

First boating safety fair set for May 6

By Ollie T. Moye

Editor In Chief

Lake Murray Coast Guard Auxiliary Commander Joe Richbourg announced this week that the first Annual Lake Murray Boating Safety Fair, an event in the planning stages for the past year, will become a reality.

He told Flotilla 12-3 members at their February meeting Monday evening at Flotilla Island that the event has been scheduled for Saturday, May 6, at the SCE&G Park by the Lake Murray Dam and that several other organizations have indicated their desire to participate along with the *** auxiliary. Hours will be from 10 am to 4 pm.

Among the sponsors in addition to the Coast Guard Auxiliary will be the Lake Murray Power Squadron, the Coast Guard Auxiliary, the Emergency Medical Service, Lifereach Helicopter, the Department

of Natural Resources and the Lake Murray Marine Patrol.

Richbourg said that the Coast Guard Auxiliary and the Power Squadron started talking about co-sponsoring a fund-raising event, such as perhaps a chicken dinner, to raise funds to help finance a dock at Flotilla Island, which they now have built.

Once the word got out, other organizations indicated a desire to join as co-sponsors, said Richbourg.

"At first, we discussed having it at Flotilla Island but because of the one-way flow of traffic at the island, we realized that would be a problem," he said. "For a number of logistical reasons, SCE&G's park is the best place to hold something of this nature."

Purpose of the Boating Safety Fair is twofold.

"It's our way of kicking off the boating

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season," said Richbourg. "And, it will stress to the public the importance of safety on the water."

Acknowledging that Boating Safety Week is observed nationally during the month of May, Richbourg said the event would be earlier than the national emphasis. "We wanted to do it earlier," he said.

Among other thing, the Boating Safety Fair will offer numerous booths operated by the sponsoring organizations, each of the which will focus attention to various aspects of safety.

Power Squadron Commander Fred Schwartz, who was guest speaker at the Monday evening meet-

ing of the Coast Guard Auxiliary, reviewed some of the booths this organization will staff at the event.

"Our concept is, we have a lot of people that boat on Lake Murray who really don't need to hear about the red and green markers on the inter-coastal waterway," said Schwartz. "What they really need to know if they're going to operate on Lake Murray is about shoal markers and what they're going to run into out on this lake."

He said that one of the first questions he had when he purchased his first boat was what kind of anchor he needed, how much rope it would require and how to use the anchor.

"We're going to have a station set up where we'll demonstrate this," he said. "And we'll be able to tell a

boater how much line and the size of anchor he'll need for a boat of a specific length."

Another booth staffed by the Power Squadron will focus attention on the reference lights location on Lake Murray.

"In our boating course, one of our members, Jim rakes, has electronically put red and green lights on a map of Lake Murray and they blink in sequence," he said. "It's a way of showing somebody that if you're in the middle of Lake Murray and don't know where you are, you can watch the sequence of the blinking reference lights if you've got a map of Lake Murray aboard, you can quickly determine your location at night."

Richbourg identified communications as one of

the booths the Coast Guard Auxiliary will set up. "We will be demonstrating the proper way to work radio channels and talk about distress signals," he said.

He informed that the Charleston Station of the United States Coast Guard also has indicated an interest to participate in the program. He said he had talked with the Coast Guard about the possibilities of bringing a rescue helicopter and demonstrating a water rescue operation. He said he also has talked to DNR about a demonstration in the back of one of the coves on using flares.

"A lot will be going on during the fair," he said. "There's going to be a lot of fun and a lot of promotion for boating safety."