

# Friends of Plum and Pilot Islands, Inc.

*Where History and Nature Meet at the Door!*

Founded in 2007

## Forum: Fall 2023

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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,

I just finished reading *Cruise of the Conrad* by Alan Villiers, first published in 1937. My copy may have been one of those originals, as the pages are yellowed and brittle. Villiers was a seasoned mariner with nine trips around the world to his credit. He purchased an old full-rigged frigate, with an engine that rarely worked, and set off on a two-year adventure circumnavigating the globe in the company of young boys and old salts. In the book he explained how he tended the sails through some of the roughest seas, the way that the mariners of old navigated through Death's Door. I tried to envision each sail bending to the wind and the currents. It wasn't until the end of the book that I discovered a line drawing of the ship in full sail and began to fully appreciate what marvels Villiers, his crew, and the ship were. How they could steer into and out of a port under wind power just boggles my mind! Now when visitors ask why there are so many shipwrecks in the Death's Door passage, I'll recommend this book and direct them to page 272 first! The *Conrad* is on display at Mystic Seaport in Connecticut, which is definitely on my bucket list to visit.

Thanks to men like Villiers, we have the recorded history of the men who built our maritime community. When Tim Sweet started the Friends of Plum and Pilot Islands, and I joined shortly thereafter, the oral history of those who walked the shores of Plum and Pilot Islands was disappearing. Thanks to the work that FOPPI has done through the years, however, we now have many of those stories preserved for future generations. We continue to learn more about the men and women who served on the islands through newspapers, photos, and family members. We encourage you to reach out to us with your memories, which will certainly inspire others to stretch their comfort zone and do something they never thought possible. That is the foundation FOPPI stands on ... making the impossible possible.

As we wrap up a terrific season—perhaps the best ever—I want to commend all of our volunteers, donors, and supporters. Our community works to build and support that strong foundation to accomplish the mission we share with the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service. Together we brought more guests to Plum Island than ever before, completed some pretty significant restoration projects, and truly had fun hanging out with friends just like you. We tried something new this past season and invited a local photographer, who tells stories with the photos he takes, to teach others how to “find the light.” Plans are underway to add watercolor and monarch butterfly conservation workshops to our special event offerings for next season. What better way to find the light than in nature's backyard!

Thank you once again for supporting and inspiring us as we preserve the buildings and the memories of those who sought and found the light.

—Mary Beth

## Refuge Manager's Corner

Time rushes by, and we're already here to talk about the celebration of field season 2023! With the support of volunteers, FOPPI members, and partners in the community, we accomplished quite a bit of meaningful work. We continue to meet our mission in conserving and protecting the vital island habitats found at the refuge! Just take a look below at what we've accomplished.

**Biological research:** We conducted colonial nesting bird surveys at Spider, Gravel, Hog, and Pilot Islands; bat colony monitoring for one of the most vital maternal populations of little brown bats; and endangered species monitoring of dwarf lake iris habitats across the refuge.

**Historic preservation:** We completed island-wide lead and asbestos testing on Plum and Pilot Islands, including building interiors and exteriors and the soils surrounding each. Volunteers painted the lattice on the Plum Island crew's quarters building and siding of the paint house, and completed installation of the final pieces of the corner pilaster restoration on the Plum Island boathouse. Urgent repairs of missing shingles on Pilot Island lighthouse's roof were funded by the USFWS and completed by Moore Quality Exteriors.

**Environmental education and cultural and natural resource interpretation:** Plum Island hosted the Washington Island Birding Festival, and I presented as a keynote speaker on Washington Island to share our work. We hosted The Ridges Sanctuary Festival of Nature, with dozens of visitors coming to learn more about the plants, wildlife, fish, and habitats that make Green Bay National Wildlife Refuge so important. Spring and Fall Lighthouse Festivals with the Door County Lighthouse Museum brought many lighthouse enthusiasts to see Plum and Pilot Islands and to learn about our efforts to preserve the historic sites found on the refuge. Students from Washington Island School came to tag monarch butterflies and conduct service learning related to those beautiful insects along their migratory journey. Volunteers spoke at community group meetings on Washington Island, Sturgeon Bay, and beyond.

