



Wilderness Again on Trial

By Sig Olson

published in *Outdoor America*, (May/June 1942)

Once more the Superior Roadless Area is threatened by the road builders, once more is there an attempt to break up the incomparable wilderness canoe country of the Canadian Border and transform it from what it is now, the goal of all lovers of the paddle, to just another resort country.

On April 19th in a little school house at what is known as Section 30, an old mining camp just outside the town of Ely, Minnesota, a small group of people met with the board of Fall Lake Township to discuss the matter of a petition to legalize a roadway into Basswood Lake.

On one side of the fence was a small group of determined men, a few resort owners who held property within the Roadless Area and some others who hoped to realize on possible future developments should the road go through. On the other side of the

fence was the Forest Service and the Izaak Walton League determined at all costs to preserve this last lakeland canoe wilderness from further exploitation.

It was not only the Basswood Section of the Superior Roadless Area on trial that night but also the integrity of every one of the seventy-two roadless and wilderness areas in the United States. For if the Superior Roadless Area could be violated through a legal interpretation of an old law, then no such area in the entire country was safe. The wilderness of the United States was on trial.

But there was little room for sentiment at that hearing, no room for the plea of thousands of wilderness canoeists that the area be saved for them and for posterity, that wilderness was a unique recreational asset that played a vital part in the country's recreational need, that it was the last great lake region of its kind on the continent.

Continued on page 5



The Story Behind the Story

By Kevin Proescholdt

The following conservation editorial by Sigurd F. Olson appeared during World War II in *Outdoor America*, the magazine of the Izaak Walton League of America. This national nonprofit conservation organization had formed in 1922, and in 1923 Sig had guided League president Will Dilg and others on a canoe trip through the Quetico-Superior canoe country. Dilg had pledged on that trip that the League would always fight to protect the canoe country. The League has indeed remained true to that pledge and has been involved in every major battle to protect what is now the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness since that time. (At the time of Sig's article, the area's name was still the Superior Roadless Area.)

Though Sig had joined the League many years before, and had helped form the Jack Linklater chapter of the League in Ely during the 1930s, this article marked Sig's first published piece in *Outdoor America*. And it would not be his last. Beginning in late 1947, Sig held the title of wilderness ecologist with the League, a position that he filled until his death in 1982. During those subsequent years, many more articles by Sig appeared in the pages of *Outdoor America*.

Sig's phrase in the next-to-last sentence, "swinging with both fists," is a historical reference to the Izaak Walton League that

Continued on page 5

The Big Trees are Down

*The wind sends old trees crashing,
The bare sky greets the dawn.
I think of friends who've fought my fight,
They tumbled, now they're gone.
Now who will love the land,
Who will help us understand,
Who will hold the sky up,
Now the big trees are down?*

The storm that came in early August was merciless, ripping through our woods (in Sartell, MN) with windspeeds of 80–95 miles per hour. As the minutes passed – 5, 10, 15, 20 – more and more trees succumbed. Some were uprooted, others snapped off 30 to 40 feet high in mid-trunk, while many were toppled by the force and weight of the monarchs collapsing upon them.

When the blast was over and we surveyed the damage, we were heartbroken. While the house had been spared a direct hit by any of the biggest trees, many old friends were down. The big white pine just off the front porch, where we had fed the flying squirrels every night for years, was shattered. Part had crushed a split rail fence, another lay in my wife Kathy's garden, while the main body of the broken trunk was jammed four feet into the ground like an enormous, misshapen javelin.

The old butternut out front was down and the red cedar with it. The rooftop and yard were littered with limbs and branches, Kathy's gardens flattened.

The long, winding gravel drive was completely blocked, with tree after tree toppled—one upon another—an impenetrable horizontal maze of trunks and limbs up to 20 feet high. As I tried to make my way out to the road I became lost. I couldn't tell, 15 feet off the driveway, where in my own woods I was.

With welcome help from friends and neighbors, including LPF Executive Director Alanna Dore, who was visiting, we began to clear the mess. The air was saturated with the smell of pine. But for the first time in my life it was not a happy fragrance. There were tears; there was also gratitude that no one had been hurt or killed.

Chainsaws screamed, shoulders and backs strained, and after many hours the driveway was cleared. The cleanup went on for days, and along the way I took the time to count some growth rings. The flying-squirrel pine by the house was 110 years old.

Many others were of about the same age and others numbered 90-plus years. Some of the rings were wide and easy to read, others so thin they were barely visible at all. As I counted rings, as I gathered limbs, as I released saplings that were bent to the ground and stood them upright once more, the words and melody of an old song came back to me. It was a song I had not sung for a long time, one I'd written with my old friend, Edith Rylander:

"The wind sends old trees crashing; a bare sky greets the dawn . . ."

It's a song not just about the falling of old trees, but also of old friends and mentors of the human variety—"big trees" that helped to hold the sky of our lives up overhead, who gave us shelter and, perhaps more importantly, a living example of the importance of growth, of aspiring, of reaching, and of standing tall.

As the weeks passed and the shock and sadness subsided, the empty places in the canopy seemed a little less jarring; the Virginia waterleaf and wild ginger and other wildflowers grew even greener and more vigorous. I noticed a young balsam fir here, a white pine or two or three over there, a hackberry, a basswood—and could picture in my mind's eye how they would grow, how they one day would fill the canopy.

