



BIRCH Barker

vol. 77 issue 2

Weekend of
MAY 31
2025

The official publication of the Birch Lake Yacht Club

BirchLakeYachtClub.com



Samantha Bogue (west side) and her dog braved the cold to go paddle boarding on Saturday, May 24. The temperature was just 45°! Photo credit to Camille Butler.

2025 BIRCH LAKE CALENDAR

June

7 - Commodore / Vice Comm.
Stock the Bar Party, 6pm
14 - Trivia Night
18 - Card Night
21 - Yacht Club Board Mtg, 9am

July

5 - Boat Parade, 3pm
5 - Fireworks, 10pm
6 - Pancake Breakfast, 8:30-11am
16 - Card Night
19 - Yacht Club Board Mtg, 9am

August

2 - Corn and Sausage Roast
16 - Yacht Club Board Mtg, 9am
20 - Card Night
TBA - Fall Dinner

September

20 - Yacht Club Board Mtg, 9am

October

25 - Bad Patty Crockpot
Challenge, 6pm

2025 BLYC Directors

Officers

Commodore: Julie Dickey (E)
Vice Comm.: Steve Frew (E)
Secretary: Mike Sheffieck (W)
Treasurer: Deb Spratt (N)
Fleet Capt: Bob Niezgodski (W)

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Karen Curtis-Miller (E)
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Ronny Eshleman (S)
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Amber Grundy (E)
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Sarah Petty (N)
Claudia Phipps (N)
Vickie Rogers (C)
Rick Russwurm (N)
Ray Scholes (S)
Scott Troeger (E)
Phil Vitale (E)
Sandy Vitale (E)
Dan Waxman (E)
Sue Williams (S)

Committee Chairs

Water Quality:
Patrick Welch (S)
Homeowners Association:
Blair Garceau (E)

COMMODORE'S COMMENTS

Hello friends, and neighbors. I hope everyone had an enjoyable Memorial Day weekend! As we remember our fallen heroes, we are grateful for the freedom that we share! The weather was a bit cool, but overall it was sunny and nice! The cool waters did not prevent our granddaughter Avery from tubing! Others took the plunge and enjoyed tubing and skiing!

We also share the beauty of Birch Lake! The BLYC prioritizes the importance of water quality! The water quality committee are focused on keeping Birch Lake one of the cleaner lakes in the southern lower peninsula of Michigan! The water quality reports will keep you updated. We appreciate the committee member efforts and interventions to keep our lake water safe and pristine! Water quality donations provide the funding for this essential investment.

The Commodore/Vice Commodore/Stock The Bar party will be coming soon at the BLYC on June 7 at 6pm. We will have a 50/50 raffle to help support the water quality fund! Don't forget to wear your favorite hat or maybe not your favorite hat! Feel free to have some fun with it! Come one come all to meet your neighbors! Steve and I welcome all residents to come join us! Please bring a dish to share.

Names starting A-M bring an appetizer. Names starting N-Z bring a dessert. Hope to see you there!

The roof repair and replacement is likely to be completed by the time you receive this Barker. As you can see in the pictures, the new roof is a beautiful improvement to the BLYC building! It is very exciting to see the transformation!



The BLYC officers and board members are now focusing their attention on other much-needed projects. Our established roof fund money can be prioritized on other needs.



The 2025 Birch Barker is
generously sponsored by Culver's.
See ad on page 2.

The Barker will consider ads, photos, and editorial content for publication.

Email items to birchbarker1@gmail.com.

For editorial concerns, contact editor Amber Grundy at birchbarker1@gmail.com or 574-315-0227.

For delivery concerns, contact Ron Niezgodski at birchbass1@gmail.com or 269-476-9317.

For all other BLYC matters, contact Commodore Julie Dickey at jdjuls@aol.com or 574-220-9132.

DEADLINE for submissions is always **NOON** on the Tuesday of the week before publication.

BIRCH LAKE NOTES

The BLYC deck replacement is our first priority. We will be getting quotes to assess the replacement costs. We will keep you updated.

Amber Grundy has taken over being our editor of the Birch Barker since our first online Barker last fall. She edited all the monthly online editions and now this second printed Birch Barker. Amber has made numerous changes and updates. It is incredible that we can access former Birch Barkers in the archives! Amber is doing a fantastic job! Thank you Amber, for all your time and efforts to continue the Birch Barker traditions! We appreciate your contributions!

We come from many different places, but we are all in the same boat, we love Birch Lake!

~Commodore Julie

The Printed Barker

The Birch Barker is delivered to all of the homes on Birch Lake each week, and is available online at

[birchlakeyachtclub.com](https://store.birchlakeyachtclub.com)

The submission deadline is noon on Tuesday of the week before publication. Contributions can be emailed to birchbarker1@gmail.com.

Advertising rates are posted at [birchlakeyachtclub.com/advertise](https://store.birchlakeyachtclub.com/advertise). To buy an ad or for more info, contact Amber at birchbarker1@gmail.com or 574-315-0227.



Grab your friends/neighbors/family and come to Trivia Night at the Birch Lake Yacht Club. Previous Trivia Nights have been very popular - so don't miss out on the fun! You can either form your own team or just come individually and we'll get you on a team. Teams can be anywhere from one to eight people.

WHEN: Saturday, June 14th
Doors open at 6:30
Trivia begins PROMPTLY at 7pm

WHERE: Birch Lake Yacht Club

BRING: Your own drinks, a dish to share (either an appetizer or dessert), paper and pen, and your wallet (for 50/50 raffle and to buy mulligans - good for free answers!)

QUESTIONS? contact
Blair Garceau (269-475-9862) or
Sue Williams (269-298-2839)
Hope to see you there!

Birch Lake Yacht Club FIREWORKS FUND

Our goal for 2025 is \$16,000

Contribute now at

<https://store.birchlakeyachtclub.com>



Yacht Club Building Use

For information on the rules and requirements, or to make arrangements to use the Birch Lake Yacht Club building for a non-BLYC event, call or text Sandy Vitale at 269-858-8184, or email sv6102@gmail.com.



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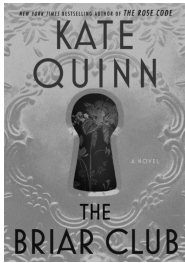
ODDS AND ENDS

Ladies Weekly Golf

We usually tee off Monday mornings and follow up with lunch after the nine-hole “adventure.” We don’t keep track of scores and welcome all levels of players. The only judgment and competition is with yourself. If you have questions or are interested in golf or just lunch, contact Blair Garceau (269-476-9862).

Book Club

Our first meeting will be June 24th, discussing *The Briar Club* by Kate Quinn. Any questions, or if you’d like to join in the fun, contact Jackie Frew: seeitall8@gmail.com or call/text 708-285-2999.



