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WETLAND *matters*

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What's Taking Flight?

.....by Jon Seymour

The year 2006 was a fabulous year in the Oxbow on many fronts. Possibly the most important was the acquisition of another 7 acres of land. This came about in an unusual fashion when we realized that there were 4 acres of streets and alleys laid out near the Hardintown entrance area and 3 acres of unclaimed land that were behind the cement plant. Working with the cooperation of our neighbor, Dearborn Ready-Mix Concrete, we vacated the streets and alleyways with the permission of Dearborn County and laid uncontested claim to the unclaimed property. As a result we added seven more acres to the Oxbow preserve.

On a sad note, this year was the last St. Patrick's Day's "Search for the Green-winged Teal" and the last Birdathon for one of our founders and great friends, Karl Maslowski. Karl will be missed by many, especially by Oxbow, Inc.

Karl did live long enough to participate in the renewal of Oxbow, Inc.'s Cincinnati Area Birdathon. Oxbow, Inc. initiated the Cincinnati Area Birdathon in 1988 and managed it through 1999. Through a combination of circumstances, Oxbow, Inc. found itself unable and unwilling to carry on the management of the annual event. Fortunately, the Cincinnati Nature Center picked up the event and managed it through 2005, when it found itself in similar circumstances to the Oxbow situation years before, and discontinued sponsorship. In the meantime circumstances at Oxbow, Inc. had changed as the Board once again was ready to assume management of the Birdathon, which we did with enthusiasm in 2006. This year our renewed efforts doubled the donations we received above the 2005 level and allowed us to establish a habitat improvement fund. It will be operated with a combination of Birdathon donations and specified private donations. The first project will be a seasonal flooding project to create a seasonal wetland in the bottom area between the Lawrenceburg Conservancy District and Oxbow Lake. This project will be adjacent to the end of the stream bank mitigation project that will be carried out by

the Indiana Department of Transportation and is set to begin in 2007. It also is adjacent to the Osprey Lake prairie area.

Kani Meyer, Vice-President of Oxbow, Inc., is also in charge of Land Management and organized three public participation trash collection days and one scout specific collection day this year. Over 300 tires and a couple of tons of trash were removed from the Oxbow. Kani and Denis Conover's recent inspection of the prairie area around Osprey Lake really bolstered our spirits. Kani and Denis reported that the prairie is looking very good with several species of plants that are indicative of a good prairie. Invasive and weed species are becoming less numerous as the native prairie plants establish themselves. This is great news but prairies are high maintenance properties and must be either mowed or burned (preferable) regularly to keep the natural succession of plant species in grasslands. Kani is planning a managed burn this winter and we hope it will be successful.

Oxbow leases 300 acres of farmland and this was the year that all of the five year leases were up for renewal. Denny Mason, Mike Kluesener, and Kani Meyer spent a great deal of time and effort during 2006 setting up a new contract system and streamlining the bidding process for the leases. This effort has focused the farming expectations and future planning for the farm program. Farming is a major source of income for Oxbow, Inc. and must be managed accordingly.

A review of the year is never complete without some mention of the wildlife present in the Oxbow. This year was again notable for the increasing frequency of River Otter sightings in Oxbow Lake. Several hikers, canoeists, and bird walk participants all got a glimpse of the otters. While not common in the Oxbow, their presence is clearly a sign of the continued health of the Oxbow wetlands. Other exciting sightings in the Oxbow were sightings of two individual birds, one in May and one November. The first sighting in May was of a juvenile Yellow-crowned Night Heron. This bird is relatively uncommon

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and has only been rarely seen in the Oxbow. It stayed around Juno Pond for a few days and a few birders were able to get a look as well as some photos. The November bird was a Least Bittern. This is a very rare straggler in the Oxbow with the two previous reports all coming from sightings on bridges over the Great Miami River where they may have stopped to rest during spring migration. The bird in November was flushed from the wet prairie grasses surrounding Osprey Lake. Both sightings speak to the increasing stability and diversity of the habitat available to wildlife in the Oxbow.

Probably the most exciting wildlife adventure in the Oxbow this year occurred in late August and also involved Osprey Lake. Working with the city of Greendale before we purchased Osprey Lake in 2000, Dave Styer arranged to have shallow areas left in the lake for shorebird habitat. Since completion of the lake, the slow drainage of the lake has let the water levels stay too high to attract many shorebirds, that is, until this year. In late August I had the good fortune to discover several species of shorebirds feeding along the north shore of Osprey Lake in fairly large numbers. That first day I observed 3 Willet, a Sanderling, and 5 other species of shorebirds. The Willet were the first fall Willet observed in the Oxbow (they are not that common in spring either) and the Sanderling is an uncommon visitor. My posting on Cincinnati's Bird Sighting Website (Ned Keller's) brought a large number of bird enthusiasts to Osprey Lake. Before the lake begin to fill again with heavy rains, eliminating the shorebird habitat, a total of 14 species and as many as 90 birds at one time were counted by onlookers. Some brought powerful telephoto cameras to record what they saw. You can see the result in one case in Wetland Matters issue #122 by looking in the color photo section for Lana Hays's magnificent portraits.

All this in addition to the ducks, eagles, osprey, beaver, warblers, grosbeaks, and deer to mention but a few of the denizens of the Oxbow made 2006 another special year. The Board thanks all the members of Oxbow, Inc. who have made even the smallest portion of this possible. Without you we would have no Oxbow and no wildlife to marvel at.

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Oxbow, Inc. has established Memorials in honor of those who have passed on. Each Memorial established in the name of a friend or relative will be enrolled permanently in the records of the Corporation. Each contribution to a Memorial will be acknowledged to the family or to those selected by the donor.

