



West Michigan Coastal Kayaker

WMCKA OCTOBER ANNUAL MEETING Mesick, Michigan

By Anne and Bill Keith

Spectacular Scenery, Scrumptious Soup

Wow! What a wonderful weekend for our annual WMCKA meeting at the Northern Exposure campground! We had sunny, warm weather for the entire weekend...Friday to Sunday. The fall colors were at their peak, and the vistas from both the campground and our kayaks were awe-inspiring, to say the least.

This year, we moved to a new location within the park. Our members really enjoyed the more intimate setting, as well as new, improved bathroom facilities. We were fortunate this year to be able to participate in the park's Halloween Fest, which featured a Haunted Trail, Trick-or-Treaters, and many decorated campsites.



We had a large turnout...Bill counted 47 people at the potluck dinner and annual meeting. This year, we had soup and bread for

our main serving, and people also brought salads and desserts to round out the meal. The fabulous soup-makers were: Jody Haines, Jack Keyes, Jim Mulder, Lori Stegmier, Julie Stevens and Carolyn White. We all thank you...the soups were wonderful! Such variety and such flavor...we are fortunate to have this type of culinary talent in our club.

Bill Keith retired as Vice-President, and Frits Kwant stepped down as Treasurer, both having served many

years in various positions. A big thank-you to both of them!

Jack Keyes, a Board member, stepped up as our new Vice-President, and Carolyn White was elected as our new Treasurer. Bryan Kapteyn was elected to fill the empty spot left on the Board by Jack Keyes. The rest of the officers and Board members stayed the same.

This wonderful weekend ended a great kayaking season, and we look forward to a fun-filled paddling season in 2012.



PRESIDENT'S PADDLE

By Steve Adsmond

Having a great weekend at Northern Exposure Campground this month was a great way to cap an awesome season on the water. The north end of the Northern Exposure campground sure was a hit with

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WMCKA Board Changes for 2012



Jack Keyes
- new Vice President



Carolyn White
- new Treasurer



Brian Kapteyn
- new At-Large Member



Frits Kwant
- Retired Treasurer



Bill Keith
- Retired At-Large Member

President's Paddle, cont'd from p. 1

WMCKA members this year. We had waterfront sites and secluded and protected wooded sites for those who wanted calm camp fire camping vs. breezy camping. Included was a new bathroom and shower building, which was a huge leap forward from the blue plastic bathroom we have had in the past! Something noticeable to me for this outing was the number of home built boats being paddled. There were stitch and glue boats all the way to beautiful Art Prize entry strip built boats. New Board member Brian Kapteyn and his cousin were two of the strip kayak builders in attendance. Their boats make art and paddling merge into one. The new location let everyone leave their kayaks right at the water's edge for easy launching and we had a fantastic gathering site for our WMCKA dinner on Saturday night. We had a lot of bread left over after our huge soup supper, so Lori Stegmeier asked who might want to have French toast breakfast on Sunday morning? We had a great group breakfast that included eggs and hash brown potatoes as well as the French toast and tortilla food.

Kathlene Eardley and Jai Deagan led a river trip on the down river portion of the Manistee from the Hodenpyle Dam to Low Bridge, while Kenneth Nesbitt led an open water paddle on the upper portion. There was also a night paddle led by Kenneth with his new kayak decorated in Halloween lights on Saturday night. Kenneth was also leading a trip down the Pine on Sunday.

The highlight for my daughter Megan and I was going through the Northern Exposure Haunted Trail along with her two cousins who had paddled at Symposium in the kids program. This is a walk through the tall mature pines that includes all of the camp staff outfitted and dressed in full scare tactics. Through the beginning of the haunted trail I was towing Megan, trying to pull her along. Next thing we knew someone was grabbing our feet from below ground. Midway through the trail a four wheeler quad charged at us. Near the end of the haunted trail Megan simply dropped my hand and sprinted away, leaving me behind. It might have had something to do with the scary person chasing us with a revving chain saw!

The Trail is something everyone should experience at least once for a good Halloween haunting! The staff really went to a lot of work to put on such a good Halloween atmosphere which included a costume time for all and Trick or Treating, including a hay ride too.

If you missed out this year, put our Mesick outing on your calendar for next year!

THANK YOU FROM THE GALES

By Keith Wikle

Ryan and I would really like to thank our sponsors, WMCKA and Downwind Sports for the support offered to the Gales.

