



The SOLAR Ray

A Monthly Publication of the School for Outdoor Leadership, Adventure, and Recreation (SOLAR)

December 2006

SEARCH AND RESCUE

by Mike Hobig

Here I sit in a perfectly calm office, on a perfectly calm morning, thinking about the Search and Rescue class. A situation that was not perfectly calm. How could a class be anything but dull and boring, packed to the gills with information, memorization, and dreaded tests. This class had all of that and more, it is correctly titled "Introduction to Search and Rescue", and this past October, another group of SOLARITES got to experience that introduction.

Yes, we had class time, exposure to the many facets of search and rescue, theory, methodology, and command structure. We found out that there are specialized groups trained for each situation and terrain; water, mountain, cave...luckily, this was an introduction and we didn't have to go to those places to be "introduced." We did go out into the woods, though, to put some of that book learning to practical use.

I feel that the core of this introduction are the scenarios and practice-staged events that were run over the practical weekend. Sure, we were taught command structure, roles and responsibilities, radio usage, some navigation, search techniques, and rescue techniques. However, theory and practice or practical application is a whole other story. There were events staged at all times during the day that tested our abilities, each of us being put into various roles of responsibility.

I found that I am comfortable with being told where to go. It may sound funny, but once told what your role is, you know what your actions should be. Sure, there are times you might wonder, "Why am I here? I could be more effective doing some thing else," but we found that all actions are needed, and carry a level of responsibility, even if it doesn't seem like it. I am thinking specifically of trail blocking, or standing at an intersection, or sitting in a parked car honking the horn-all part of limiting a search area and possibly finding a moving person. It may seem like a waste of time, but if everyone does their part, then the team can function. Another lesson learned.

Now, why did I mention being in a not perfectly calm situation and this class in the same breath. I also found that being in the field is much different from being in command. Tell me where to go what to do-I am fine with that. When I have to

make the decisions, direct people, gather information, do interviews, coordinate, log and keep track, that causes me some trepidation. We all had time in these roles, all were given a chance to function, or try to function within the team structure. I also found that my interpersonal skills could use some improvement. I have never dealt with lost children, irate siblings, or injured hikers before. I never knew that my action could affect them, their attitude, and their desire to get "unlost" or rescued.

Yes, I am at a calm desk, in a calm office. I am given assignments and I do them. Introduction to Search and Rescue put me outside my comfort zone, out of my everyday life. That is one reason I like to get outdoors, hike, and explore. This class also made it clear that there are other aspects of those pastimes that I wasn't thinking of. I have been outside my comfort zone-lost, misplaced while exploring, experiencing the out of doors. Things happen that we can't control. I now feel that I will handle those situations better, more safely, and less frequently because of the experience of this class.

Another aspect that this class reinforced yet again, is the experience and training that our fellow SOLAR members have. Most of us can function on a city street, but when you realize that the classes in Wilderness First Aid, Land Navigation, etc., coupled with experience and practice put SOLAR's members at a whole another level of folks to be lost in the woods with-make that BE in the woods with. It is great opportunity to be able to take this class with and be taught by that high class of people

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ENJOYING MICHIGAN WINTERS: BACKPACKING & WINTER SKILLS CLASS

by Tom Oloffo

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 and keep your energy level up when skiing or snowshoeing and how to build a snow shelter just in case something does go HORRIBLY WRONG on that simple 3 hour 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 Wednesday, December 6 and Thursday, December 14 from 6:30 - 8:30 at Moose Jaw in Birmingham. All other classes will be held on Wednesday nights: January 3, January 10, January 24, and January 31. The practicals are the weekends of January 13 and 14 and February 9, 10, and 11.

The cost is \$ 100.00 for new students and reduced fee for past graduates who want to retake the course. pick-up further details at the monthly meeting.

This course is open to the graduates of the Beginning Backpacking Course; this course is the prerequisite for the Mountaineering and Winter Survival Courses. For safety reasons, the Wilderness First Aid Course is highly recommended for both of these courses. Keep your fingers crossed and pray for snow. To sign up or if you have any questions contact --- TOM OLOFFO, (313) 477-0221 or mcmountainman@yahoo.com.



CAVING & HIKING IN KENTUCKY ALL LEVELS, NO EXPERIENCE NECESSARY!

by Leslie Cordova

It's that time of year again - time for the 26th annual Carter Caves Crawl-a-thon, January 26-28, 2007. 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. This trip is kid-friendly, must be 6 years old to cave. No pets.

