

West Michigan Coastal Kayaker



The Newsletter of the
West Michigan
Coastal Kayaker's Association

August-September 2004 Volume 9 Number 4

Annual Meeting – October 9 – at Ludington State Park *By Karl Geisel*

At 6pm, Saturday, October 9th, during the Fall Stew Confluence WMCKA will hold its annual membership meeting. Each year the President, Vice President, Secretary and Treasurer are all elected for one year terms. One of the three At-Large board positions are elected for a three year term.

In the last ten years since the club was incorporated many different people shared the work of keeping the WMCKA activities going. That says a lot of good things about our club. It says that our members are willing to share the work so that we can all have time to "play" within the club at sometime or another. It also shows that those who hold leadership positions are also willing to

let others take the reigns.

With that in mind. It's time to elect some new club officers...

In October the following positions will be open for election: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and one At-Large Board position.

If you are interested in filling any of these positions, please contact WMCKA President Bob Burma or any of the Board Members that are listed on page 5.



John Straatsma checks the bubbling cauldron this past Spring. *Photo by Don Harper*

KAYAK FOR LIGHT 2004 A GREAT DAY!

*By
Anne Keith*

As our 5th annual Kayak for Light event approached, both Bill and I watched the weather apprehensively. We'd had a wet, chilly start to summer, to say the least, and we were concerned about our blind paddlers with no wetsuits, etc. to protect them. However, the weather god must have decided that charity events deserve a break, because Saturday, July 10, 2004 was sunny, warm, and pleasant, with just a slight

breeze. It was as perfect as Michigan weather gets in July, and the first warm water we'd been in all year!

This year's event was one of the biggest ever, with 47 participants total, and 18 blind paddlers. Ramona Park in Portage, Michigan, again proved to be the perfect place, as it has a lovely beach, clean, clear water, and a wonderful grassy park area with lots of mature shade trees. This year, as an added bonus, we were able to commandeer one of the pavilions, under which we had our lunch, which was brought and set up, and grilled by Bob and Kathy Burma. A special thanks to both of you for your hard work and efforts.

Many WMCKA members volunteered with the various jobs connected with Kayak for Light. Some worked as guides for the blind paddlers; some were safety

boat patrollers; some worked on the beach helping paddlers find guides, PFDs, paddles, and, of course, the proper kayak; and some helped with the preparation and serving of lunch.

All who helped were greatly appreciated by the blind paddlers who got to enjoy a day on the lake, and by us, as we could not have hosted the event without them.

A special thanks goes out to Lee's Fun and Adventure Store in Portage, Michigan. Not only did they donate the use of an entire trailer full of kayaks, PFDs, and paddles, but Chris Lee and Jason Roon worked diligently all day, guiding blind paddlers and endlessly adjusting foot pegs, running for PFDs, etc.

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Bill Keith escorts a blind paddler on Ramona Lake

Photo by Jim Ellickson

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The Magic of the Twinkie

By
Jack Keyes

For years I never went to the Twinkie outing; I mean why would anybody go to an outing with a name like that? So last year I went and had a great time, but this year I had an even better time. It is in the middle of the busiest season of the year. There are people on vacation, guests up to visit, and on top of that I am planning a wedding. Yes I am getting married for the fifth time. So why would I go? Well the magic of the twinkie is the same magic every outing of WMCKA has. It is a reunion of friends with common interests. It is the fun of a family getting together out of the hectic drive of everyday life.

I arrived Sat. AM after a hectic push to get there with Winnie my future bride. The club was just getting ready to take off for a day of paddling. This was our first paddle together with the club. The day was perfect. We started on Upper Herring Lake at the White Owl. This paddle had a little bit of everything. A perfect launching site was followed by the sighting of a great blue heron, a bald eagle, belted kingfishers, and a Goss hawk while paddling the lake.

We paddled out to the Lake Michigan for a lunch break and on the way the short portage was made easy by many helping hands. Conversation and food was shared on the beach; both of

exit while surfing the big waves in the lake. Al Anderson and John Van Wyk said I only scored a six, but I was proud of the score as my first attempt in the new boat. I learned to brace into; not away from the waves.

Back into Upper Herring there is a great place to practice wet exits and rolls, just to the South of the exit to the Big Lake. Bob Burmania showed his grandson Taylor how to do a wet exit. Rick Tooker worked with his son on the same. Al Anderson shared the secret of a bomb proof roll. This sharing of experience and passing on knowledge to friends and family is one of the most magical things about this event. By the time we arrived back at the launch site everyone was happily exhausted and hungry.

