



School for Outdoor Leadership, Adventure, and Recreation www.solaroutdoors.org

Winter Camping Class

By Peter Lamb

The winter camping class teaches people how to survive an unexpected snow fall in the camping season or how to enjoy cold weather in general. Crazy as it sounds, there are some who prefer camping in the winter-their rationale, no bugs. Two practicals are held during this class, one locally and one north of Grayling in the Pigeon River Area. This year's practicals, led by Tom Oloffo, were particularly challenging due to extreme cold.

Practical One. The tone for the entire class was set at the first practical at the Waterloo trail head at 8:00 a.m. That Saturday morning was cold and bright with more snow on the ground than has been seen in many years. The hilly hike to the camp at Green Lake was very pleasant and kept the groups warm while they were moving. When the groups reached the campsite, they quickly erected shelters for their first night sleepout. Setting up the shelters is a lesson in group dynamics, and this group performed well. The sun went down and the hairs in some people's noses froze when they breathed in. They realized this was going to be an extremely cold night. The group was not sure if they could handle this kind of weather. Every one ate well and spent some time around the campfire before drifting off to their sleeping bags. Apart from the low temperature, the night was uneventful, even though some people did sleep less warmly than they were used to. Answering nature's call was the only real hardship. In the morning we found that the temperature had gone down to minus 18 degrees F. This group's ability to withstand the extreme cold makes them to stand out as a special group.

Practical Two. February's final practical started well on Thursday night at a bar in Grayling. Despite heroic efforts at the bar, everyone met for a great breakfast at the Sugar Bowl by 7:00 a.m. on Friday morning. After we had cleared eight inches of snow off the vehicles, we cruised up I75 at about twenty five mph in deep blowing snow. At the trailhead at Pigeon River Bridge the weather cleared. As usual, the skiers left first. I broke trail through fairly deep snow until the end of the boardwalk. This year the boardwalk was buried and was no: the obstacle it usually is for the skiers. The snowshoers followed the skiers into camp.



Winter Camping Class Members

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Winter Backpacking (cont'd)



On the Trail

The large amount of snow in camp was very convenient for quinzhee building. Each team of three or four quickly built a quinzhee which went up really fast, not much more than an hour to get the mound built. (Quinzhees were originally built by the Athabaska Indians. Quinzhees consist of a pile of snow about six or seven feet high and twelve feet across. After the snow has settled and fused, the quinzhees are hollowed out, leaving a wall about eighteen inches thick.)

One unfortunate incident occurred when during construction, a huge quinzhee collapsed with Michael Douglas inside. He quickly stood up and was OK. *Lesson 1—each party digging should have someone standing by in case this happens.* The group subsequently built a new quinzhee the next day. *Lesson 2—always get the roof thickness right before digging the full width at the base of the quinzhee to avoid a mass of snow supported on thin walls.*

Saturday was bright and sunny. The groups went out skiing and snowshoeing on the Shingle Mill Trail. One group built a sled run down the steep hill by the bridge and mounded snow over those pesky posts that line the road. Sledders got a lot of air on the ramp over those posts, and Dave Sweeton almost managed to reach the river—great leap Dave. Mike Hubbard even did the run on skis.

Saturday night was cold, much colder than at Waterloo. We could hear trees exploding from the cold. The sky was star filled until a magnificent full moon lit up the snow as bright as day. The students were fine inside their quinzhees because the temperature never goes below 32 degrees in them. But the group that shared Pete's Tree had a chilly night. Since Karl Overhaul's high tech down pad leaked air, he ended up sleeping on the snow, so he didn't sleep much. Our faces could not be exposed because they froze. So we cinched down our sleeping bag hoods pretty tight, but then ice formed around the breathing opening and ice fell on our faces. Gear that had worked well at Waterloo was barely adequate for these conditions. Morning light was very welcome.

The ski group had a trail adventure and the Ray's imbedded reporter was there to give a firsthand account. Six skiers were doing the eleven mile loop on the Shingle Mill Trail. They were about five miles in, breaking trail in about three feet of snow when Don Wold broke a ski in half at the binding. The plastic ski bottom was the only thing keeping the halves from separating. It looked like a tough walk out for Don or a ten mile ski for someone to get snowshoes for him.

