

# THE CARAVAN

NEWSLETTER OF THE FRIENDS OF LOREN EISELEY

Vol. 6, No. 1

Autumn 1992



**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*

## PRESIDENT'S LETTER

Dear Members:

One can see by the activities reported in this newsletter that things grow! We are trying very hard to keep the Eiseley name and accomplishments before the public as our mission statement charges us to do. Some of us are presenting our views on the message Eiseley wanted us to understand at the Second Literature Festival at the University of Nebraska-Kearney, September 25th and 26th. The Eiseley panel will be on Saturday the 26th.

Although the spirit is willing, often time is not generous with its favor for "extracurricular" activities. We feel the need for more active communication (interpersonal) between the members and the Board and have committed ourselves to an annual meeting to that end. Mike Voorhies, 1992 Eiseley medal winner, will be the speaker along with the discussion of future plans for our group.

There is an old saying "Not to decide is to decide." Don't let that happen; come to the annual meeting and dinner.

Support the Friends!

Sincerely,  
Jane Stillwell Smith, President

## LOREN EISELEY'S RELIGIOUS PILGRIMAGE

In 1990 Dr. Harvey Potthoff, then Mattingly Distinguished Professor of Religion at Nebraska Wesleyan University in Lincoln, lectured at the Heritage Room on Loren Eiseley's Religious Pilgrimage. With Dr. Potthoff's permission we are printing this paper for members of the Friends and for distribution to the public at the Nebraska Literature Festival in Kearney. Watch for it in the mail.

## THE EISELEY AWARD

Michael Voorhies, Ph.D., Curator of Vertebrate Paleontology at the University of Nebraska State Museum, was awarded the Eiseley Medal by Clarkson College, Omaha, Nebraska on March 20, 1992.

The Eiseley medal is a gold and silver replica of the oriental Yin-Yang symbol of the "complete universe." It is awarded annually to the person chosen by the Humanities Emphasis Workgroup who exemplifies the ability to traverse the invisible bridge between the humanities and the sciences much as Eiseley did. Dr. Voorhies was elected because of his contributions to both anthropology and history.

## DOC ELLIOTT AWARD PRESENTED TO DR. SCHULTZ

Dr. C. Bertrand Schultz, Executive Director of the Nebraska Academy of Science, Director Emeritus of the Nebraska State Museum, and Charter Member of the Friends of Loren Eiseley was presented with the Doc Elliott Award at the spring Commencement for the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in recognition of his long and distinguished service to the University and the state.

Congratulations, Bert! The recognition is well deserved.

## IN MEMORIAM

Memorial services were held earlier this year for Marian Schultz, civic leader, a founder and Board Member of the Friends of Loren Eiseley. Born in Omaha and graduated from Omaha North High School and the University of Nebraska, Marian served as a volunteer for twelve years for the University of Nebraska State Museum during the period when Loren Eiseley was active there.

She and her husband, Bertrand Schultz, were long time personal friends of the Eiseleys and their recollections have enriched our knowledge

of him and his work. She was often hostess for our Friends meetings in their beautiful Lincoln home and collaborated in countless ways in the activities of the organization. She is greatly missed!

\*\*\*\*\*

Poet Jacklon Schmidt, the new Secretary of the Friends, has submitted the following poem which has been accepted for publication by Enright House of County Kerry, Ireland, in their book of young poets. It would be interesting how widely Eiseley is known and read in Ireland.

## IN HOMAGE TO LOREN EISELEY

Walking through  
the starry night.  
After spending hours  
with Loren and his Pyramid.  
I am congruous  
with the world.

The dry rustle  
of leaves on a pin oak  
is the same rustle  
some far distant ancestor  
heard with her ear --  
the same ear as mine.

The stars held the same mystery  
for her as for me.  
The wind promising snow  
on my cheek  
whispered its promise to her.

This continuum  
sweeps me away.  
The buildings disappear.  
The sidewalk vanishes.  
and I am.

with the oak.  
with the sky.  
the soil.  
the wind.

through all time.

We are.

# LOREN EISELEY

NEBRASKA AUTHOR, NATURALIST, FOSSIL HUNTER

*"Eiseley is every writer's writer and every human's human...  
One of us, yet most uncommon." -- Ray Bradbury*



## BOOK DISCUSSIONS - OMAHA

Darrel Berg (University Religious Center) and  
Bing Chen (Solar Energy/UNL Engineering at Omaha) discuss:

THE IMMENSE JOURNEY

Over one million copies in print.  
Collection of essays; some featuring Nebraska locales.

ALL THE STRANGE HOURS:  
An Excavation of a Life

Autobiographical essays.

THE UNEXPECTED UNIVERSE

Contains two famous essays --  
**The Star Thrower** and **The Innocent Fox**

Tuesdays at Noon

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA - OMAHA  
**Brown Bag Lunch**, Gallery Room, 3rd Floor, Milo  
Bail Student Center. (Public parking at Religious  
Center, Dodge & Happy Hollow with shuttle service  
at 11:45 a.m.)

