



# THE SOLAR RAY

THE SCHOOL OF OUTDOOR LEADERSHIP, ADVENTURE & RECREATION

D E C E M B E R 1 9 9 7

## DON'T FORGET...By Karen

**REMEMBER**...after the December General Meeting is the SOLAR Annual Holiday Party. I promise not to ask you to be quiet for the entire program. Actually, I encourage everyone to visit, talk, meet new and long-time members, eat pizza, listen to the DJ, and have a great time! I do have several activities planned and I ask all of you to participate. (Of course it's up to you...)



- 1. We have "20 Years of SOLAR," a slide show by Tim Stangl and Maureen DeFrance. (Yes, we must be quiet for a few minutes here.) *Thanks, Tim and Maureen.*
- 2. We will all vote on the next *famous SOLAR t-shirt* artist entries in the t-shirt contest. There is still time to enter. I will accept entries at the beginning of the December meeting. (Remember if you win, you get a copy of your work of art **FREE!**)
- 3. We have "The Most Creative Cookie Contest." The rules are simple: Be creative; cookies must be edible; they will be consumed. Oh yes, there is a prize for the winner. Give it your best shot or should I say best creative culinary endeavor???
- 4. A Photo Swap. Bring in all those double prints you don't know what to do with and let others make them part of their memories.



If you have any questions, feel free to call Karen Bates at 810-983-4147. Come, socialize and have a great time. See you there.

## A NEW SOLAR TRIP...

### Kid Friendly



It's never too soon to be planning that family vacation. I'm talking about a small vacation, actually for the Memorial Day Weekend, 1998. I'd like to encourage everyone to take May 22 (Friday) off and begin this vacation after work/school. May 21. As an added bonus, take May 26 off (Tuesday). If you begin the 8-hour drive on Thursday and stay in a motel after driving a few hours, you can "play" more on Friday, and if you stay in another motel on Monday, May 25 (and return home Tuesday) you can "play" more on Monday. What do I recommend for this weekend?

#### WHITE WATER RAFTING ON THE NEW RIVER IN WEST VIRGINIA.

This will be similar to the trip I led in 1985, but this year I've included another separate trip for kids (and their parents), to be run simultaneously with the adult, regular, white water rafting trip.

The price will include three nights camping (May 22-25) at the Ace Outdoor Center in Oak Hill, W. Virginia, plus either trip #1 or #2, and breakfast, lunch and an incredible dinner in their lake front dining ledge on the day of the rafting trip. Trip #1 is for adults, #2 for kids as young as 6 and their parents. Both include an expert guide per raft and watching videos afterwards of the rafting trip.

When not rafting there's swimming, fishing, mountain bike rental, hiking, canoeing, paddle-boating, volleyball and 23 private HOT showers at ACE. Then there are nearby sights to visit like the New River Gorge Bridge, Grandview Park, Babcock State Park, and Hawks Nest State Park where other activities await such as horseback riding and their tram ride down to the river for paddle-boating. Or go into Fayetteville to get a \$5.00 airplane ride over the NRG Bridge.

Come spend a special holiday weekend with your family and all your SOLAR friends. Pickup a flyer at upcoming meetings and read all about it or give me a call, Jim Gilfix, 248-539-0489.

## "THANK GOD FOR SNOW" CROSS COUNTRY SKI CLASS

(Beginning to Intermediate)

Instructor: Mike Mannebach

**T**he very best way to get around on snow in the winter is with long boards (a.k.a. skis) strapped to your feet. If you don't believe me, just ask a Swede or a Finn. In order to be able to do this, you must acquire the basic skills (since like me, you probably weren't born on skis). This can be accomplished by first: taking this class, and second: practice, practice, practice! This class will be for the beginning to intermediate level skier and will focus on the diagonal stride. This is the most fundamental for in-track as well as out-of-track skiing and will lead to more advanced techniques such as the double pole and kick-double pole. Also covered are: how to select proper gear; how to hold your poles; how to recover from a fall; how to slow down and speed up on a downhill run; and, how to turn on downhill runs as well as on flats. Armed with these basic skills, you will now leave your car behind and ski to work...it can be done!

The class will be an on-snow clinic. The cost will be \$10.00 per person. It will take place at Independence Oaks County Park for a half day providing good snow conditions, or if not, we will make it a whole day adventure by driving up to The Cross Country Ski Headquarters in North Higgins Lake area (near Roscommon). We won't know this, of course, until about a week before the class. Which brings us to When? Well, if we really want to enjoy the ski season fully with our new skills, we should have it early in the season. So, the day is Saturday, January 17. Time will be 9:00 a.m. at Independence Oaks, or if up north, 11:00 a.m. Both touring centers rent skis if you don't own a pair yet. Total space is limited to 12 skiers. I can be contacted at 248-682-3955 if you need more info.



