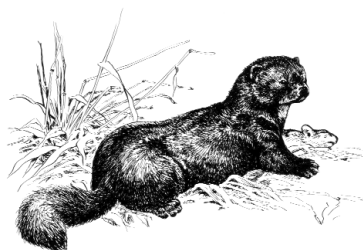




*Listening Point
Foundation, Inc.*

P.O. Box 180
Ely, Minnesota 55731

NOT FOR PROFIT
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 12
Hayward, WI 54843



THE VIEW FROM LISTENING POINT — FALL 2007

Published by
The Listening Point Foundation, Inc.
P.O. Box 180
Ely, Minnesota 55731
Telephone: 218/365-7890
FAX: 218/365-7072
Website: www.listeningpointfoundation.org
E-mail: listeningpoint@cpinternet.com

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Alanna Johnson

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Timothy J. Rudnicki, *Chair*
Charles Wick, *Vice Chair*
Nancy Jo Tubbs, *Secretary*
Robert K. Olson, *President Emeritus*
Yvonne O. Olson, *Secretary Emeritus*
Dr. Kenneth Bro
Jon Helminiak
Martin Kellogg
Paul O. Monson

Daryl Peterson
Dr. Mark Peterson
Bryan Wood
Douglas Wood

NATIONAL ADVISORY BOARD

Paul Anderson
Dr. David Backes
John “Jeb” Barzen
Jim Brandenburg
Ray Christensen
Esther Kellogg
Mike Link
Vance G. Martin
Malcolm McLean
Dr. Michael Nelson
Sigurd T. Olson
Kevin Proescholdt
Clayton Russell
Tim Sundquist
Robert Treuer
Steve Waddell
Dave Zentner

Bloomington, MN
S. Milwaukee, WI
Spring Green, WI
Ely, MN
Bloomington, MN
St. Paul, MN
Willow River, MN
Ojai, CA
St. Paul, MN
Moscow, ID
Juneau, AK
St. Paul, MN
Ashland, WI
Duluth, MN
Bemidji, MN
Bellbrook, OH
Duluth, MN

INTERNATIONAL AND SENIOR BOARD OF ADVISORS

Dr. Anne LaBastille
Author/Ecologist
Westport, NY

Dr. Ian Player
Founder/President, The Wilderness Foundation
Durban, Republic of South Africa

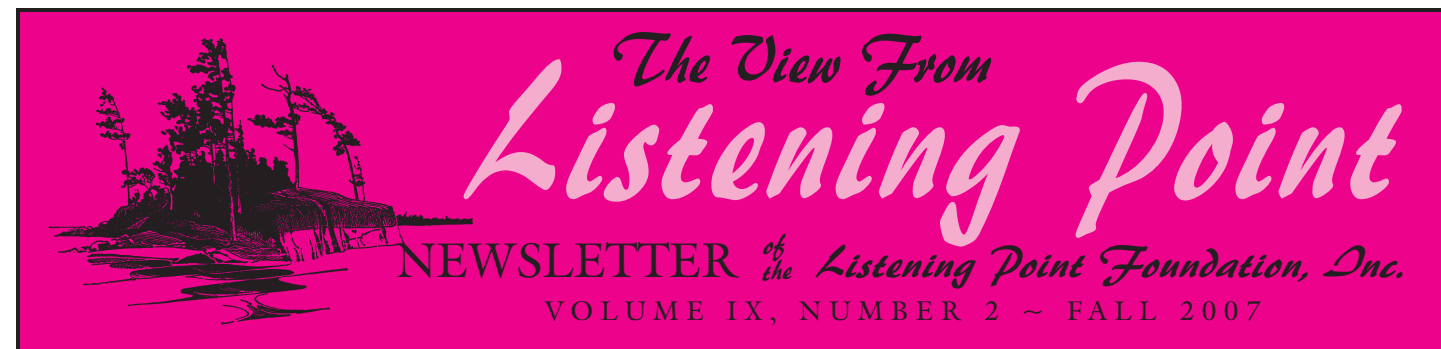
Franco Zunino
Founder/Director General
Associazione Italiana Wilderness
Murialdo (SV), Italy

Produced and printed by Advance Printing,
15576 US Hwy 63, Hayward, WI 54843;
phone 715/634-6888; fax 715/634-6912;
advprint@cheqnet.net

Editor: Laurence J. Wiland
Production: Debra Kurtzweil

Materials in the newsletter may be reproduced
with attribution to the author, the newsletter,
and the Foundation. We welcome readers’
letters, comments and suggestions.

