

The SOLAR Ray

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

November 2009

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Fall Backpacking Class '09

By Bourke Thomas

It all began on a late summer night in August....

To be exact it was Thursday, August 13, when 19 backpacking students (we lost a few through the weeks for various reasons) gathered in the Royal Oak Senior Center to learn the skills necessary to survive in the wilderness. Before class started, conversations began, and I kept my ears peeled to the discussions going on around me. People talked about the wide range of experiences they have had. Some of my fellow classmates had little to no experience, while others have been enjoying the wilderness through backpacking for years.



The instructors were great! They were knowledgeable and excited to teach about their particular subjects. We learned a bunch of information on basic survival skills, knot tying, how to plan a trip and the gear that would be necessary, among other subjects. This class, no matter the students'

experience level, helped everyone learn a lot about beginning backpacking.

Our first practical was September 18 - 20 at Brighton Recreation Area.



We arrived Friday night, set up our tents, and got to know one another around the camp fire. On Saturday, we packed up camp and hiked 6 miles on the trail with our full packs. It was a good thing we hiked those 6 miles because later on that night we had a huge potluck with lots of tasty food that left everyone wanting to take a little snooze. On Saturday, we had

demonstrations by the instructors on different types of stoves, water filters, and how to plan different styles of

(Continued on page 2)

(Continued from page 1)

meals from quick and easy to "trail gourmet." On Sunday, we were dropped off on the side of the road, given a map and told to use our compasses to



find three points and the way to our destination. This opportunity was definitely great for the team because we were able to work together, practice different orienteering strategies, learn the proper way to use a compass, and find the way out of the woods!

Our final practical took place October 2 - 4 at Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore in the Upper Peninsula. All I can say is, what a great place! A few members of the class did not go on this excursion, but I know the ones that went were amazed with the sights. I will be honest; we were all a little reluctant after watching the weather forecast day after day, hour after hour, hoping that

maybe they were wrong about not only the temperature, but the forecast for rain for Friday, Saturday and Sunday. We started off



on that brisk Friday afternoon at Munising Falls and hiked about 7 miles to Cliffs Group site. It began raining shortly after we started to hike, and by the time we arrived at camp, we had had our first experience of setting up camp in the rain! Everyone did extremely well setting up camp and cooking. We even got a fire started! On Saturday the weather was a bit chilly, but no rain and, of course, great hiking. We hiked approximately 6 miles to the Mosquito group site. We set up camp at Mosquito, and the students set out on a day-hike to see some more of the amazing rocks and formations along the trail. On Sunday, we woke up to the sound of pouring rain on our tent. All I could think of was now we have to pack up in the pouring rain. Luckily, it stopped raining, we were able to pack up and start our hike. We hiked past Mosquito Falls which was spectacular! As we concluded our trip, the drizzle became more constant. When we got back to the cars, it was pouring. Some people headed to Sydney's to conclude, while others began heading home.

It was a great experience and I am very glad I was part of it. I met and formed a bond with so many amazing people. I look forward to getting more involved in the club by taking classes and possibly leading a trip!

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

A group of people is called a crowd, but what is a group of crows called?

Match the name of the animals below with its group name.



MATCH THESE

1. _____ Eagles
2. _____ Wolves
3. _____ Fish
4. _____ Locusts
5. _____ Turtles
6. _____ Frogs
7. _____ Ants
8. _____ Geese
9. _____ Crows
10. _____ Birds
11. _____ Bears
12. _____ Squirrels

WITH THESE

- A. Gaggle
- B. Army
- C. Bale
- D. School
- E. Convocation
- F. Pack
- G. Plague
- H. Colony
- I. Murder
- J. Flock
- K. Sloth
- L. Dray

Answers are shown on page 3.



Being on the other side...

by Samantha Mozdierz

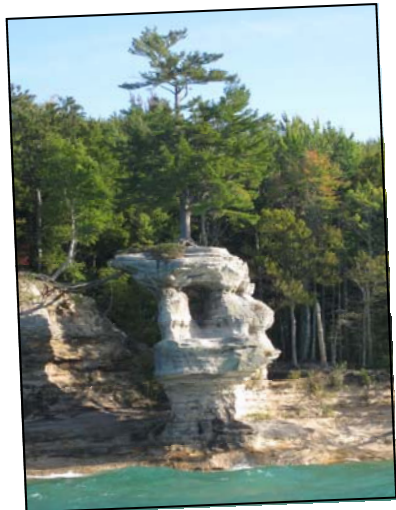
It seems like only yesterday that I was a student in the fall backpacking class....where has the time gone? This summer I was approached to help with the class. Yes, being the Rookie, I had the glorious topic of Hygiene! All I can say is it was a great experience to be on the other side now as an instructor.



Backpacking is one of my greatest joys, and I was excited to help teach and share my experiences. Helping instruct a class is only one of the many ways to give back to SOLAR.

One of the best parts of the fall backpacking class is the second practical at Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore. On Thursday, October 1st,

Carol, Leslie, Cindy and I ventured to Munising in hopes of catching the last Pictured Rocks Boat Cruise of the day to see the beautiful sights from another perspective. At 4:00 p.m.



warm and in great spirits. The trip was approximately three hours in length and worth every minute of it! I totally recommend it!

