

LATE WINTER

2021

Indian Lake Community Newsletter

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Indian Lake Information

Indian Lake, Oneida County, WI, is a 357-acre spring lake with a maximum depth of 26 feet and a mean depth of 10 feet. This mesotrophic lake has a relatively small watershed when compared to the size of the lake. Indian Lake contains 57 native plant species, of which fern pondweed is the most common plant. Indian Lake may be considered a spring lake due to its lack of an inlet stream and presence of an outlet. Water flows from this outlet through Sugar Camp Creek and eventually into nearby Chain Lake.



Indian Lake Association

The purpose of *Indian Lake Association, Inc.* (chartered in 2005) is to preserve and protect Indian Lake and its surroundings and to enhance the water quality, fishery, boating safety, and aesthetic values of Indian Lake as a public recreational facility for today and for future generations.

Website: www.IndianLakeAssociation.com

Reminder: Dues for the Indian Lake Association are \$20.00 per July 1—June 30 fiscal year. Mail dues to:
 ILA Treasurer
 P.O. Box 1801
 Eagle River, WI 54521

(See Membership Form on the last page.)



A Message from Indian Lake Association President Joe Smogor

Lake Therapy

As I take a look back at the events over the last 12 months, I would agree with the line from the Greg Brown song, “Who would have thunk it?” It has been about a year since the COVID 19 pandemic spread a thick cloud over most of our ideas of normal. Combine that with all of the media theatrics that go along with a presidential election, and we had more drama than a daily soap opera. I was very happy to see 2020 fade into the distance and look forward to the better days of 2021.

Just in case you were not here this winter, here is a brief summary. January 2021 had above average temperatures with a little snow. The milder temperatures invited a lot of people out on the lake this winter from the ice-on date of December 3, until the recent formation of slush on the ice. The lack of significant snow created a clear ice of early December, and ice skaters took advantage of this unique opportunity. It is always a little unsettling to gaze through the clear ice and see the lake bottom, the aquatic plants, and even some fish. The mild temperatures during January slowed the ice making process, and allowed for easy travel all over the lake. Fisherman, snowshoers, and skiers got out and “played” on the lake. It was easy to social distance on the ice and stay outside to escape from the potential dangers of the virus.

The above average temps did not last long and we paid for it when the February deep freeze knocked us back with sub-zero days and nights. We had a few nights in late February with low temps approaching -35F° below.

After over a year of Zoom meetings, avoiding crowds, and following all of the recommended guidelines for hand washing and mask wearing, I am feeling some pandemic fatigue, but I am not ready to give up on COVID prevention just yet.

Instead of focusing on the negatives, I would suggest getting outside for some lake therapy. Take a walk on the frozen lake and focus your senses to take in all of the sights, sounds, and smells of a frozen lake. Explore how the surface changes as you move to different parts of the lake. The tracks of the vehicles and the animals (2 legged and 4 legged) will show you where others have traveled. There is still some deep snow piled up by the wind, and on other areas, you can feel the hardpacked icy crust under your boots and hear the crunch of the compacted snow. Watch out for the invisible layers of slushy water on top of the ice that can easily fill your boots if you are not careful. The ice is constantly changing, especially at this time of year with warmer sunny days and freezing nights.

The longer days of March make it a great time to try some frozen lake therapy to beat the COVID blues.

(Note: At the time this newsletter was prepared, the lake ice was still safe for walking, but with the changing conditions of the ice in March, you should be very cautious when heading out on the lake.)





Loon Report by Kathy Noel



We awake these days to blue skies and temperatures consistently above zero. Dave, Mike McCarthy and I rode our sleds on sometimes muddy trails last week. Soon parts of the lake ice will darken beginning the speculation about what day the ice will go out. Spring is in the air! It's time to start thinking about what comes next...

Our male loons usually return even before the ice has left completely – as soon as there is enough open water for them to fish. The females lag behind for a week or two. On arrival they begin searching for a nesting site while eating as much as they can to recover from their migration journey and prepare for breeding season.

As always, I ask each of you to report any activity you see to me (kathynoel@gmail.com) for the records I keep for the Northland Institute.

My fantasy about a summer without COVID must compete with my annual fantasy of watching healthy loon chicks grow up in Indian Lake. There is nothing like watching those fluff balls learn to dive and then fish and, finally, fly away.

