

THE RAY

THE SCHOOL FOR OUTDOOR LEADERSHIP, ADVENTURE AND RECREATION

Upcoming Event

Toboggan Run

by: Jim Gilfix

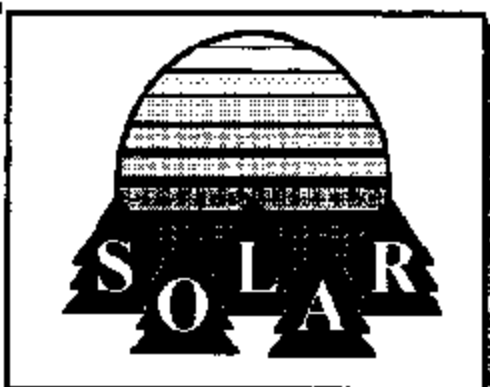
What is the one trip SOLAR has not done in years? Yes, you guessed it and now we are going to do it, go on a TOBOGGAN RUN. Just listen:

First you trek up the hill where attendants wait to put you and your toboggan on the launching platform. When you're settled in, they pull a lever and the platform tips you with a bang, straight down it seems, onto the snow-covered track. The cold wind rushes at your face and the sled runners make a cutting sound like a knife being eased across a sharpening stone. Someone screams - it's probably you!

The toboggan run at Rolling Hills County Park, in the wilds of Ypsilanti Township, is no place for wimps. This is where the rugged go to have fun. Clearly, this is a place for SOLARites.

The two tracks here are 750 feet long, the vertical descent is 50 feet and speeds are said to reach 45 m.p.h. You rent an "especially strong, padded toboggan" at \$2.00 an hour. The park costs \$5.00 per car for admission. There is a warming house nearby which has an excellent view of the toboggan run at sunset. They also have a fire, snacks and hot chocolate.

We will meet at the park at 2:00 p.m. on Sunday, March 13, and maybe go into Ann Arbor for dinner afterwards. Contact Jim Gilfix for more info at 851-5289.



Directions from Detroit:

Take I-94 W to the downtown Ypsilanti exit. Turn left and then turn right onto Stony Creek Road. The address is 7860 Stony Creek Road - (313) 484-7669.

Other directions:

M14 S to exit 31 (Willis Road), turn onto Stony Creek Road to the park.

Review

A Hot Time in Detroit

by: Kathleen Spring

Forty-two seems to be the magic number because that's the number of SOLARites who once again attended the annual trip to the Detroit Science Center, followed by a meal in Greektown.

The outing started with exploration of some computers and games challenged the brains of the all-adult group, while other attractions simply needed the curiosity of a seven year old to be encountered and enjoyed.

Next was the IMAX theatre which featured a screen ten times the size of a conventional feature film. SOLARites leaned back in their

inclining chairs and viewed "Ring of Fire" on the 180 degree, wrap-around screen.

While most had heard of the rigid plates that make up the Earth's crust and how they move, they were surprised to see on a map an actual ring of volcanoes that encircle the Pacific Ocean. The movie took us along Chile, Indonesia, Japan, Hawaii, and back to Mt. St. Helens and the San Francisco earthquake.

The depiction of Japanese Snow Monkeys, with a glazed look of pleasure, surviving in the hot springs of one volcano; and another scene of sulfur miners in Indonesia carrying their loads on their backs for 15 miles (and dying at 30 year of age) may be considered memorable, it was the fiery volcanoes of Kilauea, Hawaii that everyone was waiting for.

A quick hop to Greektown was next, with the usual authentic Greek meals and excellent service at the Laikon Cafe. Every table created their own "ring of fire" by ordering the famous Greek dish of flaming cheese (Opal).

Despite the zero degree weather, the majority of SOLARites decided to continue the evening by first window-shopping at Trapper's Alley (three levels of unique stores in Greektown), and then going to Marilyn's for music, a few drinks and a lot of dart playing.



TECH TIPS

by: Kathleen Spring

There seems to be two kinds of fun-loving, adventurous SOLARite cavers.

When Leslie Cohen takes a group caving, don't be surprised if the group comes out covered in mud and with their clothes destroyed.

When Hal Joerin takes a group caving, expect to don't touch - but look" at wild caves of unique beauty, and when they come out, they'll be ready to party.

There's not much to learn about caving that isn't based on common sense. Such as wearing a helmet to protect your head and carrying a couple of sources of light.

But, whichever group you do go with, there are a couple of basic rules that you will find useful in case of an emergency when you're exploring a "wild cave" (versus a "commercial cave" that has concrete sidewalks and florescence lights.)

Leave word with someone where you will be and your expected time back. This can be the park ranger where you checked in, or the motel manager. (And, if you're on private property, make sure you've gotten permission from the farmer so you're not greeted with a shot gun!)

