



FLATLANDERS

TAILS

March 2017

MEETINGS: 7 P.M. ~ THIRD TUESDAY ~ LOVES PARK VFW ~ 2018 WINDSOR RD ~ LOVES PARK, ILLINOIS

We're mad about muskies all year long

There is no general meeting this month because we have our annual awards banquet/fundraiser at 6 p.m. Saturday at Thunder Bay Grill in Rockford. We hope to make it our best banquet ever. All are welcome – wives, girlfriends, kids, etc. President Dick Cholke provides more info below in his monthly message.

Notes from the bow of the boat

By Dick Cholke

Flatlanders president

Spring is here and the banquet is this week. It seems like we were just wrapping up the 2016 season and now we are getting the boats ready to get out for the 2017 season.

First, we have to promote our annual Flatlanders Awards and Fundraiser Banquet at 6 p.m. March 18 (Saturday) at Thunder Bay Grill. We are getting a good response with the early bird raffle, and it looks like we should have a great time. Contact Jack Pertz to get in on the early bird raffle at either putembackjack2@aol.com or call Jack at 815-629-2562. Jack indicated we have a strong attendance this year of wives and girlfriends. We encourage bringing your spouse and non-members Saturday night.

With ordering off the menu format this year, you can decide on your favorite meal or show up at the last minute. The chapter members have stepped up very nicely this year donating some great items. Feel free to donate something also to support the chapter – call Dick Estes at 815-332-2307 or Dick Cholke at 815 – 222-1062 to arrange getting something in one of the raffles. Remember items do not have to be fishing related and the variety offers more choices to the entire group. This year we will have door prizes, bucket raffles, silent auctions, and a special Flatlanders raffle for a full range of items. If you missed the presentation of the "Flatlanders 2016 season in Review" at the last meeting, it will be running during most of the evening. It looks like it should be one of the best banquets in recent years.

For those of you that need more muskie information on March 18 remember the guys up in Madison,



Charles Carlson (orange shorts), grandson of Mark Carlson, caught this 56.5-incher in 2016.



It's not a musky, but it is a big fish. President Dick Cholke caught this redfish, estimated to be 40-41 pounds, fishing on the bay of Panama City Bay.

the Capital City Chapter, have their annual muskie school. This includes a welcoming presentation, three classes of your choice from a list of 36 classes, a nice catered lunch and a large raffle at the end of the day. Go to the Capital City website for more information. <http://www.capitalcitymuskiesinc.org/> A

number of us will be leaving Saturday morning from the Thunder Bay Grill and returning for the banquet.

We are scheduling speakers for the next two general meetings. For the April meeting, we have booked Duane Landmeier to speak on Illinois lakes. This should help us get a few of those early season fish. In April, Jeremy Venhuizen will also speak on Lake Storey, our first outing of the year on April 29. I will be in contact with our speaker for the May meeting later this week and I will confirm the presentation at the banquet.

Looking forward a little further, the Lake of the Woods trip looks like another week of Flatlanders comradery. We have 18 folks at Bay Store Camp and six others within casting distance on Oak Island. We may be able to squeeze in four more anglers on the trip - Contact Steve Ruhmann to confirm a spot. Make sure to check your passport and send off for your Remote Area Border Crossing permit as soon as possible.

We are also looking to fill up our teams for the Chapter Challenge on Lake of the Woods August 19-26.

You are welcome to join us no matter what level of experience you have chasing muskie. Talk to any of the past participants and you will be assured this is a fun week back on one of our favorite waters.

Midweek fishing has started all ready. Grab a partner for the early season tour of the lakes in Northern Illinois that hold muskies. The same as last season, weekly trips are scheduled based on weather conditions, moon phase, weekenders' reports and the honey do list. Contact Dick Cholke to get information. In addition, feel free to call for a report to plan your day of fishing on the weekend. With the first 2017 skunk under my belt I am ready to put some fish in the net!

