THE MUSHROOMS OF MOUNT HOPE CEMETERY

Text and photography by Marie F. Heerkens

This ongoing survey of the mushrooms and other fungi in Mount Hope Cemetery was made possible by an inquiry and an invitation from Marilyn Nolte. I enjoyed starting this project and photographing various fungal species over the summer and early fall of 2009. The wonderful variety of terrain and trees of the Mount Hope Cemetery makes it a great place to find a wide variety of mushrooms.

To start with, what is a mushroom? All mushrooms belong to the kingdom of fungi. The mushroom we see aboveground or emerging from decaying wood is the fruiting body of the fungus. The function of this mushroom is to distribute the spores being produced by specialized cells that usually line the gills or other surfaces of the mushroom.

You may see mushrooms growing in association with certain trees. These are known as “mycorrhizal” which have a symbiotic connection with tree roots. Others are “saprophytic” which grow on dead wood and other organic matter. There are also “parasitic” mushrooms that grow on living plants, and even other mushrooms. The mycelium are the hidden structures of the fungi that grow in and around the substrate that are comparable to the roots of a plant.

The typical parts of a mushroom are the cap, gills, stalk (or stipe), veil, and base. Each part is essential for identification. The cap varies widely in shape, texture, and color. The gills are under the cap and are the thin delicate

**Cantharellus cibarius.** The Chanterelle is a member of a very interesting group of mushrooms that have gill ridges that are not true gills. These ridges are often forked and have cross veins between them. The yellow chanterelle is quite vivid and easily seen along the forest floor. Chanterelles also have a delicate scent of apricots.

**Laetiporus sulphureus.** The Chicken mushroom, as this fungi is commonly called, is easily identified since it is bright orange on the top and yellow on the lower surface. Where you would find the gills of a typical mushroom, this one has pores with minute openings that let the spores drop. These pores are quite small and a hand lens will provide interesting details.
spore-bearing surface. Mushroom gills can vary in color; usually the color of the spores is the same as the gills. However, making a spore print will confirm the spore color which is another key identifying feature. The stalk, veil, and base support the cap and also vary widely. Size, shape, and texture are valuable clues for identification. Some mushrooms do not have a persistent veil. A persistent veil will remain on the stalk like a ring, or remnants can be found at the base of the stalk like a cup.

The majority of mushrooms grow during a season that starts in April and extends until November, depending on seasonal temperature variations. The best time to find them is after it rains. Even in dry conditions the wood-rotting fungi can be found.

Fungi are named scientifically with the genus and species comprising two parts to the name used by mycologists (fungi scientists). The first part is the genus, which can be a large or small grouping of species. The second part of the name is specific to that particular mushroom and is written in lower case, for example, Amanita rubescens. This is the species of a mushroom that belongs to a larger group known as the genus Amanita. Latin and Greek words are typically used, although some are named after the person who described it or as a memorial. Sometimes the species are moved to another genus when significant differences are found, which explains why some older field guides list different names for the same mushroom.

Russula laurocerasi. This Russula is one of the easily identified Russulas, which are a group of species that are notoriously difficult to identify. The common name “Almond Scented Russula” sums it all up! Yes, it has a strong scent of almonds, which gets more pungent as the mushroom ages. It is a very common species.

Amanita rubescens. The Amanita rubescens is commonly known as “The Blusher” for good reason. This Amanita bruises a reddish color that fades to reddish-brown when scratched or damaged. Although this is a good identifying factor, Amanitas are notoriously tricky and has the most deadly species among their numbers.
My personal interest in mycology started through photography. I found mushrooms to be an ideal subject with a wide variety of shapes and colors. The closer I looked at the forest floor, the more I found. Since I wanted to identify what kind of mushrooms they were, I joined a local club called the Rochester Area Mycological Association in 1990. This club was founded in 1984 by the students of Dr. Leo Tanghe. He taught a class at the Rochester Museum and Science Center at the request of the director, Stephen Thomas. I met both of these gentlemen in their later years at club meetings. Many years later, I was fortunate enough to be asked to revise and update the “Field Guide to Mushrooms” originally written in 1928 by Dr. William S. Thomas who was the father of Stephen Thomas. Stephen had previously updated his father’s book in 1936 and 1948. It was a coincidence, since the publisher did not know that I knew the author’s son. The latest edition features my photographs and drawings.

