



The SOLAR Ray

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

August 2007

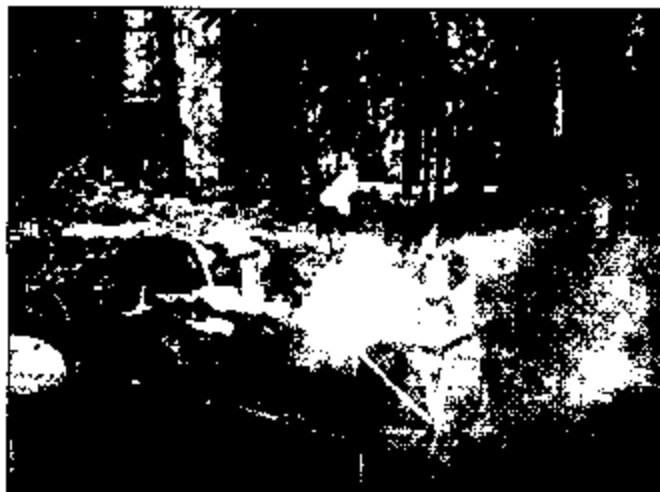
CASCADES 2007

by Grey Ivanov

Tacoma greeted us with its usual weather: rain. We spent in between. couple hours in traffic before got to Enumclaw. It was our first and last chance to purchase camp stove fuel. Once we took care of that, the three of us were ready for adventure.

Another 40 minutes and we arrived at the Carbon River entrance to Rainier National Park. A passenger car cannot go further and it is part of the game, the damaged road should have scared a crowd away, but not us. We were free to camp anywhere we pleased and go where we could. The ranger told us that Northern loop was passable, but required some determination, we had plenty of that. We also had enough time, fuel and food to return back from any point if we had to. I did not worry about the damaged trail. The only tricky part could have been the river crossing, but he ranger assured us that wherever a bridge was destroyed some log(s) lay across the water or some rocks and that we would be able to cross.

The first day we need to hike the road to the Ipsut Creek campground and after a couple hours we were at the place. The campground looked abandoned, but was quite useful. I tried the prototype pressurized alcohol stove I had brought and it worked all right.



The next day we began walking the real trail. It was far from perfect shape to non-existent in some places to everything



I should write that the Park Service did a great job cleaning the debris from the trail after the great flood. There are still things to do however with building new bridges among them. The only bridge that survived we encountered was the cable bridge over Carbon River. Some nicely shaped logs (brought by the same flood) serve for other creek crossings.



Sometimes crossing became a puzzle: one had to figure out where to cross and then how to handle crossing. Remembering this quote from Buddha teaching helped: "If you can not fight circumstances, try to use them." It was hard to believe what enormous power the water had. Thousands of logs were still scattered along the valleys like matches from a broken box. One of such logs could be right across the water..you just have to find it.



Walking at high-country was much easier. The flood did not impact the trails above the tree line. We lost the trail under the snow several times, but managed to find it later.



The highlight of the Northern loop was the view of Mt. Rainier. It dominated the southern sky. The higher we walked the bigger portion of Rainier we could see.

On the fifth day of our journey we found ourselves back at Ipsut Creek. We were done with the Northern loop and still had plenty time left to explore more: I also new that my companions were very capable at high-country backpacking and Mt. Rainier pulled us like a magnet.

We got to our car and drove to Ashford. I knew there was

a bunkhouse where you can stay very comfortably for reasonable price. What I did not know was that we would meet the seven mountaineers from SOLAR led by Lou Szakal there. I expected to meet them at Camp Muir the next day. Such a nice coincidence! Now we had our climbing permits in advance (thanks Lou). I also received priceless information from Lou: there is a better place to stay than Camp Muir... Ingraham Flats. It was the perfect setup, including perfect weather, believe it or not! The early morning of July 3rd we



began hiking Paradise along the Skyline trail.

As you already noticed SOLAR people are everywhere, including the Skyline trail. We met a SOLAR group again at Pebble Creek. A bit later Dave passed us at the middle of a snow field with 30 kilo backpack, impressive performance!



There was still plenty of light when we got to Camp Muir and the place was filthy. We took a short break and moved on to Cathedra. Rock and to Ingraham Glacier.

Our camp looked completely different from Camp Muir; just six tents on pristine snow surrounded by rocks and ice.

It was one of the most scenic places I've ever been.



I did not plan to summit on the Fourth of July as we thought it would be too crowded. However we were ready; not tired and the weather was perfect and no one could count on how it would be tomorrow. We all voted to go for it. My only concern was Brandon. He is well trained, but he is not yet 16 years old. Mountaineering is not an equation of gravity, weight of a backpack and strength of your legs. It is the balance between the brutal force of Nature and the power of your spirit. Humans come to such balance at a certain age and for some a lifetime is not enough to reach this balance. The snow and ice at high altitude could be a joy, but it could look menacing depending on your outlook.



We took off at 12:40 am. The slope of the mountain was like a chain of flashlights. It might be over 100 people going to the summit. Fortunately we passed the only narrowing; disappointment cleaver among firsts. Now slowly and

steady up.



Even the best picture can not reproduce the beauty of the sunrise on the mountains. I would not write what a joy going to the summit is, you will feel what YOU feel when you are there. From the summit your horizon includes half the world. You should try it yourself!





Brandon was up to the challenge as good as a boy can be he is. It's quite an impressive event to have Mt. Rainier as one's first summit in life. Back at the camp on Ingraham Glacier, we met the SOLARites again. They summited the next day.