While we were discussing the situation, someone whipped out a trusty leatherman with a saw blade attachment. We cut off a hefty branch and whittled it into a pair of ski splints to be held in place by what else?—trusty duct tape. It held for quite a way until the screws came out of the binding, so Don's shoe was taped directly to his ski and that saw him home. Good save Guys.



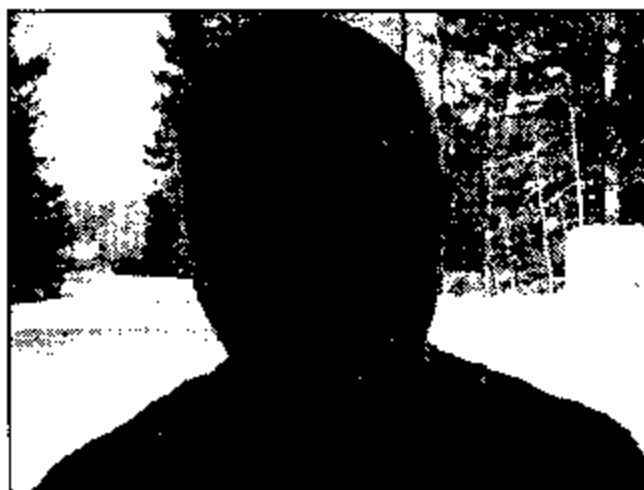
Good Fix Mike!

Winter Backpacking (cont'd)

I must say a word about the chickadees. Those tough little balls of feathers should be the state bird. They really brighten up the camp with their chirping and bold stealing of food. It has got to be a tough life, but they don't leave the state for warmer climes like robins do.



Chickadee



Our Fearless Leader

It was a windy but bright trip back to the trailhead on Sunday. We had the traditional butterscotch schnapps toast to signify the end of the class. Lester Mok and Tom Oloffo dove shirtless into the snowbank (could have been the schnapps). Then twenty five of us went for lunch at Big Buck to conclude a great weekend with a fine class of survivors. Congratulations to you all!



Building a Quinzee



Lunch on the Trail



Hike the Gila Wilderness



New Mexico's largest Wilderness, the Gila was also the world's first designated Wilderness area, created on June 3, 1904 at the insistence of Aldo Leopold. The northeastern and extreme eastern portions are high mesas and rolling hills cut by deep canyons of the East Fork, Middle Fork and West Forks of the Gila River and wooded in pinyon and juniper with areas of grassland. Vast stands of ponderosa pine cover the central portion, and spectacular cliffs stand above the canyon of the Gila River. The west and southwest portions are high mountains, particularly the Mogollon Range with elevations up to 10,895 feet, and steep canyons of the drainages of Turkey Creek and Mogollon Creek.



I am forming a small group of SOLAR-ites for a weeklong hike through this stunning wild area later this year. The proposed hike will cover 45-50 miles in six or seven days starting in the sub-alpine forests of the Mogollon Mountains and descending to and through the canyons of the West Fork of the Gila River. This is a trip for experienced backpackers.



Where: The Gila Wilderness is located in southwestern New Mexico, near Silver City.

When: Mid to late September 2004. Probably during the week of September 19th.

Cost: As with most trips of this nature, the bulk of the cost represents transportation to and from the area and will vary depending on method of transportation and available deals. I am guess-timating a total cost of \$400 - \$500 at this time. The group will work out the details



The essence of a wilderness area is that the dedicated nature lover must expend his or her own energy to get there, by hiking. You have to work to fully appreciate the natural wonders of the Gila Wilderness. Miles from the urban scene and commercial functions of society, this area is a truly special place, once the refuge of Geronimo and his Chiricahua Apache warriors, now preserved for all to enjoy.

