

BIRCH *Barker*

vol. 78 issue 7

Weekend of
July 4
2026

The official publication of the Birch Lake Yacht Club

BirchLakeYachtClub.com



Kidz Regatta Participants, June 27, 2026

2026 BIRCH LAKE CALENDAR

July

- 3 - Port-a-Pit Pick Up
- 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, 6:30pm
- 22 - BLYC Board Meeting, 9am
- 22 - Fall Dinner
- 26 - Women's Style Show

September

- 5 - 6 - Labor Day Regatta
- 9 - Card / Game Night, 6:30pm
- 12 - Sailing Awards
- 19 - BLYC Board Meeting, 9am
- 26 - Bad Patty Crockpot Challenge

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COMMODORE'S COMMENTS

Thank you, Tom and Megan Caplis for hosting a fun Kidz Regatta last weekend; Bob and Leslie King for welcoming guests; and Jeff and Denise Smitley for the use of their pier. Please see the photos in this issue.

The big day of celebration has arrived! Sailboats will be racing, boaters enjoying, Grand Marshalls marshalling, boaters parading, and Port-a-Pitters chowing down, all capped off by magnificent fireworks show. And Sunday, the Pancake Breakfast. A big advance THANK YOU to all of our many generous donors; to Keith and Julia Remington and Culver's for their generous matching fund; and to Fireworks Chair Bernie Garceau for his many hours of hard work. Grab a seat on water or land, and enjoy the show, everyone!

What if our Founding Fathers could see our country today? They would be amazed at the transformation wrought by the freedom to innovate and produce things. They would delight in seeing throngs of World Cup tourists flocking here from many nations, and finding America far better than they had been led to believe - before coming here to see it themselves. They would love seeing Birch Lake!

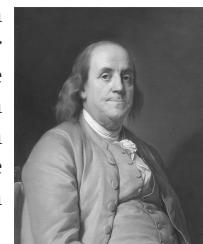
Our Founding Fathers would be humbled and gratified to know what their faith, courage and sacrifices have achieved. And they would

want to tell us why our country still exists, and what we need to do to keep it going. How do we know that? On September 17, 1787, the final day of the Constitutional Convention, Benjamin Franklin was asked: "Well, Doctor, what have we got - a republic or a monarchy?" Franklin replied, "A republic, if you can keep it."

Why did Franklin express doubt? The answer is found in his speech to the Constitutional Convention on June 28, 1787, when Franklin implored the Convention to begin each session with a prayer:

"In the beginning of the Contest with G. Britain, when we were sensible of danger we had daily prayer in this room for the divine protection. Our prayers, Sir, were heard, and they were graciously answered. All of us who were engaged in the struggle must have observed frequent instances of a Superintending providence in our favor.... "I therefore beg leave to move, that henceforth prayers imploring the assistance of Heaven, and its blessings on our deliberations, be held in this Assembly every morning before we proceed to business, and that one or more of the Clergy of the City be requested to officiate in that service."

Franklin's motion failed, but it had a sobering effect. Two years later, when the First



Benjamin Franklin, 1706–1790 By Joseph Siffrid Duplessis (1725–1802), National Portrait Gallery



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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

U.S. Congress convened in 1789, the Senate and the House both adopted Franklin's idea, hired chaplains, and began opening each daily session with a prayer - a practice that still continues today.

What would the Founding Fathers say about why our country still exists? Because despite our lapses, we are still praying for America. What advice would they give for the future? Don't stop praying for America.

~Commodore Steve Frew



Fireworks Update

We are in the home stretch with just a few days before the 4th of July Celebration and I see that our fundraising efforts are running a little behind at 72% of our goal. We are asking those residents that intend to enjoy the Fireworks Show Saturday night, and have not yet made a Fireworks donation to please step up and help us reach our targeted goal by making your Fireworks donation. In addition to our online, drop off, or mail in methods for making donations, we will have a table set up - manned by a dedicated Birch Laker - at both the Nelson's Porta-Pit Chicken pick-up location on Friday and on the front porch at the Pancake Breakfast on Sunday morning to provide convenient locations for you to make your donations. Please help us reach our fundraising goal and enjoy the Annual Fireworks Display on Saturday evening as we celebrate our Nation's 250th Birthday. Thanks to all that have already stepped up and a "happy and enjoyable 4th of July Celebration to all."

~Bernie G.

Boat Parade

The July 4th Boat Parade is this Saturday at 3pm! All participants please bring your boat to Dan Waxman's pier at 2:45pm to register, get your number and line up behind the Grand Marshal for a lap around the lake. This year's theme: **FAVORITE TEAM!**

For those of you not entering a boat, you can participate by land with decorating your pier, dock or just suit up the family and friends in your favorite team's gear to cheer on the boat parade. You will be in the competing for **BEST TEAM SPIRIT!**

We look forward to everyone on the lake to participate and enjoy this event.

And now, introducing our July 4th, 2026 Grand Marshals **John and Jennifer Ball** (see page 4)

Ladies Golf Outing

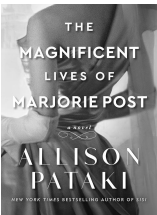
This year's Ladies Golf outing is planned for Friday, July 24th. If you are interested in attending, please notify either Blair Garceau or Carol McCoy by text as soon as possible. If you have a group already formed, let us know. More information will come once we know how many players will be attending. You can text Blair at 574-261-9817 or Carol at 708-738-3962.

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).

