
THE SOLAR RAY

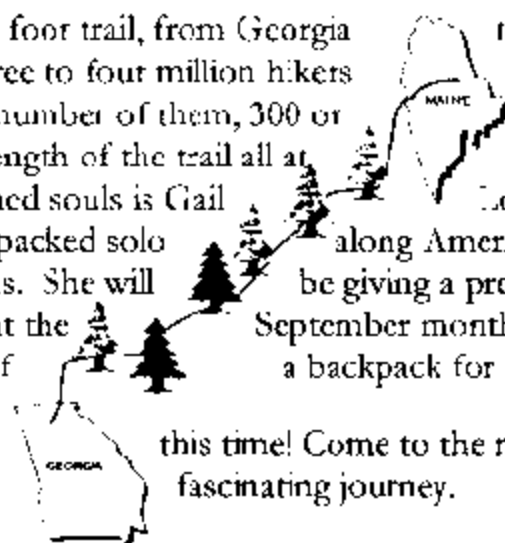
September 1999

APPALACHIAN TRAIL: SEPTEMBER PROGRAM

The world's longest foot trail, from Georgia to Maine, attracts three to four million hikers each year. A small number of them, 300 or so, are "thru-hikers," walking the entire length of the trail all at once. One of these daring and determined souls is Gail Lowe, Solar member returned, who backpacked solo along America's oldest mountain range for six months. She will be giving a presentation and slide show of her experiences at the September monthly meeting. Not only was she living out of

cold food during about her

this time! Come to the meeting and learn more fascinating journey.



FALL HAYRIDE AND BONFIRE



Come join in on the fun at a horse-drawn hayride and bonfire at Kensington Metro Park. We will meet at the Farm Center on Saturday, November 6th, at 6PM. The hayrides begin at 7PM, but we can stay at the bonfire until 10PM. Come hungry as there will be plenty of hot dogs, munchies, hot and cold beverages and, of course, marshmallows (bring your own roasting stick). This is a non-SOLAR trip, so bring your family, friends, co-workers and neighbors. Due to limited space on the hayrides, this trip is limited to the first 60 people who pay a mere \$10 for all of this fun. SORRY KIDS, BUT THIS TRIP IS FOR ADULTS ONLY.

For more information or to sign up, *contact either Gem or Leslie Cordova* at (248) 547-5626, or see us at the next SOLAR meeting.

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Letters from the Road: Part II

By Tom Dunn

Alaska: Planes, Trains and Automobiles

Crossing the border into Alaska I had no idea that my first day back on American soil was going to be so memorable. The Taylor highway, which starts at the U.S. border, is a disaster waiting to happen. Imagine an Algonquin portage with highway markers. For those of you who haven't experienced Algonquin, this means **boulders** in the roadway.

Shortly after crossing the border I saw an ancient R.V. directly in front of me drive over a particularly rough spot in the road. All of a sudden, pieces of its undercarriage were ripped from their mounts. I then watched, disbelieving, as the driver lost control and plunged over the cliff. The sight of an airborne R.V. is a sight I will never forget. I stopped amidst the road debris, grabbed my first aid kit and headed toward the edge. Stopping briefly to survey the carnage, I saw that the R.V. had come to an abrupt stop, impaled on a tree, approximately 150 feet down the slope. As I headed over the edge, I mentally ran through the inventory of my kit. I recall praying that I would remember enough from my first aid classes to be of some value. I expected to see the decimated remains of a family. Halfway down the cliff I encountered the driver of the R.V. climbing up the hill. He appeared dazed, but he said that he was alone and unhurt. I continued down to the wreckage to double-check. Thank God he *was* alone and without even a scratch. Two guys in a jeep, who had been behind me, took this guy to the nearest town.

I followed them to the "town" of Boundry, Alaska, stopping at the solo log cabin which constitutes the entire town. The proprietor shared with me his theory of how the U.S. government is planting nuclear devices under both polar icecaps and all the world's glaciers. According to him, the government is going to melt all the ice in the world, killing two-thirds of the population. He felt safe and secure in his mountain top hideaway, pointing to his marked map and noting his altitude. Shades of the Twilight Zone. I had been in Alaska one whole hour. What else would I encounter in the months ahead?

It then took me five hours to cover the all of 75 miles of this treacherous road. I cursed the Taylor highway as a butt-slapping, kidney-vibrating, motorcycle-destroying, never-to-be-repeated experience.

