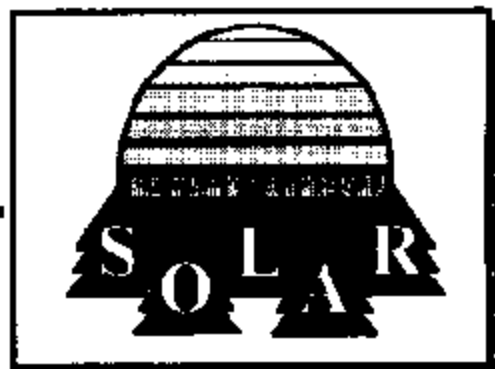


The SOLAR Day

THE SCHOOL FOR OUTDOOR LEADERSHIP, ADVENTURE AND RECREATION



Review

Advanced Backpacking Class "Shakes Down"

By Cindy Harrison-Felix

The weekend of June 21-23, the Advanced Backpacking Class had their first "shakedown". A "shakedown" is backpacker-ese for a short backpacking trip (a weekend) taken before a long backpacking trip (a week, in this case). The main purposes of a "shakedown" are to: 1) get to know the people you'll be backpacking with; 2) make sure you've got the gear you need; and 3) make sure the gear works. Since the class decided on the Long Trail in Vermont for their extended trip (much to the dismay of Mike Banks), they agreed to plan their two shakedown weekend trips on the North Country Trail. This first weekend trip was in the Manistee National Forest.

The weekend began with rustic camping at Seaton Creek Campground near Mesick, Michigan on Friday night. Saturday morning was busy with packing, dividing up group gear and spotting vehicles at our destinations. We spent the day

hiking south on the Manistee River Trail; which you can probably gather by the name follows the Manistee River for 10.6 miles. I was impressed with the scenery along this trail. It follows the rolling hills and high bluffs along the river. Some of the vistas looked more like the mountains of Pennsylvania. The weather was great, the terrain had rolling hills, and we all got a good workout. Camping Saturday night with our large group did not seem practical along the trail so we opted for a roadside public access area on the river. So much for our backcountry ambiance, however, we consoled ourselves with a trip to the local store for "luxury" provisions. Sunday, we hiked another five miles or so north on the North Country Trail. This section of trail didn't have the constant vistas we had the day before. The scenery was more "woodsy", but the trail was still hilly and challenging. I would highly recommend this trail for a weekend backpacking trip. But wait until the new bridge across the river is completed which will make this a loop trail. I think all the students got sufficiently "shookdown" and learned from the experience. Stayed tuned for "Shakedown II - Jordan River Pathway" in July.

NCT Effort Update

With the completion of the Advanced Backpacking class trip in Manistee National Forest and other solo trips, SOLAR has completed 128 miles of the North Country Trail in Michigan.

Miles Completed

128

Miles to Go

744

Section Coordinators

Southern L.P. (52)

Marco Scarpetta (313) 823-8564

Central L.P. (53)

Mike Banks (313) 425-4169

Northern L.P.

Leslie Cordova (810) 547-5626

Eastern U.P. (3)

Steve Gardner (810) 547-4998

Central U.P.

Caro McCrie (810) 229-5232

Western U.P. (20)

Bob Graham (313) 453-7313

Review

Canoe Class*By Doug Lanyk*

It's a good thing. More SOLARites now possess the skills to go canoeing safely and without frustration. The class was in two parts. The first weekend where we practiced our flatwater skills, turned into a perfect day. Most of the 10 students picked up on the basic strokes like they were born to canoe. Some took an hour or so to get the skill to paddle in a straight line. Mr. Gardner provided a great demonstration on how to empty the water out of a canoe, immediately after the demonstration how to brace (stabilize) the canoe with a paddle. (The trick is to not stop and talk while demonstrating.) The class was followed by a pot luck picnic with tons of wonderful food.

The second weekend was almost as nice. The 12 students that desired to take their skills to a river were treated to a challenge. The trip from

Proud Lake to Kensington was interesting. Paddling was harder going downstream than up because of the breeze. Due to recent rains the river was high and fast, providing many opportunities to cool the class off with spontaneous swimming. The Students all did very well. Three cheers for safe canoeing.

