



# The S O L A R Ray

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

Aug. 2008



## BIG, BOLD, AND BLUE

by Pete Lamb

The squawking outside the screen door made me look out toward the bird feeders just in time to see a squirrel get severely embarrassed. The squirrel was upside down clinging to the wire feeder stuffing its face with bird seed, its feathery tail waving in the air above him. He was in squirrel heaven. That changed abruptly, as with an angry squawk, a blue jay shot across the yard and slammed the squirrel right in his vulnerable rear end. He exploded off the feeder while the jay zoomed up into an oak tree to join a second jay. We have a lot of squirrels in our yard, and the two jays zeroed in on each one and drove them out. It was very funny to watch. First one jay would hit a squirrel, and it would jump. As soon as the squirrel landed, the second jay would hit it again. The jays chased out six or seven squirrels that way.

I wondered what would prompt this kind of behavior when the jays started bringing food to a baby jay perched on the edge of the fire ring that I had not noticed before with all the ruckus going on. The baby jay could only fly four or five feet a few inches off the ground. Baby jay began making its way toward some high weeds along a fence encouraged by the loud squawking of its parents. It made the weeds but was having a hard time making it through them. I thought I would be a good guy and help out the jays and put the baby into a low bush.

I walked across the lawn toward the young bird which did not see me in quite the same light as I saw myself; it would not let me rescue it. In fact, it got quite belligerent for such a small creature and did its level best to avoid me—very successfully I might add. As I bent for the third time to catch it, two things happened simultaneously. Actually, three things happened, though we did not realize it until a bit later. I sort of heard a shout from the deck just as I felt something slam into the back of my head quite hard. It was one of the baby jay's parents. I beat a hasty retreat to the deck. Sharon said, "Did you see that? It dove right out of that tree at your head." "No," I replied, "I didn't. Am I bleeding anywhere?"

This spot might be the place to tell you (though you may already know) that jays can be as big as 12" and that they'll scream like a hawk to scatter birds—and possibly squirrels—away from a feeder. Known as the alarm of the forest, they scream at any intruders in the woods and act aggressively when their young are threatened. Here's another interesting fact: their feathers don't have blue pigment. Refracted sunlight casts the blue light. Having given you all that extra information, now back to my story.

We stood on the deck to see what would happen next. That jay would get into a pine tree at the bottom of the yard and fly straight at us both at eye level and at the last minute zoom up into a tree and swear at us. We were dressed and ready to go to the SOLAR picnic; it was time to leave. Sharon told me I had better go and change my shirt first. Now, I thought I was looking pretty sharp in that shirt and told her so. "Not with a streak of bird poop down the middle of your back you don't!!!" she said laughingly.



## SOLAR BACKPACKING COURSE - FALL 2008

by Carol McCririe & Leslie Cordova

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

This class is for those of you that a) never backpacked and have always wanted to try it, b) new members that need the class as a prerequisite for other advanced classes or just to meet people, or c) members who just want a refresher or need an excuse to backpack.

Class begins August 13 and runs for six weeks with a break for Labor Day week (8/20, 9/4, 9/11, 9/18 and 9/25). The weekend practicals are September 20 - 21 and October 3-5. Classes will be held in Southfield and class time is from 6 to 9 pm.

In order to get a certificate for the class, you need to participate on a weekly basis and complete the entire 1<sup>st</sup> practical in September. In order to attend the 2<sup>nd</sup> practical, you must complete the 1<sup>st</sup> practical. The certificate for the class qualifies you for the Intermediate and Advanced Backpacking Classes, Wilderness Canoeing, and Enjoying Michigan Winters.

The only prerequisite for the class is that you are a current paid member of SOLAR and that you are interested in new experiences, new friends, or both!

The cost of the class is \$100 and includes a textbook, a class handbook, and most fees related to Practical 1, and camping fees for Practical 2. Please bring cash or a check payable to "SOLAR" when you sign up for the class. Fees will be due at the August general meeting to guarantee your spot in the class.

Any questions regarding the class should be directed to Carol McCririe at [cmccririe@sbcglobal.net](mailto:cmccririe@sbcglobal.net) or Leslie Cordova at [lesliegene@aol.com](mailto:lesliegene@aol.com).



## POETIC NATURE

By Elizabeth Schwab

### *I Blame Some Forest-Loving Finn*

By Mariam Heideman Krarup

Why does the white birch rouse in me  
Thoughts very near idolatry?  
I could spend hours in a wood  
If birches there in sunlight stood. . .  
And oh! When night comes and the moon,  
Chanting, the while, some mystic rune,  
Whitens my temple aisles for me,  
I know a light, and ecstasy. . .  
An inward rapture wakens, so  
I am not then the one you know!  
I am another, quite apart,  
A wanderer from my daily heart . . .  
For loving so that milky skin  
I blame some forest-loving Finn,  
Some hermit in my ancestry,  
Bequeathed this eccentricity.

If you have a favorite poem relating to the outdoors that you have read or have written yourself that you would like to see here in a future edition of the SOLAR Ray, send to Elizabeth Schwab by email at: [ges1339@yahoo.com](mailto:ges1339@yahoo.com). Include the source where you got it.



# BASIC MOUNTAINEERING & SAFETY SKILLS CLASS

by Lou Szakal

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to stand on the Summit of a Mountain?

Or to even know what it takes to get there?

How about just advancing your Winter Camping or Snowshoe and Cross-Country Ski skills to include one to two week expeditions to places like Yellowstone or the Canadian Rockies?

Here is your chance to find out.

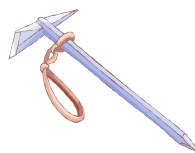
Starting in December 2008, I will be teaching the Basic Mountaineering and Safety Skills Class to a few lucky students who are interested in devoting their time and energy to the sport of Mountaineering and Advanced Winter Adventure.

## Here's what you get:

Self Arrest  
Fixed Lines  
Roped Travel  
Running Belays  
Risk Assessment  
Snow Shoeing Skills  
Health/Fitness Issues  
Cross Country Ski Skills  
Basic Mountain Skills  
Avalanche Issues  
Chest Harness  
Camaraderie  
Ice Axe Use  
Leadership  
Navigation  
Prussiks  
Cabin  
Fun



2 Mountaineering Books  
Technical Tool Usage  
Mountain Safety  
First Aid Issues  
Crampon Use  
3" Binder  
Nutrition  
Knots  
LNT  
Weather  
Sled Skills  
Glacier Travel  
Climbing Issues  
Group Dynamics  
Frost Bite Issues  
Winter Safety Skills  
Z & C Pulley System  
Optional Mountain Trip



Clothing  
Rappelling  
Gear Issues  
Effects of Cold  
Reading Material  
Crevasse Rescue  
Expedition Planning  
Environmental Ethics  
2 Weekend Practicals  
Altitude Awareness  
Ascending Ropes  
Ropes/Webbing  
Alpine Rescue  
Team Building  
Stewardship  
Movies  
Clinic  
Fun

## TOP NOTCH INSTRUCTION FROM TOP NOTCH INSTRUCTORS

### MANDATORY

Basic Backpacking  
Land Navigation  
Winter Camping  
Belay Card (Rock Gym)

### PREREQUISITES:

Highly Recommended  
Wilderness First Aid  
Intermediate Backpacking  
Rock Climbing  
Search and Rescue  
Red Cross First Aid/CPR Certification  
Winter Survival

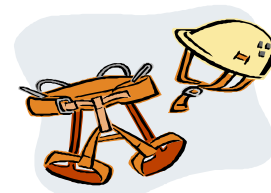
### Experience Helpful

Advanced Backpacking  
XC Ski/Snowshoe  
Ice Climbing  
S.M.O.C. Experience

### CLASS SCHEDULE

Location: TBD 6:00 - 9:00 PM

Class 1	12/11/08	Thu.
Class 2	12/18/08	Thu.
Class 3	01/08/09	Thu.
Clinic 1	01/10/09	Sat.
Class 4	01/22/09	Thu.
Practical 1	01/23-25/09	Fri.-Sun.
Class 5	01/28/09	Thu.
Class 6	02/11/09	Thu.
Practical 2	02/13-15/09	Fri.-Sun





### **COSTS (Non Refundable)**

Pay in Full on or before Oct. 7	\$140.00 ea.
Pay in Full after Oct. 7	\$160.00 ea.
Couples: On or before Oct. 7	\$255.00 cpl.*
Couples: After Oct. 7	\$295.00 cpl.*

\*Couples will receive 1 full binder for each person and 1 set of textbooks to share.  
If you want your own personal textbooks, add \$25.00 to your total.

**CONTACT:** Lou Szakal at [everest2008@comcast.net](mailto:everest2008@comcast.net) or at 248-756-7001



## **BY-LAWS MAKE OUR WORLD GO ROUND**

by Chuck Smith, chairperson of the By-Laws committee

By-Laws are the written “rules” of an organization. They spell out how the organization chooses to operate. They include its mission or why it exists, member rights and responsibilities, how meetings are run (steering committee), steering committee positions, and more. Here is what the SOLAR by-laws say about our purpose:

1. To promote and advance interest in the outdoors through information and participation in activities related to the S.O.L.A.R. program.
2. To provide a medium and a format for the exchange of ideas, information, skills, equipment, etc. related to the planning and conducting of outdoor activities, expeditions, etc., by and with people who are interested and involved in supporting and promoting these purposes as stated.

As the By-Laws chairperson, it's my responsibility to keep our by-laws current as our needs change over time. Generally, they serve us well and should not be changed without a clear, demonstrated need. We do, however; need to make some changes. For example, we are working on the sections regarding the handling funds and clarifying the responsibilities for the committee chairs.

I also serve as parliamentarian. That means I am responsible for seeing that meetings are run in an efficient and effective manner. The steering committee meetings use Robert's Rules, and it's up to me to offer advice on procedures. Robert's Rules are a set of procedures designed to help run a meeting efficiently and to protect the viewpoints of all. We strive to respect all viewpoints, but are also concerned about being respectful of people's time by running meetings efficiently.

You can access our By-Laws directly through this link <http://www.solaroutdoors.org/About/Bylaws.aspx> or through the SOLAR homepage by clicking "About", then "Bylaws."

Please contact me with any ideas, concerns, or if you would like to help!

As always, I encourage everyone to attend our steering committee meetings.





## RIDING FOR A CURE

By Craig Kosmowski

The annual MS 150 bike tour raises money to fight the effects of multiple sclerosis. This devastating disease generally affects adults in the prime of life. July 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> marked my 18th consecutive ride. As usual, it was a blast!

This year, I again rode with my old friend Shira for the first time many years. It was like old times, and I enjoyed sharing the challenge with her. Despite my lack of training for this year's event, we both managed to successfully knock off the optional "century loop" each day. Total mileage for the weekend ride - a little over 200. Total training miles for me for the entire year leading up to the ride - less than 300. Cost of potential medical bills due to lack of training - priceless.

After an uneventful day in the saddle, we arrived at Michigan State for the evening. We got our bags, cleaned up, and relaxed for a short while before dinner. My notoriously large appetite is even worse when I exert myself like I did over the weekend. So, when I got my food in the line at the cafeteria, the food service staff was chuckling as they loaded me up. (Using precise mathematical formulas, estimating calories burned while riding is easy. For my body weight, the terrain covered, wind speed, and other factors, I burn around 6000 calories on a 100 mile ride. That's about 12,000 in two days riding the double century!) With only four hours sleep the night before, I didn't last long after returning to the room after dinner.

Day two always starts too early! I don't understand why they won't let us sleep in 'til say, noon, before we have to get going. After a hearty breakfast, we got our gear to the gear trucks and hit the road. Sunday morning can be most difficult on the tush. Climbing onto your bike saddle is about the last thing you want to do but a necessity to complete the ride. The day brought us a cloudless, crystalline blue sky and a welcome coolness to the air. It was spectacular riding weather. The wildflowers seemed to be everywhere along the route, and their sunlit images still dance vividly through my head. Later in the day, the winds picked up, but they assisted rather than hindered

Everything was going along well until we hit the "fly traps." Very few people do the century routes, and even fewer do it on consecutive days. The gluttons for punishment like Shira and me were lucky enough to be treated to county road crews spraying hot, sticky, bitumen on stretches of the century loop. This crap gummed up our tires, stuck all over our shoes, bike bags, brakes, cables, and bike frames, and threaded a gooey black web from the bottom of my bike seat to the frame below. Our beloved machines were compromised. Even worse, the gunk on the tires picked up small stones that made riding my high-tech bike more akin to something seen on the Flintstones. With all the stone on my sidewalls, taking sharp turns was dicey. I learned quickly to adjust after almost losing traction and dumping it on one turn. At one point just beyond one of the dreaded tar-belching trucks, my bike rode unavoidably into a freshly sprayed patch. I almost went over the handlebars. I thought I had blown a tire or the brakes had become jammed. I quickly realized it was just the goo trying to hold me for all eternity. Think prehistoric animals wallowing futilely in the tar pits at La Brea, and you've got it.

We survived the ordeal, got to the next rest stop, and cleaned off as much crud as possible. We pushed hard the last 40 miles, and I was surprised at how well my knees held up. Though I lacked leg power from not training enough, we managed to cruise to the finish at a respectable 23 mph. Yummy veggie burgers with salsa awaited me, and the three beers we had left in the car Saturday morning still were on ice. Shira and I each had one to toast our achievement. The third went to the woman who came in last. It was her second year riding the tour. She was swept off course while still five miles out. The sag truck dropped her off just short of the finish so she could experience the cheers and excitement of crossing the finish line knowing she had done something extraordinary for a noble cause.

What started for me 18 years ago as a simple personal challenge has grown into something much larger. It made such a huge impression on me the first year that I vowed to ride it every year until either a cure was found or I could no longer do it. It's been difficult some years to keep my vow, but I've done it. Despite the occasional inconvenience, I show up every year to support a worthy cause. I've raised thousands of dollars and met extraordinary people along the way. This ride transcends physical challenge. It serves as a reality check and as a reminder of how much we have a tendency to take for granted.

# KAYAKING CLASS

by Andrea Elkins



How ironic. Just five days after the SOLAR Club watched a presentation by weather.gov experts, we experienced the glory of a full-fledged summer thunderstorm during our basic kayaking class.

Matt Dalton, 3 SOLAR members, and one guest assembled at Heavner's Canoe Rental in Milford on a blistering Sunday afternoon June 8. We geared up with life jackets and strange double-ended paddles, then spent an hour on dry land learning about critical features such as equipment, proper positioning, paddling techniques, and the ever-popular "PUSH not pull!" command. Matt emphasized safety practices, and worked with each of us individually on our strokes.

After getting the basics, it was into the water! Heavner's staff helped us into the single, sit-in kayaks and pushed us off. We were a little awkward, but moved out and toward the lake to practice.

I had a lot of difficulty with the push vs. pull technique. It's not just muscle memory, but my own thought process. I had to continually stop and think to put that lesson into practice. We practiced forward, backward, stopping, and turning.

Remember the little kid in *Jerry Maguire* that says "Did you know that the human head weighs 8 pounds?" That's interesting information in and of itself, but in kayaking the application is this: DON'T tip your head beyond your shoulders, or you'll take a dip! Matt emphasized thinking of the sides of the canoe as a pane of glass, and to keep our head and shoulders inside that pane of glass. It really helped.

Halfway through our lesson in the lake, the sky grew very dark. The students watched the clouds nervously, but Matt kept saying "just one more thing!" and proceeded to demonstrate a few moves. But when the wind suddenly whooooooshed across and the sky turned dark, he cried "Lesson's over, go go go!" and we all made a beeline for the lake access back to the dock. I nearly lost my (husband's) hat! And the rain was coming down so hard that it hurt. We were drenched within seconds. Standing under the canopy we dried off as best we could and watched other soggy paddlers trickle back in.

It was a beautiful but powerful storm. Driving through the Milford area to go home I saw several downed trees. I was shocked to turn on the radio and TV later to find out how much destruction the storm had caused across the area - and even more disappointed to have to work extra hours all week guarding downed power lines to protect the public (I work for Detroit Edison).

I don't think that Matt can guarantee the same kind of natural fireworks for the next class, but I highly recommend it anyway! And if anyone is interested in a semi-lazy day of canoeing or kayaking in southeast Michigan, please don't hesitate to contact me.



## TIP FROM "THE COMPLETE IDIOT'S GUIDE TO CANOEING AND KAYAKING:

Your first instinct will be to stop paddling if a wave splashes over the bow and slaps you in the face when you are paddling out through waves during a launch. Resist that instinct! Keep that paddle stroking to power through a wave and to keep your canoe or kayak more stable.

