



# The SOLAR Ray

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

May 2007

## POSSUM HOLLOW REVIVAL

by Elizabeth Schwab

The Earth thanked us in advance for taking part in the annual Kensington clean up on Earth Appreciation Day, Saturday April 21st, by granting us perfect weather. Twelve adults and young ladies, Michaela Gearin with her friends Emily and Abigail, descended on our assigned area, Possum Hollow, with giant garbage bags, work gloves and a few of those cool poles that have a spike on the end. This looked to be a giant area, but we fanned out in several different directions and really covered the whole thing. There were open fields, picnic shelters, playing fields, scattered picnic tables, woods, trails and lots of shoreline.

It was a great day to be outside helping out and honoring Mother Earth and Kensington, but also a little disturbing. I'm sure everyone has had trash "accidents" happen: kites break and fly away, napkins and wrappers fly off a picnic table and out of reach, sweatshirts or sunglasses get dropped and lost, raccoons scatter stuff from a garbage can. I myself that day had absentmindedly left some gloves on the car hood, which flew off once we started driving. (Fortunately, they were able to be retrieved.) But it was obvious most of what we found were junk people just thoughtlessly left. Besides the myriad food wrappings, bottle caps, beverage cans/bottles and worm containers, there was also a license plate, a 1/2 full bottle of charcoal fluid, a candle holder, and a full place setting of paper products. It appeared the people had their picnic, then just got up and left. Disturbing.



It was cool that 15 people could have such an impact, as the area was much better than when we arrived. An added benefit was becoming familiar with another beautiful area of Kensington that is definitely worth returning to. The box lunch we received was mighty tasty also. One downside was the numbers of scratches obtained, because of course a lot of the trash had blown into the bushes and brambles. At the Second Annual SOLAR Kensington Clean Up, I will definitely be in bushwhacking ready clothes, regardless of the weather!

A big THANK YOU, to everyone who participated; a special one to Julie and Bev for bringing their daughters--priming them for an Earth Appreciation lifetime, and to Lou for providing the nifty heavy-duty work gloves.

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## BUENA VISTA 2007

by Grey Ivanov

Luck is something you can not account for. Especially in mountains. Especially in springtime. I took crampons and an ice axe along with my shorts and set no specific target or ultimate destination for this trip, except to enjoy the spring in the mountains near Buena Vista, Colorado. This small town is located slightly apart from the traditional Colorado Rockies and is more popular among hunters and fishermen than backpackers. We arrived there Thursday, April 5th, shortly before noon and asked for the road to the Cottonwood trailhead. It starts right from the single traffic light at the center of town. Easy? No. The road to the Cottonwood path (a decent dirt road) does not go to the Cottonwood trailhead.

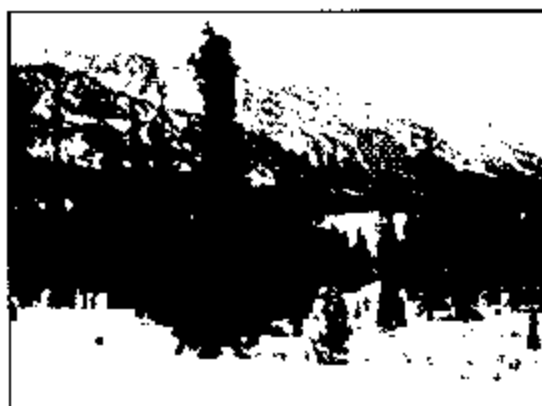


We spent half an hour finding the mysterious road #365, only to figure out that it is not suitable for a car. Not even an SUV. Going over rocks and potholes, it is a path for an experienced horseman on a brave mount. But, here we had our first measure of Luck: we did not have a car or an SUV, or even a horse. Ken Brochu brought a monster truck that can take you to any trailhead no matter what time of year or weather. So, we found ourselves in virgin pinewoods gently covered with snow, meaning you better



put on your snowshoes and forget about shorts. Our second portion of Luck: there was a trail. Not just a line on a map. Judging by the tracks, three parties had recently passed there: a party of normal people with snowshoes, a party of crazy people with backcountry skis, and a party of smart people with hiking boots only. It is a good trick to go at night when the snow is frozen underfoot and the full moon makes everything around you magical.

