called my attention to a flush of large mushrooms. She asked me if they were edible. I said that I did not think so and she replied, "But they are so big!!" I said, "Well go for it, but it might be your last supper." Size isn't everything.

### **COMA Walk Directions** by *Rena Wertzer*

One day, quite a few years ago, I picked Sylvia Stein up from her apartment in the Bronx to give her a ride to the day's walk which was somewhere in Putnam County off of route 22. After a while driving, Sylvia commented that we must have gone too far. We were driving too long. She was sure we had passed the place. I had set the odometer to the mileage on the directions so I was quite sure I was correct. Sylvia kept complaining and complaining. "We passed it. We're in the car too long. It's a beautiful day and I don't want to spend it driving." Sylvia was annoyed with me and I was annoyed with her for her constant complaining. I couldn't find the place and soon it appeared that the directions were wrong. Sylvia thought she remembered where it was so I followed her advice and finally we arrived at the right location. When I told Sandy Sheine about the mistake in the directions she said "Oh, Yes. It says go 11.2 miles on Route 22. It should be 1.12. That decimal has been in the wrong place for three years! It strikes me as funnier now than it did on that beautiful day.

**A Moving Mushroom by Mike Arkins**

I was out hiking and, out of the corner of my eye, I see a mushroom that seems to be moving. Of course, when I look directly at it, it's motionless. I'm thinking, hmm, I would have felt an earth tremor. Then I see it start wobbling, and the top falls off, revealing the beetle that had just "harvested" the mushroom. The odds of being there right at that moment — amazing. I wonder whether an entomologist has ever witnessed this behavior.

**JOE BRANDT:** So for the umpteenth time, while preparing a new batch of boletes for cooking, I was once again faced with the age-old dilemma of peeling/not peeling the pores—and I thought: "What would Hamlet say?" I suppose it would have gone something like this:

To peel, or not to peel?

*That* is the question.

Whether 'tis nobler in the mouth to suffer  
 The slings and arrows of outrageous flavor,  
 Or to take knife against pore,  
 And by opposing, end them? To taste, to savor,  
 No more; and by tasting to say we end  
 The endless debate; and a thousand other questions  
 Form in our minds regarding it's consummation  
 Devoutly to be enjoyed. To savor, in a meal;  
 To eat, perchance for dinner— aye, there's the rub:  
 For in that myco-fantasy meal, what dreams may come,  
 When we have extra-virgined the olive oil,  
 Which must give us flavor— there's the respect  
 That makes no calamity of so fine a meal.  
 The judgment may be wrong,  
 Our eyes may deceive us,  
 The patient merit of sparing the blade,  
 When bugs may linger below the surface?  
 Shall we bare the flesh, cast off the pores?  
 But that the dread of something underneath  
 The undiscovered critters who may lurketh,  
 Absorbing quietly the fine-flavored oil,  
 No epicurean palate will solve the puzzle—  
 But the fear of that which lays concealed still  
 Consumed by others that we know not of?  
 Thus conscience does make cowards of us all,  
 And thus the native hue of resolution  
 Is weakened by the thought of what may be hiding  
 To leap, unbridled into our imagination,  
 And enterprises of great pith and moment,  
 With this regard these pores do linger,  
 And we lose the name of action. Soft you now,  
 The fair bolete! Heaven in my dinner!  
 Be all my meals remembered.

**Constance Robin Burkhardt in response to Dianna's request for a paragraph on a mushroomy topic for SI 'tout de suite.'**

*A fast reply?*

*Like with the overnight delivery speed of a bell shaped white mushroom,  
lustrous in its virginal gown -- tattered hem not withstanding --  
spurging up in a slug-ridden heap of garden refuse  
dumped next to the ash that Hurricane Floyd threw down?  
Upon my word, I cannot act so quickly.*

**PEANUT BUTTER HEN OF THE WOODS**

One of our favorite hen recipes is a slightly modified version of a "Wildman" Steve Brill recipe that he calls "Sesame Hen". His recipe calls for Tahini, which has a tendency to be slightly bitter, so we've substituted peanut butter (or almond butter) for the tahini, which we've had great success with. The modified version is Peanut Butter Hen, and it's really fairly simple:

3 Tbsp. of olive oil  
7 cups hen-of-the-woods mushrooms, sliced  
1 tsp. dried marjoram, crumbled  
1 tsp. dried oregano, crumbled  
1 tsp. dried mint, crumbled  
1/2 tsp. ground cumin  
1 tsp. fresh ground white pepper (or 1/2 tsp. hot pepper sauce, like Trader Joe's)  
4 cloves garlic, crushed into a paste (or very finely minced)  
1/4 cup fresh lemon juice  
2 tbsp. tamari soy sauce  
1/2 cup peanut butter, almond butter or a 50/50 mix

Heat the oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the mushrooms, marjoram, oregano, mint, cumin and pepper. Cook, stirring, for 5 minutes. Add the garlic, and cook, stirring, for another 5 minutes. Meanwhile, mix the lemon juice, tamari soy sauce and the peanut butter, and stir the mixture into the mushrooms. Reduce heat, and cook, covered, for another 10 minutes, stirring every few minutes.

