

BIRCH *Barker*

vol. 78 issue 8

Weekend of
July 11
2026

The official publication of the Birch Lake Yacht Club

BirchLakeYachtClub.com



2026 Boat Parade Winners: the DeYoung Family with the Savannah Bananas Boat

2026 BIRCH LAKE CALENDAR

July

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

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)

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Ed Chester (E)
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Bernie Garceau (E)
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Deb Hall (C)
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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

The BLYC held a fantastic 250th birthday party for the U.S.A. last weekend. On Saturday, the Fourth of July, Ron Niezgodski called hello from under a cloud of savory smoke at his Port-a-Pit station, as I passed by on an early morning walk. Soon the lake was buzzing with boats, and yells of delight from kids being towed on tubes filled the air. All afternoon, piers were crowded and music played; while people swam, dove, splashed, and played yard games. American flags flew high as Grand Marshalls John and Jennifer Ball led a boisterous and team-spirited parade of boats around the lake, while fans cheered from the shore. Thank you, Dan Waxman, for once again organizing a great parade. Dan also donated and installed a water cooler / heater in the clubhouse - thanks Dan. Then it was time for a great Port-a-Pit dinner. Thank you, Ron, the food tasted even better than it smelled.

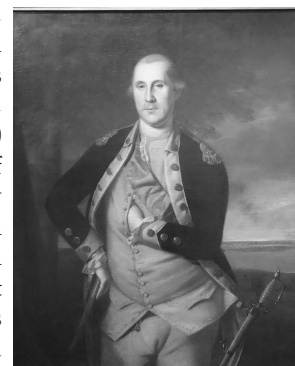
As dusk gathered on Saturday evening, a threatening curtain of rain clouds parted, and the best fireworks show ever seen on Birch Lake went off in spectacular fashion. Many thanks to Camp T for allowing the use of their parking lot to launch the fireworks, each more beautiful than the last. One was even shaped like a blue seashell. The show culminated in an incredible grand finale. Many thanks to all of

our wonderful donors; to the Remingtons and Culver's for their generous matching fund; and to Fireworks Chair Bernie Garceau, who made a difficult job look easy. Early Sunday morning before the Pancake Breakfast, Bernie led a team of volunteers in cleaning up the Camp's parking lot. Thank you, Bernie and his team which included his son-in-law Jared Schlemmer, Phil and Sandy Vitale and their grandson Dominick, Mike and Julie Sheffieck, Bill Luecht, and Jackie Frew. Unfortunately, our Sailors did not get enough wind for a Regatta. Sorry, Sailors, we missed watching your beautiful sails race around the course.

Next Wednesday, July 15, don't miss Card and Game Night, hosted by Sue Davis with Dave and Donna Hogoboom.

250 Years Ago this Week

On July 12, British Admiral Richard Howe's fleet of 150 ships, carrying 11,000 troops, arrived off Staten Island, New York. Meanwhile on July 12, two British warships made it past Patriot batteries in New York, and anchored 30 miles upriver. They could now aid Loyalists,



Painting of George Washington by Charles Willson Peale, 1776



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

disrupt river traffic and threaten the construction of American frigates further north.

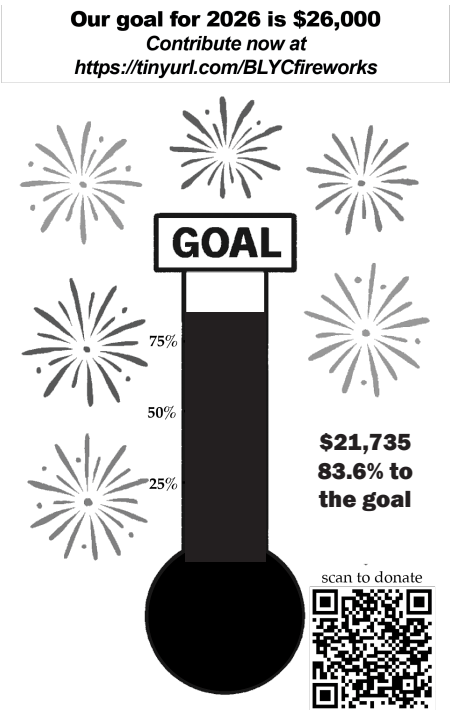
On July 13, British Admiral Howe sent a naval officer, on a barge under a flag of truce, to deliver a letter addressed to "George Washington, Esq." This was a deliberate insult, since Washington's title was "General Washington." And it was a veiled threat, because the British now controlled the Hudson River. But Washington and his officers sent the unopened letter back to the British fleet with the reply: "Sir, we have no person in our army with that address."

~Commodore Steve Frew



Many thanks to the Fireworks Cleanup Crew who arrived early Sunday morning at Camp T to pick up the debris from the fireworks.

Left to Right: Jackie Frew, Phil Vitale, Sandy Vitale, Steve Frew, Julie Sheffieck, Mike Sheffieck, Dom Vitale-Richards, Jared Schlemmer, Bill Luecht, and Bernie Garceau.



