



Symbiosis[©]

The newsletter of the Prairie States Mushroom Club

Volume 34:3

Winter

<http://iowamushroom.org>

The Mushroom Gift Issue



Looking Forward

by Glen Schwartz

While another year of mushrooming comes to a close, we look forward to better mushrooming next year. 2017 was not a very good year for mushrooms in eastern and central Iowa. Northeast Iowa had plenty of rain, but we did not have any forays planned for that area. The rest of the state experienced dry conditions. Not really a drought for most of us, but not enough rain to make the mushrooms fruit.

In late winter/early spring, we had a mushroom planning meeting. We made a big mistake by not setting up foray dates, so we were left hanging for months while we waited for decisions to be made about where and when we would foray. Let's not make that mistake again.

Attendance at our forays was down this year compared to the previous several years. In fact, we had so few people at our last foray, that we could not have our annual meeting as we did not have a quorum. Our bylaws do not address this situation, so the PSMC Board-of-Directors discussed our options, and decided on an email "meeting". If you have not done so yet, please vote for or against the officers for next year by returning the "meeting" email. Unless there are objections, the 2018 officers will be:

- President Dean Abel
- Vice President Marty Augustine
- Treasurer Roger Heidt
- Secretary Glen Schwartz

(cont. on back pg.)

From the Editor

Dave Layton

This issue's theme is mushroom related gifts. Several PSMC members will share mushroom gift ideas and creations. These include the lovely hand-carved mushrooms that Roger Heidt has created (pictured above). He began this new artistic phase in his life when he retired. I let him know that I've positively identified these as wood *blewits*. We'll see more pics of his sculptures in different stages of development.

When I think of mushroom gifts the first thing that comes to mind are books. That's because my librarian wife Sally loves to give books and I now have a very enjoyable mushroom library because of her gifts over the years. Mike Krebil lets us know about some great books to give loved ones who also love mushrooms. He'll also share some great online sites for buying great mushroom gifts.

Speaking of loving mushrooms, its always a delight to give guests a delicious wild mushroom meal. Karen Yakovich will share a delicious puffball pizza idea.

Katie Thompson will share a sweet article about using gifts such as mushroom baskets and hand lenses as great presents to get children involved with exploring nature especially fungi. Glen will also share a few mushroom related gift ideas. Finally Caroline Detreich and I will have a couple fun stories about mushrooms themselves as gifts both good and, well, horrendous. 

The Gift of Exploration Puffball Pizza

by Katie Thompson

by Karen Yakovich

As are most children, my niece has always been fascinated by the outdoors. She teeters between fearless and squeamish; though, with some patient and careful coaxing, she proudly holds the daddy long-leg and presents it to others as if their prudishness is unjustified. As her naturalist-minded aunt, I do everything I can to promote her interest and enthusiasm for the outdoors. Her birthday present last year was a handmade wooden box that was wood-burned with the words “Mila’s Rocks” along with sketches of geodes, crystals, and other outdoor illustrations. Figuring this would be something she wouldn’t appreciate until she was quite a bit older, I was overwhelmed when she gasped with delight while opening it. We now trade rocks every time we meet up.

Being one of the more unfamiliar and intimidating groups of organisms on this Earth, fungi initially fell into this squeamish-worthy category. Even so, Mila picked up on my fascination for lichens and mushrooms at a very early age; however, at that point she was still calling them “marshmallows”. Each time she stumbled across one, she would flag down her mom (my older sister) and describe to her just how much her aunt Katie would love it and how excited she would be to see it. Naturally, every time I hear this, my heart melts. It really never gets old.

As Mila’s 5th birthday was approaching this past September, I knew I had to get her something that would increase her fascination and curiosity for fungi. I initially was hoping for a children’s field guide to mushroom, similar to those in the National Audubon Society’s “First Field Guide” series, but I unfortunately had no luck finding one. Big River Books sells a mushroom coloring book (which was even tempting to myself as an early birthday present), but being that the fall season was still in full swing, I wanted something a bit more interactive. I thought about what I normally bring when I am planning to “explore” (be it for mushrooms, lichens, etc.), and realized that it was generally as simple as a carrying vessel and perhaps a hand lens for smaller specimens. I began searching for a collection basket and found one at a fair trade store in Asheville, North Carolina. It was essentially identical to those available on Fungi.com (available under the title “Kid’s Mushroom Hunting Basket”) – in pink and