HAPPY READING!

Boat Parade

Dan Waxman, chairman of the annual Birch Lake Boat Parade scheduled for Saturday, July 5th at 3pm, has announced that the theme for this year’s parade will be “Favorite TV Show.” Put on your thinking caps and start planning your entry now!

Boat Parade Grand Marshall

The July 4th Birch Lake boat parade has been held for over 20 years and the first Grand Marshal that I can identify was Al Cover in 1998. Over the next 5 weeks we will introduce you to the Grand Marshals since Al to this year. It is a great history of our Birch Lake residents who have been recognized to lead this festive parade!

Slow Down Signs



“Slow Down” signs are available for lake home owners. Contact Blair Garceau (269-476-9862) if you need a sign for your

yard. Courtesy of the BL Home Owners Association.

Barker “Newsies”

During the summer, the printed Barker is delivered to your Birch Lake home by an intrepid band of volunteer “kids.” We are led by Ron Niezgodski, who every week drives to the printer to pick up the Barkers, divides them into nine bags, and then brings them to the delivery kids’ homes. We then distribute the Barkers to you, rain or shine so you can read “all the news that’s fit to print.” In the upcoming Barkers you will meet your paper boys/ girls, and learn what their favorite part of the Barker is. For Delivery Boss Ron, he likes the Funnies. ‘Til next week, this is Dan “the Paper Boy” Waxman.

GET YOUR BIRCH LAKE GEAR!

20% of all sales will be donated to the Birch Lake Yacht Club. Orders will be shipped or distributed at the lake late June/early July. See website for more details.

Order Deadline: June 8, 2025
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Our goal for 2025 is to have 75% of homes on the lake contribute.
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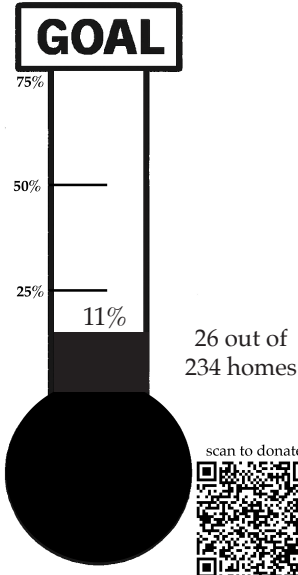


Photo credit to Bob King

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blairgarceau@gmail.com

Water Quality Committee

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WATER QUALITY REPORT

STATE OF THE LAKE

Last week, the chair of the lake's Water Quality Committee, Patrick Welch, provided the first article for the season. We will probably have an article each week discussing an array of topics hopefully of relevance to the lake community ranging from invasive species to funding of the committee's activities. Each article will be written by a different member of the committee and invited guests. Pat provided an overview last week, and future articles will be reflective of what he outlined.

The author this week is Terry Dugan. What I would like to do today is three things, (1) introduce you to the members of the committee, (2) give a brief overview via the CLMP report on the State of the Lake, (3) and provide some information on a few observations from the spring and some testing that was conducted post Barker articles last season.

Currently there are 9 members of the committee. Our chair is Patrick Welch from the south side. Paul Fallon of the east side is chair emeritus. Jennifer Ball is our water tester now, along with assistance from her husband John. Rick Russwurm works with our outside contractors for surveying the lake for invasive species and establishing treatment for such (right now only treating for Eurasian milfoil).

Cindy Bernaciak has picked up the mantle from Bruce Wagner on surveying and removing the invasive shoreline plant, purple loosestrife, and will do so with Tom Kuhn, a new member of our committee. Zach Nickell is keeping up with the flow of information on the effect of wake/bladder boats on lakes, and as an owner of one, will provide information on best practices on the use of these boats.

Ron Niezgodski has been involved with other lake/stream management groups in southwest Michigan and will

also help with the management of purple loosestrife.

We participate in the Cooperative Lakes Monitoring Program (CLMP) through Michigan Lakes and Streams. There are a number of testing parameters we can participate in but the standard ones each year are water clarity (Secchi Disk readings on a weekly basis), spring and summer phosphorous measurements, monthly chlorophyll measurements, and at least monthly dissolved oxygen and temperature readings throughout the water column from the surface to the 95 foot level.

The readings from each of these are interrelated but become combined into a scoring system referred to as the Trophic Status Index. Of importance, is doing this year after year, so one can spot trends indicating potential issues with the lake. We have included the Cooperative Lakes Monitoring report on Birch Lake, looking at each testing parameter, changes over the years, and the overall Trophic Status Indicator numbers (TSI). The overall summary provides sort of a weak basically no change status for Birch Lake.

In a later article we will provide more commentary on the state of the lake. It will be important for us to continue monitoring all of these factors on an annual basis. Change in lake status is a function of our collective behavior, i.e., not using phosphorous containing fertilizers, maintain some buffer between lawn and lake to prevent runoff from yards and road directly into the lake, and other factors we will be discussing this season.

To read the entire report and look at other lakes, go to *Micorps.net*, go to *Lakes*

and *Individual Lake Reports*, where you see our report and from other lakes.

Two other notes:

1. There has been some buzz about a discoloration in the lake a few weeks ago and a bit of an algae bloom more recently. The algae bloom can sort of be expected but at different levels yearly based on temperature and sunlight with the advent of spring. This one was a temporary bloom of the colonial algae *Spirogyra*. Instead of algae as single floating cells these link into strands so you end up with long threads. Just like threads or string not on a spool you end up with a messy ball of algal threads. If you handle one you will find it feels greasy. Not toxic like blue green algae, and it is basically disappearing as we speak. The discoloration, we believe, is a rush of heavily iron-containing water from seeps and springs near the camp. It came and went.
2. Ecoli. At the end of summer in 2024, I sampled for E coli at six locations around the lake. Effectively no sign other than the occasional colony with the exception of the little stream at the northeast part of the lake. However, once diluted into the lake no problem. There will always be some background E coli as it is a fecal product from warm blooded animals, geese, swans, dog poop, muskrats etc. E coli is only an issue when it reaches certain levels and we are way way less than that by orders of magnitude. Will sample again prior to July 4th.

Also, should you have questions or concerns please contact a member of the committee, and we will do our best to answer or find an answer if one exists. However, the quality of the lake rests in the hands of all of us as residents and stewards.

2024 BIRCH LAKE CLMP RESULTS

ABOUT THIS REPORT: This report is a summary of the data that have been collected through the Cooperative Lakes Monitoring Program. The contents have been customized for your lake. The first page is a summary of the Trophic Status Indicators of your lake (Secchi Disk Transparency, Chlorophyll-a, Spring Total Phosphorus, and Summer Total Phosphorus). Where data are available, they have been summarized for the most recent field season, five years prior to the most recent field season, and since the first year your lake has been enrolled in the program.

