

## Moose Lake News by

Jim Onarheim

The American Birkebeiner Ski event is over for another year. Thousands of skiers participated in this year's event with thousands of spectators on hand watching the event from many different locations. The Round Lake Fire Department participated at the Gravel Pit First Aid station. Round Lake Fire had their rescue sled available at the Gravel Pit in case of an emergency in that area. The Gravel Pit Aid Station had Emergency Medical Crews on hand Friday and Saturday in case of emergency. Friday was the Kortelopet race and the full Birkie race occurred on Saturday. There will be plenty of photos and stories located elsewhere in this paper about this wonderful event.

I was informed by Fishing guide John Myhre that the warm weather that we had in Northern Wisconsin the last couple of weeks caused the ice to weaken on one of the lakes near Chetek WI. A pickup truck ended up breaking through the ice causing severe damage to the vehicle. Another thing that John and I talked about was to remind people that your fishing license will expire at the end of March. Your new fishing license will take effect April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2026. At this time of the year, it is a good idea to start replacing your fishing line on all your reels. Another idea would be to go through your fishing tackle to see if any of your tackle needs to be replaced. Good luck this spring.

On Feb. 8<sup>th</sup> I left on my fishing trip to Florida to visit my good friend Mike Henry. I have talked about Mike several times in my Moose Lake News in the past. He has the Fly-In Fishing camps in NW Ontario that I visit several times during the summer. Mike and his significant other Kelly have a home in Punta Gorda FL. where Mike is a Charter Captain. Mike and Kelly invited me down again this year to fish the Big Pond which is The Gulf of America or the Gulf of Mexico how ever you want to refer to it. I had 12 days of fishing in the Gulf which was very memorable. This trip was one of the best that I have ever been on. The fishing was great every day that I was out. Yes, I caught more fish last year but the experience of where we fished and what we fished for was better. Last year we were confined to fishing on Mikes Flat boat because of the high winds that we had out on the big water or the ocean. This year the weather cooperated and allowed us to go out 50 miles on the ocean. There were days when we had rough seas, but we handled it ok.

The fish we were going after was the grouper. A very good fish to eat. We also fished for Snook, Manatees, and the Sea Trout. The grouper had to be 25 inches in length if we wanted to keep it. This year we had a very hard time catching a legal-size grouper. After talking to many Charter Captains, it was determined that because of the very cold temperatures that Florida experienced around the end of January many of the grouper perhaps moved south toward the Florida Keys to get to warmer waters. We tried over 28 of Mikes favorite spots and came up empty many times. We did catch some grouper, but they were small and could not be kept.

Mike Kelly and I toured Pine Island about three times. The first evening we went down to eat dinner at the Blue Dog Bar and Grill which is in Matlacha Fl. This is one of my favorite places to eat. Matlacha is one of the locations where Hurricane Ian caused billions of dollars in damage in September 2022. Ian did severe damage to the entire area around Pine Island. But Ian was just at the start because in 2024 Hurricane Helene and Hurricane Milton hit the same area, flooding and damaging homes and businesses. As we toured the area you could still see a lot of damage to the area four and two years after the storms. It was very sad and just made me appreciate living in Northwest Wisconsin. After 12 days of fishing and driving around the Punta Gorda area it was time to fly back to my home in Hayward. It was a great trip, but it is always good to come home.

Even though I was not at pool league I was told 12 players showed up for some exciting pool games. When things were over. Darryl Enk and Bruce Vanfleet took first place. Second place was awarded to Mike Williams and Dane Resh, and the TP prize Scott and Laura Gilkey each took home a roll of toilet tissue.

Birthday greetings this week go out to Debbie Laier on the 25<sup>th</sup>, Vaughn Christison on the 26<sup>th</sup>, Barb Figlewicz on the 27<sup>th</sup>, Sara Miller on the 1<sup>st</sup>, Dave Arnett on the 3<sup>rd</sup>, Amanda Werson on the 4<sup>th</sup>, Jan Levis on the 5<sup>th</sup> and Dave Sloten on the 10<sup>th</sup> of March. Anniversaries this week are Dick and Sue Kruckenberg on Feb. 25<sup>th</sup>, Jan Stapleton and Joe Dwyer on the first of March, John and Linda Myhre will celebrate 52 years of marriage on the 9<sup>th</sup> of March. Congratulations. Bill and Sallie Carlson will have their anniversary also on the 9<sup>th</sup> of March.

Stay safe and warm everyone and enjoy your week. Please send your items of interest to my e-mail address at emta984@gmail.com or call my landline at 715-462-4448 or my cell at 715-577-8880. Moose Lake Improvement association website is <http://mliahaywardwi.org> The Town of Round Lake Web site is <https://www.townofroundlakewi.org> and the Round Lake Fire Department website is <https://townofroundlakefire-rescue.org> JO.