

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

Local Eagle Scout candidate organizes Boating Safety event in remembrance of the death of Sheyenne Marshall, 17, at the hands of an intoxicated boater

May 15, 2016 – Cornelius, NC – Local teenager, Jack Ezzell, who witnessed the tragic death of his girlfriend last summer while knee boarding on Lake Norman, organized a boating safety event at The Peninsula Yacht Club on Saturday. Ezzell created the event to raise awareness about the need for safe and sober boating practices on Lake Norman and to share the difficult lessons he has learned about the hazards of operating marine craft while under the influence.

Hosted by The Peninsula Yacht Club, where Ezzell is employed as a summer marina and restaurant staff member, the Shine On Boating Safety Event featured participation from various organizations in the community. The Lake Norman Power Squadron offered free vessel safety checks and other organizations such as the Coast Guard Auxiliary, the Cornelius Police Department, Boat U.S., and Sea Tow will be providing additional boating safety materials and checks for the general public. With the assistance of the NC Wildlife Commission officers, Ezzell operated a drunken boater obstacle course, with the use of special goggles that simulate drunken boating. Participants navigated a small boat through the course designed by Ezzell, first with a “sober” run through, followed by a simulated impaired experience with the aid of the goggles supplied by the NC Wildlife Commission. Each participant verbalized difficulty in navigating the course while “impaired”.

In addition to providing education about safe and sober boating, the event provided Ezzell the opportunity to highlight House Bill 958, also known as Sheyenne’s Law, which passed unanimously in the NC House of Representatives on May 12, 2016 and is poised to go the NC Senate for a final vote. Sheyenne’s Law increases the penalties for drunk boating to mirror those of driving while impaired on the road. Voting the Senate will take place later this year.

The following comments are from David Goodman, Boating Education Chair, Peninsula Yacht Club Fleet Committee.

“Out of a horrific tragedy comes a very powerful program to enhance the awareness and importance of boating safety. In addition to the lake region organizations that are participating, the example of the strength of Jack’s program has generated recognition by The National Safe Boating Council, The US Sailing Hall of Fame and North Carolina elected officials. Jack’s program at the yacht club comes one week prior to National Safe Boating Week.”

The Boating Safety Event received excellent publicity and was covered by WSOC TV, Time Warner Cable News, and WCCB in Charlotte. Links to the reports/interviews are below.

<http://www.twcnews.com/nc/charlotte/news/2016/05/14/death-of-a-teenager-on-lake-norman-inspires-her-boyfriend-to-make-a-difference-.html>

<http://www.wsoc.tv/news/local/teen-creates-boat-safety-event-after-girlfriend-killed-by-intoxicated-boater/282294706>

<http://www.wccbcharlotte.com/2016/05/14/lawmakers-pushing-for-stronger-drunk-boating-laws-after-concord-teens-death/>