



Museum Hours: 9—5; Every day
 906-477-6298
 W11660 U.S. 2, Naubinway, MI 49762
 E-mail: info@snowmobileMuseum.com
 Webpage: www.snowmobileMuseum.com
 Facebook: Top of the Lake Snowmobile Museum

32nd Annual Top of the Lake Show (Ride cancelled), Feb 16 & 17, 2024 by Greg Busch

Inside this issue:	
Annual Show & Ride	1-2
Rear Engine Antique Trail Ride	3
Veteran's Ride	4
Ellis Sutfin Tribute	4
Fall Swap Meet, -9/24/2024	4
Museum Survey Results	5
MACC Grant	6
Havercroft Brothers Award	6
Traveling T-Shirts	6
Snowmobile the Mighty Mac 2023	7
Meet the Museum's New Mascot	8
Fundraising Form	8
Advertisers	9-11



The Show Must Go On! With one of the worst winters in memory-and worst meaning lack of snow. The Museum show went on and

we hope everyone who attended was happy. 189 show sleds were lined up, including possibly the largest gathering of Eliason snowmobiles together at one place. Oh, and most of them were running, with the granddaughter of their creator, Carl Eliason, looking on with an emotional smile on her face.

We went from grass to a few inches of snow overnight on Wednesday, and for the first time in our history, Friday's ride to the Cranberry Lodge had to be cancelled, along with most of the Rear Engine Ride leading up to the show (they went for a ride on Thursday.)

Friends and enthusiasts came to show off their toys and enjoy the company from fellow collectors or people there just interested in the history of a snowmobile that was created 100 years ago in Wisconsin. Friends from as far away as South Dakota, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania and 3 from Canada were in attendance. Some took advantage of fresh fallen snow to get out and run these dinosaurs for a chance to

Left: Fall swap meet raffle: 1974 Ski Whiz donated by Brad Koster (See page 4 for details)



Eliasons on display. Photo by Steve Landon

go back in time and live that dream that our forefathers created back in 1924, before they even had electricity.

Saturday was the dinner and benefit auction. The Museum staff wants to thank you for the donation of auction items and a big thank you to those who attended to help support the Museum. The guest speaker was the granddaughter of Carl Eliason, Jona Eliason, who told the amazing story of her grandfather's dream to create a snow machine that was intended



Sept. '24 Swap Meet Raffle-8'x8"shed



Above: Jona was presented with a banner from this year's show. Bernie Reid, Jona Eliason, and Charlie.

(Continued on pg. 2)



(Cont from page 1) to do the work that no other machine could do. Carl was handicapped and wanted to get out and hunt and trap in the snow with his brothers, so he put a motor on a toboggan and called it the Eliason Motor Toboggan. That creation led to the machines we grew up playing with that weren't just a work machine. This is the link for the presentation by Jona at the Banquet, done by Don Hamilton: https://youtu.be/Qmfl26Sukdg?si=euKxMFO0aA1s_CxF

Next year's featured sled will be Polaris, which will be celebrating 70 years of snowmobiling. Special guest speaker from one of the 3 families that helped create the brand, will be here at the banquet. We hope to see many Polaris models attend to help display the history of this great brand of snowmobiles.

Thanks to our auctioneers, Ted Postula and Scott Peters



Jan McGuirk won the Quilt donated by the Northern Neighbors Quilters, and donated it back for the auction



Left: Auction model, Tony Rolfes



Above: Eliason owners, (L to R) Barrie Graham, Don Hamilton, Tony Rolfes, Ted Postula, Dave Shope, Al Jewell, Jona Eliason, John McGuirk, Aaron Schroeder. Each received a special Eliason Show mug.

