

Spores Illustrated

Dear Friends:

I don't think that any of us would be here in the Northeast if we didn't enjoy the dramatic change of seasons, but it still feels rather sad to see our weekly walk season come to an end until next year. Although many of you have stocked your pantries and freezers with goodies to share with friends and family, the camaraderie and the "thrill of the hunt" are largely over for now— but fear not! In the months to come, the Programs Committee (under the careful direction of our own David Rose) will be lining up special evening events for your pre-season enjoyment and edification, and with any luck, yet another semester of "Mushroom University" will be available for those of you seeking a "higher education" in the ever-evolving realm of mycology.

And— there are less than five months remaining until our walk season begins anew, with endless possibilities and adventures in store! While keeping up with your reading (so many new mycology books, so little time!), you should know that Tom Cascione (our intrepid Walks Coordinator) will be hard at work, creating a schedule of weekend walks throughout the 2017 season that will be unsurpassed in the history of COMA walks! Thanks to the fine efforts of Taro Ietaka, we have a much anticipated newsletter, and of course, our website and Facebook page (both administered by the amazing Lisa Solomon) will provide information for your reference and enjoyment. The Foray Committee has great plans for Rogerson 2017 in our "new" (albeit previously enjoyed) location – Camp Hemlocks in Connecticut. Save the date: Labor Day Weekend, September 1-4, 2017. The Board of Directors will be working hard to ensure that throughout the season, things run as smoothly as possible. So, as you can see, although on the surface COMA may appear to be in a state of hibernation, this is far from the true story. Rest assured that a dedicated and resolute team of professional "Mycolonies" will be conspiring to ensure an absolutely fantastic season of all things mushroom-related in 2017!

Message from the President

From all of us at your favorite mushroom club, I wish you & yours a happy, healthy winter, and a wonderful new year. – Joe Brandt

Winter 2017

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



Peniophora albobadia by Joshua Hutchins

Winter Foraging

Don Shernoff

Tuesday, December 27 was a perfect day in White Plains for an oyster hunt. There had been some rain during the previous days. The weather was partly sunny and a balmy 55 degrees. And Leon, my son, was visiting me. We set out in the morning and spent an enjoyable four hours foraging leisurely in local parks.



Pleurotus ostreatus by Hamilton (ham) at Mushroom Observer.

The first park had a few polypores, stereums and some *Schizophyllum commune*, but no oysters. I had picked bags of oysters here in previous winters, but I guess that the nutrients that the oysters required had been consumed. Leon had discussed eating *S. commune* in the last issue of "Mushroom the Journal", but it has never been on my menu. After about an hour, we went to another nearby park.

At the second park, I soon spotted a group of large oysters, fairly close to the trail, growing on a fallen log, near its underside. Some of the oysters were as large as my hand and they were in perfect condition. Leon went into the woods and harvested them. We estimated their total weight at about 3 pounds. This guaranteed the success of the trip. Leon planned to make soup.

Leon found and picked some small, late-fall oysters, which he said he had never eaten before. He did sauté them in butter at home and we both tasted them. They tasted exactly like mushrooms sautéed in butter.

Leon then spotted a large, single cap growing about 11 feet above the ground in the notch of a dead, standing tree. We did not know what it was, but we went after it. Leon found a stick of suitable length and started poking the mushroom. The mushroom resisted his efforts and the stick broke. I found another, sturdier stick and Leon was able to dislodge the mushroom. It came

Tips for Winter Oystering

Look for water - "I have found abundant oysters on several trees in the past that were growing near a stream or a lake. The mushrooms were always most abundant on the areas facing the water." -Don

"The conventional wisdom for finding Oysters is to find a hardwood log with one end in water -- that's fairly reliable, and it comes close to what dad has experienced in Westchester, looking for lakeside trees that are leaning over the water." - Leon Shernoff

Take advantage of a thaw, no matter how brief - "I once saw very large, solidly frozen oysters about 20 years ago on New Year's Day. We hammered them off the tree and made delicious soup." - Don

tumbling down and broke in two. It was a large Elm Oyster.

As we were walking into another section of the park on an elevated path, we could see about 100 yards into the sparse woods below. We were scanning for oysters when Leon spotted an animal that looked like a large, fluffy, grey German Shepherd walking along on the far side of the woods. Our first reaction was that it might be a wolf, but we decided it was a large coyote in its winter coat. Nearby, adjacent to the woods, were the back yards of private houses.

