

SIMONTON SAYS...

SIMONTON LAKE AREA HOMEOWNERS' ASSOCIATION, INC. NEWSLETTER

FALL ISSUE 2025

VOLUME 18

ISSUE 4

Goodbye Summer, Hello Fall!



ELKHART, INDIANA

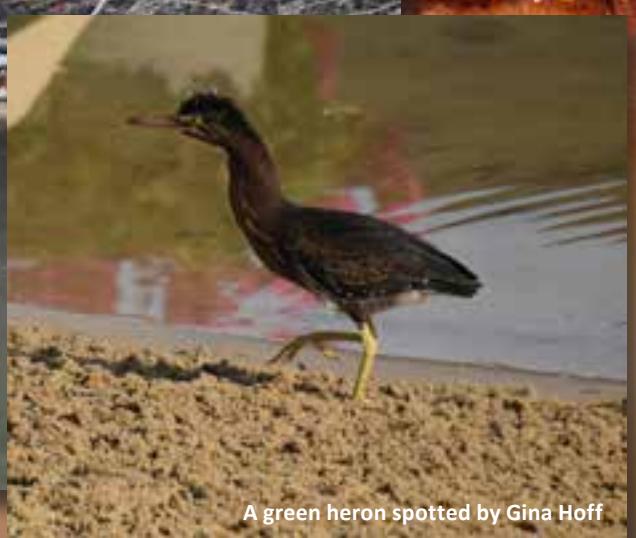
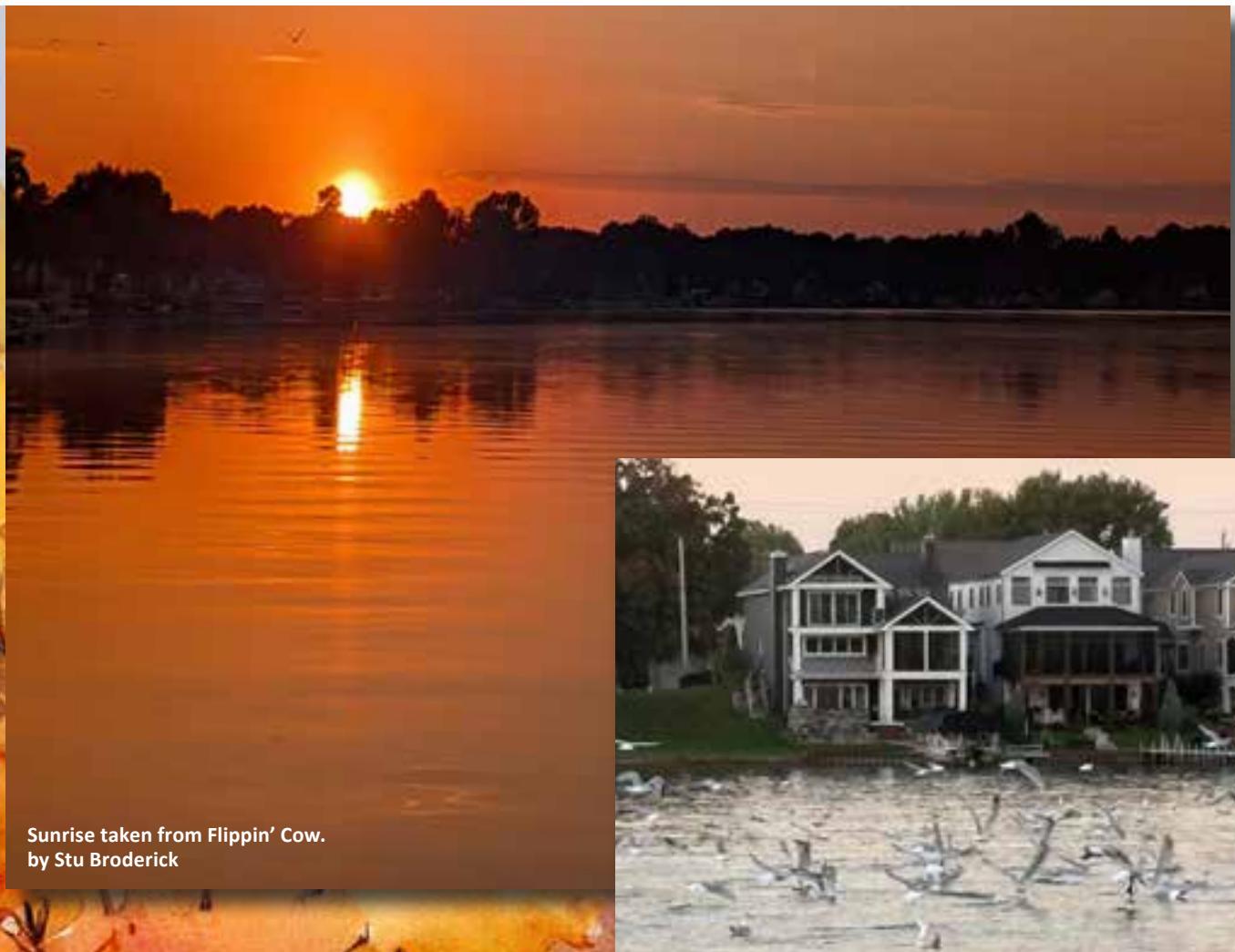
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www.simontonlakehoa.com

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Photo by Stephanie Rose



INFORMATION & EVENTS

SIMONTON SAYS...
FALL 2025 EDITION

ASSOCIATION BOARD MEMBERS

HOA ACTING PRESIDENT

Doug Reese
51234 Aqua Drive
574-327-4484

HOA ACTING VICE-PRESIDENT

Jack Tucker
51110 Sail Bay Court
574-370-3326

HOA SECRETARY

HOA TREASURER

Susie Broderick,
North Shore Drive

Randy Hoff - Board Member
Environment Liason
25369 Vernon Crossing

Tim Leis, Board Member
51004 Sail Bay Court

Tony Espinas-Board Member
51155 Aqua Drive

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

To become an advertiser
contact Jon Hart
simontonhoa@gmail.com

To sign up for Lake Alerts
simontonhoa@gmail.com

Facebook: Michelle Coleman

ENVIRONMENT

- Ecozone
- Weir
- Water Quality Concerns

SAFETY

- DNR related issues
- "Lake Alerts" - Chris Toles, 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

