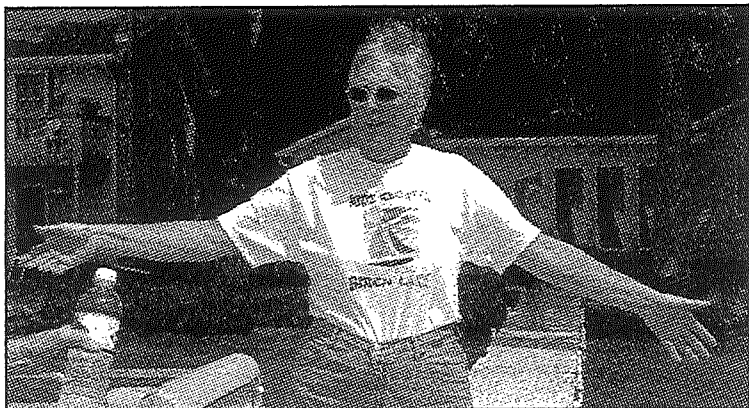
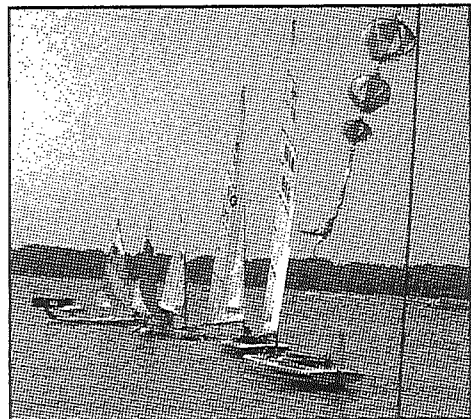


Birch Barker

Weekend of Aug. 23, 2003



The annual BLYC Kids Regatta hosted by Lind and Don Harman last Saturday attracted a dozen boats and more than 20 Lake kids. More photos and info inside.

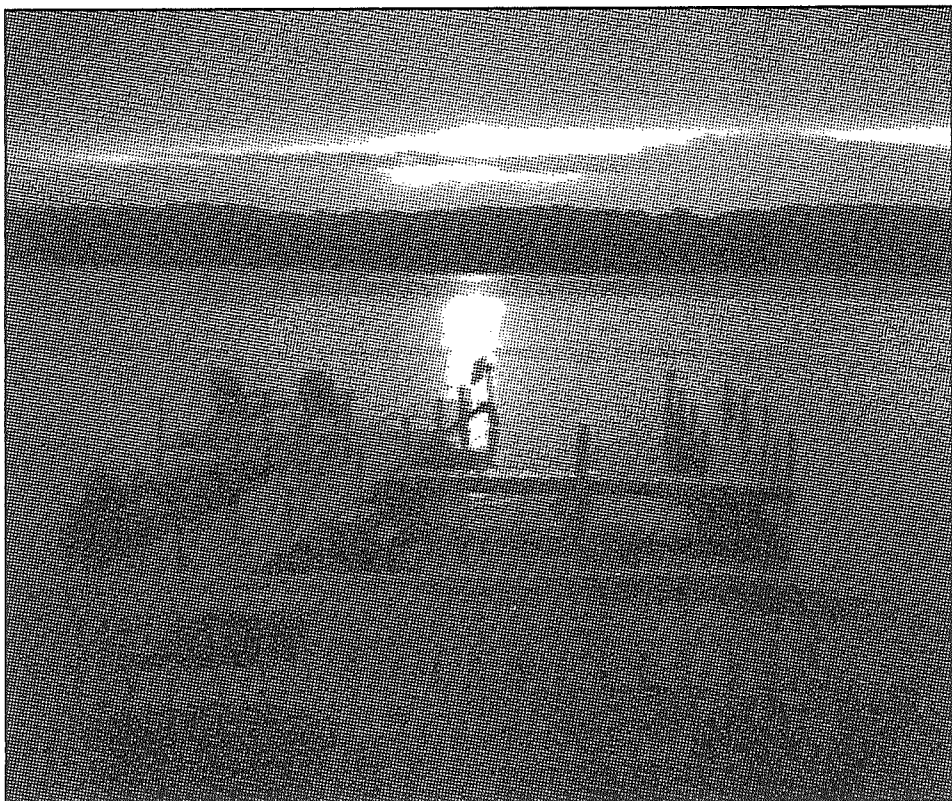


COMMODORE'S COMMENTS

Over the course of the past week and a half my world has wobbled a bit, and I found myself at the end of my pier basking in the sun and raging against the coming of the night. This is my last "comments" as the commodore of the Birch Lake Yacht Club. I trust you will allow me the indulgence of such a personal note ...

For years I've heard the poets say that you can never go home again, but only recently have I discovered what that means. As many of you know, my father died a week ago Thursday. My father was a difficult man. We never got along well. Our relationship was strained, and we were estranged for most of the 15 years that have passed since my mother died. Though most of the events of the past week are too painful to relate, I feel compelled to share a single incident that is both poignant and beautiful.

The day after dad died; the day after we had gathered at the funeral home to discuss and arrange the mundane financial matters and the details of the requisite rites of his passage, I had occasion to visit "his" house. The house in which my mother had taken so much pride. The house where my brothers and I had suffered our adolescence. The house I hadn't visited in nearly 15 years.