Tributes are also enrolled permanently in the records of the Corporation. Some tributes are birthday or anniversary remembrances, holiday greetings or gratitude acknowledgements. If so desired, "Happy Birthday!" or the like can be inscribed in the tribute notice.

Contributions should be sent to: Oxbow, Inc., P. O. Box 43391, Cincinnati, OH 45243-0391. Be sure to enclose the names and addresses of those who are to receive the acknowledgement.

The 2007 Birdathon will be May 11-12

Save the Dates and come join the fun. As in the past the competition will begin at 5:00 pm on Friday, May 11 and finish promptly at 5:00 pm on Saturday, May 12. Details of the competition will be announced later. If you want to enter a team and raise money for Oxbow, Inc. contact, Jay Stenger at 513-522-8147 or e-mail him at jaystenger@cinci.rr.com. Last year we doubled our donations from the previous year and initiated a seasonal flooding project with the Birdathon funds. We are really excited about this project and expect it to benefit the wildlife in the Oxbow. There are many ways to participate. You can sponsor a team, send a donation to the Birdathon effort, and participate as an individual or a team in the count. The object is to have fun and raise money to support improved wildlife habitat and improved viewing access to the Oxbow. As always we will end with a pizza party on Saturday while we tally up the counts. A pledge slip will be in the next Wetland Matters – please consider donating as much as you can to this worthy project.

Oxbow Wish List

It is the Christmas Season, so like many others we have prepared our Wish List for Santa. We hope if members know about items and talents that we need they might realize ways they can be able to help, and may want to play the part of Santa.

1. Oxbow is seeking secure donated office/storage space in the immediate Oxbow area. We are running out of room to store our materials, records and supplies in the various homes that currently house portions of our scattered materials. It is becoming more important that our historical records and donated collections be available in one location. If you know of a location we might use or if you have a space you would be willing to lease please call.
2. Oxbow is looking for an individual or small group who like to write thank you letters for our memorial and honorarium donations. Peggy Gatch, who currently does this for Oxbow, has let us know that she can not guarantee her health forever. We all wish Peggy could, but reality says she needs to be teaching someone else how to carry on. It is only an hour or so every month so if you can spare the time and like being nice to other people please consider volunteering.
3. We need help with our Education program. We would like to establish an education program for K to Gray. While we already have an adult education program, we are in desperate need of an education program designed for kids from K to college. If you have an interest in designing and/or delivering a school age program based on the Oxbow, please consider volunteering your time and talent.
4. We could use some extra help mailing membership renewal reminders and mailing the newsletter. This involves 2-3 hours every month but if you have the time it would be a great help.

If you can help with these needs or know someone who can, please call Jon Seymour at 513-851-9835.

Travels with Maggie

(With No Apologies to Charlie or John)

A Moving Story by an Octogenarian (Part III)

....by Jeanne K. Bocklage

Days 8 through 59: August 22 to October 19, 2005

Paula's home is situated on a ranch in the rugged hill country of central Texas. Here you find wildflowers and cacti, deer and armadillos. One day I saw two weasels run across the road. We had a Black and Yellow Garden Spider, two inches long, making a fantastic web outside Paula's back hail door. The web was long and narrow, a zig-zag staircase. Most interesting.

This ranch is the only place I know of that has a horse-wash. Not a car wash. You lead your horse onto a wood platform with a shower at one end and then start scrubbing.

Down the road are many more ranches, each one with its handsome personalized gate. Another road is named Crumley Ranch Road. In high school, we had a classmate named Sarah Crumley. Since I knew not where life had taken her, I put her on this ranch. One day to my surprise, Paula detoured down Crumley Ranch Road. If this is her spread, Sarah's done A-ok. Another day, we watched a snappy red convertible turn down Crumley Ranch Road. Simultaneously, Paula and I said, "There goes Sarah."

I'm not sure if it was our Austen Film Festival or the book on Shakespeare but Paula and I decided to have a Shakespeare Film Festival. She subscribes to Netflix, a rental DVD company. She always has three films in her possession. When she returns one, she is sent the next one on her personal list. She got busy and ordered (e-mail) fourteen of Shakespeare's plays adapted for the screen. Eleven were available.

Maggie's hearing is so acute, any kind of noise bothers her. Movies must be just more noise because she slips off to her kennel after the first few scenes. She also slips through the fence gate in the back yard, not the fence itself, just the gate with the larger openings. She slips under Dakota, too. When he is standing in her way, she walks under his belly between his front and back legs. Another fact: Miss Maggie slips home from the walks that Paula or Michael take her on. In these open spaces, the dogs are free from leashes, free to run free-- but running or walking too far does not appeal to Mags and she often cuts short her walks and I find her sitting at the back hall door, patiently waiting for me to discover her. I think she gets hotter than Dakota with her heavier coat. Dakota, being younger, is more adventurous. He finds it fun to chase deer. He has had run-ins with armadillos and skunks. Twice he had to go to the vet to be de-perfumed.

The dogs are ignoring each other more and more as the weeks go by. They do guard their food bowls and when one is not looking, the other likes to steal a few bites from the forbidden dish. Dakota gives into Maggie's wishes 99% of the time. Paula wonders if he is as sweet as she wants him to be or if he is a born Omega dog which she doesn't prefer. Dakota's ball supply is diminishing. Mags bites big holes in them and when he drops them into the pool, they sink. He is dumb-founded that he can't retrieve them.

Twice Elle came with her dog, Cash, and Maggie went bananas. One more dog was more than she could handle. While the two males romped and played, Maggie barked uncontrollably. The first time I took her to my room to quiet her. The second time her reaction improved a few fractions.

