

Birch Barker

Weekend of July 31, 2004



Celebrating a Birch Lake wedding

Lifelong lake resident Ryan Gableman, son of former lake resident John Gableman and Claudia Phipps, and fiancée Shanna Plank were married July 17th at the Three Rivers Presbyterian Church. A reception followed at the UAW hall in Three Rivers. Ryan and Shanna will be returning from their honeymoon in Hawaii and will be back on Birch lake the end of July.

photo by Bruce Harlan

COMMODORE'S COMMENTS

It's here. The event you've all been waiting for...The Great Tube Float!. So what the heck is it? Well, not what I had originally dreamed. The execution was problematic. So here's what we'll do instead...Bring your floating device out to the middle of the lake between 1:00pm and 3:00pm. It doesn't matter what you have; inner tube, blow up whale, fun noodle, cushions off the new couch, anything. Enjoy the fellowship and camaraderie of whatever flotsam and jetsam shows up. Stay for 10 minutes, stay all afternoon, whatever you like. It should be fun to see.

The men's golf outing was yesterday. Since this column is written in advance

I'll go out on a limb and say that everyone had a great time and the weather was beautiful. More details next week.

Now a bit of unhappy news. The corn and sausage roast is in jeopardy. One or more vandals have attacked the fire pit used to cook the food and have made it all but unusable. Terry Keirn is going to try to save the day and make some repairs. A report has been filed with the Cass county sheriff's office and a reward is being offered for information leading to the prosecution of those involved. Contact me with information. If you did this, someone knows about it, and it might be worth a hundred bucks to them to turn you in. I hope so.

Upcoming events — Women's golf outing next Friday, Corn and Sausage Roast next Saturday (we hope), directors/homeowners meeting 8/7, volleyball

BLYC Calendar

- July 31 - Garage sale
- July 31 - The Great Birch Lake Float-in
- July 31 - Kids Luau 1 pm
- Aug. 6 - Women's golf outing
- Aug. 7 - Corn and sausage roast
- Aug. 7 - Directors meeting: 9 am
- Aug 7 - Homeowners Assoc. Meeting
- Aug 14 - Kids Regatta
- Aug. 14 - Volleyball Tourney
- Aug. 21 - Fall dinner

on 8/14, and fall dinner 8/21. The list is getting short. Where has the summer gone? Better get out there and have some fun. Bring your floatie.

-Stewart Spratt, Commodore 2004

The deadline for submitting Barker materials is every Tuesday at Noon!

We are always soliciting and accepting materials for future publication. Just e-mail the info to me at sailorphil@philvital.com, or, if you must, put the materials in the red Barker box at 63174 Birch Rd. (East Shore), mail to Phil Vitale, 120 So. Broadway, Cassopolis, MI 49031, or fax your items to (269) 445-9200. To contact me by phone, call 476-1680 or (269) 445-9200.

Note: All times in the Barker are IST (Indiana Standard Time) unless stated otherwise

Birch Lake Notes

Fall Dinner update

This year's fall dinner is being planned as I type. The gathering will take place on August 21st at the Yacht Club. We are in negotiation with the caterer and are hoping to offer something new and exciting for a menu.

Entertainment will also be provided. More details and a reservation form will appear next week. Please plan to attend. Volunteers are being sought to assist with set up, serving drinks/food, clean up,

etc... Contact John and Nyla Erhardt at 476.9944.

Spratts to visit

Stu Spratt and his beautiful bride Kimberly Janey will be spending the coming week at their summer home on the north side. The Spratt family will be celebrating 40 years at Birch Lake. (Well, not Kim. She's not that old.) Activities this week will include sleeping on a raft, sleeping in a lawn chair, and no doubt sleeping on the couch. Kim is looking

forward to planting some flowers and soaking up a little sun. Meals will be a mixture of dining in and dining out. Hopefully sons Chris (20) and Mike (17) will be able to come up from Kentucky to spend a few days as well. The only unknown will be the weather. They'll be keeping their fingers crossed.

Matches will get under way at noon in the field next to Ben's barn in the northeast corner. Games will be played to 15 points with a cap of 17. The first team to win two games wins the match and moves on. Sign up for co-ed fours and/or co-ed sixes. Registration is \$5 per team. You may phone in your registration and pay courtside or drop it off at Spratt's on the north side. Contact Stewart at 574.291.3227 or 476.2113.