# CANOEING IS AN ADVENTURE

by Doug Lanyk



To enjoy a river outing proper planning is critical. First, you need good friends with plenty of enthusiasm and a taste for adventure. Other essentials include at least 1 canoe, paddles, life jackets, bug dope, sunscreen, oil, gas, at least 1 chainsaw and several other implements of destruction. I recommend a good hand saw, loppers, a machete, rope, cable, winch, duckbill anchors, and a cell phone. The adventure will not get off the ground if your route is not challenging enough! I recommend either a river that has been recently scouted and the scout couldn't make it to the end, or a river that hasn't been paddled for a long time, years perhaps. For advanced adventurers only, I would suggest a month when ice would be expected on the water.

Preparing for the end of the trip is also of high import. Spotting enough vehicles to bring everybody back will end any agony suffered so much earlier. The vehicles should be equipped with clean, dry clothes, a large drinking cooler of hot water, soap, towels, and water for drinking. I advise planning your trip to end near an excellent restaurant with top-notch adult beverages. If not, you should have a cooler with your favorite beverages and some pre-made food. If you've had a proper adventure you will be hungry!

Trip duration is always a tricky calculation. I find out the average current for my route and add 2 mph (if I'm going downstream). Then I divide the length of my route by my calculated speed. E.g. 3 mph current + 2 mph = 5 mph. 10 miles divided by 5 mph is 2 hours. Next I add an hour. That makes 3 hours. Then I double that, for a total of 6 hours. Unless everyone in the group has had all of SOLAR's courses, I advise ending 3 hours before sunset. Darn, this is a lot of work and you haven't started yet.

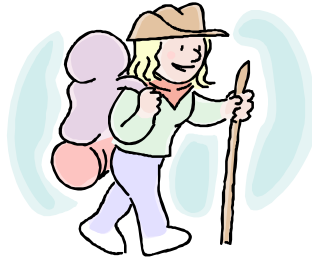
Enough of the intro. Several SOLAR members have been suckered into helping out on a paddling gem in our back yard. Most recently, Pete Lamb, Willi Gutmann, Dave Holt, Stacie Kitchen and Margaret Martin have spent time on the Shiawassee River with me helping Headwaters Trails Inc. (a non profit) develop the Top of the Shiawassee State Heritage River Trail. Starting in Holly and currently going 7 miles to Fenton, it is an "up north" river in Oakland County. Soon, this river trail will be 17 miles long ending in Argentine. Plans are under way to set up a downstream partner to Headwaters Trails to take responsibility for maintaining that stretch. While that is being organized, we will start working on the thousand or so downed trees in the river in the last 4 miles before Byron. After Byron the river has had caring groups keeping the river clean and clear all the way to its junction with the Tittabawassee, the Flint, and the Cass rivers to become the Saginaw River. Soon we will be able to paddle from Holly to Bay City on a well-maintained river.

This, my friends, is due to thousands of volunteer hours, and dollars, civic involvement, corporate and foundation sponsors, and a grand vision.

Anyone want to go on an adventure?



# SOLAR WORKSHOP WOMEN IN THE WOODS 2008



by Pam Riehl Szakal

Ever wonder why your pack doesn't fit right?  
Why you can't find good women's backpacking clothes?  
Why you still don't know how to light your stove?  
Well now you can get answers to these topics and more!

**SOLAR will conduct a workshop focusing on women's topics related to the outdoors to include:**

- Women-designed equipment
- Hygiene
- Safety in the woods
- Nutrition
- Hiking with kids
- Exercise / training for women
- Building self-confidence & self reliance
- Dealing with stress
- Teamwork
- And much more!

**Dates**

- September 9: Evening classroom session, location TBD
- September 13-14: Proud Lake Recreation Area, (approx. 9:00 am Sat thru 12:00 noon Sun)  
Optional Moonlight Canoe outing with SOLAR.
- October 17-19: Hiking practical at Red River Gorge, KY. Please note that we will begin hiking the morning of Oct. 17 so you will need to drive down Thursday night after work.

