



# THE BEACHCOMBER

DUNE ACRES, INDIANA

[WWW.DUNEACRES.ORG](http://WWW.DUNEACRES.ORG)

September, 2014

## Dune Acres Inspires

From walking through the woods to get to my friend Heather Hubbs' house or swimming in the lake with my Liddy cousins, growing up in Dune Acres gave me a great love for the natural world. I found that as I wrote my children's book **Seeds of Change** (Lee & Low, 2010), many memories of Dune Acres came back to me. The book is the biography of Wangari Maathai, the Kenyan Nobel winner who planted 30 million trees. My second children's book called **We Rise** (Farrar, Strauss & Giroux, 2016) is the biography of the Liberian women's peace movement, focusing on the lives of President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, activist Leymah Gbowee and 12-year-old girl named Sarai that helped bring an end to civil war in Liberia.

Both of these children's books were influenced by my memories of Dune Acres and my gratitude to be part of a community like ours.

Childhood in Dune Acres was a wonderful experience. I learned from our neighbors the Weckers how important it is to share your resources. I am grateful to my father Cliff Johnson for giving me many opportunities to do so. In that sense, helping others and being part of change is something we all can do here in Dune Acres and elsewhere.

Specifically, there is a school called Briar Creek Elementary North Carolina. They have adopted the book **Seeds of Change** as their year's motto. They have the lofty goal of giving every person in their 1000 plus school community a copy of the book. The school has made a great effort with securing 200 copies of **Seeds of Change**. However, they need your help.

Briar Creek Elementary needs 800 more copies before the end of next school year (2015). If you are interested in giving a child a book to inspire her about nature and being a positive change, please consider donating a copy of **Seeds of Change**. You can buy the book at any bookstore or on Amazon.

Coming up to visit friends and family, I am always grateful to swim in the lake, sight a bird or walk a trail. Each time, Dune Acres inspires me—and I am sure you, too, to love nature and share our resources.

If you are interested in donating a book below is the contact information. If you are interested in contacting me, please go to my website [www.jencullertonjohnson.com](http://www.jencullertonjohnson.com)

Send Book Donations of **Seeds of Change**:

**Ashley Howey**, NBCT  
Instructional Resource Teacher  
Literacy Coach K-5  
MS Reading  
Briar Creek Elementary  
484-4734  
[www.bcshowey.weebly.com](http://www.bcshowey.weebly.com)



- by Jen Cullerton Johnson  
(see next page to read about the author)

The deadline for the next issue of *The Beachcomber* is **September 24**.



### **dune acres fall party open microphone october 18**

Bring your music, your instrument and a smile (we have a piano and can supply sound equipment, amps and microphones). Ten minutes per, or a couple songs each, depending on how many fine musicians we can entice to play.

**Entertain and amaze your friends and neighbors!!**

Like to get on the stage? Call or text Rick Demkovich **219.241.5543** or [rpdemkovich@gmail.com](mailto:rpdemkovich@gmail.com)

### **About the Author**

Jen Cullerton Johnson is the daughter of Cliff Johnson of 8 Linden Lane. She has published fiction and creative nonfiction in literary journals and magazines and has led writing workshops for high school students of all ages. She holds a MFA in Non-Fiction from the University of New Orleans, a MEd in Curriculum and Development from Loyola University of Chicago, and is Illinois certified. She has spoken about Green Literacy and the role of environmental books for children and adults for the EPA, Chicago Green Festival, Saturday Writers, Green Schools Conference, Illinois Reading Council, National Catholic Library Association, and more. In addition to workshops and writer visits, Jen has won numerous awards and grants for her work, including an Illinois Arts Council Fellowship Award. Jen is a founding member of MuseWrite a literary arts organization based in Chicago, and a board member of Switchback Books, a feminist poetry press. She lives and teaches in Chicago, Illinois.



Her first book, **Seeds of Change**, demonstrates the connection between people and nature. It is a frank and inspiring invitation into the life and work of Wangari Maathai, Noble Peace Prize Winner and founder of the Greenbelt Movement.

