

Potomac Sporophore



December 2007

Volume No. 22

Issue No. 4

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MAW DUES

MAW dues are paid each year in January. Send check to:

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Singles: \$20.00
Households \$30.00.

PLEASE NOTE:

The first meeting in January will take place on JANUARY 8th at the Chevy Chase library.

Programs

Jan. 8, 2008- Leon Shernoff, editor of *Mushroom: The Journal of Wild Mushrooming*, will speak on the "Diversity of Eastern Boletes."

Feb. 5, 2008- David Rose will speak on the "History of Mycology."

March 4, 2008-Francis Hueber will speak on "Humongous Fungus."

These programs will take place at the Chevy Chase library on Connecticut Ave.

MEETING

The final MAW meeting for season 2007 took place at the Chevy Chase Library on December 5th. The nominations for the officers and board members which were presented at the November meeting by the nominating committee were voted on at the meeting. No additional nominations were made. Nine of the ten members who are presently serving agreed to be nominated again and were elected to serve for the 2008 year.

Due to work commitments, Ajit Gadre will not be serving again after being the MAW treasurer for three years. Ajit did a splendid job during his tenure as treasurer and the club thanks him. The new treasurer is William Drehmann. Congratulations, William.

After the vote the members enjoyed snacks and discussed the past mushroom year. Most agreed that it was a disaster. We started the year with a visit with Gary Lincoff during the morel season, which was moderately successful, and after that it was downhill. There is always someone, though, who finds some mushrooms, somewhere, during a rainless year. Waldemar found 10 pounds of chanterelles (he really weighs them) and Ray was lucky with pink bottoms (*Agaricus campestris*). And Bill, our new

treasurer, found 200-300 wine caps (*Stropharia rugosoannulata*). And Bruce, on his NAMA foray, found, to his great delight, the rare *Austroboletus betula*. But, perhaps the best news was that Ray brought in a fairly large hen of the woods- I didn't know that a hen could be found in December.

Bruce, (NAMA rep) reported that a Clemson University professor is interested in surveying mushroom club members across America about their interest in mushrooms. The board is supporting this and will have more information about it soon.

The 2007 MAW Mushroom Fair

MAW has produced six mushroom fairs and each one took place on a sunny day. This year we had another beauty. The mushrooms that the members found for display were not as numerous as in previous years because of the lack of rain but the public did not seem to notice. Less people came to the fair than the mythical norm (about 500 came into the building). No one knows why fewer people came but some said it was due to the Redskins' game (are they winning again?) and others said that the Harvest Festival, which was held near-by, was extended to Sunday this year and it featured quite a few family-oriented activities.

Personally, I enjoyed this fair more than the others. I just felt good about it, probably because of all the generous and dedicated work by the MAW members.

Ray LaSala and Gordon Callahan cooked continually and made great

dishes with the mushrooms that Phillips Mushroom Farms provided and which were brought down from Kennett Square by Waldemar Poppe.



Ray and Gordon getting ready for cooking

Our new membership chairperson, Connie Durnan, handled the membership table all afternoon, after preparing a banner and name tags and other helpful material for her station and she managed the auction as though she had been doing it for years. Connie will coordinate the fair next year. She was assisted for most of the afternoon by Mike Lewandowski.

Daniel Barizo, the VP, had two splendid banners made by people in his homeland- colorful ones with a large image of a cluster mushroom (what was the name of that mushroom?).

He had one hung at the entrance gate and the other, which was maybe 6 feet across and 8 feet long was hung near the station where Waldemar had his table in past years. The public had a good view of it from outside the hall (actually we tried several places but that was the only space that could accommodate it because of its size. And it turned out to be the best spot).

William Needham and Jon Ellifritz presented lecture/slide programs. William spoke on trees and their relationship with mushrooms and Jon spoke on medicinal and edible mushrooms. They both had a good turnout. Jon has given a presentation each year that MAW has had a fair and William gave a lecture last year.

The forays were surprisingly successful. Bruce Boyer said last year that the people on his foray wanted to continue after the scheduled hour was up so there was no time limit for the forays this year. Because of the drought, I was wondering if a foray would even be held but off Bruce went with his group and he came back with a basket of mushrooms. And Mitch Fournet led the second foray with another group and had pretty much the same experience.

Amy Rossman represented the Department of Agriculture and had a very interesting display. She brought a microscope and many people took a peep at her slides of mushroom spores.

Fred Seymour brought his library, booklet and newsletter display, as he did last year. Fred enjoys meeting people and bringing information about mushrooms and talking about mushrooms with the folks.

We had the Hardscrabble exhibit and book display with Paul Goland. Paul's stand is always popular. He showed his logs inoculated with spores and had all the books and other sundries that he has had in the past.

Loretta Chi, who supervised the October tasting, bought the food for the MAW volunteers and the ingredients used for the mushrooms that Ray and Gordon cooked and she helped Connie at the membership table. Loretta, thankfully, also looked after the kitchen for us.