Note: I tested the alcohol stove again at high altitude. It was quite capable to melt the snow and bring water to boil, we'll have to use such stoves on future trips.

We spent another night at Ingraham with the intention to escape the wet snow. No such luck. Early next morning I found our garbage scattered all over the place. Some evil bird had spoiled the otherwise uneventful trip. We spent more than an hour collecting the garbage up. At the end there was twice more than we had the evening before and more was scattered around and we gave up.

Going through the wet snow was not fun. It is a rare case when the bright sun is not welcome. The way to Paradise took more than 3 hours. I felt a bit tired after all or maybe a bit of me was sorry that such a wonderful trip had come to the end? I should not feel so. There will be another vacation soon enough and there are plenty of other places to go.



WANTED!

by Michael Banks

- People of adventurous spirit, good disposition and quirky humor
- Should be experienced backpackers and current in Wilderness First Aid
- Must be cheerful on rainy mornings without caffeine
- Be willing to work with difficult people, like me

Every year, people ask if they can help with the Spring Backpacking course. Over the years, we have introduced a good many people to the wonderful world of SOLAR instruction. In fact, that has been a goal of the spring course since the beginning. So people who are interested need only to contact me to discuss it.

Thanks for your interest!

SOLAR WORD SEARCH

by Rebecca Sweeton

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BACKPACKING
 BICYCLE
 CAMPING
 CANOE
 CAR CAMPING
 CAVING
 COLONY HALL
 COMMUNITY
 CROSS COUNTRY SKIING
 DOGSLEDS

FALL
 FIRST AID
 HIKING
 HOEDOWN
 KAYAK
 MICHIGAN
 MOUNTAINEERING
 OUTDOORS
 PADDLING
 ROCK-CLIMBER

SEARCH AND RESCUE
 SNOWSHOE
 SOLAR
 SOUTHFIELD
 SPRING
 STEERING COMMITTEE
 TENT
 WILDERNESS SURVIVAL
 WILDLIFE
 WINTER

SOLAR HIKE SCHEDULE

by Matt Dalton



Hike with the SOLAR! Lead a SOLAR hike or post your own hike! It's all about getting out, exercising and enjoying the Great Outdoors. Everyone is welcome: members, non-members & children. Hikes start at 9:30 AM. Hike Coordinator: Matt Dalton, 248-360-0031, mdalton@ameritech.net

Post a message on the SOLAR Yahoo site: 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.

August 5, 2007, Sunday 9:30 AM- Maybury State Park, Northville, MI

Meet at 8 Mile Rd entrance and parking lot by concessions area. Hike for about 2 hours and cover about 5 miles with stops for rest and water. Lunch stop after hike. (25-35 friendly hikers & 1 or 2 grumpy hikers).

August 11, 2007, Saturday - 9:30 AM, Pontiac Lake State Park, M-59 and Williams Lake Road. Meet at the north end of the beach parking lot where the mountain bikers meet. Hike, Bike, Swim, and Go out for lunch afterwards.

August 19, 2007, Sunday 9:30 AM- Maybury State Park, Northville, MI

Meet at 8 Mile Rd entrance and parking lot by concessions area. Hike for about 2 hours and cover about 5 miles with stops for rest and water. Lunch stop after hike. (25-35 friendly hikers)

August 25, 2007 Saturday - 9:30 AM, Solar Club Proud Lake State Rec. Area. Meet at parking lot next to the Wixom Rd. ranger station. After the hike, go paddling: rent a canoe or kayak from Heavner's or go have lunch in Milford.

September 2, 2007, Labor Day Weekend, Sunday - 9:30 AM, Maybury State Park, Northville, MI. Meet at 8 Mile Rd entrance and parking lot by concessions area. Hike for about 2 hours and cover about 5 miles with stops for rest and water.

FROM THE SOLAR HISTORIAN...

by Pam Schmelzer

You may or may not have noticed that we have a SOLAR photo website courtesy of the friendly folks at Flickr. The SOLAR homepage has a direct link to the Flickr site. I would like to put some more pictures on it- to show the world what it is that we do in the club.

So, I invite you to submit pictures of SOLAR events and SOLAR trips to me, and I can post them on the Flickr site.

Here are the details:

- I will only accept photos that are on a CD.
- Please print the name and date(s) of the trip/event on the CD.
- Give the CD to me at the next general meeting, or if you really can't wait, email me at pamelaksch@aol.com and I will give you my home mailing address
- As an added bonus, your CD will be stored indefinitely along with the rest of the SOLAR archives.



Looking forward to all of your fabulous photos!

SOLAR FALL BACKPACKING COURSE

by Carol McCririe

Coming in August is one of SOLAR's most popular classes, the beginning Backpacking Class. Beginning Backpacking teaches basics about trip planning, equipment, food, and other backpacking issues. It also gives you hands on experience at practicals, fun times, and new friends.

This class is for those of you that a) never backpacked and have always wanted to try it, b) new members that need the class as a prerequisite for other advanced classes or just to meet people, or c) members who just want a refresher or need an excuse to backpack. The only prerequisite for the class is that you are a current paid member of SOLAR and that you are interested in new experiences, new friends, or both!

Class begins August 15 and runs for six weeks with a break for Labor Day week (8/22, 9/6, 9/13, 9/20 and 9/27). Class time is from 6 to 9 pm. The weekend practicals are September 22 - 23 and October 5-7.

The tentative class location will be in Lathrup Village and the Practical are currently planned for Pinckney Recreation Area and Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore. Stay tuned for more information at the July SOLAR meeting.

