

BIRCH *Barker*

vol. 78 issue 9

Weekend of
July 18
2026

The official publication of the Birch Lake Yacht Club

BirchLakeYachtClub.com



Boat Parade Grand Marshalls

I was remiss in not including a picture of our Grand Marshall boat so here it is with John and Jennifer Ball along with sons Chris, Adam, and Alex. Thanks everyone for a great parade on the lake and on land! ~Boat Parade Chairman Dan Waxman

2026 BIRCH LAKE CALENDAR

July

19 - Ladies Golf Outing Entries Due
24 - Ladies Golf Outing
24 - Mens Golf Outing Entries Due

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)

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

It's been a quiet week, as is usual after the Fourth of July. But next Wednesday, don't forget Card and Game Night! Many thanks to those who helped Ron Niezgodski feed us all last weekend, with the delicious barbequed fare from the Port-A-Pit station: Dan Waxman, Liz Cover and her three sons, Barb Cassady, Kevin Goodin, Blair Garceau, Ed Chester, and Bob Niezgodski. Perhaps I have missed thanking others of you who have helped in any of our activities so far this summer. If so, I apologize, and ask that you please let me know, and I will be sure to include you next time. Thank you.

250 Years Ago in American History

Well in advance of the Declaration of Independence being signed, the British Empire had a plan in place to crush the expected rebellion. The plan was to begin with the capture of New York City. On July 2, the day Congress voted in favor of independence, a large British fleet landed in friendly territory at the British Loyalist stronghold of Staten Island, not far from New York City. The British plan was off to a good start.

But the Patriots were undeterred. On July 9, General George Washington ordered the Declaration of Independence read aloud at New York City Hall. Crowds of soldiers and

civilians then marched to Bowling Green and toppled the gilded equestrian statue of King George III. The lead was later melted down into musket balls for the Continental Army. General Washington announced that in the future, any statue-toppling would be done by the government, rather than by a mob. And that same day, New York became the 13th colony to endorse independence, making it unanimous among the 13 original colonies.

Throughout July, the largest force Britain had ever sent overseas was assembling around New York City, about 32,000 strong. Washington's smaller Continental Army, of about 19,000, was fortifying Manhattan and Long Island in anticipation of attack. Congress and colonial assemblies continued spreading news of the Declaration via newspapers, broadsides, and couriers. Skirmishes and reconnaissance occurred around New York waters. American forces destroyed or removed supplies that could aid the British. Washington issued orders emphasizing discipline, and the new reality of fighting as an independent nation. The British presence on Staten Island encouraged Loyalists, while Patriots uncovered or suppressed plots. Tensions ran high in occupied or contested areas.

The second half of July 1776 was a period of transition: jubilant celebration of independence mixed with urgent military preparation as the full weight of British retaliation loomed in New York. No major battles had yet occurred, but a colonial rebellion had become a declared



The 2026 Birch Barker is
generously sponsored by Culver's.
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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

war for independence. Many colonies had explicitly banned titles of nobility or hereditary honors. And the toppling of the gilded Statue of King George had become an iconic symbol of the American Revolution.

~Commodore Steve Frew



"The Destruction of the Royal Statue in New York," courtesy of the American Social History Project/Center for Media and Learning, CUNY

Men's Golf Outing Reminder
A reminder to register your foursome by Friday, July 24, 2026. Golf, Cocktails, Dinner, Awards, and Prizes at Meadow Valley Country Club on July 31, 2026 at noon. Contact John Ball at 574-535-3736 with questions.

Ladies Style Show & Luncheon
The Birch Lake Ladies Style Show is back! Mark your calendars for Wednesday, August 26th at 11:30 at the Woodfire Trattoria in Dowagiac. Our beautiful models will be wearing fall fashions from The Marshall Shoppe. Lunch includes your choice of an entrée, salad, dessert, and a soft drink or tea for \$35. You can purchase tickets online or from Ronni Eshleman 317-418-9557 or Deb Runser 269-313-3943. This fun event always sells out, so get your tickets early.

