

---

# MID HUDSON MYCO-NEWS

AN OCCASIONAL PUBLICATION OF THE MID HUDSON MYCOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

Volume 2, Issue 3.....November 2006

---

## Potluck Mushroom Feast and Semi-Annual Meeting Coming Up

Scheduled for December 2<sup>nd</sup> at Marbletown  
Community Center

by David C. Work

**Come one, come all and bring your friends and families,  
because I think this one's going to be a blast!**

Well, it's finally happened. The club year celebration has both sadly and gladly outgrown the warm hospitality of Cynthia & Armen Fisher's warm farmhouse kitchen (thank you Cynthia for years of generous hostessing!) and this year we're going to try the Marbletown Community Center in Stone Ridge, NY. The MCC is a great space, with many options, and a big institutional kitchen to play in. MORE INFO IN COLORED INSERT!

This meeting/feast will be a great chance to cook together, eat together, and work together. We'll be deciding on educational programs for the winter as well as all the walks for 2007. Join in!

Mark your calendars and sign up for this awesome event with the form on the colored insert in this newsletter ❖

## Holy Smokin' krombholzii!!

Bill Bakaitis

Well, just when you think you have got a handle on things, along comes the unexpected: to wit.

On the evening of Tuesday, August 15, 2006, I received a call from the major Hospital of one of our larger cities in the Northeast. The patient, a 28 yr old male of East Indian nationality came to the Emergency Room seeking help following the ingestion - by smoking -- of mushrooms he had picked and consumed from a nearby area.

On the previous Sunday (Aug. 13) he picked the mushrooms, dried and then smoked them the following day in order to get "high". He reported that he quickly developed a fever of 102, and had abdominal pain. These symptoms completely obliterated the pleasant intoxication he was expecting. When he recovered on Tuesday he sought medical attention thinking that he was in the "second day recovery period of Amanita poisoning". [This is the usual presentation of Amatoxin

*Continued on page 2*

### INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 1 Mushroom Feast!
- 1 Holy Smokin' krombholzii!! By Bill Bakaitis
- 2 Taking a Mini Mushroom Vacation by D. Work
- 3 Myco Media in Review, *Morels* by Michael Kuo
- 4 Accidental Mycologist
- Color Insert
- 7 A Poem
- 7 Membership/Release Form
- 8 Mushroom of the Moment



*The Sorting Table - Photo by Kelly Sinclair*

poisoning: onset of vomiting, diarrhea and bloody stool, intestinal distress, fever and headache usually 6 to 8 hrs following oral ingestion; a diminution of the symptoms on the following day, followed by a return of the symptoms on the third and subsequent days. Without assistance, death comes about a week after ingestion caused by the collapse of liver functions. With prompt modern medical attention all but the weakest, youngest, oldest or medically compromised patients usually recover. To my knowledge, none of the dozen or more cases of verified Amanita poisonings that I have been involved with over the past 15 or so years have ended in death.]

The patient thought the mushroom he dried and smoked was an Amanita, and said that he had smoked them in the past in order to get high. In the hospital he was frightened but had no physical symptoms aside from a minor constellation associated with fear. Related to his fear, it is important to note that his father is a prominent Physician at a nearby major medical facility and the patient did not want the father to know about this episode or his practice of smoking mushrooms in order to get high.

A fresh specimen of the mushroom was available at the ER, apparently brought in by the patient, and four digital images were emailed to me, arriving within the half hour. The images were out of focus, but it was nevertheless obvious that they were of a red-capped Russula. The disc (center of the cap) was of a darker red, the stem had a bit of a grayish brown stain, suggesting perhaps *R. krombholzii*, which was my tentative identification.

This and several other potential species names were given to the medical team at the Emergency Room. They were also informed that there were hundreds of red capped Russulas in the Northeast and that further identification would require the work of a specialist in this genus. Although *R. emetica* is the name often applied to any red capped Russula, it is a rather uncommon species. I was not aware of any in this group that are deadly. Some irritate the GI tract but this toxic effect is often neutralized by boiling and discarding the water and/or cooking with sour cream, Hungarian/Slovakian style. (\* But see below.)

