

MEMORIAL DAY GENERAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING
MAY 26, 2019
10 AM

Invocation: Given by Reverend Zack Martin, Clayton First Methodist Church and Boat Church

Pledge of Allegiance

Star Spangled Banner sung by scholarship student **Sidney Watts**

Approval of last Labor Day minutes

Recognition of Veterans

Recognition of Trustees

Introduction of new members : Tim and Christie St. Clair, Dr. Jeff and Cathy Verdack, John and April Rooker, Jim and Martha Fagen, Brian and Rebecca Sock, Drs. Eric and Nancy Ferrera, Steve Leaves and Timmy Barkin Leaves, Mikey Gray Irby, Scotty and Maggie Green, Rob Allison and Jane Hailey, Bob and Cathy Boston, Corey and Margarite Moore, John and Ashley Graham, Lisa Pruitt

LRA in Memoriam: Bell Turner, Joe Richmond, Way Brown, Betty Ann Griffin, Larry Prince, Dick Gray, Liz Stormont

Introduction of new Trustees

Officers' Reports:

Chairman - John Williams: Said officers and trustees are your eyes and ears on the lake and asked members to reach out to them with any issues. Serving as a trustee is a good way to get involved and meet new people. There are 21 trustees who do a lot of volunteering. John thanked the trustees. Bonnie Quick opened the firehouse for our trustee meeting yesterday and wanted to remind everyone that it's very important that everyone has their 911 address on their boathouse and at the top of their driveway.

Vice-Chair - Sandy Strong: Sandy said we have brought back the Social Committee after identifying the need as V.P.. We now have a committee of 10 or 12 people: Clare and Brad Brown, Jacki and Owen Hardie, Barry and Daphne McWhirter, Carole and Jack Wintle, Jerry Schwieger, Julie Cameron and Jason Moattar. Sandy thanked them all for volunteering. Sandy said 12 families purchased AED's and they are listed in the front of the new directory. If others have them please let us know so we can put you on the list. There is also an AED in the closet here which is available if you are renting the Pavilion. Hall's has an AED which will be hung outside during the summer months which is available to anyone.

President - Ruddy Deas: Ruddy acknowledged the presence of the new merchandise tent and invited everyone to check out the new merchandise. Also the Hemlock group is here to talk about saving our hemlocks. The Local on the Lake group is here, plus Sherriff Chad Nichols and one or two of his officers. Ruddy thanked them for their service. We also have reps from Georgia Power, DNR, Hall's Boathouse, Mountain Patrol and the fire department and rescue.

Vice-President - David Tatum: David pointed out the schedule of events on each person's chair - the same as on the back of the newsletter. June 8 we have first weekend of Bingo and Lakemont University - John King. The new Bingo people are Colleen and Joe Henry. Michelle Persons will offer help if needed. Michael Crowe will talk about our Boater Safety class to be held on Saturday morning. David encouraged new homeowners and boat owners to attend. There is an AED and CPR class on June 22. Rabun County EMS does a great job with this. There is a lot of activity July 4th. David Stromquist asked that the golf tournament on July 5th be mentioned. Registration will soon be available on the website. Fireworks are Friday, July 5th. We always need volunteers. Our first event was last night's party with Sweetwater Junction.

Secretary - Dick Simms: Explained that we are resurrecting the water quality testing that was long done by the late Dr. Jim Funk. Dick has been looking into what type of testing we need to do, where to collect samples, how often, which lab to use and the cost. We should have results within a couple of weeks which we will pass on to the members. Dick reminded everyone that after a heavy rain event the water quality goes down because of natural bacteria which flows into the lake from the woods, runoff from driveways and parking lots and even flooded septic systems. It might not be a good idea to let your little ones swim after a very heavy rain. Dick invited everyone to contact him with any questions or if you have suspicions about something you see or smell on the lake.

CFO - Anita Pittman: The association is in wonderful financial shape thanks to our members. Our membership is running about the same as last year. We have set aside sufficient reserves for unanticipated expenses. The fireworks are the most expensive line item on the budget. They are enjoyed by the membership and the greater community. We also spend a significant amount to print the directories, and provide the Clayton Tribune subscriptions for our members. We have a special line item for the creation of the new LRA website. Last year's Tour of Homes generated over \$60,000 for the Lake Rabun Foundation. The Rabun Ramble had its all-time high of \$22,000. We closed out the sale of our Centennial books which earned a total of \$37,000. Anita invited members to contact her with any questions, and said that the financial statements will be published on the website.

President - Ruddy Deas said that he would like to discuss the new website. We are going to update something done years ago. John Williams and Anita have dealt with it. Ruddy handed it over to John.

