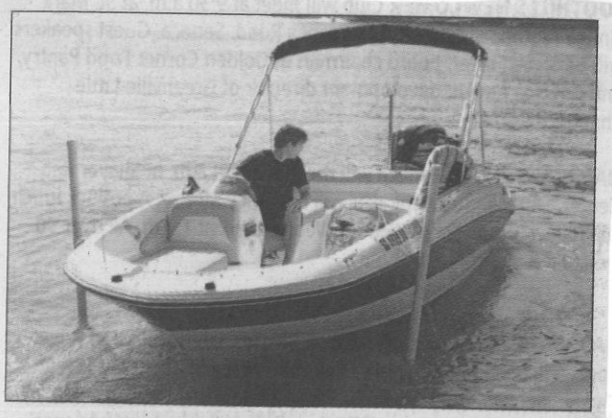


REX BROWN | THE JOURNAL

Jessie Brandon puts his Stingray 182-C into the water at Lake Keowee before taking off in it with his wife and son. "Spending time with my family means a lot," Brandon said.

Taking time off for family, friends

BY JUSTIN LEE CAMPBELL
THE JOURNAL

SENECA — Jessie Brandon backed the trailer with his Stingray 182-C on it straight into the water of Lake Keowee. He got out of his black truck, pushed the boat into the water and secured it to the dock.

"Our plans are to go out and have some fun on the boat," Brandon told The Journal. Brandon, his wife and 5-year-old son planned to spend their Labor Day fishing, wakeboarding and surfing.

The water slapped the boat, which was white with a blue strip down the side. Jessie had it for about a year. A wakeboard in the boat was soon to provide the Brandons with a lot of fun.

"Spending time with my family means a lot," said Brandon, who works as a database administrator. "It's a great time. With both (my wife and I) working, it's hard to get a weekend off or a day off. Today we're both off."

He hopped back into his truck with his wife and son to drive it out of the boat ramp and park it. His wife and son beat him back to the boat. They all jumped in and took off out into the water.

Labor Day is the first Monday in September. The holiday's significance goes beyond watersports and grilling out.

"Labor Day ... is a creation of the labor movement and is dedicated to the social and economic achievements of American workers," according to the U.S. Department of Labor. "It constitutes a yearly national tribute to the contributions workers have made to the strength, prosperity and well-being of our country."

SEE **TIME OFF,** PAGE **A5**

Efforts to make a holiday for workers started with the passage of municipal ordinances in 1885 and 1886. By 1894, 31 states had adopted the holiday. Congress passed legislation in the same year to designate the first Monday of every September a legal holiday in the District of Columbia and U.S. territories.

Two kids and two adults floated in a white and yellow boat, waiting for an opening at the dock. A teenage boy in red Georgia Bulldogs gear guided his fishing boat up to a truck driven by his fishing buddy. The group of four headed to the dock.

Sophie, a small black and white dog full of energy, hopped off the boat as it floated toward the same dock from which the Brandons had just departed. Tammy Alewine followed Sophie.

"I brought my family down camping Friday," Alewine told The Journal.

Alewine and her great niece, Chandler Fisher, joined Alewine's friend Scott Clemment and his daughter Carrie out on the lake.

"We just went for a boat ride this morning," said Alewine, who is from Fountain Inn. "It was beautiful. I love Lake Keowee."

"It was a little bumpy," said Carrie, Sophie's owner. The dog ran back and forth on the dock before Clemment scooped her up to retrieve the truck.

Carrie held a purple sucker and Chandler held a red one. They both smiled.

"Unfortunately I'm getting ready to go back home because we have to work," Alewine said.

"But we're going to do a little cookout when we get home."

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