



Unofficial SOLAR Yosemite Trip Recap 2005

By Jim Cor

Yes there was a SOLAR trip to Yosemite September 1st to Sept 11th. And no you did not forget about it. The trip filled before I could announce it. However, in case someone has an interest in doing a Yosemite trip in the future and would like some insight, here are my observations.

Four people made up our party, Don Wold, Dave DeFrance and F.J. Brooks, and me. It is difficult to get a pass for large groups, but the advantage to this is that it makes trip planning easier. I chose the route from a description on Trails.com called the Merced River High Trail, a double loop trail. We started at Happy Isle trail head. It follows the John Muir Trail, up past Nevada Falls, to the half dome trail cutoff. The Half Dome Trail is a major climb of 5,000 ft in the first 5 miles, tough for a first day with full packs. It is a gorgeous trail nonetheless. After skirting Little Yosemite Valley, we dropped down into Merced Lake and on past the ranger station, then up the west side of the second loop to Washburn Lake. Both lakes are very beautiful and the mountains are mirrored off them with a brilliant blue sky. Along the route are water falls that are postcard like, some not even on the map.

We left Washburn Lake. As we were making good time, we decided to abandon the return loops and make our way over Red Peak Pass (11700 ft). While studying the maps at home, I had seen the Pass and was intrigued by the possibility of crossing it. We all agreed it would be a cool diversion, so we made plans to camp as far up the approach as possible to make it over the pass the next day. As we were making camp, we were greeted by a frail 75 year old woman who weighed all of 90 lbs soaking wet. She was alone and carrying at least a 60 lb. pack. We were amazed and had a nice evening chatting with her and eating her food. Now wait, before you pass judgment — we did offer her some of our dinner, and she insisted that we have some of her butter cookies along with a "spot of tea."

The camp was above timberline and a little cool, so we headed out a bit early and said goodbye to our new friend. Following the trail was a bit tough through the



Yosemite Waterfall

rubble, and we soon found ourselves a bit "off course." When we recovered, we realized that our friend was now marching quite a way ahead of us. Well, we did pass her again and continued up through some snow and over the lovely Red Peak Pass. From the other side, we could see our next camp below at lower Ottaway Lake. This lake was at least as pretty as the others and full of small trout. After an evening along the lake and stargazing, most of us slept without a

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Yosemite (cont'd)

tent since we had not seen a cloud in days, and the forecast was for days more without a cloud. After leaving Ottaway Lakes, we made our way down the Illouette River and made camp there.

The next day we spotted a forest fire on the other side of the valley where we were, so we decided to cut our route short and head for the Panorama Trail. We visited Illouette falls and then made our way down the Panorama Trail. It is a breathtaking trail where you can see the Yosemite Valley and the Half Dome in all their glory. We made it down to the valley floor and rejoined the route along the trail to Half Dome

and Nevada Falls.

We ended up shaving about a day and a half off our intended time and were able to visit Mariposa Sequoia Grove. We also had enough time to drive down to spend a day at Kings Canyon National Park. We finished the last day in California with a side trip to a small vineyard and a little wine tasting. We sent a case to my house. The only way I could be trusted to not drink it was to offer a dinner at my house and some more wine tasting and a picture party. If anyone is interested in more details, you can speak with me or any of the other Yosemite travelers.



Yellowstone Trail



Yellowstone Peak

Third Annual County Hoe-Down

by Dave DeFrance

What an odd name for a barn dance. We didn't use or see any hoes (but we got to see some peculiar antique implements) nor did we ever get a chance to sit down. But it was held in a real country setting—the hay loft of a 100+ year old barn. The action started for 70 SOLARites at about 8:30 with the "caller" getting us into one big circle. After some movements and tunes to get us friendly, we broke up into smaller groups to do some square dance steps. We worked up a sweat trying to follow the calls, stay untangled, end up at the correct position and look cool while doing all of those gyrations. After a few rounds with different partners, we took a well deserved break. Everyone brought snacks and drinks so we grabbed some and went out into the cool evening.

As a special treat, Jim's 88 year old father came out to call some of the songs, including several to which he holds the copyrights. He remarked that he thought we were a great group and were doing quite well on the floor. Well that all ended in a hurry as the next event was line dancing or the country hustle. We found out that we had no rhythm, more than two left feet, and we sure did have to hustle to keep from getting stepped on. A few themes and variations and then another well deserved break. By this time, all of the hot jeans, long sleeved checkered shirts, neckerchiefs and hats were taking their toll. A few more drinks and breaths of fresh air and then back at it for the Virginia Reel.

We finished with one big circle where we slowed the pace, gave each other neck massages, swapped partners a few times and learned how to give the party a "WOW" by exchanging hugs. Twelve o'clock came quickly as we said our goodbyes and smiled our way out the door vowing to do this again next year. Yee Ha!

A Day at the Beach

by Cindy Taylor

International Coastal Clean-up Day was held this year on September 17th. As the name implies, this is a world-wide event. Vida Ruggero invited SOLAR members to work with her again this year to help clean up her beach (i.e., Nordhouse Wilderness Dunes). She calls it her beach because she has assumed official responsibility for keeping it clean under the Adopt-A-Beach program.