The medical staff and I agreed that the fact the patient thought that this Russula was an Amanita suggested that he did not know his mushrooms and should cease the practice of attempting to get high by this method. I underlined the dangers of mistaking a psychoactive species for a deadly one and suggested that the patient speak in person to a trained mycologist who could reinforce this message. Following consultation with a mycologist in the area, contact information was provided to the patient via the ER staff.

The case ended with my report filed two hours after the initial call: neat, clean and straightforward, or so I thought.

However...

On the following day I Googled "Smoking + Mushrooms" and found several well developed web sites dedicated to an exploration of this practice. Most testimonials spoke to the effects of smoking Psilocybe -"Magic" mushrooms - although companion websites addressed the merits, methods, and problems of smoking *A. muscaria*. Included were descriptions of detailed organic chemistry pathways, as well as a scientific literature, legal issues, etc. Who would have known? I am reminded of Bill Joy's edict concerning technological possibilities/realities in our nano-techno world: "If you can imagine it, it is already being done."

The "first person accounts" of smoking *muscaria* that were posted on the web sites seemed to accord pretty well with the first person accounts given to me from those *muscaria*-eaters that I have interviewed: "weird" hallucinatory effects, complete with cognitive and physical disorientation and uncomfortable sensations. Smoking marijuana along with *A. muscaria* was said to reduce and/or substantially eliminate

Continued on Page 4

## Taking a Mini Mushroom Vacation: Sporadic Journeys

by David Work

No, I don't mean a vacation from mushrooms, I mean a vacation for mushrooms, of course!

In late August of this year, I did something I'd never done before. I went to a regional, multi-day mushroom foray. You see, because of my line of work as a chef, I previously had never been able to get time off on a weekend during the summer or fall, so even a few years back when NEMF hosted their annual foray at the Nevele Grand in Ellenville, I couldn't go. So many years passed where I sadly could not participate, and I felt much like the young urchin staring in the window of a candy shop with nothing in my pocket but a nickel and everything inside cost a dime. Maybe it's not the best analogy, but you get the feeling, I think. Longing, mourning, sadness, insane jealousy.

---

### *Longing, mourning, sadness, insane jealousy.*

---

So, this past year, when my professional life changed quite drastically, one of the first things I did in the spring was to sign up early for the closest regional foray. I called up Don Shernoff, who was in charge of organizing the annual foray for our neighbors to the south in COMA (Connecticut-Westchester Mycological Association), and grilled him for details and sent in my check to reserve a spot.

The summer was incredibly busy and full and it felt like no time before Thursday, August 24th arrived for me to pack up the car

Continued on following page

and head for Cave Hill Resort in Moodus, CT. As you might imagine, I brought everything. I brought books, I brought my camera bag. I brought my big basket with all the fixins and the laptop to process all those photos I was planning on taking. I also brought my knife roll and chef coat as I had a feeling I had been volunteered to cook for the mycophagy sessions. COMA's Membership Director, Dianna Smith, who is a wonderful mushroom photographer and videographer had contacted me over the summer and asked if I would give them a slide presentation of some of my photos the first night. So, gladly accepting, I brought the slide projector and slides and ...jeez what didn't I bring? I picked some Oysters, Hedgehogs and Chicken Mushrooms along the way, too.

### **Day One**

After meandering through the back roads of Connecticut to find the place, the first person I saw when I arrived was our very own George Johanson, who, besides introducing me to a few folks right off the bat, was also requiring everyone who arrived to try some funky Asian fruit which closely resembled a lychee nut. Shortly after arriving, I also met Leon Shernoff, who puts out the excellent magazine, Mushroom: The Journal of Amateur Mushrooming and who has not only been a great email contact for identification questions, but also hosts our website on his server in Chicago. In short order I also became reacquainted with Ursula Hoffmann of the NYC club and NEMF as well as Gary Lincoff, who I had met a couple of times at lectures down at the Museum of Natural History sponsored by the New York Mycological Society. It was kind of like observing a family reunion. Everyone knew each other, and there were some wonderful minds walking around.

