



THE BIRCHWOOD VOICE

Birchwood Lakes Community Association, Inc.
212 Aspen Road, Dingmans Ferry, PA 18328
(570) 828-2111 • www.Birchwoodlakes.net

Volume 4/ No. 5

BIRCHWOOD LAKES COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION, INC.

LATE SUMMER 2009

President's Message

by Chas Ritson

Well, I guess our June "monsoon" season has finally ended. Other than being extremely depressing to wake up to rain almost every day, the constant rain also impacted our ability to start and end our road projects and pothole repair as planned; but with good weather in July, you should see a significant improvement in our roads across the community. Also, look for our new tractor which is being used to rake the beaches and to cut the grass and weeds along our roads.

On July 9, I attended a meeting of the Alliance of Community Associations (AOCA). In May BLCA joined the Alliance as it's thirteenth charter member, which includes other local communities, such as Conoshaugh Lakes, Pocono Water Forest, Pocono Mountain Lake, Walker Lake, Marcel Lakes, Traces of Lattimore, Gold Key and others in the Lake Wallenpaupack area. The purpose of the Alliance is to promote information and policy sharing among the communities, develop a master vendor list for possible discount purchases of common materials, and to use the combined political voice of thirteen communities in any local, state or national issue that could impact

any or all of us. The group is still going through some initial organizational challenges, but I am confident that our membership will bring positive benefits to Birchwood. Current plans are to share information on dues/ assessments, rental properties, and voting protocols within each community. In terms of this past meeting, information was provided by AOCA's legislative expert that HR-350 was recently passed in the PA House that will provide for a study to be initiated on the number of private communities in each county/ township, the amount of taxes paid by their residents, the amount and condition of the infrastructure in these communities, and whether these communities should be allowed to access state money to improve infrastructure. While a study is a long way from receiving actual state dollars, it's a start in the right direction.

I'm going to end this message by mentioning the great community-wide turn-out that we had at the 2nd Annual LakeFest and Pool Party on July 5. Parking spaces were at a premium, the weather was great, and our lifeguards and volunteers from the Recreation and Lake Management Committees did a terrific job! Some highlights included:



Racers at Lakefest.

Photo by R. Kleban

* 11 entrants into the first ever Chili Cook-Off, which featured beef, chicken, venison and vegetarian type chili's, and which were quickly gob-

bled up at the end of the competition by many in the enthusiastic audience.

* Our first ever "apple bobbing" event that started out slowly until the kids got the hang of it. An old activity from long ago, but still fun!

* Our second annual pie-eating contest that featured blueberry and cherry pies. The event didn't draw as many kids as last year, but those that did participate had a great time, as judged by their blue and red faces. And, special thanks to the 4-5 adults

who also participated and who were willing to become kids again, at least for a few minutes.

* A large increase in "lake walkers" and canoe/ kayak participants as compared to last year.

* Thirteen local merchants donated gifts or gift certificates that were given away at the end of the event. Please look for the list of businesses elsewhere in this issue.

That's it for now. Have a great summer!

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Birchwood Lakes Community Association, Inc.
212 Aspen Road
Dingmans Ferry, PA 18328

Deadline for the Birchwood Lakes
newsletter is September 8.

2009 Board of Directors

President	Charles Ritson
Vice President	Louis Freeman
Secretary	Eileen Naturale
Treasurer	Caroline Martin
Directors	Clare Bennett Joanne McInerney Carolyn Martin John Meola Robert Nilsen

Standing Committees

BLCA Property Development	Chairperson-Charles Ritson Co-chairperson -Ann Marie Celentano
Finance, Budget, Contracts	Chairperson-Charles Ritson Co-chairperson-Marcella Livingston
Road Maintenance & Construction	Chairperson-Louis Freeman Co-chairperson-Robert Nilsen
By-Laws	Chairperson-Charles Ritson Co-chairperson-Nancy Halliday
Rules & Regulations	Chairperson- John Meola Co-chairperson- Carolyn Martin
Capital Projects	Chairperson-John Meola Co-chairperson-
Voting & Elections	Chairperson-Eileen Naturale Co-chairperson-
Appointed Committees	
BLCA Property	Chairperson-Robert Nilsen
Beautification Recreation	Chairperson-Eileen Naturale Co-chairperson-Joanne McInerney
Community Safety	Chairperson-Ann Marie Celentano Co-chairperson-Kathleen Stirrat
Lake Management	Chairperson-Charles Ritson Co-chairperson-Sheila Salmon
Community Affairs	Chairperson-Sheila Salmon Co-chairperson-Maria Moffa

