

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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Volume 10 Number 5

A Home of Our Own

By Nick Meier

It was a difficult and controversial decision last year to move Fall Meeting to the Northern Exposure Campground on the Hodenpyle Lake near Mesick. There was some trepidation among members that the move might not be a good idea. Many of us had fond memories of Ludington and the "Stew Confluence" and moving took us out of our comfort zone and we feared the unknown. However, almost sixty souls braved the challenge.

As we began to trickle in Friday night and set up our various households—campers, tents, a teepee, and one hammock—we were pleasantly surprised to find that we literally had the entire end of the campground to ourselves. Each site had water, electricity, and a view of the lake. The shore soon became littered with kayaks of different shapes and sizes, makes and models. It wasn't too soon before we made our first late afternoon paddle. The wind was brisk and the lake was choppy, but the sun was bright and the paddlers energetic. There was even an impromptu kayak race where the team of Mulder and Meier in their tandem kayak reached an astonishing speed of 8.9 MPH over the 100 foot-



Kayaks leave shore to explore the Manistee River during the Annual Meeting near Mesick.

Photo by
Karl Geisel

long course. Not bad for a couple of old guys. Friday evening we repaired to our campsites and fires while

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Good Vibrations

By Keith Wikle, WMCKA Director at Large

I began kayaking with the assumption that sea kayaking, or Great Lakes kayaking, was entirely about long skinny kayaks going fast in a straight line. I wanted to fight against the wind, the waves, and the current to get from point A to point B. It's a self involved fantasy that pits me as the man against the elements in a kayak. So I trudged forth building fitness, endurance and skills to deal with this quirky ego maniacal picture, however out of focus it might have been.

As a result, I sought out the best person our club had to offer for rolling and rough water training, Doug Van Doren. I gleaned countless helpful tips and impromptu lessons from Doug in the Grandville pool sessions over the last few years. I learned to roll in every conceivable way, some with the paddle, some without. These sessions instilled a sense of balance, purpose, and confidence in my ability to come up for air no matter what. As a result I became more assured in my ability to venture out to Lake Michigan on very rough and windy days.

I've spent the last three years trying my hand at surfing sea kayaks with the Greenland paddle. What I discovered was that I love paddling on Lake Michigan in all weather conditions. There is a unique beauty in our third coast. The water color changes based on the available light; it can be aquamarine in bright sunshine, or it can change to resemble steel grey in a darkening stormy sky. The wind changes the surface topography. It sometimes shifts in quick musical beats from steady calm to a staccato replete with white caps. It becomes an inland sea that skitters hissing foam cat's paws towards shore as the intensity peaks. It startles me how the lake is different every time I go to South Haven. The waves

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Home (Meier)

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the sounds of laughter and camaraderie continued well into the evening, devoid of interruptions from prowling rangers intent on capping the fun. I was, however, rudely awakened sometime during the night by the howling of a coyote near my campsite. The next day I learned that it was not a coyote, but an unnamed WMCKA member in a nearby campsite experiencing a nightmare in which he was being pursued by wolves. His howling stopped when his wife forcefully interrupted his slumber with a well-placed elbow.

Saturday morning, we were met with cold, overcast skies and some folks decided to forgo paddling in favor of a hike on one of the many trails in the area. The rest of us decided to venture out and to see what the day would bring. We were not disappointed. The weather soon turned sunny and the tour up to the upstream end of the lake, with the changing leaves on the trees, made for a perfect paddle. Some of us even managed to save some passing motorists when we held up the M-115 bridge.

Saturday night can only be described as "Hog Heaven." Bob the Pigmeister had arrived early Saturday morning armed

with roaster, pig, a medieval injecting device, and a concoction of fluids which were injected into "Porky" throughout the day. A buffet was constructed, multiple dishes were spread out, and a large pan of pork was presented for our dining pleasure. I, for one, ate way too much and I "hurt so good." Our resident pyromaniac literally "torched" a fire to life, and we spent an evening on the shore enjoying the moonlight and the conversation.

