

THE RAY

THE SCHOOL FOR OUTDOOR LEADERSHIP, ADVENTURE AND RECREATION

SOLAR Election

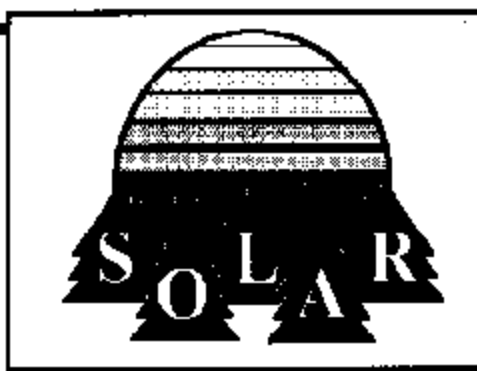
The annual election for the Steering Committee takes place at the May SOLAR Membership Meeting. As of the Ray printing, here is the cast of characters to vote for: President - Mike Banks. Vice President - Doug Lanyx. Secretary - Cindy Harrison-Felix. Treasurer - Cyndy Erickson. Activities - Leslie Cordova. Bylaws - Harry Price. Ray Editor - Steve Gardner. Education - Bob Graham. Equipment - Mike Felix. Membership - Marie Crow, Mary Price, Jim Wright. Historian - Dave Forster. Programs - Margaret Martin. If there are any additions or corrections, please contact Steve Gardner at (810) 547-4998.

Upcoming Activity

Backpacking Trip on North Manitou Island

North Manitou Island is part of Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore. The island has a wide variety of natural beauty as well as an interesting human history, as evidenced by the interesting place names and ruins returning to nature, scattered across the island.

Be prepared for a rustic backpacking experience, as you will need to hang your food, purify your drinking water, and bring a cook stove, as fires are not permitted in the wilderness area. Oh and by the way, there are no outhouses!



Cost of the trip is \$18 which will cover the ferry ride over to the island. There is no cost for camping. You may choose to take the ferry over either Friday or Saturday at 10:00am SHARP, returning Monday at 11:10am SHARP!!!

At the May meeting I will have a list of people who are going on both the Friday and Saturday ferry. Please take a copy and try to carpool as much as possible. Also, since there are 30 people going on this trip, we really need to practice minimal impact camping, so try to set up small (less than 8 people) hiking groups.

Remember that your group will be responsible for their own food and gear (stoves, water filters, tents, first aid, bear bag, etc.) PLEASE COME PREPARED! The ferry reservations have already been made, however, if you would still like to join us, please contact Leslie Cordova at (810) 547-5626 to get the necessary information to book your own ferry reservation. Please don't delay, as the ferry will fill up!

Upcoming Class

Wilderness First Aid Class

For any SOLAR members that spend time in the "great outdoors", this is a SOLAR class that should not be missed. The class is taught by Doug Brown, owner/operator of Michigan Search and Rescue. Doug uses the NOLS Wilderness First Aid manual and his knowledge and experience as an emergency rescuer to teach us what works and what doesn't when faced with real emergency situations in the wilderness.

The the class takes place on the weekend of May 17th-19th at Waterloo Recreation Area near Chelsea. Students will stay in the wilderness cabins in the Burnside area. Friday night is a get acquainted session around the camp fire. Saturday starts early and ends late with a full day of intense classroom interaction. Sunday is when it all comes together. Students are placed into simulated wilderness emergencies in the surrounding woods and must respond to the situations they find.

The cabins are RUSTIC and bring your own food. The course fee is \$80 (subject to class size) and includes two nights stay in the wilderness cabins and the NOLS Wilderness First Aid manual. For further information, contact Jim Young at (810) 731-2504.

Wabos Loppett

by Mark Lipson

On March 15, 11 hale and hearty SOLARites embarked on the annual Wabos Loppett 27K skitrip in Wabos Ontario. Mark and Debbie opened the cabins at Glenview Resort followed by Cindy and Mike B. The cabins were cozy and luxurious (by SOLAR standards) with all the amenities.

A topographical map of the area was spread out on the table for everyone to check out what lay in store for them the following day. On Friday night after Mike B. and Cindy served a satisfying dinner of home-cooked spaghetti and meat balls the gang headed for the hot tub and sauna to engage in a welcome soak and scintillating conversation about the arts, religion, politics, and philosophy. This innocent soak in a hot tub was a truly impressive meeting of the minds!