Interested? Contact Richard Ebenhoe
(313) 274-4569 or rjebenhoe@yahoo.com



SOLAR MARCH 2004 CALENDAR

School for Outdoor Leadership, Adventure & Recreation

MARCH ACTIVITIES

2	TUE	GENERAL MEETING Program: MI Birds of Prey	COLONY HALL	Tom Oloffo Lou Szakal	mcmountainman@yahoo.com everest2006@aol.com
6	SAT	WEEKLY HIKING	Kensington Metropark	Reggie Hayes	thomashayes@wideopenwest.com
14	SUN	WEEKLY HIKING	Lyons Oak City Park	Tom Hayes	thomashayes@wideopenwest.com
19-22	WKN	WABOS LOPPET SKI TOUR	Saulte St. Marie, Ont	Mike Banks	Slywolfe52@yahoo.com
20	SAT	WEEKLY HIKING	Orion Oaks City Park	TBD	thomashayes@wideopenwest.com
28	SUN	WEEKLY HIKING	Maybury State Park	TBD	thomashayes@wideopenwest.com
MARCH 12- SOLAR RAY SUBMISSION DEADLINE Send to Pete Lamb at petekancu@yahoo.com					

MARCH CLASSES

4	THU	WINTER SURVIVAL CLASS	TBD	Doug Lanyk	dslanyk@earthlink.net
5-7	WKN	WINTER SURVIVAL PRACTICAL 2	TBD	Doug Lanyk	dslanyk@earthlink.net
11,18,25	THU	BASIC BACKPACKING CLASS	EMS Farmington	Mike Banks	Slywolfe52@yahoo.com

APRIL ACTIVITIES

6	TUE	GENERAL MEETING Program: Bugs & Insects	COLONY HALL	Tom Oloffo Lou Szakal	mcmountainman@yahoo.com everest2006@aol.com
2-4	WKN	WHITE WATER RAFTING	New River, WV	Laura Albin	albinlau@msu.edu
30-May 2	WKN	CHEAT FEST-WW RAFTING**	West Virginia	Linda Hill	riverwoman@comcast.com

APRIL CLASSES

11,18,25	THU	BASIC BACKPACKING CLASS	EMS Farmington	Mike Banks	Slywolfe52@yahoo.com
17-18	WKN	BASIC BACKPACKING PRACTICAL 1	TBD	Mike Banks	Slywolfe52@yahoo.com
24	SAT	ROCK CLIMBING CLASS	TBD	Rick Waller	
30-May 2	WKN	BASIC BACKPACKING PRACTICAL 2	TBD	Mike Banks	Slywolfe52@yahoo.com

MAY ACTIVITIES

4	TUE	GENERAL MEETING Program: SOLAR Steering Committee Elections	COLONY HALL	Tom Oloffo Lou Szakal	mcmountainman@yahoo.com everest2006@aol.com
8	SAT	COUNTRY HOEDOWN**	Lazy J Ranch	DeFrance's	moedefrance@comcast.net
28-31	MULTI	POTS, PADDLES & CAVES	Hessel, MI	Jeff Ganley	jganley@fischerus.com
28-31	MULTI	HIKING/CLIMBING ADVENT.	Red River Gorge, KY	Leslie Cordova	lesliegene@aol.com

MAY CLASSES

1, 8	SAT	ROCK CLIMBING CLASS	TBD	Rick Waller	
14-15	WKN	ROCK CLIMBING PRACTICAL	TBD	Rick Waller	

WEEKLY ACTIVITIES

MONDAYS	WALK/FYBAI**	Westland	Chip Kleinbrook	mchip@aol.com
THURSDAYS	ROCK CLIMBING**	Planet Rock Pontiac	Michelle Delaporte	tazspaz2@hotmail.com
VARIOUS	X COUNTRY SKIING**	Vary- contact Chip	Chip Kleinbrook	mchip@aol.com

**FOR INFORMATION ON JOINING THE SOLAR CLUB, CONTACT MARY PRICE (248) 477-7547
OR VISIT WWW.SOLAROUTDOORS.ORG**

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO HELP PLAN AND/OR LEAD A SOLAR ACTIVITY CONTACT
PAM RIEHL SZAKAL AT (248) 685-0367 OR SEND EMAIL TO 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."**

** DENOTES NON-SOLAR ACTIVITY (Solar will not be held responsible for these activities)

Recruiting SOLAR Trip Leaders

Have you ever planned a family vacation? Booked a hotel room? Reserved a campsite? Then you are qualified to be a SOLAR trip leader. SOLAR is looking for enthusiastic members to lead trips for 2004.

Why would you want to lead a trip? First, you could qualify for a \$20 gift certificate to an area outdoor store (drawing at the general meeting for previous month's trip leaders). Second, as long as the trip does not lose money, you can build the cost of your "spot" into the trip costs. Finally, you can put to use all the knowledge you have gained from your SOLAR classes and encourage others.

