

The SOLAR RAY

November 2001

Introducing Southeast Michigan to the Outdoors since 1976

SOLAR tops 1,300 bag nights and seizes second place In nationwide Bag Night Challenge!

One thousand three hundred and thirty-seven nights... It adds up to 3 1/2 years in the woods. It took that and more for SULAR to pass the BSA Venturing Crew to move into 2nd place in the nationwide "Bag Nights" challenge. The contest, to log the most nights outdoors in a sleeping bag, is sponsored by Backpacker magazine's website, and started in December 2000. Here we are, second only to the Boy Scouts. I figure losing to them is tolerable- considering they outnumber us by baziltions (Yes, I checked the numbers...he, he, he). Also, notice that Michigan is 2nd in nights by state! We're only losing to Ca ifornia here. Not only are we in the coolest club...but also we live in the most visited (read: "coolest") state with affordable electricity!

I knew we could do it!!! Thank you all so much for heiping Don't stop now though, or someone will sneak past us! The game isn't over 'til the end of November. Help keep SOLAR at the top. Soooooco...(why change a good thing...): Get Out More, logon, login, and log your nights.

-- Karl Overneul (CyberNomad@backpacker.com

IT'S (ALMOST) TIME TO RUN WITH THE DOGS!

If you have ever watched the Idtitrod Sled Dog Race and wondered what it would be like to run with the dogs here's your chance. Once again Solar is going to South River, Ontario for a weekend of dog sledding. The trip is scheduled for February 15-17, 2002. The cost of the trip is \$225.00 (American dollars) per person, all inclusive. (check or money order only)

I've been dog sledding for several years and enjoy the sport more each year. Dog sledding is a physical sport but, anyone with a sense of adventure who loves winter outdoor activities should have a great time and come back with stories to tell. See me at the monthly Solar Club meeting or c-mail me at: lady musher@yaloo.com for more details.

-Karen Bates

Bag Night Totals (as of 10-22-01)

- Boy Scouts of America 9,735
- 2. S.O.L.A.R. Southfield, MI 1,337
- 3. BSA Venturing Crew 1,206
- Appalachian Mountain Club 862
- 5. Robert Land Academy 820
- Appalachian Trail Conference—
 591
- 7. United States Army 574
- 8. Nat'l Outdoor Leadership School-545
- Sierra Club 477
- Backpacker Magazine staff –
 416

TO LOG YOUR NIGHTS FOR SOLAR:

- 1. Go to Backpacker.com
- 2. In the upper right corner you'll see a place that says, "Please register." Fill out that form, and wait for your confirming email.
- 3. Password in hand, 30 back to the Backpacker site and start logging those nights! Don't forget to register your bag nights for SOLAR before you submit them.
- For help, email Karl at: CyberNomad@backpacper.com.

SOLAR CALENDAR

Sunday, Nov. 4
SMOC Orienteering Meet ***

Pontiac Lake - www.angelfire.com/mi/SMOC

Tuesday, Nov. 6
SOLAR General Membership Meeting
Program: Winter Backpacking Presentation
Leslie Cordova – lesliegene@aol.com

Saturday, Nov. 10 REI Winter Sports Fair *** Northville Store Peggy Medved – 248/390-3969

Sunday, Nov. 11
REI Winter Sports Fair ***
Troy Store
Peggy Medved – 248/390-3969

Weekend, Nov. 17-18
Wilderness First Aid Class ***
Lansing – Vertical Ventures – 517/336-0520

Sunday, Nov. 18 SMOC Orienteering Meet ***

Peach Mountain-www.angelfire.com/mi/SMOC

Weekend, Nov. 30 – Dec. 2
Primitive Skills Seminar
Waterloo Recreation Area
Glen & Catherine Krueger, 810/774-9697
rkruger11@home.com

Saturday, Dec. 1 Curling Party Rob Mair - grosbecs@aol.com 810-752-9740(x5)

***Denotes a non-SOLAR activity.



SOLAR member Janet Schester learned to filter water in the fall backpacking class on the shore of Lake Superior. Photo by Charles Hailey. See inside for more great pictures from the class.

