



Friends of Plum and Pilot Islands, Inc.

Where History and Nature Meet at the Door!

Founded in 2007

Forum: Summer 2024

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Membership Form

FOPPI *Forum* back issues can be found at the Washington Island Archives, WI Marine Historical Society, WI Maritime Museum, Egg Harbor Public Library, Sturgeon Bay Public Library, and the Wisconsin Historical Society Archives.

Hello, Friends and Supporters,

Last weekend, we welcomed members to Plum Island for our 16th Annual Membership Meeting. It was wonderful to meet new people and catch up with our old friends. Folks had the opportunity to climb the rear range light and see the work the contractor has done to prepare for the lead paint abatement, priming, and finished coat painting. Soon the range light will be fully encapsulated and, like a caterpillar, emerge from her cocoon bright and shiny white. Thank you for your support on this project!

In my introductory speech, I talked about that feeling I and other Friends get when they step foot on Plum Island. Researchers have coined it a *sense of place* ... a deep connection or emotional attachment to a specific location, a rootedness. It's similar to that feeling you might get when you visit your childhood home or school, or the place where you met your partner. Plum Island is where I cast my worries to the waters and try and figure out what to do with my life; often she answers back, sending thoughts that fill me with hope and inspiration. Emeritus member Scott Nelson knew that Plum was where he was going to make his mark, which he did when he served in the U.S. Coast Guard and continues to do by volunteering for FOPPI. (Read more about *Captain Scott* in this issue.)

If you've felt that sense of place, please share—we'd love to hear what she means to you!

Due to staffing changes for our partner, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, we unfortunately found it necessary to cancel the volunteer workdays this season. We continue to work to support our mission, however, by offering *The Shoreline* educational charters, online merchandise sales, and workshops. *The Shoreline* will continue to provide guided lighthouse tours (www.plumandpilot.org/the-shoreline), weather permitting, until the beginning of October. We have added neat products to our online store (foppistore.square.site/) and are taking reservations for our new Butterfly Cruise (www.plumandpilot.org/butterfly) on August 21. In addition, Door County photographer Dave Heilman will lead the popular Fall Photography Workshop (www.plumandpilot.org/events-work-days) on September 21.

Don't miss these opportunities to visit Plum and feel your *sense of place*. And thank you for all you do to support our mission.

—Mary Beth

Around the Door: A Trip to Plum Island

Challenging weather conditions forced the cancellation of some trips planned to Plum and Pilot Islands during the Door County Spring Lighthouse Festival held June 7-9. Saturday afternoon's cruise on *The Shoreline* from Gills Rock to Plum Island featured spectacular clouds over Death's Door that warned of an approaching downpour. Fortunately, all were able to duck inside the island's boathouse until the storm passed. It was a quick mover, which allowed an opportunity for visitors to climb to the top of the lighthouse before returning to Gills Rock.

First published in *Door County Pulse* (doorcountypulse.com/around-the-door-a-trip-to-plum-island/). Photos by Tim Sweet.



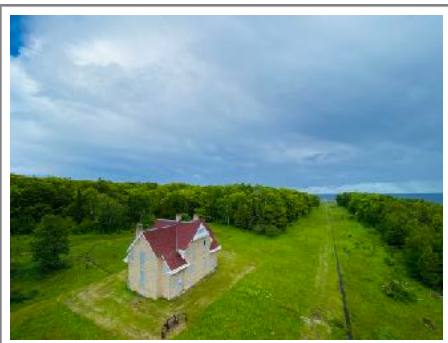
FOPPI volunteer Jude Kuenn teaches a passenger on *The Shoreline* about Death's Door.



Lighthouse Festival guests disembark on Plum Island as a storm blows in from the west.



The guests did an about-face and headed to the boathouse for shelter from the storm.



A view (from the rear range light) of the lightkeepers' house with the front range light in the distance.



After the storm passed, visitors had the opportunity to climb to the top of the rear range light.



Duluth-style life-saving station on Plum Island.



Kayaking Safety

Kayaking is a popular pasttime in Door County. The County offers breathtaking scenery and clear waters for us to enjoy. But as we know, those waters can quickly become treacherous—and live up to their “Death’s Door” nickname.

Before taking a kayak into the open water, know the hand and paddle signals (left) so you can communicate with those who cannot hear you. And **always** wear a personal floatation device when you are on the water.

Plum Island Lighthouse Painting Project by Tim Sweet

Mihm Enterprises of Hamilton, Michigan, arrived on Plum Island on June 27, 2024, to finish painting the rear range light. Mihm was on the island three years ago to paint the front range light and the top of the rear range; however, there was not enough money at that time to completely paint the lighthouse. This time, the contractor will sandblast and repaint the support legs and center tube of the historic aid to navigation. The job is expected to be finished in August.

The Friends of Plum and Pilot Islands (FOPPI) are funding the \$178,600 project with grants from the David L. and Rita E. Nelson Family Fund within the Community Foundation for the Fox Valley Region and the Great Lakes Foundation. Several private donations were also received from supporters of FOPPI.

The Washington Island Ferry Line transported the workers and their equipment from Northport to Plum Island.

Photos by Tim Sweet.



Mihm workers and equipment arrive by ferry at Plum Island.



The SkyTrak moves supplies on Plum Island.



A view of the range light from under the shroud.



Scaffolding surrounds the range light, which is shrouded to contain paint and dust.



Glimpse of a small area of HNWR.