How do you lead a trip?

- Submit to Pam Richl Szakal of SOLAR Activities (solaractivities@netscape.net, 248-709-6773) a brief description of the trip, including dates, location, number of participants, cost, etc. Pam will review, approve and notify you within a few days. Your trip will be posted on the SOLAR website and in the monthly calendar placed in the newsletter and distributed at the meetings.
- Next, submit an article to the SOLAR Ray Editor, Pete Lamb (petekandu@yahoo.com) for publication in the next month's newsletter. See the monthly calendar for submission deadlines.
- Contact Reggie Hayes the club Treasurer (thomashayes@wideopenwest.com) to discuss any finance issues—funds for deposit, collecting and submitting trip fees. SOLAR Trips qualify for some benefits non-SOLAR trips may not qualify for.
- At the SOLAR meeting Pam will provide you with signup forms, bring trip information and hand out flyers, announce your trip and encourage others members to participate.
- Get a membership list from Mary Price (hmpriec@ameritech.net) in Membership to confirm that all participants are current members if it is a SOLAR trip.
- When the trip is complete, submit an article to the Ray (optional) and give a trip recap at the next monthly meeting.

Sample trips SOLARites have led in the past: Hiking, Backpacking, Biking, Kayaking, Canoeing, Archeology Digs, Fossil Hunts, Horseback Riding, Primitive Skills, Rock Climbing, Caving, Downhill & XC Skiing, Snow shoeing, Halloween Party.

Locations SOLARites have lead trips to in the past: Manitou Island, Tobermory, Bay City State Park, Manistee River Trail, Jordan River Pathway, Red River Gorge, Pere Marquette Trail, Hocking Hills, plus more!!!

From the SOLAR Program Director

By Lou Szakal

Upcoming SOLAR Program Schedule

Please Note: All programs will take place at Colony Hall immediately following the SOLAR Business meeting

MARCH PROGRAM

Michigan Birds of Prey

By: The Michigan United Conservation Club

APRIL PROGRAM

Bugs/Minibeasts

By: Young Entomologists' Society, Inc.

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

May: S.O.L.A.R. Steering Committee Elections

June: Nocturnal Animals/Organization for Bat Conservation

July: Annual Picnic/Gear Swap

August: Annual Core Class Presentation/ All Instructors

September: Search and Rescue

October: Bats Presentation/Organization for Bat Conservation

November: SOLAR Trip Presentation/TEA

December: Annual Holiday Bash

March Program Michigan Birds of Prey



This is your chance to meet live rescued birds no longer able to survive in the wild. It's a thrill to look an eagle in the eye and see an owl turn its head 180°.

So please come and leave your dogs at home. Also, please maintain a quiet atmosphere in the hall so that the birds will not be stressed.

SOLAR Hiking Schedule

Volunteers Needed for Hike Leaders (Second Call—please sign up!)

Anyone wishing to volunteer to be hike leader, please let Pam Szakal or me know what week you are available so we can update the information. All hikes are at 9:30 a.m.

Reggie Hayes e-mail-thomashayes@wideopenwest.com

Pam Riehl Szakal e-mail-solaractivities@netscape.net



Sat. Mar. 6th Kensington Metropark Hike leader: Reggie Hayes
Exit I-96 at Kent Rd, exit 151. Meet in the first right hand side parking lot past the golf course. Hiking Trail Difficulty: easy to moderate.

Sun. Mar. 14th Lyon Oaks County Park: Hike leader: Tom Hayes
Entrance on Pontiac Trail, just east of Old Plank Rd. Park is bordered by I-96 on the south, Old Plank Rd. on the west, Pontiac Trail on the north. Hiking Trail Difficulty: unknown at this time. Will have more info in the future.