Many of our members were at the display identifying and informing the public about mushrooms. This is MAW's principle mission: to teach the public about mushrooms. Most of the members mentioned above took a turn at the mushroom tables. Jerry Burton summed up his experience by saying how much he enjoyed talking to the children about mushrooms. The children at the fair is something I hadn't thought of-I tended to think of them as kids more interested in playing tag, but Jerry put a new light on the kids for me.



Bruce, Jon and Mitch at the mushroom display table

Maria Dobrowolsky again looked after the children's room for the sixth time and said that she had a good experience. She especially liked showing a little girl with a keen interest in mushrooms the various displays

Evelyn and Paul Jemionck took much of the responsibility for

cleaning up the hall after the fair and were aided by many MAW members.

So we had another great fair- one that that we enjoyed and one that will make next year's fair something to look forward to. J.S.

NAMA '07 - Orson K. Miller, Jr. Memorial Foray

This, the 47th Annual NAMA Foray, was held at the Pipestem State Resort a few miles south of Hinton, West Virginia, August 15 through 19, 2007. The Board of Trustees Meeting kicked off the event and was held in the Mountain Creek Lodge, nestled at the bottom of the Bluestone Canyon and accessible only by a 3000' aerial tram. It was a spectacularly scenic ride that included views of the river gorge, and Appalachian Mountain vistas, Indian caves and a prohibition era still.

The Trustees agreed that NAMA is in good fiscal shape- last year was underspent by about \$3500 on a budget of \$59,570. The trustees approved a FY 07-08 budget of \$61,650. There are 1108 current members, and 72 affiliated clubs, including MAW, and 35 unaffiliated clubs.

The major item of discussion was a recommendation by publications editor, Britt Bunyard, that NAMA publish two editions of *McIlvania* and only four issues of *Mycophile* in the following year. The budget would be about the same. After much heated discussion, it was decided to continue publishing one *McIlvania* and six issues of *Mycophile* annually.

The highlight of the opening session on Thursday evening was a series of comments in memory of Orson Miller from many of his friends and graduate students. Orson was a longtime friend of MAW and gave us several presentations during his long tenure at Virginia Tech.

The program included 15 half-day or full-day forays Thursday through Saturday and 17 presentations or workshops Friday and Saturday. Although mid-Atlantic drought conditions were not favorable and local temperatures exceeded 100 deg. F, many of the forays were successful with edibles and NAMA, State or local record finds. The walkthrough the tables on Sunday revealed more than 300 species compiled.

Chief Mycologist, Bill Roody, reported a final total of 320 species, with 22 being WV state records. Three of these were larger fungi, "one new bolete, *Leccinum rotundifoliae*, and two species of *Amanita* (*A. pachysperma* and *A. pseudoceceliae*). I suspect that many WV collections recorded as *A. cecelia* are probably *A. pseudoceceliae*, if indeed this is a distinct species" Roody reported.

More than 20 current and former MAW members attended the Foray. There were about 200 total registrants.

The NAMA foray for 2008 will take place at McCall, Idaho from September 18-21 and will be sponsored by SYMA.



The Sequanaota Experience

The New England poet might have said “What is so rare as a day in September,” if he had attended the Sequanaota foray this year.

The perfectly blue sky with an air temperature of 70 degrees, no wind and the sun’s rays lighting up the green tree leaves-it was a delight.

And the first foray on Saturday filled the four display tables with mushrooms. There was plenty of work for those members who try to identify the mushrooms. I never paid much attention to the work that is done by the members who identify and label the mushrooms found at forays.

I just let the knowledgeable members take care of that task. But this year I saw how much effort is involved in this task-it is not automatic.



Intensity



Pontification

There is usually about 1/4 of the mushrooms that put the identifiers through the hoops: consulting a guide, then another one, then consulting with each other, then not agreeing, back to a guide, more discussion and then, perhaps, in the end, no decision. There are always some mushrooms that no one has seen before and can’t identify.



Connie and Barbara

Jon Ellifritz usually does this work and this year he was helped by our guest mycologist, Bill Russell, along with Bruce Boyer, Mitch and John Plischke



Jon and Bill consulting

Saturday evening Bill Russell spoke to our group. Bill likes to find a way of cooking a mushroom so that it tastes as good as it can. I believe he said that he has been trying to make the bitter bolete into a tasty dish.

According to Bill, the technique used in cooking a mushroom makes up about 80% of the success of a mushroom dish. It’s not just a matter of olive oil and butter.

I have noticed that this attention to the precise details of cooking mushrooms seems to be an activity that is particularly a male interest- almost an obsession- trying to perfect the taste of the mushroom dish. All of the MAW presidents that I have known have been and are very precise about how they cook their mushrooms – all but one: male.

