



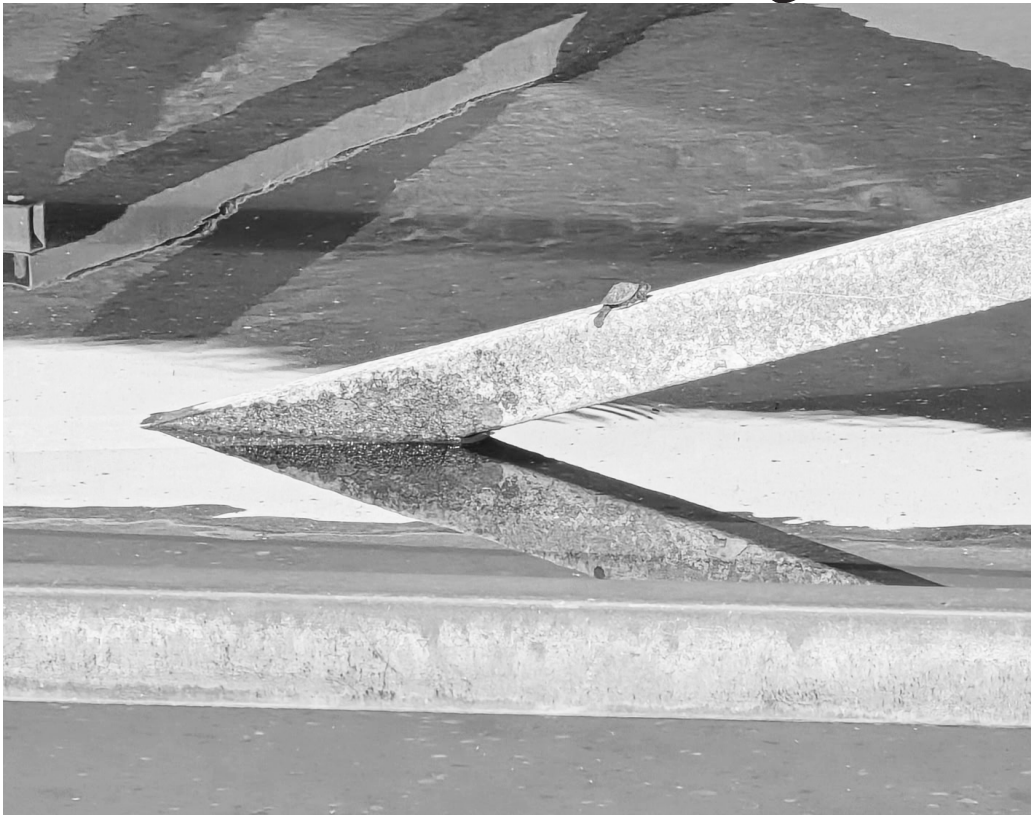
BIRCH *Barker*

vol. 78 issue 3

Weekend of
June 6
2026

The official publication of the Birch Lake Yacht Club

BirchLakeYachtClub.com



Tiny Turtle! Turtles are hatching in front of the King's house. The babies are about the size of a quarter. Photo credit to Bob King.

2026 BIRCH LAKE CALENDAR

June

- 6 - Trivia Night
- 10 - Card / Game Night
- 13 - Spaghetti Dinner
- 27 - BLYC Board Meeting, 9am
- 27 - Kidz Regatta

July

- 3 - Port-a-Pit Fundraiser
- 4 - Boat Parade, 3pm
- 4 - Fireworks
- 4-6 - Fourth of July Regatta
- 5 - Pancake Breakfast, 8:30-11am
- 15 - Card / Game Night
- 24 - Ladies Golf Outing

August

- 1 - BLYC Board Meeting
- 1 - Corn and Sausage Roast
- 19 - Card / Game Night
- 22 - BLYC Board Meeting, 9am
- 22 - Homeowner's Assoc., 10am
- 22 - Fall Dinner
- 26 - Women's Style Show

2026 BLYC Directors

Officers

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

Directors

John Ball (E)
 Dave Carroll (W)
 Barb Cassidy (E)
 Ed Chester (E)
 Tim Cole (H)
 Liz Cover (E)
 Sue Davis (E)
 Julie Dickey (E)
 Ronni Eshleman (S)
 Bernie Garceau (E)
 Amber Holleman (E)
 Deb Hall (C)
 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

It's prime time for the BLYC's 2026 social events, which are now in full swing! Next up is Trivia Night at the clubhouse this Saturday night; head on over and join the fun!

The Commodore / Vice Commodore Party opened the clubhouse season last weekend. The clubhouse was decked out in red, white, and blue for America's 250th birth year, and tables were spread with a delicious array of appetizers and desserts. Bob Niezgodski welcomed happy Birch Lakers from behind the bar, while filling in for Phil and Sandy. Generous donors contributed ample supplies for the season. Please see the photos in this Birch Barker.