Sat. Mar 20th Orion Oaks County Park Hike leader: *Needed*
I-75 to Baldwin Rd., north about 3.5 miles to the park entrance. Trail head parking at Baldwin Rd. Hiking Trail Difficulty: easy

Sun. Mar 28th Maybury State Park. Hike leader: *Needed*
5 miles west of I-275 on 8 Mile Rd., between Napier and Beck Rds. Trailhead at first parking lot far right corner. Hiking Trail Difficulty: easy to moderate

Sat. Apr. 3rd. Ortonville State Recreation Area. Hike leader: *Needed*
Between Flint and Pontiac, 2 miles north of Ortonville and east of M-15. Just east of Sands Rd. on State Park Rd. Follow the main road to the parking lot at the end. Hiking Trail Difficulty: Moderate to Difficult.

Sat. Apr. 10th Proud Lake State Recreation Area. Hike leader: Reggie Hayes
From I-96 take Wixom Rd., exit 159 north about 6 miles to the park. Follow the signs to the Annex parking. Hiking Trail Difficulty: Easy to Moderate.

Sun. Apr. 18th Seven Lakes State Park. Hike leader: *Needed*
Exit I-75 at Grange Hall Rd. then go 6 miles west to Fish Lake Rd. then north on Fish Lake Rd. 1 mile to park entrance. Follow signs to the boat launch trailhead. Hiking Trail Difficulty: Easy to Moderate.

Sat. Apr. 24th Brighton State Recreation Area. Hike leader: Tom Hayes
West from Brighton on Brighton Rd. about 4 miles to Chilson Rd. then south 1.5 miles to Bishop Lake Rd. then east to Bishop Lake Rd. picnic area parking lot. Trail head on the south end. Hiking Trail Difficulty: Easy to moderate.

Sun. May 2nd Pinckney State Recreation Area Hike leader: Tom Hayes
From US-23 west on N. Territorial Rd. about 10 miles to Dexter-townhall Rd. turn north for 1.2 miles to Silver Hill Rd. bear left to parking lot at Silver Lake Beach. Hiking Trail Difficulty: Easy to Moderate

Sat. May 8th. Island Lake State Recreation Area. Hike leader: *Needed*
I-96 to exit 151 at Kensington Rd. then south to the park entrance. Follow the signs to Riverbend picnic area. Hiking Trail Difficulty: Easy to Moderate

Sun. May 16th Heritage Park-Farmington Hills Hike leader: *Needed*
Located on Farmington RD. Between 10 and 11 Mile Rds. Meet in front of the visitor center. Hiking Difficulty: Easy.

Sat May 22nd. Bald Mountain State Recreation Area Hike leader: *Needed*
Located on Farmington RD. Between 10 and 11 Mile Rds. Meet in front of the visitor center. Hiking Difficulty: Easy.

BACKPACKING COURSE

I have a few friends who like to get outdoors and see things other people will never see. They can do this because they walk. They walk with packs. They walk with packs on their backs. Yes, they are backpackers.

Some of these friends spent last year hiking around a volcano. Some got chased by fires. A couple spent their honeymoon in the mountains. Many spent their weekends walking the hills and lakeshores of Michigan. They were out there when the first buds came onto the trees and when the last leaves fell. They hiked on snowshoes and Texas. Their cheeks felt the sun, the wind, the rain and the cold. They saw bear, elk and mountain goats. They were observed by marmos and visited by deer. They slept in tents, under tarps, in the snow and under the stars. They ate their lunches on snowfields and snacked by waterfalls. They took time to take pictures and to write, but mostly they watched and they listened.

These friends have seen valleys in bloom and mountains on fire. They have hiked a Lake Michigan beach when a wall of ice sheltered it from the waves and played with sea urchins in a tidal pool on the Pacific. They have seen shooting stars and northern lights. They marvel at sunrise and sunset. They listen to the forest and they smell the rain.

These friends of mine have gone weeks without showers or shaving. They have been known to look bad and smell worse. They have known sunburn, windburn and freezer burn. They have known sore muscles, aching joints and stretched tendons. They soak in hot springs and cold streams. They also do two other things. They laugh a lot. They smile more. Yes, they are backpackers.

The *Backpacking Course* is designed to give each participant the basic skills to start a lifetime of adventure. Introduction to such skills and subjects as First Aid, knots, land navigation, clothing systems, campsite selection, bear-bagging, caching, trail techniques, trip planning, hygiene, nutrition, water treatment, weather and nature observation, backcountry ethics, equipment use, selection and maintenance. There are probably a few dozen more items that elude me at this point.

WHEN & WHERE?

