

# ON THE WATER

## Newport instructors honored

BY TAYLOR HILL  
STAFF WRITER



Captain David Carlson



Captain Mike Kohl

PHOTOS: NEWPORT BEACH SAILING SCHOOL

Two instructors at Newport Beach Sailing School were chosen for the Outstanding Sailing Instructor of the Year award by the American Sailing Association this year.

The award, given to only 30 sailing instructors worldwide, was the third time instructor Mike Kohl has received recognition and the first for instructor and Newport Beach resident David Carlson.

The Register caught up with each to talk about the award.

**What is special about this award?**

**Mike Kohl:** The Outstanding Instructor Award is based off of student survey results and is given to only the top 2 percent of American Sailing Association instructors worldwide. It feels good to be recognized once again by my students with this award, and it makes me feel happy to know they are happy with me. This award is special to me this year because it serves as justification to continue teaching sailing even though my real estate career has really taken off.

**David Carlson:** It's special to me because it shows that I am communicating to my students well, that they are learning safely and most importantly having a good time.

**Why do you think Newport Beach Sail School had two instructors win the award?**

**Kohl:** They pay well. No, just kidding. We somehow have as-

sembled an amazingly talented and enthusiastic group of sailing instructors. I'm surprised more of the guys who didn't win this year, especially Captain Roger Phillips, who has been with the school since its inception and has won the award in the past. The school has the best maintained sailing fleet in the industry headed by a South African guy named Don Shannon. He's always down there on the docks making sure we are good to go. The laid back, yet sharp style of management also keeps everything running smoothly and has to be the backbone of it all. It takes the whole team of folks to make it all possible.

**Carlson:** We have a great relationship with Chris Jester, the owner of the school and a very good maintenance team. Also the staff in the office and the other instructors do a wonderful job. So we are surrounded by good people.

**Is sailing instructor your**

**full time job? What else do you do?**

**Kohl:** It was at first. I once even maintained our entire fleet of sailing yachts before Don Shannon stepped in (and stepped up the game), but I've become too busy as a real estate agent with Star Real Estate and Kohl and Associates over the past few years. I sell residential real estate in Orange County, specializing in short sales and probates. I guess it really doesn't matter what you do. I mean, as long as your heart is in it, everything eventually comes together.

**Carlson:** Yes I am lucky enough to do this full time. On days off I play polo. I also like to spend time at the track with sports cars and motorcycles.

**How long have you been with Newport Beach Sailing School?**

**Kohl:** Seven Years.  
**Carlson:** I have been teaching with them for three years. Before that I taught sailing and

racing in Boston for 15 years.

**What do you like about teaching sailing?**

**Carlson:** I grew up sailing. I think it is something you can do your whole life. I like to pass that on to other people, and the enjoyment they get is very rewarding. It's a sport that involves you both physically and mentally.

**Kohl:** I really enjoy the challenges of working with so many different types of people. Everybody seems to learn a little differently, and figuring out the best way to get somewhat abstract concepts across is always interesting for that reason.

Located at 1600 W. Coast Highway, Newport Beach Sailing School focuses on one-on-one sailing instruction for beginners up to advanced sailing skills, with classroom sizes limited to just two students per class. For more information, go to [www.newportbeachsail.com](http://www.newportbeachsail.com).

## BORDER RUN SAILBOAT RACE ALTERS COURSE

With its start moved from April to Feb. 22 this year, race creator Randy Reynolds expected fewer entrants for this year's Border Run, but issues in Mexico could potentially limit entries further.

The race got its name from its original course design established in 2009, which had sailboats starting just off the Newport Pier, and heading south to round Mexico's Coronado Islands before finishing in San Diego Bay.

This year, Reynolds decided to cancel the Coronado course, citing a lack of interest from the larger, faster sailboats and unanswered questions from Mexico regarding racing in their waters.

"We've been in talks with officials down there for months, but we just couldn't get a straight answer on whether our boats would be allowed to sail around the islands without the fear of being boarded for inspection during the race," Reynolds said.

The news of Mexico officials impounding more than 300 boats - most of which were American- and Canadian-owned - in various Mexican marinas hasn't helped race entries either.

"We have about 65 right now, and we had about 100 in last year's race," Reynolds said.

The two alternative courses for the race will keep sailboats in native waters.

The San Diego course will run 70 nautical miles from Newport to San Diego, and the Dana Point course will run 14 miles from the Newport Beach Pier to Dana Point Harbor.

"We just want to give all sailors a chance to enter. From dinghies to catamarans to the maxi sleds," Reynolds said.

"And we really hope these issues with Mexico are cleared up in time for the Newport to Ensenada race this spring."

For more information, go to [theborderrun.org](http://theborderrun.org)

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