

Singing Sands Almanac

Nov./Dec.
1980

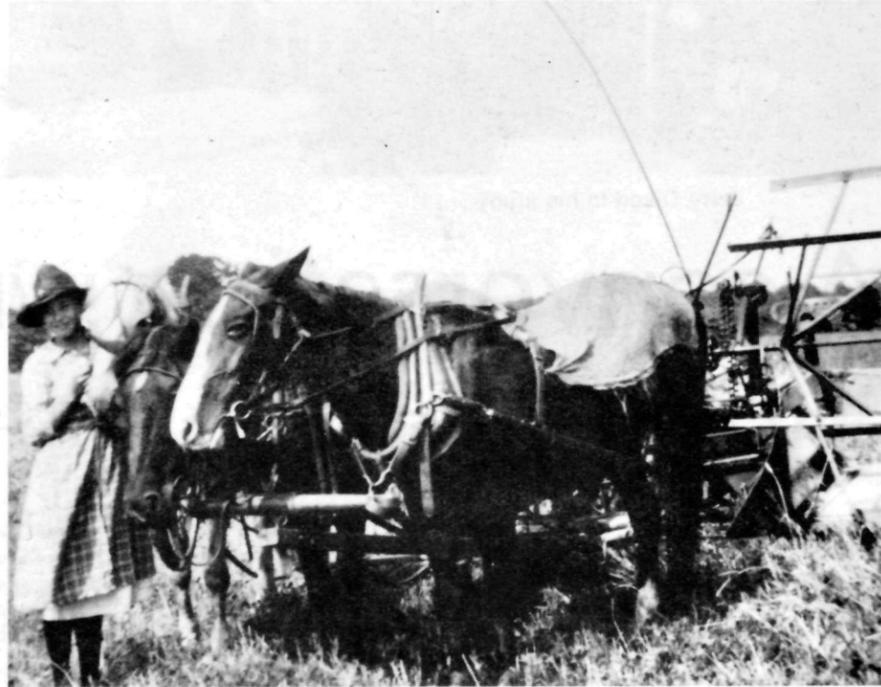
Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore
National Park Service

Vol. 3, No. 7



Wyckoff tractor with cornpicker

BOB DAUM



Chellbergs' sturdy draft horses

BOB DAUM

Running against the tide A family farm, 1980s style

By Glenda Daniel

It is the end of harvest season now on Jim and Lou Wyckoff's farm in Washington Township, Porter County. Piles of corn on the cob, hoisted into the seed house loft by elevator, are moving along a conveyor belt for sorting.

Anders and Johanna Chellberg, whose 19th century farms is preserved at the National Lakeshore, hefted their grain up by hand in 50-pound bags.

The Wyckoffs have six tractors; the biggest one has an air-conditioned cab with stereophonic sound on the radio; its wheels are hydraulically controlled.

The Chellbergs had a pair of sturdy draft horses. They also kept cattle, pigs, and chickens.

The Wyckoffs have no pigs or poultry, but they do keep cattle — more than 4,000 head of them on ranches in Nebraska and Texas. Jim makes trips in his private Cessna to inspect them several times a year.

Indiana farming has obviously changed a great deal in the last hundred years; Dave Yaeger, county agricultural extension agent, says the Wyckoffs are among the most progressive of the lot. There are more than a few similarities, though, between the Wyckoffs of 1980 and the Chellbergs of 1890. Most of the similarities have to do with lifestyles. And, ironically, it is the Wyckoffs' very progressiveness that makes their traditional lifestyle possible.

Their farm is a family enterprise, to start with. Family farms were the

norm in Anders Chellberg's time, but today agricultural land that isn't owned by a corporation is something of a novelty. In some places, agricultural land itself is a novelty. County Agent Yaeger says that even Porter County, which is still primarily rural, loses between 2,000 and 3,000 acres each year to development.

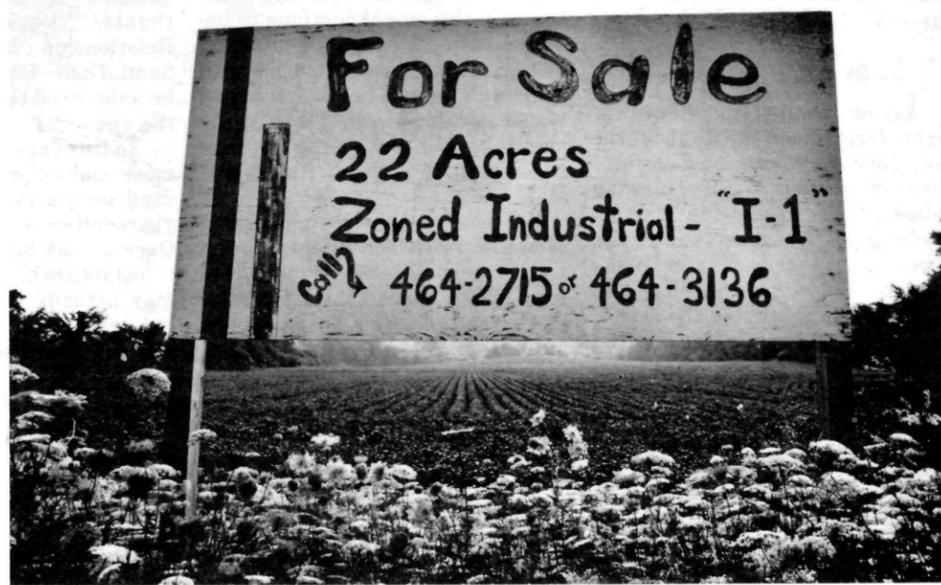
The Wyckoffs run strongly against this tide. Their business supports not only Jim and Lou but their four grown children, two of them married with children of their own, and also Jim's brother John and wife Jan. Lou boasts: "I get to see my grandchildren every day."