I was shocked nearly senseless. My father had lived there for those years as a widower in the kind of somber and solitary bachelor lifestyle that you associate with piles of dirty laundry and competitive dust-mote races on weekends. Even granting that, I was wholly unprepared for what I found. Papers were piled in untidy heaps on the floor of the dining room. The linoleum in the basement landing was dirty and worn to bare wood. Stained and unwashed dishes filled the sink. An angry looking hole gaped in the ceiling tile where the rain had dripped from a long-ignored roof leak. There was a permanent dirty-black smudge near the handle of that same round-cornered GE refrigerator that I had raided as a boy.

The house screamed of apathy and neglect. I shuddered as I felt my mother turn over in her grave.

I walked through the house in a daze. The ornate Japanese tea set mom's broth-

er had sent her 40 years ago was still in the cupboard, barely visible behind the stack of junk mail and misplaced trinkets that were visible behind the grimy glass. I barely recognized the plywood board that my father had always used when he played solitaire before he dozed in "his" chair; the metal, push-button address book still lived beside the phone on the stand I had made in high school wood shop; the marble and wood coffee table that had once been the family's prize piece of furniture was gray and faded with age.

This was not the house that I had come home to after a tough day at school to find a couple of Oreos, a glass of milk and mom waiting to talk about the day ... this was the house I had escaped as a boy-turned-man, aware that I was abandoning it and all inside to the wrath and bile and vile temper I would not abide; sure it was

Continued on back page

BLYC Calendar

Today, August 23

Fall Dinner

Social Hour/Cocktails at 6 pm
Dinner at 7 pm
Square Dancing after dinner!



We are always soliciting and accepting materials for future publication. Just put the materials in the red Barker box at 63174 Birch Rd. (East Shore) or e-mail the info to me at sailorphil@philvitale.com. If you must, mail to Phil Vitale, 122 So. Michigan, So. Bend, IN 46601, or fax your items to (574) 232-3853. To contact me by phone, call 476-1680 or (574) 232-3735.

Birch Lake Notes

Happy Birthday Helen!

A very beautiful young lady, Helen Weesner, celebrated her birthday on the 18th of August with a high speed ride in the Harlan's Chaparral, accompanied by husband Bernie and grandson Lindsay. This lovely lady admits to being 29 and from the picture — who could argue. Helen, everyone at Birch Lake celebrates with you and wishes you a happy 30th next year and many, many more — we love you, Sweetie!

News from the Cove

A million apologies for the lack of your most awaited NFTC. Mea Culpa. Ask your Catholic friends to explain that.

Summer has gone faster than ever. Soon B.S. and I will be packing up and heading North. No more boating, swimming and just looking out the windows at beautiful emerald water.

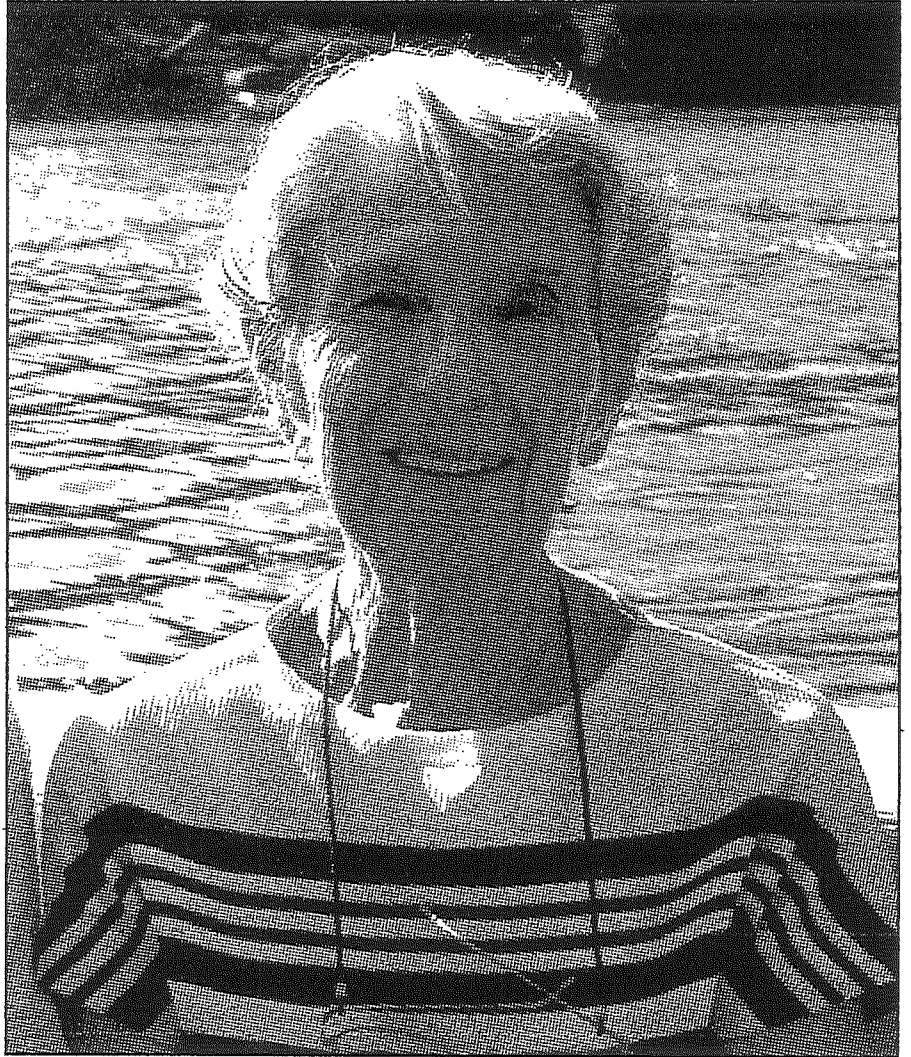
But times does fly and soon we will start buying beach towels, swim suits, etc. If you long for emerald waves, give me a call for consolation. Before midnight, please

Thank you for being avid readers. See you next Spring.

