

## CALENDAR

### GIBRALTAR BAY UNIT (GBU) DETROIT RIVER INT'L WILDLIFE REFUGE

28820 E. River Rd.  
Open to the Public Daily,  
Dawn to Dusk

### AIRPORT NATURAL AREA (ANA)

Beyond the Gate  
at the GBU  
Open on Sundays,  
May 1 to Oct 30, and  
for Special Events

### ISLAND-WIDE CLEAN-UP

Sat, April 23 @ 10am  
Meet at Centennial Farm

### EARTH DAY CELEBRATION

Sat, April 23, 1:00-5:00pm  
St. James Church

### NEW DATE!

### SIGNS OF SPRING

Sun, May 1 @ 1:00pm  
ANA

### EARLY BIRD

### MIGRATION WALK

Sat, May 14 @ 10:00am  
Meridian Woods

Continued on page 2



MARK H. MESSER

## NATIVE SPECIES OF GROSSE ILE

# Canvasback Duck

*(Aythya valisineria)*

ADAPTED BY BERT URBANI FROM AN ARTICLE BY JOHN HARTIG, PHD

This is a bad time to write about canvasback ducks, since they will have all left Grosse Ile by the time this newsletter hits members' mailboxes. But seeing them congregating in such large numbers (thousands!) in front of my house on Hickory Island, and reading (and copying large parts of) John Hartig's fascinating article in the Detroit Public Television blog, *Great Lakes News*, inspired me to share this info, so be prepared with knowledge and excitement when they return this fall!

**CHARACTERISTICS:** Canvasbacks are the largest of North American diving ducks, with a 29-inch wingspan and a length of 19-22 inches. The name "canvasback" comes from the male's white back and sides, which reminded English settlers of canvas fabric. The duck's "noble"

forehead slopes down to its blackish bill with no apparent break in angle. Male canvasbacks have mahogany heads, bright red eyes, and white bodies bookended with black breasts and hindquarters. Females have dull brown heads, gray bodies, with dark eyes, breasts and hindquarters.

**HABITAT & RANGE:** Canvasback breeding habitat consists of grasslands and wetlands, primarily in the Prairie Pothole Region, the core of the Great Plains, what was once the largest expanse of grassland in the world. From mid-April to mid-October, they dwell in their breeding grounds. Some flocks overwinter on the lower Great Lakes and Lake St. Clair, and along the St. Clair and Detroit Rivers.

– continued on Page 6



*Thank You*  
TO OUR  
SPECIAL DONORS

IN MEMORY OF

**DR. BRUCE & JOAN JONES**

*Blair & Gordon Jones  
Charitable Trust*

IN MEMORY OF

**DR. BRUCE & JOAN JONES  
AND RICHARD  
& ROSALIND MEYER**

*Meyer Family Fnd.*

IN MEMORY OF

**ANNA LEE BATSON**

*Thomas & Audrey Stull*

LIFETIME MEMBER

**BILL NACHTRAB**

PROPERTY DONATION

**HATHORNE PLLC**

MAJOR DONORS

**PETER KANTZ**

**MEYER FAMILY FND.**

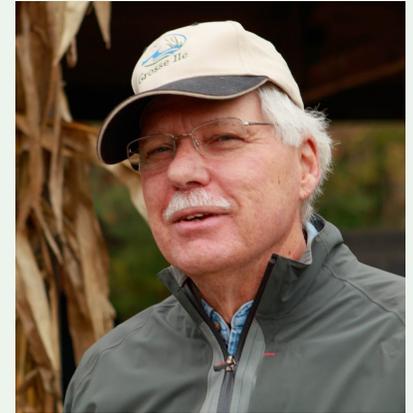
**MR & MRS PAUL**

**NUSSBAUM**

# Reflections From the President

BY PETER KANTZ

John C. Jackson, a long-time benefactor of GINLC, passed away in February of 2021. In his will he left a substantial portion of his estate to the Conservancy. We received the financial assets that Mr. Jackson bequeathed to us in February 2022, resulting in a significant change to our financial position. This change requires adjustments in how we operate and how our financial assets are handled. Fortunately, we have exceptionally talented individuals on our Board of Directors, and we have been able to work through the changes necessary to move forward on a path that remains true to our mission. Our Finance Committee has been expanded and given new responsibilities. An investment policy was established, a financial manager engaged, and an endowment fund created to ensure GINLC can fulfill its mission well into the future. A revised process for evaluating and recommending land acquisitions has been established, that gives equal consideration to all aspects of our mission. Other policies and procedures are being reviewed and updated, as necessary, to reflect the new reality of the organization.



