

# The S O L A R Ray

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

October 2008

## Isle Royale - July/August 2006

*By Sherri Doebel*

Paula Dirkes, Julia Gordon, Ronda Shapiro and I planned to hike on Isle Royal. Three weeks before our departure, we learned that our good friend, Ronda, was diagnosed with cancer. Understandably, she had to back out of the trip, but encouraged us to go on without her. Paula managed to recruited Cindy Taylor who only had two weeks to prepare for the trip.

On Saturday, July 29<sup>th</sup>, we drove to Copper Harbor taking shifts driving. On arrival we had some difficulty checking-into our motel and after some initial local peculiarities Paula managed it. Later, we headed over to the Harbor House on Superior's shore for 'the Last Supper'. After offering a toast to our good friend Ronda and wishing her well, we toasted ourselves and the trip. Later we went back to our rooms and sorted gear to organize for the morning. We spent some time, repacking, and providing packing tips to each other. We all slept somewhat soundly except Julia who could hear mice running around in the ceiling above our beds.

On Sunday, we embarked for Rock Harbor on Isle Royal, 8:15-am was departure time for the three hour cruise. The ferry was the Queen Anne IV (which makes me wonder what happened to I - III?). Paula looked at the ferry and said, "It looked bigger in the brochure". We heard how lucky we were to be riding the ferry today rather than yesterday, the waters were really rough and more than half of the passengers got sick.

On arrival we listen to the rangers briefing on how to leave no trace only footprints, respect the wildlife, stay on the trail, no soaping up in the water, pack all garbage out, no fires except for designated campgrounds, etc. After the presentation, we claim our backpacks, ate lunch and weigh our packs. According to recommendations posted, all our packs are overweight until Cindy notice with some relief that the scales are off by some eight pounds. Just to be sure, I hang from the scale to check for accuracy, it is definitely off. We were all relieved and let out big sighs.

Our first campsite, Daisy Farm, a huge campsite with many shelters and tent sites. We arrived late and were having difficulty finding a site. A man came over and took us over to probably the last available shelter, #7, and we jumped on it. While fixing dinner it became apparent that Paula is not doing well. She is a little hunched over and very uncomfortable, but we decide to go swimming anyway. The water was freezing. Julia had some kind of mantra she was saying to herself, "I'm in the Caribbean", "it's warm like the Caribbean". I tried it, but it did not work for me. Paula is not improving. She has a lot of discomfort with sharp pains and vomiting. Morning arrives and Paula's condition is bad. She says that she needs to get off the island and possibly go to the hospital. Daisy Farm is the only campground that has its own Ranger in residence but she proved very difficult to find. While I am telling Cindy that I cannot find the ranger, we get a glimpse of someone running on the trails at the speed of a deer with a long blonde pony tail, it's the ranger! Cindy took off running after her. I was yelling ranger, ranger. Neither of us caught her attention (she was wearing headphones, and in much better shape than any of us). Cindy had left notes on the ranger's boat and cabin, and she came immediately on finding one. She is an EMT (all rangers on the island must be EMT's). She does an assessment of Paula, and through a series of links provides Paulas vital signs to Keweenaw Hospital. It is agreed, Paula needs to be evacuated from the island and taken to the main land. We say our goodbyes to Paula who leaves by boat to Rock Harbor where she boards a sea plane for Keweenaw Hospital where she is admitted.

We then grab our stuff and head out for Lake Ritchie which has tent sites only, and they are all taken. We notice that the group site is vacant, so we steal just one corner thinking that if a group does arrive, we are hopefully out of their way. We decide to go swimming right away while we are still hot, so the water will feel refreshing instead of freezing. While we are washing ourselves and doing our laundry, a group shows up, we explain that we need to share the group site and the leader is okay with it. When Julia steps out of the water she finds three leaches on her. Hearing that, Cindy, who was submerged to her chin was out of the water before you could count to 1 but she was leach free. I think Julia will avoid that lake in future. Clouds are rolling in as we eat dinner, tofu tacos courtesy of Cindy when it started sprinkling then a thunderstorm rolls in along with a downpour.



Earlier Cindy noticed her fanny pack was missing so I retraced back to a spot at Lake Ritchie that she took off her pack for a rest. It was not there. Cindy was missing her Drivers License ID, Credit Card, spoon, chap-stick, Pural, and leather man.

