

Oconee adds new quilt panel at South Cove Park

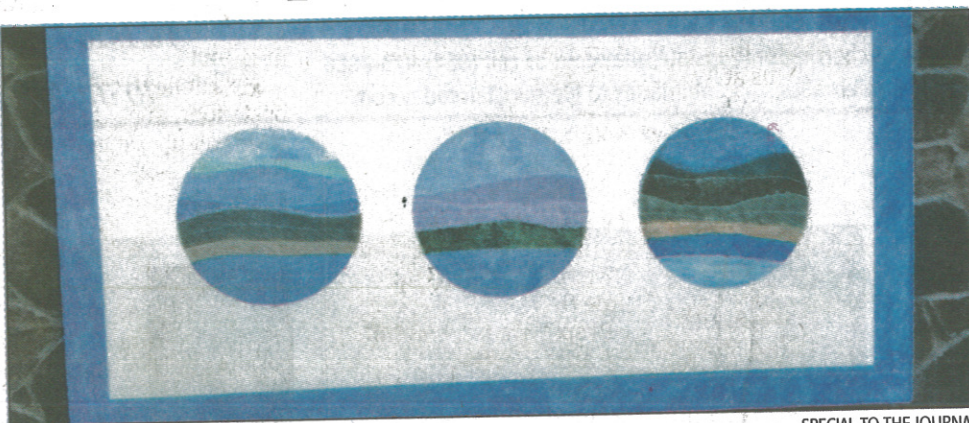
SPECIAL TO THE JOURNAL

Oconee County Parks, Recreation and Tourism and South Cove Park were excited recently to receive a quilt block from the Upstate Heritage Quilt Trail. This is the second quilt block to grace the Oconee County Parks System, as there is also a quilt block on the Alexander Canon Hill house located at High Falls County Park (No. 24, Cather's Maze).

The South Cove quilt block represents three beautiful nature scenes highlighting Lake Keowee and the Blue Ridge Mountains. Oconee County Parks, Recreation and Tourism director Phil Shirley and his staff requested that UHQT find some examples of quilts from local quilters that specifically represented either camping or the outdoors. The staff unanimously picked this option, "Scenes of the Lake," a wall hanging created by Sheree Gibson of Keowee Key.

Gibson is an ergonomics engineer who has lived in the Upstate, both in Spartanburg and Oconee County, for a number of years. She explains how quilting equates with her chosen career of industrial design, as "quilting is re-engineering fabric."

Gibson comes from a long line of quilters, originating in West Vir-



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"Scenes of the Lake," a wall hanging created by Sheree Gibson of Keowee Key, now hangs on the outside of the office at South Cove County Park.

ginia. Her grandmother, Geneviève, had a hand in Gibson's sewing direction when she handed her a needle and thread to make samplers when she was about 4 years old. Gibson made her first quilt, a whole cloth lap quilt, at the age of 12 for her grandmother. Gibson took up quilting again 15 years ago when her daughter, Jennifer, complained she didn't get a kid's quilt one Christmas from her Grandma Cora (Gibson's mom). Gibson explained that perhaps Grandma didn't consider her one of the "kids" anymore, now that she was 17, but also promised her daughter she would make her a quilt.

Gibson recalls the experience with humor, detailing how she called her mom in Florida and got directions, over the phone and in a letter, on chain-piecing a simple charm quilt. Her first

attempt was a "tangle of threads."

Needless to say, after much untangling, Jennifer got her quilt. Gibson later joined the Piedmont Piecers (the Spartanburg quilt guild) and, after moving to Keowee Key, both the Lake and Mountain Guild and the Keowee Kwilters, a group of locals who meet on Fridays. Recently, Gibson has focused on the "Honoring Their Service" program that her community sponsors and making quilts for Marines.

"Scenes of the Lake" was a challenge quilt that Gibson and her friend, Ruick, proposed: to start and finish a quilt in one week, using a new technique. Gibson chose something she'd never tried before — using curved piecing. The result is a stunning work of art that was gifted to her father, Harry Gibson, as a host gift on a visit to his home.

South Cove Park has undergone major renovations over the past three years, with a new office, new maintenance facility and upgrades to the campground. South Cove Park and the staff who work there were thrilled to have such an inspirational piece at their site. The quilt block is mounted to the office facing the lake, to showcase the Upstate Heritage Quilt Trail initiation of a water trail for visitors to tour while enjoying the lake.