

# SIMONTON SAYS...

SIMONTON LAKE AREA HOMEOWNERS' ASSOCIATION, INC. NEWSLETTER

WINTER ISSUE 2026

VOLUME 19

ISSUE 1



Leo Cahill, grandson of Jodi and Bob Divjak



ELKHART, INDIANA

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[www.simontonlakehoa.com](http://www.simontonlakehoa.com)

Find us on Facebook



Northern Lights caught by Cindy Hayes



Hawk spotted at the Hart's on Forest Road



Fox crossing the lake near the island on Little Simonton



Early winter storm at the Hart's



## 2026 MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

Dear Simonton Lake Neighbors,

As we welcome 2026 we want to express our gratitude for the privilege of serving as the SIMONTON LAKE AREA HOMEOWNERS' ASSOCIATION (SLAHA) BOARD. This year has been a transitional year. Our Board has been working on restructuring and we have operated without a President, along with the Treasurer who stepped away for several months. As always, our goals have been to be seriously involved in protecting and enhancing the unique character of our lake community. As you can see, we need new members to step forward and become involved in these efforts. **WE NEED YOU!!**

**MUTE SWAN REDUCTION** MUTE SWAN REDUCTION has been an ongoing project and will continue. Many were removed from our lake, but obviously with wings more can return. We will continue to reduce this invasive species to mitigate their environmental impact and preserve the health of our lake.

**OSOLO TOWNSHIP FIRE DEPARTMENT** requested that we purchase a new trailer for their rescue boat and equipment. The vote passed and we purchased it through Starboard Choice Marine. They will be using it for our lake, Heaton Lake and part of the St. Joseph River. You may see them as they use our lake for training purposes.

**MEMBERSHIP/OUTREACH/SOCIAL** committee has been very active this past year and has many activities planned for 2026. It is a vibrant committee of our association! If you would like to join, please let us know when you renew your membership via the membership form.

Your membership supports SLAHA's ability to address these issues, and we would like to address other concerns. Our goal is to enhance property values, safety and overall quality of life. SLAHA remains a VOLUNTARY association, both in membership and leadership, and YOUR participation is essential to our collective success.

### BENEFITS OF SLAHA MEMBERSHIP:

- To strengthen advocacy with county and state agencies
- Regular updates through our quarterly newsletter and lake alerts.  
Lake alerts are only offered to active members.
- Access to resources like the Neighborhood Crime Reporting System
- Community-building events and initiatives
- Support for grants and projects that directly benefit our lake

### MEMBERSHIP DUES FOR 2025:

- \$40 per household (under 70 years)
- \$25 for residents aged 70-79
- Free honorary membership for residents 80+

Your dues enable us to continue these efforts and take on new challenges in the year ahead. To join or renew your membership, please complete the form below. We always welcome new members, ideas and concerns.

Finally, I encourage you to mark MAY 20th on your calendar for our annual SLAHA meeting at the Simonton Lake Sportsmen's Club. This meeting will be pivotal in planning for the future and ensuring our lake remains one of the finest areas in Elkhart County.

THANK YOU for your continued support. TOGETHER we can protect and enhance the beauty and value of Simonton Lake for generations to come. JOIN THE BOARD OR A COMMITTEE TODAY!!

# INFORMATION & EVENTS

**SIMONTON SAYS...**  
WINTER 2026 EDITION

## ASSOCIATION BOARD MEMBERS

### HOA PRESIDENT

Susie Broderick,  
North Shore Drive

### VICE PRESIDENT

Jack Tucker

### HOA SECRETARY

Tim Lies  
51004 Sail Bay Court

### HOA TREASURER

Tony Espinas  
51155 Aqua Drive

### AT-LARGE

Randy Hoff  
25369 Vernon Crossing

Erin Kirchner-Lucas  
Website & Marketing  
26117 Lake Drive

wickedpics@email.com

## STANDING COMMITTEES

### MEMBERSHIP/OUTREACH

Toni Queener, Kim Kieper,  
Kathryn Freehafer  
kimk99999@yahoo.com

- New Neighbors
- Lake Events
- Dues: Susan Broderick

### COMMUNICATION

Amy Matherly  
[simontonhoa@gmail.com](mailto:simontonhoa@gmail.com)

To become an advertiser  
contact Jon Hart  
[simontonhoa@gmail.com](mailto:simontonhoa@gmail.com)

To sign up for Lake Alerts  
[simontonhoa@gmail.com](mailto:simontonhoa@gmail.com)

Facebook: Michelle Coleman

### ENVIRONMENT

- Ecozone
- Weir
- Water Quality Concerns

### SAFETY

- DNR related issues
- "Lake Alerts" - Chris Toles,  
[cmt6061@comcast.net](mailto:cmt6061@comcast.net)
- Buoy Watch, report damaged  
or loose buoys

## COMMUNITY CONTACTS

### Simonton Lake Conservancy

574-206-8485

Contact the Conservancy for:

- Sewer issues • Drainage issues
- Erosion issues • Weed Control
- Buoys • Hazards in the Water

### DNR Law Enforcement

Central Dispatch 812-837-9536

Pier Rules 317-234-1097

### Sheriff Elkhart County

(574) 533-4151

### EMERGENCIES-CALL 911

### Osolo Township Fire Dept.

574-264-1066

**Osolo EMS** 574-262-3052

## CONTACT US/INFORMATION

### VISIT OUR WEBSITE

[www.simontonlakehoa.com](http://www.simontonlakehoa.com)

### EMAIL US AT

[simontonhoa@gmail.com](mailto:simontonhoa@gmail.com)

Find us on Facebook 

### SIMONTONLAKEHOA

Simonton Lake Area  
Homeowners' Association, Inc.  
P.O. Box 1706  
Elkhart, IN 46515-1706

### JOIN "LAKE ALERTS" EMAIL GROUP

[simontonhoa@gmail.com](mailto:simontonhoa@gmail.com)

## OUR MISSION

The MISSION of the Simonton Lake Area Homeowners' Association is to foster the safety and quality of life in our neighborhood. We strive to protect the value of our homes, the wildlife and the environment surrounding our lake, support local and state law enforcement for the safety of our families and lake visitors, and encourage active involvement in the northern Elkhart area growth and development.