Your Intelligent, gorgeous, creative
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The best to you from B.S., also.



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Have A Safe and Fun Summer!

Have you seen this kid?

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aka:
Barker Kid of the Week
Age 8

Wanted for the crime of
driving his parents crazy,
running off
and frog-napping from
his own sister!

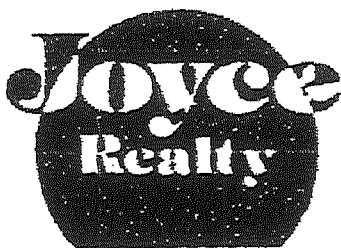
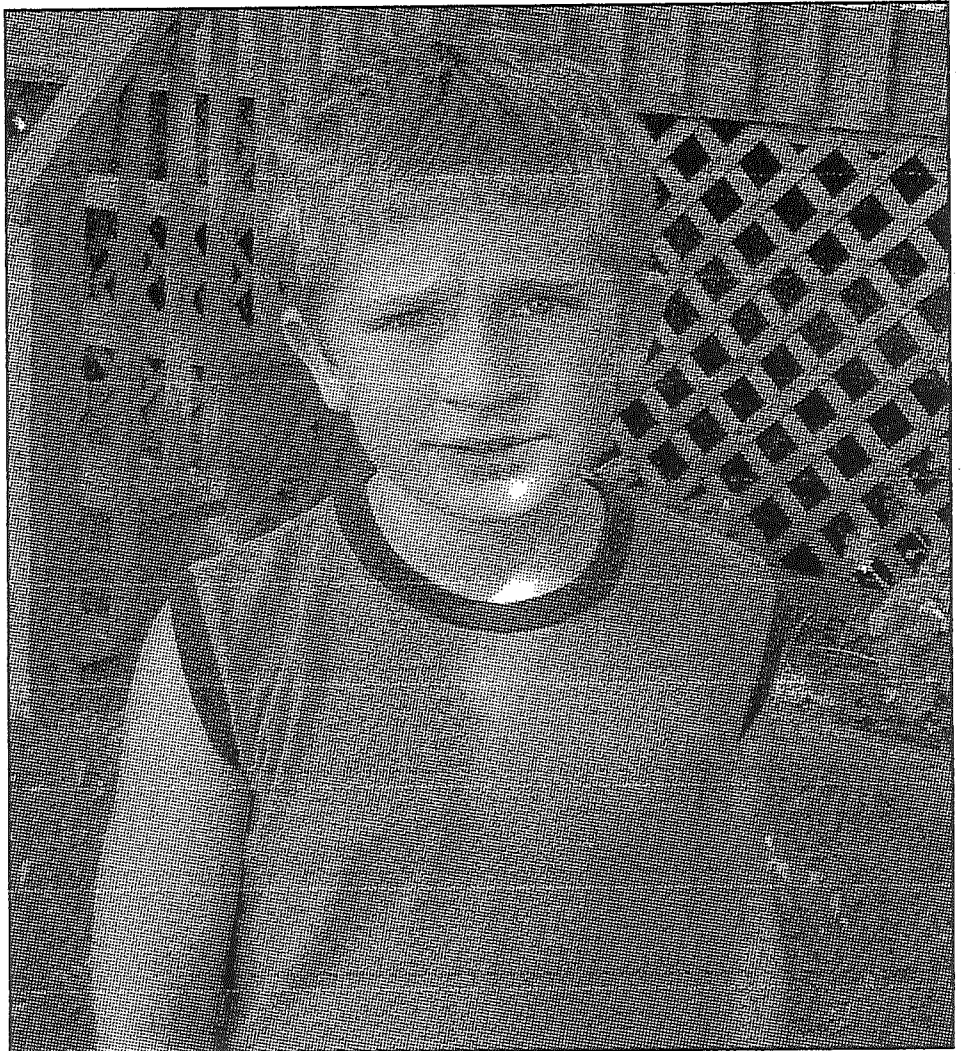
John has disappeared so many times this
summer that his parents think him capable
of teleportation ... as in "Beam me up,
Scotty."

If you see him (he like to hang out in the
Cove), call Bad Patti or Tall Bill at
476-2615

Barker Pet of the Week



Bella Curtis sits patiently waiting for
her human (Linda) to return from her
afternoon walk.



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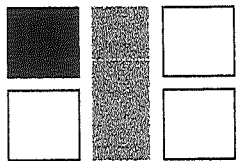
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We wish everyone a safe and enjoyable
summer at Birch Lake!

-Ben and Vanessa Wozniak

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BLYC Sailing News

Don't like the wind on Birch Lake? Just wait a minute. Last week's races were characterized by winds that ranged from dead calm to brisk ... and capable of shifting nearly 180 degrees in a single leg!

Nonetheless, we managed to squeeze in three races on Sunday (after a couple on Saturday at the Kid's Regatta).