Feb. Show Awards Winners:

- Favorite Antique** – Gerald & Diane Smith, 1964 Polaris Voyager
- Favorite Vintage** – Brandon Sanders, 1969 Arctic Cat Rat Sled
- Featured Sled, Most Original** – Ted Postula, 1953 Eliason
- Featured Sled, Most Unique** – Aaron Schroeder, 1942 Eliason
- Featured Sled, Best Restored** – Don Hamilton, 1953 Eliason
- Tow Strap Award** – Tony Rolfes, Sartell, MN
- Special Button Drawing** – Todd Kavalunas, Lapeer, MI

Raffle Drawing Winners – Feb. 2024

- 1st -1972 Evinrude – Al Sheppard, Standish, MI
- 2nd - 2 Night Stay, Adoba Hotel – Kim Crabtree, Jackson, MI
- 3rd - \$150 Gift Certificate, Fish & Hunt Shop – Mark Thomas
- 4th - \$100 Gas Card – Louie Jung, Randolph, WI
- 5th - Snowmobile Print – Mark Thomas, Arlington, IN
- 6th - \$50 Cash – Merle Foss, Ann Arbor, MI



Left: Raffle Winner, Al Sheppard, Standish, MI, won the 1972 Evinrude

Right: Thanks to Steve Landon for this great picture! He has been battling cancer for the last 4 months and was able to attend our Show. We're so glad he's back behind the camera.



Museum Upcoming Events:

- May 26, 2024 - St. Germain Swap & Show, St. Germain WI
- July 12-13, 2024 - ASCOA Summer meeting, Hopedale, IL at the Willis Museum
- Aug 2-4, 2024- National Vintage Show, Duluth, MN
- Aug. 16 & 17 - Buckley Old Engine Show, Buckley, MI
- Sept 21, 2024 - Top of the Lake Swap Meet (behind the Museum)
- Nov 1-3, 2024 - Snowmobile USA Show, Novi, MI
- Nov 1-2, 2024 - Mid MI Power Sports Swap Meet, Birch Run, MI
- Dec 14, 2024 - Snowmobile the Mighty Mac, St Ignace, MI (register online with St Ignace Visitor's Bureau)

These are events we will be attending.

You are welcome to post your event on the Top of the Lake Snowmobile Museum Facebook page.

Welcome New Members:

- ◆ Scott Johnston – Tilbury, Ontario
- ◆ F & S Yamaha & Marine – Spring Grove, PA
- ◆ Bud & Kelly Chamberlin – Curtis, MI
- ◆ Steve & Sandy Veltman – Montague, MI
- ◆ Brian Briggs – West Grove, PA
- ◆ Mike Carr – Oconomowoc, WI
- ◆ Allen & Maria Giannakopoulos - Mancos, CO
- ◆ Greg & Karen Soper – Branch, MI
- ◆ Kerry Hamilton – Indian River, MI
- ◆ Pat Sheridan – Rapid River, MI
- ◆ Kenny & Michalle Meyers – Hale, MI

2024 Rear Engine Ride

by Karen Jarema

Many of us were hopeful to complete another 100 miles this year on our 9th Annual Rear Engine Ride in Naubinway. As we have seen throughout our state, the snow has been taking a break this year.



Picture by Karen Jarema, "The Rear Engine Ride That Almost Wasn't"

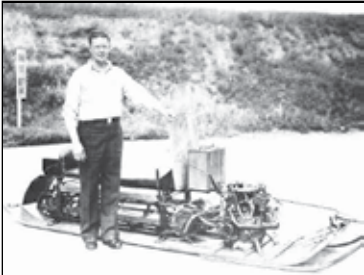
Many of us showed up on Monday...the rest came throughout the week. On Monday John McGuirk decided to take his Eliason out of the Museum, moving it out back to the garage. It had not been run for 5-6 years. He put in oil and gas, and rumor has it that it started up on the 2nd kick! I took a video of it being started up and put it on our Facebook page. To date, it has had over 1,190,000 views. A 2nd video of John driving his sled is now over 733,000 views! These are definitely record views for anything that has been posted on the Museum's Facebook page! John McGuirk – YOU went VIRAL!! (The video is on the Museum Facebook page.) If you purchased a clothing item this year, maybe ask John to sign your Eliason clothes. It may be worth something one day!

Wednesday the Snow Gods dropped enough snow that we were able to go on a Thursday ride. We left the Museum and went to the Millecoquin bridge and back. There were a few breakdowns, and all but one made it back on their own power. Tony Rolfes won the "Tow Strap Award." His track fell off his Eliason and had to be towed in. He removed the track completely, hooked up a rope, and smoothly pulled it back to the Museum. In his defense, he was in the process of collecting parts to replace the track, but decided to put it on the back burner since none of us thought we would be able to ride.

