



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

A Quinzee Is Not a Sub Shop?! Or Winter Backpacking Class

by Elizabeth Schwab

Well it's happened again. I went into a SOLAR class kicking and screaming and came out on the other side thinking, "this might not be so bad to do." Well occasionally, under favorable conditions anyway. I cornered myself into taking the class because I snowshoed and thought it would help me learn how to deal with the weather and the unexpected. Anyone who actually slept out there was just this side of crazy in my book. (Of course many of my non SOLAR friends think that of anyone who'd go into the woods in good weather even for a week end with a backpack, so I guess it is all relative.)

At the first of several classes I found it comforting that many of my classmates also had reservations. Some of the lectures, though informative, just added to them. The prospect of having to undress in the frigid winter air, when you're already cold and damp, even if it is to get into something dry to warm up with, sounded at least a little weird. After the "dangers of hypothermia" talk, you could have heard a pin drop, until Marcia Reinhardt summed it up with, "O.K., now that you've scared the hell out of all of us ..." Mother Nature was to be respected and not messed with.



Winter Camping Class

I kept eyeing the instructors who were calm, positive, encouraging, informative and representing at least a hundred years experience of winter camping and would feel reassured. Then that "What the hell am I



Picnic Table Seat Covers

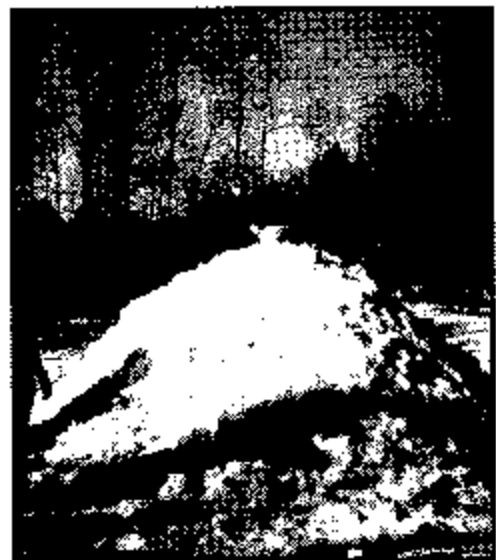
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A Quinzee Is Not a Sub Shop?! (cont'd)

DOING here" feeling would set in. At one point I asked Tom Oloff, our excellent lead instructor, "You're not going to let me die, right?" The pages of required and recommended gear were daunting. Dragging it all in to gear check night and realizing I had most of the bases covered was encouraging. The class before the first practical, with awful weather predicted, the "What the hell..." set in again, and Lynn Dubay, one of my group instructors had to talk me down. I was determined to graduate and figured it was only one night—I'd get through it.

The first practical, at Waterloo State Recreation Area, had its moments. Snowshoeing to the campsite while the 12" of snow fell was very picturesque. Our group, Tim Davis, Chris Meyers, Marie Edwards, Susan Speece, and Libby Neumaier, all worked together really well, building the shelter to fit all of us, as we moved from plan A to about R, as well as sharing food, hot water and, support to get through it. It was mostly grueling though, as the temperature dropped to -4. It was the first I'd ever seen stars come out and thought: "Oh shucks this isn't a good sign." Going to the outhouse at 2 a.m., when I'd hardly slept at all, I still had to admire the stars in the hyperclear sky. (More than one of us considered sleeping in the outhouse!) The sun the next morning on the fresh, diamondy snow, when I'd hardly slept at all, was also brilliant. As with most grueling experiences, character building and bonding occurs. It was helpful finding that some of the instructors had also found it challenging to get through. Having managed those conditions fairly well, with their help, while spending the night outside, I'll probably never react the same to winter again. I achieved my goal of survival without frostbite or even mild hypothermia, but could not at that point commit to the second practical.



Building a Quinzee

write!) The quinzee building was in peril! (A quinzee is a huge snow mound shelter you hollow out, that in our case had room for three people to sleep.) Tom and his merry band of instructors had to play a lot of the week end by ear, changing plans as the balmy conditions and their effects on the snow were decided. We ended up with 2 quinzees, each built by all nine students, a day apart and took turns spending one night in them. This was definitely easier than the usual of each small group of three students building their own and spending 2 nights in it. We also had a chance to snowshoe the second day with only daypacks, under glorious conditions. We had superb food, because my groupmates, Tim and Susan have much higher standards regarding trail food than I do. We had niceties like picnic seat covers, and folding chairs. Yet at the second night's campfire, when I was asked what I thought of it all, I honestly replied it was not for me. There was still too much work and too many discomforts to suit me.

And then the strangest thing happened. I left the fire to go decorate our quinzee for the contest. As I was walking in the dark with the stars lighting my way, it struck me I felt immersed in



Snow Queens

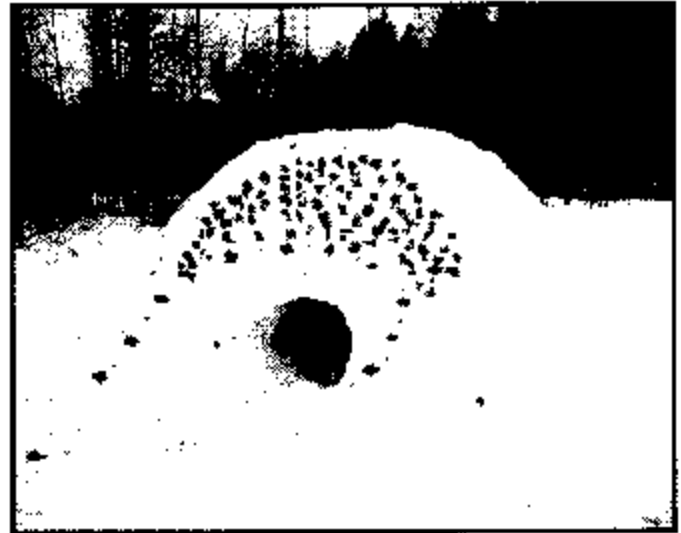
Within several days my resolve to graduate returned. (Probably why there is a 2 week break between practicals!) Another prevailing feeling among my classmates was after spending a small fortune on gear, they may as well put it to use. It also helped that with using the sleds we'd built. We could take more amenities and food.

