



The SOLAR Ray

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

October 2006

DUEL OF THE HIKER GODS

by Dave & Maureen DeFrance

We're all familiar with Greek Mythology and the impact that the gods could have on their lives. It's a constant struggle to line one up in our camp so another cannot heap tragedy upon us. Well, it turns out that you don't have to be Greek nor even wander around the Mediterranean. You can just be a Michigander wondering the John Muir Trail in California.

Last month, you read about the adventures of Pete, Karen, Maureen and Dave over 223 miles of fantastic mountain hiking. During that hike, we had environmental extremes that put us to the test, but now I'll tell you of some strokes of fate (or was it destiny or the work of the gods) that helped us along the way.



It all started with the sighting of a bear. The Native Americans know this is a good omen and many make it their totem. We had just left the 1000 Island Lake region and lost the trail in a big snow field. The four of us were trudging around with our packs trying to intercept the trail when Karen yells "There's a bear!" We weren't in danger, but it was our first bear sighting, and what a beauty it was. A large brown bear was quartering away from us and what was that path he was following? It was the trail. So the bear appeared at the right time to show us the way.

A couple of days later, we are working up and down a river, trying to figure out how to cross it. We found a tangle of logs and what was among the tangle? A perfectly good REI carbon hiking pole. Maureen's pole had a mind to collapse on her at critical times so we just started using this one.

I wanted to leave the other because it was more weight to carry at a time when we were loath to carry any frills. Maureen insisted on bringing it along and that was to be a fateful decision.

Later that day, we were approaching Red's Meadow and the skies opened up. We were already beat, so we hustled toward a closer camp at Agnew Meadows. There was nothing there so we thought we would take the road down to Red's. As we approached the road, what do we see but a bus dropping off some more drowned rats? We race with our packs and make it just in time to take the free, dry bus down to Red's.

After our first pass, we realized that our mileage allowance each day was unrealistic if it included going over a pass. Conventional advice is that each 1000 feet up is equal to another mile. Not true. It is more like three. So Rawhide Karen cracked the whip and coaxed us to do extra miles on the down hills and flats. One such day was on the trail to Vermillion Resort. Of course, this was another torrential-down-pour day, and we decided to make Edison dock before the boat left. From other hikers, we found out it was running 15 minutes late due to the storms and that we might make it if we hustled. Six miles in an hour and a half through rain, mud, and the swollen rivers brings us to the dock as the boat is releasing from the moorings. Made it. But it gets better. Due to the rain, campers were staying longer but with a little bargaining, Karen and Maureen get the last beds and have a dry, comfy night. We wash clothes, ourselves, buy the store out of DEET, beer and candy bars,

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stuff ourselves with turkey, pork chops and fish and then head out across the lake for more rain.

A couple of days later, the weather gets worse as we head into Muir Ranch in a downpour and three inches of hail. This time we are drowned and beaten rats. At the ranch we ask if they have any accommodations left. Good Luck! Due to no-shows, they have some tent cabins at \$125 per night including meals. These had beds, some shelter from the incessant mosquitoes, and a degree of dryness. At that price we didn't feel too lucky but the rain stopped, our supplies came in, we had three great meals, a couple of hot tubs and then the bonus. The following day the leader of the group with the no-shows decided to charge us only \$50 per person. Heck, we ate more than that. This was also one of the food drops. As we packed our bear canisters, the gals were lamenting that we had no snacks or chocolate. One of the other hikers was giving away about 8 pounds of candy bars. We hiked out with a couple of extra pounds each but what a treasure to be rationed along the way. We also scored a rain poncho that doubled as a tarp to give us some added protection from the rain in a shelter without sides.

Finally, we crossed Selden Pass. It stopped raining. The mosquitoes reduced by 99%. The relentless sun came out. Maureen lost her hat and was hiking with a rag tied over half of her eyes. What do we find a few miles later? Yah, that's right, an OR safari hat.

At the next pass, we had to cross boulder fields up and down. Karen took a tumble and bent her pole into an "L". We needed two poles each for balance. What dead weight was in my pack? Voila, another pole. Back on the road again.

