



ERNEST C. OBERHOLTZER FOUNDATION

MALLARD ISLAND

RAINY LAKE, MINNESOTA

Artwork by Gene Ritchie Monahan

WINTER NEWSLETTER 2023

Board of Directors

Erika Bailey-Johnson
 Bill Forsyth
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 Teghan Grulkowski
 David Harrington
 Keir Johnson
 Pebaam (Dennis) Jones
 Nance Kunkel
 Ward Merrill
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 Eric Rundell
 Peggy Smith
 Jerry Williams

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Mission

We foster Ober's legacy and north woods home as a source of inspiration, renewal, and connection to Indigenous Peoples, kindred spirits, and the natural world.
Gi-bezhig-oomin

The Next Generation

To continue thriving, organizations need to attract and be relevant to the needs and interests of the next generation. The Oberholtzer Foundation has been taking active steps in this direction, so we are very pleased to announce that Teghan Grulkowski and Eric Rundell joined the Board of Directors January 1, 2023! They may be new to the board but they are not new to the foundation. Below, they introduce themselves in their own words.

Teghan Grulkowski

In the last 5 years I have made conscious personal and professional choices that reflected my interest in conservation. From education, to government, to non-profit, to private sector in energy, I have been growing to be the ally I've always wanted to be. Now I believe I can put this allyship to good use and bring a youthful influence to the Foundation as I continue my path that started back in 2019 during the first Stewards of the Wilderness program week on Mallard Island.



When I first spent a week on Mallard, I was exposed to many different perspectives regarding cultural relations, sustainability, nature and our relationship with her, and it really changed me for the better. New perspectives can offer untapped knowledge and solutions and what better to bring that about than a young adult with fresh eyes, little life experience, and a whole bunch of disputing questions.

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Dear Readers,

Happy New Year! It's hard to believe that our next season on Mallard Island is just around the corner. I'm already immersed in logistics planning, phoning, emailing and scheduling of both visitors and volunteers for repair work to make sure we can accommodate guests. We have a robust schedule planned. Many weeks were originally scheduled for 2022, but were cancelled due to the flood. We are optimistic that these same planned program weeks will happen this year.



Renewal

Although the flood was challenging, it brought renewal to the foundation. Triaging and reassessing our sustainability helped clarify priorities. First, we needed to do some electrical work and rewiring for flood safety; we did not want to have to turn off all power again during a flood. Also, while pulling furniture out of harms way, we realized some mattresses needed replacing. I am happy to report that our electrical system is now flood resilient, and we are going to replace many mattresses with the help of donations and a grant. Also, we have identified a volunteer who will make new curtains for the cabins!

Calling all quilters

With new mattresses and curtains, we also are looking at new blankets for those chilly nights. Laura Pawlacyk, one of our caretakers, suggested we seek volunteers to sew quilts. Having handmade quilts in our cabins would be a wonderful way of enhancing the look and feel of our living museum. As part of our collections, we have one of Ober's old quilts. So - calling all quilters! You can pick the cabin and the bed you would like to adorn with your quilt on a first-come basis. We will display all donated handmade quilts at our Fall Gathering in late October. Laura is our first volunteer and she is sewing a quilt for the upper room in Front House. Thank you Laura! Please contact me if you are willing and able to partake in this exciting project.

Two Legacy Grants

I'm excited to announce that we received two small Minnesota Legacy grants with funds provided by the State of Minnesota Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund through the Minnesota Historical Society. The first is for a Collections Storage Plan for our Mallard Island Annex Library at the Backus Community Center, which will house the books from the old flooded Library and provide collections work space. The second grant is for a Conditions Assessment Report on the historic stonework around Mallard Island. Repairing it is an expensive proposition, and this grant will help us assess the condition and develop a plan to tackle the restoration over time.

Finally, thank you to all who lifted the foundation up during the flood by volunteering and making donations and encouraging friends and family to support us. What a team effort! With your continued support, we will be able to continue sharing Ober's legacy and Mallard Island home.

In Gratitude,

Rebecca Otto

(The Next Generation, cont from pg. 1)

At the end of the day, we all want to have some piece in continuing the legacy of Ernest Oberholtzer in an always changing world. I believe involving a younger demographic like myself will only be beneficial in preserving the ideals and values of this Foundation.

Before joining the board, Teghan was a caretaker in training on Mallard Island. She has served as a member of the Program Committee and the Fall Gathering Planning Committee. Teghan resides in Duluth, Minnesota.