Next camp was Chippewa Harbor. This place makes you feel like you are in the Rocky Mountains. The views are absolutely incredible! Since it rained the night before and we got an early start in the morning, we were attacked by mosquitoes on the trail. I lost a half gallon of blood. This trail is very lush and so dense that it is difficult for the sun to penetrate through. After arriving and claiming our shelter for the night, we decided to jump off the dock into the water. Very refreshing! We washed our clothes and laid them out to dry on a big rock shield where we were drying out our tents, fly's and ground cloths. After dinner, it began to sprinkle. Julia makes a fire in the designated metal BBQ grill where we decide to hang our wool socks over the fire to dry. ( I was having some kind of allergic reaction to all of my mosquito bites, because I had big welts all over, check first aid kit - no benadryl...bummer...note to self, bring Benadryl on next trip).

I ran the trail with my mosquito head net on to Moskey Basin our next campground. I immediately scout out a good shelter that has privacy, great views and access to the water. I find it with shelter number 4. I head back down the trail to greet Julia and Cindy. Cindy tells me that they asked a group of boys on the trail if they seen a girl with a red backpack (me). Then, one of the boys said that he seen an "old lady" with a "bee hat on"! Also, Cindy had broke one of her hiking poles. Julia played with it for awhile until she was able to extend it as far as it could. We loved our campsite at Moskey! We saw a female Merganser with 26 babies, not all the same size. Julia read that if one of the Mom's dies or heads off to hunt; another Mom will adopt her babies. Julia loved pointing out the Loons to us and provided some background info on them. We knew their call before the trip was over - way, way, before the trip was over!

We return to Daisy Farm, this time, we pick a shelter on the water. We are really good now, just jumping in the water and not spending time trying to get used to it. We spend our days relaxing at the beach, reading, napping or taking small hikes. We asked Rangers we came upon as to the status of our friend Paula. The answer was always the same, "I don't know once they took her away by sea plane." Also, Cindy reported her missing fanny pack.

Three Mile Campground is exactly three miles from Rock Harbor where we catch the ferry. Julia pointed out the red squirrels that are unique to Isle Royal. We are feeling energetic today; so we decide on taking a day hike to Mt. Franklin. We hike up to Mt. Franklin with some cool views. We eat lunch up there (elevation approx. 1,080 ft ... big for Michigan). The next day, we decide to take Tobin Harbor trail over to the Ferry instead of Rock Harbor Trail. I am glad we did, because we came upon a Moose and her calf! When I came upon them, I was freaked out by the size, I whipped around to advise the others. Now we are standing within 20 ft of the moose, making sure that we stayed far away from the calf and not to stand between cow and calf. After many pics of the cow and calf, we returned to hiking the trail.

At the visitor center there was a fax from Paula, she was still in the hospital! Also, we checked the lost and found no sight of Cindy's fanny pack. The ranger informed Cindy that the fox's on the island take 'everything' back to their dens, and the rangers clean out the dens at the end of the season. However, we did notice Jim Coe's fuel bottle sitting there on the counter, so we took it. I guess no fuel is allowed on the seaplane (now Jim knows the truth about his fuel bottle). We decided to each lunch at the lodge's as we had plenty of time before the ferry left, so no power bars or gorp for lunch that day

Later, we joked with Cindy, "Hey Cindy, when you go to replace your lost Driver's License ID, are you going to tell them that it's in a fox's den. UPDATE: Cindy received her fanny pack in the mail from two hikers on the island.

Paula was discharged to her Aunt's house in the Keweenaw Peninsula She had been discharged that morning and was in the hospital the entire time we were on the island. Her Aunt Joan made us an awesome dinner and we had a beautiful view of Lake Superior before we headed home

# BASIC MOUNTAINEERING & SAFETY SKILLS CLASS

By Lou Szakal

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to stand on the Summit of a Mountain? Or to even know what it takes to get there? How about just advancing your Winter Camping or Snowshoe and Cross-Country Ski skills to include one to two week expeditions to places like Yellowstone or the Canadian Rockies? Here is your chance to find out. Starting in December 2008, I will be teaching the Basic Mountaineering and Safety Skills Class to a few lucky students who are interested in devoting their time and energy to the sport of Mountaineering and Advanced Winter Adventure.

## Here are some of the things you will get:

Self Arrest, Fixed Lines, Roped Travel, Running Belays, Risk Assessment, Snow Shoeing Skills, Health/Fitness Issues, Cross Country Ski Skills, Basic Mountain Skills, Avalanche Issues, Chest Harness , Camaraderie , Ice Axe Use, Leadership, Navigation, Prussiks, Fun, 2 Mountaineering Books, Technical Tool Usage, Mountain Safety, First Aid Issues, Crampon Use, 3" Binder, Nutrition, Knots, LNT, Weather, Sled Skills, Glacier Travel, Climbing Issues, Group Dynamics, Frost Bite Issues, Winter Safety Skills, Z & C Pulley System, Optional Mountain Trip , Clothing, Rappelling, Gear Issues, Effects of Cold, Reading Material, Crevasse Rescue, Expedition Planning, Environmental Ethics, 2 Weekend Practicals, Altitude Awareness, Ascending Ropes, Ropes/Webbing, Alpine Rescue, Team Building, Stewardship, Movies, Clinic