If you did not take 8 or more Secchi disk measurements or 4 or more chlorophyll measurements, there will not be summary data calculated for these parameters. These numbers of measurements are required to ensure that the results are indicative of overall summer conditions.

If you enrolled in Dissolved Oxygen/Temperature, the summary page will have a graph of one of the profiles taken during the late summer (typically August or September). If your lake stratifies, we will use a graph showing the earliest time of stratification, because identifying the timing of this condition and the depth at which it occurs is typically the most important use of dissolved oxygen measurements. The last summary page will be an explanation of the Trophic Status Index and where your lake fits on that scale.

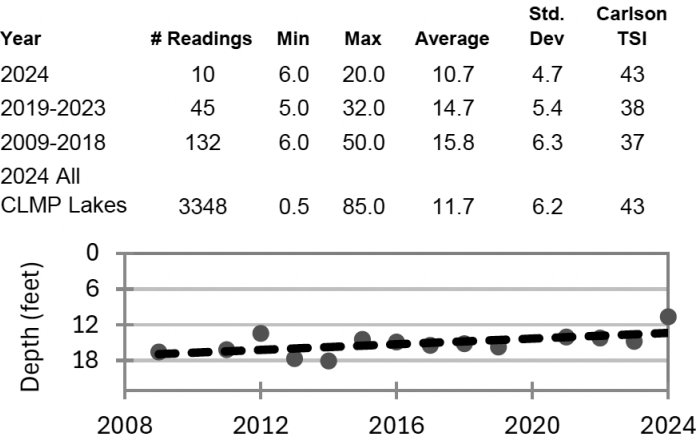
The rest of the report will be aquatic plant summaries, Score the Shore results, and larger graphs, including all Dissolved Oxygen/Temperature Profiles that you recorded. For Secchi Disk, Chlorophyll, and Phosphorus parameters, you need to have two years of data for a graph to make logical sense. Therefore if this is the first year you have enrolled in the CLMP, you will not receive a graph for these parameters. Remember that some lakes see a lot of fluctuation in these parameters from year to year. Until you have eight years worth of data, consider all trends to be preliminary.

To learn more about the CLMP monitoring parameters or get definitions to unknown terms, check out the CLMP Manual, found at: https://micorps.net/wp-content/uploads/2021/03/CLMP-Manual-2019update2_2021.pdf

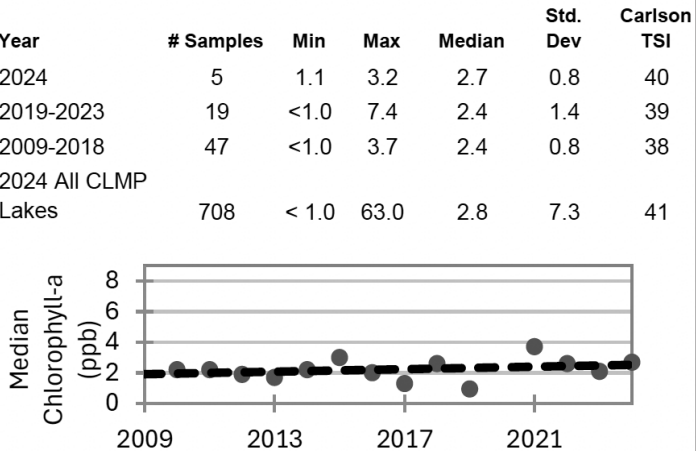


2024 BIRCH LAKE CLMP RESULTS

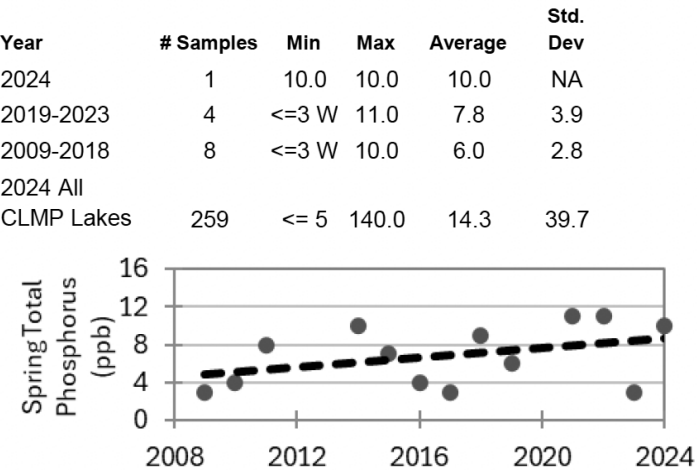
Secchi Disk Transparency (feet)



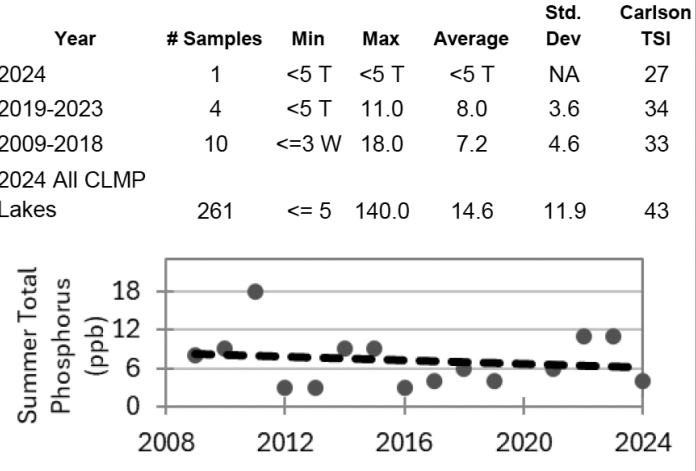
Chlorophyll-a (parts per billion)



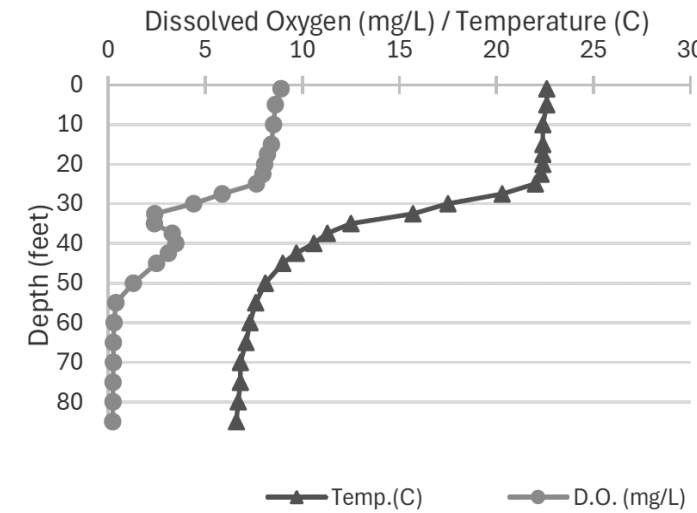
Spring Phosphorus (parts per billion)



Summer Phosphorus (parts per billion)



Dissolved Oxygen and Temperature Profile



Summary

Average TSI	2024	2019-2023	2009-2018
Birch Lake	37	37	36
All CLMP Lakes	41	42	40

With an average TSI score of 37 based on 2024 Secchi transparency, chlorophyll-a, and summer total phosphorus data, this lake is rated between the oligotrophic and mesotrophic classification. The lake leans slightly more oligotrophic than mesotrophic.

