# BIRCH Barker

vol. 78 issue 13

The official publication of the Birch Lake Yacht Club

BirchLakeYachtClub.com

Weekend of
August 15
2026




*Butterfly by the shore at camp. Photo credit to camp photographer Anroe Coetzee*

**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)

**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)
Keith Remington (W)
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

August is half over already, but we still have plenty of activities remaining on the BLYC calendar, starting with the monthly Card and Game Night next Wednesday. If you haven't been to one yet this year, come on over for a fun evening. The Fall Dinner arrives on August 22 with a delicious barbeque, and soon-to-be Commodore Ron's big reveal of his Vice Commodore for the coming year. Get your tickets now at the link at the top of this page. The Book Club will meet on August 25 at Debbie Soldato's to discuss The Correspondent; and then the return of the Ladies Style Show and Luncheon on August 26.

Thank you to everyone who helped explode the Fireworks Thermometer with 107% of the goal, and brought us a fantastic show truly worthy of the 250th Birthday of the United States of America! Thank you also to the 49.8% of homes who have donated to the Water Quality Fund, and a friendly reminder to those who have not. The goal this year is 75% of all homes on Birch Lake, because the Water Quality Fund benefits ALL community residents, not just yacht club members. The Birch Lake Yacht Club's Water Quality Committee privately funds and performs water quality maintenance on our beautiful lake, and needs the entire community to help. It's no exaggeration to say that the Water Quality program has helped save the lake from disaster in the past. The alternative would be to let government do the job, which of course would mean an increase in everyone's tax bill. And we believe that the job is done better by Birch Lake residents. So please, everybody, BLYC member or not, scan the QR code if you have not done so already, and make your home one of the proud 2026 participants in the Birch Lake Water Quality Fund. Thank you.

**The Tide Turns: 1777**

After the American victory at Saratoga and France's entry into the war, Britain changed its strategy. Convinced that Loyalist support ran deep in the South, Lord Cornwallis seized Savannah in December 1778 and Charleston in May 1780. But Congress switched generals, and patriot militias like those of Francis ("The Swamp Fox") Marion bedeviled the British. Cornwallis retreated into Virginia, and fortified the tobacco port of Yorktown. Washington and French General Rochambeau marched south from New York, while a French fleet under Admiral de Grasse seized control of Chesapeake Bay. Cornwallis was now bottled up by land and sea. On October 14, 1781, Allied troops stormed two key British redoubts, and on October 19 more than 7,000 British and Hessian troops marched out and stacked their arms in surrender. Peace talks dragged on until 1783, but Yorktown had broken Britain's will to


Culver's

The 2026 Birch Barker is generously sponsored by Culver's.
See ad on page 3


The Barker will consider ads, photos, and editorial content for publication.
Email items to ***birchbarker1@gmail.com***.
For editorial concerns, contact editor Amber Holleman at ***birchbarker1@gmail.com*** or **574-315-0227**.
For delivery concerns, contact Ron Niezgodski at ***birchbass1@gmail.com*** or **269-476-9317**.
For all other BLYC matters, contact Comm. Steve Frew at ***stephenbfrew@gmail.com*** or **239-315-1177**.
**NEW DEADLINE** for submissions is **11AM** on the **MONDAY** of the week before publication.

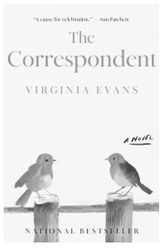
fight. Thanks to its alliance with France, made possible by the victory at Saratoga, America had won its fight for freedom.

*~Commodore Steve Frew*



***The Surrender of Lord Cornwallis,*** *by John Trumbull, 1820, U.S. Capitol Rotunda.*

**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).

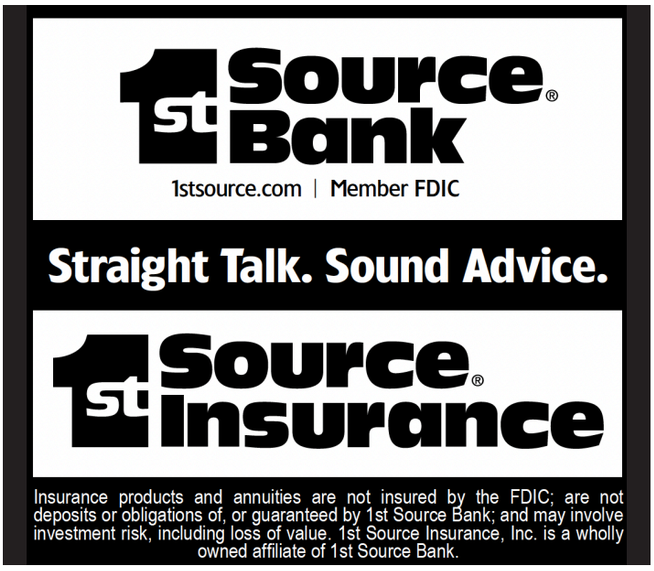






**Birch Lake Ladies Style Show and Luncheon**

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.**The last day to purchase tickets is Wednesday, August 19th.** You can purchase tickets on the BLYC website or from Ronni Eshleman 317-418-9557. This fun event always sells out, so get your tickets early.









# BIRCH LAKE NEWS

**Suzy King**



The King Family (North shore) are sad to share news sister Suzy passed away this week. Karen S. King [04/14/1952 ~ 08/11/2026]. The family plans to hold a private memorial when next our Minnesota kids can attend. Suz put up a mighty struggle but passed under constant care at Creekside NH, South Bend, IN along with Luminary Hospice Group.

**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.***

**AED Support Needed**

Our six (6) AEDs around the Lake require periodic battery and pad replacements so they are always ready when needed. The batteries have a four (4) year life and were last replaced in late Summer 2024. The pads have a two (2) year life and were last replaced in Fall 2025. That means next Fall we will need to replace the pads again at a likely cost of more than $2,100 in total. We currently have not received enough in AED donations to cover this impending cost. When you are reviewing your future donations to the Yacht Club please consider a donation toward our AEDs. Our Lake Community appreciates it!

**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.




**Thank you!**

My most sincere thanks to all my good friends and neighbors for the kind words, cards, prayers. positive ju-ju and well wishes during my recent and ongoing medical issues.