In order to get a certificate for the class, you need to participate during classes and complete the entire 1st practical in September. The certificate for the class qualifies you for the Intermediate and Advanced Backpacking Classes, Wilderness Canoeing, and Enjoying Michigan Winters.

Space is limited so sign up and pay early. The cost of the class is \$100 and includes a textbook, a class handbook, and camping fees for both Practical's. Please bring cash or a check payable to "SOLAR" when you sign up (Sorry, no credit cards). This will guarantee your spot in the class.

Any questions regarding the class should be directed to Carol McCririe at cmccririe@sbcglobal.net or Leslie Cordova at lesliegene@aol.com.



FALL ADVENTURE!

by Dave DeFrance

*Come and join in the fun,
take a trip to North Carolina!*

I have reserved a condo in Beech Mountain, NC (northwestern part of the state near Banner Elk) for October 26 through November 2. It is a 3 bedroom and 2 bathroom unit that can accommodate up to 8 people. It is in a popular recreation area. Weather should be great and the crowds minimal.

We would make the 11 hour drive down together. Carpool groupings depends on the time that you can leave for the trip. I would like to stop along the way too see some of the sights.

There is HIKING, BIKING (both mountain biking and paved road), WATERFALLS abound, and we will be near the BLUE RIDGE PARKWAY for a beautiful drive.

Check out the sites below for more details -- there is even a 5 minute promotional video if you care to watch it. This is a trip for adults only, and is a non-SOLAR trip.

- Hike Beech Mountain

<http://hikebeechmountain.com/>

- Beech Mountain Chamber of Commerce

<http://www.beechmtn.com/recreation/>

- Christie Village Condominium Complex

<http://tinyurl.com/yspwu6>

Price will vary depending on the number going, between \$100 and \$200 per person. Other costs will be shared, including food and transportation.

\$100 will hold your spot. First come, first served.

Please contact Dave DeFrance for more information at:

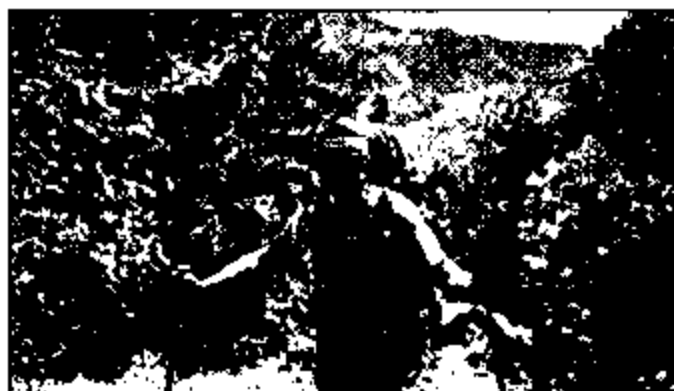
defranceomnexus@comcast.net

517-294-2333 (Cell)

517-552-3660 (Home)

SPOTLIGHT ON DICK EBENHOE

by Rebecca Sweeton



HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN A MEMBER OF SOLAR?

I have been a member of SOLAR since August 2000.

HOW DID YOU GET INVOLVED WITH SOLAR?

I had been fairly active in Sierra Club. I was interested in getting more active in backpacking again and heard about SOLAR at a Sierra Club meeting. I think it was actually Phil Crookshank that first told me about SOLAR. It took me a while to find SOLAR. I think I finally got the website address at a backpacking clinic at REI.

HOW DID YOU START BACKPACKING?

Like a lot of people, I started backpacking at about age 10 when I was a Boy Scout. I got away from it after college when I got married. But I was always active in the outdoors. With my three daughters I did a lot of base camping and hiking, as well as canoeing, whitewater rafting, and climbing.

WHAT HAS YOUR FAVORITE TRIP BEEN SO FAR?

This is very hard to say as there have been so many great trips. I guess I would chose the trip I led to the Gila Wilderness in September 2004 because it is the most extensive trip I have organized and because it is one of my favorite areas to visit.

WHAT WOULD YOUR DREAM TRIP BE?

One of my dreams is to hike one of the western long trails end to end. If I had to pick between the Pacific Crest Trail and the Continental Divide Trail, I'd probably go with the CDT, in part because it goes through the Gila in New Mexico. I would

actually like to do both of them.

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

I'd be interested in a bicycle touring class.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR MOST REWARDING EXPERIENCE IN SOLAR?

My most rewarding trip was the backpacking trip to the Wind River Mountains in September 2002 led by Karl Overheul. I had fairly serious neck surgery the previous September. The training and shakedown over the course of the summer of '02 were a lot of hard work and I almost bailed out on the trip a couple of times. Standing on the Continental Divide at 11,611 feet one year and three days after my surgery was very rewarding for me. Besides covering mountains with absolutely awesome scenery, I hiked this trip with Pete Lamb, Lester Mux and Scott Elliot, who are all great backpacking partners. I remember very early into the trip that Pete and I were laughing about how we kept saying "Wow! I look at that!" almost every time we came around a bend in the trail.

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

Like any organization, SOLAR has changed over the years. Members have come and gone. We seem to have lost interest in rock-climbing, since we no longer have the regular trips to Rattlesnake Point in Canada. I think we have less trips, although not necessarily less activities, particularly in the winter.

