



# The SOLAR Ray

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

October 2007

## A WEEK WITH THE THIMBLE BERRIES

by Allen Duncan

Six SOLARites headed up to Isle Royale for the week of August 19-26. As it turned out, the weather was very good and the Thimble Berries were even better.

Thomas Black, Janet and Allen Duncan, Sarah Kirkish, Matt Rutledge and Rob Schwenke rendezvoused at Fort Wilkins State Park, in Copper Harbor, the evening of Sunday, August 19. The latest arrived with just enough time to set up tents and eat cookies. A fire ban had us sitting around an empty fire ring, but then again we never had to worry about smoke hitting us in the face. The park was full and it seemed it might be noisy, but whether it was actually quiet or just the effects of the long drive, all slept well.

We awoke at 5:30, packed, ate and were at the dock of the Isle Royale Queen by 7:00. Parking and loading went smoothly and we were on our way at 8:00. Sarah had been the leader in preparing us for this trip. We bought our ferry tickets in March, which was necessary for the August trip! The west-bound trip was excellent. Easterly winds produced a little motion, but there were no complaints, no green faces. The coffee on the Isle Royale Queen was some of the best had in a long time. Amazing how the start of a trip brings bliss.

Landing in Rock Harbor before noon, we listened to our orientation, provided by the Ranger. Sarah went in to get our group permit and Matt and I went to find a shelter. Shelter number 5 was open, and as it turned out was a great site, right off the lake. We filled the rest of the day eating, walking, napping and, in general, hanging out in Rock Harbor. The Captain of the Queen had prepared us all for the ripe thimble berries on the island, we were able to snack on them all week. Every day had us walking by ripe thimble berries, stopping to pick and eat at our leisure.

Day two had us on the Voyager II for our trip to Windigo.



The easterly winds were blowing, though much stronger than the previous day. Because of this, the Voyager took a detour and went around to the west (leeward) side of the island for the trip to Windigo. There were a few exciting moments as we went around the north end of the island, but in general we had a fine ride. As the day progressed, clouds continued to build and we went in and out of

rain. The Voyager is not luxurious and hearing protection would help, but the accommodations were fine.

We hit the trail in Windigo at 3:00 pm. We had light rain all afternoon as we headed to our first camp at Island Mine. The light rain continued through the night. While the rain was a bit of an inconvenience, the place was dry and rain was desperately needed. Nobody really complained. We stayed at Island Mine group site #1 and voted it a "good site."

Our next day started out foggy, but by 11 am, the fog had burned off and we had sunny skies with temperatures in the 70's. We continued on the Greenstone Ridge trail, had a nice lunch at S. Lake Desor and then moved on to Ishpeming Point. We had good vistas on the trail and made the best of the scenery, though we also had the reality of a 13 mile day. Our intended camp site, Hatchet Lake was made at 7:00 pm. Hatchet Lake group site #3 was our home. This was an excellent site at a beautiful camping area. A couple leaches attached themselves while in the water, but that was the only excitement. Other than that, we just enjoyed an incredible evening with excellent scenery, food and colleagues.

Our next day brought high humidity and temperatures near 80. Our goal was East Chickenbone, with a detour to Lake Livermore for water. We stayed at East Chickenbone individual sites #1 and #2. As a group, our vote would be "avoid East Chickenbone." The scenery ranked at the

bottom for the week, with little or no shade and sites that were more dirt than anything else. However, we all agreed it was still infinitely better than the inside of a cubicle. Rain greeted us as we set up camp and intermittent rain occurred during the night, this probably didn't help in our voting.

What a difference a day makes. The next morning greeted us with much lower temperatures and humidity. Between East Chickenbone and the Daisy Farm trail we had great views of the Lake Superior north shore. Our lunch at Daisy Farm was under a shelter and the cool, dry air was conducive to good appetites and good hiking. We pushed 4 more miles to "3 Mile" after lunch and took sites #7 and #8 at 3 mile (#9 looked better than #7, #8 and #9 would be best in the area). These were on the lake. We hung out in the Lake Superior water, had a great game of "Apples to Apples" and dined on Tom Black's culinary masterpiece of vegetarian enchiladas.

Three miles on our final day from 3 Mile to Rock Harbor:



This was, without a doubt, the most difficult section of trail all week. It really isn't a trail, as much as a path across lakeshore rocks and roots. We were happy we had planned a short day for this type of trail. The day was beautiful (again) and we were in Rock Harbor before lunch. We took showers, ate and chilled until our afternoon departure on the Queen. The ride in to Copper Harbor was even smoother than our west bound ride a week earlier. After our drive back to Houghton, Sarah and Rob took us to the Ambassador for dinner, then four went to the B&B for deviled eggs and Stroh's while Jan and I strolled to the Keweenaw Brewing Company for a smoke free pint.

