



# THE BIRCHWOOD VOICE

Birchwood Lakes Community Association, Inc.  
212 Aspen Road, Dingmans Ferry, PA 18328  
(570) 828-2111

Volume 4/ No. 7

BIRCHWOOD LAKES COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION, INC.

WINTER 2009

## President's Message

by Chas Ritson

Several positive events have happened since my last message and one very terrible one.

Before I get to these events, I'd like to first mention that Robert Nilsen has resigned from the Board for health reasons. The Board thanks Bob for his service and we wish him well in the future. Marcella Livingston has been appointed from among four very good candidates to serve out the remainder of Bob's term. We welcome Marcella back and hope that the other candidates run for election this coming summer.

On the plus side, the members of Birchwood Lakes passed an Amnesty Program, albeit in low overall numbers. The Amnesty, like its predecessor 10 years ago, is intended to bring much needed money to BLCA and allow delinquent members to become members in good standing. Fifty-four members have signed up for the program and the Board is cautiously optimistic that this will be a win, win situation.

Another positive develop-

ment is the feedback we received from the Upper Lake dam/spillway preference survey that was mailed out to members, giving them a chance to tell the Board which design and which road option they would like to have considered. The top two designs, with almost identical number of votes were the Labyrinth and the Hybrid, and the walkway was the overwhelming choice in the road options. The Board will now take this feedback and put together a plan by the end of the year that will be reviewed by PADEP Dam Safety. Moving forward on this project has been long overdue, but is indicative that this Board is willing to tackle the hard topics/ issues that have previously been allowed to slide. Please bear in mind that the Board of Directors has the responsibility to repair and maintain our common areas and amenities and that PADEP will make us empty this lake if we do not take this action.

The terrible event re-



Here for a visit.

Photo by Ray Makoski

ferred above, involved a vicious attack on a women by her estranged husband. She is apparently getting better and her husband has been arrested. I mention this event not only because all members of Birchwood are hoping for her full recovery, but also because of the irresponsible comments that have been made surrounding this issue regarding this Board, our community manager and our current Public Safety company. While

all members have a right to voice their opinions, they also have a moral and ethical responsibility to be factual in their comments. Or, at least they should. Using a terrible event like this one to further a personal position is despicable in my opinion, especially when it involves telling half truths, exaggerating minor incidents, revising past history, and making broad assumptions without any foundation or objectivity.

Saying that this Board does not care about security or whether the gates are working or not, is absolutely ridiculous; implying that this incident would not have happened if the gates were working or if our previous

public safety company was here, is just plain wrong and irresponsible. What is especially galling is when someone says they are concerned about Birchwood's reputation, yet they contact a local newspaper and bash the very community that they say they care about. Birchwood is far from perfect, we all know that, but a divisive agenda does not help our community. I challenge anyone who is not satisfied with a particular issue to run for the Board, or to join a committee, or let your voice be heard at monthly Board meetings through realistic, cost effective ideas to solve perceived problems.

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Birchwood Lakes Community Association, Inc.  
212 Aspen Road  
Dingmans Ferry, PA 18328

**Deadline for the Birchwood Lakes newsletter is January 5.**

## 2010 Board of Directors

### Officers

President:	Charles Ritson
Vice President:	Louis Freeman
Treasurer:	Carolyn Martin
Secretary:	Clare Bennett

### Committee Chairs and Co-Chairs

#### Standing Committees:

BLCA Property Development:	Chairperson: Ann Marie Celantano Co-Chair: Charles Ritson
Roads Maintenance & Construction:	Chairperson: Louis Freeman Co-Chair:
Rules & Regulations:	Chairperson: John Meola Co-Chair: Carolyn Martin
Finance, Budget, Contracts:	Chairperson: Carolyn Martin Co-Chair: Charles Ritson
By-Laws:	Chairperson: Clare Bennett Co-Chair: Joanne McNerney
Capital Projects:	Chairperson: Charles Ritson Co-Chair: John Meola
Voting & Elections:	Chairperson: Clare Bennett Co-Chair: Carolyn Martin

#### Appointed Committees:

BLCA Property Beautification:	Chairperson: Marcella Livingston Co-Chair
Community Safety:	Chairperson: Ann Marie Celantano Co-Chair: Kathleen Stirrat
Community Affairs:	Chairperson: Sheila Salmon Co-Chair: Clare Bennett
Recreation:	Chairperson: Joanne McNerney Co-Chair: Eileen Naturale
Lake Management:	Chairperson: Charles Ritson Co-Chair: Sheila Salmon

## Notes from the Community Manager

Bettye White Gross, CMCA, AMS

Even as the winter season arrives, the Association and its Board of Directors continue to be active. Recently, the membership was asked to provide their input on the design options for Upper Birchwood Lake Dam. The survey provided the following results: Drop Box Design Option (7), Labyrinth Design Option (65), Hybrid Design Option (61); No Walkway (32), Walkway (64), One Lane Road (16) and Two Lane Road (19). The Board of Directors also hosted an informational session with the engineer currently working on the Upper Birchwood Lake to discuss and answer questions from both the Board and membership on November 14. The Board anticipates submitting a timeline to the DEP by the end of the year for the rehabilitation of Upper Birchwood Lake Dam by the end of 2009.

