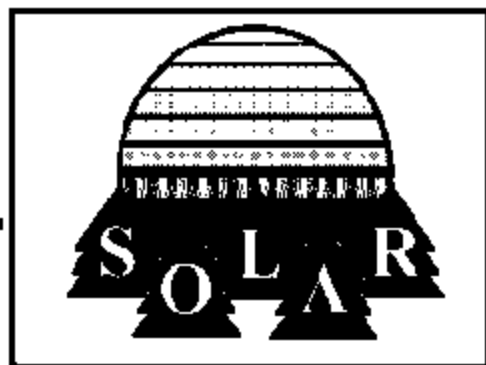


The SOLAR Day

THE SCHOOL FOR OUTDOOR LEADERSHIP, ADVENTURE AND RECREATION



Rattlesnake Review

By Jim Giffix

On August 8 the group at Rattlesnake met and discussed the weekend. We had the typical bon fire, marshmallows and the like. Saturday morning we decided NOT to do the bike race, so after breakfast I left the area with a few others. Our first stop was Crawford Lake conservation area and Indian village. I was very impressed with the village. They did an excellent job on setting it up and making it very interesting with true to life exhibits, artifacts, and pictures. One really felt they had stepped out of time into another era, although one was brought back quickly when one went into the gift store and saw the modern prices. The lake itself was truly a marvel, and so blue and deep. The boardwalk around it was also impressive. I highly recommend everyone who has not been here to do so on your next trip to the Rattlesnake area.

We were joined by more people from our group, though others left early. We car pooled to the Hamilton area and saw some incredible waterfalls. We did some hiking, steep bank climbing, picture taking, and were

amazed at the beauty of the waterfalls.

We drove to a few different falls then returned to Rattlesnake and hot showers and began cooking. Once again this year there were some excellent cooks entering the cook-off. With the assistance of Cyndy Erickson, we created a dish we could have called "Jeff", the name of a fish that took similar honors years ago. Instead our dish Cajun Jambaliah won Grand Prize and thus our names were placed on the SOLAR plaque, which Cyndy will hold until next year. More fire, marshmallows and the like and we went to bed.

Sunday, we held the bike race, then I and the others packed up and drove to Fergus to explore their Highland Games Festival and to eat. Afterwards Cyndy and I went to look for ghosts. While I thought I might have seen something, neither of our cameras recorded anything. We did meet a man in the museum who said he had "felt" one ghost, but it resided in their attic and this was closed to the public. Awwwwww... On to Elora, a quaint town with not only a waterfall downtown, but a stable (See Rattlesnake, Page 2)

NCT Effort Update

With the completion of Labor Day Mackinaw Bridge Walk, SOLAR has completed 232 miles of the North Country Trail in Michigan.

Miles Completed

232

Miles to Go

640

Section
Coordinators

Southern L.P. (113)

Marco Scarpetta (313) 823-8564

Central L.P. (63)

Mike Banks (313) 425-4169

Northern L.P. (16)

Leslie Cordova (810) 547-5626

Eastern U.P. (23)

Steve Gardner (810) 547-4998

Central U.P. (7)

Carol McCririe (810) 229-5232

Western U.P. (20)

Bob Graham (313) 453-7313

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!

(Rattlesnake, Cont'd from page 1) whirlpool. We enjoyed the farmers market, the cafe overlooking the water, and the quarry outside of town, but as we were running out of time we were unable to stop and go swimming. Maybe next year.

Review

— a little bit

By Jim Gilfix

We had a little bit of time, so we planned a little trip. Three little families and little 'o' me. We met at the little campground and we set up our little tents, we even had a little camper. We went for a swim and we went for a soak, we had a little rain, and we had a little dinner. We had a little fire and we had little smores. We had some ghost stories and we had some little scared folk. Then we slept. We ate, packed swam, hot tubbed then went to meet the other SOLARites. The sun was hot, the sky was blue. We waited a little bit, at their little museum. We read the little signs and we got a little smarter. We went for a little hike. We found some little fossils and we found a little sunshine. We had a little swim and we saw some little butterflies. The we climbed A LOT OF STAIRS!