For this year's cleanup, we had seven adult volunteers, two children and two dogs. This was a fairly small group, but enjoyable nonetheless. The volunteers were Vida (of course), her son Carlo, Tom Olofto, Ken and Lisa McQuade, their five-year old son, Gregory, Robert Lawshe, Tim Davis, and me. Oh and Max and Coco too, although they weren't much help, but neither were they a hindrance.

After a few hours of cleaning the beach, we all headed back to the campground for lunch. I was especially impressed by Gregory's willingness to try different foods. Not many five-year olds would be willing to taste the things he did that afternoon. He did find out that he doesn't like smoked salmon!

After lunch, Robert and Tim headed off to backpack out from the trailhead at Nurnburg Road with a plan to meet Tom, Olofto and me on the beach halfway for cocktails at sunset. The rest of us headed back to the beach, this time for the purpose of having some fun. It was a beautiful day for the beach—one of those warm September afternoons that you really appreciate because you know there aren't many left.

After leaving the beach, we said goodbye to Vida and Carlo who were spending the night in Pentwater since Carlo was recovering from a cough.

The McQuade's, Tom, and I cooked dinner at the campsite. After dinner the search for firewood kept us busy for a little while. Between dinner preparations and a firewood search, it was too late to meet Robert and Tim for the sunset (sorry guys!), but we had a nice campfire at our site. Unfortunately, I forgot my campfire chair, but Ken was gracious enough to volunteer to get one from their campsite. I sincerely appreciated Ken's thoughtfulness in disassembling their van just to provide me with a place to sit. (Boy weren't the people at the neighboring campsite surprised to see Ken walking up to their fire with the seat from his minivan looking like he was going to join them, but alas, he was just a little disoriented and quickly found his way to our site.)

We all enjoyed the company of Carlo and Gregory. Both of these boys were very well behaved and a pleasure to be around. I hope they are able to make more SOLAR events. The weekend was another reminder of how great SOLAR members are and how much I enjoy spending time with them—both old and new ones! Thanks Vida for inviting SOLAR to help you clean your beach. I've enjoyed it every time and am looking forward to the opportunity to do it again.

Invitation to the Symphony

by Elizabeth Schwab

Come join us Sunday December 18th at 3pm to hear Beethoven's 9th Symphony, also known as the Ode to Joy, at the Max Fischer Center on Woodward and Mack in Detroit. The symphony is an incredible piece of music, including a choral movement. Orchestra Hall is a beautiful, historic old building, world renowned for its acoustics. "The Max" is a recent addition, and though very modern, complements the hall beautifully. Tickets are \$24, and we'll be sitting in the mid balcony. Parking will be an additional \$7 per car at one of the two structures across the street, and will be your responsibility. Dress is nice casual. We can carpool from my house in Berkley, if you're unfamiliar with the Downtown area. I must have payment by 11/20 to order your ticket(s). This is a SOLAR sponsored event, so non SOLAR members are welcome. Of course, there will be an optional dinner outing afterward! I encourage arriving no later than 2:30. Cocktails are available, and it's great to meander around the building for awhile beforehand. Any questions, contact Elizabeth at ecs1339@yahoo.com, or see me at the Nov. meeting.



A Good Paddling! Lesson

By Pete Lamb

A group of eight hardy SOLAR kayakers and friend's went to Saginaw Bay near Standish on September 23rd for the weekend to take a paddling lesson from Matt Dalton. The weather did its best to thwart our plans, but we managed to fit our activities between howling gales and torrential rain.

We had gale force winds on Saturday morning, so we did paddling technique behind the outhouse, out of the wind and on the grass. The student learned how to paddle efficiently using their core muscles instead of just their arms. Matt covered the type of clothing to wear, by dressing for the water temp not the air temp always and always wear a PFD. They were advised on the type of kayak to buy for the type of use it would get, but don't really get a boat under sixteen feet and get one with bulkheads. The students got the hang of the paddle strokes just as the wind dropped, so we went out and actually dipped the paddles in the water. We had brought a variety of kayaks with us so the students got to try fat stubby



Pemi Lopez, Doug Gergegie, Winnie Chrzanowski, Matt Dalton, Jenni Gadshaw, Al Chrzanowski



recreational boats, sit on tops, cedar strip hand built kayaks and very narrow British fiberglass kayaks. The students were very leery of the Brit boat, but for a good paddler it's probably the safest of the group. This area is good for beginning paddlers as the water is very shallow. If you do get into trouble, you can literally walk out. The weather continued to behave itself, so Saturday night was a merry time thanks to a potluck we shared and Al and Winnie's supply of wine.

Despite Saturday night's revels, everyone was up early Sunday morning. Al made coffee for the

group with a fancy Coleman coffee pot. The weather looked a bit overcast, so we put up a Para Wing over the picnic table while we drank coffee and discussed cooking or going into Standish for breakfast. That decision was made for us. Someone in the party said is that a train I hear? No! It was rain coming across the dried corn fields. It hit us like a fire hose and it streamed off the sides of the wing. Breakfast at Wheelers in Standish was extremely good – all you can eat off the menu for less than six bucks.

