



The SOLAR Ray

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

February 2008

IF I HAD NEVER BACKPACKED...

by Mike Banks

If I had never backpacked, I wouldn't have lunched with eagles and whales, or dined with deer. I wouldn't have felt empowered and surprised by scaring a bear. I wouldn't have felt the ecstasy and the anguish of being up close and personal with a moose. I wouldn't have seen a wolf casually trot by as I drank a cup of tea. I wouldn't have known the curiosity of cougars nor the dexterity of raccoons. I wouldn't have had a beaver wake me up with a smack of its tail on the water to tell me my snoring was bothering him, too! I never would have guessed that harbor seals were voyeurs or that vultures could be disappointed. If I had never backpacked, I wouldn't have known that my family extends beyond humanity.

If I had never backpacked, I wouldn't have known that a sunset was a gift and a sunrise a reward. I would never have known how precious the sound of rain is in the morning. I wouldn't have realized that the universe should be seen every time you look up on a clear night. I wouldn't have seen Lake Superior turn gold or Lake Michigan electrified. If I had never backpacked, I wouldn't have felt the wind on my soul.

If I had never backpacked, I wouldn't have flown on a seaplane. I wouldn't have sailed on a jet-catamaran. I wouldn't have chugged down a rocky coast on an ancient Great Lakes fishing trawler. I wouldn't know that quicksand is just a factor and not a monster. I would not have been on a ship that beached and lowered its gangplank. I never would have gotten into a 2-person bucket suspended from a cable, and hurled myself across a river. If I had never backpacked, I wouldn't have spent 9 days on a jungle gym and regained my childhood.

If I had never backpacked, I wouldn't have known how happy the smile from a tired friend could make me. I wouldn't have heard a song come from the heart in the midst of a downpour. I wouldn't have seen that so many of my friends were born to dance on logs. I would never have learned how alive sore muscles could make you feel. If I had never backpacked, I wouldn't have discovered that adversity defines us and life is meant to be a basic quest to explore.

If I had never backpacked, I would still have known love. I would still have known beauty. I would still have known

life. I just wouldn't have known how much I was missing. I wouldn't have known the pride my 8 year old son had in every moment of every day on a long backpacking weekend. I wouldn't have known that look of pride he even wore in his sleep. If I had never backpacked, I wouldn't have known the gleam in my 16-year old daughter's eyes as they reflected the sunrise on Lake Michigan. I would never have known how much her words at that moment could mean to me after spending so many years trying to get her to go where "things don't flush." She said "Daddy, can I have my own backpack?" If I had never backpacked, I wouldn't have known how easy it was to say, "Yes."

If I had never backpacked, I wouldn't have met so many wonderful people in the middle of nowhere. If I had never backpacked, I wouldn't know that 'nowhere' is the best place to be. If I had never backpacked, I wouldn't have made so many wonderful friends. If I had never backpacked, I wouldn't have seen my students become my teachers. If I had never backpacked, I would never have known how much I needed to pay back...and to pay forward.

SPRING BACKPACKING COURSE

SCHEDULE:

- Evening Classes: Thursday April 3, 10 & 17; May 8
- Field Day: Saturday, April 19
- Practical #1: May 3 & 4
- Practical #2: May 16-18 (Friday, May 16 is optional)

COST: \$100

EXPERIENCE: What YOU make it!

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

Contact Michael Banks at slywolfe52@yahoo.com for more information or to register.

2008 CROSS COUNTRY SKI CLASS

by Jeff McWilliams

On January 12, 25 SOLAR members headed to the Michigan Cross Country Ski Headquarters in Roscommon, MI to attend cross country skiing classes.

Roscommon sits in what's often called the "snow belt" of the lower peninsula. While Southeast Michigan was bleak, gray, and devoid of snow, Roscommon still had 5 to 10 inches of unpacked snow on the ground. This created great conditions for a day of learning how to cross country ski.



Classic students ski down one of the trails.

The 2008 SOLAR ski class was the largest ski class in SOLAR history. It was divided into two sections: a morning classic skiing class and a skate skiing class in the afternoon. The classic skiing class had 25 students, while the skate skiing class had 10.

Both classes were taught by Hap Wright, a PSIA certified ski instructor. This was Hap's second season as Ski Instructor for the SOLAR class. The lead instructor for both classes was SOLAR's Larry Mergentime, who celebrated his 4th season as lead instructor for this class. Howard Weiss, another SOLARite, also served as an instructor. This was his first year.

This was the 9th year that the Michigan Cross Country Ski Headquarters (XCSHQ) has hosted the SOLAR ski class. The XCSHQ is owned by Bob and Lynne Frye, and is home to over ten miles of groomed trails.

During the morning classic skiing class, Hap explained the difference between wax and no-wax skis. He also discussed care and maintenance of both types. We then learned how to clip into our ski bindings and how to recover when we fall. Proper recovery technique is important, especially on a hill, to prevent accidentally sliding down the hill or becoming injured. This was followed by instruction of the various classic ski techniques: no pole, double pole, diagonal stride, and double pole with kick. We then spent the rest of the morning on a section of the ski trails, practicing these techniques.

The last part of the classic class covered use of the herring bone technique to climb hills, and the wedge technique to safely descend hills. After class, everyone gathered in the lodge to warm by the fire, enjoy Bob Frye's pulled pork, and socialize while Hap demonstrated how to wax skis.

After lunch, 10 SOLAR members gathered outside to attend the skate skiing class. This style of skiing is relatively new. It was developed around 1980 and made popular by

American skier, Bill Koch. It was allowed in the Nordic World Cup in 1986. The 1988 Winter Olympics marked the separation of cross country skiing into classic and freestyle forms.

The skate class introduced students to a different type of boot and ski, a different binding, and a longer set of poles. Hap taught the five different skate techniques: no pole, V1, V2, V2 alternate, and the granny skate for hill climbing. Skate skiing requires significantly more

balance and coordination than classic. Some students caught on quicker than others. Gray Ivanov did particularly well, whereas I was a somewhat more challenged learning how to maintain balance and coordination. When asked, Larry Mergentime said it takes approximately five years to become proficient at skate skiing.

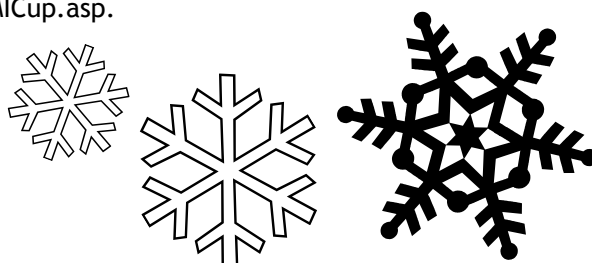
We practiced the skate techniques and also learned that they can be combined in various ways to optimize speed and efficiency, or to shift the effort to different muscle groups in order to prevent fatigue.

The session ended with all participants skiing around a practice loop adjacent to the training area.

Weather throughout the day was excellent. Temperatures hovered around 30 degrees with low wind and a gentle, but continuous snowfall. The trails had plenty of snow and were well groomed.

The Michigan Cross Country Ski Headquarters also sponsors the XCSHQ ski team, which participates in the Michigan Cup cross country ski racing series. The Michigan Cup is a recreational race series that welcomes skiers of all skill levels. The XCSHQ team contains two SOLAR members: Larry Mergentime and Pam Szakal.

For more information about XCSHQ, visit <http://www.cross-country-ski.com>. You can learn more about the Michigan Cup series by visiting <http://www.nordicskiracer.com/MICup.asp>.



SOLAR FEBRUARY PROGRAM: LIVING WITH THE EASTERN MASSASAUGA RATTLESNAKE

by Allen Duncan



Photo by Matthew Heumann

The program will include:

- How to safely co-exist with this shy, secretive snake.
- Identification, life history, status and conservation of the massasauga in Michigan.
- Opportunities to observe a live massasauga and other “look-alike” snakes.

Presented by: Yu Man Lee, Associate Program Leader, Zoology, Michigan State University Extension

SOLAR PROGRAM SCHEDULE

by Allen Duncan

Upcoming Programs:

- February: The Massasauga Rattler with Yu Man Lee, MSU Extension Scientist
- March: Author Jim Dufresne presents his new book: “Backpacking Michigan”
- April: SOLAR Annual Business Meeting
- May: SOLAR Officer Elections
- June: “Outdoor Weather Safety,” Richard Pollman, National Weather Service
- July: Annual Gear Swap and Bar-B-Que!
- August: Oakland Land Conservancy, Donna Folland, Executive Director
- September: Successful Eco-system Management in the Serengeti, William Cowger

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.

A DECEMBER SNOWSHOE AND SLEDGE EXPLORATION

of the Mackinac State Forest's Tomahawk Creek Flooding area with Michael Neiger and the Michigan Bush Rats
by Mary Powell

When my plans to spend the weekend sledging and winter camping came up in conversation with a colleague at work, he asked what almost anyone who hasn't tried it asks: "Why would you want to do that? It's cold out there..."

There are actually lots of reasons.

First of all, the countryside is beautiful and unbelievably peaceful when covered with a deep blanket of snow. I enjoy seeing the wilderness in all its moods and seasons: the exuberant awakening and explosive growth of spring, the luxuriant foliage and intense animal activity of summer, the bountiful harvest and opulent colors of fall and, finally, the dormancy of winter when life hunkers down to await the return of the sun.

I also like the physical challenges of traveling and camping comfortably in the snow. The lack of bugs is nice too.

And lastly, I like seeing the many signs left by woodland creatures that are often overlooked in the "busier" seasons—things like nests, tracks, scat, burrows and the remnants of meals.



I had planned to carpool to this trip with another of the participants, but got detained at work and found myself driving north on I-75 in the early evening. At home, the scant snow cover was melting and the weekend forecast called for intermittent rain and sleet. Fortunately, the picture was brighter to the north: 12 inches of snow on the ground and a forecast of possible snow showers.

The location for this trip was near Clear Lake State Park in Montmorency County and there had been several changes in the pre-trip bivouac plans due to new snow.

When I reached the Tomahawk Lake State Forest Campground, I found Michael, Gail, Steve and Mike gathered around a small fire. We shoveled an additional parking spot in case Cathy arrived late and then chatted awhile, enjoying

the flames and occasionally adding another branch.

When it began to look as if Cathy would either be arriving very late, or was staying somewhere else, we decided to eat our share of the planned cheesecake dessert. It might have been a bit better warm, but it went down pretty well and we headed for our sleeping bags with full stomachs.

Day 1—Friday: Turkey, Squirrel, Mouse, Deer, Coyote, and Elk Tracks

The next morning, after breakfast at our campsites, we drove down to Clear Lake State Park, where we would leave most of our vehicles for the duration of the trip. Cathy was there as were Josh and Mary Ann, who had driven down from the Canadian Soo. Mike's car was spotted elsewhere so he could leave on Sunday to get back to work.

Before long, we began our hike, which was to be a sizeable loop, east of the park, in the Mackinac State Forest.

After crossing M-33 we cut a rough azimuth to the east, over a ridge, before heading south a bit to pick up one of the many firebreak trails in the woods. Traveling on this firebreak would facilitate covering ground since we were getting a relatively late start.

Though the sky had been overcast at daybreak, it was now a bright blue with puffy, white, fast-moving clouds. With the temperature in the high twenties and almost no wind, it was very pleasant hiking weather.

By lunchtime we had seen an assortment of tracks—turkey, squirrel, mouse, deer, coyote and elk. We stopped to eat along one of the trails. When we got moving again, we spotted an eagle soaring high above the trees.

Steve expressed an interest in the land nav and Michael set him up to cut an azimuth on point. He did an excellent job despite having to contend with the thick brush and swamp that covered the low ground between the ridges.

The final azimuth of the afternoon took us to what was probably an elk feeding area—a clear field decorated with the dried remains of summer flowers...alien invaders actually: spotted knapweed and the tall spikes of mullein.

The field was bordered with a young mixed forest—aspens, beeches, and maples with a scattering of birch and evergreens. We found a sheltered area along the north edge and began to set up camp.

When completed, our little village had an assortment of shelters—Mike's Snow Cave, Steve's heated tent, Josh's pyramid shelter, and several, variously-erected tarps.

We settled in to enjoy our view of the field as we prepared dinner and relaxed for the evening.

Day 2—Saturday: Rice Pudding

Saturday began with a beautiful pastel sunrise: pinks, mauves, and blues that gradually became peaches and golds as the sun rose.

A curtain of fast-moving clouds brought that show to an end, but it was soon followed by a shower of huge snowflakes that drifted lazily down over the field. It was beautiful and peaceful.

The pleasant smell of wood smoke drifted through our encampment as we melted snow and heated our breakfasts. I had a second cup of coffee and soaked up the winter scene before packing up my gear.

Josh took the point and we ranged farther east and then north toward Upper Tomahawk Lake. He did a nice job of combining rough azimuths and working the terrain to get the easiest route.

The weather remained nice—there was a slight breeze and big, gray snow clouds alternated with brief patches of blue sky.

We had a leisurely lunch and then Mike took point, picking up the pace and leading us farther northeast to a two track that we used to cross a swampy area. North of the swamp and west of Upper Tomahawk Lake we climbed a ridge covered with hardwoods.

It was narrow enough to see the land dropping off on both sides as we traveled farther north. The sun was dropping when we neared the end of the ridge and we decided to camp there facing down toward the lake, which was not quite visible through the trees.

As we set up camp, we were treated to a sunset of wine and gold that rivaled the beauty of the previous sunrise. We settled in for the evening with a feeling that our cup was very full.

The evening was clear and the temperature dropped into the teens. We relaxed and enjoyed dinner, which was followed by rice pudding for dessert.

We visited each other and Steve demonstrated the little titanium woodstove that warmed his tent.

When the firewood we'd gathered was burned and we'd chatted enough, we lay down in our bags to listen for coyotes and watch the sky show until sleep overtook us.

