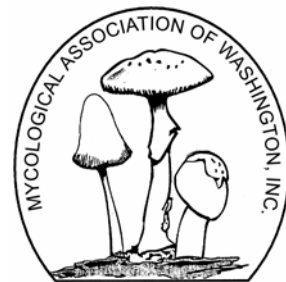


# Potomac Sporophore



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Next meeting: ext. 33  
For forays: ext. 55

## MAW DUES

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

Connie Durnan  
Membership Chair  
4509 Windom Place, NW  
Washington, DC, 20016

Singles: \$20.00  
Households: \$30.00.

**NOTE:** MAW'S policy is that a member should not pick mushrooms at a site that has been scheduled for a MAW foray for a period of seven days prior to the scheduled date of the foray.

## Club Meetings

Our monthly club meetings will have a change of venue starting in July of this year. The July meeting will be held at the Davis Library, located on 6400 Democracy Blvd in Bethesda, MD.

The August meeting will be at the Silver Spring Library at 8901 Colesville Rd. Silver Spring, MD.

The September meeting and the meetings for the rest of 2008 will be held at the Davis library.

To revue:

All meetings will take place at the Davis Library except for the August meeting, which will be at the Silver Spring Library.

## FORAYS

Good Day all,

We are off to a good start with the rains; though, they are quick and hard as opposed to slow and steady. I can't complain compared to last year. Haven't been able to get out much but have seen plenty of mushrooms in the urban environment, including the Green Spored Lepiota, *Chlorophyllum molybdites*, which can look very much like the parasol mushroom, *Macrolepiota procera*, so be careful. See you out there some time. Mitch

**The forays:**

**June 29<sup>th</sup>: Lake Bernard Frank- Rockville, MD**

**July 12<sup>th</sup>: Little Bennett Regional Park- Clarksburg, MD**

**July 20<sup>th</sup>: Greenbelt Park- Greenbelt, MD**

**Aug. 3<sup>rd</sup>: Cosca Regional Park- Clinton, MD**

**This is a tentative schedule and may change at will. For e-mail updates email [forays@mawdc.org](mailto:forays@mawdc.org) and ask to be put on the list. Or try the message line at 301-907-3053 box #55**

### **Programs**

**July 1. - Jon Ellifritz, former president of MAW, will present a slide lecture on mushrooms. Jon gives comprehensive descriptions on all the mushrooms in his extensive slide collection and is extremely good with questions. At the Davis Library.**

**August 5. - Mushroom Identification. We will sit at tables and learn how to identify mushrooms using field guide keys. At Silver Spring Library.**

**September 2. - Drew Minnis from the Greenbelt Agricultural Research Center will present a talk on the Pluteus mushroom.**

### **Other Mushroom Events**

#### **SEQUANOTA**

**Each year our club travels to a camp site called Sequanota, which is located in the Laurel Highlands of western Pennsylvania, for a foray. This year we are meeting there on September 5-7.**

**We stay for two nights (Friday and Saturday) in rooms with private baths and are served five meals, including lunch on Sunday. Friday night, members bring snacks. The price for the week-end is about \$100.00 per person, but with the rise in food prices this price cannot be guaranteed.**

**The main focus is on collecting and identifying fungi. We usually find between 150 and 300 fungi species.**

**We will engage a speaker who will aid our staff in identifying our findings. We hope to find lots of edibles, which will be cooked up by Chef Jon Ellifritz. Get in touch with Jon for reservations.**

### **Other Forays**

**1. The Seventh Annual Gary Lincoff Mid-Atlantic**

**Mushroom Foray- Saturday, Sept. 20.**

**This all-day foray is sponsored by the Western Pennsylvania Mushroom Club. Jon Ellifritz will there to lead the group. Contact John Stuart at 724-443-6878**

**2. The North American Mycological Association (NAMA) will host its annual foray at McCall, Idaho- September 4-7. This is an opportunity to hunt mushrooms in the American West, where the mushroom species may be 60 to 80 per cent different from those we find east of the Rockies. See: [www.namyc.org](http://www.namyc.org) or speak with Bruce Boyer.**

**3. Telluride Mushroom Festival August 20-24. This is a popular annual festival that is held each year in Colorado and is an opportunity to hunt mushrooms in the Rockies.**

**4. NEMF Foray- the Northeastern Mycological Foray will be at Connecticut College in New London, CT (July 31-August 3) This is the 32<sup>nd</sup> foray of NEMF-a foray that is not sponsored by a particular club but held each year in a different northeastern U.S. area. Speakers from all over the world are likely to attend. See**

**NEMF for an application.**

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## **The Spring Tasting**

**Jim Sherry**

**The Spring Tasting took place on May 6<sup>th</sup> at the Chevy Chase library and was a great success. About 60 people came- many brought mushroom dishes and many others became new members.**

**The dishes that I sampled seemed to be even more delicious than usual and the people that I spoke with were equally impressed with the rich variety of dishes at this tasting.**

**This event was a wild-food tasting and so some participants brought dishes whose main ingredient was not a mushroom: there was a ramp soup and there was a stinging nettle pate, which Maria especially liked and a wild-weed salad which might have contained two weeds but since no one was certain of their identity, the weeds were not placed in the salad, though the preparer said that he eats each of them regularly.**

