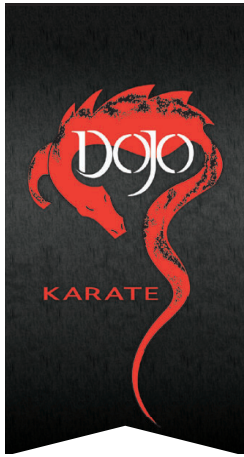


▶ DOJO KARATE

Where champions are born



By Brenda Erdahl

Peter Karels was three years old when he broke his first board. He and his family were visiting the Wright County Fair, and they happened upon the Dojo Karate booth.

“He broke a board, bounced in the bounce house and got a coupon for a free lesson, so we stopped by (the Dojo) and never looked back,” his dad Nathan Karels said.

That wasn’t quite 10 years ago but Peter, a seventh grader at Buffalo Community Middle School, has already come a long way. He was just seven when he earned his first-degree black belt and two years later advanced to second-degree black belt. That’s when he started competing.

That first year of competition he was ranked No. 1 in two nine and under black belt divisions (overall traditional forms and weapons and point sparring) in the North Central Karate Association’s Minnesota Regional Circuit. He was also Black Belt Grand Champion in the 11 and under division at Dojo Karate’s Tournament of Champions.

Since then, he’s competed in state, national and even world competitions and he has more trophies, plaques and awards than he knows what to do with.

During the 2024 season, he attended 19 tournaments and earned a trophy or medal in all but one of them. The highlight of that season and his career came when he earned the right to represent Team USA at the World Karate Commission Worlds in Albufeira, Portugal.

To get there, he had to place in the top eight at a regional



At Dojo Karate in Buffalo students are inspired to become champions and leaders of their own lives. Pictured above are some of those high achievers. From left are instructors Logan Woehner and Cash Hourscht, World Karate Commission Worlds qualifier Peter Karels, instructor Donald Low and Master Chris Hourscht.

qualifier and then in the top four at a national qualifier.

Peter loves setting goals (he plans on being a fifth-degree black belt by the time he is 23), learning the curriculum and the overall workout he gets from karate, but most of all, it’s fun, he said.

It’s not everyday that Dojo Karate produces a student who competes at the level Peter does, but that’s always the Dojo goal – to create champions and to create leaders. Dojo

Karate in Buffalo is successful at both.

Like Peter, many other Dojo students were introduced to karate at an early age. Some have gone on to be great competitors, others have worked their way through the belts and are now teaching the next generation.

Donald Low joined Dojo Karate in March of 2006. He was just four years old. Today he’s working on his third-de-

- Continued on page 2

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▶ DOJO KARATE

gree black belt and is employed as a head instructor.

“My parents wanted me to do martial arts to teach me discipline and respect,” he said. “I loved it!”

When other kids his age were watching cartoons, he was watching Walker Texas Ranger and envisioning himself as the next Chuck Norris. Between Norris and his uncle who was a police officer, he knew just what he wanted to do when he grew up. After high school, he attended Alexandria Technical College and earned a degree in law enforcement. Now

“Seeing students’ growth is really rewarding. It’s a really good feeling to see how far they have come”

– Logan Woehner
DOJO Instructor

he’s teaching at Dojo in Buffalo and he’s loving every minute of it.

“He’s a natural teacher,” Dojo Master Chris Hourscht said. “It’s so much fun to see how far he’s come. He’s a nice testimony to what martial arts can do for people.”

Low said he loves the community at Dojo Karate, he’s made many friends over the years and that’s part of the reason he returned to teach. Today he leads martial arts classes at both the Buffalo and Monticello dojos.

“It takes discipline to advance in rank and it’s not easy. It’s

important to have good relationships and students find that here,” Hourscht said.

To 16-year-old Cash Hourscht karate is a lifestyle, and he wouldn’t have it any other way. The son of Master Chris Hourscht, Cash has been practicing martial arts since he was 2 ½ years old and is currently working on his third-degree black belt. He enjoys learning new tricks and kicks, weapons and the feeling of achievement and self-improvement that comes with every new skill mastered and belt achieved.

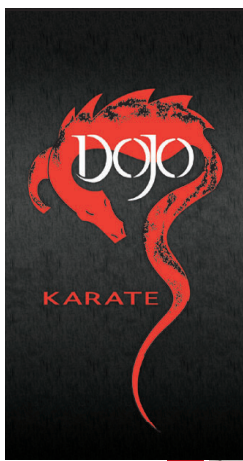
Karate has brought Cash out of his shell. “I’m still quiet, but it’s helped me to be more comfortable talking to people and leading people,” he said.

Dojo instructors kept him motivated while making learning fun and now he’s trying to do the same for the next generation. He’s been teaching at Dojo off and on for the last couple of years, but recently Mr. Low has taken him under his wing and he’s beginning to realize he just might want to follow in his dad’s footsteps.