## EVENTS ON THE LAKE

**Jan.-Feb.** HOA MEMBERSHIP DR.

**February 11** Conservancy Meeting

**February 21** 4:00 Conservancy  
Annual Meeting

**March 7-8** SLSC Turkey Shoot

**March 11** Conservancy Meeting

**April 8** Conservancy Meeting

**April 10** Info. And Photos due for

**May** issue of "Simonton Says"

**April 18** SLSC Casino Night

**April 25** SLSC Spring Clean-Up

**MAY 1 & 2 HOA GARAGE SALE**

**May 9** Stamp Out Hunger  
Food Drive

**May 9** SLSC Golf Outing

**May 13** Conservancy Meeting

**MAY 20 ANNUAL HOA MEETING**

**June 5** HOA Dock Hop

**June 13** SLSC Kid's Fishing Contest

**June 14** HOA Sandbar Family Fun Day

**July 4 POKER RUN & FIREWORKS**

**July 31** HOA Light Up the  
Night Kayak Ride



Simonton Lake is a member  
of the Indiana Lakes  
Management Society



# NOTES FROM THE BOARD

WINTER 2026 EDITION

## Join the Simonton Lake HOA today!

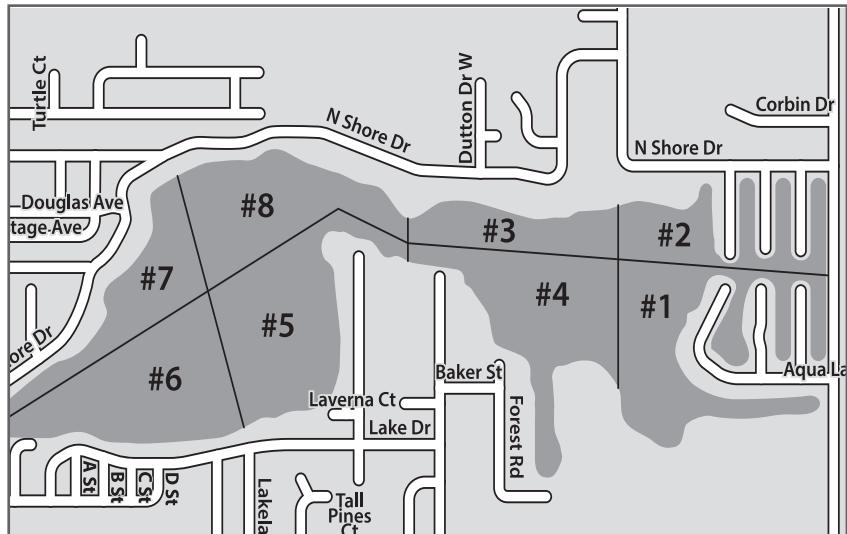
Use the form below.

HOA Email: simontonhoa@gmail.com • Website: www.simontonlakehoa.com • Facebook: SimontonLakeHOA

THE LAKE ASSOCIATION HAS DIVIDED THE LAKE INTO 8 AREAS.  
CONTACT YOUR AREA REP WITH QUESTIONS OR FOR INFORMATION.

### AREA REPRESENTATIVES

Area #1	Van Kessler	574-370-2266
Area #2	Sue Ward	574-596-2020
Area #3	Maria Hopman	574-262-1665
Area #4	Jon Hart	574-262-1404
Area #5	Bob Meyers Cindy Nickell	574-675-0970 574-262-3105
Area #6	Melissa Kessler	574-849-9995
Area #7	Dave VanZile Theresa Maier	574-264-5201 574-361-0517
Area #8	Amy Matherly	574-524-6632



## 2026 MEMBERSHIP FORM

### SLAHA MEMBERSHIP REGISTRATION

DUES: PER HOUSEHOLD PER YEAR  
JANUARY 1, 2026 - DECEMBER 31, 2026

NAME(S) \_\_\_\_\_

[  ] Regular Member

\$40

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

[  ] Senior (70-79)

\$25

PHONE/CELL(S) \_\_\_\_\_

[  ] Honorary (80 & Over)FREE  
Life  
Member

PHONE/HOME \_\_\_\_\_

SL HOA ADDITIONAL DONATION

\$

EMAIL(S) \_\_\_\_\_

FIREWORKS FUND DONATION

\$

MEMBERSHIP INCLUDES QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER,  
AUTOMATED LAKE ALERTS VIA EMAIL & LISTING IN THE LAKE DIRECTORY

SL PRESERVATION TRUST DONATION

\$

### PARTICIPATION INTEREST IN A CURRENT COMMITTEE

Committee Chairpersons  
are listed in Newsletter[  ] Lake Environment[  ] Lake Safety[  ] Membership/Outreach[  ] Newsletter[  ] Website

Goose/Swan Remediation Project

\$

TOTAL ENCLOSED

\$

Please mail your completed form &amp; check made out to SLAHA to:

Simonton Lake Area Homeowners' Association, Inc., PO Box 1706 Elkhart, IN 46515-1706

If you are interested in being a SLAHA Board Member, please contact a current board member listed in the newsletter.

# NEWS

## MEMBERSHIP / OUTREACH / SOCIAL COMMITTEE

### HOA SOCIAL COMMITTEE ANNOUNCES EVENTS FOR SUMMER 2026

Here are event dates for summer 2026. We know this is months away but put the dates on your calendar now. We will put the dates in the Spring issue of "Simonton Says" and as always updates and changes will be found on:

#### NEIGHBORS OF SIMONTON LAKE FACEBOOK PAGE

<https://www.facebook.com/groups/neighborsimontonlake>

**JUNE 5** - Dock Hop (21+ event). Four stops at Docks across the Lake

**JUNE 14** - Simonton Sandbar Family Fun Day

**JULY 31** - Light Up the Night Kayak Ride

**OCTOBER 31** - Halloween trunk or treat.



### PUT THIS DATE ON YOUR CALENDAR **MAY 9, 2026** ←

Just leave bags of non-perishable food near your mailbox and the mail carriers will collect and transport the food. **EASY!!**

The **STAMP OUT HUNGER FOOD DRIVE** is the largest one-day food drive in the nation. Your donations supply local food pantries.

### SIMONTON LAKE NEIGHBORHOOD

# SPRING GARAGE SALE

**Friday May 1 & Saturday May 2**

An ad on Yardsales.net will be paid for by the Lake Association.

Signs will be placed at major crossroads.

Get your yard sign out and

**SELL! SELL! SELL!**



Watch our Facebook page for root beer winter can sales. We will see you in March!

Thank You for another great season!!



