



# AU SABLE NOTES

## Creation's Voice

*The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of His hands.  
Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge.*

*There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard.*

*Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world.*

Psalm 19: 1–4 (NIV)

By Patricia Fagg

Every time I read the verses in Psalm 19 I think of a report I heard on NPR years ago. The story was about a man in New York City who walked the streets with a clipboard. He would walk up to someone, hold the clipboard above their heads and ask, "What color is the sky?" The results of his survey confirmed his fears. Few had observed the sky. Few had looked up.

A few years later this man was again on NPR. This time he was explaining his cloud and sky phenomenon curriculum that he had introduced into the New York City schools. He would go into the schools to take students up on their schools' roofs to examine the sky. Why is this man so passionate about the sky? He said that to be fully human every person must have a touch point with the

natural world every day. The sky is accessible to everyone. That's why he had started there.

And yet is the voice of the sky being silenced? The people in the New York City clipboard survey did not hear the sky's voice. In another NYC example, I recently heard about a 13 year old girl who did not understand a reference to the moon. It turns out she had never seen it! The city's light pollution had obliterated the moon's voice.

My mother returned from a trip to China to report that the air pollution in Xi'an was so bad that she never saw the sun while there. When she asked her guide about it, her guide replied that she remembered seeing the sun when she was a girl but that her nine-year-old daughter had never seen it.

How ironic that such an eloquent voice as the sky should need someone to be a voice for it! What a paradox that creation should need someone to insure that its voice is heard! This is why the Community School Program at Au Sable Institute is so important. It acts as a voice for creation by working to see that creation flourishes and by training our young people to hear creation's voice.

To see that creation flourishes, the Community School Program is designed to teach the basic principles of ecology emphasizing the principles that govern the health of ecosystems. Stewardship skills are taught throughout the kindergarten through grade twelve curriculum. Concepts are taught through direct experiences in the natural world using methods that engage the students. *Cont., p.2*

# AU SABLE INSTITUTE OF ENVIRONMENTAL STUDIES



A Christian institute whose mission is to bring healing and wholeness to the biosphere and the whole of Creation.

## Contact Addresses:

### Admissions Office & Great Lakes Campus

7526 Sunset Trail NE, Mancelona, MI 49659  
(231) 587-8686 Fax (231) 587-5353 e-mail: [admissions@ausable.org](mailto:admissions@ausable.org)  
Contact for applications, transcripts & internship information.

### Administration & Outreach Office

542B West Washington Ave, PO Box 260170, Madison, WI 53726  
(608) 663-4610 Fax (608) 663-4614 e-mail: [administration@ausable.org](mailto:administration@ausable.org)  
Contact for information about Au Sable and Christian environmental stewardship.  
The Institute is a 501(c)(3) organization. Donations are gratefully accepted.

### Pacific Rim Campus

180 Parker Road, Coupeville, WA 98239  
(360) 678-5586 e-mail: [pacificrim@ausable.org](mailto:pacificrim@ausable.org)

Correction for Au Sable Notes Autumn 2003: *Restoring Smith Prairie*, by Steven Byler;  
*Tropical Agriculture and Missions*, by David Unander



## AU SABLE NOTES

Editor, Melissa Van Ee  
Associate Editor, Peter Bakken  
Art contributed by Christi Sobel  
(<http://christisobel.clarityconnect.com>)

*Au Sable Notes* is printed on New Leaf Paper (Reincarnation Matte 80 lb. text; 100% recycled, 50% post-consumer, 100% chlorine free processing) using soy-based inks. Please recycle.

*Au Sable is a Christian institute whose mission is to bring healing to the biosphere and the whole of Creation. It does this through academic programs for college and university students, research projects and fora, environmental education for local school children, and information services for churches and the wider world community.*

### Cover Photo by Eric Steinkamp.

Mt Baker volcano with active steam vents taken from the Mt Winchester Fire Lookout in Washington State. Dr. Steinkamp describes the morning: *The Alpine Ecology class spent the night in the lookout and arose before sun to study the brisk morning ecological interactions of a high mountain ecosystem. The trees are the sturdy Mountain Hemlock (Tsuga mertensiana) that survive the high altitude, ice, wind and snow where most other trees fail the struggle for life. Without the habitat-forming Hemlocks, few organisms would survive the harsh conditions.*

### Creation's Voice, page 1:

To train children to hear creation's voice, field studies at Au Sable Institute strive to awaken a sense of wonder and arouse the imagination. Studies provide opportunities to experience delight and joy in creation. Observational skills are encouraged and honed. A deep sense of respect and gratitude is fostered. Keeping in mind Mardy Murie's words, "The unknowing eye cannot see," we lay down a knowledge base that enable our students to see and hear.

