

BIRCH *Barker*

vol. 78 issue 5

Weekend of
June 20
2026

The official publication of the Birch Lake Yacht Club

BirchLakeYachtClub.com



First Card and Game Night of the year on June 10th. Back row: Jackie Frew, Sue Davis, Ray Scholes, Terry Carroll, Dave Carroll, Jill Scholes, Doug Hogoboom. Front row: Bob Bender, Donna Hogoboom, Tim Burchell. Not pictured: Steve Frew.

2026 BIRCH LAKE CALENDAR

June

27 - BLYC Board Meeting, 9am
27 - Kidz Regatta, noon-3pm

July

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

August

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

September

5 - 6 - Labor Day Regatta

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 Cassady (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

Summer officially arrives on Sunday, June 21st. I always remember that date, because it's Jackie's birthday. I just can't remember how old she is right now - somewhere around 23, I think.

Ten card sharps and one rube (ahem) gathered for some friendly competition at the clubhouse recently, thanks to the efforts of Card and Game Night co-chairs Sue Davis, Donna Hogoboom and Dave Hogoboom. Please see the photo in this Barker. The games of choice that evening were euchre and 65. Snacks were provided, it was a little noisy and a lot of fun, and everybody is looking forward to the next one on Wednesday, July 15 at 6:30. So come on over!

Many thanks to co-chairs Deb Spratt and Peggy Geik, who brought back the beloved Spaghetti Dinner last Saturday. A happy crowd of about 100 savored a delicious spaghetti feast that featured your choice of meat sauce, alfredo sauce, or both. Not to mention salad, tomatoes, bread and butter, and huge portions of chocolate and/or vanilla cake. Please see photos in this Barker. John Ball sold a lot of Water Quality raffle tickets and announced the winning number. After a dramatic pause, Dave Hogoboom claimed the prize - and gave it right back to Water Quality. Thanks to all of

the volunteers: Stu Spratt, Dennis Geik, Stacia Andriano, Tom and Barb Cassady, Cam and Bill Butler, John and Jennifer Ball, Dave and Terry Carroll, Ronni Eschelman, Jackie Frew, Doug and Donna Hogoboom, Ron and Kathy Niezgodski, Bob Niezgodski, Mike and Julie Sheffieck, Dan Waxman, and the large crowd of people who helped clear and store the tables. I apologize if I missed anyone!

With the Fourth of July now only two weeks away, the BLYC 250th Birthday of America Fireworks Show saw a good jump in donations, reaching \$12,555 at this writing. If we keep that momentum going strong, we'll have a great show. Please see Fireworks Chair Bernie Garceau's report in this Barker. A big THANK YOU to all who have donated! And if you haven't donated yet, you can scan here to do it right now! Thank you!



The Water Quality thermometer level in this Barker is pretty chilly, with only 54 out of 225 homes participating. Water Quality is vital to all of our enjoyment and property values, so let's go for 100%. THANK YOU to all who have donated! And for those who want to donate right now, you can scan this code to donate online today!. Thank you!



Looking ahead to Saturday, June 27th at noon, the Birch Lake Kidz Regatta takes center stage at Tom and Megan Caplis' home on the North shore. Their son Connor is always a contender. Come out by *continued....*



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

water or land to participate or cheer on the sailors young and old in this fun event, which helps keep the great sport of sailing alive and kicking on Birch Lake.

Gathering Momentum in June, 1776: Connecticut, New Hampshire/Delaware, and New Jersey decided to support independence.

~ Commodore Steve Frew



4th of July Fireworks Display Funding

Our ongoing fundraising efforts remain in full swing as we slowly work our way towards our goal of covering this year's Fireworks Display.

I would like to remind those Birch Lake Residents that have not yet donated, that a portion of the pledge by the Remingtons' and Culver's Resteraunts is still in play to match additional donations as we close in on the 4th of July Celebration.

Please get your donations in to help use up the Remington's generous match and help push towards this year's goal.

Many thanks to all of you that have already donated.

~ Bernie G.



June 27,
2026

Lunch at noon, Sailing at 1pm, Popsicle Party after sailing. Meet 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.

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: seeitall8@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).