My most recent visit with the docs reveals that my leg is indeed getting better (not healed yet, but better) and that the labs show the infection is subsiding nicely (again, not healed yet, but better).

To those of you who offered help in obtaining whatever I needed during my recovery, doc says we can cancel the search for the peg and the parrot. I'll let you know if that changes.

Thanks again,
*The guy who used to be SailorPhil*

**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.

**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.



# PRESERVATION OF BIRCH LAKE: WATER QUALITY

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 Marc Caenepeel. Thank you to all of our authors for contributing. We hope you enjoy their "Voices". *~Your Water Quality Committee*

Today I was looking at a sky over Birch Lake dimmed and greyed by smoke created hundreds of miles away from us. Little smell of smoke, just a thick haze that makes it so I can't even see the other side of the lake.

But not to worry, the smoke and haze in the sky will be gone in a few days as the fires die and the skies clear again to a beautiful blue with white puffy clouds.

Then I think to myself, looking out over the lake, what if a similar situation happened to the beautiful water of Birch Lake? Not a thick haze in the sky, but a cloudy, murky, yellow green scum and algae replacing the normal emerald blue-green color of Birch Lake.

But wait a minute! That clean, clear, blue-green color of Birch Lake has been that way for my whole life living summers here. It will be clear and beautiful again forever, just like the sky, right?

But that ugly yellow green water color you see in neighboring ponds could happen right here. It could be caused by some natural or unnatural condition introduced to our lake by birds, ducks, geese, swans, boats, and us humans. So now what are we going to do? Who or what can fix this mess? Who do we call now? **SCUM BUSTERS?!**

In a world, of instantaneous fixes, repairs, and results, what **CAN** be done, who **DO** we call? What **WILL** it cost? **WHO PAYS?** I can hear and read it now! **"IT'S ALL YOUR FAULT!"**

**Take a minute, read the last few paragraphs again, but this time let it sink in!**

Our beautiful Birch Lake can be doomed to be a lake choked full of invasive plants both in and above the water. Weed beds or algae so thick you can't swim or paddle a boat through.

Yet, we continue to think and demonstrate this could never happen here.

**'HOW', you say?**

I've asked this question numerous times and no one has given me a rational, logical answer.

Will someone please tell me why less money, to date, has been collected for the preservation of our beautiful lake than a 30-minute, $26,000, flash in your face, fireworks light show?

Why are there fewer than 50 percent of the homes and families on this beautiful lake, 106 of 225, contributing to the preservation of our lake (the water quality fund)?

So, let me repeat my question:

**Why do more than 50 percent of the residents of this beautiful lake find it of no concern or desire to contribute to the preservation of Birch Lake?**

**WHY????**

The beauty of this lake was created long before any of us "Humanoids" began to pollute it!

**It is simple!**

It is all property owners and visitors' responsibility to help safeguard and preserve the beauty of Birch Lake. Your donation to the preservation of Birch Lake is an investment, not only for today, but for all future generations to enjoy the beauty of Birch Lake.

Thank you to those that have contributed and may we all continue to enjoy the beauty of our wonderful Birch Lake!

I echo the words of Gertie Temple's Birch lake poem:

*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.*
*~Gerti Temple*

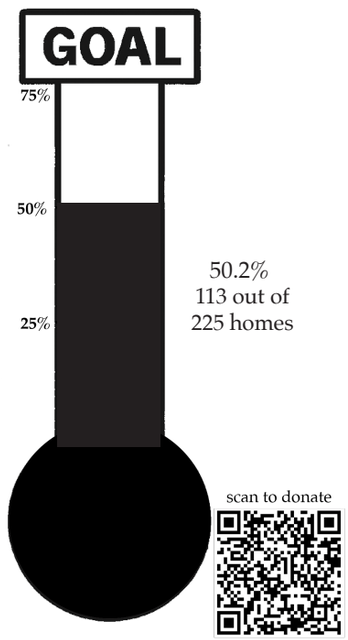
Thank you,
*Marc Caenepeel*
*Birch Lake Resident since 1950*

I tell folks I was baptized, prematurely in my mother's womb, when my Dad flipped the canoe while fishing only months before my birth!

**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.**
***Contribute now at https://store.birchlakeyachtclub.com***




THE ROCK
AT BIG FISH LAKE
STEAKS | CHOPS | SEAFOOD
CHICKEN | PASTA | RIBS
20 MINUTES FROM BIRCH LAKE
269.646.7625
BIG FISH LAKE MARCELLUS, MI
Great Food. Beautiful Views. Good Times.
THEROCKATBIGFISHLAKE.COM
DINE IN • TAKEOUT • GROUPS WELCOME

KEEP YOUR VEHICLE
RUNNING STRONG!

MGM AUTO REPAIRS



TRUSTED AUTO REPAIR
IN CASSOPOLIS

- OIL CHANGES & MAINTENANCE
- BRAKES & SUSPENSION
- ENGINE DIAGNOSTICS & REPAIR
- A/C SERVICE
- ALIGNMENTS & TIRES
- TRANSMISSION SERVICE
- ELECTRICAL SYSTEMS
- U-HAUL DEALER



FROM BASIC MAINTENANCE TO COMPLEX REPAIRS—
WE'LL KEEP YOUR VEHICLE SAFE AND RELIABLE.

1019 E STATE ST
CASSOPOLIS, MI

269-445-2065

HONEST SERVICE. EXPERIENCED TECHNICIANS. RELIABLE REPAIRS.