New and existing Conservancy properties will become more identifiable with improved signage. Future land acquisitions will hold true to the Conservancy's tradition of restoring and preserving property for the benefit of the community and future generations. Land acquisitions that are highly visible and easily accessible will enhance opportunities for community engagement through stewardship and educational events. Some of these changes and additions to the Conservancy are already apparent, others will unfold over the coming months and years.

This is an exciting time for the Conservancy. If you are aligned with the Conservancy's mission of: "To promote for the public benefit the preservation, stewardship and understanding of the natural resources in the Township of Grosse Ile and surrounding area" and would like to take a more active role in accomplishing the mission, please contact me at [info@ginlc.org](mailto:info@ginlc.org).

## CALENDAR CONTINUED

**ISLANDFEST PARADE**

Sat, June 4 @ 9:00am  
Meet at Gl High School

**WETLAND WANDER**

SUN, JUN 12 @ 1:00PM  
ANA/GBU

**THINGS WITH WINGS**

Sat, July 16 @ 1:00pm  
ANA/GBU

**LOVELY LOTUS WALK**

Sat, Aug 20 @ 1:00pm  
ANA

**TWILIGHT HIKE**

Sat, Sept 17 @ 7:00pm  
ANA/GBU

**NATURE OF  
HALLOWEEN**

Sun, Oct 30 @ 1:00pm  
ANA/GBU

**OWL PROWL**

Sat, Nov 12 @ 6:30pm  
Centennial Farm

**SOLSTICE WALK**

Sun, Dec 18 @ 1:00pm  
Meridian Woods

A complete listing of our events can be found at [ginlc.org/upcoming-events](https://ginlc.org/upcoming-events)

PETER KANTZ



*Over the past 2 years, GINLC stewardship volunteers removed and piled tons of debris by hand. Working with Compeau Brothers and Airport personnel, the debris was loaded into dumpsters and hauled away.*

# 2022 Spring Stewardship

BY PETER KANTZ

Spring is when GINLC stewardship gets moving in high gear, however we were not sitting on our hands during the winter. With the help of Compeau Brothers – Charlie Compeau has always been willing to help out whenever possible – and the Grosse Ile Airport, we were able to get rid of the trash that has been piling up at the Airport Nature Area (ANA) as we have cleared the area of tons of partially buried demolition debris left behind by the Navy. Whenever the winter weather allowed, the Monday Morning Stewardship Crew worked on restoring the trails, cutting down vines and opening viewing areas at the ANA. The area will be ready for visitors when it opens on Sunday afternoons from 1:00 pm to 4:00 pm starting May 1st.

Since we steward a number of properties beside the ANA, we are always in search of additional crew members. We work from 9:00 am to noon on Mondays when the weather cooperates, which is most of the year. If you are interested in helping maintain and restore natural areas on Grosse Ile, please send me an email at [info@ginlc.org](mailto:info@ginlc.org). It is rewarding work with great crew members and a chance to enjoy the outdoors while working to improve the community.

Spring is also the time when we take stock of our

stewardship tools. We will be purchasing some new tools this year and transitioning to battery powered tools that are more friendly to the environment. If you have some lightly used tools that you no longer need such as shovels, rakes, loppers, saws, post hole diggers, mowers, etc. we would be happy to accept your donation.

Stewardship has always been a mainstay of the Conservancy and a great opportunity to meet and work with friendly, active, conservation-minded people. This year we will be scheduling weekend stewardship events to allow greater participation in our stewardship activities.