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

All orders will be available for convenient pickup at the Waxman's house (East Side)

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

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

★ Please note that this is a preorder-only event, so be sure to secure your meal in advance! Deadline to place orders is June 26. ★

BIRCH LAKE NEWS

Boat Parade

This year's boat parade will be on Saturday July 4th starting at 3pm. Boat parade participants should come to Dan Waxman's dock at 2:45pm to get your boat number and to line up for the parade. Boat Parade Theme—FAVORITE TEAM. So, pick your favorite team from your childhood, NBA finals, World Cup, movie (Bad News Bears, Remember the Titans, A League of Their Own or my favorite, Dodge Ball!) and decorate your boat and join us for a lap around Birch Lake.

New this year for everyone on shore not entering the boat parade, dress up your family and friends in your team gear to compete in the BEST TEAM SPIRIT competition. The parade judges will be the last boat in the parade to see which family on land has the best team spirit as you cheer on the boat parade.

So, participate on land or in your boat! Any questions or comments, give Dan Waxman a call or email him at: DWaxman131@outlook.com. See you on the 4th!!!

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.

Carla Chester

There will be a memorial reception to celebrate the life of Carla Chester on Wednesday, July 1, 2026, at the Wellfield Botanic Gardens, 1011 N. Main Street in Elkhart, from 4:00 to 7:00 p.m. All are invited. No flowers are requested.



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.

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>



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.



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WATER QUALITY: EURASIAN MILFOIL

Eurasian Milfoil is an aggressive tall growing exotic aquatic plant from Europe and Asia. It can grow to the surface up to 10 to 15 feet of water. At the surface, it forms a dense canopy of vegetation over other plants. Many native plants may be reduced in abundance by Milfoil canopy. It also conflicts with many recreational activities. In dense conditions, it is a serious localized and lake wide problem. It is not a significant food crop for waterfowl, other birds or aquatic mammals. It readily regenerated from detached fragments and spreads rapidly. Consequently, this plant can form dense colonies covering much of a lake’s shoreline out to a depth of about 20 feet.

We began monitoring aquatic vegetation in Birch Lake in 2001. We were part of a Michigan Lake & Stream program that mapped the aquatic plants in Birch Lake. Howard Wandell provided professional assistance to the Birch Lake Water Quality Committee. The mapping project revealed that Birch Lake had a moderate plant population consisting of a good variety of species none of which dominated. At the time, the

survey determined that we did not have Eurasian Milfoil.

In 2007 Eurasian Milfoil was discovered at three sites. Progressive PE provided professional assistance and is still under contract.

For 2026 Progressive AE surveyed the entire lake for all types of invasive species at the end of May. Their survey turned up Eurasian Milfoil and Curly Leaf Pond Weed on the east shore. They also found Eurasian Milfoil in the Cove, on the North Shore and a small amount near the landing.

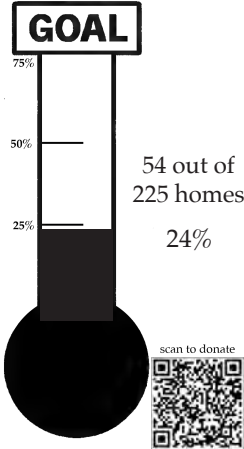
On June 9, Professional Lake Management treated 3.5 acres between the North and East shores and the Cove. Last year our total area treated was 1.5 acres. At that time, we were aware of the North Shore milfoil but hadn’t completed the permitting process to treat it. We don’t treat the Curly Leaf Pond weed because our water temperature gets high enough to kill it off.

Thanks to all of those who have contributed to make this program possible. With your help, we can keep invasives under control and continue this program.

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.

**Birch Lake Yacht Club
WATER QUALITY FUND**
Our goal for 2026 is to have 75%
of homes on the lake contribute.
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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:

Membership Fees

\$

BLYC member dues (\$50 per year)

\$

Associate member dues (\$15 per year) (non lake residents)

\$

Homeowners Association (\$10 per year)

\$

Sailing Fees (\$15 per year)

\$

Water Quality donations

Donations

\$

General Fund

\$

AED Fund

\$

Barker Donations

\$

Building Fund

\$

Fireworks Fund

\$

Safety Fund

\$

Water Quality / Milfoil Program

\$

Other Donations (please specify:)

\$

TOTAL CONTRIBUTION

Make checks payable to:
BLYC
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Friday, July 31, 2026