**Class Prerequisite:** SOLAR Basic Backpacking Class

**Class size:** 16 students

**Cost:** \$65.00

For questions or more information contact Pam Riehl Szakal at:  
pariehl@gmail.com. 248-756-7002



# THE RECUMBENT VOYAGER

by Winnie Chrznowski



## Entering the Stone: On Caves and Feeling Through the Dark

By Barbara Hurd

Houghton Mifflin Company, 170 pages

ISBN 0-618-19138-0

On my first and only encounter with wild cave spelunking, I had no idea what to expect. I did expect to be uncomfortably out of my element, and I wasn't disappointed. But, being outside my comfort zone helped me think differently about caving and about how I view the world above ground. In her book **Entering the Stone: On Caves and Feeling Through the Dark**, Barbara Hurd explores not only some of the most terrifying and fascinating places on earth but also some of the most terrifying and fascinating places within her own inner spaces. Although **Entering the Stone** is part natural history and part outdoor adventure, it's also about her own personal journey and how she came to view her own experiences of learning to be interested in her fears and putting them to good use above ground.

The first chapter, The Squeeze, gives us a bird's-eye view at the terrifying aspect of belly-squirming head first down a chute "into what . . . looked . . . like something gouged open, the interior walls juttied and slimy." Hurd has no explanation of her cave terror, and, though her first attempt at caving turned her into "a backward-crawling, blithering half-wit," she slowly tried again by starting in a show cave. Unlike a wild cave, a show cave has good manners. It does not engender physical challenges, discomforts, or harrowing squeezes to bruise the body and soul. However, the wild caves called, and she responded. She determined that she would crawl around in the dark, try another tight spot, and be helped by her trusted guides through any panic attacks she might experience.

The dozen essays that comprise **Entering the Stone** allow the reader to accompany Hurd on her journeys into the bowels of the earth and to the far reaches of her journeys into her own dark places. Each essay depicts different caves ranging from western Maryland to southern Oregon to coastal India. Through them, Hurd introduces the reader to the twilight zone of caves, troglaphiles (cave lovers—animals that depend on darkness and damp), troglonexes (cave strangers—animals like bears and bats that take temporary shelter in caves), moonmilk, and a variety of other animals and rock formations too numerous to mention here.

**Entering the Stone** provides an awesome tour through a beautiful and fragile subterranean world while metaphorically describing the author's search for courage and comfort in dark places. Well written and metaphoric, the book is not a "psychological catharsis of any sort, no back-to-the-womb, experiencing-rebirth stuff, and . . . not about conquering fear." Here is an outdoorswoman who thinks and uses her literary talents to educate, entertain, and explain what it means to literally and figuratively enter the stone and feel through the dark. In Hurd's own words, **Entering the Stone** is "about caves, what goes on inside a cave, both literally and metaphorically, and about how a mind . . . comes to think about beauty, death, intimacy, derichment."

Enjoy your journey when you enter the stone.



# JOIN IN ON A TRIP TO PARADISE!

by Moe DeFrance

Costa Rica is one of the most biologically diverse countries in the world - a true Garden of Eden. Let Costa Rica mesmerize you as we explore its rainforests, rushing rivers, pristine beaches and towering volcanoes. This trip combines world-class highlights with more remote areas for an authentic adventure experience.

## **Day 1 Arrive San José**

Arrive in San José at any time.

## **Day 2-3 Puerto Viejo de Talamanca**

Begin with an incredible bus ride over the mountains to Costa Rica's Caribbean coast. The picturesque village of Puerto Viejo de Talamanca's white and black sand beaches are surrounded by exotic tropical vegetation. Several optional activities are available, including bike rentals, snorkeling, and hiking in Manzanillo National Wildlife Refuge.

## **Day 4 Tortuguero National Park**

Take a morning boat ride to Tortuguero, with spectacular wildlife viewing en route. The beaches here are nesting grounds of the enormous Green and Leatherback sea turtles.

## **Day 5-6 Rara Avis (2B, 1L, 2D)**

The journey is half the adventure as we begin by traveling along two rivers, the San Juan and the Sarapiquí, briefly crossing the border into Nicaragua. Back on land we board a unimog (all terrain truck) then a tractor-drawn cart to get to our special jungle oasis. We enter the primary rainforest bordering Braulio Carrillo National Park, where at 700m (2000 ft) above sea level, the climate is cool year-round. A naturalist guide leads us along nature trails, a butterfly farm and swimming spots at the twin waterfalls. There is also the option to climb to a viewing platform 30m (100 ft) above the jungle floor.

