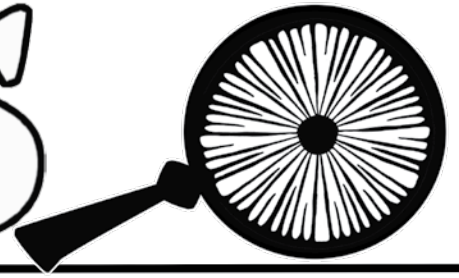


# nyms



Summer 2009 New York Mycological Society Newsletter

## Summer Love

July after the rains. Get walking if you haven't started. I'm probably the only left who has not been out somewhere finding mushrooms. I have seen the city erupting in all manner of fungal fruit, though. And once again I plan to grow mushrooms in the gardens around my neighborhood.

The New York Food Film Festival was June 13-19. *Know Your Mushrooms*, directed by Ron Mann and featuring Gary Lincoff and Larry Evans and even the New York Mycological Society in a cameo appearance, WON BEST FEATURE!!

The NYMS season is heating up. Gary reports on the excellent attendance at the recent Central Park walk both in terms of people and mushrooms. July also will see the Staten Island walk on the 12<sup>th</sup>, Van Cortlandt Park in the Bronx on the 19<sup>th</sup> and, of course, the end of the month's Chanterelle Weekend, which is fully subscribed.

August and September the walks continue. Consult your list or look online at the NYMS website! <http://www.newyorkmyc.org>

Foul Weather Friends identification sessions will begin on Monday, July 20, at the Downtown Community Center. Again, thanks to the DCC for hosting our events and meetings. If you have not come to an event there, bring your mushroom booty to one of the FWF identification Mondays and check it out.

To repeat from last issue of the newsletter: this year the NYMS is hosting the 56th annual Charles Horton Peck New York State Mushroom Foray, September 25 -27, 2009, at the YMCA's Greenkill Retreat Center in the Catskill Mountains. Much more information is inside this issue.

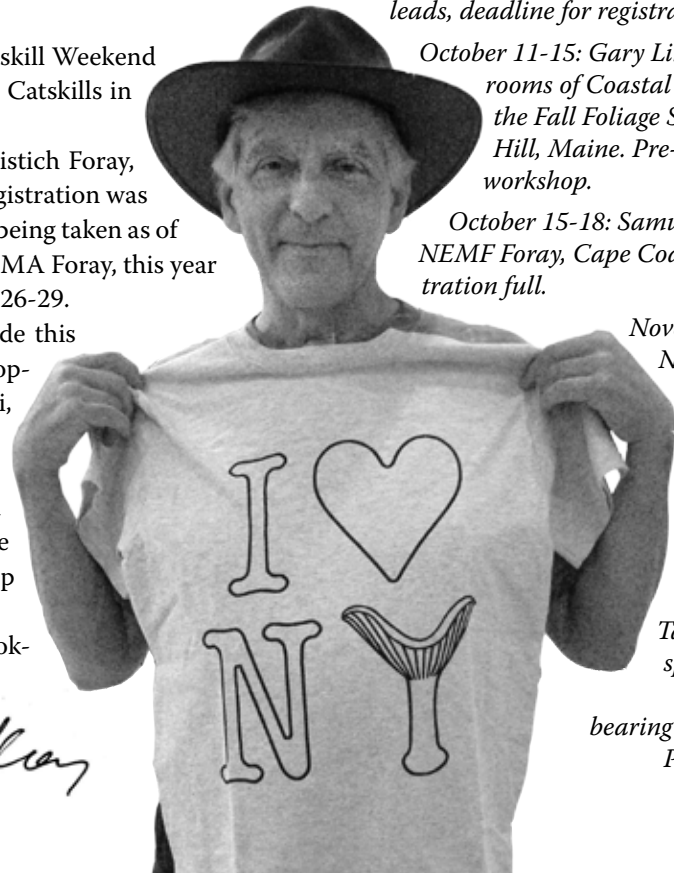
Directly after the Peck Foray weekend, our own Catskill Weekend takes place October 2-4, in the Big Indian area of the Catskills in Ulster County. More info is on page 2.

And the local season finale is the NEMF Samuel Ristich Foray, this year on Cape Cod (Falmouth), Massachusetts. Registration was full a couple of weeks ago, but waiting list names were being taken as of June 15. A little further off in time and place is the NAMA Foray, this year in Lafayette, Louisiana, on the weekend of November 26-29.

That is the short form for what is coming up. Inside this issue are some regular features and some special topics. The members' profiles features Marija Zeremski, scientist, mycophile, New York Mycological Society member. In addition, a visiting mycologist reports on both her experience foraging with our members and her native area's mycology. Dennis Aita ponders "the mushroomer's dilemma." And, letters to the editor keep coming in.

What I never get anymore are recipes. Is no one cooking? What will it take, a NYMS cookbook?