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 \$65 per person, payable to SOLAR. Since this trip will fill up, only payments in full will be accepted to hold your spot.

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 years 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 list 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.

If you need more info, contact Leslie Cordova at (248) 547-5626 or LeslieGenc@aol.com.



KNOW YOUR KNOTS: A KNOT-TYING WORKSHOP FOR BACKPACKERS

by Joan Tobin

Date: Tuesday, March 13, 2007
Time: 6:30 PM - 9:00 PM
Location: Livonia Public Library
32777 Five Mile Rd., Livonia 48154
Cost: \$10.00 per person
Class Limit: 12 people

OBJECTIVE

Join us for a hands on clinic designed to give you the know how on tying knots. Knot tying is an invaluable skill to have in any outdoor setting. In this workshop, we will focus on knots that are useful when backpacking, and learn and practice practical applications such as bear bagging, putting up a tarp for shelter, throwing a rescue line or simply hanging a clothesline. Increase your knowledge, your safety level and your comfort zone while backpacking.

SKILLS

Learn 10 different knots, what they would be useful for, and little tricks to remember them the next day! Also learn tricks to quickly untie your knots and preserve your rope (so you won't have to cut it).

KNOTS COVERED

Bowline, Square Knot, Double Half-Hitch, Trucker's Hitch, Taut-line Hitch, Clove Hitch, Buntline Hitch, and Double Fisherman's Knot, Figure Eight Knot and the Bowline on a Bight.

MATERIALS PROVIDED

Knot tying handouts and practice rope.

CONTACT

Call Joan Tobin at 734-281-1568 for more information.

Sign-ups will be taken at the January 2007 SOLAR Meeting.



DECEMBER PROGRAM: DECEMBERFEST!

(AKA SOLAR's Annual "Holiday's Around the World" Party!)

Please join us in this evening of fun and celebration of SOLAR's diversity. Feel free to wear your ethnic (or holiday) clothing. Just remember your dancing shoes as we'll have a DJ with great music and dancing! Children are welcome!

SOLAR will provide soft drinks, sandwiches and paper products. Please bring a favorite side dish or dessert to pass, consider making it an ethnic favorite! You are also welcome to bring adult beverages.



JANUARY PROGRAM: "A TALE OF TWO TRIPS"

Two groups went backpacking in the Sierras this summer. One group hiked the John Muir Trail in about a month. The others planned a trip that included joining them for the last half of their journey. We all planned on summiting Mt. Whitney together.

As often happens on these trips, things didn't always go as planned... Come and join us in laughing at our misery and celebrating our successes. We will have a multi-media presentation from both of the groups.

FEBRUARY PROGRAM: "MOUNTAINTOP REMOVAL ROADSHOW"

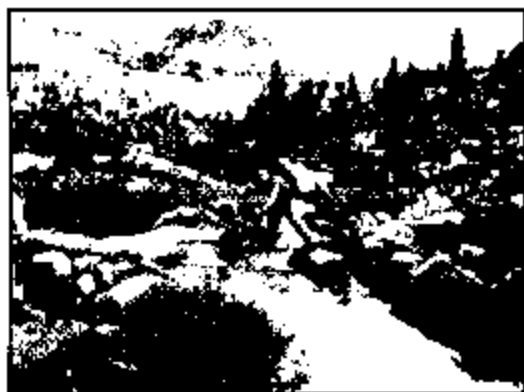
A program discussing the destruction of Appalachian Mountains for the purpose of mining coal. 400+ mountains have been leveled and 1000+ miles of streams have been buried. Dave Cooper of Ohio Valley Environmental Coalition will be presenting.

JOHN MUIR TRAIL JOURNAL

by Karen Kish

TRAIL DAY 9

Today starting at Tully Hole and over Silver Pass. Cool morning. Good because we are gaining 2000 ft. over pass. 10,000ft. total. Just before pass-cross large stream. Skipped rock to rock...cold 30 mile an hour winds whipping...temperature drops...steet... stop and put everything on...continue up to pass... sun comes out half an hour later...strip to tee shirts again. Pass is snow covered...can't find trail...split up to look. Decide it is under snowfield, so climbed up steep snowfield, over pass into green valley. Vermillion resort is 12 miles. We all push to make ferry at 4.30 pm. Easy, smooth valley floor until wide rushing river. If we cross straight away its up to our waist, so look for better area. We all find different spots and we all get wet. At one point, Moe and I end up on the same 3 x 3 island deciding how to get across without going in. Dave wants Moe to throw the camera across-no deal-!!! Made it...not so far again...cross waterfall and rushing stream...beautiful waterfall! More switchbacks coming down, thunder, lightening, rain.



