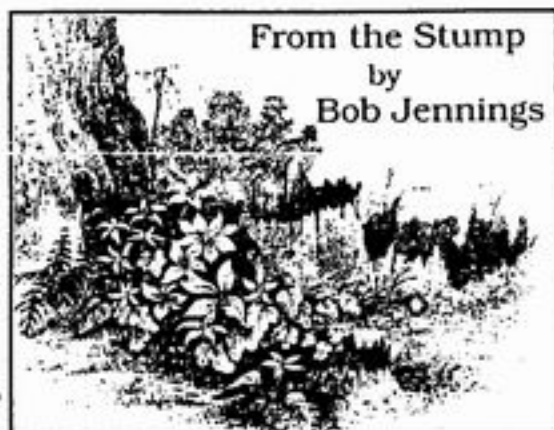




Oxley Nature Center Newsletter

Volume 134

July/August, 2001



From the Stump
by
Bob Jennings

Just about the time you get to the point where you think you have things under control, Mother Nature will come up behind you and remind you, perhaps forcefully, that she was here first, and that you don't know everything yet.

Case in point: I was sitting out behind the house in the cool June twilight, listening to the nighthawks cruise over the hill and enjoying the quiet. It had been cooler than we expect in June, and it had finally gone a whole day without raining, and the air was sweet and dark.

The side of my eye caught a flash in the cool dark, and as I turned my head I saw one, then two, then three fireflies, drifting along the dark green wall where the yard yields to a thicket of dogwood and elm trees.

My old biologist's brain automatically classifies and names things, and in this case routinely furnished the label "firefly". But instead of the process continuing, with thoughts branching off in whatever normal progression thoughts choose to pursue, things suddenly slammed to a stop. Instead, my brain acted as if it had never seen a firefly before. It stopped, awestruck, made a couple of futile attempts to resume normal activity, then came up with the mental equivalent of "WOW".

It wasn't as if I'd never known about fireflies

before. I've seen them, chased them, put them in jars, counted the flashes and correlated that to air temperature. I've seen them as adults and as larvae, and dead on the sole of a shoe.

But I'd never really seen fireflies before, not with that deep inner sight where your eyes are connected directly to your soul. Suddenly, it was as if I was an explorer on some other planet, discovering a new form of life. Here was an amazing thing, an insect that not only lit up, but did it whenever it wanted! This thing could make light! No batteries, no wires, no heat, no pollution, no smoke, no toxic radiation...just light! How does it do that, and what strange evolutionary path wound through the ages and ended up with this amazing bug, a bug that glows?

Like most special moments, and like the fireflies, this one began to fade, and nothing I could do would prolong it, but it lasted five minutes or so, and I savored each of them.

To awaken the sleeper within us is not an easy thing, and it happens so seldom in our adult lives. It's one of those major frustrations



of our jobs as interpreters that this is a skill we can't teach. We don't even know how to call it up within ourselves, it just happens

when it happens, and we have to be glad for those moments.

But, one of the nicer things about this job is that we can frequently take our visitors to places where this magic is more likely to happen. It can happen anyplace out in the woods, or gazing across a prairie, or kneeling by some ocean, or even, as with me, in your own backyard.

---This version of "From the Stump" was originally printed in the September/October, 1992 issue----

Nature Center Happenings

Oxley Nature Center and Redbud Valley Nature Preserve will be closed **Wednesday, July 4** for the Independence Day Holiday.



OXLEY AND REDBUD HOURS:

The gates at Oxley Nature Center are open daily, with the exception of most City holidays, from 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. At Oxley, you may park outside the gates from 6:00 a.m. - 9:00 p.m. to walk the trails even when the gates are closed.

At Redbud Valley Nature Preserve, the gates are open Wednesdays through Sundays, from 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. You may **not** hop the fence when the Nature Preserve is closed: on Mondays or Tuesdays, on City holidays, before 8:00 a.m., or after 5:00 p.m.

PROGRAM INFORMATION:

Call: 669-6644 to register or for more information about programs. Children under 12 must be accompanied by an adult, unless otherwise stated. Programs that are wheelchair accessible are designated with the ♣ symbol.



Volunteer Awards



On the evening of May 22, Oxley staff, volunteers, friends and family celebrated the completion of our spring season with a potluck dinner (barbecue provided by ONCA Board) and awards presentation. Without the dedication and enthusiasm of our volunteers, without their positive energy and the gift of their time, we could not possibly reach our goals.

20 Year Award
Frances Goff
Weekday Naturalist & Visitor Center

15 Year Award
Janiene Oliver
Kid's Saturday Adventure Club (K-2nd)

5 Year Award
Charles Champlin **Helen Madden**
Weekday Volunteer Naturalists

3 Year Award
Ellen Lee Weekday Naturalist
Clarence Ruby Burn Crew



10 Year Award
Marilee Chambers, Len Eames
Weekday volunteer Naturalists
Barb Daily Weekend Volunteer Naturalist
Allen White Visitor Center Volunteer



Leopold Education Project


The Leopold Education Project is a critical learning, interdisciplinary curriculum for teachers of grades 6-12 designed to establish a positive conservation ethic among its participants. The LEP is based on the classic literary work, *A Sand County Almanac*, by Aldo Leopold. Goals are to increase general teaching skills involved in outdoor education, to expose students to environmental literature and related activities, and to instill a love, respect and admiration for the land in tomorrow's land stewards. Activities also fit well into projects for 4-H, Scouts, Campfire and other youth organizations. For more information contact Oxley Nature Center at 669-6644.