Thanks to my fellow instructors Steve, Matt, and Margaret

I would like to invite people to practice their skills on flat or moving water. Give me a call to arrange a trip, or an afternoon on the lake. (810) 634-4551

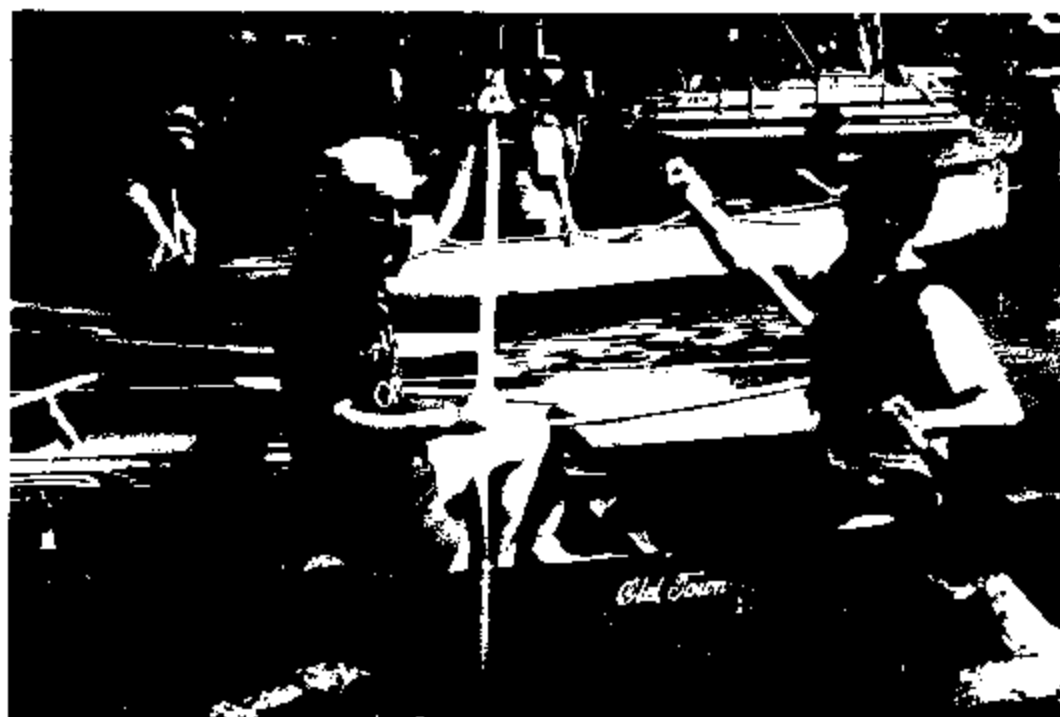
Walleyball!!!

Every Monday night, 7-9 p.m. at Bailey Recreation Center, Westland, MI. Contact Margaret Martin at (313) 721-2821 (home) or (313) 722 7820 (work).

Review

A "Thumbs Up" Trip*By Cyndy Erickson*

Swimming and kayaking in Lake Huron, hiking trails and dunes, seeing thousand year-old carvings and beautiful lighthouses made exploring the thumb area an interesting diversion for someone like myself who has for decades bypassed this area to head straight up I-75. This SOLAR weekend camping trip on June 14-16 also afforded me the opportunity to see how Sleeper State Park (and the surrounding thumb area) had changed since I had last camped there over thirty years ago. Sleeper was our second choice as Port Crescent State Park down the road was full. It was still a nice alternative with its wooded campsites and convenient children's play area. Of course after thirty years the coastal (See Thumb, page 4)



Proposed Bylaws Change

The Bylaws Committee has reviewed the current Bylaws as required under Section 4.4C. Based upon our review we propose the following change to reflect the current practice of the Club, with respect to the term of office of the steering Committee.

Current Text of Section 3.4: Election and Term of Office: The election of officers and committee chairpersons shall be held during the May meeting of the Club. Elections shall be by written ballot. The officers and chairpersons shall be elected for a term of one year or until their successors are named. The term of office shall be from July 1 to June 30.

Proposed Text of Section 3.4: Election and Term of Office: The election of officers and committee chairpersons shall be held during the May meeting of the Club. Elections shall be by written ballot. The officers and chairpersons shall be elected for a term of one year or until their successors are named. The term of office shall be from the Steering Committee immediately following the election to the Steering Committee meeting immediately following the next election

People

Congratulations to Marie Crow and Steve Gardner on the announcement of their engagement!

Write to John Gulas at his new address!

9140 SW 137th Ave. #1010
Miami, FL 33186
(305) 387-8314
E-mail: JRG090866@aol.com

ACTIVITIES CALENDAR

August

- 3 **Saturday** **Bike Ride - North Country Trail**
Marco Scarpella (313) 823-8564
- 6 **Tuesday** **General Membership Meeting**, Colony Hall, Southfield, Mike Banks (313) 425-5169
Program: Backpacking
- 7-13 **Weeklong** **Backpacking Practical**, Long Trail VT
Cindy Harrison-Felix (313) 722-3994
- 9-11 **Weekend** **Rock Climbing, Annual Summer Festivities**
Rattlesnake Prov. Pk., Jim Young (810) 731-2504
- 10 **Saturday** **Indian Village, Waterfall, Swim**, Milton Ontario
(KF) Jim Gilfix (810) 539-0489
- 11 **Sunday** **Scottish Highland Games-Ghosts**, Fergus, ON
(KF) Jim Gilfix (810) 539-0489
- 30-8 **September** **Canoe Trip**, Quetico Provincial Park
Tom Dunn, (313) 494-4212

September

- 2 **Monday** **Bridge Walk**, Mackinaw Bridge
Steve Gardner (810) 547-4998
- 3 **Tuesday** **General Membership Meeting**, Colony Hall, Southfield, Mike Banks (313) 425-5169
- 4,11,18,25 **Wednesdays** **Backpacking Class**
Carol McCrie (810) 229-5232
- 6-8 **Weekend** **Rock Climbing**,
Rattlesnake Prov. Pk., Jim Young (810) 731-2504
- 21-22 **Weekend** **Backpacking Practical 1**, Pinkney Rec. Area
Carol McCrie (810) 229-5232
- 27-30 **Weekend** **Backpack - North Country Trail**, Porcupine Mountains SP, Bob Graham (313) 453-7313

October

- 1 **Tuesday** **General Membership Meeting**, Colony Hall, Southfield, Mike Banks (313) 425-5169
- Early October** **Backpacking**, Baxter State Park, ME
Tom Dunn, (313) 494-4212
- 2 **Wednesday** **Backpacking Class**
Carol McCrie (810) 229-5232
- 3-6 **Weekend** **Backpacking Practical 2**, Pictured Rocks NLS
Carol McCrie (810) 229-5232
- 11-13 **Weekend** **UP Mountain Bike Color Tour**, NCT
Steve Gardner (810) 547-4998

** Denotes a Non-SOLAR activity

KF = "Kid Friendly", activities appropriate for kids and parents.

If you would like to help plan or lead an activity, please contact Leslie Cordova at (810) 547-5626 (H) or (810) 901-1711 (W).

SOLAR has a "No Refund" policy, however, if you are unable to attend an activity, you may "Sell Your Spot" to another SOLAR Club member.

Upcoming Event

Equipment Repair Day Skills Exchange

Coming this fall a day of repair and equipment tune-ups has been proposed. The summer wear and tear on equipment will need to be repaired, and the winter sporting aids will need to be made ready for fun. We will arrange for sewing machines, grommet repair kits, wrenches, grease, water proofing, seam sealing, fiberglass repair, waxing, stove cleaning, and technical help. This will be an educational opportunity as well as a chance to get the equipment ready for upcoming events. If you have thoughts, questions or a desire to participate, please contact Doug Lanyk 810-634-4551.

Upcoming Event

Autumn in Albion

By Jim Gilfix

Begin planning now for the Fall colors. No, its not too soon. This year I am planning a "special" trip. On October 11, we will drive the 3 hours to Chain o' Lakes State Park, in Albion, Indiana.

This park has a beautiful series of connected kettle lakes nestled among the steep wooded hillsides. These lakes are connected by water channels, which are lined by an assortment of colored leaves on various trees.

We will be camping in the modern campground, with flush toilets and showers. Saturday we will canoe 3-4 hours in 5 of their 8 lakes. We will go through their canals and passageways which are different than streams or creeks, as there is

no current, so the going is slow, easy, safe (fit for all age kids) and incredibly gorgeous! (We did this trip 2 years ago and loved it).

