

Lake Florence



Elliot and son jetskiing on Lake Florence (Mausner)



Lisa Mausner, Elliot's wife and best friend (Mausner)

The following narrative was derived from an interview with long time Lake Florence resident, Dr. Elliot Mausner on November 27, 2001 while sitting on his patio facing the lake, on which he lives. In it, he tells of the eighteen years he and his family have spent on Lake Florence and the many memories they have shared as a result.

Personal History

Elliot Mausner was born in Brooklyn, New York and was raised partially in the city and partially in the country of upstate New York where his grandparents owned a farm in a town called Liberty. He went to City College for Engineering, but stopped two classes short of his degree and decided to study Dentistry instead. Not long after, he graduated from New York University as a dentist and took some time off to travel before beginning his professional career. This decision led him in Chattahoochee, Florida where he got his first job as a dentist taking care of patients in a local mental hospital. After a small stint in the State Health Department in Tallahassee, Elliot decided to move south in search of a more happening place. He reflects:

"Tallahassee is an up and down town. When session is in and school is in...great town! But you know when school is out and the Legislature is out, there is nobody there and it got kind of boring and I was a young suburban professional. I wanted to meet people so I came to Orlando. I had a cousin living here – a chiropractor in town. He said, come on down and visit. I came here and I loved it. It was a great town, wide open. It was 74 when I first came to Orlando, 75 when I moved here permanently."

Once in Orlando, Elliot worked several jobs as a dentist before settling down and beginning his own practice. Not long after, he was set up on a blind date by one of his dental assistants. It was lucky that he agreed because it was his future wife that he was being set up with. Elliot romantically shared:

"I haven't spent a moment apart from her since we met. That was 22 years ago. We spent the last 22 years together virtually every day except for about two weeks when she went to Canada on vacation without me. And of course, now that I'm retired, we spend 24 hours a day together."

The couple moved onto Lake Florence in March of 1984. Over the years, the couple and their two children, now 15 and 11 years of age, have enjoyed jet skiing, swimming, paddle boating, and wake boarding. Now, Elliot and his wife enjoy their retirement from work, but keep busy with their two children. Elliot volunteers at a local dentistry practice twice per week and plays and records music in a studio he set up in the house, while his wife Lisa enjoys embroidering and beading.

History/Information



View of Lake Florence at time of interview (USF)

Lake Florence is a 28-acre lake located in Orange County just east of the city of Orlando. The lake means a great deal to Elliot and his family. As he reflects on the time they spent on its shores. He says:

“It’s just been wonderful. It’s like having our own pool in the backyard. It’s been wonderful. It’s everything. This is paradise back here.”

According to Elliot, the water in Lake Florence has maintained a good quality over the years. Once there was an algae bloom in the early 1990s, but the residents living on Lake Florence chipped in and hired a lake doctor to fix the problem.

Wildlife supported by the lake has changed over the years, but not to a point that concerns Elliot. He said that when he first moved onto the lake there was a family of muscovy ducks that ruled the place. He shared an embarrassing, but funny story:

“As a practicing dentist, I came home for lunch one day and I came out here to feed the cats. I walked down the lake just to look and there was a duck there, so I said, ‘Hey ducky, Hello!’ And the duck came after me and attacked me and bit me on the leg and drew blood. I had no idea that birds cannot give rabies, but I said this bird’s got rabies and I went to a veterinarian and it was kind of an embarrassing incident. I cancelled the patients, called up the cops. I was going to have this duck arrested. As it turned out, rabies can’t be spread by ducks. But these two ducks were ferocious. They owned the lake!”

Today, the nicer and less intrusive mallard ducks live on Lake Florence. In his eighteen years of living on the lake, Elliot has only spotted one alligator that was quickly removed by authorities. Elliot shared memories about the brim that also live in the lake.

“We would go out and feed the brim, it was a thing that our family did. We managed to get such an entourage of brim here, literally, I would say a thousand fish at feeding time was not uncommon. Six or eight bass would line up in the water six or eight feet from it and just beat them [the brim]. The brim would concentrate on the food and they’d forget about the bass I assume. We’d invite people over here on Friday and Saturday nights and have parties and that was part of the entertainment. We’d go out just at dusk and we’d have the party going full blast...watch this! And the water would just rumble.”

Since then, the number of fish in Lake Florence has decreased and Elliot is not sure why. When the Mausner family first moved to Lake Florence eighteen years ago, there seemed to be many more fish, turtles, and ducks than there are now. However, there is often a dramatic increase in wading birds such as egret and herons when water levels are low.

Development



The Mausner's Home at time of interview (USF)



Citrus tree on Mausner's property (USF)

According to Elliot, a great deal has changed in terms of the development of the land surrounding Lake Florence. The Mausners' home was the first to be built on their side of the lake and when they first moved in, there were only four or five other houses. Elliot says, this made it simple to go "skinny dipping at virtually any time of the day". He reflects on those early days:

"When I first moved to town, Semoran Blvd had about a mile of dirt road up to Altamonte Springs. When I first came here, you could go from Route 50 all the way up to 17/92 to Casselberry and hit two lights I think, that's all there were and it was a wide open town."

Traditional land use around the lake consisted mainly of orange groves. Elliot shared:

"Every piece of property that you see around this lake, with maybe the exception of the Parker family, which was the first property put here, was groves. And I believe that he owned groves on either side of his property and they put houses on them. In fact, some of the homes here today still have part of the original groves."

The great majority of the growth has occurred over the past 10-15 years, so the Mausners' have witnessed the most of it. Although as early as the late '70s there were only a few homes on Lake Florence's shores, today there are four housing developments around the lake: Pelican Bay, Howell Cove, Country Lane, and Hyde Park. Although, not all houses within the developments have direct access to the lake.

The Future



Lake Florence at time of interview (USF)

Overall, it seems the future of Lake Florence is as sound as its previous years. Despite the amount of growth experienced by the surrounding area, Elliot feels the lake has not been affected all that much. He says:

“The lake has the privilege of being basically private with 360 degrees of private ownership. There really are only two legitimate boat ramps that are owned by private people and there is not public access to the lake. As far as I understand, there is no influx of water anywhere either. This is a spring fed lake and when it gets high enough, it overflows down to, I believe into Garden Lake and so the water stays pristine and clear.”

When potentially threatening issues arise, homeowner associations from the various developments swing into action. However, as Elliot pointed out, meetings can become spirited affairs between those that live directly on the lake and those that do not. Regardless, there is an overall shared concern for the well being of the lake. Elliot finds comfort in the springs that he says feed the lake. About them, he reports:

“There are two springs in this lake that have been found by the bass fishers with the depth gauges. There are times of the day when the sun is just perfect, that you think you can see the bottom of them. I’m not sure that you really do, but that is what the impression is if you look down there. You could almost see the glimmering...glistening of the water coming out of the spring. They’re not killer flows. They won’t fill the lake up over night, but they do keep the lake with water. They’re out there.”

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