



The SOLAR RAY

January 2002

Introducing Southeast Michigan to the Outdoors since 1976

SOLAR gathers Tuesday, Jan. 8 for meeting & contests

That's right, folks! It's time for the annual photo contest. Each year members submit photos and win accolades and prizes for their wonderful photography skills.

Photo Contest

Here are the rules: The photo must have been taken by the person entering it, and the photo cannot be a previous contest winner. It must have been taken at a SOLAR event, unless entered in the non-SOLAR category. It must be 5x7 or larger, matted and/or framed. Only TWO entries per category are permitted. The categories are Scenery, Plants, Animals, People, Humor and Non-SOLAR. Prizes will be awarded to the 1st place winner in each category and to the overall grand prize

winner. The voting will be by all SOLAR members who attend the January meeting and winners will be announced that evening. Please bring your matted or framed photos to the January general meeting.

Dry T-shirt Contest

Can you believe the last T-shirt contest was way back in 1998? It is time for a 21st century SOLAR T-shirt! Maybe you've seen T-shirts from previous years that can give you inspiration. Or you can work the SOLAR logo as it appears on the SOLAR Ray into a nifty design. Or you can use clip art to create a design that says "SOLAR" to you. The cool thing about this contest is that if your cool design

wins, you not only get a free T-shirt but your signature will be on everyone's T-shirt! The basic guidelines are that the design may be both front and back and the design size should be no larger than 8 1/2 x 11 inches. It must be a design that will be representative of SOLAR.

Depending on interest, cotton and polypro T-shirts may be available once the design is selected. All the designs will be voted on by the membership at the meeting. Some interesting design suggestions have already come to our attention so get your design(s) on paper—we know Solarites have talent and we want to wear that talent with pride!

—Amy Fedyk

2002

Preview

SOLAR plans a slew of great trips for 2002—both perennial favorites and new adventures. The variety is impressive, and each trip is inexpensive. Just more reasons to love SOLAR. This is a list of trips already scheduled; there's more in the works. Remember, everything fills fast so sign up early!

—Laura James

Dates	Trip	Location	Trip Leader	Notes
Jan. 18-21	Skiing	Banff, Alb.	Chip Kleinbrook	Primarily downhill skiing
Jan. 19-20	Winter camping	Michigan	Tom Oloffo	Class practical
Jan. 26	Mountaineering	Pine Knob	Mike Backus	Class practical
Jan. 25-27	Caving & hiking	Olive Hill, Ky.	Leslie Cordova	The famous Carter Caves
Feb. 1-3	Winter camping	Michigan	Tom Oloffo	Sleep in an igloo
Feb. 9	Ski race	Traverse City	Jenny Carpenter	www.vasa.org
Feb. 15-17	Dogsledding	South River, Ont.	Karen Bates	Waiting list only
Feb. 15-18	Skiing	Idaho Falls, Id.	Chip Kleinbrook	Looking for Olympic tix
March 16	Skiing	Sault Ste. Marie	(need volunteer)	Untimed Wabos Loppet
May 10-12	Rock climbing	Rattlesnake, Ont.	Laura Albin	SOLAR climbing class
Mem. Wknd	River rafting	Pennsylvania	Jim Gilfix	Family friendly
Mem. Wknd	Backpacking	Somewhere	Leslie Cordova	Manitou, maybe
June 1	Nat'l Trails Day	Somewhere	(need volunteer)	www.americanhiking.org
June 8-9	Rock climbing	Rattlesnake, Ont.	Laura Albin	Solar ropes avail. to grads
June 15-16	Archaeology dig	Rattlesnake, Ont.	Laura James	Field work - Iroquois site
July 6-7	Rock climbing	Rattlesnake, Ont.	Laura Albin	Also hiking & hanging out
July 14	Fossil hunt	Ontario	Jim Gilfix	Close to Pt. Huron bridge
July 20-21	Archaeology dig	Rattlesnake, Ont.	Laura James	Excavate ancient garbage
July 27-28	Canoeing trip	Au Sable River	Tom Oloffo	Canoe race, too
Aug. 3-4	Rock climbing	Rattlesnake, Ont.	Laura Albin	on the Niagara Escarpment
Sept. 7-8	Rock climbing	Rattlesnake, Ont.	Laura Albin	Can't get enough of it

ATTENTION DOG SLEDDERS!

