



No 86

April, 2007

President's Letter

Calendar

BBLA Board Meeting	4/21/2007
Birch tree sale at Rock Tavern	4/21/07
Annual Ladies Luncheon	5/19/07
BBLA Board Meeting	5/19/07
BBLA Board Meeting	6/16/07
Annual Golf Outing	6/29/07
BBLA Board Meeting	7/21/07
BBLA Annual Meeting	8/18/07

As I write this on March 26, the outside temperature is 76 degrees! The snow cover we had a few weeks ago is gone and the accompanying spring runoff has already begun to subside. Mother Nature keeps us guessing.

Our fifteen Big Birch Lake inlet stream locations were sampled over the weekend, with what appeared to be disappointing results. Elevated phosphorus levels were evident at most inlets, and in some locations which are normally very low. We have often been told that when spring runoff occurs before the ground thaws, we can expect high nutrient levels, but I couldn't recall such high levels in previous years.

It was helpful to have accumulated a good history of spring runoff nutrient levels, because they showed we were experiencing fairly normal conditions. Fish Creek phosphorus last weekend measured 226 parts per billion, more than twice normal levels. However, March 2005, 2002, 2000 and 1996 levels



were even higher. While we don't like to see any influx of nutrients, we don't have any way to prevent excesses caused by the spring snow melt.

On the positive side, the late winter snowfall did raise the lake to its normal water level. After almost an entire summer with no flow out of Big Birch into Little

Birch Lake, the water is again flowing over the dam. Most of us are hoping to see a return to normal summer rains this year.

I want to draw your attention to a special event this spring. Two of our lake residents will be making birch tree seedlings available at a very low price for planting on lakeshore properties. They were wondering why a lake named after the birch tree had almost no birch trees in evidence around the lake, so they decided to do something about it. Look for details elsewhere in this newsletter.

I'm going to keep this short, and close by saying we're all hoping to see you back at the lake soon. Be assured that your lake association and the volunteers will be keeping the pressure on to protect

President's Letter continues on page 2

Purchase, plant birch trees on April 21

Have you ever had a lake guest ask you why our lake is named "Big Birch"? At one time its shores had stands of glistening white paper birch trees, the same trees the Native Americans used for canoes. At some point in the not too distant past our paper birch forest was devastated by the bronze birch borer. This year we are going to give Big Birch Lake land owners an opportunity to replant the shoreline with birch trees on April 21.

The association has purchased 500 two to three-foot paper birch seedling trees which we will sell to lakeshore owners to plant **on their lake property**. The trees will be available at the Rock Tavern parking lot on April 21 from

10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. Lake residents may purchase **four seedlings for \$5.00** with a maximum of 8 trees per family on a **first come first served basis** until the 500 trees are gone. If you plan on picking up trees after noon, call ahead to see if any trees are left. We will have a cell phone on - 612-760-8172. If the demand for trees is too high, we will change the limit to four trees per family.

Payment:

Make checks payable to BBLA. Cash is okay too but bring exact change.

Planting instructions:

- Keep the roots moist and cool

Birch trees continues on page 2

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Big Birch Lake Association Inc.
Report on Activities Jan. 2007

