



THE BEACHCOMBER

DUNE ACRES, INDIANA

www.DuneAcres.org

October 2026

Then and Now... *same place, different time*



Germaine
Brockington
6 WEST

Debbie
Bennett
Wiegand
8 SHORE

Jean
Howes
19 LUPINE

Nancy
Rudy
3 OAK

Elizabeth
Rogers
28 CIRCLE

Karen
Brancy
58 WEST



Desiree
DeLeon
6 WEST

Louise
Roberts
8 SHORE

Onnie
Pucel
19 LUPINE

Elise
Daxe
7 OAK

Gretchen
Stasey
12 CREST

Carolyn
Mellon
14 EAST

Sandy
Klawson
3 OAK

Linda
Deany
28 CIRCLE

Laura
Truax
58 WEST

Then and Now

With Dune Acres Historical Committee member Dan Kleine behind the camera, everyone had fun updating a photograph taken in front of the clubhouse 65 years ago. Long-established addresses in town remain intact with their new owners pictured. The houses have been updated, and in some cases replaced, to make way for new lifestyles - much like fashion trends that left girdles and white gloves to history!



Thanks to all the models who participated in "then and now."
Pictured here with Beachcomber's Jan Bapst.



Tackling Invasive Species: A Community Effort

Fall is an Excellent Time to Tackle Woody Invasive Plants

Help your neighbors, and help protect our natural environment



The reward is more than a tidier property. Removing invasive species gives native trees, wildflowers, and other woodland plants a better opportunity to thrive, helping preserve the open, diverse character of Dune Acres.

Tackling Invasives



Oriental bittersweet is one of the most damaging invaders of natural areas. In Dune Acres, its impact is easy to see. Driving through town, residents can spot open woodlands where bittersweet has been controlled, alongside overgrown areas where the vine has taken over, producing seeds that spread beyond the property where it originated.



Burning bush and autumn olive create similar problems. These introduced plants form dense thickets, and once established, they spread quickly and become considerably more difficult and expensive to remove.



Controlling invasives is part of being a good neighbor in Dune Acres. Just as suburban homeowners maintain their properties by mowing lawns and trimming shrubs, our homeowners are asked to manage invasive plants. What happens on one property affects the entire community, as seeds and vines do not recognize property lines.

Eradication need not happen all at once. Setting aside a small amount each year for professional removal, applying for a Town environmental grant, or purchasing tools and supplies for a do-it-yourself project can all make a difference. Tackling one area at a time—and returning to it regularly to remove new growth—can prevent a manageable problem from becoming an overwhelming one!

Environmental Reference Materials are Available in the Town Hall

New Playground Coming 2027

Our town park will have a new look next Spring when updated playground equipment is slated to replace most of the existing structures that have been in place for decades. The Town Council approved the project after extensive review by a committee chaired by Parks Commissioner Shawn Fitzpatrick and after multiple discussions at public meetings.



The project budget of \$170,000 includes demolition of existing structures, new equipment installation, and contingency, to be funded as follows:

DACIF general:	\$85,000
Special donations:	\$25,000
Town:	\$60,000

Tom Roberts is coordinating project implementation. Removal of old equipment will take place this fall, with installation expected in April.



Safety Signs at Rt 12 and Mineral Springs

Indiana Department of Transportation (INDOT) officials told the *Beachcomber* that new signs at the intersection of US 12 and Mineral Springs Road (and also at US 12 and Waverly Road) are Intersection Conflict Warning Systems (ICWS) - safety technology designed for non-signalized, two-way stop intersections that alert drivers of crossing traffic, aimed at reducing collisions.

- ICWS use sensors such as radar, loop detectors, or cameras to detect vehicles approaching an intersection.
- The system evaluates whether a vehicle on one approach may conflict with another vehicle on an adjacent approach, considering speed, distance, and trajectory.
- When a potential conflict is detected, warning signs and signals activate.
- Drivers approaching the intersection receive a visual cue to slow down, stop, or wait for a safe gap.



INDOT is unable to provide an activation date at this time, stating, “contract work is still ongoing, and timelines are subject to change.”