Stephen Thomas, incidentally, was the first to give tours of the Mount Hope Cemetery in the 1970s. He was attracted to the cemetery because of the interesting mushrooms he had found there. He was one of the founders of the Friends of Mt. Hope Cemetery in 1980 and helped to formalize the tours of the cemetery. Stephen was one of the original board members and did the original research for the tours. Quite often, he would launch into a spontaneous lesson about mycology for the tour members, if he chanced upon an interesting mushroom. Stephen was a graduate of Harvard, majoring in American History and Natural History.
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Coprinus quadrifidus. This Coprinus is one of the “Inky Caps” which will change to a blackish ink starting with the lower portion of the gills of more mature specimens. Some Coprinus species are good edibles, however this one is not, causing gastric upset if misidentified and consumed. Large groupings are typical for the growth habit of this species.

Coprinus quadrifidus. Another view of the Coprinus quadrifidus shows the gills turning black and deliquescing into ink. This species is growing off of buried roots from the large stump above it.
The kingdom of fungi is considered by many to be suspicious. There is an often repeated misconception that touching a poisonous mushroom is dangerous, however, you will not absorb the toxin except by eating the mushroom. On the other hand, lack of caution can lead to severe illness and possibly death. The best advice is to confirm your identification with an expert and “when in doubt, throw it out!” Collecting mushrooms for dinner is fun and exciting, but it takes many years to learn how to identify them. Joining a local club and learning firsthand through attending forays, combined with studying the various field guides available, can be a fun hobby. Beware however, hobbies can become obsessions.

I look forward to finding many more species in 2011 as my survey continues. The following list contains the species identified in 2009. I have included the common name after the genus and species name. Unknown species are indicated by “sp.” in place of the species name.

Albatrellus cristatus—Crested Polypore
Amanita flavoconia—Yellow Patches
Amanita rubescens—The Blusher
Amanita sp.
Armillaria mellea—Honey Mushroom
Bjerkandera adusta—Smoky Polypore
Boletus subvelutipes—Red Mouth Bolete
Boletus sp.
Bondarzewia berkeleyi—Berkeley’s Polypore
Cantharellus cibarius—Chanterelle
Climacodon septentrionale—Northern Tooth Fungi
Coprinus quadrifidus—Scaly Inky Cap
Cortinarius sp.
Entoloma sp.
Fuligo septica—Scrambled Egg Slime Mold
Ganoderma applanatum—Artist’s Conk
Grifola frondosa—Hen of the Woods
Helvella macropus—Long Stalked Grey Cup
Hydnum sp.
Hygrophorus sp.
Laccaria laccata—Common Laccaria
Lactarius piperatus—Peppery Milky Laetiporus sulphureus—Chicken Mushroom
Leccinum sp.
Lepiota sp.
Mycena sp.
Russula brevipes—Short Stalked Russula
Russula laurocerasi—Almond Scented Russula
Russula sp.
Strobilomyces floccopus—Old Man of the Woods
Trametes versicolor—Turkey Tail Tremellodendron pallidum—Jellied False Coral
Tylopilus sp.

(Note: The author is a self-taught expert and published author in the field of mycology. She is co-author of The Field Guide to Mushrooms (2003).
UGLY WALL UPDATE
By Marilyn Nolte

When the Ugly Wall concept was initiated, the idea was to collect a pile of photographs of broken or toppled tombstones, vegetation run amuck, and other unsightly situations in our otherwise beautiful Mount Hope Cemetery. We planned to put these photos up on a wall in the gatehouse and try to find good Samaritans to help financially in correcting the ugly situations. Before we could assemble the photos and display them, we started recruiting members when their membership renewals came up. The response was phenomenal. Most of these projects cost about $25-$50 to fix, although some ran to several hundred dollars. Here are our wonderful donors so far.

