

The SOLAR Ranger

THE SCHOOL FOR OUTDOOR LEADERSHIP, ADVENTURE AND RECREATION

Review

A Quetico Journal

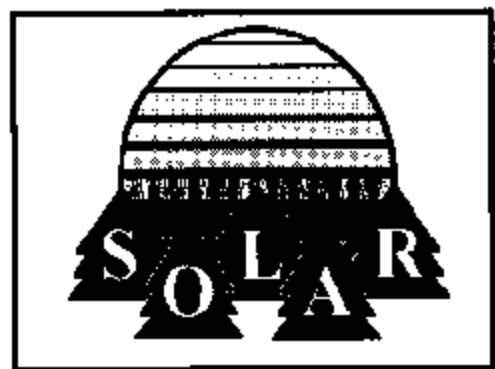
By Susan Guydos

MONDAY

Up at 5:00 - or at least that's when Tom requested the wake-up call... We didn't want to budge as we were, of course, up half the night stuffing and unstuffing dry bags - portages and visions of waterfalls in our minds. We get on the road, and head up the Gunflint Trail - Highway 12 is a scenic byway that heads quite northwesterly towards the Canadian border - a 57 mile drive of beautiful land, forests, bogs (swamps? fens?), and lakes. Fog hid the sun from view when it first rose, but Dave, my passenger and canoe partner, caught brilliant orange glimpses of it through the pink mist as it got higher in the sky.

Voyager, our outfitter, found at the End of the Trail (pretty literally!) carries all ten of us, our canoes and gear first to the Canadian border, then to Hook Island. After watering the boys' and girls' trees on the island, we paddle for the ranger station of Quetico Provincial Park. About a third of the way across our first imposing stretch of open water, the already overcast day gives way to rain. Half of us don rain gear, Margaret toughs it out, and Sid appears unphased in general by the downpour. Dave takes this opportunity to take a nap...

The crowd at the ranger station pays slowly, standing under the shelter



hoping the rain will let up. Tom doesn't understand why... "it's a canoe trip! You're gonna get wet one way or the other!!!" The ranger pulls up in her power boat, giving us a quick lesson on Quetico, camping, and portaging, as well as taking our money for waterproof maps and other misc.

Finally we venture out - first to the Indian Petroglyphs. Pictures for all, and we're off - dissention occasionally arising as to the correct course. Ask us if mutiny is possible in a canoe flotilla... Loons are spotted, flying over or sitting low like submarines in the water - I hear my first real loon call. We near the point where we will soon need to portage around Silver Falls. Tom gathers the group on a small point to coordinate - STAY TO THE RIGHT! We shove off, only to find we weren't in the right place, and so head east, only to find that we had been in the right place. Realizing our overshoot, as well as time of day and first-day-of-canoeing soreness, we head about halfway back, and make camp in the sight of 'Bald Rock', a small but obvious island of white rocks. It is a great site - 'The Hilton!' exclaims Steve. (See Quetico, Page 2)

NCT Effort Update

With the completion of the UP Fall Color Bike Tour SOLAR has completed 332 miles of the North Country Trail in Michigan.

Miles Completed

332

Miles to Go

540

Section Coordinators

Southern L.P. (113)

Marco Scarpetta (313) 823-8564

Central L.P. (53)

Mike Banks (313) 425-4169

Northern L.P. (9)

Leslie Cordova (810) 547-5626

Eastern U.P. (3)

Steve Gardner (810) 547-4998

Central U.P.

Carol McCrie (810) 229-5232

Western U.P. (20)

Bob Graham (313) 453-7313

(Quetico, cont'd from Page 1)

Fishermen set out to catch dinner, tents go up, water boils. The sky looks like dusk at 5:00, and there is a cool breeze. Loons cry out nearby, and small waves lick the edges of our peninsula. I am starving! Larry creates a Thanksgiving extravaganza for the paddlers - YUM!

TUESDAY

I could actually see the sun along with some blue in the morning sky today. The location of the tent was a choice between bad and worse, and our backs are letting us know about it, but the possibility of a clear day sure lifts our spirits. It is even quite warm as we pack up to leave. Steve and Larry have decided not to go on - we all agree that we will probably not make the Falls Chain, our original destination, so the plan is to portage through Silver Falls, set up a base camp, and "day paddle" from there. The realization that I am completely surrounded by water and islands as far as I can see has sunk in - I am

overwhelmed and at peace all at once. What a beautiful, wonderful place.