Sunday, August 26 had us all heading back to Southeast Michigan. It had been an excellent week. 43 miles; most of it on the Greenstone; most of it in excellent weather; all of it with ripe thimble berries, left and right; and all of it with excellent companions.

## CAVING IN KENTUCKY ALL LEVELS, NO EXPERIENCE NECESSARY!

by Leslie Cordova

January 25-27, 2008

It's that time of year again - time for the 27th annual Carter Caves Crawl-a-thon. 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 they offer a wide variety of cave tours, 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 too. This is NOT a pet friendly event.

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 \$70 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](http://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 years old (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 listing 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.

For more information, please contact Leslie Cordova at (748) 547-5626 or by email at [LeslieGene@aol.com](mailto:LeslieGene@aol.com).



## 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.

October 7, 2007 Sunday - 9:30 AM, Maybury State Park, Northville, MI. Meet at 8 Mile Rd entrance and parking lot by concessions area. (approx. 35 hikers)

Hike for about 2 hours and cover about 5 miles with stops for rest and water. Lunch stop after the hike.

FYI: (Hunting season is open in many of the State Parks.)

There is NO hunting at Maybury State Park or Metro Parks.

October 13, 2007, Saturday 9:30 AM, Kensington Metro Park, Milford, MI. I-96 and Kensington Road exit, meet at the Nature Center to plan route, and length of hike. Optional lunch after the hike.

October 21, 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).

October 27, 2007, Saturday - 9:30 AM, Metropolitan Beach Metro Park, on beautiful Lake St. Clair. Take I-94 to Metro Beach Parkway, (16 Mile Road). Meet at the park office building, choose your hiking route and don't miss walking on the pier that goes out to Lake St. Clair. Hike leader familiar with trails and a great lunch spot requested.

November 4, 2007, Sunday - 9:30 AM, (Daylight Saving Time Ends) Fall Back.

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).

## IT'S OCTOBERFEST!

By Carol McCririe

WHERE: CAROL MCCRIE'S  
2609 PINCKNEY RD.  
HOWELL

WHEN: SATURDAY, OCTOBER 13 @ 6 P.M. - ??

We will have brats and sauerkraut. Please bring a dish to pass (think German or any other ethnic dish).

We will have pop and this year we are again doing Octoberfest margaritas and will have all the fixins. BYO beer and tequila!

Depending on the weather, we will be indoors and/or outdoors, maybe even a bonfire. Bring your camp chair and your trip pics and CDs for sharing.