## PREREQUISITES:

### MANDATORY

Basic Backpacking  
Land Navigation  
Winter Camping (aka Enjoy Michigan Winters)  
Belay Card (Rock Gym)

## CLASS SCHEDULE

Location: TBD 6:00 - 9:00 PM

Class 1	12/11/08	Thu.
Class 2	12/18/08	Thu.
Class 3	01/08/09	Thu
Clinic 1	01/10/09	Sat.
Class 4	01/15/09	Thu.
Practical 1	01/23-25/09	Fri.-Sun.
Class 5	01/22/09	Thu.
Class 6	01/29/09	Thu.
Practical 2	02/6-8/2009	Fri.-Sun

## COSTS (Non Refundable)

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

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

CONTACT: Lou Szakal @ everest2008@comcast.net

## Enjoy Michigan Winters BACKPACKING & Winter Skills Class

By Tom Olofo

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

etc..

If you've already have taken our beginning backpacking class & are looking to expand your skills to the next level or just wanting some adventure this is the class for you !

We usually have six classes & two practicals in the great outdoors. Our second practical includes a play day in the great white north ,where you can Snowshoe , ,Ski or just sit by a nice warm roaring campfire sipping hot chocolate. So its up to you lay around on a couch all winter watching outdoor shows on TV or take my class & actually live the adventure ! After all isn't that why you joined SOLAR ?

The cost is \$ 100.00 for new students and reduced fee for past graduates who want to retake the course. I will have complete dates & info at the Oct. or Nov. general meetings. Classes will start in Dec. probably on Wed. nights. (That however hasn't been finalized as of this printing .)

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

To sign up or if you have any questions contact --- TOM OLOFFO.

(313) 461 - 4933 or [mcmountainman@yahoo.com](mailto:mcmountainman@yahoo.com)

## **Mushroom Minutes**

*By Jim Coe*

### **A real Fun gi**

This issues emphasis is on a rather easy to identify edible mushroom found throughout the Midwest region common name: Chicken mushroom, also called Sulfur shelf. It is of the family of mushrooms called Polypore. Scientific name: Polyporaceae, Aphyllophora. It grows on stumps and logs of deciduous trees and buried roots.



One reason it is fairly easy to identify is it its bright orange color on top and bright yellow or sulfur color underneath. It grows into groups of shelf- like shapes that can weigh as much as a pound per shelf. It grows from May to November so it can be found all summer as well as spring and early autumn. It is best to harvest when it is still soft to touch or a rubbery feel to it. After it becomes "woody" it may be indigestible or cause a stomach upset. It is considered a choice mushroom to eat with a chicken taste (I know you have heard that before) to it and when cooked it gives off a lovely deep mushroom aroma. The best time to harvest would be after a rain or when it has not been around too long.

During the wet and rainy after affects of hurricane Ike I went for a hike on the yellow trail at Island Lake Recreation area with friends. I mentioned that we may want to look for mushrooms since it was so damp and humid. Within a couple miles I spotted a large group of sulfur shelf brightly growing on an oak log. I jumped at the chance to harvest some and carried them back to the trail head in my hand so as to not spoil them such as putting them in a non breathable bag. The following morning I put some butter in an iron skillet and

sautéed a good batch then added 4 eggs with a bit of cheese. I asked my roommate Pete Lamb if he would like some and he said "why don't we give some to our other roommate Sharon just to make sure they are safe "and I said good idea. Well she didn't die and exclaimed her delight at the quality of her gastric experience so Pete and I had the rest.

Please don't take me seriously, nor Pete for that matter, so no animal or roommate was harmed, nor were they intended to be harmed in this endeavor. On a serious note **please do not attempt to eat any mushroom you have not positively identified.** Just to satisfy the SOLAR lawyers out there.



**CAVING AND/OR HIKING IN KENTUCKY  
ALL LEVELS, NO EXPERIENCE NECESSARY!!!!  
KID FRIENDLY (MUST BE 6 TO CAVE)  
NO PETS**

