

# Lake Country Lure

February 2026

**Business Buzz**  
The Maple Lake  
MESSINGER

## ► DOJO KARATE

Where champions are born

By Brenda Erdahl

For 25 years Dojo Karate has been a part of the Buffalo and surrounding community and it's the opinion of many that the community is better for it.

The Dojo at 409 Highway 55 NE in Buffalo is a place where friendships are made, goals are achieved and a sense of family prevails.

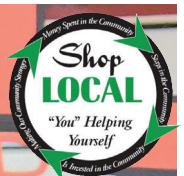
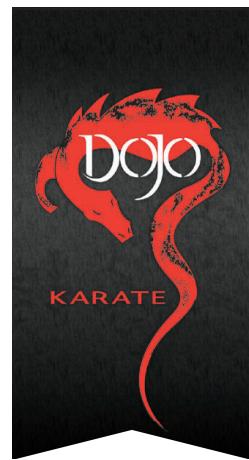
The Sites, a three generation Dojo family, has found in the karate classroom an avenue to not only pursue their own ambitions, but to also grow closer to each other.

"There are very few activities where you can do something for yourself and be with your kids as well," said Alex (Sites) Kenney who takes classes with her three-year-old daughter, brother and father.

Her daughter Ophelia is in the Mighty Tigers program where she is learning discipline and self-confidence.

"Before Ophelia started Karate, she was afraid to tell people her own name. Since she started karate, she is more confident. She talks to people now, at the grocery store and to the instructors here. It's really been a great gift," Alex said.

For Alex's brother Aiden, karate provides a more practical and holistic approach to exercise. Before joining the Dojo, he focused on body building to stay in shape. It wasn't long before he realized karate tones the entire body and the mind, plus he's learning the practical skills of self-defense.



Three generations of the Sites family are students at Dojo Karate in Buffalo. They say karate is a great way to stay fit and connected to each other and the community. They are pictured, back row, from left, Chad and Aiden. Front row, from left, Ophelia and Alex.

Their dad, Chad said he's never seen anything as all-encompassing as martial arts.

"I played sports in high school, but I don't think I've seen anything as inclusive as karate," he said.

Hourscht's mentor Grand Master Klint Klaas (a draftee for the Astros baseball team) has often attributed his success in baseball to martial arts. It not only builds confidence, but

hand eye coordination. It works the full body right down to the toes. From the concentration and focus it requires to master the forms and move on to the next belt, to the way it tones your body. Many professional athletes cross-train with martial arts, Hourscht said.

Hourscht owns and operates Dojo and nine other

- *Continued on page 2*

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## ► DOJO KARATE

classrooms just like it with business partner Master Keith Stormoen. Last summer, at an event celebrating their 25-year anniversary, both Masters were promoted to 7th Degree Blackbelt by Grand Master Klaas.

The event celebrated all those, like the Sites family, who have given and received so much from Dojo Karate.

Aiden Sites takes credit for starting his family on the martial arts journey. He recruited Ophelia first, thinking it would be a great way for her to wear off some

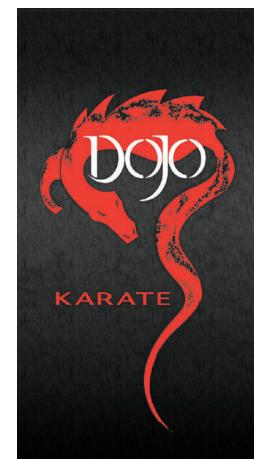
***“There is no room for judgement in martial arts; everyone wants to see you succeed,”***

– Alex (Sites) Kenney

excess energy – her favorite classes are tricks and tumbling and dodgeball – and before long Alex was interested.

Alex had no idea children as young as two and three could be successful at karate, but then she saw it with her own eyes. After watching Ophelia and Aiden a few times, she started to consider karate for herself.

“I was athletic in high school, then I had two kids back-to-back. Having babies changes your body and your mind,” she said, but karate has been a great way to get back in shape both physically and mentally. It also allows her to spend more time with her family.



