

# THE RAY

THE SCHOOL FOR OUTDOOR LEADERSHIP, ADVENTURE AND RECREATION

## Review

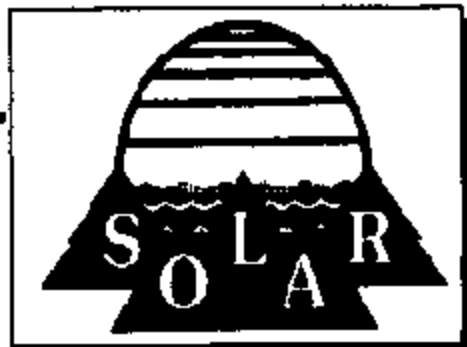
### Happy Hikers in Hocking Hills

By Steve Gardner

After a long day at work on Friday, October 23 was looking forward to a weekend away. Even a five hour drive in the dark through the rolling hills of southern Ohio was welcome as I passed through one micropolis after another on my way to Logan, a short drive south-east of Columbus.

Pulling into the state campground, I inquired as to the whereabouts of the S.O.L.A.R. club only to be met by the "Say-what?" expression of the ranger. So we went through the lists of registered campers, looking for names I might know. Fortunately, there was only one registration from Michigan. Jim Uicker. He and Linda had arrived earlier that afternoon and set up. We were to find out later that trip leader Jim Giffix had sprained his ankle and wouldn't be able to join us. We resolved to have a good time anyway.

In the morning we discovered a third tent had been set up while we slept, housing Kevin and Kathleen who found us by our Michigan licence plates, the ranger having long since retired to bed. A quick tour of the



campground produced two more S.O.L.A.R. groups. Mike and Gail, who had to rent a car when theirs died in Finlay, and Marilyn and Peggy had set up the Tent Mahal just down the path.

After a disappointing breakfast (I had no "Fact or Fiction" on my oatmeal packets) we spotted Mike's rent a car at the end of the trail and set off on the Grandma Gatewood trail. The trail head is adjacent to the entrance to the campground so we couldn't miss it.

The trail follows a deep fissure in the bedrock and is marked by so many beautiful sights that it took us

quite a lot longer than we had anticipated due to the frequent stops for "Kodak Moments", exploring an off branch of particular interest, or just admiring a particularly stunning view.

The three biggest attractions on the trail were Old Man's Cave, Cedar Falls (where we had lunch) and Ash Cave (acoustically perfect for recorder playing). After shuttling back to the campground, we had the obligatory Pot-Luck dinner.

Sunday, we broke into smaller groups and made trips to other area attractions, including the Rock House and Conckles Hollow trails.

All in all, Jim, you missed a wonderful trip. Thanks for putting it together for us. We hope to see you on the next one during the off season!



## A Night on Bald Mountain

By Theresa Savarino

The smoke hung like shrouded forms in the black cold air...and so the SOLAR Halloween weekend at Bald Mountain began... And then the lanternless trip leaders got the second stove vent unstuck, stoked the fire and found a candle by which to play Trivial Pursuit with four other SOLARites (most of us were still in the dark).

Early Saturday, we braved

the mountain bike trails with chilled knuckles and noses. For those of us who rode for the first time—well, there's nothing quite like that first big down hill—remember? Later we joined forces with some newer arrivals and rode some more, while some people hiked in the hills.

After conquering a few more hills on the trails, we decided to give the bikes a rest and commenced our collective search for the Great Pumpkin in the farming community around the park area. A challenge this was, on the day of Halloween. We did scour up a couple of armloads of pumpkins, many of which already looked pretty scary. Dinner was put on hold as the contestants carved diligently.

Coney dogs were the special of the day, along with hot spiced cider and wine. Other delectables contributed by others filled out our meal. A bonus for those still there Sunday morning were the savory taste of home-baked cookies from Pat

Following the "Feast", three SOLAR artists were rewarded for their pumpkin carving skills. Our honorary judges were our new acquaintances of that day, some members of the Michigan Mountain Bikers Assoc. They became our breakfast buddies and riding partners on Sunday. This was a tough decision, as (see Halloween, page 3)

## ACTIVITIES CALENDAR

### JANUARY

6,13	WEDNESDAYS	ENJOY MICHIGAN WINTERS CLASS 465 Dave Jones (722-8178)
15-17	WEEKEND	ENJOY MICHIGAN WINTERS PRACTICAL II Dave Jones (722-8178)
29-31	WEEKEND	SILVER CREEK CHALLENGE X-Country Ski Race
???	TBA	CURLING CLASS Detroit Curling Club Dave Jones (722-8178)
???	TBA	WINTER WALK AT THE WEST BLOOMFIELD NATURE PRESERVE Jonathan Schechter (338-2062)
???	TBA	CROSS-COUNTRY SKI CLASS

