

Spores Illustrated

Spring 2014

Spores Illustrated is the newsletter of COMA, the Connecticut-Westchester Mycological Association.

35th ROGERSON FORAY CLOSES CAMP HEMLOCKS ON A POSITIVE NOTE

In October 2013, Easter Seals Camp Hemlocks announced that it was closing its doors for good. Camp Hemlocks served as the venue for multiple Rogerson forays; it was chosen in part because of its proximity to several beautiful and productive parks, its affordable rates, and helpful staff. Past participants will surely have their own fond memories of the site such as –watching the pick-up basketball games between Wanda and Don, visiting the laccarias growing in the drip line of the building or the parasols near the parking area, and sitting in the lobby and watching the day's finds come in.

COMA's 35th Rogerson Foray in September ended up being one of the last large events held at the facility. We are pleased that we could give our farewell to the place in a positive way, even though we didn't realize it at the time. The foray was another success thanks to the many, many people who devoted their time and effort planning, cooking, sorting, collecting, recording, and identifying. The workshops and lectures were entertaining and informative, the potluck and mycophagy were delicious, and the company was great. Despite the dry weather preceding the event, we still managed to collect a sizable variety of mushrooms that will once again total over 300 species.

The mycological team of Gary Lincoff, Roz Lowen, Leon Shernoff, John Plischke III, and Bill Yule worked efficiently to identify the collections, while still spending time to help others with their tricky specimens. In fact, this team will be returning for the 36th Rogerson Foray with the addition of author and mycologist Larry Millman (see a review of his most recent book in this issue). – *Taro letaka*



Death Cap Redux

This issue's cover mushroom is the Death Cap, *Amanita phalloides*. For the second consecutive year, COMA member Steve Rock found it growing in Pawling, NY (Dutchess County) in October. Learn to recognize this one as it won't be the last one seen by COMA members (unless it is eaten, in which case it *will* be the last mushroom seen). Photo by Steve Rock.

Announcement

Sylvia Stein Scholarship Created

Have you been a member of COMA for at least one year? Have you wondered how you can increase your knowledge of mycology? Have you dreamed of attending a mycological workshop or foray but are short on funds to support your interest? COMA is here to help!

The COMA Sylvia Stein Scholarship for financial support of an applicant wishing to advance and share their knowledge of mycology by attending a mycology-related educational event is now available. For guidelines and an application, visit: www.comafungi.org/docs/scholarship.pdf

The scholarship program honors Sylvia Stein, a founding member of COMA. Sylvia was an amateur naturalist, mycologist and educator. She was an inspiring teacher, frequent lecturer on mushroom identification, and recipient of the NAMA Harry and Elsie Knighton Service Award for her lifelong contributions to amateur mycology.

So where do you find mycology-related educational events? Certainly start with our own club. We sponsor two such events: Mushroom University and the Clark Rogerson Foray. Information on these can be found on the COMA website at: www.comafungi.org. Check out *FUNGI Magazine* and *Mushroom the Journal* for announcements of events, workshops and forays. Another resource is the Eagle Hill Institute in Steuben, Maine. This summer, they are offering a course on "Mushroom Identification for New Mycophiles." See <http://www.eaglehill.us>. Finally, browse the web to see what other websites devoted to mushrooming are publicizing.

It is our intention that this scholarship program will stimulate further interest and study in the amazing world of fungi. We are hopeful that recipients will share their knowledge with club members and we ask them to provide at least one service to COMA in return for receiving a scholarship, such as leading a workshop, participating in mushroom identification walks and/or preparing mushroom education materials.

Scholarships will be reviewed and awarded on an ongoing basis as applications are received. The 2014 Sylvia Stein Scholarship fund is limited. We hope to hear from those interested soon!

UPCOMING COMA PROGRAMS

Tuesday, April 8; 7:30pm

What's a Bug Got to Do With It? Hexapod life within the fungus among us, Britt Bunyard

We've all seen them. Many among us loathe them: mushroom-eating maggots. No matter your feelings about them, you have certainly been curious — at least a little — to what those little buggers will turn into as adults. Come find out! This presentation is for general audiences with no prior knowledge of mushrooms or insects. We will discuss how many invertebrates have evolved with fungi, take an in-depth look at mushroom-feeding flies, and see some dazzling images of mushrooms (and bugs).

Tuesday, May 6; 7:30pm

The Wood-Wide Web -Mushrooms and Plants - Connecting the Dots, Gary Lincoff

Our mushrooms are far more intimately connected with our trees, shrubs and wildflowers than anyone imagined a few decades back. We all knew there were underground connections, but not how extensive they are and how interconnected it all seems to be. Now we're learning how important mushrooms are for maintaining healthy woodland soils. Our interest in mushrooms puts us in the best possible place for appreciating all these unfolding wonders.