Fireworks Wrapup

I would like to send a shout out to all of you Birch Lakers who participated in the success of this year's Fireworks Display on Saturday evening. That includes everyone who sent in or dropped off a donation and helped cover this year's cost. Thanks once again to the Remingtons from the west shore, along with their Culver's Restaurants, who provided a generous matching fund donation for the fireworks. Also, thanks to an anonymous donor who contributed a very generous amount to help push us close to our goal. I am also amazed by the sheer number of Lakers who piled into boats and onto piers, despite the almost certain 'Weather Armageddon' that threatened all the way up to launch time, but never materialized.

We had a great 250th celebration that would not have been possible without all your help. So, a heartfelt "THANK YOU" to all of you.

A big thanks to Roger and crew from RKM Fireworks who told me at 9:30pm Saturday that they were going to make the show happen regardless of the pending weather issues; and they pulled it off. Thanks to Camp T for once again providing a safe location for the Birch Lake Launch Pad. Without the Camp's continued support, the annual fireworks would not be possible.

And lastly, I would like to thank the crew that showed up in the early morning rain on Sunday to help clean up the debris left at the launch location. The crew included: Julie and Mike Sheffieck, Jackie and Steve Frew, Sandy and Phil Vitale along with their grandson Dominick, Bill Luecht, and Jared Schlemmer (Garceau Son-in-law). I apologize to anyone I missed.

The 4th Celebration was once again a great get together with friends and family that took the entire Birch Lake Community to pull off. Thanks, once again, and congratulations to all for making this a special holiday celebration.

~Bernie G.

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Ladies FUN Golf Outing

Ladies! Our annual fun golf outing is Friday, July 24th. Grab three of your fun girlfriends and join us at Elks Golf Course (Dowagiac). Tee off is at 9:00am, with an enjoyable luncheon afterwards at *The Wounded Minnow* in Dowagiac. You say you're not a good golfer? We don't care. It's a best ball scramble so everyone can come and play without any worries. If you are unable to get a foursome together let us know and we'll help find you a great group of ladies who'll make it a fun day. We are making things very simple but still enjoyable this year. Bring your best smile and enjoy a day with the wonderful ladies of Birch Lake.

Just want to enjoy the lunch? There's space for that too. Check out the Ladies Golf Outing form in this Barker for more info or call one of us. Lunch should start around noon or so. Come join us!

Carol McCoy & Blair Garceau

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BIRCH LAKE NEWS

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.

The Printed Barker

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

birchlakeyachtclub.com

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

Homeowner's Association PSA: Vote in 2026!

For All Cass County Residents

Primary Election: August 8

Early Voting July 25 - August 2

Cassopolis VFW, 131 Broadway Street

Midterm Election: November 3

Early Voting October 24 - November 1

Cassopolis VFW, 131 Broadway Street



register to vote

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.

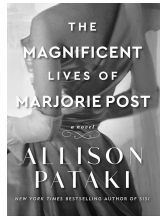


Yacht Club Building Use

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.

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: 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).

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.



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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BOAT PARADE

The July 4th Boat Parade was a wonderful event and I would like to first thank our Grand Marshals, John and Jennifer Ball for leading the parade around the lake. Great looking family and excellent pace! It was fun to have families and friends participate by lake or land so I think we have a new way for everyone to join in on the festivities.

Now, to the winners: Taking **First Place** in the Favorite Team Parade was the **DeYoung Family with the Savannah Bananas Boat!** The DeYoungs are repeat winners so they will be the team to beat next year. Coming in **second** was the **Dugan Family with their Michigan State boat.** Even as a U of M grad, I was happy to see an original Big Ten Team win a trophy. And rounding out the **top 3 winners**, was the **Geik Family with their Chicago Cubs boat.**

As with kids' soccer matches, everyone is a winner in the parade, so participant awards went to: Hogoboom (Notre Dame), Eshleman/Weesner (IU), Troeger (IU), Petty (USA), Wodark (USA hockey) and Drinkall (USA). And a special participant award goes to the Weaver family (South Bend Cubs) whose boat motor gave out, so a family member came in a jet ski to tow them back to shore. Now that's teamwork!

And this year the land (pier, dock, raft, lily pads and floaties) participants were numerous and on each shoreline. The judges loved many of the land teams and a **first place** trophy for Team Spirit went to the **Hosbein family with their Detroit Red Wings gear and enthusiasm.** In fact they showed such team spirit that the end of the pier broke off! Other notable land teams were the Kenagy Family and their Athens, Georgia Rock Lobster Ice Hockey Team (very cool) and the Remington Family and their Culver Extravaganza! And for a refreshment stop, floating in the lake was Dave Hogoboom, his nephew Nick and grandniece Riley handing out popcorn and beverages as we passed by. Much appreciated!

Finally, many thanks to our judges, Phyllis and Ciara Rasmussen and sister Annie and Jesus Lopez and the Judges Boat Captain Paul Fallon and First Mate Celia Fallon. Enjoy all these great pictures of the parade and see you next year!

~ Boat Parade Chairman, Dan (the Man) Waxman



The DeYoung Family and their 1st Place Savannah Bananas Boat



The Dugan Family and their 2nd Place Michigan State Boat



The Geik Family and their 3rd Place Chicago Cubs Boat

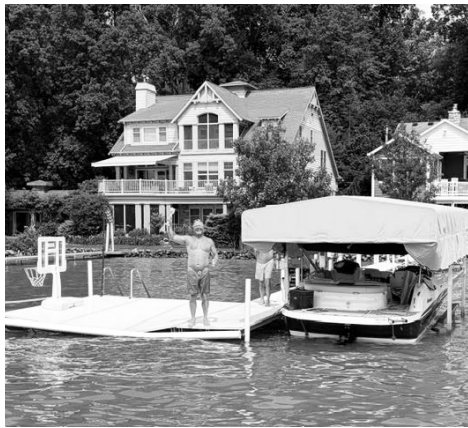


The Hosbein Family won 1st Place for Team Spirit on Shore



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Photos

BOAT PARADE



WATER QUALITY REPORT: STATE OF THE LAKE PART 2

Editor's Note: Due to an editing error, a paragraph from Marty Asire's June 27th Water Quality column about celebrating the Fourth of July at Birch Lake was inadvertently attached to the beginning of Zack Nickell's July 4th Water Quality column on responsible boat operation. The Barker regrets the error and apologizes to both authors and our readers.

In the June 13 edition of the Barker we reported on the testing that we do annually, coupled with the summary report of the 2025 results of that testing from the Cooperative Lakes Management Program. The rationale for doing this testing annually and working with the Cooperative Lakes Management Program is to look for changes in these important parameters of lake health. Thus, hopefully if we see changes, we can further address behavior issues with how we treat the lake as well as seek guidance on additional steps we can take to slow down or alter these changes.

One of the parameters was transparency as measured by weekly testing with a Secchi disk. For some reason all the data was not used by CLMP, and thus no TSI score was determined and used in calculating the overall TSI score. Jennifer Ball, who does all the testing, then resubmitted the data and a Transparency TSI score was determined. That result was a 46, which was higher than our average. However, when the overall TSI score was calculated it was 36 which is our average for 2009-2024. So, no change, which we can look at as good. Again, we will do this annually and continue to report on the results. Just a little note which may not mean much but we hope you have noticed the lake has pretty good clarity in this first week of July. Jennifer noted that the last reading was 18 feet.

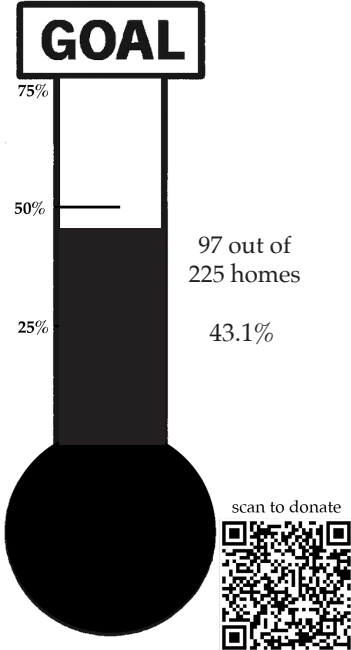
Although it may be a bit late, a word on goose poop. Unless you have put up some barrier to foil the entry of our resident geese and their young ones, you have probably picked up a lot of their droppings which they can produce at the rate of 1-2 pounds per goose per day. Thus 15 geese can produce at least 30 or so pounds per day. The poop should never be flipped into the lake as you might as well just open a bag of fertilizer and

toss a bunch into the lake. Also, it should not be used as fresh droppings due to it being highly acidic and nitrogen rich which can burn out plants. Finally, goose poop should not be eaten by dogs as it can contain harmful bacteria. So, get out there if the geese have been there and pick it up, bag it, and toss in trash.

You may notice we ask our neighbors on the lake to contribute to the Water Quality Fund, and currently it looks healthy. All funds presently are due to the generosity of the lake residents which actually is unusual for most lakes. In this age of invasive species being introduced by errant boaters etc., lakes find themselves suddenly needing \$10,000 to \$40,000 or more annually for proper treatment.

Most commonly, this is achieved through the establishment of a Special Assessment District whereby the county assesses all the residents of the lake via taxes for a defined number of years which may be continued if needed. Fabius Township is having hearings on a SAD being developed for Clear Lake near Three Rivers to manage invasive vegetation. It is estimated that this will generate \$34,000 to \$36,000 per year. Our annual fundraising does not generate anything near that, and our costs have been carried by donations as well as creating a backstop fund should we be hit by expensive invasives. Our hope is to never have to resort to a Special Assessment District as the lake would lose some control to a political body.

