Norma Flannery Dies One Month After Concluding Presidency; Flannery Island and JUNO Pond Named in Her Honor; Jon Seymour Inherits Reins

After 13 years as president, Norma passed the gavel to Jon.

After thirteen years as President of Oxbow, Inc., and one month after she concluded her presidency, Norma Flannery died at her Cincinnati home April 1, 2003. The cause was lung cancer. Her presidency covered 13 of the 17 years of Oxbow Inc.'s existence. She had declined another term at the February 26, 2003, Board of Directors meeting at EarthConnection, Mt. St. Joseph College and Vice President Jon Seymour was elected unanimously the fifth president of the organization.

At that same meeting, the Board immediately passed a resolution naming the island in the middle of the Great Miami, Flannery Island, and the first pond at the entrance to the Oxbow, JUNO Pond, in recognition of Norma Flannery's unquenchable devotion to the cause of Oxbow, Inc.

Recently, Cinergy, the Gas and Electric Company, donated 28 acres on this island to Oxbow, Inc. and suggested the island be named Flannery Island. Cinergy will erect a plaque to that effect. Norma Flannery spent years
MORE ....Flannery Dies One Month After Concluding Presidency

negotiating with Cinergy for the acreage and won many friends at the corporation.

The Flannery presidency was remarkable in every way. As chief negotiator, Norma oversaw the purchase of almost one thousand acres in the Oxbow, either outright or in conservation easements. The one purchase which did not occur during her presidency was the very first one, 26 acres now known as Wood Duck Slough. The balance sheet shows 934 acres gained during the Flannery era, including the first acreage donated by a corporation, 28 acres from Cinergy. At the time of her death, Norma was wrapping up negotiations on another purchase of 58 acres which will be a striking total of 993 acres acquired during her administration.

Norma Flannery ignited enthusiasm for donations of hundreds of thousands of dollars from the membership and friends for land purchases. She inspired countless grants from foundations always explaining in depth the worthiness of the cause and the organization. She seemed to possess a special gene to select the right person for the right job on the Board of Directors. In turn, she received many awards, including the prestigious National Wetlands Award for Volunteer Leadership at the National Wetlands Awards Presentation, June, 2001, Washington, D.C.

She was to continue to serve Oxbow, Inc. as comptroller following the end of her presidency. One of her first duties back in 1986 was editor of the newsletter. She held this position simultaneously with the presidency for part of her six years as editor.

The Oxbow, Inc. Board also has selected the very first body of water to greet you upon entrance to Oxbow owned land as a symbol of Norma’s welcoming enthusiasm for the Oxbow area to be named in Norma’s honor. Norma chose the name JUNO Pond to honor her long-time friend, now deceased, Julie Godsey. Julie had headed Oxbow Inc.’s public relations committee. The name JUNO is derived from the first two letters of these two names: Julie (Godsey) and Norma (Flannery).

Newly elected President Jon Seymour stated, “I am truly honored to be elected to be the president of Oxbow, Inc. I am aware of the big shoes I have to fill of not only Norma but other past presidents. I hope I can measure up to their standard and continue this great work they started and nourished.”

Jon brings a variety of skills to his presidency. He has a Ph.D. in biochemistry and is a toxicologist by profession. Jon’s graduate minor was Zoology specializing in animal behavior. He has been a birder for 35 years and a hunter for even longer, favoring bow hunting. Jon has had graduate level education in land management and wildlife ecology. On both sides of his family are long lines of farmers, agricultural specialists and teachers.

Joining Oxbow, Inc. in 1986, one year after its formation, Jon Seymour was elected to the Board of Directors in 2001 and vice-president this past year. As conservation chairman, he writes “Conservation Corner” for Wetland Matters. He also chairs the Speaker’s Bureau and has spent many hours addressing adult groups and youth groups as young as third graders. Jon and Jackie, his wife of 32 years, have three children.

