

# BIRCH *Barker*

vol. 78 issue 10

Weekend of  
**July 25**  
2026

The official publication of the Birch Lake Yacht Club

BirchLakeYachtClub.com



Jenn Boverhof (second from right), daughter of Dave and Donna Hogoboom, entertained her Michigan State University friends at Birch this past weekend.

## 2026 BIRCH LAKE CALENDAR

### July

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  
15 - BLYC Board Meeting, 9am  
19 - Card / Game Night, 6:30pm  
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 Cassidy (E)  
Ed Chester (E)  
Tim Cole (H)  
Liz Cover (E)  
Sue Davis (E)  
Julie Dickey (E)  
Ronni Eshleman (S)  
Bernie Garceau (E)  
Amber Holleman (E)  
Deb Hall (C)  
Vickie Rogers (C)  
Rick Russwurm (N)  
Ray Scholes (S)  
Scott Troeger (E)  
Phil Vitale (E)  
Sandy Vitale (E)  
Dan Waxman (E)  
Sue Williams (S)

#### Committee Chairs

Water Quality:  
Patrick Welch (S)  
Homeowners Association:  
Blair Garceau (E)

## COMMODORE'S COMMENTS

The monthly Card and Game Night was a fun evening at the clubhouse last Wednesday. Many thanks to event co-chairs Sue Davis and Dave and Donna Hogoboom. It was nice to meet Dave's brother Jim and his wife Bonnie. Please see the photo in this issue. The Women's Golf Outing is on Friday, July 24, and it's not too late to sign up. Contact Blair Garceau or Carol McCoy. The Men's Golf Outing is coming up - remember to sign up by July 24. Watch the Birch Barker for announcements of the Book Club selection and meeting date for August. And mark August 1 on your calendar for Homeowners' Association meeting, and the Corn and Sausage Roast.

A nice Canadian breeze can be refreshing this time of year, but not when it's full of wildfire smoke. You know it's bad when you can't even see across Birch Lake. Best to stay indoors and run the A/C with a MERV 13 filter or better, as the smoke causes an average of 2500 deaths per year in Canada. Fortunately we have had lots of nice days, and it's a joy to see all of the families out and around, enjoying our beautiful lake.

### 250 Years Ago: British Capture New York City

By July 12, 1776, eight days after the Declaration of Independence, Great Britain had hundreds of British ships and over 30,000



Card & Game Night Participants. Left to right: Ed Chester, Bob Bender, Tim Burchell, Donna Hogoboom, Jackie and Steve Frew, Jim and Bonnie Hogoboom, Dave Hogoboom. Not shown: Sue Davis.

soldiers in the waters around New York, ready to crush the fledging American Revolution. Only George Washington and his 23,000 troops stood in their way.

The decisive clash came on August 27 at the Battle of Long Island. In what became the largest battle of the entire war, British forces outmaneuvered the Americans, flanked them through the Jamaica Pass, inflicted heavy casualties, and trapped Washington's army against the East River. Yet in one of his greatest feats of generalship, Washington orchestrated a nighttime evacuation across the river under cover of fog and silence. By morning on August 30, the entire force had slipped away, saving the army to fight another day.

On September 12, Nathan Hale, a 21-year-old American captain, volunteered to spy on the British on Long Island. Three days later, the Union Jack flew over New York City. On September 21, Hale was recognized in a tavern on Long Island, and captured. He was hanged without a trial the next day. His last words were



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

Email items to [birchbarker1@gmail.com](mailto:birchbarker1@gmail.com).

For editorial concerns, contact editor Amber Holleman at [birchbarker1@gmail.com](mailto:birchbarker1@gmail.com) or 574-315-0227.

For delivery concerns, contact Ron Niezgodski at [birchbass1@gmail.com](mailto:birchbass1@gmail.com) or 269-476-9317.

For all other BLYC matters, contact Comm. Steve Frew at [stephenbfrew@gmail.com](mailto:stephenbfrew@gmail.com) or 239-315-1177.

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



# EVENTS

"I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country."

Fort Washington, on the heights of northern Manhattan Island, fell to the British on November 16, with nearly 3,000 prisoners taken. By late 1776, Washington's army was retreating across New Jersey. Enlistments were expiring, and supplies were scarce. Yet Washington's skillful retreats had kept the Continental Army alive - for the time being.