As we finished breakfast, the rain stopped. We went back to camp and packed our gear but left up the tents to dry. Matt went into the office of the marina where we were camped to check the weather. The forecast was for a few dry hours, so we launched the kayaks. We went a few miles up the bay to the mouth of the Pine River. The light was very strange. It looked like a Dutch painting as the air was full of water vapor. A sprinkle of rain sent us briskly paddling back toward camp. The group's technique improved greatly at that point. Back at camp we packed our now dried tents, stowed kayaks on car roofs and debated having lunch before we left, but here came that train again, and we jumped into packed cars to leave. We drove home through torrential rain.

Jordan River Pathway Trip

by Kevin Cotter

Eight SOLARites (Linda, Bornie, Joann, Maureen, Dave, Adam, Don, and me) and one canine (Lucky) met at the Pinney Bridge campground Friday night. We were greeted by Tom and Mark who warmed us up with a campfire and liquid refreshments. Saturday morning we loaded our backpacks, minus tents, and drove to the Lead Man Hill Overlook trailhead to begin our hike. To our relief, the clouds disappeared by noon and did not return that weekend.

Fall colors of orange, red, and yellow could be found on the treetops and on the ground, and were especially visible in open areas. We hiked 10 miles from the trailhead back to the campground to be greeted by our tents and the hospitality provided by Adam and Joann. Tom and Mark returned from their excursion and joined us for dinner and campfire. That night we were serenaded by sand cranes, owls, and the occasional snorer.

We woke up Sunday morning to find frost everywhere and temperatures in the low 20s (note to self: put cover on backpack BEFORE going to bed), which was plenty of motivation to get us moving for the hike back to our cars. Tom joined us on the 8-mile hike, his first with a backpack since breaking his ankle last spring! We all kept a brisk pace under a deep blue sky, hiking past fallen leaves and beaver dams. When we reached Dead Man Hill, we charged forward knowing our cars were right at the top. After hugs and goodbyes, we reluctantly made the trip home.



Tom, Don, Joann, Mae, Dave, Lucky, Linda, Adam, and Kevin



Fall Backpacking Class and Instructors

Am I getting to be a grumpy old man?

by Tom Posier

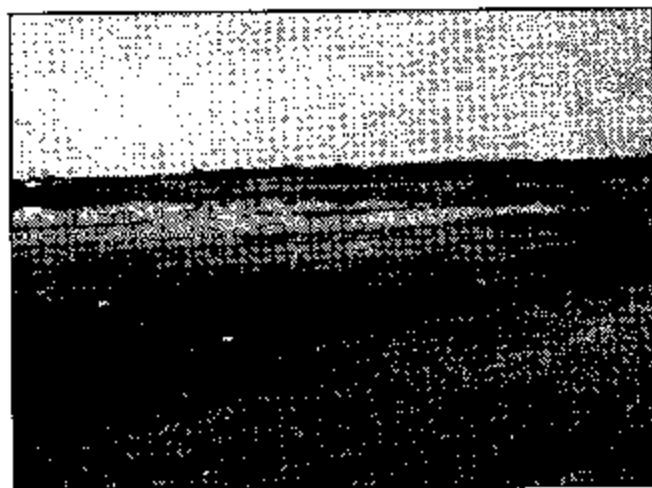
Some of you may have known me before I moved to Texas last year. I was a SOLARite for about seven years before transferring to the south. I enjoyed the SOLAR activities and backpacking trips, especially to the U.P. This is a story of my first car camping experience here in the southwest.

I started out on Thursday morning with the usual camping requirements for camping in state parks. Yeah I know... a state park? Being new to the south, I had a choice of driving 12 hours to go to a national park, or drive about two hours to what appeared to be a nice state park. I had planned on going to five different parks in five days, but that was reduced to four as I started out.

Gas prices here were \$2.69 when I started out, and with a 32 gallon tank, well you get my drift.

It took about two and a half hours to the first park, Lake Arrowhead near the Texas panhandle. When I got there they asked if I was an evacuee from Houston (hurricane Rita is on its way). I was the only person in the park, excluding the park rangers. I decided to do some mountain biking... no trails, so I went on the road for five miles. Not too bad considering the 102-degree temperatures!

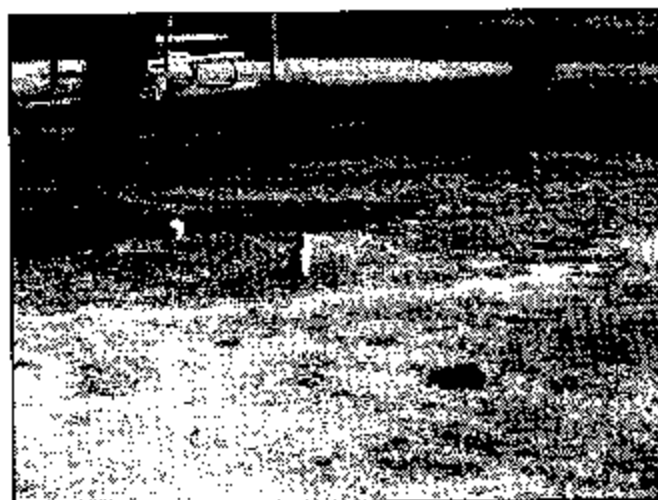
Now that I am good and toasted, I decided to take a swim. Here is what the swimming area looks like...