	Dec '06-Jan '07	Dec '05-Jan '06	Jul '06-Jan '07	% of Income
Income				
Donations-Members	0.00	0.00	100.00	0.00%
Grants	0.00	400.00	2,500.00	0.00%
Interest Income	843.23	400.67	2,585.94	100.00%
Membership Dues	30.00	0.00	150.00	0.00%
Memorials-Other	0.00	95.00	0.00	0.00%
Sponsors Contributions	0.00	0.00	50.00	0.00%
Total Income	843.23	895.67	5,385.94	100.00%
Expenses				
Annual Meeting	0.00	0.00	577.46	0.00%
Fish Creek Project	1,667.00	1,982.50	1,667.00	197.70%
Insurance	0.00	0.00	450.00	0.00%
Internet & Publicity	40.95	63.85	169.65	4.90%
Membership Drive	297.94	277.67	297.94	35.30%
Newsletter	865.96	231.99	2,025.52	102.70%
Printing & Postage	0.00	260.93	0.00	0.00%
Rent	0.00	0.00	600.00	0.00%
Septic Project	80.50	0.00	542.91	9.50%
Secretary Compensation	0.00	0.00	700.00	0.00%
Social Events	0.00	0.00	901.70	0.00%
Supplies & Copies	0.00	0.00	112.91	0.00%
Uncategorized Expense	0.00	102.24	343.44	0.00%
Water Projects	0.00	98.10	0.00	0.00%
Total Expense	2,952.35	3,017.28	8,388.54	350.10%
Net Income	-2,109.12	-2,121.61	-3,002.60	-250.10%

Birch trees *continued from page 1*
and plant as soon as possible.

- Plant trees in clumps (two or four to a clump)
- Slow release fertilizer or peat moss is optional but the soil should be thoroughly loosened.
- Water thoroughly and mulch the soil around the trunk.

Go to the Internet and Google "Paper Birch Planting" for more details. If this project is successful we will consider future events. We welcome your feedback and suggestions.

President's Letter *continued from page 1*
this lake environment.

Thank you for the wonderful response to our 2007 membership renewal.

Here's a piece of wisdom from my favorite philosopher, Yogi Berra,

"You can observe a lot just by watching."

—Gene Waldorf

Thank you, members, for your support

The 2007 BBLA Membership Drive mailing went out the first week of February, and the response has been wonderful. We have received over 332 memberships and 42 sponsorships as of March 23.

Your involvement and support of the Big Birch Lake Association is vital to achieve the association goals to improve and to protect water quality, advance the propagation and habitat of fish, and to protect the welfare of all wildlife in the Big Birch Lake area.

If you have not yet sent in your membership or sponsorship, it is not too late. Contact any Area Director (phone numbers listed in this newsletter) and they will make sure you receive a membership or sponsorship form to complete and mail in. Or simply send your check to BBLA, PO Box 342, Grey Eagle, MN 56336. Be sure to indicate if you are sending in your membership dues or a sponsorship and include your name, address and phone number. Thanks again for your support.

Additional copies of lake history book available for order

Almost 500 orders have been received for The History of Big Birch Lake, which is due out in May. Fran and Mil Voelker, authors of the book, report that many people are buying multiple copies of the book for family members and as gifts for those who had a connection to Big Birch Lake in the past.

More copies of the book will be printed than those ordered thus far; however, to make sure you get one of the extra copies, it would be good to place an order even though the March 15 pre-order deadline has passed. Copies will be mailed or hand delivered upon their arrival in May.

Fran and Mil report their delight in reading some of the comments people have made when submitting their orders. Many have expressed their thanks for the effort it took to complete a project of this kind.

The proceeds will go to the Big Birch Lake Association.

Many renewing members add comments on the renewal form. Most praise the association for the work it has done and offer encouragement for the future.

When concerns are raised, the issues are referred to one of the area directors to investigate further.

Some concerns were about inadequate tornado warning in the lake area, water and weed levels in Hunter's Bay and keeping members posted about the DNR's plans for restocking of walleyes and removing north-erns.

"We have really enjoyed our first year on Big Birch!" said Stephen and Karen Konsor.

Richard and Marilyn Mohr said, "Thanks to each of you for representing all our best interests with so much class and wisdom."

A dry, mild, early winter gives way to a cold, snowy, late winter

Minnesota is known for its snowbirds who head south to Florida or Arizona or some other state or country with warm winter weather. Many residents of Big Birch Lake spend all or part of the cold weather months in one of the warmer climes.

I never intended to be one who would seek refuge in some tropical or arid climate, but my wife and I had the opportunity to spend January in Florida on the Gulf Coast.

