



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 11 Annapolis-to-Newport Seminar to Address Electronics Mid-Atlantic Marine Electronics Will Lead Fawcett Boat Supplies-Sponsored Event

Annapolis, MD (February 16, 2017) — During the 2011 Fastnet Race, the state-of-the-art boat *Rambler 100* lost its keel as a result of a catastrophic breakdown. *Rambler 100* capsized in less than 60 seconds amidst 25 knot winds and heavy seas, leaving crew members without access to their VHF radios or the boat's Emergency Position Indicating Radio Beacon (EPIRB) device.

Owner George David had a team of 21 seasoned professionals aboard and all the latest technology. Unfortunately, the EPIRB that is so critical in such situations was contained inside the cabin, leaving the crew without the ability to directly summon help from nearby vessels. Fortunately, two of the sailors had Personal Locator Beacons attached, which helped a pair of commercial vessels render aid.

That incident led to an in-depth review by US Sailing and the International Sailing Federation, which subsequently issued recommendations for several new safety requirements for boats participating in offshore racing. One requirement that came about as a result was that boats must have a method for interfacing the VHF radio with the onboard Global Positioning System (GPS) for the purpose of sending out the fixed position signal via Digital Selective Calling (DSC).

This “distress hot button” would enable a crew member to quickly activate a VHF to automatically send a distress message to alert nearby vessels and potentially shorten the time required to start search-and-rescue operations.

That particular addition to the Sailing Instructions for the 2017 Annapolis-to-Newport Race is among many topics that will be addressed during the third installment of the informative seminar series that helps participants prepare for the event. “What You Need: Electronics Presentation” will be held at 10 am Saturday, March 11, at Annapolis Yacht Club, located at 12 Dock Street, and will be sponsored by Fawcett Boat Supplies.

Mike Jones and Mark Jefferies, co-owners of Mid-Atlantic Marine Electronics, will serve as guest speakers for the seminar and will thoroughly review the type of equipment that is required for all boats entered in the 36th biennial Annapolis-to-Newport Race, which starts June 2 and 3 on the Chesapeake Bay.

This presentation will cover the Electronics Requirements sections of the US Sailing Safety Equipment list as specified in the Notice of Race. Emphasis will be placed on the practical application and impact of these rules from industry professionals with experience installing, maintaining, and using these systems.

“There is a checklist of electronics that all boats must carry for a distance race of this nature and this seminar is designed to review the requirements,” said Jim Praley, chairman of the 2017 Annapolis-to-Newport Race. “Mike Jones and Mark Jefferies are uniquely qualified to explain what equipment is necessary and why. They can also counsel skippers and navigators with regard to the best equipment on the market.”

Fawcett Boat Supplies is assisting with the seminar by providing examples of the various necessary electronic equipment. Bill Griffin, General Manager of Fawcett, said the list of demonstration products will include examples of GPS models, EPIRB devices, satellite phones, and VHF radios.

Jones and Jefferies plan to conduct a complete review of the onboard electronics listed as mandatory in the Sailing Instructions for the 2017 Annapolis-to-Newport Race. It starts with having a GPS and EPIRB and includes other basics such as a depth sounder and knotmeter.

While it has been mandatory for some time for racing sailboats to carry a 25-watt VHF radio, it is a new requirement to have an accompanying antenna that is 15 inches in length. “There are a couple antennas on the market that were designed for small powerboats and don’t meet the specifications,” Jefferies explained.

Each vessel must also have a Maritime Mobile Service Identity (MMSI), which is issued by the Federal Communications Commission. “It is like a social security number for your boat and gives agencies such as the Coast Guard or Sea Tow a head start on the search-and-rescue process in the event of a distress call,” Jones said.

Another electronic device that has recently become mandatory is an Automated Information System (AIS) transponder. It transmits a constant signal that enables nearby vessels to see the location of a sailboat and is used for the purpose of avoiding collisions. The AIS transponder must have a dedicated splitter if it shares a masthead antenna with the VHF radio.

“Owners can have a separate antenna that is located 3 meters above the water and we will explain how that works along with the pros and cons involved,” said Jones, who has competed in the Annapolis-to-Newport Race numerous times as navigator aboard *Sjambok* and *Donnybrook*. He worked the foredeck for *Chessie Racing* when the Santa Cruz 70 set the course record for the 475-nautical-mile passage.

Jones and Jefferies co-founded Mid-Atlantic Marine Electronics, located in Annapolis, in May, 2016. Jones has worked in this field since 1997, serving as an installer and service electrician to cruisers and grand prix racers as well as a recreational fisherman to tournament fishing teams worldwide. He has run the electronics department for two America’s Cup teams and consulted with Volvo Ocean Race programs. Locally, Mike has served as the instrumentation technician for the United States Coast Guard’s Righting Moment Project for Tall Ships with *Pride of Baltimore* maintaining and installing the multi-platform systems used for data collection.

Jefferies has more than 20 years of experience in the marine industry and developed a broad foundation of boating knowledge, with a focus on marine electronics and electrical systems. His experience includes product development, sales, installation, and support of navigation systems for major manufacturers, national retailers, and as a hands-on craftsman. Mark also brings

considerable racing experience with a solid record ranging from one-design to grand prix offshore sailing.

Also during the March seminar, the Mid-Atlantic Marine Electronics partners will discuss the need for all boats to have a sufficient method for receiving weather information other than fixed-mount or hand-held radios as well as the new requirement to carry an electronic means for recording a man overboard incident within 10 seconds.

“All these requirements were implemented as the result of practical experience and are about saving lives,” Jones said. “We will explain why the requirements are in place and why they are vitally important.”

Jefferies has conducted many similar presentations in the past and marveled at the number of owners who question the electronics checklist laid out in the sailing instructions.

“A lot of folks like to float their own plans for how to save a buck and be just as safe,” he said. “You wouldn’t think we would need to convince people to follow the rules, but sometimes that is the case.”

Following the formal presentation and review of the demonstration products provided by Fawcett Boat Supplies, Jones and Jefferies will engage in a question-and-answer session that allows seminar attendees to learn more specific information and address individual concerns.

Space for the seminar is limited — to reserve a spot contact the Front Desk of Annapolis Yacht Club at 410-263- 9279. Interested skippers can find the Notice of Race and entry forms at <http://www.yachtscoring.com/emenu.cfm?eid=2982>.

###

Contact:

Linda Ambrose

AYC Regatta Manager

Email: info@annapolisnewportrace.com