

WIRELESS COMMUNICATIONS & SNAIL MAIL **(Keeping In Contact With Home and/or Business While Cruising)**

INTRODUCTION:

While on our America's Great Loop cruise during the Summers of 2002, 2003 and the Spring of 2004, we traveled through 18 states and 2 Canadian provinces. At that time, the state of the art method of communicating was with a tri-mode cell phone. Email was accomplished using the cell phone as a modem hooked up to our laptop computer at 14.2 kbps.

When we did not have a digital Data signal, we had to rely on buying long distance telephone time from marinas, and other places. Obviously there have been a lot of technological improvements over the past ten years, so we will attempt to cover many of the newer methods and options that are available now (2012).

CELL PHONE options:

- (1) Cell Phone options now include: iPhones, Android's, BlackBerry's and other "smart" phones.
- (2) Cell phone service providers are many, but Verizon, AT&T and Sprint are favored by most long range cruisers depending on the geographical area.
- (3) When cruising the Canadian waters such as the Rideau Waterway, the 1000 Islands, the Trent-Severn Waterway, the Georgian Bay, the North Channel of Lake Huron, etc. cruisers should be careful about their provider's Canadian use plan to avoid expensive Non-Roaming charges. This is traditionally done by selecting a Canadian non-roaming plan.

Check your Cell Phone Service Provider to see if 800 service is available from Canada and/or other countries such as the Bahamas - many are not.

- (4) Cell Phone Booster. PowerMax DA4000MR dual band amplifier boosts power from .6 watts to 3.0 watts (up to 50 miles). Wireless - with no

connection to cell phone. FCC-approved, (Verizon, AT&T, Sprint, TMobile).
From: Digital Antenna at ca. \$500. <www.digitalantenna.com>.

SATELLITE PHONES (need a clear view of the sky or auxiliary antenna.

- (1) Qualcomm 1600 Satellite / Cellular Phone
- (2) Motorola Iridium Satellite Phone

eMAIL & INTERNET CONNECTIVITY

Fortunately Wi-Fi (Wireless Fidelity) service is more widely available, at marinas, motels, hotels, many restaurants, coffee shops, libraries, etc.

However, one must be cautioned to be extremely careful when using a non-password protected Wi-Fi network. One scam used by internet pirates and identity thefts is to clone a good free, unprotected site - when you log onto their bogus site, the pirate/thief easily gains access into your computer and all your files.

A better alternative is to purchase your own WWAN (Wireless Wide Area Network) card or a Mobile Hot Spot card such as a Samsung 4G LTE from Verizon or other service provider. These Hot Spot cards are not too expensive (ca. \$50), but cost \$50.00 service fee use per month. However, they will accommodate 5 WiFi enabled devices (computers, iPhones, iPads, etc.) at a time. The 4G LTE Mobile Hot Spot will provide either 3G or 4G connectivity depending on the cell phone tower nearby.

Depending on your ISP, you may also need a Verizon ISP (Internet Service Provider) account for outgoing Email if you wish to continue to use your existing ISP for incoming eMail. This is because some ISP's do not have authentication and can not accept relaying. Essentially, one can get Broadband Access in most major market areas and National Access anywhere you can make a digital cell phone call.

Also, iPhones, Android's, BlackBerry's may be used as a modem, taking the place of a WWAN card or 4G LTE "Hot Spot" card. However no incoming or outgoing calls can be made when Verizon and Sprint non-LTE services are in use as a modem.

SNAIL MAIL Options:

- (1) You need someone to open and sort important mail from junk mail; such as a Relative, Neighbor or Friend.

Note: Anticipate the mail you will receive and how to identify Important mail. What someone needs to look for during your time away from office and/or home.

- (2) Mail forwarding Firms (MAIL BOXES) for your mail. Many are available.

- (3) Pay regular bills by Direct Payment or paying on line. If using paying on line option, make sure that you do not wait until the last day - pay several days ahead of time, so you do not find yourself in a non Data service area.

- (4) Take business / personal checkbooks with you to either send checks home or pay bills forwarded to you.

- (5) Mail Delivery Providers:

- a. EXPRESS MAIL (overnight) or Priority Mail (2 days) don't bet on it! Express Mail and Priority Mail are only delivered as such in the USA.
- b. Take envelopes and stamps with you. Drop off at any Post Office, Marina, Hotel, etc. Envelopes and boxes are available at post offices.
- c. FEDERAL EXPRESS Account - always confirm the mailing - delivery address which may be different than the marina's business address.

In Canada, Fed Ex is especially good because normal mail delivery is notably slow.

Having a Fed Ex account can be valuable if you need to have items sent to you while in route.

Fed Ex can also be used to send things back home or to the office. Take envelopes and boxes with you. Drop off bins are located at most U.S. Post Offices.

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