



The SOLAR Ray

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A monthly publication of the School for Outdoor Leadership, Adventure and Recreation (SOLAR)

August 2009

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Basic Land Navigation

by Nancy Austin

Eleven students participated in the BLN class this June. About half of us had survived the Spring 2009 beginning backpacking course together, but for three of us the BLN class was the first SOLAR activity beyond attending a general meeting, and we found it to be quite an introduction.

First we spent two weeknight evenings in the classroom, starting with the basics of compass and map. There was a demonstration of just how simple a compass can be, i.e., a bowl of water and a sliver of magnetized metal. We learned terms for the parts of the compass. When we started using our compasses, an object lesson about what will guarantee faulty results was right there in the room, in the form of steel in the tables at which we sat, as well as the massive I-beams and metal stairway. Examples of planimetric, orienteering, and USGS topo maps were viewed. We talked about map scale, symbols, use of color, and contour lines. In teams we created our own hands-on topo maps, using markers, Tidy Bowl blue water and a transparent container enclosing a model volcano.



Done in the classroom, it was off to a weekend at Burns Cabin, in the Waterloo Recreation area. Saturday morning we arrived, grabbed bunks, and kept an eye on the sky, anticipating more rain would follow the previous night's deluge, but the clouds retreated. We practiced leapfrogging and pacing off around the campground and woods, simultaneously avoiding - as much as we could - the poison ivy lurking everywhere. We learned that the length of Karl's paces (who had set up the instructions for this exercise) seemed somewhat different than anyone else's. Fortunately our crashing through the dense underbrush didn't seem to frighten the horses in the nearby campsites too much.

Next our groups shuttled between some modules. Maps of the same locale at different scales were compared, as well as shaded topo versus plain vanilla topo, and examples of the capabilities of computer map software -- e.g., a computer's "view" of the landscape from a selected point, side-by-side with photographs taken from that same point. Last but not least we played with Play-Doh, ostensibly with the goal of interpreting 2-D contour lines using 3-D pliable modeling material...but then again, Play-Doh is always fun.

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Later Saturday everyone drove to a trail and hiked, practicing orienting the map, thumbing our location, and getting a feel for how map and real world jibe with one another. Then it was back to the campground for a session, starting with taking a bearing from the map and applying it to the real world, and vice versa, and how to use triangulation to pinpoint one's location on the map. All of the things we'd been learning were really beginning to come together...

Our last major subject was declination. Besides being coached in what declination is, and why it's important (how many hundreds of feet of error per mile?), we heard explanations of several ways to work with it, some less error-prone than others. (I know I was much relieved at this point to hear that if you do a little work *before* the trip, you don't have to worry about declination *during* the trip!)



And throughout the weekend (and all sessions, actually) there were stories, many serving as object lessons of what **not** to do, or - to think of it a different way - what sort of boners we should not be too appalled to discover ourselves doing. Any such practitioner will be in good company, or at least copious company. The "180-club" is famous, well, infamous, in this regard.

Finally - on Sunday, after a little more instruction — it was time for the capstone exercise. Three teams were assigned, with one instructor per

team. Our goal: to work as a team to find four flags in order based on the map we were shown. We traded off so each person led at least one leg, and talked out a consensus strategy for arriving at each marker.

As it turned out, one of the markers was devilishly hard to find...but all teams made their way to the finish and celebrated a successful end to a challenging course.



One thing I took away from this course is that now I "get" the uncertainty of navigating in Michigan. In the past I have watched others navigate, people I believe were skillful, and was puzzled by the hesitation and qualifying statements. It was eye opening to try it and realize that -- despite having the tools in hand, and despite paying attention as you walk the landscape -- it's very likely you will find yourself honestly saying, "Well, I think this is where we are right now... maybe."

Many, many thanks to our wonderful instructors. Karl led this -- his last -- BLN class. The assistant instructors were (alphabetically) - Ati, Brian, Dave, Linda and Tom. To all of you - it was an awesome experience! Thank you so much for your patience, sense of humor, and amazing commitment to make this all a reality. We look forward to seeing you on the trail and back home, too (after we successfully navigate our way out of the woods!).

SPOTLIGHT ON...



Jeff McWilliams,
SOLAR Webmaster

How long have you been a member of SOLAR?

About 18 months, but it seems like longer.

What are some outdoorsy activities you enjoy?

Trail running, mountain biking, hiking, backpacking, adventure racing, nature photography, scuba diving, and canoe paddling.

What has been your favorite trip/activity so far?