Now we are deep in the wilderness. No resorts. Nearest exit three days away. We are hitting a pass almost every day and instead of getting stronger, we are getting weaker. It is not the altitude or lack of food or rest. We start talking of the first meal, food we will eat when we get out. These dream foods always had a lot of fat. Then we realize that our great dehydrated diet had no fat and that it was being eaten off of our bodies. While making us happy about our waist lines, it was also fatiguing our legs. We were lethargic all day. We went from dreaming to asking for the stuff from fellow hikers. Pete scored 9 energy bars and that got him up the passes. We also got some cheese and some flax oil bars. This gave us the kicker to get over Forester pass and up Whitney.

By now, Rawhide had us a day and a few hours ahead. We needed the extra time and took lots of breaks. We were able to summit and hike out a day early. What a stroke of luck as the portal store was scheduled to be closed on our planned exit day but we were a day early so enjoyed our cheese burgers, fries, beers, ice cream, candy bars, etc.

But our luck was not out yet as we headed to Malibu to meet Karen's brother, Richard. After some great seafood

and meeting McGiver, we find the hotels full or outrageous. We find a camp at the movie set of MASH. Of course, I gave away my sleeping pad to another hiker but Steve pulls out his yoga mat and saves the day.

Such is life. We had someone watching out for us. Have a great hike.



THE WHEATLAND MUSIC FESTIVAL

by Cindy Taylor

Wheatland...I first heard about it several years ago from Pat Murad, whose description made it sound like something I would really enjoy, but it seemed there were always other commitments or activities preventing me from attending this annual event. If you haven't heard about it, I am referring to the Wheatland Music Festival, which is an annual event that occurs the weekend after Labor Day in Remus, Michigan. This year's festival was the 33rd annual, and I finally was able to attend.

Serious talk about the Wheatland Music Festival started back in April this year on the SOLARfolkers Yahoo Group (a Yahoo group for music lovers—SOLAR members or not) and I put the date on my calendar and didn't let any other activities replace it. Boy, am I glad I did because it was such an amazing festival.

While the festival events do not officially start until late afternoon on Friday, they open the gates around 10 in the morning. Pat Murad was a volunteer worker so he was able to get in early to scope out, and hopefully, save some camping space for the rest of us. The rest of us consisted of Ward & Carla Shortridge, Elizabeth Schwab, Janet Schester, Lynn Dubay, and myself—all of us arriving at different times throughout the day on Friday. It is such a popular festival that people wait in line for 4-5+ hours to get in the gates when they first open. Fortunately by the time Janet, Lynn, and I arrived after 8:00 pm, there were no more lines, but unfortunately, we missed a full 2 hours of music! I told myself that it would be okay, because there was still several hours' worth of music to be heard that night and much, much more over the following two days.

Upon our arrival, everyone we encountered greeted us with a smile and a "Happy Wheatland!" Carla came over to say hello and good-night. She was also a festival volunteer whose shift began at midnight so she needed to get some rest before beginning her shift. We said good-night and she swept us off for a quick orientation tour of the festival grounds. First, there was the Dance Pavilion where they were giving contra and square dance lessons before an official dance with a real band (the Foghorn String Band) playing the music! Then we moved on to the Centennial Stage where we caught the end of a performance by Seth Bernard & Daisy May that was really, really good. I would have liked to have seen much more of this duo, but I told myself again, there would be a lot more great music to be heard in the coming days. Pat led us on to the Main Stage where Ira Bernstein and Riley Baugus were performing: one on the banjo and the other dancing. They both were great! That was the end of our tour for the night, but we had only covered a fraction of the festival grounds which includes an area for Kids called Kids Hill, a Kids Hill Stage, an area for young people called MiddleGround. There were also tents where you could learn how to play the Dulcimer or Drums from other musicians. There was a Folk Tent, a Workshop Tent, festival food, artists' booths, and much, much more! I was just dazed with all of the different options! I didn't know what to do with so many choices so we decided to set up our tent and then return to the music. The rest of the weekend seemed like a blur to me. There was just so much to do, that it seemed I was always worrying that I was missing something, but I managed to enjoy everything I did.

With such a large group, inevitably, there were times when we separated to observe or participate in an act or activity that most interested us. A couple of the most enjoyable activities for me were participating in a drum class, followed by African dance lessons. Imagine my surprise when I looked up during the dance lesson (while trying to ensure my right knee was up at the same time as my left arm, then switch back and forth with the other knee/arm) to see Ward taking pictures of the class! I think I was successful in hiding behind the people in the row in front of me to not get caught on film. Fortunately Ward was only taking still pictures and not video because I would pay to have that destroyed if my clumsiness had been recorded!

