



"Vaya Con Dios Amigos" - Pancho Villa

The USECA Express is published monthly by the Utica Shelby Emergency Communications Association of Macomb County, Michigan. Club meetings are held on the second Tuesday of each month at 7:30 p.m. local time at the Donald Bemis Junior High School, 12500 Nineteen Mile Road in Sterling Heights, Michigan (between Schoenherr and Clinton River Roads).

Articles submitted for publication in the EXPRESS should be delivered to the Editor no later than the Friday after the night of the Club Meeting for publication in the following months issue.

For those who need to get a message to the Board or the Membership Secretary please call our answering machine at 268-6730.

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT!!! **DUES ALMOST DUE!**

Came up with a novel idea during the off season...Early Dues renewal!

Remember how many people were saying that they had renewed their club dues but were not getting the Express or the repeater codes? The majority of that problem was caused by having a new Membership Secy in place! It takes a lot to learn that job (which Joan has done admirably) so things can be slow at first. Well, here is your chance to be proactive. I suggest that more people renew in advance so that the mad rush of renewals won't overwhelm the next Membership Secy (or Joan if she seeks the job again)

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C= Charter H= Honorary F= Founder

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From The Editor

Dave - KF8RF

In case you have not heard, this is my last month as the Editor for this paper.

First off, I have to say that I have enjoyed the experience immensely. My computer skills have improved dramatically and it has been a good way to keep in touch with the what is going on in the club. The controversy with the first soapbox kind of gave me a chuckle, especially when the G.M.A.R.C. decided to drop out of our Field Day and "take their football and go home" when Arpad made a hazy reference to the G.M.A.S.S. Kinda' made me wonder how Freedom of Speech has survived all these years.

There are several reasons why I am giving this up.....first and foremost is that my wife and I had our first child in June. Anyone who has had kids can tell you how much time it takes to be a parent. I have no idea anymore what free time is! If we are not changing diapers then we are feeding her, or playing with her, or trying to catch up on the household duties when she sleeps (in the most quiet way you can possibly imagine!)

The second reason I am giving it up is my utter disappointment in the timeliness of the mail delivery of the Express. At the January meeting several members spoke up and complained that they were getting their papers AFTER the club meeting, which made it hard to approve the meeting minutes from the previous month that are supposed to be printed in the Express. (Not a problem anymore since I gave up on trying to get the meeting minutes. I only received 2 meeting minutes from the Recording Sec' y in the 7 months I was the Editor...and I had to beg for those!)

After I heard these complaints I made a serious effort to have the paper in the proper hands in order to leave PLENTY of time for printing and mailing. In spite of this effort only 2 of the 6 issues ever made it in time. The straw that broke the camel's back for me was when I received the June issue, which was especially written for Field Day, in August. That really pissed me off (ooops....I used questionable language...somebody call Arpad to slap my ...errrrr.....wrist!).

I guess in parting I have a couple of suggestions:

- 1) Appoint a special committee to do nothing else but take care of the printing, folding, and mailing of the Express. It's too much work for one person. Jim/N8OKW has expressed an interest in doing this. Talk to him and help him to get this done!
- 2) Start being smarter about the finances of the club! All of the discussion at the June meeting (where we almost spent more money than we have) showed me that we need to get a better grasp on the finances of the club. Don't be so quick to approve what the Board suggests we spend. Seems like every expenditure proposed by the Board at the club meeting is a contest to see who can raise their hands first and approve it. Face it...there is only so much money in the coffers and it is time to be somewhat careful about how it is spent, sort of like what you do with your own finances.!

If this column has offended any specific people then sorry. That's one of the luxuries of being the Editor...being able to "Express" your opinion.

73 de KF8RF ...QRT fer now!

SOAPBOX

by Arpad - WY8M

Okay, first the leg thing. As many of you know, Friday, July 16 I was struck by a car running a red light while riding my mountain bike. Luckily only my left leg and ankle were broken. Two screws, a pin and ligament anchors were installed. Yes, I had my TH-78 with me. Was on it seconds after the impact coordinating police and transportation for my YL and the bikes. By the time you read this, one of the screws'll have been removed and I should be out of the cast and starting PT. Fun stuff. Yes, I've retained the best TV channel 20 lawyer I could find! How was your summer?

Communication. An interesting concept. A difficult skill to master. I've noticed that for a group of people who's communication skills are assumed to be above average, WE SUCK! Yes, big surprise, isn't it. First rule of communication: Don't assume that because YOU know something that everyone ELSE does. This happens a lot with hams. A ham'll tell one or two others some relevant or important info that ALL should know and assume the info will somehow be disseminated. Check into the 'information' net with information. Write the Express. Tell the board.

Second rule of communication: Verify and double check all coordination and communication. Hospitals do this. They schedule you for a certain date that could be weeks or months from now. The initial date is set with you. They call in a day or two to verify that indeed the date has been set and there was no communication error. Finally, they call the day before to assure that you brain memory or daily planner is still coordinated. My dentist does the same thing. They schedule my next visit during my present visit. I am given a card with the date, day and time of my appointment. They will mail me a postcard reminder about three weeks AND finally call me the week of. All this because we're human. We can and do forget.