**January 23-25, 2009**

*By Leslie Cordova*

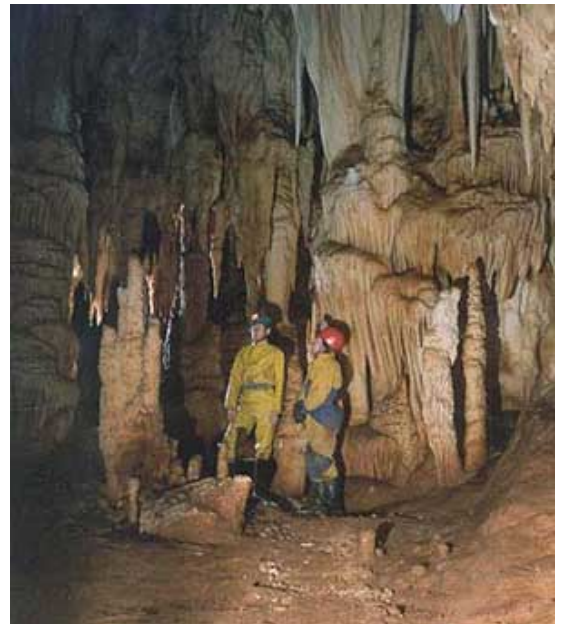
It's that time of year again - time for the 28th annual Carter Caves Crawl-a-thon. What is a crawl-a-thon you might ask - - this is an annual event put on by Carter Caves State Park in Olive Hill, Kentucky. It is a great way for people to get acquainted with caving as they offer a wide variety of cave tours, ranging from walking tours, a little bit of crawling, a lot of crawling and vertical caving. They even have trips for kids and seniors!! If you do not like the underground, join us anyway, as there is some great hiking in the area.

The basic plan is to drive down to the park on Friday (about a 7-hour drive) and stay right at the Carter Caves Lodge. I have a limited number of rooms reserved, once they are filled; the nearest lodging is 10 - 15 miles away. The cost for 2 nights lodging is \$75 per person, payable to SOLAR, \$50 for kids 16 and under. Since this trip will fill up, only payments in full will be accepted to hold your spot.

You will need to download the crawl-a-thon entry and release forms yourself from [www.crawlathon.com](http://www.crawlathon.com), or call the park at (606) 286-4411. Generally the forms are not available until mid December. You will then need to send in both forms yourself with a check for \$35 per adult, \$20 per child 6 - 12 (last years fee, the current fee could be higher) to Carter Caves. Your \$20 - \$35 includes 2 days of guided caving and a T-shirt from the event. Please do not delay as the trips fill up quickly.

See me at the meeting for a listing of equipment you may need. SOLAR has helmets, knee and elbow pads (limited) and headlamps (limited) that you may borrow. A refundable deposit is required. I do not have enough equipment for everyone, so you will need to reserve in advance. To be fair, those who have not been on SOLAR caving trips previously will get first dibs on pads and headlamps.

Need more info contact Leslie Cordova at (248) 547-5626 or [LeslieGene@aol.com](mailto:LeslieGene@aol.com).



# **SOLAR Winter Survival Class**

*By Doug Lanyk*

Have you read about the kayakers Stranded in a gorge recently, on with a broken leg? How about the mother living in her wrecked car for 5 days awaiting rescue? Perhaps you've heard about the woman who used her bra to signal a logging crew in the Alps. Would you do as well or better if something went wrong on a trip?

The winter survival class will cover the skills and preparations you need to avoid or survive emergencies. Modern equipment as well as primitive skills will be demonstrated in a survival context. You cannot be too prepared for the unplanned events on your outdoor adventures. If you want a large dose of self-confidence and a chance to test your skills we have a great class. As a student you will not be made to do anything. However you will be given multiple opportunities to push your comfort level past its edges.

This is not an easy class! It is very rewarding! The lessons learned here will change your outlook on every outdoor excursion. It also has applications to everyday life. We will use a simulated winter survival situation to bring together the various skills you have brought to this class, as well as those learned during the class. It is intended to make you aware of the dangers you may face in the outdoors. How planning and education can mitigate unforeseen events and/or lapses in judgment. Give you the physical and mental skills needed to face unexpected challenges on the trail.

A Partial list of the topics we are going to cover and practice.

Leadership  
Decision-making  
Prioritizing  
Trip Planning  
Orienteering

Shelter Construction  
Fire building  
Sustenance acquisition  
Improve your 10 essentials  
Rope and Knot Skills

I will require 10 Paid students to start this class. Limit 20 students.

The dates for the Winter Survival class are as follows; November 3, 10, 17, 24, and December 1 for the classes, The practicals will be Nov 23, Dec 6, and 12-14th. Tel 248 634-4551 [dslanyk@comcast.net](mailto:dslanyk@comcast.net)

## **THE PEACE OF WILD THINGS**

By Wendell Berry submitted by Elizabeth Schwab

When despair for the world grows in me  
and I wake in the night at the least sound  
in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,  
I go and lie down where the wood drake  
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds.  
I come into the peace of wild things  
who do not tax their lives with forethought  
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.  
And I feel above me the day-blind stars  
waiting with their light. For a time  
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.

