

The Caravan

Newsletter of the Loren Eiseley Society

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The Loren Eiseley Society at the 2015 NAG Conference in Omaha, Nebraska

President's Letter

By Dr. Bing Chen

The Loren Eiseley Society has been very busy this past year with promising new projects involving educational outreach. As you read this issue of *The Caravan*, think about becoming a member of the society and joining us in our mission to share Eiseley's wisdom with old and new friends. Visit our website at www.eiseley.org for more information or follow us on Facebook.

The Loren Eiseley Society

has continued to fulfill its goal of exposing Loren Eiseley to a new generation of students in a number of ways: developing its educational outreach with a *Teachers' Guide* as a companion to *The Loren Eiseley Reader*, public talks on "Walking in the Footsteps of Loren Eiseley" with board member Ray Boice, and the Sunflower Forest (a classroom growing project using milk cartons). We have partnered with Lauritzen Gardens (Omaha's botanical gardens) on their Sunflower

Forest pilot project to create conditions for children to experience what Eiseley did as a child in Lincoln's creek beds. Members of the society presented the keynote address at the annual Nebraska Association for the Gifted conference in April, held at the Embassy Suites in downtown Omaha. A video greeting by Ray Bradbury was shown to over three hundred teachers, exhorting them to teach Eiseley in the classrooms. A special

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Tomoka Murakami and Narumi Hirose brought Japanese editions of Eiseley's books to show the board members.

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Teachers' Guide Preview was given to teachers participating in the NAG breakout sessions.

Lauritzen Gardens has continued with its Sunflower Forest initiative to provide Eiseleyesque experiences for young children in a multiacre

sunflower forest and has *The Loren Eiseley Reader* for sale in their gift shop. We are looking at further collaborations with Lauritzen Gardens to develop children's programs, such as starting a sunflower forest from seed. Based on Eiseley's "falling into an icy pond" ex-

perience, a muck-and-mire aquarium project that allows the children to see what emerging animal and plant life come from pond mud is also being considered.

In the fall of 2014, to mark Loren Eiseley's birthday, LES board Vice President Tom Lynch organized a poetry reading of Eiseley's works at Meadowlark Coffee in Lincoln near his birthplace off South Street. The event drew two college students—Tomoka Murakami and her friend Narumi Hirose—who flew in from Osaka Prefecture University to attend the reading, both great fans of Eiseley and who are studying him as part of an extracurricular activity. They showed us their Japanese translated copies of *The Night Country*. Two other students attended. Lydia Cheng, a Chinese student from the University of Toulouse, is writing her dissertation on Eiseley, and Yeojin Kim, a Korean graduate student at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, is studying ecocriticism, a field that combines well with Eiseley.

This fall another successful poetry and favorite quotes reading was held on September 15 at Meadowlark Coffee.

The video production of the
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poem “Innocent Assassins,” narrated by Garry Alkire of Western Nebraska Community College, is now available for viewing by visitors on our website. Experiences gained while working on fossil-hunting teams in the Wildcat Hills near Scottsbluff, Nebraska, are the source of many of Loren Eiseley’s essays, and this most famous poem. Visitors traveling across western Nebraska would enjoy seeing the Eiseley “Innocent Assassins” exhibit housed at the Wildcat Hills Nature Center just south of Gering on Highway 61, a scenic detour from Interstate

80 and well worth the time. The website is <http://www.visitscottsbluff.com/recreation/wildcat-hills-state-recreation-area-and-nature-center>.

Our vice president, Tom Lynch, is also spearheading a GIS project, in partnership with the University of Nebraska-Lincoln’s geography department, to document many of Eiseley’s haunts—his home, William Buchanan Price’s place (Uncle “Buck”), the pond—on Google Earth. The GPS coordinates will be accompanied by photographs, and our goal is to bring into focus, especially for non-Nebraskans, the early pathways this solitary genius took on his way to becoming a deep thinker on nature and humankind.

At the December 12 board meeting in the Heritage Room at Bennett Martin library in Lincoln, Morrie Tuttle, the board’s treasurer, longtime member, and unofficial historian of the society, was videoed discussing the society’s early days (when it was known as Friends of Loren Eiseley, or FOLE) and sharing anecdotal stories about Loren Eiseley and Bert Schultz. Bert, a fellow student with Eiseley in geology and anthropology and later became field director of

the Nebraska State Museum, was a close friend of Eiseley and the last LES board member with a direct connection to him. The resulting video is in the process of being edited and will be available on YouTube in 2016. Visit the LES website to see when the video is ready.