From our first steps we found Luck was still with us: the snow held our weight despite the warm afternoon weather. Regardless of such luck, we resisted the urge to climb immediately as high as possible. Spring is a strange time. After a long winter you feel like an eagle, ready to fly to a summit. But, after a short while you feel like a chicken without breath. A heavy backpack and high altitude make a chicken from an eagle even faster. Nothing helps you regain your strength better than steady going along a trail. So, we followed the Kroenke Lake trail until we lost it. It was about time to set up camp anyway. There was open water in North Cottonwood creek and a flat spot nearby just for our tent. Early the next morning we found the trail again, and then lost it again after a while, but at that point the route was pretty obvious. With the creek to our left and a steep slope to our right, there was nowhere to get lost. We came to a tree line and found Kroenke Lake covered by snow. The trail to the Cottonwood path was also snow-covered, and I did not feel comfortable crossing the 15° slope with the temperature above freezing.



So, it was too late to go further and too early to set up camp. We decided to backtrack and explore the Horn Fork basin. The way back to Horn Fork creek was easy, as we had already trampled the snow on the way up. Our troubles began at the Horn Fork trail. Whoever made the trail this winter was quite energetic and rather irrational. Their prints made a gigantic sinusoid up and down, through the thick fir trees, and the snow was starting to stick to our snowshoes. The hiking that was fun in the early morning became hard work. I read up to 90° deviation from our desired direction. Nevertheless, in a couple hours we got to an opening in the woods and in another 40 minutes we found ourselves looking at a gorgeous mountain range.

Yes, such a picture was worth any hard work. Should we possibly try to get to some summit? First things first. We made camp under the last group of trees in a valley. We actually dug a hole in the snow to the soil and even cleaned up a spot for our camp stove. It was a little bit of paranoia, but mostly the result of previous experience.



Easter Sunday greeted us with perfect weather. At sunrise I went toward Mt. Harvard to check the route to the summit, and Ken went to explore other possible trails. At first it was really easy; the snow held like asphalt, and the sun was in and out of the clouds. A gentle snow slope took me to the beginning of the ascent. The ascent itself was harder. At some point I changed to crampons. Then I felt uncomfortable with the inclination of the snow slope and bypassed it over rocks. Then another stretch of snow, and another bypass of a possible avalanche alley. Back home, planning the trip, I found descriptions of summer hiking and multiplied the ascent time by 2.5. I found my estimate was wrong. Maybe the entire idea of spring climbing was wrong. The eternal dilemma: the summit is so attractive, but the way is too hard. Is the summit worth the effort? Another snow slope. The summit was still not even visible. It was already past noon, time to give up by any account. But, we had other plans for the following day. The wet snow was waiting on my way back. The ridge was close, but the rocks covered by snow and ice were not an easy route. I pushed on.



I reached the summit of Mt. Harvard at 2:15 p.m. The final

revelation: this unarticulated heap of rocks on the ridge was not worth the effort to get to it, but it was too late. Mt. Columbia was briefly visible in all its beauty through a gap in the clouds, but I was too tired to even think about it. I made it back to camp close to 5 p.m., dead tired.



Monday morning we played it smart, and started toward Mt. Columbia well before sunrise. We expected several snow fields of varying steepness, 2 long moraines and the final portion of our route via a south-eastern ridge. Under certain conditions ice and snow penetrate between the moraine's rocks and create a concrete-like foundation specially designed to make hiking easy for lucky people. Those certain conditions were missing. Everything we stepped on slid down, with the exception of a huge rock that got airborne and flew toward Ken. But, our Luck was not used up yet; the rock peacefully missed Ken and retired somewhere downhill. We got through all the snow fields, moraines and cliffs and reached the ridge. The ridge itself was surprisingly easy and beautiful. We reached the summit at noon. On the way back we discovered a trail that was missing from our map and description, which saved us about half an hour. We got back to camp by late afternoon. Our trip was done, except the easy hike to the parking lot for the last day. We didn't even need Luck anymore.



That night, our Luck was over. The blizzard hit the valley before midnight. Snow somehow penetrated our double-wall tent. The fiberglass poles could not stand up to the wind, and the tent changed its shape every second. It was

impossible to do anything outside. So, we packed inside, and cooked a meal on our Jetboil, since it was unlikely we'd have another chance that day. We got out of the tent and collapsed it. We packed the tent with a free gift of some snow, but it would not fit in the bag. We packed the tent in 2 bags, tied both to the frame of the backpack and started out of there. Avalanches were audible even in such wind, but we were safe as long as we stayed on the trail, which did not exist any more.



