

THE RAY

THE SCHOOL FOR OUTDOOR LEADERSHIP, ADVENTURE AND RECREATION

Crazy, Cold Campers

by Cindy Harrison

On Saturday December 5th, Dave Jones summoned his hearty students together from the "Enjoy Michigan Winters Class" for the first practical. Ten bundled up, barely identifiable students (Julie, Harry, Jeff, Theresa, Tom, Mike, Dan, Leslie, Cary, myself) and eight instructors (we know who you are!) assembled at Island Lake Recreation Area at noon to hit the trail.

Bob handed out photocopies of the topographic map for the area and told us we were starting at the "L" in the "LAKE" and we wanted to end up at the "A" in "OAK". Considering the trail we were on was not on the map, this was a challenge for any novice orienteer. After about an hour and a half of hiking, we gave up on the map and scouted out a short-cut trail to the road and headed for the organizational campground just as Bob came looking for us.

We coiled our backpacks and were given the materials to construct our shelter for the night. Even though we had nice picnic tables and outhouses close by, we were standing in the middle of an open field with the wind blowing. We finally figured out (with some encouragement from the instructors) that this might not be the best place to make our shelter. We scouted around for a better location and chose one acceptable



to all. The next step was to agree on our shelter design. Tom climbed the nearest tree to get a better perspective on the situation. Then a voice rang out "who remembers how to make those knots Keith showed us in class" (silence). Once we figured out the rope tricks, we decided the two story design might not be too practical. After much fumbling, stumbling and mumbling (we really weren't hypothermic!), we constructed a fine shelter fit for the abominable snowman.

Dinner consisted of some tasty tummy warming recipes. The highlight of the evenings culinary delights (personally)

was Julie's hot "apple nut raisin oatmeal cinnamon surprise" dessert.

After dinner, Mike built his traditional over zealous campfire and got busted by the park ranger. From then on, he kept the fire still enjoyable in size, but more manageable. We all stood around the campfire and played the "numbers game", which tested our concentration and good for some laughs. Evening temperature was reported to be 17 degrees with a -15 windchill.

I retired early and was sorry I missed the moon dancing which I heard occurred later that evening. I woke up in the middle of the night thinking it was daylight because the full moon had risen. Looking through the clear plastic roof of our shelter at the trees above outlined by the moon glow was a distorting sight, "where am I? will somebody turn out the moon. It's hard to (see Campers on page 3)



Upcoming Event

Hike in Ohio, Part II

For those of you who may have missed out on the Hocking Hills trip in October, we've put together a second visit for the weekend of March 12-14.

We'll be staying in the cabins at the Hocking Hills State Park, near Logan, Ohio which is about 45 minutes south-east of Columbus. Plan to arrive Friday afternoon or evening when we'll have some cabin-type activities. Saturday morning we'll start out on the Grandma Gatewood trail to Old

Man's Cave, Cedar Falls, and Ash Cave. We'll plan to have lunch on the trail and spot a vehicle at the end to shuttle us back to the cabins. Sunday, we can visit other area sights such as Conkles Hollow and the Rock House.

Cost of the weekend is \$25 and includes breakfast Saturday morning. Modern cabin space is limited to the first 12 sign-ups but rustic tent camping is available at \$9 per night per campsite if you wish to go on your own. Please be prepared to pay in full at the February meeting. Information and maps will be available at that time. If you have any questions or wish to reserve a cabin space, call Steve Gardner at 547-4998.

For Sale

Extreme cold weather outfit (blue, Medium) made by Northern Outfitters. Popular Science "Product of the Year". Manufacturer's demo video and brochure available. This outfit kept me warm at 17,000 feet in Alaska. Includes coat, inner liner, pants, mittens, inner mittens, inner gloves, hood cap and additional blaze orange Versatech wind jacket and pants. Designed for complete cold weather protection anywhere on earth. Excellent for anyone who works outdoors in winter. Cost \$650 but will sell for \$195.

Call Tucker Coon, 558-6182 (w) or 979-2742 (h).

ACTIVITIES CALENDAR

FEBRUARY

3,10,17,24	Wednesdays	Wilderness Survival Class Bob Westbrook (356-3627)
6	Saturday	Woodchucker's Holiday 12-4 pm Independence Oaks (625-6473)
9	Tuesday	Ethnic Dinner West East Restaurant Jess Harding (375-5268)
12-14	Weekend	S.O.L.A.R. at the Vasa Cross Country Ski Race Traverse City, Karen Sinclair-Smith (616 249-7210) or Cindy Harrison (331-2804)
20	Saturday	Winter Star Party Independence Oaks, Tim Stangl (625 6473)
19-21	Weekend	Blue Mountain Canada, Ski Trip Maria Picano (420-3423)
26-28	Weekend	Wilderness State Park Ski Trip Joan Govan (356-3627)

MARCH

5-7	Weekend	Wilderness Survival Practical Bob Westbrook (356-3627)
12-14	Weekend	Hike in Ohio, Part II Steve Gardner (547-4998)

SUNDAYS are for Cross-Country skiing locally or up north, depending on where there's snow. For more information, call Bob Westbrook at 356-3627.