Notes from the Community Manager

Bettye White Gross, CMCA, AMS

Summer activities are well underway as this edition goes to press. We welcomed a new Recreation Coordinator, Katy Robinson, to the staff. She has added some new activities to this year's schedule including three-on-three basketball, wiffle ball and kickball. Check the recreation calendar for dates and times. Many children are participating on the Birchwood Lakes swim team, now in its second year as an official BLCA recreation activity. Good luck to the team throughout the season. Contracted roadwork began in June as Wayco, Inc. worked on completing last year's roads, the reconstruction of Gumtree Lane and seal coating of Aspen Road and East Shore Drive. E.R. Linde will be reconstructing Red Pine Road and Spruce Drive. Please slow down, drive safely and heed posted signs.

Occasionally road survey work will reveal an encroachment on the Association's right of way. Remember the Association does

not permit encroachment of any Association property, which includes roads or right of ways, common area or any other location, which is BLCA property. To avoid the unnecessary inconvenience of having to relocate items, always verify your property lot lines before installing fences, planting trees or shrubs, etc. If you are currently encroaching on the Association's right of way, your cooperation in removing items immediately is appreciated.

The Board of Directors recently approved a part-time collections clerk to assist in the collection actions of the Association. Members are strongly encouraged to bring their accounts current to avoid any additional interest and/or collection fees. Bills for the Gypsy Moth Assessment have been mailed to all property owners with a due date of July 24. Members will also be receiving the SBA Loan Assessment bills in September 2009. This will be for the fourth year of the ten year assessment.

Members in good standing will be receiving information on the Annual Membership Meeting to be held August 22 at 9:30 a.m. in the clubhouse. Please review the information and exercise your right to vote on the issues.

Committee sign up sheets are

also included in the mailing material. Committees are an important part of our association operations. Committee members help keep our community vibrant. The association just wouldn't be what it is without our committees. They deserve our sincerest thanks. However, to be successful, our association needs to cultivate fresh ideas and encourage additional resident involvement in our committees; so, we'd like your help on one or more of our committees. Committees give the board a way to gather information, offer new ideas and opinions and provide a training ground for future board members. All committees are advisory to the board unless given specific decision-making authority by the board or governing documents. The board provides each committee with guidelines and objectives to help it succeed as a community resource. So, if you're thinking about running for the board and want to learn a little more about association operations first, or if you're interested in helping improve your community or just want to get out and meet neighbors, we would be thrilled to speak with you about our committees and how you might be able to help. Contact the BLCA Office at 570-828-2111 for more information.

Lakeview Lot FOR SALE on Mulberry Lane-

Has well/septic permit.
Asking \$27,000.

Call Charlie at
(973) 725-4378

with any questions.

BIRCHWOOD LAKES
COMMUNITY
ASSOCIATION, INC.
2009 SCHEDULE OF
OPEN BOARD
MEETINGS
Open Board Meetings
are held at the BLCA
Clubhouse

AUGUST 15 9:30 a.m.
AUGUST 22 9:30 a.m.
Annual Meeting

Let Delaware Township Inform you of local emergencies.

Delaware Township in partnership with Twenty First Communications has instituted a local notification system that will be able to send telephone notification to residences and businesses within Delaware Township impacted by, or in danger of being impacted by, an emergency or disaster. Register your phone numbers with us so we can add you to our Reverse 911 calling system.

Please contact us at:

570-828-2347



NEW BLCA BOARD MEMBERS: Carolyn Martin, Clare Bennett, Joanne McInerney & Louis Freeman.