The low level of nutrients in the lake results in dissolved oxygen being available throughout the water column for most of the summer. Only by the end of the summer does the lake fully stratify and the bottom waters become anoxic.

While the trends for individual parameters are mixed, monitoring data indicates that overall nutrient levels remain largely unchanged since data collection began.

* = Minimum # samples not met for average / median / TSI Value
<1.0 = Chlorophyll-a: Sample value is less than limit of quantification (<1 ppb)
W = Value is less than the detection limit (<3 ppb)
T = Value reported is less than the reporting limit (5 ppb)

Thank you! The CLMP leadership team would like to thank you for all of your efforts over the past year. The CLMP would not exist without dedicated and hardworking volunteers! The CLMP Leadership Team is made of: Jo Latimore, Erick Elgin, Jean Roth, Tamara Lipsey, Mike Gallagher, Melissa DeSimone, and Paul Steen.

Also thank you to our Birch Lake Water Quality Committee Members, past and present, for all of their efforts to ensure that Birch Lake remains clean, clear, and beautiful for generations to come.

The 2025 members of the Water Quality Committee are: Patrick Welch (chair), Jennifer Ball, Cindy Bernaciak, Terry Dugan, Paul Fallon, Tom Kuhn, Zack Nickell, Ron Niezgodski, and Rick Russwurm.

THE SIX COMMANDMENTS OF BIRCH LAKE WATER QUALITY

- I. Thou shalt prevent the spread of Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS).
- II. Thou shalt minimize surface runoff.
- III. Thou shalt minimize the effects of waves.
- IV. Thou shalt protect and expand Natural Shorelines.
- V. Thou shalt not allow phosphorus, nutrients, and other undesirable chemical elements to enter our lake.
- VI. Thou shalt remain informed and active about other Water Quality issues.

2024 BIRCH LAKE CLMP RESULTS

Tropic Status Explained

In 1977, limnologist Dr. Robert Carlson developed a numerical scale (0-100) where the numbers indicate the level of nutrient enrichment. Using the proper equations, we can convert results from Summer Total Phosphorus, Secchi Depth, and Chlorophyll-a to this Trophic Status Index (TSI). The TSI numbers are furthermore grouped into general categories (oligotrophic, mesotrophic, eutrophic, and hypereutrophic), to quickly give us a way to understand the general nutrient level of any lake.

The tables pictured here give the results-to-TSI conversions for the water quality data ranges normally seen in the CLMP. The formulas for this conversion can be found in the CLMP manual.

Secchi Depth (ft)	TSI Value
>30	<28
25	31
20	34
15	38
12	42
10	44
7.5	48
6	52
4	57
<3	>61

Chlorophyll-a (ppb)	TSI Value
<1	<31
2	37
3	41
4	44
6	48
8	51
12	55
16	58
22	61
>22	>61

CLMP Manual



Phosphorus (ppb)	TSI Value
<5	<27
6	30
8	34
10	37
12	40
15	43
18	46
21	48
24	50
32	54
36	56
42	58
48	60
>50	>61

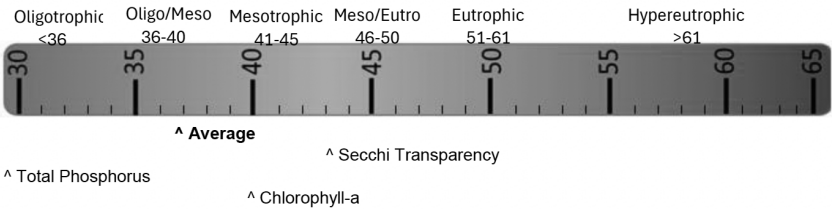
TSI for Birch Lake in 2024	
Average	37
Secchi Disk	43
Summer TP	27
Chlorophyll-a	40

Oligotrophic: Generally deep and clear lakes with little aquatic plant or algae growth. These lakes maintain sufficient dissolved oxygen in the cool, deep-bottom waters during late summer to support cold water fish, such as trout and whitefish.

Mesotrophic: Lakes that fall between oligotrophic and eutrophic. Mid-ranged amounts of nutrients.

Eutrophic: Highly productive eutrophic lakes are generally shallow, turbid, and support abundant aquatic plant growth. In deep eutrophic lakes, the cool bottom waters usually contain little or no dissolved oxygen. Therefore, these lakes can only support warm water fish, such as bass and pike.

Hypereutrophic: A specialized category of eutrophic lakes. These lakes exhibit extremely high productivity, such as nuisance algae and weed growth.

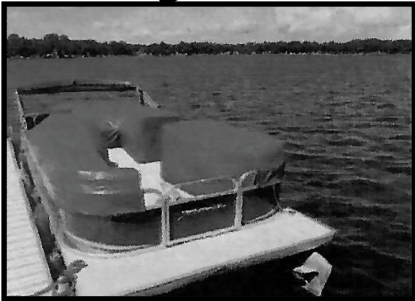
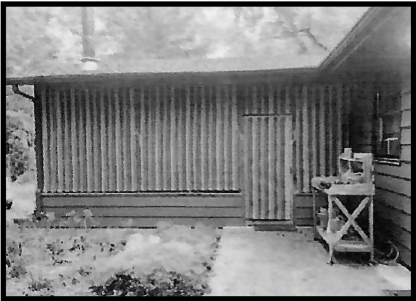


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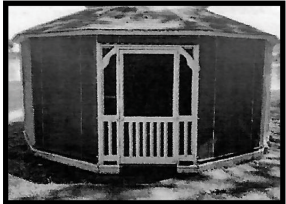
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FLEET CAPTAIN'S CORNER

New Marks and a New Team

Unfortunately, not enough sailors had their sailboats in and ready to have a Memorial Day Regatta this year. While going around the lake this past weekend in the pontoon boat, I noticed more and more sailboats going in and helped a sailor in need tow their boat from the landing to their lift.

Weather- and wind-permitting, we are hoping to start the season this weekend on June 1st. You may have noticed we set a course this last Sunday, but there was no sailing.

