With Grandmother Lois Nestel, Wings were Standard Issue

By Sandy Nestel

I grew up loving my life in the Northwoods under the tutelage of my grandmother, Lois Nestel. As far as I was concerned, wings were standard issue. On the many walks and journeys we shared, wandering the bogs and meadows as a student and teacher, her ever-present patience and willingness to impart knowledge and love of nature were steadfast. I grew, my wings grew. I felt the joy of a red-wing blackbird’s song, the beauty of a tiny bit of trailing arbutus showing through the undergrowth, and the satisfaction of remembering the names of the flora and fauna she’d taught me on other walks.

On occasion, when I failed to recall a name or a fact, Lois never chided or scolded me. The answer was brought to light in a manner that made it easier for me to recall it next time. For all the knowledge that was learned or lost, the best part of a summer day was a walk in the forest with the most beautiful, wise, and wonderful woman I have ever known—my grandmother, Lois Nestel.

The child I was revealed in the depth and breadth of knowledge that seemed to seep from her person. What magic encyclopedia had she ingested as a young girl? The adult I have become appreciates her tenacity, her life-long pursuit of the truth, and her search for knowledge of the world around us.

Lois’s Wayside Wanderings newspaper articles were indicative of the thought process and intuitive nature that she lived each day. I believe her notoriety made her uncomfortable, but her love for nature drove her to try and fill a void. She saw a need for people to understand and apply the lessons being taught around us daily and to be reminded of what we might discover if we would be so kind as to stop and listen and really look.

The best times were when the forest was speaking and we were lucky enough to be there to hear it. The echoes follow me, and I whisper them to my children and to the spirit of my grandmother.

What glory it would be to have the chance to once again walk hand-in-hand with my grandmother. Now that I am grown, I can fully appreciate the spectrum of knowledge that I had the opportunity to glean as a youngster, but did not have the capacity or attention to commit to memory. She is sorely missed.

— Sandy Nestel is the granddaughter of Lois Nestel, the Museum’s first Naturalist and Director

Note from the Director

By Deb Nelson, Museum Director

I look forward to summer because of the excitement—hundreds of programs, thousands of Museum visitors, and many smiles! Our staff is very hardworking and I am very proud of them. Our Wayside Wanderings Natural Play Area is expanding with new components, several of our mammal and bird mounts are now part of our “Traveling Collections” program, and our raptors are educating groups throughout Northern Wisconsin.

We hope you will have time to visit us this fall to experience our exhibit, a program or to just say hi! Thank you for all you do for the Museum. YOU are so important to us! ❤️
Fundraiser for Exhibit Development

Last fall we hosted a new event in support of exhibit development. We hosted a trivia night held at the Cable Community Centre. Tables played against each other in light competition to win a traveling trophy and the honor of victory! The trivia format was so fun and we had so many requests to do it again—that we plan on it! So don’t miss out on this year’s event Thursday, October 5, at Lakewoods Resort. Tables of eight will compete—so sign up your own team or we will match you with some smart folks!

Help us raise funds to support next year’s exhibit which will be all about bees! 🐝

Our 2018 Exhibit Will BEE Wonderful!

Native bees are amazing creatures who play an invaluable role in our ecosystems and food systems and who need our help. The Museum has been gardening for pollinators for many years, and we currently maintain a rain garden filled with native plants, a native plant pollinator garden, and a songbird garden. In addition, we partner with the Cable Community Farm by designating one of our interns as a “Pollinator Intern,” who helps maintain and teach about the native pollinator gardens and biodiversity project at the Cable Community Farm.

In 2018, we’ll expand on those projects and focus our new exhibit on native bees, their adaptations, and the ways that our fates intertwine. We are currently applying for grant money to help us pay for three exciting components of the project. We’ll be hiring Heather Holm (author of two award-winning books about native bees and other pollinators of native plants) to consult on the text and design of the exhibit to ensure the highest accuracy and relevancy possible. She has also offered to donate her amazing and accurately identified photos for use in the exhibit. We’ll also schedule Holm to give a free public talk and a hands-on workshop during the summer of 2018 to teach people about native bees.

Last, but definitely not least, we are seriously exploring the feasibility of installing a permanent observation hive for our very own colony of honeybees inside the Museum! While honeybees are not native to North America, we think that they will be excellent “live education animals,” and serve to stimulate interest about native bees as well.

In addition, our Pollinator Intern, Amanda Kyle, is applying for a smaller grant that would fund a series of native bee-centered public programs and pollinator plantings at the Museum and the Cable Community Farm. You can go ahead and get excited, because this next exhibit will BEE wonderful! 🐝

Where the Uncommon Meets Nature

In our freshened-up gift shop we recently overheard, “You won’t find items like this in a big box store!”

You can take home a new woodland animal of the plush kind, nature-themed souvenirs, fair trade items, and more. To enhance your outdoor experiences we have trail guides and binoculars. Local products include greeting cards, jewelry, and organic body products. Of course, we can’t forget the great selection of books, including Emily’s Natural Connections: Exploring Northwoods Nature through Science and Your Senses.