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574-350-5707  
Mooringsdocks@gmail.com

# THINK YOUR CATCH IS A STATE RECORD?

The Indiana DNR has two competitions: The State Record Fish competition and the Fish of the Year

## THE STATE RECORD FISH COMPETITION:

- Size is determined by weight measurement first, then length. Both weight and length measurements are required.
- The weight measurement must be taken before the fish is frozen and on a scale that has been certified by the State of Indiana to be accurate to 1 ounce.
- Each District Fisheries Office has a certified scale. Please call ahead to make an appointment with a biologist to have your fish weighed. Or, you can have your fish weighed at a store with a certified scale like a grocery store, hardware, or feed store. To find certified scales near you, call the Indiana Division of Weights and Measures at (317) 356-7078.
- You must have two witnesses who are not relatives who observed the length and/or weight measurements. Photos are required. The entry form and additional rules can be found at the Indiana DNR website. The completed entry form may be submitted online.

## FISH OF THE YEAR COMPETITION

- Entry must be submitted online or emailed by Dec. 15 of the calendar year when the fish was caught. Entries received after deadline will be eligible for the following year.
- Size is determined by a total length measurement, or fork length for shovelnose sturgeon. No weight measurement is required for Fish of the Year.
- Provide a good quality photograph(s) of the fish (full sideview on measuring board or next to measuring tape) clearly showing the measurement as described above.
- Optional: Provide an additional photo of the angler with their fish for annual winner summary.
- One witness, who is not a relative, who observed the length measurement, must be provided.
- Provide a copy of the angler's fishing license, if required.
- The entry form is available online at the Indiana DNR website.

# CRIME REPORT

## MAN YELLING AND OBSTRUCTING TRAFFIC ON FAWN LANE

On January 5 Police responded to calls from residents on Fawn Lane (near Dolph Road) reporting a man yelling and obstructing traffic. Police transported the man to Elkhart General Hospital for complaints of frostbite to his feet.

## BREAK IN AT TOASTED TURTLE TAVERN

Police responded to Toasted Turtle Tavern (formerly My Dad's Place) on January 6 for report of a burglary. The tavern had previously been burglarized in October. The front door had been shattered, and a shed had been broken into. The suspect had left the scene. Damage was estimated at around \$4,100.

The overnight security footage showed a suspect arriving around 4:27 a.m. The cameras captured the man using a shovel to break into the shed and then to apparently break the front door to the restaurant.

Officers recognized the man from several early morning incidents on January 5. Police responded to a report of a man yelling and obstructing traffic on Fawn Lane (near Dolph Road). They transported the man to the hospital for a complaint of frostbite to his feet.

Police found the man still in the hospital emergency room lobby. He was arrested.





**CREATIVE COLORS**

INTERNATIONAL

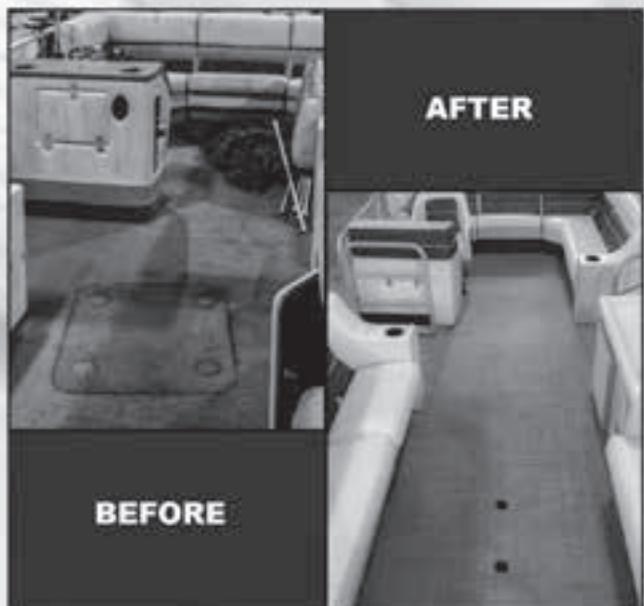
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Fabric!**



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[wecanfixthat.com](http://wecanfixthat.com)

# SPOTLIGHT ON ADVERTISERS



**Hardware Plus** was started in the 1920's as a hardware and feed store called Menaugh's, after the founders last name. The store handled coal, feed, seeds, and hardware for many years. But as things changed over time, the store evolved into a more traditional hardware store, going through many additions and expansions throughout its existence. Currently, they are excited to be planning to build a new, much larger store next door to the current location on Lincolnway in Osceola.

Known as a leader in service, Hardware Plus has prided themselves for giving exemplary in-store service by always greeting people at the door and helping them get what they need for their project. Lawn and garden is their largest category, so to meet customers needs, they have added products like bulk mulch, rock, and topsoil. On staff they have 2 master gardeners and 8 state licensed lawn technicians for their lawn fertilizing service. This year that service is expanding to offer goose repellent, certainly something lake residents will want to consider. The OC Hardware fastener section has one of the largest stainless and chrome assortments in northern Indiana where you can still buy one bolt at a time. Their additional services include screen repairs, custom paint tinting, key cutting (including chip car keys), plus mower and chainsaw blade sharpening.

The owner, Chris Hughes, has 35 years of experience at OC Hardware after beginning work there in 1990 as a Penn high school student. While working full time, Chris received a degree from IUSB in management and administration, and in 2008 became the 4th owner of the business. He has stated that he loves helping people fix things and values all the relationships he has made throughout his tenure at OC Hardware.

Going through life, Chris has always loved boating and being on the water, and Simonton Lake was on top of his list when looking for a forever home. He says the people he has met while having a home here have been some of the best neighbors! He moved on the lake for the summers in the spring of 2021, and now lives here year round on North Shore Drive.

## HARDWARE PLUS:



- **Screen Repair**
- **Bulk Mulch & Topsoil**  
with delivery
- **Computer Paint Matching**
- **Blade Sharpening**
- **Pool Chemicals**
- **Lawn & Garden Supplies**
- **Chip Keys & Remotes**



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Elkhart, Indiana 46514  
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\*Average annual household savings based on national 2010 survey of new policyholders who reported savings by switching to State Farm.

P090115.1

# NORTHERN PIKE IN SIMONTON LAKE

ADAPTED FROM THE INDIANA DNR WEBSITE



Pictured here are three Northern Pike catches in Simonton this fall and winter.



Northern Pike ARE out there swimming in Simonton Lake. Back in 1940 a 46 lb. Northern Pike was caught in Great Sacandaga Lake in the state of New York. Here's some information on our aquatic neighbor, the Northern Pike.

