



# Friends of Plum and Pilot Islands, Inc.

*Where History and Nature Meet at the Door!*

Founded in 2007

## Forum: Winter 2025

### In this issue...

#### Feature Articles

- ◆ My First Case: June 1985
- ◆ Women's History Month: Women in Conservation
- ◆ Pilot Island & Her Keepers (Blog Post)
- ◆ Winter Scenes
- ◆ Cruises on *The Shoreline*
- ◆ Upcoming Events

#### Book Reviews

#### Volunteers / Supporting FOPPI

- ◆ Volunteer Highlight: Pete LeMere and the Lambeau Cleanup Crew
- ◆ "Submerged History," a Webinar with Jim Robinson
- ◆ *The Shoreline* Cruises / FOPPI merchandise
- ◆ New member
- ◆ Donors

#### 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,

Happy New year to you! We are looking forward to a great season on Plum Island, and I hope you'll be able to join us.

This year we're once again offering our Photography Workshops and Butterfly Cruise. As these events have been so successful, we've added more opportunities for you to come to the island through our "Field Days." Field Days will introduce you to more of the natural beauty and history of Plum Island. So far we have booked programs on the Niagara Escarpment and the Native American presence on the island. I am working on another one that I know you'll be excited to attend as well. More good news—volunteer work days are returning! Once we have all the logistics ironed out, we'll send you an invite so you can save the dates on your calendar.

I recently had the opportunity to present a program (via Zoom) on the Pilot Island Lighthouse to the Grand Traverse Lighthouse Museum, one of our sister lights located in the Leelanau Peninsula of Michigan. Sixty people signed up to hear Pilot's history and learn how similar our light is to theirs. I learned that Stef Staley, director of the Grand Traverse Lighthouse Museum, visited Pilot years ago with the Coast Guard to take measurements of the windows so they could restore the windows in their light. The experience was quite memorable for her, as it has been to all of us who have worked on the island. The research I conducted magnified my belief that what we're doing matters. There are stories to be told, and we're the ones to tell them.

Throughout the years that I've volunteered for the Friends of Plum and Pilot Islands, I've had the opportunity to meet some of the most inspirational people, such as Pete LeMere, one of our ardent volunteers. In addition to helping maintain Plum Island trails, he crews aboard *The Shoreline* and works on the Lambeau Field cleanup crew. The Green Bay station WBAY recently ran an article on another of Pete's passions that keeps him feeling young at heart. We've included the interview in this edition.

Would you like to meet wonderful people, learn new skills, have fun, and share the history of those who came before us? Let us know. We have ample opportunities for you!

—Mary Beth

## My First Case: June 1985 by Scott Nelson

As many know, I served at Coast Guard Station Plum Island several summers in the '80s and early '90s. The station at that time was operated primarily by Coast Guard Reservists. There were two active-duty Coasties assigned to Plum Island year-round, but they worked out of Coast Guard Station Sturgeon Bay where the boats were stored



Scott Nelson, c. 1985. Photo courtesy of Scott Nelson.

for the winter. The balance of the team was recruited Coast Guard-wide through what was then called Operation Summer Stock. This program was an opportunity for college students and others with idle summer time to serve as active duty at an operational station.

Plum Island Station was open from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day. The rest of the year, Station Sturgeon Bay covered Plum Island's Area of Responsibility. This area spanned from Manistique, east of the Garden Peninsula in upper Michigan, to the middle of the lake south to Baileys Harbor to the west side of the Door Peninsula the width of the Bay south to Eagle Bluff Lighthouse. The area was extensive.

Our primary mission at the time was search and rescue (SAR). The case load, meaning the number of SARs, was minimal-perhaps the fewest or second fewest of any station in the Coast Guard. Plum Island earned the monikers of "Plum Island Yacht Club," "Camp Snoopy," "Fantasy Island," and my personal favorite, "Station Vacation."

My first active duty on the Island was 1985. I reported aboard along with a few others in the middle of May. The Station needed to be dewinterized, cleaned, and prepared for the season. The crews were trained and qualified or certified before the station opened. We were divided into two duty sections. Each section had an OOD (officer of the day), a boat coxswain, a boat crew, and an engineer. There was an extra crewman to stand radio watch at the station when the boat was underway.

I was assigned my duty section. I was a boat crewman. Doug Smith was the coxswain and Flip Zevnik was the engineer. Our duty sections were

set and our section was on duty the opening weekend.

It was Sunday. The second week of the season. Our watch stander received a call from a concerned father. His family was vacationing at the Wagon Trail Resort in Rowleys Bay. His teen son and son's friend were in a paddle boat. There was a fairly stiff northwest breeze pushing the boys offshore. It seemed the boat was drifting faster than the boys could paddle. Our OOD obtained the information needed, mustered the crew, and opened the case.