*Pam Kray*



### ≡ Inside This Issue ≡

*NYMS business p.2*

*Fungi—a Passport to the world, Rosemary Bencini*

*Meet Marija Zeremski*

*No more bats in the belfry?*

*What's a mushroomer to do?*

### ✦ Upcoming Events ✦

*Consult the walk list for upcoming NYMS walks.*

*Monday evenings starting July 20: Foul Weather Friends, ID sessions, 7-9 at the Downtown Community Center, see p. 2.*

*July 24-26: Chanterelle Weekend, Londonderry, VT. Claudine Michaud leads.*

*September 25 -27: Peck Foray, YMCA Greenkill Retreat, Catskill Mountains.*

*October 2-4: Catskills Weekend, Big Indian area, Catskills. Paul Sadowski leads, deadline for registration 9/28.*

*October 11-15: Gary Lincoff, "Mushrooms of Coastal Maine during the Fall Foliage Season." Eagle Hill, Maine. Pre-NEMF foray workshop.*

*October 15-18: Samuel Ristich NEMF Foray, Cape Cod, MA. Registration full.*

*November 26-29: NAMA Annual Foray, Lafayette, LA.*

*Taylor Lockwood speaks to NYMS and arrives bearing t-shirts, July 2. Photo Pam Kray*



## NYMS Newsletter

Editor—Pam Kray  
Graphic design—Maria Reidelbach

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President—Maria Reidelbach  
Vice President—Dennis Aita  
Secretary—Paul Sadowski  
Treasurer—Charles Luce  
Walks Coordinator—Dennis Aita  
Lecture Coordinator—Gary Lincoff  
Study Group—Paul Sadowski  
Archivist—Ralph Cox  
Webmaster—Adam Rosenberg  
sitemaster@newyorkmyc.org  
[www.newyorkmyc.org](http://www.newyorkmyc.org)

Articles should be sent to:  
Pam Kray  
633 E. 11 Street, #2  
New York, NY 10009  
[pamkray@mindspring.com](mailto:pamkray@mindspring.com)

Membership inquiries:  
Charles Luce  
518 Gregory Ave. C312  
Weehawken, NJ 07086  
[bryanandluce@verizon.net](mailto:bryanandluce@verizon.net)

Address corrections:  
Paul Sadowski  
205 E. 94 St., #9  
New York, NY 10128-3780  
[pabloski1@verizon.net](mailto:pabloski1@verizon.net)

All statements and opinions written in this newsletter belong solely to the individual author and in no way represent or reflect the opinions or policies of the New York Mycological Society.

*Submissions for the next issue of the NYMS newsletter must reach the editor by September 28, 2008.* Various formats are acceptable for manuscripts. Address questions to Pam Kray, editor. See above for addresses.

## BREAKING NEWS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

### New York Mycological Society Business

The New York Mycological Society was treated twice since the last newsletter with presentations. In April, Elinoar Shavit closed our Emil Lang Winter Lecture Series with a talk on heavy metal uptake in mushrooms. Not only was the night's presentation informative, we learned of Elinoar's ongoing project to determine whether there is significant uptake of arsenic in morels. At the time of this printing, the NYMS and the NJ Mycological Association are contributing funds for Elinoar's research. Britt Bunyard, editor of FUNGI, commented: "I think this is wonderful news and that this is a very important study. Her previous, albeit much smaller in scale, study generated a ton of interest and her current study is going to generate MUCH attention among the academic mycological community. It goes without saying that this will be a landmark study among the morel enthusiasts and the data generated is of real and immediate use. Please pass on my sentiments of gratitude to the members of the NYMS who are helping to make this possible."

Taylor Lockwood was with us on Thursday July 2, 2009, at the Downtown Community Center. Taylor showed about 30 of us his latest DVD, *The Good, The Bad, and the Deadly*, a video overview of edible, non-edible and poisonous mushrooms in North America. A lively discussion followed the evening's presentation.

Now comes the season to get out there and find those mushrooms for ourselves. The next walk is at Van Cortlandt Park in the Bronx on Sunday, July 19. Contact Victor Weiss if you are planning to go.

Following the walk on Monday, July 20, will be the first Foul Weather Friends (FWF) identification session at the Downtown Community Center, on Warren St. in downtown Manhattan. FWF meetings will take place at the DCC from 7 to 9 pm on all Mondays after walks and NYMS weekend forays. The meetings take place in the second floor Science Classroom. RSVP to Paul

Sadowski. Bring your finds. The FWF dates are as follows:

July 20, 27, August 3, 10, 17, 24, late August date tba, September 8 (Tue), 14, 21, 28, October 5, 13 (Tue), 19, 26

**The big forays** for the season, both our own and the bigger events, start from the NYMS Chanterelle Weekend in July and continue through November with the NAMA foray in Lafayette Louisiana. This year is particularly packed during the fall, with the late NEMF and NAMA forays in October and November, respectively. In addition, our Society is hosting the Charles H. Peck Foray September 25–27, 2009, at the YMCA's Greenkill Retreat Center in the Catskill Mountains. The Peck Foray is open to all who are interested in fungi. Attendees traditionally include professors and their students, talented nonprofessional mycologists, and curious amateurs. There is no formal education program, only the joint collecting and sharing of interesting mushrooms and other fungi. See the open letter and registration form insert. If you have any further questions, contact Paul Sadowski.

The following weekend, October 2-4, 2009, we return to the Catskills again for our Catskills Weekend. As usual, we will be in the Big Indian area. The registration form is also included in this newsletter with the membership coupon. To reserve a spot, please mail the coupon by September 28, to Paul Sadowski.

The NEMF Samuel Ristich Foray at Cape Cod this year has closed registration. The response was overwhelming and the limit for participants was reached early on. We're interested to see what great bounty the Cape yields.

**Regretfully**, at this time, Pam Kray is resigning as newsletter editor, due to pressing real-life commitments. She will be succeeded by writer and filmmaker Jason Cortlund. Pam, who says that the newsletter has "truly been one of my favorite things to do," along with newsletter designer Maria Reidelbach and copy editor Paul Sadowski welcome Jason to the team. Pam and Jason will be working together on at least the next issue as a transition.



