

# The SOLAR Ray

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

April 2007

## MCGUIRE'S RESORT

by Pete Lamb

It's the middle of winter, well it seems that way. You have had cabin fever for several weeks now, you need to get away from Metro Detroit and this weird winter before you kick the dog, the cat, or your significant other. If you feel this way bunky you should have been on Elizabeth Schwab's trip to McGuire's. It would have cured all your ills and made you a much nicer person. Seven cabin fever sufferers showed up at the resort on Friday the 1st of March for treatment. A weekend of skiing and snowshoeing, hot tubbing, and eating. Did I forget drinking- tsk, tsk.

They do have snow up around Cadillac, lots of it, and they got more on Friday evening. This enlivened the drive up north and the last part was very slippery. Elizabeth, however, did not need bad road conditions. She managed to right off her beloved Saturn before she left the Detroit area; but with great determination managed to rustle up a ride and arrive at a reasonable hour. She received treatment on arrival- bourbon and an ice pack for her neck, followed by karaoke. She is almost normal now and most people would not even notice.



Saturday was fairly warm and groups went their different ways after breakfast to pursue the various therapies available. Some snowshoed on McGuire's property- they have a six K loop. Maria and Sheila went downhill skiing at Caberfae, and the rest went cross-country skiing on the Mackenzie trail system in the National Forest. Cadillac is a popular area with snowmobiles and there were a lot of them around, but fortunately they are not allowed into large areas of the National Forest. We did not hear a sound as we skied. They do not groom the forest trails and several feet of snow had fallen since anyone had skied the trails

so we spent a happy five or six hours breaking trail and following the blue blazes on the trees. The trail system is well marked and had maps at the intersections, but I would strongly recommend taking a compass, as it would be very easy to lose track of the blazes if the visibility was bad. There was over three feet of snow in the woods and several people fell. This made a pleasant diversion for those who managed to remain upright- watching those less fortunate struggle to their feet covered in snow. The weather was snow showers and intermittent sun. Fortunately lunch was had during a sun shower when we found a nice log, butt height from the snow. Freezing rain had bejeweled the upper branches of the trees so we enjoyed a simple lunch surrounded by a forest that looked as if from a fantasy. It was a memorable lunch. When we got back to the cars the temp was 36 degrees with no wind, a very pleasant day indeed.



## CONTENTS

McGuire's Resort	1	Photo Contest	8
Wildflowers & Morels Walk	2	Bruce Peninsula Trip	9
Steering Committee	3	Canadian Winter Adventure	10
White Water Rafting	4	Hike Schedule	10
Hart-Montague Bike Trail	5	Land Navigation Class	11
Kensington Clean-up	5	Nordhouse Duks Clean-up	12
Learn to Sail	5	Summer Excursion	12
Spotlight On	6	Intermediate Backpacking	12
Enjoying Michigan Winters	7	Canoe Algonquin	13
SOLAR Reunion	8	Book Review	14
MGS Bike Tour	8	Calendar	15

Continued from page 1...

We had a very tough therapy session Saturday evening- sauna, hot tub, and pool followed by all you can eat buffet. The buffet included Death by Chocolate cake, and a bottle of wine. Just to show how much stamina SOLAR people have, some extended the therapy to include a horse-drawn sleigh ride, and a turn around McGuire's lit ski trail. That will fix what ails you.

Sunday dawned (I did not really see it) bright and sunny. Half the group chose to check out, but a group of four decided to ski the home trails, and completed the whole McGuire loop before leaving for home. It was a good choice- the weather was perfect, and there was certainly plenty of snow. I find trail grooming at McGuire's somewhat haphazard, it consisted of running a snowmobile around the trail at some time in the past. As the wind had rearranged the snow into drifts, trail breaking was required once more. It's a good job I had practiced the day before.

At this point I would like to turn serious, and seeing as I have become the SOLAR curmudgeon by default, (is that a Steering Committee position?) I can. I wish to point out there is no such thing as a waxless ski. I do not care what they advertise them as, waxless does not exist. Are you listening to me out there? NO wax less skis. All skis have to have a hot wax base. On skis with the fish scales (so called waxless) you hot wax the smooth area front and back of the scale area and before you ski you rub on silicone or Teflon on the scale area. Have you ever wondered why other skiers glide past you on the trails while you trudge around with three inches of snow stuck to the bottom of your ski, wondering what the hell is the pleasure in this- well this is the secret. (You can slip me a twenty at the meeting) The number of SOLAR people who tell me they have had these skis 10 -15 years and never waxed them boggles my mind. Their perseverance is astounding. When the manufacturer claims wax less they are referring to the kick wax area which they have replaced with the fish scales. These scales mechanically lock into the snow as you stride or go up hill. Waxable skis have to have a wax put on them that is matched to the current temperature in the same area as your fish scales, to serve the same purpose.

While I'm on a roll, get rid of the Gore-Tex jacket while cross country skiing. It cannot possibly pass enough moisture through the membrane to take care of the sweat you will generate, and you will get wet. Take it with you, certainly, but ski in a thin fleece that the perspiration can evaporate through. Perhaps you can go to McGuire's next year, and you better wax you skis because I will be checking.



## WILDFLOWERS AND MORELS WALK

by Jim Coe and Margaret Martin

Saturday, May 5, 2007

Meet at the Island Lake State Recreation Area trailhead parking lot at 10:00 AM in Brighton to look for wildflowers and mushrooms. Please bring food to grill for a picnic or snacks. Then we will head over to the Furon Meadows Metro Park in Brighton at 2:00 PM at the river picnic site. It is about 6 miles away from the Island Lake State Recreation Area, close to US 23, off Hamel Road. You may come at 10:00 AM or 2:00 PM or stay for both.

Bring your field wildflower and mushroom guidebooks; please note that we WILL NOT eat any of the mushrooms we find unless we are sure they are morels. Jim Coe can help you identify the morels.

Please bring along a compass and if you have a GPS unit, bring that along as well, we will be wandering off the trail especially in our hunt for morels so a compass and GPS unit will come in handy.



## WILDFLOWERS AND MORELS WEEKEND CAMPOUT

by Jim Coe and Margaret Martin

May 11-13, 2007

We will be car camping at Seaton Creek Campground, south of Mesick in the Manistee National Forest and Northwest of Cadillac. We'll follow the Manistee River Trail to look for wildflowers and morels. The Mesick Mushroom Festival will be going on that weekend so we may go check out the festivities.