The Stream Channel & Wetland Crossing Reconstruction and Lake Outlet Pipe Replacement Project was completed in September 2009. Middle Birchwood Lake was drawn down approximately two feet in conjunction with this project and will return to its normal pool as we receive precipitation over the coming months.

The Association has also been moving forward on collection activities, including the filing of civil complaints and the Amnesty Program. While recognizing the difficult economic times, it is important that all members remember when you moved into a community association, you agreed to abide by the governing documents—and that includes paying assessments.

If you are an owner who rents your property, we'd like to make the rental experience successful and positive for everyone by informing you of your responsibilities. Being responsible in renting your property will help preserve your property value specifically and maintain the association's property value in general.

Your tenants may not be familiar with living in a community association. Please take a few minutes to explain to them

that living in a community association is very different from living in a rental apartment community. Specifically, your tenants, like all residents, are subject to the rules and regulations of the association, and it's up to you to educate them and see that they comply. The association will assist you in this area, but the responsibility lies with you. We recommend you provide your tenants with written copies of all policies and rules and advise them on the proper use of the association's facilities. You can obtain copies of these and other useful documents from the BLCA Office.

The Association has experienced incidents of graffiti in the neighborhood recently. While the association monitors and removes graffiti from common areas, we can use your help.

- If you happen to see someone defacing property, don't try to stop it yourself. Call the State Police at 570-226-5718 immediately and report a vandalism in progress. Make a mental note of as many details as possible about the perpetrators—how many, what age, male or female, distinctive clothing—that will help police. Contact Public Safety at 570-828-6009 to report an incident involving criminal activity after contacting the State Police.

- Encourage your neighbors to do the same—watch for and report graffiti vandals.

- When graffiti appears on

your property, photograph it before removing it. Contact the State Police and Public Safety to report the incident.

- Remove graffiti immediately. Removing it quickly sends a message that you care about our community.

Working together, we can reduce this problem in our community.

Committee members and the Board of Directors have been busy developing the proposed 2010/ 2011 Budget for presentation to the membership. Please review the budget material and remember to return your vote. Over the holiday season it is often too easy to set aside paperwork in the hustle and bustle and forget or miss a deadline. Please make voting a high priority as your vote is important to the community.

Look for information on winter roads in this newsletter. Please take the time to review the information and discuss it with any new drivers in your household. Our goal is to keep everyone safe.

The office hours are now operating on the winter schedule: Monday through Friday 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. and the first Saturday of the month from 8 a.m. until noon. We will be closing Christmas Eve and New Year's Eve at noon and closed all day on Christmas and New Year's Day.

Have a joyous holiday season and Happy New Year!

## LOST ITEMS

Several 911 signs are at the maintenance shop. Call the office if you have lost one.

## Tennis Court Usage

Tennis courts, located opposite the Clubhouse, are available for use by members in good standing and their guests. A key to access the courts may be obtained at the BLCA Office and requires a \$5 deposit. Badges should be displayed when utilizing the facilities.

**Lakeview Lot  
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## Let Delaware Township Inform you of local emergencies.

Delaware Township in partnership with Twenty First Communications has instituted a local notification system that will be able to send telephone notification to residences and businesses within Delaware Township impacted by, or in danger of being impacted by, an emergency or disaster. Register your phone numbers with us so we can add you to our Reverse 911 calling system.

Please contact us at:

**570-828-2347**

### BIRCHWOOD LAKES COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION, INC. 2010 SCHEDULE OF OPEN BOARD MEETINGS

Open Board Meetings are held at the BLCA Clubhouse

Friday, January 8 @ 7 p.m.;

Snowdate – Tuesday, January 12 @ 7 p.m.

Friday, February 12 @ 7 p.m.;

Snowdate – Tuesday, February 16 @ 7 p.m.

Saturday, March 13 @ 9 a.m.

Saturday, April 10 @ 9 a.m.

Friday, May 14 @ 7 p.m.

Friday, June 11 @ 7 p.m.

Saturday, July 10 @ 9 a.m.

Tuesday, August 10 @ 7 p.m.

Annual Meeting: Saturday, August 21 @ 9 a.m.

Notes: Friday night meetings will now be held at 7 p.m. instead of 7:30 p.m.

