



View from

# Listening Point

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## Sigurd Olson and His Boys in the Wilderness

By *Kevin Proescholdt*

When most people think of Sigurd Olson and his guiding of wilderness canoe trips, they usually think that the people he guided were all adult men. But this was not always the case. Sig had an interest in introducing young people to the wilderness as well, particularly through his long-term relationship with YMCA Camp Widjiwagen on Burntside Lake and its strong canoe camping traditions. But he also guided his own boys on family canoe trips in the late 1930s.

In the following article, published in 1939, Sig described a canoe trip he led for the boys. The group included his wife Elizabeth, sons Sig Jr. and Bob, and nephew Andrew Curtis Uhrenholdt. Curtis lived with the Olson family in Ely during the years 1938-1940 while he attended the Ely Junior College (today's Vermilion Community College). Curtis became like another son to Sig and Elizabeth, and an older brother to Sig Jr. and Bob.

The article is interesting for many reasons. First, it is one of Sig's few articles about a family canoe trip. In fact, though Sig took Sig Jr. and Bob on various hunting and fishing trips through the years, it was only during the time that Curtis lived with the Olsons that they took canoe trips with the entire family in the 1930s. The article also has an air of poignancy and loss, knowing that Curtis would tragically lose his life just two years later aboard the USS Arizona at Pearl Harbor.

The article also gives insights to canoe camping in the Quetico-Superior during that time, in that era of relatively low visitation compared with modern times and that era's somewhat simple camping gear. And because of the relatively early publication of this article, it is more indicative of Sig's writing in the 1930s -- primarily hunting and fishing articles -- rather than his more polished writing of wilderness essays later on. Still, however, it's obvious that this is a Sigurd Olson piece. And finally, it's just a fun read, learning how Curtis, Sig Jr., and Bob became members of the Immortals of Argo!

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*Kevin Proescholdt is the conservation director for Wilderness Watch, a national wilderness conservation organization ([www.wildernesswatch.org](http://www.wildernesswatch.org)), and the author of *Glimpses of Wilderness*, available at <https://kevinproescholdt.com>.*

### The Immortals of Argo

By *Sig Olson, Sports Afield, July 1939*

We were camped on Crooked Lake some 30-odd canoe miles from the little border town of Winton, Minnesota; had been out a week enjoying our fill of bass and walleyes and wilderness living

along the famed international border route of the Quetico-Superior country.

This was no ordinary guiding trip, nothing hit or miss about this expedition. Not a thing had been left to chance that might even in the remotest way keep this cruise from being the high spot of the year's woods experience. There are times when being a professional Canadian guide has its disadvantages and one of these times is when he takes his own family into the bush. They were with me now, Bob and Junior, their mother Elizabeth, cousin Curt and what they expected of me was nothing short of perfection.

I had worked them by easy stages toward the clear water trout lakes of the western Quetico, had camped that night so they could look north and feast their eyes on the wild, mysterious channels of Moose Bay and the route toward Lac la Croix. With such a deliberately planned setting, talk turned as I knew it would to the one thing that had brought us west, the wild hope of taking a monster trout.

"When you start talking of trout," I said after listening to the chatter of the boys for an hour or so, "there is only one lake in the whole of the Quetico worth thinking about, that big spot of blue on the map now called Argo. In the old days, we used to call it Canadian Trout, but some map maker changed it to Argo, but Argo or Trout, it's got more and bigger fish than any other lake in the whole country."

The boys edged closer, stirred up the fire and got set, while Elizabeth, veteran of many a wild expedition, gazed tolerantly at her bunch of conspirators.

"Why, there's one hole up there," I continued, "that produces nothing but 20 pounders, the most beautiful fish you ever saw, full bodied steel blue chaps, pearl white bellies and the reddest meat you ever ate. It's a shame even to eat them, let alone take them out of that clear water."

"On the camp site on an island in the center of the lake is a cedar slab with the records of all the big trout that have been taken there during the past 20 years. If that old board could only talk and tell the stories of the fish that have been taken."

"There's one I took back there in 1927 with Doc Cahn that went better than twenty-eight pounds, another by Jimmy McManus twenty-two pounds, one of Doc Bacon's about twenty-four and some fellow I guided back in 1930 a shade bigger than any of them and a lot of others that I can't begin to remember. To carve your name on that old slab," I continued, "means that you have become one of the immortals of Argo Lake and for that matter of

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## A Listening Ear, A Helping Hand

On February 23, 1977, a young college student named David Backes—struggling, feeling lost and adrift and about to drop out of school—wrote a letter to an author and conservationist named Sigurd F. Olson. He expressed his despondence and confusion to a man who, for some reason, he thought might understand. Who might even be able to help.

David had spent the previous summer camping in the Ely area, where he and his family had taken many happy camping and canoeing trips, and during that time had discovered and read two of Olson's books, *The Singing Wilderness* and *Reflections From the North Country*. They had struck a chord in a young man who loved the outdoors. And the words on the pages provided a hint that here was someone who knew some essential things about life, someone a young person might be able to reach out to for guidance and understanding.