The upcoming February 2002 trip filled to capacity in one night. It was great to see so many people wanting to try this exciting sport. For those of you who are still interested, all is not lost, there is a waiting list you can add your name to. Cancellations do happen. For those of you who are paid in full and turned in your release forms, **THANK YOU!!!** For those who still need to turn in release, this must be done by January 13, 2002. If they do not reach me in time for mailing to the outfitter it will be up to you to get them there yourself. Any questions, see me at the Solar meeting or e-mail: lady_musher@yahoo.com.

THINK SNOW!

--Karen Bates

Crawlathon Update

If you have signed up for the crawlathon, remember you only paid SOLAR for the lodge rooms. You must submit an entry form to Carter Caves State Park, choosing the cave tours you want to participate in. Please remember to submit payment to them as well.

If you have not received your entry form from Carter Caves -- either download one from www.crawlathon.com or call the park at (606) 286-4411 and ask them to mail you a form. You MUST sign up in advance as the trips do fill up.

--Leslie Cordova

New Solar member plans big skiing trips out west

Ski Trip One: family friendly--primarily downhill skiing but also cross country skiing in Banff, Alberta (via Calgary) over the Martin Luther King holiday weekend, Jan. 18-21. Most airlines have special travel deals up to 50% off and the exchange rate is very favorable.

Ski Trip Two: family friendly--primarily downhill skiing but also cross country skiing in and around Idaho Falls. Idaho (three hours north of Salt Lake during the Olympic season -- if anyone can get tickets to some the Olympic events please let me know!) over President's Day holiday weekend, Feb. 15-18. Most airlines have special travel deals up to 50% off.

I will be happy to share info on budget flights (if you have frequent flier miles all the better), lodging, car rental, and related activities on these trips. All Salt Lake accommodations are full for miles so Idaho Falls is the nearest. Air, hotel and car expenses are eligible for entertainment book discounts if you contact me first. I will be happy to teach beginner skiers the fundamentals. For more information, please email me at mrchip1234@aol.com.

--Chip Kleinbrook

CLUB GEAR AVAILABLE CHEAP... OR FREE

Here is a reminder of the great gear SOLAR has available for current dues-paid members only. For complete rules, see Equipment Manager Carol McCririe.

1. Members can borrow anything at any time except rock climbing and caving equipment, which can be used only in SOLAR classes and outings. You must take the SOLAR backpacking class or show proficiency to borrow backpacking equipment.
2. All classes have priority for equipment while the class is in session.
3. The Equipment Manager will track who borrows equipment. The equipment is on a first come first serve basis to be borrowed. Generally, the equipment is due back at the next SOLAR meeting.
4. A deposit for each item is required. See the Equipment Manager for details.
5. The equipment must be returned in clean, working condition; otherwise, the member has to pay for repair or replacement and may lose the right to borrow more equipment.
6. There is a rental charge for borrowing a bike. The rental charge is \$5.00 per weekend (fri-mon.) or \$10.00 weekly (cash or check). A \$25.00 deposit is also required for a bike. Bikes must be returned clean.

Tents

7. Eureka Dome "2" (Sleeps 2)
8. Eureka Timberline TL4 (sleeps 4)
9. The North Face Windy Pass (sleeps 6)
10. REI Clipper (sleeps 2)
11. Eureka Timberline TL2 (sleeps 2)
12. Eureka Timberline TL4 (sleeps 4)
13. REI Clipper (sleeps 2)

Backpacks - 11 available

Sleeping bags - 4 available

Water filters - 5 available

Water jugs - 5 available

Bicycles - several available

First Aid Kits (5 available for use by class instructors and trip leaders only)

Miscellaneous

1. Snow shovels (4-coal type)
2. Volleyball - net - pump
3. Moss Parafly (tan)
4. Kmart Dining Fly (2-blue)
5. MSR Whisperlite stove w. fuel bottle (2)
6. RCA Camcorder
7. Snowshoes 1-pr. w/bindings
8. Campmore Parafly (2-blue)
9. MSR Cookset (2-alu)
10. Optimus 99 Stove
11. Therm-A-Rest Pad
12. TV/VCR w/remotes
13. Assorted Caving Helmets & headlamps
14. Ridgecrest Pad
15. Carousel Slide Projector w/ screen

SOLAR organizes a contingent for VASA ski festival Feb. 9

Hello Again! It is that time of year again for the Annual VASA Cross Country ski festival in Traverse City. Every Year a bunch of Solarites get together and travel to Traverse City to ski and socialize. Whether you want to beat last year's time or just challenge yourself it is a lot of fun.