## The Mushroomer's Dilemma

By Dennis Aita

"Is it safe to eat?" This is "the question" that all mushroomers should ask when confronted with a batch of new mushrooms. Instead we often hear: "Is it good to eat?" And that confuses and complicates things as subjectivity gets mixed with health concerns.

After a couple of decades of hunting and eating mushrooms these questions are rarely major ones for me when I go collecting. Experience has taught me the better edibles and many of the poisonous and deadly mushrooms. There are just too many good edibles out there to experiment with the questionable ones and eat the less tasty ones.

I hadn't really thought very much about the dangers of eating mushrooms (and the fear that it strikes in some people) until recently when I read *The Omnivore's Dilemma* by Michael Pollan. I highly recommend it for those who care or dare to be conscious of what they are eating. And, of course, those of us that collect and eat wild mushrooms certainly are part of this group.

Our ancient ancestors had far fewer choices of what to eat—and certainly far less to eat. They ate what their group, i.e., their culture, was eating. Generally, they ate what their mothers ate. It is only in the last few generations that so many of us are eating so many foods that our ancestors didn't eat. We now have so many choices, so many decisions when it comes time to choose what to eat for dinner.

And so it is with mushrooms. Whereas in past generations those who ate mushrooms usually consumed only those mushrooms that their families ate. For example, in the woods I sometimes run into elderly folk of European ancestry who only collect edibles that they have learnt from their parents, family, and friends—chanterelles, boletes, hen of the woods, honeys, and the like. They may only collect one or two species and nothing else. They walk past the black trumpets, the choice lactarii, and the chicken mushrooms which they don't "see" as food.

Ah, but now so many more people who go mushrooming see the full panoply of wild mushrooms as possible food. The neophytes, especially, have the difficult decisions of whether or not to eat a particular mushroom.

My woodland experiences started out as simple hikes with an occasional sampling of blueberries and blackberries. But then in rainy years I became aware of mushrooms in the woods. And then life became more difficult.

Mushroom books don't always help. They contain a limited number of mushrooms and photos, which don't always look like the mushroom in hand. I have always been cautious, but some mushroomers are far too eager to eat what they are finding and falsely match what they see in a book with their collections. (They may not even read the descriptions in their mushroom book!) And then they often compound the mistake by eating far too much of their mushrooms for the first time!

But even if they do read the text sometimes there is no stopping a determined collector. There's the story of a mushroomer who ate some mushrooms after consulting one of the major mushroom guides. He thought that he was eating honey mushrooms as they looked similar to the photos in the book. But there was a problem. His mushrooms gave a brown spore print. (He actually waited for one!) But, as we all know, honey mushrooms have white spores! He wrote to the author letting him know that there was a mistake in his book!

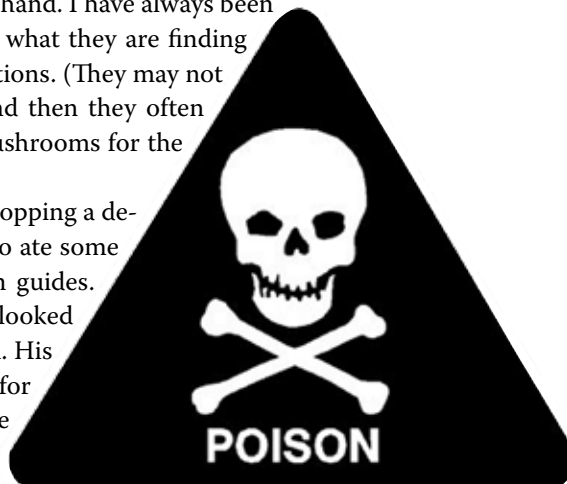
During good seasons that bear lots of choice edibles, I see no reason to experiment with questionable species. But when mushrooms are scarce, things often can get

2009 membership payment is at the rates of individuals: \$20 and families: \$30. Make checks payable to the New York Mycological Society. If you wish to become a member of NAMA (the North American Mycological Association), make a separate check for \$32, payable to NAMA and mail it with the NYMS dues to Charles Luce, Treasurer, 518 Gregory Ave. #C312, Weehawken, NJ 07086. See the membership coupon in this issue.

Stay responsibly in touch with us. If your telephone number, mailing or email address changes, please contact Paul Sadowski, Secretary with your new information. An additional note for listserv users: please remember to set your spam filter to be able to receive listserv emails.

NYMS walks policy: We meet when public transportation arrives. Check the walks schedule for other transportation notes. Walks last 5-6 hours and are of moderate difficulty except where noted. Bring lunch, water, knife, and a basket for mushrooms. Leaders have discretion to cancel walks in case of rain or very dry conditions. Be sure to check your email or contact the walk leader before a walk to see if it has been canceled for some reason. Non-members' attendance is \$5.

Warning: Many mushrooms are toxic. Neither the Society nor individual members are responsible for the identification or edibility of any fungus.



more complicated. About 30 years ago one of the NYMS members found what he also thought were honey mushrooms. It was the end of the mushroom season in upstate New York after a frost (or was it a hard freeze?), and there was little to be found in the woods. But after spending a full day with little to show, the mushroomer's evening turned into a back and forth with his wife on whether or not his collection were honeys and whether or not to eat them. Unfortunately, she gave in; they ate the mushrooms, which turned out to be deadly *Galerina autumnalis* (they have brown spores and not white), and both wound up in the hospital very sick. Fortunately, after intervention and with time they both recovered.

