

LAKE PLACID NEWS

ROTARY CLUB NEWS: Hot takes on the Rotary Club's Dam Duck Race

Like most young boys, I pretended I was at bat, just beyond the 3-point arc or on the goal line with the crowd on its feet. The fate of the game was in my hands. Sometimes I hit the homer or made the catch while falling out of the back of the end zone. Sometimes I didn't. Win or lose, the internal play-by-play call was legendary.

Meaning, from the day I traded my first Topps MLB card I was destined to call the Lake Placid Rotary Club's Dam Duck Race. It was fate.

So was meeting Chris Knight in 2001 when we both started careers in local radio. Chris was the soul of WNBZ AM 1240. I sold and voiced advertisements.

We were unmarried young guys with a hell of a lot of energy. So much so that years later we pirated the airwaves for a few hours while our boss was in Florida and produced our own show. Yes, this is true and is 100 percent why we proudly provide play-by-play and color commentary for the annual Lake Placid Rotary Club Dam Duck Race (AKA, the greatest unpaid gig of our lives).

I'll let Chris take the story from here.

I think our only marching orders that first year, from our boss and chief promoter Debbie McLean, were to have fun with it, and to make sure we read all the sponsor names. Doug and I had already developed an on-air banter through the radio, playing off each other, and it carried over easily as we talked up the audience at Lisa G's.

If I told you we had extensively prepared a routine and put together some kind of script outlining were going to say in advance, it would be 100 percent fake news. The only preparation I did that first year, and occasionally since then, was a quick search for a website with some really bad duck jokes. It's how I learned that ducks wake up at the quack of dawn. It's amazing how many times you can use a variation of the word quack in a punchline that's not something they teach you in school, kids.

Everything else in our commentary is shot from the hip, although we always try to play to current events, both local and global. There's always the bit about the ducks being tested for performance-enhancing drugs before the race. This year we riffed that many of these ducks will be back for the World Duck University Games in 2023.

But the 100 percent non-fake news is that we're just a couple guys who know how to run our mouths when it comes to what this event is all about. The real work is done by the Rotary Club members, who make the Dam Duck Race happen every year. They're out there drumming up donations from local businesses, getting people to buy ducks, and spreading the word about what the money collected does for our community. We may be doing the play-by-play, but they are the ones who are on the field, hitting home runs for Lake Placid, year in and year out.

To check out the Rotary Club of Lake Placid, drop in some Thursday morning from 7:20 to 8:30 a.m. at the Courtyard by Marriott. More info at www.rotarylakeplacid.org OR rotarylakeplacid@gmail.com.

(Chris Knight is the communications director at North Country Community College. Doug Haney is a founding partner of GreatRange, a

marketing and communications firm in Saranac Lake, and co-director of Cycle Adirondacks.)
