



On the Water

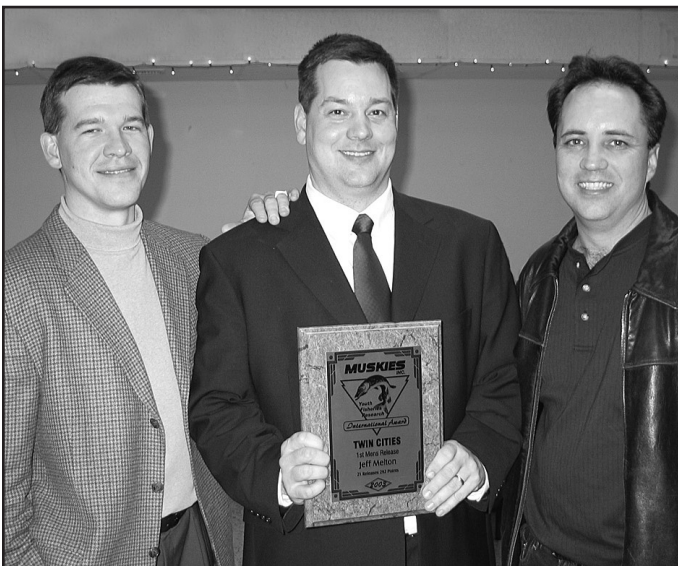
Volume 6, Issue 3

March 2004

Jeff Melton is Men's Division Contest Winner

Muskies Inc. Life member Jeff Melton released many fish over the years but never entered them in the Members Only Contest. Last spring Jeff decided that he would enter all his fish in 2003. He told his fishing partner Brian Radke that he was going to win the Twin Cities Chapter Men's Division. Jeff turned in 21 fish for a total of 292 points and he was the Men's Division winner. In June, Jeff entered two fish from French Lake and 10 fish from Little Wolf. In July he added four more from Little Wolf and one from Cass Lake. In August he added his final four entries, three from Lake of the Woods and one from Crow Lake in Ontario. His longest release was 49.5" and his average was almost 40".

Jeff was diagnosed with cancer last January, and, sadly, he passed away on Monday, February 16. Through the efforts of contest chairperson, Elaine Randolph, Jeff's fishing partner Brian Radke was able to present Jeff with his award on February 13 before the Awards Banquet.



Displaying the plaque for Member's Only Men's Division winner Jeff Melton are his friends the Tom Benerrotte (left), Brian Radke (center) and Tim Leciejewski (right). The three friends came up from Rochester for our chapter Awards Banquet February 21. Brian accepted the award on behalf of fishing partner Jeff who joined the other elite fisherman to fish for muskies forever before the Banquet.

Longest Release of the Year

Not too many years ago a 50" release was THE fish of the year but this year it would have been good for only 15th to 20th place in the Twin Cities Chapter Members Only Fishing Contest. This year's winner for the Longest Release of the Year is David Nicolai. The fish measured 55.5" with a girth of 24.5" and a calculated weight of 41.6 lbs.

History of the fish from the release form: Date – August 9, 2003, Time – 10:00 pm, Lake –

Leech, Cass County, MN, Bait – black creeper, Sky – overcast, Bottom – sand, Structure – cabbage, Wind – slight southeast



Kids Fishing Contest

Thanks to all the parents, grandparents, uncles, aunts and other adults in the lives of the children ages 12 and younger for taking the time and having the patience to TAKE A KID FISHING. Our chapter's contest is not really a contest – because everyone is a winner – kids and adults. All the kids who entered the contest were honored at our chapter's Awards Ceremony at the Winter Picnic on Saturday February 21.

Jake Clouse (age 7) caught crappies on Pelican Lake, a rock bass on Sugar and a northern over 18" on Buffalo.

Megan Clouse (age 9) entered a bass on Lake Sara.

Dallas Nicolai (age 8) will some day challenge her dad David for the longest muskie of the year, but until that day, she is practicing on northern, walleyes, bass and of course pan fish.

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From Our President

A big thanks to Patti Slack and Tom Bastian for orchestrating the Winter Picnic. I'm not sure how many times these two have done this over the years, but every year they do an outstanding job. Also thanks to Elaine Randolph for all her work on the Members Only Contest. The awards at the winter picnic closes the books on contest for 2003. Check out Elaine's report to see the final results.

The winter picnic also marks the beginning of the end of winter for me. Now that March is here we can consider ourselves over the hump as far as winter is concerned. Even if March slaps us around a little weather wise you know it will be short lived and April will bring us open water. Let the fishing begin!!