Book Club

Our next book will be *The Magnificent Lives of Marjorie Post*, by Allison Pataki. Our meeting will be on July 21. Any questions, or if you'd like to join in the fun, contact Jackie Frew: seetall8@gmail.com or call/text 708-285-2999.



ANNUAL CAMP T
PANCAKE BREAKFAST



Sunday, July 5, 8:30-11am

The cost is \$6 for ages 13 and older, \$4 for youth ages 4-12, and free for ages 0-3. We will have pancakes (including a gluten-free option), sausage links, coffee, orange juice, milk, and fruit cocktail.

Miss Carmen will also have the Camp Trading Post open, so you can get all the new Camp T apparel on Sunday morning. This year's hoodies feature a topographical map of Birch Lake!

Last year we served 375 people - let's see if we can get to 400 this year!

We can always use helpers at the breakfast, too. If you're interested in volunteering for a shift, please email me at amber@tannadoonah.org.

Homeowner's Association Annual Meeting

The Birch Lake Homeowner's Association will have its annual meeting on Saturday, August 1st following the BLYC's monthly meeting. Our guest speaker will be Elizabeth Hall from the west side. Elizabeth has been working on making sure our interests are protected as data center developers look at our county for possible locations. Please join us as we hear about her work and what we can do to protect against a data center in our back yard.

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BIRCH LAKE NEWS

Incoming Guests

In the beginning our Barkers were often about incoming guests. The Kings (north shore) eagerly anticipate the arrival of Calvin, Liz, and our Grandlings, from Minnesota. Hopefully Aunt Suzy will be able to join us. By the 4th, Chuck and Karen Horn (Carmel), Ric and Lisa Dwenger (Muncie) roll in. We have no idea whether Cal's buds will number two, twenty, or?

Charlene Sheetz

Charlene Sheetz passed away in Jonesborough, Tennessee on June 25, 2026. Charlene was a long-time resident of Birch Lake who lived on the south side of the lake near the turnaround. Charlene's funeral service will be held at Family First Funeral and Cremation Services, 52780 Michigan-40, Marcellus, MI on July 2, 2026 at 11am EST. The burial and interment are private.

Dan Reynolds

The Barker has been notified of the passing of Dan Reynolds, long-time resident of the south shore and past commodore of the BLYC. A celebration of life will be held at a later date. No further information is available at this time.

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.

Happy Anniversary!



Happy 45th Wedding Anniversary to Buzz and Linda Rasmussen! They purchased their home in 1982 on Memorial Day weekend. They have maintained their full time birch lake membership, ever since then. Buzz' Birthday is On July 5th, and Linda's is on July 20th! Reason to celebrate all month long! Please wish them a happy anniversary and birthday or honk when you're cruising on by in the boat.

Love, Phyllis & Ciara Rasmussen

Mom's Rule

Though a sweet little lady, Le King (north shore) could get her German up over a few things. One evolved into an edict, a Maxim. Get your work work done before the 4th of July then play until Labor Day. Her thought was if you worked all summer long, well, we may as well stay in town? So, from this Saturday through the great weather just do fun work (or fun oriented work). Try it ~*Bob King*

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



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BOAT PARADE GRAND MARSHALS

Celebrating America's 250th birthday, John and Jennifer Ball are this year's boat parade Grand Marshals. John started his life as an infant on Birch at the cottage of his grandparents, Vernon and Genevieve Ball. Vernon and Genevieve began the Ball family lake life on Birch in 1948. John Sr. and Marty Ball and their 4 children (Cindy, John, Julie, and Steve) began spending the entire summer on Birch in 1962. John Sr. and Marty packed up the kids at the end of the school year and moved to the lake, returning to Elkhart when school was about to start. Marty and the kids went to town one day a week for groceries and laundry, while John Sr. would commute to work in Elkhart every day. After dinner walks around the lake were the norm for the lake teenagers. Kids then went to the yacht club for dances and hanging with friends. Many of John's teenage friends are now living on Birch either full time or for the summers. The original cottage is gone, but Tom, Julie, and Dezi Lacy have built their home on the same spot near the landing.

Jennifer's first visit to Birch Lake was at the cottage owned by her parent's friends, known as Dun Romin – remodeled but still here today. The majority of Jennifer's early lake life was spent in northern Michigan on a 1,000 acre lake called Pickerel, where her grandparents had 12 cottages they rented out in the summer months. The cottages were not accessible in the winter months. Jennifer's two older brothers spent their summers on Pickerel working for her grandparents.

John and Jennifer were introduced by Jennifer's mom Doris, when she went to buy a new car from John. Secretly, Doris hoped that if Jennifer met a "nice" boy she would come home from college more often. Well.....mom always knows best and within a year they were married. Doris got the new car and Jennifer got the dealer!

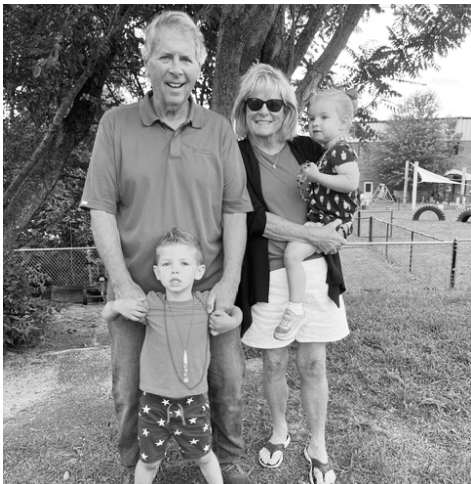
After seven years of marriage, summers on Birch, and lots of traveling, they decided to start a family. Christopher (Chris) was born in 1985, Adam in 1986, and Alex in 1990. This generation of Ball boys has also spent (with a few exceptions) all their summers on Birch Lake. Early on, John, Jennifer, and the boys began renting different cottages

around the lake for the month of July, determined to find a place of their own. They rented one cottage with a hand pump still in the kitchen sink! (Steffen's home today) Not the best way to bathe babies!

