

THE RAY

THE SCHOOL FOR OUTDOOR LEADERSHIP, ADVENTURE AND RECREATION

Review

Wilderness Weekend

by Steve Gardner

*The Northern Lights have seen
strange sights*

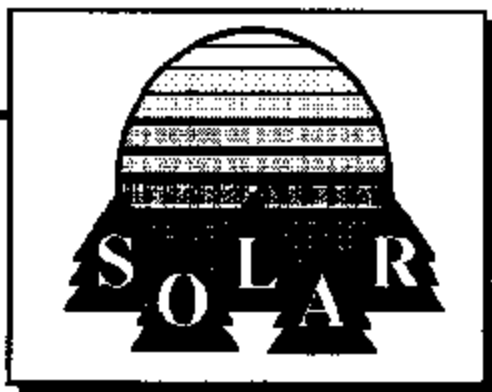
*But the strangest they ever did see
Were those days in the snow
Where the Red Pines grow,
That SOLAR went out to ski.*

Okay, Richard Service it ain't, but it somehow seems appropriate.

Steve Koz' and I arrived at about 10 p.m. Friday night to find Lori, Jeff and Karen F. huddled around the wood stove. It seems that they were there for about two hours and the stoves had yet to really get going. Karen was wrapped in so many layers we weren't even certain she was really there; just some sort of shivering pile of clothes.

As Jeff, Lori and Koz' played the opening rounds of Monopoly, more SOLARoids continued to arrive. In all, we had about 16 by Saturday morning.

The Monopoly game ended, as they so often do with Koz' getting in over his head and quitting and Lori and Jeff playing to a virtual draw. The board looked like typical modern Real Estate; cheap hotels on all the low rent property and all the high end stuff mortgaged to the hilt.



We all finally got fed up with trying to get warm and went to bed. Karen still shivering in her sleeping bag.

Morning brought with it a new attitude as the cabin was somewhat warmer, the stoves having kicked in during the night. So it was breakfast, get dressed, and hit the trails.

I started out a bit earlier to warm up, stretch, and see the trails before they got trampled and was rewarded for my

efforts by a hazy morning sun shining through the snow covered pines. I sat enjoying the solitude for five minutes or so before I remembered that I had my camera with me.

I returned to the cabin to find Karen and Lori just getting ready to leave, so we teamed up and headed out.

We hadn't gone very far when a twittering in the trees caught our attention. A chickadee was putting on a show for us and wanted to be rewarded, so Lori broke up a granola bar for him and he all but ate out of her hand. The Indian name for this little bird translates to "little friend". It's no little wonder why. (See Skiing, page 2)



Lori Love had the bad luck of falling while within camera range. To make matters worse, it's not her turn to do The Ray this month. I'm sure I'll be paid back. To be fair, this was the only fall I saw Lori make all day.

(Skiing, continued from page 1)

As we continued on the trail we were joined by Gene, Leslie, and Doug who caught up to us. Our original plan had been to ski to Sturgeon Bay and back-track but we were mis-led by a trail sign and ended up doing a loop around the park instead.

After a while the group dissolved into smaller segments. Gene and Leslie moved out ahead, Karen branched off on the Red Pine trail, Lori and Doug fell back a bit, taking it easy and so it was that I found myself alone on the trail again!

The one thing that bothered me about the loop I was on was that the final leg was quite a long stretch of county road. I really didn't want to ski on that. My trail map showed only two branches off the Nebo trail that I was on; the Red Pine, where I broke a binding last year on the same skis I was wearing today, and the Hemlock loop, a short loop off the Nebo that went in the wrong direction. As I passed both of these, I was resigned to skiing back on the road.

Then there it was. A clearing had been made for a power line trail and the park rangers had used this as a

short cut for the trail groomer. Perfect! I took it as a sign and made the switch. I followed this trail a ways and startled a deer, who took off bounding into the heavy woods to my left, taking her own shortcut back home.