We had a total of 37 participants, which was just under our maximum, 40. These students got to surf wind and waves on the Great Lakes, play in the currents of the Menomonee river, and learn some new skills and concepts from Shawna and Leon of Body Boat Blade. We heard nothing but great feedback from the participants and everyone seemed very excited about the idea of doing it all over again.

ENDING THE SUMMER IN THE BRIGHT WATERS OF PLATTE BAY

By Deborah "Hot Sauce" de Lorenzo and "Kayak Kenneth" Nesbitt

On this sunny September Saturday, our party of four (Bryan Kapteyn, Carolyn White, Kenneth Nesbitt and Deborah de Lorenzo) explored Lake Michigan's Platte Bay on the edge of Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore at the WMCKA End O' Summer gathering.

Two of us were making the maiden voyage in new boats : Bryan in an exquisite wood/fiberglass hard chine design of his own making, and Kenneth in a custom colored 19 foot NC Expedition he'd just purchased from a friend in northwest Indiana. Carolyn paddled her Wilderness Systems Tsunami and Deborah was aboard her Current Designs Suka. We were on the water about 11 a.m. and planned to take out in time for a spirited rush to Joe's Friendly Tavern in Empire to meet up with the rest of the day's kayakers who were paddling the Platte River.

We put in at Platte River Point, a sandy cut where the river becomes very shallow with a clear and pebbly bottom. We noticed a backhoe operator engaged in

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WMCKA HALLOWEEN EVENT ANNUAL MEETING, MESICK 2011



Platte Bay, cont'd from p. 2

widening this cut, probably to counteract seasons of sand built up by lake action. Later we learned the backhoe is permanently stationed at this location for ongoing maintenance of the shoreline.

True to good WMCKA practice, we first reviewed group signaling & designated a meet-up spot, and ran a quick equipment and resource check. In the first half of our trip we paddled about 5.5 miles in open water approximately 2 miles offshore. The water tower in Empire peeking over the dune was our wayfinding point until about halfway when the dune loomed larger. We paddled toward the massive first dune, noting how the erosive paths carved a striking vertical pattern in its flanks. The dune's crest was almost entirely dense dark pines, topped by a nautically blue sky studded with wind whipped clouds. We could clearly see one of the Manitou Islands (the bear "cubs" in the Legend of Sleeping Bear). Mama Bear was of course the dune we were approaching.



Bryan Kapteyn entering
Lake Michigan

slim trail to the backcountry campground off the White Pine Trail (as it is known from the land side). Happily it was exactly as calculated by Bryan's GPS. Bryan & Deborah beached their boats to explore this campground, which is perhaps 7 minutes walk inland, and chanced upon three amicable young men who had been camping there most of the week. The campgrounds are well wooded with a mix of towering hardwoods and pines, on soft ground, nicely shaded with fresh breezes. There are six of them, with a central area for a fire & group seating on convenient logs. We could imagine camping there and covertly stashing a boat or two a little bit off the landing beach.



Kenneth Nesbitt and Carolyn White
entering Lake Michigan

We landed for lunch on a narrow but pleasant strip of sandy beach at the base of this dune. Bryan brought out his backpacker stove for a tasty fried egg sandwich. This protein burst was the obvious fuel for this powerful paddler's engine! Some of us found and followed pristine animal tracks in the sand, among them bobcat, deer, snake, and the ubiquitous seagulls.

After lunch we paddled per plan, shore skirting the way back. The wind switched from south to south/southwest and picked up a bit as the sun went in and out of the spectacular cumulus clouds. The dancing waves in the shallower waters afforded some easy enjoyable surfing. We stayed very close to shore, intent on finding the blue-tipped post which marked a



Bryan in front of Empire Dunes

Now it was about 4:30 p.m., necessitating some dedicated paddling to get back to Platte River Point. The pace was exhilarating and the freshening winds lifted the waves enough that a few washed over the bows. There were even little dumping breakers at the mouth of the river which had not been there in the morning. We landed, well satisfied with a fine paddle of about 12 miles total, and with a cooperative effort to lift and load our boats set out with good appetite to Joe's Friendly Tavern.



