

THE RAY

THE SCHOOL FOR OUTDOOR LEADERSHIP, ADVENTURE AND RECREATION



Review

November at Nordhouse

By Steve Gardner

True to form for this little event, attendance was not staggeringly huge. In fact, a grand total of five SOLARoics found their way to Nordhouse Dunes National Wilderness area the first weekend in November.

I arrived at the parking area about 11:30 PM on Friday night and found a note from Karen Fox and Steve Kozmor. "Find us if you can," read the note. Not likely tonight. I had planned to spend this night in the truck, anyway. A few hours later, I heard Doug Lanyk and Marie Crow arrive.

I set out in the morning under overcast skies down the trail to Nordhouse Lake, a little pond a few miles in from the shore, and about three from the parking lot. I spent the rest of a very pleasant morning in solitude at the little lake. For some, the isolation might be uncomfortable, but it was like awakening from a long sleep for me. This is what I do "for a living". Everything else is just to pay the bills.

Back on the trail, I explored some of the inland dune areas for a bit then found myself on a ridge trail that

would lead me ultimately back to the shore of Lake Michigan. Along the way at several places I was treated to grand vistas of Lake Michigan and its dramatic shore line areas. I was tempted to make camp, but the nearest water was about half a mile away, and down a steep hill.

The topography of the shoreline here is quite interesting. It consists of a large dune, about 30 to 40 feet high, and between this dune and the lake, a "fore-dune", about 12 to 20 feet high. The main dune is covered in hardwood forest and the fore-dune is covered in sea grass.

Soon, the trail lead right down to the lake and there, between the two dunes, was a campsite. Apparently I had found Steve and Karen, but the camp was deserted, so I kept going to find a spot for myself. I found one to my liking about half a mile south and pitched camp, consisting of my little para-wing and bivvy shelter. This was the first time I used this arrangement and found that it works extremely well for solo backpacking as its about a quarter the size and weight of a tent and twice the functionality. I set up the para-wing (three corners down and one up) as a shelter for gear and cooking and the bivvy tucked neatly along one side.

After a dinner I relaxed in the wind

with a cup of hot jello to watch the sun set, when along came Doug and Marie. They soon headed back to their camp as it was starting to get on towards dark. Down by the lake, I noticed Karen and Steve returning to their camp. I went down and to say hello while they prepared a pot for hot chocolate on the beach. As we chatted, I felt a couple of rain drops and decided to head back to my own camp to settle in. I no sooner got into the bivvy and set when I heard rain for real on the para-wing. It fell steadily all night, and I mentally prepared myself to (See Dunes, page 3)



The SOLAR Day

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on seasonal topics*

In Profile: Laura Leismar
Membership Interviews

The Gas Lab: Teresa Savarino
*Recipes from SOLAR Club
members and other sources*
Trip Reviews by SOLAR Club
members

Vasa, 1995

Attention: All cross-country skiers and lovers of hot chocolate and good times -

The 1994 VASA in Traverse City is just around winter's corner, along with all of that great snow we're going to get this year (Teresa's Almaniac, 1994). So pull those skis out of the closet, dust 'em off and wax 'em up - it's time to make some plans for a fun weekend February 10th - 12th.

Anyone can come: skiers, people who want to help out skiers at the start/finish, or those who want to watch or do their own thing during the race and just go out with the group post-race and Sunday.

Here's the plan:

Friday, Feb. 10th: Carpool up to Traverse City, go to Grand Traverse Resort to pick up race packets and then to dinner or hotel. Lodging is reserved for Fri. and Sat. at Day's Inn. (Suites which accommodate 6 persons each, pool, jacuzzi, nearby restaurant for breakfast. Suites have full kitchen, although we didn't

use them last year.)

Saturday, Feb. 11th:

Race day! 45K begins at 9:00 a.m., 27K at 9:30 a.m. and 12K at 9:45 a.m.

Post race: Hot chocolate, jacuzzi, swim, jacuzzi, etc.

Evening: back to the Grand Traverse for race results, and out to dinner/dancing/cards back at the room, etc.

Sunday, Feb. 12th: Breakfast ensemble or as you wish, ski on the way home at numerous great cross-country ski areas.

The cost for 47K or 27K is as follows: \$45 through Feb. 10, \$50 on Feb. 11.

The cost for the 12K is \$15 through Feb. 10.

The 5K Powerbar Family Fun Ski (the only VASA course to be run on Sunday, the 12th) is \$3.

The cost for the hotel for 2 nights is expected to be \$35 per person.

Your contacts for the VASA weekend are: Jim Young (810) 726-8253 H, and Teresa Savarino (810) 740-2136 H, (810) 546-0233 W. Call Teresa to get a pre-registration form.