*There is a harmony in autumn, and a luster in its sky,  
which through the summer is not heard or seen, as if it  
could not be, as if it had not been.*

—Percy Bysshe Shelley

**Habitat conservation:** Through a donation to FOPPI, we were able to establish a new native plant habitat site on Plum Island to attract pollinators and educate visitors on the importance of native plants. Invasive species study and treatments at Plum and Detroit Islands, funded by the USFWS through the Great Lakes Restoration Initiative, and carried out by the Door County Soil and Water Conservation District were also conducted.

As we look to 2024, there are many more projects we are setting our sights on. We hope to continue work on the Plum Island boathouse, see FOPPI's efforts to complete painting of the rear range light come together, and more. I'm planning to host more volunteer orientations, interpretive guide trainings, and other presentations to FOPPI and our corps of volunteers. If you're interested in volunteering at the refuge, be sure to reach out to me and keep an eye on FOPPI's website for orientation and training announcements!

I close out each of these articles with the same statement. Despite it showing up over and over, I mean every word:

Staff of the Horicon National Wildlife Refuge and Leopold Wetland Management District Complex are grateful for your support, your willingness to share your skills in volunteer work, and dedication to sharing with others the importance of conserving and protecting the plants, wildlife, fish, and their habitats at Green Bay National Wildlife Refuge. It's through the protections of your National Wildlife Refuges that we're able to continue sharing together the stories of the people who called the islands home. Thank you!

—Joel Vos, Refuge Manager, Green Bay and Gravel Island National Wildlife Refuges



Autumn sky over Death's Door.  
Photo by Nancy Leisgang.

## Fall Lighthouse Festival by Tim Sweet

Volunteers from Friends of Plum and Pilot Islands led tours on Plum Island during the Door County Maritime Museum's Fall Lighthouse Festival on September 29 and October 1. Weather ranged from dense fog, to thunderstorms, to sunshine with warm temperatures. Even a rare "fogbow" was seen over Gills Rock. The event provided an opportunity for more people to experience the history and beauty of the Death's Door region. All photos by Tim Sweet.



Fogbow over Gills Rock.



The Shoreline with passengers aboard on a beautiful Door County day.



Captain Stiles Meredith and Pete LeMere.



The stairs in the rear range light.



Rear range light lantern room on September 29, 2023.



View of keepers' quarters from atop the rear range light.

Planning a trip in 2024? [Lighthousefriends.com](http://Lighthousefriends.com) is a great resource for learning more about lighthouses near your destination. Go to [www.lighthousefriends.com](http://www.lighthousefriends.com) to find maps, calendars of events, and even lighthouse trivia!



Fall Lighthouse Festival guests heading toward the rear range light.

*Somewhat of goodness, something true  
From sun and spirit shining through  
All faiths, all worlds, as through the dark  
Of ocean shines the lighthouse spark,  
Attests the presence everywhere  
Of love and providential care.*

—John Greenleaf Whittier

## Martin Knudsen submitted by Suzette Lopez

Wisconsin Marine Historical Society ([wmhs.org](http://wmhs.org))

SOUNDINGS, Vol. 9, no. 2 Fall 1969

### A GLEAM ACROSS THE WAVE

This issue of Soundings carries the initial installment of a Series of excerpts from an important bit of Wisconsiniana. The material is taken from the book *A Gleam Across the Wave*, the biography of Martin Nicolai Knudsen by Arthur and Evelyn Knudsen. The excerpts are reprinted with the kind permission of the authors.

Martin Knudsen was born, appropriately, on the island of Laaland, Denmark, in 1854. His father, Peder, and his mother, Marie, brought Martin and his brother, Peter, to America before the Civil War. They settled first at Racine, Wisconsin, but after service in the Civil War, Peder was attracted to Rock Island off the Door Peninsula by the reports of rich fishing. The family moved from Rock Island in the spring of 1867 to Washington Island where Martin grew up. Martin married Theresa Koyen in the spring of 1875.



Pilot Island, undated. Photo courtesy of Great Lakes Marine Collection of the Milwaukee Public Library and Wisconsin Marine Historical Society.

