



## ACFA

### Club Officers and Chairmen for 2005

Pres. Bruce Howle Sr.	479-2911
VP David Hare	343-5875
Treas. Tom Duncan	626-0219
Sec'y. Angie Howle	479-2911
Stats. Jennifer Mitternight	634-9716
Membership Bekki Ludlam	649-8757
Weighmaster Pat Hughes	422-6992
Donations Charlie Dowdle	661-7770
Club Logo Items Bud Barr	602-1982
Awards Bill Midgette	473-4768

Advisor Mike Thompson

### February 2005 Newsletter

The first meeting of our ninth year will be held on Thursday Feb. 3<sup>rd</sup> at 7pm at the American Legion Post 88, 2663 Halls Mill Road. We're looking forward to seeing each of you again. We hope you had a great holiday season; that your team won it's Bowl game; that you bagged some doves, ducks, or a deer; and that, maybe, you caught some of those elusive winter fish. Are you ready for another interesting club year? We are, and we've already been planning to make it really exciting for each of you as we fish our way through 2005.

For this initial meeting we have asked Mr. Robert Cardin to speak to us, and we think you'll be pleased with our selection. Robert represents Sea Tow in this area and is based on Dauphin Island. Sea Tow is possible the largest and certainly the most widely known rescue towing organization on U.S. waters today. Did you know that is you're dead-on-the-water and just need a tow back to port the Coast Guard most likely will not be able to respond unless your situation is critical? Usually at times like this the Coast Guard will suggest you call Robert and Sea Tow. Get all the details on Thurs. night because you never know when you may have a need for this type of assistance at some time in the future.

### President's Message

Hey guys it's that time again when the members of ACFA meet to share information on fishing and catch up on the fishing action around the area. Pay close attention because the ones that are willing to tell their fish stories are usually the pros of the club but, you also have some that are as tight lipped as the fish have been this winter.

We the members of ACFA had a great year in 2004 and we are going to have another good time in 2005. We have a couple of new ideas for you the members this year (details at meeting). Jr. Angler, food at all weigh-ins. Think about volunteering for the cooking crew that will be needed for the tournaments.

See you at the meeting,  
Bruce Sr. AKA TOP DAWG

### Can We Make A Suggestion?

Just for grins why not save these monthly newsletters during 2005. Start now with this newsletter--establish a file or folder, or just find a spot in a drawer and keep each month's edition so that you can readily reference everything that ACFA is doing, has done, or plans to do. Remember, every last detail of all our club's activities is published here. A good example is our club big fish records which were reproduced for your information in our Dec. letter. We think that most of your questions about the club will be answered month by month. And if you don't believe us yet just glance at the following article.

### 2005 Meeting Schedule Is Set

Please mark your calendars--

-----	Apr. 7	July. 7	Oct. 6
Feb. 3	May 5	Aug. 4	Nov. 3
Mar. 3	Jun. 2	Sept. 1	Dec. 1

### Here's What Happened

About 125 folks attended our finale on Dec. 2<sup>nd</sup> at Post 88. Six hams and all the attendant goodies were devoured. A big thank you goes out to Charlie Dowdle (who did the hams) and all his helpers: Beverly and Butch Pierce; Angie, Brittney, and Bruce Howle; Joe Sirmon; Marl Cummings; Don Ludlam; and Nellie Dowdle. Rest assured you all helped to make our awards nite a run-a-way success!

And speaking of awards this is how they went down:  
After all Big Fish winners received their awards (please note: Souther-N-Bama sponsored all eight 1<sup>st</sup> place

plaques.) The Big Fish Championship was awarded with Doug Smith in 3<sup>rd</sup> place, Bruce Howle, Jr. at runner-up in 2<sup>nd</sup> place, and Bruce Howle, Sr., with the most big fish points, as Big Fish Champion for 2004.

