BIRCH Barker

vol. 78 issue 12

The official publication of the Birch Lake Yacht Club

BirchLakeYachtClub.com

Weekend of
August 8
2026

Pop Up Lemonade Stand on the East Shore last weekend. Fresh lemonade!
Left to right: Eden and Asher Springfield, Quinny Cash, Aria and Ella Frew, and McKenna Cash

Purchase your Fall Dinner tickets by August 16!

2026 BIRCH LAKE CALENDAR

August

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

COMMODORE'S COMMENTS

Our hearts go out to the wonderful people of Zimmy's Tavern, after it was destroyed recently in a gas explosion and fire. One man was injured, and everyone is out of work. Many thanks to Blair Garceau, who as chair of the Birch Lake Homeowners Association, joined Birch Lake with other area lakes in a benefit program, with all proceeds going to Zimmy's employees. Thanks also to Amber Holleman who assisted. If you would like to help the employees of Zimmy's by purchasing nice T-shirts bearing lake logos including "Birch Lake," scan here -->

At the BLYC Board meeting last Saturday, Keith Remington was unanimously elected as its newest member. Keith has been a big supporter of Birch Lake causes such as the 250th Fireworks show and the Birch Barker. Congratulations, Keith, and welcome to the Board.

The Men's Golf Outing enjoyed good weather, and was a big success with over 60 golfers. Many thanks to event chair John Ball for once again running a great golf outing. Please see the photos and article in this issue.

Andy and Lori Snider co-chaired the Corn and Sausage Roast. Andy and nine other Birch Lake men worked the outdoor grill, while Lori's large team behind the counter passed out delicious corn, sausages and sides. Carry-out was also available. Thank you Andy, Lori, and all of your great volunteers. Please see the article and photos in this Barker.

The pop-up lemonade stand on the northeast corner of the lake has come and gone, but the sweet taste lingers. Many thanks to those who helped teach our grandkids the value of hard work!

The Tide Turns: 1777

Stung by its losses at Trenton and Princeton, the British Empire sent General John Burgoyne and his large army south out of Canada. But American General Horatio Gates and his subordinate, the future traitor Benedict Arnold, stood in Burgoyne's way. In the first battle, Arnold was brilliant and aggressive, but insubordinate, so Gates relieved him of command. Then, in a battle at Bemis on October 7, Arnold again violated Gates' orders, personally leading several successful assaults that ultimately contributed to Burgoyne's surrender of his entire army of 5,500 men on October 17, 1777. News of the surrender reached France, which formally recognized American independence and signed a Treaty of Alliance in February 1778. Spain and the Netherlands later joined the fight against Britain as well.

Benedict Arnold began spying for the British in May, 1799. On September 25, 1780, his plot to surrender West Point to the British

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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.

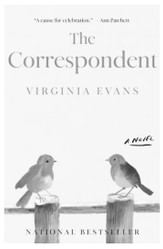
EVENTS

was discovered, and he fled to a British warship. Never fully trusted by the British, Arnold lived the rest of his life in exile in England and Canada, with the bitter knowledge that he had helped turn the tide of war in favor of the Americans.

~Commodore Steve Frew

The Treaty of Alliance, *painting by Charles Elliott Mills, circa 1910. Benjamin Franklin Institute of Technology, Boston, Massachusetts*

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*** 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.

Birch Lake Yacht Club

FIREWORKS FUND

Our goal for 2026 is $26,000

Contribute now at
https://tinyurl.com/BLYCfireworks

THE LAST HOORAH!!

Birch Lake Fall Dinner

August 22

Birch Lake Yacht Club

Cocktails at 5:30 • Dinner at 6:00

Catered by Pig Headed BBQ

Brisket • Pulled Chicken • Ribs

Potato Salad • Green Beans • Baked Beans • Dessert

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

$25 PER PERSON

TICKET DEADLINE: AUGUST 16

SCAN FOR TICKETS

Birch Lake Ladies Style Show and 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 on the BLYC website (scan the QR Code) or from Ronni Eshleman 317-418-9557 or Deb Runser 269-313-3943. This fun event always sells out, so get your tickets early.

ZIMMY'S TAVERN

The Birch Lake Homeowners Association is partnering with other area lake associations to support a fundraiser benefiting the injured employee and the rest of Zimmy's staff during this difficult time.

You can purchase Zimmy's Tavern Apparel at this link. At Lee's request, the profits from the fundraiser will go directly to his employees at Zimmy's. The HOA and BLYC have confirmed that it is a legitimate effort - not a scam - and that the funds will support the injured employee and the other Zimmy's employees affected by the fire.

The store is open to purchase apparel from now until August 10th.

BIRCH LAKE NEWS

Slow Down Signs

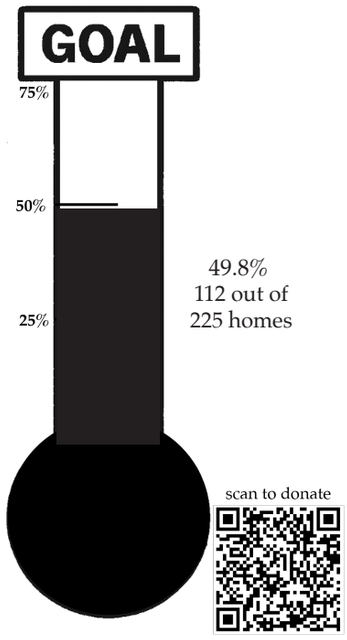
"Slow Down" signs are available for lake home owners. Contact Blair Garceau (269-476-9862) if you need a sign for your yard. Courtesy of the BL Home Owners Association.

