



turtle tracks

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From the Chair May 2016

SPRING 2016

Remembering Steve Hall

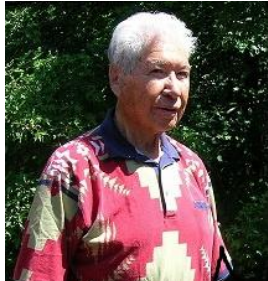
I was saddened to hear of the passing of Steve Hall in February. Steve was a member of the original Board of Directors in 1996. Following monthly meetings in the early days there was always an outing. Steve was an integral part of these events. Besides the Sandhill Crane count in October, there was a Pumpkin carving contest. Steve made sure that all young carvers had a pumpkin to work with. He also brought bushels of apples, gathered from his own trees, along with his juicer, to provide refreshments. In January he led the Wolf Howl and Owl Prowl event, having "called" ahead to find the best locations. In March, Steve and Rita constructed their geodesic burlap dome, from which bird lovers were enthralled by the mating ritual dances of the sharp-tailed grouse. In April Steve would provide the materials and expertise to build nest boxes. I still have two, and yes, the bluebirds took up residence, and return every summer.

Steve assisted in all the early projects undertaken by the FOMB; the boardwalk on the West side, trail clearing and marking, snowshoeing to pack the trails prior to a skiing event. He could always be counted on to provide volunteers and participants with nature facts and advice in his mild-mannered grandfatherly fashion.

Steve was the ultimate Citizen Scientist. He was interested in all things natural, and was knowledgeable in so many areas, but he was always open to learning more. Such is the legacy of our Friend.

2016 is going to be a busy year. The first instalment of the Science North exhibits will be unveiled this season. Also, the Giant's Rib Escarpment display will be at the Centre from May until July. John Diebolt and Friends will be constructing the new Gazebo and boardwalk as a start to the trail improvements project.

So, if you have the time and the energy, we welcome all assistance. Contact us at info@miserybay.ca



Remebering Al Shawana

Alphonse Joseph Shawana was born in Wikwemikong, Wikwemikong Unceded First Nation Reserve, Manitoulin Island, Ontario, on September 8, 1933. I never met a more pleasant, interesting, resourceful, and generous person. He told me that as a youth he spent several years at the Residential School in Spanish, Ontario. Al thought he got a good education there, and that he was warmer and had better clothes there than at home. His wife-to-be, Mary Lou, an orphan born April 15, 1929, in Alberta, spent 17 years in a Residential School along the Peace River in Fort Vermillion, northern Alberta. They met in 1958 at the hospital in Little Current, Ontario, where she was working, mostly with mentally challenged children and some adults. Later that same year they were married in a Catholic Church in Red Deer, Alberta, and honeymooned in Las Vegas, Nevada, USA. Al graduated from DeVry University in Chicago, Illinois, and then worked for as an electronics specialist for the then Wessex division of the Halliburton Oil Company for 29 years, until retirement. He received several awards and honors for his work at the oil company. He and Mary Lou were posted in Venezuela; England; Scotland; Ireland; Tripoli, Libya, North Africa; Bombay, India; and New Zealand.

Everywhere they lived, Mary Lou volunteered, working mostly with mentally challenged children. Life was not always easy for Al and Mary Lou. He spent two tumultuous consecutive years as Chief of the Wikwemikong Tribe, and he helped build his own home in Wikwemikong. They had three children, two boys and a girl. Earl Anthony was an oil company well driller, at different times in Sweden, Norway, and Trinidad. Younger son Jeffrey Charles works with mentally challenged children and currently lives at the Shawana family compound in Wikwemikong. Their married sister Rose Marie Verrit lives in New Mexico. The Verrits have one son, Brandon Joseph. Mary Lou survives and resides in Wikwemikong where she has been active in the Peace Justice and Social Development organization for ten years or more.