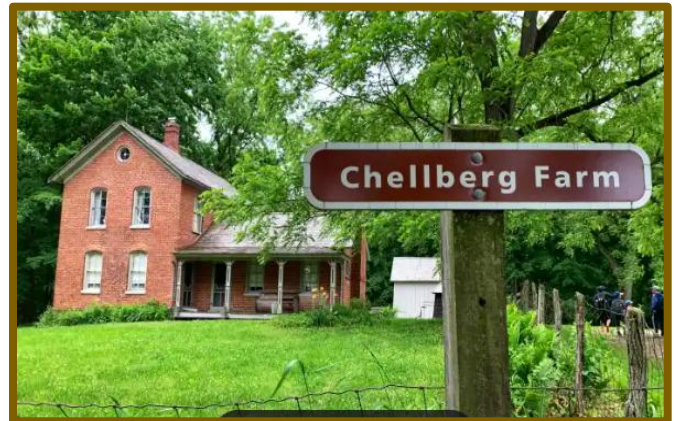
Concerns about this signage, or any road safety issue, can be directed to INDOT at (855)-463-6848 or with an online ticket at <https://indot4u.511in.org/report>.



Heidi Studebaker and the Chellberg Farm

Dune Acres' Heidi Studebaker enjoys a unique connection to the Indiana Dunes National Park's Chellberg Farm - it was the homestead of her Swedish ancestors. Heidi's great-grandparents, Anders and Johanna Chellberg (Kjellberg), settled on the property in 1869 after immigrating from Sweden. They became part of the local Swedish community known as Baillytown.

The family's original wooden farmhouse was destroyed by fire in 1884. It was replaced by the red brick Folk Victorian home that stands today and serves as the centerpiece of the historic Chellberg Farm.



Heidi's grandmother, Naomi Chellberg, grew up on the farm. After marrying Alden Studebaker in 1925, Naomi moved just down the road to Dune Acres, where the couple made their home at 25 Crest Drive. Alden designed and built the residence before becoming one of Dune Acres' most influential developers, constructing many of the log cabins that still stand.

Today, Heidi enjoys her Dune Acres home, often attending the National Park Service's Spring May Day and Fall Harvest Festivals at Chellberg Farm, where she celebrates Swedish traditions her ancestors observed on the very same property.



“Da Bear” Is Back?

In 2014, a tree stump at the corner of Crest Drive and East Road was transformed into a wildlife sculpture that quickly became an East Side landmark. Officially named **"Da Bear,"** it stood watch for years, enduring every season—and just about every accessory our creative residents could dream up. Santa hats, rabbit ears, and, on occasion, a few unmentionable protuberances all became part of its colorful history.

After years of faithful service and constant exposure to the elements, Da Bear was retired in 2025, leaving behind fond memories and family photos.



But nature—and neighborhood humor—finds a way. A new bear has appeared, bringing chuckles to many passersby.



Thank-you to the anonymous resident whose humor reminds us that a bit of whimsy can brighten everyone's day!



Welcome New Residents

By Dana Shepard Treister

MEG and BILL McCAREL settled into 5 Cypress Lane in June, having known at first glance that this was the house for them. Their roots in the Dune Acres community run deep. Meg's parents, Sue and Mike Harris, lived at 6 West Road from 1976 until 2005. Dune Acres East Beach was the site of Meg and Bill's engagement, and almost 42 years ago their wedding reception rocked the Dune Acres Clubhouse!

The McCarels son Bill (age 39 with wife Jen), and son David (age 35) visit often from their homes in Indianapolis.

As very active retirees, creating her Chesterton-based Megs Glass, and serving as director of the Duneland Education Foundation, keep Meg involved in the community, while Bill enjoys disc golf, craft beers, and music. The McCarels are super excited to be back in a community they have always considered home.

Dune Acres Property Taxes

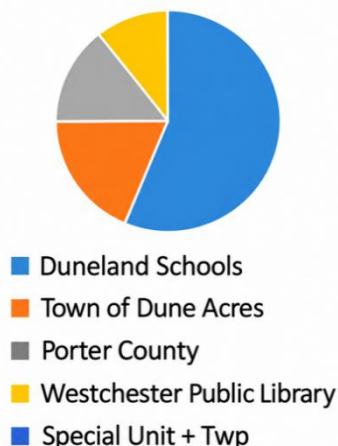
Local taxing units have limited control over property tax rates because they are governed by the Indiana Department of Local Government Finance (DLGF), which establishes the maximum tax levy that may be adopted each budget year. The Dune Acres Town Council cannot increase taxes

beyond the DLGF's maximum allowable levy, even if additional funding may be needed for Town services.