Day 3—Sunday: Crows, Chickadees, Juncos and a Pileated Woodpecker

When we'd packed up in the morning, Michael took the point and led us to a small back road where those who were leaving early could head back to the cars. Mike, Steve and Gail said their goodbyes there.

The rest of us began to bushwhack in a generally southwest direction which would bring us back to the vehicles



sometime the next day. Cathy came along to take in a little more winter scenery before departing. It was a beautiful day—full sunshine and fresh snow.

There were tracks to study and an infinite array of dead winter weeds.

We saw a second eagle. Josh and Mary Ann spotted a mouse scurrying around a tree. Birds were active—crows, chickadees, juncos and a pileated woodpecker.

We skirted some private property and had lunch along Tomahawk Creek. Beavers had been active there and we worked our way along the creek hoping to cross on a dam but didn't find one substantial enough to keep us out of the water.

We ended up crossing on the small bridge, which had been Plan A anyhow. On the road we saw signs that the rest of the group had passed there and this was where Cathy also headed back toward her car.

Michael, Josh, Mary Ann and I continued southwest using a piece of the High Country Pathway as it wound along the creek.

As the sun set, we found a good spot to camp on a remnant of a very old logging road overlooking a field. The road ran along a mature pine plantation so firewood was abundant, easy to burn, and sweet smelling.

Continued on page 8...

It was a very peaceful evening. Coyotes called from not too far away and Michael slipped out to return their call and see if he could spot them.

He and the coyotes exchanged greetings for awhile but they didn't come close enough for a sighting.

Day 4—Monday: Evidence of Poachers

Michael took point again in the morning, a position which involves breaking trail when in fresh snow as we were. He insisted that it was good training for the February trip in Canada.

We continued southwest through previously timbered areas that were partly grown up with stands of pines separated by big open areas, a landscape that reminds me of the Kingston Plains, near the Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore, in the Upper Peninsula.

At the edge of a wooded area we began to see unusual numbers of coyote tracks—they were everywhere. A little farther along we came upon the reason for this abundance of tracks: the remains of three deer carcasses lay in the snow.

There was pretty clear evidence of poaching. They'd been skinned, the hindquarters were missing, and the antlers had been removed from the buck.

Animals had been taking advantage of this bounty. The snow had been packed down all around by coyotes. There were some signs that crows had feasted too.

I was surprised at the current visitors though—chickadees! I thought of them as strictly seedeaters. They moved off reluctantly as we approached, hanging around in the nearby bushes while we examined the remains.

As we departed, they returned immediately to feed. I tried for a picture of them pecking at the bones and pulling on the tendons, but their small size combined with the location's shadows thwarted that effort.

We bushwhacked in a leisurely fashion toward the park, enjoying the sunshine and pausing for a snack. We arrived at the cars right at the appointed time, about two in the afternoon.

After stowing our gear in the cars and making some effort to clean up to a socially-acceptable level, we headed for Onaway and our traditional post-trip meal.

HELPING OUT AT GLEANER'S

by Darrell Ahlberg

On Saturday, January 12, several SOLAR members met to help out at Gleaner's food bank of Oakland County. They were part of a larger group of about 40 people who worked for three hours at breaking down large containers of food into smaller packages for distribution to needy families throughout the Metro Detroit area.

The day started with DeWayne from Gleaners giving us a short summary of the entire process from how the food is originally collected from various food drives throughout the country, and ultimately delivered to various distribution centers, of which Gleaners is among the oldest in the country. The talk was followed by a quick tour of the food bank itself and an explanation of the distribution process. We were all impressed with the extensive computerized inventory and distribution systems they have in place. It was during this process that it was explained the various chores that we were there to do that day.

Our group was then broken out into three different groups. One groups of about three or four distributed food to two other larger groups. Once everyone agreed which group they wanted to belong to, it was up to us to get ourselves organized. We had to take food items from huge boxes. These larger boxes contained items of similar types of items, but you couldn't depend on that. The objective was to fill the smaller packages with a well balanced variety of items. In a short time, we had systems set up which worked quite effectively. In some cases, someone volunteered to actually get inside the large boxes. It sounded crazy at first, but it was quite effective.

It turned out to be a very productive day. Between the two groups, we filled 14 pallets of food. There were 40 boxes to a pallet and each box is approximately 20 pounds for a total of 800 lbs. per pallet. Multiplied by 14 and it is estimated our group alone packaged over 11,000 pounds of food.

Well done group!



THE RECUMBENT VOYAGER

by Winnie Chrzanowski

Michigan on Fire (Paperback)

By Betty Soddors

Thunder Bay Press (1997), 390 pages

\$19.95



In 2007, wildfire season statistics released by the Michigan Department of Natural Resources stated that 395 fires burned 20,881 acres across the state. The “18,185-acre Sleeper Lake Fire began with a lightning strike... and spread rapidly...” No lives were lost in the Sleeper Lake Fire, but it cost an “estimated \$7.5 million” to suppress the Sleeper Lake Fire.

This 2007 catastrophe was not the last Michigan forest fire nor was it the first. Other forest fires had burned through Michigan prior to the first recorded catastrophic forest fire on October 8, 1871; that date became forever known as “the day Michigan burned.”

In 1881, the Thumb Fire wiped out 70 townships, 1,521 homes, and over 220 people. An estimated 13,000 victims needed assistance. The fledgling American Red Cross faced its first domestic disaster test with the 1881 Thumb Fire.

During this same time period, many devastating fires raged through the lush, green Upper Peninsula - in some cases pitting corporate greed against the needs of the general population.

The Metz Fire of 1908, as reported in an October 16, 1908 Detroit News article, “was a raging volcano” that burned to death 15 men, women, and children. In Alpena, 17 persons were known to be dead due to this fire.

On July 11, 1911, twin fires destroyed the twin cities of Oscoda and Au Sable. During the week of the fire, numerous small forest fires were reported burning in the area. A forest fire advanced toward AuSable ultimately setting it aflame. Oscoda began to burn at about the same time. Winds - reported to be 50 miles per hour -carried the flames across the Au Sable River Valley. Oscoda and Au Sable were both destroyed when the twin fires joined forces

The author organized Michigan on Fire into five sections. Each section provides a history of the area and provides details of the extent and causes of the fires she chronicles. In the conclusion, Soddors presents a history of Michigan fire fighting. The bibliography offers a comprehensive list of books, papers, periodicals, research reports and government reports.

Michigan on Fire is well researched and details the events of not only the fires listed in the above paragraph but other fires across the state as well. The author provides commentary but primarily uses eye-witness accounts, newspaper articles, poems, and stories written after the fires occurred to tell the tale of Michigan’s fiery history. These accounts tell of courageous efforts to save families and homes, miraculous survivals, devastating loss, and the kindness of neighbors and strangers in times of need. The stories paint a disastrous picture of what occurred; however, they are not gruesome but rather sensitively narrated.

All of the early Michigan forest fires have been documented between the covers of this book. If you want to know some history about this great state we inhabit, this book gives it to you.



