



**Geneva Lake  
Conservancy**

# Connections

Preserve and advocate for Walworth County waterways, natural areas, and working lands

Winter 2018

## GLC PURCHASES 77-ACRE PROPERTY ON SUGAR CREEK

The Geneva Lake Conservancy has purchased a 77-acre parcel on Sugar Creek in the Town of Lafayette that will be open to the public for hiking, fishing, canoeing, kayaking, hunting and other recreational uses beginning this summer.

The property will offer a half mile hike to a rare oak opening, as well as opportunities to walk and fish along Sugar Creek, which is designated as a Class II Trout Stream.

Located on Highway ES east of Highway 12, the property was purchased with a \$90,000 grant from the Knowles Nelson Stewardship program of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, as well as a \$50,000 grant from Ducks Unlimited and funding from private donations.

“We are very excited about the opportunity to open this beautiful parcel along Sugar Creek to the public,” said Kevin Brunner, chair of the Geneva Lake Conservancy’s Land Protection Committee. “It will offer a variety of recreational activities, as well as protect habitat for wildlife.”

Sugar Creek contains several species of concern, including the least darter, a small fish. The wetlands on the property also provide important habitat for ducks and other waterfowl. The purchase will preserve a buffer zone along the creek that will protect the waterway from agricultural runoff.



Over a quarter mile of Sugar Creek meanders through the Hansen Preserve.

Continued on page 2

## Hansen Preserve (continued from page 1)

The property is identified by the Southeast Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission as a natural area of local significance that should be preserved, Brunner said.

“The Conservancy holds a conservation easement on another property along the creek known as the Sugar Creek Preserve,” said Dennis Jordan, Conservancy chairman. “The purchase of this property will allow us to begin to form a protected stream corridor and we will be talking with other landowners along Sugar Creek who may be interested in placing conservation easements along their streambanks.”

This is the first time in its 40-year history that the Conservancy has used Knowles Nelson Stewardship funding to purchase land.

The new property also has historic value. It was along Sugar Creek that the Potawatomi tribe stopped to make more than 1,000 pounds of maple sugar before journeying to other camping grounds in the area, according to records in the Lake Geneva Library.

“In addition to the funding for the Sugar Creek property, the Conservancy also was awarded another \$160,000 grant from the Knowles Nelson program to purchase a second property in Walworth County that it will be raising matching funds for in 2018,” said Karen Yancey, GLC’s Executive Director.

Tim Goggin, GLC Land Protection Specialist, takes a moment to examine a Bur Oak on the Hansen Preserve Property.



“We want to thank all of the private donors who contributed to our new Land Acquisition Fund this year,” she said. “As Walworth County grows, it is so important to preserve land with high scenic and conservation value for wildlife habitat and public use.”

Private funding for the Hansen Preserve was made possible by donations from the following Conservancy supporters: Diane Beu, Charles and Dianna Colman, Chuck and Vicki Ebeling, Al Hermansen and Dorothy Sullivan, Dennis and Diane Jordan, John K. Notz, Jr., Wendy Perks Fisher, the Robert and Patricia Moore Foundation, Peter and Julee Scherrer, and Bill and Barbara Turner. The purchase brings the total number of acres protected by the Conservancy to 2035.

The Conservancy also wants to thank Russell and Cheryl Hansen, the former owners of the property, who worked with the Conservancy throughout 2017 to meet the grant requirements for purchasing the property, Yancey said.

The new Conservancy property will be known as the Hansen Preserve. It is expected to open in July, 2018 and will be marked by a sign along Highway ES.

### GLC Sustaining Sponsors

*Carol Bernick  
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### 2017 Holly Ball Sponsors

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## Have You Seen This Plant On Your Property?