On July 15, a warm and steamy day, Mary Beth Volmer, Nancy Hoefs Leisgang, and Sally Dery traveled to our sister refuge along the Wisconsin / Illinois border. Hackmatack National Wildlife Refuge (hackmatacknwr.org/) was recently awarded the 2024 Refuge Friends Group of the Year by the National Wildlife Refuge Association and honestly, we wanted to pick their brains! We exchanged tips on how to increase membership, encourage volunteerism, promote stewardship, advocate for increased U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service funding, and be changemakers in our community.

*Nature is not a place to visit,
it is home.*

—Gary Snyder



Pictured L-R, Cindy Skrudrud, Linda Oeffling, Ed Collins, Susan Sander, Mary Beth, Sally, Nancy, and Cassie Skaggs.

As one of the Friends of Plum and Pilot Island folks who helps with guiding tours on and around the islands, I am always on the lookout for stories regarding the maritime history on these fascinating places. A few of my favorite resources where one can find stories long forgotten include Steven Karges' *Keepers of the Lights: Lighthouse Keepers & Their Families, Door County, Wisconsin –1837-1939*, Newspapers.com, and NewspaperArchive.com.

Recently I was looking for more information on Martin Knudsen's rescues of crews on the ill-fated schooners *Forest*, *Gilmore*, and *A.P. Nichols* while he was the light keeper on Pilot Island. Knudsen served as the light keeper on Pilot from 1889-1897, and then after helping set up the lenses on the Plum Island range lights, he transferred to be the light keeper there. In his chapter on Pilot Island, Karges mentions that, from the early 1880s to 1894, numerous petitions had been made to Congress for lifesaving stations at Baileys Harbor and the Death's Door Passage, but it was not until the loss of the *Gilmore* and *Nichols*, and "the subsequent national attention given to Knudsen's heroic efforts brought renewed calls for a life saving station there"¹ that anything happened.

In fact, according to a February 1881 article in the *Door County Advocate*, the lighthouse board had expressed intention to establish a lifesaving station "on Plum Island next season."² However, the need for a lifesaving station on the brand-new Sturgeon Bay canal seemed to have taken precedence. It was another 14 years before the "next season" intention became a reality.

Following is the letter Knudsen submitted to the *Advocate* in December 1894 not only to once again solicit Congress for a lifesaving station in the area, but to also commend the fishermen and seamen residing on Washington Island for their "brave and self-sacrificing efforts" in rescuing navigators who found themselves in trouble on the shoals in the Death's Door Passage.
—Kim Krueger

The Needs of a Life Saving Station at the Door
"To the Editor of the *Advocate*:
Detroit Harbor, December 17—Referring to an article in a recent issue of the *Advocate* by Captain A.G. Brown, of the ill-fated scow *L. May Guthrie*, which stranded on Fisherman's Shoal

September 27, and also to the former articles written by able correspondents urging the necessity of a life saving station in this vicinity, I wish, through the columns of your estimable paper, to corroborate all that has ever been said in favor of this project and to add thereto a few facts, which strongly support the statements already made. By the records of this station are shown that since 1863, 72 serious accidents have happened to vessels in this vicinity. The accidents referred to are stranding, sinking, capsizing, and waterlogging. Twenty-six have happened directly on Pilot Island. Within the last two years, 11 vessels have stranded on Pilot Island alone, and three on Fisherman's Shoal, and 11 at other places in this immediate vicinity: making a total of 26 casualties to shipping in this short period of time. By keeping a record of passing vessels, we have ascertained that between 200-500 passages are made by vessels through Porte-des-Morts passage monthly, including sail and steam vessels of the largest dimensions and greatest tonnage, which demonstrates the large amount of valuable property and many lives constantly exposed to the danger's incidental to this vicinity.

"Never a year has passed without an accident happening to some vessel, and numerous other mishaps occurring of which no record is kept. This should fully show the need of a life saving station and the sufferings and privations to which wrecked seamen are annually exposed loudly call for a station fully equipped and ably manned by an efficient crew.

"The keepers of Porte-des-Morts light station have frequently rendered valuable assistance to wrecked seamen, but the means and equipment at their disposal are inadequate to the requirements of the service needed. Only a fully equipped life saving station will meet the needs of navigators that frequent this passage.

"Referring to Fisherman's Shoal, I would state a more terrible place to be stranded on cannot be found in Lake Michigan. That part on which the schooners *Newsboy*, *Blazing Star* and *Guthrie* have been wrecked is a completely submerged shoal, covering an area of perhaps four or five acres in extent, solid rock, with a depth of from two to three feet of water covering its surface and deep water completely surrounding it. The nearest land is nearly three miles distant. The force of the sea is well illustrated in the storm immediately

succeeding the stranding of the schooner *Newsboy* November 16, 1891, though a staunch vessel, was twisted like a corkscrew in 24 hours. Can anyone imagine a more horrible position than to be on a vessel in such a case and likewise when the *Guthrie* stranded? The vessel straining and pounding and breaking with the sea making clean breaches over her, the men wet, cold and every moment expecting the craft to be dashed to pieces, which would mean certain death there. No possibility of being saved, because land is too far distant. The thoughts of home and loved ones and possibilities of never seeing them are more trying there than most all other places, because usually people on dry land are near, whereby a ray of hope may cheer a drooping spirit. But for the persistent and daring efforts of the brave and self-sacrificing fishermen and seamen residing on Washington Island, more misery would be entailed than there is. Truly they deserve praise. As brave and capable a crew as ever handled an oar or managed a sailboat can be obtained among these hardy people. They are ever ready to assist those in distress. Yet though ever willing to render succor they have not the means at their disposal to render efficient aid and consequently much property is lost, and mariners lose heavily

financially, besides being much longer exposed to sufferings and privation and danger than they would if a life saving crew was at hand with the prompt and decisive measures they use to render aid.