Let me tell you, to a fungus crazed individual like myself, there's really no better feeling than being on a dedicated mushroom vacation... I was free! FREE!! Free to throw off any pretense that I was thinking about anything other than mushrooms for a while. Free to speak to strangers in taxonomic Latin, free to give myself permission to start again with a beginner's mind and not be an expert or a leader and to simply bask in the superior knowledge of those mycological demigods whose experience and learning could (and in some cases does) fill volumes.

### **Day 1**

The first day, Thursday, was really a half day, a day for arrivals with a foray scheduled in the early afternoon after people were settled. I didn't want to be skeptical about the possibility of finding mushrooms, but the previous 4-5 weeks had been pretty dry, but the area had received a little less than an inch of rain the previous weekend. I was hoping it wouldn't be a bust.

The great commotion of the afternoon was an absolutely stunning Spice Bush Swallowtail caterpillar, which George Johanson had found along the road. Sam Ristich, who holds not only a PhD in mycology but also a PhD in Entomology, was greatly pleased. The caterpillar's gorgeous yellow color indicated that it would soon pupate.

So, after persuading the mass of people gabbing about the caterpillar in the middle of the driveway to get out of the way, the caravan headed to the first foray walk site. When we got out in the woods, it was apparent that the area was exceedingly dry.

With very careful searching, however, under leaves and on logs by a stream, we were able to find numerous president, Morris Palmer and Leon Shernoff are expert Go players, and the scrabble game was very serious, too.

Eventually the busy day caught up to me and I found my way to my bed.

### **Day Two**

The first morning I awoke at around 6:15am to the sound of a raucous group of fungophiles some 50 feet from my upstairs window. Rubbing the sleep out of my eyes, I made my way to the nearest window and peered out. They were focused around George Johanson, cracking black walnuts in the vise-like super-duty nut cracker that George had set up on the trunk of his car. It is my belief that George, like squirrels will sometimes do, had filled the inside of his car with nuts the year before and was now getting down to the last of his cache. He kept finding more under the seat, though. There were also, of course, hickory nuts and butternuts in great supply.

---

*George, like squirrels will sometimes do, had filled the inside of his car with nuts the year before and was now getting down to the last of his cache*

---

I changed windows and looked uphill out of the bathroom window and couldn't believe my eyes. The most senior of the guest mycologists, Sam Ristich, gnarled as an old apple tree at a sprightly 90 years old, was walking laps up and down the hill of the resort's driveway at a fast clip. One of the things I will be most thankful for in attending this foray will always be the opportunity to have met Sam Ristich, whose immense knowledge has only served to enhance his natural inclination to share and to teach, not only through conveying learning through his persistent asking of questions, but also through his fabulous sense of excitement and wonderment with the world. In his presence, phrases like, "Halleluiah!" and "Holy Cow!" and other great exclamations are always to be heard, raising chuckles from those hearing it from a distance across the dining hall or in the woods. Sam was immediately generous to me, simply because it is his nature to be so, and for this I shall always be thankful.

Shortly after breakfast, there was a formal walking around the ID tables with Gary Lincoff and others discussing the interesting aspects of various finds from the day before, and then we were all off for the first morning foray...