They are able to do this because they found a way to specialize. They raise *some* soybeans on their 1800-acre spread, and they sell *some* corn in bulk for conversion to such uses as corn oil, cereals, and cattle feed. They graze beef in Nebraska and own a small orange grove in Texas. Mainly, though, they develop

and sell hybrid seed corn.

Jim's father was the first family member to experiment with corn genetics. Back in 1932, at the heart of the Great Depression, he came up with a special hybrid seed that increased his yield 15 per cent. His descendants, armed with practical experience, the latest technology, and science degrees from Purdue, have expanded the business a hundredfold. (Like farmers from time immemorial, Jim is fond of commenting that his crop depends on the weather. He doesn't say it with the same sense of finality that Anders Chellberg would have said it, however. When weeks of still, humid days threatened the cross-pollination of his seed corn this summer, Jim hired a helicopter to stir up a breeze).

Thus it has happened that Wyckoff Hybrids now grow in cornfields all over the Midwest; and thus it is also, paradoxically, possible to visit the Wyckoff family through



Porter County: 2,000 acres lost yearly to development

this year's harvest and holiday seasons and learn more than a little of what harvests and holidays were like for the Chellberg family almost a hundred years ago.

A typical day's activities begin at dawn. Lou Wyckoff is in her kitchen by 6 a.m. Breakfast will be eggs and toast and bacon, cereal, and bowls of homemade pear preserves, her specialty. Like generations of farm women before her, she keeps a kitchen garden and cans all the produce that isn't eaten immediately.

By 7, Jim will be in his office next door, going over the books, sorting out orders. Some of the family's business is retail. Seed corn, in particular, is often sold to individual farmers. But much of the business is wholesale. Often large multinational companies will contract in advance to buy all the beans or corn that can be harvested from a particular field. Jim says "Some years they get more for their money than others."

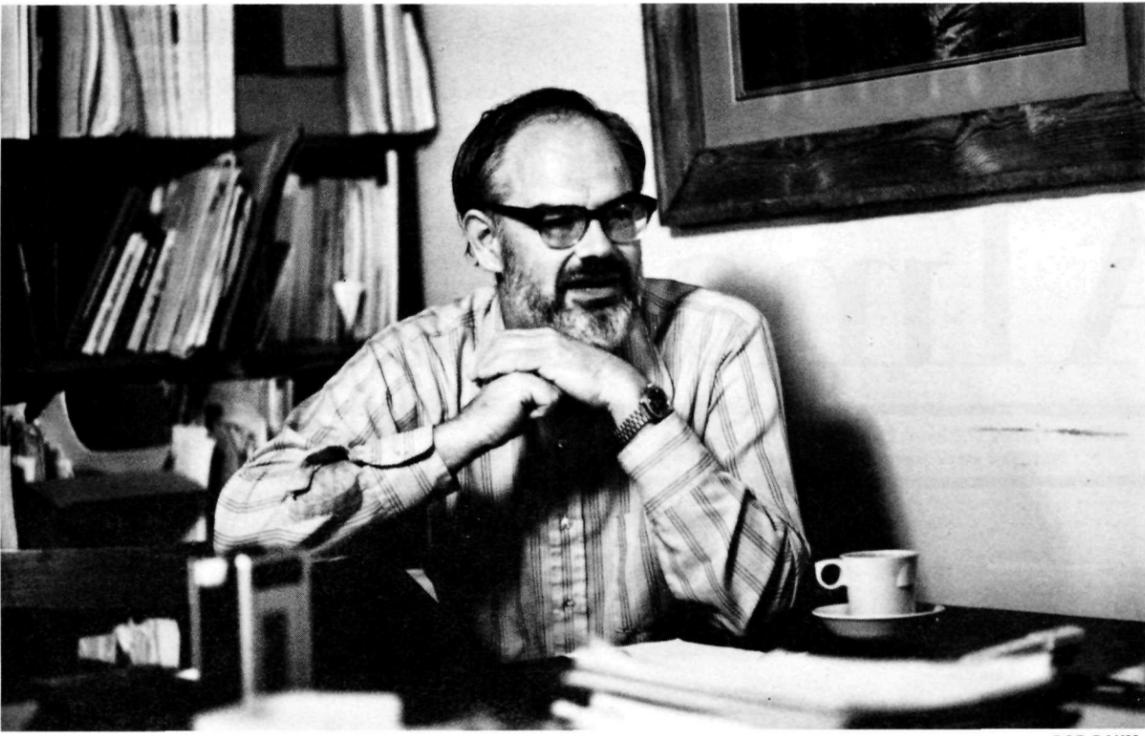
If beans are being harvested on a

particular day, the workers will scatter to the fields. If seed corn is on the agenda, a crew will also be assigned to the seed house. Lou and her brother-in-law and sister-in-law throw out bad ears as the corn passes along the conveyor belt in the loft. It is then dumped into wagons and hauled to large bins equipped with mechanical dryers. Later the corn will be shelled and sorted mechanically by shape — flat, medium flat, round — to fit different planting machines.

At noon, Lou will have another hot meal ready. In fall and winter, it is served indoors. In the spring, she often carries a meatloaf, baked beans, and a jug of lemonade to the fields; and in summer both family and "hired hands" (mainly area teenagers) brown bag it on the lawn.