Spike It Up!

Last chance to sign up for the Birch Lake Volleyball Tournament on August 14th.

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Have A Safe and Fun Summer!

Birch Lake Notes

Aerial Photos Ordered....

Thanks to all who ordered aerial photos of Birch Lake and a special thanks to those that followed directions and secured their order with a check or cash. We ordered 25 of the 20 x 24 size and had only 2 orders for the 11 x 18.

Because I had to set a price on the pictures before I had orders, I set the price too low on the 11 x 18. The profit on the 20 x 24 covered the loss

however and the profit to the Yacht Club will be \$155. (Thanks in part to not paying Michigan state sales tax of 6% because we took delivery in Indiana)

Thanks to Stewart Spratt who walked the picture around to help secure orders and to Phil Vitale who attended a water quality convention and made contact with the vendor who provided the picture.

No extra pictures were ordered so if you missed this

offer you can contact the vendor directly. Ask for Bob or Barb Smith c/o Aerial Graphics PO Box 88158, Grand Rapids, MI. 49588-8158 Phone 800.780.FOTO (3686).

Because we ordered in quantity, be prepared for substantially higher prices for individual pictures. Delivery will be after the 1st of August and I will call you before I drop in. A small delivery charge of a cold libation will graciously be accepted.

If you are not available, feel free to contact me at the following numbers. W-800.243.5548, H-574.272.3683, L-476.9823, M-574.286.0009.

-Fred Freihofer

Thanks for the hostas

A thank you to whom ever planted the hostas around the tree at the base of the hill at Sears Park. It is a thing of beauty!

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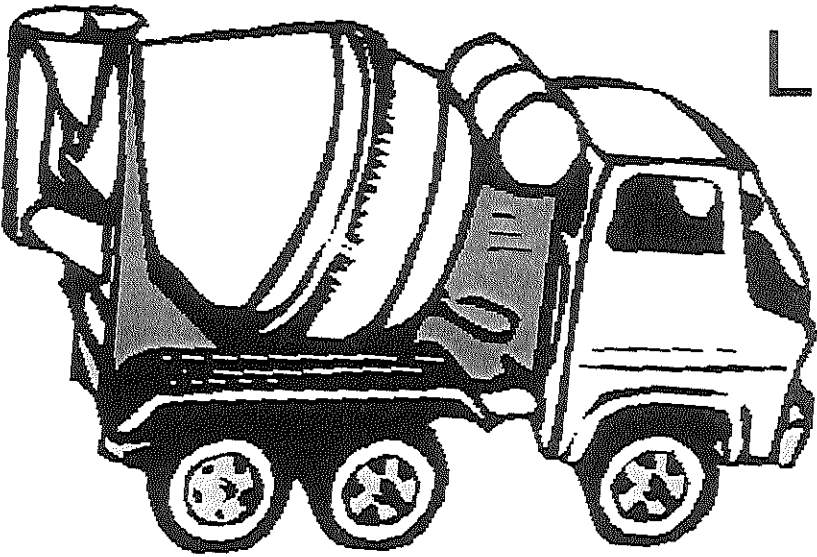
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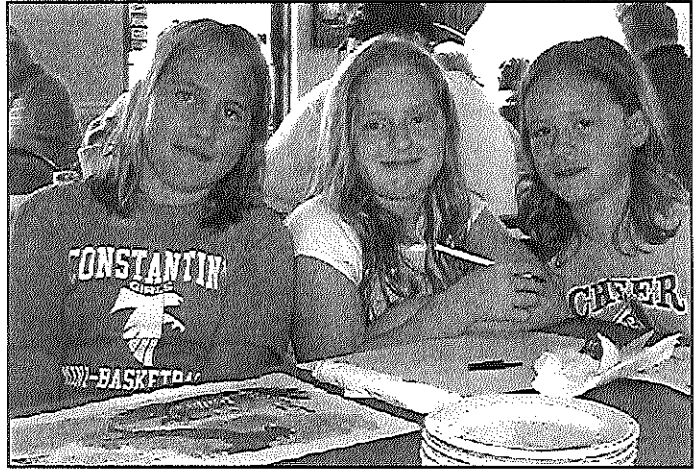
Birch Lake News

Kids of the Week



Bad Patty Luecht (east side) submitted these kid photos for the Barker. At left are son John ... being John.

