



BIRCH Barker

vol. 77 issue 8

Weekend of
JULY 12
2025

The official publication of the Birch Lake Yacht Club

BirchLakeYachtClub.com



*Julia Moore, daughter of Bob and Lisa Groszek (south side) accomplished a "reel feat."
It was a two-fer-one cast!*

2025 BIRCH LAKE CALENDAR

July

16 - Card Night, 7pm
18 - Ladies' Golf Outing, 9am
19 - Yacht Club Board Mtg, 9am
25 - Men's Golf Outing, noon
TBA - Don Harman Kidz Regatta

August

2 - Corn and Sausage Roast
9 - Don Harman Kidz Regatta
16 - Yacht Club Board Mtg, 9am
16 - Homeowners Assoc., 10am
20 - Card Night, 7pm
23 - Fall Dinner
30 & 31 Labor Day Regatta -
backup day on 9/1

September

20 - Yacht Club Board Mtg, 9am

October

25 - Bad Patty Crockpot
Challenge, 6pm

2025 BLYC Directors

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Commodore: Julie Dickey (E)
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Dan Waxman (E)
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Water Quality:

Patrick Welch (S)

Homeowners Association:

Blair Garceau (E)

COMMODORE'S COMMENTS

Hello to all at Birch Lake! The Fourth of July weekend has come gone! The weather was beautiful, but at times, it was pretty hot! Many of us were enjoying the lake to beat the heat! The lake temperature was so refreshing! It was evident that Birch Lake was full of life! Residents were outside enjoying their boats and other lake activities! There were numerous gatherings with family and friends! I was very thankful to celebrate America at Birch Lake!

The boat parade was full of fun and excitement! The participants were enthusiastic and obviously having a great time! There were many residents contributing lots of cheers from their piers! Thank you, Dan Waxman for organizing this great traditional event! Dan will be revealing who won the Grand Champion Award in this Birch Barker (see page 4)! Congratulations to the winner!

The fireworks display was beautiful and magical! It did not disappoint! The view was great on land or on the lake! The boats floated safely through the darkness!

Thank you Bernie Garceau, for organizing this spectacular event! Special thanks to Bernie and those individuals who helped pick up the fireworks debris at Camp T! They are all listed in Amber's recap of the Pancake Breakfast (see page 3)!

On that note, the Pancake Breakfast at Camp T was well attended! My family sure enjoyed it! It was so nice seeing many lake residents attending and volunteering! Thank you to everyone who helped make the breakfast a big success!

The men's and women's golf outings are coming up soon. The deadline for the ladies golf is Sunday, July 13. The men's golf deadline is Friday, July 18. They are both being held at Sauganash Golf Club. Look in the Barker for further details (page 2)!

Bob Niezgodski previously announced the great news! There will be a Kidz Regatta scheduled for August 9th! Thank you to the north siders, Tom and Megan Caplis, for hosting this awesome event! What a great sailing opportunity for kids! Thanks to all the volunteer sailors who will pair up with the lucky kids! Bob, our Fleet Captain, will provide details on the Kidz Regatta and all future sailing events! Thank you, Bob!

Thanks to Bud Zesinger for sharing his memories and photos that were featured in last week's Birch Lake History column! Bud and his family have been part of the Birch Lake community for many decades! What an amazing family journey! Bud's story is rich in Birch Lake history! I encourage more residents to share their special and unique stories.

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

~Commodore Julie



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.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Ladies' Golf Outing

LAST CALL FOR ENTRIES! Deadline is **Sunday, July 13!** The Ladies' FUN Golf Outing will be on Friday, July 18th with a best ball, shotgun start promptly at 9:00am. This year we'll be playing at Sauganash Golf Club in Three Rivers. Lunch will follow in the clubhouse. The cost of golf and lunch is the same price as last year at just \$45.00 per golfer. What a bargain! Registration form is in this Barker on page 5.



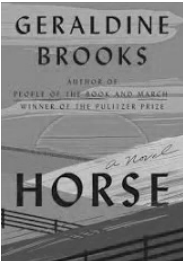
Ladies who would like to join us for just lunch the cost will be \$25.00. **Let Carol or Blair know before July 13th.** We are looking forward to a fun day with all the Birch Lake Ladies.

Men's Golf Outing

DEADLINE APPROACHING for Golf Outing Entries! The deadline to register for this year's Golf Outing is **Friday, July 18th.** The registration form is on page 6 of this Barker. Dinner (Steak and Chicken) and awards will follow the golfing at Sauganash. Door prize donations are welcome! Contact John with any questions (574-535-3736).

Book Club

Our July meeting will be July 29, discussing *Horse* by Geraldine Brookes. Any questions, or if you'd like to join in the fun, contact Jackie Frew: seeitall8@gmail.com or call/text 708-285-2999.



BIRCH LAKE ANNUAL CORN & SAUSAGE ROAST

August 2, 2025, from 5-7 PM at
BLYC



\$5 HOTDOG MEAL, \$10 SAUSAGE
MEAL, \$12 CHICKEN MEAL



**August 9
2025**

Arrive at 11am at the Caplis home, 14901 Birch North Shore Drive, on the north side of the lake. Hot dogs and bratwurst will be served. Then, around noon, the sailors will pair up with the kids and take them out for a few races to experience sailing.