I have to admit that temperatures in the 70's and low 80's the entire time were a pleasure to be savored. Strolling on the gulf beaches, basking in the sun, observing the birds, fish and dolphins, smelling the flowering bougainvillea and enjoying meals outside were summer-like treats for us.

Even some of the familiar summer migrants to Minnesota were evident along the gulf coast. The great blue herons strode the beaches; loons, in their bland winter attire, swam in the water; sandpipers skittered on the shore, and American robins in the hundreds flocked in the trees.

Returning to brown and cold Minnesota at the end of January was no surprise except for the depth of the cold which continued well into February. Sub-zero temperatures through the middle of February frustrated even the most cold-hardy Minnesotans. Many area folks had problems with frozen pipes and sewer systems due to the freezing temperatures and lack of snow cover. It was the longest stretch of cold weather since 1996. An Alberta Clipper did drop three inches of snow on February 6 to cover the brown landscape with a welcome whiteness. A Jeep Cherokee driver from Clearwater had the misfortune of going through the lake ice near the channel on Feb. 2. The driver was unharmed but the vehicle didn't fare as well.

Finally, a snowstorm did leave behind 10 ½ inches of snow during the last weekend of February. The snow was a welcomed sight and the potential moisture a godsend. Up to this point, Minne-

sota had the driest winter since 1953. Fishermen worked hard to remove fish houses from the lake by the end of the month before the next predicted storm arrived.

A second major storm did bring another nine inches of snow on March 1 and 2. Keeping ahead of accumulating snow with a snow blower became an



A great blue heron sat on Venice Beach in Florida in January. Contrast that with the snow covered island in Big Birch Lake in March.

exercise in futility. The beautiful snow cover stayed put until the middle of March when temperatures reached the mid-30's through mid 50's. But before the snow began to melt, Mother Nature



Kutter's Column

laced trees, shrubs and fences with hoarfrost. The melting snow made the watershed creeks rise and water flowed onto the ice-covered lake. The sloppy conditions on the ice discouraged fishermen from venturing out to fish.

Robins and starlings arrived in mid-March, and a few days later mourning doves, redwing blackbirds and grackles were common sights at the bird feeders. The shrill call of the sand hill crane was heard overhead along with the sight and sounds of flocks of Canada geese. Interestingly, a pair of piliated woodpeckers spent more time at the suet feeders in late March than in any other time of the year.

By the fourth week of March, all that remained of the lake ice was a rough surface caused by all of the snowmobile traffic during the brief but deep snow cover. Fisherman returned to the ice for some late season sunfish and crappie fishing.

The first thunderstorm of spring arrived at 3:15 a.m. on March 25. Lightning, loud claps of thunder and a shower of needed rain signaled a new season. The next day, the temperature reached 76 degrees and the ice had turned that gray color that indicates the impending deterioration. Gradually, the ice melted away from the shoreline leaving room for two muskrats and a beaver to make an appearance.

With the help from additional rain, the ice receded further from the shoreline during the final days of March, which is another sure sign that heaven seems closer in a house beside the water.