2008 SOLAR PHOTO CONTEST WINNERS

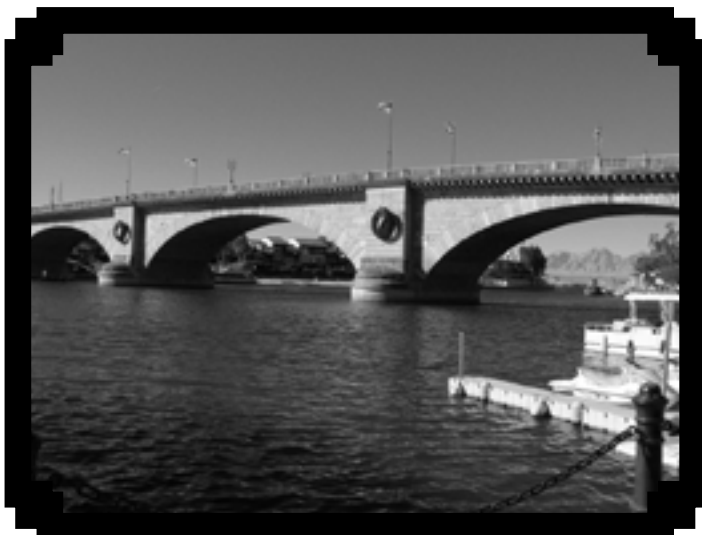
by Allen Duncan



Animals: Dave DeFrance



Photo Pro: Pete Lamb



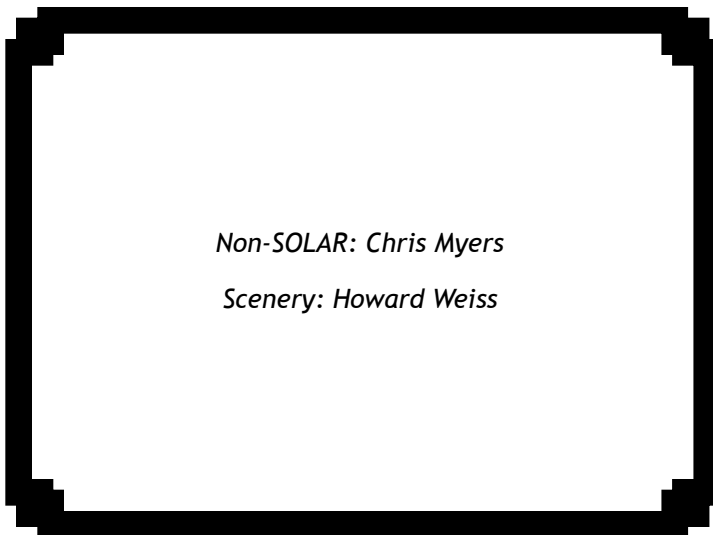
Black & White: Moe DeFrance



Plants: Dave DeFrance



People: Sharon Smelter



Non-SOLAR: Chris Myers

Scenery: Howard Weiss

Not Pictured

SOLAR ROCKS

by Pete Lamb

The rock climbing class will be held this year from Wednesday, April 2 to Wednesday, May 7. The first practical will be on Saturday, April 26 at 9:30 AM to 3:00 PM at Kensington Metro Park.

The second practical will be May 9, 10, 11, at Rattlesnake Provincial Park near Toronto. Yes, I am fully aware that is Mother's Day, but due to scheduling conflicts the only other date is May 24-25 which is Memorial Day. I don't mind having a discussion about that, and move the class forward 2 weeks

The first class on April 2 will be at Planet Rock in Pontiac where you will (hopefully) get a belay card.

The cost will be \$135. For this you get The Mountaineer's Book (can be used for Lou's mountaineering class also) a trip to Planet Rock and a camping weekend at Rattlesnake. Also if it can be worked in a rappelling class at Planet Rock, and of course the knowledge of the best instructors in SOLAR.

You must attend all classes and practical as you will be learning ways to stay alive. There will be a written test given at Rattlesnake

This class usually generates a lot of interest and will be limited to 22 students.



SOLAR HIKE SCHEDULE

by Matt Dalton



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

February 3, 2008 Sunday - 9:30 AM, Pontiac Lake State Park, M-59 and Williams Lake Rd. Meet at the beach parking lot, NW corner where the mountain bikers/hikers meet. (There will not be a lot of mountain bikers). Hike for 2 hours 5-6 miles. Possible restaurant stop after TBD by hikers.

February 9, 2008, Saturday- 9:30 AM, Kensington Metro Park, Milford, MI. I-96 and Kensington Road exit, meet at the Nature Center for a slow paced hike or X-C Ski. Optional restaurant stop after the hike.

February 17, 2008, Sunday - 9:30 AM, Highland State Recreation Area, White Lake, MI., east of Milford, enter the park from M-59 Highland Rd, meet at Haverhill Parking Lot. Volunteer hike leader requested.

February 23, 2008, Saturday - 9:30 AM, Proud Lake State Park, Milford, Meet behind the Park Headquarters for a slow to moderate paced through level terrain. Hike or cross country ski. "You may be able to rent some skies from Heaven's Canoe/Kayak and Ski Headquarters." Optional restaurant stop after.

March 2, 2008, Sunday - 9:30 AM, Brighton State Recreation Area, Meet at the Bishop Lake beach parking lot. Park is south west of Grand River Avenue and Brighton Rd., west of Hwy 23 and south of Hwy 96. Optional restaurant after, plenty of choices in downtown Brighton.

Come hike with us!

WWW.FUN OR WINTER WONDERLAND (IN THE) WEST

by Dave DeFrance



This year, Michigan teachers got a Christmas break lasting from December 22 to January 6. Grey Ivanov, Howard Weiss, Maureen and Dave De France took advantage of that break to head out to CO for some real snows. Laura Albin and Dave Forester (of the CO SOLAR clan) booked a fantastic condo in Silverthorne right outside of some world class ski areas. We drove out December 21 as soon as Maureen got off of work and arrived on Saturday about 6:00 PM and started planning our assault on the hills. Along the way, Howard brought books on CD and we listened to the Hobbit on 10 CDs. We couldn't wait to see what trouble Bilbo was getting into and out of.

The first day, we went down hilling at Keystone. Right away, we got more winter than we bargained for. Of course, temps were 20 degrees below normal and it was windy and snowy. We froze on the lifts and we froze coming down but put in a full day from 9-4 with few

breaks. Surface conditions were ideal, but every night and morning would find us watching the weather channel to see how many layers we would put on and what activity would be the most practical for the day.

Laura had done a great deal of cooking and meal planning so we were welcomed back to the condo to homemade pies and other goodies as well as a hot dry sauna, which Grey practically slept in. We could take the 194 degree temps (90 degrees C) for about 20 minutes, but he stayed almost 2 hours! We kept checking to see if he was still alive. Chilling outings and the return to feast and warm up was to be repeated all week as we hit Breckenridge, Arapahoe Basin, snowshoed and x-skied out into the hills where we found remnants of mining camps and great scenery. Grey made his famous Plav a couple of times and we also made personal pizzas, bean soup, pastas and lots of left overs and side dishes. It is time to start the typical New Year's resolution. I failed to mention that they brought a bunch of left over booze from another party so we could warm up on the inside as well.

