



Maritime Mobile Service Network

Press Release

“Where Emergency Communications is a Commitment”

Maritime Mobile Service Network
For Immediate Release, 1/8/18
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On 1/4/18 at approximately 2205 hours UTC, Maritime Mobile Service Network Net Control Operator Ken Porter, AC0ML received an emergency call on 14.300 MHz from the Sailing Vessel Solar Flair via the vessels operator Jim Matusiak, VE0KMP. VE0KMP reported that he had had lost two head sails and was underway on his main sail only. He was approximately 70 miles South of Kingston, Jamaica. AC0ML advised VE0KMP that he or another operator would remain in contact on 14.300 MHz and when propagation ceased on 20 meters, they would switch over to 40 meters on 7.268 MHz. AC0ML reached out to net managers of the Waterway Net, Glenn Tuttle , K9TUT and Rick Poole, WA1RKT of the Intercon Net to keep them abreast of the situation to assure clear frequencies.

On 1/5/18 at approximately 1400 UTC, contact was again established with the Solar Flair. Captain Matusiak advised that conditions were rapidly deteriorating as he was facing heavy winds, high seas and additional sail damage. He also reported that his engine would not start which created a very serious situation. The so called “perfect storm” was upon him. He and his wife were exhausted and they were going to need to be rescued. At approximately 1600 UTC, Fellow MMSN net control operator William Sturridge, KI4MMZ was requested by AC0ML to contact both the Jamaica Coast Guard as well as the Royal Jamaica Yacht Club and arrange for a rescue and subsequent tow for the Solar Flair.

The Jamaican Coast Guard ship HMJS Middlesex was dispatched to the area and came on frequency on 14.300 to speak with both AC0ML and the Solar Flair to confirm positions. The Middlesex advised they were now picking up the Solar Flair on their radar and had confirmed their location. As of this report, Jim and Kathy Matusiak had been rescued and are physically OK and in good spirits. The Solar Flair is being watched by the Jamaican Coast Guard in preparation for tow when the sea calms down.

Ken, AC0ML also wanted to mention fellow MMSN Net Control stations W3ZU, K1LLR, VA6FH and WA4YBC for assisting him during this emergency. As Ken said, “I have assisted in multiple emergencies and this was the most outstanding team operation ever. You all represent the highest standards in Amateur Radio” This situation truly exemplifies the organizations motto “where emergency communications is a commitment”

The Maritime Mobile Service Net operates daily on 14.300 MHz from 1700 UTC to 0200 UTC and is no stranger to emergency situations. In this 50th anniversary of the organization's existence since 1968, they have assisted with multiple high seas emergencies. This service is relied upon daily by sea going amateurs to provide routine and emergency traffic. As these operators have said on more than one occasion, “it's our lifeline”.

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