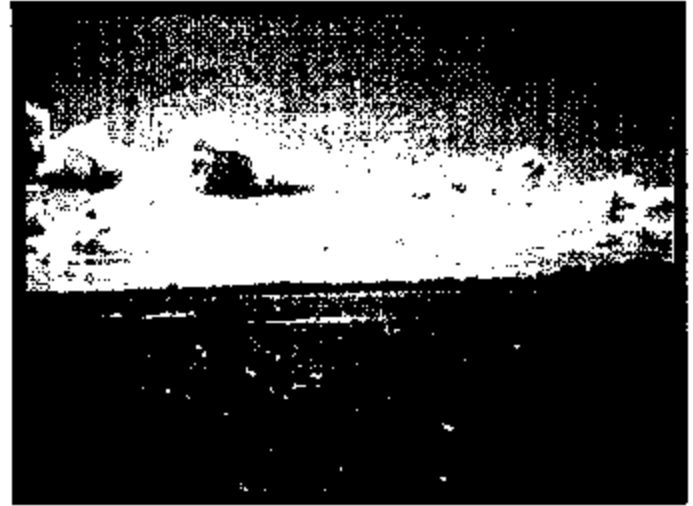


## SAGINAW BAY TRIP

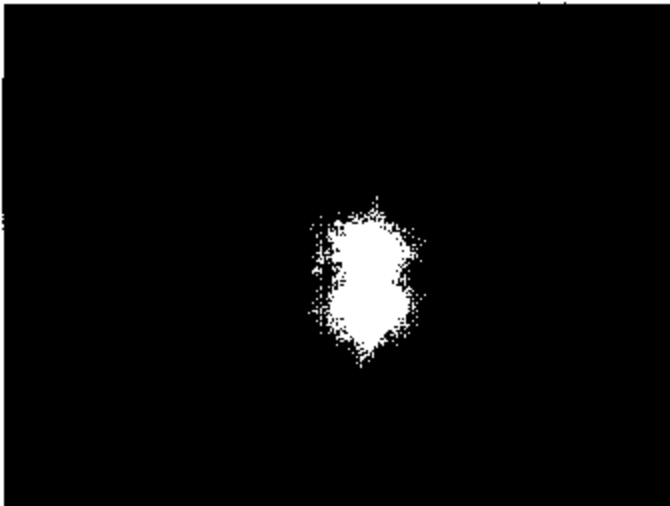
by Sharon Smelter

August 24 through the 26 found Matt Dalton and 6 other Solarites making plans to disregard the weather reports and forge ahead to kayak, hike, swim and relax on the shores of Saginaw Bay. Friday night loomed ominous, with a strong storm front moving across Michigan. The sky darkened, the wind blew, and lightning raced across the sky-for only a short time, but with enough fury to deter most plans for the evening. Not for Richard Duke, Sharon Smelter and new member Karen Carr who arrived after the storm to nice calm weather...

Saturday, after some early morning dark skies, the front moved out from Saginaw Bay and warm sunshine came racing in. By noon all were gathered - Matt Dalton with a great continental breakfast, Pete Lamb, Tom Dunn, Kevin Cotter and Bob Paige. With kayaks unloaded, and a few beginner lessons for the newbies courtesy of Matt and his dog Murphy- we were on the bay to explore! What a great gem of a place! Pete, Kevin, and Sharon (more experienced paddlers) set out north along the shore. The water was only 2-3 feet deep in some places with nice sandy bottoms! We passed marshes with white snowy colored egrets, herons, geese, swallows, and sea gulls calling out and dive bombing the waters ahead. The sunshine glistened on the slightly rippling blue water. The Rifle River delta was found with an abandoned fishing companies' equipment, turtles sunning on logs, and wildflowers on the banks. We also spotted Jo-Pye Weed, Goldenrod, Cattails strangled by Loosestrife, Fragmites, and many water lilies.



The kayaks skimmed over very shallow water in spots on the way back to camp. We could see great splashes in the water ahead!!! What was it? Murphy...having a grand old time, running through the shallow water, jumping in and out of Matt's heavy canoe - his first time in one! Matt was a great educator giving kayak lessons to Karen and Bob and teaching Murphy the fine arts of obedience and fun! Soon, we caught up to them and SOMEHOW a water fight broke out! When paddle splashing wasn't enough, kayak pumps served quite well - with great aim and precision we were soon totally soaked, laughing and chasing each other.



A potluck dinner that evening turned out quite well with Pete providing Cornish pasties and Karen and Bob cooking very tasty burgers. The almost full moon rose bright and shimmering over the water as we looked forward to another day of paddling. It was a great evening for sunset pictures!

Sunday morning was a little surprising...since early morning sunrise pictures were beautiful and clear, and then...most people woke up to dark gray cloud cover! A little front had moved in, but after a wonderful breakfast in downtown Standish at an old restaurant, Wheelers, the sun appeared with great blue skies! Did we want to paddle or go to a jazz festival? We came to paddle, so that's what we did!

Some people had to leave, but Kevin, Pete, Karen, Sharon, Matt, and Murphy couldn't pass up another day of kayaking

fun! We paddled north with the goal to find the Pine River. A great sunny, warm Saginaw Bay day! Karen was sure picking up the skills of kayaking quickly. With newly found sore kayak muscles she did well crossing this part of the bay. The wind was a gentle factor as we turned back toward camp, creating just enough wave action to be exciting!

In the shallow water, the warm wind blowing, and a sandy bottom inviting, how could we resist a cool refreshing swim in Saginaw Bay? It was great...but we had to be a little careful of sharp zebra mussel shells we found on small rocks under the water. The bay was full of surprises! A great Michigan gem not to be missed and a great place for kayaking!

## MOUNTAIN BIKING CLASS

by Nancy McMahon

Take SOLAR Mountain Biking Class 101 and discover the adventure! The Enjoying Michigan Winters/ Winter Camping class is not required!

- October 16th Class  
Cycle and Fitness @ 6:00 PM -9:00 PM
- October 19th Skill Session  
Bloomer Park @ 6:00 PM
- October 20th Trail Practical  
Stoney Creek Trail @ 4:00 PM
- October 21st Trail Practical  
Addison Oaks @ 1:00 PM



### Topics Covered:

- Golden Rule of Mountain Biking
- Ten Essentials
- Equipment
- Bike Skills
- Nutrition
- Rules of the Trails
- Repairs
- Maintenance
- First Aid
- Safety
- Night Riding
- Type A Mountain Biker

For more information, please contact: Nancy McMahon at [funoutsidel@aol.com](mailto:funoutsidel@aol.com).