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usings

by Dave Styer

The Common Merganser

When I think of real winter ducks in the Oxbow area, I think of the Common Goldeneye and the Common Merganser. In the severely cold winters in the late 1970s, the Ohio River was frozen over, and even the Great Miami River was frozen over except for a few riffles. To my surprise there were Common Mergansers swimming and diving for fish in these rapids. There I was just about comfortable in thermal underwear, an arctic parka, and thick mittens in -15 F weather watching these mergansers swimming around. It did occur to me that the water was likely 40 to 50 degrees warmer than the air. Somehow that still didn't make me want to jump right into the river for a refreshing swim.

The extreme northern ducks that we never see at the Oxbow, such as eiders, all winter in salt water. I suppose that there generally isn't open fresh water in those latitudes. The Common Goldeneyes and Common Mergansers are North America's most northern wintering ducks that regularly winter in fresh water. What adaptations does the Common Merganser have for cold? For one thing the Common Merganser is our (Cincinnati area's) heaviest regularly occurring duck, only exceeded by the White-winged Scoter. The Common Merganser weighs about 50% more than its closest relative here, the Red-breasted Merganser, and it weighs not quite twice as much as a Common Goldeneye. For warm-blooded animals a larger body definitely helps hold heat. Compactness of build also helps hold heat, but here the Common Goldeneye seems to have it all over mergansers.

The Common Merganser has another adaptation for survival. When things freeze over, these birds readily move on. You might think - well, duh, what else would they do? Here's the catch. A lot of birds migrate during certain time periods. Outside of those times, the birds have no urge to move elsewhere. I remember reading, perhaps in the 1970s, that with the expansion of refuges in the mid-west and northern plains states many ducks that once migrated to the south settled at these refuges. Boy! The duck hunters in the south were getting bummed out! The real problem came with the blizzards. The ducks had lost the urge to move on. The refuge managers either had to figure out how to get food to them or they died. At any rate, Common Mergansers fall in with birds such as Cedar Waxwings and crossbills that have the inborn capacity to move on when food becomes unavailable.

From what I read, the mergansers are most closely related to goldeneyes and the Bufflehead, the Long-tailed Duck (Oldsquaw), the scoters, the Harlequin Duck, and the

eiders. With so many extreme northern ducks as relatives, perhaps the Common Merganser has a dense coat of warm down. Eiders are famous for their down, and mergansers do line their nests with down.

This brings us to a curious thing. According to a 1995 paper by Bradley Livezey in *The Condor* three duck species are very closely related: the Common Merganser, the Red-breasted Merganser, and the Chinese Merganser. But these appear to be most closely related to the Brazilian Merganser and the extinct Auckland Islands Merganser, birds of the southern hemisphere. In fact, it would appear that the Common Merganser's ancestors were southern hemisphere birds, something that Livezey doesn't believe.

What actually happened in the distant past is intriguing. I marvel at how much we continue to learn, even without a time machine. Wouldn't it be nice to be able to go back in time to directly check out the past? Perhaps not. In every novel I have read where people go back in time with time machines, the people always end up in deep trouble. These authors may know something I don't. I'll just let it go. For now. Jane, don't turn it on now; we'll just put the machine in the storage room.

The present is the time to enjoy the ducks. I have heard the question "what is the most beautiful duck?" The Wood Duck is often mentioned. But I have heard others suggested: teal, the Canvasback, mergansers, etc. Years ago I figured out the real answer. Bundle up and get out there with your binoculars or scope. Get a close-up view of a healthy duck in sun light, with the sun on your back. You will be looking at the most beautiful duck in the world! This is the season to go out and, for a few minutes, make the Common Merganser the most beautiful of all ducks.

Rollin' on the River Program by Jim Williams

Oxbow member and former Hamilton County Park System naturalist Jim Williams presented a program on his retirement passion - Ohio River History. Jim has retired to frequent trips on the Delta Queen where he provides programs for the passengers enlightenment as the travel on the National Historic Landmark. Tough life if you can take it. Jim focused on Steamboating history for us and the on the role that the area in and around Cincinnati played in the development, success, and subsequent demise of the Steamboating era. We are fortunate here in Cincinnati to still have a lingering bit of the Steamboating era with our Tall Stacks celebration and the daily river tours and other boats like the P.A. Denny that still ply the river here locally. The P.A. Denny is currently serving as ORSANCO's floating classroom for river study and education. Of course our link to bygone times also comes through the Showboat Majestic, another National Historic Landmark. Cincinnatians can still see great shows aboard this treasure. We thank Jim for taking us back to flat boats, and Mike Fink and bringing us on a river journey all the way to the present day.

Horseshoe Bottoms Diary

November 5, 2006 by Kani Meyer

It was a cloudy but mild day. Denis Conover had requested a long walk in the Oxbow mostly to check out the forested area behind Mercer Pond as well as the Corning easement that was planted in trees years ago. So Jon Seymour came by my house to pick me up then on to Denis's before heading out to the Oxbow. We parked on the causeway just before the gate and walked toward Mercer Pond. Very soon we were confronted by a deep pool of water, actually several pools were evident before we could reach the "high ground" of the soy bean field. The Ohio River had been at 42 feet several days previous to this trip and even through it had dropped to 34 feet, it was still draining from the cement pond to Juno Pond and the depth was well over my hiking boots. Denis had on his waders so was OK. Jon and I didn't. Jon walked right on in. I hesitated. Denis gallantly offered to carry me over but I could easily visualize us both toppling over into the drink under my weight so I gritted my teeth and plunged into the somewhat cold water. It really didn't get all that deep and actually it cleaned my shoes of mud from a previous Oxbow hike (always look for the bright side of things).