The next two weeks were mild in comparison. I spent four days camped near Denali National Park. I had to wait several days for my backcountry pass. Incredibly, all four days were extremely clear, and Denali was completely visible. The ranger said she couldn't recall any other time that it had been clear for such a long period. During this time, my metallic partner and I took advantage of the wait and abused some Alaskan asphalt.

Margaret Martin joined me on July 10th. I parked the bike for ten days while Margaret and I explored some of the more picturesque parts of the state. We traveled by car, train, boat, airplane and horseback in pursuit of the perfect photo opportunity.

Next month: The journey home

T H E S O L A R R A Y

Basic Backpacking 101—SIGN UP NOW!



If you haven't taken SOLAR's basic backpacking class, *now's the time to do it.* This is the entry class for many of SOLAR's outdoor activities and is a prerequisite for many other classes. There are five evenings of classes and two weekend practicals. If you are a beginner, most of the basic equipment can be rented from the club. Even if you consider yourself an experienced backpacker, this class thoroughly covers all the basics, as well as providing a chance to practice your skills on the practicals with several experienced instructors. Some of the topics covered include preparation of meals, safety and rescue, trip planning, group dynamics, orienteering and an extensive discussion on proper equipment and use. This is also an excellent way to meet people in the club and to enjoy the outdoors.

The meetings will be held on Wednesday evenings at the Benchmark in downtown Farmington starting **September 8-October 6.** The first practical will be held on September 25-26 at Pinckney Recreation Area. The second practical will be on October 8-10 at Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore. The cost is around \$75.

Contact Carol McCrie at (810) 523-5785 or Cindy Harrison-Felix at (734) 722-3994 for sign up and info.

Stratford Bike Weekend

September 24-26 1999



Location: Wildwood Conservation Area, St. Mary's, Ontario

Cost: \$20, American, plus play tickets run \$15-60, Canadian.

Arrive on Friday and be prepared for a 10 am bike launch to Stratford where we will shop, sightsee, etc. The ride is approximately 20 km each way and a sag wagon will be available. There are several play options for Saturday night. Some of us will be seeing *WEST SIDE STORY*. Also playing is *The Tempest*, *A Midsummer's Night Dream*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *The Alchemist*, *School for Scandal*, *Dracula*, *Macbeth*, *Glenn*, and *Richard III*. Sunday morning, Joan and Bob will provide a French toast breakfast. There are bike trails at Wildwood, including 1,2,3, and 15 km multi-use trails. Mountain bikes are permitted. Coin-operated showers are available, as well as a shelter with electricity. The campsite is a group site. To order tickets for the plays, call 1-800-567-1600. Contact Joan Westbrook at 734/513-8454 for info and sign-up.

FOR SALE * * *

1. Dana Designs, Astroplane back pack, 6000-7000 cubic inch red and black medium size. Good condition, used, \$275.00 or best offer.
2. Eureka 4 person green tent, w/ full rain fly, never used \$99.00 or best offer.
3. Aquaterra, Sit-On-Top Kayak, 12 foot, used, good condition \$300.00 or best offer.
4. Aquaterra, kayak paddle feathered blades, one piece, good condition, \$60.00 or best offer.
5. Assorted self-inflating mats: 1 used, full length, \$15.00, 1 new, 3/4 length \$15.00 and 2 used, 3/4 length \$10 each.

Call Matt Dalton at 248-360-1611 if interested in any of the above items

2nd Annual Solar Club Elk Photo Safari & 4X4 Jamboree

October 9th-10th, 1999



Join fellow Solar Club members at the Pigeon River State Forest in search of the elusive Michigan Elk. There are approximately 1500 elk throughout the northern lower peninsula. The second weekend in October should be perfect. The air will be crisp, the fall colors will have kicked in, the bugs will be gone and the elk should be bugling.

The sound of an 800 to 1200-pound bull elk bugling is one you won't forget. The sound of Matt Dalton calling elk is one sound **you may want to forget**. I did call in 45 elk last year so humor me when you hear my call(s). Seeing or hearing elk is not guaranteed, but we will drive and hike several areas and give it our best shot.

Solar Club members with 4X4 vehicles are encouraged to join us. Members w/o 4X4's will be able to drive on 75% of the roads and will be matched up with members with 4X4's for the rough parts.