There will be a challenge to identify the most species of wildflowers and who can find the most morels.

No experience or cost involved other than the campsite fee. Please bring a dish to pass at the picnic potluck on Sunday, May 6.

Contact: Jim Coe at [jjmc36@comcast.net](mailto:jjmc36@comcast.net) or Margaret Martin at [mrcpluscal@hotmail.com](mailto:mrcpluscal@hotmail.com) for more information.



## ANNUAL SOLAR STEERING COMMITTEE ELECTIONS

For the past 30 years, SOLAR has strived to be a successful organization, school, and all around fun place to be. This is your chance to make a difference.

On May 1st, 2007, SOLAR will be holding its annual Steering Committee elections. By running for one of the positions, or just by participating in the voting process, you can have a say in which direction SOLAR is heading. All currently paid members are eligible to run and vote. No experience is necessary—just a willingness to make SOLAR the best outdoor club it can be!

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

The Steering Committee is comprised of the following positions:

### OFFICERS

- **President** - Oversees monthly meetings, fields member questions and concerns
- **Vice President** - Assists president and steps in for him or her when necessary
- **Secretary** - Takes minutes at Steering Committee meetings and distributes
- **Treasurer** - Manages club finances, bank account and reimburses members

### COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

- **Education** - Oversees all classes and provides direction to lead instructors
- **Membership** - Manages membership lists, collects dues and oversees liability release forms

- **Activities** - Collects, posts and announces monthly activities

- **Programs** - Organizes all monthly programs held at membership meetings

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

- **SOLAR Ray Editor** - Collects articles, edits, organizes, formats, lays out, and prints newsletter

- **Equipment** - Stores, organizes, distributes, and collects SOLAR rental equipment

- **Historian** - Collects and stores information about the club

- **By-Laws** - Oversees club by-laws and changes

- **Webmaster** - Manages, maintains, updates, and hosts club website

As of March 17th the following people are running:

- **President** - Lou Szakal
- **Secretary** - Pam Szakal
- **Treasurer** - Carol McCrinie
- **Education** - Michael Banks
- **Activities** - Kevin Cotter

- **Public Relations** - Heather Hall
- **SOLAR Ray Editor** - Rebecca Sweeton
- **By-Laws** - Cindy Taylor
- **Webmaster** - Dave Sweeton

If you are interested in running for a position or have any questions, please contact Karl Overhuel at cyber.nomad@comcast.net or call (248) 890-0738. You must submit your name and the position by April 7th, 2007 to have your name listed in the May SOLAR Ray.

The final deadline to submit your name in advance of the May meeting is April 27th, 2007. After April 27th you may select to be a write-in candidate. All candidates will have an opportunity to introduce themselves before the elections take place on May 1st. All positions are considered open until voting concludes on May 1st, 2007.

# WHITE WATER RAFTING/KAYAKING AND CHEAT FESTIVAL EXTRAVAGANZA!

by Charity M. Loring

When: May 3rd - 6th, 2007

Campgrounds - First Come, First Serve

Where: Cheat River/ Albright West Virginia (about a 6 hour drive from the Detroit Metro Area)

Teter's Campground

teterscampwv@aol.com - (304) 329-3626

Directions: <http://cheat.org/festival/>

Enjoy guided white water rafting tours or self guided kayaking during the day. At night join us for food, fun, music and dancing at the Annual Cheat River Festival!

## Cheat River Festival

<http://www.cheat.org/festival>

Cheat Fest 5K run, T-shirt art contest, Live Music, Downriver race, Vendors, and Art Market.

## Guided White Water Rafting Tours with Wilderness Voyagers

<http://www.wilderness-voyagers.com>  
800-272-4141

Wilderness Voyagers is closing off their entire Friday (4th) and Saturday (5th) for us until April 10th. So please try to register before then! Whatever spots they have left they will open back up to the public after April 10th. 8 people per raft.



The Cheat Canyon - Saturday, May 5th, Class IV- V+ Rapids, Experience Recommended. Trip length - 11 miles, 3-5 hours, Minimum age - 16 yrs. Old, Guide in every raft with regular water levels, \$89.00 pr. person, 10:00a.m. R.S.V.P. under Charity Loring.

The Cheat Narrows - Friday, May 4th, Class I - II Rapids, No experience required, Length - 5-7 miles, 3-4 hours, Minimum age - 8 years old. Family trip! \$37.95 pr. person, 2 p.m., R.S.V.P. under Charity Loring.



Located adjacent to the festival. Flush toilets and showers. It gets very packed (like sardines say the camp outfitters) and it will be difficult to get your vehicle out so bring lots of food. \$7/night. River access for kayakers.

\*\*Full by Friday afternoon prior to festival. They recommend getting there Thursday evening or early Friday morning. No pets allowed.

## Cheat Canyon Campground

[www.cheatcanyoncampground.com](http://www.cheatcanyoncampground.com) - (304)329-6522  
Contact name: Phil

About 300 yards from festival. Large open field by the river (9 acres) with flush toilets and pay-per-use showers (\$1.00). River access for kayakers. \$15/per person for the entire weekend.

\*\*Full by Friday afternoon prior to festival. They recommend getting there Thursday evening or early Friday morning. No pets allowed.

Cheat Canyon Campground may be the better of the two. It's significantly larger and you can get your vehicles in and out of the campground easily. Both campgrounds are within walking distance but Teter's is closer.

## Campgrounds - Reservations Required and Pet-Friendly

### Big Bear Lake Campground

<http://www.bigbearwv.com> - 304-379-4382

15 miles from festival, \$15 per person per night, bathroom and shower access. Pets Allowed

For more information contact: Charity M. Loring at [charitymarie@yahoo.com](mailto:charitymarie@yahoo.com).



## GET YOUR REAR IN GEAR ON THE HART-MONTAGUE BIKE TRAIL

by Dave DeFrance



The Hart-Montague Trail State Park is a paved, 22-mile trail (rails to trails pathway) passing through rural, forested lands. Scenic overlooks and picnic areas are located along the route.

When: May 11-13. We'll bike on Saturday, May 12th.