### **Clubhouse Clutter !**

The third floor of the Clubhouse has become a destination for left over party decorations and junk. The Town is concerned about it being a fire hazard so we're going to roll up our sleeves and toss it out or find somewhere else to store it. If by chance you own something that you would like to retrieve before it is tossed, please contact Carolyn Mellen at 787-1900.



Her second children's nonfiction picture book called **We Rise The Biography of a Women's Peace Movement** (Farrar, Strauss & Giroux, forthcoming) is about the women's peace movement in Liberia. It features the lives of Liberian President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf, Peace Activist Leymah Gwobee, and 12 year old girl Jemora, and how collectively they helped bring peace to their nation.

## Dune Acres and Ogden Dunes - A Tale of Two Beach Towns

- by Mike Swygert

Their borders being just miles apart, the residential towns of Dune Acres and Ogden Dunes both sit on Lake Michigan's shoreline along a narrow strip of Indiana natural dunes. Although both towns have much in common, over the decades they have evolved into distinctive communities. In the early 1920s, two groups of Gary businessmen acquired separate tracts of predominantly vacant dune land, each group having the same goal -- development of an upscale residential community for profit.

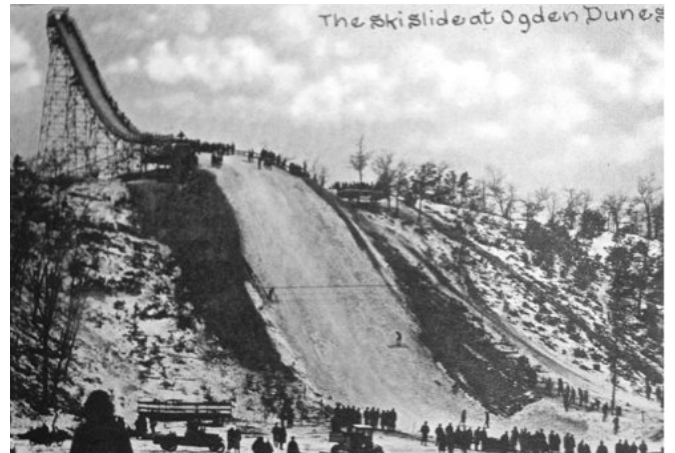
James Newman and Margaret Doyle in their 75-year anniversary history of Dune Acres describe how William A. Wirt (educator/bank president), Arthur Melton (civil engineer), Harry Hall (realtor), C.V. Ridgely (attorney), C.R. Kuss (bank treasurer) and William Ittner (architect) came together; how Wirt in December 1922 leased with an option-to-purchase 584 acres; then how the founders in early 1923 formed Dune Acres, Inc.; and finally, how in September, 1923, the corporation's shareholders voted unanimously to create a town, the boundaries of which became the land leased to Wirt.

That same year, 1923, three men from Gary -- Samuel Reck, Nelson Reck and Colin Mackenzie (president of the Gary Engineering Co.) -- purchased more than 500 acres of dune land from the estate of Chicagoan Francis Ogden. In 1925, they incorporated the land as the Town of Ogden Dunes.

For two decades, neither community sold or leased properties to people of color or to Jews. A 1924 Ogden Dunes sales brochure touted: "A Highly Restricted Lake-Front Community," while a sign at the town's entrance proclaimed: "Restricted Home Sites on Lake Michigan." A sign above the entrance to the Dune Acres Clubhouse made it clear that not everybody would be welcome. Back in the 1920s, phrases such as "restricted home sites" and "right kind of buyers" were clearly understood as only whites, non-Jewish (and in some instances non-Catholics) were welcome.

To attract buyers, the towns' developers added upscale recreational features. Dune Acres built a golf course, a small boat harbor, and a clubhouse

with an accompanying hotel. Ogden Dunes planned for a country club with clubhouse, a nine-hole golf course, and, like Dune Acres, a boat harbor. A few years later, Ogden Dunes hit a home run when a massive steel tower was erected atop a tall dune leading to a 345-foot long ski-jump.



