

THE BIRCH LOG

March 2005

WWW.BIRCHWOODLAKES.ORG

WHERE THE HECK ARE WE?

If you are like me, you may look out your back window or drive along Jackson road and ask yourself, when is this going to be over? When will we finally have water back to cover up all this mud? When will things return to normal? You must be wondering where the heck we are in the process.

I will try to tell you what I know, add some opinions, and make a guess at some of the rest.

The club officers and directors seem to have a priority to repair the dams first. While cleaning the lake bottom is a very close second, having a clean lake bottom does not help if there is no lake. We may be able to repair the dams with low interest loans, but loans will not help if we cannot make the payments. The loans will vary from 20 years to 40 years in length. The loan charges vary from approximately 2.2 % to 4.5 %. If we take this route, the payments must be made through our voluntary dues structure because of our inability to assess residents. All of the applications for loans will require a co-signature by the Township. The Township has expressed a willingness to sign for us if our community can agree on a realistic repayment plan.

The Club has selected an engineering firm, McCormick Taylor, to guide us on the dam repair project. It was a good pick, in my view, and was unanimously approved by both the Engineering Selection Committee and the BLCC Board. The total costs for the dam engineering work will probably be around \$185,000. This work will be necessary to establish the actual repair or construction costs

The construction estimates are highly dependent on the results of the engineering process (H & H studies, etc). The initial estimates are between \$600,000 and \$900,000 for both dams. I know everyone will be

happy if the cost is less. Do not get angry if they are more. This is a little like doing renovations around the house; you never know what you will find until after the project begins. If we receive any grant assistance, our actual costs and therefore loan amounts will go down. Let us all keep our fingers crossed!

REGULAR MONTHLY MEETING

Monday, March 14th @ 7:30 PM

At the Clubhouse

The Birchwood Lakes Officers and Directors will be addressing the issues affecting our community. Members are encouraged to attend. The Officers and Directors will be making decisions for you. Why not express your ideas? For detailed info on the meeting format and future meeting dates, go to our website and click on "Board Meetings".

Nonmembers who wish to join the Birchwood Lakes Colony Club are encouraged to come to the meeting. Their application will be taken at the meeting.

Lake restoration is another issue. I believe we will need a lot of help financially for this project. The Lakes Committee is taking the lead and is beginning the process of arranging for the test borings necessary to determine the nature, composition, and amount of the material to be removed from the lake bottom. Mike Maher and Tom Andreacci have taken on a Big Job and they need help! Once that information is gathered, the work can be quantified for

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2005 OFFICERS & DIRECTORS

President	John Cirenza	953-8912
Treasurer	Vivian Heiler	654-5507
Secretary	Sandy Scott	953-5640
V.P. Finance	Tom Jenkins	654-0786
V.P. Lakes	Mike Maher	654-4760
V.P. Property	Bill Brown	654-6303
V.P. Recreation	Michelle Swift	654-6268
Financial Sect.	Jim Whipple	953-1937

Directors

Tom Andreacci	11/2007	654-7922
Chris Bradley	11/2007	654-2567
Carol Kontos-Cohen	11/2007	714-2203
Christina Fennimore	11/2006	654-5292
John Rothwell	11/2005	654-4678
Joe Russomanno	11/2005	654-1991
Kevin Wall	11/2006	654-6431

Committees

	Clubhouse	
Chairperson	Valerie Wall	654-6431
	Sandy Scott	Kevin Wall
	Lakes Restoration	
Chairperson	Tom Andreacci	654-7922
	Membership	
Chairperson	Patty Yulick	953-2734
	Communications	
	Website	
Webmaster	Al Homann	953-3222
	The Birch Log	
Editor	Al Homann	953-3222
	Birch Log Distribution	
NW Lakeside Dr	Bill Bielec	654-1761
SW Lakeside Dr	Joe Zurzolo	953-2734
Upper Lake	Sandy Scott	953-5640

The Birchwood Lakes Colony Club

PO Box 382 Medford, NJ 08055
WWW.BIRCHWOODLAKES.ORG

FEBRUARY 14TH MEETING HIGHLIGHTS

Property Report: Bill Brown informed us that **Spring Ed Eck Day will be Saturday, May 14th.**

Plan to be there. Mark your calendars now! Lots of good, entry level jobs available. Make connections. You never know, maybe at the Fall Ed Eck Day you'll be promoted.

The alarm system in the Clubhouse is back up and running. The Clubhouse is better than ever and Kevin Wall is soliciting rentals for Spring and Summer use of the Clubhouse. Are you having an affair? Why not have it at the Clubhouse?

VP of Finance confirms that our books have been audited and our first ever tax return has been filed. Budgets will be distributed at the March meeting.

Looking for your pot of Gold?

You may find it at
BLCC's St. Patty's Day party!



Friday, March 18th

Pot Luck Dinner (the luck of the Irish),
BYOB and \$10.00 cash.

Let Liz Bielecki know you're coming, 654-2662

Easter Party

Friday, March 25th

Flyers will be coming soon.

Watch your mailbox

(P.S. Watched mail boxes never get mail)

The Birch Log is published just prior to each monthly meeting and before any special meeting. Materials for the newsletter should be received 12 days before the meeting. Meetings are held on the 2nd Monday of each month, at 7:30 PM, in the Clubhouse. Material may be faxed to 609-953-8429 but the preferred method is by e-mail to AHomann@aol.com. Your e-mail will be acknowledged within 48 hours. If you receive no acknowledgement, call 609-953-3222.