~Commodore Steve Frew



*The Battle of Long Island, painting by Alonzo Chappell*

## 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.

## Birch Lake Yacht Club FIREWORKS FUND

Our goal for 2026 is \$26,000

Contribute now at

<https://tinyurl.com/BLYCfireworks>



## 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).

# THE LAST HOORAH!!

## Birch Lake Fall Dinner

### August 22

Birch Lake Yacht Club

Cocktails at 5:30 • Dinner at 6:00

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Come enjoy end-of-season fun with your lake family—and find out who will be your next Vice Commodore!

Tickets available online, or mail a check payable to BLYC to:  
**Deb Spratt**  
 18100 Farmington Hills Dr.  
 South Bend, IN 46637

Questions? Ron Niezgodski  
 birchbass1@gmail.com

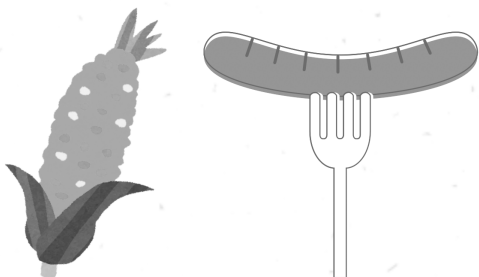
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**TICKET DEADLINE: AUGUST 16**

SCAN FOR TICKETS

## CORN & SAUSAGE ROAST

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



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**Homeowner's Association Annual Meeting**  
 The Birch Lake Homeowner's Association will have its annual meeting on Saturday, August 1<sup>st</sup> 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.

# LADIES' Style Show

## AND LUNCHEON

**FRIDAY, AUGUST 26**  
11:30

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# BIRCH LAKE NEWS

## 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.



**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](mailto:sv6102@gmail.com).

**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.



## 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](http://birchlakeyachtclub.com)

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

## Homeowner's Association PSA: Vote in 2026!

For All Cass County Residents

**Primary Election: CORRECTION! The date**

**is August 4th not August 8th**

Early Voting July 25 - August 2

Cassopolis VFW, 131 Broadway Street

**Midterm Election: November 3**

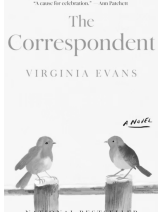
Early Voting October 24 - November 1



*register to vote*

## Book Club

Our next book will be *The Correspondent*, by Virginia Evans. Our meeting will be August 25, 6:30pm at Debbie Soldato's house (63159 Walnut Rd). Any questions, or if you'd like to join in the fun, contact Jackie Frew: [seeitall8@gmail.com](mailto:seeitall8@gmail.com) or call/text 708-285-2999.



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# WATER QUALITY: VOICES FROM THE LAKE

This year, the Water Quality Committee has asked some long-time residents of the lake for their perspective of Birch Lake and the importance of its water quality. The series of articles called, "Voices From The Lake", represent unique viewpoints. This week's article was submitted to the WQC by Dan Waxman. Thank you to all of our authors for contributing. We hope you enjoy their "Voices". ~Your Water Quality Committee

I grew up in Kansas City, Missouri (pronounced Missour-a, not like the folks in St. Louis who pronounce it Missour-e, which is funny as the word ends in an "i"). My family had a cottage on Lake Lotawana in Kansas City, which was a man-made lake - not spring-fed like the ones we enjoy here in Michigan. Our cottage was on a cove, so every few years they would have to dredge it because of the silt buildup. My 5 siblings and I had old tennis shoes that we put on to go swimming as our feet could sink into several inches of cove muck. But up here on Birch and my summers on Corey, there were sandy beaches, sparkling clear spring water and no need to wear tennis shoes to swim!

My mother grew up in Niles, Michigan and was a camper and counselor at Camp T and Camp Eberhart for many summers. After she graduated medical school at Michigan (also my alma mater, which is why I was her favorite child), she met my father during her internship in Syracuse, New York. My father had grown up in Albany and after he completed his internship in Detroit, they decided to "move south" for warmer weather. They only got as far as Kansas City where they stopped to see relatives who had moved there, and they decided to stay and raise our family.

But my mother was insistent that all of the kids would spend their summer on the lakes in Michigan. My siblings and I were campers and counselors at Camp Eberhart on Corey Lake, and in the summer of 1970 as a Junior Counselor I was invited to a gathering on Birch Lake at the John O'Brien cottage. My niece Chelsea was a camper and counselor at Camp T, where

she met her husband David. So there's something in these wonderful spring-fed lakes!