Because modern tractors come equipped with headlights, the harvest season work day is even longer now than it was for the Chellbergs. The men are sometimes in the fields until midnight.

continued on
page 3



Jerry Olson in his study

BOB DAUM

A conversation with Jerry Olson

Dunes ecologist

(Many people know already about the role of the Indiana Dunes in early ecological research. Dr. Henry Cowles, working here at the turn of the century, developed some of the first theories about plant succession. Fewer people are aware that a later generation of ecologists also used the dunes as an outdoor laboratory. The work of Dr. Jerry Olson, in particular, modified the earlier scientists' notions of a single regional climax and formed a cornerstone of modern thinking on ecology. Larry Waldron, chief interpreter at Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, wrote this story after a visit with Dr. Olson in the remote cabin where he now lives in east Tennessee.)

By Larry Waldron

Lying awake sometimes at night, Jerry Olson thinks about the sand dunes on Mars, about the cold winds of carbon dioxide blowing yellow clouds across the Martian landscape. He has seen the photographs sent back from Viking I and, using formulas developed on earth, he has calculated the rate of sand transport in an atmosphere one hundredth the weight of ours.

Dunes have been part of Jerry Olson's life as long as he can remember. His father, a regional planner in Chicago, would take his family from suburban Riverside to spend weekends camping in the Indiana Dunes. One campsite was at Johnston Beach.

There he would climb a steep dune of bare sand to the top and survey a new world. To the north were foredunes and Lake Michigan. To the south was a hardwood forest covering stabilized dunes. Between the first clinging plant on the beach and the seemingly eternal forest lay a mystery to be uncovered.

It was a mystery he was well suited to solve. His mother had been raised on a farm and knew and loved natural things. His father often left naturalist reports on the Chicago area lying around the house; Jerry read them all. And, he found, in the Cook County Forest Preserves, a natural laboratory right outside his door. Exploring along the Des Plaines River, he learned the names of plants with a newly acquired floral guide.

When he was 15, Olson began taking courses at the Morton Arboretum. The next year he enrolled at the University of Chicago, already famous for its work in plant ecology. The reputation had

begun building in 1896 when John M. Coulter agreed to build a Department of Botany. One of his students was Henry Chandler Cowles. Cowles' Ph.D. thesis, "The Ecological Relationships of the Vegetation of the Sand Dunes of Lake Michigan," was to change the course of botany.

In this paper Cowles showed how plant communities change their environment, primarily the substrate or soil, which then leads to a change in the plant communities. According to Cowles, this continues until a state of equilibrium or climax plant community is reached.

In the Chicago region Cowles speculated that the evolving plant communities would continue to improve the soil with humus, nitrogen, and other nutrients until a climax forest of beech and maple would occur. In other words, the system would continue to improve itself until it reached its highest state.

Because of Cowles' pioneering scientific work and his reputation as a superb teacher he attracted men of like kind to the University of Chicago. Charles Olmsted who came from Yale was one of these.

In the early 1940s Olmsted was teaching a course begun by Cowles: Elementary Physiographic Ecology.

It was in Olmsted's class that Olson first began reading Cowles' papers. Olmsted was a challenging teacher and one of the questions he asked Olson was: "Is there really evidence that all the succession in the Indiana Dunes is going in the same direction?"

It was the nucleus of an idea that became Olson's doctoral thesis six years later.

The Physiographic Ecology class met in an office building in downtown Chicago. It was an inspired group. Many of the students were veterans of World War II, attending under the G.I. Bill. They had a sense of urgency and dedication nurtured by Normandy and Luzon. Though spared that experience by his age, Jerry Olson's inquiring mind and dedication served equal purpose.

On Saturdays the class took field trips with assignments to identify plants and note associations. After the class term was over Olson and a fellow classmate, Floyd Swink, continued to take weekend trips to the dunes, often on the South Shore Railroad. Swink, now with the Morton Arboretum and author of *Plants of the Chicago Region*, provided Olson with taxonomic help.

Olson soon began to draw on the fields of biology, geology, and soils to answer questions the dunes presented. Soils in particular had been slighted in previous dune studies.

Traditionally the study of soils had been left to agricultural colleges and not institutions such as the University of Chicago which practice a more theoretical science.

In 1950 Olson took soil samples he had been collecting in the Dunes to the University of California at Berkeley where he studied for a semester. There under professor Hans Jenny he analyzed the chemical composition of his samples. The information was invaluable in completing a Ph.D. thesis, "Vegetation-Substrate Relationship in Lake Michigan Sand Dune Development," which he submitted the following year at the age of 23.

In this paper Olson showed that most soil improvement in dune sand occurs in the first thousand years after a dune is stabilized. Once an oak-blueberry community is established, he wrote, the soil may actually deteriorate through the leaching of nitrogen, calcium carbonate, and other nutrients.