Moving fast...dangerous. Another rushing river. We are soaked. All four hold on to one another to cross river-water over knees. Moving very fast. Don't care about staying clean or dry. Through streams, mud and over boulders. Must catch ferry...showers...food...Push... make ferry 4:25pm thanks to Pete's lead. Yeah Pete! You rock! Chris and Adam (JMT pals) getting off ferry as we get on. Warm food and showers. Ahhhh. Another long, eventful day is done.



JMT JOURNAL ENTRY, JULY 21, 2006

You may be thinking I chose an exceptionally eventful day to share with you. But the truth is I could have chosen July 13 or August 6 or any day in between because everyday was unique in its own way. What every day did share was majestic mountains, beautiful waterfalls, crystal clear rivers, mirror lakes, green valleys, untouched forests, sweet aromatic wild flowers and more, all as natural as it gets. It was an honor to live this wilderness life for 25 days. It was by no means easy but I was with three very competent companions. Moe and Dave DeFrance, Pete Lamb and I embarked on a trip that truly tested our middle age endurance.



Dave had everything well planned. Our hotels, rental cars, gear, maps, camping, water and resupplies all went smoothly (mosquitoes and lack of DEET-a small problem). My three new solar friends had a wealth of experience between them and I didn't want my inexperience to drag the team down so I learned what I could, quickly. Moe showed me how to bath in 32.5 degree lakes and rivers, indiscreetly (usually). Dave was a great alarm clock with his version of revelry at 5:30 am (needed to hit the snooze). And Pete knew the best way to keep warm on those few frosty nights.

The fabulous four, as we encouragingly called ourselves, labored over 220 miles, 10 passes and made the summit of Mt. Whitney at 14,495 ft. and our gift was an awesome wilderness journey that is beyond description. Best of all, we made sure all were successful. We had great group dynamics that would see us to the end.

I joined SOLAR last fall looking for adventure and by the end of January I had found it. By jumping in with both feet, I went on the trip of a life time. I was welcomed and embraced by these seasoned SOLAR members and am now looking forward to another great adventure.

BASIC MOUNTAINEERING & SAFETY SKILLS CLASS

by Lou Szakal

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to stand on the Summit of a Mountain? Or to even know what it takes to get there?

How about just advancing your Winter Camping or Snowshoe and Cross-Country Ski skills to include one to two week expeditions? How about expanding your knowledge of surviving in the winter during a snowstorm or in an avalanche area? What do you do about frostbite?

Here is your chance to find out!

Starting in December 2006, through January 2007, I will be teaching the Basic Mountaineering and Safety Skills Class to a some lucky students who are interested in devoting their time and energy to the sport of Mountaineering and Advanced Winter Adventure.

TOPICS COVERED

- Self Arrest
- Fixed Lines
- Roped Travel
- Running Belays
- Risk Assessment
- Snow Shoeing Skills
- Health/Fitness Issues
- Cross Country Ski Skills
- Basic Mountain Skills
- Avalanche Issues
- Ice Axe Use
- Leadership
- Navigation
- Prussiks
- 2 Mountaineering Books
- Technical Tool Usage
- Mountain Safety
- First Aid Issues
- Crampon Use
- Nutrition
- Knots
- Weather
- Glacier Travel
- Climbing Issues
- Frost Bite Issues
- Winter Safety Skills
- Z & C Pulley System
- Optional Mountain Trip
- Clothing
- Rappelling
- Gear Issues
- Effects of Cold
- Crevasse Rescue
- Reading Material
- Expedition Planning
- Environmental Ethics
- 2 Weekend Practicals
- Altitude Awareness
- Ascending Ropes
- Ropes/Webbing
- Alpine Rescue
- Sled Skills

PREREQUISITES

MANDATORY

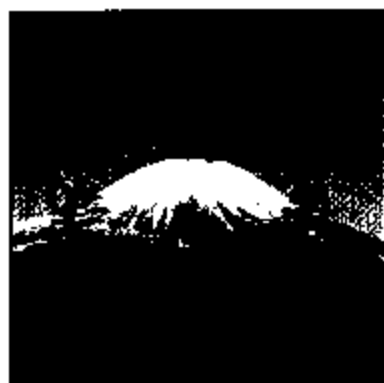
- Basic Backpacking
- Land Navigation
- Winter Camping
- Belay Card (Rock Gym)
- Rock Climbing

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED

- Wilderness First Aid
- Intermediate Backpacking
- Advanced Backpacking
- Search and Rescue
- First Aid/ CPR Certification
- Winter Survival

EXPERIENCE HELPFUL

- XC Ski/Snowshoe
- Ice Climbing
- S.M.O.C. Experience



COST

- \$150

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Lou Szakal
Phone: (248) 709-6773
Email: Everest2008@comcast.net

CLASS SCHEDULE

Location: TBD
Time: 6:00 - 9:00 PM

Class 1	12/7	Thursday
Class 2	12/13	Wednesday
Class 3	1/11	Thursday
Class 4	1/18	Thursday
Practical 1	1/19-1/21	Weekend
Class 5	1/25	Thursday
Class 6	2/1	Thursday
Practical 2	2/2-4/7	Weekend

LAKE ANN CROSS COUNTRY SKI WEEKEND

by Jim Coe

Contact: Jim Coe at jimc36@comcast.net
or 810-499-5001

When: Friday, January 19 thru Sunday, January
21, 2007

Where: Sleeping Bear Resort Lake Ann, MI

Website: sleepingbearresort.com

We have 2 Lodge style homes reserved on Lake Herendeen near Interlochen which will sleep about 25 people with some couples sharing a bed.

The homes are quite unique and rustic furnished. One home has a bear theme with bears carved into posts out front on the porch. The walls are adorned with stuffed animals, bears of course as well as a weird wood chuck.

The other home is called the lodge and is an authentic log home with hand made craftsman furniture and carvings on the walls. Both are fully furnished with full kitchen, rec room with pool tables, foosball and ping pong tables.

The Idea: Ski local cross country ski trails such as the Lake Ann pathway, Lost lake and last but not least alligator hill in Sleeping Bear N.P. some will snow shoe and some will just relax and enjoy the atmosphere. We will have a pot luck dinner on Saturday night for all and breakfast and lunch are on your own from the kitchen or eat out.

Cost: 60.00 per person

Rooms: couples will be able to stay in their own rooms when available. Rooms otherwise will be divided male-female if possible. I will try to make arrangements for those that would like to stay in the same home.



SOLAR'S ENJOYING MICHIGAN'S WINTER CLASS

by Cindy Taylor

Did you know that there are usually two or three times as many instructors as students for the Enjoying Michigan Winters Class? Does it make you wonder why? Well if you ask those instructors, I'm sure they would tell you that they do it because they have so much fun, not only teaching, but participating in the practicals. I know they would tell you that Pigeon River in February is an amazing place to be! Many would also tell you that they never would have expected to be camping in winter before joining SOLAR.

I am one of those instructors. I joined SOLAR in the fall of 2000, just in time to take the Beginning Backpacking class. When we finished the class, several of my classmates immediately signed up for Enjoying Michigan Winters. I told them there was NO WAY you were going to find me camping in winter. I do love the outdoors, but sleeping in the snow is just crazy!

Well that's what I said then. In the winter of 2002, someone convinced me to take the class. I don't remember who and maybe it was several people, but I am so glad they did because I really did enjoy it. I met some more great friends while learning new skills that I have been able to use in other sports such as X-Country skiing and snow shoeing. Most importantly, I have learned to appreciate the beauty of winter and, while summer will always be my favorite season, I consider winter to be the most beautiful season of all. I am no longer a couch potato in winter and I am much, much happier for it!

If you are one of those people who doesn't think that you would enjoy winter camping, you might want to reconsider. You just might find that you, like me, can have a blast camping in winter.

So go ahead, give it a try!

Contact Tom Oloffo at mcmountainman@yahoo.com to sign up.

P.S. There is a winter camping trip being planned for the March timeframe and, in order to go, you will need to have taken Enjoying Michigan Winters so what are you waiting for.