Birchwood2008summary

	Tested	Standard or Guidance	# Exceeding	% Violates
Total Coliform	18	Absent	6	33%
E. Coli Positive	6	Absent	1	16% (e. coli positive)
Standard Plate Count	18	< 500 / ml	8	44%
pH	18	> 6.5	0 (< 6.5)	0%
pH	18	< 8.5	0 (> 8.5)	0%
Nitrate	18	≤ 10 mg/L	mg/L)	6%
Sulfate	18	≤ 250 mg/L	0	0
Copper	18	≤ 1.0 mg/L	0	0
Iron	18	≤ 0.3 mg/L	3	17%
Manganese	18	≤ 0.05 mg/L	10	56%
		≥ 160 mg/L	2	11%
Hardness	18	≤ 6 mg/L	3	17%
Sodium	18	≥ 20 mg/L *	11	61%
				6%
Sodium	18	≥ 250 mg/L *	0 mg/L) (1 at 115	(Above Normal and exceeds chloride limit of 250 mg/L)
Saturation Index	18	No standard	2	11 % (< -2.5)
Lead	18	≤ 0.005	1	6%
Arsenic	3	≤ 0.010	0	0

Well Water Outreach Seminar and Discount Testing Program

by Chas Ritson

On June 27, Professor Brian Oram from Wilkes University in Wilkes-Barre returned to Birchwood Lakes to discuss the importance of periodic testing of individual well water systems, to continue the discounted testing program initiated last year, and to share an overview of the data obtained from the eighteen participants from 2008 (see attached table). Highlights from the seminar and from the data accumulated last year are as follows:

A USGS survey found that 70% of private wells were contaminated, resulting in acute or chronic health concerns.

In general, there are no regulations related to well construction, placement or required testing. It is left to individual well owners to determine the safety of their water.

EPA sets the standards for water and divides the standards into two broad categories – primary and secondary.

Primary – limits levels of specific contaminants that can adversely affect your health. There are over 100 chemical and biological primary standards, including trace metals, disinfection agents and their by-products, radiological, microbiological and organic chemicals. Examples include arsenic, total coliforms, asbestos, copper, benzene and TCE.

Secondary – limits levels for cosmetic or aesthetic affects, such as taste, odor or color. Examples include aluminum, chloride, corrosives, fluoride, manganese, iron, pH, sulfate, zinc, and dissolved solids.

Based on the eighteen wells tested in 2008, the most common water quality issues in BLCA are:

Total coliforms, standard plate count, iron and manganese, corrosion related issues, discolored water – reddish to brown tint and staining, odors – sulfur, and nuisance bacteria, such as sulfur and iron.

It was stressed that remedial action to eliminate or reduce the effects of the problems found in BLCA wells, need not be expensive or complicated in nature, and many may in fact be resolved through changing to a sanitary well cap and/or disinfection of the well. All participants are given not only their results, but also an explanation of what the data means and an opportunity to ask questions about their



Well Water Program, Brian Oram.

individual well when Professor Oram returns for a Question & Answer session in either late August or early September.

While the two testing options at either \$50 or \$90 are not cheap, most of the participating members thought that the money was well spent, given the importance of their drinking water to their families' health and safety.

The Lake Management Committee plans to continue this program next year and hopes that additional members take advantage of it.

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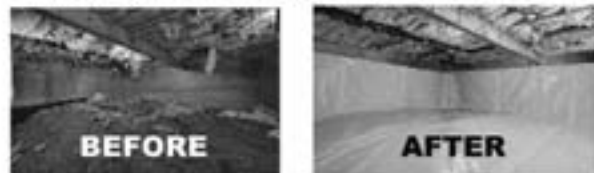
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Frances Roque, Winner Septic pump-out with.

On June 18, the Lake Management Committee hosted a Well/Septic Seminar at the Birchwood Lakes clubhouse.

Brian Oram from Wilkes University gave a presentation on the importance of

monitoring our wells and had a discount program for well water testing. The importance of having Wilkes University doing the testing is that besides the homeowner receiving the results, the University plots map where the community may have potential problems. His findings are described in the Well Water article in this issue.

Dennis Fox, from Allstate Septic gave a presentation on septic maintenance, especially on the older systems of tank and leech field. Once the older systems fail, the homeowner is looking at replacement costs of many thousands of dollars, and it would be a sand mound system.

Allstate Septic donated a free 1000-gallon pump out and Frances Rogue won this. They also have a discount program for Birchwood Lakes, \$200 for 1,000 thousand gallons, a larger tank is more expensive and they charge for any necessary digging. The number is 800-858-3111.

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Journal Newspapers is also the place to call to buy regional and national classified ad networks, reaching from 5 million to over 40 million homes.

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LAKEFEST/POOL PARTY – JULY 5

Photos by N. Halliday, R. Kleban, and S. Salmon



Boating on E. Lake.