The sky was looking very heavy. This morning's walk found me with a small group of others on a secluded stretch of the Salmon River in the Salmon River State Park. I had decided I wanted to check out the slope up above the road which ran parallel to the river before checking out the bank. Intuition always tells me that in dry weather, the best variety of terrestrial mushrooms is usually found along stream beds, especially where small streams come off a hill into a river. For about a minute, I followed a dryish streambed up a ways to where it disappeared into a large concrete culvert embedded in the hill. The hill became impossibly steep, so I turned back after not finding anything. I came back on the road and didn't even hear any indication of

*Continued on page 5*

the strong nausea effects (and undoubtedly enhance the hallucinatory experience). There was great variability of the personal experiences, and interestingly, many were not much interested in repeated use of the mushroom. This, too, accords with my first person interviews. Several people I have spoken with who have eaten *muscaria* said they tried it a second time only to verify that it was as bad as they thought the first time.

\* In the interest of being thorough I also Googled "Smoking + Russula" finding the following site [extoxnet.orst.edu/newsletters/n25\\_82.htm](http://extoxnet.orst.edu/newsletters/n25_82.htm). The article describes mushroom poisonings among Laotian immigrants in California who were sickened by both *Amanita* and *Russula* with the *Russula* producing symptoms similar to those of Amatoxins. The authors conclude, "The *Russula* toxin has not been identified, but it results in a shorter incubation period -- 1-2 hours -- followed by minor gastrointestinal and parasympathetic symptoms and hallucinations."

Holey Smokin' *Russula*! Perhaps our patient was on to something after all! Aside from the name, he may have known his mushrooms better than any of us thought.

But ...The case cited was from a 1981 incident, rather enigmatic and controversial. Although from a CDC source of highest regard (Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, June 4, 1982/ Volume 31 /Number 21.) it seems to stand alone in the toxicology literature.

Puzzled, I contacted Dr. Michael Beug, NAMA's toxicology go-to guy. His response follows:

"I have interviewed hundreds of people who have intentionally ingested *Amanita muscaria* and/or *Amanita pantherina* (containing ibotenic acid and muscimol) as well as a wide range of species that contain psilocybin and psilocin. None had ever mentioned smoking the mushrooms. Also in the over 2,000 mushroom poisonings reported to NAMA over the past 30 years, there has been no [[only one]] reference to smoking mushrooms until now. However, I would expect that smoking mushrooms would volatilize some of the active ingredient and clearly others have explored this practice as evidenced by the websites that one discovers when Googling Smoking + Mushrooms."

Concerning *Russula* toxins, Dr. Beug reports, "In the NAMA database I find reports of poisonings by *Russula* species involving 25 people with various stages of gastrointestinal distress - often quite severe. I just rediscovered one other case from a few years ago of smoking a red-capped *Russula* to get high and the person just wound up nauseous. Usually no one was able to identify the *Russula* that had made them ill. Two people were poisoned by what appeared to be *Russula claroflava*, two by what was generally described as *Russula emetica*, one serious GI with convulsions and disorientation from *R.*

*nigricans*, two poisonings from *Russula occidentalis*, two from a mixture of *Russula paludosa* and *R. claroflava*, one from *R. virescens*, and two from *R. xerampelina* that included GI distress, severe chills, hematemesis for both people plus in one there was also anuria, cramps, fever, and leucocytosis. Among the unidentified *Russula* poisonings of 13 individuals, the following symptoms appeared once: blood in stools, disorientation, mydriasis, salivation, tachycardia, agitation, and breathing difficulties; two had weakness, nausea, sweating; three had cramps; 4 had chills, and 7 experienced vomiting and diarrhea.

I know nothing about any specific toxins in *Russula* species but after reviewing the database, I am quite reluctant to sample *Russulas*, they seem to pack a pretty good punch at times."

So...with this advice in mind, perhaps we should all go through our field guides to re-edit: All *Russulas* should be considered inedible and unsmokable! ❖



## A Successful Mushroom Art Gallery Showing

Congratulations must go out to MHMA member, Cynthia Winika for her well attended opening and show, [Accidental Mycologist](#), at the A.I.R. Gallery II in NYC last month. Also contributing to the awareness of this show was MHMA member, Michelle Falkenstein, who penned a NY Times article on Cynthia's work which appeared in the Westchester Section of the Times.