The snow somehow forgot the law of gravity, and flew horizontally. We relied on a compass and ground inclination to navigate, and hit the woods in an hour. There were no references to navigate by. We came to an opening, but which one? It didn't matter. The relief of the Horn Fork valley was trivial. All we needed to do was count the creeks we crossed. The last one should bring us to the road, and it did eventually. The road was covered with 20 cm of fresh snow, and this snow conformed to the law of gravity.



Nothing could drive on such a road. Except for our truck. We had left summer Buena Vista 5 days ago; we returned to winter Buena Vista, with snow all over the valley. As we had completely used up our Luck, we drove back through a snow storm in Nebraska, Iowa, Illinois, Indiana and Michigan.

Additional info for anyone going to this lovely town: The shower in community center is no longer available.

However, they built a wonderful laundromat; right in the center of town. There are nice, clean showers which became our ultimate destination after this trip.



## INTRODUCTION TO KAYAKING

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 Heaven'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

- \$60.00 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.

## SOLAR HIKE SCHEDULE

by Matt Dalton

Hike with the SOLAR! Lead a Solar hike or post your own hike for SOLAR! 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, mcalton@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.

May 6, 2007, Sunday 9:30 AM- SOLAR, Maybury State Park, Northville, MI.

Meet at 8 Mile Rd entrance and parking lot by concessions area. We hike for about 2 hours and cover about 5 miles with stops for rest and water. Brunch afterward for most of the hikers. (25-35 friendly hikers).

May 12, 2007 Saturday - 9:30 AM, SOLAR, 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 Heaven's or go have lunch in Milford.

May 20, 2007, Sunday - 9:30 AM, SOLAR, Maybury State Park, Northville, MI.

Meet at 8 Mile Rd entrance and parking lot by concessions area. We hike for about 2 hours and cover about 5 miles with stops for rest and water. Brunch afterward for most of the hikers. (25-35 friendly hikers).

May 26, 2007, Saturday - 9:30 AM, Kensington Metro Park, Memorial Day Weekend.

Meet at the Nature Center, North of Kensington Rd entrance, past the golf course. Go out for lunch afterwards or keep hiking.

June 3, 2007, Sunday - 9:30 AM SOLAR, Maybury State Park, Northville, MI.

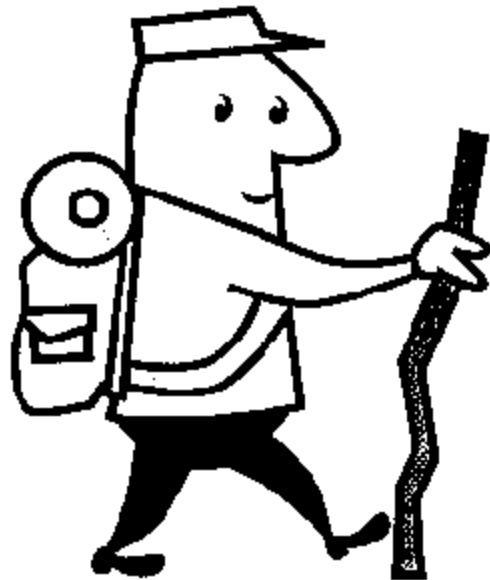
Meet at 8 Mile Rd entrance and parking lot by concessions area. Brunch afterward for most of the hikers. (25-35 friendly hikers).

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

May 18-20, 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.midnreservations.com](http://www.midnreservations.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).



## SPOTLIGHT ON MIKE HOBIG

by Rebecca Sweeton



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

For a little over three years.

### HOW DID YOU GET INVOLVED WITH SOLAR?

My friend Jeff Zabel has been in SOLAR for a long time, he would show me pictures and tell trip stories and for years I had other commitments keeping me close to home, one day Jeff realized I should get out a bit more, I think I was bemoaning that he went on the cool Inca trail trip to Peru and I wish I had, he told me I had no excuse and had to attend a meeting. The talk that night was something interesting as are most nights and between the two, that reeled me in. After that it was just one class after another, one trip after another.

