



The SOLAR Ray

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

January 2007

THINKING OF TACKLING THE BRUCE TRAIL?

By Jennifer Tislerics, Pam Schmelzer and Ati Tislerics

Of course you are! In September, three SOLARites backpacked about 55 miles of the Bruce Trail from Lion's Head to Tobermory, Ontario. People who ought to know say that this is the best part of the whole 500 mile trail. We can't speak to that, but it was great, well worth the 7 hour drive. It's a beautiful area; Georgian Bay is crystal clear, with blue-green water reminiscent of the Caribbean. The trail wanders through forest, along rocky cliff edges, and across cobble beaches. To assist you in planning your trip, here are some lessons we learned:

1. The hiking is challenging, and will take longer than you expect.
2. There is no great elevation change, but the terrain is very rocky, with plenty of opportunity for twisted ankles. You have to pay attention to each step. Rocky outcrops require short, steep scrambles up and down. Wet rocks are very slippery. Don't forget your trekking poles (including the baskets, which help with spongy duff and hidden holes in the rocks).



The Bruce Trail features incredible variety of terrain.

3. The trail is well marked, with signs at junctions and frequent blazes. It would be pretty hard to lose your way. Buy the Bruce Trail Association's Reference Guide anyway; it has excellent maps and route information, and the organization's worthy of your support (www.bruce trail.org). The route changes frequently, though

- contact the association for the latest updates before you hike.

4. Much of the route is on private land, and exists only by the forbearance of the landowners, so behave yourself; going off-trail is strongly discouraged.

5. Don't expect to get water from any source except Georgian Bay; other lakes and streams may be out of order when you're there. Don't expect to get water from the bay all that often, either; most of the time there's a major cliff between you and it.



The trail is often high above water level (and tree tops!).

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6. There is a dearth of sanctioned campsites in some areas (see #4). Spots for stealth camping exist, but they are few and far between (did we mention the rocky terrain?). Allow plenty of time to hike, so you're not hunting for a campsite as darkness falls. (Shhh - we'll tell you where we camped if you promise to keep it a secret!)

7. Some of the route just south of Bruce Peninsula National Park is along roads. They're hard on the feet, but very lightly traveled and thoughtfully accessorized with apple trees at convenient intervals - good snacking on the hoo! if you time your trip right! And, if you're lucky, you'll find a bear-proof municipal dumpster along the way (very exciting).



Pam demonstrates hiking on an "easier" section of the trail, through the woods.

8. The national park's backcountry campgrounds are positively luxurious, with composting toilets, bear poles and wooden tent platforms.

9. The campground at High Dump (named for the elevated outhouse?) is only 200 meters from the main trail, but those 200 meters are rather vertical. A 10-meter-long rope is provided for clinging; you're on your own the rest of the way.

10. The park procedures aren't designed to accommodate backpackers. They want you to check in at the park office on the same day you will arrive at your campsite, an obvious impossibility if you're arriving on foot via the trail. You can try to check in ahead of time (we had our permits faxed to us beforehand), but human fallibility rears its ugly head and they may give your site away. Cell phone service on the trail is uncertain, but you may be able to call the park office to confirm as you're hiking to the campground.

11. Try to visit The Grotto (a must-see stop near the

big Cyprus Lake campground) on a weekday, to avoid crowds of day-trippers who spoil the tranquility and abuse the facilities.



Although it took Jen 20 minutes to actually get into the "cool" water, it wasn't too bad once she got used to it.

12. If you're taking only one vehicle, the logistics of a point-to-point hike are tricky. There's no cab service in the northern Bruce Peninsula, but many of the B&B and motel operators seem willing to help you out.

13. For non-backpackers, there are day-trip options from Tobermory, the Cyprus Lake campground and numerous Bed & Breakfasts along the route. There is even a B&B network for those that would like to day-hike the trail while sleeping in the great indoors (your belongings arrive at the next stop before you do). What you gain in ease will cost you dearly in terms of missed sunrises on Georgian Bay, however.

Happy hiking!



Boulder beaches are common along the trail

KNOW YOUR KNOTS: A KNOT-TYING WORKSHOP FOR BACKPACKERS

by Joan Tobin

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

OBJECTIVE

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

SKILLS

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

KNOTS COVERED

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

MATERIALS PROVIDED

Knot tying handouts and practice rope.