Needless to say, I decided not to.

Off with the bike again. I found these prairie dogs a few sites from me. They were fun to watch as I listened to them barking at me.

I went back to my campsite, taking refuge from



the sun under the shelter over the picnic table. I noticed a lot of small ants all around. No big deal since they weren't on the table. All of a sudden, a sting, then two, and then three in rapid succession. These were fire ants! They were 1/3 the size of the ones that I had my first experience with in June. Some were so small they were barely visible. By the way, fire ants are not ants. They are actually a wingless cousin of a wasp, and they sting just like one too. I usually don't require repellants (bugs don't seem to like me). However, out came the DEET. They say not to put DEET directly on the body, but I was only wearing sandals, so the DEET went onto my feet. In less than a minute, two more bites! I think the fire ants felt the DEET was a marinade for my feet.

Since I couldn't sit there, and I was very hot, it was off to the showers. At least no bad experience there.

Back at camp I started a campfire. I thought that smoke repelled insects, but it seems like the mosquitoes and gnats thought it was a barbecue, complete with smoked meat... ME.

Off to the last refuge of the tent. I got inside, zipped up the door and turned on a light to read. Well it was too damned hot to even do that, so off went the light and I lay in the 95-degree heat without any breeze. Sleep was not to come too quickly because of the thump... thump... thump... of the oil well about 1000 feet from my tent.

Finally I fell asleep. You know how when you think bugs are crawling on you that you keep swatting yourself? I did that most of the night, into the early morning. I told myself it is just your imagination. A little voice told me otherwise. I turned on my light to



find about a hundred fire ants had somehow infiltrated into my tent. Time to evacuate! I now have eleven bites from those @^&\$ - ants! Now it's 5:30 AM, good time as any to break camp.

I headed to my second destination, Colorado City Lake State Park, and no it isn't in Colorado.

Here again I was the only tent camper. They have cabins here that were occupied, but I was alone in the tent/RV area. After finding my site, I took a short walk to the fishing pier. This lake looks more like a river by the way it winds around. As I scanned the water I noticed something BIG to my right. A power generating station, complete with the high tension lines going over the park, with its hum and crackling.

At least there were much fewer fire ants, and they didn't seem interested in me. GREAT! I walked over to an area where it seemed I could take a dip into the water to cool off. I was watching the ground since there are rattlesnakes in the area. As I got near the water, I noticed the fire ants here must have eaten fertilizer, because instead of being the tiny ones like the last campsite, they were larger than the ones I first was bitten by. These were about 1/2" long, and there were a lot of them. So much for swimming. I found another swim area about a mile down the road, and that was actually pretty nice. A short dip in the lukewarm water was, well.... better than nothing. Off to the showers to cool off again.

Now I am getting grumpy. It is hot, no cool

place to swim, nobody to socialize with, no shade (the trees are thin and don't make much shade), so I take another bike ride down the road.

After dinner I decided to pitch the tent, but first I am going over it with a "fine-tooth comb" to figure out where the ants got in. I found a small area, but an ant couldn't fit though that. I sealed it with silicone sealer anyway.

Into the tent before it got dark to beat the mosquitoes. At least it was in the lower 90's and a hint of a breeze. I read for a while and as it got dark I decided to put out the light and call it an early night. As I shut off the light I saw an eerie silhouette on the tent wall. "I hope that is on the outside", I thought, as I turned the light back on. It was a spider about 2" across! Maybe it will keep guard while I sleep.

It cooled off a lot during the night, which helped the sleep process overcome the banging from workers at the power plant. The breeze picked up which also helped cool me down, except for the smell of sulfur that it was carrying, probably from the oil storage to the right of the power plant.

After all this "fun" I decided to break camp and head home and cancelled the other two parks. As I emptied the tent I noticed how many ticks were covering the tent, ughh! At least they didn't get in.

The ride home was nice. It was only 82 degrees and clear. As I got closer to Dallas/Ft Worth the clouds from hurricane Rita were overhead. It got denser and darker as I got home, which included very high wind gusts. But I lucked out, no storm! The next time camping will be in Colorado or Utah like the last few summers. Maybe New Mexico, or better yet, Michigan.

SOLAR NOVEMBER 2005 CALENDAR

School for Outdoor Leadership, Adventure and Recreation

www.solaroutdoors.org

SEPTEMBER 2005 TRIP LEADER DRAWING WINNER

MATT DALTON, CAMPING/KAYAK TRIP

NOVEMBER ACTIVITIES

1	TUE	GENERAL MEETING	COLONY HALL	Tom Hayes	thomashayes@wideopenwest.com
	TUE	Program: Iditarod Odyssey			Linda Rodrick lindamra@aol.com
6	SUN	SMOC Orienteering Event**	Eddy Geology Center, Waterloo Rec Area	Linda Burke	Lburke1@twmrr.com 248-421-3592
November 11 Deadline for December SOLAR Ray					
11	FRI	Mountain Heart Bluegrass Concert**	The Ark, Ann Arbor	Dave DeFrance	defranceomnexus@comcast.net
13	SUN	SMOC Orienteering Event**	Peach Mountain, Stinchfield Woods	Linda Burke	Lburke1@twmrr.com 248-421-3592
18-20	WKND	Backpacking and beach	Nordhouse Dunes	Dave DeFrance	defranceomnexus@comcast.net

