



THE SCHOOL FOR OUTDOOR LEADERSHIP, ADVENTURE & RECREATION

A U G U S T 1 9 9 7

PROGRAMS OF THE FUTURE...

FROM KAREN BATES, PROGRAM CHAIRPERSON

No, this is not a Sci-fi article. It's the SOLAR Club's future programs that are being planned.

August brings us backpacking with Carol McGirr. She will show you that you can survive in the woods without the modern conveniences. She will also inform you on how you can take the SOLAR backpacking class and learn how to enjoy the out-of-doors experience.

September brings us a SOLAR Swap Meet. Bring in all that extra camping gear you haven't used in years, outgrown or just haven't figured out how to use. You can sell or trade gear with other SOLAR members. (Hey, Lester. Maybe you can finally find a buyer for your snowshoes!)

September and October bring us the SOLAR T-shirt Contest. (No, guys. Not that kind of contest.) We are looking for a new SOLAR T-shirt design. Let's see how many creative people we have out there. *The rules are simple; one-color, one-sided t-shirt design.* Turn in a



COPY, not the original, to Karen Bates at the September or October meeting. They will be on display at the October meeting for everyone to cast their vote. The winner will be able to sign their design for the printing of the

t-shirts and become a SOLAR legend. The winner also receives a *FREE* t-shirt. *Show us your design talent!*

November brings a special, surprise program that you're not going to want to miss! *More information will be forthcoming in the September Ray. Be on the lookout...*

December brings us the wonderful SOLAR Holiday Party. All you have to do for this one is bring your appetite for pizza, your dancing shoes, and a great attitude.

Once again, if you would like to do a presentation or have any ideas or leads for one, let me know. *Just call Karen Bates at (810) 983-4147.*

SHOW US YOUR PHOTOGRAPHS!

Don't forget to bring your entries for the impromptu SOLAR brochure photo contest to the August General Meeting. We're looking for that perfect photo of a SOLAR activity to put in our club brochure. Another chance to be a SOLAR legend! (I'll give you a photo credit!)



ASK SOLAR SAM...

SOLAR Sam thanks you for your questions. Here's what he came up for the August SOLAR Ray...

What is Gore-Tex® and how does it work?

Gore-Tex is a registered trademark of W.L. Gore and Associates, and is used by Gore and its licensees to signify their brand of products. Gore manufactures the Gore-Tex membrane, then laminates it to textiles to become Gore-Tex fabrics eventually sewn into the clothing pieces we purchase.

Gore-Tex is a patented product and made from two materials: pure expanded Polytetrafluoroethylene (PTFE in this article) and Polyethylene Oxide Polyurethane-Urea (PU in this article). (Spelling test to follow.) The PTFE portion of the membrane has nine billion pores per square inch. These pores are a lot smaller than a droplet of water but a lot larger than a molecule of water vapor. Water cannot pass through but water vapor can. The PU portion is an oil repelling substance that prevents contamination from oils, make-up, repellents, food, and more. This membrane combination is laminated to high performance fabrics to make waterproof, breathable, windproof Gore-Tex products by their manufacturers.

One of the best features of Gore-Tex products is their breathability. There isn't a build-up of perspiration vapor inside because it passes right through to the outside environment. It helps prevent those cold, damp, uncomfortable feelings. They even continue to breath while under water! You can stay dry by land or by sea.

I was provided a whole lot more information about Gore-Tex from: Andy at Surplus City. Anyone who wants to know the "rest of the story" in 10 easy pages, please contact the Solar Editor so you can have a read. I passed all my information on to her.

Hope I helped out with your question, SOLARite.

— Solar Sam

Editor's Admission of Guilt. I send my deepest, red-faced apologies to EMS. In the July Ray I mistakenly gave credit where credit wasn't due and named the wrong outfitter in the article on National Trail Day at Proud Lake Recreation Area in June. Thank you, EMS, for your involvement in the activities on the Huron River Trail and all the time you spent and "free-bees" you provided for the helpers.

BACKPACKING CLASS 1

A REVIEW BY RHONDA SHAPIRO



Photo by Steve Williamson

I thoroughly enjoyed our backpacking class!

Because I had not backpacked for many, many years, I joined SOLAR primarily to relearn the updated version of the art of backpacking. To my dismay, this class was given only on Wednesday nights, the only night I work late. After voicing my upset to Leslie Cordova, this class was offered on Thursday night (last spring), so-o-o-o, if you complain to the right people, you will be heard.