Back in the 1970s, camp counselors spent their summer in Speedo swimsuits and cutoff jean shorts. Given my physique like a mailbox, I went with the diver's speedo which was a much better fit on my frame. We would bathe in the lake, thinking that using Ivory soap and Johnson's Baby shampoo would be ok. An early water quality devotee asked us to give up this tradition, so we relegated ourselves back to taking showers in the various facilities available to us.

I met my wife Sharon in Kansas City and brought her to Birch Lake on a Memorial Day weekend. We stayed at Dick Green's cottage and then the O'Brien cottage. Sharon fell in love with the lake and asked if we could ever live here. Back then I didn't know how that would happen, but from then on, my career took us from Kansas City to Dallas, Ann Arbor, and Indianapolis - so we were getting in range! In 2003 my brothers Michael, Stevie, and I bought the Lagoni cottage. Over the next few years Sharon became the Michigan resident owner, and once I sold our home in Indianapolis, I joined her here on Birch Lake.

We now are true year-round residents and do not head south or west for the winters. We love the change of seasons and last winter, when the lake froze over for 3 full months, it was an ice fishing extravaganza early morning, noon, and night. So what we all strive to do for water quality in the summer pays off in the winter for those folks who want to put on snow suits and spend time "away" from their families, enjoying the great outdoors and catching fish for winter meals.

I have now retired after 41 years as a Clinical Pathologist/Blood Banker, and as Sharon retired earlier as a special education teacher we are now in the perfect location and community to spend the next chapter in our lives. We have 14 nieces and nephews and 4 great nieces and 2 great nephews, so living on this amazing lake is the best way to see relatives and friends. You will find me walking around the lake with our latest adoptee, Buddy, the Bad Boy from Benton Harbor. How anyone could abandon a little dog like him is something I don't understand. But their castaway is our cherished little man.

We are all so fortunate to have found this piece of heaven on earth. Enjoy every moment you have on Birch Lake. Please donate to the Water Quality Fund so that we have 100% of homeowners participate.

Peace, Love, Birch Lake  
Dan A. Waxman MD

## THE SIX COMMANDMENTS OF BIRCH LAKE WATER QUALITY

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

## Birch Lake Yacht Club WATER QUALITY FUND

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

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## GOAL

75%

50%

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| 5 | 8 |   |   | 9 |   |   | 4 | 1 |
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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

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General Fund

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AED Fund

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Barker Donations

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Water Quality / Milfoil Program

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Other Donations (please specify: )

\$

TOTAL CONTRIBUTION

Make checks payable to:  
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BLYC 66<sup>TH</sup> 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)

<sup>+</sup> 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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\*Individual registrations available. If you don't have a team, contact John and he can match you up!



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## FLEET CAPTAIN'S CORNER

What a weird wind last weekend. There was a good, constant wind early in the morning on race day, so I decided we would give it a go. I sailed out as the course was being finalized, then shortly after, the wind shifted quite a bit, making the course layout a bit funky. This also made the course difficult to navigate and figure out. The committee boat moved the start-line ball, which helped, but we still ended up sailing two upwind legs. To me it was a fun and challenging day of sailing, particularly figuring out the second leg of the race. There were a lot of wind shifts, gusts, wind coming across the lake, and holes to navigate out there. At one point I was sailing in an odd direction in relation to the boats just 30 or so feet upwind of me. The wind didn't make much sense at times. Due to the spotty wind conditions and the fact that the forecast was for the wind to decrease in speed, I decided to call it off after the first race. Funny enough, I had the best sail of the day on the way home. When I got home and up on shore, I looked out at the lake, and a strong wind was blowing at me towards the west shore while the boats sailing to the north shore almost had to be towed in but ended up making it home on their own. Again, what a weird wind.

~ Fleet Captain Bob Niezgodski, [rjniezgodski@gmail.com](mailto:rjniezgodski@gmail.com)



*Eerie views of the lake with the smoke from the Canadian Wildfires last week. Drone photos courtesy of Stewart Spratt.*