If you would like to plan / lead a SOLAR activity, contact Pam Rich: at <u>parichll@nctscape.net</u> or <u>sqlaractivities@netscape.net</u>.

SOLAR HAS A NO-REFUND POLICY. If YOU ARE UNABLE TO ATTEND AN ACTIVITY, YOU MAY "SELL YOUR SPOT" TO ANOTHER CLUB MEMBER

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OOPS!!! Through no fault of the editor (I swear!) the website for the GPS treasure hunts was left out of last month's Solar Ray. To find out more, go to www.geocaching.com.

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"When we walk, we naturally go to the fields and woods: what would become of us, if we walked only in a garden or a mall?"
--Heary David Thoreau, "Walking"

tt's that time of year again - time for the 21st annual Carter Caves Crawla-thon. What is a crawl-a-thon you this is an annual event might ask put on by Carter Caves State Park in Olive Hill, Kentucky. It is a great way for people to get acquainted with caving as they offer a wide variety of cave lours, ranging from walking tours, a little bit of crawling. a lot of crawling and vertical caving. They even have trips for kids and seniors!! If you do not like the underground, join us anyway, asthere is some great hiking in the area.

The basic plan is to drive down to the park on Friday (about a 7-hour drive) and stay right at the Carter Caves Lodge. I have a limited number of rooms reserved, once they are filled; the nearest lodging is 10 – 15 miles away.

The cost for 2 nights lodging is \$45 per adult and \$25 per child 16 and under, payable to SOLAR. Since this trip will fill up, only payments in full will be accepted to hold your spot. If you give me your address, I will give it to Carter Caves and they will then meil you an entry form for the Crawta-thon sometime in December.

You will need to send in the entry form yourself along with a check for \$20 to Carter Caves. Your \$20 includes 2 days of guided caving and a T-shirt from the event. Please do not delay as the trips fill up quickly. If you do not receive the form by January, call them at (606) 286-4411 and ask them for a form, or download it from www.crawlathon.com.

See me at the meeting for a listing of equipment you may need. SOLAR has helmets, knee and elbow pads and a few headlamps that you may borrow. A refundable deposit is required. I do not have enough equipment for everyone, so you will need to reserve in advance. For more info contact me at (248) 547-5626 or LeslieGene@aol.com.

--Leslie Cordova



Photo. Roger James enjoys Crawlathon 2000, By Mrs. James.

Toledo 200 lights display

Saturday, December 15 - Come join us for the "Lights Before Christmas" display at the Toledo Zoo. Toledo's favorite boliday tradition continues once again at the Toledo Zoo. Come and see over ONE MILLION LIGHTS and over 130 animals. If you have ever been to the lights display at the Detroit Zoo, you haven't seen anything. This is the best lights display in the area. The lights are throughout the entire zoo, not just in one area. You can wander around and see the lights, visit the animals, take a train ride, listen to the carolers or visit with Santa.

Plan:

- * Meet at the entrance (in front of the gift shop) at 4:45PM.
- * Tour the zoo.
- * Meet back at the gift shop at 8:30ish
- * Caravan to cinner, take I-75 back North to the Alexis Road exit, turn left and go a few miles until you see a Ground Round restaurant on your right.

Cost:

Adults - - \$5, Children 2 - 11 - - \$3

More Info: www.toledozoo.org · or · (419) 385-5721 or contact me at LeslieGene@aol.com - or - (248) 547-5626

--Leslie Cordova

Sharing the SOLAR spirit

On Sunday, December 9, come holiday hiking inside at Botsford Continued Care. We'll sing Christmas Carols through the halls for the residents All singing levels welcome, please wear holiday hats, vests, etc. as the residents really enjoy the festive attire. All the music will be provided, and, thanks to Judy Spitzer, the books have been updated.

