

The
Weekend
Of

Labor Day
2017

Birch Barker

The official summer publication of the
BIRCH LAKE YACHT CLUB



Thanks to Linda Bergan (Cove) for the pic of Past Commodore Claudia, Commodore Karen and Vice Commodore Angela.

COMMODORE'S COMMENTS

Hello Birch Lakers! Wow — my first official Commodore's Comments for the Barker. I hope I live up to the eloquent words shared by our past Commodores. I want to offer a huge "thank you" to Past Commodore Claudia Phipps, and on behalf of everyone on the lake — a job well done!

Something you may not know about me is I tend to break out in song if there are lyrics that are appropriate to whatever is going on in my world. So with that in mind ... "Feelings, wo-o-o feelings" are running rampant in my mind/heart. I feel blessed that I am a part of our wonderful Birch Lake community and that I have a huge network of support behind me as I serve as Commodore.

I'm feeling relieved that the 2017 Fall Dinner is behind me, and speaking of that, "Oh What A Night!" I am thrilled that 85 Birch Lakers joined in

camaraderie for an evening of fun, friendship and fantastic food! It was wonderful to hear the Yacht Club filled with chatter (granted, it was loud — but what a great sound!).

This brings me to the opportunity to "Celebrate Good Times" with our new BLYC Vice Commodore — **Angela Bergan!** For those who don't know Angela, she currently is a "Covette," residing in the Cove (in the former Blackwood home). She and her husband, Nick, and their beloved dachshund Seminole will be "Moving On Up ... To the East Side" once their new home is completed (it's the new build between Bob & Sue Waddle and Bob & Sandy Baucus). They will continue to reside in Florida during the winter. If you weren't able to offer your congratulations at the Fall Dinner, please do so when you see her next Spring — they've left for Florida so they can begin their crazy travel as FSU football fanatics.

As long as I'm on the topic of Vice Commodore, I strongly encourage anyone who has a desire to serve to let your wishes be known. As I mentioned at the Fall Dinner/Annual Meeting, picking a

Birch Lake Calendar

2017

September 3 - BLYC Flotilla 2, 5 pm
September 9 - BLYC Board Meeting
September 16 - Tour of Heddon Museum
October 14 - Soup Challenge, 6 pm
October 29 - Memorial Mass for Stanley Pitakos, Our Lady of the Lake, Edwardsburg, 8 am

2018

May 19 - Spring Dinner
June 30 - House Walk
July 7 - Fireworks
July 20 - Ladies Golf
July 27 - Men's Golf
October 10 - Soup Challenge

More info as available. Dates subject to change. Watch the Barker for updates!

Vice Commodore was somewhat of a challenge. I think people avoided me because they were concerned I'd ask them ... I was developing a little bit of a complex! I had several people proactive-

— Birch Lake Notes —



Thanks Bad Patty Luecht for the pic of the suicidal deer hanging on the hill of Harvey Street just east of Birch Rd.

ly state “don’t even think of asking me” (but they were very gracious in volunteering their help to support our various functions). Please, if you have an interest, let us know.

I would like to congratulate Mike Sheffieck for being awarded with the 2017 Commodore’s Award – well deserved for his reliability, knowledge and dedication serving as Secretary (and for all-around good guy!).

As part of the Annual Meeting, we elected five Directors who had terms ending – they are Rick Russwurm, Chas Grundy, Bob Waddle, Sandy Vitale and Sue Williams. We would like to express our thanks to Alan Van Huffel for his service to the Board and to the lake com-

munity – he has chosen to not renew his term.

I don’t have any song lyrics jumping out at me for Labor Day and if I had any that were relevant, they’d be depressing. Labor Day makes me sad ... it’s the time on my calendar that means another summer at the lake is coming to an end. Boating activity dwindles, the days are getting shorter, the water is turning cooler and piers are coming out. It means that October is just around the corner, the month when our cottage is shut down for the winter ... and I start counting the days until we open it back up in April.

On a happier note (“Don’t Worry – Be Happy”), October also means we’re close to the Birch Lake Soup Challenge! Please see the write-up in the Barker about this fun autumn event.

October also means it’s time to get the long sleeves out – and I have the perfect thing for you – new Birch Lake t-shirts! One thing I want to do as Commodore is have a fund raiser, and I’ve decided to do t-shirts (maybe some other Birch Lake goodies as well—we shall see!). Please see the write-up in the Barker for details.

I think that’s everything I wanted to get into my first write-up as Commodore! Please enjoy this holiday weekend – be careful and stay safe. I’m keeping my fingers crossed for beautiful weather all three days – “Blue Skies

Smiling At Me ... Nothing But Blue Skies!”

If the winds cooperate, there will be a Labor Day Regatta with sailing on Saturday and Sunday (make-up day on Monday). Stay in touch via the Online Barker over the fall/winter/spring seasons – I’d love to see more contributions from everyone as to what is going on in your lives! Cheers from Milleritaville!

~Commodore Karen

WHO IS THIS PERSON?

(Following speech was given at the fall dinner)

Every year someone at this lake is rewarded by the Commodore, the Commodore’s award, for outstanding service to the lake. As I talk I will identify the recipient of this award as “this person” until it is evident that “this person” realizes that he or she is the recipient of this esteemed award.

Soon after I became Commodore I realized the value of “this person.” Then I started noticing how many yacht club events “this person” has volunteered for or co-chaired this year and in past years. Neighbors of “this person” say he or she is a good neighbor and “this person” calls his or her neighbors as kind and caring. In fact “this person” has volunteered to help people with pier jerks even though they don’t need this service themselves. “This person” had been called a people person, and readily becomes involved in lake activities and has worked at Camp.

