

MARINE Madness

Greg Noble VK7FT

**You've heard of some crazy ideas.
Well, here is one to add to the list.**

7.30 a.m. Sunday 12th February: Harvey (VK7HK) arrives at Greg's (VK7FT) QTH where Greg had just concluded fuelling his 15 ft. half cabin cruiser. They load up their gear into the boat which includes various strange items — strange to go fishing with at any rate. They depart shortly after and head north-east to a place called Dodges Ferry. On arrival — back the boat down the launching ramp to be greeted by some water conditions which are far from being pleasant for boating (or whatever they are up to).

They launch the boat with much difficulty with very strong winds pushing the waves straight in onto the launching ramp.

The boat reverses into the "slop" and takes in quite a bit of water over the stern. They head for their next destination which is only just around the next point but this takes some time as the 4-5 ft. waves make for slow going. They look at each other ("We must be mad").

They arrive at their destination just offshore from a boatshed at which Greg's father-in-law stands with a 12 ft. aluminium dinghy. The aim at this stage is to get the dinghy out to the boat. They dare not go any closer than 25-30 yards to the shore because of the pounding weather conditions. Greg's father-in-law makes a cast with his fishing rod and on his second attempt Greg's boat becomes "hooked". They attach a rope to the line and it is reeled in to shore where it is tied onto the dinghy. They now head off with dinghy in tow to their next destination — the most sheltered spot available — about ½ mile away in the lee of a small island called Spectacle Isle. They anchor close into the island to get some protection from the weather which by no means has improved.

Now, down to the business at hand.

They pull the dinghy up alongside and with heart in mouth transfer the rented 600W petrol generator into the dinghy, connect the extension lead to it and let it drift away again. They now have a dinghy

drifting about 50 ft. away — an extension lead supported by three plastic bottles filled with coolite. Harvey sets up his FT101E on a temporary operating table in the cabin, throws an earthing rod over the side and connects to an antenna coupling unit.

Next comes the fun part of the exercise — pull the gas cylinder from under the bunk and commence to inflate the weather balloon which will support the 66 ft. vertical wire antenna — "MAYBE!!"

Whoops — the acquisition of the balloon must have been too cheap — it has two holes in it and subsequently bursts.

Guess the next step is to employ the 18 ft. (4 aluminium section) vertical — it was taken along as a standby — tie it into place with some fishing line, tune up

the rig just in time to give a report to the VK7W1 Sunday morning broadcast which was partly heard on the 2 MTR rig installed in the boat. The next four hours is spent working as many stations as possible for the John Moyle Memorial Field Day Contest. After 34 contacts, 302 points, two flatheads, one whiting, several cups of coffee and one generator refuel and lots of fun, Greg and Harvey with dinghy in tow, head for home, working Mike (VK7FB), crossband 20 metres SSB to 2 metres FM, on the way.

NOTE: The generator in the dinghy 50 ft. away was to reduce any audible or RF interference. Harvey and Greg will probably be about next year — I wonder what they will dream up for then. Thanks to all who worked them. ■



Greg dismantling the aluminium antenna as Harvey looks on