



Big Birch Lake Association NEWSLETTER



No 139

July, 2020

President's Letter

The BBLA Board has taken the unusual step of cancelling the annual meeting due to Covid-19. Out of precautions for our members, the board will send either an email or letter to all 328 members on or about August 8 detailing how the meeting business will be conducted.

If you have not submitted your email address to the association, you may send it to bblla@meltel.net and your address will be added to those who receive updates from the association.

Included in the email/letter will be a ballot to elect directors for the open seats, the financial update, approval of dues, and approval of the 2019 BBLA Annual Meeting Minutes.

Members will be invited to submit any questions to the board. Any email or letter with a returned response regarding the election of directors by August 15 will be considered as attendance. See the election information in the story below and follow updates on the BBLA Facebook page and on the BBLA website.

The board will hold its monthly meeting on August 15 when the annual meeting would

have been held. The board has only had online meetings so far in 2020.

Please thank two long-term board members whose term limit (four consecutive three-year terms) concludes with the annual meeting. Dean Mohs, Area D Director, served 12 years and was instrumental in getting the organization online and guiding it through the process of acquiring the office building which was a gift from Gene and Bernie Waldorf.

Robert Kutter, At-large Director, served 14 years, a full term plus two years of an unexpired term. He has edited the newsletter, was the first editor of the website and started the Facebook page. He will continue the role of newsletter and Facebook editor.

Remember to give to the fish stocking fundraiser. You will receive a letter from the Wildlife Habitat and Fisheries Committee with details about how you can financially support the effort to stock walleye this past spring. Due to pandemic, the DNR did not stock lakes this past spring.

Enjoy the remainder of the summer at Big Birch Lake.

Ben Ellering, President

Calendar

BBLA Board Meeting

July 18, 2020

BBLA Board Meeting

August 15, 2020

BBLA Board Meeting

September 19, 2020

In-person annual meeting canceled due to pandemic

Due to Covid-19, no in-person annual meeting will be held in 2020. Elections, reports and minutes will be approved through an email or letter to all members.

All members will receive information regarding how to cast votes. All ballots need to be returned by August 15.

Five BBLA Directors will be elected for the next term. The board members whose terms expire are Deb Johnson (At-large) Craig Tweedale (At-large) Kevin Costello, (Area C), Robert Kutter (At-large) and Dean Mohs (Area D). Kutter and Mohs reached the term limit and will go off the board.

Incumbents Johnson, Tweedale and Costello will seek re-election to the board for a three-year term.

Nominees Matt Everding will seek election to the At-large director and Blake Johnson will seek election as Area D Director.

Association members have an opportunity to nominate candidates from the floor provided they comply with the association by-laws which state: "Nominations may be made from the floor at the annual meeting provided that notice of the intent thereof has been given to the president or vice-president of the association or any member of the nominating committee (Dean Mohs, Ben Ellering, Kevin Costello) at least 10 days before the annual general membership meeting."

This year any nominations from the floor will have to be in writing by August 5.

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St. Joseph Catholic Church, Grey Eagle

President Ben Ellering called the meeting to order at 8:30 AM.

Board of Directors Present: Ben Ellering, Craig Tweedale, Kevin Costello, Lynn Ersland, Brian Gordon, Bob Hughes, Adrian Johnson, Deb Johnson, Bob Kutter, Jeanne Niehaus, John Roe, Chuck Schiemann, Russ Sieben, and Kris Zimmerman.

Board of Director Absent: Dean Mohls

Welcome

Minutes of 2018 Annual Meeting

Ben Ellering directed attention to the Financial Report and the Annual Meeting Minutes for 2018. Ben asked that we dispense with the reading of the minutes. A motion was made to dispense the reading of the minutes, and approve the minutes as printed.

Motion – Rosemary Meyer 2nd – Ken Berg Motion was adopted.

Treasurer's Report

Craig Tweedale presented the treasurer report. Total assets this year have decreased slightly from 2018, while liabilities this year remain basically the same as 2018. 2019 Membership dues were down slightly: \$9255 (309 members) vs. \$10,380 (346 members) in 2018.

Member donations were up this year approximately 34%.

Sponsor dues this year are at \$3350 while there has been an 85% increase in sponsor donations.

The totals were summarized as follows:

Total assets as of June 30, 2019	\$ 209,025.61 (includes building)
Total Income	\$ 28,539.55
Total Expenses	\$ 30,351.77
Net Income	\$ (1812.22)

Ben Ellering called for a motion to approve the treasurer's report.

Motion – Sharry Meyer 2nd – Bernie Waldorf Motion was adopted

Annual Election of Directors

The board members whose terms are up in 2018:

Ben Ellering, Lynn Ersland, Russ Sieben, John Roe, Kris Zimmerman, and Chuck Schiemann.

Suggested candidates:

Ben Ellering - Area J, Russ Sieben - Area B, and Lynn Ersland – Area H – will continue on board

time on board
Larry Welle - Area E

Jay Anderson - Area I

Kevin Costello – Area C (replacing Chuck Schiemann)

Grant Niehaus – At Large (replacing Kevin Costello who will become the Area C director)

A motion was made to pass a unanimous ballot of all of these candidates to be elected as board members:

Ben Ellering, Russ Sieben, Lynn Ersland, Larry Welle, Jay Anderson, Kevin Costello, and Grant Niehaus.