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simontonhoa@gmail.com

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

JOIN "LAKE ALERTS"
EMAIL GROUP

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

Nov. "Simonton Says"

Nov. 12 Conservancy Meeting

Nov. 15 SLSC Fall Ball

Dec. 1 FILING DEADLINE FOR CONSERVANCY DISTRICT 3

Dec. 10 Conservancy Meeting

January 10 Deadline for Info. And pictures for the winter issue of "Simonton Says"

January HOA Membership Drive

January 14 Conservancy Meeting

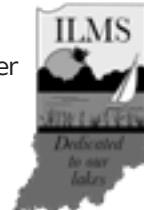
February Winter issue of "Simonton Says"

February 21 4:00 Conservancy Election

MAY 1 AND 2 SPRING GARAGE SALE



Simonton Lake is a member
of the Indiana Lakes
Management Society



NOTES FROM THE BOARD

FALL 2025 EDITION

Join the Simonton Lake HOA today!

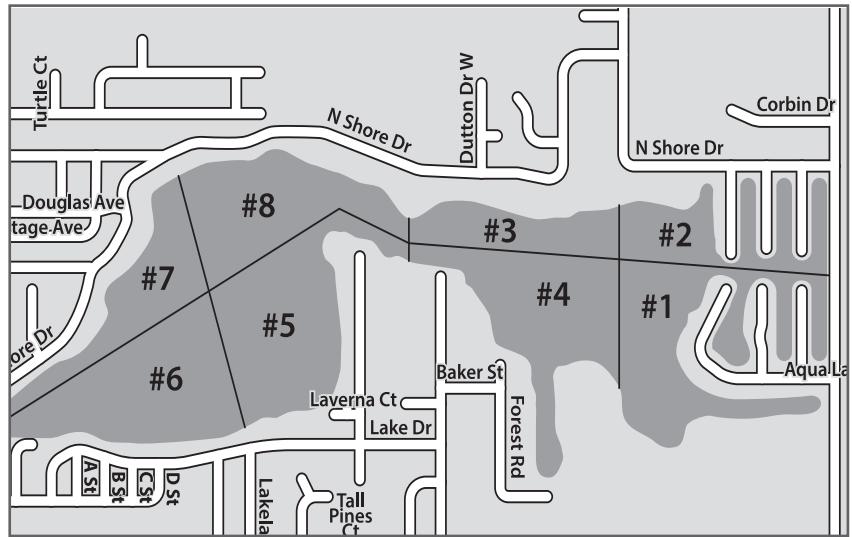
Use the form below.

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

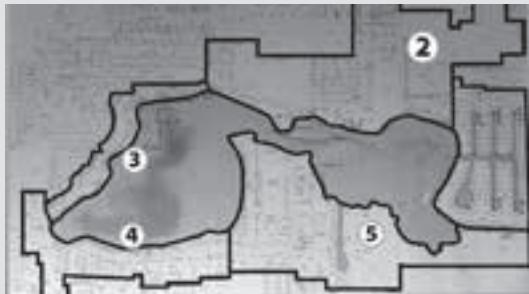
Area #1	Van Kessler	574-370-2266
Area #2	Jerry Broderick Sue Ward	574-254-1331 574-596-2020
Area #3	Maria Hopman	574-262-1665
Area #4	Jon Hart	574-262-1404
Area #5	Bob Meyers Cindy Nickell	574-675-0970 574-262-3105
Area #6	Melissa Kessler	574-849-9995
Area #7	Dave VanZile Theresa Maier	574-264-5201 574-361-0517
Area #8	Amy Matherly	574-524-6632



SIMONTON LAKE CONSERVANCY BOARD POSITION UP FOR RE-ELECTION

This year an election will be held in FEBRUARY 2026 for the Section 3 district. That position is currently held by Ryan Matherly. At this time he is considering seeking another term.

District 3 includes homes on both sides of North Shore Drive from 25872 North Shore Drive (the home of Tom and Sally Shultz) to State Road 19. If you wish to run for the District 3 position you MUST own land in District 3.



HOW TO RUN FOR A SEAT ON THE CONSERVANCY BOARD

1. Call the Conservancy Office at 574-206-8485 to confirm that you live in District 3.
2. Using an official petition format, declare that you wish to run for a position on the Simonton Lake Conservancy Board.
3. Have five freeholders (landowners) who own land within District 3 sign your petition.
4. Your petition should be mailed to the Simonton Lake

Conservancy District Office at P.O. Box 4304, Elkhart, Indiana 46515 on or before DECEMBER 1, 2025

5. Call the Conservancy Office at 574-206-8485 to make sure your petition was delivered and to confirm the site and time for the Annual Meeting.
6. Only residents of Section 3 may vote.

WHAT DOES THE CONSERVANCY DO?

Our local Conservancy is in charge of the running a maintenance of our sewer system, improving drainage, developing forests, wildlife areas, parks and recreational facilities, preventing erosion, and the operation, maintenance and improvement for water-based recreational purposes (Dredging, Water Quality, Weed Control)

WHO IS ON OUR CONSERVANCY BOARD?

In our Conservancy we have 5 districts. The current Board members are as follows:

•District 1-Bob Evans	•District 2-Hayden Kruger
•District 3-Ryan Matherly	•District 4-Mark Lucas
•District 5-Randy Hoff	

Board members serve four-year terms and attend monthly meetings.

People who are interested in serving on the Board would be wise to attend some meetings and talk to board members to get an idea of the responsibilities and time required.



NEW ONLINE LAKE 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



CONSERVANCY CORNER

SIMONTON LAKE
CONSERVANCY
574-206-8485

CONSERVANCY ELECTION FOR DISTRICT 3 FEBRUARY 21

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.

FEES FROM THE CITY OF ELKHART CONTINUE TO RISE

The sewage from the Simonton Lake sewer system flows under State Road 19 and through underground pipes to hook up with the City of Elkhart's system. The city charges us for this service. That's why sewage rates were raised in January of 2025. The city also monitors the sewage for harmful chemicals. If the chemicals are higher than allowed, the city fines us. Our Conservancy Board regularly monitors those chemicals and takes preventative measures, but we still get a spike on occasion. The board is in conversation with the City about why this happens.

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!

BOARD HIRES NEW LOCATOR SERVICE

Every time someone digs a locator service is called to mark underground utilities and cables. The fee for this required locating is very high. The Board has recently hired a new company called Astbury Water Tech. LOCATOR COMPANIES ARE NOT REQUIRED TO GET A PERMIT FROM THE COUNTY. However, they should have their company logo and information on their trucks and should be able to identify themselves to you upon request.

While we try to send out Lake Alerts when there is disruption on our lake area streets, the locator company could be working somewhere every day **within the lake area**. Read the article on "Digging" in this issue.

Also, read the article on "Lily Creek Clean Out" in this issue.

BOARD MEETINGS ARE HELD AT THE ELKHART AQUATIC CENTER

NOVEMBER 12 • DECEMBER 10
JANUARY 14 • FEBRUARY 11
ANNUAL MEETING SAT. FEB 21, 4:00

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.

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Thank You for another great season!!



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NEWS

MEMBERSHIP / OUTREACH / SOCIAL COMMITTEE

AWESOME SUMMER 2025 EVENTS

The Membership/Outreach Committee are a group of innovative and talented individuals. They brainstorm in the spring and then fine tune their list of events for adults and events for the family and all the time they are having fun themselves.

Simonton Sunset Socials happen each 2nd Friday from June to September at 6 pm on the sandbar.



The First Annual Lakeside Dock Hop was held on September 5. *Read the article in this issue.*

On July 5 the committee had a boat and poker run stop decorating contest that was more popular than in 2024



Kayaks and Koozies started at the sandbar. A full moon was a great addition to the evening.



Norma Cox hosted a lakeside concert on Labor Day weekend.

Sadly, the Sandbar Family Play Day was cancelled because of cold weather. Cold weather? Yes, one week it was in the 90's and the next it was 60 degrees followed by more 90's. Maybe next summer.

**THANKS TO THE COMMITTEE.
IT WAS A GREAT SUMMER!!**



ELKHART COUNTY PROVIDES INFORMATION ON DIGGING IN STREET RIGHT-OF-WAYS

Our thanks to Nate at the Elkhart County Highway Department for responding to our concern about digging in the right-of-way along our lake area roads.

First Surf Internet and then Frontier went through the area placing underground fiber optic cable. Some homeowners had good experiences, others did not. We can't keep them from digging, but according to the Highway Department, they must do a decent job of repairing the area disturbed.

If you have had less than excellent repairs in your lawn, contact the Elkhart County Highway Department. They will send someone out to check out the damage and see to it that the

damage is repaired.

Having said that, if your shrubs or flower beds are right up against the roadway, you are in the public right of way. Those shrubs and flower beds are in danger from the next project that comes down the road!

Here's the official information from the Elkhart County Highway Department website

Public easements (Right of Ways) along Elkhart County roads include areas for utilities (like drainage and access) and maintenance.

It is illegal to place permanent structures on these easements, though some temporary activities like loading or the placement of trash receptacles may be permitted. Any work within the right-of-way requires a permit

from the Elkhart County Highway Department.

- You cannot place structures, posts, or poles in a way that obstructs public use of the right-of-way.
- Exceptions are made for temporary activities like loading/unloading, placing garbage receptacles, or mailbox supports.
- Permit required: Any work within the street right-of-way, including driveways or utility work, needs a permit from the Elkhart County Highway Department, except for Locator Companies.

The Highway Department also tells us that the trucks or other vehicles for anyone digging in the right-of-way must be clearly marked.



CREATIVE COLORS

INTERNATIONAL

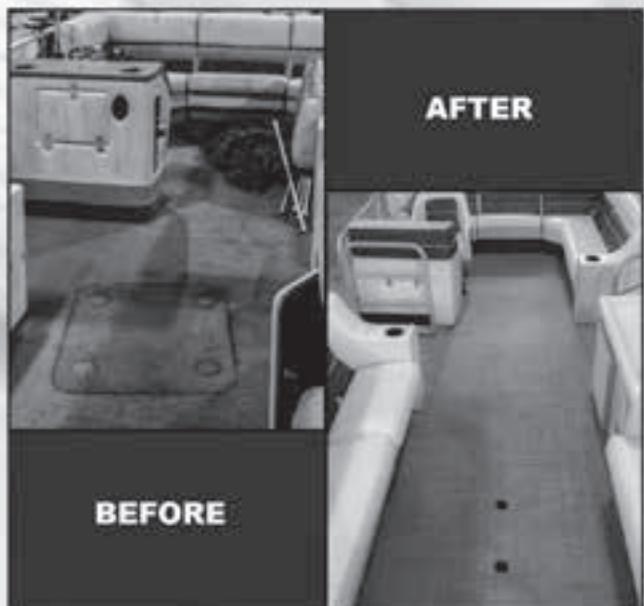
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SPOTLIGHT ON ADVERTISERS



S&H Auto Group was founded with a mission to provide affordable and reliable used vehicles to our community. Over the past decade, under the leadership of Tom Hagen, Brian Brisco, and Jeremy Noetzel, we've grown into one of Northern Indiana's largest independently owned used car destinations.