Our Tournament Championship was as follows: 5<sup>th</sup> place- Tom Duncan; 4<sup>th</sup> place-David Hare; 3<sup>rd</sup> place-Doug Smith; runner-up in 2<sup>nd</sup> place- Bill Midgette; and our 2004 Tournament Champion was Kyle Mitternight who tied for Tourney Champ in 2002 and won going away in 2003 as part of his 3yr. reign.

The prestigious Master Angler award for '04 went to Doug Smith, and our first-ever ACFA Female Angler of the Year was awarded to Belinda Smith. Angie Howle garnered the ACFA Member of the Year award for all her contributions as secretary of our club for the past several years. Charlie Dowdle and Bill Midgette received special recognition awards for their hard work and dedication to ACFA through the years.

Seven other special recognition plaques went to friends of ACFA who helped our club in 2004. They were as follows:

- \*Howle Construction Co.--Bruce Howle, Sr.
- \*D.P. Screen Printing Inc.--Phil Gill
- \*Post 250, American Legion--weigh-in site
- \*Mobile Register--David Rainer
- \*Liz's Haven--Causeway Classic Site
- \*Grady Marine--yearlong door prizes
- \*Souther-N-Bama--Charlie Crawford

And last-but-not-least the grand attendance prize went to Bill Faircloth.

-----Congratulations to ALL!-----

#### New For You--The Treasurer's Treat

In case you have never noticed our treasurer's table is a virtual bee-hive of frantic dues-paying activity for the first couple meetings of each new club year and then sometime around April or May the sign-up action becomes merely hectic as our late-comers and new members pay their dues. Well, in order to help our treasurer and once again give something back to the membership we're going to award a free membership for 2005 to one lucky person. Here's all you have to do to become eligible for this first "freebee" of the year: Pay your dues by mail during Feb. and Mar. that's all there is to it--send your \$45 check made out to ACFA to Tom Duncan, 37 Village Main, Spanish Fort, AL 36527. Please make sure to tell Tom if there's been any change in your address and please include an up-to-date phone number.

Every old member who renews his membership in this manner by Mar 31<sup>st</sup> (postmark) will be in the drawing pot and at our April meeting we'll draw a winner and award a \$45 dues rebate to that lucky fellow.

#### Reminders

1. No tournament in Feb. Our first tourney is set for Sat. Mar. 19<sup>th</sup>.
2. As already mentioned ACFA 2005 dues (\$45) are due and payable now. If you insist on paying at the meeting-please-bring-correct change or check. (No \$100 bills!)
3. Mobile Boat Show Feb. 17-20; Biloxi Show Mar. 4-6; and Pensacola Show Apr. 15-17.
4. All 2005 ACFA tourney dates will be in the next (Mar.) newsletter.
5. Our 2005 Big Fish contest (8 species) runs all year long (mid Nov. to mid Nov.) and is now in full swing. If you catch a fish to enter have your ACFA Big Fish card filled out, signed by the weigher, and forward same to our statistician: Jennifer Mitternight, 9430 Yorktowne Way, Mobile, AL 36695. (Cards available at sign-in table.)  
Please remember that weight cards must reach the stat. person within 30 days of the catch date. And--very important--if you currently have a Big Fish entry registered our custom dictated that you must pay your '05 dues during the month of February. Otherwise your entry will be automatically deleted.
6. Your suggestions are always welcomed. Please contact our Pres., V.P., or Secretary.
7. Smokers--thank you for smoking outside our meeting room.

#### 2005 Grand Attendance Prize

Once again our membership chairperson, Bekki Ludlam, will have a nice grand attendance prize package (valued well over \$100) which will be awarded at our Dec. meeting. Eligibility is your attendance and signing-in at any 8 of our first 10 meetings (Dec. doesn't count) in 2005.

#### On Our Horizon In '05???

- A.) A fishing rod raffle.
- B.) Two tournaments with 5 fish species instead of the usual 4.
- C.) A magazine subscription contest/drive.
- D.) Food at more tournament weigh-ins.
- E.) A junior angler for the year.