Get on the water and get on the board.

Rockford Gander Mountain survives

Gander Mountain filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy and will close 32 of its 162 stores in 26 states. Rockford's store survived the cut, as did the Janesville and Madison stores that Flatlanders tend to go to. Gander Mountain closed stores in Champaign, Algonquin and Springfield in Illinois and Eau Claire and Germantown in Wisconsin. The St. Paul-Minnesota based company has put itself up for sale.

Illini Muskie Alliance update

The Flatlanders are one of the 11 clubs and organizations that make up the Illini Muskie Alliance. Without the IMA, we probably wouldn't have musky fishing in Illinois. Besides promoting the fishery, IMA has helped the Illinois Department of Natural Resources during difficult economic times. In the last 10 years, IMA has donated more than \$55,000 to the DNR to meet its various needs.

The future of the DNR is murky. The department has half the number of employees it did in 2000 and critical areas such as the hatcheries are understaffed. For example, the Jake Wolf hatchery should have 24 employees. It has six – and two of them are expected to retire by the end of the year. There's a hiring freeze, so those employees will not be replaced anytime soon.

What can we do? We can write letters to our state senators and representatives letting them know how important the DNR is to us. I'm told that the letters need to be as positive as possible – extol the virtues of the DNR without criticizing the officials who got them in the hole that they are in.

Our first outing of the year is at Storey Lake. There wouldn't be muskies there without the DNR's stocking efforts or the IMA's support of the DNR.

Outing schedule

April 29: Storey Lake, Illinois

May 13: Lake Waubesa and Lake Monona

July 15-22: Lake of the Woods – Bay Store Camp

Sept. 22-23: St. Croix River

Oct. 20-22: Deer, Bone, Apple River and Wapogasset

Nov. 11-13: Big Sissabagama area

Purposes of Muskies, Inc.

- To promote a high quality Muskellunge sport fishery
- To support selected conservation practices based on scientific merit and carried out by authorized federal and state agencies
- To promote Muskellunge research
- To establish hatcheries and rearing ponds and introduce the species into suitable waters
- To support the abatement of water pollution
- To maintain records of habits, growth and range of species
- To disseminate Muskellunge information
- To promote good fellowship and sportsmanship among men, women and children

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A photograph of a man wearing a cap and sunglasses, holding a large fish (likely a muskie) in a body of water. The background shows a shoreline with trees.

LOVESPARKMOTORSPORTS.COM
LOVES PARK MOTORSPORTS
DAVE JACK
(815) 636-7636
FAX: (815) 633-2746
9902 N. SECOND ST. MACHESNEY PARK, IL 61115

A large, stylized logo for Loves Park Motorsports, featuring the letters 'LP' in a dark, metallic font. To the right of the logo are logos for Can-Am, Sea-Doo, Ski-Doo, and Arctic Cat.

can-am
SEA-DOO
ski-doo
ARCTIC CAT
SMALL BOAT PASSION

ACEBAITS
www.ACETANDEM.com
612-210-6312

An advertisement for Acebaits. It features a fishing lure with a spinner and a yellow lure, a fishing hook, and a large fish (likely a muskie) swimming in the water. The background is a light blue and white gradient.

YAMAHA
EXPECT A LOT.™
SALES ~ SERVICE ~ PARTS
CRESTLINER ~ CROWNLINE
SYLVAN
EVEN KEEL MARINE INC.
Even Better Than You Think
6621 W. State
Rockford, IL

A black and white illustration of a Yamaha outboard motor.

Tuffy
Wisconsin's Best

963-1105

LAC SEUL FLOATING LODGES
HUDSON ONTARIO
PROVIDING OUR GUESTS WITH AN ENJOYABLE
HOUSE-BOATING EXPERIENCE FOR OVER 25 YEARS

A photograph of a white floating lodge on a lake. The lodge has a blue roof and is surrounded by water and trees. There are several small boats docked nearby.

Michael Starratt
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