## 2 Easy Ways to Give



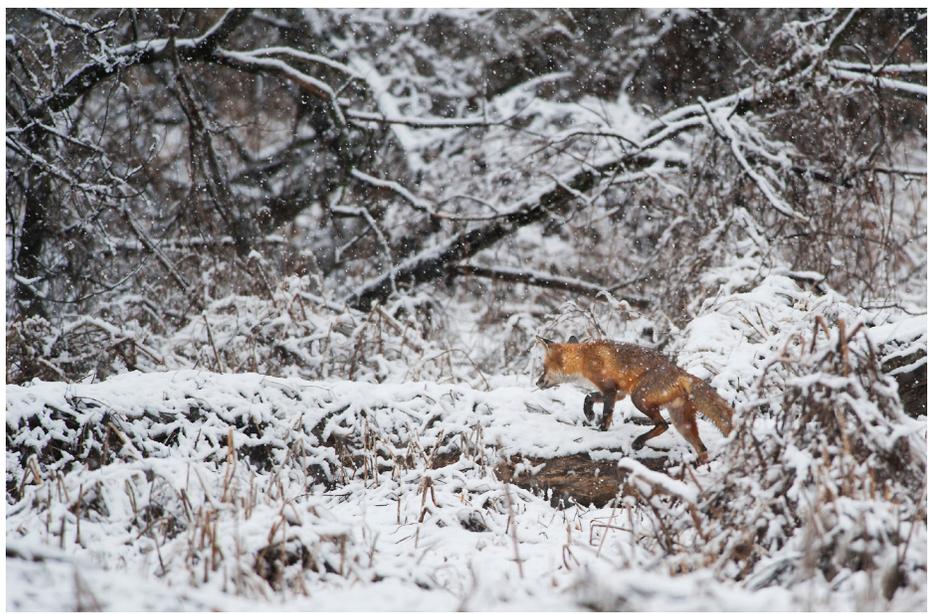
### KROGER CARDS

Enroll your Kroger Plus card to benefit the Grosse Ile Nature & Land Conservancy! Go to [www.kroger.com/communityrewards](http://www.kroger.com/communityrewards) to enroll. Thanks!



### AMAZON SMILE

Don't forget to smile — Sign up for Amazon Smile! Select Grosse Ile Nature & Land Conservancy as your charitable organization, and then 0.5% of the purchase price of eligible products will be donated to GINLC.



RAY HENNESSY / UNSPLASH



# The Winter of Our DisContent

BY BERT URBANI

Although January's planned outdoor environmental educational event was cancelled, we were content to enjoy the educational content provided by naturalist Griffin Bray on Feb 13 at the Airport Natural Area. Despite the 20 degree temperature, it was sunny, with no wind, and so it felt downright balmy. And, despite the title, *Birds on the Bay*, which should have had us looking skyward, we found ourselves mostly looking at the ground. The light snow provided a perfect canvas for observing wildlife tracks. Although Griffin did not say this, I will now write that he paraphrased Robert Frost, "whose tracks these are, I think I know ..." because he did identify a large variety of footprints, to the delight of all.

Griffin explained the identifying characteristics of several types of tracks including squirrel, rabbit, raccoon, fox, turkey, and opossum tracks. By looking at traits like track size (foxes have smaller tracks than coyotes), gait (raccoons waddle and leave a front and back footprint side by side while opossums step on top of their previous tracks), and even track shape (rabbits and squirrels both land with their back feet in front of their front feet, but squirrels have their front feet side by side while rabbits have them one after the other), we were able to identify and learn about the animals that had been using the area since the snowfall even while they stayed well out of sight.

We did see some birds, literally, on the Bay – several swans and Canada geese were spotted swimming in the open water near the Upper Hickory Island bridge. And hiding in the shrubs along the trail, we found white-throated sparrows, downy woodpeckers, and a cedar waxwing feeding on leftover berries from fall.

*Left, Top: A close look at raccoon tracks, Center: A flock of wild turkeys must have trotted by this spot, Bottom, Cari & Doug Thiel and their granddaughters observe while Griffin notes the difference between squirrel, rabbit, and opossum tracks. Top right: A fox delicately moves through the snowy landscape.*

PHOTOS ON LEFT BY BERT URBANI

# Bird Safe Windows

BY ERIN PARKER

We've all heard that sound; the thud of a bird hitting a window. But did you know that somewhere between 100 million and 1 billion birds die from colliding with windows each year? And this is only bird collisions in the United States. These staggering numbers come from reports by the National Audubon Society and the American Bird Conservancy, and both organizations believe that the higher numbers of bird fatalities are more accurate because capturing the total is difficult. Even birds that initially appear to recover and fly off may be dying; research suggests that only 35% of these birds actually survive. Many die from the collision itself and many more become prey for other animals as they try to recover from their injuries.