Ogden Dunes historians Richard Meister and Ken Martin explain: "In 1927, Ogden Dunes Realty sold a large parcel of land on a high dune near the town's entrance to the Ogden Dunes Ski Club. The club was organized by Norwegian-American ski enthusiasts from Chicago. That fall, the club built the largest man-made ski jump in North America." According to Meister and Martin, beginning in 1928 the club sponsored annual "international ski-jumping competitions [that drew] large crowds estimated between 10,000 and 20,000 during each of its five years of operation." Why did it end? Not enough money, not enough snow.

Despite cessation of international skiing events, Ogden Dunes as well as Dune Acres continued to grow, though very slowly, during the 1930s and early 1940s, largely due to the Great Depression and World War Two. After the war, from the mid-1940's on, both towns grew rapidly.

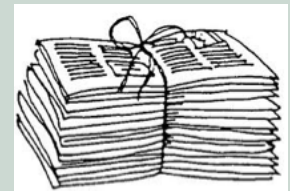
*continued on page 4*

## Name That Bear

The contest is over and the vote was taken. At the August Town Council meeting Bill Nixon held the vote with several suggested names by residents. The winner is...(drumroll please)...DaBear. So when giving directions just tell them to go past DaBear, or turn left at DaBear. Just make sure they see DaBear!

- by Carolyn Mellen

A few copies of The Beachcomber, printed in black and white, are available every month at the Gate House.





## Tidbits From The Town Council

**Rich Hawksworth** is working hard on repairing the Clubhouse Dune and has been awarded a \$15,000 matching grant through the Indiana DNR's Lake Michigan Coastal Program. The grant is named "Restoration of Clubhouse Dune: Unit #4 – East Facing Slope. Work should begin later this year and be completed in 2015.

**Lou Mellen** and **Mark Taylor** recently built two sturdy good looking picnic tables and are planning to build another. The tables are currently located at East Beach but will be moved elsewhere when the summer is over. One is a handicap accessible table that will sit by the tennis court park in the future.

**John Sullivan** will take the helm as President of the Town Council for the last third of the term of the current Council. Jeffrey Swoger held the position for 13 months before moving and then Lou Mellen finished Jeffrey's term and then served an additional 16 months. Lou's dedication and hard work as President were recognized with applause at the August Town Council meeting. Thanks Lou!

*by Carolyn Mellen*

## Road Easement Maintenance

Aren't we lucky to live in such a lush environment? Indeed! Many of our residents take great pride in their plantings and shrubbery – while others enjoy letting the wild thing happen. In both cases it still remains the resident's responsibility to keep the road easement clean and clear of limbs and shrubs. This is so important in this type of environment for several reasons: we have no sidewalks so folks need to have a place along the side the road to avoid traffic; visibility is impaired when driving around corners when limbs and shrubs are not cut back; and bike riders may veer out into the road to avoid being struck by a protruding limb.

Our Maintenance man Mark Taylor has been instructed to cut the grass along the easement of our properties and according to Attorney Dan Whitten, it is the Town's right to maintain the roadway easements for the safety of its residents. As property owners, it is our responsibility to cooperate with Town policy. Please cut all limbs and shrubs back at least three feet from the road. And please allow Mark Taylor to do his job.

*by Carolyn Mellen*

## Dune Acres and Ogden Dunes

*continued from page 3*

Today, each town has met its founders' expectations -- thriving, upscale, residential communities. The earlier racial and religious discriminatory practices are long gone, especially after the 1948 U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Shelley vs. Kraemer* that held race-based real estate restrictions unconstitutional.

Even though Dune Acres and Ogden Dunes have similar origins, history and dune environment, when it comes to demographics the towns have evolved differently. The U.S. 2010 census reported that Dune Acres had 163 housing units, Ogden Dunes, 627. Dune Acres' population was 182, Ogden Dunes, 1,110. Dune Acres' total land size is 3.44 square miles; Ogden Dunes is 1.46 square miles. Dune Acres density is 84 people per square mile; Ogden Dunes is 1,500 people per square mile.

