



THE BEACHCOMBER

DUNE ACRES, INDIANA

WWW.DUNEACRES.ORG

January 2026



Happy New Year!



2025 Holiday Party

Our incredible Social Committee did it again!



Tom Roberts, Theresa Weakland,
Lou Roberts

Residents celebrated the holiday season together at the clubhouse, enjoying wonderful music, incredible food and great company. A special shout out to Laurie Metz, Michele McClead, Theresa Weakland, Jeff McSpaden, Ellen Kollar and Jan Baptst.



Desree and Matthew DeLeon, Scott Hale



Charles Weinberg, Lance Hornaday



The Security Office was specially decked out for the holidays thanks to residents Peter and Debra Nau who donated funds for the décor, and staff members Irene Brown and Mark Taylor who facilitated the installation.

Skating Rink Preparation Complete

Thank you volunteers Rick Demkovich, Rob Carstons, Todd Klein, Al Stock, Perry Metz, Henry Weinberg, Sean Fitzpatrick, Bruce Riffle, Tony Schirripa, Kelly Klawson, Tom Donnelly, and special helpers Orion and Jacob, along with Town Maintenance Coordinator Mark Taylor. Their ongoing efforts make our Town Ice Rink possible! Every year, they set up the rink, keep it cleared of snow and leaves, post the “open” and “close” notices, and complete end-of-year closeup.

Enjoy the skating season and thank our volunteers!



Orion and Jacob are ready for some skating action!



Halloween Celebration

It seems like a distant memory at the moment! The DA Halloween celebration brought together kids and parents and transport vehicles and food for a fun evening. The costumes were so outstanding we had to share some pictures below.



Fitness for Everyone, All Year Around

Inspirations from your Dune Acres neighbors



Marie and John Slaughter head out their door to cross country ski on our trails whenever the snow graces cooperate. They also venture to local spots such as the Glenwood Dunes Trail between routes 12 and 20 in Furnessville. Marie says “it is our favorite trail when we have enough snow locally. Lunch at Smokey’s BBQ afterwards makes for a great day!” When there is not enough snow in DA, the

Slaughters head to Love Creek County Park in Berrien Springs. The park has groomed trails, offers equipment rentals, and has a fabulous nature center/warming house with a toasty fireplace.



The Franciscan Health and Fitness Center is located at 810 Michael Drive, Chesterton. Membership offers free access to the gym, pool, hot tubs and all fitness classes. There are fees for private training sessions, small group classes, and massage by certified therapists. Medical memberships are available at reduced cost. **“D.A. Yoga Guys”** are regulars at evening yoga class.



As photographed by Carolyn Mellen, Yoga class participants: Charles Weinberg, Alex Demkovich.

Kevin Masten, Michael Yetnikoff, Bill Kolada, Bob Lauer.



A number of DA residents frequent the **Duneland YMCA**. Though still operating at its original location at 215 Roosevelt Road, Chesterton, activities are already taking place at the new Healthy Living Campus on Morgan Avenue. Group exercise



classes for youth through seniors, one-on-one training, pickleball (Lynne Remington pictured above), racquetball, aquatics including Adult Swim League (Sara McKinley pictured with teammates in the pool) along with full gym facilities are available.

(By the way, you can ring in the new year with fitness and wellness at the **YMCA’s Healthy You Year** on January 17 from 9 am - 1 pm at the new healthy living campus, 651 W. Morgan Avenue in Chesterton. Approximately 50 vendors from the community will be on hand. More information is available at <https://www.dunelandymca.org/elementor-17120/>.)



Mary Boeke is a regular at Qigong classes held every Thursday morning, 10am, at **St. John’s United Church** located at 225 W. Lincoln, Chesterton. Qigong is a mind-body connection practice aimed at improving overall health and vitality. The class is open to everyone. There is no set fee, but donations are accepted.

Sarah McGinn teaches online Pilates mat classes and takes 3-4 yoga classes each week at **Ebb and Flow Yoga** in Chesterton. Sarah writes: “I love staying active and over the course of a typical week I will work out most days, taking rest days as I need them. Pilates keeps my core strong and my back healthy and pain free after an injury several years ago. I also love hiking in the great outdoors with my dog Blue when the weather permits. Being out in nature is so great for our nervous system and mental health.”



Dune Acres - The Original Plan

Article by Michele McClead, Clubhouse Coordinator

100 years ago...