Third rule of communication: Initiate-it! If your waiting on a communication and it's not happening, start it! "Well, she was supposed to tell me when to..." Don't wait... INITIATE! Find out what's going on.

Fourth rule of communication: KIS ASS (keep it short and simple, stupid) In a true communication situation, socializing/ragchewing aside, too many hams love the sound of their own voice using sentences where words would suffice.

These rules (strong suggestions???) lead into another, more specific plague setting foot in the club that I must address.

This is a great club. It is a great club because of it's motivated volunteers. People who take pride in organizing and accomplishing events and tasks. Unfortunately, there has been times in recent years when people accept a responsibility in the club, and then incur setbacks in carrying it out. This in and of itself is fine. Unexpected conflicting schedules do happen. Replacements can be found and the necessary work carried on. The PROBLEM arises when the individual doesn't ask for help or won't indicate to the board that this task needs to be re-assigned. This to me is inexcusable, irresponsible and immature behavior. I hate to say this, but I quickly lose respect for these types of individuals. Just the way I see things, I guess.

There are many ways to avoid this situation. Unfortunately we employ none of them. We need to start. Being a volunteer organization, it is difficult at times to monitor and coordinate the efforts at hand. The best suggestion that I have would be to do like Ann did recently. She got tired of waiting for others to get their poop in a scoop, grabbed the newsletter, and folded them and mailed them! Yes, late, but at least the task was accomplished! That's the kind of spirit that turned this club into a formidable voice in the amateur community. Look out!

Lead, follow or get outa da way!

Soapbox Continued

Regarding emergency phone patches... Don't make one unless ya know what yer doin'!!! Learn how to use your codes. Know the limits of your radio and the repeater. The police operator is interested in only two things: WHERE is the emergency (for God's sake, learn the compass points), and are there any INJURIES requiring an ambulance. They don't care who you are. They don't care what your call sign is. They don't have time to listen to your lengthy dissertation. They don't understand ham lingo or the new CB/ham (UGH!) lingo. They do have a passing interest in knowing you're on a one-way radio. They DO understand the concept of semi-duplex, but have never heard the terms 'semi-duplex' or 'repeater'! Just say you are on a radio at initial contact. That's it. Giving them more info than they need actually confuses the situation. KIS ASS. I know this is 'amateur radio', but let's not act like amateurs in emergency communications. THINK. I know it hurts, but try!

Whoa! Way too much seriousness here... let's lighten up a bit!

Bay City State Park Campground. What a great time! Met N8ZSC who was brave enough to come up and meet the ham-campers. Several other hams were found to be camping in the park and were extended the invitation to join our picnic/barbecue by the beach Saturday evening. Our marinated steaks came out great. Walt, ya missed a good one! Standard USECA style pass-a-dish pig-out! Dawn's nacho dip was outa dis world. I had a blast on the blacktop roads and trails on my wheelchair, though I longed to be swimming, wave running, and antenna raising with Mike WX3L and TJ N8RUH. TJ had a unique method for launching large lead objects through the air that were supposed to be tied to fishing line, yet somehow weren't. Had to send Dave N8OEV into town to buy more lead. Brought back fluorescent tape to assist finding the weights in the future. Wes WJ8Q inadvertently experimented with nuclear detonation Saturday night trying to create a cozy campfire. 'Heh heh m heh.

Fires cool! Hm heh heh.' IFL instructed me in the fine art of hammocking and how to get others to fetch you drinks while engaged in hammocking. We, Lynn and I, finally left when I heard Don WX3M make contact with Floyd KF8AT on 7.030. I listened in the car to the QSO while driving home. My head copy is not very good, but I managed to pick out several eeeeeeeeeee's! Wished I could've stayed, but the leg let me know I'd had my fill.

Hey, let's talk about this new 'plain language' Tech-lite question pool. Okay, let's not. It's an embarrassment to the amateur community. Ooooo I can't stand it! Let's talk about it! What is this? A verification that the average intellect has gone down in this country? Are we as a nation really this stupid? Thousands of retired (can't teach old dog new tricks), handicapped (incapable?), and grade school aged (barely read?) people have passed the novice and tech tests. Heck, even up to Extra! What prompted this 'dumbing' of the question pool? Enough lazy people whined and cried to the FCC? Sorry, I don't get it. These were never hard tests, people! Where can you go to school or take a class where any question that would conceivably be asked is given to you with the answers!!! This 'hobby' is supposed to promote learning, technical competence, and operating skill. Now we're going to start getting morons who can barely read just 'cause they want a better CB! Which brings me to morse code...