This striking difference in density gives Ogden Dunes the charms of an upscale suburban community within the dunes, while Dune Acres has more the flavor of rural living. Residents of both towns, however, live within a common wondrous natural environment, one encompassing a beautiful shoreline with sandy beaches on Lake Michigan among magnificent dunes, and incredibly diverse flora and fauna.

**Disclosure: My wife Dianne and I have lived in both Ogden Dunes and Dune Acres and love each of the towns.**

### SOURCES:

**The History of Dune Acres, 75th Anniversary Celebration.** James Newman, Margaret Doyle, 34 pages, privately printed (1998) (Dune Acres archives)

**Ogden Dunes, Images of America.** Dick Meister, Ken Martin and the Historical Society of Ogden Dunes, 127pp., Arcadia Publishing (2014).

**Dune Acres Corporate Records.** Vol. 1 (bound), 165 pp., 1923-1949, (located in archives of the Dune Acres Historical Commission.

**Calumet Beginnings: Ancient Shorelines and Settlements at the South End of Lake Michigan.** Kenneth J. Schoon, 247 pp., Indiana Un. Press (2003).

**U.S. Census, 2010, Indiana, Porter County, Westchester Township, Dune Acres.** (accessible online and through Wikipedia) (2014).

**U.S. Census, 2010, Indiana, Porter County, Portage Township, Ogden Dunes.** (accessible online and through Wikipedia) (2014).

**Early History of Dune Acres.** Naomi V. Studebaker, 6 typed pages (unpublished), no date, likely mid to late 1950s, (accessible in archives of Dune Acres Historical Commission).

**Shelley vs. Kraemer, 334 U.S. 1 (1948)** (U.S. Supreme Court ruling that abolished racially-based restrictions in real-estate transactions.)

## Fair Oaks Farms

I wish I could remember who first told me about Fair Oaks Farm so I could THANK him or her -- I think it was a Dune Acres neighbor.



Located about an hour away, south of Merrillville, it is well worth the drive – especially if you have children, grandchildren, or nieces and nephews. Michael and I were there with our 11 ½ year old granddaughter Eloise and her best friend on the last Monday in August for over six hours, and would have gladly stayed longer except closing time is 5 PM! I had been there with all of our grandchildren the summer before last, but this was Michael's first visit and it was HE who insisted I write something up for the Beachcomber!

Fair Oaks is self-described as “agri-tourism” – an opportunity to learn about commercial dairy farming, and, as of last summer, commercial pig farming too, but the experience is so much more! For the very reasonable price of \$25 per adult or \$20 per child/senior (\$10 less if your time is short and you want to skip either the dairy farm or the pig farm tour– with various discounts for groups, and on certain days and frequent-guest passes available) you can spend a most enjoyable and enlightening day. Yes, the main building features various interactive, climbing, and video exhibits, but they are really well-conceived for maximum appeal and education. Yes, when you exit that building onto an expansive grassy lawn called “Mooville”, the (included) bungee jumping, super-size trampoline, climbing wall, mini tractors, maze, etc. will have more appeal to the younger guests, but there are also shady benches for everyone else.

But the real highlight of Mooville is the Birthing Barn. Enter the building into an intimate “theater” with stadium seating. The “stage” is a glassed in cow maternity ward, with separate rooms for two cows to birth calves – right before your eyes. Several births happen each day, so you are almost sure to see at least one. A “herdsman” is there to assist if needed, and to answer questions in between. Hard to express how thrilling this is – for us city folk! A modified traffic light outside the Birthing Barn indicates whether a calf is coming out (green), just a hoof is out (yellow) or if labor is in an earlier stage (red) – just like people, the exact timing of any birth is indefinite. Visitors can come in as often as they like during their stay, and can remain as long as they like each time. There is a side room where all the calves born that day are on view through glass, with a sign indicating gender, time born, and weight!