**We take our work seriously. We are fighting to maintain the integrity of the fabric of creation. We are also fighting for the hearts of our children.** Dale Allison in his book, *The Silence of Angels*, points out that "our landscape shapes our 'inscape'". In his book, he considers the impact the sky has on who we are as people. He expresses concern that night light pollution makes the stars less accessible to everyone. He notes, "As the stars belong less and less to our direct experience, our very hearts are made different from those who came before us."

May the heavens continue to declare the glory of God. May each of us take on the task to insure that creation's voice is heard.

*Patricia Fagg is the Coordinator of the Community Program at Au Sable - Great Lakes.*

# From The Director: Our 25th Anniversary

**T**his is our 25th Anniversary Year! Forty-six years after the founding of our parent organization—Au Sable Trails Camp for Youth, Inc.—we have come to the quarter-century mark on our mission-driven journey of “bringing healing and wholeness to all Creation.” We have worked with joy, enthusiasm and resolve— with our communities, our colleges and university partners, churches, and the wider world of stewardship. We also celebrate our 5th Anniversary of teaching and prairie restoration on Whidbey Island.

## How did we come to this point?

- In 1979, the Institute’s Board of Trustees undertook a great venture to bring environmental stewardship into the core of evangelical colleges and universities.
- This produced resources and partnerships to support teaching, research, and

outreach, building science-ethics-praxis inter-linkages basic to environmental stewardship.

- This, in turn, extended the Institute’s vision to south India, east Africa, and to the Northwest and Pacific Rim.

## What has been our progress?

- The communities we serve in Michigan and on Whidbey Island have joined us as partners in ecological restoration and land stewardship.
- Sixty colleges and universities have joined together as partners in stewardship, incorporating Creation care into their programs.
- Institute faculty and scientists, from these and other institutions, have developed extremely high levels of preparation and competence.
- Many Institute alumni have become leaders in environmental stewardship. Some have earned Ph.D.’s and become faculty at our partnering colleges, in the Institute, and beyond.

“Who have we become at age 25?” We are old enough to have alumni! And, many people have become vital constituents—people of the Pacific Northwest leading and joining the work of saving Smith Prairie and people of Michigan envisioning and supporting stewardship education. Our alumni and constituency have become the life-blood of this great stewardship venture!

What have we become at age 25? We are a vigorous, yet mature, Institute! Our healthy growth is continuing— as you, our alumni and constituents, grow in number and in means. Together we have the capacity not only to sustain the Institute, but also to “grow the Institute” to meet the vital present and emerging needs.

I hope you will not only respond to the Institute we have become at 25, but also help us to become what we must be in order to bring good news to every creature!  
*Cal DeWitt*

## Cal DeWitt Addresses Senate Breakfast on Biblical Stewardship

On Tuesday, April 20, Au Sable Director, Cal DeWitt, presented the keynote speech at a U.S. Senate breakfast forum on the moral principles, religious teachings and faith perspectives concerning “Religion and the Environment.” Inviting him were the forum organizers, Senators Sam Brownback and Joseph Lieberman.

In their invitation to Cal and to their fellow senators and their staffs, they wrote, “We have both long believed that the world is a gift from God, and that we all are called to be good stewards of creation.”

They went on to say, “The relationship between faith and the care for creation, however, is not always recognized. This forum is an opportunity to begin a conversation among Senators and their staff on this important subject.” The bi-partisan breakfast forum was announced by the senators with the hope “that Dr. DeWitt’s words will open up a wider discussion among Senators and

their staff members concerning individual faith perspectives to our call to protect creation.”

The meeting was a very simple and completely confidential time together where attendees reflected upon such questions as: What are the deepest sources of our environmental concerns? How have these arisen in moments of spiritual and moral awakening and awareness? What do these issues have to do with our faith and fundamental belief about human place and purpose?

The event was held in the hearing room of the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, Dirksen Building. Cal’s speech centered on his “science-ethics-praxis triad” and four biblical principles: His triad points to the need to address three questions simultaneously and interactively in stewardship of our lives and landscapes: How does the world work? (Science) What ought to be? (Ethics) and Then what must we do? (Praxis).