Once our crew was briefed, we were to deploy our 41-foot boat to assist if necessary. There wasn't a huge sense of urgency because Rowleys Bay was sheltered from a northwest breeze. As we got under way, we knew there wouldn't be much of a sea. It takes about 25 minutes to make the run to Rowleys Bay from Plum. We had two crewmen, in addition to me. Flip was our engineer who managed the mechanical systems of the boat. Doug Smith (aka Smitty) was the coxswain. I was one of two crewmen. The run to the scene was routine.

We found the paddle boat almost immediately, but much to our horror the boys were not on it. The only contents of the boat were a couple Mickey Mouse sweatshirts. The nature of the case changed immediately. We went looking for a floating water craft. We were now looking for people in the water. The water temperature in Lake Michigan in early June is in the 40s and 50s. Time was not on our side.

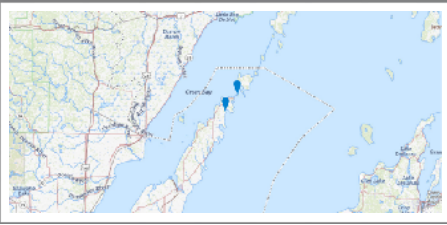
The bad news was relayed to the station and from there reported up the chain of command, Coast Guard Group Milwaukee, District 9 Cleveland, and the Rescue Coordination Center. A helicopter from Air Station Traverse City, Michigan, was immediately deployed. Our boat was the on-scene commander.



USCG helicopter on Plum Island, c. 1985.

I do not recall the search patterns we were assigned, but generally a sector search was typical for this situation. This is a series of 120 degree

## My First Case: June 1985 by Scott Nelson



Higher pin is on Plum Island; lower pin is in Rowleys Bay. Map courtesy of U.S. Geological Survey.

turns. It would have started at the location of the paddle boat. The pattern resembles a pinwheel when drawn on a navigational chart. Other searches are

planned and assigned by Coast Guard Group Milwaukee. The search details were relayed to our boat via radio. The recipe for the search included search type (parallel, creeping line, expanding square, etc.), the track length, track spacing, and direction of the first leg.

Our searches yielded no results. We eventually changed our strategy. We began a shoreline

search. As implied, we ran the boat as shallow as we could along the shoreline. This was often unofficially referred to as the helter-skelter search.



CG 41489. Photo courtesy of Scott Nelson.

The lakeside of the Door Peninsula is hazardous. There are many shoals of hard, rocky bottom.

Shallow water is not a friend to a boat with an aluminum hull. Our boat, CG 41489, was one of two boats in the Coast Guard outfitted with a portable Zodiac inflatable raft and a 9-horse outboard motor.

The station and the crew decided that the Zodiac should be deployed. The boat had to be placed on the main deck, unpacked, assembled and inflated. It was placed in the water alongside the 41-footer where the motor was attached. It was quite the process and unfortunately the bottom deck boards could not be locked into place. The brackets intended to hold the boards in place were worn and ill-fitting. We were still able to deploy it in a somewhat less than rigid manner.

I was the operator of the Zodiac. I was issued a handheld marine radio so I could communicate with the 41-footer. I proceeded to make my way into shallower water. The boat rode in an interesting manner. The bottom boards flexed and

flopped in the chop because of the unfastened boards. I searched the southern shore of Newport State Park, in and around Spider Island, through Rowleys Bay to the Juice Mill, and then toward the Mink River without any results.

It is common knowledge of most small boat station coasties that if there is someone to be found in the water, it will be the helicopter that finds them. Well... the helicopter did not. At some point later in the day, both units (our boat and the helicopter) had exhausted our searches. Group Milwaukee suspended the case. We returned to station without success. The boys were not likely to be found by continued searches.

Eventually, the boys' bodies were discovered separately in the vicinity of Rowleys Bay. We discovered that the two boys were on a swim team. We speculate that they panicked when they could not make headway toward shore. As competent and confident swimmers, they decided to swim for it. They did not understand how cold the water was and the effects hypothermia has on motor skills. Their lives were taken by the lake.

SAR cases in which there is a loss of life take a toll on the responders. I can remember almost all the cases I worked where life was lost. This case, being my first, was especially difficult.

I have lost track of most of my shipmates from the Island. I do keep in touch with the coxswain from that day, Smitty. You may recognize him. Smitty retired from his civilian job as a tugboat captain and is now one of our captains for *The Shoreline*. In 1988, I qualified as a coxswain at Plum Island Station and ran CG 41489 for my duty section several summers. Last year, I became a USCG licensed master of inspected vessels. I, too, am one of the captains of *The Shoreline*.



Doug Smith on Plum Island in more recent times.