Doug then decided to entertain the group by climbing a 10 ft. snow drift outside wearing only his bathing suit, running around on all fours and peering at us through the cabin window. His behavior certainly helps to support Darwin's Theory of Evolution. Doug was patient enough to explain that in Minnesota this is considered perfectly normal behavior. A lively discussion of anthropology followed.

Other members arrived until the wee hours when John and Denise finally pulled in at 2:30a.m. After the hot tub and sauna we fell into a deep sleep only to awaken early the next a.m. for the Agawa Canyon Snow Train which interestingly enough (like the sauna) was also about 90 degrees in our car.

The day began at a balmy 25 degrees F with sunny clear blue skies. After a 1 hour ride through the Algoma Highlands we were dropped off near Weckstrum Lake for our 1st challenge of the loppett - putting on

our skis in a 10ft. glazed over snow drift. Putting on skis when one leg has sunk up to your hip in snow can be a humbling experience.

On the first icy hill, non-SOLARites were tumbling over like bowling pins! SOLAR members, meanwhile, negotiated the slope with their usual aplomb. We proceeded to ski over Weckstrum Lake for some spectacular scenery. Some of us also skied over Bojack Lake for more spectacular scenery before stopping at Norm Bourgeois cabin on Bone Lake for tea, oranges, cookies and companionship.

The weather, scenery and company could not have been more perfect. The Highlands have hills that are as high as 1900 feet above sea level with very open, spacious, and pristine woods. Blue skies prevailed and it was so warm that people were skiing in next to nothing. Doug was even skiing in shorts and t-shirt. Look out for that hill Doug! The weather was so warm in fact that some people were using the dreaded universal and red klister wax.

Snow conditions were most challenging and ranged from corn (granular snow that has melted and refrozen) to sheer ice. Some people could be seen lashing crampons to the bottom of their skis for more



stable descents (just kidding). Before some very long herringbones you could see skiers looking up hills taking stock of the task ahead of them. You could hear non-SOLARites asking nervously, "We're going up that hill?!!!"

After the loppett we joined the after ski barbecue celebration for dinner. Doug and Mark even participated in the annual Wabos Loppett parade. Later, back at the cabin, more hot tubbing, feasting on salad and pizza and laughing ensued. A blissful time was had by all.



SOLAR's Quest -The North Country Trail

This year is SOLAR's 20th anniversary. To celebrate in true SOLAR style we've taken on a great quest...to traverse the Michigan section of the North Country Trail.

The plan is to start at the Ohio border on National Trails Day, 1996, plan trips throughout the following twelve months that will cover the entire 872 miles and end at the Wisconsin border on National Trails Day, 1997.

Over 500 miles of the trail have been completed in Michigan. For segments of the incomplete or proposed trail, we're planning to do bike trips on roads that run parallel to the proposed segments. For the segments that have been completed, it's "Anything Goes". We can do the trail in any of the diverse methods that SOLAR promotes, backpacking, skiing, mountain biking, canoeing (on parallel rivers, where applicable), or even day hikes.

In order to organize this event, the trail has been divided into six sections headed by one of our section chiefs (see names and phone numbers following this article). Don't be surprised if one of these section chiefs approaches you to plan a trip through their area. It can be ANYTHING you'd like to do and any length trip you're comfortable with. Even day trips are possible on virtually any segment of the trail. Just park a car at either end and spend the day on the trail.

This is a great project in the true spirit of the SOLAR Club. The American Hiking Society, sponsor of National Trails Day is very enthusiastic about our efforts and is publishing an article about the SOLAR club in their newsletter. The President of the North Country Trail Association Derek Blount, will be giving a presentation on the NCT

following the May SOLAR General Membership meeting.

The Kick off for this project will take place on June 1, 1996 (National Trails Day). We're meeting at Hudson Lake Recreation Area near Morenci, Michigan at 10a.m. Those that wish to, can catch a shuttle to the Ohio border and bike the road route in closest proximity to the proposed NCT back to Hudson Lake (approximately 10 miles). Another bike route, for those who want a longer ride, also takes you around the Hudson Lake area for a total 25-mile loop.

The traditional SOLAR pot luck lunch will follow the bike ride at Hudson Lake. You don't have to ride in order to participate in the celebration. Bring food, kids, summer outdoor toys, games, etc. and plan to have fun and picnic the day away! Maps will be available at the May SOLAR meeting. For further information about the Kick Off, call Marco Scarpetta at the number below.

SOLAR's NCT Section Chiefs

Southern L.P.
Marco Scarpetta (313) 823-8564.

Central L.P.
Mike Banks (313) 425-4169.