Upcoming Event**Winter Walk**

If you like brisk walks in the winter, and you met with our trip leader, Jonathan Schechter, to the West Bloomfield Woods Nature Preserve on Sunday, January 10th, you got it!

Improvements to the trail system such as several new woodland bridges were appreciated efforts by the park, but hard to find in the snowstorm of +/- 6". This park is nationally recognized as an Urban Wildlife Area and is home to deer, weasels and a wide variety of birds, including: chickadee, wood-pecker, and blue heron (wait for the heron until our next visit!).

We didn't see any tracks (a crow was in the sky). Life forms were out there that realized (unlike the 8 mighty SOLARites) a venture into the woods on this day was brave (to say the least). Next time!

Upcoming Event**How Much Wood Would a Woodchuck Chuck?**

Well, if you (and your family), like some SOLARites are curious, on Saturday, February 6, from 12 - 4 pm, you may find out! Or, if you are just interested in *what this is all about*...call Independence Oaks and ask (525-6473).

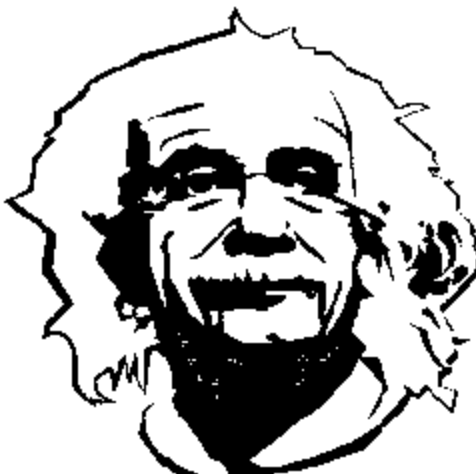
Hint: in the golden days of real lumberjacks....



(Campers ... cont'd from page 1) sleep!" Anyway, I was lulled back to sleep by the sound of harmonious snores from all sides.

Daylight broke as we anticipated leaving our warm multicolored cocoons to face the realization that we really did sleep outside in the winter. Julie announced that during the night she had shed her multiple layers and was sleeping in just her underwear. When she emerged from her sleeping bag with gray long johns, Tom expressed his disappointment as he envisioned something more along the "Victoria's Secret" line.

The "ice heaters" were elected the MVP (most valuable possession) and the winners of the winter attire contest were Dan for his furry hat and Theresa for her yellow oversized pants! Stay tuned for Practical i.

**Review****Wally Who?**

On Friday, January 8, S.O.L.A.R. met at the "RacquetTime" club in Westland for one of those wild and crazy evenings of WallyBall.

For those of you unfamiliar with the concept, its Volleyball played on a racquet ball court. You can play the ball off any wall on your own side of the net, including the ceiling but must return the ball to the other side without exceeding the standard three hits. The ball may hit either (but not both) of the side walls on the other side but must not hit the back wall or the ceiling, unless the other team plays it that way. Otherwise, the rules are the same as in standard volleyball.

Come join in on the next game! For new members or those of you considering the club, this is a great opportunity to us to meet!

Upcoming Event**A Night with the Stars**

This is *not* an invitation to the Inaugural Ball. It is, however, an opportunity to go to Independence Oaks on Saturday, February 20, with your SOLAR friends (or friends to be).

Bring your binoculars, flashlight and wear warm clothes to this event. Witness our great solar system and the stars that fill it. A \$2.00 fee is charged and the space is filling up fast so call right away to reserve your ticket to see the stars.

Contact Independence Oaks at 625-6473 for further details.

Upcoming Event

Blue Mountain Ski Weekend

The weekend of February 19th through the 21st will see S.O.L.A.R. members at the Blue Mountain Ski Area in Collingwood, Ontario, about a five hour drive.

We'll be staying in a three bedroom luxury condo with a whirlpool, bathtubs, fireplace, heated swimming pool, and complete kitchen facilities, as well as close proximity to the slopes and cross-country ski trails. Saturday we'll have the requisite pot-luck and a party Saturday evening.

The cost of the weekend is \$80.00 and does NOT include equipment rental or lift tickets. For more information, contact Maria Picano at 420-3423.