Saturday morning meetings will now be held at 9 a.m. instead of 9:30 a.m.

Snowdates have been added to the calendar, all being Tuesday nights at 7 p.m.

August Open Board Meeting will be on a Tuesday night at 7 p.m.

# Winter Roads

With winter almost here, Birchwood Lakes would like to offer the following tips and information for your safety and convenience:

Don't drive unnecessarily in a storm, especially during severe snowstorms and freezing rain.

Remember to keep the roads and right of way clear of vehicles and other encumbrances. Our maintenance employees cannot plow roads that are blocked by cars. Vehicles blocking BLCA roads will be towed. Any landscap-

ing items within the BLCA right of way may unintentionally be damaged by plowing efforts. BLCA will not be responsible for damage to items within the right-of-way. Please familiarize yourself with the locations of parking areas within BLCA should you need to pull over while obtaining assistance.

Be sure your car is properly equipped for winter driving with snow or all-season tires and properly functioning windshield wiper blades.

Remind your children to play away from the roads for their own safety.

There is no practical way for maintenance to avoid dropping snow in your driveway when they are plowing. You can minimize this frustrating event by trying to avoid cleaning out your driveway until the road has been plowed. When plowing or shoveling your driveway, do not place snow in the roadway or block drainage swales or culverts.

Be prepared for winter driving by carrying a blanket and emergency supplies in your vehicle.

## New Rules Approved - Septic Rule Change

At the July 31, 2009 meeting, the Board approved the following rule changes.

### Section 98-50-26

#### Septic Tank Maintenance

**Definition.** The Deeds & Covenants request each homeowner to properly maintain their septic system. To ensure a clean environment, the Community is instituting a mandatory schedule of inspections and pump-outs.

Beginning June 1, 2010, every homeowner must have their septic system inspected or pumped out every 5 years.

Septic tanks shall be cleaned by a licensed PA pumper/hauler whenever inspection of a septic tank reveals the septic tank is filled with solids or scum in excess of one-third (1/3) the liquid depth.

New homes built and occupied during 2009 may wait until June 1, 2014 for the

first inspection.

Homes that had septic tanks pumped during 2009, may wait until June 1, 2014 for next inspection or pump-out.

At the beginning of the program the homeowners will have until December 31, 2010 to provide documentation from a licensed PA company to the Association office. Documentation should be a receipt from the pumper/hauler with the date of inspection or cleaning.

Any homeowner who violates this regulation will be fined \$250 (two hundred and fifty dollars) for each month of non-compliance.

The Association will issue a warning for failure to comply with the above and will allow three (3) months for compliance.

Other rule changes

Section 98 – Subsection 60

#14 racing dives are permitted during swim team

practice only

#25 ice activities section is eliminated. Ice activities are now allowed at your own risk.

All the Rules and Regulations as well as the By-Laws are posted on our web site: [www.birchwoodlakes.net](http://www.birchwoodlakes.net). Be familiar with them. Some residents were surprised when they got citations for fireworks on July 4, yet the rules are quite clear about that prohibition. You can download the most recent set from the web. They are in PDF format and are updated when rules are changed.



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## Community Notes

All property owners are hereby put on notice that the Association has a right of way on each roadway. Any personal property placed in the Association's right of way is not the Association's responsibility and the Association will not be held responsible for any damages incurred to said personal property. All property owners are to refrain from placing personal property within the Association's right of way. The Association does not permit encroachment of any Association property, which includes roads or right of ways, common area or any other location, which is BLCA property.

## Maintenance Report

Our gears are changing for winter. Spreaders and plows are working and at this time in November two of our trucks are ready for winter. The third is still used for hot patch until Thanksgiving when the plant closes for the winter. The salt bin is full and a very large pile of antiskid is covered up. All of the amenities are winterized and secured, as is the pool.

Thank you to all of the people at Birchwood. You made this past summer and fall a lot easier by helping us know about problem areas, missing signs, bad roads and dumping. A continuing problem is vandalism. Please tell us about any graffiti, broken or missing signs, broken windows and gates that you see.

Winter driving is difficult. Keep clear of other cars, and our plows when you drive in the community. We promise to try harder by continuing to improve our response time for plowing and spreading. Watch out for our lights and we apologize in advance for any inconvenience that our work may cause.

**Have a great Holiday Season and Happy New Year**  
James Silverman and your Maintenance Department

## Home Sales in Birchwood

During the months of August, September and October 2009, eleven homes were sold within Birchwood Lakes Community. Two homes sold for less than \$100,000, six homes sold for between \$100,000 and \$150,000, one home sold for between \$150,000 and \$200,000 and two homes sold for between \$200,000 and \$250,000.