Northern L.P.
Leslie Cordova (810) 547-5626.

Eastern L.P.
Marie Crow (810) 547-4998.

Central U.P.
Steve Gardner (810) 547-4998.

Western U.P.
Bob Graham (313) 453-7313.

Upcoming Activity Nature Day at Kensington

On May 5th we'll be meeting at the Kensington 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 the April meeting, and it's free. Call Jim Gilfix at (810) 538-0489 for more information.

Upcoming Activity Point Pelee

Saturday, May 18th, SOLARites will be making their annual trek to Point Pelee National Park in Ontario, Canada to witness the spring bird migration. We'll be camping overnight on Saturday and rising with the birds on Sunday to hike the birding trails and try to identify as many birds as we can.

Unfortunately, the trip is full however, I have started a waiting list and would appreciate it if anyone who has signed up can't make it please call me so others can go. For further information, contact: Cindy Harrison-Felix at (313) 722-3994.

Don't forget to pay your SOLAR membership dues at the May meeting or you won't be getting your SOLAR Ray anymore!!!!

Upcoming Class

Can You Canoe?

Canoeing is a great way to: A) Have fun, B) Get down river, C) Go fishing, D) Enjoy life, E) Get wet, F) All of the above. If you passed this test, and don't know how to paddle a canoe in a straight line, you are ready for the SOLAR Paddling Class.

The first day we will be on a lake learning; basic canoe safety, how to make a canoe go straight, how to turn when and only when you want to, how to upright your craft after your partner swamps you, and how to come back from a canoe outing on speaking terms with your partner. This will be followed by the requisite pot luck dinner. (Too much food).

Day 2 will be on a river to experience what the current will do with your new skills; some light white water will be available (Pray for rain the week before the class) to get some practice getting wet. Class dates will be June 15th and June 22nd. Sign ups will be at the May and June SOLAR meetings. Cost will be minimal. For more information, call Doug Lanyk at (810) 834-4551. Let's hit the water! Yea!!!

Review

St. Patrick's Day at Kensington Metro Park

by Nancy Day

Even though it was St. Patrick's Day, there was very little green out at Kensington Metro Park for the SOLAR Nature Hike and Antler Hunt. But that's not what we went for anyway. We went to check out the late winter wildlife, take photographs, look for fallen antlers and get to know other members of SOLAR.

After viewing the creepy carp in the Kingfisher Lagoon, we left the Nature Center area and headed down Deer Run Trail for maybe half an hour seeing some birds, gray squirrels and chipmunks. Then we started bush-whacking to see if we could find any antlers. To our dismay, none of us found any detached antlers, but we did come upon the remains of a deer and solaced ourselves with the fact that it was part of nature's food cycle.

We got back to the trail and Matthew decided it was lunch time. We bush-whacked a bit off the trail and dined among some fallen trees. The weather was fantastic! It was sunny, warm and there was not one complaint of any discomfort, although a majority of us headed straight for the restrooms upon our return to the Nature Center.

At lunchtime I headed back into the woods still obsessed with finding some antlers. At one point I looked up and there were three deer up ahead of me. I snapped a pic, but with only a point-and-shoot camera, I doubt if it will be SOLAR award-winning quality.

After lunch we skirted Wildwing Lake. We came to a bridge across a ravine where we had the highlight of our day: chickadees eating birdseed right out of our hands. (NOTE: I will not fuss up as to who provided the birdseed, huh?, Matthew, since feeding the animals is prohibited...) Upon heading back our group came upon some weird plants by the trail, and being a bit of a wildflower aficionado, I informed them it was Skunk Cabbage, would they like to get closer and have a good whiff??

After hiking, some headed home, but a few of us went to the Farm Center to see maple syrup being made and to check out the farm animals. One of the club members gave two of us SOLARites a quick run-down on the making of maple

syrup. How the sap is 98% water and that it takes 40 gallons of sap to make one gallon of syrup. Also the sap must be retrieved when the nights are below freezing and the day temps above freezing because that's when the sap is sweetest. So, thank you, Priscilla Dana, for that information.

Matthew had told us that there were some colossal pigs over at the farm, so we had to check the pens for PIGLETS, and there was a cute, pink litter entertaining all who watched their antics! So, it was a fun- and info-filled day and well worth the trip! I give it a four-star SOLAR rating. There are some other SOLAR events coming up at Kensington this spring. Be sure and put them on your calendar!