All Dune Acres property owners are taxed at the same tax rate. The 2026 rate is \$2.2470 per \$100 Assessed Valuation (AV). Differences in tax bills are determined primarily by the AV of each property, as established by the Porter County Assessor, along with any applicable deductions and credits.

Questions about your property's AV may be directed to the Porter County Assessor's Office

Where Your 2026 Property Taxes Go



Wildlife Rescues in Dune Acres

Opposums!



The Valparaiso wildlife rescue center operated by Humane Indiana experienced a bumper year for opossums. Porter County residents brought nearly 400 abandoned baby opossums to the center this past summer after finding them along roadsides, in parks, and in their yards.

Once the young opossums are old enough to survive on their own, the next challenge is finding suitable locations for their release. For the second consecutive year, Dune Acres served as one of those release sites, welcoming 18 juveniles into the surrounding woodlands.

Opossums are sometimes credited with consuming thousands of ticks each year—some estimates suggest as many as 5,000 per animal annually. Hopefully, these new residents will thrive while helping reduce the population of everyone's least favorite pest.



Boxes are Packed for Transport



Welcome Little Guys



GO EAT SOME TICKS!!



Wildlife Rescues...

Raccoons!



In other wildlife news, Jeff McSpaden recently rescued a distressed raccoon. The animal had a jar stuck on its head, which is more common than one would expect. Jeff trapped it, then took it to Dr. Read at Westchester Animal Clinic where it was promptly sedated and treated. Jeff was able to release the raccoon back into the wild – good as new.



Who is this?



This Dune Acres lady was the height of mod fashion while visiting London in 1968.

Can you guess who it is? Answer on page 16





The Storms In August

After Dune Acres experienced a series of severe thunderstorms, bringing down trees and leaving residents without power, on August 11, a tornado and derecho swept through northwest Indiana, creating a complete blackout and what NIPSCO described as “the largest and most widespread outage event in the company’s history.”

As provided under Indiana Code 10-24-3-29, Town Council President Richard Hawksworth issued a “Declaration of Local Disaster Emergency.” Neighbors helped neighbors by sharing resources, clearing debris, and checking on one another.

Town staff helped ensure residents’ safety and kept everyone informed as work crews arrived.

After five days, power was restored to most Dune Acres homes, but many remained without electricity because of downed lines. Other areas of northwest Indiana were dark for over two weeks. Through all these major storms, our community was reminded of the strength and resilience that define Dune Acres. Thank-you’s to our town staff, emergency responders, utility crews, and to neighbors who stepped up to help when it mattered most.



ROADSIDE BRUSH PICKUP: Week of October 19th
ORGANIC WASTE DUMPSTER: Week of October 26th

Did you Know?



The “Blind Hill” sign on Mineral Springs Road was copied from an Icelandic graphic since no U.S. road sign version quite fit the town’s application.



The red bench located at town hall is a “Leopold Bench” named after Aldo Leopold, a pioneering conservationist and author of *A Sand County Almanac*, whose work



emphasized preserving natural habitats and fostering a human connection to the land.



The Town Hall was constructed in 1945 as a fire station. It was converted to its current configuration in 1995 when the town began contracting fire protection with the Town of Porter.

Fire station painting by Beverly Hubbs



The Richardson Foundation Summer Interns

Founded in 1958, the Flora Richardson Foundation continues its mission of preserving natural habitats and creating opportunities to connect with nature in the Indiana Coastal Zones. This year's cohort of summer interns once again presented their research projects at the Dune Acres clubhouse. In collaboration with the Shirley Heinze Land Trust, a total of fourteen interns were funded, with students from five universities.

Flora and William Richardson were early residents of Dune Acres and lifelong champions of environmental education. The foundation that bears their name is currently led by President Tim Kollar, Treasurer Jan Bapst, and Secretary Lynne Remington. Other board members from outside the town bring expertise in environmental science, education, and land preservation.