The Festival ended Sunday evening and we all headed for home, but we all agreed that it was a wonderful weekend and are planning to attend next year. If you like traditional arts, music, and camping, you would enjoy the Wheatland Music Festival, so mark your calendars for September 7-9, 2007. It is also a wonderful place for kids so it would be a great family activity. If you would like to get additional information about the Wheatland Music Festival, you can go to www.wheatlandmusic.org.

If you are interested in joining other music lovers on the SOLARfolkers Yahoo Group, just search for "SOLARfolkers" from www.yahoo.com or find me or any of the others who attended the festival and we'll set you up.

MT. WHITNEY TRIP

by Bill Lynch

Since I didn't have the ambition, dedication, or time to pack with the "big dogs" on the John Muir Trail, I opted to combine a trip to California to visit my daughter and first grandchild with a trip to Mt. Whitney. After spending a few days visiting in San Jose, my plan was to acclimate by climbing White Mountain Peak, the third highest mountain in California at 14,256 feet, followed by a couple of days hiking before climbing Mt. Whitney.

I drove from San Jose to the trailhead at White Mountain Peak and arrived in the evening. I immediately started experiencing altitude sickness. I didn't sleep and Tylenol had no effect on my headache. I started for the peak at 6 AM the next morning. The trail is not very scenic and the first couple of miles are along the road to the University of California's Barcroft Lab. It then becomes an off-road trail past an observatory, to the summit. At about the three-quarters point I stopped for a break and snack. My headache had not abated and I was feeling nauseous so I decided to turn back.

After White Mountain Peak, I spent two nights at the Onion Valley Campground (elev. 9200 feet), hiking to Kearsarge Pass (elev. 11800 feet) the second day. By that time, I had acclimated to the altitude and felt good.

The next morning I drove to the Lone Pine Ranger Station and picked up my permit for the Mt. Whitney Trail. I spent the night at the Whitney Portal campground. At 6 AM the next morning, I started out, and reached Trail Camp (elev. 12000 feet) before noon. After spending the night at Trail Camp, I left for the summit at 4 AM, arriving on the summit shortly before 8:30 AM. It was August 14th, my 35th wedding anniversary, so the first order of business was to shout "Happy Anniversary" to my wife. I spent about an hour and a half socializing with other hikers and taking pictures before heading down.

In summary, "Mr. Altitude" really kicked my butt at White Mountain Peak, but I was able to acclimate and summit Mt. Whitney. (Side Note: Pete, you should have tried the 10" pancake at the Whitney Portal. Mine was at least 13" and came with three eggs and four strips of bacon, way more than I could eat!)

I returned to San Jose to spend a few more days with my daughter and the "little rug rat". I then completed a great vacation by attending the San Jose Jazz Festival and visiting the Bonny Doon Vineyard outside Santa Cruz. I recommend the Framboise (raspberry dessert wine) in a chocolate cup.



THE RECUMBENT VOYAGER

by Winnie Chrzanowski



Hunts' Map Guide to Michigan's Upper Peninsula

by Mary and Don Hunt

\$5.00 plus shipping and handling

www.hunts-upguide.com

Hey, all you Trolls (those of us who live "under" the Big Mac Bridge). Want to get the skinny on all the good stuff to see and to in "da UP" from the Yoopers? Well, this website and the map created by Mary and Don Hunt provides all the details you'll ever need and then some. What's the really good thing about this map and the information provided on the website? According to the authors, "No one pays to be included in our publications or on our website . . ."

I discovered this website (and consequently the map) from an article in the 8-16-06 Detroit Free Press. The article stated that "In 1976, Don and Mary Hunt started the Ann Arbor Observer, which continues to appear monthly under different ownership after all these years. In 1990, they published "Southeast Michigan," a groundbreaking guidebook to metro Detroit that celebrated the region's gems and criticized its failings. Other Michigan books followed, and in the past several years, they have concentrated on Hunts' Guide to Michigan's Upper Peninsula . . ."