We can’t list it all here. Come in and see for yourself. Your holiday shopping for any age just got easier (and local). 🐝
Volunteer Voice

By Travis Cinco

Living in New York City, an instant smile would spread across my face when I’d see Emily’s weekly CNHM email pop up in my inbox. Instantly, the tightness of a subway car crowded with strange faces dissolved into the feelings of walking among the tall pines of Northern Wisconsin, the avenues of loud taxis smoothed into the rippling waters of the Namekagon, and for moments I was taken into the natural places I love. These nature-stories took the place of my own, nurturing my connection to the wild while living in NYC. After several readings throughout the day, I’d file each of the emails in a folder called “WiscoWoods,” returning later to find a fact about the smell after rain, or to remember how the winter looks from above your skis.

Back then, I was a lucky beneficiary of the work of the Museum. Now, I am fortunate to have the chance to volunteer in support of that work. For 50 years, the Museum has fostered so many personal connections to nature, through the energy of a great team and the facilities, programs and activities they’ve created. I’m humbled by their work and excited to volunteer my skills to help in the effort.

And, few other volunteer opportunities come with the guaranteed company of snakes, passing by a kestrel perched in Haley’s office and the lonely passenger pigeon specimen, or the chance to sketch a porcupine habitat! Thanks CNHM for being part of my nature-story and letting me be part of yours.

Summer Flies By in the Gardens

By Amanda Kyle, Naturalist/Pollinator Intern

Summer, summer, boy is it flying by! Like the Delaware Skipper butterflies flitting around the Cable Community Farm, my days as the Naturalist/Pollinator Intern are flitting out of my grasp faster than I can catch them. As the Naturalist/Pollinator Intern, I was tasked with not only providing pollinator related programs at both the Cable Community Farm and the Museum, but also with sprucing up the spaces planted for pollinators at each location.

How has my summer been so far? Well, I was able to watch the Common Spiderwort bloom, dotting my fingers with the luscious purple juice from the flowers. Two generations of Monarch Butterflies have graced the milkweed plants: one generation in early June, and another just wiggled into their chrysalises a few days ago. Perhaps this generation of butterflies will be the ones who fly south for the winter.

For me, this summer has been a whirlwind of adventure. Saturday Biodiversity Tours have been my favorite program overall, allowing the public to get up-close and personal with the bees, native plant/pollinator garden, orchard, and the vineyard.

At the time of writing this, about halfway through my summer here, I can state with confidence that I am a different person now than the one who began this internship. I am more aware of the ways that native plants and pollinators work together to beautify the world. It is hard to describe how amazing this summer has been so far. I find myself wanting to learn more, and bloom more as a person.

I invite you to slow down your busy life to take a moment and just look more closely at a flower. You may even be surprised by what you find there.
Interview With a Junior Naturalist

We had the chance to interview Eli, a regular Junior Naturalists attendee. Eli is always excited to tell us about his fishing and hunting adventures, his dad’s tractor, and the lawn mower that he will hopefully get in the fall.

Eli comes to Junior Naturalists every week fully prepared wearing a zippered camouflage vest stocked full with all kinds of necessities one might need while exploring the wild. He’ll be starting 2nd grade this fall.

• What do you bring to Junior Naturalists every day? Sunscreen, hat, bug spray, flashlight, compass, eraser, tissues, bear ornament, notebook, and pencil. I only take my vest off when we get in the water.

• What do you look forward to most when coming to Junior Naturalists? Doing crafts and learning about bats.

• What do you like most about bats? That they eat mosquitos and that they screech.

• What was the neatest critter you found today in the Namekagon River? I think it was the crayfish.

• Do you have a favorite craft? I think making the flowers with the pipe cleaners for the parade float.

• Do you have a favorite game at Junior Naturalists? I like to play Park Ranger.

• How long have you been coming to Junior Naturalists? Last year I started coming, this is my second year.

• What would you tell a friend about Junior Naturalists? We do cool stuff like shocking fish and looking at live bats. We do projects and play games.

• Would you tell your friends to come to Junior Naturalists? Yes. It’s really fun and we do stuff with bats and stuff.

Seasoned Junior Naturalist Eli
Curator’s Corner: Dead for Science

By Kaylee Faltys, Museum Curator

“Mommy, are those animals dead?”

This is one of the most common questions I hear children ask their parents when I walk by families peering into the collections room. They are mainly looking at the mammal and bird taxidermy mounts on display. What they don’t see are the hundreds of plants, insects, and other invertebrate specimens tucked away inside the cabinets. And to answer that child’s question, yes, they are all dead, and that’s okay.

While hunters often seek out trophy animals, non-game wildlife is not usually killed specifically for our museum collections. Animals die naturally, get hit by vehicles, or fly into windows, and then become valued museum specimens. Occasionally, animals are purposely killed (with proper authority and permits) to serve as “voucher specimens,” which are unique species collected for reference and study. Taking voucher specimens has a long history, and has not been found to contribute to the endangerment of a species. Vouchers allow us to continue learning about extinct species (e.g. dodos and passenger pigeons), to make species comparisons, answer complex ecological questions, study the impacts of climate change and pesticide use, identify species, discover new species, and the list goes on. We all want to understand the world around us, and museum collections are valuable tools in that quest.