COMA programs are held at the Friends Meeting House in Purchase, NY (Route 120 near intersection of E. Lake Street).

*Announcement***Rena Wertzner Says Goodbye to Spores Illustrated, Hello to Programming and Scholarships**

This issue marks the first of Spores Illustrated in a decade that Rena Wertzner has not edited. Taking on her role has required Mike Arkins to edit copy, Taro Ietaka to do layout, and the contributions of many other people, especially Dianna Smith for written and visual content. It takes a lot of us to do the work of one Rena! All COMA members will be happy to know that Rena is continuing to play an important and active role in the club as a member of both the Scholarship and Program Committees. Rena will also continue to write for Spores Illustrated. Thanks Rena!

Honorary Membership Given to Ida Kreingold

Ida and Sam Kreingold were very devoted members of COMA for many years. Sam was always interested in the biological sciences, although his college studies were interrupted by World War II. He was the owner of a successful business but continued his studies of the natural sciences at the New York Botanical Garden. It was there that he enrolled in a class to study fungi, probably taught by Dr. Sam Ristich. He then joined COMA with his wife, Ida. Sam studied fungi in depth while Ida enjoyed the camaraderie of our interesting members. As I recall, Ida was a high school librarian. When we needed a new treasurer, Ida offered to do the job. She remained in that position for many years, until Don Shernoff succeeded her. Sam and Ida lived in Queens but attended most of the COMA meetings, walks and our annual foray. After Sam died, Ida was as devoted as ever to COMA and attended all our events until she could no longer drive to them from Queens.

Sam and Ida were generous benefactors of the New York Botanical Garden for many years. After Sam died, Ida donated money to the NYBG for a bench in the garden with Sam's name on it. Perhaps you sat on it during a visit.

Ida is 90 years old now and COMA Board members voted to give Ida an honorary lifetime membership in appreciation of her dedication to COMA.

*Announcement
by Sandy Sheine,
past president*

Greetings COMA members! Just in case you haven't heard, our **36th Clark Rogerson Foray** will have a new Venue: Berkshire Hills - Camp Eisenberg, in Copake, NY. The facility itself is nothing short of spectacular. The amenities include private air-conditioned rooms (each with their own bathroom & shower), heated outdoor swimming pool, tennis courts, basketball courts (indoor & outdoor), air-conditioned (and well-lit) display and meeting rooms, a spacious and modern air-conditioned dining room— and that's not the half of it! The camp sits on 600 acres of private property (including an enormous lake), surrounded by lush woodlands that boast a wide array of parks for your foraging delight! With the lineup of mycological experts and culinary delights we have in store for attendees, this will be the event of the year, and registration will be first-come, first serve for COMA members. – *Joe Brandt*

What to Call These Morels?
by Dianna Smith,
past president

There are at least 20 or so different species of morels in North America. Prior to 2012, we tended to call them by their common names, or we used the well-known binomial names established by European mycologists. With DNA analysis, it has been shown that there are roughly four or five species of morels common to our region in the Northeast, and they are genetically different from the European versions. I will try to help you figure out what species we have and the current terminology we should consider using for what we find. (Of course, calling them by their common names won't offend the mushrooms themselves). Our various morel species are addressed below in the order in which they tend to appear in the spring.

Formerly known as *Morchella elata*, the black morel or *Morchella angusticeps* (Peck) has a conical or subconical cap and exhibits dark, vertically arranged ridges and paler pits. The cap barely overhangs the granular stalk to which it is attached. *Morchella angusticeps* is typically the first of the four or five main eastern morels to appear in the spring. Like all morels, and unlike the brown to reddish-brown gyromitras, which have a "stuffed" interior, *Morchella angusticeps* is hollow. It is found growing solitary or grouped under several different species of hardwood and conifer trees, including tulip poplars, pines, oaks and others.



Morchella angusticeps by Dianna Smith

Morchella punctipes (Peck), formerly known as *Morchella semilibera* or the half-free morel, is found growing scattered about or solitary under a variety of

hardwoods from the Great Plains eastward. The

name was recently changed because it was discovered that *Morchella semilibera* is a European species genetically different from our half-free morel. Like our black morel, it tends to appear earlier in the season than the yellow morels. It has a relatively small cap compared with other morels and a comparatively long, thin stipe. About halfway up, the cap is attached to the somewhat granular stalk. Note that like other true morels, the stipe and the cap are hollow.