Unfortunately, nobody could remember how to play music on the sound system from a phone. But the cloud had a silver lining. With no music and a medium-sized crowd, we were surprised to find that everyone could actually hear and understand each other, and there was lively chatter everywhere. For example, Bob Palm and I were able to find out that at age 16 respectively, we each bought a car manufactured in 1930; that we had each bought a Birch Lake cottage in 2006, after looking at the cottage that the other guy bought that same year; and that when we are in Florida in the winter, we are not far apart.

So, the sound system mix-up accidentally gave us great acoustics for the evening. Maybe some decent sound-dampening panels could do the same, even when there is loud music and a bigger crowd. Bernie Garceau recently shared some information about acoustic panels, and this looks like a good topic for the next BLYC Board meeting. Many thanks to Bob Niezgodski and Jackie Frew their great work in setup and cleanup for the event. All in all, it was a very happy and enjoyable evening.

A lot of us are dog and animal lovers, and are hoping that someone will step up to chair the Pooch and Pet Parade later this summer. If this might be you, please contact Ronni Eshleman. Also, as a friendly reminder to dog owners, please be courteous to neighbors by preventing prolonged barking. Thank you!

Congratulations to Bud Hall for his hole-in-one last week at Indian Hills, in the "highly competitive" BLYC men's golf group. Bud used his DRIVER on the North course, 6th hole, 138 yard par 3. (Don't laugh, we're not as young as we used to be! And who am I to talk? I have never made a hole-in-one.) Thank you also to this same Bud Hall for the excellent job he did painting our house, which he finished recently. And thank you to Carla Chester for sharing the formula for the paint color Bud used.

250 Years ago this week in US History:

On June 7, 1776, Richard Henry Lee introduced a motion in Congress to declare independence from Britain. *continued...* Congress



The 2026 Birch Barker is
 generously sponsored by Culver's.
 See ad on page 3

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

Email items to birchbarker1@gmail.com.

For editorial concerns, contact editor Amber Holleman 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 Comm. Steve Frew at stephenbfrew@gmail.com or 239-315-1177.

NEW DEADLINE for submissions is 11AM on the **MONDAY** of the week before publication.

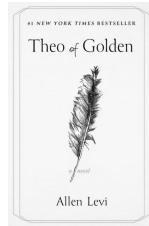
EVENTS

formed a committee to draft a Declaration of Independence, and that responsibility was assigned to Thomas Jefferson, then 33 years old.

~ Commodore Steve Frew

Book Club

The first book club meeting of 2026 will be on Tuesday, June 23, hosted by Ronni Eshleman. The book will be *Theo of Golden*. Any questions, or if you'd like to join in the fun, contact Jackie Frew: seetall8@gmail.com or call/text 708-285-2999.




Ladies Weekly Golf

This year we tee off on Thursday 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).

Your Barker Newsies

The Barker delivery kids gathered together last weekend with our delivery overlord Ron Niezgodski. We deliver your weekly Barker right to your home rain or shine!





June 27, 2026

1pm at the Caplis home, 14901 Birch North Shore Drive, on the north side of the lake. Bring your sailboat and/or your kids! BLYC Sailors will give kids rides.

Everyone must bring and wear a Personal Flotation Device (PFD / Life Jacket). If anyone has questions, feel free to contact me at rjniezgodski@gmail.com, or look me up in the directory and give me a call.

Reservations optional - call or text 574-532-6919.

TRIVIA NIGHT

Grab your FRIENDS NEIGHBORS FAMILY ? and come to

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.

<p>WHEN: SATURDAY, JUNE 6TH DOORS OPEN AT 6:30</p> <p style="text-align: center;">TRIVIA BEGINS PROMPTLY AT 7PM!</p>	<p>WHERE: BIRCH LAKE YACHT CLUB</p>	<p>BRING:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Your own drinks A dish to share (either an appetizer or dessert) Paper and pen Your wallet (for 50/50 raffle and to buy mulligans – good for free answers!)
--	---	---

BLAIR GARCEAU (269-475-9862) ⚡ **QUESTIONS?** ⚡ **SUE WILLIAMS** (269-298-2839)
contact

Spaghetti Dinner

Saturday, June 13
→ 5:00 pm – 7:00 pm ←

Join us for a delicious evening at the **Birch Lake Yacht Club**

Enjoy spaghetti with choice of homemade meat sauce, alfredo sauce, or marinara sauce (limited)
Salad, bread, dessert, and lemonade or iced tea

Bring your family, friends, and appetite for a fun community dinner night.

	<p>No tickets needed. Pay at the door:</p> <table style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 20px;"></td> <td>Adults</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$15.00</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td>Children 10 and under</td> <td style="text-align: right;">\$10.00</td> </tr> </table>		Adults	\$15.00		Children 10 and under	\$10.00
	Adults	\$15.00					
	Children 10 and under	\$10.00					



Join us for a delicious Nelson's Port-A-Pit fundraiser and treat yourself to some amazing BBQ while supporting a great cause!

Preorders are now open for mouthwatering options including:

	1/2 CHICKEN	\$10.00
	PORK CHOPS	\$10.00
	RIBS	\$11.00
	POTATOES	\$4.00

SCAN TO PLACE YOUR ORDER!



