



P.O. Box 6552
Rochester, Minn. 55903

FRIENDS OF OXBOW

www.friendsfoxbow.org

December 2008 / January 2009

ZOLLMAN ZOO LOSES ITS BEST FRIEND

Friends of Oxbow, Oxbow Park, and the Zollman Zoo have lost their best friend. Dr. Paul Zollman died at St. Mary's Hospital on October 29th this year. Below is the eulogy given by County Park Superintendent Tom Ryan at Dr. Zollman's funeral. He was a close friend and mentor for Tom's entire career.

Like all of us here today, and on behalf of my family, I would like to extend my sincere condolences to Dawn, and to Paul's family in the event of his passing. It has no doubt been a difficult month for you all. For those that live nearby of course, and perhaps more, for those of you that have chosen to build your lives a distance away.

Doc loved to speak of the travels and experiences of his children and grandchildren, and he did so often in our years of friendship. His stories would begin with an affectionate comment about one of the girls, or of their husbands, or one of his grandchildren. Over the years, you all were spoken of. Often. He liked to visit with me about your lives, your achievements, your travels. And in due time he would weave in an ancillary lesson about the geography of that distant country, or state or region where you happened to be. I loved listening to him speak of you. In particular, I reveled in the change in his persona when he thought of you all. His strong, booming voice would soften when he spoke of you, and his gaze would shift to an object on the table as he shared things about you all. I recall thinking to myself one time....this man could burst with pride if it wasn't for his modesty.

Paul Zollman loved his family. That, first and foremost, is what I hope for you all in your grief journey, a realization that your father, loved by all, truly defined his life's success not through his own many personal accomplishments, but through yours. His family was his life. We thank you so for sharing him with us. Because you know you did.

In my view, of his many gifts and talents, Doc's greatest achievement may have been his commitment to service. To people, to animals, to his country, to the environment, to the pursuit of knowledge. But no man, at least in my life, has demonstrated a greater ability to make other human beings believe in

themselves. Dr. Paul Zollman empowered people to achieve! To recognize their potential. To strive. To improve. To step into the fray! To figure it out. To know better. To be prepared! The list goes on and on.

"C'mon, let's go!"

"Oh, nonsense!"

"Good God man, get out of my way!"

"Tom, you lapsed into the vernacular."

"Tom, you betray your youth."

"Tom, you must remember that in this world, there is a wide range of normal."

"Tom, you must never lose your childlike sense of curiosity."

"Now Tom...."

"Now Tom..."

"Now Tom..."

You know this man, don't you? My respect and admiration for this man is the same as yours, isn't it? He was interested in your life, wasn't he?? He knew you, didn't he? He expected you to strive, didn't he? He lectured you, didn't he? He.....prepared you, didn't he?

It was my extreme honor to speak to Doc as his worldly life neared it's end. For that, Dawn, I will be forever grateful. At my request, Dawn held her phone to his ear so I could have a word.

"Hello Doc. It's Tom. It's a beautiful October day. I want you to know that I admire and respect you more than you will ever know, and that I love you" Dawn said that she could tell that he heard me.

But that's the point, I think. My final words to my friend and mentor were not really mine, were they? It wasn't about me...it was about all of us. About his people, his animals, his days in the field, his laugh, his mind, his contribution to the world. I said it for all of us, didn't I?

Here lies the earthly remains of a good and decent man. I will remember him always, as will you. But more, I suspect that like me, you will continue to live your lives in a manner that you hope will make him proud. Dr. Paul Zollman.

About Our Organization

Friends mission is to support the educational, environmental and recreational goal of Oxbow Park. This Newsletter is published 6 times a year. Copy deadline is the 2nd Monday of the month before publication. All submissions are subject to editing or revision. Copy may be submitted via email, or typed to: Ruthann Yaeger, PO Box 6552, Rochester, MN 55903 or ryegr@q.com. Friends board meets monthly at Oxbow Park Nature Center on the 2nd Wednesday at 7:00 pm. Everyone is welcome.

Friends Board Officers

President - Peggy Morris
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Friends Web page

www.friendsofowbow.org

Olmsted County Parks Information

www.co.olmsted.mn.us

Oxbow Park Hours

Park Grounds: 7 am -10pm

Nature Center & Zoo:

10 am to 4 pm daily

Nature Center, Zoo are closed for Thanksgiving, Christmas, New Years Day and Easter

Want to sponsor a zoo animal?

Go to:
www.friendsofowbow.org

Programs and Events at the Parks

Oxbow Park

There are no programs for December and January at Oxbow Park

Chester Woods Park

A \$5.00 daily or \$25.00 annual vehicle pass is required to enter Chester Woods Park.

No programs for November or December.

Stay tuned for upcoming ice fishing and animal tracking programs early next year.

**The Oxbow and Chester Woods staff wish all of you
 Happy Holidays and a great New Year.**

Park Report

 by Celeste Lewis, naturalist

Wow, another year has flown by. When I was younger, I never believed my mother when she would talk about how fast time goes by, (it always seemed that the school year wouldn't go by fast enough!) As I have become older and, hopefully a little wiser, I seem to understand what she was talking about.

The past couple of months here at the park have been particularly busy. Classes were very successful. We taught almost every day and had tremendous feedback from the teachers and staff that accompanied each group. We taught approximately 1880 children during the six-week sessions. Once classes came to an end, we were able to focus on getting the zoo and park winterized.