Each year I remind the ILA community that loons require space, undeveloped shoreline, and mindful humans in order to thrive. Dr Wally Piper, who comes from California each year to study the magnificent birds, reports that chick numbers are in serious decline. That has certainly been true for “our” chicks. They are threatened by varying water levels, insects, and large predators which we can't control.

They are also threatened by densely populated shorelines, big and fast watercraft, and fun seeking lake lovers that sometimes forget to look and listen. We *can* adjust our behavior in these areas.

Last year it was suggested that an artificial nesting platform (ANP) might be in order for us. I spoke with Erica LeMoine, our contact at LoonWatch at Northland College for advice on the matter. That discussion led to a virtual [LoonTalk](#) in October 2020. About twelve ILA folks were in “attendance”. Erica put together a terrific hourlong program for our Association. The piece is packed with information for those of you who have lived around loons for a long time, and also for those who are just beginning to notice the birds. There are gorgeous pictures and amazing video footage as well.

Below is the link to the presentation. It will be available to us until 10/14/2021.

<https://transcripts.gotomeeting.com/#/s/0555da7aee5f1ac4e612949acd2f2df7e8dcacfe99a30cecd85582c5b0774889>

(you should be able to select and copy this link and then paste it in your browser to access the video.)

By the way, the ILA board decided *not* to pursue building an ANP at this time. We had a successful nest in 2019 even though, sadly, the chicks did not survive their first week. In that case we believe jet ski traffic stressed the chicks/adults beyond their ability to find shelter and to feed as much as they needed to in those early days.

Again, I plead with you all to be mindful of the loons, especially just after ice out, especially through May as they search for and begin work on nesting sites. We are all eager to get our boats in the water, but I ask that you scan your shorelines, looking carefully around your shoreline before you disturb what may be a loon nursery. Please leave last years' plant growth as well. Loons build their nests offshore and use the grasses to build on floating root masses and hummocks. When the eggs hatch, they abandon the nest and seek protection for the chicks along the shoreline where camouflage is critical for all of our shoreland critters.

It has indeed been a while since we had a loon family on Indian Lake. Please help to make this experience possible again. We are fortunate to have a pair that makes our lake their home. It is a privilege!

Things to do Outdoors in the Winter During a Pandemic



Interesting Facts About Loons by Roger Ziff

On October 13, Erica LeMoine, the LoonWatch Program Director at Northland College in Ashland, WI, made a presentation to the Indian Lake Association over the internet about loons and “artificial nesting platforms.”

Here are some of things I found interesting from her presentation (and from some other information she subsequently sent me):

1. Loons are one of the most primitive birds. They have not changed form in about a million years.
2. Loons are not related to ducks. Their nearest relatives are penguins and tube-nose birds like petrels.
3. There are five species of loons and the type of loon we have in Wisconsin is called the “common loon” (*Gavia immer*).
4. We are at the southern edge of the loon range in the U.S. and the range is moving north over time. **It is expected that in 30 years there will be no breeding loons in Wisconsin.** There are currently about 4,000 adult loons in Wisconsin, 12,000 in Minnesota (where it is the state bird) and less than 800 in Michigan.
5. Loons are about 30” long, weigh 7-12 pounds, and have a wingspan of 5 feet. They eat fish less than 10 inches long and eat about two pounds of fish per day.
6. When they dive into lakes like Indian Lake, they go under for around 45-60 seconds. **But on Lake Michigan, they can go under for 5 minutes and use their legs to dive to depths of 200 feet.**
7. They have a 25-30-year life expectancy but can even be older. One of the things that kills them is lead fishing tackle. Lead fishing tackle is responsible for about 20% of loon deaths. “Get the lead out” and use other kinds of fishing tackle.
8. Loons cannot walk on land and they need about a quarter mile runway to get off the water (unless there is a headwind).

But once they are flying, they can go up to 65 miles per hour during migration and flap their wings 200 times per minute. They migrate to the Gulf of Mexico and the southeast US Atlantic coast.

9. There are four types of loon vocalizations:
 - a. **Yodel** (males only). This sounds like kind of a distress call but means “you are in my territory, stay away.”
 - b. **Wail**. This sounds like a higher-pitched, wolf howl. This is addressed to other loons and means “where are you.” A variation of this is an eagle warning.
 - c. **Tremolo**. This sounds like a quavering laugh. It means the loon is nervous and something is too close. **People should stay at least 200 feet away from a loon.** A variation is the in-flight tremolo which is used when flying over a lake to see if it is safe to land.
 - d.. **Hoot**. This sounds like hoo, hoo, hoo. It is used between parents and chicks to say, “Hello, there.”