Yes, code is archaic. Yes, code is slow. No, code will not make you an intellectual giant. BUT... Code is the most basic, rudimentary form of communication we have and it could get through clearly when other modes are lost in the static noise floor. Code will also make you respect the hobby/service more. At least learn the letters and numbers so you can recognize receive sites and SOS distress calls. No, I'm not one of those tech-lite bashers.

I was for a form of no-code license, but with stricter, larger tests which would have included at least a code character recognition test at one word a minute. This way exposure would be ensured. Why not? The present testing exposes you to all the other digital modes, so let's include code! At least the code employs the greatest computer known to man... The brain! Nope, code don't make ya no smarter, but it'll make ya appreciate the hobby more!

What ever happened to the plan of getting a group of knowledgeable hams together and giving informative presentations to high school electronics students? Was brought up several meetings ago. Could be made up of retired, layed off, afternoon shift, or independently wealthy individuals who care about our technical future. Wish someone would pick up the ball on this and run with it. No, not me. I can't even walk!

Soapbox Continued

Back to CB. I love to razz the obvious CBers 'cause I used to be one. Big time. Had the 2000 fully moded with a kW and a Super Galaxy II with a 400 Watt Palomar in the car. Point being I'm a ham now. I use ham lingo. If I were a cop on a beat, I'd be using cop lingo on 460 MHz. If a doctor at a hospital, I'd be listening for medical lingo on the PA 'Dr. Miklos... ICU stat!'. Get the picture? All professions and hobbies have a unique language. Ours is presently being bastardized. Somehow, even with my years of heavy CB involvement and meager mental capability, I managed to lose those CB ways and get an Extra ticket. Change is good only when it's for the better. Ham is better. I have no problem with change. Matter 'fact, I encourage change if the ends justifies the means. Show me how using 'break' ALL the time has helped our emergency communications. Yes, my pet peeve!

Actually, I think former CB operators usually make better hams. They have something to compare ham radio against and appreciate the great privilege we have. They've been exposed to coax, antennas, watts, static, squelch, concepts like altitude = more range and don't try to talk to someone while their keyed up. Kinda gives them an edge up on stuff. Also, if they were paying attention, they noticed that the 'roger beeps' could be heard long after the voice communication was lost! I did. We (the guys I hung with) all had the beeps. We used to say 'one beep for no, two for yes' when they were out of voice range, meaning that the modulation was buried in the static of AM. You thought code was slow! So I guess I learned the importance of CW before I ever even knew there WAS a ham radio! Wow! Wonder if any others tripped across this obvious example? Naw. Too many intellectual deficient in CB.

Well, would love to write more, but Dave is picking up this disk for me. Thanks for the favor, Dave. And thanks for the many months of editing the Express and the many evenings of burning the midnight oil pumping out this premier publication. You did a great job and put it out in a timely manner. Wish we could say the same for the printing, eh?

Oh yea. This may be the last soapbox for a while. Unless someone wants to pick up where I left off. Been doin' this for about two years now. Time for some new talent. How about it? Anyone want to become famous with the ARRL? Want to get people thinking? Want to get bomb threats? Just kidding!

Catch you at the meetings... HAVE FUN!!!

WHoomp, der it is

WY8M

Thanks From Marianne!

To the Bay City Campers (especially Ann, Dave, and Velma)

Thank you for your tireless efforts at making the unofficial USECA Bay City camp-out a success. Everyone enjoyed themselves and are looking forward to the next one. You really made my Birthday a special memory this year and I thank you

I would like to extend my special thanks to Don and Kathy for providing the delicious birthday cake for all of us.

A lot of new friends were made and many friendships were strengthened. It was a great weekend. Once again, my thanks to all.

Sincerely,

Marianne Mickle/ N8TMJ

USECA MEMBERSHIP APPLICATIONTYPE OF APPLICATION: NEW RENEWAL NEWSLETTER ONLY

DATE OF APPLICATION:

NAME:

ADDRESS:

CITY, STATE, ZIP CODE:

BIRTHDATE:

CALLSIGN:

CLASS:

TELEPHONE NUMBER:

WANT IT LISTED IN ROSTER? YES NOARE YOU A MEMBER OF THE ARRL? YES NO
IF YES, WHEN DOES IT EXPIRE? (MM/YY)DO YOU DESIRE AUTOPATCH PRIVILEGES? Yes No
IF THIS IS A RENEWAL, PLEASE LIST YOUR AUTODIAL NUMBER.A CURRENT COPY OF YOUR LICENSE IS REQUIRED FOR CLUB RECORDS.
HAS THE CLUB RECEIVED A COPY OF YOUR CURRENT LICENSE?

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REGULAR MEMBERSHIP (INCLUDES NEWSLETTER)	\$15.00
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Net Point Notes and A Letter to The Editor

by Ken /KF8RG

Again, I wish to thank our Net Op's who are conscientious and consistently get their net check-in sheets to me on a timely basis.... Joe (K8OEF), Jim (N8OKW), Scott and Linda (KB8NXS & N8VVH), and Bill (N8NMX). These op's usually have their net points to me in as little as two days but no more than 2 weeks.