Mergansers, first mistaken for loons, a common sight now, provide a photo opportunity for Dave as we paddle over and pick up Doug and Denny, who had camped separate from the larger group to comply with the "9 people to a group" rule inside the park. Off we go, hugging the right wall, in search of Silver Falls. Mist rising ominously in the distance - the butterflies in my stomach fluttering. The portage is long (600 yards), and the waterfall amazing - much more a 25 foot falls than a five foot falls the map lead us to believe it was. Good thing Tom didn't try to brave THIS one! The possibility of going over in a kayak is discussed - hmmmm. Two trips for the gear and the canoe. I carried a third of the way. David the rest (I'll try for longer next time, we still have to go back!) After the portage, Steve and Larry join us for lunch, and most of us also go in, at least, for a short dip. The day is actually getting quite hot - clear skies and barely a breeze,

plus that canoe is damn heavy!

After the lunch break, we set out for our next portage, falls, and camp. Again, someone seems to have misplaced our next portage. The map shows quite a nice selection of islands, if only it would show ALL of them. We camp on a Quetico Mystery Island, which Doug and Denny circle before dinner to determine our location. Clouds come in as the day ends - looks like Northern Lights will have to wait yet another night.

Tents go up quickly; all spots appear relatively flat (yea!) Tonight Jonnie and Margaret are cooking (something about a pepper?) We get soup, rice with veggies and chicken (thoughtfully withheld for me!) and we salivate at the rumors circulating about cake! Bad jokes abound at dinner as we are beginning to grow more comfortable with each other.

The water is like glass - Dennis sees the opportunity to fish. The bugs aren't too bad as we tie up bear (okay, chipmunk!) bags, filter water and I daydream of flat ground and marshmallows. My first group campfire - It makes it past the crucial 15 minute mark and acceptably sets fire to David's marshmallows - My thanks to Mike Felix! A pretty peaceful night, except for a few snorers (I know, we ALL snore)

WEDNESDAY

The sun rises for us again this morning, glad it's not raining but it will be another warm one. Of course those who were snoring were awake first.

Margaret and Jonnie create eggstraordinary Denver omelettes for us this morning - we all consider seriously the expense and weight of a non-stick pan as we devour our breakfast. Denny and Doug and Dennis are out fishing even before I (See Quetico, page 4)



Did You Know?

By presenting your membership card at any of the area retailers listed below you will be entitled to special discounts reserved for SOLAR members. These discounts vary from store to store and its always best to check with the manager on duty at the time of purchase. So get out there and get yourself a deal and support these stores, thanking them for supporting the SOLAR Club!

Joe's Army-Navy Surplus,
Royal Oak, Pontiac, and Warren
Moosejaw Outfitters,
Keego Harbor
Surplus City,
Berkley and Westland
Venture Outdoors,
Plymouth

Upcoming Event

Massage Workshop

Just what you've been waiting for!

On Saturday, December 14, 1996, a stress management and massage therapy workshop will be presented for SOLAR members at the Cara Lutheran Church in Berkley, just east of the high school. Participants will be put into pairs for the "hands on" portion of the workshop. All work will be done over clothing. The session will take place from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon and will be held on the carpeted floor of the church's lounge/library so bring a floor mat or therm-a-rest for comfort's sake. Cost of this workshop by certified professionals is \$20. Sign ups will be taken at the November and December meetings and are limited to 40. For more information call Paula Dirkes at (810) 399-9628.

Activities Calendar

November

- 2 **Saturday** **Skills Exchange and Repair Day**
Doug Lanyk (810)634-4551 (see page 4)
- 5 **Tuesday** **General Membership Meeting, Annual Photo Contest, Swap and Sell, Colony Hall, Southfield, Mike Banks (313) 425-5169 (see page 7)**
- 8-10 **Weekend** **November at Nordhouse, Nordhouse Dunes Nat'l Lakeshore, Steve Gardner (810) 547-4998 (see page 7)**
- 12 **Tuesday** **Ethnic Dinner, Mongolian Barbecue Royal Oak, Jim Gilfix (810) 539-0489**
- 7 **Weekend** **Gales of November - Kayaking Lake Superior, Mike Banks (313)235-8129**

December

- 3 **Tuesday** **General Membership Meeting, and Annual Holiday Party Colony Hall, Southfield, Mike Banks (313) 425-5169**
- 6-8 **Weekend** **Cabins / Hiking North Country Trail Traverse City, Linda Rosa (313) 261-5584 (see page 6)**
- 14 **Saturday** **Christmas Caroling / Pot Luck, Westland area Margaret Martn (313) 721-2821**
- 14 **Saturday** **Massage Therapy Workshop Cana Lutheran Church, Berkley, Paula Dirks (810) 399-9628 (see page 3)**

January

- 7 **Tuesday** **General Membership Meeting, Colony Hall, Southfield, Mike Banks (313) 425-5169**
- 24-26 **Weekend** **** Crawathon - Caving Trip, Olive Hill, KY Leslie Cordova (810) 547-5626 (see page 7)**
- Tentative** **Snowshoe Superior, North Country Trail Upper Peninsula, 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.

