
EDITOR'S MESSAGE

It is with a tinge of sadness I start my last editorial and try to thank the many people who have contributed to my sojourn as editor. These include the Board and staff at Nature Saskatchewan, the Associate Editors, contributors and the many, many people who have helped in ways large and small. I will particularly miss the interchange I had with the contributors.

I will also miss the prairie. While I plan at least three trips for this year, it is not the same as living in the west. I remember the cascade of bluebirds we saw through an early spring snowfall. I took several wonderful trips with the irrepressible Frank Roy, I sat on the porch with Sig and Ruby Jordheim listening to his peacocks. I worked on conservation issues with Garth Nelson, benefiting from his eloquence and his strength of purpose. Stephanie and I both ducked instinctively (and unnecessarily – we were inside a car) when a mad rush of cranes passed just overhead, flushed by a Golden Eagle. I watched as a group of New Zealanders howled like wolves in the piercing frost of Prince Albert National Park, and wondered what the home faculty would think of a law professor wailing during the wee hours. I took part in a wonderful NS trip to Churchill, where it patted a mother Polar Bear's rear (after it was sedated!). I showed Margaret Atwood her life Whooping Cranes; nine birds that began to dance and show off as soon as we arrived. I have peered through the heat shimmer at thousands of Hudsonian Godwits at Luck Lake. One dawn, at Last Mountain lake I stood under thousands of geese and cranes as they dispersed into the rising sun. With a mixture of joy and sadness I watched Burrowing Owls feed their young. Two coyotes howled from to each other from opposite sides of the Gardiner Dam. Can I forget those awful drives we took through heaps of the sticky mud? The farmer who saw two frozen CBC counters and immediately invited us in for hot coffee. The trip, especially arranged for me, that I took to see mountain wildflowers. The vast blue sky with a Swainson's Hawk spiraling ever upward. The varied forms and subtle colours of the prairie landscapes I have enjoyed. A mother Black Bear with one cinnamon and one black cube who ripped apart a rotten log for grubs. These are some of the memories of people, places and wildlife that have made the prairies special to me. I will always remember that "It is better to have lived in the prairies for a few years than never to have lived there at all."

I want to end by saying what a wonderful help Stephanie has been in this process. She has typed, proofed, commented, edited and organized. To quote Stuart Houston she has been "a gem."

Sincerely,
Roy D. John