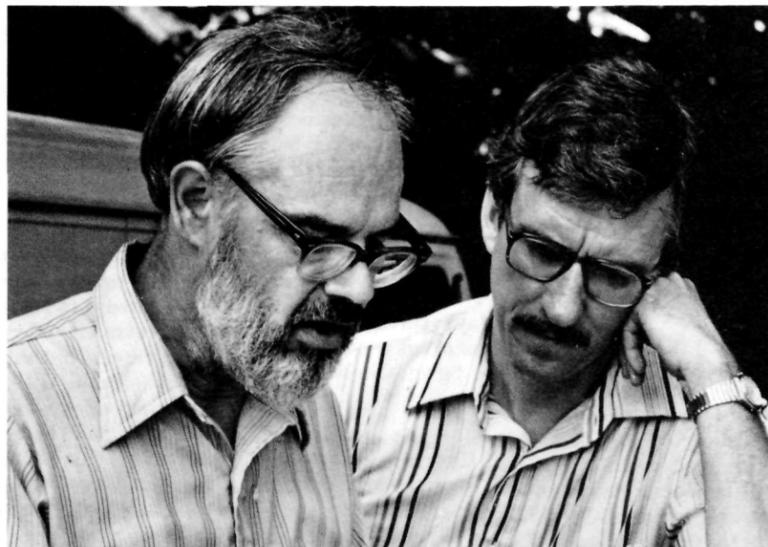
Olson identified two major routes of plant succession in the Indiana Dunes. The first is from dune grass to jack pine to a black oak-blueberry community.

The second goes from dune grass to basswood to red oak to sugar maple. Examples of this succession route's climax stage are found in damp pockets, protected from fires and drying winds, on the lower lee slopes of dunes.

In 1958 Olson summarized his work in the dunes by publishing four articles; one was in the *Botanical Gazette* and three were

Jerry Olson, Larry Waldron

BOB DAUM



BOB DAUM

Opening the gate to visitors

in the *Journal of Geology*. They are a testimony to his diversity of viewpoints. In addition to the relationship of succession to substrate, the four articles also addressed wind velocity profiles on dunes; lake level, beach, and dune oscillation; and plants as agents in shaping dunes.

Olson's work clearly shows that plant communities in the Indiana Dunes reach no single climax stage. Even so, Cowles' original theory of a straight-line succession to a beech-maple forest is still commonly repeated. One place where it is repeated is at the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore Museum.

(Jerry Olson works now at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory in Oak Ridge, Tennessee. Chief interpreter Larry Waldron and National Lakeshore photographer Bob Daum interviewed him at his home near Oak Ridge in September. The story continues with excerpts from that interview.)

Once we left the interstate the roads had no names, but the directions Olson gave us were precise: "Turn left at the Methodist Church and go .9 mile. If you reach my mailbox you have gone 15 feet too far."

We drove up a lane to a red cabin. Through the front door we could see a wall of bookshelves. Olson, a tall robust man with a graying beard, came striding out of the cabin to welcome us; for the next four hours we talked.

LW "What makes dunes special?"

JO "They're nature's experiments. They don't have the control of variables that laboratory experiments do, but that leaves to the scientist a kind of detective work. For instance dune systems horizontally around the world give a picture of how variables like climate, availability of biological materials, and substrate influence the ecosystem. Also wind and waves can remove the vegetation, giving bare sand again. The experiment runs again, like an instant replay."

LW "What were your objectives in doing your research?"

JO "I wanted to combine different scientific disciplines and see how the dune system as a whole starts from almost nothing in bare sand and develops into a highly integrated ecosystem. Most dissertations look at things in a highly specialized way."

LW "Henry Cowles' work has been widely popularized showing straight line succession from pioneering plants to a beech-maple forest. To what do you attribute this?"

JO "Well, Cowles' original thesis is more nearly correct in expressing a degree of uncertainty. But a dogma quickly sprang up that even got embraced in his later papers. I can understand that with a squirmy class a simplified picture helps them organize their thoughts. It kept people interested."

LW "What kind of work are you doing at Oak Ridge? Are you still involved with sand dunes?"

JO "Originally I worked on the recycling of elements. The balance of income and loss rates for elements is a direct outgrowth of the concepts that I learned and worked out in the age sequence and succession of the dunes."

LW "What are you working on now?"

JO "My current work is on the global climatic change that is likely to come about from the increase of carbon dioxide in the world atmosphere. It looks like the time span of decades and centuries will move us toward a regime of warmer weather. There may be more precipitation, but it seems clear that the general warming such as Dallas and even Tennessee experienced this summer will be associated with greater drying. So, on balance, I would expect the Great Lake levels to be dropping. This would give us new beach and foredunes."

November

Saturday, November 1

8 a.m. - 11 a.m.

WEST BEACH BIRD HIKE: Look for migrating birds among dunes and ponds. Meet at the West Beach parking lot.

10 a.m. - 1 p.m.

FALL PANORAMA HIKE: Open oak savanna, dunes, and interdunal ponds will be explored. Meet the Ranger at the Lake Street Beach parking lot in Gary (at the far northern end of Lake Street). Repeated Sunday, November 16 at a different time.

Sunday, November 2

9 a.m. - 1 p.m.

COWLES BOG AREA HIKE: Wetlands, forest, and dunes are the focus of this hike around the Cowles Bog area. Wear sturdy walking shoes. Meet at the Dune Acres train stop parking lot.

1 p.m. - 3 p.m.

FOR THE BIRDS: Find out about winter birds of the area, how to attract them to your house, and everything you always wanted to know about bird feeding. Meet at the Visitor Center.

Wednesday, November 5

3:45 p.m. - 5 p.m.

AFTER SCHOOL SPECIAL: "Feed the Birds" - These programs for local students are activity-oriented and just plain fun. This week, learn about birds that visit this area in the winter and how you can take care of them. We will make bird feeders from recycleable trash. Bring plastic or cardboard milk cartons, coat hangers, potato bags, and potato chip cans. Meet at the Environmental Education Center. Different programs presented on November 19 and December 3 and 17.

Friday, November 7

8 p.m. - 10 p.m.