Martin was appointed as assistant keeper at Pilot Island lighthouse in 1880. He subsequently was appointed head lighthouse keeper at Manitou Island on the Michigan side of the lake. In 1889, Martin was offered the position of head keeper at Pilot Island. Although our narrative concerns only Martin's career on these two assignments, he

subsequently was head keeper on Plum Island (1896) and in 1899 he was transferred to Racine, Wisconsin, as keeper of the Racine pier Head Light. His last position was at the old North Point Lighthouse in Lake Park, Milwaukee, which he took over in 1917. He retired in June 1924 at the age of 70. He died on July 26, 1943 at the advanced age of 89.

Our excerpts from this interesting little book are concerned mainly with Lake Michigan and shipping.

And thus it came about that one of Martin Knudsen's boyhood ambitions was realized—he had become assistant keeper of the light at Pilot Island. He was quite contented in his new work; the only fly in the ointment was that he and his family had to be separated so much of the time. There were then no accommodations on Pilot Island for the family of the assistant keeper. However, he had the privilege of sailing the lighthouse boat over to Washington Island quite frequently to see how Theresa and the children were getting along, and he knew that she could call on relatives or friends in case of an emergency.



Manitou Island Lighthouse, 1940. Photo courtesy of Great Lakes Marine Collection of the Milwaukee Public Library and Wisconsin Marine Historical Society.

Martin felt that he had entered the service in a very modern era. The old lard oil lamps had been superseded by those burning kerosene. Martin knew all about the inconvenience and hard work connected with the use of lard oil. In cold weather, it hardened and had to be warmed up before it could be used. It was smoky, smelly, dirty and unreliable, and the keepers worked endlessly trying to keep the lighthouse clean. To produce enough light to be seen for any distance on the water, several lard



Plum Island, undated. Photo courtesy of Great Lakes Marine Collection of the Milwaukee Public Library and Wisconsin Marine Historical Society.

## Martin Knudsen submitted by Suzette Lopez

oil lamps had to be used, each lamp placed in front of a tin reflector. With the advent of the kerosene lamp and the glass lens, only one lamp was needed, and the white walls of the lantern room stayed clean for a much longer period of time.

It was in October of 1880 that Martin Knudsen experienced the first of many terrific gales he was to encounter during his years on Pilot Island. The fifteenth of the month was a beautiful, warm, sunny Indian Summer day, but the keepers noticed that the barometer was falling lower and lower. They made ready for a spell of bad weather, bringing in plenty of firewood and water. At the fog signal, they laid the fire under the boiler, ready for quick lighting, so that steam for operating the siren could be available promptly to warn vessels away from the shores of the rocky little island should fog, rain, or even snow obscure its outlines or the light itself.

Martin took the first evening watch, and as he made his periodic patrols of the island he noticed that the wind was growing steadily stronger. By

nine p.m., it had reached almost squall proportions. Clouds were tearing across the sky, and the sea looked wild and angry. It seemed to Martin that the wind was blowing violently from all directions at once, churning the lake into great agitation. Here and there as he looked out across the waters, he saw the lights of several vessels, and from the heights to which they rose and the depths to which they sank, he could judge something of the immensity of the waves with which they were contending. When he went back into the building he found that the suction of the wind inside the lighthouse tower was so strong that the iron trap door to the lantern room was slamming up and down, in spite of the fact that no window or door was open. Martin gave over the midnight watch to Captain Davidson and went to bed with a prayer on his lips for "all the ships at seas." (*To be continued.*)



At North Point Lighthouse.