Last year, Tom Cassady - after several years of helping the club set the buoys (also known as marks) - has decided to hang it up to spend more time with his grandchildren. I want to thank Tom for all his help over the past several years. His second-in-command, Vic Jones, has decided to stay on and help. Last weekend he was kind enough to take me and the two new team members, John Ball and Tom Lacy, out to practice and train us in setting the marks. We decided to leave the course out for a day in case anyone wanted to go out and practice.

In addition to the aforementioned, Steve Plaia - who used to help his father-in-law Harold Cranmer set marks - has agreed to help as well. I want to thank the team in advance for their help this year.

Finally, last fall the club was notified by Tom and Vic that the sailing marks were in rough shape. This winter we purchased new marks for the races. We have two new orange marks, and are hoping to get the third soon. So, if you see the new orange (and/or old yellow) marks go out in the future that means we are sailing.

~FC Bob Niezgodski
rjniezgodski@gmail.com



New orange mark on the left and old yellow one on the right



New team members, John Ball (left) and Tom Lacy (right)

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Here are some things for you to consider:

- Lake inventory is at an all time low and prices are higher.
- There are more buyers than sellers.
- Many lake property buyers are cash buyers.
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*Not intended to solicit any properties already listed for sale with another real estate agent.

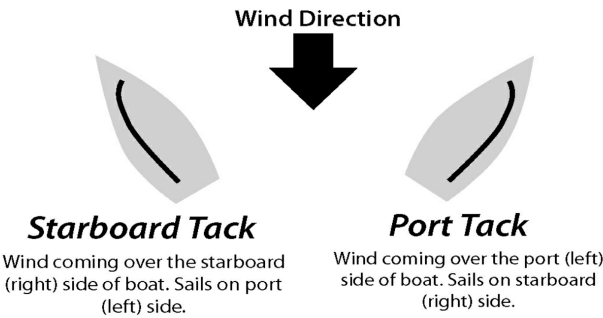
BIRCH LAKE SAILING

Since we did not have any Memorial Day weekend races, we are sharing some more basics of sailing for beginners who might be thinking about joining in the races.

In sailboat racing there are no out-of-bounds lines on the floor or referees to call fouls. The rules are self-enforced and administered within the fleet. A basic understanding of just a few important rules will help ensure that everyone has fun and gets home safely.

The specifics of the sailboat racing rules are mind-numbingly detailed and written to cover all potential incidents. DON'T WORRY - you do not need to know everything about the rules to go out and have fun and be safe. By reading and understanding the following rules and terms, you should be able to get around the course without fouling another boat or causing an accident. These rules should only be thought of as a beginning! A full copy of the rules can be found at ussailing.org.

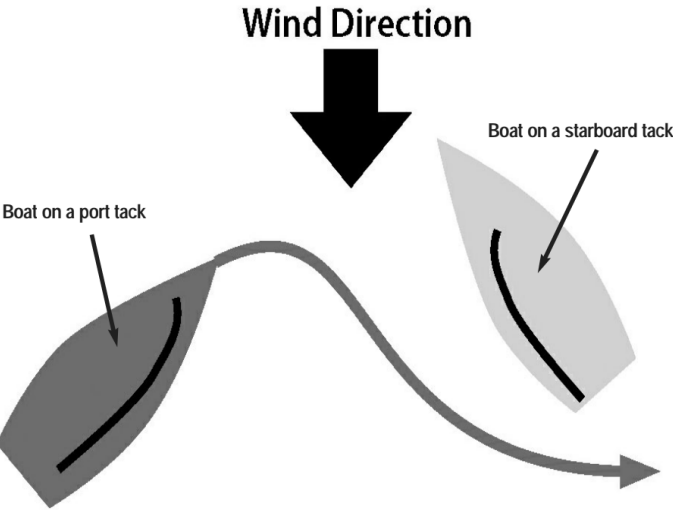
Starboard Tack vs Port Tack



Sunday is SAILING DAY!
Races start at 11am
Please steer clear
of the course!

RULE #1: Starboard Tack Boat Has Right-of-Way

A boat on a port tack (wind is coming over the port side of the boat) must give way to boat on a starboard tack



The advertisement features a black and white background with a grid pattern. On the left, there is an image of an Indian motorcycle with the text "MOTORCYCLE RENTALS" below it. On the right, there is an image of a Slingshot three-wheeled vehicle with the text "SLINGSHOT RENTALS" below it. A large, diagonal banner across the center reads "RENTALS ON TWO & THREE WHEELS!". The Indian Motorcycle logo is in the top left, and the Elkhardt logo is in the top right.

The advertisement features a black and white background. At the top, the text "Cass County COA" is displayed with a tree logo. Below it, the text "Summer Concert Series" is written in a cursive font. The concert schedule is listed: "Friday, June 27: Touch of Texas", "Friday, July 25: Memphis Underground", and "Friday, August 22: Whistle Pigs". A paragraph of text describes the event: "The COA's Summer Concert Series is back by popular demand. Join us at the COA Lowe Center's Pavilion for some great music and an opportunity to purchase food from our food truck vendors. Bring a chair or blanket enjoy three FREE outdoor concerts!". The text "Food is available from 5:30-7:30pm" and "Concerts begin at 7:00pm" is at the bottom. A QR code is located in the bottom right corner, and the text "more info -->" is next to it.



CAMP T CORNER

Camp T is busy and bustling with preparations for campers to arrive! Counselors and other staff members have been here for a week now, learning everything they need to know to make this summer a great one. Staff training aims to prepare staff in many different ways, including activities like team building, goal-setting, learning games and activities, emergency procedures training, Lifeguard and First Aid/CPR certifications, and much more. Our staff will be down at the waterfront during part of training this week, so you may spot us on the recently-installed pier!

This summer’s staff has been a joy to work with so far. They are composed of young people with many different backgrounds, cultures, areas of study, and walks of life. They come from Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, Ohio, Missouri, Iowa, Maryland, France, South Africa, Mexico, Scotland, Ecuador, Australia, Colombia, and New Zealand. We really appreciate the opportunity for the campers to get to know people from other places and to learn from them.

In last week’s column, we mentioned that we are still looking for Health Officers and for cabin staff, especially male counselors. I am happy to update that our Health Officer positions have been filled! If you know anyone that may be interested in a cabin counselor position, they can email us at info@riverbendcampfire.org

or fill out our application on our website, riverbendcampfire.org/jobs

Although most of our summer staff have just arrived this past week, there has been plenty happening at Camp T in the fall and spring. The Dining Hall porch has been screened in and the cement porch floors have been refinished to match the inside of the Dining Hall. This allows us to offer porch seating during meals and activities. The front entrance door to the Dining Hall has been replaced with barn doors and made much larger, and a door of the same size has been added on either side of the original door. This will allow for more airflow on the hot summer days!