2007 Big Birch Lake Association Members

Anderson, Derry
 Anderson, Marge
 Anderson, Todd & Debbie
 Anderson, Warren & Chadyienne
 Andrews, Mike & Jackie
 Arvig, Tom & Emily
 Athmann, Judy
 Atkinson, Daniel & Janet
 Atwood, Duane & Cindy
 Auger, John & Karen
 Bauer, Melvin & Lois
 Becken, Thor & Jane
 Beckermann, Linda & Fran
 Beekhuizen, Julie & Steve
 Bell, Bradley
 Benson, Marilyn
 Berg, Aaron & Becky
 Berg, Andy & Chelsea
 Berg, Ken & Bev
 Berg, Dwaine & Louise
 Bergmann, Kenneth & Marilyn
 Beste, Tom & Julie
 Beyer, Harlowe
 Blommel Family
 Blommel, LeRoy & Marilyn
 Bohlig, Al
 Bohlig-Kemper, Linda & Jeff
 Kemper
 Bomstad, Gary & Susan
 Braegelmann, Patrick & Sandy
 Brattensborg, Ruth
 Broman, Raleigh & Ruth
 Bruyere, Jr., James L. & Connie
 Marks-Bruyere
 Buchanan, Kent & JoAnne
 Budde, Sheldon & Joan
 Burger, Robert and Nanette
 Bushman, Wayne
 Butte, Rick & Colleen
 Carlson, Allen & Shirley
 Carpenter, Todd & Laura
 Cebuhar, Chuck & Mary
 Chirhart, Jim & Penny
 Chmielewski, Dan & Barb
 Claussen, Kimberly
 Collins, Joyce
 Collins, Ken & Margaret
 Czap, Neil & Catherine
 Daly, William & Ann
 Damrow, June & Paul
 Davis, Scott & Marjo
 Dinndorf, Don & Floss
 Doth, Steve & Jean
 Dougherty, Joan
 Dubiel, Marvin & Pam
 Duclos, Edwin & Verina
 DuFrene, Donald
 Elfering, Vic & Evie
 Engelmeyer, Ron & Mary Kay
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 Enright, Jack & Kay
 Erdmann, Chuck & Lila
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 Erickson, Scott & Lynette
 Ersland, Lynn & Mary Kay
 Fehn, Kenneth & Barbara
 Felling, Merle & Kathy
 Figueroa, Fernando & Nancy
 First, Pete & Nicole
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 Fox, Tom & Laurie
 Freeman, Dave & Sue
 Freeman, Ralph & Laurie
 Frerichs, Al
 Froehling, Joe & Jeanie
 Funk, Robert & Carolyn
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 Gallagher, Mike & Sarah
 Gallagher, Pat & Caryn
 Gallagher, Sr., Pat & Gloria
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 Gerner, Robert & Charlene Coplan
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 Goffin, Gerry
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 Hammerstrom, Mary Jean
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 Heinen, Doug & Nancy
 Hellerman, Joe & Sheila
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 Hick, Robert & Margaret
 Hinnenkamp, Albert
 Hinnenkamp, Ebe & Helen
 Hinnenkamp, Holly & Mary Jo
 Hinnenkamp, Marlene & Bill
 Hird, Louis & Mary
 Hird, Mike & Cathi Lyons
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 Honl, Dolores & Helen Ringenberger
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 Hughes, Frank & Bonnie
 Hughes, Parry & Kathy
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 Huseby, Robert
 Ingold, Kirk & Mandi
 Ingold, Linnea
 Jacobsen, James & Marjorie
 Jaeger, Dwight & Augrey
 Jarnow, Dean & Linda
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 Jeske, Ron & Nancy
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 Johnson, David & Betty
 Johnson, Evelyn B.
 Johnson, James H. & Mary A.
 Johnson, Kay & Adrian
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 Kluempke, Paul & Sarah
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 Poganski, Roger & Joyce
 Poganski, Roger & Marcia
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 Rieland, Mike & Mary
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 Rose, John & Sharon
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 Schmidt, Tom & JoAnn
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 Tiemann George
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 Walters, George & Sue
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 Weitzel, Mary & John
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 Wolters, Ronald
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 Worms, Tim & Sonja Gidlow
 Wright, Walter & Phyllis
 Zaborski, Tom & Julia
 Zackoski, Mike & Kim
 Zimmerman, Larry & Marion
 Zimmerman, Lowell & Kris
 Zirbes, June

Big Birch Lake Association, Inc
Balance Sheet

Babying your birch

Reprinted by permission from "Northern Gardener" January/February 2007

Birch are tough, but a little care will go a long way toward helping your tree stay healthy and beautiful. University of Minnesota Extension offers the following tips:

Pick the right site. Birch are river trees, so pick a place where the roots will be moist and the tops sunny.

