



THE BEACHCOMBER

DUNE ACRES, INDIANA

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JULY 2026

Dune Acres Celebrates the 4th of July

It was an epic celebration spanning 3 days! Bands on the beach, tennis and pickleball, run and walk, face painting, parade, hot dog roast and Fireworks!



Residents and guests gathered on the beach for live bands Thursday and Saturday



There was no shortage of hot dogs and no shortage of fun at the hot dog roast.



The parade was started with the cannon! Porter Fire led the way, followed by residents in festively decorated cars and golf carts.





The 5K run / 2 mile walk had a record number of participants - over 75 residents and guests ran and walked through the streets of Dune Acres.



Jeaneene's Retirement Party

Many residents and fans stopped by to wish Jeaneene a happy retirement! She is reportedly having a great time riding her motorcycle and doing airport transportation. Here she is enjoying some cake and conversation with Paul and Debbie Woidke.

Easter Egg Hunt

Kids and parents celebrated Easter with a festive and fun egg hunt at the town park.



Welcome New Residents!

ANNETTE SPERELAKIS and KEN CANIGLIA closed on 24 Circle Drive in late December, 2023. While their primary residence remains in the Lake Shore East neighborhood of downtown Chicago where they are longtime members of the Union League Club, they also enjoy travel. Thus far with family they've visited four continents and are planning excursions to Macchu Picchu this fall and to Italy over Christmas. The Caniglia-Sperelakis family includes **Andrew** (30), **Gabriel**, (28, fiancée **Mattie**), and Sebastian (22). Ken has been a wealth management advisor with Merrill Lynch since 1996. Annette, a physician at Northwestern Palos Medical Center, started her career working for a private pathology group in Michigan City, with stints also at Porter Memorial Hospital, St. Margaret Mercy and Hammond Clinic. Her first medical license was for Indiana, so she has come full circle! Annette and Ken enjoy meeting neighbors and making new friends at Social Committee events, and have attended almost every one.



RACHAEL and NICHOLAS "NICK" KANICH purchased their 2 Cypress Lane home in late November, 2024. While their primary residence will remain in Chicago's Lincoln Park neighborhood, the Dunes are in their blood, with Nick having grown up in Ogden Dunes. Their **first child is expected** in late August, and they look forward to raising her surrounded by the year-round natural beauty and sense of peace inherent in Dune Acres. The Kaniches' sweet golden retriever **fur baby Piper** loves swimming in the lake with Nick - they're excited for their new baby daughter to become a little beachcomber herself one day! Rachel and Nick look forward to meeting neighbors, pitching in wherever they can, and opening their home to friends and family to share the love, warmth, and nature that make this place so special.



REBECCA and KEVIN JOHNSON have been part-timers at 16 East Road since October 2024, along with their children **William** (7) and **Annika** (5). Having enjoyed the State Park in all seasons, the Johnsons were thrilled to find their Dune Acres “University of Amazement” home. Kevin’s “Wink Eye” optometry practice has two northwest Indiana locations, and he golfs every chance he gets. (His smaller Lowell office is in a historic bank building featuring John Dillinger bullet holes!) Currently a stay-at-home mom, Rebecca is also a Reiki master practitioner, Laughter Yoga leader, artist, bird nerd, and is working on her first book. An avid *Beachcomber* reader, before the recent revival she pored over old issues online! In the fall both children (who are collectively into art, nature, piano, singing, martial arts, soccer, pretend play, and making new friends) will attend Wonder Academy NWI. Dune Acres is a special place for the Johnsons, who feel so lucky to be here.



JESSICA and BILL RIDGWAY purchased their 92 West Road home about 1 ½ years ago. Jessica is an infectious disease physician at the University of Chicago, and Bill is an attorney at Skadden Arps. The Ridgway family includes **June (13 years), Elliott (age 11), and Eleanor (age 9) as well as their mini Bernedoodle Cali.** With their primary residence in the Hyde Park neighborhood of Chicago, the Ridgway family is enjoying Dune Acres as well, as evidenced by this happy family photo taken on our beach last summer!