Please arrive at 3:15 PM, we'll sing from 3:30-4:30. After caroling, we'll head over to Harry & Mary Price's for a potluck dinner. Bring a potluck dish to pass. Everyone welcome, including supervised children. Sign up at the Nov. or Dec. meetings in case there is a freak snowstorm, or, as in the case a few years ago, a flu outbreak that causes us to cancel. For more info. call me at 734 721 2821.

-- Margaret Marti

Trip report - Life in Yellowstone

Sixteen SOLAR members departed for Yellowstone Park in late August for a 2-week visit. With 4 vehicles for flexibility and plenty of food, we saw every corner of the Park. Most of the time, we stayed in the backcountry – true wilderness. We also saw the standard tourist fare: geysers and hot springs, the grand waterfalls, and wildlife. About half of the group enjoyed a 5-day hike into the southwestern corner; daily hikes varied from 3 to 17 miles.

We cooked all meals over stoves; open fires were not permitted until the final 2 days. All food and other attractants were strung up on bear poles each night. People usually slept under tarps or just under the stars. The weather varied greatly from highs over 90 degrees to snow and lows in the 20s. You have not hiked in dry country until you've experienced 90 degrees and 10% homidity with a pack on your back and steep climbs. There were a few campground nights for convenience, and a few meals and snacks from Park concessions. And plenty of souvenirs.

One main goal was to see lots of wildlife, and as many species as possible. Hikes were selected to see diverse habitats, places where the chances of seeing less common species were better. Sometimes we hiked for miles and saw almost no animals, surprising given our expectations. We did see a lot from the road. I think we made too much noise while on the trails. No one saw a bear. We did see Old Faithfu, crupt through a blizzard. Deep, fresh snow covered the high mountaintops by the end of the trip.

Group members did see: wolves, elk, pronghom, bison, mule deer, pikas, golden and bald eagles, osprey, bighom sheep, coyotes, fox, white patieans, trumpeter swans, magpies, begging Gray lays, Clark's Nuterackers, bold ravens, eLtthroat trout, sand hill cranes, moose. Lewis & Clark first identified some of these species for science. Tom Oloffo had the most dramatic experience when he watched wolves hassle a healthy bison and feed on an earlier kill.

The signs of the great '88 fire are everywhere, changing vast areas of beautiful old-growth forest into meadows full of vertical and prone, black and silver sticks. Early hikes went through some severe burn areas; there were few flowers left to glorify them. Old-growth torests are far more interesting. Active wildfires even threatened the Park while we were there; we saw the smoke and asken ridges.

The trip was a success in all ways. No one was hurt or frightened. Few lost weight. Animals posed often and well. We saw as much as time allowed and marveled at the wonders. Bison appearing to charge our car. Swimming in a bubbling, but spring. But, elk in the campgrounds at dawn. Howling coyotes. An intent, stalking fox. Osprey diving for trout. An amazing, electric storm at midnight. Fording large rivers. Dinner in the Old Faithful Inn. Sleeping in the open in bear territory. Watching a 2-week old geyser. Seeing smoke and smelling a wildfire while on the trail. Cold beer at the end of the trail. Deep, starry skies. We started planning another visit before coming home.

--Rob Mair

STAY CONNECTED TO SOLAR VIA EMAIL

Dear Fellow Solar Members.

In early September a mass small from Peggy Medved went out regarding a fundraiser in October. The following members' emails came back to

Peggy as nonworking email addresses: Vickie Arrington, Mustafa Bahjet, Jenny Carpenter. Suzanne Creech, Karen Contsinger, Matt Dalton, Maria Edwards, Jeff Emery, David Fey, Jeffery Ganley, Henry Harriman Jr., James Kadhabowski, Vani Katta, Kim Olvera, Lori Seimiller, Ronda Shapiro, Colleen & Joe Virag, Rick Waller, George Zapp, Joanne Kwansik, Lydia Maes, G. Maddox, Rob Nani, Jim Nelson.



Beata Owczarski, Ron Quinn, Judy Spitzer, and Sandy Tutro.

