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Boat responsibly; life jackets save lives

FATALITIES ALREADY REPORTED THIS YEAR

The Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources reminds boaters that wearing a life jacket could save your life.

It is human nature to think drowning can't happen to you. Most people who drown in boating accidents know how to swim but become incapacitated in the water such as being injured or unconscious, exhausted or weighed down by clothing.

Four people have died in boating incidents as of the end of May, and another 25 people died in 2021. Operator inexperience, inattention, recklessness and speeding are the four leading causes of tragic watercraft crashes, and the leading cause of death is drowning.

Boating is a big part of Wisconsin's culture and summer fun. With that comes the responsibility of making sure to operate your boat in a safe and responsible manner. Part of that is ensuring there are enough life jackets on board for everyone.

Nationally, 80% of all boating related fatalities are the direct result of drowning. Something as simple as wearing your life jacket can significantly mitigate that risk and prevent a fun summer outing from becoming a tragedy.

"Safety is an important part of water fun," said Lt. Darren Kuhn, DNR Boating Law Administrator. "Wisconsin rivers

and lakes can be relaxing and family-friendly places to spend a summer day when you put safety first and respect the water."

The department does not track all drownings – only those fatalities linked to the use of a recreational activity item, such as a boat, kayak or canoe. Boating incident reports to date for 2022 and previous years are available online here.

Statistics show boaters who wear life jackets and take boater safety courses are most likely to stay safe on Wisconsin waters. New life jackets are much more comfortable, lightweight and stylish than the bulky orange style most boaters know. There are innovative options, such as inflatable life jackets, allowing mobility and flexibility for activities like boating, fishing, paddling or hunting and are much cooler in the warmer weather.

Follow the basic safety tips below and enjoy Wisconsin's open waters with family and friends.

Water safety tips:

- Sign up now to take an online boater education course.
- Always wear a properly fitted life jacket that has a snug fit and is fastened when you're on or near the water. Life jackets will keep you on top of the water

if you walk off an unexpected drop-off, or a wave or current overpowers you or you fall out of a boat.

- Enjoy the waters sober and know your limits. Alcohol blurs a person's judgment, reaction time and abilities.
- River shorelines and sandbars pose unseen dangers. Higher, fast-moving

water can tax an individual's boating, paddling and swimming skills.

- Keep an eye on the weather and let someone know where you are going.

Be ready for the unexpected and always wear your life jacket. More boating safety tips are available on the DNR website at dnr.wi.gov.

Delavan Lake Breeze

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above: Boating is a big part of Wisconsin's culture and summer fun. With that comes the responsibility of making sure to operate your boat in a safe and responsible manner.

ISTOCK/WILLARD The Breeze

on the cover: The sun sets on Delavan Lake.

HEIDI SCHULZ The Breeze



SANDRA LANDEN MACHAJ The Breeze

Summertime *on the* water

Activities abound on local lakes

By **Sandra Landen Machaj**
CORRESPONDENT

Summertime, time to head out of doors and enjoy the beauty of outdoor life, away from the hustle and bustle of the stress of our work lives. In the Southern Lakes area, head to one of the beautiful lakes to relax

and enjoy the beauty of the water.

With a variety of lakes to choose from in the area, finding the one that best meets your needs is easy. Whether you looking for a busy, bustling lake with lots of activity, or a calm quiet area to relax, there is sure to be one that is perfect for your needs.

Boating

Summer means taking to the water to enjoy a day of fun in the sun and usually that means a watercraft of some type is

involved. While years ago, the pontoon boat was thought of as the slow moving boat, the ones used to take the older members of the family for a ride, today the pontoon is considered the most popular and one of the most versatile boats on the water.

Today's pontoon comes in a variety of sizes to accommodate larger numbers of guests. They also have more powerful engines making it possible to water ski or tube behind the boat. They are versatile and can be used for fishing, or after a time of cruising along the lake, you may find the perfect spot to stop, drop anchor and let everyone swim off the back of the boat.

With so many lakes available in the southern Wisconsin area, there is sure to be one that will provide the perfect place for your day on the water.

If you are not fortunate enough to own a boat, but still want to spend time out on the water, there are a many places along the lakes where the boat of your choice can be rented for the day, the weekend, or a week. Pick the lake you want to boat on and call one of the local boat rental companies for rental costs and types of craft available.

Boat clubs are available which allow you the use of a boat for a certain number of days a year. A great choice if you live on or near a lake and plan to be out on the water often.