After a rainy spell and warm weather, the family raided the forest. We were hopeful of finding some honeys. We may have been a little early (or late). There wasn’t a honey in sight. We found lots of LBM’s though. As we were leaving I thought about heading to the one spot that I saw the decayed giant puffball last year. Sure enough, we found five giant puffballs. We took them home and peeled, sliced, and diced them. Most of them got put in the dehydrator. Some were shared with friends. We fried some in batter. Those were pretty bland. A friend asked what it tasted like. Like a tempurpedic mattress soaked in foot bath water. “Why would you eat that?” she said. It tasted more like French toast when we dipped it in maple syrup. My favorite was the puffball pizzas. I put the slices on a pizza screen and topped them like mini pizzas and put them through the pizza oven. They were delicious like that. I’ve seen people pan fry or grill the ¾ inch slices before they top and broil their mini puffball pizzas. I topped mine raw because the ¾ inch slices were no match for my commercial pizza oven. Now, what to do with all that powdered puffball...



Cheddar and jalapeno is my favorite.



(cont. on pg. 5)



Online Shopping Opportunities

by Mike Krebill

For sheer convenience, it's hard to beat online shopping if you have a computer, a credit or debit card, and are connected to the internet. There's a work-around if you aren't connected: get online at your public library. Don't know how? Librarians are there to help.

One of the best online catalogs is the flipbook at highly respected Fungi Perfecti:

<http://www.fungi.com/pdf/catalog/flipbook/mobile/index.html> - p=1

Gourmet Mushroom's site is reasonably easy to navigate: <http://www.gmushrooms.com>

For a wide range of handcrafted items, do a mushroom gifts search on Etsy.com.

Here's an item I found that could be used to decorate a special cake:



10 marzipan chanterelles from AlexandrasCandyLab

in Italy. \$14.77. https://www.etsy.com/listing/276059206/marzipan-chanterelle-mushrooms10?ga_order=most_relevant&ga_search_type=all&ga_view_type=gallery&ga_search_query=mushroom%20gift&ref=sr_gallery_32

One more website to check out: <http://everythingmushrooms.com/great-gift-ideas>

These four sites provide a sample of what can be found by doing a search for "mushroom gifts." There are also mushroom tours/trips and NAMA meetings that might be fun. Just be careful and check out reviews from

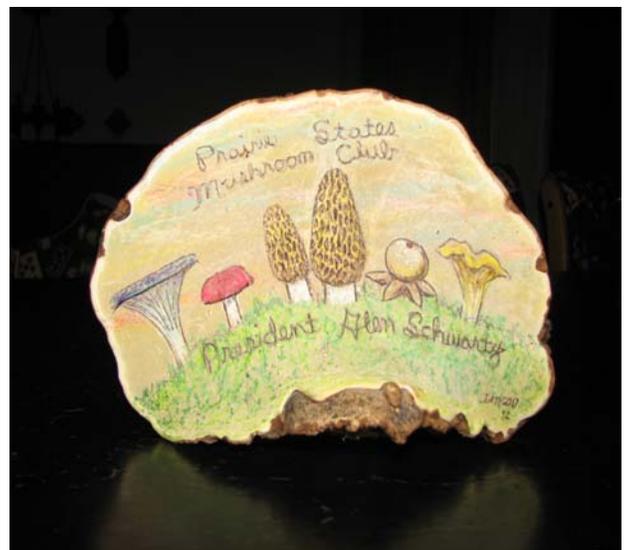
participants who have gone. Chris Matherly, who built quite a reputation for morels, did not deliver what he promised, and the reviews and litigation will impact his business. 

Mushroom Gift Ideas

by Glen Schwartz

If you have a mushroomer in your circle of friends or family, I have a few ideas for gifts.

1. Get them a carved morel trinket for their keychain. I have one carved from a deer horn that I keep on my keychain. This way, I get to look at it every day and it always brings a smile to my face. The image of the morel gets implanted in my brain, and that makes it easier to spot real morels in the spring.
2. If you have a friend that is an artist, bring them an Artist's Conk. Better yet, bring them several Conks of various sizes. Just now, I was looking at Artist's Conks online, and there are some that have been painted rather than scratched as we normally see. Apparently, oil paints work well.
3. If you are an artist and a mushroomer, create gifts out of Artist Conks. Several years ago, Brett Johnson made a beautiful piece for me. It sits on our dining room table for all to see. He used a combination of colored pencils, pens, and indentations to make this colorful piece. 



A Gift that Keeps on Giving - Hopefully

by Dave Layton



Ken displaying a blewit



Seed blewits



Food blewits

My best mushroom find this year was in a paper bag on my porch. It was a single blewit (*Lepista nuda*.) I was excited about this because two years ago blewit patches that I'd been harvesting for most of a decade disappeared. I believe they drowned in a torrential summer rain two years ago. I also think that blewits are more of an annual mushroom than a perennial one meaning they have to reseed (respore?) the direct area if they are going to continue to be abundant in that area. So when I received a message later asking what they were from my friend Ken who left them on my porch, I was doubly excited when he said he had lots of them. He was fine with me taking old ones to try respore my favorite woods with. It turned out he had a pile of leaves on the top of a ravine that had dozens of blewit caps old and young. I showed Ken how to be sure they were blewits - pinkish/white spores rather

than orange or brown and no cobwebby veil on young ones differentiating them from *Cortinarius* species and I showed him how to cleanly harvest just the youngest worm-free ones for eating. Blewits quickly develop a stale flavor as they age, but I love young ones.

I went home with a paper grocery sack half full of old ones including some leaves with mycelium for good measure. I also had a nice little sack of perfect eaters. Ken took a sack of those too. After spreading the caps in my favorite spots and some new spots too, I'm hoping this will be the gift that keeps on giving. I'll let you know next fall if the respore worked. The next day I got a message from Ken that these were a new favorite for him. I guess my knowledge turned out to be a gift for him too. 🍄

Mushroom Wood Carving

by Roger Heidt

My latest activity is caring out (chainsaw and angle grinder) “mushrooms” for flower beds and smaller ones for indoors. I made the big ones from the ash tree branch I had to trim for water line work at my house. I’ve been experimenting with different woods, Cedar branches make nice ones. I also got some 2 inch thick wood I helped mill at the Indian Creek Nature Center. No need to glue up for thickness. Pictured below are four easy steps to a “mushroom” with standard lumber.



1. Cut pieces for cap and stem.



2. Glue up for thickness.



3. Rough cut shape.



4. Whittle and glue cap to stem.



5. I finish them with Danish Oil.

I had not planned on selling any. I use up most of my stock for “yard size”. I’ve been making small ones for gifts.

Editor’s Note: I identified the ones on the front page as wood blewits, but lack of gills and light tan color lead me to believe this demonstrator mushroom is actually a barkless bolete. - DL 

The Gift of Exploration

(cont. from pg. 2)

purple, of course. It was perfect. I paired it with a larger-sized plastic hand lens given to me by my current graduate advisor, but similar to the Bausch & Lomb Pocket Magnifier 4X available online. Just as before, her unexpected surprise and enthusiasm melted my heart, followed by her urgency to get outside to look at mushrooms and “lichings”. We spent the evening magnifying cicada shells, crawling through the grass searching for mushrooms, and huddled under bleachers checking out saxicolous lichens on pebbles. We were so wrapped up that both of our moms had to tell us it finally was time to come home... 



Mila with Hand lens and basket

When Mushroom are Just Plain Wrong

by Caroline Dieterle

Mushrooms are a wonderful gift from nature - when they're where they belong, but when they're found where they shouldn't be found, well, they're really really creepy, as Caroline Dieterle shares:

Here are 2 photos of mushrooms sp. that came up in the flooring around the base of a leaky toilet in an apartment on Clinton St. in Iowa City in 1986. Not digital but I have the negatives. I photographed them with my iPhone.

My eldest daughter was a student and lived there with a friend. Great location - right across from what is now the Old Capitol Mall - but conditions in the building were a bit 'rough'. She called me one day and told me there were mushrooms growing in the bathroom, so I went over with my Pentax. - C.

I can only imagine Caroline's initial reaction to her daughter's mushroom gift. I don't suppose it would have helped much for her to know they were harmless inky

caps. Plus harmless is a relative term when the mushrooms indicate that the toilet may soon fall through a rotten floor. Oh well, Caroline's daughter apparently got her education without further mishap. 