### Dr. Joseph Sheldon to testify before Congressional Hearing

Joseph K. Sheldon, Professor of Messiah College, PA, has been asked to address the U.S. House of Representatives Committee on Resources regarding the bill H.R. 2933 “Critical Habitat Reform Act of 2003” which weakens the Endangered Species Act. The bill limits habitat protection to landscape presently occupied by the species and further restricts protection to only the area containing features that are “absolutely necessary and indispensable to the conservation of the species concerned”. Sheldon was specifically asked to speak from a Judeo-Christian environmental ethic viewpoint. His testimony is scheduled for April 28, 2004.

# Twenty-five years of Living

By Bob Barr

**D**uring this 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary year, many profound and articulate people who have been associated with Au Sable over the years will contribute profound and articulate reflections to enrich the celebration. Some of us are not profound or articulate (you know who you are), but we also have thoughts occasionally, and I would like to contribute mine to the mix. Living in the middle of the Au Sable fishbowl for 28 years does give one a certain perspective. Here's mine:

## **The trees have gotten bigger.**

Every year I cut down a few more large aspen trees which have died and are threatening to fall on a building. As they die, the beech, maple and pine stretch ever higher replacing the aspen which is part of God's plan for a healthy maturing forest. Au Sable is also in the process of maturing. We look act and sound very different than we did 25 years ago. Those are healthy indicators of growth. One exciting indicator of healthy growth is the number of students who got excited about God's world while they took classes here, took advanced studies in the field and have returned as professors teaching the next generation of Au Sable students.

## **The students are smarter.**

Twenty-five years ago, very few Christian colleges had programs in the environmental sciences, and there were not many career options for those few students interested in working in the field. Biology departments at Christian colleges tended to emphasize medicine and education. Our early students were often those who liked biology but were not interested in teaching or the health professions. Today there are many more career options in the environmental

sciences, and more Christian colleges are offering environmental studies programs in their curricula. As a result, better students are choosing Environmental Science programs.

## **The food is better.**

In one of the early years, I was excited to hire a cook who had experience cooking at a major chain restaurant. One of his first meals was ham and mashed potatoes. That was it, ham and mashed potatoes. I suggested that it would have been good to have a vegetable with that meal, so a couple of days later we had ham, mashed potatoes, and baked beans. Our food service has come a long way over the years, as have all our support services. We have become more sophisticated and stewardly in our approach to our infrastructure and services, often in response to ideas put forward by our students and staff.

One of the joys of my career at Au Sable has been the opportunity to work with students who have returned as servants to the Au Sable community to work as cooks, maintenance staff, and interns. Because these folks stay longer and work more directly with me, I have gotten to know many of them more intimately. They have enriched my life and the lives of my family as they have shared meals with us, played games with us, and even babysat our kids. What a rich legacy they have left us!

## **God works in spite of us.**

An event we could schedule as part of our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, but probably should not, is a day dedicated to "Dumb Things We Have Done." I could start the day off with a 3 hour presentation titled, "Disasters Rained Down Upon Us by the Maintenance Department." Our academic and administrative



departments have also had their disasters as well. However, through all these years, God has been active in what we have done and most importantly, He has been active in the lives of the students who have passed through this place.

## **There is something special about this place.**

This is a place where God works. One of the great joys of my life at Au Sable is to have former students return, sometimes 10 or 15 years later, and share how at such and such a particular spot on the grounds God spoke to them, or to share some life changing event that happened to them while they were here taking a class. I have often pondered why that is, and I find myself returning to the founding fathers of Au Sable who stood on the shore of Louie's Pond in 1958 and dedicated this place to God, to be a place where Christ is exalted. We continue that today. Not a session

# in the Fishbowl



Rebecca Barr

*Let's all make a commitment to be in prayer for the next 25 years, that the next generation of students, staff, interns and faculty will sense God's presence here.*

begins but that the students and staff are committed to the Lord. It is normal for me to walk the grounds in prayer prior to a session, praying specifically that students, faculty and staff will encounter God in a special way. Let's all make a commitment to be in prayer for the next 25 years, that the next generation of students, staff, interns and faculty will sense God's presence here.

