



School for Outdoor Leadership, Adventure, and Recreation [www.SOLARoutdoors.org](http://www.SOLARoutdoors.org)

## **SOLAR Mountaineering Class Climbs Mt. Rainier.**

Mt. Rainier National Park, Washington—June 21-24, 2005. *by Larry Mergentime*

**Mt. Rainier Climbing Party** *Students: Chris Meyers, Judy Patrella, Sharon Smelter, Mark Tones, Jason Vanderagt.*  
*Instructors: Lou Szakal (lead), Karl Overhuel, Larry Mergentime*

The Basic Mountaineering Class climbed two mountains in June – Mt. Olympus and then Mt. Rainier. Olympus is much smaller than Rainier but has many challenging features which make it well suited for training and preparation. So Lou, Chris, Judy, Sharon, Mark, Jason, and Pam Szakal spent a week on Olympus before continuing on to Mt. Rainier. Pam was not able to make the Rainier climb. Karl and I could not make the Olympus climb, so we flew out later and met up with the rest of the group at Paradise Lodge on Mt. Rainier.

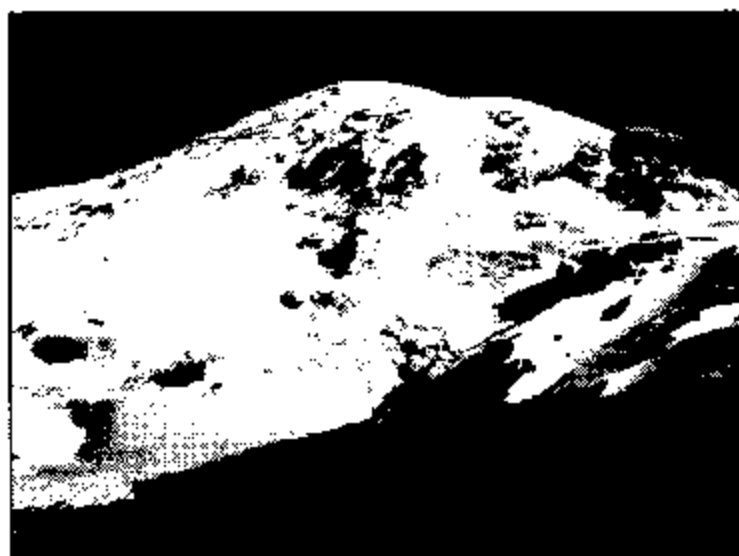
Mt Rainier (14,411 feet) is the fifth highest peak in the United States, and except for Denali in Alaska, is considered one of the most difficult to climb. It is often referred to as the American Mt. Everest. The mountain is surrounded by terrain that is near sea level so the summit requires a climb of nearly 9000 vertical feet if you start from the main trailhead at Paradise Lodge (5470 feet)—which is where we started from. Very few mountains in the world require climbers to ascend this much. Compare this to Mt. Everest where climbers ascend 11,000 feet to get from base camp (17,998) to the summit (29,035).

I arrived at Paradise Lodge a few days ahead of the group. To help myself acclimatize I hauled a portion of our group gear up to Camp Muir and left it cached there for later. I spent the night at 10,000 feet and then descended back down in the morning to meet the others. It was a good plan and provided me the final preparation I needed.

Mt. Rainier is the most heavily glaciated mountain in the contiguous United States. It contains five active glaciers covering more than 36 square miles, including the Emmons glacier, which is the largest single glacier in the United States. This means that climbers start crunching snow and ice within 1 to 2 hours after leaving the trailhead at Paradise Lodge. Our group was no exception.

We started out from Paradise Lodge early Tuesday morning June 21<sup>st</sup> and within two hours reached the bottom of the Muir snowfield just above Pebble Creek at 6,600 feet.

Sharon at this point made a difficult and painful decision to turn back. She had to weigh her wish to push on against her awareness of her own limitations



*Mt. Rainier*

and the possible consequences of those limitations to herself and to the group. Making a difficult decision like this was an integral part of our training and only the first such choice we would face over the next several days.

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## Mt. Rainier (cont'd)

We climbed to 10,080 feet and set our first camp at Camp Muir—precisely at the spot I had camped two days earlier. Reaching Camp Muir is no small accomplishment. By the time you get to Muir you have completed almost half of the entire summit climb. It's surprising how difficult this first leg is. Most first-timers seriously underestimate it. "Paradise to Muir is one long hard never-ending slog" opined Karl. No one challenged that assessment in the least.

The evening was clear and we were treated to a spectacular sunset. The next morning was bright and cool with gorgeous views of Mt. Adams, Mt. Hood, Mt. Jefferson and Mt. St. Helens.