Carolyn at the Dunes



Beach at Empire Dunes



Cougar tracks on the Beach



Beach at Empire Dunes



Bryan beside the kayak that he built

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Submissions

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

Send to: wmcka.news@Yahoo.com
Submissions due by 15th of the previous month

FOR SALE

FOR SALE: Classic Nordkapp (bought from Ken Fink in 1988) needs a home with someone who can appreciate it. Email Dave Sadler at d-sadler@att.net. 269-345-3130

FOUND an Olympus camera lens cap at the Northern Exposure campground after our WMCKA tent was dismantled. Email or call Steve Adsmond

UPCOMING PADDLES

Paddles on the WMCKA Web site

Remember that the events marked with an asterisk (*) are non-WMCKA sponsored events.

Calendar

Pool Sessions at Grandville: Dec 10, Jan 14, Jan 28, Feb 18, Mar 3, and Mar 17

For location, cost, and equipment requirements, please see the Events Page at www.wmcka.org

GREATER DUTY OF CARE PART I

By Keith Wikle

The Gales Storm Gathering has now concluded. A lot of my effort over the last few months has been directed at making the event a success. I am not ready to stick a flag in the hill and declare victory. But I was very very happy with how the event was attended and received by both the participants and the coaches. Whenever I get together with Shawna and Leon from [Body Boat Blade](#), I walk away with a healthy dose of humility. They are such great people, and terrific paddlers who put a lot of thought into everything they do.

One of the courses that was most heavily attended was Incident Management. I learned most of what I know in this area from Shawna and Leon and [Jeff Allen](#). When I teach this course, I take a good chunk of their approach and put the Wikle filter on it. I am not ashamed to point out where I have stolen from the best. I have been fortunate in my coaching life to have had access to many great mentors. WMCKA has had so many great coaches come to teach at their symposium that all of us have had one on one time with. This alone has put so many of us in a position to learn from the best.

During the Gales a phrase was tossed around quite a bit by Shawna and Leon, called [Greater Duty of Care](#). Maybe the rest of the universe heard this phrase and took heed. I blithely assumed I had prepared myself for **duty of care** by being an instructor at all. During the course of the symposium I gained new respect for the expertise that Shawna and Leon have developed to this end.

On the trip down the Menominee with Shawna, Leon, Alec BP, Sharon BP, we got on the water

with fading daylight on a class IV river none of us had been down, with all new equipment, and no leader. It was a classic deep trouble list. If something had gone wrong what was the plan?

As instructors, what is our **duty of care**? What can we reasonably be held accountable for? What gear and precautions become necessary to ensure this **duty of care** is handled. In my paddling life with students, or fellow instructors we rarely do any of the things we say we are going to do when we get together.

So in examining this phrase duty of care, the first part that occurred to me is that the phrase that is often used, is **Greater** Duty of Care. Meaning not only do we as coaches have duty of care, we have Greater, or sometimes called **Higher Duty of Care**. What does this actually mean?

From a legal standpoint it means that because instructors or coaches have received training, those heading out with us, have a higher expectation of trust in our decisions, and our ability to lead them out of danger. For ACA/BCU instructors this has always been a cause for some debate. Especially because the ACA and the BCU are there in some senses to provide insurance against litigation in this regard. Though it seems that this litigation happens with very sparse frequency, I for one, would not count on the ACA's insurance to protect me from a pack of blue-pinstriped hyena attorneys if something horrible really happened. Suffice it to say, this higher expectation of trust is really the operable phrase.

What does that higher duty of care mean? To me, in it's simplest terms it means that the expectation is I should be able to take a group of about 6 people out on open water and be able to bring them and all of their gear (if possible) back

safely to land. I should be ready for whatever comes and be able to pick up the pieces and get everyone back home safely. Though medical conditions and freak accidents do sometimes just happen.

In seeing how seriously it was taken at the Gales, I think I may have to up my game on a daily basis with students and even fellow instructors.

Here is a simple list of things in the arena of Higher Duty of Care I feel I could vastly improve upon.

- **Communication of [Risk Assessment](#) on land. We often rush through this prior to getting on the water because everyone wants to skip ahead to the fun part.**
- **Communication of Leadership for any trip.**
- **Communication of Outs and possible retreats if the weather, or other incidents arise.**
- **Communication of hand signals**
- **Communication of radio frequencies, who will use them, and when they will be used.**
- **Communication of float plan, I am great at doing this for surf, but terrible for journeys. I actually tell my wife where I am parked, where I will be surfing and to call the coast guard if she doesn't hear from me by [x] time when I surf. I want to be found alive man.**
- **Communication of what first aid gear I have and where it is.**
- **Communication about what signalling devices I have and where they are located.**

APOSTLE ISLANDS, 2011

By Brian Kapteyn

Have you ever been to a place that you knew after being there for only a short while you had to come back? Well, that's how I felt after just the first night in Apostle Islands National Park this past July. While I have paddled on Lake Superior before, this area has an allure and beauty all its own, from the sea caves to paddling through islands dotted like splotches on an artist's easel, the memories are branded into my conscience.