Scott Nelson as captain of *The Shoreline*.

## Women's History Month: Women in Conservation

The following is excerpted from an article written by Laura Vachula, Public Affairs Specialist, with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, FOPPI's official partner. Visit [www.fws.gov/story/2024-03/quiz-which-famous-female-conservationist-are-you](http://www.fws.gov/story/2024-03/quiz-which-famous-female-conservationist-are-you) to read the article in its entirety.

March is Women's History Month. Take the quiz to see which female conservationist best matches your interests and change-making style, and discover your stewardship superpower.

### Take the quiz!

Which conservation issue is most important to you?

- A. Endangered species protection
- B. Aquatic habitat restoration
- C. Land preservation
- D. Clean air and water

What was your childhood dream job?

- A. President
- B. Scientist
- C. Business owner
- D. Teacher

What do you like to do while on vacation?

- A. Meet the locals
- B. Adventure sports, like bungee jumping
- C. Spend time with the people you love
- D. Take pictures and video

Within your friend group, you're known as the:

- A. Peacekeeper
- B. Daredevil
- C. Ride or die
- D. Social butterfly

Pick a hobby:

- A. Team sports
- B. Travel
- C. Rock climbing
- D. Art

### Results

#### Mostly A's: Mollie Beattie

The first female director of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Mollie Beattie was a strong-willed, diplomatic leader. She fiercely defended the Endangered Species Act at a time when many in Congress opposed it, and she had a natural way of winning over her critics, such as Congressman Don Young. Despite a rocky start to their relationship, the two developed a mutual respect,

and after her death, he pushed to name a portion of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in her honor.

In a landmark moment, Beattie helped release the first gray wolves back into Yellowstone National Park, beginning a decades-long project to restore the population. Trained as a forester, she understood that every species is important and was vocal about paying attention to human impacts on all creatures. "When we see the snails and the mussels and the lichen in trouble, it is a signal that the ecosystems upon which we, too, depend are unravelling," she said.



Mollie Beattie visiting Arthur R. Marshall Loxahatchee National Wildlife Refuge.

If you answered mostly A's, you're an expert negotiator, skilled at working with others and winning them over. Your superpower is your ability to lead with candor and collaborate with all types of people, even those who have differing opinions to your own. Use your voice to speak out about conservation issues and unite groups toward a common mission.

#### Mostly B's: Mamie Parker

After beginning her career as a fish biologist, Dr. Mamie Parker broke through the glass ceiling twice, as the first African American to serve as a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service regional director and the first Black woman to hold the position of assistant director for Fisheries and Habitat Conservation. She helped create the National Fish Habitat Action Plan to restore and protect aquatic habitats and co-chaired the Aquatic Nuisance Task Force to address invasive fish species, including snakehead and Asian carp.



Dr. Mamie Parker volunteering at Urban Kids Fishing Derby on the National Mall, Washington, D.C.

In retirement, Parker has shared her knowledge and talents as a board member for numerous conservation organizations. Dedicated to her

## Women's History Month: Women in Conservation

mission of raising others up, she mentors women and people of color and encourages them to explore the STEM fields, as well as actively supports legislation for hiring a more diverse workforce.

If you answered mostly B's, you know no limits and encourage others to push beyond the status quo. Having big dreams and an optimistic attitude is your superpower. Take small steps, or big leaps, towards your goals, even if others tell you they're far-fetched. We'll need innovative minds to solve conservation issues now and in the future.

### Mostly C's: Celia Hunter

An adventurer at her core, Celia Hunter learned to fly and joined the Women Air Force Service Pilots (WASP) during World War II. After the war, she and her best friend, Ginny Wood, flew themselves to Alaska, where they started the first eco-tourism business in the state. This was an era of change and development in Alaska, and the two women were keenly aware of the need to actively protect wilderness.



Celia Hunter in her Women Air Force Service Pilots classroom photograph in 1943.

Celia strongly supported creation of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge and cofounded the Alaska Conservation Society to give Alaskans a voice on national issues that impacted the state. One of her biggest successes was pressing Congress to pass the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act, protecting more than 100 million acres. She accomplished much of this with her friend Ginny.

If you answered mostly C's, you might work best in a dynamic duo! Your superpower is your adventurous spirit, combined with an ability to build strong relationships and capitalize on individual strengths. Seek out others who share your passions and use your combined energy to accomplish more than you would on your own.

### Mostly D's: Rachel Carson

A talented writer and accomplished scientist, Rachel Carson combined her passions to amplify stories about the environment. Carson worked as an aquatic biologist for the U.S. Fish and Wildlife

Service and became editor-in-chief of the agency's publications.

