

January 23, 2000

Yesterday we saw a bird on the river we haven't seen before. A "ring-necked duck". It is a black and white diver. The American mergansers and American goldeneyes are also here. They don't show up until it really gets cold. The geese and mallards are here, but they are here year around.

Last I heard from Amy was a short note saying she was going to Manhattan and was excited, but apprehensive.

I've been doing a lot of running - 10 miles yesterday. I hope to run in a half marathon (13+ miles) in Ludington on June 17. The course is from downtown Ludington out to the state park, partially through the dunes, and then back along the lakeshore road.

I just read L.Ron Hubbard: Messiah or Madman? written by a guy who had spent 20 years in the Church of Scientology. The conclusion was that he was a madman. Fascinating character, but a power-crazy nut. In the divorce trial of one of his wives, someone testified that he was a paranoid schizophrenic. He was an "ends justifies the means" sort of person who created the Church of Scientology and kept it very much under his control until he died in the 1980's. The "auditing" - a form of therapy - that the Church provides to members is generally considered very effective by former members. But the Church charges exorbitant fees for these services. I haven't heard anything from Tom about his Caribbean cruise on the Scientology ship.

Now I am reading a book of collected writings of John Muir, the guy who roamed all over the western wilderness in the 1800's. He was quite a guy - a brilliant inventor who loved the out-of-doors so much that he decided to just go play in the woods the rest of his life. His first excursion, when he was in his late 20's, was to walk from his home in Wisconsin to Florida - about 1000 miles.

We saw "Magnolia" last night and I was disappointed. It was a lot of different people having various bad times and using very bad language - all signifying nothing. I just didn't get it. It was supposed to be on of the best movies of the year. The movies I have enjoyed this year are "3 Kings", "Being John Malkovich", "The Insider" and "The Straight Story". "The Straight Story" is one Mom and Dad would enjoy, although it was directed by the guy who did "Blue Velvet" and "Eraserhead". It is the true story of an old guy who drives his tractor mower 300 miles across Iowa to visit his estranged brother.

Steve