Friday: Arrive, set-up camp, and enjoy the campfire

Saturday: Start about 9 a.m. with 22 miles and lunch in Hart (Lakefront Cafe or Schooners). Return and get ready for the evening potluck.

Sunday, your options are:

- Head back home to celebrate with Mom
- Go up north and join the search for wild flowers and morels (see the Jim Coe/Margaret Martin outing)
- Go canoeing for 4 hours on the scenic White River with the Happy Mohawk Livery, contact 231-894-4209 for more information

Accommodations: May 11 and 12. Camp at White River RV Park and Campground, contact 231-894-4708 for more information.

Directions: <http://www.michiganenr.com/parksandtrails/ParksandTrailsInfo.aspx?id=452>

Costs: \$25 per person for 2 nights of camping, \$3 per person to use the trail (collected on the trail), and \$20 per person for canoeing.

I'll collect either \$25 or \$45 from you at the April meeting. After that, you are on your own.

Dave De France  
517-294-2333  
defranceomnexus@comcast.net

## KENSINGTON CLEAN UP

by Elizabeth Schwab

Kensington is considered the jewel of the Metro Park system and is such a wonderful place to spend time. Whether you like to bike, hike, rollerblade, cc ski, snowshoe, golf, picnic, boat, fish, hang out at the beach or all of the above, you can do it there.

Please join me in showing appreciation to Kensington and the Earth at the annual clean up day on Sat April 21st, which is also Earth Appreciation Day. It will be from (not SOLAR time) 9a-12p beginning at the Farm Center. A box lunch is provided and park entry is free. I'll be taking sign ups at the April meeting; the deadline is April 12th.

This activity is also to promote SOLAR so wearing of garb advertising the group is encouraged! The bigger the group, the more impact we'll have.

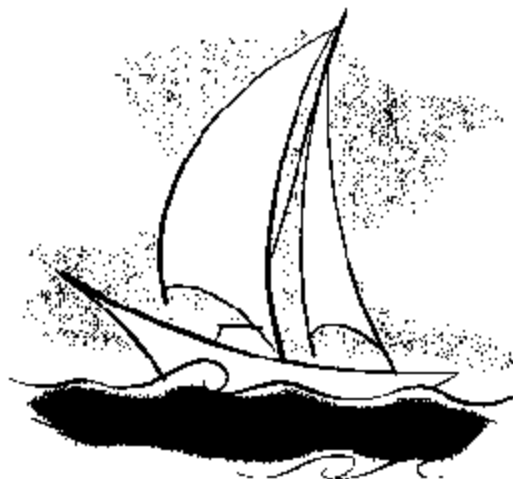
Questions? See me at the meeting or e mail me at [QES1339@yahoo.com](mailto:QES1339@yahoo.com).



## WANT TO LEARN TO SAIL?

by Vida Ruggero

Ahoy mates! Captain Vida here to tell you about an opportunity to learn to sail. Last summer I joined the U of M Sailing Club (yes, they DO allow Spartans). I went out many Saturday mornings to Baseline Lake in Dexter to learn from their seasoned sailing instructors. I even crewed a race, very exciting! By the end of the summer, Carlo and I were out enjoying an afternoon of sailing. If you want to know about starboard, leeward, coming about, jiving and other cool sailing terms, sign up for this one! A Saturday outing in June is planned, overnight camping on Friday night if you want. The first two lessons are free and membership is really reasonable if you decide you like it! Stay tuned for specific dates and more information at the April meeting.



## SPOTLIGHT ON: HEATHER HALL

by Rebecca Sweeton



### HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN A MEMBER OF SOLAR?

I joined in fall 2005.

### HOW DID YOU GET INVOLVED WITH SOLAR?

I hiked and biked a lot while in college but afterwards life took me in a few different directions. I finally realized how much I missed hiking, new activities and being outdoors, and also that many of my current friends weren't interested in these type of outdoor activities. While I adore these girls, I decided I also needed to find people who would enjoy these activities. An acquaintance suggested BSHikers (hiking group). After a few hikes, I'd heard enough about SOLAR from their members that I had to check it out for myself.

### HOW DID YOU START BACKPACKING?

A few years ago, I became a board member for a camp in Montana for kids and young adults with cancer and met several people who lived there. During a return trip, we went to Glacier National Park to backpack for a few days. Until then I had only car camped and gone on a few day trips. I admit I didn't have to do much in terms of organizing the trip or even carry much, but I enjoyed the experience enough that I wanted to try it again. I backpacked once more in Montana before finding SOLAR.

### WHAT HAS YOUR FAVORITE TRIP BEEN SO FAR?

My favorite SOLAR trip so far is probably to South Manitou Island. Definitely reinforced my belief that the people with you can make or break a trip. From the antics of a new Jet Boil to wine in a box to sitting in the tent laughing with Sally and Kathy while it rained like mad outside, it was a memorable trip. The drive to/from was almost as memorable...poor Chuck with three women discussing men, relationships, jobs, shoes. Caving in Kentucky was another fun trip - an interesting new experience shared with good friends.

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

I'd love for the rock climbing class to take place this year. I just started climbing in December and love it, however, would appreciate a bit more knowledge from a class.

### WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR MOST REWARDING EXPERIENCE IN SOLAR?

I've become more adventurous and open to new experiences. As I get older, I seem to push myself past my comfort zone more and have certainly done that several times since joining. I've learned a lot about myself and really appreciate the many "ah ha" moments, not to mention the laughs I've enjoyed with new friends. I've kind of been the girlie one in my family (shocking for many of you to discover that I'm sure!), so SOLAR and my new hobbies are really intriguing to my family. I really didn't think I'd enjoy it all as much as I do!

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

I've noticed that more members are sharing information with others, so in turn more new people are joining. I think that's great! With growth comes the need to look at how the organization can best serve its members - with class size/choices, trips and activities. As a steering committee member, I think this will have challenges, but also many opportunities and rewards.