CONTACT

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

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



SOLAR HIKE & BIKE SCHEDULE FOR JANUARY 2006

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

December 31, 2006 Sunday - 2:00 PM to 5:30 PM, Fund Raising Walk or Run, Join several Metro Detroit Walking/Running Clubs for Jeanne and Gerry Bocci's, 37th Annual Belle Isle Fund Raiser for the Special Olympics: 2:00, 5K Fun Run and 3:00 PM Fitness Walk. This is a super child friendly event. Get home in time to celebrate the New Year. Please contact Jeanne for application and more information: <joanbocci@excite.com>

January 7, 2007, Sunday - 9:30 AM Solar Club and BS Hikers are hiking at Maybury State Park, Northville, MI. Meet at 8 Mile Rd entrance and parking lot by concessions area. Most hikers go out for brunch after the hike. Over 25-35 hikers.

Sierra Club Ski or Hike - 10:30 AM at Independence Oaks, meet in Rochester Hills, 3 to 5 mile of skiing or 4 mile hike if no snow. Bring trail lunch and water. Contact Mary, 248-879-6004

January 13, Saturday, - 9:30 AM, Pontiac Lake State Park: North of M-59 Highland Rd. and west of Williams Lake Rd. Meet in the NW corner of the Gale Rd. parking lot. (Park is very popular for mountain biking.)

January 14, 2007, Sunday, - Indian Springs X-C Ski/Hike, 5 miles. Meet at noon for car pooling in Bloomfield Twp. Contact: Cindy, 248-336-2984

January 21, 2007, Sunday - 9:30 AM, Solar Club and BS Hikers, Maybury State Park, Northville, MI. Meet at 8 Mile Rd entrance and parking lot by concessions area. Brunch afterward for most of the hikers. (25-35 friendly hikers)

January 27, 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.

January 28th, 2007, Sunday -Sierra Club, Bald Mtn. Hike: Bonnie 248-589-2251

February 3, 2007, Saturday, Sierra Club, 6:30 PM Maybury, Moonlight hike Phil-313-562-1873. 4-miles, meet in horse stable parking lot

CELEBRATE WINTER!

by Mary Dunn

Join us in a winter celebration of Cross country skiing, snow hoeing, ice skating.

WHEN: Arrive Sunday, February 18, depart February 24, Saturday

WHERE: Gatineau Park is in Quebec province, 25 K northwest of Ottawa, and has 200 K striding and skating cross country ski trails. 19 beginner trails, 15 intermediate, 10 advanced. There are 25 K of snow shoeing trails too. Ice skating is available in Ottawa on the Rideau Canal dubbed the "world's longest ice rink". We can also make time to visit snow/ice sculptures from the previous week's Winterfest or the National Art Gallery and Notre Dame Cathedral. The Canadian Museum of Civilization has outstanding displays of Canada's history from prehistoric times, native settlements and migration.

LODGING: 6 nights in Wunderbar Hotel in Wakefield, Quebec. Two people in 400 sq. foot apartment with 2 beds and a small furnished kitchen.

TRANSPORTATION TO AREA: Car pools for a 10-11 hour drive.

COST: \$325. US funds for 6 nights lodging, includes taxes. Payment schedule: November \$50, December \$50, by January 8 another \$100, by February 6 \$125.

ADDITIONAL COST PER EACH PARTICIPANT: transportation, additional lodging if taking 2 days to travel to or from Wakefield, all meals, all trail fees (\$10 daily in Canadian funds), entertainment.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION:

Gatineau Park:

http://www.canadascapital.gc.ca/bins/ncc_web_content_page.asp?cid=16297-16299-10170-26510-16469&lang=1

http://gorp.away.com/gorp/location/canada/top_twenty3.htm

Wunderbar Hotel: <http://www.bbcanada.com/491.html?showpage=1>

Local Quebec tourism information: <http://www.outaouais-tourism.ca>

SIGN UP and Questions: Mary Dunn 248-585-9954
mdunn48@peoplepc.com

ATTENTION ALL SOLAR MEMBERS...

By Mary Price

As of January 1st, 2007, all 2006 annual memberships will have expired. Be sure to stop by the Membership table at the General Meeting on January 2nd or fill out an application or mail completed application to Mary Price, 22801 Tulane, Farmington Hills, MI 48336 along with a check or money order made out to SOLAR (NO CASH).

