

directions

The journal of the Association of Nature Center Administrators

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2006 ANCA Leadership Award:

Gordon Maupin

Ken Finch
President
Green Hearts INC
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The annual ANCA Leadership Award is the highest honor bestowed upon an individual in the nature center profession. The purpose of the Award is to recognize those who have made a major contribution to the success of a nature center or centers and who have made important contributions to the profession through professional organizations and through support and mentoring of other nature center leaders.

Gordon Maupin has served the nature center profession for more than 30 years, effectively qualifying him as one of the old farts

of the business. (Note that I speak from a similar vantage point.) His first few years in the profession were spent working with the Missouri Department of Conservation, where he was the Naturalist Program Coordinator. Since 1981 Gordon has served as the Executive Director of The Wilderness Center, leading it through a long period of growth and success.

Gordon's service to the nature center profession is long and distinguished, not just by formal and official roles but by his constant willingness to provide support, advice, and a light touch of humor to his colleagues.

Certainly Gordon's most distinguished official roles have been with ANCA, where he served on the Board of

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**"Come forth into the light of things, Let Nature be your teacher."
—William Wordsworth**

ANCA is a private, non-profit organization, dedicated to promoting and supporting best leadership and management practices for nature and environmental learning centers.

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President's Message

**Tim Sandsmark
Executive Director
Lookout Mountain Nature
Center, Golden, CO**



At the time of this writing in early September, I'm still basking in that "Summit High" from our annual Summit at McKinney Roughs Nature Park near Austin, Texas. Aren't all "summits" by definition "high"? They really are in ANCA's case and this one was no exception. All things considered it was truly HOT! Daily temperatures were over 100 degrees and the level of enthusiasm, cerebral activity, and passion for fun were boiling!

More than 140 people from throughout the U.S. (and Canada) attended the Lone Star Summit and enjoyed the great Texas hospitality that the staff of McKinney Roughs and parent agency, the Lower Colorado River Authority provided. A very special thanks goes to Beth Banks, Supervisor, LCRA Natural Science Education Programs, Carolyn Nelson, Manager, LCRA Natural Science Centers, and Dick Touvell, Executive Director, Chippewa Nature Center for their superb leadership and dedication to making the Summit a great success.

Participants enjoyed inspirational workshops, facilitated sessions, and the keynote presented by Ed Pembleton as well as rafting the river, great food and drink, and music from bluegrass to mariachi. Several great field trips were also offered before and after the Summit. I had the good fortune to take the field trip to Bracken Cave, owned and operated by Bat Conservation International. The cave is home to the largest concentration of mammals on the planet - 20 million plus Mexican free-tailed bats! After a welcome downpour drenched us all, for over 2 hours, millions of bats streamed from the cave to begin their nightly devouring of 200+ tons of insects. A truly amazing sight!

There were many impressive and memorable events at the Summit including the awarding of ANCA's Leadership award to Gordon Maupin, Executive Director of the Wilderness Center in Ohio and former ANCA Board President. Another great event was the annual live auction, which raised nearly \$8,500. It was a very different auction this year without Richard Haley's wonderful prowess as auctioneer, but Larry Richardson, Bob Mercer, Dave Catlin, and Ann Rilling very capably stepped up to the task and did a superb job.

The auction was followed by a truly remarkable fund-a-need effort MC'd by Alan Barnhart. The generosity of ANCA members and Summit participants was incredible and almost \$27,000 was raised to create a memorial endowed scholarship program that could be used to honor ANCA leaders and members. In honor and memory of Richard Haley, a special Memorial Scholarship Fund was established in his name as the first in this program. For more details, please see the following article.

Another major announcement at the Summit was the ANCA Board's decision to take a big step forward in advancing the organization by hiring ANCA's first Executive Director. The Board felt that ANCA was in a position financially and in the developmental process of the organization to move forward on this plan. A special task force has been established and begun to work on a transition plan and search process. We will keep you posted on the progress of this effort. 🌿

Richard Haley Memorial Scholarship Fund

Friday evening at the ANCA Summit in Austin, TX provided us with a wonderful opportunity to give of ourselves and create opportunities to share our management knowledge with others. Prior to the Summit the ANCA list-serve was active with stories of Richard Haley's tragic automobile accident. Many people suggested that we should honor Richard's life by creating an endowment. Debbi and Paul Brainerd of Islandwood made an initial contribution of \$10,000. The stage was set. Following a very successful live auction which included lots of fabulous vacation trips as well as the cash gator, MC Bob Mercer turned the microphone over to Alan Barnhardt of Carolina Raptor Center.

