

THE RAY

THE SCHOOL FOR OUTDOOR LEADERSHIP, ADVENTURE AND RECREATION

Upcoming Class

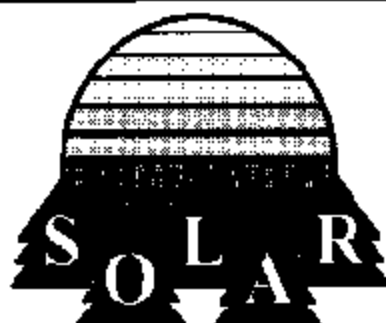
Trip Planning and Advanced Backpacking Class

The trip planning seminar teaches the basics of planning and leading an extended outdoor trip. It is open to all SOLAR members and will be held on Wednesday, March 6th from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m. at Mike and Cindy Felix's house in Inkster. The cost is \$10.

The advanced backpacking class will use trip planning techniques to plan a week-long backpacking trip. The trip planning meetings are tentatively scheduled for 3/27, 4/9, 5/1, 5/22 and 6/5. The backpacking trip is tentatively scheduled for 6/15-6/23 but may change depending on trip destination.

The latest idea being tossed around for the trip is doing part of the North Country Trail in Michigan (Porcupine Mtns./Ottawa Nat'l Forest) in celebration of SOLAR's 20th anniversary (if this turns out to be the trip destination, the trip will probably be moved up to at least mid-July). The cost of this class is \$25, and is limited to 12 people. You must have taken the backpacking class, be able to attend the trip planning seminar, participate in the planning meetings, and take the entire week off for the trip.

For further information contact Cindy Harrison-Felix at (313) 722-3994 (h) or (313) 745-1188 (w).



Review

V-1 Skate Class

by Julie Gordon

Our skate class was spread out over two days. The 1st day, Dec. 9th began the "in class" portion where we learned about ski preparation and waxing. It was a very informative and interesting session with several instructors giving away their secrets for successful skiing in any type of snow conditions.

The second part of the class, the on-snow clinic, was held at Forbush Corners on January 21st. Wow, what a wonderful day! The weather was very cooperative and ski conditions were great. We had a rather small turn-out of students, which was great for those of us who were able to make it, because that made for a better teacher/student ratio.

I think the majority of us struggled with the new technique (at first), but I feel confident that we all enjoyed ourselves tremendously. Thanks for introducing me/us to the V-1 skate technique Mike M!

Upcoming Class

Rock Climbing Class

Get ready for the 1996 SOLAR Rock Climbing Class. Students will learn the basics of how to move up and over the rock face, correct use of harness, climbing knot craft, climbing calls, and belay techniques. Then the class will move on to the more advanced skills required to correctly construct a safe top rope anchor system. We will also discuss climbing ethics and ways climbers can minimize their impact on our environment.

Class will be held at the Benchmark Outfitter in Farmington Hills on Wednesday evenings during the month of April. If you are itching to get on the rocks, then sign-up for this class during the SOLAR General Membership Meeting or contact Jim Young at (810) 731-2504.

March Program on Rock Climbing

The Program following the March SOLAR General Membership meeting will feature Rock Climbing. This introduction to the sport, presented by SOLAR climber Al Fylak, is in preparation for the SOLAR Rock Climbing Class beginning in April.

Review

20th Michigan VASA*by Karen Sinclair-Smith*

It was a dark and stormy night. Cold. Big fat snowflakes. That was the night AFTER the VASA. The day OF the VASA, when 14 intrepid SOLARites donned their skis, it was nearly 47degrees by mid-day! A day for yellow klister or waxless skis and mud.

The Traverse City Record-Eagle described the race start as, "near-perfect conditions", for the front row elite skiers. Actually, the hearty six from SOLAR who tackled the 47K at the back of the pack, also had, "not too bad" conditions.

By the time 800+ skiers had their way with the melting snow in the parking lots and start area, the mud was three inches deep. The snow at the beginning for the 12K skiers was already getting warm and mushy. In some areas, tracking for classic skiers was non-existent.