The second practical at Pigeon River was much milder; almost too mild. (OhmyGod; what did I just

A Quinzee Is Not a Sub Shop?! (cont'd)

winter. Not fighting it. Part of it. And I had never felt that way on any winter day outing I had ever done. And this, in addition to the incredible beauty, might actually outweigh any downsides or discomforts to make doing it worthwhile.

Now this doesn't mean I'm buying a 40 below sleeping bag for Far North trips next year. I can embrace winter backpacking and still draw the line at certain temperatures, i.e. single digits and below. But I've surprised myself again, finding a new type of adventure to enjoy, that I once said, "Yeah, right." to. It's wonderful finding, on the far side of 40, that I still have the ability to surprise myself. Is winter backpacking for everyone? Of course not. But maybe try taking next year's class, and you might surprise yourself too.



A Pretty Quinzee

Lake Ann Cross Country Ski Weekend

by Jim Coe 02/11 to 02/13



Overlooking Lake Michigan

We had 17 people show up to Sleeping Bear resort despite the gloomy forecast for warm weather and possible rain. Don Wold, Sue Tavidian, and I left early Friday which turned out to be a good move since northbound 23 was closed due to an accident later in the day.

The lodge, a really great place, had been remodeled by a local craftsman with an outdoor bear theme to it. The log posts that hold up the front porch have a mother bear and a cub carved onto the posts, which is cool. Inside the rec room (pool table foosball and ping pong table) is a bear with claws and teeth glaring at

you mounted on the wall.

We went for a walk on lovely Lake Herendeen on which the lodge is located. Never making it out to ski that day, we went into Interlochen for dinner at the Hottelbraugh Restaurant. It was a little eerie for me since 20 plus years earlier I worked as a park ranger at Interlochen State Park for three years. Nothing was the same, but it was fun to reminisce.

Early Saturday morning with the sun shining we went up to Sleeping Bear Dunes Natural Lake Shore to ski Alligator Hill. We decided not to ski the trail due to the bad snow conditions. We all agreed that the hike was beautiful anyway with a great view of N and S Manitou Islands and Big Gleru Lake from the overlooks at the top.

We headed back to the lodge for lunch and then down to Lake Ann Pathway. The snow ended up not being too bad. The trail had a few challenging hills and the section along the Platte River was beautiful. That night we did a group dinner. I made a big pot of spaghetti sauce with the recipe including spinach. NEVER worry about not having enough food at a SOLAR event. We had plenty of food. We had a rousing game of music trivia and a group stayed up till 3 am playing dice (it was Moe's fault). Sunday our group went down to Crystal Mtn. I skied downhill and the rest went cross country skiing. All in all, we had a great time with a great group of people. Thanks to everyone who attended.

Winter Festival in Houghton

By Mike Hobig

Putting lessons learned to the test, two days after completing the winter camping class with just enough time to check gear, clean up and repack, we are again on our way north. Yes, I realize I could be in New York city by the time I reach Houghton, the home of Michigan Technological University, but does NY have a carnival with massive snow sculptures and are they a buzz with winter activities which include skiing in all its forms, snowshoeing, curling, sledding, broom ball and so much more? NY loses again by my tally. Check the weather forecast before you go, that's what we were taught. Will it be cooler than the forty degrees we had at the last winter practical? Will there be snow? YES and YES.

This is one of several things I have wanted to do or see in Michigan but have put off for years. So why not run a trip to the place they start measuring snow fall only after it passes eight feet. To emphasize that there usually is a lot of snow, the university even has student parking for snowmobiles. Sure it's nice in the summer, but there won't be any mosquitoes on this trip. The other person making the trip is Jen. Her plans are to make one or two small day trips into the woods with the rest of the time in the coffee shops and festival activities with friends that are living in the Houghton area. I expect to sample those civilized activities too.

The drive which is supposed to take ten and a half hours from Detroit to Houghton took us eleven and a half, in spite of the inclement weather in the metro area. We stopped about an hour for lunch in Vanderbilt where we had great omelets.

The All Nighter, a big event of winter carnival, occurs the night we arrive. The warm weather that occurred the week before (unprecedented in the history of the competition), melted the snow and all the work done previous to the all nighter literally melted away. Students finished sculptures that they had been working on or built in just one night. This is the heart of Winter Carnival here at Tech. The engineering students, Greek houses and other clubs contribute snow sculptures to the contest. A majority of them are bigger than most SUVs, some larger than homes. Officially there is no drinking during building but it's not called the all nighter for nothing. These folks are serious into competition and snow, fueling themselves with caffeine and I can only assume a multitude of other beverages. I never thought I would see a clothes iron used to glaze snow sculptures, but now I have. We walked around well into the night, watching. Free food and drink were provided, as well as all you could eat ROTC pancakes at midnight at the reasonable price of three dollars.