Morchella punctipes by Dianna Smith

Previously, *Morchella diminutiva* (Kuo, Dewsbury, Moncalvo and Stephenson) had been commonly called a gray, small yellow or tulip morel. It typically appears under tulip poplars. It is also not uncommon under ash, hickory and old apple trees. It is not found under pine. As might be guessed from the name, it is more petite than the large morels favored by most morel hunters. In fact, it most closely resembles the black morel, *Morchella angusticeps*, except that its sterile ridges

and fertile pits are paler in comparison. Also, it may or may not have a smooth stipe. *Morchella diminutiva* is common from the Great Plains eastward.

I am not positive about the identification of the morel depicted in this photo, though its habitat and morphological features tend to correspond with descriptions of *Morchella prava* (Dewsbury, Moncalvo, J. D. Moore and M. Kuo). The dark pits and pale ridges of *Morchella prava* are more randomly arranged than our other morel species. This mushroom tends to be found under pines and oaks and in wet, sandy environments near water from latitude 43°N and farther north.

Morchella americana (Clowez and C. Matherly, syn. *Morchella esculentoides*) is the meaty yellow morel most desired and sought after by morel hunters. It is the easiest of all our morels to serve stuffed with favorite cooking ingredients. *Morchella americana* is common east of the Rocky Mountains, and is found under dying American elms, living ash trees, and under very mature apple trees. It is also found in river bottoms and urban locations in the west. Note its pale infertile ridges and the irregularly shaped fertile pits. The base of the cap



Morchella prava (?) by Dianna Smith



Morchella americana by Dianna Smith

(hymenophore) is attached to the stipe. While all morels are considered choice edibles by most of us *Morchella americana* is a favorite. There is a lookalike found a bit farther west called *Morchella cryptica*. It is apparently impossible to distinguish the two species without DNA analysis.

Be aware that morels are known to cause severe gastric distress when eaten raw or partially cooked. Also note that some people have reported becoming sick after eating morels accompanied by an alcoholic beverage or two. So whatever you call them, be sure to cook them all thoroughly and savor their complex flavors.

For more detailed descriptions of these morels, please consult Michael Kuo's website, mushroomexpert.com, and Michael Beug, Arleen Bessette and Alan Bessette's newly published reference book, *Ascomycete Fungi of North America*.

BOOK REVIEW
by Roz Lowen

Giant Polypores and Stoned Reindeer: Rambles in Kingdom Fungi (July 2013) by Lawrence Millman, published by Komatik Press. ISBN 978-0-9828219-3-0. Available from the author: PO Box 381582, Cambridge, MA 02238, \$17.50.

This small book is a compilation of writings by Larry Millman that have been previously published in *Fungi* magazine, *Mushroom the Journal*, the Boston Mycological Club bulletin and other periodicals. Larry is a gifted, imaginative writer with a great sense of humor. He is an excellent mycologist and an excellent storyteller. This multifaceted author is a member of the prestigious Explorers Club and has traveled extensively. The selections range from the discovery of a previously extinct fungus, to a fantasy about climbing a mountain, and a Sherlock Holmes mystery. A common theme from many of the chapters is that mushroom analysis is often concluded with a compendium of "probablys/possiblys" and question marks. No mycological story has a real ending.

I found the essay on chaga the most interesting and useful chapter in the book. Chaga is the black canker found on birches that is popularly used to make a therapeutic tea. I know of no other source that describes so well the fertile stage of this fungus. It appears at a different time and place than the canker. The fertile stage often lasts only a short time, and it is often devoured by insects. Its rarity has made it hard to study. There still are many questions about it.

Another particularly relevant essay, entitled "Collecting for the Table" laments the collection of fungi at mushroom forays because the identifications are not necessarily accurate without microscopic examination; collection data are scanty; collections are not usually deposited in herbaria for subsequent examination, and a large quantity of mushrooms are thrown out, wasting collections. I think the author overlooks the positive aspects of mushroom club collections: They are an opportunity for amateurs to learn more about fungi and their identification. Collection slips do ask for substrate data. NAMA forays do save interesting collections in the Field Museum. Collections are usually dumped back in the woods after the forays, so most of the germplasm is not destroyed. Questionable collections are taken home by mycologists for further examination and subsequent reporting. The lists of fungi that are generated can be used as a general basis for knowledge of fungi distribution in the areas of collections.



Chaga (*Inonotus obliquus*) by Tomas Cekanavicius

There is a wonderful account of the search for the rare polypore *Echinodontium ballouii* on frozen ground in the winter in order to penetrate a cedar swamp. I loved the scatological tale of the succession of fungi on deer dung. Can you imagine another book with such a varied and unusual account of fungi? It is also an opportunity to learn what it is like to collect fungi in unusual places all over the world. I recommend this book to anyone with an interest in fungi who wants to learn of unusual mushrooms and unusual places. It was a fun read.