Water. During the growing season, water your tree slowly for two to three hours once a week, if the weather is dry.

Mulch. Apply 2 to 4 inches of wood chips or leaf mulch above the root zone to preserve moisture.

Pruning. Don't prune from May through July, when birch borers are more likely to be in flight and looking for weak trees to settle on.



			Jan 31, '07
ASSETS			
Current Assets			
Checking/Savings			
	CD-Tier 4-1		\$52,024.45
	CD Central MN - 3 SPL		\$7,201.36
	Cert. of Dep.6 Central MN CU		\$16,038.93
	Checking-Central MN CU		\$4,963.61
	Money Mkt.-Central MN CU		\$36,779.69
	Share A/C Central MN CU		\$5.79
	Total Checking Savings		\$119,013.83
	Total Current Asset		\$119,013.83
TOTAL ASSETS			\$119,013.83
LIABILITIES & EQUITY			
Liabilities			
Long Term Liabilities			
	Buffer Obligations-Strip Agree		\$8,657.50
	Total Long Term Liabilities		\$8,657.50
	Total Liabilities		\$8,657.50
Equity			
	Opening Bal. Equity		\$25,233.98
	Retained Earnings		\$88,124.95
	Net Income		-\$3,002.60
	Total Equity		\$110,356.33
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY			\$110,013.83

Birch Booster

By John Eustice

Reprinted by permission from "Northern Gardener" magazine January/February, 2007.

Peel away the misinformation about borers and health problems, and birch is still one of the best trees for northern landscapes.

If I had to move, of all the wonderful plants that we enjoy in the north, it is the birches that I would miss most. Warm climate growers seek out look-a-like forms of Eucalyptus or Acacia—but nothing can beat the real deal. Birches are a northern icon, emblems of our landscapes.

They stand out during the winter with their striking forms and exquisite bark,

beautifying the landscape when we need it most. Unfortunately, birches have been under threat from human paranoia and poor information concerning the bronze birch borer. This insect is not an exotic invader like Dutch elm disease, white pine blister rust, or Japanese beetle. Rather, it is a native insect that has coexisted with native trees for millennia. Native birch species have a natural resistance to the insect, as do some nonnative birches. Regrettably, the public has been directed toward a few forms due to misinformation about this insect and another birch dweller, birch leaf miners. However, the damage is usually minimal and mostly cos-

metic. Fear should not keep us from enjoying these wonderful plants.

Old Favorites

Two species of birch dominate the nursery industry—gray birch (*Betula populifolia*) in the form of 'Whitespire', and the river birch (*Betula nigra*). These are good trees. They grow fast and transplant well, both in the nursery setting and in landscapes. They adapt to a wide range of soil types and moisture regimes. They also have good resistance to the bronze birch borer, even under conditions of high stress, such as balling and burlapping, and extreme dryness. As valuable as these are to the northern plant palette, they should

Birch Booster, continues on page 8

Big Birch Lake Contributing Sponsors, 2007

ALBANY

Ecolab Pest Elimination Division Stan Kortenbusch (800) 325-1671

FREEPORT

Atkinson Well & Pump Ltd. Rodney Atkinson (320) 836-2597
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 Freeport State Bank (320) 836-2126
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LITTLE FALLS

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 diversiCOM Melrose Telephone Company Dean Mohs (320) 256-7471
 Ernie's Family Foods Ernie Kociemba (320) 256-4444
 "Gotta Guy" Handyman Service Bob Leukam (320) 260-1248
 Heartland Chapter of MN Darkhouse & Angling Assn. (320) 256-3027
 Kraemer Lumber Company, Inc. Roy & Barry Meyer (320) 256-4275
 Melrose Marine & Sports, Inc. Joe & Sheila Hellerman (320) 256-4642
 Meyer Electric, Inc. Ray & Darlene Ostendorf (320) 256-3274
 Meyer, Meyer, Dymoke & Dymoke, P.A. Scott E. Dymoke & Rachel J. Dymoke (320) 256-4205
 Rahn's Oil & Propane, Inc. Dave & Lisa Rahn (320) 256-3680
 Snyder V & S Variety John & Linda Kociemba (320) 256-4415
 South Town Builders Tom Schwieters (320) 250-1981
 Stearns Electric Association George Jensen (320) 256-4241

