

# OPINION

Contributions welcome to editor@plamerican.com, (952) 345-6378

COMMENTARY

# Stay smart on the ice

BY MEGHAN LITSEY

While many of us are looking forward to our favorite winter activities that our local lakes will soon offer, we must first wait patiently for the ice to thicken enough to support us and our gear.

Knowledge is the best way to keep safe on lakes in the winter, from understanding how ice forms to avoiding a thin-ice situation.

Most of us know that water freezes at 32 degrees Fahrenheit. But water is strange when it freezes. The simple explanation of how ice can form on a lake is “density.” More specifically, the crucial property of water is that at 40 degrees F, water is most dense or heavy, and it becomes lighter and less dense the more it cools.

As winter temperatures settle in, lakes undergo mixing until the entire water body from top to bottom reaches 40 degrees F. As surface temperatures continue to drop, the surface water will start to turn into ice at around 32 degrees F, while the temperatures below hold steady at around 40 degrees F. Once this occurs, the ice on the surface expands and takes up more room than the water it was made from. This makes ice lighter or less dense than the heavier or denser water below it, allowing ice to float on top of the water, rather than sink to the bottom of the lake.

Once an ice crust has formed on the top of a lake and the air above the ice continues to be colder than the ice, the ice will thicken. The cold air above the ice forces the heat to leave the lake water below the ice and from the ice itself. Eventually this causes the water below the ice to cool and freeze into thicker layers, until we can stand, and even drive, on it without falling through.

After some time, the ice layer will act as an insulator, preventing the cold air above the ice from removing heat from the unfrozen water below it. Because of this, deeper lakes typically do not freeze solid from top to bottom. Many factors determine the

## Ice is never 100-percent safe

Many factors determine the overall strength of ice, including the depth of water below the ice, the shape and size of the water body, currents, temperature, rough fish and snow cover. This is why it’s important to remember that ice is never 100-percent safe, and you can never judge the strength of ice just by its age, appearance, thickness or temperature.

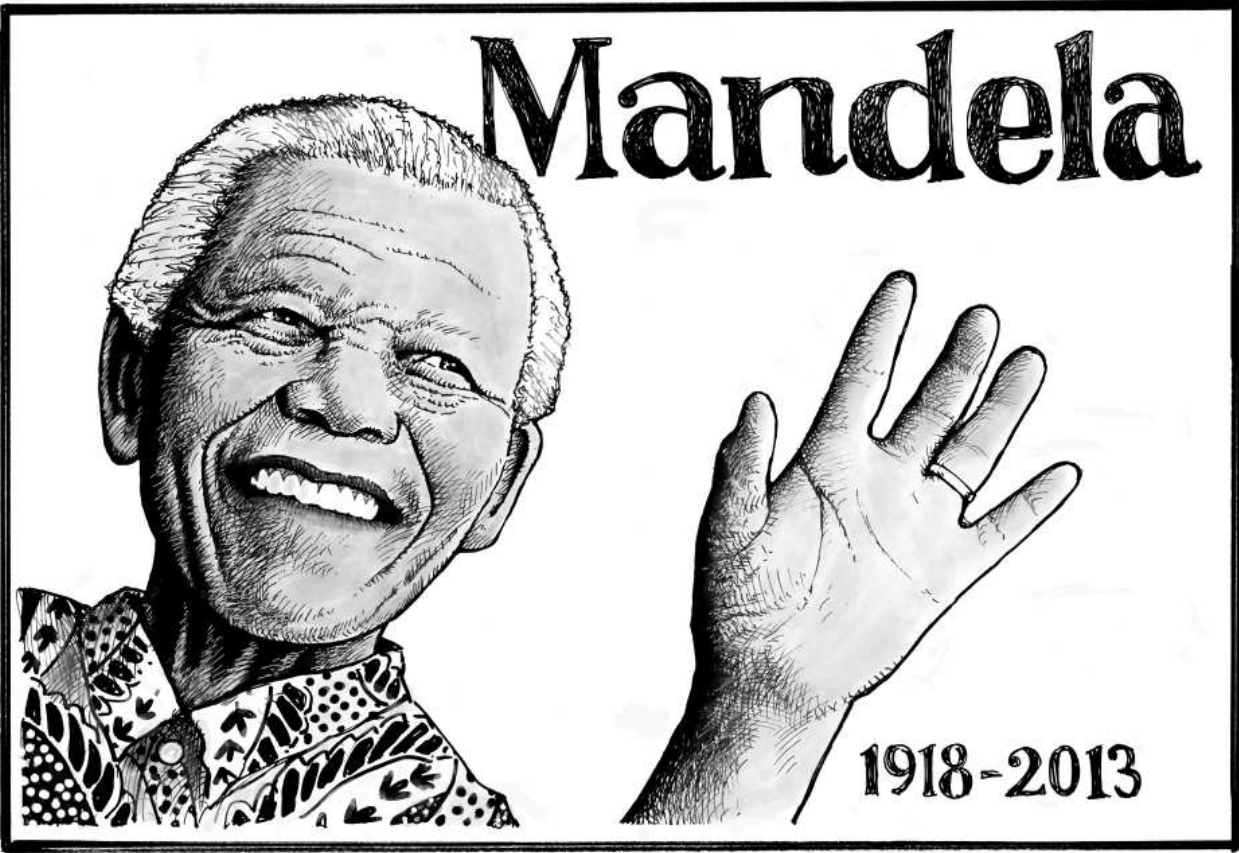
overall strength of ice, including the depth of water below the ice, the shape and size of the water body, currents, temperature, rough fish and snow cover. This is why it’s important to remember that ice is never 100-percent safe, and you can never judge the strength of ice just by its age, appearance, thickness or temperature.