Our final practical took place at Hoist Lake. It was absolutely beautiful! The lakes are plentiful, the trails wide, and it's *very* hilly. It was a very uneventful three days; the weather was perfect and nobody got hurt. Our personalities even meshed well, so there was no screaming, yelling or throwing of pots and pans.

Our instructors were great fun. They kept us humored throughout the weekend. We decided to "interview" them while we sat around the campfire each night. We even got some good inside information about the mysterious LESTER MOK!

We learned all the basic information that one needs to know about backpacking, but most importantly, we learned about group cooperation while making new friendships. The class was very well organized, and the information well presented. A special thanks to Mike Banks for coordinating this class, and to all the well-informed SOLAR members who came to share their knowledge with us. *Your patience was greatly appreciated!*



Spotlight on August...



RATTLESLAKE

IT'S GETTING CLOSER! On August 8-10th all SOLARites are invited to our **GRAND CAMPING WEEKEND** at Rattlesnake near Milton, Ontario. This one weekend SOLAR encourages **EVERYONE** to participate. We camp on a grassy lot; hot showers and flush toilets nearby and outhouses even "nearerby."

SATURDAY, AUGUST 9th:

EVENTS:

The Buffalo Shuffle - A unique event early Saturday morning helps set the atmosphere for the day. Shuffle, walk, run, we don't care. Just don't come

Photo by Jim Gilfix



back until you spot a buffalo!

The Bicycle Hill Climb

A gruelling race up an impossible incline. Only for those with legs of iron, empty stomachs, and masochistic athletic tendencies. Or, you can participate by being a member of the cheering section.

SOLAR Cook-Off (approximately 1:30 p.m.) - This results in a



Photo by Jim Gilfix

wonderful potluck because everyone gets to sample the entries and some lucky SOLAR members get to be judges! Give it a try!

Campfire - Don't forget guitars or other instruments suitable for a campfire sing-a-long **Friday and Saturday** nights.

ACTIVITIES:

Bring bikes, hiking shoes, windsurfing equipment, climbing apparatus and other sporting gear suitable for the cliffs, woods and nearby Kelso Lake.

OR...Join Jim Gilfix's Waterfall Discovery Tour...

- ↳ Crawford Lake Conservation Area - Crawford Lake is perched atop the Niagara Escarpment, the most

EXTRA! EXTRA!

This year there will be prizes for the events: *Gift certificates to area outfitters.*

Come, join in and just maybe you'll be able to help finance that item you've got your eye on...

significant landform in southern Ontario. There's a 15th century village, hiking trails, a boardwalk around the lake, and a gift shop.

- ↳ **Spencer Gorge Wilderness Area** - This Y-shaped gorge is fed by two creeks which plunge over the escarpment in falls. We will hike and see the sights.
- ↳ **Decision time...** what to do next? Either Hilton Falls and more hiking or swimming at Kelso Lake.

SUNDAY, AUGUST 10th:

More biking, hiking, climbing, windsurfing, etc.

OR...Head to the Scottish Festival and Highland Games Festival at Fergus, Ontario with Jim G. There are shops, markets, cafes, and of course, another waterfall.

Contact Jim Gilfix for more information at (248) 539-0489 and pick-up handouts at the August SOLAR meeting.



Photo by Nancy Day

GOOD-BYE SUMMER...

Not ready to let summer go? Me neither. That's why I'm planning this trip for September 12 - 14. It's in Elora, Ontario which is north of Kitchener and Guelph: a 3-hour drive from Detroit. We'll be camping at the Elora Gorge Conservation Area campground and yes, this trip is kid-friendly. Saturday and Sunday we will hike, swim, sightsee and enjoy. Traditional Saturday evening potluck and bonfire...you know the rest.

Why Elora? Waterfalls, cliffs, gorges, caves, lakes and rivers.

Here's what they say:

"What a difference 179 years make..."

On December 1, 1817, Roswell Matthews and his two sons became Elora's first "visitors".

After walking for days through the forest that lined the banks of the Grand River, they had suddenly encountered the steep cliffs along both sides of the river - the Gorge.

Another mile or so along the river came another Gorge, and beyond that, a roaring ice-surrounded waterfall with a huge tree-covered rock in the middle of the falls.

Then, above the falls, an ice covered stretch of peaceful looking river, unfortunately barely visible in an early winter blizzard.

Having "done" the Gorge and "done" the falls, Roswell and his sons decided they had done enough and that this was as good as it was going to get: a great place (?) to build a mill and start a homestead.