The soy field was high and somewhat dry...at least at the near end. The farmer had not yet harvested the beans so we walked a track where some inconsiderate person had driven before the field was planted and before the gate was put up. The compacted earth didn't grow any soybeans. At the far end, near Mercer Pond, things got really muddy then downright wet again. We tried to skirt around the wet areas but were stopped short by the tongue of lower land that extends from Mercer Pond toward the Corning easement. There was no way around it without waist-high waders. We could see a few Cormorants in Mercer Pond and Killdeer and Ring-billed Gulls circled overhead. GBHs (great blue herons) kept dropping into the trough between us and the easement. The Bald Cypress in the Corning tract were a beautiful rust red and through our binocs we could see the red stems of dogwoods along the edge. That whole area has filled in nicely and grown to 20-30 feet for many of the species. But, alas, we weren't going to get a close look today!

So we retraced our steps, grabbed some plastic shopping bags from Jon's car and headed for the Oxbow Lake overlook. After crossing the outlet from Junior's pond, we cut across the harvested soy field to look at the edge of the meadow that extends between the field and the levee. As we approached the edge, up burst a Least Bittern that only flew about 25 feet to land in the vegetation on the other side of the slough. What a treat! According to Jon this is only the third record in the Oxbow

of this elusive species that normally inhabits marsh areas. Continuing along this edge, I was delighted to see a lot of Switchgrass among the dwindling Johnson Grass. There were also Indian and Big Bluestem grasses taking hold. This is a very encouraging sign. This area had not been planted when we did the prairie seeding a few years back but seems to be seeding itself from the adjacent prairie. I have been very satisfied with our prairie planting. It's one of those non-instant gratification projects. The first 1-2 years the plants were putting their energy into developing root systems and the Johnson grass seemed as thick as always. In April of 2003 we had done a partial burn of the Osprey Lake prairie area to clear vegetation to allow the natives to better take hold, but we have not had a chance to do any further burns because the winter floods remove too much of the dead grasses which make for a good burn. So this year we plan to burn in early December before the big floods. As we walked the road alongside the prairie I could see the dried heads of coneflowers as well as more of the grasses mentioned above. Unfortunately there are some patches of teasel that are getting established and I'll have to tend to that problem. What is most gratifying is the fact that, as the prairie has stabilized and not been further disturbed; the Johnson grass is finally disappearing! Good riddance!

We continued our trek to the overlook and those benches were a welcome respite! We continue to thank Alex Rowe for his very successful project. While sitting there we could see Pied-billed Grebes, a male Hooded Merganser accompanied by two females, Wood Ducks, and the creme de la creme of Oxbow birds, a Bald Eagle sitting on high above a trio of cormorants. So two extraordinary sightings for the day! But, alas, no otters. We continued the short distance along the road to where the Conservancy ponds drain through the fields into Oxbow Lake. It was draining pretty rapidly with the dropping water level. Off in the field at water's edge we could see shorebird activity and 3 GBHs in courting mode. We are planning to put a dam with a water level control gate in that area to trap the water at a higher level during the fall and winter before allowing it to drain for planting. That way we can provide more habitat for shorebirds and wading birds.

On our walk back to the car we filled the plastic bags we had brought along with litter. Although there is less and less of it, there still is litter. We (meaning mostly Jon) spotted Gadwalls, lots of Mallards on Oxbow Lake and Canada Geese on Osprey Lake. Denis spotted a Cooper's Hawk and some crows. Check online at www.oxbowinc.org for a complete listing of the birds we saw.

All in all, it was a wonderful hike even though we couldn't get where we originally had wanted to go. But that is a good excuse for another walk in the Oxbow!

Jon's Favorites



This cub scout troop on a special tour of the Oxbow reminds me that family involvement in the outdoors is the great strength of nature. Everyone can participate and learn, including Moms, Dads and little sister. *(photo by Cammie Seymour)*



Our friend and member Bill Zimmerman bit off a little more than he could manage when his Saturn Vue bottomed out in a classic Oxbow mud puddle. Just a reminder that the Oxbow is still an adventure and you never know when it will be your turn! *(photo by Bill Zimmerman)*



Fall is a time of contrasts in the Oxbow. The greens are gone but the blues, gold, and browns remain. As the sun plays between the clouds a sudden burst of light reveals a new contrast. *(photo by Jon Seymour)*



Flannery Island has an unique history with old aerial photos showing it as a scrub covered sand bar forming downstream from the railroad bridge. The portion of the island in Ohio has been farmed for years with the farmer floating his equipment out to the island on a boat. Once the farming stopped a forest of Giant Ragweed (native) established itself on the field and forms a dense almost impenetrable mat. This fall photo of the ragweed field after winds and floods have toppled the stems reminds me that the Oxbow is not just wetlands but a variety of unique environments providing unique environmental opportunities. *(photo by Jon Seymour)*



The Oxbow produces a lot of corn some of which is not harvested and left for wildlife consumption thereby increasing the value of the Oxbow for wintering wildlife and migratory birds. The corn forms its own forest containing beaver clearings, deer trails, squirrel and deer ravaged patches nestled in it's rows. The I-275 bridge (nearly a mile away) in the background reminds us that we are only a few steps from the hustle of modern civilization. *(photo by Jon Seymour)*



Thanks to readers Katie Morris and Jon & Marylou Nicodemus who all say this mystery bird is no mystery! Thanks for writing to identify this beauty as a Red-Shouldered Hawk.