We ate a little lunch, and we had a little watermelon. We had a little shower under their little 35 foot waterfall. We walked down the little creek, went under the little falls, we had some little folk and they had some little smiles. Another little swim, a little current, little rocks, little fossils — NOT — (okay, a big swim in a strong, swift current which threw us into large boulders but we found tons and tons of fossils) then we climbed A LOT OF STAIRS again! and our little trip was over.

See you next year for the 7th annual fossil hunt.

Review

A Different Rattlesnake

By Moe DeFrance

The usual hype of our upcoming August Rattlesnake was not there. The annual Bill Halvargas 2nd place winner was absent. Tucker, a faithful climber in the club, is now in his new home in New York. Almost all of the "old" members of the club were not able to make it up to climb, talk, camp, run, ride, and snore.

This trip was serene. It involved leisurely walks on the Bruce trail, visits to numerous waterfalls in lieu of climbing for some, and new faces. The surrounding area was explored, rather than just the park where we stayed. Although I had to leave early Sunday, there was even a ghost town explored by a few brave souls. The climbs somehow seemed more difficult. I'm sure it had nothing to do with a few pounds, a few years, and that heat that is relentless on the rocks. For the first time in years, there was not the slightest hint of rain. We all enjoyed brilliant sunshine during our days. We enjoyed glorious stars and sparklers at night.

The weekend was still filled with excitement. David, a new face at SOLAR (and one of the growing faction of "SOLAR Kids"), broke his wrist while careening around some gravel on his mountain bike.

The cook-off was very tasty. Winners were:
Grand Prize — Jim Gilfix (Jambolia)
Main Dish — Sharon (Sweet and sour chicken)
Side dish — Moe and Dave DeFrance (Stuffed zucchini Medley)

It was great fun meeting new people. Of course, that's what SOLAR is all about!

SOLAR Club Hotline Service

The SOLAR Club has instituted a new Voice Mail hot-line number to help in getting the word out about our organization. This new service will allow us to keep a constant phone number on our mailings and brochure information and give us a central common "Mail Box" for retrieving messages. Our initial goal is to streamline the dispensing of new member information, but additional uses are being discussed and may be implemented at a later date. If you have any ideas about additional uses for this number and would like to share them, you are encouraged to attend the Steering Committee meetings where this topic will be discussed.

The number for the SOLAR Club Hotline is (810) 988-8658.

Did You Know?

Did you know that your SOLAR Club membership gets you more than just great outdoors classes and activities? It can also help you get some great outdoor gear as well. 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 it's 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

ACTIVITIES CALENDAR

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 McCririe (810) 229-5232
- 3-6 Weekend** Backpacking Practical 2, Pictured Rocks NLS
Carol McCririe (810) 229-523
- 11-13 Weekend** UP Mountain Bike Color Tour, NCT
Steve Gardner (810) 547-4998
- 11-13 Weekend** Chain of Lakes Canoeing (KF)
Jim Gilfix, (810) 539-0489
- 19 Saturday** Haunted Houses & Amazing Mazes
Jim Gilfix, (810) 539-0489
- 20 Sunday** ** Orienteering, Highland Rec. Area, Noon - 3 pm,
beginners at 11am, Lester Mok (519) 256-0324
- 25-27 Weekend** 5th Annual Haunted Halloween, Bald Mtn.
Rec. Area, Leslie Cordova (810) 547-5626

November

- 2 Saturday** Skills Exchange and Repair Day
Doug Lanyk (810) 634-4551
- 5 Tuesday** General Membership Meeting, and Annual
Photo Contest Colony Hall, Southfield,
Mike Banks (313) 425-5169
- 8-10 Weekend** November at Nordhouse, Nordhouse Dunes
Nat'l Lakeshore, Steve Gardner (810) 547-4998
- 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

** 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 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.



Trout Fishing in America

By Jim Gilfix

Trout Fishing in America is a folk band out of Texas. On July 28, SOLAR met to go trout fishing in Dexter. We carefully placed worms on the hook. Natalie was able to do her own, Erika scrunched up her face and said yuuuuuu! So I put hers on, but later she started doing it herself. Cyndy had no trouble as she is a fisher person from way back. Larry Martin proudly showed off his grandson's "prize" and I caught a tasty brute. We paid for them, cooked them. I used an outdoor grill and the "nuke". They were REALLY good. We missed you.