### FEBRUARY

5-7	WEEKEND	WHITE PINES STAMPEDE X-Country Ski Race
12-14	WEEKEND	S.O.L.A.R. AT THE VASA X-COUNTRY SKI RACE Traverse City, Karen Sinclair-Smith (616 249-7216) and Cindy Harrison (331-2804)
19-21	WEEKEND	BLUE MOUNTAIN, CANADA Downhill and X-Country Skiing, Maria Picano (420-3423)
26-28	WEEKEND	WILDERNESS STATE PARK SKI WEEKEND Joan Govan (356-3627)
???	TBA	WILDERNESS SURVIVAL CLASS Bob Westbrook (356-3627)

## Upcoming Event

## Bike Tour in Ohio

By Steve Limkemanr.

This is an invitation to take part in one of bicycling's most popular 8 step programs. Because of its popularity, only those who apply during the first few days of February can take part.

Next year over 6,000 people will converge on Columbus, Ohio during Mother's Day Weekend for the 32nd annual program. Each step of this program is a 20 to 30

mile bike ride to a well stocked food stop. The program unfolds as four friendly, fun filled steps on Saturday, dinner and a good night's sleep, and the last four steps on Sunday. The volunteer staff not only feed you, but also transport your baggage from Columbus to Portsmouth and back again.

The official name of this outing is TOSRV, Tour Of Scioto River Valley. As the name implies, the route follows the Scioto river and is relatively flat. Some people race between food stops, but most enjoy the ride at a leisurely pace meeting new and old friends.

The Columbus council of the AYH sends out applications each year on February 1. Within 2 weeks, all 6,000 positions are filled. To receive an application for the next program you should send a stamped, self addressed business sized envelope to TOSRV, P.O. Box 14384, Columbus, OH 43214-0384. If that seems like too much trouble, give me a call at 595-7991 evenings and I'll include an application request for you with mine.

Come help me celebrate my 15th consecutive TOSRV.



(Halloween cont'd from page 2)

most of our pumpkins were either very scary or very funny. We did find the following winners. Kevin Wehrli for scariest, John Gulas for funniest, and Pam Claydon for most creative; Pam obviously worked the hardest, as she had to be woken up to receive her award. An honorable mention must be made to Gene Cordova for his most patriotic and well executed "SOLAR-mouthed-pumpkin" design.

Also, some scary persons were hanging around camp that night - vampires, insects, hairy toothed things, and unidentifiable hybrid-entities. Of course we had to "bob" for apples. That pump water can be sooooo refreshing! Later Saturday night, a band of us followed our flashlights up to the sledding hill to peer at the stars through the cloud cover (it was nice to shoot the breeze). Sunday included the Paint Creek Trail for more "social riding". Rumor has it that SOLAR members were even on the playground jungle gym.

Thanks to all you good ghouls out there.

### *in profile : Andrew Michael Fylak*

**Address:** Rochester Hills, MI

**Occupation:** Being a baby

**Hobbies/Interests:** Mostly just eating and sleeping for now, but I also enjoy screaming at 2:00 am to see which of my parents, Al or Ellen, will come to see what's the matter.

**How did you hear about S.O.L.A.R.?** Are you kidding? That's all my parents ever talk about.

**What do you like best about S.O.L.A.R.?** Give me a chance to make it to a meeting, and maybe I can tell you.

**Additional information you want to share?** I was eight pounds, four ounces when I was born at 4:37 am on Monday November 30th

## Review

## Holiday Carols Ring in New Center

On Thursday December 20th several SOLARoids met in the park to lend their voices to the holiday season. Hosted by the Detroit Free Press as well as other sponsors, this year's Caroling marked a new site, the park right in front of the Fisher Building. It made a fine sight to see as we lifted our voices to traditional carols of the season.

After the singing, we trooped *en masse* to a local eatery, the Ramp Room, where Hal is a fixture. We enjoyed a variety of meals and beverages, then piled into the van where we got the rest of the songs out of our systems on the ride home.

We're all looking forward to next year when we'll don our gay apparel (and head lamps) and do it all over again.

## 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 area's finest cross country skiing. We will be having a pot-luck Saturday night.

Cost is \$5.00 and sign up will be available at the January and February meetings. Contact Jean Govan at 356-3627 for more info.