Several people did not even bring sleds with them due to the "no snow" issue. But others graciously pulled out their extra sleds, boots and gloves and everyone enjoyed a few hours out on the trail. John said that this was our 9th Annual... but has changed that to "a machine shake out" and will call next year's ride as year 9.

John came up with this idea 10 years ago. We are all grateful for his leadership. As you can imagine, it is quite a sight seeing a lineup of 25 rear engine snowmobiles driving down the trail. John has kept the number of snowmobiles limited so that it is feasible to actually take them out, fix them on the trail, and get all/or most of them back to the Museum at the end of the day. John has a waiting list of people who would like to participate.

We are all looking forward to next year and hope to get Mile 900 under our belts!



Carl Eliason's original Eliason sled

Guest Speaker: Jona Eliason/

Featured Sled – Eliason

The Museum Board members chose the Eliason to be the 2024 featured sled in honor of it's 100 year anniversary. The first one was built in 1924 in Saynor, WI by a young man named Carl Eliason. He received a patent in 1927. Jona Eliason, granddaughter of Carl, was here as our guest speaker, to honor her grandfather and share information about his wild and crazy idea of creating a machine that goes over the snow. It basically started out as a toboggan with a Johnson 2.5hp motor from his hardware store, a Model T radiator, bicycle gears and a conveyor belt track on it. It was appropriately named a Motor Toboggan. Carl was handicapped with a club foot, making it very difficult to get out in the snow to hunt and trap with his brothers. He took that disadvantage and turned it into a great idea that became very popular in the US and Canada. In 1939, the military wanted to buy 200 machines to use in Alaska. He couldn't make that many, so he sold the rights to FWD, Clintonville, WI in 1939. They made these machines from 1940 until 1946. The company was then moved to Kitchener, Ontario and made until 1963. The engine was eventually moved to the rear of the machine. For more information, check out the article in Snowmobile History, Vol I, by Pierre Pellerin.

We want to give Jona a huge thank you for coming to share her story, with her friend Greg Rangel. They were a wealth of information and a real joy to have here! Also, thanks to John McGuirk for the great introduction. He usually gives the talk at the banquet, but I think it was a nice break for him this year, and was happy to give her the reins.

Veterans Ride – Operation Injured Soldiers



The first Veteran's Ride group, Jan 2024

We had a new event this winter and everyone who came had a great time! Charlie had been talking to Ryan Blain about the Operation Injured Soldiers, Brave Hearts Lodge, organization in Pellston, MI. Charlie and Ryan decided to take the veterans for a snowmobile ride on Jan 19, 2024.

They arrived with food and people and gear. It was cold that morning, so they sat in our meeting room and introduced each other and talked about their service experiences with our staff who was here to help out. Charlie gave them the class A guided trip through the Museum. They had lunch, supplied by the Brave Hearts Estate crew and then headed out to Cranberry Lodge, on the Hiawatha Sportsman's Club. It's a 13-mile ride, one way. The trails weren't groomed, but there was fresh snow, so everyone enjoyed the trip, even with the very cold temperature! There was one veteran who was unable to ride the snowmobile, but he was content to stay at the Museum and wait for the others to return. We were able to get a picture of everyone, with Charlie and his sister, MaryBeth, in front of a machine that displays their dad's picture. Lawrence Vallier was a WWII, Battle of the Bulge Purple Heart recipient. Everyone definitely plans on doing this ride again next year. Stay tuned on Facebook next fall for details



The Veterans group at Cranberry Lodge



Tribute to Ellis Sutfin



Ellis & Ruth at 2024 Banquet



Ellis in his shop

Our long-time friend and famous rocker builder, Ellis Sutfin, is retiring now and we want to give a huge shout-out to him for everything he has done for the Museum! Ellis was a mechanic and firefighter for the DNR, living in Escanaba. He worked with Charlie and helped him out as his go-to keyman on prescribed burns. When he retired in 1997, Ellis and Ruth moved to Naubinway, where he started making furniture for the locals. He made dressers, desks, shelves, and even a cage for a Iguana! He was always busy because he did amazing work.