Many of the challenges and dangers on Mt. Rainier are similar to those found on Mt. Everest—on a smaller scale. These include huge yawning crevasses, impossible ice falls, seracs (towering ice blocks as large as houses which tend to fall over unexpectedly), avalanche, rock fall, ladder traverses, and snow bridges which can punch through without notice. It's no wonder Mt. Rainier is a favorite destination of climbers training for Mt. Everest.

On day two we roped up. We would remain roped up for the next three days until we descended back to Camp Muir on the hike out. We formed two rope teams. Team 1 was led by Lou with Chris and Jason following. Team 2 was led by me with Mark, Karl, and Judy following.

We ascended from Camp Muir up through Cathedral Gap where we dodged continuously falling rock. From the gap we traversed the steep top of the Cowlitz glacier. A dense fog hid from view a dizzying slide into a huge open crevasse a thousand



*Climbing party*

uninterrupted feet below. We continued on to Ingraham Flats where we made camp 2 at 11,000 feet.

At camp 2 the plan was to go to bed early, rise at 10:30 PM, and head out at midnight for the summit. We would ascend via Disappointment Cleaver (the normal route), tag the summit, and then descend back here to camp 2 and spend the night before heading down the mountain well rested in the morning.

Plan "B." When we arrived at camp 2 it was obvious that Disappointment Cleaver was impassable. Heavy spring snow and a large gaping bergschrund blocked all passage. The alternative was to take the Ingraham direct route—i.e. straight up the Ingraham glacier headwall, through ice falls, crevasses, seracs, snow bridges, and avalanche slabs. Normally in June the Ingraham direct route is far too dangerous to travel safely. However the same snow that made



*Camp Muir*



*Rope Teams*

## Mt. Rainier (cont'd)

Disappointment Cleaver impassable had also made the direct route more feasible... to a degree. Looking up the slope from camp 2 we could see jumbled ice falls, crevasses and slabs strewn along our intended route. A daunting sight to say the least.

A returning summit party that afternoon warned us that a section of the headwall had just slabbed out (avalanche) making the direct route very difficult if not impassable. We each silently pondered our chances of summiting. Snow started moving in. By 4:00 PM we were all in our tents trying to sleep, hoping the snow would stop soon. With each passing hour the driving wind intensified. Snow and wind whipped our tent as the storm slowly became a blizzard. Nobody could sleep. Curious—I opened the tent door an inch to assess the situation. A burst of snow blew in through the tiny opening. I could see our camp getting slowly buried; our chances of summiting evaporating.

Ten thirty PM came and passed without any letup in the storm. Finally at 1:30 AM the storm abated. I poked my head out and was surprised to see a string of 40 or 50 headlamps in the distance below. Eight or nine rope teams were laboriously making the climb across the top of the Cowlitz toward our camp. I realized that these were RMI-led teams. RMI guides know the mountain better than anybody. They would be flagging a safe route around the buried ice falls and across the slabbed out sections. I was excited to get moving. I started yelling at everyone. "Wake up! Get Up! Let's get ready to bag this puppy!!!"

But it was 1:30 AM—already too late. By the time we could get dressed, melt snow for water, make breakfast, sort through ropes, karabiners, helmets, headlamps, prussic knots, ascenders, crampons, gaiters, plastic boots, and all the rest, it would be far too late. We even considered skipping breakfast and chowing down on power bars and gorp instead... bad idea!

We tried to ready ourselves quickly in vain, our hearts sinking fast as the futility of our efforts became evident. We watched team after team reach our camp, continue on past, and then disappear from site. We were not even close to



*Ingraham Flats*

being ready as the last team vanished from sight and my watch read 3:30 AM. The final insult: Our stoves were encrusted in ice and would not light. Now we had no way to melt snow for the day's water supply. No water, no way. This summit attempt was over.

**Plan "C."** In June, climbers make a commitment to be off the summit no later than 9:30 AM. This is for safety. As the day progresses, the sun melts the glacial surface ice turning it into a crystalline slush called "soup." Crevasses open up, snow bridges fail, embedded rocks start falling out of melting ice, and seracs fall over. Crampons don't stick and they clump up with snow transforming them into little toboggans. Ice axes don't arrest as well, making a slide down potentially unstoppable. In the early morning, however, things are frozen hard and are much more stable.



*Camp at Ingraham Flats*

## Mt. Rainier (cont'd)

Crampons grip frozen, glacial ice as if on Styrofoam.

With this in mind, Lou made a decision to halt our summit attempt. We would spend the day here and make a second attempt at 10:30 PM that evening. This meant that our post-summit rest day would be sacrificed. Our descent from the summit would now require us to go all the way down the mountain in one giant leg, pausing at camp 2 just long enough to eat, refresh, and pack it all up before continuing on down. We all agreed quickly and happily.