The website is an updated and expanded version of their book, Hunts' Guide to Michigan's Upper Peninsula. The book, sadly, is not in print and the only edition I could find was a used copy for about \$40. Apparently, an updated version of this book has been postponed. But, the good news is that the website contains a vast array of UP information such as where to get specialty foods like trimbleberry jam, restaurants like the Driftwood in St. Ignace that offers "good food priced for the locals," lodgings, campgrounds, etc. The offerings are listed according to region so if you're looking up a place to camp or eat, you need to know the region to find the place.

The map, which costs a whopping five bucks plus shipping and handling, is a gem. I bought it, and on our recent trip to "da UP" used it. We tested out the Driftwood in St. Ignace to see if the authors were reliable. The food was good, reasonably priced, and the service (one lone server working the entire place on Labor Day) was surprisingly good.

The map is quite handy despite its size: 12" high and over 3' wide. It folds easily—like an accordion. It's sturdily constructed on water-resistant paper. It's annotated and offers more than 300 recommended destinations—from natural wonders (beaches, waterfalls, etc.) to attractions (museums), food and accommodations, and walks. One side of the map shows an annotated full-color view of the entire UP. The other side provides maps of 12 UP towns. Towns are printed in large purple font, attractions in black, and eateries in red. A "helpful information" box indicates where to find visitor centers or chambers of commerce and includes a mileage grid in the upper right corner which is readily accessible without unfolding the map. The only detraction I could find about the map is that it doesn't list accommodations or campgrounds. Other than that, the map is a great way to discover the best of "da UP."

Check out the website; buy the map. If you like "da UP" or want to discover more about it, these are great tools to get you going.

EDITOR'S NOTE

by Winnie Chrzanowski

I gave a wrong definition to the word corrie on Pete Lamb's John Muir Trail article from the September edition of the SOLAR Ray. A corrie is a circular bite out of a hill, its not a valley. It would be where a glacier took out part of a hill, its very specific.

BLACK HILLS OF DAKOTA

by Ivanov Sergey



Nightmare started when I woke up. A barbed wire and a desert beyond. Is it concentration camp in USSR? No, it is our first camp in South Dakota. The land beyond the barbed wire belongs to local Indians. We did not drive through to the Wind Cave park because of awful traffic in Chicago area. We made it up early morning. The adventures in Black hills begun.



Starting from Centennial trailhead. Couple hours later than we planned. We have to be at French creek campground tonight. There is water. Here are buffalo. Most of buffalo are nice. They eat grass and do not attack people. Usually. This particular time they mate and young males become aggressive. They can chase hikers.

Fortunately they are lazy. Unfortunately there are too many of them right on the trail. This one already had some misunderstanding with people. The people win. We were not so lucky. Another beast runs us off the trail. We lost at least another hour. All these adventures made our first day the hardest one. However we made it.



French creek horse campground is a nice place run by nice people. Early morning we had a visitor. This one was not troublesome. We are out of desert into pine woods. Much easy to hike. Next stop is Iron creek horse camp.



We had nothing to do but find a beautiful spot for our third camp. There we met another backpackers, looked at their map and changed our plans. There are better trails than Centennial. They are around Harney peak and Sylvan lake. We are going there.



It started as a gently trail. Then terrain become a bit hilly. Than a bit more hilly. And the sun was hot. And backpacks heavy with water that we stupidly carry to be safe. Sometimes it looked a little bit as a hard work. After all we got on the top of things.

We were rewarded for all up hills and down hills. We got to one of the most scenic places in North America. No any devil around but there are some devil's towers.



Sometimes Black Hills are almost black. You need certain combination of sun and shadows. You also need to gain some elevation to the top of Harney Peak.



Dakota is famous by its Badlands. The place is not really bad. The sunset, sunrise and the night sky make it worth a separate trip. We had just enough time for a short hike and camp. And also the biggest rattlesnake I've ever seen.

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 LeslieGene@aol.com.



ALGONQUIN WILDERNESS CANOE TRIP

by Sharon Smelter & Phil Crookshank

Sunshine streaming through a white billowy cloud,
loons beckoning soft and loud,
canoes gliding together and apart,
Paddles swaying to tunes of the heart...

Five Solarites - Mary Dunn, Scott Elliott, Margaret Martin, Phil Crookshank and Sharon Smelter - were empowered by the ebb and flow, the wind and the water, the peace and solitude of Algonquin Provincial Park - 4 hours north of Toronto.