**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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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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BLYC ANNUAL LADIES' FUN GOLF OUTING

FRIDAY, JULY 24, 2026

Elks Golf Course

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Dowagiac

9am Tee Off

please arrive no later
than 8:30am

All Entries Due by
Sunday, July 19

\$55 REGISTRATION INCLUDES:
Golf, Cart, and Lunch at the
Wounded Minnow
following the Outing

Lunch Choices include:

A. Chicken Salad on Croissant

B. All-You-Can-Eat Salad Bar

C. Hamburger/Cheeseburger Meal

If you don't golf but would like to join us at
noon for lunch, please register and pay \$27

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

2026 BLYC Ladies' FUN Golf Outing Registration

\$55 per player or \$27 for lunch only

Captain: _____

Lunch:

A B C

Player 3: _____

Lunch:

A B C

Player 2: _____

Lunch:

A B C

Player 4: _____

Lunch:

A B C

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

Carol McCoy

63021 Birch Rd.

Vandalia, MI 49095

OR

Blair Garceau

63542 Birch Rd.

Vandalia, MI 49095

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

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AED Fund

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Barker Donations

\$

Building Fund

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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
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South Bend, IN 46637

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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
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*Individual registrations available. If you don’t have a team, contact John and he can match you up!



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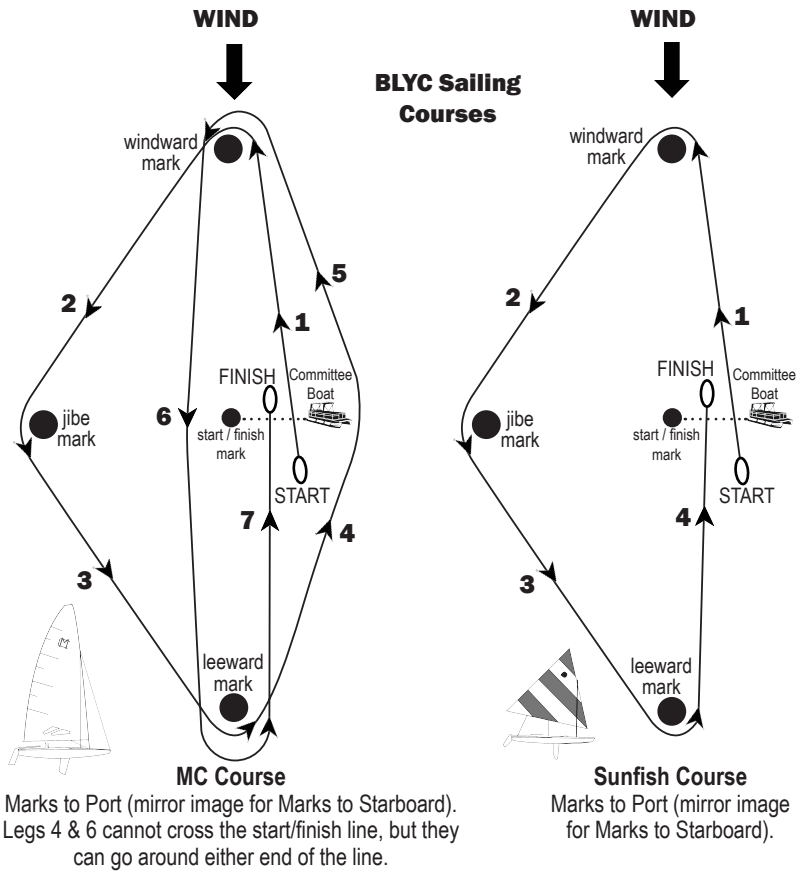
No July 4th Regatta this year

Unfortunately, the winds were not in our favor this past weekend from a sailing perspective, but it was a wonderful weekend overall. The rainstorms were limited, but the forecast did make a lot of us nervous. We did get a downpour that was pretty impressive on Friday afternoon. Unfortunately, the wind was very weak at race time on both Saturday and Sunday, but I did see a sailboat brave the boat traffic and go out Saturday evening when the wind was a little better. All in all, it was a wonderful 250th Fourth of July celebration.

The fireworks went off well and were a wonderful show. Someone I know on Bair Lake said they could see our fireworks show and that it was very nice. The Port-a-Pit Chick fundraiser went off very well on Friday. Was happy to spend time with family and friends this weekend. Also glad it looked like a lot of boaters were having fun out on the lake and that everyone kept safe. Other than that, not a lot to report at the moment. Just cross your fingers that the winds improve so we can get some racing in the next couple of months. In the past, the winds tend to get better later in the year, and I am hoping that holds true this year.

~ Fleet Captain Bob Niezgodski
rjniedzgodski@gmail.com

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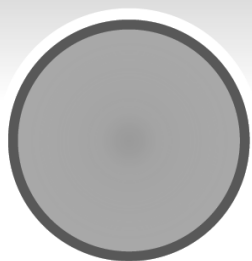
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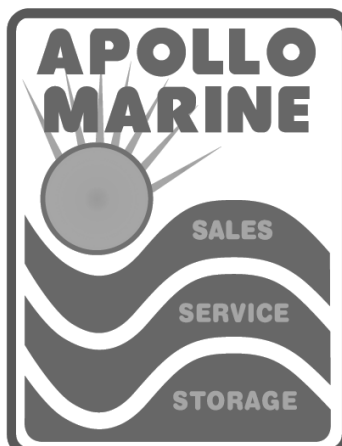
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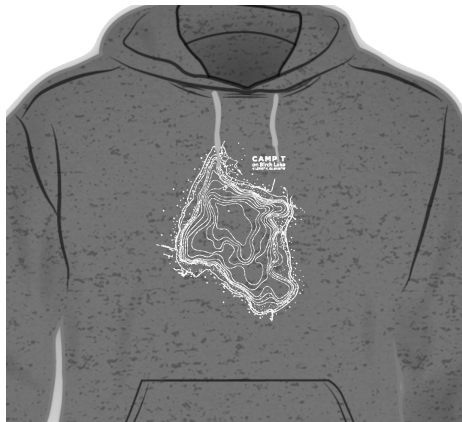
CAMP T CORNER: PANCAKE BREAKFAST

