



The SOLAR Ray

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

July 2008

SPRING BACKPACKING CLASS

by Ken Lemieux

The best piece of advice I can offer to a new SOLAR member is to sign up for a class. When I joined SOLAR in January, I'll admit I felt a little intimidated at the monthly meeting. I didn't know anybody and the amount of information disseminated really had my head spinning. Although everyone seemed friendly enough, until you really make some friends, you can still feel like an outsider.

I signed up for the Spring Beginning Backpacking Course and boy-oh-boy did I meet a lot of people! The classes began in early April and covered such topics as the 10 essentials, clothing, footwear, various knots, stretching, equipment, and many other topics, including how to s%&@ in the woods.

For the couples that were taking the class it seemed awkward to be split up from each other for the group activities, a SOLAR requirement. By being separated you are given the opportunity to learn on your own and not depend on your partner. It was a great way to become friends with twice as many people.

On April 19 we had our Field Day at Maybury State Park. The weather was decent and we were introduced to a variety of different stoves, ways to sterilize water, basic orienteering, Leave No Trace principles, and types of shelters. But most importantly, we started preparing in earnest for our first practical. Planning out the meals and equipment is where, in my opinion, everyone started to bond.

The first practical was at Waterloo State Recreation Area on May 3-4. Some of our instructors went to the campground the night before and set up a few tents, insuring we would all be able to camp in the same general area. Saturday morning we leisurely hiked in about six miles and set up camp. The rest of the day was spent learning about bear bagging, first-aid, and various other skills. The wind picked up that evening to the tune of 20-30 MPH and a bit of rain had most of us retiring to our tents early.

That night the wind stopped and the sky cleared. Everyone who rose before sunrise commented on the brilliance of the stars. Sunday's weather was gorgeous. After breakfast and breaking camp, the students went orienteering while the instructors plotted out the teams for the second practical. Although we were sad to part with our old teammates, we were excited to begin planning for our next adventure: Hoist Lakes, in the Huron-Manistee National Forests.

For some, the second practical began on the night of



Thursday, May 15 at the Mio Motel. Others drove up Friday morning and heard the tales of debauchery from the folks who visited the Mio Saloon the night before. The Friday groups began on the west side of Hoist Lakes and hiked a leisurely seven miles to the camp site at North Hoist Lake. About the time they were setting up, it began raining. Heavily. As soon as all the shelters were up, the rain stopped and the sky once again turned blue. Setting up in the rain was another lesson the book couldn't teach us.

Saturday morning the Friday groups broke camp and hiked a couple of miles to meet the Saturday groups. We went about ten miles over challenging terrain that day and experienced all kinds of weather, including a couple of groups getting walloped by heavy rain and hail. Saturday night we enjoyed a campfire while some of us went on a night hike led by our fearless leader, Michael Banks (hiking with our eyes closed at night in a conga line was a memorable experience for sure).

Sunday morning we broke camp and the students bushwhacked/orienteered our way out to the parking lot.

Kudos to all the instructors who gave their time and energy towards making this course a smashing success. Special thanks to Michael Banks and Heather Hall for doing an outstanding job organizing the classes and practicals.

As I sat in the June meeting I realized I am no longer a stranger to SOLAR. There were numerous people I exchanged greetings with and many, many faces I recognized. When it was all said and done, it's hard to say what the best thing was that I gained from this course: the skills learned, the confidence gained, or the friends made.

GRAND CANYON COMMENTS MAY 2008

by Mike Hobig



We actually made it, after months of planning, getting permits, booking flights, making connections, getting dropped off, finally taking that first step onto the trail... Boy, am I glad I didn't do it alone - this is a mostly personal account of getting there and back again, but without good companions and organizers I for one wouldn't have gotten off my duff and taken that first step. Thanks to Grey and the whole group, it was a good trip for me.

That first step came off the bus on the South Rim of the Grand Canyon at Hermit's Rest at 6:30 AM. Sheila Hardy, Bill Lynch and I made our way through switchbacks, rock fall and scrambles; this trail was more like rock climbing than hiking. Lots of flowers too - from the rim to the bottom through the seasons, plants went from flowers to seed to puff out and blow away. Tall flowering yellow agave (so that's where tequila comes from). At one structure on the way down at Santa Maria spring, if you water the plants that shade the interior you are granted a good trip. I didn't know if that was true but I watered them anyway. There were reeds growing in the desert canyon; I hadn't expected that and it was a pleasant surprise. Where there is water there is life. Also surprising were the many blooms and colors of cactus.

We also found out that the Cathedral Stairs were not stairs at all, just a thousand feet or more of switchbacks. A trail crew hadn't been through there since the 1930s and it showed. Who knew a few boulders could cause such chaos. I found it cool to trace their paths down the slope until they stopped hundreds of feet down, an easy path to see, but not so easy to climb over sometimes. From the high trail perches we could look down and match the topo maps with the visual features almost exactly, it was kind of fun but then again I get a kick out of graphic things. We also found delight where boulders cast cool shade over a place to rest.

After 12 hours of hiking we arrived at Hermit's Creek camp. Another cool creek and life, birds and bats and frogs. We were joined by another group with mom out for Mother's Day. The moon was so bright it cast shadows. Only after it went down did the stars show in all their glory, no light pollution, they only ended where the canyon walls began, the sky bursting with points of light. Bill and I were awake enough to see the Big Dipper revolve in the sky, very cool to watch from bed.

The next day was warmer, trails easier, less shade. We saw rafters on the river from a great height and enjoyed the strong winds. We saw the tall monument spire of rock; somehow later on the plateau above it looked small, the canyon can do that perspective thing and mess with your head. By the end of the day we made it to the Colorado River at Monument Creek. Granite Rapids is not much of a camp area, Bill, Sheila and I were in three separate areas, nooks, niches to our liking. I was in sand, clouds in the sky, my tarp by my side, it probably wouldn't stand in the sand with the gusting wind but I wanted to see the stars again and set up to have a perfect view when the clouds cleared...