Sunday, we awoke to one of the most beautiful mornings I've ever seen. The sun was rising over a thick fog on the lake. Yet, the fog did not cloud the view of the tops of the trees whose color was highlighted by the morning sun. I watched as many of my fellow WMCKA members disappeared into the mist on their way to points unknown. I stayed in camp and enjoyed round two of "The Pigmeister's" gastronomic delights—BBQ. We even were supplied with plastic bags and took samples home which I, for one, enjoyed several times during the ensuing days.

Several of us took one last paddle down to the Hodenpyle Dam.

I asked some of our members to comment on this event. Here is what they had to say:

- Mesick is a great place to camp and paddle. It was a good change. Let's do it again.
- Real nice to have all the sites within a few feet of the water.
- Let's keep this site in the Fall and Ludington in the Spring. Quiet, good H2O. Not loud.
- Great place for meeting. Room for everyone.

We reluctantly broke camp Sunday afternoon, and we bade a fond farewell to Northern Exposure. Thanks to Bill and Anne Keith who were our Camp Hosts and worked hard to make the weekend enjoyable for all of us.



WMCKA Members save motorists along M-115 Bridge at Mesick.

Photo by Jim Mulder

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

**Submissions for the Winter WMCKA Newsletter
need to be received before:
January 23, 2006**



Angela and Bob get ready to serve the roasted pig.

Photo by Jim Mulder

The Presidents View from the Bay

By Al Anderson, WMCKA President



While the south has been wracked by hurricanes and the east has been pounded with rains and flooding, we have been enjoying a particularly mild fall here in the Great Lakes. While the temperatures have dipped into the frigid zone a couple of times, it has been unseasonably warm and paddleable. I'm impressed by how many stinkpotters

still populate the Bay - most years they are all drydocked by now. Even the punitive fuel prices haven't deterred the hookers from extending the fishing season.

The WMCKA 2005 season wrapped up last weekend with the annual fall get-together. I have to say that '05 was one of the best years in WMCKA history: we had one of the best symposia ever and all our events were blessed with good weather and well attended. The pig roast was an absolute smash hit (thanks to Bob Burmania). We fed over fifty people Saturday night and Sunday noon and still had some BBQ "doggie bags" going home after the weekend. The new venue at Northern Exposure was an absolute joy. We were able to camp together as a group and it really took me back to the 'old days' when crowded campgrounds were not an issue.

While the board was shy of a quorum in its meeting, the annual meeting of the general membership was held. Bill Keith was elected to fill the at-large board position of outgoing member Fred McConkey. I'd like to thank Fred for all his work over the years, both with Symposium and just being there to help out when needed. The rest of the officers volunteered to continue in their present jobs for another year. Karl is (obviously) still at the helm of the newsletter and Keith is still master of the website. Thanks to everyone. -Al



WMCKA Members practice skills at Platte River

Photo by Joe Simon

Fall Adventures with Adriene and World Class Kayak Academy

By Adriene Levknecht

This fall was much different for me as compared to a "normal" high school student. It began with my dad driving me all the way out to Missoula, MT where World Class Kayak Academy is based to meet them to begin school. It was a 36 hour drive and we stopped to see Mt. Rushmore and the Crazy Horse monument (which was actually quite interesting, even to a high schooler).

We began school with three days of pure cold water swimming, in the Clark Fork, doing a swift-water rescue course. We then had our first day of school and began the long, very long, haul to Ontario Canada where the Ottawa River is located. All 14 of the students loved being cooped up in 2 vans for 50 hours, when most of us didn't even know each other at that point! We had a competition there called the Canada Cup where some of the greatest kayakers from places like South Africa to Ireland and, of course, from the US and Canada came to compete in the North American Championships. I got third and won 100\$ Canadian.

After 2 weeks at the Ottawa we traveled to Montreal where we spent four days going huge (surfing) on the very well known Lachine Rapids on the St. Lawrence Seaway. Following that, the school went to West Virginia, the location of both the Gauley River (in Summersville) and the New River (in Fayetteville). There was also a competition at the Gauley River, which was called the Wave Sport Open (www.doublyouess.com). There was a downriver move competition

at Pillow Rock and a ramp that people went off of in their boats. I got second in the Womens' downriver move competition, and won an Astral PFD and an IR womens' tank top (which I am wearing right now).

We had a fundraiser that the school did while at the Gauley. We all paddled the whole Gauley (26 miles) twice in one day, which is 52 miles of kayaking in one day. Now that's a feat if I've never heard done...or done before in this matter. Since everyone was very tired after all of that hucking, flipping and kayaking, everyone was glad to get back in the vans and travel another four hours south to Asheville, NC where the notorious Green River is. We had an awesome time running waterfalls and sitting around watching kayaking videos at Shane Benedict's house (inventor of Liquid Logic kayaks).

We then made our way down to the Coosa River in northern Alabama where the Freestyle Nationals were held. (www.doublyouess.com) I ended up earning the title of Junior Women's runner-up in the National Championships. I got a camelback and an IR long sleeve women's paddling shirt. I leave for New Zealand in only a few days and I promise, you all will be hearing from me while I am down under.

I hope that everyone is having an awesome Fall/Winter.
-Adriene

Vibrations (Wikle)

(Continued from page 1)
form uniquely
based on how

strong the wind is and by which direction the wind originates. Watching the waves form farther out and then travel over the underwater topography allows you to judge how your kayak will behave on different parts of the wave. The Lake Michigan Web Cam and the NOAA forecast for small craft advisories have become windows to unscheduled adventures. I can now judge what is surfable and what is not from a small screen on my laptop. The lake cam is now used to judge when to call in all debts, favors, and begin family plea bargaining in order to go out and hit the waves.

While surfing a sea kayak does present unique and interesting challenges, to me it's always felt a bit like trying to parallel-park a school bus in downtown Ann Arbor. As the waves get progressively larger, the long sea kayak hulls will broach more easily, until almost all your rides are bongo sliding (side surfing) into the beach. While bongo sliding is enjoyable in its own right, it lacks grace and control. Then there is the problem of pearling, or what sea kayakers refer to as "pitch-poling". This is what happens when you take a very long, 16-18 foot long sea kayak and surf it down a very fast, steep wave. As the water gets shallower (this is typically where the waves are breaking), the waves will become faster and steeper and the long beautiful lines of a sea kayak become a very scary thing as the bow digs into the soft sand and you are catapulted end over end. This is usually a bad event, despite the laughs your friends may get from watching the terror on your face as your kayak stands on end in Lake Michigan. Sea kayakers also have an annoying tendency to break in half this way (ask my friend Karl Geisel how this is done if you're interested in the details).

After three years of surfing sea kayakers, I finally tried moving into shorter white water kayakers to surf on the waves. This improved both the bongo slide problem, but unfortunately not the "pitch-poling" problem. The short snub nosed play boats lack significant volume and hull speed to really travel down the wave without digging the bow in on the take off (which also results in pitch-poling the little white water boat). Luckily pitch-poling a 6 foot plastic white water boat is not as calamitous as it is in an 18 foot glass sea kayak. The white water designs are simply not meant for moving waves. This is mainly because surfing moving waves or ocean style waves is entirely different from surfing re-circulating waves on a river. The white water play boats, which are small six and seven foot planing, (flat bottomed and hard chined) hull kayakers with lots of bow and stern rocker do not travel down five

and six foot waves very well, they tend to either drop like a stone from the crest and slide out into the white water, or pitch-pole as the kayak tries to accelerate off the face. So obviously this type of kayak wasn't going to work for surfing moving waves either.

I eventually discovered surf kayakers. Surf kayakers developed in the late sixties and early seventies, and became popular around the same time as sea kayaking and white water kayakers. Perhaps because of the recent resurgence of surf kayakers, I easily found an inexpensive rotomolded polyethylene model designed by Riot called the Boogie™. It is a lean seven foot nine inch design with a flat planing hull, but with sharp rails around the outside for carving on the wave. The bow has a definite upsweep that immediately calls a surfboard to mind. The stern of the kayak is constantly awash no matter how much weight is in the kayak. The hull has three boxes for slotting fins. The fins allow traction to carve sharp turns. This kayak eliminates the bongo sliding problem and the pitch-poling problem by volume distribution; most of the volume is distributed under and forward of the paddler center of gravity. After trying it out a few times, I discovered that the kayak really flies down the face of a wave and allows the paddler to carve along the wave face and stay in the green water much longer than any other kayak I've paddled yet. The surf kayak also allows the paddler to



Surfing with your kayak can have unexpected results. Photo from Internet

catch larger waves pretty late and still scoot quickly down the face before they terminate.

Before you begin to think this is a product endorsement, I will say that this is typical of all surf kayakers to a greater or lesser extent. For me it was all about discovering how much joy I could get out of carving down the green water of a big wave and then slicing back up to stay on crest before it breaks. My experience with surf kayakers was an introduction to an entirely different world. I will never hang up my Greenland paddle and sea kayak because I think all aspects of kayaking have a strange and magnificent power over me. There is a simple grace and elegance to traditional style sea kayaking, and it is still the best way to see all the scenery the Great Lakes has to offer. However when I see the waves come up now, I am reaching more often for my helmet and my surf paddle to head toward the beach.

I look forward to surfing the fall storm systems in a whole new way! Now I have to admit point A to point B paddling is great, but surfing close to shore on windy days has its own healthy appeal as well.

Small disclaimer: the opinions and ideas expressed by Keith Wikle are not those of WMCKA, its members, or its officers. He is clearly a nut and should probably be caged somewhere in a landlocked state like Kansas.

Verlen Kruger Memorial Approved

By Nancy Anderson

The Verlen Kruger Memorial has now been approved by the Portland City Council and is finally a definite go.

The memorial has now received its non-profit status through the Grand River Conservation Club. It is a historical informational monument and all donations are tax deductible. Checks may be made out to the Kruger Memorial GRCC.

For those who haven't heard, the memorial will be a life-sized bronze statue of Verlen in his Tilley hat with his paddle. It will stand atop a granite base with maps and inscriptions carved into it. It will be located at Thompson Field in Portland, along the river trail, between the new parking lot and the boat launch. Verlen will be looking out over the river. There will be a pavilion close by, and a brick walkway from the parking lot to the memorial.

The statue is already in the making, with donations already received. Two current fund raising projects are T-shirt sales and brick sales.



T-shirts are a light gray with a picture of the statue on the front, and Verlen's favorite saying "All things are possible with God," on the back. All printing is done in black. T-shirts are \$15 with all monies now going directly to the memorial fund.

Bricks are being sold for \$100 and allow you up to 3 lines of 12 spaces each for names or a message.

There are also paintings of Verlen for sale, with 50% of the proceeds going to the memorial fund. Please see www.loapc.com for more information on the paintings.

We are also in the process of setting up a website and establishing a brief newsletter letting all contributors know the status of the project.

For more information or to donate to Verlen's memorial, please contact me (517-628-2890) or Dan Smith (517-647-5788), president of the Kruger Memorial Board. We both have T-shirts to sell, as well as the forms for ordering a brick.



The Pig was served and the hungry paddlers decended!

Photo by Karl Geisel



Things got quiet as the eating began in earnest.

Photo by Jim Mulder

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

WMCKA Paddler Directory Update

Several additions and/or changes have been made to the WMCKA Paddlers Directory that was sent out to WMCKA Members in the last issue. Here the listing of members with new/changed information:

<u>Name</u>	<u>City</u>	<u>Phone</u>	<u>Email</u>
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Not published on the web!

* Denotes New Member Listing in Directory

Meeting Minutes

By Julie Stevens, WMCKA Secretary

WMCKA 2005 Board and Annual Meeting 10/08/05
Northern Exposure Campground
Mesick, MI

Board Meeting

Present: Anderson/President, Adsmond/VP, Stevens/Secretary, Geisel/Non-Board Newsletter Editor
Absent: Kwant/Treasurer, VanWyk, Wikle, McKonkey/ At Large Members

Symposium Financial Wrap-up. Presented by Steve Adsmond. Net Profit \$1506.73 despite Insurance cost increase of \$1000 and the Camp Fee Increase of \$850. Full expense report available from Adsmond if desired. Kudos to Symposium Co-Chairs Lynn Dominguez and Laurie Levnecht for organizing an outstandingly run event. Discussed planning for thank you gifts for Symposium Chairs to recognize the months of hard work to coordinate this caliber of an event.

All Board positions up for re-election except At Large 1 & 2. Bill Keith to be nominated for At Large 3. Will open floor of annual meeting for nominations for these positions. All other board position incumbents are interested in continuing remaining on the board.