Our journey began in a modest office by Simonton Lake with a single garage door for detailing, a few desks, and a small lot for vehicle display. Today, we've expanded

by adding a service center, a new detail shop/corporate office, a collision center, and space for over 200 vehicles. S&H now has additional locations in Dunlap and Osceola, with an inventory that has grown from under 100 vehicles to over 500 across our three locations, offering the best selection in the area. This inventory is diverse and includes everything from budget-friendly vehicles to low-mileage lease turn-ins. We partner with over 20 lenders to provide options for all budgets and credit situations, and we collaborate with both local and national lenders to offer competitive prime interest rates.

Dedication to enhancing the customer experience and redefining the traditional dealership model is encapsulated in our slogans: "Experience the Difference" and "Simple & Hassle-free". Whether you interact with an S&H Auto Group employee at one of our two service centers, our collision center, sales floor, or office, we hope "the Difference" is clear. We believe car buying should be stress-free, and are focused on making it as enjoyable, simple, and hassle-free as possible. If you have not already, our hope is that you stop by to see our facility, meet our staff, and when the timing is right, give us the opportunity to earn your business. Our team is committed to a vision of transforming the car buying experience, one sale at a time.

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FIRST ANNUAL DOCK HOP

SPONSORED BY THE HOA MEMBERSHIP/OUTREACH COMMITTEE

The Membership/Outreach Committee is on FIRE!!

They planned so many great events this summer that it's hard to keep up with them.

The Dock Hop was billed as the ultimate bar crawl-lake style. There were 4 hosts each serving their own signature drink. Each dock welcomed guests on the hour and was only open for that designated hour. Participants started out at the Shinabarger's Tiki Bar, then went to Coleman's, followed by the West's and finishing up the night at the Anderson's.



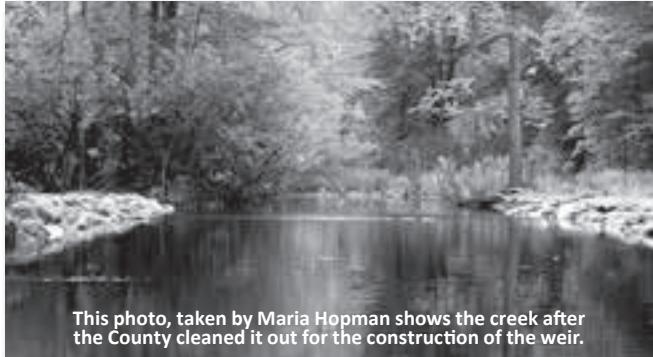
LILY CREEK DREDGED

WRITTEN BY DAVE FOUTZ. BOB EVANS ALSO CONTRIBUTED

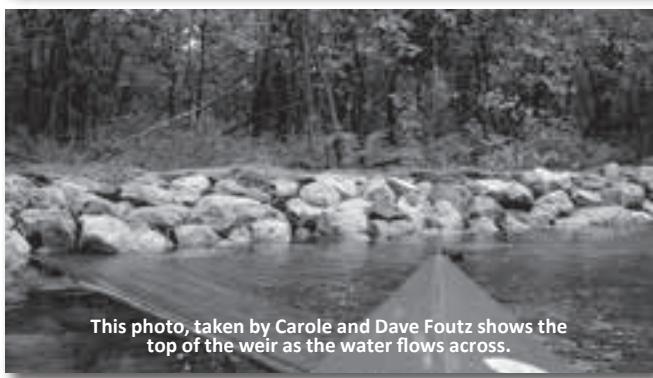
Lily Creek, also known as Osolo Ditch, was created in the 1800's for drainage in the county's northern farmland. The creek begins at the southeastern shore of Little Simonton just west of the Ecozone.

Lake residents went to the DNR and the County with plans for a weir across the creek. Finally, in 2016 after 20 years of effort the weir was finished.

A weir is a water control device which regulates the level of the lake. Previously Simonton Lake had no such device.



This photo, taken by Maria Hopman shows the creek after the County cleaned it out for the construction of the weir.



This photo, taken by Carole and Dave Foutz shows the top of the weir as the water flows across.

Weirs are common on most lakes the size of Simonton. A legal lake level was established by DNR based on records of the past ten years of lake levels and the weir was constructed at that level.

The photos on the left showing a gentle creek slowing southward with stone lining both banks were taken in 2016.

This past year the weir looked like the picture to the right. Sediment and vegetation clogged the creek. The water still flowed, but not as well.



It is the job of the Elkhart County Drainage Board to maintain the ditches throughout the county. In agricultural areas, these ditches provide needed drainage for water runoff. Here at Simonton Lake this ditch drains excess water after rain/storm events or during the spring melt. It also prevents water from leaving the lake in times of drought like we are experiencing now.

The fact that boats are stranded on lifts because of the low water is a big issue, the bigger issue is the health of the lake. Low water is stressful to the good vegetation, and to aquatic animals. Low water affects water quality as well.

The Simonton Lake Conservancy Board monitors drainage issues within the Conservancy and reports issues to the County or State. In their last meeting they reported that the County had been out to remove the vegetation and sediment. However, they were unable to get their equipment near enough to an area filled with cattails. Instead, the cattails were sprayed.

WHERE IS MY LOT LINE?

Many of the lots on Big Simonton were platted in the 1940's or 1950's. Over time people come to assume that their lot lines are in a certain spot. Perhaps you assume that a row of bushes is yours or that your driveway is on your property. But, when a survey is done, what you assumed was not correct.

A stake survey in Elkhart County will cost somewhere between \$400 and \$1,800, depending on the complexity of the property and the number of stakes needed.

Getting a survey of your property is a good idea to legally define property boundaries.