My son Nick and I arrived at Sand Beach around 2 PM on July 22, 2011 to a gorgeous afternoon. It was bright and sunny with temperatures in the 80's, which is a little warm when one's mind wanders to the thought of donning a dry suit and sitting in a kayak paddling for a couple of hours. Given the fact that it was quite hot and the lake was flat, and we were only paddling a couple of miles to York Island, I decided to forgo the dry suit and went with the wetsuit for this paddle. As it turns out, this was the only day I did not wear it, since every other day the water was not flat, but saw 1-2 footers most of the time. I was paddling a strip tandem kayak that I built for my neighbor who graciously lent it to me, and being able to stock the front cockpit with gear was a major blessing! We arrived at York Island with no problems, taking the route around the west end of the island to reach the sheltered bay on the north side. We thought at first we were the only ones there but discovered 3 college girls on holiday one campsite over. We exchanged information, and after discovering that the girls had forgotten insect repellent, we also exchanged that for a couple of Leinenkugel beers.....I think we got the best deal in that swap!

Day 2 we had small craft advisories, and there was no way we were venturing out into 5-6 foot waves on Superior. We spent the day exploring York Island, which turned out to be fairly un-interesting with the exception of some humongous pine trees which survived the logging days of this area. I think we walked about 3 miles through some of the thickest deadfall area I have seen since Slate Island in 2009. The winds were blowing around 35 knots, so we took some hot dogs, buns, and condiments and walked to the south side of the island to get out of the wind. We started a nice little fire, cooked our weenies, and had a great time drinking our Lienenkugels (thanks girls!)

Day 3 we headed out around 9 AM for Raspberry Island. We knew we could not camp there, but we wanted to see the lighthouse. We arrived at the very beautiful beach on the south side of the island about noon, ate some lunch, and headed up the approximately 1 mile trail to see the sights. The lighthouse is fully restored, and they have rangers giving tours every hour. The grounds are well kept, and the place was on fire with beautiful natural flowers of several varieties. After returning from the lighthouse, we chatted with some people we saw on the beach, and headed for Oak Island about 3 PM. Nick's back was getting a little sore, so we stopped for a food break near the dock on Oak Island. We debated whether to camp in an undesignated spot on Oak for the night, or push on to Stockton Island where we had a reserved campsite on Quarry Bay. We decided we still had enough time to get to Stockton, so we pushed on. We were pretty tired by the time we got there, and Nick was having a little bit of a tough time handling the Iggy. As it turns out, because he had a dry bag strapped to the rear deck, the center of gravity was affected too much in this little boat, and it made it too tender. We took the bag and put it on the tandem, and everything was better after that. Quarry Bay is one of the most beautiful spots in the Apostle Islands. A gently curving sand beach with a high ridge to one side and lowlands to the other picture frame this harbor like a postcard. The only thing spoiling the setting was the black flies and mosquitoes. The park has to chain everything down to keep the insects from flying away with them. At least that's the story I told, the little buggers were merciless!!!! I took a little paddle in the quiet bay by myself later that evening, and was hailed by a couple on a sailboat that was anchored there. They invited me on board for a glass of wine, so I grabbed a line from them and tied it to the Iggy, grabbed the rail, and hoisted myself up. We sat and talked and drank, discussing everything from politics to wine, and deciding that one needed the wine to be able to stomach a conversation about politics. After an enjoyable hour, I slipped back into the Iggy and paddled back to camp.

Day 4 we spent walking the trails on Stockton Island, of which there are over 20 miles, and we hiked about 16 of them. If you go to the Apostles and like to hike, this is the Island for it! We did pick up some ticks on the way however, which proved to be a not very pleasant addition to the black flies and mosquitoes.

Apostle Islands, cont'd from p. 9

We were hoping to see black bear, not black flies, but alas, it was not to be!