Exactly one month earlier, another young man living and teaching school in Morris Minnesota, sent Sigurd Olson a very similar letter. He, too, felt lost and uncertain. He, too, had recently discovered Olson's books. He, too, had been moved—even to tears—by the words on the page. And he, too, had the strange feeling that here was a person who might somehow be able to help.

The second young man was me.

David and I did not know each other then, had never even met. But without realizing it, we were connected by our shared difficulties and confusion, and by our impulse to reach out to someone we thought could help. When we compare notes now, the similarities and parallels are striking.

Within a week, David received an answer that changed and gave direction to his life. “There is no substitute for a college degree,” read the letter, “Much as you may hate to sit behind a desk... Talk to your professors and advisors and don't worry too much about the major right now. That will come in time. With your love of the wilderness and a definite objective your grades will go up. What you need to do now is pour all of your energies into your work accumulating all the possible information you can get.”

I, too, received an answer within a week. “What a beautiful letter,” said the words. “You really impressed me with the exquisite depth of your understanding and your need of the North Country, and you said so hauntingly well I am sure I have not seen the last of your reflections... You have talent, I know that. Keep on working away and someday you'll arrive.”

Both David and I were shy, unsure about reaching out and “bothering” this famous author. Neither of us really thought we'd get an answer. And both our lives were changed—and redirected—when we did. Had either of us realized how incredibly busy and burdened this 78 year-old man was, we would probably not have even tried. It is good we did not know. Because we both needed an answer, needed the feeling that someone heard what we said, understood how we felt, and would take the time to encourage us.

David became a teacher—a college professor—helping countless other young people reach for their dreams and sort out the choices and challenges of life. He also became a writer and Sigurd Olson's official biographer, telling the story of Sig's life—including all his own difficulties, fears, and doubts—in the beautiful book, *A Wilderness Within: The Life of Sigurd F. Olson*.

I became a writer as well, first of songs and later of many books, including my latest memoir, *Deep Woods, Wild Waters*, the story of my own lifelong love affair with the natural world and the North Woods.

It is my considered opinion that none of this would have happened had we not stumbled upon the writings of Sigurd Olson, and more particularly had not each of us sat down to write a letter, and received a beautiful and caring answer in response.

Sig Olson is remembered and revered today for many things—for his beautiful books, for his environmental and wilderness ethic, for his hard and fruitful work to preserve wild and natural areas in the North Country and all over the continent. But perhaps one of the least known aspects of his life and career was the way in which he gave a helping hand, a listening ear, warm counsel and advice, to literally countless individuals, often young people, who needed just that. Often responding in a matter of hours or days to the many letters and requests he received. David and I were by no means exceptions, but rather examples of a commitment Sig Olson took seriously and lived every day.

Life is hard. It is confusing and challenging and full of twisty trails and difficult portages. It can be discouraging. Everyone needs a little extra help once in awhile. Here at the Listening Point Foundation we have declared this our “Year For Youth,” as we highlight the importance of mentoring and making connections with younger generations. And we can all make a difference. Sometimes it is hard to imagine, with all of our own life difficulties, our acknowledged shortcomings and limitations, that what we say and do really matters, can really make a difference to someone. That we are really important in the scheme of things.

We are. For although few of us may ever have the public impact of a Sigurd F. Olson, each of us is vitally important. To someone.

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Doug Wood Illustration

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## ESRI Story Maps – Sigurd Olson’s Lonely Land

By Steffi O’Brien

Want to personally explore the historic 1955 trip down the Churchill River in Saskatchewan that inspired Sig’s third book, *The Lonely Land*? Now you can!

Using ESRI Story Map technology, an interactive, online visual display has been created that allows viewers to click, navigate, and examine the route taken by Sig and his Voyageurs. Type in the link below into your web browser and scroll down the page to learn about and see the places and environments the Lonely Land Voyageurs encountered. In addition, view the historic photographs that were taken by members of that 1955 expedition and view their route on an interactive map.

**Link to the Lonely Land Story Map:** <http://arcg.is/2kWMDyX>

*NOTE: Link works best on the Chrome web browser from Google.*

**Part II will appear in the next issue**

## Calendar

**2017**

**June 10-11:** Great American Canoe Festival, Ely, MN ([greatamericancanoeifest.org](http://greatamericancanoeifest.org)); LPF information booth—come and see us.