It didn't take long for the three to convince Grandpa Chad to give karate a try.

“It was a way to see my own kids,” he joked.

In truth, it wasn't a hard sell.

“We'd been around the Dojo for a couple years, been at a lot of graduations and just watching kids do the curriculum. I heard Master Hourscht talking all the time about self-discipline and self-esteem and you can actually see it manifest in the classroom.”

Just months away from turning 50 when he joined, Chad thought it would be “interesting” to see if a guy his age could do it. Not only did he learn he was perfectly capable he learned that Karate is for people of all ages and intergenerational friendships are the norm.

Aiden works from home remotely and relishes the time spent at the Dojo. He's made friends across age barriers in an environment where camaraderie and respect are shared by all.

“There is no room for judgement in martial arts; everyone wants to see you succeed,” Alex said. “There is a sense of competition, but not with each other, but who you were yesterday.”

Aiden and Alex have both been so impressed with their experience at Dojo, they've



**Pictured above is the Sites family with Dojo Elite Head Instructor, Donald Low (standing at right) who is a second degree blackbelt.**

Photos by Brenda Erdahl

decided to take it a step further and become instructors' aids. Alex in particular loves working with the younger children. Aiden is currently an advanced brown belt working toward black and Alex is an advanced blue belt.

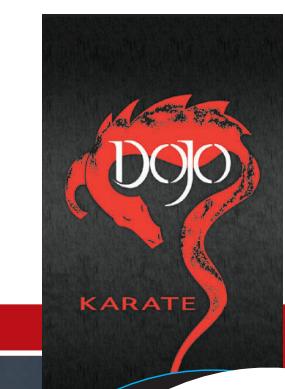
For Chad, a gold belt, Dojo has become a sanctuary where he can leave the stress of his job behind. Karate requires him to be physical and at the same time focus all his attention on learning the forms leaving no room for stressful

thoughts of work, he said. Plus, he's never been more flexible in his life.

Ophelia, a red belt, is all about the fun.

Whether you bring your own family like the Sites did or find a new family in people with shared goals and values, all are welcome at Dojo Karate.

To learn more about Dojo Karate visit them online at [www.dojokarate.com](http://www.dojokarate.com)



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# Renew Minnesota fishing licenses

## March 1st, 2026



Photos by Don Dittberner

By Minnesota DNR

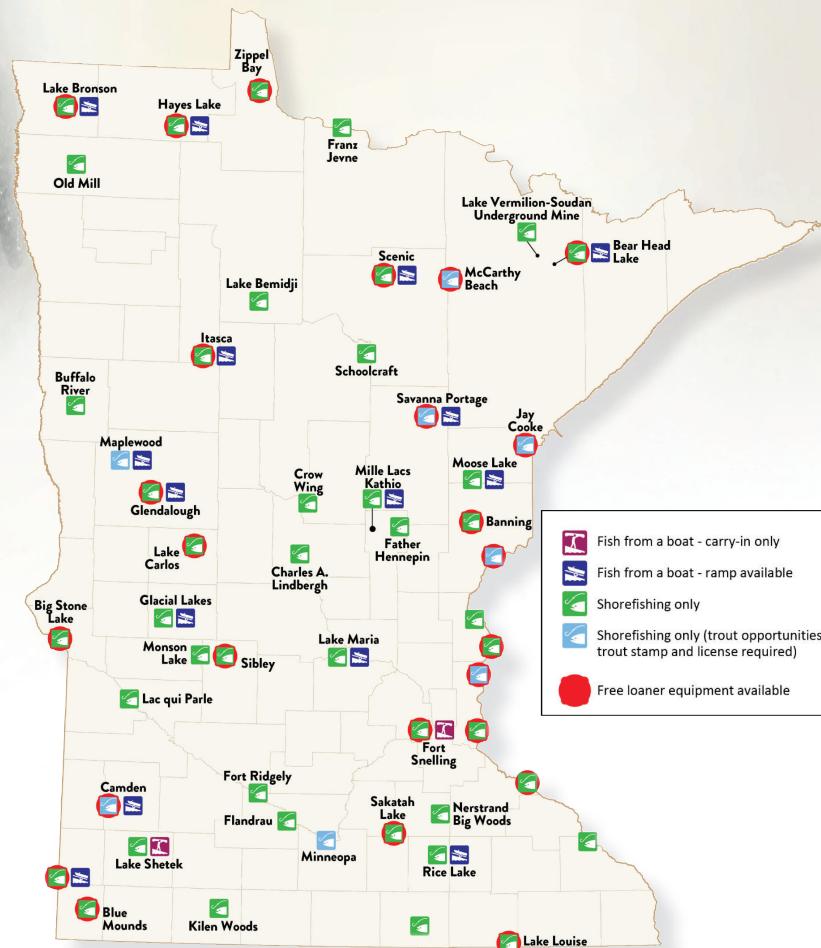
You need to buy a Minnesota fishing license if you're 16 or older. Annual licenses allow you to fish from March 1 to the last day of February the following year. Lower-cost licenses are available for shorter time periods. There is an added cost to fish for trout, salmon or sturgeon.