CALL TODAY
TO SCHEDULE YOUR APPOINTMENT!
MGM-REPAIRS.COM

O'Donnell's Docks LLC

CRAFTLANDER HYDRAULIC LIFTS
Available in 4,500lb, 6,000lb, and 8,000lb capacities




NEVER UNDERSOLD

- HEAVY-DUTY ENGINEERING
- EFFORTLESS OPERATION
- RELIABLE HYDRAULIC SYSTEM
- BUILT FOR CONVENIENCE

HYDRAULIC LIFT · HIGH PERFORMANCE

MORE SPRING SPECIALS
25% off 4'x10' in-stock HD anodized aluminum dock sections
retail $931.00 SALE 25% off now just $698.00 per section

For online quote, go to
www.odonnellsdocks.com



12097 M-60 • Jones, MI
269-244-1446
info@odonnellsdocks.com

Authorized Dealer for:
lift tech Marine · SHOREMASTER · 4EverAluminum PRODUCTS INC. · CRAFTLANDER · HEWITT DOCKS - LIFTS - PONTOON LEGS · LSP inc. · POLYDOCK PRODUCTS

YOUR ANCHOR IN THE SEA OF REAL ESTATE
DON'T LET THE WORRY OF BUYING/SELLING WEIGH YOU DOWN



★ YOUR GOALS
★ MY PRIORITY
★ THE JOURNEY
★ OUR SUCCESS

MEET MY TEAM




Hanna Clayton
269-588-0523
&
Kally Hoelcher
269-240-8824

Jessica Pompey
Realtor®
269-228-1980
jesspompey@yahoo.com

REALTOR® | MLS MULTIPLE LISTING SERVICE

COLDWELL BANKER
ANCHOR
REAL ESTATE
2049 Lakeshore Dr, St. Joseph, MI 269-983-0011

# 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**

or pay online at
https://app.joinit.com/o/blyc/

Name _____
Lake Address _____
Phone _____
Email _____


INFINITY
HOME SERVICES LLC

• home watch • property checks • maintenance •
• repairs • small projects •
• short-term vacation rental maintenance services •

**269-259-1127** | jim@infinitymichiana.com

*infinitymichiana.com*

# FLEET CAPTAIN'S CORNER: TWO WEEKS IN A ROW

Wow, we had two great sailing weekends in a row. Let's cross our fingers for a third. We were able to get three races in for both the MC's and Sunfish and had several spectators in boats watching and enjoying the races. Including Buzz Rasmussen, who took several nice pictures. Thanks, Buzz. I had a lot of family in from out west and found a boat for my cousin Max Parnell, from San Diego, to sail. He has sailed before with me, but this was his first solo race, and he beat me. Good racing, Max. Guess I shouldn't have stayed up that late the night before, chuckle. Also, a big thanks to Bob King for lending us your Sunfish. If anyone has company that would like to try sailing, don't hesitate to reach out. I most likely can find a Sunfish to borrow for a weekend or a race.

We also had another close race between Stewart Spratt and Rick Russwurm. Rick beat Stewart by a few inches. My dad, VC Ron, on the Committee boat said Stewart needed to point his bow up towards the line and he would have had the race. Good racing, and you'll get him next time, Stewart. All in all, it was another beautiful day sailing on lovely Birch Lake.

*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

| | 9-Aug | 9-Aug | 9-Aug | Total | % Races | Average | Season |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 9 | 10 | 11 | Points | Finished | Points | Rank |
| **MC Scow Sailor** | ---------- | | | | | | |
| Scott Troeger #1489 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 14321 | 75.0% | 1591.2 | 1 |
| Patrick Welch #1979 | DNS | DNS | DNS | 4642 | 25.0% | 1547.3 | 2 |
| Barb Cassady #2506 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 16895 | 91.7% | 1535.9 | 3 |
| Bill Luecht #1579 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 15661 | 91.7% | 1423.7 | 4 |
| Rick Harmon #852 | DNS | DNS | DNS | 4257 | 25.0% | 1419.0 | 5 |
| Phil Vitale #500 | DNS | DNS | DNS | 7070 | 41.7% | 1414.0 | 6 |
| Gigi Cassady (crew for Barb C) | DNS | DNS | DNS | 0 | 16.7% | 0.0 | 7 |
| Eliza (crew for Rick H) | DNS | DNS | DNS | 0 | 25.0% | 0.0 | 7 |
| Max (crew for Rick H) | DNS | DNS | DNS | 0 | 25.0% | 0.0 | 7 |

### Sunfish Standings

| | 9-Aug | 9-Aug | 9-Aug | Total | % Races | Average | Season |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 14 | 15 | 16 | Points | Finished | Points | Rank |
| **Sunfish Sailor** | ---------- | | | | | | |
| Rick Russwurm | 2 | 2 | 1 | 15459 | 62.5% | 1545.9 | 1 |
| Stewart Spratt | 3 | 1 | 2 | 20018 | 81.3% | 1539.8 | 2 |
| Amy Troeger | DNS | DNS | DNS | 10580 | 43.8% | 1511.4 | 3 |
| Pete Soldato | DNS | DNS | DNS | 2965 | 12.5% | 1482.5 | 4 |
| Herb Cleveland | 1 | 3 | DNS | 13014 | 56.3% | 1446.0 | 5 |
| Bob Niezgodski | 5 | 5 | 4 | 22587 | 100.0% | 1411.7 | 6 |
| Connor Caplis | DNS | DNS | DNS | 8439 | 37.5% | 1406.5 | 7 |
| Max Parnell | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4182 | 18.8% | 1394.0 | 8 |
| Marlee Soldato (crew for Pete S) | DNS | DNS | DNS | 0 | 12.5% | 0.0 | 9 |

**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










# A GOOD DAY FOR SAILING








































# PIER LOGIC

DOCKS • LIFTS • STORAGE • SERVICE

*Your One-Stop Marine Service Partner*

From custom dock and lift solutions to seasonal installation, removal, storage, and maintenance — Pier Logic keeps your waterfront ready all year long.




- Dock & Lift Sales
- Installation & Removal
- Boat Lift Service & Repair
- Indoor & Outdoor Storage
- Barge Services
- Winterization & Detailing

THREE RIVERS, MICHIGAN | 269-528-6001 | pierlogic.org | vince@pierlogic.org

---

# DYNAMIC

CONSTRUCTION & CONTRACTING LLC

*Excellence ◆ Quality ◆ Craftsmanship*

*Custom projects with high attention to detail*

Remodeling ◆ Additions ◆ Kitchens

New construction ◆ Decks

Darrell Martin (269)718-2995

---

# JAYWALKER

RESTAURANT

Conveniently located close to Birch Lake!
Open for Lunch and Dinner
Located on the beautiful St. Joseph River
10188 US 12, Mottville
for reservations or carry-out, call

**269-483-2305**

$5 off your purchase of $25 or more with this ad!