Placing his hand on the coat of many colors that had been worn so many times by Richard Haley, Alan reminded us that Richard was a great friend and leader that we looked to at ANCA.

His life, intelligence, and antics influenced us all. Alan went on to share his feelings by saying, "When I think of Richard, I think of a river. On the surface we see a smooth, calm surface. At points along its path we can hear the chortling and playfulness as it travels over rocks and around bends. Jump in a boat and you begin to feel the power of its pull. If you took time to immerse yourself

in Richard's fullness you began to understand the depth and power that was within him. Like a river during flood stage, Richard's influence often flowed beyond his personal being. Many of us were influenced by the projects that he crafted and guided. And like the river, Richard's impact will be felt for years to come - by people that will never know him."



photo by Jimmy Paz

Beth Banks of McKenney Roughs Nature Park holds a real gator, while Paul Tebbel, treasurer of ANCA, totes the cash gator.

Richard loved sharing with others and was the ANCA Board person who coordinated ANCA's Peer Consults for several years and has led and participated in many consults. He realized the value of this collective knowledge and encouraged us to share it freely with others.

Richard was also very involved in the success of ANCA's Summits, not just in his role as auctioneer, but also as a leader of many sessions and by offering much insight into the many facets of nature centers. For several years the ANCA Board has allocated

funding from its budget to support individuals that cannot afford to attend the Summit. Bobbi Jo Geise, Chair of the Scholarship Committee said, "Working together, ANCA and Audubon supported 24 individuals who are attending this year's Summit. But everyone was not able to attend because we could not supply the necessary financial

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Richard Haley Memorial Scholarship Fund Donors

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Gordon

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Directors from 1995 to 2003, including his term as ANCA's President, 2001 to 2003. Gordon provided a strong, common-sense grounding to ANCA's governance, always looking for new ideas and successes, but with a realist's eye that focused on achievable goals. His term as President coincided with a major "changing of the guard" in ANCA's leadership, and Gordon provided a vital transition between the old and the new Directors. Further, he stepped up to offer his Center as the site of ANCA's 2003 Summit – a very successful and well-received conference that he and his staff orchestrated perfectly.

In his affiliation with ANCA, Gordon has served on numerous consult teams, lending his experience, judgment, and winning "ah shucks" personality to each group. He has also long been an active member of Ohio's informal nature center directors' group, which has periodically gathered for collegial sharing and advice since the early 1990s.

Gordon has also provided an important link between nature centers and the land trust movement, serving as a conduit for information and ideas that both professions can benefit from. He has been an active member of the Land Trust Alliance, and has modeled his beliefs by extending The Wilderness Center's mission so that the organization now also functions as a local land trust.

On a personal note, Gordon's interest in – and commitment to – the "extinction of experience" concepts have provided me with great support and reinforcement in my own growing work in that area, and it was Gordon who played the instrumental role in first introducing other ANCA members to these concepts by building them into ANCA's 2003 Summit.

Gordon Maupin's leadership has transformed

The Wilderness Center. Although this nature center is located in a rural location, without a very large population base in close proximity, he and his staff have built it into one of the nation's leading nature centers.

Gordon's ability and commitment to reach out to his community has guided The Wilderness Center into a unique strength of forming on-going collaborations with a wide range of local clubs with nature-related themes. There are currently a dozen of these community groups which are affiliated with TWC, using the Center's facilities for their activities. In return, TWC has garnered hundreds of new members, immense good will throughout the region, and a great source of volunteers and subject-area experts who assist the Center with its own projects.

Gordon also led the Center through a very successful capital campaign, raising over \$5.5 million for expanding and renovating their main building, as well adding other improvements to their grounds and physical plant. ANCA members from around the country were able to personally experience the success of this re-building effort at the 2003 Summit.