We will be staying at the Days Inn at Traverse City for a cost of \$70.00 per person. The hotel provides breakfast Saturday and Sunday morning. Each suite has a bedroom with two double beds, a living room and a kitchenette. There is also a double bed in the living room that folds down from the wall.

Event coordinator: Jenny Carpenter, (734) 577-4431, shaerockk@cs.com.

Events:

Friday night: Meet for dinner in Traverse City.

Saturday: Ski the VASA

Saturday night: Pizza!

Sunday: Family Fun day call 231-938-4400 for more details

Please remember that the \$70.00 charge only includes the hotel stay. You will need to register with VASA to participate in the race itself. To register for the race sign on to their web site at: WWW.VASA.ORG or pick up an entry form at the next meeting. The race begins Saturday February 9th. Here are the race times and costs. There are 5 distances that you can sign up to ski:

27 & 50 km Classic	Starts at 8:30 am	\$55.00
50 km freestyle	Starts at 9:00 am	\$55.00
27 km freestyle	Starts at 9:30 am	\$55.00
12 km & tour class	Starts at 9:45 am	\$25.00

--Jeff Zabel

Trip to the Lights Fantastic - Review of Toledo zoo display

Our Toledo Zoo Holiday Lights Display adventure began a bit earlier and farther north than we expected when a pickup truck rolled over on the 696 freeway in front of us. We were trapped in traffic, for 45 minutes, although the red, white and blue flashing lights of the dozen or so emergency vehicles presented us with a very patriotic show!

We finally arrived at the zoo to find about 25 SOLARites patiently waiting for us. Our group was in high spirits as we headed into this high-voltage, winter wonderland. You just knew you were headed into a special place even as you crossed the footbridge from the parking lot to the zoo proper and looked down into what appeared to be countless twinkling, multi-colored stars.

There were several first-time visitors among us, and it was fun to see their reactions as we made our way through the flashing and pulsing displays. All the trees, and shrubs, were wrapped, draped and bathed in electronic splendor. It was almost as if some mystical giant had taken and dipped them into an enchanted cauldron of molten light.

Since it is almost wintertime, many of the "real" animals were not available to us, so the zoo wizards used their electric magic to create illuminated versions of them! Everywhere you looked, these gleaming creatures competed for your attention, using all the colors of a neon rainbow. These brilliant frauds were seen crawling on the ground, climbing trees, flying through the air and jumping from buildings. They were everywhere! There were flying bats and sleeping cats; there were bears fishing for salmon; and frogs jumping into trees. There were flamingos and foxes, rabbits and penguins and yes, even "lions, tigers and bears, oh my!" Not all the real animals were hibernating, either. We were still able to see reindeer, elephants, giraffes, seals, llamas, fishes, reptiles and my personal favorite—the polar bear!

No holiday lights display would be complete without Santa and his reindeer and so we were treated to a life-sized exhibit on the last part of our tour. The time went by quickly and it was time to meet up at the gift shop and then drive to a local restaurant for dinner. About 28 of us ended up at the restaurant (several people turned up that weren't with us in the beginning). We enjoyed lots of good food, drink and conversation!

As, all good things must end and as we departed, I could hear Santa's own words in our parting wishes for each other "MERRY CHRISTMAS TO ALL, AND TO ALL A GOOD NIGHT!" I hope you can join us next year.

