



THE BIRCHWOOD VOICE

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

Volume 5/ No. 1

BIRCHWOOD LAKES COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION, INC.

WINTER 2010

President's Message

by Chas Ritson

Winter is upon us. The maintenance crew has been doing a good job in ensuring that the roads have been plowed and salted. We are fortunate that the freezing rain and ice storms of the past few years have not materialized so far, and while there have been some complaints, maintenance has worked hard and it shows. I'd also like to compliment the office staff for their efficient handling of the voting packet that you received that gives members the opportunity to vote on the "no increase" 2010/2011 Budget and the 2010 Reserve projects recommended by the Board

A brief update on Board, Committees, and Community Manager's projects:

Members of the Capital Projects Committee met with the Township Planning Commission and the interim Zoning Officer to informally discuss three outstanding projects (pool, maintenance building/ salt shed, and office). All are considered non-conforming/ pre-existing structures that can be increased up to 50% in size without changing their status.

A structural engineering inspection has been completed of the office, the salt shed and maintenance building. Bottom-line results indicate that the office may be salvageable, depending upon the overall cost of repairs; the salt shed must be replaced as soon as this winter season is over; and the maintenance building, while salvageable, is not functional other

than as an office/ light storage facility and will likely not be functional, even if expanded by 50%.

The Board has requested that the Community Manager immediately begin a search for engineering and attorney candidates to develop plans and to obtain approval from the Township to enlarge the pool by approx 15 ft. The required permits, selection of contractors, etc must be in place by Labor Day so that construction can be completed by the next swimming season in 2011.

The Board has approved moving forward with Lot Improving the end two lots with the three center lots at the maintenance yard, so that we will have a single lot that gives us more flexibility for placement of a new, larger salt shed and maintenance building, and the installation of a septic system. In addition, preliminary research has started on the new salt shed ("cover-all" type) and a metal/ pole barn type maintenance facility that would be used to repair and house our vehicles. As referenced above, the replacement of the salt shed is a priority

The Board has approved a survey of the 739 entrance behind the old mailbox area to determine whether a new office could be constructed in this area. If found to be feasible, the Board would then look into whether the current office site could be sold and the money used to pay for the new building; if not feasible, cost estimates to repair the existing office



Here comes Santa Claus!

More photos on pages 4 and 5.

would be pursued, as well as proposals to construct a new stick-built or modular building. Final plans, as well as approval for Reserve money, would be targeted for 2011.

The Board has agreed to move forward on the Labyrinth design and the walking path option for the Upper Birchwood Lake/ Crossing Road spillway plan. A letter has been sent to PADEP Dam Safety of our intentions.

The Community Affairs Committee has been asked to have proposals for new BLCA entrance signs ready for Board review as soon as possible, so that these signs can be installed by late spring for Lancet, Wisperwood, Church and Silver Lake entrances.

The Recreation Committee is in the final stages of determining

which new playground equipment supplier will be recommended to the Board for installation at the pool area.

The road assessment portion of the Cornerstone Road & Drainage study has been completed, but the drainage/ culvert portion has been delayed till March/April because of weather conditions. The Roads Committee will use this study to determine which roads and drainage areas will be part of the 2010 program.

The Board has forwarded a draft of a Code of Conduct & Ethics Policy to the By-Laws Committee for review, as well as a request to develop a Disclosure Statement. If approved by the Board and subsequently by the membership as new By-Laws requirements, all Directors will be required to sign these documents at the beginning of each new Board term.

The Board has offered \$25 per lot to the County for 11 properties under the Repository Sale program. If approved by the County and the Township, these lots will be green-belted and go into common land.

Upon completing the 2010/2011 Budget and 2010 Reserve Vote for Board and membership consideration, the Budget & Finance Committee is developing plans to implement the Reserve Study completed in 2009.

A new three year public safety contract (with 30 day out) was signed with Vector Security.

Our Amnesty and civil complaint programs are moving ahead. Delinquent members are urged to contact the office to discuss possible payment options.

A monthly and annual member complaint system has been started to assist the Community Manager and the Board in tracking the status of individual complaints and determining trends/ possible remedial action.

All in all, our volunteers are expending a lot of energy and creativity, and that is not the total list by any means. If you would like to get involved in any of these projects and committees that are doing this very worthwhile work for the community, please call the office.

Have a safe and healthy winter season.

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Deadline for the Birchwood Lakes newsletter is March 8.