2017 PSMC Treasurers report

Submitted by PSMC Treasurer, Roger Heidt

Starting Balance:		\$3207.94
Income:	\$400.00	(all from membership dues)
Expenses:		
Printing	\$ 94.83	
Mileage	\$ 79.82	
Linn Co. Conservation	\$100.00	(Donation for use of building, 2016 Meeting)
Hospice	\$100.00	(Linda Scarth Memorial)
Web Site Hosting	\$119.40	(Aabaco Small Business)
Planning Luncheon	\$150.00	
Photo Site	\$ 60.00	(Smug Mug)
NAMA Dues	\$ 30.00	
Office supplies	\$ 5.87	
Postage	\$ 31.78	
Total Expenses	\$771.70	
Ending Balance as of 11/12/2017:	\$2836.24	

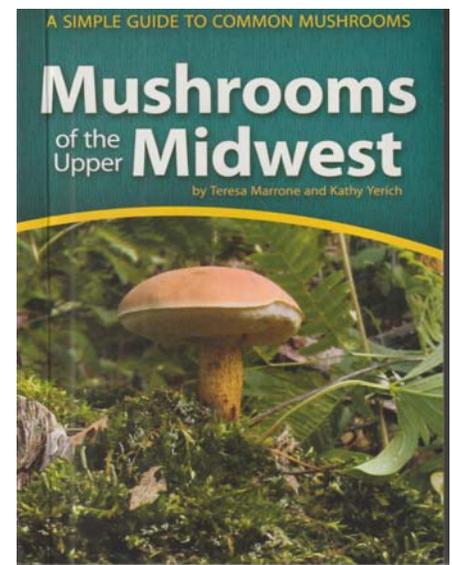
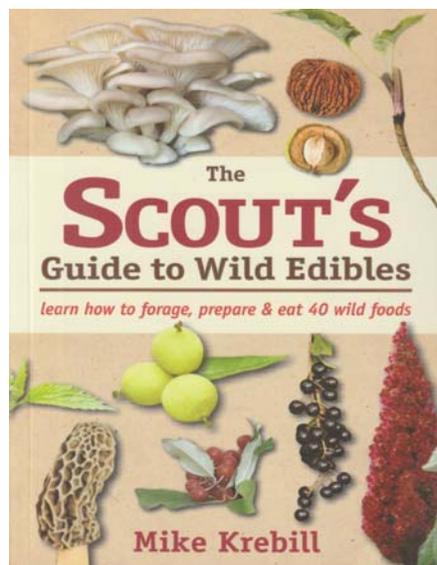
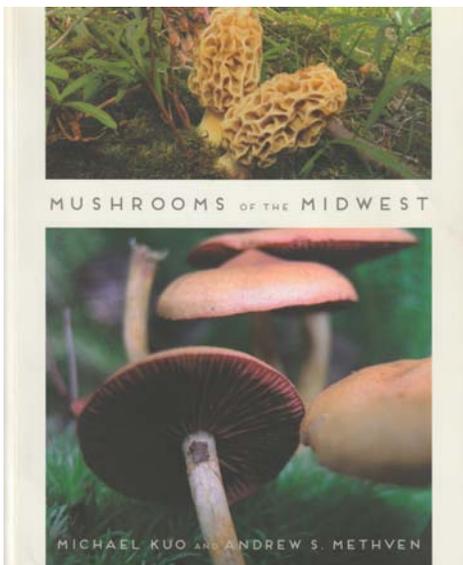
Great gifts for Budding mushroom Hunters