KELLY and ROB SPENGLER purchased their 8 Ridge Drive home in November 2024. Kelly is an executive with JPMorgan Private Bank, and Rob works with a small family office administration group. While their primary residence is in Elmhurst, Illinois, they and their children **Abby (age 4) and Bobby (age 2)** enjoy hiking and biking and are excited to be part of this unique community. Through visits over the years with former owners Scott and Maria Hodes, the Spengler family fell in love with what they know will be their perfect community for year-round escapes from city pressures!



PATTI and JOE VERZONI purchased their 6 Circle Drive home in February 2025. Patti is an accountant while Joe works in the transportation industry. The Verzoni family includes daughters Megan and Cara, and son Nick, as well as the family dog Rizzo. With another home in the Beverly neighborhood of Chicago, the Verzonis are looking forward to meeting all their new neighbors in the Dune Acres community!



LEE SMITH and MARK WEBB purchased their 6 Oak Drive home in May 2024. Both Indianapolis-based attorneys, Mark focuses on alcoholic beverage licensing and lobbying for clients in restaurant, distributor, and distillery sectors. Lee's career has included serving as a public defender, legislative attorney, Clerk of the Indiana House of Representatives, and – in her winding-down years – non-profit executive. Together Lee and Mark enjoy the performing arts, progressive causes, being part of an “all-IU” family, and historic preservation (they've owned six vintage homes!). A side hobby of Mark's is vintage and classic cars. Two sons **Jimmy and Tyler** live respectively in Montana and Nashville, but Dune Acres neighbors might meet Tyler's partner **Kayla Whately** on the beach or out hiking while she is between flights as a Chicago-based AA flight attendant. Although their primary residence remains in Indianapolis, Lee and Mark have been enjoying their 1936 Dune Acres log cottage at least twice a month with **dogs Piper and Bentley**, including for the winter experience, and are eager to make new friends here.



TOBIN A. MITCHELL and ROBERT G. KEMP, Jr. PhD purchased their 12 Ridge Drive home in 2024. They are both retired educators of students ranging from preschool to college. For 20 years Robert was a union president, while Tobin “went down the dark side” to administration and central office management! They currently own and manage Old Town Ale House in Chicago, in addition to taking on independent contracting projects. With homes in Chicago and Central Illinois as well as Puerto Plata in the Dominican Republic, and a passion for fishing, hunting, and the culinary arts, Tobin and Robert are enjoying also becoming part of their new Dune Acres community.



THANK YOU to Dana Treister for welcoming our new residents and providing these profiles!

Meet the Guard

Meet **Roger Goode**, Chief of Security. Roger has greeting residents and guests at Dune Acres since 2021. He was a WJOB radio sports personality. He is known for his global travels as a pro athlete and entertainer with "The King and His Court" 4-man softball team. Formerly, he was GM and fixer for Luca Pizza's 48 US stores and a new store coordinator/fixer for Hat World/Lids.

Roger likes to stay in shape by working out - he even walks on a treadmill in the security office. Roger's generosity is recognized by friends and family as he and a relative established a charity to donate to friends and neighbors in need.

Roger enjoys the beach lifestyle living in Michigan City and working here in Dune Acres.



Meet our Singing Mailperson

Kim delivers our mail, but did you know she is also an accomplished vocalist? We recently saw her perform at Zorn's Brewing in Michigan City and were wowed by her talent. If you are looking for something fun to do on a Tuesday evening, head to Zorn's to catch Kim and Johnnie V. (That happens to be Taco Tuesday, as well).