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.***

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.

Birch Lake Yacht Club
WATER QUALITY FUND
Our goal for 2026 is to have 75% of homes on the lake contribute.
Contribute now at https://store.birchlakeyachtclub.com



HOA ANNUAL MEETING RECAP

The Birch Lake Home Owners Association held its annual meeting this past Saturday. The issues we are working on were highlighted and following the meeting we had our new neighbor, Elizabeth Hall on the west side, talk about the work she has done regarding data centers. Below is a recap of what transpired.

The Birch Lake HOA quietly works behind the scenes to keep an eye on township, county and state issues that may effect Birch Lake. This year we have participated in meetings about regulating data centers in Cass County. We have worked with the Parks Department to replace the sign at the landing that was taken out by the car last winter and currently we are working on addressing the prop wash hole created by "power loading" boats onto trailers (please don't rev your engine to get onto your trailer). We continue to work with the pier companies to ask them NOT to "power load" their boat when maneuvering onto their trailers. We are in conversation with the Road Commissioner to discuss replacing the guardrail along Birch Road as you head down towards the landing. These are just a few of the many things HOA have worked on and will continue to work on.

Data centers have become a major topic cross the United States. Elizabeth Hall informed about 20 lakers about her deep dive on slowing down the development of data centers in her hometown of Bristol, Indiana and now is working with residents of Penn Township (and keeping pour HOA informed) about slowing down and regulating data centers that could effect our peaceful life at Birch Lake. It would take pages to list all of her efforts and accomplishments however as residents we need to concentrate on what we can do. Her suggestions are to stay informed: go to Township and County meetings or live stream them (not just Porter Township either), ask for transparency, get the minutes from local meetings. Hold elected officials accountable, write or email them (individually) about your concerns, or questions. Write them monthly.

In conclusion, first we'd like to thank Elizabeth for her time and knowledge that informed us about data centers. Second, every HOA Board member is NOT on Facebook. If you have a question or concern our contact information is listed in each Barker and in the directory.

Your HOA Board - the Quiet Committee

Photos from Sailing last weekend, contributed by Buzz Rasmussen

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WATER QUALITY HISTORY AT BIRCH LAKE

The summer of 2023, I was gifted some of the history of Birch Lake Water Quality from Ken and Darlene Troyer, two of the founding members of the water quality committee. Recently, along with Troyer's information, I have also been able to study some of the amazing records kept by Gert Temple, another founding member.

The first WQ group met at the Ross home next to the public landing, now the home of the Bolls. Bob Ross was elected president, and Gert Temple was elected secretary. Ken Troyer had the job of doing water testing because he had a background in science and chemistry. When Ken was president of WQ, Gert Temple became the member of the committee that communicated with WQ specialists around the State of Michigan. Gert was very active in all aspects of water quality. Gert's detailed records and poetry about Birch Lake are amazing!

I have not been able to learn the timeline, but the Birch Barker was originally published as the Birch Lake Association. The Birch Lake Association sent out a monthly newsletter to the residents on Birch if they were members and paid dues of $10. These newsletters are not as "fancy" as our Barker. The 1980's copies I have don't have pictures, only one ad for septic service, and no reminders about boating laws. What is included is a welcome paragraph by the president (who we would call commodore). Along with a paragraph or sentence submitted by the Fish Chairman, Health and Safety Chairman, Water Clarity Chairman, State and Local affairs, and a notice of swim lessons for those 4 years old and older. Water quality was high on their lists of concern and later became a major issue when old septic systems became a pollution problem for Birch Lake.

The State of Michigan started an Inland Lake Self-Help Program in 1974. This group was administered by the Department of Natural Resources, which was coordinated by the Inland Lake Management Unit of the Division of Land Resources Programs. Their initial goal was to take steps toward a statewide inland lake management program. The idea was to implement a eutrophication (aging) "warning" system that would assess the annual baseline of trophic level for individual lakes, so subtle annual changes in the inland lakes could be accurately assessed. Lake aging is natural as well as a human-induced process, and not all lakes age at the same rate. Natural aging is influenced by the biological and physical conditions of the watershed through which the lake gains its waters, nutrients carrying water. Birch Lake's testing results are now monitored by the Cooperative Lakes Monitoring Program (CLMP). Like the Self-Help Program, CLMP requires active participation of volunteers. The information I have tells us that our smart water quality members became involved with the Self-Help Program in 1980. We are so lucky they did! We have years of data on our lake. Anyone interested in seeing past data, can find it on the MiCorps website under Birch Temple and Birch Fallon data exchange. Additionally, I have copies of Self-Help reports from 1980-1989.