## Qajaqa "Kayak" weekend August 22,23,24 in Beulah, Michigan

*By Sharon Smelter*



On a windswept bay along the shores of Herring Lake a line of kayaks bobbed over to a unique encampment. Arrival only possible by water, this tucked away gem sets with Lake Michigan on one side and the beautiful inland lake on the other. Six SOLARites - Michelle Dellaporte, Marie Harrington, Carolyn Kudwa, Pete Lamb, Sharon Smelter, and Chuck Smith, came to learn the ancient

skills of the Eskimo and his tools of survival - the skin on frame kayak and the harpoon.

Instructors came from as far as Massachusetts, Iowa and Wisconsin to share the art of kayak roll, Greenland paddling, Eskimo rope walking, sharpening harpoon skills, and making Eskimo



style clothes - The Tulik and kayak skirt!!!!.....To keep alive in the fierce arctic waters, the clothing needed to be waterproof and skintight!!...The Tulik was made from seal skin ( we'll use neoprene!), and fit over the head and arm very snugly and came down the waist and around the cockpit rim with a seal. No arctic cold water in your lap!!!

Not only was fun had on the water, but beautiful sunsets on Lake Michigan, hot tub

fun, fantastic meals with martinis on the terrace!!!!...Michelle, Sharon and Marie all got a roll by the second day, Chuck already had several rolls under his belt. With

Pete and Carolyn rolling is a work in progress. And you guys who stay at home and leave the 2:1 ratio of women to men - eat your hearts out!!!!!! What solar outings bring, besides new and practiced skills, cannot be found in front of the T.V. or watching that sports game at the bar!!!!

So this next year - GRAB that paddle, borrow or rent a kayak, Hit the water and Make NEW solar friends!!...Join us for a kayak seminar!!!!



## Wheatland 2008

*By Sharon Smelter*

One of the best kept secrets in Michigan was discovered by Pat Murad some 20 years ago and now has been attended by SOLAR for the last few years. This year was spectacular and was enjoyed by of course Pat, the man Murad, Dan Butterworth, Lynn Dubay, Mike Hubbard, Pete, Lamb, Elizabeth Schwab, Janet Schester Sharon Smelter Pam Smeltzer and husband, Chuck Smith, Susan Speece Pat works at the festival and gets in early and put up several tents to hold a spot big enough to hold the 12 SOLARites that attended. We were just a small dot amongst the 20.000 that eventually filled the 165 acre farm. It a bit like a mini Woodstock. Everywhere people were happily intermingling, families with children were playing games and having a great time on Kids Hill were the activities included giant bubble blowing, digging in the sand, juggling lessons, tie dyeing, face painting and other amusements for kids while music sifted through the trees and around the hills. Sounds of great bands on stages, down to five year olds plying violins in the shade of the trees (usually for money)were heard all day long In the evening impromptu groups of musicians held jam sessions in the moon light into the wee hours of the morning and tired festival participants fell asleep to the soft strains of music which was never an annoyance.

Opportunities to learn and carry on the traditions of folk music of our country were numerous. Beginning lessons were offered on the banjo ,ukulele, harmonica and dulcimer and fiddle. Such wonderful sounding instruments and yes also drums went on and on putting one into a trance like state. Crowds gathered to watch, participate, and learn a variety of styles of dance, such as clog, square, and folk, and for the athletically inclined African dance. What a great way to bring people together and share a culture that is all to often lost in our ever changing technological society!





## OCTOBER ACTIVITIES

10/3 to 6	multi	Off-trail Backpacking and caving more info at <a href="http://therucksacktripod.com/trips.htm">http:// therucksack tripod.com/trips.htm</a> **	Picture Rocks National lakeshore	Michael Neiger	<a href="mailto:mneiger@hotmail.com">mneiger@hotmail.com</a>
10/3 and 4	Wkend	Hocking Hills	Hocking Hills Ohio	Susan Speece	<a href="mailto:sspeece@yahoo.com">sspeece@yahoo.com</a>
10/5 to 10/11		Fall colors in Adirondaks	Lake Placid NY	Don Wold	<a href="mailto:dwold1297@aol.com">dwold1297@aol.com</a>
Oct 7, 2008	Tuesday	Monthly Meeting **	Colony Hall	Cindy Tayler	Solar President@ <a href="http://solaroutdoors.org">solaroutdoors.org</a>
Tuesday		National Trails System **	Colony Hall	Janet Duncan	<a href="mailto:solarprograms@solaroutdoors.org">solarprograms@solaroutdoors.org</a>
Oct 12, 2008	Sunday	Full moon canoe paddle	Heavner's Proud Lake State Park	Margret Martin Allan Heavner	<a href="mailto:alanheavner@heavnercanoe.com">alanheavner@heavnercanoe.com</a>
10/17 to 10/19	Wkend	Backpacking	Jordan Valley Pathway	Kevin Cotter	<a href="mailto:solar@wowway.com">solar@wowway.com</a>

