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# The Lake Mitchell H.O.B.O.

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## FROM THE PRESIDENT Johnye Woodrow

A lot has transpired since our last newsletter! Summer weather seems to have come early to Alabama this year; and as a result, June has felt much more like August! I don't know if you feel like me, but spring just went over my head! Our clan actually went swimming earlier this year than any other year that we have been on the lake.

The picnic on June 3rd was a lot of fun. It was great in that we had a lot of new faces and made new friends. H.O.B.O. is sincerely grateful this year to Randy Hammond of Richville Volunteer Fire Department for cooking all the meat during the night before. We picked the meat up Saturday morning and it was still hot when served! Absolutely delicious! If you missed the picnic this year, you missed a good one.

Our thanks to Brad Harrison, Marine Police and Larry Crozier who volunteered their time to discuss water safety with us prior to the picnic. Those who attended left with a better understanding of Alabama's law. I am sorry more of us were not in attendance as they provided hand-outs as well as valuable information. Ensuring the safety of folks on the water-ways is sometimes a "thankless job", but we want them to know that we appreciate their efforts.

By the time you get this newsletter, the July 4<sup>th</sup> festivities will have come and gone again. They just get better and better each year! The same people work hard devoting their time and personal resources for the enjoyment of us all. I hope your families and friends who enjoyed Lake Mitchell over this holiday were safe and reached their home destinations safely. It just does not get any better than to have those you love, with you at a place you love!

Various lakes formed homeowners associations around the same time we did; and most, if not all, were dedicated to helping provide support to Alabama Water Watch as volunteer water monitoring groups. Our H.O.B.O. has evolved in becoming one of the premiere organizations with greater support and participation. We have branched out through our committee structuring to provide services that benefit Lake Mitchell and our community. The greatest benefit of our H.O.B.O. is the communication

network established by our bi-annual resident telephone books, our area representatives, the mail-outs, etc.

Our membership is down this year from last. Please look at your label. If "M06" does not appear on your mailing label, it means that we have not yet received your 2006 dues. Please join, or at least take the time to let us know why you prefer to not join. Your thoughts and involvement are always appreciated.

Each time I look out of our front windows, I am reminded of what a special and beautiful place Lake Mitchell is. The people on Lake Mitchell seem to be responsible and caring about issues concerning the lake and their neighbors. Even though county lines divide us, we are truly one community. There are some very smart and interesting people who live on this lake. Take the time to know your neighbors – you will be glad you did!



## AREA REPRESENTATIVE REPORTS

### Area 3 Dan and Judy Murchison

We have several new people to "Welcome to the Lake".

The Jones Family - Danny and Judy, daughter Lindsey (18) and son Colby (13) recently moved here from Blount County and are the new owners of Durbin's Farm Market on Hwy 31.

Danny, originally from Chilton County, has been in the produce business in Birmingham for the past 13 years as the manager of the big Farmers Market in Birmingham. He knows fresh vegetables and fruit. When you stop in Durbin's introduce yourself. You might notice that they have added a very nice sandwich shop and of course there is the ice cream shoppe we are all familiar with. They also stock unique gifts, beautiful hanging baskets, as well as potted plants.

The Padens, Shan & Tricia, sons Brian (19) and Scott (23). The Padens are not new to Lake Mitchell having been on Bird Creek for seven years before building on Cargile South – at Buster Norris's old point. We're sure glad to have them here in our area now.

The Duncans, Tommy & Kim, and their sons Tyler (24) and Morgan (21). They are good friends with Shan and

Tricia and have built a new place there on the point also, right next door to the Paden's. Both of these homes are "must see" homes. They are beautifully built, unusual with great views.

**A BIG THANK YOU**

Most everybody has heard that the sign "Welcome to the Lake" at the intersection of Co Rd. 542 and Co Rd 59 that Dan had built was torn down by vandals. Dan was going to build it back but that would have taken awhile. Then along came Tommy Duncan. Tommy is in the commercial construction business and he called and offered on his own to rebuild the sign at a plant he uses and bring it to the lake. Whatta man! His wife Kim even drove the flat bed trailer with the sign on it down to the lake while Tommy was away on a business trip. Whatta woman! A **BIG THANK YOU** to the Duncans. Dan and I have had so much help from many here on the lake and we couldn't name them all, but we just have to single out a few more for a **BIG THANK YOU**. Thomas and Karen Scott (Area 2), who worked so very hard. Karen found the sign the morning after on the side of the road and along with some help from Mary Sue Olson (Area 2) and Danny Bates (Area 2), disassembled it and brought it to our cabin. Shan and Tricia Paden were on their way to the lake when they saw Dan digging a hole and stopped to help with the digging to get the new sign set in. Then when it was time to put the sign back up, Thomas, Karen and Ken Kertulla from our Area 3 joined us to get it in the ground. If you see any of these people; the Duncans, the Padens, the Scotts, Mary Sue Olson, Danny Bates or Ken Kertulla please thank them for the help they gave us to get the sign back up. We surely do appreciate them. We also add a **BIG THANK YOU** to Martha and David Wright of Area 2. They not only brought plants to beautify this spot, but brought soil and even pine straw to finish it off! We are so thankful to have had all this wonderful help, what a nice community we live in.