To learn more about the lighthouses where Martin served as keeper, check out these websites:

**Plum and Pilot Islands** [www.plumandpilot.org/history.html](http://www.plumandpilot.org/history.html)

**South Manitou Island** [www.nps.gov/slbe/planyourvisit/smilighthouse.htm](http://www.nps.gov/slbe/planyourvisit/smilighthouse.htm)

**Racine Harbor Lighthouse** [www.lighthousefriends.com/light.asp?ID=643](http://www.lighthousefriends.com/light.asp?ID=643)

**Milwaukee North Point Lighthouse** [northpointlighthouse.org/](http://northpointlighthouse.org/)

In May, FOPPI volunteers from the historic preservation team and USFWS staff took a trip to inspect Pilot Island. They performed a general assessment of the overall conditions of the keeper's house and light tower to determine what the next steps might be. The waterproof sheeting on the deck was holding. The team assessed the conditions of the lantern room to ensure it remains in sound condition. The team noticed some shingle damage that occurred over the winter. There were two obvious places where the shingles were gone and wood was exposed. In a third spot (near the ridge) the shingles were close to coming off. The rest of the roof looked in pretty good shape. A contractor was hired and able to complete the roof repairs before nesting birds prohibited work on the Island. (Submitted by Chuck Scheckel.)



The Pilot Island lighthouse roof shingle damage, May 2023.  
Photo by Chuck Scheckel.



The Pilot Island lighthouse roof after repairs, August 15, 2023.  
Photo by Bill Peterson.

## The Wreck of the *Louisiana*

### Paraphrased from Wisconsin Shipwrecks:

The *Louisiana* departed Lorain, Ohio, on November 2, 1913, loaded with coal and headed for Milwaukee. Captain Fred McDonald was in command. After delivering her cargo in Milwaukee, she departed light for Escanaba, Michigan, to pick up a load of iron ore. Around midnight of November 8, the ship passed through the channel between Green Bay and Lake Michigan known as Death's Door.

The *Louisiana* and her crew navigated the rocky passage during a severe snow storm. Winds more 70 miles per hour whipped the waves into huge, crashing breakers. Captain McDonald sought refuge from the dangerous conditions in Washington Harbor on Washington Island, but the *Louisiana's* anchors could not hold in the heavy seas. The fierce storm drove the ship aground, perilously close to the rocky southeast shore of Washington Harbor.

The *Louisiana's* small lifeboat offered little hope of getting ashore safely. Rather than braving the heavy seas and surf in the tiny craft, the crew elected to ride out the storm aboard the grounded steamer. By morning, however, the grave situation had grown worse....

Visit [wisconsinshipwrecks.org](http://wisconsinshipwrecks.org) to view photographs and learn more details about the wreck of the *Louisiana* as well as many other shipwrecks.

### Report of the Wreck of the *Louisiana* submitted by Lorel Gordon

#### Remarks:

At 6:30 am I received a telephone message from Washington Harbor saying that the steam barge *Louisiana* had dragged her anchor and was on the shore with the crew on board and that they needed our assistance, the wind was then blowing a gale from the N.W. with blinding snow storm and it was not practicable to take the life boat to Washington Harbor, as it would take hours to reach there.



We loaded the gear of the beach apparatus into the life boat and took the boat to Detroit Harbor where I had engaged a team to carry us to Washington Harbor.

We left the station at 7:50 am it took us some time to load the gear and to launch the life boat in the heavy sea.

We arrived at Detroit Harbor at 8:40 am where I learned that the crew was on shore, that the vessel was on fire and that no assistance was needed.

I was informed that three other vessels in Washington Harbor were in danger of dragging ashore.

We continued our trip over land to scene of wrecks.

The crew of the *Louisiana* was ashore, and nothing could be done to assist the burning vessel, but three other vessels were in danger. We spent the day and night patrolling the shore.

—Williamson Robinson, Keeper



Wisconsin Historical Society has a photo gallery of more than 110,000 historical images. Click over to [wisconsinhistory.org](http://wisconsinhistory.org) to view some photos of the *Louisiana* as she rests in Washington Harbor.

## Island Auxiliary Flotilla submitted by Lorel Gordon

December 19, 1978

### Island Auxiliary Flotilla Holds Change of Watch by Cleo Fowler

Following a dinner at Holiday Too Inn on December 15, Washington Island Flotilla 4-8 of the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary honored members with awards and welcomed new officers for 1979. This was the first Change of Watch for the flotilla since its founding on the Island in August 1977.



Plum Island, June 10, 1928

Division captain Charles Bornemann of Green Bay attended the event and swore in Orville C. Jess, new flotilla commander, and Robert Carr, incoming vice-commander. Immediate past commander Alfred D. Thornton was honored with a special plaque and a citation for membership growth.