Motion –Lee Moening 2nd – Ken Meyer Motion was adopted

Dues

The board has recommended that the dues remain at \$30 and sponsor dues remain the same at \$50.

Ben Ellerling asked for a motion to set the membership dues at \$30 and sponsor dues at \$50.

Motion – Ken Sinclair
adopted.

2nd – Bob Niehaus

Motion was

Visiting Guests:

Minutes *continue on page 9*

Obituaries of lake residents

Anthony J. “Tony” Janke, age 90 of Melrose, died peacefully on Saturday, February 29, 2020 in Melrose, Minnesota.

Anthony John Janke was born May 4, 1929 in Spring Hill, Minnesota to John and Elizabeth (Korf) Janke. Tony bought his lot on Big Birch Lake in 1942 and met the love of his life while at the lake. He married Rosemary Zierden on February 20, 1970 at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Melrose.

Tony was employed at Space Center in Minneapolis for 37 years and commuted all those years from their home on Big Birch Lake. He retired at the age of 65. Tony was a simple family man with strong faith. He lived out his faith by putting his neighbors, friends and family before himself. He was always willing to help anyone who needed him. Everyone that met him loved his witty sense of humor.

Tony was a member of St. Mary's Catholic Church in Melrose. He was an avid fisherman and hunter. Tony loved to tend his garden and do yard work. He was a jack of all trades: carpenter, plumber, electrician, mason, and mechanic. For many years, Tony took care of plowing and maintaining the roads at the lake and he also helped maintain the Birch Creek Outlet between Big and Little Birch Lakes.

Survivors include his children, Brenda and Chad Van Beck of Big Birch Lake, Sandy (Ostendorf) Janke of New York, Steve and Jennifer (Dubiel) Janke of Anoka, Ronny and Diana (Hancock) Janke of Lakeville, and Mary Lou and Dale Gerads of Big Birch Lake; grandchildren, Cole Van Beck, Bailey Van Beck, Zachary Van Beck, Vanessa Van Beck, Emily Janke, Morgan Janke, Nathan Janke, Logan Janke, Courtney Gerads, and Owen Gerads.

Tony was preceded in death by his wife, Rose Mary Janke on September 18, 2000; parents, John and Elizabeth Janke; son, Anthony Janke Jr.; infant granddaughter, Amelia Janke; sister, Pauline Hunt; and brothers, Elmer, Alphonse, and August Janke.

The family thanks the nursing staff at Pine Haven along with hospice and Alternative Senior Care for the compassionate care Tony received during the last few years of his life.

Mary Ann (Voller) Johnson, 88, born Sept. 9, 1931, died June 4, 2020 in Shoreview. Mary was raised in Sauk Centre and married Jim Johnson in 1953. She was a gracious homemaker and enjoyed 42 years of lake life at Big Birch Lake.

Obituaries *continue on page 5*

BBLA works to maintain, enhance and preserve the natural environment

BBLA conservation efforts began 51 years ago

The loons arrived on the upper bay April 8. Strong northwest winds the next two days pushed the ice off the upper bay, the burden of winter lifted. Seeing open water is always a relief after four- or five-months of ice cover. Official ice-out was April 12. Look for ice-out dates from the past in another section of the newsletter.

In this season of Covid-19, spring auto traffic was down in the area as many people sheltered in place. Some folks ventured to their lake places to find respite from the restrictions of home. The area lumber and nursery businesses were doing brisk business as many people found time to do those home updates, projects and landscaping that had been put on the back burner for a long time.

Once the water warmed just a little, docks and boats went in, and many took time for a cruise on warm spring days. Few boats were on the lake for the cold fishing opener, but the number increased later in May as the weather warmed. Most boats had one or two people in them.

At the end of May, loons began feeding the newly hatched young. We on the North Shore were particularly excited to see two offspring for the pair of loons in this area. For two years straight, they had not produced any. The young loon population is strong this summer. The pair that occupies the Birch Bay area near where Adley Creek enters the lake were not successful with offspring.

According to climatologist, Mark Seely, Minnesota has experienced a 70 percent increase of wind for the months of April and May over the state average. The strong winds have exacerbated an already apparent drought. There was little snow melt this spring and even less rainfall. Seely also noted that the month of June had 14 days of strong winds.

One of the many goals of the BBLA is to preserve the lake and surrounding area for wildlife habitat and recreation. According to Hannah Texler writing in the Minnesota Conservation Volunteer March/April edition, The Big Reveal, "Over the past 150 years, Minnesota has lost about 50 percent of its wetlands and 40 percent of its prairies to agriculture

and development. Thankfully, the state still has pockets of natural habitats, which serve a critically important role. Diverse natural systems are most resilient to change and provide food and shelter for wildlife, including the pollinators so crucial for our food supply." "How do we best protect and conserve them into the future?" asks Texler.

"Much of our ecosystem has been lost since the 1800's. Little more than one percent of native prairie remains. About four percent of the state's old growth forests remain compared with 51 percent in 1850," said Texler. She added, "The United Nations recently released a report



A June 2020 rainbow reminds us heaven seems closer in a house beside the water. Photo by Robert Kutter.

estimating that around one million animal and plant species are now threatened with extinction." As someone who lived on the prairie of Southwest Minnesota for 30 years, I know firsthand how wetlands were drained into the Minnesota River Watershed to provide more productive farmland, land that is some of the most productive on the planet. The question remains, "What is the balance we should seek between feeding the people of the world and preserving the very natural resources to make that possible?"