May be kept (tightly covered) in the refrigerator for a few days. (Re-heat before serving.) This will also freeze well in heavy zip-lock bags.

One of the best ways to serve this is in small whole-wheat pitas that have been cut in half. (We've done on some COMA walks in the past)

*Linda Yannone, Sherman CT and Ithaca, NY*

**My mushroom story:**

Early in adulthood I was interested in mushrooms and all of-out-of-doors plants. I am a gardener/horticulturist by vocation.

In the late 1980's, early 1990's I joined COMA after finding out about it, I think through a class with Bill Bakaitis in Millbrook at the Institute for Ecosystem Studies.

I attended a few walks and a couple of forays with my family to Paul Smth's College in the Adirondacks and University of Maine at Orono.

In 1992, I then took SUNY Cortland's two-week, summer field mycology course in the Adirondacks with Dr. Tim Baroni.

Following that course I began attending Cornell's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences for a bachelor Science degree in plant sciences.

My academic advisor was from the plant pathology department, Dr. Phil Arneson. He asked what I really was interested in taking courses in and I said fungi. He recommended Dr. Korf's introduction to mycology course, as Dr. Korf would be retiring soon. PhD. Candidate, Kathy Hodges, (now Dr. Hodges) was a classmate of mine!

This was one of the last courses Dr. Korf taught. I thoroughly enjoyed this course. We would go out over hill and dale in the Finger Lakes region to collect fungi. Class was held in the evening to identify what was found and also have lectures. We attended the Peck Foray, too, as a group. I went on to take the advanced class in mycology, which was also with Dr. Korf, as well as other plant pathology classes, including George Hudler's Magical Mushrooms, Mischievous Molds class along with 300-400+ other students in attendance!

I was both overwhelmed with and loved the diversity and complexity of fungi. I continued my studies in graduate school and went on for degrees in teaching agriculture and horticulture. Overtime, I became more involved in production of horticultural and agricultural crops.

Although I took a good long break from studying mycology, I have recently rejoined COMA, while living here in western Connecticut. I found many new friends and acquaintances in our club and am enjoying the interactions. This season I joined a fungi CSA, (community supported agriculture) at the farmers market I go to on weekends. I am doing blue oyster cultivation there.

That's my story and I am sticking to it.

**Peter Russell**

One of my favourite sites for fungi lies in the sleepy village of Burghclere in England. Most tourists pass nearby on the way to Stonehenge, but very few stop to explore, even though the village lies sheltered behind the real Watership Down that inspired the famous bunny book; and it is only a stone's throw from Highclere Castle, the family seat of Lord Carnarvon of Tutankhamen fame. But if they took time to park by the Carpenter's Arms, and not get too distracted by prospect of Arkell's cask-conditioned ales straight from the barrel, and cross the road to the Sandham Memorial Chapel, they will discover both an artistic masterpiece, and at the right time of year, a mycological cornucopia.

Nothing about the building belies its attraction. It is a single story red bricked building that might pass for a small village school, and in autumn the caretaker usually has a stand and honesty box for the apples which drop from the trees on the surrounding lawns.

However, inside lies the masterpiece of one of the heroes of post-modern painting, Stanley Spencer. He is a highly sought after artist. One of his paintings sold this year for 5.4 million pounds. I am no connoisseur when it comes to art, and I find some of Stanley Spencer's religious painting unsettling, but to stand in the semi-dark of the chapel, in the middle of the sleepy countryside and look at the walls of this small chapel covered in murals that took five years to complete, commemorating the sacrifices of the first world war, is a provoking experience.

But that is not the main reason why I visit the chapel whenever I can; it is all the waxcaps and other old grassland species that form a riot of colours in autumn; and each visit usually brings a new discovery, another species that I had so far overlooked. If I had to choose one species, I guess the most conspicuous is the Crimson Waxcap (*Hygrocybe punicea*). I remember my first visit thinking from afar that the lawns were covered in fallen red apples. This is one of 'few' fungi I have found that looks identical to its American relative; and whilst I am tempted to say it is unmistakable, I confess I did not immediately identify it when I found it under the giant Redwood trees in California in March whilst looking for the Calypso Orchid.

But back to the memorial chapel; if there was one site in the South of England to go and look for old grassland fungi, I would suggest this should be on the list; and if it is the wrong time of year for fungi, there are always the murals, apples, bunnies, curse of the mummy, and fine ale!

Please send in your reservation forms for the annual dinner by Oct.22nd. It is in an attachment along with this issue, or it is an insert if you have a hard copy. It can also be downloaded from our website, [www.comafungi.org](http://www.comafungi.org).

**Membership** Please renew your membership in a timely fashion. See attachment or insert.  
**All membership renewals for 2012 are due now.** The form is also on our website.

**Please consider contributing to *Spores Illustrated*. Deadline for the winter issue is Dec. 15<sup>th</sup>. All articles, poems, cartoons relating to mushrooms will be greatly appreciated.**

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