One day, Grey, Howard and Dave D. drove to Boreas Mountain out side of Breckenridge for some cross country skiing. Did I mention how cold it was? We hit the trail at -4 confident that our frozen toes and hands would warm up soon. It was almost 2 miles of uphill before we could start feeling no pain and another 2 miles before we could start venting. We were on an old railroad bed that boasted 165 turns over its total run of about 40 miles (we only did about 6 of it to this point). At the crest of that trail, we found a restored water tank that served the steam engine and a trail that went up some more. We took that and found an old mining camp with several buildings, machinery and a mound of tailings. We went a couple more miles and decided we had enough. By the time we got back to the car, the temps had started to drop again and we were totally out of energy.

On Christmas day, Laura skied only half a day and spent the rest cooking. We came back to more deserts, a 9 pound ham (you know what kind of sandwiches we had on the trail), macaroni/cheese casserole and two kinds of squash. After, we found she had stockings stuffed with gifts for all of us in addition to the stuff we hauled out from MI.

Dave F. and Laura are snowboarders. Maureen heard how this was easier on your knees so she started planning for when her knees gave out and took 3 lessons. At this stage, you fall a lot and try to break those falls with your arms and in turn jamb your shoulders. As of this writing, Maureen is nursing sore joints and has sworn off snowboarding. It is a sport for youth.

Well, that was week one. Laura and Dave F. had to return to work and Howard decided to fly home, but we had another week to play. The three of us headed to Utah and stayed in Moab, a neat little town. We had never seen Canyonlands or Arches NPs. Are we glad we did. They were experiencing the 20 below normal weather as well so most of the land was covered with snow. The web said mid 40s and sun. HA! These parks are a photographer's paradise with the rock formations, colors and wild life. After a little touring of Arches, we dropped Grey off for a 4 day backpack trip in Canyonlands. We drove and took short hikes to the sites and took hundreds of photos. When we picked him up later, we found that nights were very cold and long, trails not well marked and that there was no water other than snow, which is a great pain to use as your only water source. At another time of year, this would be an even better trip. Look at the photos and make your plans to go.

poetic nature

by Elizabeth Schwab

Winter Scenery

By Patrick O'Callaghan

Did you ever wend you way
On a quiet winter day
In a valley where the stately cedars grow,
When the forestland was dressed
In it's very, very best,
All embellished in a robe of new-born snow?
Have you scaled the highest hill
When the valleyland was still,
And the whole wide world was feathering with snow?
Have you watched the bright flakes fall
Out of heaven's distant wall
'Til they cloaked the tranquil cedars far below?
Have you walked the highest crest
Where the hilltops run abreast,
Have you stood there in the brightest hour of day?
While a fawn roamed through the snow
In the breathless land below
As he wandered down the valley on his way?
Have you ever seen the glow
Of the twilight on the snow,
And the moonlight o'er that same majestic land?
Have you ever seen such Art
From the bottom of your heart?
If you've seen it, then I know you understand.

From: "An Anthology of Verse About Michigan's U.P."

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 editoin of the SOLAR Ray, send it to Elizabeth Schwab by email at: qes1339@yahoo.com. Include the source you obtained it from.

WHAT'S MISSING?

Your article!

Your pictures!

Your trip recommendation!
Email YOUR contributions to
the SOLAR Ray at:

rayeditor@solaroutdoors.org

MEMBERSHIP 2008

by Mary Price

If you haven't paid your 2008 dues please do so right away. I will be going through the SOLAR yahoo group list in February and removing folks who are not up to date on their dues and therefore are no longer SOLAR members.

I will also be cleaning up the database and deleting non-members so Rays will not be mailed out to those non-members who have requested that the SOLAR Ray be mailed to them.

The membership application is available in this month's Ray (page 18) or on the SOLAR website (www.solaroutdoors.org) under membership.

My address is on the bottom of the form. All renewing members must include a completed and signed membership form along with their check (NO CASH).

New members who joined in October through December 2007 will have their memberships expire in December 2008.

SOLAR BOOK CLUB UPDATE

By Vida Ruggero

The first meeting of the book club took place before the October SOLAR meeting at Chipolte restaurant. We had a great dinner, and discussed, among other things, the book, "The Greatest Adventure Tales Ever Told." My personal favorites were excerpts from the classics "The Sentinal" and "Kon'Tiki." We decided to meet every three months.

The next book club meeting will be on Tuesday, February 5 at 6:00 PM (before the SOLAR meeting) at Chipotle Restaurant (26147 Evergreen Rd. Southfield, MI 48075).

The next book we will be discussing is Arctic Homestead by Norma Cobb.

If you would like to be on the book club email list, please contact Vida Ruggero at rageti@hotmail.com.

SAVE A TREE!

by Rebecca Sweeton

Save a tree and download the SOLAR Ray rather than receiving it by mail. To no longer receive the SOLAR Ray by mail, please email Mary Price at membership@solaroutdoors.org.

SPOTLIGHT ON CAROL MCCRIE

by Rebecca Sweeton



HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN A MEMBER OF SOLAR?
Since 1982.

HOW DID YOU GET INVOLVED WITH SOLAR?

The sister of a friend talked us into joining SOLAR right after college. We thought it had something to do with the sun. She quickly explained what it was really about. I am so glad I joined as I have no idea where my life would be now without SOLAR.

HOW DID YOU START BACKPACKING?

When I joined SOLAR, I had only done camping with Girls Scouts and most of this was car camping. The first class I took was the survival class (back then there were no prerequisites) and learned that I really needed to take a basic course (Translated - I was unprepared, cold and wet!). I took SOLAR's beginning backpacking class, then taught by Bob Westbrook, in 1983 or 1984. From there I took just about every other class SOLAR had to offer and have been backpacking ever since. I took over teaching SOLAR's class in 1990, after Bob and I taught it jointly in 1989. I've packed all over the US - White Mountains, Green Mountains, Smokies, Rockies, Yosemite, Olympics, and Glacier, as well as the Canadian Rockies and many places here in Michigan such as Pictured Rocks and Isle Royale.

WHAT HAS YOUR FAVORITE TRIP BEEN SO FAR?

I would have to say the Canadian Rockies because this was a 17 day trip. Six of us hiked in Mt. Robson PP, Jasper PP, Yoho PP, and Kootenay PP. The first three were extended day trips ranging from 4-6 days and the last was day hiking. We had an excellent time with

great views and wildlife. We got to hike on glaciers, see the sunrise on a waterfall, and camp at the base of the ramparts in the Tonquin Valley in Jasper. The sunset on the red rocks was just awesome. It took some of the focus off of the mosquitos! Our last night in the parks, we got off the trail in 70 degree weather and camped in a drive in campground. Over night it snowed and we drove up to Lake Louise and had a snow ball fight!

WHAT WOULD YOUR DREAM TRIP BE?