Not at the meeting? Membership forms can be downloaded from the SOLAR website, www.solaroutdoors.org or form is provided in this month's Ray. Prices remain: \$40 for a single membership, \$55 for family, \$175 for single Lifetime, and \$250 for Family Lifetime. Don't miss out on the upcoming classes or trips because you haven't renewed your membership. Lifetime members do not need to complete a new form.

SOLAR PROVIDES SPECIAL GIFTS TO MEMBERS AT FEBRUARY MEETING

By Heather Hall

It's a New Year, sure to be filled with great trips, exciting classes and never to forget memories! An organization is only as successful as the members who join - with more than 300 active members, SOLAR continues to grow and provide wonderful opportunities to enjoy the outdoors.

At the February general meeting, all current and lifetime members will receive a membership gift. These gifts will kick off a membership program to promote SOLAR in the community and encourage members to recruit new people. Members must be present to receive kit and dues must be current.

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NORTH MANITOU ISLAND BACKPACKING

By Mike Banks

Have you ever wanted to be the first to hike through the woods on a deserted island? Here's your chance. Although there aren't any more islands in the Great Lakes that are completely undiscovered Mother Nature manages to renew each of these islands each winter. Come join a group of SOLARites in exploring this island before even the rangers land. Although temperatures maybe in the 80's they may also drop into the teens. Therefore, I'm asking only for graduates or current students of the Enjoying Michigan Winters (winter backpacking) course to sign up. Besides this the only other skills needed should be basic navigation. Special equipment should include a fry pan for the wild leeks and morels. Please see me at the January meeting or contact me, Michael Banks, at slywolfe52@yahoo.com.

North Manitou Island

April 20th-22nd

Cost = \$30

SPOTLIGHT ON PETE LAMB

By Rebecca Sweeton



HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN A MEMBER OF SOLAR?

I have been in SOLAR for over 10 years, but I took the SOLAR rock climbing class with my kids 25 years ago.

HOW DID YOU GET INVOLVED WITH SOLAR?

I had gone to Yellowstone one February as a birthday treat to myself for a week long photography class. I worked with Karen Bates and was showing her my pictures of wolves and stuff when I got back. She had just become SOLAR's activities person and asked me if I would put on a show for the club. I still don't know what made me say yes, I had never done anything like that before, but I did it. It was one of the worst experiences of my life, they weren't used to having programs and as they tried to talk over me I talked over them and I just ploughed on to the end, but I joined that night anyway.

HOW DID YOU START BACKPACKING?

I started backpacking in the Sea Scouts in the late 1940s. In 1950-51. I went on trips to Germany for two weeks backpacking in the Black Forest and the following few years we went bicycle camping across

Europe into Italy down as far as Lake Como. I got drafted into the British Navy in 1956 and after coming back from Egypt I ended up in a mountain rescue group in the north of Scotland. I had a ball, I learned to ski and we trained with the Commandos and the SAS. We were on the cutting edge in ice climbing and made all our own equipment as it did not exist for purchase and we had no money anyway. We would bicycle to the mountains to ice climb as no one owned a car it was about 30 mile each way. I used to trade my Navy rum ration for food for weekends.

WHAT HAS YOUR FAVORITE TRIP BEEN SO FAR?

My favourite trip is a problem. Obviously the JMT was a great trip and a challenge, but I hiked almost as far going to base camp on Everest and the culture there really made a big impression on me. There is nothing like going to a third world country to challenge your perceptions of the world and the Nepotes are such a great people. I was embarrassed to complain about anything after I got back.

WHAT WOULD YOUR DREAM TRIP BE?

I thought I had my dream trip planned, Climb Aconcagua with Lou and the guys go down to hike the Towers of Payne and the Fitz William trail then raft the Fucafalu, awesome trip. I had to cancel because of this damned eye, perhaps next year.

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

An advanced winter camping class either by dog sled in Upper Ontario or an expedition down the Bechler River Valley in Yellowstone Park for 6 or 7 days.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR MOST REWARDING EXPERIENCE IN SOLAR?

My most rewarding thing from SOLAR is getting to have so many friends and so many things to do after the isolation of being married for ever.

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

How has SOLAR changed? Well everyone does seem to be so much younger these days, even doctors and policemen.