But sometimes things do not end as well. Recently an 82 year-old Italian-American man out in California ate some mushrooms that he collected. They reminded him of mushrooms that he had eaten as a child in Italy. Unfortunately, his mushrooms turned out to be *Amanita ocreata*, one of the deadly Destroying Angel mushrooms. He died after eating them. His wife never trusted his mushroom knowledge and never ate the mushrooms that he collected; she only ate the ones from the store.

So, whom can you trust? Some of us are lucky and have parents, family, and friends who are knowledgeable about mushrooms. Many of us don't have that knowledge base to draw on. However, I think it may be safe to assume that almost everyone reading this article is a member of a mushroom club. And that's a very good start.

And I say start because the mushroom game is not that simple. First, there are so many mushrooms out there in any given region. And second, no one knows them all. So I believe that the ultimate responsibility rests upon each of us when deciding what to eat when we collect.

With time and experience the identification and recognition of good edibles get easier. But occasionally one comes across mushrooms that are not commonly seen in any given area—and/or they may not be in any of our books! Can they ever be eaten? Sometimes, I say. Once one learns the major deadly and poisonous mushrooms of the area I see nothing wrong in tasting new mushrooms that one encounters provided that one doesn't eat too much on a first tasting and that one has knowledge of similar mushrooms in their group. For example, the *Agaricus* genus is divided into several groups—some of them have good edibles and some contain poisonous species. Once one understands the groupings one can probably safely try delicious species that are not commonly found in the wild nor in many of our books (BUT: note that some people are highly allergic to some of the best edibles in this genus).

Last fall a few of us went collecting in the mixed woods of Blue Mountain Reservation. We found several collections of *Lepistas* (*Clitocybes*) including a couple that we clearly agreed were *Lepista nuda* (blewits). But several others were noticeably different—with very little or no violet/purplish coloration, drier caps, and slightly different overall shapes (and they weren't old mushrooms). Microscopic features were examined and the monograph by Bigelow on *Clitocybes* was consulted with no conclusions as to what they were. Personally, *Clitocybe/Lepistas* are far from my favorite mushrooms for the table but Claudine Michaud carried these collections from the deep woods home, cooked them up, and brought some of them to our Monday night ID session for a tasting. I think that the overall consensus that night was that the blewits were noticeably sweeter and tastier than the others (We also had some *Clitocybe subconnexa* which weren't very good at all).

Then, how about some of the uncommon *Amanitas*? Are they edible? Are they choice? The last few years I have occasionally come across small groupings of two different and highly colorful *Amanitas* in the woods of central NJ, not very far from NYC. "Almost certainly" they are related to the orange-colored *Amanitas* in the caesarea group (In the US we have the good to very good edible, *Amanita jacksonii*, while in Italy there is the highly-prized *Amanita caesarea*, the true Caesar's Mushroom). Many of these mushrooms have colorful caps, yellow to even orangish gills and stems, large white saccate cups, and a highly striated cap margin. But note that the deadly *Amanita phalloides* (the Death Cap) also has a large white saccate cup although it doesn't have



# Fungi—

## Passport to the World and New Friends

[Foreward from Charles Luce: Early this spring I received an enticing email: an English woman living in Tuscany, Italy, who is also a trained mycologist, was coming to New York for a visit. Was there any way, she wondered, to go on a foray in our area? With little hesitation I volunteered, although the available dates—over the Memorial Day weekend—were not conducive to most species. Then I remembered a place I've found morels as late as June. So on a fine warm Saturday, Rosemary Bencini, her daughter Giulia, Paul Sadowski, my wife Leslie Bryan, and I foraged the dregs of *M. deliciosa*. The results are described below.]

By Rosemary Bencini

When, after a recent short visit to New York, I was asked what I had enjoyed most, many people would have been more than a little surprised by my reply. Without hesitating for a second I said, "The day we went on a morel foray." "A morel foray in New York? You must be joking!" "Well," I answered, "it wasn't exactly Manhattan, but it wasn't all that far away."

I had previously contacted NYMS by email to find out if there were any events or lectures I could attend during my stay, and your president, Maria Reidelbach, kindly wrote back straightaway to say that unfortunately it was rather too late in the spring-season. Then to my delight, I had a second email, this time from Charles Luce, saying that he would try to organize a foray for me with his wife Leslie and with Paul Sadowski.

It was wonderful to drive away from the hustle and bustle of the city into the lush green countryside and woodland. A thunderstorm threatened at first and then the clouds blew away as if by magic, filling the woods with dappled sunlight. My hosts were a mine of interesting information and eager to share their knowledge of the natural environment. They were careful to point out the risks of poison ivy, helped me to recognize what were for me unfamiliar species of trees and showed me the most likely places to find morels.

Although it was late in the fruiting season, by the afternoon our baskets were by no means empty. We drove back to the friendly atmosphere of the Luce's home, where Charles cooked the most delicious pizza I had ever tasted in my life, piled lavishly high with rich, creamy morels. It was an unforgettable day and one to store in my treasure-trove of memories.

Here where I live in the coastal area of Tuscany called Maremma, morels are mostly found in the sandy soil of the pinewoods, the big "umbrella pines", *Pinus pinea*, growing close to the sea—so close, in fact, that even after careful brushing, it is difficult to avoid a certain gritty texture, with grains of sand lodged inextricably in the honeycomb maze of the morels.