A new pavillion has also been built at the archery range, expanding our capacity from three archers at a time to six! The structure offers much more seating and shade to those waiting their turn, as well.

If this column sounds a little different than usual, it is because Miss Amber has passed the Birch Barker proverbial torch. My name is Miss Meghan, and I am the Assistant Camp Director at Camp T. I work at Camp full time, leading our after school program at Edwardsburg Intermediate School and working in our office during the school year.

I have a long history with Camp T, starting back when my grandmother attended as a little girl! My aunts attended, and then I was a camper for four years. I was a staff member for six



years throughout high school, college, and while teaching middle school science after graduating. These roles included counselor, waterfront director, and STEM coordinator. I became the Assistant Director in 2022 when Miss Gabby became the Director, and returned to the role in 2024 after teaching abroad in England. I am so excited to be here at Camp T full time, and to be able to update all of you with the goings on. I look forward to a great summer with you!

-Miss Meghan at Camp T



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BIRCH LAKE HISTORY: HARVEY'S HOUSE

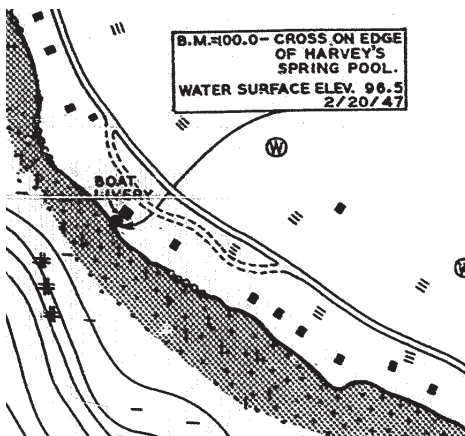
Editor's Note: This season in the Barker, we plan to feature different properties on the lake each week, with historical information about the families who have lived there, photos, and stories. If you would like to submit content about your home at the lake, we will gladly accept new submissions! Please send to

birchbarker1@gmail.com

Orley K. Harvey purchased 137 acres along the east shore of Birch Lake in 1905 from the Frederic Jones family, and soon thereafter constructed a stone cottage.

Just a few years later, in 1908, Harvey became frustrated that Christian Searer, owner of the mill in Williamsville, raised the dam on the outflow of Birch Lake, causing the lake to rise 21 inches and flooding Harvey's property. He filed suit against Searer, and while he won the case, Searer removed only two boards and the lake level did not decrease sufficiently. Harvey then placed a charge of dynamite at the dam, and removed the offending boards. In the resulting trial, the jury ruled in favor of Harvey, citing a state law that an individual may not raise the level of a lake, resulting in damage to another's property (*Niles Daily Sun*, December 24, 1909).

Orley and his wife, Lucy O'Dell Harvey, operated a Boat Livery on their east side property. They offered boats for rent and live bait for sale. A 1947 map of Birch Lake identifies "Harvey's Spring



1947 map of Birch Lake, showing Harvey's Spring Pool, and noting the Boat Livery located on this site. Map source: Michigan Conservation Department Division of Fisheries.

Pool" and the Boat Livery.

Orley and Lucy Harvey were also the proprietors of the Harvey House Hotel in Constantine from approximately 1908 to 1917. When the hotel changed management, the local newspaper wrote that, "The present proprietor, O.K. Harvey, has had charge of the Hotel since it opened to the public about 9 years ago. He and his wife Lucy gave the place such a home-like atmosphere, and served such excellent meals that the travelling public said that the Harvey House was one of the best conducted hotels to be found, and guests wanted to make it to Constantine for the fine accommodations to be enjoyed" (*Items of Constantine*, August, 1917).

In 1924, Harvey laid out and platted the Nun-u-komuk "subdivision," which purportedly means "fair landing." Nun-u-komuk spans from the bottom of Kinsey St. (the Mikulak house today), to the Pence house, just north of the original Harvey home (now Bernaciak's). Few houses were built until the 40s; Helen Weesner wrote a Barker article about her memories of Birch Lake, and said that in the 1930s, starting from her home (now Garceau's), "moving north, there were no cottages until the Ruehl [sic] Harvey house" (*Birch Barker*, 2005).

The Harveys had five children: O'Dell (b. 1888), Edith (b. 1890), Roscoe (b. 1893), Antoinette "Annie" (b. 1897), and Ruel (b. 1901). Ruel married Margaret Reid in 1930, and they lived at the Harvey home on Birch Lake with their children, Nancy (b. 1930), Patricia (b. 1933), John (b. 1937), and Lucy (b. 1939). Nancy Harvey married the Harvey's neighbor, J. Lamar King in 1948 (not the same King listed on the 1920 plat map to the right).

The Harvey family sold their home (cottage #157) to Val, Mary, Ken, and Mary Ellen Bernaciak in 1960. The home remains in the family today, now owned by Kevin and Cindy Bernaciak. The Harvey's house, built circa 1905, has been expanded but the original structure remains recognizable. For the past 120 years, only two families have owned this very early Birch Lake residence!

Cindy and Kevin Bernaciak contributed photos and information for this story.

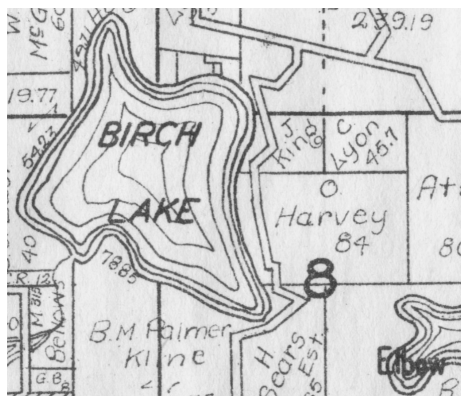
Birch Lake Man Dynamited Obnoxious Dam.

Cassopolis, Dec. 24.—The recent trial of the Searer-Harvey case here brought out the fact that Harvey had considerable nerve.

Searer had raised the flood gates to his dam at the outlet of Birch lake, which raised the water in the lake twenty-one inches and brought it up to the Harvey cottage. Harvey got an injunction ordering Searer to take down the boards, and he took off two, not enough to lower the later.

Then Harvey dynamited the dam and waded in and took out the pieces which the dynamite did not throw out. The jury sided with Harvey, and there is a state law which says that one cannot raise a lake in this manner if it banks water up to anyone's cottage or hotel.

December 24, 1909, *Niles Daily Sun*, page 1



1920 Plat Map of the area around Birch Lake



photo of the Harvey house from the south, circa 1960

Join us for dinner!