Minnesota residents are people who maintain a legal residence in Minnesota for at least 60 consecutive days prior to purchasing a license. If 21 or older, they must present a current Minnesota driver's license or identification card to obtain a resident license.

### Fish for free in most Minnesota state parks

Minnesota residents can fish without a fishing license in most Minnesota state parks, including ice fishing!

If the body of water requires a trout stamp, you will need a fishing license whether you are fishing for trout or



**Fishing is free in most State Parks in Minnesota. At parks with fishable trout opportunities, a trout stamp must be purchased before fishing. See fishing regulations for more information.**

for something else. If no trout stamp is required, a Minnesota resident may fish in a state park without a fishing license when:

Fishing from shore or wading in water on state-owned land within the state park; or

Fishing through the ice, or from

a boat or a float on a lake that is completely encompassed within a Minnesota state park.

You will still need a vehicle permit to enter a Minnesota state park. All park rules must be followed as usual, as well as any fishing rules and regulations.

### Minnesota Residential Fishing Licenses

New License required March 1, 2026

Angling - 24-hour	\$12
Angling - 3 year Individual	\$71
Angling - 72 Hour	\$14
Angling - combo (Married Couple)	\$40
Angling - dark house rental	\$30
Angling - dark house shelter Residents	\$15
Angling - individual Residents	\$25
Angling - individual Non-Residents	\$51
Angling - military Residents	Free
Angling - Netting white tulibee herring	\$10
Angling - spearing from dark house	\$6
Angling Youth Ages 16 to 17	\$5
Conservation combo angling	\$27
Conservation individual angling	\$17
Sports - combination	\$57
Sports - individual	\$41
Stamp - trout (validation & pictorial) Both	\$10.75
Stamp - trout validation Both	\$10
Super Sports Combination	\$126
Super Sports Individual	\$100

A full list of Residential and Non-Residential licenses available on MN DNR Website.