It could have been worse. The night before, weather predictions for race time were heavy on rain. Instead, we had mostly sunny (ergo, the melting snow and resultant mud) with some overcast. It was absolutely beautiful back in the trees, where grooming held up better in the shade, and sun glinted off the snowy fields and evergreen tree tops.

It was mud and yuck again back at the finish, but in between a gorgeous panorama. The front runners missed the homemade chili (how good was that Chili, Pam?) and healthy muffins which were ready at the first food stop by the time the rest of us got there.

Various food stops on the different length race loops had a number of goodies. Food! Isn't that a good enough reason for SOLARites to do anything? Just think, food and crink every 6K or so and you don't even

have to display good "table" manners. Volunteers even pick up after you.

After the race, there was the hot tub for soaking and pool for splashing back at the Days Inn. Speaking of food, Saturday evening found the SOLAR troupe at Auntie Pasta's, in a room to ourselves. No, it was not because our celebration (or Dave's restaurant stories) was getting out of hand.

The dinner seemed exceptionally good, as did the camaraderie. Everyone had stories to tell of their race adventures and parking lot mud adventures. Seen any totally mud covered vehicles in T.C. lately? They must have been at the VASA. Last year there was a rumor about Mike Mannebach...something about frostbite and a helicopter ride. To even things up, this year at dinner some of us (John) tried to start a rumor about Mike and sunburn and a helicopter ride, but it didn't fly.

By the time we left Auntie Pasta's, having stuffed ourselves, there was plenty of fresh snow and it was cold! Re-wax! In the snowy AM, our caravan of skiers hit another eatery, this time the Omelette Shoppe, with more fantastic food. Several SOLARites had not had enough skiing for one weekend and stopped off for more on the way home.

Our hats off to the following skiers who kept up the SOLAR tradition of VASA-ing: Clayton Lucey, Marco Scarpetta, Mike Mannebach, Dave Bombard, Richard Stanley and Bill Stanley in the 47K race; Thomas Kuhn in the 27K race; Jim Young, Tim Stangl, John Gulas, Linda Harner, Karen Sinclair-Smith, Pam Maxey, Mark Lipson in the 12K (but-we-all-knew-it-was-really-14K) race. Our group total was 393K! Skoal!

Upcoming Activity

Orienteering Training

The Southern Michigan Orienteering Club will have a pre-season training on basic, intermediate, and advanced orienteering skills on March 3rd, Sunday. All classes are open to the public, and they will start at noon and end at 3pm. The basic map and compass skills are easy to learn, but if you've done this before then why not come again and learn some advanced skills?

They will meet at the Highland Recreational Area. The park entrance is on the south side of M-59, it is 11 miles east from US-23, or 12 miles west from Pontiac. Sometimes they mark the entrance with a red and white marker. There is no sign-up, just show up on time.

Wear comfortable shoes, bring a baseplate compass, a whistle, snacks, drinks, and a change of clothing if the weather is wet. You can also rent a compass from SMOC. The cost of the training is about \$5 and you need a DNR vehicle permit to enter the park. Contact Lester Mok at (519) 256-3324 (Windsor). This is a non-SOLAR event.

Upcoming Activity

Wabos Loppet

SOLAR will participate in a special event held each year at Stokley Creek Resort called the Wabos Loppet. The "Loppet" is a 27-kilometer noncompetitive cross-country ski event which will be held on Saturday, March 16, 1996. Skiers take the Algoma Snow Train which drops them off in Wabos and then they ski 27K back to Stokley Creek Resort. For further information, contact Mike Banks, at (313) 425-4169.

Announcing "Kid Friendly" SOLAR Activities

SOLAR has traditionally been mostly for adults who like outdoor activities. We now have many married couples, families and single's with kids.

SOLAR is announcing a new series of activities aimed at children and parents. On the SOLAR calendar and in the SOLAR Ray, these activities will be designated by saying "Kid Friendly" or "KF".

At this time I am doing most of the planning for "Kid Friendly" trips. I hope others will join me in planning fun, adventurous, cheap and safe trips. For further information contact Jim Gilfix at (810) 539-0439.