We left the high ground and went down to explore the areas near the streams. On the way, Leon spotted a beautiful cluster of oysters on top of a large log. In contrast to the first bunch, these were tiny, about the size of a quarter. The cluster was about 12 inches in diameter, and the mushrooms were fresh and perfect. These winter mushrooms are almost always free from bugs. Now I had some mushrooms to give to a friend.

We continued foraging until hunger told us that it was time to go home for lunch. - *Don Shernoff*



Bisporrella citrina (above) by Boris Martinov

Mushroom University 2017

Gary Lincoff, noted mycologist and author of *The Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Mushrooms* will again be our instructor. This year's program is a series of six very interesting and varied individual sessions. See the full class by class topic description <http://www.comafungi.org/special-events/mushroom-u/>.

Dates: 6 Saturdays - March 4, 11, 18 and April 8, 15, 22

Location/Time: Muscote Farm. 51 Route 100, Katonah, NY. 10AM – 2PM

Registration: \$115. Open only to members of COMA. To register for Mushroom University online, visit the link above. To register by mail, send \$115 check to Carol McLeod, 18 Capricorn Lane, Mount Kisco, NY 10549

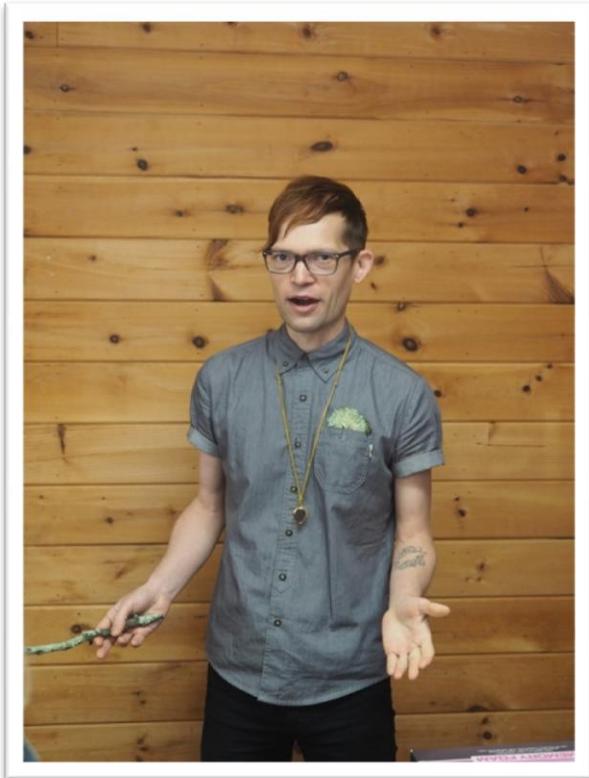
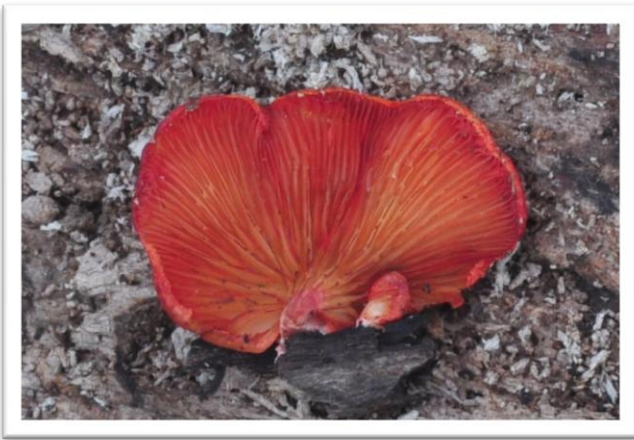


Camarops petersii (left) aka the dog nose mushroom by Joshua Hutchins

Photos from the 37th Clark Rogerson Foray

Despite the dry weather and absence of our favorite mycologist, Gary Lincoff, we had another successful foray at Camp Eisenberg in Copake, NY. Led by Alan and Arleen Bessette, Dianna Smith, Roz Lowen, Bill Yule, Leon Shernoff, and John Plischke III, participants found and identified 270 species of fungi, 32 of which were found for the first time in 37 years of our foray! Many thanks to Paula Desanto and Stacey Kalechitz for recording and to the Brandts for organizing this event!

Save the Date! The Clark Rogerson foray will be at Camp Hemlocks in Hebron, CT from Sept. 1-4, 2017.