Review

Marvelous Marvins

by Jim Gilfix

On March 10 SOLAR met at Marvelous Marvins Fun House for 3 hours of fun. Twenty "kids" showed up ranging from 2 1/2 to 40's. We played on their "over 300" toys, mechanical games, kiddie rides and authentic old-fashioned pinball machines. Erin, the 2 1/2 year old loved the variety of rides, the circus atmosphere and the continuous bells and bleeps, although the 6 foot musical rats scared her silly.

Most of us had "dinner" and helped celebrate by birthday. After dinner I was presented with a cake the likes of which I have never seen. Besides the two people in the hot tub, there were mountains, a river, trees, and a wolf howling at the moon. Cyndy did an excellent job making it and the rest of us did a good job eating it.

**Don't forget to buy
your SOLAR T-shirt!**

Upcoming Activity

Camping in the Thumb

June 14-16, 1996, camping at the Tip-of-the-thumb, Michigan; plus hiking, canoeing, fishing and swimming. Here is a weekend trip aimed at small children to young teens, but there are many things for adults to do, if they are in the mood for a slower pace.

The sand dunes along Lake Huron are perfect for hikers with short legs and small arms. We will be spending the weekend at Fort Crescent State Park. In the mid-1800's Port Crescent was a booming lumbering and fishing town, it was known for its salt wells, fine sand and good docks. Today, it is one of the most scenic and unusual state parks along Lake Huron. As the last remnants and residents of the town vanished in the 1930's their 181 space campground now occupies the site of a ghost town whose remains are marked only by a few brick-chimney tombstones. Due to this we will listen to ghost stories aimed at small children, on Saturday night, at our campfire.

We will arrive at the campground Friday, June 14 and hopefully will be able to get some of the "premium sites" situated right off the beach. On Saturday we will play. This park has 3 miles of almost pure white beach along Saginaw Bay, with dunes which are said to be like soft mountains to be climbed and conquered. The sweeping panoramas that the high perches of sand provides are wonderful. Wildflowers and bird-life thrive in the wetlands that border the river here.

Throughout the park, birdwatchers can spot waterfowl, songbirds and shorebirds, including the relatively rare piping plover. The Huron

Audubon Society maintains nesting sites for winged visitors--from blue birds to ospreys. Picnic decks sit atop a boardwalk that weaves among the dunes.

Of course there is swimming in the gentle waves and basking in the sun. The Pinnebog River, which flows from south to north as it empties into Saginaw Bay can be canoed. There is a canoe livery located just outside the park. This river can also be fished for bass, panfish and northern pike. Also in Port Austin boats can be chartered for perch and trolling Lake Huron for salmon and lake trout is also available.

Most of the hiking takes place in their wooded interior of jack pine and oak trees. The park has 3 miles of hiking trails. Their figure-8 loop winds through wooded dunes along the Pinnebog River and passes several scenic viewpoints of Saginaw Bay. You will be crossing the old iron bridge over the Old River Channel. In 1988 the park added a 0.75 mile exercise trail with 10 stations. There is also a boardwalk that provides handicapped visitors access across the dunes to observation decks and picnic tables above the beach. This park is listed in the book "Michigan's Best Outdoor Adventures with Children" and should make for a wonderful outdoor weekend for families and other SOLAR Folks.

Should the weather be Not-the-best for outdoor time there are may side trips in the area. While the trolling boats for salmon and lake trout can be a bit expensive, the "party boats" or chartered boats for perch are fine for young anglers. They take anywhere from 20-30 anglers from one reef in the bay to the next until they find a mess of yellow bellies, or perch, and then the fishing can be fast and furious. This type of fishing is ideal for six or seven year old anglers as the party boats are large

enough for children to get up and walk around plus there is a bathroom on board. They often have special prices for families. You can rent a pole and bait is included.

Also there is Port Austin 5 miles to the east. This town resembles a painting of a fishing village with its wide, shady streets. Finan's drugstore has a soda fountain dating back to the 1940's. Caseville to the west is a busy harbor with its share of restaurants and craft and antiques shops. Finally there is Bad Axe 17 miles to the south.

Sunday, if the weather is not stormy, we will pack up and go to the Sanilac State Historic Site, 30 miles to the south. Once there we will view the 1,000 year old petroglyph's, or the prehistoric rock carvings the aboriginal artists left. The only carvings in Michigan. For more on this unique park, see separate article.