Some Net Op's I've heard have never turned in Check-in sheets... you know who you are! Don't claim you gave it to somebody else... it is your final responsibility as a Net Op to Mail (yes, it's gonna cost you 29 cents) your check-in sheet to the net point manager. If you take more than one net a month, mail them in together, but get them out before they're a month old! I have been tinkering with the idea of printing a Net Point Manager's "Black List" of those who never turn in Net Points... should I?

Dave.....a letter to the editor....

Man, what a blast! The Camelot Island Expedition was a great success, maybe not in radio or weather terms, but measured in fun and speed! I only went for the day on Saturday the 28th but just the ride out on Floyd's (KF8AT) Nova was enough to make my day! His boat is a 25 foot WellCraft Nova and is powered by twin Chevy 350 cid engines. I hadn't been on a boat in a few years, and my old Chris-Craft never did much better than 25 mph. Needless to say, Floyd's 60 mph plus rocket ship was quite a treat.

Not to be outdone, after the thrill ride to the island, Brian (A8BCY) brought out his air-boat and took everyone attending for rides through the flats and marsh grass. The air-boat uses a wooden prop for propulsion and is powered by a Lycoming four cylinder engine. The boat appears to need no more than a teaspoon of water to float, as Brian took us into just a few inches of water many times at speed. It sure is a neat way to view the St. Clair Flats up close. One warning though.... it's LOUD!!!

Floyd and Lissa both teamed up to give everyone rides on the Wave-Runner, an exciting pocket rocket by Yamaha. Kinda like riding a snowmobile on water but far more fun. Even Bernie got in on the action as he went for a long ride with Floyd while Dooie watched from shore. (Bernie and Dooie are dogs...but don't tell them, it'd spoil all their fun!)

Oh!! Did I forget Radio?...Yeah, we also played radio while on the island. Walt brought along his MFJ QRP rig and mounted his vertical antenna on the crows nest. Floyd had an HW8 multiband QRP Heathkit hooked up to a dipole in the trees. Brian had a Yaesu 757 also tied to a dipole. I even picked up a state I'd never worked, only need Alaska now for a 40m CW W.A.S.! But as true USECA members, we never let radio get in the way of FUN!

On the island for the weekend or part of it were Lissa (KF8AT/XYL), Floyd (KF8AT), Walt (WB8E), Brian (A8BCY), John (KA7KZO), Eddie (N8RUE), Ann (KB8NYY), Dave (W8BIFL), Thelma (N8YVC), Phil (W8BZOF) and kids, Mark (N8RUK), Arpad (W8BM) and his gal, Don (WX3M), myself (KF8RG) and my wife Denise as well as a few others who I didn't know. Entertaining and begging most of the day for table scraps were Bernie and Dooie.

To anyone who has a boat and didn't go.... SHAME! There was plenty of dockage, plenty of food and the water was simply fantastic!