They didn't, it rained (or, to my amazement, snowed on the South Rim). By morning I was wet, Bill's bivy sack leaked and Sheila was dry but feeling ill. The sparrows gave us a flying display above between the canyon walls and then over the foam of the rapids, simply amazing, I couldn't tell if they were having fun or in a feeding frenzy. We had a short way to hike so took it easy going out, slow by any standard but with a team member not feeling up to snuff it didn't need to be pushed. Monument Creek campground was close, sunny, has water and that glorious shining privy on the hill (it is a solar privy and I am taking literary license - it wasn't that glorious).

Monument Creek has cut a cool canyon and I took lunch there to escape from the sun. I found the space adverse to the rest of the trail of broken rock in the sun a balm for the being, a haven, cool, calm and relaxing. The blue granite with red and white veins, cracked but smooth, the water sounding off the walls with its bubbles and gurgles, no better place for food and almost a liter of water. Again life was here in the smallest of pools, tadpoles did their dance as I passed by. Bill was fighting with the stove, but being the master mechanic he is (ok, he was our only mechanic) he got it operational and in good order.

Nothing prepared me for the feel of green that you get coming into Indian Gardens from several days of desert hiking. Tall trees, water, lots of water, bushes and lushness under foot. We had gotten a taste of that green at Horn Creek campground where a few trees and the supposedly safe uranium-tinged water only hinted at the lushness to come. The corridor trails here are wide and filled with day hikers, I don't much like either. This morning Sheila was better but we took some gear from her and it seemed to

help. I gave it back to her the next day, as she took the shorter trail down to Bright Angel campground and Bill and I took the Tonto trail to the Kaibab then down across the Colorado. That night I did what I could to lighten her pack as she let me root through her larder for treats and other food to complement the potatoes I had planned for dinner. Living large, definitely living large and loving it.

Conclusions can be made before you reach the end, and I made one soon after getting onto the Kaibab trail: I don't like mule steps. They put logs across the trail and fill in to level off the grade, creating steps of sorts for the mules. Great for them but the monotony of movement jars the knees and senses into submission; even the river views don't cut the dread of a thousand more steps. I do not like them, Sam I am...

On the other hand, I absolutely enjoyed the campground and its sister Phantom Ranch and surrounding trails. Now this is living large on the river. We ate reserved dinners and having tables to sit at is very cool as well. Bright Angel creek flows through the middle of the side canyon to the Colorado; there is life here too, mostly campers down for the night but also mules and mule trains, passenger and cargo, and helicopters too. Believe it or not, from a path overlooking the campground I watched them take away and deliver washers and dryers to the rangers by helicopter; they said they couldn't get a repairman to come down. Sheila took it easy again, I day hiked to some lookouts and up the Bright Angel trail a bit, Bill went all the way to the waterfalls and made good time as well.

Hiking out day, we were on the trail by six o'clock; ten and a half hours later I reached the rim. Sheila was just ahead



of me. I didn't hurry but I don't think I could have gone much faster. We made it quickly up to Indian Gardens but after that the sun sapped my strength and slow was the going. Bill stayed close to us up to about the three mile rest house. We met Grey and Ken just before the one and a half mile rest house, they caught up to us but they started from the north rim that morning. I let them pass after a few words and questions about their group's trip, and as they passed Sheila, Grey took her pack.

I saw them at camp several hours later, clean and rested. At least they stopped to take a picture with the helicopter. A helicopter removal of a hiker from about the one and a half mile rest house area was all the excuse I needed to settle into the shade of a rock on my small seat pad. As providence would have it a mule train passed my perfect rest spot and the wrangler boredly said to the riders behind him, "Again, the pictographs on your right..." He was right, there were pictographs up high on the stone, sun, lizards, hands, the more I looked the more I saw. There were more up near the rim, very close now, almost there, then there was Bill. He came back down the trail a bit to meet me, maybe to hurry me up. He had been there two and a half hours before me, had eaten and returned his rented rodent-proof sack (he could have almost bought one with a few dollars more). I want to be like Bill when I grow up, he is my hero. At camp all was good, everyone cleaned up, we chitchatted about each group's trips and trials. Bill, Sheila and I opted to go out to eat; Sheila had



had enough camp food. In retrospect their meal sounded good (they got a cooked chicken and fixings at the market) but so was ours at the Maswick Lodge dining hall.

Sunday morning, group one and Bill were gone by the time Sheila woke. I saw them off, getting to talk to everyone a little and especially to pick Michele's brain for an orientation to the shuttle service. She is a great tour guide, really knows the area but that is another story. I had time to go back to the rim and look down one last time and realize how naïve I was about the scale. Those lush bushes along the trail were the huge cottonwoods at Indian Garden. Those trails now held memories and names and distances and heights, now seeming too huge to believe I had been there. But we had been. I for one enjoyed the rocks, the smaller canyons and the close spaces where life was holding on in the balance. And I liked the places of man, the shelter and shade near a spring, the towers and buildings, the archaeology, they highlighted man's temporary nature and tenuous hold in the big canyon. Sheila liked the animals, ringtail, young big horn sheep and others. What Bill enjoyed I think was the accomplishment, seeing all that he could while he was there. What the other group did remains for another story. We all seem to be no worse for wear and we all made our flights, but who knew that that extra fuel canister would cause so much trouble with Homeland Security... just kidding, I left it in Arizona.

Tips & Extras

Ranger Betsy's maximum sun protection product referrals:

- Protective Clothing & Other Cool Products
www.coolibar.com
- Aloe Up (zinc and aloe and natural tan color)
- Desitin
A high zinc baby bottom rash cream, safe and blocks up to 85 percent of the sun and does it cheaply (really worked on my knees).

An archaeological study slide show of an excavation in the Grand Canyon National Park: <http://www.dawnkishphotography.com/data/web/GrandArchaeology/index.html>

Oh yeah, and COTTON DOES NOT KILL, it has its proper place and use in the desert, wet it down and it will keep you cool and help you SURVIVE.

Speical thanks to Ati Tislerics for guest editing this article!

STARK RAVING MAD

by Pam & Lou Szakal

The Adventure Race Class is over. The training complete and the dust has settled after the "Stark Raving Mad" Adventure Race in Muskegon, MI on June 14. 12 teams signed up, 10 competed and 9 finished. You can see all of the results at the end of this article.