Day 5 was a big decision day. Originally we wanted to paddle to Outer Island which is the last one east of Stockton, but Nick's back was not doing very well so we decided to head back to Oak. We had been paddling in the Islands for awhile now, so we thought we knew where we were going. Bad mistake! The island we actually arrived at was Hermit Island. It took us awhile to realize we were in the wrong place, but we finally figured it out after we had circumnavigated it and never found any campsites! Duh. Oh well, we took a bearing of our true destination, and arrived on the south sand spit of Oak Island around 5 in the afternoon. We set up camp there, and went on a very pleasant 6 mile hike, hoping to see some bear. Unfortunately, we didn't see any, although Oak supposedly has over 25 bears on it. I talked to some people back at the end of our trip that were in a powerboat, and they saw 3 bear along the shore near our campsite. Oh, well, maybe next time!

Day 6 was interesting. The wind was predicted to pick up later in the day, so we tried to get an early start. Just as we were getting ready to launch I felt a tick bite me under my foot! To top it off it was starting to rain.....I was a little miserable, but I ripped the tick off along with no small amount of skin, got in the boat, and we took off. We were planning on Island hopping from Oak to Raspberry to York, but the wind had other ideas. It picked up as we headed across open water coming in from our port side, and the waves were building to 3 feet. We decided to turn into the increasing wind and head for the mainland and skirt around that way, which I was able to do in the Iggy. Nick however, paddling the 22 foot tandem fully loaded, could not pull around into the wind since the rudder jammed and would not drop! He had to paddle parallel to the waves for about a mile before he could angle enough to intersect with my path. It was a little scary to see only a dot of blue a mile across the waves to tell me Nick was still ok in those conditions, and he reported the same feeling to me. Every time he saw his dad's yellow dry suit mount the top of a wave he breathed a little sigh of relief, only to have the anxiety return when he lost sight of me again for a few seconds. We finally were able to join up again in a sheltered bay on the mainland, and we took a much needed rest. We paddled around the mainland for a few miles, and stopped on a peninsula

directly across from Sand Island, our last night in the Apostles.

I built a small inushtuk on the beach about 1 mile north of Sand Beach in case anyone wants to check if it survived, which I doubt.



About 2 PM we started paddling west into 0-1' waves, and had an uneventful crossing into the sheltered harbor of Sand Island. There were about 12 people from a 2-family group on the beach as we arrived about 3 PM, and you could tell they had not seen wood kayaks before. After being somewhat pleasantly delayed explaining what they were and how they were built, we found our campsite in a lovely open glade of grass which was quite large, encompassing three campsites total, all with bear boxes. We started a fire since it was rather cool and damp, having gotten some rain earlier in the day. For lunch I cooked fettucini alfredo and mixed in some tuna, which turned out to be delicious, if I may say so myself. I have a new JetBoil fry pan which attaches to my Jetboil burner, and if I keep close watch I can simmer to a certain degree. After dinner we went on a hike to the lighthouse, which is about 2.5 miles away. We arrived there about 4:30, and heard the strains of a ukulele emanating from the lakeside of the lighthouse. Walking around that side, we saw the ranger sitting in a chair sawing away! After a friendly greeting, we were able to have the ukulele-playing- ranger give us a personal guided tour since we were the only ones there that late in the afternoon. The walk back to the campsite was a little eerie, since the shadows were deepening and the interior of Sand Island is extremely thick with deadfall, ferns, hanging moss, and huge pine trees. We kept looking around us, half expecting animals to come creeping out of the gloom. We slept well that night, and prepared ourselves mentally for the end of our trip.

Apostle Islands, cont'd from p. 10

Day 7 greeted us with sunshine and warm temperatures, although the lake was covered with a fog bank, which delayed our start for Sand Beach. About 9:30 it started to break up, and one of the rangers mentioned that now was our opportunity to reach the mainland since the fog would break all the way up by the time we reached the center of the channel. He also said that if we waited it could pack in again by 10:30, so we hustled our kayaks into the water, and paddled steadily to the east. The ranger was right, the fog did break up, and we headed for the breakwater shelter of Sand Beach. We encountered several groups of teenage kayakers out with groups being led by experienced guides, and I couldn't help but be a little envious of people just starting a wonderful trip that we were finishing. After landing the boats, packing up and driving to Bayfield for a shower and lunch, we headed out for the long 12 hour drive back to Grand Rapids.

Once again, as with all of our trips, it was satisfying and fulfilling, knowing that we had found another corner of creation, and not have to say "boy, I wish we would have gone to....." I will return to the Apostles someday, God willing, because we only saw 6 of the 22 islands, and were not able to paddle inside the sea caves on Devils Island. Ah yes, another adventure looms in my future!