SLEEPING BEAR RESORT CROSS COUNTRY SKI WEEKEND

By Jim Coe

When: Friday, 01/19/07 to Sunday, 01/21/07

Where: Lake Ann, Michigan (Leelanau County area), 20 miles NW of Traverse City, about 4 1/2 hour drive. Check out the virtual tour on the website at sleepingbearresort.com. At this point not pet friendly.

Purpose: Lodge style rental home (s) to sleep in, shower, cook dinner, play cards/billiards, set around the fireplace in a lake front log home (the lodge) and cedar sided (bears den) fully furnished. Just north of Village of Lake Ann on N Reynolds rd

Included: 2 nights lodging with full facilities. Potluck dinner Saturday night. Lift tickets or trail passes not included. Some beds will be bunk style, some full beds will be available for couples in separate rooms on first come first serve basis. Sleeping arrangements can be set up for paid in full guests.

Cost: \$60.00 per person for the weekend. Must be paid in full by the 12/05/06 meeting.

Activities: Ungroomed public trails as close as 3 miles from Lodge, such as the Lake Ann pathway, Lost Lake pathway and the Sleeping Bear Dunes National Park. Perfect for snow shoeing and XC skiing. Crystal Mountain downhill skiing about 30 minutes away.

Details: Linens provided, but you may want to bring a sleeping bag and a bath towel. Think of a dish to pass for Saturday night potluck.

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



2007 SPRING BACKPACKING COURSE

by Mike Banks

The Backpacking Course is at the heart of SOLAR. Sure it's the prerequisite for many of the other courses that SOLAR offers. It is also much more. It is here that you learn basic backcountry skills. It is here that you build confidence in yourself and others. It is here you meet your friends. It is here that you meet your fellow adventurers. It is here that you take your first steps into a new world.

What does \$100 get me? It is a good question. Why don't we start with your instructors? You get a staff of instructors who have logged almost as many hours instructing as they have miles of backpacking and they have collected thousands of miles on the trail. You will have an overall ratio of at least one instructor for every two students. They don't do this for pay. They are doing it for the love of it.

You will be getting 18 hours of class time. This time will be spent learning subjects such as clothing, shelters, sleeping systems, conditioning, packs and pack fitting, knots, water filtration and treatment, backcountry hygiene, trip planning, stoves and cookware, food, maps and much more.

You will be getting 2 weekend practicals. Practical #1 will give you a taste of hiking over a trail with all the gear you and your team need for your overnight adventure. Your weekend will be spent giving you hands-on experience. It is here that your new knot knowledge will allow you to place bear bags and tarps. It is here that you will learn the operations of stoves and water filters. It is here that you will learn some of the basics of land navigation and first aid. You will pitch your tent, cook your meals and sleep the good sleep.

Practical #2 is where the real fun begins. You are still learning, but it is with every step you take. Here you have the choice of 2 or 3 days in the backcountry. You practice 'Leave No Trace' camping. You wake up to the call of jays and the sight of eagles. You fall asleep to the distant howl of coyotes and the last slap of the beaver's tail on the water. There is no doubt you are 'Up North'.

DATES: Class dates are: March 8, 15, 22, 29, April 12 & 26. Practical #1 is April 14 & 15. Practical #2 is May 1, 2 & 3.

LOCATION: Berkley Community Center

CONTACT: Michael Banks at shywolf52@yahoo.com if you have questions or to sign-up. Hurry! The class is limited to 24 students.

THE RECUMBENT VOYAGER

by Winnie Chrzanowski



A Matter of Principle

Starring: Alan Arkin & Barbara Dana

Directed By: Gwen Arner

Written By: Nancy Miller, Neal Miller, adapted from the John D. Weaver story

We all trot out our holiday traditions at this time of year—favorite foods, decorations, jokes, and, for many of us, movies that we must watch in order to get into the Christmas spirit. Hollywood's old chestnuts like "It's a Wonderful Life" and "Miracle on 34th Street" start showing on TV right after Thanksgiving along with the quintessential animated made-for TV shows like Charlie Brown and Frosty the Snowman. The one movie that I have not seen in that line up in years is "A Matter of Principle," a story about Flagg Purdy, an impoverished, cantankerous father of 11 who won't allow his family to celebrate any holiday because of his principles. Not many people have even heard of this movie, so I wanted to share it with those of you who are unfamiliar with it because it's a warm, humorous movie about love, devotion, relationships, and Christmas.