## **Day 7-9 La Fortuna / Arenal**

La Fortuna, at the foot of Arenal Volcano, is an excellent base for area explorations. Take a night hike around the base of the Arenal Volcano, accompanied by the sounds of monkeys and the distant rumbling of the volcano. Other optional activities include whitewater rafting, horseback riding, canyoneering (rappelling), a tour of the Caño Negro Wildlife Refuge, or a relaxing soak in hot springs.

## **Day 10-11 Monteverde**

Climb into the misty mountain air of the Monteverde Cloud Forest. Weather permitting, travel by horse around Lake Arenal to Monteverde. Spend a couple of days exploring the town and the Cloud Forest Reserve, a true nature lover's paradise. Optional activities include a trail of suspended bridges through the canopy, a butterfly garden and a thrilling canopy zip line.

## **Day 12-14 Quepos / Manuel Antonio National Park**

Quepos is a small Pacific town perfect for relaxing at the end of your tour. A short distance away, Manuel Antonio National Park offers excellent hiking, spectacular views, and abundant wildlife. There are beautiful white sand beaches and the warm turquoise water is ideal for swimming, fishing, kayaking, boogie boarding, sailing or surfing. The nightlife in the area is also some of the best in the country.

## **Day 15 San José**

Return to San José for some last-minute shopping and a final night on the town.

## **Day 16 Depart San José**

### **Included Highlights:**

- Boat tour to Tortuguero National Park
- Rara Avis Rainforest Lodge excursion with guide
- Horseback riding trip from La Fortuna to Monteverde
- Guided visit to Monteverde Cloud Forest Reserve
- Arenal Volcano Hiking and Hot Springs
- Optional zip lining

### **Additional Information:**

Group size: Max 15, Avg 10

Group Leader: GAP Adventures leader throughout

Accommodation: Simple hotels (13), multi-share lodge (2)

Transport: Public bus, tractor, van, boat, horseback

Meals Included: 2 breakfasts, 1 lunch, 2 dinners

Meal Budget: Allow USD 350 for meals not included

### **Estimated Costs:**

- \$250 to hold spot
- \$700 to GAP Adventures - November 2008
- \$250 local payment
- \$0 - \$400 for optional activities
- \$280 - \$350 for local meals
- \$450 for airfare
- \$35 to \$140 for medical/evacuation insurance

For more details, contact Moe DeFrance at

[moelifeisgood@lavabit.com](mailto:moelifeisgood@lavabit.com) or by telephone 810.599.9818.

## SOLAR AUGUST 2008 CALENDAR

AUGUST Activities					
8/5	Tues	Monthly Meeting **	Colony Hall	Cindy Taylor	SolarPresident@SolarOutdoors.org
8/5	Tues	Highlights of SOLAR Classes – Sarah Kirkish**	Colony Hall	Janet Duncan	SolarPrograms@solaroutdoors.org
8/6-16	Multi	Best of Yosemite	Yosemite National Park	Kevin Cotter	solar@wowway.com
8/7-10	Multi	North Country Trail Backpacking Trip	White Cloud, MI	Samantha Schafer	samantha2win@yahoo.com
8/9	Sat	The 3rd Annual National Trails Day Party**	Southfield, MI	Mike Malon	mmalon130390MI@comcast.net
8/15-31	Multi	The best of the JMT	John Muir Trail, California	Dave DeFrance	ventures@lavabit.com
8/16	Sat	Full Moon Canoe Paddle	Heavner's, Proud Lake State Park	Margaret Martin/ Alan Heavner	AlanHeavner@heavnercanoe.com
8/28-9/2	Multi	Off-trail Backpacking **	McCormick Wilderness Tract	Michael Neiger ( <a href="http://therucksack.tripod.com/trips.htm">http://therucksack.tripod.com/trips.htm</a> )	mneiger@hotmail.com
AUGUST CLASSES					
8/13,20; 9/4,11,18,20-21,25; 10/3-5	Multi	Beginning Backpacking	TBD	Carol McCririe	cmccririe@sbcglobal.net
SEPTEMBER ACTIVITES					
9/2	Tues	Monthly Meeting **	Colony Hall	Cindy Taylor	SolarPresident@SolarOutdoors.org
9/2	Tues	Eco System Wildlife Management in the Serengeti**	Colony Hall	Janet Duncan	SolarPrograms@solaroutdoors.org
9/6	Sat	House Warming Party**	Roseville, MI	Stacie Kitchen	smk4980@att.net
9/12-21	Multi	Isle Royale Trip – Feldtman Loop	Isle Royale National Park	Elizabeth Schwab	qes1339@yahoo.com
9/13	Sat	Full Moon Canoe Paddle	Heavner's, Proud Lake State Park	Margaret Martin/ Alan Heavner	AlanHeavner@heavnercanoe.com
OCTOBER ACTIVITIES					
10/3-6	Multi	Off-trail Backpacking and caving **	Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore	Michael Neiger ( <a href="http://therucksack.tripod.com/trips.htm">http://therucksack.tripod.com/trips.htm</a> )	mneiger@hotmail.com
10/5-11	Multi	Fall colors in the Adirondacks	Lake Placid, NY	Don Wold	DWold12972@aol.com
10/7	Tues	Monthly Meeting **	Colony Hall	Cindy Taylor	SolarPresident@SolarOutdoors.org
10/7	Tues	National Trails System**	Colony Hall	Janet Duncan	SolarPrograms@solaroutdoors.org