LES is also working on a multidisciplinary course on Eiseley to be offered through the University of Nebraska at Omaha in the fall of 2016. This course will combine geology, biology, English, and engineering and use the talents of UNO and UNL educators. Once this course is established, the society intends to create a MOOC (Massive Open Online Course) through the University of Nebraska, sharing with a global audience the richness and depth of Eiseley’s written words and his message that we are all in a great caravan on an immense journey.

* * *

If you enjoy the prose of Loren Eiseley and believe in sharing his wisdom with a new generation of young people committed to being “star throwers,” consider joining our Caravan and making a contribution. Help us reach out to this new generation.

The Caravan is a biannual publication of the Loren Eiseley Society.

Loren Eiseley Society
PO Box 80934
Lincoln, NE 68501-0934
pwimberly@eiseley.org
www.eiseley.org

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Loren Eiseley Society

The Friends of Loren Eiseley: The Founders' Story

This article originally appeared in the summer 1987 issue, volume one, issue one, of The Caravan.

By Ruth Thone

The Friends of Loren Eiseley came into being on May 21, 1981, at a meeting in the alfalfa-green basement of the governor's mansion.

Called by Ruth Thone, wife of the governor at that time, Charles Thone, the Friends' first meeting had been preceded by much thought and discussion about collecting Eiseley friends and scholars into a group. These founders included Lincoln *Journal* editor Dick Herman and long-time Eiseley friends and colleagues Bert and Marian Schultz.

Coincident with this first meeting were the thoughtful and detailed plans by the staff at the Bennett Martin Public Library to host a celebration of Eiseley's work. So, the first annual Friends of Loren Eiseley fall meeting was also held in 1981.

Curator Pam Gossin and Library Director Carol Connor did all the background and logistical work, bringing in

the Lincoln Junior League to research and produce a slide show about Eiseley's Lincoln years.

John Carter, Joann Kimball, Charles Mignon, Eloise Herrick, and Robert Knoll, all of Lincoln, were active in the early days of the Friends. The first meeting, as well as subsequent ones, consisted of snaring memories of Eiseley, and discussing his writings and ideas that attracted people to Eiseley's work.

A pattern established itself of having our annual meeting in the fall, as close to Eiseley's September 3 birthdate as possible, and including dinner and a speaker in the evening.

The Friends also have a spring meeting that is less formal, a potluck luncheon at Marian and Bertrand Schultz's Hilltop Road home north of Lincoln, and including a program of discussion and readings from Eiseley's writings.

A mailing list grew, and dues were collected, and the Friends of Loren Eiseley became a reality. Letters were sent out three or four times a year to update the Friends about plans, and the spring and fall meetings

became a tradition. A host of activities have occurred over the years: contacting Eiseley scholars, reprinting various special articles, and encouraging the interest in and study of Eiseley's writings wherever possible, through publicity, speeches, and personal contacts.

The Heritage Room at Bennett Martin Library has served as the repository of Eiseley writings, photographs, and videotapes (including the *Animal Secrets* films narrated by Eiseley and produced and donated to the Friends by Nebraska native Ed Stanley).

This year we are working on some of our most ambitious projects (see other articles in this newsletter), to continue to share information about Eiseley and his ideas with all.

The president in 1987 was Sherrill Daniels. The editorial board consisted of Kathryn Bellman, Naomi Brill, and Dick Herman. By 2009, the society had completed its transition from Friends of Loren Eiseley to a new name, The Loren Eiseley Society.

Join the Caravan Today!

We very much appreciate your interest in the Loren Eiseley Society. As a nonprofit organization, the society relies on your charitable contributions to sponsor our educational and outreach activities. To join, or to renew your membership, mail this form with your dues or visit <http://www.eiseley.org/Members/join.php>. All new members will receive a copy of *The Loren Eiseley Reader*, a hardcover anthology of Eiseley's most popular essays. We thank you for your support at whatever level you can give.

THE LOREN EISELEY SOCIETY

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/ZIP _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Membership dues enclosed:

Benefactor \$1,000

Patron \$500

Sponsor \$250

Friend \$100

Individual/Family \$25

Student \$10

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Mail to PO Box 80934, Lincoln, NE 68501-0934