**Area 9** Dale and Patty Vann

Area 9 had their annual Memorial Day get together at the Vann's place. We had a good turnout and lots of discussion (especially about the county water situation). Please remember you will not read this until maybe the last of July, but as of today, 6/12/06, the county has not started on this project. It is coming and we will have the opportunity to get county water. Hopefully we can get enough money to accomplish the goal on this project. I have been asked to pass along a complaint from several of our neighbors. Some people are driving their ski boats and jet skis too close to the shore/pier line. I have noticed this myself so I know it happens. If you have 2, 3 or 4 hundred yards of water space to ski and run your boat, why come so close to the area where people swim and relax on their pier? Any questions about this please feel free to contact me. Please just be careful and courteous. Once an accident happens it is too late. Hope you are having fun this summer.

**Area 11** Pearl and Ricky Buford

Please help us get better Cingular mobile service on Lake Mitchell!

My mobile phone died and the lady that helped me with purchasing a new mobile phone told us that the technical department is taking requests from areas of poor or no Cingular mobile service. PLEASE CALL CINGULAR AND REPORT MITCHELL LAKE AREA. We told her that a lot of Birmingham residents are their customers and reside on Lake Mitchell.

**Area 15** Anita and Jerry Lawson

Another opportunity has arrived for Coosa County property owners. Did you receive your mailer regarding the possibility of CITY OF ROCKFORD water being available? Please respond to this as soon as possible. If you have any questions, feel free to call me. We are also getting a guard rail on the ridge - Tad Eason, Engineer, has not given me a firm date but it will probably be after paving season is over. Please call me if your neighbors move or if any news has occurred we might need to report in our newsletter. Let's all keep each other informed. Be safe and mind your boating manners. See you this summer.

**COMMITTEE REPORTS:**

**Water Quality Report** Sam Piccolo, Chairman

PARAMETER	ACCEPTABLE RANGE	SIX SITE AVERAGE
Dissolved O <sub>2</sub>	5-9	8.51
pH	6.5 - 8.2	7.72
Alkalinity	20+	45.71
Hardness	10 - 120	47.62

Quarterly Report Average Water Quality

A low **dissolved oxygen** level indicates a demand on the oxygen in the system. Pollutants such as inadequately treated sewage as well as decaying natural organic matter can cause low oxygen levels. The **ph** scale ranges from very acidic such as battery acid to very basic such as household lye. The midsection of the scale between 6.5 to 8.2 is optimal for most organisms. If a body of water has an abundance of buffering materials causing high **total alkalinity**, it is more stable and resistant to ph changes. When alkalinity is above 20mg/l there is a marked increase in nutrient utilization. **Hardness** refers primarily to the amount of calcium and magnesium, which enters the water mainly by leaching of rocks. Both minerals are essential to the development and growth of aquatic plants and animals.

**BULLETIN BOARD**

**2006 Calendar of Events**

Aug 13	2 p.m.	Area Rep meeting	TBA
Sept 22	6 p.m.	Board of Directors meeting	APCO Clanton
Oct 20	6 p.m.	Board of Directors meeting	APCO Clanton
Oct 28	8 a.m.	Fall lake clean-up	Higgins Ferry
Nov 17	7 p.m.	Annual General Membership meeting	APCO Clanton

H.O.B.O. is your organization! Members are welcome at all meetings and especially at social functions.

**Marine Police Information** Judy Murchison

Before the lake-wide picnic on June 3<sup>rd</sup>, our new Marine Police Officer, Brad Harrison, met with us to discuss water safety on Lake Mitchell. He is on our lake full time and will be patrolling and randomly stopping boats for safety checks. The checking of your boat/wave runner is for your safety and protection. Some of the things he will be checking are:

Current registration numbers on **both sides** of your boat License and registration on the boat at all times  
Driver's license approved for operator of the boat **in** the boat.