Oh, there are so many places to go; I'm not sure if I have a dream trip. Places I'd like to see - Yellowstone, Grand Canyon, the Cascades, and Scotland and Ireland. I'm sure I could name many more, but those are top of my list.

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

A solo camping class.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR MOST REWARDING EXPERIENCE IN SOLAR?

There are many things I have experienced in SOLAR that I value. Having been a longtime lifetime member, it is satisfying to be able to share my experiences with new members by teaching. In addition to leading the backpacking class, I've also helped with other classes in the past - Enjoying Michigan Winters, Survival, Search and Rescue, and Women's Backpacking Workshop. Probably the greatest part is all the friends that I've made in SOLAR. These are the people I travel with, party with, and just generally get together with. The very first SOLAR trip that I led was a week long trip to the Smokies. I remember going to SC to pitch the idea and once I got the go ahead, I started to look for people. I was pretty careful about screening for experience so we wouldn't have any problems. There was one person that really struggled on that trip and Denny Phillips held us together by sticking close and helping out because I was out front hiking. He taught me an important lesson and that is that as the trip leader I needed to understand that a group is only as strong as its' weakest link. I have never forgotten this lesson and have actually learned to enjoying being the "sweep," (especially as I get older and slower.)

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

I've seen a lot of changes in SOLAR in the past 20+ years. When I joined, there were not as many members, but the leadership were always very welcoming for new people. We may not have had all of the structure and technology as now (sometimes the SOLAR Rays were hand written and xeroxed for distribution), but we were together to enjoy the outdoors.

WOULD YOU LIKE TO HIKE THE BEST OF THE JMT?

by Dave DeFrance

The John Muir Trail passes through what many backpackers say is the finest mountain scenery in the United States. This is a land of 13,000-foot and 14,000-foot peaks, of lakes in the thousands, and of canyons and granite cliffs. It's also a land blessed with the mildest, sunniest climate of any major mountain range in the world.

The JMT runs through 3 National Parks: Yosemite (Official NPS Page), Kings Canyon and Sequoia (Official NPS Page). When not within a National Park, it runs through Forest Service (Official Inyo National Forest Page) land, including the John Muir and Ansel Adams Wilderness areas. The trail also passes through the Devils Postpile National Monument near Red's Meadow.

The John Muir Trail is 211 miles long and runs (mostly in conjunction with the PCT—Pacific Crest Trail) from Yosemite Valley to Mt Whitney, in California. We're only doing part of it—the best part.

The trip will start from Tuolumne Meadows on August 17 and end at Fresno on August 29. We will have to coordinate getting there and back. Estimated cost is \$500 plus your airfare. Hang onto your \$ for now. Our first orientation meeting and hike will be February 3 at 1:00 PM at our house. It will coordinate with the Superbowl so we can do it all.

This terrain is at high altitude, has large gains and losses in any day, is sustained, we will be carrying weight. Food and lodging is not likely to give you the revitalization that you get at home. THIS IS 90+ MILES OVER 13 DAYS. Before you spend the money on a ticket, you should be able to carry your full pack for 10-12 miles in Michigan day after day. We will have a meeting each month that includes a hike. This hike is not for conditioning but for status assessment, communication and team- building. Since other trips will get in the way, a large burden is on you to supplement and continue your training outside of these get-togethers. It is normal to work out twice per week and hike with your pack once per week. In addition, we will have to function in teams of 4-6 so two weekend outings will be planned to wring out the gear and cooperation.

A Description of the Route

The John Muir Trail climbs out of Yosemite Valley northeast over the Cathedral Range to Tuolumne Meadows then descends into Lyell Canyon which it follows south, up Lyell canyon, to Donohue Pass (11,050' high), in the ridge which divides Yosemite National Park from the Ansel Adams Wilderness in the Inyo National Forest. The largest glacier in the Sierras lies on the face of Mt Lyell.

Over Donohue Pass the trail descends into the valley of the Middle Fork of the San Joaquin River, a wet region with many lakes and streams that attracts fishers (who need a permit from the State Fish and Game Department.) It descends to Shadow Lake, a famously-beautiful lake, then rises up over

a ridge before descending to Devil's Postpile. The scenic Ritter Range, an old range whose rising preceded the rising of the Sierra forms the east wall of the valley. The soil changes from the rough grainy soil of eroding mountains to volcanic dust, a less pleasant soil to deal with keeping clean against, especially when wet.

At Devil's Postpile and Red's Meadow. A small National Monument, Devil's Postpile features the unusual formation of hundreds of hexagonal posts of basalt that had the opportunity to solidify without mixing, allowing them to freeze in hexagonal posts. A mile from Devil's Postpile lies Red's Meadow which has a campground (with a site for backpackers that always has room for one more), a hot springs plumbed into shower stalls providing free hot showers (perhaps after a wait for the water to get hot, especially the further down the pipes your stall. Wait for it.), a store (food but few supplies for hikers - it appears to serve fishers more) and cafe, both open 7 AM to 7 PM, and a shuttle bus goes to the town of Mammoth Lakes (roundtrip: \$8).

The trail climbs out of the valley of the Middle Fork through forest still burnt from the 1993 fire through a meadow, past Deer Creek, and then along the west face of the ridge above Cascade Valley to Duck Creek. From Duck Creek the trail ascends a ridgepoint then descends into Purple Lake, then another ridgepoint before descending into Lake Virginia. The trail descends steeply to Tully Hole, on a fork of Fish Creek, then gently to the head of Cascade Valley, where it crosses Fish Creek on a bridge and ascends another fork of Fish Creek past high rocky Squaw and Chief Lakes to Silver Pass on Silver Divide.

The trail descends Silver Pass past Silver Pass Lake, follows Silver Pass Creek to the North Fork of Mono Creek at Pocket Meadow, then descends to Quail Meadows, a mile east of Lake Edison. It crosses Mono Creek then rises steeply to Bear Ridge, follows the ridge then descends to the bank of Bear Creek. It follows Bear Creek, then its west fork, to its source, Marie Lake, then over Selden Pass.

The JMT now descends Selden Pass past Heart Lake, through a meadow to Sally Keyes Lakes, crosses Senger Creek and descends an exposed ridge to the South Fork of the San Joaquin River.

We exit from here.

This is a rigorous hike but not a death march. Come to the first meeting to see what is involved and be prepared to make your commitment soon.

For More Information

Please contact Dave DeFrance by email at defranceomnex@comcast.net or at the next SOLAR general membership meeting.

A NIGHT OUT IN REDFORD

by Darrell Ahlberg



On the evening of Saturday, December 15, SOLAR members were joined with people from various clubs like the GM Ski Club, Skiwi Ski Club, and other friends for an evening at the Redford Theater in Detroit to see the Old Time Classic movie "It's A Wonderful Life" starring James Stewart and Donna Reed. In all there were about 40 people.

For those not familiar with the Redford Theater, it is special because it's about 80 years old and still in the same mold and charm under which it was originally built. It has one of the few remaining pipe organs in movie theaters anywhere. It is currently run by the non-profit Motor City Theatre Organ Society who has done a lot of work to restore it. Their mission is to show old classic films on the big screen "the way they were meant to be seen".