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Birch Lake Notes

"This person" is a Wolverine fan, a father to 4 children, grandfather to two grandchildren, provides continuity to the yacht club board of directors, has been a director since 2010, the secretary for 6 years, and whispers in the right ear of the Commodore. I swear he has the yacht club by-laws memorized. He is one of the hidden treasures I have found since being Commodore and I am proud to call him my friend. *Mike Sheffieck!*

~Presented by Commodore Claudia Phipps

SOUP CHALLENGE

What's better than warm soup on a cool fall evening – it's the best type of comfort food around! The Soup Challenge is our next (and last) event at the Yacht Club this year. Mark your calendars for Saturday, October 14 and show up at the Yacht Club at 6 pm (or a little before if you're bringing soup). Bring your favorite soup or chili for taste testing. All attendees will vote for their favorites and the winner and runner-up will receive a very coveted prize! If making soup is not your thing, please bring an appetizer or dessert to share. There are a few left-over beverages at the yacht club that are available for consumption, but you might want to bring along whatever you'd like to drink. Hope we have a great turn out and lots of soup to sample!

SHOUT OUT FOR VOLUNTEER(S)!

Is anyone interested in organizing



Thanks to our artist in residence Duffy Dufor for the great Birch Lake art.

the spring road clean-up? Duties involve setting a date, organizing the group and arranging to have the full bags picked up at designated areas. Think of it as a great way to get some exercise and fresh air ... all while helping our environment. Let me know if you'd like to pitch in! You can call/text me at 574-261-6712 or email me at krcurtismiller@gmail.com.

Sunday Night Flotilla!

Sunday September 3 – 5 p.m.

Due to the past successful flotillas,

let's do it again this Sunday from 3 to 5 pm! Meet in the middle of the lake with your boat. Bring an Appetizer. Boats will be tied together and we will walk from boat to boat sharing food and camaraderie. Look for the boats in the middle!

Open house for Dick Green

Birch Lakers are welcome to an open house celebrating the life of Dr. Richard "Dick" Green between 2 and 6 pm on Sunday, September 3 at the

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Birch Lake Notes

Green cottage on the south side.

Scentsy Open House

There will be a Scentsy Open House on Saturday, September 23 from 2 to 4 pm at the Yacht Club. Everyone is welcome to come sniff the many varieties of scented wax, see the fall catalog (including holiday warmers), and get a jump on your holiday shopping. Snacks and beverages will be served. If you have any questions, please contact Sandy Baucus or Deb Spratt.

Fishing Lures, Local History

On Saturday, September 16, (4 pm) arrangements have been made for Birch Lakers to tour The Heddon Fishing Lure Museum (there are lures, reels, poles and antique cars!). It is a fascinating piece of local history as well as fishing history. Dinner at the Wounded Minnow would follow the tour. This tour/dinner is open to everyone: men, women, children (sorry no pets!) If you are interested in joining us for a brief overview of the lures and how they came to the couple who owns the museum and then enjoy a good hamburger please contact me. We have enough interest to make this event happen, however, contact me if you want to join us so I can give the museum and the Minnow a head count. The museum is free (donations welcome). Below is a brief account of this local history.

"In the late 1890s James Heddon launched a hand-made lure into a Dowagiac, Mich. pond, and the ripples



The Birch Lake Yacht Club's Purple-Loosestrife Team; Bruce Wagner and Nick Bergan enjoying the Fall Dinner



Past Commodores Chas Grundy, Phil Vitale, Claudia Phipps, Bob Waddle and Bad Patty Luecht gathered for post-Fall-Dinner libations in the Flamingo Room after the big event last Saturday.

are still expanding. It marked the beginning of a new era – the artificial-lure fishing era – for all anglers. Heddon is the manufacturer of legendary lures, including the Spook, Torpedo, Lucky 13 and many more" (heddonlures.com). Joan and Don, a local Dowagiac couple, stumbled into obtaining a vast number of the antique Heddon lures and have created the Heddon Museum.

~Blair Garceau

476-9862, bgarceau@comcast.net

"The Company" Christmas program canceled

For the past 20 or so years "The Company" has welcomed in the holidays at Battell Center in Mishawaka. The preparation for this years, "A Merry Como Christmas, Singin' and Dancin' into the Holidays" was underway with the cast, crew and musicians lined up. All but a very important part of the production, the piano player! Our past pianist became unavailable for this year.

We put in a request to Battell Center to have an extension for cancellation of our contract five days to audition a pianist. The Battell Center denied our request.

It is an understatement to say we are heartbroken! We always look forward to celebrating the holidays with all of you! It is said that "when God closes a door He opens a window." Our fervent

hope is that we will find an answer to this problem, but for now our 2017 holiday production sadly has to be canceled. Thank you all for your kind patronage and "The Company" looks forward to seeing you in 2018.

Wishing you a very merry Christmas, and many blessings to you and your family!

~Wendy Como and "The Company"

The Birch Barker

This is the last printed Birch Barker of the season. Starting next month the Online Barker will begin. If you are not signed up to receive notices the Online Barker or if you have changed your email address recently, send your email address to onlinebarker@gmail.com.

When I took over the duties as editor of the Birch Barker at the end of the year 2000, I never imagined still being in this position 17 years later. It's been a great run and unless someone else is dying to step up and take on the responsibilities (and the work), if the Good Lord is willing and my health holds out, I'll be back next summer to do it again.

I would like to thank all of the people who contributed editorial materials for this summer's Birch Barker. Thanks to all our neighbors who sent in "kids" of the week, funnies, photos, news items, tidbits, historical items, etc. Special thanks to Stu for Star Stuff, Good Patti

Calling all Birch Lake Fashionistas and t-shirt enthusiasts!

I have designed a couple of t-shirts as a fund raiser for the lake. In order to know the quantity/sizes I need to order, please take a moment to text (574-261-6712) or email me (krcurtismiller@gmail.com) with the size and t-shirt option you want. I don't want to order too many or not enough, nor do I want to have an abundance of a size no one wants! (If you noted your preference at the Fall Dinner, there no need to send me anything). Sizes range from Youth Small to Adult 4XL. Images of the shirts are shown below – the front of the shirt is the left image and the back of the

shirt is the right image. There is a white short-sleeve version (\$12 or \$15 depending on quantity ordered) and two long-sleeve versions – a white (same design as the short sleeve) and an athletic gray (\$20 or \$22.50 depending on quantity ordered). There is an additional \$2.50 charge for 3X and 4X sizes. If you'd like to see what they look like in color prior to deciding, please stop by our pier this weekend. I am hoping to place an order soon so the shirts will be here in time to sell at the Soup Challenge. These will make great Christmas gifts – so plan accordingly!