THE RECUMBENT VOYAGER

by Winnie Chrzanowski



In Search of the Ivory-Billed Woodpecker
By Jerome A. Jackson
Smithsonian Books, 294 pages
ISBN 1 58834 132 1
\$24.95

Jerome A. Jackson, recognized as the world's expert on the ivory-billed woodpecker, spent 30 years searching for this rare avian species and just a glimpse of it. He states that it has become the Holy Grail of birders. But, what is an ivory-billed woodpecker and why are ornithologists so eager to spot this bird? What's the big deal?

The Ivory-bill is a large showy woodpecker with a jet-black body spectacularly marked with white. The male sports brilliant red plumage at the back of its crest. It's about 20 inches long, weighs about 1-¼ pounds, and has about a 31" wingspan. Its distinctive ivory-colored bill is larger and much different from the bills of other woodpeckers—Heavier and "flattened at the tip like a carpenter's wood chisel." It's familiar name among those who have been fortunate enough to see it in the wild is the "Lord-God Bird"—probably because the common reaction was: "Lord God what a woodpecker."

These magnificent birds once ranged from east Texas to North Carolina, from southern Illinois to Florida and south to Cuba living primarily in the swampy bottomland hardwood forests of the southeastern U.S. The author asserts that it was probably always an uncommon bird but by 1900 it had "become the rarest woodpecker in North America, perhaps the world." It disappeared when its habitat was destroyed and there was no more timber left for the logging companies to cut. For 60 years searches for this American legend continued. The searches, until 2005, produced false alarms. Today, the ivory-bill is a rarity, but the sightings in 2005 prove that the ivory-billed woodpecker is not extinct as was previously thought.

In Search of the Ivory-billed Woodpecker is divided into two parts. Part I, The Bird, is devoted to its behavior and ecology, the causes of its decline and recognition of the historical aspects of that decline, and the significance of the ivory-bill to Native American culture. Part II, The Searchers, is part natural history, part detective story, and part adventure tale. Jackson provides anecdotal tales that illuminate the searches and methods of early naturalists like John J. Audubon and Alexander Wilson.

Jackson's fascination with the ivory-billed woodpecker spans 30 years and propels him to explore places like the Atchafalaya Swamp, canoeing bayous, driving back roads, and hiking logging roads and through mature forest areas. He spent hours flying over potential ivory-bill habitat, slogging through swamps, and conducting hours and hours of interviews with people who claimed to have seen the elusive ivory-bill.

Jackson's easy to read, illustrated book provides a wealth of information on ornithological history; the politics of conservation and endangered species; the ivory-bill's iconic status in advertising, conservation, and lore from the 1800s to present day. If you're interested in natural history, conservation, or just want a plain good read about a remarkable bird, this book is for you.

If you do a search on the web for the ivory-billed woodpecker, you'll find plenty of information. One of the best sites is <http://www.birds.cornell.edu/ivory>.

SPOTLIGHT ON TOM OLOFFO

by Rebecca Yoo



Hi everyone. First off, unlike most people, I'd rather be holding a microphone in my hand instead of a pen—I suck at writing so bear with me. I've been given a list of questions to answer by our Ray editor, Rebecca, so I guess I'll just answer them in order.

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN A MEMBER OF SOLAR?

Ahhhh, 10 or 11 years in August. The years are fuzzy but I know it was August because I signed up for the fall Backpacking class. I also became a lifetime member my first year. Sometimes you know when something is just right.

HOW DID YOU GET INVOLVED WITH SOLAR?

Well one day out in the field (I work for Konica/Minolta as a field service Tech.), I was at Garden City Parks and Recreation Department bemoaning the fact to someone how none, and I mean NONE, of my friends wanted to do the outdoors thing any more—unless taking the kids to the soccer field counts. At the time they said it's time to grow up—that people our age (late 30s) didn't want to do that camping thing, let alone backpacking stuff, anymore. Boy were they wrong! Anyway, I was bemoaning this to some dear lady when she said, wait a minute you have to meet someone. Out comes Margaret Martini and she says "Boy have I got a club for you!" The rest, as they say, is history.

HOW DID YOU START BACKPACKING?