*Screw El Nino! Let there be snow!*

# HIKE! SKI! SNOWSHOE!



*That's what we plan on doing at Tahquamenon Falls State Park...*

## LOCATION:

Tahquamenon Falls is approximately 60 miles north of the Mackinac Bridge on M-123.

## DATE:

Friday, January 2nd through Sunday, January 4th, 1998.

## LODGING:

Heidi's Travelers Motel  
906-492-3364

## TRIP LEADER:

Pam Maxey 248-887-4553

## GOAL:

To view the fall in winter -- HIKE, SKI, SNOWSHOE!!! There are 6 miles of groomed X-country ski trails in and around the Tahquamenon Falls area. It is a short hike to see the falls they are VERY spectacular in the winter. Lodger's at

Heidi's have free snowshoe rental, of which we may want to take advantage. Also, Heidi's Motel is within walking distance of the stores and restaurants (and, yes, bars!) of Paradise. *So, give me a call or sign up at the December meeting.*



*Tahquamenon Falls in the winter...this photo just don't do the place justice...come see for yourself!*

**If you missed the November Program, you missed a never-to-be-repeated, one-time-only, extraordinary talk by Lou Kasischke, a member of the ill-fated Mt. Everest expedition of 1996. A tremendous THANK YOU, Lou, for spending so much time with us, telling us so vividly about the happenings on the expedition, and answering all those questions!**



*by Lester Mok*

**M**y big "THANK YOU" to Andy Buesser of Wild Heart and George Hedgepeth of the Great Lake Primitives in teaching part of the Primitive Skills Workshop. And more "THANK YOUS" to Priscilla Dana, Harry Price and Mary Price for lowering my anxiety and helping out. And a final thanks to you folks who played with us and kept it accident free. It is now your turn to organize the next class.

Several SOLARites have asked me about first aid and CPR classes. Here is the scoop: You can let your fingers do the walking and call your local chapter of the American Red Cross for weeknight or weekend classes. The American Heart Association also offers CPR classes as well. Wilderness first aid classes are offered locally by SOLAR/MSR (see our Winter WEA, December 5-6) and other outfits several times a year. The Cranbrook Kingwood School in Bloomfield Hills is booking a local SOLO WEA Course (December 20-21, \$125.) Call Frank Norton at (H) 248-644-5787 for details ASAP. This is a non-SOLAR course so you have to make your own arrangements. If you took the MSR course a few years ago, you can try this for a different POV. SOLO is well known in wilderness emergency education. *Happy Holidays!*

## PRIMITIVE SKILLS WORKSHOP WEEKEND

A Review by John Fedyk

*What exactly are primitive skills? Is it only young children or klutzes who have them? Well, guess what folks. Anyone can get them and during the first weekend of November, the SOLAR Club had a workshop that taught them.*

*At a Waterloo State Recreation Area cabin, club members learned how to build a fire with three pieces of wood and a string, make eating bowls and utensils with hot coals and a knife, build shelters out of leaves, track animals, find water, identify edible plants, and make cordage out of natural fibers found locally. We learned the skills needed to survive under primitive conditions.*

*SO WHAT? Any fool with a GPS, tent, backpack, mess kit, stove, fuel, lighter, dehydrated food, water purifier, change of clothes (preferably polypro and Gortex), hiking boots and cellular*



*Andy demonstrates starting a fire with a bow drill.*

phone can easily survive with comfort in the wilderness.

*That may be right. However, learning primitive skills cannot only bring one closer to the essence of nature, but save lives as well. Accidents, carelessness and stupidity can happen. If we get separated from our gear, then what? That was Lester Mok's rationale for leading this two-day symposium. He was assisted by Priscilla Dana, Mary and Harry Price, and two guest instructors: Andy Buesser who taught knife skills and how to make a bow drill fire and George Hedgepeth who took us on an outdoor tour of*



*Pam Maxey coal-burning a wooden bowl.*

botanical discovery.