Birch Lake Notes

for recipes and tons-o-funnies, Terry Dugan and Paul Fallon for Water Quality info, Steve Quinlan for the lake temps, Sarah Petty for the Community Corner, Fleet Captain Mike Lutz for sailing info, Amy Lutz for funnies and the great pics of her beautiful granddaughter, Bruce Wagner for the Sunny files, and Amber Grundy for the news from the camp.

Thanks to Stu for retrieving the Barker at the printer every week, Bob & Sue Waddle for administering the delivery process and all of the folks who delivered the Barkers to our doorsteps each week.

Special thanks to Pat Welch, Baylee and the AlphaGraphics team for printing the Barker and the Directory, and to all of the advertisers for supporting the Birch Lake Yacht Club and helping make the Barker financially possible.

Have a great winter, hope to see you all out on the puddle again soon,

~Editor Phil

Birch Lake Totes

Birch Lake Totes are available for just \$5 each (special pricing for large orders). Call Bad Patty at 476-2615.

EUCHRE PARTY!

Stay tuned to Online Barkers for a Euchre tourney next Spring. East Siders Sue Davis and Karen Curtis-Miller are scheming to come up with a fun event to shake off the winter dol-



The Witchies (east side) are looking forward to Labor Day weekend fun with family from as far away as Montana, Oregon and Alaska!...Peg Larson, Carol (Larson) Bell & Neil, Sara & Derek Clifford and family, Emily Coate and family, David Bell, Liz & Tyler Cragg, and Julie & Kevin Stewart and family. The photo includes some "Kids of the Week" from last year's Labor Day weekend get together.

drums. Birch Lake might not have a Mardi Gras parade, but we can shake some things up at the BLYC with a Euchre tournament! Details still being worked out, but we're hoping to hold the event in May. All the Snow Birds should be back on the lake and ready for

a Birch Lake Bash!

Bachelor Party?

Apologies in advance: in addition to old friends visiting Birch, we may be host to somewhat of a Bachelor Party?

~The Kings.

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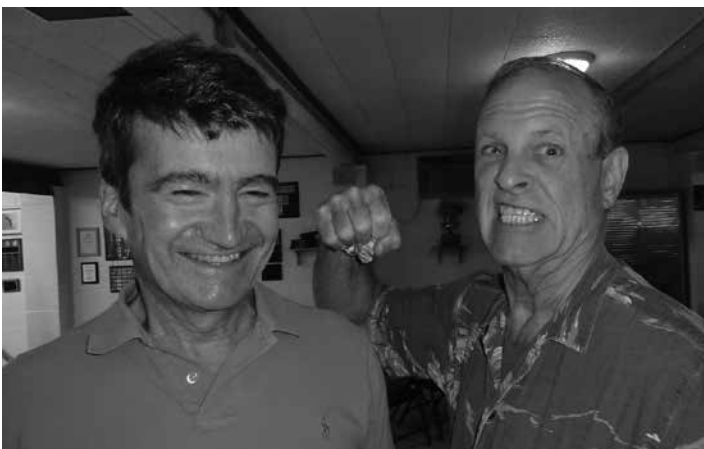
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BLYC Fall Dinner





FLEET CAPTAIN'S CORNER



One week of sailing left!

It is hard to believe, but this weekend will be our last racing weekend of the year! It seems we have only been sailing for a few weeks, not three months as the calendar shows. We will be having our Fall Regatta this weekend, which include three races on Saturday and two on Sunday, rain day will be on Monday if needed. All races this weekend will start at our usual time of 11 am, with an hour delay if needed.

In closing this year out, I need to thank everyone who has participated on the committee boat, set and or retrieved the marks, calculated the

scores and to all you sailors that made this year a success. Our sailing would not have occurred without each and everyone of you. In saying this it is my time to let someone else take the reins of fleet captain. It has been very enjoyable and a pleasure to be your fleet captain for the last five years.

Thanks to everyone for their support. Can't wait until next year to start sailing and competing against all you wonderful sailors.

This is the final "Splice The Main Brace" (PS Google it for the understanding of this)."

~Fleet Captain Mike



2017 BLYC Season Sailing Results

Date	27-Aug	27-Aug	Total	Season	Races	%	
Race	21	22	Points	Average	Finished	Finished	
MC Scow/Sailor						20	
Scott Troeger #1489	1	1	30705	1535	19	95.0%	
Rick Harmon	DNS	DNS	2969	1485	2	10.0%	
Jeff Smitley #2002	3	4	24892	1464	17	85.0%	
Barb Cassady/Maggie Cassady #2506	6	7	28778	1439	20	100.0%	
Harold Cranmer #1991/2550	4	3	25808	1358	19	95.0%	
Phil Vitale #500	5	5	16010	1334	12	60.0%	
Gib Eberhart #916	7	2	11771	1308	9	45.0%	
Bill Luecht #1579	2	6	23439	1302	18	90.0%	
Pat McGann #1735	DNS	DNS	15870	1221	12	60.0%	
Bob King #1199	DNS	DNS	2381	1191	2	10.0%	
Sandy Vitale	DNS	DNS	0		0	0.0%	
Sunfish/Sailor						22	
Rick Russwurm (Green/Blue)	DNS	DNS	31293	1565	20	90.9%	
Peter Soldato	DNS	DNS	25279	1487	17	77.3%	
Mike Lutz (Blue/Red/Yellow)	1	2	25722	1429	18	81.8%	
Herb Cleveland	2	1	28454	1423	20	90.9%	
Stewart Spratt	DNS	3	25181	1399	18	81.8%	
Pat McGann	3	5	9773	1396	7	31.8%	
Brad Davis	DNS	DNS	5403	1351	4	18.2%	
Camille Butler	4	4	23388	1231	19	86.4%	
Bill Butler	DNS	DNS	13483	1226	10	45.5%	
Greg Cowan	DNS	DNS	3468	1156	3	13.6%	