Thanks to Jim, Sally, Amy and Bruce (and Stewart) for committee boat duties. We'd like to remind people on speed boats and PWCs that the law requires you to give the right of way to a boat under sail, and it also requires you to stay at least 100 feet away from other boats — and common courtesy demands that you now interfere with the racers!

Regular races this Sunday; next week, if the weather permits, we'll have the Labor Day Regatta on Saturday and Sunday, and the Awards ceremony on Monday at 9 am.

Harold Cranmer
2003 Fleet Captain

Kids Regatta Results/Participants

Everyone wins in the annual BLYC Kids Regatta. Thanks to Don and Lind for hosting it again this year, and thanks to all the sailors and kids who came out for the sail — a good time was had by all!

Participants:

MC/Rick Harman/Conner Stigner, Tyler Rondot/3rd/3rd
MC/Don Harman/Abby Rondot/Lauren Rosswurm/2nd/6th

Here are the results of last weekend's competition:

Sunfish:	1st race	2nd race	3rd race	Place/Avg.
A Class				
Jim Bolinger	2	1	1	1; 1565.8
Dave Olson	1	2	2	3; 1522.5
Rick Russwurm	DNS	DNS	DNS	4; 1430.4
Dewayne Weaver	3	3	3	3; 1510.8
Tom Howard	1	1	1	N/C
B Class				
Erica Vitale	3	1	1	1; 1563.3
Sandy Vitale	1	2	2	3; 1531.1
Chad Plaia	2	DNS	DNS	2; 1551.3
Jody Meyers	DNS	DNS	DNS	4; 1454.7
MCs				
	1st race	2nd race	3rd race	Place
Harold Cranmer	3	4	4	4; 1461.7
Don Harman	4	3	3	3; 1475.4
Rick Harman	DNS	2	2	2; 1484.8
Scott Troeger	1	1	1	1; 1562.7
Phil Vitale	2	5	5	5; 1385.1

MC/Phil Vitale, Sandy Vitale/Katie Luecht/5th/4th

Katie Heraty/10th/10th

MC/Harold Cranmer/Chad Plaia/4th/5th

Catamaran/Joe Kelly, Matt Kelly, Lauren McCay, Joe Smarzewski/1st/7th

MC/Bruce Harlan/Sean O'Neill, Liam O'Neill/6th/2nd

E-Scow/Bob King, Stewart Spratt, Scott Troeger/Cal King, Kyle Bernaciak, Neil Troeger/11th/1st

Sunfish/Amy Troeger/Tori Troeger/8th/11th

Sunfish/Spencer Bouwkamp/Kenny McCay/9th/9th

Sunfish/Dave Olson/Amanda Lacy/7th/8th

Chrysler/Tess Kelly, Rachel Kelly,

This Week: Sunday Races
Sunday, Aug. 24 11 am
Alternate start: Noon

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Kathy & Ron Niezgodski & Dorothy Parnell

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Dan Reynolds

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Helen Toth

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Terry Keirn
President

Birch Lake Recipes of the Week

Cherry Stuffed French Toast

(serves 4)

1 8-oz. package cream cheese, softened at room temperature
1 Cup red sour cherried
1/4 teaspoon almond extract or 1 tablespoon Amaretto
1 loaf unsliced Italian or Challa egg bread
6 eggs, well beaten
1/3 cup milk (or heavy cream if your waist line can take it)
Unsalted butter
Cinnamon

Cut the end off the bread. Make a cut to form a pocket in the bread 1/2" or so from the end. Only cut 3/4 of the way down into the loaf, leaving as much of the sides attached as possible. Once the pocket is formed cut the slice from the loaf so it is about 1" or so thick slice.

Beat the eggs, then add milk or cream. Add a sprinkle of cinnamon to this custard mix.

Beat the cream cheese slightly to soften. Mix in the almond extract or the Amaretto, then add the sour cherries and any juice. Take about 1/4 cup of this mixture and spread into the pocket of the bread.

Place the bread into the egg custard mixture to soak briefly, turning once or twice.

In a large, non-stick pan or well-seasoned griddle, heat butter over moderate heat until foam subsides and cook bread slices 5 to 7 minutes on each side, or until golden and crisp. Sprinkle lightly with sugar and serve with maple syrup.

This recipe can also be made with other seasonal fruits such as blueberries, raspberries or chopped peaches. Simply replace the

other fruit and remove the almond extract.

Spicy Hot Szechwan Chicken

(serves 4)

4 chicken breasts, cut into small pieces
1 tablespoon light soy sauce
1 tablespoon dry sherry
2 tablespoons cornstarch
9 dried hot red peppers (if you want it less spicy, use fewer)

Sauce

3 tablespoons sherry
3 tablespoons dark soy sauce
1 tablespoon brown sugar
1-1/2 tablespoon sesame oil
1-1/2 teaspoon Worcestershire sauce
1-1/2 tablespoon water
1-1/2 tablespoon corn starch

3 tablespoons oil
Chopped green onions
chopped toasted peanuts

Marinate chicken in soy sauce, sherry and corn starch for 15 minutes. Remove seeds from red peppers and cut into small pieces.

Combine sauce ingredients and set aside.