- It helps avoid neighborly disputes over fences, driveways, or building encroachments.
- It is crucial for major projects,
 - as it can identify **legal restrictions** like easements or setbacks,
 - is often required by lenders for mortgages.
 - Protects your investment.
- Identifies rights-of-ways and utilities.
- Provides the correct information for builders of fences, additions, or seawalls or landscaping.



THAT'S THE BOTTOM LINE.

DON'T ASSUME.

DO A SURVEY!

ZONING REPORT

No zoning appeals presented at the Elkhart County Board of Zoning Appeals directly affected the lake during the period of August through October.

Amazon has finally opened its 800,000 square foot facility just off of C.R. 17 north of the Toll Road. One thousand full-time workers will be needed to staff the building.

While this huge facility is not on Simonton Lake's doorstep, the influx of workers may strain available local housing and mean more homes or apartments will be built.

The new facility will likely increase competition for a workforce already in high demand, potentially creating challenges for existing local employers, such as those in the RV industry.



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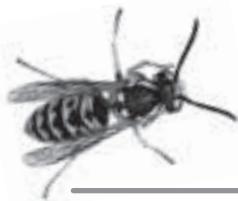
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THE YELLOWJACKETS

FASCINATING, FEARSOME, AND OFTEN MISUNDERSTOOD

SUBMITTED BY GINA HOFF

Yellowjackets are some of the most notorious and misunderstood insects in the world. Recognizable by their black and yellow striped bodies, they belong to the wasp family (Vespidae), and though they are often confused with bees, their behavior and biology are quite different. Here's a deep dive into who yellowjackets are, their role in the ecosystem, and why they can be both helpful and dangerous.

WHAT ARE YELLOWJACKETS?

Yellowjackets are social wasps known for their aggressive nature, especially when their nests are threatened. They are typically around $\frac{1}{2}$ to $\frac{3}{4}$ inches long and can be distinguished from other wasps by their bright yellow and black striped appearance. Unlike bees, yellowjackets have smooth stingers, which means they can sting multiple times without dying—making them particularly dangerous when provoked.

Yellowjackets are found primarily in North America, though they also inhabit parts of Europe and Asia. Their colonies often thrive in late summer and early fall, when the nest population is at its peak.

NESTING HABITS AND BEHAVIOR

Yellowjackets are adept builders, constructing their nests from a papery substance they create by chewing wood fibers and mixing them with saliva. These nests are typically found in underground burrows, tree cavities, or even man-made structures such as eaves, attics, and sheds. The nests can grow quite large, housing anywhere from a few hundred to several thousand individual wasps.

The queen is the central figure in any yellowjacket colony. She begins laying eggs early in the season, with worker wasps emerging to forage for food, protect the nest, and expand the colony. In late summer or fall, the colony produces new queens and male drones to mate. After mating, the males die, while the newly fertilized queens hibernate over the winter. The rest of the colony perishes when temperatures drop.

YELLOWJACKETS' DIET

Yellowjackets are omnivorous, meaning they eat both plant and animal matter. They feed on a wide variety of foods, such as nectar, rotting fruits, and sugary substances. However, they also hunt small insects, which they feed to their larvae. This carnivorous aspect of their diet is one reason why yellowjackets can be seen in the late summer near garbage cans or picnic tables, where they scavenge for food.

Interestingly, yellowjackets play a crucial role in controlling populations of other insect species. By preying on pests such as flies, caterpillars, and aphids, they help maintain a balance in local ecosystems.

THE STINGS: A PAINFUL DEFENSE MECHANISM

One of the most feared aspects of yellowjackets is their ability to sting. They are highly territorial and protective of



their nests, so if they feel threatened, they will not hesitate to sting multiple times. Their stings are painful and can cause allergic reactions in some individuals. In rare cases, these stings can trigger anaphylactic shock, which can be life-threatening if not treated promptly.

Unlike bees, whose stingers get stuck in the skin and fall out after a single sting, yellowjackets can sting repeatedly, injecting venom each time. The venom causes intense pain, swelling, and redness around the sting site. Some people may experience more severe reactions, such as difficulty breathing or dizziness, which requires immediate medical attention.

ARE YELLOWJACKETS HELPFUL OR HARMFUL?

While yellowjackets are often considered a nuisance or even a threat, they do offer ecological benefits. As predators of other insects, they help control pest populations. For gardeners and farmers, yellowjackets can act as natural pest control agents, keeping crops free from destructive insects.

On the other hand, yellowjackets can be a serious threat in areas where people frequently gather, such as parks, picnic areas, or backyards. A yellowjacket sting can cause a lot of pain and discomfort, and for those who are allergic, it can be life-threatening. Because of their aggression and tendency to nest in hidden places, they are often seen as a nuisance, especially in the late summer and fall months when they become more active.

PREVENTION AND CONTROL

If you're dealing with a yellowjacket nest on your property, it's important to take precautions. The best way to avoid being stung is to stay calm and avoid disturbing their nests. If a nest is located near your home or in a frequently used area, it's best to contact a pest control professional to remove it safely. Yellowjackets chew wood fiber to create a pulp, forming a papery nest that is typically gray or brown and has a wavy texture.

For those who are allergic to stings, it's crucial to carry an epinephrine auto-injector (EpiPen) and seek immediate medical attention if stung. Wearing protective clothing when outdoors and avoiding brightly colored clothing or floral prints (which can attract yellowjackets) can also help reduce the risk of a sting.

CONCLUSION

Yellowjackets are complex creatures that are both beneficial and dangerous, depending on the situation. While their aggressive nature and painful stings often make them unwelcome guests at outdoor events, they also play an important role in the environment by controlling pest populations. Understanding their behavior, nesting habits, and role in the ecosystem can help us coexist with these fascinating insects in a safe and informed way.



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LAKE SHORTS



Rachel and Walt Talbot have two little skiers at their house. It was great fun watching them. Rachel says they love to ski. Dad just took the boat out in October. So, if you didn't see them this summer, you'll have to wait until summer 2026.

