

The Lake Mitchell H.O.B.O.

Lake Mitchell Home Owners and Boat Owners Association Newsletter

Volume 19 Issue 4

www.lakemitchellhobo.org

Fourth Quarter 2014

FROM THE PRESIDENT...

Lee Poe Mr.LeePoe@yahoo.com



Well this summer is over, and as always it is sad to see summer come to a close. Hope everyone enjoyed the summer here on Lake Mitchell. I did; it was just too short and I did not get to spend as much time on the lake as

I would have liked.

As well as summer coming to a close, my term as President of Lake Mitchell H.O.B.O. is also soon coming to a close. I have enjoyed serving as president. There are a lot of good people involved who have made the job easy, and I appreciate every one of them.

We still have a few events before the end of the year. The lake cleanup will be on November 1, 2014. We will meet at Higgins Ferry at 8:00 AM.

The annual meeting will be November 14, 2014. It will be at the Alabama Power Building in Clanton starting at 6:30 PM.

As I have said I have enjoyed serving as president and again thanks to all the people that have helped with all the events and made this an easy job.

Lee

Upcoming Events for ALL

Lake Cleanup. Saturday, November 1. Meet at Higgins Ferry at 8:00 a.m. **Every homeowner on Lake Mitchell should plan to participate.** Spend a couple of hours improving the quality of our lake by going out in teams on boats and removing trash from the lake. Then celebrate with a picnic lunch provided by H.O.B.O.

Annual Meeting. Friday, November 14, 6:30 p.m. Meet at the Alabama Power building in Clanton. Hear the financial report and 2014 accomplishments of H.O.B.O. Witness the installation of new officers. Voice your ideas and concerns to the organization. You will be eligible for some very nice door prizes just for attending.

2015 H.O.B.O. Scholarship News

In May 2015, Lake Mitchell H.O.B.O. will award a \$2,500 scholarship for the seventh year to a student who lives in Chilton or Coosa County.

To apply, a student must be a senior in good standing with at least a B average and must be planning to attend an Alabama college in the fall of 2015. The student must submit an application form, participate in one or more Lake Mitchell clean-ups, write an essay about environmental concerns, and be interviewed by members of the Lake Mitchell H.O.B.O. Scholarship Committee.

Any student who is interested in applying for the Scholarship can go to our website at <http://www.lakemitchellhobo.org/scholarships.html> and download the H.O.B.O. Scholarship Application Form and the H.O.B.O. Scholarship Requirements. Contact Rebecca Beaty at rebecca.beaty@gmail.com if you need more information.

The sale of our calendars and donations from you, our members, help support this scholarship. H.O.B.O. Calendars for 2015 will be available at Lake Clean-up on November 1st. Buy several and help us with this important project!

Water Quality Report

PARAMETER	O.K. RANGE	CURRENT QTR
Dissolved O2	5 - 9	7.07
pH	6.5 - 8.2	7.93
Alkalinity	20+	75.66
Hardness	10 - 120	51.33



Higgins Update

The 3rd quarter newsletter article about the Higgins family and ferry brought responses from two folks. Not surprisingly, both are members of the Higgins family. Amy Moon, whose husband Bob is a direct descendant of B. F. and Josephine Higgins, was given a number of old documents by Bob Flemon Higgins' wife Barbara. These documents included land deeds and mortgages and, being from around the turn of the 20th century, were written in longhand. We will explore one of these in this story.

Unless Willard Scott has read out your name and shown your photo on the TODAY SHOW, it is unlikely you have ever tread upon House's Island. You see, House's Island, or as it was known in the late 1800's, the House Island Plantation, is under water. The *Lake Mitchell Recreation and Fishing Guide* I so often refer to, depicts this subterranean world as starting about three tenths of a mile above the present Higgins Ferry boat ramp, extending upriver to a point about one tenth of a mile north of the mouth of Walnut Creek. Prior to Mitchell Dam being built, the island sat pretty much right in the middle of the Coosa River. Please bear in mind that what I'm about to relate comes from a 3-page document, hand written on what appears to be lined school notebook paper, and using the vernacular of the day. As such, I hope my interpretation of the wording is accurate.