Jon Seymour becomes the fifth president of Oxbow, Inc. Preceding him were:
Judy Bramstedt - 1986-1988
John Miller - 1988-1989
Norma Flannery - 1989-1994
John Getzendanner - 1994-1995
Norma Flannery - 1995-2003

Kani Meyer, schooled in land management, is the newly elected vice president. The other officers reelected unanimously are:
Recording Secretary, Dwight Poffenberger
Corresponding Secretary, Suzanne Skidmore
Treasurer, Mark Westrich
Ohio Agent, Dwight Poffenberger
Indiana Agent, John Getzendanner.

Newly elected Oxbow, Inc. officers are l to r: John Getzendanner, Indiana Agent; Kani Meyer, Vice President; Mark Westrich, Treasurer; Dwight Poffenberger, Recording Secretary and Ohio Agent; Jon Seymour, President. Missing is Suzanne Skidmore, Corresponding Secretary.
Conservation Corner
by Jon Seymour

“Conservation is everyone’s business.” I have heard this phrase many times before and have always believed it but maybe I have never given it the attention it deserved.

The other day I tagged along on one of Paul Wharton’s excellent guided field trips down into the bottoms of the Oxbow. While walking along, I was thinking about this phrase since I am committed to finding ways to convince more people to become directly involved with conservation and of course Oxbow, Inc. I asked myself the question, “Why is conservation everyone’s business?”

Is it because it is important to preserve natural areas? Is it because it is important to protect nature’s various species? Is it because it is important to prevent others from destroying what can not be replaced? The answers of course are yes, yes and yes but are these the real reasons?

As I was walking with the Oxbow field trippers, the answer came to me. The real reason conservation is everyone’s business was walking along beside me. A young lady about ten years old had come with her parents. The real reason conservation is every one’s business is the children.

We are stewards of nature for the children. If we fail, they lose. If we fail to teach them to be stewards, their children will lose. Conservation truly is everyone’s business. Become involved!

Since writing the paragraphs above, I was deeply saddened by the news of the death of Norma Flannery, our beloved President. Norma was a teacher and an inspiration to many generations of conservationists. She lived and embodied the words— “Become Involved!”

PLEASE NOTE

This issue of Wetland Matters is dedicated to our dear friend, Norma Flannery, herself a former editor of this newsletter. It is assembled in full as customary because we believe that Norma would advise us not to interrupt the work of Oxbow, Inc. “#100 and Going Strong, Part 2”, is held over to the next issue because of the many pages of this issue.

Oxbow, Inc.
Activities Schedule

Are you missing our programs and walks every month? Membership meetings are held the 2nd Tuesday of each month, one month at the library in Lawrenceburg, Indiana, and the next month at EarthConnection, Mt. St. Joseph College, in Delhi. We also have one walk per month at the Oxbow. Come, bring the kids, bring your friends!

PROGRAMS

Tuesday, May 13, 2003, 7:30 p.m.
EarthConnection, Mt. St. Joseph College

Anita Buck will tell us about “The Bats in Your BackYard.” Anita has made a study of bats and knows they are mankind’s friends.

Tuesday, June 10, 2003, 7:30 p.m.
Public Library, Lawrenceburg

John Klein, Land Manager for the Hamilton County Parks, will give us the first season deer management report, following the thinning of the deer population in the parks.

FIELD TRIPS

Saturday, May 3, 2003, 9:30 a.m.

Meet Steve Wagner at the upper boat ramp at Shawnee Lookout Park. Steve enjoys looking for the nesting and migrating birds and will help you find them.

Thursday, June 19, 2003, 6:30 p.m.

Meet Connie McNamee and Greg Mendell at the new Oxbow parking lot for a walk around the Oxbow. We’re hoping for a fine evening and expect lots of wildlife. Greg and Connie know the Oxbow well.
Jim walked toward Oxbow Lake and set up the scope. He told us to take a look and we were surprised to see two white pelicans. I had seen one white pelican on Beaver Pond several years ago but there have been mighty few. That was a good way to start our trip. We couldn't see much of Oxbow Lake but it sure looked as if spring was near. We saw coots, horned and pied-billed grebes, the noisy grackles and a yellow-rumped warbler was flitting in the trees.

