



P.O. Box 177
Empire, Michigan 49630
November 2002

2001/2002 Vol. 13, No. 3

Membership Audit ...

Organizations are usually able to keep up-to-date membership records by recording dues payments. Since SMMS membership is free, the task is more of a challenge for us.

membership is. Can you take a moment right now to reaffirm your interest by returning the enclosed card, using the online form, or calling the following toll-free number?

www.southmanitou.org/members
1-877-842-7658

...and A Call for Comments

People once lived on South Manitou. For a 100-years, loggers, immigrant farmers, light-keepers and seamen called it "home". Children were born there. Old folks died. There were moments of great personal happiness and pride, and times of devastating tragedy and shame.

Those who were able left a hand, while others gave of their treasures, and in time the burial places were restored to their original state. The island is now a wilderness within a few hours' drive.

But things change. By the early 1950's, it was mostly left over. Life on the island had become extremely hard and lonely, many were lost in the woods. The group dedicated itself to recovering the island's cemeteries and outlying burial places, and seeing to their decent future maintenance. Each year thereafter they met at Empire and on the island.

Places for 100 years, the South Manitou Memorial Society had materially accomplished its mission. The new agenda was to read or print the book, and even have it read aloud to their members.

Today, many of those who were most invested in that mission have passed on. Mortality is a fact of human life. Moreover, we mortals are apt to remember our ancestors only through two generations, then their great abode only as names on tombstones, their graves unadorned by flowers and their rest unstartled by visitors.

Thirty-five years passed. Then a small group of Island residents made a pact; they decided it would be nice to get together once a year at mid-summer to renew acquaintances and reminisce about the "good old days" on South Manitou. Some had relatives buried on the island and were abashed by the neglect. Grandpa had fallen into shameful states of disrepair. Indeed, many were lost in the woods. The group dedicated itself to recovering the island's cemeteries and outlying burial places, and seeing to their decent future maintenance. Each year thereafter they met at Empire and on the island.

SMMS membership is not to be advertised for a broader segment of our membership, and we have experienced a natural drift towards expanding our mission to include the preservation and interpretation of the island's human history and cultural heritage.

Perhaps because the change occurred gradually and not artificially by design, this new agenda was never actually articulated, debated, officially adopted or otherwise recognized as a watershed in the life of the organization. A loose point was found

ourselves struggling with questions about who we are and what we are up to, and had pressed to come up with any definitive answers. Some therefore find themselves stuck in the old paradigm with nothing to do, since it is no longer affords many opportunities to be involved. Others are interested in embracing the new agenda, but are unable to enlist the full-fledged moral and financial support of the membership, without which their ideas and proposals are soon frustrated.

Your feedback is important. While no action can be taken on such matters without a vote of the general membership, comments delivered in this mode are certain to have an impact upon the ultimate decision-making process.

As you are reaffirming your interest in SMMS membership, use the opportunity to also make your thinking about the future of the organization known.

Authors - Copyright Holders

If you have ever published a book, have an unpublished work, or are the custodian of a copyright for a book about South Manitou, may we convert your work to an eBook?

eBooks are downloadable versions of paper books. They look just like conventional books, but exist in digital form on the Internet and in computer memories. Free book-reader software permits users to read or print the book, and even have it read aloud to their members.

For more information and to see what eBooks are all about, visit www.southmanitou.org/ebooks/.

SMMS Newsletter Archive

Previous issues of the SMMS Newsletter are now available on the Web. The newsletters have been converted to HTML for quick downloading, and can therefore be viewed using your Web browser. If you're new to the Society, you can learn all about our history and past activities by browsing through this collection. Old timers will appreciate the opportunity to review and reminisce. This searchable archive contains unique essays about the Island's natural and human history and cultural traditions, and is therefore a great resource for writers and genealogical researchers!

The archive contains all but the original two issues (prior to 1990) of the newsletter, which have apparently been forever lost? (Got 'em? Call 877-842-7658.) See www.southmanitou.org/members/newsletters/

GMP Sinks in Protest Storm

Summer of 2002 turned out to be unexpectedly stormy for SLBE officials, and their preliminary 20-year general management "plan" finally foundered and sank in early October.

The plan in question was prepared under the stewardship of then Superintendent Ivan Miller. It was first published and distributed in the fall of 1999, as a set of preliminary working proposals designed to engender public debate and comment, as required by law and park policy. The published document was rather highly polished and very nicely packaged; perhaps that was its Achilles heel ... it didn't look very preliminary.

Most recipients focused on the word "plan" rather than "preliminary" and "alternatives". Few liked anything they saw, and storms of protest quickly began to gather. Before it was all over, county governments, state agencies and executives, congressmen, newspapers, a broad array of non-profit organizations, and hundreds of individuals were writing letters, voting resolutions, publishing articles and making phone calls.

