



News & Views • South Florida Happenings • Emergency Communications • Ham Heroes Vol 1 Num 2 APRIL 2001

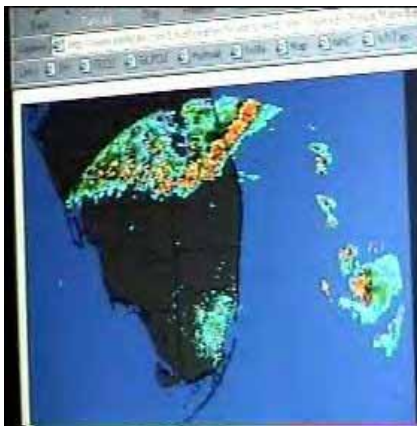
SOUTH FLORIDA'S STORM INTERCEPT TEAMS: The Paul Reveres of Severe Weather... or Reckless Chasers?

There seems to be a divergence of opinion about groups that feel the need to be physically close to severe weather phenomena. Frequently they are referred to as *storm chasers* and at other times *storm interception teams*. One such group, the *Weathervine*, recently sponsored a picnic to which all Palm Beach SKYWARN spotters were invited. It was a great opportunity to learn firsthand whether they were as "reckless" as some portray them to be.

Chatting with their members and those of other similar groups that had come from as far away as Orlando, I learned that all the "chasers" present were SKYWARN certified but the local group had no ham members. This is in contrast to Orlando's *Storm Speed* group which is made up of nearly all licensees.

They are also serious about their training. Prior to the Hurricane season, members of the group travel to "tornado alley" to sharpen and test their powers of severe weather observation. Dave Cornfield, a Bellsouth data line specialist, talked about their field trips: "SKYWARN Spotters, to a lot of people, are a matter of life and death... In Tornado Alley people treat you like royalty because no matter who it is out there, somewhere, a Spotter has 'called a storm' and they've been able to get their family to a shelter."

Jeff Gammons, *Weathervine*'s founder, says "I've come across some chasers that could be considered reckless. But the vast majority of experienced ones know about safety and try to push it." Indeed, most chaser websites we studied had sections devoted to safety do's and don'ts.



Dave Cornwall, Chris Collura, Melissa KE4WBQ Palm Beach County SKYWARN Coordinator, KF4YKM and Jeff Gammons, Weathervine's founder. Note the anemometer of a complete mobile weather station which storm teams depend upon in the field. They track storms both on radar and visually often capturing dramatic photos of the storm phenomena while recording storm data via their weather stations.

According to Lee Nicholas, KF4YKM, "The *Storm Speed* group works out of the Seminole County ARES/RACES relaying severe storm information back to the NWS." Interestingly, it was hard to differentiate between the spotters and spotter-hams.

I mention that because it was easy to relate to everyone at the picnic and their sense of humor. *Weathervine*'s Chris Collura, a computer engineer, explained that "storm chasers have a very different perspective about time... they'd say 'Hey honey, I'll be back in an hour' and come back two days later!" But he was serious about the use of their "trained eyes" and the role they play in passing information back to the National Weather Service from the field.

This event's chasers appeared to be as steeped in the nitty-gritty of their weather specialty as most hams are in theirs. They seemed a lot less "reckless" than we may be because of their team's collective knowledge. Most teams face and evaluate risks together as opposed to many hams who often face climbing, or high voltage, situations solo. Storm interception teams provide a unique, expert service unavailable elsewhere that can be lifesaving.

Contact them or learn more about these groups, storm interception and the storm conditions they have captured on film:

WWW.WEATHERVINE.COM

WWW.WEBSPAWNER.COM/USERS/KF4YKM/

APRIL SHOWERS US... WITH HAM EVENTS!

