



# BIRCHWOOD VILLAGE NEWS



City of Birchwood Village, MN

Summer 2017

## *Welcome New Neighbors:*

**Lee Alnes & Rebecca Krinkle**, 345 Wildwood, **Justin & Jessa McCarthy**, 515 Lake; **Jared & Ashley Lyle**, 403 Birchwood Ave; **Peggy & James Stockwell**, 17 White Pine; **Mike Lundberg**, 170 Wildwood; **Ryan Hankins**, 183 Wildwood; and **Venessa Greer**, 2 Oakhill Ct.

## *Our Condolences to:*

Ruth Teichrow whose husband Warren died this spring. Warren and Ruth have lived in Birchwood since the 1970s.

## *Our thanks to:*

- Volunteer staffers: **Kathy Madore, Lori Klimp, Gene and Shirley Ruehle, Ron Sternal, Suzanne Donnell, Lisa Reitveld and Mary Wingfield** for stuffing the spring newsletter. Good job, TEAM!
- **Andy Sorenson** for fixing the woodpecker holes (again) at city hall. Let's hope this time they are afraid to come back.
- **Maureen Seibert** for cleaning out debris that was illegally dumped in Nordling Park
- **Kevin Woolstencroft, Doug Hough, and Mary Wingfield** for their help installing **Kay Beach dock on a cold day. Brrrrr.**
- **Erica Peterson**, who was back in town last month, and **Mary Wingfield** trimmed our birch trees at **Tighe-Schmitz**. Erica's son **Chad** planted the trees as part of his eagle scout project
- **Buckthorn removal group: Bridget Sperl, Megan Malvey, Ben and Chris Creagh and kids, Doug Hough and grandson Logan, Alan Mitchell, John McCormick, Larry and Judy Walker, Kevin Woolstencroft and Mary Wingfield.** All pitched in to make more open space in the play area of **Bloomquist Park.**
- **Patriotic Flag installers: Doug Hough and Mary Wingfield**

If you would like to add your name to future volunteer opportunities, contact me at [Wingfield.mary@gmail.com](mailto:Wingfield.mary@gmail.com)

*Generous supporters to the Community Club:*  
**Jeff and Karen Olson**

## *Residents who add a bright light to our town:*

- **Doug Hough, grandson Logan Carlson, Mary Wingfield and Callie and Augie, and Colleen Jefferson** for picking up the litter along Cedar, Hall Avenue, and Birchwood Road and all the snow flags.

Do you know of someone who has gone the extra mile to make our community bright? Let me know and we will post it here!

## **WANT TO BE ON THE LITTER TEAM?**

We have a few stretches of town where the litter collects. Some folks help pick up the debris from time to time. Do you want to "Adopt a Village" and join fellow residents who take time to make our city look beautiful. Let us know and we will add your name to the team.



Augie the Litter Picker Doggie

## **BIRCHWOOD DOCK ASSOCIATION**

Everyone is invited to join the dock assn to use the docks at Ash, Birch, Elm and Dellwood Easements. (Kay Beach is now a city dock and is free for all to use.) Membership is \$35 per year; send it to Mike Evangelist, 364 Wildwood Ave.

- If you are not on the boat slip waiting list, you can pay a refundable \$200 deposit with
- City Hall to reserve your place on the list. The Association held a spring meeting in early April. If you are interested in being a full member of the Association, contact [BirchwoodDocks@gmail.com](mailto: BirchwoodDocks@gmail.com).

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### UPCOMING EVENTS:

**4th of JULY PARADE-** July 4<sup>th</sup>, 9:30 am at 5 Birchwood Avenue. FFI: Mary Wingfield. 651-653-1022, mary.wingfield@juno.com

**MARIAN JOHNSON ACROSS THE LAKE SWIM-** July 29, 2017, 7 am Birch Beach. (See Info later in this Newsletter)

**PLANT EXCHANGE-** June 3, 10 am Village Hall; FFI: Randy Lafoy, 651-426-9229

**ALL CITY GARAGE SALE-** Sat., June 10

**MUSIC IN THE PARK-** Sundays starting 6/4

### COMMUNITY CLUB ANNUAL DUES

Please make sure to send your dues (\$4) in the enclosed envelope. Your support funds village events including the Fourth of July Parade, Marion Johnson Across the Lake Swim, Common Table Pot Luck and Christmas Party. Thank you to all for making Birchwood a great community.