This photo of Cathy Mund's class from Bright Elementary is a favorite because of the way it sets off the students, parents and teachers of the class walking through butterweed to get to Mercer Pond for a trash pick up. I like what it says about getting outside and appreciating the environment as a family value. I see hope when I look at this. *(photo by Cammie Seymour)*



I see the future when I look at this photo of a student in Cathy Mund's class from Bright Elementary on Earth Day 2006. This may be my favorite. The ear to ear smile, as she proudly shows off a baby turtle she discovered in a sky pool in the agricultural field, tells me everything I need to know about how much she enjoyed being a child out in nature. *(photo by Cammie Seymour)*



The tip of Flannery Island can usually be reached only by boat but this eastern most extremity of the Oxbow property has great beauty. I feel the power of the two rivers as they collide here. The nearly undercut tree hangs on while ripples of swirling current play along the shore. *(photo by Jon Seymour)*

No trip to the Oxbow is ever like the ones you have done before. The floodplain seems to have a mind of its own and is going to do exactly what it pleases. We have had to cancel or modify tours due to rain, mud, high water, poison ivy, and lightning. It is a place where nature is playing on its own terms and is used to winning. The Boy Scouts have it right - Be Prepared!. Here I am wading through the drainage of Oxbow Lake using a pair of boots that Wayne Wauligman lent me. At least he was PREPARED. *(photo by Wayne Wauligman)*



Behind Mercer Pond is our own 40 acre wood. It is low land, often flooded and swampy. Here a beaver has left his handiwork hanging on another tree. The beaver moved back into the Bottoms a few years ago and are busy altering the floodplain to their liking. Oxbow Lake drains much more slowly than it did years ago, due to a large beaver dam partially blocking the exit of Oxbow Lake to the Great Miami River. *(photo by Jon Seymour)*



Conservation Corner

by Jon Seymour

"Every year we are losing thousands of acres of good land. Every year makes control more difficult. And every acre that goes down the creek seems to me a loss that is preventable, needless, and beyond recall." Aldo Leopold (1921)

While Oxbow, Inc. prides itself on being independent of government grants and support we are involved with local, state, and federal environmental issues and systems. We look to these organizations for synergy when their aims and methods correspond with ours. For example, a few years ago we planted a prairie around Osprey Lake. There was a program in the State of Indiana that would have purchased the seed for us but it was a program to encourage quail and required a few types of grasses that were not native to the area. We rejected the program and purchased the seed ourselves.

In another instance we contracted with the Indiana Department of Transportation (IDOT) to plant 2500 linear feet by 50 feet wide of the south edge of Oxbow Lake as a mitigation site for an IDOT project. We negotiated the list of plant species they planned to plant and they removed some and added back the native species we suggested in their place. In this case the restrictions of the state contract were well within our own requirements and coincided with our own development plan and we could accept the deal.

Our ability to work with local, state and federal organizations has the potential to increase the impact of the investment of our members as long as the opportunities offered by cooperation are within the scope of the requirements of the Oxbow Board of Directors. In line with our mission to improve the floodplain we continue to keep our eyes open to new opportunities to work with local government, local business, IDOT, IDEM (Indiana Department of Environmental Management), and IDNR (Indiana Department of Natural Resources), and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Private Lands Division), the U.S. Park Service (trails), and of course the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers (floodplain).

There are other outside associations that benefit Oxbow, Inc. We have working relationships with Miami University, Northern Kentucky University, The College of Mount St. Joseph, Xavier University, and the University of Cincinnati. Currently the University of Cincinnati and the Cincinnati Nature Center are cooperating to establish a Biological Field Station at the Nature Center for the study of ecology in the urban, suburban, and rural areas at the edges where the meet. We will offer the Oxbow area floodplain as a potential laboratory for researchers that will study at the Field Station.

Oxbow, Inc belongs to several wider based organizations. On a national level we belong to the Land Trust Association (LTA). The LTA is an association of over 1600 Land Trusts nationwide. LTA supplies many kinds of technical support and training for Land Trust employees, Directors, lawyers, and volunteers. They also monitor national legislation that affects Land Trusts and have regional field offices all over the U.S.

We also participate in the Indiana Land Protection Alliance (ILPA) which is a group of Indiana Land Trusts as well as government and pseudo-government organizations that hold land in protective status in the State of Indiana. We also belong to Green Umbrella which is an organization that promotes land conservation and other ecologically sound practices in the Greater Cincinnati Area. Membership in these organizations allows us to learn from one another and work together to support synergistically the goal of ecological conservation that each individual group is working hard at to protect in their own local areas.

As far back as 85 years ago Aldo Leopold was decrying the loss of thousands of acres per year. In 85 years, we seem to have learned very little. The loss of many of these acres to progress is still just as needless and beyond recall. And much is still just as preventable through smart growth and green development. The real difference, and I hope that it will make a real difference, is that 85 years ago only Dr. Leopold and a few other enlightened spirits realized and voiced this truth. In 2006 there are thousands of voices raised to the cause. It is still not enough and we need thousands more.

Richard Louv Lecture Tuesday, February 6, 2007

Richard Louv, author of Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder. Will present a lecture program at 6:30 pm at the Crossroads Community Church, 3500 Madison Rd. (at Ridge Rd.), Cincinnati, OH 45209. Call 513-965-4899 for tickets and information. A reception and Information Fair starts at 5:00 pm and will continue to 8:30 after the Lecture Program. The Lecture is sponsored by Leave No Child Inside of Greater Cincinnati.

(*Travels with Maggie*— continued from page 3)

It's been hot here -- days with temperatures 100 and above. I have been in the pool only three times because -- how does that song go?-- "It's too damn hot". One morning I went to get in my car and the rear view mirror was on the car floor. The heat had melted the glue which kept it in place.

While I have been visiting, two horrendous hurricanes have hit the Gulf area, Rita and especially Katrina, a category 5. There are signs along the roads in Austin telling the hundreds of evacuees where they can find shelter. New Orleans was inundated twice. Cam sent me a copy of the thank-you announcement she sent out to Nestle associates. (She's Exec VP, Human Resources.) The associates contributed over \$371 thousand to the American Red Cross Katrina Disaster Relief Fund and over \$17 thousand to Noah's Wish, a non-profit animal welfare group whose sole purpose is to keep animals alive during disasters. Nestle owns Purina/Mighty Dog which operates a kennel in Seattle at the old Carnation Farm (where all the contented cows used to live). The dogs, mostly Labrador Retrievers currently, are monitored as they grow on the Purina products. The farm is a postcard-pretty place. Nestle matched the employees' gifts.