Back at the campsite so graciously provided by our hosts the Smiths we set up for a sumptuous repast. The theme was Mexican. As usual fresh air and exercise provided every one with a healthy appetite. Steve's fresh sweet corn is the finest thing; hot from the fire and

which were equally refreshing. I provided part of the entertainment taking a wet

ready for melted butter and salt. I swear that the food gets better every event that I attend. I did however try a new wine which works well with acidic foods and fish. It is an Argentine wine grape called Malbec with a price around 5 to ten dollars a bottle. Yup! Fine family, friends, food, and fun; to me that is a major part of life and that is the magic of the twinkie. I will definitely be back next year. Hopefully you will be too.

P.S. If you want copies of films I have done I can be reached at my new E-mail address of jack-keyes@charter.net.



The WMCKA Armada is launched across Lower Herring Lake.

Photo by Jack Keyes

Kayaks v. Powerboats: A Fresh Safety Perspective

By
Anne Keith

After kayaking for about eight years, my husband, Bill, and I decided last summer that we wanted to try something new. I guess we felt we didn't have enough toys J! Anyway, we took the big plunge and purchased a 24-foot cabin cruiser. Over the winter, we took the Power Squadron boaters' safety course, did lots of reading up on cruising, subscribed to Lakeland Boating, and in effect, did all we could to prepare ourselves to be safe and conscientious power boaters.

During one of our boat-handling lessons last fall, I was driving the cruiser and noticed how difficult it is to see a kayaker in the water. We were out on Grand Traverse Bay, where the boat traffic is horrendous anyway, and being especially aware of kayakers, I was on the alert for them. The first time I saw a kayaker in the water, he and it resembled a floating toothpick. This particular kayak was a red roto-molded model, and the person in it was wearing a bright red PFD. Even

Imagine now, a person driving a big cruiser, with no awareness of kayakers, possibly pulling a waterskier, and who, perhaps, has had a couple of adult beverages. The chances of that person seeing a kayak in the water decreases exponentially with every negative factor I've mentioned.

Early in June, four of us put out from Frankfort harbor in the cruiser and headed north for a short shakedown cruise. On board were Al and Betsie Anderson, and Bill and myself. I think it would be difficult to find four people more aware of kayakers than we are. As we neared Point Betsie, I noticed some of the same toothpick-like objects in the water, and called out, "kayakers!" to Bill, who was driving. Bill, Al and Betsie eventually saw them, too, but it was a few more seconds. By this time, we were within about 1/2 mile of them. We gave them what we felt was a wide berth, slowed down, waved and honked, and carefully veered out away from them. As it turned out, our friend Diane Carr was one of that

with my hyper-awareness, and with all the red, the kayak was still very hard to spot.

group of kayakers, and, not knowing who we were, we gave them cause for concern, as from their perspective, we were too close and seemed to be heading right for them.

I feel a lesson can be learned from our experiences. First of all, when paddling in waters where an encounter with a cruiser could occur, paddle in a tight group. It is FAR easier to see kayakers in a bunch than singly. Do not get strung out while crossing a lake or in deeper waters. Next, wear BRIGHT colors! Hues that show up well from a powerboat are red and that sort of orange-yellow color that one often sees in dry tops. The boat color that is the most obvious from a powerboat is white. Something else that really aids in being seen is paddle color. The white tips on BBK Greenlander paddles are very easy to spot. If your paddle is not tipped in white, you might consider doing that. Finally, be aware that power boaters, no matter how careful they are being, may feel they are giving you lots of room, when, in reality, you feel crowded. Even power boaters who are long-time kayakers have trouble seeing those little boats out there. Be alert.

WMCKA Events

September 17-19

End-o-Summer Weekend – Platte River Campground,

Most people camp at the Platte River Campground between Frankfort and Empire. Saturday usually has a trip down the Platte River from Platte Lake to Lake Michigan. Other trips are A group dinner Saturday night in Glen Arbor.

September 24-26

Wild Wilderness Wave Weekend – Wilderness State Park

This new event is aimed squarely at intermediate to advanced paddlers. Bring gear for cold water & "good" waves! There is no leadership involved, merely an opportunity to paddle together and learn from one another.

October 8-10

Fall Stew Confluence – Ludington State Park

Bring your favorite pre-cooked stew recipe and add it to the bubbling communal cauldron with other WMCKA chefs. No two bowls are quite the same, but each bite is guaranteed delicious!

Non-WMCKA Events

September 24-26

Howl At the Moon Ladies W'end – St. Joe River/ Union Lake --

At Val Rossman's, Union City, MI. Primitive camping at the lake, moonlight paddle, Sat. night "lard can" dinner provided. Other ladies from N. Indiana/SW Michigan Paddle Tales/WOW group will be part of this.