Interesting Facts About Loons by Roger Ziff (continued)

10. A loon usually makes its nest out of vegetation in a quiet, protected, hidden spot on the edge of an island, shore, or other surface adjacent to deep water.

. If a lake does not have adequate nesting sites, an “**artificial nesting platform**” could be built for them.

Indian Lake is not currently eligible to build an artificial nesting platform because we have not gone three consecutive years without hatches related to predators.

If we ever are eligible, we would want to build it at least 15 feet away from a shore in a quiet bay away from the wind and humans. Its frame should be built from 6’ cedar logs, topped with a base covered with vegetation and anchored with a rope and concrete block. It should have poles on the four corners approximately 4’ apart, connected by ropes at the top, to serve as an eagle guard.

One person would need to be responsible for maintaining the platform.

The reason artificial loon nesting platforms are restricted is because loons become overly dependent on them.

11. Loon predators include:

- a. Bald eagles (they are natural predators)
- b. Gulls and crows (they are around because of human waste)
- c. Raccoons (ditto)
- d. Minks, otters, snapping turtles, muskies, northern pike, bass (they are natural predators).

12. Loon defenses include:

- a. Lying flat and still in a “hangover” the side of a nest posture to be inconspicuous.
- b. Lying flat and still in the water to hide.
- c. Doing a “penguin dance” where they appear to rapidly “walk” across the water vertically. This uses a lot of energy.

13. Threats:

- a. Loss of habitat because of development of land.
- b. Poor water quality (loons need clean, clear water to find prey).
- c. Lead fishing tackle (“get the lead out”). 20% of deaths are from lead fishing tackle.

LoonWatch Presentations and Loon Ranger Training Workshops

Due to the continual threat of Covid-19, this spring LoonWatch is again providing educational presentations and Loon Ranger training workshops via virtual, on-line opportunities.

Loon Ranger Training Workshops

LoonWatch Loon Ranger Training Workshops

LoonWatch is offering two free on-line training workshops in April and May. Even if you don't plan to participate, this is a great opportunity to learn more about loons. Registration is required. To register, email us:

1. The workshop date you plan to attend. 2. Your first and last name. 3. Your email (if different than the one you're using) 4. Your lake name and county

Send your registration email to loonwatch@northland.edu

Workshop Dates and Times

Saturday, April 17th, 9:00a.m. - 11:30a.m.

Saturday, May 15th, 9:00a.m. - 11:30a.m.

Poem

The Revenant

By Billy Collins .

I am the dog you put to sleep,
as you like to call the needle of oblivion,
come back to tell you this simple thing:
I never liked you- - not one bit.

When I licked your face,
I thought of biting off your nose.
When I watched you toweling yourself dry,
I wanted to leap and unman you with a snap.

I resented the way you moved,
your lack of animal grace,
the way you would sit in a chair to eat,
a napkin on your lap, knife in your hand.

I would have run away,
but I was too weak, a trick you taught me
while I was learning to sit and heel,
and - greatest of insults - shake hands without a hand.

I admit the sight of the leash
would excite me
but only because it meant I was about
to smell things you had never touched.

You do not want to believe this,
but I have no reason to lie.
I hated the car, the rubber toys,
disliked your friends and, worse, your relatives.

The jingling of my tags drove me mad.
You always scratched me in the wrong place.
All I ever wanted from you
was food and fresh water in my metal bowls.

While you slept, I watched you breathe
as the moon rose in the sky.
It took all of my strength
not to raise my head and howl.

Now I am free of the collar,
the yellow raincoat, monogrammed sweater,
the absurdity of your lawn,
and that is all you need to know about this place

except what you already supposed
and are glad it did not happen sooner~
that everyone here can read and write,
the dogs in poetry, the cats and the others in prose.



Lake Bottom Mysteries—Ten Great Things to Know About Your Lake in Winter

By Ted J. Rulseh. From Lake Tides, UW-Stevens Point

Your lake is a very different place when encased in ice for the winter, but it's still very much a living system with many mysteries to explore. Look closely and you can appreciate the processes by which the ice forms and ultimately disappears with spring. Meanwhile, aquatic creatures change their habits to make it through until the water warms again. Here are ten things you may not know about the life of a frozen lake.