The only rules are that everyone must bring and wear a Personal Flotation Device, every sailboat has a kid on board, and that the kids have fun. If anyone has questions or wants to give us a heads up that they'll be attending the Kidz Regatta, feel free to contact me at rjniezgodski@gmail.com, or look me up in the directory and give me a call.

WELCOME to DELICIOUS



VISIT YOUR LOCAL CULVER'S RESTAURANT:

Niles, MI

Sturgis, MI

Coldwater, MI

Three Rivers, MI

Granger, IN

Mishawaka, IN



2025 BIRCH BARKER SPONSOR

ODDS AND ENDS



The two F-4 Hellcats that were crisscrossing Birch Lake last Saturday afternoon. What a show they put on for us! Photo credit to Mike Sheffieck.

Pancake Breakfast Recap

A HUGE thank you to everyone who joined us last Sunday morning at Camp T for the annual pancake breakfast! Over the course of 2½ hours, we served 369 adults, 49 youth, and 16 children for a total of 434 people. Last year in 2024, our total for the morning was 360, so this year was a great success! Our record was 508 in 2008 - maybe we can hit that number again next year!

We couldn't have done it without the help of our amazing volunteer crew who helped setup, sell tickets at the door, cook pancakes and sausage, serve the food, keep the juice, milk, coffee, syrup, butter, and fruit cocktail filled, take out the trash, clean up tables, and clean up after the breakfast. Not to mention run extra supplies over from my house (I forget something every year - this time it was the eggs to make the gluten free pancake mix).

Thank you to Bob Bender, Cassie Boemi, Mich Coleman, Tom Kuhn, Emily Matz, Judah Matz, Sylvia Matz, Kara Nickell, Zach Kickell, Yolanda Roche, Andy Snider, Scott Sortal, Patrick Welch, Brad Zesinger, who all helped ensure that everything ran smoothly.

Also thank you to Gabby Bittner and Meghan Burmeister, our Camp T staff members who worked in the camp store to make camp gear available for purchase throughout the morning. If you didn't get your camp shirts, hoodies, or other camp items at the store on Sunday, you can always come up to camp on a Sunday afternoon (2-4pm) or Saturday morning (10-11am) during check in / check out times when the store is open. Or you can call us at (574) 387-6095 to arrange another time.

We would also like to extend our gratitude to Bernie Garceau for organizing a crew to clean up the fireworks debris in the parking lot early on Sunday morning. You may not realize what a mess is left behind after the fireworks show - it's a lot! Thank you to Bernie Garceau, Bill Luecht, Tim and Chris Cole, Ed and Tom Chester, Callie and Jared Schlemmer, Mike and Julie Sheffieck, and Kate and Elliott Frank, who all helped make sure our parking lot was cleaned up before our Pancake Breakfast guests started arriving!

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.

Barbara Green
The Green family sadly announces the passing of their mother, Barbara Green, a long time south shore resident. Barb and Dick bought their cottage in 1977 after renting on Birch for 10 years. Their 4 children and spouses, 6 grandchildren and 4 great grandchildren have enjoyed many wonderful summers together here. After "Doc" Green passed in 2017, Barb continued to enjoy family time at Birch whenever she could. Her warmth and care was felt by all who knew her, and lives on in the close bonds of her family. We will all miss her smile and grace.



Barbara Green

Barker Newsies

This week's delivery spotlight is on Patti Russwurm who lives on the north side with her husband Rick. The north side is divided into east and west sections and Patti's route covers the north-east side. She took over this route from long-time delivery girl Claudia Phipps, who passed the delivery satchel to Patti as Claudia and husband Dennis are moving from Birch Lake. Patti and Rick moved to Birch Lake in 1995, and she has been a Birch Barker contributor for many years sharing tasty recipes, word searches and games and Patti-Cam pictures from multiple gatherings. Patti's favorite sections of the Barker are the Birch Lake History and the every popular Funnies. Thank you, Delivery Girl Patti!



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).

THANK YOU to all of our 2025 Barker advertisers! Please check them all out on the BLYC website and support our advertisers.

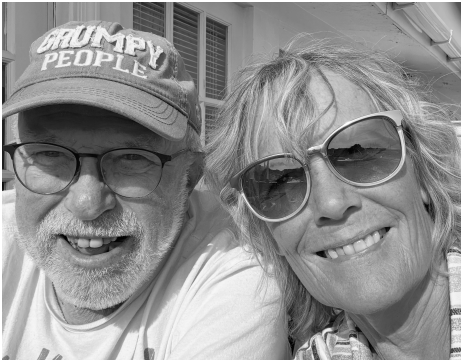
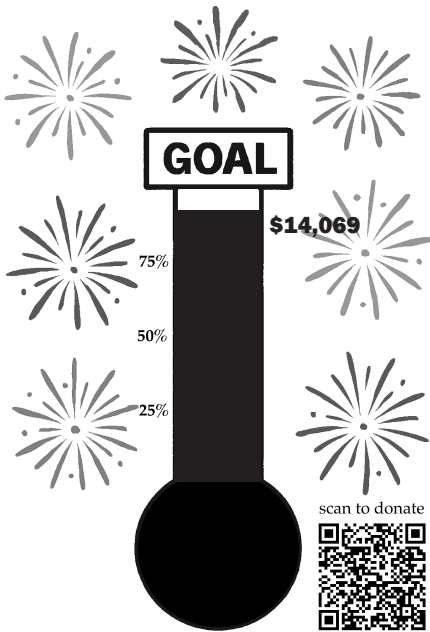


Birch Lake Yacht Club FIREWORKS FUND

Our goal for 2025 is \$16,000

Contribute now at

<https://store.birchlakeyachtclub.com>



"See You Soon" Party!