I also thought about the many stumps that held 110 rings, and the others of 90, and began to wonder what event, what change, what "disaster" had occurred to open the sky up for them? To make their rings so wide in some years? Each of them had their parents, their grandparents, the ancestors that had sheltered them, that had held the sky up for awhile. Now it would be the saplings' turn.

No tree stands forever. Neither any person. But if we are lucky, and pay attention, we have examples who go before us, who hold the sky up during "their time." Who seed the earth with their ideas, their thoughts, their actions. We have a John Muir, a Rachel Carson, an Aldo Leopold. We have a Sigurd Olson, and Sig Jr, and Vonnie Olson, and Paul Monson, and others who have helped keep Sig's example and legacy alive, along with a firm belief in the future, in the next big trees, and in the living world we all share.

It is a world of changes and challenges and many storms. But after the storms the sky is still above us, the sun is there to reach for, and each of us has our part to play.

*"Let's sing of Sigurd Olson, the bourgeois of the North,
With a paddle and a pen he set his course and sallied forth,
From a rocky point he'd listen as he watched the white caps
glisten,
And he knew we'd hold the sky up, now the big trees are
down."*

—Douglas Wood



Illustration by Doug Wood

Inside

Notes from the Chair	2
This and That	3
Looking for Paddlers!	4
LPF Contribution Form	4
Letters from Sig	5
Book Review	6
A Point for Stories	7
My Experience at the Point	8
Gift Shop	9
Donors	10-11

This and That...

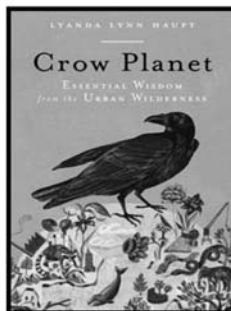
- **The First Annual Ely Northwoods Dinner** was held in September and was very successful. Ninety-six people attended, participated in the silent auction, and heard a very moving and informative talk by Becky Rom. Becky spoke of SFO's unique style of teaching while at the junior college in Ely, using stories about some of Sig's students, including her father Bill Rom and noted writer and researcher Milt Stenlund.

- **Our educational outreach pilot project** for the summer was well received. *Sig Olson's Wilderness Moments* was distributed to four camps in the area. Group leaders and educational staff, as well as the young campers, hikers and canoeists enjoyed the booklet and the activities presented. LPF will be extending the program next summer to many more camps. Please send us the name of a camp you think might benefit from our outreach program. Just give us a call.

- **Our next annual luncheon** in St Paul is scheduled for April 2, 2011, at the Town and Country Club. Invitations will be going out on or before March 1. Hope to see you there.

- **The recent publication** of *The Opposite of Cold: The Northwoods Finnish Sauna Tradition* by Michael Nordskog & Aaron Hautala includes a wonderful piece about Sig and the sauna at Listening Point. The writing and photography are both first rate. Definitely worth a look.

- **The 2010 Sigurd F. Olson Nature Writing Award** has been given to Lyanda Lynn Haupt for her book *Crow Planet, Essential Wisdom from the Urban Wilderness*, published by Little, Brown and Company. Haupt will accept the award on November 11 at the Sigurd Olson Environmental Institute at Northland College in Ashland, Wis.



The writing award has been given by the Sigurd Olson Environmental Institute since 1992 to book-length works of nonfiction that best capture the spirit of the human relationship with the natural world, and promote the values that preserve or restore the land for future generations.

Wolf Ridge ELC Staff Visit the Point

By Andrea Doerr

On a crisp, October day earlier this fall, 26 naturalists from Wolf Ridge Environmental Learning Center caravanned through the winding curves of Hwy. 1 between Finland and Ely in search of their roots. Not only were they seeking personal knowledge and connection with the land of northern Minnesota, they were also hearing the stories of Wolf Ridge's roots and



Wolf Ridge Environmental Learning Center staff at Listening Point.

discovering the relationship between our organization and a significant man. Sigurd Olson was a board member for Wolf Ridge between 1975 and 1982. He placed great value in the ability of environmental education to ignite sparks in children's imagination, knowledge and understanding of the world around them. He designed our first logo—an image of the three stages of a jack pine cone, to demonstrate the potential of education to stimulate growth through fire and passion for nature.

The warmth of his fire was still present at Listening Point when we arrived. The wind in the pine trees whispered of solitude, reflection, and renewal. We read aloud passages from *Listening Point* that spoke of wilderness adventures, planned and unplanned. We reconnected with our roots, and felt the rekindling of the ancient flame that was lit long before Olson's time. It is our hope to share this adventure and zeal with the students attending Wolf Ridge, and to continue listening to the waves as they lap peacefully against glacial shorelines. ●

ROOT BEER FALLS

Root Beer Falls
on Sioux River
flowing north
in wilderness splendor.

Calm passage
through murky muskeg
and bending stalks
of wild rice.

All the way to Elm Portage
descending elevation
in rushing rapids.

Cascading water.
Crashing through tumbling timber
and glistening boulders
of river bed
shifting –
always shifting
in timeless rhythm
of the north country.

Plunging over granite
ancient
and free.

Bronze foam
rich in color,
smooth in texture,
turbulent in motion.

Flashing rainbow hues
in dim afternoon
sunlight.

