Volume 31, Issue 4, Fall 2026

PRESIDENT'S CORNER: by Chan Aldridge

I can hardly believe my time as President of Lake Mitchell HOBO is coming to an end. They say time flies when you're having fun and that definitely describes my time as President. I have been so blessed to have a wonderful team of volunteers to work with. I could not have accomplished anything without them! The last two years have seen much progress on our beautiful lake. We have purchased and installed (or are in the process of installing) 30 directional signs to identify sloughs, creeks, and islands. A special shout out to Durwood Brown and Ken McElroy who helped install each of them. It was a very labor intensive project. Not everyone who boats (or even lives) on our lake know their way around our 150 miles of shoreline as well as the old-timers do. These signs will not only help them, but also Marine 9, our fire and rescue boat. When we finish installing them this Fall, Lt. Conrad Walden, over Marine 9, will go with us to help install and also see the location of each of the signs. My grandsons installed one of the signs showing AlaGa Slough on my neighbor, Paul Hammock's property, under his work safe supervision. We used the Coosa Queen (my 26' long, hard top, custom built, antique pontoon boat) for installing the signs.

The sign installing crew (Chan, Durwood, and Ken) getting ready to install more signs on our beautiful lake.

These are the last signs we will put up this Fall and this will complete this lake improvement project. Noneless Creek Slough will be one of our last signs to be put up. This is where we have an overnight shelter in the very back of the slough, which is at the halfway mark on this beautiful hiking trail through the 10,000 acre Forever Wild land.

Kenny Hall (Area 3B Representative) hiking the Forever Wild Trail.

Don Miller (HOBO member) standing in front of the overnight shelter at the halfway point of the hiking trail

Kenny's phone number or Don's phone numbers are in the Lake Mitchell HOBO directory if you have questions.

To me Fall is the most beautiful time of the year to take this hiking adventure. Above and below are pictures from this trail. It begins or ends on Hwy 29 going to Weogufka at the Hatchett Creek Bridge. It ends or begins on the big hilltop above Weogufka Creek. You can pick up a map at the check-in station across from Mount Mariah Church not far past Hatchett Creek Bridge. There is also an information board with a trail map at the start and finish of this beautiful trail. You can print out a map from your computer of the Coosa Wildlife Management Area. Stay on the beaten trail and you can't go wrong. When you are in the Fixico (Old Little Joe's Fish Camp) Creek area of this trail you will see a warning sign that says, BEWARE OF BIGFOOT, STAY ON THE BEATEN TRAIL. When I was hiking this part of the trail with two of my best friends, one of them said, "The only hikers that have seen Big Foot on this trail are the ones drinking wine and eating cheese."

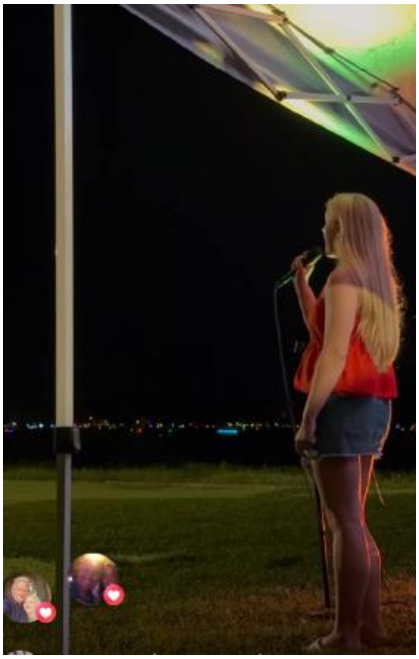
This is the view from the overnight shelter. If you aren't up to the entire 11-mile trail, you can have someone meet you in their boat here and pick you up.

On a personal note, this summer I had an accident near the shore of Lake Mitchell while helping a neighbor cut down some trees with my chainsaw. The mimosa tree split and did a barber chair spin and hit me in the back while I was walking away from it. The tree ended up landing on top of me and I ended up having a broken back, a broken foot, and requiring CPR from my neighbor, Paul Hammock, who I was helping. I was very thankful for my neighbor who saved my life. But I am also very thankful for the East Chilton Volunteer Fire and Rescue guys of Marine 9 who beat the ambulance to me and strapped me to a back board and pulled me up the steep rock vertical bank to the ambulance. We are VERY blessed to have these guys!

I would like to thank everyone who has participated in our Lake Cleanups through the years. Our next one is scheduled for October 3rd and if you have never participated, or haven't joined us in a while, please put this on your calendar and join us. It's a wonderful opportunity to help clean our lake of debris and have fun and fellowship with your lake neighbors. When HOBO began our lake cleanups over two decades ago, we were able to fill a giant dump truck each time. More recently, we have only been able to find enough debris to fill a regular size dump truck. We miss Dale Vann who was our Lake Cleanup Chairman for many years. Upon his death, Ken McElroy continued the tradition of doing a great job. Ken will be our next HOBO President. He is an outstanding person and will be one of our all-time great HOBO presidents.