Thursday Evenings from 6PM - 9PM

March 1, 18 & 25 / April 1, 15 & 22

Eastern Mountain Sports in Farmington Hills

Practical #1 - April 17th & 18th at a location TBA

Practical #2 - April 30th thru May 2nd at a location TBA

HOW MUCH?

\$85.00 U.S.



MORE QUESTIONS?

Contact Michael Banks at slywolfe52@yahoo.com or check www.solaroutdoors.org

Rock Climbing Class

It's Back! This spring ROCK CLIMBING returns to SOLAR. Top Rope anchor rigging, Belaying, Climbing and Technique, will be key elements of instruction. This class is designed for anyone who has never climbed before or those who have climbed but want to learn to rig their own Top Rope anchor system. There will be three Saturday class sessions (4/24, 5/1, 5/8) and an outdoor climbing practical (5/14 - 5/16). Cost is \$130.00. This includes all classroom materials, book, Planet Rock climbing passes, shoe rentals, and use of climbing gear. All we need is YOU!! This class will be limited to 20 students, so sign-up early.

Contact Rick Waller at 248-414-6991 or klymr_rekk@msn.com.

Climb On!

Rick



X-C SKIING: Calling All Loppeteers

It's hard to imagine that winter will soon be leaving us. The old man has been good to us this year. So let us not send him away without proper farfare and celebration. Come join your fellow SOLARites (and another 200 or so of your new best friends) on March 20th. We will be boarding the 'Snow Train' early that morning to join in on one of North America's greatest winter traditions, The Wabos Loppet.

You will join skiers from across the Great Lakes and beyond in your quest to traverse some of the most scenic terrain in this part of the world. Frozen lakes, granite cliffs, an endless forest and all that snow leads you from the train as you head towards your first official rest stop on this daylong journey. Make no mistake: this is not just a stop for snacks. This is your gateway to Stokely Creek, a 120-kilometer trail system resort that gives you a taste of nirvana. Alas, you only get a sample today (the Wabos is only 26 kilometers) but you can come back tomorrow and ski for free as a Loppeteer.

Most of the trails are groomed for classic and skate (you will be going over some of these today), and the moose always seem to know that their tracks shouldn't step on your tracks. I won't go on because you have quite a few more clicks to ski, but you will all have stories to share for the trail's end and many years to come. I will guarantee four things that you will all remember: 1) Norm's, 2) Home Run Hill, 3) The Finish Line and 4) the Barbeque.

Just remember: Winter ain't over 'til the lady sings and the lady does the Wabos. Bon Hiver!

WHAT ARE THE FACTS?

- The Wabos Loppet is 26 kilometers in length.
- The journey begins at the train station in downtown Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario.
- It is a non-competitive journey.
- The cost for the weekend includes 2 nights lodging (March 19 & 20), the Wabos entry fee, the train ride, the Wabos barbeque, Saturday night pizza and Sunday morning breakfast.

The cost of the Wabos weekend is not stable. Stokely Creek increases the fee on a regular basis.

Your cost is

\$150.00 until February 21, 2004

\$160.00 at the March meeting

For more information:

Contact Michael Banks at

slywolfe52@yahoo.com



2004 Cheat River Festival Trip Whitewater Rafting Weekend

Friday, April 30 th	Saturday, May 1 st
Upper Youghiogheny	Cheat River Canyon
Friendsville, Maryland	Albright, West Virginia
\$119	\$99
Class IV - V+	Class IV
Experience Required	Experience Recommended
11 Miles	11 Miles
4-person high adventure rafts	Guided Rafts
Hot meal included	Riverside lunch included

THE UPPER YOUGH drops almost 1,000 feet from the put-in to take out. The rapids flow back to back, with class IV and V's coming at you continuously. The Upper Yough is on the cutting edge of whitewater rafting. It is among the most demanding whitewater commercially rafted anywhere with tight slots and steep drops. The intricate rapids require a quick and positive response to the guide's commands. Thus we recommend good physical condition and previous whitewater experience.

THE CHEAT RIVER in Northern West Virginia is the largest un-dammed river system east of the Mississippi. Due to natural flows, water levels are at their highest during the spring. The Cheat River Canyon is 12 miles of isolated class III-IV whitewater (becoming class V at high water). It drops more than 300 feet through more than 25 rapids. This trip is a must run for the river connoisseur!