4/2 **MEETING - WELLINGTON RADIO CLUB**
MON COMMUNITY CENTER, 12165 FOREST HILL BLVD.
7:30 **DR. HARVEY KLEIN: THE TRAUMA OF THE**
PM **LOST CHILD AND PANICKED PARENT**
TALK-IN: 147.285+

4/7 **PUBLIC SERVICE EVENT - 1000s EXPECTED!**
SAT **DIABETES WALK - BRING YOUR HANDHELD**
7:30AM ASSEMBLY POINT: **LOST CHILD/COMMUNICATIONS**
TO **CENTER, MEYER AMPHITHEATER ON FLAGLER**
11:30 **FLAGLER, WPB TALK-IN: 147.670-**
NINE PEOPLE NEEDED... CONTACT:
DICK AF4OR 582-0617 OR
JACK KG4FKY 798-6232

4/9, 16, 23 and 30th
MON **WELLINGTON EMERGENCY NET**
7:30pm Net Control: Rob KG4BZF

4/14 **VE TESTS AT MIAMI-DADE COUNTY EOC**
SAT 9300 NW 41ST, MIAMI
9AM CONTACT: (305) 255-1057

4/21 **UNIV OF MIAMI/FLAMINGO TAILGATE SWAPFEST**
SAT CORAL GABLES
CONTACT: BILL WA4TEJ 305-264-4465 (DAYS)
EMAIL: WA4TEJ@BEETHOVEN.COM

4/21 **TAMPA AMATEUR RADIO CLUB HAMFEST**
SAT CONTACT: BIFF K4LAW (813) 265-4812
EMAIL: K4LAW@ARRL.NET
[HTTP://WWW.HAMCLUB.ORG](http://WWW.HAMCLUB.ORG)

4/28 **PUBLIC SERVICE EVENT - MANY 1000s EXPECTED!**
SAT **MARCH OF DIMES WALKATHON**
8AM ASSEMBLY POINT:
TO **PARK ADMINISTRATION BLDG ON 6TH AVENUE**
NOON **JOHN PRINCE PARK, LAKEWORTH**
BRING YOUR HANDHELD TALK-IN: 147.670-
50 PEOPLE URGENTLY NEEDED... CONTACT:
DICK AF4OR 582-0617 OR
JACK KG4FKY 798-6232

TIMELY TOWERING BRIEFS...

PRE-1950 EQUIPMENT IS SOUGHT BY THE YESTERYEAR VILLAGE RADIO COMMITTEE at the South Florida Fairgrounds, West Palm Beach. Fred N0RBR, Chairman, is trying to develop antique radio displays and setup a working "boat anchor" station for special events and the Annual Fair. If you would like to donate equipment, or join the Yesteryear Village Radio Club of volunteers, contact Fred at (561) 753-3442 or email him at: N0RBR@YAHOO.COM

WELLINGTON EMERGENCY NET average participation increased to 16 checkins during March. A great job was done by John KG4JMO as Net Control Station... thanks to all checkins and especially to John and Wil W4WLR for his Official Bulletins!

HELP WANTED... Good Training... Poor Pay! The two most recent Net Controllers did superb jobs conducting the Net although they have only been recently licensed. The WRC Board strongly favors having all members gain Net Control experience and seeks volunteers for July and August. Contact Larry KS4NB, 793-0788.

THE REST OF THE STORY: JACKSON R. CARTER - AKA JACK CARTER KC6WYX - SILENT KEY

The first news about Jack Carter came from the Associated Press in the usual formal report. As you may recall for our last edition, Jack had made headlines as the ham radio operator aboard the now famous ship LST-325.

Herb Clarkson, KM6DD of the PVARC provided more information for the amateur radio community on this remarkable ham. "...Carter had ham radio gear aboard and used the WW2LST call sign of the USS LST Amateur Radio Club while under way... The Palos Verdes Amateur Radio Club has assumed QSL responsibility for contacts Jack Carter made during his WW2LST/MM voyage...

... A memorial service for Jack Carter, KC6WYX, was held March 1 and burial was expected to be at sea from a US Navy vessel."

It bears repeating: At age 77, as a leader of a daring crew of average age 72, he obviously merits being remembered as a ham's hero. The family invites memorial donations to the American Cancer Society.

Our Towering Times

is the official publication of the
Wellington Radio Club

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QUOTE OF THE MONTH

Seen on SoFlaHams@yahoogroups.com... a quote from Ray Vaughn, KD4BBM of Miami:

"Sometimes I'm convinced terms like 'amateur' and 'ham' are killing us. Before all, we're trained emergency communicators."

Ray does a great job as moderator and often gets thought provoking responses such as from Paul WO4U of East TN:

"they (successful EmComm groups) have all taken any reference to 'Amateur' out of their title. For example: Aux Comm Service (ACS) or Emergency Communications Aux. (ECA).



Ray KD4BBM

They no longer even sport the logo of ARES or RACES."