Finally, Congressmen Dave Camp (R-Midland), Peter H. Hoekstra (R-Idaho) and U.S. Governor Dick Postlebus gathered up on Dan Smith at the NPS and Craig Manson at the Department of Interior. The response of the Federal officials was, "It has been determined that the best course of action at this time is to withdraw the plan and cease (GMP) development processes for an undetermined amount of time."

This came as a surprise to local park officials, who apparently had not tracing their bosses in Washington were about to wash their hands. At that moment, new Superintendent Dusty Shultz had no comment other than, "We'll just wait until we get some direction from the Department of Interior."

In a subsequent note, Ms Shultz wrote about the nature of the NPS planning process, and assured, "Things shouldn't really stay in the forefront of our minds."

- You care deeply for the rich heritage and resources of this area ...
- You are fiercely dedicated to ensuring that these precious resources are available for the enjoyment of all future generations, regardless of age or disability ...
- You project the strongest sense of community in the preservation and protection of the resources so that you, your grandchildren and your great grandchildren can all enjoy the same rich and memorable experiences of this special place.

We also share your love of this national treasure. (For the full text of the note, please see www.southmanitou.org)

Meanwhile, the "plan" has disappeared from the NPS Planning Website.

Dec & Harvey Rocheleau, SMMS Volunteers, roll up their sleeves on the Island!

Dec and Harvey Rocheleau, SMMS Members, volunteered their time on South Manitou Island for four days following our Annual Island Outing this year.

After working the porch on the village, Mike Smith and Mike Smith in the marigold, they built a 10-foot extension to the main building from a facing fence at the Main Cemetery. Then they cleared weeds from around the cemetery perimeter and around some trees inside.

Meanwhile, the camera also found NPS maintenance personnel beginning demolition work at the historic SMI schoolhouse, in preparation of a complete interior restoration. But wait ...!

... what's that thing in the corner ... an indoor PRYER? (That's not 'matrye').

WAYS TO GET INVOLVED

It's not too late. It's never too late. Think about helping out. You can help in many ways. You are always needed, no matter the "Etidit" you can take charge of its composition and coordinate the production and mailing activities. If publishing isn't your cup-of-tea, how about "fun"! Become part of the planning and coordination for the SMMS Annual picnic, meeting and Island outing. Write Box 177, or use the [volunteer form](http://www.southmanitou.org) on southmanitou.org.

precisely the exact placement. It needed to be properly aligned with the sidewalk, with the door opening and rings on the pad properly positioned with respect to the interior shelves. All of this was completed by the end of the day. The amount of work we had originally estimated the work would take only a few hours, we found that it took a full day to perfect and complete each step!

How to get the seven-foot tall, five-foot diameter shelf back inside the interior of the round building was a discussion that consumed most of the weekend. Could the structure be raised over the top and down around? No, the tractors were not suitable for this type of maneuver. It would be the structure be tilted and the shelves inserted from the bottom. No, again the tractors and equipment on the island were not suitable. The solution was to dismantle the shelves by removing their structure, then reassemble them inside the building, as had been done so long ago, but this time using threaded fasteners instead of rivets.

After three days of long hours and hard work, it was finally time to leave the island. The sight of the complex from the boat upon leaving the island was incredible. We wondered all weekend if the results would be worth the time and extra effort that had been expended. The answer is definitely "Yes". The lighthouse scene never seems much more complete. It was not apparent that something was missing until it was returned to the site. The structure fills a void in the landscape that was hardly noticeable until the building was back in its original setting.

As I now look at all the postcards and photographs of the lighthouse, I see the obvious hole in the landscape is scenes missing a crucial part of the garden. Grandpa would usually drive us over there early in the morning in a Model T Ford. We'd spend the day weeding and hoeing, then walk back home in the afternoon. The two-mile trek was a long walk for my little legs, and I could usually be seen lagging quite far behind Grandma and Judy. Grandma often recited the story about the day John Tobin watched me trudging along with his hand, dusty, totally exhausted and grumpy, and with his hands on his hips exclaimed, "Well ... and here comes old man Warner!" I cannot remember the exact date, but she was in the afternoon. That "tickled" her.

Snakes also frequented the garden, but Grandma was their mortal enemy. Whenever we would see one, their would hustle over with her hoe and shovel to dig out the snake. She would take each half in separate holes, located well away from each other. She claimed that they would otherwise grow back together. Some of these she identified as rattlers! Officially the Island has been known to have only Garter Snakes and Northern King Snakes. Necked Snakes, but it does lie in the middle of the range of the Eastern Massasauga Rattlesnake, a lethargic, non-aggressive, but toxic viper. The marshy areas around Lake Florence would indeed make for a perfect habitat. Perhaps she was right.