When you head out on the ice this winter, stay on the lookout for signs of weak ice. Ice is generally weaker where there is moving water, such as near inlets and outlets, bridge supports and islands. Slush indicates that the ice is weakening and should be considered a danger sign. If ice at the shoreline is cracked or soft, people should stay off. Finally, you should avoid honeycombed ice and dark ice, which indicates that the ice is thawing.

Before you head out on the ice this winter, contact a local bait shop or lakeside resort for updates on current ice conditions. Then, double check the ice thickness once you get there. Remember, you need at least 4 inches of new, clear ice for activities on foot.

For more information on ice safety, visit the DNR’s website at: [www.dnr.state.mn.us/safety/ice](http://www.dnr.state.mn.us/safety/ice) or contact the DNR Information Center at: (651) 296-6157.

*Meghan Litsey is the outreach specialist with the Prior Lake-Spring Lake Watershed District.*



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### NATIONAL POLITICS

### Blame Democrats for Obamacare

I have an individual healthcare plan with a \$6,000 deductible that I purchased for my family in July 2013.

I just received a letter saying that my policy was required to add these services due to Obamacare: Mental health, chemical dependency, maternity, chiropractic care, infertility, biofeedback, pediatric vision/dental, etc.

I don’t need these services, and I don’t want to pay extra for these services.

Now my policy is going up 43 percent starting in January.

My family budget does not have hundreds of extra dollars to spend on services I don’t want or need. The Affordable Care Act is making my healthcare coverage very unaffordable. We really need to hold the Democrats accountable for this fiasco and vote them out of office.

**Kevin Lilland**  
Prior Lake

### Anecdotes don’t reflect true ObamaCare

U.S. Rep. John Kline calls ObamaCare “a disaster for many,” concerned that 140,000 Minnesotans have to change (but still get) health insurance policies. But why is he not concerned about the 520,000 Minnesotans who are uninsured (according to the 2010 census) and cannot get health insurance without the Affordable Care Act (aka ObamaCare)?

Eighty percent of them have jobs that do not offer insurance. The Congressional Budget Office said, (and sign up rates confirm), these uninsured, and 50 million other uninsured Americans, want to buy affordable health care under ObamaCare.

We should urge our representatives to spend more time helping these 520,000 Minnesotans get affordable healthcare under ObamaCare, and less time trying to prevent them, and 50 million other Americans, from getting insurance.

Please try to keep a perspective between anecdotal cases against ObamaCare vs. the millions of Americans who will benefit from it. If needed, let’s fix the problem for the few vs. deny healthcare for 50 million.

I am retired, 61, have a pre-existing condition and was turned down by every insurance company. Luckily, Minnesota offers a state plan (MCHA) for people like me. Under ObamaCare, I can choose from dozens of plans and cut my costs by over \$100 per month, which also saves Minnesota taxpayers money. Mr. Kline offers no specif-

ics how his “plan” would help me or Minnesota.

Every year, one million Americans still go bankrupt due to healthcare costs — and 70 percent of them, 700,000, had paid-in-full policies that were canceled after they got sick.

Insurance companies are the real “Death Panels,” deciding to “pull the plug on Grandma” by canceling existing policies and cutting off coverage at an arbitrary “life time limit”, thus making you unable to buy new healthcare due to your pre-existing condition.