Is it time for change? How do you see yourself? How would you like others to see you? Let Ray, OUR TOWERING TIMES or the South Florida newsgroup have your input. Subscribe to it or contact Ray at RAY@RAYVAUGHN.COM

MONTHLY OR BI-WEEKLY TESTING SITES

• Schedules Verified As Of April 1st •

- **HOMESTEAD - 2ND FRIDAY:** EVERGLADES ARC - 8 pm at Agriculture Center - Bill N4LTT (305) 258-2218
- **MIAMI - 2ND SATURDAY:** Miami-Dade EOC - 9 am 9300 NW 41 ST - Joe Chwick AC4TV (305) 255-1057
- **MIAMI - 4TH SUNDAY:** by reservation-9 am - Dave and Mary Alper JCC at SW 112 St. and 112 Ave. (305) 255 1057
- **HOLLYWOOD - 2ND MONDAY:** Palmetto ARC at T-Y Park - Robert WE4B - (954) 524-6051 or (954) 525-0103
- **FT. LAUDERDALE - 2ND WEDNESDAY - 6 pm - ARRL VE - American Legion Post 180 - 44th Terrace & Davie Blvd. Len WEISS (954) 963-7713**

NOTE: THERE ARE NO KNOWN, SCHEDULED MONTHLY OR BI-WEEKLY TESTS GIVEN IN PALM BEACH COUNTY.

ALL TESTING SITES require you to bring:

a pictured ID, your original license, any valid CSCE's plus a COPY of each. Of course, pen and pencil.

TESTING FEE IS NOW \$10. ESTABLISHED BY FCC.

Many thanks to Joe Chwick AC4TV,

Miami-Dade ARES/RACES Information Officer

for the basic information above... verification by KS4NB

GET READY... GET SET... G...



Spring... and Field Day 2001 are just around the corner! "Chef Extraordinaire" Bob KG4BOK, at the drink coolers, watches operators unwind at the Wellington FD2000 blue mess tent.

THE LIFE OF AN XYL

By Tanya Wesley

*The wife of a HAM hears these sounds all the time
"Back to Net Control... What was that call sign?"*

*Their conversations always contain
stuff about radios, repeaters, and much of the same.*

*There's dots and dashes, squelches and static
that's constantly heard but it's part of their habit.*

*Talk about antennas strung through the trees
and news about Skywarn at the slightest of breeze.*

*The friends with names made of numbers and letters
no need for landlines the radio's much better.*

*No Monday night plans just meetings and The Net
then there's the activities and of course the HAM Fests.*

*It's never a quiet moment as you can see
Now back to Net Control... this is K4WIFE.*

DAVID CLARK KB6TAM... ON THE HIGH SEAS AGAIN?

David likes to set goals and accomplish them. He still has the urge to finish what he started in 1993... being the oldest solo circumnavigator of the world. So it's no surprise that Lynda Clark, XYL of KB6TAM, provided the following in her latest email update of 3/17/01:

"Great progress!!! Earlier this week the final \$5,000 was wired to Cape Town to finish paying for the boat and David will soon finish the world record goal. The remaining money... will be used to pay for shipping of some of the equipment, purchase of some equipment in Cape Town, which would have cost more to ship than to buy right there, and to finance the last leg of the trip. David will need to cover the cost of fuel and provisions... Again, David and I want all of you to know how very much your support is appreciated.



Skipper Clark KB6TAM and Mickey

...His estimated date of departure will be March 29th. We will keep everyone posted! Lynda & David "

A thorough Internet search failed to turnup news of Clark's departure from South Africa. However, once underway, his latest position will be posted to the website of a New Zealand/Western Australia amateur radio group:

www.pangolin.co.nz/yotreps/plotter.asp

On the webpage, enter Clark's callsign, KB6TAM, to see his position plotted. According to the original project timetable, his trip from Cape Town to Ft. Lauderdale should be on the order of ten weeks.

“LOST CHILDREN AND COMMUNICATIONS”

A BANNER THAT’S WORTH IT’S WEIGHT IN GOLD!

AN IMMENSE PROBLEM

Every week, I receive a piece of “junk” mail that I hesitate to throw out. It’s the one with an ad but also the picture of a missing child. And, how often have you stopped to glance at the milk cartons in the local supermarket? You know, the ones with the missing kids on them. We are much more sensitive today to child welfare than ever before. The FBI reports that 2,100 children *per day* are reported missing. That’s a difficult figure to imagine... 87 per hour!

