

# DAILY NORTH SHORE

(<https://jwcdaily.com>)

Sign up for the Daily North Shore Email

Sign Up!

## Day In The Sun for Lifeguard Chairs

by Libby Elliott (<https://jwcdaily.com/author/libbyelliott/>) • July 9, 2018

Leave a Comment (<https://jwcdaily.com/2018/07/09/day-in-the-sun-for-lifeguard-chairs/#respond>)

0

Don't tell North Shore resident and avid sailor Curt Kalousek he's living in a "flyover state."

"Ask any experienced sailor and they'll tell you the Great Lakes aren't really lakes...they're inland seas," said Kalousek, a former Eagle Scout. "We get 20 foot waves out there."

Growing up in Rockford in the 1980s, Kalousek fondly recalls camping in Door County's Peninsula State Park with his Grandpa John, a World War II veteran. Kalousek likes to

reminisce about long, summer days spent swimming at local beaches and windsurfing on Green Bay near Fish Creek Harbor.

Too young to drive, the pre-teen Kalousek would sail his “dates” to Wilson’s Ice Cream Parlor in nearby Ephraim, hoping to woo them with his nautical prowess.



**Curt “Thor” Kalousek of Lake Forest is the creative force behind two start-up companies, Tan Foot Lifestyle and John Hans Board Company. Thor built the paddle board above. PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOEL LERNER/JWC MEDIA**



Kalousek in one of his “Beach Lifeguard Chair” T-shirts. This one depicts the chairs at Lake Forest’s Forest Park Beach. PHOTOGRAPHY BY JOEL LERNER/JWC MEDIA

“I’d be like ‘you got a car? Well, I’ve got a boat,” said Kalousek.

With his laid-back, sea dog-style and youthful exuberance, some might say Kalousek – also known as “Thor” – is a Great Lakes’ version Florida’s Jimmy Buffett. Most comfortable wearing flip flops, board shorts and a T-shirt of his own design, he is the perfect embodiment of the North Shore’s chill, summer-time vibe: those precious three months each year when local residents peel off their down coats and relax with beach BBQs, boat rides and dips in Lake Michigan.

Now married and settled in Lake Forest with his wife, Theresa, and their 3-year-old daughter, Lilly, the former advertising executive now makes a living delivering boats up and down the Great Lakes and Atlantic. Nonetheless, he's hoping to channel those endless, Midwestern-summertime of his youth into a full-fledged lifestyle brand.

Kalousek's two start-up companies, Tan Foot Lifestyle and John Hans Board Company (an homage to Kalousek's Grandpa John) are slowly rolling out products that embody the Midwest's unique beach culture. Current offerings include T-shirts, hats, and paddle boards, with future plans to expand into craft beer and branded events.

This summer, Kiddles Sports in Lake Forest is stocking limited edition John Hans Board Company T-shirts, featuring silk-screened drawings of the North Shore's distinct beach lifeguard chairs.

The T-shirts were inspired by the dozens of black and white photos Kalousek snapped on his sailing trips up and down the Great Lakes.

"I started noticing that every town's lifeguard chairs were slightly different," said Kalousek.

Kalousek also started noticing that some Midwestern-beach towns were discontinuing their lifeguarding programs to control costs, choosing instead to post "Swim at Your Own Risk" signs to waive their liability.

"In some ways, these chairs have become a symbol of the past," said Kalousek. "I want to capture them before they disappear."

Kiddle Sports stocks T-shirts featuring the distinct beach lifeguard chairs of Lake Forest and Lake Bluff, and Kalousek hopes to expand the collection to other North Shore communities including Highland Park, Wilmette and Evanston.

And rather than sell the \$25 beach lifeguard chair T-shirts through his website, they are carried exclusively through Kiddle Sports, a reflection of Kalousek's commitment to supporting local businesses.

"I could sell these online, but that's not fun," said Kalousek. "To me, the health of a community is based on the mom and pop stores that are still around. If you're wearing this T-shirt, it means you were shopping in Lake Forest."