Alfred Hantke received a special operational award for 149 hours of safety patrol in Green Bay waters during 1978, as well as 52 courtesy vessel examinations he carried out in the interest of boating safety.

Orville Jess, Harry Fowler, and Cleo Fowler received special insignia denoting their qualifications as auxiliary instructors and courtesy vessel examiners. Reha Sikes and Will Krueger were sworn in as newly qualified members by Captain Bornemann.

During its first year and a half, the Washington Island CG Auxiliary group has taken leadership in getting the Plum Island CG station season extended, conducted a number of safety patrol and assists to boaters in distress, given boating safety courses to over 30 non-members, and is sponsoring a candidate for the United States Coast Guard Academy.

*A special note: Orville Jess was FOPPI's first Vice President.*

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*I can think of no other edifice constructed by man as altruistic as a lighthouse. They were built only to serve.*  
—George Bernard Shaw



Portland Head Light,  
Cape Elizabeth, Maine.  
Photo by Nancy Leisgang.

### From *The New Yorker* “The Last Lighthouse Keeper in America”

For the greater part of two decades, Sally Snowman has lived and worked contentedly on Little Brewster Island, a craggy patch of bare rock, crabgrass, concrete, and dilapidated buildings in Boston’s outer harbor. Under the auspices of the Coast Guard, she serves as the keeper, and the historian, of Boston Light. The lighthouse, opened in September, 1716, was the first in the American colonies, and Snowman is the last official keeper in the United States.

To continue reading this fascinating article by Dorothy Wickenden, and to learn more about the history of lighthouses in the United States as well as Sally Snowman’s experience, click over to [www.newyorker.com/magazine/2023/11/06/the-last-lighthouse-keeper-in-america](http://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2023/11/06/the-last-lighthouse-keeper-in-america).

## Pollinator Garden by Sue Scheckel and Mary Beth Volmer



Master gardener and FOPPI volunteer Sue Scheckel with custom pollinator seed mix.

Last year, the Detroit Harbor Ladies Aid donated \$500 to the Friends of Plum and Pilot Islands to support pollinator restoration. After careful consideration, we formed a team which included Master Gardener/Master Naturalist Sue Scheckel from Sister Bay, U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service biologist Sadie O'Dell, and Refuge Manager Joel Vos. Together we mapped out a plan to enhance our pollinator-friendly habitat on the island. The island is considered an *alvar* environment, meaning that there is thin or no soil and, as a result, sparse grassland vegetation. Due to the challenges of growing pollinator-friendly plants in this type of environment and the care needed, the team decided to broadcast a choice seed collection in a selected area as a start.

The team researched different approaches to the timing of the seeding and site preparation, and chose a late fall seed application that would allow the seeds to have a good winter stratification and encourage a successful spring germination in 2024. Site preparation included several low mows to discourage weeds, as we do not want to apply chemical herbicides.



USFWS biologist Frank Gercz (left), Sue Scheckel (middle), and other FOPPI volunteers check control plot and spread seeds.

Thanks to the Detroit Harbor Ladies Aid donation, we purchased local native seed from vendors that provided pre-designed (custom) seed mixes for our unique environment for the first seeding. Our plan is to do additional seeding over the next few years to get the results we want for pollinator interest. Seeding an area with wildflowers is always a little challenging, as we will have to rely on Mother Nature to provide the spring rains to get the seedling off to a good start. We'll then rely on the pollinators to spread the DHLA's donation around the island. Photos by Kimberly Wells.



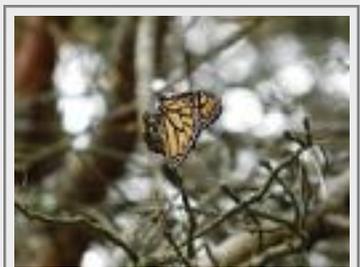
Two pollinators (look closely!) doing what they do best.

The Detroit Harbor Ladies Aid (DHLA)—formed in 1903—is one of the oldest organizations on the Island. The DHLA operates The Twice Around Shop, which sells donated items and distributes the proceeds to local non-profits. The Twice Around Shop is open in July and August.

