

Central Florida clubs set sail



PHOTOS BY DENNIS WALL/ORLANDO SENTINEL

At practice. Sailboats practice on Lake Monroe in preparation for the Kettle Cup regatta. Above, Denise Burchard (left) and her sister, Tracy Burchard, are on the lead boat. The Lake Monroe Sailing Association hosts the 2-day regatta this weekend.



This weekend's Kettle Cup regatta is among events hosted during the year by area sailing clubs.

By SHANNON SHELTON
SENTINEL STAFF WRITER

For years, an early-December regatta was a tradition on Lake Monroe in Sanford. So when sponsorships ran out and the regattas went defunct, the Lake Monroe Sailing Association stepped in to revive the events.

Around the same time last year, members of the group read a newspaper article detailing the Salvation Army's need for donations during the holiday season. LMSA decided to use its new regatta as a vehicle to help the charitable organization. Choosing the famous symbol of the Salvation Army bell-ringers, LMSA named the regatta the Kettle Cup.

This weekend, the Kettle Cup regatta is back for a second year for sailing enthusiasts of all types. Saturday was the first day of the event and sailing continues today at 10 a.m. at the marina in Sanford. The regatta includes sailing vessels ranging from 16 feet to 30 feet, although special arrangements can be made for smaller boats — monohulls and multihulls.

The two-day event has at least five or six classes, including open spinnaker and non-spinnaker classes. Five one-designs constitute a class.

Money from the event will be donated to the Salvation Army, and the group will also consider expanding to other charities next year.

But if you can't make it today to watch one of Central Florida's newest regattas, there are plenty of others throughout the year for sailing enthusiasts. If you don't know how to sail, but want to learn, Central Florida clubs can help.

The Lake Eustis Sailing Club, based in Lake County, offers clinics, courses, races and seven major regattas during the year.

"We're a very active sailing club," said commodore Martin Zonnenberg.

In existence since 1953, the club keeps celebrating milestones. A new clubhouse finished in March on Lake Eustis is one of the group's highlights. Advanced sailing lessons are offered every Saturday morning and learn-to-sail classes are available Saturday afternoons. The club currently has 85 senior, or advanced, members and 15 junior, or youth, members.

The racing season begins in early September and continues through late May. The race season consists of 86 events and members hail from as far as Naples, Jupiter, Tampa and Melbourne. The Lake Eustis Sailing Club specializes in one-design races.

Not too far down the road is the Mount Dora Yacht Club. The club's Web site touts it as "Florida's Oldest Inland Waterway Yacht Club" since it was established in 1913. The club held its 50th annual regatta last April on Lake Dora and offers sailing les-

A CLOSER LOOK

Some area contacts about sailing lessons/club membership:

Lake Eustis Sailing Club — www.lakeeustissailingclub.org, Charley Jensen: 352-735-2275 or e-mail: cjen@gate.net; Martin Zonnenberg: 352-735-3298 or e-mail: mbpz@aol.com

Mount Dora Yacht Club — www.mountdoraclub.com, e-mail: info@MountDoraYachtClub.com or 352-383-3188

Halifax Sailing Association — www.halifaxsailing.org or 386-238-7245, info@HalifaxSailing.org, Gary Smith: 386-547-3771.

Central Florida Yacht Club: www.cfcyc.com

Lake Monroe Sailing Association: www.lmsa.ws, sail4fun@lmsa.ws

FUN Maritime Academy (Sanford): www.funma.com, 407-330-0633 or 1-866-320-SAIL

Upcoming Central Florida regattas include:

Halifax River: Thunder Mug Regatta, March 2004

Lake Monroe: Kettle Cup, today; TransMonroe, March 2004

Lake Dora: Mount Dora Yacht Club Regatta, April 2004

Lake Eustis: International Wayfarer Regatta, Feb. 6-8, 2004; Flying Scot Regatta, Feb. 7-8, 2004; George Washington Birthday Regatta, Feb. 21-22, 2004; C Scow Midwinter Regatta, March 12-14, 2004; Zenda U MC Scow Clinic, March 16-17, 2004; MC Scow Midwinter National Championship Regatta, March 18-20, 2004

Lake Harris: Clemens Cup

sons for young people and adults.

In Volusia County, a number of clubs exist along the Halifax River. The Halifax Yacht Club and the Halifax Sailing Association work together to put on events in the Daytona Beach area. There are regattas, learn-to-sail classes and other club activities designed to bring together boating enthusiasts in the area.

Closer to Orlando, the Central Florida Yacht Club is based in Ocoee, and sponsors the Clemens Cup regatta each year on Lake Harris, near Tavares in Lake County.

Back in Sanford, the Lake Monroe Sailing Association also has meetings, club races and regattas.

"We're open to anyone," said Bernice Siebuhr, the club chair. "Anyone is more than welcome to come and participate."

The Lake Monroe Sailing Association holds three regattas a year — the TransMonroe regatta in March, the East Lake Toho regatta in Kissimmee in November and the Kettle Cup. The group has been in existence since 1985.

LMSA doesn't offer lessons, but the nearby FUN Maritime Academy, which rents boats and is a sponsor of the LMSA regattas, does have sailing courses. The academy is located on the marina in Sanford.

"We're looking forward to making Lake Monroe the sailing center of Central Florida," said Willie Blewins, a co-owner of the academy with his wife, Denise Burchard.

That kind of excitement seems to be common no matter what body of water enthusiasts sail.

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