### Membership 2005

We had our greatest club year, to date, in 2004. Our membership climbed to 135 and we were blessed with success at everything we attempted. With more members on our rolls we were more able financially to give back to you--the folks who helped attain the goals we've set for ACFA. But success can be a fleeting thing especially if you tend to sit on your laurels. We aren't going to do that! With your help we're going to continue to build on the foundation that Mike Thompson so carefully laid just over eight years ago.

We know that we'll lose a few of our valued members and we'll hate to see them go, but ACFA will go on and will continue to provide the average inshore, salt-water angler with a family oriented fishing club where new fishing friends are made, common interest are shared, and tried and true fishing methods are passed on in order to make everyone even more successful while pursuing their hobby on the water.

Always remember this--ACFA is not like any bass club you've ever heard about. Only about 50 percent of our membership elect to fish in our tournaments with our remaining members opting for only affiliation, friendship, and learning. It doesn't matter to us as to which type of member you are. We're just darn happy you've chosen ACFA.

Now let's all get out there and help our club. We need to fill any vacancies that might occur and increase our membership in 2005. Most folks want to join an organization at or near the beginning of the year. For ACFA we usually see an influx in membership from Feb. thru May so now's the time for each of us to seek out those fishermen who may be interested in our club. Will you lend a hand in this worthwhile endeavor??

We're real serious about this because it all starts and ends with membership. As we did last year--A) For the member who brings in the most new (paid) members we will award a seafood dinner for two valued at \$50 and-- B) Another seafood dinner for two of equal value will be won by some member who signs up a minimum one new member. We'll draw from all members who "sponsor" new additions in 2005.

Remember, dues remain \$45/year per family (wives and all children under 16), the same as in '97 when ACFA was founded. The dinners will be awarded at our May meeting. The deadline for this contest is the close of our April meeting. And remember, all new 2005 members are also immediately eligible for this contest after payment of their '05 dues.

Please be advised that you, the old member, are solely responsible for making sure your new member names you as his sponsor on his application form or otherwise you will not be credited.

Do you have an interested fishing friend or acquaintance or a "sure-fire" new member who is close to joining? Please let us help you win one of those dinner packages. Jot down that potential member's name and address on a card or slip of paper, bring it to the meeting and hand it to sec'y. Angie Howle or our President. We'll send them a copy of our very next newsletter to remind them and maybe pique their interest in ACFA.

Oh, and by the way, please pick up our ACFA business cards, (which tell the ACFA story); carry a couple in your wallet, and if the occasion arises, give one to a potential new member. These cards are available at our sign-in table.

### Can You Help?

As you know ACFA strives to have the best and most expansive array of monthly door prizes of any club we know of. We're capable of giving away almost anything all year long. There's nothing magic about these great items though as each and every one is the result of the diligent work of our Donations Committee Chairman. This year Charlie Dowdle, who heads up our '05 effort, is requesting your help. All of us know someone in business who would be willing to donate some item (big or small) to ACFA if only they were asked. Please call Charlie at 661-7770 or catch him at the meeting and volunteer a small portion of your time in order to help our club. He will explain the simple procedure that we use and furnish copies of our ACFA letter of request in order to make it easy for you to achieve our goal. Just think what we would be able to give away if every member was to produce just one item apiece?

### Loose Ends

- 1.) Seen from the water--a new addition to the existing Delta Port Ramp Store and Bait House complete with cold drink vending units. Could it be that once again we'll be able to launch on West Fowl River?
- 2.) Found after our Dec. meeting--one Pyrex dish and a serving knife. Please call Charlie Dowdle to retrieve same. (661-7770)
- 3.) Newest bait shop on Mississippi Sound--Rough Water Bait and Tackle (1-251-824-2222) located approx. one block before you reach the public ramps at the mouth of Bayou La Batre. Weekends 5am 'til and week days 6am 'til. They carry bull minnows and live shrimp (sometimes from Miss.) and frozen shrimp, cigar minnows, etc. Located on the curve in a trailer they also have a digital scale for your big fish entries and a limited amount of basic tackle. Call ahead to check on anything!

See you at the meeting!