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<https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/ticketing/nelsons-port-a-pit-fundraiser>

on Friday, July 3, 2026, between 11:00 AM and 2:00 PM.

★ **Please note that this is a preorder-only event, so be sure to secure your meal in advance!** ★

ODDS AND ENDS

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.



Guest Newsies

Camp Eberhart alumni traveling from Texas (Nancy Schoenbucher) and California (Chari Ford) to help Barker delivery boy Dan Waxman deliver last week Barker!



NEW BARKER DEADLINE

Our printer has notified us that we need to send in the final version of the Barker by Monday at noon in order to have it ready for pickup at the same time we've picked up in the past. As a result, **the new deadline for Barker submissions is 11am on Mondays.** Contributions can be emailed to

birchbarker1@gmail.com.

Regarding Buoys

A notice from the Cass County Sheriff's office was recently shared online regarding the placement of buoys in the lake. The notice references Michigan Rule R.281.1103, titled Revocable Marker Permits. Under this rule, "A person shall not place buoys, markers or aids to navigation, except mooring buoys and buoys for marking fish nets or fishing devices, in any waters of the state unless a permit granting authority to do so has been issued by the department or the United States coast guard." Buoys placed to mark swim areas are not allowed unless a permit has been obtained. For the record, the two buoys to mark the Camp swim area have the proper permits.

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.

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.



Our goal for 2026 is \$26,000
Contribute now at
<https://tinyurl.com/BLYCfireworks>



THANK YOU to all of our 2026 Barker advertisers! Please check them all out on the BLYC website and support our advertisers. The Birch Barker is delivered **free** to all Birch Lake residents because the advertising revenue covers all of the printing costs, website hosting, and our new membership platform. Publication and distribution is all managed by volunteers.



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Bartender Bob Niezgodski



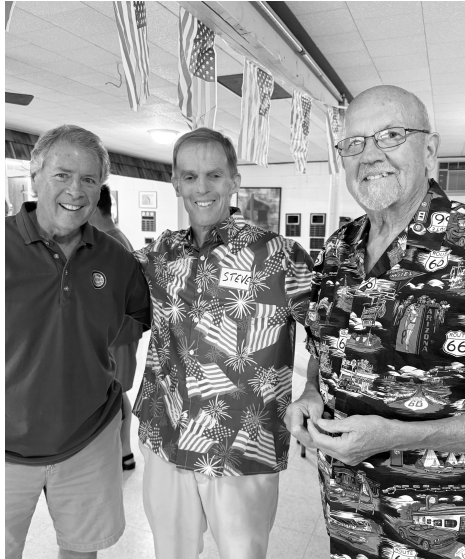
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Steve and Jackie Frew



Jeff Runser, Pat Williams, Bob Palm



John Ball, Steve Frew, Bud Hall



Carol McCoy, Sue Williams, Ronni Eshleman, Carolyn Palm



Deb Runser, Chris Ball



Barb Cassady, Deb Hall, Holly Troeger



Scott Troeger, Tom Cassady



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Katha Machalleck, Pat Welch, Cassie Boemi, Mike Machalleck



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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.

NEW in 2026!

We are excited to introduce a new membership platform this year for BLYC memberships! This platform – called JoinIt – allows us to take online membership payments, collect donations, and take payments for events like the Spring or Fall Dinner. JoinIt also gives us an online directory that is only accessible to current BLYC members. It's entirely up to you what information you want to put into the directory to be shared with other BLYC members.



Scan here to go to Join It

When you get to the JoinIt page, **make sure to click the blue "JOIN" button under the membership type you're interested in.** Don't click log in at the top right of the page, because you won't be in the system if you haven't joined yet.

You can also make donations to the BLYC online. We are using a platform for donations called Zeffy that allows nonprofits to accept payments with no fees, but they automatically select a donation to Zeffy on the checkout screen. If you choose to pay online with the QR code, **you can avoid paying any credit card fees by choosing "other" from the dropdown menu and entering \$0 in the box.**

You can also mail in a paper form:

<p>Membership Fees</p> <p>\$ _____ BLYC member dues (\$50 per year)</p> <p>\$ _____ Associate member dues (\$15 per year) (non lake residents)</p> <p>\$ _____ Homeowners Association (\$10 per year)</p> <p>\$ _____ Sailing Fees (\$15 per year)</p> <p>\$ _____ Water Quality donations</p> <p>Donations</p> <p>\$ _____ General Fund</p> <p>\$ _____ AED Fund</p> <p>\$ _____ Barker Donations</p> <p>\$ _____ Building Fund</p> <p>\$ _____ Fireworks Fund</p> <p>\$ _____ Safety Fund</p> <p>\$ _____ Water Quality / Milfoil Program</p> <p>\$ _____ Other Donations (please specify: _____)</p> <p>\$ _____ TOTAL CONTRIBUTION</p>	<p>Make checks payable to: BLYC and mail to: Deb Spratt, Treasurer 18100 Farmington Hills Dr South Bend, IN 46637</p>
	<p>or pay online at https://app.joinit.com/o/blyc/</p>
	<p>Name _____</p> <p>Lake Address _____</p> <p>Phone _____</p> <p>Email _____</p>