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contractor bid preparation and costs can be established. If the material is relatively harmless, it may go to a local site. If it is composed of regulated materials of a certain concentration, it will have to be transported to other more appropriate (and more expensive) facilities. It is easy to figure out which scenario we should be hoping for. In any case, we have made applications for Federal and State grants (not loans) and are awaiting decisions from FEMA and New Jersey State. Some members of the BLCC board have discussed other options, but grants will help us do the necessary things much more quickly. Lawsuits and tax assessment plans are years and maybe decades away from a financial solution. Maybe it will help if we cross our legs too!

While I do not have a crystal ball, based on the opinion of our engineering firm, I believe if things fall right for us, we might have near normal water levels back by this time next year or sooner (spring 2006.) That is the best guess right now. By comparison, the Medford Lakes plan calls for their dam rebuilding projects to be completed in 2008, according to some newspaper articles.

As the board has said before, no one is looking forward to a dues increase. Any decision to raise dues will need to be voted on and approved by the membership. Our committees will present costs for dam repair and lake bottom cleaning. At that point, the membership will decide on any loans to be assumed.

Our project has received initial approval for consideration of the USDA remediation program. The application has been submitted and offers loans of 30 or 40 years at 4.5%. This loan program can be used for dam repair and lake bottom cleaning. Any other monies provided through the State DEP Dam Safety division can be included in this application. Currently this is the only loan money available for lake bottom cleaning. Much more to follow.

Last week members of the Lakes Committee met with the USDA and our new engineer. It is our understanding that BLCC is the only community to

take advantage of the changes in the law governing rural areas.

The Township, through Alan Feit's office, has been extremely helpful and has not said no to even our smallest request. The Fire Department has pitched in with a letter of support as has the Board of Elections. Martha Bark's office has helped establish contacts with the State. Jim Saxton's office made a shoe string catch after a filing error (not ours) caused our initial FEMA application to be denied. He arranged a personal meeting for us (he attended) which resulted in a 'Fresh Application Period.' We have residents who are human resource professionals and lawyers who are volunteering to help! A lot of people are stepping up.

There is no new information regarding the lawsuits. Our attorney has been contacted by a plaintiff's attorney about getting the New Jersey Legislature involved in a global settlement for the lawsuits. Who knows where that effort will go?

I know that when we all look back on this in the future, we will marvel at what has been accomplished by a small group of unpaid volunteers. I have been told by people in authority, that Birchwood Lakes "has it together," and that we are doing a better job of this than most of the other larger, more connected, and better funded effected parties. I have always been proud of living in Birchwood Lakes, but never more so than now. I remain optimistic about the final solutions to our problems; I hope you will be too.

I am reminded of that old television series "The Six Million Dollar Man." The promo would say something like; "we will rebuild him better and stronger than before." Ironically, while the results will be very similar, the final costs should not be the same.

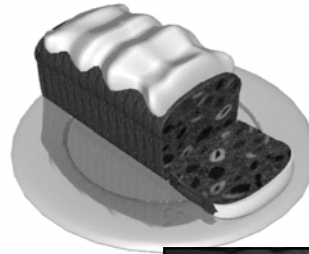
Stay tuned.

Tom Jenkins

Victoria's Bakery Presents Easter Cakes and Cookies

Cakes

	Price
Egg Shaped Cake, Small, Half	\$4.00
Egg Shaped Cake, Large, Half	\$10.00
Egg Shaped Cake, Large, Whole	\$12.00



Cookies

Spring Flower Cookies (3 doz.)	\$6.00
Chocolate Mints (3 or 4 dozen)	\$5.00-6.00
Orange Blossoms (2 dozen)	\$4.50



Descriptions

Small half egg- can be eaten in 3-4
 Large half - will feed 6-8 people
 Large whole- will feed 8-12 people

All cakes are made from a pound cake with butter and cream cheese.
 The cakes are then dipped in chocolate ganache and decorated with buttercream. The flowers are made from meringue and chocolate.
 The large cakes will say "Happy Easter" unless otherwise specified
 The small cakes can be personalized with the recipient's name.

Cookies

Chocolate Mints are similar to the girl scouts' thin mints.
 Orange blossoms are butter-colored topped cookies with orange-flecked icing.
 Spring Flower cookies- rolled and shaped cookies decorate with colored-sugar.

Call in your order to **Victoria Cooper at 953 4075 or email me at tebiri@comcast.net. Please make checks payable to Victoria Cooper.**
 Please leave a phone number so if I have any questions about your order I can get in touch with you.

A portion of proceeds will be donated to the cost of repairing the dam on the Upper Lake.

Since Easter is early, March 27, the last day to order is March 15, Tuesday.

You can pick up your order between Thursday, March 24 and Saturday, March 26 at 26 Cherry Street, in Medford Village, Thursday, Friday and Saturday. Thank you!

Secretarial Help Wanted

Seeking light secretarial help—typing,
 packing books for shipment
 Dan Benor, 5 Birchwood Dr. 714-1885

Visited your website lately?

The BLCC Board wants to keep you informed about what is going on that affects your neighborhood and you. That's why we have the Birch Log and the Website. Please send us your suggestions of what you would like to see.