ObamaCare outlaws these “standard insurance company practices.” Republicans have done nothing to end these unethical practices, and overturning ObamaCare would allow them to continue.

As for the 140,000 whose insurance companies blamed ObamaCare for canceling their policy, I would point out two things:

1. Minnesota law dictates health insurance can’t be canceled.
2. ObamaCare exempted all existing policies when it was passed: Part 2, titled: “Sec. 1251. Preservation of right to maintain existing coverage.” It says every plan that existed when the bill became law in 2010 was “grandfathered in,” hence they are all exempt from the law. And this year, every policy written since then was also exempted.

So if Mr. Kline wants to help these 140,000 Minnesotans, he should spend more time investigating insurance companies for violating both state and federal law, and less time lamenting ObamaCare in op eds.

Like Mr. Kline, Sean Hannity on Fox also had anecdotal stories of people claiming they were harmed by ObamaCare. But when reporters checked with those guests, they all actually could get better coverage under ObamaCare, for half the cost of their current policy. Minnesotans would be better served if Mr. Kline and his staff would likewise help us to also find better healthcare for less under ObamaCare.

**Chuck Miller**  
Prior Lake

### COMMUNITY

### Winterfair donations help veterans

The auxiliary of the Prior Lake VFW would like to extend our most sincere thanks to all who helped make our recent Winterfair artisan and craft sale a success.

We are appreciative of all the businesses and individuals who helped with advertising, set-up and purchase of the wide variety of gifts available.

We want to extend a special thank you to all those who donated socks for homeless veterans. Your contribution will really help those in need during the cold winter months. The

t-shirts and briefs that were donated will be delivered to the Minneapolis Veterans Hospital, where they are needed by many.

Thanks again for your generous support. Best wishes to all for a very Happy New Year.

**Barbara Prindle**  
Prior Lake

### Heaton’s family says thanks

On behalf of my entire family, I want to thank the community of Prior Lake and Savage for the incredible outpouring of care and support we received both before Sue Heaton’s passing and afterward.

The experience has been one of both anguish and joy in that we know she is no longer having to fight against cancer.

I especially want to thank the Optimist Club, the Uplifters Cancer Support Group, the Pink Prayer Warriors, Boy Scout Troop 331 and the Prior Lake High School Boys Swim Team for going above and beyond during this time. I say with great confidence that our family (and Sue’s extended family) appreciate the efforts these organizations and people made in supporting us. I also want to thank the funeral home for the attention and care that was made in recognizing that Sue Heaton played a large role in this community.

Finally, I have a challenge. Many people shared how Sue was a torch bearer for being involved and striving to improve the experience of the community. Don’t let the torch be dropped. Step up, let those projects and events for which she advocated continue.

Pick up the torch and make a better place in this world.

**Chuck Jorenby**  
Prior Lake

### SENIOR LUNCHEON

### Seniors willing to give instead of receive

Our seniors are awesome.

On Monday, as Lions chairperson for the Senior Citizens Christmas Luncheon, hosted by the Prior Lake Lions and VFW Post 6208, I was worried how attendees would take our decision not to have door prizes except for the centerpieces. Instead, we asked them to bring a Toys for Tot donation or an item for the food shelf, “giving instead of getting.”

They overwhelmed us with both toys and food, plus money for the food shelf from those who forgot. This day has reaffirmed my faith in the spirit of Christmas giving.

Thank you to everyone who donated anything. Merry Christmas, and a healthy and happy New Year to each and everyone.

**Char Beerling**  
Prior Lake

## Reach your representatives

### U.S. SENATORS

Sen. Amy Klobuchar  
United States Senate  
302 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510  
(202) 224-3244  
-or-  
Metro office  
1200 Washington Ave. S., Suite 250  
Minneapolis, MN 55415  
(612) 727-5220  
Web: [www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov)

Sen. Al Franken  
United States Senate  
320 Hart Senate Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20510  
(202) 224-5641  
Web: [www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov)

### U.S. REPRESENTATIVE

**-2nd District**  
Rep. John Kline  
2439 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, D.C. 20515  
(202) 225-2271  
-or-  
350 W. Burnsville Parkway, Suite 135  
(952) 808-1213  
Web: [www.kline.house.gov](http://www.kline.house.gov)

### GOVERNOR

Gov. Mark Dayton  
Office of the Governor  
130 State Capitol  
75 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.  
St. Paul, MN 55155  
(651) 201-3400  
E-mail: [mark.dayton@state.mn.us](mailto:mark.dayton@state.mn.us)

