

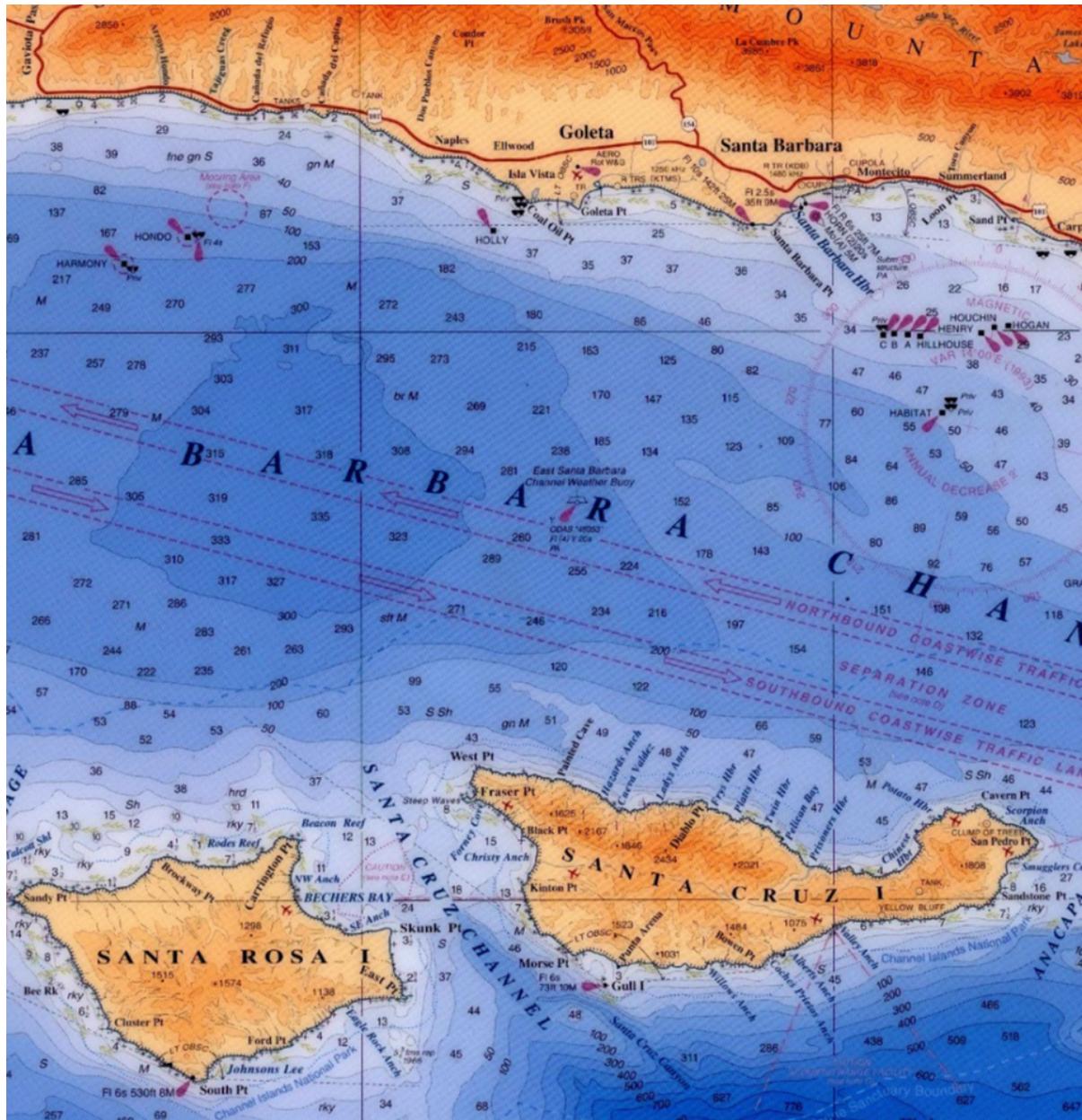


# Signal Hoist

## Santa Barbara Sail & Power Squadron

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## Monthly Newsletter February 2026





## **COMMANDER'S MESSAGE**

**Cdr. Alec Hardy**

Dear Squadron Members,

Happy New Year to all of you! It was truly great seeing everyone at our Holiday Party—what a fun way to wrap up the year and spend time together. As we head into the new year, I'm excited to share that we've been busy planning what's ahead, and there's a lot to look forward to. We have a great mix of social gatherings, cruising opportunities, and continued training in the works—something for everyone.