For a full week before the race, we read over the final updated rules of the race and tried to figure out what the organizers had in store for us. Things like "I think we will do the canoes first", "They may transport us over there" and "This is the only way it can be done" were sent over the AR Yahoo group site. Boy, were we ever wrong. We did not fully comprehend what an adventure this would be until 8:30 AM when we received our race instructions (an hour before the race started). We started in waves. Solo and all male left at 9:30 AM and Coed and all female left at 10:00 AM. The finish would be no later than 3:30 and 4:00 PM respectively.

We started by trekking or trail running a mile or so (past the Luge Tracks) finding 1 CP (Control Point) and punching our Passport. There were 21 CP's in all. Most people had to carry their personal PFD's and Paddles with them to CP #2. The people who rented, had theirs at the canoe site



already. After CP 1, we were at the Canoe site and CP2. We then needed to do the Orienteering portion. 8 CP's were spread out in the woods and dunes, some with breathtaking views. We needed to get a minimum of 3 in order to be a ranked team. This 5-6 miles of trekking would bring us back to the canoe area and we would begin the next leg of the race.

The canoe portion was around 3.8 to 4 miles on Muskegon and Bear Lakes. The early teams enjoyed low winds and calm waters. The teams who were later had high winds and 2-3 foot waves coming

at them. After about an hour of continuous paddling, we ended up at the canoe take out area on Bear Lake, across from the bike drop. Yes, I said across. Which means we had a choice to make. Either swim the ½ mile across with your PFD, racing pack, gear and shoes, or trek around the lake. Most opted for the ½ hour swim but Grey Ivanov did the trek in 15 minutes.

After some of us changed into dry clothes and shoes, we began the bike portion which was around 12-14 miles in length and had 1 mandatory and a number of optional CP's to find. Depending on how much time you had before the

cutoff, you needed to make a decision to continue on or head back to the finish line. The bike route took us to a Muskegan Nature Center building and then on to the final 6 optional CP's. Several were spread out in businesses (Sponsors) and the rest were along bike trails. Some of these trails took you through knee deep swamps with 8-10 foot high reeds.

All in all. It was a great adventure with a lot of surprises. Everyone got wet, dirty, muddy, sweaty, tired and sore. We can't wait for the next one. Actually, there are several teams signing up to do a 10 hour race in July.

Of course, the fearless leader instructors are the ones who had to pull out during the bike portion because of a major mechanical bike failure that could not be repaired.

Matt Vander Sys, the race organizer and owner of Endurance Sports was a gracious host and all around swell guy. Matt mentioned SOLAR several times to the 200 race participants and thanking all of us for being there.. We really made our mark in Western Michigan.

Pam (and I) will be teaching this class again starting in February, so be prepared.

Overall Place	CP's	Time	Team	Names
21	21	5:20:56	Mechatronic's	Grey Ivanov
37	20	5:29:35	Rogue Penguin	Jeff & Jennifer McWilliams
38	20	5:29:41	Ram's Don't Moo	Mike & Marie Martinko
6	19	5:41:01	M&M	Larry Mergentime & Chris Myers
72	14	5:50:39	Pierogi Girls	Kinga Gorzelewski & Gosia Brozda
79	12	5:59:56	Beginner's Luck	Pam Esper & Jackie Ostrosky
93	16	6:12:24	Dumb & Dumber	Tim Davis & Brian McCown
94	14	6:21:07	Pathfinder	Willi Guttman & Rob Kempert
101	1	6:48:41	New Orienteer's	Don Wold & Mike Crossman
WD	14		Smiley Riley	Lou Szakal & Pam Riehl Szakal

Divisional Place	Team	Names
Division - Solo		
6	Mechatronic's	Grey Ivanov
Division - 2 person male		
21	M&M	Larry Mergentime & Chris Myers
32	Dumb & Dumber	Tim Davis & Brian McCown
33	Pathfinder	Willi Guttman & Rob Kempert
35	New Orienteer's	Don Wold & Mike Crossman
Division - 2 person female		
9	Pierogi Girls	Kinga Gorzelewski & Gosia Brozda
15	Beginner's Luck	Pam Esper & Jackie Ostrosky
Division - 2 person coed		
8	Rogue Penguin	Jeff & Jennifer McWilliams
9	Ram's Don't Moo	Mike & Marie Martinko
WD	Smiley Riley	Lou Szakal & Pam Riehl Szakal

NIGHT HIKE

by Marie Martinko and Jeff McWilliams

Gathered around the campfire, our eyes turned from the flames to reflect Michael Banks standing before us, offering one more activity for the evening. Some of us were tired after a day full of backpacking - two, for those who started the second practical of the spring beginning backpacking class on Friday - and we were now being asked about a night hike.

Are you going? No, I think I'll turn in for the night. Yes, absolutely; I'm tired, but when will we have this opportunity again? My feet have some hot spots. What about you, are you going? The campfire is so warm...

For some of us, the lure of a night hike was too much to resist. One by one, we rose from the warmth radiating from the fire and the murmuring conversations among new friends. One by one, we counted off as requested: 1 2, 3... 15. Knowing how many people were going on the hike made sense - the "buddy system" had been noted in class.

But what happened next was rather unexpected. Michael asked us to form a straight line, place our right hands on the shoulder of the person in front of us, and close our eyes. We complied. After some initial shuffling around, we grew silent, our thoughts going unspoken as we awaited further instructions.

Am I holding on too tight? Hey, can you massage that a little while you're at it? How did I end up behind the tallest person here? What exactly are we doing anyway? I wish my arms were a little longer...

We were to rely on senses other than sight to detect and navigate the environment around us. This was going to be a very interesting and unique experience.

How will we know when to stop? No peeking! Let your eyes adjust. I'm sorry; I didn't mean to kick your foot. Does one stomp or two mean there's a log up ahead? I can still smell the campfire...

We trusted our leader. We trusted each other. We closed our eyes, held tight, and slowly moved forward as we began to trust ourselves. Hearing heightened, the spring peepers seemed much closer as we passed a marshy area on our left. Left left right right left right, our group slowly stumbled along.