Rachel is best known for her book *Silent Spring* that shined a spotlight on the dangers of pesticides to the natural world. This was a sticky topic, because pesticides, like DDT, played a large role in the agricultural industry. Despite the negative response from many, Carson testified in front of Congress and ultimately can be credited with the government's decision to ban DDT, saving species such as the bald eagle.



Rachel Carson. Undated photograph.

If you answered mostly D's, you have a way with words. Whether it's through social media, writing, music, or video production, your superpower is being able to connect with audiences. Consider how you can best spread conservation messages and communicate well researched information widely! A blog, social media, or writing for your local newspaper... The sky's the limit!

### Taking action

There are many ways to make a difference, and conservation counts on every level, including in your backyard or local community. We hope the accomplishments of these notable women encourage you to spearhead a conservation project important to you. If you're looking for more inspiration, check out the [Conservation Heroes Hall of Fame](#).

*Wild creatures, like men, must have a place to live. As civilization creates cities, builds highways, and drains marshes, it takes away, little by little, the land that is suitable for wildlife. And as their space for living dwindles, the wildlife populations themselves decline. Refuges resist this trend by saving some areas from encroachment, and by preserving in them, or restoring where necessary, the conditions that wild things need in order to live.*

—Rachel Carson

*Pilot Island & Her Keepers (Blog Post)* by Mary Beth Volmer



The doors opened to the sound of water crashing on the shore and gulls screaming in the wind. The small theatre was packed with about 30 people awaiting to learn more about *Pilot Island & Her Keepers*. I sat patiently, as I already knew the story. The actors appeared and told of this desolate island “that affords about as much independence and liberty as Libby Prison,” a quote from Victor Rohn, one of the early lightkeepers, whom we soon met. The narrator asked the audience, “If you could bring three things to the island, what would they be?” As we pondered the question, an actor appeared on stage as the spirit of an ill-fated voyage.

In the next scene we heard keeper Rohn tell the next keeper, Emmanuel Davidson, all the pleasantries of the island, such as the siren (aka “the beast”), the fog, picnics, and how much he will miss seeing the horizon at every sun up and sun down. The playwright did an amazing job getting in the head of the complicated assistant keeper, John Boyce. Equally amazing was the depiction of the lightkeeper/hero Martin Knudsen, who was “born for this” life, but let’s not forget those who inspired him! Enter Nellie the cow, played by an actor carrying an accordion. The troupe sang of the hilariously harrowing event in bringing Nellie over to Pilot Island.

I listened intently to the audience as they departed, awed by this troupe that delivered a story that made them feel like they were witnessing history in the making. I agreed and then questioned myself, “What three things would I bring to Pilot Island?”

Note: I saw this play in November 2024, after which I spoke with the play’s director about bringing the story to Door County. He told me that he’s been in conversation with the Trueblood Performing Arts Center on Washington Island and Northern Sky Theatre in Fish Creek.



The stark stage.

There’s nothing quite like live theatre to evoke your senses and hold you captive in the moment! Plan ahead for your next visit north of the tension line, and check out the fun events and fine performances presented by these Door County theatres.

Door Shakespeare, Baileys Harbor: [www.doorshakespeare.com/](http://www.doorshakespeare.com/)

Northern Sky Theatre, Fish Creek: [northernskytheater.com/](http://northernskytheater.com/)

Peninsula Players Theatre, Fish Creek: [peninsulaplayers.com/](http://peninsulaplayers.com/)

Southern Door Community Auditorium, Brussels: [www.southerndoorauditorium.org/](http://www.southerndoorauditorium.org/)

Third Avenue Playworks, Sturgeon Bay: [thirdavenueplayworks.org/](http://thirdavenueplayworks.org/)

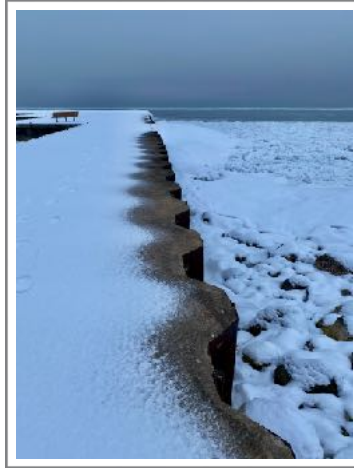
Trueblood Performing Arts Center, Washington Island: [www.tpacwashingtonisland.com/](http://www.tpacwashingtonisland.com/)

*I regard the theatre as the greatest of all art forms, the most immediate way in which a human being can share with another the sense of what it is to be a human being. —Oscar Wilde*

## Winter Scenes



Ice in Death's Door, Plum Island. Photo by Tim Sweet.



Bench, Egg Harbor.  
Photo by Nancy Hoefs Leisgang.



Icicles in Sturgeon Bay.  
Photos by Tim Sweet.