DNS (Did Not Sail) does not count against season score, however sailor must complete 2/3 of races to qualify for season; DNF (Did Not Finish), DSQ (Disqualified) scores as one place worse than last place (if 5 boats finished, you would have finished 6th, will be scored as 7th place); DNF, DSQ not counted toward minimum number of races needed; CB - sailor who serves on Committee Boat receives their season average place as of that date - counted toward season total; Season Points are awarded on Square of 40 system (1st = 40 squared = 1600, 2nd = 39 squared, etc.); Season Place = total season points/number of races attempted; Crew - Counted toward completed races, Points go to skipper of boat.

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— Water Quality Report —

Water quality summer summary

Labor Day weekend already. It was just the 4th of July. Summers seem to go by so quickly now.

The Water Quality Committee has been active since spring. Took the spring phosphorous samples in the icy waters of post ice out. Have been collecting samples for chlorophyll analysis monthly since May. Will be doing final chlorophyll sampling in September along with summer phosphorous sampling. In addition, we do a weekly secchi disk reading to ascertain changes in clarity of the water. This provides additional information that can usually be correlated with the phosphorous (nutrient level) and chlorophyll (productivity) characteristics of the lake.

We also regularly do temperature and dissolved oxygen profiles of the lake at its deepest point measuring every 5 feet or so down to the bottom. Oxygen is lost from the lower levels as bacteria use it to digest the algae that grow and die in the upper layers and sink to the bottom. The more algae, the greater the oxygen loss in the deeper layers of the lake. In the spring we have excellent oxygen levels supportive of all fish habitat down to the 90 foot mark. Now since there is no mixing of the lake below the thermocline of about 30 feet, the loss of oxygen is demonstrable, with fish supportive levels only down to about 45 to 50 feet. In the

fall as the surface cools water will sink mixing the lake from top to bottom and restoring the oxygen levels throughout the depth of the lake.

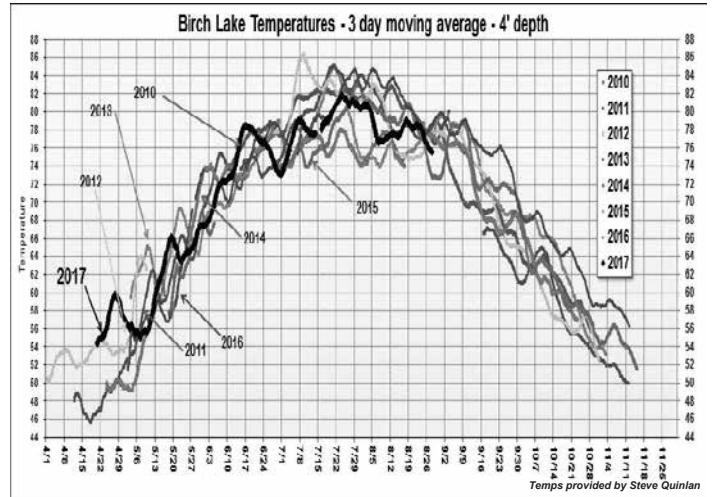
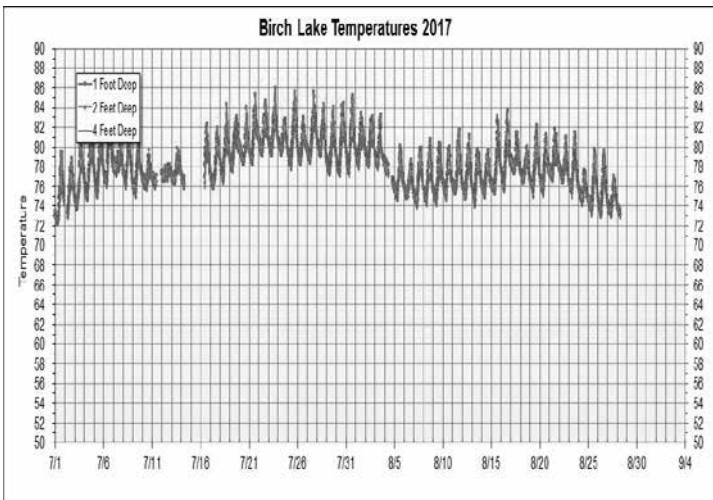
In addition to the measurements taken a major task has been the surveying, treating, and elimination of invasive species. We know we have Eurasian milfoil and this has been reduced to a small repetitive area that upon treatment dies out. We have no practical way to eradicate this invasive, but it is extremely well controlled. If you look at other lakes near the shoreline and public landings you will notice another invasive that can spread rapidly, i.e. purple loosestrife. You may not be aware of it because it is identified and eradicated immediately upon observation at Birch Lake. There are reports of an invasion of starry stonewort in the mill pond, and an allusion to it being in Birch Lake. Although the allusion has since been withdrawn, we will remain on the alert any starry stonewort in the lake. More later if we actually do find it now or in the future.

We did our first "Score the Shore" and this was reported in two successive Barkers. Of interest here is the folks in the boat doing the survey. Bruce Wagner and Paul Fallon could not seem to help themselves in extolling the virtues of their particular areas of the lake as the best environments, friendliest peo-



ple, and most remarkable views. I think that was in part due to their Jealousy of Terry Dugan and the wonderful environment he lives in on the south side. In reality it is great to see folks take pride in their own areas as well as the lake as an entity. This is our home and we want to be proud of it and thus take care of it. We will provide a full summary of all the observations from the data generated this summer in the first spring printed Barker. Have a great fall and winter. Remember what is around the lake gets into the lake.