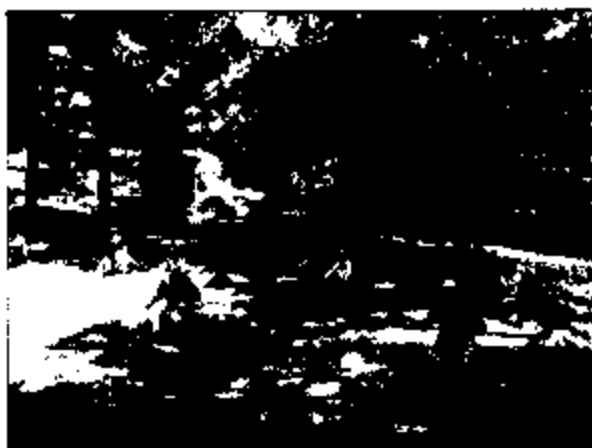


INTRODUCTION TO KAYAKING CLASS

by Lisa Frederick

We met at Heaven's Canoe Rental in the Proud Lake Recreation Area, Milford, Michigan at 1:00 PM. The lead instructor was Matt Dalton, who has been conducting kayaking classes for quite a number of years now. He had help from Kevin Cotter and Wilf Gutman, which was very welcomed due to the large number of students, 16 to be exact.

The day was perfect, clear blue sky, light breeze and very warm and sunny. We started with verbal instruction, moved to land practice of skills and then got our kayaks into the water for a couple hours of practice, followed by a quick paddle down the river and back and a post pizza party. We learned basic skills for flat water kayaking (vs. sea kayaking or white water kayaking). The instruction started with safety (always wear a PFD-personal flotation device), avoiding motor boats and water skiers, etc. We learned about clothing and gear that can be worn including pogies (paddle gloves) and the 10 essentials (of course). Next was a discussion of various boat designs such as sit-inside



and sit-on-top kayaks, flat and wide vs. long and narrow and the advantages and disadvantages of each; the various materials such as fiberglass or Kevlar, water tight bulk heads; bottom ridge line; skages and rudders; the various types of paddles.

We were then shown the proper method for getting in and out of the boat without tipping it over, using the paddle like a kick-stand for support. We were shown the proper body position while in the boat, to keep our knees against the side of the kayak and to keep our head and shoulders within the invisible walls formed from the side of the boat in order to prevent tipping over. If a motor boat goes by and creates a big wave, we were instructed to point the boat perpendicular to the wave to minimize its impact.

Next we went over the very important subject of proper form to move the kayak. It is a bit counter-intuitive so we first practiced on land sitting on the grass and then later in the water. We learned the forward paddle, backward paddle, turning, advanced

(tighter) turning and moving the boat sideways (a skill that comes in handy to move closer to another boat that may have the cooler!).

I was glad to have taken the class before attempting it on my own and then later having to unlearn bad habits or becoming too tired too quickly due to incorrect form and therefore discouraged. Many find kayaking easier than canoeing with a partner. This was an excellent class and I highly recommended it. I'm looking forward to practicing my newly learned skills and to take the next level class for some additional skills before embarking on kayak camping.



WILDERNESS SKILLS: RIP-CURRENT SAFETY

by Michael A. Netzer

Great Lakes' rip currents--which can rival those of southern California--represent a life-threatening hazard to the uninformed. Waders, bathers, swimmers, surfers, divers, and overturned paddlers must beware these deadly rip currents, especially when it is very windy or breakers are crashing ashore.

Rips are deadly

Rip currents on the Great Lakes have drowned numerous swimmers over the years. For example, on Lake Michigan alone, where swimming is more popular, deadly rips claimed the lives of at least 30 swimmers during one two-year period. On one particular beach, these currents killed seven swimmers in a single day. On beaches with breaking waves, rip currents account for 80 percent of all rescues by lifeguards. Nationally, rips kill more people than floods, tornadoes, or lightning.

Rips are mini-rivers

A rip current is a fast-moving, narrow jet of surface water flowing out into the lake. As a coastal current, they return water back to the lake that has piled up along shore as the result of incoming breakers and swells. These mini-rivers are typically very narrow--usually less than 30 feet--and just long enough to penetrate the surf zone and breaker line.

In extreme cases rips can exceed 50 yards in width and several 100 yards in length. While rip currents have been referred to as rip tides or undertows, these are misnomers since rips are neither created by tides nor capable of pulling people underwater (however, they do pull people away from shore and out into the lake).

Rip formation

Rip currents--which represent the last stage of a horizontal, near-shore, circulation system--form as excess water piled up along the shore from wind-driven waves and swells attempts to run back into the lake, seeking its natural level. Many times, this excess water returns to the lake by running out along the bottom of the lake--beneath the incoming waves--in the form of undertow, which is also called backwash, backrush, or runback.

However, in certain situations, this piled-up, excess water is prevented from returning to the lake by a lake-bottom feature such as a shoal (a sandbar), reef, or bank that runs parallel to the shoreline, just offshore. Acting like a dam, these hidden structures tend to create channel-like reservoirs, known as longshore channels, between the underwater structure and the shoreline. Prohibited from flowing back out into the lake, the water accumulated in these channels ends up flowing sideways, along the shore, creating what are known as longshore or littoral currents.

In addition to the forces of gravity that help the water return to its natural level, longshore currents can be further strengthened by high winds, breakers, and swells that strike the shoreline diagonally. Such forces can be further amplified by the funneling effect of curved shorelines common to coves and bays, especially those framed in by headlands.

Longshore currents continue flowing along the shoreline until they can overcome a line of weaker incoming breakers, find a natural outlet in a bottom structure, pass over a sandbar at a low area, or rip a channel through a bar at a weak location. Longshore currents can also turn lakeward when they meet another longshore current head-on or when they encounter a shoreline irregularity or obstruction, whether manmade or natural, that redirects them out into the lake.

