

SPECIAL TO THE JOURNA

Tribble Center consumers celebrated with a day on the lake Saturday hosted by Golden Corner Lakes Sail and Power Squadron.

Charting the course

BY STEPHANIE JADRNICEK
THE JOURNAL

SENECA — The Tribble Center kicked off National Safe Boating Week on Saturday with boat rides on Lake Keowee. For the 10th year, Golden Corner Lakes Sail and Power Squadron (GCLSPS) invited Tribble Center consumers to enjoy a picnic and a day on the lake.

"The center provides persons with disabilities and their families a higher quality of life that would otherwise be out of reach," GCLSPS public relations officer Sue Dragoo said. "One of their core values is to participate in community involvement, and we are delighted to provide our services each year by hosting this event."

Although GCLSPS members panicked all week about the weather, the chance of rain continued to drop and the skies were fair on Saturday.

"We had a total of 103 people there — 51 were Tribble Center consumers and 32 were Golden Corner members," GCLSPS commander Ron Osburn said. "It was a great day."

Once the consumers arrived at High Falls Park at 11 a.m., they were led down to the dock, where they boarded seven boats. And after a pleasant ride on the lake, they went back to the pavilion, where a spread of hamburgers, hot dogs, brownies, baked beans and potato salad awaited them.

Osburn said the event gives the folks from Tribble Center an experience to remember.

"It's just to give them a break from their routine and to bring some joy into their lives," he said. "So many times we've taken them out and one of them will say that they've never been in a boat before."

Before the consumers unstrapped their life vests, Osburn snapped photos for the Safe Boating Day "Ready, Set, Wear It" challenge.

"Boating safety educators, marine enforcement officials, politicians, media and the general public gathered across North America and throughout the world to try to beat the 2015 world record of 10,917 life jackets worn and inflatable life jackets inflated," Dragoo said.

Life Jacket World Record Day aims to raise public awareness about the importance of wearing a life jacket and general boating safety practices. The event officially launched National Safe Boating Week, which runs from May 21-27 this year.

Dragoo said this timing positioned the campaign to kick off right before Memorial Day weekend, which is the "un-

THE DETAILS

WHAT: AMERICA'S Boating Course
WHEN: THURSDAYS, Sept. 22 - Oct. 20; 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.
WHERE: OCONEE Room in the Oconee Memorial Hospital
COST: $30 for manual and supplies
TWO-WEEK PRE-REGISTRATION required.
FOR MORE information, call (864) 985-0788 or email mjstroven@bellsouth.net

SEE **BOATS,** PAGE **B4**

BOATS: Course plan at Hospital beginning in September

FROM PAGE B1

official start of summer" when a large number of boating incidents occurs.

"The majority of people who drown do not have a life jacket on," Osburn said.

Many of the people who drown on the inland lakes in the wintertime are fishermen who fall overboard while relieving themselves. When they hit the cold water, they take a long gasp, called a gasp reflux, and they suck in a lung full of water — and down they go.

GCLSPS will offer a beginner's boat course on Thursdays, Sept. 22-Oct. 20 from 6:30-8:30 p.m., in the Oconee Room at Oconee Memorial Hospital.

Called America's Boating Course, it's sanctioned by the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators.

"People retire, move to this area, live on one of the beautiful lakes and buy a boat," Osburn said. "They've never had a boat before and they have no idea what the rules of the road are, who has the right of way, what light you need to have on or what equipment you need to have on board."

The four-week course is only one night per week and ends with a 50-question exam. Osburn said 10 questions are also given on South Carolina law and Georgia law, because the state rules differ.

"You can be on Lake Hartwell and the dividing line's in the middle of the lake," he said. "Georgia now has a law that you have to take a boating course to get a certificate to operate a boat if you were born after 1998."

Osburn said the Georgia Department of Natural Resources is going to start enforcing that law, and GCLSPS is pushing the South Carolina legislature to create a similar rule.

"You can go to the marina right now buy a 40-foot yacht and they'll hand you the keys, even if you've never been on a boat," he said. "You wouldn't do that with a car or an airplane."

stephanie@upstatetoday.com | (864) 973-6686

