

# THE CARAVAN

## NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF LOREN EISELEY

Vol. 5, No. 2

SUMMER 1991



**Loren Corey Eiseley**  
September 3, 1907 - July 9, 1977

*"We have joined the caravan, you might say, at a certain point; we will travel as far as we can, but we cannot in one lifetime see all that we would like to see or learn all that we hunger to know."*

*-- The Immense Journey*

### BOARD MEMBERS

Save May 18, 11:30 to 1:00 p.m.  
Meeting in Fourth Floor Board Room,  
Bennett Martin Library, 14th & N St.  
Lincoln, Nebraska

### PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear Friends of Loren Eiseley,

This letter is to inform you that the May 4th "Eiseley Walk" is not being scheduled this year due to a conflict that day with the Willa Cather program.

There will be a Board Meeting (present Board members) on May 18th (11:30 to 1:00 p.m.--brown bag lunch) to finalize officer appointments and discuss plans for 1991-92. Persons having names of members who would like to serve on the Board, please send them to me.

This meeting will be held in the Board Room, Bennett Martin Public Library, Lincoln. The meeting will follow the Nebraska Literature Festival meeting at the Library.

Sincerely,

Jane Stillwell Smith, Acting President  
105 1/2 North 54th St.  
Omaha, NE 68132  
(402) 558-5911

**FROM THE MAILBOX**

"I felt as though I had a link with Loren Eiseley as long as the sidewalk that led up to his boyhood cottage in Aurora, Nebraska was still there. It stood on a vacant lot on busy Highway 34. But now it is gone. The lot has sprouted a Runza Hut and the concrete that goes with it.

It seems demeaning, somehow, Eiseley associated with the Runza Hut. But, of course, it isn't and he isn't. I'm probably the only person in town who knows or cares.

His spirit though is very persuasive. If I spot an old dog lurking around and I look into its eyes or hear the faint honking of a flock flying over, I'll know."

Emmy Lou Whitney  
Aurora, Nebraska



**EISELEY QUOTE OF THE SEASON**

"Without the gift of flowers and the infinite diversity of their fruits, man and bird, if they continued to exist at all would be today unrecognizable. Archeopteryx, the lizard bird, might still be snapping at beetles on a sequoia limb; man might still be a nocturnal insectivore gnawing a roach in the dark. The weight of a petal has changed the face of the world and made it ours."

-- How Flowers Changed the World  
The Immense Journey



**EISELEY, AN EIGHTH GRADE PLAGIARIST?**

When an eighth grade student at Prescott School in Lincoln, Eiseley wrote an essay entitled "Nature Writing" as follows:

"I have selected Nature Writing as my vocation because at this time in my life it appeals to me more than any other subject. I feel it is my duty to do what I can to make people realize that the wild creature has just as much right to life as you or I. They must learn that the wild offers a more thrilling sport than killing--that of letting live. Killing for the excitement of killing is murder. As in human life, there are tragedy, humor and pathos; in the life of the wild there are facts of tremendous interest, real lives and real happenings, to be written about, and there is little necessity for drawing on the imagination."

Sid Comings, Eiseley teacher and free lance writer from Oberlin, Ohio sends the following:

"In his autobiography, All the Strange Hours, Loren Eiseley tells his readers of the vow he made at an early age to be a reader. At five or six he completed Robinson Crusoe on his own and goes on to say that "surely the first step in writing is the vow to read . . ."

Gale Christianson's Eiseley biography, Fox at the Wood's Edge informs us that one of the books Eiseley read as a youngster was James Oliver Curwood's Baree, Son of Kazan. I believe that Eiseley also perused, if not read, another Curwood book, namely the Grizzley King. I say that because of the more than coincidental similarity between an essay entitled "Nature Writing" written by Eiseley as an eight grader in 1921 and the Curwood preface to Grizzley King, written in 1916.

Eiseley's essay can be found on page 14 of The Lost Notebooks of Loren Eiseley edited by Kenneth Heuer. Eiseley's eighth grade essay incorporates the Curwood creed that "the greatest thrill of the hunt is not in killing, but in letting live." The following sentence is straight from Curwood's Grizzley King preface:

"As in human life, there are tragedy, humor and pathos; in the life of the wild, there are facts of tremendous interest, real lives, and real happenings, to be written about, and there is little necessity for drawing on the imagination."

Curwood's animal books, Kazan (1914); The Grizzley King (1961); and Baree (1917) are full of animal tragedy, humor and pathos.

How well did the mature Eiseley write, as only Eiseley could, concerning animal humor (his difficulty with the pack rats in All the Strange Hours), and animal pathos (the story of the two hawks in The Judgment of the Birds). Eiseley's views of hunting are similar to Curwood's late-in-life philosophy against hunting. Again in All the Strange Hours, Eiseley writes "in past years when hunting with others I have failed to call attention to a fox."

Curwood could never have written with the elegance of Eiseley. What Curwood could do was to tell tall stories like Aree and The Grizzley King that inspired Eiseley to become a nature writer in his own right.

-- Sid Comings



### THE NEBRASKA LITERATURE FESTIVAL

Plans for the Nebraska Literature Festival to be held in Omaha September 27-29, proceed apace. Funding has been received for a Literary Map of Nebraska featuring the six writers---Aldrich, Cather, Eiseley, Morris, Neihardt, and Sandoz, along with contemporary Nebraska authors.

In addition, a Resource Guide is being prepared to go to English Departments and Libraries in all schools and colleges in Nebraska. This will include photography, biographies, listing of publications, information about sources of material and guides to places

significant in the life and work of the writers.

Present plans for participation of the Friends of Loren Eiseley include a booth, a panel and a workshop. Eloise Herrick, Board member from Lincoln, has volunteered to take charge of the booth. We will need help, so let us know if you are interested.

The next edition of The Caravan will appear in late summer with information about our regular September Annual Meeting as well as about the Festival.



### PLEASE NOTE .....

We welcome comments, criticisms, material for inclusion in the Caravan, new members. If you have not yet paid your dues, send them along. \$5.00 will keep you on the mailing list for a year and include a subscription to the Newsletter.

You can become a Contributing Member for \$25.00; a Supporting Member for \$50.00; and a Patron for \$100.00. Send checks to: Friends of Loren Eiseley, P.O. Box 80934, Lincoln, NE 68501-0934.

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