DUNELAND DIMENSIONS: "The LaSalle Expedition II" - Reid Lewis transports us back to the 17th century court of Louis XIV at Versailles where we will meet the explorer Robert Cavalier Sieur de LaSalle in person. From here we learn about the LaSalle Expedition II: 15 high school students and 8 leaders who braved a rigorous winter and a 3,300 mile journey to retrace LaSalle's expedition. This story of twentieth century voyageurs has been acclaimed by President Carter, the Canadian and French governments, and Jacques Cousteau. Meet at the Visitor Center.

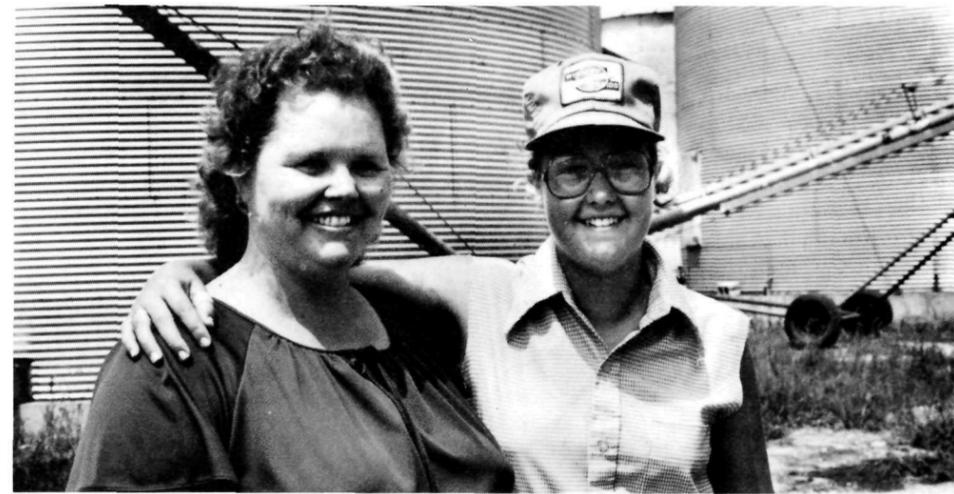
Saturday, November 8

9 a.m. - 12 noon

JOGGERS' SPECIAL: Join a Ranger for a fun run along a variety of trails in the Park. Distance is negotiable. Meet at the Visitor Center.

1 p.m. - 3 p.m.

FALL PLANT IDENTIFICATION: Learn about the variety of plants seen at this special time of year. Meet at the Ly-co-ki-we Trail parking lot for this hike.



Lou Wyckoff and daughter Beth

GLENDAN DANIEL

Farms, old and new

continued from page 1

There are no off-seasons on this farm. Winter is a time for grading the seed corn, treating it with chemicals to protect it from insect attack, and bagging it.

The few off-hours are reserved for equipment repair, outbuilding construction, and other maintenance chores. In this, too, the Wyckoffs follow tradition. "Everybody in the family has a special skill," says Lou. "Jim is a good electrician; John is a good carpenter." One of her sons-in-law is trained in electronics, so they don't even have to send their TV sets out for repair.

Community life for the Wyckoffs, as it was for the Chellbergs, is an extension of family life. "There are 15 families in Washington Township; we're all very good friends," Lou says. The families attend church together. They also have two big neighborhood parties each year — one after harvest and the second on New Year's Eve — and many smaller gatherings. "It seems like every time you turn around somebody is either graduating from school or getting married or having a baby." Lou and Jim had all the neighbors over last year for their

silver wedding anniversary.

Thanksgiving and Christmas are celebrated separately by each family. On those occasions Lou Wyckoff gets a break; she seldom has to cook for more than 30 people.

LOCATOR GUIDE

Visitor Center — U.S. 12 and Kemil Road.

Environmental Education Center — East side of Ind. Hwy. 49 at U.S. 12.

Ly-co-ki-we Trail parking area — U.S. 20 at Schoolhouse Road

Mount Baldy parking area — north from 90 degree curve on U.S. 12 near Michigan City.

Bailly-Chellberg parking area — By the Bailly-Chellberg Information Center south of Chellberg Farm between U.S. 12 and U.S. 20 on Mineral Springs Road.

West Beach parking area — County Line Road north of U.S. 12 near Gary.

Dune Acres train stop parking lot — Mineral Springs Road north of U.S. 12.

Visitor Center hours: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., closed Thanksgiving and Christmas.



MELISSA MACKENZIE

Ranger Elizabeth Rivera with Cuban refugees at Fort McCoy, Wis. — part of the National Lakeshore's bilingual program afield.

Sunday, November 9

1 p.m. - 3 p.m.

FROM THE SHORES OF ESCHIKAGOU: Today's program tells the oft-forgotten tale of Jean duSable, a Haitian settler and trader, who found favor with the native Americans, was instrumental in making peace among warring Indian tribes, and established the city of Chicago on the Indian's former forbidden battleground, Eschikagou. Meet at the Visitor Center. Repeated November 23.

1 p.m. - 4 p.m.

LITTLE CALUMET RIVER HIKE: Explore plant and animal communities associated with river wetlands. This hike is through wooded, gently rolling terrain. Meet at the Bailly-Chellberg Information Center. Repeated December 6.

Saturday, November 15

1 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.

FIFTEEN THOUSAND YEAR HIKE: The geology of Lake Michigan and the sand dunes of Indiana will be explored. Meet at

the Mt. Baldy parking lot. Repeated November 23 and December 7 at different times.

7 p.m. - 9 p.m.