Winters are usually mild so that baskets can often be filled with *Cantharellus lutescens* until the end of January, or even later, from the same pinewoods and fruitings of *Leccinum lepidum* can be found in the mixed woods of cork oak and *ilex* (holly) for longer still.

A few miles further inland in the gently rolling hills, a spring favorite is the *Calocybe gambosa* (*Tricholoma georgii*), St. George's mushroom; and an annual festival, known as the Sagra del Prugnolo is held in April in the village of Montieri, on the way to Siena.

*Aita*, cont. from p. 5



a striated cap margin and any non-white colorations in the gills and stem (it has a greenish fading to yellowish cap color with age). My NJ collections with their yellowish to yellowish-orangish-brownish cap colorations seemed to best fit the descriptions of *Amanita arkansana* and *A. banningiana*. While these may be delicious edibles, it is not surprising that other mushroomers are not readily collecting them for the table! I have collected them but then they just sit in the fridge. Will I have the courage to try them this summer if I find them again? 🍄

Cont. p. 6



Top: Charles Luce, Rosemary and Giulia Bencini ready to pounce on their quarry.

Middle: Rosemary, Giulia and Paul Sadowski all smiles over some of their *Deliciosa* bounty.

Bottom: Charles tries to not salivate on the morels.

*Bencini, cont. from p.5*

Prugnolo is the local name for *C. gambosa*, a clear reference to its habitat—close to thorny bushes of the *Rosaceae* family. It is often not very gatherer-friendly and a few scratches are inevitable, but at least there is no poison ivy!

Further inland still, the splendid Vallombrosa Forest, between Florence and Arezzo, is a favorite haunt of mycophiles and mycologists. Sometimes as early as February and then onwards into May, plentiful fruitings of *Hygrophorus marzuolus*, or “dormiente” (the sleeper) can be found by the gatherer with a well-trained eye. The cap is usually dark grey, growing low in the ground or partly buried. As it is also highly appreciated by animals, it is often the squirrels that give out clues, leaving an eye-catching piece of white mushroom flesh poking through the ground covering of fallen leaves.

The favorite time for forays in Maremma is fall from early September on. Italy is a mycophilic country and, of course, hoards of people will comb the woods for “porcini”, mainly *Boletus aereus* and *B. edulis*, as well as for the beautiful *Amanita Caesarea*.

Picking mushrooms is not free for all. Regulations vary regionally, but in most, one has to pay for a permit, local residents usually excluded. Permits are issued for a year or more, or for much shorter periods, and the cost can vary considerably. In Tuscany, the annual fee is 25 euros, while in the Northeast, the mountain area of Trentino Alto Adige, it is much higher. There are restrictions, too, regarding the quantity or the days of the week one can pick. In other regions, one has to pass a basic identification test of the most common species and their look-alikes before a permit is issued.

So far, I have only mentioned one or two of the best known edibles. Paul asked me whether, when in doubt, people go to the local pharmacist for help in identification as they do in France. Here in Italy, it is a qualified mycologist, employed by the local branch of the National Public Health Service (A.S.L., Azienda sanitaria locale), who has the authority to certify the edibility of wild mushrooms.

While most mushroom gatherers are aware of the dangers of the three “deadly sisters”, *Amanita phalloides*, *A. verna* and *A. virosa*, accidents unfortunately still occur. As a further precaution against mistaken identity, it is illegal to pick the young fruit body of the choice *Amanita caesarea* in its button stage, still enclosed in its universal veil.

Without such potentially fatal consequences, there are other “trouble-makers”. In this part of Tuscany, for generations the Clouded Funnel Cap, *Clitocybe nebularis*, has been a favorite for the cooking pot. Although it can be toxic and has long been banned from the officially approved list of wild mushrooms that can be sold on the commercial market, bad habits are hard to die and it is no easy task to convince elderly country people that it could be harmful. Worse still is its look-alike, the Lead Poisoner, *Entoloma lividum* or *sinuatum*, whose spore-print color is not clearly evident when the mushroom is young.

When reading the statistics of last year’s cases of mushroom poisoning in my area, my greatest surprise was to find the choice *Boletus edulis* fairly high on the list. There could be several explanations: inadequate cooking, too large and too frequent helpings, varying degrees of individual tolerance, but the most likely is its rapid deterioration. Whereas people would not hesitate to throw away a prime cut of steak when rotten to avoid serious food poisoning, the same cannot be said for mushroom gatherers. After a long day in the woods searching for porcini (and here there is a lot of competition), they might indeed be reluctant to relinquish their trophies, whatever their condition.

This could be a warning and a point in favor of Seneca’s drastic negative statement two thousand years ago—“Fungus, qualiscum sit, semper malignus est,” (All fungi are toxic), causing his ghost to gloat and say “I told you so!”

However, I am sure that whatever country they are from, and whatever mushroom-connected activity they are taking part in—on a foray, taking photographs, looking through a microscope, or busy in the kitchen preparing a mouth-watering sauce—all mycophiles would agree that nothing can detract from the fascination, the sense of discovery and wonder, in short, the sheer enjoyment offered by the world of fungi. 🍄



# \* Field Notes \*

## Central Park Walk 6/28/09

Leader: Gary Lincoff

At least 40 people showed up for the NYMS Central Park mushroom hunt on Sunday,

June 28th. It was one of those rare days in June when it wasn't raining. We walked around the west side of the park between 95th St. and 99th. It didn't take much to find mushrooms. We even found some edibles, though not as many as last year. We found at least 40 different mushrooms. The list is below.