“On behalf of all who navigate this passage I would urgently represent that no where is a life saving station more needed than right here. I would respectfully solicit the attention of our representative to congress thereto, asking his aid in accomplishing the object herein stated, and which others have written about, and which you have constantly urged through the columns of your valuable paper.

—Martin Knudsen, Keeper of Porte-des-Morts Light Station”



Plum Island life-saving station, date unknown.

Built in 1895 by the U.S. Life Saving Service, the Plum Island Duluth-style station is the only surviving one in the Great Lakes. It was staffed in March 1896 with Captain Ingar Olsen as its first keeper. The station went through major renovation in

1929 when the original building's boat bays were enclosed and converted to sleeping quarters. The foundation was raised three feet and indoor plumbing was installed.

The station remained in active service until 1992, when it was abandoned, and a seasonal Coast Guard Station was established on Washington Island. In 2010, Plum's LSS became listed in the National Register of Historic Places.

¹ Steven Karges, *Keepers of the Lights: Lighthouse Keepers & Their Families, Door County, Wisconsin—1837-1939*, Wm Caxton Ltd, 2005.

² *Door County Advocate*, New Life-Saving Station, Sturgeon Bay, WI 10 Feb. 1881, pg. 3.



Keepers' quarters and rear range light, Plum Island.

The Heroic Milkweed

During World War II, your parents or grandparents might have been harvesting milkweed pods to make a little cash.

Today, milkweed plants are often cultivated by nature lovers seeking to attract monarch butterflies. But in World War II, these native wildflowers were sought out for an entirely different reason.

Milkweed pods contain silky floss that is both waterproof and buoyant, making it ideal filler for the life preservers relied upon by American sailors and airmen. Read more at www.csmonitor.com.



Love Rock by James Heinz, Wisconsin Marine Historical Society

No, this story will not be about sweaty, sultry, scantily clad singles in skimpy swimsuits in a tropical paradise. This story will be about a desperate battle for survival in the icy cold waters of Lake Michigan just off the shores of Milwaukee on top of what was once a local landmark while thousands watched.

One man will survive. One man will become a hero.

In 1890 Milwaukee had a problem: clean drinking water. At that time Milwaukee got its water from wells dug next to outhouses and the polluted Milwaukee River. That year the city of Milwaukee began construction of a water intake crib 3,000 feet off what is now Bradford Beach.

MilwaukeeNotebook.com describes the crib: “Workers began by building a small island—called a ‘crib’—3,000 feet off Bradford Beach. Built of timber pilings and large rocks, the crib was octagonal in shape and 100 yards in diameter. From this manmade island, workers dug a shaft 140 feet down and then started to drive a tunnel to shore that would eventually house two 60-inch intake pipes.



North Point second intake crib workers.
Photos courtesy of
Milwaukee Water Works.

“While the work progressed, the engineers, miners, and bricklayers lived in a large timber structure on top of the crib, which also housed the tools, compressors, and other necessary machinery. Wary of Lake Michigan storms, the contractor made the shelter walls of 12-inch-thick timbers.”

Halfway through its construction, tragedy struck.

On April 19, 1893, a fierce storm struck Milwaukee. Sixty-five mph winds whipped the Lake into a churning froth. In a *Milwaukee Sentinel* article in Wisconsin Marine Historical Society (WMHS) files, sole survivor

James Miller described what happened: “So severe was the gale Wednesday that at 10 o’clock in the evening the men decided to seek safety in the upper lock, where we remained until 5 o’clock this morning. At that hour the water, which earlier in the evening had penetrated to the shafts, began entering our compression chamber. When the air in the lock became so foul that suffocation was certain if we stayed longer, by a unanimous vote, we decided to open the upper trap and force our way to the top of the crib. We pushed up the door, and the water rushed in. Only six of us reached the platform. Those left behind must have been immediately drowned, and I think their bodies will be found in the shaft when it is opened.

“The six of us were obliged to climb a ladder through 10 feet of water, and it was only after a desperate struggle that we gained a wire rope which had been attached to the hoisting engine. We grasped the rope, and there we all swung for about 10 minutes. Then the first of us gave out. He fell from the rope back into the pit and disappeared. One by one the men dropped, until before the end of the first half hour, McBride and I were the only ones still clinging to the rope. He held on until within 10 minutes of when the lifeboat arrived, but finally he became exhausted, loosened his hold on the rope, and sank, waving his hand as he disappeared below the water, as if to encourage me to cling to the line.”

The wooden structure on top of the crib washed away at 5:30 am on the morning of April 20. It vanished into the waves with an audible crack heard by the patients at St. Mary’s Hospital. When the structure washed away, it took with it the boilers, pumps, and compressors that supplied air to the shaft.

St. Mary’s staff notified the Milwaukee Lifesaving Service Station. Legend has it that North Point lighthouse keeper Georgia Stebbins also alerted the U.S. lifesaving station in Milwaukee after seeing the disaster unfold from the top of the lighthouse.