Shotgun Start at **NOON**

Meadow Valley Country Club
57600 SR 13
Middlebury, IN 46530

Dinner and awards to follow
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 24

2026 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.
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*Individual registrations available.
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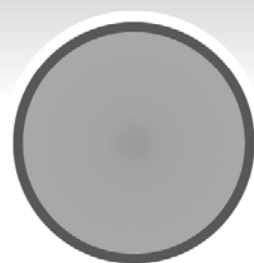
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2026 BIRCH LAKE DIRECTORY

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	☐	☐
You may share NONE of the information except name, lake address, and cottage number	☐	☐
You may share my / our phone number(s)	☐	☐
You may share my / our email address(es)	☐	☐
You may share my / our off-lake address	☐	☐
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FLEET CAPTAIN'S CORNER

Rain and Beautiful Wind. Last Sunday, it appeared that there was a storm on the radar, so the sailboat races got scuttled/canceled. Good thing we did, the rain rolled in, and the conditions for sailing were not good until midafternoon. Then the skies parted, and the wind was pretty good for a sail. Here's to better luck the next few weekends.

Don Harman Kidz Regatta - next Saturday, June 27th

The 2026 Don Harman Kidz Regatta is Next Saturday, June 27th! Tom and Megan Caplis offered to host it again this year, so it will be at the same place as last year's. Thanks again to Tom and Megan. Their house is located on the North Shore next to the King's House. Look for the homemade Kidz Regatta signs at the end of their pier. Should be out a day or two before the event. Also, look for where all the sailboats go on the day of the event. 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 the wind is light, the event will go on. It will still be a great opportunity for the kids to meet other kids they may not know around the lake and make new friends.

A General Timeline

Arrive around Noon at the Caplis home, 14901 Birch North Shore Drive. You're welcome to walk, bike, or drive over. Kids who know how to sail are welcome to sail a boat over to race on their own or with a family member or friend. There will be a mooring line to tie your boat up to. If you need help tying off your boat, a sailor will help. Hamburgers and hot dogs will be served. If the wind is good, around 1 PM, the sailors will pair up with the kids and take them out for a few races. If not, we will let the kids loose to play out in the yards and have fun together. The only rules are that everyone sailing 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, feel free to contact me at rjniezgodski@gmail.com, or look me up in the directory and give me a call.

~ Fleet Captain Bob Niezgodski



DIAMOND LAKE SAILING SCHOOL

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Intro to Racing Seminar

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CAMP T CORNER: SEVERE WEATHER

Over the past 20 years writing camp columns for the Barker, I've periodically shared our weather procedures. With the possibility of severe weather in the forecast as I am writing this camp column, I thought it would be helpful to share again how we handle weather emergencies here at camp. Last week's storm sent us to the basement for over an hour. The potential for severe weather again today and tomorrow has led to several questions from parents about our procedures and preparedness.

The safety of our campers and staff is always our top priority. During staff training each year, we spend significant time reviewing emergency procedures and discussing how to respond in a variety of situations, including severe weather. This year we had three members of the Cass County Emergency Management team visit camp for an afternoon to help with that training.

Communication is key during any emergency at camp. Every cabin and every activity area has a walkie-talkie, allowing staff to stay connected throughout camp. In addition, our Admin team members closely monitor weather forecasts, radar, and emergency alerts. If severe weather is predicted for that day, we inform staff at our morning staff meeting to be alert to the conditions. Whenever a severe weather **watch** is issued, we notify all staff so prepared to respond quickly.

While radio communication is our primary method of keeping staff

informed, we recognize that staff may not always hear a message over the walkies immediately. To ensure everyone receives important information, we also use an air horn and the large bell outside the Welcome Center as emergency signals. These backup systems help us quickly communicate with the entire camp if conditions require immediate action.

If a tornado **watch** is issued, or if a storm becomes severe, campers and staff are immediately directed to one of three designated shelter locations: the Dining Hall, Morris Lodge, or the Welcome Center. These buildings each have a basements where we can shelter if the circumstances require it. Depending on where campers are at the time, they are directed to the shelter that can be reached most quickly and safely.

Once everyone is gathered inside, our staff work hard to keep campers calm and comfortable. We often sing camp songs, play games, and engage campers in activities while we wait for the storm to pass. Meanwhile, leadership staff continue monitoring radar and weather alerts. If conditions worsen or a tornado **warning** is issued, everyone is moved into the basement areas until the threat has passed.