## SOLAR PROGRAM SCHEDULE

by Allen Duncan

### October Program: Michigan Lyme Disease Association with Linda Lobes, President

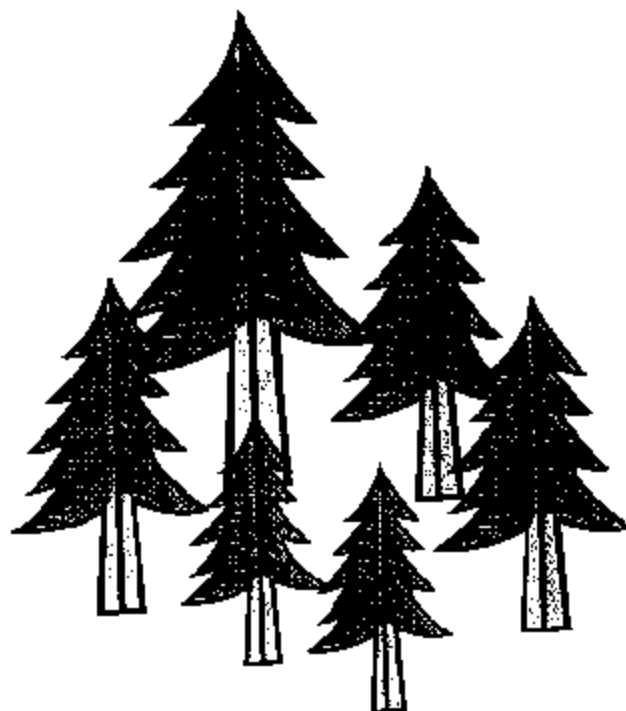
What is Lyme Disease? How do you get it? Linda Lobes will educate SOLAR members and answer these questions, as well as what to do if you contract Lyme Disease? How to protect yourself and your family and how to properly remove a tick.

### Upcoming Programs:

- November: SOLAR Mountaineering Trips with Lou Szakal
- December: Holiday Party
- January: SOLAR Photo Contest
- February: The Massasauga Rattler with Yu Man Lee, MSU Extension Scientist

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

Do you have an idea or suggestion for a SOLAR Program? Please e-mail me: [programs@SOLAROutdoors.org](mailto:programs@SOLAROutdoors.org)

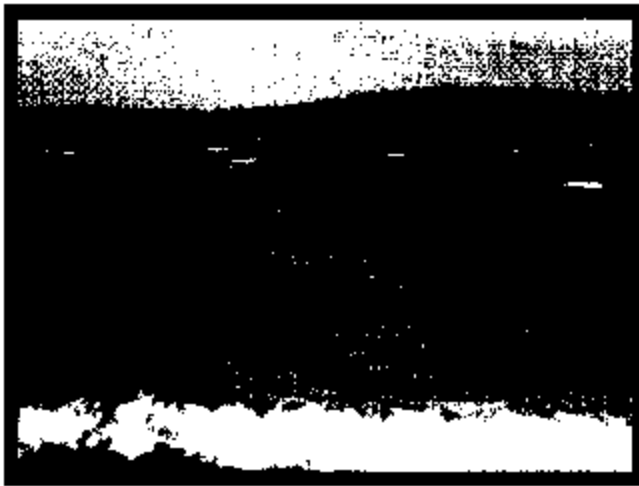


## OUR ALGONQUIN ADVENTURE 2007

by Sharon Smelter and Phil Crookshank

Eight Solarites left August 11 for a fine Algonquin adventure. And what an adventure, amidst myriad blue water lakes, endless skies and island paradises! Bill and Susan Ahlstrom, Marie Harrington, John Hergott, Rex Mathewson, Tom Scott, Phil Crookshank and myself, Sharon Smelter, set out for a week paddling in the Canadian wilderness and all eight of us returned with many a memory, calloused hands, toughened muscles and a love for CALM water!

After experiencing the first two days of head winds, white caps and rolling waves, it was an awesome feeling on the third day to have the wind to our backs and surf the waves. The goal of 8 miles a day was met pretty closely, even with the unexpected great effort it took to cross Lake Opeongo - a lake known for being feisty! A long 1395 meter portage into Little Crowe Lake was the first land crossing. With rocks and roots as additional obstacles, we did a fine job!