This year we had the best fireworks show ever put on by the Lake Mitchell HOBO. The Board approved extra money to celebrate our 250th anniversary of our country by a spectacular fireworks show. Thank you to Jimmy McCormick and his team who made this happen.

Jimmy McCormick's family and friends getting ready for a spectacular fireworks show. The McCormick family started this tradition several decades back.



We were blessed to have Melanie Dickinson-McCormick's daughter, Abigail, to sing the National Anthem at the Fireworks Show. She did an amazing job. Abigail could be a famous singer with her singing talent. I would go as far as saying her performance at this special event will never be forgotten by those that were close enough to hear this performance. This event was also broadcast live if you were tuned in to the right radio station.

This year was also a record-breaking Poker Run. Thanks to Melanie Dickinson-McCormick and her wonderful team who worked so hard to make it the best ever. Much of this money goes to pay for scholarships and teacher grants for Chilton and Coosa County students and teachers.

Don't forget our upcoming annual meeting. This is an opportunity for all the residents of the lake to hear the lake news and ask any questions they may have. Central Alabama Electric Cooperative has, once again, graciously allowed us to use their beautiful auditorium for our meeting. It's located at 103 Jesse Samuel Hunt Blvd, Prattville. It's a very short distance off Hwy 31N, from I-65, off Exit 186. The meeting is Friday, November 6, 2026 at 6:00 p.m. Thank you to Tom Stackhouse (a Lake Mitchell HOBO member) for allowing us to use this beautiful auditorium and setting up Central Access for our lake family. This also included the homes in the rural areas surrounding our lake. Below are photos from last year's meeting, including Tom Stackhouse and Coosa Riverkeeper Justinn Overton. --- **Thank you for allowing me to be your president!**

AREA REP NEWS:

Area 6 **Durwood and Karen Brown**

We proudly welcome new residents Kevin and Cameron Smitherman and sons Aiden & Collin. The Smithermans are loving their great place near the Bird Creek entrance; and they are ever so fortunate to be next-door to the lovable Tom & Tad Henry.

We also congratulate David and Melinda McCullough, who are now “full-timers” at their beautiful & newly renovated home at the far end of the creek. The Cook/McCulloughs now proudly span 4 generations here. How many more of you have 3 or even 4 generations who claim Lake Mitchell as their own? This would be fun to know—email me!!

Speaking of the end of Bird Creek – many thanks to Adam, Karin, Lisa and the King family for bringing back Bird‘s Independence Day fireworks. Their dad (Norman King) annually did a July 4th Bird Creek firework show prior to his passing. Thanks again to the Kings for an amazing show.
What an action-packed HOBO Summer it has been---- (see highlights below)
5/2 Our annual HOBO picnic was wonderful. Many thanks to Jim and Johnye Woodrow for always heading up this fun time for all.

6/20 This year’s Poker Run was the most successful ever! Thanks to Melanie, Jim, and all the McCormicks for masterfully coordinating and executing this enormous event that provides scholarships and grants to deserving teens and teachers in our area. Additional applause and our gratitude to all who pitched in… especially to all the host dealers who were outstanding.

7/3 HOBO fireworks at Cargile - What a Spectacular show! “Way to go”, Jimmy McCormick and Crew. Best ever! Even viewing the Fireworks from 3 miles away on our deck, all the colors were bursting above the trees. Happy 250th birthday America.

Let’s all finish this season safe on the water. Wear your PFD’s; and always have ready a throwable, horn or whistle, kill switch, fire extinguisher, first aid kit, and have any extra fuel safely stowed away. And Captains - always watch out for fast and/or careless traffic, especially coming around corners and through tight channels.

Lastly, as a word to the wise – on July 25 numerous Lake Mitchell homes were without power for 20 straight hours. Our generator kept the frig running in the house; but our outside freezer remained off throughout the power outage. No problem, however because we had learned this precautionary tip sometime ago.
That is – keep several gallon jugs of water frozen in your freezer. By doing so your freezer should still remain “semi frozen” because the hard frozen gallon (milk or tea) jugs take days to completely thaw out. Hope this helps. ***Happy Fall Y’all. The Browns***