When John and Jennifer bought the lot from the Witchie family where their home is today, there was tent camping and bathing in the lake, with bathroom privileges and dinners at John Sr. and Marty Ball's cottage.

John and Jennifer built their current home on Birch in 1994. It was designed by a fraternity brother of John's. It was finished inside with the bare minimums – just enough to pass local inspections. Summers were spent camping, swimming, skiing, tubing, boating, and sailing. Hanging out, riding bikes to Tom's for penny candy, lemonade stands for garage sale days were shared with other lake kids, Troegers, Fergusons, Curtis, Lacys, Carpenters, and Boukamps. Soon the boys' friends from Bristol and Middlebury joined the boys for summer shenanigans. These friends visit often now with their babies and for the traditional Birch Lake Baptism. John and Jennifer never really learned how a huge round bale of hay ended up in the lake at the public landing. A few summers, John would stay at their home in Bristol while Jennifer would stay at the lake, being very mindful that 3 teenage boys can get into all kinds of trouble (and did). Christopher was once asked by a neighbor why the boys wanted to spend time at Birch Lake, Chris responded that "in the beginning we really didn't have a choice," and they really did not!

John and Jennifer always planned to move to Birch permanently. They wanted their boys to finish school in Middlebury before making the move, and in 2014 they decided to sell their Bristol home and move to Birch Lake. The remodeling to their home began with lots of changes like new kitchen cabinets instead of recycled ones - which now reside in another cottage on the lake. They both currently love retirement including Sunday dinners at the lake with their three boys, daughter-in-law Briana, and 5th generation grandchildren Kayson and Saylor.




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WATER QUALITY REPORT: ENVIRONMENTALLY RESPONSIBLE BOAT OPERATION

The 4th of July at Birch Lake is always memorable although you will have to forgive me for not remembering my first 4th. I was only two months old. I have a long memory, but it fails me on that one. I have never missed a 4th at the lake and no, I won't divulge how many years it has been. Spending the holiday and summer at the lake was simply something our family did, no matter how young the children or where we lived. From Kansas, to Africa, New York, and now Virginia, we travel like lemmings to the lake each summer.

In the past, I have written about the realities of the impact of wake boats on the shoreline and shallow bottom areas, advocating for responsible operation backed up by scientific studies. This year I am expanding the scope to include other boating and lake activities, as virtually every action we take in and around Birch Lake does have some level of consequence. We all want to enjoy the lake, now and in the future, and we all have a vested interest in the property values that come from being on a beautiful, "All Sports" lake.

First, let me mention the pending legislation Michigan Senate Bill 812, which will place operating parameters on wake boats statewide. If passed, this bill will require 500 feet from shore and 20 feet of depth for a wake boat operating with ballast tanks full. As a wake boat owner, I fully support this legislation. As mentioned in my previous article, we can operate in 40 feet of water or more 100% of our surf time on Birch. I encourage all wake boats on the lake to please do the same...it isn't difficult, and not only does it show due respect to the lake itself, it also shows respect to our community.

Now on to other activities that can and do impact the lake. Anything that causes disruption to the lake bottom can cause the nutrient rich sediment to suspend in the water, which encourages the growth of algae and reduces clarity, and moves us away from Birch's natural oligotrophic state and pushes us toward a mesotrophic state. This happens naturally through several events...wind, rain, fish creating beds, as well as though unnatural events, like walking or swimming in the lake, putting in a dock, launching a boat, or operating a boat, just to name a few. We really can't avoid all of these, nor should we want to, in my opinion. But it is in our best interest to minimize our impact.

Just a couple of weeks ago, right from my bedroom window, I saw a group of swimmers a few hundred feet away from my house. They were swimming at the end of a dock, and on this windy and sunny day, you could see the plume of sediment drifting away from them for at least a couple hundred feet. Prior to my participation with the Water Quality Committee, I would never have given this situation a second thought. And even now, I am all in favor of folks swimming and enjoying the lake. For me, it was simply a reminder of how such a simple activity can have a visually identifiable impact. That mud cloud from swimming has surely happened thousands of times on Birch. Should we stop swimming? Heck no. But we should be mindful of what we are doing and try to minimize impact. Is it better to swim out in the middle? Probably. Can we do that every time? Absolutely not. Just be mindful of your impact.

I have also noticed wave runners taking off at high speed from shallow areas not even past the end of the nearest dock. A wave runner won't disrupt the bottom at depths the way a wake boat will, but according to sources readily available on Google, it will disrupt the bottom in 6-10 feet of water during

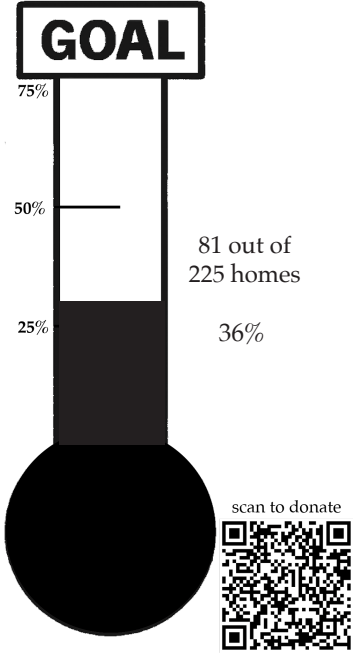
its initial acceleration. So, by simply following the state's operational guidelines for a personal watercraft, being clear of docks by 100 feet before accelerating, the rider would also be reducing impact on the lake bottom.