## BIRCH LAKE SAILING SCORES

## Sunfish Standings

|                                  | 20-Jul | Total  | % Races  | Average | Season |
|----------------------------------|--------|--------|----------|---------|--------|
|                                  | 10     | Points | Finished | Points  | Rank   |
| Sunfish Sailor                   |        |        |          |         |        |
| Stewart Spratt                   | 1      | 11042  | 70.0%    | 1577.4  | 1      |
| Amy Troeger                      | 2      | 10580  | 70.0%    | 1511.4  | 2      |
| Rick Russwurm                    | 5      | 6017   | 40.0%    | 1504.3  | 3      |
| Pete Soldato                     | DNS    | 2965   | 20.0%    | 1482.5  | 4      |
| Bob Niezgodski                   | 3      | 14444  | 100.0%   | 1444.4  | 5      |
| Connor Caplis                    | DNS    | 8439   | 60.0%    | 1406.5  | 6      |
| Herb Cleveland                   | 4      | 5561   | 40.0%    | 1390.3  | 7      |
| Marlee Soldato (crew for Pete S) | DNS    | 0      | 20.0%    | 0.0     | 8      |

## MC Scow Standings

|                                | Total  | % Races  | Average | Season |
|--------------------------------|--------|----------|---------|--------|
|                                | Points | Finished | Points  | Rank   |
| MC Scow Sailor                 |        |          |         |        |
| Scott Troeger #1489            | 4800   | 60.0%    | 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).

DNE, 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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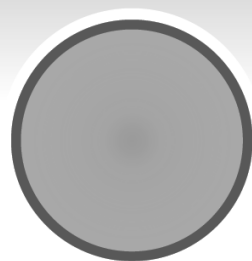
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# CAMP T CORNER

It is hard to believe, but we are already past the halfway point of the summer camp season. After this week, only three weeks of camp remain - and they will be our busiest weeks of the year. We are expecting more than 160 campers each week as we head toward the end of another wonderful summer at Camp T.

The final stretch of camp always brings a special kind of energy. By this point in the summer, our staff members have settled into their roles, camp traditions are in full swing, and every corner of camp is filled with activity. The final week of camp is especially exciting with special traditions and events that only happen during that week.

Although the end of summer camp is approaching, things will not slow down much once our campers head home. Immediately after our final session, we will welcome a longtime rental group from Livonia, Michigan. This Orthodox church group from the Basilica of Saint Mary has been visiting camp for many years, and we always enjoy having them return to Camp T.

Their visit begins a busy late-summer and fall rental season. In the weeks that follow, Camp T will host a wedding anniversary celebration, a wilderness medicine retreat organized by Corewell Health, a junior high overnight, a birthday party, and two weddings. Each event brings a different group of people to camp and gives them an opportunity to experience camp in their own way.

At the same time as we are wrapping up summer camp, our school-year programs will be starting again. Camp T operates before and after school programs at three area schools: Good Shepherd Montessori School in South Bend, Sam Adams Elementary School in Cassopolis, and Edwardsburg Intermediate School. Our programs at Good Shepherd and Sam Adams will begin immediately after the Basilica of Saint Mary group departs, with the Edwardsburg program beginning the following week.

The transition from summer camp to school-year programming happens quickly. While one part of our team is wrapping up the camp season and preparing for rental groups, another is getting classrooms ready, organizing supplies, and preparing to welcome students back. It is a busy time, but it reflects how much Camp T has grown beyond the traditional summer season.

We will also host our annual Grown-Up Camp weekend, which is always one of the highlights of the fall season. Grown-Up Camp offers adults the chance to enjoy camp activities, reconnect with friends, spend time outdoors, and experience some of the fun that our campers enjoy all summer. We would especially love to see some of our Birch Lake friends join us this year!

This year's Grown Up Camp is scheduled for September 25 - 27. We typically have 40-50 people attend, and we plan cocktail cruises on the lake,



traditional camp activities like archery and crafts, songs around the campfire, yard games, and plenty of time to relax and hang out with friends. Even though it's a busy weekend for staff, it's always very refreshing and fun, too!

There may be only three weeks of summer camp left, but there is still a great deal ahead. From hundreds of campers still to arrive, to retreats, celebrations, school programs, and Grown-Up Camp, Camp T will remain a lively place well into the fall.

~Miss Amber



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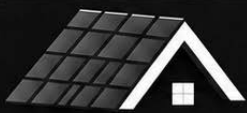
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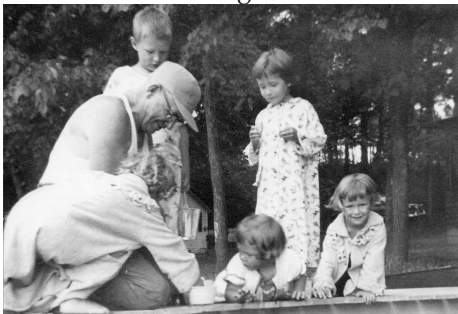
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# BIRCH LAKE HISTORY: THE TEMPLE FAMILY

Long before Bob and Gertie Temple owned property at Birch Lake, they dreamed of making a life here. The couple began visiting the lake to swim while they were dating in the late 1940s. They would drive down a narrow two-track through the woods to reach the shore. As they looked out over the lake, they often talked about how wonderful it would be to someday live in a place like Birch Lake.