Cash is a sophomore and A student at Buffalo High School where he plays for the Bison baseball team. Baseball is his other passion, he said and joked if the major leagues don’t come calling, it’s very possible he’ll make owning a dojo and teaching karate a career.

Other Dojo students like Logan Woehner, found you don’t have to start karate at a young age to be inspired by the Dojo lifestyle. He was 21 years old in February of 2023 when he began his martial arts journey.

Like the others, he was encour-



Twelve-year-old Peter Karels represented Team USA at the World Karate Commission Worlds in Albufeira, Portugal in 2024. He is a student at Dojo Karate in Buffalo.

aged by his parents who wanted him to get involved and grow socially. His sisters had joined Dojo the fall before and he found himself driving them to class.

“After a few practices I got into it myself,” he said. “I liked seeing the progress I was making as well as the people. I wasn’t involved in anything else at the time and I liked the community here. It was very freeing to me. I’ve seen a lot of mental and physical growth.”

It took him about two years to get to where he is now, advanced brown belt, but he won’t be there long. With any luck, he’ll be testing for his black belt in May.

About a year ago, he started

assisting in his sisters’ classes, hoping to improve his leadership skills and now he is a fulltime instructor at Dojo.

“Seeing students’ growth is really rewarding. It’s a really good feeling to see how far they have come,” he said.

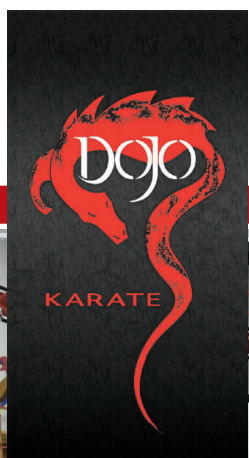
Woehner is a testament to the fact that you don’t have to start karate at a young age to be successful at it. He’s seen students as young as 2 ½ to as old as 60 or 70 join and experience the difference martial arts can make in their lives.

“All of them acknowledge a big change in attitude and physical performance,” he said.

Master Hourscht who launched his first Dojo in 2000 and has since grown that number to 10, said not every student who walks through his door is going to be a martial arts champion or a teacher.

“Some want to take it to that career level and own their own dojo. It’s been a very rewarding career for me, and I like to mentor and grow those students into the industry if that’s what they want,” he said.

He is confident, however, that all those who walk through his door will leave with the skills they need to be both a champion and a leader on whatever path life takes them down.



Twelve-year-old Peter Karels, center, is an inspiration to the youngsters at Dojo Karate in Buffalo. Through hard work and discipline, he has become a world class martial arts competitor.



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LET'S GO ICE FISHING

By Chris Niskanen
MN DNR Report

Ah, winter! It's time to put on your long underwear. Slip on some wool socks and a sweater. Climb into your snow pants. Pull down your stocking cap. And grab your fishing rod and bait bucket.

There's ice on the lake, and it's the season to enjoy a true Minnesota adventure—ice fishing.

Don't worry about getting cold or bored on a frozen lake. Ice fishing is both easy and exciting. It's fun to hike across the ice imagining hungry sunnies or walleyes lurking below.

It's an adventure to hang out around an ice hole with friends and family, telling stories and holding a funny-looking fishing rod as you wait for a bite. And it's thrilling when your bobber suddenly vanishes down the hole, and you pull a slippery fish from the water with a splash.

So grab a grown-up, a thermos of hot cocoa, and get ready for an ice fishing adventure.

Getting Started

Start with a visit to your local bait store or DNR Fisheries office. Folks there can tell you in which lakes the fish are biting and where you can get onto the lake. They can also tell you where the ice is most likely to be Okay.

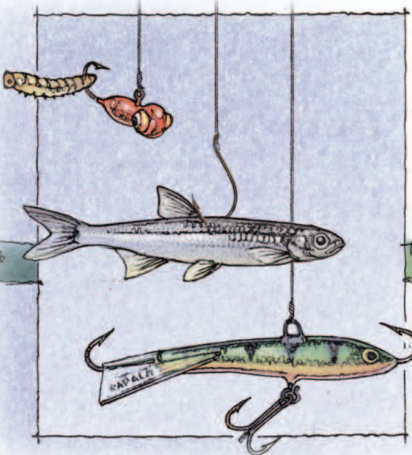
Now go find a fishing spot. Here are three ways to look:

If you know where fish hang out in summer, go there. Fish usually go to the

same places in winter.

Pick up a lake map at the bait shop or DNR and look for shallow areas or drop-offs (where the bottom gets deep quickly). Fish are more likely to be there.

Look for anglers congregated at the best fishing holes. Ask if you can fish near them. (It's not polite to drill holes too close to other anglers.) If the fish aren't biting in one spot, try another.