"We can take pride in the fact that we're home to more wolves than any



Kutter's Column

state but Alaska, as well as one of the largest populations of golden-winged warblers in North America, said Texler. We who believe conservation of our natural resources is essential to our own survival as a species, have done much good work to preserve, maintain and enhance our natural environment through such organizations as the Big Birch Lake Association, but the lingering questions remain. Have we done enough? What more should we do? What are the right things to do?

The BBLA Board wrestles with these questions, as have the boards of this organization that was formed 51 years ago. The early organization focused on providing quality fishing. In the early 1970's the BBLA made huge efforts to decrease the number of carp in the lake by removing tons of the fish from traps set at water inlets. Next the organization made concerted efforts to stock the lake with walleye and northern. Back then BBLA did not depend upon the DNR to stock the lake but rather, with the approval of the DNR, it created nearby rearing ponds, and raised millions of fingerlings to stock not only BBL but other area lakes as well. Some of those efforts were done in tandem with the Grey Eagle Sportsmen's Club. This effort continued for several years.

In addition to improving fishing, the BBLA got involved in raising pheasants in the 70's to improve fall pheasant hunting. Several members took on the tasks of raising young pheasants on their property.

The next big issue the early organization tackled was deteriorating water quality due to farm run-off as area farmer began using more chemicals for their crops and the inferior septic systems used by lake property owners. As property ownership increased around the lake, so did the sewage leaks into the lake water.

Weed growth, filamentous algae problems for lakeshore homeowners

By Lynn Ersland, co-chair of the AIS Committee

One of the main topics of conversation this spring has been the early start and the amount of filamentous algae. Last year we seemed to have an explosion of weeds along most shorelines. We blamed this growth on zebra mussels causing the water to become clearer allowing the sunlight to penetrate deeper into the lake causing this weed growth.

This year in the 3rd week of June, we have seen limited weed growth. As a result of this increase in algae growth, sunlight has not been able to reach normal depths in the water resulting in a slower growth of weeds.

As temperatures warm this year, the algae will continue to bloom and possi-

bly worsen. MPCA experts caution that this could be the year that the lakes don't clear up.

The filamentous algae growth has been exceptionally aggravating along Sandy Beach where I live. I'm sure you are experiencing the same algae growth in your area.

The only thing that has given us temporary relief is raking the algae to shore and allowing it to dry. A rake that many are using on Sandy Beach is made in Fergus Falls. The website for information on this rake is tweedertool.com. It does not give permanent relief, but it temporarily gives us a clean swimming area and does help burn calories.

Fishing and Wildlife Committee seeks donations for spring walleye stocking in BBL

By Grant Niehaus

The BBLA Fishing and Wildlife Committee stocked 10,000-15,000 Walleye fingerlings in BBL this past April due to concerns of poor walleye fishing over the past few years and the fact that the DNR did not stock the lake this year.

The committee recently started a fund-raising initiative to help offset the costs of this year's stocking efforts and to raise funds for future stocking and for other fishing/wildlife improvement projects to BBL.

Contributions from BBLA members and non-members are greatly appreciated and the Fishing/Wildlife Committee along with the BBLA thank you for your support.

Donations can be made online through the Payment/Donate link on the BBLA website under the Fishing and Wildlife Donations category.

WWW.BIGBIRCHLAKEASSOCIATION.ORG

or by mailing a check made out to the Big Birch Lake Association with "Walleye Stocking" in the memo line to: Big Birch Lake Association
PO Box 342 | Grey Eagle, Minnesota 56336

In other news, the Fishing and Wildlife Committee will be reaching out to the DNR to discuss (1) a long-term strategy for the walleye population in BBL and to see if any implementation of a slot limit/bag limit would be effective to help sustain walleye fishing into the future.

(2) the Minnesota DNR's Bluegill Initiative to see if this would be a good fit for BBL. This Bluegill Initiative is to improve the size and quality of bluegills through slot/bag limits and catch and release tactics.

(3) implementing a change in the crappie slot or bag limits in BBL.

Big Birch Lake Association Board of Directors

Ben Ellering , Pres,	Area J Director	320-260-1907
Kevin Costello, V Pres.	Area C Director	480-250-3698
Craig Tweedale, Treas.	Director At Large	608-317-6647
Jay Anderson	Area I Director	763-482-1926
Lynn Ersland	Area H Director	320-285-2655
Brian Gordon	Area F Director	763-443-6902
Bob Hughes	Area G Director	615-890-0991
Deb Johnson	Director At Large	320-285-5833
Adrian Johnson	Area A Director	952-939-0939
Robert Kutter	Director At Large	320-285-5114
Dean Mohs	Area D Director	320-285-7155
Grant Niehaus	Director At Large	320-583-4939
Jeanne Niehaus	Director At Large	651-757-7475
Russ Sieben	Area B Director	320-256-3936

Big Birch Lake Association e-mail address: bbla@meltel.net

The Big Birch Lake Newsletter is an official publication of the Big Birch Lake Association, Inc.

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Ben Ellering, President

Robert Kutter, Editor

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Web Site: www.birchlakeassociation.org

Mission Statement: The purpose of the Big Birch Lake Association shall be to improve and protect water quality, to advance the propagation and habitat of fish and to protect the welfare of all wildlife in Big Birch Lake and adjacent areas.