Visit us online!
www.listeningpointfoundation.org



Blaze Orange and Green: Opposite Colors

By Mark Neuzil

Like just about every other 9-year-old boy in rural America in the 1960s, I received a Crosman BB gun as a Christmas gift. That present sent me down the trail of a lifetime of hunting, although I don’t remember killing a living thing with it. I did fire at a mouse once, while I was walking in a stand of tall corn as the grown-ups were shooting pheasants, but it was an excuse-me shot and did no harm.

When I got to be 11, my dad took me down to the river bottom and taught me how to shoot his 20-gauge shotgun, a Winchester Model 12. That was my ticket to the big-time, hunting pheasants in southeast Iowa with dad and Uncle Jerry and occasionally some of their buddies. Because none of us owned a dog, the dog’s job fell to me. I walked through and often under some of the thickest brush and beat-down corn a person could imagine, flushing birds left and right.

One shooting sports association states that each hunter spends \$1,896 annually on hunting. Even adjusting for inflation, somebody else was spending a heck of lot more money than we did. Not counting the gasoline in the old Jeep, our hunting purchases included a bag of doughnuts (eaten on the ride to the farm), a box of Fanny Farmer chocolates (for the farmer’s wife) and a few paper shotgun shells, most of which were older than I was.

The farmer, who was Mennonite and didn’t hunt, paid us \$1 for each pheasant hide; he gave his wife the feathers for hats and pillows. It seems possible that some years we made a profit on a hunting trip, although possibly not, what with the lousy gas mileage from the Jeep.

None of us had heard the term “environmentalist” back then. Today, scholars would probably call us “natural resource conservationists.” We were not that much different from proto-environmentalists like Aldo Leopold, Sigurd Olson or Horace Kephart, all of whom liked to wet a line or fill a snow goose full



of holes every once in a while.

Somewhere along the way, natural resource conservationists began evolving into environmentalists. But many of them did not expand their interests beyond parks, fish and wildlife, while some environmentalists came not from a natural resources background but from the feminist, anti-war or anti-nuclear movements. Many of these new recruits had never fired a Crosman BB gun, much less a 20-gauge Winchester.

Those diverse histories are part

of the source of the problem among lovers of the outdoors that we see today.

In parts of the county, including Appalachia, the word “environmentalist” became an epithet, or at least a mild rebuke. In other areas, hunting seemed an anachronistic form of socially sanctioned violence. Blaze orange and green became opposite colors in the ecological spectrum.

The dispute has roots in an urban-rural divide almost as old as the country. Environmentalists (or at least their organizations) tend to come from the city, while hunters and other outdoorsmen often wear boots at work as well as in the sporting field. Hunting has deep roots in Appalachian history, as it has in the narratives of all rural or formerly rural areas of the United States. Two-thirds of Southern hunters come from small communities or farms. Skills are passed on from parent to child as folk knowledge; guns are family heirlooms, like old guitars or sewing machines.

The greatest source of conflict, in my mind, is based on economics as well as geography. While the environmental movement gained power in the 1970s, the country went through a series of agonizing recessions that left many rural communities and family farms devastated. Some did not recover. Faced with a Hobson’s choice of economic growth or environmental protection, locals chose the economic answer nearly every time. What often followed was a lawsuit, a protester chained to a tree,

Continued on page 5

FROM THE CHAIRMAN'S DESK

Letter from the Chair

Robert and Vonnie Olson have given us another reason to celebrate: 2008 marks the 10th year of operation for the Listening Point Foundation. The Listening Point Foundation works to preserve the natural and historical integrity of Listening Point on Burntside Lake. It also works to provide education in the ideas and values of wilderness as exemplified by the life and works of Sigurd F. Olson.



courtesy Tim Rudnicki

For Sigurd F. Olson, one of the great environmental leaders and writers of the 20th Century, Listening Point was a touchstone. Then, just as now, it provides intellectual and spiritual refreshment

and inspiration for those who experience the totality of the Point. Thanks to Robert and Vonnie and the Listening Point Foundation Board of Directors, National Advisory Board, International and Senior Board of Advisors and its Executive Director, many

people continue to draw inspiration from Listening Point.