Before renting a boat, visit the lake to see how busy they are on the day of the week you wish to be on the water.

Weekends are busier than week days especially on larger and very popular lakes such as Geneva Lake.

"Lake Mary and Lake Elizabeth in Twin Lakes, are more peaceful, relaxing lakes and if you can sneak a day off during the week, it is like being on a private lake," said Dave Lang, who along with Ryan La Meer owns Twin Lakes Boat Rental.

In the State of Wisconsin, if you were born after Jan. 1, 1989, you must be boater certified by the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources to rent a watercraft. The course is available online and there is a \$10 fee to issue the certification after passing the exam.

"We recommend reserving your boat as soon as possible, especially for the weekends," Lang said. "We have some customers who have already reserved boats for every weekend through Labor Day. It is never too soon to do so."

Personal watercraft

If you are looking for a more personal water riding experience, the JetSki or a wave runner may be just for you. Holding from 1 to 3 people as it zips through the water, the thrill of speed is what often attracts riders to choose this method of fun on the water.

The stand-up PWCs are more difficult to drive than those that allow one to sit and drive. The standup requires more balance and only one person can be on the jet ski at a time.



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Sit-down PWCs can hold from 1 to 3 riders, depending on the size. For those who enjoy the thrill of speed, the jet ski can exceed speeds of 40 miles per hour with some going up to 70 miles per hour. Speed is dependent on the power of the jet ski, the calmness of the water, wind resistance and the weight of the passengers.

So, if you have the need for speed enjoy some time on a jet ski but do so safely. Riding a jet ski can be a day of fun on the water.

Safety is important. Always wear a personal flotation device (life jacket) and get instruction on riding the jet ski before going out the first time. If it is your own jet ski, have it serviced at the beginning of the season and as needed.

Kayaks, paddleboards

Motor-driven watercraft are not the only way to enjoy being on the water. Kayaks, rowboats and paddle boards are enjoyable ways to spend time in the water using your own power to travel along.

Over the past years, kayaks have become very popular. They are inexpensive to purchase starting as low as a couple of hundred dollars, although more expensive models are available. They are lightweight, thus very portable and easy to store over the winter.

Kayaks are small narrow boats which hold one or two people. The paddler uses a double-bladed paddle to propel the boat. On any given day, kayaks can be seen traveling on the lakes. It can be a single kayaker or a group of friends traveling along enjoying the day and the beauty of nature.

Kayaks are fun to enjoy on the water and they will take you as fast as your arms can paddle or the wind and the waves can propel you. Kayaks are easy to maneuver and a great way to enjoy the peace and tranquility of the water on a nice summer day.

Try these beaches for a fun day at the shore

Delavan's Community Park, 1220 S Shore Drive. Beach, boat launch, boat rentals from nearby businesses.

Whitewater Lake Beach, N7660 State Park Drive.

Open 6 a.m. to 11 p.m. year-round. Public beach on Whitewater Lake in the Kettle Moraine State Forest. Picnic tables, grills, and toilet facilities available. Near hiking trails, fishing piers, and JNT's Parkside Marina where you can purchase fishing/swimming gear and snacks. Boat rentals also available. State Park Pass required for parking.

Information at 262-594-6200

Riviera Beach, 812 Wrigley Drive, Lake Geneva. Located in downtown Lake Geneva on the shore of Geneva Lake adjacent to the Riviera, it is a favorite gathering place to enjoy a day at the lake. With a lakefront of 600 feet of sand, there is room to play in the sand or to just sit on the beach and enjoy the view. Lifeguards on duty 9:30 a.m. to 6 p.m. during summer season. Dogs not allowed on beach. Daily fee.

Fischer Park on Brown's Lake, 30326 Durand Ave., Burlington. Beach on the shore of Brown's Lake in Einer Fischer Park. Plenty of parking and picnic tables. Park is open daily with lifeguard coverage.



PHOTO COURTESY OF TWIN LAKES BOAT RENTAL *The Breeze*



PHOTO COURTESY OF TWIN LAKES BOAT RENTAL *The Breeze*



SANDRA LANDEN MACHAJ *The Breeze*

from top: Man's best friend joins his owner on the jet ski for a ride around the lake; Ready for a family outing aboard their pontoon, with plenty of room to spread out, they will enjoy a full day on the water; Families enjoy a beautiful sunny day at Riviera Beach on Geneva Lake. Whether playing in the sand or swimming in the water, everyone has a good time. **opposite:** Jet skis are favorites for those who enjoy speeding around the lake. Wearing a life vest is always recommended.