Carry the emergency phone number of the National Speleological Society (906-643-7407) and a quarter with you. Many hurt cavers have died because of time wasted by inexperienced small town police officers - no offense.

Lastly, "wild" doesn't mean careless - know your caves and know your limits!

ACTIVITIES CALENDAR

March

- | | | |
|-------|----------|--|
| 1 | TUESDAY | General Membership Meeting
Colony Hall, Southfield; Joan Govan 356-3627
at 7:30 p.m. |
| 4-6 | WEEKEND | Wilderness Weekend
Joan Govan 356-3627 |
| 13 | SUNDAY | Toboggan Run
Jim Giffix 851-5286 |
| 18-20 | WEEKEND | Wobos Loppet
Stokely Creek, Sault St. Marie, Ont.; Natalie Iglewicz 544-8704 |
| 24 | THURSDAY | Ethnic Dinner
Durango Grill, Royal Oak; Ron Quinn 879-2229 |
| 25 | FRIDAY | Hilberry Theatre - Heidi Chronicles
Wendy Bundergaard 540-9411 |

April

- | | | |
|-------|---------|--|
| 5 | TUESDAY | General Membership Meeting
Colony Hall, Southfield; Joan Govan 356-3627 |
| 15-17 | WEEKEND | Hocking Hills Hicking Trip
Hocking Hills, Ont. |

Reprinted from THE OAKLAND PRESS, "The Reminder" section, with permission from SOLAR member Jonathon Schechter. Jonathon is a naturalist and writer (see the PEOPLE section of this month's RAY for details)

A house in the country will become my Walden...

In 1845, the naturalist-philosopher Henry David Thoreau built a small cabin on the edge of the secured woods of Walden Pond.

His chosen pace of temporary seclusion included the basic necessities for his life; an axe for firewood and a pen for his dreams and thoughts. Thoreau rationalized his escape from the city in his journal with these words: "I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential fact of life, and see if I could not learn that it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived."

For the past fifteen years I have lived amidst the modern amenities, conveniences, plazas and fast-paced life of Bloomfield Township not far from the endless roar of traffic at Square Lake and Telegraph roads. The constant hum of tires on wet pavement, the endless buzz of mowers on manicured lawns, and the wail of sirens of every imaginable pulsation are sounds I had come to accept as part of my life. No longer.

Today, I will be closing the door on my Bloomfield Township house for the last time and stepping into a more rural and, I hope, more real existence on a hilly dirt road in Brandon Township. Friends down in

Bloomfield have already begun to ask inevitable questions. "Why are you moving out there?" When I show them the picture of the weathered barn that now shelters an army of mice, they ask, "What are you going to do with that?" I'm tempted to tell them the barn is good for a barn cat and I just like looking at it. And that's the truth.

Perhaps the question that I found the most difficult to answer, and sent my thoughts drifting back to Thoreau for moral support was, "What are you going to do with the land?"

I'm going to live there, that's what I'm going to do. I'm going to turn the old farmhouse that shows years of past love into my home. I'm going to look out the kitchen window in the morning, gaze into the field and hope for a glimpse of a deer or grouse or fox. A new neighbor tells me a coyote is more likely than a red fox. I'll settle for that.

But for now I'll settle for the nuthatches, woodpeckers, and chickadees that have already discovered that I'm good for a handout. And I'll watch for the redtail hawk that perches on the hickory tree and waits for rabbits. And I'll wonder how long it will take my dog to realize that we are not just visiting and he too can finally stretch his legs and bark at the moon if he feels so inclined. The dog must wonder how he will ever have time to scent-mark all those trees. (Maybe that is why he now seems to drink more water.)

When maple sap flows in the spring and the mud turns to slick mud, I'll tap a tree or two and plan my garden. Corn, tomatoes, onions, beans and herbs for me. A field of sunflowers for birds, pumpkins for Halloween, flowers for friends and alfalfa for deer. And I will learn quickly that the deer eat what they want.

And for once in my life, I will be a part of the land and won't need to

drive to get where I'm going. I will already be there. And that feels good.

Upcoming Event Go West

by: Lori Lee Love

Between Friday, July 29th through Sunday, August 7th, join SOLAR for some backpacking &/or rock climbing in Colorado at the Rocky Mountain National Park northwest of Denver.

You need to have taken the SOLAR backpacking course to do any portion of the trip. You must have had our climbing class in order to do the rock climbing. These are the prerequisites! Arrangements (flight that is) to get out there are still being worked on - we'll try to get the best rates in & pass the info on to you.