The Listening Point Foundation has some weighty responsibilities given the significance of the Point, including Sigurd's cabin. In particular, the Listening Point Foundation is charged with maintaining Listening Point as a place for thought, study, and contemplation (as it was for Sigurd F. Olson), for the pleasure, education and inspiration of future generations. Given some of the pressing environmental issues of our time, and the need to continually educate and inspire ourselves to respond to the challenges, we will continue to work with you to ensure the natural and historical integrity of Listening Point is preserved for present and future generations.

Over the coming months the Listening Point Foundation will provide you with more information about 2008 celebration events. The Foundation will also be providing you with information about the April luncheon, status of the National Register of Historic Places application, and the launch of the endowment campaign to ensure the preservation of the natural and historical integrity of Listening Point.

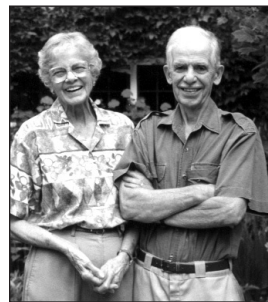
The Board and its Executive Director look forward to your continued interest and participation in efforts to advance the work of Sigurd F. Olson. Your comments, questions and participation are greatly appreciated. ●

—Tim Rudnicki

Speaking of Honors

By Robert K. Olson

Vonnie and I wish to thank all for the special honor and many kind comments about us in the last newsletter. They are much appreciated and accepted with all due pleasure and modesty. As it says in the Bible (Proverbs 15:33) "Before honor is humility."



Courtesy Robert K. Olson

But we are also grateful for the opportunity it gives us to respond in kind to honor the original members of the board and the charter members of the Foundation and their successors for their splendid support for the idea of the

Listening Point Foundation.

Indeed, we have been surprised not to say gratified by the enthusiastic and genuine devotion and pleasure expressed by so many for the preservation of Listening Point and for reviving the wilderness message of Sigurd Olson.

We members of the original board can justly take credit for actually launching the Foundation but only as facilitators. For we only coaxed a spark into life. But it has been the heartfelt response of thousands that has nursed the spark into a bright flame with a life of its own which, we pray, will be a permanent living flame of remembrance and inspiration for future generations.

We would like to suggest, therefore, that this coming year 2008, the 10th anniversary of the Listening Point Foundation, should become a special year

to honor those who have fed the flame and transformed the Foundation from an idea, a thought, an aspiration, into a permanent, self sustaining beacon for the wilderness.

Sig would have been proud and grateful. ●

Inside

Stories of Sig	3
Membership Form	3
Book Review	4
A Listening Point Experience	6
Gift Shop	6
Donors	7

DONORS

Thank you to our most recent donors, listed below.

Tom Ajax & Jan McElfish
Douglas & Phyllis Amdahl
Keith & Anita Anderson
Jim & Kathy Antilla,
in memory of Ted Ojala
Donna Arbaugh
Artists to Watch
Terry & Beth Artmann
Clint & Pepper Asche
Holly Atkinson
Julie Atkinson
Bruce & June Baker
Elaine Clyborne Barber
Tim Barzan
Joanne Becklund
Bill Berg,
in memory of Sigurd Olson
Frances Blacklock
Jim & Judy Brandenburg
Brandenburg Gallery
Heidi Brandenburg
Alan & Nicole Brew
Kenneth Bro & Becky Brown
Patricia Browne
Pam Brunfelt
Todd & Stephanie Burras,
in memory of Bob Cary
Caring Family S.C.
Jim & Jan Call,
in memory of Sharon Kastelic
Merrily Carlson
William A. Carlson
Ray Christensen
Thomas & Susan Christiansen
Lee Coleman
Dr. Tom Connell
Jack & Sue Cornwell
Anne Cowie
Elizabeth Cowie
Jerry & Lynn Cox
Jill Crafton
H.S. Crosby
Sheldon & Carol Damberg
Blake & Sandra Davis
William Davis
Al DeRuyter & Linda K. Peterson
Mr. & Mrs. William Dirks
Dan & Nancy Young Dixon
Thomas M. Dore
Ruth S. Donhowe
Sue Duffy & Linda Ganister
Barbara Dunsmore
Laverne Dunsmore
Thomas & Helen Dwight
Jack & Jane Edson
Larry & Wendy Ehnert
Barbara Ellison
Peder Engebretson
Shirley Fox,
in honor of Dennis Fox