Kayaks, like canoes, can turn over if not balanced correctly, so for safety always wear your life jackets or other personal flotation device. Almost anyone can learn to kayak. Kayaking is a great way to increase physical activity.

"Kayaking is a great way to get out and enjoy time on the water," said Pat Schafer who has spent her life living on waterfronts and owns a variety of watercraft including a fishing boat, pontoons, and rowboats, but also has enjoyed kayaking with a friend.

"They do tend to wobble when getting in or out. Once you learn to keep them steady, they are fun," Schafer added.

Over the last few years stand up paddle boards (SUP) have become another way to enjoy both the waves and the tranquility of the lakes. Like kayaks, they are inexpensive and easy to transfer from home to the lakefront.

Balance is important when riding a SUP. So perhaps that is why the sport appeals to those in their teens and twenties, when balance is at its best. However, anyone can learn.

Paddle boards are a low impact activity and can help improve your balance. So don't be shy – give a SUP a try.

As with all the watersports, safety is

Looking to rent watercraft?

Here are a few businesses that rent boats and watercraft on local lakes:

Delavan Lake Boat Rentals, 2518 N Shore Drive, 262-728-5540. Boat rentals seven days a week, 8:30 a.m. to 6:15 p.m. Boats, tubes, lilypads, canoes, and paddleboards are available.

JNT's Parkside Marina Boat Rentals, N7660 State Park Road, Whitewater. Boats, kayaks, canoes, paddle boards., Call 262-473-5028.

Twin Lakes Boat Rental, 3101 E. Lake Shore Drive, on Lake Elizabeth, and 503 Wilmot Ave., on Lake Mary. They rent pontoon boats, ski boats, wave runners, kayaks, paddle boats and canoes. Contact at 888-251-2628. Open daily 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Action Marine, 5909 392nd Ave., Burlington. They rent pontoons, fishing boats, kayaks, weekly or on a 3-day rental. Deliver to most of the local lakes including Twin Lakes, Powers Lake, Bohners Lake, Silver Lake, Paddock Lake, and Brown's Lake. Contact for additional sites. Call 262-539-2000. Open Tuesday to Friday 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Saturday 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Gordy's Boat Rental, 342 Lake St., Fontana. Gordy's has been renting boats since 1955 and still offer a variety of boats, and also stand-up paddle boards. Call 262-275-1563. Open daily 9 a.m. to 5pm.

important. Wear a life jacket. If possible, only use where there are lifeguards and never go out alone.

Swimming

For many of us, the best days of summer when we were young, were those we spent going to the beach and spending the day playing in the sand and swimming in the water. Of course, those days often ended with sunburn as we neglected to replenish layers of sunscreen throughout the day.

Today as grownups we take our children or in some cases grandchildren to the beach to enjoy the fun we once had. And surprisingly, they are just as excited to be at the beach, digging in sand to build their sand castles and bringing up buckets of water to moisten the sand to keep it in place as they build. They often attempt to build a moat around their castle, but become frustrated that the water doesn't stay on top of the sand but sinks in.

We are now a bit smarter and remember to reapply the sun screen, on ourselves and on the children, and to try to avoid sunburn.

The American Red Cross advises: "Never swim alone or allow anyone else to do so. Always swim with a buddy."

The Red Cross also recommends swimming in areas with a lifeguard and always keeping an eye on everyone in your group, especially young children. Avoid distractions including cell phones.

On a hot sunny day walking into the water as the waves splash gently up your body and the cold water temporarily cools one down and at the same time, takes your breath away.

There are many beaches along the local lakes that will make a wonderful day at the beach. Bring snacks and a variety of liquid drinks to avoid dehydration. And have fun. All of you will return home happy and tired from a day at the beach.



Show time on the water!

Area waterski shows celebrate anniversaries

By **Sandra Landen Machaj**
CORRESPONDENT

The Southern Lakes Area comes by its moniker for good reason. The multitude of lakes and rivers provide residents and visitors

the chance to enjoy fishing, boating and watersports during the summer months.

For many, sitting along the shore to watch the local, award-winning waterski team exhibitions are a favorite activity. From the Burlington Aquaducks to the Twin Lakes Aquanuts to the Southern Wakes United Water Ski Team in Walworth County, there's no shortage of performances on area lakes.