Starting at noon Saturday, there will be live bands playing, food, kayaks, and outdoor gear for sale. The festival raises money for clean-up of the Cheat River watershed. Cost is \$10 and you can bring in your own beverages.

We will be camping at a private campground on the Cheat River next to the festival site. (This means stumbling distance back to the campfire after the Festival.) Cost is \$5 per night.

If you don't want to raft but would like to camp and party with our group, you can hike or mountain bike in nearby state parks. No reservations are needed.

To reserve your spot, call *Wilderness Voyagers* 1-800-272-4141

\$22 Discount for both trips!

Please let me know when you have reserved your spot. I will help coordinate carpooling, directions, camp site and social activities. Email me at riverwoman@comcast.net.

Get ready for a super fun weekend!

YEEE-HA!

Let's do it again. It's time to get down country style at the

Lazy J Ranch

Come and join in for an old fashioned Country Hoe-Down



- WHEN:** Saturday
TIME: 8-Midnight. Do not be late. This is a team sport.
WHERE: See directions to the Lazy J below
COST: \$20 per person. Limit is 80 people
INCLUDES: 100+ year old barn, caller and enough fun to knock your socks off
YOU SHOULD: Bring your own pass around snacks (Hors D'oeuvre)

The evening is a full program of square dancing and mixers designed for the fun and enjoyment of beginners only. No prior knowledge of square dancing is necessary nor expected.

Sign up at the March thru April meetings and give or mail your check to Maureen DeFrance, 2692 Court Lane North, Howell, MI 48843

Directions

- I-96 to Exit#155Milford
- Turn heading North on to Milford Road
- 4.2 miles to General Motors Road
- Turn left onto GM Road
- 2.4 miles to Hickory Ridge Road
- Turn right onto Hickory Ridge Road
- 3.6 miles to the Lazy J Ranch

The Lazy J Ranch is located on the east side of Hickory Ridge Road.

HIKING AND ADVENTURE CLIMBING TORRENT, KENTUCKY MAY 28 - 31, 2004 KID FRIENDLY, NO PETS

Join SOI AR as we head down to Kentucky for an exciting Memorial Weekend adventure. We are going to be staying at the Torrent Falls Bed and Breakfast. You will have a choice of staying in cabins or rooms with varying amenities. There is a large array of things to do in the area. The main plan is to hike and explore Red River Gorge Geological Area and Natural Bridges State Park. For those more adventurous, try the Via Ferrata adventure climbing course right at the bed and breakfast.

Natural Bridges:

Natural Bridges State Resort Park is home to a great natural sandstone arch, which is 900 tons of rock suspended across a mountainside. The park is located in the midst of the Daniel Boone National Forest. There are 9 hiking trails ranging in length from ½ mile to 8 miles.

Red River Gorge:

Red River Gorge Geological Area is a unique landscape containing more than 80 major natural arches and an unusual assortment of vegetation. This area has been sculpted by wind and water for more than 70 million years. Red River Gorge contains the largest concentration of rock shelters and arches east of the Rocky Mountains.

Via Ferrata:

A via ferrata is an engineered iron rung pathway, a combination of rock climbing, rung climbing and hiking. Climbing a via ferrata does not require prior experience. The route is made up of iron rungs that are drilled directly into the rock. While climbing you are always protected by dual safety lines attached to vinyl coated steel cables. The course is broken down into 6 sections with 5 exit points and gets progressively harder as it goes on. You can exit at anytime. You must be at least 10 years old to climb this course.

The cost for this trip varies depending on what lodging you choose, ranging from \$85 to \$125 for 3 nights lodging which includes breakfast for all 3 mornings, a central hot tub and nightly bonfire. A one day pass to use the via ferrata is an additional \$26 for adults and \$23 for kids 10 - 18.

Sound like fun? Contact Leslie Cordova at (248) 547-5626 or lesliegene@aol.com. Hurry as there are only 18 spaces available and will be first pay first go. Only payments in full will be accepted to hold your spot.