Then the power lines turned southeast, away from where I wanted to go. There was still a clearing visible going in the right general direction so I figured I'd try it. One ski off the groomed trail. Then the other and spoof! I'm face down in three feet of powder snow! Looks like a job for snow shoes, not skis. I'm stuck with the power line trail for now.

As it turned out, the power line trail joined with the Old Stone trail which also ended at the county road, but I had cut off a significant chunk of pavement skiing. I went about 50 yards on the county road and decided that the skiing was a bust. It just wasn't working with the poles and the slight scraping, so I walked back the rest of the way to the lodge, carrying my skis.

Back at the cabin, it is now too hot. Several SOLARoids decided to take Koz's snow shoes out (he brought 12 pair so we could all try them out. Thanks Koz!) for a stroll and I had to stay behind and prepare my oish for the requisite SOLAR pot luck.

*Now the SOLAR club just loves its grub,
And the spread is always divine.
You'd think it a sin, the way we all grin
When SOLAR sits down to dine.*

I always hesitate to put in a list of food because I know I'm going to miss some one, but here are the home made dishes that stand out in my memory: Sausage Bean Bowl Salad, by Jeff Zabel; Pasta Salad, (see Skiing, page 3)

ACTIVITIES CALENDAR

February

- | | | |
|--------|------------|---|
| 1 | Tuesday | General Membership Meeting
7:30 p.m.
Colony Hall, Southfield; Joan Govan 356-3627 |
| 2,9,16 | Wednesdays | Survival Class
Bob Westbrook 356-3627 |
| 23 | | |
| 11-13 | Weekend | VASA Ski Race
Traverse City; John Gulas 574-0243 |
| 19 | Saturday | XC Ski Volunteer Work Teaching,
Mayberry State Park; Margaret Martin 721-2821 |
| 18-20 | Weekend | Blue Mountain Ski Weekend, Colingwood, Ont.
Jeff Zabel 776-1457 |

March

- | | | |
|-----|------------|---|
| 1 | Tuesday | General Membership Meeting
7:30 p.m.
Colony Hall, Southfield; Joan Govan 356-3627 |
| 2 | Wednesdays | Survival Class
Bob Westbrook 356-3627 |
| 4-6 | Weekend | Survival Class Practical
Bob Westbrook 356-3627 |

- Skiing on Sundays started in January - For more information call Bob Westbrook at 356-3627.

- Monday WallyBall on "sometimes" basis, 7:00 p.m. at Baily recreation center, Westland. Call Margaret Martin at 721-2821 to confirm.

- Roll at the Dome continues on Tuesday evenings. Call Doug Lanyk at 377-7370 for more information.

- If you would like to help plan and/or lead a SOLAR activity, please call Julie Stolignosz at 471-7444.

(Skiing, continued from page 2)
by Lori Love; Cauliflower Pie, by Karen Fox; Vegetable Ragu and Chocolate Applesauce Bundt Cake, by Mike Mannenbach and Karen Sinclair-Smith; Raspberry Beef Marinade by me; Pork Stew by Doug Lanyk, and oh so much more by the rest of the crew. Typical pot-luck ... too much food.

After dinner, several of us went for a walk down to the Totem at the general store to make our wishes for 1994. The sky was clear and the stars welcomed us as we admired the view of Big Mac at night across the bay.

So Sunday morning we all packed up and drove home. About half of us stopped at Hartwick Pines for more skiing, hiking and pictures, and again at Tony's in Birch Run for too much food again. I sense a trend. Ski, eat, ski, eat ...

And to top it off, if you feel left out SOLAR will be heading back in March. See Joan Govan to get on the list. \$5 for a great weekend. Not too shabby!

Free SOLAR Membership!

That's right! New for 1994, the SOLAR Club is offering a FREE annual membership option. This of course, has some imitations. You can't attend any SOLAR activities or classes, you can't hold steering committee office, and you won't keep getting *The Ray*.