## TAKE SOLAR MOUNTAIN BIKING 101 AND DISCOVER THE ADVENTURE!

"Riding is about rhythm and flow. It's the wind in your face and the challenge of hammering up a long hill. It's the reward at the top and the thrill of a high-speed descent. Biking lets you come alive both in body and spirit. After a while the bike disappears beneath you and you feel as if you're suspended in midair." - Gary Klein

Contact: Nancy McMahon, [funoutside1@aol.com](mailto:funoutside1@aol.com)



## ENJOYING MICHIGAN WINTERS 2007

by Sarah Kirkish

When Mike Banks said at the October SOLAR meeting "If you are ever interested in going to the Rockies, the John Muir Trail or to Isle Royal, you should sign up for Enjoying Michigan Winters because in these places, it could snow at any time of the year." I cringed because at that point I knew I was going to take the winter camping class. Fortunately thanks to Tom Oloffo, his merry gang of instructors and the other 12 students who graduated along with me, I even enjoyed the experience so the class lived up to its name.

Once you get past the original insanity of freezing and below freezing weather, there is definitely something to be said for winter camping. I was awestruck by the beauty of a quiet snow covered forest on our second practical at Pigeon River. Also, you definitely get a sense of how active the forest is year round with all the wildlife tracks. Also zero bugs, no bear bags, that you practically get the entire forest to yourself and forget dieting, you have to eat to stay warm are some huge pluses too.



Enjoying Michigan Winters is a lot of fun, but it's also a lot of work. You might not realize just how long it takes to build a snow shelter or quinzee, but you definitely appreciate it the second night when the temperatures are in the single digits. You expend a lot of time and energy just staying warm, hydrated and well fed, but you also learn just how resilient the human body is in extreme conditions and this helps give you outdoor confidence you will never get from reading a book.

Tom Oloffo and Roxanne Bittner did a great job organizing the class and making sure we had all the skills we needed for the class practicals along with enough planned activities and free-time to keep everyone happy. The instructors outnumbered the students two to one so there was plenty of people looking out to make sure everyone was safe and having a good time as well.



Most of all, learning the skills to stay warm are applicable year round especially if you want to camp in early spring or late fall. The propensity for temperatures in the 30s and 40s with the dangerous combination of ice and rain was thoroughly covered in the first practical and something that's not unheard of in three season camping. I can even claim that since the class I've been keeping the thermostat lower at my house, but I'll stop short of adding saved heating dollars to the list of benefits from the class.



Nevertheless Enjoying Michigan Winters definitely stressed that should you ever get caught in less than desirable weather, you have more options than you think and the class gives you the skills to help you stay safe and warm. Finally you can impress your friends and family with your spirit of adventure or just confirm to them how nuts you are about the outdoors. Either way, I'm definitely glad I got to fully Enjoy Michigan Winters.



## SOLAR 2<sup>ND</sup> ANNUAL REUNION

May 13-20, 2007

by Carol McCririe

Many of you were in attendance when SOLAR celebrated its 30th anniversary reunion at Brighton Recreation Area in 2006. It was such a success that we decided to make it an annual event. So, if you're up for a relaxing car-camping weekend with old and new friends, go to [www.midnrrreservations.com](http://www.midnrrreservations.com) and book a campsite at the Bishop Lake campground. Last year, SOLAR booked sites 4 to 47 in the upper campground. On the web site you will not be able to reserve a specific site, but you can use the comments section to ask for a site in the upper campground and/or a specific site number if you have a favorite. They don't guarantee the results, but they do their best. Plan to bring your own supplies for the weekend and whatever toys you want. There are sure to be hikes, bike rides, swimming, and more! New members and long-time members, please come and enjoy the fun! For more information or questions, contact Carol McCririe at [cmccririe@sbcglobal.net](mailto:cmccririe@sbcglobal.net).

## 24TH ANNUAL MGST BIKE TOUR

by Dave DeFrance

Come join the DCC (Down River Cycle Club) on Sunday May 6, for the 24th Metro Grand Spring Tour, covering routes along the Ilwaco River and scenic country roads in Wayne and Monroe counties. Choose from Road routes of 25, 45 and 62 miles.

**Breakfast -** For the 12th year, we are pleased to bring back the famous "Chris Cakes" who will be serving up a complete breakfast at the first food stop of all-you-can-eat pancakes, sausage, orange drink and coffee until 1 PM. Chris Cakes Breakfast is included in the registration fee.

**Food Stops -** As always, we provide well-stocked, friendly food stops with our famous homemade cookies, plenty to drink, and more.

**SAG Support and Maps -** SAG services are provided on all routes with limited repair capabilities and with radio support provided by the Motor City Radio Club. Maps will be provided for all routes.

Download the flyer at <http://www.lmb.org/dcc/mgst/mgst-flyer.pdf> for more information and the registration form.



## 2007 ANNUAL PHOTO CONTEST

by Karl Overheul

It's that time of year again when all of you amateur photographers can brag about your trips and show off your stuff. So dig out those photos from year 2006 and enter them into this year's photo contest. Prizes will be awarded to the first place winner in each category and to the overall Grand Prize winner. Photos will be voted on by SOLAR members who attend the May meeting, and winners will be announced that evening. Just show up with your photo to enter!

### CATEGORIES

- Scenery
- Animals
- Plants
- Humor
- Black & White
- Non-SOLAR Scenery
- Non-SOLAR Plants & Animals
- Non-SOLAR People
- Digitally Enhanced Scenery
- Digitally Enhanced Other
- Photo-Pro

### CATEGORY EXPLANATIONS

**Digitally enhanced-** If you alter your photo in any way on your computer or splice several photos together, you can only enter them in the "digitally enhanced" categories. Cropping or enlargements are the only exceptions.

**Photo-Pro-** Photos in this category won't be eligible for the "Grand Prize." This category is meant to encourage full creativity for the more advanced photographers, while not having others compete with them.



### OFFICIAL RULES

- You must be a SOLAR member to enter the photo contest.
- The photo must have been taken by the person entering it between January 1, 2006 and December 31, 2006.
- Photos must be taken at a SOLAR event unless entered in the non-SOLAR category.
- Photos must be mounted, framed or matted.
- Standard photos must be no larger than 8x10 with matte size no larger than 11x14 (Photo-Pro is unlimited).
- Panoramic photos must be no larger than 8x18 with matt size no larger than 11x21 (Photo-Pro is unlimited).
- Only one photo entry per person per category and only ten entries per person overall are allowed.



## BRUCE PENINSULA BACKCOUNTRY ADVENTURE

By Jennifer Tislerics

Join us over Memorial Day weekend on a trip to the Bruce Peninsula National Park in Canada!