<http://zornbrewworks.com>

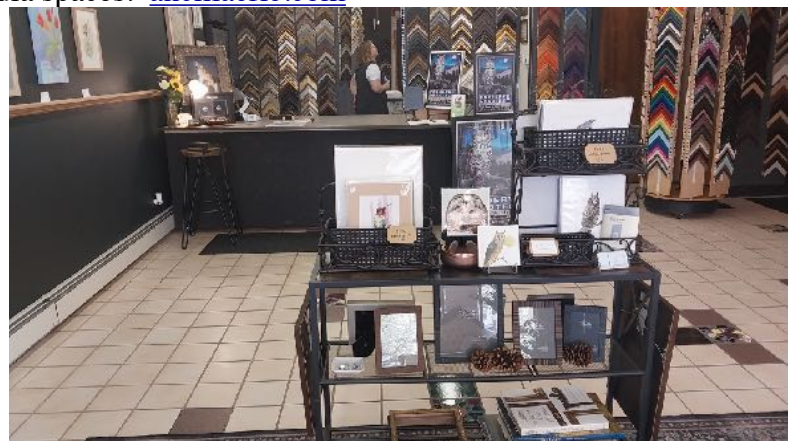


Ancillaerie: A New Cultural Gem in Chesterton's Historic District

Nestled in the heart of Chesterton's Commercial Historic District at 109 S. Calumet Rd, Ancillaerie is the town's new destination for custom framing and fine art. Launched in 2024, Ancillaerie is guided by classically trained artist-framers Kristina Knowski and Aaron Melendez. Knowski, originally from the American Academy of Art in Chicago, began framing professionally at Framing Concepts in Chesterton in 2015. Partnered with Melendez—also a Marine veteran and academy-trained artist—they offer award-winning, conservation-focused craftsmanship.

The shop offers custom picture framing for prints, watercolors, textiles, memorabilia, and more. In fact, many of us have had our Dune Acres poster framed by Kristina! I was delighted with the framing work that Kristina did for a portrait of my dog.

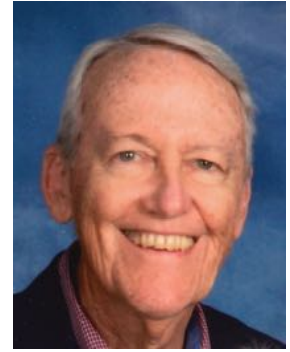
Ancillaerie also offers giclée printing - museum-grade art printing suitable for artists and collectors looking for reproduction options. And the shop has a rotating gallery showcasing regional artists. We saw lovely framed art and cute gifts such as notecards and jewelry as well. Shop hours, exhibition schedules, and artist events are available on their website and social media spaces. ancillaerie.com



Remembering Robert Hartmann

Robert F. “Bob” Hartmann died peacefully on Saturday, April 12, 2025. He was 85 years old.

Throughout his life, of the thousands of times that friends and family asked “How are you, Bob?”, 99% of the time he answered “Great!” He exuded positive energy and loved life to the fullest. Bob grew up in Cincinnati, OH, went to the University of Cincinnati where he earned a BS degree in Metallurgical Engineering, joined Phi Delta Theta fraternity, and met his wonderful wife, Margo. They moved to Northwest Indiana in 1962 where Bob worked at US Steel Corporation first, and then at Bethlehem Steel Corporation for the rest of his professional career. He earned his MBA in Marketing from Northwestern University in 1967.



Bob loved baseball and was a life-long Cincinnati Reds fan along with being an enthusiastic Fantasy Baseball participant. He was also an avid UC Bearcats sports fan. He and Margo are devoted members of the Ogden Dunes Community Church where he served as an elder, choir member, and Memorial Garden steward.

Bob lived his values, reflected in his generous spirit of volunteerism. He and Margo co-founded the Booster Club when their girls were at Chesterton High School. Bob served on the Franciscan Hospital Community Board for several years, and he was an active volunteer at the Westchester Township Historical Museum.

Bob and Margo moved to Dune Acres in 1972 where he relished the natural and wild beauty of the place, whether walking on the beach, hiking and cross-country skiing in the dunes, or watching birds from the house. He enjoyed playing and teaching tennis down at the park and ice-skating with his young daughters.

Bob was on the Dune Acres Town Council for many years (1974-79, 1984-85, 1992-95), serving as President at times during each of those periods. He was also an enthusiastic member of the Flora Richardson Foundation Board when it was first getting started, and then served as President of the Board for multiple terms (2001, 2002, 2005, 2006-12) and Vice-President as well (2003-04, 2020). He truly loved facilitating student visits to the Wildlife refuge, especially for kids who wouldn't otherwise have that opportunity.

From volunteering in leadership roles to hosting social events, Bob and Margo were fully immersed in Dune Acres life, fostering life-long friends over the years. As an example, for more than 40 years, they hosted a Christmas caroling party, initially inviting their daughters' friends and then later expanding it to their friends. It was always a joyful event, reminding everyone of the power of song, generosity, and the Christmas spirit.

