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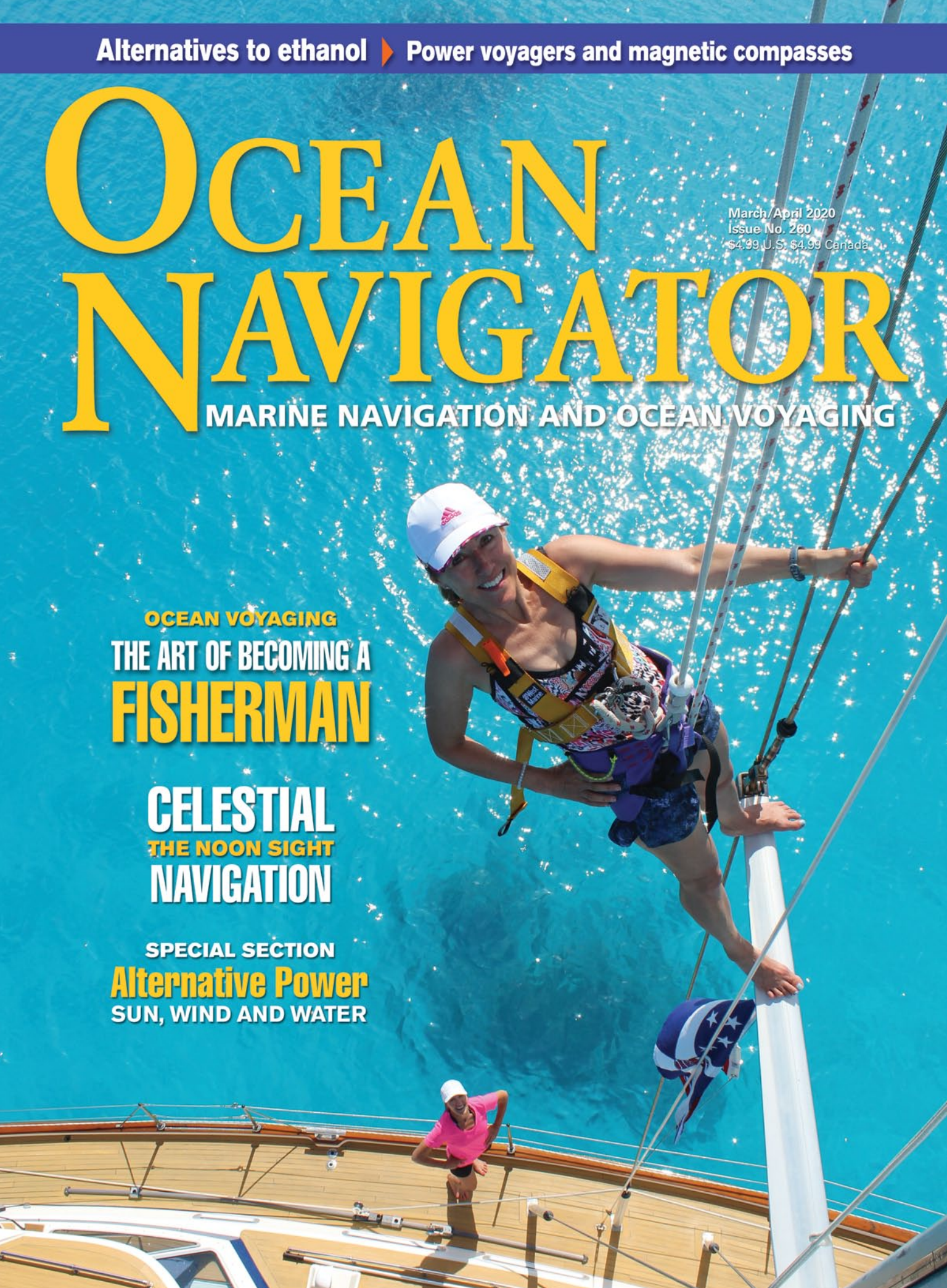
MARINE NAVIGATION AND OCEAN VOYAGING

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OCEAN VOYAGING
THE ART OF BECOMING A
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SSCA HF radio service teams with Caribbean Safety and Security Net, Boatwatch.org

To the editor: When I was asked to join the board of directors of the SSCA in 2015, I thought to myself, “How could I combine my passions, cruising and radio communications, and serve SSCA?” I realized that perhaps I could make useful contributions to the organization and the cruising community by promoting the use of radio communications among cruisers.

As a full-time live-aboard for over 30 years who’s cruised 10 years in remote areas of the southern and southwest Caribbean, spending months at a time at anchor without cellular or Internet access, I have realized the importance of the HF/SSB radio aboard cruising vessels. Although a satellite phone is a great resource — and my wife, Eddie, and I used an Iridium phone during our cruising in the Caribbean — it is not a replacement for an HF/SSB radio.

I suggested to the board that they establish an SSCA voice service (not a formal net) on the HF radio band to assist cruisers in remote locations, who are without cellular and Internet access, in order to relay priority and emergency information and

to provide any vessels needing assistance with additional resources. The assistance could include radio checks, float plans, telephone contact with family/friends, boat-to-boat relays, access to medical or mechanical professionals, marinas, Internet searches or other assistance that we might

marine bands from a land station, requires a public coast license from the FCC. The SSCA — with particular help from its president at the time, Scott Berg — was successful in obtaining such a license and is now authorized to operate under the call sign “KPK” from my residence

Glenn and Eddie Tuttle in their home radio room for coast station KPK, which they operate for the SSCA.