On the 25th day of May, 1887, B. F. Higgins (Sr.) and his wife Josephine bought the island from George H. Dunlap, a trustee of Baker Lawler (a law firm) of Mobile. The amount, due and payable on the 25th of December of that year, was \$750. This paltry sum (by today's standards) yielded a parcel of land that encompassed 52 & 32/100 acres, or the entire island. The mortgage goes on to state that the property, since it is in the middle of the river, lies (sic) in both Chilton and Coosa counties. The sale was witnessed by J. Graysville, acting Justice of the Peace in Chilton County. The document pages were subsequently folded together vertically, and on what came to be the outside front was a blue inked stamp. The blanks filled in, it said the mortgage was filed for record and signed by the Judge of Probate in Chilton County, the (Honorable) H. J. Callen, on the 2nd day of June, 1887. If the book still exists at the courthouse, this record can be found in Volume 15 of Deeds, on page 782.

Our second respondent, Dr. Phil Simms, a longtime resident and dentist in Clanton, has property on Bird Creek. Dr. Phil says he has about 60 years of history on the "river." His aunt Grace was married to Joseph Higgins. Uncle Joe and Aunt Grace had three children: Joe Frank, Simms, and Sara Ann.

Dr. Simms has recollections of the Higgins Ferry, and that it moved under its own power, as opposed to

using ropes or cables to cross the river/lake. The ferry left the Chilton County side about a quarter mile north of the current boat launch, and did indeed go up into Ferry Branch on the Coosa County side. Dr. Simms remembers the Higgins cabin, located near where the ferry left the Chilton County shore. Sometimes as a young man, he would walk to a nearby spring to fetch water for use at the cabin. Dr. Simms recalls that spring to be a source of fine water. He said the property where the cabin was located is now owned by a friend of his. The friend told him the old road bed that used to lead to the ferry fell into disuse and later became a refuse dumping ground. Dr. Phil and I hope to meet in a cooler, less snaky time of year and see what we can find of the old road.

Goats Will Roam

I have found there are certain historical things rivers and lakes in this state seem to have in common. Stills, moonshine, and speakeasies are one attribute that invariably accompanied large bodies of water, especially those in non-urban areas. I think that topic would warrant a book, so I'll leave it alone for now. Another common theme is the presence of a Goat Island. It seems, in our case, we are blessed with a few.

Alan Hargrove, who has a place at the mouth of Armstrong Slough on Cargile Creek, told me that Goat Island I is the small island just south of the entrance to Bird/Byrd Creek. He said the island just off the north shore of Cargile and having the large transmission tower on it is called Goat Island II.

Beth Wise, whose place is on Cargile Creek between Goat Island (II) and Pumphouse Slough, said when they first came to the lake in the early 80's, there were in fact goats on that island. Someone had even built a shelter for the animals. She said if you "baahhaed" at them, they would answer, something her kids (no pun intended) loved. Beth went on to say there haven't been any goats on the island in many years.

My cousin John Trapolino recalls attending the Boy Scout camp, Camp Arrowhead, near Bird Creek, in the early 60's. To earn a particular merit badge they would have to swim a mile, the course being marked by buoys between the Chilton shore and Goat Island (I). As part of a ceremony inducting scouts into The Order of the Arrow, a bonfire would be lit on the island. John said he didn't remember any goats being on the island at that time, so they might have been later arrivals.

My oft-referred-to modern map doesn't indicate a name, but a check of Google Earth shows a Goat Island on the Coosa County side. It is a couple of sloughs up from Ferry Branch, and would have been opposite the southern end of House's Island. Having circumnavigated this island during the recent Labor

Day holiday, I can say there were no obvious signs of any of the bearded creatures. Of course, with today's technology, they may have been stealth goats.

If you have any Goat Island trivia or stories to share, please contact me at gatesestate@bellsouth.net.