**July 28-30:** Blueberry Arts Festival, Ely, MN; LPF information booth #151—please stop in and say hello.

**Sept. 8:** Annual Northwoods Dinner, Grand Ely Lodge, Ely, MN

**Oct. 28:** LPF Board meeting, Ely, MN

*Please check our website and Facebook page for additional activities and dates.*



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### **A Listening Ear, A Helping Hand** *(continued from page 2)*

Each of us can help someone. I have a favorite little saying that I’ve often shared around the campfire with groups I’ve guided on wilderness trips: “There’s no such thing as V.I.P.’s. (Very Important People) Just I.P.’s (Important People.)” Sooner or later on a canoe trip you discover there is only one way to sit around a campfire—in a circle, no one in a more elevated or more important place than anyone else. Everyone equally responsible and equally involved. There is another saying: “To the world you may just be one person; but to one person you may be the world.”

And so we encourage all our LPF friends to make a special effort this year to do what Sigurd Olson did. Connect to the next generation. Remind them they are important and have something to offer and contribute. Share your wisdom and your passion, and help pass on the legacy of caring for our environment and our natural heritage. Remember someone who helped you along in life, and be that person for someone else—someone who may be young and in need of guidance. Help the Listening Point Foundation celebrate the “Year For Youth.”

That would make Sig Olson proud.

*–Doug Wood*

## Sigurd Olson and His Boys in the Wilderness *(continued from page 1)*

the whole Quetico. Trout,” I said, giving the fire a kick to emphasize my point, “trout – that lake fairly reeks with them. You can all but smell them when you cross the portage from Crooked Lake.”

Junior spoke up, “You don’t expect us to believe all of that, do you Dad? Remember this isn’t our first trip out and we know trout are hard to get even in the best water.”

“So help me,” I assured him, “every word of it is true and more. Speaking of camp sites, that island I mentioned is something to dream about. There’s a clean rocky point backed by pine trees with a sloping shelf right down to water’s edge, a perfect landing for canoes, a good spot for the tents and plenty of room to roam around in.”

“When do we start?” spoke up Curt.

“Well,” I countered, “it’s up to you fellows. You’ve got to remember it’s a long trip in and there is always a chance that the trout aren’t hitting just now, that the wind might be wrong or a storm blow up, but I’ll do whatever you think it best.”

“How far is it?” gulped Bob, the youngest of the trio.

“Something better than twenty miles,” I answered, “just a good day’s travel if the wind is with us.”

Rising to my feet, I drove home the final challenge to their spirit of adventure. “Of course,” I added, “I don’t want to force you into this but if you are willing to take a gambling chance on everything working out all right, let’s pull out first thing in the morning, at the crack of dawn or a little before.”

With a whoop of delight the boys dove into their tent to begin gathering up their odds and ends of duffel for the dash out. Walleyes were tame and so were bass and northerns, but trout from the clear cold waters of Argo, trout with flaming gills and spots on their sides, twenty or thirty pounds of battling fish from cold, green depths, but more than all of that, their names carved with the rest of the immortals on that old cedar slab, that would



compensate for any hardship.

Up at dawn. By the time the bacon and pancakes were ready, the boys had the tents down, the packs ready. Down the winding channels of Crooked Lake, twenty miles of rocky islands and smooth glaciated cliffs, deep grassy bays, narrow channels sedge bordered and close to the great red pines and then into the afternoon a stop at the old ranger’s cabin near Argo Portage for a pot of tea and a snack.

In the distance we could hear the roar of Curtain Falls where Crooked empties into Iron but in the trees above us we were conscious of a rather disquieting whisper, the sound of rain, the slightest intimation of a coming drizzle. All afternoon I had worried about the sky, hoping against hope that the clouds piling up would disperse by sunset. But now the rain clouds hung low, the wind had come up out of the west and the bay before us was choppy and dark. We would have to hurry and make camp before the storm caught us.

Stowing the kettle, we pushed off and headed for the grassy

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*For more information on giving, please contact us at 218-365-8889.*

## Sigurd Olson and His Boys in the Wilderness *(continued from page 4)*

bay around the point that marked the portage. A moose had made a wallow of the swampy landing and as I stepped out into the soft muck, I saw something that worried me far more than the coming storm, far more than any outburst of the elements—a boot mark, clear, well outlined in the mud.

The drizzle had now commenced in earnest, a slow fine penetrating wetness that was more mist than rain. The swamps were muggy and alive with the hum of tiny wings. Clouds of gnats and mosquitoes followed us even over the high rocky slopes. Sweat and mud, black flies and soggy brush, my file of voyageurs struggled manfully through it all, swatting with their free hands, cussing I was sure under their breaths, unaware of that boot mark in the mud. But ahead was Argo and my glorious camp site and that was enough to make them forget any discomfiture.

By the time we hit the end of the portage, the rain had begun to come down in a steady downpour. Dropping our loads we hurried to the water's edge, washed off the muck and sweat, drank deeply from the clear cold water. The boys stood and stared at the wild darkening lake, camping ground of the immortals.

"So this is Argo?" said Junior. "How far to the campsite?"

"About two miles," I answered, "just an hour and we'll be all set on that point of mine." I knew what their mother was thinking, knew that in all probability she too had seen that boot mark. As an old Canadian guide, I also knew that only damned fools travel at night in the rain. But this, I argued, was different from the ordinary setup. We would no doubt stay here several days and for that matter we were already wet. But as we loaded up and pushed off, I prayed fervently that everything would be all right.