We moved on down toward Jackpot Pond. The water was best seen from the path on top of the Greendale levee. We saw scaup, ring-necked and I saw my first shoveler and wood duck of the season. Jim and I had seen several vultures earlier, both the turkey and the black. We couldn't get far around here because of the water and mud. We moved to Cemetery Lake. The diving ducks were on the flooded lake—the head, canvasback, scaup and ring-necked duck. Karl said he needed a golden eye for his 2003 list and Jim was able to pick one out. There were many gulls. Most of the gulls were ring-billed but there were several Bonaparte’s gull in the crowd.

We hadn’t found a green-winged teal but Karl agreed a green headed mallard would do this morning. Jim got the first Lorna Doone. I thought the cookies were extra good this year. With our strength renewed we went on with our hunt. State Line Pond and Hidden Valley were next. Not many ducks, but we added the ruddy duck and the bufflehead to our list.

It was lunch time and we drove into Lawrenceburg to pick up lunch. Jim got to hear our old WWII stories. Even if they are ancient history! As we were ready to leave Karl said, “The way the old WWII vets are dropping off, we might not all make it next year.” George said, “The way we’ve beaten the odds, we might just beat them again.” I said we would meet again at the same place next year.

We drove down to the Oxbow to get the other cars. There was Rick Pope clearing the area for a new parking lot. Rick stopped and came over to talk. Karl gave him a Lorna Doone. George and Karl headed for home and Jim decided to walk down toward the other end of Oxbow Lake. He had to walk, wade, both water and mud to get there. I told him I would wait for him and watch Rick work. It wasn’t long before Jon Seymour came driving up to help Rick and I thought it was time for me to watch a bit more and stay out of the way.

I saw Jim coming down the road and he looked as if he had about had it. He said we had really missed it. All the puddle ducks were back there: mallards, blacks, gadwall, pintail, blue-winged teal, green-winged teal (a flock of 30 or more) and shovelers and wood ducks. Wish I could have seen all of that but glad Jim got to see them. We need that Jim for these trips. This is the Oxbow I remember and I’m glad Oxbow, Inc owns as much as we do.

Now spring is here, a most beautiful time of the year. Hope to see you at the Oxbow.
Mallards and Domestication

The mallard is the most common duck at the Oxbow, and, in fact, the most common duck in the world. I have it on the best of authority that when George Laycock, Karl Maslowski, Morris Mercer, and Jim Simpson took their Lorna Doone cookies out on St. Patrick’s Day this year, they broke into the cookie jar before they saw a green-winged teal. Indeed, they said the male mallard’s green head would do just fine.

The mallard is the one duck that almost everyone knows. In fact, it and the muscovy are the only duck species that are domesticated. Even wild mallards aren’t terribly wild. I contacted a well-known Monterey area ornithologist, Alan Baldridge, to learn what it is about mallards that makes them subject to domestication. (California mallards are much the same as Cincinnati area mallards, perhaps just a little flakier.) Although Alan didn’t have the answer that explained everything, he suggested several contributing factors. Mallards breed in lower latitudes than many other ducks. Thus, they aren’t forced to migrate; and they aren’t highly migratory. Mallards and wood ducks are the common breeding birds in the Cincinnati area, and wood ducks are more migratory. Also, mallards use small ponds, a habitat frequently created by people.

In Europe, ducks may have been first domesticated during Roman times. However, in China, mallard domestication likely took place much earlier. The white, domestic Pekin duck is a mallard. The Handbook of the Birds of the World states: "It seems that the first species of wildfowl to be domesticated were probably the mallard and the swan goose (Anser cygnoides), which are known to have been living with humans in China and southeast Asia from a very early date. The mechanism of domestication was probably very simple: wild birds would rarely breed in captivity, but it would certainly not be difficult to collect eggs from the wild and have them incubated and hatched by the already domesticated hens. The young hatched in this way could rapidly become imprinted by their surroundings and captive breeding by such birds would be far less difficult."