### HOUSE DISTRICT 55A

Rep. Michael Beard (R)  
417 State Office Building  
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.  
St. Paul, MN 55155  
Phone: (651) 296-8872  
E-mail: [rep.mike.beard@house.mn](mailto:rep.mike.beard@house.mn)

### HOUSE DISTRICT 55B

Tony Albright (R)  
417 State Office Building  
100 Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Blvd.  
St. Paul, MN 55155  
Phone: (651) 297-9010  
Email: [rep.tony.albright@house.mn](mailto:rep.tony.albright@house.mn)

### SENATE DISTRICT 55

Eric R. Pratt (R)  
23 State Office Building  
St. Paul, MN 55155-1206  
Phone: (651) 296-4123  
E-mail: [sen.eric.pratt@senate.mn](mailto:sen.eric.pratt@senate.mn)

## PRIOR LAKE AMERICAN

(USPS 004-696)

**About us:** The Prior Lake American, founded in 1960, is published by Southwest Newspapers, a division of Red Wing Publishing Company. We are an active member of the Minnesota Newspaper Association and the official newspaper for the City of Prior Lake and School District 719.

Published weekly on Saturdays; periodicals postage paid at Prior Lake, MN. POSTMASTER: Send change of address notice to Prior Lake American, P.O. Box 8, Shakopee, MN 55379.

**Location:** The Prior Lake American office is located at 327 Marshall Rd., Ste. 125, Shakopee, MN 55379. Mailing address is Prior Lake American, P.O. Box 538, Prior Lake, MN 55372. For general information call (952) 447-6669; send faxes to (952) 445-3335.

### Newspaper rates:

One-year subscriptions, \$30 voluntary in Prior Lake, \$34 in Scott and Carver Counties, \$45 outside of Scott and Carver Counties. Subscriptions are non-refundable.

**Guest columns and letters to the editor:** Letters to the editor and guest commentaries stating positions on issues facing the local community are especially welcome but are reviewed by the editor prior to publication. The newspaper reserves the right to edit letters for length, grammar and clarity. We will not print letters of a libelous nature. Letters should be 500 or fewer words in length. Exceptions are at the editor’s discretion. Deadline for letters is noon Wednesday before the Saturday publication date. Letters must contain the address and daytime phone number of the author, as well as a signature (except on e-mails). We prefer letters that are e-mailed to [editor@plamerican.com](mailto:editor@plamerican.com). Editorials that appear on this page represent the institutional voice of the newspaper. Any questions or comments should be directed to the editor.

### Deadlines

News: noon Wednesday  
Advertising: 4 p.m. Tuesday  
Marketplace (Classifieds): 3 p.m. Thursday for paid ads;  
noon Thursday for Thrift ads  
Legal notices: Noon Tuesday

**Publisher:** Laurie Hartmann (952) 345-6878; [lhartmann@swpub.com](mailto:lhartmann@swpub.com)

**Editor:** Lori Carlson (952) 345-6378; [editor@plamerican.com](mailto:editor@plamerican.com)

**Staff Writer:** Kaitlyn Egan (952) 345-6375; [kegan@swpub.com](mailto:kegan@swpub.com)

**Staff Writer:** Alex Hall (952) 345-6381; [ahall@swpub.com](mailto:ahall@swpub.com)

**Sports Editor:** Tom Schardin (952) 345-6379; [tschardin@swpub.com](mailto:tschardin@swpub.com)

**Advertising Sales:** Matt Terres (952) 345-6372; [mterres@swpub.com](mailto:mterres@swpub.com)

**Advertising Sales:** Pat Vickerman (952) 345-6373;

[pvickerman@swpub.com](mailto:pvickerman@swpub.com)

**Circulation:** Ruby Winings (952) 345-6682; [circulation@swpub.com](mailto:circulation@swpub.com)

**Marketplace (Classified) Advertising:** (952) 345-3003;

self-serve at [www.imarketplace.mn](http://www.imarketplace.mn)

**Composition:** Mike Gears

For breaking news and news updates, go to [www.plamerican.com](http://www.plamerican.com) or follow us on Twitter and Facebook. Find sports scores online at [www.plamerican.com/scoreboard](http://www.plamerican.com/scoreboard). Leave news tips at (952) 345-6378.

© 2013 Southwest Newspapers ([www.swnewspapers.com](http://www.swnewspapers.com))