Prior to the movie, we met for dinner at Steve's Family Dining (on Middlebelt between 5 & 6 Mile in Livonia). It is a restaurant renowned for excellent home cooking

specializing in Polish and Italian food and reasonable prices. Their 100% non-smoking atmosphere was a special treat. We were served up some world class family style helpings of Polish Sausage and Kraut, Roasted Chicken, Mostacholi, Stuffed Cabbage (golumpke), perogies (all three varieties), and Lasagna. All this in addition to the included choice of soup or salad and soft drink beverage of your choice. Beer and wine were offered at nominal additional charges. The food was unbelievably authentic, mouth wateringly delicious, and extremely plentiful. So plentiful, that most took home enough leftovers for another meal or two.

The beautifully restored theater was indeed a sight to behold. Complete with a nighttime sky with stars and moving clouds, Japanese tapestry painting and décor, and a deep set, fully lighted Christmas decorated stage. It also featured a complete electric train set up which moved magically through a Dickens village. The crowning feature of the building is its still fully functioning pipe organ. At exactly 7:30, the organ and its accompanying organist were majestically elevated to the full view of the crowd and we were treated to 30 minutes of beautiful Christmas music. When it was time to start the movie, a red velvet curtain was lowered to cover the decorated stage. The curtain was then drawn to reveal an old fashioned silver screen. The showing of the movie featured an "intermission" during which the pipe organ was resurrected and we were treated to still more Christmas sounds.

Watching one of the greatest classic films of all time shown on the big screen in a theater filled with people was an incredible experience. Even though most people have probably seen the film numerous times on television, the funny parts were still as fresh and funny as ever. Only this time we shared the experience and laughter with the audience. And the sad and touching moments were shared alike with not a dry eye in the place.

In the end, I am very happy to report; George Bailey once again prevailed over the despicable Mr. Potter because, despite his poor financial situation, George had friends and people who loved him for the gifts they'd received from his having been a part of their lives. An entire theater filled with people all came away with a solid reminder that no matter what your financial or social situation is, if you have friends and family who know you, understand you, and appreciate you, then you should appreciate what you have because you are among the richest and most elite people in the world.

The Redford features similar showings on a regular basis and we hope to have many more such outings in the near future. I hope you will consider joining us.



NORTH MANITOU ISLAND TRIP

by Mike Banks

Have you ever wanted to spend a weekend alone with a few friends on a wilderness island? Yes? Well then, here's your chance. On the morning of Friday, April 11th, 20 SOLARites will depart the harbor of Leland for the island of North Manitou. We will be the first people to set foot on the island in 2008. No rangers or other park staff will be coming to the island for at least another 2 to 3 weeks. We will have a 22 square mile wilderness island to ourselves. Isn't this what you wanted?

Why go to North Manitou? This island is one of two that belongs to Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore. While the emphasis on South Manitou is one of historical preservation, this is not the case on the northern sibling. North Manitou is being allowed to revert to wilderness. Outside of the old village, farmhouses and barns, autos and machinery, fenceposts and walls are being retrieved by nature. Here you will find forests of mature hardwoods, sandy beaches, perched dunes and open fields. The trails are as wide as the roads that they were a hundred years ago.

The 20 mile coastline has as many personalities as the rest of the island. Sand, gravel and lake stone pave the shoreline. The interior can be virtually at the same level or perhaps 15 feet above a 50-foot wide swath of white sand. There are also many spots on the island that the beach is just a short strip between the water and a towering bluff.

Why go to North Manitou in April? We all go into the woods for the beauty, the solitude and the nature. However, we need to face one of the other reasons. We go in for the challenge. We want to know our self-reliance isn't misplaced. We want to know that the people we backpack with are capable. Here we go! A snowfall could keep us from moving around the island. High winds could keep our ship from coming in to retrieve us. Windstorms could

mean that the trail is blocked or erased in sections and you have to use your own judgment and navigational skills to find your way. A cold snap could cause you to rethink your sleeping system on an island where fire is forbidden. You could forget something ... like food. These are simple challenges on an island 12 miles from the nearest outside help.

Then again our 3-day weekend could be a lot like last year. Sunshine, blue skies and highs in the 60's defined our days. Trees and bushes had just started to awaken letting light reach all sections of the forest floor. The lack of vegetation allowed us to explore old unmaintained trails to homesteads and orchards. Eagles and kites flew in the sky above us. Life was good.

THE FACTS:

- \$30 will get you a ticket on the boat.
- We need 20 people minimum to make it go.
- We'll limit it to 30 people maximum.
- All of you must be trained as winter campers. (It was the ranger's rule.)
- There should be no camping fees.
- You need to bring an extra meal in case the boat is delayed a day. (This has happened once to me in 17 years/30 trips.)
- We register at the dock at 09:00 on Friday, April 11.

To register or get more information, please contact Michael Banks at slywolfe52@yahoo.com.

BIKING AND HIKING IN CUYAHOGA VALLEY NATIONAL PARK

by Leslie Cordova

Come join us Memorial Weekend. We are going to Cuyahoga Valley National Park for some hiking, biking, touring and exploring. This is located just South of Cleveland, so only about a 3-hour drive.

There are over 125 miles of hiking and biking trails. The main bike trail, Ohio & Erie Canal Towpath, runs thru the Cuyahoga River Valley and is a 19.5 mile linear crushed stone trail. Other trails include the Bike and Hike Trail, which is a 16 mile linear asphalt trail. If you get tired from biking, you can bike one way and return via the train. Or perhaps you would rather hike to see some waterfalls, gorges or historic homesteads. Let's not forget about the Herons nesting in the trees along the trail, and the great marsh area too!

We will be staying at the Stanford Hostel within the National Park. This is a restored 1830's farmhouse. The hostel is equipped with 33 beds in 9 rooms, 3 bathrooms, a fully equipped kitchen, dining room, living room, outdoor picnic tables and fire pit.

Cost of all this fun is \$70 for 3 nights lodging. Depending on how many people sign up, we may have the Hostel to ourselves. KID FRIENDLY, NO DOGS

Sound like something interesting?

Contact Leslie Cordova to sign up. lesliegene@aol.com or (248) 547-5626.

ENJOYING MICHIGAN WINTERS - PART I

by Jennifer Tislerics

The Enjoying Michigan Winters (EMW) class has been busy learning how to keep warm, and to stay well fed and hydrated. So far, so good—everyone survived the 1st Practical, and none of the students were cold while sleeping in the great (winter) outdoors.

Thank you to our many (many!) instructors who went to much effort to keep us safe and happy at Green Lake. We're looking forward to building sleds, and using them on the 2nd Practical somewhere Up North.

Keep your fingers crossed that northern Michigan gets lots of snow in early February!



WANTED!

by Rebecca Sweeton

Are you an aspiring writer?

Photographer?

Artist?

**Do you enjoy telling or showing people
about the latest and greatest
in the outdoors?**

Do you want to become world famous?