Having developed a life-long interest in fossils, Al came to several public lectures on geology and fossils of Manitoulin Island at the Misery Bay Provincial Park Centre in 2008 to 2010. That is how we became friends. He asked if the Friends of Misery Bay, who staffed and managed the Park, would be interested in having fossils from his collection as part of the educational exhibits being developed. That began the first of several very enjoyable visits to Al and Mary Lou's home. They both were very interested in having their impressive fossils (102 mostly sizeable specimens, primarily from Manitoulin Island) where they could be enjoyed by the public, and they offered to donate the entire collection if the Friends could arrange transportation

to the Centre. Earl Shawana helped Al, and Tom and Ellie Moore, pack the Shawana Fossil Collection for transfer from the Shawana Wikwemikong home to the Misery Bay Provincial Park Centre on Manitoulin Island in the summer of 2010. Not long after that, Earl died. That was a great loss, for Earl too was a gentle and thoughtful friend who, like his father, had interesting tales and perspectives on life to share.

Al Shawana suffered circulatory complications, and died peacefully in his

sleep on the Island in the hospital at Little Current, Ontario, on December 26, 2014. At his Catholic Church funeral in Wikwemikong, Al was honored with a 21-gun salute. The Friends of Misery Bay in turn are honored by the friendship and generosity of Al and Mary Lou. As Al had envisioned, generations of visitors to the Misery Bay Provincial Park Centre can continue to learn and benefit from the special Shawana Fossil Collection, now available to the public.

Thomas E. Moore,
November, 2015

Out and About in Misery Bay

Ondatra zibethicus



The **muskrat** (*Ondatra zibethicus*), the [only species](#) in [genus *Ondatra*](#) and tribe ***Ondatrini***, is a medium-sized [semi-aquatic rodent](#) native to [North America](#). The muskrat is found in [wetlands](#) over a wide range of [climates](#) and [habitats](#). It has important effects on the ecology of wetlands and is a resource of [food](#) and [fur](#) for [humans](#). There is at least one family that has moved into Misery Bay. The muskrat's name probably comes by [folk etymology](#) from a word of [Algonquin](#) origin, *muscascus* (literally "it is red", so called for its colorings), or from the [Abenaki](#) native word *mòskwas*.

An adult muskrat is about 40–70 cm (16–28 in) long, half of that is the [tail](#), and weighs from 0.6–2 kg (1.3–4.4 lb). Muskrats are covered with short, thick [fur](#) which is medium to dark brown or black in color, with the belly a bit lighter; as the age increases, it turns a partly gray in color. The fur has two layers, which helps protect them from the cold water. They have long tails covered with scales rather than hair and, to aid them in swimming, are slightly flattened vertically, which is a shape that is unique to them. When they walk on land, their tails drag on the ground, which makes their [tracks](#) easy to recognize.

Muskrats spend much of their time in the water and are well suited for their semi-aquatic life. They can swim under water for 12 to 17 minutes. They can close off their ears to keep the water out. Their hind feet are semi-webbed, although in swimming, their tails are their main means of propulsion.

Their populations naturally cycle; in areas where they become abundant,

they are capable of removing much of the vegetation in wetlands. Species commonly eaten include [cattail](#) and [yellow water lily](#).



Compact mounds of partially dried and decayed plant material can frequently be seen scattered among the cattails and bulrushes. These dead-looking heaps are homes of the muskrat. One such mound appeared in the stream at Misery Bay in the summer of 2015. Muskrat families build these mounds to protect themselves and their young from cold and predators. In marshes, push-ups are constructed from vegetation and mud. These push-ups are up to 3 ft (91 cm) in height. Muskrats also burrow, and from the location of the mound on the beach, they may well have burrowed into the dunes in this area. Muskrats are most active at night or near dawn and dusk. Like most rodents, muskrats are prolific breeders. Females can have two or three litters a year of six to eight young each. The babies are born small and hairless, and weigh only about 22 g (0.78 oz).