Along with the fall comes the time when we say "good night" to a couple of critters, the bear, and woodchucks, as well as, "see you in the spring" to the badger and prairie dogs. Not only do we miss these animals, but we also say "goodbye" to the remainder of the seasonal staff here at the park. Our last two seasonal employees are now done for the year. They did not leave, however, before the unveiling of the brand new raptor exhibit here at the park. If you have not had the opportunity to check out the new exhibit I suggest you take the time to visit the zoo and see this breathtaking new addition to Zollman Zoo.

Even though winter is coming, the park is still here. It has been said to be one of the most beautiful and peaceful times to visit. In stating that, we hope to see you out soon!

PHENOLOGY

DECEMBER – MOON OF THE POPPING TREES

- Cedar waxwings can be seen feeding on junipers, crabapples and mountain ash trees.
- Gray squirrels eat 40 pounds of acorns over the winter.
- Look for animal tracks in the snow. They are active even though you don't see them.
- White-tailed deer bucks will start to drop their antlers.

JANUARY – MOON OF FROST IN THE TEPEE

- Despite the cold weather, porcupines are still actively feeding in northern Minnesota.
- Listen for downy woodpeckers making drumming noises on trees. This lets other birds know where their territory is and can also attract mates.
- Raccoons may come out on warm days to investigate their surroundings.
- Flying squirrels visit feeders during the night to eat sunflower seeds and corn.

Critter Column by R. Yaeger

One of my personal favorites at Zollman Zoo is the Grey Fox. This attractive animal is a member of the dog family, but is very different from your family pet and also different from its cousin the Red Fox.

Natural history

The grey fox has “salt and pepper” fur over its back and sides (hence the name) with reddish ears and legs. Males are slightly larger than females, but look the same and usually weigh between 7 and 15 lbs. With good habitat, they may live for 6 years in the wild and up to 12 years in captivity.

Grey Foxes are one of only two living members of the genus *Urocyon*, which is considered to be among the most primitive of the living canids (the other is the Island Fox, not found in Minnesota). They are relatively common in the wild, found throughout the central and southwestern United States down to Mexico and Venezuela but not in the Rocky Mountains or Great Plains. They prefer wooded and brushy areas and unlike Red foxes, don't like agricultural areas. Probably due to trapping, they disappeared from Canada in the late 17th century, but have recently been found in Ontario, Manitoba and Quebec.

If they're so common why don't I ever see one?

Grey foxes are nocturnal and crepuscular (meaning out at dawn and dusk), and go back to their dens during the day. Den sites are made in rock formations, hollow logs and trees, brush piles or burrows abandoned by other animals and are often lined with grass and leaves. Very territorial animals, they mark their boundaries with urine. Since they do not migrate, winter is a good time to see fox tracks.

We must also remember that when we say the grey fox is plentiful now, it does not mean that it will be so forever if we don't take steps to protect its habitat.

Is it true that they can climb trees?

Except for the Asian Raccoon dog, the grey fox is the only member of the dog family that can climb trees. Its strong, hooked claws allow it to scramble up trees to escape predators such as the domestic dog or the Coyote, or to reach food not eaten by Red foxes. Its short legs are very powerful and are designed to give the fox tremendous ability to balance itself while it climbs. It descends primarily by jumping from branch to branch, or by descending backwards like a house cat. It will also sit in trees to ambush prey. Not a fast runner, it can reach speeds of 28 mph. for short distances.

Grey Fox (*Urocyon cinereoargenteus*)

What is a dog fox?

Females, called vixen, reach maturity at one year and breed from February to March. The male, or ‘dog’ fox, stays with the female until the kits are born, then he is banished from the den.



From 1 to 7 kits are born after 50 to 55 days. They are dark brown, blind at birth, weigh about 3.5 oz., and open their eyes after 10 days. Kits are weaned after 10 weeks and begin to hunt with their parents by 3 months. During this time the father provides the whole family with food. The family stays together during the fall, but separates at the beginning of winter when they generally become solitary.

Do they eat most anything, like my dog?

The Gray Fox is a largely omnivorous and solitary hunter. It frequently preys upon the Eastern Cottontail, though it will readily catch voles, shrews, and birds. It supplements its diet with whatever fruits are readily available and generally eats more vegetable matter than does the Red Fox. If it has more food than it can eat, the fox will bury it and go back later, marking the spot with urine so that it can find it when it gets hungry.

Who eats them?

The grey fox has few predators besides people and their vehicles. Hawks, eagles, owls, bobcats and dogs will kill and eat the kits. Although it often helps them by eating rodents, farmers readily kill them because they will eat poorly protected chickens, and trappers still kill them for their fur.

What about the Grey Fox at the Zoo?

This sweet-natured little vixen came to us in July of 2002 when she was only 2 months old. She has become a rather fussy eater with definite preferences in food. Unlike her wild cousins, she turns up her nose at mice and deer meat and does not eat her fruits and veggies at all. The usual term for such behavior is “spoiled” but she is not a pet, although a favorite of many, and staff can only feed her with what she'll eat. Come on down and see her – she is now donning her spectacular winter coat for you.

FRIENDS OF OXBOW
PO Box 6552
ROCHESTER, MN 55903-6552

Friends of Oxbow

Yes, I'd like to be a Friend of this great Park!

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Mail to: Friends of Oxbow
PO Box 6552
Rochester, MN 55903

FRIENDS OF OXBOW

DECEMBER 2008/JANUARY 2009

Raptors Introduced to Their New Home

The Oxbow park raptors were moved from the quarantine shed where they had been kept during the construction of the new exhibit, to their completed enclosure on October 31st. They have adjusted well and seem to like their new home.