**Then YOU should contribute to
the SOLAR Ray!**

The SOLAR Ray is looking for individuals (or groups) to write a regular (once a month, bi-monthly, etc.) feature for the SOLAR Ray.

It could be on anything: latest gear (or old gear you just love), trip recommendations, handy outdoors tips, backcountry recipes, poetry, really anything outdoor related!

If you are interested in writing a regular feature, please contact the SOLAR Ray Editor with your ideas at rayeditor@solaroutdoors.org.

This also includes you photographers and artists, submit your outdoor related photos, drawings, paintings, etc.

COMING SOON: 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 6, 2008, 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.

More information on how to run for a steering committee position will be posted in future editions of the SOLAR Ray, so stay tuned!



1ST ANNUAL ENJOYING MICHIGAN WINTERS ZOO HIKE

Photos by Rebecca & Dave Sweeton



Thanks to Pam Schmelzer for organizing this hike!

SOLAR APPLICATION

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

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

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

The following information is required for family memberships:

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

How did you find out about SOLAR? _____

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

School for Outdoor Leadership, Adventure & Recreation **ABSOLUTE LIABILITY RELEASE**

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

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

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

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

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

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

Member's Signature: _____

Spouse's Signature (REQUIRED on married couple's family memberships): _____

Parent's Signature, if under 18: _____

SOLAR 2007 CALENDAR

FEBRUARY ACTIVITIES					
2/3	SUN	Super Bowl Party**	Howell, MI	Carol McCrie	cmccrie@sbcglobal.net
2/5	TUE	GENERAL MEETING**	Colony Hall	Lou Szakal	Everest2008@comcast.net
2/5	TUE	PROGRAM: Massasauga Rattler - Yuman Lee, MSU Extension**	Colony Hall	Allen Duncan	allenduncan@aggienetwork.com
2/9-2/17	MULTI	21st Annual Canadian Snowshoeing Expedition**	Lake Superior Provincial Park, Ontario	Michael Neiger	mneiger@hotmail.com http://therucksack.tripod.com
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
2/15-2/17	WKND	Dogsledding	South River, Ontario	Larry Mergentime	larrymergentime@yahoo.com
2/24	SUN	Detroit Climb 2	Renaissance Center, Detroit	Lisa Boose	Elbows6000@att.net
MARCH ACTIVITIES					
3/4	TUE	GENERAL MEETING**	Colony Hall	Lou Szakal	Everest2008@comcast.net
3/4	TUE	PROGRAM: Jim Dufresne - Backpacking Michigan**	Colony Hall	Allen Duncan	allenduncan@aggienetwork.com
3/7-3/11	MULTI	Winter Camping and Ice Exploration**	Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore	Michael Neiger	mneiger@hotmail.com http://therucksack.tripod.com
3/29-4/5	MULTI	GM Ski Club Trip**	Mammoth Mountain, California	Darrell Ahlberg	Dave Duvali daveduvali@wowway.com
MARCH CLASSES					
3/15 & 6/21	SAT	Tree Identification	Maybury State Park	Mary Costello	mary.m.costello@att.net
APRIL ACTIVITIES					
4/1	TUE	GENERAL MEETING**	Colony Hall	Lou Szakal	Everest2008@comcast.net
4/1	TUE	PROGRAM: Annual SOLAR Business Meeting**	Colony Hall	Allen Duncan	allenduncan@aggienetwork.com
4/4-4/7	WKND	Off-trail Backpacking**	Pigeon River Country State Forest	Michael Neiger	mneiger@hotmail.com http://therucksack.tripod.com
4/11-4/13	WKNG	Backpacking Trip	North Manitou Island	Mike Banks	michaelbsolar@yahoo.com
APRIL CLASSES					
4/3, 4/10, 4/17, 4/19; 5/3-5/4, 5/8, 5/16-5/18	Various	Spring Beginning Backpacking	TBD	Mike Banks	slywolfe52@yahoo.com
UPCOMING ACTIVITIES					
5/2-5/5	WKND	Off-trail Backpacking**	Eastern Upper Peninsula	Michael Neiger	mneiger@hotmail.com http://therucksack.tripod.com
5/10-5/17	MULTI	Backpacking Trip	Grand Canyon National Park	Grey Ivanov	sergey.ivanov@us.bosch.com
5/23-5/26	MULTI	Hiking and Biking	Cuyahoga Valley National Park, Ohio	Leslie Cordova	lesliegene@aol.com
5/24-6/1	MULTI	22nd Annual Canadian Backpacking Expedition**	Lake Superior Provincial Park	Michael Neiger	mneiger@hotmail.com http://therucksack.tripod.com
7/3-7/6	MULTI	Car camping, hiking, biking, etc.	Caesar Creek State Park, Ohio	Leslie Cordova	lesliegene@aol.com
8/15-8/31	MULTI	Extended Backpacking Trip	John Muir Trail, California	Dave DeFrance	defranceomn@comcast.net
UPCOMING CLASSES					
5/7, 5/14, 5/17-5/18, 5/21, 5/30 -6/1	WED, WKND	Beginning Car Camping	TBA	Mark Speece	mspeece@med.wayne.edu

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

WHAT IS SOLAR?

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

MEMBERSHIP

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

MEETINGS

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

SOLAR RAY NEWSLETTER

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

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Submissions for the SOLAR Ray are due on the Friday two weeks prior to the monthly Steering Committee Meeting (February 8 for the March issue). Electronic documents only, Word is preferred and please attach your images. If you have any questions, please contact Rebecca Sweeton at rayeditor@solaroutdoors.org.

STEERING COMMITTEE

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

PRESIDENTS AT LARGE

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

STEERING COMMITTEE MEETINGS

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

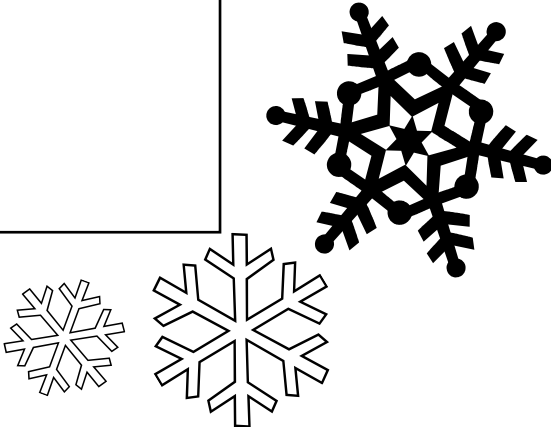
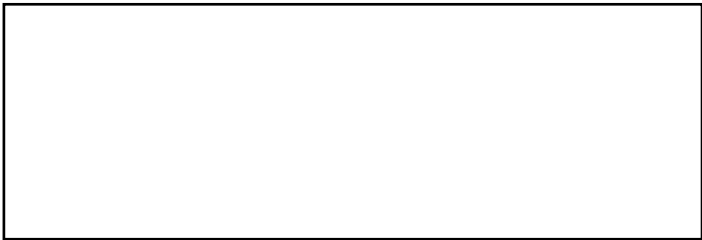
FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visit our website at: www.solaroutdoors.org.

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