Heat wok or frying pan over very hot flame. Add oil and red pepper, cook for a few seconds. Add chicken and cook over high heat, stirring constantly for 10 minutes. Add sauce mixture and cook until it thickens. Remove to serving platter, top with green onions and chopped toasted peanuts. Serve with rice

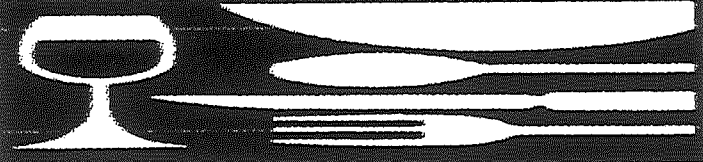
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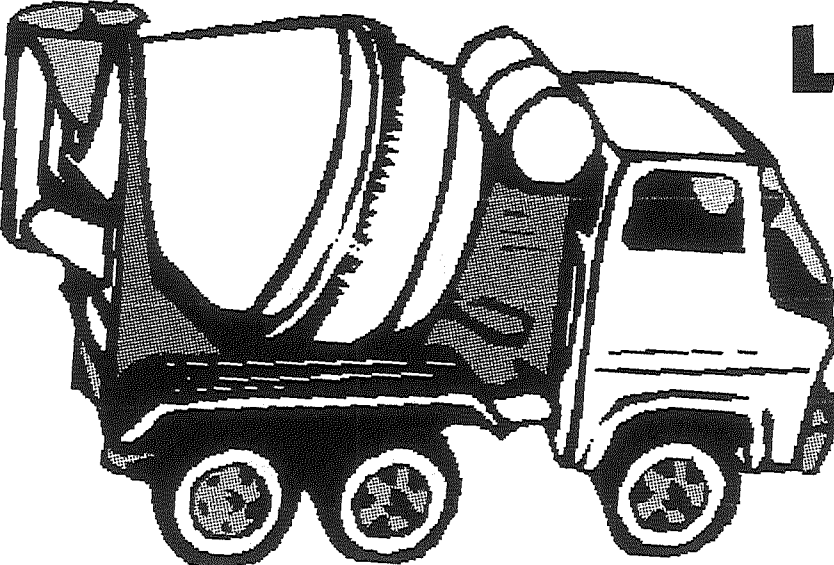
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Birch Lake Recipes of the Week

Blue Cheese Potato Salad

(serves 16)

5 lbs small red potatoes scrubbed
1/2 cup dry white vermouth
3/4 cup safflower oil (or other neutral flavored salad oil)
2/3 cup apple cider vinegar
3 teaspoons Tabasco
3 tablespoons sugar
3 tablespoons grainy mustard
3 cloves garlic, minced
1 teaspoon cumin, crushed or ground
6 scallions, chopped
1 orange or red bell pepper, seeded and diced
salt and pepper to taste
6 large fresh basil leaves (more if they are small)
6 oz. blue cheese, crumbled

Place potatoes in a large pot with cold water. Bring to a boil over high heat and immediately reduce to a simmer, cooking the potatoes until tender when pricked with a fork, about 20 minutes.

Drain potatoes, cool slightly, cut in half. While they are still warm toss in large bowl with the vermouth. Allow to cool to room temperature.

Whisk together the safflower oil, vinegar, Tabasco, sugar, mustard, garlic and cumin. Gently stir in scallions and bell pepper. Pour over potatoes and season with salt and pepper.

Make a chiffonade of the basil by placing leaves directly on top of one another in the same direction. Starting along one edge, roll the leaves lengthwise, and using a sharp knife, cut the rolled basil into thin pieces. Sprinkle over the potatoes and add the crumbled blue cheese. Toss lightly.

Best served right away, but can be made a day in advance and kept covered in the refrigerator. Half a recipe works well for a smaller crowd.

Note: This recipe can be made with any blue cheese, but for a special treat try using Maytag Blue Cheese. This cheese is available by mail order from the Maytag Dairy farms in Iowa for around \$11 per pound plus shipping (1-800-247-2458). The dairy was started in the early 1900s by one of the sons of the Matag appliance founder. The cheese is hand made in small batches and then aged in caves to peak flavor. It is considered to be the finest American Blue and comparisons rank in among the world's great cheeses.

By Jeff and Denise Smitley

Tim Miller

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Stu's Star Stuff



About once a month the Moon pulls a dangerous stunt, cutting directly across the tracks of the oncoming freight train we call Earth. It would take us about three and a half hours to cover the quarter-million-mile gap. But it's nothing to panic about. By the time we cover that distance, the Moon will have moved that much farther away, so we won't catch up to it.

We were barreling toward the Moon because, at around 7:49PM on Tuesday, the Moon's phase was at last quarter. At last quarter, the Moon lines up directly ahead of Earth in our orbit around the Sun. On average, Earth races around the Sun at about 66,000 miles an hour, or about 18 miles per second.

But that's just one of our planet's many motions through space.

Earth, Moon, Sun, and everything else in our solar system orbits the center of the Milky Way galaxy, which is 27,000 light-years

away. It takes more than 200 million years to complete one turn around the galaxy, for an average speed of about 500,000 miles an hour, or almost 140 miles each second. At that snail's pace the solar system has only been around the block about two dozen times during Earth's existence.

The Milky Way is moving, too. It's being pulled toward the giant Andromeda galaxy. And both the Milky Way and Andromeda are being pulled toward the Great Attractor — a dense cluster of hundreds of galaxies, which is also moving.

The Moon will continue to wane as it approaches New on Wednesday this coming week. Keep an eye on it as we head in that direction — one of our planet's many motions through the universe. Next week, Mars at it's brightest.