Ice floes, Plum Island.  
Photo by Nancy Hoefs Leisgang



Walking on (frozen) water, Washington Island. Photo by Nancy Hoefs Leisgang.



Icy sunset, Washington Island. Photo by Nancy Hoefs Leisgang.

### The Snow Man

One must have a mind of winter  
To regard the frost and the boughs  
Of the pine-trees crusted with snow;  
And have been cold a long time

To behold the junipers shagged with ice,  
The spruces rough in the distant glitter  
Of the January sun; and not to think  
Of any misery in the sound of the wind,  
In the sound of a few leaves,

Which is the sound of the land  
Full of the same wind  
That is blowing in the same bare place

For the listener, who listens in the snow,  
And, nothing himself, beholds  
Nothing that is not there and the nothing that is.

—Wallace Stevens



*The Alpena*, Sturgeon Bay, March 2022.  
Photo by Tim Sweet.



Ice shoves. Photo by Tim Sweet.



Ice at Cave Point. Photo by Tim Sweet.

## Cruise on *The Shoreline*

### CRUISE ON *THE SHORELINE*!

Are you ready for a unique Door County adventure?

Nor'Door Cruises by *The Shoreline* offers our premier **Death's Door Lighthouse Cruise with a stop on Plum Island**. See the remote Pilot Island Lighthouse and Plum Island Range Lights. Docents tell the tales of the area shipwrecks and share stories about the lighthouse keepers and coasties who were stationed on the islands. You'll also learn about the islands' natural history and the work the Friends of Plum and Pilot Islands are doing to preserve this history.



We also offer cruises to these destinations:

- Rock Island State Park** cruise to lovely Rock Island, home of the Pottawatomie Lighthouse, with time to hike, picnic, or swim before your return cruise.
- Fayette State Park** in Upper Michigan's Garden Peninsula. Bring a picnic lunch, explore preserved sites in this mining-settlement-turned-ghost-town, hike the trails and enjoy the outstanding views.
- Out-Island** cruise to see Boyers Bluff Light Tower on Washington Island, Pottawatomie Lighthouse on Rock Island, and St. Martin Island and Poverty Island Lighthouses. This is a water-only tour—be sure to pack a lunch!

Contact us if you'd like to create your own cruise to best fit your interests.

*The Shoreline* can comfortably accommodate 14 guests. And, we're dog friendly!

All cruises depart from Gills Rock at The Shoreline Resort Marina. For charter rates and more information, visit [www.plumandpilot.org/the-shoreline.html](http://www.plumandpilot.org/the-shoreline.html).



Tours are provided by the Friends of Plum and Pilot Islands to support preservation and restoration of the historic maritime structures on these islands.



If you have already enjoyed a cruise on *The Shoreline*, we would love to hear from you! Please share your experience and your photos with us at [friendsofplumandpilot@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofplumandpilot@gmail.com).



## Upcoming Events

### March 7-9: Canoecopia

Stop at the FOPPI table during Canoecopia, held at the Alliant Energy Exposition Center in Madison [Canoecopia--World's Largest Paddlesports Expo](http://rutabaga.com) ([rutabaga.com](http://rutabaga.com))



Paddling enthusiasts at Canoecopia.



FOPPI volunteers at Canoecopia. L-R: Jude, Barb, Kim, and Paul

### April 26, 12:30-1:30pm: Historic Fog Signals

Learn about the historic fog signals that alerted mariners to danger in Death's Door during fog-laden voyages from our friend Jake Heffernan. Meet at Kewaunee Harbor Light, Kewaunee.



Photo by Dave Heilman.

### June 9: Summer Photography Workshop

Famed Door County photographer [Dave Heilman](#) once again will be sharing his craft with us during two photography workshops on Plum Island.

Dave believes that "You are not photographing your subject; you are photographing how light falls upon your subject." Dave will guide us in meeting that light, whether you are a cellphone, SLR, or time-honored film photographer. No experience is necessary; Plum Island and its natural beauty and historic buildings will provide the inspiration. Transportation from Gills Rock provided aboard *The Shoreline*. Go to [www.plumandpilot.org/photoworkshop](http://www.plumandpilot.org/photoworkshop) to register.

### June 21: Niagara Escarpment Field Day

Join Don Mikulic, with the Niagara Escarpment Resource Network (NERN), to learn about the natural, cultural, historical and environmental features of the escarpment. After the presentation, take a hike to see where the escarpment is present on Plum Island and learn about the plants that are dependent on this rare geologic formation. Transportation from Gills Rock provided aboard *The Shoreline*. Click [www.plumandpilot.org/niagara](http://www.plumandpilot.org/niagara) to register!