**The Plan:** Drive up to the Bruce Peninsula (approx. 7 hour drive) on Friday May 26th and stay at the Cyprus Lake campground overnight. Saturday morning, hike to Storm Haven backcountry campground located on the shores of Georgian Bay. Unlimited opportunities for day-hiking are available on the Bruce Trail. Hiking difficulty will range from strenuous to very strenuous. We will stay at Storm Haven on Saturday and Sunday nights, and return to Cyprus Lake campground on Monday for the 7-hour drive home.

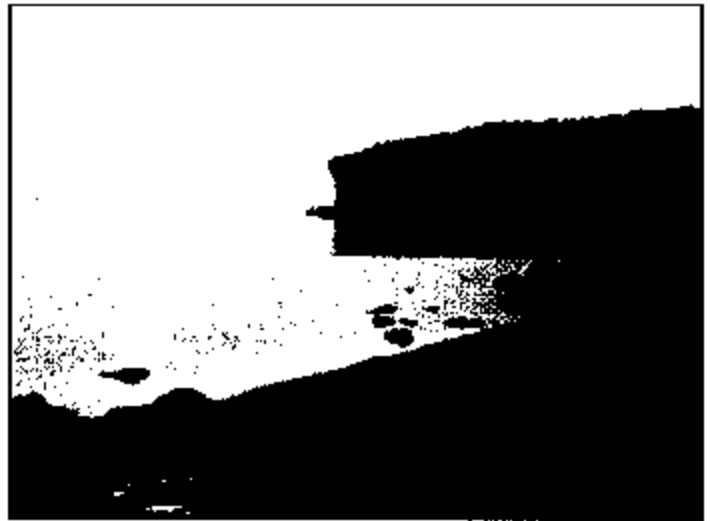
**Cost:** Estimated trip cost per person is \$50. This covers camping and parking fees. Transportation, bridge tolls across the border and food are not included. Carpooling will keep costs down. Unfortunately, the Canadian Parks reservation system does not open until April. We will let all interested participants know what the final cost is once reservations are confirmed in mid-April. **DEPOSIT CHECKS (\$50.00) SHOULD BE MADE OUT TO S.O.L.A.R.** and sent to Jennifer Tislerics, 18654 Gaylord, Redford MI 48240, no later than April 9. Exact costs will vary, depending on the number of participants and campsites.

**Required Experience:** completion of the SOLAR Basic Backpacking course

**What to Bring:** All of your favorite backpacking gear. Be advised that the Bruce Trail is extremely rugged and rocky. A pair of heavy, leather, over-the-ankle backpacking boots are a must. Trekking poles are highly recommended. Pre-trip conditioning is very much encouraged.

**Travel Documents:** Either a passport or a birth certificate and driver's license to cross the border back to the U.S.A.

For more information or to sign up, email Jennifer Tislerics at [jtislerics@yahoo.com](mailto:jtislerics@yahoo.com) or Pam Schmelzer at [pamelaksch@aol.com](mailto:pamelaksch@aol.com).



*Sunrise on Georgian Bay, at Storm Haven.*



*Swimmers at a rock beach near the Grotto, a day's hike away from Cyprus Lake Campground and Storm Haven backcountry campground.*



## HOW TO ENJOY THE OUTDOOR "INDOORS"

by Mary Dunn

Sounds like an oxymoron and yet this is a perfect description for the Ansel Adams photography exhibit at the Detroit Institute of Arts. Adams was a consummate photographer of some of our natural treasures in Yosemite and the Sierras. His images became icons in American culture as he experimented with light and developing techniques.

This is a non SOLAR activity. Everyone is welcome. We will meet at the DIA for 10am Saturday, April 14. Refreshments or lunch will follow at the DIA cafeteria. \$10 per person paid at the April meeting will allow buying tickets in advance. Food service will be an extra cost. Contact Mary Dunn at 248-585-9954.

## CANADIAN WINTER ADVENTURE

by Mary Dunn

Seven SOLAR members enjoyed Canadian hospitality for a week in February at Gatineau Park, Quebec just north of Ottawa. Mother Nature treated us well with adequate snow cover for skiing and snow shoeing through the woods of the Canadian Shield. This is a paradise for beginner skiers with many wide, well groomed trails and very gradual uphill routes. Huts with wood burning stoves gave us a comfortable lunch spot. Our muscles enjoyed a break from skiing one day as we visited the Canadian Museum of Civilization. This has life size reconstructions of native Canadian West Coast villages and ice skating and currency exhibits. The day's trip was capped off with lunch at a pub. Later, some went site seeing at Parliament buildings and Notre Dame or ice skating on the Rideau Canal.



Thanks to all for sharing this adventure with me. A special congratulation goes to Julia Gerdes, Vera Desouza-Dias and Steve Patterson for exploring the area on cross country skis! I hope to see you all on the trails next winter.

## SOLAR HIKE SCHEDULE

by Matt Dalton

Keep Your New Year's resolution, stay active and healthy. Hike with SOLAR. Non-members & children welcome. Hikes start at 9:30 AM. Hike Coordinator: Matt Dalton, 248-360-0031, [mdalton@ameritech.net](mailto: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.

We need more club members to join and lead these or other hikes! This is a great way to get MORE active with SOLAR, make more friends and get into better shape. Let's see more of the backpacking class folks.

April 1, 2007, Sunday - 9:30 AM, Solar Club, Maybury State Park, Northville, MI. Meet at 8 Mile Rd entrance and parking lot by concessions area. Brunch afterward for most of the hikers. (25-35 friendly hikers)

April 7, 2007 Saturday - 9:30 AM, Solar Club hike at Pontiac Lake State Park. Meet at the beach parking lot, next to where the mountain bikers start. 2-4 mile hike easy to moderate hiking. Possible restaurant stop after.

April 15, 2007, Sunday - 9:30 AM, Solar Club, Maybury State Park, Northville, MI. Meet at 8 Mile Rd entrance and parking lot by concessions area. Brunch afterward for most of the hikers. (25-35 friendly hikers).

April 21, 2007, Saturday - 9:30 AM, Kensington Metro Park. Meet at the Nature Center, North of Kensington Rd entrance, past the golf course. Go out for lunch afterwards or keep hiking until dinner time and then go out to eat.