Obituaries continued from page 2

She is cherished by her children Kathy (Bill) Spitzmueller, Bill (Kaleta) Johnson, Nancy Calderon, (Rick Lessard), and Betsy Hartmann (Larry Alm).

Adored by her grandchildren: Jull (George) Konstantinides, Amy (Peter) Borash Cotanna, Kyatt, Keton and Canyou Johnson, Natalia (Brad Hoffman, Nathan (Lauren) Calderon, Laren and Jack Hartmann. Blessed by five great grandchildren who always put a smile on her face. She is survived by a loving family, Lorraine Peschel, Betty Anne Voller, Carole Martin, Rich and Jan Voller, Arlene Voller and other treasured family and friends.

Preceded in death by devoted husband, Jim Johnson, son-in-law, Manuel Calderon, and family: Don Peschel, Bill Voller, Fred and JoAnn Voller, Butch Voller and Don Voller.

Her endearing commitment to faith and family will live on. Memorials preferred to the Big Birch Lake Association or the Sauk Centre Community Foundation.

Robert R. "Bob" Meldaus, age 71 of Grey Eagle, died peacefully on Sunday, March 1, 2020 at the Mother of Mercy Nursing Home in Albany, Minnesota.

Robert Ray Meldaus was born December 30, 1948 in Little Falls, Minnesota to Clarence and Loretta (Nagler) Meldaus. He graduated from Grey Eagle High School and joined the U.S. Navy. Bob was stationed at Okinawa near Vietnam. When he came home, he worked for the United Parcel Service in Minneapolis for five years. Bob returned to Big Birch Lake near Grey Eagle and worked for Jennie-O Foods in Melrose for 12 years. Due to ill health, he and a friend, Steve Barnick, did painting and light carpentry work.

Bob enjoyed reading, working on puzzles, and watching the sunsets at Big Birch Lake.

Survivors include his two nieces, Tammy Spoo of St. Francis and Heather Spoo (Mark Connelly) of Casa Grande, Arizona; and nephew, Shawn Spoo of Milaca.

Bob was preceded in death by his parents, Clarence and Loretta Meldaus; brother, Dale Meldaus; and sister, Sharon Spoo.

Ice-out Dates

April 7 2004	April 9, 2005
April 10, 2006	April 16, 2007
April 30, 2008	April 20, 2009
April 2, 2010	April 21, 2011
March 20, 2012	May 11, 2013
April 27, 2014	April 10, 2015
March 27, 2016	March 31, 2017
May 5, 2018	April 20, 2019
April 12, 2020	

News from the boardroom

The BBLA has sought help from people who are willing to assist the board in searching for grants and writing grants.

Sarah Jo Boser, the Water Resource Manager, from the Sauk River Watershed District has agreed to help in this area according to association treasurer, Craig Tweedale.

Secchi disks readings for May found the lower basin at 27.5 feet of clarity and 10.5 for the north basin. By the June meeting the lower basin was 17.7 feet and the north was 13.5.

News continues on page 7



Board member Grant Niehaus picked up this trash on the Sand Bar and Hunter's Bay this past May. Lake users should make sure they take back to shore any garbage they have, as well as, pick up any garbage they may find in the water and on shore.

MEMBERSHIP AS OF JULY 1ST 2020

Althaus, Kurt & Lori
Anderson, Jay & Derry
Anderson, Jean
Anderson, Stephen & Lisa
Anderson, Todd & Debbie
Arulfo, Michelle
Atkinson, Dan & John
Atwood, Duane
Auger, John & Karen
Austing, April
Austing, Dick & Jane
Beckermann, Fran & Linda
Beekhuizen, Steven & Julie
Berg, Dwaine & Louise
Berg, Ken & Bev
Bergmann, Ken & Marilyn
Beste, Alexander
Beste, Thomas & Julie
Beuning, James & Judine
Bitz, Steve & LaVonne
Blommel Family
Blommel, Leroy & Marilyn
Blommel, Leroy & Marilyn: Member
Boecker, Elmer & Juliana
Bohlig, Silverius
Bomstad, Gary & Sue
Braegelmann, Patrick & Sandra
Brandon, David & Kristine Dunford
Brandt, Barry & Paula
Brattensborg, Ruth
Brixius, Bernie & Lisa
Browman, Raleigh & Ruth
Brunner, Paul & Lauri
Bullock, Lou & Debbie
Bushman, Wayne
Butte, Rick
Campbell, Mel & Sherry
Carlson, Allen & Shirley
Carpenter, Todd & Laura
Carstens, James & Brenda
Caspers, John & Allyson
Cavello, Butch & Amy
Cebuhar, Charles & Mary
Chmielewski, Daniel & Barb
Claussen, Kim
Collins, Jim & Crystal
Collins, Joyce
Collins, Margaret
Comfort, Jeff & Julie
Costello, Kevin & Ann
Coulson, Brad & Jane
Damrow, Paul & June
Davis, Scott & Marjo
Denne, Marv & Mary Beth
Dinndorf, Don
Dobesh, Jeff & Jill
Doth, Stephen & Jean
Dubiel, Marvin & Pam
Duevel, Jerome & Kim
Elfering Family, Evelyn
Elielf, Daniel & Julie
Ellering, Ben & Jenn
Engel, Greg & Susan
Engel, John & Carol
Enneking, Gene & Cheryl
Erdmann, Mark & Summer
Erickson, Russell
Ersland, Lynn & Mary Kay
Everding, Matt & Missy Kotzer
Eveslage, Steve & Sarah
Falk, Jeremy & Jennifer
Fehn, Ken & Barbara
Finken, Ida
First, Pete & Nicole
Flaws, Michael & Marilyn
Fox, Thomas & Laurie
Freeman, Dave & Sue