That beginning was somewhere close to where Elora LCBO store now stands and it was around this site that Captain William Gilkison, in 1832, purchased 14,000 acres of land and began a settlement that he called Elora. The name came from Gilkison's brother's description of a beautiful cave and river area in India.

Roswell Matthews and Captain Gilkison chose well. The Grand River is at its best where the Grand meets the Irving and the Elora Gorge begins.

Come visit and see for yourself - the sights and sounds of



Elora Gorge, Ontario, Canada

Elora The Village has a population of just over 3,000 friendly people. It's situated in one of Ontario's more unique water-front settings, where the Grand, one

of Canada's Heritage Rivers, joined by the Irving River, begins a tumultuous ride through the mild-and-a-half-long Elora Gorge. Over the years Elora has become one of Ontario's most inviting and relaxing tourist destinations."

Look for hand-outs at the August and September meetings or contact Jim Gilfix at (248) 539-0489 for more information.

"Taken from "Elora Gorge. A Visitor's Guide"



PRIMITIVE SKILLS WORKSHOP

Here is a chance for you to "go wild", munch grass, and eat worms with your fellow SOLARites...and then brag about it to your other friends. This workshop will introduce you to the basics of shelter building, fire making, tool making, nature observation and philosophy, and more. We hope this workshop will open your door for more advanced skills and for you to explore your own relationship with Mother Earth. The workshop will be held on the weekend of November 1st, from Saturday morning to Sunday afternoon, at the Burns Cabin of the Waterloo Recreation Area. The cost is \$25. You can get more details at the general meetings or you can call Lester Mok at (519) 256-0324.

BEEN THERE, DID THAT... WHAT A CHALLENGE!!!

REVIEW #1 BY JENNIFER (KWAPIS) JELLYBEAN

The day began with a fun activity in which we learned each other's names. In order to make it more interesting, we all adopted new last names that were food items beginning with the first letter of our first name. Sound confusing? It was at first. This is how I became Jennifer Jellybean. We also had attendees by the name of Alex Applesauce, Steve Spinach, Theresa Tapioca, Mark Mear, Carol Carrot, Richard Radish, Sherry Steak, Brad Bread, and our fearless leader, Jim Jambalaya. (I have no idea how to spell Jim's new last name. I suggest he stick to Gilfix.) I apologize that I cannot remember the names of the other members of our Grocery Store Gang.



From the Name Game, we ventured into the forest to begin our expedition. The initial challenge was tame (tossing tennis balls and teddy bears) but it became increasingly dangerous. As a group, we had to deal with an island that lacked food and water, shark infested oceans and alligator filled moats. After a morning of teamwork, adventure, and physical activity, we all took a much needed lunch break. Once our stomachs were full, we geared up for the high ropes course. This was truly the highlight of the day.

I would like to send a big *thank you* to Jim, our leader, and also to our instructor, Doug Doughnut. This was a trip that I will always remember. (I can't wait to see everyone else's photos!)

REVIEW #2 BY CAROL BOS

When I started out for this one-day excursion, I wasn't quite sure what I was getting myself into. But as the day wore on, I realized why it had the name of "Personal Challenge." Getting to the Star Commonwealth Facility proved to be the first challenge; directions weren't very clear but everyone managed to find the place.

The weather was a perfect 75 and sunny, so just being outside was a treat. Doug, our leader, loaded all of us into the van and we started out on our first challenge. He had us gather around in a circle and provided a sure way for us to remember each others' names; the game of memorization and concentration worked well.

After accomplishing that, we hiked on over to the next stop. This next challenge involved more working with each other, discovering each others' personalities. We were to get from one imaginary island to another with a limited set of guidelines and supplies. We did very well with this challenge and in almost record time, so we were pumped up and ready for the next one.

The next one proved a bit more difficult! Our tension and frustration mounted when we were having difficulty building a bridge across an imaginary moat with a limited number of supplies - we were also told by our leader that if anyone fell in, "there would be consequences." All I'll tell you is that I fell into the moat and "consequences" were given to the group...nothing serious, but it provided a learning experience. Right after we built our bridge we broke for lunch -



Photos by Jennifer (Kwapis) Jellybean

everyone had definitely worked up an appetite!

Finally we made it to the greatest personal challenge of the day: an obstacle course high in the trees. I'm not sure if that's what it's called, but that's how I saw it. It was very intimidating at the start but after going through a couple of the challenges, your confidence was built-up enough so continuing was easier.