Get the latest buzz on building your own pollinator garden at [www.fws.gov/story/how-build-pollinator-garden](http://www.fws.gov/story/how-build-pollinator-garden).

*In November, the earth is growing quiet. It is making its bed, a winter bed for flowers and small creatures.*

—Cynthia Rylant



Some Washington Island pollinators. Photos by Nancy Leisgang.

## FOPPI Volunteers: Team Work Makes the Dream Work

Throughout the spring, summer, and fall seasons, our amazing volunteers stepped up (with smiles!) for a variety of jobs. From preparing and planting a pollinator garden (see page 8) to crewing and doing maintenance on *The Shoreline* to cleaning restrooms and closing up Plum Island for the season (and so much more), our volunteers put their time, their energy, and their hearts into meeting the mission of Friends of Plum and Pilot Islands: 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.



Left to right: New volunteers on the way to pick up benches, Scott cleaning the bathroom, Jim overseeing volunteers, Bob cleaning the martin houses, and Dallas measuring windows. Photos by Kimberly Wells.

The weekend of October 21 was a beautiful—and productive—day for our team of volunteers who prepared *The Shoreline* for her winter storage.



Capt. Jim (center) giving direction to Stiles, Scott, and Mike.

Deb, Stiles, and Mike painting.

Sally cleaning on deck prior to winter storage.

Scott making *The Shoreline* shine.



Tim cleaning *The Shoreline's* bow.



Mike painting *The Shoreline*.



Time for a hard-earned delicious meal at Jackson Harbor Soup & Sandwich!  
L-R: Tim, Deb, Stiles, Sally, Jim, and Scott.

*As you grow older, you will discover that you have two hands—one for helping yourself, the other for helping others.*  
—Audrey Hepburn

## Events



### The Ridges Sanctuary, Baileys Harbor Ongoing

From a Night Hike on the Boardwalk! to a Wreath Making Workshop to Holiday Luminary Walks, The Ridges offers events to help you stay active and interested throughout the fall and winter. Visit [www.ridgessanctuary.org/events/](http://www.ridgessanctuary.org/events/) for event dates and times. NOTE: Most trails at The Ridges will be closed during Wisconsin's gun deer hunting season, November 18-26. The Hidden Brook and Range Light Boardwalks will remain open from dawn until dusk. While these sections of the property are not accessible for hunting, wearing blaze orange is mandatory.

### Merry-Time Festival of Trees: Door County Maritime Museum, Sturgeon Bay November 11-December 31

Celebrate the holidays by enjoying many beautifully decorated trees and festive displays at the museum. Adorned by local businesses, organizations, and residents, each extraordinary tree will go home with a lucky winner in the Merry-Time Festival of Trees raffle! Visit [dcomm.org/merry-time-festival-of-trees](http://dcomm.org/merry-time-festival-of-trees) for more info.



### Holly Days: Egg Harbor November 24-26

Celebrate the holiday season with children's activities (including breakfast with Santa and ornament making), horse-drawn wagon rides, caroling, old-fashioned tree lighting, and more! Check out [eggharbordoorcounty.org/event/holly-days/](http://eggharbordoorcounty.org/event/holly-days/) for a complete schedule of events.



### Door County Christkindlmarkt: Sister Bay November 24-26, December 1-2, and December 8-10

Get in the spirit of Christmas at Door County's second annual European-style Christmas market! This outdoor event features traditional Nordic food, fine artisan goods, and holiday music. For information about location, hours, and parking, go to [doorcountychristmasmarket.com](http://doorcountychristmasmarket.com).

Follow FOPPI on social media! Download our audio tours at [www.plumandpilot.org/audio-tour](http://www.plumandpilot.org/audio-tour).



Mary Beth Volmer and Deb Meredith helping out at the plant sale. Photo by Sally Dery.

### FOPPI Native Plant Sale a Success

On August 19, FOPPI volunteers and the staff of Stone Silo Prairie Gardens in DePere, WI, greeted many visitors to our second native plant sale.

We enjoyed a beautiful day on the grounds of Stone Silo Prairie Gardens and thank them for partnering with FOPPI. Thanks to members and supporters of FOPPI we raised \$760.00!