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stephenbfrew@gmail.com

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Treasurer

Deb Spratt (N)
debspratt@comcast.net

Secretary

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Fleet Captain

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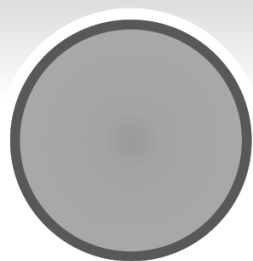
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Dan Waxman (E) 317-506-1680
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Patrick Welch (S) 574-536-7344
patrick.welch2017@gmail.com
Water Quality Committee Chair

Sue Williams (S) 269-476-8886
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2026 BIRCH LAKE DIRECTORY

Every two years, we publish a new Birch Lake Directory. In 2026, BLYC members will also have access to the online directory through Join It, our new online member portal.

If you would like to update the information that is published in the printed directory, you can submit the new information by scanning the QR code (this is the preferred method to update!).



or by mailing the printed form to:

Amber Holleman
63250 Birch Rd
Vandalia, MI 49095

Please indicate on the form which information you consent to being shared in the printed and online directories.

IMPORTANT NOTE: The JoinIt online directory is ONLY available to current, paid, BLYC members.

If you do not submit an update by **June 30, 2026**, the printed directory will contain the same information that was in the 2024 printed directory. The online directory will contain ONLY name, lake address, and cottage number.

If you have questions about the directory or the information to be shared, please email birchbarker1@gmail.com

BLYC 2026 Directory Update

Cottage number: _____ Lake Address: _____

Last name(s): _____

First name(s): _____

Off lake address (if applicable): _____

Phone #1 _____ Name for this phone # _____

Phone #2 _____ Name for this phone # _____

Email address(es) _____

Children's names: _____

Consent to Share Information in the Directory

	Printed Directory	Online Directory
You may share ALL of the information above	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
You may share NONE of the information except name, lake address, and cottage number	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
You may share my / our phone number(s)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
You may share my / our email address(es)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
You may share my / our off-lake address	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
You may share my / our children's names	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



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WATER QUALITY REPORT: BE AN ANNOYANCE

Issues with runoff. Unanchored soil leading to dirt plumes across the lake. Treating invasive cattails. Starry Stonewort in many areas. Fish die-offs. Discussions on dredging costs at \$10,000 just for evaluations needed to apply for a permit. Invasive carp issues. Treating about 70 acres on the lake twice a year for milfoil..."

These are just some of the issues raised by other lakes in the 2026 MLSA regional meeting, held in April. These are lakes in Cass County. Many are struggling. But Birch Lake isn't one of them thanks to your donations to the Water Quality Fund and the committee's diligence in overseeing the well-being of its waters.

However, there are only two types of people who think you can let your guard down:

- 1) Those who are wrong.
- 2) Those who are about to be wrong.

Because conditions can change in a heartbeat – and they will. For instance, what was once a small area of milfoil that needed to be treated 3 years ago has grown to three small areas. It would have been a massive problem had it been ignored or mistreated. Purple loosestrife hasn't been eradicated and probably never will be. Constant identification and removal are paramount. Starry Stonewort is in the millpond and could be in the lake if not monitored. The list goes on...

As you can see, we need your donations every year to cover expenses and create a war chest to combat the inevitable. What's the inevitable, you ask? Read paragraph one again.

As in past years, the committee will use the Barker to report on the state of the lake, specific testing results, new and proposed boat safety regulations along with "feel good" stories from lake residents who reflect on the history, beauty and wonderful memories our cherished lake bestows.

In the meantime, please support our efforts. Lead by example – donate to the water quality fund then ask your neighbor on the left and your neighbor on the right to do the same. As Mark Twain said, "Few things are harder to put up with than the annoyance of a good example". Be a great example. Be an annoyance.

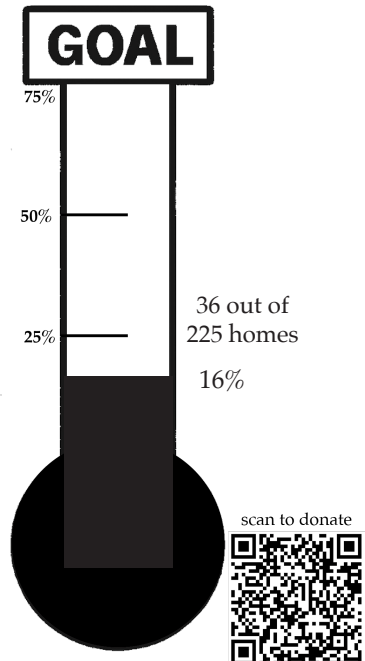
Your Water Quality Committee is dedicated to monitoring, protecting and improving the water quality of Birch Lake, and all who enjoy its waters. We are committed to responsible stewardship for the waters that sustain our property values, our community and make possible the recreational and environmental heritage we are all proud to share. Please join us with your financial commitment today.

Birch Lake Yacht Club WATER QUALITY FUND

Our goal for 2026 is to have 75% of homes on the lake contribute.