## ARE NORTHERN PIKE NATIVE TO SIMONTON LAKE?

Northern Pike are native to North America and Indiana. Indiana represents the southernmost extent of their natural range, where they inhabit approximately one-third of Indiana's 452 northern glacial lakes. Simonton Lake is one of those glacial lakes. Pike also exist in many of Indiana's northern rivers including the Elkhart and St. Joseph. Pike have been introduced to lakes and reservoirs further south in Indiana, but they are only natural to the Northern Indiana

## WHAT DO NORTHERN PIKE EAT

Northern Pike are aggressive, opportunistic carnivores whose diet is primarily other fish, but they'll eat almost anything they can fit in their mouths, including fish (perch, suckers, walleye), amphibians (frogs, snakes), small mammals (mice, voles, shrews), and waterfowl (ducklings, birds). If food is scarce, pike will eat other pike.

Northern Pike do have teeth. They have many rows of sharp, backward-slanting teeth lining their mouths, so they can grip and hold prey. Northern Pike are not going to come after you when you are swimming. But once caught you need to be careful getting the pike off your hook.

## HOW BIG DO THEY GET?

They grow rapidly. The Indiana state record pike is 30 pounds, 2 ounces (48½ inches), caught at Clear Lake (Steuben County) in 1992 by Jack Barnes.

## WHAT DO THEY LOOK LIKE?

Northern Pike are most often olive green, shading from yellow to white along the belly. The side is marked with short, light bar-like spots and dark spots on the fins. Sometimes, the fins are reddish. The lower half of the gill cover lacks scales, and it has large pores on its head and on the underside of its lower jaw. Unlike the similar looking muskie, the northern pike has light markings on a dark body background and fewer than six pores on the underside of each side of the lower jaw.

## WHERE DO THEY LIVE

The primary habitat requirements of Pike include year-round access to cool water. Pike spawn early, swimming into shallow spawning water right after the ice melts on natural lakes.

"The preferred spawning habitat for Pike is seasonally flooded wetlands and permanently submerged aquatic vegetation. Recently hatched pike will use these shallow vegetated areas for food and protection from predators. After the spawning period, adult pike will progressively migrate deeper in the water column in search of cool water as spring and summer surface temperatures warm the water."

## LIMITS IN INDIANA

Pike are regulated under a statewide three fish bag limit and a 24-inch minimum size limit. But, Hamilton Lake (Steuben County) has a six fish daily bag limit and no minimum size limit (no more than one per day more than 30 inches).

## ARE NORTHERN PIKE A GOOD OR BAD THING TO HAVE IN OUR LAKE

Whether you want Northern Pike in your lake depends on your goals and the lake's specific ecosystem. Northern Pike are predators and their presence has benefits and drawbacks.

### Potential Benefits of Northern Pike

- Pike help regulate the populations of abundant, smaller fish species, preventing overpopulation.
- Pike can help control invasive or nuisance fish species.
- Pike are a popular and exciting sport fish.

### Potential Drawbacks of Northern Pike

- Pike eat desirable fish, such as young bass or panfish, which can negatively impact sport fish populations.
- Pike eat fingerlings and can hurt our attempts to stock our lake.

## SEEMS LIKE THE NORTHERN PIKE IS A NEW TYPE OF FISH IN SIMONTON LAKE

There are some fishermen who feel that Northern Pike were put in the lake in the last few decades by some well-meaning person. We have no proof of that. The Indiana DNR tells us that Northern Pike are natural to glacial lakes in northern Indiana. However, currently we do not stock Simonton Lake with Northern Pike.

## ARE PIKE GOOD TO EAT?

If you look on the internet you will find lots of posts saying yes, and about the same number saying no. According to these posts they are a bony fish, don't freeze well and are best cooked right after catching.

# CONSERVANCY CORNER

SIMONTON LAKE  
CONSERVANCY  
574-206-8485

## WHAT NOT TO PUT INTO THE SEWER

Remember these letters: F.O.G.S.

F stands for Fats

O stands for Oils

G stands for Grease

S stands for Sanitary "disposable" wipes



## CONSERVANCY PURPOSES

The Conservancy deals with the following:

**Sewer System, Drainage, Erosion, Sewer, Sediment Removal, Weed Control, Issues that Improve Recreational Use of the Lake** (Example: ADA Compliant Pier).

If you are new to the lake, you will want to contact the Conservancy District to make sure your account is in order and that the name of the bill is yours.

## BE CAREFUL WHERE YOU DIG!

The sewer system is pressurized. If you puncture the line, you will have a fountain of sewage.

**Call 811 before you dig!**

## CONSERVANCY BOARD MEETINGS

Are held at the Elkhart Aquatic Center at 6:30

**MARCH 11 • APRIL 8  
MAY 13 • JUNE 10 • JULY 8**

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Bob Evans-District 1 and Board President
- Linda Wilson, SLCD Secretary
- Hayden Kruger-District 2
- Ryan Matherly-District 3
- Open-District 4
- Randy Hoff-District 5

## DISTRICT 3 ELECTION

Only one candidate applied for the District 3 Board position. Because of this no election was needed. **Ryan Matherly** will continue to represent District 3.

## DISTRICT 4 BOARD MEMBER NEEDED

The Conservancy Board has accepted the resignation of Mark Lucas who represented District 4. If you live in District 4 and are interested in serving on the Board, please call the Conservancy Office at 574-206-8485.

In general, District 4 includes Lake Drive to just west of Maplewood Drive, as well as A, B, C, and D streets, Lakewood and both sides of Cassopolis Street up to the area of North Shore Drive.

## REPAIR AND INSTALLATION SERVICES

The companies listed below have done great work for many Conservancy District sewer customers in the past and know our system well. BUT you may use whoever you like to install and repair your grinder pump and sewer line. The Conservancy has no control over the charges and gets no money for referrals.

### FOR SEWER LINE REPAIRS: C & E EXCAVATING

Contact Adam Clark: 574.320.2050  
[www.candeexcavating.com](http://www.candeexcavating.com)

### FOR GRINDER PUMP EMERGENCIES A&R WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT, INC.

574.674.5779

[www.arwwm.com](http://www.arwwm.com)

- Emergency Grinder Repairs
- Tank\Pump Installation Contractors

## ATTENTION

**Conservancy District Sewer Customers  
Monthly Sewer Rates increased as of January 2025**

Your monthly amount is:  
**\$59.00 For residential customers  
\$119.00 For business customers**

Note to autopay customers:  
Please adjust your autopay amount to this rate.