Our first and last days, like bookends or a shelf, were drenched in Algonquin mist. In-between were glorious days of sunshine, blue skies, inland lakes and little island paradises. What else did our canoe trip offer?

Rest - Sleep in until the sun wakes you up, your breakfast nook window overlooking blue lakes and rocky shores of the loons' home.

Challenges - Carry a canoe on my shoulders? You say what? For how far? Over trails of rocks and roots? (7 days paddling 54 km, 13 lakes, 12 portages, 7,595 meters portaged) Many of us were taught of portage rests, hand made cushiony sponges made by Phil to ease the bite of a thwart across your back (very appreciated), and the ever wonderful use of thunderboxes at needful times - (works better than logs and Maple leaves!)

Sights and Sounds - Green forests, blue waters, loons swimming and calling, soaring birds, swimming beavers, howling wolves, blooming wildflowers, sounds of stubbing toes on the rocks. Some lakes were found still as glass with perfect reflections of canoes and shorelines. Others had whitecaps with us battling wind for hours. But a challenge worth every minute and days ending around a campfire filled with jokes, stories, sharing and laughter.

The moon and stars many nights we found to be so numerous and bright that evening paddling could be done easily. Sitting on the shore of little islands under these stars made a single person feel as small as a little glowworm found along the shore.

"My paddles keen and bright, Flashing like silver,
Swift as a wild goose flies. Dip, dip and swing
we dip, pull, glide, as over the still waters we slide
The moon and stars guide our way, as we dip, pull, glide
Land of the silver birch, home of the beaver,
Where still the mighty moose wanders at will,
Blue lake and rocky shore, I will return once more!"

Sung en route by Margaret and Sharon



AN ALGONQUIN REFLECTION

by Sharon Smelter

Day 1 - filled with leaving the city behind, direction - away from the hustle and bustle of preparations to leave.

Day 2 - Anticipation - It's beginning - the adventure - Sore muscles, Aching bodies - No matter how much training - new muscles being used

Day 3 - Discovery - The sounds of the loons, the feel of the cool silky water, the campfires, the ocean of stars at night, the jokes and laughter

Day 4 - Settling in - A peacefulness - the familiarity of time by the sun and moon - NO WATCH - live from the land

Day 5 - Delight - unencumbered - Singing - Freedom - Liberated from demands and stresses of the workday, fashion and deadlines

Day 6 - Becoming One - The pine tree smells, the waterlogged feet, the mildewed shirt, the mosquitoes even stay away now

Day 7 - Returning - Washing away the outward grime, fresh clothes, renewed spirits, memories for a lifetime - Desire to share the gifts

Day 8 - Looking forward to Another Day, Another Time, Another Place



SOLAR HIKE & BIKE SCHEDULE FOR OCTOBER 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

Post a message on the SOLAR Yahoo! site, after you decide to join one of the hikes: discuss car pooling/ride sharing, obtain a list of other hikers, and obtain additional details or directions for the hike. Make plans for an after hike restaurant stop.

October 1, 2006 Sunday - 9:30 AM, Opening day for archery deer hunting. Hike in the non-hunting area of Proud Lake State Recreation Area. Meet in parking lot down from the Park Rangers Office, Wixom & Garden Road.

October 1, 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. (Anyone interested in bike riding after the hike?)

The first and third Sunday's of the month have been averaging over 25 hikers at Maybury State Park with the combined Solar and BS Hiker Hikes.

October 7, 2006 Saturday - 9:30 AM, Kensington Metro Park, Meet at the Nature Center, North of Kensington Rd entrance, past the golf course. (Bike after the hike)

October 15, 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. (Bike Ride or Eat)

October 21, 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.)

October 29, 2006, Sunday - 9:30 AM, (Daylight Savings Time Ends-Fall Back) Highland State Park: South of M-59, Highland Rd. 3-4 miles west of Williams Lake Rd. Meet at the Barn.

November 5, 2006 Sunday - 9:30AM, 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.

SPOTLIGHT ON DENNY PHILLIPS



HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN A MEMBER OF SOLAR?

I've been a member since 1985; I joined in order to get some outdoor experience. I've taken basic backpacking, winter backpacking, and survival. I've also taken the winter backpacking class another two times because it's changed so much depending on the instructor.