Welcome to the following members and their families: Lemanski, Palmer, Dinicola, Link, Grabley, Geib, Sparnon, Leiper, Johanson, Hashemi, Hull, Andersen and Vaccaro. We invite you to become an active part of the community.

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**WWW.BIRCHWOODLAKES.NET**

## Board Meeting Minutes

July 10, 2009

This is an abbreviated record of the minutes. A more complete copy may be obtained in the BLCA office.

Actions taken between meetings by polling all members;

- Approved a tree removal request.

- Approved a request for inspection of corporate records

- Approved purchase of tables, chairs and umbrellas

- Actions approved at the meeting;

- Placement in 3 newspapers of requests for bids for the Joint Permit

- Sell 2002 Dodge Dakota

- Payment plan requests

- Tree removal requests and inspection of corporate documents

- Mailing of Amnesty Program and changes in Lot Improvement Program to voters.

Other discussions included,

- Road drainage study,

- Difficulty contacting Public Safety

- Setting a date to meet with the DEP

- Mailing Upper Birchwood Lake Dam designs to the community for a non-binding vote.

August 15, 2009

This is an abbreviated record of the minutes. A more complete copy may be obtained in the BLCA office.

Actions approved at the meeting.

- Write-offs over \$1,400

- Extended voting deadline, less than 200 ballots were received by original deadline.

- Draft Audit for the Annual Meeting

- Vendors to provide salt and anti-skid for the winter

- Rules for Board Meetings was changed to prevent unauthorized taping

- New rule mandating septic tank inspection and/or pumping

Other discussions included:

- Submitting a plan to DEP by the end of the year regarding Upper Lake dam,

- Approval of 6 tree removal requests

- Security systems for the clubhouse and office

- Agreement to remove the chain at Beach 4 to allow access to boat launch

- Clubhouse roof repair before winter

- Responses to various letters.

## A Plea for Help

(Reprinted from the Birchwood Newsletter, Mountain Breeze, Summer 1991)

"In the past two issues of the newsletter we have requested help from you, the members of Birchwood. All we asked for was pictures, short articles and recipes. We have received very little response from you.

Currently the committee is only 3 members and has been since it started. This newsletter is for the community and its members. We feel it is very informative and beneficial to the community, but we cannot keep operating with only 3 members consistently writing articles. We desperately need your help to keep this newsletter going. Take a part in your community and write an article for the newsletter or better yet, join the Newsletter Committee. We welcome new members..."

Some things don't change! We have only four members on the committee and we now are trying

The Annual Meeting was held on August 22, 2009 at the Birchwood Lakes Clubhouse.

President Ritson gave an overview of accomplishments from the previous year and upcoming projects.

Some key points were:

- Three Board vacancies and the time it took to fill them;

- Delayed roadwork because of poor weather;

- Ending the agreement with Appletree Management for book-keeping;

- Contracting with a new security company;

to keep up with the newsletter, the web site and other responsibilities that the Board gives the Community Affairs Committee.

We have grown in one respect. We do have more than the members of the committee writing articles. Members of the Lake Management Committee contribute regularly, Linda Tancs, a community member has written a regular column on Careers, although the article in this issue will be the last of the series. Recreation committee members have contributed photos and information about events and we have regular columns by our Management team and Board President. Some residents contribute digital photos that we can publish (see the bear images sent by Ray Makoski in this issue) and the occasional submission from members.

We welcome photos, articles, opinion pieces and letters. We prefer entries to come by e-mail to Sheila Salmon at rssalmon@rcn.com, but we will transcribe written materials if you have no computer access.

What we desperately need is a person or persons who can work on the web site. Of course we would enjoy having a larger group in our committee so feel free to volunteer!

## Annual Meeting - August 22, 2009

- Actions being taken on delinquent accounts

- Request for more committee volunteers.

**Committee**

**Chairperson's Reports:**

Director Freeman had maps available to show past years and future projects. He updated information on the roads started/completed this year. The committee is looking into drainage issues and he requested more members.

Director Meola reported on Rules and Regulations, there has been a problem with attendance for a quorum, he also chairs Capital Projects, and he is focusing on the maintenance shed reviewing the options.

Community Affairs has a web site [www.birchwoodlakes.net](http://www.birchwoodlakes.net), and everyone is urged to look at it, also the committee works on the newsletter and asks for contributing articles.

Director Naturale, Recreation Committee, said events were well attended, the swim team had over 50 children and new umbrellas, and tables and chairs have been purchased.

Director Nilsen, Beautification Committee, thanked his committee for the hard work and reminded everyone about the fall planting.

Director Celentano, Community Safety, would like to start a Community Watch program and install speed bumps, but there is a lack of interest in the community.

Property Development purchased 14 lots for \$25 each at the repository sale and placed in common land.

By-Laws has been active, 11 amendments were passed in

January and there is a change to the Lot Improvement Program.