Essentially, this is what's in store:
Friday 29... arrive sometime

depending upon flight

Saturday 30...get acclimated

Sunday 31...head out for backpacking and climbing in two teams

Monday 1...get to sites (two: one climbing and one in a meadow for exploration)

Tuesday 2 -

Thursday 4...climbing &/or backpacking

Friday 5...exit out

Saturday 6...extra day if needed for exit

Sunday 7...depart for home sometime depending upon flight

Final interest sign-up will be at the March meeting. Expect to put \$50 down at the April meeting to declare your intent. For obvious reasons, this trip is limited to 12 MEMBERS. First paid, first served on this one. No advance phone or mail reservations - just be at the meeting when we take sign-ups! Look at the next RAY for additional details or call: Lori at 313-420-2175.

Review

Brave or Crazy? Sleeping in the Snow

by: Julia Gordon

My axiom for the week:

The white and quiet wilderness tempts to broaden my horizon. From hiking season for all seasons.

Hi Mal

January 1994

Guess what your crazy daughter did? She went camping in January, yes, in Michigan! Oh yeah, didn't I mention I was taking an "Enjoying Michigan Winters" class through SOLAR? I'll give you a run down on events and if you have any questions regarding my sanity, then blame SOLAR.

On Friday we braved the freezing rain and drove up to Gaylord, only 20 miles shy of our destination, the Pigeon River Recreation Area. Following SOLAR tradition we jammed 12 people into 2 hotel rooms. Up and at 'em before the sun, an unfortunate SOLAR ritual that always makes me glad I did, when on this occasion, I get up to watch the sunrise. Gee ma, was that a run on sentence, or what? We were supposed to hit the trail by 9:00 am SHARP! Did you catch that "supposed to"? Well, for once it wasn't because of me.

Though I will try, there are really no words capable of rendering the scenery we saw on Saturday. As I was skiing through the woods, I felt refreshed. It was as if the touch of a wand had caused the whole space around me to be filled with fragments of glittering sun spangled snow and ice. With every slight sigh of the wind, tiny spaces of snow sent pinpoints of reflected sunlight

flashing and dancing outwards. The sun continued to shine, but reality returned when I came upon the group scattered along a snowmobile hardened access road....scarfing lunch.

Upon arrival at the playground, oops, I mean campground, my group spent the rest of the day alternating between drinking warm drinks and shoveling snow, oh joy! Close to sundown, we were finally ready to start excavating the interior of our snow/labor house. I volunteered to be the first inside snow remover. I was almost the last when our "would-be" shelter suddenly settled 6 inches, causing me to drive for the door. When we were almost done, two of our foursome were inside doing finishing touches. Suddenly, SNOWQUAKE....Help! Dig them out! The roof caved in!! If nothing else brought the group running, our shouts for help certainly did. In moments, we had about fifteen people digging furiously. Even after our two buried teammates were rescued, many stayed to help rebuild so we could have something to sleep in. Thanks again to all you who helped put a "roof" over our heads in 20 degree weather.

Sunday morning dawned gray, cloudy and fortunately, uneventful. It felt great to ski without a pack on as I glided through the woods.

Mom, I really did enjoy this Michigan winter, but I will always remember especially that Saturday afternoon when the fairies came out to play...as dancing, shimmering sun spangled snow.

People

FOR SALE:

Scarpa Inverno plastic mountaineering boots. Size 8 1/2, and are somewhat narrow in the heel and wide in the shoe box. Suitable for cold weather alpine waterfall climbing and expedition use. \$275.00 or best offer. Call Lester Mok at (519) 256-0324.

Travelling?

I am looking for a backpacking & car camping companion in Alaska between May 30 and June 11th. I am also going to attend Tom Brown's Tracker School in New Jersey between September and October. Please call me if you are interested in either of these trips or just want to chat about mountaineering, tracking or wilderness survival. These are Non-SOLAR events and my plans are flexible. Lester Mok (519) 256-0326

SOLAR extends its sincerest condolences to membership co-chair Maria Picano and her sister, Anna for the recent loss of her grandmother.

Sympathy also goes out to Maureen & Dave DeFrance. Mo's sister passed away in February.

FYI:

Member Jonathon Schechter had a column appearing in THE OAKLAND PRESS on the weekends in "The Reminder" section. Thank you Jonathon for allowing us to reprint the January 27, 1994 column in this month's SOLAR RAY.

Julia Gordon was the last customer in the North Face outlet store when it closed...all members will miss this valuable resource....

Upcoming Event

Hocking Hills Wildflower Hike

On April 15, SOLAR will be heading for the hills again. We'll be going to Hocking Hills State Park near Logan, Ohio (southeast of Columbus) for a weekend of day hikes, wildflowers, pictures and everything else that SOLAR does so much of.

Some of us will be staying in the park's cabins, recently upgraded with TVs and micro-waves. The cabin space is limited to 24 in four cabins and is already filled, but you can camp in the park's campground if you like, or call Steve Gardner (547-4998) to get on the waiting list for cabins.