Minnows are popular. So are larvae called waxies, and other insect larvae. Walleyes, north-erns, and bass like to eat minnows. Crappies will bite on tiny minnows. Most panfish go for larvae and bugs in winter.

Basic Shelter

Many people bring little shacks called fish houses out onto the lake. Those made with wooden boards or metal look like cabins. Those made

with canvas and aluminum poles look like tents. To heat either kind of house, anglers use small stoves.

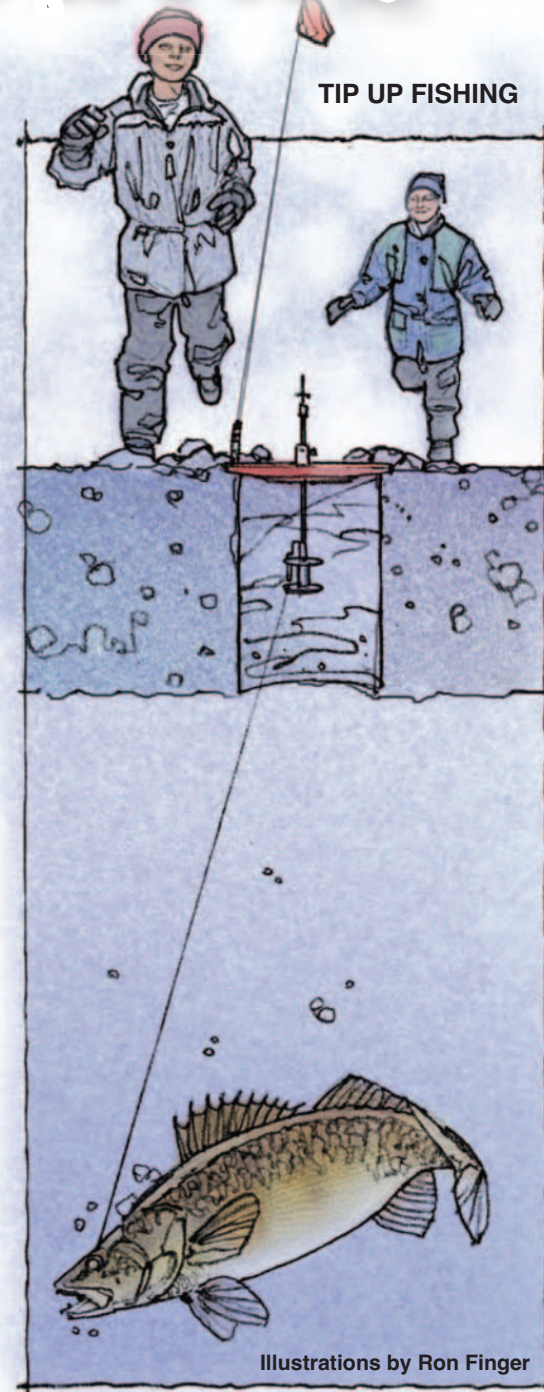
Cabin-style houses have skis or special plates on the bottom so they can be slid across ice. The owner ties a heavy rope to the house and tows it with a truck or all-terrain vehicle. Owners of these houses don't move them around often. Tentlike houses, sometimes called portable fish houses, are light enough to pull by hand with a rope. They have a plastic floor with rounded sides like a snow sled. Aluminum poles attach to the floor and hold up canvas walls and ceiling. Snap the poles together, pull the ceiling over your head, and you have an instant fish house.

Tip-Ups are fun!

You can use a regular reel, or some anglers use a device called a tip-up instead. A tip-up has two sticks. One lies across the hole. The other points down into the hole and has a spool with line. When a fish takes your bait, a flag springs up from the stick across the hole. Then you pull the fish up with the line.

Tip-ups are fun because you can watch them while reading a book or tossing a frisbee.

Be polite and don't disturb your fellow anglers with loud talk or goofing around. Always pick up your trash and anything else you brought. Remember: Anything you leave on the lake will go into the water when the ice melts. Have fun & good luck!