Bob and Gertie married in 1949 and began bringing their family to the lake a few years later. Their daughters, Jan and Gerry, remember renting the Breece cottage (E133) with their friends Kate and Roy Henderson. It was simple and crowded, but those summers established a connection to Birch Lake that has lasted four generations.



*Grandpa Bill Major with Cathy Henderson, Denny Henderson, Gerry, Jan, and Didi Henderson at Birch Lake*

One evening in 1971, Bob and Gertie were visiting the Hendersons at the lake. Roy told them that some lots were for sale on the north shore. They went at dusk and had their choice of several wooded lots that were formerly part of Camp Kiloqua.

Bob and Gertie designed and built the house themselves. Bob came to the lake on nights and weekends to clear the heavily wooded land, assisted by friends and family members. While building the house, the family stayed in a camper on the front lawn.

Bob and Gertie moved from South Bend to Birch Lake in January of 1975. They tried to find the old two-track they had used to get to the lake when they were dating but they could not locate it. Then a neighbor, Mr. Goddard, mentioned that a two-track had once run between his property and theirs. Bob and Gertie realized that the property where they had built their dream home was the exact same place where they had gone swimming as a young couple!

Their daughters Jan and Gerry spent their teen years at the lake. Later, the grandchildren (Jan's sons Scott and Brett, and stepdaughter Anna, and Gerry's sons Peter and Robert) spent summers and holidays at Birch Lake. Gerry always returned from Dallas for a month or more with her children, and no one was ever eager to leave (Peter would hide when it was time to go). Each time the grandchildren left the lake, Gertie ran to the end of the pier and waved until they disappeared around the corner near Lazy Lodge.



*Young Bob & Gert at Birch Lake*

Gertie turned those arrivals and departures into family songs. On the journey to the lake, the family sang:

*Beautiful, beautiful Birch Lake,  
Beautiful, beautiful Birch Lake,  
Beautiful, beautiful Birch Lake,  
I'm on my way to Birch Lake.*

On the way home, the words changed to "Goodbye, Birch Lake," followed by the name of wherever they were headed. Jan's sons now sing the same songs with their own children.

Summer days at the Temple home included swimming, sailing, and skiing, games in the front yard, bonfires with songs and stories, and trips to Tom's Garage for candy. Bob taught the grandchildren to play pool and golf, and they all shared a love of fishing. Gertie's father Bill Major had taught Bob his favorite fishing holes, and Bob passed that knowledge to the next generation, and Scott and Brett still fish those same spots today. Brett has said, "Everything important in my life I learned from Grandpa."



*Bob and Gertie's Grandkids: Peter, Scott, Rob, Anna, and Brett*

The annual Birch Lake Men's Golf Outing became another important tradition. Bob's rule was that grandsons could join him at the outing after finishing 8<sup>th</sup> grade. When Gerry's son Robert was in 6<sup>th</sup> grade, however, Bob's health was declining. Bob consulted the three older boys, and they agreed that Robert should come along.



*Tom (Jan's husband), Peter, Scott, Bob, Brett, and Robert at the golf outing*

Years later, when Gertie was nearing the end of her life, the boys came to the lake to be with her. It was the Golf Outing weekend, and they told her they would stay with her instead of golfing. But Gertie insisted that they go. "Gramps would want you to play," she told them. They still try to return



*Bob and Gert with the Grandsons*

each year to play together in his honor.

Today, Gerry lives in the family home on the north shore, and Jan and her husband Tom Kuhn have built their own home on the west shore. Brett and Cynthia were married at Camp Tannadoonah. Rob and Katie held their rehearsal dinner at Gerry's home - the one their grandparents had built - and the wedding took place at Jan and Tom's lakefront. In the photographs taken during the ceremony, Bob and Gertie's house - the home they had dreamed about, designed and built - can be seen in the background.

Bob and Gertie's love for the lake always extended beyond their own property. When concerns arose about Birch Lake's water quality, they worked tirelessly over many years to protect it for future generations. They filled volumes of notebooks with water-test results and data. Their efforts reflected their belief that Birch Lake was something to be cared for and passed along.