This increase was advertised by postcard mailed to each customer's home address. An article on the increase was printed in the Fall issue of "Simonton Says."

# Martin's

## SUPERMARKETS SOLD

Martin's Supermarkets, a staple in our lake community for decades, were sold back in 2018. Now they have been sold again, this time to C&S Wholesale Grocers based in New Hampshire. What will this mean for shoppers? Will the Wednesday Senior Discount Day continue? Will prices go up, down or stay the same?

Martin's Super Market started in South Bend and was owned by the Martin family. Now there are Martin's Supermarkets in towns across northcentral Indiana. There are four stores in Elkhart. The closest one to Simonton Lake is at CR4 (Sanford Road) and State Road 19 (Cassopolis Street). Other stores include, four in the South Bend/Mishawaka area, one store in Warsaw, one store in Goshen, one store in Nappanee, one store in Osceola, one store in Granger and one store in Plymouth

C&S Wholesale Grocers is not new to the business. They also own Piggly Wiggly and Grand Union supermarkets. It is hoped that being owned by a larger company with more buying power will cause prices to go down.



# FRANZ TILE & FLOORING

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# WHAT HAPPENS UNDER THE ICE?

ADAPTED FROM AN ARTICLE BY MORIYA RUFER

Lakes Monitoring Program Coordinator for RMB Environmental Laboratories in Detroit Lakes



Photo by Van Kessler

Water freezes at 32 degrees Fahrenheit. But that doesn't mean, however, when the air temperature reaches 32 degrees the lakes freeze. Water is a great insulator and good at holding heat, which is why the lake temperature doesn't fluctuate much day to day like the air does. Therefore, below freezing temperatures are needed for a week or more to form ice on a large lake.

Water is a unique substance in that the solid form (ice) is lighter than the liquid form (water). For most substances, the solid form is heavier. If ice sank, lakes would freeze from the bottom up and the fish and other aquatic creatures wouldn't survive the winter!

Since water is good at holding heat, the more water there is, the more heat it will hold. This is why large deep lakes take longer to freeze and melt than small shallow lakes. When Big Simonton freezes completely, Lake Wawasee and Lake Tippecanoe to the south which are larger and deeper may still be open.

## WHAT IS "TURNOVER"?

The water is most dense at 39 degrees Fahrenheit. When the water at the top gets to 39 degrees, it sinks. Water on the bottom comes to the top. Scientists call this the "turnover." This is important because it redistributes oxygen throughout the water in the lake. This top layer of water interfaces with the cold air, which cools the top of the lake even further until it freezes. Windy days cool the lake surface off faster.

## WHAT ABOUT THE FISH?

Fish are cold blooded, meaning their body temperature matches their environment. Colder temperatures mean a reduction in their metabolism. Fish are often classified as cold water, cool water, and warm water species. The warm water species will seek out the warmest water they can, which is often found at the bottom of the lake or pond. They hunker down in these areas and enter a state of torpor, reducing their respiration and using as little energy as possible.

When ice forms across the surface of a lake, it seals off the water from atmospheric oxygen exchange and blocks out much of the light that is necessary for aquatic plants and phytoplankton to produce oxygen within the lake. Throughout the winter oxygen levels in the lake slowly decline. This presents a serious challenge to fish, because if the lake stays frozen for too long, oxygen levels can become low enough to kill them.

## WHAT ABOUT THE OTHER PLANTS AND ANIMALS THAT CALL THE LAKE HOME?

Phytoplankton, small single-celled photosynthetic organisms, produce thick-walled resistant cells that settle to the bottom of the lake where they overwinter. Other plants essential to water quality go dormant in the winter. (Too bad the invasive weeds don't suffer from the cold.)

The ice is great for winter sports, but it is also important to the health of the lake.

## NEW ONLINE DIRECTORY

Use the QR code below to access a new online lake directory. The Membership/Outreach Committee has been working hard to get this going. If you need help or have questions, contact [slhoa@directory@gmail.com](mailto:slhoa@directory@gmail.com)



## NEW TO THE LAKE?

- Read the Indiana DNR Boating Manual. Available online. See the link at the Simonton Lake HOA website, [www.simontonlakehoa.com](http://www.simontonlakehoa.com)
- Are you hooked up to the Simonton Lake Sewer? If you are, you'll have a grinder pump in your yard. Make sure your name is now on the account. Call the Conservancy Office at 574-206-8485.
- Water quality is something we all must protect. Don't blow yard waste or leaves into the lake. Be careful about using fertilizer near the water.
- Putting in a pier? Make sure you know the rules for piers. Check this out at the Indiana DNR website, [in.gov/dnr/water](http://in.gov/dnr/water)
- Don't feed the geese or ducks. When ducks and geese get food from us, additional waterfowl who visit our lake will stay because it appears that there is plenty of food.
- Join the Simonton Lake Area Homeowners' Association. You'll find a membership form in your gift bag and in the "Simonton Says" magazine.
- Read the quarterly "Simonton Says" magazine to keep up with what is happening at the lake
- Contact the New Neighbor team at: [toniqueener@gmail.com](mailto:toniqueener@gmail.com), [kfreehafer@icloud.com](mailto:kfreehafer@icloud.com), [kimk999999@yahoo.com](mailto:kimk999999@yahoo.com)

Follow us on Facebook: SIMONTON LAKE HOA  
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# LAKE SHORTS



We love it when the snowplow comes through after a winter storm. But, as **Cindy Hanson** reports, we don't like it when the plow takes out our mailbox.



**CONGRATULATIONS** to Jenna VanBruaene on her outstanding season with the Marian High School Volleyball Team and her post-season honor shown above. Brent and Maranda VanBruaene are her parents.

**LEPRECHAUN LEAP?**  
THE DATE FOR THE  
LEPRECHAUN LEAP 2026  
IS MARCH 28

## PANERA COMING TO ELKHART?

We have heard rumors that the Hardee's restaurant on Cassopolis Street that closed in 2025 will become a Panera. We have no confirmation of that from Panera or from the Elkhart business community. Hardee's has closed many of its restaurants across the nation.



**CONGRATULATIONS** to Elena Polizoto Najmr for graduating from Hawaii Pacific University with a degree in Marine Science. Her grandmother is Kay Wuchner Marcus.