March will also bring us the Minnesota Muskie Expo in Blaine on the 12th 13th and 14th. If memory serves me right this will be the ninth year of the Expo. The Expo has always been a good thing for the chapter financially. Over the years the Expo has given in the neighborhood of \$49,000 to the chapter. So, do yourself and the chapter a favor and make plans to attend this year's Muskie Expo. From what I have heard it should be the best ever.

Now that we can start thinking about open water, we can start considering one of this summer's coming events. The July 13th general meeting will be held on the water this year. Shawn Kellet has arranged for Greg Thomas to give a lakeside presentation on Lake Minnetonka. After the presentation we'll head out on the lake for some fishing. So plan on bringing your boat or team up with someone else who will be bringing a boat. This type of event is sort of new to our chapter and I thought it would be good to start mentioning it early so it won't be too much of a surprise to people when it comes around and so appropriate plans can be made. Keep an eye out for more news on this event as its time approaches. Right now the exact time and place are not known but we'll get those settled and announce them as soon as possible.

Come to meetings; share your stories and ideas.

Joe DeMars



2004 Muskie Award recipients John Olson (left) and Tom Glander (center) look on as Elaine Randolph hands third recipient Larry Proskins a bouquet of roses.

Muskie Award 2003

The Muskie Award is presented each year at the Winter Picnic/Awards Banquet to a chapter member who "has constantly and unselfishly devoted time and energy over the years to promoting and improving the goals of Muskies, Inc."

This year the board this year chose to present the Muskie Award to three people – Tom Glander, John Olson and Larry Proskins.

The three recipients remember they are representing Muskies, Inc. and conduct themselves accordingly on the water, at the landings, and in public and retail places. They are not one time, one event people, but have been in this for the long haul. The three have been active for a long, long time and in many different ways.

Being a member of the Chapter board is not a requirement but the way things usually go; the most active members are on the board. This year's recipients have poked their fingers into a little bit of everything – among other things:

- served as a board member
- worked the booth at the St. Paul and Minneapolis sports shows and the Muskie Expo
- could sign up new member and sell Project and Rearing Fund tickets and merchandise all at the same time
- worked at the Vet's Home Opener with a filet knife in hand to cut potatoes, chop onions and of course clean fish, and/or acted more or a less a greeter, talking with the vets and their families and helping with the fishing at the pond
- helped with many project such as hiking along Highway 8 helping with our Adopt-A-Highway program
- worked at or headed our international tournament
- helped with weekly minnow runs from Como Lake to the Isaak Walton Ponds when we were raising our own muskies and helped harvest the 10-12" muskies in the fall not only from the Isaak Walton Ponds, but also the Battle Lake hatchery

That's just a short list of all the contributions Tom Glander, John Olson and Larry Proskins have made to our chapter. Congratulations to three deserving recipients!

Member's Only Contest – And the Winners Are...

from Elaine Randolph, Member's Only Contest Chair

The Twin Cities Chapter Winter Picnic/Awards Banquet was held on Saturday, February 21. We get to read the statistics each month in the newsletter, but the evening gives those who attend the opportunity to hear the stories behind some of the big fish that won awards.

RELEASE OF THE MONTH

MAY **JOHN NEWMAN, JR.**
49" CAVE RUN RESERVOIR, KENTUCKY

John and his partner made their annual trek to Kentucky in May, and, as usual, they caught fish. John's 49" hit a reef hawg at 12:40 pm on May 18. It was during a tournament and only minutes before the contest ended and they had to return to tournament headquarters to check in.

JUNE **CHRIS MUELLER**
52.5" LAKE OF THE WOODS, ONTARIO

Over a couple of beers around my kitchen table that was loaded with entry forms, Chris marked the spot on Whitefish Bay where he released his 52.5" muskie that had a 24" girth and weighed an estimated 38 pounds. This fish hit a black and orange spring dawg at 10:50 am on June 23 next to a small branch sticking off shore in 7 feet of water. Now everyone knows exactly where this fish lives.

JULY **GEORGE WAHL**
52" LAKE OF THE WOODS, ONTARIO

George flagged Greg and I down on Lake of the Woods to request and complete the entry form for this fish. The only forms received faster are the ones from Greg. This muskie was caught in three feet of water on July 19 on what else but a red Eagle Tail.