Rushton Comes to Light

My initial interest in the history of the lake revolved around the town of Rushton, a sawmill town located at the confluence of Blue Creek and the Coosa River. Denizens of the lake spoke of a rail line that was used in conjunction with the mill, one that bordered Blue Creek and wound its way into the woods to where the timber was being cut. After consulting 40 or so maps listed online by the University of Alabama, I found a couple that showed this short line. However, there was one map, put out in 1913 for the Alabama Traction, Light and Power Company, that showed a complete spur line going from Verbena to Rushton. My interest in railroads piqued, but still fixated on the now submerged town, I reached out to a descendent of Colonel William James Rushton, a highly respected Alabamian involved in many local industries, thinking there may be a connection. Though Col. Rushton had ties to the Power Company and several railroads, there was no connection to the town of the same name. Fortunately, James Russell, a fisherman of Lake Mitchell since the late 70's, shared the same interest in the town. He recently contacted me and I provided what little information I had. Feeling a bit like Tom Sawyer, with Rushton being my picket fence, I sat back while James went to work. In short order, this is what he found.

The book *Notable Men of Alabama: Vol. 2*, by Hon. Joel Campbell DuBose, was published in 1904. The date is important because Rushton didn't start to appear on Alabama maps until this time. On pages 346-349 of this volume, James found the story of William White Wadsworth. Born in 1841 near Prattville, Wadsworth suffered a debilitating injury to both wrists, which led to his being rejected for service in the early part of the Civil War. He persisted though, enlisting in the Confederate army, and had some fascinating experiences through the remainder of the conflict. One of these was, as a prisoner of war, when he grabbed the reins of a Union captain's horse and rode off in a hail of bullets to make his escape. After being wounded three times during a raid in 1865, Wadsworth returned to Autauga County, where he became successful in agriculture and the saw mill business. To quote DuBose, Wadsworth "owns one of the largest sawmills in the State, located in Chilton county on the Coosa river." Furthermore DuBose writes, "He has a railroad connecting his mill with the Louisville and Nashville railroad, and a narrow gauge road to bring timber to mill from the woods."

For our interest, DuBose further stated that Wadsworth maintained a commissary at Rushton.

So there it is. Where the name Rushton came from has not yet been discovered. But as I sit back and relax, you can rest assured Mr. Russell is on the hunt for more details about the town and will undoubtedly uncover them. Thanks James!

As always, I am interested in hearing from our readers on any topic of lake history. Meanwhile, perhaps someone can enlighten me, and others, as to whom the islands of Ware, Gilchrist, and Foshee are named for. This might be a good place to start to finding out more about the upper part of the Lake.



W. W. Wadsworth

AREA REPRESENTATIVES			
Area	Area Name	Representative	Phone
1	Blue Creek/ The Ridge	Bobby Lewis docx2@mindspring.com	205-212-1020 205-901-8307
2	Blue to Cargile	Jim & Johnye Woodrow ajwking@aol.com	205-425-9431 205-755-0055
3	Cargile South	Dan Murchison DanMurchison@gmail.com	205-408-7445
4	Cargile North	Joan Vickery vickery200@yahoo.com	205-280-7336
5	Cargile to Bird	Sonny & Peggy Bullard pnsbullard@gmail.com	205 755-9514
6	Bird Creek	Leslie Miles lesliemiles0@gmail.com	205-755-6432 205-612-2172
7	Bird to Walnut	Becki & Mau McCallum beckmau@gmail.com	205 755-5334
8	Walnut SW	Beau Battaglia beauredsox@yahoo.com	205-389-2480
9	Walnut Creek Peninsula	Dale & Patty Vann rdvann@bellsouth.net	205 979-5559 205 755-0825
10	Cove and Mountain	Roxanne Martin roxypmartin@gmail.com	205 755-0863
11	Mountain to Lay Dam	Stan Holt Stan-holt@att.net	205-980-1428
12	Upper Hatchet and Weogufka	VACANT	
13A	East Pennamotley	Jim & Wathan Hand jmhand@centurylink.net	256-377-1153
13B	West Pennamotley	Sam & Nancy Piccolo samppiccolo62@gmail.com	256 377-4801
14	Hatchet to Big Airplane	Eric & Rose Green rosegreenlake14@yahoo.com	205-492-7151
15	Airplane/Finger to Big Y Slough	Tommy Carpenter rtcarpen@southernco.com	256-377-1046 205-586-1749
16	Big Y to Mitchell Dam	Nan & David Spivey davidaspivey@gmail.com	256-377-1178 205-492-0375