Proper number of life jackets – **one for every person** on board and should be readily accessible. They cannot be wrapped in plastic or under seats.

Fire extinguisher in **working** order. Check to make sure yours is fully charged.

Throwable cushion – type 4 PFD.

All children under 8 years of age **must** wear a life jacket at all times.

Cut off switch (kill switch) in working order and attached to the operator of the boat

Some things you might want to take note of that he brought to our attention:

Operators of Wave Runners, Sea Doos, and boats are all the same. You **MUST** be a **licensed** driver. A child can take the boating test at 12 years of age and obtain a boating license, but **will not** be legal to drive **alone** until they are **14 years of age**. Remember your license must be with you at all times. At 12 years of age a child **with a boating license** can drive any of these vehicles with a **licensed adult (21 years or older)** with them at all times. Your out of state visitor is allowed to drive your vehicles/wave runners **if** they are **properly licensed** in their home state.

Alabama residents must have a valid boat operator's license. Passing the test and having the certificate is not enough. The Alabama Drivers License must have the "Boat Operators" endorsement on it. The Alabama Drivers/Boat Operators license must be with you while operating a boat. **Copies are not acceptable.**

Everyone should be reminded that Chilton County is a "DRY" county; consumption of alcoholic beverages and the possession of alcoholic beverages are prohibited. Persons under the legal age of 21 consuming alcoholic beverages continue to be a problem on most lakes in Alabama. The Marine Police and the Alcohol Beverage Control Board reminds everyone that a person must be 21 years of age in order to possess and/or consume "any amount" of alcoholic beverage. (Title 28, Code of Alabama)

The Marine Police have been getting many reports of wave runners/personal watercraft following too closely behind larger boats and jumping the wake of those boats. This is an illegal activity and will be dealt with accordingly. Personal watercraft operators should stay at least 100 feet behind other boats and any other object or person in the water. Anyone seeing any illegal boating activity can contact the Marine Police by calling the Chilton County Sheriff's office 755-2511, or if it is an emergency call 911. In Coosa County you should call the Sheriff's office at 256-377-2211. The registration number of the vessel should accompany the complaint.

Another complaint heard at the Higgins Ferry meeting was regarding people driving boats/wave runners too fast and too close to the piers. It should be noted as well that you should never stand up in a moving boat. We would caution teenagers that reckless driving or excessive noise will call attention to you and possibly cause you to be stopped for a safety check.

Pamphlets are available, "Alabama Boating Laws and Regulations", which will cover all topics you might have questions about. H.O.B.O. has these pamphlets. Call Johnye Woodrow at 755-0055 to obtain a copy. If you have other questions you can call the Marine Police District Office for clarification, 1-800-432-7389 Monday thru Friday 8 AM to 4 PM. Let's have a fun and safe boating summer. Obey the rules of water safety - they are there to protect all of us.

**Fall Lake Clean-up** Doug Martin

Folks, it's early but please mark your calendars for Saturday, October 28<sup>th</sup>, 2006 for our fall cleanup date. Our two major teams have out-of-town games that day, so you can be home in time to watch them. Anytime you are on the lake this summer pick up a can or bottle floating in the water, it's easier than picking it out of streams or shallow areas this fall, plus it might encourage someone watching to do the same. Have fun and play safe.

**Memorial Gifts**

Dan & Judy Murchison - in memory of Ed & Laura Warren

*The Lake Mitchell Memorial Fund is available for gifts in honor or in memory of a friend or loved one. Please send your contributions to our post office box and note your check accordingly. The intent is to set aside these funds until there is a sufficient amount to fund special projects.*

**We need your help!** Judy Murchison

It is a very time consuming and difficult job to keep up with the changes in lake ownership. We need the assistance of all residents to keep us informed with

detailed information so that your bi-annual phonebooks will be accurate and complete.

Please call me, Jim Woodrow, or your area representative if you hear of ownership changes on the lake so that we can keep the data base and phone book up to date, and so we can welcome new people to our lake community. H.O.B.O. has welcome packages with a lot of useful information for new people on the lake. Also, if you know anyone that has property on the lake that is not listed in our phone book, please provide us their name and a phone number. This will be a big help keeping our data base and phone book complete and accurate. The new phone book will come out for 2007-2008 and the newsletter goes out quarterly. We sure want to include any new people. Call me at 755-0521 or 823-2308, or email me at: [gugga4@bellsouth.net](mailto:gugga4@bellsouth.net)

#### **Recent fire on Cargile Creek** Becki McCallum

On Sunday June 18 a boathouse burned in Cargile Creek. The owners, the Craigs, had built the boathouse in 1954. The cause of the fire has not been established, though it may have been a result of fireworks shot a few hours prior. The Craigs were not there at the time, but neighbors called 911 and rescued the boats. Marine 9 responded and was first on the scene, with land support from Verbena arriving shortly thereafter. The fire was contained to the upper level of the boathouse and luckily there were no injuries. It should be noted that many people keep gas cans and other flammables in their boathouses, so this could have been a potentially dangerous situation. Many thanks to the fire departments and their volunteers – we certainly appreciate you all!