The HOA is developing a list of small businesses owned by lake residents. Watch for this online at the "Neighbors of Simonton Lake" Facebook Page



# LAKE SHORTS



## MICHELLE COLEMAN JOINS AIRXCEL

Lake Resident and HOA leader, **Michelle Coleman**, has joined Airxcel, a leading provider of essential RV products. She will serve as their Business Development Manager. Michelle joins the Airxcel team here in Elkhart.

## FOUTZ'S VISIT ANTARCTICA

**Dave and Carole Foutz** took a trip to Antarctica recently. We are hoping they will share pictures upon their return.



## NEW TO THE LAKE

- **Adam and Brenda Arms** on Beach Road
- **Jason and Nicole Gill** on Blue Ribbon
- **Crystal and Ron Halfman** on North Shore Drive

## AMY SINK APPOINTED TO STATE BOARD FOR DEPOSITORYES

**Amy Sink**, resident of North Shore Drive and Chief Executive Officer at Intra Credit Union has been appointed by Governor Mike Braun to serve on the Indiana Board for Depositories in the credit union-designated position. This Board helps to oversee Public Deposit Insurance.



# FAREWELLS

## JOHN GARBERICK

**John Carl Garberick Sr.**, 66, of Sparks, Nevada, lost his decades long battle with multiple sclerosis on Nov. 1, 2025, at Renown Hospital in Reno, Nevada. He passed peacefully surrounded by his family.

John was born on June 11, 1959, in Elkhart, Indiana, to Joseph and Dorothy (Miller) Garberick. He was a graduate of Elkhart High School. John and his family moved to Sparks, Nevada, in 1998. He was an amazing husband, father, and grandfather.

Surviving are his wife of 46 years, Lisa (Paul) Garberick; mother, Dorothy (Miller) Garberick; his sons, Chris Garberick (Ashly), and John Garberick Jr.; the loves of his life, his grandchildren, CJ, and Emily; and his brother, Joseph (Susie) Garberick. John was preceded in death by his father, Joseph Garberick.

An open house for John's celebration of life was held in December at the home of John's in-laws, **Bob Paul and Kathy Flynn**.



## ROGER ROBISON

**Roger S. Robison**, 92 of North Shore Drive passed away on Tuesday, December 16, 2025, at his home. Roger was born on June 15, 1933, in Montpelier, Ohio to Harry and Herma Robison. He married Viola J. Shoemaker on May 31, 1963, in Toledo, OH. She preceded him in death on August 26, 2022.

A product of a one room schoolhouse (eight grades and one teacher) and no electricity until Rural Electric Association came in 1938. He was blessed with ambitious, independent, and loving parents. Their motto was "Hard work, ingenuity and persistence". Roger loved the outdoors, hunting, fishing, sports, travel, and anything new. He was always attracted to water, including water skiing. He played high school football and track. He was proud to have been offered a scholarship by Ara Parseghian to Miami of Ohio and by Woody Hayes to Ohio State University. Roger graduated from Montpelier High School with honors and attended Ohio State University for 2 years until he was drafted in 1953. He served in the 11th Airborne Division, Tank Battalion as a driver during the Korean Conflict until 1955. He completed his education, graduating from Tri-State University with a Mechanical Engineering Degree in 1959. He worked for General Motors Foundry in Defiance, OH, Owens-Illinois in Toledo, OH and 31 years with Miles Laboratories in Elkhart where he retired in 1995. He primarily did projects for Miles Consumer Products Division, managed building projects in Elkhart and expansions in West Haven, Connecticut.



Roger met Viola Shoemaker while at Owens-Illinois Technical Center during a company production of *Guys and Dolls*. Viola was a lead dancer in the play. They married May 31, 1963, at Central Avenue United Methodist Church, Toledo, OH. They moved to Elkhart in January 1964 to accept the position at Miles.

Roger is survived by his children Steve Robison of Vandalia, MI and Gwen Robison of Elkhart, IN. and his granddaughters, Nicole Robison, Paige Robison, and Madison Robison. He was preceded in death by his parents, Harry and Herma Robison, his dear wife of 59 years, Viola, and his brothers Harry and Jack Robison.

Roger served on the board of the Simonton Lake Conservancy District for many years. In fact, he retired from the board and returned to fill out a vacancy. He will be greatly missed.



## MICHAEL DANDINO

**Michael J. Dandino, Jr.**, 70, died Sunday, January 11, 2026 in his home. Mike was born on December 26, 1955 in Elkhart to the late Michael J. Dandino, Sr. and Angela R. (Papa) Dandino. On June 20, 2022, Mike was united in marriage to Deborah Uselman. He is survived by his loving wife, Debbie, as well his daughter Carmella Dandino, step-daughter Robyn Uselman; step-sons David (Annette) Clement and Matthew Uselman; brother Patrick (Donna) Dandino; sisters Kathi (Carlos) Torres and Julie (John) Slater;

# FAREWELLS

and one grandchild, Ava Clement. Mike grew up on Simonton Lake.

Mike was the owner and proprietor of Dino's in Elkhart. He was formerly a hairstylist and local musician. He was a member of St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Church and the IARA Club.

## MARGO REDMAN

**Margo Redman**, 86, of North Shore Drive, passed away peacefully at the Center for Hospice – Esther's House on Friday, July 11, 2025, with her devoted family by her side.

Born on November 12, 1938, in Elkhart, Margo was the daughter of the late Clyde and Miriam (Pensinger) Pletcher. She graduated from Concord High School with the Class of 1956. On July 1, 1967, she married the love of her life, Dean Redman, in Elkhart, and they shared a joyful life together filled with love and adventure.

Margo was preceded in death by her brothers Carl Burleson, Greg Pletcher, and Mike Hettinger.

She lived a vibrant life, always drawn to nature and fun. A former member of the Moose Lodge, Margo loved boating, water skiing, and dancing. She had a tender heart for animals—whether wild or tame—and found comfort in watching movies on TV, a pastime she truly enjoyed.

Margo is survived by her loving husband, Dean; her daughter, Julie Kline (Mike Brunke) of Hastings, MI; her sons, Jeff (Barbara) Redman of Corte Madera, CA, and Jay (Brintz) DeHaven of White Pigeon, MI. She was a proud grandmother to Zachary (Vivi) Kline, Skyler Kline, Jacob DeHaven, Sam (Maddie) Redman, and Brenda Oli-gee and was also blessed with numerous great-grandchildren. She is also survived by her brothers Buzz Hettinger, Travis Pletcher, and Fred (Jan) Pletcher; her sister Muff (Rod) Stamper; her niece Ginger Sheline, and many other cherished nieces and nephews.