Birch Lake was also a part of an Inland Lake Study by the Southwestern Michigan Regional Planning Commission in May 1979. This report contains a Watershed Study and Water Quality Study. The study reports that Birch is considered Mesotrophic for water quality and mean Secchi depth; with an Oligotrophic status for summer Chlorophyll a. Oligotrophic is the ideal status we would like to maintain. The 1980 report from the self-help program, Birch had a trophic status of Mesotrophic. 16 Secchi disk readings were taken with the average of 9.9 feet. 10 Chlorophyll-a reading were taken with the of mean 1.5 (ug /1).

Ken Troyer's report in the April 1981 Birch Lake Association newsletter shares results of our first year of testing in the form of rankings with other lakes in the program. "Birch ranks 38th of 89 lakes with respect to low (average) chlorophyll a content. We average 1.5 micrograms per liter or 1.5 parts per billion, while others range from 0.4 to 16.9. Birch ranks 94 of 179 lakes with respect to good clarity (we average 9.9 meters (29 feet) while the rest range from 3.2 meters (10 feet) to only 2.2 meters (7 feet).

We have not always had such great readings. Because of active changes made in the past, including upgraded septic systems, no lawn fertilizer in the lake, no burning leaves near the shoreline, no weed killers near the shoreline, not raking leaves into the lake but rather getting leaves out of the lake and finally our sewer system we are making improvements.

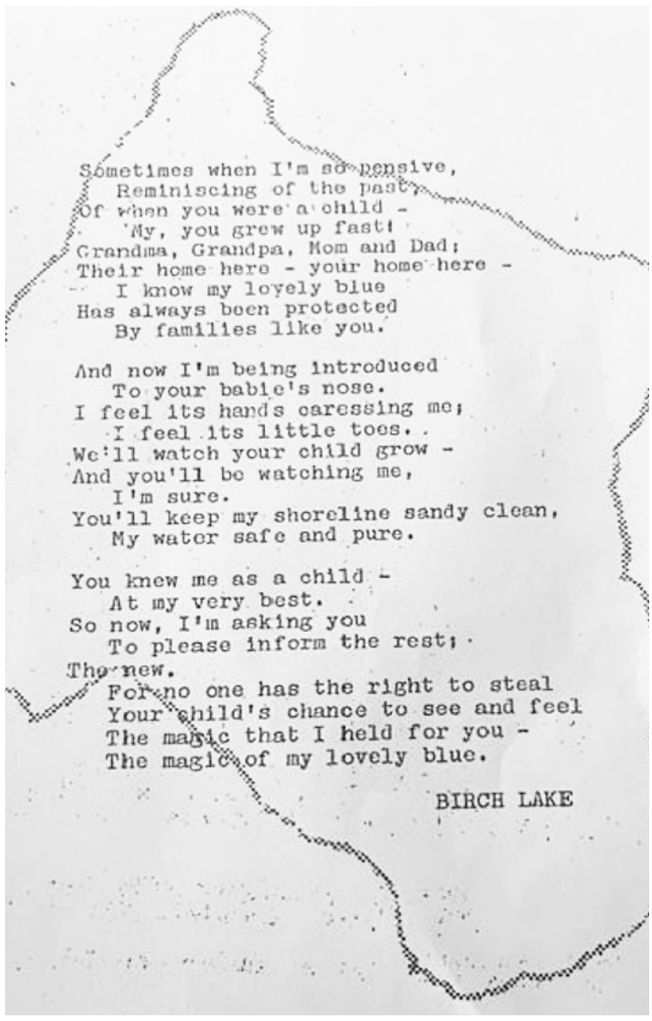
According to the CLMP Summary for 2024 (updated data for 2025 not available yet), with an average TSI score of 37, our lake is now rated between Oligotrophic and Mesotrophic.

Average TSI	2024	2019-2023	2009-2018
Birch	37	37	36
All CLMP Lakes	41	42	40

Water Quality became a standing committee of the Birch Lake Yacht Club in1986. Our Birch Lake community owes a huge thank you to those lake residents who took it upon themselves to care enough for our lake to start the Self-Help Program and the testing through CLMP. This committee thrives today because of their legacy and your donations.

Gert Temple also wrote poetry from the lake's perspective. Below is one that I especially liked.

~Jennifer Ball


Sometimes when I'm so pensive,
Reminiscing of the past
Of when you were a child -
My, you grew up fast!
Grandma, Grandpa, Mom and Dad;
Their home here - your home here -
I know my lovely blue
Has always been protected
By families like you.

And now I'm being introduced
To your babie's nose.
I feel its hands caressing me;
I feel its little toes.
We'll watch your child grow -
And you'll be watching me,
I'm sure.
You'll keep my shoreline sandy clean,
My water safe and pure.

You knew me as a child -
At my very best.
So now, I'm asking you
To please inform the rest;
The new.
For no one has the right to steal
Your child's chance to see and feel
The magic that I held for you -
The magic of my lovely blue.

BIRCH LAKE

Poem by Gertie Temple

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 MEN'S GOLF OUTING

The 66th Birch Lake Men's Golf Outing we held July 31st at Meadow Valley Golf Club with 61 golfers competing for cash prizes and bragging rights. After golf we met in the banquet room at Meadow Valley for cocktails and dinner followed by award presentations and door prize drawings.