This was the last thing the lifesavers wanted to hear. They were cold and exhausted from spending the night rescuing the crew of the schooner *Laurina*. The *Laurina* was blown in from the Lake by the same storm. She sought shelter behind a short seawall sticking out from the shore in front of Juneau Park. The sea wall was not providing much protection, so the lifesavers hired a horse to drag their surfboat on a wagon to the park. At the

Love Rock by James Heinz, Wisconsin Marine Historical Society

intersection of Broadway and Wisconsin Avenue in downtown Milwaukee, the horse collapsed from exhaustion.

Apparently made of sterner stuff than their horse, the lifesavers carried their Lyle gun to the park and found that the *Laurina* was fortunately only 50 feet offshore, although in the raging surf, it might as well have been 50 miles. They were able to fire a light heaving line out to the schooner, and the schooner crew were then able to haul out to the ship a heavier whip line and secure it to the ship. As a result, the lifesavers were able to bring the crew ashore safely.



North Point second intake crib structure. Photo courtesy of Milwaukee Water Works.

The lifesavers had just returned to their station when a man on a horse rode up, shouting “The crib is breaking up.” However, in the best traditions of the service, they put their surfboat on a wagon and pulled and pushed it by hand down Jones Island from

the lifesaving station at the north end of the island south to National Avenue.

There they recruited a team of horses from a lumberyard to pull the wagon but as the wagon was crossing the railroad tracks at National and Water Street, the axle of the wagon broke and could not be repaired. Experienced sailors also felt that the surfboat could not make it through the surf that was raging between the crib and the shore.

The lifesavers then recruited the tug *Starke* to tow their surfboat to the crib site. The *Starke* had to turn back when the storm shattered its windows. The lifesavers then persuaded Captain William Gnewuch and his tug *Welcome* to tow their surfboat to the crib, a trip that normally would take about 10 minutes. The trip took an hour to get to the crib and another hour to maneuver around to its east side where there was a platform or pier that had not been washed away. The waves were that bad.

Wisconsin Marine Historical Society files show that for William Gnewuch it was *deja-vu* all over

again. In 1879 he had assisted his father Charlie Gnewuch in saving seven lives from the wreck of the scow schooner *Wilcox*, for which Charlie received the gold Lifesaving Medal.

When the tug got close enough to the crib the crew slacked the tow line so that the surfboat could approach the pier. The surfboat was commanded by Captain Nels Peterson. It had a crew of seven including surfman Ingar Olsen.

Onlookers on shore watched the tug approach, rolling in the storm. The watchers included relatives of the men trapped on the crib. As the surfboat approached the crib, one of the men lost his grip and dropped into the shaft and drowned. Only James Miller still clung to the cable.



Lifesavers towing a surfboat on a wagon. Photo courtesy of Wikipedia.

Captain Gnewuch then described what happened next: “All the while the lifeboat was drifting slowly toward the crib. It got close enough for Olsen to spring upon the pier. Just as he landed, great waves, over 30 feet high, swept the pier for several moments, and we thought both men were done for. But when the waves subsided, Olsen was seen to be making his way slowly towards Miller with a life line. He got hold of Miller just as he let loose his hold on the cable. The weight of the man was nearly too great for Olsen, but with extreme exertion he managed to release his own preserver and place it around Miller’s waist. Then he fastened the life-line to Miller. Taking another preserver, which had been thrown him, Olsen secured it about himself.”

“Then came the feat that caused all of us to admire him. Unhesitatingly Olsen threw Miller into the sea, and sprang in after him. In the water, with the waves breaking over their heads, Olsen got Miller on his back, and thus they were dragged into the lifeboat. Miller was more dead than alive.”

Miller, who weighed 235 pounds, had lost consciousness but had wrapped the cable around his arm, which prevented him from dropping into the flooded shaft. Olsen then described what

Love Rock by James Heinz, Wisconsin Marine Historical Society

happened: “As we finally maneuvered into position, I unconsciously dropped my oar, picked my way between the other men in the boat ... and made a dive. No command had been given and weeks later, when I was asked to explain how I happened to do what I did at the time, I was unable to give any explanation ... it was just as though an unseen hand was guiding my actions.”

“First, I took off my life-preserver and tried to put it on Miller. Trying to maneuver the inert form into proper position as the icy sea beat against us and sought to wash us from our perilous perch was a job that taxed my remaining strength. Finally, with this accomplished, the crew of our lifeboat threw me a heaving line, which I tied securely around Miller’s body. Watching my chance for a lull in the waves, I picked Miller up bodily, managed somehow to get him on my back and crawled with him to the lee side of what remained of the crib, and dumped him over for the crew to haul in.”

It took Olsen two hours to accomplish what he did. Olsen barely made it back to the tug. He had no memory of the return trip. Although badly bruised, Miller survived. He visited Olsen 32 years later when business brought him to Milwaukee.

The crew of the *Welcome* were not the only people who admired Olsen’s feat. The Lifesaving Service was so impressed that they awarded Olsen their highest award, the gold Lifesaving Medal, whose history I wrote about previously. This is the official citation. Date of the award May 24, 1893:

“During night of 19 April 1893, the house on the crib of a new city waterworks tunnel washed away during a prevailing gale. The 15 workmen took refuge in the air lock and on morning of the 20th, all but one had drowned. The lifesaving crew of the Milwaukee Lifesaving Station were towed to the crib by the tug *Welcome* and rescued the survivor from the crib. The superior intelligence, remarkable strength, and courageous daring of Surfman Ingar Olsen resulted in the rescue of the lone survivor. On the following day the crew helped recover the bodies of 10 of those drowned in this disaster.”