Finally, Gordon's personal interest in the community benefits of land conservation has guided The Wilderness Center into its formal role as a local land trust, working to protect local natural areas that are significant for their ecological value as well as for their value as destinations

where local children can explore and enjoy the outdoors. TWC now owns 13 separate tracts of land, totalling 1,499 acres, and holds conservation easements on another six parcels totaling 718 acres.

Through Gordon's leadership, a strong staff, and a committed team of volunteers, The Wilderness Center has become a model and inspiration for nature centers throughout the country. It is doubtful than any other rural nature center has more influenced its region with so much positive and tangible conservation success. 🌿



Gordon Maupin, Executive Director of The Wilderness Center in Wilmot, OH, is the recipient of the 2006 ANCA Leadership Award.

Picking up theBig Guy

Gordon Maupin
Executive Director
The Wilderness Center
Wilmot, OH

I prepared a speech loaded with wonderful statistics. I calculated standard deviations and did statistical tests, scoured the internet, the whole bit.

Then, as I was driving over here my wife, Margaret, said, "At least you didn't forget your speech this time." That's when I started to feel sick.

"I do this all the time!" I said, "I can't believe I did it again! What am I going to do? It's too late to go back and get it."

As usual Margaret comes up with an idea to bail me out. She said, "Maybe they would like to hear about that hitchhiker you picked up the other day."

What did I have to lose?

This was kind of unusual and interesting, and since I forgot my speech – and all those wonderful tables filled with numbers..... well

Well, as a lot of you know by now, strange things happen to me. But this was stranger than most.

It all happened as I was driving back home from a meeting. I had a little extra time, so I decided to take a scenic route on some back roads. As I was driving along the road I saw this big wall of really dense fog. Standing at the edge of the fog was this guy. Hitchhiking.

He looked like somebody I knew.

He was dressed a little strangely, like an Indian. And for some reason I couldn't stop myself, I pulled over.

Before I knew it, he was sitting next to me.

As we started moving slowly through the fog, he said, "Thanks for the ride, Gordon?"

I said, "How do you know my name?"

He said, "I know all the Cherokee?"

Now, I've got Native American blood, but 1/16 is not exactly Tonto. I said, "It's really way back, hardly enough to make me a long lost relative of the tribe." He said, "I put a lot of stock in Mitochondrial DNA. That is inherited through women and your Cherokee blood comes through your mother, grandmother, and great grandmother. So I'm liberal enough to consider you a human being." I thought that was a compliment.

I asked, "O.K., So, what's your name?"

He said, "U-ne-qua."

"What's that mean in English?" I was hoping something like "Dances With Wolves."

He laughed and said, "Well, I guess it would loosely translate as 'The Big Guy.'"

The fog was really thick now. I couldn't go more than about 20 miles per hour.

The Big Guy said, "Congratulations on getting the ANCA Leadership Award. I guess you'll be giving those folks a big speech."

I answered, "I'm working on it now. I got some great tables with lots of numbers... great stuff." Then I added, "Rilling said she'd kill me if I went on for more than 20 minutes."

Anyway, suddenly out of the fog loomed up a ROAD CLOSED sign. With no detour instructions. Typical Ohio.

I stopped and asked rhetorically with more than a little irritation. "Where do we go from here?"

"The Big Guy" laughed and said, "I knew you were going to ask me that; that's why I came."

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Ed Pembleton
Director
Leopold Education Project (LEP)
Saint Paul, MN

Teaching Lessons in a Land Ethic - No Child Left Indoors *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature Deficit Disorder*

Part 1 of a 4 part series

Who is going to carry on the work of wildlife conservation when we are gone? That is THE question for concerned conservationists who are actively dedicated to restoring and protecting wildlife habitat and looking toward the future. Pheasants Forever (PF) has achieved nearly 25 years of outstanding habitat work, but if it is going to last, we must develop, teach and inspire the next generation of stewards who will inherit our legacy and carry on our traditions. That is the role and responsibility of PF's youth and education programs. In a multi-part series, this column will explore the increasing isolation of people (especially youth) from the land, the problems and challenges caused by this isolation and your opportunities to provide new and continuing solutions.