"A Matter of Principle" first aired on PBS in 1984. The movie is based on a short story by John D. Weaver and stars Alan Arkin and Barbara Dana, Arkin's real life wife. Flagg is a West Virginia version of Ebenezer Scrooge. He sees no need for frills; he's a man of great convictions and many "principles." He runs his family's life according to his principles despite the fact that they don't agree with his ideas of what is more important in life—having principles or having a life that benefits the entire family.

Flagg refuses to pay the 89-cent county tax on his phone bill because he didn't vote for it, and the family loses phone service. They've already lost electricity. Alan Arkin gives a terrific performance of an arrogant, self-centered, domineering husband and father, but Barbara Dana as Flagg's wife, Ada, is superb. She is the long-suffering wife who uncomplainingly crawls out of a warm bed on a cold winter's night to get Flagg a glass of water (which she has to hand pump at the kitchen sink) in case he gets thirsty during the night.

When Flagg's favorite daughter becomes engaged, she and her fiancée surprise the family with a Christmas tree and gifts. Flagg's wrath is a sight to behold. He destroys the tree and, in the process, demoralizes the entire family. Ada and the family are forbidden to even talk about the Purdy's oldest daughter because of Flagg's stubborn refusal to acknowledge her marriage to a fellow of whom he didn't approve.

So when he destroys Christmas in the Purdy household, what ensues when Ada and the children leave Flagg is bittersweet. The sweet and usually subservient Ada's rebellion against Flagg's principles is a shock to his well ordered existence. Alone for the first time since they married, he is forced to come to terms with his contrariness. Flagg learns (just in time for Christmas, of course) that love and family are more important than pride and principles and the movie ends with the hope that life will improve for the Purdy clan.

If you want to see this movie, it's available on DVD from several on-line sellers and costs about \$20. It's also available at Netflix and in some local public libraries.

Merry Christmas everyone.

DEHYDRATION INFORMATION

By Pete Lamb

For dehydrating I favor the square model dehydrator with the fan at the back, such as the Excalibur from California. I feel that they are more efficient and it is easier to dry sauces and other wet things in them. With the fan at the back blowing across the food it all gets dried at the same rate. With the round dehydrators the fan is at the bottom so moisture from the bottom trays is pushed up through the food at the top which takes longer to dry.

I have the nine tray Excalibur which has large fan that dries well. For most people the small one would be sufficient and the cost is about \$110, the larger one is \$210. One, two week trip would pay for the dehydrator with the difference in price between the commercial freeze dried food and what you made yourself. I do not dehydrate just because of cost, although that is a factor. I dehydrate because it tastes better, and to be frank the commercial stuff gives me gas much to the dismay of my hiking partners.

If you do get an Excalibur get the plastic tray covers, these are used for drying soups and sauces and such. They work a bit like Gortex, moisture is drawn from the underside of the food as well as the top unlike using Saran wrap. I do still turn the food over when it is dry enough to handle and give it an hour or so more drying time. With the round dryers you have to put Saran Wrap on the trays for wet food and that stops the air from blowing on it so it does not do a very good job on soups and the like

Another gadget that is very handy is a mandolin. No this is not a musical instrument it is a very efficient way on slicing stuff evenly and quickly. It will slice tomatoes into 1.5 mm perfect slices. I sliced 5lb of tomatoes and 3lb of onions in about 10 minutes for meals for our JMT trip. Having food sliced evenly and thinly is important for dehydrating, as obviously thicker slices take longer to dry. Also as you check for dryness you can miss the odd pieces that are not dried properly because of thickness differences and it spoils on the trail.

Getting started, well you can just about dry anything but it's probably better to start from a book until you get confident about the process. There are three books that I use, Lip Smacking Backpacking, Lip Smacking Backpacking Vegetarian, and Backpacker Gourmet. These three will have more recipes than you can use. They give you the weight of individual portions after drying and how much water to add to reconstitute also the calorie content. The first two books I know are available at REI or Borders you may have to hunt for the third one. One book is more than enough to get started though.

When I first started drying food I was very nervous about drying meat, fish, or chicken the consequences of it going bad are so serious I avoided drying them altogether. Let me reassure you it does work, as generations of our ancestors have proved in the past. I started by drying cans of fish

or chicken packed in water. If you do this make sure you break all the lumps up, turn it into fibers, if you don't it will never get reconstituted no matter how long you soak or boil it.