DECEMBER ACTIVITIES

5	TUE	GENERAL MEETING	COLONY HALL	Tom Hayes	thomashayes@wideopenwest.com
5	TUE	Program: Holiday Party			Linda Rodrick lindamra@aol.com
9-11	WKND	Camping Trip	Wakely Lake	Doug Lanyk	dslanyk@earthlink.net
18	SUN	DSO Outing**	Orchestra Hall, Detroit	Elizabeth Schwab	qes1339@yahoo.com

DECEMBER CLASSES

Dec 14, Jan 4, 11, 14-15, 18, 25, Feb 1, 10-12	WED/ WKND	Enjoying Michigan Winters	TBA	Tom Oloff	mcmountainman@yahoo.com
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UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

Jan 27-29	WKND	Carter Caves Crawlathon	Carter Caves State Park, Kentucky	Leslie Cordova	lesliegene@aol.com
Feb 10-12	WKND	Dogsledding	Algonquin Provincial Park, Ontario	Karen Bates	lady_muslier@yahoo.com
Feb 17-19	WKND	Outhouse Race	Caseville, Michigan	Penni Lopez	kavecrawler@yahoo.com 248-259-3732
Feb 18-25	MULTI	Baja Sea Kayak Trip	Baja, Mexico	Winnie Chrzanowski	wcinro@yahoo.com
Feb 19-23	MULTI	Yellowstone Cross Country Ski Trip**	Yellowstone National Park	Pete Lamb	petekandu@yahoo.com
April 13-20	MULTI	Caribbean Trip**	St. John, Virgin Islands	Jim Gessner	gessnerj@prodigy.net
July 15-Aug 15	MULTI	Extended backpacking trip	John Mur Trail	Dave DeFrance	defranceomnexus@comcast.net

FOR INFORMATION ON JOINING THE SOLAR CLUB, CONTACT PENNI LOPEZ (248) 259-3732, kavecrawler@yahoo.com OR VISIT WWW.SOLAROUTDOORS.ORG

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO HELP PLAN AND/OR LEAD A SOLAR ACTIVITY, CONTACT KEVIN COTTER (248) 544-9637 OR SEND EMAIL TO soar@wowway.com

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)**

SOLAR Program Schedule
From the SOLAR Program Director
Linda Rodrick

NOVEMBER PROGRAM: Iditarod Odyssey

By Phil Crooksnaak and Karen Bates

If you've been considering the upcoming SOLAR dog sledding trip, then you won't want to miss this presentation. See how much fun dog sledding can be as you sit back and enjoy a digital slide show presented by two SOLAR members and active dogsledders. A primary focus will be on the safe and humane handling and treatment of the canines as the temperatures drop well below zero. For anyone interested, Karen will also have information on adopting a former sled dog



UPCOMING SOLAR PROGRAMS

DECEMBER: Annual SOLAR Holiday Party!

What: A GREAT time celebrating the "Holidays around the World"

When: Tuesday, December 6th after our general meeting concludes

Where: Colony Hall (our usual meeting location)

Please join us in an evening of fun and celebration of SOLAR's diversity. Consider bringing a favorite ethnic side dish or dessert as your dish to pass.

You are also welcome to bring an adult beverage.

Solar will provide soft drinks, sandwiches and paper products.

Feel free to wear your ethnic (or holiday) clothing. Just remember your dancing shoes as we'll have a DJ and dancing!

JANUARY: Touch the Top of the World

By: Erik Weiheimmayer

A DVD documentary presentation of the first blind climber
to summit Mt. Everest

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



School for Outdoor Leadership, Adventure and Recreation

WICKING SHIRT ORDER FORM

Name: _____

Address: _____ City: _____

Zip: _____

Phone: _____ email: _____

Shirts are \$25.00 each except for: 2X add \$2.00, 3X add \$3.00, and 4X add \$3.50

Payment is due at Time of order. Make check Payable to **SOLAR**

All orders due to Mary Price by November 15th. Solar members only may order.

Mail orders to Mary Price 22801 Tulane Farmington Hills 48336

Style (choose one)

T-shirt/short sleeve _____ T-shirt/long sleeve _____

Shooter Shirt _____ Woman's V- neck _____

Color (choose one)

Maroon _____ Gold _____ Royal _____ Caribbean _____ (women's only)

Size (choose one)

Small _____ Medium _____ Large _____ XLarge _____

2X _____ (add \$2.00) 3X _____ (add \$3.00) 4X _____ (add \$3.50)

Total Cost of Shirt: \$ _____ PAID BY: CASH/CHECK# _____

Hiking for November to December 17th

Matt Dalton, 248 360 3031 (Phone)

Hikes are drop-in, and participants may show up at the last minute. They may or may not have a designated leader or other hikers. If you know in advance that you will participate with a specific hike, email, post a message at the SOLAR Yahoo group site or call Matt Dalton. We will coordinate hikers, car pooling, etc. and let others know who's participating.