The classic book, A Natural History of Ducks, by John C. Phillips, suggests that mallards are quickly domesticated: "The actual process of domestication is a rapid one, and can easily be observed by any one who cares to make the effort. After two or three generations the natural wildness of the ducklings and old birds disappears." Also, "Wild specimens when brought into confinement will usually not lay the first year, but in the second year they nest freely and there is no difficulty whatever in rearing large numbers of young." What seems more remarkable is that the birds don’t just get used to people; in this short span of generations the mallards change. "The shape and carriage of the birds become greatly changed; they are more erect and waddling in their gait, heavier and courser in appearance, and lose almost all inclination to fly. The inbreeding which usually accompanies domestication is very apt to affect the plumage, and fix variations that crop up, especially white primary feathers and other patches of albinism. All those changes are accompanied by a derangement of the sexual life which results in polygamy and greatly increased capacity for laying eggs."

According to Grzimek’s Encyclopedia of Ethology (animal behavior), the changes associated with domestication are similar in many animals. While sexuality increases other traits often decrease. Domestic animals let humans care for them. They don’t need the alertness or visual acuity of their wild relatives. It is somewhat startling to read that: "Behavior is most certainly related to the development of the brain. Hence, it is important to know that the brain of domestic animals is more than thirty percent lighter than that of comparable wild species. This reduction by roughly a third indicates that demands on domestic animals are considerably less than on the wild species. The various parts of the brain are reduced in different amounts, indicating that not all the demands have changed in the same way. In domestic animals, the smallest development takes place in brain regions dealing with visual and olfactory senses, emotional behavior, attention, and general activity level. On the other hand, areas controlling reproductive behavior have changed but little."

Have you heard that domestic turkeys have such little brain power that they will hold their heads up and drown if left standing in the rain? Is that a myth? Domestic mallards have no such problem. But then wild and domestic mallards seem a lot closer than wild and domestic turkeys.
It's Birdathon 2003!
Get Your Pledges In Now!

Four official Oxbow, Inc. teams along with many other local birders will take to the fields, counting bird species, all to help save the special wetlands at the Oxbow. You can help by pledging your support for one of the teams or one of your favorite "single" birders. The "big day" is Friday, May 9, 5:00 p.m. until Saturday, May 10, 5:00 p.m.

The four official teams are:

1. Geriatric Gents & Juniors. Karl Maslowski, George Laycock, Jerry Meyer and Randy Lakes. The geriatric portion of this team has taken part in every Birdathon since its inception in 1989. George says they spend the night at an old farm house in Adams County to be able to catch a chuck will's widow first thing. It's a 115 acre farm with lakes that hopefully many birds, too, will want to stop over and spend the night.

2. Fire & Brimstone Birders. Jay Stenger, 14 year old son Jack Stenger, Joe Bens and Paul Wharton. Six years in a row this team has won the Birdathon. Last year they saw and/or heard 155 species. They are methodical, checking out road conditions, water conditions and farm rain pools a day or two ahead of Birdathon. That's legal!

3. Finneytown's Fabulous Flying Fortune Seekers. Jerry Lippen, Wayne Wauligman, Erich Baumgardner and Matt Stenger. Matt's the new team member this year and we hear he has eyes in the back of his head! They recorded 129 species last year and took second place. Are they hungry for the win?

4. Oxbow/ Shawnee Birders. Charlie Saunders, Mike Busam and Steve Pelikan. They figure all the birds worthy of Birdathon will congregate at the Oxbow and Shawnee Park. Why not? It's the Oxbow Birdathon!

5. No See'ums, West. Jane and Dave Styer. New Californians, the Styers, will bird the Monterey Bay area for Oxbow. They're not competing but serious about finding the western birds and helping Oxbow, Inc.

Pledge amounts are per species seen or heard by your team and you pledge whatever amount you wish. Birders may canvas anywhere within a 100 mile radius of the Oxbow at the specific times allowed. Many take to the fields at night specifically to find owls. This is Oxbow Inc.'s annual fund raiser. Get in on the fun. Mail in the pledge form below. All backers will receive their team's results by mail. A follow-up article (or two!) will appear in the next Wetland Matters.