### ROADS UPDATE, PLUS THE STOP SIGNS ARE WORKING!

The Roads Committee has been preparing for annual road maintenance to Cedar St/Hall Ave and Wildwood Ave. With the Spring crack sealing completed on all our streets, expect to see crews chip sealing these three roads early this summer.

We've also heard concerns about traffic volume and speeds along Wildwood and Cedar/Hall, which prompted us to solicit the help from the County Sheriff to place a radar speed trailer on each of those streets for a few days. These trailers also collect traffic data. It recorded just over 3000 vehicles on Cedar/Hall with an average speed of 27 mph during six days in April. It found 3% of cars traveled over 36 mph during that time period. Next, the trailer was moved to Wildwood Ave for four days and recorded just over 300 vehicles traveling at an average speed of 21 mph and 2% of vehicles were recorded traveling above 31 mph.

The Committee is always open to comments, ideas and your attendance at our meetings is always welcome! It meets the first Monday of each month at 6:30 in the Village Hall.

### 2017 SEWER LINING ASSESSEMENT PROJECT

See Mayor's Notes

## SUMMER 2017

### DO YOU KNOW THIS BIRD?



“Elmer” the Muscovy duck made Birchwood his home for a week this April. He is a tropical bird that likes to eat slugs and worms. He took a liking to the Jefferson's place at Cedar and Oakridge. He was relocated to a safer home away from our neighborhood fox.

### CITY TREE INSPECTIONS NOTICE

If you want to be notified when our city tree inspector is out looking for diseased trees on your property, please contact the city administrator so you can be updated when the inspector will be in your neighborhood.

### PLEASE DO NOT DUMP IN OUR PARKS

There have been some instances of debris being deposited in our city spaces. This is illegal and contrary to keeping our city beautiful. Please help us maintain our parks and make sure this does not happen.

### CONSUMER CONFIDENCE REPORT

Here is the link for our public water supply system. The analysis shows we are within the range of safety for all measured elements. Paper copies are available through City Hall - call 651-426-3403.

[http://www.cityofbirchwood.com/index.asp?SEC=19D266A8-CD74-486E-81AD-30A371963B55&DE=0B00A785-FC08-47CD-BBD3-78AA1F88F4A1&Type=B\\_BASIC](http://www.cityofbirchwood.com/index.asp?SEC=19D266A8-CD74-486E-81AD-30A371963B55&DE=0B00A785-FC08-47CD-BBD3-78AA1F88F4A1&Type=B_BASIC)

### **3 BIRCHWOOD VILLAGE NEWS**

#### **FOURTH OF JULY GRAND MARSHAL**

Scott Howe is our Grand Marshal this year. Scott has been a dedicated volunteer manning our hockey rink for the past few years. Prior to that, he has helped at the rink for 15 years. Scott is a heating and air conditioning contractor and pitches in at city hall to make sure our systems are running well. He has donated countless hours to the community and is now on the new Parks committee. We look forward to Scott help this summer with changing out the LED lights at the rink.

#### **A NOTE OF CONCERN: *by Gail Diez***

Now that the snow is melted and days are warmer and brighter, we Minnesotans are outdoors again. I enjoy working in my garden listening to birds and ducks returning to beautiful White Bear Lake. However, it seems on those beautiful warm days, neighbors and hired businesses are out using leaf blowers to clean not only their small yards but their driveways, docks, streets and decks, etc. The noise from them can be heard blocks away. Leaf blowers not only cause noise pollution, they blow dust and allergens and can contribute to hearing loss. Neighbors, please be more considerate--use this machine for short periods of time appropriately or better yet use a rake, broom or hire a student. We live very close to each other. Please respect others rights to the quietude. Thank you.

#### **WATER RATE INCREASE**

The city bases its water rates on anticipated costs of service each year. The number of water main breaks we have per season is unpredictable. We budget for two each winter; this year we had three. The weather was especially hard on water pipes throughout the region due to the severely fluctuating temperatures transitioning through the freeze/thaw mark. As a result of these unanticipated costs, the water fund is in deficit. This requires the city to raise the water rates until the water fund is stable. Let's hope next season is much easier on our infrastructure.

#### **CABLE COMMISSION POST OPEN**

Shirley Donovan has resigned from the board for personal reasons. Shirley has served as our representative for the past two years and filled the large hole left when her husband Greg passed away. Shirley was a dedicated member of the commission and we will miss her greatly.

If you have an interest in being the city's representative, please send a letter of interest to our City Administrator by June 30, 2017.