November Swap and Sell

Don't forget: Along with everything else going on at the November General membership meeting, SOLAR will be holding its annual Swap and Sell. Bring any equipment you may want to sell or trade to the meeting. An area will be set up for this purpose.

Upcoming Event

Equipment Repair Day and Skills Exchange

It's time to: put the bikes away. Sew up the broken zipper on the tent. Tune and wax the skis. Clean the campstove, fix the torn grommets on the rainfly. Change the bearings on your rollerblades. Seam seal and waterproof all the camping stuff. Etc... We will also show you how to customize your equipment, add pockets to gear, straps to stuff sacks, create your own parawing.

On Saturday November 2 We will have available skilled members willing to teach and help you get all your toys back into prime working order. The tools and space to work will also be available. The skills exchange will be at Douglas Lanyk's house, give a call if you are interested (810) 634-4551.

People

Warmest congratulations to **Julia Gordon and John Fox** on the announcement of their engagement!

And a new address for John:
John Fox
4837 Sunpoint Circle, #714
Indianapolis, IN 46237

(317) 889-7007

Harry and Mary Price, besides being very active with SOLAR, are also very active with Scouting. That organization has presented them with the Silver Beaver Award, the highest award in Scouting given for leadership. Congratulations!

(Quetico, cont'd from page 2)

am up. They return successful. We didn't depend on fish for food, but we didn't tell them that! We have had quite a nice sampling of Quetico fish fare since arriving.

The general consensus is that we have gone too far once again, so we break camp after a group discussion, and head south, retracing our steps. We discover that we floated within 50 feet of our narrow channel to the portage we were searching for the previous day. It was only about a foot deep and cleverly disguised by reeds. Amazed, we paddle around the point, drop our gear, and hang our bear bags at what would later serve as tonight's camp. Returning to the portage, we pack up and carry over the second longest portage of the trip. About 200 yards, and not QUITE as rocky as Silver Falls. David carries the canoe the whole way.

Loaded up, we paddle out, cruising by what looks suspiciously like a beaver lodge, and head for the Falls Chain. We are lean now, with only minimal gear - lunches, survival and first aid kits, and cameras (Margaret's camera gear of course was quite the opposite of minimal!) Travelling light is travelling fast, and we make wake for a good hour or so before we need to consult the map. A lunch break ensues while Denny and Doug orient us, and Dennis tries to loose all of his fishing lures.

We arrive at the first falls in the chain, Tom giving each canoe the option to portage and continue, or walk this

portage and explore, giving us about an hour to play around, as it is 3:30 and we need still to portage and return to camp as well as cook and set up before dark. Dave and I, Margaret, Dennis and Tom decide to leave the canoes, and explore this island and take it easy. Of course, Denny and Doug set out (Doug is really trying to convince us that our canoes are not THAT heavy...) kidnapping Jonnie and heading downstream in search of the 12 foot waterfall. Dave climbs a tree, Margaret and I play in the current and Dennis and Tom take pictures and explore.

We regroup, and head for camp. Dave and I commence cooking my vegetarian feast of black beans, couscous, cheese and tortillas, preceded by a spur of the moment rice soup concoction. Even a small bit of chocolate pudding is produced. (My apologies to Tom and Doug!) An hour of daylight wasn't enough to complete my camp duties, and darkness falls making the remains of the evening hectic. Quickly I realize though, that the sky is amazingly clear, and stars are plentiful (as are the mosquitoes!!!) Doug sees a flash of Northern Lights, and I catch glimpses of two shooting stars. Beautiful night!

THURSDAY

Today we split our group of eight in half. The Dennis' Tom and Doug all set out very early to head back out to conquer the entire Falls Chain (14 portages in one day, I think we figured...) Margaret, Jonnie, Dave and I pack up and head back towards Silver Falls and the portage from HELL. 2/3 of the way there, Margaret spots a white speck in the trees. Dave and I switch into stealth mode to try to see the bald eagle as closely as possible. Amazingly, we come within 25 feet of the eagle, who is perched about halfway up a tree. I think it was a young one, still brown below it's white head. He sat patiently sat still

Walleyball!!