Please email the at <a href="mailto:https://ht

-- Mary Price, Membership

Ice Hotel Feb. 14-18

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to sleep in a giant igloo on a bed of ice? Or sit on an ice chair eating from an ice table or even drinking from a glass carved out of ice? Well, now's your drance. I am looking for people to join me for a Valentines weekend you won't forget.

The Ice Hotel is located in the village of Ste-Catherine-de-Ia-Jacques-Cartier near Quebec City, Quebec, Canada. This rip includes one night in downtown Toronto, one night at the Ice Hotel, one night at the Ducheshay Lodge (Ice Hotel property), and one night in downtown Quebec City. The trip also includes one Absolut cocktail, one complete dinner, two breakfasts, CC Skiing, Snowshocing, Ice Skating, Sliding, Discovery Rally, Walking Hikes, Ecological treks. Orienteering in the woods, and winter survival. Optimal activities include Dogsledding, White fishing, Igloo Construction, Snowmobile, and Coureur des bois.

Please see me at the November meeting for pricing and more info.

--Lou Szaka

<u>SOLAR SNAPSHOTS</u>

Congrats to the graduates & instructors of this fall's SOLAR backpacking class, posing here during their trip to the U.P. The photo at upper left is lead instructor Carol McCrirle. Unfortunately space doesn't permit listing all the graduates, but you know who you are. Thanks to Kim Kozlowski for sharing her pictures.







School for Outdoor Leadership, Adventure and Recreation

Letters from the Road

Every summer for years, SOLAR member and teacher Tom Dunn rode his motorcycle to Alaska and back. In this second excerpt, he shares a bit more of his adventures.

Turning North - My pivot point for turning north was the four comers national menument. I stopped at a gas station on an Indian reservation to refuel. The pack of dogs that guard the station apparently don't like bikers. After I fueled and was pulling out of the station I was attacked by three dogs jumping at me and biting my legs. In my effort to kick them away I dropped my bike on the gravel drive. Cost, I broken windshield, I bent brake lever, I cut, twisted knee. Score, Apache dogs 3. Detroit biker 0.

Leaving the canine humiliation behind, I had a 120-mile run across the desert to get to Monument Valley where I was going to camp. My next target was Prince Rupert on the coast of British Columbia, 2700 miles north. To quote an old traveling song, "I have a long way to go and a short time to get there." This leg of my ride took me across New Mexico, Arizona, Utah, Idaho, Oragon, Washington and halfway up British Columbia. I crossed into Canada at Vancouver and headed north on Highway 99. After 35 years of motorcycle touring I must admit that this is the most beautiful stretch of road I have ever seen. The road varied from fjord shoreline to cliffhanging curves without guardrails. I followed the Fraser river valley for several days. The scenery varied from high latitude scrub desent to snow-filled mountain passes. The last 100 miles into Prince Rupert was spectacular as snow-covered peaks lined both sides of the highway. I met several other bikers in Prince Rupert. After 4700 miles on my bike a few days rest and some camaraderic will be appreciated.

--Tom Dunn

Next month. Alaska, Yukon, and the Northwest Territories.

SOLAR Curls!

Curling is an ancient game, devised and played first by Scots over 500 years ago. Originally played on key lakes and rivers, it requires deft control of heavy rocks that are slid to targets in the kee. Teammates with brooms sweep snow and debris from the path. Today, played indoors in teams of four, the physical techniques are refined and the strategy resembles that of chess.

The Detroit Curling Club is one of the oldest in the nation, proclaiming a heritage dating to 1885. It will open a great, new arena this fall in Ferndale. I will host curling parties for SOLAR members this fall. The first party will be 1 December, Saturday, moon to 4, and the charge per person is \$15. We will have snacks and drinks available.

Teammates each stide 2 stones of granite to the target, or "house", in the ice. While one person throws and another directs from the far end, the remaining 2 sweep the ice when so directed. These deliveries alternate between opposing teams. You may try to place a stone within the target or in front, or hit an opponent's stone to remove it. The rules are simple. A normal game is 8 ends – like innings – 4 times throwing all of the stones to the other and of the sheet, and 4 times coming back. It takes about 2 hours.