Area 13B **Wendy and Richard Cruse**

Happy Fall, Neighbors,

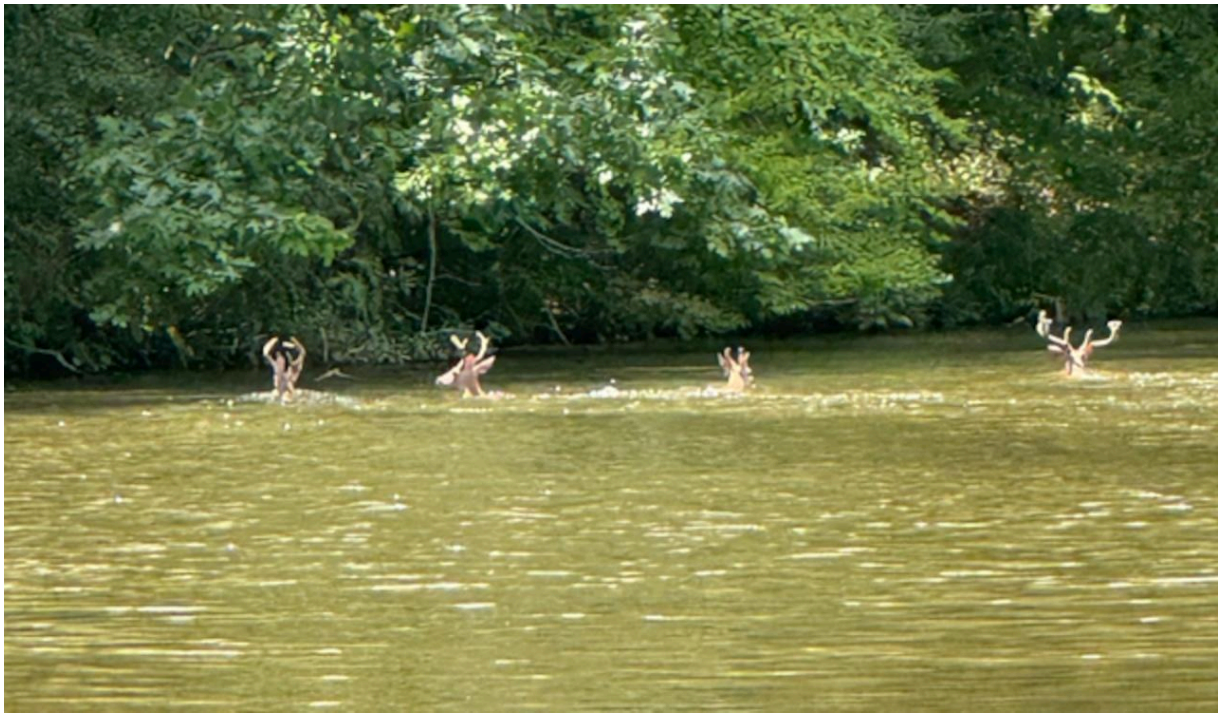
As you enjoy the autumn weather, please consider supporting the participants in this year's AL 650.

Now in its 8th year, the AL 650 is a high-level endurance challenge stretching from Weiss Lake in Northeast Alabama to Fort Morgan on the Gulf coast. Racers from all over the world compete with only ten days to complete the course.

The Lake Mitchell HOBO group, in conjunction with other donors, has prepared welcome bags for the contestants. You can track their progress along the route using their GPS coordinates.

If you would like to help pass out welcome bags and give the racers a great sendoff, please join us at Jake's at Weiss Lake on October 2nd at 7:00 PM. - Sincerely, The Cruses

"There's something you don't see every day…."



Four antlered deer swim across Alabama's Weogufka Creek Aug. 5, 2026. Justinn Overton

ON THE LIGHTER SIDE (a chuckle or a grin)

What does a farmer use to count his cows? A cow-culator!

Did you hear about the guy who got hit in the head with a can of soda? He was lucky it was a soft drink!

What vegetable is kind to everyone? A sweet potato.

I couldn't understand why the baseball kept getting bigger. Then, it hit me!

What do you call a fibbing cat? A lion.

Why should you never play poker in the jungle? Because it's full of cheetahs!

How does Darth Vader prefer his toast? On the dark side.

What kind of trousers does a ghosthunter wear? Just a paranormal jeans.

What did the air conditioner say when it met a celebrity? I'm a big fan!

The bad news – My girlfriend Lorraine dumped me when she found out I was seeing her best friend, Claire Lee. ….. The good news – I can see Claire Lee now, Lorraine is gone.

Why do chicken coops only have two doors? Because if they had four, they'd be chicken sedans.

How did the hamburger introduce his girlfriend? Meat Patty.

(EDITOR'S NOTE: These gems are courtesy of our own Chip Gates, and he's got more in store, believe you me. But if you have your own favorite "dad-joke", or pun, kid-friendly joke, classic shaggy dog tale, or any other clean joke you'd like to see in a future edition, just send it on to me. Laura Thornton, with the subject line HOBO Newsletter to rdthornt@charter.net

Lake Mitchell H.O.B.O. Membership Annual Dues Form

Print this page if you wish to mail in your annual dues, or click the link to pay online.

https://www.lakemitchellhobo.org/join.html

DUES & DONATIONS	
Annual Dues	$ 25
General Donation	$
Fireboat	$
Fireworks	$
Scholarship	$
TOTAL	$

MEMBERSHIP STATUS Check One	
Renewal	☐
New Member	☐

Last Name	
First Name(s)	
Home Address	
Lake Address	
Email 1	
Email 2	
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Mail completed form along with your check to:

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