HOW DID YOU GET INVOLVED WITH SOLAR?

I found out about SOLAR from Hal Joerine who was into caving through SOLAR.

HOW DID YOU START BACKPACKING?

My son, who was 15 years old at the time, was in Boy Scouts and they needed leaders and I thought I better get some skills.

WHAT HAS YOUR FAVORITE TRIP BEEN SO FAR?

I've been fortunate to have gone on a lot of good trips, but my favorite was 8 days backpacking around 100 kilometers in the Silhouette Mountains in Killarney Provincial Park with Jim Wright. We had spectacular campsites and Jim dehydrated all the food so our loads were lighter. Most of my trips are my favorite at the time.

WHAT WOULD YOUR DREAM TRIP BE?

Simple: level ground, good weather, good vistas, great companions, and a light pack!

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

Botany type classes, including identifying trees, plants, and wild edibles and animal tracking and footprint identification.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR MOST REWARDING EXPERIENCE IN SOLAR?

The most rewarding experience for me in SOLAR so far has been watching the development of former students as they learn new skills and become instructors themselves.

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

SOLAR has changed in several ways during the years, most notable the large increase in membership as well as the increased diversity in interests of the members. Lots of new faces. The winter camping class has changed too, we used to ski on the trail with backpacks on rather than snowshoes and sleds and those hills can be killer.





ENJOYING MICHIGAN WINTERS

by Tom Oloffo



Overview

Enjoying Michigan Winters is one of the core courses we offer throughout the year. You will learn the "ins and outs" of winter backpacking and travel to places where you can enjoy fellowship, winter solitude, snowy scenery, and make it an adventurous learning experience.

To properly prepare for this course, you should have a good foundation in backpacking so that you can concentrate on learning new skills and keeping yourself warm, well fed, and hydrated. You will carry a backpack and travel while wearing non-insulated hiking boots, insulated boots, snowshoes, or x-country skis. There will be no X-C skiing instruction in this course, but you may use your skis if you're already a skier. Being in good physical condition will not only keep you warm but will also give you the reserve energy needed to act in an emergency. So please continue your regular aerobic exercise if you already have one. This course is the prerequisite for the Mountaineering & Winter Survival Course, usually scheduled in February.

Tentative Class Topics

- Teamwork and leadership
- Basic first aid and incident management
- Clothing, boots, sleeping system, and gear
- Group sanitation and personal hygiene
- Basic snow shoeing, sled making
- Winter safety and trip planning
- Heat management, nutrition, and hydration
- Campsite selection, quinzee building, and kitchen set up
- "Leave No Trace" practices

Lead Instructor Contact

Contact Tom Oloffo, (313) 477-0221 or mcmountainman@yahoo.com to sign up or if you have any questions.

Prerequisite and Sign-up Requirements

This course is open to all graduates of the SOLAR Beginning Backpacking Course who are also paid members in 2006.

If you have a medical condition, e.g. problem in regulating body temperature or metabolism, problem with breathing, heart condition, injuries in your back, knee, or ankle, or severe allergy, please consult with your doctor before taking this course. Illegal drugs and alcohol are not allowed in this course.

Although the following is not a sign-up requirement, we recommend that you take a Wilderness First Aid Course when one is offered. A Standard First Aid/Adult CPR certification should be your minimal safety skill in all outings. Please call your local American Red Cross Chapter for evening or weekend classes.

Signing Up

At the October, November, and December General Meetings or call me.

A non-refundable payment of \$100.00 is due at sign up. Please make check payable to SOLAR. If you're paying in cash, please write down "CASH" and initial next to your sign-up. No refunds unless SOLAR cancels the course.

Extra Expenses

Budget at least \$150 for these expenses: gas, food, motel, state park vehicle permit, snowshoes or skis rental, snow shovel, and additional personal gear and clothing. We'll do our best to minimize your cost (see next page).

Class Attendance and Schedule

Still Finalizing Details & Locations - so this schedule may change!

If you are going to Practical 1, you must attend the first 3 classes and also complete the mandatory gear check while we're in class. You must attend Practical 1 and Class 6 if you are going to Practical 2. You must attend both practicals to graduate.