At right are daughter Katie, her friend Hannah Everling from Danville, Indiana (her first visit to Birch Lake) and Carrie Curtis (Northeast side) posing and waiting at Columbos for pizza.



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Birch Lake News

O'Neil wins braggin' rights at tourney

Bill O'Neil was the champ at the second-annual Olsen Shuffleboard invitational that took place last Sunday. His "eagle eye and controlled shots" assured him of a win over some very competitive — and vocal — players. Dave Olsen was the gracious (?) host and "let" Bill win in the final round of play.

Pet of the week

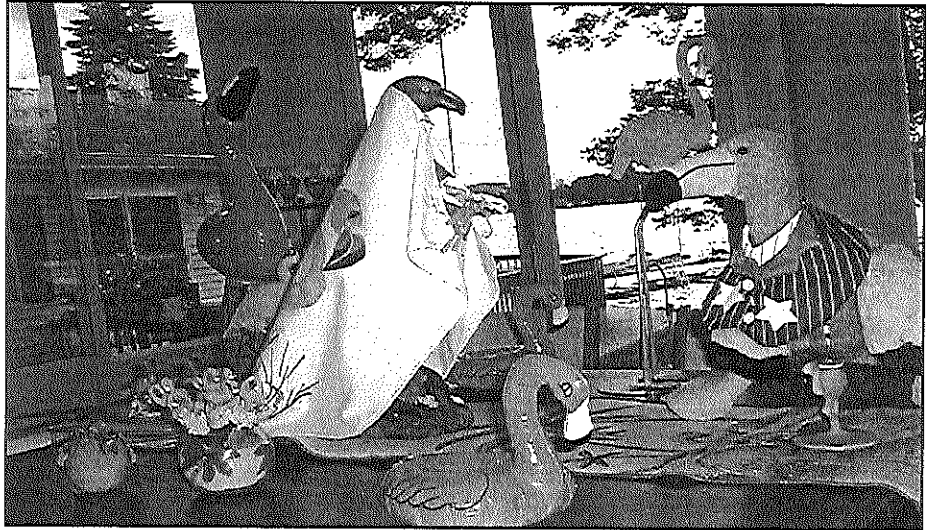
Parents play a part in the pet of the week photo. Ray and Jackie Davis escaped the heat of Florida to visit their daughter and son in law Patti and Rick Russwurm recently. For the fee paid (petting), Major shared his favorite place in the world to be — the bow of a boat on Birch Lake.



Birds of a feather flock together at Birch Lake ...

Birch Lake was the scene of a rather unusual wedding earlier this summer between Flo the Flamingo (the migratory waterfowl who flew in this past winter but has been convalescing this from a broken neck suffered in a New Years Eve gravity storm), and Farley, the one-footed piano player and part-time bartender at the famed Birch Lake Flamingo Room.

photos by *BadPatty*
Costumes by *Katie Luecht*

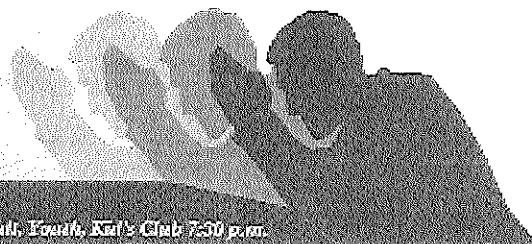
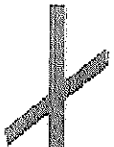


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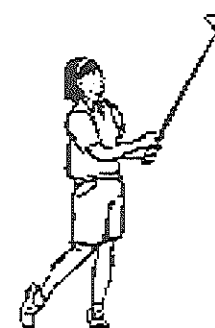
Ladies Golf/Lunch

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BLYC Sailing News

Friends,

I am happy to say that Sunday found us with a new pair of sailors in the MC class. Greg Peyer with son, David joined in during the first race and stayed to sail the second. We hope it was an enjoyable day for them and

they will come out with us next Sunday. I want to thank the Becks once again for running the Committee Boat. They are such pros at it! We are lucky to have their help whenever they have a free Sunday. To show our appreciation for the Committee Boat's

promptness and efficiency, all sailors need to make a real effort to have boats rigged and be out at the mark at 11:00a.m. because they are always out there ready and waiting to greet us and get us started. Thanks also to Don Harman and Harold Cranmer for

being the "mark" wranglers, that is, putting out and taking in the marks as well as storing them when they are not in use.