Travels With.....

Some decades ago, I read John Steinbeck's *Travels with Charlie* (an airedale if I remember correctly) and Graham Greene's *Travels with My Aunt* which he called an entertainment rather than a novel. I wish Steinbeck and especially Greene could bless my travel account with their talents.

Before I left Cincinnati, I checked the library to learn how many "Travels With" books are out there. I knew of *Travels with Henry* (that's Kissinger) by Richard Valeriani and *The Birds of Heaven: Travels with Cranes* by Peter Matthiessen but suspected *there must be more*. My search found 354 titles but that included "Travels In" books.

Day 60: October 20, 2005—384 Miles

At long last we are Albuquerque bound! I'm ready to go at 8:00 a.m. but departure is 11:15. Beau and Megan help us pack the car. I pick up shaggy Maggie and put her in her back seat, then take my place behind the wheel for the first leg of driving. Suddenly Dakota leaps into the passenger side and tries to climb on my lap. Ten minutes earlier, Maggie had snapped at him angrily when he stuck his nose into one of my bags. Nevertheless I suppose he wants to go along.

Maggie had a bath and trim a day or two before we left Cincinnati but now all her white parts are gray from playing and rolling in the dirt at the ranch and her hair is stiff. She's a ragamuffin pup.

Outside Austin traveling north on back roads, over rolling hills touched with Prickly Pear Cacti and stunted Live Oak Trees, we have the road almost exclusively to ourselves. Paula tells me that in spring this area is one big blanket of Bluebonnets.

Llano is a quaint, authentic, little town with the courthouse square surrounded by old west store fronts. We stop for lunch at Brady at the best eatery in town, a McDonald's. This one has a well manicured dog area with three faux fire hydrants painted in different bright colors. Mags nonchalantly looks them over.

Abilene comes up next followed by mile upon mile of fields of hail. Not really hail, just looks like it. Cotton fields. In one field is a baling machine in operation. If Molly and Sarah or Eric and Austin were here, I would pull over so they could see what cotton in fruit looks like up close.

Just before we reach Lubbock around six o'clock I count 90 working oil drills within two or three miles. Best gas price in Austin when we left was \$2.59. Here we pay \$2.42. We spend the night at another LaQuinta in Lubbock after a fast bite at a drive-in. Maggie seems dubious about staying in another strange location and keeps a serious eye on my doings.

I certainly enjoyed my day traveling with Paula, talking about the coming wedding, a bridal shower, the rehearsal dinner, how her family fell in love with Texas, future visits, Albuquerque, books we had read in common, what fun we had at the San Marcos upscale outlet mall. You could spend a week there if you were a shopaholic: Movado, Salvatore Ferragamo, Nieman Marcus, Ralph Lauren, Eddie Bauer, Coach, Fritz and Floyd, Lenox, Saks and so on. We reinforced our materialistic society at Liz Claiborne's. At Nieman Marcus I picked up a handsome pale green suede handbag that had been \$1,100.00 and now was only-- only -- \$98. The original price so flabbergasted me that I quickly returned the purse to the shelf. Later I wished I had opened it to see what a thousand-plus handbag looked like inside.

My stay of over two months at Paula's and Michael's was most pleasurable. Their hospitality was unlimited and I will be forever thankful.

The Movie in My Mind

In bed, I thought of Margie's nephew when he was about five and couldn't sleep. "What kept you awake?" his mother asked. He replied, "My brain kept talking to me." My brain insisted on retelling the story of this past year. It was October 2004 when Cam and I were visiting Therese that we decided to view some of the houses in The Albuquerque Parade of Homes. We looked at maybe a half dozen when the three of us fell in love with the Bill Cheirst model. After talking with him and learning that he had one lot available in the High Desert, we all hopped in the car for a three block drive and had a look. Next Therese was driving home for her checkbook to make a \$5000 deposit. It was all so simple. And exhilarating.

Therese and I put our homes on the market and they both sold quickly. Therese put her furnishings in storage and moved into her motor home at a KOA campground. May 10, I met with a talented young realtor who put my house up for sale the next day. May 15 through 23, I was in Texas for Erik's graduation. May 24, I had an offer; May 25, I signed the papers to sell. June 15, I flew to Seattle for a family holiday at the Nestle Carnation Farm and returned home on June 19. June 29 was the closing with a clause that I would rent until August 15.

All this was playing like a movie in my mind. Instead of sleeping I pictured the garage sale that Cam and Paula flew in to help me with on Saturday, April 9. Cam manned the garage, Paula the downstairs and I sat in the kitchen cautioning everyone to watch their steps going downstairs. It was a colossal sale in many ways. One young man wanted my Boston rocker for his wife who was expecting their first child. He quickly drove home to get his wife and mother-in-law to see if they approved. This was the rocker I had when Therese was a babe and I was glad another tiny baby would be rocked to sleep in it. A lady looking at the books saw Bill's name in one and bought it because he was her teacher at UC. "I liked him," she told Cam. New, young neighbors from up the street carried home my ping-pong table. One man needed a screwdriver to take off the banister so he could move the freezer out of the basement. Cam had already sold all my tools but luckily he had a screwdriver in his truck. Cam was amazed at all the old gentlemen in their 70s and 80s who came for nothing but old tools. Another man bought my four leather/chrome chairs. "My wife will

