

GATOR

FROM A1

Sometimes he bridges the cultural gap by telling stories about the songs. That works more when the band plays early gigs, when people tend just to listen. But at night, such as the band's gig at Club West on Friday, the audience comes to boogie-woogie, not listen to stories.

Sometimes it's also difficult going back to Louisiana, a land that jealously guards its musical culture. Gator Beat is the only band that was invited this year to play at the Crawfish Festival (the largest Cajun festival in the world) at Breaux Bridge, La. The only reason Gator Beat got invited, he said, is because most of their songs are originals.

"They always like new music and to see what's changing inside the traditions," he said.

The band has played the North Coast's jazz festival for several years. Domingue said they like coming here because the festival is well organized and the working class crowd here is more comfortable than at some of the more affluent crowds at other festivals.

"This is the blue-jean and pick up truck crowd, feels more like Louisiana," he said.

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Patricia Wilson/ For the Times-Standard

Gator Beat drummer Willard Blackwell carries his drums after the Finale performance at the Eureka Municipal Auditorium.

RADIO

FROM A1

friends and family on the last leg of his trip in 2001.

Typically, his task is more routine. At least two nights a week, at 3:25 p.m. Greenwich Mean Time, 7:25 p.m. Pacific Standard Time, he takes roll call, which is much like it sounds.

At this time of year sailors who have spent the past few months getting ready for long trips are leaving Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, en route to the Marquesas in the South Pacific. Reed and several others of the Pacific Seafarer's Network nightly take the boats' positions and the weather conditions they're experiencing. He also asks if there are incoming or outgoing messages for those boats and accommodates them if there are.

It is something of an ethereal gathering place for sailors and their relatives. Two boats that can't talk to each other because they're too close may want to communicate or meet somewhere. Because radio waves bounce off the ionosphere, they often jump over positions that are close together.

Reed can warn sailors of approaching storms or assure a becalmed boat that wind is forthcoming.

A sailor named Peter on board the yacht Cool Change between Honolulu and Papeete in Tahiti on Thursday reported such a becalming.

"It's just a horrible day," he said, his voice echoing, possibly because of a solar flare disrup-

tion of the radio waves.

Reed checked the wind speed and direction along Peter's course and advised him he might get a decent breeze soon, much to Peter's relief.

In the height of the season, there are about 30 boats to keep track of, and the roll call can take nearly two hours. This relatively simple task can become a heroic undertaking.

Calm in the storm

One night in May 1999 a mayday call was sent out from a boat sailing in an around-the-world race. That boat had received a distress call from another racing boat named Lucifer seven hours ahead which had struck something and were taking on water.

The first boat then lost contact with the Lucifer.

A ham operator in Hawaii relayed the information to the U.S. Coast Guard, which forwarded the call to the U.S. Air Force. The Air Force had picked up the troubled Lucifer's emergency beacon. Reed relayed information to the boat that had reported the mayday.

Reed and others worked to keep the frequency clear of other radio traffic. The Air Force notified New Zealand Maritime Communications, which informed the New Zealand Air Force of the problem. The New Zealand Air Force sent a plane, a P3 Orion, to find the distressed sailors of the Lucifer who were now in a life raft. The P3 was able to guide the reporting sailboat to

the raft, whose occupants were then rescued.

Ham operators also played an enormous role in the 1994 Queen's Birthday storm that struck a fleet of yachts between New Zealand and Tonga to the north, a particularly treacherous area. Accounts of the storm are terrifying: 100-mile-per-hour winds, up to 100-foot waves, boats capsized, masts sheered, sailors bloodied. But perhaps the most incredible elements of the four-day storm were the rescue efforts that saved 21 people.

Ham radio operators were a crucial link to life for many of the 60 yachts caught in the cyclone's path. They relayed positions to rescue craft, reassured sailors' relatives and took advice from other mariners on how they might survive the onslaught. The owner of a yacht behaving poorly in the giant seas asked one ham operator to relay advice from anyone who had experience sailing a similar boat — and got it, greatly improving his chances of riding out the storm.

The radio community

Reed grew up in Newport Beach amidst the masts, rigging and hulls of yachts. He sailed from the time he was age 10 to 21, mostly short distances. He became interested in aviation after that and turned away from sailing.

When he was 28 he was licensed as a ham radio operator. The Amateur Radio Service, as it is otherwise called, the ham band is orderly and much unlike

POWELL

FROM A1

Powell's efforts, Arab officials say.

Powell said he will seek a cease-fire as a first step toward a peace agreement.

"Until the violence goes down hopefully to zero, but at least to a level where you can see that both sides are acting in a responsible way and trying to cooperate in a cease-fire, you're not going to get to a peace agreement," he said on NBC's "Meet the Press."