Defining the problems and challenges will provide you with the ammunition to show there is a serious and growing need to involve and educate youth for the future of conservation throughout the broader community.

"There are two spiritual dangers in not owning a farm. One is the danger of supposing that breakfast comes from the grocery, and the other that heat comes from the furnace."

Aldo Leopold, A Sand County ALMANAC

The divide between rural and urban populations may even be wider than Aldo Leopold envisioned when he penned these most quotable sentences more than 50 years ago. It may be even wider than we currently perceive.

The farm population in the United States declined from 40% of the population in 1900 to a mere 2% in 1990. In 1993 the U. S. Census Bureau decided to drop its survey of farm residents because the numbers were statistically insignificant. Our immediate concern is that we are increasingly relying on a small percent of our population to manage the majority of wildlife habitat in our nation. At the same time urban dwellers are losing sight of their reliance on farms and are disconnected from the outdoors, hunting, fishing, and recreational activities that could connect them to



photo by Ed Pembleton

Something as simple as looking for frogs can be a pleasurable way to spend some time outdoors with youth and connect them to the natural world.

farms and the land. Participation in hunting and fishing is declining and gaining support for conservation is becoming a challenge. If farms seem irrelevant, how do we convince the 98% of those not on the farm and the 2% who are to be good stewards of that land? That is the first part of our challenge and opportunity.

Our longer range and broader challenge is that we are losing our bond with nature. With 98% of our population increasingly isolated in urban and suburban enclaves where they are largely detached from the land, we are learning that even the 2% of rural residents, and especially youth, are almost equally detached from the natural world. Recent studies demonstrate that the consequences of our isolation from nature reach beyond conservation to influence our physical, mental and social well being.

"Denatured" Children

In his latest book, *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our*

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Children From Nature Deficit Disorder, Richard Louv makes a strong argument for the case that the physical and mental health of children is being compromised by their lack of connection and exposure to nature. Louv, a columnist for The San Diego Union-Tribune, is nimble at coining phrases and captured my attention in an article where he explained that, "We are in the middle of an experiment where we are raising the first generation of "denatured" children." Louv goes on to document some of the benefits achieved when children are provided with opportunities for immersion in natural settings and suggests solutions that help children connect to nature.

The second part of this series will explore Louv's findings and ideas about the causes and cures of "nature deficit disorder." If you are curious about his findings—pick up a copy of his book.

Part 2 of a 4 part series
 For more than a decade, the LEP has focused on training informal and classroom educators to teach outdoors as a core part of teaching "Lessons in a Land Ethic," our curriculum based on Aldo Leopold's conservation classic book, A Sand County ALMANAC. We know that getting youth outdoors is a critical part of the learning process. As teachers and conservationists, we must connect youth to the land, so they build an attachment to the natural world and develop values that will form their personal land ethic.

Participants in LEP workshops tell us about the remarkable improvements they see in students when they get engaged in outdoor education. Evaluation of our program in Missouri demonstrated that LEP workshops were effective in convincing educators to go outdoors to teach.

"Nature Deficit Disorder"
 We are now learning that the benefits of taking youth outdoors reach beyond learning. Richard Louv's latest book, Last Child in the Woods, provides evidence that for a variety of reasons, children are spending far less time outdoors and are less familiar with their local natural environment. No wonder there are fewer new hunters.

Louv provides lots of studies and circumstantial evidence that today's children spend less time outdoors and are detached from the natural world. Unfortunately there is little baseline research from previous decades to compare how much time youth previously spent outdoors. In today's fast paced society, we are increasingly

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photo by Ed Pembleton

Learning from the real world builds strong attachments to nature.



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Profiles: Hike for Your Health - An Example of Indirect Marketing

Bill Hopple
Executive Director
Cincinnati Nature Center
Cincinnati, OH

time. Since Denali is one of the seven summits of the world (highest peak on each of the seven continents) and Cincinnati is nicknamed the city of seven hills, we came up with the idea

during April and May.” Hikers gathered on Fountain Square (the center of downtown) at Noon. Hikes were free with increasing distances from 3 miles to 9.5 miles. We created

What do I mean by Indirect Marketing? Promoting an event or an organization other than your own, resulting in increased but indirect visibility and awareness of your organization.