As the longshore current is turned lakeward and forced through a narrow outlet, it accelerates and becomes what is known as a rip current--a strong, fast-running, narrow channel of surface-flowing water moving perpendicular to the shoreline. Fed by the longshore current, the rip current surges through the surf zone and the breaker line before spreading out in a fan- or mushroom-shaped manner and dissipating its energy.

Rip spotting

While rip currents can occur anywhere waves break, they are at their deadliest during periods of high winds or big waves. Spotting a deadly rip, or the signs of one, can be tricky at best. However, polarized sunglasses may help since they can cut reflected sunlight and reduce glare.

Some rip currents can appear as streaks of choppy or churning turbid water flowing away from shore, through a break in the incoming waves. Sometimes, they are marked by an off-color plume of floating debris and sediment--foam, driftwood, vegetation, litter, and swirling sand and silt--that is either moving lakeward or has become trapped in the no-man's-land along the very edge of the rip.

Cusps of sand protruding from the shoreline, breaks or gaps in the surf line, interruptions in incoming wave patterns, or breakers that appear to steepen prematurely may also mark the location of a rip.

While rips are usually associated with underwater sandbars near long, straight sand beaches, they can also be found near any irregular, shoreline-area feature capable of redirecting a longshore current lakeward. These features would include the naturally-occurring, such as coves, bays, reefs, islands, and headlands, as well as the manmade, such as piers, seawalls, artificial reefs, and erosion-control devices.

Keep in mind that rips can be fickle. They can vary in intensity by the minute, as wave trains come and go or winds change. Rips can also appear or disappear as quickly as shifting sand creates or alters underwater sandbars.

Highly-skilled surfers, paddlers, and rescuers have been known to utilize a rip current's assets--quick lakeward flow through areas where the breakers are either nonexistent or substantially moderated--to penetrate the surf zone and incoming breakers and reach the calmer waters beyond.

Rip survival

Since some rip currents can flow at speeds in excess of 5 miles per hour, swimmers caught in such a strong current should not try to swim (or wade) against it as even the best swimmer--an Olympic swimmer--can't out-swim it. Trying to buck such a strong current head-on could lead to premature exhaustion, a leading cause of drownings.

Instead, people caught in rip currents should conserve their energy by remaining calm and avoiding the tendency to panic. Proficient swimmers should take the shortest and fastest route out of the rip by either swimming sideways (laterally, parallel to the shoreline) or diagonally across the rip until the pull of the current weakens and they can calmly begin to swim back to shore, often pushed along by shore-bound waves and swells.

Less-proficient swimmers can float or tread water until the current carries them into calmer water beyond the breaker line, where they too can begin working their way back to shore through the adjacent, incoming breakers.

To learn more about rip currents...

To learn more about rip current safety, point your Internet browser to the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration's (NOAA) website at <http://www.ripcurrents.noaa.gov> or the U.S. Lifesaving Association's (USLA) website at <http://www.usla.org>.

Editor's note: Michael Neiger is a wilderness trip organizer who resides along the south shore of Lake Superior in Marquette, Michigan. He has recently rejoined the SOLAR club, having been active in the club during the late '80s and early '90s, contributing to the SOLAR Ray, instructing, and organizing trips. His free, SOLAR-friendly, Michigan Bush Rats' trips and expeditions will be listed in the club calendar from time to time. His website is <http://therucksack.tripod.com> and he welcomes your comments and opinions at mneiger@hotmail.com.