(For those of you on whom sarcasm is wasted, this is a call for you to get your dues paid. They were due in December and if you haven't paid and are reading this, its only because we're so nice, we grant a grace period. So how about being nice in return and get your dues in soon, okay?)

In Profile

Mark Tomes

Address: Novi, MI
Stats: 37, divorced with 2 children
Mark Jr. (16), Dawn (15 this month)

MG: When did you join SOLAR?
MT: April of 93

MG: So, you have been involved in several SOLAR events in less than a year.

MT: I completed the backpacking and rock climbing classes. Right now I am taking the "Enjoying Michigan Winters" class and I plan on taking the survival class in the spring. I have also done the canoe trip on the Rifle River, the Halloween party at Bald Mountain and rollerblading on Tuesday nights at the Silverdome.

MG: And you did several trips to Rattlesnake last summer to go rockclimbing.

MT: Yeah, I loved that. I'm still a little afraid of heights, though.

MG: Really? You wouldn't know that watching you climb.

MG: What has been your biggest challenge in your life?

MT: My biggest challenge was learning to ride a unicycle when I was younger - and I can still do it.

MG: What goals do you have for the new year?

MT: I want to do a free fall this year. I have been parachuting before with a tether line.

MG: Can you explain the difference?

MT: With a tethered line you jump from the plane with a rope attached and fall for about 90 feet. With a free fall you fall for about a minute with no rope and travel about 7000 feet before your chute opens.

MG: What does it take to do that?

MT: It takes about 12 jumps to prepare. Each lesson you learn something more and you get the practice and build up to it. The first time, it's pretty hard to let go of the plane, much less remember everything you need to free fall.

MG: Where do you work?

MT: I have worked for Ford Motor Company for the past 7 years. I repair electronic communications equipment.

MG: Is this something you started learning when you were young?

MT: No, I enlisted in the Navy for 6 years and got my electronics training there, just like they show on the recruiting commercials.

MG: So you are pretty handy with electronics?

MT: Yes, I love to read how-to books. I taught myself to fix just about anything, including doing auto body repair. I even used to have my builder's license. (In Profile interview continued on Page 5)

Tech-Tips

by Kathleen Spring

Dave Jones teaches the "Enjoying Michigan Winters" class for SOLAR, and he encourages others to not skip this season because of the cold.

"You can see a lot better (with the leaves fallen)," said Dave, "but it can be deadly if you get lost without the essentials."

Everyone gets the ten essentials drilled into their heads by SOLAR backpacking instructors, but Dave has something easier to carry around -- it's a list of four items that spell out "cold".

"C" stands for Clean; keep your clothing and gear clean.

"O" Don't Overheat.

"L" is for Layering your clothes.

"D" is for Dry. Once you get wet or cold, you'll have a hard time warming up again.

Bob Westbrook, who is teaching the Wilderness Survival class in February, said getting lost is one of the greatest dangers of winter camping and skiing. Many people go to their favorite summer hiking spots, thinking they know it well, but things look different in the winter.

"Snow covers the trails," said Bob, "And you should agree on a place to meet your friends."

One of the most disliked aspects of winter camping is having to get up in the middle of the night to relieve your bladder. Jim Gilfix spent a few years in Alaska and learned that drinking less water in the evening with hopes of not getting up at 2 a.m. will actually result in the opposite effect. If you don't drink sufficient water, you will get colder, and in turn will have stronger urges to get up and go.

So pay particular attention to your clothes, don't be over confident on the trails, and drink lots of water and you'll be enjoying Michigan's Winter

Class

Wilderness Survival Course

On Wednesday nights in February, Bob Westbrook will be teaching a course in Wilderness Survival. The course material is Tom Brown's Field Guide to Wilderness Survival and the book is included in the cost of the course.

The final class night is March 2 and a practical outing is scheduled for the weekend of March 4-6. Call Bob Westbrook at 356-3627 for more information.

For Sale:

Steve Wilson has a pair of Marmot Gortex Alpine pants for sale. They're size medium, blue and black in color, never been worn and are in new condition. He's asking \$80. You can give Steve a call at 397-6866 or 416-1963.