The past few years, all lakes have seen an increase in high horsepower pontoons. These behave very similarly to other "speed boats" that don't have ballast tanks like wake boats. During initial take off from idle, both high HP pontoons and speed boats can impact the bottom at depths exceeding 15 feet, and when cruising on plane, can impact 6 to 10 feet of water. Those numbers are not a problem for most of Birch Lake, but we do have some areas of shallows that can be impacted. I have seen this frequently from my home. If you see a mud trail behind you, please know that this is the nutrient rich sediment that we want to stay on the bottom of the lake!

All these situations occur on Birch on a regular basis, and when it comes down to it, they all have similar solutions. The common theme is that all these activities are less harmful in deeper water. Simply follow the states boating safety guidelines and you will have already done a decent job of minimizing impact. If you go a step further and recognize the shallow areas of the lake that extend furthest from shore, and minimize activities over these areas, then you really have done your part.

~ Zack Nickell, Water Quality Committee

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of homes on the lake contribute.
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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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STATE OF THE LAKE

It must not be in the Commodore’s Notebook (an enormous 3-ring binder) to issue an annual appraisal. I will do my best. We are blessed to have an ever diligent BLYC Water Quality Committee, looking after our basin. Many don’t see the exceptional clarity through the week, often beginning as soon as Monday, as Turbidity settles out.



Spotted Frog

Anecdotal evidence of health abounds. Many see frogs and toads without grasping amphibians of their ilk are "canaries in the coal mine" due to nature of their skin, place in food chain, etc. They reflect healthy conditions. Or not. This probably triggers additional snakes and others which eat hoppy.

Long ago, the Birch bottom was chock full of indigenous freshwater clams (or mussels). These bivalve critters help balance aquatic ecosystems. During the zebra mussel invasion most were wiped out (one invasive bivalve killing off another). Wading in the shallows



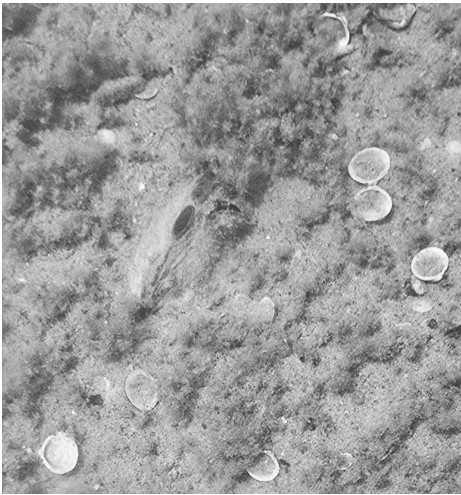
Clam Shell

lately I have seen just one clam (location withheld, a national security secret).

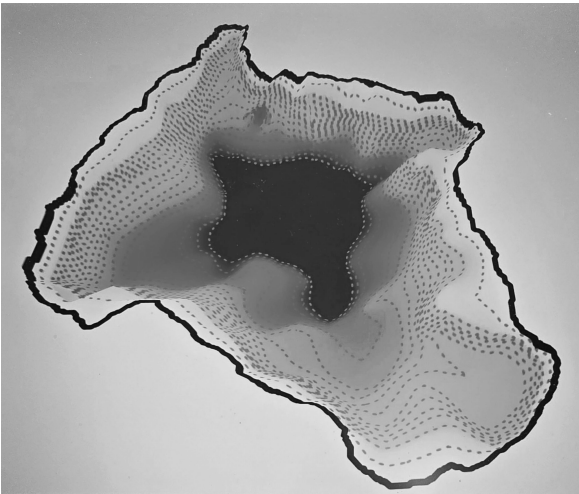
I have heard it said whatever you put in Birch takes twelve (12) years to exit our lake due to large volume and slow turn-over. It should be said, some surprising chemistry readings might be from things beyond our control (ex: from unusual but natural changes in spring flow). Some data, abnormal.

How many gallons of water are held in Birch at controlling depth? A: it’s a lot. I write today to remind everyone we are on the same team. Be good Stewards of Birch. Not long ago I saw the enormous Koi some genius set loose here. Those decorative Carp can live a very long time. Be gentle with the Blue Lady.

~Bob King (North shore)



Lake Bottom



3D Visualization of Lake Depth

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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.

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.



Scan here to go to
Join It

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
and mail to: Deb Spratt, Treasurer
18100 Farmington Hills Dr
South Bend, IN 46637

or pay online at
[https:// app.joinit.com/o/blyc/](https://app.joinit.com/o/blyc/)

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BLYC 66TH ANNUAL MEN’S GOLF OUTING

FOUR MAN FLORIDA SCRAMBLE

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.
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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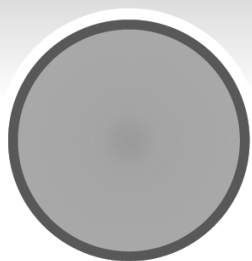
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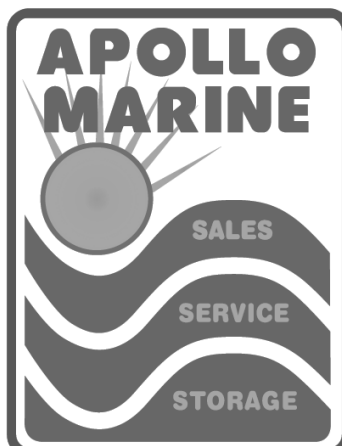
Patrick Welch (S) 574-536-7344
patrick.welch2017@gmail.com
Water Quality Committee Chair

Sue Williams (S) 269-476-8886
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BARKER KIDS OF THE WEEK



Neil Troeger was awarded his MBA from the University of Chicago on June 6, 2026.