Upcoming Activity

Laser Quest

Once again we are going back in for another futuristic adventure at Laser Quest in a 8,000 sq. ft. maze filled with ramps, towers, black lights, smoke and dragons! This will be our biggest and most advanced trip, but also open to beginners and children.

On Sunday, March 24th, we will meet at 4pm play two games back-to-back (40 minutes), eat pizza, drink Vernors and help Jim celebrate his birthday, he'll provide the cake (B-day cards are welcome). We will then play a 3rd game!

All for the low cost of \$18. Sign up and pay at the March SOLAR Meeting. Limit 30 people. This trip is "Kid Friendly", however, no one younger than 7 or older than 82.

For further information contact Jim Gilfix. Instructions, tips, tricks, and party favors passed out prior to game time.

Upcoming Activity

Personal Challenge

In April I am leading a Personal Challenge trip. Located in a tranquil, wooded setting, Starr's Low Ground Initiatives and High Ropes Courses challenge individuals to be the best they can be. Participants work in small groups to complete specific tasks, which call for risk-taking, problem solving, communication and trust.

The initiatives resemble an obstacle course, but are based on a non-competitive teamwork concept. A series of group-oriented tasks make up the low, or ground initiative activities.

Two ropes courses provide a series of obstacles, one 25 and the other 35 feet off the ground. Ropes, cables and logs must be traversed by participants in such activities as the bucking log, balance beam, Burma bridge, hour glass, flea jump, and Tarzan swing.

Each course provides an intense experience, which requires facing one's fears and making decisions under pressure. The perceived danger creates a stress level that intensifies the attitudes and behaviors of participants. After tasks are completed, group members and Starr staff discuss feelings and the day's activities.

This activity is open to SOLAR members ages 25 to 63. The cost is \$25 and you pack a lunch. We are scheduled for their outdoor course, but in bad weather, we will use their indoor course.

The day is Sunday, April 14, 9:30am to 6pm (it takes about two hours to get there), the limit is 12 people. Sign up at March SOLAR meeting or contact Jim Gilfix for more information.

Upcoming Activity

A day trip to Pt Pelee

On Sunday, April 21st, SOLAR returns to Point Pelee in Canada for a Grand Day. We'll meet at their Nature Center and spend the day playing, hiking, eating, bird watching, tree identifying, flower hunting, squirrel chasing, frisbee throwing, scavenger-things-seeking, marsh walking, laughing, yelling, story-telling, maze exploring, picture drawing, movie seeing, souvenir buying, Vernors drinking and bathroom visiting.

Kids are welcome and encouraged. Plan for a 1:30pm pot-luck lunch. Call Jim Gilfix for more information. Look for a handout at the March and April SOLAR meetings.

Upcoming Activity

Nature Day at Kensington

If you think the Point Pelee trip sounds like fun, we're going to do it again, at Kensington. This will be on May 5th, meeting at their nature center to hike, picnic, all the other stuff plus kite flying.

Kids are welcome and encouraged. Plan for a pot-luck lunch, handouts at April and May meeting, and its free. Call Jim Gilfix for more information.

Upcoming "Kid Friendly" Trips

June - canoeing, July - Fossil hunt/water parks day and camping, mini golf, hot tubs and ghost stories. August - Rattlesnake, swim, eat, games. September - camp, day canoe, scavenger hunt. October - Halloween hayride/stories. Laser Quest every 2-3 months and...well that's enough for now.

Upcoming Activity Spring Bird Migration

Mid-May brings the world renowned annual spring bird migration to Point Pelee National Park in Ontario, Canada. Saturday, May 18th, we'll meet to set up camp; then we can hike, bike, canoe, sun at the beach, etc.

Sunday morning at dawn, we'll arise to get an early jump on the bird watching. We'll hike the birding trails and try to identify as many birds as we can.

The cost of this trip is \$10 and is limited to the first 16 people that sign up and pay in full. For further information, contact Cindy Harrison-Felix (look out, she thinks she's a real birdwatcher now that she's been to Costa Rica) at (313) 722-3994.