It was rough going. The chop had grown into quite a gale out of the northeast. We hugged the rocky shores, took advantage of every island and promontory and all the time got wetter and wetter. There was little daylight left and the shores loomed black and soggy. Rounding a heavily timbered point, our island lay before us at last but not the fairyland I had described the night before. Now it was dark and threatening, white caps washing the bare wind-swept ledges, the sheltering pines moaning in the gale. In a moment, I would know.

I pushed hard on my paddle, tried desperately to penetrate the mist. Was that a white rock on the point or was it a tent? I tried to make myself believe that in the darkness I had forgotten the old shoreline but as we came closer the terrible truth struck home. That white V was a tent and the island point was taken. "Guess someone got in there ahead of us," I called loudly, "looks like we'll have to look around a bit."



Junior and Curt paddled rather dejectedly, their dreams of Argo and its beauties vanishing rapidly in the gloom. Bob sat humped in the center of my canoe, a dripping poncho pulled over his shoulders. They were all wet and cold and weary and the open water we were to cross was anything but inviting. No one said a word, for which I blessed them all.

The point we headed for proved rougher than even I had anticipated. There wasn't a spot for one tent, let alone two, and the rollers broke as dangerously along shore, that landing was out of the question. Somehow, somehow, I would have to bring a camp site out of that dripping wilderness. It was bad enough to be up a tree with a bunch of tourists, but with your own family who believes implicitly that you are the greatest guide who ever stroked a paddle, it is something different.

I finally decided to head back toward the old island. Perhaps, I figured, we might find something on the lee side out of the wind. What we needed now was shelter and warmth, not beauty or romance. Anything would do.

We landed close to a forbidding slope, unloaded with difficulty in a clump of dripping balsams, packed the duffel up under the pines, pitched the tents as best we could. A big dry stump furnished plenty of kindling and soon the rain was spitting merrily into a roaring fire. By now the squall had developed into a real gale and the lake outside was loud with breakers. We could hear their crash and roar on the other side of the island where our beautiful camp site lay. What a tornado that little tent was facing; if the old point had been unoccupied we would have been camping right in the teeth of the nastiest northeaster that ever hit Quetico. The boot mark in the mud was a good luck sign after all.

What laughing and joking there was that night in spite of the storm. The black sodden trunks of the pines glowed in the firelight and the wild crash of the combers across the point made our shelter seem cozy and secure. It rained and stormed for two solid days, days of cold and discomfort when we dared not attempt to put a canoe in the water, dared not make pancakes or anything that required exposure to the elements. We huddled in our tents, played games, even read the advertisements in the few magazines we had brought along, kept the guy ropes taut and the fire going and prayed for a letup.

On the afternoon of the second day, a rift appeared in the clouds toward the west, and suddenly the wind shifted. To one who has never experienced the sight of blue sky in a dripping wilderness; to one who has not seen the sun for two full days of

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## Sigurd Olson and His Boys in the Wilderness *(continued from page 5)*

rain, this will mean nothing, but when that warm beautiful sunshine came through that rift of blue for the first time, when the leaden sky actually began to color, we dashed out of our tents and yelled for sheer joy. And while the island steamed its gratefulness, we dragged out blankets, heavy and soggy, dried out everything we had. It was a glorious time and we were happy, happy not only to be dry again, but because we were going trout fishing at last off the finest point in Quetico.

Just before sunset, the wind died and the long awaited time had come. We launched the canoes and paddled swiftly around the point of the island toward the big cliff. We had about an hour to fish.

As we approached the hole, I yelled instructions, but the boys were not in any need of help or advice. For two days they had pictured this event, knew everything about it, how deep to fish, what direction to troll and how to act when they hooked the big one they expected. Every move was timed perfectly.

Elizabeth hooked a little one going over, just enough for a fry when we returned and Junior a four-pounder, just this side of the cliff. Then Curt tied into something heavy and yelled, "Snag."

Junior backed immediately while Curt took in the slack. I hoped that it wouldn't tie them up too long as their fishing time was short. Perhaps I had better go over and help them. Then Curt yelled again, "This isn't a snag. It's moving." And move it did right out into the open water, stripping line steadily off the reel.

We were in for action. I had seen this sort of thing happen before. Curt had tied into the big one we had been praying for. This was his first trout, so we paddled alongside to give advice and watch the fun.

Drifting close, I tested the line just to be sure. It was a trout all right and a big one, moving now slowly across the big rock pool into the deeps beyond. I glanced at my watch. It was exactly 6:30 and the clouds in the west were turning pink. It was a grand setting for the climax of our cruise. Long rosy streamers clear across an unbelievably blue sky, the south leaden grey with the re-treating storm, loons calling excitedly and Curt fast to the sort of trout we had been hoping for.