The GLC needs your help! The Lesser Celandine (*Ranunculus ficaria*) is an invasive species which aggressively colonizes shaded sites with moist soil. It is a low-growing, short-lived perennial with dark green, heart-shaped leaves and a single yellow flower. It begins growing earlier than most natives, typically leafing out in March and flowering in April. It forms dense mats of continuous growth, eliminates native plant communities, takes over lawns and garden beds and dies back in late spring, leaving vast areas of bare soil. If you have encountered this plant or believe it exists on your property, please call the GLC at (262) 579-5700 or report its location to [Tgoggin@GenevaLakeConservancy.org](mailto:Tgoggin@GenevaLakeConservancy.org). For more information on this plant, its identification or control methods please visit: <https://sewisc.org/invasives/invasive-plants/378-lesser-celandine> or stop by the Mill House for an informational flyer.



Leslie J. Mehrhoff, University of Connecticut, Bugwood.org

Lesser celandine, a.k.a. Fig buttercup, can be identified by its bright butter-yellow, glossy flowers that are 1" wide and usually have 8 petals (sometimes 12). Its 1.6-3.4" wide leaves grow in clusters, reaching 12" in height and 12" in diameter at maturity. (Photo: Leslie J. Mehrhoff, University of Connecticut,

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Conservancy gratefully acknowledges a \$10,000 grant received from the  
Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation

## Volunteer Work Days

**March 20th, Tuesday**—Sponsored by Walworth County

- Landscaper's Workshop—8 am—noon
- Lesser celandine Workshop (for homeowners) — begins at noon

**April 27th, Friday**—Sponsored by Walworth County

White River County Park Work Day—9 am—noon

**May 5th, Saturday**—Sponsored by GLC

Hansen Preserve Work Day—9 am—noon

**May 19th, Saturday**—Sponsored by GLC

White River County Park Work Day—9 am—noon

**July 20th, Friday**—Sponsored by Walworth County

"Summer Park Improvement" Work Day—  
9 am—noon

**October 19th, Friday**—Sponsored by Walworth County

White River County Park Work Day—9 am—noon

See GLC website for registration details

## Christopher Mann

1930—2018

Visionary Christopher Mann passed away on February 7 at his home on Eagle Spring Lake. Along with his wife, Martina, Mann started a biodynamic community in East Troy which led to the founding of the Michael Fields Agricultural Institute. In 2015 the Conservancy awarded the Conservation Stewardship award to Mann for his contributions to conservation throughout his lifetime. Mann accomplished his wish to provide "a solid foundation for the younger generations to use and learn from, to explore and build on for a culturally rich and diverse growing community."



CONNECTIONS Winter photo by Jim Frost. Special thanks to Jim for his assistance with photographs.

# 2017 Holly Ball

## Conservation Stewardship Award

The Conservancy honors leaders in the Walworth County land conservation movement at the Holly Ball. The 2017 award was given to the Geneva Lake Level Corporation (GLLC), which has been safeguarding the level of Geneva Lake for over 120 years. Operating under the radar, Karl Otzen, GLLC president, and Larry Larkin have both served on the board of the GLLC for over 30 years. In 1894 the GLLC constructed the dam in the site now known as Flat Iron Park. In 1909 a spillway was added to maintain, preserve and protect the level Geneva Lake.



Charles Colman articulating the history and contributions of the Geneva Lake Level Corporation to the welfare of Geneva Lake.



Larry Larkin accepting the awards from the Conservancy.

The goal of the GLLC board is to be proactive in managing extreme weather events that have been experienced in the past 6 years. In 2011-2012 the lake reached its lowest level due to a drought, and in 2017 the lake's highest levels were reached due to the big storms. Just this past July, after an emergency meeting, the board directed that additional water from the lake be released into the White River three days before the big storms, preventing severe damage to the shoreline and possible flooding downstream. We are fortunate in these times of unpredictable weather patterns to have the Geneva Lake Level Corporation, and its committed leaders, Karl Otzen and Larry Larkin. Larkin accepted GLC's Conservation Stewardship award for Karl Otzen. To recognize Larkin for his service of over 50 years in so many roles, the Conservancy gave Larkin the Honorary Land Steward award. In addition, the Conservancy presented a leadership award to Charles Colman for his many years of dedicated service to the GLC and to John Notz, retiring board member, for his many contributions to the GLC.

