

West Michigan Coastal Kayaker



WMCKA is affiliated with the ACA through its Paddle America program

The Newsletter of the
West Michigan
Coastal Kayaker's Association

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October Event – Annual Meeting — Moving From Ludington State Park to Mesick Campground on Manistee River

By Anne Keith

Recently, the WMCKA Board of Directors voted to change the location of the fall outing and annual meeting from Ludington State Park to Northern Exposure Campground, Mesick, Michigan. Northern Exposure Campground is located north of Grand Rapids, traveling US 131 to M-115, then northwest to Mesick, Michigan. From Grand Rapids, it is approximately a 2-hour drive to Northern Exposure.

The campground is located on the lake formed by the Hodenpyle Dam, which is on the Manistee River. The lake is approximately 6 miles long and about a mile wide. It is surrounded by beautiful

pine and hardwood forests. The lake's waters are clean and clear.

In addition to paddling on the lake, there is an opportunity to paddle on the Manistee River above or below the dam. This would be an option in the event of extremely windy or inclement weather. For anyone interested in paddling on Lake Michigan, it is approximately 25 minutes to a launch site.

The campground itself will have numerous open sites. During October, very few other campers will be found at Northern Exposure. The campground manager has reserved an entire section

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of the campground exclusively for the WMCKA event. Each site has piped-in water and electric. The price to WMCKA members for the weekend will be \$14 per night for waterfront sites, and \$12 per night for back sites (most appropriate for tenters.) There are excellent launch opportunities at every single waterfront site. This campground has newly paved blacktop ac-

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Symposium Weekend vs the “Weather”?

By Lynn Dominguez – Symposium Chair

It was much easier to report on the Symposium last year because I could just talk about the weather (cool and flooding, remember?). But this year the ‘weather’ is reduced to one word *perfect!* So I guess I’ll have to talk about other things instead! First of all, I want to express my appreciation for our wonderful staff and instructors who gave so much time and energy to make the symposium a success. Every year the planning committee comes together in the depths of winter to prepare for the upcoming symposium. Without these dedicated volunteers WMCKA would never be able to pull off the symposium in the spring. So, a big thank-you to Fred McConkey, Frits and Clarice Kwant, John and Jan VanWyk, Steve Adsmond, Keith Wikle, Brenda Hennink, Kathy and Bob Burmania, and Laurie Levknecht, this year’s planning

committee. We are always looking for other members who would like to volunteer with planning the symposium, so if you are interested please contact one of the club board members.

Symposium Highlights: There were so many highlights that stand out for me this year that I have been reduced to a list and exclamation points.

- On Saturday and Sunday we were feeding over 200



For the first time in 16 years, Symposium attendees saw no rain during the entire event.

Photo by
Frits Kwant

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The Presidents View from the Bay

By Al Anderson

Hooray! The 16th Annual WMCKA Symposium was one of the best ever. The three elements of planning, enrollment and, yes, WEATHER, finally come into alignment for us. Lynn and Laurie and the entire Symposium committee deserve a giant pat on the back. The new schedule worked wonders for participants, instructors and demo reps. By the way, did I mention the WEATHER? The head count of 83 for the night paddle approached double the old record.

IMPORTANT! WMCKA ON THE MOVE

The event formally called the Fall Stew Confluence (October 7-9) is changing venues. Since the late 1980's we've held our fall rendezvous at Ludington State Park. In those days, we kayakers had the park literally all to ourselves. When the park became the last legal salmon snagging location in the state it started to fill up with hook-and bullet

types in massive RV's. The salmon snagging is now history, but the crowds have pretty much edged us out, to the point where even finding a place to park is a teeth-gritting challenge.