That's all for now,

-Jim Bolinger
Fleet Captain 2004

Results from last week's sailboat races

Sailor	# Races	class	1st race	2nd race	3rd race	day's total	cumulative	average	place
Rick Harman	10	MC	5th	3rd	2nd	4291	14422	1442	3
Scott Troeger	16	MC	1st	1st	1st	4820	24786	1549	1
Don Harman	16	MC	3rd	5th	3rd	4204	22830	1428	4
Harold Cranmer	15	MC	2nd	2nd	5th	4368	21919	1473	2
Jim Bolinger	16	MC	6th	7th	7th	3557	21871	1367	5
Phil Vitale	15	MC	4th	4th	4th	4137	20043	1336	6
Bill Luecht	10	MC	7th	8th	6th	3500	12078	1208	7
Greg Peyer	1	MC	DNS	6th	DNS	1235	1235	1235	*
Dave Olson	13	Sun A	1st	2nd	2nd	4672	20048	1542	2
Rick Russwurm	8	Sun A	DNS	DNS	DNS	0	11865	1483	3
Erica Vitale	8	Sun A	3rd	3rd	3rd	4363	11637	1455	4
Tom Howard	13	Sun A	2nd	1st	1st	4751	20535	1580	1
Bob King	2	Sun A	DNS	DNS	DNS	0	3220	1610	*
Caleb Walker	14	Sun B	1st	1st	1st	4830	21912	1565	1 (tie)
Amy Troeger	8	Sun B	3rd	2nd	DNS	2985	10338	1496	2
Sandy Vitale	15	Sun B	2nd	3rd	2nd	4516	21912	1565	1 (tie)
Steve Richards	8	Sun B	4th	4th	4th	4137	11334	1417	3
Chad Plaia	3	Sun B	3rd	DNS	DNS	1454	4187	1367	4

Accents & Images

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Fourth generation Birch Baby

I felt it was necessary to write a little something to you all before I leave for school and say goodbye for the year so, here it goes...

This is a story about my 18 years worth of summers spent in a place that is more than a home but, yet a way of life. My great-grandfather built the cottage that my grandfather, father and, his siblings grew up in on the South side of the lake. Now my family and I live in the white sore thumb on the East side of the lake. So here begins the story of years filled with endless memories of family and friends.

One of the earliest memories I have of Birch Lake is being towed behind the row boat on the flexi-board. This was a piece of wood fashioned into two skis but, left attached in the center. I remember feeling privileged to sit on grandpa's lap and being able to "drive" the boat. Grandpa always said I was going to make him sick because; I never drove in a straight line. Grandpa was also proud of his Philippine mahogany pier. He said many times "That pier will probably outlast you!" Along with the many hours spent outside — Grandpa and I watched Cub's games together religiously at the lake. I sat on his footstool at the end of his chair and cheered along with him. To this day that footstool has my butt imprint on it!

One of the funniest memories I have of both of my grandparents is the day they attempted to get on a jet-ski and, the fell off before they had even started. Needless to say Grandpa's pipe was lost and they both gave up. Speaking of losing things I

think we all have lost a pair of glasses in the lake!

Having my grandparents and, my entire family together on summer weekends was a great time. I have many memories of parties at the lake or, endless nights of playing cards after dinner. Both of my grandparents loved sharing their little slice of heaven with others.

The Fourth of July was always a time our family spent together. I remember laughing at my cousins for nearly blowing their hands off and now, they laughed at me for the same thing. I would stare in awe at the colors and shapes and then, wonder why anyone would want to be any other place than Birch Lake. I remember a particular boat parade on the Fourth of July, when I was hit with a water balloon that was launched by none other than my own father. One year I also remember having lemonade stand at our house during the Fourth of July garage sale. The Troeger family and, my brothers and I were determined to make money.

The lake would not be what it is without the loving neighbors and friends. I remember visiting the Henderson family and going on paddleboat rides with Justin. Justin would then carry me from his house to mine on his broad shoulders. We would then cause trouble at home. I remember when Roy unveiled the new hot tub in their front yard; I thought that was the coolest thing around. I remember jumping from the hot tub into the cold lake water. Justin would do the same thing right along with me. He probably thought I was crazy and, I was and

still am. Regardless of how crazy I am Justin was always around for me when I needed a friend and, he still is around when I need him. His entire family has been wonderful to me and I thank them for everything. You all help make this place home and, I hope remembering Justin's giant smile brings one to all of your faces. I love you all.