With animal products I still work on the principle that you cannot ever dry it to much, I don't know if I am too cautious about this but then I have never got sick or had a meal smell bad on the trail. I now feel comfortable drying meats and fish that I have cooked.

When drying ground meat always use the lowest fat content you can find, NEVER use hamburger meat. I use ground buffalo or reduced fat ground sirloin. The reason is the fat will go rancid during shipping or in your pack. We shipped many meals containing meats and fish to cache sites for our JMT trip and you have no control of the temperatures it is subjected to on the journey or at the storage site and our meals sat in storage out of our control for weeks.

Storage at home is important. I keep all dried food in the freezer in a dark bag and where ever possible I vacuum bag it as well. Meat, vacuum bagged, and stored properly will keep almost indefinitely and I just feel more comfortable doing it that way.

I make quite a lot of Jerky and I always use flank steak (low fat content). I put it in the freezer until just a bit stiff this makes it easier to slice evenly. Depending on how chewy you want it, you can slice along the grain of the meat or diagonally across. For seasoning I mostly use a good salt and freshly ground pepper and I find that quite sufficient for my taste, but there are a ton of marinades you can use.

I find that peas, green beans, and broccoli dehydrate very well I usually start with frozen and a lb of either will dry down to about 2ozs. You can use fresh, and if you do blanch them first before drying as they reconstitute better. I don't dry much corn because it does not have much nutritional value.

As you can see I have tried to keep the fat content down for spoilage reasons but during our JMT trip we found that the lack of oils in our diet was running us down and toward the end we really felt a bit drained, so you do need to add oils to your dishes after you prepare them on the trail. I would suggest carrying some olive oil or even gee.

Of course you could take some cheese or sausage although these are heavy and you will get a bigger bang for your buck just taking oil. On the JMT trail we met a woman who had too much stuff and she gave us some bread she had made that was loaded with flax seed oil and that really hit the spot. Actually it was that made us realize our problem with the lack of oils

My favorite recipe is one I invented. I take dried ground

buffalo and some peas or carrots or both reconstitute that in onion soup which I then pour over mashed potatoes. You could use any onion soup but I favor a five onion soup that I get from Papa Joes on Woodward when they have it. I always keep a stock on hand and it is not inexpensive. This has gone down very well with a SOLAR team of taste tester on several trails.

From Backpack Gourmet:

Page 21-22: French Country Potatoes and Packers Potatoes Plus. These two pulled us through when things got very rough on the trail, everyone liked these two.

Page 91: North African Stew, very good.

Pages 86-87: Seafood Stew and Fish Stew. We all enjoyed these.

Page 126: Fish baked with onions. Make sure you really flake the fish well before drying. I didn't and it stayed like shotgun pellets no matter what I did, but it was still good. I think with this book just jump in any where and it will be good.

From Lip Smacking Backpacking:

Pages 22-25: These are all salads eaten cold for lunch.

Page 26: Hudson Bay Bread. I dehydrated this bread; it lasted for ever and was good.

Page 63: Michigan Salmon Fettuccine. I cooked this in the Teton's on the side of an impossible slope, while Karl freaked out about me cooking salmon after all the bears we had seen that day.

Page 103: Backpack Pot Pie I have made this many times, it helps to have a heat spreader as it can burn easily. If you have Craig with you when you cook this just make sure you get your share first and don't skimp your self, as there won't be second after he has done.

I have never made anything from these books that I did not like and the only complaints I have had were from people who did not like curry or beans, or things they just did not like any where.

Sundry ramblings: You can dry salsa (Cindy please note) also pasta sauce. To break up sauces, fruit leather, or onion soup put it into the freezer then crumble it, this works with yogurt to. While picking up supplies at Tuolumne Meadows I was given some chutney that had been dehydrated and it was really good. I don't get into deserts very much but if you take an assortment of dried fruit drop it into boiling water, wine or rum for a minute or two while you mix up some apple pancake batter into a thick paste. Pour the batter over fruit, replace lid, and let steam, watching so it does not burn, it makes a great stick to the ribs desert not in the books

Just one word of caution. We found that the portions were very large, even Dave DeFrance found them a challenge. So before you go on a major trip cook some of the dishes and recalibrate the sizes of the portions or you may end up carrying too much weight, this does not apply to Craig as he can eat six of anything. I think the two potato dishes will serve 5 maybe 6 if there are women in the party, they say

it's for 4.