Of course we will have a big SOLAR potluck dinner and sit around a campfire. Sunday we will hike some of the many trails of the park. We also found this to be exceptionally pretty at it goes by 4-6 lakes, canals and waterways. There are no pay-ahead costs. The trip should cost about \$15 which includes entrance to the park, a campsite, canoeing for 6 hours and a great hike, plus food and gas.

Sign up at the September or October SOLAR meeting and collect a detailed hand-out, which includes directions to the park, map of the park and the hiking canoe route, costs and history of the area. Contact me, Jim Gilfix, for more info.

Upcoming Event

ITS PICNIC TIME AGAIN

On Sunday, September 8, we will be meeting at Maybury State Park for a picnic, a hike and/or bike and/or mountain bike ride, outdoor games, maybe kite flying too. Those of you with small kids will want to arrive at 9:30 a.m. and go to the Living Farm. Anyone is allowed to reach in and pet their pigs, turkeys, sheep, goats, cows, horses and ducks. The rest of the folks should arrive at noonish.

We will eat first, potluck lunch, play games then we will leave our stuff in the cars, except the bikes and go for bike rides and/or a hike. We will ride or walk, then maybe meet for more games, fun, food, fun, conversation, fun, kite flying, fun or maybe for more fun. We will have fun, then head home. Contact Jim Gilfix for more information

(Thumb, Cont'd from page 2)

area was a lot more built up and the park's beach camps sites appeared to have been replaced by a parking lot/day use area (dam that progress!).

Half arrived Friday night and the rest of us joined them on the beach at Port Crescent State Park. Bill had us test his Dagger kayak out on the white-capped waves of Lake Huron. Our fearless leader, Jim Gilfix, didn't last too long before he was upside down after being hit by the Big Kahuna. Not exactly an Eskimo roll! When it was my turn, I thought I'd beat the odds until it got me, too and I ended up like Jim. My prior Huron River kayaking experiences were child's play compared to this! Of course, the kids, Cassie and Stephanie, did great (with a little help from Dad).

Afterward, half the group fished while the other half of us hiked the trails through the woods and dunes and then were beaten by Erika at miniature golf at a nearby course beautifully landscaped with a wide variety of perennials. (I think I noticed the flowers and birds more than I did the golf.) We made dinner at camp and the kids played in the playground area while the adults hung out and relaxed by the fire. We ended the evening with s'mores and ghost stories (Natalie's favorite part).

After a leisurely breakfast, Bill and his girls decided to try fishing again while the rest of us decided to visit the lighthouses along the thumb's coast on the way to the petroglyphs in Sanilac, seeing lots of deer along the way. Anyone traveling this area should definitely stop and visit the picturesque Port Aux Barques lighthouse, one of the prettier ones in Michigan. A small museum inside is open to visitors and we were able to look up into the winding lighthouse stairway and go upstairs in to its various rooms.

(See Thumb, page 5)

Upcoming Event

August Rattlesnake Weekend!

By Jim Gilfix

On August 9, 1996 all SOLARites are invited to our Grand Camping Weekend at Rattlesnake Point, in Milton, Ontario. On this weekend, SOLAR encourages everyone to go regardless of how much camping experience you have. Year after year SOLAR sponsors the same events, and they are grand events, the buffalo shuffle (hike to see real buffalo), a bike race, and the Cook-off, a cooking contest based on everything being prepared at the campsite. There have been some years we have had some very unusual culinary dishes served, maybe this year the winner will be you.

Most people who go to Rattlesnake during the Spring and Summer go there to climb. I do not. This year I will be sponsoring 2 trips for all those, and kids, who do not climb, or choose not to climb.

On Saturday August 10, we will drive to Crawford Lake Conservation Area which is about a 20 minute drive. Crawford Lake is perched atop the Niagara Escarpment, the most significant landform in southern Ontario. The lake itself is ecologically unusual. It is a meromictic lake that contains much information about the natural and cultural history of the area. Studies of the sediment, which can be accurately dated as far back as 1000 years, led to the discovery of one of the most accurately dated Iroquoian Villages in Canada. They have reconstructed a fifteenth century village. I am looking forward to seeing the Wolf Clan's Longhouse Learning Center. They also have hiking trails, an elevated boardwalk

around the lake. Plus a lookout over the Escarpment and a giftshop.