### HOW DID YOU START BACKPACKING?

Nineteen eighty something Porcupine Mountains, Isle Royal and several other small trips, ancient equipment and a much younger back. Like many folks we didn't know we didn't know what we were doing was the hard way, cans of food, mmmmm good and light. who says that you can't take a full sized can opener out on the trail. That is not something I will ever do again, the can goods stay home too

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

Actually a trip by train out to Vancouver, a bit of luxury and then some day hikes at beaches and to cultural museums, and gardens and along the Baden-Powell trail. It was the first trip that I ever stayed at a hostel. Every path out there is lush and every thing was new and different, huge trees, ferns, slugs...it was exploring around every turn even in the city with Chinese gardens, Stanley park and seeing the ship that made the first Northwest Passage very cool.

### WHAT WOULD YOUR DREAM TRIP BE?

I have wanted for year to hike the Scottish highlands, at one time I had the opportunity to go there and stay at the Trust properties, which are historical significant buildings, castles, homes, cottages. That dream trip sits in the back of my head along with the idea to get a rail pass and hike some of the highland trail. from rail head to rail head through the small towns.

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

I have trepidations about traveling abroad, so much so that maybe I have let opportunities pass by, I guess I would like to hear from some of our world travelers and hear how and what to do internationally when traveling. My fall backpacking plan is to wait until there is a trip I can't resist and then muscle through that indecision and go go go.

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

For sure the people, I guess that I feel that I should be more friendly and encouraging to other new SOLAR folks as generally all the established members have been to me. I know that the S in SOLAR is not social but that aspect of the club has been great, talking to world adventurers and hearing about their experience has been enlightening and who knew that there were so many thing to do and see so close to home too. Talk to anyone in the club and most of us have more going on and more planned than the average Joe. that's inspiring.

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

It has only been a few years that I have been in, I guess that SOLAR hasn't changed as much as I have, most everyone starts out knowing only one or two folks, they take a class or two, go out on a hike or two, eat and drink at a restaurant or two and as time goes by you get to know folks and get involved a bit more. There are alot more familiar faces at meetings now. I think that people are the core of the club and the more effort put in to meeting greeting and doing with them, intertwines us all and give us all opportunities to go, see and do with a great group of folks. I guess my perspective has changed the most, from a friend leaning on me to come to a meeting to wanting to go and see friends and new faces and actually want to learn something new and have a good time getting out there.



## 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 club rental equipment
- **Historian:** Collects and stores information about the club
- **By-Laws:** Oversees club by-laws and changes
- **Webmaster:** Manages, maintains, and updates club website

If you are interested in running for a position or have any questions, please contact Karl Overhuel at cyber.nomad@comcast.net or call (218) 890-0738. 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.

To see who is currently running for Steering Committee, see page 8.





## ELECTION 2007

by Karl Overhuel



The following people are running for SOLAR Steering Committee as of April 20.

### OFFICERS

- **President:** Lou Szakal
- **Vice President:** Cindy Taylor & Pam Riehl Szakal
- **Secretary:** Michelle Deleporte
- **Treasurer:** Carol McCrie

### COMMITTEE CHAIRPERSONS

- **Education:** Sarah Kirkish
- **Membership:** Mary Price & Marie Harrington
- **Activities:** Kevin Cotter & Samantha Schafer
- **Programs:** Allen Duncan
- **Public Relations:** Heather Hall
- **SOLAR Ray Editor:** Rebecca Sweeton
- **Equipment:** Rob Schwenke
- **Historian:** Pam Schmelzer
- **By-Laws:** Chuck Smith
- **Webmaster:** Dave Sweeton

If you are interested in running for a position or have any questions, please contact Karl Overhuel at cyber.nomcd@comcast.net or call (248) 890-0738. 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.

**CORRECTION:** In the April edition of the SOLAR Ray, it was listed that Pam Riehl Szakal was running for Secretary, this was an error, she is in fact running for Vice President.

## COME JOIN SOLAR AT NATIONAL TRAILS DAY 2007

by Pam Riehl Szakal

New in its 15th year, National Trails Day (NTD) continues to inspire the public to flock to their favorite trails to discover, learn about and celebrate trails while participating in educational exhibits, trail dedications, gear demonstrations, instructional workshops and trail work projects. In 2006, a record 1,210 events registered with American Hiking Society for national sanctioning.

SOLAR has been participating in National Trails Day for over 13 years. For 2007, National Trails Day will fall on Saturday, June 2 from 9:30am-12pm. SOLAR will work with the Friends of Maybury at Maybury State Park to relocate and improve existing trails.

After the work is done, Friends of Maybury will provide a light lunch and then Peg Campbell, a founding member of SOLAR, has invited everyone to her house for adult beverages and chips. Peg's house is adjacent to Maybury State Park and she is a member of Friends of Maybury.

So come join SOLAR, give back to Maybury State Park and enjoy a great day outdoors. Event will be held rain or shine. If interested in volunteering, contact Pam Riehl Szakal at [parieh@gmail.com](mailto:parieh@gmail.com).

### Additional info:

- Meet at the Park Office off of Beck Road, Northville Township.
- Wear work clothes and boots and be prepared for bad weather.
- SOLAR will provide work gloves or bring your own.
- If you own, please bring long handled shovels, rakes and any weeding tools for pulling or scratching invasive garlic mustard.
- Bring: work gloves, water, sunscreen and mosquito repellent.





## 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

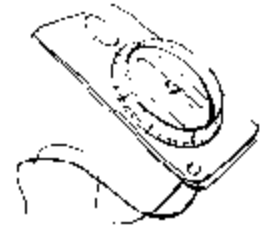
- \$40 which includes: book, maps/handout, cabin rental
- Does NOT include parking permit or meals

### 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  
(248) 890-0738



## GOOGLE EARTH ADDS HIKING TRAILS

by Rebecca Sweeton

Before you plan your next backpacking trip, you may want to check out Google Earth (<http://earth.google.com/>). Google recently added GPS-marked trails for hiking, biking, backpacking and running. The info includes directions to trailheads, a difficulty ranking, and notes on interesting sights to see along the way. Some also include photos, audio and even video clips.

Another cool feature is that with one click Google sends the trail information straight to your phone and if it's a GPS-enabled phone, you can get the actual coordinates as well, as opposed to just the map.

Users can also submit their own hiking routes.

To see the hiking trails feature in action, open Google Earth and look under the featured content tree in the layers pane. More specific information can be found on Google Earth and the Google Blog, see the links below.

### LINKS:

- <http://earth.google.com/>
- <http://googleblog.blogspot.com/2007/04/hikes-on-ity.html>

### SOURCE:

- <http://lifehacker.com/software/google-earth/google-earth-adds-hiking-trails-2520136.php>

Google™

## THE RECUMBENT VOYAGER

by Winnie Chrzanowski



*Grave Matters: A Journey through The Modern Funeral Industry to a Natural Way of Burial*

By Mark Harris

Scribner, Hardcover 208 pages

\$24.00

Did you know that no state law requires a body to be buried in a casket or other container? Or that no law mandates a body must be embalmed? Or that "cremains" could be buried in your own backyard? These facts come from Mark Harris' *Grave Matters: A Journey through The Modern Funeral Industry to a Natural Way of Burial*.

Last month's book review discussed the dark side of a park ranger's life (*Nature Noir*). For some reason, I seem to be staying with the dark side, so it feels right that this month's book review discusses grave matters (sorry, pun intended). Nary a soul wants to consider his or her demise, but the event is inevitable. As the Doors' Jim Morrison so aptly put it (anyway I think it was Jim), no one here gets out alive. So if we can't get out alive, what's the best way to send us off and then dispose of our earthly remains?

Someday, today's "traditional" funerary rites have never quite appealed to me. They smack of showmanship, prestidigitation, and gross consumerism—a way to gouge money from grief-stricken relatives. Of course, for those of us who were fans of HBO's *Six Feet Under*, the sight of Nate Fisher being buried in a woodland grave covered only in a shroud gave us food for thought. Now along comes Mark Harris' slim book with the long title offering appealing alternatives to expensive, impersonal funeral and burial process. The natural burial process proposes a more personal and loving approach to caring for our dead.

Part I: *Modern Burial* consists of the first two chapters of the book. They provide an in-depth look at the "traditional" embalming and burial process. Harris uses a case study of a young woman who dies suddenly and whose parents choose the "traditional" processes. Neither chapter is for the squeamish. Chapter 1 is the most unpleasant part of the book. It's a front row seat at an embalming. I had a hard time getting through it though it was gruesomely fascinating. Chapter 2 puts you right up front again at the burial process. Again, this chapter brought unpleasant visions to mind but provided a great set up for the rest of the book.

Part II: *Natural Burial* covers cremation, burial at sea, memorial reefs, home funerals, plain pine boxes, backyard burials, and natural cemeteries such as Greensprings Natural Cemetery (<http://natural.burial.org>). These chapters are much lighter in spirit (and cost) than the preceding two chapters. Harris uses real people and their stories to illustrate the different options for burial and to put a more human face on life after death. While life after death is a religious tenet, in *Grave Matters* the concept is brought to its full reality by showing how eco-friendly burials can enrich the earth rather than deplete it making us each something greater than ourselves.

The author's investigative reporting skills add to the book's readability. He weaves fascinating facts, history, and interviews around the various burial choices. He does not take sides but provides information in a straightforward manner. At the end of each burial option chapter, the author furnishes practical information about how to do it, who to contact, and an estimate of what it might cost. He includes information on laws as well.

If you're hungry for more information on "green" eco-friendly burials and seriously don't want to pollute Mother Earth any more than we already have, *Grave Matters* is a book you don't want to miss. Even if you're not concerned about being eco-friendly, this book is filled with basic information every consumer needs to know about funerals and burial processes. I highly recommend that everyone pick up this book and read it. You'll be grateful that you sat down to consider such grave matters.

## NON-SOLAR KID-MANDATORY BACKPACKING TRIP

by Kevin Cotter

Do you enjoy backpacking and want to share that experience with your children? Are you waiting for SOLAR to offer more kid oriented outings? Do your kids need an alternative to video games and text messaging? Then this backpacking trip on the Manistee River Trail is for you.

We will meet on Friday, June 29 at the Seaton Creek Campground, about 25 miles northwest of Cadillac, then backpack on Saturday and Sunday along the Manistee River. The trail is very scenic and fairly easy, offering plenty of opportunities for swimming and playing along the way. We will hike about 5-6 miles on Saturday and camp on the trail Saturday night, then continue hiking Sunday to Red Bridge before heading home. Total distance is 10 miles.

Each adult (or couple) must bring a child between the ages of 8 and 18. Adults should have backpacking experience. Completion of the SOLAR Beginning Backpacking course is desirable but not required. Children do not need backpacking experience, but should have experience hiking and camping.

Cost will be fairly minimal. We will meet to coordinate group gear and transportation. The emphasis will be on having fun, enjoying the river and scenery, and spending quality time with some very important people.

Sign-ups will be taken at the May meeting, or you can also contact me directly at [solar@wowway.com](mailto:solar@wowway.com).



## BRIGHTON SPRING FLING- MAY 6

by Pam Riehl Szakal

On Sunday, May 6 from 12-5pm join SOLAR at the Brighton Spring Fling. Hosted by the Brighton State Recreation Area, the event promotes getting involved in outdoor activities and the state parks. Over 25 groups will be on hand promoting hiking, geocaching, mushroom hunting, kayaking, kite flying, camping, hiking, horseback riding, archery, and more! Organized activities are also scheduled and hosted by some of the participating groups.

TIME	CLASS/ACTIVITY	GROUP
Noon	Guided Trail Hike	Hiking Michigan
1:00	Proper Use of Lifejackets	US Coast Guard
1:30	Guided Mushroom Hunt	Mushroom Hunters Club
2:00	Basics of Hiking	SOLAR
2:30	Outdoor Cooking	Girl Scouts
3:00	The Aliens Among Us	DNR Stewardship
3:30	Do It or Tri It! Triathlon	Elite Endeavors
4:00	Geo-Caching Demo	MIGC

In addition, food vendors will be present to make it a complete day for the entire family!

SOLAR will have a booth where we will display our classes and activities, hold various seminars, and get a chance to talk to people about SOLAR. Although the event is free a valid state park permit is required for park entry.

Please come out, meet new people and learn more about outdoor activities available in SE Michigan. For additional information on the event contact Brighton State Rec at 810-229-6566. If you are interested in helping at the SOLAR booth please contact Pam Riehl Szakal at [pariehl@gmail.com](mailto:pariehl@gmail.com).