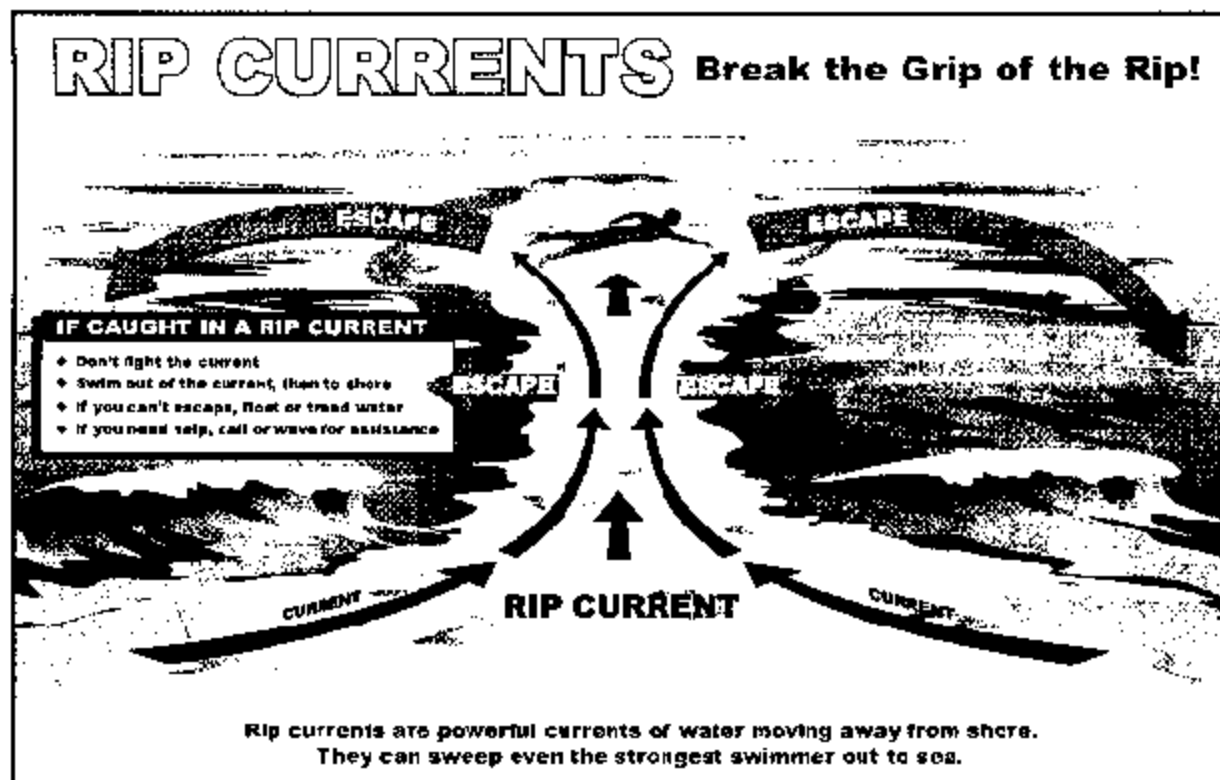


Image from U.S. Lifesaving Association's (USLA) website:
<http://www.usla.org/ripcurrents/signsbrochures.asp>

SAGINAW BAY TRIP

*Kayaking, Swimming, Fishing, Eating, Drinking,
Sleeping In, Car Camping, and More!*

by Matt Dalton

When: August 24, 25, 26, 2007

Where: Great Lakes Shores Marina, Standish, MI
North 43 57.10, West 83, 52.50 for GPS people

Arrive Friday afternoon, stay over Saturday and Sunday.

Bring kayaks, canoes, bikes, fishing poles and books. It will be a fun relaxing event. Kayaks are also available to rent.

Cost is \$35.00 per Person, (\$40.00 for couples) Children welcome!

We will be camping next to the water and have full access to bathrooms and showers.

Continental Breakfast on Saturday AM. Basic kayak paddling lessons and advanced rescue and bracing lessons - practice included in the trip.

Sunday we will go into Standish and have a great all you can eat home style breakfast.

Contact Matt Dalton at 248 360 0031 or by email at mdalton@ameritech.net for more information.

SOLAR PROGRAM SCHEDULE

by Allen Duncan

AUGUST: SOLAR 2007/2008 EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

Sarah Kirkish, SOLAR Education Chair

Sarah will lead a discussion of SOLAR Education Policies and Guidelines and she will also (with the help of the lead instructors) provide an inside look at some of SOLAR's most popular courses, including:

Beginning Backpacking with lead instructor, Carol McCririe

Dates: 8/15, 8/22, 9/6, 9/13, 9/20, 9/22-9/23, 9/27, 10/5-7

All new SOLAR members are encouraged to take the Beginning Backpacking class whether you are a novice or an expert, it's an experience that is pure SOLAR! Please note that the Beginning Backpacking class is a prerequisite for many other SOLAR classes.

Fall Land Navigation with lead instructor, Karl Overheul

Dates: 9/26, 9/29-9/30

A thorough and key course for those of you who have any interest in bushwhacking, orienteering or more importantly staying found.

Search & Rescue with lead instructor, Tom Hayes

Dates: 10/3, 10/10, 10/17, 10/19-10/21

This course will help you gain confidence in the woods and is strongly encouraged for those who want to enjoy longer hiking trips.

Enjoying Michigan Winters with lead instructor, Tom Oloff

Dates: TBA

How else can you get away from almost everyone while camping including the bugs? Take this class to find out!

UPCOMING PROGRAMS

- September: TBA
- October: Lyme Disease Education
President: MI Lyme Disease Association
- November: SOLAR Mountaineering Trips
Lou Szakal
- December: Holiday Party
- January: The Massasauga Rattler
MSU Extension Scientist, Yu Man Lee

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

WHAT'S MISSING?

Your article!

Your pictures!

Your trip recommendation!

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

THE RECUMBENT VOYAGER

by Winnie Chrzanowski

Together on Top of the World: The Remarkable Story of the First Couple to Climb the Fabled Seven Summits

By Phil and Susan Ershler with Robin Simons

Warner Books, 294 pages

\$24.99



Sometimes an entire packet of Splenda is too much sweetener for one cup of coffee. Sometimes it's just right. That's how I felt when I was reading *Together on Top of the World*.

Phil Ershler is an internationally renowned mountain climber and director of International Mountain Guides. Susan Ershler was an award-winning corporate executive for 23 years with several Fortune 500 companies. Together, Phil and Susan became the first couple to climb the fabled seven summits. Their Everest summit in 2002 earned them international recognition. As Alex Ward of *The New York Times* put it, "Surmounting Everest's 29,035 feet remains one of the great mythic achievements, an undisputable display of skill and courage against ice and rock, bottomless chasms, body-numbing temperatures and tent-shredding winds, all in an oxygen-deprived danger zone."

Although the Ershlers' story centers around mountain climbing and reaching the top of whatever it is they attempt, the real story is about their commitments to each other and the relationship they worked to build. Both were mature adults when they met; neither had given much thought to marriage. Phil began mountain climbing when he was a teenager to combat the physical difficulties of Crohn's disease. Susan was interested in climbing the corporate ladder, partying, and accumulating the trappings of success so prevalent during the 80s. They had little in common.

Each chapter begins with a note from Phil to Susan and vice versa—providing a bit of a preamble to what is going to happen in the ensuing pages. The interwoven stories provide individual perspectives of the same incidents. They each tell their own stories. The typeface differs so the reader can identify the speaker. It wasn't difficult to follow who was speaking.