April 29, 2007, Sunday - 9:30 AM Solar Club, Proud Lake State Rec. Area. Meet at parking lot next to the Wixom Rd. ranger station.

May 6, 2007, 9:30 AM- Solar, Maybury State Park, Northville. Meet at 8 Mile Rd entrance and parking lot by concessions area. Brunch afterward for most of the hikers. (25-35 friendly hikers).

## INTRODUCTION TO KAYAKING ENJOYING MICHIGAN'S WATERWAYS

by Matt Dalton

Kayaking is one of the best ways to explore all of Michigan's wonderful lakes and streams. It's also a great form of exercise and a great way to relax.

Introduction to Kayaking is a complete 4 hour beginner's class taught by Matt Dalton at Heavner's Canoe & Kayak in Milford, MI, on the clean, quiet and safe Huron River.

You'll be introduced to kayaking safety skills, basic paddling techniques and kayak equipment. This will assist you in choosing and paddling kayaks in the future. You'll learn about required and optional equipment and clothing. You'll learn the fundamentals of safe paddling, how to paddle fast and efficiently and how to stay in your kayak.

### DATES & TIMES

- Saturday, May 12, 2007 from 1:00 PM - 5:00 PM
- Saturday, June 9, 2007 from 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM

### COST

- \$50.00 or \$40.00 with your own boat

Depending on demand we may have an advanced kayaking class in July.

Saginaw Bay Weekend Kayaking & Camping Trip in August. Interest sign up's are now being taken.

Contact Matt Dalton at 248-360-0031 or by email at [mdalton@ameritech.net](mailto:mdalton@ameritech.net) to sign up

## THE HIDDEN DESTRUCTION OF THE APPALACHIAN MOUNTAINS

by Karl Overheul

It's called "mountaintop removal" mining. In West Virginia and eastern Kentucky, coal companies blast as much as 600 feet off the top of the mountains, then dump the rock and debris into mountain streams. Over 300,000 acres of the most beautiful and productive hardwood forests in America have already been turned into barren grasslands. Mountaintop removal mining increases flooding, contaminates drinking water supplies, cracks foundations, and showers nearby towns with dust and noise from blasting.

The Mountaintop Removal Road Show features a beautiful and thought-provoking 22-minute slide show with traditional Appalachian music and culture by Lexington, Kentucky environmental activist Dave Cooper. Discussion to follow the program.

Tuesday April 3, 2007

SOLAR Meeting

Colony Hall, Southfield, MI

*Free and open to the public*

## BASIC LAND NAVIGATION

by Karl Overheul

The Basic Land Navigation class is a requirement for most SOLAR classes and is core knowledge for a competent outdoors person. This class will teach you the things you need to know to safely and effectively navigate with a map and compass. Come join us!

### CLASS

When: Wednesday, May 16, 6:30 PM-9:00 PM  
Where: Royal Oak Public Library

### PRACTICAL

When: Saturday, May 19, 9:00 AM- 7:00 PM  
Sunday, May 20, 9:00 AM- 4:00 PM  
Where: Waterloo Recreation Area

### COST

- \$40 which includes: book, maps/hangout, cabin rental
- Does NOT include parking permit or meals

### TOPICS

- Map Reading Skills
- Taking & Plotting Compass Bearings
- The 3 North's & Declination
- Navigation Strategies
- Primitive Navigation
- Cross-country Route Finding Exercise

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

Karl Overheul  
[Cyber.Nomad@comcast.net](mailto:Cyber.Nomad@comcast.net)  
(248) 890-0738

## INTERMEDIATE BACKPACK CLASS

by Leslie Cordova

Have you taken the beginning backpack class? Are you looking to put your new found skills to the test, but need a little more guidance? Then this class is for you.

You and your fellow students will plan your own backpack trip, from start to finish. Class will start out with a 2-hour lecture on trip planning. It will be held on Wednesday May 2nd from 7 - 9 PM, location to be determined. After that, where, when and how often we meet is up to you. The cost is a mere \$10 to cover materials and handouts. This class will be limited to 12 students.

The only rule is that the trip must be within a 12-hour drive of the Detroit area. Learn to pick the area to backpack, when to go, who to go with, how to obtain permits, local regulations, climate, trail conditions, crowds, trail difficulty, hiking speeds, take training/conditioning hikes, etc. The final practical can be a weekend, long weekend or a week; it is all up to you.

If interested, contact Leslie Cordova at (248) 547-5626 or [lesliegene@aol.com](mailto:lesliegene@aol.com).



## TIME TO CLEAN UP THE BUTTS! (AND FLY KITES, TOO)

by Vida Ruggero



OK, it's not as gross as it sounds. But cigarette butts are the #1 item picked up off the shores of the Great Lakes. During the last four years I have been involved in the Alliance for the Great Lakes Adopt-a Beach. I have found many interesting things which I won't tell you about here but maybe you will come and find out for yourself! It's a treasure hunt of sorts...

This year's spring beach clean up will be April 27-29 at Nordhouse Wilderness Dunes, a beautiful stretch of undeveloped Lake Michigan shoreline between Ludington and Manistee. Backpack into the dunes area, car camp in the rustic campground or just come out for the day. We will spend 3 hours Saturday morning 9 a.m. - 12 p.m. cleaning up the beach and the rest of the time just enjoying ourselves outdoors. This year, I am asking everyone to bring a kite! Contact me or see me at the April meeting for more details. Hope to see you at the beach!

## A HANDS-DOWN GREAT SUMMER EXCURSION

by Mike Hobig

Ever considered vacationing on the little finger of your left hand? Probably not, but... take your left hand, place it palm down on the table, and imagine it's a map of Michigan. Now, look at your little fingernail. You'll find some pretty neat places there: Leland, Sleeping Bear Dunes, and Frankfort, to name just a few.

My plan is to explore those exotic places June 30 through July 4. Eight spots are available. I expect to be tenting, but campsites and accommodations will be worked out closer to trip time. I want to get early input and commitment from interested parties so I can make reservations and establish a trip plan. This area is popular and fills up quickly so I want to get an early start.

The trip focus is to day hike some dune areas - Sleeping Bear and Pyramid Point - and to tour the Port Oneida Rural Historic District (old farm buildings, barns, houses, sugar shack, schools, cemeteries), either by foot or by car. I'm still gathering information on these places.