This weekend should be a lot of fun, adventure for little people, and a good rest for the rest of us. Contact Jim Gilfix at (810) 539-0489 for more information. Those choosing to go camping will reserve and/or pay for this on your own. We will have the traditional pot-luck Saturday dinner. There is no pay-ahead costs. Sign up at the May and June SOLAR meetings.

Don't forget to stick around following the May SOLAR General Membership meeting for a presentation by Derek Blount, President of the North Country Trail Association!

Review

Map Orienteering with SMOC

by Nancy Day

HEY, this map orienteering is fun! That's what a few of us SOLARites discovered Sunday, March 31st at Highland Recreation Area. We showed up, paid 3 bucks for our maps, and let the Southern Michigan Orienteering Club show us their stuff!

It was a crash course, but an excellent introduction to the activity and it sparked a lot of interest. First we did a beginner course and became familiar with the basics. After a 15 minute talk by SOLARite Lester Mok, a few of us headed off with our instructor Pat to find some "ruins". We actually found our way to the old Ford Lodge via the back woods and usually at least one of us could point out where we were on the map when quizzed by Pat.

The whole afternoon was well worth it despite the rather cold breezes. Afterwards we were told we now qualify for the "red courses"-whatever that means!

Upcoming Activity

KIDSTOWN

This next trip is aimed at kids age 2-7 but those slightly younger can go as well as those a bit older, and adults will also enjoy it. It's called KIDSTOWN and it's located across from the Wonderland mall on Plymouth Road. This trip was requested by Erin, who is 2 1/2 and wanted to play with more SOLAR kids, and for the parents of the SOLAR young kids to meet and maybe discuss things to do together over the next months.

At ground level steps and rope nets and other climbing devices lead to what's overhead: several hundred

feet of colored, serpentine plastic tunnels to crawl through. This place is totally tubular. It's an indoor playground, featuring a huge structure of passageways, assorted slides, pools of plastic balls and other fun things.

Adults are not allowed in unless they bring a child! But then adults are free, kids cost about \$5. For 50 cents you can rent knee pads, or bring your own. This is similar to Kid Kingdom and the various Discovery Zones but its wider, so adults can enjoy it more.

The date is May 21---at 6:30p.m. You can buy pizza, hot dogs or nachos plus drinks at their in-house restaurant. This is a NON-SOLAR trip and open to all SOLAR and NON-SOLAR. Contact Jim Gilfix for more information.

Upcoming Class

Wilderness Survival Skills (or surviving with Mike Felix!)

Want to learn the basic skills necessary for wilderness survival? Then sign up for the SOLAR Wilderness Survival Skills class.

This class will be held the four Wednesdays in June (5,12,19,26) at Mike Felix's House. Such skills as fire building, water and food procurement, shelter building, etc. will be taught.

The final practical will be a weekend (July 12-14) of simulated survival situations in order to practice what you've learned in the class. The cost of the class will be \$55 and sign ups will be taken at the May SOLAR membership meeting. For further information contact Mike Felix at (313) 722-3994.

Upcoming Activity

Fossil Hunt

On July 14, 1996 we will be once again meeting at Arcona, Canada for the 6th annual fossil hunt. This trip is perfect for kids as young as 4 and for adults as old as...well 72.

We will do some hiking, mostly on stairs, a lot of eating, at the pot-luck lunch and then some swimming, wading and walking down their fossil stream. For those of you who like to plan ahead, there is also an option to camp at the family campground across the street. The attraction there is their indoor pool, their outdoor pool, their hot tub, sauna, free mini-golf, playgrounds, modern bathrooms, hot showers, game room and its very close to the fossil park. See next months RAY and handout for more information or call Jim Gilfix.

Review

Laser Quest

by Jim Gilfix

On March 24, thirty-one SOLARites met at Laser Quest for an unusual couple of games. We then broke for pizza, Vernors, lasagna and a regular birthday cake, to again celebrate my birthday.

The next game was a "double" game with two teams divided in a random order after three minutes of playing. Leslie Cordova was playing with her brother, who was in from out of town. When the teams were chosen they ended up on opposite sides, one was "green" and one was "red". Leslie said "I had no choice, I had to shoot him."

It seemed to be a lot more fun to be on "teams" and the GREEN TEAM WON THE MATCH. Stayed tuned for upcoming SOLAR meetings for the next sign up!

Upcoming Activity

Sanilac Petroglyphs State Park

On June 16, 1996 join SOLAR for a day trip to Sanilac Petroglyphs State Park (Kid Friendly). In the sandstone outcroppings near the south fork of the Cass River in Michigan's Thumb, aboriginal artists left the only prehistoric rock carvings found in Michigan.