Sweeping is more than just cleaning the ice. It affects the course of the stone in a predictable manner. By starting and stopping sweeping, the team actually steers the stone toward a good location. Sweeping is aerobic; you don't have to wear much on the ice when you sweep hard.

In addition to skills and rules, the instructors explain the culture of the game. Curlers are courteous and polite during games, not criticizing teammates or opponents. "If you have nothing good to say, say something good anyway." No trash talk; just ladies and gentlemen. Games all start with handshakes and greetings and end the same way. The winning team normally buys a round of drinks for their opponents.

If you are interested, contact me soon: grosbecs@aol.com or 810-752-9740x5 at work, with voicemail. Each party is limited to the first 32 SOLAR MEMBERS who sign up.

-Rob Mair

Membership Dues To Increase

What is your SOLAR membership worth to you? Have you ever asked yourself that question? When I think of the opportunities that The Club has given me, the knowledge that I have gained, the friends that I have made, and all the experiences that have helped to mold me into who I am, I realize that it is impossible to place a value on that kind of wealth!

As you know, The SOLAR Club is a non-profit organization, run by volunteers. These volunteers are you and I. We all share a love for the outdoors, and we chose to become members because we share a common motivation to nurture that love, for the outdoors, in others. However, there are costs associated with that sharing and those costs continue to go up! It has always been a club goal to keep expenses to a minimum in order to allow the greatest number of people to enjoy the benefits of club membership. We have maintained the same membership dues for the last seven years.

Unfortunately, our insurance has skyrocketed, and the rent for Colony Hall has increased, as have our expenses to buy new and replace old gear, and printing and postage costs are on the rise. In short we must raise membership fees, in order to uncompromisingly maintain our consistently high standards. Thus, please be advised that the following new rates will go into effect with the renewal of your 2002 membership. New Individual Membership:\$40.00 per year/\$175 lifetime; New Family Membership: \$55.00 per year/\$250 lifetime. I trust that you will understand the innancial realities which have made this action necessary and I look forward to sharing a strong, healthy club with you, well into the exciting future!

-- Leslie Cordova, Solar Club President

HELP WANTED (really)

Hello Fellow Climbers:

I know we are all busy but I wanted to pass on an opportunity that has recently come up that some of you may be interested in. As many of you have heard, a new outdoor sporting goods retailer Gaylans Trading Company (www.galyans.com) is opening it's doors in Novi in the next couple of weeks. It is located in the new mail just west of 12 Oaks off of 12 Mile Roac.

I spoke with Paul (many of you may remember him from the Benchmark), the manager of the camping/canoeing/kayaking/climbing areas of the store and they are looking for part-time belayers. The position does not pay much, but there are some good benefits including "Pro-Deal Discount" as well as store discounts of 10-25% off in store merchandise, climbing safety training, and some climbing time (including setting holds). The wall is impressive 50' tall, and is open 7 days a week (4-9pm Monday-Friday, 9-8:30pm Saturday, and 11-5pm Sunday). They are looking for people to work 12-26 hours/week, however if you were willing to work more, they would be eager to have you.

Due to the hours that the wall is open, it would be an ideal 'after work" job and an opportunity to meet follow climbors. If you have any questions, or are interested contact me: (517-324-0564) or Paul: (hpgoodman@earthlink.net or 248-449-8979 temporary offices or 248-478-7116 home). The training is October 10-11 and the grand opening is the weekend of October 18, so he is 'ooking forward to getting some help soon! Thank you for your time.

-Laura Albin

Enjoy Michigan Winters Backpacking

Winter backpacking skill is not just for the winter, it is a useful back-up for the unexpected cold days in early spring and late fall. In this class we'll teach you how to keep warm & your energy level up when skiing or snow shoeing in the winter & now to build a snow shelter just in case something does go HORRIBLY WRONG on that simple 3 hr. ski trib. You can also use these skills in the summer on glaciers and snowy peaks in the Rockies, the Cascades, Alaska, or Kilimanjaro.