Frerichs Frank, Jane
Freudenrich, Jeremy & Holly
Froehling, Joseph
Funk, Robb & Carolyn
Gagne, Bob & Christine
Gallagher, Pat & Caryn
Gangl, Dale
Gerads, Dale & Mary Lou
Gerner, Robert & Charlene
Gordon, Brian J
Grossman, Jim & Jan
Grutsch, John & Jan
Hammerstrom, Malia
Hatton, Rene & LuAnn
Helget, Ron
Henderson, John & Mary
Hendrickson, David & Colette
Hennemann, Kitty
Hess, Herb & Mary Kay
Hinman, John & Kathy
Hinnenkamp, Ben & Pam
Hinnenkamp, Eberhard & Helen
Hinnenkamp, Hollis
Hinnenkamp, Willam
Hird, Mike & Susan
Hoffman, Dan & Janell
Hoversten, Chris & Leah
Howe, Michael
Hughes, Bob & Sally
Hughes, Frank
Hughes, Parry & Kathy
Hughes, Tim
Humbert, Rick & Lois
Ingold, Kirk & Mandi
Ingold, Linnea
Jacobsen, James & Marjorie
Jarsko, Mrs. H. L.
Jepperson, Craig & Mary
Jeske, Nancy
Jim Lind Family
Johnson, Adrian & Kay
Johnson, Craig & Debra
Johnson, Dan & Julie
Johnson, David & Betty
Kadri, Abdu & Janice
Kalgren, Rick & Ann
Kappes, Mike & Jannie
Kaufman, Robert & Josephine
Kelly, Brandon & Becky
Kemper, Jeff & Linda
Kennedy, Dennis
Kerfeld, Art & Rosie
Kerfeld, Cheryl
Kerfeld, Donald & Diane
Kerfeld, Glenn
Kirchner, Gerald & Jonelle
Klaphake, Florian & Doreen
Klaphake, Rick & Deb
Klaphake, Steve & Pam
Klapperich, John & Suzy
Klasen, Kyle & Stacy
Klasen, Vern & Marlene
Klocker, Barb
Kloos, Mike & Becky
Kluempke, Jim & Cathy
Klug, Darlene
Koch, Bob & Connie
Kohorst, Don & Loni, Bob & Joan
Kotsmith, Terry & Sharon
Kraker, Bob
Krig, Gary
Kuehne, Robert
Kuehne, Ron & Midge
Kuhns, Vanessa
Kunkel, Phil & Rose
Kutter, Robert & Nancy
Kutter, Ryan & Jenny

Kutter, Wayne & Sherry
Kyllo, John & Carole
Lambrecht, Paul & Sandra
Larson, Brandon & Debi
Larson, Gayle
Lemieux, BJ & Rachel
Lieder, Bill & Renee
Lilligren, Kirk & Cathy
Lind, Kevin
Linz, Mary
Lloyd, Karen
Loehr, Jim & Renee
Logan, Guy & Suzanne
Louden, Sarah
Lundeen, Darrell & Marlys
Mack, Murray & Sue
Maeder, Niklas & Brandee
Martland, Richard & Marge Anderson
Matchinsky, James & Roselyn
Mattson, Amy
McConnell, Ann
McQueen, Kathy
Meh, Mike & Lori
Meh, Ralph & Mary Ann
Melhaus, Raymond & Elizabeth
Meyer, Glenn & Dianne
Meyer, Juel
Meyer, Ken & Sherry
Meyer, Roy
Meyer, Virg & Joyce
Miley, Rod & Nancy
Miller, Peter & Anna
Mische, Hans & Julie
Moening, Lee & Judy
Mohr, Richard & Marilyn
Mohs, Dean & Sandra
Molitor, Chick & Karen
Molitor, Jon
Moser, Scott & Helen
Mueller, Jerry
Nathe, Mike & Laura
Neville, Steve
Niehaus, Anthony & Carol
Niehaus, Bob & Deb
Niehaus, Grant
Niehaus, Jeanne
Niehaus, John & Mary
Nohner, Kevin & Mary
Orchard, Joan
Orth, David & Linda
Osendorf, Rosemary
Ostendorf, Lenore
Ostendorf, Mark & Lisa
Ostrem, Justin & Amy
Pakola, Howard & Barbara
Palmquist, Mary Pluth
Patch Family
Pavlivek, John
Pelo, Rod & Phyllis
Peterson, Dr Thomas & Virginia
Phillips, Rev Roger & Rosemary
Piersak, Jeff & Kim
Pladson, Dr & Mrs Terence
Poganski, Rock & Marcia
Provinzino, Chuck & Jannine
Pundsack, Craig & Lisa
Rahn, Dave & Lisa
Rasmussen, Steve & Sandy
Reed, Beverly
Refsland, Curt & Mary
Richardson, David & Anna
Richie, Betty
Richie, Paul
Rieger, Joel & Pamela
Rieland, Chuck & Lucy
Rieland, Matt & Shari