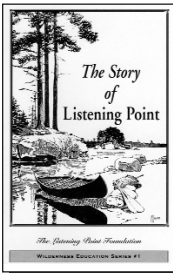
John Foster
Dirk Fucik,
in memory of Mark W. Fucik
William Fucik
in memory of Mark W. Fucik
George & Andrea Gara
Lynn Glesne
Richard & Sheryl Glisinski
Peter Gove
in honor of Chuck Wick
Roderick & Maryann Grant
Kevin & Diane Grasley
Jake & Ruth Graves
Rachel & Timothy Gustin
Ron & Beth Haakensen,
in memory of Russ Moore
Karen Halbersleben & Jack Miller
Steve & Barb Hall,
in memory of Bob Cary
James Hart
William Heart
Frances Heinselman,
in memory of Amos Stolee
Russell & Barbara Heinselman,
in memory of Amos Stolee
Jon Helminiak
Robert & Susan Hengefelt
David Henning
Kimberly Hiller
Ron "Hobsie" Hobart
Steven Hollenhorst
Mary Holmes
Melvin & Alta Hougen
M. Imsdahl
International Wolf Center
Lois Jacobi
Don Johannning,
in memory of the Great Mr. "O"
Richard Jorgensen
Balsy Kasi
Jeanne Kellogg
Martin and Esther Kellogg
Mr. & Mrs. Charles A. Kelly
John & Teresa Kendrick
Vaughn & Joyce Knapp
Janet Kortuem & Peter Nord
Christine Kuehn
Roberta Kuehn,
in memory of Raymond Kuehn
Dr. Anne LaBastille
Ellie & Dick Larmouth
Bob Larson
Gary & Paula Larson
Laurie & Jim Latimer
Linda Lemke
Scott & Carla Leonard
Wayne Lewis
Mike & Marci Lien
Armin "Whitey" & Virginia Luehers
Luther College

Rory MacKay
Deb Magnuson
in honor of Jack Magnuson
Robert & Marveen Minish
Betty Magnuson
Gary & Paul Mathena
Dr. & Mrs. Charles H. Mayo II
Malcolm & Wendy McLean
Bill & Sally Meadows
Curt Meine
Kate & Pat Miller
Sharon Mischke
Paul Monson
Roberta Moore,
in honor of all wild places and those who listen...
Milo M. Moyano
Donald & Rita Myntti
C. Roger & Laverne Nelson
Darby & Geri Nelson
Mike Nelson & Heather Varco
Northland College
Jon & Cheryl Nygaard
Oberholtzer Foundation
Caorlyn O'Grady & Jim Bonilla
Alis & Byron Olsen
Derek Olson
Robert & Yvonne Olson
Richard C. Olson
Dennis & Turid Ormseth
Randall & Kathleen Pachal
Doreen Packila
John & Charlotte Parish
Robert Rue Parsonage
Luke Patterson
Susan Pekarek
Shirley Perkins
Terrence Peters
Mark & Erica Peterson
David & Jane Piepgras
Piragis Northwoods Company
Steve & Nancy Piragis
Pomeroy Family Foundation
Chris Pranskatis
Kevin Proescholdt
Prudential Matching Gifts Program
Purdham
The Question Club
Linda Ramsden
John Rejman
Dr. Don E. Richard
Bill & Lauren Ritchie
Jeff & Sharon Rome
Howard & Mary Ronning
Chuck Rose
G.M. Rossi
Timothy Rudnicki
Clayton Russell
Don & Laverne Ruud
Thomas & Judith Saeger