### July 27: Native American Presence on Plum Island Field Day

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Regional Historic Preservation Officer and Archaeologist James Myster will share his knowledge of the customs, traditions, and ways of life of the indigenous peoples in the native tribes in northern Door County. Transportation from Gills Rock provided aboard *The Shoreline*. Go to [www.plumandpilot.org/nativeamerican](http://www.plumandpilot.org/nativeamerican) to register.

### August 9: Native Plant Sale / Fundraiser

FOPPI is once again excited to partner with Stone Silo Prairie Gardens in DePere, WI, to host a sale of native perennials and grasses. FOPPI volunteers and Stone Silo experts will be on hand to help you select the perfect native plants for your garden. Visit [www.stonesiloprairie.com](http://www.stonesiloprairie.com) for more information.

### September 13: Fall Photography Workshop (See description for Summer Photography workshop!)

### September 13: Butterfly Cruise

You'll learn about the monarch butterfly, their migration, and what we can do to protect these fragile creatures. You will have a chance to net the butterflies, apply a monitoring tag to them, and trace their migration south to aid scientists in studying their population and migration patterns. Transportation from Gills Rock provided aboard *The Shoreline*. Click [www.plumandpilot.org/butterfly](http://www.plumandpilot.org/butterfly) to register!

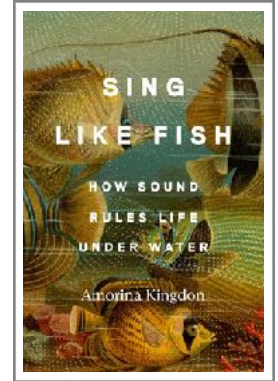


Photo by Dave Heilman.

**Save the date(s) now, and plan to attend one (or more) of these great events!**

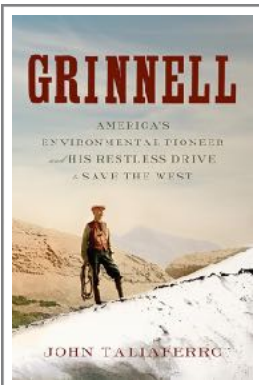
**Sing Like Fish**  
by Amorina Kingdon

In *Sing Like Fish*, award-winning science journalist Amorina Kingdon synthesizes historical discoveries with the latest scientific research in a clear and compelling portrait of this sonic undersea world. From plainfin midshipman fish, whose swim-bladder drumming is loud enough to keep houseboat-dwellers awake, to the syntax of whalesong; from the deafening crackle of snapping shrimp, to the seismic resonance of underwater earthquakes and volcanoes; sound plays a vital role in feeding, mating, parenting, navigating, and warning—even in animals that we never suspected of acoustic ability.



Meanwhile, we jump in our motorboats and cruise ships, oblivious to the impact below us. Our lifestyle is fueled by oil in growling tankers and furnished by goods that travel in massive container ships. Our seas echo with human-made sound, but we are just learning of the repercussions of anthropogenic noise on the marine world’s delicate acoustic ecosystems—masking mating calls, chasing animals from their food, and even wounding creatures, from plankton to lobsters.

With intimate and artful prose, *Sing Like Fish* tells a uniquely complete story of ocean animals’ submerged sounds, envisions a quieter future, and offers a profound new understanding of the world below the surface. (Review suggestion courtesy of Jude Kuenn. Review courtesy of amazon.com.)



**Grinnell**  
by John Taliaferro

Grinnell is definitely the unsung hero of conservation! He was an adventurous explorer who fed his passion in the West, beginning by gathering fossils and bones with college colleagues. He wrote of his exploits in the weekly *Forest and Stream* and later became editor and then president and publisher of this magazine that was dedicated to conservation. Through *Forest and Stream*, Grinnell helped to launch the National Audubon Society, was an early sponsor of the national park movement, and supported the Migratory Bird Treaty Act of 1918. He was also one of the founding members along with his friend Theodore Roosevelt of the “Boone and Crockett Club,” which was dedicated to restoration of America’s wildlands.

Over the years that he explored the West, Grinnell witnessed the steep decline of birds, whose feathers adorned women’s hats, and the decimation of the buffalo, deer, and elk herds. He befriended Native American men and women and wrote books about their culture, which was quickly being exterminated, along with the buffalo.

He witnessed buffalo herds that took three hours to pass, men who shot these majestic animals for sheer sport, and Native Americans who starved when pushed into reservations with limited food supply. He felt a sense of duty to change the tide of these atrocities.

His stories reached the right people who could make a difference. Due in part to his voice, we now have National Parks and National Wildlife Refuges to protect the national treasures, rules and regulations to strategically manage wildlife, restored buffalo herds on private and public lands and offered restitution to Native American tribes for failure to follow historic treaty acts.