Experts estimate that, at least 1,000 year ago, Michigan's early human inhabitants carved the wildlife figures, hunting scenes and animal tracks as part of a hunting ritual or to record dreams and visions. Most of the carvings are near the parking lot, but there is a 2 mile trail that winds around the park and twice crosses a branch of the Cass River along stepping stones. Eight interpretive posts line the walk. They explain different parts of a Chippewa village in-days-gone-by.

The trail also crosses a swing bridge over the river, impressive birch trees, great oaks, a beaver dam and another bridge all are on the trail. The quiet beauty and solitude of the Cass River--especially at the back of the park where large maples and other hardwoods arch across the stream--provides the perfect setting to contemplate the strange and fascinating record left by people who passed through Michigan hundreds of years before the new world was discovered.

We'll meet at the parking lot at 1p.m. and finish about 5p.m. This will be a good family outing for the day, or the last day of a great weekend camping trip (see other article in Ray). This trip is FREE and open to all. Contact Jim Gilfix for more information.

Upcoming Activity

Caving in Kentucky with "Cordova the Barbarian"

Back by popular demand we are going caving again in Northeast Kentucky. The dates are July 28-28, 1993!!! The plan is to drive down to Olive Hill, KY on Friday (7 hour drive) and stay at Carroll's Inn Motel.

Saturday morning we will go to breakfast at the infamous James Drive-in, (delicious food at very low prices), then go directly to some caves, mostly on private property, for 5-8 hours of caving. Expect more of the same on Sunday, with a stop back at James Drive-in on the way home for the best milk shakes and cobbblers you've ever tasted. We should be heading back to Detroit at 2:00 or 3:00 p.m.

This trip involves prolonged crawling through small constricted passages, some of which may contain water. The rewards are a great physical challenge, and you will probably see lots of bats, cave crickets, and very interesting formations.

You must be in good physical condition to participate in this activity. Equipment needed: old coveralls, or any type of loose fitting clothing, knee and elbow pads, gloves, boots that cover the ankle, hard hat with chin strap (SOLAR can provide), 3 sources of light, one must be mounted on your hard hat (duct tape works well), and extra batteries.

The cost of the trip is \$55. Sign ups will be taken at the May SOLAR Membership meeting. For further information call Leslie Cordova (alias "Cohen the Barbarian") at (810) 547-5626.

Upcoming Activity

Clifty Falls State Park

Now is the time to make plans for your July 4 weekend. While this is a kid friendly trip, it will also be an excellent trip for the most rugged for SOLAR adults. We will be traveling to Southern Indiana, (about a 6 hour drive from Royal Oak) to the Clifty Falls State Park.

You ask what is so special here? Well this park has it all.... This park is famous for its deeply cut gorges, sheer rock walls, 3 miles of canyon, five major waterfalls ranging from 60 feet to over 80 feet!, plus numerous minor falls in the park. Clifty Falls, located at the upper end of the gorge, cascades over a series of wide, shallow steps of rock jutting from the cliff before tumbling more than 70 feet into the pool below.

Even in midsummer, when the flow of water is diminished, the falls are a dramatic sight. Ten hiking trails, of varying lengths and difficulty, run along the gorge and through surrounding woodlands, among them a mile-long self-guided nature trail. This trail is listed as "easy" and ideal for small children. Of the other 9 trails, one is Moderate, 2 are moderately rugged, 5 are rugged and 1 is very rugged.

Other recreational facilities include a large swimming pool, tennis courts, a bathhouse, a waterslide, playground equipment, 5 picnic shelters, a play-field for kite flying, and a nature center containing exhibits of fossils from the gorge and a bird-watching room where a one-way window enables onlookers to view the winged visitors, leaving them undisturbed.

An observation tower, just a short walk from the nature center, offers a panoramic view of the Ohio River a half mile to the south.

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The Clifty Inn's dining room has a great view of the activity on the Ohio River and nearby, Madison. Near the Hickory Grove Shelter, in the gorge, is Tunnel Falls, listed as a 83 foot drop. Also nearby is a walking tunnel through the hills.

We will be staying in their Modern Class A campsites which have electrical outlets, modern restrooms and showers. The naturalist staff conducts daily activities, including hikes, nature talks, and campfires. We can expect to see an assortment of wildflowers, ferns and mosses, plus white-tailed deer, red and gray fox, bobwhite quail and rabbits.

