

STAMFORD ADVOCATE

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Matthew Brown / Hearst Connecticut Media

Nick Veronica, of Stamford; center, talks with “Big Wave” Dave Reidenbach, of GoDiveNow.com; at left, and Kevin McGinley, of Stamford; a volunteer from Greenwich’s Ski and Scuba Connection, during a free scuba lesson in a dive pool set up for the upcoming third annual Harborfest in Stamford.

ORGANIZERS DIVE IN

Making a splash

Event to feature more water activities

By Ignacio Laguarda

STAMFORD — If there’s one takeaway for organizers of previous HarborFests, it’s that visitors want to get out on the water.

That’s why the third annual event on Saturday will include 45-minute boat rides, to go along with established features like kayak racing and a scuba tank.

Bob Mazzone, vice president of development for SoundWaters, which organizes HarborFest, said the event will feature Stamford Harbor’s waters more than ever.

He said there will be \$5 harbor boat rides at 11 a.m., 12:30 p.m. and 2 p.m. The boats, which can hold up to 40 people, will go up to break-water and come back.

“You can get a chance to see what the city looks like from the water,” Mazzone said.

Visitors who want to get in the water can try the 20-foot by 30-foot, 15,000-gallon mobile scuba tank. Equipment, including wetsuits, snorkels and fins will be available, as well as dressing rooms, but organizers ask that swimmers bring a bathing suit.

See Festival on A3



Nick Veronica, of Stamford, takes a dive in a pool set up for the upcoming third annual Harborfest in Stamford.



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Nick Veronica, of Stamford, at right, gets geared up by “Big Wave” Dave Reidenbach, of GoDiveNow.com, as he prepares for a free scuba lesson in a dive pool set up for Saturday’s third annual Harborfest in Stamford.

FESTIVAL

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The pool is free to the public from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Those preferring to stay on dry land can still get a taste of the harbor with \$1 Long Island Sound oysters from Stella Mar Oyster Co. starting around 4 p.m.

Mazzone said Stella Mar’s oyster boats will create a scene in the water during the event processing thousands of oysters in the harbor.

“It is absolutely fascinating,” he said.

The highlight of HarborFest for many is the cardboard kayak race. Participants have two hours to build a two-person kayak out of eight sheets of cardboard and duct tape. They then race against each



Nick Veronica, of Stamford, scuba dives in a pool set up for Saturday’s third annual Harborfest in Stamford on Friday.

other in the harbor.

Mazzone said organizers are expecting as many as 8,000 people to attend the free event, which kicks off

at 10 a.m. with a boat parade and lasts until 6 p.m.

“The last thing we want to do is put a ticket price in front of them,” Mazzone

said. “It would run counter to what our goal is.”

Mazzone said the event is a showcase for the harbor, which he said is an underappreciated feature of the city.

“One of the big things it’s about is helping people understand that this is a working harbor,” said Mazzone, explaining why he believes HarborFest is more than just a festival. “It’s all about taking care of this incredible resource.”

Besides the kayak races, Mazzone said he is looking forward to trying some fresh Long Island Sound oysters and soaking up a fun day on the docks.

“Our goal is for people to walk away saying, ‘I had some fun, I learned some new things,’” he said.