



# The SOLAR RAY

SEPTEMBER 2001

## September Program--Get All Geared Up

*Many wealthy people are little more than janitors of their possessions.*

-Frank Lloyd Wright

If you are tired of being a janitor to all your extra gear, share some of your wealth (gear) by selling it at the September program, and make more wealth (money!!) in return! See, it's simple: SOLAR has a constant influx of new members looking for beginner gear to test out a new activity. They have CASH because, logically, they have NO GEAR. Some members are admirably sporting the latest in

outdoor gear/equipment, so they have GEAR but NO CASH. Ok, some of you may be disgustingly rich but just remember the janitor thing.

**THE GIST IS THIS:** Bring any and all outdoor-related items (rockclimbing salt and pepper shakers are iffy) to the September meeting, bring \$\$\$\$\$ and we'll have a good old-fashioned Swap & Sell!

Please try to bring your gear early so as not to disrupt the meeting. We'll set up tables so you can hawk your wares. And just a reminder to bring your duct tape integrity monitor and a prepared mind (?) to Lester Mok's booth!

--Amy Fedyk

## SOLAR beats the Army (!!) in Backpacker battle

The Backpacker.com Bag Night Challenge is in high gear, and SOLAR recently passed the U.S. Army to move into 4<sup>th</sup> place. The contest, which runs from December 2000 to December 2001, sets groups against each other in a race to record the most nights spent in a sleeping bag.

As the momentum is growing in

the "Bag Nights" competition, we rise rapidly toward the top. Thank you all so much for joining in the effort. ☺ But don't let our position make you too comfortable, as I've noticed other large organizations (NOLS, REI) seem to be getting more organized. The war isn't over!

So— as before: Get Out

More, logon, login, and log your nights for SOLAR at:  
[www.backpacker.com](http://www.backpacker.com)

— Karl Overmuel,  
CyberNomad@backpacker.com

### Bag Night Totals (as of 8-19-01)

Contender	No.	Comment
1. Boy Scouts of America	6883	These boys have to go back to school sooner or later...
2. BSA Venturing Crew	846	This is Boy Scouts for the 14 - 20 set.
3. Robert Land Academy	820	More kids bound for school - a Canadian boys' military academy.
4. S.O.L.A.R.	579	<b>These bag nights are entirely voluntary!</b>
5. U.S. Army	553	What do they need free gear for, anyway?
6. Appalachian Mountain Club	391	America's oldest conservation/ recreation group has chapters across New England.
7. National Outdoor Leadership School	345	If you want to pay a bundle and go for a month, NOLS has great classes for you - it's the premier teacher for outdoor skills. (But still can't beat SOLAR!)
8. Appalachian Trail Conference	331	A non-profit group with 31 chapters dedicated to managing the AT.
9. Backpacker	323	The sponsor of the contest is moving up the list suspiciously fast.
10. Sierra Club	312	Sierra who?

# SOLAR Calendar

## September

**Sept. 4 Tuesday General Membership Meeting** Colony Hall Leslie Cordova (248) 547-5626

**Sept 7-9 Rock Climbing** Rattlesnake Park Ontario Laura Albin (517) 324-0564, [albinlau@msu.edu](mailto:albinlau@msu.edu)

**Sept. 14-16 Hiking & Biking** Wilderness State Park, Mackinac Leslie Cordova (248) 547-5626

**Sept. 15-16 Basic Backpacking Practical** Carol McCririe 810 523-5785

**Sept. 15-16 Kids Camping** Nordhouse Dunes Jim Hoffer (248) 360 4854

**Sept. 28-30 Basic Backpacking Practical** Carol McCririe 810 523-5785

## October

**Oct. 2 General Membership Meeting**

Colony Hall Leslie Cordova (248) 547-5626

**Oct. 19-21 Hiking etc. at Hocking Hills, Ohio**

Peggy Medved (248) 390-3969

**Oct. 19-21 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Bald Mountain**

**Halloween Weekend** Lisa Boose (248) 358-5330

**Oct. 26-28 Horseback Halloween Party**

Double JJ Ranch Rothbury

Lisa Boose (248) 358-5330

\*\*\* Denotes NON-SOLAR activity (SOLAR will not be held responsible for this activity -- on here for informational purposes only).