Slanting through pine treetops.
Reflecting unchanging reality
in the always changing
landscape
of Root Beer Falls.

—Larry Christensen

Looking for Paddlers!

A day of paddle strokes and portages, the sweet hymns of white-throats and song sparrows, the satisfaction of watching a skyline grow gradually closer, the appearance of a perfect campsite. After dinner and dishes, under a blanket of stars, to the accompaniment of a loon chorus, a campfire to nurse, a day to be recalled, a moment to savor.

These are the timeless experiences of the canoe country, experiences available to anyone with a sense of adventure, an eye and an ear for beauty. Perhaps no one knew such things better, or wrote about them more beautifully than Sigurd F. Olson. And perhaps the only way to improve upon the experiences themselves would be to enjoy them in the company of Sig.

While we can't exactly make that magic happen, perhaps we can come close. The Listening Point Foundation (LPF) and the Audubon Center of the North Woods (ACNW) are proud to offer the first Sigurd Olson Legacy Canoe Trip. Your guides for this adventure of the spirit are the father and son team of Douglas and Bryan Wood. Doug, president of LPF and best-selling author of 30 books, has guided scores of trips from the BWCA to the Northwest Territories, and counts Sigurd Olson as his most influential mentor. Bryan, also an LPF board member, is an outdoor education professional, an experienced wilderness guide, and Co-Director of the ACNW. Together, they make the canoe country come alive, sharing their extensive knowledge of plants and animals, ecology and history of the North Country.

On this unique trip, the added element will be the color and context, the writings and philosophy of Sig Olson, who explained, better than anyone, the depths and meanings of wilderness experience, of travel by canoe, and of the canoe



Illustration by Doug Wood

country itself. Come and discover the land, the lakes and portages Sig knew so well, exploring at the same time the meaning of Sig's words, his life and legacy. Visit Sig's Listening Point cabin, and the 300-year old pines he loved on Burntside's Snellman Island. Bring your favorite Olson books, stories, quotes and questions, and share the evening campfires with others who enjoy the same.

All transportation, camping gear, canoes, packs, paddles, and meals will be provided. You bring your personal gear, a spirit of adventure, and a willingness to share the wilderness exploration of the legacy of Sigurd Olson. Only seven spots are available!

The trip will be held July 21-25, and is for adults only. Cost is \$1,295. To reserve a spot, or if you have questions please contact the Listening Point Foundation at 218-365-7890 or email: info@listeningpointfoundation.org. ●

Listening Point Foundation Contribution Form

Name: _____

Address: _____

City, State, ZIP: _____

E-mail _____

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

Listening Point Foundation is a 501(c)3 organization; your gift is tax deductible as provided for by law.

Letters from Sig

Lynden Gerdes shared this letter from Sig, dated Feb. 28, 1977:

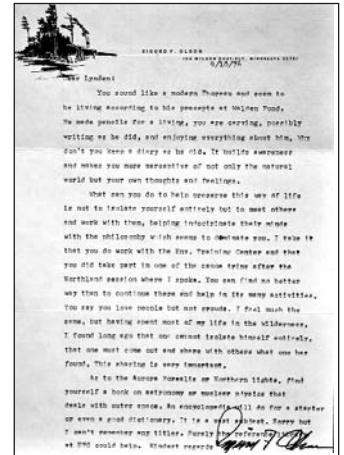
Dear Lynden,

You sound like a modern Thoreau and seem to be living according to his precepts at Walden Pond. He made pencils for a living, you are carving, possibly writing as he did, and enjoying everything about him. Why don't you keep a diary as he did. It builds awareness and makes you more perceptive of not only the natural world but your own thoughts and feelings.

What can you do to help preserve this way of life is not to isolate yourself entirely but to meet others and work with them, helping indoctrinate their minds with the philosophy which seems to dominate you. I take it that you do work with Env. Training Center and that you did take part in one of the canoe trips after the Northland session where I spoke. You can find no better way than to continue there and help in its many activities. You say you love people but not crowds. I feel much the same, but having spent most of my life in the wilderness, I found long ago that one cannot isolate himself entirely, that one must come out and share with others what one has found. This sharing is very important.

As to the Aurora Borealis or Northern lights, find yourself a book on astronomy or nuclear physics that deals with outer space. An encyclopedia will do for a starter or even a good dictionary. It is a vast subject. Sorry but I can't remember any titles. Surely the reference library at ETC could help.

kindest regards,
Sigurd F. Olson



Wilderness Again on Trial (Continued from page 1)

There was room only for an explanation of legal terminology, an interpretation of the Forest Service law of 1897 which presumably gave settlers the right of ingress and egress to their properties when hemmed in by expansions of the then fast developing National Forests. The question was: Did a man have the right to demand such ingress and egress even in violation of the policies laid down by a federal agency such as the U.S. Forest Service for the administration of such an area, or Did the Government have the final word?

The Board of Fall Lake Township granted the petition, instructed the petitioners that they must stand the cost of further litigation and that was the end of the hearing. Now the case will go to Federal District Court and from there to the Supreme Court for the Forest Service will fight it through to save its splendid wilderness area program. It is confident that no town, county, or state administrative unit can dictate administrative policies to the Federal Government over its own holdings.