Upcoming Event

Orienteering - A Cheap Thrill?

You bet! You can come and "get lost" with Lester - cheap! Huh... no, Lester is not the cheap thrill, but the event is.

Orienteering is the sport of using a map and compass and your navigation skills to find pre-set "controls" in the woods. This is a Southern Michigan Orienteering Club (call 'em "SMOC") event and they have 4 different courses, ranging from beginner to expert. These courses are open at noon and close at 3 PM. The basic orienteering skills are easy to learn and Lester will teach a free beginner class at 11 AM. Come for a leisurely trail hike or a blood-and-gut bushwhacking by yourself. You can try more than one course without extra charge. If you know the drill, then why not come again and practice your skills?

We'll meet on Sunday, October 20 at the Highland Recreational Area on M-59 between US 23 and Pontiac. Lester's class will start at 11 AM sharp. Meet him at the picnic shelter, about 3/4 mile from the entrance. Look for his red Sentra as there is no SOLAR sign. Just show up on time.

Wear comfortable shoes, bring a baseplate compass, a whistle, snacks, drinks and a change of warm clothing. Contact Lester Mok at (519) 256-0324. Don't forget the warm change of clothing or your cheap thrill will become a cheap chill.



Upcoming Event

NCT Fall ^{post} Color Bicycle Tour

Here's a great opportunity for you to support the SOLAR Club's North Country Trail Effort and maybe even get in on the (probably ate) fall colors in the bargain. We'll be biking in the Eastern section of the Upper Peninsula the weekend of October 11 through 13.

Here's the plan. Drive north Friday October 11 and stay at the Erevort Lake Campground, about 12 miles west of St. Ignace off of US 2. Saturday morning we will pack up the camp and stuff everything but the bikes into Steve Gardner's truck to be delivered to the Guard Lake campground, about 25 miles (as the black flies) where we'll be camping Saturday night. Two routes are to be considered. The first will be along the actual North Country Trail, and the second will be our back up plan to ride on two-track roads where the trail may not be suitable for biking. Detailed maps will be provided for both routes. If you get into the Guard Lake camp early and wish to continue biking, we can load you and your bike into the truck again and drop you off further up the trail to bike back.

There are also several other sections of trail in the area that are suited to biking, including a route along the south side of Whitefish Bay that includes the "Mini-Mac" bridge over the Naomacong river, if you are interested in riding on Sunday before driving home.

The camping fee for each night will probably be about \$10 per campsite and we'll have a pot luck on Saturday night. Sign ups will be taken at the October meeting. For more information contact Steve Gardner at (810) 547-4998.

Upcoming Event

5th Annual Haunted Halloween Weekend

Where: Bald Mountain
Recreation Area, Cabins #1 and #2
Dates: Friday 10/25/95 7PM to
Sunday 10/27/95 2PM
Cost: A mere \$10
Trip Limit: 40 people
Trip Leader: Leslie Cordova
(810) 547-5626

Plan: Meet Friday at the cabins at
7:00 PM and warm up by the wood
stoves.

Saturday we will enjoy Michigan's
autumn colors while mountain biking
and hiking. In the afternoon, take a
hayride to a local pumpkin patch to
look for the great pumpkin. You may
buy a pumpkin to carve for the
SOLAR pumpkin carving contest
later that evening, or bring your own.
Bring knives or pumpkin cutters.
And don't forget your costume as
there will be prizes awarded in
various categories. Halloween
weekend wouldn't be complete
without the traditional apple bubbling
and Twister twist-off and, of course,
the traditional SOLAR style "pot-luck"
dinner on Saturday.

