



BIRCHWOOD VILLAGE NEWS



City of Birchwood Village, MN

Spring 2015

Welcome new residents:

Elizabeth Dabruzzi, 415 Birchwood Avenue
Stephanie and David Heiden, 242 Wildwood Avenue

Our sympathies extended to:

- Arlene Feistner whose husband Ralph Larson died this past month. Ralph lived in Birchwood for the past 16 years.
- The Witthaus family (Craig and Peg). Peg's mother Helen Vacha passed away last month.

Our thanks to:

- Volunteer staffers: **Charlie Moore, Cynthia Tomlinson, Gary and Judi Oakins, Karleen Corliss, Marian Johnson, Suzanne Donnell, Mary Sue Simmons, Mark Anderson, Kevin Woolstencroft, Mary Wingfield.** We set a new record time for stuffing and chatting.
- Belated thanks to **Katie Cavenor and Jay Brunner** for helping paint the ice rink base. And to John Lund for putting the finishing touches on the hockey hut.
- **Mark Anderson** for guiding the reconstruction project for the drainage swale at Elm Beach.
- **Suzanne Donnell** for serving on the White Bear Lake Conservation District for the past four years.
- **Scott Howe** for dedicating his time and energy in taking care of the ice rink in grand fashion
- **Amy and Carter Johnson** for putting on a super Christmas party and Bob Carson for being one of Santa's helpers.
- **Jim and Joy Hogenson** who volunteered to be the masters of our website--that has been a need for some time. Be sure to see Jim and Joy's work when you are cruising the net.

WATER RATE INFO:

You have heard much about excessive water use in the media these days. We took a look at our use and found that Birchwood is doing its part to reduce waste! Ten years ago all residents used an average of 55,000,000 cubic feet per year. In the past two years we have averaged 33,000,000 cu. ft. That is a 40% decrease!

But we still have issues. We don't have a water tower in town (or at least one that is functioning), so our city buys water from the City of White Bear Lake. We charge residents the cost for that water, plus an added cost to cover operating expenses. Most of our costs are fixed. When we have an extreme winter like last year with many water main breaks (4), we can't cover our costs. Last year was kind of a perfect storm of extra costs—we had a wet summer, used less water, and we had some very expensive breaks.

For the past year, the city water task force has been tackling the way the city charges for water use to make sure we have enough revenue, even in wet years. We have been operating at a deficit in our water fund for the past year. In addition, we have been told to expect at least a 10% increase by White Bear Lake due to the cost of their fees in defending the lake level lawsuit.

Unfortunately, that means your cost is going up as well. The good news is the city has pared its operating costs by \$8-10,000 per year by contracting locally for its water operator (which we are required by law to have). We also will be instituting a fee structure that conforms with our neighboring communities that will include larger fees for larger water users. With all of these measures in place, we hope to have a stable water fund. Exact rate fees will be decided by the council this summer.

Of course, this issue will not go away. We will be visiting this again as the legislature decides if and when we have to start drawing water from the Mississippi.



KAYAK/CANOE RACK INFORMATION

See A Note from the City Administrator (below)

SPRING LEAF PICK UP

The city will again provide for spring leaf pick up. Based on comments and the amount of leaves picked up last year, a flat fee of \$25 will be charged (via your utility bill) to each resident who puts leaves out at the curb. Since the contractor makes many swings through town, **if you use the service multiple times, you will be billed for each pick up.**

Road signs will be put out at the entrances into town the week prior to the pick-up weekend.

- Leaves must be piled along the curbside -- NOT extended back into the yard.
- Residents with limited frontage should consider putting piles at the end of their driveways.
- LEAVES ONLY--no compost, dirt, sticks, rocks, plant or garden material
- DO NOT place leaves on rock/gravel driveways or landscaping
- LEAF PILES WILL NOT BE PICKED UP FROM PROPERTIES THAT DO NOT FOLLOW THESE CONDITIONS.

BIRCHWOOD BIRKEBEINER SKIERS

Congratulations to these Birchwoodonians who skied the 42nd annual 50+ km ski marathon February 21 from Cable to Hayward, WI: Ben and Chris Creagh, William Sikorski, Andy Sorenson, Barton Winter, Mary Wingfield. (John Wyland skied the 25 km Korte race).

TRIVIA

The population of Birchwood in 1940 was 91 folks. In 1950, the population swelled to 312.

A NOTE FROM THE CITY ADMINISTRATOR

With spring fast approaching, the Birchwood City Council is adopting a new policy for canoe and kayak storage at public easements that best serves all residents. Most importantly, canoes and kayaks not in use must be stored in racks, and must be properly licensed and registered with the City. Now all canoes and kayaks must have a permit displayed on their watercraft in the form of a sticker obtained at City Hall. The cost of the permit is \$10.00 and must be renewed annually. This allows the City to confirm that racks are being used by residents only. Additionally, there is a fee of \$25.00 for residents using racks without a permit, and a fee of \$50.00 for all watercraft that must be removed by the City due to lack of permit or failure to remove a canoe or kayak prior to October 31st.

Please contact me at (651) 426-3403 if you would like more information regarding canoe and kayak rack use or would like a copy of the ordinance amending canoe and kayak storage at public easements. Sincerely, Chris Mickelson

BIRCHWOOD DOCK ASSOCIATION

Everyone is invited to join the dock Association to use the docks at Ash, Birch, Elm and Dellwood Easements. (Kay Beach is now a city dock and is free for all to us.) Membership is \$35 per year. Check off the box on your utility bill and include your fee, or send it to Mike Evangelist, 364 Wildwood Av.

- If you are not on the boat slip waiting list, contact city hall to do so.
- The Association will hold a spring meeting in early April. All current members and easement neighbors will be notified of the date/time/location by mail. To add your name to the list, contact BirchwoodDocks@gmail.com.

MAYOR'S NOTES

We are looking to “spruce” things up around the village. It has been decades since the city initiated a tree replacement program. We have removed hundreds of trees since then, so the council is now looking to fill in places where we used to have shade. It will years before the trees mature, but at least we will be making progress to make us more green. If you would like to help on this volunteer project or any other, let me know. The more the merrier! We expect to start planting in early May.

Happy spring to all, m

EMAIL ADVANCED-NOTICE LIST

Add your name to our list for important happenings. We will advise you of upcoming concerns such as hydrant flushing, leaf pick up dates, road repairs and other matters that occur on short notice. This list is for internal use only and will not be provided to others.



DIRECT DEPOSIT YOUR UTILITY PAYMENT--NEVER RISK ANOTHER LATE PAYMENT!

City of St. Anthony

YES! I'd like to sign up for electronic payment!

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY		Customer Account #:	
Name on account (Please print):			
Address:			
City:		State:	Zip Code:
Please transfer payments directly from my:		<input type="checkbox"/> Checking account	
Routing # :		Account #:	
I authorize City of St. Anthony to process debit entries from my account. This will remain in effect until I give reasonable notification to terminate this authorization. I have attached a voided check.			
Authorized signature on account:			Date: