

The SOLAR Run

THE **S**CHOOL FOR **O**UTDOOR **L**EADERSHIP, **A**DVENTURE AND **R**ECREATION



Upcoming Class

So! Do You Like It On Top?

Deep down we all want to be aggressive. Yes, we all want to change roles and be on top. Well, you need to learn how to get up there first!

If you have a great sense of adventure, you should be a part of the 1997 SOLAR Climbing Class. This class teaches all the basics. You'll learn how to get into a climbing harness, tie all those complicated knots safely belay your partner, move with grace and style over the rock face and speak the language of climbers. You will learn to construct a strong, safe top rope anchor system and you will do it with confidence.

Class dates are each Wednesday beginning April, 2nd through April 23rd at the Benchmark in Farmington. Saturday April 19 at Grand Ledge near Lansing, MI and Saturday, April 26th at Powers Park in Farmington. The class comes together on the weekend of May 2nd through 4th at Rattlesnake Conservation Area near Toronto, Canada.

Student climbers will be tested on

their knowledge and practical skills over the course of this three day event.

So! If you are ready to get on top, make plans to be part of this exciting class. Sign ups will be taken at the March general SOLAR meeting. The course fee is \$65.00 and includes all equipment and class materials. Students should be in good physical condition and be committed to attending all classes and practicals.

If you have any questions contact Jim Young at (810) 726-8253 or (810) 731-2504.

Notice!

Just a reminder that annual memberships in SOLAR expire each December. So if you haven't already renewed by paying your dues, you're not really a member and not entitled to go on trips, attend classes, or get this newsletter. So be sure to get your dues in to the membership committee or you may find yourself missing out.

NCT Effort Update

With the completion of trail sections in the Manistee National Forest, SOLAR has completed 351 miles of the North Country Trail in Michigan.

Miles Completed
351

Miles to Go
521

Section	Miles	
	Done	To Go
Southern L.P.	113	87
Marco Scarpetta (313) 823-8564		
Central L.P.	72	*
Mike Banks (313) 425-4169		
Northern L.P.	16	*
Leslie Cordova (810) 547-5626		
Eastern U.P.	75	68
Steve Gardner (810) 547-4998		
Central U.P.	55	*
Carol McOrrie (810) 229-5232		
Western U.P.	20	*
Bob Graham (313) 453-7313		

* To be calculated

Upcoming Event

Expedition '97

Mt. Zirkel Wilderness is the destination for Expedition '97, a mountain backpacking trip departing Saturday, August 2, 1997 and returning on Sunday, August 17, 1997. Participation will be limited to eight hardy souls.

You might want to consider this Expedition when making your 1997 vacation plans. For more information, and to sign-up, contact Jim Wright, work: 313-592-2925, home: 313-284-2639.

Mt. Zirkel Wilderness lies astride the Continental Divide within the Routt National Forest in Colorado. Encompassing 139,818 acres of unspoiled alpine terrain, this is big-view country. Open tundra dotted with shimmering turquoise tarns, mountains towering overhead.

The core of Expedition '97 is nine days of mountain backpacking along 60 miles of the Continental Divide at an average altitude of 10,455 ft. We will travel by train from Dearborn to Denver, bus from Denver to Steamboat Springs, and by taxi from Steamboat Springs to the trail head. Some time is available for sightseeing in both Denver and Steamboat Springs.

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).

Visit The SOLAR Page on the World Wide Web at:

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

Letters 2/17/97

Hello Trolls!

Greetings from Indy! John and I are now settled in Indianapolis. Wow, find a coffee house or micro-brewery around here! There is a big, beautiful city park here, and a big lake!

We've had a lot of cold weather, but not enough snow accumulation to ski, except once. A big consolation is that we are only 3.5 hours from the Red River Gorge - Rock climbing here we come!

If anyone is planning on coming to the Indianapolis 500 or Memorial Day weekend, give us a call! Visitors and letters are welcome.

Take care, miss you,

Julia Gordon and John Fox
(317) 889-7077

4837 Sunpoint Circle #714
Indianapolis, IN
46237-4613

P.S. To see what I've been doing since moving here, see my Everglades article.

People

Steve and Marie Gardner have moved a 4 bedroom house into a 2 bedroom apartment. Call if you have any space for lease!

Steve and Marie Gardner
24323 Buchanan Court #1963
Farmington Hills, MI 48335

(810) 442-0758

Upcoming Event

Murder Mystery

Webster defines "mystery" as "anything that arouses curiosity because it is unexplained, inexplicable or secret." The word "detective" usually brings to mind the image of a Sherlock Holmes character, in a deerstalker hat, an S-curved pipe and an over-sized magnifying glass.

Come March 1997, Jim Gilfix will organize, with Mo DeFrance, a solvable mystery. It will be an all day event (a Sunday), a pot-luck for lunch, and you will be required to arrive in costume for the role!

The Date: Sunday, March 16, 1997

The Cost: \$10 payable at the February or March SOLAR meeting, or until the limit of 15 or 23 is reached. There will be a \$5 refund ONLY if you are on time!

The Place: Mo and Dave DeFrance's house in Brighton.

The Time: 1:00 P.M. SHARP!! You MUST be on time!

You are encouraged to appear in costume. About 2 weeks before the game is to begin, you will be mailed a list of the other suspects besides yourself, your character's description and his/her suggested clothing. Directions to the DeFrance's house will also be enclosed.

You are encouraged to bring a dish to pass, a dinner FINGER FOOD. We will play for about 2 hours, break and eat, and then play for another hour. We should be done around 5 P.M.

Contact Jim Gilfix for more information at (810) 539-0489.

Upcoming Events

Before You Wander...

Congratulations! You've taken the Fall, Winter, and Advanced Backpacking Classes. And you've completed the Rock Climbing, Skiing, Wilderness Canoeing, and misc. courses. So you head straight out of town into the wide open air. You have a pack on your back, boots full of feet, and you can pick any direction you choose to care. Wander into yonder? Perhaps, you may wonder. But wait ... ! You can't wait to come back so you can teach us what you've learned. And not when you come to die in the woods, discover that you have not taken these bags of tricks. So don't just sit there and cross your legs! These courses are here for you to take. Sign up BEFORE the mountain is waiting or you're off for a hike ... Or call Lester at (519) 256-0324 to hear his telephone clicks.

Wilderness Leadership and Safety Seminar March 15 at Brighton, \$40. This is a one day seminar designed to share insights among members who want have a safe, successful, and enjoyable outing. Tentative topics include leadership, group dynamics, and wilderness hazards and safety. All levels of outdoor enthusiasts are welcome.

Land Navigation Course March 22-23 at Waterloo Rec. \$30. Learn how to get from hither to yon safely and wisely. You will practice navigation strategies and route finding skills using your map and compass. This is an intensive course designed to build your confidence in on-trail hiking and off-trail bushwhacking. Bring your compass and a wandering spirit. Beginners welcome. Rustic lodging on Friday and Saturday are included. The class starts promptly at 9 am on Saturday and ends at 3 pm on Sunday.

Activities Calendar

March

- 4 **Tuesday** **General Membership Meeting**, Colony Hall, Southfield, Mike Banks (313) 425-5169
- 5 **Wednesday** **Trip Planning Seminar**, Mike and Cindy's, Inkster, Cindy Harrison-Felix (313) 722-3994
- 5,12,26 **Wednesdays** **Adv. Backpack Class**, Mike and Cindy's, Inkster, Cindy Harrison-Felix (313) 722-3994
- 15 **Saturday** **Outdoor Leadership Seminar**, Brighton, Lester Mok (519) 256-0324
- 16 **Sunday** **Murder Mystery**, Brighton, Jim Gifex (810) 539-0489
- 22-23 **Weekend** **Land Navigation Class**, Waterloo Rec. Area, Brighton, Lester Mok (519) 256-0324
- 21-23 **Weekend** **Wabos Loppet XC Skiing**, Wabos, Canada, Mike Banks (313) 425-5169

April

- 1 **Tuesday** **General Membership Meeting**, Colony Hall, Southfield, Mike Banks (313) 425-5169
- 2,9,16,23 **Wednesday** **Rock Climbing Class**, Location TBD, Jim Young (810) 726-3253
- 8,22 **Tuesdays** **Advanced Backpack Class**, Mike and Cindy's, Inkster (313) 722-3994
- 11-13 **Weekend** **Hocking Hills State Park**, Logan Ohio, Jim Gifex (810) 539-0489
- 18-20 **Weekend** **Shakedown Hike - Adv. Backpack**, Location TBD, Cindy Harrison-Felix (313) 722-3994
- 19 **Saturday** **Rock Climbing Class Practical I**, Planet Rock, Pontiac, Jim Young (810) 726-3253
- 26 **Saturday** **Rock Climbing Class Outdoors**, Powers Park, Jim Young (810) 726-3253

May

- 2-4 **Weekend** **Shakedown Hike, Adv. Backpacking**, Location TBD, Cindy Harrison-Felix (313) 722-3994
- 2-4 **Weekend** **Rock Climbing Class Practical II**, Rattlesnake Point, Jim Young (810) 726-3253
- 6 **Tuesday** **General Membership Meeting**, Colony Hall, Southfield, Mike Banks (313) 425-5169
- 7 **Wednesday** **Advanced Backpack Class**, Mike and Cindy's, Inkster, Cindy Harrison-Felix (313) 722-3994
- 9-11 **Weekend** **Rock Climbing, Rattlesnake Point**, Jim Young (810) 726-3253
- 17-26 **Week long** **Adv. Backpack Practical**, Location TBD, Cindy Harrison-Felix (313) 722-3994
- 22-25 **Weekend** **** White Water Rafting**, Cheat River, WV, Jonnie Kostishak (517) 456-7569
- 23-26 **Weekend** **North Manitou Island, Backpacking**, Leland, MI, Leslie Cordova (810) 547-5626

** Denotes a Non-SOLAR activity

If you would like to help plan and / or lead a SOLAR trip, contact Leslie Cordova at (810) 547-5626

Upcoming Event

Am I Still in Ohio?

That's the question asked by visitors to the Hocking Hills area in Ohio, as they see the dramatic sandstone and shale cliffs, canyons, caves, and waterfalls. Ohio Magazine picked this region as having Ohio's best rock scenery, most photogenic waterfall, and best caves.

Join us on April 11-13, 1997 as we journey down to Ohio. We will car-pool to Hocking Hills State Park, 40 miles southeast of Columbus, about 5 hours drive from Detroit. We will stay in their deluxe cabins, with real beds, stoves, fridge, heat, hot showers, and fireplace.

Saturday we will hike the Grandma Gatewood trail, a 3 mile section of the Buckeye Trail, starting from the Old Man's Cave, past the upper falls and the Cedar Falls to the Ash Cave, a four hour hike if you don't stop for photos (April is a good time for wild-flowers in Hocking Hills). We may spot a car at the end so we can have time to see Cantwell Cliffs on Saturday as well. Old Man's Cave measures 150 feet long, 120 feet high and 90 feet deep. The lower falls is 60 feet tall and at the plunge pool, a deep recess cave has been carved in the underlying shale. Cedar Falls will be a good place for lunch. Ash Cave is 700 feet long and 90 feet high. A stream falls from the roof edge into a pool. Saturday evening will consist of the delectable SOLAR Pot Luck Dinner.

Sunday we can choose from some of the other wonderful sites in the area such as the Rock House and Conkles Hollow. Hiking plans for both days are flexible, due to the weather and wide variety of scenic opportunities in the area.

Cost of the trip is \$30 payable at the February or March meetings and includes 2 nights in a cabin, hiking maps, a Vernors, and breakfast. The trip is limited to 17. Be sure to sign up early as this trip is likely to sell out quickly.

Contact Jim Gifx at (810) 539-0489 for more information.

Wanted Wanted

The past and present of SOLAR the first twenty years.

A group of current and past SOLARites has been commissioned to put together a slide show representing the past twenty years SOLAR has been a club. So open up those boxes of pictures and photo albums that you have gathered over the years and see if you have some shots that can help show who we are and what we like to do as SOLARites.

We can use your Bald Mtn. Halloween, Winter Camping, backpacking, SOLAR picnics, SOLAR weddings, Rattlesnake, wind surfing, rafting, canoeing, kayaking, hiking, SOLAR classes and activities, survival, biking, SOLAR parties, X-skiing, downhill skiing, ballooning, gliding, caving, roller blading, and kiting pictures and slides. All materials will be returned to you after copies have been made.

You can bring your photos or slides to the January 97 SOLAR meeting, or attend our next group review meeting that will be held at Moe DeFrances house in Brighton, MI on Monday, January 13, 1997.

Questions can be directed to Tim Stang at H (810) 474-3242 W (810) 262-5964.

Review

My First Trip with SOLAR

By Klarita Orley

Dave DeFrance looked ecstatic and friendly while advertising a cross country ski trip to Cassair, MI. Already I saw a long list of people on the sign-up before him.

I'd got names of three different people to car pool from him. Before the trip, all of them quit on me. I would NOT give up. The night before the trip, Moe DeFrance gave me Jonnie's name. Together with her and Ron, we drove happily to the DeFrance cabin, three hours away. The snow and wind were gusting all the way.

The cabin, first cold, was warmed up cozy by the wood burning stove. In the middle of the night I woke up feeling cold. Nearby soft snoring sounded. When I stood up, shadows were moving around the room. I was getting ready to lay on the couch which was not occupied before, but a new body was there already. Who was that? Everybody was up for a bathroom check and we didn't know it. It was really funny.

The morning went by lazily. More people arrived. Until we moved our buttocks, the snow on the trails was sticky from the "heat". We had a marvelous, sunny time anyway.

In the evening, everybody came together in the cozy cabin. The pot luck dinner was outstanding. Even a connoisseur would have licked his fingers. Outside, a great bon fire was roaring. What a great contrast is was with the fluffy snow covering everything in a layer a couple of feet thick. The dark evergreens towering around, the bright twinkle of burning wood, the smoke following me ...
(See Skiing, page 6)

Review

Crawl-a-Thon**Carter Caves State Park***By Karen "Rosella" Bates*

It seems lately the first thing I encounter on a winter weekend outing is a white knuckle drive.

After a very long and tiring drive to Kentucky, I was never so happy to see Carrols Inn Motel. I knew sleep was just moments away. It seemed like just moments later Saturday morning arrived unexpectedly after that long drive. My roommates Doug and Damien Lanyk and myself started putting together our caving attire. Let me tell you, cavers are a fashion statement that can't be beat! On go the long underwear, socks, elbow pads and knee pads. Every trip introduces me to a new "Best Buddy". This weekend I met ... "Mr. Duct Tape"! The duct tape kept all the protective gear in place and light sources attached to my hard hat. Next, the coveralls go on (thanks to Rosella at Titan Truck Repair). I simply HAD to customize my coveralls with glow in the dark smiley faces on the seat of course! Yes, it is on film.

Once our fashion statements were complete, we were off to meet the rest of the SOLAR cavers to explore the saltpeter cave. This old mining cave was very dry, dusty, and beautiful. It was a good thing Doug remembered dust masks. We walked, crawled, squeezed and even slithered on our bellies. Then our guide said "Okay, everybody through there!" He was pointing to a hole with about a nine inch pinch point. After watching Gene Cordova get his helmet stuck, my first reaction was "Yeah, right!" But it didn't stop me from making an attempt. It took a lot of wiggling, squiggling and self encouragement. SUCCESS! I was through! Don't tell Gene, but I had to take off my helmet

also. At this point, I was feeling great and looking forward to the next challenge of the day.

Bat cave back door was just the challenging fun I was looking for. This cave had a beauty of its own. Streams, waterfalls, cave crickets, spiders, and yes, lots of bats. Did you know it's a federal offense to kill a bat in Carter county? In this cave it was more walking, crawling squeezing and belly crawling but with added fun! We got to do all this in water and mud! It was great! Were else can adults go crawl around in mud and bat guano, get real dirty, like it, and appear perfectly normal? It's a good thing the water, over time, had smoothed the walls in this cave because our guide took us to a place called the endless crawl. Yes, when you are on your belly with your head turned sideways, your back touching the rock above you, pulling with your fingers and pushing with your toes, any distance seems endless. As I came out of the endless crawl, I heard Gene ask "Did Karen make it through yet?" My reply was "No, her body did by the rest was left behind." At this point, I realized caving is a physically exhausting sport. Even so, I was having a blast!

Soon after the endless crawl, it was on to our third cave for the day, X Cave. It was a very mild walking tour with a lit walkway. Good thing, because one more belly crawl could have been my bed for the night. The order in which the cave tours were planned by Leslie Cordova was perfect. X Cave was like a cool-down after a work out. Thanks, Leslie!

After a hot shower and warm dinner it was off to watch the Squeeze-O-Meter contest. When the Squeez-O-Meter was rolled out, I expected uncle Fester from the Addams family to emcee the event. It was great watching the contestants

expressions through the clear side of this contraption as they tried to morph their bodies through. I heard Jerry Lawler made it through a seven inch squeeze!

Sunday came just as quickly as Saturday. It seemed as soon as I closed my eyes my roommates were waking me to prepare for the Sunday morning crawl at Burchess Cave. This cave was my favorite! There was more walking, crawling, squeezing, water, mud and fun. Burchess Cave has very sharp rock formations. I even heard that last year Doug Lanyk lost his coveralls in the chamber of knives. I loved climbing over the deep crevices that would not only swallow small children, but your whole family. There were several small pinch points to squeeze through so we decided to use Doug as our "Go-No Go" gauge. He kept a great attitude when asked to "Squeeze through there, Doug!" At this point we would hear "Okay, come on guys" or "No Way!"