I have many crazy memories about Sheriff Dan and his boys. Dan was the first person I ever had ridden a motorcycle with. Dan also is the man who issued my boating license; I imagine he still regrets doing that. Dan to this day has the wondrous ability to scare me to death. One afternoon in July two years ago Dan sent his cronies out looking for me. His men didn't need to look far because; I was docking the boat next door. As I was docking two men walked out onto my families' pier. The two men grabbed the boat and, asked me how much I had been drinking. I replied and said "None that I know of." Apparently these two gentlemen still had to arrest me. I was then handcuffed and walked off of our pier. Dan walked down and proceeded to tell me that, I was driving too fast. (Gee what a shock). Dan and Sheryl have been great friends and neighbors and, I will miss all of our road trips and, hair cuts as I head off to school.

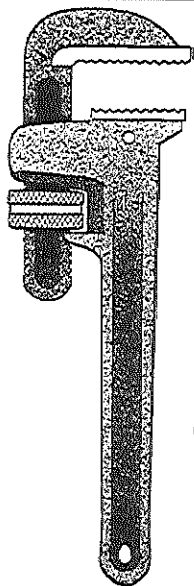
The Troeger's have been fabulous neighbors. We have been in boat parades together, we have taken walks and bike rides together. (Mostly riding or walking to Tom's). We have burned marshmallows together and, camped in

our yard together. All of us kids have even prepared meals together for our respective parents. Most recently we all drove down Monkey Run road, with plastic monkeys and crazy hats on our heads in Grandma's lime green convertible laughing the entire way. I am thankful to have grown up with such wonderful people right next to me. Best of luck to you Neil in all of your business ventures!

The entire Bouwkamp family has become a wonderful friend to our family. Scott has been a great friend. He and I have shared many memories out on the lake. I am glad that he has become a part of our family. Thanks to Scott for the great memories and, the college advice that made my mother cringe!!! Thanks for your friendship.

Many of my friends who do not live on the lake love it when I invite them up. I have spent time sailing, tubing and doing a multitude of other things with friends whom I bring up here. Just like me these friends don't like to leave this wonderful place. Birch Lake contains an enthralling calm that I have yet to find anywhere else on Earth. When I was younger and I would fall or hurt myself Grandpa told me to get into the healing waters of Birch Lake so I would feel better. Now when I come to the lake, these waters put me at peace and I enjoy life with family and friends. I am saying goodbye for now but, I hope to be at Birch Lake for summers and years to come. I feel incredibly blessed to call this place home and, you should too!

-Chris Ball, East Side



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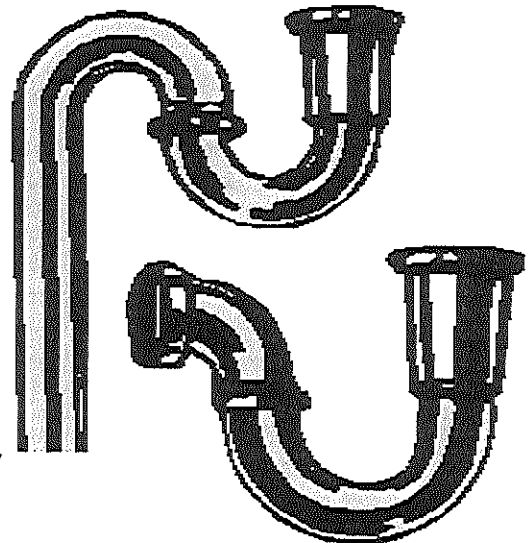
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Stu's Star Stuff



Blue moon, I saw you standing alone...

We have all watched the moon over the lake as it passes through its cycle from full to new and back to full again. That cycle takes about 29 and a half days to complete. That means that once in a while the cycle can begin again within a single calendar month. When that happens, the second full moon is called a Blue Moon. But is it ever really blue?

In September of 1950 it was. From British Columbia to the British Isles, the

Moon looked a bit odd. Instead of its usual silvery countenance, it did look distinctly blue.