"Urge him a little," I cautioned, "but take it easy."

Curt's face was white and set and he did as I said. Junior had already reeled in his line and was handling the canoe like the veteran, which in truth he was.

"How big do you think he is," asked Bob.

"Should say he'd go twenty pounds at least," I answered, "big enough so that if you are lucky enough to land him, you can all



carve your names on that slab."

After some twenty minutes of play, the fish started coming in a few feet at a time, then with a scream the line went out across the pool. Then up again, this time fast and I slipped alongside to be in at the finish, knelt in the bottom of the canoe and looked down into the green translucent depths. Still no sign. Then a flash of white, a great startling flash of underside as he turned.

"He's big," I whispered, "you'll have to take it very easy. Remember that line tests only eighteen and when he runs let him have it."

The fish spiraled slowly against the pull of the line, then seeing the two canoes made a swift dash down into the green below. A hundred feet of line this time and the battle was on once more. But when a trout has come that close, it is near the finish. Five minutes more and the slack was in again. This time I hung on the gunwales of both canoes and got set. Slowly, oh so slowly, he came toward the surface and then once more that flash of white. Now he was on his back turning over, the great fins sticking out at right angles, crimson gills opening and closing, tail fanning gently. He looked eight inches across the back and a yard long.

"Bring him close," I cautioned, "but if he tries to run, let go."

Curt needed no cautioning. He sat as though carved of stone, slowly pumping the great fish within reach. Kneeling down in the bottom of the canoe, I slipped my arm clear in to the shoulder and waited. He was coming in – another two feet and he would be within reach. Curt braced himself against the weight and I am sure he prayed. His reputation was at stake. If he should lose this fish, he would never live it down and if he won, his name would be with the rest.

Another turn of the reel and I touched the glistening grey sides. Leaning out as far as I dared, I slipped my hand gently toward those wide open gills, took a firm hold and with a smooth swing brought him out of the water and laid him in the bottom of our canoe, the biggest and most beautiful trout I had ever seen on Argo.

The fish lay for a moment without moving, just the gills slowly opening and closing, blood red gills and heaving gill covers. One final slap of the tail against the planking and it was all over. I stole another glance at Curt. His face was still white and as yet he hadn't said a word, not a single word since the battle started three-quarters of an hour before. Bob broke the tension.

"Wow," was all he said.

We held the canoes together for just a moment and admired



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# Writers Among Our Readers

## From Phil Voxland, one of LPF's tour guides:

We all know this quote from Sig Olson: "Everyone has a listening point somewhere. It does not have to be in the north or close to the wilderness, but someplace of quiet where the universe can be contemplated with awe."

Yesterday I was at Paisley Park the recording studios and residence of Prince. In addition to the tour itself I paid some attention to the style and presentation of the young fellow who took us around. I may have picked up some cues on how to pace even a small group and give them destination points along the way where we should gather up again together.

I should say that Paisley Park, at least the public first floor is fairly spare, perhaps mores so as it is now functioning as a museum. But it was a business place too, so it had a sense of office hallways, side lounges, but all in a unified and unique design scheme. The sound studios especially had wonderfully warm wood paneled walls, wood tiled floors and some muted fabric acoustic treatments. The doors were thick as were the walls, to isolate the sound recording.

Some of the public ceilings and walls were hand painted in a pastel blue skies and thin clouds, Another room was dark but with faintly painted discrete celestial elements painted on the walls and ceilings (the famous "Symbol" that Prince took for a name.

I also bought a souvenir booklet with photos quotes and commentary. I found this curious comment which just might make it into some of my tours at the cabin:

Prince: "Paisley Park is pretty much representative of everything I am musically" "It's a way of cutting the chaos off, cutting off the outside voices.... Here there is solitude, silence - I like to stay in this controlled environment."

So, out there at the intersection of Arboretum Road and Audubon Drive, at Paisley Park, Prince found his Listening Point?

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## Liv VisGirda, a student in a writing class, taught by DyAnne Korda, that held at the house and Listening Point last fall shared the following:

### Sitting for a moment at Listening Point

I think I remember reading somewhere that Sigurd was friends with long time Objibwa game warden who patrolled the Ely/ Winton area. John (Jack) Linklater was his name. He was a man well known for his comfort and ease in the wilderness. He patrolled way back in the bush in places where others feared getting lost. Jack often asked others if they, 'could hear the wilderness sing?' Meaning in the way of spirit, as if each entity that resided within the forest spoke to him in harmony. It seemed nature had created a symphony that he alone could comprehend.