Contribute now at

<https://store.birchlakeyachtclub.com>



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.



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FLEET CAPTAIN'S CORNER: NO RACES IN MAY

No sailing in May this year, which is typical. The wind forecast was iffy, but it turned out to be sailable early. I doubt if we could have had three races. In any event, not enough sailboats were ready to sail yet to meet the three-sailboat minimum to host a race. Talked to a few sailors, and I am pretty hopeful that we will have enough sailors ready for next weekend to hold the races. Crossing my fingers that the weather cooperates next Sunday and we can start June off strong!

In other sailing news, we scheduled the **Don Harman Kidz Regatta** earlier in the season this year. It will be Saturday, June 27th at 1 PM. Tom and Megan Caplis are hosting the event again at their home on the North Shore. There is no need to know how to sail. If the wind is good, the sailors will take the kids out in their sailboats to experience a sailboat race and teach them a little about sailing. If you have kids or grandkids, be sure to put it on your calendar. It's a great event for the kids to meet other kids around the lake and make new friends. Part of the idea of hosting the event earlier is so the kids have an earlier opportunity to meet new kids around the lake and maybe make friends for the summer.

~Fleet Captain Bob Niezgodski, rniezgodski@gmail.com

Sundays are SAILING DAYS!
Races typically start at 11am
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CAMP T CORNER: STAFF TRAINING

While campers won't arrive for a couple more weeks, camp is already buzzing with activity as our summer staff have arrived for Staff Training Week. Before we can welcome over 1200 campers for another unforgettable summer, our counselors, activity instructors, and administrative staff spend two intensive weeks preparing for the important responsibility of caring for campers.

Our camp staff can't simply show up and start leading activities! Our goal is to ensure that every staff member is prepared to provide a safe, fun, and meaningful experience for every camper who comes to Camp T.

One of the most important components of training is learning camp safety and emergency procedures. Staff members review plans for everything from severe weather and waterfront emergencies to medical situations and fire drills. We practice these procedures so that staff know exactly what to do should an emergency arise. While we hope never to need many of these skills, preparation and practice are essential parts of creating a safe camp environment.

Staff also spend time learning how to lead activities effectively. Whether they are teaching archery, arts and crafts, nature, swimming, sailing, or sports, our counselors learn techniques for keeping campers engaged, building skills, and making activities both fun and educational. Camp activities are about

much more than simply filling time - they are opportunities for young people to discover new interests, gain confidence, and develop friendships.

Another major focus of the week is learning how to work with children and manage camper behavior. Our staff learn positive behavior management strategies that emphasize relationship-building, clear expectations, and helping campers develop problem-solving skills. We want camp to be a place where children feel supported while also learning responsibility, independence, and respect for others.

Just as important as learning skills is building relationships among the staff themselves. Camp is a team effort, and staff members need to trust and support one another throughout the summer. During training week, new and returning staff get to know each other, develop teamwork skills, and build the strong sense of community that will carry them through the busy summer season.

We are especially excited to welcome two outstanding guest trainers this week. On Wednesday, nationally recognized team-building expert Dr. Jim Cain will spend the day leading staff through a variety of experiential learning and team-development activities. Dr. Cain works with schools, camps, businesses, and organizations around the world, helping groups build communication, trust, and collaboration skills. He has published a number of books on teamwork and




teambuilding, and this is the second time he has visited Camp T to help train our staff.


Then on Friday, Amanda Raines will provide certification training in Youth Mental Health First Aid. This program helps our staff identify, understand, and respond to signs of mental health challenges in our youth participants. The training equips our staff with valuable tools to better support campers' emotional well-being and connect them with appropriate resources when needed.

By the time campers arrive, our staff will have spent countless hours learning, practicing, and preparing. Staff Training may happen behind the scenes, but it is one of the most important parts of the entire summer. The investment we make in our staff today helps create the safe, supportive, and memorable camp experiences that campers will enjoy all season long. We have many new and returning faces, and we're all excited to get started!

~Miss Amber

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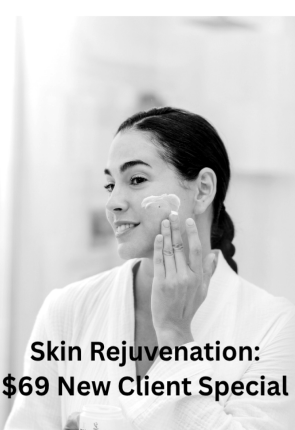


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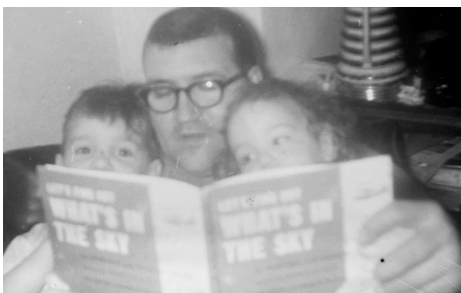
BIRCH LAKE HISTORY: THE WHITEMAN FAMILY

Editor's Note: This season in the Barker, we plan to again 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

Ron Whiteman's connection to Birch Lake began around 1971 when his parents, Dick and Ida Whiteman, were introduced to the lake by George and Rosemary Varga. Rosemary played organ in a band alongside Dick, who played drums. Dick and Ida had 5 children - Randy, Rick, Ron, Ilona, and Ileana.