We also recently had the chance to sit down with the Commander and SEO from the Ventura Squadron, and it turned into a really energizing conversation about working more closely together. What does that mean for you? Expect invitations to Ventura Squadron social events, shared training opportunities between both squadrons, and boats from both groups coming together at an island anchorage.

Our 2026 schedule is now ready, so keep an eye out for it in this *Signal Hoist* and on our website. It's shaping up to be a terrific year, and I'm looking forward to sharing it with all of you.

Warm regards,  
Alec Hardy  
Squadron Commander



## **SECRETARY'S MESSAGE & ACTIVITIES COORDINATOR MESSAGE**

At our January 9, 2026 business meeting these were our main discussion items:

- Proposed budget for 2026
  - Treasurer Steve York presented the proposed budget, including a detailed list of assumptions used to develop it. The budget as presented was approved by all present, but not a quorum.
- Calendar for 2026
  - Cdr Alec Hardy developed a starting proposal using last year's calendar. We discussed and adjusted.
- Education
  - Alec scheduled a meeting of the Education Committee. Once we have a proposed schedule of classes/seminars we will run that by Ventura squadron as we want to coordinate our offerings and dates to minimize conflicts and duplicates. We want members of both squadrons to be able to take advantage of the education offerings of both groups.
  - Our newest members are most interested in our education program.

Any members who would like a copy of the full minutes – don't hesitate to request from Virginia at [sbmesafirstmate@gmail.com](mailto:sbmesafirstmate@gmail.com).

*Ahoy, Santa Barbara squadron members!*  
*We're looking for enthusiastic crew members to step up and help.*  
*Whether you have a passion for organizing events, sharing your boating knowledge, or*  
*serving in a support role, there's a spot for YOU!*  
*Your contributions will keep our organization cruising smoothly. Let's set sail together!*

If you have questions or want to raise your hand, please contact your nominations committee:

John Profant [johnprofant@cox.net](mailto:johnprofant@cox.net)  
 Virginia Johns [sbmesafirstmate@gmail.com](mailto:sbmesafirstmate@gmail.com)

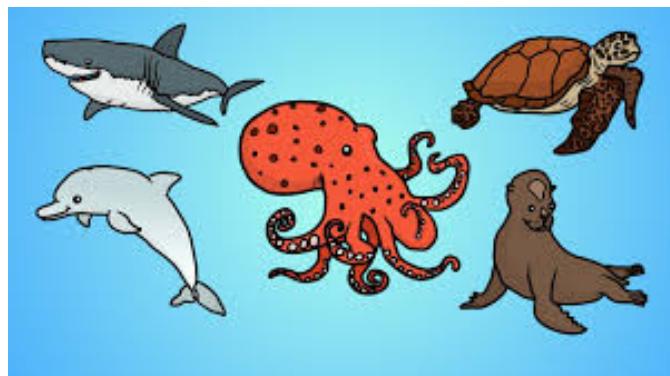
SBSPS Meetings and Activities Calendar 2026 (as of 1/25/2026)				
Date	Activity	Time	Category	Point
Feb 15 Sun	Field Trip TBD	10am	Social	
Mar 13-15	District Conference (San Diego)	TBD	Social	
Mar 21 Sat	Change of Watch	12noon	Social	
Apr 18 Sat	Dockside Brunch	10am	Social	Past Commanders
Apr 23 Thurs	Business Meeting (All Are Welcome)	7pm	Social	
May 2 Sat	Harbor Clean Sweep	TBD	Service	
May 29-31	Weekend Cruise (Frys)	8am	Cruise	A.Hardy/S. Burns
June 6 Sat	Ships and Dips (Apps/Desserts)	4pm	Social	
June 26-28	Weekend Cruise (Coches)	8am	Cruise	A.Hardy/S. Burns
July 24-26	PCYC Cruise/Saturday Dinner	5pm	Social	
August 28-30	Weekend Cruise	8am	Cruise	A.Hardy/S. Burns
Sep 19 Sat	White Elephant/Annual BBQ	1pm	Social	
Oct 17 Sat	Harbor Seafood Festival	10-5pm	Service	
Sept 25-27	Weekend Cruise (TBD)	8am	Cruise	A.Hardy/S. Burns
Nov 18 Wed	Maritime Museum Mixer	5:30-7pm	Social	
Dec 12 Sat	Holiday Party	Noon	Social	
Jan 7 Thurs	Business Meeting (All Are Welcome)	7pm	Social	