-Stu Spratt

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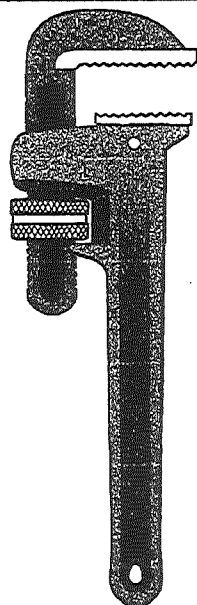
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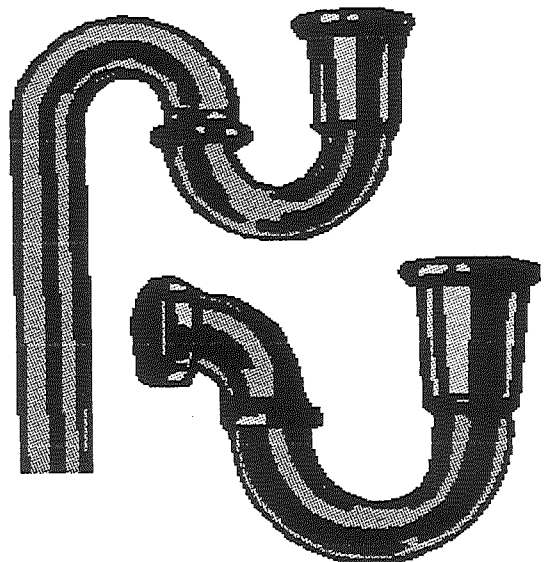
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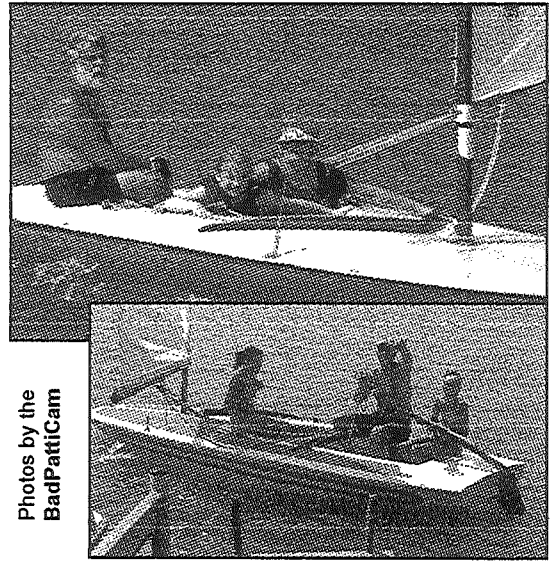
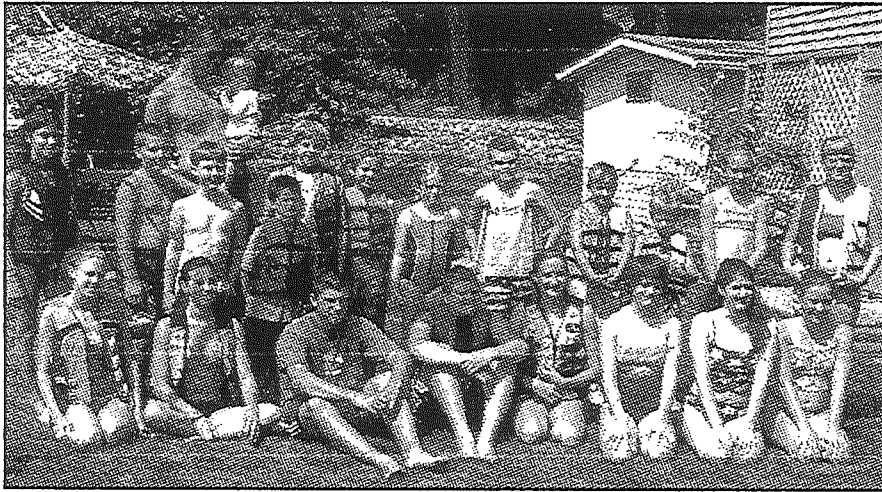
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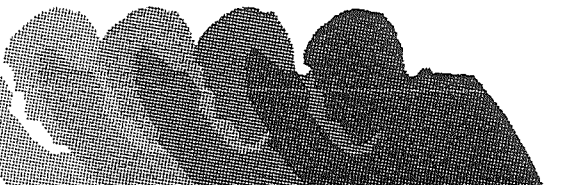
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Birch lake Management Program - BLYC Water Quality Committee

August

by Gert Temple

Dear Birch Lake's Friends:

So many of you have told me that you either heard or read that Birch Lake is rated as one of the top 10 cleanest lakes in the state of Michigan.

Some of you told me that Birch Lake is the 4th or 5th cleanest lake in the state.

We all know for sure that BIRCH is called "THE JEWEL OF CASS COUNTY" throughout the state of Michigan and that BIRCH is looked upon throughout the state as a role model ... and that lakes continue to strive to attain the goal that you, the property owners have reached for YOUR lake.

Birch Lake is enrolled in the Cooperative Lakes Monitoring Program for 2003. It is one of the top volunteer monitoring programs in the nation. The basic indicators included in the program are water clarity, as measured with a Secchi Disk; the plant nutrient phosphorus; and the algal plant pigment chlorophyll.

The CLMP provides sampling methods, training, technical support, quality control and laboratory assistance for volunteer's who monitor their lake for these basic indicators of lake productivity using Carlson's Trophic State Index.