If you wish to take an active role in the Birdathon, go out as a single, or with a buddy or two, line up your family members and friends as sponsors and then phone Jon Seymour (513-851-9835) to register. You'll be glad you did.

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Oxbow, Inc.
Gratefully Acknowledges
The Recent Grant from
The Allan & Dorothy Campbell Fund
of The Greater Cincinnati Foundation

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Birdathon 2003 Pledge Form

Name:__________________________________________
Address:_______________________________________

My pledge is per species found:
__ $1__ _50¢_ _25¢_ _20¢_ _10¢_ other:_________

or for this amount:___________________________

Mail to: Oxbow, Inc.
854 Ligorio Avenue
Cincinnati, Ohio 45218-1521

My pledge is for:
____ Oxbow Team #1 -- Geriatric Gents
____ Oxbow Team #2 -- Fire & Brimstone
____ Oxbow Team #3 -- Finneytown's Seekers
____ Oxbow Team #4 --Oxbow/Shawnee Birders
____ Oxbow Team #5--No See'ums, West
____ Highest Scoring Oxbow, Inc. Team
Meet (Again) Two Newest Members of the Board

Mark Esposito and Kani Meyer, the two newest members of Oxbow, Inc. Board of Directors, have served Oxbow, Inc. in earlier days. It's not "Deja vu all over again," as Yogi used to say. Kani had been a member of the Board as early as 1986 and Mark has been doing survey work for Oxbow, Inc. for several years. Both were appointed in 2002 by President Norma Flannery and approved unanimously by the other board members. Oxbow, Inc. is indeed fortunate to have this duo because of their exceptional talents -- and the timing couldn't be better.

Mark Esposito is a soft-spoken gentleman, a professional land surveyor registered in both Ohio and Indiana. His company is called "The Survey Company, Esposito Surveying and Mapping," located in Lawrenceburg, Indiana.

Mark was born in Jackson Heights, New York, is married to Connie and has two sons from a previous marriage, Roy 40, and Mark, 34. The Espositos reside in Dearborn County, Indiana.

"I've had a lifelong love of the outdoors that includes hunting, fishing and hiking," Mark says. "One of my favorite places is the Great Smoky Mountains. The bird I find interesting is the flicker."

Having served Oxbow, Inc. for over nine years surveying the organization's land, especially establishing boundaries, Mark was appointed to the Board of Directors in 2002. "Working with Norma Flannery and the Oxbow, Inc. Board has been a pleasure and a great learning experience," Mark states.

Kani Meyer appears to be constantly on the go but has managed to stay put long enough to begin a second term on the Oxbow, Inc. Board. Her first term began in 1986 after Morris Mercer's "contagious enthusiasm" (her words) for the Oxbow led her in that direction. Ten years later, work conflicts necessitated her leaving. Today she is the newly elected vice-president of the organization as well as chair of the Land Management Committee.

"Originally I'm from the island of Maui," Kani explains, "but my father being in the service, we traveled constantly so that I went to grade school in Virginia and Germany and high school in Maine. Then off to college in Nova Scotia and graduate school in Connecticut. I met my husband at Yale, then moved to Panama for four years before settling in Cincinnati in 1975. We have a son, Ross, a junior at Miami University (Ohio). Our favorite place in the world is Swan's Island, Maine, where we have a house overlooking the harbor that has been in our family for seven generations and where we see eagles and ospreys daily.

"A visit to Sanibel Island's Ding Darling Preserve got me hooked on birds -- you can't avoid them there! That was followed by the stay in Panama where we totaled up 356 species on one Audubon Christmas count! What a great hobby... it travels so easily. Now my binoculars go around the world with me to Australia, India, Malaysia, Palau, Cuba and all over the Caribbean. My favorite bird? All of them... though I am partial to the quetzal and wattled bellbird, I must admit... and then there's the motmot and the........"
Ron Austing’s Favorite Bird Videos

Wildlife photographer Ron Austing shared some of his favorite bird videos at the March 11 meeting at EarthConnection, Mt. St. Joseph College. The audience of 15 (weather was uncooperative) seemed to relish the golden eagle shots as well as the exceptional footage of the many beautiful warblers at Pt. Pelee, Canada. Following the program, Ron talked of petting gray whales off the coast of Baja California recently and with solid interest from the group present, he went to his car, brought back and showed this exciting video.