On our fourth day out, a small river meandered through marshes, wetlands, cattails and water-lilies. Beavers made their presence known by creating walls of debris blocking our way in spots. Pushing our way up and over these beaver dams created some good laughs! With seven portages it was a great learning day physically and mentally. As we pushed ourselves into the setting sun Phil found a few leeches that had opted to take a little ride with him.



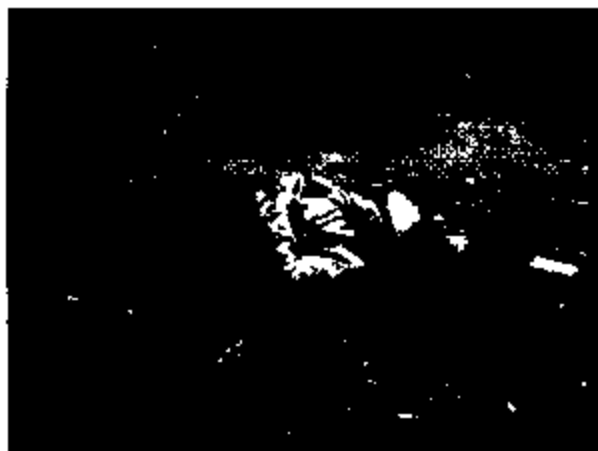
Campsites were always a welcome site, marked by the orange markers on peninsulas, islands and shorelines. Some campsites were sparse, while others were complete with kitchen, bedrooms and bathroom (thunder box.) You can't find a view like this from any bathroom you have at home!

On day five, mutiny pending, I promised an early day for swimming, bathing, sunning, reading and relaxing, with a prediction for a 3:00pm siesta at the next campsite. Thank goodness, the wind heard my plea and we surfed through Lake Lavielle. Making great time, and with only one short portage into Lake Dickson, we arrived at our destination at 2:55pm-- right on target. What a great afternoon to take pictures, shoot squirt guns, and play on the sandy beach of our island home! After dinner, binoculars in hand, we looked across to the next day's goal--the Day of Death with a 5500 meter portage. But with canoe carts made for this occasion, we had hopes that it would be a fine backpack day.



Our sixth day, a killer day. The trail, rougher than expected, covered with rocks, tall grass and rocky slopes made for a challenge. The carts, created by Scott Elliott, were very nicely built and engineered. As we progressed up the hill though, we found the carts needed to be higher off the ground and centered more in the middle of the canoes. They didn't work as planned, but as Solarites we could adapt. We portaged and leapfrogged the canoes mile after mile for about 5 miles. KNEW I was growing some big muscles and would feel much stronger after this event! Around 4:30 energy was waning and a very young couple from Toronto were found to be our TRAIL ANGELS! They helped gather our scattered packs and canoes for the last portage into the East Arm of Lake Opeongo. Our other trail angels, Bill and Sue, had dinner ready as we staggered in just before dark. The night was so calm and full of stars. Under the tall straight pines with hardly enough energy to eat or talk, we gathered to watch the crescent moon over the rippling calm waters and our wishes went out with the shooting stars!

Our last day. Just a paddle away from BEER and BURGERS, the Solar celebration of a great trip completed! But once again the wind had its way with us blowing strong into the bay. We could see monstrous white caps around the peninsula opening into big Lake Opeongo. We paddled and paddled and inched our way across. My own canoe blown and buffeted by wind and waves lost the race. Avoiding capsizing John and I raced for the shoreline.



Two hours later, still fighting the increasingly strong wind and waves, hugging the shoreline for protection, it became apparent that the wind was winning. Yikes! We were being pummeled backwards. A good time to hole up on a great campsite, have lunch and siesta. We needed a rest.

The STORM hit. From sun to storm, the clouds rushed in and BLEW - rain pelting in sheets across the stormy lake. We weren't going anywhere. Tents erected, we hunkered down for the night in hopes of calmer waters tomorrow. Bummer - no beer and burgers tonight--but no capsized canoe rescues either! The wind Howled all night. Many of us were down to a couple of nutra-grain bars and Doug Lanyk's wilderness survival skills came to mind. Pine Needle Tea may come in handy!

Saturday morning finally cleared with some residual waves and wind, but the sun was out and shining. The last 2 sunny hours in great Algonquin CALM waters, full of song we paddled our way from a week full of memories to share with others. What a great group of Solarites, accepting the wonderfulness of nature gracefully and accepting the harsh side of nature - maybe not so gracefully - but with the resolve that makes us all great outdoors people!