Area 4 – Joan Vickery

It's hard to believe that summer has come and gone. There was a time in my life that i wanted things to "hurry up and get here" but now i wish things would just slow down.

We love seeing the wildlife on the lake. There are a group of ducks that regularly visit us, and our grandchildren enjoy feeding them. We also love seeing the geese and their babies floating by.

We were blessed to have an uneventful summer - no skiing or tubing accidents. But there was one thing that happened a few weeks ago that bothered me tremendously. Thank goodness I didn't witness the event, but my son and one of his friends happened to be on our dock and saw it happen.

On this particular day a family of geese had just passed our dock and was headed up the creek when a speedboat decided to cut directly into the family, hitting some of the babies. I can't imagine why someone would have a desire to do something like this, but I guess in the world we live in today, there are all kinds of people.

Since I am obviously sharing my thoughts, I have to say I also don't understand why, when we are swimming just off of our dock, boaters have to come in so close. There were several times this year that I got upset with some of these folks. Common courtesy goes hand in hand with safety.

We have a wonderful lake and a lot of wonderful people that call it home. It's a shame that a few people can tarnish the "good life." *Joan*

Area 5 – Peggy and Sonny Bullard

This has been one of the best summers ever! Do we say that every year? Probably, since they are all great and special in their own way.

The picnic and the 4TH of July was great this year as well. They only get better. Thanks to Jim McCormick and his team the fireworks were spectacular. There were more boats in both parades this year than they have been in many years. All the activities were great but the time with friends and family we had visiting this summer was the greatest event of all times.

We did have our Area 5 party at the Straka's home in July. There were only a small group of twelve there but there was enough food for twenty. We may be small in attendance but we are large on fellowship. If you missed it you missed a real treat.



We mentioned in the last newsletter about our adopted Grands from Ethiopia who live in Delaware coming for their first visit to the lake. Well it happened

and yes they do love it. They took to the water, the tube and the boat like fish do to water. Watching them delighted our hearts.

Our church youth group came for a work/play day as part of Servants Week. They go to different homes each day and help with projects not easily done by the homeowner. They pulled weeds and cleaned the ditches along our drive before enjoying an afternoon of fun swimming, tubing and boating. There were 25 teenagers plus their leaders. What a blessing they are and they really do work hard.

I would like to especially invite all the Area 5 people to attend the annual meeting on November 14th at the Alabama Power Building at 6:30 P.M. This meeting is always informative and fun complete with many door prizes. This year we hope to display all the scrapbooks from the very first President of H.O.B.O. through our current one, Lee Poe. You owe it to yourself to come and see just exactly what your organization is about.

Sonny wants to remind everyone to winterize your boats before winter gets here.

Have a great fall & winter but keep in touch. Please send us your news and pictures. We would like to share them with your lake neighbors in our next newsletter. *Sonny and Peggy*



Area 6 - Bird Creek Gathering at the home of Troy and Tina Crocker

Area 6 – Leslie Miles

I hope everyone had an enjoyable summer, we personally did. Lots of family and friends came through out the season but the best one was the weekend we celebrated my mothers 86th birthday on August 3rd. She and my dad bought our place in 1974 and she continues to love it here, I pray she has many more summers to come!