Flora and William in Dune Acres



Interns with NPS staff at Clubhouse



In Memoriam

Bonnie Thomas, 95, passed away peacefully on July 20, 2026. Born May 17, 1931, in Atchison, Kansas, to Clement and Edna (Turner) Trapp, she was preceded in death by her beloved brother, Donald Trapp. She is survived by her three cherished daughters, Jeanine (Todd) Freeman, Nancy (Clifton) Yandell, and Charna (Arthur Pullano) Osmundson; six grandchildren; and six great-grandchildren.



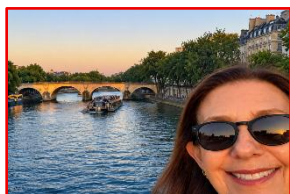
Bonnie was devoted to her family. She generously shared her talents in the kitchen, along with her treasured recipes. She was an avid gardener with an encyclopedic knowledge of Indiana Dunes indigenous plants and wildflowers, along with being a meticulous seamstress. An accomplished musician, she played piano, organ, flute, and piccolo and was the winner of the prestigious Gershwin *Rhapsody in Blue* Contest.

After graduating from Atchison High School and Emporia State University with a degree in elementary education, Bonnie taught in Topeka before marrying Joseph Thomas in 1956 and moving to Gary. The family relocated to Dune Acres in 1971, where Bonnie became an active member of the community and Chesterton United Methodist Church. She sang in the church choir, participated in the Hand Bell Choir and Joy Circle, coordinated music for Vacation Bible School and the Children's Choir, and volunteered at Jacob's Table and the annual Christmas Cookie Walk. She also volunteered as a teacher aide at Yost School and served for 10 years as Dune Acres Clubhouse Coordinator and Treasurer of the Dune Acres Social Committee.

Per Bonnie's wishes, a private family funeral service was held. Her family later hosted a celebration of life at the Dune Acres Clubhouse—the historic building where she dedicated so many hours of service—overlooking the Lake Michigan shoreline she called home.

Who is This?

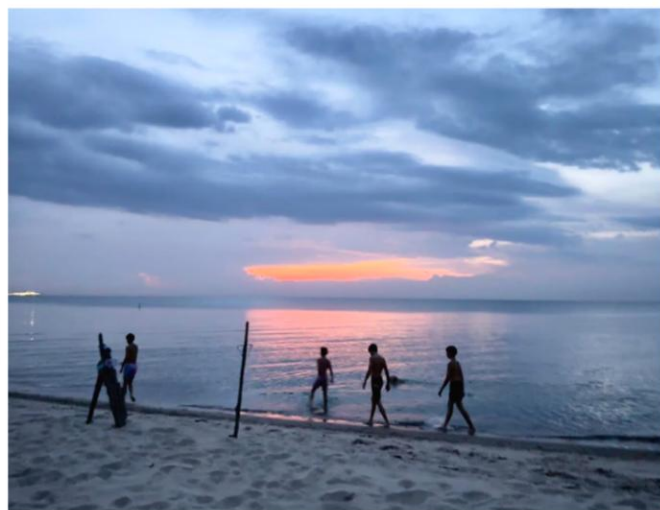
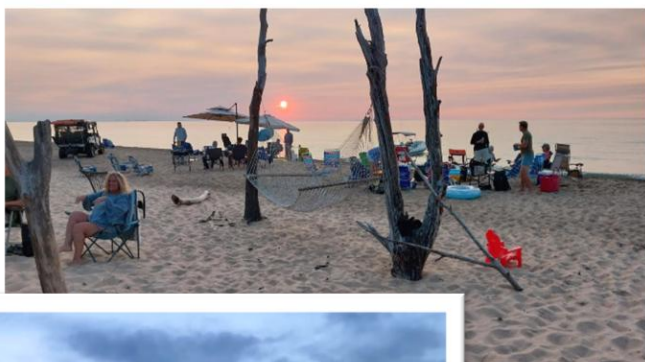
Answer from page 11... It's our own Dana Treister!



*Dana in London 1968 /
Dana in Paris 2025*



Goodbye Summer 2026



The Fine Print: The Beachcomber is a grass roots publication not officially affiliated with the Town of Dune Acres. All content is believed to be reasonably accurate and reliable, but not 'guaranteed!' Any information, news, articles, reports, suggestions, photos or otherwise are welcome to help sustain this publication. Email to linda2menc@gmail.com or jbapst10@gmail.com Please use "Beachcomber" in the subject line.