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American Sailing Association Launches “Women Wake Up Zone”
to Celebrate Women on the Water and Encourage More Women to Sail

LOS ANGELES (March 21, 2019) The [American Sailing Association](#) (ASA), America’s sail education authority, is energizing women to set sail with the announcement of its new education campaign: “Women Wake Up Zone.” As U.S. corporations, politics and the entertainment industry evolve to include greater numbers of women, the sailing industry is riding the wave of gender equality, as well. With International Women’s Day earlier this month, as well as March being designated as Women’s History Month, the world’s largest sailing organization chose March 2019 to embark upon a crusade to bring more women into sailing.

“When people hear ‘sailing,’ they often think of stuffy, 60-year-old men behind the wheel while women watch,” said Cindy Shabes, president of the American Sailing Association. “Although a recent market research study shows that men outnumber women seven to one as registered boat owners, many of our instructors and high-level instructor evaluators are now women, and many of our schools are now owned or managed by women.”

The American Sailing Association aims to lead gender equality in sailing with its “Women Wake Up Zone” education campaign. Designed to erase the stereotypes and eliminate the fear some women have that sailing is too expensive and physically demanding, the initiative aims to create more women sailors. Shabes added, “As we see more women take the wheel and thrive on our waterways, we believe that others will follow in their wake.”

The “Women Wake Up Zone” education campaign includes classes that teach how to:

- **Tie the knot** – Knots can be tricky and intimidating, but women can be better at tying knots because their hands are often nimbler.
- **Raise a sail** – Heavy sails that used to require major upper body strength have been replaced with lighter synthetic sails. In fact, men who often try to “muscle” the lines are at a disadvantage because now there are more efficient mechanisms and techniques.
- **Work the winch** – Maneuver a modern two-speed winch, the device on a boat to pull in or let out wind.
- **Save someone** – Learn the procedure to follow if someone falls off of a boat.
- **Take the helm** – Use fingertip precision to steer and sail the course.

“While this campaign is new, in the future we plan to move to having no special training for women sailors because, with the technological advances, it has truly become a gender-neutral activity,” said Shabes. “We just need more women to get involved and spread the word.”

In 2018, one third of all new students at the American Sailing Association schools nationwide were women, and the organization expects that by the year 2020, at least half of all new students will be women. More progress is needed in the ferry, cruise, and cargo ship industry, the workforce of which the International Workers Federation (ITF) estimates only one to two percent is women. “More women in the industry will also encourage more women to consider sailing,” Shabes concluded.

To find a local American Sailing Association affiliated school, [click here](#).