We went day tripping to several locations including Fort Wilkins State Park, which is nearly at the tip of the Keweenaw Peninsula. It has a recreated fortification much like the ones at Mackinaw with all the formality that the military could muster, houses, shops and eating halls all around a central parade ground, as if they were at formation. Now in the winter, with fewer tourists, the wind still blows over a small lake, Fanny Hooley with the same chill as the days in which it was named, honoring a lady who came to visit and warmed their dreary days.



Easter Island Head



Parthenon?



Octopus

Winter Festival in Houghton (cont'd)

Estivant Pines is a stand of virgin pines also in the area. Snow is thick but the trail is mostly obvious. A beautiful light snow clung to everything. It also fell from trees when we passed by. Our progress was slow, to keep on the trail and not to overheat, but I was still anxious to explore. There is more elevation than this flatlander expected. On some portions of the trail the snow was fresh and untrod, I was glad to have snow shoes and stay on top of it. Spent about six hours there, covering approximately six or seven miles in the Fort Wilkins and Estivant Pines area, did some bushwhacking between trails which was fun.



Estivant Pines



Estivant Pines

In Lake Linden School Forest, off Bootjack road (I just love that road name for some reason) the trails are wide and very well marked, the pines are thick through most of this four hundred acre woods, some have been harvested. It is close to Houghton. This trail is a nice slow easy walk. It is also set up for teaching. Trees are labeled and marked for junior forestry projects which are ongoing. Besides the squirrel and chickadees, there were tracks of bigger animals, deer for sure, possibly wolf and definitely a pack of wild elementary school kids probably from the day before. This is also where I had to change my tire. Who knew that an aluminum wheel would "freeze" to the iron hub by galvanic action. I had to find a house and borrow a sledgehammer. Guess

what else is going into my car emergency kit?

Along Lake Superior are several trails, McLain State Park and others but in general they offer paths long the windward side of the Keweenaw. The ice on the shore was in translucent blues. Instead of being piled up in jagged forms and frozen mountains it was rounded and had soft edges. The heat wave last week melted the shoreline ice as well as the sculptures at the college. At McLain there was a fairly large chunk of fur out on the edge of Bear Lake, and scavenger tracks were all around. The frozen lake was singing with low droning like a bee passing by your ear but with tones so low it shook your bones. The sounds weren't the scary sharp cracking of fracturing ice but of its slow expansion under the warmth of the sun, peaceful as the sun on



Ice on Lake Superior's Shore

Winter Festival in Houghton (cont'd)

your face on a calm quiet day. No I wasn't standing on the ice at the time.

Tried to meet a new SOLAR member up there. We had some rendezvous plans but just didn't connect. I hope Liz had a good time and was sorry we missed her. At least we will be able to talk about snow sculptures and similar trips next meeting.

Also visited the Eagle Harbor Lighthouse along the way. There are so many other trails to take and explore away from Houghton as well as some close or within the city. Just walking the town is a history lesson. As a hint to folks going up in the winter, almost no museum or other attraction are open (the lighthouse for example). Even the state parks are only plowed to provide a small parking area. If it's a dirt road where you want to start your hike, plan on the possibility of hiking in from the main road or further away due to snow walls at the roadside.

The close of winter festival, also being the night before we leave for home, were the fireworks. We fueled up with a Chinese buffet and then headed outside to overlook the river and the school owned ski mountain. The show was impressive. There was also a torch light ski during which a giant dolphin



Eagle Harbor Lighthouse

was made in fire on the slopes. This followed the under sea theme of this year's carnival. A firework I had never seen was worked into the standard explosive mix. Instead of a boom or crack of noise it gave out a small puff and embers floated and swirled in the sky, unlike the other linear displays it floated and moved as if by a soft breeze which rotates up leaves. I half expected them to come together, implode to explode again. This was a nice finale to our time way up north. We visited some frozen water falls, the MCCC museum and other sites on the way home, had pasties and made it back at a reasonable hour to get ready for the next day. Left at 9 arrived at 9, whew.



Jen



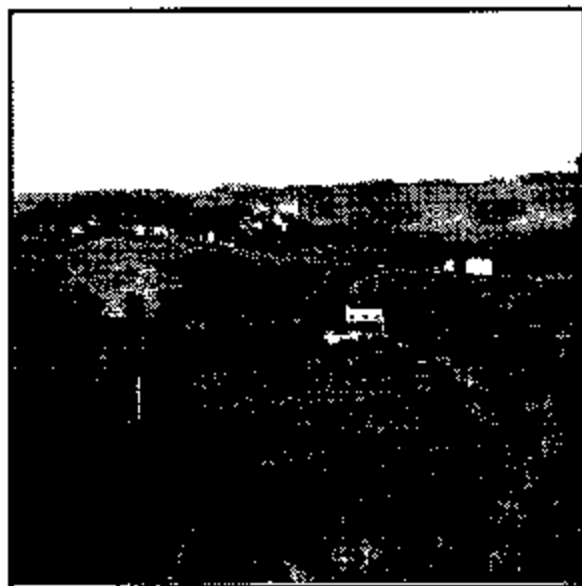
Mike

Maybe we'll try this again and get a few more folks to take the long trip up. Had a good time and wish you were there.

SOLAR Hint: by Peter Lamb After a beautiful snowy hike, a group of SOLARites went to an Irish pub in Brighton. The food was good and the beer was excellent. Somebody suggested that instead of getting up early and hiking six miles waiting for the pub to open, we could just stay in bed longer and drive straight to the pub. Could we get a larger consensus on this? [And if you don't like this tip, our library of hints has dried up. So please send your really good hints to Pete. Thanks.]

Brushing up for Italy

By Mike Willihnganz



Highland: Buona sera, Amici! It is 6:30 Thursday evening and a small group of SOLARites is meeting in Wendy's petite studio, back of our house which is north of Milford. Armed with bags of brushes, pallets and pictures, the group is meeting to exercise its eyes and skills in the art of water color painting.