## ENJOYING MICHIGAN WINTERS! BACKPACKING & WINTER SKILLS CLASS

by Tom Oloffo

Winter backpacking skills are not just for the winter, they are a useful back-up for the unexpected cold days in early spring and late fall. In this class we'll teach you how to keep warm and to keep your energy level up when skiing or snow shoeing as well as how to build a snow shelter just in case something does go HORRIBLY WRONG on that so called simple 3 hour ski trip. You can also use these skills in the summer on glaciers and snowy peaks in the Rockies, the Cascades, Alaska or even Mount Kilimanjaro.

This class will teach you the "ins and outs" of winter camping in Michigan. The first classes will be held on Thursday, December 6 from 6:30 PM to 9:00 PM in Southfield. Classes will continue on Thursday nights on December 13, January 3, January 10, January 24, January 31. The practicals are the weekends of January 13 through 14 and February 9, 10, and 11.

The cost is \$100.00 for new students and reduced fee for past graduates who want to retake the course. Pick-up details from me at the monthly SOLAR meeting.

This course is open to the graduates of the Basic Backpacking Class and is the prerequisite for the Mountaineering and Winter Survival courses. For safety reasons, the Wilderness First Aid Course is highly recommended for all of these courses. Keep your fingers crossed and Think SNOW!

To sign up or if you have any questions please contact TCM OLOFFO at 313-461-4933 or [mcmountainman@yahoo.com](mailto:mcmountainman@yahoo.com).



## SPOTLIGHT ON CHARITY LORING

by Rebecca Sweeton



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

About 7 months

**HOW DID YOU GET INVOLVED WITH SOLAR?**

I was taking a Buddhist meditation class at a fall/winter forum and ran into some SOLAR members. I'd been wanting to find a group of outdoorsy people for ages and found out what SOLAR was all about. I then went that following Tuesday to the meeting, fell in love with all the positive people, energy, atmosphere, classes, activities and joined that evening!

**HOW DID YOU START BACKPACKING?**

My ex-fiance got me hooked. We'd backpacked for about 4 years. But SOLAR got me hooked on group backpacking. I'm now so happy to be able to backpack with like minded people.

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

Hocking Hills this past spring which was my first SOLAR trip. The people and the scenery were wonderful! Well, that, and I got to play in the waterfalls.

**WHAT WOULD YOUR DREAM TRIP BE?**

The Grand Canyon. Always wanted to backpack it with my son.

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

Family friendly and / or kid's classes. I really want my son to be able to learn things like land navigation and wilderness first aid along side me. I would also like to see Pam's Women's backpacking workshop offered again, sometime in the near future.

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

Experiencing group dynamics in trips. Seeing how great of an experience it can be to share your passion of the outdoors with other like-minded people. The camaraderie in all my trips has been absolutely amazing!

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

I've only been in SOLAR for a short time. So all I can really comment on right now is the consistencies. The welcoming, accepting nature of all the people in SOLAR stays consistent as well as the amazing plethora of classes and activities.

## 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)



## WINTER SPORTS / CARNAVAL - QUEBEC CITY

by Joanne Sarrasin



**WHEN:** One week trip arriving Sunday, February 10 and departing Sunday, February 17, 2008 during the best winter carnival in historic Quebec City (which is also celebrating its 400th year in 2008).

**WHERE:** Mont Ste Anne (ski resort) located 40 minutes from downtown Quebec City

**WHY:** Mont Ste Anne is Canada's largest cross country ski center. There are 212 kms of cross country ski trails (classic, skating and backcountry) with access from the door of your home for the week.

Two international class downhill ski resorts: one less than one kilometre away and the other about 30 kilometres away.

Many other destinations and activities are available within an hour's drive or less: more cross country ski trails, snowshoeing, dog sledding, and tobogganing.

Quebec winter carnival activities including: internationally-rated ice sculpture competition, canoe race across ice-bound St Lawrence River, and night time parade.

**ACCOMMODATIONS:** 7 nights in one of several homes available located at the foot of Mont Ste Anne. Depending on which house is reserved: there are rooms with queen size beds or double beds available for couples and some rooms have single/bunk beds. The plan is to structure the assignment of rooms in such a way that each person can have their own bed for the week (single people will not have to share a bed, although they may have to share a room). So, if couples sign up and share a queen-size or double-bed, then we can fit more people in the house which will reduce the cost per person. We need a minimum of 6 people to sign up for this trip to run. This is a very popular area and time of year, so these houses will not remain available very long. I'm hoping that all participants will be signed up by the October meeting.



**COST:** \$500 US per person if at least 6 people sign up and would decrease if we get more people. Need \$150 US to reserve your spot. Remaining payment schedule as follows (this is flexible): \$100 in November, \$100 in December, and \$150 in January (or less depending on number of participants).