Eric Rundell



I've spent the majority of my life paddling, hiking, hunting, and fishing all around Northern Minnesota. My degree is in Geography from the University of Wisconsin Stevens Point, but my skill sets aren't limited to maps as I gravitate toward fixing, building and restoring the infrastructure around the Review Islands. I am a GIS Technician for the local public utility and I coach high school swimming.

I have been going to Mallard Island regularly since 1987 and know the workings of the space quite well. I grew up in a house where the name Ober was a regular reference, and by the time I was a teenager I knew Mallard Island like the back of my hand. In the last several decades my family has been busy with opening and closing chores, along with basic upkeep and firewood processing with an eye towards keeping the island and the legacy going. I have always had a passion for building and a curiosity for how things are put together and those skills have come together to make me somewhat of a handyman. Through my 20's I worked as a carpenter, roofer, landscaper and have been on hand during many construction projects. In recent years, these skills have allowed me to be able to expand by involvement with the foundation into official work projects on the island such as the tool shed rebuild and most recently flood cleanup projects.

When I think about the future of the Oberholtzer Foundation, I am well-aware of the fact that it is important to continue to cultivate the next generation of stewards for this place. I have a strong desire to help make the island accessible to people in the beginning stages of their professional life where time and money are always a commodity in short supply. To maintain a strong future, we need to continue to grow at present. The island, the legacy and the man run through my veins.

Before joining the board, Eric served as a member of the Facilities Committee and has led carpentry work weeks on Mallard Island with volunteers he has recruited. Eric resides in Grand Rapids, Minnesota.



Mallard Island Schedule - 2023

Dates	Summary of Program Week
May 18-27	<i>Reflection and Flood Clean Up/Repair Work</i>
May 28-June 3	<i>Carpentry/Repairs Work Week - Caboose roof & misc repairs</i>
June 4-9	<i>Gardening Work Week - grounds clean up & plantings</i>
June 9-11	<i>Foundation Board Meeting & Workshop - strategic planning</i>
June 11-17	<i>Archive Work Week - work on books & maps</i>
June 18-24	<i>Young Writers Workshop - build a cohort of young northern MN writers who can use collections/cultural practices to enhance writing</i>
June 25-30	<i>Water is Life - focus on Anishinaabe inaakonigewin (law) and giikendaasowin (knowledge) relating to lands & waters</i>
June 30-July 4	<i>Carpentry Work Week I - Big House deck & misc maintenance</i>
July 5-8	<i>Carpentry Work Week II - misc repairs and maintenance</i>
July 9-15	<i>Rest Week</i>
July 16-22	<i>MCEA Leadership Retreat - restorative time for staff & time to reflect on strategies to protect environment & MN's health</i>
July 23-29	<i>Grandmother Drum Week - cultural immersion & ceremony with Grandmother Drum</i>
July 30-Aug 5	<i>Sustainability & Psychology - complete a curricular unit on Ober for Sustainability & Psychology courses at college & high school levels</i>
Aug 6-12	<i>Individual Projects - varied projects that fit the mission of the foundation including visual arts, writing, research, culture</i>
Aug 13-19	<i>Boreal Travels – using the Greene Journals, record this group's annual treks to the wilderness to share with next generation</i>
Aug 20-26	<i>Stewards of the Wilderness - convene & develop the next generation of environmental advocates</i>
Aug 27-Sept 1	<i>Rest Week</i>
Sept 1-7	<i>Possible repairs week - Big House, upper west side</i>
Sept 7-10	<i>Foundation Board Meeting & Workshop - strategic planning</i>
Sept 11-22	<i>Forestry Work Week</i>