Other destinations I plan to include are more touristy, but worth visiting. "Fish Town", an old fishing area, now houses a trendy outdoor collection of shops and also includes a general store, a maritime museum, the old cannery boathouse, and a blacksmith shop.

At least one refreshing dip into Lake Michigan would be great. Another possibility is to go down the Lake Michigan hill at Sleeping Bear from the scenic drive. Remember, though: climbing back up to the top is a real heart check. If you're not up for that, just enjoying the gorgeous Lake Michigan shoreline works.

Fireworks and an art fair in Leland and Frankfort for the Fourth promise to provide extra fun and entertainment. Jim Coe promises some recommendations on great places to eat, so we'll be exploring with our taste buds too.

I'll be staying 'up north' after the 5th of July, so I can carpool for the trip up to our little fingernail but not for the return. Cost is currently pegged at \$25 per person; it's expected that we'll share the cost of gas, camping fees, food, and park passes. The final cost will be set once the planning and reservations are in place. I'll announce this trip at the next meeting to determine interest.

Now's the time to consider joining me on my visit to the Sleeping Bear Dunes area to do some day hiking, historical sight seeing, and fun touristy stuff.



# CANOEING ALGONQUIN PROVINCIAL PARK, NORTHERN ONTARIO

by Sharon Smelter

Saturday August 11 - Friday August 17, 2007

Limit 8 people

Leaders: Sharon Smelter and Phil Crookshank

6 days of exploration of the east side of Algonquin Provincial Park, including paddling 5-6 days through a series of small and large lakes, waterfalls and several portages.

Enjoy the Canadian wilderness, moose lazing in marshes, loons beckoning at sunrise and lulling sleepy heads at days end, splendid sunsets and paddling on diamond sparkling waters. Breakfasts and lunches are on your own, evening group meals will be provided by participants. (Everyone takes a night.)

## REQUIREMENTS

- Ability to carry 48 pound canoes (or a partner that can) over rugged terrain, paddling endurance for 4-5 hours daily, and an ability to adapt to the elements.
- Camping gear for wilderness travel and waterproof packs
- One day paddling shakedown and get together

## RECOMMENDED

- Beginning backpacking, previous canoe or kayak instruction, good swimming ability, wilderness first aid.

## COSTS

- Total Estimated Cost: \$300.00. Ride share aprox. \$80.00 + camping meals. 8B, 8L, Group Dinner -8.
- \$50 Deposit by May 8, \$100 by June 5. Last \$150 by July 10 - remainder TBD by cost of canoes, camping fees, permits, etc.

## THE PLAN

- Saturday, August 11 - Travel to Opeongo Lake - Algonquin Outfitters for Canoe Rental and permits. Set up camp at Kearny Lake Campground
- Sunday, August 12 - Paddle - 8 miles to North Arm of Opeongo Lake, camp on an island
- Monday, August 13 - Paddle - 8 miles through Crowe Lake to Lake Proulx with short portages of 175, 310, 965m, good fishing area.
- Tuesday, August 14 - Paddle - 8 miles through Crowe River with short portages ( 210, 105, 1220m) to Lake Lavielle (Portage - 385, 170, 205, 110m) camp on islands
- Wednesday, August 15 - Easy day, Paddle - 7 miles through Hardy Bay to historical Lake Dickson, swim, laze in the sun. Picture the sunset.
- Thursday, August 16 - Big Portage day with a cart on the cart trail - Portage 5305 and two short portages of 260, 285m to the East Arm of Opeongo Lake.
- Friday, August 17 - Paddle - 7 miles to Opeongo Store, Food, Showers, Celebration, camp at Kearny Lake campground
- Saturday August 18 - Algonquin Museum - Drive Home

## THE RECUMBENT VOYAGER

by Winnie Chrzanowski



Nature Noir: A Park Ranger's Patrol in the Sierra  
Jordan Fisher Smith  
Houghton Mifflin Company, 244 pages  
\$24.00

The title says it all. *Nature Noir* looks at the darker side of a park ranger's life. As Smith writes, a park ranger's job is to "protect the land from the people, the people from the land, the people from each other, and the people from themselves." *Nature Noir* features dramatic tales of people behaving poorly. Smith conveys the daily stresses of ranger life and the many kinds of emergencies to which rangers must respond. Due to the abundance of crimes and crises that occur all too often in our parks, this book is fast-paced. Even though many of the incidents involve vehicles, boats and aircraft, hikers will appreciate these eye-opening stories as much as anyone.

Smith's situation was unique. He and his fellow rangers pledged to protect and patrol 48 miles of the American River in the Auburn State Recreation Area until its canyons and gorges were drowned to 500 feet by a federal dam (the Auburn Dam Project). (The American River originates in the high Sierra Nevada just west of Lake Tahoe, in the Tahoe and El Dorado National Forests.) After 40 years, the dam is still not built, and according to Smith's epilogue, may never be. Nevertheless, the specter of the dam affected the rangers who protected the threatened landscape and the citizens who visited it.

Smith's narratives intersperse the history of the dam's bureaucratic death with the daily routine of a park ranger—responses to natural and man-made hazards capped off with mountains of paperwork that end up being mice nests in the ranger station storage area. Ever the naturalist and keen observer of the wilderness where he earns his car and mortgage payments, Smith describes the canyons, climate, people, and landscape vividly. The reader feels the grit of the dust on the skin in the heat of summer and hears the silence with the quiet shush of oxygen flowing into an oxygen mask.

Smith is a naturalist and a human. However, as a park ranger enforcing the laws, he has seen too much humankind's dark side. Smith tells of his adventures with baby throwing fathers, adrenaline junkies, drunken miners, and hungry mountain lions with a keen eye for nature's overwhelming strength and beauty. His anecdotes, though dark, are not bleak. Despite the craziness surrounding the human condition, nature's slow but sure reclamation of the canyons and the parklands is proof that hope springs eternal.

Smith himself embodies a more insidious natural hazard as he briefly describes his battle with advanced Lyme disease.

*Nature Noir* covers a fair amount of environmental politics and conservationist history, mostly in the discussions of decades-long plans to dam the American River in the park for flood control and irrigation. The specter of the dam overshadowed Smith and his coworkers and informed their jobs with a strange sense of risking their lives to protect a condemned and temporary landscape. Because of it, the book offers up some pretty good philosophy of the civilization vs. wilderness strife.