Captain Gnewuch said it best of Olsen’s feat: “It was the most courageous piece of work I ever saw.”

According to the Find-A-Grave website, Ingar Olsen was born in 1870 in Norway. The website goes on to say: “Capt. Olsen stayed with the Life-saving Service, and retired as the Milwaukee Station Commander. Capt. Olsen died on December 8, 1964 in Shorewood, WI. His wife Emily died two years later, and both are buried in Wisconsin Memorial Park in Brookfield, Wisconsin.”

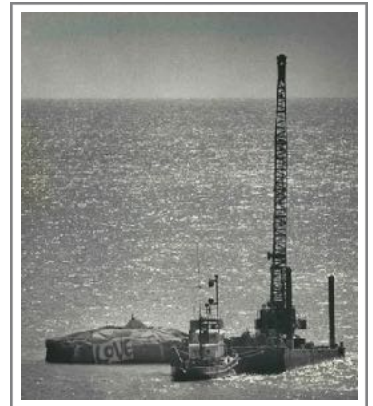
The crib structure went on to become Milwaukee’s beloved landmark, Love Island or Love Rock, so named because in 1970 someone paddled out to it and spray painted the word LOVE on the side facing Bradford Beach. In 1986, concerned about the safety of the deteriorating condition of the crib, and of those who kept paddling out to it to refresh the paint on the word LOVE, the City of Milwaukee blew it up. However, according to legendary Milwaukee underwater explorer Capt. Jerry Guyer, the city only removed about the top 40 feet of Love Island. The lower 100 feet of it still remains and is an excellent dive site with lots of fish.

About the Author

James Heinz is Wisconsin Marine Historical Society’s acquisitions director. He became interested in maritime history as a kid watching Jacques Cousteau’s adventures on TV. He was a Great Lakes wreck diver until three episodes of the bends forced him to retire from diving. He was a UW-Milwaukee police officer for 30 years. He regularly flies either a Cessna 152 or 172.



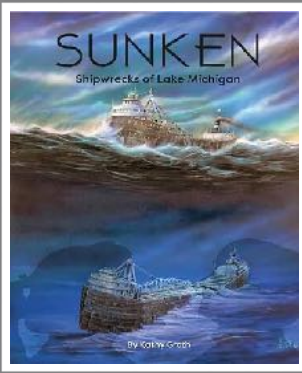
The Love Rock from above, 1963.
Photo courtesy of the
Milwaukee Journal.



The Love Rock demolition begins.
Photo courtesy of the
Milwaukee Journal.

To read more about the Love Rock, visit www.jsonline.com/story/life/green-sheet/2021/11/23/what-happened-milwaukes-love-rock-lake-michigan-what-the-wisconsin/8451715002/

Book Reviews



Sunken: Shipwrecks of Lake Michigan by Kathy Groth

An engaging read for young history enthusiasts in grades 3 through 7, *Sunken: Shipwrecks of Lake Michigan* is the companion book to *Sunken: Shipwrecks of Lake Superior* by the same Wisconsin author.

In this new book, we meet Chase, a boy who conquered his fear of deep water while exploring shipwrecks on Lake Superior with a new friend he met at the museum. Brizo, is a girl with incredible knowledge about the wrecks, storms, and heroes of the Great Lakes. Using a magical map, the two begin an adventure that allows them to time travel back to the day of some of the most horrific wrecks in Lake Michigan's history. (Review, in part, courtesy of kathygroth.com.)

*Life is a shipwreck, but we must not forget to
sing in the lifeboats.*

—Voltaire

Visit kathygroth.com/ to learn more about this Wisconsin author and the other books she has written.

Have you read a wonderful book that you'd like to tell other FOPPI members about? We'd love to hear about it! Please send your book reviews to friendsofplumandpilot@gmail.com.

Great Lakes Pirate: The Adventures of Roaring Dan Seavey by Gavin Schmitt

If you are able, first read *A Pirate Roams Lake Michigan: The Dan Seavey Story* by Dr. Richard Boyd and published by the Wisconsin Underwater Archaeology Association (www.wuaa.org). Schmitt picks up where Boyd left off and helps to fill in the gaps to help the reader better understand who Seavey was. Both books are greatly researched and interesting to read.

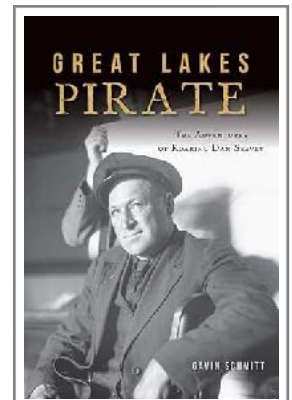
Boyd mentions that Seavey was acquainted with Captain Frederick Pabst (yes, the beer baron) and that Pabst enticed Seavey to undertake a gold-mining enterprise in Alaska. Seavey sold his Milwaukee-based profitable businesses, abandoned his family, and traveled "North to Alaska." Schmitt describes how risky this venture was and how difficult it was to mine for gold.

Seavey was an entrepreneur at heart and soon learned different ways to strike it rich, maybe not within a normal career path, but one that brought him some notoriety and "friends" who may have helped him skirt an arrest and an accusation of piracy. Regardless of Seavey's connections, the pirate label stayed with him for the rest of his life.

