



Radios & Boats & Nets

Green Box socializing at our own docks is one of the SYC traditions that bring boaters together. Now picture a community of boaters with a virtual venue in which they can share information about weather, cruising plans, things learned along the way, things to avoid, and have the opportunity to meet new boaters. Amateur Radio nets are a lot like Green Box conversations.

For example, every evening at 5 p.m. the British Columbia Boaters Net (BCBN) starts up on the Vancouver Island VHF trunk system. The VHF trunk system links boaters from the San Juans to Desolation Sound, Port McNeill and Port Hardy. This net has been operating over twenty years and provides the traveling boater with weather information and contacts with other boats. Most of the “check-ins” are seasoned boaters who have a lot of experience and insights to share. It is no accident that many of the boaters utilizing a variety of boating nets are SYC members, e.g., Don & Mary Simpson on *Bandit*, Dwight & Michele on *Cassis*, Chris & Pam on *Panther*, Dick & Patty Jenness on *Spray*, Barrie & Margaret on *Cloud 9*, Larry & Carol on *Shania*, Chuck & Peggy on *Alert*, Larry & Sally on *Austral Belle*, Tom & Mary Ann on *Friendship II*, Bob & JoAnne Ovens on *Islander*, Viktor & Diane on *Loreley*, Day & Frances on *Oceana*, Larry & Joyce on *Perseverance*, Doug & Barb on *Seaclusion*, Dave & Heather on *Gypsy*, Frank & Dolores Dean on *Encore*, Laura Cruz on *Ruddy Duck*, Don & Ruellene on *Petit Syrah*, Larry & Audrey on *Sockeye*, Dave & Jeanne on *Spirit of Kazan*, Mike & Judy on *Starbird*, Chuck & Pam on *Summation*.

Nets are a great way to keep in touch with other boaters. This summer the net participants were the first to hear about *Bandit* and their experience with Danger Shoal, Larry and Carol’s new boat *Shania*, Pierres’ Pig Roast as reported by Larry and Sally Cole on *Austral Belle*, various moorage opportunities, shell fish suggestions, and of course changing weather patterns in different locations. One of our members found the net very useful this summer when an emergency medical situation caused a stop in Port McNeill. One of the local hams provided assistance in getting the care needed.

Another popular radio use this summer was communicating on simplex frequencies. Simplex is like Marine VHF – not using a repeater, but with almost an unlimited number of channels. As you know – sometimes it is difficult to find a clear marine channel in the middle of the summer – and once you find one – it does not mean it will be interference free. Part of the problem is that there are only a handful of marine frequencies that you can transfer to after contacting another boater on Channel 16. A number of us tried another tactic this summer. We would make a contact on Channel 16 and then transfer to an Amateur Radio simplex frequency, e.g., 146.52 MHz. This not only provides a clear channel, but also

offers a little more privacy, and frees up the already congested marine frequencies. Another advantage is the additional power output that is possible using Amateur Radio gear. These simplex frequencies are also great for ship-to-shore communications with the additional flexibility of being able to access a repeater if needed.

In addition to the BC Boaters Net – a group of ARC (SYC Amateur Radio Committee) members set up a schedule to talk every morning on the Vancouver Island Trunk System at 0730. This time was convenient in that the VI Trunk system was not being used and it was just before our own Puget Sound Boaters Net check-in time of 0747 on the 146.88 repeater. This way messages could be relayed between folks at home in Seattle and boats up North.

Another resource that was used by a few boaters was the NW Boaters Net on 75 meters. This net has been operational since 1984 and is run from Port Ludlow. Using 75 meters allows the net to provide coverage to the Queen Charlottes and Alaska. The NW Boaters net meets at 0830 on 3.865 MHz. A new net has started at 0730 on 3.870 MHz that also provides a link to 40 meters – run by Barbara out of Sidney, BC. Other nets provide coverage for those going offshore.

Amateur Radio Class and Exam

Mark your calendar to attend the annual Amateur Radio Class and Exam on the Saturday after New Years – January 5th. This popular class has filled up the past two years. The focus of the class/exam is to review the material for the FCC Tech exam to enable a passing grade for the afternoon’s exam. Last year a number of participants received perfect scores and the success rate was close to 100%. The first step is to register at the Front Desk and pick up a review book. Registration and books should be available during October. Join the over 155-licensed radio operators in the club and participate next year in this virtual Green Box community of boaters while cruising.

More Information & Local Practice Net

Our Committee meetings are open to all members and guests – we meet on the second Wednesday of the month, 1800 hours at the Portage Bay Mainstation. The meeting schedule for the next few months is: October 10th, November 14th, and December 12th, January 9th. If you have a 2m radio you are welcome to join our “practice” net – the Puget Sound Boaters Net. We meet at 0747 every morning on the 146.88 MHz repeater.

W7SYC – For more information about the Seattle Yacht Club Amateur Radio Committee: send an email to Chuck Lowry, beauxarts1@comcast.net or Day Chapin, chapin@alarron.com.
73s – Day Chapin, W7HDC, Oceana