Ellis made the shelf and rocker

Marilyn got the idea to make a snowmobile rocker, so Charlie talked to Ellis and he was willing to build them for us. They were such a hit, and he soon found out they would definitely keep him busy! He started making them shortly after we opened the Museum in 2007. After a few years, he thought we should change to more of a vintage style snowmobile. He came up with the design, and we are still selling them today.

Top of the Lake Museum Swap Meet Saturday, Sept. 21, 2024

- **Location:** Top of the Lake Snowmobile Museum, on the North side of US 2, Naubinway, MI
- **Hours:** 8:00 am-3:00 pm. All recreational/sporting type items will be allowed
- \$5 admission fee per visitor (free with a paid Museum Membership) includes all day admission to the Museum.
- \$10 – 2-place trailer; \$20 – 4-place trailer
- Raffle drawing at 2:30 for **5 great prizes**. Purchase tickets at the Museum before 2:15 pm on Saturday 09/21/24
- For more info call Charlie 906-477-6192, Email info@snowmobilemuseum.com

Swap Meet Raffle Ticket Prizes

- 1st - 1974 Massey Ferguson (donated by Brad Koster)
- 2nd – 8x8 Storage Shed or \$500
- 3rd - \$100 Gas Card (donated by a Museum member)
- 4th – Snowmobile Print
- 5th - \$50 Cash (donated by a Museum member)

Snowmobile Museum is a Harvest Host Member

Harvest Host is a "Unique RVing Experience."
 Hosts who sign up provide a spot for a RV or camper for free (electricity is a minimal charge by the Host.)
 There are 3 outside outlets at the Museum. We have a large parking lot, which is great for large campers.

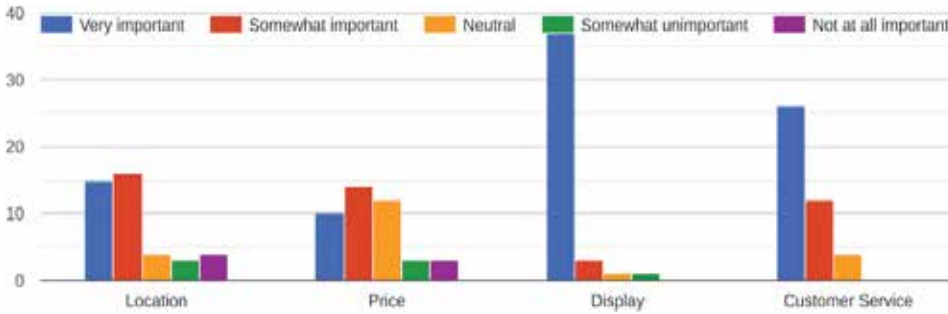
Museum Survey Results from our grandson, Jared Cox

Our grandson, Jared, is a senior at Sturgis Charter school in Hyannis, MA, which is among the top 5 public schools in Massachusetts. He did a survey for his senior project for his business class. The survey was posted on our Museum Facebook page in Dec, 2023. The results from each person's response went to Jared. The results were interesting!

Jared's business class is his favorite class and we were excited that he wanted to use the Museum for his project.

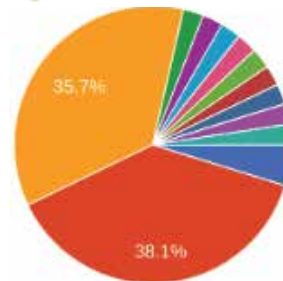


Please rank the following elements in the importance of why you come to the Top of the Lake Snowmobile Museum



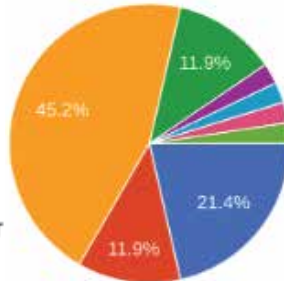
What category do you fit in?