Early in my twenties, my cousin and I were looking for something to do. We decided to backpack in Porcupine Mountains State Park. Mind you, this was with no experience whatsoever. I think we made every mistake known to man or womankind. Whoever would have thought those Hobo

Pie Makers would weigh soooooo much after just 10 miles? Or that the great sound of a roaring waterfall didn't turn off at night. Picture this: Two rookies from Detroit in a flimsy Kmart blue light special tent on the edge of said waterfall when pans fall from the picnic table! (Yeah, yeah I know—now). Well something made those pans fall but you couldn't hear what it was over the nice soothing ROAR of the waterfall! Then to compound matters, you have to go (when ya gotta go, you GCT TO go) due to the nice soothing ROAR of the waterfall again. I think it took me an hour to get up enough nerve to stick my head out of that tent—no I didn't see any bears, thank heaven!

After that trip, I went on a few trips by myself—don't think my cousin ever did backpack again! I didn't do any really major trips until joining S.O.L.A.R. I've since made up for lost time by doing some hardcore trips including Yellowstone, Mt. Rainier—no, not climbing it, just a short jaunt around it—97 miles and 53,000 ft. of elevation change. I've also hiked the West Coast Trail in British Columbia, rated one of the toughest trails in North America. (Not trying to brag, well, OK, just a little bit). My point is, if it wasn't for our club and the fine people leading these trips (Thanks Joan and thanks Rob!) I never would have done this stuff.

WHAT HAS YOUR FAVORITE TRIP BEEN SO FAR?

Yikes, that's a tough question. They're all special. I guess it would be Yellowstone. It was my first time out west, the scenery is just surreal and wildlife is everywhere. It's not a matter of if you'll see any but what do you want to see? I was lucky enough to witness a group of wolves (Druid Pack) attack a lone buffalo. Five wolves broke off from the main pack, two circled in front of the big guy three behind. The front two would get his attention then the other three would nip at him from behind. This happened a few times until the buffalo stopped playing around and charged! One wolf quickly became nothing more than a ball of dust and fur. That was when the wolves limped away with their tails between their legs.

WHAT WOULD YOUR DREAM TRIP BE?

After talking with my uncle who has been all over the planet, every continent numerous times and asking what his favorite is? Then seeing Lord of the Rings, I guess I'd have to say New Zealand. You've got everything from tropical beaches to snow capped mountain scenery. One of these days!

WHAT CLASSES WOULD YOU LIKE TO ADD TO SOLAR'S CURRICULUM?

Sort of like the classes we have. I mean they pretty much cover the spectrum from basics all the way up to crevasse rescue, boy that's a broad spectrum. If we add too much more you get instructor burnout. Also there is a time factor—as it is, some classes overlap which I'm not crazy about. Maybe a few more weekend seminars. Photography and Geocaching come to mind.

Continued from Spotlight on Tom Oloffo...

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR MOST REWARDING EXPERIENCE IN SOLAR?

It's a toss up. First, being President - I mean I never ever, ever thought I'd be president of anything. Then there I was—talking to 100 plus people at our General Meetings. I

Loved that!

Second, being Lead winter instructor- I like helping the club and seeing people come out of that class with a whole new sense of accomplishment. Of course, all my great instructors have more to do with that than me. So when I say "I," I mean the whole winter class as a whole.

HOW HAS SOLAR CHANGED DURING THE YEARS YOU HAVE BEEN A MEMBER?

One of the things I've noticed are "bigger and badder" trips. I mean folks are climbing Rainier, backpacking over 200 miles straight, and dog sledding in the great white north. Others have gone to foreign lands and hiked the Alps and Himalayas, etc.

One thing that remains constant, whether big expensive trips or small car camping excursions right here in wonderful Michigan, is our passion for the outdoors. I hope we never lose focus of that!

Speaking of which—stop reading this boring stuff about me and get outdoors—it's a great place to be!

CAROLING

by Margaret Martin

Bring joy to the residents of Botsford Continued Care by caroling through the halls. Wear Christmas attire, and meet in the front lobby at 2:30 PM on Sunday, December 10, 2006. We'll sing for about an hour then head over to Mary & Harry Price's for a pot luck dinner. Music provided.

When: Sunday, December 10, 2006.

Time: Singing from 2:30-4:00 PM

Where: Botsford Continued Care, 21450 Archwood Circle, Farmington Hills, MI 48336

Dinner Location: Harry & Mary Price

22801 Tulane Farmington Hills, MI

248-477-7547



Cost: Free. Please bring a dish to pass. For more information call Margaret at 734-721-2821 or e-mail at mpluscat@hotmail.com.