--Gene Cordova

SOLAR CALENDAR

Jan. 3, 10, 17, 24, 30

Winter Camping Class

Tom Oloffo - mcmountainman@yahoo.com

Tuesday, Jan. 8

SOLAR General Membership Meeting

Program: T-Shirt & Photo Contests

Leslie Cordova - lesliegane@aol.com

Jan. 9, 16, 30

Mountaineering Class

Mike Backus (248) 417 4256

Sunday, Jan. 13, 1-5

Curling Party

Rob Mair - grosbecs@aol.com

Jan. 18-21 Ski Trip - Banff, Alberta

Chip Kleinbrook - mrchip1234@aol.com

Jan. 19-21 Winter Camping Practical

Tom Oloffo - mcmountainman@yahoo.com

Jan. 25-27 Mountaineering Practical

Mike Backus (248) 417 4256

Jan. 25-27 Caving & Hiking in Kentucky

Leslie Cordova - lesliegane@aol.com

If you would like to plan / lead a SOLAR activity,
contact Pam Riehl at pariehl1@netscape.net or
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.

*Life shrinks or expands
in direct proportion
to one's courage.*

~ Anais Nin

Bag Night Challenge:

It Ain't Over!?!

From the Backpacker website: "We're challenging you to Get Out More! Keep track of your bag nights (nights spent in a sleeping bag) here until next December. The more nights out, the more points you earn. And in December 2001, 100 happy campers will be eligible for a grand-prize drawing. (Hint: it's gear.)"

So don't forget! Keep logging your nights for SOLAR at www.backpacker.com.

ORGANIZATION TOTALS

As of December 15

1. Boy Scouts of America 11,256
2. Robert Land Academy 2260
3. S.O.L.A.R.- Southfield, MI 1898
4. BSA Venturing Crew 1501
5. Appalachian Mountain Club 910
6. National Outdoor Leadership School 783
7. Appalachian Trail Conference 754
8. Louisiana Hiking Club 659
9. United States Army 633
10. Sierra Club 622

STATE TOTALS

As of December 15

1. California 6434
2. Michigan 3578
3. Texas 3301
4. Ontario 2895
5. Pennsylvania 2806
6. Washington 2612
7. North Carolina 2591
8. New York 2584
9. Illinois 2438
10. Colorado 2358

January Astronomical Forecast for Southfield, Michigan, longitude W83.2, latitude N42.5

Saturday, Jan. 5 - sunrise 8:03 a.m., sunset 5:14 p.m., moonrise 4:19 a.m., moonset 2:15 p.m. *Last quarter moon.*

Saturday, Jan. 12 - sunrise 8:01 a.m., sunset 5:22 p.m., moonrise 7:28 a.m., moonset 4:32 p.m. *New moon.*

Saturday, Jan. 19 - Sunrise 7:58 a.m., sunset 5:30 p.m., moonrise 11:18 a.m., moonset 11:32 p.m. *First quarter moon.*

Saturday, Jan. 26 - Sunrise 7:53 p.m., sunset 5:39 p.m., moonrise 3:08 p.m., moonset 5:58 a.m. *Full moon.*

Review of Primitive Skills Weekend



Above: Plant expert George Hedgepath took SOLAR members on a tour of the campground, finding plants once widely used for food; cordage; and as medicine for everything from minor cuts to menstrual cramps. Photo by Laura James.

Below left: Roger James makes fire from an ember and a tinder bundle of cedar and cottonwood "cambium" (the fibrous inner bark). Photo by Karl Overheul.

Below right: Peggy Medved uses a bow drill to start a friction fire. Photo by Tom Oloffo.



SOLAR members spent the first weekend in December learning survival techniques. Experts in the field displayed methods of finding edible plants, knapping points, processing game, and making fire—life skills practiced by all our ancestors for thousands of years.

The weekend included a flintknapping lecture by Bob Love, president of the Michigan Flintknappers. Plant and survival expert George Hedgepath pointed out the amazing diversity and usefulness of what the unappreciative might call weeds. Roger James taught a class on making a bowdrill fire using just wood and twine. The exercise was an unusual success, with 75% of SOLARites achieving fire. Even Mr. Hedgepath was impressed.

Lester Mok also showed us how to make bowls and spoons from chunks of wood and hot coals (with, alas, humble results), and led the group blindfolded through the woods in an effort to sharpen the four underused senses. Doug Lanyk also showed some steps in turning a stinky deer hide into tanned leather.

The experts also tantalized us with glimpses of other things that can be made and done with primitive technology, such as basketry, copperwork and pottery. Thanks to the Kruegers for putting together a fun, educational, and relaxing weekend.