I try to imagine what this song must sound like. Sometimes it seems it is only for those rooted to the earth, connected by ancestors who loved the land for so many generations it was as if they had never left that spot. When I first came to Northern Minnesota I could not get over the feeling that it was home. My ancestors are Lithuanian and the landscape of the old country is similar to Minnesota. The land is covered in low lying boreal

forests filled with flat leaf trees and pine. In the summers the babushkas (old ladies with colorful scarves tied around their heads) sell mushrooms and blueberries gathered in the woods by the roadside. It makes me wonder if all the generations of those who once lived in the forest call out to the living. Whenever I arrive back home by plane, I feel at peace, as if I am a child being swept back up into my mother's arms. Visits to Lake Superior become intermingled with the Baltic Sea. The pink agates of the lake become the gold chunks of amber that wash up on the beach in the land of Europe.

But I know I have yet to hear the song that the native spoke of. Sometimes I get close, like when I played the flute one night in the back country and an owl kept soaring over me as I lay in my sleeping bag watching the dusk come in overhead. The bird met my eyes with piercing curiosity, wondering what my song meant. I ask myself if Sigurd heard the song of the wilderness or if it was something that he searched for as I do. He wrote a book titled "The Singing Wilderness." Was his book a reflection of what he was hearing or was it a road map in attempt to discover that perfect sound?

To hear a song one must listen. And I wonder if that is why Sigurd bought this cabin and named it Listening Point. As I sit hear watching the ripples tease the water, I can only imagine it was so he could have a place where he could listen for and understand the song of the wilderness.

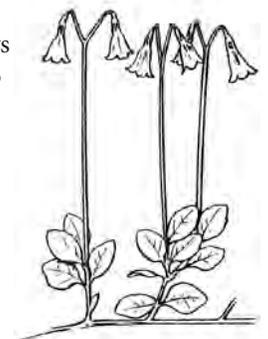
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### Must Reads!

**Douglas Wood**, LPF's president, has a great new book out (available in our Gift Shop) "*Deep Woods, Wild Waters, A Memoir.*" The book began as a collection of memories and thoughts written down in a "pile of notebooks." Doug has written 34 books, (so far!) some for adults and some for children. But this is the first time that he has collected the stories of his own life. The book has a diverse range of topics. Each story is part of the greater whole, but each could be read alone. Don Shelby is quoted as saying "With *Deep Woods, Wild Waters*" Douglas Wood has risen to the pantheon of the great nature writers."

• • •

**Mike Lein**, long time friend of the Foundation, has written a humorous, creative collection of short stories that depicts life at the Lein cabin in northern Minnesota - *Firewood Happens -- Life Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness in Minnesota's Northwoods*. Mike was inspired to put his own feelings and observations into words, after visiting Sig's cabin in Ely. The result is a series of short essays that will appeal to any and all who love to hunt, fish, or just sit on a lakeshore and enjoy the surroundings. The book won the Minnesota Independent Publishing Association Book Award in the Humor Category. (Available in our Gift Shop)



## Sigurd Olson and His Boys in the Wilderness *(continued from page 6)*

our catch then paddled happily toward the island. The last flaming rays of the sun were a fitting tribute to our accomplishment. Passing my old camp site, we picked up the old cedar slab, could not resist showing our prize and gloating just a little. When our



intruders told us that the three days before the storm had produced nothing larger than five pounds, we knew that the boot mark had brought us more than our share of good fortune.

That night we sang all of the songs we knew, ate fried lake trout until we could barely stand and then by the light of a blazing fire carved our names with the rest of the immortals on the old cedar plank and the legend of the finest trout we had ever taken in the Quetico. There was only one regret. We had no scales and had to guess at the weight.

## The Listening Point Foundation, Inc. Asset Summary

as of December 31, 2016

The following funds are held in trust for uses directed by donors or where the needs are greatest in support of the Listening Point Foundation mission.

<b>1. Operating Funds</b>	
WFB Checking Account	5,890
Undeposited Funds	1,365
Unrestricted funds invested	115,681
Inventory	<u>9,321</u>
<b>Total Operating Funds</b>	132,257
<b>2. Maintenance Endowment Fund</b> <u>144,421</u>	
(Invested permanently to generate income for the Listening Point Foundation)	
<b>Total Endowment Funds</b>	144,421
<b>3. Listening Point Preservation Fund</b> 46,946	
<b>Total Restricted Funds</b>	46,946
<b>4. Fixed assets</b>	
Listening Point Property	493,576
106 E. Wilson Street	221,502
Less accumulated depreciation	19,271
Total 106 E. Wilson St.	202,231
Art and books	25,000
<b>Total Fixed Assets</b>	720,807
<b>Total Foundation Assets as of December 31, 2016</b>	<b>1,044,431</b>



## Quote from Sig:

The Foundation's "year of the young" was inspired by the following quote from Sig that he shared in "The Wilderness World of Sigurd Olson" dvd:

Sig's words regarding the "young" of the world.  
*(From The Wilderness World of Sigurd Olson)*

Young people come to me and they ask me "What is your hope for the world?" And I always answer that the hope for the world is you. You are the new generation, I am the old generation. Just like this little tree here. This is a sapling, right beside it is one of these enormous red pines. This sapling epitomizes you and the hope of the world. So when you wonder how things are going, just remember that.