SOLAR HIKE & BIKE SCHEDULE FOR DECEMBER 2006

Hike, Swim & Bike with SOLAR. Non-members & children welcome. Hikes start at 9:30 AM. Hike Coordinator: Matt Dalton, contact at 248-360-0031 or mdalton@ameritech.net

December 2, 2006, Saturday - 11:00 AM Sierra Club Hike at Maybury State Park, Northville, MI. Contact Tom Griebel for information 248-349-8782,

December 3, 2006, Sunday - 9:30 AM Solar Club and BS Hikers are hiking at Maybury State Park, Northville, MI. Meet at 8 Mile Rd entrance and parking lot by concessions area. Most hikers go out for brunch after the hike.

The first and third Sunday's of the month average over 25 hikers at Maybury State Park.

December 3, 2006, Sunday 11:30ish Sierra Club at Holdridge Lakes at Holly Rec Area, for information contact, Joanne Cantoni, 248-932-5370 or Bonnie M. at 248-589-221

December 9, 2006 Saturday - 9:30 AM, Kensington Metro Park. Meet at the Nature Center, North of Kensington Rd entrance, past the golf course.

December 19, 2006, Sunday - 9:30 AM, Solar Club and BS Hikers, Maybury State Park, Northville, MI. Meet at 8 Mile Rd entrance and parking lot by concessions area. Brunch afterward for most of the hikers.

December 19, 2006, Sunday - 11:30ish, Sierra Club Hike Seven Lakes, 7 miles, hilly, for additional information contact John Herrgott at 248-766-9575

December 23, 2006, Saturday - 9:30 AM, Pontiac Lake State Park: North of M-59 Highland Rd. and west of Williams Lake Rd. Meet in the NW corner of the Gale Rd. parking lot. (Park is very popular for mountain biking.)

December 31, 2006 Sunday - Approx 10:30 AM to 4:30 PM, Fund Raising Walk or Run. Join several Metro Detroit Walking/Running Clubs for Jeannie and Gerry Bocci's, 30ish Annual Belle Isle Fund Raiser for the Special Olympics: 2:00, 5K Fun Run and 3:00 PM Fitness Walk. \$20 Advanced Fee, \$25 at the event. This is a super child friendly event. All participants will get a t-shirt, snacks and cold - warm drinks and children will receive a trophy. Get home in time to celebrate the New Year.

YEE HA!

by Dave DeFrance

Again this year, the dance was held in a real country setting—the hay loft of a 100+ year old barn. The action started for 54 Solarites 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 opened the door to let in some of the 35 degree air.

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, the hustle, the scoot/scat, the Texas two step and more.

We finished as we started, with one big circle where we slowed the pace, swapped partners a few times and finally started to get the hang of things. 12 o'clock came quickly as we said our goodbyes and smiled our way out the door vowing to do this again. Yee Ha!

FAMILY SPRING BREAK TRIP

by Vida Ruggero

Interested in joining a family spring break trip to the Outer Banks? Plan on going April 6 through April 15. We'll be renting a house and doing day outings or just hanging around the beach.

Contact Vida at 810-923-3839 rageti@hotmail.com if you are interested or need more information.

WHAT'S MISSING?

Your article!

Your pictures!

Your trip recommendation!

Email YOUR contributions to the SOLAR Ray at:
rayeditor@solaroutdoors.org

SOLAR 2006-2007 CALENDAR
 School for Outdoor Leadership, Adventure and Recreation
 www.solaroutdoors.org

DECEMBER ACTIVITIES

12/7	SAT	Crossroads Village Holiday Lights**	Huckleberry Railroad and Crossroads Village	Leslie Cordova	lesliegere@aol.com
12/5	TUE	GENERAL MEETING	Colony Hall	Lou Szakal	Everest2008@comcast.net
12/5	TUE	Program: Holiday Party	Colony Hall	Karl Overheul	Cyber.nomad@comcast.net
12/10	SUN	Caroling**	Botstord Continued Care	Margaret Martin	mp-uscat@hotmail.com
12/14-1/10	MULTI	Extended Mountaineering Trip (FULL)	Aconcagua, Argentina	Lou Szakal	Everest2008@comcast.net