--Laura James



Above left: Primitive weapons expert Robert Love showed SOLAR a thing or two about creating tools for hunting game. Here, he shows off a beautiful bow made of the wood of the osage orange tree. Photo by Laura James

Above right: Karl Overhaul accomplishes fire. Photo by Bill Tite.

Below: One can only guess what Roger James said to amuse his audience during fire-making sessions. Photo by Laura James.



CALENDAR

RECREATION

For more recreation news, see Friday's Weekend Guide.



Mike Daniels of Clinton Township, from left, Cindy Taylor of St. Clair Shores, Peggy Medved of Waterford and Dennis Phillips of Southfield join the intermediate backpacking class at a location in the Adirondack Mountains, by Cranberry Lake in New York.

Outdoor adventurers join the club

By Mary Quinley

Special to The Detroit News

Until a year ago, Peggy Medved had no desire to try the sport of rock-climbing. However, when she joined the School for Outdoor Leadership, Adventure & Recreation (SOLAR), she changed her mind and enrolled in a rock-climbing class.

"It's amazing! Because of the class, I feel so secure and safe (when I climb)," says Medved, 35, who has been a member of SOLAR for about a year.

Rock-climbing instruction is just one of the perks that members enjoy. The club also offers a variety of activities, trips and classes that include backpacking, white-water rafting, orienteering, skiing, wilderness survival, photography, inline skating and lots more. Programs are geared to accommodate a wide range of skill levels and age groups.

"Some members are competitive; others prefer the easy-paced activities," explains Medved. However, members share a common interest — a love for the outdoors.

Prior to joining SOLAR,

About the event

What: SOLAR general membership meeting (everyone invited — no charge).

When: 7:30 p.m. Dec. 4.

Where: Colony Hall, 21780 Evergreen (between Eight and Nine Mile Roads), Southfield.

Membership dues: Individual, \$40 per year; family, \$50 per year; individual lifetime, \$175; family lifetime, \$250.

For more information: Call (248) 988-6654 or online at www.solaroutdoors.org.

Medved says she could barely walk up a hill. "I'm in better shape now," says the Waterford resident, who participates in a variety of events.

She has also volunteered to help teach a SOLAR-sponsored orienteering class. Education plays a vital role in the club. Members are encouraged to attend the formal classes that are taught by SOLAR volunteers.

In 1976, a trio of male rock-climbers founded this not-for-profit organization. Today, the club's membership, comprised primarily of people living in southeast Michigan and Canada, tops 400. The group is a mix of singles, married couples and families with children.

Like other SOLAR mem-

bers, Mary Price and her husband, Harry, of Farmington Hills, were looking for an organization that sponsored outdoor events.

"Actually, we wanted to get away from leadership roles and still enjoy activities like camping," says a laughing Price, who was very active in scouting with her children. "Now, I'm the membership chair, and my husband is in charge of education."

Price, who joined SOLAR six years ago, describes the people as "great."

"There's a lot of fellowship — it's almost like family," she says.

Mary Quinley is a Metro Detroit free-lance writer.

Daily calendar features

Monday: Recreation Tuesday: Families Wednesday: Singles Thursday: Community Saturday: Weekend highlights

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 \$40 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



GENE & LESLIE CORDOVA
14520 BORGMAN
OAK PARK, MI 48237

SOLAR Steering Committee

President Leslie Cordova
Vice President Tom Olloff
Secretary John Simonds
Treasurer John Moffatt
Activities Pam Riehl
By-Laws Gloria Fontaine
Education Harry Price

Equipment
Historian
Membership
Programs
Pub. Relations
Solar Ray
Web Master

Carol McCrie
Denise Kordie
Mary Price
Amy Fedyk
Peggy Medved
Laura James
Roger James

At Large

Mike Banks * Moe DeFrance
Al Fylak * Steve Gardner
Bill Halvingis
Cindy Harrison-Felix
Doug Lanyk * Larry Martin
Joan Ryan
Joan & Bob Westbrook

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. 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, hmprice@ameritech.net

Submission guidelines:

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 MI 48167.

Please submit photos as JPEGs or prints only

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

February issue deadline is **January 16**; NO SUBMISSIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED AFTER THAT DATE