Birch Lake Yacht Club
FIREWORKS FUND
Our goal for 2026 is \$26,000
Contribute now at
<https://tinyurl.com/BLYCFireworks>



LADIES'
Style Show
— AND LUNCHEON —

FRIDAY, AUGUST 26
11:30

WOOD FIRE TRATTORIA

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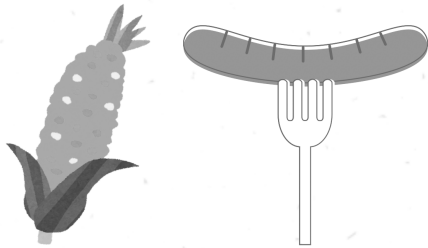
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\$35.00

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CORN & SAUSAGE ROAST

Saturday, August 1,
from 5-6:30 PM at BLYC



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

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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.

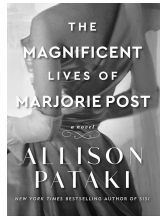


Yacht Club Building Use

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).

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WATER QUALITY REPORT

Lifelong Birch Lakers all have stories of happenstance encounters with others connected to the lake. Recently, I had one from fairly far afield: I was speaking to one of my school colleagues in Saint Louis about scouting and summer camps, and, following the thread of Camp Fire and the songs and stories we were familiar with, I realized she had spent one summer at Camp T (formerly Tannadoonah). Eager to share our experiences as campers, I asked her about the activities she enjoyed there, including at the waterfront.

"Oh, I didn't go in the water," she explained. "Swimming in lakes is . . . gross."

I was astonished. Surely she wasn't talking about *Birch Lake*!

Certainly not the Birch Lake in which I was "baptized" at a month old (only weeks out of the NICU!) at my grandparents' place on the south shore in 1987.

Not Birch Lake - whose lapping waves lulled me to sleep as a one-year-old under cover of my grandparents' shore station during the construction of another cottage on the north shore - and through every summer night from my ground-floor bedroom.

Not Birch Lake - on which I spent many a warm day capturing and releasing minnows and turtles, creating a "slip and slide" from foam rafts off the end of the pier, and filling water guns alongside a shoreline full of neighbor children.

Not Birch Lake - which, one winter when I was nine or ten, froze over smooth as glass, with ice so clear you could gaze through it like the walls of an aquarium. We skated out and spotted generations of fishing lures and golf balls sunk in the water far from shore.

Not Birch Lake - which evicted the zebra mussel epidemic of the early '00s in record time partly because the filter-feeders found her *too clean*. From our pier, I see more of her native yellow clams returning each year.

Not Birch Lake - from which, I once boasted to a visiting friend, I had only encountered two leeches in my entire lifetime. (She was, ironically, the victim of the third, but it hasn't stopped

her visiting year after year - and now, in almost *forty* years, I can still say I've only encountered *three* leeches!).

Not Birch Lake - whose abundant waters draw fishermen of various species, including our beloved herons, eagles, and osprey.

Not Birch Lake - to which I continue to make a yearly summer pilgrimage and in whose waters I have never hesitated to open my eyes beneath the surface nor flinch at a mouthful of water!

"Honestly," my colleague replied sheepishly, taken aback at my unsolicited TED Talk, "I don't know that I even went down and saw the waterfront. It was a cold week, and there were all those steps..."

Ultimately, I can't blame her for her assumption that the lake would be unpleasant. Birch Lake defies the image many (especially from out of state!) have of inland lakes: murky, mucky, polluted, barren. Instead, we enjoy a clear and shimmering treasure. This summer I have marveled at the 18 feet of depth clarity observed with the Secchi disk by my neighbors John and Jennifer Ball. Even after the heat and hubbub of the July 4th holiday, I can still see the topography of the lake floor from the end of our pier.

