

# Marine Communications *by Day Chapin*

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## **March Event - Marine Communications 101: Wireless Communication Options for Mariners**

This March, the Amateur Radio Committee of the Seattle Yacht Club will present an event on radio communications, licensing requirements, and everything you've always wanted to know about marine radio communications! Please join us at 7:00 pm on **March 31**, in the SYC Fireside Lounge. This program will introduce you to various options for radio communications from your vessel and provide awareness of the resources within our Club for further information and assistance. Here are the highlights planned to date:

7:00 pm – Introduction – Marine Communications Overview

7:15 pm – Voice Communications

7:40 pm – Digital Communications

8:00 pm – Emergency Communications

8:20 pm – Licensing Issues: What You Need To Know.

8:40 pm – Seattle Yacht Club Wireless Resources

8:50 pm – Information Resources Available

## **For safety and utility – Marine Communications**

Equipping your boat with amateur radio equipment definitely enhances safety and utility. Many boaters that have traveled beyond our protected waters of the inner coastline have found that wireless communications have distinct advantages. You can find out about the weather and stay in touch with the rest of the world. In various regions, groups of boating radio amateurs have formed “nets” (networks with regular informal on-the-air meetings). These virtual

gatherings allow you to get messages to friends and family (even a patch into the telephone system, allowing direct communications with a third party). In our area, cruising yachts contact each other through local nets, e.g., the NW Boater's Net (<http://www.toandos.com/nwbn.html>). Other nets cover the west coast, the Sea of Cortez, the Pacific Ocean, the Bahamas and southeast coast and the Mediterranean. You can also collect local knowledge on cruising destinations and anchorages, or get help trouble-shooting boat engines and systems. Detailed weather forecasts are shared with cruisers offshore who may not be equipped with weatherfax weather fax recorders or satellite web-browsers.

Other advances in Marine Communications that are in use by boaters with a laptop include SailMail, AirMail, and other programs that allow ordinary e-mail to be transmitted over Amateur and Marine Radio frequencies. Many boats already have marine SSB (Single Side Band). Often with minor modification, a SSB transceiver can be modified or supplemented with additional equipment to add Amateur Radio band capability. There are over 600,000 Amateur Radio Operators in the U.S., many belong to ARRL (<http://www.arrl.org/>) and “hams” have been instrumental in developing many wireless, communication, telecom, and computer technologies (<http://www.ac6v.com/history.htm>). Additional links include: <http://www.qrz.com/i/howtoham.html> and <http://aa9pw.com>. And don't forget to visit a great local resource on radio history in our own backyard in Bellingham – <http://www.americanradiomuseum.org>.