Sept. 15	All The Strange Hours
Oct. 6	The Immense Journey
Nov. 3	The Unexpected Universe

Friday Evenings at Seven

W. CLARKE SWANSON PUBLIC LIBRARY  
9101 West Dodge Street, Omaha

Oct. 9	The Immense Journey
Nov. 13	All The Strange Hours
Dec. 11	The Unexpected Universe

December 11th - Dessert Reception for Nebraska  
Center for the Book Members and Guests at  
University of Nebraska at Omaha. 8:30 p.m.

# NEBRASKA LITERATURE FESTIVAL - KEARNEY

**Saturday  
September 26**

**PANEL DISCUSSION 3:00 p.m.**

**Loren Eiseley:  
His Message for Our Time**

**Panel Members:** Nebraska State Poet William Kloefkorn (Nebraska Wesleyan University); Darrel Berg (UNO); Jane Stilwell-Smith (Clarkson College). **Moderator:** Kira Gale.

The festival features programs, performances, and a bookfair celebrating Nebraska's literary heritage and contemporary authors. 8 a.m. to 8 p.m., University of Nebraska - Kearney Student Union. Admission \$3.00. For more information call: (308) 234-8294.

## LOREN EISELEY DAY - LINCOLN

**Sunday  
October 25**

**GUIDED TOUR 2:30 p.m.**

Visit places in Lincoln associated with Eiseley's childhood memories, family, homes and schools. Tour begins at the Heritage Room, 3rd floor, Bennett Martin Public Library, 136 South 14th Street, Lincoln.

**ELEPHANT HALL 5:00 p.m.**

University of Nebraska State Museum, 14th & "U"

**Social Hour/Annual Members Meeting**

5:00 - 6:00 p.m.

**Dinner (Reservations \$12.50 @)**

6:00 - 6:45 p.m.

**Program: Michael Voorhies**

6:45 - 7:30 p.m.

"Hunting Fossils in the Wild Cat Hills:  
Loren Eiseley's Night Country."

Dr. Voorhies is the 1992 recipient of the Loren Eiseley Medal Award of Clarkson College.

He is Curator of Vertebrate Paleontology, University of Nebraska State Museum, and Supervisor of Excavations at Ashfall State Park.

**Please make dinner reservations (\$12.50 @) by sending checks to Friends of Loren Eiseley, P.O. Box 80934, Lincoln, NE 68501-0934**

**Deadline for reservations: October 22nd.**

For more information call: (402) 435-5454 in Lincoln or (402) 558-6737 in Omaha.

*The general public is cordially invited to attend all events.*

Portrait drawing by David Routon © 1991

## THE LOREN EISELEY MEMORIAL SCHOLARSHIP ESSAY

It is our custom, as space permits, to print the winning essays in the Loren Eiseley Memorial Scholarship Contest. Here is one of the winners awarded on September 28, 1991

### Waiting at the Woods' Edge

By Ronald Chen, 8564 Dark Hawk Circle, Columbia, Maryland 21043, formerly Hastings High School.

"The city was dying, that was plain, but the cause was undiscernible...It was dying slowly, in the length of centuries, and all about it the little eyes under the leaves were closing in. It was then that I understood, finally, and no longer felt particularly glad or sorry. The city was forfeit to those little shining brains at the woods' edge. I knew how long they had waited. And we, too, had been at the woods' edge in our time. We could afford to go now. Our vast intellectual corridor might stretch empty for a million years. It did not matter. My squirrel would attend to it. And if not he, then wood rats. They were all there waiting under the leaves . . ."

--- Loren Eiseley, "The Fire Apes"

He who has danced with the frogs, who has looked inverted to see the triumph of the pigeons, he who has played and rolled with the innocent fox, who has talked with the muskrat in the Garden of Eden and seen the spider worshipping the minor sun, he who has hurled a star to its home in the oceans, who has seen and heard the miracle of life pronounced through the songs of the birds, he is that man who would possess that rare perspective of humanity, "that mood of childhood innocence in which [man] talked successfully to all things living but had no power and no urge to harm." He is that man who could avert the imminent extinction of a species doomed to an unkind death at its own hands or at the hands of its environment. But it is not to be, for mankind heeds not the admonitions of those who would save him. True, man has eluded death at the hands of specialization; but he has done so only to face an imminent end of his own doing, and end at his own hands.

Mankind is, and always will be, the child of that which acted as his mother---the environment. As a mother teaches and shapes her child, so too did the environment shape mankind. Blinded by her darkness, we learned to make light; covered by her showers, we learned to hide and to build shelter; confronted with her harshness, we learned to kill. We learned to survive, and we emerged as men triumphant, winners in the game of natural selection. Lucky, we were, for undoubtedly we skittered on the edge of death for more than a few fleeting moments when the first rock was thrown or the first fire was lit.