A painting of the plan for Dune Acres has been hanging in the Clubhouse for nearly 100 years, and has just been restored. When the Town of Dune Acres was conceived the planner of the town, A.P. Melton (also the planner of the City of Gary) commissioned an “aerial view” painted map of the planned town of Dune Acres. The painting shows what was initially planned for our town.



It is interesting to see the difference between what was planned and what has been built. The painting shows a small boat marina just south of what is now our East Beach, a golf course from West Road into the land and dunes to the south, and many streets which were never built. After the market failures and the start of the Depression in the 1930's building slowed down and the town's vision changed. The restoration of this painting was extensive and costly. The restoration was done in late August and September by Margaret Sawczuk of the Arts Objects Conservation Lab. She repaired the damage: made a new stretcher to eliminate wrinkles, stabilized tears in the canvas and replaced old patches, and cleaned the oil-painted surface to get rid of decades of grime. A generous donation by Bill and DeeDee Spence was offered to get this project started, and the Town and the Dune Acres Civic Improvement Foundation are collaborating on the total cost. The painting is in the clubhouse to view.



Construction in our Dunes

By Laura Truax

September 7th was cooler than we had expected. After a long summer that graciously extended into the early fall, we woke up that day to 60-degree temperatures. While that sounds amazing now in January, on that September day we were a little crestfallen: we were hosting a big thank you party for the many who had labored (or had endured the labor) on the construction of our swimming pool.

The work took a long six months. We had another five months of planning before any crews arrived. Almost a year of site planning, design approvals and the like. Familiar stuff to many Dune Acres residents.

At every point, we were so aware of the many people that come together to get projects done. The volunteers on Planning Commission who gave up precious hours to review and consult and decide. The tireless Town Council members weighing our concerns alongside frost restrictions, contractor schedules and neighborly needs. And of course, the various trades who shared the driveway. Regularly I was grateful for our immediate neighbors who could not have been more understanding and accommodating.

As guests started arriving that day, people started to share stories. Neighbors recounted their first time at 58 West Road. Mr. Charles Wheeler owned the property then and he ran a little church camp during the summer. His daughter playing the piano in the great room. We shared stories with neighbor Tony Schirripa who purchased our previous home at 46 Circle Drive. We had purchased the home in 2006 from Jane Dunne, a lovely woman who died in January 2025 at the rich age of 91.



On the beautiful September day, we were reminded again that we don't "own" as much as we "steward" these gifts we call home. People before us worked on these properties and cultivated the land, and others will work, enjoy and cultivate after we are gone. We were just grateful to take our place among these neighbors and friends for the time we are here.

We raised our glasses – toasting and celebrating these people, and this moment, and felt so glad to be part of it all.

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Meet the Guard

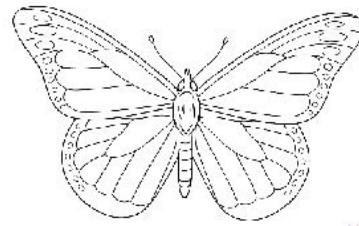


Rhonda Rebhorn joined the security team in July, 2024. When she retired from her job as a Registered Nurse, Rhonda wanted to work part time to keep busy. Because she had worked the midnight shift as a nurse (at Symphony assisted living center and University of Chicago hospital), she was a natural fit for the midnight - 8:00 am guard spot. Outside of work Rhonda is active in dog sports with her Jack Russell and Patterdale Terrier dogs. She teaches nosework classes in Valparaiso and participates in dock diving trials. Rhonda likes to hike with her dogs on local trails and she participates in 5K runs to stay fit.



Wonders of the Monarch Butterfly

Over thirty neighbors enjoyed breakfast at the clubhouse in November during an informative presentation on the Monarch Butterfly. Residents learned how to protect the species by preserving existing milkweed throughout Dune Acres and planting the two varieties that thrive locally and support Monarch habitats – swamp milkweed and common milkweed. The devastating effects of mosquito ‘fogging’ and other pesticide use was emphasized. Questions were numerous, with all attendees going home with a package of milkweed seeds! Thanks to Jim Starin for his informative presentation.