Team Winners:

- **1st place:** Bob Bender, Andy Karceski, Ken Petty, Cooper Petty
- **2nd place:** Tom Lacy, Bill Reader, Danny Boussom, Dave Hogoboom, Dave Anderson
- **3rd place:** Gus Eshelman, Tom Kuhn, Mark VanHuffel, Jeff Runser
- **4th place:** Brady Baucus, Bob Baucus, Mason Dombrowski, Tony Schmitt

Hole Prizes:

Closest to the Pin: Mike Sheffieck, Bob Baucus
Long Drive under 65: Scott Sortal
Long Drive 65+: Kevin Bernaciak

Other Teams:
Bernie Garceau, Mike Sheffieck, Bill Luecht, Ed Chester
Wes Steffen, Elliot Steffen, Al Cover, Brogan Cover
Steve Manor, Jay Holm, Charles Affeld, Cory Vonier
Ron Niezgodski, Bob Niezgodski, Kevin Goodin, Kyle Carlton
Bud Hall, Rick Russwurm, Jim Limes, Marc Caenepeel
Ray Scholes, Tim Burchell, Jon Rondot, Justin Bratt
Jamie Green, Mark Laoun, Chris O'Brien, Conner O'Brien
Pete Lovato, Rob Lovato, Scott Sortal, Brett Sortal
Scott Troeger, Jim Cunningham, Vic Jones, Mike Shefler
Pat McGann, Ed Levy, John O'Brien, Bill Holleman
John Ball, Kevin Bernaciak, Dick Vance, Doug Kline

The outing would not be a success without the support of our hole sponsors and door prize contributors.

Hole Sponsors: Zimmy's, Phil and Sandy Vitale, Lake Life Realty, Paul and Celia Fallon, Artie McElwee, Ed Chester, Justin Bratt – Dermani Med Spa, Steve and Jackie Frew, Tim Burchell, Bob and Sandy Baucus, Bud and Deb Hall, Keith Kinzler, Mike and Julie Sheffieck, Dan and Sharon Waxman, Wes Steffen – Elmer's Body Shop, Rick and Patti Russwurm, Dock Bros, Ray and Jill Scholes.

Door Prizes: Mark Van Huffel, Dan Waxman, Dave and Donna Hogoboom, Mike Machallek, Meadow Valley Country Club, Birch Lake Yacht Club.

Sponsor Signs: Jennifer Ball

Thanks to the players, hole sponsors and prize contributors, we were able to donate $676 to the General Fund at the Yacht Club! Hope to see everyone back next year!

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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

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CORN AND SAUSAGE ROAST 2026

The Corn and Sausage Roast ran smoothly, thanks to numerous hard-working and dedicated volunteers. There were many familiar faces helping again this year, along with some new volunteers that stepped up to help make it possible.

We would like to send out a huge thank you to all of the volunteers. Mike Sheffieck and Julie Dickey greeted people at the door this year as our money collectors. Service with a smile was provided by Patti Russworm, Bruce Wagner, Amy Koscielski, Peggy Geik, Rose Eslinger, Elizabeth Hall and Robin Carey. Our fabulous corn shuckers were Dan Waxman, Barb Cassidy, Bob Niezgodski, Vic Jones, Ron Niezgodski and Bill Butler. Our grill masters this year, lead by Bob Bender and Andy Snider, were Jim Limes, Tom Eslinger, Steve Plaia, Greg Bolin, Rick Russworm, Matt Koscielski, Andy Karceski and Ken Petty. Dishwashing was a team effort this year with Camille Athanas and many of the servers pitching in. At the end of the night, everyone was a huge help taking care of the tables and chairs again this year. Camille went above and beyond cleaning the yacht club prior to the event, while Layna and I prepared the food and staying to the very end helping us with cleaning everything after the event. A huge thank you to Bob and Layna Bender for cochairing with us again this year to plan and execute our second Corn and Sausage Roast. It is wonderful to partner with you.

Thank you to the 110 people served (190 last year). We appreciate you coming out to support the Corn and Sausage Roast. Unfortunately, the low turnout did not provide for a very large donation to the yacht club but the good news is the food did not go to waste. The leftover desserts will be used at the fall dinner. The leftover protein and sides were divided and donated to Camp T and Stacia Andriano, who delivered the food to Hope United Amanda's House. Thank you to everyone who supported this year's Corn and Sausage Roast. *~Lori Snider*

Corn and Sausage Roast Grill Masters: Jim Limes, Andy Karceski, Matt Koscielski, Andy Snider, Rick Russwurm, Ken Petty, Bob Bender, Tom Eslinger, and Greg Bolin

Scan for Color Photos

FLEET CAPTAIN'S CORNER: A WINDY DAY

Finally, a windy racing day! The wind this past weekend was great. It was around 10 to 12 mph and was the first big wind of the season. No one I could see flipped and it turned out to be a fun day of sailing. Was good to see Rick Harman and crew out there. Rick is the son of Don Harman, founder of the Kidz Regatta. There was a photo finish too. Barb won the second race over Scott by roughly two inches. Barb was in front on a starboard tack, then Scott tacked back to cross the finish line on a port tack. He almost passed her, but at the last minute, at the line, Barb turned the nose of her boat up towards the line and got the win. Nice racing to all. In general, it was a really nice day of sailing, and I was happy to see that many MCs brought out crew.