**SPRING
MUSHROOMS**
by Dianna Smith,
past president

I am frequently asked to produce a list of mushrooms that can be found in the spring in our area of the northeast. The following checklist is compiled from the COMA spring (April through May) walk collections from 2003 to 2013. It is important to note that some fungi listed are left over from the previous year, particularly soft annual and hard perennial polypores and crusts, as well as old puffballs. Also, there are undoubtedly a host of other fungi that we saw, but weren't able to identify.

(Photos of these fungi can be found at www.fungikingdom.net and COMA's website, <http://www.comafungi.org>)

ASCOMYCETES

Aleuria aurantia
Aracnopeziza auralea
Calocypha fulgens
Chlorociboria aeruginascens
Chlorosplenium chlora
Dasyscyphus sp.
Diatrype stigma
Gyromitra korfii
Hypocrea sp.
Hypoxyton fragiforme
Hypoxyton cf multifforme
Hypoxyton sp.
Mollisa cinerea
Morchella americana
Morchella angusticeps
Morchella diminutiva
Morchella punctipes
Peziza badioconfusa
Resupinatus applicatus
Sarcoscypha occidentalis
Xylaria hypoxyton
Xylaria polymorpha

GILLED MUSHROOMS

Agrocybe dura
Agrocybe pediales
Agrocybe praecox
Amanita amerifulva
Collybia (Gymnopus) alkavirens
Coprinellus micaceus (Coprinus micaceus)
Crepidotus applanatus
Crepidotus crocophyllus
Entoloma venum
Flammulina velutipes
Galerina marginata
Gymnopilus sapineus
Gymnopus dryophilus

Lacrymaria velutina (Psathyrella velutina)
Infundibulicybe squamulosa
Lentinus torulosus (Panus conchatus)
Marasmius pyrrocephalus
Marasmius rotula
Melanoleuca alboflavida
Mycena sp.
Mycena haematopus
Mycena leiana
Panellus stipticus
Pleurotus ostreatus
Pleurotus pulmonarius
Pluteus cervinus
Psathyrella candoleana
Psathyrella hydrophila
Psathyrella rugocephal
Schizophyllum commune
Stropharia rugosoannulata
Tectella patellaris
Megacollybia rodmanii (Tricholomopsis platyphylla)

GASTEROMYCETES

Lycoperdon pyriforme

POLYPORES

Coltricia montagnei var. greenei
Daedaleopsis confragosa
Favolus alveolaris
Ganoderma applanatum
Ganoderma lucidum
Ganoderma tsugae
Hydnochaete olivacea
Inonotus glomeratus
Inonotus obliquis
Irpex lacteus
Ischnoderma resinosum
Laetiporus sulphureus

SPRING MUSHROOMS cont.

Lenzites betulina
Polyporus badius
Polyporus varius
Polyporus squamosus
Porodiscus pendulus
Trametes conchifer
Trametes gibbosa
Trametes hirsute
Trametes versicolor
Trichaptum bifforme
Tyromyces chioneus



If not for the fact that it is one of the earliest cap and stem mushrooms each year, *Agrocybe praecox* would be almost completely ignored. (photo by Dan Molter)

CRUSTS and PARCHMENT FUNGI

Hymenochaete corrugata
Hymenochaete rubiginosa
Hyphodontia quercina
Hyphodontia cf. sambuci
Phanerochaete chrysorhiza
Phlebia sp.
Stereum hirsutum
Stereum ostrea
Xylobolus frustulatus

JELLIES

Exidia glandulosa
Exidia nigricans
Exidia recisa
Dacrymyces palmatus
Tremella foliacea
Tremella mesenterica

TOOTHED

Hericium erinaceus

MYXOMYCETES

Arcyria cinerea
Arcyria denudata
Ceratiomyxa fruticulosa
Enteridium lycoperdon
Linbladia tubulina
Lycogala epidendrum
Lycogala terrestre
Metatrachia vesparium
Stemonitis sp.
Tubifera ferruginosa

*Announcement***John Cage: Artist and Naturalist Exhibit**

The Horticultural Society of New York is hosting an exhibit of the works of John Cage, musician, mycologist and more. Opening reception Wednesday, April 2nd from 6:00 to 8:00 pm. The display will continue through May 16, 2014 at 148 W. 37th St, 13th floor, New York. See www.thehort.org for more information.

COMA officers and committee members are:

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<i>Past presidents</i>	David Rose, Morris Palmer, Dianna Smith (diannasmith1@me.com), and Sandy Sheine

Volunteers Wanted

COMA is a volunteer organization and needs member participation in order to thrive. You can help by:

- Scouting locations for Rogerson foray walks
- Writing, contributing photos, or doing layouts for Spores Illustrated
- Joining the COMA board or a committee
- Assisting with special events such as the Rogerson Foray or Fungus Fair

Please contact taro@ietaka.com if you'd like to help. Thanks in advance!