You may sign up when you arrive for the separate Dairy Farm (“Cow Adventure”) and Pig Adventure”) 30 min bus tours to the actual off-site commercial operations – don't miss these! You will learn so much about the science and technology both from what you see and from the excellent commentary of the educators in each area, as well as from your bus-driver-educator. The mission is to educate the public about modern farming efforts, reuse and recycle way more than you can imagine, and also, of course, produce the highest quality commercial products. Virtually the entire facility runs on cow and pig manure, via anaerobic digesters (part of the drive-thru portion of the Dairy Farm tour).

Get off the bus and enter the glass-enclosed commercial milking parlor, where the equipment tracks each cow via an electronic ear chip! In the Pig Farm building you see every facet -- from the artificial insemination process to the actual delivery and post-delivery with up to 26 piglets climbing over each other to get milk from their mom (average litter is 14!). It's all behind glass for germ and odor control. NO “hands-on” opportunities with animals – for fear of introducing disease to the farms; but plenty of close-up-behind-glass excitement.

And yes, there is a combination gift shop/café/cheese factory as well as a beautiful new full service restaurant, all of which stay open until 6 PM. We all enjoyed lunch at the restaurant – way better than we could have imagined – as well as grilled cheese and ice cream for a snack at the end of the day in the café.

This was my second visit (first was two summers ago), and for sure we'll all try to return next summer. The farm is open to visitors year-round, however, with special holiday events as well. You'll want to add this to your “to-do” list! <http://fofarms.com> for more info or contact Michael or me, or our grandchildren Eloise, Beatrix, or Solomon!

*Dana Shepard Treister*





## Local, Organic, Affordable Food

LOAF opens in Chesterton!

A new specialty grocery store opened this Summer at 401 N. Calumet Road. Eve Kaiser, Chesterton resident, dreamed of a store that would carry the wares of local farmers and producers. She opened LOAF (Local, Organic, Affordable Food) to sell vegetables, baked goods, frozen meat, fresh eggs, milk, butter, cheese, sausages, household cleaners, products for the body, and fresh drinks, all made locally. Some of my favorite recent purchases included Valpo shrimp, ground grass-fed beef, and chevre wrapped in herbs. Pictured here is Ms. Kaiser and assistant Daisy, ready to help you pick out some delicious items! This is a valuable addition to our town and a delicious place to shop.



Eve Kaiser and daughter Daisy

(219) 628-6106 and on Facebook! <https://www.facebook.com/LOAFchesterton>

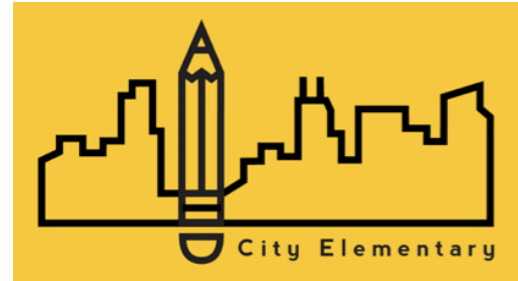
- Leah Harp



### Correction to Article in August Beachcomber

Since my article on the Richardsons appeared in the August Beachcomber, I've learned that it wasn't until 1940 that they owned recorded property in Dune Acres. I thank Cheryl Evans for pointing this out. When the Richardsons came to the dunes in 1913, Henry Leman of Chicago owned the land. In 1922, Leman transferred it to William Wirt, a founder of Dune Acres. During his ownership, Leman invited friends from Chicago to come and put up "summer shelters". Many did so.

- Mike Swygert



Dune Acres residents Jason and Leah Harp are involved with the opening of a new therapeutic school in Chicago's Hyde Park neighborhood. After researching local public and private school options, they concluded that there was nowhere in the city where their son would thrive. Working with another couple with a special needs child and a board of professionals, they founded City Elementary that welcomes its inaugural class of Kindergarten, first, and second graders on September 8.