### **SUMMER 2017**

#### **SCHOOL DISTRICT BOUNDARY**

Councilmembers Megan Malvey and Randy LaFoy request the help of community members who wish to do research regarding the potential for a school district alignment change for Birchwood from White Bear Lake (624) to Mahtomedi (832). Although the majority of Birchwood students still attend school in Mahtomedi (via open enrollment) the percentage is down from a few years ago, likely because fewer children are being accepted for open enrollment in Mahtomedi. Megan has received requests to pursue this from Birchwood parents whose children have been denied open enrollment to Mahtomedi or who have younger (pre-K) children who they hope will be able to attend school in Mahtomedi. It's worth noting that enrollment remains open in White Bear Lake, so students wishing to attend school in WBL would presumably have that opportunity even if a district alignment change occurred.

A district alignment change would not be an easy task with many approval steps involved. The first step, though, is to determine if the broader community of Birchwood supports pursuit of the change. In addition to considering the educational aspects of a change, it is also relevant to consider the impact on home values in Birchwood and taxes for all Birchwood residents if such a change were made. Megan and Randy plan to have a kick-off meeting in June with community members who are interested in helping do the research necessary to provide that type of information to the community. If you would like to assist with this, please reach out to Megan at [malvey.birchwood@gmail.com](mailto:malvey.birchwood@gmail.com). Feedback from the community will be requested once background information is collected. If you already have a strong opinion on this topic, feel free to contact Megan or Randy now.

#### **MEET YOUR PARK COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

The following residents were appointed to the re-established parks committee. They have been charged with reviewing our parks and improving our walking trails and helping out with our public spaces. They are a dedicated group and we look forward to their help and insight. Please thank them for their enthusiasm and dedication. Dave Remely, Ana Vang, Bridget Sperl, Houstoun Clinch, James Nelson, Judy Walker and Scott Howe.

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**POPULATION 875, MEETING YOUR**  
**NEIGHBOR ONE NEWSLETTER AT A TIME\***  
*by Alison Ebbott and Ken Ebbott*

**SUMMER 2017**

Meet Birchwood neighbor Ralph Ebbott! Ralph was born in 1927 in Edgerton Wisconsin. He was the youngest of five children. His Dad ran a farm implement store in town. At that time, Edgerton grew a lot of tobacco, and Ralph remembers the warehouses lining the street. He was grateful NOT to have to work there as a summer job, but he did work in a shoe factory. Ralph was very musical and received an oboe scholarship to attend the University of Wisconsin in Madison. He was a member of the Sigma Alpha Epsilon fraternity. While at Madison, he met his wife-to-be, Elizabeth Adams from Solon, Iowa. Ralph was smitten. He ended up staying one more year in school, both to get his MBA and to make sure he could stay close to Liz.

Ralph and Liz lived on the East Coast for a time, but when they wanted to start a family they moved back to the Midwest. They first lived on Otter Lake Road in White Bear Lake, where they had four children. Ralph worked in the finance department for 3M for many years. At one point 3M sent him to Italy to help with a new acquisition and the whole family packed up and lived in Milan. After a year abroad, he and Liz returned to the US and bought their house in Birchwood. Liz loved how much room the yard had for flowers and vegetables. Ralph loved benefitting from Liz's green thumb. The Ebbott yard has been the site of a neighborhood Birchwood picnic for many years.

For most of their married life, Ralph & Liz travelled all over the world, including a memorable trip to New Guinea in the 80's. Sadly, Liz passed away in 1998, but Ralph holds her memory dearly.

Ralph has continued to travel without Liz, and was able to visit Cuba last year with two of his children plus spouses. Ralph enjoys opera, bridge, church, family visitors, crossword puzzles, and cuddle time with his great-granddaughter.

\* This is a new column we'd like to employ. If you know of a neighbor you think we should profile in our next newsletter, please contact Mary Wingfield

**CHECK OUT THIS BIT OF NOSTALGIA**

We have free video cassettes of Birchwood History that is narrated by many of our prior residents. You might still hear those folks' names and wonder what their connection is with our community. Check out this video. It is a wonderful expression of what we are about. Please contact the city staff for your copy.