The muskrat's front teeth are especially modified for underwater chewing. Non-aquatic mammals have great difficulty in trying to chew on a large object under water, because water would enter the mouth, throat, and nasal passages. This problem has been overcome in the muskrat through the evolution of incisors, that protrude ahead of the

cheeks and of lips that can close behind the teeth. This adaptation permits the muskrat (and the beaver) to chew on stems and roots under water "with its mouth closed."

The Muskrat plays a prominent role in Native American myths and legends.

In several Native American tribes Muskrat plays the role of Earth diver, being the only animal to succeed at diving to the ocean floor to bring up earth for the Creator to make land with.

In some Algonquin traditions, Muskrat is a female figure who becomes the mother of humankind.

Muskrats are considered lucky animals in other tribes, and some legends include muskrats bestowing wealth or hunting success on humans who treat them respectfully.

From the Menominee Oral Tradition:

"In the beginning, Beaver was jealous of the fine flat tail that Muskrat had. Beaver had only a very skinny tail, and he did not think it was very attractive. When Muskrat dove in the water, he could slap his tail and make a big noise and scared people and the other animals. So Beaver begged and coaxed Muskrat over and over, and called him his dear little brother, and asked him to trade tails for a while so Beaver could see what it was like to have a broad, flat tail. At last Muskrat agreed, but Beaver cheated him and never gave Muskrat back his broad, flat tail. Now Muskrat has the skinny tail and is jealous of Beaver."

(Adapted from Alanson B. Skinner and John Satterlee, 1915, "Folklore of the Menomini Indians," *Anthropological Papers of the American Museum of Natural History* XIII: 217-542.)

Some Early Spring Flowers at Misery Bay

By Marcel Bénéteau

Misery Bay is rightly known for its explosion of colour in late May and early June when flowers such as Manitoulin Gold and quite a variety of Ladies' Slippers and other orchids burst forth along the woodland trails and open alvars. But the action starts much earlier in the park – in fact, as soon as the snow melts, several hardy little blooms make their appearance and offer confirmation that winter is gone at last. The following are but a sample of some of these harbingers of spring that the attentive visitor can spot in the various park environments in late April and early May.

One of the very first flowers to appear on the alvars is **Spring Whitlow-grass** (*Draba verna*). This tiny plant is part of the *Cruciferae* or *Brassicaceae* (Mustard) family and is actually a new-comer to Misery Bay. According to J.K. Morton's

The Flora of Manitoulin Island, it was first noted on the Island in 1990 and was still absent from *A Plant List for Misery Bay*, compiled in 1997 by Morton, Joan Venn and Judith Jones. It is now fairly widespread and can be seen wherever there are pockets of organic material on the limestone pavements, practically carpeting the alvar in some areas. A single stalk comes up from a tiny rosette of oblong and fairly hairy leaves. The stalks, rarely more than two or three inches tall, support from two to half a dozen miniscule white flowers. Like all flowers in the *Cruciferae* family, these have four petals arranged in a cross-like pattern; in this case the petals are so deeply cleft as to appear to be double in number. It has been recorded flowering in sunny locations in the park as early as April 14th, with some blooms persisting until early June.



Early Saxifrage (*Saxifraga virginiensis*) is found on alvars and thin-soiled environments throughout Manitoulin Island and is perfectly adapted to Misery Bay's environment. It is often in bloom by the first week in May. The name *Saxifrage* means "rock-breaker" and refers to the role some plants in this

family play in breaking down rocks for soil formation. Early Saxifrage has

sharply toothed thick and leathery leaves that help to preserve moisture for the plant in inhospitable locations. It can reach 8 to 10 inches in height in favourable conditions, but the plants

found on the alvars rarely surpass four or five inches. A cluster of five-petaled white flowers branches out from a fairly thick fuzzy stalk. The brightly coloured



pistils and stamens, as well as the reddish leaves at the base of the plant add a splash of colour to the early spring drabness of the alvar.



One of the park's prettiest flowers grows abundantly on the wet shorelines of Lake Huron. **Bird's-eye Primrose** (*Primula mistassinica*) also flourishes in swampy forest openings behind the shore. The five lavender heart-shaped petals spreading out from a bright yellow

"bird's eye" make this flower one of the easiest to identify. The blooms, about half an inch across, sit at the top of a brown, wiry stem up to 6 inches tall. They appear some years at the end of April and often persist well into the month of June.



The park's forest trails also see some early spring activity. **Round-lobed Hepatica** (*Anemone americana*) is one of the earliest flowering plants on Manitoulin Island, sometimes appearing in early April even before all the snow has disappeared (as early as April 4th on the Cup and Saucer trail, but a bit later

near Lake Huron). The name *Hepatica* comes from Medieval Latin meaning "of the liver", as the leaves were once used to treat liver ailments (the plant is also known as Liverleaf). A member of the Buttercup family, its white to pale blue flowers can be seen along several wooded trails in Misery Bay, rising above

sprawling three-lobed leaves that lie on the forest floor. It is closely related to the very similar **Sharp-lobed Hepatica** (*A. Acutiloba*), which does not occur



within the park boundaries; some experts consider them as different varieties of the same plant.



Not all flowers on the ground; the park also boasts of several flowering shrubs among its diverse flora. One of the earliest, **Fly Honeysuckle** (*Lonicera canadensis*), usually appears along forest trails in early May. Look for small, pale yellow bell-like flowers hanging on straggly, metre-high bushes in the understory in both deciduous and



coniferous tree stands. Twin flowers are joined on single stalk that droops down from the base of the leaf stems. Later in the summer, bright red "double berries" are fused together, end to end and perpendicular to the stalk. They provide an important food source for birds such as robins and cardinals.



This is but a small sampling of the early spring flowers to be found in Misery Bay between the time when the snow leaves and the mosquitoes arrive. They are the opening notes of a floral symphony that

will play out until the last asters and goldenrods fade away in late October.

References:

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<http://www.michiganflora.net/browse.aspx>

- Morton, J.K. and Joan M. Venn, *The Flora of Manitoulin Island and the adjacent islands of Lake Huron, Georgian Bay and the North Channel*, Waterloo, University of Waterloo Biology Department, third edition, 2000.

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INSECT MIMICRY

By Peter Ford

Mimicry in insects occurs when an insect (the mimic) closely resembles an insect from another species (the model). The model may be toxic – it may taste bad or actually be poisonous – or it may be dangerous (has a sting for example). The mimic which may be edible or toxic itself benefits from the experience of predators who have tried to eat the model.

In order for mimicry to be most effective, the model should be much commoner than the mimic. Thus potential predators are most likely to try eating the model and learn by experience to leave alone anything that looks similar. If the mimic is too common, the predator may either have been less likely to have encountered the model first or may be prepared to take a chance.

There are a number of types of mimicry. There is Mullerian mimicry where both parties may be distasteful or toxic. Examples of this are the Monarch butterfly (Fig.1) and the Viceroy butterfly (Fig.2). Both insects occur in our region and both are distasteful to birds, although the Viceroy seems to be less so. Thus the two species tend to reinforce the message that they are best

avoided. The Monarch caterpillars feed on plants of the milkweed family which

are the source of the poisonous glycosides that make both adult and larvae toxic. Some plants of the milkweed family are less toxic than others and some Monarch larvae and adults may actually contain low levels of toxin and may be relatively edible, thus exhibiting a sort of mimicry within the species.

Another and commoner form of mimicry is Batesian mimicry where the edible mimic looks like the distasteful or dangerous model. A model with quite few mimics is the wasp family. The black and yellow stripes clearly serving as a warning that this is an insect which is capable of inflicting pain or even death. The common wasp and its relatives such as the hornet are widespread and numerous. The high frequency of the wasp family has encouraged a large number of mimic species which include hoverflies, moths and beetles. The hoverfly, numerous species of which occur in Ontario, is an example of a family of insects many of which look like a members of the wasp family, but are quite harmless.