2010 Board of Directors

Officers

President:	Charles Ritson
Vice President:	Louis Freeman
Treasurer:	Marcella Livingston
Secretary:	Clare Bennett

Committee Chairs and Co-Chairs

Standing Committees:

BLCA Property Development:	Chairperson: Ann Marie Celantano Co-Chair: Charles Ritson
Roads Maintenance & Construction:	Chairperson: Louis Freeman Co-Chair:
Rules & Regulations:	Chairperson: John Meola Co-Chair: Carolyn Martin
Finance, Budget, Contracts:	Chairperson: Carolyn Martin Co-Chair: Charles Ritson
By-Laws:	Chairperson: Clare Bennett Co-Chair: Joanne McNerney
Capital Projects:	Chairperson: Charles Ritson Co-Chair: JoAnn Woods
Voting & Elections:	Chairperson: Clare Bennett Co-Chair: Carolyn Martin

Appointed Committees:

BLCA Property Beautification:	Chairperson: Marcella Livingston Co-Chair: JoAnn Woods
Community Safety:	Chairperson: Ann Marie Celantano Co-Chair: Kathleen Stirrat
Community Affairs:	Chairperson: Sheila Salmon Co-Chair: Clare Bennett
Recreation:	Chairperson: Joanne McNerney Co-Chair: Shannon Cancelleri
Lake Management:	Chairperson: Charles Ritson Co-Chair: Sheila Salmon

Notes from the Community Manager

Bettye White Gross, CMCA, AMS

We have all heard and maybe even used the expression "time flies." Twenty years have flown by since Sherri Gonzalez, the Birchwood Lakes' Office Manager, first began working for the Association. Many members of the community know Sherri and of the years of service she has provided. On behalf of the staff, past and present, that have had the opportunity to work with her, our congratulations and many thanks for the years of service are extended to her.

With the passage of time, staff begins their work preparing for the completion of the 2009/2010 fiscal year and beginning of the 2010/2011 fiscal year. Several items to keep in mind over the next few months include remembering to bring your accounts current to avoid the \$50 annual late fee added to delinquent accounts on April 1; the amended Lot Improvement Program imposes a \$50 surcharge on adjacent properties not paid in full as of April 30; and 2010/2011 annual dues statements will be mailed in March 2010. If you do not receive your statement in March, contact the BLCA Office. The early payment discount and payment plan request information is included with the annual dues statement mailing and both have time sensitive deadlines. When planning to make your payments, remember the BLCA Office cannot accept cash payments over \$100 and we do not accept credit cards.

We are also asking for your help in updating our member records. Enclosed with the annual dues mailing, you will find an Owner

Information Form. Please complete the form and return it to the BLCA Office as soon as possible. This will help us in keeping your information current. Responding promptly will also help reduce your wait time at the office window when making payments and/or picking up badges.

During periods of "spring thaw," we strongly encourage you to clean up any untidy items that may have accumulated during the winter months or been covered under snowfall. Public Safety will be touring the community looking for compliance with the Association's rule regarding untidy properties and abandoned vehicles. Being proactive by maintaining your property in a neat condition, obtaining a "vehicle storage permit" if applicable and

removing abandoned vehicles can eliminate the issuance of citations for untidy property or abandoned vehicles observed during these community inspections.

If you have your septic system inspected or pumped out during 2010, please provide a copy of the receipt to the BLCA Office. This will help us with the implementation of the newly adopted septic tank maintenance rule and eliminate unnecessary paperwork for both you and the office staff.

I hope your winter has been gentle and 2010 has been kind on you and your family. Make an effort to attend at least one community function this year, vote each time your community asks you to and stay informed on the Association activities. It's your community. Be a part of it.

LOST ITEMS

Several 911 signs are at the maintenance shop. Call the office if you have lost one.

Tennis Court Usage

Tennis courts, located opposite the Clubhouse, are available for use by members in good standing and their guests. A key to access the courts may be obtained at the BLCA Office and requires a \$5 deposit. Badges should be displayed when utilizing the facilities.

Lakeview Lot FOR SALE on Mulberry Lane-

Has well/septic permit.
Asking \$27,000.
Call Charlie at
(973) 725-4378
with any questions.

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.