In the meantime, Kalousek is earning praise for his handcrafted, custom-ordered wooden paddleboards inlaid with intricate carvings. A John Hans board inlaid with a wooden-carving of the Chicago skyline hangs on a wall in Kalousek's sunroom. And in his basement workroom, Kalousek is slowly crafting a paddleboard inlaid with a detailed map of the Great Lakes.

Kalousek, who spends an average of 40-60 hours carving a John Hans custom-made inlay alone, said his boards look just as displayed underfoot as they do hanging on a wall.

"When you're on something that's hand-built, it's got a different feeling from something that's been machine produced," he said.

Despite ambitious plans for a Tan Foot Lifestyle-branded beer, plus live events like beach volleyball tournaments, Kalousek still takes time for sailing and paddle boarding expeditions with his family, making sure he lives up to his company's official tagline: "Forget work. Enjoy the beach."



For more information, visit [jhans.com](http://jhans.com) (<http://jhans.com>).

« Previous Post (<https://jwcdaily.com/2018/07/08/thursday-food-truck-festival-returns-to-ravinia-district/>)

Next Post » (<https://jwcdaily.com/2018/07/09/ridesharing-company-for-seniors-goes-whole-nine-miles/>)

## TODAY'S TOP STORIES



BLOODY COMPETITION SHAKIN' IN...

(<https://jwcdaily.com/2018/07/09/BLOODY->

## COMPETITION-SHAKIN-IN-2018/)

Written by Julie Kemp Pick (<https://jwcdaily.com/author/julie-kemp-pick/>)

*July 09 2018*

HIGHWOOD – When Bloody Mary Fest first began, some judges got a little too carried away with the tantalizing offerings...

Read More (<https://jwcdaily.com/2018/07/09/bloody-competition-shakin-in-2018/>)



## RIDESHARING FOR SENIORS GOES...

([HTTPS://JWCDAILY.COM/2018/07/09/RIDESHARING-COMPANY-FOR-SENIORS-GOES-WHOLE-NINE-MILES/](https://jwcdaily.com/2018/07/09/ridesharing-company-for-seniors-goes-whole-nine-miles/))

Written by Bill McLean (<https://jwcdaily.com/author/bill-mclean/>)  
*July 09 2018*

An elderly woman in a suburb of Chicago needed to undergo a procedure at a hospital. She also needed a...

Read More (<https://jwcdaily.com/2018/07/09/ridesharing-company-for-seniors-goes-whole-nine-miles/>)

## RECENTLY ADDED

Bloody Competition

Lake Bluff In...

Shakin'...

(<https://jwcdaily.com/2018/07/09/seventh->

(<https://jwcdaily.com/2018/07/09/lake-bluff->

competition-shakin-  
in-2018/)

by Julie Kemp Pick  
(<https://jwcdaily.com/author/julie-kemp-pick/>)  
*July 09 2018*

HIGHWOOD – When  
Bloody Mary Fest...

Read More  
(<https://jwcdaily.com/2018/07/09/bloody-criterion-july-21/>)  
competition-shakin-in-  
2018/)

criterion-july-21/)

by Emily Spectre  
(<https://jwcdaily.com/author/emily-spectre/>)  
*July 09 2018*

LAKE BLUFF – With the  
4th of...

Read More  
(<https://jwcdaily.com/2018/07/09/seventh-annual-lake-bluff-criterion-july-21/>)

Business Tips from...

(<https://jwcdaily.com/2018/07/09/business-tips-from-wilmette-entrepreneur/>)

entrepreneur/)

by Emily Spectre  
(<https://jwcdaily.com/author/emily-spectre/>)  
*July 09 2018*

Wilmette resident Danny  
Schuman felt despair...