Margo's warmth, generosity, and zest for life will live on in the hearts of all who knew and loved her.



## NO MORE PENNIES



The last U.S. pennies were minted on Nov. 12, 2025, in Philadelphia. According to Maryclare Dale, writer for the Associated Press, it cost the mint four cents for every one cent penny that was made.

Pennies can still be used but they will no longer be made. In the history of the United States "the last coin to be discontinued was the half-cent coin back in 1857."

"After the discontinuation of the penny retailers were concerned as their supplies ran low. Some rounded prices down and others pleaded with customers to bring exact change. Some banks across the nation began rationing supplies."

An interesting fact is that "the nickel costs nearly 14 cents to make, the dime costs 6 cents to produce and the quarter nearly 15 cents."

Coins, including the half-penny, penny, nickel, dime, quarter, half dollar and dollar, were first produced in 1793 one year after Congress passed the Coinage Act. "Back then a penny could get you a biscuit, a candle or a piece of candy."

Discontinuing the minting of new pennies will save \$56 million according to the U.S. Treasurer Brandon Beach.

# GOSHEN DAM POND DREDGING PLANS CANCELED



The Goshen Dam Pond is located south of State Road 119 and just north of the Kercher Road bridge over the Elkhart River.

About the time the Simonton Lake HOA was planning a dredging project here at our lake, residents on a section of the Elkhart River known as the Goshen Dam Pond were attempting to do the same.

There were many differences between the two projects.

- A river constantly brings in sediment.
- We have no creeks or rivers feeding our lake. Our lake is spring-fed. With good erosion control, keeping speed boats in the marked waterways and limiting our boats to no-wake speed where indicated, we control the amount of sediment already there from being re-suspended in our water. New sediment is minimal.
- We asked for donations. They established a tax district. We also sought grants and received over \$50,000. They did not receive the funding they needed.
- We had secured land for depositing the sediment, they had not.
- We had secured our permit from the Indiana DNR Lake and River Enhancement Program (LARE) because we had all the prerequisites that the State of Indiana required.

While the area is referred to as a pond, it is actually a wide portion of the river created by a dam at the north end.

## TAXING STOPPED

A special tax district was formed in 2014 to collect assessments from nearby property owners to remove sediment from the pond. While some labor and funding were committed early on, the project never secured the millions of dollars needed to complete the work.

Having been stopped from dredging through the LARE program, pond residents tried another route. They had a study done in 2019 to see if dredging the pond would prevent flooding. The study found that dredging the pond would NOT prevent future flooding

Elkhart County Commissioners ended the district's taxing authority in 2022.

## WHAT NOW HAPPENS TO THE MONEY LEFT IN THE SPECIAL TAXING ACCOUNT?

Dozens of riverfront residents attended the Commissioners January 5th meeting, with many urging that the remaining funds be spent on conservation or restoration efforts along the river rather than restarting dredging.

A smaller group of residents argued the remaining money in the fund should be returned to those who paid into the district.

Commissioners said refunding the assessments would likely cost the county more than the amount remaining, noting that some of the money has already been spent and that tracking individual payments would be difficult.

While the taxing authority ended in 2022, the Goshen Dam Pond District was formally dissolved at the Commissioner meeting on Monday, January 5th. No decision was made on how to use the remaining funds.

**Here at Simonton Lake we completed a big dredging project with over 50,500 Cubic Yards of sediment removed.**

(A cubic yard is one yard, by one yard, by one yard. Think of a box that is 36 inches long, 36 inches wide and 36 inches high!)

We still have an area at the west end of Big Simonton that was approved for dredging. That Phase was not completed because we did not have the funding.

Now, the charter of the SIMONTON LAKE CONSERVANCY includes dredging projects. Any new dredging projects will be funded and managed by the Conservancy. The Conservancy is putting money aside to complete that final phase of dredging. Permits are being sought.



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# OSOLO FIRE DEPARTMENT REPORT

BY CHIEF MIKE SMITH

## HOUSE FIRE

At approximately 3:30 on December 18, members of A Shift responded to a reported house fire in the 26000 Block of Parkview Ave. Parkview Ave. runs east and west intersecting State Road 19 at the One Stop Furniture Mattress Store. The fire was on the street to the east of St. Rd. 19.

Members arrived on scene to heavy fire and smoke coming from an attached garage that had already collapsed by the time first units arrived. The fire was starting to work its way into the residence, which was unoccupied as it was undergoing renovations, but thanks to a quick and aggressive fire attack, damage to the home was kept to a minimum. Assisting Osolo Fire were Bristol Fire Department, Cleveland Township Fire Department, Elkhart Firefighters Local 338 Engine 6 and Engine 7 as well as Battalion 106, and the Osolo EMS. We are proud to serve the residents of Osolo Township and strive to continue to provide the best possible care.



## TOLL ROAD CRASH

On January 14 at approximately 4pm, Osolo Township Fire Department and EMS were dispatched to the 93-94 mile marker of the Indiana Toll Road. Units were initially informed that there were multiple vehicles involved and upon arrival, found approximately 20-30 vehicles including cars and tractor trailers, involved in a large pileup blocking both eastbound and westbound traffic.



Assisting trapped driver

Due to the large number of vehicles involved, multiple mutual aid agencies were contacted to begin bringing manpower and equipment. One of the patients was entrapped in his semi requiring heavy extrication due to the extent of the damage. We are happy to announce that in all, there were no fatalities and minimal patients with minor to moderate injuries. We would like to extend a big thank you to all our mutual aid: Elkhart Firefighters Local 338, Cleveland Township Fire Department, Bristol Fire Department, Middlebury Professional Firefighters Local #4843, Tom's 24-Hour Towing Inc., and the Indiana State Police Toll Road Post.

## OSOLO FIRE DEPARTMENT STATISTICS FOR 2025

- 1,513 Total Calls
- 1,076 of those calls were Medical Based
- 251 of those calls were Fire Based
- 30 Rescue
- 156 Other Types

This number of calls makes Osolo Fire one of the busiest Fire Departments in the County



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# HOUSE FIRE DISPLACES FAMILY WITH SIMONTON LAKE TIES

BY AMY MATHERLY



Carla Darr, cousin of lake resident Amy Matherly, had a house fire on November 28, the day after Thanksgiving. The family had enjoyed a family dinner with Carla's sister, Diane, who lives in South Bend. Then the fire. The house was a complete loss.