Chairman - John Williams recognized Tim and Veanne Smith who built the website and have spent a lot of hours maintaining it. We want to now build a website that the officers can use so we don't rely on the Smiths. They run a business. We rely more and more on the website for many things like fundraising, ticketing, etc. Anita and John have engaged Rock, Paper, Scissors out of Lawrenceville to help us build our website. Anita is building an e-commerce portion of it where you can buy wonderful items online and have them shipped to you. We will have a more robust membership directory where you can put in unlimited e-mails so our children who want to be involved can be included. We will also have an auction function. The whole experience will be different. You will want to go to this website.

President - Ruddy Deas: Mentioned the survey done last year, the first done in approximately 10 years. We had an almost 70% response rate and it gave us a lot of valuable information. It appears that we are doing what the members want us to do. David Tatum was the architect of the survey.

Local on the Lake - This is a replacement of our traditional Father's Day event. Ruddy handed it over to Sandy.

Sandy Strong: Sandy and Anita decided to take on the Local on the Lake event. In the chairs there is an announcement about it and a list of auction items. Everything is local. Lee Epting is the caterer. We are getting back to basics with just a simplified live auction with more valuable "experience" items

We have three young members. Oakley Sutherland works with an event planner in Atlanta. Emily Thompson and Forest Kennedy are also helping. Lee Epting has donated all of the decorations. Sandy asked if anyone wants to volunteer please reach out to her. It's a great way to meet new friends and have fun. There will be an open bar and a reverse raffle. There will be multiple food stations. We need 2 more volunteers to be spotters for the live auction. We have had several people step up to be sponsors. Tickets can be purchased on the website and proceeds go to the Lake Rabun Foundation.

Anita Pittman: Acknowledged the contribution of Andrea Altholz who has been a great help. Ticket purchases are not tax-deductible. Sponsorships go directly to the Foundation and are tax-deductible. Please encourage your younger family members to attend this event.

Sandy Strong - Rabun Ramble: This is the 13th annual Rabun Road Race. It will be Saturday, July 6 at 7:30. It's a 5k and a 10k and there are many walkers. Dogs and strollers are ok. You can sign up on RabunRamble.com and the LRA website.

Michael Crowe - Boating Safety - Discussed "Lifejacket Loaner Stations" which are about to become a reality. Hall's Boathouse and Watersports Central are sponsoring the one at the Hall's boat ramp and LRA is sponsoring the one at the Rabun Beach ramp. This is a program initiated by Nathen Deal to save lives by providing loaner lifejackets. Michael asked for donations of life jackets which are clean and in good condition.

Boater Safety class is Saturday, June 8 at 9 am. Things pertinent to Lake Rabun will be covered. In order to operate a boat you have to have this class if you were born on January 1, 1998 or later. CPR and AED class is Saturday, June 22 at 9 am.

After the fireworks the "pace boat" will lead everyone out. The fire boat will be following. DNR and Rescue will be out patrolling. Please empty your ballast tanks before coming to the fireworks. Also, please slow down to idle speed when passing by boat church. Also, please don't tow skiers or tubers into Hall's. Get them back in the boat. Make sure your lights and nav lights work. To get an idea about the 100' rule see the yellow 0 and 100 markers going into Hall's. Please drive on the right side of the lake. It's Georgia law.

Ruddy Deas: DNR says there is nothing we can do about the wakeboats. The answer is the education of adults and children by adults about the proper operation of wake boats. We are tearing up our shoreline and damaging docks. DNR will do everything they can to help but they have budget and manpower limitations. Rabun is the safest lake in Georgia so the DNR is going to the more dangerous lakes.

Steve Raeber - The Lake Rabun Foundation: Dick Newkirk has published two e-mails entitled "Foundation Updates" to provide more information about the Foundation and what we are trying to accomplish. The Foundation originated 32 years ago to encourage the LRA members to become more involved in the community. Over that time the foundation has provided over \$1.6 million in grants and scholarships in Rabun County. This is made possible by the administrative support of the North Georgia Community Foundation. This year the foundation has budgeted a record \$135,000 for scholarships and assistance in Community Outreach grants. Approximately \$45,000 goes to support Rabun organizations involved in charity, child welfare, food ministry, education, environmental programs and community development. In addition to the Food Bank, Faith and Habitat, we also help some of the local churches with their outreach ministries. You can look at the website for a list of charities and organizations receiving grants.

This fall we will have 43 Rabun students receiving over \$90,000 in scholarship assistance. These are for 4 years of college. This is all possible because of members' commitment and ongoing generosity in supporting our annual fund which is the cornerstone of our annual budget. Members also contribute your time, talent and energy to all these events you've heard discussed today, such as Local on the Lake, The Ramble and next year's tour of homes. There have also been the cookbook, the Centennial book and all the Rabun merchandise.

Anne Pledger determined that almost 90% of our students graduated from college. We try to identify students who have the grit and determination to graduate.