You have your task to do. You've got to carry on the battle to preserve such beautiful places as this, the battle goes on endlessly. It's your task. You've got to see that you keep the flame alive - no matter what obstacles. The whole world depends on you!

This whole world depends on this little pine in a sense. Just like at one time, it depended on these enormous trees here.



# GIFT SHOP

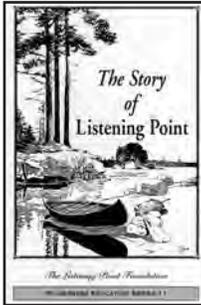
Share the spirit of Listening Point with friends and family with one of these gift items that celebrate Sigurd Olson, Listening Point, wilderness and more! See next page for order form.



**Sigurd Olson Classics**  
 Attractive paperback versions of seven of Sigurd Olson's most loved books.

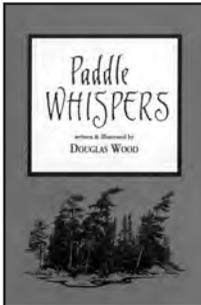
- *The Singing Wilderness*
- *Listening Point*
- *The Lonely Land*
- *Runes of the North*
- *Open Horizons*
- *Reflections from the North Country*
- *Of Time and Place*

..... \$16



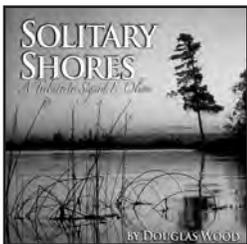
**The Story of Listening Point**  
 This 28-page booklet, written by Sig's son Robert K. Olson, tells the inside story of how Listening Point came to be and why, what it meant to Sigurd Olson, and what it continues to mean to wilderness lovers and loyalists. Features dozens of historical photos and images.

..... \$5



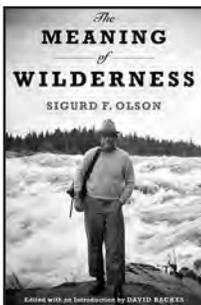
**Paddle Whispers**  
 An illustrated, nonfiction meditation by Doug Wood about the human soul encountering itself through the soul of the wilderness on a canoe trip through the rocks, woods and water of the North Country.

..... \$16



**Paddle Whispers**  
 First recorded in 1983, *Solitary Shores* was Douglas Wood's musical tribute to Sigurd Olson. All of the songs have a strong North Country flavor, and there is even a segment of Sig reading from one of his own essays.

..... \$18



**The Meaning of Wilderness**  
 Now available in paperback! First published in 2001, this book features a collection of Sigurd F. Olson's articles and speeches. It offers a lively look at the evolution of one of environmentalism's leading figures and is essential reading for Olson fans, historians, and outdoors enthusiasts around the country.

..... \$18



**New!**

**LPF Mug**  
 3 finger handle. With logo, website, and "Sig's legacy...pass it on!" Available in black or white.

..... \$10



**The Wilderness World of Sigurd F. Olson DVD**  
 A digitally remastered version of the classic film "The Wilderness World of Sigurd F. Olson" includes more than two hours of conversations with Sig as he speaks about the craft of writing and life in the wilderness. You'll also hear Sig's wife Elizabeth and their son Sig Jr. speak candidly about Sigurd, his profession, and life in the north woods.

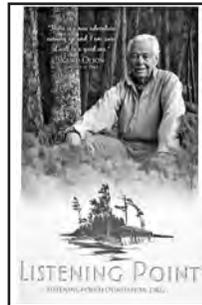
..... \$15



**For Kids**

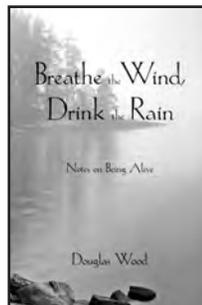
**Sig Olson's Wilderness Moments**  
 For Kids! Five selections of Sig Olson's writings, with "Points to Ponder" and "Activities" following each section. Excellent opportunity to introduce Sig to the younger generation. Includes blank pages at the end of the book for several of the activities—journaling, mapping, etc.

..... \$5



**Sigurd Olson Poster**  
 The image, taken by Bryan Stenlund, may well be one of the last photos of Sig before he died. The 11" by 17" poster includes Sig's last type written words. A must have for Sig fans.

..... \$16



**Breathe the Wind, Drink the Rain**  
 Doug Wood's personal recipe for being truly alive—for arriving at the ground beneath your feet and feeling at home in the universe. Great to take on a canoe trip. Pen & ink drawings by Doug as well. 52 pages.

..... \$10



**Simple Journal**  
 Simple journal (6.5h x 4.5w) with SFO quote "There's a new adventure coming up and I'm sure it will be a good one" on the cover! Great for canoe trips.