If you would like to plan / lead a SOLAR activity, contact Pam Riehl at [pamr111@netscape.net](mailto:pamr111@netscape.net) or [solaractivities@netscape.net](mailto:solaractivities@netscape.net).

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

§ § §

"You can discover more  
about a person  
in an hour of play  
than in a year  
of conversation."

Plato



*This one's alive!*

Michelle Hoffman, age 10, found more than fossils on this summer's SOLAR fossil hunt in Ontario. Photo by Jim Gilfix.

## Period Dress Picnic at Kensington

( or get dressed period)

Did Lewis and Clark wear Tevas? Did Sacajewea wear fleece?

Were there sheep on this continent back then?

Those old-timers wore wool year round,  
those pioneers of the land, those serious, hard-core adventurers.

We propose offering a taste of that, and a taste it is.

Breakfast at Kensington, on the royal grounds of our lovely state park.  
We'd love to have you join us dressed in whatever long-past period you fancy,  
and we'll cook breakfast for you, our guests, in the Great Outdoors in style.

Pancakes, omelettes made to order and we need some of those  
great SOLAR chefs to help us out! After satiating ourselves,

we can amuse ourselves with a paddle around the lake,  
bicycling (side saddle for ladies in dresses) along the paths,  
strolling with parasol, or what the heck,

don your shorts and your Tevas and go for it!

We will greet all Solar members who arrive heartily,

but those who come dressed (formally, that is)

will be greeted with MUCH ENTHUSIASM (dignified, of course)!

Contact Margaret Martin, 734-721-2821

or Amy Fedyk at 248-543-9875 for more details.

--Amy Fedyk

## SOLAR... WHAT'S YOUR NEXT ADVENTURE?

### SOLAR RAY DEADLINES

- ☛ October Issue ... September 10
- ☛ November Issue ... October 21
- ☛ December Issue... November 18

A gentle reminder: If I don't get this thing to the printer and back before the steering committee meeting, I have to label and stamp them all myself which is no fun. --Ed.

### 10<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL BALD MOUNTAIN HALLOWEEN Oct. 19-21

\$30 pp reserves your plot  
Plus you'll get quite a lot  
Like 2 nights' rest in Kevorkian's cabin  
And admittance to Upland Hills for some autumn happenin'  
Pumpkin picking and carving too  
And bring your scariest costume to boo  
Something fun that we're bringing back  
Is our Saturday night Potluck, so food we won't lack  
So all adults, you must bring a child  
To stay overnight for fun & fright in the wild  
If you can't find a child, then come Saturday by 4:00  
Bring a dish to pass, a costume, & Halloween lore  
See Lisa Boose to find out more  
Or call 248-738-4867

-- Lisa Boose

## **WILDERNESS PARK HIKING & MACKINAC ISLAND BIKING - Sept. 14 - 16**

**KID FRIENDLY, NO PETS** – Come join S.O.L.A.R. as we bike Mackinac Island and hike Wilderness State Park on September 14 - 16, 2001. This is going to be a loosely organized trip. There are a lot of things to do in the area. The main plan is (weather depending) to go to Mackinac Island (11 miles from park to the ferry) on Saturday and do some bike riding, visit the forts, eat some fudge, eat some ice cream, take a carriage ride or visit the butterfly house.

You can rent bikes on the Island, but it is cheaper to bring your own. The ferry to Mackinac Island leaves every half hour and costs \$15.50 round trip for adults, \$7.50 for children 5 - 11, and \$6.50 for bikes. On Sunday, you can hike Wilderness State Park which has 16 miles of hiking trails, and 26 miles of Lake Michigan shoreline, or you can take a trip to Tahquamenon Falls. We will be staying in bunkhouses #2 and #3.

These area rustic bunkhouses (i.e. no electric) with mattresses provided, outhouses nearby, and this time of year the showers and flush toilets should be available. Bring a sleeping bag or sheets. Also, please bring a lantern, campstove, games, stories, and a sense of humor. Everyone is expected to help clean up the cabin on Sunday before we leave!!! All this fun can be yours for a mere \$15 per person, plus the cost of the Mackinac Island ferry. Interested: contact Leslie Cordova at (248) 547-5626 or [lesliecno@aol.com](mailto:lesliecno@aol.com). Hurry as there are only 48 bunks available and as usual, it is first pay, first go.