Another memorable day was Aug 9th. Troy and Tina Crocker opened their beautiful home for our area

party. It was fabulous! Around 40 people attended and we all had a great time. We really have some awesome cooks! The Crocker's ordered BBQ from Hickory Chip, which was excellent.... and everyone else brought either an appetizer, side dish or dessert. It was so much fun getting to know our neighbors better. I really encourage all areas to do the same!

When out boating, have you noticed some signs that name the creeks? My husband had this idea and we have put out 5; one for Bird, Hatchet, Pennymotley (this spelling was taken from Alabama Power's map), Finger Slough and Big Y Slough. If an area is interested in a sign, please let Steve know by emailing him at smiles@insurancenetworkal.com

On a last note, I want to thank Marie Greene for the fantastic job she has done being the sole editor for this H.O.B.O. newsletter. She is stepping down from this position and I can't thank her enough for her great service. God Bless you Marie!

Wishing everyone a safe and happy fall. Hope to see a lot you at the fall clean up and good luck to our favorite football teams! *Leslie*

Area 7 – Becki and Mau McCallum

We have had a nice quiet summer and appreciated the relatively cooler temperatures - especially the wonderful July 4 weather. Now looking forward to a quiet fall and winter. I hope you will all plan to attend the Annual Meeting on Nov. 14. It is a good opportunity to see your neighbors and meet new ones.

We do want to welcome a new member to our area, David and Tracy Gossett and their girls. They are remodeling and looking forward to spending time on the lake with friends old and new.

Come by and visit us when you are out. *Becki and Mau*

Area 9 – Dale and Patty Vann

Area 9 (Walnut Creek Peninsula) has been the target of several robberies this summer, but we are uniting as a community to fight back. We are staying in close email communication with all homeowners and we are patrolling our area on four-wheelers, on foot and in our cars to check out each other's property. We are posting signs, installing gates, security systems and surveillance cameras at many homes. We have had

one small group meeting with local law enforcement and will likely plan a broader meeting in the future.

On a personal note, it is with mixed emotions that I announce that Patty and I will be stepping down as your H.O.B.O. Area 9 representatives at the end of this year. We have enjoyed the opportunity to get to know so many of our neighbors personally, and to be your voice to the H.O.B.O. organization.

Dale and Patty



Editors Note: Area 9 owes a huge debt of gratitude to Patty and Dale Vann who have served for 10 years as the H.O.B.O. reps for the Walnut Creek peninsula. Under their leadership, Area 9 has become a community of real neighbors. The area banded together in a huge project to bring county drinking water to the community. We have gotten involved in an effort to improve the water quality in Walnut Creek. And most recently, we are working together to thwart would-be thieves in our area. Patty and Dale have helped create this sense of community through their annual Memorial Day get-togethers where there was always great good and fellowship. In addition to their role as Area Reps, Dale has led the H.O.B.O. Lake Cleanup Committee for years (and will continue to do so.) I hope everyone in Area 9 will take time to phone or send Dale and Patty an email of thanks for a job well done!

Area 14 - Eric and Rose Green

It was nice to see everyone this summer. Lets do it again next summer.

The lake is a wonderful place, but sometimes it can be far away from some services that may come in need -- like after hours emergency pet care. We met some wonderful people this summer, although it was a

misfortunate accident that brought us together. When our dog was injured we rushed him to River Region Veterinary Services in Prattville just off Exit 186. They provided excellent care and I would highly recommend them. *Rose*

Area 15 - Tommy Carpenter

I love the Fall season on Lake Mitchell. It's cooler, the fishing gets better, and when the leaves change on the lake it is absolutely beautiful. Some great places to visit when the leaves start to change are just north of Higgins Ferry or almost anywhere in Hatchet, Pennamotley, and Weogufka Creek. There are some sloughs on the left just before the Big Y slough that have not been developed and are really nice also.

Recently we had the Birmingham Fire Department come speak at one of our staff meetings. He said that through February we had more deaths related to house fires than we had in all of 2013. He spoke about the importance of smoke detectors and recommended checking your smoke detectors at least twice a year. He also covered the importance of having fire extinguishers. There was an interesting discussion about having fire extinguishers in your boat. A fellow employee told his story about getting a ticket for not having a fire extinguisher in his boat on Lake Tuscaloosa. I have one in both my boats purely for safety purposes, regardless of any legal requirements.