A CHALLENGE AND OPPORTUNITY

The size of this problem led me to think seriously about the role communications volunteers can play at public service and community events. After serving at many, I noticed that often the lost child situation was handled very casually. Obviously, being a *LOST* child is the step *before* a child is considered missing. What if we could help *prevent* “lost” children from becoming “missing” by concentrating our efforts on reuniting them with their parents?

A SOLUTION: THE LOST CHILD CENTER

By providing a publicized, highly visible, safe meeting place and improving the means of communicating the whereabouts of a lost child with respect to its parents, the public, event organizers and law enforcement agencies, we can provide an invaluable, rewarding service.

One solution is simply to setup a vehicle, or booth, with an attention getting banner that can serve as a LOST CHILD CENTER. It provides the focal point for reuniting children with their parents:

- Parents see the banner and tell their kids to go there if separated,
- Passerbys know to bring lost children there, and
- Anxious parents are directed there when they realize their kids are missing.

It is important to emphasize that the need to immediately inform the primary public safety agency of a lost child situation at the event does not change. Neither does the responsibility of event organizers for the safety of those attending. What does change is that all parties concerned have additional resources available to make executing their responsibilities easier and more efficient.

THE BASICS

Prior to an event, volunteer leaders should plan the

high visibility placement of the Lost Child Center and select communications resources with event organizers and public safety personnel. There should be designated people to care for the lost child or work with the worried parent. From research, it seems law enforcement personnel do not normally receive training specifically on the handling of lost children nor are there set procedures for doing so.

REDUCED TRAUMA AND GRIEF

Such training or experience could go a long way to minimize a child’s or parent’s trauma. For example, knowing *how* to assure them that you understand their situation and concerns, they *will* be reunited, they are safe, etc. is important. In addition, having a kit including teddy bears, crayons, coloring books, comic books, and games to occupy the child is useful. Be careful to provide only water or club soda to a child with an unknown medical history.

HOW TO PLEASE

Public safety personnel are often stretched thin at

community events with traffic control and other enforcement duties, so the LOST CHILD CENTER makes their job easier and gains their appreciation of our communications skills. Not only does it greatly speed up the reunification process, reduces stress and anxiety, but it also



HIGH VISIBILITY + COMMUNICATIONS + VOLUNTEERS + TRAINING = SUCCESS!

Left to right: John KF4GHM, Larry KS4NB, Jack KG4FKY and daughter Aleisha, John KC4VMO, Fred N0RBR, John KG4JMO and Georg KR4WD.

frees them up sooner to handle other public safety issues. No one doubts that many of these kids might not have seen their parents for *hours* had the coordination and focal point not been available.

THE BOTTOM LINE

The benefits to the community from the LOST CHILD CENTER service are pretty apparent. The radio amateur community likewise enjoys benefits from this type activity:

- Everyone seeing the banner can’t help but view the radio amateur in a positive image,
- An opportunity is gained to meaningfully interact with public safety agencies,
- Lost children often draw the attention of the media which would include the Lost Child Center.

And then there are the two *major* benefits:

- Ham volunteers can feel really great about the work they are doing, and possibly
- One less child has fallen into the wrong hands!

THE LOST CHILDREN AND COMMUNICATIONS CENTER AT WELLINGTON'S 5TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

On Saturday, March 10th, the Florida Highway Patrol, Troop L Special Operations Van departed from Headquarters. This was its fifth mission as part of the FHP's support of community programs and it carried its normal complement of public safety radios. By adding 2 meter and HF communications capability it would be used as a "Lost Child" and "Event" communications center for Wellington's 5th Anniversary Celebration. The added equipment was on loan from Wellington's EOC to support a network of Wellington Radio Club, WRC, volunteers. The WRC is affiliated with the Village sponsored "RACES" unit.

LOCATION, LOCATION, LOCATION!!!

The Van was positioned in a highly visible location just 200 feet from the event's main stage. It sported a very large banner to indicate its purpose to the estimated crowd of 8000 attendees. During the seven hour event, at least four radio amateurs, at any point in time, were at the Lost Child Center and circulating in the crowds wearing easy to spot yellow vests.