Camouflage may also be regarded as a form of mimicry – small moths that look like bird droppings or looper caterpillars (Geometridae moth larvae) which when

motionless look like twigs are mimicking inanimate objects rather than other insects.



Figure 1 Monarch (*Danaus plexippus*)



Figure 2 Viceroy (*Limenitis archippus*)



Figure 3 Hover Fly

Zebra Caterpillar

The **zebra caterpillar** is the larva of an American [noctuid](#) moth (*Melanchra picta*) that feeds on [cabbages](#), [beets](#) and other cultivated plants. This caterpillar often exists in a mixed population with the bertha armyworm and the [variegated cutworm](#). This little guy was photographed in herbaceous debris on the beach at Misery Bay.



Manitoulin Nature Club
Presents
Notable Trees of
Manitoulin (NTOM)
2-day Event

All About Trees



Friday, May 27
Mindemoya
Community Centre
Saturday, May 28

Moderated by Brian
Bell

Trees Trees Trees

The Notable Trees of Manitoulin Project was launched last year by the Manitoulin Nature Club to educate and encourage appreciation of trees on Manitoulin Island. The project has been receiving nominations of trees that have become prominent landmarks or associated with local folklore, myths, legends or traditions. Welcomed nominations include 'witness trees' in family histories that describe trees present at key historical events such as family gatherings and weddings. Friends of Misery Bay have submitted two notable trees from within the park to the project: a Striped Maple and an unusual White Cedar

In order to promote knowledge and appreciation of the diverse trees on Manitoulin Island, the Notable Trees Project is organizing a two-day forum that will take place May 27 and 28. Day one takes place at the Mindemoya Community Centre and includes a full day of speakers on various aspects of tree life on Manitoulin, including topics such as soil fertility, orchards, tree form and structure, managing crown land, plantation management and revitalizing forested lands. Admission is free and includes complementary lunch and coffee breaks. Several local crafts people will be on hand to present their wood-based products. As well, a full day children's program will keep students from Mindemoya Central Public School and Lakeview School in M'Chigeeng busy with science presentations, craft and writing workshops and a guided walk in Wagg's Woods to identify trees. Saturday the action shifts to Misery Bay where Friends of Misery Bay will host a talk at the park visitor centre by Elizabeth George entitled "What is a heritage tree and why are they important to protect." The talk will be followed by a guided walk in the park.

FOMB events 2016

April 30 - Turtle Blitz

May 21 - Open for weekends

May 28 - Notable trees of Manitoulin Speaker Edith George at 1:00, followed by a guided hike in the Park.

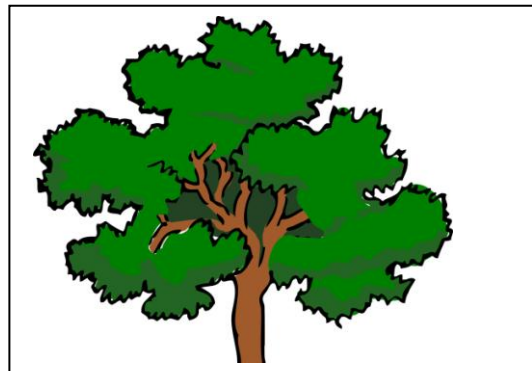
May 31 - Guided hike with 4 Elements, Leader Gaynor Orford

June 18 - AGM at the Visitors Centre. Guest speaker Dr. Joe Shorthouse (to be confirmed)

June 27 - Open 7 days/week, 10 - 5.

Advice from a tree

Stand tall and proud
Go out on a limb
Remember your roots
Drink plenty of water
Be content with your natural beauty
Enjoy the view



Edith George will be at the Visitors Centre on Saturday May 28, 2016 at 1:00 pm. She will be addressing "What is a heritage tree and why are they important to protect." Edith will be present on the Island as a guest of the Manitoulin Nature Club, as they host their Notable Trees of Manitoulin Event.