It will be some time before the final results are known but it is a case that will bear watching. If there is danger that the old law of 1897 can be interpreted as meaning that settlers and property holders within a created roadless area can demand a right of way to their holdings, irrespective of whether or not they are bonafide settlers or have purchased properties for purely speculative purposes within such areas, then it is up to the wilderness devotees of the continent to rise up in arms and demand a constitutional amendment to that law to safeguard for all time the remaining wilderness regions of the United State from exploitation.

Here is where the Izaak Walton League can play its part; here is where every real conservationist who wants to preserve something of the old America for future generations to see and enjoy can step in swinging with both fists. If the wilderness of our country is on the way out, then there is work to do. ●

Behind the Story (continued from page 1)

would have been understood by the readers of this editorial, since much of the League's early history was imbued with references to and images about fighting for the natural resources of America. (And Sig's use of this imagery may have helped inspire the League's executive director three years later to title his own article about the League "Born with Fists Doubled," which also later became the title of the book about the League's history.)

The incident that Sig described in this editorial was one in a series of efforts by local resorters and others to build a road directly to Basswood Lake. The Basswood Lake area had been added to the Superior National Forest in 1936, and attempts were made again and again to build direct road access to the sprawling lake in the middle of the wilderness. Fortunately for the BWCAW, those efforts never succeeded.

Readers will recognize in this short piece some of the cadences and rhythms of Sig's more mature writing style later made famous by his series of published books, beginning with *The Singing Wilderness* in 1956.

—Kevin Proescholdt is the Wilderness and Public Lands Director at the Izaak Walton League of America

BOOK REVIEW

The Wilderness Warrior: Theodore Roosevelt and the Crusade for America

Douglas Brinkley
Harper, 2009

Reviewed by RK Olson

Saving and preserving the wilderness is as American as apple pie and a never-ending campaign. But it is not a simple thing. It is not just about saving the scenery and its habitat for a variety of purposes. Saving the wilderness is in the American soul and we do it for God and country.

Teddy Roosevelt is, perhaps, the outstanding example of an American citizen, governor, president, cowboy-rancher, prolific author—and champion of the wilderness.

TR is already well known to the American public through his accomplishments with the Panama Canal, anti-trust legislation, and eight years of American growth in size, wealth, and reputation. Mount Rushmore ranks TR for all the ages with Washington, Lincoln, and Jefferson. We have the legend of Colonel Roosevelt, the “Rough Riders,” San Juan Hill, and the liberation of Cuba. Not the least is his image as a happy and unapologetic big game hunter.

We all know this (or think we do). What we do not know, however, is TR’s graphic and inspiring record on saving the wilderness, which was, for TR, the metaphor for saving the West. TR would have relished Douglas Brinkley’s hefty volume of 817 pages (text) with pictures, maps, charts, appendix, and bibliography in “The Wilderness Warrior: Theodore Roosevelt and the Crusade for America.”

TR did not invent wilderness preservation. He had his predecessors going back to Thoreau and even President Grant, who saved the Yellowstone. But he added to it in the decade of his own presidency: 150 national forests created and enlarged, 51 federal bird reservations, four national game reserves, six more national parks, and 18 national monuments.

TR saw to it that the White House didn’t become another talking shop. He wanted action and he got it. Every achievement is a story in itself described with an historian’s respect for scholarship and a journalist’s flair for human interest, anecdotes, and colorful events.

For example, TR was a pioneer birder from boyhood. In the 19th century, bird watching wasn’t an amusement. Following Audubon, it was a serious scientific business with as much at stake for the economy as for the natural balance of nature. As it turned out, the interest in bird life became a powerful force in conservation solidarity, rationale, and political action.

Chapter by chapter, the book follows the flow of the opening of the continent west of the Mississippi beginning with the Louisiana Purchase celebrated at the unforgettable St. Louis World’s Fair in 1903. It follows the drive for western exploitation, the western mystique of a new world, freedom, and the “little log home in the West.” It evokes the melodies of the cowboys, the stunning landscapes by artists and photographers, and the

recognition that, at the same time, it was the end of the now fabled frontier, the end of Indian life, the end of the passenger pigeon, and the near extinction of the buffalo. What a drama!

This was TR’s world and his spiritual and historical palette. But, rather than exploiting the West, TR and his friends and colleagues devoted their lives to saving us from ourselves. TR was a good friend and admirer of nature philosopher John Burroughs and of California sage of the mountains, John Muir, who led the creation of Yosemite and Sequoia Parks and the preservation of the redwoods. TR and his friends founded the Boone and Crocket Club of New York, which was the Wilderness Society of the time and led the movement to save wildlife and special national treasures.

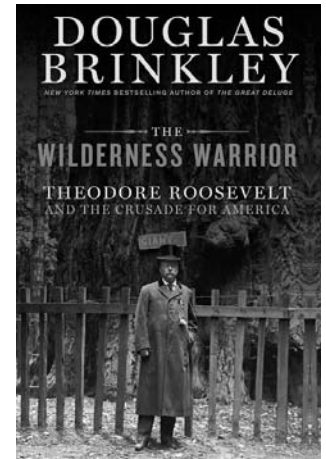
TR and his close friend and colleague George Bird Grinnel, inspired by Audubon’s outrage that the slaughter of the buffalo “cannot last and must not be permitted,” are recognized as the founders of the modern conservation movement.