The 2008 Spring Backpacking Class. I made so many wonderful new friends, and they now seem like part of an extended family to me.

What would your ideal trip be like?

My ideal trip would include friends I've made through SOLAR. It would have days which were challenging, physically and/or mentally. It would also have times to relax and enjoy the moment, like watching a sunset, sitting by a lake and hearing loons cry out, or watching a mist lift in the early dawn. It would include opportunities to explore places I haven't been before, or to learn some new things. Maybe it would include some sort of ecology component, too, a way to give something back.

Which SOLAR classes have you taken? What class(es) do you wish were offered that are not currently?

I have taken backpacking, search and rescue, adventure racing, SCUBA diving and wilderness first aid. I wish an advanced backpacking class was offered.

Tell us something about you that would surprise us!

Five years ago I weighed around 255 pounds. I lost the weight by following the South Beach Diet and exercising. I still love food! Maintaining an active lifestyle, one in which SOLAR is a key component, helps me avoid putting the weight back on.

Do you have any pets?

We have one black cat named Shadow. I kept a crawfish as a pet for a while when I was a young teenager!

Kids?

We have one daughter, named Heather. She's 19.

Significant Other?

Jennifer and I have been married for close to 19 years.



What inspired you to run for a Steering Committee position?

I'm a total computer geek. I learned how to program "home computers" when I was 14 years old. I saw the Webmaster position as a way for me to give something back to a club that I've enjoyed immensely since becoming a member.

Backpacking Beach Clean-up

By Vida Ruggero

Enjoy a weekend in the woods, on the dunes and beach of beautiful Lake Michigan August 28 - 30 at Nordhouse Dunes, all the while doing something good for the environment - and yourself. For the last five years I have been coordinating beach clean-ups at Nordhouse Dunes through the Alliance for the Great Lakes (www.greatlakes.org). While introducing my son to backpacking I got to know the area; it is a nice place to learn as you are only about one hour from your vehicle after hiking into the wilderness area.



The plan is to arrive at the Nurnberg Road trailhead at a time convenient to you on Friday or early Saturday morning, hike west on the beach trail to Lake Michigan (trails are unmarked since it is a designated wilderness area), pick your camping spot among the trees at least 400 feet from the shoreline, and enjoy! We

will plan to stroll down the beach Saturday morning from 9 a.m. to Noon and pick up anything that is not supposed to be there. Usually, most of what we find are cigarette butts and balloons, but there are always surprises!

In the past we have camped at the rustic campground, however it is extremely busy there in the summer so we are going to claim our own space in the wilderness! I ask that you bring one non-essential fun item, like a kite, float or light up Frisbee. I'm going to bring water colors, brushes and paint to share, so let's hope there will be a great sunset! For more information check out this website:

<http://www.getoffthecouch.info/mason/nordunes.htm>

Hope to see you for a fun, low cost summer weekend at the beach!

Vida Ruggero, rageti@hotmail.com

NOTE: Nordhouse Dunes Wilderness Area is located just north of Ludington State Park, about a four hour drive from Southfield.

SOLAR Workshop

Women in the Woods 2009



Ever wonder why your pack doesn't fit right?

Why you can't find good women's backpacking clothes?

Why you still don't know how to light your stove?

Well now you can get answers to these topics and more!

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

- | | |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------|
| • Women-designed equipment | • Building self-confidence |
| • Hygiene / Health | • Knots |
| • Safety in the woods | • Navigation |
| • Nutrition | • Hiking with kids |
| • Exercise / Training for women | • And much more! |

NOTE that dates are corrected here, original flyer was incorrect!

September 16: Evening classroom session, location TBD (Royal Oak, Troy, Southfield area)

September 26-27: Proud Lake Recreation Area, (approx. 8:00 am Sat thru 12:00 noon Sun)

October 16-18: Hiking practical at Red River Gorge, KY. Please note that we will begin hiking the morning of Oct. 16 so you will need to drive down Thursday night after work.

Class Prerequisite: SOLAR Basic Backpacking Class. Can be taken concurrently with the Fall Basic Backpacking Class.

Class size: 16 students

Cost: \$60.00

For questions or more information contact Pam Riehl Szakal at:

pariehl@gmail.com or 248-756-7002

SOLAR Backpacking Course - Fall 2009

One of the most popular classes offered through SOLAR, the Beginning Backpacking class, will start in August. Beginning Backpacking teaches basics about trip planning, equipment, food, and other backpacking issues. It also gives you hands-on experience, fun times in beautiful places and lots of new friends.