To recapture the spirit of the original event we have moved to Northern Exposure Campground, near Mesick off M-115. NEC is on the Hodenpyl (HODEN-PILE) Dam reservoir on the Manistee River. The campground has very few guests in October and the management has rolled out the red carpet for us. They are setting aside a portion of the campground just for WMCKA, with the largest and newest bath houses, with both RV and tent-style campsites (at \$12-\$14, a great deal) including some waterfront. They have even waived their day-fee for WMCKA members. There are beautiful hiking trails and new blacktop drives for kids to bike or skateboard on (without the traffic problem of LSP). Mesick is



about 15 minutes further from downtown GR than LSP, so driving shouldn't be an issue. Lake Michigan is about 25 minutes away, but the reservoir and river provide more than enough open water and gunkholing to fill a weekend.

Finally, instead of stew, we would like to do a pig roast. Bob Burmania has volunteered to be the Chef. This ensures a hearty meal on Saturday night if everyone brings a side dish (veggies, spuds, casseroles, etc.). We would need an approximate head count in advance to make this work, as well as a small donation at dinner to defray the costs. I am asking everyone who plans to attend the fall event to contact me by e-mail or phone ASAP so that we can finalize plans for the pig roast and campsite reservations.

High Energy Blues Boats

By Derrick Mayolet

[Reprinted with permission from Derrick's Blog at: <http://www.kayakwisconsin.net/blog.html> ED.]

*Well maybe it is just the time of year,
Or maybe it's the time of man
I don't know who I am,
But life is for learning
- Joni Mitchell*

So I wanted to tell you a bit about the West Michigan symposium. The short version is that it was a really fun time. Given that at this moment I can only compare it to a BCU symposium it's hard to find a common frame of reference other than in both events there was camping, instructors, and students. There was even the classic monstrous bonfire. However in Michigan it was harder to drag the adults out to join us at the fires edge. For the few of us who made the fire we were entertained by the great special effects log and regaled with stories of people we neither knew or cared about. The beauty of the story after all is in the telling. Hanging out with teenagers around a fire is almost always a reminder that life is good. That is, if

you haven't forgotten how to smile.

Off the water the symposium is a hybrid mix of summer camp and peace rally. The people are warm and friendly, children run and play amongst adult feet and long boats. Students and instructors by design are mixed and mingled at every point in such

a way that as an instructor you spend almost every minute away from your tent talking to students about some aspect of the sport. Even at my tent I found myself drawn up from my book (I'm still working my way through Chris Duff's "Southern Exposure") to answer questions about drysuits and wing paddles. As an attendee it's got to be great to have this kind of access instead of



Rodeo events tested participants mentally, physically and ethically – as cheating was not always discouraged!

Photo by Frits Kwant

just walking eyes down past some "God-like" instructor in wetsuit and Raybans choking at the thought of asking a question. The WMCKA had done a fantastic job of slaying the 'Kayak God' and replacing him with the benevolent teacher.

I could certainly tell you about all the

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October Change

(Continued from page 1)

cess roads, and numerous hiking trails on the camp property, as well as access to the North Country trail nearby.

The campground management is extremely friendly, and educated by our esteemed member, Lynn Dominguez.

Although there should be no problem with last-minute arrivals, campground

More information on Northern Exposure Campground can be found on the web at: www.northernexposure.com.

We'll have a map and more information on the event in the July August newsletter.

management recommends calling ahead for reservations and using the WMCKA name to ensure that everyone is in the same area. Normally, there is a \$4 fee for day visitors, BUT this fee has been waived for the WMCKA event. There

are no parking restrictions at Northern Exposure, so we should have no problem accommodating any day visitors.

The campground phone numbers for reservations are toll free: 1-800-563-7425, or 231-885-1199.

If you have any questions, contact Bill and Anne Keith at 231-779-4349 or email elfman@netonecom.net

Dominguez

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people!