This odd appearance was the result of forest fires in western Canada. Tiny particles of ash rose high into the atmosphere, where they were carried eastward. These particles were just the right size and composition to scatter some of the red wavelengths of moonlight. The blue passed through unfiltered.

Such "true-blue" moons are unusual but not unheard of. One of the most widespread occurred

after the explosion of Krakatoa in 1883. The plume of volcanic ash spread around much of the globe.

Yet "blue moons" are so rare that they became important to the English language. At first, if someone said that something was as likely to happen as a blue moon, they meant it would never happen at all. Over time, though, the meaning changed, so the phrase "once in a blue moon" came to mean "once in a great while."

In the last couple of decades, "blue moon" has gained a

new meaning. It's the name given to a second full Moon in any calendar month -- something that happens on average about once every two and a half years. Our last full moon was on July 2nd. Tonight marks the second full moon of July. With the moon as bright as it is much of the show will be greatly diminished. But go out and enjoy what's there anyway. And it's still free.

-Stu Spratt

Big enough for you, Stu?

The moon for July 31 2004 (at Midnight): 0.5 days after full moon; illuminated Fraction: 0.993

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Off the page

by *Marian* (the librarian)

One of the hardest times to find time to read is when you are in high school. Friends, work, sleep just seem to be the top priorities. I hope these suggestions will get you to pick up a book this summer. Who knows you may be ahead of the game when book report time comes this fall.

Ø Slam (Myers)

Sixteen-year-old "Slam" Harris is counting on his noteworthy basketball talents to get him out of the inner city and give him a chance to succeed in life, but his coach sees things differently. This one is always checked out of my library.

Ø Speak (Anderson)

A traumatic event near the end of the summer has a devastating effect on Melinda's freshman year in high school. I haven't had one complaint about this book being boring.

Ø The Hitchhikers Guide to the Galaxy (Adams)

Seconds before Earth is demolished to make room for a galactic freeway, an earthman is saved by his friend. Together they journey through the galaxy. A favorite of many students who are looking for something offbeat.

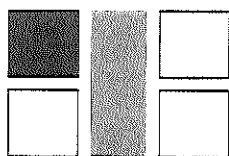
Ø Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants (Brashares)

Carmen decides to discard an old pair of jeans, but Tibby, Lena, and Bridget think they are great and decide that whoever the pants fit best will get them. When the jeans fit everyone perfectly, a sisterhood and a memorable summer begin. A fun, fast read. This book was so popular the sequel *The Second Summer of the Sisterhood of the Traveling Pants* is now printed.

Ø Big Mouth, Ugly Girl (Oates)

When sixteen-year-old Matt is falsely accused of threatening to blow up his high school and his friends turn against him, an unlikely classmate comes to his aid. This one is really catching on to teen readers. It wasn't hard to read but I thought it was a really good story.

Next week: Graphic Novels



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

-Ben and Vanessa Wozniak

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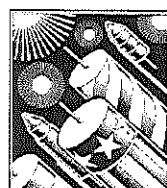
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Birch Lake Merchandise for Sale

Sun Visors, foam with coil back in royal blue selling at \$4; Canvas Totes, navy blue in color imprinted in white selling at \$12; Bib Aprons great for the kitchen or sizzling BBQ's selling at \$15; Fleece Blankets, navy blue, with a sailboat in color circled by a gold rope and birch lake text, all embroidered in the lower right corner selling at \$30.

Call any one of following committee people: Denny Weesner 476-2569 ; Maryann O'Neil 476-2831; Judy Olson 476-2125; Linda Bergan 476-9359; Vickie Rogers 476-2383.

Corn & Sausage Update

This year's BLYC Corn & Sausage Roast, which will be held on August 7, is being expanded! Event Chairman Bernie Garceau has announced that in addition to the yummy corn and sausage, attendees can now special order (at the door) New York Strip Steak or Chicken (at a modestly increased price).

Barker Delivery Team: Charlene Sheetz, South Side; Margaret Bouwkamp South Side/Hill; Holly Troeger, East Side; Judy Olson, East Side; Linda Curtis, East Side; Elaine Lochmandy, North Side; Vickie Rogers, Cove; Buzz Rasmussen, West Side; Becky Wiseman, Courier; Bob King, Courier; Phil Vitale, Editor.