We should also recognize those generous individuals who have established named scholarships, including Jim Pless, Christina Freeman, David and Sherra Smither and Jeannie and John East, Marie and Bruce Brownlow, Angela and Mitch Quay, Collin and Tommy Lyons, Laura and Greg Rhodes, Mary Shannon and Dwight Scott, Belle and Bob Voyles and Amy and Jerry Wethington,. Thank you all! Please consider including the Lake Rabun Foundation in your estate planning.

This year we are please to announce eleven new scholarship award winners. Steve asked Anne Pledger, chair of the scholarship committee, to come up. LRA members involved in the interviews were Anne, Laura Rhodes, new chair of our "Connections" program, Clay Battle and Helen McSwain. The selection process was challenging this year. All applicants had impressive credentials.

Anne Pledger and Laura Rhodes announced this year's scholarship winners:

Katie Cox, Guy Gober, Allen Hughes, Ethan Jones, Kacper Kuzimski, Chandler Lowe, Pedro Silva, Annalese Starzee, Elizabeth Walrod, Sydney Watts and Collin Welborn.

Students were asked to stay after the meeting to meet their connection people. Laura explained that the "Connection Program" was started to establish a support system for our students. Photos of the group were taken. Laura commended the students.

Steve Raeber: Thanks to Anne Pledger for all the time she spends to organize all this.

At the Memorial Day meeting we announce the Buz Stone Lake Rabun Cares Award, which was created in 2012 to honor Buz for his 25 years of leadership and stewardship. The award carries a \$2500 grant to a Rabun charity. Past recipients are Buz Stone, Barbara and David Cantrell, Jacqueline and Charles Groover, Dorothy Ann King, Joe Hamilton, Kathy and Kirk Knous, and Leckie Stack.

This year's winners are Anita and Robert Pittman. For many years Anita and Robert have poured themselves into improving economic opportunities in Rabun County. Steve listed the many things the Pittmans have done to help Rabun County. They have requested that the grant be directed to the Forward Rabun County program. The Pittmans came forward to accept the award and thank everyone.

Marie Brownlow was asked to the front and presented with a new Whippoorwill to replace the one lost in her fire.

Rena Ann Stricker recognized for her work on our Memorial Garden.

Ruddy Deas: Discussed the change in the lake draw down from one year to three years. The next draw down will be in November 2020.

Jeff Jackson with Georgia Power: Said Georgia Power made the drawdown change in October of 2016. In the last 5 years there have been a lot of changes to try to keep costs down. All local offices have been closed. The drawdown is a restriction for the system for how we provide peak electricity during days when we have really hot weather and really cold weather. The restriction on the system is a cost to the company. They are trying to keep the cost per kilowatt-hour down.

Jeff discussed the rumor that their office is closing. With smart phones they have fewer walk-ins. There are 17 Georgia Power reservoirs in Georgia - 6 up here. The others are on a 5-year drawdown schedule. They were able to settle on 3 years for Rabun. They may consider lengthening the drawdown for Rabun.

Jeff said they will continue to control lake weeds. Allen Price asked if we can close the boat ramps during high-water events. Jeff said the lake would have to be above the operating range which is 18". A member commented that our shorelines and seawalls have been undermined at an accelerated rate in recent years. There is concern that with the drawdown every three years, that there will be a shortage of contractors to make repairs. Jeff said they are monitoring the shoreline erosion and considering banning wake boats, and maybe having time periods for different kinds of boating

activities. Jeff said they enjoy being here and partnering with us on different things, such as a land swap for the fireboat house. They will continue to work with the association to make this a better community.

At this point the scholarship students and their families were allowed to leave.

Ruddy Deas - New business: The rezoning from Agricultural to Commercial 7.62 acres on Lake Rabun Road abutting Rabun Bluffs. There is a sale of the property contingent on this zoning and a proposal to put 5 rental cabins there. Ruddy asked that everyone attend the commissioners' meeting Tuesday night at 5:30. Ruddy will speak at the meeting in opposition to this zoning. If the property goes commercial there are potentially very negative consequences in the long run. The purchaser is in agreement that Commercial zoning of this property does not benefit them. This property will have something done to it in the foreseeable future and we should be in front of that process instead of catching up. The neighbors also oppose this and will speak at the meeting.

It was suggested that we work with the commissioners to develop a long-range land use plan for this area. This would become a road map for the commissioners to decide future zoning issues.

Anita said that there actually is a land use plan and that we need to consult that to see if the position we are taking is consistent with it. Ruddy said Annie's Fish Camp is zoned agricultural. The Barn Inn is also zoned agricultural. The hotel may be. So why does this property need to be zoned commercial? We want to fill the meeting room with Rabun people, and those who cannot attend should send e-mails to all commissioners opposing this rezoning.