This is a children-friendly car camping trip. The cost is \$10.00 in advance. To reserve a spot on this trip, send a \$10.00 check today, made out to The Solar Club and mail it to: Matt Dalton, Solar Elk Trip, PO Box 103, Union Lake, MI 48387 Phone # 248-360-1611. Include your phone, fax or email for directions.



NATIONAL TRAILS DAY

On June 5th, thousands of people across the country and one hundred and sixty six people at Maybury State Park gathered together to honor National Trails Day. RHE, along with SOLAR, sponsored the event at Maybury and provided wood chips, lunch, snacks and tee shirts. Tager crews of all ages flocked to the trails with shovels and wheelbarrows in hand. SOLAR members, Friends of Maybury, and the Scouts all lent a hand. We erased trails, forged new trails, widened trails for emergency vehicles, removed barbed wire fencing, cut down tree stumps, and posted signs. Everyone had a great time working together and in just a few hours so many positive changes were made that will ensure environmental soundness and continued enjoyment of the trails at Maybury Park for years to come. Thank you to everyone in SOLAR who volunteered their time and tools!! You should feel proud of your contribution. If you couldn't make it this time, come next year (especially if you own a wheelbarrow)!

Activities Calendar

Sept. 7—General Membership Meeting. Colony Hall, Southfield

Sept. 8,15,22,29, Oct. 6—

Backpacking Class

Benchmark, Farmington

Carol McCrirk, 810/529-5232

Sept. 10-12—Rattlesnake

Provincial Park

Milton, Ontario

Laura Atkin, 810/229-8283

Sept. 18—Land Navigation

Class, Waterloo Recreation Area

Linda Burke, 248/471-9185

Sept. 19—Canoe w/ Special

Needs People

Proud Lake Recreation Area

Margaret Martin, 734/721-2821

Sept. 24-26—Stratford Bike

Weekend

St. Mary's, Ontario

Joan Westbrook, 734/513-3454

Sept. 25-26—Backpack

Practical I

Pineckey Recreation Area

Carol McCrirk, 810/523-5785

Sept. 26—Solar Night At Tiger Stadium

Mike Banks, 248/925-8939

Sept. 30-Oct. 3—Fall Color

Sailing Trip

Traverse City

Juli Penrod, 248/586-2625

Oct. 1-3—Canoe, Hike Cabins

Mohical River Area, Ohio

Leslie Cordova, 248/547-5626

Oct. 5—General Membership

Meeting

Colony Hall, Southfield

Oct. 8-10—Backpack Practical

II

Pictured Rocks Nat'l Lakeshore

Carol McCrirk, 810/523-5785

Oct. 15-17—Wilderness First

Aid Class

Harry Price, 248/477-7547

Oct. 15-17—Caving/Hiking

Mammoth Caves Nat'l Park

Karen Bates, 810/323-1436

Oct. 22-24—8th Annual

Haunted Halloween

Bald Mountain Recreation Area

Lisa Boese, 248/681-3617

Oct. 29-31—Outdoor

Leadership and Team Building

Class

Metamora

Harry Price, 248/477-7547

Nov. 5-7—Jordan River Car-

Camping Weekend

Mike Bayerl, 810/791-3781

the mohican river weekend



Come join us October 1-3 for a fun filled weekend of canoeing and hiking along the Mohican River in Loudonville, Ohio (3.5 hours from Detroit). On Saturday we will hike some of the 12 miles of trail in the nearby Mohican State Park. The striking Clearfork Gorge with its towering hemlocks and virgin stands of white pine are part of the reason that the National Park Service has dedicated this area as a Registered National Natural Landmark. Along the hiking trails there are two waterfalls, a scenic wooden bridge and one that follows a lakeshore. Sunday, we will canoe or kayak the Mohican River for about 4 hours before we depart for home. Other attractions in the area include Malabar Farm State Park, Fire Tower, Amish Country, Wine & Cheese Fest, and biking trails.

We will be staying in cabins at the Mohican Canoe Livery and Fun Center. These are not exactly your rustic cabins as they have real beds and showers, even hot tubs on the back decks. Cost is \$44 for 2 nights w/hot tubs, \$40 without. Canoeing is \$15 per person, or you can rent kayaks for \$18. The trip is currently full, but Leslie is taking a waiting list. Call **Leslie Cordova** at (248) 547-5626.