Do our boots always thump so loudly along the trail? Scrunch, scrunch scrunch, do you hear that? There are



leaves on the trail up ahead. I feel the log against my shin; do I try to step over or on it, up then down? It's quieter in front now; we'll be on dirt again soon.

We passed close to an occupied campsite on our right and could hear the low voices of the campers sitting around a crackling fire. We could only imagine what we must have looked like to them, if they had observed us, winding down the trail as one as our steps became more confident.

Right left right left, as the sound of the ground changes in pitch, my feet tell me whether I'm traveling uphill or downhill. I can smell the earth, feel the night air on my cheeks. Would I be able to see my breath? My eyes are closed, but I know where the moon is. We're slowing...

Stopping on the trail at an area southeast of Byron Lake, Michael invited us to look up at the sky and take in the stars. One by one, we released the shoulders in front of us. One by one, we were all accounted for: 1, 2, 3... 15. Two by two, eyes opened wide and turned skyward. Although we were in a small clearing, not far from where we had stopped for lunch, much of the sky was obscured by the shadowed limbs of trees. Even so, the stars we saw were dazzling. As we turned toward one another, faces once lit by the flickering campfire were now bathed in the glow of the moon. The sound of twigs popping in the heat of flames was replaced by soft crunches underfoot.

It's so beautiful out here...

Michael spoke of how much was visible at night, especially under the light of the full moon. He also told us that even with little moon visible, we would be able to see a surprising amount by starlight. Some sought familiar constellations in the night sky. Others took in the moonlit glow of the trees and vegetation. Still others, moved by the experience, stood quietly in awed and reverent silence.

(...)

After some time we made our way back to camp, no longer with hands on shoulders but as 15 students and their instructor, bonded by a powerful experience with hiking, the night and each other.

Jeff's Epilogue

Later that night, I ventured out on my own to sit along the western shore of the lake, close to camp, to get a better

view of the sky. I didn't have any star charts with me, and it's been a while since I've looked up to identify constellations. Still, Ursa Major was evident as always, pointing to Polaris. The moon was full or almost full and had traveled along the ecliptic so that it was above the southern end of the lake. It had risen over the trees on the eastern edge of Lake Byron earlier that evening. I picked out the constellation Bootes with its familiar diamond shape, and Cassiopeia was partially visible above the trees to the North. I also picked out Cygnus the swan, a familiar summer time constellation, over in the east.

As time wore on, clouds began to fill the southern sky and the temperatures began to drop, so I headed back to camp. On the way, I was startled by the loud cry of an owl nearby. It was sitting in a tree barely 20 or 30 yards from the trail. It called out several times, after which I saw it fly off through the trees to the south. As I continued the following the trail back to camp, I heard its faint cry one more time, off in the distance.

SOLAR PROGRAM SCHEDULE

by Janet Duncan

July 1: Annual Gear/Book/Map Sale/Swap and Bar-B-Que!

Upcoming Programs:

- August: SOLAR Educational Offerings - An Overview" with Sarah Kirkish
- September: "Successful Eco-System Management in the Serengeti" with William Cowger
- October: "National Trail System" with Derek Blount

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.

JULY 1, 2008: ANNUAL SOLAR GEAR SWAP & SUMMER BARBECUE

by Janet Duncan

- Do you have outdoor gear you no longer use?
- Do you have guide books or maps you are ready to sell ?
- Have you acquired several of the same items over the years?
- Would you like to clean out your closets and help other SOLARites acquire needed gear?

Well here is your chance! Bring your unwanted outdoor gear to the July meeting (to sell or barter).

And there's even more fun! Also featuring the SOLAR summer barbecue...a great opportunity to socialize!

- SOLAR provides the main course and beverages (meat and veggie burgers, hotdogs & pop).
- Please bring a side dish to pass...dessert, salads, etc.

Any questions, please contact Janet Duncan at programs@solaroutdoors.org.

*SOLAR takes no responsibility for warranty, guarantee, quality or price of purchased outdoor gear.



poetic nature

by Elizabeth Schwab

Our Camp

by Robert Frost

In a haunt in the depths of the forest,
Enshrined by a lonely wood lake,
With the trees bending over its waters
Where moon-crested ripples break,--

Where far down the long arching vistas,
The moon-beams all peacefully lie,
And the night wind that steals through the tree tops,
Moans softly and lingers by:--
Here, oft in the midnight above me,

I watch a lone, hem locked-wreathed star;
Till over the sands of the silence,
Wave music comes swelling afar.

My mind is born on by the singing,
A rudderless craft on the deep;
And 'tis left by the ebbing waters,
To strand on the sands of sleep.

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.

MOONLIGHT CANOE TRIPS

by Margaret Martin

Be whisked away through the waters in a canoe or kayak. Paddle into the sunset, then return into the moonrise.

This special night includes dinner, canoe or kayak rental, bonfire with s'mores, and other surprises. Kid and dog friendly. All skill levels welcome. Meet at Proud Lake State Park Canoe Rental at 2775 Garden Road, Milford, MI 48381. To make a reservation call: Heavner Canoe Rental, 248-685-2379, fax 248-684-7939 or e-mail: AlanHeavner@heavnercanoe.com

Schedule:

Saturday, August 16: Dinner, 7:00 PM, Paddle 8-10 PM, Bonfire 10:00-???, Sunset, 8:32 PM, Moonrise, 8:28 PM

Saturday, September 13: Dinner, 6:30 PM, Paddle 7:15-9:30 PM, Bonfire 9:30-???, Sunset, 7:46 PM, Moonrise, 6:53 PM

Sunday: October 12: Dinner: 5:30, 6:30-8:30 Paddle, 8:30-??? Bonfire. Sunset 6:56 PM, Moonrise: 5:39 PM

Cost:

\$25 per person includes boat rental, pizza dinner, beverage, bonfire and s'mores.

\$15 includes pizza dinner, beverage, bonfire and s'mores.

\$5 includes bonfire, and s'mores

Call in your reservation ahead so that your dinner and boat will be ready for you.

NORTH COUNTRY TRAIL BACKPACK TRIP

by Samantha Schafer

Want to go backpacking? Don't want to travel too far due to the price of gas? This is the trip for you. Treat yourself to a three day weekend in Western Michigan hiking on the North Country Trail.