Read More  
(<https://jwcdaily.com/2018/07/09/business-tips-from-wilmette-entrepreneur/>)

Ridesharing for

(<https://jwcdaily.com/2018/07/09/ridesharing-company-for-seniors-goes-whole-nine-miles/>)

seniors-goes-whole-  
nine-miles/)

by Bill McLean  
(<https://jwcdaily.com/author/bill-mclean/>)  
*July 09 2018*

An elderly woman in a  
suburb...

Read More  
(<https://jwcdaily.com/2018/07/09/ridesharing-company-for-seniors-goes-whole-nine-miles/>)

Day In The...

(<https://jwcdaily.com/2018/07/09/day-in-the-sun-for-lifeguard-chairs/>)

lifeguard-chairs/)

by Libby Elliott

LIVE FROM GLASA...

(<https://jwcdaily.com/2018/07/09/live-from-glasaits-saturday-night/>)

saturday-night-



(<https://jwcdaily.com/author/libbyelliott/>)

July 09 2018

great-lakes-

Don't tell North Shore  
resident and...

adaptive-sports-  
association/)

Read More

(<https://jwcdaily.com/2018/07/09/day-in-the-sun-for-lifeguard-chairs/>)

by Kemmie Ryan

(<https://jwcdaily.com/author/kemmieorquiz/>)

July 09 2018

North Shore guests  
enjoyed a "wild...

Read More

(<https://jwcdaily.com/2018/07/09/live-from-glasaits-saturday-night-great-lakes-adaptive-sports-association/>)

## RECENT COMMENTS

NEW LF BOUTIQUE IS ALL ABOUT...

([HTTPS://JWCDAILY.COM/2018/02/26/NEW-LAKE-FOREST-BOUTIQUE-IS-ALL-ABOUT-THE-BRIDE/](https://jwcdaily.com/2018/02/26/new-lake-forest-boutique-is-all-about-the-bride/)) (1)

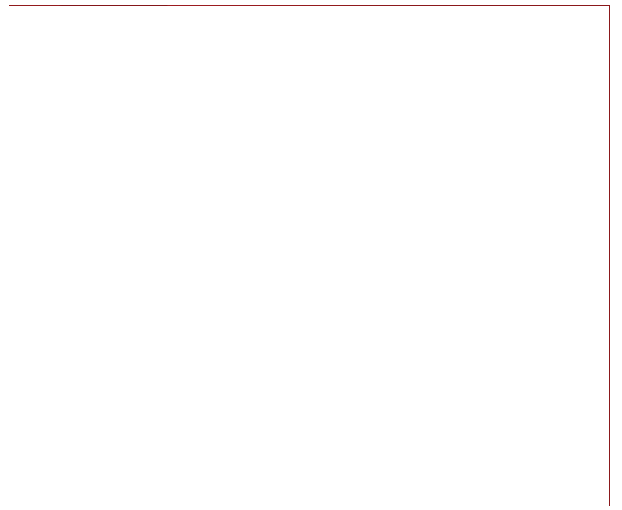
*By Andrewchris*

Excellent Post! Thanks for sharing such an Wonderful Information.

Read More (<https://jwcdaily.com/2018/02/26/new-lake-forest-boutique-is-all-about-the-bride/comment-page-1/#comment-94628>)

Older »







## Post a Comment

Your email address will not be published. Required fields are marked \*

## Comment

Daily North Shore encourages comments, but we have specific guidelines that you can **find here** (<https://dailynorthshore.com/daily-north-shore-comments-policy/>). A general principle is: Do not state anything in a comment that you would not say in public and do not state anything about another person that you would not say to his or her face.

**Name \***

**Email \***

**Website**

Post Comment

About (<https://jwcdaily.com/about/>)

Send News (<https://jwcdaily.com/hey/>)

Advertise (<https://jwcdaily.com/advertise/>)

Send Opinion (<https://jwcdaily.com/hey/>)

Contact Us (<https://jwcdaily.com/contact-editor/>)

Follow Us



<https://www.facebook.com/>

<https://twitter.com/DailyNOI>

<https://www.instagram.com/daily>

<https://www.youtube.com/u>

Copyright © 2016. All Rights reserved.