

**CITY OF SANTA BARBARA WATERFRONT
DEPARTMENT MEMORANDUM**

Date: October 23, 2014
To: Harbor Commission
From: Scott Riedman, Waterfront Director
Subject: Harbor Operations Report

HARBOR PATROL RESCUE

At 5:30 p.m. on September 24th, the twin-engine, 45' powerboat *Mesmerize* radioed a Mayday, reporting that it was sinking with six passengers aboard approximately half-way between Santa Barbara and Ventura Harbor.

Harbor Patrol Officers Erik Engebretson and Larry Nufer responded aboard Patrol Boat #2 (the fastest boat in our fleet). While in route, the *Mesmerize* reported its bilge pumps were not working, they were having difficulty getting their life raft in the water and were taking water over their transom. At this point, responding officers thought the vessel would sink before they arrived on scene and hoped its passengers would be found safe before sunset.

After a fast twenty-minute run, the officers located the *Mesmerize* five miles offshore, still afloat with several through-hulls discharging water from its bilges. The vessel's passengers were lying about the deck seasick and in obvious distress. Officer Engebretson transferred Officer Nufer from PB#2 to the *Mesmerize*. Officer Nufer assured the passengers they would all be okay and began inspecting the engine compartment and bilges, where he found an engine intake hose had failed and an intake pump was pumping seawater into the vessel's bilges. Officer Nufer secured the engine through-hull, stopping the leak and the bilge pumps removed the remaining water. A US Coast Guard SAFE Boat and a Ventura Harbor Patrol Boat then arrived on scene. Coast Guard placed a crewmember aboard the *Mesmerize* and escorted its operator back to Ventura Harbor while the vessel ran on its one remaining operable engine.

GOVERNOR SIGNS BOATER-EDUCATION BILL

In an effort to reduce boating accidents and fatalities, Governor Brown signed Senate Bill 941, a boater-education bill, into law last month. Its passage represents seven years of political wrangling over the need for boater education in California, one of only five states previously lacking such a requirement.

Beginning in 2018, the law prohibits operation of a motor-powered vessel in state waters without a valid "Vessel Operator Card." The law will be phased in from 2018 through 2025, with younger operators needing to meet its requirements first, followed annually and incrementally by older operators. To obtain the Card (good for life) a person must first pass an online boater-safety exam.

Program implementation costs will be underwritten by a \$4 million loan from the Division of Boating and Waterways' Harbors and Watercraft Revolving Fund, to be repaid within eight years from program revenues, specifically fees for obtaining the Card, which, by law, shall not exceed \$30 per person.

The law also requires the state to compile annual reports detailing the number of Cards issued and any correlation between the issuances of Cards and the statewide number of boating accidents, injuries and fatalities.

And there are exclusions to the law, reflecting compromises made between boating-interest groups:

- Sail-powered and human-powered vessels;
- Persons temporarily using state waters for not more than 60 days;
- Persons operating rental vessels;
- A person under the age of 18 operating a vessel under the supervision of a person possessing a Vessel Operator Card; and
- A person operating a vessel in an organized regatta or vessel race, or water ski race.

For more information, search California Senate Bill 941 on the internet.

COAST GUARD DROPS CODE LABELS FOR PERSONAL FLOATATION DEVICES

In a move intended to reduce confusion and simplify requirements for recreational boaters' use of Personal Floatation Devices (PFDs or "life jackets"), the Coast Guard on October 22nd eliminated its "code-labeling system" for PFDs that currently specifies requirements for PDF use in five different categories. PFDs currently range in "Type Categories" labeled I-V from what the Coast Guard calls "Nearshore Buoyant Vests" to "Floatation Aids" to "Offshore Lifejackets" for extended survival in rough, open water.

Removing type-coding is the first step in a multi-year process that includes designing new labels and developing new PFD standards that would "harmonize" with international standards adopted by SOLAS (Safety of Life at Sea), an international treaty whose roots date to the sinking of the Titanic. When that is accomplished (possibly by 2017) manufacturers can have jackets approved under the new standards, and jackets without the current code labeling should hit the market.

Life-jacket manufacturers will continue to use Type I-V coding until new regulations and labels are designed and approved. Current life jackets that have Type 1-V coding are good for the useful life of the PFD.

HARBOR AND SEAFOOD FESTIVAL RECAP

For the third straight year, nearly 14,000 people attended the Harbor and Seafood Festival, held on Saturday, October 11th. The public got its fill of seafood—lobster, crab,

sea urchin “uni,” oysters, mussels, barbequed albacore, fish-and-chips, clam chowder, paella, fish tacos and more—at the 13th annual event. Arts-and-crafts vendors reported brisk sales throughout the day and many said they would love to return next year.

As always, the heart of the festival remains its volunteers—starting with fishermen who not only tended to a searing barbeque and 14 pots of boiling crab and lobster, to the trappers who donated some 1,200 pounds of crab to the Festival. The rest of the volunteer corps, from high-school students to students in SBCC’s Culinary Arts Program, NOAA, the Maritime Museum, city staff, local yacht brokerages and the general public, did a bang-up job, again proving indispensable to the event.

Meanwhile, festival-goers packed the *Double Dolphin* and *Azure Seas* for free boat rides, thanks to the generosity of Santa Barbara Sailing Center and Celebration Cruises, respectively. Bands rocked and rolled on two stages all day.

Transportation was for the most part smooth, as the Department was able to use the Carriage Museum Parking Lot this year. In addition, Bici Centro and the Bicycle Coalition provided about 150 bike stations to help support alternative transportation to the Festival. That said, staff is consistently looking to increase event parking and streamline directional signage for this event. Coordination with other agencies and institutions, including SBCC and non-profits holding events in the same area on the same day, remains crucial to this effort.

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