Why do it? Often times indirect marketing can be more effective than directly promoting your organization. People might not be interested in your organization because they don't associate what you do with their interests, but they may be interested in a particular event, program or activity.

For thirty years I have wanted to climb Denali – the tallest mountain in North America. It started when I was a mountaineering instructor for National Outdoor Leadership School during college. In 2003, I was looking for a physical challenge to celebrate my 50th birthday and set my sights on Denali. I asked the Cincinnati Nature Center (CNC) Board of Trustees for a three week sabbatical on the condition that we use my climb to benefit (i.e., promote) CNC.

Our first thought was to use the opportunity as a fundraiser, but upon reflection we felt my climb was not compelling enough to stimulate new gifts to CNC. Instead, we focused on promotion – a constant challenge to get residents of Greater Cincinnati to know that CNC even exists. How could we use my climb to generate awareness of CNC? What could we do that will attract the attention of the public and the media?

A good friend, who is a marketing professional, counseled that I should be like the energizer bunny – popping up frequently over a finite period of



photo by Bill Hopple

On the “summit” of Mt. Echo, 4.5 miles from downtown Cincinnati, seen in background.

of my climbing “The Seven Summits of Cincinnati.” I would use these “climbs” as training elements by carrying my 60 pound pack on the hikes and I would invite others to join me. CNC has some of the nicest trails in the area and those trails are a primary reason why people become members. The final component was to tie all of this into health and fitness. Here is what we came up with:

“Hike for Your Health” – You don't have to climb to the top of North America like Bill – come out and hike the beautiful trails of Cincinnati Nature Center! Join Bill to climb the Seven Summits of Cincinnati on Fridays

a logo and gave free T-shirts to all hike participants.

While the hikers gathered, CNC staff handed out brochures and free admission passes to passersby. Free passes were valid from April 1 through August 31. As an enticement to come visit CNC, we created a raffle with prizes from 10 local fitness and outdoor recreation stores. Each of the raffle sponsors were given passes to distribute to customers directly. The objective was to drive people to our site, so they could enter the raffle each time they visited. Name and contact

(continued on next page)

information were required to use free passes/raffle tickets so we could follow up with membership solicitation.

We also held three events as part of Hike for Your Health: A Kick-Off on the first Friday climb, a reception after the last climb, and A Send-Off just prior to my departure for Alaska. At the Send-Off we had the drawing for the raffle prizes. The entire program was sponsored by a local life insurance company – Western & Southern Financial – thanks to a CNC trustee who runs one of their divisions.

This program was then promoted along with the health benefits of hiking through a comprehensive communications plan. Internally, we announced the program on the Director's page of our newsletter, placed a display in our Visitor Center lobby, sent group emails, and talked it up among our volunteers and members. Although members did not benefit from the free passes, they were allowed to enter the raffle. Additionally, we sent out a variety of press releases throughout the campaign, averaging two per week.

The results were fantastic, generating a lot of publicity for CNC:

- We had 15 to 30 "climbers" on each of the hikes
- We handed out over 10,000 brochures downtown
- Over 1,500 passes were redeemed
- The Cincinnati Enquirer (our major newspaper) ran two articles with color pictures on the front page of the local section; one in March describing my training and announcing the 7 Summits of Cincinnati hikes, and one in July following my climb
- Cincinnati Magazine ran a full page color feature
- Numerous articles were placed in neighborhood papers
- TV Channel 12, our local CBS affiliate, ran a feature on their morning and evening health program

Costs: We spent about \$5,000 (from the sponsorship) on the following: printing of passes, T-shirts, hats and water bottles with the HFYH logo. The indirect costs were staff time. Though we felt the program was highly successful, it took a great deal more staff time than we had anticipated.

We received numerous requests to continue the hikes in the future, but at different times (other than during a weekday). As a result, we are talking with county and city park districts about co-promoting a regional hiking program. If you are interested in receiving a packet of the materials developed for Hike for Your Health, contact me at bhopple@cincynature.org.