1. **It all starts with steam.** If you look out on your lake on a very cold October morning, you may see tendrils of steam rising from the water. The steam forms as warmer, moist air, just above the water, rises to meet the cold, drier air above. The moisture condenses into tiny droplets to form what's known as steam fog or water smoke. It's a sure sign that the water is cooling as time for ice formation approaches.
2. **Ice requires cold stillness.** Have you wondered why your lake won't freeze when the days and nights are windy? It's because wave action constantly fractures tiny ice crystals as they form, keeping solid ice from taking hold. In these conditions, the water can actually supercool, remaining as liquid below the freezing point of 32 degrees F. Then along comes a very cold, windless night, and presto! A thin sheet of ice covers your lake..
3. **Your winter lake has layers.** Underneath the ice, lake water has an interesting temperature profile. The warmest, densest water, at about 40 degrees F, lies at the bottom. The coldest, least dense water, at 32 degrees F, lies right under the ice. The ice itself is the least dense of all, which is why it floats. Ice expands by about 10 percent from the liquid state of water.
4. **The lake starts winter rich in oxygen.** Fish and other water creatures need a supply of oxygen to make it through the winter. Fortunately, beneath the new ice, the lake holds more oxygen than at any other time of year. That's because water can hold much more oxygen when it's cold than when it's warm. At 32 degrees F, water holds almost twice as much oxygen as it would at 80 degrees F.
5. **Water creatures need less oxygen in winter.** Fish, frogs, mollusks, crayfish, and other critters are cold-blooded. In cold water, their metabolism slows down, and they move about slowly, if at all. As a result, they use less energy, and so, less oxygen. They go into winter with the most abundant oxygen they will experience all year, at a time when they need that oxygen the least. It's a good scenario for survival.
6. **There's no need to fear ice "booming."** Lake ice makes wondrous, almost musical, sometimes eerie sounds as it expands and contracts with changes in temperature. If you're on the lake when the ice is booming, or even if you hear a crack sizzle right past you and off into the distance, there's no need to fear. Booming and cracking do not mean the ice is weakening.
7. **Ice is really a collection of crystals.** We think of ice as a monolithic, solid substance, akin to a block of glass. In reality, it consists of vertically oriented crystals in the shape of hexagons, tightly packed together. These crystals grow from the surface down as the lake is continuously exposed to cold air. This structure reveals itself as the ice deteriorates toward spring: The bonds between the crystals break down, and the crystals become individual "candles" very loosely held together. At this point, the ice is extremely weak and is hazardous to walk upon.

(Continued on next page)

Lake Bottom Mysteries (continued)

8. No one is certain why ice is slippery. Most of us learned in grade school that we can skate on ice because the pressure of the steel blades lowers the melting temperature at the surface and creates a film of water on which we glide. Science has now rejected that explanation in favor of two theories. One is that friction, not pressure, melts the ice. The other is that ice is inherently slippery – that a tiny liquid film remains on the ice surface even at temperatures far below freezing. Scientists disagree on which theory is correct.

9. Ice is tough – and fragile. There are various ways to assess the strength of ice. One is fracture toughness – how easily a crack spreads through a material. On this measure, ice is about one-tenth as tough as window glass. Then there's tensile strength – how much force a substance can take when stretched from both ends. The tensile strength of ice is about half that of bricks. Its flexural strength, which measures resistance to bending under a load, is roughly the same strength as a pine board across the grain. That's pretty tough! How much ice is safe for travel? The Wisconsin DNR's guidelines for new clear ice are as follows:

- Ice fishing (person on foot) = 4 inches
- Snowmobile = 5 inches
- Car or small pick-up = 8-12 inches
- Medium sized truck = 12-15 inches
- Godzilla = 100+ inches

Always, the watchword is caution. One saying has it: Thick and blue, tried and true. Soft or crispy, much too risky. If in doubt, don't go out.

10. Ice melts from the bottom up. As the weather warms, the snow melts off the ice surface. Then the sun's rays penetrate the ice and warm the water below, while also warming areas of open water near shore. Warm air above the ice contributes to the thaw, but it's the warming water below that really does the trick.



In Memory of Indian Lake Friends

Gary Edwards

On Thursday, October 29, 2020, Gary Edwards, loving husband and father of two, passed away at the age of 56 due to cancer.

Gary was born on July 2, 1964 in Beloit, Wisconsin, to James and Betty (Boniface) Edwards.

Gary graduated from Clinton High School in 1982. He married the love of his life, Paula (Niedermeier) Edwards on September 12, 1992. They were blessed with two sons, David (Chelsea) Edwards and Jeffrey Edwards.