Unfortunately there were some reports of thefts on the lake this past summer. They caught the bad guys but it seems that once Labor Day passes the thieves come out. Just a reminder to secure your property, especially if you are a weekender.

Be safe. *Tommy Carpenter*

Area 16, The Cove - Nan and David Spivey

Welcome to Nan and David Spivey who have agreed to become the new Area 16 reps for The Cove community!

Nan and David have been on Lake Mitchell for many years. Starting out in Area 15 until they built their permanent home in The Cove. They are now full time retirees at the lake. Please give David or Nan a call or send them an email at davidaspivey@gmail.com welcoming them. Also, help them out with any news or events going on that are newsworthy.

Thanks to Anita Lawson who had been filling in as the Area 16 rep even though she lives in Area 15. Anita will still keep area residents posted until Nan and David get going.

Groups Unite to Tour Walnut Creek and Discuss Issues Impacting the Creek and Lake Mitchell

On August 14 concerned citizens met in Clanton to tour Walnut Creek to get a first-hand look at issues regarding the creek and its impact on Lake Mitchell. After stopping at three sites along the creek as it flows through Clanton toward the Lake, the group returned to the Alabama Power building to discuss the problems and possible solutions.



Lake Mitchell H.O.B.O. members and residents who live along the creek were well represented in the group that was hosted by the Alabama Clean Water Partnership. There were also representatives from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, the Alabama Department of Environmental Management, the Alabama Forestry Commission, the Health Department, the Extension Center and the Mayor of Clanton.

The primary issue with the creek is excessive sedimentation generated during heavy rains as the creek flows through downtown Clanton where the creek has been dredged. The



erosion of sediment is then carried downstream where much of it is deposited at the mouth of the lake. Another suspected source of sedimentation is the

result of the scraping of dirt county roads. Excessive dirt fills the drainage ditches alongside the roads and then is carried from the ditches into the creek during heavy rains. Again, the sediment is settling out at the entrance to the lake.

rainstorms. Again, the sediment is settling out at the entrance to the lake.



Homeowners on the lake who live near where Walnut Creek enters Lake Mitchell are experiencing huge build-up of sediment to the point that at least one family can no longer get their boat out of their boathouse.

There is also concern that the buildup of sediment could negatively impact the water quality and health of fish and wildlife in the creek. Water testing and inspection of wildlife in the creek approximately halfway between downtown Clanton and the lake indicates the creek is fairly healthy.

However, official testing has not been done by the Alabama Department of Environmental Management (ADEM) close to where the creek enters lake level. H.O.B.O. Water Monitor Patsy Wideman has been testing the water in this area for 11 years and has reported a sharp increase in turbidity just in the last couple of years. Turbidity is a measure of sediment.



ADEM has committed to testing Walnut Creek closer to the lake in 2015.

No solutions or remedial actions were decided at the meeting.

P. O. Box 1324
Clanton, Alabama 35046

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Lake Mitchell H.O.B.O. Membership Application

Annual Dues Homeowner \$25.00	Marine 9 - Donation Maintenance & Operation \$	Fireworks - Donation Purchase of Fireworks \$	Utility Boat - Donation Maintenance & Operation \$
Other Donation Boathouse Sign \$15____ Memorial ____ Education Fund ____ Scholarship ____ Other (specify) _____ Amount \$			
Name:		Check One: Renewal <input type="checkbox"/> New Member <input type="checkbox"/>	
Home Mailing Address:			
Lake 911 Address:			Lake Area:
Email:			
Home Phone:	Lake Phone:	Cell Phone	

Detach and mail completed form along with your check to: Lake Mitchell H.O.B.O., PO Box 1324, Clanton, AL 35046

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M14 should appear next to your name on the mailing label of this newsletter if you have already paid your 2014 dues.