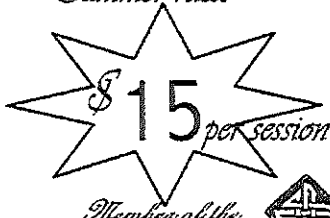
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Spike It Up!

Only 3 more weeks until the Birch Lake Volleyball Tournament on August 14th. Matches will get under way at noon in the field next to Ben's barn in the north-east corner. Games will be played to 15 points with a cap of 17. The first team to win two games wins the match and moves on. Sign up for co-ed fours and/or co-ed sixes. Registration is \$5 per team. You may phone in your registration and pay courtside or drop it off at Spratt's on the north side. Contact Stewart at 574.291.3227 or 476.2113.

Team Name: _____

Team Captain: _____

Competing in: (check one) Fours _____ Sixes _____

Roster: _____



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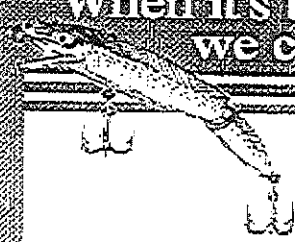
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For Sale — Fairfield 223,000 Point time share. Good at any Fairfield, RCI or Interval Int'l. Network for 1-2 week stay during any week and any location you request. Very reasonably priced. For information and

questions call Mike Machaleck, 476-2642.

LOST & FOUND

Lost — Pair of glasses in blue case. Lost Memorial Day weekend on East side. Please call 476-2461.

Found: Blue hooded sweatshirt at pancake breakfast. **LONGBALL** in red letters on front. Contact Stewart Spratt at 476.2113 or 574.291.3227.

Found: A water lounge float was found at the Vath's shoreline this past weekend. It folds and has a mesh center with a head rest, blue in color. Since the Vath's do not have a tele-

phone, please call Vickie Rogers at 476-2383.

Lost: White windbreaker at yacht club. Contact Carol Freihofer at 564.272.3683 or 476.9823.

Found — A wooden raft with blue barrels found in the creek. We have had it tied up in front of our seawall hoping the owners would claim it. Call 574-288-7936 Paul or Billie Rzeszewski (south west corner by outlet)

MISC.

Cute kittens to good homes only. They love people and are litter box trained. Call Charlene at 476-2604.

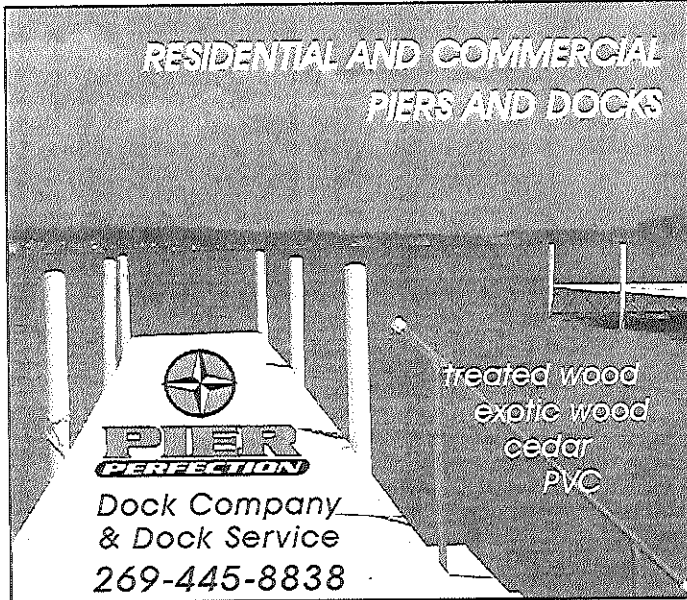
Free to good home: two redwood lounge chairs. 14790 Birch Lakeshore Dr. PS: do you need a cement block or two? Help yourself at the same address.

Got a classified? Send it via e-mail to sailorphil@philvital.com

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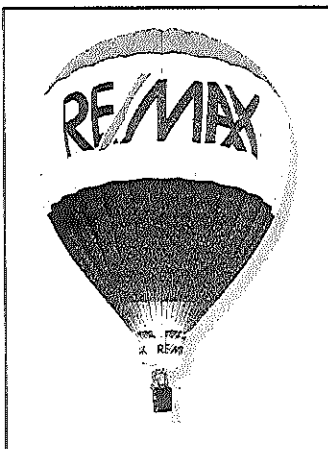
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