

SSCA Radio Station KPK

by Glenn Tuttle



kHz), or participating on regional nets such as the Cruiseheimers Net (8.152 kHz), Coconut Telegraph Net (8.170 kHz), Panama Connection Net (8.107 kHz), NW Caribbean and SW Caribbean Nets (6.209 kHz), and the afternoon Doo Dah Net (8.152 kHz), this is how the cruising community communicates on a daily basis. These daily nets are the equivalent of several well-known and respected Amateur Radio nets servicing the cruising community such as the Waterway Radio & Cruising Club (7.268 kHz), and the Maritime Mobile Service Network (14.300 kHz). Times, and further information on these and other maritime nets, may be found on a printable format at www.docksideradio.com.

Often times, the US Coast Guard asks that reports of overdue vessels, hazards to navigation, and other serious matters of safety be relayed via these nets. But it is often the vessel operators themselves who must use their HF radios to send a Mayday, broadcast a Pan-Pan message, report routine safety messages, or request some form of assistance from land-based resources.

SSCA currently provides "on-the-ground" support to cruisers through our worldwide network of cruising stations. SSCA has recently initiated a SSB Voice Net,

KPK can assist with radio checks, float plans, telephone contact with family and friends, boat-to-boat relays, access to medical or mechanical professionals, marinas, Internet searches, or any other assistance that we may be able to provide.

Through a partnership with the Caribbean Safety & Security Net, (www.safetyandsecuritynet.com) any report of a safety and security nature occurring in the Caribbean and made to KPK will be immediately provided to the CSSN. Likewise, any recent incident posted on the CSSN website will be announced during KPK's broadcast.



CSSN's primary mission is the collection and dissemination of accurate information relating to crimes against yachts in the Caribbean, enabling cruisers to make intelligent decisions about how and where they cruise. [See more information about CSSN in *Info & Updates* on page 4.]

How KPK Helps

Although KPK is a service provided by SSCA, all vessels are welcome to participate. KPK also welcomes relay assistance.

One of the first "customers" of KPK happened to be SSCA members cruising on their boat, *S/V La Luna*, in Panama. They were returning to the States via the Yucatan, and needed to make an unscheduled stop in Isla Mujeres, Mexico. They contacted KPK on the morning net and asked if we had any information on anchorages and Customs and Immigration procedures in Isla Mujeres. I was able to make a phone patch to another SSCA member, Bob on *S/V Sunrise*, who had just returned from Mexico. Bob was able to answer all of *La Luna's* questions prior to their arrival in Mexico.

Recently, KPK assisted a cruiser who departed from Puerto La Cruz, Venezuela, only to make it to an anchorage near Isla Margarita where his injector pump failed. KPK stayed in touch with this cruiser throughout his difficulty, lending support and contact in case of an emergency.

Also, recently, KPK was contacted by a fishing vessel out of Roatan, Honduras. The captain usually stays in HF contact with his family while he is off fishing for weeks at a time. The HF radio on shore was having problems and the captain could not contact his base station. KPK was able to make contact for him and pass the necessary information for his family to restore service to the shore-based radio.

These are just a few of the dozens of times when KPK has been of assistance to mariners, or to the United States Coast Guard in locating overdue vessels. All vessels are welcome to the assistance of KPK.

Glenn Tuttle, an amateur radio enthusiast (K9TUT), is on the Board of Directors of SSCA, and serves as the Net Manager for SSCA Radio Station KPK. He is also the immediate past Commodore and Net Manager of the 52-year old Waterway Radio & Cruising Amateur Radio Club and a member of the Cruising Club of America. Glenn is active in the US Coast Guard Auxiliary HF Program and the Department of Homeland Security's SHARES HF Program. He and his wife, Eddie, and boat dog, Peppino, cruise aboard their 46-foot Grand Banks, Tothill.

Comments or suggestions regarding KPK may be sent to KPK@ssca.org.

Above: Here to help: Glenn and Peppino at the KPK station
Right: The Tuttle's cruise aboard their Grand Banks

Seven Seas Cruising Association (SSCA) is the oldest and largest worldwide organization supporting the full-time cruising lifestyle. SSCA focuses on promoting safety and fellowship among the cruising community. A primary means of promoting these objectives is through communications.

With the advent of the Internet, e-mail, cell phones, and social media, most people have the capability of being connected 24/7. This is not the case for a vast majority of the cruising community who elect to cruise in remote locations of our globe. For those cruisers, the principal way to remain connected is through high frequency (HF) radio.

HF/Single Sideband Radios

It is not an overstatement to say the majority of off-shore bluewater cruisers have a high frequency radio on board their vessel. While many cruisers are licensed Hams (Amateur Radio License holders), the majority rely on the use of marine HF/Single Sideband (SSB) radios. Each morning these cruisers start their day by listening to, and participating in, SSB radio nets, and often end their day checking into nets as well.

Whether tuning in to weather router Chris Parker of the Marine Weather Center for weather forecasts (8.137

which widens the support of cruising stations over the air, extending a helping hand to any cruiser with an HF radio.

What is KPK?

Two years ago, SSCA applied for and was granted a Public Coast Station License, call sign "KPK", by the FCC. At the present time, KPK broadcasts on frequency 8.104 for 15 minutes beginning at 1215 hours UTC, or 0815 EDT, and 0745 EST. The KPK Service is purposely scheduled to immediately follow the Coconut Telegraph Net, and come immediately before the Cruiseheimers Net.

The purpose of this service is to:

- Pass emergency and priority traffic, as well as traffic related to safety and security.
- Provide current news updates of interest to cruisers from such sources as the Caribbean Safety & Security Net, Noonsite, The Salty Southeast Cruisers Net, Caribbean Compass, Bahamas Chatter and others.
- Provide any vessels needing assistance with land-based resources.



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