Thank you to everyone who came to camp last Sunday for our annual pancake breakfast! Despite the rainy weather, we had approximately 380 people attend, and an amazing group of volunteers helping make this event happen.

We had 14 volunteers who helped on Sunday - some starting at 6am - plus two camp staff. The volunteers included lake residents, current campers, camp board members, and family and friends. Tom Kuhn, Bob Bender, Kara and Zack Nickell, Lori and Dylan Snider, Brad Zesinger, Scott Sortal, Tom Eslinger, Gaby Cowen, Elyse Grundy, Bill and Sherry Holleman, and Carmen and Robert Garcia. For the 3rd year in a row, Andy and Lori Snider brought their Blackstone up to help make pancakes, and it's a huge help keeping up with the crowd! We couldn't serve 380+ people in 2.5 hours without many helping hands!

Thank you, too, to the volunteers who helped clean up the mess from the fireworks in the sports field! See Bernie's Fireworks recap for their photo and names.

Our camp Trading Post was open on Sunday, and I know lots of people bought this year's amazing Camp Hoodie featuring a topographic map of Birch Lake! If you didn't make it to the breakfast but still want to purchase camp gear, you can always come up and shop during our check in and check out times on the weekends.



2026 Camp T Hoodie
The hoodie is maroon with a topographic map of Birch Lake printed on the front

Check in is every Sunday from 2-4 pm and check out is every Saturday from 10-11 am. The Trading Post is always open during those times. Or you can call or email us and we can schedule a time for you to shop! Camp store items include t-shirts, tank tops, hoodies, sweatpants, engraved tumblers (similar to a Stanley), engraved water bottles (similar to an Owala), stickers, belt bags, flashlights, notebooks, luggage tags, temporary tattoos, and camp staff trading cards.

The holiday weekend is near our midpoint of the summer. Leading up to the holiday, our staff have been at camp for 2 weeks of staff training, and 2½ weeks with campers (plus an additional week of training for those who came to Lifeguard Training). We always do a mini camp the

week of July 4, with campers arriving Sunday and going home Wednesday. Then our staff have a break from midday Wednesday to midday Sunday, before we come back for the last 6 weeks of camp.

We still have openings for some of the upcoming sessions, if you have kids, grandkids, nieces, nephews, neighbors, etc. who want to come for a week! We have over 1100 campers registered for the summer, but still have room for a few more. There are five weeks left – Sessions 4 through 8, before we wrap up the summer on August 15th.

Once our camp program ends, our year-round staff stays busy with rental groups at camp, school year programs in schools, and our 6th annual Grown Up Camp weekend, which will be September 25-27 this year. If you're interested in learning more about Grown Up Camp, give us a call or check out the event on our website at <https://tannadoonah.org>

~Miss Amber



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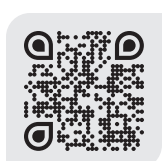


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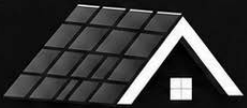
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BIRCH LAKE HISTORY: THE HOLLEMAN FAMILY

Editor's Note: A little bit different this week! You get a first-person history of my own family's connection to Birch Lake. ~Amber

My mom's (Sherry Holleman) first introduction to Birch Lake was when she was about 10 years old. Last summer, the Barker featured a history article about *The Love Shack*, a cottage on the east shore now owned by Eric Miller and Karen Curtis Miller. That cottage (E-176) was previously owned by the Dennert family, who purchased it in 1946. In the mid- to late-1960s, Kay Dennert was a Girl Scout Leader. Her co-leaders were Penny Deats and my grandmother Lee Schutt. Kay and her husband Larry regularly invited the Girl Scout troop up to the lake, and thus began my mom's love of Birch Lake.

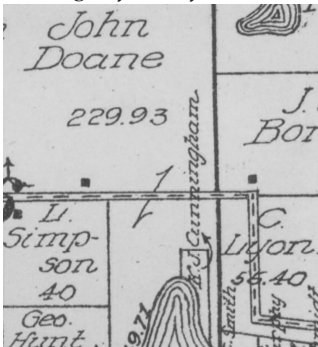
Later, when my mom was in college in the mid 70s, her father remarried, and his new wife's family had a home on Birch Lake. My grandfather, Dick Schutt, married Gail Getzinger, whose parents Hub and Dorothy Getzinger lived on the south shore (S-002), and who were also featured in a history article last summer!