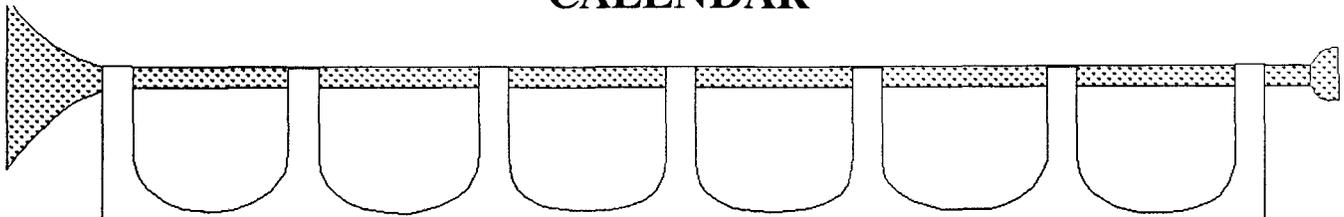
Though mankind apparently has done so, the child will never emerge from this mother's shadow. Though man seems to have broken the bonds of the environment is sure and inevitable. Man, it seems, has progressed beyond the inflexible specialization that all too often has led to extinction; he has achieved a level unequaled, a specialization "devoted to the sole purpose of escaping specialization." Man has achieved an unprecedented and awesome ability to adapt, a specialization seemingly ideal to escape his subservience to the environment through the centuries. And, yes, he has escaped. His adaptability allows him to mold the environment to his liking.

Mankind is destroying his environment, and not without price. Only so long can it withstand our crushing hand. If it is true that specialization of our adaptive abilities will allow us to understand and "sudden emergence of spectacular enemies or other environmental circumstances which overwhelm or ambush a living for so suddenly..."; if it is true that we will not be broken by the environment, then the environment will surely be broken by us. Mankind's dance on this planet will come to an end regardless, for man's dependence upon his environment is too great, his ability to adapt neither extends indefinitely nor includes a provision enabling man to flourish after his environment has perished.

The relationship of man to his environment is that of the monetary victory of the moon in an eclipse to the ultimate triumph of the sun through the ages. Man--or any subservient species--may triumph, as he currently is, for a time. But the "vast intellectual corridor" to which Loren Eiseley referred in "The Fire Apes" will inevitably come to an end. The end will come when the environment no longer tolerates its misuse and abuse at the hands of man; the end will come when man's triumph is ended, when the dull moon gives way to the radiance of the sun; the end will come when man's specialization dooms himself, when the air and the water and the minerals grow weary, when judgment is cast upon the men who rape the land. When the end comes, I too am just primitive enough to bow to the sun, primitive enough, as Eiseley wrote, "to hope that somehow, somewhere, a cardinal may still be whistling on a green bush when the last man goes blind before his man-made sun."

One corridor may span a billion more years or four more days. But when mankind must abdicate his authority once more, the sadness of the day will be overcome so long as he does not drag along with him the "violets and the tree frog"; so long as he recognized their sovereignty and honors their claim to that for which they have waited, quietly, patiently, at the woods' edge. Because I, too, am just as primitive to hope that man's last breath will not be spent pulling the trees and the birds and the waters along with him, but spent to utter a last grievance, an apology, that we held reign for so long, reminding them that "we, too, had been at the woods' edge in our time," and thanking them, for waiting.

# CALENDAR



**September 15, October 6, November 3** - Brown Bag Book Discussions, Milo Bail Student Center, University of Nebraska, Omaha

**October 9, November 13, December 11** - Book discussions, Swanson Public Library, Omaha. These discussion groups will consider All The Strange Hours, Immense Journey, and Unexpected Universe.

**September 26** - Eiseley Panel, Loren Eiseley: His Message for Our Time, Nebraska Literature Festival, University of Nebraska-Kearney

**October 16** - Board Meeting, 3 p.m., UNO Religious Center

**October 25** - Loren Eiseley Day. Guided tour, 2:30 p.m. from Heritage Room, Bennett Martin Public Library, Lincoln. Meeting and dinner Elephant Hall, Morrill Hall, University of Nebraska State Museum, University of Nebraska-Lincoln. (See enclosed handout for details of events on this calendar. Hope you can make some or all of them.)

## MEMBERSHIP

We regret the absence of the Spring 1992 Caravan due to the Editor's illness and hope that is in the past. The Board has not been idle, however, as witnessed by the enclosed handout of activities for Autumn. In addition, we are making a long overdue survey of our membership list in an effort to determine who is active -- i.e., who supports the work of the organization by paying dues. Active members receive newsletters, publications, and notification of meetings and special events.

Will you take the time to check the status of your dues --- we would like to keep you on our active list. Our fiscal year runs from January 1 to January 1 and dues paid after September 1 are considered to cover all of the following year --- in this instance 1993. Please let us know about change of address.

Individual membership	\$10.00	Send checks to:	Friends of Loren Eiseley
Contributing members	\$25.00		P.O. Box 80934
Supporting members	\$50.00		Lincoln, NE 68501-0934
Patrons	\$100.00		

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