## **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

## MEMORIAL DAY WEEKEND - NORTH MANITOU ISLAND BACKPACKING

by Pam Riehl Szakal & Lou Szakal

Trip Leaders - Pam & Lou Szakal

Date - May 25-28, 2007

Contact - parieh11@netscape.net, 248-705-6773

This will be our third year visiting North Manitou Island which is the more isolated of the two islands that are part of Sleeping Bear Sand Dunes National Lakeshore. The island has a wide variety of natural beauty as well as an interesting human history, as evidenced by the interesting place names and ruins returning to nature, scattered across the island. There are 15,000 acres to explore and hike around. The topography varies considerably from low, sandy, open dunes to rugged bluffs.

There is a variety of wildlife on the island, including deer, raccoons that will steal your food, given the opportunity and the Piping Plover, a shore bird, which is on the endangered species list. Fishing is permitted on Lake Manitou, with a valid fishing license.

Be prepared for a rustic backpacking experience, as you will need to hang your food, purify your drinking water, and bring a cook stove, as fires are not permitted in the wilderness area. Oh and by the way there are no outhouses. Remember that your group will be responsible for their own food and gear (stoves, water filters, tents, first aid, bear bag, etc.) PLEASE COME PREPARED!

For those interested, bring food and an adult beverage to share (theme to come). We had so much fun with this overall the last few years we decided to let people prepare in advance.

Please don't delay, as the ferry will fill up!

### Trip Details

- Meet at the boat dock in Leland at 9:15 AM Friday, May 25, the boat leaves at 10:00 SHARP. If interest, we can also schedule a ferry for Saturday morning for those who cannot take Friday off.
- We will be leaving the island on Monday at 11:10 AM. Check the boat schedule to make sure the times haven't changed. Please arrive at the boat dock a little before the departure time, as the boat will leave without you.
- You must have taken the S.D.L.A.R. Basic Backpacking Class to participate.
- Cost- Approximately \$46 per person which covers- ferry, camping, park pass and parking (Friday-Monday). NOTE- this does not cover the cost of accommodations for Thursday night. However, we will only collect \$37 since we will pay for the ferry and camping as a group. Park pass and parking are on your own.
- Maximum Group Size- 10 for group sites but we can have more than one group site if there is interest.

**ALL MONIES MUST BE SUBMITTED BY MAY 1 SOLAR MEETING**

## SOLAR 2007 CALENDAR

### 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	Lyber.nomai@comcast.net
5/4-5/6	WKND	Whitewater Rafting & Cheat Fest**	Cheat River, WV	Charity Loring	charitymarie@yahoo.com
5/5	SAT	Wildflower and Mushroom Walk	Island Lake State Park	Margaret Martin/ Jim Coe	mpluscat@hotmail.com jimc36@comcast.net
5/6	SUN	Metro Grand Spring Bike Tour**	Willow Metropark	Dave DeFrance	defranceomex@comcast.net
5/6	SUN	Brighton Spring Fling**	Brighton State Recreation Area	Pam Riehl Szakal	parieh@gmail.com
5/11-5/13	WKND	Hart Montague Bike Trail Car Camping	Muskegon, MI	Dave DeFrance	defranceomex@comcast.net
5/11-5/13	WKND	Michigan Wildflowers and Mcrels Weekend	Manistee National Forest	Margaret Martin/ Jim Coe	mpluscat@hotmail.com jimc36@comcast.net
5/18-5/20	WKND	Annual SOLAR Reunion**	Brighton Recreation Area	Carol McGinnis	cmcginnis@shcglobal.net
5/25-5/28	WKND	Memorial Weekend Getaway	Tobermory, Ontario	Leslie Corcora	lestiegenes@aol.com
5/25-5/28	WKND	Bruce Peninsula Backcountry Adventure	Bruce Peninsula, Ontario	Jennifer Tislerics/ Pam Schmeltzer	pamelaksch@aol.com
5/25-5/28	WKND	Backpacking	North Manitou Island	Pam and Lou Szakal	pamelaksch@aol.com

### MAY CLASSES

5/2	WED	Intermediate Backpacking	Lathrup Village, MI	Leslie Corcora	lestiegenes@aol.com
5/4-5/6	WKND	Beginning Backpacking (con't)	TBA	Mike Janks	Slywolfe52@yahoo.com
5/4, 5/12, 5/19	FRI/SAT	Mountain Biking Practicals (con't)	Addison Oaks/ Sonney Creek/Holly Holdridge	Nancy McMahon	funoutside1@aol.com
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
5/12	SAT	Introduction to Kayaking	Heavner's Canoe Rental, Milford	Matt Dalton	mdalton@anentech.net
5/16, 5/19-5/20	WED/ WKND	Basic Land Navigation Class	TBA	Karl Overheul	Cyber.nomad@comcast.net