DECEMBER CLASSES

12/6, 13, 1/3, 10, 13, 14, 24, 31, 2/9-11	MULTI	Enjoying Michigan Winters	Moosejaw, Waterloo State Park, & Pigeon River State Forest	Tom Oloffe	mcmountainman@yahoo.com
12/7, 13, 1/11, 18, 19, 21, 25, 2/1, 2-4	MULTI	Mountaineering	TBA	Lou Szakal	Everest2008@comcast.net

JANUARY ACTIVITIES

1/7	TUE	GENERAL MEETING	Colony Hall	Lou Szakal	Everest2008@comcast.net
1/2	TUE	Program: A Tale of Two Trips	Colony Hall	Karl Overheul	Cyber.nomad@comcast.net
1/12-1/14	WKND	Skiing & Snowshoeing Weekend (FULL)	Hartwick Pines State Park	Kevin Cotter	solar@wowway.com
1/19-1/21	WKND	Cross Country Skiing	Lake Ann, MI	Jim Coe	jimc36@comcast.net
1/26-1/28	WKND	Crawlathon	Carter Caves State Park, Kentucky	Leslie Cordova	lesliegere@aol.com

JANUARY CLASSES

1/20	SAT	Cross Country Skiing - Striding	Cross Country Ski Headquarters, Roscommon	Larry Mergentime	larrymergentime@yahoo.com
1/27	SAT	Cross Country Skiing - Skate Skiing	Cross Country Ski Headquarters, Roscommon	Larry Mergentime	larrymergentime@yahoo.com

FEBRUARY ACTIVITIES

2/4	SUN	Super Bowl Party**	Fowell, MI	Dave & Moe DeFrance	vicepresident@solaroutdoors.org
2/6	TUE	GENERAL MEETING	Colony Hall	Lou Szakal	Everest2008@comcast.net
2/6	TUE	Program: Mountaintop Removal Roadshow	Colony Hall	Karl Overheul	Cyber.nomad@comcast.net
2/9-2/11	WKND	Dogsledding	Sauk River, Ontario	Karen Beles	Lacy_muslier@yahoo.com
2/18-2/24	MULTI	Skiing	Gatineau Park, Quebec	Mary Dunn	mdunn48@peoplepc.com

All classes and activities are limited to SOLAR members except for non-SOLAR events marked with **.

If you would like to help plan and/or lead a SOLAR activity, please contact Kevin Cotter at (248) 544-9637 or activities@solaroutdoors.org.

If you would like to help plan and/or teach a SOLAR class, please contact Mike Banks at education@solaroutdoors.org.

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 or non-SOLAR class (SOLAR will not be held responsible for these activities/classes).

WHAT IS SOLAR?

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

MEMBERSHIP

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, scenic shorelines, and the experiences to be found there.

MEETINGS

Our monthly 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 pm. Everyone is welcome to attend

SOLAR RAY NEWSLETTER

The SOLAR RAY is a monthly publication of SOLAR and is available online at www.solaroutdoors.org. To receive a copy in the mail, please contact Mary Price at hmprice@ameritech.net.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Submissions for the SOLAR Ray are due on the Friday two weeks prior to the monthly Steering Committee Meeting (December 15 for the January issue). Electronic documents only. If you have any questions, please contact Rebecca Sweeton at rayeditor@solaroutdoors.org.

STEERING COMMITTEE

President: Lou Szakal
Secretary: Heather Hal.
Activities: Kevin Cotter
Education: Mike Banks
Historian: Dick Ebenhoe
Programs: Karl Overheul
Ray Editor: Rebecca Sweeton

Vice President: Moe DeFrance
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Steve Gardner | Bill Halvingis | Cindy Harrison-Felix | Tom Hayes
Doug Lanyk | Larry Martin | Joan Hettinger | Tom Olaf'o
Joan & Bob Westbrook

STEERING COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The Steering Committee meets on the last Tuesday of every month at 7:30 pm. 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, please contact Lou Szakal at president@solaroutdoors.org.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visit our website at: www.solaroutdoors.org.

SPECIAL THANKS TO THE SOLAR RAY ASSISTANT EDITORS

Winnie Chrzanowski, Kathy Drewyore, Shella Hardy, Pam Schmelzer, Carol, McCrie, and Elizabeth Schwab

Visit our website: www.solaroutdoors.org



Happy Holidays!

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