Throughout the summer, we conduct periodic drills with staff to make sure procedures remain fresh in everyone's mind. These practice sessions help ensure that when an actual emergency



occurs, staff can respond quickly, confidently, and calmly.

We also know that parents are very concerned whenever severe weather develops. During weather emergencies, we provide updates through emails, our camp Facebook group, and by group text messages. These tools allow us to quickly let families know what is happening and reassure them that campers are safe. Once the weather threat has ended and activities resume, we follow up with additional updates.

We believe it is always better to over-communicate than to not communicate enough during an emergency. Thankfully, this past week's storms did not cause any serious damage at camp. We were very fortunate, considering the damage to areas nearby. Even so, it was a good reminder of why we practice, prepare, and stay vigilant. While we can't control the weather, we can make sure we are ready to respond whenever Mother Nature decides to make an appearance.

~Miss Amber

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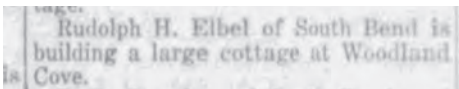
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BIRCH LAKE HISTORY: MELODY LODGE

Editor's Note: Another local history topic this week! If you would like to submit content about your family at the lake, we will gladly accept new submissions! Please send to birchbarker1@gmail.com

For many Birch Lake families today, summer means weekends at the cottage. For the Toth family, however, summer meant living at the lake. Their story is one of long summers, neighborhood adventures, family traditions, and a cottage that became a second home for generations.

The cottage (W320) is known as Melody Lodge because of its connection to a prominent musical family. The property was originally purchased in 1925 by Rudolph Elbel. Rudolph and his brothers owned Elbel Music Store in downtown South Bend. His brother Louis was a musician who - after attending the 1898 Michigan vs. Chicago football game - was inspired to write Michigan's fight song, "*The Victors*." The song was first performed the following April by John Philip Sousa and his band! The Elbel Golf Course in South Bend is named for Richard Elbel who served as a South Bend Parks Commissioner for 27 years.



Cassopolis Vigilant, September 17, 1925

The Toth family's connection to Birch Lake began because their oldest daughter, Helen, attended Camp Tannadoonah in 1959. While she was away at camp, her parents discovered a cottage for sale. By the end of the week, they had purchased it. When camp ended, they rowed a boat across the lake, picked up Helen and her cousin Terry, and brought them back to the family's new summer home!



The Toth Cottage (W320), now shared by Karen and Mark Evans and Ann and Charlie Kesmodel

The cottage itself has changed remarkably little over the years. Originally built with two bedrooms and a half bath (you washed your hair in the lake back then!), it still occupies the same footprint today. Helen and Joseph - known to most as "Doc" - later divided rooms to create a third bedroom, but much of the cottage remains as it was decades ago. Their kids remember the trap door in the kitchen that provided access to the crawl space beneath the house.

Doc, Helen, and their 8 children (Joe, Helen, John, Karen, Terry, Greg, Ann, and Paula) would arrive at the lake on June 1 and return to South



Bend at the end of August. Doc drove back and forth to South Bend daily to operate his dental practice in town - except on Wednesdays which he spent at the lake. There was no phone and Helen did not have a car, yet the kids rarely noticed the lack of modern conveniences. There was always something to do. They spent their days swimming, fishing, waterskiing, and walking around the lake with friends. They remember carrying 5-gallon cans of gas from Williamsville so they could get back out on the water to ski.

The neighborhood was filled with children. Every cottage seemed to have kids spending the summer there. Sleepovers overflowed onto the screened porch, where couch cushions and pillows became mattresses and there were never enough blankets. The birds would wake you at dawn, only to discover another kid had stolen your pillow in the middle of the night.



Ann, John, Mom, Joe, Dad, Terry, Greg, Paula, Helen, Karen

One of Ann's favorite memories is of her mother teaching the children to swim. She vividly recalls floating on her back while Helen gently supported her in the water. At some point, Helen let go, and Annie discovered she could float on her own.