Please join us for a "See You Soon" party for Dennis and Claudia Phipps at the Yacht Club on July 27, 2025 from 1:00pm to 4:00pm. Details to follow.

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.

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

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

birchbarker1@gmail.com.

To buy an ad or for more info, contact Amber at birchbarker1@gmail.com or 574-315-0227. Advertising rates are posted at

birchlakeyachtclub.com/advertise



Birch Lake Floating Keychains are still available for purchase for \$5.00 each. 100% of proceeds go to the Water Quality Fund. Text or call Jennifer Ball at 574-535-3733 or Cindy Bernaciak at 773-401-9191 to get yours.



2025 BOAT PARADE

Grand Marshals Scott and Holly Troeger led a dozen parade participants around the lake to cheering Birch Lakers on all shores. Our 3-judge panel comprised of Phyllis Rasmussen, Ciara Rasmussen, and Sanya Vitale deliberated thoughtfully to pick this year's Grand Champion Boat for the "Favorite TV Show" theme. And the Winner is..... the DeYoung family with "Spidey and Friends"! The Underwood family was first runner up with "Gilligan's Island" and here are the other category winners: Petty family, "Duck Dynasty"—*Best use of Taxidermy*, Habich family "Lilo and Stich"—*Best dressed pet*, Ball family, "Survivor"—*Best decorated boat*, Hogoboom family, "Bluey"—*Best use of Balloons*, Evans family, "Sons of Liberty"—*Most Patriotic*, Troeger family, "Sponge Bob"—*Best use of special effects (bubbles)*, Dugan family, "Bluey"—*Best visual effect*, Wodark family, "Cops"—*Best theme song*, Sankey family, "Simpsons"—*Best hair design* and finally the Magro family, "The Office"—*best costumes*. A big round of applause to all the family boats in this year's parade and I can let you know that the judges have already picked a theme for next year's parade! This theme will motivate all families to participate either in a boat or on shore. Will start giving hints in future Barkers so you can all start planning ahead. Until then, this is Boat Parade Chair-man Dan Waxman signing off. (thanks to Phyllis Rasmussen for the Chair shirt and the judges' robes and wigs)



Grand Champion: DeYoung Family, "Spidey and Friends"



Grand Marshals Scott and Holly Troeger, and daughter Amy



1st Runner Up: Underwood Family, Gilligan's Island



Best Use of Taxidermy: Petty Family, Duck Dynasty



Best Dressed Pet: Habich Family, Lilo and Stich



Best Decorated Boat: Ball Family, Survivor



Best Use of Balloons: Hogoboom Family, Bluey



Most Patriotic: Evans Family, Sons of Liberty



Best Use of Special Effects (bubbles): Troeger Family, Sponge Bob



Best Visual Effect: Dugan Family, Bluey



Best Theme Song: Wodark Family, Cops



Best Hair Design: Sankey Family, The Simpsons



Best Costumes: Magro Family, The Office



Boat Parade Chair, Dan Waxman, and Judges Phyllis, Sanya, and Ciara



scan for color photos

BLYC ANNUAL LADIES' FUN GOLF OUTING

FRIDAY, JULY 18, 2025

Sauganash Golf Course

9am Tee Off
please arrive no later
than 8:30am

Lunch at Sauganash
following the outing

\$45 REGISTRATION INCLUDES:
Golf, Cart, and Lunch

If you don't golf but would like to
join us at noon for lunch, please
register and pay \$25

All Entries Due by
Sunday, July 13

If you'd like to sponsor a hole, or have questions, please contact either:
Carol McCoy (708-738-3962) or Blair Garceau (574-261-9817)

2025 BLYC Ladies' FUN Golf Outing Registration

\$45 per player or \$25 for lunch only

Team Captain: _____ Player 3: _____

Player 2: _____ Player 4: _____

Please make checks payable to BLYC and bring or mail to:

Carol McCoy
63021 Birch Rd.
Vandalia, MI 49095

OR

Blair Garceau
63542 Birch Rd.
Vandalia, MI 49095

*Individual registrations available.
If you don't have a team, contact Carol
or Blair and we can match you up.

Cass County COA Summer Concert Series

Friday, July 25: *Memphis Underground*

Friday, August 22: *Whistle Pigs*

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!

Food is available from 5:30-7:30pm
Concerts begin at 7:00pm

more info -->



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SPYNOFFS

BLYC 65TH ANNUAL MEN'S GOLF OUTING

FOUR MAN FLORIDA SCRAMBLE

Friday, July 25, 2025

Shotgun Start at **NOON**

Sauganash Country Club
61270 Lutz Rd
Three Rivers, MI

Dinner and awards at Sauganash
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 18

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.**
If you don't have a team, contact John
and he can match you up!