Bill also observed that the oyster mushroom has migrated north from the area where he has found it in the past. I don’t know what this means in terms of my experience with the oyster mushroom. I have found very little of it this year but I assume that that is because of the drought. Next year, and perhaps even this year, I expect to find the oyster mushroom in those well-established places that I have so persistently described in other articles.

Another story of Bill’s concerned a mountain town in Pennsylvania where its people find masses of *Latarius volemus* each year. This mushroom, which has a terrible fishy odor, is a prized mushroom that is popularly called “milky.”

The people of the town have a great time looking for this mushroom each year and comparing their findings with each other.

Bill noted that sometimes he has found masses of a choice mushroom in one spot, and then never found them in that spot again. This is the mystery of mushrooms: Why here and why now, or perhaps, why aren't they here now.

The only obvious fact is that if there is no rain there are no mushrooms and from what I have seen this year that applies not only to field mushrooms, but also, to mushrooms that grow on wood. It is now December and I don't see any pleurotus and have seen very little hen of the woods or chicken mushrooms.

There is only one fungus that has the temerity to show itself in great numbers and on those logs where I look for the pleurotus and it's one of the ugly ones- the tremetes elegans. Is it mocking me? J.S.



Trametes elagans T. Volk

Thanks to William Needham and to Derya Slivka for their help with the newsletter and to Mitch Fournet, Bruce Boyer, Jon Ellifritz and Dan Barizo.

At our November meeting Dr. John Jemionek spoke about mushroom poisoning and the chemicals that cause the poisonings. He said that of the 5000 mushrooms that grow in America, twelve are deadly. Lots more make us sick and usually the sickness involves the gastrointestinal track.

The deadly mushrooms are mostly in the amanita and galerina families. Both have the same deadly amatoxin. Eating mushrooms of these families can lead to the destruction of the liver cells and clogging of the kidney. Death can occur in 6 to 12 days if treatment is not given soon after the ingestion of these mushrooms.

The death cap (*Amanita phalloides*) causes most of the deaths but a number of others in the amanita family are deadly. A Roman Emperor, a pope and a king have been poisoned by the death cap.

The *Galerina autumnalis* has the same toxin and also causes death. Other deadly mushrooms are the *Cortinarius rubellus* and the *C. orellanus*, both have a toxin which attacks the kidney: orellanine.

There are four types of poisoning from mushrooms: (1). Deadly, (2). Gastrointestinal, (3) Neurotoxin e.g. hallucinogens and (4) mushrooms when taken with alcohol. J.S.

Autumn Leaves

Because of the dry weather it was expected that the fall colors this year would be below average. But

this was not so. In our area the colors of the leaves were spectacular.

The maples were up to their usual beauty- displaying a range of hues between yellow and red and even the Bradford pears had variety in their colors, instead of just that dull red that they usually display. Of course the sycamores gave little and the tulip poplars seemed to disappear fast, and the hickories were good if you like their mustard yellow color, but the star of this fall was the oaks. It was their red which made the season such a success. The scarlet oak was more scarlet than usual and the white oak was more russet. Each day for maybe two weeks we were thrilled by these colors and it all happened in November. J.S.

The Chicken and the Hen

The chicken and the hen are two of the fungi that we all look forward to finding each year. Both are polypores that are choice, easy to identify and usually plentiful. The chicken is much more colorful and easier to spot in a drive-by foray.

Both grow around oaks and both grow at both living and dead trees, though hens do not grow on top of logs, as chicken often does. One can find both a chicken and a hen growing on the same tree in the same month, but rarely.

Though both fungi are choice, the chicken seems to have more detractors because of allergic and texture problems.

The hen is more likely to appear
on the same tree the following
year than is the chicken on its tree.

The chicken is found in the spring
and the summer, but the hen is
found in the fall.

The hen is more medicinal.
Both are saprophytes but the
chicken eats the cell's cellulose
(brown rot) while the hen eats its
lignin (white rot). J.S.

SONGS TO THE MUSHROOM

Oh Virosa, my Virosa
So tall and stately white.
A joy it is to see you there,
Despite your deadly bite.

Oh, Russula, my Russula
Who has knocked you down?
Who has taken such a bite,
And left you to be found?

Oh Grifola, my Grifola
You'r so hard to clean.
I scrape away all that waste,
It makes you very lean.

Oh Edulis, my Edulis
In every land you'r chased.
You'r called the king and all do
sing
Of your very noble taste.

Oh Sulphureus, my
Sulphureus
On a log you perch.
If I knew where and I knew when
I'd leave now for the search.

Oh, Chanterelle, my
Chanterelle,
Where have you been this year?
Someone must have found you,
Perhaps it was the deer.

Oh, mushroom, lowly
mushroom,
Disregarded by most folk,
Though some do seek you for your
taste
And know you aid the mighty oak.
J. Sherry



The Potomac Sporophore is published by the Mycological Association of Washington, Inc. (MAW) four times a year.