All of this is in preparation for Pete Lamb's trip to Tuscany in June. The core of the trip is a two week stay in a villa near Poggibonsi, Tuscany Italy. We are planning to get in a lot of time to record the event "en plein air" painting and taking photos for later renditions, when we get back home. But nothing beats the hillside view, smells and tastes of painting on site. And it yields memories that are far beyond what is seen through the lens of a camera.

Wendy Willihnganz, who has been teaching water color painting for many years, wields a soft brush while running the sessions. Each painter brings a different perspective and

background to the studio. Pete's background and training, for example, is extensive and it is reflected in the pictures he draws. The rest of us splash on color with surprising effect and enthusiasm. All the while a background of soft music plays and conversation runs from the job to trips past and planned. The process is an unfolding and exercising of observation and rendition. Trees, I noted, are often painted with limbs out the top and sides but not often toward you or away from you. Wendy takes each student as she finds them and encourages them—from the color wheel, through perspective and on to distance and shading suitable to their own level and inclination.

The plan is to dabble and dribble till we take off, and probably long after. There is no requirement that you have any particular level of skill. Nothing is formalized and equipment and supplies are provided for the beginner. You are invited to join us, whenever. Call Wendy Willihnganz at 248 887-4273 or Copycast@aol.com.

Grazie e benvenuto

Wildlife Gardening

by Laura James

New SOLAR Class Brings Wildlife to the Garden

This April, SOLAR is offering a new class on wildlife gardening. The date of the class is Saturday, April 23 at 1 p.m. and will last roughly two hours. The location and cost will depend on the number of people who sign up, but the cost will likely be under \$25, including the cost of the workbook. For more information or to sign up, send me a note at Laura1991@prodigy.net.



FOR INFORMATION ON JOINING THE SOLAR CLUB, CONTACT PENNI LOPEZ (248)338-2911, kavekrawler@yahoo.com OR VISIT WWW.SOLAROUTDOORS.ORG

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO HELP PLAN AND/OR LEAD A SOLAR ACTIVITY, CONTACT PAN 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)



Memorial Weekend—Hiking, Boat Touring, Site Seeing—Tobermory, Canada

by Leslie Cordova

Come join us as we spend Memorial Weekend, May 27–30, exploring this magnificent area of Canada. Tobermory is considered a paradise by naturalists, hikers and kayakers. It offers a wide variety of outdoor activities and scenery that is absolutely breathtaking. I like the majestic cliffs of the Niagara Escarpment along the Bruce Trail or the inland trails of the Bruce Peninsula National Park. Numerous boat tours are available. Or bring your kayak and paddle on the (we hope) calm waters. There is a lot to do in the area. Visit the official website, www.tobermory.org.

We will be staying at the Trails End Lodge, <http://members.rogers.com/artamos/home.htm>. The lodge is situated on five acres of waterfront property overlooking the Islands of Fathom Five National Marine Park, just a 15 minute walk to the shops and restaurants in the Village of Tobermory. We have the entire 9 bedroom, 3 bath, 2 kitchen lodge reserved. There is a living room, a verandah and deck. Most kitchen utensils are provided, along with bedding and towels.

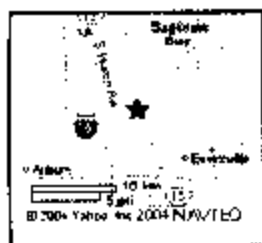
There will be the traditional potluck on Saturday night; the rest of the meals will be on your own.

This kid friendly, no pet weekend can be yours for a mere \$50 USD for 3 nights lodging. Interested? Contact Leslie Cordova at (248) 547-5626 or lesliegene@aol.com. Hurry as there are only 25 spaces available, and as always, it will be first pay, first go.



Camping Weekend at Bay City State Park

by Margaret Martin



Are Dutchman's Breeches a: clothing worn by Netherlands' mariners, b: a constellation, or c: a spring wildflower? Is a tufted titmouse a: a mushroom b: a bird, or c: a wildflower? When is a cattail not attached to a feline? Come discover spring at its best on this camping weekend. Bay City State Park hosts a wide variety of flora and fowl, as well as a nature center and great hiking and biking trails. Come have a great time! For those who do not wish to stay the night, we'll be hiking both Saturday and Sunday, so just come for the day!

Who should come: Anyone interested in wildflower identification, bird watching, star gazing, or other stuff outside. Kid friendly.

What: Wildflower identification, bird watching, stargazing and car camping.

Where: Bay City State Park, Bay City, MI

When: Friday-Sunday, May 13-15, 2005

Why: Just because it's spring and it's a great time to go outside.

Cost: \$ 2 per person, please make checks payable to "SOLAR" Includes camping cost and Sunday morning pancake breakfast.

Bring: Car Camping Supplies, wildflower, bird, tree, star, mushroom, butterfly, and any other kind of identification books, bikes, day hiking supplies, etc.