Thank you Cynthia for stretching the envelope and finding beauty where not everyone sees it at first.

A photo of one of Cynthia's mushroom art pieces appears on the back page in the Mushroom of the Moment section and more can be found at

<http://fiddlehead.smugmug.com/gallery/2128805>

where my group had gone. I crossed the road and slid down the steep path to the river. I immediately found a beautiful white *Amanita cokerii*, the type species for the group Lepidella, most of which are white with white warts. *Amanita cokerii* has a long tapered stem which descends into the ground usually at least a couple of inches. Also, its bands of downward pointing scales on the swollen stipe base are typical. I stopped for photos, knowing that George had left this gift here for me rather than gathering it for the ID tables. A few stray raindrops began to fall and the wind kicked up a bit. I didn't know whether to be thankful because I knew we needed the rain.

I looked around a bit more and decided that it was unlikely I would find anything heading upstream, as that is the way the group had headed. I turned downstream, but the path soon disappeared and the terrain became disappointing. Across the river I spotted an area where a stream joined the river in a northern exposure dominated by Hemlock, Pine and Mixed deciduous trees, with Mountain Laurel along the bank and a primarily deciduous area above. With my camera in a gallon ziplock bag in my basket and the tripod on my back, I took off my shoes, found the shallowest place possible and forded the river, drying my feet with a towel. Taking advice from Douglas Adams' Hitchhiker's Guide To the Universe, I usually carry a towel with me, whether to wipe hands after applying bug repellent, drying my brow, or drying my feet after fording a river.

Weaving through the Mountain Laurel to the stream, I could see that the terrain was a little bit damper here, with sphagnum moss in beds in an area between the two branches of the stream. There were plenty of small mushrooms here, and, to my delight, some of the most gorgeous *Suillus pictus* (formerly *Suillus spraguei*, the Painted Suillus) I had ever seen poking out of the moss over the stream. With the magical abilities of the Gitzo Explorer tripod, I was able to suspend the camera over the water below the level of the edge of the bank to take some nice photos. It was now raining pretty steadily, but the White Pines I was under were giving me some partial protection. I got the camera back into the ziplock just as all hell broke loose. The rain came down in buckets. I was instantly wet. I was thinking, though, that since I was wet and I had already forded the river, I should probably follow the stream uphill to see what I could find.

To make a long story short, I spent about another hour exploring the area, completely soaked to the bone, I found some gorgeous areas and quite a number of mushrooms to bring back to the ID tables, mostly *Cortinarius* and *Entoloma*, as well as some *Leccinum* and a number of slimes *Mirascium* and *Mycena*. (this was my chance to find out what some of these LBMs are!) When I got back to the river, I didn't bother to take off my shoes, as they were as wet as the rest of me. The river was a little higher than it had been when I went across the first time, but not dangerously so. I made it back to the car and the other cars of my compatriots were gone. We had all planned to meet for lunch at the cars, but I assumed the rain had overwhelmed them. I took a few more utility towels out of the trunk and lay them on my car seat, got my lunch out and drove back to Cave Hill with the heat on...

Once I got back, I brought my haul of very wet paper bags to

the ID tables, sat down and got to work. All in all I brought perhaps 30 or 40 species to the tables. I stayed long enough to give my best shot at ¾ of them before I started to shiver. I really needed to get changed up to get ready to help Damon cook for the Mycophagy session that day, but before I left, I bought a copy of Sam Ristich's self published Sam's Corner book, a compilation of Sam's public journals and commentaries over a years. This is a source of amazing enlightenment and includes discussion of species you are unlikely to find in the books. I brought my copy over to Sam, and he signed and inscribed it for me.