Birch comes by her beauty naturally with her ground springs and inlet/outlet keeping the waters refreshed and flowing, but she remains as pristine as she does by the care of her stewards. We cannot take her health and beauty for granted. From the Water Quality Committee's work on monitoring, treatment, and education and the contributors who fund it, to the residents and visitors who respect guidelines on runoff and shoreline protection, on down to children who helped remove invasive zebra mussels by hand (for \$.01 per mussel, per Bob King in 2002!), we all play a role in preserving the our beloved Birch Lake for generations to enjoy.

~Amy Troeger

THE SIX COMMANDMENTS OF BIRCH LAKE WATER QUALITY

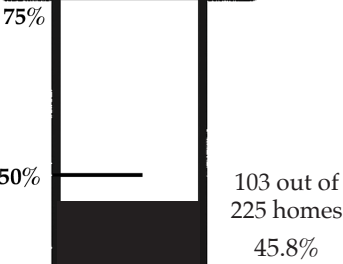
- I. Thou shalt prevent the spread of Aquatic Invasive Species (AIS).
- II. Thou shalt minimize surface runoff.
- III. Thou shalt minimize the effects of waves.
- IV. Thou shalt protect and expand Natural Shorelines.
- V. Thou shalt not allow phosphorus, nutrients, and other undesirable chemical elements to enter our lake.
- VI. Thou shalt remain informed and active about other Water Quality issues.

Birch Lake Yacht Club WATER QUALITY FUND

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GOAL



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BLYC ANNUAL LADIES' FUN GOLF OUTING

FRIDAY, JULY 24, 2026

Elks Golf Course

300 Riverside Dr.
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
match you up.

Join us for dinner!



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

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BLYC 66TH ANNUAL MEN'S GOLF OUTING

FOUR MAN 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:

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FLEET CAPTAIN'S CORNER

This past weekend, the winds were finally in our favor, but almost weren't. Before the races, we had a nice, constant breeze, but before the races, the wind died down. It took me half an hour to sail across the lake and make it to the start line from the west shore. The Committee Boat, two MC's, and the other two Sunfish were waiting patiently for me to get to the line to call the races. But Mother Nature pulled through. All of a sudden, the wind picked back up, and I zoomed to the start line. On the way out, I was preparing to cancel the races, but since now there was wind, and we all made the effort to sail out there, the Sunfish decided to race. The MCs only had two boats, so they didn't have the three-boat minimum to host a race. Unfortunately, there has been a string of health-related issues affecting the MC sailors and their families this year, and it's been a struggle to get enough boats out there. If you have a MC, please come out and join us this year. We need everyone out there we can get. Reach out to me if interested, and I will add you to the sailing email list to notify you if we are racing or not.

In any event, the Sunfish were able to sail our three races for the weekend, and complete them in under an hour and a half. This is slightly under the typical time it takes to host the races. The wind was good and challenging as well. There were many spots on the course where the wind was not, "we sailors call that a hole," so as long as you avoided those spots, it was a good day of sailing. The results were pretty consistent. Rick 1st, Amy 2nd, and I got 3rd. Amy did beat Rick in one of the races by 6 inches or so. Good job, Amy! It turned out for the best and was a fun day of sailing. We also had a drone sighting. Stew, who sails with the Sunfish, doesn't like the lighter wind, but helped out by flying his drone out to take some good action photos!

~ Fleet Captain Bob Niezgodski, rjniedzgodski@gmail.com



BIRCH LAKE SAILING SCORES

Sunfish Standings

	12-Jul	12-Jul	12-Jul	Total	% Races	Average	Season
	7	8	9	Points	Finished	Points	Rank
Sunfish Sailor							
Stewart Spratt	DNS	DNS	DNS	9442	66.7%	1573.7	1
Rick Russwurm	1	2	1	4721	33.3%	1573.7	1
Amy Troeger	2	1	2	9059	66.7%	1509.8	3
Pete Soldato	DNS	DNS	DNS	2965	22.2%	1482.5	4
Bob Niezgodski	3	3	3	13000	100.0%	1444.4	5
Connor Caplis	DNS	DNS	DNS	8439	66.7%	1406.5	6
Herb Cleveland	DNS	DNS	DNS	4192	33.3%	1397.3	7
Marlee Soldato (crew for Pete S)	DNS	DNS	DNS	0	22.2%	0.0	8

MC Scow Standings

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

Key and Scoring Information

DNS (Did Not Sail) does not count against season score, however **sailor must complete 2/3 of races to qualify for season**

DNF (Did Not Finish) or DSQ (Disqualified) scores as last place (if 5 boats started the race, you will be scored as 5th place).