Stephen Sandell
Patricia Sander
Darryl & Diane Sannes
Marjorie Sanzi
Andy Schaedel & Sue Sanzi-Schaedel
John W. Saxhaug
Rev. Dave Schneider
Carol Schofield
Leif Selkregg & Laura Myntti
Jim Shackelford
Kathy Shaw & Larry LaBonté
James W. Shepard
Gary Sherman
Mr. & Mrs. Sinclair
Perry & Laurie Smith
Gerry & Nan Snyder
Steve Sorenson
Spiritwood Music of the
Boundary Waters
John Staton
Brian & Susan Stedman
Milt Stenlund
Allen & Ann Stolee
Marilee Storest
Tim & Carolyn Sundquist
Donna & Pat Surface
Barton Sutter
Darlene J. Swanson
Helen Swem,
*in memory of Ted Swem, LPF
Advisory Board member*
Ed & Gloria Szymanski
Bill Tefft
Diane Tessari
Ned Therrien,
in memory of Russell Moore
Elaine Thrune
John R. Topczewski
Jon Traver
Robert Treuer
The Trust for Public Lands
Bill & Louise Trygg
Nancy jo Tubbs
Andrew & Elizabeth Urban,
in honor of the Knapps
Vermilion Community College
Barbara H. Vinson
John & Donna Virr
Derrick & Mary Vocelka
Jim & Dawn Voegeli
Jae & Marilee Wandke
William K. Wang
Thomas & Lynette Ward
Nigel & Jane Wattus
Richard & Audrey Webb
David & Marjorie White
Chuck & Marty Wick
Fred & Eleanor Winston
Douglas Wood
Bob, Marion & Linda Woodbury

Gift Shop

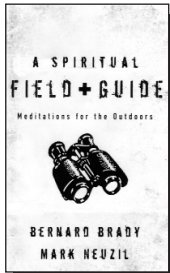
Share the spirit of Listening Point with friends and family with one of these gift items that celebrate Sigurd Olson and Listening Point.



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.

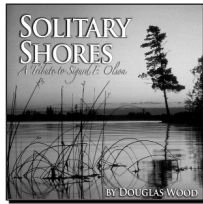
..... \$5



A Spiritual Field Guide

This 192-page softcover book contains passages from a wide variety of writers, activists and others (including Sigurd F. Olson) who have thought long and deeply about the meaning and value of nature and wilderness. A perfect trip companion.

..... \$13



Solitary Shores CD

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. This is an album for lovers of the Northwoods and fans of Sig Olson.

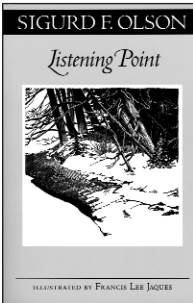
..... \$18



Brandenburg Cards

Listening Point at winter's end, captured by photographer Jim Brandenburg and featuring a quote from Sigurd Olson. Set of 10 full-color note cards with envelopes.

..... \$20

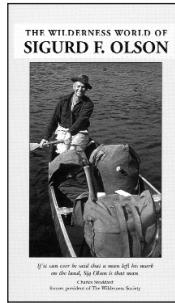


Sigurd Olson Classics

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*

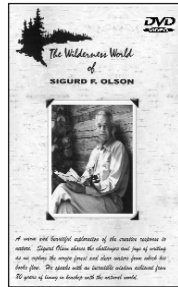
..... \$15 each



The Wilderness World of Sigurd F. Olson Video

This intimate film captures the life and spirit of Sigurd Olson late in his life. VHS format, 30 minutes long.

..... \$15



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. The audio clips are set to a slideshow of Olson family photographs.