TIP UP FISHING

Illustrations by Ron Finger

\$10 TICKETS

Saturday February 8, 2025

MapleLakeFishingDerby.com

In Case of Inclement Weather, The Derby will be postponed to February 15, 2025

MAPLE LAKE ICE FISHING DERBY EVENT SCHEDULE

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
						• St. Paul Winter Carnival thru Feb 2nd
2 Groundhog's Day • St. Paul Winter Carnival Ends Sunrise- 7:33 a.m. Sunset- 5:24 p.m.	3 • Maple Lake Irish Boys Basketball vs. Braham, 7 p.m.	4 • Ann. Conservation Club- 7:30 p.m. • South Haven Council Meeting, 6:30 pm • Silver Creek Township Meeting, 7 p.m. • Corinna Township Meeting, 7 p.m. • Potluck Dinner Pioneer Park, 6:00 p.m. • Annandale Cardinals Girls Basketball vs. Central, 7 p.m.	5 • Maple Lake Chamber Meeting, 12 p.m., The V by HH	6 • Lion's Club Meeting, 7 p.m., at the V by HH • Maple Lake Irish Girls Basketball vs. Holdingford, 5:30 p.m. • Maple Lake Irish Boys Basketball vs. Kimball, 7 p.m.	7 Maple Lake Ice Fishing Derby Dance • Annandale Cardinals Boys Basketball vs. Rockford, 7:15 p.m. • Buffalo Community Theater, "Newsies, Jr.", Buffalo High School Auditorium, 7 p.m. • Annandale Cardinals Girls Basketball vs. Rockford, 5:45 p.m.	8 Maple Lake Ice Fishing Derby • Winter Farmer's Market, Buffalo Community Center, 9-12 • Kites On Ice Festival, Buffalo Lake, 11 a.m.-3 p.m. • Buffalo Community Theater, "Newsies, Jr.", Buffalo High School Auditorium, 7 p.m.
9 Superbowl • Family Snowshoe Hike, Ney Park, 2-3:30 p.m. • Buffalo Community Theater, "Newsies, Jr.", Buffalo High School Auditorium, 2 p.m. Sunrise- 7:24 a.m. Sunset- 5:34 p.m.	10 • Annandale City Council Meeting, City Hall, 7 p.m. • Maple Lake School Board Meeting 7p.m.	11 • Chatham Township Meeting, 7 p.m. • American Legion Meeting, 7:30 p.m. at the Legion Club • Maple Lake Schools- Late Start • Maple Lake Irish Girls Basketball vs. Swanville, 7 p.m. • Annandale Cardinals Girls Basketball vs. Norwood-Young America, 7 p.m.	12 Full Moon • Hasty-Silver Creek Sportsmen's Club Meeting, 7 p.m. • Annandale Chamber Meeting, TBD, 11:30 a.m.	13 • Wright Saddle Club Meeting, 7:30 p.m. • Maple Lake Legion Auxiliary Meeting, 7 p.m. • Sons of the American Legion, 8 p.m. at the Legion Club • Annandale Cardinals Boys Basketball vs. Litchfield, 7 p.m.	14 Valentine's Day • Buffalo Community Theater, "Newsies, Jr.", Buffalo High School Auditorium, 7 p.m. • Dog Sledding at Robert Ney Park, 4-6p.m./6:30-8:30 p.m. • Maple Lake Irish Girls Basketball vs. Long Prairie-Grey Eagle, 5:30 p.m.	15 • Dog Sledding at Robert Ney Park, 8:30-10:30 a.m./11 a.m.-1 p.m./2-4 p.m. • Sweetheart Snowshoe Hike, Ney Park, 6-8:30 p.m. • Buffalo Community Theater, "Newsies, Jr.", Buffalo High School Auditorium, 7 p.m.
16 • Buffalo Community Theater, "Newsies, Jr.", Buffalo High School, 2 p.m. Sunrise- 7:14 a.m. Sunset- 5:44 p.m.	17 Presidents Day No School Annandale & Maple Lake • Annandale School Board Meeting, AES Media Center, 7 p.m.	18 • Maple Lake Council Meeting, 7:00 p.m. • Corinna Township Meeting, 7 p.m. • Maple Lake Township Meeting, 7 p.m. • Albion Township Meeting, 7 p.m. • Silver Creek Township Meeting, 7 p.m. • Annandale Cardinals Boys Basketball vs. Dassel-Cokato, 7:15 p.m. • Annandale Cardinals Girls Basketball vs. Dassel-Cokato, 5:45 p.m.	19 • Wright Saddle Club Meeting, 7:30 p.m. • Maple Lake Legion Auxiliary Meeting, 7 p.m.	20 • Wright Saddle Club Meeting, 7:30 p.m. • Maple Lake Legion Auxiliary Meeting, 7 p.m.	21	22
23 Sunrise- 7:02 a.m. Sunset- 5:54 p.m.	25 • Wright County Snowmobile Association Meeting - American Legion, 7:30 p.m. • Maple Lake Irish Girls Basketball vs. TBD 7 p.m. • Annandale Cardinals Boys Basketball vs. Legacy Christian Academy, 7:15 p.m. ★ Deadline for March Event Calendar	26 • Knights of Columbus Meeting, St. Timothy Church, 7 p.m. • Maple Lake Irish Girls Basketball vs. TBD, 7 p.m.	27 • Annandale Cardinals Boys Basketball vs. Becker, 7 p.m.	28		

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