– Leslie Cordova

### **Benchmark Used Gear Sale!**

September 7th from 12-5 pm  
September 8th from 10-6 pm

Here's another way to clean out those gear closets or pick up new gear cheap!

If you don't sell it at the September Meeting, you can take it to Benchmark that weekend for them to sell!

All you need to do is drop off your gear for them to sell on consignment. You keep 80% they keep 20% of your asking price.

Or better yet get 100% of your used gear cost when you apply the full amount towards merchandise from the store!

Also BOATS will be on sale for 40% OFF!!  
That's right, I said 40% OFF!!!!!!

For more information call Benchmark at (248) 477-8116.

-- Peggy Medved

### **Double JJ Horseback Riding Weekend**

This is SOLAR's second annual Halloween Weekend git-a-way. We've got a great block of rooms along the main strip where all the action takes place Saturday night. For only \$261 per person, you get two nights at the Adult Exclusive Ranch, meals Saturday and Sunday, at LEAST one hour of horseback riding (pretty much unlimited riding if you show up at every ride time) for every level Saturday and Sunday, a hayride to a haunted barn, corn roast, d.j. dancing, mechanical bull, Saturday night Halloween trick-or-treat on the Ranch where we go door-to-door for shots, and such, all followed by an MC Dance Party with contests. There's so many activities to choose from you will never get bored and will definitely want to come back year after year. I have a pre-trip party planned for Saturday, October 13 to go over carpooling arrangements, share costume ideas, decorations for our cabins and of course, tasting the treats we will bring. I've got an additional 10 spots, so rope up a friend, wrangle up some cash, and brand your spot now! I guarantee you will have a great time!

For details, call me @ 248-358-5330 during the day, 248-738-4867 evenings.

– Lisa Boose

## MANISTEE RIVER TRIP REVIEW

The weekend started with an interesting event of pulling two wagons filled about 4 feet tall of car-camping gear with two dogs.... Lets just say after taking a few wrong turns in the dark, we woke up the neighbors. Once getting to the camp, we discovered the usual SOLAR crew shootin' the breeze around the campfire and laughing at us as we tried to orchestrate the dogs, tent, lanterns, air mattress and pump, wagons and way too much gear. Organized and ready to take a rest at the fire-pit, we all discussed the events of the upcoming weekend. Of course after weeks of blistering heat and sunshine, our canoeing weekend was about 60 degrees and sprinkling. The canoe gods were not smiling, but we still had a great time.

Saturday was the big day to paddle down the Manistee. It is not a real hard river, but has some tricky areas. I am not sure if anyone dumped, but it was fun watching the canoes maneuver their way through hairpin turns. This weekend was also the start of the "Up-North renown" AuSable canoe race where avid paddlers go all night long to reach the finish line. A full day of kayaking in semi-beautiful weather let up to spectacle of the race start. What an event, these guys put a whole new definition to paddling.

After an evening of watching the race start and eating dinner, we broke out the Kamikazes as a tribute to a great weekend of SOLAR camaraderie. After a beautiful night's sleep in perfect temperatures (high 40's), we all packed up camp, and made the same wagon trek back to the car and out to breakfast, although I heard Margaret's blueberry pancakes were fabulous. A few notes for future Tom O. trip goers: Margaret Martin does not like peppermint dish soap, the buzzing noise from a tent is an air mattress pump no imagination needed, at the end of an evening it does not matter what you put into a Kamikaze it's all good, dogs pulling wagons through sand it fun to watch, and bring rain gear!

— Laura Albin

## LETTER FROM THE ROAD

*For years SOLAR member and teacher Tom Dunn has spent the summer on a long road trip to Alaska on a motorcycle (we won't assume the make). He shares a bit of his adventure below. Makes you wish you could go back and change your major, eh? --Ed.*

**GONE TO LOOK AT AMERICA** — The last of my students left the classroom at 10:30, and I was on I-94 heading west by 10:33.

I only have two time constraints this summer. I have a reservation on the Alaska maritime car ferry for June 27 and I had to be back in my classroom on August 23<sup>rd</sup>. Other than that my summer belongs to the road.