Dune Acres Residents Donate to Food Pantry

The Duneland communities held a food drive before Thanksgiving to benefit the Westchester Neighbors Food Pantry. Dune Acres participated by staging collection boxes in the Town Hall. Residents were very generous, donating enough to fill two cars! One family went shopping specifically for the most-needed items, and used it as a teaching moment for their children. It was very heartening to see the generosity of our fellow neighbors. The food pantry reported that they served over 400 clients the week prior to Thanksgiving and very much appreciated our contributions. You can learn more about the local pantry at: <https://westchesterneighborsfoodpantry.org/>. A portion of the contributions pictured at right.



Beach Access

Throughout Dune Acres' 100-year history, town officials have remained committed to preserving beach access for residents along the community's shoreline. This ongoing effort has included negotiating easement rights, maintaining infrastructure, and ensuring beachgoers respect adjacent private property. Parking in designated areas requires a Dune Acres parking sticker.

EAST BEACH:

Multiple parking spots are available. In-season boat storage is allowed on the beach. Access to the beach is via the main path, via the dune cutout across from the port-a-potty, and via the metal stairs on Beach Drive. The stairway down from Circle Drive provides additional pedestrian access. The wooden walkway at the west end of Beach Drive is private and not for public use. (*New Circle Drive stairs pictured, right.*)



RIDGE BEACH:

Multiple parking spots are available. In-season boat storage is allowed on the beach. Access to the beach is via the stairway with viewing deck. The stairway down from Crest Drive provides additional pedestrian access.

SHORE DRIVE:

Pedestrian access is between 6 Shore Drive and 8 Shore Drive. Storage of boats or beach paraphernalia is not allowed at this access point. Please respect the privacy and private property of adjacent homeowners.

OAK DRIVE:

Pedestrian access is via the western edge of the pavement at 22 Oak Drive, then left at the signed walking path. Please respect the private property of the residents. Vehicular use of the drive is prohibited.



HILL DRIVE:

There are two parking spots on the north side of Hill Drive and a stairway with viewing deck leading to the beach. This is the main west side beach access point. In-season boat storage is allowed on the beach. *Hill Drive area residents enjoying the deck: Leslie Nuss, Kathleen Hornaday, Mary Boeke, Bob & Kathy Lauer, Fred Barnesberger, Todd Klein pictured.*

WEST ROAD AT CYPRESS:

Parking is available on the south side of West Road at Cypress Lane that serves the signed beach path on the opposite side of West Road. This path is an easement across private property. Overnight storage of watercraft and beach paraphernalia on the beach is prohibited. Please respect the private property of residents.

Local Business Spotlight: Nature's Cupboard

Organic, Local, and Wholesome Foods in Chesterton

If you are looking to eat a bit healthier this new year, consider a visit to **Nature's Cupboard**. The store is an independently owned natural foods market located at 761 Indian Boundary Road in Chesterton. It is a destination for locals seeking organic ingredients, local produce, fresh juices, and a range of wholesome products.

We visited and were greeted by the friendly store associates who seemed very knowledgeable about the products they offer. The store carries a wide selection of natural and organic foods that go beyond what most traditional grocery stores offer. From certified organic fruits and vegetables to local meat, dairy, and pantry staples, Nature's Cupboard emphasizes products free from artificial ingredients and chemical preservatives.

The store carries a good variety of products:

- **Organic and local produce** — including offerings sourced directly from farms across Indiana and Michigan.
- **Fresh juices and smoothies** from an in-house juice bar.
- **Grab-and-go meals** like soups, salads, and wraps that rotate daily.
- **Health and beauty products** made with natural ingredients.
- **Specialty dietary items** catering to gluten-free, vegan, vegetarian needs.
- **Supplements and vitamins** to support overall health goals.



Nature's Cupboard's supports local farmers and small producers partnering with regional farms and vendors to bring in locally raised meats, farm-fresh eggs, honey, fermented foods, and more.



Thank you to 2025 Beachcomber Contributors:

We sincerely thank residents who contributed articles to the 2025 Beachcomber:

Fred Bamesberger
Cheryl Evans
Dan Kleine
Tim and Ellen Kollar
Rich Hawksworth
Michele McClead
Dana Treister

...and guest contributors:

Brad Bumgardner, Indiana Audubon, *Executive Director*
Nicole Harmon, Humane Indiana Wildlife Rehab, *Executive Director*



Editors Jan Bapst and Sara McKinley

Please submit your photos for the next issue of The Beachcomber!

Here are some recent sights at our beaches:



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.

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