Following her talk, there will be a guided hike in the Park, to identify our Notable trees.

Passing of an Era

Misery Bay lost several friends this year, none more fondly remembered than long-time volunteer Ellie Sifferd Moore, whose family donated the land on which the park now stands. Her obituary appeared in the Manitoulin Expositor on April 1, 2016:



Ellie Moore of Ann Arbor, Michigan, and Silver Water, Ontario, 85, passed away peacefully at home (Meadowcroft Farm, Ann Arbor)

surrounded by family on March 26, 2016. Born September 14, 1930, to Calvin S. and Eunice Eleanor (Shepherd) Sifferd in Saginaw, MI. Ellie retired in 1991 from the Ann Arbor Public Schools. She taught elementary school at King, Newport and Lawton schools from 1970 to 1991. From 1956 to 1970, Ellie did substitute teaching in the Ann Arbor and Ypsilanti school systems. She taught at Beth Israel Cooperative Nursery School in Ann Arbor from 1958-1961. Ellie began her teaching career at Switzer School in Champaign, IL from 1952-1955. She held a B.A. with High Honors from the University of Illinois, Urbana, and an M.A. from the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. Ellie is survived by her beloved husband of over 65 years (and high school sweetheart), retired University of Michigan Professor of Biology Thomas E. Moore, daughters Deborah Moore, New York City, and Melinda "Mindy" (Brian) Kerr, Ann Arbor, sisters Nancy Lambert of Ann Arbor and Anne (Bryce) Styza of Chenequa, WI. Ellie was proud to have three loving grandsons: Alex Kerr, Pleasanton, CA, Andrew and Paul Yanchyshyn, New York

City. Additionally, she leaves behind several nieces and nephews. Following her retirement, Ellie helped edit Living In Ann Arbor, published by International Neighbors, where she was president from 1968-1969. She served on the board of directors at Kempf House Museum, Ann Arbor, from 1996 to present, and was president of the board in 2004-2006. Ellie also served as chairman of the Kempf House Museum Piano Restoration Committee, raising funds to restore the first concert grand piano in Ann Arbor. She also volunteered with the Friends of Misery Bay organization during her summers at the family cottage in Canada. In addition, she volunteered in Mortar Board activities and served as a member of the board of the Friends of the Ann Arbor Public Library. An avid University of Michigan sports fan, Ellie's other activities included reading, music, watching old movies, crossword puzzles, scrabble, hearts, travel, and boating on the Great Lakes (especially exploring the North Channel and her most favorite Benjamin Islands). Known for going the extra mile in effort in everything she did, Ellie was a model teacher and volunteer. She was a gracious hostess, befriending many people from around the world. Ellie was a radiant, thoughtful, generous and kind person with numerous treasured friends. Ellie and Tom and their children and grandchildren cherished family time at their summer home on Manitoulin Island, Ontario. There on the shores of Lake Huron the family spent many hours boating, fishing, swimming, watching sunsets, playing cards and scrabble games (which Ellie usually won). The family cottage was not far from Misery Bay where Ellie's parents became Landed Immigrants in

Canada in the late 1950's. Her parents later donated their land through the Nature Conservancy of Canada thus starting the Misery Bay Provincial Park on the south shore of Manitoulin Island on Lake Huron. Cremation has taken place. Ellie and the family appreciated the thoughtful care of Dr. Bryan Schneider's Team 2, Oncology Center, and Dr. Daniel Spratt's Radiation Oncology staff at the University of Michigan, as well as the wonderful help from Arbor Hospice and Shared Care

Services staff. A private family memorial will be held later this year, as Ellie requested. In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to the Piano Fund of the Kempf House Museum, 312 S. Division St., Ann Arbor, MI, 48104, or to the Handicapped Trail Fund of the Friends of Misery Bay Provincial Park, P.O. Box 114, Gore Bay, Ontario, Canada, P0P 1H0. So long, Ellie. We will never forget the wonderful times we've had together. We will miss you.