Surprisingly, Seavey ended his career with the U.S. Marshall Service (or Bureau of Indian Affairs as Boyd noted), working to curb poaching, smuggling, and piracy on Lake Michigan! Like his other ventures, this one didn't end too well but led to some interesting folklore! (Review by Mary Beth Volmer.)

Read more about the infamous Dan Seavey here:

doorcountypulse.com/roaring-dan-seavey-pirate-of-the-great-lakes/
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Dan_Seavey



*There is more treasure in books
than in all the pirate's loot on
Treasure Island.*

—Walt Disney

FOPPI Annual Meeting and Picnic by Tim Sweet

On July 20, the *Yankee Clipper* brought members and guests of the Friends of Plum and Pilot Islands (FOPPI) from Gills Rock to Plum Island for the organization's annual meeting and picnic. FOPPI volunteers arrived aboard *The Shoreline* to set up in advance for the arrival of the picnickers.

Following the meeting and the meal, visitors had time to explore the island. Many chose to see the rear range light that is currently surrounded by scaffolding and is partially shrouded in preparation for sandblasting and repainting. Others took a ride on *The Shoreline* to see the front range light and to learn how sailors align the dayboards on the front and rear lights to determine the safe passage through Death's Door.

Mid-afternoon, Captain Chris Voight swung by Pilot Island to pick up our visitors before returning the group to Gills Rock. Weather conditions were warm and humid with light winds and no precipitation. It was a lovely day on Plum Island with old and new Friends!



The *Yankee Clipper*.
Photo by Tim Sweet.

Transportation aboard the *M/V Yankee Clipper* was generously provided by an anonymous FOPPI member and supported by the fine folks at Voight's Marine Service.

A heartfelt thank you to Gary and Cindy Wilson for providing a lunch of fresh bread, meats, and cheeses from Mann's Store on Washington Island. Another heartfelt thank you to Stiles and Deb Meredith for providing guests transportation aboard the *Yankee Clipper*. Thank you to our volunteers and guests who brought a dish or dessert to share. Thank you as well to the Washington Island Cherry Train and Community Center for offering a lift and a place to gather in the case of inclement weather.



Mary Beth Volmer, Board President, welcomes guests to Plum Island.



USFWS staff Dave Bolin, Deputy Project Leader, Horicon NWR/Leopold WMD Complex, addresses guests.



Guests in the lunch buffet line!
Photo by Tim Sweet.



FOPPI Friends enjoying the day.



Pilot Island. Photo by Tim Sweet.



Left (photo by Tim Sweet) and above (photo by Jude Kuenn): The picnic team and Friends make their way to Washington Island on *The Shoreline*.



The picnic team, L-R: Capt. Scott, Jude, Sally, Kim, Nancy, Kiersten, and Barb.
Photo by Dawn Nelson

Find a group of people who challenge and inspire you; spend a lot of time with them, and it will change your life. —Amy Poehler

FOPPI Annual Meeting and Picnic



Plum Island is a Leave No Trace site. To learn how you can leave no trace, visit the following websites:

- www.fws.gov/project/leave-no-trace-principles
- lnt.org/why/7-principles/

To further your knowledge of how to protect our planet, enroll in the free **Leave No Trace 101** online course at learn.lnt.org/courses/101.

The picnic team kept lunch and cleanup supplies as environmentally friendly as possible with cloth napkins and reusable plates and silverware. Photos by Steve Schmidt.



On Saturday, July 20, several volunteers were presented with the President's Volunteer Service Award as acknowledgement of and appreciation for the number of hours they volunteered in 2023 for the Friends of Plum and Pilot Islands, a 501(c)3 organization. The program is administered by AmeriCorps and Points of Light. Volunteers were awarded a bronze coin for 100-249 hours, a silver medallion for 250-499 hours, and a gold medallion for 500+ hours. In addition, awardees were presented a personalized certificate of achievement and letter signed by the President of the United States.



Mary Beth Volmer earned a silver medal.



Jim Schwartz earned a silver medal.



Nancy Leisgang earned a silver and Sally Dery earned a gold medal.



Jim Robinson earned a gold medal.

The following volunteers earned bronze coins:

Karen Ellery, Jude Kueen, Paul Kueen, Scott Nelson, Colleen Pilat, Mike Repp, Chuck Scheckel, Tim Sweet, and Kimberly Wells.

Congratulations, Captain Scott Nelson!

Recently, a longtime FOPPI volunteer and Emeritus Board member, Scott Nelson, earned his captain's license and can serve as captain of *The Shoreline* charters.

Here is what Scott had to say about the process of earning his license:

"I had two long-weekend courses. The first one was for operator of uninspected vessels. This included navigation on paper charts, navigational rules of the road, safety equipment, etc. The following weekend was for the upgrade to inspected vessels such as *The Shoreline*. I also completed the towing endorsement that weekend.

"I obtained my transportation workers card which included a background check. I went through drug testing, a physical, and course work for CPR, AED, and first aid. Finally, I documented sea time requirements. I have been licensed as a 100-ton Master.

Thanks to my mentors, Stiles Meredith and Jim Robinson."

Thank you, Captain Scott, for your service to FOPPI!



Captain Scott Nelson.

