



Oxley Nature Center

January/February, 2011

Volume 201

Musing of a Naturalist by Eddie Reese

Oxley Nature Center:

-The Interpretive Building will be open Monday through Saturday, 10:00 a.m.- 4:30 p.m. and Sunday 12 noon- 4:30 p.m.
-Gate and parking lot is open daily, 8:00 a.m.- 5:00 p.m. except most City holidays.
-Hiking trails are accessible during Mohawk Park hours, 7:00 a.m.- 9:00 p.m.

Redbud Valley Nature Preserve is closed:

all Mondays and Tuesdays.
-Open Wednesday through Sunday, 8:00 a.m.- 5:00 p.m. only.
Hiking after these hours is not allowed.
-Interpretive building is open Wednesday through Sunday 11:00 a.m.- 3:00 p.m.
-Closed most City holidays.

***Closings for Oxley Nature Center and Redbud Valley Nature Preserve:

Saturday, January 1 and Monday, January 17 are holidays.
January 1 is a holiday, but the Saturday Morning Birders may meet outside Oxley's gate at 8:00 a.m. to bird until 9:45 a.m. with a staff member!

Program information:

- 918-669-6644
- Oxley@cityoftulsa.org
- Website at "<http://www.oxleynaturecenter.org>".

** Please register for classes 48 hours in advance unless otherwise stated. A class minimum of 6 is required.

-Some classes require supplies and allow limited enrollment.
-Children under 12 must be accompanied by an adult unless otherwise stated.
-Most programs are stroller/wheelchair accessible.

Recently my wife Janet dropped me off at work one morning. As we drove down the lane to the visitor center parking lot a young buck with about six points dashed across the road in front of us. After he leapt over the split rail in one smooth poetic motion he stopped and turned his head to look at us. We had stopped the jeep to get a look at him. After a few moments of looking back over his shoulder at us he wagged his tail and walked away. His gray winter coat blended with the grays and browns of the winter woods and in a moment he vanished.

"Oh wow!" she said. "It must be great to see that every day like you do." Well it's true I do see deer every day. I don't always see a buck with antlers but yeah, pretty much every day, all year long I will see deer. She commented that since I see them a lot the "Wow" factor is gone and I probably take them for granted. I thought about that for a moment and replied that it's true that I am not thrilled every time I see a deer but I certainly don't take for granted the blessing it is to have the opportunity to see them. Janet works in an office building downtown thirteen floors up. She doesn't even take fresh air for granted. Seeing an antlered buck on the way to work was definitely "Wow" and was something to share with her coworkers.



Honestly, I felt a little guilty. Maybe I should have been a little more excited to see that buck. I've been thinking ever since, "What things in my life do I take for granted?"

I certainly don't take my life for granted. As a child I survived a life threatening illness and a horrible automobile accident. I am blessed to be here. And I don't take modern medicine for granted either. Life can be fleeting. You've got to hold on with both hands, but what about little things. I never take a rose for granted for example. I try to grow a couple of rose bushes at my house. I am always amazed how a spindly, thorny, disease prone bush can produce such complex flowers, brilliantly colored and heavenly scented.

Remember what it was like when you were a little kid? You were new to the world and everything in the world was new. Almost every moment was a discovery and every discovery was a thrill. I remember the first time my daughter saw a hummingbird. She was sitting on my lap and I was sitting on the porch step. A hummer flew up to the hanging feeder, buzzed around the porch a bit and shot away in a blaze of speed into the sky. The look of wonder and amazement on her face was for me thrilling to watch. She helped me see the hummingbird for the first time too.

So we have a whole new year ahead of us. I think it is possible that the key to a Happy New Year is to see each day through the eyes of a child and with the cheerful abandon of a dog with his head out the window of a car with ears and tongue flapping in the wind.

There is one thing I tend to take for granted and that is time. At my age now I don't think my glass is half full anymore. I need to work on that. I was thinking, one of my favorite quotes is from John Muir. He said, "In every walk in nature, one receives far more than he seeks". It might be twenty degrees outside but I'm going for a walk in the woods. I hope to meet you on the trail.