- New Snowmobile rider
- Vintage rider
- Curious about museums and snowmo...
- Racer, collector, restorer
- All the above
- Naubinway knitter
- Rode as a kid. Moved South, love to v...
- Sometimes snowmobile



How did you first learn about the Museum?

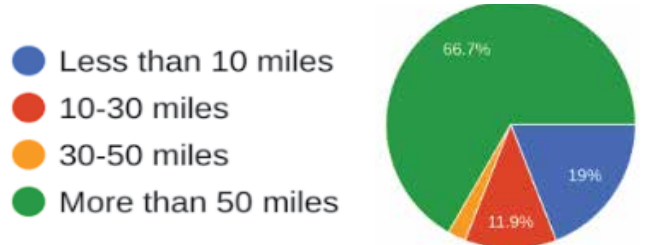
- Through shows/ events
- Social media
- Through family/freinds
- Passing through the area
- A member
- Vintagesleds.com
- Living in Engadine 5 months of the year
- Founding member.



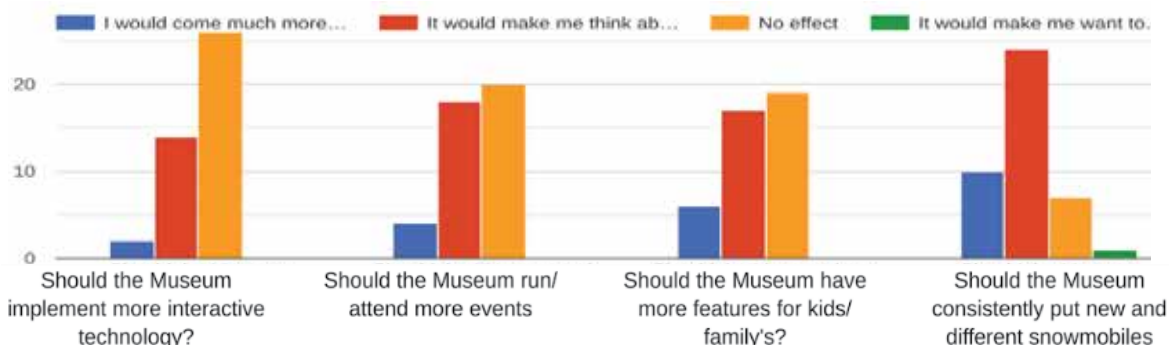
Roughly how often do you currently visit the Top of the Lake Snowmobile Museum ?



How far do you travel to get to the museum?

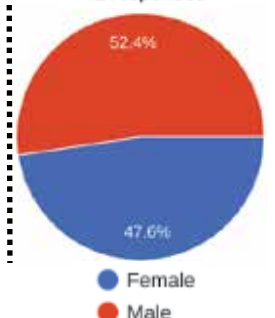


If Top of the Lake Snowmobile Museum were to make these changes, how likely would you be to visit more of Top of the Lake Snowmobile Museum ?



Gender

42 responses





Museum Receives Grant from MACC for Operational Support

On September 22, 2023, the Michigan Arts and Culture Council (MACC) in conjunction with the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), announced it would be generously awarding the Top of the Lake Snowmobile Museum in Naubinway an \$8750 grant for operational support during 2024.



MACC uses a peer review process to award grants. More than 700 organizations across the state applied for funding. Each grant application is competitively judged; award-ees are chosen to ensure Michigan residents and visitors have access to the most authentic aspects of local arts and culture.

Organizations receiving a grant award from MACC/NEA are required to match those funds with other public or private dollars. The Top of the Lake Snowmobile Museum receives a great deal of donated monetary support through its memberships and visitors and plans to use these funds to match the MACC grant award. There are 141 active Museum members, not including lifetime members, and more than 7000 visitors just last year.

The Museum has plans to bring more local art-related activities to our conference room and develop a program for groups with special needs. This support will go toward the cost of wages and advertising for these activities

For more information on MACC and to view a complete list of the grant awards in Michigan visit their website at www.michigan.gov/arts. And, for more information on the NEA you can visit their website at www.arts.gov.