## Spring Conference 2026

This year's Spring Conference will be a conference for both District 13 and District 28. It will be hosted by District 28 in San Diego, beginning on Friday, March 13, and ending on Sunday March 15. It will be held at the Southwestern Yacht Club, 2702 Qualtrough St., San Diego, [southwesternyc.org](http://southwesternyc.org) These are very informative and enjoyable events and there will be a welcome event on Friday evening. Further details will be forthcoming.

## Upcoming Activities

<b>Feb 15</b>	<b>Sunday</b>	<b>Field Trip — TBD — Look for email update</b>
	<b>Noon</b>	
	<b>1:00PM</b>	<b>Lunch</b>
<b>Mar 13-15</b>	<b>Friday-Sunday</b>	<b>District 13/28 Conference</b> <b>San Diego</b>
<b>Mar 21</b>	<b>Saturday</b>	<b>Change of Watch</b> <b>TBD</b>
	<b>Noon</b>	



# Another Fun Time at Annual Mixer

Many thanks to Suzette Seagoe for again organizing our annual mixer, held in partnership with the Santa Barbara Sailing Club, at the Santa Barbara Maritime Museum. Delicious appetizers, smooth wines, salty stories all make the event a yearly must-attend. Below a few photos from the event.



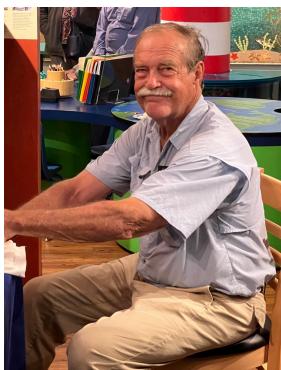
Suzette & Pete Seagoe



Bobby Young



John Profant & Neil Abblit



Scott Burns



Alec Hardy



John Bridgwater & Rich Ciolino



Sue Abblit



Mike Pyzel — mid-story



Joan Kent & Vicki Slocum



Andrew Stevens & Jackie Raskin

## Scenes From Holiday Luncheon

Thank-you Virginia Johns for arranging for our Holiday Luncheon at Cody's. Thanks to Lori Sanchez for helping and Peggy Ciolino for decorations. It was fun to get together and visit. The highlight of the afternoon, though, was Dennis John's game from childhood that had us all trying to keep a candle flame alive in a cup full of pudding!!!!!!



Amber & Alec Hardy



Pete Seagoe, Mike Pyzel, Suzette Seagoe, John and Michelle Profant



Rick & Lorie Sanchez



Virginia Johns & Steve York



Eleanor York, Alec Hardy, & Rich Ciolino



Awaiting lunch



We were all engrossed in Dennis' candle-flame game!



The two winning remains of the spent candles



Not at the Luncheon, Mark Breen —member at large in Austin — we were fortunate to have a sighting, while in town to check on his boat!