PUBLIC SAFETY & AMATEUR COMMUNICATIONS

A detail of about ten Palm Beach Sheriff's Office Deputies and one County EMS unit were assigned to the event... all using VHF radios. Because the scan function wasn't programmed into their portables, one Deputy was appointed as a communications "Coordinator" and issued an 800 MHz EOC radio with Mutual Aid Channels. That linked the Lost Child Center with all the county public safety personnel at the event. The combined public safety and amateur radio "nets" was soon to be put to real use!

FIRST LOST CHILD OF THE DAY

An hour after installing the large LOST CHILD banner and testing all systems, the first child was brought to the Center. A passerby saw the child alone and crying hysterically. Remembering the banner, she knew where to take the child. The Deputies were notified on 800 MHz and the ham volunteers alerted on two meters. The Radio Club was prepared with a kit of



A very happy Taylor Walker throws her arms around her relieved mother, Shelley. Only 20 minutes earlier, Taylor could have single handedly ended our drought with her tears!

LOST CHILDREN & COMMUNICATIONS CENTER VOLUNTEER ATTENDEES

WELLINGTON RADIO CLUB MEMBERS

KC4VMO JOHN	KR4WD GEORG
KF4GHM JOHN	KS4EC ROB
KF4TSQ LARRY	KS4NB LARRY
KG4FKY JACK	N0RBR FRED
KG4JMO JOHN	WA4SBD LEOLA
WB4MOZ JOHN	

YOUTH AFFILIATES:

ALEISHA WESLEY, BART & SEBASTIAN PEASE

toys, crayons and games for lost children to use while waiting for their parents. After the child was calmed down, but even before the kit could be given to her, her mother arrived. When the mother realized her daughter was nowhere to be seen, she panicked. However, people nearby directed her to the LOST CHILD CENTER. Whah-lah! Child and parent reunited within 20 minutes!

Before the EMS unit came on duty, another child was brought to the Center with a scraped knee. The mother applied a bandage and antiseptic from the First Aid kit.

AND THEN THERE WERE TWO!

Deputies found the second lost child, a girl of about 4, crying and wandering aimlessly in the crowd. Everyone was alerted by radio as she was brought to the Center. It was decided that the Deputies would work the crowd with the child looking for her parents while an announcement would be made over the event public address system. Only five minutes later,



Anxious child searches the crowd as KS4NB confers with PBSO Deputies Todd Chandler and Harold Eisenman. No more caring a team could be found on any force, anywhere! Good work!

the Deputies encountered the mother approaching the Lost Child Center. Elapsed time... about 15 minutes!

The AMBER Plan: Getting Word Out When Time is of the Essence!

An Idea from

**Allen Richter W4PHL,
Palm Beach County EOC**

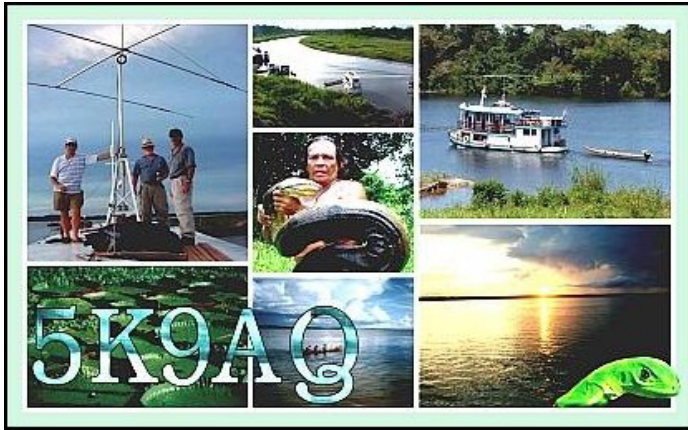
Allen thought you should know how mass communication, via the AMBER PLAN, is affecting lost, missing and particularly abducted children. As in the lost child situation, time is a vital factor in recovering missing children. In several states, including Florida, a message concerning a missing child can be broadcast to the public over the EMERGENCY ALERT SYSTEM, EAS. So far nine children have been released unharmed shortly after their abductors saw, or heard, the broadcast alerts.

Allen suggests we too announce such alerts over local repeaters and nets. Amen!

PS... "Amber" was a kidnapped child killed before the EAS project started.