Volunteering / Events / Supporting FOPPI

With the recent staffing changes in the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, work days on Plum Island have been limited, but our dedicated volunteers have made great progress on some projects in the time they have had on the island. Photos by Jude Kuenn.



Kimberly and Ginnie scrape the porch railing in preparation for painting.



Paul, Ginnie, and Dallas paint the porch railing on the crew quarters.



Paul putting on the first coat of white paint.



Kimberly and Dallas putting on a second coat of paint.



The 12th Annual Death's Door Bar-B-Q has been **canceled for 2024**, with the recent passing of one of its organizers, Dick Jepsen. Visit www.deathdoorbbq.com/ to read more. We extend our sympathy to Mr. Jepsen's family and friends.

More Events and Opportunities

Visit www.plumandpilot.org/events-work-days to learn about more fun events and opportunities supported and offered by FOPPI, including the following:

- Butterfly Cruise: August 21
- Photography Workshop with Door County photographer Dave Heilman: September 21
- Door County Maritime Museum Fall Lighthouse Festival: October 4-6

Looking for a special anniversary, birthday, or “just because” gift? Look no further: Cruises aboard *M/V The Shoreline*

A gift card for a Death's Door cruise on *The Shoreline*, which includes a stop on Plum Island and a close-up water view of remote Pilot Island, is sure to make some waves—and some special memories! Numerous private tour options are also available: Visit Rock Island State Park and Fayette Historic State Park, or cruise by the Poverty Island and St. Martin Island lighthouses. All profits generated from the trips will be put into the continued restoration and preservation of the historic maritime structures found on Plum and Pilot Islands. Visit fareharbor.com/embeds/book/plumandpilot/items/ to buy the gift that will be remembered.



Plum Island boathouse and crew quarters. Photo by Steve Schmidt.



If a cruise is not your speed...

Click over to our store at www.plumandpilot.org/store to find a variety of other fun FOPPI gifts for friends and family!

- Caps and beanies
- Tee shirts and hoodies
- Plum Island prints and cards
- And SO much more, including wine and pint glasses, mugs, candles, and even books!



Volunteering / Supporting FOPPI

Friends of Plum and Pilot Islands welcomes these new members:

- ✦ Carlson Erickson Builders Inc., Sister Bay, WI
- ✦ Robert Geiger and Family, Elmhurst, IL
- ✦ Karen Sanchez and Family, Green Bay, WI
- ✦ Susan Sander, Genoa City, WI
- ✦ Ashley Viste and Family, Madison, WI

Friends of Plum and Pilot Islands, Inc. (FOPPI) was established in 2007 to preserve the unique island ecosystems and foster partnerships to preserve their heritage for future generations.

Your membership dues and charitable gifts help to restore and preserve the historical maritime structures on these island and support education in the areas of conservation, natural history, and environmental protection.

Members who receive our quarterly newsletter, *FOPPI Forum*, are invited to attend the annual meeting and to join us seasonal cleanup, trail maintenance, invasive species removal, and light repair work.

Whatever your interest, there are events and projects that will benefit from your talent and support! Visit www.plumandpilot.org/foppi-volunteer to learn more.

To view FOPPI's financial records, scan the QR code below.



Follow FOPPI on social media!
Download our audio tours at
www.plumandpilot.org/audio-tour.

President's Volunteer Service Award

Friends of Plum and Pilot Islands is excited to announce our association with the President's Volunteer Service Award. This program is administered by AmeriCorps and Points of Light. The President's Volunteer Service Award is an opportunity for FOPPI to recognize our most outstanding volunteers. This program is open to individuals of almost all ranges and provides Bronze, Silver, Gold, and Lifetime awards based on the service benchmarks outlined below.

Age Group	Bronze	Silver	Gold	Lifetime Achievement
Teens (age 11-15)	50-74 hours	75-99 hours	100+ hours	4,000+ hours
Young Adults (16-25)	100-174 hours	175-249 hours	250+ hours	4,000+ hours
Adults (age 26+)	100-249 hours	250-499 hours	500+ hours	4,000+ hours

Award winners receive the following:

- The official President's Volunteer Service Award pin, coin, or medallion.
- A personalized certificate of achievement and letter signed by the President of the United States.

Please go to presidentalserviceawards.gov for more information. As the certifying organization, FOPPI began this program retroactively on January 1, 2023. All volunteer hours must be submitted to the FOPPI Volunteer Coordinator, Jim Schwartz, at jrschwartz@new.rr.com.

Supporting FOPPI

FOPPI is an affiliate of the Wisconsin State Historical Society (wisconsinhistory.org), members of Washington Island Chamber of Commerce (washingtontisland.com), Door County Historical Society (doorcountyhistoricalsociety.org), U.S. Life-Saving Service Heritage Association (uslife-savingservice.org), Door County Visitor Bureau (doorcounty.com), and a partner with Wisconsin Marine Historical Society (wmhs.org).

FOPPI thanks its distinguished
community and business associates!



A Special Note of Thanks

Marian LeMire extends her gratitude to those who helped her when she fell upon returning to Gills Rock after the picnic on Plum Island:

I would like to thank the first fellow who was right next to me for ensuring I could respond to him and to the couple who got ice out of their cooler, which kept my bump down. I'm unable to mention names because I'd miss someone, but truly everyone with our group was concerned. My doctor says I should take it slow, and my concussion will heal in a couple weeks. Pete and I thank you all for your help.

Nature's beauty is a gift that cultivates appreciation and gratitude.