In conclusion I also wanted to take a moment and thank everyone who helps out with sailing. In particular a few crews. First my dad VC Ron Niezgodski, Bill Butler, Stacia Andriano, and Steve Plaia for running the Committee Boat. Second, John Ball, Vic Jones, and Tom Lacy for helping to set the course. Finally, to Tom Eslinger, Buzz Rasmussen, and Rick Doolittle for coming out this weekend and serving on the two safety boats and taking pictures. It is really appreciated expectedly on windier days like it was. Again a big thanks to all, it takes a village!

Fleet Captain, Bob Niezgodski

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

BIRCH LAKE SAILING SCORES

MC Scow Standings

	2-Aug	2-Aug	2-Aug	Total	% Races	Average	Season
	6	7	8	Points	Finished	Points	Rank
MC Scow Sailor							
Scott Troeger #1489	1	2	1	9521	75.0%	1586.8	1
Patrick Welch #1979	DNS	DNS	DNS	4642	37.5%	1547.3	2
Barb Cassady #2506	2	1	1	12332	100.0%	1541.5	3
Rick Harmon #852	3	3	4	4257	37.5%	1419.0	4
Bill Luecht #1579	4	4	3	11329	100.0%	1416.1	5
Phil Vitale #500	DNS	DNS	DNS	7070	62.5%	1414.0	6
Gigi Cassady (crew for Barb C)	DNS	DNS	DNS	0	0.0%	0.0	7
Eliza (crew for Rick H)	DNS	DNS	DNS	0	0.0%	0.0	7
Max (crew for Rick H)	DNS	DNS	DNS	0	0.0%	0.0	7
Tory Troeger (crew for Scott T)	DNS	DNS	DNS	0	0.0%	0.0	7

Sunfish Standings

	2-Aug	2-Aug	2-Aug	Total	% Races	Average	Season
	11	12	13	Points	Finished	Points	Rank
Sunfish Sailor							
Stewart Spratt	4	2	2	15453	76.9%	1545.3	1
Rick Russwurm	1	1	1	10817	53.8%	1545.3	2
Amy Troeger	DNS	DNS	DNS	10580	53.8%	1511.4	3
Pete Soldato	DNS	DNS	DNS	2965	15.4%	1482.5	4
Bob Niezgodski	3	4	4	18626	100.0%	1432.8	5
Herb Cleveland	2	3	3	9970	53.8%	1424.3	6
Connor Caplis	DNS	DNS	DNS	8439	46.2%	1406.5	7
Marlee Soldato (crew for Pete S)	DNS	DNS	DNS	0	15.4%	0.0	8

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****

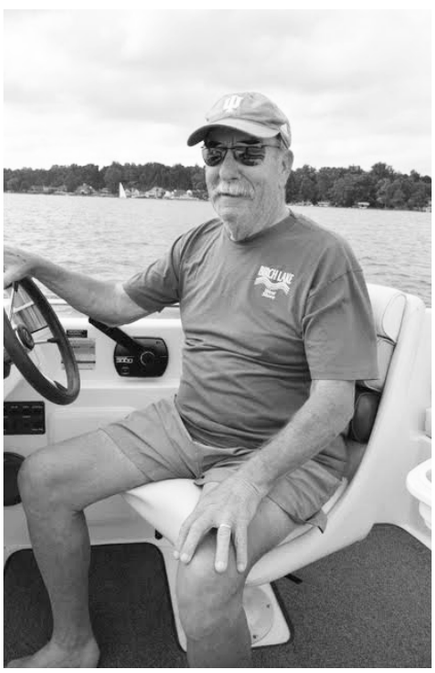
DNF (Did Not Finish) or DSQ (Disqualified) scores as last place (if 5 boats started the race, you will be scored as 5th place).

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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CAMP T CORNER

It is hard to believe that another summer at Camp T is almost over! This week is our busiest week of the season, with 190 campers joining us. Nearly every overnight bed in camp is full, and we also have 51 day campers participating in activities throughout the week. Camp is certainly busy, but it is wonderful to see every corner of the property filled with campers swimming, sailing, creating, playing, and making new friends.

Next week will be our final week of the 2026 summer, with another 163 campers joining us. The last week always brings mixed emotions. Everyone is tired after a long and busy summer, but we are also reluctant to say goodbye to our campers and staff. It is also a week filled with some of our most meaningful traditions.

One of those traditions is our final Closing Campfire, when we recognize all the campers who earned the *Order of the Birch Award* during the summer. So far this year, 18 campers have earned this honor.

The *Order of the Birch* is the highest honor a camper can receive at Camp T. To be eligible, campers must be entering at least seventh grade and must have attended Camp T for at least five years. During their week at camp, campers complete a series of tasks designed to encourage participation, growth, leadership, service, and camp spirit.

They must attend Polar Bear every morning, attend each of the "free choice" activities at least once, and demonstrate growth or improvement in an activity they attend all week. They must also complete a service project for camp, serve as a model camper, keep their bunk neat and clean, and lead a song at Song Circle one evening. Finally, each candidate writes a poem, song, or speech about what Camp T means to them and presents it during Closing Campfire.