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

CB - sailor who serves on Committee Boat receives their season average place as of that date - counted toward season total.

Season Points are awarded on Square of 40 system (1st = 40 squared = 1600, 2nd = 39 squared, etc.)

Season Place = total season points / number of races attempted



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Steve Frew (E) 708-285-2999
stephenbfrew@gmail.com

Vice Commodore

Ron Niezgodski (W) 574-532-6710
birchbass1@gmail.com

Treasurer

Deb Spratt (N)
debspratt@comcast.net

Secretary

Mike Sheffieck (W) 708-220-1506
mcsheffieck@gmail.com

Fleet Captain

Bob Niezgodski (W) 574-532-6919
rjniezgodski@gmail.com

BLYC DIRECTORS

John Ball (E) 574-535-3736
john.ball0452@gmail.com

Dave Carroll (W) 574-850-0465
carrolldavid39@gmail.com

Barb Cassady (E) 574-229-9815
barbcassady49@gmail.com

Ed Chester (E) 269-476-1010
ed@chesterlawoffice.com

Tim Cole (H) 574-607-7235
tim@gemstoness.com



Liz Cover (E) 574-849-1429
bizzycovers27@gmail.com

Sue Davis (E) 574-993-6031
eyesnd76@gmail.com

Julie Dickey (E) 574-220-9132
jdjuls@aol.com
Past Commodore

Ronni Eshleman (S) 317-418-9557
rondaesh@gmail.com

Bernie Garceau (E) 269-476-9862
bgarceau@norcoind.com

Blair Garceau (E) 269-476-9862
blairgarceau@gmail.com
Homeowner's Association Chair

Deb Hall (C) 219-765-8691
debbershall@gmail.com

Amber Holleman (E) 574-315-0227
amber.grundy@gmail.com
birchbarker1@gmail.com

Vickie Rogers (C) 269-476-2383
tvrogers@frontier.com

Rick Russwurm (N) 269-476-2407
paramountp@aol.com

Ray Scholes (S) 567-429-9569
rqs72@aol.com

Scott Troeger (E) 269-476-9898
scott.troeger@btlaw.com

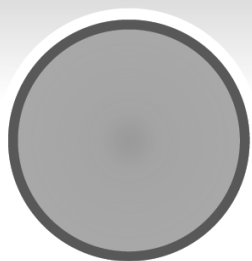
Phil Vitale (E) 269-476-1680
onlinebarker@gmail.com

Sandy Vitale (E) 269-476-1680
sv6102@gmail.com

Dan Waxman (E) 317-506-1680
dwaxman131@outlook.com

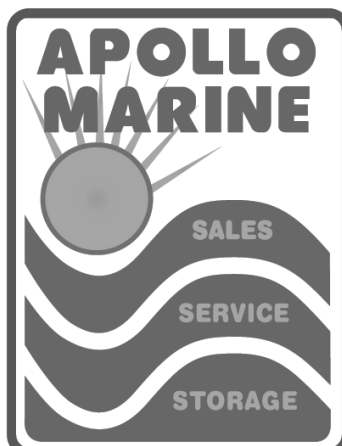
Patrick Welch (S) 574-536-7344
patrick.welch2017@gmail.com
Water Quality Committee Chair

Sue Williams (S) 269-476-8886
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CAMP T CORNER

Every summer we raise funds to help campers attend camp who would otherwise be unable to attend for financial reasons. We call these "campership" funds - scholarships to attend camp.

