



April 2026 PMKCA Newsletter

Neighborhood “Kinship” Groups Residents addressing common issues “close to home.”

Ruth Bennett
PMKCA President

In our association’s membership meetings, as we go around the tables introducing ourselves, we often get a bit silly glorifying the roads we live on - “*We live on... legendary Waika’alulu Road.*”, or “*... on Pa’auilo Mauka Road, in the heart of mauka Pa’auilo*”. It’s fun as a friendly competition, but there’s an element of importance to our allegiance to the roads we live on.

We know the condition of the road we share, and we recognize each other’s vehicles as we come and go. We may meet on the road with chainsaws and a tractor to remove a downed tree. We may help round up a neighbor’s cattle that escaped their pasture or to contain a loose dog that might be considered a threat to a neighbor’s sheep.

PMKCA recognizes that this “neighborhood kinship” is a natural, practical way for people in a rural community, far from the services and conveniences of “town”, to deal with their local area’s unique qualities and limitations. We would like to help by adding a few layers to the natural affinity that neighbors who share a road have to each other, with hopes that as a result, our mauka Pa’auilo and Kalōpā communities might become more resilient, safer, and happier.

The three layers that we are suggesting might be part of a neighborhood’s natural “kinship by location” are:

- A bit of structure (not much) – to develop a shared knowledge of each area’s qualities and resources, the issues and concerns residents face, and some idea of what might be done to address the issues and concerns.
- The creation of a very local and unique plan for each neighborhood to meet the challenges of an emergency or disaster as it might play out in that neighborhood.

- Since “pride of place” can result in some pleasant events within a neighborhood (think “block party”), it would be nice to see neighbors gathering for barbecues, games, music, work parties, whatever makes life better for all residents on a local road or in a local area.

Here’s one example of how a “kinship” group in a local area could deal with a major concern that affects rural communities the hardest - and often with dire consequences:

Our CERT team leader, Denning Powell, and others in PMKCA are currently rolling out a handheld radio-based communications network that fits perfectly within the structure of local neighborhood “kinship” groups.

The problem to be solved: When a disaster strikes, a hurricane or strong storm, for example, the critical methods of communication and connection with the outside world – cell towers, land lines, internet services – would likely be destroyed or lose power. Residents on rural roads and in dangerous conditions have no means to communicate with each other or to reach emergency responders.

The solution: A network of handheld radio-based devices (GMRS radios), boosted in range by a “repeater” tower, and distributed at low cost to members within our mauka communities. Among other uses, their critical purpose would be to provide vital communication in a major disaster. Holders of these radios could be in a neighborhood “kinship” group and would be capable of reaching any others holding similar radios in other areas of our communities. They could also talk to our local ham radio operators who can reach out to other islands and the mainland. The radios (two in a set) would be useful to their holders in other scenarios when cell phones lose signal - imagine hikers in remote areas radioing to someone at home.

In a serious emergency, all the residents in a neighborhood’s “kinship” group can have confidence that no matter how much of our normal infrastructure is in ruins, these radio operators can organize help, whether it’s down the road, across our island or elsewhere in the world.

If you live within the mauka Pa’auilo and Kalōpā region and are interested in participating in the GMRS Radio Project, contact Denning Powell (powelldenning@hotmail.com).

If you’re interested in our association, check out our website – www.pmkca.org. You’ll find useful local information, a calendar of events, and ways to connect (to join PMKCA, or to get on our free mailing list).

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