Appreciation Award



Above: Scott ,Tim & Paul Havercroft receive their Appreciation Award

At the Feb. Show's Saturday evening events, the Museum Staff and Board honored Scott, Tim and Paul Havercroft for their talents, generosity, and donations of many displays for the Museum. They have created many unusual snowmobiles over the years and 2 of them are in the Museum on display now. They also made 2 large display stands for machines to give us more room, and engine stands for display. The biggest surprise was the large lighted display outside the front of the building! All we



Scott & Tim putting the display together, July, 2024

had to supply was a snowmobile to put inside of it. The display is a huge improvement to the front of the building and it definitely grabs your attention when you drive by! It's obvious that these brothers enjoy what they are doing and are very good at it. This is our way of expressing our appreciation for all they do for the Museum!

Left: James Derr in Germany

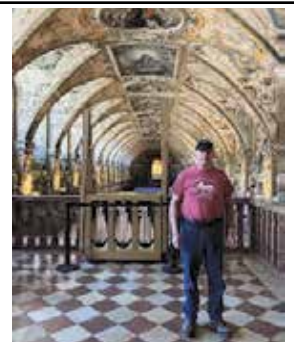
Right: Doug Oosterhouse in Germany

Traveling T-Shirts

Send us a picture of you, or someone you know, wearing Museum apparel!



Right: Greg & Jackie Busch – St John's



Thank you for your generous donations!

- White Pine Lodge Snowmobile Show, Christmas, MI (March 9, 2024)
- Pine Stump Vintage Snowmobile Show, Newberry, MI (March 26, 2024)
- Mid-Michigan Powersports Swap & Show, Birch Run, MI (Nov. 3/4, 2023)



Newsletter – Regular Mail or E-mail?

We have set up an email list for the newsletters. If you would like to receive your newsletter by email instead of snail mail, please contact us with your email address and we will get that taken care of for the Fall newsletter.

Snowmobile the Mighty Mac

8th Bridge Crossing

I have crossed the Mighty Mackinac Bridge and traveled many miles on snowmobiles over the last 50 years, but when I go to the Bridge Crossing, I am always amazed at how excited and brave the people are who cross this Bridge on snowmobiles! Unfortunately, this year the adventure included some light rain. The rain didn't stop any of the 121 who did make it across the 5-mile Bridge, including our grandson, Zach and his family, who drove 800 miles from his Coast Guard bootcamp graduation so he could participate in the Bridge Crossing!

Unfortunately, 8 snowmobilers ended up not making it across because their machines failed. I do believe all vintage snowmobile collectors can relate to that experience. The best part is, no one was discouraged – they came to the lunch at the Little Bear Arena East and vowed to try again next year.



National Anthem flag

The Bridge Crossing is sponsored by the Museum and the St. Ignace Visitor's Bureau. Everyone doing the Bridge Crossing meets in the Fort Michilimackinac parking lot under the Bridge, on the Mackinaw City side, with snowmobiles that have at least 2" wide wheels and no studs or cleats on their tracks. This was our 8th year and we have always had a snowmobile leading the group with an American flag on the back. This year, Ryan Blain brought his 20' x 30' flag and several people held the flag and waved it as everyone sang the National Anthem. Following that, there was a driver's safety meeting. Next, the excited drivers started their engines, smoke rolled in the cold air, and they took off behind the Mackinaw Police Dept who led them to the Bridge. From there, a Mackinac Bridge Authority truck lead them across the 5-mile Mackinac Bridge. There is also a Bridge Authority truck following the group, with a trailer (which has been named the Trailer of Shame). They are the ones who collect the broken down machines along the way (6 this year, plus 2 that didn't make it to the Mackinac Bridge). Meanwhile, cars are passing by in the other lane. I've heard that many of the people wave as they drive by. I can only imagine the comments inside the cars!



Presenter-Andy Wells

Several people were taking pictures, but Kathy Sirvio, our graphics designer, got permission from the Bridge Authority to go to the first turnout with one of their crew to take a video of the snowmobiles. Kathy also took some great pictures under the Bridge. This was her first year at the Bridge Crossing and she said she will plan on being there next year. Kathy and her husband, Andy, designed the logo for our show shirts the last 3 years.