As the curator, part of my job is to obtain Northwoods species we don’t have in the collection and preserve them for the future. New bird and mammal specimens come from salvages, donations, and purchases. While we don’t cause the death of vertebrate specimens for the Cable Natural History Museum, we do actively collect live invertebrates. For half my life I’ve been collecting, pinning, and identifying insects, and rarely have thought twice about the lethal consequences. Most insects cannot be identified in the field and must be captured, preserved, and microscopically inspected to be properly identified. Insects are the most abundant group of organisms on earth, so much so that about 80 percent of all identified species on earth are arthropods! (Arthropoda is the phylum in which insects are categorized.) There can be anywhere between 125 million to 425 million arthropods per acre of land. Trillions of insects are killed every year by vehicles alone. With so many individual insects buzzing and crawling around, collecting a few for scientific purposes doesn’t impact the larger population.

Museums aren’t simply morgues for the long-term storage of dead things. Voucher specimens aren’t just trophies from our field trips. The work we do isn’t old-fashioned or unnecessary. To document, understand, teach about, and develop conservation strategies for many species, we need to preserve at least a few specimens for posterity. One may assume that 21st century humans know almost everything about nature, but our knowledge is only the tip of the iceberg. Museum collections are an important resource for discovering the rest of it.
“Between every two pines is a doorway to a new world.”

—John Muir

White pines. Just mentioning the name evokes strong feelings in people who love or know nature and the outdoors. White pines, especially those that have held their ground for hundreds of years, have been and continue to be the reigning monarchs of our northern forests.

Beyond their size and beauty, white pines also fill important ecological roles. They grow across the range of forest conditions. It was the white pine that brought loggers to this area in the late 1880s and provided the lumber that built the homes of our great-grandparents.

The White Pine Society is the Cable Natural History Museum’s strong and stable connection which will help ensure that the Museum is financially resilient in the future. Gifting an amount in your will or trust is the easiest way to create a legacy, while keeping use of your assets during your lifetime. Gifts are tax deductible and may reduce your taxable estate. Please call Deb Nelson, Museum Director, with your questions and interest.

Thank you to current White Pine Society Members who have made a commitment to the Cable Natural History Museum. Their legacy will continue to support our efforts to connect people to Northwoods nature through educational experiences that inspire wonder, discovery, and responsibility.
Three Things Raptors Taught Me

By Haley Appleman, Naturalist

The Museum’s three live raptors are a valuable part of our teaching staff. As non-releasable birds, they serve as ambassadors to connect visitors with their wild counterparts. But they also teach me valuable lessons as I work with them on a daily basis.

1. Patience: “Take the time that it takes so it takes less time,” is one of the mottos of animal training that can also be applied to everyday life. If Carson the Red-tailed Hawk is having a bad day, rushing will only make her day worse. Patiently giving her the space and time she needs to adjust will build her comfort level and confidence in the future. This patience is also important in my garden: if I speed through weed pulling, they quickly regrow. Taking the time to thoroughly dig up those weedy root systems will lead to less work later.

2. Being present: Theo the Great Horned Owl would rely on his camouflage to protect him from a threat in the wild, so standing motionless is his best defense. If I come too close or make a sudden movement, he might wink one eye or raise the feather tufts on top of his head. His subtle way of communicating means I need to pay close attention in order to listen. Before I step into his mew, I pause to clear my mind and ruffles his feathers to get comfortable. As he stretches a wing behind him, I can’t help but smile and let go of any concerns.

3. Relaxation: Sometimes you need to take care of yourself and relax, even if you’re standing on a stage in front of 150 fourth graders. If I ever feel butterflies during a program or stumble over my words, I take a cue from Aldo the American Kestrel. He dips his head behind his wing to preen and ruffles his feathers to get comfortable. As he stretches a wing behind him, I can’t help but smile and let go of any concerns.

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In addition to supporting the work of the Cable Natural History Museum, Museum members enjoy a variety of benefits, including:

- Free admission to our collections and exhibits
- Reduced rates for participation in our nature and education programs
- Receive the Museum Messenger twice a year
- Opportunities for Museum Naturalist-led programs for your special family events

To become a member of the Cable Natural History Museum visit cablemuseum.org/membership, call 715-798-3890 or complete and mail the form at the right to CNHM, P.O. Box 416, Cable, WI 54821

Go Paperless!

- Help us save resources and printing costs by receiving The Museum Messenger by e-mail! Just send a message to info@cablemuseum.org with PAPERLESS in the subject line and we will begin sending you the Messenger in PDF format. Please indicate if you would like to receive our program announcements as well.
- Please note that we are now sending out acknowledgement letters for memberships and donations by e-mail instead of by regular mail (unless you do not have an e-mail address) to be more environmentally conscious. Please contact the Museum if we do not have your current e-mail address on file.

Membership Form

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- Painted Turtle: $500 to $999
- Wood Duck: $1000 to $2499
- Loon: $2500 to $4999
- Dragonfly: $5000 and above

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**The Museum Messenger**

*published for*
Friends of the Cable Natural History Museum
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