



Meetings at 7 p.m. the third Tuesday of every month at Loves Park VFW.

Catch the Christmas spirit

Lure swap, food and fun at the annual holiday gathering



Dick Cholke and Wally Haas braved the cold to catch a couple of nice fish.

By **Dick Cholke**
Flatlanders president

The season is winding down but fish are being brought to the net. It has been a very unusual year, and now we look forward to next season. In particular, get your partner lined up and get your deposit in for the annual July outing to Lake of the Woods. Deposits are due by the later part of January. Last year we had 101 muskies for the week with a 4.2 fish per angler average. Let's make 2018 even better!

The annual Christmas Party is Dec. 19 with the crazy lure/gift swap. Bring your wrapped new muskie related item worth **at least \$15** to the meeting. Get in on the fun of getting the best

wrapped package and be prepared to have it move around the room. We also bring in **something to eat** for the seasonal munchies. Items vary from chips and dip, pizza, to your private label deer sausage (with photos available for a good story). Since we do not have a regular meeting in January we also need the trophies returned to give us in time to get ready for the banquet.

This is also the season to send in your photos from the 2017 season. I will be putting together the "2017 Flatlanders Year in Review." I would like to get photos of everyone for the

presentation. We caught some nice fish – let's show them off. If you have any good shots of your partner doing something crazy, include those photos. We all need a little humor. I started to run some data and very interesting patterns are emerging – good LOTW stuff from the Chapter Challenge. This presentation will be shown at the February meeting.

Oh, by the way, at the November meeting those attending did not "Throw the Bums Out" as Wally suggested in the newsletter. The officers from 2017 along with the other board members agreed to stay on for the 2018 season. I would like to thank all those who hold these offices and make our chapter run throughout the year. We invite you join us at the EC meeting and help grow our chapter.

Here is a quick rundown of the upcoming events:

Jan. 6 will get the Flatlanders heading into the Chicago Muskie Expo at Pheasant Run Resort. As in years past we will meet at Cracker Barrel for breakfast at 7:30 a.m.. (Note the time change from the last newsletter – the late sleepers needed a little more shuteye). Remember this is the last chance to get your Lake of the Woods deposit into Steve Ruhmann. You can also mail him the deposit.

March 24 we will be returning to Thunder Bay for our annual awards banquet. This year's banquet will be a buffet which should provide a nice meal for everyone. We are making plans for a great night out.

Next year's outing schedule will get us back on the water. We encourage strong participation on the outings. In an effort to grow the chapter we kept some of the favorites and added two that are something different. The schedule is:

April 28: Lake McMaster near Victoria, Illinois.

May 20: Lake Waubesa with lunch at the Green Lantern

July 13-24: Lake of the Woods Ontario, Canada

September – date to be set later: We are trying to set up an outing in conjunction with the Muskie First Chapter out of Eau Claire, Wisconsin on the Holcombe Flowage.

Oct. 13-14: Lake Namekagon with the Wormsoakers. This should be an interesting outing with other Rockford Muskie Anglers.

We start to think this cold weather will keep us inside for a while – well consider a few options. Late February is a good time to get a big fish off Lake Kandaid. It is a trolling bite over huge schools of bait fish. Guide Scott Donovan still puts fish in the boat during this cold weather pattern. Some of us also head up to the Milwaukee Harbor for some brown trout, lake trout and steelhead action. As long as the water is open this can be a very fun day during the middle of the winter. It is definitely the season for the boat with taller sides and wearing your PFD.

I hope everyone has a wonderful Holiday Season and I hope to see you at the Christmas Party on Tuesday. (Oh, let me mention your LOTW Deposits one more time!)

Lake of the Woods – with feeling

It is that time of year again when we collect deposits for Lake of the Woods outing. This year's trip is from July 14–21. This year's lodging is at \$400. As in previous years, this will include the items for the raffle. We will accept deposits no later than the end of January. We need an accurate head count ASAP. So mark these days down in your calendar and get your deposits to myself. The sooner we have a total fishermen count, the sooner we can organize what cabins each us will be assigned to. This is important to ensure we do the best to accommodate everyone's wishes. 2017 was a fun year with lots of fish caught! Let's make 2018 another year to remember.

Please send deposits to:

Steve Ruhmann

**14728 Whispering Wind Way
South Beloit, Illinois 61080**

Release contest update

Well the month of December is here and it appears our 2017 season is coming to a rapid close. A few of us were still out looking for that last bite of the year. We will start this month's update with new members/father and son team of Alexander and Andrew Larson. The team was up on the shores of Lake Mead where Alexander banged fish measuring 36, 41, 39, and 32 inches. Dad added to their total with Esox of 30 and 35 inches. Travis Brady and his clan made their annual fall trek to Oxbow where Travis boated fish of 35.5, 37, and 36.5 inches. Bob Cholke and Brother Dick have been running around the Midwest and wound up on Lake Kincaid. After a few days of some minor recuperation, Bob stuck a fish of 33 inches. Since we are talking about the success of the Cholkes, let's discuss our President Dick. Dick has been out with myself on Wingra and has had some good success. On the first trip he released a 41-incher and then on the second trip he stuck a 43. He was nice enough to share some of his success with me on the second trip where I stuck a 36.5 and then a 30.5 on a crankbait made by member Jeremy VenHuizen. Speaking of Jeremy, he made the long trip to Lake St. Clair and was rewarded with a 39 inch Lunge. He also has hopped in the back of my boat where he released a 38 incher. Since we are discussing fish out of the back of my boat, the last fish to hit the decks was caught by Dick Estes. Dick banged a 37-incher to close out the season in the Red Rocket. Dave Jack was also out on Wingra where he coaxed a 37 incher to eat his bait. Our last fish come from Wally Haas



who also was floating around on Wingra. In two trips, Wally released fish measuring 35.5 and 36.5. Well, that is all the release forms that have been submitted. It has been a fun year and thanks to everyone I shared a both with.

Remember to send your release forms postmarked by Jan. 15 to:

Steve Ruhmann
14728 Whispering Wind Way
South, Beloit, Illinois
61080

Or email a copy to: steve.ruhmann@gmail.com



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