My parents - Bill and Sherry Holleman - got married in 1978. They were living on the southwest side of South Bend at the time, when dad started a job working at the General Motors Plant in Three Rivers, MI. They started looking for something closer to Three Rivers, and found property for sale in the Cove (C-291) - now the home of the Kellys.

They purchased the land from Mildred Binkley Curtis, who was born Mildred Doane in 1900. Her father Frank Doane had at one time owned all of the property in the cove area, and it



1904 photo taken at Birch Lake. Mildred Doane, age 4, is on the lower right, standing in front of her mother.



was known as Doane's Cove for many years.

With the help of my grandfather, Dick Schutt, my parents built our home in the cove, doing much of the work themselves. They quickly became involved in Birch Lake life. Anyone who lived at the lake in the 80s would remember my mom and all of the things she was involved in!

I was born in December of 1979, and my first summer at the lake in 1980 my mom was running youth activities like frog jumping contests and a weekly volleyball league for the kids of Birch Lake. In a Barker note in July 1980, my mom wrote that "Our family really loves to read the Birch Barker, but we have to read it quickly because our 6 month old daughter Amber likes the **taste** of it most!"

The FROG JUMPING CONTEST, held at the Yacht Club last Wednesday was a HUGE SUCCESS!! Twenty-two entrants with frogs of all sizes put on a good show for many Moms, Dads, Aunts Grammas and friends. Each contestant had the opportunity to race their frog three times, prodding him on with their own special technique and the best total of three jumps was thier score. The frog had to make three jumps and was measured at that time. KELLY TROYER was the winner in the small frog division with a 44 inch jump and BETH DAVIS claimed second place honors with a jump of 39 inches. In the big frog division, GREG JEVERT was first with a 54 inch jump and JELL OLSON second with 46 inches. A BIG THANKS to SHERRY for such a FUN DAY. Refreshments of cookies and lemonade made it a special day for all who attended.

Birch Barker, August 16, 1980. Frog jumping contest at the Yacht Club, planned and hosted by Sherry Holleman.

My sisters, Heather and Nicole, were born in 1983 and 1986, respectively. My parents continued to stay involved in the Yacht Club, and mom got involved in the production and delivery of the Barker. In 1982 she coordinated Barker delivery - which at the time was done by the youth of the lake! In 1983 she and Judy Olson were both elected to the BLYC Board of Directors and were co-editors of the Barker. By 1986, mom was the Editor of the Barker on her own.

My memories of growing up on the lake include roaming the cove and west side on our bikes, with Angie and Randy Rogers (our next door neighbors), Josh and Caleb Walker, Val and Kyla Scofield, the Gableman kids, and others. We played in the woods behind our houses, built forts, climbed trees, and swam in the lake every chance we got. And every kid growing up on the lake remembers trips to Tom's Garage (or Lanky's before Tom's) for penny candy. There weren't many year-round families at the time, and I remember it being quiet and rather lonely in the winters!

When I was 4 or 5, we acquired a "ski board" and started riding behind the boat. A few years later I wanted to try real skis. A note in the July 17, 1987 Barker stated "Amber Holleman reports that a pair of beginner's skis has been found at the Tate's. She has also decided they are definitely not as easy as they look! Her first try was a bust but we all had that problem. Next time it will be a lot easier and she is going to get up, right Amber? Heather is also screaming right along behind the pontoon."

I remember my mom typing the



Heather (5), Amber (8), and Nicole Holleman (2) at Birch Lake in 1988

Barker in our living room, and my sister Heather and I helping crank the mimeograph to make the copies. Once it was printed, we would load up our red wagon and deliver the Barker along the cove and west side. My mom claims that I was her reporter - I would walk or bike around the lake talking to people and gathering information for her to report in the Barker.

As soon as I was old enough (5), I started going to day camp at Camp T. My mom would walk me to the bottom of the waterfront stairs, and Mrs. Laing would wait at the top of the stairs. She would call down to my mom when I made it up to camp, and my mom would do the same in the evening when Mrs. Laing sent me down the stairs. In all my years as a camper, I never imagined that someday I would BE Mrs. Murphy (the camp director)!



My first week at Camp in 1986. I'm in the lower left corner.

At the 1989 fall dinner, my dad was announced as the Vice Commodore for the 1990 season. However, at the end of that fall, the GM plant in Three Rivers closed for "retooling," and never reopened. My dad was offered the option of being transferred to another GM facility, and he accepted it. In April of 1990 we moved to Ortonville, Michigan, and left Birch Lake behind.

When I was a small child, my grandparents had a summer cottage on Shavehead Lake, one set of great-grandparents lived year-round on Birch Lake, and my other great-grandparents lived year-round on Simonton Lake. Naturally, I believed that everyone got to live on a lake! When I went to preschool, my mom says I introduced myself to another student, and asked, "What lake do *you* live on?" We were lucky indeed to have had a childhood on the lake!