The school offers an educational program tailored to students with diverse learning styles and developmental needs. City Elementary represents an extension of the philosophy and methods of pediatric therapeutic services center LEEP Forward. Like its sister school, City Elementary provides a strong education while simultaneously encouraging regulation, social engagement, and peer interactions.

Please check out the website [cityelementary.com](http://cityelementary.com) and the Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/cityelementary>, and click to listen to Dr. Harp's interview of WBEZ's morning shift <https://soundcloud.com/morningshiftwbez/new-therapeutic-school-takes-different-approach-to-teaching>

- Leah Harp

## Spotted off our shores ..... What are they?



Here is one suggestion of what those strange containers are being pushed by the tug boat. Notice that the container on the left has stripes that go down further than those on the right. Bingo! Giant-size salt and pepper shakers sold at Costco.

## Guided Hike

More than twenty DA residents turned out for the recent hike through Cowles Bog Wetland. USGS ecologist, Noel Pavlovic, provided a brief history of CBWC, the pioneering work of Dr. Henry Cowles and the natural processes that formed the unique ecosystem. Dan Mason of the National Park Service discussed the restoration work that is ongoing and described the challenges and successes they've seen thus far. In particular, he noted the surprising diversity of plants that spontaneously emerged from the seed bank following the tree clearing. Later in the evening, the group was treated to an up close view of our resident Sand Hill cranes, which were feeding along the trail. Thanks to Save the Dunes for organizing the event and Drs. Mason and Pavlovic for sharing their time.

- Rich Hawksworth



Thanks to the Social Committee, we now have a picnic table up at the Clubhouse where residents will be able to sit and enjoy the beautiful view of Lake Michigan.



Thanks to the following people who made this issue happen:

Rick Demkovich	Carolyn Mellen
Leah Harp	Irene Newman
Rich Hawksworth	Howard Silverman
Bev Hubbs	Mike Swygert
Jen Johnson	Dana Treister

If you would like to contribute a story, photo, poem, art, something from your children or grandchildren, etc, the deadline for the next issue is September 24!

## Did You Know....

When the National Park Service commissioned an inventory of all the plants present or recorded within the boundaries of the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, more than 700 vascular plants were noted for the Dune Acres survey unit. The report's authors called the 1400-acre tract "a leviathan among natural areas," "world class," and stated, "Where else in the north temperate United States can such immense conservatism exist across so small an area?"



Sand Hill Cranes near Mineral Springs Road. Photo by Howard Silverman



## Dunes Kankakee Bike Trail

Beginning at Mineral Springs Road and Highway 12, the Dunes National Lakeshore segment of the Dunes Kankakee Bike Trail leads from Dune Acres into Porter. Spanning US 12 via a wooden and steel bridge, the trail winds through two miles of the National Lakeshore, traversing the Little Calumet River, past the National Lakeshore headquarters, the Bailey Homestead, and the Dunes Learning Center. The winding trail meanders through gorgeous fields of wildflowers intermingled among lush acres of woodlands, ending at the bridge across US 20. From there, the trail continues outside the Lakeshore property on little travelled back roads of Porter and Chesterton. Eventually it will go all the way to the Kankakee River.

Having few hills, the Dunes Kankakee Bike Trail is easy to bike or hike. My wife Dianne has ridden to and from Chesterton and I have hiked it twice so far. The trail is paved, has good signage, and, importantly, good visibility to spot oncoming cyclists (and they spotting you). If you want a little peaceful time to leisurely enjoy nature, I highly recommend taking a ride or a stroll on this wonderful addition to the existing assortment of hiking and cycling trails in the dunes.

- by Mike Swygert



Photos by  
Mike Swygert

**The Fine Print:** *The Beachcomber* is published on-line on the first day of each month. All information, news, creative contributions, articles, reports, corrections, suggestions, Letters to the Editor, art work, comments and otherwise are welcomed and encouraged. *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!"

Editorial Board: Carolyn Mellen, Irene Newman and Mike Swygert.

Email submissions to [inewman680@aol.com](mailto:inewman680@aol.com). Please use "Beachcomber," in the subject line.