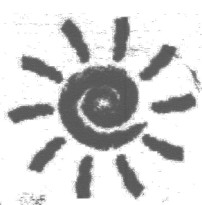
This year, between a combination of individual donors, local organizations, and grant funds, we have allocated over \$90,000 for camperships. These funds will provide approximately 220 free or reduced cost sessions of overnight and day camp over the course of the summer (about 1/6 of our overall camper sessions).

For the past two years we have received a very generous grant from the State of Michigan to fund camperships specifically for youth who attend our school year programs to attend day camp throughout the entire summer as a way of maintaining connection with these students throughout the year. In addition, the funds have allowed us to rent a van to provide transportation for many of these campers from Cassopolis and Edwardsburg.

We ask campers who receive campership funding to write a brief thank you note so that we can share those with donors and organizations who support the campership program. This week I wanted to share a heartfelt note written by one of those campers this summer. If you are interested in contributing to our campership fund, please contact me!

~Miss Amber

You are the best for
Sponsoring me to come
back to camp T. Thank You
so so much! This is the best part of
camp this is my second year and i really
had so much fun making new friends and
getting to be privileged to come to camp.
My favorite part of coming to camp is
the people, the people who cook for us,
the people who volunteer to be CITs,
the people who deal with our antics at
night, the people who let me come out of
it, its honestly so fun to be able
to meet people from all around the world
and make friends with all of them.
My favorite activitie was Drama because I
love playing games or making up improv or even
acting off a script. I really hope I can come
back next year. I really appreciate Cis that you re
spell it?) that you did this for me.
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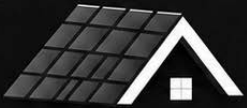
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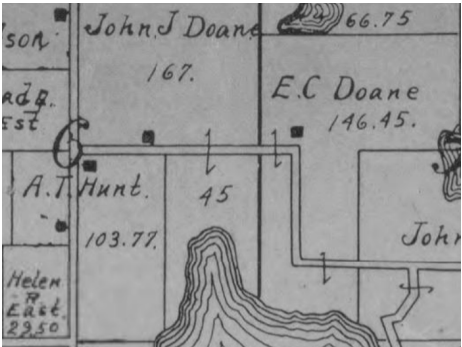
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BIRCH LAKE HISTORY: THE COVE

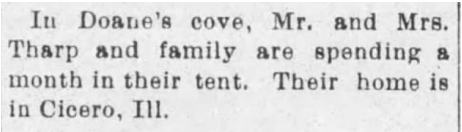
The cove at the northern tip of Birch Lake is a quiet nook. Many of the lots are triangular, with narrow frontage on the lake, long front yards, and wider frontage on the road side, and property that reaches back into the woods beyond.

The cove today is far different from how it was once imagined by early owners of the land there. In an 1897 plat map of Cass County, the entire cove area was owned by John Doane, who had purchased the land in 1868 from Allen T. Hunt. At that time, the north shore was also owned by a member of the Doane family, E. C. Doane.

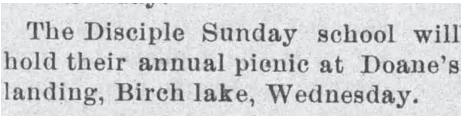


1897 Plat Map of Northern Porter Township, Cass County

In the early 1900s Doane's Cove was used as a public recreation site, with permission from the Doane family. Families came to Doane's Cove (sometimes called Doane's Landing) to camp, fish, and swim. Harold Cranmer recalls that his parents first came to Birch Lake around 1920 to camp and fish with friends when they were dating.



Doane's Cove, Cassopolis Vigilant, July 25, 1912



Doane's Landing, Cassopolis Vigilant, August 21, 1913

In the late 1910s and early 1920s, the land around Birch Lake was being subdivided into lots. By 1925, those subdivisions included Willow Beach, Nun-u-ko-muk, and Birch Shores on the east shore, Sylvan Shores, Birch Aire, and Birch Terrace on the south shore, Oak Bluff and Woodland Cove in the cove.