Upcoming Class Wilderness First Aid

What would you do if you were out in the wilderness and someone in your party was sick or injured? Would you feel helpless watching them suffer because you didn't know what to do? Don't let this happen to you! Take the Wilderness First Aid class offered by SOLAR and taught by Doug Brown.

The class is tentatively scheduled for May, the exact date will be announced at the SOLAR meeting. This is a weekend class held at Waterloo Recreation Area.

Prior to the class, students are expected to have the required reading in the text completed and be prepared for a full day of instruction on Saturday and more instruction and practical exercises on Sunday. Last year we even did a full-blown

search and rescue (finding Mike Felix and bringing him back took some encouraging!).

Feedback from previous classes has been very positive. Cost of the class will probably be about \$80-\$85 and includes the NOLS text. For more information call Jim Young at (810) 726-8253.

SOLAR's 20th Anniversary

This year marks the 20th anniversary of the SOLAR club. In honor of this event, SOLAR has taken on a great challenge! SOLAR members will traverse the section of the North Country Trail that goes through our great state of Michigan.

This section of trail covers approximately 870 miles and some sections are not yet completed. The sections of trail not completed can be traversed by nearby roads on bike (Marco Scarpetta will coordinate).

We would like to use as many modes of "traversing" the trail as possible to highlight the variety of outdoor sports and activities that SOLAR engages in. We're considering, backpacking, day hiking, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, horseback riding, mountain biking, canoeing (nearby rivers), etc.

The plan is to start this challenge on June 1st, 1996 (National Trails Day) and complete the journey by National Trails Day next year. At this point, we're looking for SOLARites to help coordinate either different sections of the trail or different modes of transportation.

For further information contact Mike Banks at (313) 425-4169.

Review Enjoy Michigan Winters?

Have you already read the trip review for the VASA? Well, we had the same weather for the final practical trip for the SOLAR Winter Camping Class.

Saturday morning, the weather was in the high 30's, rather balmy, considering it was minus 30 degrees the weekend before!

The ski/snowshoe into camp was pretty good (you're not too fussy about "perfect snow conditions" when you're carrying a backpack and not really moving that fast on the ski's anyway). It was also pretty amusing watching people get up after falling with backpacks and skis/snowshoes on.

When we arrived at camp, it seemed cold enough to attempt the quin-zhee building. All groups set to the task with the help of Doug and his "Yupper Scooper"! Mike was already far into the creation of the "Holidome Quin-Zhee" and Dave had "The Big Top" complete!

Just as most of the various shelters we're done, it began to rain. The full quin-zhees had to be beheaded and replaced with plastics tops to avoid rude snow cave-ins in the middle of the night.

By morning, it was winter again. The temperature had dropped, the rain had turned to snow and it was windy (remember, if you don't like the season in Michigan, wait a day!). SOLAR winter campers packed up (helped dig Mike's truck out of the snow) and headed out. All were in good spirits at Big Buck's Steak House where most stopped for lunch. Thanks for a fun weekend!

FOR SALE

Denatured alcohol stove, asking \$10. Two mosquito head nets, asking \$1 each. Three knives, a five inch lockback blade knife, a filet knife, and a survival knife, asking \$10 to \$25. Call John Fox at (810) 615-7559 (h) or (810) 814-2769 (w).

A Hartwick Pines Weekend

Eight SOLARites came to play. One of them had to go away. The other seven skied two days. And with sore muscles they did pay.

All of us could make gourmet fare. There was more food than we could bear. But Mike ate oatmeal, though Ron did share. And passed his omelettes everywhere.

Margaret sure could bake. She brought cookies (but no cake). In spite of a really bad backache. But some massage gave her a break.

They skied all day in perfect snow. Up and down they did go. Debbie's skills did really grow. But Carol's ski's were really slow.

We know that Gene skied too much. His whole body was sore to touch. His wife Leslie told us such. But we could guess he needed a crutch.

