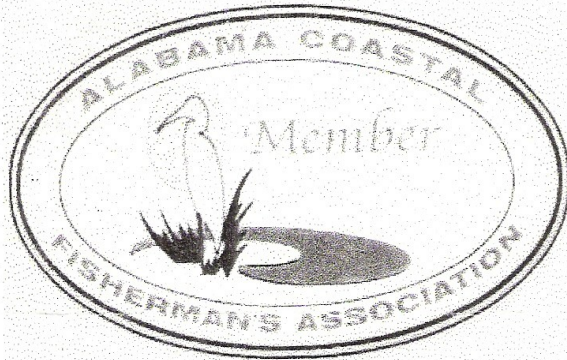


# ACFA



## New Club Officers and Chairmen for 2003

Pres. Don Ludlam 649-8757

VP Lee Minto 607-0121

Treas. Tom Duncan 626-0219

Sec'y. Angie Howle 479-2911

Stats. Jennifer Mitternacht 634-9716

Membership Bekki Ludlam 649-8757

Weighmaster Pat Hughes 443-6686

Donations Joe Sirmon 973-1973

Club Logo Items Bud Barr 602-1982

Awards Bill Midgette 473-4768

Adviser Mike Thompson

## FEBRUARY Newsletter

### First Meeting of 2003

The first meeting of 2003 of the Alabama Coastal Fisherman's Association will be held on Thurs. Feb. 6th, at 7pm at the American Legion Post 88, 2663 Halls Mill Road. We look forward to seeing each of you! Our speakers will be T.J. Waters from Sea Grant who will update us on the planned second pick-up of abandoned crab traps in local waters, and Ross Hutchisson will review the "ends & outs" that every angler needs to know regarding rod & reel maintenance before the fishing season starts.

### Message From The President

I hope everyone had a nice holiday season and are ready for a new year of fellowship, fishing tales (a.k.a. lies), tournaments, fish fry's, informative speakers, and just good old fishing fun.

As we awaken from our long winter sleep, wipe the cobwebs off the tackle box, and dig that favorite present out of the closet (you know, that unbreakable "TOTUM POLE" that you can drive your car over with your six favorite rods on it) we need to also be mindful that MAINTENANCE is the word of the day. For those of us who haven't fished on a regular basis for the past year, making sure guides are attached, line is good, and reels still turn is a must. If you haven't checked your trailer bearings in the last few months, do it now. A little practice on knot tying probably wouldn't hurt either, after all, a knot is nothing but a tangle with a name.

Your 2003 officers have an exciting year planned for the club, with some new ideas for boosting membership, great speakers and programs for fund raising. We hope that attendance at our meetings will continue to increase and we want everyone to invite a guest to attend.

I look forward to seeing everyone at our first meeting. Good luck fishing in the new year ahead.

Don

### Awards Highlight Big December 2002 Wrap-up Meeting

Slightly over 90 members and guests enjoyed another delicious undertaking by Charlie Dowdle as 3 large hams were devoured; the sweets provided by our members were simply "to die for". Del Delchamps carried away abundant hardware as he garnered the prestigious Master Angler Award, tied for Tournament Champion, placed 2nd in the Big Fish Contest, and won for largest Blackfish and largest Groundmullet in 2002. Kyle Mitternacht also finished big in 2002, tied for Tournament Champion and the largest Spanish of the year. Bruce Howle, Jr. defended his Big Fish Championship of 2001 by repeating as Big Fish Champion for 2002 and landing the largest White Trout of the year. Bobby McElroy was right in there also as he placed 2nd in the Tourney Championship, 3rd in the Big Fish Championship, and netted the largest Flounder of the year.



Other members receiving well-deserved awards are as follows:

- |                |                        |             |  |
|----------------|------------------------|-------------|--|
| Alvin Bell     | Largest Redfish        | Barry Keith | Largest Sheepshead                       |
| Bill Patterson | Largest Speckled Trout | Rick Yeend  | 3rd place in the Tournament Championship |

In addition to the fishing awards, appreciation plaques were given to our past presidents--Mike Thompson, Jeff Dute, and David Hare. Special recognition plaques were awarded to Bruce Howle SR; Phil Gill; David Rainer; and American Legion Post 250 for their valued support of ACFA in 2002.

And finally, a very special appreciation award (a first for our club in 6 years of existence) went to Charlie Dowdle as "ACFA Member of the Year" for 2002 for a myriad of contributions toward the betterment of ACFA throughout the entire club year.

Moore Garners 2002 Attendance Prize

Dustin Moore, one of our many younger members, walked off with the ice chest full of goodies, including a new Ambassadeur reel. Dustin's name was drawn during the Dec. meeting from a pool of over thirty qualifying members who attended at least 8 out of our first 10 meetings in 2002.

Congratulations Dustin!

Patterson Makes' News Again!

For those of you who may have missed the Register's account our "Big Spec Man" Bill Patterson caught a 30" Tarpon (that's right---a Tarpon) while fishing for specs with a sinking plug in the Theodore Industrial Canal a few weeks ago. Congrats "Pat"!

Reminders

1. The 2003 Big Fish Contest is now in progress. To enter, have your ACFA Big Fish card filled out and signed by the weigher and them forward same to our Stat. Person: Jennifer Mitternacht, 9430 Yorktown Way, Mobile, AL 36695. Weight cards should reach the statistician within 30 days of the catch.
2. 2003 dues (\$45) are now due and payable. See the Treasurer.

Your Stake in ACFA

ACFA is our club and each of us, whether you realize it or not, contributes to the strengths and reputation of it. As we finished 2002 there were well over 100 members on our roster. We all hope that everyone returns for an even more exciting 2003, but the reality of the situation is that there will be some natural attrition and we will sadly say goodbye to some of you, our valued members. So you see--it's always an uphill climb when we think of membership and that's where each of you can help. Almost every one of us knows someone who would enjoy an affiliation with ACFA. He or she could be a relative, an acquaintance at work or church, another fisherman who you always see on the water, or a newcomer to our area who wants to learn the ropes for the inside. Or, if you know of somebody who likes to fish, but is not always successful they would certainly benefit from membership. Invite them to join.

Please remember to emphasize this--we are not like the typical bass fishing club where all members fish all year long and many secrets are kept since everyone is trying to be "King-Of-The-Hill". Our primary objective has always been to provide a family oriented fishing club where inshore saltwater fishermen could meet new fishing friends, share common interests, and learn to be even more successful while pursuing their hobby on the water. Although we have some club tournaments and the yearly Big Fish Contest less than 1/3 of our members choose to compete on a regular basis while the vast majority of our membership just wants to mingle with other fishing enthusiasts, find out where the fish are biting, and expand their fishing know-how. This is what ACFA is all about!

We hope that each of you will spread the word. Help us get those new members who are "out there" but need to be "in here" with us as we travel through 2003. New and informative speakers are planned. More "how to" info will be forthcoming through the months. New ideas are already in progress, several surprises are in store, and we believe that 2003 will turn out to be better than you thought 2002 was. Help us get a full crew for this year's ACFA voyage. Bring a new member aboard and strengthen our (your) club in doing so.

New (2003) Membership Drive

In order to boost your incentive to bring in new members the club will once again bankroll our members who help expand our current roster.