Scott and Neil Troeger at Neil's graduation from the University of Chicago.

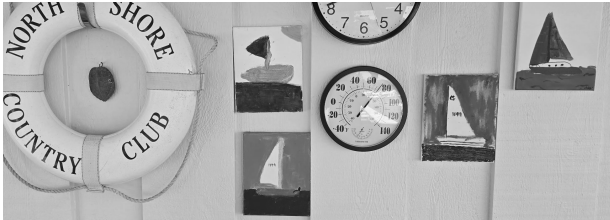
Want your kid to be a Barker kid of the week? Send your photos to birchbarker1@gmail.com



Birch Lake pontoon boat captains sporting their new uniforms! David Robison (north shore), Craig Fredlake (south shore), Tom Kuhn and Rich DeYoung (west shore), Gus Eshleman and Randy Welch (south shore). Not pictured: Ben Wozniak, Dan Waxman, and Al Cover (east shore) and Patrick Welch (south shore).



Julie and Mike Sheffieck's granddaughters Iris, Gwendolyn, and Alanna had a great day sailing at the Kidz Regatta. Their dad, David Sheffieck, helped Skipper Barb Cassady land the boat.



Those are a 4-year Abby Caplis compilation. The Galleria is open all summer. Not for sale.



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FLEET CAPTAIN'S CORNER

Kidz Regatta

Sunday Races

Sunday Races

If you or anyone you know is interested in learning to sail, don't be hesitant to reach out. It's a very fun and unique hobby that can teach us all a lot. Many past and present sailors on the lake would be happy to make arrangements to take someone out sailing, no matter what the age.

~ Fleet Captain Bob Niezgodski (rjniedzgodski@gmail.com)

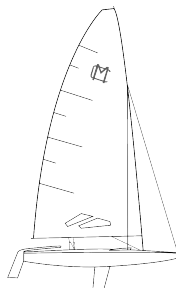
Sundays are SAILING DAYS!
Races typically start at 11am
Please steer clear
of the course!

BIRCH LAKE SAILING SCORES

MC Scow Standings

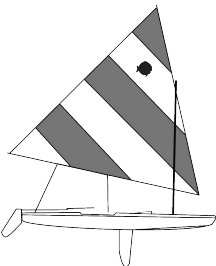
	28-Jun	28-Jun	Total	% Races	Average	Season
	4	5	Points	Finished	Points	Rank
MC Scow Sailor						
Scott Troeger #1489	1	1	3200	40.0%	1600.0	1
Patrick Welch #1979	DNS	DNS	4642	60.0%	1547.3	2
Barb Cassidy #2506	2	2	7611	100.0%	1522.2	3
Bill Luecht #1579	4	3	7147	100.0%	1429.4	4
Phil Vitale #500	3	4	7070	100.0%	1414.0	5
Gigi Cassidy (crew for Barb C)	DNS	DNS	0	0.0%	0.0	6

Scott 1st
Barb 2nd



Sunfish Standings

	28-Jun	28-Jun	28-Jun	Total	% Races	Average	Season
	4	5	6	Points	Finished	Points	Rank
Sunfish Sailor							
Stewart Spratt	2	1	2	9442	100.0%	1573.7	1
Pete Soldato	DNS	DNS	DNS	2965	33.3%	1482.5	2
Amy Troeger	5	2	1	4417	50.0%	1472.3	3
Bob Niezgodski	4	3	3	8668	100.0%	1444.7	4
Connor Caplis	3	4	4	8439	100.0%	1406.5	5
Herb Cleveland	1	5	5	4192	50.0%	1397.3	6
Marlee Soldato (crew for Pete S)	DNS	DNS	DNS	0	33.3%	0.0	7



DNS (Did Not Sail) does not count against season score, however sailor must complete 2/3 of races to qualify for season
DNE (Did Not Finish) or DSO (Disqualified) scores as last place (if 5 boats started the race, you will be scored as 5th place)

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 Squares of 40 systems (1st - 40 awarded - 1600, 2nd - 39 awarded, etc.)

$$\text{Season Place} = \text{total season points} / \text{number of races attempted}$$


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CAMP T CORNER: ACA ACCREDITATION



This week is an important one here at Camp T, as we welcome visitors from the American Camp Association (ACA) for our accreditation review. Camp T has been an ACA-accredited camp since the mid-1980s, and every few years we go through the process of renewing that accreditation.

While campers are busy sailing, swimming, playing sports, singing songs, and creating art projects, our visitors will be observing camp in action, reviewing records, inspecting facilities, and talking with staff. Their goal is to ensure that we're continuing to meet the highest standards in camping.

ACA accreditation is the only nationally recognized accreditation program for camps. To earn accreditation, camps must demonstrate compliance with more than 250 standards covering virtually every aspect of camp operations, including health care at camp, emergency preparedness, staff training, waterfront safety, food service, transportation, risk management, facility maintenance, program quality, and much more.

