

Sheriff's Office Participates in Sea School

April 13, 2013

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On Saturday, April 13, 2013, the Hall County Sheriff's Office participated in Sea School at Hideaway Bay Marina in Flowery Branch. Since 1977, instructors from the U.S. Coast Guard conduct a number of courses ranging from Charter Boat Captain's Licensing to Sailboat and Fishing Boat courses on safety. This weekend's class instructors utilized realistic props to simulate actual emergency situations that boaters may encounter while on Lake Lanier. Teaching everyone to slow down while using a 360 degree approach to navigating, ensuring that everyone could properly identify buoys and markers on the Lake, conducting proper safety checks before departure and awareness of geographical location underlined the theme in Saturday's course.

Hall County Sheriff's Office Captain Harry Chapman (Ret) of the Marine Patrol Division capped off the course with safety advice garnered from his years of experience on Lake Lanier. The most common issue encountered each season on our waterway is a boat's close proximity to other vessels, according to Captain Chapman. He also echoed the common message of having enough life jackets to accommodate every passenger on each vessel, along with maintaining at least one fire extinguisher in the event of a sudden emergency.

He relates "You have to maintain a safe distance between you boat, jet ski or other type of watercraft regardless of speed and activity. Any sudden change of course, or speed, will quickly become a dangerous situation if you are following someone too closely. Accelerating and steering your boat is not something one learns in a day at the Lake. You must practice and develop that skill on a regular basis." To learn more on Sea School and other courses offered through the U.S. Coast Guard instructors, you may visit them online at www.SeaSchool.com. For training on the horizon at Hideaway Bay Marina, visit their website at www.hideawaybaymarina.com. You may also find safety tips and general information from Marine Patrol on the Hall County Sheriff's Office website at www.hallcounty.org/sheriff, or call (770)531-6889.