This may encourage car pooling, after hike lunch opportunities, etc. This will also be helpful for new members who don't know many SOLAR Club members. Hike leaders or senior SOLAR members can look for and welcome new members at the trail head. Getting exercise, having fun, seeing new places and meeting new and established SOLAR Club members: This is what the weekly hikes are all about.



Hike Schedule:

Saturday, November 5, 9:30 AM, Waterloo State Recreation Area, East of Jackson, MI. West of Ann Arbor off I-94. Meet at the Geology Center. This is home for Solar's winter backpacking 1st practical, many land navigation classes and offers scenic vistas. Leader Needed.

(Small game hunters, bow hunter may be in the area.) Deer hunting with guns does not open until November 15th.

Sunday, November 12, Maybury State Park, Northville, MI., 8 Mile Rd., west of Beck Rd. Meet at parking lot, far right corner. (Leader Needed) Lunch visit optional after hike. There is no hunting allowed at Maybury.

Saturday, November 19, Stony Creek Metro Park, North of Utica, off Van Dyke (M-53), 26 Mile Rd. West Branch picnic area. Hiking difficulty: Easy to moderate. (Leader Needed) There is no hunting allowed at any Metro Park.

Sunday, November 27, Thanksgiving Weekend, Indian Springs Metro Park, North of Pontiac Lake State Rec. Area. White Lake Road between Cuthbert and Teggerdine Rds. Meet at Nature Center parking lot. Hiking difficulty: Easy to moderate. (Leader Needed)

Saturday, December 3, Lyon Oaks County Park, Entrance on Pontiac Trail, just East of Old Plank Rd., South of I-96, North of Pontiac Trail. Cross Country skiing possible. Hiking Difficulty: Easy to moderate. (Leader Needed)

Sunday, December 11, Proud Lake State Rec. Area. I-96 to Wixom Rd. Exit 159, north 6 miles to park. Meet in 1st parking lot past Park Headquarters, Wixom Rd./Garden Rd right before Heavner's Canoe Rental. Hiking difficulty: Easy to moderate. (Leader Needed)

Saturday, December 17, Pincney State Rec. Area. I-5-23, West on N. Territorial Rd., Meet Silver Lake Beach parking lot. Hiking Trail difficulty: Easy to moderate. (Leader Needed)

Contact: Matt Dalton at: 248 360 0031 or mdalton@ameritech.net if you're planning to attend any of the hikes or if you'd like to lead one of these hikes.

**ALL LEVELS, NO EXPERIENCE
NECESSARY!!!!**

**KID FRIENDLY (MUST BE 6 TO
CAVE)—NO PETS
January 27-29, 2006**

CAVING AND OR HIKING IN KENTUCKY

It's that time of year again — time for the 25th annual Carter Caves Crawl-a-thon. What is a crawl-a-thon you might ask? This is an annual event put on by Carter Caves State Park in Olive Hill,

Kentucky. It is a great way for people to get acquainted with caving as a wide variety of cave tours are offered, ranging from walking tours, a little bit of crawling, a lot of crawling and vertical caving. They even have trips for kids and seniors!! If you do not like the underground, join us anyway, as there is some great hiking in the area.

The basic plan is to drive down to the park on Friday (about a 7-hour drive) and stay right at the Carter Caves Lodge. I have a limited number of rooms reserved. Once they are filled; the nearest lodging is 10 – 15 miles away. The cost for 2 nights lodging is \$60 per person, payable to SOLAR. Since this trip will fill up, only payments in full will be accepted to hold your spot. This year we are staying in the cottages, complete with 2 bedrooms, 2 beds each, 2 bathrooms, full kitchen and living room. Some cottages have fireplaces.

You will need to download the crawl-a-thon entry and release forms yourself from www.crawlathon.com, or call the park at (606) 286-4411. Generally the forms are not available until mid December. You will then



need to send in both forms yourself with a check for \$30 per adult, 15 per child 6 – 12 (last year's fee, the current fee could be higher) to Carter Caves. Your \$15 – \$30 includes 2 days of guided caving and a T-shirt from the event. Please do not delay as the trips fill up quickly.

See me at the meeting for a listing of equipment you may need. SOLAR has helmets, knee and elbow pads (limited) and headlamps (limited) that you may borrow. A refundable deposit is required. I do not have enough equipment for everyone, so you will need to reserve in advance. To be fair, those who have not been on SOLAR caving trips previously will get first dibs on pads and headlamps.

Need more info? Contact Leslie Cordova at (248) 547-5626 or LeslieGene@aol.com.

Wakely Lake Camping

by Doug Lanyck

I'm planning a weekend trip December 9-11th at Wakely Lake. The activities will be weather dependent and could range from hiking, backpacking, XC skiing, to canoeing or kayaking. This trip will be tent camping at least 1/4 mile from the parking lot, possibly a lot further. The official campground is on Wakely Lake itself and has picnic tables and water available. However, camping is allowed anywhere that's 300 ft from water.

Wakely Lake is 8 miles East of Grayling. It's a wildlife restoration area specializing in loons and bald eagles. It is also 3 miles from the Mason Tract. Between the two areas is at least enough hiking to fill 3 days. When I skied there last winter, I saw animal tracks everywhere.