Annual Meeting

Called to Order by President. Introduction of Participants and Board Members.

Symposium Financial Report presented by Adsmond to club members present. Public Thank you given to job well done by symposium Co-Chairs.

Incumbent Board Members all re-elected. At Large 3 nominee Bill Keith elected for 3 year term.

Ann Keith discussed Kayak for Light.

Adjourned until Spring Meeting in Ludington.

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

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



Leslie and Lauren enjoy some after dinner conversation at Mesick.

Photo by Jim Mulder

WMCKA Pool Sessions – Dates Tentative

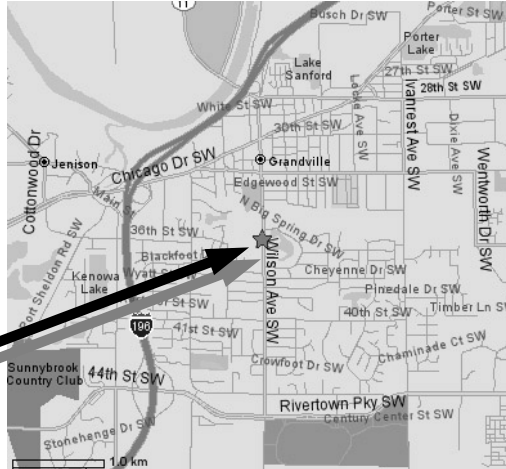
WMCKA Pool Sessions will **tentatively** be held again this year at the Grandville Middle School (address below) on the following Saturdays from 3-5 PM. Call any board member to confirm the date, or check wmcka.org.

- November 26
- December 17
- January 7, 21
- February 4, 18
- March 4, 18

Rates are:

WMCKA/ACA Members	\$10.00
WMCKA, non ACA	\$15.00
Non WMCKA members	\$20.00

Grandville Middle School is located at:
3535 Wilson SW
Grandville MI 49418
(Pool entrance is at the rear (NW corner) of building next to the athletic field)



Please clean your boat thoroughly before leaving home. Boats that are not free of dirt, sand, leaves and other debris will not be allowed in the pool!!

Formal instruction may be available this year for an additional charge. You must sign up in advance – contact Karl Geisel at karl.geisel@wmcka.org.

Event Calendar

Pool Sessions

See Info at left.

April 28-30, 2006

Spring Confluence
Ludington State Park

Membership Information

Your membership expiration date is printed in the upper right-hand corner of the mailing label on your newsletter.

For those of you with email...

If your WMCKA membership has expired, we will notify you by email.

When we receive your payment, we'll also notify to confirm the payment and to confirm your name, address, phone, etc.

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	Bill Keith	(231) 779-4349	elfman@netonecom.net

WMCKA Non Board Positions

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

Coming Soon!

Pay Your WMCKA Membership Online with PayPal!

Keith, the WMCKA webmaster, is adding a PayPal payment option for new and renewing WMCKA Memberships. Check it out at www.WMCKA.org!

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.

Nov-06

Classified Ads

Perception Sonoma 13.5 RoyaleX, lime green deck, white hull. 13' x 23". Bought new '03, always stored indoors. \$650.00. Jim Mulder 888-739-4297 days. Cell 269-217-3029

Bay De Noc 17'9"x 22". Mahogany deck, fiberglass white hull. Greenland styled, low volume, well mannered boat. Well used, but still looks real nice. \$795.00
Jim Mulder 888-739-4297 days Cell 269-217-3029

BBK "Betsie Bay" - Rare opportunity to own a piece of history: BBK "Betsie Bay" model, serial number #001, 1980's vintage. Refurbished by BBK in 1997, this kayak is in mint condition. The owner is no longer paddling due to age/health issues and would like to find new owner. Priced reasonably. I will field inquiries for him and pass serious ones on. Boat is here in Frankfort are now - winters in Chicago area. Al Anderson 231.352.7774 or bbkayak@t-one.net

Cascade. Kayak Ultra-light 37 lbs. 14'6"x26"x15" Yellow over White. All equipment – value \$3,000 – Offer.

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

Grand Rapids, Mich – Contact: Paul
616-706-7771

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 keyhole 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.



The Moon over Mesick.

Photo by Karl Geisel

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