My roommate Damon and I were well paired. Both musician/composers, both chefs, both myco-people. Damon, the walk chairman for COMA had been contracted to be responsible for the Wine and Cheese Mycophagy sessions on Friday and Saturday afternoons. He's a private chef, meaning he cooks for one family whenever they want him to, and he takes cooking stints in various big name NYC restaurants whenever he feels he needs some inspiration or polishing up. Damon had bought some mushrooms in the city before coming up, because he was not convinced that the group would find enough mushrooms to cook for a group of 80 folks.

That first cooking session, Damon a couple of other volunteers and I were able to get 5 or 6 dishes out to the expectant crowd in the couple of hours we had to cook. There were scrumptious Steamed Shiitake Dim Sum dumplings, Bruscetta of Tomato, Fennel, Lemon with Cultivated Maitake, Pasta with braised Black Staining Polypore, Fricasee of Fresh Corn, Peppers and Chanterelles, Marinated *Agaricus bisporus* with crackers and summer sausage and something else I can't recall. All were delicious and well received with the exception of the Black Staining Polypore is that when you pick it in prime condition, you need to cook it right away! Don't wait until tomorrow. We made that mistake. The flavor was OK, then there is the fact that they turn totally black when you cook them. They had the consistency of strips of fine English leather which has been sautéed and braised in stock and butter and herbs for an hour. Too bad.

Among other things, dinner on Friday included potatoes, so, in thanks to this exceptional group of folks, I decided to break out a treat I had brought: a bottle of good truffle oil. If you have ever had potatoes with truffle, you know that they were made for each other. I passed it around the whole dining hall. The experience isn't for everyone, but I, for one, am utterly entranced by truffles. It is a pheremonal thing, I believe.

Following dinner (we ate a lot on this foray) we had another walk around the ID tables, which were much fuller than before, and got to hear Gary and Sam, both of whom have probably forgotten more in their lives than I will ever know, discuss the taxonomy of various fungi. This was followed by another excellent round of evening presentations.

The first was by Elinoar Shavit who spoke eloquently on the truffles of the Holy Lands showing not only their habitats but also discussing the etymological history behind how their common and taxonomic names are derived from ancient words for *food* and originally, *manna*. She asserted that the truffles of the holy land seemingly burst forth from the ground at night with the

*Continued from previous page*

dew, shattering the crust of the desert surface, thus looking as if they have fallen from heaven. (I don't know, if I got up in the morning one day and the ground outside my house was littered with giant truffles, I might very well think something divine was going on! I might also start attending religious services!)

After that, David Rose gave a very well researched and well-delivered history of amateur mycology in North America, including such giants as Charles Horton Peck, the botanist at the New York State Museum in Albany from 1868 to 1911, the dangerously sloppy Charles "Old Ironguts" McIlvane, the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century maverick mycologist who insisted loudly that most of the literature was wrong and ate nearly every fungus he found, including many *Amanita* and especially the most stinky of stinkhorns, proclaiming they were all delicious. David discussed the years in the 1950s leading into our country's psychedelic era as well as the sometimes strange but wonderful years that composer John Cage was co-refounder and president of the New York Mycological Society. Many of the folks at this gathering had known and foraged with John. I knew John Cage mainly only through his work as composer, and had briefly met him (long ago when I was still studying Music Composition at Oberlin Conservatory) in Putney, Vermont, at the Yellow Barn Festival at a performance of some of his work, but sorely wished that I had had the opportunity to spend time with him in the context of mushrooms.

The end of the evening that night also included bouts of Go and Scrabble, but also included a lot of sitting around and talking, which I was grateful for. I ended up at a table with Leon Shernoff, Dave Rose and Gary Lincoff. Conversation was REALLY fascinating. Leon and I got to talking about the world of composers, Dave and Gary talked about how things were with John Cage around and Gary told an incredible story about his incredible trip with a group of others to the Kamchatka Peninsula, which is a strip of land between Alaska and Russia with two distinctly different human populations, the Russians and the hunting/gathering Koryak people. The Koryak evidently have a deep and ancient practice of using *Amanita muscaria* regularly, in shamanic practice and for health. Gary told us about his experience partaking in *A. muscaria*, and his inexplicable strength for hours or even days afterward: standing to make a toast to his Russian hosts thereby causing his chair to fly back from him and shatter against the wall and the following day accidentally pulling the airplane's seatbelt out of its anchors. Much more on this subject is available online in the form of an article which Gary wrote about his experiences at <http://www.nemf.org/files/various/muscaria/part1.html>.