## Review

## WallyBall!

On Saturday December 12th, S.O.L.A.R. met at the "Racquet Time" club in Livonia for an evening 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.

All in all, twelve players showed up and Dave Jones, who hosted us, couldn't play due to his ongoing ankle problem. Sorry, Dave, but thanks anyway for a good outing!

## Upcoming Event

## Thai One On

The January ethnic dinner will be at the "Taste of Thailand" restaurant in Rochester on Tuesday, January 5 at 6:30 pm. To get there, take I-75 to the University Drive exit and go east about 200 yards. The restaurant is in a shopping center on the north side (your left hand if coming from I-75) called Auburn Crossing.

Thai food tends to be on the hot and spicy side of Oriental style foods although there are a lot of dishes with little or no "fire" that can be ordered "mild" to suit. For more information contact Jess Harding at 375-5268.

## Upcoming Event

## Winter Walk

If you like a brisk walk in the woods in the winter, come and join us at the West Bloomfield Woods Nature Preserve on Sunday, January 10th. We will be meeting in the parking area at 1:00 PM.

The park is newly re-opened after having been closed for improvements to the trail system including several new woodland bridges. 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, though the herons have migrated south for the season. While the park is not specifically designed for it, you can bring your cross-country skis if you like.

So bring your thermos and camera and join us as we stroll 160 acres of a unique, close to home attraction. Contact Jonathan Schechter at 338-2062 for more information and directions.

## Review

## A Night Under The Stars

By Tim Stangl

Despite Mother Nature's best attempts to foul things up outside, seventeen S.O.L.A.R. members moved indoors to view the evening sky at the Adler Elementary School planetarium on November 19th.

Mike Best our speaker for the evening, took the group on a short tour of the Milky Way galaxy and then reviewed the constellations of the current night sky.

For those who could not attend the planetarium showing, don't worry. There will be more opportunities to view the night sky in the future when the weather will be warmer. Stay tuned for more astronomy shows next spring.

Who knows, the evening sky might even stay clear for a night or two. Thanks to those who participated. Keep those books handy. You will get a lot more use out of them in the months to come.

## 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. A \$25 deposit is required by the December meeting and full payment by the January meeting.

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.

## Upcoming Event

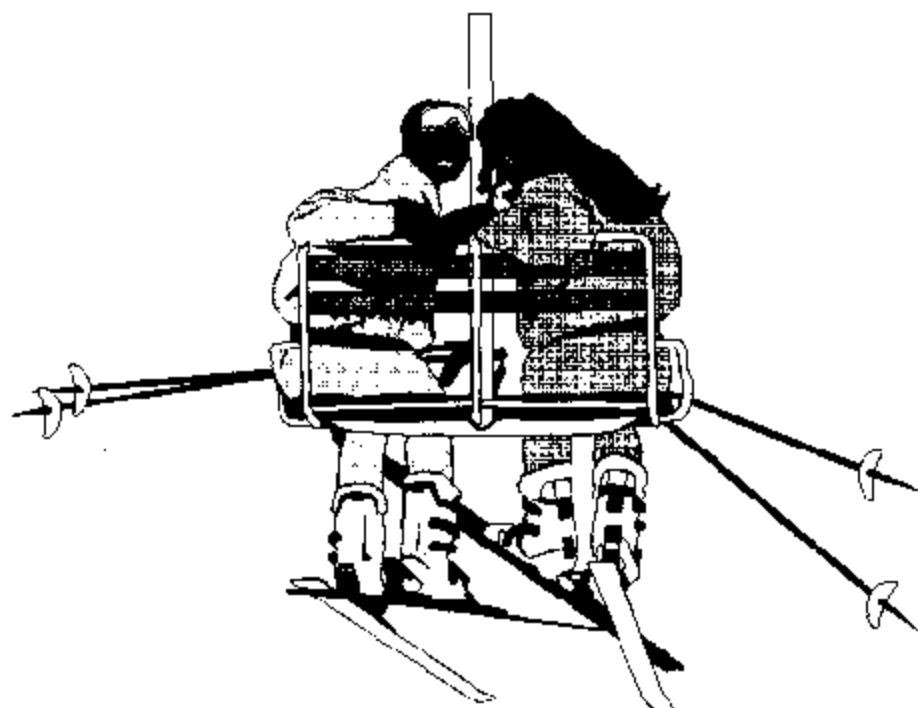
## Blue Mountain Ski Weekend

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.



## 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 21780 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.

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