I have a quality machine, a few coins of the realm and my special blend of arrogance, what more would I need?

I escaped Detroit as fast as my motorcycle would allow, heading for Indy. As usual I ran into a serious storm that delayed me for a while.

I was determined to stay off the interstates as much as possible. I chose to explore Highway 36. It runs west from Indy across five states. This road is also known as the "Pony Express Highway."

My ride across the plains was blessed with clear skies and sunshine. Unfortunately the temperature rose to 100 degrees in Kansas. I could see the waves of heat rising from the asphalt.

Turning south just west of Denver I encountered thousands on bicyclists on Highway 550. I was irritated that I had to share this spectacular road. After miles of slowly inching past them I was relieved to finally have this perfect biker road to myself. After several miles I drove past the last of the bicyclists. He had a sag wagon and a motorcycle mounted state trooper for company. I was humbled to watch his efforts to pedal up that long hill with his arms as he didn't have any legs. God has a way of reminding me of my place.

— Tom Dunn

*(Read next month's Ray for more.)*

## SUPER SOLAR ADVENTURE WEEKEND ... THINK NEXT YEAR

Now that summer is almost over its time to think about next year. Once again I am planning a SOLAR Rafting trip on the New River for the Memorial Day Weekend, May 24-27, 2002. This will be a unique trip and a first, considering all the options. You need to begin your planning NOW, as you will see below. This will be an excellent trip for people age 6-77. This trip will have the options of one of three trips. You will choose one. The first is the Traditional Lower New River, the "Grand Canyon of the East" and will be for people age 15 and up.

The second trip will be the Kid-Friendly trip on the Upper New River. This section is suitable for beginners, kids and those wanting a more laid-back adventure. "Duckies" are also an option here. A Ducky is a one or two person inflatable kayak. These are stable, maneuverable, easy to paddle and tons of fun. The kids seem to love them and so do the adults. This section is rated Class I and II. There is NO chance of the boat tipping or anyone being knocked overboard. Minimum age is 6.

The third trip is a new one. It is called "Team Extreme" as it is an intense and aggressive whitewater experience. It is also on the Lower New River. They use small rafts for 4 or 5 people (as opposed to 7 or 8) per raft. They provide intense instructional orientation and they encourage you to be in top physical shape. Minimum age is 18.

All three trips will go on the same day, May 26, 2001 (Sunday). Once again we will be using ACE Adventures Company. Every raft will have a trained guide. The cost will cover rafting and all three (Hot) meals that day. The cost will range from about \$70 for kids, \$130 for adults and \$170 for the "Extreme" experience (which can only be booked in groups of 4 or 5).

As far as lodging goes you have some options.

1. **Camping** (\$30) for 3 nights. I will also collect for this if you want.
2. **Cabin Tents** (\$99. for 3) for 3 nights
3. **Lake View A-frame Cabins**, with hot tub, bathroom and more (\$345. for 4 people) for 3 nights.
4. **"Cozy Cabins"** (similar to #3 but bigger inside)
5. **Two Bedroom Chalets** (\$215. for 6 people, per night) and its filled with all kinds of special things.

I strongly recommend # 5, 4, or 3, but you need to **ACT NOW** and **SEND IN YOUR DEPOSIT**. They have a very limited supply. This could make this long weekend more of a vacation, certainly a more luxury one. So call:

ACE Adventures 1-888-223-7238 to reserve your lodging. Or you can call me, Jim Gilfix 734-513-9460. There will be a handout at the Solar meetings.

-- Jim Gilfix

### Captivating creek

Charles Hailey shares his photo from the DeFrance-Albin canoe outing. The redhead on the far right is Elsa for sure, and the others are SOLAR members enjoying a spectacular view.





Photos: Some of the SOLAR cook-off winners display their trophies? Photos by Laura Albin

## **SOLAR Cook-Off Challenge Winners**

Hmmmmmmmmmm. the 2001 August Rattlesnake was success. With a weekend full of climbing, hiking, swimming, biking and of course eating, and we had beautiful weather to boot.