Birch Lake Water Temperature



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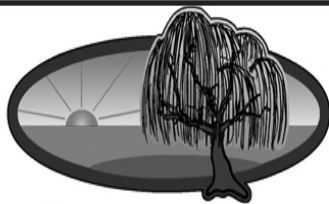
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— Barker Kids of the Week —



The Mimosa Tribe posed for a photo last Sunday at Tim Burchell's (south side) ... from left are Burchell, Commodore Karen Curtis-Miller, Eric Miller, Chris Ball and Sue O'Brien Davis (all of the east side). Thanks to Jill Scholes for the photo.



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Amanda North Druckeniller "Working with Vickie to sell our home was a pleasure! Our home sat on the market for a year with another realtor. We switched to Vickie and had an offer within a month! Vickie is prompt, professional and very knowledgeable in her field. I strongly recommend her for your realty needs!"

Tom Davidson -- Top qualities: Personable, Expert, High Integrity

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Tony Clark -- Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Arts et des Lettres

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— Barker Kids of the Week —



Dan Waxman (east side) sent in these great pics from last weekend of his niece Jennifer and grand nephews Luca and Niko visiting Birch lake with their father Alexis. Luca is the one with Scout on the pontoon and Niko is the one strapped to Jennifer and lying on the blanket.



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— Barker Kids of the Week —



Finley Gableman, Taylor Gableman, Foster Marlow, Layla Gableman, Macey Gableman, and Parker Gableman enjoy a special day celebrating Grandma Claudia Phipps' becoming Past Commodore.



Dezi Ward is enjoying another summer of fun at grandma and grandpa Lacys (south side)

KID-OF-THE-WEEK PHOTOS

Want your kid to be a Birch Barker Kid of the Week? Want your dog to be a Dog of the Week? Want your lawnmower to be Lawnmower of the Week? Just mail your photo (with a

SASE if you want them back) to Birch Barker, 63174 Birch Rd., Vandalia, MI 49095; put them in a ziplock and stick them in the stone mailbox at my home (east side), or email them to me at SAILORPHIL@PHILVITALE.COM

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— Barker Kids of the Week —



You Rock! Suzanna Kappel, one of the Quinlan (west side) grandkids.



During the last year, Birch Lake lost three of the best friends it will ever know. These three friends, three brothers, are sadly gone but not forgotten.

Birch Lake is a truly special place and always will be, but for so many of us it will never be quite the same without Earl (Jr.), Jack and Tom Troeger.

May the gentle voices and laughter of the Troeger boys, having first been heard here more than 70 years ago, echo across the magical waters of Birch Lake forever.

Thanks to Tammy Alby for the photo and the memories.



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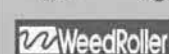
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— Barker Special Feature —

A Sunny blast from the past

Birch Lakers, who remembers Sunny Waters and her amazing 'News from the Cove' column? Well, thanks to Sunny's BS (Beloved Spouse), we've received a number of her old columns and will reprint them here as space allows. This week's contribution is from August, 2001

Farewell From The Cove

By Sunny Waters

Another summer bites the dust. And a glorious summer it was, albeit too swiftly over. B.S. and I have asked one another what we consider the season's high point. B.S. votes for the Fourth of July, when nine, count them nine, boats tied together and the occupants spent hours eating, drinking, swimming, drinking, talking, drinking, laughing at bad jokes, drinking and drinking. Camaraderie was at an all-time high. B.S. insists, having read my rough draft, that I correct the emphasis on drinking; it wasn't really that profound. Yes, dear (and pigs fly).

Two years ago at our daughter Wendy's wedding I was asked by a guest what I liked best about Birch Lake. Tough question. Quick images of emerald green water and wonderful people scanned through my cerebellum and the words shot out, "GREEN PEOPLE!" The stunned inquirer made a polite exit and I'm still laughing.

From the mouths of babes

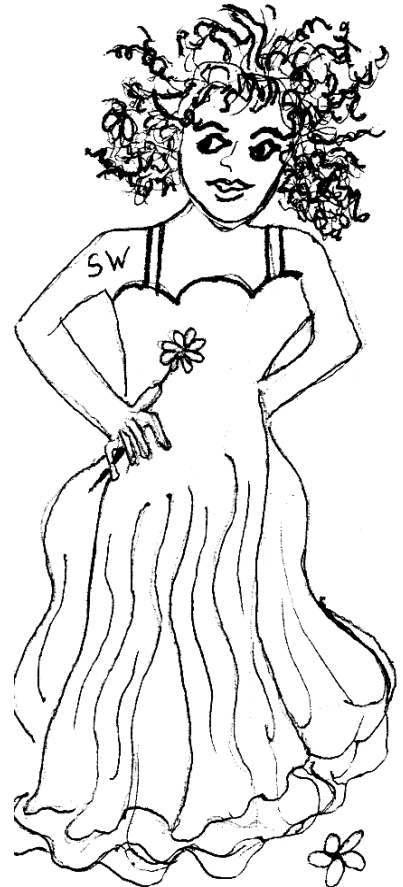
Michael Thomas, while visiting his Blackwood grandparents, caught a beautiful butterfly to keep as a pet. As butterflies in captivity are wont to do, it soon expired. Ann Thomas explained to her sad little boy that his pet was in Heaven where everything is good. That evening the family went to dinner and Michael became distressed about leaving the butterfly behind. His mother explained again that it was in Heaven where everything was good, whereupon Michael asked, "Aren't we in Heaven?" His mother replied, "No, we're at Birch Lake." The sweet little boy responded, "But Mommy, I though Birch Lake *is* Heaven."

That it is, Michael. That it is.

So, all you lovely Green People, after you've taken in all your piers, drained the pipes and battened down the hatches, remember the good old Summertime and its return in 2002.

Bless you all,

-Sunny and B.S.