If we did a good job in the garden, we would sometimes catch a nickel, and quickly be off down the boardwalk towards Bertha Peth's store. I held my nickel as tight as my sweaty little hands could as we ran along the plank, for fear of dropping it. I could not see the nickel in the sand. Bertha's "store" was upstairs in one of the village houses. I remember the steep, narrow staircase and her little showman with the candy ... and mouse traps. I seem to remember Grandma warning me not to touch the chocolate, since that would be too old and remarkably spotted. I cannot recall there being anything remarkable about Bertha, but then small children would not be apt to notice an older person's eccentricities. Besides, she was not the only character on the island ... at least not in the eyes of small children.

In the evenings Grandma, Judy and I would often go beach combing, walking along the shore from the front of the house to the lighthouse, then back to the dock and looking for sea shells. I remember the excitement of finding a shell. Grandma would make use of, since he was still setting nets in the bay.

was highly proud. In that respect, it was a good thing. Moreover, Grand Haven was a long way from South Manitou Island, both in distance and culture. The interstate highway system had yet to be built, and we did not have a road to bring the mail. It meant embarking on a journey back then. When we did go, it was usually by train.

My father never expressed any interest in going back to the Island. In fact, he took much pride in having my mother and I go to the island. He was in the city the first time he had done it for himself, and done well by his family. He openly scoffed at my sentiments with respect to what I thought of as "home" and "paradise", angrily asserting, "You don't know a Goddamned thing about the Island!" For that I thank him. I cannot remember the exact date, but she was in the morning in a Model T Ford. We'd spend the day weeding and hoeing, then walk back home in the afternoon. The two-mile trek was a long walk for my little legs, and I could usually be seen lagging quite far behind Grandma and Judy. Grandma often recited the story about the day John Tobin watched me trudging along with his hand, dusty, totally exhausted and grumpy, and with his hands on his hips exclaimed, "Well ... and here comes old man Warner!" I cannot remember the exact date, but she was in the afternoon. That "tickled" her.

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The possibility of our formal dissolution therefore arises. In that case, our by-laws provide that if the assets of the Corporation are dedicated to the purchase and erection of a memorial honoring the former inhabitants of South Manitou Island, with any remainder given to the Park Service or another relevant non-profit organization in other words, we would have a \$40,000 statue ... probably for the Island's Main Cemetery ... then forever close our doors. This would be a fundamentally legitimate choice.

The alternative would seem to be to adopt and pursue a new agenda focused on a more aggressive advocacy for South Manitou Island as a part of the Sleeping Bear National Lakeshore, according to the purposes originally envisaged for the park, and in recognition of today's rapidly expanding need for retreats and recreational resources.

The reality is that the National Park Service and other groups would doubtless meet such an agenda with staunch and powerful opposition. That has traditionally been the case. The significance of achievement and accomplishments would be a function of the Society's ability to apply the persuasive power of money and influence. This is also a reality of dealing with large-scale public entities. To succeed in this vein, we would therefore need to recruit a wide array of other membership, achieve the involvement of influential and distinguished individuals, and develop highly successful fund-raising strategies. A challenging endeavor, to be sure!

So where do you stand? Is it time to fold up tent, or roll up our sleeves? Are you willing to participate aggressively in a new agenda ... or support it unenthusiastically? Is there a middle ground? Do you have opinions to share? Do you care one way or another?

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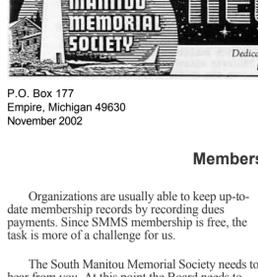
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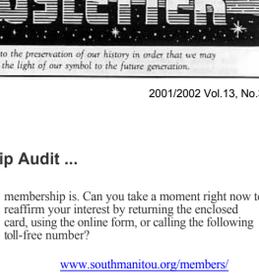
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membership is. Can you take a moment right now to reaffirm your interest by returning the enclosed card, using the online form, or calling the following toll-free number?

www.southmanitou.org/members
1-877-842-7658

...and A Call for Comments

Those who were able left a hand, while others gave of their treasures, and in time the burial places were restored to their original state. The island is now a wilderness within a few hours' drive.

Places for 100 years, the South Manitou Memorial Society had materially accomplished its mission. The new agenda was to read or print the book, and even have it read aloud to their members.

Today, many of those who were most invested in that mission have passed on. Mortality is a fact of human life. Moreover, we mortals are apt to remember our ancestors only through two generations, then their great abode only as names on tombstones, their graves unadorned by flowers and their rest unstartled by visitors.

SMMS membership is not to be advertised for a broader segment of our membership, and we have experienced a natural drift towards expanding our mission to include the preservation and interpretation of the island's human history and cultural heritage.

Perhaps because the change occurred gradually and not artificially by design, this new agenda was never actually articulated, debated, officially adopted or otherwise recognized as a watershed in the life of the organization. A loose point was found

Your feedback is important. While no action can be taken on such matters without a vote of the general membership, comments delivered in this mode are certain to have an impact upon the ultimate decision-making process.

As you are reaffirming your interest in SMMS membership, use the opportunity to also make your thinking about the future of the organization known.

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