At our final Closing Campfire, each staff member with at least five years of experience as a Camp T camper or counselor holds a torch. The *Order of the Birch* recipients walk through this honor guard to the stage, where they recite a pledge and receive their certificates. They are then given the honor of leading the entire camp down the stairs to the waterfront for our candlelight serenade.

This year's candlelight serenade will take place on Friday, August 14. We expect to begin making our way down the stairs at approximately 9:15 p.m. As we walk, we will sing *Follow the Gleam*. Once we reach the waterfront, campers and staff will line the dock, place their candles in the water, and sing camp songs for the Birch Lake residents gathered nearby in their boats.

If you have never experienced the candlelight serenade, we hope you will join us. Bring your boat near the Camp T waterfront around 9:15 on Friday night and help us celebrate the end of another unforgettable summer at Camp T.

~Miss Amber

Camp T

Candlelight Serenade

Friday, August 14 at 9:15pm

Come out on your boats and gather near the camp dock to see our campers set their candles in the water and sing. We will start proceeding down the waterfront stairs around 9:15pm.

Follow the Gleam

To the campers in days of old
Keeping watch o'er Tannadoonah's heights
Came the gleam of a tiny candle
Lighting the black darkness of the night

Follow folllow, follow the gleam
Campers wish, throughout the world
Follow follow, follow the gleam
Of a Tannadoonah light

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BIRCH LAKE HISTORY: THE SCANNELL-HOGOBOOM FAMILY

For Pat Scannell, now 94, the history of Birch Lake is intertwined with memories of family, friendship and a different way of life at the lake.

The Scannell family's connection to Birch Lake began with Sunday afternoon drives during the 1930s. Pat's family would pile into the car and go for a ride, often visiting the lakes of southwestern Michigan. Her father John eventually narrowed his favorites down to Corey Lake and Birch Lake, both of which appealed to him because of their clean, deep water.

The family rented a cottage at Birch Lake in 1939 and 1940 - what Pat remembers as the Douglas house and is now the Russell cottage on the south shore. In July of 1940, John and Lois Scannell purchased the vacant lot next door to the cottage they had been renting the previous summers. At the time, the property was being used as an informal dump, since there was no organized garbage collection around the lake. Pat's brothers, Johnny and Bob, hauled the family's trash up the hill and buried it. Later, a local teenager began collecting garbage from lake residents, creating the lake's earliest garbage service.

The family's one-bedroom cottage was built during the summer of 1941, at the height of a polio outbreak. Pat's father hoped that bringing his family to the lake would get them away from the city and reduce their risk of exposure. School openings were delayed that year until the weather cooled, allowing the family to use the new cottage in September.

The newly-built Scannell Cottage in September 1940 (S074)

Because very little was known about how polio spread, fear was widespread. Pat remembers a local official advising her father to keep the children out of the lake. The official acknowledged that swimming probably was not the source of transmission, but said he still had to contend with the public hysteria surrounding the disease.

Birch Lake also provided a sense of safety during the war years. Lois and the kids would stay at the lake all summer, and John would make the daily commute to his job as the Chairman of the Physical Education Department at Notre Dame. Gasoline was rationed during the war years, so her father carpooled to work with Clarke Zesinger. Pat remembers walking up the road with June Zesinger - occasionally walking all the way to Lanky's - to wait for their fathers to return in the evening.

John and Lois Scannell, with John, Bob, and Pat at their cottage in the 1940s

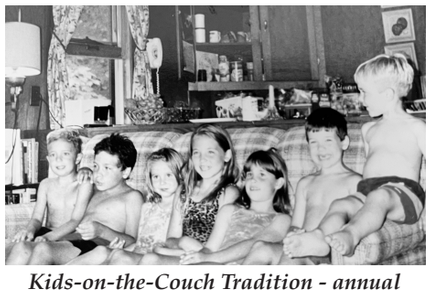
Lois was a dance instructor and later an artist. She became and accomplished painter and later in life taught painting classes at the YMCA. After Knute Rockne's death, John oversaw the building of the Rockne Memorial Building, and his office was in that building for many years. There is a painting in the building that honors John's contributions to the physical education department at Notre Dame, which was painted by Lois.

Painting by Lois Scannell of John Scannell in the Rockne Memorial Building at Notre Dame

The kids had to create their own entertainment at the lake. Johnny and Bob often rowed across the lake to the cove, which the family called Turtle Bay. For the return trip, they rigged a bedsheet into a makeshift sail and let the wind carry them home. Pat also remembers walks around the lake with other lake kids and their mothers, and trips to Lanky's for ice cream. She also recalls walking up to the Brossman's farm to play with other kids and swim in their pond.

When a group of lake youth created the first Birch Barker, Pat and her brothers were involved in the earliest days of the project. In the 2nd edition of the Barker, printed in July of 1944, Pat is listed as one of the Editors (alongside June Zesinger), John as the Artist, and Bob as one of the Reporters.

As teenagers in the 50s, the Scannell kids spent less time at Birch Lake. John and Bob both worked at Camp Eberhart and Pat worked for a park in South Bend in the summers.