Heads-up on other clubs

Just a few ideas for those who like to try other, uh... real outdoor adventures:

1. *Southern Michigan Orienteering Club*. 1830 North Lafayette Street, Dearborn, MI 48128-1165. Enclose your name(s), full address, phone, e-mail address, and a check payable to SMOC (\$8/individual, \$12/family) for a year of membership. You will receive newsletters and local meets schedule. Fall meets start in late September. Web: www.angelfire.com/mi/SMOC/smocsked.html
2. *Appalachian Mountain Club*. Call 1-800-262-4455 for membership info. The AMC has 5-day winter mountaineering courses in the White Mountains and the Adirondacks. These are very popular courses, so act now to get the registration info. Web: www.outdoors.org/
3. *Equinox Adventures in Toronto*. Call 1-800-785-8855 for river rescue, rig rescue, and rock-climbing instructor courses. Web: www.equinoxadventures.com

Talk to me if you feel guilty in checking out these non-SOLAR sources.
Lester Mok, 519/256-0324, lsmok@sprint.ca



REMEMBER JEFF SMITH? He was SOLAR president in the early 80s and moved to Colorado. He did two stints in Antarctica and always has good stories to share. He will be in town, and Peg and Ron Campbell will be hosting a potluck dinner for him and old friends on Friday, September 10. Social hour 6:30, dinner 7:30. If you can attend, call Peg for directions at 248/348-4246 or e-mail her at pegcampbell@mediaone.net. The Campbells live in Northville by Maybury State Park. Hope you can make it.

Wilderness First Aid Class

WHEN: OCTOBER 15-17, 1999
 LOCATION: BRIGHTON RECREATION AREA
 FRONTIER CABINS
 COST: \$95.00
 INSTRUCTOR: DOUG BROWN
 COORDINATOR: HARRY PRICE
 248/477-7547



Get Certified!

Wilderness First Aid is a core class. The emphasis of this course is first aid when medical help is several days away. The course will use the second edition of NOLS Wilderness First Aid. Evidence of current CPR training is required to receive a certificate. The certification is good for three years. The course includes classroom instruction and participating in rescue scenarios.

OUTDOOR LEADERSHIP AND TEAM BUILDING

WHEN: October 29-31, 1999
 LOCATION: D-A Scout Ranch, Metamora, MI (near Lapeer)
 COST: \$70.00
 LEAD INSTRUCTOR: Harry Price
 248/477-7547

This is a new class for SOLAR. The class will deal with leadership skills, including effective communications, decision-making, conflict resolution, leadership styles (sharing leadership), and controlling group performance. In addition, team-building exercises suitable for the development of small groups will be presented, discussed, and practiced. The class will start at 7:30 p.m., Friday night, and will end at approximately noon on Sunday. The text is Outdoor Leadership by John Graham—The Mountaineers. If you are thinking of leading a trip or activity for the first time, this is a class you should strongly consider.



Fossil Hunt Review

By Jim Giffix

This year's 9th Annual Fossil Hunt was awesome. Counting 6-month old Carlos, we had 51 people this year. This was truly a fun group, with over two dozen kids and lots of adults who like to play. While we missed Marcella's laughter, Erika and Natalie's adventurous spirit led us on a fun time. Jeff Enterkin and Gene barbecued for lunch, and with tons of food and three watermelons, everyone was satisfied. Balloon animals and hats cheered the kids.

The refreshing waters of the 35-foot waterfall were almost warm, the hike to the river was plentiful with frogs, and almost everyone swam and found what they were looking for. Getting fried at the Grand Bend beach on Saturday helped make this trip to a foreign country truly a memorable one.

Jim Ellis and family were our hosts for camping—thanks. Also, thanks to Cyndy for great company. Even Jennifer from work was there! C-ya all next year....

Never Kayaked?

Want To Try Many Different Kayaks?

Don't Know Why Eskimos Roll?

Event: Solar Kayak Paddlefest
Date: Sunday, September 26, 1999
Time: 12:00 PM to 4:30 PM
Place: Cass Lake Beach Area
Cost: \$5.00

Solar's kayaking members have graciously volunteered to allow fellow Solar Club members to try out their kayaking gear. Beginners and experienced paddlers will be able to paddle many different makes and models of kayaks. This is not a class, but some instruction will be given to beginners. All paddlers must wear their personal flotation device (PFD) while on the water. The beach area at Cass Lake, not the swimming area, is good for beginners because of its shallow and sandy bottom.