Gary worked at Scot Forge for 25 years and was able to retire early to spend time with his boys and move to northern Wisconsin to enjoy all that the Northwoods has to offer.

Gary was born with the love of the outdoors running through his veins. From a young age, Gary could be found in a deer stand in the woods, or on the lake fishing. Gary passed on his love for the outdoors to his boys. As the boys got older, you could find Gary in the stands of the football field, cheering them on. Gary also had a passion for golf. On Saturday mornings he would be out on the golf course with his buddies where many memories were made.

Paula and the boys rallied for Gary as he fought the disease and were by his side when he passed. We send them condolences. May Gary's memory be a blessing.

Gretchen Pauline Hoover

Gretchen Pauline Hoover, 20-year resident of Sugar Camp, left this world January 21, 2021, to further explore the universe. Recently residing at Milestone Senior Living, Woodruff, she is finding peace after battling serious health issues and finally, COVID 19.

Gretchen built the log home on Indian Lake Road that is now the residence of Fran and Dave Zimmerman. Her twin brother, Jim Hoover, and his wife, Knobby, lived on Tower Road for many years. Gretchen was involved in the Indian Lake Association and was a Loon Ranger for our lake. She then built a home on Virgin Timber Road on Sugar Camp Lake where she lived until her illness cramped her independent style.

Gretchen served in leadership positions in the Wisconsin Democratic Party and as a delegate in numerous state and congressional conventions. She was also a delegate to the Democratic National Convention in 2016 in Philadelphia.

Indian Lake Logic Puzzles

1. Mrs. Ziff, a teacher, gave five students a make-up science test. There were five questions on the test. However, after grading the tests, she lost the answer sheet and her grade book. She does remember that someone got all five correct, someone got only four correct, someone got only three correct, somebody else got only two correct, and one person got only one answer right. She doesn't know which student received which score. Here are the test papers:

Andy: (1) loons, (2) canoes, (3) alligator, (4) frogs, (5) fish.

April: (1) ducks (2) kayaks, (3) alligator, (4) turtles, (5) fish.

Bryn: (1) loons, (2) kayaks, (3) crocodile, (4) turtles, (5) birds.

Max: (1) loons, (2) canoes, (3) alligator, (4) turtles, (5) fish.

Lily: (1) ducks (2) kayaks, (3) crocodile, (4) turtles, (5) birds.



What were the correct answers?



2. How could you hang a string (attached to a picture on the top left and right) over two nails on the wall in such a way that if either nail came off the wall, the picture would fall to the floor?

Last Issue's Puzzle and solution:

An Indian Lake couple was married on a Sunday in June of 1970. Their 50th anniversary this past June was also on a Sunday. What are the chances that a couple would be married on the same day of the week as the day of the week of their 50th anniversary (to keep it simple, just consider couples married in the 20th century)?

Chose one answer from the following.

- Quite a coincidence. It only happens one time out of seven on average.
- Oh, no. It is always the case.
- I would say it happens a lot – maybe around 75% of the time – but not always.
- It is like flipping a coin: 50/50.
- It is rarer than one out of seven.
- It can't happen.
- It depends on how old they are.



Answer: d (50/50). It's all about the number of leap years in the interim. If there are 13, then it happens, if 12, no. For couples married in June of 1970 or 1971, yes. For couples married in June of 1967 or 1972, no.

Photo Acknowledgements

Many thanks to everyone who has sent me their lake photos. The submitters of the excellent pictures in this issue are:

Page 4 Dan Buran (dog sledding and ice fishing)