**Chrystius and Jim Burris shared their wild-ramp soup recipe :**

## **Wild Ramp Soup**

**6 medium potatoes  
2 onions  
1 c. of cooked ham  
2 tsp. salt  
½ tsp. pepper  
2 c. milk  
3 tbs. flour  
1-2 cps fresh ramps**

- 1. Peel and dice potatoes and onions; cook with three cups of water, diced ham, salt and pepper.**
- 2. Cook until potatoes are done.**
- 3. Add 1 to 2 cups ramps to hot base (both tops and bottoms of ramps).**
- 4. Add 2 cups milk, plus 3 tbs. flour (blend): bring just to boiling point.**
- 5. Serve hot with a small pat of margarine in each bowl.**

**Wild ramps grow in the DC area. We transferred some to our back yard three years ago and in some number of years we should have quite a few. Their shoots come up in May.**

**Right-top- Bonnie Johnson and Daniel Barizo and his wife holding the prizes that each won when each's food preparation was voted as the most liked by the members at the May Wild-Food Tasting.**



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**Below: Fred Seymour on the right busy serving his popular dish at the May Tasting.**



**Below-Mitch and Guests**



## **The Button Mushroom**

**Jim Sherry**

**TV'S chef Jacques Pepin and MAW'S Jerry Burton have at least one thing in common: they both like the button mushroom.**

**Although one rarely hears the button mushroom (Agaricus bisporus) mentioned in mushroom clubs it is the mushroom most consumed by Americans and Europeans.**

**Recently I separately cooked the button, the shiitake and the pleurotus mushroom with a small sirloin steak and tasted each, blindfolded. The shiitake had a better finish but otherwise there was little difference among the mushrooms, for me.**

**The button mushroom was first mushroom cultivated in the West- by the French in the 1700's. Farmers would find clusters of these mushrooms in their fields and transplant them to a bed of manure, sometimes in caves. This was an uncertain procedure and often the mushrooms became contaminated.**

**I am told that when Marie Antionette said, if she did say, " Qu'ils**

**mangent de la brioche" she may have been referring to the wild beds of this mushroom which were growing from the manure deposited by farm horses. History, though, has alternative explanations of her famous remark.**

**In 1893, scientists at the Louis Pasteur Institute developed a method of growing the button in a pure culture and a few years later farmers in southeast Pennsylvania began producing the button mushroom as a profitable commercial enterprise.**

**In 1945, a G.I. returned from the war and built beds for mushrooms in his father's rambling 18<sup>th</sup> century farmhouse, which was located across from my home. I used to visit him. He was trying to grow the button mushroom in an attached barn.**

**At one time the button mushroom was brown like the crimini mushroom, but in 1926, a Pennsylvania farmer found a cluster of buttons that had mutated to a white color and that was the beginning of the white button mushroom.**

**The crimini and the portobello mushrooms are of the same species as the button; the portobollo is a crimini that has been allowed to grow another 48 to 96 hours. The portobello was first introduced into the commercial market in the**

**1980's. Apparently prior to that time they were not thought to be commercially profitable.**

**Don't look for much information about the button mushroom in your field guides-it's mentioned but not fully described. I don't think it's found often in the U.S. except on composts.**

**At one time the French grew the bulk of button mushrooms: after WW II the US took the lead but today the Chinese are the leaders in the production of the button mushroom.**

## **The Agaricus Mushroom**

**Jim Sherry**

**The agaricus mushroom is a secondary decomposer (saprobe) which means that after primary decomposers (other fungi and bacteria) consume the food in its substrate (dead organic debris) the substrate is left in a state that can be consumed by the secondary decomposers.**

**Agarici mushrooms have a partial veil which leaves a ring on their stems and pink or light colored gills which darken as they age. The gills don't touch the stem and produce chocolate-brown spores. Most grow in fields and on lawns and pastures from summer through fall.**

There are a number of wild edible agarici that are found in the DC area. The *Agaricus campestris* or meadow mushroom is a close cousin of the button mushroom. Some refer to it as “pink bottom” because its gills are more pink than other agarici. It has a more intense flavor than the button mushroom and grows from summer to fall in chalky soils and on lawns. Its flesh bruises pink and it dries well. Maggots like it.



 Agaricus Campestris  
From Mycoweb.com

Another favorite agaricus is the horse agaricus (*Agaricus arvensis*). Its cap can grow as large as a dinner plate and can be found on horse and cow pastures and in lime soil. It has some yellow on its cap but it doesn't stain yellow; its gills are white to dark brown. It also has an intense flavor, but it doesn't seem to be found very often in the DC area. It is often said that one can

mistake an agaricus for an amanita because when the agaricus starts growing it can look like an amanita volva, as can be seen in the horse mushroom pictured on the right.



Can you find Connie's Morel

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

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The Horse Mushroom  
(unopened)  
From English Country Garden

A third wild agaricus that one might find in the DC area is the *Agaricus silvaticus*, which can be recognized by its cap's reddish center, especially as it ages. It dries well and is found often in conifer woods.