JULY **RICHARD WOLFF**
52" MILLE LACS LAKE, MINNESOTA

Richard was using a black top raider on July 31 when this 52" muskie with a 22" girth, estimated 31 pound hit. This fish was found at 6:30 pm in about two feet of water. The water surface temperature was 70+ degrees.

AUGUST **DAVID NICOLAI**
55.5" LEECH LAKE, MINNESOTA

What happened at 10:00 pm on August 9 in 10 feet of water on Leech Lake? Not much if you discard the fact that David was casting a black creeper when a 55.5" muskie with a 24.5" girth that weighed an estimated 41.6 pounds hit.

SEPTEMBER **PATRICK COTTER**
53" LEECH LAKE, MINNESOTA

Patrick was casting an olive green slammer thunderhead when the fish hit at 6:54 pm on September 20. The skies were overcast and the water surface temperature was 63 degrees.

OCTOBER **BOBBY JOHNSON**
51.33" LAKE NOKOMIS, MINNESOTA

This is the story Bobby sent me regarding this fish. It was caught and released Saturday, October 25th at 2 pm on Lake Nokomis in Minneapolis on a 10" Grandma Bait, moments after a mild sleet started coming down. She missed the bait on her first pass and I hooked her after about 30 seconds into a figure eight. It took nearly 10 minutes to get her in the net (I was fishing alone). I tried to net her six different times but she would take off when she saw the net and I had my drag completely locked down. She grabbed the back treble hook on the bait but only had one of the hooks in her mouth; by the time this was over that hook was bent almost 180 degrees. I don't know how she stayed on; I think I was ready to jump in the water if she had fallen off. This catch and release was witnessed by several people on shore, and a guy was kind enough to take pictures for me, I'm not sure who was more excited, him or me!!!!

NOVEMBER **BRIAN HANSON**
52" MILLE LACS LAKE, MINNESOTA

Of Brian's reported 20 releases (275 points), this 52" muskie with a 26" girth and an estimated weight of 43.9 pounds, was his second longest of the year, a 53" was released in August. November 15 was the date and a red Jake was the bait.

NOVEMBER **RICHARD WOLFF**
52" LEECH LAKE, MINNESOTA

Trolling a perch colored Grandma at 9:00 am in 12 feet of water with the water surface temperature of 35 degrees on November 2 sounds cold, but add to that an air temperature of 3 degrees and I am going to sit by my fireplace with my computer and enter release forms instead of going fishing so I can complete one. Richard's 52" release had a 26" girth and weighed an estimated 44 pounds.

MASTER'S DIVISION

The Master's Division is reserved for the winners for the past three years in the Men's and Women's Divisions. Nine people entered 109 fish for a total of 1,501 points in the Master's Division this year. Previous Women's Division winners, Sharon Swentkofske, Cindy Hegdahl and Carol Health accounted for 14 fish and 160 points. Adding to the grand total were Chris Swentkofske, Kurt Hostager and Mark Fredrick who released a total of 30 fish for 304 points. Tony Sommerfeld released 22 fish for 245 points and Mark Sewald released 23 for 317 points. Although Brian Hanson, the 2003 Master's Division winner, released only 20 fish, four of them were 50" or longer, giving him an average release length of almost 45" and a total of 375 points.

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The youngest person at the Winter Picnic/Awards Banquet on Saturday, February 21 had a little trouble making it through the entire evening. It was obviously too much for Allison Kellett.

MEN'S DIVISION

Forty-seven men entered 280 fish for a total of 3,369 points (compared to 38 men who entered 160 fish for a total of 2,377 points in 2002). The average fish was almost 40" and twenty were 50" or longer.

FIRST PLACE 21 FISH 292 POINTS JEFF MELTON

Congratulations to Jeff (see story page one).

SECOND PLACE 24 FISH 262 POINTS BOB CULBERTSON

Like last year Bob started his year at Cave Run, Kentucky, but this year he was just the net man. With his first 38" release on June 14 to his last 43.5" release on October 25, 20 of the 24 fish were reported as bring caught on Baby Lake. Bob's longest release was 44.25" and his average was 37".

THIRD PLACE 18 FISH 259 POINTS BRENT HIRSCH

Brent spent about 2 weeks in July on the Winnipeg River catching and releasing 13 fish. His other 5 fish came from the Chippewa Flowage, Minnetonka and Vermilion. Brent's longest release was 49" and his average was about 40".