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Lake References Available

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Cocktail hour at 5pm
Dinner and Awards at 6pm

REGISTRATION INCLUDES:
Four Man Scramble
Team Prizes⁺ & Contests
Cocktail Hour & Dinner

Questions? Contact John Ball (john.ball0452@gmail.com or 574-535-3736)

⁺ Donations of door & team prizes are needed. If you have access to golf- or lake-related merchandise that could be donated, please contact John.

ALL ENTRIES DUE BY JULY 14

2025 BLYC Men's Golf Outing Foursome Registration

\$75 per man*

Please PRINT names:

Team Captain: _____ Player 3: _____

Player 2: _____ Player 4: _____

Questions? Contact John Ball (john.ball0452@gmail.com or 574-535-3736)

Please make checks payable to BLYC and mail to:

John Ball
63690 Birch Rd.
Vandalia, MI 49095

***Individual registrations available.**
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BARKER KIDS OF THE WEEK



Storytime with Papa Ball, Kayson and Saylor Ball.

Want your kid to be a Barker kid of the week?
Send your photos to birchbarker1@gmail.com

Beckett Willms, nephew of Amber Grundy (east side), at the Edwardsburg Memorial Day parade with an Axolotl, his favorite animal.



Congratulations to Dr. Meghan Mary Russell, daughter of Paula Toth Russell and Michael Russell, who graduated from IU School of Medicine on May 16, 2025. Paula had the honor of hooding Meghan at her graduation ceremony. Meghan will be starting her Pediatric Neurology Residency at the University of Michigan this summer. She learned her love of children by being a faithful camper and counselor at Camp Tannadoonah, earning the distinguished Order of the Birch recognition. We're so proud of you Meghan!



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Dino Meneghin celebrating his 8th birthday on Sunday, May 25!

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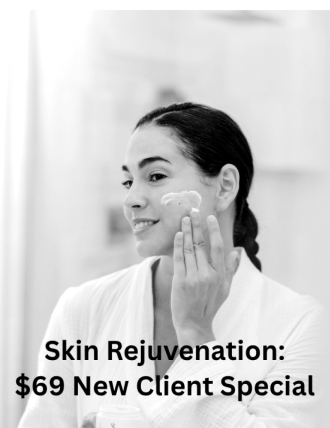
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SUMMER RECIPES: MEXICAN BURRIA TACOS

Mexican birria tacos, Jalisco-style, made with braised beef that's slow-cooked in a fragrant 3-chile sauce with a delicious spice mix. Crispy tacos, and tender, mouth-watering beef team up with melted Mexican cheese in this impressive meal. This meal takes some time, but it's definitely worth it!

Sauce

- 6 dried guajillo chile peppers, seeded
- 4 dried chile de arbol peppers, stemmed and seeded
- 2 dried ancho chiles, stemmed and seeded
- 1 tablespoon olive oil, or as needed
- 4 medium Roma tomatoes
- 2 tablespoons white vinegar
- 2 cloves garlic
- 2 teaspoons ground black pepper
- 4 whole cloves
- 1 pinch ground cinnamon
- 1 pinch ground cumin
- 1 pinch ground thyme
- 1 pinch dried marjoram
- 1 pinch dried oregano
- 1 pinch salt

Meat

- 4 pounds beef chuck roast
- salt and freshly ground black pepper to taste

Tacos

- 18 corn tortillas
- 1 large white onion, finely chopped
- 1 bunch fresh cilantro, chopped
- 1 cup shredded queso asadero (optional)

1. Preheat the oven to 325° F. Fill a pot with water and bring to a boil.
2. Start the sauce: Add guajillo, arbol, and ancho chile peppers to the boiling water; boil for 5 minutes.
3. Remove pot from the heat and allow peppers to soak until cool. Drain, reserving ¼ cup of the water.
4. Rinse beef and pat dry. Cut beef into chunks if desired, and season with salt and pepper.
5. Heat oil in a Dutch oven over medium-high heat. Add beef and cook until browned on all sides, about 10 minutes.
6. While the beef is searing, continue the sauce: Line a heavy cast-iron grill pan or griddle with aluminum foil and place over high heat. Arrange tomatoes in a single layer on top. Grill until tomato skin is burned on all sides and begins to peel, 3 to 5 minutes.
7. Place cooled chile peppers into a blender. Add grilled tomatoes, vinegar, garlic, black pepper, cloves, cinnamon, cumin, thyme, marjoram, oregano, and salt in a blender. Pour in the reserved ¼ cup water; blend until smooth.
8. Strain chile sauce through a mesh strainer and pour over the meat in the Dutch oven, turning the roast so it is completely covered with sauce; cover.
9. Bake in the preheated oven, basting meat every 45 minutes with sauce, until birria begins to fall apart, 3 to 4 hours. Remove the lid and bake, uncovered, until birria is crispy on top, about 20 minutes. Remove from oven, cover with aluminum foil, and allow to rest in a warm area for 10 minutes.
10. Remove meat to a cutting board and strain off any fat from the sauce. Shred meat with two forks, then return meat to the pot and stir with the sauce to combine.
11. Fill each tortilla with birria and top with cheese, chopped onion, and cilantro. Warm the filled tacos on a griddle, flipping until both sides are crispy and cheese is melted.
12. Serve with extra sauce on the side for dipping.



Recipe and photo credit to AllRecipes.com

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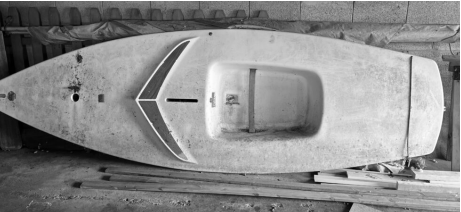
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CLASSIFIEDS

SAILBOATS

Free to a good home: Dennis Tudor (west shore) has an Alcott Minifish that he would like to give away to a good home. Needs a good cleaning! Has a sail, dagger board, and rudder. No major cracks or damage to the fiberglass. Contact Dennis at 269-476-2744 for more information.



Alcott Minifish

Sad Sunfish Seeking Sailors! Our boat pines to go racing on Sundays. Please borrow the boat (rigged and ready)! It's a great way to "kick the tires" at no expense. Contact the Kings at 574-299-0705 and leave a message.



Sad Sunfish

Two Sailboats: Tammy Hanstine has a 1990-vintage AMF Sunfish previously owned and raced by Tom Howard on Birch Lake for sale. Brand new sail (still in plastic), new tiller and extension, 3 daggerboards, 2 complete mast/boom set-ups with sails, 2 rudder assemblies, plus misc. extra parts. Everything is in good to great shape. Make an offer (minimum \$500) and take it all (or will sell parts individually).

Come see on the south side; contact Tammy at tkhanstine@yahoo.com

FOR SALE

Propane campfire cube \$50.
Text Jon at 574-339-6492.