In grass:

*Conocybe lactea*

*Marasmius scorodonioides*

*Marasmius sp.* (tiny, orange cap with few, distant gills)

*Melanoleuca alboflavida*

In moss (near wood):

*Clavulina cinerea*

In wood chip mulch:

*Agrocybe dura* complex

*Collybia (Gymnopus) luxurians*

*Psathyrella candolleana*

*Stropharia rugosoannulata*

*Crucibulum laeve*

*Cyathus striatus* ?

*Phallus rubicundus*

*Scleroderma sp.* (tiny)

On trees, logs, or sticks:

*Irpex lacteus*

*Meripilus giganteus* (Black-staining polypore)

*Pycnoporus cinnabarinus*

*Stereum complicatum*

*Stereum ostrea*

*Trametes hirsutum*

*Trichaptum bifforme*

At base of trees:

*Laetiporus cincinnatus* (White Chicken Mushroom)

*Tricholomopsis platyphylla*

On the ground, in grass, but associated with oak trees:

*Boletus campestris*

*Boletus chrysenteron*

*Boletus chrysenteron* with *Hypomyces chrysospermus*

*Boletus pulverulentus*

*Boletus subvelutipes*

*Gyroporus castaneus*

*Tylopilus ferrugineus*

*Amanita crenulata* (near *A. gemmata*)

*Amanita flavorubescens*

*Amanita vaginata*

*Amanita sp.* (tiny, cream-colored)

*Inocybe abundans*

*Inocybe albodisca*

*Inocybe rimosoides*

*Laccaria amethystina*

*Laccaria ohioensis* (near *L. laccata*)

*Russula sp.* near *fragilis*

*Russula mariaae*

*Russula pectinatoides*

*Russula subfoetens*

*Russula spp.* (purple, rosy red, orange, mild)



Top: Taylor Lockwood and Gary Lincoff examine finds from Gary's Central Park walk.

Middle and bottom: stills from Lockwood's DVD, The Good, the Bad and the Deadly: Knowing the Poisonous Mushrooms.

Photos: Pam Kray



## An Open Letter To a Prospective Peck Foray Attendee

This was in response to the following question:

PS, I am thinking about attending the Peck Foray. I am a completely clueless neophyte—eager to learn, but no mycological knowledge whatsoever. Would the Peck Foray be too advanced for me?

Dear [member],

Regarding the Peck Foray, I would say that your expertise should not be a factor in deciding to attend. There are certainly no entrance requirements. You will find the

Cont. p. 8



*The Wikipedia provides the following information: Charles Horton Peck, born March 30th 1833 in Sand Lake, New York, died 1917 in Albany, New York, was an American mycologist of the 19th and early 20th centuries. He was the New York State Botanist from 1867 to 1915, a period in which he described over 2700 species of North American fungi.*

*Photo from Paul Sadowski.*

foray to be quite informal and rather unstructured, nothing to fulfill really, but your own curiosity.

We will have some destinations for forays on Friday, Saturday and Sunday. But there is no sign-up sheet, you just bum a ride (or give one if you have a car).

Someone may decide to give a presentation in the evenings.

If we find enough edible mushrooms I am sure there will be cooking and eating.

The Profs. come with their students and they are sort of on their own peering through their microscopes in a reverie of learning.

We'll have display tables set up with identified and unidentified specimens. So you may come as an initiate but I promise you will leave a more knowledgeable mycophile.

Most of all, the group is rather small, 50 people or so. You will have a chance to meet new people many of whom, I am sure, will be happy to share their experience and knowledge.

I fell in love with the Peck Foray as an initiate 15 years ago, returning many times and now with this one, hosting two.

Hope to see you there. I have added you to the Peck database, so you'll get any email information from them.

Paul Sadowski

See the enclosed registration sheet for further details.

## Letter to the Editor

Dear Naomi,

I read with particular interest your letter to the editor in last spring's NYMS newsletter regarding the winter banquet. Since I joined NYMS in the fall of October 1982 I have attended just about all of the winter banquets (Unfortunately, not all of them should have ever been considered banquets) and I have organized or have helped with the majority of these dinners.

The banquet you mentioned took place in early December 1977 in the Bobst Library in NYU and was written up in the December 6, 1977 NY Times (Times subscribers can access it for free online). I heard from several members who were there that night that it was a special evening and I, too, wish that I had been there! And, yes, kudos to Lorette Reisman, one of our original members, who organized it as well as most of the other banquets and dinners of the 60's, 70's, and 80's.

What helped to make the event possible were several things: a former club member who had attended NYU and had connections to get us the needed space at a very reasonable price, club members who collected mushrooms during the season and were willing to cook them up and bring them as appetizers to these events, and the old club policy of allotting ten dollars of each member's annual dues towards the annual banquet.

But at some point in the late 80's we started to hold our annual event in restaurants (with one exception that I can think of). Sometimes they had better food and they usually prepared some of their dishes with mushrooms, they were easier to organize, and the price of these dinners was reasonable. On the other hand, we sometimes found that we didn't have enough privacy and enough space to move around. (Space is a major problem in New York City as we all know.) Because of the space problem and the fact that some restaurants don't allow us to bring our own appetizers we haven't had as many of our dinners/banquets with our own mushroom appetizers as in the past.