While the family was building their lake house, Dick was gradually losing his sight due to glaucoma. He gave the kids a choice: stay in town or move permanently to the lake. The decision was made to sell the house in town and relocate to Birch Lake full-time in 1973, just as Ron was beginning sixth grade.

Living at the lake year-round came with its challenges. The kids attended school in Constantine, which meant an hour-long bus ride each morning and a forty-five-minute ride home. They had to walk to the public landing to catch the bus, regardless of the weather.



Dick reading to Ron and Ilona, c. 1966

One of Ron's favorite stories involves his father after he had gone blind. A devoted smoker of Swisher Sweet cigars, he discovered one day that he had run out. While the kids were at school, he hopped on Ron's brother's minibike and headed for Tom's Garage to buy more. Returning home, he was pulled over by a Cass County sheriff's deputy who assumed he was intoxicated. When the officer discovered his driver's license had expired four years earlier and asked why, Dick calmly replied, "Because I'm blind." The deputy was left wondering how he would explain to a judge that he had pulled over a blind man for crossing the centerline.



Dick and Ida Whiteman

Ron recalls that when he was growing up, everyone knew everyone. If one of the kids even considered doing something they shouldn't, word would travel quickly and their parents would hear about it before they even made it home. The lake community functioned like an extended family, with neighbors helping one another through everything from everyday challenges to major snowstorms.

One such event was the legendary Blizzard of 1978. Snow began falling on a Wednesday and continued until residents were effectively trapped for ten days. Ron remembers that the east side of the lake was plowed out a day before they did on the south. Like many teenagers, he and his brothers found ways to entertain themselves, climbing the hill near the landing and intentionally triggering avalanches to dump even more snow onto the road. He also remembers helping shovel out Rosemary Varga's home, where drifts had reached an astonishing twelve feet high.

Even after losing his sight, Dick continued performing with his band. Many of Ron's high school dates followed a familiar pattern: pick up his date, drive his father to a performance, spend the evening at a movie, then return later to bring his father home. Their band often provided the entertainment for Yacht Club events like the Fall Dinner.

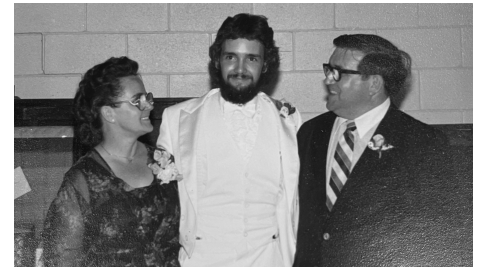


Dick Whiteman with his band

At age fifteen, Ron began working for John and Dorothy Parnell on the west side of the lake, maintaining their home and property. What started as a summer job lasted twenty years! The relationship grew into something much deeper than employment. When Ron was twenty-five, the Parnells flew Ron and his wife Staci to Florida so they could drive one of the couple's cars back to Michigan. A few years later, John called Ron in for what seemed like a serious conversation. After praising Ron for his hard work and loyalty, John surprised him by giving him a completely unexpected and incredibly generous gift.

Ron married Staci on Labor Day weekend in 1983, during a summer when three of the Whiteman siblings were married within a span of two

months. Ron and Staci spent their first weeks together living at the lake before moving to Constantine later that fall. Birch Lake never stopped calling them home. On December 20, 1989, during yet another blizzard, Ron and Staci moved back to the lake permanently.



Ida, Ron, and Dick on Ron and Staci's wedding day, 1983

The Whiteman family's story also reflects a rich heritage stretching far beyond Birch Lake. Ron's father's family traces its roots to the Bristol, Tennessee area. Family history tells of an ancestor, Paul Whiteman, who crossed the Delaware River with George Washington on Christmas eve during the Revolutionary War. According to family records, he lost his saddlebags during one of the crossings and later received compensation from the fledgling United States government.

On his mother's side, the family descends from the Vandenbosch family of Belgium. Ron's grandmother was a young girl when World War I began. Family stories tell of German troops confiscating their cow and soldiers begging for food. Ron's great-grandmother reportedly chased hungry soldiers away with a meat cleaver, insisting there was barely enough food for her own children. Remarkably, Ron still possesses that same meat cleaver today.

More than 50 years after first coming to Birch Lake, the Whiteman family has become a four-generation lake family. Ron and Staci's son Ian was born in 1991, and their daughter Ashleigh followed in 1996. Both now have children of their own. Their oldest grandchild was born on Ron and Staci's thirty-fifth wedding anniversary.



Dick with his Grandson Ian, 1991

1980 Fall Dinner Recap in the Barker

WOW !!! Did we all have FUN at the YACHT CLUB DANCE Saturday night !! And what a grand assortment of goodies showed up, making it necessary for us to go back many times to replenish our plates -- we had to try them all, didn't we ?