Carla taught at Mary Daly and Mary Beck and was voted Teacher of the Year on more than one occasion. Carla has also been active in the community and was a volleyball coach for Daly and for Shank You Volleyball

Club. She escaped with her newly adopted sons, King, KJ, and Ky, with nothing but the clothes they were wearing. They didn't even have shoes on their feet.

A firefighter was able to retrieve Carla's purse. And her car was in the driveway.

I tried to use a fire extinguisher to put the fire out, Carla said, " and they're like, 'No, mama, you have to get outside, like, don't do that.' That's what the firefighters do and so they knew what to do and they didn't panic. They stayed calm."

Close friend Kaytee Lane, daughter of former lake resident Laura Byrns, organized donations and set up a GoFundMe page. Response was amazing.

Carla and her sons are staying at a local hotel and are being helped in finding a new home by the Red Cross. As stated, Carla recently adopted Ky, King and KJ and she is their mom. She is making a wonderful life for them when she could have been settling into retirement after decades of teaching.

We know that bad things happen to good people but sometimes it's just hard to bear. But then these overwhelming donations come in. People help. We'll keep you updated on this family's road to recovery.

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# WINTER WEATHER IN REVIEW



Accident on the Indiana Toll Road on January 14 west of C.R. 17, east of the Elkhart exit.  
The accident happened during a snowstorm earlier in the day.

This winter began, which meant many lake residents were prevented from doing that last lawn raking of the season. Ice on the lake held bringing a few ice fishermen and at least one ice rink. Since then, we've been in a freeze/thaw pattern. In early January, some neighbors were able to complete that lawn raking. But, if you wanted to and didn't, no problem. It snowed and covered up the unraked leaves.

While the National Weather Service reports our Indiana winter a milder winter as far as temperature, the precipitation, both rain and snow were above normal. This article was written in January. We'll have to wait and see what the rest of the winter brings to the lake.

Residents can enjoy the few extra minutes of daylight each day as the Winter Equinox has passed. Each day in January and February we gain approximately 2 minutes of daylight. The number of daylight minutes gained per day increases as we move into spring.

## Best Films of 2025

The Simonton Says staff hopes you recognize more of these films than we did.

10. "Weapons"
9. "Is this Thing On?"
8. "Superman"
7. "Hamnet"
6. "Marty Supreme"
5. "It Was Just an Accident"
4. "Wake Up Dead Man: A Knives Out Mystery"
3. "Rental Family"
2. "Sinners"
1. "The Life of Chuck"

## Most Popular Baby Names for 2025

According to BabyCenter.com

### GIRLS

1. Olivia
2. Amelia
3. Sophia
4. Emma
5. Isabella
6. Charlotte
7. Eliana
8. Ellie
9. Aurora
10. Mia

### BOYS

1. Noah
2. Liam
3. Oliver
4. Elizah
5. Mateo
6. Levi
7. Lucas
8. Ezra
9. Asher
10. Luca



These are the properties for sale according to Zillow as of January 9, 2026

- 26051 Lake Drive
- 25424 North Shore Drive
- 25413 North Shore Drive
- 51174 North Shore Drive
- 50938 North Shore Drive



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## Fall Food Drive

With manpower from the Club and advertisement through the media and the HOA, we really had a great outcome. So many families were helped. Come join us as we help our neighbors.

## Sportsmen's Club Dates for 2026

- Turkey Shoot March 7 and 8 -
- Leprechaun Leap Mar. 28 -
- Casino Night April 18 -
- Firecracker Golf Outing May 9 -
- Kids Fishing Contest June 13 -
- Poker Run and Fireworks July 4 -
- Flag Retirement Ceremony July 5 -

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## MISSING PORCH FURNITURE

Last summer during a huge storm, the Van Teims' lost the glider from their pier. They put out a plea and it was found. Of all the things the HOA has done, finding lost things after a storm is one of the most helpful.

Guess what? It's gone again. On December 29, they saw it floating east from the Flippin' Cow end of North Shore Drive.

Now the Van Teims have been urged by their neighbors and friends to tie down their furniture. But, this is not flimsy stuff. It's heavy-duty polywood-type furniture, the kind you move and later need a heating pad on your back.

They'd like to have that glider back. So, next time the ice melts, take a look.

The missing item is a blue and white glider pictured here.



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FROM THE SAFETY COMMITTEE

We still have weeks of winter left. So, here are your safety reminders.

1. Drill a test hole near shore. Your test hole should show at least a four-inch thickness of clear ice like the ice you get from your freezer.
2. Wear a life jacket for extra warmth and safety.
3. Not all the ice on the lake is the same thickness.
4. Ice strength can also change. Thick ice is rotten after rain. Old honey-combed ice or slushy ice is weak ice.
5. Wind, waterfowl, and beavers can also keep areas of ice from being thick.
6. The water in the area near Lily Creek may still be flowing into the creek. Flowing water under the ice makes the ice unreliable.
7. Water near an aerator may freeze with inconsistencies in the thickness.
8. Underground springs and wind can cause weakness in the ice.

## ICE SAFETY GUIDELINES

### ICE THICKNESS    WHAT TO DO

1" of ice	-----STAY OFF!!!
4" of ice	-----Needed for safe ice fishing
5" of ice	-----Needed for snowmobiling
8" of ice	-----Needed to support the weight of a car or light truck
10" of ice	-----Needed to support a medium weight truck

## ICE FISHING REMINDERS

- Indiana law limits ice fishing holes to a diameter of twelve inches.
- Fishing shanties must have reflectors on each side so snowmobiles won't crash into them at dusk or during snowstorms.



If you see a pet or other animal in distress on the ice, do not venture out after it. The ice may be able to support the pet or animal, but not you. Instead, contact local emergency response personnel, who are trained and equipped to make rescues on thin ice.

## WHAT TO DO IF YOU FIND A HYPOTHERMIC ANIMAL

1. Do NOT feed.
2. Do NOT submerge in water.
3. Do NOT bring inside out of the weather.
4. Do NOT dry the animal off.
5. Do NOT stroke to stimulate the blood flow.
6. DO get to a vet immediately!

If you feed a kitten with a temperature below 97°, you can kill it!

If you warm them up too fast, you can kill it!

If the animal is frozen to the ground, do not pull it off! Instead, get LUKEWARM water and pour it around and under the animal. DO NOT use hot water. Once free, immediately dry the animal off, wrap it in a dry towel and get it to the nearest vet.





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# WINTER ON THE LAKE