Preparing for an accreditation visit is a year-round process. We review our policies, update procedures, train our staff, and evaluate our programs. During the accreditation visit, experienced camp professionals from other ACA-accredited camps spend the day reviewing our documentation, touring the property, observing activities, and verifying that the standards aren't just written in a handbook, that they're part of how camp operates every day.

While accreditation requires a tremendous amount of work behind the scenes, the benefits are well worth the effort. First and foremost, it helps ensure that camp is as safe as possible for every camper who comes through our gates. ACA standards are developed by experts in youth development, healthcare, education, recreation, and risk management. They are regularly updated to reflect new research and changing best practices, helping camps stay current as the needs of young people continue to evolve.

The accreditation process also encourages us to continually improve. Even after more than 100 years of camping at Birch Lake, we're always looking for ways to make Camp T even better. Every accreditation visit gives us an opportunity to receive feedback from experienced camp professionals and to learn from the best practices being used across the country.



For parents, ACA accreditation provides reassurance that Camp T has voluntarily chosen to meet standards that go well beyond state licensing requirements. It reflects our commitment to careful planning, thorough staff training, and providing a high-quality experience for every camper who spends part of their summer with us.

Although our accreditation review only happens every few years, the work behind it happens every day. From daily equipment safety checks and weekly emergency drills, to staff supervision and thoughtful program planning, the standards that ACA evaluates are a part of our daily lives at camp.

We are proud to have maintained ACA accreditation for more than four decades, and we're excited to once again demonstrate the commitment our staff makes each day to providing a safe, fun, and meaningful camp experience.

~Miss Amber

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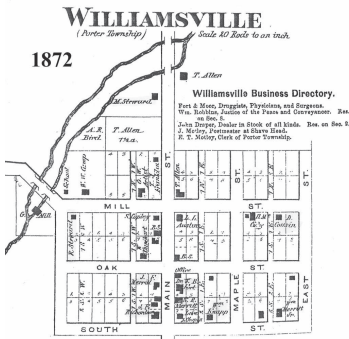
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BIRCH LAKE AREA HISTORY: WILLIAMSVILLE

Today, when driving through Williamsville you might not realize you have passed through what was once a thriving country village. Believe it or not, Williamsville once served as the commercial and social center for the countryside surrounding Birch Lake. Though it never became a large town, its influence reached far beyond its modest size.

The story of Williamsville begins with one man. Williamsville was laid out in March 1848 by Josiah Williams, whose name the village still bears. However, settlement in the area began even earlier. The earliest land entries in Porter Township date to 1829, when John White, John East, and Nathan Williams acquired property in what was then an undeveloped wilderness.

Williams recognized the potential of the creek flowing south from Birch Lake. Using its dependable water power, he constructed a large grist mill just south of today's Williamsville St. (once called Mill St).

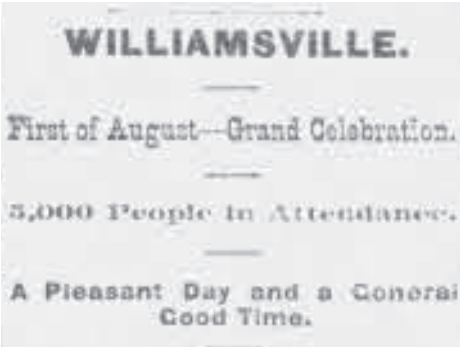


1872 Plat Map

An 1872 plat map shows a surprisingly active village. Along Main, Mill, Oak, Maple, and South Streets stood homes, businesses, a sawmill, physicians' offices, and numerous small shops. The business directory listed druggists, a justice of the peace, a dealer in "stock of all kind," the township clerk, and the postmaster, reflecting a community that served the needs of the surrounding farming population.

Originally operated by W. W. Camp, and later the Searer family, the water-powered grist mill ground wheat into flour and corn into feed for area farmers. The mill remained an important business well into the twentieth century. Harold Cranmer (west shore) remembers walking to the mill to purchase a bag of grain to bring home to his mother.

In 1873, the Cassopolis Vigilant published a report of a Grand Celebration in Williamsville to honor the anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation. According to the article, 5,000 people were in attendance for the celebration on August 1, 1873! The festivities included a national salute on "the grove on the bank of Birch Lake," music provided by the Cassopolis Coronet Band, a prayer offered by the chaplain, speeches by local residents and out-of-town guests, a competition



Cassopolis Vigilant, August 7, 1873

involving a greased pig, washtub races in Birch Lake, and vast quantities of beverages served by 20 separate lemonade stands. Sheriff Cannady reported only "a few rows caused by too much bad whisky." In the evening, about 50 couples gathered in the hall of Mr. J. N. Cannady and danced "until the approach of morning."

The general store was the heart of village life. The two-story brick building was established by Josiah Williams around 1860. In 1894, the original store was lost to a fire, but fortunately the owner, J. Fred Merritt, had insured both the building and its contents and was able to rebuild.

Although Williamsville was small, it supported an impressive variety of businesses. An inn on the corner of Main and Mill Streets welcomed travelers passing through northern Cass County. Across the street stood another general store operated by Rhuben Weikle, later taken over by Tom White.

Residents had access to two physicians - Dr. Moore and Dr. Fort - an unusual luxury for such a small village. Other businesses included Zacky Brown's barber shop, a feed store, a livery stable, Albert Reck and Jerome Cousins' sawmill, Will Rhinehart's cabinet and paint shop Hardy McCally's cooperage. Mail arrived by horseback or horse-drawn cart along a route connecting Bristol, Williamsville, and Vandalia, with James W. East serving as mail carrier.