FM Net Point Totals submitted by Ken /KF8RG

U.S.E.C.A. F M N E T P O I N T S

CALL	NAME	PTS	CALL	NAME	PTS
N08GF	OLLIE	1	N80KW	JIM	97
K80TT	JAY	2	N80WT	COLE	126
N0WKP	CHAD	1	W80PLQ	GAYLEN	8
N1FCK	GREG	27	N8PNO	DAVE	35
WX3L	MIKE	99	N8PYH	GERARD	12
WX3M	DON	59	WJ8Q	WES	12
VE3WWX	GREG	1	N8QDW	JOHN	21
KA4ZSM	JIM	3	N8QDX	CLYDE	6
KC6VCB	NIKE	2	N8QPR	DAN	4
KATKZO	JOHN	35	N8QVX	KEVIN	33
K88AD	BILL	11	N8RAR	WAYNE	20
K88AT	FLOYD	144	W8REN	DAVE	1
K88BY	MIKE	18	* K88RF	DAVE	50
N8BYY	BOB	86	KF8RG	KEN	92
K8CFY	JERRY	112	N8RHT	RICH	28
N8CPF	STEVE	1	N8RHV	JAY	27
W8CRS	EARL	9	W8RNY	DON	2
K8BCT	DAVE	78	* N8RRU	GARY	50
N8CVC	BILL	24	N8RUD	MIKE	67
W88E	WALT	189	N8RUE	EDDIE	95
K88FK	BILL	76	N8RUH	TJ	42
N8FOW	RONBABY	11	N8SCQ	BOB	15
K88GPO	KEN	22	N8SFU	PAUL	1
W88GL	DAN	1	N8SIN	BETTY	32
* W88H	GORDIE	52	N8TLC	BILL	40
A88HF	DARWIN	38	* N8TMJ	MARIANNE	57
N8HTV	JOHN	4	K8TPE	DALE	19
N8HUL	DAVE	2	N8TUN	STEVE	11
W8BIFL	DAVE	116	N8TVW	BOB	5
N8IGH	JOE	32	K8TYS	ALEX	2
W8JEK	BOB	18	N8UJL	SARA	27
WY8K	CHARLIE	75	W8BY	DAVE	3
N8KDL	DOUG	3	N8VBG	MIKE	16
K88KLM	RICK	168	* N8VBH	PAT	53
N8KLY	GEROME	6	N8VLY	DON	5
N8KNS	DON	52	N8VLZ	BORDY	3
N8LOG	PAT	5	K8BYM	DAN	96
K88LT	JACK	1	K8BYM	STEVE	8
W8BLT	HANK	41	N8VMH	DAVE	25
N8LXL	BETTY	88	N8VOH	KATHY	58
WY8M	ARPAD	74	N8VSI	SCOTT	21
K88MB	MEL	40	N8VTF	DON	39
N8MBK	NATHAN	19	N8VVH	LINDA	42
N8MCD	JIM	137	N8WDD	DAN	16
W8MCE	PETE	10	N8WJE	KEVIN	15
N8MEF	BARB	38	N8WYP	RAY	6
N8MIJ	JIM	35	N8XCD	ERIC	1
K8MKA	STAG	1	N8XCZ	ELIZABETH	25
N8MMV	MIKE	13	KF8XD	JEFF	42
N8MOJ	MARION	7	N8XRB	JEFF	16
N8NAV	MARK	1	N8XZD	ERIC	7
K88NDS	TOM	21	N8YBY	LEONARD	1
N8NKY	ED	1	N8YCD	NEEDNAME	2
N8NLS	VIRGINIA	23	N8YJI	DEANNA	13
N8NMX	BILL	117	N8YMF	WILBUR	1
N8NQQ	BIFF	83	K8BYRW	STEVE	12
W88NRJ	TOM	1	N8YVC	THELMA	13
N8NXX	ED	17	N8YVD	KELLY	2
K88NYS	SCOTT	91	N8YVX	JIM	2
N8DAE	ANN	45	N8YVM	JULIE	1
N8ODY	ERNIE	5	N8YWS	STAN	7
K8OEF	STEVE	7	KF8ZC	LEE	2
N8OEF	JOE	26	N8ZFA	PETE	3
N8OEF	VAL	31	W88ZJL	PAUL	13
N8OEM	BARB	19	W88ZOF	PHIL	13
N8OEV	DAVE	102	N8ZRC	AL	9
N8OEX	EARL	76	N8ZSC	HAL	1
N8OFB	DAVE	19			

Date: 08/29/93, KEN (KF8RG)

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TOP TWENTY CONTESTANTS

No.	Call	Name	Pts	Totals
1	W88E	WALT	25	189
2	K88KLM	RICK	9	168
3	K88AT	FLOYD	18	144
4	N8MCD	JIM	4	137
5	N8OWI	COLE	14	126
6	N8NMX	BILL	14	117
7	W8BIFL	DAVE	19	116
8	K8CFY	JERRY	19	112
9	N8OEV	DAVE	15	102
10	WX3L	MIKE	8	99
11	N8OKW	JIM	17	97
12	K88VM	DAN	3	96
13	N8RUE	EDDIE	16	95
14	KF8RG	KEN	17	92
15	K88NYS	SCOTT	27	91
16	N8LXL	BETTY	4	88
17	N8BYY	BOB	13	86
18	N8NQQ	BIFF	10	83
19	K8BCT	DAVE	8	78
20	N8OEX	EARL	15	76

Date: 08/29/93, KEN (KF8RG)

Net Point Explanation:

1) A "*" by your call denotes an award due. (There is a certificate for 50 check-ins and each multiple thereof.) Pick up your awards at USECA meetings.

2) A "NEEDNAME" means just that, either the net control op did not note names with calls or the name was not given at net time.

3) FM net control ops receive 2pts for each net. CW control ops get 4 pts each net.

4) FM check-ins receive 1 pt each net. CW check-ins get 2 pts. (The difference is meant to encourage upgrading by use of the Code and to reward the extra time and effort of a CW net.)

5) If you have not checked into a net in the last 3 months, your points total will not be listed. A simple check-in will put you back on the list! (with all points noted)

6) Net points can only be awarded as I receive them. (Net control ops: It is *your responsibility* to get check-in sheets to me as soon as possible and as complete as possible!)

(7) CW net points are tallied separately and are published only when I receive updates on checkins or quarterly.

SOUTH MANITOU ISLAND QRP EXPEDITION

BY KEN/ KF8RG

Chippewa Indian legend tells of a mother bear and her two cubs fleeing a forest fire by swimming across Lake Michigan. The tale continues, with only the mother bear reaching the towering dunes of the Leleenu peninsula, where she laid down to await her cubs. Where her cubs' final struggle with the waves ended, it is said the spirit "Manitou" created two islands to mark the spot.