WOMEN'S DIVISION

In addition to the 3 women who released fish in the Master's Division, 8 more entered fish in the Women's Division in 2003. These 8 women had eligible entries of 18 fish and 238 points. Diane Dahl, Wendy Hedensten and Liz Sewald each had one eligible entry for a total of 19 points. Pamela Carroll added 2 fish and 15 points to the total and I (Elaine Randolph) released 2 fish for 23 points.

FIRST PLACE 6 FISH 96 POINTS LOIS HARVEY

Sabaskong Bay on Lake of the Woods, a black Teddy Bait and being on the water between 10 a.m. and 12:45 p.m. were the secret ingredients for Lois in 2003. This was the only reported lake for 2003 for Lois. Her longest release was 48.5" and her average was 42". For the next 3 years, Linda will be joining the other Twin Cities Chapter "pros" in the Master's Division.

SECOND PLACE 3 FISH 39 POINTS TERRIE DuBE'

July 19, August 20 and September 7 were "muskie" days for Terrie. Leech Lake and Lake of the Woods were the bodies of water and 40.5", 40.5" and 35" were the length of the catches. Terrie's average was almost 39".

THIRD PLACE 2 FISH 36 POINTS LINDA KNUTSON

Fishing an unspecified lake in Canada in July had to be rewarding for Linda. She released a 48" fish with a 20-inch girth on the 12th and a 39.5" on July 13th. Great job for about 19 hours worth of work.

JUNIOR'S DIVISION

The junior division is not based on ability to catch fish, but rather age – age 17 or less on January 1. Six young people released 11 muskies for a total of 164 points – the average muskie was 40", the longest was 51".

FIRST PLACE 4 FISH 63 POINTS EVAN NICOLAI

This year's 11-year-old Junior "Pro" released a 48" and a 40" fish on Lass Lake, a 41" fish on Inguadona and a 38" fish on Leech. An almost 42" average for the year is outstanding!

SECOND PLACE 3 FISH 56 POINTS GARY WOLFF

All the junior members can say farewell and good luck to Gary because hit 17th birthday has moved into the Men's Division. With a 41" release on Vermilion on July 12, a 43" release on Leech Lake on November 15 and a 49.5" with a 25" girth and an estimated weight of 39 pounds, Gary ended this year with an average of almost 45" per fish.

THIRD PLACE 1 FISH 13 POINTS SHAINA WOLFF

I am not sure if Dad got to do much fishing on this trip because he was kept busy releasing fish. Shaina caught her fish at 11:50 am on a white jig on Bone Lake, Wisconsin on October 11.

FOURTH PLACE 1 FISH 12 POINTS SAMANTHA DOEBLER

Strong winds were blowing on October 17, but that didn't stop 9-year-old Samantha from going muskie fishing. At 4:00 in the afternoon using a crappie Burt, the 37.5" fish it in about 2 feet of water.

FOURTH PLACE 1 FISH 12 POINTS ELENI WOLFF

Picture this – you are 10 years old, it October 11 and you are muskie fish on Bone Lake, Wisconsin with 10-20 miles per hour wind in the rain. Not to be outdone by her sister's release earlier in the day, at 3:00 pm a 38" muskie finally hit the white jig, and the fight was on.

SIXTH PLACE 1 FISH 8 POINTS JAMES HEDENSTEN

If you were to ask 13-year-old Jimmy about his first muskies, you might hear the following. It was June 7 on Bald Eagle Lake at 8:15 am and the 34" muskie hit a yellow and red Marv's tandem spinnerbait.

But Are They Good Eating?

from Juris Ozols

“Hey, I see you got ‘Muskie’ on the back of your jacket. That some kind of fish?”

“Yeah. A big one.”

“You fish ‘em?”

“Been known to.”

“They good eating?”

So there’s that question! “Are they good eating?” I’ve faced it a lot. Most often it’s probably been because my jacket (the only one I own) has “Muskie’s Inc. Twin Cities Chapter” on the back. It may also be because I’ve been known to drop by a certain bar every once in a while, and bar people seem to be naturally inquisitive.

But I’m sure you’ve had to answer that question too, in or out of a bar. So what do you do?