Today, that legacy continues through their children, grandchildren and a growing generation of great-grandchildren. They include Scott and Sara's daughters Raegan, Jane and Brooke; Brett and Cynthia's sons Luke and Isaiah; Peter's children Quint and Valor; Robert and Katie's son TJ; and Anna and Grant's son Alan, and twins expected soon.

Gertie contributed plenty of stories of her own. She wrote poems, songs and tales about a mischievous Birch Lake duck who played tricks on "Grandpa Bobby." Each story included the duck's familiar promise: "Quack, quack, quack. Quack, quack, quack. Grandpa Bobby, I'll be back."

For Bob and Gertie Temple, Birch Lake was more than a summer destination. It was the fulfillment of a dream they had shared as a young couple swimming along a wooded shoreline. It became their home, the center of their family life, and a place they worked hard to protect. That devotion has now been passed through three more generations - and, just like Gert's little duck, the Temple family keeps coming back.



*The Temple Family at Birch Lake 2026*



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# BARKER KIDS OF THE WEEK



*It was a busy few days in The Cove last weekend when Matt and Amy Koscielski's 14 grandkids came for a visit! A great time was had by all!!*



*Liam Geik, visiting from Phoenix, AZ, is enjoying some fishing time with grandparents, Peggy and Dennis Geik (west shore).*



*Gavin Andis from Indianapolis - grandson of Eric Miller and Karen Curtis Miller (east shore) - taking over his Bub's hat to get his Indiana Jones on*

Want your kid to be a Barker kid of the week? Send your photos to [birchbarker1@gmail.com](mailto:birchbarker1@gmail.com)



*TJ Cassady (grandson of east sides Barb and Tom Cassady) relaxes with Boris.*



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# EMERGENCY HEART DEFIBRILLATOR (AED) locations on Birch Lake

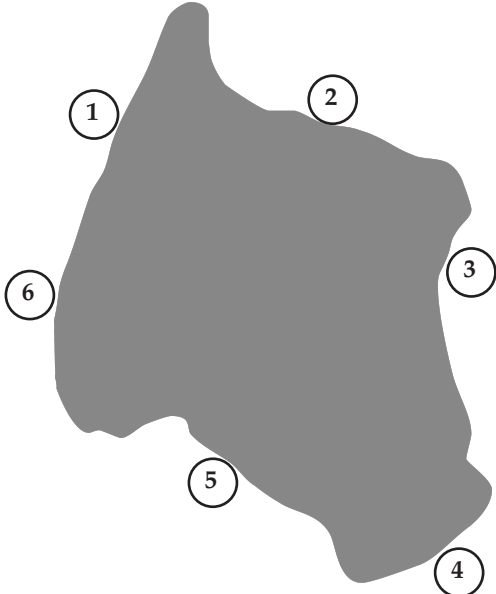
There are six (6) automated external defibrillator units (AEDs) on Birch Lake. The boxes that contain these devices are located at the following locations:

- 1. **West Shore:** Sheffieck Home  
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- 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  
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All units are on the **ROAD SIDE** of the property and accessible by vehicle or on foot.



## AED Locations



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- 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.*

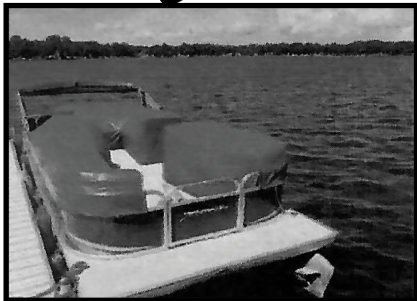
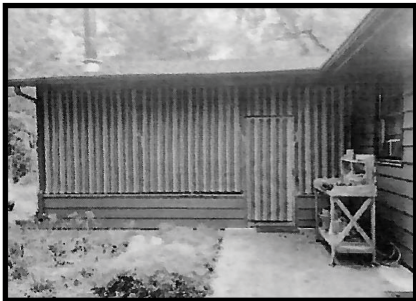


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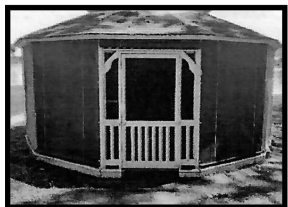
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Friday, July 24: *Whistle Pigs*