Lake Management Committee is very successful. The LakeFest/Pool party was a success, the Well Water program was well received and there is an upcoming seminar on the lakes

Finance, Budgets & Contracts will be meeting soon on the 1010-1011 budget.

Voting was extended until September 5, because of lack of a quorum.

## CORRECTIONS

Garden photographs incorrectly identified the gardeners. They are Barbara and Bob Dodge, not Bodner, Dennis McMahon, not Dennis Macmahan.

## Permits

BLCA Rules and Regulations (Section 98-50-19), in accordance with the Association's Covenants and Restrictions, require members to obtain a BLCA permit prior to moving to, constructing, or erecting any structure or building within the community. There is no fee for obtaining the permit. Additionally, permits are needed for septic repairs and tree removals. For more information, contact the BLCA Office.

### Residential Garbage Removal

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# Notes from the Gardener

by Sheila Salmon, Penn State Master Gardener Volunteer

## Visiting Bears

Many bears are roaming the neighborhood, getting at the garbage and bird feeders and often coming too close to comfort. One of my neighbors reported that he had a bear come up on to his deck. It ate his birdseed and destroyed a bird feeder. These photos taken by (name to be inserted) in Birchwood this fall indicated how close the bears are.

For all of our safety, please make sure your garbage is placed securely in a garbage can that is bear proof or keep your garbage in a shed or garage until just before garbage pick-up. The bears in these photos were not able to get into the cans, but I have seen garbage strewn all across the road and a homeowner's property after a bear did get into a can. It was a pretty smelly sight.

The Connecticut Department of Environmental Education publish-

es this advice.

## DEP Issues "Top 10 List" of Ways to Avoid Contact With Black Bears

- Take down, clean, and put away birdfeeders by late March. Store the feeders until late fall. Clean up spilled seed below feeder stations.

- Store garbage in secure, airtight containers inside a garage or storage area. Double bagging and the use of ammonia will reduce odors that attract bears. Periodically clean garbage cans with ammonia to reduce residual odor. Garbage for pickup should be put outside the morning of collection and not the night before.

- Avoid leaving pet food or dishes outdoors at night.

- Clean barbecue grills after use and store inside a garage or shed.

- Avoid placing meat scraps and sweet foods in compost piles.

- Protect beehives, livestock, and berry bushes from bears with electric fencing.

- Never intentionally feed bears to attract them to your yard for viewing.

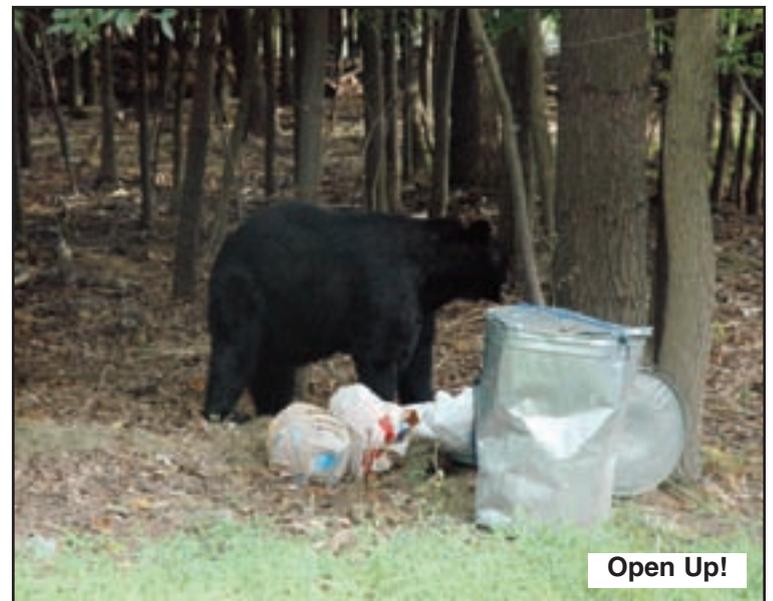
- When hiking, make your presence known by making noise and waving your arms if you see a bear.

- Keep dogs on a leash outdoors. A roaming dog might be perceived as a threat to a bear or its cubs.

- When camping, don't cook food near your tent or shelter and store all food in a secure vehicle or use rope to suspend it from a tree.



Finding Garbage.



Open Up!



Trying Hard.



Knocking It Down.  
Photos by Ray Makoski



Smells Good!

## BLCA Lake Management Committee - Summary of 2009 Activities

by Chas Ritson

As Chair of the Lake Management Committee, I want to thank the members of the committee who give so much of their time and energy to make our activities and events possible. I would also like to say thanks to the office staff, our Recreation Coordinator, Katie Robinson, and our life guards who supported us in all our efforts. Thanks guys!