This class is for anyone meeting one or more of the following conditions:

- You've never slept outside before.
- You've camped out of your car, and wondered what was up with those people hiking past your site wearing backpacks.
- It's been a while since you've backpacked and you'd like a refresher.
- You want to meet more people in the club.
- You need the Beginning Backpacking class as a prerequisite for more advanced classes offered through SOLAR.
- You need an excuse to backpack.



Class begins in August and runs for six weeks with a break for end of summer trips (8/13, 8/20, 9/3, 9/10, 9/17 and 9/24). The weekend practicals are September 18 - 20 and October 2-4. There will also be a day hike and class day on either September 12th or 13th. Classes will be held in a location yet to be determined. Classes will run from 6 - 9 p.m.

You will need to participate in class on a weekly basis, or make arrangements to review any pertinent information with a classmate. You should plan to attend both practicals to get the most out of the class. In order to attend the 2nd practical, you must have completed the 1st practical.

The only prerequisites for the class are that you are a current, paid member of SOLAR and that you are interested in new experiences or new friends (or both!). With the exception of hiking shoes or boots and a few appropriate clothing items, you don't need to have your own gear - you will be able to borrow SOLAR gear for the class.

The cost to take the class is \$100, which includes a textbook, a class handbook, camping fees for both practicals, and dinner at the 1st practical. Please bring cash or a check payable to SOLAR when you sign up for the class. Fees will be due at the August general meeting to guarantee your spot in the class.

Any questions regarding the class should be directed to Carol McCririe at cmccririe@sbcglobal.net or Leslie Cordova at lesliegene@aol.com.

Printed below are a few photos from the Mt. Olympus/Mt. Rainier trip, courtesy of Marie Martinko.

More photos and an article will be included in a future Ray newsletter.





WHITE WATER RAFTING TRIP



Where: Upper Gauley River – West Virginia

When: September 18 – 20, 2009

This is a Friday to Sunday Trip

Cost: GM Members: \$220 Guest: \$240

Maneuver through exciting rapids on the Upper Gauley. We will enjoy a day on the river, time around a campfire and eat great food. So, bring your sleeping bag, friends and get ready for an awesome adventure and new friendships.

Package Includes

2 Nights lodging in Bunk House

2 Breakfast (Sat & Sun)

1 Day Rafting (Sat)

Personal guide in every raft.

1 Lunch (Sat - Riverside)

1 Dinner (Sat)

Complete Wet Suit (farmer johns, splash jacket & booties)

Deposit \$100.00 Final payment August 4, balance.

Make checks payable to G M Ski Club.

Mail to Cathy Schneidt 29931 Rosemont St, Roseville, MI 48066.

Further information please call Cathy at 586-206-2424 or email at catdancer23@hotmail.com with "WHITE WATER RAFTING" in the subject line.

 Make Checks Payable to the GM Ski Club



GM SKI CLUB Trip Application Destination: _____ Date: _____

Name: _____

Address: _____ City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone Day: (____) _____ Phone Night: (____) _____

☒ Gender: ☐ M ☐ F * Smoking: ☐ Y ☐ N GM Ski Club Member: ☐ Y ☐ N or MDSC (list) _____

Please state any roommate preferences: _____

Emergency Contact: _____

In consideration for me being able to participate in this activity, I assume personal responsibility for any risks and hazards to my personal safety and equipment. I release the GM Ski Club, their Directors and Officers, and anyone affiliated with any and all activities from all liability and waive any and all claims I may have or may hereafter acquire related to any and all injuries or damages whatsoever arising as a result of my participation in any and all activities connected directly or indirectly with the GM Ski Club. I also certify that I am at least 19 years of age or older and that I have read and understand the conditions outlined above. I have read and understand the Refund/Cancellation policies applicable to this trip.

Date: _____ Signed _____

* Please see the GM By-Laws concerning smoking on Club trips or ask the Trip Leader.





Backcountry Cooking

Wild Mushroom Couscous with Turkey

Ingredients:

1 off-the-shelf box of Wild Mushroom Couscous (*this and other flavors available at Meijer*)

2 packets of freeze-dried turkey (~ 28 grams each)

2-3 Tablespoons parmesan cheese (shredded is best)

1/4 cup toasted pine nuts

1/4 cup sunflower seeds

At home directions:

Split ingredients evenly into two quart-size freezer bags, makes two meals. (It's very important to use freezer bags, not regular storage bags.)

On trail directions:

Add 1 cup of boiling water to each freezer bag. Mix the contents well (carefully mush the bag around a lot). Insulate well, using either a freezer-bag cozie or fleece clothing (the latter is not recommended in bear country). Let sit for approximately 10 minutes, mixing/mushing periodically. Allow more cooking time in colder weather. Eat and enjoy!