This is just one small example. Your event doesn't have to be as extreme as climbing Denali to use Indirect Marketing. Put your thinking cap on and come up with your own opportunities to promote your center indirectly. 🌿

Inspire an A-HA!

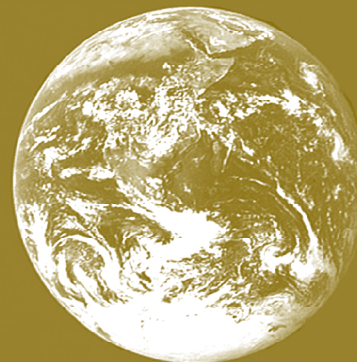


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**2007 RESIDENTIAL ENVIRONMENTAL LEARNING CENTER DIRECTOR'S CONFERENCE
AT TETON SCIENCE SCHOOLS IN JACKSON HOLE, WYOMING**

A biannual conference for Directors and Administrators exploring the issues and trends related to residential programs and facilities.

2007 Site Sponsor: Teton Science Schools (www.tetonscience.org)
Co-Sponsored by ANCA (Association of Nature Center Administrators, www.natctr.org)

Dates:
Wednesday, January 24 – Sunday, January 28, 2007

Who should attend?

This is a biannual gathering of administrators (directors and coordinators), and those with an interest in residential environmental education programs. This gathering of professionals seeks to advance the residential environmental education movement through the sharing of current ideas, concerns, solutions, and insights.

This is not your typical conference format:

The Friday and Saturday sessions are built on the Open Space concept. On Thursday evening, the conference group as a whole will create the agenda for these days by identifying topics of interest. A schedule is then created and participants attend sessions most applicable to their interests and concerns. Sunday we will wrap up the conference, plan for the next, and travel home.

About the location for the 2007 gathering:

This year's gathering of Directors of Residential Environmental Learning Centers will be held at Teton Science Schools Jackson Campus, completed in September 2005. The Jackson Campus serves residential programs for learners of all ages in a quiet draw five minutes from the historic town of Jackson, surrounded by the Grand Teton National Park and Bridger-Teton National Forest. Additionally, the campus features high efficiency environmental design, constructed to provide simultaneous educational opportunities for school and adult groups throughout the year.

The Jackson Campus will be hosting this gathering with a variety of housing choices from private to shared baths. Housing units are simple, comfortable and have a community feel, with common shared living rooms and a food service that is responsive to diet restrictions and preferences. The campus serves gatherings well with wireless internet throughout and a range of meeting spaces and resources to serve group needs.

For conference information and registration email:

John Haskin, Director of Education at john.haskin@tetonscience.org
Kathy Haskin, Jackson Campus Coordinator at kathy.haskin@tetonscience.org

Teton Science Schools, 700 Coyote Canyon Road, Jackson, WY 83001
307-733-1313 – www.tetonscience.org

Teaching Lessons

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occupied by the high-speed digital world. We experience the natural world in a remote way with only our eyes and ears. We are inside, rather than outdoors using all of our senses.

Louv contends that many of the psychological, physical, social, and spiritual problems that are emerging in our youth are related to their disconnection from nature, which he terms “nature-deficit disorder.” Louv makes it clear that this is not a medical diagnosis and that most of the evidence is circumstantial.

He offers up the “nature-deficit disorder” label as a way to focus attention and initiate a public discussion of the current circumstances facing youth and society. Louv is interested in awakening the public to the “nature-deficit disorder” problem and explaining that it can be individually and culturally reversed. He sees that as the first step on the path to understanding how cognitively, spiritually, emotionally, and biologically rich we could become if we were positively connected to the natural world.

Louv points out that our relationship with nature has changed from utilitarian direct use, to romantic attachment, to electronic detachment. The first half of his book defines the problems caused by this change and provides evidence for how and why our youth are increasingly estranged from nature. Contrary to what many people think, the isolation of youth from nature is not a problem of access to natural areas. Rather the isolation is due to lack of time, lack of knowledge, increased fears and more importantly, lack of adult mentors to accompany them outdoors.