SERVICES

I do sewing and mending at fair prices – zippers, hemming, small alterations. Call Kathy at 269-476-9317.

Classified Ads in the Barker are free to current BLYC members. The cost is \$5 per week for non members. Send your ad to birchbarker1@gmail.com Deadline is Tuesday noon for the upcoming weekend's Barker.

WANTED

Wanted to Buy: Bill and Sherry Holleman are looking to get back on to Birch Lake part-time or full-time. If you are thinking about selling, please email Sherry at dakotalynn01@aol.com.

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EMERGENCY HEART DEFIBRILLATOR (AED) locations on Birch Lake

There are six (6) automated external defibrillator units (AEDs) on Birch Lake. The boxes that contain these devices are located at the following locations:

- 1. **West Shore:** Sheffieck Home
62875 Birch Lakeview Drive
- 2. **North Shore:** Smitley Home
14859 Birch Northshore Drive
- 3. **East Shore:** Vitale Home
63174 Birch Road
- 4. **Southeast Shore:** Troeger Home
63696 Birch Road
- 5. **South Shore:** Crawford Home
15046 Birch Lakeshore Drive
- 6. **Southwest Shore:** DeYoung Home
63255 Storey Hill Street

All units are on the **ROAD SIDE** of the property and accessible by vehicle or on foot.



AED Locations



IN AN EMERGENCY

- 1. **CALL 911** and report the emergency and the patient's location
- 2. Pull the box open, remove the orange-colored unit, take it to the patient, and open the device by pressing the white lever at the bottom.
- 3. An automated voice will guide you through the setup and use of the defibrillator. Follow directions as they are given.
- 4. Continue to follow the instructions, and **stay with the patient until emergency personnel arrive.**

This message is brought to you by the Birch Lake Homeowners Association.

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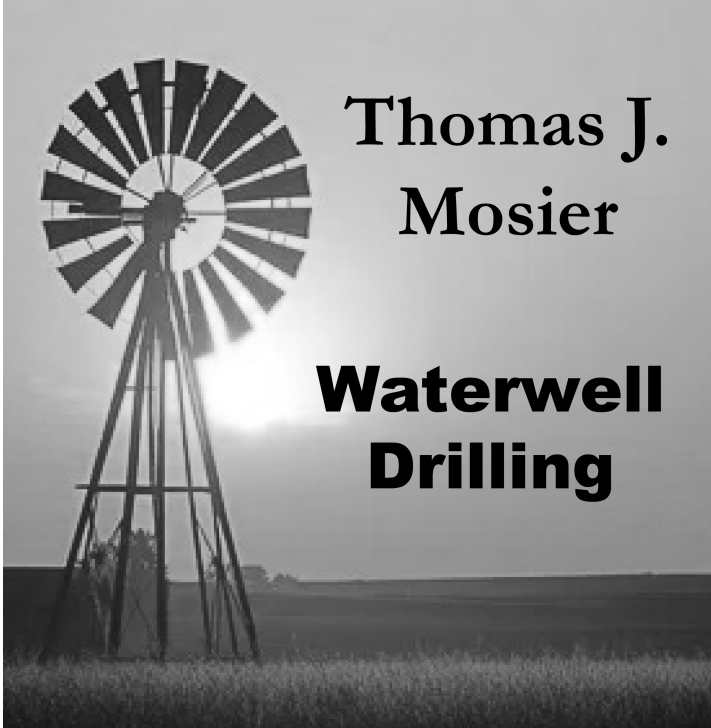
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V	O	T	S	B	U	O	N	G	A	R	X	Y	T	R	A	P	L	O	O	P	O	D	N
Q	Y	S	A	M	K	E	I	K	R	A	P	R	E	T	A	W	L	S	D	P	Q	Z	E
Q	W	Z	L	U	S	B	C	B	B	A	K	H	I	H	V	I	D	D	R	B	Y	K	W
G	Y	F	L	B	H	O	S	W	P	B	K	S	T	U	O	K	O	O	C	V	Q	I	J
X	Y	P	Y	P	A	S	L	A	D	N	A	S	N	N	V	J	S	Q	Q	Z	O	V	Q

Word Search Words

amusementpark
sleepingin
watermelon
parawings
waterpark
poolparty
flipflops
sunscreen
barbeque
dirtbike
laughing
vacation
icecream
cookouts
umbrella
picnics
friends
fishing
surfing
hotdogs
sandals
outside
travel
museum
bikes
beach
sand
pool
hot
fun

OLYMPIC

AROUSAL
CANNERY
CHAPTER
CHAUCER
DEPRESS
EMANATE
GESTURE
LUKEMIA
MUTAGEN

[illegible]

BIRCH LAKE YACHT CLUB DUES

Support the BLYC and the entire Birch Lake Community by becoming a member!

The Birch Lake Yacht Club (BLYC) is a 501(c)(7) non profit organization



What your BLYC dues and donations support:

- Monitoring water quality, which helps keep Birch Lake clean, and improves our ability to respond swiftly to treat and eradicate invasive species.
- Maintaining the Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) around the lake.
- Producing and distributing the printed Birch Barker every week in the summer (and online every month in the off season).
- Publication of a biennial Directory.
- Fundraising for, planning and carrying out the 4th of July Fireworks show.
- Providing a forum and means for handling lake-wide concerns with local governmental issues.
- Helping to fund and host a variety of community-building activities.

BLYC dues are NOT used to purchase alcohol for events. All events sponsored by the Yacht Club are organized by volunteers. In 2024, the BLYC Board of Directors voted to make all events revenue-neutral and to not spend any Yacht Club funds on alcoholic beverages.

\$ _____ BLYC member dues (\$50 per year)

\$ _____ Associate member dues (\$10 per year) (non lake residents)

\$ _____ Water Quality donations

\$ _____ Fireworks fund

\$ _____ Homeowners Association (\$10 per year)

\$ _____ Sailing Fees (\$15 per year)

\$ _____ Other Donations (please specify: _____)

\$ _____ TOTAL CONTRIBUTION

Make checks payable to:
BLYC
and mail to: **Deb Spratt, Treasurer**
18100 Farmington Hills Dr
South Bend, IN 46637

or pay online at
store.birchlakeyachtclub.com

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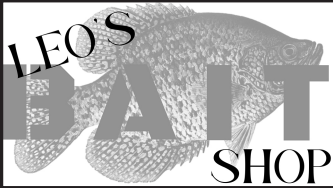
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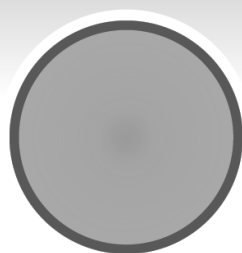
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