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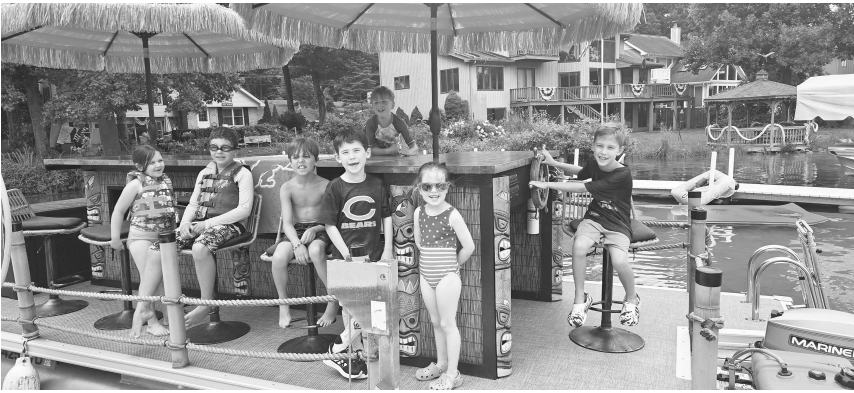
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BARKER KIDS OF THE WEEK



*Madi, Andrew, Clay, Alex, Atlas, Claire, and Collin
Grandkids of southsiders Ray and Mary Waters and Dave and Donna Hogoboom
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Want your kid to be a Barker kid of the week? Send your photos to birchbarker1@gmail.com



Bob Palm's (south shore) baby since he was 13 years old and spent years caring and renovating this 1930 Model A.



Ray and Jill Scholes celebrated a "grand" holiday.



Lifelong lake girls enjoying the 4th: Sue Davis and Jill Scholes with their daughters, Nicole Riordan and Kate Crossetti.



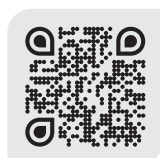
Boat parade fun with Pat Hogoboom's great-grandkids: Andrew Hogoboom, Clay Boverhof, Madi Hogoboom, Riley Haverkamp, and Atlas Boverhof.



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EMERGENCY HEART DEFIBRILLATOR (AED) locations on Birch Lake

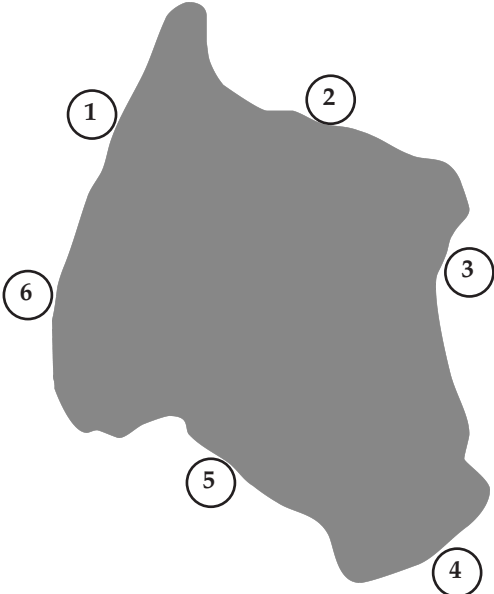
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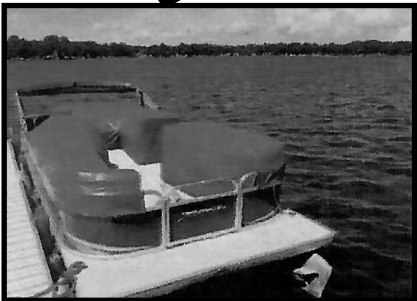
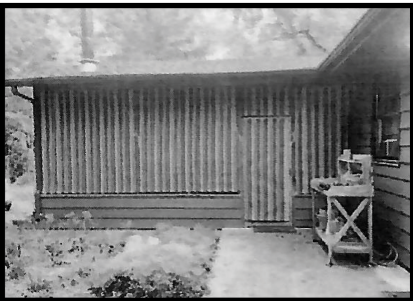


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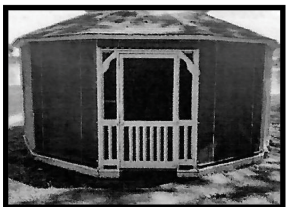
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FOUND

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Cass County COA Summer Concert Series

Friday, June 26: The Van Dyke Revue

Friday, July 24: Whistle Pigs

Friday, August 28: Whiskey Retreat

The COA's Summer Concert Series is back by popular demand. Join us at the COA Lowe Center's Pavilion for some great music and an opportunity to purchase food from our food truck vendors. Bring a chair or blanket enjoy three FREE outdoor concerts!