For More Information contact Margaret at 734-721-2821 or e-mail MPLUSCAT@Hotmail.com

SOLAR APRIL 2005 CALENDAR

School for Outdoor Leadership, Adventure & Recreation

March Activities Leader Winner: Maria Edwards – Hartwick Pines

APRIL ACTIVITIES

1	THU	GENERAL MEETING	COLONY HALL	Tom Hayes	thomashayes@wiceopenwest.com
1	TUE	Program: MUCC Valuable Wetlands		Linda Rodrick	lincamra@aol.com
3	SUN	Weekly Hike	Highland State Rec	Nd a Hike Ldr	thomashayes@wiceopenwest.com
7	THUR	Thursday Unique Dining	A Matter of Taste, Commerce	Mark Mirzorian	merz69@yahoo.com
9	SAT	Weekly Hike	Stoney Creek Metropark	Nd a Hike Ldr	thomashayes@wiceopenwest.com
17	SUN	Weekly Hike	Seven Ponds Nature Center	Nd a Hike Ldr	thomashayes@wiceopenwest.com
22-23	WKND	Beach Clean-Up**	Nordhouse Dunes	Vida Ruggero	rageti@hotmail.com
23	SAT	Weekly Hike	Maybury State Rec	Nd a Hike Ldr	thomashayes@wiceopenwest.com
April 23	SAT	Lunar Canoe Trip***	Proud Lake	heavenr	www.hcaynorcanoe.com
				Canoeing	

APRIL CLASSES

6, 13, 20, 27	WED	Rock Climbing Class	Moosejaw, Birmingham	Pete Lamb	petekandu@yahoo.com
7, 14, 21	THU	SOLAR Beginning Backpacking Class	EMS, Farmington	Mike Banks	slywolf52@aol.com
16-17	WKND	SOLAR Beginning Backpacking Practical #1	Waterloo	Mike Banks	slywolf52@aol.com
19	TUE	MSR Equipment Maintenance Class	EMS	Mike Banks	slywolf52@aol.com
23	SAT	Wildlife Gardening Class	TBD	Laura James	laura4991@prodigy.net
29-May 1	WKND	SOLAR Beginning Backpacking Practical #2	Hors: Lakes	Mike Banks	slywolf52@aol.com

Articles due April 8 for the May RAY. Please send to Pete Lamb at petekandu@yahoo.com

MAY ACTIVITIES

3	TUE	GENERAL MEETING	COLONY HALL	Tom Hayes	thomashayes@wiceopenwest.com
3	TUE	WProgram: SOLAR Elections, Annual Photo Contest, T-shirt		Linda Rodrick	lindamra@aol.com
1	SUN	Weekly Hike	Brighton State Rec	Nd a Hike Ldr	thomashayes@wiceopenwest.com
7	SAT	Weekly Hike	Kensington Metropark	Nd a Hike Ldr	thomashayes@wiceopenwest.com
13-15	WKND	Wild Flower Walk/Camping	Bay City State Park	Margaret Martin	mpuscal@hotmail.com
15	SUN	Weekly Hike	Sever Lakes State Park	Nd a Hike Ldr	thomashayes@wiceopenwest.com
18	WED	Intermediate Backpacking Class	TBD	Carol McOrrie	cmccrrie@sbcglobal.net
21	SUN	Weekly Hike	Island Lake State Rec	Nd a Hike Ldr	thomashayes@wiceopenwest.com
27-30	MULTI	Hiking, site seeing, boat trips, etc- Sign-ups in March	Tobermory Canada	Leslie Cordova	lesliegene@aol.com
27-29	WKND	Bring a Kid Backpacking	S. Manitou Island	Vida Ruggero	rageti@hotmail.com

MAY CLASSES

4	WED	Rock Climbing Class	Moosejaw, Birmingham	Pete Lamb	petekandu@yahoo.com
11, 14, 15	WED/ WKND	Basic Land Navigation Class	TBD	Karl Overheul	cybernomad@backpacker.com
13, 14, 15	WKND	Rock Climbing Practical	Mad Moose Lodge, Onario	Pete Lamb	petekandu@yahoo.com

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES /CLASSES

June 3-5	WKND	Bike Trip- Kal-Haven Bike Trail	South Haven	Joni Kostishak	jandrut@ic.net
Jun. 18 - Jul. 2	MULTI	Multi activity: Hiking, Biking, Wine Tasting- FULL	Tuscany, Italy	Pete Lamb	petekandu@yahoo.com
August 13-21	MULTI	Kayaking Trip	Aposille Islands, L Superior	Stacie Kitchen	skitchen@wowway.com

SOLAR Program Schedule

From the SOLAR Program Director — *Linda Rodrick*

APRIL PROGRAM "Michigan Valuable Wetlands"

By: The Michigan United Conservation Clubs (MUCC)

Michigan has lost more than 70 percent of our native wetlands.

In this presentation, a variety of live Michigan wetland mammals, birds and reptiles are used to illustrate the tremendous value and importance of wetlands to both wildlife and people.

It is important that cell phones are turned off and the audience is quiet during this presentation so as not to stress the animals.

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

MAY: Annual SOLAR Steering Committee Elections,
Photography and SOLAR T-Shirt Design Contest

We need your presence at this meeting!
More follows...

Please note: All programs take place at Colony Hall immediately following the SOLAR business meeting.



2005 ANNUAL PHOTO CONTEST



It's that time of year again when all of you amateur photographers can brag about your trips and show off your stuff. So dig out those photos from year 2004 and enter them into this year's photo contest.

Categories

- | | | | |
|-----------|----------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| ➤ Scenery | Digitally Enhanced Scenery | ➤ Humor | Non-SOLAR Plants/Animals |
| ➤ Animals | Digitally Enhanced Other | ➤ People | Non-SOLAR Humor |
| ➤ Plants | Non-SOLAR Scenery | ➤ Black & White | Best Overall |
| | | ➤ Photo-Pro (new category!) | |

Category Explanations

Digitally enhanced: If you alter your photo in any way on your computer or splice several photos together, you can only enter them in the "digitally enhanced" category. Cropping is the only exception. Digitally enhanced photos may be entered in the "scenery" or "other" category. **Photo-Pro:** Photos in this category won't be eligible for the "Grand Prize". This category is meant to encourage full creativity for the more advanced photographers, while not having others compete with them.