*Seven Seas Cruising Association*



*AI (artificial intelligence) seems to be a hot topic right now. Here are some free zoom seminars on HAL, an AI tool to help boaters. They are free to all, not just SSCA members. The series runs on the last Thursday of each month at 7:00 PM Eastern (4pm Pacific), beginning January 29, 2026, and continues through June 2026*

*submitted by Virginia Johns*

# **SSCA Launches Monthly Training Webinars for Cruisers**

Practical Risk Awareness • Real-World Systems Insight • Better Go / No-Go Decisions

Norfolk, VA — January 2026 —

The Seven Seas Cruising Association (SSCA) has launched a new monthly Zoom Webinar training series supporting fundamentals and introducing members and guests to HAL (Hybrid Applied Layer) — SSCA's AI-assisted decision-support framework designed to help cruisers interpret conditions more clearly, recognize risk earlier, and make better operational decisions afloat.

The series runs on the last Thursday of each month at 7:00 PM Eastern, beginning January 29, 2026, and continues through June 2026. All sessions are delivered via Zoom Webinar in an observer-friendly format.

## **What Is HAL?**

HAL is not an app or autopilot. It is an AI "buddy" framework that runs inside guided ChatGPT sessions, helping cruisers fuse authoritative data, vessel knowledge, and real-world observations into clearer situational understanding.

HAL is designed to:

- support human judgment, not replace it
- surface risks earlier
- reduce common escalation traps
- improve interpretation of weather, systems, and location-specific information
- Access to HAL tools is provided to SSCA members, though non-members are welcome to attend the training webinars.
- 

## **HAL Training Modules (Modules 1–5)**

Each monthly webinar focuses on a specific HAL training module drawn from SSCA's Seven Seas University (SSU) curriculum:

## **Module 1 — Weather Interpretation & Risk Awareness**

Understanding weather products, forecast limitations, pattern recognition, and common misreads that lead to poor go/no-go decisions.

## **Module 2 — Boat Equipment & Failure Pattern Recognition**

Using HAL to reason through real-world equipment issues, maintenance risk, and failure escalation — not diagnostics, but decision support.

## **Module 3 — Rigging & Structural Assessment (Visual Analysis)**

Photo-based and observation-based rigging checks, risk triage, and when to escalate to professional inspection.

## **Module 4 — Port Guides & Cruising Location Intelligence**

Applying HAL to SSCA Port Guides, regional knowledge, customs considerations, and on-arrival risk awareness.

Module 5 — Integrated Cruising Scenarios

Combining weather, equipment, and location data into practical decision workflows cruisers face offshore and in port.

### **Who Should Attend**

- Sail and power cruisers
- New-to-you boat owners
- Offshore passage makers
- Coastal cruisers planning longer legs
- Anyone interested in practical, non-hyped AI support tools
- No technical background is required.
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### **Webinar Details**

**When: January 29, 2026 — 7:00 PM Eastern**

Then monthly on the last Thursday through June 25, 2026  
Format: Zoom Webinar (observer-only, recorded)  
Cost: Free — complimentary to all

***HAL tool access reserved for SSCA members***

**Register Now!**

## REVENUE OPPORTUNITIES FOR HARBOR

If you would like to know what those in charge of the harbor and waterfront are contemplating in order to increase income for the harbor, please check out this link to the Santa Barbara Harbor Strategic Planning Update of November 20, 2025:

<https://docs.santabarbaraca.gov/publicaccess/api/Document/AcjVJgjNkFmzND0sN5p%C3%89a8%C3%89Drw%C3%81P%C3%89ygvaKo%C3%891CcwCNC28BLa2BxwmLkgMm9Mu125WZwgSMLsGlfBHu8HoUQf%C3%81c8%3D/>

The table on pages 3 and 4 is particularly illuminating. The “revenue opportunities” listed, such as charging for the currently free 90 minute parking spaces, charging for classroom usage (the fee is currently waived for organizations like ours), along with increasing slip fees (of course) are of interest. These options and more are to be discussed and evaluated this year from now until June 2026.