## OCTOBER CLASSES

(Cont)Oct 3,5	Multi	Beginning backpacking	Picture rocks	Carol McCrie	<a href="mailto:cmccrie@sbcglobal.net">cmccrie@sbcglobal.net</a>
10/3 to 5	thurs Wkend	Wilderness First-aid	TBD	Mike Malon	<a href="mailto:mmalone@comcast.net">mmalone@comcast.net</a>
10/9,16,23,31, 11/1 and 2	Thursday Wkend	Search and Rescue	East Detroit H/S D Bar A Scout Ranch	Tom Hayes	<a href="mailto:thomashayes@wideopenwest.com">thomashayes@wideopenwest.com</a>
cont 10/19-19	Tues Wkend	Women in the Woods	Red River Gorge, KY	Pam Reihl Szakal	<a href="mailto:pareihl@gmail.com">pareihl@gmail.com</a>
Oct 29, 2008	Wed Wkend	Basic Land Navigation	TBD	Karl Overheul	<a href="mailto:cyber.nomad@comcast.net">cyber.nomad@comcast.net</a>

## NOVEMBER ACTIVITIES

Nov 4, 2008	Tuesday	Monthly Meeting**	Colony Hall	Cindy Taylor	Solar President @solaroutdoors.org
Nov 4, 2008	Tuesday	TBD**	Colony Hall	Janet Duncan	Solar Programs@ solaroutdoors.org
Nov 4, 2008	Tuesday	Book Club Meets	Chipolte Southfield	Vida Ruggero	rageti@hotmail.com
11/17 to 10	Multi	Off trail Backpacking info at <a href="http://therucksack.tripod.com">http://therucksack.tripod.com</a>	Hiawatha National Forest	Michael Neiger	<a href="mailto:mneiger@hotmail.com">mneiger@hotmail.com</a>
Nov 3,10,17,23,24	Mon Wkend	Winter Survival	Various	Douglas Lanyk	<a href="mailto:dslanyk@yahoo.com">dslanyk@yahoo.com</a>
Nov 5,7,8,	Wed wkend	Basic Land Navigation	TBD/Waterloo Rec Area	Karl Overheul	<a href="mailto:cybernomad@comcast.net">cybernomad@comcast.net</a>

## DECEMBER ACTIVITIES

Dec 2, 2008	Tuesday	Monthly Meeting**	Colony Hall	Cindy Taylor	Solar <a href="mailto:President@solaroutdoors.org">President@solaroutdoors.org</a>
Dec 2, 2008	Tuesday	TBD **	Colony Hall	Janet Duncan	Solar <a href="mailto:Programs@solaroutdoors.org">Programs@solaroutdoors.org</a>
Dec 5-8	Multi	Off Trail- Backpacking (info at <a href="http://therucksack.tripod.com/trips.htm">Http://therucksack.tripod.com/trips.htm</a> ) **	Pigeon River Country SF	Michael Neiger	<a href="mailto:mneiger@hotmail.com">mneiger@hotmail.com</a>

## DECEMBER CLASSES

(Cont) Dec 1,6,12,14	Monday Wkend	Winter Survival	Various	Douglas Lanyk	<a href="mailto:dslanyk@yahoo.com">dslanyk@yahoo.com</a>
Dec11,18	Multi	Mountaineering			

## UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

Jan16,18	Wkend	4th Annual Lake Ann Cross country ski weekend	Lake Ann	Jim Coe	jimc36@comcast.net
Jan 16,20	Multi	Off trail Winter Camping ( info at <a href="http://therucksack.tripod.com/trips.htm">http://therucksack.tripod.com/trips.htm</a> ) **	Hiawatha National Forest	Michael Neiger	mneiger@hotmail.com
Feb2,22	Multi	Arctic Ocean Expedition James Bay ( info at <a href="http://therucksack.tripod.com/trips.htm">therucksack.tripod.com/trips.htm</a> )**	Moose River Canada	Michael Neiger	mneiger@hotmail.com
Feb 7,22	Multi	Costa Rica Adventure	Costa Rica	Maureen DeFrance	<a href="mailto:Moelifeisgood@lavebit.com">Moelifeisgood@lavebit.com</a>
March 8-14	Multi	Off trail Winter Camping ( info at <a href="http://therucksack.tripod.com/trips.htm">http://therucksack.tripod.com/trips.htm</a> ) **	Picture Rocks Lakeshore	Michael Neiger	mneiger@hotmail.com
April 5-12	Multi	Return to St John USVI	Maho Bay Camps St John USVI	Jim Gessner	<a href="mailto:gessner@comcast.net">gessner@comcast.net</a>
April24,27	Multi	Off trail Backpacking (info at <a href="http://therucksack.tripod.com/trips.htm">http://therucksack.tripod.com/trips.htm</a> )**	Pigeon River State Forest	Michael Neiger	mneiger@hotmail.com
May 23 June 1	multi	Off trail Winter Camping ( info at <a href="http://therucksack.tripod.com/trips.htm">http://therucksack.tripod.com/trips.htm</a> ) **	Lake superior Provincial Park	Michael Neiger	mneiger@hotmail.com