Sunday, we can bike / hike/
horseback ride, or stop at a cider mill
on the way home.

Note: Bring your most chilling
ghost stories and haunting cassette
tapes. Bring games, mitts, frisbies,
etc. There is no electricity, so bring

stoves, lanterns, and coolers. A
water pump, outhouse, and wood
burning stoves are provided. Each
bunk features a 2-inch thick mattress,
bring blankets or sleeping bags.
And, yes, a valid Michigan State
Parks permit is required.

Walleyball!!

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



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

Canoeing with Jim Gilfix

Join us October 11-13, 1996 and spend the weekend. This trip will be to Indiana, a 3 hour jaunt from Royal Oak. We will be camping at the Chain O' Lakes State Park, near Albion. The campground has hot showers and flush toilets. Saturday we will canoe 4 to 6 hours (you can go less if you like). Sunday we will hike some of the many trails that haunt their divine woods and upper lakes.

In this park they have an exquisite series of connected kettle lakes nestled among steep, wooded hillsides. We will canoe 5 of their 8 lakes, connected by channels, with no current, so they are easy, (kids can do it) safe (you can bring your best camera) and slow, (a relaxing, serene journey). I led this trip 2 years ago and we managed to be there at peak color. I'm hoping for this magnificent sight again. It was extraordinary.

Saturday we will have a big SOLAR Pot Luck dinner. All costs are payable at the park. Camping is \$15 per tent, based on 2 tents per site for 2 nights, \$15 per canoe, based on 6 hours of canoeing or \$7.50 per person and about \$5 per car to enter the park.

Sign up at the October SOLAR meeting and pick up a flyer or call Jim Gilfix at (810) 539-0489 for more information.



Review

Indiana Weekend Adventures

By Jim Gilfix

During the July 4 Holiday weekend a handful of hearty SOLAR folk headed down to Indiana for an incredible trip. The campsites were better than I had hoped for with lots of trees, privacy, and not too far from the hot showers and modern rest rooms.

Friday we got up early and drove to the Bluespring cave system. We went on their hour ride on a flat bottom boat in a large cave system. We saw blind fish, blind crawdaddies and incredible rock formations.

We then drove to the Spring Mill State Park to check out their cave system. The first cave we went in was immense with lots of side tunnels, passageways and openings. It was a lot of fun. We then went to their Donaldson Cave. After investigating for a while we decided to do some adventurous exploring. We went back to the cars and changed into bathing suits, sandals and left the fragile cameras in the car. With head lamps on our heads, we headed back.

We were told by some locals that the stream, with the waterfall at the end of our sight, came out of the mountain and we could go in "a-ways". We thought, "OK, We're SOLAR, we can do this." We stepped into the water and found it to be very cold.

Jeff Enterkin, Cyndy Erickson and myself were the only ones brave enough (or stupid enough, depending on how you look at it) to go in. After about 5 minutes and 20

feet could no longer feel my feet, which seemed good, because they no longer felt cold. Jeff went first. We had to swim about 6 feet, to a rock shelf just to the left of the waterfall and stood up. The problem at this point was the water was deep and none of us touched bottom. Something about jumping in water so cold that not only couldn't you touch bottom, but you couldn't talk and it was hard to breathe. The water seemed so frigid that a piece of ice placed in it would not have melted. (Actually the water was only about 55 degrees F, so we later learned.)

We continued up the passageway. It was genuinely dark, but we had our headlights/flashlights. Jeff had a good camera, so he said, (we'll see) and took a bunch of pictures of our journey. We went up and up, around this corner and that. Usually the water wasn't very deep, sometimes it was. The tunnel was filling up with the fog from our breath. Brrrrr, it was very cold in the cave. After about 30 minutes we came to the end, which was a big cavern, filled with water and it looked bottomless. We decided to turn back. We were departing at a brisk pace because by this time we were extremely cold.