So, what did we accomplish the 2009 season? Here's a brief recap with a few comments thrown in:

LakeFest 2009 – a big success, particularly the Chili Cook-Off, the increased number of participants in the lake-walk, the canoe/kayak race, the pie eating and apple bobbing, our environmentally friendly household products booth, and our beginners' fishing booth and the composting workshop. Any ideas for 2010? Let the committee know.

Well Water and Septic Seminars – lightly attended, but everyone who participated said they were very worthwhile. Slightly modified programs will again be on the schedule for next year.

Aquatic Plant Control – the June "monsoon" season set our contractor back significantly. Although all four lakes received some level of treatment, the treatments were delayed and not as effective as we would have liked. The focus again this coming year needs to be East BL. Our contractor has been reminded that he is in the last year of a three year contract and needs to do better.

Water Quality Monitoring – the grant work received in 2009 from PADEP for their Citizen's Volunteer Monitoring Program was completed on the Upper Lake in early November. Unfortunately, the program will be discontinued next year due to funding problems. The committee has asked the Board to consider buying sampling/ testing equipment out of this year's budget, so that we can continue monitoring the lakes in the year's ahead. The committee will be putting together a list of equipment by the end of the year.

Geese Control – our spring adding program appears to have been successful, but the subsequent harassment portion using

pyrotechnics never got off the ground. We plan on continuing both segments next year, but will need a more coordinated harassment approach.

Native Plant Garden/ Compost Barrels/ Riparian Buffer Info – the native garden at the head of East BL is flourishing. New environmentally friendly plant info and coupons for compost barrels were provided.

Invasive species signs were erected at all boat launches warning boaters about unwanted hitchhikers on their boats, trailers, and motors. Several of the signs will need to be replaced before the 2010 season.

Restocking of East BL – our third stocking of large mouth bass was accomplished without any problems. This will be the last stocking at this time. Catch and Release fishing for bass will again be recommended for the coming year.

If you have an interest in maintaining and improving our lakes, please come out to the first LMC meeting in the spring.



# Ice Fishing

by Tom Askar

Wikipedia defines ice fishing as an activity of catching fish with lines and hooks or spears through an opening in the ice on a frozen body of water. Fishermen may sit on a stool in the open expanse of a frozen lake or sit in a heated cabin on the ice. Accessories are needed for ice fishing and those that are should be ones that can help with not only catching fish but also with keeping the fisherman warm and safe.

### Accessories

Electronic devices can help you to find your way to a good ice fishing spot. A global positioning system reader can help you to find your way back to land in the case of emergency. A digital thermometer can let you know that your place is cold enough and that there will be no risk of the ice breaking.

A heater is one of the most essential of the ice fishing accessories. It can keep you warm and keep the ice fishing hole open. Some ice fishing areas are dangerously cold, so a heater is extremely important. Of course, you must watch the heater and keep it away from where you will be ice fishing so that the ice below you does not melt.

Wear warm clothing. Thermal underwear is helpful and so are plenty of layers of clothes. Have additional clothes stored somewhere nearby in case your clothes get wet.

Pack your ice fishing accessories in a container or bag that can be transported easily. Pack only what you know you are going to need. If the bag is too heavy then the ice that you put the bag on will crack. You should especially consider how long you are going to be ice fishing for when packing your ice fishing accessories, as a shorter trip will not need as much. Consider your level of experience when determining what ice fishing accessories are needed for your trip.

### Dangers

Many fishermen will go out with 2.5 inches of good ice for

walking, but the recommended thickness is 4 inches, 5-6 inches for Sleds (Snow Machines, Snowmobiles) 7-12 inches for light cars and 14-16 inches for full sized trucks. Care must be



taken, because sometimes ice will not form in areas with swift currents, leaving open areas which freeze with much thinner ice.

Late-winter warm spells can destroy the texture of the ice, which, while still of the required thickness, will not adequately support weight. It is called "rotten ice" or soft ice and is exceedingly dangerous. Some ice-fishermen will continue to fish, since even with the bad ice, 8 inches is more than enough. Fisherman may carry a self-rescue device made of two spiked handles connected by a string to pull themselves out of the water and onto the ice. Many cars, trucks, SUVs, snowmobiles,



and fish houses fall through the ice each year. Current environmental regulations require the speedy recovery of the vehicle or structure. situation.

Other risks associated with ice fishing include carbon monoxide poisoning from fish house heaters and frostbite due to prolonged exposure to wind and low temperatures.

### Gear

Ice fishing gear is highly specialized. First, an ice SAW or AUGAR or chisel is required to cut a circular hole or larger rectangular hole in the ice. Sometimes power augers are used. A skimmer is used to remove new ice as it forms and to clear slush left from making the hole. During colder periods most ice anglers choose to carry a heater of some type. The heater is for warmth and it also keeps an anglers fishing hole from freezing. When temperatures reach -20 °F or colder it becomes very hard to keep a fishing hole open.