NEW NEIGHBORS

Glen and Michelle Cauthen are new neighbors on Channel Court.

BIG FISH On Labor Day weekend Graham Matherly, grandson of **Amy and Ryan Matherly**, was fishing off the pier. He wasn't having much luck. Then he screamed, "Dad, help!" We could see he had something big because his pole was bending in two. His dad, Ben Matherly, stuck the fish net into the water but only half the fish would fit. As you can see from the picture, he landed that fish, a northern pike.

It measured 36 inches. Graham's uncle, Greg Shewmaker, removed the hook but the fish took a small piece out of his finger.



This was the second summer for "Church on the Water." Held at the sandbar on Big Simonton on Sundays from Memorial Day to Labor Day, worshipers come by boat, kayak, or float for singing and a message.

The Sandbar in September sounds like the name of a movie. But, no, this is the real deal on Simonton Lake. September isn't always sandbar weather. The downside, it was so hot and sunny that the water was extremely low.



LAKE SHORTS



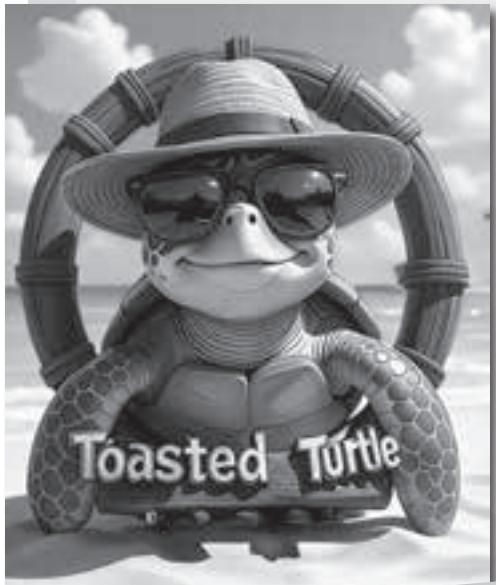
Three of the Elkhart Lions Boys Soccer Team made the NIC FIRST TEAM ALL-CONFERENCE. The player on the left is Karter Lopez, great grandson of **Eldonna Thorpe** of North Shore Drive.



Nathan Brekke, son of **Leanne and Dan**, turned 25 this summer.

Cam and Sue Snyder have purchased My Dad's Place restaurant. They asked their grandkids for suggestions on what to name the place. They came up with something about turtles. Cam and Sue put in the toasted part. The Snyders are loyal Simonton Says advertisers. We wish them the best on their new venture.

In August, the Lerner Theatre hosted its annual volunteer banquet. The article in the Elkhart Truth included our own **Bufford Skipper** who was honored for more than 10 years of service, alongside the mayor of Elkhart, Rod Roberson. We're proud of you, Bufford!



Long time lake resident, **Lois Sellers** celebrated her 95 birthday. She's shown here with her daughter, Pam Sellers Hesterman and sons Jim and Dick.

LAKE SHORTS

FALL GARAGE SALE

There were 23 garage sales around the lake this fall for our Fall Neighborhood Garage Sale. Thanks to all of you who helped put out and pick up signs. All of the signs were returned, and we will be ready for the Spring Garage Sale on May 1 and 2, 2026.

NORMA'S CONCERT

Norma Cox, once again opened her yard for a summer concert. Great weather, great friend, great music.



FAREWELLS



BOB PUTNAM

Robert "Bob" Putnam died peacefully in his sleep on Sunday morning, September 7, 2025, in Sun City Center, Florida.

Bob was born on October 31, 1945, in Rockville Center, New York, to Charles and Marjorie (Udell) Putnam. He was a 1967 graduate of the University of Dayton.

Bob enlisted in the Vietnam War in December 1968 and served three years as a United States Army Infantry Officer, earning the Silver Star, two Bronze Stars, and two Purple Hearts for his valor and service. He was honorably discharged with the rank of First Lieutenant.

Bob began his military journey with Basic and Advanced Infantry Training at Fort Dix, New Jersey, followed by Officer Candidate School at Fort Benning, Georgia. After commissioning, he served with the 54th Infantry at Fort Knox, Kentucky, completed Jungle Training in Panama, and was deployed to Vietnam. There, he joined Company C, 1st Battalion, 27th Infantry Regiment ("Wolfhounds"), under the 25th Infantry Division ("Tropic Lightning"). His tour included leading a platoon, working alongside MACV and Australian forces, and supporting operations with the Brown Water Navy along the Vietnam-Cambodia border, including the Cambodian invasion.

Bob often reflected on the dangers his unit faced, especially the daily threat of booby traps, describing it as "a version of Russian Roulette." After his tour, Bob returned home to his family and friends. On August 6, 1994, Bob married Lou Cynda Edwards. The couple lived on Simonton Lake in Elkhart, Indiana, for 30 years, enjoying boating, fishing, and, of course, their faithful dogs. They enjoyed the outdoors, especially biking together on their tandem, white-water rafting, and traveling to places like Australia and Mount Rushmore. Bob was also an avid golfer. Bob was president of the Simonton Lake Sportsmen's Club for two years and a very active member for 30 years.

Bob was a credit manager for 16 years at Philips Products, Elkhart, Indiana, and a credit analyst for 15 years at Philips Industries, Dayton, Ohio.

Bob and Lou retired to Sun City Center, Florida, in 2021. Bob remained deeply committed to veterans' causes. He was active in the Military Officers Association of America (MOAA), Honor Flight, and held memberships in VFW Post 8108, American Legion Sun City Center Post, and regularly attended Bob's Vets of Ruskin Thursday breakfasts. In 2024, he was honored with the Congressional Veterans Commendation by Congressman Vern Buchanan.