Following Bush's call for a withdrawal "without delay," Israel said it would expedite its mission aimed at rooting out Palestinian militants responsible for suicide attacks. Fighting continued Sunday in the West Bank cities of Jenin and Nablus. Defense Minister Binyamin Ben-Eliezer acknowledged U.S. pressure. "Our hourglass is running out," he said in a statement.

Powell said he spoke with Sharon on Sunday and is confident Bush's call for a withdrawal "will not be ignored."

"I know that he is trying to move the operation forward as quickly as possible. And we'll see what happens in the next couple of days," he said.

Powell said Israel's offensive has succeeded in suppressing terrorist attacks — perhaps at a long-term cost. "We may well be radicalizing a new generation, many more terrorists waiting to act once this incursion is over," he said on "Fox News Sunday."

The secretary said Israel could destroy advances it has made in relations with Arab states. In his



The Associated Press

Secretary of State Colin Powell is interviewed on "Fox News Sunday" in Washington Sunday, prior to his departure to the Middle East.

trip, Powell will call on those states to take a bigger role in pressuring Arafat to fight terrorism and to stop their own inflammatory rhetoric.

"We need more responsible statements coming out of Arab capitals," he said. "We need all Arab leaders to act responsibly in this time of crisis."

At Powell's first stop, Morocco, he planned meetings today with King Mohammed VI and Saudi Crown Prince Abdullah. He then heads to Egypt to see President Hosni Mubarak, and to Spain for talks with U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan, Russian Foreign Minister Igor Ivanov and

European leaders.

Jordanian Foreign Minister Marwan Muasher said on CBS' "Face the Nation" that Arabs "are ready to do everything in their power to move the peace process forward." But he said "it would be really absurd to meet with all the parties to the conflict without meeting with Yasser Arafat."

Amr Moussa, secretary-general of the League of Arab Nations, told ABC's "This Week" that if Powell does not meet with Arafat "I don't think he'll find any other interlocutor among the Palestinians and the mission will fail."

Powell repeated Bush administration complaints that Arafat has not done enough to reach a cease-fire by speaking out against violence and using his security forces to prevent terrorist attacks. But he acknowledged that Arafat represents the Palestinian people.

"Chairman Arafat, whether one likes it or not and whether one approves of it or not, does occupy a position in Palestinian society. He is seen by the Palestinian people as their leader, and that has to be taken into account," Powell said.

Asked how he would measure success in his trip, Powell tried to diminish expectations for "a completely satisfactory solution" in a week's time.

"But if we have brought the violence down, if we have started to create a dialogue again between the two sides, then my trip will have been worth the energy that I'm going to put into it and the effort we're going to put into it," he said.

the unregulated and chaotic Citizens Band, or CB.

Reed became fascinated listening to sailors cruising the world's oceans.

"It was a passive thing until about four years ago," Reed said.

Around then, he bought the equipment needed to relay phone messages. At the same time, a delivery captain — a person who sails boats to ports as a service — started coming up on a frequency every night. Reed eventually asked the captain if he wanted a phone patch. It wasn't long before he was doing it for other sailors.

"From then on I just got hooked," Reed said.

He soon became involved in the Pacific Seafarer's Network and began doing roll call.

The 49-year-old diesel generator technician lives with his wife Patrice and his teen-age son Cameron and daughter Allison. Having active teen-agers means he can't always be there to run the roll call, in which case someone else on the network takes over. One operator is a tax spe-

cialist, and during tax season, it's Reed who covers additional days.

These ham operators do a lot more than keep tabs on boats. They provide emergency communications, and act as liaisons between boats and search-and-rescue authorities. They track non-ham-equipped vessels by relaying through other ham-equipped boats at sea. They provide weather information and take weather information from forecasts, an invaluable tool.

One of the more fascinating roles is that of medical liaison. Several doctors are on call to give advice to wounded or sick sailors via the network.

On Thursday night, one sailor informed Reed during roll call that he had altered course in the mid-Pacific and were headed to Long Beach to find a doctor for his partner, who was having medical problems. They were 1,200 miles — at least 10 days away — from that port.

Reed told the sailor that he could patch a doctor through if needed, though the sailor

declined. Reed and others are now monitoring the boat closely, keeping tabs on the sailor who may get fatigued if he has to sail that far single-handedly. Others on the network have begun to write in and give advice on alternate ports and routes the boat might consider.

The people that make up the network are a community in the ether. Friendships develop over radio waves. It happens through coordination that can seem like magic, with each operator and sailor watching everyone else's backs.

At the end of a list of functions the network performs is its most philosophical, but also its most relevant: To be ambassadors of good will to all members of the public at large and crews of vessels at sea.

To learn more about the Pacific Seafarer's Network look on the web at www.tidepool.com/~psn/.

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