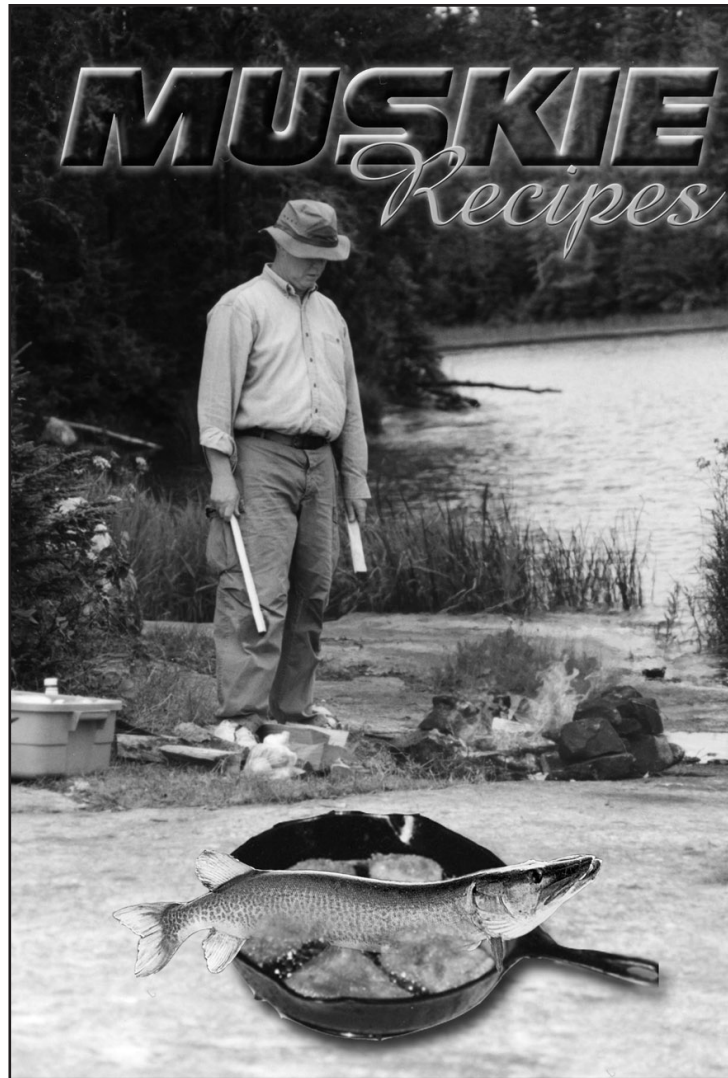
It used to be that the question would really get me going. I’d get started into “Hard to catch – not many – big fight – catch and release – Gil Hamm – protect the resource,” all that. I’d crank up the emotions, explain why you couldn’t possibly kill and eat that magnificent fish. I’d tell them I didn’t know anybody who kept Muskies. I’d explain that... Well...

The standard reaction? A slack jaw and glazed eyes. On one occasion the fellow who asked the question actually nodded off after a minute of my harangue. He fell off the barstool, and then threatened to sue me when we woke him up. Fortunately he wasn’t hurt, so the matter passed on.

But that incident made me realize the folly of my ways. I was wasting my time, explaining things to folks who didn’t know a Muskie was a fish, for crying out loud! Did I really expect them to relate to Catch and Release, or to Gil Hamm? Forget it.

So now, I do it differently. “Are they good eating?” You bet! Superb eating!

Now I explain how some of my fondest memories are of Muskie dinners. My mom has this secret family recipe, brought over from our native Latvia where they used to catch



and fry up Pike, that’s just awesome. And up in Canada we fix Muskies up for shore lunch, you just can’t believe how good they are. A stringer of Muskies on a remote Canadian island, fried up with beer batter? Why it’s spectacular!

And listen, there’s this new diet coming out – the Muskie diet – that’s way lower in carbs than the Atkins diet. And it’s a lot better for you ‘cause everybody knows that fish are really healthy food. And also...

The Atkins thing is the saviour. As soon as I mention that I invariably get interrupted by the story of how Uncle Fred lost twenty pounds and then gained thirty back on the Atkins diet. And then my own eyes glaze over, even though I’ve yet to fall asleep.

I switch the subject to the weather, the decades-long incompetence of the Vikings, or something else.

And thankfully, Muskies disappear from the conversation.

Well, am I just dreaming and lying here? Of course. What do I really do when the “eating Muskies” question arises? I answer something along the lines of “Yeah, whatever,” and immediately switch to the Vikings. I see no profit for me or the questioner in giving a straightforward answer.

But I’m curious – what do you do, when that question is posed to you? Do you try to answer honestly, Gil Hamm, etc.? What happens if you do? Does the other person comprehend what you’re saying? Or have you gotten tired of it, like I have, and do you just brush it off.