We will then drive another 20 minutes to the Spencer Gorge Wilderness Area. This Y-shaped gorge is fed by two creeks, Spencer and Logie's, each of which plunges over the Escarpment in a waterfall. We'll park at Webster's Falls, about 65 feet tall and follow a section of the Bruce Trail to Tews Falls, about 120 feet tall, almost as high as Niagara Falls. From here we will either drive to Hilton Falls, about 45 feet tall. We want to return to the campground with plenty of time to cook, (wait till you see what I have planned, its...different and should be good).

On Sunday, August 11, we will pack up at Rattlesnake and drive 40 minutes to Fergus, Ontario (this is a small town mostly towards home, but slightly north). On this day they will be having their Scottish Festival and Highland Games Festival. It is their 51st year!

Fergus has also earned a reputation for its ghosts. Their Chamber of Commerce sent me a pamphlet which describes some phantasmagoric sightings and offers advice to receptive souls who wish to encounter ghosts for themselves. So I will be going on this tour and you are welcome to join me.

Also in Fergus is a century-old foundry/market, boasting over 90 shops of farmers, butchers, bakers and crafts-people. Nearby is the River's Edge Cafe, which has a deck overlooking the Grand Falls, another waterfall.

We will have the option of walking down the Grand River Gorge by a pathway or we can drive, to Elora where we can see their spectacular 79 foot gorge with overhanging rock ledges, small caves, unusual rock formations and yes, they too have a waterfall.

This weekend is shaping up to be not only different and strange, but unusual too. We will see waterfalls, gorges, ghosts, bagpipes, Indian villages and strange types of food (oops, almost gave it away). Contact me, Jim Gilfix, at 810-539-0489, or look for my 2 handouts at the August SOLAR meeting for more info.

(Thumb, Cont'd from page 4)

Our final destination. Sanilac Petroglyph State Park, was an interesting, unique place to visit. Its 1,000 year old rock carvings are the only known ones in Michigan. The largest rock is roped off and covered by a roof, about the size of a picnic shelter (for protection) with DNR personnel there answering questions. We easily spotted the figure with the bow and arrow shown in the photograph in Tom Powers' book, *Natural Michigan*. We hiked the park's trails along the chocolatey brown Cass River (the color was quite unusual) and found turtles and frogs, yellow lady's slippers, swinging bridges, gigantic old trees and more rock carvings i.e., "Joe loves Jane", etc. There were very few other visitors there (probably because it's in a remote area and lacks typical park amenities) making it quite serene.

The drive back down M-53 through mostly farmland was an interesting alternative to I-75. We had to stop twice, first, allow an Amish horse and buggy to pass, and second, to allow a giant turtle (over a foot long) to cross the road.

It seemed that any one of the areas we visited is probably too far from the Detroit area to make a day trip worthwhile. However, they are definitely worth visiting, especially combined with a series of stops, as we did, or a part of a longer trip or as a diversion on the way to somewhere else. Although my favorite area in Michigan is still the far north, the SOLAR "thumb" trip rated a "thumbs up".

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 second 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, SOLAR Ray Editor, 10024 Borgman, Huntington Woods, MI 48070 or call Steve at (810) 547-4998, or E-mail to slgardner@gnn.com

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 \$30 individual annually, or \$100 individual lifetime.

STEERING COMMITTEE

President	Mike Banks / (313) 235-8129
Vice-President	Doug Lanyk / (810) 634-4551
Secretary	Cindy Harrison-Felix / (313) 722-3994
Treasurer	Cyndy Enckson / (313) 397-8240
Activities	Leslie Cordova / (810) 547-5626
Membership	Mary Price / (810) 477-7547
Equipment	Mike Felix / (313) 722-3894
Bylaws	Harry Price / (810) 477-7547
Education	Bob Graham / (313) 453-7313
SOLAR Ray	Steve Gardner / (810) 547-4998
Historian	Dave Foerster / (313) 433-0692
Programs	Margaret Martin / (313) 721-2821
At Large	
	Cindy Harrison-Felix / (313) 722-3994
	Steve Gardner / (810) 547-4998
	Bob Westbrook / (313) 513-8454
	Joan Westbrook / (313) 513-8454
	Mo DeFrance / (810) 229-8283
	Larry Martin / (313) 591-3856
	Bill Halvengis / (810) 683-1911
	Al Fyjak / 852-7514
	Joan Ryan / (810) 57-DIVE1

If you would like to assist with any of the above positions, call the appropriate committee chairperson.



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