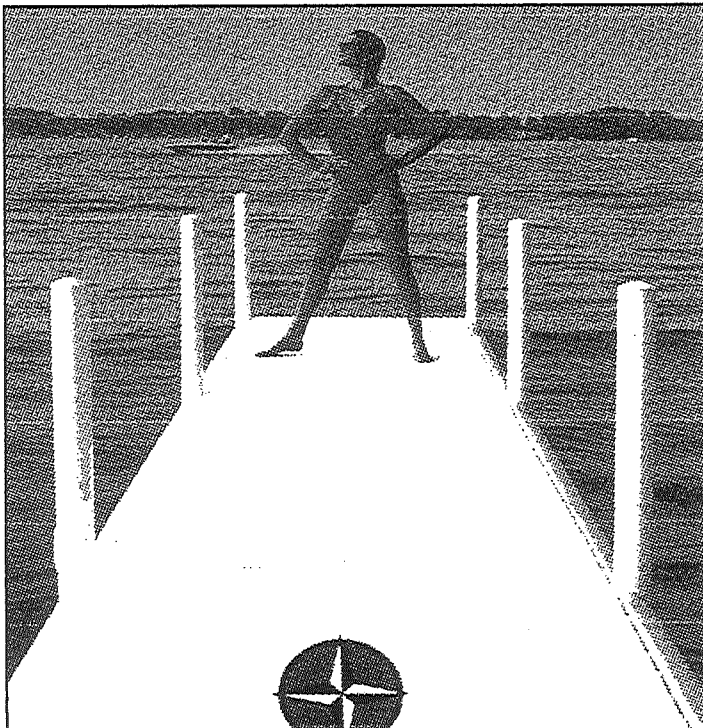
Long term monitoring on a consistent and regular basis provides data needed to recognize changes or trends in lake productivity. By participating in the CLMP, the water quality committee provides an annual check-up on Birch Lake's health.

• In the Michigan Annual Summary Report 1999 through 2002 the Carlson's Trophic State Index for Birch Lake is "OLIGOTROPHIC" the Highest Quality.

CLMP is a partnership between the Land and Water Management Division of the Michigan Department of Environmental Quality and the Michigan Lake and Stream Associations; therefore,

• The Department of Environmental Quality and the Michigan Lake and Stream Associations, Inc. are well aware of the CLEANLINESS of BIRCH LAKE and the BEAUTY of Birch Lake, as are you, the wonderful property owners of the "JEWEL of CASS COUNTY."

-G Temple



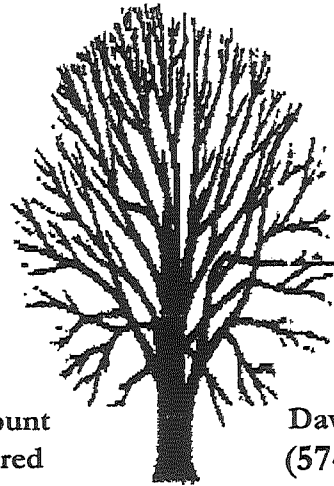
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The XYZs of healthy eating

Editor's note: Ima Foodnudge is on vacation again, so her evil twin, Skippy, submitted the following note.

For those of you who watch what you eat... Here's the final word on nutrition and health. It's a relief to know the truth after all those conflicting medical studies.

1. The Japanese eat very little fat and suffer fewer heart attacks than the British or Americans.

**JUST FOR THE
HEALTH OF IT**
by: Skippy Foodnudge

2. The Mexicans eat a lot of fat and suffer fewer heart attacks than the British or Americans.

3. The Japanese drink very little red wine and suffer fewer heart attacks than the British or Americans

4. The Italians drink excessive amounts of red wine and suffer fewer heart attacks than the British or Americans.

5. The Germans drink a lot of beers and eat lots of sausages and fats and suffer fewer heart attacks than the British or Americans.

CONCLUSION: Eat and drink what you like. Speaking English is apparently what kills you.

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FOR SALE BY OWNERS (Bud & Louise Rieth): Year-round home on Northwest side of Birch Lake (Cove). Large 2-story house, 4400 sq. ft., 3 Bedrooms, 2-1/2 Baths, Large Living Room, Family Room, Kitchen, & lots of closets. 69 feet frontage. Separate Guest House with 3-Stall Garage, 2 Bedrooms, Living Room, Kitchen, & Bath. 1-1/2 acre lot. Price: \$695,000. Call Louise or Bud for appt. 269-476-2174

LAKEFRONT HOME FOR SALE — 75' frontage, 2,500 sq ft, 3 BR, 2 BA, 2 great rooms, sunroom, laundry, floor to ceiling windows facing lake. Large deck, oversized garage, many extras. Call Dean and Phyllis Davis 476-2396.

2003 Nissan Outboard, 9.9 Hp, 4-stroke, electric start. Only 2 hours use. \$1,700; \$25 more with new battery. Can be seen at 63286 Birch Rd. (east side), or call 476-8897.

Aqua-Step, a spring-loaded heavy-duty stainless steel padded step to mount to the rear of a wave runner. Step remains in the up position (out of water) until needed, then pulls down to make an underwater step at the rear of the boat for boarding. This unit will fit all wave runners and is new with all parts and full easy installation instructions. \$35. Call Bruce Harlan 476-9714.