It is also on the Au Sable River, so boating from Grayling is a possibility. If a river run is decided upon by the group, you will need to supply your own boat. I doubt the liveries are open in December. Cost should be minimal, say \$10 a person for the camping permits. The weather could range from 60 and sunny to a blizzard. I'm guessing 25 degrees and rain, so be prepared for anything! I will be taking sign-ups at the next two meetings. If you have any questions, you can contact me at 248-634-4551 or dsलयक@earthlink.net.

Cruise Mexico's Sea of Cortez without Polluting the Environment

by Winnie Chrzanowski

I'm planning a sea kayak trip to the Sea of Cortez Islands in Baja (Loreto), Mexico February 18-25, 2006. The trip is through an outfitter—Sea Kayak Adventures (SKA), www.seakayakadventures.com. Check out their website.

Cost: \$1200 per person, \$200 non-refundable deposit required ASAP as February 18-25 is peak whale watching season and it's the only week available with 15 openings. Airfare is NOT included; you can either fly into Loreto Mexico airport or fly into Cabo San Lucas and take the bus to Loreto—an 8-hour ride for about 30 USD per person—can't remember if that's one way or round trip. The bus is comfortable, has AC and TV—in Spanish, of course.

If you want to go, contact the outfitter directly to pay your \$200 deposit and be sure to mention my name (Winnie Chrzanowski) and that you're with the SOLAR group.

Skill level: No experience required. We have 11 openings for this trip

Cost includes two nights (first and last—two per room) in top-notch hotel with pool and restaurant and within walking distance to downtown Loreto, ground service at Loreto Airport, all gear (two person sea kayaks, PFDs, camping equipment, dry bags, etc.) except personal stuff, experienced guides, cocktail hour and all meals while kayaking (meals before and after kayak trip are on your own)

Itinerary

Day 1: Arrival in Loreto, overnight at hotel

Day 2: Paddle to first night's campsite

Day 3-6: Mornings kayaking to new campsite, afternoons for snorkeling, hiking, lazing on the beach

Day 7: Take out after final lunch, return to hotel

Day 8: Depart

Add a one-day Magdalena Bay Whale Watching excursion aboard 22-ft skiffs (pangas) for \$120 each plus \$65 hotel cost for the extra night (2 people per room)

Al and I took a similar trip through with SKA a couple of years ago and it ranks on my top 10 list of vacation spots. The guides are superb, the food is excellent, and the equipment in great condition.

For more info, you can visit SKA's website, e-mail me (winnie@yahoo.com) or call me 248-797-9967.

Will you survive?

by Doug Lanyck

You're out for a quick Sunday afternoon ski at an up North park. The day starts out clear but degenerates into a 30-degree rain. You discover the trail map you have is for the adjacent park, and the trail is getting icy as the temperature plummets. O'@#\$%. You just fell and broke your ski and wrenched your knee. It's getting dark. Now what? Similar events have happened to SOLAR members, but with good foresight they had acquired the skills to deal with the unforeseen. If you wish to be able to face those extra challenging days that we all could run into, take SOLAR's Winter Survival Class.

Class will be on all the Thursdays in February and the first one in March. The practicals will be February 20 and March 5-7. The cost will be \$90 and the payoff possibly lifesaving. To run the class I need 12 students and have an upper limit of 20, so get in line and sign up early.

Prerequisites

- Enjoying Michigan Winters Without Leaving the State.
- Wilderness First Aid (Strongly Suggested)
- Search and Rescue (Strongly Suggested)
- Land Navigation (Strongly Suggested)
- Top Rope Class (Suggested)
- Advanced Backpacking (Suggested)
- Primitive Skills Workshop (Suggested)
- Edible Plants Courses (Suggested)
- Leadership (Suggested)

ABL

by Lori Szukal

Advanced Backpacking and Leadership; It is just what it says it is. Improving your basic backpacking skills; taking the next step in your outdoor life; stepping out of your shell and exploring the real you, finding out who you really are.

I thought I knew what camping in the outdoors with my parents was all about. Turning my "Cotton" sweatshirt inside out when it was dirty and wearing my "Blue Jeans" for 5-6 days in a row. That's how advanced I was back then.

I joined SOLAR in January of 2000. In February of 2001, I was heading off to climb Mt. Kilimanjaro by myself. What gave me all of this self confidence?

Four months later, I spent 18 days in

Southern Russia climbing 3 mountains with 4 people from England and Scotland I never met before. What gave me the skills to accomplish this? In December of 2003, I climbed the highest mountain in the world outside of Asia. Six months later, I found myself at high camp on Mt. McKinley making a very tough decision to turn around without summiting because of bad weather. Where did I learn that I had the courage to do this and make these decisions? In August of 2004, I put together my first major SOLAR trip. Sixteen people would hike 128 miles for 15 days through the Alps from Chamonix, France to Zermatt, Switzerland with altitudes of 10,000' and hiking 10-12 hours on some days. Where did I learn to put this all together and keep the group dynamics from falling apart? Over the last 2 years, I have designed and put together 2 mountaineering classes and 2 mountaineering trips where I have had 9 people summit Mt. Rainier. How did I learn to lead a class of this nature and trips like this? And finally, I have spent the last 3 years on SOLAR's Steering Committee as Program Director and currently Vice President. Where did I get the Leadership skills and the desire to do this?