Experienced kayakers will be demonstrating group rescues, self-rescues, Eskimo rolling, paddling techniques and a few tricks. All of our group can perform at least half an Eskimo roll; it's the second half,



getting back up, that's tricky. Come and join the fun, rain or shine, and

remember this is a wet sport. Bring your swimsuit, water shoes and a smile.

Solar members with kayaks are encouraged to sign up for this event. Members who share their kayaks will have the \$5.00 fee waived, and will be invited to a post Paddlefest Barbecue and Party! This will include food and videos demonstrating expert rolling instruction. Also, Matt will show videos of the world famous Tsunami Rangers, the most extreme & crazy coastal sea kayakers in the country. The party starts at 5:30 PM.

You must sign up in advance. Cost for this event is \$5.00, and there is a state park fee of \$4.00 to get into the park if you don't have a state park sticker. Send a check for \$5.00 made out to The Solar Club today. Mail it to: Matt Dalton, Kayak Paddlefest, PO Box 103, Union Lake, MI 48387. Include your phone, fax # or email to receive directions. You can contact Matt Dalton at phone: 248-366-1611 or email:

mdalton@heritagekayaks.com

JORDAN RIVER BACKPACKING / CAR- CAMPING WEEKEND

November (5)6-7



Hey there, all you recent graduates of the basic backpacking classes, and all other SOLAR members. We will be hiking the Jordan River trail east of Traverse City, November 6-7. This is one of the most spectacular trails in the Lower Peninsula.

The trail follows the Jordan River Valley for about 18 miles round trip. The campground is located around the halfway point. However, a small service road comes to within about 200 yards of the campground. This means that we will walk into the campground on Friday night to set up camp and pack daypacks for Saturday morning. We will then shuttle in cars to the trailhead and hike back to basecamp. Sunday, we will hike back to the trail head. Any masochists out there (e.g., Doug Lanyk) can haul all their gear on their backs. I prefer to travel light so as to see more than the tops of my shoes. In addition, since we don't have to carry everything, we can bring plenty of warm clothes (just in case) and extra *games and toys*. The cost of the trip is essentially nothing. Everyone will be expected to arrange travel to and from the trail, food and sleeping arrangements. The DNR requires \$6/campsite. Hope to see you then...Contact Mike Bayerl for info and sign-up at 810/791-3781 or email: bayerlm@ameritech.net

T H E S O L A R R A Y

Nordhouse Review by Catherine Krieger

"Beware, the woods at night. Beware, the lunar light".

- Peter Steele

Seven SOLAR backpackers experienced a unique weekend, July 31-August 2, at Nordhouse Dunes. For those who have yet to discover this beautiful wilderness area in the Huron Manistee Forest, it can be found roughly 8 miles north of Ludington and 12 miles southwest of Manistee. The 3,450 acres of desert-like grassy dunes bordered by stands of pine and hardwood forest is the only designated wilderness in the Lower Peninsula.

We met in the south parking lot and hiked through a dreamy wooded landscape to the beach after midnight, enveloped in a warm humid breeze. Reaching the shores of Lake Michigan, we were treated to a spectacular show of heat lightning and crashing waves. After a brief discussion to form a safety plan for a possible storm, we comfortably settled to sleep on the beach. Shortly thereafter, we were abruptly awakened by high winds and the swift approach of immense black clouds moving across the water. Scrambling over the dunes to safe cover in the tree line, the group braved the elements for the remainder of the night, with or without tents. Eventually mosquitoes drove us back to the beach to continue a well-deserved rest.

The next morning, gray clouds gave way to clear sun as we set up camp and bodysurfed in the warm coastal waters of Lake Michigan. Lester treated us to a bushwhacking exercise, followed by a long hike through the woods and along the beach back to camp. Unfortunately, sometime in the late afternoon the flies decided to have us for dinner. These weren't black flies, just the ordinary beach variety. We had a good laugh watching one another race for cover in tents or in the water. Glen, Mike and Lester watched the sunset in water up to their chins. As most of us were admittedly quite tired by this point, the planned night hike was scrapped. However, two of our hardier members, Susan and Rick, ventured into the woods to listen to the night sounds. Throughout the night, we lost only one to the Nordhouse Witch.