Just visible from mainland Michigan, North and South Manitou Islands are located directly west of the quaint village of Leland. Approximately 18 miles from shore, each island draws daytrippers and campers visiting Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore, of which the islands are a part.

The ferry "Misha Mokwa" comes to South Manitou Island every day from Leland, weather permitting, while North Manitou is served every second day by a smaller boat. Camping permits cost nothing, and are available onboard the ferry or on the islands at the ranger stations. When camping on the islands, it is a good idea to prepare for at least one extra day as foul weather may keep the ferry from it's scheduled run.

The Manitou Islands are a rustic camping experience, there's no electricity, no transportation (except your feet), and no nearby help. Drinkable water is only a short walk from most campsites, as are pit toilets. Fires are allowed, but only in the communal fire rings, shared by three or more campsites. Only "down and dead" wood may be gathered for fires.

South Manitou Island is the site of a life-saving station and a lighthouse as well as many farm buildings, left from the island's busier days when it was the only deep water harbor between the Straits of Mackinaw and Chicago. (The islands were actually settled before the adjoining mainland.) To the east lies the Manitou Passage, which saw as many as a hundred ships an hour plying her busy waters at the turn of the century. The passage is rife with sandbars and rock shoals and is only one-half mile wide at its narrowest and therefor is also the final resting place of many a forlorn crew. It's for this reason, a life- saving station and lighthouse were erected here over 117 years ago. On the south side of the island, the wreck "Francisco Morazon", a Liberian steel-hulled package freighter, attests to the hazards of this area of Lake Michigan. The wreck, there since running hard aground in a late November blizzard in 1960, is still visible and mostly intact, just a few hundred yards from shore in shallow water and can be seen from the mainland with the aid of binoculars. The west side of the island is host to some of Michigan's highest sand dunes, almost 400 feet tall and also home to a forest of giant White Cedars, known as the "Valley of the Giants" (one, the national champion, is over 110 feet tall). The center and north of the island are where the residences, schoolhouse, farms, and cemetery of the island's inhabitants are located.

I'm not really quite sure where or when the idea of putting the islands on the air began. I had discussed many times, on our club's repeater (USECA,147.180+), my earlier trips to South Manitou Island. I had even discussed putting the island on the air, but had pretty much discounted that idea due to the size and bulk of my old Drake TR4C and the power required to run it. Then, along came Walt (WB8E), with his QRP rig in a

SOUTH MANITOU ISLAND QRP EXPEDITION CONTINUED

cooler....

When Walt first offered the rig, an MFJ 40 meter QRP rig, I almost turned him down. I've always been a bit leery of using other people's gear, always afraid something would happen to it while in my possession. Walt insisted though, and after jokingly being asked for my firstborn as collateral, I eagerly agreed to pick up the rig at Jim's (N8MCD) place during Field Day weekend. The cooler contains an MFJ 40 meter CW transceiver, tuner, selectable notch audio filter, speaker and a Vibroplex Brass racer keyer. All I would need would be an antenna, some coax, a few hundred feet of nylon rope and a power source. I already had a 40 meter dipole and some 200 ft of coax stashed in a closet at home, so that took care of the antenna problem. Bill (N8CVC), donated the power source, a 12 volt gel-cell battery. South Manitou Island was going on the air, ready or not!

As we neared the island, after an easy drive up and a very smooth crossing, it became obvious that many of the island's wildflowers were in bloom. From the water, we could see a small strip of white sand beach, littered with the usual driftwood, followed by a wide strip of beachgrass and blooming flowers and ending in the pine and hardwood forests of the island.

The harbor itself, where the ferry docks, is almost 150 feet deep and surrounded by a white sugar sand beach. Many divers come here to dive on 3 marked wrecks in the harbor as well as the old docks, where many artifacts of the island's heyday can be found. For divers, the Manitous can be very rewarding, with many diveable wrecks around both islands. The harbor on South Manitou offers excellent protection from storms and usually is host to a number of transient boaters.

We had hoped to camp at Weatherstation Campground, located on the south side of the island. It is appropriately named, as this is where the weather usually hits the island the hardest. While camping here seems to invite disaster, the view is generally worth the risk. Most of the campsites are situated on a bluff overlooking Lake Michigan, the Manitou Passage, Pyramid Point, the Empire Bluffs and Sleeping Bear Dunes. At sunset the view is incredible, with the dunes turning many shades of gold and orange while freighters ply the Manitou Passage. As we were arriving on the 4th of July, we had hoped to watch fireworks all along the shoreline of the Mainland from this vantage point. It was not to be....