Now that we had an entire day to kill everybody relaxed. The tense mood of the previous 24 hours gave way to fun and lightheartedness. Jason decided to use this downtime to set up some pickets and webbing and rappelled down a nearby crevasse. He didn't go all the way down to the bottom but he did get some awesome pictures. Without much to do, the seven of us must have snapped a hundred pictures of Little Tahoma Peak that day. Not bad, eh? At 4:00 PM we retired to our tents to rest before the final push to the summit.

**Final Ascent.** Lou woke everyone up at 10:30 PM under clear skies, no wind, and a luscious full moon. Preparations went smoothly and by midnight our two rope teams headed up the Ingraham glacier headwall. It's hard to describe the beauty of it all — climbers in single-file silently heading up a darkened white slope, golden light from headlamps forming human silhouettes, spotlighting small patches of golden light on glinting snow in front of each, the full moon rising overhead, the black outline of distant peaks and seracs against a deep purple star-studded evening sky. All this coupled with the excitement of knowing that this is it... the culmination of six months of preparation... all boiling down to the next 14 or 15 hours.

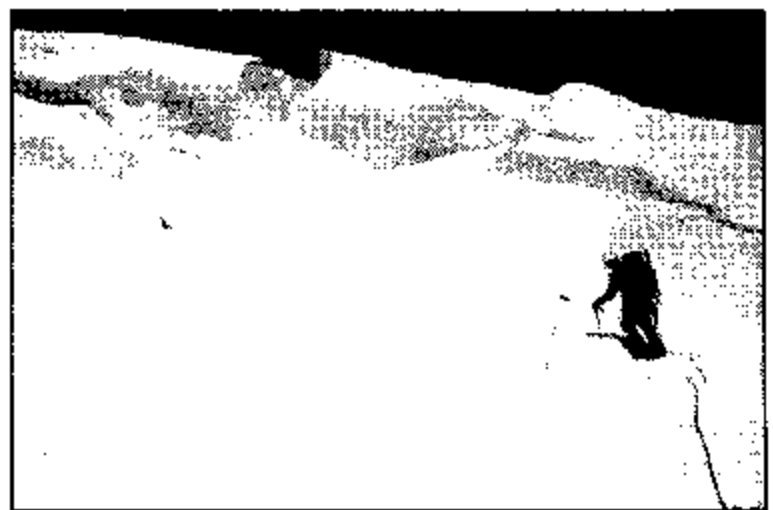
After thirty minutes Lou stopped the ascent. Like Sharon before him he now also had to make a difficult and painful decision to turn back. The flu he had been fighting for several days at high altitude was taking its toll. With breathing already labored at this early stage he knew that for him to continue would be irresponsible and dangerous. It takes a high level of discipline and good judgment to know when to quit —

especially for climbers. Far too many mountain disasters have resulted from a failure of judgment in exactly this situation — where pride or summit fever over-ruled reality and the price was tragedy.

Lou turned the expedition lead over to me. I switched ropes to the front of Team 1, and Mark Tones moved up to the front of Team 2 where I had been. Alone, Lou headed back down to camp 2. Now we were six. As an instructor and expedition second, I had spent significant time studying routes, topos and accounts of potential conditions and obstacles. Even though the route ahead was flagged and discernable, I was grateful to have spent that time and as a result felt confident to lead.

The first significant obstacle we encountered was a ladder traverse. This is where an aluminum ladder is laid out on the ground horizontally so that it spans a crevasse. RMI or the park service had set this ladder up. However this was one of the few things we had not trained for. The original route plan did not take us through any ice falls. We were mentally unprepared for this to say the least. We each walked across, balancing slowly, advancing rung by rung, while wearing pack and crampons. Our rope teammates braced on-belay for possible trouble. There were a few pieces of plywood set between some of the rungs, but the wood was worn and deteriorating. It was quite a heart-pounding experience, but everyone made it across without incident.

We slowly made our way up increasingly steep ice. In my opinion, the "rest-step" is one of the greatest innovations of modern mountaineering. Without it the last several hours would have been much more difficult for me. I finally figured out that it's the full leg extension ending in a brief knee lock that sets you up for the proper stride.



*Into the Ingraham Glacier*

### Mt. Rainier (cont'd)

After locking, you lean forward and almost fall onto the next step without pushing off from the foot of the recovering leg. It's as if you are using gravity to pull you up the mountain. I have no idea why this works but it does.

As daylight broke we still had a long way to go. Team 1 pulled far ahead of Team 2, and we eventually lost sight of them. We climbed over many snow bridges, and several small crevasses which required a hop over to cross. Chris set a mitten down during a water break, and it started to slide down the mountainside. With a quick reaction time, he was able to scoop down and retrieve it just as it started to slip away. Good job!

Finally we reached the crater rim at the top. Some accounts that I have read classify Mt. Rainier as a dormant volcano. That's wrong. It's active. We saw steam venting from several small fissures in and around the crater rim. Heat from this venting has melted the glacial ice and laid bare a lot of rock on the rim.