## UPCOMING CLASSES

(cont)Jan 8,10,15,22-25.29.Feb6-8	Multi	Mountaineering	TBD	Lou szakal	<a href="mailto:everest2008@comcast.net">everest2008@comcast.net</a>
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## Calender Notes

\*\* Denotes NON SOLAR activity(SOLAR will not beheld responsible for this activity, on calender for informational purposes only

If you would like to lead/ plan a SOLAR activity contact our activities Chairperson, Samantha Schafer, at HYPERLINK”<mailto:SolarActivities@Solaroutdoors.org>”[solaractivities@solaroutdoors.org](mailto:solaractivities@solaroutdoors.org)

If you would like to teach or sugest a SOLAR class, contact our Education Chairperson. Allan Duncan, at HYPERLINK”[mail to:SolarEducation@solaroutdoors.org](mailto:SolarEducation@solaroutdoors.org)”[SolarEducation@Solaroutdoors.org](mailto:SolarEducation@Solaroutdoors.org)

SOLAR HAS A NO REFUND POLICY. IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO ATTEND ANY ACTIVITY, YOU MAY “SELL YOUR SPOT”TO ANOTHER CLUB MEMBER

## **Don’t Underestimate a Motivated Bear**

*By Jennifer “Scribe” Tislerics*

The Sierra Interagency Black Bear Group has a limited list of containers approved for protecting food and toiletries from the local fauna in the Sierra Nevada. Black bears in this area have shown remarkable skill in opening “bear proof” containers and in retrieving bear bags from trees. With this in mind, the SOLARites who hiked along the JMT this August were careful to obtain appropriate bear canisters.

Space was tight in the bear canisters, especially on the first leg of the trip – 5 days’ worth of food and toiletries per person had to fit inside, and several of us were sharing canisters. Although no longer permitted, Ursacks (bags made of Kevlar) were acceptable two years ago, so some trip participants relied on an Ursack for a small amount of overflow the first night in the Yosemite wilderness.

At 10:00, the last of us hit the sack. An hour and a half later, many of us were awakened by yelling, banging and lights flashing at the far end of camp. Two thru-hikers from Colorado, who had camped near us, had heard (and seen) a bear “testing” our bear canisters. Further inspection showed that the bear had torn the Ursack open along its seam, and pulled out most of its contents. The bear canisters appeared unharmed.



Lost to the bear were Snickers bars, Camp-suds, olive oil, and some trash. Toiletries were covered in either bear slobber or soap, but were salvageable. After some discussion about next steps, it was agreed that, since we had no secure place to store it, the trash needed to be burned, along with the Ursack, to prevent another raid by the bear. While some people burned trash, others barricaded the canisters with heavy rocks (primarily for the protection of the canister with a lid that had broken earlier that evening).



All the noise and commotion (or maybe the Camp suds) did its job – the bear did not pay any more visits to our camp that night. A couple who was camped nearby later told us that the bear had visited them first, scratching at a backpack from which they'd forgotten to remove the bear canister. The pack was only 5 feet away from where they slept!

The next morning, several people cleaned up and disguised the site of the fire. Although no evidence was left in sight, word of the bear encounter preceded us along the trail. For the next two days, hikers and park employees alike commented on the rumor of a bear

breaking into an Ursack in Lyell Canyon.

Let it be known far and wide – if the authorities prohibit something along the trail, there's good reason for it. Reckless defiance of the rules may result in wildlife management problems. Please learn from our experience, and avoid repeating our mistake.

## ***The Best of the John Muir Trail***

*by Jennifer "Scribe" Tislerics*

Fifteen SOLARites embarked on an incredible two week adventure this August, led by veteran JMTers David and Maureen DeFrance. Several people created parallel, overlapping or connecting trips to explore Yosemite National Park and other parts of the John Muir Trail. In total, 20 SOLARites spent quality time in the mountains and forests of the Sierra Nevada.

No article could do justice to the daily adventures (and misadventures) we experienced on the John Muir Trail. No photos truly capture the magnitude of the natural beauty we saw. Through a few articles detailing specific incidents from the trip and a few photo highlights, we hope to provide a glimpse into what the trip was like.