..... \$15

Listening Point Foundation Gift Shop order form

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/ZIP: _____

Phone: _____

☐ Story of Listening Point booklet @ \$ 5.00 = _____

☐ Sigurd Olson paperback books @ \$15.00 = _____

specify title(s): _____

☐ Wilderness World video @ \$15.00 = _____

☐ Wilderness World DVD @ \$15.00 = _____

☐ A Spiritual Field Guide book @ \$13.00 = _____

☐ Brandenburg cards @ \$20.00 = _____

☐ Solitary Shores audio CD @ \$18.00 = _____

☐ Shipping/Handling (\$2.00 for 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

Orders also may be placed by email (to listeningpoint@cpinternet.com) or fax (to 218/365-7072). Invoices will be included with your shipped order.

Stories of Sig

❖ Mike Green writes:

Just wanted to share a Sig Olson story before throat cancer takes me down. During the 1960s I was married to Judith H. Conn, whose father, Dr. Howard J. Conn, owned Aberfoyle on Burntside, the property that adjoined Mr. Olson's. Dr. Conn was the minister of Plymouth Congregational Church in Minneapolis and the church was the sponsor for Explorer Post 27. I was a member during my high school years. Our Post Adviser was Dr. John Wheeler, Senior Research Chemist for General Mills, and Sig Olson was our Honorary Adviser.

Each year we would come up from Minneapolis for our 10-day Quetico Canoe Trip and at each evening's campfire Dr. Wheeler would read a chapter from *Listening Point* or *The Singing Wilderness*—it was the high point of each day and the perfect thing before crawling into your sleeping bag. Each year we would take a side trip to Burntside Lake on the way out or coming back in hope of having a chance to meet Mr. Olson—but it never happened.

While in the Navy from 1962-1966 I was staying at the Conn's Burntside Lake home and went into the woods to find a place to safely shoot a .22 caliber pistol. I found a perfect spot and went



through two boxes of 50 rounds each. When I went back to the house, Mr. Olson was sitting at the Conn's picnic table overlooking the lake; his canoe was at their dock. I introduced myself and when he told me who he was, I gave a detailed account of Explorer Post 27.

When I finished, he had one question: "Are you finished shooting?"

If there was ever a moment of enlightenment in my life, it was then. "Yes sir, never again." I kept my promise and thus had the benefit of his advice on a 30-day trip that I had been planning for the summer of my discharge. It made all the difference in where I went and where I camped—and his books were the lightest thing in my pack.

Hope I go to Heaven because I know the loons are there. ●

The Listening Point Foundation wants you to help keep Sig's memory and legacy alive by keeping an eye and ear open for instances where you read about or hear mention of Sigurd F. Olson, whether that be in books, newspaper or magazine articles, radio or television programming, anecdotes from friends or coworkers, or from any other source. Please clip or write down these instances and send them to The Listening Point Foundation, where we'll keep a collection and publish them in this newsletter. Send any news of Sigurd F. Olson by letter or email to: listeningpoint@cpinternet.com.

Listening Point Foundation Contribution Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, ZIP: _____

☐ My donation will secure a gift contribution for:

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, ZIP: _____

☐ My contribution is in (select one) honor/memory of:

Contribution Amount

- | | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$25 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$250 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$50 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$500 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$100 | <input type="checkbox"/> (other) _____ |

Please send your check payable to
Listening Point Foundation to:

Listening Point Foundation, Inc.
P.O. Box 180
Ely, MN 55731

BOOK REVIEW

Nothing Routine: A Quest for Discovery in Remote and Strange Places

Jon Helminiak
Seaboard Press, 2005
244 pages, paperback

By RK Olson

This is a book in the Sigurd Olson tradition of travel and discovery of both the world about us and of “the wilderness within.” But with a difference. Jon Helminiak is a member of the generation that has had the freedom and ability to roam the world pretty much at will and to come home with good stories and a deepened understanding not only of the world but of itself.

There was a time when the term “well traveled man” meant someone who had visited and even lived in Paris, Rome, London, New York, San Francisco, maybe Moscow and Petersburg (Leningrad), cities of the world with all their cultural legacies and comforts, and who came home with colorful stickers on his baggage to show it. Not anymore.

The well-traveled man or woman today means one who has traveled literally to what an earlier era called “the ends of the earth.” That meant the world of Teddy Roosevelt and the Amazonian “River of Doubt,” of Stanley hiking across Africa to find Livingstone, of dining in Baghdad with Gertrude Bell, of little Shangri Las tucked away in the Himalayas, and of Robert Service, the Yukon and “The Call of the Wild.”