The plan is to drive down Friday the 15th (afternoon or evening is fine, plan for about four to five hours driving). Saturday morning we'll be hiking the trail to Old Man's Cave, Ash Cave, and Cedar Falls. It's an easy walk on well maintained trails.

Sunday morning's breakfast is included in the \$25 trip fee if you'll be staying in a cabin, and afterwards we can check out of the cabins and stop by the Rock House and Conkles Hollow trails before heading home. All the sights are breathtakingly beautiful natural rock formations and we should be treated to wildflowers for our efforts.

Directions and maps will be available at the March and April meetings for anyone interested. Hope to see you there!

RECIPE FILE

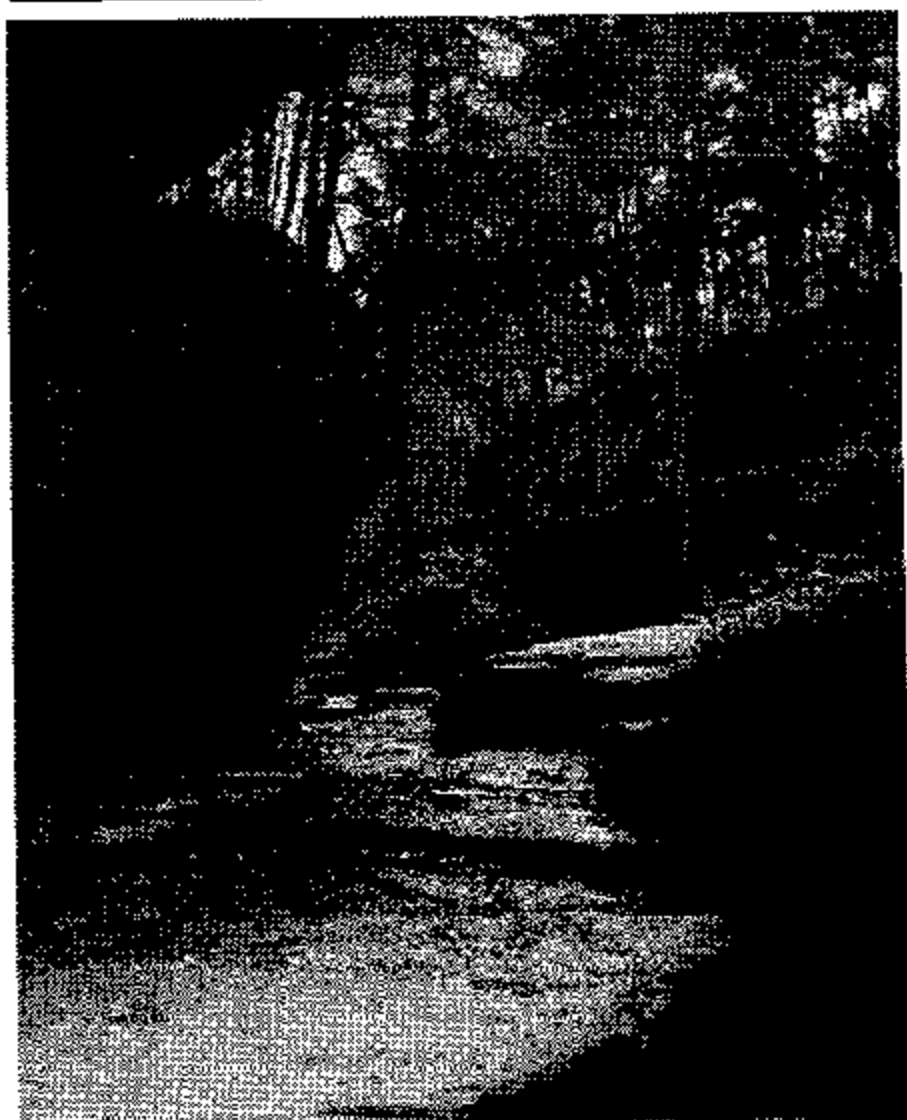
by: Teresa Savarino

FRIENDSHIP TEA (from the camp of Keith Germaine)

- 1 18 oz. jar of Tang instant breakfast juice drink
- 1/2 c. instant tea
- 1 c. sugar
- 2 pkg. Wyler's (unsweetened) powdered lemonade mix
- 2 t. ground cinnamon
- 2 t. ground cloves

Mix it all up and share it (hot or cold)!!!

This recipe was given to Keith by a friend in 1977. Leslie Cohen shared it with the 1st Winter Camping trip where Teresa had it. Thank you for sharing this one with your SOLAR friends.....



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 547-4998 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 Mall, located at 2780 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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