Saturday

Today Damon and I decided to head out on an early mushroom walk together since we were planning on returning to the resort early to cook for the mycophagy session. It was a nice day, muddy, and we decided to walk another portion of the Salmon River Park to see what we could find. The rain the day before had certainly done its magic and if we had to choose the genera of the day would have had to be *Entoloma* and *Cortinarius*, though there a lot of *Amanita* around. I picked up some *Boletus edulis* (Porcini) and *Laetiporus sulphureus* (Chicken Mushroom) for the kitchen later on

and there were a great number of "Beech Rooters" or *Xerula furfuracea*, (also known as Rooting Collybia). We gathered many many species for the ID tables, including some interesting mystery Boletes. We got back, added our additions to the ID tables, which were getting crowded enough that it was hard to find a place to put anything, and got ready to cook.

This time around, we had more locally picked mushrooms to work with, but the problem was that many of them kept coming in piecemeal after groups came back when it was close to the time for us to put out food... I can't remember everything we prepared, but here are some highlights... Damon put together these delicious fried Maitake "Meatballs", there was something tasty with Lobster mushrooms, but the most memorable thing for my were the Deep Fried Chicken Mushroom Nuggets. This one really surprised me. It was by far the best recipe I have ever had involving Chicken Mushrooms. First we braised the tender portions of a large number of Chicken Mushrooms in butter, water, salt, herbs and garlic. We drained them to remove the liquid. Then we proceeded with a standard breading of flour, eggwash and bread crumbs. These were then deep fried in oil until golden at an estimated temperature of 325 degrees (we didn't have a thermometer.) The result was astounding. The "chicken" was so very tender and tasty. Definitely a recipe for the books. Someone came in and insisted that we cook up a basketful of very dirty Beech Rooters, which we really didn't want to do but did anyway. They complained that it had too much garlic.

The barbecue which rapidly followed the mushroom feed was followed by Gary's discussion of notable finds. I don't know how many of you have met Gary but my experience with him is that besides being tremendously knowledgeable, his witty and straight-faced sarcastic side comments are really hilarious.

Saturday night was scheduled to be a Sam Ristich extravaganza, with Sam giving a presentation on slime molds and also a celebration of his accomplishments by old friends and students, many of whom are now the recognized experts in the field of mycology. It was also to be a celebration of his 90 1/2<sup>th</sup> birthday, but bless him, Sam was too tired to continue the day and went to bed. We feted him in absentia.

The last official event of the night was the long awaited Tchotchka Auction, hosted by Leon Shernoff, who is both intentionally and unintentionally very very funny as an auctioneer. The items ranged from tacky mushroom plates, to mushroom baskets, posters, art, garden gnomes, and homemade chanterelle vodkas. I hadn't brought a lot of money on this trip, so I happily sat there for 2 1/2 hours so that I could finally bid on a t-shirt.

The last item of note on this trip, for me, was a spontaneous conversation I got into with Don Shernoff, Leon Shernoff, George Johanson and Bill Bakaitis about mushroom clubs, organizing and motivating and educating members, and different ways on organizing different processes within clubs. It was a great way to leave this, my first multi day foray: feeling positive and empowered

*Continued on page 7*

I had a great time at this foray. I spent a lot of time in the presentation hall at the ID tables. There were many species which were new to me. Never before had I had the opportunity to meet Stinky Squid, *Pseudocolus fusiformis* in person. Another amazing looking specimen was the Pretzel Slime, *Hemitrichia serpula*, which was tiny and gorgeous in its uniqueness. I also saw the Beefsteak Fungus, *Fistulina hepatica* for the first time. We ended up documenting more than 350 species! There were many more interesting species than I can list here, but certainly the most precious find of the weekend, for me, was this awesome group of folks, some of whom began as friends but all of whom ended as better friends by the end. This foray is obviously highly recommended ☺