Three main types of fishing occur. Small, light fishing rod with small, brightly colored lures or jigs with bait such as wax-worms, fat heads or crappie minnows. Tip-ups, which carry a line attached to a flag that "tips up" when a strike occurs, allow unattended or less-intensive fishing. The line is dragged in by hand with no reel.

In spear fishing a large hole is cut in the ice and the fisherman may use a decoy. The fisherman sits in a dark ice shanty called a dark house. The fisherman then peers into the water while holding a large spear attached to a line



waiting for fish to appear.

A flasher, similar to a fish finder is popular. This sonar system provides depth information, as well as indicates the presence of fish or other objects. Flashers, unlike most typical fish finders, display the movement of fish and other objects almost instantaneously. The bait being used can often be seen as a mark on the flasher, enabling the angler to position the bait right in front of

the fish. Underwater cameras are also now available which allow the user to view the fish and observe their reaction to the lure presentation.

Ice fishing is a great sport. You can enjoy it on the Great Lakes, or closer to home on a Birchwood Lake. Take proper precautions and stay safe.

Some information was taken from Wikipedia free encyclopedia and the web site "Welcome to Ice Fishing."

## AVAILABLE IN THE OFFICE

### BLCA T-Shirts – For Sale



Children's Sizes S, M & L  
(Beige & Navy Blue)

\$11

Adult's Sizes

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(Beige, Light Blue & Navy Blue)

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# Thank You Letters Help Job Applicants

In today's economy, more applicants are observing the finer points of interviewing etiquette—namely, sending a thank-you letter to their interviewer. Don't let a failure to do so hamper your chances of being selected for your target position. Just follow a few simple rules of letter writing and you can increase your chances of influencing the hiring decision.

First, consider mailing a typed or handwritten note. Although the digital age has made e-mails a much more common (and perhaps in many cases, preferred) method of communication, there is no substitute for the personal touch. If your handwriting is generally illegible, however, then type your message. Second, keep it simple. A single page of no more than three or four paragraphs should suffice in most instances. Third, proofread your letter for mis-

spellings, grammatical errors and correct names and addresses. You must devote attention to detail to a task as simple as this; otherwise, why would an employer entrust you with more significant communications? Furthermore, be sure to direct a customized letter to each person with whom you interviewed.

Next, focus on the body of your letter. A good letter should: (i) thank the interviewer; (ii) confirm your interest in the position; (iii) emphasize your strengths and counter any concerns that may have arisen during the interview; and (iv) suggest further action. When you express thanks for your interview, be sure to include the date of the interview and the nature or title of the position for which you applied. In a second paragraph, confirm your interest in the position. Specifically, indicate why you are a good fit—what is it about the job in rela-

tion to your experience that makes it particularly inviting? Your remarks should illustrate how well you've researched the company and your prospective role in it. Follow up on this in a third paragraph, emphasizing one or two of your strongest qualifications. The trick here is to state your best qualifications from the perspective of the interviewer—not your own. In other words, demonstrate your listening skills by relating your best traits or experiences to what the interviewer considered to be most significant for the position. Conversely, if the interviewer expressed concerns about any of your qualifications or ability to perform the job, be sure to address and assuage any objections in your letter. For instance, career changers should consider transferable skills that are relevant to the tasks involved in the job that might not have been highlighted effectively during the interview. Again, understanding the job, the firm's culture and how your experience relates to the organization are all paramount to addressing potential roadblocks. In the final paragraph, close with a call to action. Is a second interview in the offing? Will you call to check on the status of a decision within a few days or weeks? Outline your desired next step, and leave appropriate contact information if applicable.

A thank-you letter represents more than just good manners. It

also demonstrates your initiative and ability to follow up, two strong traits for any position. Use it wisely to demonstrate how valuable you'll be to your target employer.

Linda Tancs, J.D. is a personal, organizational and executive coach dealing in career management and transition, workplace issues, work/life balance and entrepreneurial challenges. She has a specialty practice coaching legal professionals. Learn more at [www.jurismart.com](http://www.jurismart.com).



## Carolyn's Recipe Recommendations

by Carolyn Martin

I love to cook and collect cooking books and magazines. I have always loved the kitchen. Since we are busy people, I use simple recipes. Please try them and enjoy the results

### Hot Crab Meat Dip

serves 4-6 people

1 can crabmeat, 6 ounces  
1 cup shredded cheddar cheese  
1-cup mayo  
1 eight (8) oz package of cream cheese  
Mix all ingredients together, sprinkle with paprika, (optional). Bake at 350 for 15-20 minutes in covered casserole. Serve warm with crackers

Submitted by Anna Gonnella in the BLCA newsletter Mountain Breeze, Summer, 1991.