- Vendors reported that more people had demo'ed kayaks by Saturday at noon then in other symposium during the entire weekend!
- The sun was out!
- Two thirds of the participants were new to kayaking!
- Lots of new people participated in the rodeo!
- The recreation kayak track doubled in number of participants!
- Registrations were up by a third from the last two years!
- No Rain!
- The kid's program had 14 participants!
- The band was great again!
- Justine took us on a whirlwind trip for expedition kayaking!
- The night paddle was HUGE!
- The restrooms were clean, the food didn't run out, and there were port-a-jons in the tent camping area!

You can probably add many personal highlights from your own experience. Maybe you learned a new kayak stroke, nailed a roll for the first time, wet exited for the first time, learned to feel more comfortable in your kayak, won the roll-

ing competition, got inspired to go solo around Iceland, got back in your kayak for the first time after an injury, or saw the light bulb go off over a student's head when they 'got it'. Whatever your experience or memories may be, for many people they will last a lifetime. One thing I can guarantee is that we will be talking about this symposium for years to come.

From my viewpoint, I have always considered the WMCKA symposium our clubs' chance to get beginners started on the safe path toward years of enjoyment on the water. This event gives the staff, instructors and club membership the opportunity to 'give back' to the activity that has given us so much. Over the years, I have heard from so many guest instructors and participants who tell us that WMCKA's symposium is unique. That we fill a niche for beginning and intermediate paddlers to learn in a welcoming, safe, and community-oriented manner. Whatever it is that we 'do', I hope we never change or lose it! This year I have had a hard time letting

go of the symposium, the 'buzz' is still there! I certainly feel like I was 'jump-started' into the upcoming paddling season. Hopefully I will see many of you throughout the summer at other symposia or club events. If you have suggestions, comments, or ideas about how we could make the symposium even better, please let me know at:

domin1a@cmich.edu.

To the planning committee, staff, and instructors I can only say Thank-You - 'we done good'!! Now it's time to get out there and paddle!



Fall colors should be near peak at this years Annual Meeting in October.

Photo from NorthernExposure.com

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	Al Anderson	(231) 352-7774	bbkayak@betsievalley.net
Vice Pres.	Steven Adsmund	(231) 924-3719	adsmund@comcast.net
Secretary	Julie Stevens	(989) 828-5783	steven49@msu.edu
Treasurer	Frits Kwant	(616) 956-6125	frits@iserv.net
At Large 1	John Van Wyk	(616) 669-1565	jjvw@earthlink.net
At Large 2	Keith Wikle	(269) 657-6763	kjwikle@turtleneck.net
At Large 3	Fred McConkey	(616) 396-5036	fmcconkey@macatawa.com

WMCKA Non Board Positions

Web Guy	Keith Wikle	(269) 657-6763	kjwikle@turtleneck.net
Newsletter	Karl Geisel	(616) 452-3239	karl.geisel@wmcka.org

Mayoleth

(Continued from page 2)

classes but for the most part we know what a symposium is for. We spent most of the weekend on the water teaching and learning everything from wet-exits to advance rescues. There were many children's classes as well which often became various versions of my favorite game, "Kill the instructor". That's always a good time! But the key of this symposium is more than just great instructors and classes, it's really the atmosphere off the water which becomes the conduit by which students brought into a learning state of mind. Knowing as a student you can ask questions, knowing your kids are having fun and they are near, hearing laughter all around you, feeling safe on the water and cared about off, having warm meals and clean facilities all allow you as a student to relax and focus on learning. The WMCKA has addressed this very well. We can only hope that the camp on Big Blue Lake can be protected from developers who are now playing their consistent roll of wolves at the door and planning to put up condos.

Justine's presentation was fun and interesting as you would expect. Knowing the material she was planning to cover and watching the way the clock was spinning against her all evening, I was impressed that she could speak as quickly as she did and still not give the feeling of being rushed. Luckily so many of us kayaker types have spent many hours listening

to British accents either through symposiums or videos that most are capable of following along with ease. I think one out of 5 or so Sea Kayakers is a closet Anglophile as it is.