Frank Doane, the son of John Doane, inherited the land in 1916. He originally platted the land as Oak Bluff. During the winter, he moved an old ice house across the frozen lake to lot 27, converting it into what is considered the first cottage in the cove. This property is now occupied by the Bender family.

In 1925, the Oak Bluff subdivision was "abandoned" and replatted as Woodland Cove. When Frank Doane,

Tom L. Hogan, Richard Ridenback, and Glen Welch platted Woodland Cove in 1925, they did more than divide the shoreline into cottage lots. Their plat also dedicated a parcel called Doane Park, along with several streets and alleys, for public use.

At the time, dedicating parks and public access areas was common practice in subdivisions. The developers hoped the park would provide access to the lake, serve as a picnic and gathering area, and create shared open space for both residents and visitors. There appears to have been little formal development of Doane Park. There were no permanent recreation facilities, and neither Porter Township nor Cass County ever assumed responsibility for maintaining or regulating it.

With over 100 lots stretching from the cove to the middle of the west side of the lake, if the early plans for Woodland Cove had come to fruition, the northwest corner of the lake would look far different than it does today!

Some of the earliest families to purchase lots in the cove included Floyd and Ruth Fulmer, Jack and Evelyn Asire, Clifford and Avonelle Cowen, Howard and Ruth Lahr, Jim and Helen Beard, Dee and Helen Shewman, and Chuck and Sara Partridge. Many of the early cottages had whimsical names - Snug Harbor, Bottom Dollar, Wee Wood, Cowen's Cove, DunKampin, and Add-a-Bit. Many of these families lived in the cove for generations, and some are still here!

In 1949, an attorney named Luther Binkley purchased the remaining lots in the cove. His wife was Mildred Doane Binkley, the granddaughter of the original owner of the land, John Doane, and daughter of Frank Doane who had subdivided Woodland Cove in 1925. In 1951, Mr. and Mrs. Binkley petitioned Cass County to close Doane Park and abandon several dedicated streets and alleyways in the original Woodland Cove plat that were unusable.

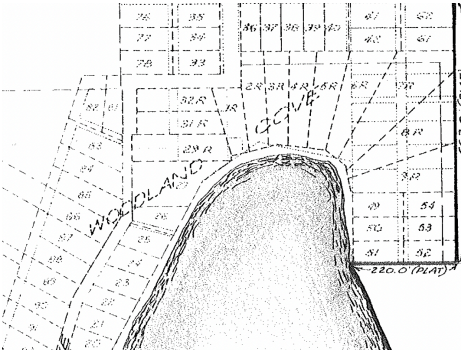
Binkley's petition to the court stated that "wild parties" at the park keep residents awake at all hours of the night and that the grounds were often littered with broken bottles and trash left by campers and picnickers. The Cass County Sheriff further stated that he had received numerous complaints of rowdy visitors disturbing the peace of the residents. Binkley told the county that he would drop his petition if the county would guarantee that they would take over the park, clean it up, and enforce some sort of control over the park and the people using it.

The Cass County Court approved Binkley's petition in 1951 and the decision was upheld by the Michigan Supreme Court on December 9, 1952.



1925 Plat Map of Woodland Cove

This decision paved the way for the remaining empty lots in the cove to be replatted and sold. What had been Doane Park and 23 separate bordering lots became 9 triangular lots with 25 to 40 feet of lake frontage each. These lots were deep, stretching 190 to over 300 feet back into the woods of the cove.



1962 map showing the overlay of the nine new triangular lots (numbered 1R through 9R) on top of the 1925 Woodland Cove plat map

The Binkleys built a new home at the southernmost end of Woodland Cove in 1951, located where the Niezgodskis now live. Mr. Binkley passed away in the summer of 1953, only months after the conclusion of the court case surrounding Woodland Cove. Mrs. Binkley (who later remarried and became Mildred Curtis) and her son, Charles Binkley, then sold the remaining lots in the cove over the course of the next three decades.