—Louie Schwartzberg

Thank you, Donors!

The work done on the Green Bay National Wildlife Refuge is funded in part by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Friends of Plum and Pilot Islands. The projects and programs we have worked on would not be possible without your financial support. Your donations and inspiration help us to preserve and restore this important part of our heritage within the Green Bay and Gravel Island National Wildlife Refuge. Our gratitude is great.

Britt Ausin
Benevity Community Fund
Carlson Erickson Builders Inc.
Sally Dery
Door County North
Karen Ellery
Steven Hintz
Eric Howe & Kristin Wegner
Roxanne Jungwirth
Janet Koestring
Jude Kuenn
Merlin Lang
Amy Lesnjack
Stiles Meredith
Colleen Pilat
Thrivent
Wagon Trail Inc.
Leza & Kevin Wells
Tina Wells
Scott Whelan

Thanks to Jeff Heal of Washington Island for assisting with FOPPI's mail pickup!

Whoever you are, no matter how lonely, the world offers itself to your imagination, calls to you like the wild geese, harsh and exciting—over and over announcing your place in the family of things.

—Mary Oliver

Membership Form

The mission of the Friends of Plum and Pilot Islands is to partner with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to support the preservation, restoration, maintenance, and contemporary use of the historic resources on Plum and Pilot Islands, and to conserve and protect wildlife resources, while providing opportunities for quality wildlife-dependent recreation.

Mail to:

Friends of Plum and Pilot Islands Inc.
PO Box 61
Washington Island WI 54246-0061



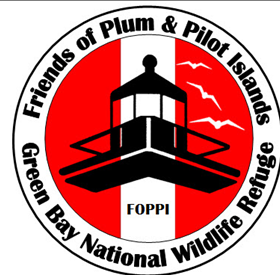
YES, the work of the Friends of Plum and Pilot Islands DOES matter and here is my contribution to support their mission:
(Please indicate how you would like your donation used.)

- Environmental Education \$ _____
- Historic Preservation \$ _____
- "Float the Boat" Shoreline Donation \$ _____
- Special Events \$ _____
- Other Expenses as Needed \$ _____
- Gift Membership \$30 \$ _____
- TOTAL AMOUNT: \$ _____

The Friends of Plum and Pilot Islands is a 501c(3) Charitable Organization. Your gift is tax deductible as provided by law.

Please complete this section for a \$30.00 Gift Membership

Name _____
Address _____
City _____
State/Zip _____
Your Name _____
Occasion _____



"Where History and Nature Meet at the Door!"

www.plumandpilot.org

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Email _____

Phone _____

Name as I wish it to appear in your appreciation materials _____

Please do not list my name in your materials.

Do you have a connection to the islands? _____

Is it time to renew your membership?

Mailing label include membership expiration date above your name. If membership has expired, please renew using the form on page 15. Mail it along with your payment to: FOPPI, P.O. Box 61, Washington Island, WI 54246. If you receive the *Forum* electronically, watch for an email that tells you it's time to renew.



Friends of Plum and Pilot Islands, Inc.
P.O. Box 61
Washington Island, WI 54245

Help Us Be Green!

To help save paper, printing, and postage expenses, please consider receiving your newsletter via email. Just contact Laura Chappell at coastiegal1@yahoo.com.

Previous issues of the *Forum* are available on our website to download or read.



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Friends of Plum and Pilot Islands, Inc.

President: Mary Beth Volmer, 2026
Vice President/*The Shoreline* Director:
Mike Repp, 2027
Treasurer: Kimberly Wells, 2026
Secretary: Karen Ellery, 2026

Board of Directors

Historic Preservation & Restoration:
Chuck Scheckel, 2025
Membership: Laura Chappell, 2026
Merchandising: Sally Dery, 2026
Volunteer Coordinator: Jim Schwartz, 2025

Emeritus Directors

Mike Brodd	Dan Olson
Lew Clark	Hoyt Purinton
Amanda Danforth	John Sawyer
Frank Forkert	Tim Sweet
Matt Foss	Gordon Vieth
Eric Greenfeldt	Gary Wilson
Jude Kuenn	Patti Zarling
Scott Nelson	

Volunteer Team Members

Environmental Education: Ginnie Harney*, Sue Scheckel
Fundraising: Karen Ellery*, Mike Repp, Chuck Scheckel, Jim Schwartz, Tim Sweet, Mary Beth Volmer
Governance: Open
Historic Preservation & Restoration: Jude Kuenn, Paul Kuenn, Chuck Scheckel*, Tim Sweet, Kimberly Wells
Marketing: Jake Heffernan*, Colleen Pilat
Membership: Laura Chappell*, Bob and Sue Griem, Cheryl Lenz
Merchandising: Sally Dery*, Patti Zarling
Newsletter: James Heinz, Kim Krueger, Jude Kueen, Nancy Hoefs Leisgang*, Tim Sweet, Mary Beth Volmer
Special Events: Sally Dery, Mike Repp, Mary Beth Volmer
The Shoreline: Sally Dery, Ginnie Harney, Todd Harris, Barb Jacobs, Kim Krueger, Nancy Hoefs Leisgang, Pete LeMere, Deb Meredith, Stiles Meredith, Colleen Pilat, Mike Repp*, Jim Robinson, Jim Schwartz, Jon Wall
Volunteer Coordinators: Sally Dery, Bob and Sue Griem, Jim Schwartz*
**Denotes team leader*