Every Monday night, 7-9 p.m. at Bailey Recreation Center, Westland, MI. Contact Margaret Martin at (313) 721-2821 (home) or (313) 722-7620 (work).

for a couple pictures, and then soared away showing us his marvelous wingspan. It took my breath away....

We make it to our portage quickly, but decided we will rest a bit before the portage. Dave and I decide to try a run up the current at the base of the first "fall", really just a two foot rapid. After a missed first try, we are successful, and portage over a boulder, and paddle through a bit of calm water up to the next falls; again, more of a rapid. This one we also make short work of - Dave doesn't even need my help pushing the canoe up a bunch of branches and debris to the next level of water. Onward! We head for the next fall. Dave identifies this next one well - water only falls over half the channel, and then curves across and loops back towards itself, creating a great eddy for us to ride, free of charge right up to the bank for our next portage. This last portage is a bit longer, involving actually carrying and pushing over 50 feet or so of land. We can hear Silver Falls in the distance - we can see the current growing more turbulent. We are both pretty sure that we don't want to go all the way back and make the long portage, having paddled this far, (although Dave really wanted to ride back down a few of those rapids!) Cautiously, we walk the canoe along the edge of the river, eyeing the hillside for a trail up. An exploratory search within view of Silver Falls shows that we are near (horizontally, NOT vertically) the portage trail. Since there is no more going forward, we prepare to head up. Short but hard work, it is great to come back a different way than we went - we both hop in for a dip, and then chow on lunch.

We meet up with Steve and Larry, and after Margaret and Steve go skoshing in the mud portage at the bottom rapid, and Jonnie takes a

nap, the three canoes head back to the first night's camp. All is well, until we exit the mouth of the river, and are greeted by wind, then 1-2 foot waves and swells. Tired, we ride it out (Dave trying to make it more exciting for me) and arrive only a bit damp. Naps, berries, hikes and filtering fill the rest of the day, while we await the arrival of the other group, who expected to get back to us today.

Jonnie and Larry cook Tom's meal (sneaky, Tom!) - Rice, au jus, dried beef and warmed up couscous from the day before - the kicker is dessert - pistachio pudding AND cake! The falls exploration group is still nowhere to be seen, and as the strength of the wind increases, and daylight decreases, we plan on seeing them early tomorrow instead.

Steve and Margaret transform into photographic nerds as the sunset nears... There is a faraway haze on the horizon and the orange globe is beautiful as it turns shades of red I never knew existed before it drops into the tree line. A wonderful fire is built, stories told, and stars gazed upon. A group grope is instituted, and we all relax to the sound of the wind blowing through the trees.

FRIDAY

Clear, but slightly hazy skies await - the wind never really let up overnight, and swells form completely parallel to our intended course. We plan on leaving early, it looks like hard work, and we don't want to miss our 5:00 pickup. The missing four arrive around 9:00. They made it through the Falls Chain, but at the previous night's camp, decided to stay, rest and finish the trip the next day. The wind affected their trip also, and they had to paddle in it much longer than we did! After filling everyone with pancakes (Dennis has already had 8

fruit bars today) we set out across what looks like a never-ending bay of waves. Our first crossing is about 90 degrees off of where we would actually like to go, but then the wind is blowing 90 degrees off where we wish it was too. We cross the bay in about a half hour, regrouping and refueling, then crossing back into the US. We happily realize the wind is now (basically) at our backs, and we surf toward the ranger station, and finally Hook Island.

Awaiting the pickup on the island makes me realize that finally this amazing trip is over. I think back on the way the wind sounded blowing through this huge land of waters, trees, and boulders, how waves lulled me to sleep as they lapped at the shore, how the sky in the day warned of rain or heat, and filled with glistening stars and loon cries at night. Again, my respect and love of nature is reinforced and my spirit smiles as I look out across the waves and await the return to the mainland, and the plans for the next trip.

SOLAR Author Published

If you've been in the SOLAR Club for very long the subject of Jim Gilfix's book should come as no surprise. It's titled *Exciting and Innovative Wild Game Recipes. "Cooking with Style"*. Included in the book are jerky techniques, marinates, dressing tips, savory grilling methods and other mouthwatering and easy to fix dishes. The book sells for a mere \$4.95 and is available through Jim directly.

Perhaps this explains how Jim keeps taking that Spoon trophy home from the August Rattlesnake!