The book is written from letters Grinnell penned over his lifetime. The author applies great empathy to the changing world that Grinnell was seeing pass before his very eyes. It is a great read, one that will make you rethink about the “why” of expansion. (Review by Mary Beth Volmer.)

## FOPPI Volunteers



The FOPPI crew, left to right:  
Pete, Jack, Sally, Dallas, and Jim.

### It's the Lambeau Cleanup Crew for the Win!

by Sally Dery

Once again FOPPI's cleanup crew is hard at work cleaning the lower concourse at Lambeau Field and raising funds for FOPPI. This year, FOPPI's winning team of expert sweepers included seasoned members, Jim Schwartz, Pete LeMere, Scott Nelson, Sally Dery, Dallas Greetham, and rookie Jack Miron.

FOPPI member Pete LeMere was featured on WBAY TV 2 before a Monday night game against the New Orleans Saints. Pete attended his first Packers game in 1948 and has been a season ticket holder ever since. He was excited to share his love of the Packers and seeing many historic sporting moments firsthand at Lambeau Field. At age 91, Pete prefers to watch the games in the comfort of his recliner at home, but he still finds his way back to 1265 Lombardi

Avenue as a FOPPI volunteer. As TV 2 stated, "A dedicated fan helping raise money for a cause close to his heart while supporting the team that captured it over 70 years ago." To watch this feature go to <https://www.wbay.com/2024/12/23/go-pack-go-91-year-old-packers-fan-still-serves-stadium-cleanup-crew/>

Thank you, Pete, and all our volunteers! If you live in the Green Bay area, reach out to FOPPI's Volunteer Coordinator, Jim Schwartz ([jrschwartz@new.rr.com](mailto:jrschwartz@new.rr.com)), and join in the fun next year! In Pete's own words, "We get together, we clean up, we have fun talking. It's just fun to do."

If you're interested in learning about other volunteer opportunities, send us an email at [friendsofplumandpilot@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofplumandpilot@gmail.com).

*Friends often ask me why I volunteer for a place that takes me 5.5 hours to reach. By the time I tell them all the reasons, they're ready to request a refill of their drink (coffee, that is). Volunteering gives us an opportunity to explore our interests and to give back—a double dose of satisfaction.*

—Mary Beth Volmer

On January 18, FOPPI volunteer, Captain Jim Robinson, hosted the webinar "History Submerged," a fascinating discussion of several of the shipwrecks in Lake Michigan, Green Bay, and the waters around Door County.

Jim is an experienced diver who has explored many Great Lakes wrecks as well as springs and caves in northern Florida.

If you missed this interesting webinar in January, you can watch it now at [www.plumandpilot.org/post/historysubmerged2025](http://www.plumandpilot.org/post/historysubmerged2025).



Captain Jim Robinson aboard *The Shoreline*, the boat he owned until 2022 when FOPPI acquired it.

## Supporting FOPPI

**It's that time of year!** Are you dealing with your Required Minimum Distribution from your IRA? Tax-Free Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCDs) can benefit you and Friends of Plum and Pilot Islands' work.

Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCDs), also called IRA charitable distributions, enable individuals to fulfill their required minimum distribution by a direct transfer to support a charity/charities, as long as the sum of the distributions is within the \$100,000 limit. And because QCDs don't increase taxable income, they can help you avoid higher tax rates. You can use this strategy if:

- You are 70½ or older at the time of the gift.
- You direct distributions in the amount of your choosing, up to an annual limit set by the IRS from your traditional or Roth IRA to Friends of Plum and Pilot Islands (other types of retirement plans are not covered by the law).
- To count for the current tax year, QCDs distribution must be made before December 31.

Contact your IRA custodian and ask them to send the check for a "qualified charitable distribution" to: Friends of Plum and Pilot Islands, EIN 74-3226051.

Is your organization or nonprofit hosting a community event? Let us know if you would like FOPPI to come share our story! Email us as [friendsofplumandpilot@gmail.com](mailto:friendsofplumandpilot@gmail.com), and we will arrange for one (or more!) of our knowledgeable and passionate volunteers to attend your event.

*We cannot live only for ourselves. A thousand fibers connect us with our fellow men [and women]. –Herman Melville*

**NOR'DOOR CRUISES** by "The Shoreline"  
**BOOK NOW** 10% OFF  
**FOR 2025 CRUISES**

[WWW.PLUMANDPILOT.ORG/CRUISES](http://WWW.PLUMANDPILOT.ORG/CRUISES)

### Looking for a memorable gift?

#### Cruises aboard *M/V The Shoreline*

Take advantage of a **10% discount** until May 15, 2025, on 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! 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/](http://fareharbor.com/embeds/book/plumandpilot/items/) to buy the gift that is sure to make waves!