Photos of the Spice Bush Swallowtail Caterpillar, numerous fungi and people on this COMA foray are available on my website at <http://fiddlehead.smugmug.com/gallery/1826070>. There is also a video clip of the ID Tables for those of you who have broadband service



Mushrooms are BEAUTIFUL!

Some are FAT  
Some are TALL  
Some are LOUD                    → →  
And some are small.  
Some are DROOPY  
Some are LOOPY  
And some are very very GOOPY!  
Some are CLEAN  
Some are GREEN  
And some are VERY VERY MEAN.

Some are SHAGGY  
Some are BALD  
Some I don't know WHAT they're called.  
Some Mushrooms really LOVE eachother.  
Some you wouldn't show your MOTHER!  
Why do I love these mushrooms SO?  
'Cause some are good with ESCARGOT!

David Work

This poem created as part of a mushrooms slideshow presented at the Rosendale Library in September. The accompanying photos are set up in a slideshow online at <http://fiddlehead.smugmug.com/gallery/2129100>

MID HUDSON MYCOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP / RELEASE FORM

Dues (Please circle one)      Family: \$15      Individual: \$10      Full time student: \$5

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

Address \_\_\_\_\_

e-mail (important!) \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

**RELEASE**

I (We) realize that when engaged in wild mushroom activities, that serious physical injury and personal property damage may accidentally occur. I (We) further realize that there is always the possibility of having an allergic reaction to or being poisoned by the eating of wild mushrooms and that these adverse reactions to eating wild mushrooms range from mild indigestion to fatal illness. Knowing the risks, I (we) agree to assume the risks, and agree to release, hold harmless and to indemnify the Mid-Hudson Mycological Association, and any officer or member thereof, from any and all legal responsibility for injuries or accidents incurred by myself or my family during or as a result of any mushroom identification, field trip, excursion, meeting or dining, sponsored by the club.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please send your completed application, signed and dated, with your check to "MHMA" to:  
Cynthia Fisher, MHMA Treasurer, 203 Lily Lake Road, Highland, NY 12528

As a member of MHMA you are entitled to Discounted Membership with the North American Mycological Association. If you are interested in joining or renewing NAMA membership through MHMA, please include an additional check for \$32 per person made out to "NAMA" and include it in the envelope with this form and we will forward your NAMA renewal.



*Cynthia Winika's Sketch on this Artist Conk shows it is a perfect medium for the creative mind*  
*Photo by D. Work*

## Mushroom of the Moment

### *Ganoderma applanatum* – Artist's Conk

Sometimes truly awesome in size and a polypore of many varied uses, *Ganoderma applanatum* is a very widely distributed fungus, appearing in all 50 of the United States. Artist's Conk grows on nearly all species of hardwood trees and quite a few conifers, as well, causing a white rot of both sapwood and heartwood in trees. Ancient firemakers revered this conk for its exceptional tinder potential, early gunpowder makers preferred it for making charcoal for the production of black powder for its exceptionally fine grain. Natural Medicine practitioners claim preparations of this conk can be used as an anti-bacterial, anti-inflammatory or anti-tumor tonic, as well as a supportive concoction for the respiratory system. Countless masterpieces have been etched onto these giants. The drawings can be kept indefinitely once the conk is dry ❖

***Mushroom Calendars will be available at the Dec. 2<sup>nd</sup>  
Mushroom Feast/Semi-Annual Meeting***

MHMA  
140 Smith Lane  
Accord NY 12404

***MID HUDSON MYCOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION***  
***All Mushrooms. All the Time.***

***Perishable Mushroom Related Information Enclosed.***