Fun-loving and hard-working, Bob's priorities were family and friends, faith, and country. He was also famous for telling stories, entertaining friends and family with jokes and tall tales, and never missing an opportunity for a practical joke (especially for an audience of kids!). In addition to activities mentioned above, Bob loved playing golf and researching new exciting places to take his family on vacations.

Celebration of Life for Longtime Resident Sharon Snyder

The Snyder family welcomes friends to share memories in Sharon Snyder's honor at a Celebration of Life to be held on Saturday, July 19, 2025 from 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at The Spa, 333 N. Mineral Springs Road, Porter.

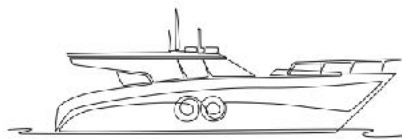
Town Safety Buoys


As part of his responsibilities as Dune Acres Beach Commissioner, Rob Carstens ensures that the town's safety buoys are installed and properly positioned along the town's 2.3-mile lakefront each year.

Rob coordinates with South Shore Marina of Portage as needed and accompanies the crew during the buoy installation, following pre-determined GPS drop points. At the end of the season, he reviews any broken or missing parts that need replacement for the following year. The town allocates approximately \$15,000 annually for this service.

Lake Michigan is a public, navigable waterway regulated by multiple agencies. The Indiana Department of Natural Resources (DNR) issues permits for all structures placed in the lake, including the Dune Acres buoys. This annual permitting process may include inspections by DNR officials to verify that the buoys are properly labeled and maintained.

The town's buoys are designed to protect swimmers and to encourage boaters to remain outside the designated swimming area. However, they cannot prevent boaters from engaging in any lawful activity in navigable waters, including cruising within the marked area or anchoring for recreational purposes.



PERMIT FOR RECREATIONAL STRUCTURE ON PUBLIC WATER	
Law Enforcement Division, Indiana Department of Natural Resources Pursuant to IC 14-16-7-3, and 312 IAC 5-4	
Town of Dune Acres	
1 East Road Dune Acres, IN 46304	
Informational Buoy(s) (Structure Type)	on Lake Michigan (Location)
from: 6/16/2025 - 10/16/2025 (Date)	
<p>1) A permit issued may be modified or revoked if severe weather or hazardous conditions threaten public safety.</p> <p>2) The person issued this permit shall maintain possession of such permit and shall present the permit to any conservation officer for inspection upon request.</p> <p>3) Structures shall have attached, in a conspicuous place, the name and address of the permittee and</p> <p>4) No structure shall remain in the water between November 15th and March 15th.</p>	
<p>Approval to install this structure is subject to your compliance with any stipulated modification or requirements listed on the "Site Inspection" separate correspondence from the department, other permits required by IC 14-25 and/or to ordinances of a municipality having jurisdiction. This permit does not relieve the permittee or owner(s) of liability arising due to personal injury or property damage of another caused by this installation.</p>	
	<p>DNR</p> <p><i>Brian Bailey</i> Signature of Law Enforcement Division</p>

Summer on the Circle

Circle Drive residents recently celebrated summer with a block party - music, food and socializing with neighbors. Everyone brought food to share and Tony Schirripa grilled some excellent Italian sausage and burgers. It was great to meet some of the newer residents and catch up with the "old" neighbors.



Environmental Restoration: How we turned our 76 West Road Lakeside Lawn into a Native Prairie

By Dana Shepard Treister

PART 1 - 1994-1999

In 1994, after 10 years at 48 West Road, Michael and I purchased a new home at 76 West Road, described as one of the most beautiful estate settings along the Indiana Shoreline!

The previous owner had demolished an existing 1960's A-frame in order to build the home we bought in 1994. They repaired the severely compromised site by creating a vast, flat, green suburban lawn. Yes, for the first few years, Michael did man the lawnmower from time to time!

We felt the lawn was totally out of place in the dunes. We knew this had to change. We would transform our flat boring lawn into a rolling duneland prairie-scape! No lawn! No manicured gardens! No deer fences! No irrigation or mowing!