**OTHER COSTS:** Transportation to and from Quebec City, meals, trail fees, etc. are all in addition to the cost of the accommodations. **NOTE:** There is a free shuttle available to the Mont Ste Anne downhill ski slopes.

Please contact Joanne Sarrasin @ [jsarrasin@cogeco.ca](mailto:jsarrasin@cogeco.ca) for more information.

### SHOP FOR SOLAR MERCHANDISE ONLINE!

by Heather Hall

SOLAR has partnered with two great companies to offer a wide range of merchandise to members. The online stores are set up to provide many choices at low prices and easy step by step ordering instructions.

SOLAR members can order a variety of great wicking wear, from shirts to shorts to pants. A color logo or black/white logo can be imprinted on the clothing. Michelle Delaporte has volunteered to deliver ordered items to the monthly SOLAR meetings so choose "store pick up" if you'd like this option. Otherwise items can be shipped directly to your home for an additional fee. Visit [www.mkroy.com](http://www.mkroy.com) to start shopping!

Cotton can be a great option at times too! SOLAR offers great choices on cotton clothing and other merchandise at [www.cafepress.com](http://www.cafepress.com). Choose from hats, mugs, shirts and more. Direct shipping is only available with this website (no special delivery to membership meetings).

Visit [www.solaroutdoors.org](http://www.solaroutdoors.org) and click on "Shop" to find quick links to the merchandise websites. Please contact [publicrelations@solaroutdoors.org](mailto:publicrelations@solaroutdoors.org) with any questions regarding these websites.

## THE RECUMBENT VOYAGER

by Winnie Chrzanowski

### Crank

By Ellen Hopkins

Simon Pulse, 537 pages

\$6.99



When Kaitlyn, my 16-year-old granddaughter, and I went to the library, she requested the book *Crank*. The librarian said, "Oh, yes, that's a great book." I'd obviously not heard of it and, dumb me, had no clue what *crank* is. I thought it was a book about a crabby teen-ager. So, after Kaitlyn told me it was about a 16 year old on crystal meth, I thought I'd read the book when she finished it. I know this type book isn't the usual material reviewed for SOLAR, but I thought some of you might be interested in it if you care about kids. If you think this book isn't for you, just go to the next page of the SOLAR Ray.

*Crank* is geared to the Grades 8-12 crowd; nevertheless, I was totally immersed in the world of Kristina Georgia Snow and her alter ego, Bree. Ellen Hopkins' verse novel is a work of fiction; however, it is based on her daughter's story. Amazon.com review says that this book "reads like a *Go Ask Alice* for the 21st century." They're right on the money. *Crank* depicts Kristina's flirtation with the monster. As the story opens, Kristina tells us "life was good before I met the monster. After, life was great. At least for a little while." Kristina's account portrays the distorted reality of her life with the monster. Bree's accounts put in plain words how she becomes stronger and takes Kristina places she would never dream of going. As she says, "there is no . . . Kristina Georgia Snow. There is only Bree."

Kristina's flight into the world of *crank* "started with a court ordered visit" to her less than princely daddy in Albuquerque who she has not seen since she was seven. Her first impression of him is "Marlboros. Jack Daniels. Straightforward 80." Dad works in a bowling alley in a not-so-great part of town and still gets high—on weed and *crank*—even while Kristina is visiting. Left to her own devices for days on end, she takes up with handsome Buddy/Adam, a boy with a "tawny six pack" and a "drop dead in your tracks gorgeous grin" who lives in the same apartment building as her father. Her relationship with Buddy changed "every single thing about my life . . . Forever." When Adam "asked about getting high, I didn't think, I agreed . . . I wanted to meet the monster. Why go down if you can go up?"

Hopkins writes *Crank* in free verse using words, shapes, and pacing to draw readers into the compelling story of Kristina's dance with the monster. Obviously topical, it's a page-turner nonetheless. As the School Library Journal states, *Crank* is a "stunning portrayal of a teen's loss of direction and her realistically uncertain future."

*Crank* does not have a happy ending. The monster forever calls to Kristina. If you decide to read this book, you'll understand why *crank* users "can never really walk away."



