

Three Generations' Impact

... on Smith Lake

By Casey Williams

Boaters and residents alike who have been enjoying Smith Lake for any length of time are probably familiar with the Beasley family and Duskin Point Marina. After Harold Beasley had been enjoying time at the lake since 1969 when he bought a trailer to spend the weekends, he decided to buy the marina in November of 1986 after retiring from Hayes International. Harold's son Danny joined the full-time staff in 2006 after his own retirement. Grandsons Phillip and Michael started working at the marina as teenagers. Duskin Point Marina's services include wet and dry storage (300 dry rack slips and 38 wet slips), engine service, boat sales, boat rentals, and more. The business has also been a HydroHoist boat lift dealer for 25 years. Lake living has been a major part of the Beasley family's life for a long time.

This family who has spent so many years enjoying beautiful Smith Lake has not been exempt from the tragedy that sometimes occurs on its pristine waters. Many area residents will remember the tragic boating accident that took the life of Harold's son Mike Beasley in May of 2001. "He went down in 201 feet of water," Harold said. "There had never been a body recovered from that kind of depth in Smith Lake." Because of the extreme depth of the water and presence of standing timber where the accident occurred, many feared that Mike's body might never be recovered. "A bridge outfit from Mobile came with their camera boats and found him," Harold said. It took several days for the body to be finally recovered. After the family's terrible ordeal,

Harold wanted to ensure that local officials would have better search equipment to improve the chances of recovering drowning victims from the deep waters of the lake. The Smith Lake Task Force was formed soon after

Mike's accident as a way to organize resources for future search and recovery operations on the lake. Many

individuals and businesses gave money to the cause for the purchase of boats, underwater cameras, and other search equipment. "A lot of people donated that first year," Harold said. "Scott Crump donated a car to sell." In the

years since the founding of the Smith Lake Task Force, some \$800,000 has been raised. In addition to purchasing and maintaining its own equipment, the Task Force also donates money to area volunteer fire departments and other non-profit organizations that have a direct connection to the lake.

In the thirteen years since its founding, the Task Force's primary source of funding is the annual Mike Beasley Memorial Poker Run, which takes place on the lake every third Saturday in July. This year's edition of the Poker Run will take place on *July 19*. The entry fee is \$25 per player. In addition to the \$500 grand prize for the best hand, numerous other prizes will be awarded in a raffle. Raffle tickets are \$1 each. For more information about the Fourteenth Annual Mike Beasley Memorial Poker Run, contact Duskin Point Marina at 205-384-6942.