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 Re/Max Associates Alex & Betsy Hartmann (651) 334-6000

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 First National Bank of Sauk Centre Paul Skorheim, President (320) 352-5211
 First State Bank and Agency of Sauk Centre (320) 352-5771
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ST. CLOUD

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 Godfather's Exterminating, Inc. Kim Lykken (800) 317-5974

ST. ROSA

Arnzen Construction, Inc. John Arnzen & Bob Arnzen (888) 276-1751
 Henry's Bar & Grill Henry & Michelle Arnzen (320) 836-2154
 St. Rosa Lumber, Inc. Alvin Leinen & John Arnzen (888) 276-1751

SWANVILLE

American Septic Pumping, Inc. Harland & Kris Kunz (320) 547-2469

Big Birch Lake Association Board of Directors

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

PO Box 342
Grey Eagle, Minnesota 56336

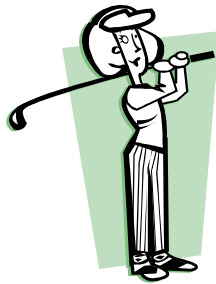
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www.birchlakeassociation.org

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Gene Waldorf, Pres.	Area G. Director		320-285-8867
Jonelle Kirchner, Treas.	Area H Director		320-285-3677
James Chirhart, Sec.	Director at Large		320-256-7223
Don Dinndorf	Director at Large	320-836-2800	320-845-2665
Nancy Heinen	Area J Director	320-285-2436	320-252-8697
Jim Jacobsen	Area A Director	320-256-3804	612-729-5297
Robert Kutter	Director At Large		320-285-5114
Renee Loehr	Area I Director		320-285-2823
Ralph H. Mehr, VP	Area B Director		320-256-7416
Howard Nathe	Area D Director	320-836-2977	320-285-2186
Roger Plombon	Area F Director	320-285-2623	320-252-4886
Jeanine Renard	Area E Director		320-285-4443
Chuck Rieland	Director At Large	320-256-7148	763-571-9661
Jim Sinclair	Director At Large		320-285-5605
Monte Westphal	Area C Director		320-836-2988

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

9th Annual BIG BIRCH LAKE RESIDENTS GOLF OUTING Friday, June 29th, 2007

10:00 a.m. Coffee and Rolls
11:00 a.m. Tee Off
5:00 p.m. Attitude Adjustment
6:00 p.m. Buffet Dinner and Awards



\$30.00 Entry fee includes golf, dinner and prizes
\$10.00 Entry fee includes dinner only, no golf and is non-refundable for no shows
Limit 90 Golfers

Afternoon card playing for non-golfers (need 20)

Please return entry fee by June 15th, 2007

Please detach entry form below and send to:
BIG BIRCH LAKE ASSOCIATION
P.O. BOX 342
GREY EAGLE MN 56336

----- ENCLOSED IS MY CHECK FOR \$30.00 GOLF AND DINNER

----- ENCLOSED IS MY CHECK FOR \$10.00 DINNER ONLY, NON- REFUNDABLE FOR NO SHOWS

NAME -----

ADDRESS -----

CITY/STATE -----

INDICATE YOUR GOLFING ABILITY FOR TEAM BALANCE BY CIRCLING THE APPROPRIATE LETTER

A--- VERY GOOD

C--- FAIR

B--- GOOD

D--- GOLF A FEW TIMES A YR

Annual Ladies Spring Luncheon Saturday, May 19

Linda B's, St. Rosa



Open Face Walleye Sandwich
Fruit Salad
Chips and Pickle
Non-alcoholic beverages
Dessert

Cost - \$12.00

Open bar and social hour at 11:00 a.m.
Lunch at 12:00 noon

Guest Speaker: Mil Voelker, co-author of
"THE HISTORY OF BIG BIRCH LAKE"
recently written by Fran and Mil Voelker

Please return registration with payment to
Jeanine Renard
P.O. Box 196
Grey Eagle, Mn. 56336

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____

NUMBER OF RESERVATIONS : _____

PHONE NO. _____

Birch Booster *continued from page 4*
not be used in lieu of other forms that have similar cultural assets and sometimes greater beauty.