The center of town also included a telephone exchange established by Perry Storey, making Williamsville one of the better-connected rural communities in the area.



Perry Storey's Birch Lake Telephone Exchange, located in Williamsville

Around the turn of the 20th century, Williamsville reached its peak population of around 300 residents. The community even supported a string band organized in 1902, featuring members of the Searer family and the East boys, who entertained at social gatherings around Birch Lake and the surrounding countryside.

A church was constructed at what is now the corner of Birch Rd. and Sears St. The East School stood at the corner of Main and Mill Streets with about 25 students, taught by Miss Iva Hoyt. In 1925, Williamsville was recognized as one of only four standard schools in Cass County, a significant achievement.



Students of the East School, c. 1911

SCHOOL IMPROVED AT WILLIAMSVILLE

Cassopolis Vigilant, October 28, 1925

Over the decades the General Store changed ownership many times, reflecting both the changing economy and the generations of families who lived in Williamsville. After the Merritt family, the store was owned by Oscar Loupee, Albert Snyder, Ryton Jones, and G.W. "Lanky" Breece. Most Birch Lake residents of the mid-20th Century have fond memories of going to Breece's General Store (aka "Lanky's").

Lanky's also housed the Williamsville Post Office, and for many years contained the community's only telephone, making it the communication center for the surrounding countryside long before rural telephones became common.

In later years Lanky's was replaced by Tom's Garage, operated by Tom and Betty Griffith. Like Breece's General Store before it (though in a different building), Tom's Garage became a place where neighbors stopped not only for repairs or gasoline, but also to catch up on local news and visit with friends. Even after many of Williamsville's earlier businesses had disappeared, the garage remained a familiar landmark for local families.

For the youth of Birch Lake, Lanky's or Tom's Garage - depending on your age - are part of your core memories of growing up at the lake. Teenagers walked from the lake to fill tanks of gas to get back out on the lake in their boats. Children came with pennies to buy candy, while adults gathered there to shop, exchange news, and visit with neighbors. For generations of Birch Lake residents, Williamsville was far more than just a dot on the map.

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

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

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



AED Locations



IN AN EMERGENCY

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

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

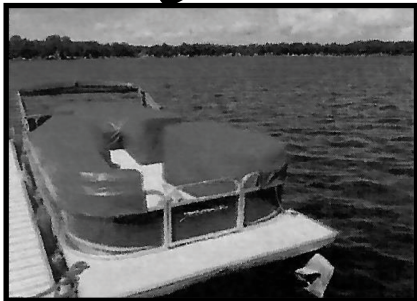
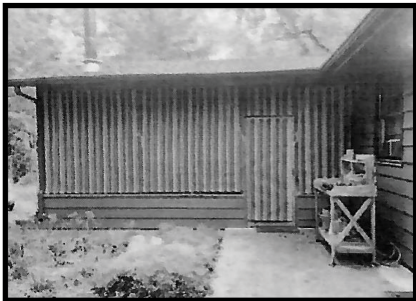


D & M CANVAS

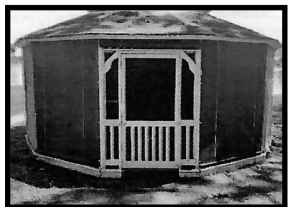
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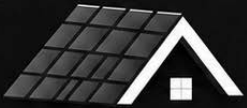
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Engraved Drinkware

Customized Birch Lake drinkware (or choose your own design)! Wide variety of sizes, colors, and styles - stainless steel wine tumblers, coffee mugs, water bottles and more. Call or text Amber at 574-315-0227.



FREE

Infant / Child Life Vests: I have a collection of youth size life vests (mostly 30-50lbs) that my kids have outgrown. Call or text Amber at 574-315-0227.

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 **MONDAY 11am** for the upcoming weekend's Barker.

WANTED

Old BLYC Directories. If you have directories from between 1981 and 1996, I would love to scan them! I have many of the old directories, but nothing between '81 and '96. Email if you come across any! birchbarker1@gmail.com

Outdoor storage space for two MCs (on trailers) in winter and for the two trailers in summer. Call Phil 476-1680.

SERVICES

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

LOST

Missing one turtle raft. Must have taken flight during the storm. Please contact the Garceaus at 269-476-9817 if it happened to wash up on your shore. Thank you.



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Friday, July 24: *Whistle Pigs*
Friday, August 28: *Whiskey Retreat*