Kyack race winner.



Pool party.



Chili tasters.



Judging the Chili-Cook-off.



Face painting.

Important Telephone Numbers

Police, Fire, Ambulance Emergency 911
Birchwood Lakes Office 828-2111
Birchwood Lakes Public Safety 828-6009
Vector Security Dispatch 1-800-222-6565, press option 1

Home Sales in Birchwood

During the months of February and March 2009, five homes were sold within Birchwood Lakes Community. Two homes sold for less than \$100,000; one home sold for between \$150,000 and \$200,000; and two homes sold for over \$200,000.

Welcome to the following members and their families: Astorino, Barie, Lutwama, Mvunga and Palma. We invite you to become an active part of the community.

LAKEFEST/POOL PARTY – JULY 5

Photos by N. Halliday, R. Kleban, and S. Salmon



Pie eating contest.



Pie eater.



The Askars - Get Your Raffle Tickets.

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Compost class.



Support our local businesses.



Learning about fishing.

Notes from the Gardener

by Sheila Salmon, Penn State Master Gardener Volunteer



Temporary netting.

Gardening in Deer Country

"I can't garden because the deer eat everything I plant," said a person looking at the native plant garden at East Lake. "How come these plants survive?" Gardening in Birchwood is a challenge, but one that is important to face because when the deer population destroys plants and shrubs the wildlife that depend on those plants also diminish. As their natural food sources disappear, so do beneficial insects, birds, and small mammals. When these creatures diminish or disappear, our whole environment suffers. We can do our part to keep the ecosystem healthy by encouraging plant life

in our backyards despite the difficulty. Here are some guidelines you can follow:

Plant varieties that aren't deer's favorite foods.

Surprising, as it may seem, there are some plants that deer stay away from. It's possible that they make take a bite or two to check them out, but on the whole, they leave them alone. Most of the plants in the East Lake garden fit the bill. Lists of deer resistant plants are available from the Pike County Cooperative Extension and on the Internet. Stay away from plants that are deer favorites such as hosta and tulips. I have posted suggested sites on our web site link page www.birchwoodlakes.net for good information on deer resistant

plants

Protect newly planted areas with deer deterrents or temporary fencing or netting.

To warn deer away from your plantings, spray a deer deterrent on the plants before or right after they go into the ground. You will have to reapply after a heavy rain. A temporary cover of netting will help also. This is particularly good to protect shrubs during the fall and winter months when food is scarcer. There are many commercial products you can find in nearby stores and garden centers.

Think about using grasses, sedge and ferns.

Although they don't have bright flowers, they have interesting shapes, color and seed heads that bring interest to your landscape. These types of plants are easy to maintain year after year. They spread and cover more area without any help from the gardener.

Fence an area.

If you want to have garden with a variety of plants that may not all be deer resistant, the only way to do that here is to fence in all or part of your property. Deer can jump high so a fence that is 10 feet high is recommended for the job. My own garden is fenced in



Deer resistant Hyssop.

front and on the sides, but open in the back to a lake. The deer are very happy to wade in or walk on the ice to get a tasty morsel, so I am resigned to some deer browsing, but I try not to stock their

favorite foods.

Gardening is a great hobby and an important environmental activity. Don't be discouraged. Find a way to make it part of our landscape.

AVAILABLE IN THE OFFICE

BLCA T-Shirts – For Sale

Children's Sizes S, M & L
(Beige & Navy Blue)

\$11

Adult's Sizes
S, M & L

(Beige, Light Blue & Navy Blue)

\$11

XL

\$13

XXL

\$15

BLCA Tote Bags

\$5



Change Your P.O. Address

Please help us help you. Many residents in Birchwood Lakes community still do not have "911" street signs on their house or in front of their property. When a call comes in requesting emergency assistance (ambulance, fire, police), it is difficult for the Association to offer assistance in leading the emergency volunteers to your home if it isn't clearly marked with the 911 address. Make sure your sign is visible from the road. If you need information on your 911 address, contact the BLCA Office at 570-828-2111. While we hope that you will never require emergency services, take a moment to help yourself and your loved ones just in case.

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Board Meeting Minutes

April and May, 2009

This is an abbreviated record of the minutes. A more complete copy may be obtained in the BLCA office.

April 11, 2009

Actions taken between meetings by polling all members;

Approved payment of bills by transferring money between accounts.