It's a half-mile trek across the crater floor to the rim on the other side where the summit sits. At 7:15 AM, Chris, Jason, and I reached the summit log on the high end rim. We were so happy and excited about our accomplishment that we almost didn't notice that another eighty feet of climbing remained to reach the highest point on the summit - Columbia Crest. Jason and I headed up the crest while Chris was content to have signed the log just below it. After spending an hour and a half at the summit we headed back down.

Just as we started down we passed Mark on his way to the top. And then we passed Karl and Judy, packs off and resting at the center of the crater, who then both summited a short time later.

The way down was long and hot as the sun started to heat up the air and the UV radiation kicked in. Jason took the lead and did a fine job. By the time we got back down to camp 2 it was around 1:30 PM and we were dog tired. Lou was there waiting and the smile on his face showed pride and

joy in our accomplishment.

Team 2 arrived a few hours later and after a short rest we packed up camp and headed down to Muir around 5:00 PM. We stopped at Muir just long enough to un-rope, coil everything up, remove crampons, and dump accumulated trash in the disposal area provided there. Then we headed down the snowfield looking for glissades to take. Being so late and warm, the snowfield had turned to soup and the glissades were not very productive. Eager to save energy by glissading we took one long soupy chute that took us off course.

A gathering fog made us unaware that the chute had taken us off course. We found ourselves post-holing in thigh-deep slush. Post-holing is hard enough when not loaded down with 75+ pounds of gear. It took us two hours of post-holing to get back on course. Eventually we reached the end of the snowfield and started the trek down the trail to Paradise Lodge – another 2 hours. The last mile before the Lodge is a steep series of inclines without switchbacks that is paved with asphalt and used by day-hikers from the Lodge.

This was the hardest part of the entire climb in my book. Our feet were dying. Judy found a mantra that seemed to help her get past the pain. "My feet don't hurt. My feet don't hurt. My feet don't hurt. My feet don't hurt. My..." Chanting this aloud over and over she actually picked up the pace and passed us all.

We reached the Lodge at 8:00 PM and ordered a gourmet dinner in the Lodge's restaurant. Had we arrived a half-hour later, everything at Paradise would have been closed and we would have been pulling out our stoves, Ramen, and gorp.

It is hard to describe the exhilaration and sense of achievement and self-mastery that summiting such a mountain brings. I came away with an increased sense of confidence, and a newfound respect and awe for the grandeur of the mountains. In some way – and I am sure this is true for all those who summited – it's as if the mountain itself granted us the privilege of climbing it, allowing us touch its crown and heart.

**SOLAR Travel Tip.** *by Pete Luntz.* A pickpocket stole my camera from its case on the subway in Rome even though I know the busses and trains are hunting areas for thieves. While I was being careful, I could have made it more difficult for them by locking my camera case. DO NOT put valuables in a fanny pack EVER. Minimize cash, and carry only one credit card. Have your other cards and your passport locked in the hotel safe, not the one in the room, or split up your cards and carry them on your person, never in a pack pocket or handbag. I carry my wallet and passport in a small bag inside my shirt and tucked under my belt.

## The Wunderkinder on the Mighty Minong

*By Joan Tobin*

For those of you who have never been to Isle Royale, it is a magical place. Michigan's only national park, it is a federally designated wilderness and a UN designated Biosphere Reserve. Although this park is in Michigan, getting there requires some logistical planning and two days travel time, as it is only accessible by boat or by seaplane. Once you get there, you will experience miles of rugged, beautiful scenery with the often-surprising companionship of loons, fox, moose and the much too elusive wolf.

The Wunderkinder decided to make this year's trip a Michigan adventure and head to Isle Royale. With Tom O.'s recent leg-breaking experience, he (and his doctor) decided he couldn't join in the hike on Isle Royale. Tom instead accompanied the Wunderkinder on the 12-hour drive to Copper Harbor where he then left us to explore the Upper Peninsula, Wisconsin and Minnesota. We arranged with Tom to come pick us up in a week (you really have to trust your friend to return when he drops you off in Copper Harbor), and we boarded the Isle Royale Queen IV to Rock Harbor.

Since Pete was the only one who managed to eat (a cold chicken leg) on the 3 1/2 hour stomach churning ride across Lake Superior, we decided to have lunch in Rock Harbor before we started our hike. Rock Harbor is on the southeast shore of Lake Superior and offers a bit of civilization with a lodge, store and visitor center. Many people on the ferry were staying at the lodge and planning day trips hiking or paddling around Rock Harbor. This is a great alternative trip for those who don't care for backpacking but would like to experience the Island.

Everyone who arrives at the Island is required to listen to a Leave No Trace orientation lecture and then register their backpacking route with the park rangers. Our plan was to hike from Rock Harbor up to Macargoe Cove on the north shore and along the Mighty Minong Trail to Windigo. Altogether, the hike was approximately 52 miles, and we had an unhurried 7 days to complete the trail.