For sale: Swim raft with ladder. 6 yr. old. 1/3 of new (\$1,200) = \$400. Has small leak. Contact Bob Morrison, 14860 S. Shore, or call 574-250-4945.

FOR SALE: DYNASTY SKI BOAT 17' I/O with OMC Cobra 175 HP engine. Original owner and in very good condition with Trailmaster color coordinated trailer. Includes Shoremaster boat lift with electric hoist and new canopy. \$6500 for complete combination. Call Kruggel's (269)476-2169

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WANTED TO BUY

Wanted to buy: small boat trailer. Call 476-2526.

Looking for used wakeboard preferably a beginners board, with bindings included. (574) 272-3683

WANTED

Wanted: stainless steel u-shaped awning parts for older, 8' wide pontoon boat. Check on the wall or in the rafters of your garage. While you're there, we also need an old battery charger with a 5-volt setting. O'Brien; N 250. 476-2126

Wanted: 16+ foot Jon Boat needed for Porter Twp Fire Dept. Lake Rescue Squad. Contact Mike Holdeman at chief@ptpfd.org.

RENTALS

North Shore cottage for rent, available through September. Sleeps six. \$850 per week. Contact Fred Frehofer at (574) 272-3683 or send e-mail to ffrehofer@aol.com.

MISC.

FREE — four empty plastic barrels; ideal for swim raft. Come get 'em at the Bad-Patty and Good-Bill Luecht house, east side.

Free (Old) Pier Sections. Anyone interested can just help themselves, otherwise we're just going to pitch them. They are at 63315 Storey Hill St. It's the old Jankowski house. Thanks. Any questions, let me know. Vickie Tomaino mytoria@aol.com

SERVICES

Housedcleaning: Call Shanna at (269) 501-9379. I'm located on the south side and I am available to clean your home weekly, bi-weekly, monthly or seasonally.

Babysitting: Call Shanna on the south side of Birch Lake at (269)501-9379.

Babysitting: Please call Amanda Lacy at 476-2102.

LOST

Lost in storm: Red plastic five-gallon gas tank, blown off Wiseman's pier in storm of 8/1. Please call 476-9560

Rich Pope Water Ski lost Aug. 3 near camp; please call 476-8807.

Dropped ski — blue, red and black, HO Xtra JC 59 lost along the east shore. Please call Scott Troeger at 476-9898.

Lost: during storm of July 5: swim fins with colors blue and black. If found, please call 476-2526.

We lost a ski last week in the north/northwest sectors. It is a boring 30 yr old "Cypress Gardens" with a beige boot & natural wood. It might also be useful as a replacement board for a squeaky floorboard. Contact Ray & Sonia Sanders 476-8807

FOUND

We found an Electra EP blue water ski in the middle of the lake. Contact Frank or Elizabeth Parkinson at 476-9293



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Comments
Continued from Page 1

fated to one day sink to this ...

I didn't stay long that day. I couldn't.

I allowed myself the mercy of the now-mechanical drive to Birch Lake, where I once again found myself in the seat of solace at the end of my pier, staring numb-brained at the waves and the sun reflecting off the water, my mind wandering along aching paths.

I have heard over the years about the "healing" waters of Birch Lake — some sort of legend passed down from the Native Americans who inhabited the area in the days of pre-history, I assumed. But that day, I finally got it.

Somewhere between the third beer and the fourth dip in the lake to try to wash the sweat and grime and confusion

and grief off my body, I got a funny feeling. You know, the kind when you're sure someone's staring at you, and you need to turn to look at the house for just a second.

I turned and looked. No one there.

Then I looked back again, and I saw it ... right at the end of my pier. I saw my house ... no, I saw my home.

And I realized how wrong I had been about that stupid quote, the one about never going home again. You see, I had always assumed that it was referring to a house, the physical place where a person might have once lived, and about how the changes that happen in the course of your life make you see it differently if you go there years later, after you have changed.

That day out on the pier, though, I realized you can't go home again because no matter where you go or how you change, you can never really leave home.

Home isn't a house on a street that you can come to or go from as life's winds blow you around. Home is where you make your peace with your demons and your Gods; where you let yourself live and laugh and love. Where you share your fortunes with the people who mean the most to you. Where you find peace.

This is where I have chosen to make my home. This is where my heart is. This is where I intend to live with the woman who has already given me 33 years of love; where I intend to watch my grandchildren learn to fish and sail and grow into adults; where I intend to finally die and let my ashes feed the fish. This is the place where I can find peace.

Thank you, Birch Lake, for accepting me into the community, into your homes and into your hearts.

-Phil Vitale

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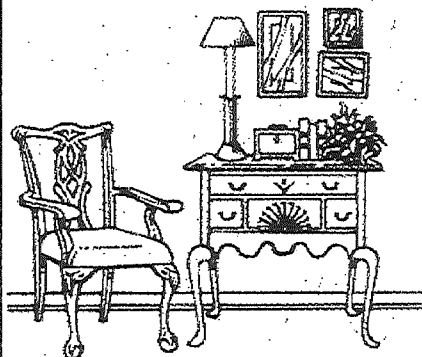
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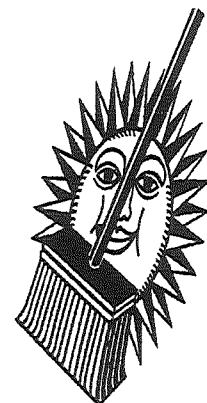
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