With more disconnections and more barriers between our youth and our hope for the future, it will take many kinds of programs and opportunities to heal the wounds. Most of the last half of Louv’s book deals with ways of reconnecting children with the natural world. Louv does not give a cookbook of solutions, instead he gives a series of prescriptions that can work. If every reader finds one, two or more ideas and uses them to overcome the “nature deficit disorder” and reconnect people to the natural world, the chances for healing ourselves and sustaining the planet will improve.

Toward the end of the book Louv concludes, “The environmental attachment theory is a good guiding principle: attachment to land is good for child and land.” Louv sounds a lot like what Aldo Leopold wrote in the River of the Mother of God, “Once you learn to read the land, I have no fear of what you will do to it, or with it. And I know many pleasant things it will do to you.” 🍁

Parts 3 and 4 will be published in the Winter 2007 issue of *Directions*.



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Big Guy

(continued from page 5)

So there we sat in the fog. Me and the Indian named "The Big Guy."

"You know, Gordon," he said, "There are a few things nature center leaders should hear. The challenges facing them and facing the world are greater than ever. You need to tell them that living comfortably within their borders is no longer enough. They are leaders and more is expected. Nature Centers can be a starting place for a new kind of Environmental Organization.

"That is one place you can go from here."

I asked, "What do you mean a new kind of organization?"

The Big Guy said "Think of the challenges the world faces:"

"Climate Change is real and it's serious; Crowding ever more people on the planet drives extinction; Biodiversity is being fed to land development and other abuses. Add to this the challenges of Extinction of Experience; Nature Deficit Disorder.... A generation that cares nothing for the natural world is in the making. Nature Centers need to be a part of the solution.

"That is one place you can go from here."

"Okay Big Guy," I said. "How can a little nature center do anything?"

The Big Guy was ready with an answer. He said, "First it means don't give up without trying. Think creatively to be part of a solution.

"It means, changing your organization's self image. Moving outside your comfort zone, and, most important, discarding the idea that you can live within your borders.

"That is one place you can go from here."

I said, "That's nuts. We can't do anything about climate change."

The Big Guy shook his finger at me. "Aren't you listening? I said to think creatively. You can sequester carbon. You might even get paid for doing it. It's going to take a lot of little organizations to do it all."

"But that's just one problem, there are so many and they are so big," I complained. "What can I do?"

The Big Guy shook his finger again. (I thought I was about to get tired of that.) "Gordon, the cutting edge of conservation is the capitalistic solutions to environmental problems. You must

selling nutrient credits on your local creek. If you think creatively, you just might get paid for being part of the solution.

"That's better than just whining about the problem.

"That is one place you can go from here."

This Big Guy was getting on my nerves. Who was he to talk to me like this? I won the ANCA Award.

"So what can I do about Extinction of Experience?" I asked. "That problem is bigger than all of us."

The Big Guy said, "Where have you been? You know about the nature centers that have preschools. They're making money on these schools. They are also creating the next generation of environmentalists."

"Look around you at your local land trusts, they conserve land where kids can go outside and play. Land Trusts deal with developers! They actually earn income from creative land deals. You can do that too. Think creatively. Think differently.

"That is one place you can go from here."

"Gordon, you are a plant guy," he said. "You see the forests all around your area high-graded over and over. Do you think there is a way for you to work on sustainable forestry?" I said, "Yes, I've had ideas about that for years. But, gosh, our mission is education, not forestry."

The Big Guy said, "I told you to think differently... think creatively. There is an answer there if you have the courage to step outside your comfortable little box!

"That is one place you can go from here."

learn about this stuff and figure out how your organization can get paid to do conservation.

"Buying and selling sulfur dioxide has really cut acid rain. Get out of your 1970s mentality!

"You're an old dog, but you've got to learn new tricks.

"That is one place you can go from here."

I started to get defensive, "Hey, I've done some of that. We just made a pile of money from wetland mitigation."

The Big Guy said, "I know. Did you do that by trying to live within your borders?"

I answered, "Well, no, not exactly, but the wetlands we saved weren't too far away. You know that creek that goes through our property is really polluted.