*Our first guest instructor, Andy Buesser, came by Saturday morning to teach us the rudiments of sharpening and wielding a knife properly. Andy is a very skilful with a knife and demonstrated his aptitude by transforming a cedar log into a bow drill fire maker with only the additional use of another piece of wood for a hammer. Five students actually did complete their bow drills and used them to start fires!*

*After a course in bowl-making with hot coals, we adjourned for dinner, had a sumptuous feast of chicken, potatoes and other assorted vegetables with cornbread and hot drinks. Afterwards we were taught cordage making. It was fun transforming fibrous portions of dogbane leaves into ropes. The results were pretty too, and Lester showed us examples of other primitive handicrafts that have the same aesthetic appeal, such as birch bark boxes, flint knapping and basketry. My thanks to Jerry for bringing in items he had made.*

*The next day we learned the essentials of survival with only rudimentary tools. Then Lester talked about tracking and*

*how it relates to the characteristics of a particular species or an individual animal.*

*Lastly George Hedgepeth arrived and talked briefly indoors before we went outdoors to ramble. He is imbued with so much interesting information about wild plants that he bounced from topic to topic as he sighted each new plant. His excitement and his love of this topic were quite evident. Plant lore, plant history, edible uses, medicinal uses, which plants make the best tools, or ropes, or whistles, were all topics that he delighted about as we slowly tramped through the woods. His enthusiasm was contagious; our class asked him loads of questions to which he was only too glad to answer.*

*There is one thing that Lester, Andy and later on George talked about, and it was more than just a series of skills to learn. It can't be taught. It's more of a calling and they describe it in more spiritual terms. It is the desire to both understand and to be a part of nature. It is what led them to their avocations and what compelled them to share their joy of the outdoors with us.*

*My thanks go again to Lester, Priscilla, Harry and Mary Price, and our two guest instructors for making the Primitive Skills Workshop Weekend possible.*



*John Fedyk works on his primitive skills...*

# THE SOLAR RAY BULLETIN BOARD

## POSSIBLE CANCELLATION:

Due to the cost of cabin reservations, both the Outdoor Safety and Tracking classes may be canceled if we have less than 12 paid participants between these classes at the December sign-up. Look for an update in the January Ray.

## Winter Outdoor Safety Class\*

This new class will prepare novice XC skiers, snowshoers and day hikers for their winter activity. Experienced day-trippers who want to review their safety skills are also welcome. We'll cover winter hazards, trip planning, proper clothing, nutrition and gear, basic winter first aid, trail navigation, and what to do in an emergency. This class will be held on January 10th (Saturday, 9 a.m. - 5 p.m.) in a rustic cabin at the Island Lake Recreation Area. Friday night bunk bed, Monopoly, and Risk are included. Sign up with a check payment to SOLAR at the December meeting.

*Experienced skiers and winter day hikers are encouraged to apply as co-instructors and may possibly take over this class next year. Please see me for an interview at the December meeting.*

*Lester Mok (519) 256-0324.*

## BASIC TRACKING CLASS\* (Teen Friendly)

This is mostly an indoor class but may have some outdoor tracking depending on the weather and snow cover. Tentative topics include track identification, gait patterns, animal signs and behavior, and how to make plaster casts. Minors (age 14+) must sign up with a parent. It will be held on January 11th (Sunday, 9 a.m. - 3 p.m.) in a rustic cabin at the Island Lake Recreation Area. Saturday night bunk bed, Monopoly, and Risk are included. The cost is \$10. Sign up with a check payment to SOLAR at the December meeting.

**Lester Mok (519) 256-0324**

## Enjoy Michigan Winters

With this skill in your bag of tricks, you can go wallowing in the northern Lower or the western Upper, the Algonquin, the Adirondacks, and even the White Mtns. But cold weather backpacking isn't just for winter fun. It is also your reserve skill for the early frost or late thaw or once in a century freak storm. You can also build on this skill and spend your summer on glaciers or high peaks in the Cascades and Alaska.

We will teach you the "ins and outs" of winter backpacking in Michigan. You will learn to stay warm and dry in cold temperatures, to cross-country ski or to snowshoe while carrying a backpack, and to build a snugly snow shelter for those cold and windy nights. The first class is on 12/3 and all other classes and practicals are in January. It is open to all graduates of our backpacking classes. Members with other backpacking experience are welcome but they need to pass a screening process before signing up. The cost is \$60. This course is the prerequisite for the Winter Survival scheduled for February. Although not a requirement, the Winter Wilderness First Aid Class is highly recommended as a concurrent class. Pick up details at the monthly meeting or contact *Doug Lanyk at 248-634-4551.*