- Richard and Marie Leistman: Remove brush and clean up at John Genrich family plot, Range 3, Lot 218.
- Joyce Eustace: Reclaim lot in Range 3.
- Penny Illingworth: Reset Mark and Jeannette Sloman tombstone, Range 3, Lot 245.
- Pamela Koon: Remove tree branch on roof of Curtice mausoleum, Section AA, SE corner.
- Eaton Kempshall: Reset gravestones of Hulbright and Marie Luitweiler, Section O, Lot 53, Seth Sherman and Sherman and Sadie Todd, Section A, Lot 57.
- Joan Shafer: Reset Robert and Nancy Wheaton gravestone, Section A, Lot 58.
- David Hanna: Reset William and Maria Albaugh monument, Range 1, Lot 341.
- Julie Strassner: Reset George and Martha Heckroth gravestone, Range 4, Lot 29.
- Peter Seagle: Reset gravestones of Augustus Klein, Range 3, Lot 40.
- Gary Sedore: Brush and tree removal, southeast end of Section M.
- Rick and Rosanne Taubold: Tree removals, Section A.
- Linda Smith: Reset Norman Dopkins gravestone, Range 1, Lot 53.
- Grace Jones: Remove English ivy on Robert Burnes gravestone, Range 1, Lot 42.
- John Himmelsbach: Remove English ivy on Charles and Jennie Blakeslee gravestone, Range 4, Lot 49.
- Scott Carpenter: Reset Maria Porter gravestone, Section G, Lot 65-70.
- Larry and Marge Boehme: Reset Helen and Lucy Hayward gravestones, Section C, Lot 170.
- Susan Thomas: Reset Warren, Fannie, and Harvey Holcombe gravestones, Range 2, Lot 227.
- Miriam Thomas: Reset gravestones of Daniel Wood, Section C, Lot 171, and “Father” and Cynthia Smith, Section C, Lot 170.
- Joan Schumaker: Reset gravestones of Susan Straub and Mary Haller, Range 1, Lot 85.
- Pat Curchin: Reset Daniel and Catherine Haight gravestones, Section B, Lot 38.
- Jeremy Smith: Reset Sarah L. Miles gravestone, Section A, Lot 57.
- Robert Hoepf: Remove English ivy from Daniel, Margaret, and Chauncey Fuller gravestones, Range 4, Lot 49.
- Mary Fisher: Reset Samuel Ward Selden gravestone, Section G, Lot 114.
- Janice DeMunck: Reset Kate and Grace Tanner gravestones, Range 2, Lot 234.
- Carolyn Maraggi: Reset Casper and Margaret Giebel gravestone, Range 2, Lot 243.
- Alberto and Juany Martinez: Reset James and Louisa Binning gravestone, Range 2, Lot 247.
- Margaret Van Doren: Reset Wilhelmina Lagner gravestone, Range 2, Lot 250.
- Carol Lombard: Reset Herbert’s gravestone, Range 2, Lot 241.
• Herbert Gauch: Reset Gustav Hering gravestone, Range 2, Lot 249.
• Terry Yount: Reset Franklin McClain gravestone, Range 2, Lot 249.
• Elinor and William Klein: Reset Jane Westcott gravestone, Range 2, Lot 249.
• Margaret Misch: Reset Otto Sass gravestone, Range 2, Lot 267.
• Dennis Carr: Reset John Southworth gravestone, Section B, Lot 38.

Thanks to all of these generous donors. You have made the cemetery more beautiful.

NEW MEMBERSHIP LEVELS
FOR FRIENDS OF
MOUNT HOPE CEMETERY

The Friends of Mount Hope Cemetery have determined new membership levels as follows:

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All levels receive the Friends quarterly newsletter, the Epitaph. They also receive free admission to our theme tours for which nonmembers pay $4. Special events are also free to members unless otherwise advertised.

EPITAPH NEWSLETTER AVAILABLE BY E-MAIL

By Sue O'Neil
In 2011, you will have the choice of receiving this publication either by e-mail or hard copy by USPS when you renew your membership. The electronic version of our quarterly newsletter will arrive as a pdf that you can open, read at your leisure, save, or delete. You can also enlarge the pdf pages so that the type size is convenient for you. And with electronic mail you have no paper to contend with. If you choose to continue receiving the Epitaph by mail, in the future it will arrive flat and not folded. Also, there will be no wafer seals to break open.