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STU'S STAR STUFF



Evolution vs Intelligent Design

“Any honest reading of the biblical account of creation suggests that God created all plants, animals, stars and planets as we now see them. There is no question that the bible is wrong about this. Many who want to cast doubt upon the truth of evolution advocate something called Intelligent Design (ID). The problem with ID is that it is nothing more than a program of political and religious advocacy masquerading as science.”

~Sam Harris.

The world, solar system, galaxy and universe in which we exist are formidable and wondrous. Science doesn't yet have all the answers as to how it all came about, but science sure has a good start. The very atoms that make up our bodies were born among the cosmic dust that first formed our universe. Research has proven time and again the theories about the age of the earth, the evolution of not just humans, but all of Earth's creatures and the creation of our solar system. Looking up at the night sky here at the lake, or any place for that matter, reveals a beautiful show.

But it wasn't all created in six days. The earth is over 4 billion years old. The most distant galaxies are proven to be 13 billion light years away and therefore every bit as old. Humans, as primates, have existed on Earth for 100,000 years, perhaps as much as 250,000 years. More species of plants, animals and micro-organisms are now extinct than currently

exist in the world today. None of this was designed by an intelligent creator. The evidence for evolution and the progression of the development of our world, our universe, is overwhelming.

Any intellectually honest person will admit that he does not know why the universe exists. Scientists of course readily admit their ignorance on this point. Religious believers do not. One of the monumental ironies of religious discourse can be appreciated in the frequency with which people with faith praise themselves for their humility while condemning scientists and other non-believers for their intellectual arrogance.

There is in fact no world view more reprehensible in its arrogance than that of a religious believer. “The creator of the universe takes an interest in me, approves of me, loves me and will reward me after death. My current belief, drawn from scripture, will remain the best statement of truth until the end of the world. Everyone who disagrees with me will spend eternity in hell.”

An average Christian, in an average church, listening to an average Sunday sermon, has achieved the level of arrogance simply unimaginable in scientific discourse. And there have been some extraordinarily arrogant scientists.

One more from **Sam Harris**:

“Clearly, it is time we learned to meet our emotional needs without embracing the preposterous. We must find ways to invoke the power of ritual and to mark those transitions in every human life that demand profundi-

The Moon for this Saturday
 (At Midnight, US Central time, as viewed from the Northern Hemisphere)
 Illuminated Fraction: 0.905
 3.0 days until full moon



Sunrise: 07:11:40 AM
Sunset: 20:16:59 PM
Moonrise: 18:15:18 PM
Moonset: 03:27:55
 Daylight: 13 Hr 05 Min 18 Sec

ty - birth, marriage, death, without lying to ourselves about the nature of reality. Only then will the practice of raising our children to believe that they are Christian, Muslim, or Jewish be widely recognized as the ludicrous obscenity that it is. And only then will we stand a chance of healing the deepest and most dangerous fractures in our world.”

I'm done folks. Thank you so much for your encouragement and support. Enjoy the show. It's free now and it always will be.

~Stu Spratt

Celebrating more than 53 Years at Birch Lake

—COMMUNITY CORNER—

Meet the board member

Rick Russwurm here. I have enjoyed Birch Lake for most of my adult life, and have lived here full time for almost 25 years with my wife Patti. Now our three granddaughters are loving the lake as their mother did when she was a girl. I have served on the Birch Lake Yacht Club Board for quite some time as well as the Water Quality Committee and the Homeowners Association.

I am involved in our Township as a board member on the Planning Commission and SEPSA (which provides our fire and ambulance services.) In our County,

I'm a board member on the Cass County Economic Development Corporation.

As a Boy Scout, I attended Camp Tamarack here in Porter Township, and today I serve on the Executive Committee for the LaSalle Council of the Boy Scout America and the Properties Committee that looks after Camp Tamarack on Wood Lake.

In my spare time, I enjoy participation in the Birch Lake sailing races.

What a great place to be a part of. We are very fortunate to have you all as neighbors.



YOUR HOROSCOPE

Aries (March 21-April 19) - This week you are in both work and play mode. In other words, you do want to work and accomplish as much as possible. In fact, you want to be efficient, effective and productive! Meanwhile, three other planets urge you to play! They encourage romantic outings, social diversions, sports events. You might want to rekindle old memories or carry a fire hose wherever you go. Your call. ("I'm melting! I'm melting!")

Taurus (April 20-May 20) - This week you now have a last-minute fever of wanting to get away on a fun vacation and do it all up big before Labor Day. Not only do you want to pursue pleasurable escapes, you want to feel you have the freedom to do your own thing. This is the perfect time to wrap up old details and old business.

Gemini (May 21-June 20) - Your focus continues to be on home, family and your private life this week. In fact, an interaction with a parent could be significant for many of you. You are also still in play mode looking for opportunities for vacations, romantic escapes, sports events and fun activities with children.

Cancer (June 21-July 22) - This is a busy, active time for you. Many of you will take short trips this week and spend time with siblings, neighbors and relatives. You're keen to talk to others because you have something to say. In all likelihood, you want to enlighten someone about something. You're also thinking about money and cash flow, in large measure because you're spending it!

Leo (July 23-Aug. 22) - This week you're working hard and juggling many tasks. You're ready to fight, especially if attacked. You have to ask yourself if it's worth it because sometimes you just end up with egg on your face. It's your ego that is offended. Relax, you're just fine. In fact, splendid!

Virgo (Aug. 23-Sept. 22) - Well, it's all about you, dear Virgo. This is your time of year so go big or go home. Make use of this wonderful advantage while you have it, and look for ways to boost your earnings! For some reason, you are playing your cards very close to your heaving bosom.

Libra (Sept. 23-Oct. 22) - Life is blowing hot and cold for you lately. In one way, you want to socialize. You want to be active with groups, friends and take charge of situations. You will enjoy hanging with creative, artistic people as well as participating in physical activities, especially competitive ones. And yes, old friends from the past are back in your world. However, you also need quiet time just for you to rest and recuperate. You often stretch yourself too thin with your social obligations and your desire to please everyone. Take time for yourself before your birthday arrives in all its grand glitterati!