Waterskiing was invented by Ralph Willard Samuelson of Lake City, Minnesota, in 1922. One-hundred years ago, Samuelson strapped wooden boards to the bottom of his feet, used a clothesline as a towrope attached

to a boat, and attempted to travel across the water on Lake Pepin. He experimented with various sizes of boards and tried many different positions on the "skis" before successfully navigating Lake Pepin's waters and inventing a new sport.

Since then waterskiing has grown from a fledgling activity to a top-line competitive sport with worldwide competitions. Individual waterskiing teams compete in local, state and national levels. Sometimes, as they progress, they even compete in international competitions.

Local teams, including the Aquanuts, Aquaducks and the Southern Wakes United, have been very successful in competition at all levels.

Check the schedule of the team close by, gather family or friends, a folding chair or a blanket and make head out to the waterfront to take in a show. The whole group will enjoy watching the skill and gracefulness of the skiers.

The local teams present shows at their home venues weekly during the summer for the enjoyment of the community. They do not charge to view their performances but all do accept donations to help them with the cost of producing the performance.

Happy birthday, Aquanuts!

Fifty years ago, in the small town of Twin Lakes, a group of water skiers gathered and formed the Aquanuts. Little did they know that this tightly knit group would band together and become one of the premier waterskiing groups, competing in a variety of competitions and winning more than 100 awards for first-, second- and third-place finishes over the years.

In 2021, the team won the Wisconsin state title for the first time in 35 years and finished second in national competition.

The Aquanuts are known for their daring stunts, ballet lines and innovative show themes. Each year more difficult and daring stunts are added to their routines. The clowns were introduced in the early days and have remained a symbol of the Aquaducks, even earning a place on their logo.

While the skiers are the showpiece, they alone are not responsible for the success

of the team. The boat drivers, spotters, equipment managers, marketing managers and the local businesses, especially the marinas, which help support them are as necessary as the skiers for success.

The Aquanuts say they are extremely thankful for their partnership with the Village of Twin Lakes, which allows for Lance Park to be their home.

"We are truly a team," said Heather Buelow, who began attending waterski shows as a spectator in 1994 when she and her husband were dating. "Now our whole family is immersed in the team."

Two of their daughters will be singing in this year's show, which is based on Mary Poppins. Buelow's husband drives a boat and she is involved in marketing.

Practice begins each year before the skiers are ready to hit the water. They work on the exciting three-, four- or even five-high pyramids on dry ground before ever trying to build one on the water.

The Aquanuts have two separate teams – a Junior Team and a Senior Team – but at times they overlap. The younger skiers, who range in age from 8 to 14 years old, are on the Junior Team as they train to learn the more intricate moves and formations. Sometimes a younger skier may advance to the Senior Team if they have particularly good skills.

"The Senior Team members range from 15 years to in their 50s," said Mark Gurda, who is the announcer for the team's shows.

Every two years there is a World Championship Competition where Team USA picks from the best skiers to represent the United States as members of Team USA. This year Aquanuts, Cody Coffey, Kalia Coffey, Kailey Koehler, Bob Koehler and Ethan Shulda have been chosen for Team USA for 2022.

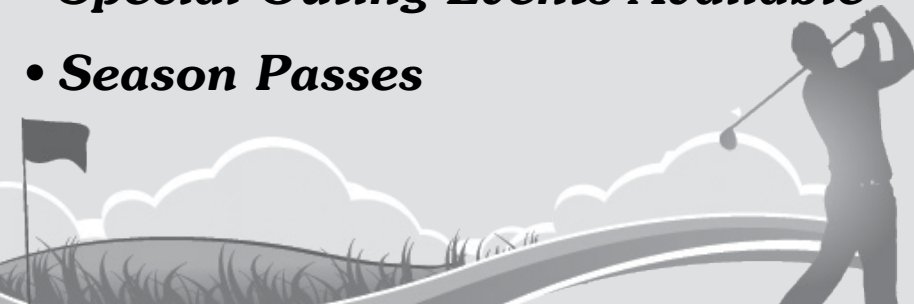
This year, in celebration of 100 years of waterskiing and 50 years of waterskiing for the Aquanuts, there will be multiple celebrations and special programs.