Then it happened. Jeff stepped into a hole and almost disappeared, forever. Luckily, his arm wasn't by his side and it caught on the lip of the hole. He said he didn't touch the bottom. This underground stream had a swift current. If his arm had not been away from his body, if he had been sucked in... well, you get the idea. He ripped considerable flesh off his forearm, his leg and his foot. But again, since the water was so icy, we think it stopped whatever bleeding there may have been. Then we were out. We found the rest of our group and we headed to the beach and the hot sun. We munched for dinner, then headed back to the camp to make a bon fire, smores and a good nights sleep.

Saturday, we drove to the Clifty Falls State Park and hiked to and from their 4 major waterfalls. Along the way we saw snakes, one was eating a fish and it was part-way in its mouth, plus other fascinating things. Afterwards, we were hot and sweaty so we went to their built in swimming pool. We played in the water, on the water slide, and showered continually, until we felt clean. We then went out to eat at an all-you-can-eat barbecue. By the time we got back to camp, we were all exhausted. This "Kid-Trip" kicked the s__ out of us adults. I guess it was fitting no kids went, though we would have done it differently if kids had gone.

Sunday, the group split up and headed home. Cyndy and I took a side trip to another set of caves in a secluded valley. The owner boasts 7 caves. The first was up a hill and was filled with cold water ... we passed checking out this one. The next was over the hill and the water wasn't deep so we went in. We walked and walked and waled. Most of the time we were out of the water. Since there was no swimming in this cave we each took our cameras and took many pictures.

We went back about 1 mile, though it felt like 5. We turned back at the V. The owner later said we were only half way. Reluctantly, we had to leave and return to Michigan. Some day I will go back to that area and just do the caves, plus a few that we missed. It was a lot of fun.

I know it wasn't a good weekend for many SOLARites. Most people had other commitments. To the 14 who canceled, sorry you missed a great trip.

Upcoming Event

Tracking? No. :(Nordhouse? Yes! :)

Oops. At the last meeting, I announced a tentative tracking class for November, but have opened my mouth too soon. It might be a bad idea to have folks down on their bellies for an hour trying to draw a track at 40F. I'll try to plan a tracking class in a warmer month. Besides, going to Nordhouse Dunes that same weekend (Nov. 8 - 10) sounds like a great idea.

This annual Nordhouse trip is really Steve's (the Highlander) project. I'll bring my toys (CB radios, GPS navigation gadget, map and compass, ... etc. as well as my primitive camping skills. If you promise not to say "Over and out", or if you know how to build a debris shelter or a solar still, I'll play with you anytime. Nordhouse is also a great place to polish your backpacking skills. 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 (water sources, latrines, cooking, etc.) practices 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 stock 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 or call me, Lester Mok, at (519) 256-0324 if you want to play with me or my toys.

Out of room and out of time!

Next Month in The Ray

Just what was Susan writing in that notebook of her's all through the Quietico canoe trip? For all the latest, news from the Gunflint Trail northward, check out her review here next month.

SOLAR Author Published

Next time you see Jim Gilfix you might want to congratulate him on getting his book published. If you've been in the SOLAR Club for very long the subject of his 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, marinades (recipes for them, not the sauces themselves, that would make a mess), 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!

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 Borman, Huntington Woods, MI 48070 or call Steve at (810) 547-4998, or E-mail to slgardner@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 21700 Evergreen Rd. in Southfield, between 8 & 9 Mile Roads at 7:30 PM SHARP. Membership dues are \$30 individual annually, or \$100 individual lifetime.

For more information about SOLAR call the

SOLAR Club Hotline

24 Hour Voice Mail: (810) 988-6558

STEERING COMMITTEE

President	Mike Banks / (313) 235-8129
Vice-President	Doug Lanyk / (810) 634-4551
Secretary	Cindy Harrison-Felx / (313) 722-3994
Treasurer	Cyndy Erickson / (313) 367-8240
Activities	Leslie Cordova / (810) 547-5825
Membership	Mary Price / (810) 477-7547
Equipment	Mike Felx / (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-Felx / (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) 591-3858
	Bill Halvangelis / (810) 669-1911 Al Fylak / 852-7514
	Joan Ryan / (810) 57DIVE1

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



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