There are close to 300 species of agaricus; some are choice and others are poisonous. The edible ones smell pleasant, often with a scent of anise. The poisonous ones smell of phenol

and may taste metallic. Like boletus and russula, it is not easy to distinguish among the various species of agarici.

Some people find agaricus; others don't. There does not seem to be a lot of them in the DC area, but one can always get lucky or as someone once said; "it's all serendipitous."

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### A New Magazine

A new mushroom magazine has just been published-it's called *Fungi* and will be issued four times a year, along with a special fifth issue. Many of the people working with the magazine are known to members of MAW and also have long associations with NAMA (North American Mycological Association).

John Plischke, III is a member of MAW and has received many awards for his photographs of mushrooms. He has an article in the first issue of *Fungi* on photographing fungi using an umbrella as a means of light control.

The editor of *Fungi*, Britt Bunyard, is also the editor of NAMA'S *Mycophile*.

Britt states that "Each issue of *Fungi* will explore the world of mycology from many different angles. Regular features, ranging from Toxicology to Medicinal Mushrooms to Photography, will inform and entertain everyone from beginner to professional mycologist." J.S.

USA residents can order an annual subscription of *Fungi* for \$35.00 at:

FUNGI  
P.O. Box B  
1925 Hwy 175  
Richfield, Wisconsin, 53076.  
[www.fungimag.com](http://www.fungimag.com)

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### What's in a Name

Jim Sherry

The name of MAW's newsletter, *Potomac Sporophore*, was once the *Capital Mushroomer* and was changed by a former editor-perhaps to have a more scientific name or even a more accurate one.

A sporophore is an organism that bears spores. Synonyms for sporophore are: carpophore, sporocarp and fruiting body.

The word "sporophore" is not as popular with mycologists as is "fruiting body, which seems to be replacing the word "mushroom."

The word "mushroom,"

which is a fruiting body, is not popular with mycologists because it suggests a fungus with a cap and a stem and many fungi have shapes other than a cap and a stem. In fact, the five choice fungi that you are likely to find in the MAW hunting area and which are very popular with MAW members do not have a typical cap and a stem. I am referring to the morel, the chanterelle, the chicken mushroom, the hen of the woods and the pleurotus- the pleurotus comes close.

But even though mycologists have a technical problem with the word "mushroom" you cannot kill it off. There are no "fruiting body" clubs and it would be somewhat awkward to ask the produce manager at the local Giant Supermarket if he has any fresh fruiting bodies. "Mushroom" as a word just pops out when one is not careful. We all grew up using it and it is almost as easy to say as "mother."

Fruiting body refers to the fact that it is the reproductive part of the fungus, i.e. it produces the spores, which float around and which may eventually land on a receptive substrate and hook up with another germinating spore to begin a new mycelium

Fruiting bodies are often

compared to apples because like apples, fruiting bodies produce the seeds (spores) which carry on the life of the fungus, but biologists do not refer to apples as fruiting bodies but just “fruit.” - the phrase “fruiting body” always refers to a fungus or, if I may, to a mushroom.

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### Using Hen of the Woods as a Medicine

Jim Sherry

The government, under the influence of the scientific community, got it very wrong. It sponsored the low-fat diet for years and now lots of us are too fat. It is estimated that the number of obese Americans has doubled since the 1970'S .

The government was trying to help our heart by reducing cholesterol but it didn't realize that eating carbohydrates (rich desserts and simple starches) instead of fat produces too much insulin and insulin causes the body to store fat.

Insulin converts our carbohydrates into glucose, which is used by the body for energy; extra glucose is stored as glycogen but if the glycogen is not converted

back into glucose, it very soon is turned by the body into adipose tissue or body fat.

I used to joke that I was overweight because I ate too much non-fat food but it turns out that the joke was true.

Our speaker for April, Dr. Harry Preuss of Georgetown University, is studying maitake or hen of the woods (*Grifola frondosa*) to determine its effect in reducing glucose levels.

In addition to exercise for his own health (he tries to take about 15,000 steps a day, steps which are counted by a device strapped to his belt) he is attempting to show that maitake can reduce both sugar in the blood (glucose levels) and insulin levels- its important to reduce both and it's healthier to use a natural food like hen than to take the drugs which the typical physician is likely to prescribe for high glucose.

Dr Preuss said that his aim is for a program that helps us to lose fat, not just weight because weight-loss could indicate muscle loss only.

Dr. Preuss administered Fraction X, which he obtained from hen of the woods ( he prefers to call it maitake) to mice and found that Fraction X significantly lowered both circulating glucose and insulin concentrations in mice.

We have all noticed that as people grow older they get

“heavy.” This may be related to a syndrome called, “insulin resistance.” As we age, the body cells do not let insulin do its work so the pancreas secretes more insulin to get the glucose into the cells-this additional insulin can lead to Type II diabetes.

So, in addition to the obesity that we have from eating too many carbohydrates, we are experiencing an epidemic of both pre-diabetes and diabetes.

Maitake can be eaten fresh, as a tea, in capsule form or as an extract. Fraction X can be bought.



Mitch and a Morel

At the Watkins Regional Park Morel Foray