---



# The truth about your home's value.

Our Pin Point Price Analysis uses hyper-local data to position your home for top offers.
**Scan for your free, personalized analysis.**

*Paul DeLano*
BROKER / OWNER
**269.445.8877**
*thelakelife.com*

LAKE LIFE REALTY

---



# 2026 BLYC OFFICERS AND DIRECTORS

## BLYC OFFICERS

*Commodore*
**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
bizzycover27@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

**Keith Remington (W)**.....574-520-7459
keith@bleedblue.net

**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
smwilliams226@gmail.com





APOLLOMARINE.net

We rent
Pontoon Boats!

We service all
area lakes!

APOLLO MARINE
SALES
SERVICE
STORAGE

South side
of Gravel Lake
15355 96th Avenue
Lawton, MI 49065

269-423-6011
1-888-996-BOAT

SALES • SERVICE • STORAGE

# CAMP T CORNER

When I came back to camp in 2006 to be the Camp Director, I told the board of directors that I was just filling in. That I would do this for one season while they found someone permanent to lead camp. I had one year left in my PhD program in Development Psychology, and then I was going to find "a real job" - one where I was teaching and doing research at a university. I never imagined that 20 years later I would still be right here at camp!

When I was a child I attended Camp T from the ages of 5 to 15. I tried other camps too, including Girl Scout camp at Camp Shawadassee in Lawton. None of them ever felt like home, and I always came back to Camp T. Mrs. Murphy and Mrs. Laing were the Director and Assistant Director for all the years I was a camper, and for the first two years I worked at camp. I don't think there was ever a time when I thought I would someday ***be*** Mrs. Murphy! She was the director for 27 summers, from 1971 to 1997.

When I was 16, I spent the summer working as the dishwasher and kitchen assistant in the kitchen at Camp T. At 17 I became a cabin counselor and lifeguard, and worked the next few summers in that role. When I was 21 I was the waterfront director for the summer.

When I went to graduate school the next year, my advisor said I had to work in the lab during the summer. That first summer I marked my days based on what was happening at camp. *It's 9:30, they're starting 1st activity. It's 1:15, time for singing after lunch and then rest hour. It's 5:50, they're taking down the flag and heading to dinner. Taps is playing, it's time for bed.* In that summer of 2002 I didn't think I would ever spend a full season at camp again.

Eventually, while still in grad school, I joined the board of directors hoping that even though I couldn't physically be there in the summers, I could help advise. As a board member, I learned very quickly that camp was in serious trouble. We were in debt, there was a looming sewer project that was going to be very costly, buildings were falling apart, and camper numbers were at an all-time low. In the fall of 2005, the Camp Director resigned during a board meeting. A week or so later, I submitted my resume to the Executive Director, with the caveat that I could only take this on for one summer. "Just this one summer," was what I kept saying to everyone. At the very first board meeting after I was hired in January of 2006, the Treasurer stood up and proposed that we close camp and sell the property. Thankfully the board didn't vote to support her proposal.

During the summer of 2006, we served 351 campers over an eight-week season. Our largest week brought about 60 campers to camp. During our smallest week, we served just 12. We finished the summer with 18 seasonal staff members.

Our only school-year program at time was a dwindling "club" program that met twice a month and served about 20 youth with the help of two volunteers. The organization employed one full-time, year-round staff member - the Executive Director - and a part-time office employee. The Camp Director position was seasonal, even though hiring staff, recruiting campers, developing programs, and preparing for summer required work throughout the entire year.

Twenty years later, the picture looks remarkably different. During the summer of 2026, we served 1,241 campers over a nine-week season - nearly four times as many campers as we served in 2006. Our largest week we had 189 campers, and even our smallest week we had 71 - more campers than our biggest week two decades ago.

Today, approximately 30 seasonal staff members make camp possible each summer, supported by five full-time, year-round employees who carry our mission forward in every season. We've built new buildings, expanded our capacity, and renovated old spaces. We have five new camper cabins, a maintenance building, a new boat shed and seawall, and have renovated Morris Lodge, the Dining Hall, Wallace, Cardinals & Wrens, and Robins & Woodpeckers over the years.

We operate three school-year programs in local schools, each serving between 30 and 60 children every day of the school year. What was once a small, twice-monthly club has grown into consistent, daily programs for children throughout our community.

We have moved from debt and uncertainty to stability. We now have a solid cash reserve, a strong foundation, and plans to continue improving our facilities and expanding our programs. We have received grants to support our programs, and are building new community partnerships to reach more youth throughout the year.

This progress was built one summer, one camper, one staff member, one donor, one volunteer, and one decision at a time. It came from people who believed camp was worth saving, strengthening, and sharing with more children. It came from board members, families, alumni, employees, community partners, and friends who gave their time, resources, trust, and love to this place.

The journey has not always been easy. There have been difficult seasons, difficult decisions, and moments when the future has felt uncertain. We have gone through the process of separating from our former parent organization (Camp Fire), and we're working on a renaming and rebranding journey. But despire the challenges, there has also been tremendous joy: cabins filled with laughter, friendships formed around campfires, children discovering new passions, maintaining a century of camp traditions, and years of young people finding a place where they belong.

In August of 2006, we wondered whether camp would survive. In August of 2026, we are making plans for how it will continue to grow. As I finish my 21st summer leading camp, I am deeply proud of what we have built, and even more excited about what is still ahead.

***~Miss Amber***

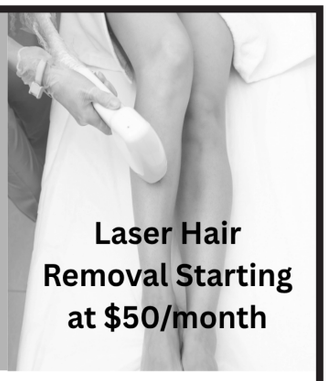
## Camp T

**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.



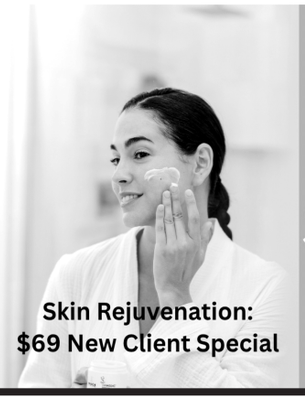

$499
Lip Filler



Laser Hair Removal Starting at $50/month

dermani MEDSPA

605 E University Dr
Granger, IN 46530
574-521-1355
dermanimedspa.com/granger



Skin Rejuvenation:
$69 New Client Special

Botox® Membership
$45/mo



PIER PERFECTION

YOUR ONE-STOP RESOURCE
FOR ALL YOUR DOCK, PIER & BOAT LIFT NEEDS



SALES | DESIGN | INSTALLATION | REMOVAL | REPAIR

ONE-STOP. FULL SERVICE.
Custom dock & pier sales, design, installation, removal, and repair. We handle it all—so you can enjoy what matters most.