I find a common fallacy in SOLAR is that as you burn 5,000 calories a day hiking you have to eat 5,000, so they end up taking far too much food which is weight. Well you cannot physically eat that much until you develop a trail appetite which takes weeks, we never got to that point even after 26 days on the trail. A pound of body fat is 3500 calories and there are few of use that cannot afford to loose the odd ten pounds over a two week hike or in my case 20 or so, over a month. My recommendation is to take what you would normally eat plus an extra meal. I would however take more food in winter.

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

by Leslie Cordova

It's that time of year again - time for the 26th annual Carter Caves Crawl-a-thon, January 26-28, 2007. What is a crawl-a-thon you might ask - - this is an annual event put on by Carter Caves State Park in Olive Hill, Kentucky. It is a great way for people to get acquainted with caving as a wide variety of cave tours are offered, ranging from walking tours, a little bit of crawling, a lot of crawling, and vertical caving. They even have trips for kids and seniors!! If you do not like the underground, join us anyway, as there is some great hiking in the area. This trip is kid-friendly, must be 6 years old to cave. No pets.

The basic plan is to drive down to the park on Friday (about a 7-hour drive) and stay right at the Carter Caves Lodge. I have a limited number of rooms reserved. Once they are filled, the nearest lodging is 10 - 15 miles away. The cost for 2 nights lodging is \$65 per person, payable to SOLAR. Since this trip will fill up, only payments in full will be accepted to hold your spot.

You will need to download the crawl-a-thon entry and release forms yourself from www.crawlathon.com, or call the park at (606) 286-4411. Generally the forms are not available until mid December. You will then need to send in both forms yourself with a check for \$30 per adult, \$15 per child 6 - 12 (last years fee, the current fee could be higher) to Carter Caves. Your \$ 15 - \$30 includes 2 days of guided caving and a T-shirt from the event. Please do not delay as the trips fill up quickly.

See me at the meeting for a list of equipment you may need. SOLAR has helmets, knee and elbow pads (limited), and headlamps (limited) that you may borrow. A refundable deposit is required. I do not have enough equipment for everyone, so you will need to reserve in advance. To be fair, those who have not been on SOLAR caving trips previously will get first dibs on pads and headlamps.

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

SOLAR APPLICATION

Name:	Home Telephone #:	
Address:	Work Telephone #:	
City:	State:	Zip Code:
Email:		
Birthday (optional):		

SOLAR has permission to publish the following information on its roster: () Home # () Work # () Email
 SOLAR has permission to publish on the SOLAR website my: () Name () Telephone # () Email
 The SOLAR RAY Monthly Newsletter is available each month at the SOLAR website www.solaroutdoors.org. Would you prefer to have it mailed to you? () YES () NO

Payment Type: () Cash () Check (#) _____ Make checks payable to SOLAR
 Type of Membership: () New Member () Renewal
 () Single Annual Membership: \$40.00 () Family Annual Member: \$55.00
 () Single Lifetime Membership: \$175.00 () Family Lifetime Membership: \$250.00

The following information is required for family memberships:

Spouse's Name: _____ Age: _____
 Other Family Members (under the age of 18): If more than 2 additional members list on back of application.
 Name: _____ Relationship: _____ Age: _____
 Name: _____ Relationship: _____ Age: _____

How did you find out about SOLAR? _____

1. All memberships shall expire at the end of the current calendar year unless otherwise stated on your membership card.
2. **IMPORTANT: THIS MEMBERSHIP WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED UNLESS THE LIABILITY RELEASE IS READ AND SIGNED**

School for Outdoor Leadership, Adventure & Recreation ABSOLUTE LIABILITY RELEASE

Many outdoor activities are inherently dangerous and can cause injury or even death. By joining SOLAR, I agree to assume all of these risks. I agree that SOLAR will not be responsible if I am harmed while I am traveling to, attending, or participating in club meetings, classes or trips, or while using club equipment. In exchange for membership, I agree to release and discharge (waive my rights to bring any personal injury suit against):

1. SOLAR;
2. Its leaders, instructors, steering committee, and all individual members;
3. Its landlord at Colony Hall; and
4. The retail stores that let SOLAR use space for classes.