Gift Designations in 2022

Anonymous in honor of Lucy Bruntjen
Tracie Anderson in honor of Mairi Doerr and Sherry Rovig
Mary Axelson in memory of Marjorie Laughnan and Donna Axelson
Patricia Brophy in memory of Janet Pearson
Nancy Churchill in memory of Clifford E. Knapp
Jerry and Lynn Cox in honor of Jean and Randy Replinger
Elizabeth Cregan in memory of Leo Anderson
Fred Dalldorf and Jane Bultman in memory of Ober
Mairi Doerr in honor of Ober
Mayme Donsker in honor of artists of these times
Alanna Dore in honor of Beth Waterhouse
Kathryn Duchene in honor of Steve and Elaine Thrune
David Duggan in honor of Archive/Book Week Folk
James and Janet Edlund in memory of Butch Thompson
Jim Fitzpatrick in memory of Don Maronde
Sue Foran in honor of Ward Merrill
David Fraher in honor of Mickey Smith
BG Garner in memory of Charlie Kelly
Cary J. Griffith in honor of Anna M. McCourt, a fellow lover of wild places
Thomas Hall in memory of Ted Hall and in honor of Pinay Boshkaykin
Sheila Hart in memory of John C. And Phyllis Hart
Thomas Heinrich in honor of Ted Schwenker
Steve and Jackie Henning in honor of Bob Hilke and in memory of Mary Hilke
Jack and Mary Hickerson in memory of Duane Aden - Marshall City Administrator, outdoorsman & friend
Anthony Johnson in honor of Pebaam
Julia Joplin in memory of Nelly Harding Gerber
Mary and Allan Juers in honor of Tim Heinle and Harry Sweatt
Ellie Kingsbury in honor of Ellie Kingsbury
Sonja Kosler in honor of Beth Waterhouse
John Lamb in honor of Mickey Smith
Barbara LaValleur in honor of volunteers who helped with the flood work on our beloved Mallard Island
Jeff Lightfoot in memory of Dwayne C Mannausau
Frank Lockwood in memory of Sam White
Carol Marshall in honor of Jean Replinger
Sara N. Martineau in memory of James P. Martineau
Sarah Miller in honor of Mickey Smith
Mary Miller in memory of Todd Miller
David & Shannon Monahan in memory of Hugh & Marnee Monahan
Karen Mueller in honor of Mickey Smith



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Message From the Chair

It's tough to think of green trees, blue sky, beautiful Rainy Lake, warm summer breezes, fresh pine scent of Mallard summer days at this time of the year. But with visions of the flood in our rear view mirror, your Oberholtzer Foundation is looking forward to hosting a full programming season. The flood provided an opportunity to rewire the eastern end of Mallard so the infrastructure project will enhance our ability to host programming weeks. We're also freshening up Mallard lodging, investing in new mattresses, curtains and blankets.



Last year we completed policy updates and established new ones as part of modernizing our administrative infrastructure. And this is the year we get after our strategic plan, the first with a full-time executive director and the security of an endowment fund. This exceptionally important fund helps us focus more effort on programming supporting our mission, and less on what we need to do to keep the lights on. We are humbly thankful for all the volunteer and financial support our Oberholtzer friends provided in recent years.

We also have changes in our board lineup with two long-time board members Mike Reid and Diane Tessari who are institutions unto themselves, finishing out their terms as board members. But as we know they will likely not go too far as it's tough to really leave when there is still so much more work to be done on committees or as volunteers. We are also welcoming two new board members who are young enough to stay busy for a long time. Teghan Grulkowski and Eric Rundell are enthusiastically ready to go to work. We also welcome Kier Johnson as our new Treasurer. He's already busy pouring over our finances and thinking about what's next for us.

As many already know, we've established a presence in the Backus Community Center where we can begin work organizing the books rescued from the library building, soon to be repurposed. The Backus space will allow us to host events, conduct research and work on archives.



Thank you for your support!

George Glazier

Letter from the Treasurer

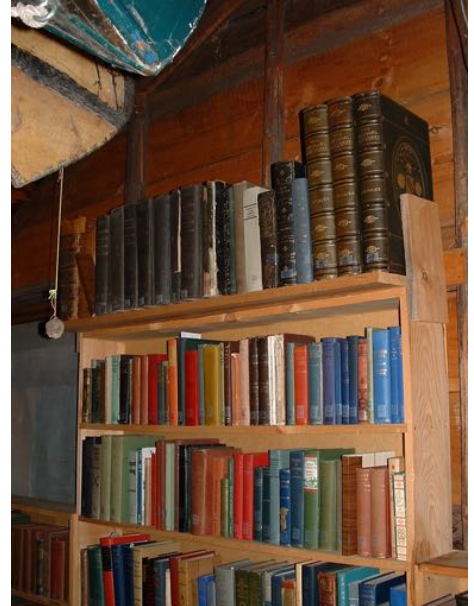


Hello, and nice to meet you! I am the newly elected Treasurer for the Oberholtzer Foundation. I took over from Michael Reid at the first of the year when Michael's term ended. I hope you will join me in offering Michael heartfelt thanks for his years of service to the Ober Board, both as Director and Treasurer.