Official Rules:

- | | |
|--|---|
| ➤ You must be a SOLAR member to enter the contest. | ➤ Photos must be taken at a SOLAR event unless entered in the non-SOLAR category. |
| ➤ Photos must have been taken between January 1, 2004 and December 31, 2004. | ➤ Only one photo entry per person per category and only ten entries per person overall are allowed. |
| ➤ Standard photos must be no larger than 8x10 & panoramic no larger than 8x18. | ➤ Prizes will be awarded to the first place winner in each category and to the overall Grand Prize winner. |
| ➤ Photos must be matted with mat size no larger than 11x14 on standard photos and 11x21 on panoramic photos. | Photos will be voted on by SOLAR members who attend the May meeting and winners will be announced that evening. |
| ➤ Photos must have been taken by the entering person. | |

SOLAR Elections Are Coming-May 3rd, 2005

This is your chance to make a difference. On May 3rd, 2005, SOLAR will be holding its annual Steering Committee elections. By running for one of the 4-Officer positions or 10-Committee positions, or just by participating in the voting process, you can have a say in which direction SOLAR is heading. All current paid members are eligible to run and vote. No experience is necessary-just a willingness to make SOLAR the best outdoor club it can be!

For the past 29 years, SOLAR has strived to be a successful organization, school and all around fun place to be. Each of you has an important part in our success.

In addition to the monthly membership meetings, the Steering Committee holds a club business meeting the last Tuesday of each month in which all committee members are encouraged to attend. SOLAR is a volunteer organization, thus all Steering Committee members give their personal time to participate in a larger way for the good of the club.

All positions are considered open until voting concludes on May 3rd, 2005

The Steering Committee is comprised of the following positions:

President (Officer)-Oversees monthly meetings, fields member questions and concerns

Vice President (Officer)-Assists president and steps in for them when necessary

Secretary (Officer)-Takes minutes at Steering Committee meetings and distributes

Treasure (Officer)-Manages club finances, bank account and reimburses members

Education (Committee)-Oversees all classes and provides direction to lead instructors

Membership (Committee)-Manages membership lists, collects dues and oversees liability release forms

Activities (Committee)-Collects, posts and announces monthly activities

Programs (Committee)-Organizes all monthly programs held at membership meetings

Public Relations (Committee)-Promotes club at local events, in media and organizes members for participation in grassroots event (i.e. National Trails Days)

SOLAR Ray Editor (Committee)-Collects articles, organizes, lays out and prints newsletter

Equipment (Committee)-Stores, organizes, distributes and collects SOLAR rental equipment

Historian (Committee)-Collects and stores information about the club

By-Laws (Committee)-Oversees club by-laws and changes

Web Master (Committee)-Manages, maintains, updates, and hosts club website

If you are interested in running for a position or have any questions, please contact me. You must submit your name and the position to Linda Rodrick at lindamra@aol.com or call (248) 673-4842 by April 8th, 2005 to have your name listed in the May SOLAR Ray.

The final deadline to submit your name in advance of the May meeting is April 29, 2005. After April 29th you can select to be a write-in candidate. All candidates will have an opportunity to introduce themselves before elections take place on May 3rd, 2005.

Remember...ALL positions remain open until voting concludes on May 3rd.

The following steering committee positions have confirmed open seats. Please consider running for one of the following positions:

Secretary

Activities

Equipment



ARE YOU READY TO PUT AWAY YOUR WINTER GEAR AND BREAK OUT YOUR BIKE?

By Dick Ebenhoe

Join me on Sunday, May 1, 2005 for the Downriver Cycling Club's 22nd Metro Grand Spring Tour, covering routes along the Huron River and scenic country roads in Wayne and Monroe counties. Road routes of 25, 45 and 62 miles are available.

I am interested in putting together a group of SOLARites to participate. Cost is \$16 per individual and includes breakfast, food stops, SAG support and maps. With enough interest, I hope to negotiate a group rate that may lower the cost. However, the cost goes up for registrations after April 20th.

I plan to ride the 62-mile route and would like some company, but you're more than welcome to ride one of the shorter routes.

See <http://www.lmb.org/dcc/mgst/> for more information

I will be taking sign-ups and collecting money at the April 5th SOLAR meeting. If you have any questions or would like to sign up, you can also e-mail me at rjebenhoe@yahoo.com.

Calling All Creative SOLARites to Design a New SOLAR T-Shirt

Why? It's been a few years since our last T-Shirt designing contest. We ran out of our last batch of shirts about six months ago so it is definitely time to produce a new one. We don't want our newest Solarites to be t-shirtless. Winner will receive a gift certificate for \$50 to a local outdoor outfitter.

How? Design can be done in two or three colors and must include the name SOLAR somewhere on the design.

When? Submit original artwork to Mary Price by April 25th.

Voting for the most popular design will be by the membership at the May General membership meeting on May 3rd.

Questions? Call Mary Price at (248) 477-7547 or email lmprice@ameritech.net.



Favorite Dish at Hartwick Pines—Tomatitan

By Mary Dism

This is a Chilean stew that can be as spicy or mild as you like. It is easy to put together. Green beans can be used in place of lima beans. Zucchini or yellow squash can be added for a change.