Birds don't see glass as a solid surface—they may see through a window or series of windows, to the landscape beyond. They may see a reflection, particularly of sky or vegetation, that makes it appear to be space through which they can fly. This isn't just a problem with large buildings in big cities, the windows in our homes can also cause trouble for birds.

Particularly during spring and fall migration, with large numbers of birds moving through and seeking shelter in unfamiliar places, reflective windows can cause bird

fatalities. If you've ever observed a window with one or two hawk silhouette decals on it, the unfortunate reality is that a few scattered images don't work because they don't cover enough of the surface area.

Simple solutions for homeowners range from closing or partially closing the blinds during parts of the day when the windows might be most reflective, or adding bird-safe glass products. These can be films or stickers applied to the exterior of the window, allowing homeowners clear views out but creating a pattern or grid that makes the glass visible to birds. Acopian Bird Savers are strings that sit outside the window, about 4 inches apart, and create a visible barrier for birds. They can be purchased or home-made. Bird-safe window products typically have patterns of 2x2 or 2x4 inches, through which birds won't attempt to fly.

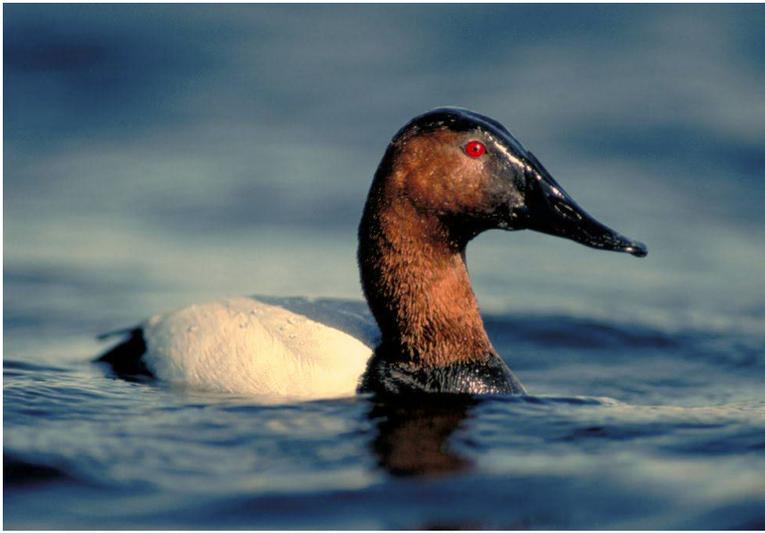
Along with modifications to windows, homeowners should consider the location of their bird feeders. Recommended distances are either within 3 feet of the window so that birds flying away from predators won't be flying fast enough to cause themselves harm, or further out than 30 feet because they have more time to avoid windows altogether. At 15-30 feet from a window, bird collisions are nearly always fatal.

Many local nature centers including the Belle Isle Nature Center and the visitor center at the Detroit International Wildlife Refuge Gateway have examples of bird-safe glass modifications which greatly reduce bird strikes and bird fatalities.

**Interested in learning more about reducing bird strikes on your property?  
Here are some resources and research: [www.abcbirds.org/glass-collisions/](http://www.abcbirds.org/glass-collisions/)**



*Clockwise from Bottom Left: Dot pattern on Visitor Center windows. A purchased Acopian Bird Saver on a house in Georgia. Part of a display of birds killed by glass collisions in Toronto. Dot pattern inside up close view. Window and Sliding Door bird screens.*



CANVASBACK DUCK, continued from cover

**DIET:** The species name *valisineria* comes from the wild celery *Vallisneria americana*, whose buds and underground stems, called rhizomes, are the canvasback's preferred food during the winter season. Canvasbacks can dive as deep as 30 feet for aquatic plants. During the breeding season, canvasbacks are omnivores, eating mussels, snails and insect larvae in addition to plants.