If we want to keep the wintertime event at a reasonable price (and I feel strongly that we should), then we will always have to make some difficult choices and compromises as there doesn't seem to be a perfect place for us. Lately, Chinese restaurants have given us some of the features that many of our members want.

I ask that all club members who are interested in our winter-time dinner see my further thoughts on our website under the "Banquet". I have an "ideal" place in mind. I also will present a more in-depth look at the dinners over the years with thoughts for the future.

Dennis Aita



# Member Profile: *Marija Zeremski*

NYMS: With whom did you first hunt mushrooms?

MZ: I was born in Belgrade, Serbia (former Yugoslavia), where mushroom hunting was not as popular as in some other parts of Europe. My first exposure to wild mushrooms happened in Chicago, while I was in graduate school. My Russian colleagues used to spend their summer vacations in Wisconsin and come back with stories about mushroom hunting and the differences between mushrooms in North America and Russia. I found the topic fascinating but I was afraid to venture to the woods by myself (or with my Russian friends) without any knowledge about mushrooms. So, I became a member of Illinois Mycological Association. My first mushrooming experience was a morel hunt (mostly unsuccessful) with IMS.

NYMS: What scientific aspects of fungi interest you?

MZ: I did not spend much time studying science behind mushrooms—I am still overwhelmed with more basic stuff, such as proper identification and classification of different species. Science will be the next step in my mushroom adventure.

NYMS: How would you describe your relationship with fungus?

MZ: It brings me a great joy to walk through the woods and look for mushrooms hidden underneath the leaves and behind the trees. I like that feeling of a treasure hunt. I am also fascinated by their beauty and diversity.

NYMS: What occupies you when you aren't mushroom hunting?

MZ: I am a scientist and I currently work in the hepatitis C field. In my free time I like to travel and learn more about new countries and cultures.

NYMS: Has your interest in fungus had any influence on the rest of your life?

MZ: Definitely. Since I became a member of NYMS I am spending more time outdoors. I also met some very interesting, nice people that I enjoy spending time with.

NYMS: How do you decide whether or not to eat a mushroom?

MZ: I am relatively new to mushrooming so I am still very cautious and eat only mushrooms that I am absolutely sure I can identify correctly. If I am 100% sure the mushroom is edible, I am less picky. I like to try everything.

NYMS: How do you like to eat mushrooms (if you do)?

MZ: Mushrooms that I found in nature I usually sauté on butter or on olive oil with garlic and white wine. If I have a larger quantity (which doesn't happen too frequently) I pickle them or make soup. I use supermarket *Agaricus* to make pasta dishes and mushroom pies with phyllo dough.

NYMS: Are you secretive about the places where you've found mushrooms growing?

MZ: Not really. The problem is that I tend to forget those places myself.

NYMS: What is your favorite season to mushroom hunt?

MZ: Fall is my favorite season for mushroom hunting. The best time to spend a day in the woods.

NYMS: What habitats do you prefer to hunt in?

MZ: Forests are my favorite mushroom habitats.

NYMS: Do you keep a life list of species you've found?

MZ: I have a binder in which I put pictures and short descriptions of all edible mushrooms that I have ever found. I am trying to be extra cautious with mushrooms that I am planning to eat, especially if nobody helped me with identification. Sometimes I include in the binder species that are not edible but that I found interesting for some other reason.

NYMS: Do you know many mushroom enthusiasts?

MZ: Unfortunately not. However, I plan to visit the Serbian Mycological Association on my next visit to Belgrade. Interestingly, they meet every Monday night in the building across the street from my mother's home in Belgrade. 🍄



*Marija at the Whole Foods tasting following the 2009 business meeting. Photo by Maria Reidelbach.*

# Reporting on White-Nose Syndrome in Bats

By Pam Kray

Hard times for bats. White-nose Syndrome (WNS), named for the fungus that appears white on infected bats' muzzles and wings, is linked to, and there is evidence it is the cause of, the deaths of record numbers of hibernating bats in the northeast United States since 2006. The responsible pathogen has been identified as *Geomyces destructans*; its generic status as *Geomyces* has been verified by RNA sequencing, but "its distinctive asymmetrically curved conidia are unlike those of any described *Geomyces* species" (Gargas et al. 2009).

What is known about the fungus is that it is psychrophilic (cold-temperature-loving); it affects only some species of bats including little brown (*Myotis lucifugus*), northern long-eared (*Myotis septentrionalis*), big brown (*Eptesicus fuscus*), and tricolored (*Perimyotis subflavus*); it is thought that the bats are afflicted during hibernation while their immune response may be lowered—predisposing the bats to infection. The dead bats appear emaciated.

Of the affected species, it seems that the natural survival rate is about 5-10%. According to Gary McCracken, professor of ecology and evolutionary biology at the University of Tennessee at Knoxville, that survival rate suggests viability of natural resistance to the disease. European bats seem immune to it altogether.

So far, WNS has been evident in the above-named species of bats but in no other animals. The role of bats in our ecosystem is quite important, as they eat up to two-thirds of their body weight in insects overnight. Along with the birds and the bees, bats also transport pollen and seeds during their nocturnal rounds. So, we could feel the effects of WNS pretty quickly.