Zilwaukee Club donors

After everyone crossed the Bridge and loaded up their trailers, they traveled across town to the Little Bear Arena for a delicious lunch served by BC Pizza. A few days before the event, we found out from Matt VandenBosch that Andy Wells and his son Andrew would be coming from Minnesota to buy a Lil Andy from him. Matt told them about the Bridge Crossing and invited them to come that weekend. They made a quick decision to come to the lunch and give a presentation about Andy's career with Polaris and then his adventures with his own company. Andy is known in the vintage snowmobile community for making the Polaris Lil Andy snowmobile, which followed the Comet model.

The Lil Andy was a good seller, which was a lifesaver after the failure of the Comet. Andy went on to start his own manufacturing business and is still doing that with his son in Bemidji, MN. What a bonus for our event! We want to thank Kathy Sirvio for making a shadowbox with a piece of the Mackinac Bridge and our show flyer in the background to present to Andy Wells. We also want to thank the Zilwaukee Bridge Vintage Snowmobile Club for the donation of an amazing clock they made for Charlie. We also want to send a special thank you to John Mathias for donating a wheel kit he made and to our awesome volunteers who help with the ride. We hope to see everyone again next year, **Dec 14, 2024!**

Snowmobile the Mighty Mac Award winners:

- * Oldest Snowmobile – Terry Wellman, Fort Recovery, OH - Santa on a 1962 Polaris Sno-Traveler
- * Youngest Driver – Kevin Suk, Wayland, MI
- * Oldest Driver – Roger Ashley, 84, Linden, MI
- * Most Innovative Wheel Kit – Sherril Boerman, Holland, MI, with a Hamms Beer tap on the machine
- * Best Costume – Katy Brawt, Sanford, MI, wearing a silver suit (looked like a baked potato)
- * Farthest Traveled – Jim Budzinski, Marietta, GA
- * Broken Wheel Award – Mike Agrusa, Mancelona, MI He didn't make it to the Bridge.
- * Special Award to Neil Swanson -A Yamaha converted to an electric motor-1st electric snowmobile to cross the Bridge!
- * Special Award to the Guest Speaker - Andy Wells, Bemidji, MN

Museum's New Mascot

We want to introduce the Museum's newest volunteer guard dog, Tori. She became the newest member of our family last September, thanks to Wyatt Anderson. Wyatt and his sister raise these Cavalier King Charles Spaniels and he highly recommended one for us since they are a very calm dog. The name of their business is Arctic Acres Cavaliers. If you come in and Tori starts to cry, it's because she wants you to pet her. Charlie has taken her for a short snowmobile ride and she seemed to like it.



Advertisers:

If you wish to advertise your show or business, you can submit a business card in our newspaper, or advertise on the website with a banner ad for \$100 a year.

Please note – with the newsletter now being in color, the cost of single ad has increased to \$35, and a double ad is \$55. If you are interested in listing your business ad in the next newsletter, please call or email the museum for more information. We will be happy to include you with the other ads. We just need your business card.

All proceeds go to the Museum. Please contact Marilyn for information about the Museum or the website.

Visit us on Facebook: "Top of the Lake Snowmobile Museum" or on our website: www.snowmobileMuseum.com

If you would like to become a supporting member, or need to renew your membership, call the Museum.

The cost is \$50 per year.

Top of the Lake Snowmobile Museum Fundraiser Form

501c3 Not-For-Profit Corporation

- ◆ The Museum Board is seeking funding to support the Building Operation Fund.
- ◆ A business, snowmobile club, or person who donates will have their name on the Museum donor wall.
- ◆ Donors will receive a tax-deductible receipt, upon your request.
- ◆ \$1000 donors will also receive either a lifetime membership or a free Corporate sponsor ad on the Museum website for two years.

**Return form to: Top of the Lake Museum
P.O Box 2
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TOL Museum Fundraiser Form

The fundraising contribution will be used to continue the growth of the Top of the Lake Snowmobile Museum.

Other \$100 \$500 \$1000 Pledge

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Antique Snowmobile Museum of Indiana



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Executive Director & Curator

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