NIGHT MYSTERIES: Join a Ranger and discover the sights and sounds of nighttime. Meet at the Bailly-Chellberg Information Center for this hike.

Sunday, November 16

1 p.m. - 3 p.m.

A BACKWARD GLANCE: Explore the lives of 19th Century fur traders and farmers at the Bailly Homestead and Chellberg Farm. A look at the interior of the Bailly house will be included. Meet at the Bailly-Chellberg Information Center. Repeated November 29 and December 7, 14, and 28.

1 p.m. - 4 p.m.

FALL PANORAMA HIKE: See Saturday, November 1. Note time change.

Wednesday, November 19

3:45 p.m. - 5 p.m.

AFTER SCHOOL SPECIAL: "Litter Monsters and All That Trash" - Join Rangers and the Indiana Dunes puppets for a look at the nasty world of trash. We will play a trash game, go on a search for trash monsters, and build our own monster. Bring any trash you can find (within reason!). Meet at the Environmental Education Center.

Friday, November 21

8 p.m. - 10 p.m.

DUNELAND DIMENSIONS: "Great Lakes Indians" - Amateur ethnologist and archeologist Edward Gillis brings to life the rich history and culture of our Native Americans. Mr. Gillis has been president of the Michigan Archeological Society and has been a student of Indian culture for most of his life. Meet at the Visitor Center.

Saturday, November 22

10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

FIRST ANNUAL LAKESHORE MARATHON: This 26 mile race along the lakefront and scenic dune area is sponsored by the Sand Striders, the Chesterton branch of the Lakeshore Running Club. Aid stations will be provided. Advance registration is \$5. Entrance fee and registration can be sent to Lakeshore Running Club, P.O. Box 502, Chesterton, IN 46304. Meet at the Visitor Center.

Sunday, November 23

11 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

FIFTEEN THOUSAND YEAR HIKE: See Saturday, November 15. Note time change.

1 p.m. - 3 p.m.

FROM THE SHORES OF ESCHIKAGOU: See Sunday, November 9.

Saturday, November 29

1 p.m. - 3 p.m.

A BACKWARD GLANCE: See Sunday, November 16.

Sunday, November 30

1 p.m. - 3 p.m.

WEST BEACH WONDERS: Discover a "living" sand dune, tree graveyards, interdunal ponds and an unusual variety of plant life on this hike. Meet at the West Beach parking lot. Repeated December 6 at a different time.

December

Wednesday, December 3

3:45 p.m. - 5 p.m.

AFTER SCHOOL SPECIAL: "Gee, it's Getting Cold" - Winter must be on its way. Join us for a look at the changes the Park is going through and the ways the plants and animals adapt to the cold of winter. Meet at the Environmental Education Center.

Saturday, December 6

10 a.m. - 12 noon

WEST BEACH WONDERS: See Sunday, November 30. Note time change.

1 p.m. - 4 p.m.

LITTLE CALUMET RIVER HIKE: See Sunday, November 9.

Sunday, December 7

11 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

FIFTEEN THOUSAND YEAR HIKE: See Saturday, November 15. Note time change.

1 p.m. - 3 p.m.

A BACKWARD GLANCE: See Sunday, November 16.

Saturday, December 13

11 a.m. - 1 p.m.

WINTER PLANT IDENTIFICATION: Find out about winter "weeds" that came from the flowers of summer. Meet at the Visitor Center.

2 p.m. - 4 p.m.

HOLIDAY NATURE CRAFTS: Bring your creativity and get into the holiday spirit by making ornaments from natural objects. This program is for the young and young at heart. Meet at the Visitor Center.

Sunday, December 14

11 a.m. - 1 p.m.

DISCOVER WINTER: This hike explores how animals and plants prepare for winter as well as the other special sights and sounds of the season. Meet at the Ly-co-ki-we Trail parking lot. Repeated December 21 at a different time and location.

1 p.m. - 3 p.m.

A BACKWARD GLANCE: See Sunday, November 16.

Wednesday, December 17

3:45 p.m. - 5 p.m.

AFTER SCHOOL SPECIAL: "Holiday Nature Crafts" - Natural materials are always nice to spruce up your home. Today, everyone will have the chance to make a variety of decorations from objects easily found outside. Meet at the Environmental Education Center.

Saturday, December 20

7 a.m. - 11 a.m.

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT: Don't miss this opportunity to participate in the best known of all bird counts. Join in the search for the elusive Virginia rail and many other winter birds. Bring binoculars, dress warmly, and be prepared to hike through frozen marsh areas. Meet at the Visitor Center.

1 p.m. - 4 p.m.

A TRADITIONAL CHRISTMAS AT BAILLY: Today's program brings us back to the holiday celebrations of a simpler time - a time of songs, roast goose, and toasts for plentiful beaver and mink in the coming year. A discussion of 19th Century French-Canadian and Swedish holiday customs will be combined with a walk to the Bailly Homestead. Meet at the Bailly-Chellberg Information Center.

Sunday, December 21

11 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

WINTER DUNES: Discover the story of Lake Michigan's sand dunes as well as the magical quality of winter dunes. Meet at the Mt. Baldy parking lot. Repeated December 27 at a different time.

1 p.m. - 3 p.m.

DISCOVER WINTER: See Sunday, December 14. Note time change. Meet at the Bailly-Chellberg Information Center.