Kids-on-the-Couch Tradition - annual photo of all the cousins at the lake

Pat married Dave Hogoboom in 1954, and they spent their one-night honeymoon at the cottage at Birch Lake. Pat remembers stepping out the back door of the cottage on Sunday morning and the woman who lived up the hill yelling down, "Have a nice honeymoon!"

After John died in 1973, Lois considered selling the cottage. Pat and her husband Dave convinced her to keep it, and they maintained it as a rental for about 10 years to cover the expenses of keeping a second home.

Pat and Dave have five children - Annie, Dave, Jean, Jim, and Tom. They recall that there wasn't much privacy at the cottage - the "door" to the bedroom was curtain, and the walls didn't go all the way to the ceiling. Weekends at the lake meant all seven of them in the one-bedroom cottage. There was no hot water, so bathing meant taking a bar of soap into the lake.

The cottage really hasn't changed much in the past 85 years. They've added a hot water heater and a shower, and finished the attic to create a loft for additional sleeping space. A larger deck was built on the lakeside, and in 2020 the cottage got new siding and windows. But it's still a simple lake cottage where the family gathers each summer.

Birthday Celebration at the lake. Pat is pictured on the left, lighting the candles.

Pat's son Dave and his wife Donna bought the house next door (S-073) and are now the caretakers of the family cottage. Looking back, Pat misses the times when families with average incomes could afford a simple cottage and build a life at the lake for their families. The Scannell cottage was never elaborate. It was small, crowded and lacked many modern comforts. Yet it has given generations of the family a place to swim, play, visit with neighbors and create traditions together.

Scannell-Hogoboom ("Sca-Boom") reunion at the cottage

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BARKER KIDS OF THE WEEK

Molly Moore, granddaughter of Bob and Lisa Groszek (south shore). Showing off her lake fashion hat.

Tim Burchell celebrating his 76th birthday at Nick and Angela Bergan's, July 28.

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

Claire Riordan (left) granddaughter of Sue Davis (east shore) and friend Molly enjoy paddle boarding around Birch Lake.

Abby Caplis (north shore) and bestie Hannah. It was Abby's Birthday.

Bill Magro and daughter Jennifer Magro Algarotti (north shore) hosted visitors from Brisbane, Australia. Megan Stewart and daughters Lulu and Wil enjoyed their week at the lake. The girls attended Camp T mini week and loved it!!

Gus Eshleman buys lemonade from Ella and Aria Frew, while Quinny Cash and Eden Springfield are hard at work.

Michael Kelly (cove) turned 5 on August 2 and spent the day with nine of his cousins.

This weekend, the west side and the cove were filled with the laughter of three generations of Birch Lake kids! There's something special about seeing lake families return to the place they love most and watching memories being made.

Mike Kelly's (cove) daughter Rachael with her 2 youngest sons Brayden and Liam.

Once a lake kid, always a lake kid!
Christopher and Robin Carey, Caleb and Kyla Walker, and Valerie and Chris Lintner

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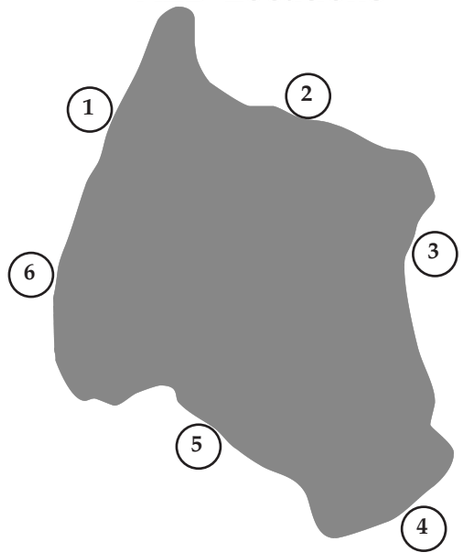
(AED) locations on Birch Lake

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

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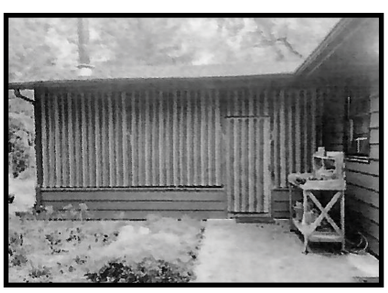

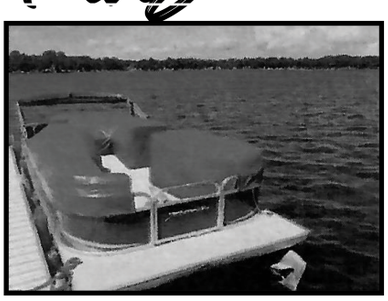

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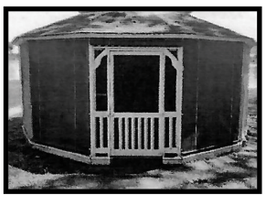

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Classified Ads in the Barker are free to current BLYC members. Send your ad to ***birchbarker1@gmail.com*** Deadline is **MONDAY 11am** for the upcoming weekend's Barker.