**REPRODUCTION:** Canvasbacks pick new mates every year in late winter. They nest over water on permanent prairie marshes surrounded by cattails and bulrushes for cover. When conditions are good, females lay 5-11 drab greenish eggs. Chicks emerge with down and leave the nest fairly soon.



**BEHAVIOR:** Canvasbacks seldom go ashore and even sleep on the water with their bill tucked under their wing, earning their scientific name *Aythya*, which comes from an Ancient Greek word meaning a sea-dwelling duck. They are one of the fastest ducks in the sky, clocking airspeeds around 60 miles per hour. Because their feet are placed far back on their body for swimming and diving, the canvasback has difficulty walking on land and cannot quickly lift off the water, so they need a running start to lift off.



**STATUS:** Canvasback populations have fluctuated over the years due to many different reasons. The ducks' wild celery diet lent a special taste to the meat, which resulted in overhunting and a decline in canvasback numbers. Agricultural development in the Prairie Pothole Region has caused considerable draining of wetlands, which has also taken its toll. They are protected by the Migratory Bird Act but they are not currently considered threatened or endangered.

**VIEWING OPPORTUNITIES:** More than 300,000 diving ducks, including canvasbacks, have been documented at one time on the lower Detroit River. According to Joe Robison, southeast regional supervisor for the Michigan Department of Natural Resources, "The best places to view canvasbacks in late winter are off of Lake Erie Metropark, along East River Road on Grosse Ile, and off Point Mouillee State Game area." The GINLC's Hennepin Marsh Gateway is also a good place to view Canvasback ducks.



*From Top: A male canvasback with striking red eyes, A female and her brood, Female showing characteristic leg placement towards the back of the body, Wild celery flowing with the river current. It is abundant in the Detroit River.*

# Update on McLouth Steel Site: Remediation and Redevelopment

BY DOUG THIEL, GINLC BOARD MEMBER/CAG LEADERSHIP TEAM

*The following is an update on progress at the McLouth Steel Site over the past few months.*

## Northern Portion of the Site

- ASTI Environmental completed their Phase I investigative report on the northern portion of the site as required by the Phase I Corrective Action Consent Order for the property between the Michigan Department of Environment, Great Lakes and Energy (EGLE) and the Riverview-Trenton Railroad Company. EGLE has reviewed and approved the investigative report. The report is now posted on EGLE's website. EGLE is in the process of using the information in the Phase I investigative report to generate a Phase II Corrective Action Consent Order that will outline the requirements for remediation at the site.
- The Phase II remediation is expected to take 4-5 years to complete.
- West Jefferson will be resurfaced and drainage improvements will be completed this summer at the northwest corner of the site where poor road conditions and standing water have been a problem for a number of years.

## Southern Portion of the Site

- The required report summarizing the completion of the work associated with the EPA/ MSC Land Company Agreement for the clean-up and removal of 45 structures on-site, and the removal of contaminated water and sludges from 23 subsurface pits, basements and lagoons was issued on January 4, 2022. It is currently under review by the EPA. The report will be made available to the public after EPA review and approval. The total cost of the initial cleanup phase of the project was \$20 million.
- Greg Gehrig, EPA Region 5, has been named as the site Remedial Project Manager moving forward, replacing Nabil Fayoumi due to workload adjustments. The start of EPA's remedial investigation of the site has now been delayed to the spring of 2023 due to the need to find a new contractor who will be conducting the remedial investigation. The original contractor which had been selected to conduct the remedial investigation, Great Lakes Architect and Engineering Services, has declined to take on the project. A new contractor will be selected over the next 3-5 months. The remedial investigation phase of the project is expected to take 4-5 years.
- The public health assessment is continuing for the southern portion of the site. It is being conducted via a cooperative agreement between the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR), EPA, and the State of Michigan Department of Health and Human Services. As reported in my earlier quarterly updates, the public health assessment will explore and identify data gaps to see if the site contains an unknown exposure pathway that could adversely affect the community, which will then have to be addressed.