Jon and the First Ladies

Oxbow, Inc. President Jon Seymour attended a luncheon/meeting February 27 at the Hyatt Regency, downtown Cincinnati, with the three first ladies of Ohio, Kentucky and Indiana—Hope Taft, Judy Patton and Judy O’Bannon respectively. The governors’ wives are honorary tri-chairpersons of the planned Ohio River Way which could include the bike path along the levee at the Oxbow. The Ohio River Way is being created to link natural walkways and pathways along the river from Maysville, Kentucky, to Madison, Indiana. Jon managed to slip Mrs. O’Bannon a copy of Wetland Matters with the colorful map of the Oxbow.

The Fun Bunch

Noon, May 21, Jon Seymour will join The Fun Bunch, the seniors group at St. Gertrude Catholic Church, and tell the story of Oxbow, Inc. and the Oxbow. Need a speaker? Call Jon.

Season of Salmon & Bears

At our February meeting in Lawrenceburg, Steve Maslowski showed us a video he helped make for National Geographic called “The Season of the Salmon.” It was very good. Steve told us it was also the season of the bear and how he was followed by an Alaskan brown bear and how he laid down his expensive camera and climbed a tree until the bear decided to move along. Where else but at an Oxbow, Inc. membership meeting can you get an insider story like that?.......by Morris Mercer

April 5 Field Trip Does Double Duty

The April 5 field trip group to be led by Darlena Graham joined the Zoo Trippers for a tour into the Oxbow. The Zoo Trippers are a social group of zoo volunteers that take trips and have fun together. There were 20 people in the combined group and the weather was cold, cloudy and windy. The Oxbow roads were muddy and the road out to Beaver Pond was impassible. The group proceeded to explore on foot.

We were treated to views of several dabbling ducks. There were good numbers of shovelers, blue-winged teal and green-winged teal. Small flocks were flying in and out of the flooded field edges. We had views of rough-winged and tree swallows, pied-billed grebe, American coot, blue heron, lesser scaup, wood duck, turkey vulture, ring-billed gull, killdeer and large groups of double-crested cormorants. A close fly-by from a northern harrier was the highlight.

The walk along the roads generated 2/3 pound coverings of mud on each shoe. This was too exhausting for some of the tour who had to turn back. About 12 of the tour made it out to Osprey Lake and to the proposed overlook site. On return to the new parking area, every one seemed to be enthusiastic and wanting to come back for another visit.....

....by Jon Seymour

All’s Well That Ends Well

“The best laid plans...somehow between my brain and the newsletter, the time for my April 5 field trip through the Oxbow changed from 8:00 to 9:00 a.m. I was there at 8:00 and the participants at 9:00. Fortunately for everyone, Jon Seymour scooped up my group with his Zoo Trippers and all ended well. Thank you, Jon.

After hanging around the new and oh-so-nice parking lot for the obligatory ten minutes, I did a little birding by myself. An obliging immature bald eagle cruised by, rusty blackbirds squeaked in the trees and tree and rough-winged swallows sailed over the water. A cardinal, Carolina wren, robin and chickadee exchanged “Good mornings” in the brush. Mallards, wigeons and blue-winged teal paddled around feeding happily and a small group of Canada geese flew over heading south. Interestingly, there were 12 turkey vultures sailing around. I can only believe they were joining the few remaining ring-billed gulls looking for fish stranded by the receding waters.

It was a really cold day and as the wind picked up I felt reluctant to get any further into the mud. I hopped into my warm car and headed out.....by Darlena Graham

Warblers and Monarchs

Yvonne Mohlman is a better photographer than she gives herself credit for. Her slides of quite a number of warblers taken over the last few years were unique in that she uses a flash to highlight the birds’ eyes so you can spot them in their settings. Ron Austing was among the 15 in the audience at the Lawrenceburg Library membership meeting,
April 8, and Yvonne asked him some questions but she didn’t need him to help her out. (He did graciously lend an assist with the projector.)