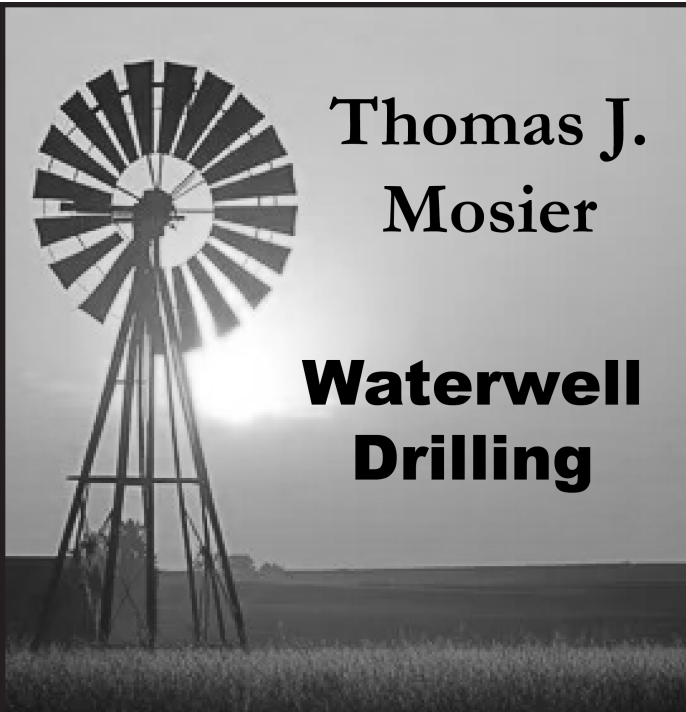
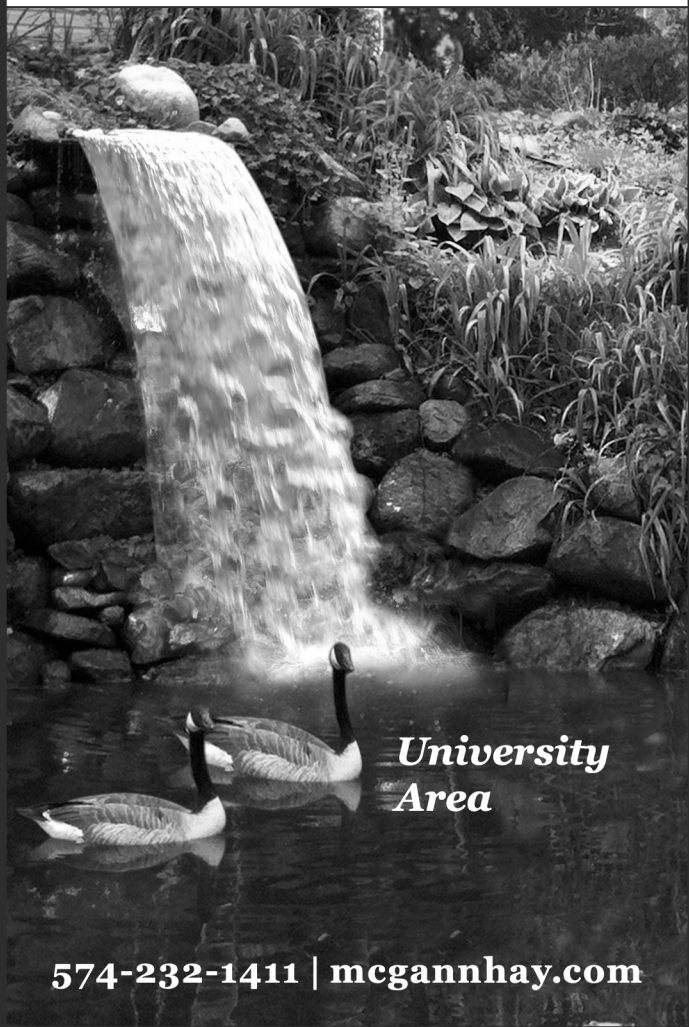
Food is available from 5:30-7:30pm
Concerts begin at 7:00pm

[more info -->](#)



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Here are some things for you to consider:

- Lake inventory is at an all time low and prices are higher.
- There are more buyers than sellers.
- Many lake property buyers are cash buyers.
- Interest rates have leveled off and may come down more.



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

BARKER FUNNIES



"I want my Sharpie back as soon as you're done dyeing your hair."

I was the best man at my brother's wedding in Paris. At the reception, I raised my champagne glass and said, "Eggs, cinnamon, bread, and maple syrup..."

It was a French toast.

A drunk stumbles into a Catholic Church. He enters a confessional booth. He sits down but says nothing. The priest coughs a few times to get his attention but the drunk continues to sit there.

Finally, the priest pounds on the wall three times. The drunk mumbles..."Ain't no use knocking, there's no toilet paper on this side either!" 🤪

Matt's dad picked him up from school one afternoon.

Knowing the parts for the school play were supposed to be posted today, he asked his son if he got a part. Matt enthusiastically announced that he'd gotten a part. "I play a man who's been married for twenty years."

"That's great, son. Keep up the good work and before you know it they'll be giving you a speaking part."

AS I GET OLDER,
I DON'T REALLY SLEEP
ANYMORE.
IT'S MORE OF A DOZE
BETWEEN PEE BREAKS.

A lonely frog telephoned the Psychic Hotline and asked what his future holds.

His Personal Psychic Advisor tells him: "You are going to meet a beautiful young girl who will want to know everything about you."

The frog is thrilled! "This is great! Will I meet her at a party?" he croaks.

"No," says the psychic, "in biology class."

WAKE SIDE MARINE



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