SOLAR's ADVANCED BACKPACKING & LEADERSHIP Course

That mouthful should tell you why many of us refer to this course simply as 'ABL'. There are other nicknames for the course. 'The Never Ending Course' seems to be one of the most popular. However, my favorite is 'A Season in Hell: The Director's Cut'. It just never caught on. I guess I just don't have my finger on the pulse of 'The Cult'*.

What is ABL? It is a course designed to accelerate the personal growth of the individual student in such outdoor skills as teamwork, backpacking, instruction and leadership. It sounds harmless enough. Doesn't it? It is, unless you come with the wrong expectations.

You need to realize that this course is demanding. First you need to acquire the prerequisites. They include:

- Backpacking
- Land Navigation
- Wilderness First Aid
- Trip Planning Seminar.

Next you must be prepared to dedicate 4 weekends to practicals. There is a week-long practical. There are assigned readings. There will be workshops and classes. These activities will be stretched out over 3 months.

You will be keeping an exercise log and sharing it with your team and the instructors. This will make you more aware of your efforts and help to motivate you. Motivation is the key. You're holding it.

Okay, this brings you through October, and you're finished. Wrong! Your team will be designing a service project. You will be leading a backpacking trip. All of you will be helping with the Spring 2005 Backpacking Course.



*Oh my! How did this change
happen?*

Why would anyone in their right mind want to commit all this time and effort? Some of you will do this to develop some 'tangible' skills. All of you will eventually do it to develop things that are harder to describe. However, these things will be noticed. One student's employer suggested charging the course fee to the company. Another's boss said the course should be tax deductible. The graduates have been to the tops of mountains, led treks through Nepal and the sub-zero wilderness of the U.P. This course won't change you, but it will give you the opportunity to change yourself.

Talk to me if you are interested in learning more about the ABL course. Talk to some of the graduates. I'll be available after the March meeting. I also welcome the opportunity to spend the weekend of March 27th backpacking with any of you that are interested in the ABL course.

MORE QUESTIONS?

Contact Michael Banks at slywolfe52@yahoo.com or check www.solaroutdoors.org

*SOLAR's most popular nickname

Wolverine 200 Bike Event

For those of you interested in the challenge of biking 200 miles in 24 hours on Belle Isle, May 14, 15, 16, contact Matt Dalton (mdalton@ameritech.net). You can camp, bike, kayak, or roller blade on Belle Isle (with Detroit Police security) for this event.

Membership is only \$40 a year per person (\$55 per family) 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 experience to be found there.

President	Tom Oloffo	Equipment	Carol McCririe
Vice President	Tom Hayes	Historlar	Charles Hailey
Secretary	Cindy Taylor	Membership	Mary Price
Treasurer	Reggie Hayes	Programs	Lou Szakal
Activities	Pam Kiehl	Pub. Relations	Jenny Couch
By-Laws	Gloria Fontaine	Solar Ray	Pete Lantry
Education	Harry Price	Web Master	Karl Overheu
At Large:	Mike Banks • Moe DeFrance • Al Fylak • Steve Gardner • Bill Halvingis • Cindy Harrison-Felix • Doug Lanyk • Larry Martin • Joan Hettlinger • Leslie Cordova • Joan & Bob Westbrook		

SOLAR Steering Committee Meetings –The Steering Committee meets on the last Tuesday of every month at 7:30 p.m. These meetings are usually open to the general membership. Anyone who is interested in learning what topics are discussed, the decisions being made, or contemplating running for a position on the Steering Committee, is welcome to attend. If you are interested in attending the Steering Committee Meeting, contact Tom Oleffo at (313) 386-0057 or memountainrao@yahoo.com.

Are held the first Tuesday of every month in Southfield at the Colony Hall, 21180 Evergreen (between 8 & 9 Mile Roads) at 7:30 p.m. Visitors can come in for free.

SOLAR RAY is a monthly publication of SOLAR and is sent free to current dues-paid members. If you change your address please tel. the membership chairman, Mary Price, hmrprice@ameritech.net.

(Submissions are due on the Friday two weeks prior to the monthly Steering Committee Meeting (Feb 6 for March issue). Electronic files accessible to Word are required.) Pete Lamb, 409 E. Southlawn, Birmingham, MI 48009 Or call 248-644-5831 E-mail: Pete.lamb@yahoo.com

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VISIT OUR WEBSITE: WWW.SOLARHOTBOBBS.ORG

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