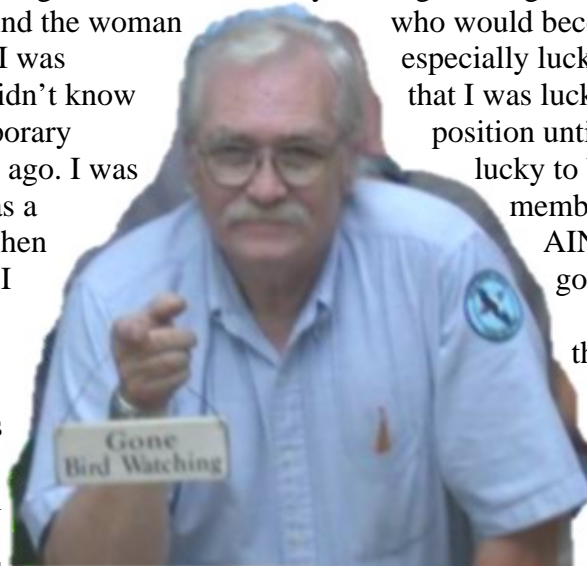


Eulogy: Bob Jennings Memorial Service

Merle Rogers, Roaring River State Park, Missouri

I've always considered myself lucky. I was lucky in my youth to spend a lot of time at Grandma & Grandpa Rose's farm playing in the pasture, fishing, and hunting. I was lucky to be in the Boy Scouts of America during its' heydays of the 1950's and 60's and got to spend a lot of time camping and hiking. I was lucky that I got into the United States navy and not the Army during the Vietnam War. I had the good fortune of finally earning a college degree at my second attempt. I was lucky to find the woman who would become my wife and give me two wonderful children. I was especially lucky to get a job with Missouri State Parks. I didn't know that I was lucky until later, because I only considered it a temporary position until something better came along. That was 30 years ago. I was lucky to be the only naturalist in the parks system who was a member of the Association of Interpretive naturalists when AIN held a workshop in Seattle, Washington and I got to go.



I was especially lucky at that workshop to meet and become Bob Jennings friend. It didn't happen right away because I was still trying to get to know all these professional people in the field of interpretation and I was quite intimidated by most of everyone. But, later, on a field trip on Puget Sound, several of us were out on the bow of the ferry with out binoculars and bird field guides trying to figure out what the heck kind of birds were flying, floating, and diving all over the Sound. From behind us came the voice of a fellow with a name tag that read "Hello" Bob Jennings, Oxley Nature Center, Tulsa, Oklahoma. Bob asked us what we were doing. We answered that we were trying to identify some of the birds out there on the sound. Bob had spotted us from the upper deck and took pity and came to help us with bird identification.

He said that those with the white on the wings are pigeon guillemot, those over there are either red-throated loons or Pacific loons, and the birds floating in the bay are most likely harlequin ducks. My mouth just dropped and I want to tell you that I stayed right with Mr. Bob Jennings from then on. This guy knows his stuff and I wanted to know what he knows. I found out later that was a little beyond my abilities. I was lucky from then on to enjoy Bob's company at many regional and national workshops put on by the National Association for Interpretation.

(continued on page 2)

Bob was a mentor to me and hundreds of other interpreters. He was the person who made me realize that I was doing my nature programs correctly and that I was actually pretty good at what I did. I really didn't know that I had the right stuff until Bob and I had long talks about what I was doing at Roaring River and what he was doing at Oxley nature Center. I didn't know all the scientific names for every plant and animals but I could lead people on a nature walk, make them think about the natural world around them, and get excited about the streams, forests, and glades found in the Ozarks.

Bob was a giving and generous person. He was a deep thinker who was often called on to serve on or chair committees for NAI. When I was the Region VI director for NAI, I held all my executive meetings in Tulsa so Bob would be there to sit in and guide us as we made decisions concerning the next workshop, the scholarship auction, the newsletter, and tell us what the national office was doing and why.

Bob Jennings is a LEGACY for naturalist and interpreters across the nation. He will be deeply missed and remembered often by us all.

Happy Trails, Bob.



Bob and the bumblebees **Eddie Reese, Oxley Nature Center,** **Oklahoma**

I have lots of stories about Bob. Here is one. Many years ago when I was a seasonal here at the nature center, I discovered a bumblebee nest too close to a heavily travelled trail. Someone had been stung. As you know, they become temperamental and nasty when their nest is perceived to be in danger. Well I told Bob about the nest. He was in his usual spot in front of the computer. He leaned back in his chair, looked up and furrowed his brow like he did when he was consternated. "Come on", he said. He filled a sprayer with pesticide and we went to the nest site.

I was a little anxious about what he planned to do. Sure enough he walked right up to the hole and commenced to drowning the nest with pesticide. When I saw hoards of bees swarm out of the hole, I took my life in my own hands and took off like a scalded cat. I used to run track in college and I figured I could stay well ahead of my old, overweight boss. So I'm thinking as long as I stay ahead of Bob, I'd be OK.

As I was blasting down the trail I looked back and, to my surprise, Bob is right behind me and gaining ground. We started laughing as we ran. We had out distanced the bees and neither of us were stung. It is amazing what adrenalin can do for a guy when you have a lot of ground to cover in a short amount of time!

*Bob Jennings with Prairie Larry,
Larry Larson, Merle Rogers and a
few good friends.*