

Ice-mazing! Cool new ice maze added to this year's slate of Polar Fest attractions

By Grant Evans
gevans@dlnewspapers.com

Ice art and construction is a meticulous process involving everything from chainsaws to excavators.

Lance Akers, of Nature's Design Landscaping near Pelican Rapids, is no stranger to the process. He and his work partner, Jack Davis, have been involved with the ice harvest for Polar Fest since 2018, pulling blocks of ice from Little

Detroit Lake and shaping them into giant ice sculptures.

This year, to commemorate the Detroit Lakes' 150th birthday as part of the festival, they conceived and constructed an ambitious new ice maze.

The maze is located right next to the Pavilion, where there's been a small sledding hill during past Polar Fests. Organizers wanted to replace the sledding hill this year with something new and easier to maintain, and an ice maze seemed like a natural fit for that already ice-filled and high-traffic location. The Ice Palace, other smaller ice sculptures, and snow sculptures are all very close by.

Since the city's Sesqui-centennial was the main inspiration for the ice maze, the milestone was worked into the design of the maze: When seen from above, "DL 150" is spelled out.

Davis conceptualized the project with a CAD drawing (a highly detailed computer illustration) as a guidepost, and then workers constructed the maze by hand.

The ice blocks used to build the maze were pulled from the lake during this year's ice harvest, along with all the blocks that were pulled for construction of the ice palace. Akers said the blocks measure about 22-by-44 inches each.



Promotional photo / Detroit Lakes Tribune
"Rumors & Dreams," a Fleetwood Mac tribute show will play as part of Polar Fest at the Historic Holmes Theatre on Saturday, Feb. 19 at 7:30 p.m.

Hot dish and dessert bars: Could it get any more Minnesotan around here?

The new addition of celebrity judge 'That Midwestern Mom' shows that yes, yes it can

A Polar Fest staple that's back on the menu again in 2022 is the Minne-"Soda" Hot Dish and Dessert Bar Challenge, set for Sunday, Feb. 13 from 4-5:30 p.m. at Grace Lutheran Church.

As always, this delicious event will feature the best-of-the-best hot dish and dessert bar recipes.

Celebrity judges — including Frazee's own TikTok sensation, Amber Estenson Schwarzrock, who plans to livestream the event on her channel — will determine the winners of the challenge trophy.

Want to taste-test the entries yourself? All it costs is a free-will donation, to benefit Grace Lutheran Church and their charity of choice. And you'll get a can

of soda and a dinner roll to boot!

Entry submissions will be taken between 3-3:30 p.m. on the day of the event, followed by judging from 3:35-4 p.m. Dinner will be served after that.

Winners' trophies will be presented by Schwarzrock, who's quirky "That Midwestern Mom" videos have gone viral on social media. Known for her "Minnesota Nice" personality, exaggerated Minnesota accent and retro aesthetic, her followers enjoy watching her cheeky 'cooking shows' about Midwestern hot dishes and Cool Whip-filled "salads that aren't really salads."

For more information about the hot dish challenge, contact Jim Brogren at lololand@gmail.com or 218-841-2968.



Contributed / Detroit Lakes Tribune
Amber Estenson Schwarzrock, a Frazee resident, is better known in the world of social media as "That Midwestern Mom."

Fun new events this year

It couldn't be a 'super sized' Polar Fest without the addition of some new ways to have even more frosty fun.

For the kids, there's a new **Polar Glow Night**. Set for Monday, Feb. 21 at the Pavilion, this family-friendly event will run from 5:30-7:30 p.m.

"They'll have glow sticks and a hot chocolate bar, with kids' music playing," said Lauinger.

While admission is free, a free will donation might get folks some extra goodies to share.

For the grownups, there's a new **Home Brew Tasting Night**, hosted by Bucks Mill Brewing at the Washington Square Mall on Thursday, Feb. 24 from 5-8 p.m. Home brewers, get your beers ready, and bring some samples to pour for the public. Bucks Mill Brewing will also be providing some free samples of their products. Email bucksmillbrew@gmail.com for more information.

Two other new events are both set for Polar Fest's final day, Feb. 27.

First, drop by the Detroit Lakes City Park at 11 a.m. for a little **"Snoga" — yoga in the snow** — sponsored by the local yoga studio, 180 Balance.

Then, at 3 p.m., the Boys & Girls Club of Detroit Lakes will be hosting a **Sweetheart Sundae Dance**.

"Because of some renovations going on at the Holmes Theatre, they couldn't do their Daddy's Little Sweetheart Dance this year," said Lauinger — but dads and daughters ages 2-12 are welcome to check out this event instead.

The reigning Miss Northwest and Miss Northwest Outstanding Teen will be on hand for the festivities, which will include a grand march, dance, sundae bar, treats and more. Tickets are available online at dlccc.org/holmes-theatre.html, or at the door the night of the dance.

Also new this year is a fun **Valentine selfie station** at the mall, a **Fleetwood Mac tribute show** at the Holmes, and **children's book giveaways**, among others. See the full list of Polar Fest events on pages 6-7.



Detroit Lakes Tribune file photo
Daddies and daughters ages 2-12, put on your dancing shoes! The Boys & Girls Club of Detroit Lakes will be hosting a Sweetheart Sundae Dance on Sunday, Feb. 27 at 3 p.m.

PLUNGE

From Page 4

to sign up on the day of the event, but those who do so will not qualify for the celebrity guest incentives. Signup is also available online at bgcdl.org.

Another new incentive, just for teams, is the chance to earn \$500 in cash for raising the most money in pledges prior to the Plunge.

As always, the costume contest will be back, with cash prizes for first through fourth places, for individuals and teams.

A Plunge raffle will also be taking place on the day of the event. Out of 1,500 tickets sold, there will be 13 prizes given away, valued at over \$5,000. Tickets are available at Central Market and the Boys and Girls Club Thrift Store, for \$10 each.



Detroit Lakes Tribune file photo
Actor Josh Duhamel stepped up and delivered as "Proxy Plunger" for the Polar Fest Plunge in 2021, as the event was mostly canceled due to COVID-19. The North Dakota native agreed to take the plunge on his own as a means of raising funds for the Detroit Lakes Boys and Girls Club. This year's event will feature multiple celebrity guests, including local YouTube sensations the Cboys, country music duo Tigirlily, and Minnesota Vikings tight end Ben Ellefson.

FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT POLAR FEST, VISIT POLARFESTDL.COM.

WE ♥ POLAR FEST

BUILD DYNAMIC. BUILT FOR LIFE.

525 Roosevelt Ave. • Detroit Lakes, MN

1-800-492-4833

www.dynamichomes.com

Schedule an Eye Exam Today!

General Optometry • Contact Lenses

Pediatrics • LASIK Consultant

Diseases of the Eye

Thank you for voting us
1 Eye Clinic &
Dr. Mike #1 Dr of Optometry
3 Years in a Row!

Dr. Michael Morrison
Optometrist

Dr. Marc Harrie
Optometrist

Morrison Eye Care

Detroit Lakes • Mahanomen

Personalized eye health solutions,
from our family to yours

1244 Washington Ave.
Detroit Lakes, MN
218.847.2020

Manitok Mall
Mahanomen, MN
218.936.2020

www.morrisononeyecare.com