We will be meeting Thursday evening, August 7 at Highbanks Campground and start hiking on Friday morning. We will hike about 7 miles on Friday to Nickels Lake Campground. Then on Saturday, we will hike the trail for 12 miles to the Birch Grove Schoolhouse. At the Schoolhouse, we will be able to sleep inside out of the weather. The Schoolhouse is the original NCTA headquarters. Now to it is used for travelers, like us, to stay at for the night. At the Schoolhouse, there are kitchen facilities, mattresses to sleep on, and a fire pit in the yard to enjoy. Then on Sunday, August 10, we will finish the weekend with an 8 mile hike.

The cost for the weekend is \$25. That will cover the costs of the two campgrounds and the night at the Schoolhouse. You will be responsible for your own food and transportation. There is only room for 16 people on this trip, so don't wait to sign up!

For more information, please contact Samantha Schafer at samantha2win@yahoo.com.

JMT SHAKEDOWN #2 PINCKNEY-WATERLOO RECREATION AREA

by Jennifer Tislerics

Our group's final shakedown was tough - 90 degree days, very high humidity, and pesky mosquitos were par for the course. Most group members hiked nearly 12 miles on Saturday and 11 miles on Sunday, half of it on hilly terrain. We were visited by thunderstorms nightly, although most of us were safely in our sleeping shelters before the storms hit.

In typical SOLARite fashion, we spent the weekend comparing notes on pack weight, gear selection, new outdoor toys, clothing and camp shoes, meal options, etc.

Important lessons learned:

- Trekking poles help with balance, momentum and joint-care. Use them.
- Each step should be taken with care—it's easy to twist and sprain an ankle.
- We can live without a lot of amenities, and need to leave many of them at home for the sake of pack weight.
- There are no shortcuts to good conditioning—get out and hike!

Fun quotes heard on the shakedown:

- "We're not in a race. This is a vacation."
- "I can't resist making a comment about your jugs!"
- "What are you reading, a book?"
- "Where are my legs?"
- "The canister's not just bear-proof, it's Moe-proof."

Look for more great quotes, and photos of fantastic scenery, in the September SOLAR Ray!



THE FELDTMANN LOOP ON ISLE ROYALE

by Elizabeth Schwab

My first trip to Isle Royale was in the early '80's; pre-camping, pre-SOLAR, and therefore pre-backpacking. I walked into my lodge room that was on a bluff so the window looked out at nothing but Superior, and was absolutely enchanted. A family emergency made me get back on the ferry to go home the same day. I think the gods had other plans for me.

Three years ago, after being in SOLAR a couple years and discovering the joys of backpacking, a couple SOLAR friends planned a trip there. I threw in my hat despite some trepidation after having severe motion sickness on the 1st trip back, figuring ultimately it would be worth it. It was, and then some.

I'm now planning my third trip there, and am wanting a few fit, adventurous folk to come along to discover the enchantment. We'll be on the Feldtmann Loop on the west side of the Isle, and so will be leaving from Grand Portage, Mn. This is a lesser traveled trail, and with the dates later in the season it's unlikely we'll encounter many other backpackers.

The pesky bugs are mostly gone, and this is a great trail for moose sightings and to at least hear wolves. The weather may be dicey though. I have a laid back style, so there are two nights at both Feldtmann Lake and Siskiwit Bay for exploring, vegging or both, but two of the trail days will be challenging. I'd be happy to send the actual itinerary to anyone curious. An excellent resource to read more about the trail to be covered and a map that shows it is: isleroyale.info/trails.

The dates listed include travel time to and from Grand Portage. The price is \$146, which includes the round trip ferry fare and 7 days of usage fees. There will also be three nights at a hotel going to and returning from Grand Portage, unless you choose to drive 15 hours straight.

There will be one REQUIRED weekend shakedown trip to verify readiness, at a date to be determined. Beginning backpacking is preferred, but this can be discussed. This is open to 4 more people, and it is a SOLAR trip, so you must be a paid member. The deposit to save your spot is \$118, to cover the ferry tickets.

Questions? E-mail Elizabeth: qes1339@yahoo.com.

GRAND CANYON - S. RIM TO N. RIM & BACK

by Sara "Energizer" Cockrell

John Wesley Powell said it best in The Canyons of the Colorado in 1895: "The glories and the beauties of form, color, and sound unite in the Grand Canyon—forms unrivaled even by the mountains, colors that vie with sunsets, and sounds that span the diapason from tempest to tinkling raindrop, from cataract to bubbling fountain. But more: it is a vast district of country. Were it a valley plain it would make a state. It can be seen only in parts. It has infinite variety, and no part

is ever duplicated. Its colors, though many and complex in any instant, change with the ascending and declining sun; lights and shadows appear and vanish with the passing clouds, and the changing seasons mark their passage in changing colors. You cannot see the Grand Canyon in one view, as if it were a changeless spectacle from which a curtain might be lifted, but to see it you have to toil from month to month through its labyrinths. It is a region more difficult to traverse than the Alps or the Himalayas, but if strength and courage are sufficient for the task by a year's toil a concept of sublimity can be obtained never again to be equaled on the hither side of Paradise."

I had day hiked down from the South Rim on South Kaibab to Phantom Ranch and back up Bright Angel with a girlfriend two years ago, in addition to Plateau Point, Hermits Rest to Santa Maria Springs, both the East and West Rim trails, and to Havasu Falls, and had ever since wanted to return to backpack the Tonto Plateau. When a local friends' early April permit was maxed out at 6, and I didn't make the cut, I asked to join Grey's SOLAR group, delighted not to have to do it alone. Wow, what majestic views, towering buttes, blossoming wildflowers and cactus, moonlit nights, serenity, and companionship, ending with a jubilant, strain-free N Rim-to-S Rim day hike, 23 miles and 10,000 elevation change in 11 hours (2 hours snacking and soaking in creeks in 90-degree heat)!

I've posted 95 photos you can view, with descriptions, under the name at www.flickr.com/photos/26715862@N03/.