Nature Center Happenings

Volunteer Staff Appreciation Luncheon and Awards Celebration

We celebrated our Fall season with a luncheon at Oxley on December 4th to honor our volunteer staff. With barbecue provided by our Friends Association (ONCA) and delicious potluck dishes, we were able to eat, socialize and most importantly recognize volunteer staff that had reached milestones in their service to Oxley Nature Center. **The following volunteer staff received awards:**

Bob Aggas: 30 seasons, **Kim Bebee** and **Sharon Cairns:** 20 seasons,
Kristie Melton: 10 seasons, **Montez Mutzig:** 6 seasons

Outstanding Service Award: **Mike Lessard** and **Judy Wallis.** This award is presented for service above and beyond what is expected. Mike stepped up to fill in on leading weekend tours, night walks, and weekday school tours at a moment's notice. Judy led tours as a volunteer naturalist and donated over 80 hours to paint a mural in our new children's area.

Thank you to **ALL** our wonderful volunteer staff for all you do!

Green Woodworking at Oxley

Green woodworking continues in the shop. Do you like the concept of transforming a freshly cut green log into a useful everyday item with the use of hand tools? Feel a connection with your past as you use a traditional shaving horse, spoke shaves, crook knives, chisel and mallet to create a useful piece of folk art. **This will be a two part class.**

Saturday, January 15, 9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.
You will begin carving a shallow bowl or platter out of walnut or sassafras.

Saturday, February 19, 9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.
You will finish up your piece, and learn how to put a finish on it.

**Please register in advance, Ages 16 to Adult
\$20 for general public, \$15 for members**

2nd Saturday Family Adventures at Oxley

Saturday, January 8, 10:00-11:30 a.m. and 1:00-2:30 p.m.

"The Story Tracks Tell"

Animal families live at Oxley, but we don't always see them. Often they are shy or sleeping during the day. What can tracks tell us about who lives here? We will explore outside to find a track and make a plaster cast to take home.

Saturday, February 12, 10:00-11:30 a.m. and 1:00-2:30 p.m.

"Winter Habitats"

A habitat is an animal's home -- the place where it finds what it needs to survive. How do those needs change in the winter? We will talk about habitats and go outside to explore some different ones and discover who lives where.

***** Free, all ages, registration not required. The same program will be offered morning and afternoon. *****

Full Moon Walks at Oxley Nature Center

\$2 for general public, free for members, all ages. *** Please register in advance ***

Full Wolf Moon

Thursday, January 20, 7:00-8:30 p.m.

The last gray wolf was described in Oklahoma in 1939. Previous to that time they could be found statewide. Perhaps tonight we will hear the singing voices of their smaller cousins the coyote.



Full Snow Moon

Friday, February 18, 7:00-8:30 p.m.

We often have our heaviest snowfalls during this month. Snow has different characteristics, sounds, texture ... Will we have some on the ground to reflect the light of the full moon?

Programs and Special Events

January

1 “Saturday Morning Birding” **Ages: All**
Saturday **8:00-9:45 a.m.**
Free **registration not required**

What a great way to start a New Year! The Nature Center is closed for the holiday but we will meet at Oxley’s front gate. Beginners are welcome! Dress warmly and bring binoculars if you have them. In the event of threatening weather please call 669-6644 to hear if the hike will take place.



2 “Needle-Weaving, Part One”
Ages: 12 to Adult
Sunday **2:00-3:00 p.m.**
\$5 for general public **\$3 for members**

In **Part One**, we will thread our looms and begin weaving a small neck pouch. You may use our yarn, or bring your own leftover bits from other projects. Meet at Oxley.

15 “Green Woodworking, Part One”
Ages: 16 to Adult
Saturday **9:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m.**
\$20 for general public **\$15 for members**

See details on page 2. Meet at Oxley.

22 “Botany Walk” **Ages: All**
Saturday **10:30-12:00 noon**
Free **registration not required**

How do plants survive the winter cold? Let’s take a walk and see what we can find in the winter landscape. Meet at Oxley.

29 “Fireside Sketching” **Ages: All**
Saturday **1:00-2:30 p.m.**
\$2 for general public **Free for members**

Learn to draw nature and document what you see. Bring paper or a sketch book and pencils and join us at Oxley. All skill levels are welcome.