## The Holly Ball Celebration

Holly Ball is a festive "party" celebrating the Conservancy's mission of preserving and advocating for Walworth County waterways, natural areas and working lands. A gala in every sense, the dynamic committee creatively used water as the central theme for the décor. Held at Big Foot Country Club with a live band, the event was at full capacity. The biggest fundraiser the Conservancy has every year, it was sold out, and guests enjoyed a silent auction with electronic bidding and an energetic band. Special thanks to Committee members Cari Alberts, Marilyn Ames, Kate Berely, Kelly Clow, Mojdeh Drobnitch, Grace Eckland, Wendy Fisher, Ursula Grud, Karen Hirn, Kelly Hirn, Kim Hirn, Merilee Holst, Kirsten Larsen, Tracy Lentz, Cindy Milojevic, Sharon O'Brien, Margaret O'Regan, JaNelle Powers, Bridget Six, Dee Tuschall and Kathy Yih. The Conservancy appreciates Honorary Chairs Grace Hanny and Marie Kropp.



Top row, left to right: Margaret Labus, Joanna Gerard, Angie Snobel, Katie Nitsch, Kelly Hirn & Margaret O'Regan. Bottom row, left to right: Mojdeh Drobnitch, Cari Alberts, Brooke Grunow & Melissa Flies.

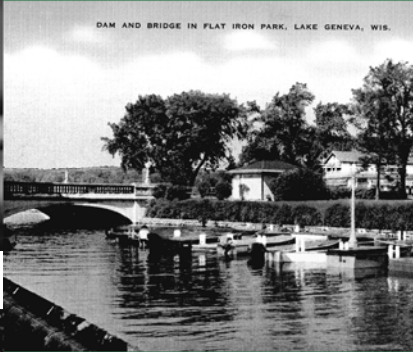




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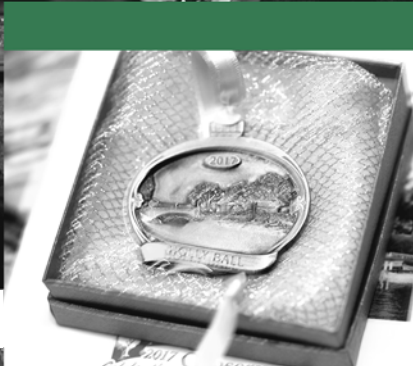
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# The Monarch Mission—Back by Popular Demand

We're doing it again! Thanks to the great response to last year's Monarch Mission, we're again going to offer milkweed seedlings to our members and friends to help protect the Monarch butterfly population.

The beautiful orange and black Monarch butterflies are symbols of summertime in the Midwest. With their colorful wings and delicate bodies, they seem to float at the whim of the breezes. But these summer visitors are actually offspring of butterflies from thousands of miles away. The lovely Monarchs winter in large numbers in central Mexico and wing their way north to breed and dine in the summer months. Unfortunately, the number of Monarchs summering in the central US has been in serious decline over the past several years. There are a number of reasons experts cite for this problem, but the main culprit seems to be the loss of milkweed, a common but critical plant in the Monarch lifecycle. Monarchs lay their eggs on the underside of milkweed plants and the emerging Monarch caterpillars eat only milkweed to survive.

Milkweed plants used to be found in abundance along the roadsides and in fields all over the Midwest. In addition to milkweed for the caterpillar stage, adult butterflies need nectar from native plants to thrive. More recently, however, housing sprawl, weed trimming along roadsides and the use of chemical herbicides has greatly diminished the numbers of these native plants and the number of Monarchs that are able to survive this change has also greatly diminished, but we can all do something to help.

The Geneva Lake Conservancy will again offer locally grown milkweed seedlings for sale in early spring. We are encouraging members and friends to plant milkweed and other native flowering plants to create Monarch waystations in their own backyards. Plants will come in 2 ½ inch pots and will cost \$5.00 each. Orders are due by April 1 and plants will be available for pick-up between May 15 and May 31. Please see opposite page or check online for an order form.



