

City of Birchwood Village, MN

Welcome New Neighbors: Derek Spavin--26 Oakridge, Zachary and Jaryn Huth--9 White Pine, Michelle Heinshe --367 Wildwood, Michael and Angela Holvig, 429 Birchwood Cts.

Condolences to: The Lundberg Family on the passing of their grandmother Agnes Lundberg.

Our thanks to:

- Rachael Drew, Steve Dean and Mary Wingfield got the flags up in town and back down, with a little maintenance done along the way.
- **Dave Trepanier** was Mr. Weedwhipper along our pathways.

If you would like to add your name to future volunteer activities, contact me at wingfield.mary@gmail.com

Generous supporters to the Community Club: (\$20+) Sandy Kris-Buerkle, Jean and Philip Sutherland, Bill and Mary Hullsiek, Gene and Shirley Ruehle, Chris and Angie Churchill, Sue Schway, Bridget Sperl and John McCormick, Ryan and Shari Hankins, Susan and Michael Mercer, JP and Patty Lauer, Eugene and Sandra Bowar, Urho and Pam Rahkola, Steve and Nancy Ferry, Judy Alnes and Bernie Kruse, Peggy and Craig Witthaus, Kelly and David Strobel, Tom and Amy Hoffman, Dave and Pat Trepanier, Nancy Calderon, Ron and Mary Sternal, Dan and Cheryl Anderson, Bruce Kolcinski, Thomas and CarlyAnn Nelson, Ron and Mary Sternal, Ross and Donna Cardozo, Mary and Steve Newman, Sarah and Dan Webber, and Jerry and Jacqueline Carlson

DEER MANAGEMENT OPEN HOUSE

The council has scheduled an open house in conjunction with the Parks Committee and the DNR. Please come to this forum to learn and give input on this issue. Thursday, September 12, 2019 at 7pm at City Hall.

FOURTH OF JULY—

Birchwood celebrated our nation's 243rd birthday with our 68th Annual Parade. After the deluge last year, it looked like we might get snake bit again with the rains but the weather reports were much ado about nothing. Yay! We honored Jim Rupert again this year as he did not get his due last year in the abbreviated parade. Jim is a Boy Scout (Eagle Scout, Order of the Arrow, Silver Beaver Award) and long-time volunteer. He has spent much of his time helping special-needs people in Troop 594 attain Eagle Scout. For that he has landed on the front page of the St Paul Pioneer Press—2 times!

Thanks to Kowalski's CUB in White Bear Township, their financial support allowed us to upgrade our food options and dispense with electric cords in the rain.

Despite a dire forecast, the sun came out and made it a perfect day. More folks than seen in recent memory showed up. But it could not have happened without a stellar effort from our team of volunteers. We had a lot of new helpers this year and their efforts were much appreciated along with the usual players. These are the folks that pitched in and made it all happen:

Bill Trinka led the team and set up the route, Karleen Corliss escorted our Grand Marshal Jim Rupert. Dave Trepanier returned to the balloon team along with Greg and Claudia Beckman, Colleen Jefferson, Bill and Mary Hullsiek, Bob and Diane Landberg and grandkids Robert and Maddie, and Hope and Maia Monette. Shannon Moore, Megan Hough and Karen Abrahamson joined in for distribution to kids young and old. Flags were handed out by Lori Klimp. Becca Anderson was our water balloon gal. Ron Sternal, MaryKay and Chris Sorenson, Mark and Mary Cahill and Evelyn Morse were kept busy handing out pop and bagging pop corn. Nancy Maas and Michael Lien organized the primo Birchwood Band with Anne Vail as the majorette and Ginny Altman leading us in the Star Spangled Banner. The games were a huge production led by Ben and Frank Lind, Noel Hegedus with Visal Ebbott guiding all the kiddoes in organized chaos. (For the record, the "Evens" won a very spirited Tug of War 2-0.) Larry Walker was the line painter for the games, and Randy LaFoy took care of the garbage bins. JP Lauer recruited the VFW Post 1782 Rifle Squad that fired the shots heard around the lake. And Boy Scout Troup #434 took care raising the flag and clean up after.

A special thanks to Sandy Kris-Buerkle for stepping up at the last minute to help me sort out all the loose ends parade morning.

See you next year!