So, here's the rest of the story of our 83.7 mile adventure:

Saturday, May 10: The Hermit group drove us to Grandview Point (7400') on the South Rim at 3PM for our 2500' descent, since we had a 3 mile hike to our dry Horseshoe Mesa campsite (4900'). I hadn't met Michele yet, and though I had engaged in some hypnotherapy to overcome my fear of falling, she needed me to encourage her over some tough spots on this rocky, steep sloping, eroded trail. I employed



my balance from mountain and road biking, XC skiing, canoeing, and yoga to my advantage.

When we arrived, we set up tents, cooked our one-pot dinners, hung food bags with picture wire and muffin tins, and visited with others camping there.

Sunday, May 11: Getting up at sunrise to try to beat the heat, we followed the trail guide's directions to the most civilized 1100' descent from the western arm (NE side) of the mesa, adding

a few miles to our journey, counterclockwise around the mesa, arriving at Cottonwood Creek mid-morning to stock up on water. Another group had backpacked from the west, and confirmed the ranger's report that there was water at our next 2 primitive campsites.

Soon after we headed out on the dry, open, flat, hot Tonto, Michele fainted, then got sick from heat exposure and dehydration. As Grey fanned her, Susan made a cover with her shirt and Tyvek sheet, Ken gave her some electrolytes, then we laid her on my pad, while shade was found under a nearby ledge, where she could cool down, rehydrate and refuel. We spent 3 hours in the heat, trying to nap and enjoy the view of the Colorado River below, before the decision was made to evacuate her. Grey and Ken would shuttle the 3 packs back to Cottonwood for the night, then hike back to the trailhead and hitch a ride to Grand Canyon Village, while Susan and I would continue on. After heading out on our own, we encountered the famous, exposed ridge of Grapevine Creek, taking careful steps in the windy gusts. Soon, we crossed the spring on the eastern arm, and decided to camp early, but it was too rocky and windy to set up our tents, so we slept on rock ledges above the creek bed under the bright moonlit sky.

Monday, May 12: The Grapevine Creek drainage is a long hike. There was a little water about an hour later in the southeastern arm, though the southwestern creek was dry, with a flat, sandy protected campsite. On the western side, we again encountered gusty conditions on the exposed ridge, and I enjoyed the open views. By noon, we had a steady pace on the rocky Tonto trail, in and out of drainages, until I tripped on a rock following Susan, and felt like I'd knocked out my teeth (just a little bloody nose).

Along the way, we entered a meadow of blossoming cactus and wildflowers. We found another ledge to lunch under, then headed out again in the heat to trickling Lonetree Creek. The wind was still whipping up a gust, but we

needed to pitch our tents due to the dark clouds, so we took turns getting water and keeping stakes down with big rocks on the ledge. As we were finishing dinner, Grey hiked over the ridge from the opposite direction, just before the storm hit. We had not seen any other backpackers since Cottonwood Creek, so this was a big surprise. He and Ken had shuttled Michele's backpack to Grandview by noon, hitched a ride to Yaki Point, where he descended South Kaibab, then headed east to meet us. But, he had left his tent and most of his food with Ken, who would be meeting up with us at Horn Creek the next night. Since Susan's tent is even more solo than mine, I shared mine uncomfortably with him, as the rain blew in the netting.

Tuesday, May 13: As I got up, I went to check on Susan, and she was drenched from the gusting rain all night. We had breakfast, packed up and got moving to warm up. The sky was dark clouds and heavy fog, with evidence of snow on the rims above. As we hiked in and out, up and down through the 3 dry Cremation Creek drainages, we were hoping for some warm sunshine to dry gear.

When we arrived at South Kaibab's "Tipoff", we spread out on a knoll, to the dismay of some passerbys and a ranger, drying out enough to continue on after lunch. This was 30% more mileage of our other days, 13 miles, so we didn't have time to waste. We enjoyed the lush vegetation at Burro and Pipe Springs, and the Redwall Limestone cliffs above, as we worked our way to Indian Garden (3800'), for our first piped water, pit toilets, benches, crowds and mule train. Again, we took a short rest, then headed out on the Tonto West to our small group's primitive Horn Creek campsite, under the Orphan Mine on the South Rim. Ken was waiting for us with a tent and food for Grey, and news that Michele was feeling better at the Yavapai Lodge at the Market Plaza. Again, we enjoyed the bright moonlit night, and companionship, before retiring.

Wednesday, May 14: We arose to a more leisurely pace this morning, hiking out to Plateau Point, as we backtracked towards Indian Garden. From here is the most majestic vista of the Colorado River's Granite Gorge, lush Bright Angel Campground in the distance, the towering temples

and buttes, and the Devils Corkscrew switchbacks, descending below to Pipe Creek. We also enjoyed visiting with 2 enforcement rangers, watching the medical helicopter transporting supplies to Phantom Ranch and Indian Garden, and rafters passing by below. Then, back to



Indian Garden for our descent down the Bright Angel trail to the river, along rushing Pipe Creek, losing 1320' in 4.7 miles on switchbacks, before crossing the Silver suspension bridge, built for the piped water from Roaring Springs, which supplies the "corridor" trails and all of Grand Canyon Village on the South Rim. We camped next to cascading Bright Angel Creek, before I headed down to the Boater's Beach to rinse off the Tonto dust, as a group got ready to depart for their river trip.

We met for the ranger's history program under the sycamore tree at Phantom Ranch (2480'). Bill Lynch had made reservations for meals, so we enjoyed hiker stew, cornbread, salad, chocolate cake and iced tea, before joining the ranger's geology program after dinner. Afterwards, we sipped lemonade at the canteen, while writing postcards, "mailed by mule at the bottom of the Grand Canyon." The campground sites had a picnic table and running water in the bathrooms for a few creature comforts.