COMMITTED TO EXCELLENCE.
Fully trained and insured crew. Timely, responsive, and professional service you can count on.

BUILT FOR YOU.
From simple to custom, we bring your vision to life with quality craftsmanship that stands the test of time.



Built to Last.
Backed by Experience.

LET'S BUILD SOMETHING PERFECT.

269-233-2222
PIERPERFECTION.COM



STRICTLY ROOFING

QUALITY INTEGRITY PROTECTION



BUILT TO PROTECT.
BUILT TO LAST.
Your home. Our expertise.
Complete exterior solutions
you can trust.

ROOFING | SIDING | WINDOWS | GUTTERS

(269) 322-0279 | strictlyroofing@myyahoo.com

LICENSED • INSURED • RELIABLE

# BIRCH LAKE HISTORY: HISTORICAL SUBDIVISIONS

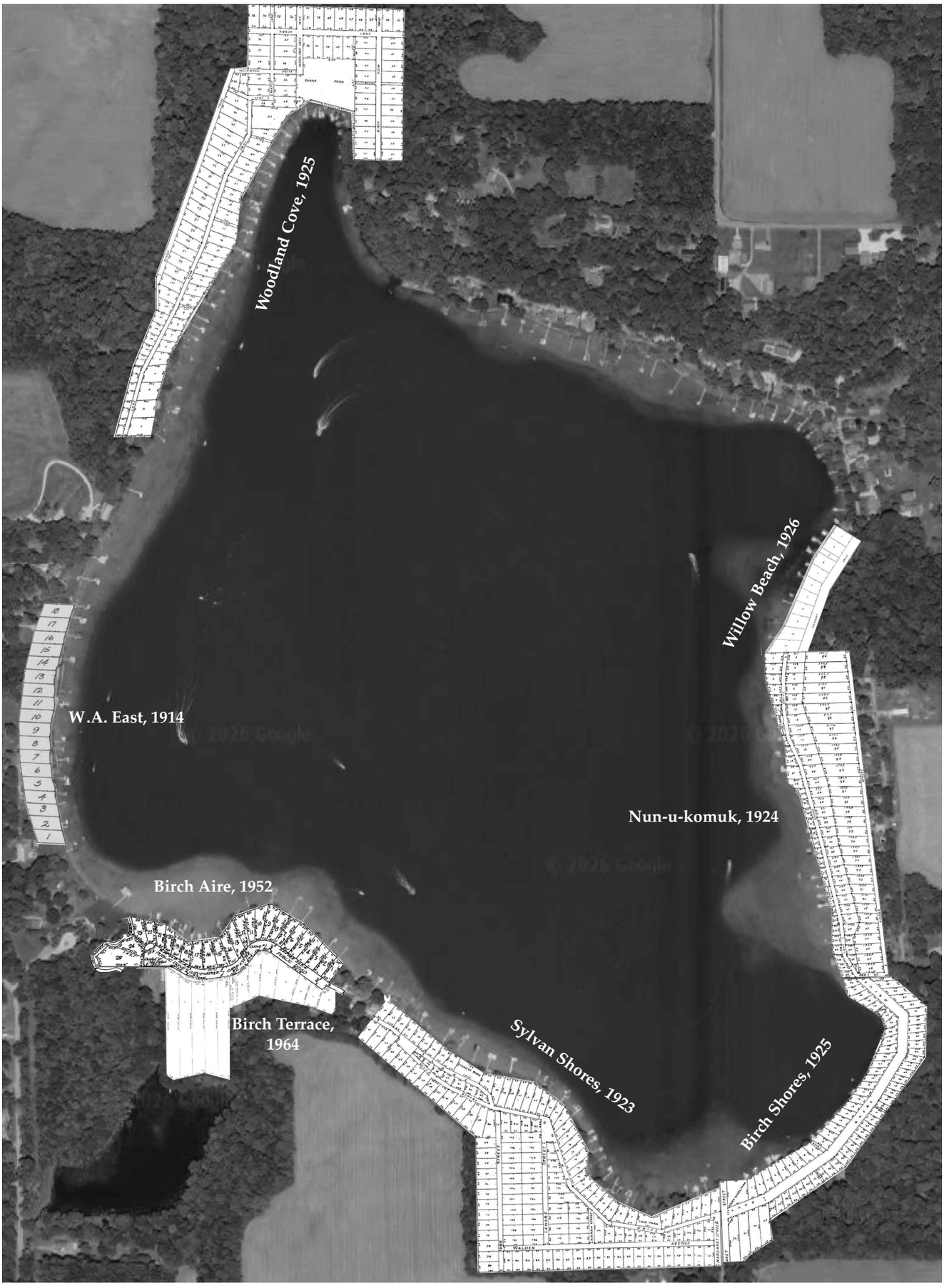
I've always been fascinated by the different subdivisions that were long ago platted around the lake. Many of them were platted in the 1920s, and the owners of the land envisioned a very different lake than we live on today, with many more homes, smaller lots, and public parks along each shore.

I've located the plat maps for these original subdivisons, and overlaid them on a current Google Earth image of Birch Lake. The area where Camp T is located and the north shore of the lake over to the Lazy Lodge area were never sub-divided and named with the county, so there are no subdivision plat maps.

The area where Storey Hill is now was originally platted (but not named) in 1914 by W.A. East. The Cove was originally platted in 1916 by Frank Doane as *Oak Bluff*. In 1925, the *Oak Bluff* subdivision was abandoned and replatted as *Woodland Cove*.