If you choose electronic delivery, we will e-mail the Epitaph four times a year, but we will not share your e-mail address with any other organizations.

FRIENDS OF MT. HOPE PUBLISH NEW BOOK

By Richard O. Reisem
Late this fall, a new book published by the Friends of Mount Hope Cemetery will become available. It is titled Frederick Douglass and the Underground Railroad and the author is Richard Reisem. The book has many interesting contemporary photographs by Frank Gillespie, as well as wonderful historic photos and illustrations. The Friends president, Marilyn Nolte, initiated the project and performed much of the research for the book, including determining the GPS gravesite locations in Mount Hope Cemetery for 37 Underground Railroad activists and notable abolitionists in the Rochester area. Dan Malczewski, who designs the Epitaph newsletter for the Friends, gave this new publication a particularly smart look.

This softcover book with a four-color cover traces slavery in New York State from its early existence as a Dutch colony called New Netherland, through slavery during its history as an English colony, and finally its part in American slave history up to the civil war. There is also a biography, from birth to death, of the fascinating life of Frederick Douglass. Chapters devoted to the Underground Railroad present the complicated freedom story, revealing secrets of the Underground Railroad and tales of its stops, its passionate leaders, the constant dangers, the treacherous journeys for escaping slaves, and finally the joy onboard Canadian ships to freedom in Canada. It is one of Rochester’s and western New York’s most thrilling and heart-warming stories.
With 100 pages, this 6 by 9-inch book would normally sell for $19.95, but with our goal of providing this historic information about America’s first civil rights movement to a broad audience, we are pricing the book at $10. If you wish to be invited to a special book-signing event, let us know on the “Contact Us” form at our Web site, www.fomh.org. After the book is available, you can order it online by downloading an order form at www.fomh.org, or by mail from Friends of Mount Hope Cemetery, P.O. Box 18713, Rochester, NY 14618. Add $2.00 for shipping and handling.

FRIENDS OF MOUNT HOPE SPONSOR ESSAY CONTEST

To celebrate the release of a new book published by the Friends of Mount Hope Cemetery called Frederick Douglass and the Underground Railroad, we are sponsoring an essay contest for Rochester City School students in grades 7 through 12.

The essays, which are limited to 500 words or less, will address the question: What does the Underground Railroad mean to you and to the city of Rochester? A panel selected by the Friends of Mount Hope Cemetery will judge the submissions based on these criteria:

- The essay should make a thoughtful and compelling statement about the Underground Railroad’s importance to the student and to our city.
- The essay must be historically accurate and the original work of the student.
- The essay should communicate ideas clearly, be well organized, and use correct syntax, grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

Essays should be submitted to Underground Railroad Essay Contest, Friends of Mount Hope Cemetery, PO Box 18713, Rochester, NY 14618-0713 by December 10, 2010. Copies of the winning essays will be distributed with sales of the new book, Frederick Douglass and the Underground Railroad. Winners will also be honored at the annual meeting of the Friends of Mount Hope Cemetery next April 2011.
The Florentine fountain in the cemetery's north entrance area, presented an elegant, ghostly appearance to nearly 900 tour-goers over the two nights of the Mount Hope Cemetery Torch Light Guided Tours. Gasps of surprise and wonder were heard as people passed the 135-year-old cast-iron fountain, one of many memorable sights at the nighttime event. On the evenings of October 23 and 26, there were guided tours for small groups (average size: 25) every ten minutes with eight Mount Hope tour guides taking out groups on a rotating basis from 5:45 to 8:30 p.m. Standing torches lighted a circuitous path, and a guide's powerful flashlight illuminated the monuments at each tour stop on the hour-long trek. Fascinating stories of the dead buried six feet under or interred in mausoleum vaults were revealed. In the gatehouse afterwards, the conversations were lively over apple cider and doughnuts. Photograph by James Palis.