Smith's direct experience and concrete language gives us a book chock full of an original mix of true crime, naturalist philosophy, and social observation. A park ranger's life can be pretty wild when looked at from the noir side of nature.



# SOLAR 2006-2007 CALENDAR

## APRIL EVENTS

4/3	TUE	GENERAL MEETING	Colony Hall	Lou Szakal	Everest2008@comcast.net
4/3	TUE	Program: Mountaintop Removal Roadshow	Colony Hall	Karl Overheul	Cyber.nomad@comcast.net
4/17, 4/24	TUE	Mountain Biking Class	Cycle and Fitness Center, Royal Oak	Nancy McMahon	funoutside1@aol.com
4/20-4/22	WKND	Backpacking Trip	North Manitou Island	Mike Banks	Slywolfe52@yahoo.com
4/21	SAT	Kensington Metropark Cleanup	Kensington Metropark	Elizabeth Schwab	qes1339@yahoo.com
4/25, 4/28-4/29	WED/ WKND	Basic Land Navigation Class	Livonia Public Library/ Waterloo Rec Area	Dave Sweeton	davesw@provident.net
4/27-4/29	WKND	Beach Clean-up**	Northhouse Dunes	Vida Ruggero	raget1@hotmail.com

## MAY EVENTS

5/1	TUE	GENERAL MEETING	Colony Hall	Lou Szakal	Everest2008@comcast.net
5/1	TUE	Program: Annual Elections & Photo Contest	Colony Hall	Karl Overheul	Cyber.nomad@comcast.net
5/2	WED	Intermediate Backpacking Class	TBA	Leslie Cordova	lesliegene@aol.com
5/4-5/6	WKND	Whitewater Rafting Trip**	Cheat River, WV	Charity Loring	charitymarie@yahoo.com
5/5	SAT	Wildflower and Mushroom Walk	Island Lake State Park	Margaret Martin/ Jim Coe	mpluseat@hotmail.com jim36@comcast.net
5/6	SUN	Metro Grand Spring Bike Tour**	Willow Metropark	Dave DeFrance	defranceomn@comcast.net
5/9, 5/19-5/20, 5/23, 6/1-6/3	WED/ WKND	Car Tent Camping Class	Royal Oak Public Library/Rifle River	Mark Speece	mspeece@med.wayne.edu
5/11-5/13	WKND	Hart-Montague Bike Trail Car camping	Muskegon, MI	Dave DeFrance	defranceomn@comcast.net
5/11-5/13	WKND	Michigan Wildflowers and Morels Weekend	Manistee National Forest	Margaret Martin/ Jim Coe	mpluseat@hotmail.com jim36@comcast.net
5/16, 5/19-5/20	WED/ WKND	Basic Land Navigation Class	TBA	Karl Overheul	Cyber.nomad@comcast.net
5/18-5/20	WKND	Annual SOLAR Reunion	Brighton Recreation Area	Carol McCririe	cmccririe@sbcglobal.net
5/25-5/28	WKND	Memorial Weekend Getaway	Tobermory, Ontario	Leslie Cordova	lesliegene@aol.com
5/25-5/28	WKND	Bruce Peninsula Backcountry Adventure	Bruce Peninsula, Ontario	Jennifer Tistories/ Pam Schmeltzer	pamelaloch@aol.com

## UPCOMING

6/30-7/4	MULTI	Summer Trip	Lelanc, Sleeping Bear Dunes Frankfort	Mike Hubig	mh10big@ford.com
7/20-7/23	MULTI	Backpacking Trip	Monongahela National Forest, West Virginia	Natalie Jewel	woodsromer@yahoo.com
8/11-8/18	MULTI	Canoeing Trip	Algonquin Provincial Park, Ontario	S Smelter/P Crookshank	ssharon_35@hotmail.com
8/11-8/19	MULTI	Kayaking and SCUBA Diving Trip**	Tobermory, Ontario	Chuck Smith	chryansmit@aol.com
8/15, 8/22, 9/6, 9/13, 9/20, 9/22-9/23, 9/27, 10/5-10/7	MULTI	Beginning Backpacking Class	Southfield/ Pinckney/ Pictured Rocks	Carol McCririe	cmccririe@sbcglobal.net
8/17-8/19	WKND	Canoeing and Camping Trip	Pere Marquette River	Mary Bogush	notdev@yahoo.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 Cutler at (248) 544-5637 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](http://www.solaroutdoors.org). To receive a copy in the mail, please contact Mary Price at [hmpri@ameritech.net](mailto:hmpri@ameritech.net).

#### SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Submissions for the SOLAR Ray are due on the Friday two weeks prior to the monthly Steering Committee Meeting (April 20 for the May issue). Electronic documents only. If you have any questions, please contact Rebecca Sweeton at [rayeditor@solaroutdoors.org](mailto:rayeditor@solaroutdoors.org).

#### STEERING COMMITTEE

President: Lou Szakal	Vice President: Moe DeFrance
Secretary: Heather Hall	Treasurer: Carol McCrie
Activities: Kevin Cotter	By-Laws: Cindy Taylor
Education: Mike Banks	Equipment: Dave DeFrance
Historian: Dick Ebenhoe	Membership: Mary Price
Programs: Karl Overheul	Public Relations: Pam Szakal
Ray Editor: Rebecca Sweeton	Webmaster: Dave Sweeton

#### PRESIDENTS AT LARGE

Mike Banks | Leslie Cordova | Moe DeFrance | Al Fylak  
Steve Gardner | Bill Halvingis | Cindy Harrison-Felix | Tom Hayes  
Doug Lanyk | Larry Martin | Joar Hettinger | Tom Oloff  
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](mailto:president@solaroutdoors.org).

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visit our website at: [www.solaroutdoors.org](http://www.solaroutdoors.org).

#### SPECIAL THANKS TO THE SOLAR RAY ASSISTANT EDITORS

Winnie Chrzanowski, Kathy Drewyore, Sheila Hardy, Pam Schmeizer, Carol McCrie, and Elizabeth Schwab

Visit our website: [www.solaroutdoors.org](http://www.solaroutdoors.org)



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