Each serving is approx. 700 calories.

Recommended tools/resources:

Long handled spoon (lightweightbackpacking.com)

Freezer-bag cozie (freezerbagcooking.com)

Freeze-dried turkey (wildernessdining.com)

The Life of a SOLAR Treasurer

*Part 3 of a series of articles
on Steering Committee positions.*

Job duties per SOLAR bylaws:



"It shall be the duty of the treasurer to have custody of all funds; accounting for the same at the Steering Committee regular meetings in a written report (including assets and liabilities, and current month's income and expenditures), and any other time demanded by the Steering Committee; to maintain an inventory record and to perform such other duties as pertinent to the office; and serve as chairperson of the Budget and Finance Committee. Upon retirement from office the treasurer shall turn over to the successor or to the president, all funds, books of accounts or any S.O.L.A.R property in his/her possession."

General responsibilities:

- Collecting, counting and depositing monies to the bank monthly (or more often).
- Receiving and reimbursing for all bills and receipts turned in.
- Posting all deposits and disbursements into QuickBooks.
- Posting transactions using the SOLAR debit card.
- Reconciling the bank accounts to agree with bank statements.
- Tracking bank adjustments such as NSF checks.
- Reporting to the steering committee monthly.

THE BEST OF YOSEMITE

Poem & Photo by Glenn Schultz

*This is dedicated
To Kevin and Bert,
Maria and Susan.
Fine hikers all.*

*I put pen to paper
This poem I composed
From your experiences
On The BEST of the YOS.*

*Half Dome, the renowned
Monolithic Half Rock.
So photogenic
The Anchor of the Park*

*Scale it by cables
Up the backside we go.
Here we hang tight
The whole group is in tow.*

*The sheer granite side
Of El Capitan's wall.
Standing below it
One feels rather small.*

*Camp on the summit
There, star gazing's the best.
Don't skirt by the edge
Or it's death you'll bequest.*

*The climbers come up
Off the wall they appear.
Like out of thin air,
Then down trail disappear.*

*There's Yosemite Falls,
Bridalveil and Nevada.
Some were ribbon dry
The drought was the matter.*

*And Clouds Rest was fun
Some exposure I'm told.
Could see the whole valley
From the crest toward below*

*Glacier and Washburn
All Points of their own
And Taft and El Portal
Great views to behold!*

*Here Curry Village
Is a small busy town
Parking lots and tourists
Buses to get round.*

*The Grill and Degnan's
Full of lines and good food.
We met a fine waitress
The opposite of rude.*

*After hiking nine days
We parted fine fellows
Some for the JMT
At Tuolumne Meadows.*

*The flowing Merced River
Its meander and weave
The Valley it nourishes
Fine memories we'll keep.*

SOLAR's Annual Picnic and Gear Swap

July 2009 ~ Island Theme



The Dollar Bin—perhaps a new national chain idea?



Talking about trips



Let's make a deal!



SOLAR AUGUST 2009 CALENDAR

www.SolarOutdoors.org

AUGUST ACTIVITIES

8/4	Tues	Monthly Meeting 7:30pm	Colony Hall	Cindy Taylor	SolarPresident@SolarOutdoors.org
8/4	Tues	Program- Core Course Introduction	Colony Hall	Debbie Zuchlewski	SolarPrograms@SolarOutdoors.org
8/8	Sat	Moonlight Paddle	Proud Lake Rec Area	Margaret Martin	mpluscat@yahoo.com
8/13	Thurs	September SOLAR RAY Deadline		Jennifer Tislerics	SOLARrayeditor@SolarOutdoors.org
8/28-30	Wknd	Backpacking Beach Clean-up	Nordhouse Wilderness Dunes	Vida Ruggero	rageti@hotmail.com

AUGUST CLASSES

8/13,20	Thurs	Beginning Backpacking (<i>continues in Sept</i>)	TBD	Carol McCrie	cmccrie@sbcglobal.net
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SEPTEMBER ACTIVITIES

9/1	Tues	Monthly Meeting 7:30pm	Colony Hall	Cindy Taylor	SolarPresident@SolarOutdoors.org
9/1	Tues	Program- TBD	Colony Hall	Debbie Zuchlewski	SolarPrograms@SolarOutdoors.org
9/4	Fri	Moonlight Paddle	Proud Lake Rec Area	Margaret Martin	mpluscat@yahoo.com
9/17	Thurs	October SOLAR RAY Deadline		Jennifer Tislerics	SOLARrayeditor@SolarOutdoors.org
9/18-20	Wknd	Whitewater Rafting	Upper Gauley River, West Virginia	Darrell Ahlberg	dahlberg7@comcast.net