TR condensed his philosophy in his famous article “Wilderness Reserves,” his greatest call for wilderness preservation. Preservation of forests and wildlife, he wrote, was essential to the long-term health of America and “a democratic moment in the interest of all our people.” What he meant was that preservation was not just for the rich and privileged but for everyone, rich or poor.

TR and his friend and colleague Gifford Pinchot, America’s pioneer forester, rose to their intellectual summit by convening the North America Conservation Congress in 1909. The Congress under Pinchot’s leadership proposed that a World Conservation Congress be held that year in the Hague. They believed that the global conference would start a conservation revolution around the world. Sadly, after 53 countries had signed up, incoming President Taft cancelled it as impractical.

Now, to we who live in a tamer age, organized, internetted, law laden, those days of TR and the Western legends are like the Beatles’ song “Yesterday.” We are “not the men we used to be.” And now, it is also true, we sometimes “long for yesterday.”

This volume by Douglas Brinkley brings it all back to life like a dream vividly remembered. Reading it, remembering those times, revives our own passion for wilderness and what it really means for America, something not just seen and heard but something of the soul. Remembering is something we must do which brings back the wilderness lives of the original peoples and of our own pioneers to us of the present day. ●



A Point for Stories

By Alan Brew

“Listening Point is a bare glaciated spit of rock in the Quetico-Superior country.” The first time I read these words aloud, I was sitting with students at dusk. Loons accented Olson’s words as we read, and our hands traced striations in the granite spit that Olson was describing.

Earlier that day, we had traveled from Northland College in Ashland, Wisconsin, to Ely, Minnesota. The seven others traveling with me were students in a literature course I was teaching for the first time, *Pens & Paddles in the North Woods*, and I had made arrangements with Chuck Wick to tour Olson’s writing shack and Listening Point.

Our tour began in the Olson house where scenes of Sigurd and Elizabeth had been filmed for the documentary *The Wilderness World of Sigurd F. Olson*. Since the house was virtually unchanged since Elizabeth’s death, it was easy for us to imagine what it might have been like to visit with Sigurd and Elizabeth in that room, as so many before us had done.

When we traveled from the house to the Shack and ultimately to the Point, the images, the imaginings, continued to accumulate as Chuck shared stories about the couple he had come to know so well. Each of us was captivated by different artifacts as we moved through the tour—a drawer full of pipes, a quote from William Blake thumbtacked to a window frame, snowshoes stacked haphazardly in a corner, canoes in the rafters, beautifully dove-tailed joints in the wood of an old cabin. But, I don’t believe any of us was prepared for how the evening would end.

Chuck, who was still teaching at the time, needed to return to Ely shortly after we arrived at Listening Point, so he encouraged us to stay and finish visiting the Point at our own pace. We did, and after scattering to walk and explore alone, we gathered at the tip of the Point to read.

It was a relatively warm evening in early May, and we settled comfortably in a small circle where granite meets the water of Burntside Lake. Passing a copy of our class reader, we began to read aloud: “Listening Point is a bare glaciated spit of rock in Quetico-Superior Country. Each time I have gone there I have found something new which has opened up great realms of thought and interest. For me it has been a point of discovery and, like all such places of departure, has assumed meaning far beyond

the ordinary.”

On that particular night, none of us questioned Olson’s assertion that Listening point was a place of meaning far beyond the ordinary.



A group of Northland College students enrolled in “Pens & Paddles in the North Woods,” a course developed by English Professor Alan Brew (below).



Initially, what I valued about the evening was how fully, how literally, it affirmed the premise for my course. I had developed *Pens & Paddles in the North Woods* because I believed that reading literature while simultaneously traveling in the places that inspired it would both deepen and complicate the students’ appreciation for the literature and the role that it might play in their lives.

As my students and I read aloud the words from Olson’s essay, “Through a vein of rose quartz at its tip can be read the geological history of the planet, . . .” and simultaneously traced that very vein of rose quartz with our fingertips, I certainly felt as though the central goal of my course had been fulfilled, even as the course itself was just beginning.

But, over time, I’ve found myself focusing more and more on the significance of what Olson writes in the final paragraph of his essay. Here, in an essay that functions as the introduction to the book *Listening Point*, he writes, “The chapters that follow are simply the stories of what I have found on my particular point of departure.”

As special as Listening Point is, it is not always as magical as it was on my first visit with students. On subsequent visits, I’ve found that sometimes it is cold and gray, and you’re distracted by shivering; that sometimes, you feel a bit rushed and your thoughts are elsewhere; that sometimes students are interested, but only politely so,

not intensely so.

Olson probably wouldn’t have been surprised to read about these experiences either. His point on Burntside Lake was important and central to his life and creative activities, but as he emphasizes in his final paragraph, the point he’s most interested in is the importance of listening: “I named this place Listening Point because only when one comes to listen, only when one is aware and still, can things be seen and heard.”

The value of this listening, of making space in our lives to really hear and see what surrounds us, as Olson explains, is that when we do so, we can’t help but wonder, and through this

Continued on page 5

My Experience with Listening Point 2010

By Derek Brekke

This summer I had the opportunity to work for Vermilion Community College doing Listening Point tours. I had never worked much with guiding tours before this summer so I started out nervous for the first couple tours. With only having a minimal knowledge of Sigurd Olson before starting, I did my research for the weeks leading up to the tours. My tours started out slow and gradually grew as the summer went on. This was a great lead in for me to gain confidence in the information and knowledge that I would need to know for the rest of the summer. I talked with Chuck Wick and Bill Tefft about many different questions and concerns that I had. My questions were answered and I was on course for making each tour more knowledgeable.