Our first day, Sunday the 4th, found us camped on an inland site, at "Weatherstation", away from the bluffs, because severe weather was headed for the island. Upon our arrival the National Park Rangers warned us that a storm with 60 mph winds and 1/2 inch hail was expected. Some welcome! After rushing to our campsite, (a two mile hike, with packs), setting up camp and preparing for the worst, my son Sean and I hung the dipole up in a group of trees over the tents. I tried the rig out by calling "CQ", but that seemed pretty hopeless and soon started looking for CQ's to answer. The first station I worked was in Commerce Township, just west of Detroit, so I figured I'd have no trouble working members of my club, U.S.E.C.A., in the Detroit area later in the day. After cooking a dinner of chicken and dumplings on the open fire and dining on the bluff overlooking the lake, I retired to the tent. As darkness fell, I worked WX8T in Ohio,

SOUTH MANITOU ISLAND QRP EXPEDITION CONTINUED

an old acquaintance of mine, Floyd (KF8AT) and Mike (WX3L). I also heard Ann (KB8NYY), at least twice, but was unable to make the connection. At about 11:45pm, the expected storm arrived. Winds, thankfully, were not as bad as was forecasted but we had very heavy rains and unbelievable thunder and lightning. Each stroke of lightning would create numerous claps of thunder as the claps echoed off the dunes on both islands and the mainland.

Morning the next day, found us wet, with the tent covered in snails and slugs. It seems we arrived in the middle of the island's mollusk mating frenzy! Everywhere you looked, there were snails, doing their thing. My wife, Denise even found one in the cooler containing the radio gear, feverishly working his antennae at the transceiver. Perhaps, with the large dipole outside, he had thought this might be his ultimate babe! But, before he could get amorous, I kicked him out of the tent. (I told him, that as a Volunteer Examiner, I had no problem with him sending with his foot, but if he wanted to work 40 meters, he'd have to know code!) He wriggled his antennae defiantly and slimed off into the woods, looking for love (or maybe a repeater).

Speaking of repeaters.... quite a few are accessible from the island. I had little trouble working the Traverse City machine (146.86-) and even less trouble working one in the Honor area (147.3+). Sure is nice to know that help is always there when you need it! I'm sure with more than a rubber duck for an antenna and two watts, quite a few other repeaters would be accessible, possibly even into Wisconsin. I never thought to try 440Mhz from the island, so that will have to wait till next time.

I hadn't listened to the NOAA broadcast, but it looked like we'd have good weather for the day, as the clouds had all but left and the sun was shining through! We quickly got dressed, made a simple breakfast, and hiked off to see the village and lighthouse. The view from the top of Michigan's tallest lighthouse (110 feet) is definitely worth the climb. If we had time, we were planning on hiking to the 400 ft dunes on the far side of the island, a four and a half mile trek. Although we did make it to the lighthouse and village, the cough I had left the mainland with was worsening, so we decided to forsake the dune hike and head back to camp. As we hiked, we decided to move our gear up to one of the bluff sites to avoid the ferocious mosquitoes at the inland site. They would dance in the air all around us, doing the "fleshdance", as Sean put it, diving in for a quick meal. We hoped the winds on the bluff sites would prevent them from becoming a nuisance.

After moving our gear, and setting up camp a second time, we began to sense that we were being watched. Closer observation revealed a veritable horde of "micro-bears", otherwise known as Chipmunks, lurking under every bush. It seems that the chipmunks on the island have become very unafraid of man. They will sneak up while you're eating and grab food off your plate if you're not watching. They've also been known to chew holes in packs and tents to get at food inside, requiring food to be hung in sacks from tree limbs, as in bear country, to keep them out. We had one "micro-bear" who tried to get into our tent a number of times through the opening left for the feedline to the antenna. One did get into the kid's tent, but left after

SOUTH MANITOU ISLAND QRP EXPEDITION CONTINUED

satisfying himself there was no food there.

In the afternoon, Sean and I again set up the station, hanging one end of the dipole about 30 ft up in a tree on the bluff and anchoring the other end on a large piece of driftwood on the beach, 40 ft below the base of the tree. Tuning around for CQ's again, I was able to work NOVWP in Iowa, N5AIT in Kentucky (an ex-radio op from a great lakes freighter and a great ragchewer!), and KB9IFR in Illinois. I also again heard KB8NYY, but again was unsuccessful in hooking up. Later, at our scheduled time, I was able to work Walt (WB8E), the gentleman whose rig I was using on the island. Sadly, before Walt and I could have much of a QSO, a very severe storm hit the island and I thought it best to shut down the station. I sure didn't want to give Walt back a charred rig!

I should have listened to the NOAA broadcast earlier... the storm had winds of up to 55 mph, very heavy rain and lightning as well. Being up on the bluff left us very exposed to the weather and for a while it looked like we might have to abandon camp and hike out to the old Lifesaving Station for protection from the storm. The tents were buffeted violently from every direction by the winds and water was streaming in at every seam. At times, the dome tents were almost flattened by freak winds that seemed to push down from above, like some huge hand trying to squash us. I spent the better part of two hours throwing our backpacks to different corners of the tent, trying to keep the tent on the ground. If we had not been in the habit of securely staking the tents down, I doubt they would've withstood the onslaught. As the storm passed, the temperature dropped about twenty degrees, into the low sixties. Of course, by now, after running around checking on the kids and the tents in my underwear, my cough had progressed to acute bronchitis and a mild fever and my wife was now worried for my health!