We found our perfect landscape architect, Chicago-based Doug Hoerr, to make the magic happen. Doug's goal was to make it look like no one had ever interfered with Mother Nature! Our contractor, Chesterton-based Mark Breitzke (builder of the home) would assist, and architect John Banks of Chicago and Michigan would design a spacious gazebo as part of the project.

PART 2 - 2000 - 2025

After excavating to eradicate any evidence of the lawn, there were hills and valleys again! A sinuous curving ribbon of wood steps was added, along with a gazebo that was enhanced by the 1950s Belgian block/granite path that lead through the dune to the beach.

Instead of a lawn, now there was Little Blue Stem blowing in the wind, which shifts color during the year from blue-green to golden. Botanist Sandy O'Brien - recommended by Dune Acres legend Barbara Plampin, has added wildflowers giving us vibrant bursts of various colors over the summer season.

The best way to maintain such a prairie is with occasional controlled burns (always permitted by IDEM and approved by the Town Council.) A gentle scorching of the area in late fall or late winter by experienced professionals safely eliminates underbrush and allows the grasses and flowers to regenerate better and fuller than ever!

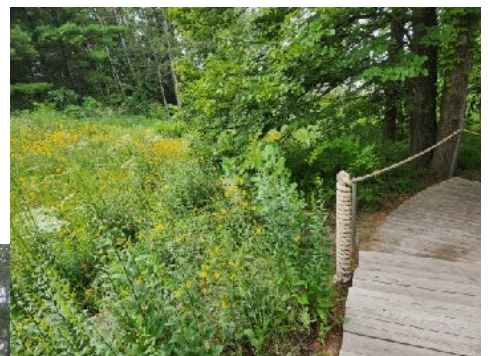
We'd be happy to give you the Grand Tour any time we're around - best to contact us via our mobiles as listed in the Dune Acres directory. Happy Summer, everyone!



Before



After



Wildlife News!

Cowles Bog had a special visitor! Styx, a banded Whooping Crane, arrived on Saturday May 3 with a group of Sandhill Cranes. She stood out from the crowd not only because of her bright white color, but also because she was much bigger than the Sandhills.

The whooping crane is an endangered species, native to North America, named for its "whooping" calls. Along with the sandhill crane, it is one of only two crane species native to North America, and it is also the tallest North American bird species and has an estimated 22–24 year life expectancy in the wild. After being pushed to the brink of extinction by hunting and loss of habitat, there were just 21 wild cranes by 1941. Now there are



around 700 in the U.S. and only 75 travel in our flyway. We sent photos of the bands to the International Crane Foundation and they were to identify this bird as "Styx", a one year old female who was born in Wisconsin. She spent the winter in Tennessee and stopped over here for four days on her way back north. Once the news was out we had many visitors trying to catch a view of this rare bird. We are wishing her safe and swift travels!



Irene helps this snapper safely lay her eggs. Look for baby turtles around August 1.

The new snapping turtle sculptures at the Indiana Dunes Visitor Center (Doug Ross/for Post-Tribune)

A notable number of snapping turtles chose to lay their eggs around the DA guard house this year. Guards, residents and Maintenance manager Mark Taylor have taken steps to help protect the eggs from predators.

Snapping turtles typically lay their eggs in late spring or early summer, digging nests in well-drained, sunny areas like sandy banks or even lawns. A female snapping turtle will excavate a cavity with her powerful hind legs, deposit 20-40 eggs and then cover the nest with sand or dirt. The entire process can take a few hours. The eggs, which are round and white, are vulnerable to predators, so turtles lay a large number of eggs to increase the chances of some offspring surviving.



Save the date! Humane Indiana Wildlife will be at the Clubhouse August 23rd, 9:00 am for a show and tell with some of their wildlife ambassadors

The Fine Print: *The Beachcomber* is a grass roots publication not officially affiliated with either the Town of Dune Acres or the Dune Acres Civic Improvement Foundation, Inc. (DACIF). All content is believed to be reasonably accurate and reliable but not "guaranteed"! Any information, news, creative contributions, articles, reports, corrections, suggestions, Letters to the Editor, art work, photos, comments and otherwise (and volunteers!) are welcomed and encouraged to help sustain this publication.

Email contribution to saralmckinley@gmail.com or jbpst10@gmail.com Please use "Beachcomber," in the subject line.