*For a more thorough review of the incredible mountains, valleys, rivers, flora and fauna seen by participants of the "Best of the JMT" trip, please visit these websites:*

<http://ph.groups.yahoo.com/group/Solaroutdoors/photos/browse/6f65>

<http://www.trailjournals.com/photos.cfm?id=382109>

<http://www.trailjournals.com/entry.cfm?id=252374>

<http://tinyurl.com/tislerics-jmt08> (be sure to turn on the captions)

## **The trip at a glance**

Number who started the trip 15

Number who finished the trip 13

Bitners 3

Days on the trail 14

Resupplies 2

Miles Hiked 110 (varied for some individuals)

Elevation Gained: 12,500 feet

Elevation Lost: 13,000 feet

Critters seen: Mule Deer, Pikas, Marmots, Lizards, Various Birds

Critters Heard: Coyotes

Critters Fed: Bear

Rivers and Lakes swam in: Countless

## **Trail Names of the JMT**

Andrew Dalian – Big Dipper

Ati Tislerics – Scout

Bert Courson – Chert

Bill Lynch – Glider Man

Dave DeFrance – Trail Boss (TB)

Don Wold – Coach

Doug Bittner – Slacker

Glenn Schultz – Gung ho

Jennifer Tislerics – Scribe

Joanne Sarrasin – Two Tone

Kevin Cotter – Bad Boy

Maureen DeFrance – Matriarch

Roxann Bittner – Cotton Candy

Sara Cockrell – Energizer

Steve Bittner – Boot Cam





## **Personal Memories of the John Muir Trail**

*By Jennifer "Scribe" Tislerics*

It took me a few days to acclimate to the elevation. Climbing our first 11,000 foot pass (Donahue Pass) took a lot out of me, both physically and emotionally. When Moe warned me that the day we went over Silver Pass would be tougher than going over Donahue, I resigned myself to a long and difficult day. However, I was pleasantly surprised at how easy it was to climb the 1400 feet down, 1800 feet up over, and another-1900 feet down past Silver Pass. As a matter of fact, I had a terrific day! I hadn't realized how much the altitude was affecting me until I'd acclimated.

I didn't take it very well when Ati first suggested that we hike separately. He wasn't affected by the altitude like I was, and is generally more fit, so he was bored hiking at my pace. But after a day of hiking with others, I appreciated the opportunity to hike with and get to know other people in the group. In the long run, having multiple hiking buddies made for a better trip.

We'd had a tougher than expected time getting to Vermilion Valley Resort for our second resupply stop (maybe the story of Day 10 will be recounted in another SOLAR Ray edition). The staff at VVR more than made up for the difficulty of getting there. Jim, a co-owner and Michigan transplant, was extremely helpful and friendly in every interaction. Paula, the waitstaff, learned many of our names and worked her tush off when we all came in at once to eat. Roy, the cook, accepted our praises and our teasing (but declined to accompany us on the rest of the trip).

Jamie, the Manhattan executive turned laundry and housekeeping guy, not only washed and dried our clothes for 9 straight hours, but he sorted and folded them! VVR kept large quantities of free backpacker stuff, donated by previous hikers who had packed too much. For convenience, VVR kept a running tab for every hiker and trusted that we'd pay up before we left. Vermilion has rightfully earned a reputation as a great place for backpackers to recharge.

Some members of the group relished swimming in cold lakes and rivers. Not me, I like my water warm! Imagine my pleasure when we found a natural hot spring not far from our campsites at Muir Trail Ranch. Nearby was a refreshing (but not too cold) pond, in which we could cool off afterward. What a perfect way to spend a lazy summer afternoon in the backcountry.

Around Day 2, while I was still struggling with altitude, I got a bit discouraged at the idea of two full weeks on the trail. I'd never backpacked for more than 5 days previously, and it's a big jump from five days to 14! Was I going to get tired of the group? Could I handle the tough hiking? On Day 5 I realized with regret that the trip was already 1/3 over. I was enjoying the company of these SOLARites, doing much better with the hiking, and loving the scenery. In the end, 14 days was not too long. I would have kept going, gladly.



### WHAT IS SOLAR?

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

### MEMBERSHIP

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

### MEETINGS

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

### SOLAR RAY NEWSLETTER

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

### SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Submissions for the SOLAR Ray are due on the Friday two weeks prior to the monthly Steering Committee Meeting (June 13 for the July issue). Electronic documents only, Word is preferred and please attach your images. If you have any questions, please contact **Pete Lamb** at [rayeditor@solaroutdoors.org](mailto:rayeditor@solaroutdoors.org).

### STEERING COMMITTEE

President: Cindy Taylor	Vice President: Carol McCririe
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### STEERING COMMITTEE MEETINGS

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

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

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

### SPECIAL THANKS TO THE SOLAR RAY ASSISTANT EDITORS

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

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

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