**MARIAN JOHNSON INDUCTED INTO**  
**GIRLS BASKETBALL HALL OF FAME**  
*by Judy Walker*

Our very own Marian Bemis Johnson of Birchwood was inducted into the Minnesota Girls Basketball Hall of Fame on April 8<sup>th</sup> at a ceremony at Carleton College in Northfield, Minnesota. Marian was honored for her many years of coaching women's basketball at Lakewood Community College, now Century College, and for her book, "Daughters of the Game" highlighting the story of girls' basketball in Minnesota, 1891-1942. The event was held in conjunction with the 2016-2017 Minnesota Girls All Star Games played at Carleton College that afternoon and featured 40 of the top players from across the State.

Marian's story-filled speech illustrated aspects of the history of Minnesota Girls Basketball. She investigated and unraveled the mystery of 'why' were there numerous, successful girls' teams before 1942 – and – none after that for the next four decades? Marian contacted people who had letters sent to school superintendents in the 1930's urging schools to drop girls basketball because a national organization said,

*"it would be better for girls to play just for fun and to avoid the stress of competition, cheering crowds and coaches and fans pressuring them beyond the limits of the female psyche and limited physical stamina."*

And the schools dropped the teams – for four decades!!.

Marian was honored as 'a courageous woman who left a legacy for female coaches, their schools and most important--the young women who are learning that they are important--that doors are open to them--and they can change the face of the world.'

**Trivia**

In the last newsletter it was noted that Marlys Oliver was the first woman mayor of Birchwood. Wrong. Lucy Tighe was. Her term was 1943-47. How progressive is that to have a woman at the helm 30 years before the 1970s Women's Movement? Thanks to Bill Trinka for this correction. "Aunt Lou" was Bill's great aunt. One more bit: Tighe-Schmitz Park was named for Lou and Clara Schmitz in the 1970s. Both dedicated themselves to Birchwood as volunteer servants for many years.

**MAXIMIZE YOUR RECYCLING**

- If you find that you need more space for your recyclables, Tennis Sanitation will super-size your bin at no charge. Please contact our city administrator with your request, so he can coordinate delivery.
- Don't forget that all metals, including steel and aluminum are recyclable. They need not be free of corrosion, but they should be free of other materials such as plastic.

**FREE CABLE TV!**

If you are not currently subscribing to cable, but you would like to view:

- local community events;
- governmental meetings;
- school district information;
- local and regional cable programming.

Subscribe to Universal PEG Service. For more information call 651-747-3801

You will receive installation (basic, less than 200 feet) and these channels free of charge:

- Ch. 16 - SCC Government
- Ch. 18 - SCC Global
- Ch. 19 - SCC Community
- Ch. 20 - Educational Access

Also, there is no ongoing monthly fee. An A/B switch is also provided at no charge so you can switch to your TV's over-the-air broadcast channels.

**MORE VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES**

The city council will be considering soliciting residents to help with organizing our city code at its next meeting. If this is an area that you would like to lend your time and effort, please contact the city administrator. Details will be determined by the council at one of its upcoming meetings.

The city also is looking for some folks who want to be involved with the city website. Those who have special techie knowledge with the ability to create easy-to-use layouts and formatting are encouraged to apply with a letter to the city administrator.

**SEEKING INPUT ON OFF LEASH DOG AREA**

*By Steve Schad*

Last December, the Council formed a new "Dog Park Committee" to make a recommendation to them on where and how a dog park might be created in Birchwood. We've been talking to neighbors and conducting research, and we are now ready to bring the whole community into our conversation.

There has been some buzz about this effort, and knowing how sensitive public space usage can be, we committed early to having extensive public input. We also realized early that just the term "dog park" had to be addressed. One of the committee's first activities has been to clarify and reset the vision, because no one wants a large, industrial dog park like Stillwater's in our town.

So how might it be different? First, the committee established principles to shape the potential creation of an off-leash dog exercise area. These include the following.

- A fenced area that is unobtrusive with low visual impact
- Uses natural materials that complement the character of our community
- Is designed and placed to minimize impact on neighbors and other users
- Maximizes safety for people and pets

So, where? We looked at and debated every possible place, and we've decided to get further input on two concepts, following the principles above. Those are the wooded area behind city hall and an unused area of Bloomquist park.

The next step is to have a dialog as a community before recommending a single area for pilot to the council. We invite the town to join us to hear more about why we chose these areas over others, to see detailed mockups of what is being proposed, and to discuss the pros and cons.

We'll call the public meeting at some date after the July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday. We'll also issue an online survey at around the same time for public comment. We hope you join your neighbors in the dialogue.