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WATER QUALITY REPORT: VOICES OF BIRCH LAKE

Jennifer Ball asked me to write a water quality article for the Birch Barker. She seemed to think that people would be interested in the personal memories of a now-senior citizen who has been at the lake since early childhood. I sincerely doubt that, but Jennifer is persistent, and I can't risk angering such a good neighbor.

Except for the summer I was born (1956, when Dad was an officer in the Air Force and stationed in California), I've spent every summer since infancy at Birch Lake. My early childhood memories are nearly as fuzzy as my college memories, but one of my earliest recollections is being fascinated by the sunlight sparkling like diamonds on the blue water. It probably reminded me of Uncle Scrooge McDuck's jewel-filled swimming pool in the comic books (Holly says no one under 50 will know who that is).

All through the 1960s and into the 1970s, there were still quite a few unbuilt areas around the lake, especially in the Cove and on the West side. Cottages were smaller and rustic. Utilities were often unreliable. The electricity seemed to go out every time a squirrel sneezed. The few cottages which had telephones were on a party line system where anyone could listen in on others' calls. Septic systems had a nasty habit of not cooperating - usually when guests were expected. Wells and pumps were treated gingerly, and a common expectation was for the males of the family to wash in the lake, not the shower. Many piers had bars of soap and bottles of shampoo stationed at their deep ends for that purpose.

Most power boats were small runabouts with what now seem like laughably small outboard engines. As a kid I remember my dad and a group of his friends, all of whom had been college athletes, water skiing behind a 35hp outboard engine on a little fiberglass cockleshell of a boat. Two of the guys had to go forward on the deck to help the struggling boat plane out, while the skier was dragged half-submerged around the lake.

All through this primitive period, the blue waters of Birch Lake sparkled like diamonds. When I visited friends who lived on other lakes, I would tease them by saying it looked like they had forgotten to flush their lake.

But as time passed there was less open shoreline as new and bigger cottages were built, all with septic systems of more or less reliability. Every year power boats and engines became larger and more powerful. From the mid-1960s to the early 1980s, for example, my family's boats went from a 35hp outboard to a 40hp, to a 55hp, then to a 150hp inboard/outboard, then to a 275hp inboard/outboard. Moreover, most cottages were owned by young families whose kids were out using those boats from morning to night. We would only come ashore to get more boat gas.

About the time I was in college I noticed that the lake was looking tired. At times there was an unwholesome murky tint to the water. This displeased me because I couldn't tease friends about their lakes anymore.

The lake's water quality was at real risk of spiraling downwards to become unsalvageable. Fortunately, Gert Temple made it her mission to save the lake's water quality. Through her impressive dedication and efforts, all the septic systems on the lake were upgraded. That saved the lake for nearly 20 years. The water resumed its blue clarity and sparkled like diamonds again.

Sewers were installed around the lake in 2006. That was a very divisive issue at the lake. Due to the success that Gert Temple had achieved, many questioned the need for sewers right then.

Now, except for Camp Tannadoonah and Lake Park and a lot in the southwest corner, all the shoreline on Birch Lake has dwellings on it, many of which are shoehorned together from lot line to lot line. Power boats are ever larger and more powerful. My ski boat for example has a 330hp inboard engine but it is dwarfed by the powerful engines of some of the new wake surfing boats and even by some pontoon boats' outboard engines.

Do those factors put the lake at risk of another crisis for water quality? Potentially, but I am optimistic. Why? Well, for one thing, most of the houses at the lake are (with a few



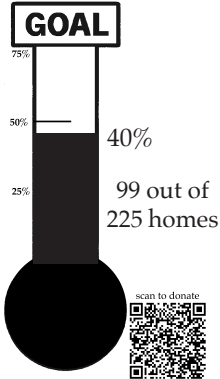
exceptions) not occupied by young families, but by older folk who might only have grandchildren visit on the occasional weekend. So, many of the new big boats only rarely get used intensively, and many of them are just pontoons or tritoons anyway that don't make much of a wake. The rest of the time most of the watercraft here, despite their impressive horsepower, just sit in their lifts or putter around the lake on cocktail cruises.

But the main reason I am optimistic is that Birch Lake has such a great group of lake residents on our water quality committee. These neighbors of ours are experienced and dedicated and they work quietly but tirelessly to monitor and protect our lake.

So, while it is usual for older people to complain about things being worse now than in their remembered past, some things do get better. Back then there were no eagles or osprey at the lake. Back then the county would spray used engine oil on the many dirt roads to keep the dust down. Back then mosquito control meant DDT and spreading a film of gasoline on ponds and ditches so the larvae couldn't breathe.

The water quality at Birch Lake has ebbed and flowed over the years. It is at a good point now. With vigilance, care, and common sense, the blue waters at Birch Lake can continue to sparkle like diamonds in a way that would make Uncle Scrooge McDuck envious. ~Submitted by Scott Troeger

**Birch Lake Yacht Club
WATER QUALITY FUND**
Our goal for 2025 is to have 75% of homes on the lake contribute.
Contribute now at
<https://store.birchlakeyachtclub.com>



Keep Birch Lake Beautiful

Phyllis Rasmussen (west side) has partnered with Birch Lake Water Quality to sell one of a kind Birch Lake gear, and 20% of all proceeds will be donated directly to the Water Quality fund. There are three designs (Gull, Fish, and Turtle), and three garment choices (T-Shirt, Crewneck, and Hoodie).