Orley Harvey platted a long section of the east shore as *Nun-u-komuk* in 1924. The following year, Henry Sears platted *Birch Shores* at the southern end of the east shore. *Willow Beach* - on the north end of the east shore - was platted in 1926 by Clifford Lyon.

A large section of the south side was platted as *Sylvan Shores* in 1923 by Seymour Jansen. The rest of the south shore, along the lakeside, was platted in 1952 as *Birch Aire* by Charlotte Bryan. The back lots behind *Birch Aire* were platted as *Birch Terrace* in 1964, also by Charlotte Bryan.



# Experience the Open Road

## SLINGSHOT Rentals

elkhartindianmotorcycle.com
(574)327-2327

ELKHART
INDIAN MOTORCYCLE



# Starting at $115 / Day



CRESSY
PROPERTY CONCIERGE SERVICES

## Is your home or rental property ready for the season?

We help homeowners prepare, inspect, and oversee their homes and rental properties all year around.

### SERVICES INCLUDE:

- Seasonal home inspections and repairs.
- Grounds maintenance and clean-up.
- Identifying maintenance issues before they turn into costly repairs.
- Property watch while you're away.
- Vendor and project coordination and oversight.
- 24/7 emergency services available.
- In-house HVAC and plumbing teams.
- Shopping and pantry-stocking before you or your guests arrive.
- Just need an extra hand? We can help.
- Event set-up / tear-down, heavy item hauling, and so much more!

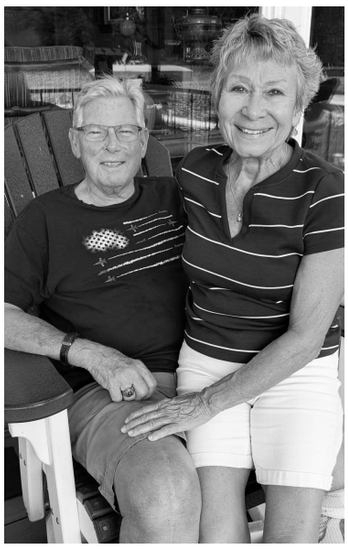
**Let's Get You Scheduled**
574.227.1040 | www.CressyConcierge.com

A Division of CRESSY

# BARKER KIDS OF THE WEEK



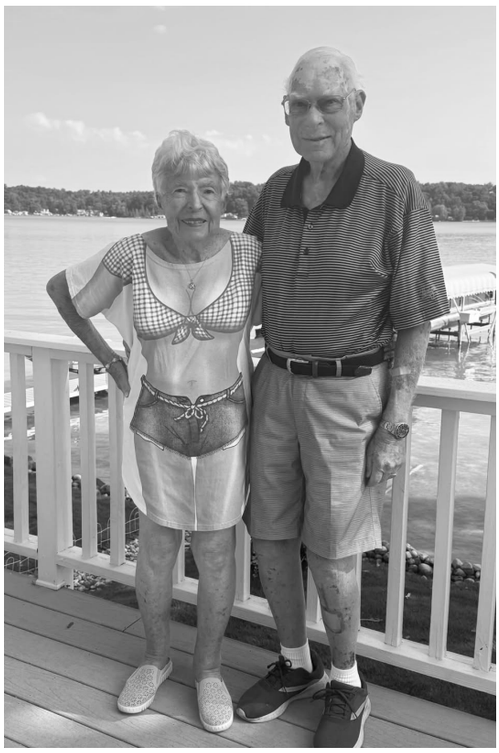
*Welcome to 6th generation Birch Laker, Wilson Allen Witchie, born on Friday August 7th! Wilson, son of Blake & Lindsey Witchie, is part of the Sears/Larson lineage here on the lake. He is the first grandchild for east side residents, Ron and Linda Witchie.*



*A very happy 92nd Birthday to Denny Weesner (south shore)!*

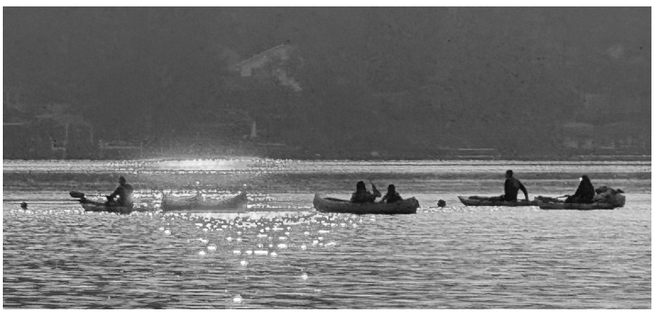
Want your kid to be a Barker kid of the week? Send your photos to *birchbarker1@gmail.com*

*Marc & Lynn Caenepeel (west shore) celebrating 54 years of marriage last week.*

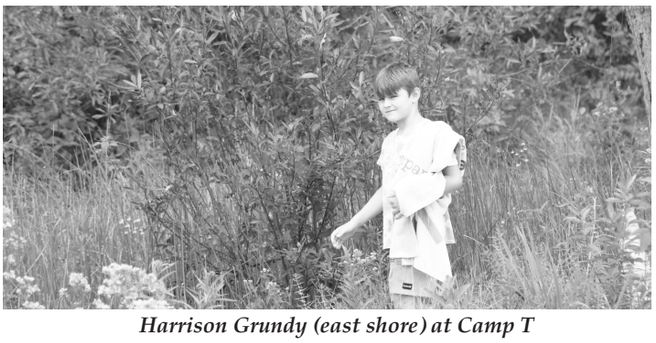





*Lifelong Birch Lake friends, Tory Troeger, Chris Ball, and Neil Troeger*



*Early Saturday morning swimmers from Camp.*



*Harrison Grundy (east shore) at Camp T*



*Harrison Grundy (east shore), friend Bentley, Kieran Grundy, cousin Beckett, and Grandma Sherry*




# TOP DOG LAWN CARE

**Mowing**
**Hedges**
**Edging**
**Gutter Cleaning**
**Spring, Summer, and Fall Cleanup**
**Rock / Mulch Installation**

**BRET TIETSORT**

**269-580-2738**

---

# TOUCHLESS COVER®

COVER YOUR INVESTMENT
WITH THE TOUCH OF A BUTTON




EFFORTLESS PROTECTION.
PREMIUM CONVENIENCE.