Thursday, May 15 After our breakfast of pancakes, orange juice, eggs and bacon at Phantom Ranch, we traveled into Bright Angel Canyon's Inner Gorge, with the creek rushing beside the trail, and vegetation, where it opens up. We had an easy hike to Ribbon Falls, enjoying lunch under the waterfall, before getting to Cottonwood Campground for an afternoon nap and dinner. Along the way, an annual happening was taking place unexpectedly. Since the North Rim opens May 15, day hikers come to the Grand Canyon to hike rim-to-rim, with some crossing both ways. This is similar to Opening Day of hunting season. We saw our first runner near Phantom Ranch heading up to the South Rim, then, when we arrived at Cottonwood, he was already returning to the North Rim. This is when I began to consider doing a trans-canyon day hike, along with Grey and Ken. I





had paid for my bus shuttle back to South Rim, but since I had day hiked from the South Rim down South Kaibab to Phantom Ranch and back up Bright Angel 2 years ago, I knew I could make it in less than 12 hours, if I could recover from the next day's strenuous trek. So, I began planning snacks and a daypack from the store at the North Rim.

Friday, May 16: This would be our most difficult hike so far, only 6.8 miles but 4161' ascent through the Redwall Limestone on switchbacks cut into the rock, up to the North Rim Campground, passing the Pumphouse Residence, Roaring Springs and Supai Tunnel. When we arrived at the top of the Coconino Sandstone, we began seeing evidence of the snow from Monday night. After checking into the campground, restocking snacks, making a few cell phone calls, taking a hot shower, and washing our clothes, we went to Bright Angel Lodge (8241') for dinner and photos from the Point, but with the opening, came the crowds. We ended up settling for deli food, and hitching a ride back to the campground.

Saturday, May 17: We had arranged for Susan to take our backpacks on the shuttle back to South Rim, where Michele would meet her to take them to Mather Campground, while we hiked Rim-to-Rim, 23.6 miles, 5761' descent, then 4380' ascent. It was a long, hot 90-degree day, but I did it solo, and enjoyed visiting with many others along the trail and at Phantom Ranch, soaking my shirt, cap and gloves every hour along Pipe Creek. Since I had been carrying Motorola radio phones all week, I had given the other to Susan, and she called me from the top, when I was only 3 switchbacks below. It was one of the most exciting moments, like finishing a race and having everyone cheering you over the line. I was sweaty, tired but no strained knee. We stopped for a Coke and bananas, shopped for dinner, took a hot shower, then packed for our noon flight home from Phoenix on Sunday. It was over much too soon, our passing of time, like a grain of sand in the Grand Canyon. Wow-eee!

SPECIAL PEOPLE

by Mike Banks

Dear SOLAR,

I just wanted all of you to know that there are very special people that have joined us here at SOLAR. They are the Spring Backpacking graduates of 2008. Heather Hall said it best "I would go backpacking with these people anytime." They are just an incredible group of positive can-do people that will go the distance for their companions. They are a terrific addition to the SOLAR family.

Speaking of 'special people' I wanted to recognize all of the following folks who planned and instructed the course. Lynn Dubay, Heather Hall, Sarah Kirkish and Dennis Phillips worked diligently to plan this course. We had 5 views going in to the process and a common goal to build without destroying. So much was accomplished through a willingness to communicate with mutual respect. They, along with Tim Davis, Marie Harrington, Tom Hayes, David Komrska, Mike Malon, Judy Petrella, Chrissy Spafford, Kevin Sullivan, Lou Szakal, Pam Szakal, Chuck Smith and Matt Rutledge devoted long hours preparing for and executing this course with all their skills and passion. They worked hard. They tackled every task with enthusiasm. They never stopped. Thanks guys!

One last mention...

Heather Hall a.k.a. 'The Cheerleader'

What can I say? Heather never failed us in her first year as the Executive Manager. She never stopped working to make sure people were informed, supplied and most of all...happy! Heather was my sounding board, my editor, my spokesperson, my right arm and my left eye. Most important, she couldn't go a minute without saying something positive to someone or about someone. She set a standard of optimism that became the collective attitude of instructors and students alike. We might have done it without her. But who would have wanted to? Thank you, Heather!

Sincerely,

Michael B. Banks

A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

by Cindy Taylor

My name is Cindy Taylor. I have been a member of SOLAR since 2000 and on the Steering Committee since May 2002. During that time, I have served as SOLAR's Secretary, By-Laws Chairperson, and Vice President.

I'd like to thank you for electing me as SOLAR's president for the 2008/2009 term. It is an honor to serve in this position as I consider SOLAR to be a very special and unique organization that continues to impress me. Of course, it is all of you (the members) who make SOLAR such a unique, special, and fun club!

One of the things that I find to be special about SOLAR is the bonds that are often formed in SOLAR and how lasting and strong these bonds can be. There are many examples of life long bonds have been formed in SOLAR. Just ask someone who's been involved for most of the years that SOLAR has existed. People like Carol McCririe, the DeFrances, Mary Dunn, and others that I am probably not even aware of.

Many of us are often asked who/what is SOLAR? I've heard a lot of different answers to this question, which leads me to believe that SOLAR is a lot of different things to different people.

My usual response to the question of who is SOLAR is this. We are a diverse group of people with many different interests and purposes for joining SOLAR. The thing we all share though is our love of the outdoors. Members' interests range from wildflower walks to mountain climbing and everything in between. Some members enjoy many different activities, while others may have more streamlined interests. We have members who have families that demand the majority of their attention and therefore, have limited spare time to participate in SOLAR and we also have members who devote a great deal of their spare time to SOLAR. There is room for all of these people in SOLAR. Of course, with such a diverse group of people and interests, it means we sometimes need to make an extra effort to be tolerant and respectful toward those who have different interests or abilities.

What is SOLAR? SOLAR is made up of individuals with a passion for the outdoors and a willingness to share their skills in a loosely structured volunteer organization. SOLAR offers a forum for those individuals to share their knowledge, skills, interests, and/or time to teach, lead activities, share information, utilize skills, apply their knowledge, etc.

One of the primary areas that I would like us to focus on during this next year is opening up and improving communication. Recently, with help from some SOLAR members, the Education Chairperson was able to put a formalized class evaluation system in place which allows students and instructors to provide anonymous feedback to the Education Chairperson about their experience with SOLAR classes. This is one example of a formalized system that allows SOLAR members to provide feedback to a chairperson on the Steering Committee so we can try to make improvements. I believe there are some other areas where we can also improve.

I will do my best as President, but I want people to know in advance, that I am not perfect. I am sure to make mistakes. Hopefully, I will learn from them and not repeat them. I ask that you show me some patience. I will do the same.

