

Race, dam ducks, race

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The large, inflatable rubber duck — mascot of the Rotary Club of Lake Placid’s annual Dam Duck Race — is seen here floating on Mill Pond Wednesday, Sept. 20. Festivities begin at 5 p.m., and the race starts at 6 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 23 at the Mill Pond dam behind Lisa G’s restaurant on Sentinel Road. It is a benefit for the Rotary Club. (News photo — Andy Flynn)

LAKE PLACID — More than 1,700 yellow rubber ducks will race over the Mill Pond dam and a short distance down the Chubb River on Saturday evening, Sept. 23, during the Rotary Club of Lake Placid’s 18th annual Dam Duck Race, a benefit for the organization.

“We used to do 1,500, and this year we upped the duck amount to 1,750 to see if we could sell some more ducks,” said Bridget McKillip, who is co-chairing the event with Stephanie Pianka. “At 6 o’clock, Howl at the Moon (Mechanicals) is going to have all the ducks on the pond. They dump the ducks into the pond, and they come down over the dam, and there’s a finish line at Lisa G’s.”

Dam Duck Race headquarters is Lisa G’s at 6125 Sentinel Road in Lake Placid. The dam is behind the restaurant, and the river flows next to it.

“The duck runners bring the ducks up, and we announce the (winning) ducks,” McKillip said.

The person with the winning duck gets \$1,500. Second place is \$300, and third place is \$200. Last place will get a round of golf for four at the Crowne Plaza’s Lake Placid Club golf course.



A promotional banner for the Rotary Club of Lake Placid’s 2023 Dam Duck Race is seen here Wednesday, Sept. 20 on Station Street next to the Mill Pond dam. (News photo — Andy Flynn)

“And then we’ve got lots of gift cards, giveaways, I would say around 60 of those,” McKillip said.

Numbered ducks are \$10 a ticket or three for \$25. They can be purchased from a Rotarian, at Lisa G’s restaurant at 6125 Sentinel Road, at the Gordon W. Pratt Agency at 2699 Main St. or at Terry Robard’s Wine and Spirits at 2047 Saranac Ave. They will also be on sale between 5 and 6 p.m. Saturday at the Dam Duck Race headquarters behind Lisa G’s. Or they can be secured by emailing the race coordinators at lakeplacidrotaryduckrace@gmail.com.

Passersby on Station Street will notice a new large, inflatable “Mama Duck” on Mill Pond this week, which was recently installed by village of Lake Placid employees.

“She’s ready to float in the Chubb and usher her little ducklings over the dam and into the net!” the Rotary Club posted on its Facebook page on Aug. 17 after the new duck arrived.

The old inflatable duck busted several years ago. Students at the Lake Placid Elementary School chose a name for the new duck, which will be announced before Saturday’s race.

The festivities at Lisa G’s begin at 5 p.m. with an all-you-can-eat buffet for \$15 per person. There will also be music, face painting, a mechanical bucking bronco (for all ages) and a children’s book fair.

“All the proceeds go back into the community,” McKillip said.

The Rotary Club’s most recent project was the installation of two bus shelters in the village, one at Cascade Acres and another at the Four Seasons Apartments on state Route 73 (Cascade Road). A third bus shelter is being placed near the Lake Placid Center for the Arts.

Other organizations the Rotary Club has helped with its fundraising efforts include the Lake Placid Elementary School for a new playground, Mercy Care for the Adirondacks, Lake Placid Ecumenical Food Pantry, Lake Placid Community Beautification Association, North Elba Community Christmas Fund and Shipman Youth Center. Plus the club takes care of a few parks in town — Jewtraw Park bordering Mill Pond on Station Street and Rotary Park bordering Mill Pond on Dow Road (near the Lake Placid Volunteer Ambulance Service garage) — and recently helped with the rehabilitation of the McKinley Street park.

Last year, the Dam Duck Race raised a record amount of \$20,000 for the Rotary Club’s community projects around the village of Lake Placid and town of North Elba.

The Rotary Club of Lake Placid’s Dam Duck Race began in 2004 with 200 ducks racing over the Mill Pond dam and into the Chubb River, raising about \$3,000 to renovate the Jewtraw and Mill Pond (Rotary) parks. Those ducks sold out, so the original organizers — Tina Leonard and Debbie McLean — increased the duck count to 600 for the following year. The race, which was traditionally held in June, was canceled due to the coronavirus pandemic in 2020 and again in 2021 and was moved to September in 2022.

For more information about the event, visit online at damduckrace.com.