"Gordon," the Big Guy said, "Pay attention to what's happening in your area. They are going to start buying

If I could use only 4 words to describe Gordon I would say:

Dynamic, action oriented leader

If I had only 3 words to describe Gordon I would use:

Powerful, exciting visionary

If I could use only 2 words to describe Gordon they would be:

Goof ball

If I could use only 1 word to describe Gordon it would be:

Friend

Charity Krueger
Executive Director
Aullwood Audubon Center & Farm

(continued on next page)

The Big Guy actually took my hand and looked into my eyes. About then, a light bulb sort of went off in my head. "I think I understand what you are saying."

"A lot of the right ideas are already out there. Somebody, and why not nature centers, needs to grab these ideas and start making them work."

Finally, the Big Guy smiled at me and said, "Gordon, you're not nearly as dumb as you look. Change, creative thought, thinking differently.... I know that's not easy. It demands more from you, from everyone. But, success requires it. The Earth requires it. The children require it. It's the moral choice."

"Fight the good fight. Do the good job. Make an Earth you will be proud to leave your children."

"That's one place you can go from here."

About that time the fog started to thin out. But the light was bad, I couldn't see the Big Guy too well.

Big Guy said, "You better let me off here."

So I pulled over. Before he got out, I asked if there anything else I should be thinking about.

The Big Guy said, "Years ago a guy I know named Seattle asked, 'How can you buy or sell the sky, the warmth of the land? We do not own the freshness of the air or the sparkle on the water.'

"When Seattle said that, he didn't understand the ways of the white man. The white man has already bought and sold the sky. The freshness of the air is not something we can take for granted. No one ever thought the warmth of the Earth would be a problem. And does the water truly sparkle if it is not clean. The white man has indeed bought and sold these things. You must save them the way the white man does with science and education. You must save them by thinking differently about your nature center.

"You must also save them the way the Indian did, with love.

"Seattle had it right when he said, 'Every pine needle shining in the sun, every sandy beach, the mist hanging in the dark woods, every clearing, each humming insect, every part of the earth is holy in the memory and experience of my people. We are part of the earth and the earth is part of us.'

"That's one place you can go from here."

When he was done, we looked at each other. Then "the Big Guy" got out of the car and disappeared in the wisps of the fog.

It was then I saw a Raven fly past. Not a Crow, a Raven.

Well, anyway. I forgot my speech. I apologize because I know how much you want to hear detailed statistics.

But maybe the Big Guy's advice on where to go from here was worth sharing. 



Wanted: Nature Centers for Flying WILD Partnerships

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To learn more about Flying WILD and Flying WILD partnerships, please contact us or visit our website at www.flyingwild.org.

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Memorial Fund

(continued from page 3)

support to all who requested it. "Our goal is to create an endowment that will provide enough support for emerging nature center administrators to attend future Summits.

Alan reminded us of the challenge to raise \$10,000 - to match the contribution by Paul and Debbi Brainerd. The ANCA Board suggested creating a memorial endowed scholarship program that could be used to honor ANCA leaders and members and Bob Mercer suggested that the Richard Haley Memorial Scholarship Fund would be the first in this program. The group endorsed this idea with thunderous applause.

Alan called for individuals that would make a contribution of \$500 or more. A number of participants responded. Karen Deaton of Riverwoods responded with a wonderful contribution of \$2,500 generously provided by Millcreek Hunting Preserve. More donors joined the excitement with contributions of \$250 and \$100. Then Christine Turnbull of Moose Hill Wildlife Sanctuary contributed the cash gator she had just purchased at the auction. Others responded with more contributions - \$50, \$20, \$10 and more.

At the end of the evening the total was just under \$17,000. This will be added to the Brainerd's gift creating an initial endowment of nearly \$27,000, which is enough to generate more than \$1,300 in scholarships each year. It's a terrific beginning, but we need your help to serve all those in need.

Please contact Larry Brown at lbrown@audubon.org or 937-890-7360 or 800-490-2622 if you would like to make a contribution to the Richard Haley Memorial Fund. 🌿

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If you would like to become a business member or have any questions, please call Larry Brown at the ANCA Office at 1-800-490-2622 or 937-890-7360 or email at lbrown@audubon.org

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