Sunday night was the infamous dance. I say infamous because of the stories I heard around the fire the night before. But it was a great time. Betsie Bay (yes, that's correct "We build kayaks and play in a band") played fantastic high energy

Volunteers Needed for Kayak for Light 2005

This year's Kayak for Light event will be held on Saturday, July 9, from 10 am to 4 pm in Ramona Park, Portage, Michigan. Lunch will be provided for all kayakers, guides, and volunteers.

We need WMCKA members (non-WMCKA members are welcome, also) who are interested in giving a day to help others and feel great about themselves! Even if you don't feel comfortable working in the water with a blind paddler, you could help on shore with various things such as registration, lunch, helping paddlers with equipment, etc. You do not have to be an experienced kayaker to assist with Kayak for Light.

Although many kayaks, paddles, etc. will be provided for the day by Lee's Fun and Adventure Store, Portage, Michigan, any extra kayaks or extra gear that you could lend for the day would also be very welcome. We especially need double kayaks, and wide, stable kayaks with large, open cockpits, and extra-large PFDs.

If you are interested in helping out during Kayak for Light, or if you need directions to Ramona Park, or if you just want to find out more about Kayak for Light, contact:

Bill and Anne Keith, Ph 231-779-4349, email: elfman@netonecom.net
Or Jim Ellickson, Ph 989-224-8288, email: ellickson@verizon.net

blues while we drank boxed wine and various other libations that seemed to show up in doorways or be placed in your hands by random folks passing by. All the crazy instructors spent most of the night on the dance floor while unerringly shadowed by a surprising number of cameras both still and video. I'm sure something of that is going to come back

like the sea.

The last day is always a mixed bag. I had one more class to teach with an instructor who went with us on the Manitou trip and this seemed to be the perfect wrap up to the event. Soon all the students were heading home and the instructors and staff were gathering for our final meeting all suntanned and tired. I sat at my table and looked across all the faces of the people I had met while thinking about smiles and stories attached to each face. Some folks were still "in mode" both chatty and chipper while others were happily zapped and lost in their own quiet musings. I was thinking to myself I really want to come back here. And for a moment my self-doubt mind jumped in with stuff like "I hope I did everything ok. I hope I represented Rutabaga in good fashion, blah, blah," Then I relaxed and thought about just missing all these new friends. It would have been a sad drive back if not for the fact that I knew Mary and Gryphon were meeting me at the Harbor.



Instructor Jon Holmes empties a boat during rescue instruction.

Photo by Frits Kwant

and haunt me. . . .

Monday morning as I slowly entered consciousness I layed perfectly still waiting to see how hung over I actually was. It wasn't the wine or even the Scotch that I was worried about, it was the Budweiser in the middle that had me scared. Given that I get a hangover from 2 beers I expected a whopper. Yet amazingly I was in pretty good shape. In reality we did not drink in quantity but if like me, you rarely drink at all a drop is

Time flew and I realized I had to get on the road. I looked back to the table behind me where good friends were sitting just a moment earlier to say my good-byes but they were gone. Good-byes are always tough anyway, in the end it's better to just say "See you again Soon".

Soon, is always a relative term. . .

Event Calendar

July 1-5

Camp Doug Smith

This is your chance to see fireworks "up close and personal" as the camp is the location for the local fireworks display. Located on the NW end of Hamlin Lake, this is your chance to see this lake from the side opposite from Ludington State Park.

Directions: From Ludington, go East on US-10 for 5.2 mi, then Turn LEFT (North) onto US-31 for 10.2 mi, then Turn LEFT (West) onto W Free Soil Rd. (B) Continue for 1.0 mi, then Turn RIGHT (North) onto (N) La Salle Rd for 0.2 mi, then Turn LEFT (West) onto W White Rd for 1.5 mi, then Turn LEFT (South) onto N Quarterline Rd for 0.2 mi, Turn RIGHT (West) onto W Nurnberg Rd for approximately 4.5 mi and watch for the camps driveway on your LEFT (South).