The weekly programs, which are open to the public, are at Lance Park at 6 p.m. Shows are presented Saturdays and Wednesdays

• CONTINUED ON BACK PAGE

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top: Known as the Hot Pickup, this event is a favorite of watchers and performers. Some are skiing attached to the boat while another group is picked up from the pier and a third group of skiers join the boat from a barge. This event requires not only the skill of the skiers but also the skill of the boat driver as he winds his way between the pier and the barge with some skiers already connected to the boat.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE AQUANUTS *The Breeze*



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each week through Labor Day.

A special Fourth of July weekend celebration will be at Lance Park on July 2 with festivities beginning around 6 p.m. The national anthem, "The Star-Spangled Banner," will be sung by world-famous anthem singer Jim Cornelison who will open the show. Cornelison is well known for his singing of the anthem at Chicago Blackhawks home games. The Aquanuts will present a special ski show, which will end with the traditional Independence Day fireworks.

As always there is free admission and parking. Food and beer will be available for sale.

"With support from the city, Munson Marine, Dr. Pepper, Mercury Marine and others, the team progressed," Gurda said. "We were the first team to utilize a background music soundtrack in 1975, which was quickly copied by other teams."

Each year there is a theme for the show often based on past popular movies, this year it is Mary Poppins.

Along with providing shows for the public, each year the team supports an adaptive skiing program to bring the sport to those with disabilities.

For more information visit www.aquanutswatershows.com.

Browns Lake Aquaducks

Forty-six years ago, a group of local waterskiers gathered together on Browns Lake and formed the Aquaducks, a volunteer, family-oriented group that began to ski for fun, but went on to compete in both local and national competitions with great success. In 2019 they became the Division 2 State Champions. In 2021 they moved up to Division 1 in state competition and finished in seventh place while finishing 14th in nationals that same year.

"We have about 100 members in our skiing club," said Monica Shultis, who provides whatever help the team needs. "They range in age from 8 years to 67 years. Our oldest member at 67 continues to barefoot water ski, that is he skis on the water without skis just using his feet."

The team began on Browns Lake and continues to make Fisher Park their home.

While the team receives a lot of support from the community and local business, they also give back in various



Lifting a partner high above while maintaining balance requires skill and balance and skill on the part of both participants.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF THE AQUANUTS *The Breeze*

ways. One such way is the adaptive-skiing program started by Rick and Denise Legios in honor of their daughter.

The program allows those with disabilities to experience the joy of waterskiing. Using special adaptive equipment and the support of a skier on either side for balance it is possible for people with disabilities to have a waterskiing experience. The Aquaducks host the free program several times a year.

The team offers free shows to the public from Memorial

Day weekend to Labor Day on Thursday evenings in Fisher Park at 6:30 p.m. weekly. Starting June 23, the team will be joined by a junior show at 5 p.m. Check www.aquaducks.org for updated information on shows and special events.

Southern Wakes United

In the 1950s, the Lauderdale Lakes Aqua Skiers were formed by a group of young skiers who wanted to perform. They produced a single show each year on Regatta Day in front of the Sterlingworth Motor Hotel and were given dinner for their performance. By the 1980s they were competing in the state tournament with some success.

The Whitewater Lake Sports Club named its ski team the Minneiska Water Ski Team. The team organized and presented its first show in July of 1974 for the Lions Club and began competing in tournaments in 1975.

The Southern Wakes United Ski Team is a merger of the Lauderdale Aqua Skiers and the Whitewater Lake Sports Club (Minneiska) team, and are the only waterski team in Walworth County. The team's goal is to encourage both young and young at heart to work together to build confidence, while learning new skills. The team also encourages leadership development, water safety and sportsmanship as noted on their website.

Southern Wakes United competed in the 2021 Wisconsin State Tournament and placed third in Division III.

The team encourages skiers and those who want to be skiers to join the team. New members are always welcome. The team is a family-oriented group who work together for the benefit of all.

For those not ready or able to commit to a full membership with the team, they offer a pay-to-play option. Individuals who must be a member of the USA Water Ski org. and love to ski can pay a daily \$5 fee to ski with the team.

The show schedule for Southern Wakes United is a bit more complicated than that for the other teams because they present shows at three different locations – Whitewater Lake at Scenic Ridge Campground, Lauderdale Lakes at Lauderdale Landing in Elkhorn and the Elkhorn Lake show at Babe Mann Park.

Ski show times vary depending on the location. Check, www.southernwakesunited.com for current schedule.



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