Serves 4

- | | |
|---|---|
| 2 cups chopped onions | 1 28-ounce can of low salt diced tomatoes |
| 1 fresh chile, minced or 1/4 teaspoon cayenne | 2 cups fresh or frozen cut corn |
| 2 tablespoons olive oil | 1/4 cup chopped fresh cilantro |
| 2 teaspoons ground cumin | Salt to taste |
| 2 cups frozen lima beans | |

Sauté the onions and chile or cayenne in the oil for about 5 minutes, until the onions begin to soften. Add the cumin and lima beans and sauté, stirring for a couple minutes. Add the juice from the tomatoes, cover and simmer for 5 minutes. Add the tomatoes, corn and cilantro and stir. Cover and simmer for about 10 minutes until the vegetables are tender and not mushy. Salt to taste.

Serve plain or garnish with avocado slices, seasoned tempah or grated cheese.





Bring a Kid to South Manitou

by Vida Ruggero

Have you ever seen a shipwreck sticking up out of the water? Been in a virgin cedar forest? Been on a secluded, undeveloped island? Been morel hunting? Have you done any of these things with a child? All of this can be yours on the SOLAR bring a kid to South Manitou Island trip May 27 -29, 2005.

Some of the special activities you can share with a child in your life on this trip are: a scenic boat ride from Leland, camping out away from all electronic distractions, climbing a dune, visit a museum to learn what it was like to live there, frolic on the beach shore, learn about edible plants (but don't eat any), and eat s'mores.

We will meet in Leland on Friday May 27th at 9 a.m. at the Manitou Transit office. The boat is scheduled to leave at 10 a.m. Please be advised that the boat schedule can change due to weather and other variables and we may need to be flexible. This also applies to our pick-up so it is important that you bring extra food and warm, dry clothes. A rough idea of what our plan will be is the following: Friday, set up camp at Bay Campground (half mile from dock), hunt for morels and rocks, have dinner, campfire, stories and s'mores, identify stars, play with my light-up frisbee (my favorite backpacking activity!) Saturday morning have breakfast at camp, pack lunches and lots of snacks, then spend the rest of the day hiking and exploring the island. Some highlights are the visitor center, Florence Lake, shipwreck, cedar forest, and sand dune summit. We will return to camp that evening for dinner, stories, etc. Sunday morning break camp and head to the dock to be picked up or stay another day if you want!

Costs:

Round trip boat fare is 25\$ adults and 14\$ for children 12 and under.

Parking is 1\$ per day.

Individual campsites are 5\$ per night, or if we have a large enough group, 20\$ per night for a **group site** (up to 25 people).

Food. Bring food and all your own gear for your party, as no group meals will be planned. Some special prizes and supplies will be provided for the kids for some of the activities.

Requirements: Participants must be SOLAR members and adults accompanying children on this trip must have had SOLAR's basic backpacking class.

I will be taking signups at the April meeting. Questions? Contact me at rageti@hotmail.com or 810-923-3839.

Thursday's Unique Dining

By Mark Mirzorian

April 7th, 2005 "French, Italian"

7:00 pm **A Matter of Taste**

2323 Union Lake Road

Commerce Township

(248) 360-6650

Call for Directions

Meals range Moderate

RSVP by 5:00 pm April 6th To Merz69@yahoo.com

Subject: Unique Dining

These dinners are not limited to SOLAR Members only. So, bring a friend and enjoy a nice night out with friends, old and new. Solar "Thursday's Unique Dining" is a great way to relax from the week, enjoy camaraderie and have a GREAT dinner!

After each week's dinner, a brief review of the event will be sent out via email.

Tab's will be broken up into groups of four. Please expect to pay 25% (6% tax & 19% tip) in addition to your meal & drinks

Hiking Schedule: April – May

Any one wishing to volunteer to be hiking leader, please let me know what week you are available so we can up-date the information. All hikes are at 9:30 a.m. Reggie Hayes e-mail-thomashayes@wideopenwest.com

Sun. Apr. 3rd. Highland State Recreation Area. Hike Leader: Needed Main park entrance. North east of Milford off M-59, 1 mile east of Duck Lake Rd. Go to the Haven Hill Lake parking area. Difficulty: *Easy to moderate.*

Sat. Apr. 9th. Stony Creek Metropark. Hike leader: needed

North of Utica off of VanDyke expressway (M-53). From M-53 take 26 Mile Rd. west 1.5 miles to park entrance. Follow the signs to the West Branch Picnic Area. Hiking trail difficulty: *Easy to moderate.*

Sun. Apr. 17th. Seven Ponds Nature Center. Hike leader: Needed. I-69 to M-24 to Dryden RD. then east 7 miles to Calkins Rd. then 1 mile south to the nature center. Difficulty: *Easy.*

Sat. Apr. 23rd. 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.*

Sun. May 1st. Brighton State Recreation Area. Hike leader: Needed. West from Brighton on Brighton Rd. about 4 miles to Chilsen Rd. Then south 1.5 miles to Bishop Lake Rd., then east to Bishop Lake Rd. picnic area parking lot. Trailhead on the south end. Trail difficulty: *Easy to Moderate.*

Sat. May 7th. Kensington Metropark. Hike leader: Needed. Exit I-96 at Kent Rd., exit 151. Meet in the first right hand parking lot past the golf course. Hiking trail difficulty: *Easy to Moderate.*

Sun. May 15th. 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. May 21st. 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.*



BEACH CLEAN UP #2—April 23, 2005

by Vida Ruggero

Celebrate our Mother Earth by spending a couple of days at one of her most beautiful places, Lake Michigan! Beach clean up #2 at "my beach," Nordhouse Wilderness Dunes, will be Saturday, April 23rd (Earth Week!). We will meet at 9 a.m. at the day use beach parking area. Come and enjoy the beach for a few hours or spend the night in the rustic campground or backpacking area! In 2004, 21,322 cigarette butts, 6,540 food wrappers and

1,366 balloon wrappers (as well as many other items, but these were the most numerous) were picked up off the Lake Michigan shores. Did anyone notice the sign in the movie I-Robot that was a memorial to where Lake Michigan once was? You can help make sure that never happens. Hope to see you there! Contact me at raget@hotmail.com or 810-923-3839. Friends, children and dogs welcome! For more information about the Adopt-A-Beach program, contact the Lake Michigan Federation at 616-850-0745.