Bob was preceded in death by his parents, his brother Dennis Putnam, and his nephew Stephen Sutton. He is survived by his wife, Lou; son, Greg (Susan) Putnam; daughter, Michele (Rob) Twitchell; grandsons, Joseph (Samantha) Putnam and Quenton Galbraith; three great-grandsons; sister, Lois (Putnam) Corridi; nephews Dennis (Kacie) Sutton, Matthew (Justine) Schulte, Paul Lutz, Andy Lutz; several cousins; and their dogs, Buddy and Bennie.

A military service was held at Sarasota National Cemetery at 11:00 AM on Tuesday, September 16, 2025, followed by a luncheon at St. Andrew Presbyterian Church in Sun City Center.

Bob will be remembered for his courage, his love of life, and his unwavering dedication to his country and fellow veterans.

Instead of flowers, donations may be made in Bob's name to Dogs, Inc. (formerly Southeastern Guide Dogs) 4210 77th St E, Palmetto, FL 34221.

A Celebration of Life was held on Bob's birthday, October 31, at the Simonton Lake Sportsmen's Club.



MARY BETH PFLUGRADT

Mary Beth Pflugradt, 80 years young of North Shore Drive passed away this October. She loved living on Simonton Lake and was a great friend to many. Per her wishes there was no obituary in the local papers.

JIM BALLARD RECEIVES AWARD

Our own Jim Ballard received the Circle of Corydon Award this October at a meeting of the Goshen Common Council. The award was named after the state's first capital and recognizes individuals for making contributions to Indiana. Indiana State Representative Joanna King presented the award.

Ballard is Goshen's Behavioral Health Response Coordinator and works with the Goshen Mobile Integrated Health program which improves coordination among law enforcement, health care providers, and community organizations. In his role he helps the department do a better job when a situation involves a behavioral or medical crises. His department teaches and implements crisis de-escalation and supports individuals after the incident. Beyond that they also help get people referrals to health care specialists. In addition, the department educates the community on these special situations. Goshen Mayor, Gina Leichty spoke highly of Ballard and his efforts in mental health advocacy and care for "the least of these" in the community.

Jim and his wife, Mary Anne, are longtime residents of Simonton Lake.



State Representative Joanna King and Officer James Ballard, Circle of Corydon Award recipient.

DAHLIAS AT THE LAKE!

BY THERESA MAIER



Who knew a visit to the Elkhart Dahlia Society show the first Saturday in May would start an immediate "addiction" to the brightly colored, perfectly formed flowers for Heidi Johnson Compton and eventually husband Michial. Four years ago, the Comptons started with 5-7 "tubers" from The High Dive Park Show.

This good "addiction" "keeps the now retired couple outside and "off the couch!"

Heidi retired from Elkhart Community Schools. Mike from Fire Chief for City of Elkhart and now owner of Compton's Tile.

Walking past their home it isn't obvious the beauty growing in their backyard,

WOW was I surprised when Heidi offered a September tour!!! Heidi and Mike have created an amazing tall garden of color. After spring planting of the tubers, the beauty begins within two weeks. Blooms come into their colors near the end of July and August.

After first hard frost the tubers are removed and stored in wood chips in their crawl space. Their garden is a favorite spot of hummingbirds, and butterflies.

Heidi says, "Plant one and check it out!"

She can usually be found in her backyard ready and willing to give tours!

Heidi lived most of her life at the lake. A true native of Simonton Lake she is the daughter of the late Sue and Tedd Johnson, former owners of Simonton Lake Marina owned by the family since 1941.

Thanks, Heidi, not just for the tour but also for the beautiful dahlias in our community.

SIMONTON LAKE SPORTSMEN'S CLUB FISHING CONTEST

AUGUST 2025

Twice each summer the Sportsmen's Club holds the Friend's Kids Fishing Contest. There are trophies and prizes and the excitement of pulling in a fish on your own line. Great memories for kids and adults!



STOP FOR SCHOOL BUSES!

In September, the South Bend Tribune ran an article on the terrible record drivers have in not stopping for school buses. According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration from 2000 to 2023, there were sixty-one fatal crashes involving a driver illegally passing a school bus while it was stopped.

When the stop arm extends, all traffic is required to stop in Indiana. That means traffic on both sides of the road.

Horrible crashes, like the one near Rochester which killed three children and injured another, are why we have hefty penalties for people who illegally pass school buses. In fact, about 40,000 buses across the nation now have cameras to help catch the offenders.

The National School Transportation Association ran a survey of over 100,000 school bus drivers. They reported over 67,000 violations in just one day.



IN INDIANA,

- the penalty for illegally passing a school bus ranges from a Class A misdemeanor to a felony depending on the circumstances.
- Fines go from \$5,000 to \$10,000.
- Jail time of one year is possible.
- The driver's license can be suspended for up to 90 days.
- If there is an injury, it is a level 6 felony punishable by up to two-and-a-half years in prison. Up to eight points may be assessed on your license.

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DROUGHT 2025



One of the things summer 2025 will be remembered for is the low water level caused by the lack of rain. As of October 14, 2025 approximately 42% (15430 square miles) of Indiana is under drought conditions and 35% (12882 square miles) is abnormally dry. Simonton Lake was down around 9 inches.

Fall and drought have often gone hand in hand across Indiana in recent years, and 2025 has followed the same pattern.

The September 30 US Drought Monitor, released on October 2, reported that more than 92 percent of Indiana was classified as either abnormally dry (D0) or moderate drought (D1). Several counties also experienced severe (D2) or extreme (D3) drought levels.

The rapid onset of drought this year began in August. Climate records

show that some northern Indiana cities experienced one of their driest late summer periods ever.

Drought impacts have included dried-up crops, dropping leaves, declining stream flows, and shrinking pond levels. Lawns have also gone dormant, offering a small silver lining to homeowners.

Looking ahead, forecasts between October 2 and 9 predict over an inch of rain in many parts of central and eastern Indiana, with some areas expecting up to two inches.

The Climate Prediction Center has raised confidence in above-normal rainfall through mid-October, offering hope for relief from the dry spell.