BIRCHWOOD LAKES COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION, INC. 2010 SCHEDULE OF OPEN BOARD MEETINGS

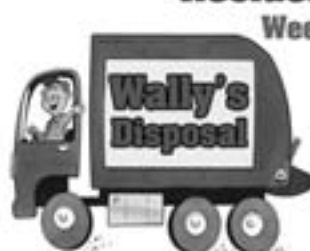
Open Board Meetings are held at the BLCA Clubhouse
Friday, February 12 @ 7 p.m.;
Snowdate - Tuesday, February 16 @ 7 p.m.
Saturday, March 13 @ 9 a.m.
Saturday, April 10 @ 9 a.m.
Friday, May 14 @ 7 p.m.
Friday, June 11 @ 7 p.m.
Saturday, July 10 @ 9 a.m.
Tuesday, August 10 @ 7 p.m.

Annual Meeting: Saturday, August 21 @ 9 a.m.

Notes: Snowdates have been added to the calendar, all being Tuesday nights at 7 p.m.

August Open Board Meeting will be on a Tuesday night at 7 p.m.

Residential Garbage Removal



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(unable to accept large bulk items, ex. fridges, couches etc.)

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

Looking for information on Birchwood Lakes?
Don't forget to check out the Association's
website at www.birchwoodlakes.net.

Board of Directors

Adapted from Community Association Institute

From time to time you may hear that the board of the association operates in a fiduciary capacity for the property owners. Or you may read about the board's fiduciary responsibility in the governing documents. Just exactly what does this mean?

Fiduciary duty simply means the board has an ethical and legal obligation to make decisions in the best interests of the entire association. That's a small explanation for a very big responsibility.

Fiduciary duty includes a duty of loyalty to the association, which means that board members should never use their position to

take advantage of the association. They should never make decisions for the association that benefit themselves at the expense of the association and its members.

Fiduciary duty also includes the duty to exercise ordinary care. This means board members must perform their duties in good faith and in a manner they believe to be in the best interest of the association, with such care as an ordinary prudent person in a similar position under similar circumstances would use.

In short, boards must act in the best interests of the association and act reasonably.

Members of our community association board have a big responsibility, and they have the legal authority to carry out their roles. Where do they get this authority?

First, most states have statutes—such as a condominium act or homeowner association act—that legally empower elected volunteer community association boards to act on behalf of all owners collectively. Also, our association is subject to the state's nonprofit corporation code, which confers on the board the authority to act on the corporation's behalf.

Second, the association's governing documents—such as the declaration; bylaws; and covenants, conditions and restrictions—which are recognized by the state as binding documents, bestow legal authority on the board and define the scope of that authority.

Being a board member can be frustrating at times, but it may also be one of the most rewarding ways you'll find to volunteer your time. If you're interested in running for the board or would like more details about board's responsibilities, please contact the BLCA Office.

Amnesty

Program Vote

A special meeting was held on September 5, 2009 to announce the results of votes on the Amnesty Program and By-Laws Lot Improvement Program.

There were a total of 220 votes, 193 with valid signatures.

Amnesty Program: 164 Yes, 27 No, 2 Void

Lot Improvement Program By-Law Change: 166 Yes, 25 No, 2 Void

PUBLIC SAFETY REPORT

	Citations
October 2009	22
November 2009	13
Abandoned Vehicle	1
Animal Noise	1
Careless Driving	1
Clear Cutting	1
Common Area Restriction	1
Dumping	1
Excessive Vehicle Noise	1
Failure to Report Accident	1
Fireworks	1
Harassing Public Safety	2
Parking	2
Renters Public Insurance	1
Resale Certificates	1
Speeding	8
Stop and Traffic Control Signs	7
Trespassing	1
Untidy Property	3
Wrong Direction of Road	1
	Radar
October 2009	13.25 Hours
November 2009	10 Hours
	Patrol Miles
October 2009	1994 miles
November 2009	1720 miles

Community Notes

All property owners are hereby put on notice that the Association has a right of way on each roadway. Any personal property placed in the Association's right of way is not the Association's responsibility and the Association will not be held responsible for any damages incurred to said personal property. All property owners are to refrain from placing personal property within the Association's right of way. 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.



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Are Our Rules Reasonable?

Adapted from Community Association Institute

The association has a number of rules and regulations that we ask you to observe so we can all maintain our property values and quality of life. In developing and enforcing rules, the Association makes every effort to enforce rules uniformly, taking into account the consequences. All our rules are based on proper authority—either our governing documents or state or local law.

We don't make rules to limit your activities. We're trying to ensure that each resident can enjoy the community free from the disruptive or harmful behavior of others. If you have any questions regarding the rules and regulations, contact the BLCA Office. If you are a new member or a long-time resident, contact the BLCA Office to obtain a set of the rules and regulations if needed. We would rather assist you in understanding and complying with the Association's rules before a citation is issued for a violation.