This article is not about me, it is about you and what is inside of you that needs to get out. It is about what you are able to accomplish. SOLAR and the ABL Class give you the tools, knowledge and opportunity you need to accomplish this. How do I know this? I am a 2000 graduate of the ABL class.

Is there hard work involved? You betcha there is. Remember, "You get out of it what you put into it." Will you be put into uncomfortable situations? It is better to learn how to handle any situation in a controlled environment among close friends than learning it out in the real world among possible strangers. Is it time consuming? Where else would you rather spend your time than in Norchouse Dunes, Pigeon River and other parts of Northern Michigan?

The benefits to you: Enhanced Leadership skills, group/team dynamics, long lasting friendships, advanced knowledge of the outdoors, and a 24/7 open door policy with Mike Banks (OK, maybe this might not be a top benefit). Not to mention the final practical; Laurentian Trail in Quebec, or Kilamey or Pukaskwa in Ontario, or who knows what Park/Trail the ABL graduating class of 2006 will choose.

The worse that can happen? You will walk away in better shape (maybe even lose that extra 10 or so lbs. you've been carrying around for a long time). Gain a few close friends. A better understanding of the outdoors. A better understanding of who these crazy instructors really are and what they are thinking (I know, I'm reaching a little bit here). You'll find courage and confidence you never knew you had.

The ABL Class happens only every other year. Is 2006 the year for you? Mike Banks has been a great instructor and mentor for a lot of students who have the desire to improve themselves and their outdoor skills. Don't let this class slip through the cracks. Talk to Mike about the benefits of becoming a student. Better yet, talk to an ABL graduate or instructor.

Next month you can read about Pam's 1998 ABL experiences.



Mike, Lou, Jenny, Pam at the start of the Laurentian

Enjoy Michigan Winters BACKPACKING!

by Tom Olffo

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

This class will teach you the "ins and outs" of winter camping in Michigan. The first classes will be held on 12/7 & 12/11. All other classes and practicals will be held in January at locations to be announced. The cost is \$100.00 for new students and reduced fee for past graduates who want to retake the course. Pick up details at the monthly meeting, or E mail me.

This course is open to the graduates of the S.O.L.A.R.'s Basic Backpacking course. This course is also the prerequisite for the Mountaineering & Winter Survival courses. For safety reasons, the Wilderness First Aid course is highly recommended for all of these classes.

Come Play in the Winter in Roscommon—January 13 and 14

by Mary Dunn

Opportunities abound for cross country skiing and snowshoeing in the Grayling area. Hartwick Pines State Park and Forbush Corners provide rustic to well groomed trails for both sports. The Mason Tract along the Au Sable River is a more natural setting, and Hanson Hills just outside Grayling has trails for the novice and most experienced skier. Many will be taking ski lessons Saturday, January 14 in Roscommon. Join SOLAR members in two cabins with furnished kitchens in Grayling's Woodland Motel. The cost is a total of \$50, including lodging for both Friday and Saturday January 13 and 14. Contact Mary Dunn for more information mj170bc@msn.com or 248-585-9954. Signup will be taken at the November meeting.



Winter Camp

So get off that couch and cut down on heating bills by being outdoors—it's a great place to be—even in Winter!!

To sign up or if you have any questions contact — TOM OLOFFO mcmountainman@yahoo.com (313) 477-0221.

THINK SNOW (: (: (:



Teddy, faithful beloved companion of Mary Bogush for 15 years, passed away Oct. 8th. Teddy enjoyed SOLAR outings including: Carter Caves Crawlathon, Red River Gorge and, his last trip which was to Kal-Haven. He will be missed.

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 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 to join free.

SOLAR Steering Committee

President	Tom Hayes	Equipment	Dave DeFrance
Vice President	Lou Szekal	Historian	Dick Ebenhoe
Secretary	Debbie Zuchlewski	Membership	Penni Lopez
Treasurer	Carol McEirrie	Programs	Linda Rodrick
Activities	Kevin Cotter	Pub. Relations	Mary Price
By-Laws	Cindy Taylor	SOLAR RAY	Pete Lamb
Education	Mike Banks	Webmaster	Karl Overheul
At Large:	Mike Banks • Moe DeFrance • Al Fylak • Steve Gardner • Bill Halvingis • Cindy Harrison-Felix • Doug Laryk • Larry Martin • Joan Hettlinger • Leslie Cordova • Joan & Bob Westbrook • Tom Oloffo		

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) 778-3389 or thomashayes@wideopenwest.com.

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 kayekrayer@yahoo.com

Submission Guidelines:

(Submissions are due on the Friday two weeks prior to the monthly Steering Committee Meeting (Nov. 11 for the December Issue). Electronic files accessible to Word are required.)
Pete Lamb, 409 E. Southlawn, Birmingham, MI 48009 Or call 248-644-5831 E-mail: Petekanduz@yahoo.com

VISIT OUR WEBSITE: WWW.SOLAROUTDOORS.ORG

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