Because of a lack of rainfall, the water level in Simonton Lake is extremely low. This caused residents all over the lake to have difficulty getting boats and wave runners up to and away from piers.

A lack of rain also causes:

- Increased algal blooms
- Stress to aquatic life
- Increased weed growth.

As you know, a weir across Lily Creek prevents water from leaving the lake. The weir was working. So water was not draining from the lake.

By mid-September it became difficult to get boats off boat lifts. Boats not on lifts were often sitting on the sand. The water shrank away from seawalls showing bare sand.

Because of the low level of water boat motors stirred up the bottom in areas where they usually would not.

We know droughts have happened before and we know that the lake will rebound but it has been a tough fall.



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NEW TO THE LAKE?

- Read the Indiana DNR Boating Manual. Available online. See the link at the Simonton Lake HOA website, 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
- 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, kfreehafer@icloud.com, kimk999999@yahoo.com

Follow us on Facebook: SIMONTON LAKE HOA
 Join the Simonton Lake Neighbors page:
 NEIGHBORS OF SIMONTON LAKE



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FALL LEAF COLLECTION

Because of the poor results from relying on the county leaf collection contestants, the HOA has no organized free way to get rid of your leaves.

You may contact the county and arrange to have a contestant pick up your leaves. But this will be on your own and not organized by the HOA.

IF I DON'T BURN MY LEAVES, WHAT CAN I DO WITH THEM?

- The Elkhart County Landfill at 59530 C. R. 7 (Oakland Avenue in the city) will take leaves for free on any day that they are open. The Landfill is just south of the U.S. 20 Bypass.
- If you have room on your property leaves, make great compost for use on gardens, come springtime.
- Check with your trash removal service to see if they will pick up your leaves.

• DON'T PUT LEAVES INTO THE LAKE!

ELKHART COUNTY BURNING REGULATIONS

Being allowed to burn does not mean you can burn anything you want, anytime. If you assume this, you may be ticketed.

Here are the Elkhart County Burning Regulations:

- Private residential open burning is allowed where the building contains four or fewer dwelling units. Apartments, condominium complexes, mobile home parks, and businesses may not burn.
- A person may burn vegetation from a farm, orchard, nursery, or drainage ditch.
- Recreational or ceremonial fires are allowed but cannot be used for disposal purposes.
- It is always against the law to burn trash such as household waste, plastic, batteries, rubber, diapers, and painted or stained wood.

If you choose to burn, these conditions must always be followed:

- Fires must be attended at all times during burning until completely extinguished.
- A fire must be extinguished at any time if it creates a:
 - Pollution problem
 - Threat to public health
 - Nuisance
 - Fire hazard
- Burning may not be conducted during unfavorable meteorological conditions, such as high winds, temperature inversions, air stagnation, or when a pollution alert or air quality action day has been declared.
- Private residential open burning must be during daylight hours. All fires must be extinguished before sunset. (Recreational or ceremonial fires are allowed after sunset but cannot be used for disposal purposes.)
- Private residential open burning must be in a non-combustible container that is sufficiently vented and induce adequate primary combustion and has enclosed sides and a bottom. A burn barrel is not well vented.
- Only clean wood products and paper may be burned. "Clean wood products" means wood products, including vegetation, which are not coated with stain, paint, glue, or other coating material.

IF YOU ARE AFFECTED BY A NEIGHBOR'S LEAF FIRE, CALL THE ELKHART COUNTY SHERIFF'S NON-EMERGENCY LINE.





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UPCOMING EVENTS

November 15
 Fall Ball
 Check out Facebook
 for details.
 Theme: "The 80's"



Campaign for the Pond

Help is needed as the Club begins building a pond on the Sportsmen's Club property on County Road 11. This pond will be used for the Kid's Fishing contests and will be a great venue for other events, with a gazebo and walking path.

The Club members work hard all year round to fund our events. Adding this project is daunting.

If you, as an individual, or your company are interested in assisting us please reach out. Any donation, small or large, would be greatly appreciated.

We are a non-profit 501C3, so any donation is tax deductible!!



RENT THE CLUB HOUSE!!

When planning an event, don't forget the Sportsmen's Clubhouse on County Road 11. It's a great space and has clean restrooms, a nice kitchen and plenty of parking. And it's a great way to support the Club!



Great Events this Fall

The Club is always busy with events. In August we hosted a Turkey Shoot. In September we had a Tailgate Party and in October we had our annual Casino Night. If you missed these events, don't worry. Just join us next time.

JOIN THE CLUB

Membership is \$25/yr

Call Bill Leighton at
 574-596-4835

FOLLOW THE SIMONTON LAKE SPORTSMEN'S CLUB ON FACEBOOK!

SIMONTON LAKE HOA PROVIDES NEW WATER RESCUE TRAILER FOR OSOLO FIRE



The Osolo Township Fire Department has a water rescue boat. There are three bodies of water within the township, Heaton Lake, a section of the St. Joe River and Simonton Lake, the largest lake in Elkhart County.

The water rescue boat is in good shape, but the trailer needed to be replaced. This item simply was not in the Fire Department budget. Chief Mike Smith contacted members of the HOA board to ask for help. The board approved the request.

Just a few weeks ago Chief Smith sent us a picture of the new trailer. The department does regular water rescue practices starting out from our public boat ramp. We are alerted to these practices and then send that information out to you via Lake Alerts. Interested residents are welcome to watch. Just stay out of their way.

Life starts all over again when it gets crisp in the fall.

—F. Scott Fitzgerald—

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ASSUME ALL ICE OUT THERE IS THIN ICE

FROM THE SAFETY COMMITTEE

WINTER IS RIGHT AROUND THE CORNER. 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.



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"Fall Kayakers" by Brenda Yoder



"September Moon" by Vince Wilder



"Cold August Morning" by Brenda Yoder



"Fishing 'til dark the night before the first day of school" by Amy Matherly