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

more info -->



KIDZ REGATTA

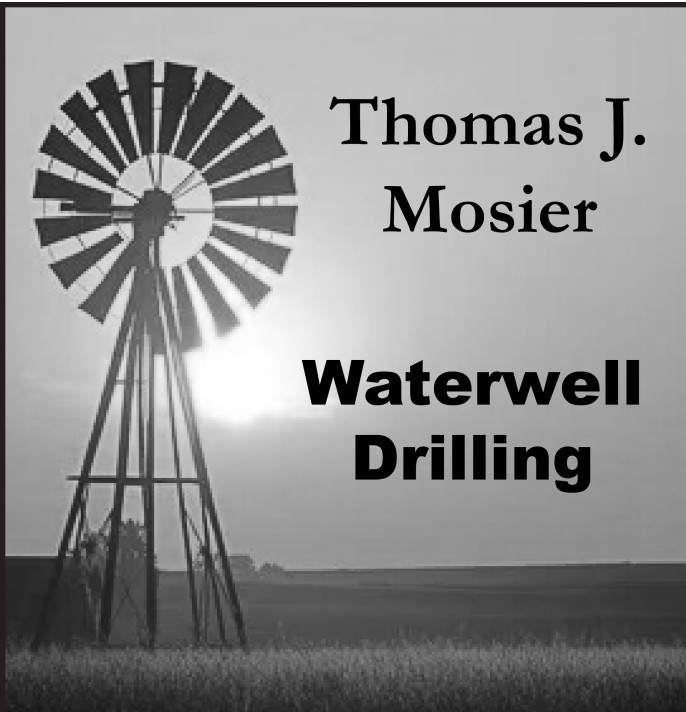
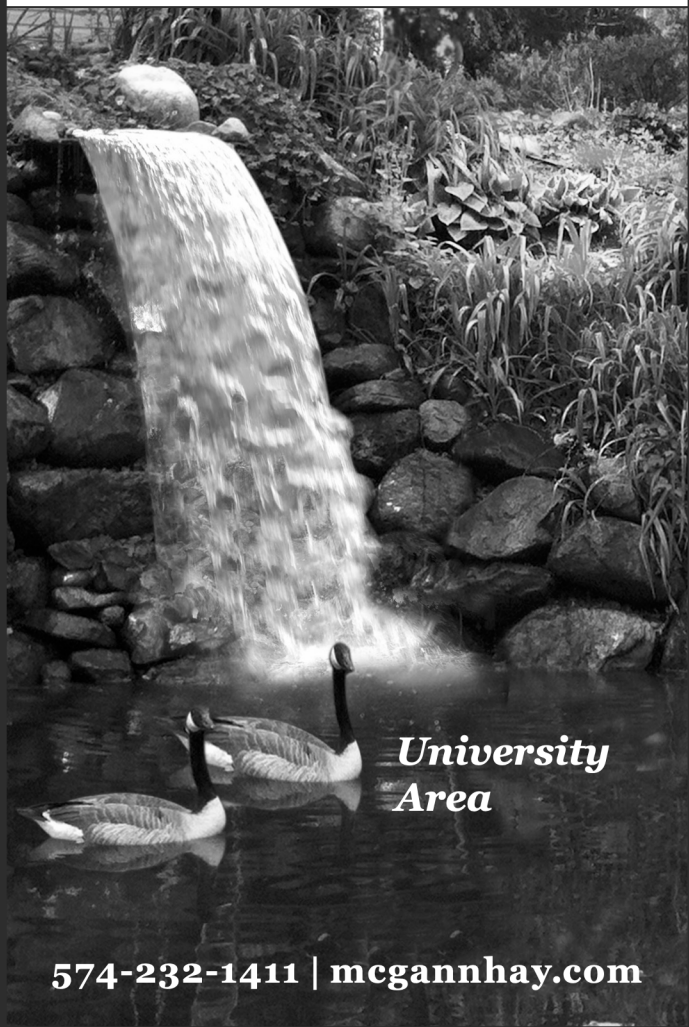


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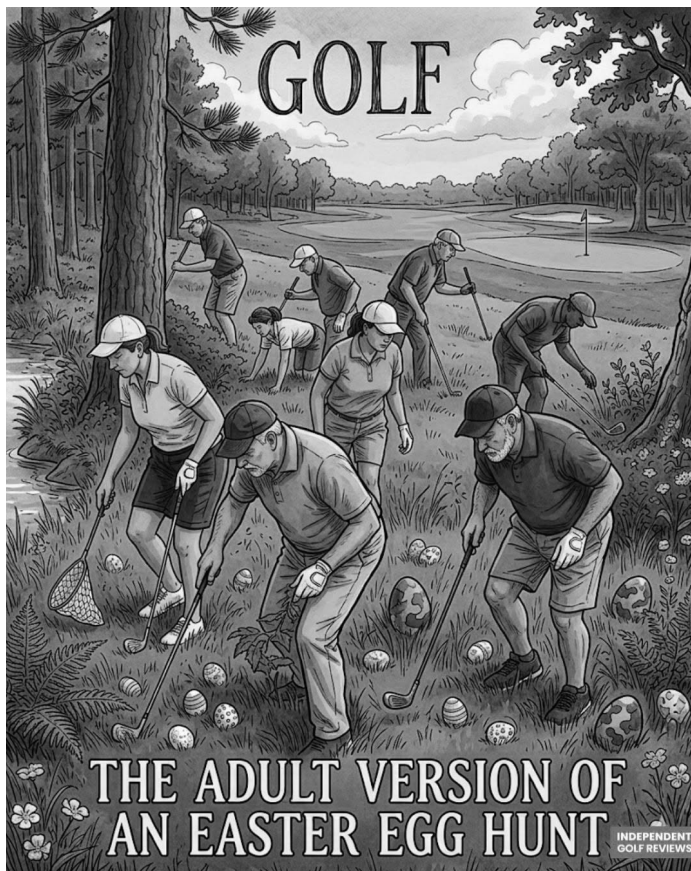
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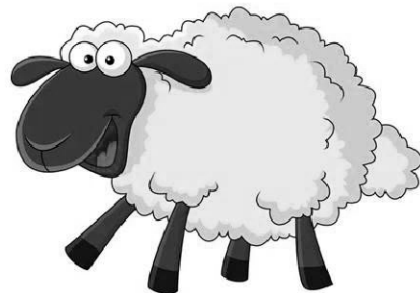
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*Not intended to solicit any properties already listed for sale with another real estate agent.

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