Full of cheeseburgers and French fries, we set out on our seven-mile hike to Daisy Farm, our first night's destination. It had been a long day and we were happy to see an empty shelter so we didn't have to put up our tents and tarps. The wildlife most certainly thought an abominable new species had emerged on Isle Royale with the introduction of the



*Pat Murral, Joan Tobin, Mike Barks, Don Roselle, Pete Lamb*

### Five Snoring Wunderkinder!!

We spent night number two at Lake Ritchie, listening to a symphony of loons and beavers slapping their tails on the water. Hiking out in the morning, we surprised a fox that was walking towards us on the trail with a breakfast rabbit in his mouth. The fox quickly ran off the trail to protect his meal but stopped to make sure we were well behind him before he disappeared in to the woods.

On day 3, we arrived at the beautiful Marcargoe cove, where Pete and I fly-fished with skill that amazed our fellow backpackers. We had time to rest, swim, fish, take pictures and excitedly point out a moose that walked to the shore for a drink.

Day 4 arrived with the promise of the Mighty Minong trail. We had heard many warnings about this trail's difficulty and we were eager to see how tricky it really was. We had four more days and three nights to hike the Minong to Windigo. Heading out that day, we passed the Minong Mine, Isle Royale's largest copper mine, operated during the late 1800's. We stopped for a bit to investigate and climb down into a mining cave where remnants of a railroad track still exist. After a beautiful day of easy hiking, we arrived at our destination, Todd Harbor, at 2:30 p.m. and again had time for relaxation and swimming.

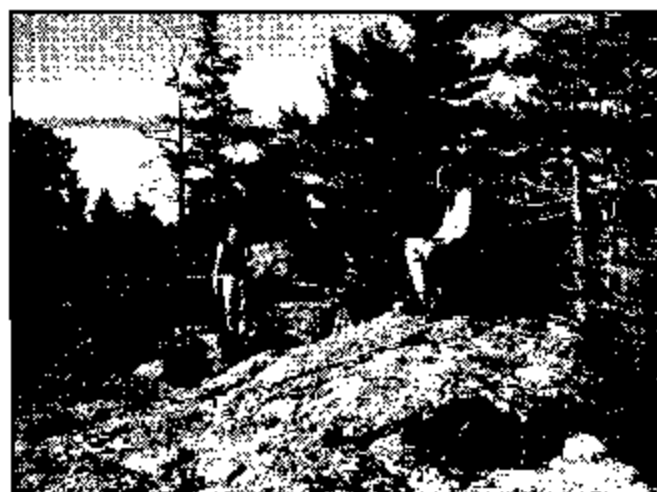
Day 5 we left for Little Todd, one of the leveliest spots on the Island. We had another picturesque day of hiking along the Minong ridgeline with spectacular views of Lake Superior, then dropped down into Little Todd, a wooded, cozy campsite right on Little Todd Harbor, where we

## The Wunderkinder on the Mighty Minong (cont'd)

spotted another moose. Little Todd is one of the few spots you can have a campfire in an established fire ring so we had a fun evening around the fire with bats zinging around our heads catching mosquitoes.

Day 6 was a short hiking day with many ups-and-downs that made it more strenuous than the prior two days on the Minong. Winds were extremely high along the ridgeline and contributed to the difficulty of hiking the rocky trail. (We were later told the Voyageur II couldn't operate that day because of the high waves). Taking many breaks along the trail and enjoying views of Lake Superior whitecaps made for a pleasant day. We arrived at North Lake Desor by 4:00 p.m.

The big hiking day on the Minong Trail came on Day 7. We had been told this was the tough day simply because it's 12.5-15 miles to Windigo with no water source along the way. We realized this would be our test on the Mighty Minong. We filled up our water containers and headed out by 8:00 a.m. There was no dawdling or stopping for views this day.



*On the Minong Trail*

This stretch of the Minong is where it earns its reputation with lots of rocky ridgeline and many ups and downs along the way. A long stretch of boardwalk through a swamp was like hiking in a bird sanctuary. We encountered two spots where beavers had very enthusiastically dammed up the entire area, requiring some fancy-footwork as we hiked across the top of the dams. In the woods, we spotted many wolf tracks in the mud. It was a long hot day of hiking, but we arrived in Windigo by 4:00 p.m.

We had survived and enjoyed the Mighty Minong Trail! After cleaning up at the luxurious Windigo



*Grazing Moose*

showers and laundry, we enjoyed a sandwich, potato chips, and pop at the store. Later, at our shelter, we watched industrious beavers swim past toting trees for more dam building, and Pete caught his first trout with a fly rod.