### JUNE ACTIVITIES

6/2	SAT	National Trails Day Cleanup**	Waybury State Park	Pam Riehl Szakal	parieh@gmail.com
6/2	SAT	Celebration**	Southfield, MI	Mike Malor	mmalor130390MI@comcast.net
6/5	TUE	GENERAL MEETING	Colony Hall	Lou Szakal	Everest2008@comcast.net
6/9-6/10	FRI/SAT	Camping & Free Sailing Lesson	U of Michigan Sailing Club, Dexter	Vida Ruggero	rageti@hotmail.com
6/16	SAT	Solstice Sunset Canoe Paddle**	Heavner Canoe Rental, Proud Lake	Margaret Martin	mpluscat@hotmail.com
6/29-7/1	WKND	Kid-Mandatory Backpacking Trip**	Manistee River Trail	Kevin Cotter	sslar@wowway.com
6/30	SAT	Summer Moonlight: Canoe Paddle and Motorcycle Ride**	Heavner Canoe Rental, Proud Lake	Margaret Martin	mpluscat@hotmail.com
6/30-7/4	MULTI	Summer Trip	Leland, Sleeping Bear Dunes, Frankfort	Mike Hobig	mhobig@ford.com

### JUNE CLASSES

6/9	SAT	Introduction to Kayaking	Heavner's Canoe Rental, Milford	Matt Dalton	mdalton@anentech.net
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## SOLAR 2007 CALENDAR (Continued)

JULY ACTIVITIES					
7/2-7/19	MULTI	Scotland Trip**	Scotland	Don Wold	dwold12972@aol.com
7/20-7/23	MULTI	Backpacking Trip	Monongahela National Forest, West Virginia	Natalie Jewett	woodsromer@yahoo.com
7/21-7/23	WKND	Canoe Float	Manistee River, Grayling, MI	Tom Oloffo	mcmountainman@yahoo.com
AUGUST ACTIVITIES					
8/3-8/5	WKND	Hike and Float	Manistee River Trail	Jim Coe	Jmc36@comcast.net
8/11-8/18	MULTI	Canoeing	Agouquin Provincial Park, Ontario	S Smetter/P Crookshank	ssharon_35@hotmail.com
8/11-8/19	MULTI	Kayaking and SCUBA Diving**	Tobermory, Ontario	Chuck Smith	coryansmit@aol.com
8/17-8/19	WKND	Canoeing and Camping	Pere Marquette River	Wary Bogush	notdev@yahoo.com
AUGUST CLASSES					
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 McGinrie	cmcgrinrie@sbcglobal.net
UPCOMING ACTIVITIES					
9/28	FRI	Full Moon Canoe Paddle**	Heavner Canoe Rental, Proud Lake	Margaret Martin	mpluscat@hotmail.com

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

For information on joining SOLAR, contact Mary Price at [membership@solaroutdoors.org](mailto:membership@solaroutdoors.org).

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](mailto:activities@solaroutdoors.org).

If you would like to help plan and/or teach a SOLAR class, please contact Mike Banks at [education@solaroutdoors.org](mailto: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'S MISSING?

Your article!

Your pictures!

Your trip recommendation!

Email YOUR contributions to the SOLAR Ray at:  
[rayeditor@solaroutdoors.org](mailto:rayeditor@solaroutdoors.org)

#### 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 Road!) 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 [hmpriee@ameritech.net](mailto:hmpriee@ameritech.net).

#### SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Submissions for the SOLAR Ray are due on the Friday two weeks prior to the monthly Steering Committee Meeting (May 18 for the June 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 McCririe
Activities: Kevin Cotter	By-Laws: Cindy Taylor
Education: Mike Banks	Equipment: Dave DeFrance
Historians: Dick Elsenhoe	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 Fytak  
Steve Gardner | Bill Halvingis | Cincy 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](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 Schmetzer, Carol, McCririe, Elizabeth Schwab, and Abi Tislerics

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



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