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Community Calendar

# February 2026

## Business Buzz



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1  Full Moon Sunrise: 7:36 a.m. Sunset: 5:24 p.m.	2  Groundhog Day Irish Girls Basketball vs. Paynesville, 7 p.m. Cardinals Girls BB vs. Milaca, 7 p.m.	3  • Annandale Conservation Club- 7:30 pm • So. Haven City Council Meets, 6:30 pm • Silver Creek Township Meeting, 7 p.m. • Corinna Township Meeting, 7 p.m.	4  • Maple Lake Chamber Meeting, 12 p.m., The V by HH	5  • Lion's Club Meeting, 7 p.m., at the V by HH • Maple Lake Irish Boys Basketball vs. Kimball, 7 p.m.	6  • Maple Lake Ice Fishing Derby Pre-Party • Buffalo Community Theater, "Musical Adventures of Stanley Jr.", Discovery Elementary School Stage, 7 p.m. • Irish Boys BB vs. Kimball, 7 p.m. • Irish Girls BB vs. Eden Valley-W. 7 p.m.	7  • Maple Lake Ice Fishing Derby on Maple Lake • Buffalo Community Theater, "Musical Adventures of Stanley Jr.", 7 p.m. • Winter Farmer's Market, Buffalo Com- munity Center, 9-12 • Winter Festival, Otsego Prairie Park, 10 a.m.- 2 p.m.
8  • Super Bowl LX • Buffalo Community Theater, "Musical Adventures of Stanley Jr.", Discovery Elementary School Stage, 7 p.m. Sunrise: 7:27 a.m. Sunset: 5:34 p.m.	9  • Annandale City Council Meeting, City Hall, 7 p.m. • Maple Lake School Board Meeting 7 p.m.	10  • Chatham Township Meeting, 7 p.m. • American Legion Meeting, 7:30 p.m. at the Legion Club • Irish Girls BB vs. Royalton, 7 p.m. • Cardinals Girls BB vs. Watertown-Mayer 7 p.m.	11  • Hasty-Silver Creek Sportsmen's Club Meeting, 7 p.m. • Annandale Chamber Meeting, TBD, 11:30 a.m.	12  • 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 • Irish Girls BB vs. Kimball, 7 p.m. • Irish BB vs. PACT Charter, 5:30 p.m. • Annandale Cardinals Boys Basketball @	13  • Buffalo Community Theater, "Musical Adventures of Stanley Jr.", Discovery Elementary School Stage, 7 p.m. • No School ML-Teacher Workshop Day • Irish Girls BB vs. Mille Lacs, 5:30 p.m. • Irish Boys BB vs. Holdingford, 7 p.m.	14  • Valentine's Day • Sweetheart Snowshoe Hike, Ney Park, 6-8:30 p.m. • Buffalo Community Theater, "Musical Adventures of Stanley Jr.", Discovery Elementary School Stage, 7 p.m. • Kites On Ice, Buffalo Lake, 11-3 p.m.
15  Sunrise: 7:17 a.m. Sunset: 5:44 p.m. • Buffalo Community Theater, "Musical Adventures of Stanley Jr.", Discovery Elementary School Stage, 2 p.m.	16  • Presidents Day, No School Annandale & Maple Lake • Irish Girls BB @ Paynesville 7 p.m. • Cardinals Boys BB vs. Morris Area 7 p.m. • Annandale School Board Meeting, AES Media Center, 7 p.m.	17  • Mardi Gras • 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. • MLVFW Post 7664, at the The V, 7 p.m. • Cardinals BB vs. Dassel-Cokato, 7 p.m.	18  • Ash Wednesday	19  • Wright Saddle Club Meeting, 7:30 p.m. • ML Legion Auxiliary Meets, 7 p.m. • Cardinals Girls BB vs. Glencoe SL, 7 p.m.	20  • Irish Boys BB vs. Benson, 7 p.m. • Cardinals Boys BB vs. Glencoe-SL, 7 p.m.	21
22  Sunrise: 7:02 a.m. Sunset: 5:54 p.m.	23  • Wright County Snowmobile Association Meeting - American Legion, 7:30 p.m. • Irish Boys BB vs. Royalton, 7 p.m.	24  • Knights of Columbus Meeting, St. Timothy Church, 7 p.m. • Irish Girls BB vs. TBD, 7 p.m. • Cardinals Boys BB vs. Big Lake, 7 p.m.	25	26  • Cardinals Boys BB vs. Howard Lake-Wa- verly-Winsted, 7 p.m.	27  • Purchase New Fishing License	28

★ Calendar Sponsors - Submit next months events before the deadline noted above - Email to [ads@maplelakemessenger.com](mailto:ads@maplelakemessenger.com)

  
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