Her pictures of the monarch butterflies were fantastic. I never saw so many butterflies in one bush! The monarchs winter over in Mexico and the first breeding area on their return to Canada is in Texas where they find milkweed. Any variety of milkweed will do but milkweed is the only plant Mrs. Butterfly will select to lay her eggs. It’s the food the youngsters like when they arrive. I would have to say that everyone enjoyed the evening.......by John Getzendanner

Ducks on the Move

A group of 11 hearty souls met Saturday, March 29, at nine in the morning at the newly cleared Oxbow parking lot with high hopes. After all, in the week prior to the field trip, up to 19 species of waterfowl had been seen in the area as the Ohio River had crested at just over 50 feet. In addition, just three days prior, two American White Pelicans had been frequenting our beloved Oxbow. But a funny thing happened in those few days. The Ohio River dropped to 33 feet, the temperature went from 70 degrees to 34, and the waterfowl continued their migration.

However, all was not lost as we did get good looks at both Pied-billed and Horned Grebes. Fifty or more Double-crested Cormorants roosted in the snags along the edge of Beaver Pond, and were joined by an Osprey. A few dozen swallows were seen snatching insects off of the water; mostly they were Tree Swallows, but we also saw our first Barn and Rough-winged Swallows as well.

The ducks were few in number and scattered, but we did manage to see Canada Goose, Mallard, Gadwall, Wigeon, Blue-winged Teal, Wood Duck, Redhead, and Hooded Merganser. Certainly more were present, but they avoided us.

In the trees lining the Oxbow lake were several Chickadees, Yellow-rumped Warblers, Golden-crowned Kinglets, and Downy Woodpeckers, as well as our first Brown Thrasher of the season.

I must admit that I had high hopes for an impressive bird list for the morning and was disappointed by the scarcity of the birds, but the company was good, the birds we did see were enjoyable, and the Oxbow itself was as good as ever. If it weren’t for some very dedicated and forward thinking people back in the early 1980s, our beloved Oxbow would look nothing like it does now. Many thanks to all those people who stood up and founded Oxbow Inc. and have taken it to where it is now and in the future.......by Paul Wharton

Oxbow, Inc. Memorials

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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 loved one, 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. Contributions should be sent to Oxbow, Inc., PO Box 43391, Cincinnati, Ohio, 45243-0391. Be sure to enclose the names and addresses of those to receive the acknowledgement.

WANTED!

A CREATIVE PERSON TO DONATE HIS/HER HELP IN DESIGNING A WEB PAGE FOR OXBOW, INC. YOU DON’T NEED TO MAINTAIN THE PAGE, JUST GIVE US SOME GREAT IDEAS ON OVERALL DESIGN. IF INTERESTED, EMAIL KANI MEYER AT: KANI@BERNHEIM.ORG

CORRECTION

My sincere apology to Ruth Trosset, not the late Ruth Trosset, which I erroneously reported in Part One of “$100 and Going Strong!” in the previous issue of Wetland Matters. Ruth, one of the first directors of Oxbow, Inc., lives with her husband, Stan, in Sharonville. Mea culpa.

Jeanne Bocklage
2002 Treasury Report

by Mark M. Westrich, CFA, Oxbow Treasurer

Oxbow* bought over 150 acres of land in 2002 including the Osprey Lake! Still more land has been acquired this year and we continue to save for our next opportunity to buy wetland in the Great Miami/Ohio Rivers flood plain. There is yet land to be acquired from willing sellers but prices remain high due to continuing commercial interest in the area.

Oxbow saved about $45,000.00 in 2002. This is $45,000.00 less than last year due to declining interest rates and lower cash principal (due to land purchases). All member gifts declined by 3.5% though dues increased 17%.