# SOLAR 2007 CALENDAR

## OCTOBER ACTIVITIES

10/2	TUE	GENERAL MEETING	Colony Hall	Lou Szakal	Everest2008@comcast.net
10/2	TUE	PROGRAM: Lyme Disease Education	Colony Hall	Allen Duncan	allenduncan@aggienetwork.com
10/5-13/8	MULTI	Off-trail Backpacking and Caving**	Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore	Michael Neiger	mneiger@hotmail.com <a href="http://tinyurl.com/22t14x">http://tinyurl.com/22t14x</a>
10/12-10/14	WKND	Have Fun in Hocking Hills!**	Hocking Hills State Park, Ohio	Charity Loring	charitymarie@yahoo.com
10/13	SAT	Octoberfest**	Howell, MI	Carol McCririe	cmccririe@sbcglobal.net
10/21	SUN	Detroit Free Press Marathon**	Detroit/Windsor	Maureen DeFrance	moe defiance@comcast.net
10/25-11/2	MULTI	Fall Color Adventure**	Beech Mountain, North Carolina	Dave DeFrance	defranceomn@comcast.net

## OCTOBER CLASSES

10/3, 10/10,	WED/ WKND	Search and Rescue	Eastpointe	Tom Hayes	thomashayes@wideopenwest.com
10/16, 10/19-10/21	TUE/ MULTI	Mountain Biking	TBA	Nancy McMahon	funoutside1@aol.com

## NOVEMBER ACTIVITIES

11/2-11/5	MULTI	Off-trail Winter Backpacking**	Mackinac Wilderness Tract	Michael Neiger	mneiger@hotmail.com <a href="http://tinyurl.com/39k66e">http://tinyurl.com/39k66e</a>
11/6	TUE	GENERAL MEETING	Colony Hall	Lou Szakal	Everest2008@comcast.net
11/6	TUE	PROGRAM: SOLAR Mountaineering Trips	Colony Hall	Allen Duncan	allenduncan@aggienetwork.com

## NOVEMBER CLASSES

11/7, 11/9- 11/10, 11/14	WED/ MULTI	Advanced Land Navigation	Royal Oak/ Waterloo Rec Area	Karl Overheul	Cyber.nomad@comcast.net
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## UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

12/7-12/10	MULTI	Off-trail Winter Backpacking Trip**	Mackinac State Forest: Onaway	Michael Neiger	mneiger@hotmail.com <a href="http://tinyurl.com/2vz5p9">http://tinyurl.com/2vz5p9</a>
1/18-1/22	MULTI	Off-trail Snowshoe & Sledge Trip**	Detritum Wilderness Tract	Michael Neiger	mneiger@hotmail.com <a href="http://tinyurl.com/3bn6js">http://tinyurl.com/3bn6js</a>
1/25-1/27	WKND	Crawlathon	Carter Caves State Park, Kentucky	Leslie Cordova	lesliegene@aol.com
2/9-2/17	MULTI	21st Annual Canadian Snowshoeing Expedition**	Lake Superior Provincial Park, Ontario	Michael Neiger	mneiger@hotmail.com <a href="http://therucksack.tripod.com">http://therucksack.tripod.com</a>
2/10-2/17	MULTI	Winter Sports/Carnival Getaway	Mont Ste. Anne Ski Resort, Quebec	Joanne Sarrasin	jsarrasin@yahoo.ca
2/14-2/29	MULTI	Costa Rica Adventure**	Costa Rica	Jim Gessner	Gessnerj@comcast.net

## UPCOMING CLASSES

12/6, 12/13, 1/3, 1/10, 1/12-1/13, 1/24, 1/26, 1/31, 2/8- 2/10	MULTI	Enjoying Michigan Winters	Southfield/ Waterloo Rec Area/Pigeon River State Forest	Tom Oloffo/ Roxann Bittner	Roxann.bittner@gm.com
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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 Catter 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 Sarah Kirkish 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 IS SOLAR?

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

#### MEMBERSHIP

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

#### MEETINGS

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

#### SOLAR RAY NEWSLETTER

The SOLAR RAY is a monthly publication of SOLAR and is available online at [www.solaroutdoors.org](http://www.solaroutdoors.org). To receive a copy in the mail, please contact Mary Price at [membership@solaroutdoors.org](mailto:membership@solaroutdoors.org).

#### SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Submissions for the SOLAR Ray are due on the Friday two weeks prior to the monthly Steering Committee Meeting (October 19 for the November issue). Electronic documents only. If you have any questions, please contact Rebecca Sweeton at [rayeditor@so.aroutdoors.org](mailto:rayeditor@so.aroutdoors.org).

#### STEERING COMMITTEE

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

#### PRESIDENTS AT LARGE

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

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION

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

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

Winnie Chrzarowski, Kathy Drewyore, Sheila Hardy, Pam Schmelzer, Carol McCrinie, Elizabeth Schwab, and Ati Tislerics

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



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