

RESCUE OFF CHILEAN COAST

A 44-foot ketch was dismantled when it encountered a severe storm off the west coast of South America. The sailboat was being single handed in an around-the-world attempt. Amateur radio had a significant part in the international effort to rescue the sailor from Long Beach, California. He was rescued Friday, January 05 by a Chilean trawler. You may have seen the story in the news. A behind the scene account below was copied from the following web site: <http://www.arrl.org/news/stories/2007/01/08/101/?nc=1>.

You will note that the 10-meter ham band was utilized between Riverside, California and Punta Arenas, Chile. We are near the end of Sunspot Cycle 23. There are very few sunspots. Few sunspots make ionospheric propagation over this distance remarkable.

Amateur radio, satellite communications, etc. are reviewed in Marine Electronics. If you have not received credit for Marine Electronics, consider taking this elective. Review the class schedule with your Squadron's Education Officer.

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California Radio Amateur Has Role in Rescue at Sea



Mike Morales, KC6CYK, at his station in Riverside, California.

NEWINGTON, CT, Jan 8, 2007 -- A radio amateur from California played a significant part in an international effort to rescue a US sailor attempting to single-handedly circumnavigate the globe. Miguel "Mike" Morales, KC6CYK, of Riverside, told ARRL he was able to contact fellow radio amateurs in Chile to obtain and relay reassuring information to the family of Ken Barnes, whose 44-foot ketch *Pivateer* was foundering off South America. A Chilean trawler, *Polar Pesca 1*, rescued Barnes from his disabled vessel on January 5. Upon learning of Barnes's predicament on January 2, Morales

said he contacted the sailor's fiancée, Cathy Chambers, offering to see if he could make radio contact with Chile.

"She mentioned that the satellite telephone was dying on him over there, so their communication was 30 to 60 seconds at a time," Morales recounted. "I was lucky enough; I got in touch with some of the Charlie Echo [CE-prefix] stations until I got to someone in Punta Arenas, and then *Polar Pesca*, the vessel that did the rescue." Morales speaks fluent Spanish and has visited Chile and knew "the way things operate down there." As a result, he says, he was able to obtain credible reports via his 10-meter contacts as to what was happening.

Morales said he was able to gather information from Punta Arenas, on the extreme southern tip of South America, and, via his Chilean ham radio contacts, from the *Polar Pesca 1*. "I talked to them a couple of times," he recalled, "and relayed information as to when he [Barnes] was going to be rescued, the latitude and longitude he was at that particular time." Morales said he felt it was important for the family to know Barnes's situation and how the rescue plans were playing out.

Barnes, who's 47, left Long Beach, California, late last October, hoping to be the first person to sail around the world from the West Coast. A severe storm dismasted, badly damaged the vessel and soaked his supplies.

The Chilean Navy didn't really want to rescue Barnes, Morales maintains, even though it later took credit for doing so. According to Morales, the Chilean Navy wasn't eager to send a military vessel to retrieve Barnes because of the potential costs involved, and, in any case, wanted to put off the rescue until January 7.

The Chilean Navy did dispatch one of the CP3 Orion aircraft Chile uses to patrol its 200-mile-offshore territorial claim, and the plane spotted the foundering vessel, photographed it and even attempted to drop a life raft that missed its mark. The Chilean Navy coordinated the operation and recruited the *Polar Pesca 1* to undertake the actual rescue, although the US Coast Guard reportedly has agreed to cover the expense, Morales says. At that point he was able to pass along news to the family that the trawler was en route to Barnes's location.

"The main thing is, Ken Barnes is back, is alive," Morales said. "What I did was on behalf of the US ham radio community, I believe. That's what you're there for."

Barnes is scheduled to return home to California this week, and Morales will be among those on hand to welcome him. The City of Riverside has announced plans to honor Morales for rendering assistance, although Morales says he's "a very low-key type of person" who isn't fond of being in the media spotlight. Nonetheless, Barnes's family and friends, armed with information Morales provided, tipped off the news media, and over the past few days Morales has been interviewed, photographed and videotaped by reporters from the *Los Angeles Times*, ABC, CBS, NBC and Telemundo.

Morales also will be a special guest this week of the Riverside County Amateur Radio Club, thanks to Duane Allen, N6JPO, a club officer. A radio amateur for about 15 years, Morales now is planning to upgrade his license. "I've just been procrastinating about it," he said.