Photos clockwise from top left: *Crepidotus cinnabarinus* by Joshua Hutchins; *Ganoderma applanatum* with guttation by Joshua Hutchins; a healthy haul of chicken mushrooms by Boris Martinov; Nova Patch giving the lichen table talk by Boris Martinov



My experience at the Eagle Hill Institute

Joshua Hutchins

It all began with a scholarship I received from COMA in 2014 to attend Alan and Arleen Bessette's "Bolete and Lactarius" seminar in October of that year. It's funny how something like a scholarship can change your life. I remember when I first arrived to the grounds after driving up and down the winding dirt road that brings you there, just how far I had traveled from my home in Rhode Island. I had so much fun and learned a plethora of new taxonomy as well as the history of the Institute which was founded in the 1980s by Joerg Henner Loetze who is the owner/director. With his mother Ingrid, who oversees the kitchen operations and cooks alongside the dedicated staff most of the time, the whole Eagle Hill experience is because of their hard work and dedication to furthering science and making it great fun.

I had the time of my life keying out boletes with the Bessettes and finding new species we all had never seen before like *Suillus subaureus*. It was so much fun that an idea popped in my head. "What if I could work at a place like this and be able to attend all sorts of different interesting and informative lectures at the same time?" So the following May I called Joerg and set up an interview with him and his mother. I pretty much told him what skills I had which was mostly my ability in the kitchen, so we agreed that I would spend half of the time working at the on-site restaurant, *Christopher's*, and the other half painting and helping to restore an old farmhouse down the road which had been left to the school by the Donelson Hoopes who had died five years earlier. Hoopes was an avid supporter of Eagle Hill and a



Suillus subaureus by Jason Hollinger via Wikimedia Commons

The 2017 Sylvia Stein Scholarship

COMA has created a scholarship program in honor of Sylvia Stein, a founding member of COMA. Sylvia was an amateur naturalist, mycologist, and educator. As an organization of volunteers and committed amateur mycologists, our hope is that this scholarship program will stimulate further interest and study in the amazing world of fungi. The Sylvia Stein Scholarship provides financial support to an outstanding applicant wishing to advance and share their knowledge of mycology and mushroom identification, by attending a mycology-related educational event or by creating a mycology-related project.

An applicant's personal financial situation is neither a requirement for eligibility nor a factor in scholarship determination. Recipients are expected to lead walks and/or submit material to "Spores Illustrated". Please refer to the guidelines for additional details: www.comafungi.org/docs/scholarship.pdf.

former curator at the Smithsonian, as well as a descendant of Andrew Jackson. I had a great time living there and enjoyed the backyard which had a rich biodiversity. I enjoyed watching the birds and butterflies fly around while sitting on the old deck watching the sun rise behind the bay.

Maine is a beautiful place and holds a place in my heart forever. I hope I return someday, as recently the restaurant changed chefs and Christopher, who is an excellent cook and friend of mine, is pursuing personal endeavors. Time goes on and things change but as Joerg would say, "We all try and keep moving forward here at Eagle Hill." They all do keep moving forward at Eagle Hill with people like Keith, who stays in the background but has been keeping the "Northeastern Naturalist" and "Caribbean Naturalist" publications going – it gives Eagle Hill an air that hard work and dedication pay off, especially if it's what you love to do. I will return to the Eagle Hill Institute in the future even if I don't get to work there again. With great teachers like Dick Homola, Alan and Arleen Bessette, Roz Lowen, Dianna Smith, and Tom Volk how can you go wrong? I thank Joerg Loetze for letting me in to the Eagle Hill family, and everyone at COMA for being the best mushroom club around with so many people who make mycology so fun and exciting. You all have changed my life for the better and to all the future recipients of the COMA scholarship, I hope it makes a difference in your life as well.

Renew Your Membership Today!