Waking to a glorious sunny morning, we packed up and cleared a few unoccupied campsites on the way out (i.e., dismantled fire pits, picked up trash). Part of our morning duties included coaxing Mike Banks in from the surf. At least we didn't have to wait for his body to wash up on shore. We headed down the road for a great breakfast at "The Steak and Figger".

Mike forced us to stop at his favorite ice cream shop in Ludington, serving 100 flavors and connected to a real live dairy. Prolonging our adventure we strolled off to a nearby lighthouse park. Overall, we enjoyed a very pleasant and adventurous weekend.

I'm looking forward to spending more night time at Nordhouse in the fall. Interested? See me or contact the Ranger Station at 616 723 2211.

Solar Night at Tiger Stadium

September 26, 1999. The Second to Last night at the Old Stadium. Join in the roar for the Tigers, with Mr. Mike Banks leading the cheers.

The seats are upper box reserve; cost is \$15.00. Time is on Sunday, at 1:00 pm. But Solar Night apparently sounds more festive... According to Mike, it's going to be "sunny and beautiful."

If YOU want to be a part of history AND have a great time, call Mike Banks at 248/926-8939 to learn how!



8th ANNUAL HAUNTED HALLOWEEN

Bald Mountain Recreation Area
October 22-24, 1999

Cost: \$15.00 per person, one cabin, limit 20 people

Trip Leader: Lisa Boose, 248/681-3617



This will a family/kid-friendly weekend filled with fun Halloween events for the kids! Friday night we will meet at the cabins after 7:00 pm and have a campfire, night hiking, and games with the kids. Saturday, we will go leaf-crunching in the woods, both hiking and mountain biking. In the afternoon, it's a trip to the pumpkin patch for a hayride, hay fights, and other fall games. Buy a pumpkin to carve and make plans for the...

SOLAR pumpkin carving contest in the evening.

Halloween costume contest

Traditional potluck

Games, campfire, and ghost stories



Sunday is another day for hiking, biking, horseback riding, or a stop at the cider mill on the way home.

There is no electricity so bring stoves, lanterns and coolers. A water pump, outhouse and wood burning stove are available. Bring your sleeping bags and pillows; there are bunk beds with mattresses. A state park permit is required.

(All adults must be accompanied by a child.)

Fall Color Sailing Tour

Northport, Michigan off the lovely Leelanau Peninsula

9/30-10/3



Set sail with us on the "Manitou," one of the largest sailing ships on the Great Lakes. It is a "traditional" two masted, gaff-rigged, topsail schooner, measuring 114 feet in length." We go aboard ship Thursday evening, and have a champagne toast and a quick tour of the vessel and crew introduction. We set sail early the next morning and return to port Sunday at noon. The destination each day varies according to the wind, but Beaver Island, Harbor Springs, and Manitou are likely options. This is a participatory "barefoot" cruise in which passengers can assist with sailing, anchor raising and lowering and other nautical tasks as they wish. All food is homemade and provided.

The cost is \$400 and includes all accommodations except additional beverages. There are only seven spots left so make your reservations today! Call Juli Perrod at 248/589-2629 for more information and sign-up.

T H E S O L A R R A Y



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Bill Halvingis
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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 12 days after the general meeting for the following month's edition. Contributions in the form of upcoming events, comments, trip reports, recipes, photos, and original articles are welcome. Send all contributions to Amy Barber, 6921 Lakeview Blvd. #3311, Westland, MI 48185. Phone# 734/595-4599. Send e-mail to amykay86@hotmail.com. ^

Meeting Location

Meetings are held on the first Tuesday of the month at the Colony Hall, located at 21780 Evergreen Rd., between 8 and 9 Mile Roads in Southfield at 7:30 PM. **Visitors can attend meetings for free.** Membership dues are:

\$30 individual, annually
\$150 individual, lifetime
\$45 family, annually
\$225 family, lifetime

The **SOLAR CLUB** is a non-profit organization of people interested in promoting appreciation of outdoor activities through education and practical experience. The club offers educational programs and various activities which are listed inside. We sponsor trips as well as informal gatherings to provide the exchange of expertise, experiences and information. All of these contribute to fellowship among the membership. SOLAR Club activities will enhance and further the skills and information taught in the basic and more advanced classes through active participation.

For more information about SOLAR
SOLAR CLUB HOTLINE
24-hour Voice Mail 248/988-6658
or <http://members.tripod.com/~solarclub1>
or Call Doug Lanyk @248/634-4551



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