

# Editor's Letter



Photo courtesy J. Bildahl.

*"You should give up whatever job you have and just quit. Just stop now, and devote the rest of your life to mushrooms."*

Only Gary Lincoff would be wacky enough to say something like that. And only Gary had the credentials and influence to inspire people to do it.

This issue of FUNGI is devoted to remembering and celebrating the life, career, and influence this legendary man had on so many of us. Gary Lincoff's passing earlier this year generated an outpouring of commentary, the likes of which has never been seen among the mycological community in my lifetime. Gary touched so many of our lives. This issue features some of the poems, plays, and rants Gary wrote. Some of our colleagues that knew him best have shared their thoughts and anecdotes. I received more than one thousand photographs and comments from mycophiles all across North America and beyond. Thank you all to everyone who contributed to this Memorial—many of you are named within the pages of this issue, but many more are not. Thank you all. Especial thanks to Irene Liberman, Gary Lincoff's wife and partner for so many years (and friend to so many of us); thank you for sharing Gary and so much of your personal time. And thanks for your patience with me in putting together what I hope is a very fitting Memorial to Gary. You have the love of the entire mycological community.

My first brush with Gary was as a child. I grew up on a small farm in southwestern Ohio where I spent much of my time in the field and woods surrounding my home; I was interested in everything living, especially mushrooms. It was the early 1980s (I was still in middle school) when I was given a copy of *The Audubon Guide to Mushrooms* to supply the answers that none of the adults around me ever had. Gary Lincoff was already well-known within the mycological community. A few years on, as an undergrad at Kent State University, I devoted much of my free time to collecting mushrooms and learning their names under the tutelage of Sam Mazzer (himself, a protege of the great Alex Smith). It was a rare day that I didn't have the *Audubon Guide* with me. One day Sam stopped me in the hallway of Cunningham Hall, pointed to Gary's book that I was clutching and said, "If you're not careful you're going to turn out just like him." Mine is a rare career (my wife calls it a hobby) where you can be in awe of someone as a kid, grow up and become their colleague and friend. It's been a wonderful, rare privilege to know Gary Lincoff. †

## FUNGI

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