Friday, August 28: *Whiskey Retreat*

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Concerts begin at 7:00pm

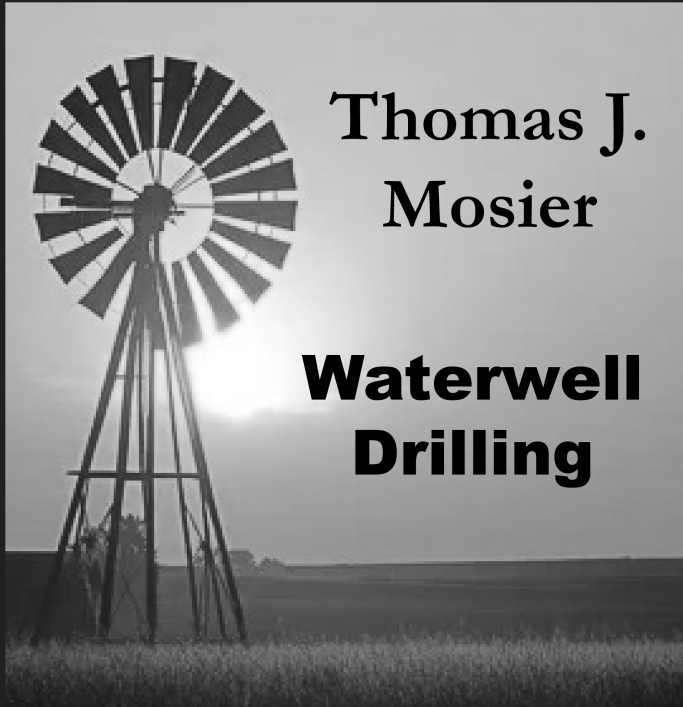
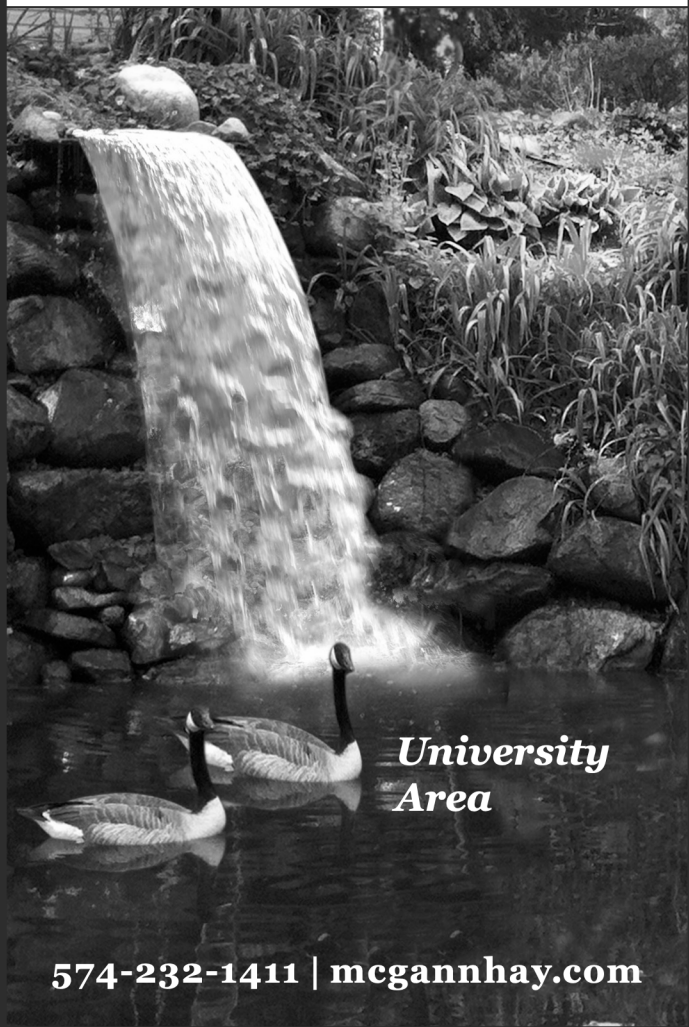
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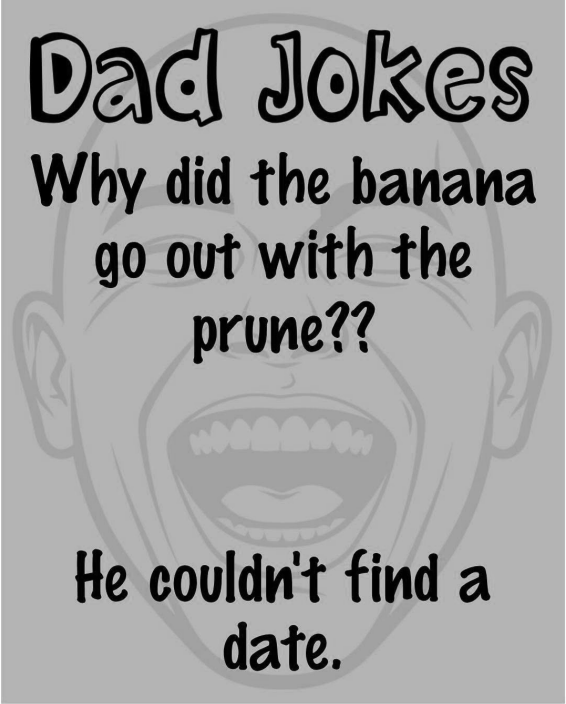
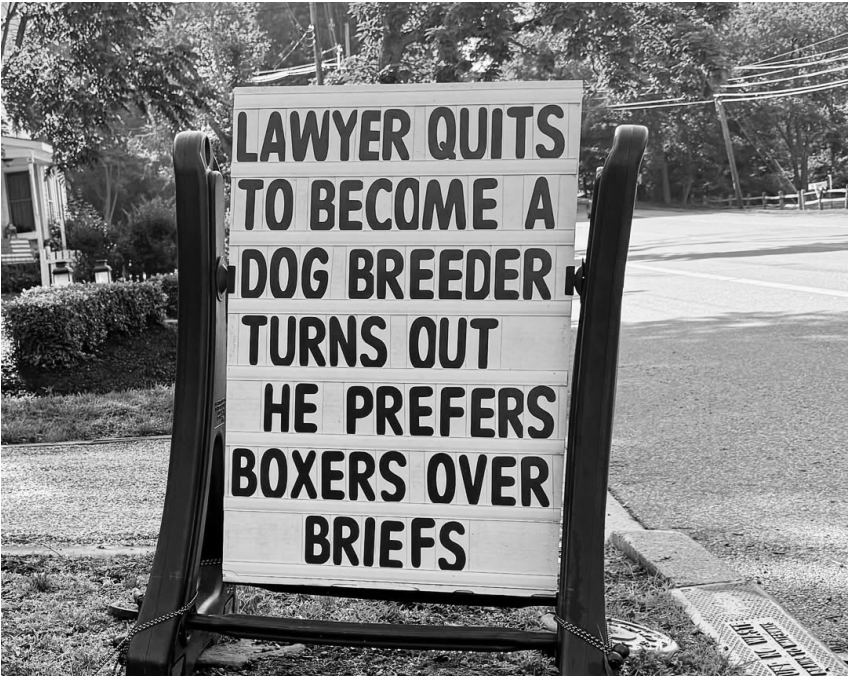
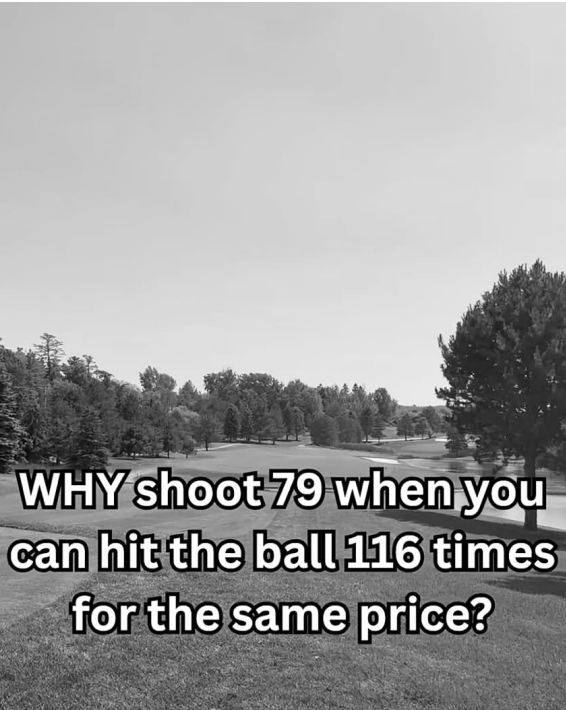
\*Not intended to solicit any properties already listed for sale with another real estate agent.



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I don't have a golf swing. I have a series of optimistic muscle spasms that sometimes result in the ball actually going forward. 🤪



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