When at night we did meet. We found at Euchre Mike did cheat. The other teams he would beat. But Cindy did not find it neat.

Tomorrow morning we'll crawl out of a sack. Our gear we will have to pack. To head south, not wanting to go back. But for fun and friendship we did not lack.

ACTIVITIES CALENDAR

March

- | | | |
|--------------|------------------|--|
| 2 | Saturday | Mt. Brighton Ski Party, Brighton, M.
Maureen DeFrance (810) 229-8283 |
| 5 | Tuesday | General Membership Meeting,
Colony Hall, Southfield, 7:30 p.m.,
Steve Gardner (810) 547-4998 |
| 6 | Wednesday | Trip Planning Seminar/Advanced Backpacking
Class 1, Felix's House, Inkster
Cindy Harrison-Felix (313) 722-3994 |
| 10 | Sunday | **Marvelous Marvins Fun House (KF),
W. Bloomfield, Jim Gilfix (810) 539-0489 |
| 15-17 | Weekend | Wabos Loppet Cross-Country Skiing, Saul
St. Marie, Canada, Mike Barks (313) 425-4189 |
| 24 | Sunday | **Laser Quest (KF), Madison Hgts,
Jim Gilfix (810) 539-0489 |
| 27 | Wednesday | Advanced Backpacking Class 2, Felix's House
Inkster, Cindy Harrison-Felix (313) 722-3994 |
| 31 | Sunday | **SMOC Orienteering Training, Highland Rec.
Area, 12noon-3pm, Lester Mok (519) 256-0324 |

April

- | | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|--|
| 3,10,17,24 | Weds | Rock Climbing Class, Benchmark, Farmington
Jim Young (810) 731-2504 |
| 9 | Tuesday | Advanced Backpacking Class 3, Felix's House
Inkster, Cindy Harrison-Felix (313) 722-3994 |
| 14 | Sunday | Personal Challenge, Jackson, MI
Jim Gilfix (810) 539-0489 |
| 20 | Saturday | Rock Climbing Practical I, Planet Rock, Pontiac
Jim Young (810) 731-2504 |
| 21 | Sunday | Nature Day (KF), Pt. Pelee Prov. Park
Ontario, Canada Jim Gilfix (810) 539-0489 |
| 27 | Saturday | Rock Climbing Class, Powers Park
Jim Young (810) 731-2504 |

****Roll at the Dome** - Inline skating at the Pontiac Silverdome. For times and schedules, contact Doug Lanyk at (810) 634-4551.

****Wallyball - Every Monday** at Bailey Rec. Center, Westland. Contact Margaret Martin (313) 721-2821 (h) or (313) 722-7620 (w).

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

->SOLAR has a "No Refund" policy. However, if you are unable to attend an activity, you can "sell your spot" to another club member.

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

->If you would like to help plan and/or lead a SOLAR trip or activity, contact Leslie Cordova at (810) 547-5626.

UPCOMING TRIPS

->Tom Dunn is planning a backpacking trip to Maine this fall. If interested call him at (810) 471-9163.

->Tim Stangl is planning a backpacking trip out West the first two weeks of July. If interested call him at (810) 262-5964 (w) or (810) 474-3242 (h).

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: Cindy Harrison-Felix, SOLAR Ray Editor, 780 Central, Inkster, MI 48141 or call Cindy at (313) 722-3994.

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	Steve Gardner / (810) 547-4998
Vice-President	Tom Dunn / (313) 494-4212
Secretary	Mike Banks / (313) 425-4169
Treasurer	Cyndy Erickson / (313) 387-8240
Activities	Leslie Cordova / (810) 547-5625
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Equipment	Mike Felix / (313) 722-3994
Bylaws	Marie Crow / (810) 547-4998
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SOLAR Ray	Cindy Harrison-Felix / (313) 722-3994
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Programs	Margaret Martin / (313) 721-2821
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Bob Westbrook / (313) 513-8454	Joan Westbrook / (313) 513-8454
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Bill Halvargis / (810) 669-1911	A. Fytak / 852-7514
Joan Ryan / (810) 570IVE1	

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



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