- REMOTE-CONTROL OPERATION
- FAST, HASSLE-FREE PROTECTION
- CUSTOM BUILT FOR YOUR SETUP
- HANDMADE IN THE USA
- DURABLE MARINE-GRADE MATERIALS

GET ON THE WATER FASTER —
AND PROTECT WHAT MATTERS MOST.

PIER LOGIC MARINA

NOW AVAILABLE FOR PURCHASE AT
**PIER LOGIC MARINA**
IN THREE RIVERS

CONTACT US
269-528-6001

VISIT US AT
59442 County Line Road
Three Rivers, MI 49093

---

# Satori
Salon & Spa

EVERY GUEST. EVERY TIME.
*Served with Passion and Integrity.*

REFRESH YOUR LOOK.
*Renew Your Spirit.*

From custom color and precision cuts to facials, massage, nails, waxing, and spa treatments — Satori Salon & Spa offers a full-service beauty and wellness experience in a relaxing organic environment.



HAIR | NAILS | FACIALS | MASSAGE

WAXING • BODY TREATMENTS • BRIDAL SERVICES

CERTIFIED ORGANIC SALON & DAY SPA

Certified Organic Salon & Day Spa
Professional Eufora® products & personalized care.
eufora.

11923 M-60
Jones, MI 49061
(269) 244-5510

*Book Online Today!*
satorisalonandspa.com

*Relax. Renew. Be You.*

---

# Prime Property Care

**Barge Services**
**Dock Removal / Install**
**Dock / Hoist Sales**

61272 Dailey Rd
Cassopolis, MI 49031
269-591-9848

**primepropertycarellc@yahoo.com**

# EMERGENCY HEART DEFIBRILLATOR
## (AED) locations on Birch Lake

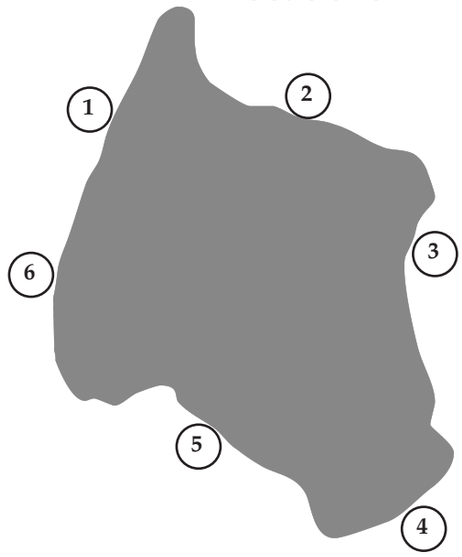
There are six (6) automated external defibrillator units (AEDs) on Birch Lake. The boxes that contain these devices are located at the following locations:

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

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




**AED Locations**




## IN AN EMERGENCY

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

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

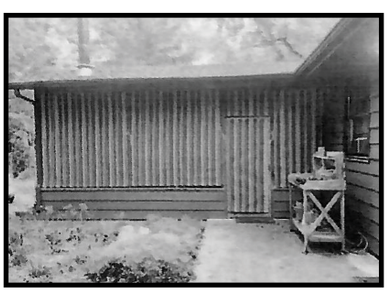

D & M CANVAS

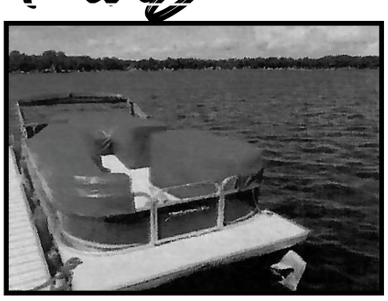
**O: 269.244.8020 | C: 269.506.3276**

**PROTECT YOUR PORCH WITH**

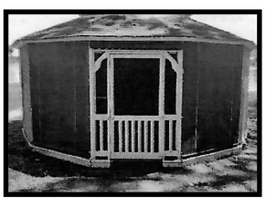
*Sunbrella Roll Curtains*







**CUSTOM CANVAS COVERINGS**



**Sunbrella roll curtains**
**outdoor furniture covers**
**boat covers**
**pontoon covers**



**12291 BIDELMAN RD. | THREE RIVERS, MI 49093**

# Eco Clean

RESIDENTIAL & COMMERCIAL CLEANING

269-479-6124

## Life gets busy—

let Eco Clean handle the mess.

We deliver reliable, professional cleaning for **homes**, **offices**, and **warehouses**, along with interior **boat and auto detailing.** We also offer **organization services** to help restore order to your space.
















*From routine upkeep to deep cleans, no job is too big or too small— we clean so you don't have to.*

**Call or text Jamie today to schedule your FREE quote.**

**269-479-6124**

For a reference call: **Ed Levy** at **574-286-0436** – A Birch Lake resident.

# THK

THK LAW, LLP

**Estate Planning**
**Business Counsel**
**Elder Law**
**Litigation**

Cassopolis | South Bend | Elkhart
269.445.1818

thklaw.com

# LAKE EFFECT MARINA

**LakeEffectMarina.com**

**269-641-2154**

Offering a variety of services from pick-up and delivery, parts, repair services, winterization, shrink wrap at our place, inside or outside storage, spring fire and detailing.

**13815 US Hwy 12**
**Union, MI 49130**

# CLASSIFIEDS

## FOR SALE

**Firewood for Sale!**
Perfect for summer bonfires! Delivery available. Starting at $4 per wrapped bundle. Ranger or truck loads available as well. High school kids' summer gig - text us to place and order or get more information. **269-528-1357**

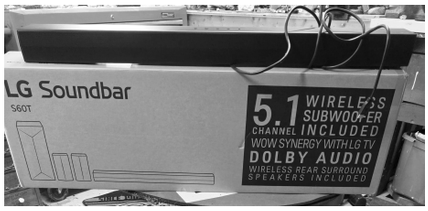
**MC Scow for Sale**
1999 MC with trailer, 3 sails, and cover. All dings and scratches removed, new board bearings. 3-1 traveler, 5-1 tapered mainsheet. Excellent condition ready to race or sail for fun.
Call B.J. Hague **269-462-5825** or email ***sailor1900@comcast.net***

**Desk for Sale**
Nine-drawer pedestal desk with inlaid top. Measures 44w x 23d x 29h. Antique? Not sure, but it's older than me. Make offer. Stewart **574-514-0667**





**LG Soundbar for Sale**
LG soundbar with subwoofer and rear surround sound. Brand new, only thing taken out of box was soundbar, never used. Call Deb at **219-765-8691**. $175.00




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

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.