Fish Design

Gull Design

Turtle Design

Go to
www.keepbirchlakebeautiful.com
to get yours today!

Thank you Coy Jankowski for your beautiful art donation! Thank you to the Birch Lake community for submitting your wonderful photos which are shared on the ordering site. Thank you to everyone involved in this project.

Let's keep our lake clean and beautiful for years to come! This project helps support keeping our earth clean, our lakes clean, and ensuring our waterways are safe for children to swim in! You can make the difference!

Contact Phyllis by phone (574-807-1924) or email (keepbirchlakebeautiful@gmail.com) with any questions or to place an order by phone.

...a little slice of heaven

FLEET CAPTAIN'S CORNER

The weather over the Fourth of July weekend was great! The sailors were able to host all five races, thus completing a full Fourth of July Regatta. Since it has been tradition to count Fourth of July Regatta race results toward the sailing season standings, this effectively doubles the races held for the year.

Friday was supposed to be the first day of the regatta. At the time to call the race, the wind was borderline sail-able, but the radar showed a storm heading our way. Due to this, we didn't sail. Like clockwork, the wind picked up, and nothing materialized. Better safe than sorry.

Saturday the wind was perfect, and it was smooth sailing, pun intended. In the MC Class, Scott Troeger was first in all three races. Second was split three ways between Amber Grundy, Bill Luecht, and Phil Vitale, respectively. Third was split between Amber and Phil two-to-one. Amber had another good showing. Keep up the good work! The results for the sunfish were a little more varied. Rick Russwurm got two firsts and a third. Stewart Spratt had two third places and a second. Amy Troeger got a second and a first, with Scott Sortal rounding everything out with a second. The committee boat polled the sailors after the last race, and there was a general interest in continuing the regatta the next day.

Sunday, the races were postponed until noon due to the pancake breakfast. There were several small pop-up storms on the radar, but I decided to roll the dice and sail. I later heard it had rained at Donnell Lake during the races, but there were no signs of rain here. The wind turned out to be good and strong with some fun gusts. On the second day, Scott and Bill split first and second in the MCs, and Rick and Pete Soldato did the same in the Sunfish. Patrick Welch and Stewart both had two third places in their classes. All in all, it was a wonderful weekend of sailing.

~Fleet Captain Bob Niezgodski



July 5th Sailing
photo credit to Bob King



Stewart Spratt's "out-of-class"
Sunfish Logo

BIRCH LAKE SAILING SCORES

4th of July Regatta Results

	Date Race	5-Jul 7	5-Jul 8	5-Jul 9	6-Jul 10	6-Jul 11	Regatta Score if DNS=last	Regatta Place
MC Scow / Sailor								
Scott Troeger #1489		1	1	1	1	2	6	1
Bill Luecht #1579		4	2	4	2	1	13	2
Patrick Welch #1979		5	4	5	3	3	20	3
Amber Grundy #1173		2	3	3	DNS	DNS	22	4
Phil Vitale #500		3	5	2	DNS	DNS	24	5
Steve Frew #676		6	6	6	4	4	26	6
Sandy Vitale #2159		7	7	7	DNS	DNS	35	7

	Date Race	5-Jul 7	5-Jul 8	5-Jul 9	6-Jul 10	6-Jul 11	Regatta Score if DNS=last	Regatta Place
Sunfish Sailor								
Rick Russwurm		1	1	3	2	1	8	1
Stewart Spratt		3	3	2	3	3	14	2
Amy Troeger		4	2	1	5	4	16	3
Pete Soldato		5	DNS	DNS	1	2	22	4
Bob Niezgodski		7	4	5	4	5	25	5
Scott Sortal		2	5	4	DNS	DNS	25	5
Herb Cleveland		6	DNS	DNS	DNS	DNS	34	7

Key and Scoring Information

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) or DSQ (Disqualified) scores as last place (if 5 boats started the race, you will be scored as 5th place).

DNF, DSQ are not counted toward minimum number of races needed

Season Standings

	Total Points	% Races Finished	Average Points	Season Rank
MC Scow / Sailor				
Scott Troeger #1489	12721	73	1590	1
Bill Luecht #1579	11870	73	1484	2
Phil Vitale #500	13158	82	1462	3
Amber Grundy #1173	13004	82	1445	4
Patrick Welch #1979	15671	100	1425	5
Steve Frew #676	6413	45	1283	6
Sandy Vitale #2159	7356	55	1226	7

	Total Points	% Races Finished	Average Points	Season Rank
Sunfish Sailor				
Rick Russwurm	12565	100	1571	1
Stewart Spratt	11783	100	1473	2
Pete Soldato	4417	38	1472	3
Amy Troeger	7155	63	1431	4
Scott Sortal	4186	38	1395	5
Bill Butler	1369	0	1369	6
Bob Niezgodski	10895	100	1362	7
Herb Cleveland	1225	13	1225	8

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

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CAMP T CORNER

It has been absolutely devastating for us here at Camp T to hear of the destructive flooding happening in Texas, specifically at Camp Mystic. The camp community has always been deeply interconnected, and it is never felt more so than when a tragedy like this occurs. We send our deepest condolences to the families of the campers, camp staff, and everyone else affected by this unimaginable disaster. We have been in contact with one of our staffing agencies, the International Exchange of North America (IENA) to offer to take in international staff displaced by the floods. The American Camp Association has links to ways that you can help, if you are interested, at acacamps.org.

When tragedies like this occur, it can naturally bring worry. For camp staff, it causes us to consider and reevaluate our emergency preparedness procedures. Sending your child to camp requires an enormous amount of trust, and we at Camp T consider the safety of everyone on our property to be our top priority. We'd like to reassure everyone that we have carefully developed, practiced, and regularly reviewed emergency protocols.

Although Camp T is a largely tech-free camp, all of our leadership staff and the nurse carry their phones in case of emergencies. We use these to access the weather forecasts throughout the day, and are notified by the National Weather Service in the case of severe weather. If a

tornado watch is issued or the conditions at camp become otherwise unsafe, members of the leadership team alert staff and the campers they are responsible for to report to the closest of three buildings which have a basement for emergency shelter - Morris Lodge, the Dining Hall, and the Welcome Center.

While sheltering in these buildings, members of the leadership team are in communication with each other and monitoring the weather, while the rest of the staff entertain the campers with games and songs. If the weather worsens, or a tornado warning is issued, we move everyone to the basement shelters. In the case of a loss of power, a generator turns on to power the shower house and the Dining Hall.

During any inclement weather, communication with parents and families is also a priority. The main mode of communication is through text alerts and emails, and we may also post updates on our social media accounts. Updates are given when we move to our safe buildings, to basements, and then when weather conditions improve enough to resume normal activities. The lines of communication are always open for any family members who have additional questions or concerns.

In case of medical emergencies, our nearest hospital is about 15 minutes away in Three Rivers. The Newberg Township fire department is within a ten minute



drive, and they have toured our camp grounds and are familiar with the layout of our property if they are ever called in an emergency.

Please be assured that the camp staff have been well-trained in how to handle these kinds of situations, and the leadership staff have past experience in dealing with severe weather and a multitude of other emergency procedures. We understand the gravity of the responsibility we carry in caring for the children - and staff - at camp and do not take it lightly. Again, our thoughts are with all who have been affected by the tragedy in Texas.

~Miss Meghan at Camp T

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BIRCH LAKE HISTORY: COWEN FAMILY

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

Clifford and Avanelle Cowen were close friends with a group from the First Methodist Church in Mishawaka - Floyd and Ruth Fulmer, Harry and Bernice Hatcher, Lawrence and Ruth Brooke, and Dee and Helen Shewman. The group tent camped together at Birch Lake beginning as early as 1934. For two summers, they all rented "the Domer" cottage on the east side. This would later become Jim and Shirley (Wentworth) Blue's house (E131).

In 1945, the Fulmers purchased a lot at Birch Lake and started building their cottage, "Dunkampin" (W302). Floyd let his friends know he had picked out lots for them too! They drove out to the lake to check them out, and back to South Bend to talk to the owner of the land, Tom Hogan, and bought the lots.

The Cowens had two children, Dick and Carolyn, who were 10 and 7 years old when they started building their cottage at Birch Lake. Dick remembers that the road behind the house was just two dirt tire tracks with grass growing in between. He says you couldn't see the lake from the road because the trees and underbrush were so dense. The shoreline was marshy, and they moved dirt and sand to fill it in and make it possible to walk to the edge of the water.

The Cowens built a two-story cottage in 1946, with a woodburning stove for heat when they visited in the winter. The second story was unfinished at the time, and just had beds upstairs. They called their cottage "Cowen's Cove" (W308) because of the small inlet or "nook" on the north edge of their shoreline. Avanelle was a teacher and had summers off, so they spent the entire summer at the lake each year.



Painting of Cowen's Cove, by Carolyn Cowen McCoy in 1987. Painted from a photograph dated 1947. Dick and his father Clifford are pictured.

Dick recalls swimming at the public beach that was located in the cove, and swimming all the way across the lake to Lazy Lodge. He and his friends fished and biked and waterskiied on the lake, and even built their own waterskis! Dick was friends with Jack and Bob Marsh who lived a few doors down (later owned by the Toths, W320). Jack had the paper route around the lake, and Dick would sub for him when they were on vacation. The paper was dropped off at Lanky's, and they would pick it up and deliver it around the lake on their bikes. Chuck Schott (south side) would bring Barkers over to Dick, and he would walk along the west side and sell them for a dime.

They had a 25HP Johnson motor and the kids skiied behind it! When Dick was in college at Indiana University, they upgraded to a 40HP and he said they would "run it all day" on the lake. Friends from college would visit and they all skiied - even building a 3-man pyramid!

Dick married Peggy Cleland in 1956. After a short honeymoon, they came back to the lake to spend a few days at the cottage. After they were already in bed, his parents and the neighbors all showed up with cake and ice cream to celebrate! Irv Bowers (next door at W307) had a station wagon, and Dick and Peggy rode around the lake on the back tailgate in their pajamas, to the cheers of the neighbors. Dick recalls that when they returned to the cottage to go to bed, someone had snuck inside and tied a cowbell to the underside of their bed! The story even made it into the Cassopolis Vigilant.

Birch lake residents all wondered about all the noise and the parade of cars all sounding their horns like mad Sunday evening, July 22. Well, it was a belling for Richard Cowen and his new wife who was Peggy Cleland. They were married Friday, July 20th and are living at the lake. Congratulations, Dick and Peggy!

Cassopolis Vigilant, August 2, 1956, p. 2

In 1958 Clifford and Avanelle had the cottage insulated, and the upstairs finished with knotty pine, and in 1963 added an upstairs bathroom. In 1966, they retired, sold their home in Mishawaka, and moved to the lake, spending winters in Florida each year.

That same year, Dick and Peggy bought a cottage on the west side (W354). They bought the property from Herm and Bev Kruggel, located where the Rassmussen's garage is today. They stayed at that cottage with their three children, Steven, Stacia, and Bradley until the mid-70s when they moved to Osceola along the river. Dick and Peggy were active in the Birch Lake community for many years. He served as Commodore in 1969, and Peggy was the Secretary for the BLYC.

Dick and Peggy returned to Birch Lake around 1995, buying a house on the west side (W350, where Soldato's live now). They spent most of the year at the lake, and wintered in The Villages in Florida.

Clifford and Avanelle passed down



Dick and the waterski he built from ash as a teenager

their cottage to Dick and his sister Carolyn, and they shared it as a place for their children and grandchildren to visit. After Carolyn passed away in 1997, Dick and Peggy's daughter Stacia and her family bought Carolyn's half of the cottage, and they rented it out to lake visitors. When Stacia's children, Gregory, Elizabeth, and Janelle were teenagers, they sold their half of the cottage back to Dick and Peggy.



Peggy and Dick Cowen, c. 2018

In 2004, Dick and Peggy sold their place farther down the west side and built their new home at W308. They had to cut down two huge oak trees to make way for the new house, and had the trees milled to make flooring for the second floor and stairs. They had planned to save the knotty pine from the upstairs of the original cottage, and use it in the new house, but it was unfortunately lost when the company that was restoring it burned down.

Today, Dick and Peggy's daughter Stacia lives year-round at W308, and Dick visits from Florida each year. Their 6 grandchildren, and 5 great-grandchildren love to visit Birch Lake!

~Dick Cowen and Stacia Cowen Andriano contributed photos and information for this column. More information gathered from Avanelle Cowen's autobiography written in 1975.



Four Generations: Peggy Cowen, daughter Stacia, granddaughter Janelle, and great-granddaughter Elowyn in 2019.

BARKER KIDS OF THE WEEK



Left: cousins Layla Petty and Abby Caplis (north shore)



Right: Abby and Connor Caplis (north shore)

Cove Swim Party compliments of the Lily Pad from our new neighbors, Tom and Rose Eslinger

So many great kid of the week submissions for the holiday weekend! Want your kid to be a Barker kid of the week? Send your photos to birchbarker1@gmail.com



Harvey Reckelhoff, son of Paige Dufour, grandson of Dave Dufour, and great grandson of Sue and Duffy Dufour



Throwback to July 4, 1997. Kyle Bernaciak (east shore), Spencer Rheinhardt (grandson of the Zesingers, east shore), Phyllis Rasmussen (west shore), and Calvin King (north shore).



Grandchildren of Dennis and Peggy Geik, Nora from Indianapolis, IN and Liam and Evie visiting from Phoenix, AZ



The twins Summer and Scarlett celebrated their 6th birthday on the 4th of July! They invited cousins and a friend for a tea party. Grandchildren of Mark and Karen Evans (west shore), grandchildren of Dave and Terry Carroll (west shore) and daughter of Andy and Lori Snider (cove)

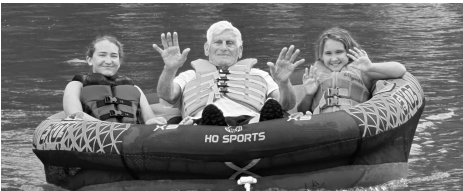


Grandchildren of Mark and Karen Evans



Caden William King (Grandson of Bob & Leslie, north shore) had a lovely time visiting Birch Lake on his annual visit.

Wouldn't be the 4th of July without a Soldato Family Reunion on Birch Lake! Here are the 10 grandkids from across the country.



At 88 years young, Jim Foos (cove) is still enjoying participating in water sports behind the boat! Pictured here with his great-grandchildren Drew & Madelyn Condle and Abigail & Lindsay Anderson.

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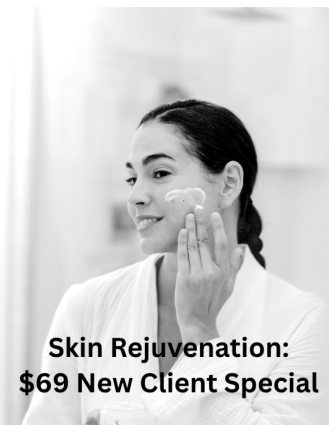
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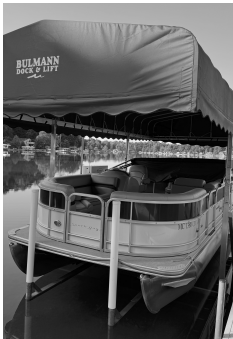
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Sad Sunfish

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Errands Services. Hi all! My name is Ruby Sandler, I am 16 years old and live on the North Shore. I am offering a service for the summer that includes picking up to-go order groceries from Martin's (or any other store that may offer that around this area), and bringing them back to your home. I will also be available to run errands such as taking things to Goodwill, watering plants when you are out of town, walking/checking on pets, etc. I will be available 4 days a week: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday from 9am - 4pm, excluding the week of July 26th - August 3rd. I will be available until middle of August. If anyone is interested, feel free to contact me at 574-261-0121.