*Robert Barr is the Director of Support Services. He and his wife Becky have lived on-site at Au Sable – Great Lakes for over twenty-five years and have raised their children, Rachel and David there. This year will be their last to live in the “fishbowl” as they are currently building a new home across Louie’s Pond.*

**Center:** Bob, Becky, David and Rachel in 1986.

**Above:** Bob and Rachel working in 1983.

**Below:** Matt Hoppe (Rachel's fiancé), Rachel, David, Becky and Bob 2003.



Dick Hoppe

# Business, Career & Creation: A Calling

## *Notes from a Board Member*

By Bob Van Stright

**T**he road to Au Sable began for me some years ago in a nondescript northwest suburb of Chicago. I trudged across the property outside a small manufacturing plant, noting the drums stacked two high and the colored ribbons of paint and solvent running into the desolate field behind the plant.

It was an awakening for me. To that point, I had not learned much about birds or flowers. I had no understanding how CFCs create holes in the ozone layer. I had not studied scientific evidence that relates the exposure of chlorinated solvents to cancer in humans.

But once I confronted the carelessness with which some handle our precious God-given resources, I pledged that my work would somehow contribute part of the solution and not part of the problem facing the environment. I learned about industrial manufacturing processes, the waste those processes produce, and the best options available for disposal. I learned about the Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) – the federal legislation that gave definition to hazardous waste and new meaning to the phrase “cradle-to-grave responsibility.” I remember that day because it was my initiation into a business career in the chemical waste management and environmental services industry.

For almost 25 years now, I have had a front-row seat witnessing an amazing lesson in public policy. The genius of those federal regulations was not the prescribed solution to the chemical waste disposal problem. Business worked out those solutions over the years. Rather, regulations recognized the value of our natural resources and provided a mechanism whereby the cost of abusing and wasting those resources could begin to be factored back into the total cost of production. The regulatory framework put in place by RCRA has significantly impacted the use of hazardous products in production and has encouraged the minimization of waste resulting from that production. The concept that gave that legislation its name in 1979 has become a way of doing business in 2004.

Today there is a growing recognition of the need for business to be sustainable — not just in its economic bottom line, but in its use of

environmental and social resources as well. My education continues through organizations like the West Michigan Sustainable Business Forum, an alliance of over 50 West

Michigan businesses, including some of the largest and most significant manufacturers in the area. These companies are united in their belief that “a balance must be struck between economic prosperity, social equity and a healthy environment” and further that

***Christians have been much too timid in their defense of the environment. We need leaders who are quick to stand in protest when nurturing God’s creation is subordinated to abuse and inconsiderate exploitation.***



*Lowering a loaded drum into an overpack for transport at Valley City Environmental Services, Inc.*

“the business community can and should take the lead in finding and preserving this balance.” ([www.WMSBF.com](http://www.WMSBF.com))

Christians have been much too timid in their defense of the environment. We need leaders who are quick to stand in protest when nurturing God’s creation is subordinated to abuse and inconsiderate exploitation. Au Sable Institute is an important instrument that God is using to equip young Christians with the knowledge and motivation needed to champion creation whether they are called to this task as a scientist, a missionary, a business person, or a homemaker. It is a privilege to participate in such an important task, and to be inspired by so many thoughtful and dedicated Christians to continue on the journey.

*Bob Van Stright joined the Au Sable Board of Trustees in 2003. He is the owner of Valley City Environmental Services, Inc. in Grand Rapids, Michigan. We welcome his commitment to and knowledge of the environment.*



## Alumni Update

**Curtis Dykstra** (Great Lakes, Spring '98), Park Ranger II at Goose Creek State Park, NC. He and his wife Bonnie are now the proud parents of a Caleb Alan (6/19/03).

**Eric Van Dyken** (Great Lakes, May & Summer '92), Environmental Officer for Renville County, MN. As Environmental Officer Eric uses many of the principles that he learned at Au Sable and Dordt College and put them into practice within the confines of the government regulatory setting. His job includes planning and zoning administration, individual sewage treatment system regulation, animal feedlot regulation, mining regulation, and general environmental complaint/cleanup investigation.

**Julie Wynia**, (Great Lakes, Summer '01), High School Biology Teacher, South Sioux City, NE. In addition to teaching, Julie assists with the drill team, sponsors student council, works on science curriculum, line judges volleyball games, and attends 2 Bible studies. In summer 2003 she showed the JESUS film with campus crusade in Kenya.

**Holly Mehl** (Great Lakes, Summer '88 & '89), Ecologist for US EPA Region 7, environmental and ecological assessments and GIS mapping. Project officer on some exciting projects with partners to evaluate risk and irreplaceability for Region 7 ecoregions (in IA, KS, MO, NE). Completed a M.A. in Ecology from the University of Kansas, Dec. 2002.