#### **Donation made to Richville Fire Department**

At the last board meeting held on June 23 the board of directors voted to make a cash donation to the Richville Volunteer Fire Department, which serves the Coosa side of the lake. Recently, they lost their best truck to a fire and are in great need of funds to replace this equipment. They hold fundraisers regularly, and would welcome your support.

All our volunteer fire departments depend on our financial assistance; please remember to support your local fire department whenever possible. We certainly value their commitment to service and appreciate all their efforts.

#### **Speaking of Donations:**

It is not our intent to use this newsletter to solicit, but another great need this season is supplies for unwanted animals sheltered in our humane societies. Recently one of our lake residents took a bag of dog food to the Chilton County Humane Society, where they were in such desperate straits that they immediately used the bag he provided. There are great needs everywhere and thankfully the spirit of giving lives on throughout the year.

Thank you for supporting your local charities, whatever they may be.

#### **H.O.B.O. Spotlight**

*Have you ever seen what looks like big birdhouses on the edge of the lake and wondered what they were? Now you will know!*

#### **Wood Ducks on Lake Mitchell** Mickey Bates

Of the many species of waterfowl that are observed on Lake Mitchell at various times of the year, only the Wood Ducks nest extensively in the area. Once abundant along forested streams in Alabama and eastern states, their numbers diminished due to streamside timber harvesting along with other factors. These beautiful ducks were on the brink of extinction in the early 1900s. Conservation efforts beginning in 1918 helped save the species that we now enjoy so often on the lake. It is estimated that there are now close to two million Wood Ducks in the continental United States. One of the conservation measures that had a part in the recovery of the Wood Duck population was and still is the placing of artificial nesting boxes or houses. Wood Ducks normally nest in cavities of trees along streams, ponds and wetlands. With very few natural nest cavities available the production of broods of young Woodies was limited. On Lake Mitchell the habitat for Wood Ducks is excellent, but the naturally occurring nesting structures are limited.

Since 1992 the nesting pairs of Wood Ducks have had more places to raise their young on Lake Mitchell. In July of that year Jarrad Bates of Area 9/Walnut Creek Peninsula, the son of Mickey and Barbara Bates, began a project while working towards his Eagle Scout rank as a member of Boy Scout Troop 57. His project was to build and install Wood Duck nesting boxes or houses at suitable locations in the sloughs and wooded backwater areas of the lake. With the approval and guidance of the State of Alabama Department of Conservation and the help of the other members of BSA Troop 57, Jarrad built and installed twenty five nesting boxes along the shoreline. Since they were put in place so late in the nesting season that first year only a very few of the boxes were used. A survey later in the fall determined that only 26 eggs were laid and 18 hatched. Things have changed since that first year. The second year 88 eggs were laid and 58 hatched. The third year 124 eggs were laid in the 19 boxes used and 110 hatched. The trend continued to improve and still today the nest boxes are very productive. The nest boxes must be monitored every year. Some boxes may need repair and all boxes require cleaning and the old shavings replaced. The use and nesting success rate is determined by counting the eggshells that hatched along with eggs that did not hatch. The boxes that were not used by the third year were relocated to another area that might be more suitable to the ducks. The boxes last about five years on average, although a few of the originals are still

in use (after a few repairs). Jarrad and the Bates family still maintain the nest boxes every year with new boxes replacing the old ones as needed and records kept of the ducks hatched. Because the predator guards are not always an effective deterrent the boxes are sometimes occupied by other animals including snakes, raccoons, and squirrels. Wasps love to build large nests in them after the ducks have left.

Over the past 13 years over one thousand five hundred (1500) eggs have been laid in the boxes and over one thousand (1000) have hatched. Given a 35% to 50% survival rate that is 350 to 500 additional Wood Ducks we

have enjoyed. Now when you see those boxes on the poles in the back waters and sloughs you will know how they got there and what they have done for the Wood Ducks of Lake Mitchell. Jarrad earned his BSA Eagle Rank and was selected to receive the W. Kelly Mosley Environmental Award for achievements in Forestry and Wildlife for the project.