This class will teach you the 'ins and outs' of winter camping in Michigan. The first class will be held on Dec. 13 and all other classes and practicals will be held in January & the beginning of February. The cost is \$100.00 for new students and reduced fee for past graduates who want to retake or audit the course. Pick up details at the monthly meeting.

This course is open to the graduates of the Backpacking Course, graduates of non-SOLAR backpacking courses may be admitted by special permission only. This course is the prerequisite for the Winter Survival Course. For safety reasons, the Winter Wilderness First Aid Course is highly recommended for both of these courses. With the recent warm winters keep your fingers crossed & pray for snow. To sign up or if you have any questions contact me at (313)-380-3057 or mcmountainman@yahoo.com.

--Tom Oloffo

PRIMITIVE SKILLS WEEKEND

Have you always wanted to learn primitive skills but didn't know where to start? Join us to learn some of the basic foundational skills. Build your confidence and self-sufficiency in the woods without gadgets and expensive gear. Planned topics thus far include: Debris shelter, edible plants, primitive navigation, bow drill/fire making, cordage, water usage with paper containers and solar still (non-alcoholic!), coal burning containers and fl.nt knapping.

Spots are limited to 15 students. The cost is \$60, which must be paid at the time of registration. We'll be staying at Burns Cabin #2 at the Waterloo Recreation Area from Friday 11/30 to Sunday 12/2. For more information, contact Glen or Catherine Krueger at (810) 774-9697 or e-mail rkruger11@home.com.

--Catherine Krueger

SOLAR's Intro to Mountaineering Class

If you have ever had a desire to climb mountains, but didn't know where to start, here is your opportunity. This winter, SOLAR will offer a mountaineering class, where you can learn the basic skills necessary to climb and trek safely on glaciered terrain — crevasse rescue, ice axe use, avalanche safety, roped glacier travel, gear selection, health, safety techniques, and more....

The class will be offered in December and January. We will have an optional climb for those who graduate.

For more information contact me at: mike35climbs@aol.com or call 1-248-417-4256.

--Mike Backus

SOLAR is a non-profit dub with almost 400 members dedicated to the intelligent on sympat of nature and outdoor pursuits. All SOLAR adventures begin at our meetings. There, you can get to know the other members and sign up for SOLAR activities, trips and classes.

Membership is only \$30 a year and includes discounts to a number of retail outfitters. access to club-owned equipment, a monthly newsletter, and a chance to meet hundreds of other likeminded adventurers drawn together by a common love of pristine lakes, breathtaking vistas, virgin forests and scenic shorelines, and the experiences to be found there



SOLAR Steering Committee

DODING COMMING					
President	Leslie Cordova	Em pment	Carol McCriric	At Large	Mike Banks * Moe DeFrance
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SOLAR MEETINGS are held the first Tuesday of each month in Southfield at the Colony Hall, 21780 Evergreen (between 8 & 9 Mile Roads) at 7:30. Visitors can come for FREE. Dues for 2001 are \$30/year for an individual. In 2002, dues will increase for the first time in several years. The new rates are:

\$40 per year per person

\$55 per year per family

Lifetime membership: \$175 per person, \$250 per family

SOLAR remains a non-profit club.

The SOLAR RAY is a monthly publication of SOLAR and is sent free to current dues-paid members. If you change your address please tell the membership chairman, Mary Price, http://example.com/please tell the membership chairman tell t

Submission guidefines:

Articles must be 500 words or less

SOLAR events have priority over non-club events.

Events in the next 2 months have priority over other events

Please submit via email or Word attachment to Laura4991@prodigy.net

Please submit via regular mail to Laura James, 57100 W. Eight Mile Road, Northville Ma 48167.

Please submit photos as JPEGs or prints only

All articles and photos must be attributed and submitting photos is encouraged!

December issue deadline is November 18; January deadline is December 16; please make my life easier