Food was another centerpiece of life at Melody Lodge. Doc was the cook, and Helen was his assistant. Sunday dinners were weekly family gatherings. The message was simple: if you wanted to eat, come to the lake. The family still shares Doc's recipes - chili mac every Fourth of July, chicken paprikash, pea soup, and a Hungarian fried dough treat called jungalows. As Paula remembers, everything seemed to taste better at the lake.

Helen hosted her longstanding poker club, a group that had begun during World War II when many of the husbands were away. On Wednesdays, the women would gather at the lake while Doc entertained them with jokes



Graham, Laura, Erik, Paula, Connor, Karen, Charlie, Ann, Bobbie, Johnny, Andrea, Carol, Mom Toth, Meghan, Matt, and Patrick. In front of the Drolet cottage in the cove on a 4th of July Weekend.

and excellent food and drink.

Some family stories have become legendary. There was Doc's tendency to threaten to sell the cottage whenever the children argued too much. There was also his memorable docking technique, shouting "Catch me!" as he approached the pier too quickly in the pontoon boat. On one occasion, the family hosted a group of nuns from St. Matthew's Cathedral in South Bend at the lake. The kids remember watching them go by on the pontoon boat with their habits flying in the wind.



Doc and Grandson Dan Evans

Rainy days meant finding things to do inside the cottage - reading, playing games, and talking with friends. Greg once said "Even a rainy day here is better than anywhere else."

Looking back, Ann remembers assuming that every family had a place like Birch Lake. Only later did she realize how fortunate they were. The big family dinners, the endless summers, the friendships, and the memories created at Melody Lodge were truly something special.

More than sixty-five years after purchasing Melody Lodge, the Toth family continues to gather at Birch Lake. Four siblings (Karen, Terry, Ann, and Paula) still maintain homes on the lake, while others travel from Indiana, California, and Idaho to return each summer. What began with Doc and Helen and their eight kids has grown into a family of 66 spanning multiple generations who all love coming back to beautiful Birch Lake.

Photos and stories were shared by John and Carol Toth, Karen Evans, Terry and Dave Carroll, Ann Kesmodel, and Paula Russell.



Home of year round residents Dave and Terry Carroll (W318)



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BARKER KIDS OF THE WEEK



JJ Pope, son of Katee (Hogoboom) and Jaric Pope; great-grandson of Pat Scannell Hogoboom (South Shore). Another generation loving Birch Lake.

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



The cousins came for a visit to the North Shore. Abby Caplis, Leila Petty (both north shore) Kelsey & Kendall Roussell from Virginia. They take a picture in the same spot every summer.

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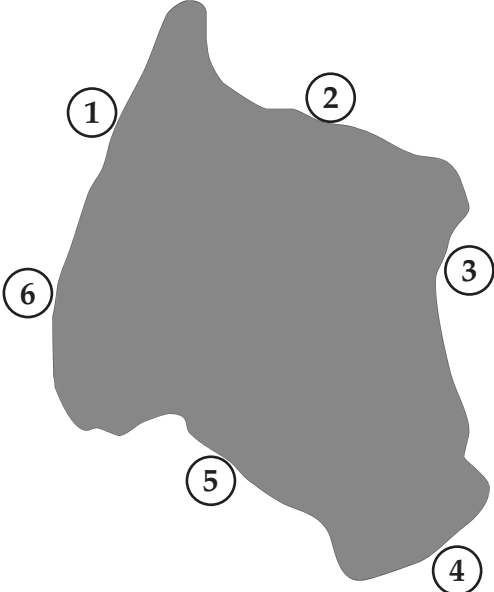
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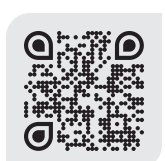
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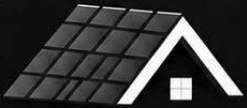
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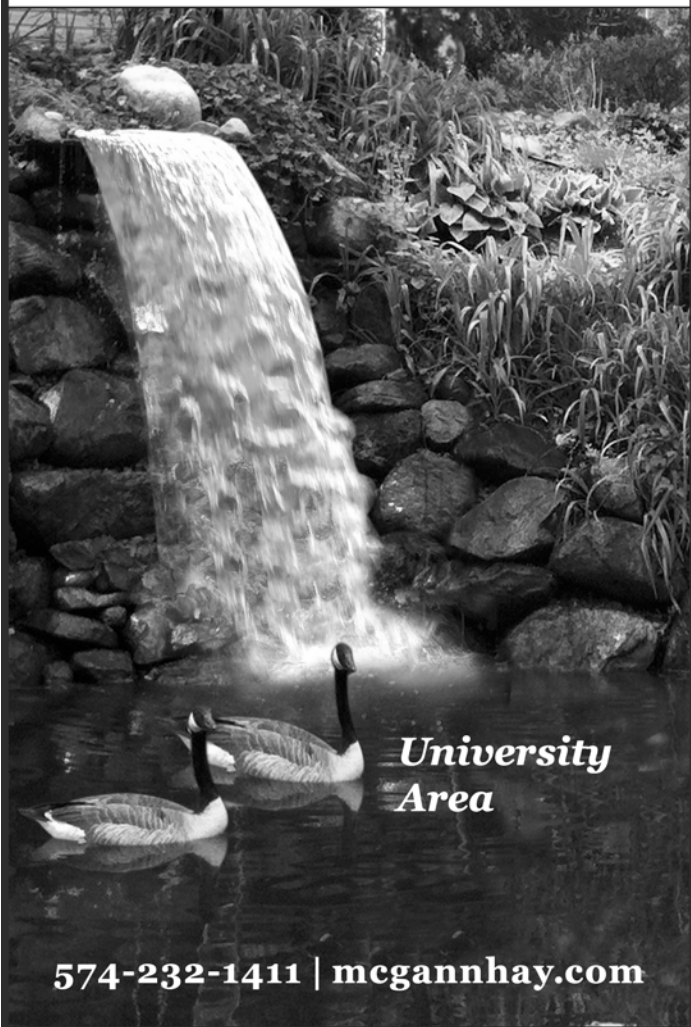
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- Many lake property buyers are cash buyers.
- Interest rates have leveled off and may come down more.