by Mike Krebill

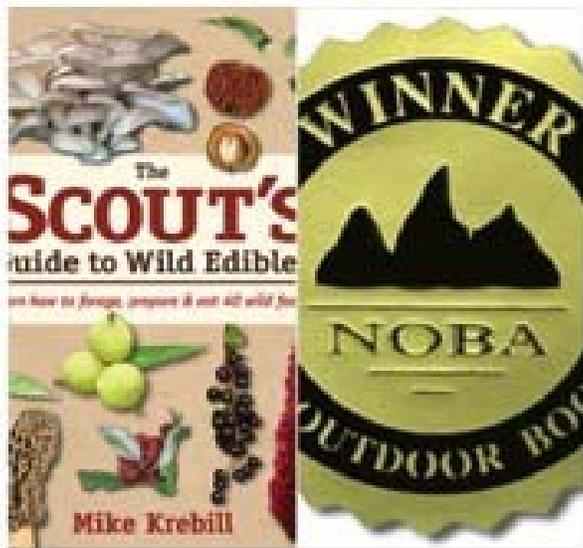
While there are all kinds of gifts one might give a beginning (or even a veteran) mushroom hunter, ranging from tee shirts to collecting baskets to hiking poles, none is as useful as an additional field guide with outstanding color photos of mushrooms. The reason for this is that there may be up to 5,000 species of mushrooms, and no one book can hold them all. Note that I said “additional field guide.” If possible, take a peek to find out what books your giftee owns. And don’t get hung up on “field guide.” The book doesn’t need to be small or easily carried. Most veteran mushroom hunters learn quickly not to lug books around with them. It’s hard to stand still long enough to use a book to identify mushrooms when the mosquitoes are biting, and reference books are quickly damaged by rain. Plus, books can be heavy. We typically leave them in the car, and when we come back with our collection, we place the mushrooms on a picnic table. We return to the car to get our reference books and our lunches, and then, enjoy identifying our find while eating lunch with one another.

To organize the list of books and make it easier to compare with what your giftee may already own, the list is alphabetized by the author’s last name.

- Barron, *Mushrooms of Northeast North America, Midwest to New England*, Lone Pine Publishing, Auburn, WA, 1999.
- Forsberg and Lindberg, *Edible Mushrooms: Safe to Pick, Good to Eat*, Skyhorse Publishing, NY, 2014.
- Holmberg and Marklund, *The Pocket Guide to Wild Mushrooms*, Skyhorse Publishing, 2013.
- Jordan, *Mushroom Picker’s Foolproof Field Guide*, Southwater, London, 2010.
- Katsaros, *National Audubon Society Pocket Guide to Familiar Mushrooms*, Knopf, NY, 1990.
- Krebill, *The Scout’s Guide to Wild Edibles*, St. Lynn’s Press, Pittsburgh, PA, 2016.
- Kuo and Methven, *Mushrooms of the Midwest*, University of Illinois Press, Chicago, 2014.
- Laessoe and Lincoff, *Mushrooms. How to Identify and Gather Mushrooms & Other Fungi*, DK Publishing, NY, 2013.
- Marrone and Sturgeon, *Mushrooms of the Northeast*, Adventure Publications, 2016.
- Marrone and Yerich, *Mushrooms of the Upper Midwest*, Adventure Publications, Cambridge, MN, 2014.
- McFarland and Mueller, *Edible Wild Mushrooms of Illinois & Surrounding States*, University of Illinois Press, Chicago, 2009.
- Plischke III, *Good Mushroom Bad Mushroom*, St. Lynn’s Press, Pittsburgh, PA, 2016.
- Schwab, *Mushrooming with Confidence*, Skyhorse Publishing, NY, 2011. 



Congratulations Mike Krebill!



St. Lynn's Press
November 16 at 10:22 am

It's a wonderful day at St. Lynn's: The Scout's Guide to Wild Edibles by Mike Krebill has won the Nature Guidebook category of the 2017 National Outdoor Book Awards!

A huge congrats to Mike and all of the other awards winners. Thank you to the National Outdoor Book Awards for recognizing outstanding writing and publishing in the outdoor field. We are just thrilled by the honor. 😊

Here's what the NOBA judges had to say about Scout's Guide: "Sometimes good guidebooks come in small packages. The Scout's Guide to Wild Edibles almost fits in a back pocket, and yet, for it

relatively small size, it packs in a lot of information. Author Mike Krebill knows his wild edibles, and he knows how to make a guidebook fun for young people. A wild food expert and a Scout leader, he divides the book into two parts: the first is the identification guide profiling 40 widely found edible wild plants and mushrooms. The second half consists of recipes and ways of cooking wild foods. In this last half boys and girls are pictured preparing and cooking plants that they have gathered on their outdoor forays. It's oriented to the younger set, of course, but adults just might want to sneak one along on the next outing. They'll find it pretty handy too." 🍄