**M. JOHNSON ACROSS THE LAKE SWIM**

Join your fellow paddlers and enjoy a quiet morning swim across the lake from the Peninsula back to Birch Beach. Each paddler needs a paddle boat escort and extra life jacket on board. All are welcome! July 29 at 7 Am FFI and RSVP: Mary Wingfield at 651-653-1022 (cell)

## 6 BIRCHWOOD VILLAGE NEWS HELP STOP LAKE POLLUTION

The City of Birchwood Village asks your help to stop the discharge of illicit liquids and materials from entering the City's storm sewer system. Illicit discharges are generally any discharge not composed entirely of storm water; such as oil, paint, fertilizer, pet waste, car wash chemicals, and grass clippings. Storm sewer systems are not designed to handle anything other than storm water; everything dumped down the storm sewer eventually drains into lakes and streams. Illicit liquids and materials can kill important plants and animals and negatively impact the water quality.

Please take measures to keep the storm sewer system free from illicit discharge. If you see any unusual liquids or materials draining into a storm drain, ditch, stream, or lake, please call City Hall at [651-426-3403](tel:651-426-3403) or email [info@cityofbirchwood.com](mailto:info@cityofbirchwood.com). If it is after hours or on the weekend please call the Washington County Sheriff's department at 651-439-9381 or the 911 non-emergency hotline."

### MUSIC IN THE PARK - SUMMER 2017

For the seventh consecutive summer the City will be holding a *Music in the Park* concert series on Sunday evenings starting June 4<sup>th</sup> through August 27<sup>th</sup> (no concert July 2) at various locations throughout the community including Birch Beach, Dellwood Beach, and Tighe-Schmitz Park. These outdoor concerts are free of charge and open to the public. The concerts begin at 6:00 p.m. and end around 7:30. Bring your lawn chair and join your neighbors and friends for an evening of music and fun. Enjoy a picnic snack and a glass of wine (City Council has approved consumption of beer and wine during the concerts) and sit back and enjoy the music. In case of inclement weather, the concert will be moved inside the Village Hall.

The complete schedule is posted outside the Village Hall and is available on the city's webpage. Check the White Bear Press each week for the upcoming concert. Come and enjoy a pleasant evening of musical entertainment.

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**WHEW!** If you have read through this newsletter and got to this point, send us an email with your name and address. We will put your name in for a drawing at a later date for a **free jar of local honey**. We will add your email to our list for important happenings. This list is for internal use only and will not be provided to others.

## SUMMER 2017

### MAYOR'S NOTES:

At its March meeting the city council approved fixing the remaining 10% of the city's sewer pipes. There were 4-5 small areas around town that have not been improved. Areas include parts of White Pine Lane, Birchwood Courts, Oakridge Drive and Birchwood Avenue/Jay Street areas. Residents affected will be getting a letter from the city.

These repairs extend the life of the sewer pipes for another 50-100 years. As one council member noted, "These is no reason why we wouldn't fix the problem now."

There were three previous sewer lining projects done in 2004, 2006 and 2008 which resulted in assessments between \$1000, \$1100 and \$1500 respectively. It is estimated this year's assessment will be just over \$600 per household. Ordinarily, one would anticipate this piecemeal approach 10 years later would result in significantly higher costs. A major reason for the large cost reduction now is engineering expenses will be 90% less than before.

The excessive costs in 2008 were a large reason why I got involved in city politics again. In researching how other cities go about sewer lining projects, not one approached such projects on an assessment basis—which adds much administrative overhead. Further, experts in the industry advise cities to do as big an area as possible to avoid the cost of re-staging the repair equipment. There is an economy of scale involved.

Finally, this is a time and material project that needs only a moderate investment in our engineer's time. I am happy that our current engineer is giving us guidance in a thorough, economical manner. As a result, the last group of residents that will be assessed will actually be paying the lowest rate compared to three other groups previously assessed. This cost savings benefit is the mission I started in 2009 and continue today. I am proud of that success.

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### CONTACT INFORMATION:

Mayor Mary Wingfield 651-653-1022 [wingfield.mary@gmail.com](mailto:wingfield.mary@gmail.com)

Council members:

Randy LaFoy (Deputy Mayor) 651-429-9229 [rlofoy@gmail.com](mailto:rlofoy@gmail.com)

Kevin Woolstencroft 651-426-3718 [kevinshouse@access4less.net](mailto:kevinshouse@access4less.net)

Megan Malvey [malvey.birchwood@gmail.com](mailto:malvey.birchwood@gmail.com)

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