I would like to thank the following people who helped make it such a success: The John Machallecks, Judy Olson, The John Browns, the Frank Horvaths, Sally Everett, Roy Henderson, Dennis Tudor, Dave Anthony, Dick Whiteman and his swinging Combo and all thr people who pitched in to help clean up after the dance. And then a great big THANKS to all of you who came to enjoy the dance, for it would have been in vain without you.

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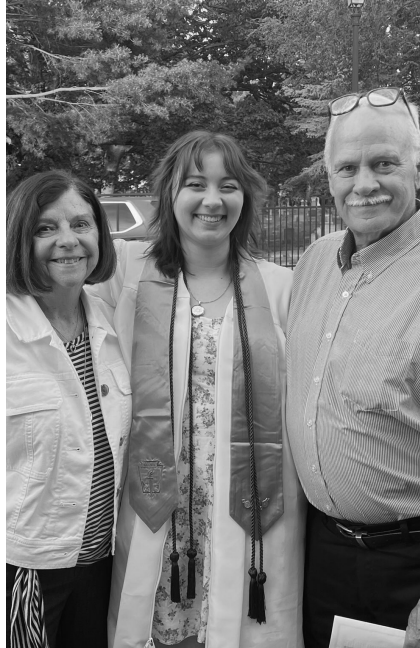


Addi's first fish ever! Large mouth bass off grandma and grandpa O's pier on the east side! Submitted by Gary Odenwald.



Temple / Kuhn grandkids (west shore)

Emily Snider, granddaughter of Tom and Vickie Rogers (cove). Emily graduated from Marian High School, Mishawaka. Emily will be attending Purdue University this fall.



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



First invasion of grandkids complete. Couldn't have picked a better week. Bruce and Joanna Scholes, grands of Jill and Ray Scholes (south shore)



Robinson Hartman boys (south side) and friends after prom



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EMERGENCY HEART DEFIBRILLATOR (AED) locations on Birch Lake

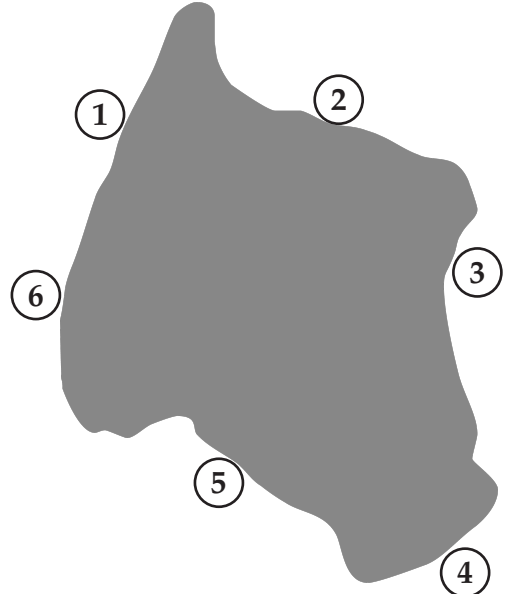
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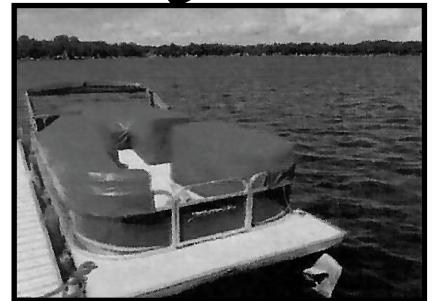
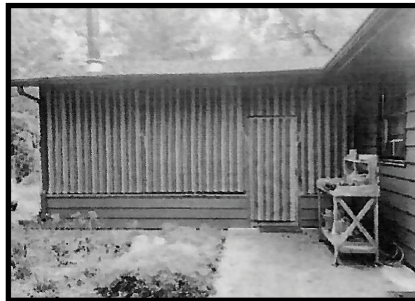