Sweet birch and yellow birch are two really great trees that are almost never seen in parks or gardens. Their lack of exposure leads to lack of demand, and they can be hard to find commercially, which is unfortunate, as these trees have much to offer. Sweet birch (*Betula lenta*) is not a native in our region, but it is a North American native, ranging from southern Canada southeast to Georgia and Alabama. A mature sweet birch is grand, reminiscent of both American beech and black cherry in size and presence. The bark is also like a concoction of the two; both smooth gray and shredding black.

Yellow birch (*Betula alleghaniensis*) is a Minnesota native. Yellow birch can be seen in cattered woodland remnants in the eastern half of the state and occasionally in residential landscapes. Their best feature is the shimmering coppery bronze bark. The bark can rival and surpass even the Amur cherry. These are suitable for a wide variety of settings and should be used more.

The paper birch (*Betula papyrifera*) with its shimmering snow-white and contrasting coal-black furrowed bark, is the birch that most people know best. Many older neighborhoods are blessed

with paper birches planted decades ago; they continue to provide shade and year-round beauty. In newer areas, the paper birch is rarely seen. Homeowners often plant gray birch when they want a white-barked birch. While gray birch has an acceptable appearance, it cannot rival the paper birch in size, presence, or ornamental value. Its mature bark—more gray than white—cannot match that of a paper birch.

Unfortunately, modern construction techniques and some landscaping methods impose stresses on paper birch and other trees that are difficult for the plants to tolerate. Soil compaction and topsoil disruption, bad siting, poor care after balling and burlapping, and often no care after planting can all be blamed. Gray and river birch have tolerated these factors better than most and so their planting has continued.

The threat of the bronze birch borer is real. However, this insect is mostly a concern when trees are poorly sited, poorly cared for, or sick and dying anyway. Birch are tough, but they cannot tolerate abuse as well as elms, hoyneylocust, and hackberries. Birch trees do best in full sun with moisture-retentive soil. Watering regularly during establishment and then periodically during times of drought is also important.

While most gardeners will seek birch with natural or improved borer resistance, some gardeners may want to pamper a birch with less tolerance but great beauty. European white birch, (*Betula pendula*), for

instance, has less borer resistance than many other species but is a beauty queen of the temperate flora. This tree has many cultivars, ranging from lacy shrublets to graceful weepers and striking towers of purple and gold.

Gardeners may also be able to find some quality, older favorites at nurseries. While the species has weeping branchlets, forms like ‘Dalecarlica’ and ‘Youngii’ have even more weeping character. Newer red-toned hybrids like ‘Crimson Frost’ and ‘Royal Frost’ as well as selections like ‘Purple Rain’ have a beauty that is undeniable.

‘Crimson Frost’, grows 40 feet high, 30 feet wide, with reddish leaves, and pure white bark streaked with cinnamon colors. These birch work best in prominent locations that suit them culturally—moist soil and sun for the leaves.

In an ever-more homogenous world, fewer things define a region. Like the Saguaros of the southwest or the palmettos of the southeast, northern birches provide a sense of place for us. We live in a land of ice and snow, and birches like it that way. On a cold winter day, the sight of shimmering copper bark from a yellow birch or the repeating white trunks in a paper birch grove makes me glad to be a northerner.

BIG BIRCH LAKE ASSOCIATION, INC
PO BOX 342
GREY EAGLE, MN 56336

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