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.

LOST

LOST: Black seat cover from our boat on the North Shore. Please contact or return to Roger Falk at (269) 217-9291.

FOUND

Tava Paddle

Pick up from the end of Bernaciak's pier (east side #157)



Birkenstock Sandal

Found floating along the west shore on the Tuesday before 4th of July. Call Niezgodski's to claim (269) 476-9317.



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EMERGENCY HEART DEFIBRILLATOR (AED) locations on Birch Lake

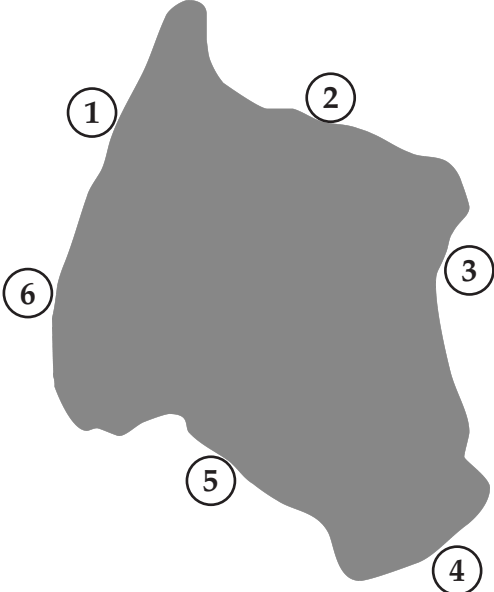
There are six (6) automated external defibrillator units (AEDs) on Birch Lake. The boxes that contain these devices are located at the following locations:

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- 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
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- 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.
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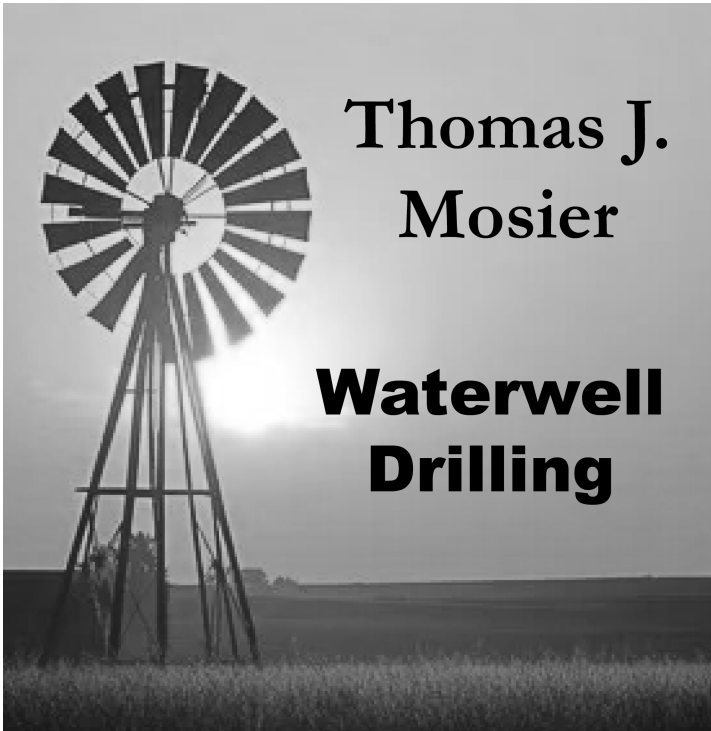
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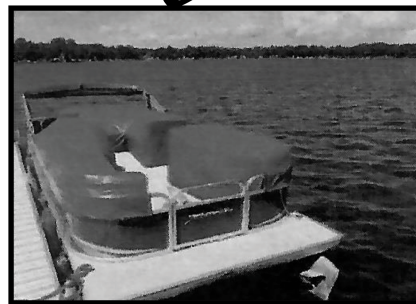
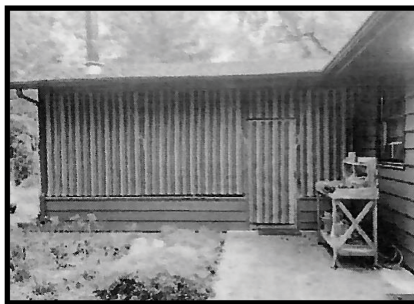


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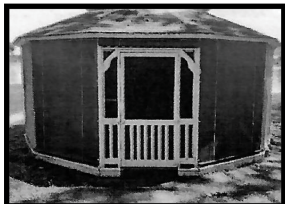
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- Monitoring water quality, which helps keep Birch Lake clean, and improves our ability to respond swiftly to treat and eradicate invasive species.
- Maintaining the Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) around the lake.
- Producing and distributing 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.

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\$ _____ Fireworks fund

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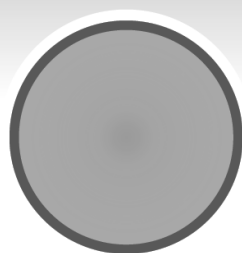
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269-445-8877

paul@thelakelife.com