It seemed that each week I was critiquing my Powerpoint presentation (sometimes never using it) to the point where I got it where I liked it, short, easy to understand, but yet covered the most important details. When I first started out with the Powerpoint presentation I was using one from the past years. I needed something of my own. As the summer went on I critiqued myself each time only to hopefully get better at presenting, which is something I have struggled with for some



Derek Brekke at work giving tours at Listening Point.

Photo by Bill Tefft

time.

The tour is out of doors, and this is what I really enjoyed! Bringing people to a place they have ALWAYS wanted to visit really means something to a guide. This also makes it easier on the guide because people are not necessarily looking for someone to tell them everything; they just want to “experience it” themselves. A lot of people have read Sig’s books, so coming to the Point and to the Shack really touches them personally. Sigurd’s words have touched a lot of people.

This whole experience has been such a joy and a learning experience! I will carry this experience and knowledge on to future career jobs. I really enjoyed learning about such an influential man to the nation and to the Ely area. Advice I would give to the next person doing these tours is that you will never know everything about Sigurd. Learn what you can and read the books as much as you can. Being able to connect with people through the books was one thing I really enjoyed. Lastly, make the Powerpoint presentation yours, something you do not have to look at all the time, but something you really know. I really appreciate the opportunity to be the guide on these tours and would not have changed a thing. ●

A Point for Stories (Continued from page 1)

wonder we open ourselves to the world of knowledge and spirit—to “inherent joys” and to “truths that can encompass all.”

My students’ appreciation for these opportunities to listen has surprised me, though I suppose it shouldn’t. When I teach *Pens & Paddles*, we embark on a fifteen-day paddle through the Boundary Waters the morning after visiting Listening Point, winding our way north on the Nina Moose River and then east through the week-day bays of Crooked Lake. In early May, prior to the fishing opener, we are privileged to travel mostly alone, and we allow our days to unfold as weather and mood dictate.

Consistently, my students have commented on the contrast between these days and the days they typically experience as students, juggling four or five or six classes, part-time work, volunteer activities, relationships, and the general social milieu of college. How liberating they explain to focus on one class, in one place, with one small group of companions.

For me, the benefits of such experiences have come to manifest themselves most clearly on the final day of the course

when the students and I gather to share excerpts from their final essays. Sitting on the floor of my house in a tight circle, listening again to them read aloud, I am awed by what I hear, by what they heard when they paused long enough to really listen—to themselves and to the world that surrounds them. It is their words, their stories, written bravely and honestly, I have come to believe, that are the true legacy of Olson’s Listening Point.

Olson understood this, of course. He knew that it wasn’t enough to listen, to contemplate, to adventure in isolation. He recognized, as C. L. Rawlins has written in *Sky’s Witness*, that “our instinct is for stories” and that it is through sharing the simple stories of what we find on our particular points of departure that we are able, generation after generation, to sustain the flames of wonder that open us to the world of knowledge and spirit and that constitute out deepest satisfactions. ●

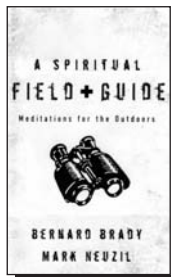
—Alan Brew lives in Ashland, Wisconsin, where he teaches literature at Northland College and listens carefully for the stories of wonder that surround him.

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.



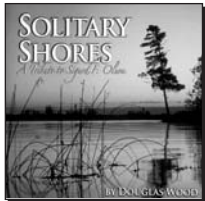
The Story of Listening Point
This 28-page booklet, written by Sig's son Robert K. Olson, tells the inside story of how Listening Point came to be and why, what it meant to Sigurd Olson, and what it continues to mean to wilderness lovers and loyalists. Features dozens of historical photos and images.
..... \$5



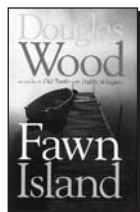
A Spiritual Field Guide
This 192-page softcover book contains passages from a wide variety of writers, activists and others (including Sigurd F. Olson) who have thought long and deeply about the meaning and value of nature and wilderness. A perfect trip companion.
..... \$13



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



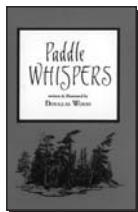
Solitary Shores CD
First recorded in 1983, *Solitary Shores* was Douglas Wood's musical tribute to Sigurd Olson. All of the songs have a strong North Country flavor, and there is even a segment of Sig reading from one of his own essays.
..... \$18



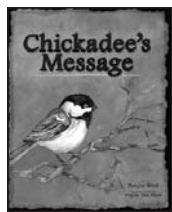
Fawn Island (hard cover)
Fawn Island is not merely a charming wilderness hideaway; it is the entry to realms of thought and meaning as well. Author Doug Wood probes for meaning into the nature of neighborliness and independence, of community and solitude.
..... \$20



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



Paddle Whispers
An illustrated, nonfiction meditation 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



Chickadee's Message (hard cover)
Doug Wood's retelling of a Lakota Indian legend about chickadees' strong spirit and boundless good cheer. The story is accompanied by Elly Van Diers's stunning watercolor illustrations that make this an appealing book for readers of all ages.
..... \$15