Upcoming Event

Wilderness Ski Weekend

Our annual trip to Wilderness State Park is coming up on February 26th through 28th. We will be staying in the frontier cabin with its two stoves, or you may opt for the available snow camping. The park features some of the areas finest cross country skiing. We will be having a pot-luck Saturday night.

Cost is \$5.00 and sign up will be available February meeting.

Contact Joan Govan at 356-3627 for more info

Upcoming Event

Vasa Annual

On the weekend of February 12 through 14, S.O.L.A.R. members will be heading north to Traverse City to participate in the annual Vasa Cross-Country ski race weekend.

A variety of races from 12k to 45k will be starting on Saturday between 9:00 and 9:45 a.m. If you are interested in skiing in a race, get a registration form from Cindy Harrison. She is interested in getting a group together to ski in the 12k. Let her know or state so on the sign-up sheet if you are interested.

The group will be staying at the Days Inn which has suites that sleep six to a room. If you have a

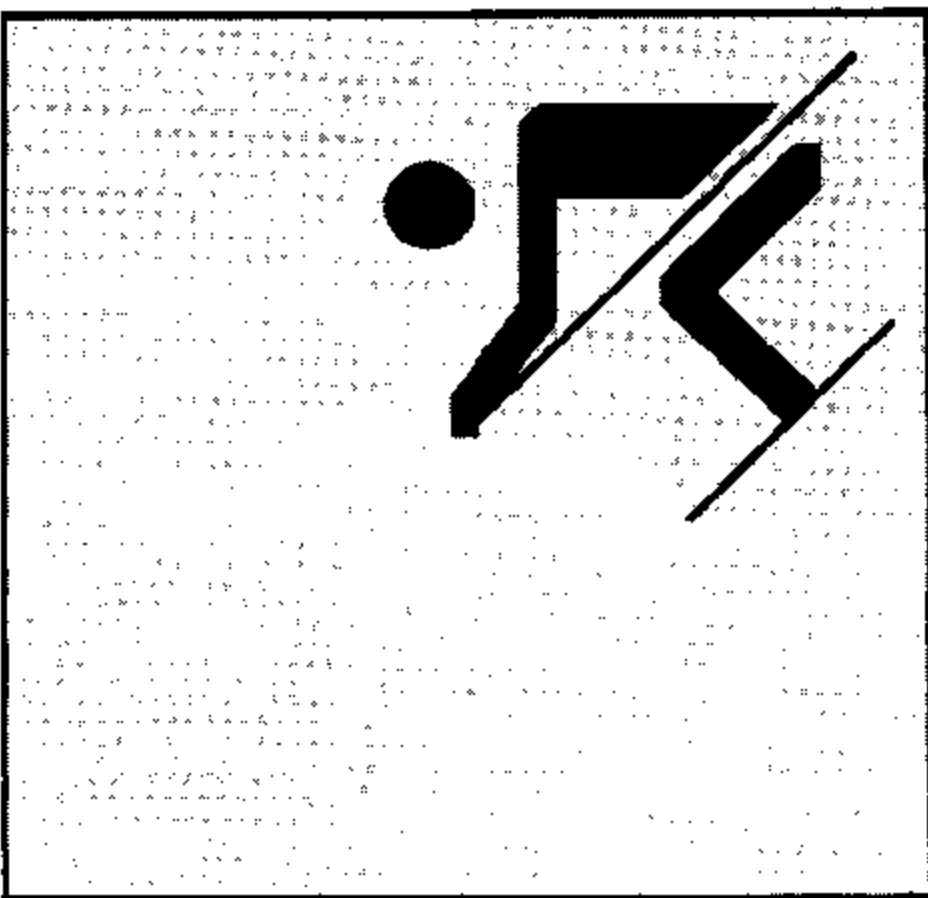
preference as to room mates, state so on the sign-up or let Cindy know

The cost will be about \$50 per person and includes two nights lodging and a buffet dinner on Saturday. Spaces may still be arranged - make your plans with Cindy!

We need volunteers interested in assisting the S.O.L.A.R. skiers at the beginning and end of the race. Let Cindy know if you are interested in helping in this capacity.

There are lots of options for cross-country and downhill skiing as well as other activities in the Traverse City area.

If you are interested in attending this event, call Cindy at 331-2804 or Karen Sinclair-Smith at (616) 249-7216.



Ski Warriors

by Cindy Harrison

So you want to ski this winter and you've been waiting, year after year, for the snow to return to Southeastern Michigan. We'll stop staring out the window waiting for those flakes to fall and join the S.O.L.A.R. skiers whose motto is "WE ARE SKI WARRIORS AND IF THE SNOW WON'T COME TO US, WE WILL GO TO THE SNOW!"

