

Waterfronts Feb. 5

Under a bill signed into law by the governor in September, California boaters will have to take tests and be licensed just like driver of motor vehicles.

It all begins on Jan. 1, 2018, when all persons under the age of 20 must get a boaters license unless operating a vessel in an organized regatta, vessel race or waterskiing competition.

The Senate Bill 941 will be phased in gradually until Jan. 1, 2025 in which all boaters of any age must be tested and licensed if they are to drive any boat – sail or power – with an engine of at least 15 horsepower.

Jan Lawson, rear commodore of Ventura Yacht Club who teaches boating classes, writes about the new law in her column in the club's February newsletter.

Fortunately for area boaters, the Sail & Power Squadron offers boating courses each year. "America's Boating Course" will be held on Tuesdays from 7 to 9 p.m. from Feb. 10 through April 9 at the VYC clubhouse, 1755 Spinnaker Drive in Ventura Harbor.

The law effects younger boaters first, with boaters 25 and younger requiring licenses in 2019, and increases age-wise in five year increments until 2025 when all boaters, regardless of age, will be required to take a test and be licensed. Boaters who need to be tested for a license must score 80 percent or higher to pass.

"There is some confusion on the internet about the course that needs to be taken," Lawson said. "The state web site references an eight hour course by the U.S. Power Squadrons or the Coast Guard Auxiliary. The problem here is that I'm not aware of any eight hour course offered by any power squadron or the Coast Guard Auxiliary. The seamanship class Ventura Sail and Power Squadron offers runs eight weeks at 1.5 hours per week. The next class starts April 13, 2015."

"To make matters more fun," Lawson said, "the state web site states it is uncertain if passing a class before 2018 will be sufficient to get the license" or if a boater will have to wait until his/her age requirement is reached in order to be tested.

"Once you have a license it will be good in every state," Lawson said. Currently California is one of five states that do not have a licensing law currently in place.

The rationale for the licensing law is a rash of boating accidents in recent years in California. In 2012 there were 473 boating accidents resulting in 53 deaths. "Most of these were attributable to inexperience," Lawson said, "so some education could go a long way to reduce accidents.

SOLID BOX:

The Ventura Sail & Power Squadron will present America's Boating Course on Tuesday nights at Ventura Yacht Club from Feb. 10 through April 9. The course includes sessions on safety equipment; navigation rules; light and sound signals; federal and state laws; anchoring. water sports safety; trailering and much more. The classes will be from 7 to 9 p.m. at the VYC clubhouse at

1755 Spinnaker Drive in Ventura Harbor. The cost for the course is \$50. For more information contact Pat, the squadron education officer at 646-7675.

SOLID BOX:

Upcoming Sailboat Races

- Saturday, Feb. 14, PBYC Spring Series. Hosted by Pierpont Bay Yacht Club, this is the first of a three race series. The other races are on March 7 and March 21. The entry fee is \$80 for the series (\$70 for U.S. Sailing members) or \$30 per race (\$25 for U.S. Sailing members). Skippers meetings are at 8:30 a.m. By tradition, trophies for the 2014 County High Point Standings will be presented by Richard Sharpe to the following: First place Deke Klatt in Jaded; second place Mike Hopper in Majic Dragon; third place Tom Hudson in E Ticket; fourth place Randy Alcorn in Out Patient, and fifth place John Roland in Wild Flyer. For more information, contact Race Chair Richard Countess at (818) 889-2669 or rcountess@aol.com.
- Saturday, Sunday, Feb. 21-22, SCYA Midwinter Regatta. Hosted by Channel Islands Yacht Club, there will be four classes: J-24, Wylie Wabbit and PHRF spinnaker and non-spinnaker. Entry fee varies, depending on boat size. The skippers meeting for the J-24 class will be at 8:30 a.m. at Ventura Yacht Club. The skippers meeting for the other classes will be at 9 a.m. at Channel Islands Yacht Club. First start will be at noon both days. For more information, contact event chair Jane Thomas at (415) 518-4046 or sunblade@prodigy.net.
- Sunday, Feb. 22, SCYA Midwinter Regatta. Hosted by Westlake Yacht Club, this event at Westlake Lake is for dingy classes including C-18, CFJ, Capri 14.2, Laser and U.S. Sabot. Entries close at 11:30 a.m. on Friday, Feb. 20. Boat and trailer inspection will start at 10:30 on Sunday and continue until noon. Entry forms can be sent to Race Chair, Westlake Yacht Club, 32123 Lindero Canyon Rd., Westlake Village, CA 91361.
- Saturday, Feb. 28, Regatta Series 1. Hosted by Ventura Yacht Club, this regatta was blown out on Jan. 24 and rescheduled. It is the first of three windward-leeward regattas for PHRF spinnaker boats. Eleven boats signed up for the first regatta and more are expected in the rescheduled event. The other regattas in the series are on April 18 and Aug. 29. Entry fee for individual regattas is \$25, or \$60 for the series. The skippers meetings will be at 8:30 a.m. and racing begins at 11 a.m. in the vicinity of the Mandalay buoy. For more information, contact Race Chair Stan Whisenhunt at 659-1464 or email him at Swhisenhun@aol.com.

(Fax your race announcements, results and other information to Stan Whisenhunt at 659-3058 or call him at 659-1464. His e-mail address is Swhisenhun@aol.com).