July 9

Kayak for Light

Ramona Park – Kalamazoo

Assist sight impaired individuals experience the sport that you've come to know and love. You may just find yourself getting more out of this event than they do! **Volunteers Needed!** See Page 4,

August 5-7th

Frankfort Paddling Weekend

(aka: Twinkie Conflagration)

Frankfort, MI

Begin with a Friday night paddle across Crystal Lake. Saturday night's repast is a Mexican potluck followed by the twinkie sacrifice. Camping is primitive (port-a-john provided), fresh water is nearby.

Directions: Take US-31 to Benzonia. Grace Rd is found at Crystal Plaza. Take Grace Rd about four miles west to Paul Rose Rd and turn left (south). The next road you come to (about a 1/2 mile) is Sliverville Rd (only left as well). Phil and Cathy Smith's place is the first drive on the left.

September 16-18

Paddle with the Salmon @ Platte River

Saturday's trip down the Platte River is one of the oddest experiences you'll have in a kayak. Watch hundreds of salmon swimming upstream as you take a leisurely trip down the river.



October 7-9

WMCKA – Annual Meeting Manistee River – Mesick, MI (Northern Exposure Campground)

Paddle the Manistee floodwaters behind the Hodenpyle Dam. WMCKA will have a block of campsites reserved at the waters edge with easy access to the water. On Saturday night the Annual Meeting will be held and afterwards we'll enjoy a pigroast. **(Pigroast is RSVP – See AI's "View" on page 2 for more information.)**

To post and/or read about paddling opportunities from other WMCKA members visit the Forums/Message Board at www.wmcka.org

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

Club Information	Kayaking Links
Membership Information	Symposium Information
Event Calendar	On-Line Registration
	Photo Galleries

New Fees Effective April 2005

WMCKA Membership Form

Address change

New Member

Renewal

Select a Membership option:

WMCKA Individual (\$15/yr)

WMCKA Family (\$20/yr)

WMCKA & ACA Individual (\$35/yr)

WMCKA & ACA Family (\$45/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 WMCKA membership directory sent to members each year.

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.

Jun-05

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

2003 Valley Aluet Sea II – Fiberglass Double. 22'x26". Has center "cargo" area for child or pet. Very nice boat in excellent condition. Orange over White. Ultimate tripping boat. 2005 MSRP is \$4,460. Asking \$3,400. Contact Karl @ 616.452.3239 or karl.geisel@wmcka.org.

CLC North Bay, 18.5'x20", 8" Beckson pry out hatches, epoxy white paint on hull and clear coat on deck, safety lines, 47 lbs, foam padded knee, seat and hip areas, compass, bulkheads front and rear with neoprene spray skirt and key-hole cockpit. Very carefully built and used little. \$1200 OBO. Boat is in Lake Isabella, 15 miles west of Mt. Pleasant. Call 616-292-5070 for questions on the boat and ask for Scott. Call 989-644-6655 to see the boat ask for Jim.

Wilderness Systems Sparrow Hawk. Fiberglass. 16'6" Off white top and bottom with teal trim. About 40 to 45 pounds. Used slightly. Neoprene spray skirt and cockpit cover included. \$1500. Contact Susan at 616-538-1759.

Beautiful wooden kayak. Selling because of moving. I have some other stuff that I will give away for free to the buyer. Price would be very reasonable and negotiable. You can read and see more at: <http://www.altitudevacations.com/kayak/kayak.html>

Wanted: Two person sea kayak. Appearance not critical issue. Contact Cliff @ 269 686 7792



Time to get a little WET!

Photo by
Charles Vannette

The 2005 WMCKA Paddlers Directory has been emailed to you. If you didn't get it, email karl.geisel@wmcka.org with an updated address.

See more symposium pictures
online and in color at:
www.wmcka.org

c/o Karl Geisel
1900 Clearbrook SE
Grand Rapids MI