S.O.L.A.R. has several ski activities planned for the winter, so dust off those cross-country and/or downhill skis and come along. The weekend of January 29-31, Tom Mazur and Pam Maxey are leading a trip to Boyne Valley for downhill/cross-country skiing. February 12-14 Karen Sinclair-Smith and Cindy Harrison are leading a trip to the VASA Cross-Country Sk Race in Traverse City. Maria Picano is leading a downhill / cross-country ski trip to Blue Mountain, Canada the weekend of February 19-21. The weekend of February 26-28, Joan Govan is leading a trip to Wilderness State Park for cross-country skiing.

Now, if these weekend trips aren't enough to satisfy your ski habit, we have more options. First, let's not give up hope for snow closer to home this winter. After all, Bob and Joan have been spotted performing ritual S.O.L.A.R. snow dances. The "Ski Warriors" depart on a quest to find the snow every Sunday during ski season.

If there's snow locally, there are many options. Independence Oaks, however, is a favored destination. If there's not a flake to be seen down state, the "Ski Warriors" pile in as few cars as possible and head for Forbush Corners, just off I-75, north of Grayling (three hours from

Detroit). They ski until dark or exhaustion, whichever comes first, then pile back into the cars to head for home.

The Sunday meeting place is Shields Pizza on Telegraph and Ten Mile at 8 a.m. or at 8:30 at I-75 and University Drive in Rochester.

If there's snow locally and you're a down-hiller, call Carol McCorrie at 437-8764. Carol gets a group of SOLARoids together on Monday evenings (the evening is flexible) to ski at Mount Brighton.

If you're a wanna-be skier, don't be discouraged by this "warrior" stuff.

We welcome all levels of skiers from beginners to experts to come along and most of the ski areas that S.O.L.A.R. frequents also rent equipment.

If you're interested in any of the weekend ski trips, contact the trip loaders whose phone numbers are listed on the calendar. If you're interested in joining the "Ski Warriors" weekly quest to find snow, call Bob Westbrook at 356-3627 for further information. If you're interested in other areas to cross-country ski in Northern Michigan, contact Cindy Harrison at 331-2804. See you on the trails!



in profile:

Jim Young

Address: Sterling Heights, MI

Occupation: Owner, operator of J & C Window Cleaning

Hobbies/Interests: Rock climbing, backpacking, cross-country skiing, running and old blues music

How did you hear about S.O.L.A.R.? From the Benchmark, after a trip to the Black Hills in South Dakota

What do you like best about S.O.L.A.R.? Finding other people with similar interests and enthusiasm

About the Ray

The Ray is a monthly publication of the S.O.L.A.R. Club and is provided free of charge to the current dues paid members. For those members who move outside of a 200 mile radius of the Detroit Area and would like to continue receiving the Ray, a \$5.00 annual subscription fee will be charged to cover mailing costs.

DEADLINE for the Ray is the Friday after the general meeting for the following month's edition. Contributions in the form of comments, trip reports, recipes, photos or original articles are welcome. Send all contributions to: Lori Love, RAY Editor, 324 Catalpa, Royal Oak, MI 48067 or call Lori @ 398-5774 or Steve Gardner, RAY Editor @ 547-4998

Meeting Location

The purpose of the S.O.L.A.R. Club is to promote and advance interest in the outdoors through information and participation. Meetings are held on the first Tuesday of the month at the Colony Hall, located at 21790 Evergreen Rd. in Southfield, between 8 & 9 Mile Roads at 7:30 PM SHARP. Membership dues are \$20.00 per individual and \$30.00 per family.

STEERING COMMITTEE

President
Vice-President
Secretary
Treasurer
Activities
Membership
Equipment
Bylaws
Education
S.O.L.A.R. Ray

Programs
Historian
At Large

Al Fylak / 852-7514
Jess Harding / 375-5288
Laura Bowman / 960-1516
Joan Givens / 356-3621
Cindy Hammon / 331-2804
Maria Picano / 420-3423
Sharon Stank / 477-8215
Bill Stanley / 263-1973
Dave Jones / 721-8178
Lori Lee Love / 398-5774
Steve Gardner / 547-4998
John Gulas / 574-0243
Pam Macey / 687-4553
Joan Hettinger / 377-2377
Debby Campbell / 626-5303
Bob Westbrook / 356-3627
Mae DeFrance / 229-8283
Larry Martin / 591-3856
Bill Halvargis / 669-1911
Peg Campbell / 344-1260

S.O.L.A.R. CLUB
P.O. BOX 2438
SOUTHFIELD MI 48037

FIRST CLASS
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
SOUTHFIELD MI
PERMIT NO 108

S . O . L . A . R .
m e m b e r

LESLIE COHEN
14520 BORDMAN
OAK PARK

MI 48237