# History of the Grosse Ile Nature & Land Conservancy

BY AMANDA PHILLIPS

After a long absence, I returned to the GINLC Board in the Fall of 2020. As happens when you join an organization, there are always jobs to be done. One of the concerns of the Board at that time was for someone to begin writing a history of the Conservancy, before memories faded and the founders got any older. Since I was one of the founders and a retired History teacher, it felt like a natural fit to work on this project.

The main resource for this endeavor has been the *Voyageur*, our wonderful newsletter. Since the beginning of the newsletter in 1993, its purpose has been to get the word out to our members and eventually to our community. Educating the public about the why, what, when, and where of a Conservancy was a major push in the beginning. It was a new concept locally. Explaining the idea and its benefits was very important, to combat the misinformation that was circulating in the community.

Each newsletter, while explaining the mission, also reviewed why conservation easements were needed in order to preserve the character and charm of Grosse Ile. Conservation easements, (wherein a property owner retains ownership of the property but the easement preserves the land in its natural state in perpetuity), as well as outright land donations and property sales to the GINLC, remain essential in preserving Grosse Ile's natural resources from unfettered development. The newsletters described how the donations surrounding the grantee's responsibilities were important and how donations could reduce one's income tax. That was the beginning of the public education for Island residents.

Since that time in 1992 the issues have changed and grown to include more than just our island home.

The Conservation Crescent (the area that surrounds the southern portion of Grosse Ile and includes the smaller islands and shoreline areas along the Canadian and U.S. sides of the river from Stony Island in the northeast to Humbug Marsh in the northwest) that founder Dr. Bruce

Jones foresaw as one of our biggest missions, has come to pass. More property has been acquired as well as increased cooperation and coordination with the Township, and local, state, and federal agencies. Education remains a priority. These learning experiences continue to the present day.

All of the hard work by the board members, volunteers, and members, has made this Conservancy thrive. Stewardship has been hard, dutiful, and without end. When we began in 1992, many of us thought we were too late – a Conservancy should have begun at least 25 years previously. Now it is 2022, and the work,

dedication, and commitment are still as strong as they were in the beginning. Thank goodness, we weren't too late.

Ingo Hasserodt, another founding member of the GINLC, identifies this picture as having been taken when the missile base was handed over to the EPA in 1996. The EPA then partnered with the GINLC to be the stewards of the site. The photo shows Senator Carl Levin among a group of people taking sledge hammers to one of the Nike Missile bunkers. The concrete remnants are still there, just past the gate to the Airport Natural Area, to the west of the GINLC equipment shed. Through the hard work and persistence of several visionaries and GINLC, what was once a missile base is now a protected natural area – Gibraltar Bay Unit and Airport Natural area – for the enjoyment of the public.



*“Since the beginning of the newsletter in 1993, its purpose has been to get the word out to our members and eventually to our community.”*



*New Refuge Manager Dan Kennedy and two views of the new Nature Playscape at the Refuge Gateway on W. Jefferson in Trenton.*

# What's New at the Detroit River International Refuge?

BY BERT URBANI



How about a new Refuge Manager? Dan Kennedy started his new job on Feb 28, so on his Day One of Week Two I took the opportunity to have a ZOOM meeting with him to welcome him to the area and ask a few questions. Dan brings a 25-year career in wildlife management, with nearly 19 years with the Michigan Department of Natural Resources in the areas of wildlife and endangered and threatened species.

He was inspired to apply for the job as Refuge Manager because of the US Fish & Wildlife Service's (USFWS) Urban Wildlife Conservation Program, which has been in existence for about a decade but only recently funded at the DRIWR. Dan noted that historically, the nation's conservation programs have focused on rural areas with large tracts of land but few people, and he is excited by the prospect of helping to connect people with nature. (Seven million people live within driving distance of the DRIWR.) With the world's population increasingly moving to cities,\* the USFWS believes "Conservation in urban areas helps protect our natural heritage and provides people with access to nature that raises their quality of life."\*\*\*

Dan's immediate goal is Learning. He expects a steep learning curve to absorb the policies and practices of a new agency, the vast institutional and practical knowledge of the Refuge staff, and the present and growing challenges including climate change and invasive species. Dan is looking forward to getting to know the Refuge's partners,

including its "friend" group, the International Wildlife Refuge Alliance, as well as the Grosse Ile Nature & Land Conservancy, Friends of the Detroit River, and others. He plans to connect with former Refuge Managers John Hartig on Grosse Ile and Susan White in Hawaii to learn from their experiences, and acknowledges that he is lucky to be arriving after the Visitor Center was completed.