Kal-Haven Bike Trip

by Jonnie Kostishak

Hey, come on out for the first SOLAR bike trip of the season! It will be June 3-5 where we will be biking on the Kal-Haven Trail that goes from Kalamazoo to South Haven. The complete trail itself is 34 miles long. A shorter option is available. We will be camping at Van Buren State Park in South Haven. The cost is \$15.00 per person for 2 nights' camping. Don't forget to bring your bike! For more information call or e-mail Jonnie Kostishak at 734-398-5315 or jkoutdoors100@yahoo.com



BACKPACKING NEWS FLASH!

By Mike Banks

GOOD NEWS!

SOLAR's Spring Backpacking Course is bursting with enthusiastic students. **BAD NEWS!** I was still turning down people 20 minutes before the first class began.

GOOD NEWS!

There is still room in SOLAR's Fall Backpacking Course!

MORE GOOD NEWS!

The very talented Carol McCririe is the Lead Instructor.

REAL BAD NEWS!

Carol McCririe is a *tax accountant*. Between now and well past April 15th, Carol only talks to her clients and the IRS.

STILL ... KINDA GOOD NEWS!

As your Education Director, I am sworn to turn each and every one of you into a granola-eating, tree-hugging, nature-loving, multi-day-live-out-of-your-pack, titanium obsessed, waterfall-massaged, fleece-wearing, aurora borealis-addicted, backpacking fanatic! Therefore, I will be taking names on an interest sign-up sheet* at the next two meetings. If you think you or your non-backpacking friends can escape it, remember ... *Resistance IS futile!*

WHAT? YOU THOUGHT WE FORGOT ABOUT ALL YOU ALREADY CONFIRMED BACKWOODS TYPES? NO WAY!!!!

The Trip Planning Seminar will soon be coming up and of course ...

Intermediate Backpacking! These are also led by Carol McCririe! I will also be taking sign-ups for these. Look no farther if you want to learn about **and experience** multi-day backpacking trips.

REMEMBER: SOLAR: We're bugging you! And your phone ... and your cell phone ... and your computer ... and your watch ... and your ... :-)

* I usually just take names.

SOLAR Exercise Hint: Balance Moves* contributed by Winnie Chrzanowski (to be cont'd)

The target: Core muscles — abs, back, hips, and pelvis. The payoff: Feel more stable while hefting a pack, less back fatigue, and better balance in any trail conditions.

Swiss Ball Crunches (Balance Move 1 — Moves to be continued): With your lower back resting on the Swiss ball, your feet shoulder width apart on the floor in front of you, and your hands behind your head, tighten your stomach and lift your torso up with your abs. Keep your back straight—don't mold to the ball or curl your shoulders. Hold for a few seconds at the top of the crunch or do controlled pulses to pump up the difficulty. Focus on remaining stable on the ball and keeping your stomach muscles tight throughout the exercise. Take this move up a notch by extending your hands above your head. Goal: Three sets of 15 to 20 reps.



Swiss Ball Crunches

*From *Backpacking Magazine*, May, 2004.

(Note: The Ray editor owes his sylph like figure to these exercises.)

SOLAR is a non-profit Club with 400 plus members dedicated to the intelligent enjoyment of nature and outdoor pursuits.

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 experiences to be found there.

SOLAR Steering Committee

President Tom Hayes
Vice President Lou Szakal
Secretary Cindy Taylor
Treasurer Reggie Hayes
Activities Pam Riehl Szakal
By-Laws Gloria Fontaine
Education Mike Banks
At Large: Mike Banks • Moe DeFrance • Al Fylak • Steve Gardner • Bill Halvings • Cindy Harrison Delix • Doug Lanyk • Larry Martin • Joan Hethinger • Leslie Cordova • Joan & Bob Westbrook • Tom Oloffo

Equipment
Historian
Membership
Programs
Pub. Relations
SOLAR RAY
Webmaster

Carol McGirr
 Charles Hatley
 Penni Lopez
 Linda Rodrick
 Mary Price
 Pete Lamb
 Karl Overheul

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 Hayes at (586) 778-3589 or thomashayes@wideopenwest.com.

SOLAR MEETINGS

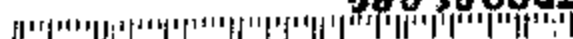
Are held the first Tuesday of every month in Southfield at the Colony Hall, 21780 Evergreen (between 8 & 9 Mile Roads) at 7:30 p.m. Visitors are welcome in for free.

SOLAR RAY is a monthly publication of SOLAR and is sent free to current dues-paid members. If you change your address, please tell the membership chairperson, Penni Lopez at kayekrayler@yahoo.com

Submission Guidelines:

(Submissions are due on the Friday two weeks prior to the monthly Steering Committee Meeting (April 8 for the May issue). Electronic files accessible to Word are required.) Pete Lamb, 109 E. Southtown, Birmingham, MI 48009 Or call 248-644-5831 E mail Petekandug@yahoo.com

VISIT OUR WEBSITE: WWW.SOLAROUTDOORS.ORG



GENE & LESLIE CORDOVA
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 OAK PARK MI 48237

S.O.L.A.R.
 P.O. Box 2438
 Southfield, MI 48037