People

Jill Craig and Dave McIntyre have announced their engagement! A May wedding is planned. Congratulations!

Upcoming Event

Head for the Hills, Again

Once again, the SOLAR club is going to head for the Hocking Hills State Park near Logan, Ohio.

This time the trip is planned to take advantage of the Spring wildflowers on the weekend of April 15 - 17. We'll be staying in the cabins again this time.

The trails in the area include Old Man's Cave, Cedar Falls, and Ash Cave as well as Conkles Hollow and the Rock House. All are breathtakingly beautiful natural rock formations, and it's hoped that we'll be able to augment our photographs with wildflowers.

Call Steve Gardner at 547-4998 for more details.

Bananas Foster Brennan's

1 tbs. butter	2 tbs. warm rum
2 tsp. brown sugar	1 tsp. warm banana liqueur
dash of cinnamon	
1 firm ripe banana, cut	

- 1) Heat butter, brown sugar, and cinnamon. Add banana and saute until tender
- 2) Pour rum and banana liqueur over banana and flame spirit.

Yields one serving (large when served over ice cream, pound cake or ...)

Recipe by Michelle Majetic, First Place Desert,
SOLAR 1993
August Rattlesnake Cook-Off

MG: What future goals do you have?

MT: I plan on retiring from Ford and would like to start my own business. I am not sure what kind.

MG: Sounds like you have several skills you could possibly do that with.

MG: What else do you like to do besides SOLAR activities?

MT: I like to spend time with my kids, but as teenagers, they are pretty busy. I don't watch TV. I haven't had one at home for more than a year. I love to read instead. I like to read a book and then go see the movie.

MG: What else?

MT: I run every day. I run about 20 miles a week. Usually I go to Vic Tanny's early in the morning on the way to work. I also do a lot of water skiing.

MG: Really? Where?

MT: I live on Walled Lake and in the summer several guys I know that live there go out almost every day.

MG: Typical question - what do you enjoy most about SOLAR?

MT: I have to give the typical response and say the people. What I like is that it is not a meat market for meeting women. The people are just friends, which I enjoy. I have to say that the people who do the activities we do in SOLAR are a lot like me, so I find them enjoyable to be with.

MG: How are they like you?

MT: The people in SOLAR have energy and are not afraid of a challenge.

MG: How did you get involved in SOLAR?

MT: A friend that was in SOLAR told me about the rock climbing class. I had tried it before and wanted to learn more about it. My other friends wouldn't try it, so I decided I needed to make some new friends.

MG: You said you had tried rockclimbing before. How did you get involved in that?

MT: I was reading Rock and Ice magazine in the bookstore and saw a climbing picture and it interested me. On the back was an ad for gyms and suppliers and it listed the Benchmark. They told me about the Barn in Albion and from there I learned about SOLAR.

MG: I know that you have been through a lot with your divorce. What have you learned since you've been single?

MT: I've learned not to run from my problems, but not to let them control my life either. And I have learned to be happy alone by taking care of myself. I am not lonely any more.

MG: Sounds like a philosophy we share. Thanks for the interview.



This month's SOLAR member *In Profile* is Mark Tones. Here he pauses on the trail in Allegheny National Forest to prepare lunch.

Upcoming Event

Volunteer!

Spend an afternoon sharing your cross-country ski talents with some "special" teens and young adults. Margaret Martin is working with the Westland Therapeutic Recreation Members and wants to share this opportunity with you. Pre-register by calling Margaret at 722-7620 for more information.

About the Ray

The Ray is a monthly publication of the SOLAR 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: Steve Gardner, RAY Editor, 10024 Borgman, Huntington Woods, MI 48070 or call Steve at 847-4888 or write Lori Love, RAY Editor, 42257 Old Pond Circle, Plymouth, MI 48170 or call Lori at 420-2175.

Meeting Location

The purpose of the SOLAR 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 \$35.00 per family.

STEERING COMMITTEE

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