

Water Fronts for Dec. 31

A quick look back at some of the highlights of the 2009 sailboat racing season.

Fickle weather plagued the racing scene in January and February, with stormy Santa Ana winds reducing the 9-boat fleet in the VYC regatta to just two surviving boats. In February, the opposite took place as winds were so light only one boat in the 22 boat fleet managed to finish the opening race of Pierpont Bay Yacht Club's Spring Series.

Later in February, Channel Islands Yacht Club hosted J-24 and PHRF classes in the SCYA Midwinter Regatta. Deke Klatt took first in the J-24 class in Jaded, while Richard Sharpe won the PHRF Class in his Olson 30, Perfect Balance.

Light winds prevailed for the Spring Series. Series winners were Dick Velthoen's J-35 Rival in spinnaker A, Perfect Balance in spinnaker B, Tom Warshauer's Hunter 37 Quiet Times in non-spinnaker A, Tim Haapanen's Catalina 27 Sisu in non-spinnaker B, and Bill Gibb's 52-foot catamaran Afterburner in the multi-hull class.

In April, it was obvious that the slumping economy was having a negative effect on sailboat racing as less than 300 boats turned out for the world famous Newport Beach to Ensenada Race, an event that normally attracts 400 to 500 boats each year. And, for the first time since 1968, the Ventura County to Newport race – an annual feeder for the Ensenada Race – was called off due to lack of entries.

The popular Hardway Race from Santa Barbara to Ventura in May attracted 36 boats. Only three boats sailed the 67-mile course around Santa Cruz Island while the rest of the skippers opted for shorter coastal courses. Dan Chepley won the hardway course in Colt 45, taking 22 hours, 37 minutes, 20 seconds to sail the course. The going was equally slow for the inshore boats.

CIYC boats, Zoarces and Fusee, took first and third places in the Commodore Classic race in early June, hosted by Ventura Yacht Club.

July was highlighted by PBYC's 42-mile Milt Ingram race, which was won by radio talk show host and best-selling author Dr. Laura Schlessinger in her J-125, Warrior.

In August, America's Cup veteran Dennis Conner showed up for Pacific Corinthian Yacht Club's McNish Classic Race in a replica of the 19th century racing schooner, America, which won the race and trophy which has become yachting's most prestigious event and coveted award.

September's highlight was the Santa Barbara Channel Challenge and Ventura Cup, hosted by Ventura Yacht Club. The VYC team of Rival, Angry Hillbillies and High Voltage, won the Cup, with CIYC taking second.

Dr. Laura was a sailing highlight again in October as she sailed another of her boats, a J-100 named Perfect, in The Caregivers Sailathon. She sailed the most laps and also raised the most money in the charity event.

The long racing season ground to a close in December with the wrap-up of the Two Harbor Fall Series co-hosted by Anacapa and Pierpont Bay yacht clubs and PCYC's TGIS series.

Haapanen won the non-spinnaker class in Sisu in the Fall Series finale and captured the the Ventura County High Point championship. The top spinnaker boat in the High Point series was Angry Hillbillies, a Zap 26 co-skipped by Paul Moore and Deke Klatt.

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Stay up-to-date with the latest notices of race, results and other timely information by joining the local Google Group for the Association of Santa Barbara Channel Yacht Clubs. Click over to:

<http://groups.google.com/group/asbcyc> and then select "Join this group" on the right side of the page.

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Upcoming sailboat races:

* Sunday, Jan. 17, VYC Regatta Series 1. Hosted by Ventura Yacht Club, this is the first of three regattas for PHRF boats and J-24s. The other regattas will be sailed on April 18 and Sept. 12. The entry fee for the series is \$45. Entry for individual regattas is \$20. Three races are planned for each regatta, with skippers meetings at 8:30 and racing beginning at 11. Notice of race and entry form are available on the club's website at Venturayachtclub.org. For more information, contact Stan Whisenhunt at 659-1464 or e-mail him at Swhisenhun@aol.com.

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2010 ocean sailboat racing schedule:

Jan. 17, VYC PHRF & J-24 Regatta Series 1.

Feb. 13, PBYC, Spring Series 1

Feb. 20-21, CIYC, SCYA Midwinters, PHRF & J-24.

(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).