10/11-19	Multi	New River Invasion**	New River Gorge, WV	Karl Overheul	cyber.nomad@comcast.net
10/12	Sun	Full Moon Canoe Paddle	Heavner's, Proud Lake State Park	Margaret Martin/ Alan Heavner	AlanHeavner@heavnercanoe.com
10/17-19	Wknd	Backpacking	Jordan Valley Pathway	Kevin Cotter	solar@wowway.com

### UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

11/7-10	Multi	Off-trail Backpacking **	Hiawatha National Forest	Michael Neiger (http://therucksack.tripod.com/trips.htm)	mneiger@hotmail.com
12/5-8	Multi	Off-trail Backpacking or sledging **	Pigeon River Country SF	Michael Neiger (http://therucksack.tripod.com/trips.htm)	mneiger@hotmail.com
1/16-20	Multi	Off-trail Winter Camping	Hiawatha National Forest	Michael Neiger (http://therucksack.tripod.com/trips.htm)	mneiger@hotmail.com
2/7-22	Multi	Arctic Ocean Expedition (James Bay)	Moose River, Ontario	Michael Neiger (http://therucksack.tripod.com/trips.htm)	mneiger@hotmail.com
2/7-22/2009	Multi	Costa Rica Adventure	Costa Rica	Maureen DeFrance	moelifeisgood@lavabit.com
3/8-14	Multi	Off-trail Winter Camping	Pictured Rocks Lakeshore	Michael Neiger (http://therucksack.tripod.com/trips.htm)	mneiger@hotmail.com
4/5-12/2009	Multi	Return to St John USVI	Maho Bay Camps, St. John, USVI	Jim Gessner	gessnerj@comcast.net
4/24-27	Multi	Off-trail Backpacking	Pigeon River State Forest	Michael Neiger (http://therucksack.tripod.com/trips.htm)	mneiger@hotmail.com
5/23-6/1	Multi	Off-trail Canadian Backpacking Expedition	Lake Superior Provincial Park	Michael Neiger (http://therucksack.tripod.com/trips.htm)	mneiger@hotmail.com

\*\* Denotes NON-SOLAR activity (SOLAR will not be held responsible for this activity, on calendar for informational purposes only)

If you would like to plan/lead a SOLAR activity, contact our Activities Chairperson, Samantha Schafer, at [Activities@SolarOutdoors.org](mailto:Activities@SolarOutdoors.org).

If you would like to teach or suggest a SOLAR class, contact our Education Chairperson, Allen Duncan, 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



## 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 (June 13 for the July issue). Electronic documents only, Word is preferred and please attach your images. If you have any questions, please contact **Pete Lamb** at [rayeditor@solaroutdoors.org](mailto:rayeditor@solaroutdoors.org).

## STEERING COMMITTEE

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## 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 Schmelzer, Carol McCririe, Elizabeth Schwab, and Ati Tislerics

# SOLAR

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