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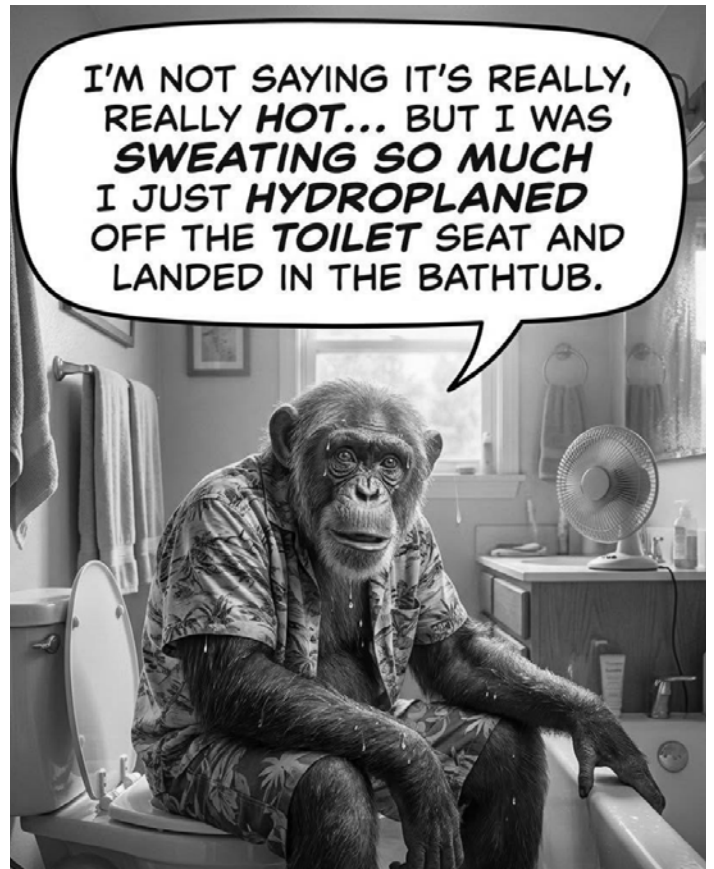
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574-532-3808

dennisbamber@cressyeverett.com

*Not intended to solicit any properties already listed for sale with another real estate agent.

BARKER FUNNIES



This morning I saw an envelope on my doorstep that said: 'Do Not Bend'. I stood there for ages trying to figure out how to pick it up...

Back then, you used to be able to get air for free at the gas station, but now it's \$1...
That's inflation for you.

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