Class

Survival Skills

What if things don't go as planned on your back packing trip. Well, with a bit of preparedness, you took the SOLAR Survival Class, and the rescue party finds you alive. The class will be taught by Bob Westbrook and others and will cover scenarios to keep you alive until help can get to you. Pre-requisites for the class are the SOLAR Backpacking and Winter Backpacking classes. For more information on class dates and costs, you can call Bob at (810) 356-3627.

Class

Introduction to Better Photography

Did you see all those wonderful photographs at the SOLAR Club Photo Contest? Did you say to yourself, "Gee, I wish I had the money for all that equipment so I could take good pictures, too!" Well here's some good news for you. Steve Gardner will be holding a class, Introduction to Better Photography at his home on Saturday, March 4.

Topics to be covered will include types of cameras and film, composition and lighting, and technical aspects of taking better photographs.

Cost of the class is \$10 and includes class materials and a roll of film. At sign-up, be sure to specify the format of your camera. A camera is NOT required for this class, but if you have one, bring it along. The optional field practical for this class will be at Hocking Hills State Park the following weekend, March 10-12. Be sure to read the article on page 5. Cost for the Class/Trip combination is \$30.

People

We were saddened to hear of the passing of Mike Laird's father. The family wishes donations be made to the Capuchin Kitchen in Detroit in lieu of flowers.

Get well SOON wishes are hereby sent to SOLAR Club President, Cindy Harrison-Felix, who took a nasty spill while cross-country skiing and broke her ankle.

Upcoming Event

Cabin Fever,
SOLAR Style

On February 24-26, SOLAR will be at the cabins at Wilderness State Park. There will be space for you inside the cabins if you sign up early enough, or, if you have the skills, you can camp. For more information on this weekend contact Joan Westbrook at (313) 356-3627.

For the adventurous, SOLAR has planned a weekend at Hartwick Pines State Park. The catch here is that the cabin isn't big enough for a crowd so we'll be sleeping outside in quinzees or tents or whatever and using the cabin for warming and eating and such. For more information on this trip call Cindy Harrison-Felix at (313) 722-3994.

(Dunes, cont'd from page 1)
pack up wet in the morning. I was pleasantly surprised. The only things that got wet were the wing and my food bag, suspended in a tree 50 feet away.

The walk out was Michigan November. It was raining; kicked up by winds gusting through 50 mph and more. The steel grey skies reflected the blackness of Lake Michigan, broken only by the whitcaps highlighting its surface. Some might describe this as "Fury", "Might", or "Majesty". The sense that I got on that windswept beach was "Joyous and Playful" and I found myself laughing with the intensity of the Moods of Michigan.

Back up in the woods behind the main dune, it was much quieter. The wind was about 1/3 and the rain was falling gently. I stopped at the campground to talk with Doug and Marie for a bit before heading for home, keeping November at Nordhouse with me.

ACTIVITIES CALENDAR

February

1,8,15	Wednesdays	Survival Class Location to be determined Bob Westbrook (810) 356-3627
7	Tuesday	General Membership Meeting, Colony Hall Southfield; Cindy Harrison-Felix (313) 722-3994
10-12	Weekend	Vasa X-Country ski race, Traverse City Teresa Savarino (810) 546-0233
17-19	Weekend	Blue Mountain Skiing, Collingwood, Ontario Jeff Zabel (810) 816-8029
17-19	Weekend	Enjoy Michigan Winters, Practical - Option #1 Dave Jones (313) 722-8178
24-26	Weekend	Cabin/X-Country Ski weekend Wilderness State Park, Joan Westbrook (810) 356-3627
24-26	Weekend	Enjoy Michigan Winters, Practical - Option #2 Dave Jones (313) 722-8178
TBA		Survival Practical, Location to be determined Bob Westbrook (810) 356-3627

March

4	Saturday	Introduction to Better Photography Class Steve Gardner (810) 547-4998
7	Tuesday	General Membership Meeting, Colony Hall Southfield; Cindy Harrison-Felix (313) 722-3994
10-12	Weekend	Hocking Hills State Park and Photography class Practical; Steve Gardner (810) 547-4998
17-19	Weekend	Cross Country Skiing Wabos Lappet Marlyn Arnold (810) 647-5870

* Denotes a Non-SOLAR activity. Included on this calendar for informational purposes only. SOLAR will not be held responsible for this activity.

Roll at the Dome Rollerblading at the Pontiac Silverdome.
Contact Doug Lanyk (810) 634-4551.

Wallyball every Monday, Contact Margaret Martin, (313) 721-2821.

If you would like to help plan and/or lead a SOLAR trip or activity, contact Leslie Cohen at (810) 547-5528.