Listening Point Foundation Gift Shop
order form

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/ZIP: _____

Phone: _____

- Story of Listening Point booklet @ \$ 5.00 = _____
 - A Spiritual Field Guide book @ \$13.00 = _____
 - Wilderness World DVD @ \$15.00 = _____
 - Solitary Shores audio CD @ \$18.00 = _____
 - Fawn Island @ \$20.00 = _____
 - Paddle Whispers @ \$16.00 = _____
 - Chickadee's Message @ \$15.00 = _____
 - Sigurd Olson paperback books @ \$15.00 = _____
- specify title(s): _____
- 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 info@listeningpointfoundation.org) or fax (to 218/365-7072). Invoices will be included with your shipped order.

DONORS

**THE LISTENING POINT FOUNDATION WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE FOLLOWING INDIVIDUALS,
FOUNDATIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS FOR THEIR GENEROUS GIFTS:***

Andrew Aarons	Tom & Carrie Cusak	International Wolf Center	Mn Boreal Forests At Risk
David & Judith Adolpson	Paul Danicic	Steve & Anne Jay	Patsy & Jeff Mogush
Aldo Leopold Foundation	Thomas Dean	Don Johanning	Marshall & Heather
Mark Allsup	Bill & Marian Dirks	Hal & Julie Johnson	Monthei
Keith & Anita Anderson	Larry & Nancy Dolphin	Clint & Mary Ann Jurgens	Roberta Moore
Wendy & Jim Annis	Ruth Donhowe	Mr. & Mrs. Martin Kellogg	Mark Munger
Donna Arbaugh	Rev. Tom Dore	Marjorie Kimbrough	Darby & Geri Nelson
Mr. & Mrs. Clint Asche	Dennis Dreher	Paula J King	Dr. Michael Nelson
Marta L Atchison	Dawn Durand	Patricia Kirkegaard	David & Mary Ness
Joseph Bagby	Jane Edson	Vic Koivumaki	Joseph & Margaret
David & Judith Bahnemann	Kristin Eggerling	Janet Kortuem &	Nesterhoff
Dick & Elaine Barber	Peder Engebretson	Peter Nord	Mr & Mrs Albert Nisswandt
Dan & Donna Barski	Barb & Marc Farley	Bernadine Krawczyk	Jon Nygaard
Rob & Joyce Barta	Cynthia Findley	Christine Kuehn	Bob Olson
Tim & Vicki Barzen	F.D. Fogg	Ann & Kevin Landers	Derek Olson
Pete & Sherry Batterman	Shirley Fox	Gary & Judy Larson	Robert K. Olson
William & Helene Berg	Bruce Frana	Linda Law	Carol Orban
Mark Blanchard	Karen & Wayne Friedrich	Mike & Marcie Lein	Dennis & Turid Ormseth
Jeff Brand	Friends Of The Boundary	Jim Levorsen	Vicki & John Ott
Heidi Brandenburg	Waters	Ken Lewis	Henry Pabst
Brandenburg Gallery	Mr. & Mrs. William Fucik	Wayne Lewis	Doreen Packila
Mike Braun	Robert Gibson	Gary Lindsay	John & Charlotte Parish Sr
Heidi & Marty Breaker	Lynn A. Glesne	Armin Luehrs	Susan Pekarek
Alan & Nicole Brew	Peter & Mary Gove	Sue Lyon	Linda Peterson
Kim Bro & Becky Brown	Bob & Mary Grant	Betty Magnuson	Dr. Mark & Erica Peterson
Burntside Lodge	Jake & Ruth Graves	Finette Magnuson	Gary & Lynette Peterson
John & Cindy Cantrell	David Hakensen	Eric & Mary Dunne Mann	Mr. David & Tess Peterson
Phil & Sharon Carlson	Lillian Hamlin	Mr. & Mrs. Charles	Arlyn & Connie Picken
Ray Christensen	Wanda Hammond	Marsden	Piragis Northwoods Co.
Larry Christianson	Helen Hanten	Mary Brown Environmental	Walt Plude
Mr. & Mrs. Anthony Cicala	Jim Hart	Centerr	Gillian Podkomorka &
Lee Coleman	Thomas Hayden	Dr. & Mrs. Charles H.	Richard Eathorne
Jack & Bobbi Conrad	Frances Heinselman	Mayo II	Pomeroy Family Foundation
Carmie Cook	Mark Helling	Virginia Mcbride	Scott Popoff
Wanda Copeland	Jon Helminiak	Malcolm & Wendy Mclean	Jen Poppen
Jack & Sue Cornwell	Ray Helminiak	Karen Mcmanus	Judith & Paul Poppen
Anne Cowie	Highlands Nature Sanctuary	William & Sally Meadows	Consie Powell
Betty Cowie	Hobie Hobart	Dr. Curt Meine	Nancy Powers
John & Page Cowles	Kate Hodapp	Mike & Diane Menne	Beckie Prange
William & Jill Crafton	Mr. & Mrs. Phil Hogan	Ward Merrill	Chris Pranskatis
Tom & Jean Currie	Mary Holmes	Bob Minish	Kevin Proescholdt