Morning, again, found us wet and we decided that staying another day, with more foul weather predicted, and myself sick, would be foolish. We packed up camp and after a quick breakfast of Pop Tarts, granola bars, and Tang, headed for the ranger station and the ferry dock. The storm had riled the lake and the Manitou Passage and winds were still running about 25 mph, forcing the Captain to make a run for the lee side of Sleeping Bear Dunes (the scenic route, they called it!) to avoid the worst seas. The rough passage back to Leland didn't seem to bother a group of Girl Scouts who were along. They spent most of the trip back dodging the waves and spray on the forward deck, getting drenched in the bargain and entertaining everyone else aboard.

The return crossing was mostly unremarkable except for the spectacular views of Sleeping Bear Dunes and conversation with other passengers about their discoveries on South Manitou Island. There seemed to be a consensus; even though we'd had horrible weather, we all talked about going back again. The Manitou Islands hold a strange attraction for me and I always wish I had more time to explore them. A beautiful, forested island, once clear-cut by lumbermen to feed wood burning steamships and rebuild Chicago after the great fire, now almost totally reclaimed by nature. Truly little remains of those who lived, worked and died here. Only clues and hints remain as to what life on the island must've been like. I pondered how the

SOUTH MANITOU ISLAND QRP EXPEDITION CONTINUED

people who had lived on the island felt when they left for the last time, never to return to their island paradise again, to live on the mainland with all it's hustle and bustle.

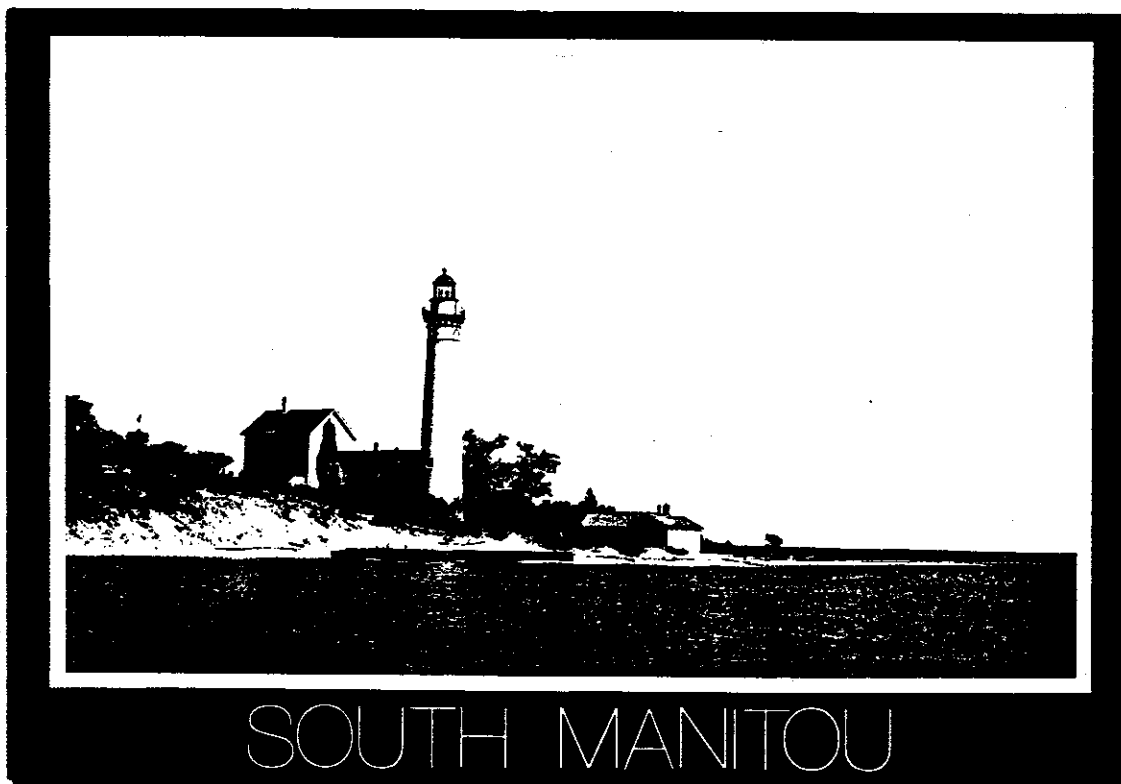
Ken Coughlin...KF8RG

PS.- Anyone for going to Grand Island (near Munising), Isle Royale (Lake Superior), Fox Island (north of the Manitous), Beaver Island (Northern Lake Michigan) or.....?

Information on the Manitou Islands can be had from "Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore", Box 277, Empire, MI. 49630 or call (616)326-5134.

or

"Manitou Island Transit", Mike and George Grosvenor, PO Box 591, Island, Michigan 49654 Phone 616) 356-9061



SOUTH MANITOU

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