Upcoming Event

Third Annual Solar Photo Contest

Hey, Photobugs! At the November meeting we will be voting on the best picture from the last year at the third annual Solar Photo Contest. So, start looking through your great shots of animals, people and scenery or try to take the funniest picture!

For those of you who are photo-snappers, pick your best scenic, people, animal or humorous picture and make an enlargement that is at least 5" x 7" wide. Pictures should have been taken between September 15, 1995 and November 5, 1996. Matte it on matte board or put it in a frame and bring it to the November meeting. Voting will begin promptly at 7:40 so be there promptly at 7:30 to register your pictures. Put your name on the back of the picture, not the front. you may register up to 6 pictures.

If you are not a photographer, help out by doing silly, cute or funny things when a photographer is around so that you can be part of the contest, too.

As a special feature for the 20th anniversary, please bring a few memorable pictures of club events or activities from years past. We'll have a special table where people can peruse through them. Anyone able to donate a copy of those memorable pictures to the Solar library/archive, please make sure there is a date on the picture, location, and all people are clearly identified.

This will be a great contest, see you in November!

Upcoming Event

November at Nordhouse

SOLAR will be heading out to Nordhouse Dunes Wilderness Area on Lake Michigan for the weekend of November 8 thru 10.

Nordhouse is a great place to polish your backpacking skills or to try a "solo" trip for the first time. You can camp in a wilderness area less than 45 minutes from the parking lot, but you'll have to haul in or filter water. Wilderness camping is limited to eight people per site and standard sanitary practices (water sources, latrines, cooking, etc.) apply so backpacking experience is required to camp in the wilderness area. However, rustic camping is also available for about \$9 per site, limit of two tents per site. The rustic sites are beautiful and have nearby pumps and outhouses as well as being just a short hike to get into the wilderness areas. There is no camping fee for the wilderness area.

We may try something different this year and have a group campfire and potluck in one of the rustic sites so bring a stick of wood and your favorite dish to pass. Remember, this trip is notorious for inclement weather! **BE PREPARED FOR SNOW!**

You can give Steve Gardner a call at (810) 547-4998 to coordinate the trip.

Roll at the Dome

It's that time of year again when In-Line skating heads indoors at the Pontiac Silverdome. The schedule varies from week to week. For more information, contact Doug Lanyk at (810) 634-4551.

Upcoming Event

Caving in Kentucky

Well, you asked for more caving and you got it. I just got word that the annual Carter Caves Crawl-a-thon is scheduled for January 24-26, 1997!

The plan is to drive down to Olive Hill, KY on Friday and stay at Carroll's Inn Motel. I have reserved five rooms under my name. The cost will be \$30 for 2 nights lodging and will be first paid, first go. I will be supplying the entry forms for the Crawl-a-thon itself sometime in December. You can sign up for as many caving tours as you'd like on Saturday and/or Sunday. The cost is \$15 for two days of guided caving, and you will receive a free T-shirt. You must send this form to Carter Caves State Resort Park yourself, but don't delay as the trips do fill up quickly.

This trip could involve 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 interesting formations. You must be in good physical condition to participate in level 3 or 4 caving tours.

Equipment you will need: 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), three light sources with one that is mounted on your hard hat (duct tape works well) and extra batteries.

For more information, contact Leslie Cordova at (810) 547-5625. Note: future caving trip/bat count in March, 1997!

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.

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 sfgardner@gm.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

For more information about SOLAR call the

SOLAR Club Hotline

24 Hour Voice Mail: (810) 988-8658

STEERING COMMITTEE

President	Mike Banks / (313) 235-8129
Vice-President	Doug Lanyx / (810) 634-4551
Secretary	Cindy Harrison-Felix / (313) 722-3994
Treasurer	Cyndy Erickson / (313) 397-8240
Activities	Leslie Cordova / (810) 547-5625
Membership	Mary Price / (810) 477-7547
Equipment	Mike Felix / (313) 722-3994
Bylaws	Harry Price / (810) 477-7547
Education	Bob Graham / (313) 453-7313
SOLAR Ray	Steve Gardner / (810) 547-4998
Historian	Dave Foerster / (313) 453-0692
Programs	Margaret Martin / (313) 721-2821
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	Cindy Harrison-Felix / (313) 722-3994 Steve Gardner / (810) 547-4998
	Bob Westbrook / (313) 513-8454 Joan Westbrook / (313) 513-8454
	Mc DeFrance / (810) 229-8283 Larry Martin / (313) 591-3856
	Bill Halvange / (810) 660-1911 Al Fylak / 852-7514
	Joan Ryan / (810) 57DNE1

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



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