Those places are still there today, a little better known at the ragged edges of the Third World, but still remote, and still promising some adventure, some excitement, and some wild wilderness. This is the world that Jon Helminiak has decided to share with the rest of us. The title *Nothing Routine* betrays his need for escape from the routine of the office and conventional life in “A Quest for Discovery in Remote and Strange Places.” Good enough. Then, gradually, he writes, it came to him that what he had actually written was “a book about soulful exploration, with travel and adventure being the conduit.”

Besides, he writes, “I am easily bored, dislike authority, avoid crowds, and can’t stay in one place too long,” the confession of an incurable vagabond.

I would like to retell some of Jon’s stories, especially from places familiar to me like Vietnam. But I will refrain and leave it there for the reader to enjoy first hand. Suffice to say, Jon brings us a traveller’s good fireside yarns about rafting down “The River of No Return” in Idaho, of a couple of close shaves with grizzlies and rapids while canoeing down Alaska’s Copper River, of exploring by kayak the “Forbidden Sea Islands” of Myanmar (the Merguin Archipelago of Burma), of trekking in the beautiful Torres Del Paine National Park in Patagonia (Chile).

My favorite is his account of searching for the country of the headhunters in the northern Philippines. He started in Manila with a rented car, a bad map, and worse advice to drive through hours of a traffic jam of honking cars, sweltering humanity, and

wandering livestock toward the northern highlands beyond the now notorious Mt. Pinatubo volcano to remote Sabagam, the highest village in the Philippines, for a blessedly cool overnight and an unexpected and—as it turned out—unforgettable experience. He went on the next day to the villages of the headhunters who still dress in native costume, tattooed from head to toe, and still relish their now outlawed headhunting tradition. But, what surprised Jon about the whole venture, was a moment, unexpected and profound in Sabagan, an epiphany with tears as he gazed at the age-old, serene, beautiful, and picturesquely permanent panorama of hillside terraces emerging from the jungle.

I loved it. The description of daily life along the way was simple, unadorned, and true to life. I could see it, smell it, and hear it all myself. It has the feel of the authentic as compared to run-of-the-mill travel writing devoted to sea, sand, and sun laced with lavish and luxurious lodging and “exotic cuisine,” oh my.

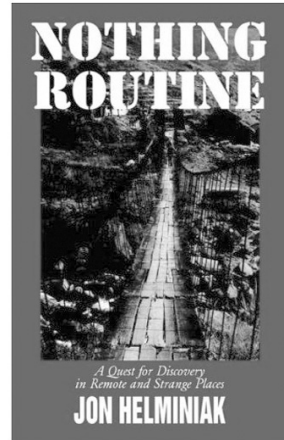
But there is more, folded in here and there, having do to with wilderness, and that is where the Sigurd Olson parallel becomes more apparent. “Spiritual awareness, revelation, emotional movement usually occur in moments of solitude when one’s senses are sharp and concentration magnified.” Sound familiar?

But enough. You will have to read the book. The writing is great, professional and disciplined with every chapter a good story. You will enjoy it.

Every reviewer is obliged to criticize something to make the review something besides a sales pitch. My criticism is the lack of maps. A travel book without maps? I spent the better part of an hour with a good atlas and a magnifying glass trying to locate place names on the southern coast of Myanmar. Fun, but a map would have helped (and enhanced the book). And where is the Copper River in Alaska and the Burntwood in Canada? Recommend maps should be added to the second edition.

Finally, when Jon is not roaming the outbacks of the world, he is president of Solstice Resources Development of Mequon, Wis., devoted to assisting nonprofits with financial development; an instrument-rated frequent flyer; closely associated with the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee; and a member of the Board of Directors of the Listening Point Foundation, Inc. ●

—Former LPF Board member Bob Olson
lives and writes in Seeley, Wisconsin.