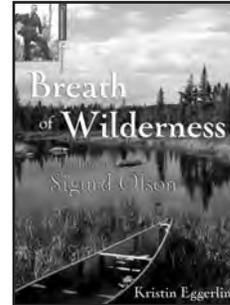
..... \$15

**New!**



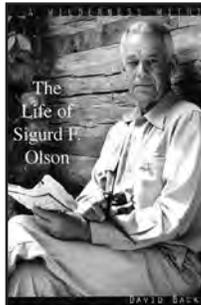
**Wilderness Days**  
 University of Minnesota Press has published a new paperback edition of *Wilderness Days*—a collection of Sig's writings that depicts the essence of the magnificent woodlands and waters of the legendary Quetico-Superior region that borders Minnesota and Ontario.

..... \$18



**Breath of Wilderness**  
 By Kristin Eggerling. A must have for your Olson library. The story covers Sigurd Olson's love of wild places and how that love transformed his life. It is a book written for middle school students, but can be enjoyed by all. 92 pages.

..... \$13



**A Wilderness Within**  
 The authoritative portrait of one of the greatest environmentalists of the twentieth century. The book is a stunning look at a man with a vision for the natural world and for himself. Essential reading for Olson fans.

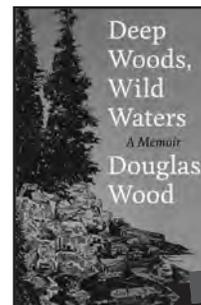
..... \$23 (paperback)



**Firewood Happens**  
 by Mike Lein. A series of short essays, humorous, knowledgeable stories for those who love to hunt, fish, or sit on a lakeshore.

..... \$12

**New!**



**Deep Woods, Wild Waters, A Memoir**  
 by Douglas Wood. A joy to read - Wood shares bushwhacking skills, hurtling down wild rapids, crossing stormy lakes, or simply navigating treacherous currents and the twisty trails of everyday life.

..... \$23

**New!**



**LPF Hats**

For your wearing pleasure! 100% cotton, embroidered with the Listening Point logo. Choose from cranberry, cream, loden green, sea foam green and sky blue. Adjustable leather strap.

..... \$18

*Listening Point Foundation Gift Shop*  
**order form**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City/State/ZIP: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

- Sigurd Olson classics paperback books ..... @ \$16.00 = \_\_\_\_\_  
 specify title(s): \_\_\_\_\_
- Wilderness Days* ..... @ \$18.00 = \_\_\_\_\_
- Wilderness World of Sigurd F. Olson* DVD ..... @ \$15.00 = \_\_\_\_\_
- Story of Listening Point* booklet, by Robert Olson . . . @ \$ 5.00 = \_\_\_\_\_
- Wilderness Moments* booklet ..... @ \$ 5.00 = \_\_\_\_\_
- Breath of Wilderness* ..... @ \$13.00 = \_\_\_\_\_
- Paddle Whispers* ..... @ \$16.00 = \_\_\_\_\_
- A Wilderness Within* ..... @ \$23.00 = \_\_\_\_\_
- Solitary Shores* audio CD ..... @ \$18.00 = \_\_\_\_\_
- Sigurd Olson poster ..... @ \$15.00 = \_\_\_\_\_
- The Meaning of Wilderness* ..... @ \$18.00 = \_\_\_\_\_
- LPF Hat - (choose color) ..... @ \$18.00 = \_\_\_\_\_  
*cranberry, cream, loden, sea foam green, sky blue*
- LPF Mug (choose black or white) ..... @ \$10.00 = \_\_\_\_\_
- Breathe the Wind, Drink the Rain* ..... @ \$10.00 = \_\_\_\_\_
- Firewood Happens* by Mike Lein ..... @ \$12.00 = \_\_\_\_\_
- Deep Woods, Wild Waters* by Douglas Wood ..... @ \$23.00 = \_\_\_\_\_
- Pocket Journal with SFO quote ..... @ \$15.00 = \_\_\_\_\_
- Shipping/Handling (\$2.00 each item)** ..... @ \$ 2.00 = \_\_\_\_\_

**ORDER TOTAL:** \_\_\_\_\_

Please send order form and your check to Listening Point Foundation (LPF), to:  
**Listening Point Foundation, Inc.**  
**P.O. Box 180**  
**Ely, Minnesota 55731**

All items may be ordered from our website via PayPal. Orders also may be placed by email to [info@listeningpointfoundation.org](mailto:info@listeningpointfoundation.org). Invoices will be included with your shipped order.



*Dedicated to preserving Listening Point and advancing Sigurd Olson's legacy of wilderness education.*

# Thank You!

*The Listening Point Foundation would like to thank the following individuals, businesses, foundations and organizations for their generous donations:*

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- Robert D. Olson, in memory and in honor of Sigurd F. Olson

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# *Listening Point Foundation, Inc.*

P.O. Box 180  
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## THE VIEW FROM LISTENING POINT — SUMMER 2017

Special request—so you won't miss any of LPF's mailings. Please send us your winter and summer addresses. Or just give us a call. Thanks.

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