AMAZON HAM VISITS SOUTH FLORIDA By Aleisha Wesley

Recently I met a HAM radio operator from the Amazon. Phil AA8JV (Extra Class) is also known as HK3SA (Advanced Class, Colombia) or 5K9AQ (Amazon Queen River Boat Call). He lives in Bogota, Colombia but was visiting longtime friend John KC4VMO this week in Loxahatchee.



Phil's neat QSL card used when operating from the Amazon Queen. Note the Tri-bander on the roof deck.

OPPORTUNITY KNOCKS

I also had the opportunity to ask him a few questions about what life is like living and working on the Amazon. Here are some of his responses.

Phil is the owner and captain of the Amazon Queen. He has to fly 800 miles from Bogota to the Amazon River in Leticia, Colombia. It borders Peru, Colombia, and Brazil. He has been giving riverboat eco-tours, which can last up to 5-6 months at a time, for about two and a half years.

LIFE ON THE AMAZON

From what he told me, it sounds very interesting and exciting on the Amazon. The weather there is very similar to our weather here in South Florida. On the eco-tours they have seen parrots, snakes, fish, tapirs, tigers, monkeys, eagles, pink dolphins that are actually pink, giant catfish, electric eels and piranha. On the river Phil said that he has to be careful not to run into logs, trees, whirlpools or Indian Tribe boats. While steering the boat, he also has to stay out of strong currents and large swarms of mosquitoes! Ouch!

The Amazon Queen is a large boat. On an eco-



Captain Phil in his radio room aboard the Amazon Queen with loads of Yagua Indian visitors.

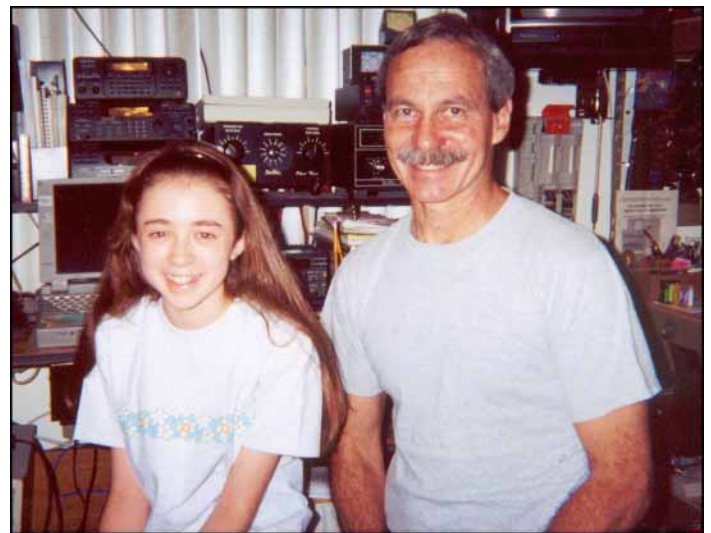
tour, there are usually ten passengers plus the crew. They all sleep in hammocks with mosquito nets. The boat is 14 meters (47 feet) in length. It is made out of three types of Tayuba wood which is very durable under water. Tayuba Red can last up to twenty years, Tayuba Black that lasts up to fifty years and the Yellow variety that can last a few years.

KEEPING IN TOUCH BY AMATEUR RADIO

Phil uses his amateur radio equipment to communicate with others while he is on the Amazon Queen. He monitors the frequencies 28.4700 on 10 meters (USB), 21.385 on 15 meters (USB) and 14.347 on 20 meters (USB). He uses a Yeasu 757 and a Kenwood 4505.

I enjoyed my visit with Phil and hope that someday I will be able to speak with him as he navigates the Amazon Queen.

73... From Aleisha Wesley, Loxahatchee, FL.



Aleisha, age 11, and Phil AA8JV in the radio shack of John KC4VMO. She has been studying for her Technician License and will probably beat her Dad, Jack KG4FKY, in getting HF privileges. She really wants them to QSO with Phil directly!

PHIL WANTS TO SHARE HIS EXPERIENCES

WITH YOUR LOCAL SCHOOLS ... CONTACT HIM!!!

Lots of photos and much more information about Phil, his unique eco-tours and the past expeditions of the Amazon Queen are on his great website: WWW.AMAZONQUEEN2000.COM



The Amazon Queen is a pretty sight cruising the tranquil Amazon River. May she sail safely and in peace.