## DECEMBER & JANUARY/ FEBRUARY 1998!!!

- Dec. 2 - General Membership Meeting  
Program: Holiday Party (Cookie Creation  
Contest, Photo Swap & T-Shirt Contest)  
Colony Hall, Southfield  
Mike Banks 313-235-8129
- Dec. 3 - Enjoy Michigan Winters, Class 1  
Benchmark, Farmington Hills  
Doug Lanyk 248-634-4551
- Dec. 5-6 Winter Wilderness First Aid  
Waterloo Recreation Area  
Cindy Harrison-Felix 313-722-3994
- Dec. 9 - Channel 56 Pledge Drive  
Doug Lanyk 248-634-4551
- Dec. 13 - Massage Therapy Workshop  
(Legs and Feet)  
Cana Luth. Church, Berkley  
Paula Lirkes 248-399-9628
- Dec. 13 - Christmas Caroling  
Westland/Farmington Area  
Margaret Martin 313-721-2821
- Jan. 6 - General Membership Meeting  
Program: Photo Contest  
Colony Hall, Southfield  
Mike Banks 313-235-8129
- Jan. 7, 14, 21, 28 - Enjoy Michigan Winters  
Benchmark, Farmington Hills  
Doug Lanyk 248-634-4551
- Jan. 9-10 Cross Country Skiing  
Tanquamenon Falls  
Pat Maxey 248-387-4553
- Jan. 10 - Winter Outdoor Safety Class  
Island Lake Recreation Area  
Lester Mok 319-256-0324
- Jan. 11 - Basic Tracking Class  
Island Lake Recreation Area  
Lester Mok 319-256-0324
- Jan. 17 - Cross Country Skiing Clinic  
Independence Oak County Park or  
North Higgins Lake Area, depending  
on snow conditions  
Mike Mannack 248-682-3955
- Jan. 17-18 - Enjoy Michigan Winters,  
Practical I  
Waterloo Recreation Area
- Jan. 23-25 - Crawlathon-Living Trip  
(Kids Okay)  
Olive Hill, Kentucky  
Leslie Conduva 248-547-5626
- Jan. 30 - Feb. 1 - Enjoy Michigan  
Winters, Practical II  
Pigeon River

## ATTENTION TO THOSE WHO SPEND TIME OUTDOORS IN THE WINTER!!!

So, your way of beating the Michigan Winter is to JOIN IT!!! But wait, if you're spending time outdoors in the winter, *you should be prepared!* What do you do if you come across a disoriented and hypothermic snowshoer while cross-country skiing? What do you do if your cross-country ski partner falls and breaks an ankle while skiing in the wilderness? *Well, find out what to do...by taking the SOLAR Winter Wilderness First Aid Class!*

The class is taught by Doug Brown, a working, licensed paramedic in Jackson County and owner/operator of Michigan Search and Rescue. The textbook for this class is *Hypothermia, Frostbite, and Other Cold Injuries* by Wilkerson, Bangs, and Hayward. Students will be expected to have the text read prior to the class.

The course will be offered on Friday-Saturday, December 5-6 at Waterloo Recreation Area near Chelsea. The class will begin the evening of Friday the 5th at 7 p.m. Lecture topics to be covered include hypothermia, frostbite, other cold injuries, winter nutrition, dehydration, etc. Students will stay in the wilderness cabin in the Burns area.

Saturday starts early and continues with intense classroom interaction. Following the instruction, students will be given a written test and placed into simulated winter wilderness emergencies in the surrounding woods and must respond to the situations they find. The class ends at 3 p.m. on Saturday.

Bring clothing adequate for spending prolonged time outdoors (contact Cindy for a clothing list). The cabins are R U S T I C, equipped with bunk beds and a wood stove and no electricity. You will also be responsible for your own meals (bring lots of warm food and drinks). The course is \$40 and includes instruction, one-night's stay in the wilderness cabins, and the text. Having current CPR training prior to this class is highly recommended; there are no prerequisites. *For further information, contact Cindy Felix at (313) 722-3994.*





JOIN YOUR FELLOW  
SOLARITES FOR  
**CHRISTMAS  
CAROLING**  
ON DECEMBER 18TH.  
Contact Margaret Martin for more  
information: 313-721-2821

## 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/~solarclub/>

## STEERING COMMITTEE

President ..... Mike Banks / 313.235.8129  
Vice President ..... Margaret Martin / 313.791.2821  
Secretary ..... Linda Burke / 248.471.9185  
Treasurer ..... Susan Caydes / 313.482.8404  
Activities ..... Leslie Cordova / 248.547.5626  
Membership ..... Mary Price / 248.477.7547  
Equipment ..... Bob Graham / 313.453.7313  
By-Laws ..... Harry Price / 248.477.7547  
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SOLAR Ray ..... Nancy Day / 248.641.9863  
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Programs ..... Karen Bates / 810.983.4147  
Public Relations ..... Doug Lanyk / 248.634.4551

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Larry Martin / 313.591.3856  
Mo DeFrance / 810.229.8283  
Bob Westbrook / 313.513.8454  
Bill Halvargis / 810.659.1911  
Peg Campbell / 248-344-1260

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

## THE SCHOOL FOR OUTDOOR LEADERSHIP, ADVENTURE & RECREATION

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*The SOLAR Ray*  
is printed on 50%  
recycled paper stock.

## • S O L A R • M E M B E R

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