4 Jim Wilson (curling)

4 C. Ziff (snow beaver)

9 Joe Smogor

11 L. da Vinci

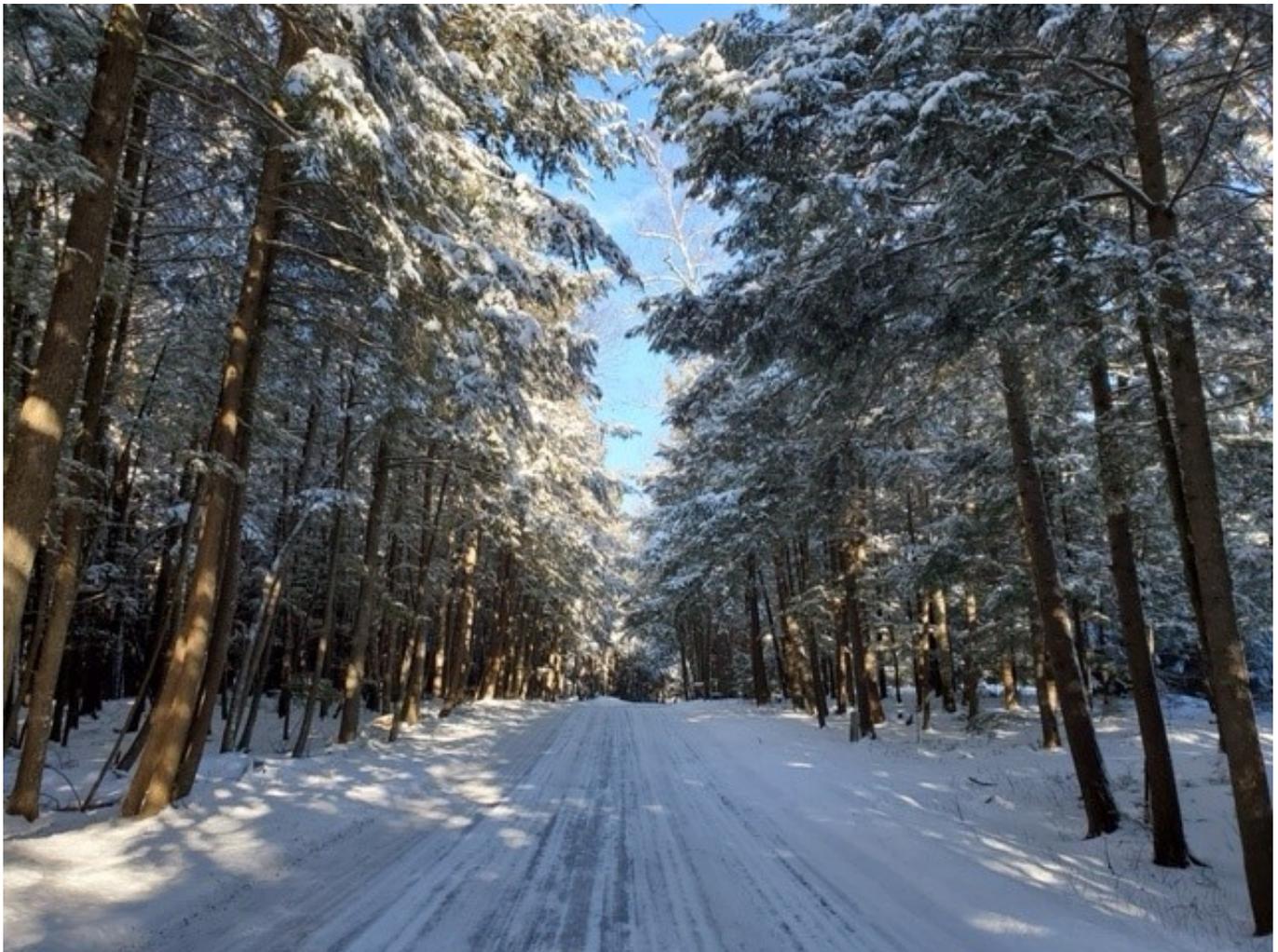
12 Liz Bartholomew



Thank you. - Roger Ziff, Newsletter Editor.

Photos

Do you have any good Indian Lake photos (or story ideas) you would be willing to contribute to the newsletter? If so, please email them to Roger Ziff at cziff@charter.net.



Odds and Ends

Indian Lake Association Website

For much more information about Indian Lake, check out the ILA website at indianlakeassociation.com. Look at the Photo page for a summary of 2020 "before Covid" (Chili Cook Off) and "during Covid" pictures.

Indian Lake Facebook Site

One of our Indian Lake neighbors has created an Indian Lake Facebook site. Now you can post your own lake-related pictures, notices, and comments. Search for "Indian Lake - Sugar Camp, WI" on Facebook. It's a private site, only open to residents and family.

Indian Lake Association Membership Form

Membership Year: July 1 to June 30

Annual Dues: \$20

Please make your check payable to Indian Lake Association and mail it along with this form to :

ILA Treasurer, P.O. Box 1801, Eagle River, WI 54521

Name: _____

Lake Address: _____ Lake Phone: _____

Other Address: _____

Other Phone: _____ Email Address: _____

Do you receive mail at your lake address? Yes ____ No ____

Would you like to be included in the Indian Lake directory? Yes ____ No ____

Are you interested in learning more about volunteer opportunities with the association? Yes ____ No ____

Comments or suggestions: _____