Scorpio (Oct. 23-Nov. 21) - Take charge of life. Look around and see what needs to be done. People will make demands of your time because they want your input in clubs, groups and associations. Even friends want face time. Because your ambition is aroused and opportunities exist, there are ways that you can advance your career and promote your good name.

Sagittarius (Nov. 22-Dec. 21) - You are still looking fabulous to everyone, especially parents, bosses and VIPs. When it bathes you in flattering light like this, everyone thinks you are talented and capable! Since everyone is ready to give you the A-OK, why not arrange some travel time? You would dearly love to travel for pleasure and explore more of the world. A sudden opportunity to travel or get further education might materialize this week.

Capricorn (Dec. 22-Jan. 19) - You're at the end of a two-year window (perhaps a bit longer) of giving up things. You've had to let go of people, places, partnerships and property. It's almost exhausting. However, the New Year will promise so much that is fresh and exciting! Keep your on the prize. Meanwhile, grab every opportunity to travel or get further education and training.

Aquarius (Jan. 20-Feb. 18) - This continues to be an intense time. One reason this might be is because ex-partners are back in your life again. Traditionally, Aquarians like to remain friends with their ex's. This doesn't go over with some signs. Discussions about shared property and inheritances might be demanding at this time.

Pisces (Feb. 19-March 20) - Once again -- a reminder that you need more sleep now because of the demands of your daily world. Just accept this and go to bed. However, at this particular time, you are in the best phase of the entire year to be able to learn more about your style of relating to those who are closest to you. Be aware. Whatever you learn will only make your life easier.

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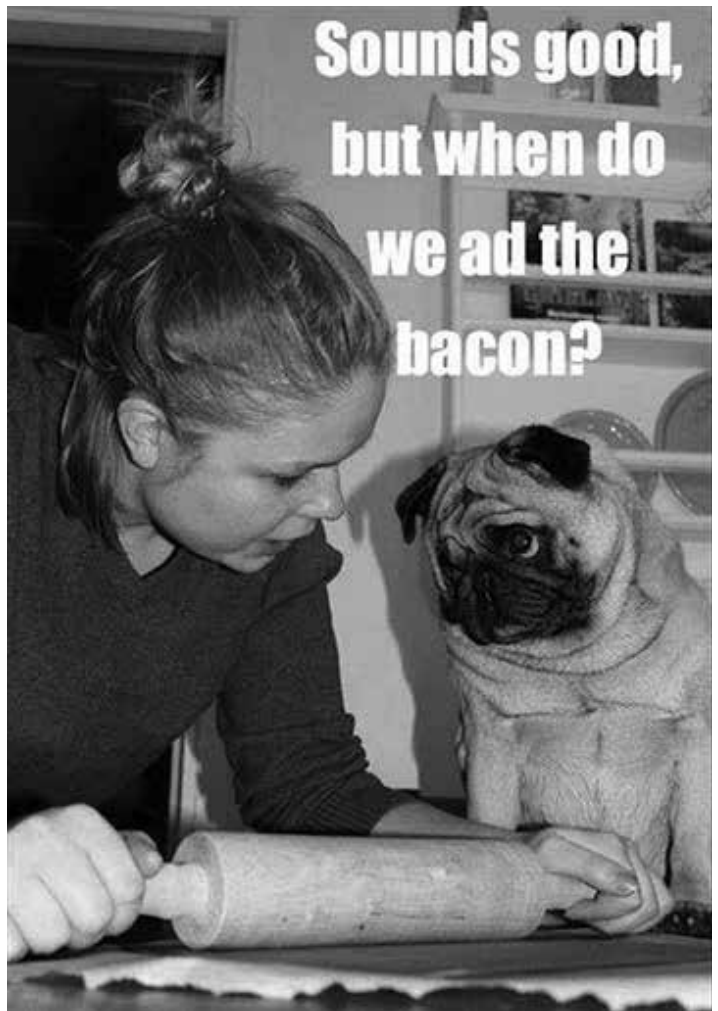
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BIRCH BARKER FUNNIES





~Birch Lake Recipes~



Provided Exclusively to the Birch Barker from Mrs. Ima Foodnudge

Something to do with all those tomatoes

Fresh Tomato Marinara Sauce

Easy recipe for making marinara sauce with fresh tomatoes.

Ingredients

- 1/4 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1 yellow onion, chopped
- 4 cloves garlic, peeled and thinly sliced
- 1/4 cup red wine
- 8 cups tomato chunks
- 1 teaspoon dried oregano
- pinch red pepper flakes
- small bunch of fresh basil
- sea salt and pepper to taste

Instructions

1. In a large sauce pan, saute onion in olive oil over medium heat until softened, about 7 minutes. Add garlic and saute 1 minute longer. Add wine and simmer until liquid has evaporated, making sure garlic doesn't burn. Stir in tomatoes and a pinch of sea salt.
2. Add oregano and red pepper flakes. Reduce heat to low and cover for 15 minutes. Covering will help the tomatoes to "sweat" and break down more quickly. Uncover and cook over low heat, stirring occasionally for about an hour.
3. Use an immersion blender to carefully puree the sauce. Add basil the basil and blend it in with the blender or leave whole. If you don't have an immersion blender, you can let the sauce cool and then very carefully puree in a regular blender.
4. Continue to simmer another 30 minutes. Season to taste

with salt and pepper. Optional additions: sometimes I like to stir in a small handful of grated Parmesan cheese or a drizzle of balsamic for more flavor. Delicious!

Green Beans with Cherry Tomatoes

"These beans are briefly boiled and tossed with cherry tomatoes in a buttery basil sauce to make the most yummy green beans ever!"