The condition has been found in over 25 caves and mines in the northeastern U.S. from New Hampshire through West Virginia. Its rapid spread and the mortality rate of infected bats has caused concern among scientists of

diverse disciplines as well as the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Transmission seems to occur bat to bat. However, human activity in the caves may also serve to transport the fungus on clothes or equipment. The USFWS has closed caves to people in the eastern U.S. (But I wonder if it isn't the interested scientists who would be the likely transmitters, since they would be getting close to the populations of bats specifically.)

As this newsletter goes to print, state and federal agency representatives will join scientists in the fields of bat physiology, fungal ecology, ecotoxicology, disease and environmental modeling, among others, at a workshop at the National Institute for Mathematical and Biological Synthesis (NIMBioS), June 29-July 1, at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, to explore the disease and to develop solutions to manage it.

Paul Sadowski adds that the New York State Biodiversity Research Institute and New York State Museum are sponsoring a Biology and Conservation lecture series in October. These are free lectures at the New York State Museum in Albany, NY, Wednesdays at noon, in the Carole F. Huxley Theater. The first lecture will take place on October 7, 2009, and is titled: White-nose Syndrome—the Darkest of Nights for North American Bats. More information and directions to the museum are at: [http://www.nysm.nysed.gov/bri/program/bri\\_lectures\\_fallo9.html](http://www.nysm.nysed.gov/bri/program/bri_lectures_fallo9.html).

This article contains information culled from several sources. For science of *Geomyces destructans*, I thank Charles Luce for sending: Gargas A., Trest, M.T., Christensen, M., Volk, T.J., & Blehert, D.S. (2009). *Geomyces destructans* sp. nov. associated with bat white-nose syndrome. In *Mycotaxon*. Vol 108, pp. 147-154. For lay discussion of WNS' history and effects and the information on the workshop in Tennessee, I used online sources: [http://www.eurekalert.org/pub\\_releases/2009-06/nifm-stt060409](http://www.eurekalert.org/pub_releases/2009-06/nifm-stt060409).

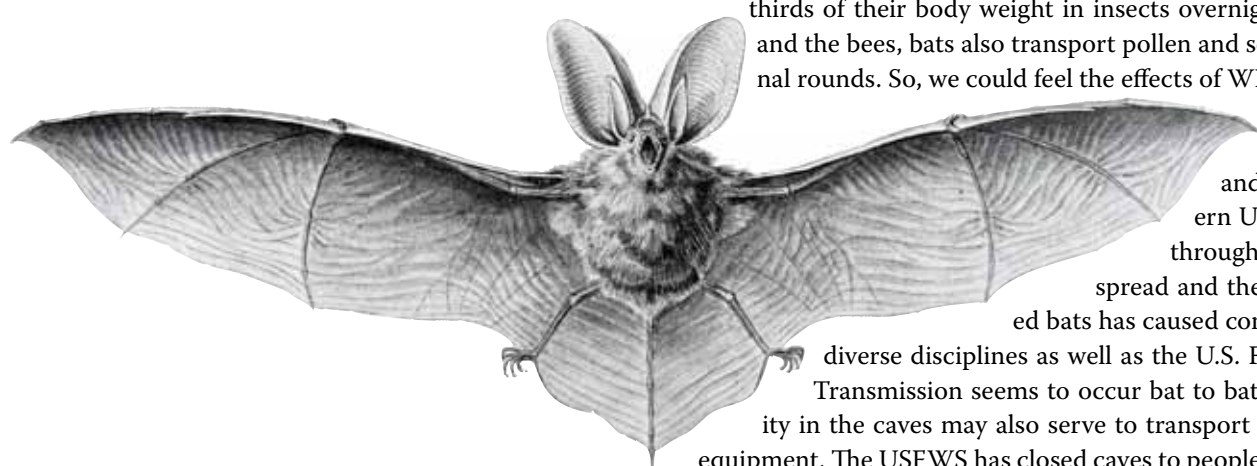


Illustration by Ernst Haeckel, *Kunstformen der Natur*, Verlag des Bibliographischen Instituts, Leipzig and Vienna, 1904.

php and [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White-nose\\_syndrome](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/White-nose_syndrome). For practical information regarding WNS in our area, I downloaded the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service pdf: *White-nose syndrome in bats: Frequently Asked Questions*. 🦇

# Mycopolis

Mushrooms coming out of MTA train ties, M line, Queens NY. Photo taken on 6/12/09 by Travis Kray.



## MEMBERSHIP

- \_\_\_ Individual—20.00
- \_\_\_ Family—30.00
- \_\_\_ NAMA—32.00

Through the NYMS members can optionally also get a North American Mushroom Association membership at a discount. Make your check(s) payable to NYMS and to NAMA separately and mail with this form to:

Charles Luce, Treasurer, NYMS  
518 Gregory Ave. C312  
Weehawken, NJ 07086

## CATSKILL WEEKEND

October 2-4, 2009

30.00 deposit X number of guests \_\_\_\_\_ = \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_ need ride \_\_\_ have car space

Registrants names:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Make your check payable to NYMS, mail it with this form to:

Paul Sadowski  
205 E. 94 St., #9  
New York, NY 10128-3780

Name(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State, Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

### Release

I hereby release the New York Mycological Society, any officer or member thereof, from any legal responsibility for injuries or accidents incurred during or as result of any mushroom identification, field trip, excursion, meeting, or dining, sponsored by the Society.

Your signature(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_



*Items from the canopy and the floor of a Tulip Poplar stand: the flowers of *Liriodendron tulipifera* and *Morchella deliciosa**