Saturday, December 27

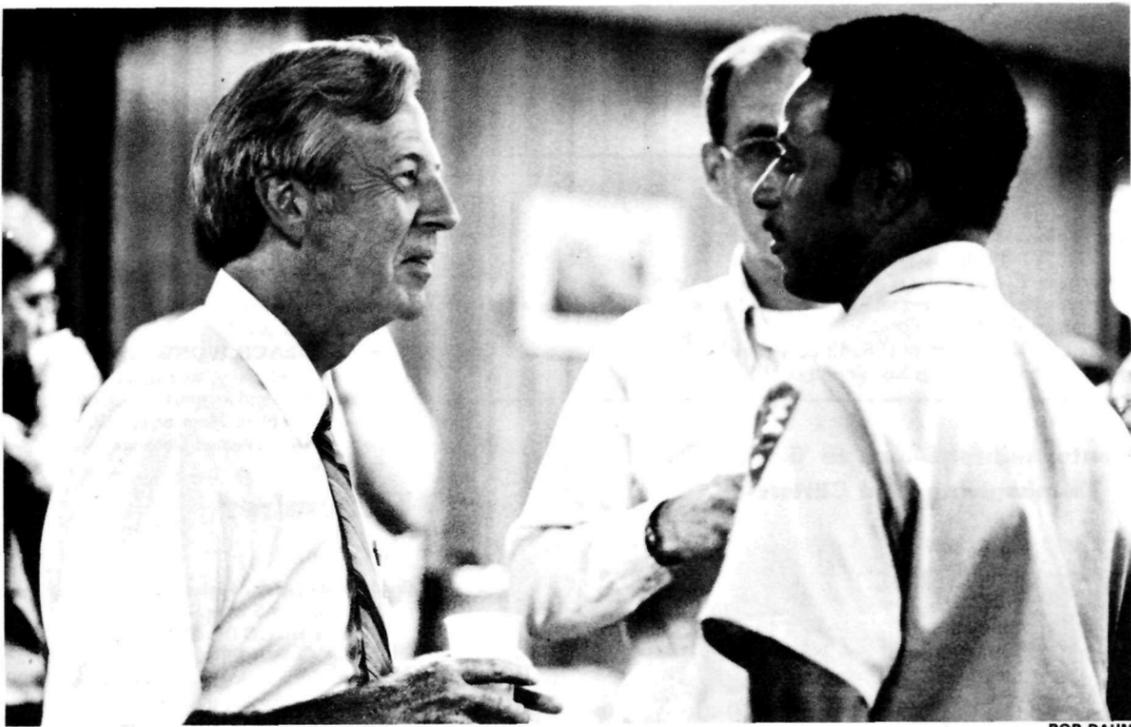
1 p.m. - 2:30 p.m.

WINTER DUNES: See Sunday, December 21. Note time change.

Sunday, December 28

1 p.m. - 3 p.m.

A BACKWARD GLANCE: See Sunday, November 16.



BOB DAUM

Russ Dickinson, the Park Service's newest director, was pushing the need to economize on a recent visit to Indiana Dunes. "Budgets are going to be tight in all government departments," he told the staff. "So for the next few years we'll be emphasizing operations rather than construction, and we'll be trying to make existing programs stronger rather than creating new ones."

It was not a message designed to win friends, and it was greeted with some worried questions. Jim Dunning, Midwest regional director, said that people are more likely to accept such a message from Dickinson, however, than from many another high level official.

In the 63 years of the National Park Service's existence, he is the first director who started at the very bottom of the hierarchy — as a seasonal ranger in Grand Canyon — and worked his way up. "When he talks about budget cuts you can figure that at least he understands what the cuts will mean for the day-to-day operations of a particular park," Dunning said.

Dickinson's experience weighed heavily in his favor when a group of nine regional directors and the Alaska area director for the Park Service met earlier this year to decide whom they would recommend for the newly vacant job.

"The decision was ultimately up to the Secretary of the Interior," Dunning said. "But there has been concern in recent years about the Park Service's increasing vulnerability to changes in the political winds." (The Service has had only ten directors in its more than six decades, but four of them have served since 1972. The first of those four was Ron Walker, former advance man for then President Nixon).

"We hoped to find someone experienced in administration, knowledgeable about the Park Service, and acceptable both to an incumbent or a new administration," Dunning said. They settled on Dickinson and informed Interior Secretary Cecil Andrus at 1:30 on a sunny spring afternoon. "I'll let you know," he told them.

The group expected to learn his decision within a few weeks, "but we got a call by noon the next day," Dunning recalled. Andrus had been on the phone to congressmen, senators, environmentalists, and others who knew of Dickinson's record. "None of them objected," Andrus told them. "It looks like you've picked yourselves a director." The announcement was made immediately.

Russ Dickinson has worked in traditional western parks like Grand Canyon, Big Bend, and Grand Teton over the years. He has also worked in an urban situation, as deputy director of the National Capitol Region and as deputy director of the National Park Service. Most recently he was regional director for parks in the Pacific Northwest.