PLEASE COMPLETE THE SCHOOL QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE LAST PAGE OF THE NEWSLETTER

2 BIRCHWOOD VILLAGE NEWS

STREET BOULEVARD PRUNING

With all the rains the past few years, the vegetative edges of the roads have been encroaching into the driving/biking lanes. It has gotten to the point where it is interfering with user safety.

The city is responsible for clearing these spaces, although, we could use your help. If you want to control what is cut, please cut back any greenery that is within 4 to 6 feet of the roadway. Otherwise, the city will be sending out a crew the second half of September to get after these rogue plants. Thanks for your help and understanding.

WATER METER UPDATE:

Most cities now have meters read via radio/cellular technology. Our system is archaic—it has become difficult and expensive to get our water meters read. The solution is to upgrade our meters from mechanical meters to electronic. The city is currently soliciting bids for transitioning our homes to this new system. The cost will be paid for by quarterly surcharge until our costs have covered the expense (probably a five year term). More information will be provided in the next newsletter. Stay tuned.

ADA UPDATES:

- Grotto pathway will soon have a railing on the steps.
- Handicapped parking is available at Kay Beach.

NEW SIGNS:

You will be seeing fewer signs around town as we have been reviewing which signs are no longer relevant. In addition, our various parks are getting new, uniform signage. We hope you like the improvement.

MN DEPT OF HEALTH WATER FEE INCREASE

This fee shows up on your water bill as \$1.59/quarter. The fee was established in 1993 by the DPH to monitor and improve drinking water supplies. The fee will be increasing \$2.43/qtr in January per state mandate.

SOLAR GARDEN TASK FORCE

Mike Lundberg offered to look into options for improving our carbon footprint. If you would like to help Mike, please contact city hall.

SENIOR CHORE SERVICES

By connecting youth and adults in search of work with seniors in need of help, Northeast Youth and Family Service (NYFS) helps older adults live independently in their homes for as long as possible. Workers assist seniors with basic services such as housekeeping and lawn care as well as seasonal activities such as snow shoveling and leaf raking. Contact Debbie Wells, Senior Chore & Volunteer coordinator: 651/757-4061 or debbiep@nyfs.org

NAME THAT PARK

Our city parks have been named after residents who provided exceptional service to our community. Al Bloomquist was our constable and drove most of the kids on the Birchwood School bus. (And as all the kids around knew, he and his wife also gave out Cracker Jacks for Halloween!) Tighe-Schmitz was named after Lucy Tighe, our first woman mayor, and Ms. Schmitz, longtime volunteer city treasurer. Hall's Marsh was named for Mr. Hall who was the city "President" when we were founded. Curt Feistner Memorial Reserve was named for Curt who was in the 101st Airborne Division and died in a helicopter training exercise shortly after 9-11.

On the other hand, a study of the city records shows Nordling Park was named in the early 1970s but the name has little historical significance to Birchwood. We are looking to upgrade our park signage, so the council agreed it is appropriate to review the name.

We would like your input on this. Names that have been floated about include: Birchwood Commons, Central Park, and Shank Park—a tribute to the family that initiated the Fourth of July Parade and helped create the Birchwood Painters group and then the White Bear Center for the Arts. When the Shanks sold their home, they required the new owners to continue the start of the parade on their property...as it had for over 50 years.

Let us know your thoughts.

KAYAK/CANOE INFORMATION:

Please make sure to remove your boat from racks by Oct. 31 to avoid penalties.

Kay Beach now has Kayak/Canoe space for 2020

OTHER BITS:

- Old signs that are no longer relevant will be coming down. Park signs will be updated and "decluttered". Those new signs will be brown and consistent throughout town.
- The Lake Avenue overlay will soon be progressing. A drainage swale will be constructed along the north side of the hockey rink along with paving the hockey rink parking lot.
- We are working on a multi-use surface overlay for the hockey rink to make it usable for most of the year. Markings for basketball, pickleball, hopscotch and shuffleboard are planned.
- Utility bill ACH direct deposits have climbed to a third of the residents. This creates more efficient processing so there is a \$2 discount each quarter for those who opt in. Sound like you want in? Please contact city hall for more info.



COMMUNITY YOGA CLASS RESTARTING

The Community Club yoga class will start up again on Tuesday September 17th at City Hall. Join in the fun every Tuesday from 5-6pm. Cost: Donation - pay as you can.

MAYOR'S NOTES by Mary Wingfield

Earlier this summer, the Roads Committee and City Council held a joint public forum to address the Lake Links connection at the Mahtomedi border and how that will affect our approach to bike and ped traffic around the lake.