Tech-Tips Telemark Skiing

By Kathleen Spring

Do you want a much smoother and faster way to handle turns when downhill skiing on unbroken snow, rather than the snowplowing technique? Go back 175 years to the telemark skiing style invented about 1825 in Norway.

"Alpine skiing came from telemark skiing," said Paul Goodman at the Benchmark. "When skiing started, people used a wooden ski with a leather thong strapped to it, and the heel wasn't strapped down. Telemark is actually the name they gave the graceful turn invented then."

In a telemark turn, the skier lets the outside ski slide forward about a foot and bends the knee on the outside leg. The inside leg drops back a foot and that knee is also bent deeply, according to Eric Sharp, of Detroit Free Press Sports.

"Telemark skiing is undergoing a little renaissance over the past four to six years," said Goodman, "but not much in Michigan."

If you want to try this out, you might like to go to such places as Porcupine Mountains State Park where skiers can buy a one-time lift ticket for \$2, or try it out on one of SOLAR's group trips to Colorado.

(Editor's Note: Due to the increasing pressures of her very busy schedule, Kathleen has informed The Ray that this will be her last column. We wish to thank Kathleen for her past work and wish her success in future endeavors.)

Review

Wilderness Trip January Style

By Douglas Lanyk

If success is measured by the amount of fun had by all, the trip to Wilderness State Park was a resounding success. Fifteen SOLARites were in attendance at cabin #3, for a weekend of skiing, eating, and talking. The snow conditions were excellent except for the fact that there were only a few inches on the ground. As a result most of us opted for a not so early run to Tahquamenon Falls for the day Saturday. Followed by a typical SOLAR style pot luck dinner (Too much food). When eating was over

sleep, card playing, and hot spiced (or was that spiked) beverages were the activities of the night.

Several technical tips were learned by the participants: Asking for mustard for a sandwich you have carried into a restaurant is not a good idea; Walking into a snowmobile bar wearing spandex will attract attention whether you are male or female; Snow covered roads are slippery, and can cause you to make doughnuts in the road; Hat hair and cameras do not get along.

The February trip should be even better (we will have snow). See you all there. Bob and Joan where were you?



Upcoming Event/Class

Head for the Hills

SOLAR will be headed back to Hocking Hills State Park the weekend of March 10-12.

In conjunction with the Introduction to Better Photography class (see article, page 2), Steve Gardner has planned this trip to be the class practical and preference will be given to students who sign up for both at the February meeting. Cost of the trip is \$25 and the class is \$10, or both for \$30. If the students don't hog up the 12 cabin spaces, the trip will be opened up to the rest of the club. A waiting list will be started at the same time as sign-ups for those interested in the trip, but not the class.

The cabins are located at the North trail head of the Grandma Gatewood trail. Points of interest on this trail include Old Man's Cave, Cedar Falls, and Ash Cave. There are several waterfalls along the trail and it's hoped that we'll be able to see the area frozen over. The cabins are more like hotel rooms than cabins. We've reserved two and they sleep six each, and are equipped with kitchenettes (including micro-wave), television, and gas furnace. This is not exactly SOLAR standard we're talking here. We don't have to check out until the morning of Monday the 13th.

This trip is expected to fill very quickly, so see Steve as soon as you can at the February meeting. Hope to see you there!

*In Profile**Marilyn Arnold*

Meet Marilyn Arnold of Birmingham whose first SOLAR trip was in July of 1992. Since she joined SOLAR, she has participated in a variety of winter and summer activities including skiing, backpacking, caving, and attending the backpacking, wilderness first aid and Michigan Winters classes.

Marilyn is now planning her first event: The "Wabos Lappet". So bag your freeze dried food and leave your oatmeal behind and join in on the "Gourmet Ski Trip". This cross country ski weekend to Stokely Creek still has room for you to register and enjoy the winter fun.

Any real estate issue should be no match for Marilyn who is a trial attorney for construction law and real estate. She is also quite a mover, having purchased a home in Waterford and selling it less than a year later to relocate in Birmingham. However, now she plans to stay in this home with her miniature Dachshund (a dog and a half long, half a dog high) for a bit longer.

Look for Marilyn at the next SOLAR meeting when she will be signing up people for the Wabos Lappet.

In Profile interview by Laura Leisner



This month's SOLAR Member *In Profile*, Marilyn Arnold finds her way through a tight situation during a SOLAR caving excursion. And she even managed to smile while doing it!

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 \$500 annual subscription fee will be charged to cover mailing costs.

DEADLINE for The Ray is the second Wednesday 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 (810)547-4998 or call: Julia Gordon RAY Co-Editor at (313)475-7265, (no calls after 10:00 PM please.)

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 21730 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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Not elected but serving on the sub-committee indicated.
If you would like to assist with any of the above positions, call the appropriate committee chairperson.



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