### Chocolate Éclair Cake

1-box graham crackers  
8 ounces Cool Whip  
3 cups of milk  
1 tsp vanilla  
2 boxes vanilla pudding  
2 tsp Karo syrup  
2 squares chocolate  
3 tbs. milk  
3 tbs margarine  
1 ½ cups confectionary sugar

Mix pudding and 3 cups milk for about 1 minute, fold in Cool Whip. Layer bottom of buttered 9 X 13 pan with graham crackers. Add ½ cup pudding mixture, layer graham crackers, remainder of pudding, and another layer of graham crackers.

Frosting. Mix together 2 squares chocolate, 2 tbs. margarine (melted), Karo syrup, vanilla, 3 tbs. milk and confectionary sugar.

Refrigerate overnight.

## We Need Your Help!

Please help us help you. Many residents in Birchwood Lakes Community still do not have "911" street signs on their house or in front of their property. When a call comes in requesting emergency assistance (ambulance, fire, police), it is difficult for the Association to offer assistance in leading the emergency volunteers to your home if it isn't clearly marked with the 911 address. Make sure your sign is visible from the road. If you need information on your 911 address, contact the BLCA Office at 570-828-2111. While we hope that you will never require emergency services, take a moment to help yourself and your loved ones just in case.

**Place Your Free Classified Ads on the Birchwood website.**  
[www.Birchwoodlakes.net](http://www.Birchwoodlakes.net)

## Member's address changes

If you were issued a new 911 mailing address and have not yet notified the office in writing, we ask you please do so. This will allow you to receive your mail from the Birchwood Lakes Office and to prevent any problems that may develop in the next few months.

### CHANGE OF MAILING ADDRESS FORM

I, \_\_\_\_\_ have an address change.

Please change my address to

Lot(s) \_\_\_\_\_ Block \_\_\_\_\_  
Section \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

No phone changes will be accepted. You can either mail the form, hand deliver it to the BLCA Office or drop it off in the mailbox by the BLCA Office front door. The Office will not change your address without written notification.

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## BLCA Curfew

BLCA has a curfew of 10 p.m. Sunday through Thursday and 11 p.m. Friday and Saturday.

As a courtesy to all members, please observe the curfew hours.

## Important Telephone Numbers

Police, Fire, Ambulance Emergency 911  
Birchwood Lakes Office 828-2111  
Birchwood Lakes Public Safety 828-6009  
Vector Security Dispatch 1-800-222-6565,  
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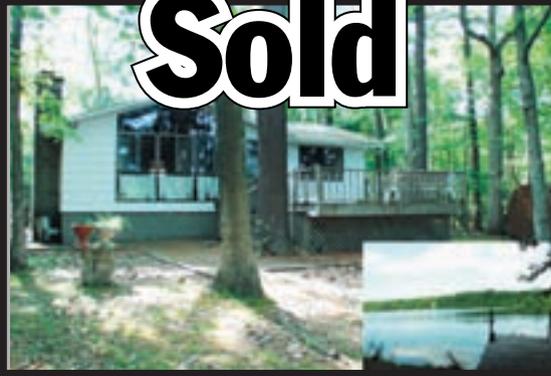
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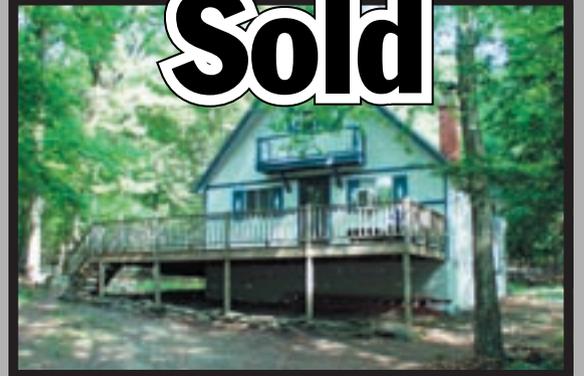
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**Sold**



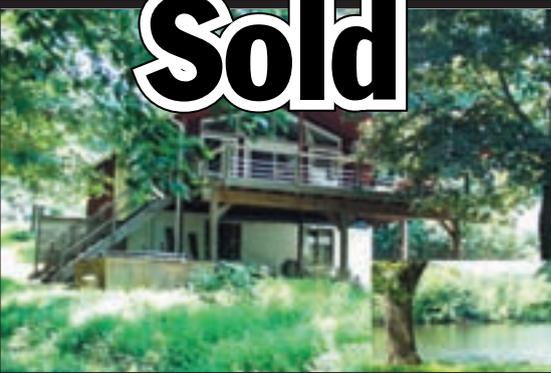
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