New to the sale is *Liatris ligulistylus*, commonly known as meadow blazing star, is another monarch favorite for its late-summer nectar. It is a tall plant (can grow up to 5 feet in rich soil) and produces long-lasting purple flowers on upright spikes. It is an easy-to-grow perennial, perfect for garden or meadow, and a magnet for butterflies and other pollinators. Three varieties of milkweed will be available:

- \* Common milkweed, with purplish white flowers, are the easiest and fastest to grow.
- \* Swamp or marsh milkweed have rose or pink flowers and prefer moist soils.
- \* Butterfly weed has clusters of orange flowers and likes dry and sunny locations.

All four plants are easy to grow and can be lovely additions to your gardens. This is a great project to do with children or grandchildren. And, seeds from these plants can be collected and sown in the fall to provide butterfly habitat for years to come. A big thank you goes to Intrinsic Perennial Gardens in Hebron, a Conservancy supporter, for helping us acquire good quality plants for our sale.

If you don't have a place for milkweed, you can still make a donation and we will plant some for you at some of our conservancy properties. Proceeds from the sale of these plants will go to restoration of the 77-acre Hansen Preserve. For more information, please check our website or phone Kelley Happ at 847-404-3957 or call the Conservancy at 262-275-5700.



## Boy Scout Klondike Derby



On January 20<sup>th</sup>, Lake Geneva Boy Scout Troop 239 partnered with the Moelter Foundation to host the annual Boy Scout Klondike Derby. The derby was held on the 240-acre Moelter Farm and drew an attendance of approximately 300 scouts and supporters. The event was modeled after an Alaskan-styled Iditarod sled race but also included events such as

fire building, orienteering, first aid, ice rescue, meal cooking, animal tracking and a snowball launch. Twenty-one troops from Wisconsin and Illinois competed in this year's race, which was won by Troop 539 of Janesville.



Thanks to the relationship forged between Charlie Moelter and Frank Guske, Troop 239 has been calling Moelter Farm home and treating it as such for over ten years. They not only breathe youthful life and energy into the property protected by a GLC conservation easement, they also have helped manage its natural areas and made improvements which benefit its educational and recreation values for all visitors. The GLC would like to commend Mr. Moelter, Mr. Guske and Troop 239 for not only helping preserve this land but for ensuring it is used and cherished by many for years to come. Thank you for your dedication to conservation and for bringing the Klondike Derby to Lake Geneva.



## GLC Milkweed Order Form

Yes, I would like to order milkweed plants to help Monarch butterflies. Please indicate the number of each plant below. (Plants will come in 2-½" pots with planting instructions.)

**Each plant is \$5.00. Deadline for ordering is April 1.**

\_\_\_ Common milkweed. (Flowers are purplish white, easiest and fastest to grow.)

\_\_\_ Swamp or marsh milkweed (rose or pink flower, fragrant, likes moist soils)

\_\_\_ Butterfly weed (orange flowers, likes dry and sunny location)

\_\_\_ Laetris meadow blazing star (purple flowers), has been called the "Ultimate Butterfly Magnet"

Proceeds will benefit the restoration of GLC's Hansen Preserve.

All plants can be picked up at the Geneva Lake Conservancy garage, 398 Mill Street, Fontana, WI between May 15 and May 31.

You may order from our Web site or send your check made out to the Geneva Lake Conservancy and this form to PO BOX 588, Fontana, WI 53125. For questions, call Kelley Happ at 847-404-3957.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Check amount: \_\_\_\_\_



# Geneva Lake Conservancy

Our mission is to preserve and advocate for Walworth County  
waterways, natural areas and working lands.

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## GENEVA LAKE CONSERVANCY 2018 SAVANNA SPRING LUNCHEON

*With Speaker*  
**ED COLLINS**

Director of Land Preservation & Natural Resources,  
McHenry County Conservation District

**FRIDAY, APRIL 20**  
LAKE GENEVA COUNTRY CLUB

11:30AM GATHERING • NOON LUNCHEON/PRESENTATION  
\$75/PERSON • RSVP BY 04/13/18

Reservations are limited and accepted as received. Please use the enclosed  
card to register or online at [www.GenevaLakeConservancy.org](http://www.GenevaLakeConservancy.org)

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