**This list acknowledges gifts received from January 1, 2010 thru October 25, 2010.*

**THE LISTENING POINT FOUNDATION WOULD LIKE TO THANK THE FOLLOWING INDIVIDUALS,
FOUNDATIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS FOR THEIR GENEROUS GIFTS:***

The Question Club	Mr & Mrs John Seaborg	Allen & Ann Stolee	Beth Waterhouse
Mr. & Mrs. Joseph Raymond	Leif Selkregg &	Jill Stoltenberg	Mr. & Mrs. Richard Webb
John Rejman	Laura Myntti	Phil Stoltenberg	Bruce Weeks
Judy Rich	Jim Shackelford	Stewart Stone	Kathy Weflen
Don Richard	Anna Shallman	Tim & Carolyn Sundquist	Robert & Diane Wentz
John Ritter	Connie & Rick Shand	Darlene J. Swanson	Mr. & Mrs. David White
Win & Binky Rockwell	Gail Sheddy	Helen Swem	John Whitmore
Ms. Becky Rom	John Sheehy	Bill Tefft	Chuck & Marty Wick
Jeff & Sharon Rome	Don & Barbara Shelby	Nancy Jo Tubbs	Kermit & Lordean Wick
Jim Rowley	Ron Shields	Mr. & Mrs. Russell	Chris Williams
Timothy Rudnicki	Justin Singleton	Uhrenholdt	Wolf Ridge Elc
Clayton Russell	Scott Singleton	Mr. & Mrs. Soren	Bryan Wood
Steve Sandell	Susan Smegal	Uhrenholdt	Doug & Kathy Wood
John W. Saxhaug	Jordan Smith	Elizabeth & Andrew Urban	YMCA Camp Menogyn
Andrew & Sue Schaedel	Perry & Laurie Smith	Lynn Anne Vesper	YMCA Camp Widjiwagan
John Schaust	Gerry & Nan Snyder	John & Donna Virr	Tom Zehren
Steve Scheid	SOEI Northland College	Jim Voegeli	David & Margo Zentner
Susan Schirott	Rev. John Staton	Steve & Polly Voiles	Zup's Market, Ely
Steve Schon	Bryan & Marlene Stenlund	William K Wang	

IN HONOR AND MEMORY

Mr & Mrs William Berg,
in honor of Milt Stenlund

Dawn Durand,
in memory of Sigurd Olson and family

Peter & Mary Gove,
in honor of David Corey Foster

Maria Helling,
in honor of Mark Helling

Russell Kinney,
in memory of John L. McKenzie

Virginia McBride,
in memory of Roger W. McBride

John M. McKenzie,
in memory of John L. McKenzie

Mike & Diane Menne,
in memory of Irene Fraiser, mother of Jane Todd

Mary Anne O'Keefe,
in memory of John L. McKenzie

Susan Schirott,
in memory of Yvonne Olson

Jill Stoltenberg,
in memory of the mother and mother-in-law of Gunter & Susan Dittmar

Scott Stowell & Dyanne Korda,
in honor of Robyn Hintz's birthday

Quote from Sig:

"Wilderness is more than camping or hiking; it is a symbol of a way of life that can nourish the spirit."

— from "What is Wilderness?" *Living Wilderness*, Spring 1968

Leave a Legacy

The Listening Point Foundation is pleased to introduce a program of Planned Giving in support of Sigurd F. Olson's rich legacy of wilderness education and Listening Point. By naming the Listening Point Foundation in your will or by designating the Foundation as a beneficiary through another method of planned giving, you will help continue the vital work of the Foundation in the years to come. All gifts are welcome and will help to sustain Listening Point, the cabin and outbuildings, as well as wilderness educational outreach programs. With your help, future generations will come to know and support our rich wilderness heritage.

If you or your financial advisor would like information on how to name the Listening Point Foundation as a beneficiary of your estate or about the benefits of a planned gift, please call 218-365-7890 or email info@listeningpointfoundation.org.



*Listening Point
Foundation, Inc.*

P.O. Box 180
Ely, Minnesota 55731



THE VIEW FROM LISTENING POINT — FALL 2010

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

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Alanna Dore

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Douglas Wood, *Chair*
Charles Wick, *Vice Chair*
Nancy Jo Tubbs, *Secretary*
Karen Friedrich, *Treasurer*
Robert K. Olson, *President Emeritus*
Tim Barzen Larry Dolphin
Martin Kellogg Paula J. King
Dr. Mark Peterson Bryan Wood

NATIONAL ADVISORY BOARD

Paul Anderson Bloomington, MN
Dr. David Backes S. Milwaukee, WI
John "Jeb" Barzen Spring Green, WI
Jim Brandenburg Ely, MN
Ray Christensen Bloomington, MN
Gary Deason Flagstaff, AZ
Jon Helminiak Mequon, WI
Esther Kellogg St. Paul, MN
Mike Link Willow River, MN
Vance G. Martin Boulder, CO
Malcolm McLean St. Paul, MN
Dr. Michael Nelson Moscow, ID
Walter Pomeroy Mechanicsburg, PA
Kevin Proescholdt St. Paul, MN
Clayton Russell Ashland, WI
Tim Sundquist Duluth, MN
Robert Treuer Bemidji, MN
Steve Waddell Bellbrook, OH
Dave Zentner 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

Visit us online!
www.listeningpointfoundation.org

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