Dan loves to go fishing from his kayak and went at least once a week during the depths of the pandemic to relieve stress. Originally from Midland, Michigan, Dan currently lives in Lansing. He is house-hunting in the Downriver area, and maybe the kayak launch at Sunrise Park and the fact that the free bridge is open can lure him to become a Grosse Ile neighbor! At any rate, we will be seeing Dan at some GINLC functions as he settles in, and wish him a warm welcome.

... AND, a new playscape! The Nature Playscape at the Refuge Gateway is installed and ready for use! It is located near the fishing pier at the Refuge Gateway on W. Jefferson in Trenton. Discover your wild side, and come play!

*\*Globally, over 50% of the population lives in urban areas today. By 2045, the world's urban population will increase by 1.5 times to 6 billion. [www.worldbank.org/en/topic/urbandevelopment/overview#1](http://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/urbandevelopment/overview#1)*

*\*\* [www.doi.gov/urban/USFWS](http://www.doi.gov/urban/USFWS)*

## SPRING IS IN THE AIR

Warm breezes are blowing,  
gentle rain is falling, flowers  
are blooming, birds are  
singing, bees are buzzing...

### DON'T POISON YOUR YARD!

Have a **HEALTHY LAWN** for  
your family, pets, and wildlife.

Fertilize only if a soil test  
indicates your soil needs it,  
and never use Weed & Feed.

Cut high; 2.5 inches.  
Let the clips fall.

Don't overwater.

Hand-dig weeds or  
spot treat with herbicide.

Core aerate.

[ginlc.org/healthy-lawns-and-gardens](http://ginlc.org/healthy-lawns-and-gardens)

# Conservancy Acquires New Properties

BY DOUG THIEL

In December, January and February the GINLC acquired three new properties on Grosse Ile. The first was a 0.16-acre parcel at the intersection of Marlborough and Chicory donated by Hathorne PLLC. This is a very heavily vegetated second-growth wooded property which provides excellent wildlife habitat. The GINLC has a number of other property parcels in this area with some on the Thorofare Canal. The second and third parcels were purchased by the GINLC and are side-by-side at the southeast corner of Parke Lane and Wendell, a short distance north of Church Road. The two parcels total 1.18 acres and they are situated



*A view of the wooded property at Marlborough and Chicory in early March.*

directly east of a 12-acre Township-owned Open Space parcel. The combined parcels are a visually-beautiful mature wooded property which contains a variety of large specimens of native trees found on Grosse Ile. It is likely that environmental education sessions will be held there in the future by the GINLC.

The GINLC now has a total of 159 protected acres of easements and owned property across Grosse Ile. All of the GINLC-owned property is available for the public to enjoy. A complete listing of our protected lands can be found at [www.ginlc.org/protected-lands](http://www.ginlc.org/protected-lands).

LEFT: ANIKET BHATTACHARYA / UNSPLASH, RIGHT: DOUG THIEL

**TAKE IT OUTSIDE**  
NATURE AND WILDLIFE PHOTO CONTEST  
OPEN TO ALL HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS

Sponsored by the Grosse Ile Nature and Land Conservancy

**3 Categories**  
New Beginnings  
Nature in Distress  
Nature at its Best

ALL DIGITAL  
Cash Prizes - \$445!  
3 photo entries per student max,  
one per category  
Enter throughout school year  
Deadline Thurs. MAY 5th, 2022

Enter at [www.ginlc.org](http://www.ginlc.org)  
Click on "Photo Contest" for entry form and complete details.

## CALLING ALL HIGH SCHOOL PHOTOGRAPHERS!

The reality is that every high school student has a cell phone these days, so every high school student is eligible to enter the GINLC High School nature photo contest, Take It Outside. The deadline is Thursday, May 5, and the categories are New Beginnings, Nature in Distress, and Nature at its Best. There will be 10 cash prizes, and winning photos and honorable mentions will be displayed during IslandFest and in the Wyandotte and Trenton libraries. We're looking forward to lots and lots of entries from Grosse Ile High School and all our neighboring communities.