**Andrea Corens** (Great Lakes, Jan '98, Summer '99), Youth pastor at Kensington Road Church in Calgary, Alberta. Since earning her B.S. at Bethel College, MN and a Naturalist Certificate, Andrea has worked for Adventurous Christians Covenant Wilderness Center (Grand Marias, MN) as a trail guide in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness and a cook; she also was a dean of women at Covenant Bible College in Strathmore, AB, Canada.

# New Greenhouse at Pacific Rim

By Harold Hertlein

The plant propagation efforts at the Pacific Rim campus will be significantly improved with the addition of a 1275 sq. ft. greenhouse. Completion is scheduled for mid-May. The primary use of the greenhouse will be for Roemer's fescue (*Festuca idahoensis* var. roemerii) propagation, which is used for prairie restoration efforts. Additional plant species that will be propagated are Showy Fleabane (*Erigeron speciosus*), Oregon Sunshine (*Eriophyllum lanatum*) and Spike-like Goldenrod (*Solidago spathulata*). Eventually there will be thermostat controlled roll-up sidewalls and a timer controlled sprinkler system. The greenhouse has the maximum capacity for approximately 32



Harold Hertlein

benches (3' x 10') with 960 trays for a total count of 64,000 plugs per production cycle. We are excited that we now will be able to provide significant prairie restoration plant material to the U.S. Parks Service and National Resource Conservation Service along with other agencies.

## Introducing Harold Hertlein *Pacific Rim's new facility manager*

By Robin Hertlein

Raised on a Kansas wheat farm, Harold definitely has agriculture in his blood. After serving in the U.S. Peace Corps in Belize, Harold decided to devote his future to agriculture and studied Agronomy at Washington State University, earning a Bachelor's of Science in 1987. He took a job at the Boeing Aircraft Company after graduation when he couldn't find employment in an agricultural field, and ended up staying there for 15 years until being laid off last fall in one of the large rounds of downsizing Boeing is currently going through. Harold is now happily employed at Au Sable, and in his free time works on the Whidbey Island Bean Company, which he started in 2001 to specialize in large, seeded fava bean production.

Harold enjoys working with his hands maintaining the facilities at Au Sable, and enjoys the outdoors of the

Pacific Northwest. He loves working with students, professors and the local community to help them understand the world from the perspective of plants and soils. Some of Harold's favorite times are walking through various ecosystems and seeing not only the plants, but also the processes that nature uses every day. Happy in his work, Harold says "Au Sable has been a true blessing from the Lord".



David Michan

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

NONPROFIT ORG  
US POSTAGE PAID  
MADISON WI  
PERMIT NO 1

Mail List Changes? 608-663-4610 or [newsletter@ausable.org](mailto:newsletter@ausable.org)



*Paphiopedilum*  
Orchid

***Dedicated to bringing healing and wholeness to  
the biosphere and the whole of creation.***

# Celebrate Central Whidbey's Native Prairie

Saturday, May 8, 2004

***Come celebrate with Au Sable Institute as we mark our 25th Anniversary and the 5th Anniversary of the new Pacific Rim Campus! We invite you to join us in a morning of informative guided tours of local areas as well as an afternoon on the Pacific Rim Campus at 180 Parker Road, just off Highway 20, about 3 miles south of Coupeville.***

## **Morning Activities**

The following sites will host educational talks hourly at 10 & 11 AM:

### **Crockett Lake and Keystone Spit**

Audubon members discuss rare plants thriving in glacially generated deposit and the role of this nationally recognized birding hot spot.

### **Ebey's Landing Bluff Trail**

Docents from The Nature Conservancy will offer guided walks at Ebey's Landing Bluff Trail.

### **Ebey's Landing Ferry House**

Members of Ebey's Landing National Historical Reserve will discuss historical human influences upon the prairie.

## **Afternoon Activities at Smith Prairie, Au Sable - Pacific Rim**

### **Picnic Lunch**

Complimentary picnic lunch will be provided to the first 100 attendees. Come feast as we enjoy music by Karl and Vern Olsen. 12 PM

### **Address by Director, Cal DeWitt**

Learn more of the vision and mission of the Institute. 1 PM

### **Tours of the Prairie & Campus**

Tours through the undisturbed prairie remnant and the beginnings of prairie restoration and the new campus buildings that house classrooms, meeting rooms, science lab, and library. 2-4 PM