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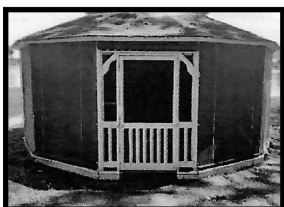
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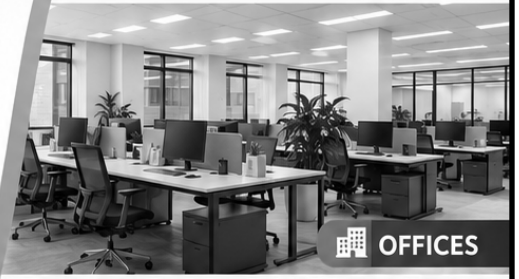
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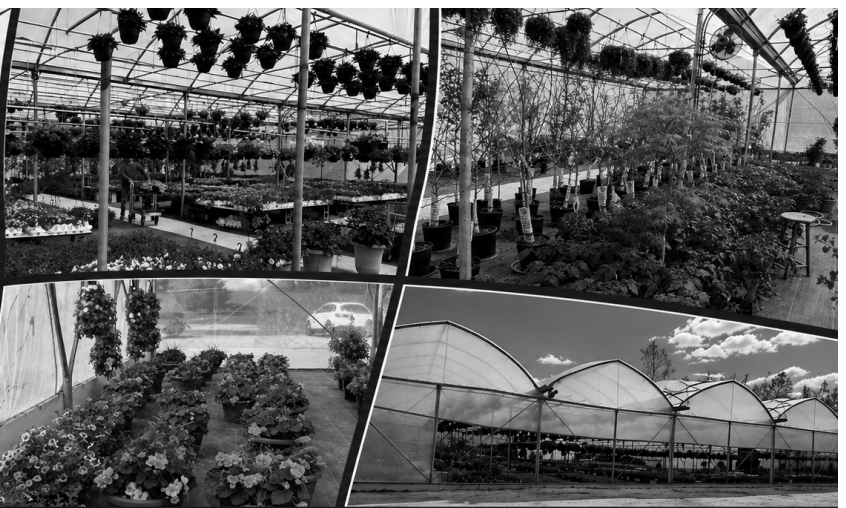
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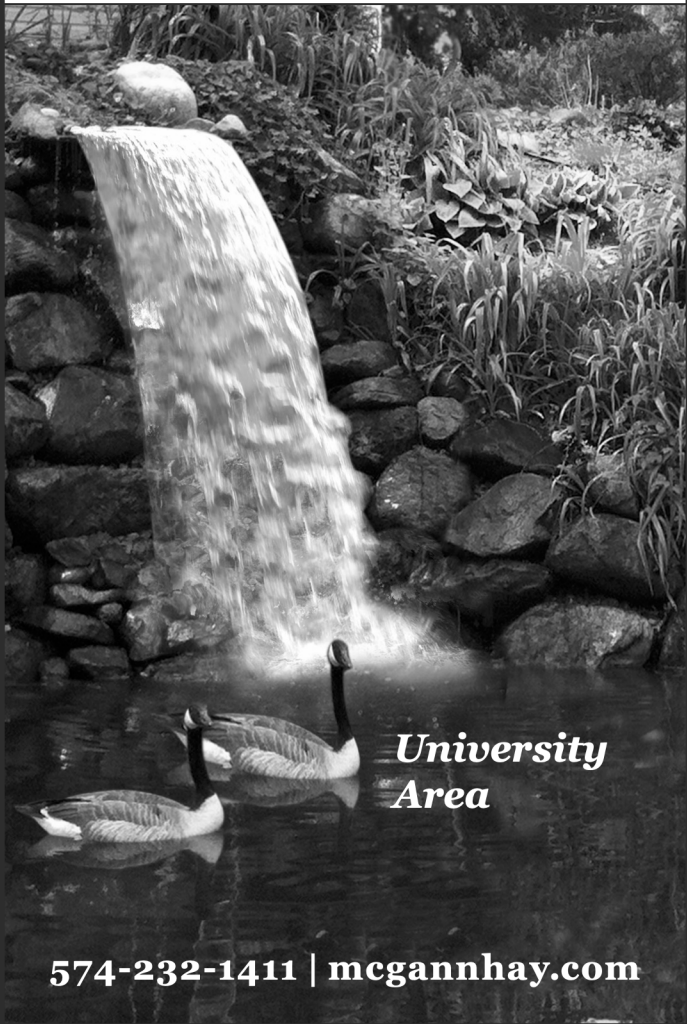
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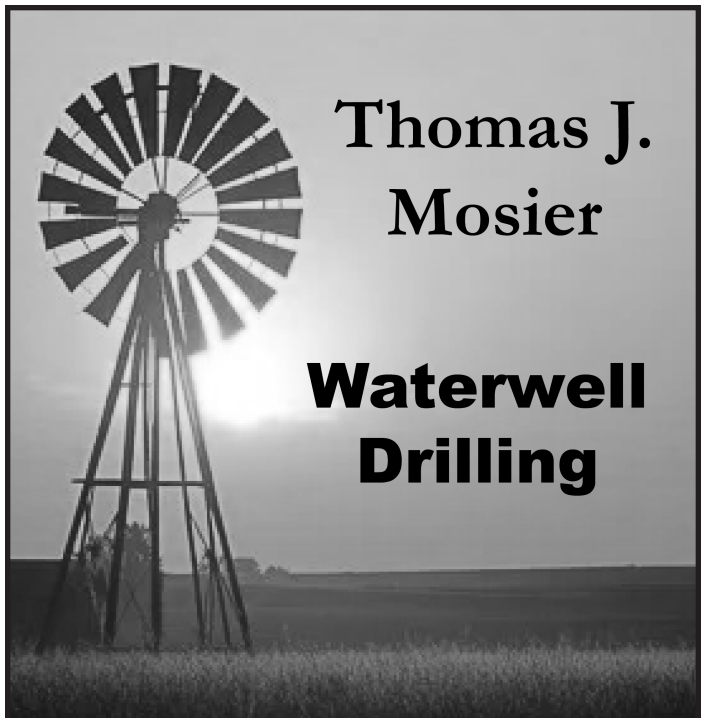
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