February

5 “Saturday Morning Birding” **Ages: All**
Saturday **8:00-9:45 a.m.**
Free **registration not required**

Join us for fireside birding! We will fill the feeders, build a roaring fire, and provide hot drinks. Meet at Oxley and bring binoculars if you have them.

6 “Nature Art Pillow Cases”
Ages: 16 to adult
Sunday **1:00-3:30 p.m.**
\$12 for general public **\$10 for members**

Design and create your own pair of pillow cases using natural dyes and/or nature printing methods. These will make unique Valentine gifts for your loved ones. Pillow cases are provided. Meet at Oxley.

19 “Needle-Weaving, Part Two”
Ages: 12 to Adult
Saturday **2:00-3:00 p.m.**
Attendance in part one is required

By now, your woven neck pouch should be ready to take off the loom and finish. You may use our string for the neck cord, or bring your own. Meet at Oxley.

19 “Green Woodworking, Part Two”
Ages: 16 to Adult
Saturday **9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.**

See details on page 2. Meet at Oxley.

26 “Botany Walk” **Ages: All**
Saturday **10:30-12:00 noon**
Free **registration not required**

What will we find this time of year? Are the buds starting to swell? Come to Oxley and see what is happening in the plant world on a cold February day.

****Please register 48 hours in advance of classes unless stated otherwise. A minimum of 6 registrants is required.**

2011 Winter Bird Feeder Survey

Become a citizen scientist and participate in the ODWC (Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation) Winter Bird Survey. Join us at Redbud Valley Nature Preserve or Oxley Nature Center on Saturday, January 8 and/or Sunday, January 9 to count birds at our feeders.

We will be counting birds 4 times each day, recording the greatest number of species feeding together at one time. We will 'count' at 9 a.m., 11 a.m., 1 p.m. and 3 p.m. Survey results will be submitted online to 'The Wildlife Diversity Program' with ODWC.

If you prefer to participate in this survey at home, visit www.okwinterbirds.com for information you will need to complete the survey. Learn to identify up to 52 species that appear at bird feeders in Oklahoma in the winter.

State biologists have 21 years of data showing the trends of birds visiting winter feeders. Bird populations vary from year to year due to a variety of factors. Help ODWC track population fluctuations.

Volunteer Naturalist Training Offered

Become a Volunteer Naturalist and share your love of nature with others! If you enjoy being outdoors experiencing nature with others, join us for one of our two Volunteer Naturalist training programs.

Our **weekday session** runs March 8 - April 1, two days a week from 9:00 a.m.-12 noon. If **evening and weekend** training is more convenient for you, you may attend training three nights from 6:30-8:30 p.m. and three weekend days from 1-3:30 p.m. Please call for more details about the training schedules.

Training is fun. You will become familiar with our trail system as you explore prairie, forest and wetland areas. Emphasis during training is learning leadership skills and interpretation methods.

Following training, you will join other naturalists each guiding a small group of visitors on weekday, evening or weekend tours. If you are 18 or older, call us for more information. Enthusiasm is a plus, and no previous experience necessary.

Please Don't Eat the Berries!

This native parasitic plant is found on trees, usually hardwoods. It produces fruits, white berries, from November through January, that often persist through the winter. The berries, and possibly the succulent-like, evergreen foliage, contain toxic nitrogenous compounds (polypeptides and amines) that may cause gastric distress, nausea, slow pulse, labored breathing, shock and in extreme cases, death.

That said, mistletoe, *Phoradendron serotinum*, was adopted by the Oklahoma Territorial Legislature as its official floral emblem on February 11, 1893, 14 years before Oklahoma even became a state. It was made official in 1910, after our entry into statehood in 1907.

Some say mistletoe was used to decorate settler's graves in winter and symbolized the perseverance of early settlers. The green and white are the official colors of Oklahoma today.

Mistletoe has a long history as a mystical and sacred plant of European folklore. Recent research indicates it may have medicinal healing properties for cancer or hypertension.

Perhaps most common, this time of year, is the tradition of kissing beneath a sprig of mistletoe (traced to ancient Greek rituals). So have a kiss, but please don't eat the berries!