My Morel Gifts

by Dave Layton

In this picture I'm modeling three great morel gifts that I'd never be caught morel hunting with. My cap says Morel Hunter with morel pic emblazoned. It looks very official and I can imagine a novice coming up and asking, "Excuse me sir - When is your next tour of the best morel spots?" Next, I'm wearing a really nice T-shirt that says Morel Master on it. I know some old fart coming up to me in the woods will say, "Hey Morel Master - what about that one you just stepped on?" Finally, I'm holding a beautiful hand-carved morel walking stick. It's just way too nice for a klutz like me to take out in the woods and be likely to lose or break.



My wife, Sally, loves "planting" this wooden morel in an unlikely place then leading some unsuspecting dupe (such as myself or her boss, the college dean) to it and watching their dumbfounded amazement - until they touch it - Ha-ha-ha! Somehow she's managed to retain both her job and our marriage. 🍄

Poisoned by Known Mushrooms - A Warning

by Dave Layton

A person can receive mushroom poisoning more than one way. Most get poisoned by ignorance. They just don't know what they were eating. However, a friend of mine was poisoned by my hubris.

This year American Parasols (*Leucoagaricus americanus*) were particularly abundant here. A large mulch pile at a park yielded hundreds - repeatedly. And I harvested them - repeatedly. I've found and eaten these mushrooms for over 40 years and I've shared them for just as long. However, I've recently read from two different sources that you should use precautions because these have been known to cause allergic reactions for some people. Yeah, but I thought that I've already shared these with so many people over the years. I was sure that they'd be fine in the spaghetti sauce that we shared with another couple. I was wrong.

The husband experienced severe nausea for many hours during the night and morning. I was called about it in the morning while on my way north to have fun with my son. I was not having fun. This man was very sick and I was afraid, but not so much of a digestive reaction possibly caused by the parasols. No I feared the remote possibility that his serious symptoms could be caused by another mushroom I've eaten for several years and included in the sauce, *Paragyrodon spherosporus* (leather sheathed bolete). I found their texture and flavor delightful.

People have eaten leather sheaths without problem over the years. That was before it was recently learned that genetically this strange bolete was most similar to a poison pax (*Paxillus involutus*). I argued that leather sheaths are both structurally and chemically different from poison pax because they look, smell and taste different. They don't contain one of the poisons found in *Paxillus*. So, I thought it highly unlikely that they would have another unidentified but deadly pax toxin. That toxin builds up in the body with repeated ingestion until it triggers an allergic reaction in some people causing their immune systems to fatally attack they're own red blood cells. No one knows the deadly dosage because any amount could trigger the reaction..

The two mushrooms have more similarities than I originally admitted. These include a brown staining of either the gills or pores, in-rolled margin and similar overall color texture

and shape. I couldn't be certain leather sheaths did not have the same toxin because it is unknown. Still, I shared them with others one of whom was now sick.

On the phone, I told the husband simply that he might be experiencing an allergic reaction to some mushroom in the sauce, but I prayed to God to let it be a digestive reaction and not something more deadly. I gave thanks when he called saying he was better. When I got home, a dozen perfect looking leather sheath buttons quickly went from the fridge to the compost. I experienced some long overdue humility. 



American Lepiota



Paragyrodon in different growth stages

Prairie States Mushroom Club
c/o Roger Heidt
125 Timber Ln.
Robins, IA 52328-9632

PSMC Web Site:
<http://iowamushroom.org>



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Looking Forward

(cont. from cover)

Dave Layton has agreed to be the newsletter editor. This is a big deal as newsletter editor is one of the few positions in the club that requires significant effort throughout the year. Thanks Dave and a big thank you to our previous editor Karen.

I would like to close with a big giant THANK YOU for allowing me to be the club president for the last several years. I have met so many wonderful people through the club that I can't imagine what my life would be without all of you. Don't let the title fool you into thinking that club president is a challenging position to fulfill. The only requirement set forth in the bylaws is to run the annual meeting. I performed a few other tasks, but they are not that hard. I mention this to challenge you to participate in the club leadership in the future. If I can do it, so can you.



From All the PSMC membership, Thank you Glen for your enthusiastic sharing of your love of nature and your service to PSMC. This picture says it all!