Exceptions: While SOLAR will have no responsibility for any injury to a member (even if SOLAR is grossly negligent).

I understand that individual SOLAR members, including me, remain fully responsible and liable for any injury or damage caused either by their pets or by their negligent driving of a vehicle.

I have read, understood and agree to this Assumption of Risk Agreement and Liability Release this _____ day of _____, 200_____.

Mail application to: Mary Price, 22801 Tulare, Farmington Hills, MI 48336

Member's Signature: _____
 Spouse's Signature (REQUIRED on married couple's family memberships): _____
 Parent's Signature, if under 18: _____

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

DECEMBER ACTIVITIES

12/14-1/10	MULTI	Extended Mountaineering Trip (FULL)	Aconcagua, Argentina	Lou Szakal	Everest2008@comcast.net
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DECEMBER CLASSES

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

JANUARY ACTIVITIES

1/2	TUE	GENERAL MEETING	Colony Hall	Lou Szakal	Everest2008@comcast.net
1/2	TUE	Program: A Tale of Two Trips	Colony Hall	Karl Overheul	Cyber.nomad@comcast.net
1/12-1/14	WKND	Skiing & Snowshoeing Weekend (FULL)	Hartwick Pines State Park	Kevin Cotter	solar@wowway.com
1/19-1/21	WKND	Cross Country Skiing	Lake Ann, MI	Jim Coe	jmc36@comcast.net
1/26-1/28	WKND	Crawlathon	Carter Caves State Park, Kentucky	Leslie Cordova	lesliegene@aol.com

JANUARY CLASSES

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

FEBRUARY ACTIVITIES

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

UPCOMING CLASSES

3/13	WED	Know Your Knots Clinic	Livonia Public Library	Joan Tobin	734-281-1568
Spring	MULTI	Land Navigation		Karl Overheul & Dave Sweetor	Cyber.nomad@comcast.net webmaster@solaroutdoors.org
Spring	MULTI	Advanced Land Navigation		Karl Overheul	Cyber.nomad@comcast.net
Spring		Mountain Biking		Nancy McMahon	
Spring		Gear Maintenance		Michael Banks	activities@solaroutdoors.org
Spring	MULTI	Rock Climbing			
Spring	MULTI	Wilderness First Aid			

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

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

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

SOLAR has a no-refund policy. If you are unable to attend an activity you may "sell your spot" to another club member.

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

WHAT IS SOLAR?

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

MEMBERSHIP

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

MEETINGS

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

SOLAR RAY NEWSLETTER

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

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Submissions for the SOLAR Ray are due on the Friday two weeks prior to the monthly Steering Committee Meeting (January 19 for the February issue). Electronic documents only. If you have any questions, please contact Rebecca Sweeton at rayeditor@solaroutdoors.org.

STEERING COMMITTEE

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

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

PRESIDENTS AT LARGE

Mike Banks | Leslie Cordova | Moe DeFrance | Al Fylak
Steve Gardner | Bill Halvingis | Cindy Harrison-Felix | Tom Hayes
Doug Lanyk | Larry Martin | Joan Hettinger | Tom Oloffo
Joan & Bob Westbrook

STEERING COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The Steering Committee meets on the last Tuesday of every month at 7:30 pm. These meetings are usually open to the general membership. Anyone who is interested in learning what topics are discussed, the decisions being made or contemplating running for a position on the Steering Committee, is welcome to attend. If you are interested in attending the Steering Committee Meeting, please contact Lou Szakal at president@solaroutdoors.org.

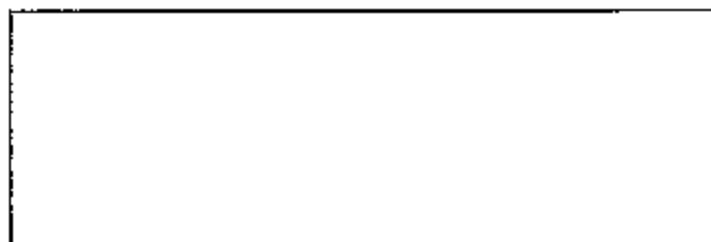
FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visit our website at: www.solaroutdoors.org.

SPECIAL THANKS TO THE SOLAR RAY ASSISTANT EDITORS

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

Visit our website: www.solaroutdoors.org



Happy New Year!

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