Rieland, Mike & Mary
Rieland, Shirley
Ritter, Greg & Barb
Rolles, Robert & Charles
Rose, Herman & Therese
Roy, Barbara
Rudolph, Jerry & Deb
Russell, Jim & Mindy
Rutherford, Peter & Lourel
Sadlowsky, Mike & Vicki
Sand, Daniel & Mary
Savage, William & Sharon
Schanhaar, Tom & Deb
Schimann, Charles & Ellie
Schlough, Thomas & Joyce
Schmid, Judith
Schmid, Ted & Julie
Schmidt, Thomas & Joann
Schnettler, Edmund
Schnettler, John & Jan
Schwantes, Michael
Schwantes, Mike & Amy
Schwartz, Stephen & Joan
Schwieters, Charles & Beatrice
Sieben, Kevin & Beth Thieschafer
Sieben, Russell & Mary
Silbernagel, John & Marie
Sinclair, James & Carolyn
Sinclair, Ken & Jan
Sorenson, Larry & Loanne
Sorenson, Lois
Spears (Moening), Heather
Steinbring, John & Sandy
Stueve, Charlie & Doris
Tembrock, Henry & Marion
Thelen, Steve & Amy
Thielen, Marvin & Judy
Thompson, Rod & Sally
Tiemann, Madonna
Timmermann, John & Molly
Trierweiler, Corey & Julie
Trulson, Kent & Loretta
Tschida, Stewart & Amy
Tschida, Wayne & JoAnn
Tweedale, Craig & Mary Lou
Uphoff, Jim & Lee
Van Beck, Chad & Brenda
VanDrehle, Donald & Helen
VanHavermaet, Paul & Amanda
Vener, John & Corinne
Vener, Mike & Kim
Viere, Kevin & Ann
Waldvogel, Dennis
Walker, Tom
Walters, George & Sue
Wander, Dave & Joan
Warnert, Ron & Lee Meyer
Weber, Thomas
Weber, Tom
Weitzel, John & Mary
Weitzel, Michael & Jean
Weitzel, Michele
Welle, Larry & Rose
Wiebolt, Bernard
Wobegon Properties LLC
Wolters, Ronald & Kathy
Wright, Thomas & Sara Roberts
Zaborski, Tom & Julia
Zachman, Jeff & Linda
Zackowski, Marie
Zenzen, Art & Marilyn
Zimmer, Chris & Sarah
Zimmerman, Lowell & Kris

News continued from page 5

At the June association board meeting approximately \$1000 had been raised for the walleye stocking effort in May. A push to replenish the \$10,000 expense of the stocking will begin in mid-July. Members and anyone who fishes on BBL is invited to contribute to the fundraiser.

AIS Committee co-chair Deb Johnson reported that walleye growth can be diminished by 14 percent due to the presence of zebra mussels which remove the species' food source.

There will be no Friends of the Lake Award presented this year/

The BBLA Board sent a letter of support to the Sauk River Watershed District for the district's efforts to improve and maintain the water quality within the district. There is an organized group trying to undermine the work of the SRWD.

The Big Birch Lake Association has long supported the work of the Sauk River Watershed District and assures its continued support for the vital and urgent work of protecting the water and wildlife resources within the district.

Specifically, both Adam Hjelm and Sarah Jo Boser have been immensely helpful in supporting and testing the health of Big Birch Lake. Hjelm trained local volunteers to test for zebra mussel veligers for two summers. He also provided support for our access weed sampling program, aquatic plant identification materials and links to plant training workshops.

Boser conducted water tests on BBL as a part of a monitoring program of local lakes. The testing crew collected samples and tested for several gases, types of phosphorus, and completed a depth profile.

The results of this work help the BBLA Aquatic Invasive Species Committee plan for and implement efforts to keep AIS out of Big Birch Lake.

The SRWD has provided many lake property owners with technical help and literature about shoreline erosion, maintenance, and landscaping. For many years, the BBLA has given a Friends of the Lake award to individuals and families who demonstrated exceptional environmentally friendly property maintenance.

The SRWD support to an all-volunteer organization of 328 members is invaluable for its ability to respond to the invasive species and other threats to the ecological health of Big Birch Lake.

As threats to ground and lake water rise in the area, the BBLA commends the efforts of the SRWD for projects aimed at protecting and improving this natural resource.

Sincerely,

The Big Birch Lake Association Board of Directors

Big Birch Lake Association Balance Sheet Prev Year Comparison As of June 30, 2020