We ended the day around 6:00 p.m. with everyone expressing what a great time they had! If you've never come this before, it's definitely worth checking out!



THE SOLAR RAY

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

6TH ANNUAL HAUNTED HALLOWEEN

WHERE: Bald Mountain Recreation Area,
Cabins #1 & #2

WHEN: Friday, October 24, 7 p.m.-
Sunday, October 26, noon

COST: \$15.00

TRIP LIMIT: 40 people

TRIP LEADER: Leslie Cordova (810) 547-5626

PLAN:

Meet Friday at the cabins after
7 p.m. and warm up by the fire.
Then we will do some night hiking
and play some cards/games.

Saturday we will enjoy Michigan's
autumn colors while mountain
biking/hiking.

In the afternoon we can take a hayride to a local
pumpkin patch to look for the *perfect* 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.

Don't forget your costume. There will be prizes awarded in
various categories.

Halloween weekend would not be complete without the
traditional apple bobbing competition and twister twist-off.

We will have the traditional
"potluck" for dinner on
Saturday evening.

Sunday we can
like/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 stove are available.

A 2-inch mattress is on each cot; bring blankets or sleeping bags.

A State Park permit is required.



AUGUST & SEPTEMBER ACTIVITIES

Aug. 1-3 - Wilderness First Aid Class
Bald Mountain Recreation Area
Susan Gaydos (313) 482-8404

Aug. 5 - General Membership Meeting
Colony Hall, Southfield
Program: **BACKPACKING**

Aug. 8-10 - Rattlesnake Weekend
Rattlesnake Provincial Park
Jim Gilfix (248) 539-0489

Aug. 9 - Indian Village/Waterfalls
Milton, Ontario
Jim Gilfix (248) 539-0489

Aug. 10 - Highland Games/
Ghosts/More Falls
Milton, Ontario
Jim Gilfix (248) 539-0489

Aug. 16 - Canoe Trip
Huron River
Jim Gilfix (248) 539-0489

Aug. 22 - DNR Booth
Michigan State Fair, 3:30-6:30 p.m.
Doug Lanyk (248) 634-4551

Aug. 22-24 - 8th Annual
DeFrance Canoe Outing
Au Sable River
Maureen DeFrance (810) 229-8283

Aug. 31-Sept. 6 - Canoe Trip
Algonquin
Margaret Marrin (313) 721-2821

Sept. 2 - General Membership Meeting
Colony Hall, Southfield
SWAP MEET & T-SHIRT CONTEST

Sept. 3, 10, 17, 24 - Backpacking Class
Benchmark, Farmington Hills
Carol McCririe (810) 229-5232

Sept. 5-7 - Rattlesnake Weekend
Rattlesnake Provincial Park
Jim Young (810) 731-2504

Sept. 5-7 - Mountain Biking
Stokely, Sault Ste. Marie, Canada
Sharon Broderick (313) 256-6541
Charles Haley (248) 524-1273

Sept. 9 - Summerfest
Charnel 56 Pludge Drive
Doug Lanyk (248) 634-4551

Sept. 12-14 - Flora Gorge
Hiking/Camping
Flora, Ontario
Jim Gilfix (248) 539-0489

Sept. 20-21 - Backpacking Practical #1
Pinckney Recreation Area
Carol McCririe (810) 229-5232

Sept. 26-28 - Land Navigation Class
Linda Burke (248) 471-9185

SHIAWASSEE RIVER CANOE TRIP, JUNE 28, 1997

A REVIEW BY JIM WRIGHI

Photos by Doug Lanyk

This weekend canoe trip was the hardest canoe trip I have ever done. There were twelve canoes in our flotilla for a total of twenty-four people. Casey and I shared one canoe. We had brought along a lunch, drinking water and other equipment like gloves, first aid kit, and insect repellent. The trip was to be four hours of canoeing the Shiawassee River. The canoe livery would take us up-river by bus and we would canoe back to the livery.

The *Michigan Rivers Guide Book* I have says that the Shiawassee River is navigable all the way to the town of Holly, and that up-river of the town of Byron, the river is so shallow and blocked with snags and log jams that it isn't recommended. The guidebook starts its discourse at Byron. So...*obviously*...the outfitters put us on up-river of Byron.