The book doesn't go into a lot of detail about expedition planning or the technicalities of mountaineering. It does go into detail about affirming relationships, learning to trust each other, and Phil's battles with communicating his health issues to Susan. Both overcame great odds. Susan didn't begin climbing until she was in her mid-30s. Phil, a veteran climber who was the first American to reach the top of Everest from the north face), suffered with Crohn's disease from the time he was a teenager. When a colon cancer diagnosis and then a prostate cancer diagnosis threatened to end Phil's climbing career, Susan kept him from falling into one of the deepest crevasses of his life.

This inspiring story provides insight into what keeps these two on the success path they both desire and pursue. She writes, "I began to think that fear is an intrinsic part of every dream, that overcoming fear is part of what makes the achievement so fulfilling." *Together on Top of the World* illustrates that people can change.

Together on Top of the World is a feel-good story. However, in some instances I found it to be too feel-good-y. Maybe that's why Susan left her job as a corporate exec and became a motivational speaker. I'm almost tempted to try the seven summits.

To learn more about Susan, you can visit her website at www.SusanErshler.com. To learn more about Phil and International Mountain Guides, check out that website at www.mountainguides.com.

(Thanks to Jennifer Tisterics for recommending this book.)



ROASTED YAM AND ALMOND BUTTER MUFFINS

by Allyson Kemp

This is a recipe that has been adapted from many recipes I have gotten from friends and magazines. I usually follow a recipe the first time through and then change it. I think I finally hit on something worth sharing.

Roasted Yams

- 2 medium yams (1 1/4-1 1/2 lbs) (garnet, jewel or sweet potato)
- 1 teaspoon olive oil or melted butter
- 1-2 teaspoons FRESH lemon juice (fresh really does make a difference)

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Peel yams and cut in half lengthwise. Place in a baking dish. Brush with olive oil or melted butter. Bake until easily pierced with a fork (40-50 minutes).

Break yams into smaller pieces and puree in food processor or by hand until smooth with 1-2 t. FRESH lemon juice. Save 1 1/4 cup for using in the muffins and save leftover. (It is worth making extra because it takes some time to bake them, so why not. Use for dinner or eat as a snack. I love 'em.)

If you are short on time, you can use canned pumpkin or you can also make the yams the day before and put the allotted muffin amount in the fridge until the next day.

Roasted Yam and Almond Butter Muffins

Dry Ingredients:

- 1 2/3 cups flour (or wheat pastry flour)
- 1 teaspoon baking soda
- 1/2 teaspoon baking powder
- 1 scant teaspoon salt
- 1 generous teaspoon cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon nutmeg
- 1/4 cup sugar

Wet Ingredients:

- 1/8 cup oil (I use olive or canola oil)
- 2 eggs
- 1 1/4 cup of roasted yam

Other Ingredients:

- 1 cup mixed dried fruit (cranberries, blueberries, raisins, etc.)
- 1/2-1 cup chopped nuts (walnuts, pecans, almonds, etc.)
- 10-12 teaspoons almond butter (try cashew butter or peanut butter too)

Preheat oven to 350 degrees. In a small bowl cover dried fruit with very hot water, cover, and set aside. In a large bowl whisk together dry ingredients. In a small bowl mix together oil, eggs and yam. Drain the dried fruit and add to dry ingredients. Add yam mixture and mix JUST until the dry ingredients are moist. Fill 12 muffin tins about half full and dish out a small depression in the middle of each one. Add about 1 teaspoon of almond butter to each muffin and then cover with the remaining muffin mixture.

Bake at 350 degrees for 20 minutes or until a toothpick (or knife) comes out clean. Cool in pans for 5 minutes and then transfer muffins to cooling rack. When cold, store in Ziploc bags for the trail. They also store well in the refrigerator or freezer. Excellent heated up in microwave or fresh out of the fridge.

Note: Trader Joe's has a fun anti-oxidant mix that includes slivered almonds for a change that can be used instead of the 1 cup mixed dried fruit.

This is a great recipe to experiment with and change as you wish. I love the fresh taste of roasted yams over canned pumpkin and like to vary the fruit and nuts and flour for variety.