Your paid membership in COMA supports our mission of advancing the science of mycology through public education, organized forays and field trips, publication, lectures, and nature study. It also gets you these exclusive benefits:

- Information about the locations of our spring morel walks
- Ability to register for [Mushroom U](#), a six-session class focusing on a different genus each year, taught by leading mycologist Gary Lincoff
- Eligibility to apply for the [Sylvia Stein Scholarship](#)
- Invitation to attend the fall banquet, a gourmet potluck and mycophagist's dream

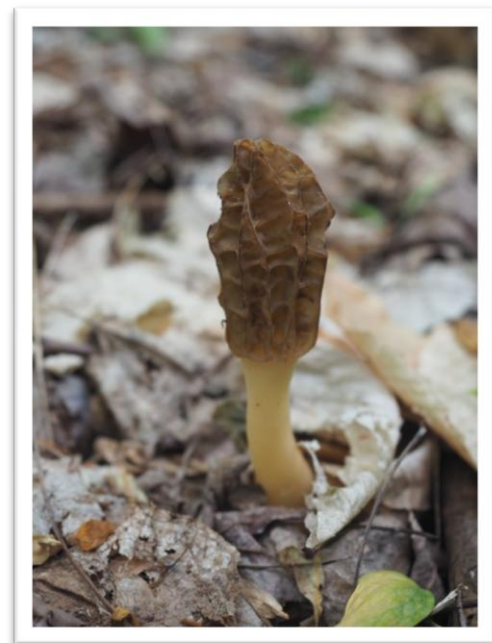
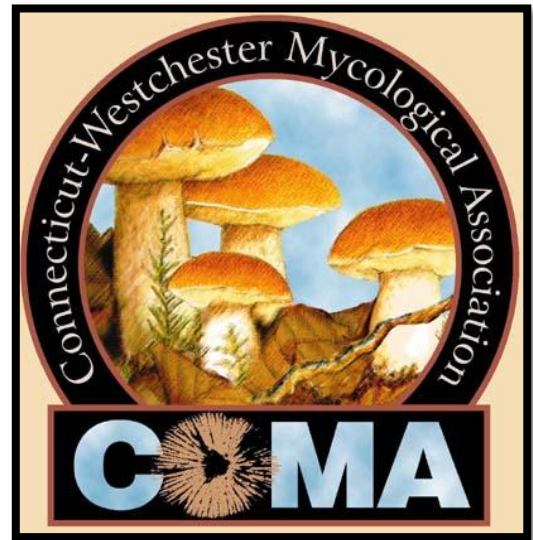
The annual membership fee is \$25 for an individual *or* family membership. To renew online or to download the membership form, visit <http://www.comafungi.org/membership/>



Specimens from this year's walk at Mianus. Photo by Theodore Stanek

COMA officers and committee members are:

<i>President</i>	Joe Brandt (jlbco@hotmail.com)
<i>Vice-president</i>	Taro letaka (taro@ietaka.com)
<i>Secretary</i>	Julie O'Grady (Julieog@optonline.net)
<i>Treasurer</i>	Don Shernoff (donshernoff@yahoo.com)
<i>Membership</i>	Carol McLeod (mcleod6@optonline.net)
<i>Publicity</i>	Jen Keane (nykeane@aol.com)
<i>e-Media</i>	Lisa Solomon (comawebmaster@comafungi.org)
<i>Walks</i>	Tom Cascione (tcascione@aol.com)
<i>Spores Illustrated</i>	Taro letaka
<i>Rogerson Foray</i>	Don Shernoff, Diane Alden (daldenpc@verizon.net), Carol McLeod, Taro letaka, Joe & Kathy Brandt
<i>Scholarships</i>	Sue Rose (chair (susanmbrose@gmail.com)), Rena Wertzer (renawertzer@hotmail.com), Stephanie Scavelli
<i>Programs</i>	David Rose (tomashunders@gmail.com), Rena Wertzer, Lisa Solomon, Joe Brandt
<i>Mushroom U.</i>	Carol McLeod
<i>Rules</i>	Morris Palmer (morrssarian@msn.com)
<i>Hospitality</i>	Jen Keane
<i>Past presidents</i>	Sandy Sheine, Morris Palmer, David Rose, Dianna Smith, Taro letaka



*Counting the days until morel season...
Photo by Boris Martinov.*

NEMF 2017

The New York Mycological Society, Connecticut-Westchester Mycological Association, Mid-Hudson Mycological Association and Long Island Mycological Club are hosting the 2017 NEMF Samuel Ristich Foray at the Stratton Mountain Resort in southern Vermont July 27-30, 2017.

Gary Lincoff, Faculty Chair is assembling a group of local experts. Our accommodations will be located in three lodges located in a resort village located about halfway up Stratton. All lectures, exhibitions, vendors, evening programs, socials and lunch & dinner meals will be found in one building, the Base Lodge, from where the lift goes up Stratton.