Save the date and join us again next year on Saturday, August 17, 2024!



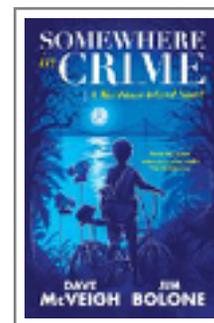
John Wall hanging the FOPPI banner. Photo by Sally Dery.

## Book Reviews

### The Dock Porter (Book 2 of 2: Mackinac Island Novels)

by Dave McVeigh and Jim Boone

Paperboy Jack McGuinn thinks his life on Mackinac Island, Michigan, is all figured out, but when a Hollywood production arrives to film *Somewhere in Time*, starring Christopher Reeve and Jane Seymour, his perfectly constructed life comes apart like a newspaper in a windstorm. The island is gripped with movie mania, and his parents are pulled apart by mysteries from their past.



With the help of a metalhead misfit named Blaze, Jack embarks on a delusional mission to earn reward money from a 20-year-old unsolved murder. His goal? To buy the dream vacation his parents never quite had the time to take—a trip he believes can save their marriage and his perfect life on the island. But as Jack digs deeper, he sees the island in a new light....

*Somewhere in Crime*, the prequel to the Amazon bestseller and Michigan Notable Book *The Dockporter*, is a nostalgic, touching, and often hilarious coming-of-age adventure set against the backdrop of the filming of a Hollywood classic. (Review courtesy of amazon.com.)

This fall, the Wisconsin Historical Society Press released its first graphic-novel style history, [\*Death's Door: True Tales of Tragedy, Mystery, and Bravery from the Great Lakes' Most Dangerous Waters.\*](#)

Written and illustrated by the award-winning children's book team of Barbara Joose and Renée Graef, this beautifully illustrated book for young readers relates five true maritime stories. These tragic, mysterious, and heroic tales span four centuries of Door County, Wisconsin, history, but they all take place in just one perilous location: a stretch of water near Lake Michigan's notoriously dangerous western shore known as "Death's Door."



The Death's Door passage itself narrates the stories, guiding young readers ages 8 to 11 through heart-rending accounts of a 17th-century fur-trading crew, an 18th-century Potawatomi trading party, a mail carrier and a shipbuilding family from the 19th century, and an early 20th-century basketball team. As Death's Door laments, all these humans—"ambitious and restless... but loving too"—had insisted on crossing the treacherous waters between the Door Peninsula and Washington Island. Some survived the dangers of Death's Door; some did not.

#### About the Author

Barbara Joose is an award-winning author of more than 50 books for children. Joose is also the author and narrator of Shipwreck Walking Tour, an app she created with the Port Washington Historical Society. Renée Graef is an award-winning illustrator of more than 80 books for children. She divides her time between Los Angeles and her home state of Wisconsin. (Review courtesy of the Wisconsin Historical Society Press, submitted by Jude Kuenn.)

*Death's Door: True Tales of Tragedy, Mystery, and Bravery from the Great Lakes' Most Dangerous Waters* may also be purchased from the Friends of Plum and Pilot Islands store to support historic preservation and restoration. Visit [www.plumandpilot.org/store](http://www.plumandpilot.org/store) to get your copy!

#### Shipwreck Walking Tour App

If you like seafaring tales featuring heroes and cowards, set against a backdrop of tempests and fires, then this walking tour along Port Washington's beautiful marina is the tour for you! You'll hear the dramatic retelling of six shipwrecks that took place just off Port Washington's shores. Along the way, you'll discover Lake Michigan's perilous past and the often ill-fated history of maritime travel. Go to [www.pwhistory.org/](http://www.pwhistory.org/) to learn more and download the QR code.

## 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 Island's 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.

### Looking for a special Christmas gift?

#### Look no further: Cruises aboard *M/V The Shoreline*

Make a merry memory! 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! Numerous private tour options to Rock Island State Park, Fayette Historic State Park in Michigan, and past the Poverty Island and St. Martin Island lighthouses are also available. 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 perfect stocking stuffer.