	Jun 30, 20	Jun 30, 19
ASSETS		
Current Assets		
Checking/Savings		
1005 · Checking-CMCU	1,346.11	2,493.02
1010 · Share Account-CMCU	35.90	35.90
1015 · My Goal Savings	3,223.80	3,223.72
1020 · Money Markey-CMCU	3,087.29	12,508.29
1050 · Cert of Deposit-12	109,482.05	107,278.20
1055 · Cert of Deposit-12 Month	10,478.98	10,344.18
Total Checking/Savings	127,654.13	135,883.31
Other Current Assets		
1080 · Initiative Foundation Fund	37,831.99	36,903.66
Total Other Current Assets	37,831.99	36,903.66
Total Current Assets	165,486.12	172,786.97
Fixed Assets		
1200 · Building & Land	35,300.00	35,300.00
Total Fixed Assets	35,300.00	35,300.00
TOTAL ASSETS	200,786.12	208,086.97
LIABILITIES & EQUITY		
Liabilities		
Long Term Liabilities		
2500 · Buffer Obligations-Strip	5,949.05	5,949.05
2550 · Reserve		
2551 · Aquatic-Invasive Species	100,000.00	100,000.00
2552 · Future Buffer Strips	14,495.72	14,495.72
Total 2550 · Reserve	114,495.72	114,495.72
Total Long Term Liabilities	120,444.77	120,444.77
Total Liabilities	120,444.77	120,444.77
Equity		
3990 · Unrestricted Net Assets	87,101.96	89,073.32
Net Income	-6,760.61	-1,431.12
Total Equity	80,341.35	87,642.20
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	200,786.12	208,086.97



4th of July BBL Boat Parade. Photos by Robert Kutter

SPONSORSHIP AS OF JULY 1ST 2020



WALLEYE CLUB

Engelmeyer Land Services LLC	Melrose
Kutter Agency Inc.	Grey Eagle
Hinman Lawn Service	Grey Eagle
Midwest Clinic of Dermatology	St Cloud/Alexandria



NORTHERN PIKE

Central Minnesota Credit Union - GE	Grey Eagle
Warrior Boats Inc.	Melrose



CRAPPIE CLUB

Freeport State Bank	Freeport
Double R Saloon Inc.	Grey Eagle
Bitz Plumbing & Heating Services Inc.	Grey Eagle
Update Buiding Supplies, LLC	Grey Eagle
Guy Waymore's Musc Emporium	Grey Eagle
Thieschafer Accounting Ltd	Melrose
Kramer Lumber Co Inc	Melrose
Lake Country Storage LLC	Melrose
Outdoor News Inc.	Plymouth
K&R Tax Service LLC DBA H&R Block	Sauk Centre
Coborn's Incorporated	St Cloud
St. Rosa Lumber Inc.	St Rosa
Arnzen Construction Inc	St Rosa
Edina Realty-Jeff Piersak	St. Cloud



BASS CLUB

Shady's Golden Eagle	Burtrum
Hennen Lumber Co Inc.	Freeport
Triple J Restaurants Inc	Freeport
Hennen Floor Covering Inc	Freeport
Freeport Gas & Grocery-Sinclair	Freeport
Neville Hardware	Grey Eagle
Plumbing on the Side	Grey Eagle
Central Lakes Landscape & Construction	Grey Eagle
Central MN Realty-Brandon Kelly	Grey Eagle
Benchmark Real Estate-Judy Frier	Grey Eagle
Lafayette Resort	Grey Eagle
Nancy's Bait & Tackle	Grey Eagle
Eagle Fabricating & Water Walker Dock Sys	Grey Eagle
Grey Eagle Gas & Grocery-Sinclair	Grey Eagle
American Family Insurance-Kyle Hoium	Melrose
Spaeth Sodding & Landscaping Inc.	Melrose
Melrose Plumbing & Heating Services Inc	Melrose
Central Minnesota Credit Union	Melrose
Meadowlark Country Club	Melrose
Melrose 1 Stop-Sinclair	Melrose
Rahns Oil & Propane	Melrose
Joe Hellermann Repair	Melrose
Melrose Bakery	Melrose
Dan Schmidt Printing Inc	Melrose
Norwex - Karen Molitor (320) 249-8000	Melrose
New Munich Gas & Grocery-Sinclair	New Munich
Centre Powersports & Marine	Sauk Centre
All Stars Sports Bar & Grill	St Rosa
RJ's Country Store LLC	St Rosa
Nordman's Cabin, LLC	St. Paul

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Minutes continued from page 2

John and Carol Engel are two of the 5 new owners of the Rock Tavern which hopes to re-open by the end of October.
Caleb Silgjord – Minnesota DNR Conservation Officer – Water Resource Enforcement Officer
Phone 612-559-8713 calebsilgjord@state.mn.us.

Membership Report

Kevin Costello reported on the BBLA Board's decision to change the membership process to eliminate a number of issues with a membership list that is very outdated. Lists were bought from the county to mail membership requests to.

An on-line portal was also added to make payment easier for members.

There were issues with approximately 40 to 60 paying members whose names did not appear on the BBLA July Newsletter. This issue has been fixed and we now have an updated membership list.

There is no mandate for members being actual property owners on the lake.

There are roughly 480 owners of property on the lake.

There was a request to send out email reminders before the membership drive begins.

Marketing for membership typically begins in January.

There will be an effort to continue mailing past members to encourage membership.

Newsletter is presently being sent to everyone on county lists as well as members.

Address verification on-line after membership process is completed is not possible due to privacy issues.

Website

Kevin Costello indicated that the new website is now up and running.

A great new feature is a portal at which photos can be up-loaded onto the site.

Fireworks

Kevin Costello indicated that the July 4th fireworks display is not a BBLA sponsored event.

This year the event raised \$6,000 for local fire departments. The goal is to raise \$10,000 next year.

All debris from the display is biodegradable.

BBLA has been working with inspectors to work extra hours during all lake events.

Building Remodel

Ben Ellering reported on the recent remodeling of the BBLA space.

Building was donated to the BBLA by Gene Waldorf.

The BBLA Board decided to remodel the space and offer the new space as a community center to the public.