Contact Val if you plan to come and for details and directions. 517-741-3619 home 269-986-2573 cell vfrossman@cbpu.com

For group paddling opportunities from WMCKA members

Visit the Forums/Message Board at
www.wmcka.org

KAYAK FOR LIGHT

(Continued from page 1)

Finally, thanks to Jim Ellickson, whose brain-child Kayak for Light originally was, and who orchestrated notifying the blind paddlers about the event in the first place. This great day of paddling for folks who otherwise would never experience the freedom of paddling a kayak would never have occurred without his great concern for others.

We were sorry when 4 pm rolled around, and it was time to head home and say good-bye to our friends, both old and new. We will be eagerly looking forward to the 6th Annual Kayak for Light in 2005!

SUBMISSIONS

Articles, photos, trip reports, announcements for trips or any other materials relating to kayaking or the environment are welcome for submission. Electronic media is preferred (plain text, or MS Word format please). Materials are subject to editing.

Send to: karl.geisel@wmcka.org

WMCKA Board of Directors

Title	Name	Phone	Email
President	Bob Burmania	(616) 676-1591	rburmania@netpenny.net
Vice Pres.	Steven Adsmund	(231) 924-3719	adsmund@comcast.net
Secretary	Trish Harrington	(616) 459-5429	trish_h@comcast.net
Treasurer	Jon Klatt	(616) 956-6125	kayakklatt@worldnet.att.net
At Large 1	John Van Wyk	(616) 669-1565	jjvw@earthlink.net
At Large 2	Keith Wikle	(269) 833-2164	kjwikle@turtleneck.net
At Large 3	Fred McConkey	(616) 396-5036	fmconkey@macatawa.com

WMCKA Non Board Positions

Symp Co-Chair	Lynn Dominguez	(517) 669-1565	dominla@cmich.edu
Symp Co-Chair	Laurie Levknecht	(616) 123-1234	kayaklaurie@aol.com
Web Guy	Keith Wikle	(269) 833-2164	kjwikle@turtleneck.net
Newsletter	Karl Geisel	(616) 452-3239	karl.geisel@wmcka.org

Visit WMCKA On-line at:
www.wmcka.org

Club Information
Membership Information
Event Calendar

Kayaking Links
Photo Galleries
Message Board

WMCKA Membership Form

Address change only

New Member

Renewal

Select a Membership option:

WMCKA Individual (\$10/yr)

WMCKA & ACA Individual (\$30/yr)

WMCKA & ACA Family (\$35/yr)

(Dual WMCKA/ACA Memberships

Include 1 year of Paddler Magazine)

Please make checks payable to WMCKA.

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

I would like my name, phone # and e-mail address included in the membership directory.

Mail To: WMCKA
c/o Karl Geisel
1900 Clearbrook SE
Grand Rapids, MI 49508

A word about WMCKA events

These events are gatherings of paddlers who share an interest in kayaking and spending social time together. They are open to all interested individuals of any (or no) skill level. There are no leaders, lifeguards, or anyone else responsible the safety of those who choose to participate. Everyone is responsible for his/her own safety and is expected to use common sense and good judgement both on and off the water. Neither WMCKA nor any of its individual members can be responsible for the safety of those attending club events.

Classified Ads

Non-commercial "For Sale" and "Wanted" ads are available for WMCKA members and other area clubs. Each ad will appear for two issues unless the individual placing the ad notifies the editor otherwise. Ads should be submitted in electronic format to the editor at:
karl.geisel@wmcka.org

NRS kayakers full wetsuit, mens medium, \$60.
Contact: Roger at rogdykstra1@juno.com or 616-241-6364.

Betsie Bay Valkyrie – Fiberglass. \$900. Built in 1993. 17'x22" and approximately 45 lbs. Photos can be seen at: www.iserv.net/~geisel/boats4sale Contact: Karl at karl.geisel@wmcka.org or 616-452-3239

For Sale: Kayak Ultra-light 37 lbs. Cascade. 14'6"x26"x15" Yellow over White. All equipment – value \$3,000 – Offer. Grand Rapids, Mich – Contact: Paul 616-785-9353

For Sale: 2002 P&H Sirius in nearly new condition. Kevlar/fiberglass, orange over white with yellow trim. Weighs only 47 lbs! \$2500.00. Phone Bill or Anne Keith at 231-779-4349, or email at elfman@netonecom.net.

Blue Heron racing kayak made by Eddyline. Very good condition. \$795 or may consider a trade for a Sunfish or similar small sail boat or two person sea kayak. Con-

tact: Rich at 269-646-3229.

Perception Phat for \$425. Contact Rich at 269-646-3229.

CLC West River 180, never been paddled, deck needs varnish, \$1200, call Jim at (269)349-3642



Megan perhaps dreaming of a world full of Twinkies on Lower Herring Lake

Photo by Jack Keyes

Grand Rapids MI 49508
1900 Clearbrook SE
c/o Karl Geisel