Glenn Tuttle

be able to provide to cruisers in remote locations. All vessels would be welcome to participate in this service provided by the SSCA.

However, in order to reach the far corners of the Caribbean and beyond, a land-based radio and antenna system is needed, similar to the excellent system used by Chris Parker of the Marine Weather Center. Such a radio station, operating on the

in southwest Florida. I have erected a 70-foot tower with a rotatable directional beam antenna tuned for the 8 and 12 MHz marine bands that effectively reach the entire Caribbean and beyond.

Through a partnership with the Caribbean Safety and Security Net (CSSN), any report of a safety/security nature occurring in the Caribbean made to the SSCA HF radio net will be provided



Glenn Tuttle

to the CSSN. Likewise, any recent incident posted on the CSSN website will be announced during our daily morning broadcast.

The Caribbean Safety and Security Net'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.

For decades, bluewater cruisers have relied on HF radio — both on the amateur

and marine bands — for their safety-at-sea needs. One of these services has been the International Boat Watch Network (IBWN), which was originally founded by amateur radio operator Michael Pilgrim (K5MP) in 2001 as a public service and tool allowing the maritime community to share information regarding overdue and missing vessels throughout the world.

In 2007, Shipcom LLC, owned by Rene Stiegler (K4EDX) agreed to take over management of the network as a public service to the maritime community. Mr. Stiegler and Shipcom managed the IBWN until his untimely death in February 2018. Mr. Stiegler was a member of the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary and net manager of the Maritime Mobile Service Network (MMSN), a network that continues to operate on the amateur radio frequency of

14.300 MHz.

In 2018, upon Mr. Stiegler's passing, amateur radio operator Bobby Graves (KB5HAV), net manager of the Hurricane Watch Net, recognizing the value of the International Boat Watch Network, refused to let it go by the wayside and took over its ownership and management. Mr. Graves has been managing the organization very effectively but has found that his primary interest in the Hurricane Watch Net has been taking a large portion of his volunteer time, and there are only so many hours in the day.

Therefore, Mr. Graves contacted Eddie and myself to see if we were interested in assuming ownership and management of the International Boat Watch Network. The answer was an enthusiastic yes, inasmuch as the SSCA's KPK radio service also focuses on overdue and missing boats, primarily in the Caribbean.

Since July 2019, we have committed to ownership and management of the IBWN. We will continue the operation and management of the organization, bringing it to new heights as a credible organization, and to serve as a conduit between the family and friends of overdue and missing cruisers and the many government agencies respon-

Above, the Tuttle's' 70-foot tower with a rotatable directional beam antenna tuned for the 8 and 12 MHz marine bands. Right, the Tuttle's aboard their Grand Banks 46.



Glenn Tuttle

sible for search and rescue operations throughout the world.

Both of us take this responsibility very seriously and will do everything in our power to assist in helping locate all overdue and missing vessels. We will work directly with family members and friends of missing cruisers to assist in their interaction with government officials if needed. A new website was recently launched, www.boatwatch.org, as well as a new Facebook group called Boat Watch.

The SSCA HF radio net operates daily at 1215 hrs UTC, or 0815 EST and 0715 EDT, on SSB frequency 8.104. The purpose of this service is to pass emergency and priority traffic, as well as traffic related to safety and security.

We also provide current news updates of interest to cruisers from such sources as the Caribbean Safety and Security Net, Noonsite, the Salty Southeast Cruisers Net, Caribbean Compass, Bahamas Chatter and others. We are also always ready to provide land-based resources to any vessels needing assistance.

This net can assist with radio checks, float plans, telephone contact with family and friends, boat-to-boat relays, access to medical or mechanical professionals via free phone patches, Internet searches or any other assistance that we may be able to provide. The net welcomes all vessels.

During periods of trans-Atlantic migration, KPK operates the SSCA Trans-Atlantic Cruisers Net. This net serves to keep trans-Atlantic

cruisers connected and take position reports for vessels that have filed float plans with KPK. The net operates in conjunction with Dick Giddings' (KNC) Doo Dah Net, which is on the air daily at 2100 UTC, or 1700 EST, on frequency 8.152. After about 15 minutes, we switch to frequency 12.350 to reach vessels in Europe, depending on HF propagation. All vessels are welcome to join this net. However, for us to take position reports and track your progress as you make the passage, we require a float plan be submitted, and you have both SSB and satellite communications capabilities aboard your vessel. Float plans may be submitted to KPK@ssca.org.

In summary, the SSCA HF radio service, Boatwatch.org and the Caribbean Safety and Security Net all work in harmony to provide a valuable service to the cruising community. It's all about cruisers helping cruisers.

One way you can help out Boatwatch.org get recognized on the Internet and with search engines, such as Google, is by going to Boatwatch.org and spending about five minutes navigating around the website. That action on your part will help Boatwatch.org become a recognized entity on the Internet when someone searches for help finding a stolen, missing or overdue boat.

—Glenn and Eddie Tuttle are both former FBI agents as well as sail and power voyagers who own a Grand Banks 46 and run shore station KPK, the SSCA radio service.



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