OXBOW, INC. PROGRAMS

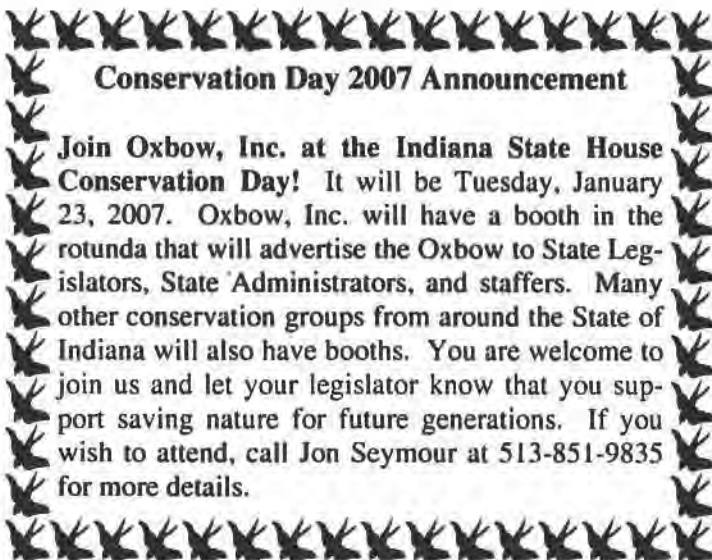
Tuesday, January 9th, 2007
Winton Centre in Winton Woods
Natural History of the Greater Cincinnati Region

Stan Hedeem, locally acclaimed author and recently retired Xavier University professor, will speak tonight on the natural history of the Ohio-Kentucky-Indiana region, focusing on how the Oxbow fits into this natural setting. Stan is the acknowledged local expert on how the geological and ecological history of the Cincinnati area have come together to form the current natural surroundings where we all live.

To reach Winton Centre, go ~3 miles south on Winton Road from I-275, or ~3 miles north on Winton Road from Ronald Reagan Cross County Highway. From Winton Road go west on Valleyview Drive in Winton Woods. After one block, take the first left onto the driveway by Winton Centre. Winton Centre will be on your right.

Tuesday, February 13th, 2007, 7:30 PM
Lawrenceburg Public Library, Lawrenceburg, Indiana
Ron Austing

Ron Austing, naturalist and photographer, will speak tonight on the efforts of the Kirtland's Warbler Recovery Team, and show a 15-minute video on the Kirtland's Warbler showing all phases of their life cycle. Then Ron will present a slide show on birds through the seasons. The entire program will last about one hour. You won't want to miss it! Here is your chance to hear one of the area's best naturalists and photographers! The Lawrenceburg Public Library is downtown at 123 High Street. Go west on US 50, turn left onto Walnut St, then right onto High St. The Public Library is on your right.



Conservation Day 2007 Announcement

Join Oxbow, Inc. at the Indiana State House Conservation Day! It will be Tuesday, January 23, 2007. Oxbow, Inc. will have a booth in the rotunda that will advertise the Oxbow to State Legislators, State Administrators, and staffers. Many other conservation groups from around the State of Indiana will also have booths. You are welcome to join us and let your legislator know that you support saving nature for future generations. If you wish to attend, call Jon Seymour at 513-851-9835 for more details.

OXBOW INC. FIELD TRIPS

To reach the upper Oxbow Inc. parking lot near the cement plant, turn south from Rt. 50 at the Shell gas station in Greendale, drive back to the cement plant, turn right to the end of the road, then left and the lot is on your right.

Friday, February 2nd, 2007, 7:00 PM
Morris Mercer Memorial Hike

Meet John Klein, Land Manager for the Hamilton County Park District, at Shawnee Lookout Park's Archaeology Museum/Golf Clubhouse. This will be the second Morris Mercer Memorial Hike, in honor of the man who helped found Oxbow, and who every year co-led this hike with John Klein on a Friday on or near a January full moon. With a full moon falling on February 2nd, this year's January hike will be in February! Folks can tell their favorite Morris stories and John will supply the M&Ms. We will walk one of the nature trails in Shawnee Lookout Park, calling for owls along the way, and hopefully getting great views of the full moon. For more information, call John at 521-7275, ext. 227.

To reach the Shawnee Lookout Archaeology Museum/Golf Clubhouse, take Lawrenceburg Road south into Shawnee Lookout Park, and at the first Park intersection, take a left turn up the hill past the Ranger station; turn left into the Museum/Clubhouse parking lot.

Saturday, February 24th, 2007, 9:00 AM
Ducks, Eagles, and Cranes

Meet Paul Wharton, expert birder and member of the winning Birdathon team from 2006, for this search for ducks, eagles, and cranes. We make no promises on the eagles and cranes, but the Oxbow is a good spot to see them as they move through our area. Meet at the Oxbow, Inc. parking lot near the cement plant. For more information, call Paul at 353-3403, before 8:30 PM.

Saturday, March 17th, 2007, 8:00 AM
Migrant Waterfowl

Meet Ned Keller at the Oxbow, Inc. parking lot near the cement plant. Ned will search for migrating waterfowl which should be at or near peak numbers in the Oxbow. For more information call Ned at 941-6497 or email to keller@one.net.

Saturday, April 21st, 2007, 8:00 AM
Waterfowl and Returning Songbirds

Meet Paul Wharton, expert birder and member of the winning Birdathon team from 2006, for this search for waterfowl and returning spring migrant songbirds. Meet at the Oxbow, Inc. parking lot near the cement plant. For more information, call Paul at 353-3403, before 8:30 PM.

Travels with Maggie (cont'd from page 9)

kill me," he moaned, "but these are too good a bargain to pass up." Paula sold all my hats to one man!

She had a little girl customer, about four, who had 30 cents in her hand when she asked "How much is that?" referring to a necklace of Indian beads marked down to \$1.00. Paula said "30 cents" and the little tot beamed. She went home as happy as the little boy whose father held him up so he could pick out all the Christmas ornaments he liked.