A Listening Point Experience: Summer 2007

By Luke Patterson

I remember my first trip out to Listening Point with Bill Tefft. I was one day away from giving my first presentation on Sig and leading my first tour of his property. I had read and researched and organized a series of talking points about him for my presentation. To say I was overwhelmed was an understatement. I was flat out intimidated! What do I know of Sig that I deserve the opportunity to lead these trips, to share of a life I have yet to understand?

A month before, I could only tell you a couple of books he had written and maybe tell you in less than thirty seconds what I know about his life and philosophy. Well, needless to say, I went home that night, as any student would the night before a big exam, cramming, studying, and sweating over material I would be “tested” on the next day. I was anxious.

My first group was, I believe, eight people, mostly fifties and older. I showed “The Wilderness World of Sigurd Olson” DVD before I began my presentation. I watched this for the first time six years earlier. Just before the ending credits appear on the screen, Sigurd is talking about those of us who have the power of wonderment, stay forever young and the world is always new and pristine and exciting. I learned at that moment, right before I was to give my first presentation, that I needed an attitude adjustment. I consider myself a confident speaker in front of groups, but here I am swallowing hard, with palms clammy and the glisten of sweat on my forehead, realizing that I need to get excited about what I am doing. Well, that important phrase Sigurd Olson uttered changed my attitude for that moment in time and for the rest of the summer. I never pretended to be an expert on Sig’s life and philosophy. (After meeting many people over the summer that had met Sig and had read all of his books, this would be an important factor in how I presented material.) I remember

standing in front of that first group. I remember saying, “My name is Luke. I hope you are as excited as I am to go on this tour.” Yes, I truly was excited and I could see almost immediately that it was rubbing off on the group. I probably did go a little overkill with my excitement; after all I was battling nervousness and sweaty palms. In fact, at this point, I probably couldn’t even tell you Sigurd’s last name if someone were to ask! And so the summer began and ended in a blink of an eye and the excitement still hasn’t worn off. I learned something new about Sig every week as I researched something new to keep up with the questions I was being asked. For each group I took out, I felt like echoing Sig’s words concerning his feeling on taking on a new book, when he said, “Each one is a challenge and a joy.”

I believe Sigurd Olson’s attitude on how we should view the world inspired me in the most subtle and profound way that it literally changed my attitude in a matter of moments. It still stays with me today. If Sigurd was alive today, I would write him a thank you letter for inspiring me like he does so many countless others. And I’m sure eventually, maybe two months, maybe two years from now, who knows, but eventually, my wife would hand me an envelope from Sigurd Olson. I don’t know what he would have written in that letter. But I do know that he would have written one. And that’s all I need to know. That’s just the kind of guy he is. ●

—Luke Patterson served as the guide for the
“Visit to Listening Point” program last summer;
coordinated through Vermilion Community College in Ely.



Coming to Ely? Plan on a visit to Sig’s
“Listening Point.” Just give us a call!
1-218-365-7890.

Blaze Orange and Green

Continued from page 1

or government bigfooting, which led to even more acrimony.

Politicians call this a wedge issue and they and their pressure groups—on both sides—have been quick to exploit it, raise funds, recruit members and increase their power. A few old-line groups, notably the Izaak Walton League, attempt to appease both constituencies, but they are in the minority. In a political system fueled by conflict, rather than consensus, it may seem there is no going back.

This acrimony pollutes the legacy of founding environmental giants like

Leopold, Olson, Kephart, T. Gilbert Pearson, Teddy Roosevelt and others—people who appreciated sports afield but recognized the need for environmental stewardship. Hunters, anglers, bird-watchers, hikers and even those on the fringes like the NRA or PETA have more in common than they care to admit. Acid rain affects not only the forests that the bird-watchers enjoy hiking through but also the trout streams in which anglers like to wade. Global warming alarms environmentalists but also affects hunters alarmed by species migration.

Hunters and anglers have a historic and legitimate place in our culture. Environmentalists deserve credit for helping protect the lands and waters that sustain everyone. Those 9-year-old boys receiving BB guns for Christmas can grow up to be adults who appreciate field sports as well as the need to protect the environment. ●

—Mark Neuzil is an associate professor
of journalism and mass communications
and environmental studies at the
University of St. Thomas in St. Paul.