SOLAR 2007 CALENDAR

AUGUST ACTIVITIES					
8/4	SAT	Scuba Trip	Lexington, MI	Chuck Smith	cbryansmit@aol.com
8/7	TUE	GENERAL MEETING	Colony Hall	Lou Szakal	Everest1008@comcast.net
8/7	TUE	PROGRAM: Fall Class Preview	Colony Hall	Allen Duncan	allenduncan@aggienetwork.com
8/10-8/12	WKND	Hike and Float	Manistee River Trail	Jim Coe	JimCoe36@comcast.net
8/11	SAT	Hike**	Oak Openings Nature Preserve, Ohio	Lisa Frederick	Lisa.Frederick@us.yazaki.com
8/11-8/18	MULTI	Canoeing	Algonquin Provincial Park, Ontario	T Smelter/P Crookshank	cdharon_35@hotmail.com
8/11-8/19	MULTI	Kayaking and SCUBA Diving**	Tobermory, Ontario	Chuck Smith	cbryansmit@aol.com
8/17-8/19	WKND	Canoeing and Camping	Pere Marquette River	Mary Bogush	netdev@yahoo.com
8/24-8/26	WKND	Kayaking and Car Camping	Great Lakes Shores Marina, Standish	Watt Dalton	wdalton@ameritech.net
8/31-9/4	MULTI	Off-trail Backpacking and Elk Stalking**	Pigeon River State Forest	Michael Neiger	mneiger@hotmail.com http://tinyurl.com/2s5kyw
AUGUST CLASSES					
8/15, 8/22, 9/6, 9/13, 9/20, 9/27, 9/21, 9/27, 10/5-10/7	MULTI	Beginning Backpacking Class	Southfield/Pinckney/Pictured Rocks	Carol McGurie	cmcgurie@sbcglobal.net
SEPTEMBER ACTIVITIES					
9/4	TUE	GENERAL MEETING	Colony Hall	Lou Szakal	Everest1008@comcast.net
9/4	TUE	PROGRAM: TBA	Colony Hall	Allen Duncan	allenduncan@aggienetwork.com
9/8-9/9	WKND	Beach Cleanup**	Nordhouse Dunes	Vida Ruggera	ragetr@hotmail.com
9/19	WED	Play Hooky from Work Day**	Petawalomi Trail	Ati Tislerics	atisleri@med.umich.edu
9/28	FRI	Full Moon Canoe Paddle**	Heavenly Canoe Rental, Poud Lake	Margaret Martin	rrplus.at@hotmail.com
SEPTEMBER CLASSES					
9/17-9/14-9/15	WED/ WKND	Wilderness First Aid	TBA	Mike Walton	Amalmt130190@comcast.net
9/25, 9/26-9/30	WED/ WKND	Basic Land Navigation	TBA	Karl Overhaul	cyber.nomad@comcast.net
9/29, 10/11-10/14	SAT/MULTI	Women's Backpacking Workshop	TBA	Pam Riehl Szakal	pamriehl@gmail.com
OCTOBER ACTIVITIES					
10/2	TUE	GENERAL MEETING	Colony Hall	Lou Szakal	Everest1008@comcast.net
10/2	TUE	PROGRAM: Lyme Disease Education	Colony Hall	Allen Duncan	allenduncan@aggienetwork.com
10/5-10/8	MULTI	Off-trail Backpacking and Caving**	Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore	Michael Neiger	mneiger@hotmail.com http://tinyurl.com/22t64x
10/25-11/2	MULTI	Fall Color Adventure**	Beech Mountain, North Carolina	Dave DeFrance	dfranceomn@comcast.net
OCTOBER CLASSES					
10/3, 10/10, 10/17, 10/19-10/21	WED/ WKND	Search and Rescue	Eastpointe	Tom Hayes	thomashayes@wideopenwest.com
UPCOMING ACTIVITIES					
11/2-11/5	MULTI	Off-trail Winter Backpacking**	Mackinac Wilderness Tract	Michael Neiger	mneiger@hotmail.com http://tinyurl.com/39k66e
12/7-12/10	MULTI	Off-trail Winter Backpacking Trip**	Mackinac State Forest: Onaway	Michael Neiger	mneiger@hotmail.com http://tinyurl.com/2vz5p9
1/18-1/22	MULTI	Off-trail Snowshoe & Sledge Trip**	Delirium Wilderness Tract	Michael Neiger	mneiger@hotmail.com http://tinyurl.com/3hn6js
2/9-2/17	MULTI	21st Annual Canadian Snowshoeing Expedition**	Lake Superior Provincial Park, Ontario	Michael Neiger	mneiger@hotmail.com http://therucksacktripod.com
2/14-2/29	MULTI	Costa Rica Adventure**	Costa Rica	Jim Gessner	Gessnerj@comcast.net

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 Colter at (248) 544-9637 or activities@solaroutdoors.org. If you would like to help plan and/or teach a SOLAR class, please contact Sarah Kirkish at education@solaroutdoors.org. SOLAR has a no-refund policy. If you are unable to attend an activity you may "sell your spot" to another club member. ** Denotes non-SOLAR activity or non-SOLAR class. (SOLAR will not be held responsible for these activities/classes)

WHAT IS SOLAR?

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

MEMBERSHIP

Membership is only \$40 a year per person (\$55 per family) and includes discounts to a number of retail outfitters, access to club-owned equipment, a monthly newsletter, and a chance to meet hundreds of other like-minded adventurers drawn together by a common love of pristine lakes, breathtaking vistas, virgin forests, scenic shorelines, and the experiences to be found there.

MEETINGS

Our monthly meetings are held the first Tuesday of every month in Southfield at the Colony Hall, 21780 Evergreen (between 8 & 9 Mile Roads) at 7:30 pm. Everyone is welcome to attend.

SOLAR RAY NEWSLETTER

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

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Submissions for the SOLAR Ray are due on the Friday two weeks prior to the monthly Steering Committee Meeting (August 17 for the September issue). Electronic documents only. If you have any questions, please contact Rebecca Sweeton at rayeditor@solaroutdoors.org.

STEERING COMMITTEE

President: Lou Szaka.	Vice President: Cindy Taylor
Secretary: Michelle Delaporte	Treasurer: Carol McEnrie
Activities: Kevin Cotter	By-Laws: Chuck Smith
Education: Sarah Kirkish	Equipment: Rob Schwenke
Historian: Pam Schmelzer	Membership: Mary Price
Programs: Allen Duncan	Public Relations: Heather Hall
Ray Editor: Rebecca Sweeton	Webmaster: Dave Sweeton

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Steve Gardner | Bill Halvingis | Cincy Harrison-Felix | Tom Hayes
Doug Lanyk | Larry Martin | Joan Hettinger | Tom Oloffe
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 Szaka at president@solaroutdoors.org.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visit our website at: www.solaroutdoors.org.

SPECIAL THANKS TO THE SOLAR RAY ASSISTANT EDITORS

Winnie Chrzancowski | Kathy Drewyore, Sheila Hardy, Pam Schmelzer, Carol McEnrie, Elizabeth Schwab, and Aki Tislerics

Visit our website: www.solaroutdoors.org



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