My real job often takes me out of town, but for the most part, I am available by email (outdoorswoman@gmail.com) or phone (586-530-4315). Please feel free to contact me or another Steering Committee member if you have any questions or concerns that you would like to communicate to us.

I'm looking forward to a wonderful year in SOLAR.

Respectfully,

Cindy Taylor

JOIN IN ON A TRIP TO PARADISE! February 7-February 22, 2009

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: G.A.P 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 USD350 for meals not included.

Estimated Costs:

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

For more details, contact Moe DeFrance at moedefrance@comcast.net or by telephone 517-552-3660 or 517-294-2333.

SOLAR 2008 CALENDAR

JULY ACTIVITIES					
7/1	TUE	MONTHLY MEETING**	Colony Hall	Cindy Taylor	President@SolarOutdoors.org
7/1	TUE	PROGRAM: Gear Swap/Summer Bash**	Colony Hall	Janet Duncan	Programs@SolarOutdoors.org
7/3-7/6	MULTI	Car camping, hiking, biking, etc.	Caesar Creek State Park, Ohio	Leslie Cordova	lesliegene@aol.com
7/13-7/18	MULTI	Michigander Bike Ride	Muskegon to Traverse City, MI	Caroline Kudwa	Caroline.A.Kudwa@delphi.com
7/25-7/27	WKND	Canoe float down the Manistee River	Grayling, MI	Tom Oloffo	mcmountainman@yahoo.com
AUGUST ACTIVITIES					
8/5	TUE	MONTHLY MEETING**	Colony Hall	Cindy Taylor	President@SolarOutdoors.org
8/5	TUE	PROGRAM: Highlights of SOLAR Classes**	Colony Hall	Janet Duncan	Programs@SolarOutdoors.org
8/15-8/31	Multi	Best of Yosemite Camping and Backpacking	Yosemite National Park	Kevin Cotter	solar@wowway.com
8/7-8/10	MULTI	North Country Trail Backpacking Trip	White Cloud, MI	Samantha Schafer	samantha2win@yahoo.com
8/15-8/31	MULTI	The Best of the JMT	John Muir Trail, California	Dave DeFrance	defranceomnexus@comcast.net
8/16	SAT	Full moon canoe paddle **	Heavner's, Proud Lake State Park	Margaret Martin	Mpluscat@hotmail.com
8/28-9/2	MULTI	Off-trail Backpacking**	McCormick Wilderness Tract	Michael Neiger	mneiger@hotmail.com http://therucksack.tripod.com
SEPTEMBER ACTIVITIES					
8/2	TUE	MONTHLY MEETING**	Colony Hall	Cindy Taylor	President@SolarOutdoors.org
8/2	TUE	PROGRAM: TBD**	Colony Hall	Janet Duncan	Programs@SolarOutdoors.org
9/12-9/21	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	Mpluscat@hotmail.com
UPCOMING ACTIVITIES					
10/3-10/6	MULTI	Off-trail Backpacking & Caving**	Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore	Michael Neiger	mneiger@hotmail.com http://therucksack.tripod.com
10/5-10/11	MULTI	Fall colors in the Adirondacks	Lake Placid, NY	Don Wold	DWold12972@aol.com
10/12	SUN	Full moon canoe paddle **	Heavner's, Proud Lake State Park	Margaret Martin	Mpluscat@hotmail.com
10/17-10/19	WKND	Backpacking	Jordan Valley Pathway	Kevin Cotter	solar@wowway.com
11/7-11/10	MULTI	Off-trail Backpacking**	Hiawatha National Forest	Michael Neiger	mneiger@hotmail.com http://therucksack.tripod.com
12/5-12/8	MULTI	Off-trail Backpacking & Sledging**	Pigeon River Country State Forest	Michael Neiger	mneiger@hotmail.com http://therucksack.tripod.com
2/7-2/22	MULTI	Costa Rica Adventure	Costa Rica	Maureen DeFrance	moedefrance@comcast.net
4/5-4/12	MULTI	Return to St. John	Maho Bay Camps, St. John, USVI	Jim Gessner	gessnerj@comcast.net

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 Samantha Schafer at Activities@SolarOutdoors.org.

If you would like to help plan and/or teach a SOLAR class, please contact Allen Duncan at Education@SolarOutdoors.org.

WHAT IS SOLAR?

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

MEMBERSHIP

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

MEETINGS

Our monthly meetings are held the first Tuesday of every month in Southfield at the Colony Hall, 21780 Evergreen (between 8 & 9 Mile 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 (July 18 for the August 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.

STEERING COMMITTEE

President: Cindy Taylor	Vice President: Carol McCrie
Secretary: Sherri Doebel	Treasurer: Michelle Delaporte
Activities: Samantha Schafer	By-Laws: Chuck Smith
Education: Allen Duncan	Equipment: Adam Greener
Historian: Debbie Zuchlewski	Membership: Mary Price
Programs: Jan Duncan	Public Relations: Pam Szakal
Ray Editor: Pete Lamb	Webmaster: Willi Gutman

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 | Lou Szakal
Joan & Bob Westbrook

STEERING COMMITTEE MEETINGS

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

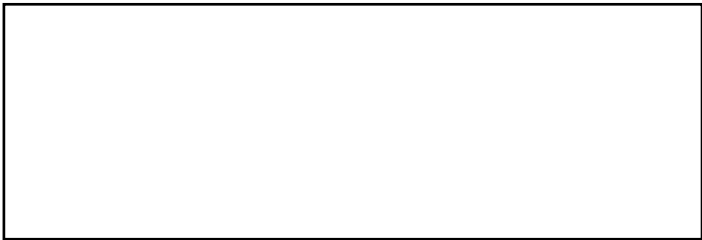
FOR MORE INFORMATION

Visit our website at: www.solaroutdoors.org.

SPECIAL THANKS TO THE SOLAR RAY ASSISTANT EDITORS

Winnie Chrzanowski, Kathy Drewyore, Sheila Hardy, Pam Schmelzer, Carol McCrie, Elizabeth Schwab, and Ati Tislerics

Visit our website: www.solaroutdoors.org



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