#### If a cruise is not your speed...

Click over to our store at [www.plumandpilot.org/store](http://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!

*Give the gift that gives back to future generations.*

## Supporting FOPPI / Volunteering

**Friends of Plum and Pilot Islands  
welcomes this new member:**

◆ Gerald Harris, DePere, WI

*What is the essence of life? To serve  
others and to do good.*

*—Aristotle*

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](http://www.plumandpilot.org/audio-tour).

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](http://www.plumandpilot.org/foppi-volunteer) to learn more.

### 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](http://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](mailto:jrschwartz@new.rr.com).

## Supporting FOPPI

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

FOPPI thanks its distinguished  
community and business associates!



*In a gentle way, you can shake the world.*  
—Mahatma Gandhi

### A Note of Thanks

A FOPPI volunteer recently wrote to share how good it feels to be part of Friends of Plum and Pilot Islands:

*You all are the most incredible people. I am blessed to have FOPPI in my life. I would have never dreamed my life would be so enriched by this fabulous group of people after attending my first work day! Which, by the way, was a spur of the moment decision. I do believe we are often put in certain places at certain times in our lives for a reason!*

### 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.

Angela Bier  
Gil & Joyce Carlson Charitable Fund  
Robert Davis  
Jean Fox  
Gerald F. Harris  
Steve & Marjorie Karges  
James Mergener  
Lisa & Carson Mettel  
Caroline Moes  
John & Joni Pagel  
Colleen Pilat  
Thrivent  
Twin Cities United Way  
Tom & Judy Vonck  
Rodney Waage  
Dan & Karen Wieske

#### Float the Boat:

Sally Dery  
Stiles Meredith

#### Pollinator Garden:

Detroit Harbor Ladies Aid

*How wonderful it is that nobody need wait a single moment before starting to improve the world.*

—Anne Frank

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

## Membership Form



### FOPPI Membership/Donation Form

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? \_\_\_\_\_

*Where History and Nature Meet at the Door!*

Please choose a Membership to join us in our mission to preserve and protect Plum and Pilot Islands!

\$30 Individual  
 \$50 Family - 2 or more family members  
 \$75 Patron  
 \$100 Keeper  
 \$1000 Lifetime

**\*\*Gift Memberships are available as well! Please use the below section to mark this membership as a gift.**

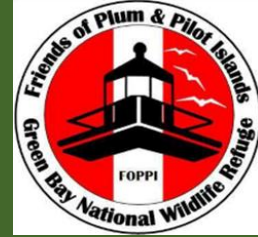
Gift Membership for:  
 Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email: \_\_\_\_\_

**If you would like to donate to a certain FOPPI cause, please let us know by filling out the section below. Thank you!**

Your support is critical to the Friends of Plum and Pilot Islands (FOPPI). Restoration and preservation of these beautiful WI islands and their buildings takes a group like FOPPI to make it happen. **Fun Fact:** Plum Island is home to the only Duluth-style Life Saving Station on the Great Lakes!

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.



#### FOPPI Members receive:

- ❖ The FOPPI Forum Newsletter
- ❖ An invitation to the FOPPI Annual Meeting
- ❖ 10% off in-person merchandise sales
- ❖ Opportunities to volunteer on the wildlife refuge!

**MAIL TO:**  
 FRIENDS OF PLUM &  
 PILOT ISLANDS  
 PO Box 61  
 Washington Island, WI  
 54246

**OR GO ONLINE TO:**  
[www.plumandpilot.org/membership](http://www.plumandpilot.org/membership)

We also have a QR code!



Become A Member

**Is it time to renew your membership?**

Mailing label includes 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. For membership questions call Mary Beth Volmer: (262) 613-4680.



Friends of Plum and Pilot Islands, Inc.  
P.O. Box 61  
Washington Island, WI 54246

**Help Us Be Green!**

To help save paper, printing, and postage expenses, please consider receiving your newsletter via email. Just contact Laura Chappell at coastieg1@yahoo.com.

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



The mission of 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.

**Friends of Plum and Pilot Islands, Inc.**

**President:** Mary Beth Volmer, 2026  
**Vice President/*The Shoreline* Director:**  
Open  
**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	Paul Schumacher
Matt Foss	Tim Sweet
Eric Greenfeldt	Gordon Vieth
Jude Kuenn	Gary Wilson
Scott Nelson	Patti Zarlino

**Volunteer Team Members**

**Environmental Education:** Ginnie Harney\*, Sue Scheckel  
**Fundraising:** Karen Ellery\*, 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 Zarlino  
**Newsletter:** Nancy Hoefs Leisgang\*, Sally Dery, Scott Nelson, Tim Sweet, Mary Beth Volmer  
**Special Events:** Sally Dery, 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*