### End of the Year Sale!

Click over to our FOPPI store at [www.plumandpilot.org/store](http://www.plumandpilot.org/store) to find some great gifts for friends and family! Take advantage of special pricing on some of best-selling items through December 31, 2023:

- Plum d'Light Candle by Door County Candle Company: \$23
- Pint and stemless wine glasses etched with an image of the rear range light: \$14
- Monarch hoodies: \$35
- Plum Island sea glass necklaces: \$26

### Wine and Pint Glasses Featuring Plum Island's Rear Range Light

This 16-oz. stemless wine glass featuring Plum Island's rear range light is laser engraved, dishwasher safe, and made in the USA. A 16-oz. pint glass is also available to hold your beverage of choice. Visit the FOPPI store at [www.plumandpilot.org/store](http://www.plumandpilot.org/store) to check out our fun merch!



### Plum Island d'Light Candle from Door County Candle Company

Door County Candle Company's candles are truly special, just like Plum Island! The Plum Island d'Light 16 oz. apothecary jar candle is crafted just for FOPPI in a beautiful light blend of vanilla and lavender.

All of Door County Candle Company's scented wax products are hand poured and handcrafted in small batches at their store in Door County. Their products are tested before market, and all of the fragrances are IFRA certified, meaning they are made with non-harmful chemicals and are safe to burn. Approximate burn time is 75 hours. Visit FOPPI's online store [www.plumandpilot.org/store](http://www.plumandpilot.org/store) to purchase.

## Supporting FOPPI

### Friends of Plum and Pilot Islands welcomes these new members:

- ◆ Richard Bosman, Waterstone Construction, LLC, Sturgeon Bay, WI
- ◆ Gary & Mary Chappell, McGregor, IA
- ◆ Bradley Dennis, Cottage Grove, WI
- ◆ Narda Dhanai, Middleton, WI
- ◆ Ginnie Harney, Fond du Lac, WI
- ◆ Kate Sullivan, Sister Bay, WI
- ◆ Joan Tague, Ormond Beach, FL
- ◆ Janna Zimmerman, Green Bay, WI

**Thank you for your support!**

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 due 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 [www.presidentialserviceawards.gov](http://www.presidentialserviceawards.gov) for more information. As the certifying organization, FOPPI will begin 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 partners!**



Heartfelt thanks goes to Jeff Heal of Washington Island for assisting with FOPPI's mail pickup!



Jackson Harbor Ridges  
in the fall.  
Photo by Nancy Leisgang.

## 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.

Baileys Harbor Community Association Inc.

Mike & Judy Brodd

Fair Isle Books

Jack & Marcia Fry

Steven B. & M. Lynn Karges

Kit Keane & Duncan Alexander

Matthew Kyler

John & Ronda Liebmann

Organizers and Patrons of the 2023 Fine Arts & Antiques Fair

Patrons of the Stone Silo Plant Sale Fundraiser

PayPal Giving Fund

Thrivent

Twin Cities United Way

Danielle Ware

*We make a living by what we get, but we make  
a life by what we give.*

*—Winston Churchill*

# 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.)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Environmental Education	\$	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Historic Preservation	\$	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	"Float the Boat" Shoreline Donation	\$	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Special Events	\$	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other Expenses as Needed	\$	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	Gift Membership \$30	\$	_____
<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>TOTAL AMOUNT:</b>	\$	_____

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](http://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.



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:**  
Mike Repp, 2024  
**Treasurer:** Kimberly Wells, 2026  
**Secretary:** Karen Ellery, 2026

**Board of Directors**

Sally Dery, 2026  
Chuck Scheckel, 2025  
Jim Schwartz, 2025

**Emeritus Directors**

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

**Volunteer Team Members**

**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:** Sally Dery, Lorel Gordon, Nancy Leisgang\*, Suzette Lopez, Sue Scheckel, Tim Sweet, Mary Beth Volmer  
**Special Events:** Sally Dery, Kim Krueger, Tim Sweet, Mary Beth Volmer  
***The Shoreline:*** Sally Dery, Dallas Greetham, Ginnie Harney, Todd Harris, Barb Jacobs, Kim Krueger, Nancy 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*