Join us!
Friday,
July 13
from
8:30-4:00
at
Oxley
\$30 fee

Programs and special events

July

7 "Saturday Morning Birding" Ages: All 
 Saturday 8:00-9:45 a.m.
 Free registration not required

Meet in the Oxley parking lot promptly at 8:00 a.m.
 Bring binoculars if you have them.

8 "Tule Sun Visor" Ages: 10 & up 
 Sunday 2:00-4:00 p.m.
 \$2 for non-members free to members


Make your own headgear. The Klamath Indians of Northern California used tule (bulrush) and cattails to weave a functional and primitively stylish sunvisor. We will create our own version of this ancient sunvisor. Meet at Oxley. Sign-up begins June 24.

14 "Have You Got The Time?" Ages: All 
 Saturday 10:30-12:00 noon
 \$2 fee plus \$1 for materials members pay only \$1

Of course you do if you create a sundial for your yard or garden. Take time out for family fun and join us. Meet at Oxley. Sign-up begins July 1.

15 "Color From Natural Dyes" Ages: 12 & up
 Sunday 1:00 -2:30 p.m.
 \$2 for non-members free to members

We'll see how our ancestors made dyes from plants and other materials. Preparations of dyes will be demonstrated and you'll dye a sample of wool to take home. Meet at Oxley. Sign-up begins July 1.


21 "Butterfly ID for Beginners" Ages: All 
 Saturday 10:00-12:00 noon
 Free registration not required

Inside we will use flash cards and study slides. Then we'll go outside and focus on identification in the field (weather permitting). Bring binoculars if you have them. Meet at Oxley.


28 "Water, Water Everywhere" Ages: All 
 Saturday 9:30-11:00 a.m.
 \$2 for non-members free to members

The key to life as we know it, clean water, is essential for each of us. It is also a versatile and busy part of our world. Prepare to get wet as you find out more about water. Meet at Oxley. Sign-up begins July 15.

August

4 "Saturday Morning Birding" Ages: All 
 Saturday 8:00-9:45 a.m.
 Free registration not required

Meet in the Oxley parking lot promptly at 8:00 a.m.
 Bring binoculars if you have them.

4 "Gourd & Pine Needle Baskets-Part I" Ages: Adult 
 Saturday 1:00-4:00 p.m.
 \$2 fee plus \$10 for materials members pay only \$10

Gourds have many uses from drinking vessels to baskets. Create a basket with gourd and pine needles. In part 1 you will clean and prepare your gourd. Meet at Oxley. Sign-up begins July 22.

11 "Gourd & Pine Needle Baskets-Part 2" Ages: Adult 
 Saturday 1:00 -4:00 p.m.
 \$2 for non-members free to members

This class is a continuation of part 1. You will be building coils of pine needles on your gourd. Meet at Oxley. Sign-up begins July 29.

18 "Gardening for Butterflies" Ages: All 
 Saturday 10:00-12:00 noon
 Free registration not required

Inside we'll look at slides on flowers and butterfly feeders. Then we'll go outside and focus on identification, nectaring and behaviors (weather permitting). Bring binoculars if you have them. Meet at Oxley.

19 "Birds in the Heat" Ages: 14 & up 
 Sunday 8:30-10:30 a.m.
 \$2 for non-members free to members

What do birds do in the summer heat? Join us for a stroll through the Redbud Valley Nature Preserve to seek the birds of summer. Meet at Redbud. Sign-up begins August 5.

26 "Ladybird Beetle, Fly Away Home" Ages: All 
 Sunday 1:00-2:30 p.m.
 \$2 fee plus \$1 for materials members pay only \$1

Come find out about the mysterious life of the lovely ladybug. We'll search for them outside and then we'll create our own ladybird beetle! Meet at Oxley. Sign-up begins August 12.



Moon Watching



Wednesday, August 1, 7-8:30 p.m. (sunset-8:29, moonrise-7:00 p.m.). Meet on the east side of Lake Yahola to watch the moon rise. Bring binoculars or a telescope if you wish. Moon watching kits will be available to take home. Sign-up begins July 22.
 \$2 for non-members free to members

North American Butterfly
Association (NABA)

Oxley Nature Center
Butterfly Count--July 5,
2001

The 27th annual *NABA 4th of July Butterfly Count* tracks butterfly populations of North America (Canada, United States and Mexico). Information obtained from these counts provides valuable information about geographical distributions and population sizes of species counted. Comparisons of the results over the years monitor changes in populations and reveal effects of weather and habitat changes on different species. This will be our first year to participate in this census and we would like to make it an annual event. Come join us and learn more about the butterflies we share our space with.

Butterfly watchers needed!

It doesn't matter if you can't tell a Monarch from a Fiery Skipper or a Tiger Swallowtail from a Great Spangled Fritillary. We need people to help tally numbers and to spot shy butterflies hiding under leaves. If you would like to be listed as an official participant the fee is \$3. Otherwise just come along. We will census Redbud Valley and Oxley Nature Center.

We will be out in the field
from 9:00 a.m. until ??

For information or to
sign-up call 669-6644.

J
U
N
I
O
R

Oxley Nature Center offers a special program for 3rd through 5th graders who enjoy nature and want to learn more about it. These "Junior Naturalists" meet the second Saturday of each month from September through May from 10:00 a.m.-12:00 noon.



Program topics vary and may include activities as well as an eco-project or special event. For more information and to register call Oxley Nature Center at 669-6644.

N
A
T
U
R
A
L
I
S
T
S