The Board of Directors recently adopted a new septic tank maintenance rule requiring every homeowner to have their septic system inspected or pumped out every five years. If you have not yet reviewed this rule, contact the BLCA Office for a copy or the rule may be viewed on the Association website at www.birchwoodlakes.net.

Maintenance Report

Littering is terrible and doing it in the culverts, swales and ditches is even worse. It could be dangerous, Clogged culverts mean wash outs and flooding your driveway, roads and homes are at risk of damage.

We remove everything from cups and pizza boxes to bikes, skateboards and even recently a TV and microwave.

Please help us by not letting anything wind up in the culverts and ditches and reporting anyone or anything being dumped into them to the office.

Thank you so much.
BLCA Maintenance
Jim Silverman

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WWW.BIRCHWOODLAKES.NET**

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SANTA'S BREAKFAST ACTIVITY - DECEMBER 14

Photographs by Nancy Halliday



1.



4.



2.

- 1. Lining up for Santa.
- 2. Brothers
- 3. Gifts
- 4. Santas in Pink
- 5. Sitting on Santa
- 6. What's he saying?



5.



3.



6.

SANTA'S BREAKFAST ACTIVITY - DECEMBER 14

Photographs by Nancy Halliday



- 1. Speaking to Santa
- 2. Santa's helpers.
- 3. Chief Cook
- 4. Time for art!
- 5. Enjoying breakfast.
- 6. Little Santa



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Notes from the Gardener

by Sheila Salmon, Penn State Master Gardener Volunteer

ABC's for New Gardeners

Do you want to start a garden project this spring? Now is the time to start planning for it. This article will describe the steps that are necessary to create a successful garden.

A. FIRST STEP

Decide what your goal is. Think about how much time you have to

work on a garden, who you have to help, how much you want to spend and your physical condition. You may want to start with a very small goal. When it is successful you can enlarge your project. If you are too ambitious you may not be able to everything you want, but if you start small, you can always enlarge next season. The list below may give you some ideas.

Garden Projects

- Brighten up an area around your house. Colorful blooms make a pretty picture that brings enjoyment to you and your visitors.
- Create an edible garden. With today's emphasis on healthful, local food, freshly picked herbs or vegetables fit the bill.
- If your house faces a lake or stream, create a border that will filter out chemicals and other impurities from entering the water.
- Attract birds and butterflies to your home, without using bird feeders that also attract the bears.
- Eliminate the work and expense of keeping a lawn and have a display

of ground covers, shrubs, and plants, instead.

- Plant for fragrance. Many plants have sweet smelling blooms that delight the senses.

- Go native. Add native plants to your garden. They take less care, water and fertilizer after they are established and they are a source of food and shelter for many species of beneficial insects, birds, and butterflies.

- Hanging plants, or plants in pots for easy, attractive accents.

B. SECOND STEP

Pick a location. Gardens can be on decks, in the ground, in planters, or in raised beds. Gardening in our area, where deer are ever present is a challenge and unless you plan to fence an area or plant a small variety of deer resistant plants, you are likely to be disappointed by their behavior. An inexpensive fence made of stakes and deer netting can be a satisfactory way of protecting a garden area in the ground or in raised beds.

Gardening on a deck requires planters of various sizes and/or hooks for hanging plants and is less likely to be destroyed by deer. An important factor in selecting a location is that it is of a size that you can handle with the help (or lack of help) that is avail-

able.

C. THIRD STEP

Research. The secret of successful gardening is planting the right plant in the right place. Plants need certain ingredients to thrive: light, moisture, and soil. All plants do not need the same amount of these ingredients. Some like full sunlight, some like shade, some need partial sun. Some plants need lots of water, others need less. Some plants need rich soil; others do well in poor soil. The trick is to know which plants need what. That's what research will tell you.

Determine what your planting conditions are. Is your project area in the sun, shade, or a combination? If you're planting in the ground, is the ground generally moist or dry. You'll need a soil analysis to determine if

your soil needs additional nutrients for the plants you want to grow. You can get an inexpensive soil testing kit from the Pike County Cooperative Extension in Milford with instructions on how to take a soil sample when the ground has thawed. Contact them at <http://.pikeextension.psu.edu> or call at 570-296-3400 for information. The Extension Office will also have a wealth of information on gardening and also has a gardening hotline during the spring, summer and fall months for questions.

After you have completed these ABC's you are well on your way to planning a successful garden project. In the next issue, I will discuss planting, maintenance of the plants and suggest some plants that grow well in our area.

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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.

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



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