*submitted by Steve York*

## Free OpenCPN Online Seminar

OpenCPN is free chart plotting software, popular with boaters worldwide, and used by America’s Boating Club | United States Power Squadrons for teaching courses. A free OpenCPN online seminar is now available at the [online education store](#). To access it, simply browse the list of online courses and select “Introduction to OpenCPN” (the second-to-last course). Add it to your cart, then proceed to checkout. If you already have an account, just log in and complete your purchase. If you don’t have an account, follow the prompts to create one. This seminar covers how to install OpenCPN, download and update charts, configure chart displays, create waypoints and routes, and integrate OpenCPN with GPS for live navigation. It’s a great resource for students taking Marine Navigation or anyone interested in learning OpenCPN. [-Barbara Herrmann](#)

*submitted by Virginia Johns*



The Santa Barbara Maritime Museum (SBMM) is pleased to announce the next presentation in its Maritime Distinguished Speaker Series on Thursday, February 19, 2026 at 7:00 p.m. The talk, "Shooting for the Stars: Sunflower Star Laboratory's Community-Based Approach to *Pycnopodia* Recovery," will be delivered by Reuven Bank, co-founder and chairman of the board of the Sunflower Star Laboratory (SSL).



Photo courtesy of NPS / Scott Gabara

*Pycnopodia helianthoides*, commonly known as the sunflower star, is a massive, vibrantly-coloured seastar predator that once roamed coastal kelp forests, devouring sea urchins and maintaining ecological balance. In the



Reuven Banks, photo courtesy

2013–14 sea star wasting syndrome outbreak, one of the largest marine-disease events on record, these keystone predators collapsed into functional extinction along California's coast. With their loss came the dramatic decline of kelp forests—over 96 percent of Northern California's kelp canopy has

vanished in the last decade, and the trend extends into regions of Santa Barbara County.

"At SBMM, we believe a healthy ocean means a healthy people and region — our next chapter will deepen that link between local maritime history, ecosystem resilience, and public stewardship," said Director of Education Lis Perry.

Founded in 2021 by a coalition of concerned community members, the Sunflower Star Laboratory is a nonprofit conservation-aquaculture initiative that is now rearing part of California's first cohort of human-reared juvenile sunflower stars. The talk will highlight SSL's pioneering research methods, their partnerships across North America, and how their efforts tie directly into kelp-forest restoration and ecosystem resilience in the Santa Barbara Channel region. SSL's community-based model makes it an ideal lens for understanding how local engagement and science can intersect to rebuild ecosystem health.

"We're honored to host leaders who bring both rigorous science and community heart — this presentation on sunflower star recovery shows how bold action and compassion go hand in hand for the Santa Barbara Channel's future," said Executive Director TBD.

### **About the Speaker:**

Reuven Bank is a former coastal resource manager in the U.S. Peace Corps (Philippines) and has served as chairman of the Sunflower Star Laboratory's Board of Directors since its founding. "Kelp forests are an essential ecosystem for our planet, and they are disappearing before our eyes in California. Restoring the sunflower star is the single most impactful step we can take to give California's beleaguered kelp forests a chance at recovery," Bank says. "I'm excited to share how the Sunflower Star Laboratory team is super-charging recovery efforts for this vital keystone species and the ecosystems they support."

This presentation aligns with SBMM's mission to explore and interpret the rich and diverse maritime and marine-ecosystem history of the Santa Barbara Channel and beyond.

**Tickets:** Free for Navigators Circle members, \$10 for SBMM members, \$20 for the general public, and \$5 for students and educators with a valid school ID or email. Purchase tickets by calling (805) 456-8750.



The Signal Hoist is the official publication of the Santa Barbara Sail & Power Squadron. Articles of interest to the membership should be forwarded in writing via email to the Editor by the 20th of the month in order to be included in the next issue. We solicit the submission of your articles on safety, boating, cruising, racing, and squadron activities. Accompanying relevant photos are appreciated. We encourage articles by our members. Send us your true or tall tales. Articles, opinions, and advertisements published herein do not necessarily reflect squadron policy or endorsement unless so designated.

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