A DAY AT THE RACES

by Alyse Robinson & Kathy Drewyore

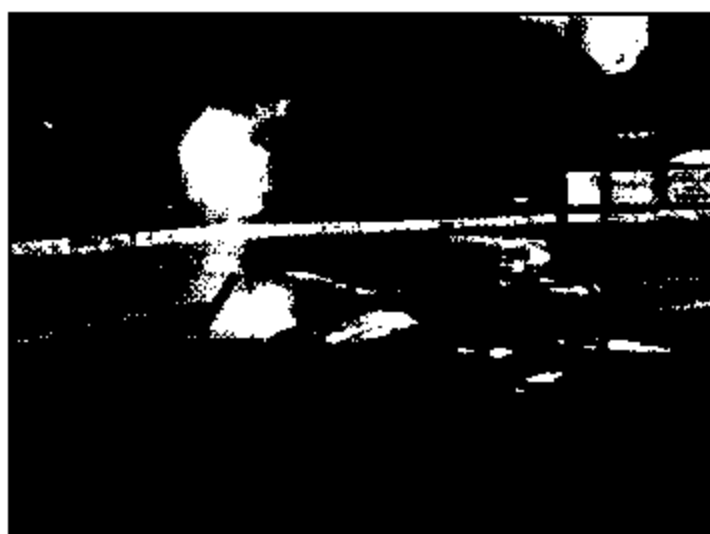
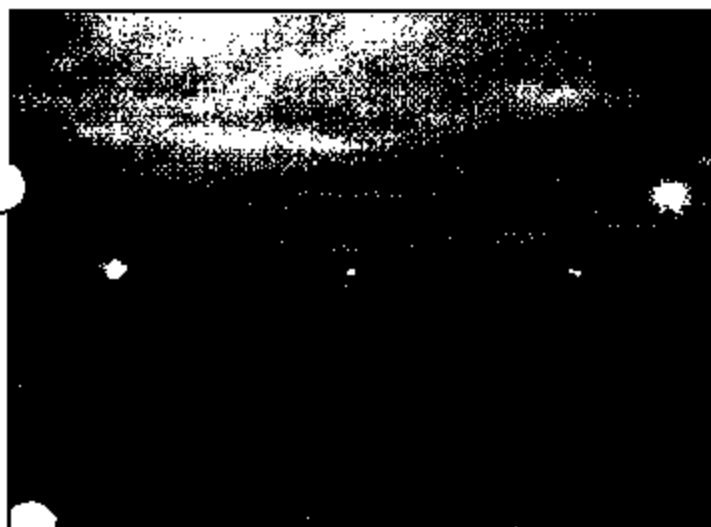
On Friday, September 9th, I was invited by Ms. Kathy Drewyore and her son Matt to the Flat Rock Speedway for a School Bus race event. First, I have to say that the parking set up was hassle-free. They had volunteers directing cars to their spots, alleviating the endless circling for a spot. Then as we walked into the stadium, an usher from the Kiwanis Club directed us straight to our seats. We had the special reserved seats with backs. High class seating!

The races started with stock cars. They are numbered and have their own designs. Those races were full of loud engines, lots of gasoline, and exciting crashes. But that wasn't even the best part! The races with the school busses were amazing! These big, painted busses racing and crashing into each other was the highlight of the evening. These particular races had an added twist...instead of just going around in circles on the track like the stock cars. The busses ran a Figure 8 track. Yep, that's right, an 8 has a criss cross in the middle. The bus drivers had to time their crossing so as to avoid the other behemoths barreling from

the other direction. Think NASCAR crossed with demolition derby in school busses. WOW!

The whole crowd was electric as the busses pulled up to the starting line. Lights flashing, engines roaring, they start the race. Within five minutes of the start, one of the busses lost a tire; the result of being sandwiched between two other busses. Crunch! Another bus ran over it. Ouch. They ran into each other, broke off front ends and generally tried to take out their opponents. Sparks were flying as metal scrapes the track. Busses are smoking, fluids are pouring onto the track. The action continued until the end and one bus remained. It really was a night that I won't forget.

I would like to thank Ms. Drewyore for driving us all the way to Flat Rock. I would also like to thank the members of her group, SOLAR, for getting the tickets and making this possible. It was an incredible night and I truly appreciate the planning that you guys did!