For an entry form and contest rules, visit...

[ginlc.org/photo-contest](http://ginlc.org/photo-contest)

# GINLC Newsletter VOYAGEUR to Have Three Co-Editors, For Now

BY PAMELA A. FRUCCI

When Bert Urbani, previous editor of the Grosse Ile Nature & Land Conservancy newsletter The Voyageur, was term-limited off the board, she asked for a replacement. She got two volunteers: Katie Kobiljak and me. Katie is attending college and I bring a long history in journalism. When I was 13-years-old and in junior high, my neighbor Pat Pittman and I were complaining in Heine and Dorothy Hoch's living room that there was nothing to do on Grosse Ile. Heine, church editor of The Detroit News, suggested publishing a kids' newspaper. We published the Ile Camera "by and for kids" in their basement for two years until we got in high school and got busier. The Hochs took it over and published the Ile Camera for 25 years. Then the News-Herald published it, but it folded in 2015.

Now writing two columns for the Grosse Ile Grand, I figure I've been a journalist for 76 years! Bert Urbani has BIG shoes to fill as previous editor of the Voyageur, so, after this Spring 2022 issue with Bert still on board, I'm hoping the two of us can fill those shoes!

My twin brother and I were born on May 25, 1932 and our family moved to Grosse Ile six weeks later, so I figure my roots are pretty deep on the Island. I graduated from GIHS in 1950

and our two kids in 1979 and 1987. Our son Jay and his wife Lisa's three girls all attended GIHS and the youngest graduates this year: the third generation of Marsh/Frucci GIHS alumni.

I got my master's degree in education from the U. of

Michigan. I needed one more course to finish my requirements and saw I could earn that credit from the Rackham School in Detroit. The course intrigued me, living on Grosse Ile and surrounded by the Detroit River. It was taught by Gerald Remus, then head of the Detroit Water and Sewerage



Department and the course was entitled: "Sewers I Have Known." It was a fascinating experience since Professor Remus arranged tours of Detroit's sewerage plant and fresh water intake facility. He told us that when the department stopped dumping tons of oil and sludge directly into the Detroit River, Lake Erie began its revival. (Up to that time, there had been a false theory that "The solution to pollution is dilution!")

The "Sewers I Have Known" class is what inspired my passion for cleaning up the environment, so much so that in 1991 I started the Downriver Recycling Center on property donated by DTE Energy. We had bins for glass, metal, and paper. That operated until around 1997 when curbside recycling started on Grosse Ile and other communities.

So, with my long experience as a journalist, and Katie's youth and energy, I hope we two will fill Bert's BIG shoes!

*"...with my long experience as a journalist, and Katie's youth and energy, I hope we two will fill Bert's BIG shoes!"*



## A Snippet About Me

BY KATIE KOBILJAK

I graduated from Michigan State last winter and I am now studying at the University of Detroit Mercy School of Law. At MSU, I received a minor in public relations by taking multiple journalism credits, and worked at the Michigan State Writing Center. Additionally, I write various stories for the American Conservation Coalition, another environmental nonprofit.





### Indoors – Presentations:

- The History of Earth Day
- Understanding Coyotes
- Native Trees & How to “Re-Tree”
- Plastics in Our Environment
- Stewarding Our Backyards

### Displays:

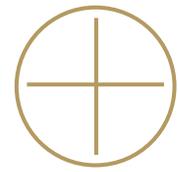
Healthy Lawns, Climate Change, GI High School Env. Awareness Club, Monarch Butterflies, Priority Waste, DTE, Wild Birds Unlimited, GI Garden Club



## Earth Day Celebration!

Saturday April 23, 2022, 1-5pm  
St. James Episcopal Church  
25150 E. River Rd. Grosse Ile MI 48138

**(Everyone is invited)**



ST. JAMES  
GREEN TEAM

### Outdoors:

- Painting Bird Houses
- Skulls and Pelts
- Seed Planting
- Westcroft Gardens
- What’s In The Sand?

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