The next day a moose posed for pictures as we boarded the Voyageur II ferry and took the 5-hour ride back to Rock Harbor. This is a wonderful ferry ride and is a lovely way to see Isle Royale from the water. We stopped at Macargoe Cove and Belle Isle to drop off backpackers and paddlers starting their adventures and made a quick mail drop at Tobin Harbor, a charming place with 8 current residents.

Isle Royale has something for everyone. Whether you are a backpacker, a day hiker or a paddler, you can plan a trip that will suit your interests and your skill level. Talking to the Isle Royale Park rangers will help to ensure your skill level matches your plans. Between the hiking, the wildlife watching and the beauty of the Island, you are undoubtedly going to have a good time.

**Tip:** There are leeches in the inland lakes on Isle Royale so we only swam in Lake Superior, and thought we were quite safe. One thing we didn't realize when swimming in the harbor was that we could contract swimmer's itch. In simplest terms, you will contract swimmer's itch during warm summer months from parasites that start with a host snail and then move on to aquatic migrating birds. If the water temperatures are right and the parasite thinks you are a duck, you will get swimmer's itch. Your ailment is a red itchy pinpoint rash that lasts from 2 days to one week and will clear up on its own with time, but is helped along with antihistamines and cortisone cream.

## **SOLAR Program Schedule**

*From the SOLAR Program Director – Linda Rodrick*

### **OCTOBER PROGRAM: SOLAR Trip Presentation: Italy**

#### **Featuring Tuscany & the Glorious Dolomites**

**By Pete Lamb & other SOLAR Trip Participants**

Join fourteen SOLARites as they relive their two summer weeks in the hill towns of Tuscany, enjoying the glories of Rome and the sensuousness of Venice. Also experience the glorious Dolomites as Solar members hike along the Via One, a foot path from Munich to Venice. Travel the Via Ferrates, the Iron Highway in the sky, built to transport ammunition for guns in the Great War and now used by hikers who really want to get off the beaten path. Just sit back in your chair to experience all this and more through the eyes of SOLAR trip participants.



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### **UPCOMING SOLAR PROGRAMS**

#### **NOVEMBER: Iditarod Odyssey**

**By Phil Crookshank and Karen Bates**

Join two Solar members and active dogsledders for a digital slide show of recent sledding adventures. This presentation will feature two dog sledding outfitters in the Upper Peninsula. The primary focus will be on the safe and humane handling and treatment of the canines. Meeting dietary needs, the proper fit and maintenance of sled equipment and safety as the temperatures drop well below zero will be emphasized.

Karen will also have information for anyone interested in adopting a former sled dog.

#### **DECEMBER: Annual SOLAR Holiday Party!**

Mark your calendars... Tuesday, December 6<sup>th</sup> is our annual holiday bash! The fun will take place at Colony Hall after our general meeting concludes. As usual, we'll have a DJ, dancing and lots of wonderful food!

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

#### **Thank You...Julia!**

A special "thank you" to Julia Gordon for a GREAT September SOLAR program! Julia's photography experience and professionalism is exemplary. Thank you for generously sharing your secrets to successfully photographing nature.

**We also wish you and your new husband a lifetime of happiness!**



# SOLAR SEPTEMBER 2005 CALENDAR

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

## AUGUST 2005 TRIP LEADER DRAWING WINNER DON WOLD, ADIRONDACK TRIP OCTOBER ACTIVITIES

4	TUE	<b>GENERAL MEETING</b>	<b>COLONY HALL</b>	Tom Hayes	thomashayes@wideopenwest.com
4	TUE	<b>Program: SOLAR Trip Presentation: Tuscany, Italy</b>		Linda Rodrick	lindamra@aol.com

### *October 7: Deadline for November SOLAR Ray*

8-9	WKND	Jordan River Pathway backpacking trip	Jordan River Pathway	Kevin Cotter	solar@wowway.com
15	SAT	Octoberfest	Howell, Michigan	Caro McCrie	cmccrie@sbcglobal.net
16	SUN	Pumpkin Party and Paddle**	Proud Lake State Park	Alan Heavner/ Margaret Martin	AlanHeavner@Heavnercane.com
Oct. 31- Nov 5	MULTI	Archeological Survey**	DeSoto National Forest, Mississippi	Chip Kleinbrook & Gloria Fontaine	mrchip1234@aol.com

## OCTOBER CLASSES

11, 15-16	TUE/ WKND	Basic Land Navigation Class	EMS/ Waterloo	Karl Overheu	cybernomad@backpacker.com
5, 12, 19, 21-23	WED	Search & Rescue Class	Eastpointe HS	Tom Hayes	thomashayes@wideopenwest.com

## NOVEMBER ACTIVITIES

1	TUE	<b>GENERAL MEETING</b>	<b>COLONY HALL</b>	Tom Hayes	thomashayes@wideopenwest.com
1	TUE	<b>Program: Iditarod Odyssey</b>		Linda Rodrick	lindamra@aol.com

## UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

Jan 27- 29, 2006	WKND	Carter Caves Crawlathon	Carter Caves State Park, Kentucky	Leslie Cordova	lesilegena@aol.com
Feb	MULTI	Yellowstone Cross Country Ski Trip**	Yellowstone National Park	Pete Lamb	petekandu@yahoo.com
Feb 17- 19, 2006	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
April 20- 30, 2006	MULTI	Caribbean Trip**	St. John, Virgin Islands	Jim Gessner	gessneri@prodigy.net

FOR INFORMATION ON JOINING THE SOLAR CLUB, CONTACT PENNI LOPEZ (248) 336-2911, kavecrawler@yahoo.com OR VISIT  
WWW.SOLAROUTDOORS.ORG

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO HELP PLAN OR LEAD A SOLAR ACTIVITY, CONTACT KEVIN COTTER (248) 544-9637 OR SEND EMAIL TO  
kd:cotter@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 Club and Guests October Hiking Schedule**

**Sunday: October 2, 9:30 AM –Kensington Metropark**, Brighton, I-96 and Kensington Rd. Meet at the Nature Center, Hike the Wild Wing Trail. See the heron rookery, deer, squirrels, bunnies, chipmunks, ducks, geese and huge fish.

FYI: Archery Deer hunting opened up in Michigan on October 1<sup>st</sup>, NO hunting is allowed in the Metro Parks but most of the State Parks like Proud Lake, Island Lake, Pontiac Lake, Brighton State Park do allow hunting. Please wear very bright colors when hiking.

**Saturday: October 8<sup>th</sup>, 9:30 AM – Maybury State Park**, this park is 5 miles west of I-275 on 8 Mile Rd., just west of Beck Rd. Meet at the 1<sup>st</sup> parking lot in the far right corner. There is no hunting in Maybury State Park and some nice hilly terrain with many good places to eat right down the street. You may get to hike with the BS Hiking Group.

**Sunday: October 16<sup>th</sup>, 9:30 AM – Proud Lake State Park**, Meet in the parking lot behind the Park Headquarter, on Wixom Rd. just south of Garden Road, across the street from Heavner's Canoe Rental, There is NO hunting in this part of Proud Lake, get maps from the Headquarters, there is hunting on the other side of the river. Hike some of the cross country sk routes. Later in the day you can join Solar's Margaret Martin for her Pumpkin Party and Paddle.

**Saturday: October 22<sup>nd</sup>, 9:30 AM, Eastside of town hiking at Metro Beach Metropark**. Located near I-94 and Metro Beach Parkway, (16 Mile Rd.) north of St. Clair Shores and south of Selfridge Air Nat. Guard Base and M-59. Meet at the parking lot near the Park Office. Beautiful hiking around the edges of Lake St. Clair.

**Sunday: October 30<sup>th</sup>, 9:30 AM, Paint Creek Trail**, meet at the Paint Creek Cider Mill in Goodison, MI. which is in Oakland Cty, east of 24 north of Silver Bell Rd between Rochester and Lake Orion. Local resident leader requested. If you want something faster than hiking or want to see the whole trail, bring a mountain bike but then you'd be expected to bring brownies to share with the hikers.

**Saturday: November 5<sup>th</sup>, 9:30 AM, Waterloo State Recreation Area**, East of Jackson, MI, Wes. of Ann Arbor off I-94. Meet at the Geology Center. This is home for SOLAR's winter backpacking 1<sup>st</sup> practical, many land navigation classes and offers scenic vistas and a trail that goes 35 miles one way. Ok this is a 3 to 4 day recommended hike but you can have a great time with a couple of hours of hiking. Leader Needed.

This is before Michigan's regular deer hunting season which starts November 15<sup>th</sup>.

Contact Matt Dalton at [mdalton@ameritech.net](mailto:mdalton@ameritech.net) or 248-360-0031 to discuss leading or participating in these hikes.

## **Backpacking the Jordan River Pathway— October 8-October 9**

We will meet at the Dead Man's Hill Overlook at 9 AM on Saturday and hike 10 miles along the Jordan River to the Pinney Bridge State Forest campground. The campground has drinking water, pit toilets, and picnic tables. We will camp here on Saturday, then return to the starting point on Sunday.

The Jordan River is a designated Wild and Scenic River. We will hike through the forest and should be able to catch some fall colors.

This is an 18 mile loop. Sections of the trail are hilly. Participants must have had beginning backpacking (including the current class) and be in good physical condition. The only costs of the trip are the camping fee, which is \$10 per campsite, and lodging on Friday night.