The guidebook was correct. The river was shallow, but navigable. It started with paddles hitting the bottom and proceeded to snags and log jams. The snags were easy to miss; you can usually see a rattle on the water surface, but the blow-downs were impregnable and the water was an uninviting dark, murky green. The biggest problem was the horrendous number of log jams we had to deal with. Some only partially blocked the river, however, there were plenty that completely blocked it. One log jam had only an inch or so channel around the right bank, and a labyrinth to approach it. If you approached from the wrong angle, the job of re-orienting the canoe was a tough one. Another one we approached incorrectly and the water was too deep to get out and lift the canoe around. Several pushes and tugs finally got the canoe into a favorable position so we could slipped around.

Another log jam completely blocked the river. We had to approach a low spot in the jam that landed the bow; the bow-man had to get out, pull the canoe up over the logs until the stern-man could also get out on the other side of the canoe. Now with both of us balancing on the log jam, we had to pull the canoe up and over the jam and launch it on the other side.

We took a rest break at Byron where a side stream joined the Shiawassee. The side stream was dammed and sounded like a major rapids while we were coming down the main stream. I was relieved to see it was not on the main stream. After a short time Casey and I launched downstream, the first to depart the rest stop.

When we reached Byron, the worst of the snags and log jams were behind us. We had picked up additional water from two other streams which flow into the Shiawassee. Unfortunately, we also seemed to pick up some sewage, and the smell, for awhile, was bad.

Without all the snags and log jams the slow current became obvious. Time stretched out longer and longer. Boredom would be the word here: boredom and lots of paddling to make progress. As we became wearier, the flies became more numerous. They were *annoying*. They had a vicious bite, were irritating, a nuisance, and were *impenetrable* to every repellent known to mankind.

Further down we encountered a small set of rapids at the site of an old dam that wasn't any more. The site was coincident with a bridge. The rubble was the cause of the rapids. It looked scarier to us than it was. We bottomed out twice going through this collection of rocks.

Then there were the bridges; one of which had fishermen fishing under it. Fishermen, like canoeists, figure they own the river, which means that they are not feeling in their line for anybody. Fishermen also cannot fish unless they have cast the line from their side of the river to the other. It's hard to see a fish line...they are very transparent. You have to spot the ripples on the water and have to know where to look; then you can usually follow the line back to its origin. Lastly you have to weave around all the fishing lines. Mission accomplished.

Shortly after leaving the fishermen behind, Casey said those 8 little words, whatever number of letters, that tired paddlers don't want to hear, "I hope we didn't miss the take-out point." The timing was about right. It was four hours from when we got on the bus and a four hour canoe trip could be anything from three to five hours depending on how fast you are and the last thing one wants to do is paddle back upriver. I was sure we hadn't missed it until Casey raised the question in my mind. So what now?

We kept going. The take out has to be ahead of us. Just one more bend, and one more, and one more...more log jams. Voices...it MUST be voices at the beach in the camping area at the canoe livery, but when I would stop paddling, the sounds would stop. Squeaky canoe?

We were supposed to leave the livery by bus at 1:00, but our departure was a little late. I don't know what time we actually got on the river (should have looked at the watch), but at 5:30 we came to a bridge and on the other side of the bridge was the take-out point. We were the first ones there and we were exhausted!

This was the toughest canoe trip I have ever been on. Why the canoe livery would take customers up-river when even the guidebooks say "don't" is beyond me. I can see where it would be easier for the livery to drop you up stream and let you paddle back to the livery rather than have to meet you down-river for a pick-up, but I would think that what the livery did would not be conducive to repeat business. I for one will not be a repeat customer. The challenge of this trip was what I enjoyed. Casey and I handled it. It would not have been my choice for a first time canoe trip which this was for Casey. I have not asked him yet if he would go canoeing again. I did tell him that this was a tough trip and that he performed excellently. I hope he can appreciate his efforts.



SOLARies take a break along the Shiawassee River

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 and original articles are welcome. Send all contributions to: *Nancy Day, SOLAR Ray Editor • 1788 Brentwood Drive • Troy, MI 48098 248.641.9863 • FAX: 248-545-3479 or provide on MAC disk.*

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., Southfield between 8 & 9 Mile Roads at 7:30 p.m. Membership dues are \$30 individual annually or \$100 individual lifetime and \$45 family annually or \$175 family lifetime.

For more information about SOLAR, call the

SOLAR CLUB HOTLINE

24-Hour Voice Mail (248) 988-6658

Or visit our Worldwide Web at:

<http://members.tripod.com/solarclub1>

STEERING COMMITTEE

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

THE SCHOOL FOR OUTDOOR LEADERSHIP, ADVENTURE & RECREATION

SOLAR CLUB

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