Even with sore muscles, bruises, and the smell of cave mud in my nose, I was sad to see the weekend end. I can honestly say, if you have ever wondered what it's like to go caving, you should give the Crawl-A-Thon a try. You will have a great time. So, Leslie, do we really have to wait another year to go again?



Review

SOLAR Ski Team Excels in the "VASA"

By Cindy Harrison-Felix

Saturday, February 8th was the date for the 21st annual VASA Cross-Country Ski Race in Traverse City. The VASA is a national cross-country ski race with skiers from all over the country participating. This race offers competitions for distances of 47 or 27 kilometers, classic (diagonal stride) or freestyle (skating) skiing, or a 12 kilometer fun race (both freestyle and classic).

This year, Debbie Wood lead the trip to the '997 VASA with the SOLAR Ski Team! Seventeen SOLARites met Friday night at the Days Inn in Traverse City. We had a great turnout

for the race; nineteen SOLARites skied in the race this year. The ski conditions were great, with sun, lots of snow on the course, and temperatures between 18 and 26 degrees during the race. Everyone enjoyed the grueling race to the finish. A special pat-on-the-back goes to all those SOLARites who skied the 27K race for the first time! Of special note was of the 16 women participating in the 27K race, seven were SOLARites!

The unofficial (SOLAR) results as printed on the day of the race are listed in the table below.

The Days Inn hot tub was a popular gathering spot after the race; and then the traditional trip up to the Grand Traverse Resort to get the race results and find our names in print.

Everyone enjoyed pizza, euchre, TV,

etc. Saturday night. Some even had the extra energy to do more skiing on the way home Sunday.

Spring Sales

Sherpa snowshoes (9x34): \$120

Therm-A-Rest pad and chair kit: \$45

REI insulated booties (small): \$15

Dike booties: \$10 Coleman 440 stove (white/unleaded gas) and windscreen: \$30

Gander Mountain sleeping bag (-15° F 3 season, 3.7 lb): \$90

See 'em at the March meeting. All sales as is. Call Lester Mok at (519) 256-0324

	Distance	Style	Time	Rank Among Gender Division	Rank Among Age & Gender Div.
Clayton Lucey	47K	F	3:50:10	140 of 170	34 of 44
Bill Stanley	47K	F	5:43:14	169 of 170	32 of 33
Dave Bombard	27K	F	3:01:36	233 of 240	51 of 53
Cindy Harrison-Felix	27K	C	3:57:55	7 of 13	4 of 8
Leslie Cordova	27K	C	4:08:02	8 of 13	5 of 8
Susan Greenspoon	27K	C	4:34:38	9 of 13	6 of 8
Linda Horner	27K	C	4:38:43	11 of 13	8 of 8
Julie Stolligrosz	27K	C	4:40:59	12 of 13	4 of 5
Debbie Wood	27K	C	ONC		
Lesia Hoover	27K	C	ONC		
Jim Young	27K	C	2:57:23	43 of 77	15 of 32
Tom Kuhn	27K	C	3:13:12	52 of 77	20 of 32
Gene Cordova	27K	C	3:47:19	65 of 77	25 of 26
Jeff Zabel	27K	C	4:31:48	75 of 77	31 of 32
Tim Stangl	27K	C	4:34:02	77 of 77	32 of 32
Ken McQuade	27K	C	ONC		
Marco Scarpetta	12K	F	1:02:17	30 of 92	
Ronda Shapiro	12K	C	1:47:31	57 of 71	
Mike Malon	12K	C	1:58:58	77 of 92	

C=Classic, F=Freestyle, ONC=On the course when results printed

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 send E-mail to stgardner@earthlink.net

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 21790 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) 988-6658

STEERING COMMITTEE

President	Mike Banks / (313) 235-8129
Vice-President	Doug Lanyk / (810) 634-4551
Secretary	Cindy Harrison-Felix / (313) 722-3994
Treasurer	Cindy Erickson / (313) 397-8240
Activities	Leslie Cordova / (810) 547-5626
Membership	Mary Price / (810) 477-7547
Equipment	Mike Felix / (313) 722-3994
Bylaws	Harry Price / (810) 477-7547
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SOLAR Ray	Steve Gardner / (810) 547-4998
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	Mo DeFrance / (810) 229-8283 Larry Martin / (313) 591-3856
	Bill Halvargis / (810) 669-1911 Al Fylak / 852-7514
	Joan Ryan / (810) 570IVE1

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



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