SEPTEMBER CLASSES

9/3, 10, 17, 18-20, 24	Thurs/ Wknd	Beginning Backpacking (<i>continues in Oct</i>)	TBD	Carol McCrie	cmccrie@sbcglobal.net
9/16, 26-27	Multi	Women in the Woods (<i>continues in Oct</i>)	TBD	Pamela Riehl	pariehl@gmail.com

OCTOBER ACTIVITIES

10/3	Sat	Moonlight Paddle	Proud Lake Rec Area	Margaret Martin	mpluscat@yahoo.com
10/4-10	Multi	Week in the Adirondacks	Lake Placid, NY	Don Wold	dwold12972@aol.com
10/6	Tues	Monthly Meeting 7:30pm	Colony Hall	Cindy Taylor	SolarPresident@SolarOutdoors.org
10/6	Tues	Program- TBD	Colony Hall	Debbie Zuchlewski	SolarPrograms@SolarOutdoors.org
10/15	Thurs	November SOLAR RAY Deadline		Jennifer Tislerics	SOLARrayeditor@SolarOutdoors.org

OCTOBER CLASSES

10/2-4	Thurs	Beginning Backpacking (<i>continued</i>)	TBD	Carol McCrie	cmccrie@sbcglobal.net
10/14, 21, 24-25	Weds, Wknd	Basic Land Navigation	TBD	Brian Andrews	briangandrews@comcast.net
10/16-18	Wknd	Women in the Woods (<i>continued</i>)	Red River Gorge, KY	Pamela Riehl	pariehl@gmail.com

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

11/1	Sun	Moonlight Paddle	Proud Lake Rec Area	Margaret Martin	mpluscat@yahoo.com
Fall 2010	Multi	Gaelic Adventure	Ireland/Scotland	Jim Gessner	gessnerj@comcast.net

If you would like to plan/lead a SOLAR activity, contact our Activities Chairperson, Samantha Schafer, at SolarActivities@SolarOutdoors.org.

If you would like to teach or suggest a SOLAR class, contact our Education Chairperson, Marie Martinko, at SolarEducation@SolarOutdoors.org.

SOLAR HAS A NO-REFUND POLICY. IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO ATTEND AN ACTIVITY, YOU MAY "SELL YOUR SPOT" TO ANOTHER CLUB MEMBER.



WHAT IS SOLAR?

SOLAR is a non-profit, volunteer-based organization with 400-plus members who enjoy the outdoors. Members share their knowledge and experience with each other by leading classes and coordinating activities/trips.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership is only \$40 a year per person (\$55 per family) and includes free access to most 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, deep 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 Colony Hall, 21780 Evergreen (between 8 Mile & 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 SOLARmembership@solaroutdoors.org.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Submissions for the *SOLAR Ray* are due on the Thursday three weeks prior to the monthly Membership meeting. Articles, poems, recipes, etc. should be submitted in electronic format, preferably in Microsoft Word. Please attach images separately. If you have any questions, please contact Jennifer Tislerics at SOLARrayeditor@solaroutdoors.org.

STEERING COMMITTEE

President: Cindy Taylor	Activities: Samantha Schafer	Bylaws: Allen Duncan
Vice President: Carol McCririe	Education: Marie Martinko	Equipment: Laura Buhl
Secretary: Samantha Mozdierz	Historian: Chuck Smith	Membership: Mary Price
Treasurer: Mary Donahue	Programs: Debbie Zuchlewski	Public Relations: Gloria Fontaine
	Ray Editor: Jennifer Tislerics	Webmaster: Jeff McWilliams

PRESIDENTS AT LARGE

Mike Banks | Leslie Cordova | Al Fylak | Steve Gardner | Bill Halvingis | Cindy Harrison-Felix
Tom Hayes | Joan Hettinger | Doug Lanyk | Larry Martin | 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 Cindy Taylor at SOLARpresident@solaroutdoors.org.

SPECIAL THANKS TO THE SOLAR RAY ASSISTANT EDITORS

Laura Buhl, Winnie Chrzanowski, Sheila Hardy, Jennifer Hill, Ken Lemieux, Pamela Schmelzer-Anzicek, Elizabeth Schwab, Rebecca Sweeton and Ati Tislerics.

MORE INFORMATION

Please visit our website at www.solaroutdoors.org.

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