There are a number of differing views on the subject. Some want an expanded path through town to accommodate walking and biking, others want no change, and a few want a separate path altogether. We all want a safe and user friendly resolution and we want to ensure the cost is not passed on to our residents.

This is a complicated problem and it will take time to come up with the best solution that addresses these concerns. We have already added stop signs and reduced the speed to 25 MPH along the roadway. This has significantly reduced traffic by pushing faster drivers out to Hwy 244. We have also narrowed the lanes as a "traffic calming" measure.

There are some other things that we can do to improve Hall Avenue:

• Grass and other vegetation have taken root on top of the pavement along the edge--by as much as 6 to 24 inches in places. The pavement needs to be bladed to remove this encroachment. We have been told that this problem is exacerbated when the shoulders are higher than the pavement causing dirt to accumulate on the roadway. Scraping the shoulders down and possibly adding Class 5 material to the edge will help.

FALL 2019

• In recent years, large snow accumulations have made plowing the full width of the road difficult. The council will consider having the mailboxes and any other impediments on the south side of the road moved to the north. This will help the plows to keep the road the same width as the summer.

These changes are small, but incremental. It should help the council evaluate how it wants to proceed in the future. We hope you will support these ideas.

School is back in session. Please drive carefully,

m

CONTACT INFORMATION:

CITY HALL: 207 Birchwood Avenue, Birchwood MN; tel.: 651-426-3403; email: info@CityofBirchwood.com

Administrator Tobin Lay 651-426-3403 tobin.lay@CityofBirchwood.com

COUNCIL MEMBERS: Mary Wingfield (Mayor) 651-653-1022 wingfield.mary@gmail.com

Randy LaFoy (Deputy Mayor) 651-429-9229 lafoybwd@gmail.com

Kevin Woolstencroft 651-426-3718 kevinshouse@access4less.net

Jessi Aakre jaakre.birchwood@gmail.com

Jon Fleck jonathan.fleck1@gmail.com

PLEASE COMPLETE THE SCHOOL QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE NEXT PAGE

BIRCHWOOD SCHOOL QUESTIONNAIRE PLEASE FILL OUT AND <u>RETURN WITH UTILITY PAYMENT</u> OR TO CITY HALL

The latest White Bear Lake School District referendum has renewed discussion about our school district alignment and if it is the best fit for the community of Birchwood. The city council, responding to this renewed interest, has asked a group of residents to help determine if any action should be considered. This group of residents have created this questionnaire and request your prompt response.

Background data provided by the Minnesota Dept of Education as of tax year 2017

Mahtomedi ISD #832	<u>WBL ISD #624</u>
District tax rate .254	District tax rate .230
Referendum/levy tax rate .258	Referendum/levy tax rate .231
# homesteads 4177	# homesteads 19576
Average homestead value \$390,013	Average homestead value \$224,706
Birchwood k-12 student population this year 49	Birchwood k-12 student population this year 40

- 1. Indicate your opinion with respect to Birchwood's school district alignment
 - a. I strongly prefer to remain aligned to White Bear Lake
 - b. I slightly prefer to be aligned to White Bear Lake
 - c. I don't have an opinion or feel I need more information to answer
 - d. I slightly prefer to change alignment to Mahtomedi
 - e. I strongly prefer to change alignment to Mahtomedi
- 2. If you answered a, b, d, or e to question #1 please indicate all the reasons why you answered as you did for #1. Example: my answer for #1 is based on a belief that my answer would result in...(circle all of the following options that you think apply).
 - a. My child/children already attend the district I selected
 - b. Academic quality
 - c. I would like my child/children to attend the district I selected
 - d. Ability to vote in WBL referendums/levies and school district matters
 - e. Ability to vote in Mahtomedi referendums/levies and school district matters
 - f. Higher home value
 - g. Lower Home value
 - h. Higher taxes
 - i. Lower taxes
 - j. Geographic / location / logistics
 - k. Increased number of school buses through Birchwood
 - 1. Decreased number of school buses through Birchwood
 - m. Other please elaborate here:
- 3. If you answered c on question #1 (no opinion or need more information), please indicate all of the areas about which you would desire more information to offer an opinion:
 - a. Home value
 - b. Tax implication
 - c. School locations
 - d. Quality
 - e. Birchwood parent preference for their children
 - f. Other Please elaborate here:

Please feel free to attach any comments and/or answers as necessary