A budget of \$6,000 was set to perform said remodel. \$6,035 was actually spent by the BBLA for an overall cost \$15,085. \$8,900 in sponsor donations was raised.

There is no charge for other non-profits to use the facility.

Aquatic Invasive Species Control (keynote)

John Roe, Deb Johnson and Lynn Ersland of the AIS Committee presented information on what is being done to control Aquatic Invasive Species on the lake in greater detail.

Zebra mussels are present and they are here to stay. There is very little that can be done at this time, mostly because they reproduce too quickly. Good news-they have now successfully found a way to map their DNA.

There are good and bad weeds. The main focus today is the Starry Stonewort variety. Two lake comparison: Lake Koronis spending over a million dollars to unsuccessfully battle the weed vs. Grand Lake which successfully eliminated a small patch (8 feet by 8 feet).

Starry Stonewort grows only to four feet in length, but neither fish nor swimmers can navigate through the thick mass.

An informative video dealing with Starry Stonewort was shown.

Deb Johnson provided the meeting with additional information:

- Starry Stonewort produces a toxin that destroys all other plants.

- Winter will not kill off the weed.

- Volunteers who check public accesses were recognized. There are 5 public accesses that are checked by two teams per access. Each team checks their access once a month. Last year these accesses were checked by Deb and her teams 27 times. This year these same teams have checked public accesses 17 times. Lynn Ersland demonstrated the ins and outs of weed sampling. Each access is checked in at least 6 to 7 different locations. If there are any concerns the team will immediately contact the DNR indicating the location and water depth of any suspicious weeds.

2017/2018 Highlights

The annual BBLA golf tournament was held on 7-21-2019.

The annual Ladies Luncheon was held on 6-8-2019 at Shady's Golden Eagle; hosted by Janet Roe and LuAnn Hatton.

The annual lake clean-up day was held.

Minutes continue on page 10



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Friends of the Lake Award

Bob Kutter presented the award to Gene and Bernie Waldorf:

"The award goes to Gene and Bernie Waldorf for all they have contributed to this organization for the past 27 years. As past president Peter Rutherford said, "it is easy to see Gene's breadth of knowledge and activism, as well as, his fingerprints all over 20 plus years of archived BBLA records." Gene became involved in the organization in 1992 serving in various leadership positions including years as president of the organization. He initiated weed and water sampling which continues to this day. He worked to establish the buffer zones on farmlands that drain into Fish Creek/Adley Creek thereby reducing the runoff that can impair lake water. He was instrumental in obtaining a grant from the Initiative Foundation for a study of the lake, he eventually served on the foundation's board and helped set up reserve funds for the BBLA at the Foundation. He was active in the Coalition of Lake Associations teaching them about weed sampling and water quality. Again, Peter Rutherford relays the story of Gene teaching other lake associations. Peter said, "Attending one of my first Stearns Co. AIS meetings, a long time Pierz lake activist/Committee member sought me out to relate a story of how Gene met with a group of Pierz Lk people at Charlie's Cafe in the early '90's to discuss/teach them about water quality and testing processes. Second, at the Stearns COLA meeting in April 2018, an older guy from Grand Lake relayed a story of how Gene met with their lake people about the mid-90's regarding water quality and the pros/cons of a lake-wide sewage system. Again, both of these people initiated the conversations about Gene and were complimentary about his work with them." Gene knew the presence of loons were an indicator of good water quality and worked to provide habitat for them by building several loon rafts. Gene remembers that he and Ralph Mehr were going to walk the creek between Big and Little Birch Lake to examine what could be done to provide a healthy flow of water. Gene stepped out of Ralph's boat and sunk in muck up to his waist. Many of you probably don't know that Gene was an avid ice boater. He loved sailing across the ice and Bernie told him not to go through the channel. The first thing he did was head for the channel. He got off his boat to examine the ice and fell through a hole. When he got back home, Bernie made him strip at the front door. A couple of times he was involved in removing boulders from said channel. Once a barge was hired to move large boulders and then on May 6 of 2012, Gene, in his scuba gear along with Mitchell Niehaus and Tyler Schmidt dove to the bottom using a homemade chain sling to slide large rocks to the side of the channel. Gene and Bernie purchased the current BBLA office building in 2004. It was originally Hammarsten Drug Store from the 1920's to the 1970's, after which it was a retail space and a medical clinic. In 2015 they donated the building to the BBLA. Bernie, we know you were always in the background helping with this organization in so many ways and we thank you as well for your contributions to its health and vitality. Prior to life at BBL, Gene was an engineer at 3M in Maplewood and served 16 years as a state senator representing an area north of the state capitol near Lake Phalen. He and Bernie raised 6 children and are blessed with many grandchildren and great grandchildren. From the current board members and all those who served with you in the past, we say thank you for your extraordinary contributions to the Big Birch Lake Association."

Final Comments/Questions

There was discussion about buffer strips. The program began on BBL following a 1994 study which indicated the Fish Creek was the major contributor to the pollution of the lake. There was some concern that BBLA is still making payments.

There was a question about who handles those property owners whose sewer systems are not in compliance-it is an issue for the county.

There was a question about the stocking of walleyes. It was pointed out that fingerlings are no longer stocked, only fry are stocked.

Adjournment at 10:40AM. Jay Anderson, Recording Secretary Website is www.bigbirchlakeassociation.org