I joined the Ober Board at the outset of 2022 and I am honored to serve with such a distinguished group to help fulfill the mission of the Foundation; to preserve Ober's island home and promote his legacy. I was born and grew up in International Falls. I have fond memories of Ober visiting my parents' home for dinner parties in the 1960's as well as visits to both his home at Wildcroft and Mallard Island. Two of my most prized possessions are copies of Moby Dick and Tom Sawyer that Ober gave to a young reader from his personal collection.

As you know, we have come through a difficult time. Investment earnings were severely challenged throughout 2022 at the same time historic flooding forced us to cancel summer programming. We could not have survived without the enormous outpouring of both financial support and "boots on the ground" volunteer labor. We are a small organization, and program fees are deliberately affordable. That means we rely on generous donations for both current operations and to build our endowment. We were immensely gratified to have received record donations in 2022 including a very significant gift to the Endowment.

This will be a year of rebuilding, but we are building on a solid foundation. We still have physical infrastructure needs, including preparing for a significant project to stabilize our historic stonework. At the same time, we are working to expand our outreach efforts to promote Ober's legacy locally and more broadly. Yes, all of those efforts require money, and we will be inviting our loyal friends to continue supporting our annual operations as well as to help us rebuild our endowed funds. We have been very fortunate to receive small grants from the Minnesota Legacy Fund to get us started with outreach and preservation efforts, including a new partnership with the Backus Center in International Falls to create a space for preservation and research with some of Ober's thousands of books from the old Library. (In my spare time, I also Chair the Archives Committee). We all think Ober would have been delighted that the community center named for his old adversary will be hosting parts of his collections!



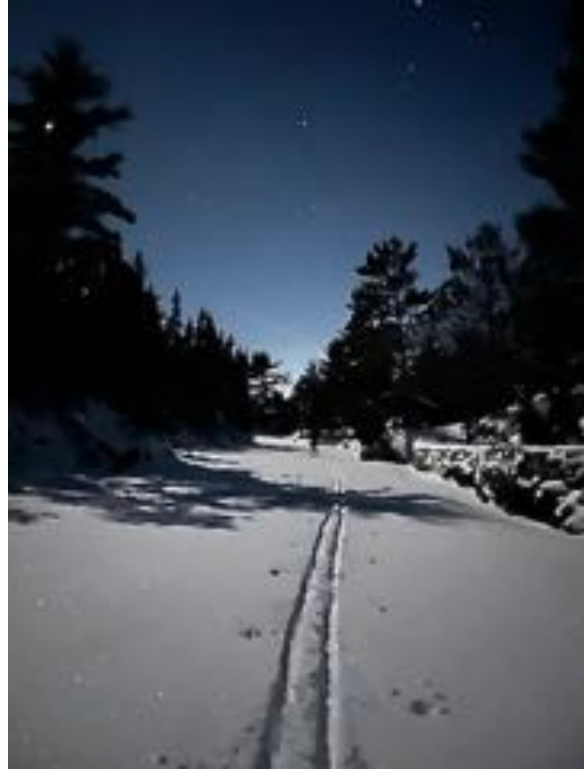
Thank you also to those of you who supported and attended our Fall Gathering. While the event is for outreach and celebration, your donations and auction participation provided important financial support.

Keir Johnson

Winter 2023

(Gift designations continued from p. 5)

Darcia Narvaez in memory of Blair Borden
Rachel Neville in memory of Charlie Kelly
Rebecca Otto in memory of Phil Lawrence
Shawn Otto in honor of Rebecca Otto
Les and Karen Oystryk in honor of volunteers
Tom Paper in honor of Jean Replinger
Sheree and Phil Peterson in honor of Jean Replinger
Wayne Potratz in memory of Thomas Gipe
Catherine Sandell in honor of Jean Replinger
Erika Schinler in honor of Louise Erdrich
Pete Siebert in memory of Sam and Stephanie White
George and Ruth Simmons in memory of John Holden
Sarah Stonich in memory of Matt Stonich
Terri Sundberg in memory of Swede Sundberg
Beth Waterhouse in memory of Don Maronde
Sarah Wilkinson in honor of the spirits
Mike and Mary Williams in memory of Tim Heinle
Jim and Marianne Zarzana in honor of Jean Replinger



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