Songbirds abound throughout the park and vultures soar and glide overhead on 6-foot wings. Hawks are also seen hunting small mammals in the shrubby old field areas around trail 10. The park is connected to the Hoosier Hills Bicycle Trail, which goes towards Batesville. Prior to reaching Batesville it goes to Versailles State Park which also has a swimming pool complex, figure-eight water slide, canoe and paddleboat rentals, horse rentals hiking trails and of course Versailles Lake.

Most of us will drive here on Sunday (to play) but some can of course, ride their bikes. Charles Kuralt once called Madison, (the near-by town) the most beautiful river town in America. The old LIFE magazine chose Madison as the most pleasant small town in the country in which to live. Its been praised as the most beautiful in the Midwest, and on the banks of the Ohio River.

Indiana is one of the best known CAVE states in the U.S. There are over 400 known caves. Within one hour's drive west of the park are over 10 caves. this includes the largest, Wyandotte cave, which is over 23 miles long. This cave is shown on commercial tours. It's world famous

for its Monument Mountain--the highest underground mountain in any known cave on Earth. When visiting this cave you will see an awe-inspiring room known as Rothrock's Cathedral, which is 185 feet high, 360 feet long and 140 feet wide.

The ghost of Chief Wyandotte, a weird and entertaining play of shadows is also present. Stalagmites, delicate and exquisite formations called helictites that are rare are here too. They have a two-hour walk or a five or eight hour tour during which you'll not only walk, but crawl, climb, descend a pole and in places and travel by lantern light.

Nearby is Sibert's Well Cave. By climbing down a pit for 20 feet one can enter a subterranean stream passage. This cave is of interest because of its fauna, which includes blind fish. Just north of there is Marengo Cave. This cave is comfortable 54 degrees all the time.

Concerts were once held in a subterranean room noted for its acoustics. The highlights is the Crysta Palace, acknowledged by speleologists as one of the ten most beautiful cavern rooms anywhere. In the south is Boone's Mill Cave, the entrance to the cave is 12 feet wide and 5 feet high. A stream about 1 foot deep flows from the entrance. The passage may be followed upstream for about 350 feet to the site of some waterfalls, one of which is 10 feet high and another of which is 13 feet high. A guide-book to the caves can be obtained nearby.

Also in the south is the Falls of the Ohio National Wildlife Preservation Area. There is a fossil bed--the largest exposed coral reef in the world--which is part of Clarksville's Riverside Park. Plus the infamous Wave-lek Water Park. In addition to the Olympic-sized pool where three foot waves ripple the surface there is the Water Boggan, a giant water slide that hurtles you down a

toboggan-style flume, and the Rampage, a giant water roller coaster. Its part of the Marriott Inn complex, but is open to the public.

The plan is to arrive Thursday, July 4th, check out area, bar-b-que, camp fire. Friday, hike the various trails, see the waterfalls, play in the pool and on the water slide, eat... Saturday, check out the caves, maybe the Water Park, maybe more hiking, eat... Sunday, more of the same, plus ride (or bike) to Versailles Park (after packing up) play, canoe, eat....then drive home.

The cost is \$50 per campsite -- Up to 6 people and NO MORE THAN TWO TENTS. The money is needed NOW. Please sign up and pay as soon as possible. Make checks out to SOLAR, as soon as I get money I will make the RESERVATIONS. This is a big weekend so we need to reserve the sites as soon as possible. This is a SOLAR event and is open to all SOLAR members. Handouts available at the May and June SOLAR meetings. For further information, contact Jim Gilfix.

Great Lakes Sea Kayak Symposium

The dates for the 12th annual Great Lakes Sea Kayak Symposium are July 18-21, 1996 at Grand Marais, Michigan (On the South Shore of Lake Superior in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. At the east border of Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore). The symposium will include lectures, workshops, instruction, boat trials, demonstrations, and guided trips.

Registration is \$65 before July 1st and \$80 after that date. For further information contact Cathy Susan at (313) 668-2437.

For Sale

Backpack tents - 3lb, 9oz Eureka Clip Flashlight Tent, 3-season, 2-person, lists at \$170, asking \$95 (used). Eureka Windriver 2, 7lb, 3oz, 2-person, 3-season, lists at \$220, asking \$125 (used). Eureka Windriver 4, 12lb, 9oz 4-person, 3-season, lists at \$295, asking \$149 (never used). Call Matthew Dalton (810) 227-3720.

For Sale

Lowe Sirocco Women's Backpack, 1991 model. Used once, like new. Weight 4lbs, 8oz, capacity 3500-4380 cubic inches, internal frame, purple/green/black. Asking \$150. Contact Cindy Harrison-Felix at (313) 722-3994 (h) or (313) 745-1188 (w).