More information on the trail can be found on the Web at <http://www.northcountrytrail.org/explore/focus/jordan.htm>. We will coordinate rides and places to stay Friday night. The trailhead is 20 miles west of Caylord, about a 4 hour drive from Detroit. Kevin Cotter, [solar@wowway.com](mailto:solar@wowway.com), (248) 544-9637

## ABOUT ABL

*by Michael Banks*

*NOTE: There have been so many questions about this course that I have asked Pete to print this article again.*

The Advanced Backpacking & Leadership course (ABL) is sometimes referred to less than charitable terms. It is arguably the most expensive, most demanding, most time consuming and most maddening of all SOLAR courses. It may also be the most rewarding. Some graduates have said that it made a major difference in their lives. Many have utilized the lessons learned in some tougher than usual situations. Hopefully, all have learned something important about themselves.

ABL develops leadership by promoting teamwork and independent thought. ABL demands effort, flexibility, self-discipline, an open mind, introspection and *commitment*. Commitment is the key to this course. You must be committed to the course, your team, and yourself.

The course demands are not limited to the students. The instructors view this as a learning experience as well. The roles are sometimes blurred as students instruct and instructors take a back seat.

### PREREQUISITES

- Basic Backpacking
- Current CPR certificate
- Completion of a Land Navigation course
- The SOLAR Trip Planning Seminar
- Current Wilderness First Aid certification

Additionally, you must attend an **Informational Meeting** about the course, which will consist of course description, and Q&A. You will also be expected to attend at least one of the **Physical Education & Training Weekends**.

The actual ABL course calendar begins with a **Team Building Weekend**, and it will be followed by 3 **weekend practicals** and a **weeklong practical**. This is not the end of the course. Your team will design and perform a service project. Each student will lead a **backpacking trip**. You will also join the **staff of the Spring 2007 Backpacking course**.

## Speaking of Backpacking Courses ...

If you are interested in helping with the Spring Backpacking course, please keep the following in mind:

- The Instructors are all current in Wilderness First Aid and CPR.
- The Group Instructors have led a SOLAR backpacking trip sometime in the two years prior to the course.
- All of our instructors are extremely hard working and dedicated.
- None of our instructors ever came on board by saying, "I don't want to teach, but I'll be glad to come and camp on the practicals."

Let me know if you are interested in becoming one of the few, the proud, the under-appreciated and the overworked. We may have an opening for a masochist like you. — Michael Banks

### Cruise Mexico's Sea of Cortez without Polluting the Environment by Winnie Chrzanowski

I'm planning a sea kayak trip through Sea Kayak Adventures (SKA), [www.seakayadventures.com](http://www.seakayadventures.com) to the Sea of Cortez Islands in Baja (Loreto), Mexico, February 18-25, 2006. Skill level: No experience required.

Cost: \$1200 per person, \$200 non-refundable deposit required ASAP as this time is peak whale watching season. Airfare is NOT included.

Cost includes two nights in top-notch hotel, all gear (two person sea kayaks, PFDs, camping equipment, dry bags, etc.) except personal stuff, experienced guides, cocktail hour and all meals while kayaking.

If you want to go, contact the outfitter directly to pay your deposit and be sure to mention my name (Winnie Chrzanowski) and that you're with the SOLAR group. Act quickly as we only have 11 openings for this trip.

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

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 can come in for free.

# **SOLAR Steering Committee**

<b>President</b>	Tom Hayes	<b>Equipment</b>	Dave DeFrance
<b>Vice President</b>	Lou Szakal	<b>Historian</b>	Eick Ebenhoe
<b>Secretary</b>	Debbie Zuchlewski	<b>Membership</b>	Penni Lopez
<b>Treasurer</b>	Carol McCririe	<b>Programs</b>	Linda Rodzick
<b>Activities</b>	Kevin Cutter	<b>Pub. Relations</b>	Mary Price
<b>By-Laws</b>	Cindy Taylor	<b>SCLAR RAY</b>	Pete Lamb
<b>Education</b>	Mike Banks	<b>Webmaster</b>	Karl Overholt
<b>At Large:</b>	Mike Banks • Moe DeFrance • Al Fydak • Steve Gardrer • Bill Halvingus • Cindy Harrison-Felix • Doug Lanyk • Larry Martic • Joan Hettinger • Leslie Cordova • Juan & 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) 778-3589 or [thomashayes@wideopenwest.com](mailto: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 [kayekawier@yahoo.com](mailto:kayekawier@yahoo.com)

# **Submission Guidelines:**

(Submissions are due on the Friday two weeks prior to the monthly Steering Committee Meeting (Oct. 7 for the November issue). Electronic files accessible to Word are required.) Pete Lamb, 400 E. Southlawn, Birmingham, MI 48009 Or call 248-644-5831 E-mail: [Petekandu@yahoo.com](mailto:Petekandu@yahoo.com)

VISIT OUR WEBSITE: [WWW.SOLAROUTDOORS.ORG](http://WWW.SOLAROUTDOORS.ORG)

GENE & LESLIE CORDOVA  
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