Between 1954 and the early 80s, the nine lots were sold to the Colemans (lot 9R, 1954), Heckbers (lot 1R, 1961 and lot 2R, 1966), Bill Lloyd (lot 6R, 1966), Kolbers (lot 4R, 1967), Chicks (lot 3R, 1972), Witts (lot 5R, 1972), Hollemans (lot 8R, 1978), and Rogers (lot 7R, early 80s).

The cove is a quiet corner with sheltered water. The long front lawns seem to blend together, and neighbors have long treated them as shared green space, often paying little attention to the invisible property lines between cottages. Children run from house to house, and swim out to the middle of the cove to float and play on rafts. While much has changed since Woodland Cove was platted over a century ago, the same sense of community and shared space still defines the Cove.

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BARKER KIDS OF THE WEEK



Gigi Cassady (granddaughter of Barb and Tom Cassady, east shore) on her second solo sailing adventure.



Nina and David Frurip (east shore) with their grandkids on the 4th. Julie (14), Matthew (12), Joey (7), Nora (4), and David (2).

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



2026 Edition of the "Soldato Grandkids 4th of July Visit" (west shore)



Uncle Brett Sortal took Raegan and Jane Sortal fishing (son and granddaughters of Jan Temple and Tom Kuhn, west shore). Nothing better than a Birch Lake fish fry!



Brett and Luke Sortal (son and grandson of Jan Temple and Tom Kuhn, west shore) with Brett's catch — a 13.5" Crappie — and Luke's first Crappie catch.



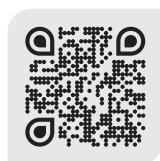
Matthew Wodark (south shore) with his catch.



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EMERGENCY HEART DEFIBRILLATOR (AED) locations on Birch Lake

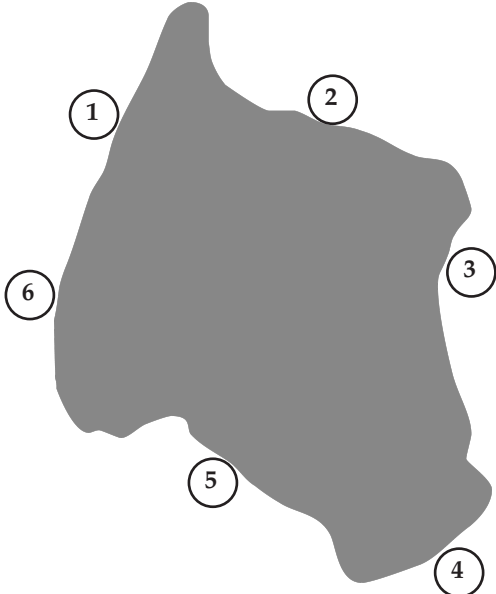
There are six (6) automated external defibrillator units (AEDs) on Birch Lake. The boxes that contain these devices are located at the following locations:

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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



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- 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.

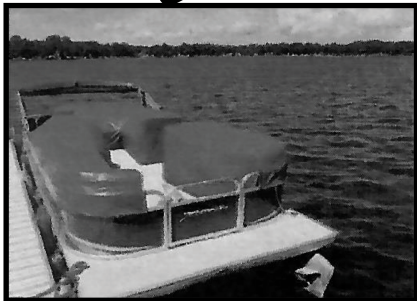
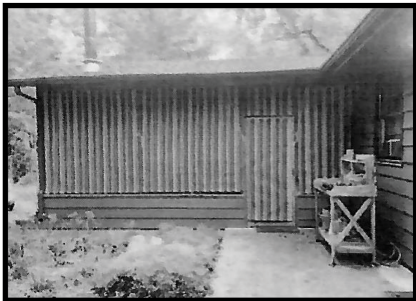