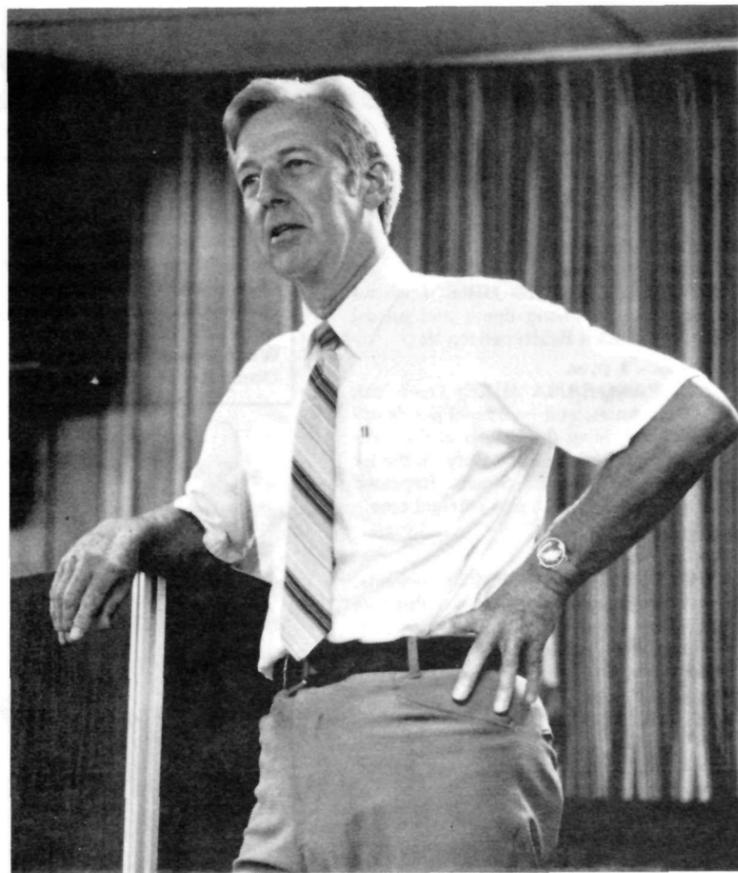
Among old friends, the new Director has a reputation for tact, patience, and an even temper. Dickinson himself said he tends not to become personally offended at criticism of the Park Service. Asked specifically about how he responds to criticism of policy and programs from environmental groups, he said "it would be a miracle if we always agreed. But such groups are a vital part of the support system for national parks; if it weren't for citizen activists, many of the parks wouldn't exist."

During his two-day visit to the Dunes, Dickinson met with members of a local environmental group, the Save the Dunes Council, and spoke at a banquet they held.

Charlotte Read, executive director of the Council, said Dickinson didn't support all of her group's proposals for an Indiana Dunes expansion bill pending in Congress, but she came away with a good impression of him, all the same. "His reactions seemed honest and his arguments were cogent; he was well informed. I think he really cares about maintaining a high level of professionalism in the Park Service. And he seemed, aside from all that, to be a man who loves the work he is doing."

In his meeting with the National Lakeshore staff, Dickinson answered questions and responded with good humor — as only an insider can — to jokes about "the uniform problem" and Park Service housing. He assured his audience that the new austerity will not damage efforts to hire and promote more qualified women and minorities. And he said that parks which draw the most visitors will, out of necessity, have priority for the limited funding available over parks less heavily used. There was evidence in the first six months of this year, he said, that urban parks like Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore are attracting bigger crowds than the better known but more remote preserves like Yellowstone. He said he'll be watching carefully to see if the trend continues.

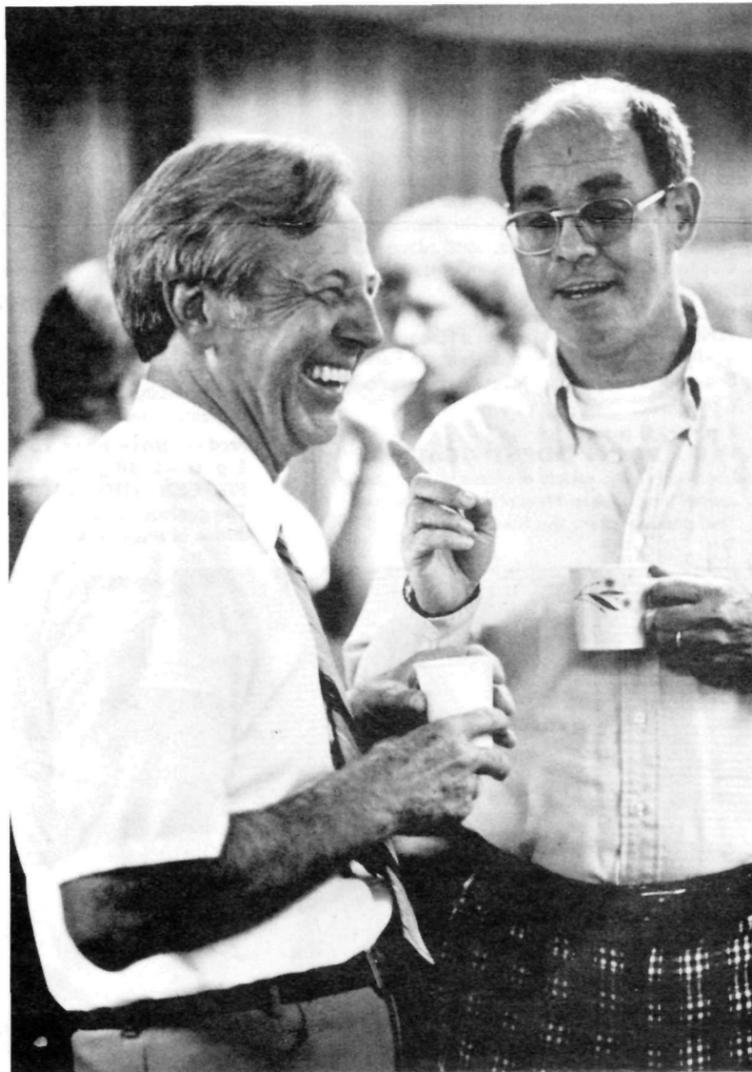
G.D.



BOB DAUM

Director visits the Lakeshore

BOB DAUM



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