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

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Kayak paddle during early July storm. Black blades, aluminum shaft.
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Friday, July 24: ***Whistle Pigs***

Friday, August 28: ***Whiskey Retreat***

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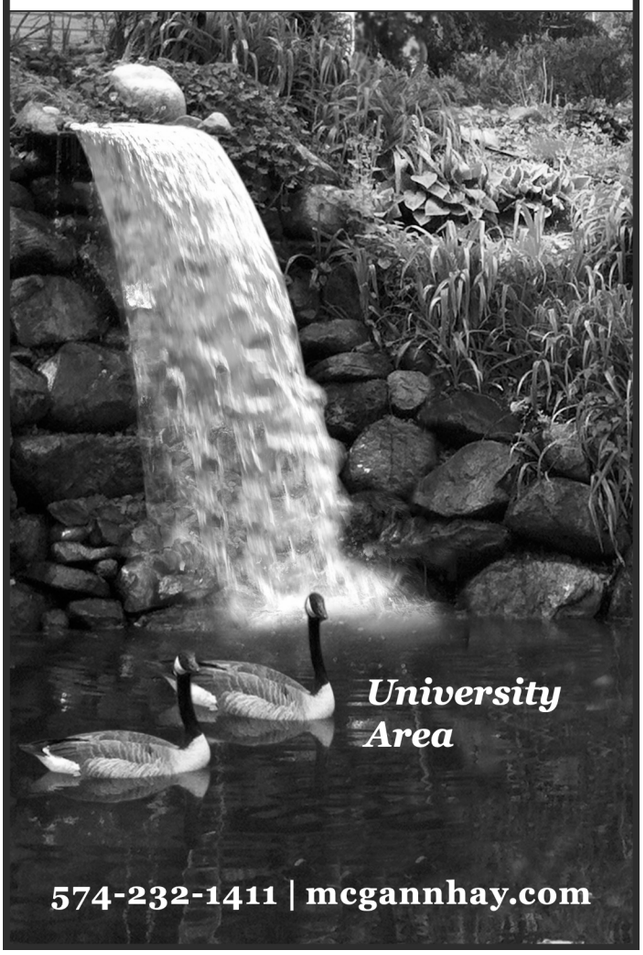

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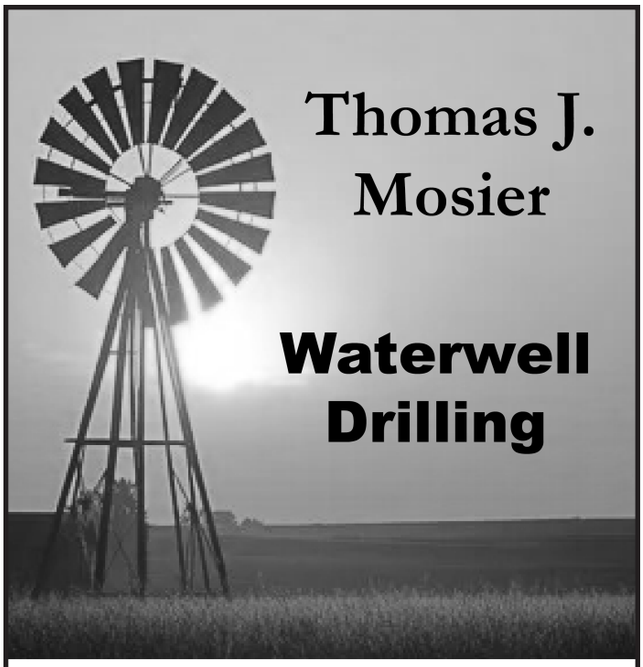

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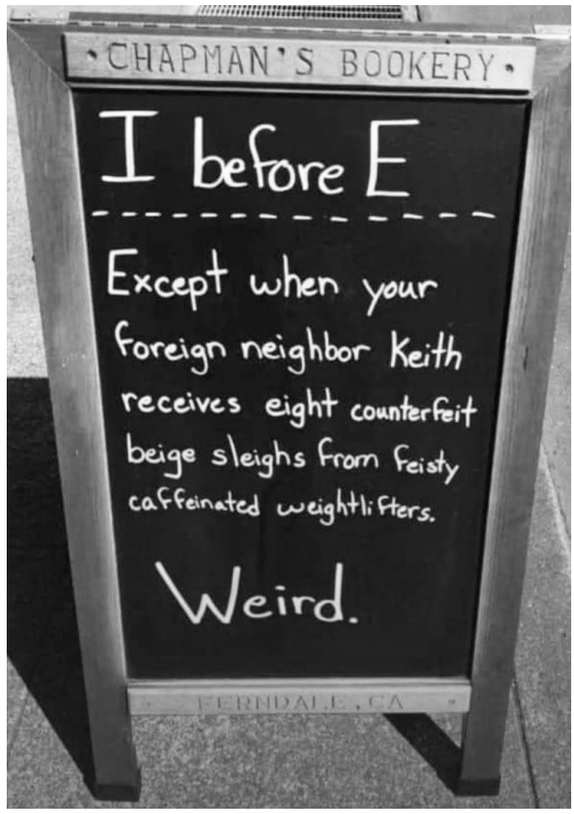

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