Major expense items in 2002 were for security and tax/insurance, all related to acquiring and managing our growing acreage. Legal expenditures were incurred to evaluate proposals for commercial development in the flood plain and to represent the interests of the wetland area before various public and private agencies.

Administrative expenses were about $1,900.00 or 2.2% of revenue and there was no fundraising expense.

Oxbow is a 100% volunteer organization. There are no salaries, no expense accounts and no offices to maintain. Oxbow is beholden to the generous support of the membership and public. The IRS Forms 990 for Oxbow, Inc. and Oxbow of Indiana, Inc. may be inspected on www.guidestar.org.

*Oxbow, Inc. & Oxbow of Indiana, Inc.

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Net Savings $44,705

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| $1,074,340         |
| $231,963           |
| $1,045,392         |
| $2,351,695         |
| $0                |
| $2,351,695         |
Steve Pelikan, my husband, is in the process of surveying flies at the Oxbow. In warm weather, he makes at least one trip a week, hauling traps, nets, and other equipment out to the Oxbow, setting it up, taking it down, then hauling it all home, where he makes sure all the little beasts are dead, and places the wet ones in varying concentrations of isopropyl alcohol. When he has time, he mounts them on special pins to dry. In cold weather, he spends evenings and weekends hunched over his microscope, keying out specimens and calling me in to see particularly interesting or beautiful creatures. He also spends hours meticulously labeling the specimens, organizing them by family into little acid-free cardboard boxes he assembles and glues by hand. These little boxes then go into glass-topped Cornell drawers, stacked ever higher in his office.

Steve says that one advantage of studying flies is that you can store an enormous quantity of specimens in a relatively small space. I will not dispute this. However, the amount of equipment and supplies required to collect, preserve, examine, and organize the many thousands of flies he has caught is striking, particularly when it is all stacked by the back door, or parked on the breakfast counter. ("Are those deadly toxins in the killing jars next to the place mats, dear?")

I couldn't complain, even if I wanted to, because it started with the worm bin.

I needed a convenient way to handle kitchen scraps. Our compost pile is located too far from the house to be easily accessed by anybody but the neighborhood raccoons, who then ransack the yard for other treats -- in particular, to dig up every new plant put in. So, to eliminate the lure of the kitchen scraps, I bought a state-of-the-art worm bin.

Steve, who patiently deals with multiple pet cats and occasional stray, not to mention the bats I receive for rehab, was less than supportive. "We already have too many animals in the house and you want ten thousand more?" His resignation turned to exasperation as our new bin developed biodiversity. Yes, a worm bin is a little ecosystem unto itself. Unfortunately, it is an ecosystem that always involves fruit flies, or similar species that share that particular niche.

Fruit flies are amazing. Even though our worm bin is located in the far reaches of the garage, sixty feet distant from the kitchen, squads of fruit flies appeared whenever we opened a bottle of wine, and plunged into our glasses. The flies also exhibited a fondness for coffee, particularly the decaffeinated stuff Steve drinks whenever he decides to live healthfully. (Judging from the intensity of his comments on these occasions, Steve needs whatever decrease in blood pressure he can get.)

One day, however, fishing a fly out of his glass of chardonnay, Steve looked closely at the sooty insect wagging its wings at the tip of his little finger. "This isn't an actual fruit fly," he said. "It sure looks like a fruit fly," I replied. "Wild Drosophila," Steve pointed out, referring to the genus so widely used in genetics experiments, "have red eyes, so this must be something else."

About a week later, after poring through books about flies at the biology library, Steve came home triumphant. "It's a phorid, a coffin fly." The rest, is, as they say, history, at least in our house. Steve has never uttered another complaint about the occasional swarms from the worm bin, or the worm bin itself. I sometimes find him poking around in it in search of new residents.

This demonstrates one of the qualities I most admire in my husband: his scientific curiosity. He quickly forgot his personal annoyance in his desire to learn more about the world, and, because he's a scientist, he is systematic about acquiring knowledge, then placing it in a useful context. So, not only do I not mind Steve's work on flies, I actively encourage it and help out where I can. Besides, I know life could be worse. He could be working with dung beetles.
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 known 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.

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