A woman who home schooled her eight children purchased my two white desks and matching chairs. "These will get plenty of use," she commented. A well dressed African American couple with a young daughter bought my three bamboo/glass tables and some luggage. Then the daughter bought three gifts for herself. Three young mothers each with three youngsters took home all my camping supplies. Two well dressed ladies bought my surplus tea cups for a bridal shower/tea party they were planning. A grandmother with two grandchildren, a boy about 10 and a younger sister, all three experienced garage sale aficionados, bought an assortment of items, among them a dish the boy bought for his mother. That was sweet but he was as savvy as the woman what brung 'im when he asked Cam, "Will you take a dime for this?" His grandmother explained to Cam that she gives the two of them each \$5 once a month and they go canvassing the garage sales. Another woman paid for the downstairs sofa and said a relative in the moving business would come for it. Two men arrived about a week later but could not get the sofa up the stairs. They thought they could remove some paneling but that was a no-no as far as I was concerned so I refunded her money. The new house buyers got a free sofa.

Instead of snoozing, I recalled Paula and I setting up the garage on the previous Thursday. Almost immediately a man arrived to ask if he could look things over while we worked. His name was Bill. He came back later in the day, twice on Friday and again on Saturday, buying something on each visit. We got to know Bill quite well.

Peter, Cam's husband, had encouraged me to make this a grand sale because I wouldn't be able to use, he claimed, even one tenth of what I owned when I got to Albuquerque. He went so far as to offer to match what I would take in for Oxbow Inc., my husband's and my own pet environmental group trying and succeeding to save a wetland area for migrating waterfowl. Little did Peter know all the desirable treasures that I possessed. The sale's profits totaled over \$1600. I reassured Peter I didn't intend to hold him to that promise of a matching check. He generously sent Oxbow Inc. a check for \$1000. Oxbow Inc. and I are forever grateful.

I dreamily envisioned driving two Explorer loads of leftovers to a St. Vincent de Paul collection point immediately following the end of the garage sale and a week later depositing about fifteen cartons of books at the library for its semi annual used books sales.

Some furniture I needed for daily living requirements. Just before I moved, I advertised a moving sale in the newspapers and thanks to a dear, different Megan, on Craig's List on the computer. This was another fascinating episode in my young life. One gentleman came, could not use the items I had for sale but asked to buy Paula's painting, *Smoky Mountain Morning*, which was hanging in my living room. Not for sale -- ever. Another man bought my china cabinet for his recently married son.

A woman arrived with her twelve year old daughter and they loved and paid for my twin bed with the bells and silk flowers decorating the headboard. They would come back the next day, Friday, with a truck. Friday a young man, newly arrived in town from India by way of Phoenix, wanted to buy my entertainment center and my computer desk and hutch but lacked the vehicle to transport them to his apartment. The twin bed lady was fastening her purchase (with my donated clothesline) inside her broken-down truck (the tailgate did not open). "Do you think the lady outside would move these things for me in her truck?" the young man asked me. Believing the lady outside could use a few extra dollars, I said, "You will have to offer her some payment". "How much do you think?" he inquired. "Well, furniture stores are charging about \$40 for a delivery, you should offer at least \$25 or \$30," I replied and he hustled out to talk with the twin bed lady. She agreed to come back Saturday. I brokered a deal!

On Saturday, the twin bed lady phoned to see if the computer desk man had showed up before she made an unnecessary trip. He hadn't arrived as yet. About fifteen minutes later, he came with two male friends to help with the lifting. (I had to help the twin bed lady yesterday lift her bed into her truck-- up over the broken tailgate.) The twin bed lady phoned again and when she came the truck's gas tank was now leaking.

I was beginning to feel like these people were old friends of mine. I was seeing them every day. (On Thursday, the Indian man had come with his beautiful wife and bought my electric sweeper.) The woman kept telling me how happy her daughter was with her new bed and the man definitely was pleased he was able to get his new purchases transported without too much hassle. After parting with more clothesline on the driveway, I met with my new business partners in my living room and we all settled up, AND we ended our farewells with big hugs, although the young man from India was a bit perplexed.

Then this movie in my mind played again all the warm farewells with all my friends and finally I fell asleep with the help of a Tylenol PM.

We left a much cooler Lubbock at 9:00 a.m. wearing sweaters, a welcome change in the weather. Another part of the true west was upon us-- stockyards. We passed seven stockyards, one at least a mile long and some crowded to the railings. Your nose informs you before your eyes do of their whereabouts.

At 10:15 (9:15 New Mexico time) we crossed the border into Clovis, not exactly The Land of Enchantment I was familiar with. Another true west phenomenon are the endless trains that cross the country with you. All of them have at least 100 cars, most double decked with RR containers. Many that we saw had Chinese lettering on them. Paula tells me we have been passing through Llano Estacado, the flat lands that stymied the Spanish Conquistadors, flat but studded with rocks and without water.

Fort Sumner with an elevation of 4.060 feet came into view. It's greatest boast: it has "The Authentic Grave Site of Billy the Kid". Just past here we saw our first wild pronghorns.

(to be concluded next issue)

Oxbow, Inc.

A nonprofit organization formed by conservation groups and concerned citizens of Ohio and Indiana for the purpose of preserving and protecting a wetlands ecosystem know locally as the Oxbow, Hardintown, or Horseshoe Bottoms, from industrial development and to preserve the floodplain at the confluence of the Great Miami and Ohio rivers for use as a staging area for the seasonal migrations of waterfowl. This agricultural area is rich in geological, archaeological, and anthropological history.

Help us save this unique wetland ecosystem. Make your state a richer place in which to live by helping us preserve this precious resource. **Membership in Oxbow, Inc. is encouraged and solicited.**

Prothonotary Warbler	\$ 15	Wood Duck	\$ 25
Great Blue Heron	\$ 50	Green-winged Teal	\$100
Great Egret	\$250	Osprey	\$500
Bald Eagle	\$1000		
Charm of Goldfinches (Group Level)	\$25		

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