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).

Walleyball!!!

Every Monday night, 7-9p.m. at Bailey Recreation Center, Westland, MI. Contact Margaret Martin at (313) 721-2821 (h) or (313) 722-7520 (w).

Upcoming "Kid Friendly" Trips!!

August- Rattlesnake, swim, eat, games. September - camp, day canoe, scavenger hunt. October - Halloween hayrides/stories.

ACTIVITIES CALENDAR

May

- 3-5 Weekend Rock Climbing Practical II, Rattlesnake Pk., Jim Young (810) 731-2504
- 5 Sunday Hiking/Wild Flower Identification (KF), Kensington Metro Park, Jim Gilfix (810) 539-0489
- 7 Tuesday General Membership Meeting, Colony Hall, Southfield, Steve Gardner (810) 547-4998
- 10-12 Weekend Rock Climbing, Rattlesnake Prov. Pk., Jim Young (810) 731-2504
- 15 Wednesday Advanced Backpacking Class, Felix's House, Inkster, Cindy Harrison-Felix (313) 722-3994
- 16 Thursday **Kidstown (KF), Jim Gilfix (810) 539-0489
- 17-19 Weekend Wilderness First Aid Class, Waterloo Rec. Area, Jim Young (810) 731-2504
- 18-19 Sat-Sun Annual Spring Bird Migration, Point Pelee Nat'l Pk., Canada, Cindy Harrison-Felix (313) 722-3994
- 24-27 Weekend North Manitou Island Backpack Trip, Leland, MI, Leslie Cordova (810) 547-5626
- 24-27 Weekend **Camping/Hiking, Georgian Bay, Canada, Mark Lipson (810) 661-3288

June

- 1 Saturday North Country Trail Quest Kick Off Event, Hudson Lake Recreation Area, Morenci, MI, Marco Scarpetta (313) 823-8564
- 4 Tuesday General Membership Meeting, Colony Hall, Southfield, Steve Gardner (810) 547-4998
- 5,12,19,26 Weds Wilderness Survival Skills Class, Felix's House, Inkster, MI, Mike Felix (313) 722-3994
- 7-9 Weekend Rock Climbing, Rattlesnake Prov. Pk., Jim Young (810) 731-2504
- 11 Tuesday Advanced Backpacking Class, Felix's House, Inkster, Cindy Harrison-Felix (313) 722-3994
- 14-16 Weekend Port Crescent State Park Camping (KF), Port Austin, MI, Jim Gilfix (810) 539-0489
- 15,22 Saturdays Canoe Paddling Class, Doug's House, Doug Lanyk (810) 634-4551
- 16 Sunday Sanilac Petroglyphs State Park (KF), Sanilac, MI, Jim Gilfix (810) 539-0489

July

- 4-7 Weekend Clifty Falls State Park Camping (KF), Indiana, Jim Gilfix (810) 539-0489
- 12-14 Weekend Wilderness Survival Skills Class Practical, Mike Felix (313) 722-3994
- 14 Sunday 6th Annual Fossil Hunt (KF), Canada, Jim Gilfix (810) 539-0489
- 26-28 Weekend Caving in Kentucky, Olive Hill, KY, Leslie Cordova (810) 547-5626

** Denotes a Non-SOLAR activity

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

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, 760 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 21730 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) 547-4990
Vice-President	Tom Dunn / (313) 494-4212
Secretary	Mike Bantas / (313) 425-4109
Treasurer	Cyndy Erickson / (313) 367-8240
Activities	Leslie Cordova / (810) 547-5020
Membership	Sharon Stanek / (313) 565-8671
Equipment	Mike Felix / (313) 722-3994
Bylaws	Marie Crow / (810) 547-4986
Education	Jim Young / (810) 720-8253
SOLAR Ray	Cindy Harrison-Felix / (313) 722-3994
Historian	John Gules / (810) 574-0243
Programs	Margaret Martin / (313) 721-2821
At Large	Cindy Harrison-Felix / (313) 722-3994
Bob Westbrook / (313) 513-8454	Joan Westbrook / (313) 513-8454
Mo DeFrance / (810) 229-8283	Larry Martin / (313) 591-3600
Bill Halvargis / (810) 689-1911	Al Fylak / 852-7514
	Joan Ryan / (810) 570-1511

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



SOLAR CLUB
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SOUTHFIELD MI 48037

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