I’d be interested in hearing. Maybe there’s some clever response, that could take an innocent, curious person and convert him or her into a fanatic Muskie fisherman who belongs to Muskies Inc. But I’m afraid it’s hopeless. Maybe what we should do is create a Muskie recipe to pass out and then invite the person to join Muskies Inc. to share their own recipes. For who knows, Muskies might indeed be good to eat.

Kids Fishing Contest
continued from page 1

Thomas Hedensten (age 9) had a lot of fun catching bluegills, perch and sunfish. He also largemouth bass and crappies, but who took him bullhead fishing?

Andy Smith (age 12) caught 3 northern on August 20 and one was over 18". He also caught his share of largemouth bass, bluegills, perch and sunfish.

Living on the shores of Leech Lake, Zachary Tooker has caught a lot of fish in his eleven years and this year was no different. He caught northern over 18", walleyes, both small and large-mouth bass and tons of bluegills, perch, sunfish and crappies. There might have even been some catfish, carp or bullheads on the end of his line.

Ten year old Nora Vee caught a walleye over 12" and a



Kids who entered the chapter Kids Fishing Contest were honored at the Winter Picnic/Awards Banquet. They are (left to right) Jimmy Hedensten, Dallas Nicolai, Andy Smith, Evan Nicolai, Tom Hedensten and Zachary Weyland.

northern pike over 18" as well as bass and smaller northern at Lake of the Woods. Orchard Lake and Leech Lake also produced pan fish, bass and walleyes.

Ryan Vee (age 12) caught an 18" large-mouth bass on Lake Crystal and a 20" wall-eye and a northern over 18" on Lake of the Woods. Pan fish, crappies, bullheads, large-mouth bass and walleyes were also caught on Orchard Lake, Prior Lake, and Leech Lake.

While most of the other kids were fishing in the summer, nine-year-old Zachary Weyland caught crappies (one was 1 lb. 9 oz.) in February. On July 6 he caught pan fish and bass. During the summer Zachary also caught a 25" and 27" walleye, two 17" brown trout, and northern that measures 33", 34", 35", 40" and 42".

— this 'n that —

Minnesota Muskie Expo

Don't forget the Minnesota Muskie Expo March 12-13-14 at the National Sports Center in Blaine. This three-day event is devoted exclusively to the muskie. The Expo is open from 2 to 9 pm Friday, Saturday from 10 to 7, and on Sunday from 10 to 4.

There will be over 100 muskie-related exhibitors including lure manufacturers, guides, resorts, and retailers and boat dealers with show specials. All three days will feature seminars by

top muskie pros. Adult entry for the Expo is \$8, a three-day pass is \$15.

Mark Your Calendar Now

The chapter has planned various events for the spring/summer season. Keep these dates in mind and plan to attend these events: May 8 - Fishing Home Opener at Minnesota Veterans Home; May 15 - Metro Kid's Outing at Lake Nokomis; June 13 - Capable Partners Outing. July 13 - "On the Water" Meeting at Lake Minnetonka; August 10 - Annual Picnic at Minnehaha Falls.

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calendar of events

*Muskies Inc. Twin Cities Chapter
General Meetings are held the second
Tuesday of every month at the Knights
of Columbus Hall, 1114 West 79th
Street, Bloomington, MN (just off I-494
& Lyndale Ave.) at 7:00 pm.*

MARCH 9

General Meeting. Speaker Dennis Lapin.

MARCH 12, 13, 14

Minnesota Muskie Expo. National Sports Center, Blaine, MN.

APRIL 13

General Meeting.

MAY 8

Fishing Home Opener at Minnesota Veterans Home.

MAY 11

Annual Swap Meet/Manufacturers Night. Go through your fishing stuff. Bring things to swap, find "new stuff for yourself. A number of manufacturers will demo their products and have items for sale.

MAY 15

Metro Kid's Outing at Lake Nokomis.

JUNE 5

Minnesota Muskie Fishing Opens

JUNE 8

General Meeting.

JUNE 13

Capable Partners Outing at Lake Independence.

JULY 10-17

Chapter trip to Winnipeg River, Ontario

JULY 13

"On the Water" General Meeting, Lake Minnetonka

AUGUST 10

Annual Picnic, Minnehaha Falls.

AUGUST 14-18

Chapter trip to Red Wing Lodge, Lake of the Woods

SEPTEMBER 10-11-12

37th Annual Frank Schneider, Jr. International Fishing Tournament

SEPTEMBER 14

General Meeting.

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next meeting

MARCH 9
DENNIS LAPIN

*Dennis, of Muskie Innovations,
will discuss fishing for muskies
on Lake Minnetonka.*



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