

FEBRUARY 2023 OUTING - WINE & CHEESE PARTY AND ARCTIC DIVE

Hey all – after a two-year absence, we are returning to the remodeled Marietta Landing campground in Lake Murray State Park (Oklahoma) on Saturday, February 25 for the traditional Wine & Cheese Party / Arctic Dive. This annual multi-club event has traditionally been organized and supported primarily by the Diving Rebels and the Scubadillo dive clubs, with occasional other dive club and individual diver participation. We would like to invite any interested divers and non-divers to join us. Lake Murray State Park is located about 24 miles north of the Texas border just off I-35 and 7 miles northeast of Marietta, OK. This is an easy day trip - only 1:30 - 2:00 hours from DFW. A map of Lake Murray State Park with Marietta Landing campground noted is included following this article. As in past years, the park has been opened a week earlier than normal to accommodate our event. It will be open to the public also at that time, but is not publicized so on the park website. Mr. Joseph Hahn, the Lake Murray State Park manager (also a diver) is to thank for this.

DIVING

Although there is no official dive time scheduled, there is an unofficial time dive of 11 AM there at the campground boar ramp area. Should you not be able to make that time, the lake is continually open for your diving pleasure on an ad hoc basis, so you can make your own arrangements as desired. It should go without saying that one needs to be prepared for cold water diving so bring the appropriate gear (thick wet suits or dry suits) as we don't need anyone suffering hypothermia. Also, please no solo diving (strange that I should say that), so be sure and buddy up.

SILENT AUCTION

As we are moving through a bit of a recent chilly time here in north Texas, it's time to start thinking about warmer weather to come and whether your dive gear is need of an upgrade or expansion. As in previous years, we'll have a silent auction throughout the day on Saturday during which participants can bid on that item that is missing from their dive gear inventory or that is needed for a backup. If you have gear that has been lying dormant in your garage or storage shed or that has shrunk over the winter or since the last time you dove and you'd like to have your dive club reap the revenue gained by the sale of that item, please consider donating it for the silent auction. We'll note the donor's club on each item, and that club will receive the money generated by the sale. There was a fair bit of high quality gear that didn't move at the silent auction at the Scubadillo Christmas party, as folks probably didn't have diving on their minds at the time. But now diving is just around the corner. Please bring only gear that is in reasonably good shape and is still usable such that you would still feel comfortable using it. We plan to also have non-dive gear in the form of gift baskets that certain of the ladies prepare and that have been quite popular previously. Any unsold items will be rolled into the raffle drawing that we hold in the evening, which will also provide some great diving-related treasures for the taking. Our raffle will also include dive shop gift certificates and other general use dive-related items.

WINE AND CHEESE CONTEST

We will have our famous and traditional wine and cheese contest where we utilize a panel of just slightly less than sommelier-quality judges (if you don't have an entry, you can be a judge) who will rate and award prizes for best red wine, best white wine, worst wine and best cheese. The judging will begin about 3:30 PM. So scour your wine cellar or favorite liquor store to bring your best/worst red and white wines that will be judged by an erudite panel of vintner wannabes who will closely taste and scrutinize the entries for bouquet, flavor, clarity, and all such hoity-toity wine things. We'll award "winner" gift certificates for first prize for the best red and white wines. We'll also award a "loser" gift certificate for the worst wine. After the wine contest, we'll choose the best cheese, and the winner will also win a gift certificate (no entries for worst cheese, please!!). We need judges for both contests, so if you are not a contest participant or related to a contest participant and would like to judge, please let me know. Please bring your bottles uncorked to the judging site and place them in the provided labeled paper bags to maintain the "secrecy" of the process. After the conclusion of the contest, please feel free to incorporate the left over wine and cheese into the forthcoming meal.

FOOD

The Diving Rebels plan to serve a meal at about 4:30 pm, consisting of a main dish of brisket and sausage. We are asking that you bring a favorite side item of either a salad or desert and your own drink. We will also provide

water and tea. To assist in meal planning and preparation, we're asking attendees to purchase tickets. Through February 18, each ticket costs \$10. After that date and at the event, each ticket costs \$15. If you would like to attend and have not yet obtained your ticket, you can contact me and I will reserve and mark a \$10 ticket for you on assurance of surety of your first born that you will attend. ☺ You can obtain a ticket at the January or February club meetings and also by contacting Steve at (214) 641-6013. I'll hold your ticket if you can give me a firm commitment for attendance.

RAFFLE

After the meal, we will have our traditional raffle featuring all kinds of wonderful items. We ask if you have dive related items that could be used by anyone, that you consider donating these for this activity and allow someone else to experience the joy in the use of this items that you formerly experienced. For those of you who will be bidding, please bring cash.

BONFIRE

We will hopefully have a bonfire, although reduced compared to some of the blazing and raging infernos we have generated in the past. Given the recent wet weather, it seems doubtful that a burn ban would be in effect. My large trailer load of wood may be history, but we will use this year to gauge what we might be able to have in coming years. If you have some good quality wood that is not infested with any insect pests or contaminated with any chemicals, please feel free to bring this along and we will see about creating a moderate camp fire to create some warmth and a nice effect. Be sure to bring a comfortable chair for sitting around the fire and visiting at the end of the day.

LODGING

RV and tent camping is available at Marietta Landing campground. The campground was redesigned primarily for RV camping with an expansion of the paved areas and a reduction of open and uncovered areas. A map of the campground is provided below. The RV rates for each campsite range from about \$32 - \$40 per night. Each site can also accommodate up to two tents. The first tent reservation will be \$32 and the second tent at the same site is \$16. Each of these reservation rates also includes a day pass for that vehicle at no extra charge. If have made a reservation to spend the night in a tent, RV, cabin or lodge, you will be provided a day ticket for entrance to the park. If you are just there for the day, you will need to go on the park website (provided below), to purchase a \$10 car pass or you can stop at the park headquarters and purchase a pass for \$10/vehicle. So you might car pool, if not spending the night.

The Diving Rebels have reserved three of these campsites – 9, 10 and 14. Site 10 will be utilized exclusively for the outing operations area – food, contest, etc. Sites 9 and 14 are available for reservation through me, with payment at the rates noted above. Mr. Hahn, the Lake Murray State Park manager, has blocked an additional 4 campsites exclusively for our event – sites 12 – 16 as noted on the map. So if you would like to reserve a site, please consider reserving sites 9 or 14 (through me) or sites 12 – 16 through the park. To reserves the sites, you can either go through a rather laborious and rather obtuse online process or you can call the park office at (580) 223-4044 and ask for Tracy. She is really a delight to work with and she told me she would be happy to work with anyone that would like to make reservations or have any questions. Should you happen to speak with Joseph, please give him special thanks for working with us so generously this year.

There may also be accommodations at the park lodge as well as cabins. Traditionally, for those spending the night at the park, we meet for breakfast at the beautifully refurbished lodge as the dining area provides an impressive overlook of the lake.

The park website is noted as follows. <https://www.travelok.com/state-parks/lake-murray-state-park>

Go to <https://guestrez.megasyshms.com/8Q8S8/lake-murray-state-park-campground/SearchCriteria/> to see what is available.

Should there be a potential weather impact develop as we get closer to the event, we will update as necessary.

Please contact me with any questions, comments or complaints. Thanks and we look forward to seeing you that day.

Steve "Oggie" Ogden
steveogdentx@gmail.com
214 641-6013