Actions approved at the meeting;

Write-offs totaling about \$100.

Reestablished a pool sub-committee

Requested attorney opinion to use SBA loan money for East Lake dam cap

Sell road grader
Appointed Clare Bennett to the Board

Accepted resignation of Maria Moffa

Three tree removal requests

Other discussions included: road bids, pricing of clubhouse surveillance system, request for clubhouse rental, payment pay requests, requests for inspection of corporate records and insurance renewals.

Actions taken by the Board between April 11 and May 8 meeting by polling all members:

Approved placing newspaper ads for road work

Voided agreement with Appletree Management Group

Approved insurance renewal package

Actions approved at the May 8 board meeting:

Write-offs of \$1,700

Appointed Carolyn Martin to the Board

Purchase of Kubota tractor-trailer.

Other discussions included: receipt of three road bids, request for corporate documents, and a petition signed by neighbors on Wisperwood regarding unsightly property.



A Match Made in Heaven by Roy Kohan

After coming to the realization that I had met my life's partner on our first date I decided to put her to the real test! On the following date I took her fishing. We arrived on the banks of a local trout stream at about noontime whereupon she promptly caught the first fish of the day. Unfortunately there were 6 other fishermen there who had been fishing all morning with no luck. One caustically advised her "women are

not allowed to fish on Sunday." Forty-six years later she continues to catch more fish than me, but I caught her!

So, you want to go fishing.....

But you don't know what kind of fish we have or what the size and daily limits are for keeping fish. To get you started, the Lake Management Committee has put together a table to tell you what you need to know. Please remember that although we are a private community, the state "owns" the

Permits

BLCA Rules and Regulations (Section 98-50-19), in accordance with the Association's Covenants and Restrictions, require members to obtain a BLCA permit prior to moving to, constructing, or erecting any structure or building within the community. There is no fee for obtaining the permit. Additionally, permits are needed for septic repairs and tree removals. For more information, contact the BLCA Office.

water in our lakes and therefore you will need a fishing license, either resident or non-resident, if you are age 16 or older. And lastly, fishing in East Birchwood Lake remains "catch and release" only this year.

Lakes Update by Chas Ritson

Several notable activities occurred in June and early July regarding our lakes:

A successful LakeFest 09 was held on July 5.

Over 300 six to nine inch large-mouth bass were stocked in East Birchwood Lake on June 20.

An initial spraying of Goose Stopper repellent was completed on Beach # 3 on Upper Birchwood Lake, but because of the heavy rain the trial spraying will be redone in July. In addition, once our "resident" goose population completes the ongoing molt of flight feathers, our harassment program using pyrotechnics will be restarted.

Discount Septic pump-out and Well Water testing programs/seminars were conducted on June 27.

Our aquatic plant control program began in June with the focus being the south end of the East Birchwood Lake and areas

around all docks. [Please remember that all of our lakes are multi-use (fishing, boating, and swimming), and as such there will be aquatic plants present in every lake, including some lily pads. Our contractor and the Lake Management Committee will be closely observing the lakes, but if you have a specific problem or issue, please contact the office.]

Several members have asked what those "brain-shaped" jelly or gelatinous objects are in the shallow areas of their lakes that appear to grow on or cling to submerged branches or vegetation. These are Bryozoa, Pectinella magnifica, an organism related to coral. The object is really a colony of individual organisms. They are sometimes called "moss animals" and usually only found where water quality is good. They are not harmful and should not be destroyed.

Member's address changes

If you were issued a new 911 mailing address and have not yet notified the office in writing, we ask you please do so. This will allow you to receive your mail from the Birchwood Lakes Office and to prevent any problems that may develop in the next few months.

CHANGE OF MAILING ADDRESS FORM

I, _____ have an address change.

Please change my address to

Lot(s) _____ Block _____

Section _____ Date: _____

No phone changes will be accepted. You can either mail the form, hand deliver it to the BLCA Office or drop it off in the mailbox by the BLCA Office front door. The Office will not change your address without written notification.

BLCA Curfew

BLCA has a curfew of 10 p.m. Sunday through Thursday and 11 p.m. Friday and Saturday.

As a courtesy to all members, please observe the curfew hours.