## WANTED

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

**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***

## LOST

Kayak paddle during early July storm. Black blades, aluminum shaft.
Contact Beth. **269-985-8782**

Two small, seat-like inflatable floaties, one blue, one yellow.
Call Sandy, **476-1680**

## SERVICES

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






Cass County COA
*Summer Concert Series*

**Friday, June 26:** *The Van Dyke Revue*

**Friday, July 24:** *Whistle Pigs*

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

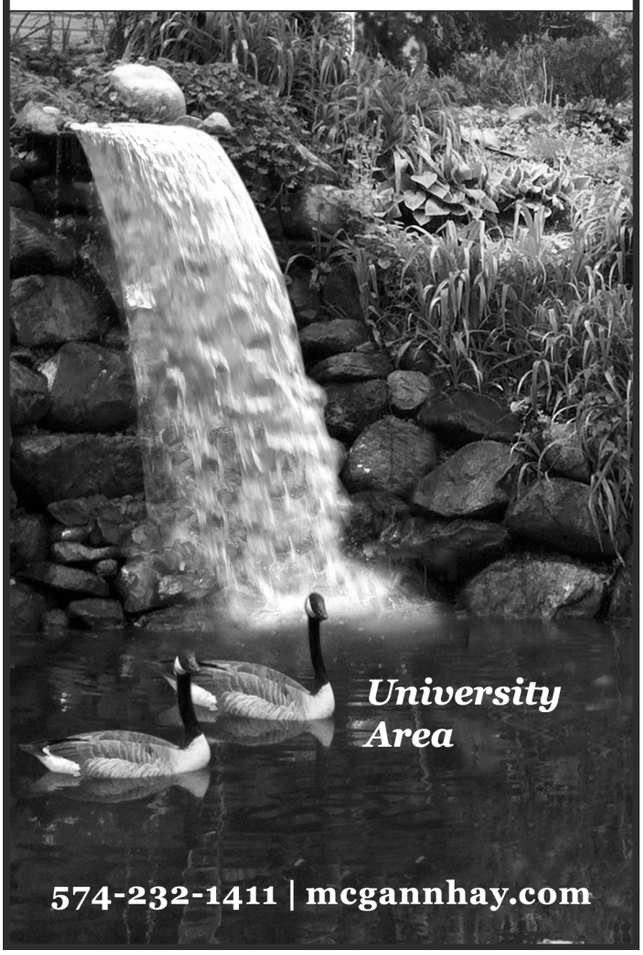
The COA's Summer Concert Series is back by popular demand. Join us at the COA Lowe Center's Pavilion for some great music and an opportunity to purchase food from our food truck vendors. Bring a chair or blanket enjoy three FREE outdoor concerts!

**Food is available from 5:30-7:30pm**
**Concerts begin at 7:00pm**
*more info -->*



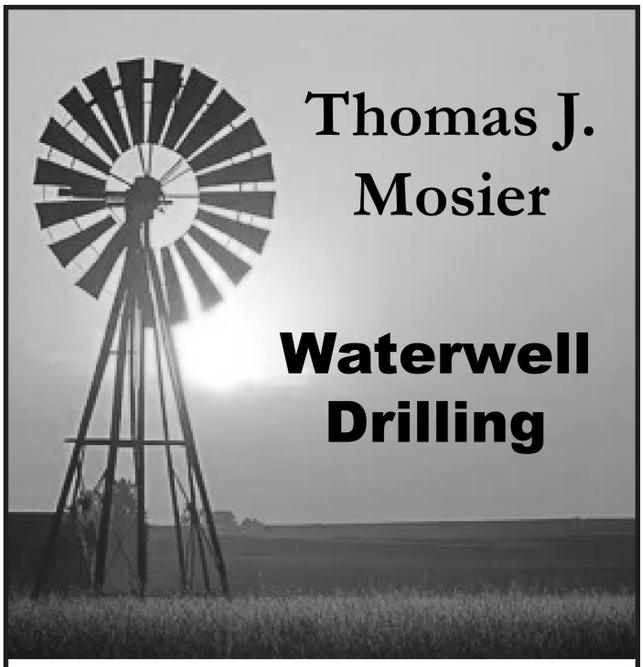
MH McGann Hay

Funerals | Cremation Specialists




574-232-1411 | mcgannhay.com





Thomas J. Mosier

Waterwell Drilling

5" Water Wells

Repair and Service
Most Water Pumps

M-60 E, Cassopolis

Office: 269-445-3246
Cell: 269-580-3246



Thinking about selling your lake home or property?

**The Dennis Bamber Group**
has sold over 175 waterfront properties in the past few years valued at over $70,000,000.

**Our Exceptional Marketing**
for lake property is creative, dynamic, and brings results.

**We Know How to List, Market, and Sell**




Here are some things for you to consider:

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

My MICHIGAN LAKE HOUSE

**Visit our website:**
mymichiganlakehouse.com
exclusively to waterfront

Above & Beyond
Cressy & Everett REAL ESTATE
701 Spruce St Dowagiac, MI

**THE DENNIS BAMBER GROUP**
LAKE & WATERFRONT SPECIALISTS

574-532-3808
dennisbamber@cressyeverett.com

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

# BARKER FUNNIES



















**Track Birch Lake market activity.**

Receive weekly updates on new, pending, and sold listings on your lake. **Scan to get clear, data-driven insights** delivered straight to your inbox.

*Paul DeLano*
BROKER / OWNER
**269.445.8877**
***thelakelife.com***

LAKE LIFE
REALTY

# WAKE SIDE MARINE




**WakeSide Marine**
51305 State Road 19 N, Elkhart, IN
WakeSideMarine.com 574-264-2874