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

OCTOBER ACTIVITIES

10/3	TUE	GENERAL MEETING	Colony Hall	Lou Szakal	Eve-est2008@comcast.net
10/3	TUE	Program: SOLAR Summer Trips	Colony Hall	Karl Overheul	Cyber.nomad@comcast.net
10/8	SUN	Pumpkin Party and Full Moon Canoe Paddle**	Heavner's, Proud Lake	Margaret Martin/ Alan Heavner	mpluscat@hotmail.com AlanHeavner@heavnercanoe.com
10/14	SAT	Octoberfest**	Howel, MI	Carol McCrie	cmccrie@sbcglobal.net

OCTOBER CLASSES

10/4, 7-8	WED, WKND	Advanced Land Navigation	TBA/Waterloo State Rec Area	Karl Overheul	Cyber.nomad@comcast.net
10/11, 10/18, 10/25, 10/27 10/29	WED/ WKND	Search and Rescue	East Detroit High School	Tom Hayes	thomashayes@wideopenwest.com
10/14-10/15 & TBA	WKND	Wilderness First Aid	TBA	Mike Mallon	mmallon130390MI@comcast.net
10/17, 10/21- 10/22	TUE/ WKND	Basic Land Navigation	TBA/Waterloo State Rec Area	Karl Overheul	Cyber.nomad@comcast.net

NOVEMBER ACTIVITIES

11/3-11/4	WKND	Wedding Celebration**	Bald Mountain State Recreation Area	Rebecca Yoo/ Dave Sweetun	rebeccayoo@gmail.com
11/7	TUE	GENERAL MEETING	Colony Hall	Lou Szakal	Eve-est2008@comcast.net
11/7	TUE	Program: Mountaineering	Colony Hall	Karl Overheul	cybernomad@backpacker.com
11/18	SAT	Hoedown**	Milford, MI	Dave and Moe DeFrance	defranceomnexus@comcast.net

NOVEMBER CLASSES

11/4, 11/9- 11/12	SAT/ WKND	Women in the Woods	TBA	Pam Riehl Szakal	pariehl1@netscape.net
11/8, 11/17- 11/19	WED/ WKND	Outdoor Cooking and Nutrition	TBA	Pam Riehl Szakal	pariehl1@netscape.net
TBA	MULTI	Enjoying Michigan Winters	TBA	Tom Oloffo	mcmountainman@yahoo.com

DECEMBER ACTIVITIES

12/5	TUE	GENERAL MEETING	Colony Hall	Lou Szakal	Eve-est2008@comcast.net
12/5	TUE	Program: Holiday Party	Colony Hall	Karl Overheul	Cyber.nomad@comcast.net

DECEMBER CLASSES

12/7, 13, 17/11, 18, 19- 21, 25, 26, 2-4	MULTI	Mountaineering	TBA	Lou Szakal	Eve-est2008@comcast.net
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JANUARY ACTIVITIES

1/2	TUE	GENERAL MEETING	Colony Hall	Lou Szakal	Eve-est2008@comcast.net
1/2	TUE	Program	Colony Hall	Karl Overheul	Cyber.nomad@comcast.net
1/12-1/14	WKND	Skiing, snowshoeing, etc.	Hartwick Pines State Park	Kevin Cotter	solar@wowway.com
1/26-1/28	WKND	Crawltathon	Carter Gages State Park, Kentucky	Leslie Cordova	lestegene@aol.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. 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)

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 hmpri@ameritech.net.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Submissions for the SOLAR Ray are due on the Friday two weeks prior to the monthly Steering Committee Meeting (October 20 for November issue). Electronic documents only. If you have any questions, please contact Rebecca Yoc at rayeditor@solaroutdoors.org.

STEERING COMMITTEE

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

Vice President: Moe DeFrance
Treasurer: Carol McCrine
By-Laws: Cindy Taylor
Equipment: Dave DeFrance
Membership: Mary Price
Public Relations: Pam Szakal
Webmaster: Dave Sweeton

PRESIDENTS AT LARGE

Mike Banks | Leslie Cordova | Moe DeFrance | Al Fytak
Steve Gardner | Bill Halvingis | Cindy Harrison-Felix | Tom Hayes
Doug Lanyk | Larry Martin | Joan Hettinger | Tom Qloffo
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 Urewyore, Sheila Hardy, Pam Schmelzer, and Elizabeth Schwab

Visit our website: www.solaroutdoors.org

