

## **Thanks for a Great Meet**

First of all, I'd like to thank everyone who lent a hand to the Gator Achievement Meet last weekend. It took the entirety of Gator Nation to pull it off and I don't think it could have gone much more smoothly than it did. I thought the kids did a great job in the water and everyone seemed to have fun, but the thanks, again, go to the parents and swimmers who lent so much time and effort to preparing the pool for the meet, manning the various volunteer posts during the meet, and then cleaning up afterward. Thanks also to our sponsors, particularly Oriental Express, Ragazzi's, and End Zone, which each made generous contributions of food. Representatives from the other teams were extremely impressed with how efficiently the meet ran and, overall, with the positive atmosphere surrounding the meet. I hate to single out a single individual for contributions because so many made substantial contributions, but David Strider is deserving of such accolades. David's kids, as many of you know, have long since left the team, but David continues to serve the Gators in countless ways and he was the absolute anchor of this meet. We thank him from the bottom of our hearts for his efforts.

## **Secret Santa**

If your kids haven't yet signed up for the Secret Santa exchange, please do before the end of this weekend. Each kid will be provided the name of a team member for whom they should buy a present of no more than ten dollars. The plan is to have a box for each of the practice groups into which you will place the wrapped present and then the gifts will be exchanged over cocoa and other treats after practices the last week before Christmas (Dec. 19 and 20). The more that participate, the more fun it will be for all.

## **Good Luck in Pittsburgh (and on exams)**

For all swimmers headed to the meet in Pittsburgh next week, best of luck. Swim fast! You'll no doubt be receiving separate information from coaches on this, so I won't dwell on it here, but you should be very proud of your, or your kids', accomplishment to qualify for this meet! We are eager to hear how you do. As you may know, the meet immediately precedes with exams for high-school kids, so for the second year we won't be sending most of the the older kids. High-school kids, study hard for exams and best of luck in your upcoming high-school meets.

## **Thanks to Jackie Anderson**

Jackie Anderson will be leaving us at the end of this week to take a position at ACAC within her real specialty, aerobic training. Jackie has been a real asset to our program in the six months or so that she's been with us. She also is due much thanks for the recent meet as well as for putting some organization and pizzazz behind the program this fall. I think the message she sent out to the team earlier this week is indicative of what a special person she is. We'll miss her, but she has vowed to continue to use her Kroger card to support the Gators and I think she wouldn't mind me using this space to remind everyone to do so as well!

### **Update on the Bridge**

OK, with VDOT and the railroad nearing completion on the bridge, our developer friends at Stonehaus, decided to use the opportunity to build the new Belvedere Road. Ahhh, frustrating, I'd give you an update on when it was supposed to be done, but last we heard it was to be done by today, the 7th, and as of this morning it didn't look like we were close. We regret the inconvenience of having to continue to drive through Dunlora and we'll let you know as soon as we have an update on when we can start using the bridge again. Do keep in mind that Stonehaus is contributing mightily to our new facility in terms of site planning and development, so we have some patience. You do have to admit that the holiday lights in Dunlora are beautiful. Be sure to keep your speed down in Dunlora and be careful driving on the goat path down to the pool.

### **Bubble Trouble No More**

All right the last time I said that our troubles with the Bubble's main blower were over, it turned out to be horrible timing since the blower pooped out within minutes of when we hit the send button on the email. But it was only several hours later than we found an electrician who was able to actually diagnose the problem and fix it permanently. Best of all, if we run into more problems, we now have a company who can come in and fix it correctly...but we anticipate no more problems. Loads of thanks also to board member Mark Mitchell who has been instrumental in working on our electrical challenges (also to JJ who spent many a sleepless night at the Bubble over a ten-day period).

### **Practice Schedule**

Keep an eye on special practice schedules that likely will accompany the coaches' hiatus while in Pittsburgh and then over the holidays. I don't have specifics on me at the moment, but I want to get this message out.

Last, I hope everyone has a fabulous holiday season. I'd like to get one more edition of Gator Bites out before the end of the year to go over what I see as the Gators' accomplishments for 2007 as a program and maybe some resolutions for 2008.

Jim Cudahy

President

Virginia Gators