Ingredients

Original recipe yields 6 servings

Ingredients

- 1 1/2 pounds green beans, trimmed and cut into 2 inch pieces
- 1 1/2 cups water
- 1/4 cup butter
- 1 tablespoon sugar
- 3/4 teaspoon garlic salt
- 1/4 teaspoon pepper
- 1 1/2 teaspoons chopped fresh basil
- 2 cups cherry tomato halves or chop a couple larger ones.

Directions

1. Place beans and water in a large saucepan. Cover, and bring to a boil. Set heat to low, and simmer until tender, about 10 minutes. Drain off water, and set aside.
2. Melt butter in a skillet over medium heat. Stir in sugar, garlic salt, pepper and basil. Add tomatoes, and cook stirring gently just until soft. Pour the tomato mixture over the green beans, and toss gently to blend.

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— Camp Tannadoonah —

Thank you from Camp T

How is it possible that it's Labor Day weekend already?! This summer went by in a whirlwind! We've only wrapped up camp 3 weeks ago, and yet we're already looking ahead to the summer of 2018 and plan to launch registration on Tuesday morning!

For this last Birch Barker column of the summer, I'd like to say a special thank you to all of the wonderful and generous individuals here at Birch Lake who have helped us at Camp this past year. We are truly grateful for all of the time, energy, and generous contributions we receive from the Birch Lake community.

Thank you to...

Patrick Welch, Amy Lutz, and Bob Pence for serving on the Camp Fire Board. And to Chas Grundy, Mike Sheffieck, Tom Kuhn, and Jan Temple for serving on Camp Fire committees.

Phil Vitale, Bill and Sherry Holleman, and Rick and Tish Harman for volunteering their time during camp

to run activities and special programs.

Marc Caenepeel, PJ and Sue Vandewalle, Lisa Rodriguez, Bob and Kathleen Wozny, Tom and Barb Cassady, Jack and Mardy Miller, Tom and Jen Nevala, Gretchen and Nick Batalis, David and Nina Frurip, Dick and Peggy Cowen, Peter and Denise Trybula, Bill Doba, Buzz and Linda Rasmussen, Joe and Becky O'Connell, Terry and Carol Dugan, Pat and Tessa McGann, Ross and Kris Molho, Sarah Singleton, Dan and Sharon Waxman, John and Jennifer Ball, Doug and Julie Weaver, Claudia and Dennis Phipps, Debbie and Carmen Soldato, John and Lois Groszek, John Benjamin, Margie Trybus, Ron and Linda Witchie, Karen Brovold, Doug and Judie Eichorst, Norma Pence, Millie Zelasko, Chet and Vivian Kolber, Shirley Drinkall, Bob and Beth Kenagy, Judson and Joyce Green, Dennis and Judy Leatherman, Craig Fredlake and Diana Wozny, Anne Freihofer, Ben and Vanessa Wozniak, and Pete and Dana Soldato for their

contributions of time, talent, and treasure (monetary and otherwise).

And to everyone who attended the Pancake Breakfast to support Camp T. Our Board and staff really enjoyed doing the breakfast this year and it was fun to see everyone there!

And finally, to all of those people whose children / grandchildren / nieces / nephews attended or worked at Camp T this summer! Lind Harman, Tish and Rick Harman, John and Lois Groszek, Artie McElwee, Phil and Sandy Vitale, Margie Trybus, Jeff and Linda Myers, Claudia and Dennis Phipps, Bill and Sheryl Magro, Grace Bliler, Bob and Beth Kenagy, Ron and Mel Como, Melanie Como Dits and Dave Dits, Mary Como, Laveta Scofield, Jen and Tom Nevala, Dennis and Ruth Kinzler, and Ken Kinzler.

Thank you to everyone! We are very grateful for everything you do to support Camp Fire and Camp Tannadoonah at Birch Lake.

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FOUND

FOUND: One white "San Marin" **inflatable buoy**, Item Number "NB60," approximately 20" diameter, on 2/17/17. Call 476-1467.

FOUND: **Black "Kitchen Aid" grill cover.** Please call Jeff & Denise Smitley at 269.476.9000.

Found: **Golf club head cover** at men's golf outing. Contact Chas at 574-315-0217

LOST

Lost **Canoe Paddle**, black and gray. If found please call 269-476-7062

Camp T is missing several kayak and stand up paddleboarding paddles

Lost: **Yamaha Waverunner key fob.** If found please contact: Bill Magro @ 937-657-8988



CLASSIFIED ADS

This is the last printed Birch Barker of the year. The once-a-month Online Barker will begin in October. If you would like a classified ad in the Online Barker send me an email me at Sailorphil@philvital.com with the appropriate information. Photos will be used in the Online Barker if space permits and our good neighbors don't flood me with photos and take up all the space for the rest of the content (which means, photos will be used if the editor's got room and time to get 'em in!).

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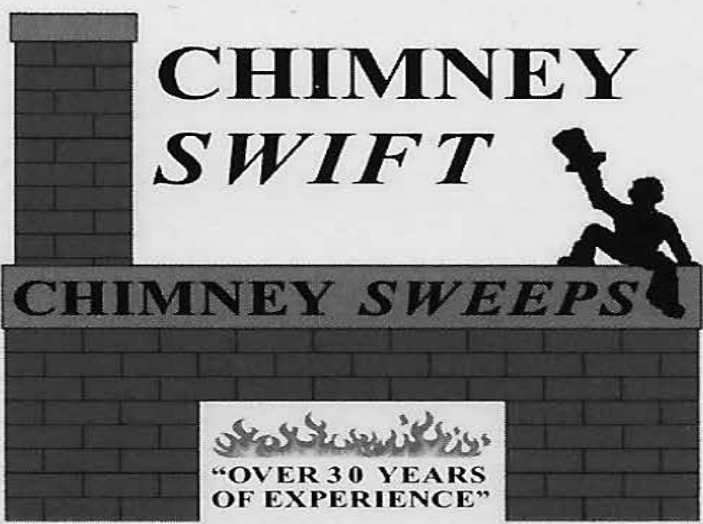
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