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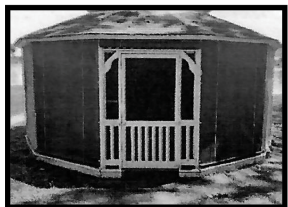
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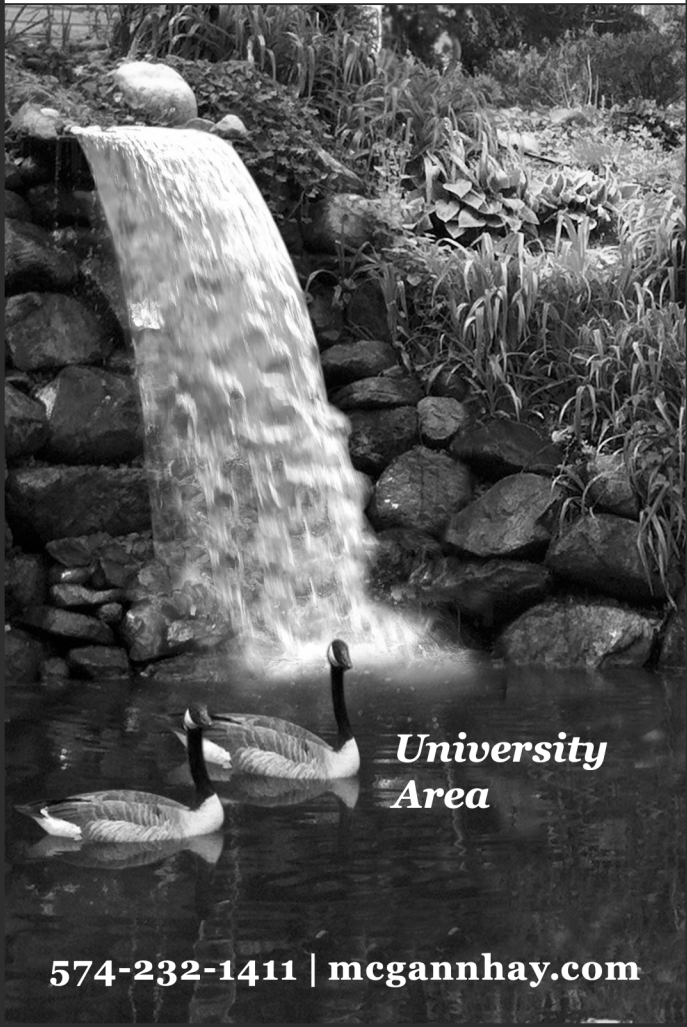
Food is available from 5:30-7:30pm
Concerts begin at 7:00pm

more info --> 



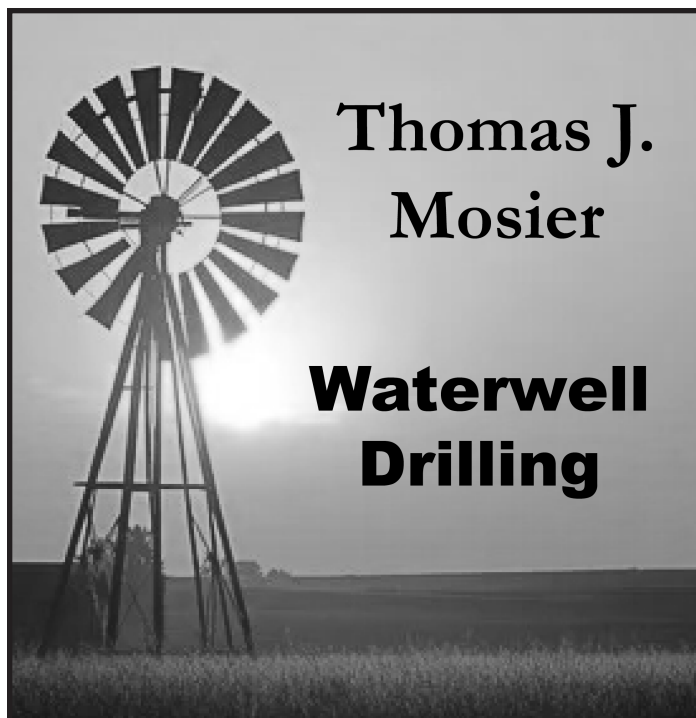
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DAD JOKE OF THE DAY

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