To get to the point, the winners are:

Overall Grand Prize Winner: Linda, Brad and Daina Hill – Mountain of Potatoes

Best Main Dish: David Foerster – Coleman Spaghetti

Appetizer Mary and "Boomer" Boomer – Broccoli Salad

Side Dish. Cassie and Stephanie Kotynski – Strawberry Salad

Dessert: Mike Mananbach and Karen Sinclair-Smith – Blueberry Cobbler

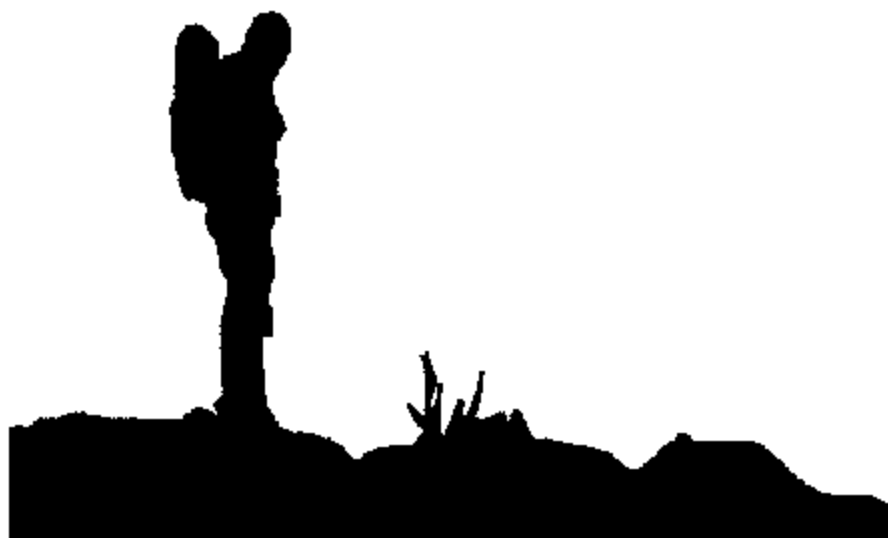
Join us for our last Rattlesnake outing of the summer, September 7-9. If you have any questions, feel free to call or email ([albinlau@msu.edu](mailto:albinlau@msu.edu) 517-324-0564).

-- Laura Albin

SOLAR is a non-profit club with almost 400 members dedicated to the intelligent enjoyment 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 like-minded 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 Club  
P.O. Box 2438  
Southfield, MI 48307



## SOLAR Steering Committee

President	Leslie Cordova
Vice President	Tom Oloffo
Secretary	John Simonds
Treasurer	John Moffatt
Activities	Pam Riehl
By-Laws	Gloria Fontaine
Education	Harry Price
Equipment	Carol McCrnie
Historian	Denise Kordie
Membership	Mary Price
Programs	Amy Fedyk
Pub. Relations	Peggy Medved
Solar Ray	Laura Phillips
Web Master	Roger James
At Large	Mike Banks
	Moc DeFrance
	Al Fylak
	Steve Gardner
	Bill Halvingie
	Cindy Harrison-Felix
	Doug Lanyk
	Larry Martin
	Joan Ryan
	Joan & Bob Westbrook

The SOLAR Club publishes the SOLAR RAY once a month for free to current dues-paid members. Submissions must be 500 words or less and must be received by the deadline. SOLAR events have priority over non-SOLAR events. Events in the next 2 months have priority over other events.

To submit by email: send to [Laura4991@prodigy.net](mailto:Laura4991@prodigy.net) (preferred – no, Strongly Preferred – please send only Word attachments and either “JPEG” photos or actual prints, with captions and name of photographer)

By mail (sign): Laura Phillips, 57100 W. Eight Mile Road, Northville MI 48167

Check out SOLAR on the World Wide Web

[www.solaroutdoors.org](http://www.solaroutdoors.org)

[www.solaroutdoors.com](http://www.solaroutdoors.com)

Monthly meeting location: Join us at the Colony Hall, 21780 Evergreen (between 8 and 9 Mile Roads) in Southfield at 7:30 p.m. Visitors can come for FREE. The club meets on the first Tuesday of the month. Membership dues are:

Individuals - \$30 a year / \$150 lifetime

Families - \$45 a year / \$225 lifetime

CELEBRATE LATE SUMMER \* [WWW.SOLAROUTDOORS.ORG](http://WWW.SOLAROUTDOORS.ORG)