SPECIES	SEASON	MINIMUM SIZE	DAILY LIMIT
Largemouth Bass	1/1-4/17/09 And 11/1-12/31/09	15 inches	4
	4/18-6/12/09	Catch & Release only	No Harvest
	6/13-10/31/09	12 inches	6

Chain Pickerel	Open Year-Round	18 inches	4

Sunfish, Yellow Perch, Black Crappie, Rock Bass, and Brown Bull- Head Catfish	Open Year-Round	No Minimum	50 Combined



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Cover Letters Help Candidates Get Interviews by Linda Tancs

In today's fast-paced environment, it's often tempting to forego a cover letter as part of the job application process, particularly if its submission is optional. However, a well crafted cover letter gives you an additional opportunity to highlight and sell your skills and experiences to an employer or recruiter, provided you follow some basic guidelines.

First, recognize that a cover letter is a marketing tool—in other words, don't treat it like a form letter. In some instances, an employer may choose to read a cover letter first to get an overall sense of your background, writing style, or personal characteristics. Accordingly, make sure you prepare a letter that reflects how your background and experiences match the needs of that particular employer in an engaging manner. To do that, think of your letter in three parts: the opening hook, a needs analysis, and a call to action.

A good opening has greater potential to catch the reader's interest. Often referred to as the "hook," it should immediately explain why you are the best candidate for the position.

Therefore, avoid such common openings as "I am writing in response to your advertisement for a manager of financial services." Instead, lead with a compelling example of your performance that is related to a key element of the position. Consider the difference between the above example and a sentence such as "Improving cash flow by \$500,000 per month through a reorganization of accounting and collections functions illustrates my commitment to achieving operating efficiencies and highlights my qualifications to serve as your next manager of financial services." Keep the paragraph short; a strong hook (and perhaps some background information on where you saw the advertisement) is enough for this

first paragraph.

Following the hook are two or three paragraphs explaining how your skills relate to the job. However, be careful not to simply repeat the information that is in your résumé. Your cover letter should focus on connecting key achievements highlighted in your résumé to the needs of your potential employer, using strong action verbs whenever possible. Highlight these achievements using bullet points to draw out particular successes that are quantifiable in terms of dollars, a percentage increase in productivity or some other measure. These points should also address the underlying challenge that led to the result. Using bullet points helps the writer avoid excessive use of "I" in the narrative of the

letter, which can make the candidate appear self-centered if over-used.

After drawing attention to relevant achievements, create a compelling closing, or call to action. Any sales professional will tell you that the key to closing the sale is to ask for the business. Be enthusiastic and eager to be an asset to the company. Either ask for an appointment or call at a time stated in your letter, followed by an expression of thanks for the reader's consideration.

Linda Tancs, J.D. is a personal, organizational and executive coach dealing in career management and transition, workplace issues, work/life balance and entrepreneurial challenges. She has a specialty practice coaching legal professionals. Learn more at www.latancs.com and www.jurismart.com.

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Carolyn's Recipe Recommendations

I love to cook and collect cooking books and magazines. I have always loved the kitchen. Since we are busy people, I use simple recipes. Please try them and enjoy the results.

People are surprised by this salad. Once you try it, I'm sure you will keep using it.

I got this recipe from a friend in Birchwood Lakes, Caroline Heiselman.

STRAWBERRY SPINACH SALAD

Dressing

1-cup mayonnaise

¼ cup sugar

¼ cup raspberry vinegar

Mix above in a jar with a cap. Sugar has to melt. Refrigerate

Salad, use portions you need. Mix in a salad bowl,

Baby spinach

Strawberries

Red onion chopped

Pour dressing over salad just before serving.

BCLA Lakefest/Pool Party on July 5 featured a Chili Cook-Off. This is the winning recipe prepared by Nancy Halliday.

CHILI

1-pound ground beef

1 large onion, chopped

1 green pepper, chopped

1 large can red kidney beans

1 can black beans, drained and rinsed

1 can (16oz) stewed tomatoes

1 can (16oz) tomato sauce

2 cups of water

(1 may be enough, depends on how thick you like it)

1 can (small) chopped green chilies, or 1 fresh

¼-cup chili powder (approximately or to taste)

2 tablespoons cumin pepper (approximately or to taste)

¼ teaspoon black pepper

Brown chopped meat and drain fat, add rest of ingredients and simmer for 1 hour. Serve with rice, crushed saltines, raw chopped onion, shredded cheese or sour cream.

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