The Pictured Rocks practical was a success. It was great to see the students working together using the skills that they had gained. As for the instructors, I have never seen such a clumsy bunch. Four out of eight instructors were off of their feet at one time or another. If it wasn't Carol tripping over the guy line (yes, she did save the camera that was in her hand), it was Leslie flat on her back on the wooden bridge, Cindy sprawled out on the ground in front of Jan's tent, or Kevin lying in a mud puddle just a short



distance from the car. On these practicals, the instructors look forward to them and have as much fun as the students do.

Not only do I recommend taking additional classes through SOLAR, but after this experience, I also encourage others to get involved and volunteer to help teach classes. I have learned as much as an instructor as I did as a student. I also formed many new friendships with students and other instructors. The class was a great time and I want to thank everyone who participated!

the four of us boarded the cruise to start the adventure. I am sure the cruise is a lot more enjoyable in the summertime, but the many layers of clothing along with the hats and gloves kept us

TEST YOUR KNOWLEDGE

Answer Key

1. E
2. F
3. D
4. G
5. C
6. B
7. H
8. A
9. I
10. J
11. K
12. L

*Thanks to Lou Szakal
for the quiz!*

SOLAR Program - January 5, 2010

2009 ANNUAL PHOTO CONTEST

By Debbie Zuchlewski

It's that time of year again when all of you amateur photographers can brag about your trips and show off your stuff.
So dig out those photos from year 2009 and enter them into this year's photo contest.



Categories:

- ❖ Scenery
- ❖ Non-SOLAR Scenery
- ❖ Digitally Enhanced Scenery
- ❖ Digitally Enhanced Other
- ❖ Animals
- ❖ Plants
- ❖ Non-SOLAR Plants/Animals
- ❖ Humor
- ❖ Non-SOLAR Humor
- ❖ People
- ❖ Black & White
- ❖ Photo-Pro
- ❖ Best Overall

Category Explanations:

Digitally enhanced: If you alter your photo in any way on your computer or splice several photos together, you can only enter them in the "digitally enhanced" category. Cropping is the only exception. Digitally enhanced photos may be entered in the "scenery" or the "other" category.

Photo-Pro: Photos in this category won't be eligible for the "Grand Prize". This category is meant to encourage full creativity for the more advanced photographers, while not having others compete with them.

Official Rules:

- ❖ You must be a SOLAR member to enter the photo contest.
- ❖ Photos must have been taken between January 1, 2009 and December 31, 2009.
- ❖ Standard photos must be no larger than 8x10 and panoramic no larger than 8x18.
- ❖ Photos must be matted with mat size no larger than 11x14 on standard photos and 11x21 on panoramic photos.
- ❖ Photos must have been taken by the person entering them.
- ❖ Photos must be taken at a SOLAR event unless entered in the non-SOLAR category.
- ❖ Only one photo entry per person per category and only ten entries per person overall are allowed.
- ❖ Prizes will be awarded to the first place winner in each category and to the Best Overall.
- ❖ Photos will be voted on by SOLAR members who attend the January 2010 meeting and winners will be announced that evening.

SPOTLIGHT ON...



Ken Lemieux
SOLAR Ray
Assistant Editor

How long have you been a member of SOLAR? Since January 2008.

How did you learn of SOLAR in the first place? Co-worker Brian Nordhaus had been telling me about SOLAR for years. Finally I decided to attend a meeting and take, as everyone suggested, the Beginner Backpacking class. Hooked.

What are some outdoorsy activities you enjoy? Walking my dog, going to the park with my kids, canoeing, day hikes, cross country skiing, and biking. I've been day hiking all my life, but just took up backpacking - and I love it! Wish I'd started 20 years ago.

What has been your favorite trip/activity so far? Six of us who met in the Beginner Backpacking class went to Isle Royale this past August. We hiked from Rock Harbor to Windigo via the Minong Ridge trail. It was very rewarding in that none of us were overly experienced, but we planned meticulously and trained a fair amount. Our physical and mental preparation served us well, especially when the weather wasn't so swell.

What would your ideal trip be like? Taking my kids backpacking somewhere for a week when they are old enough, perhaps the Grand Canyon.

Which SOLAR classes have you taken? What class(es) do you wish were offered that are not currently? So far, only Beginner Backpacking and Kayaking. I hope to take more as time allows (with three kids that is the trick) so until I've experienced some of the others, I probably shouldn't be suggesting additional curriculum!

Tell us something about you that would surprise us! My first two plane rides were to and from England. In my third trip, I jumped out of a plane.

Do you have any pets? Kids? Significant Other? Married for 12 years to my wonderful wife, Marcie. We have four-year-old twin girls and a two-year-old boy. And a Boxer named Zeke.

What would you like to see changed in SOLAR in the next year? More trips made public. It seemed like in 2008 there were more offerings. Maybe it's the economy?

What inspired you to run for a Steering Committee position? Actually, I'm not on the Steering Committee. However, Jeff McWilliams gave me a great speech about how the organization relies on volunteers (he really should consider a job selling insurance) and shamed me into action. So I became an assistant editor for the Ray and am a "charter member" of the PR Committee.





Enjoy Michigan Winters! Backpacking & Winter Skills Class



Winter backpacking skills are not just for the winter; these skills are a useful back-up for the chilly days in early spring and late fall, at higher elevations and on those unexpectedly cold nights. In this class we'll teach you how to keep warm and maintain high energy levels when skiing or snowshoeing in the winter (just in case something does go HORRIBLY WRONG on that so-called "simple," 3 hour ski trip). Students in this class will learn how to build a snow shelter and work on many other winter skills. 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 the beginning backpacking class through SOLAR, or have comparable experience and are looking to expand your skills to the next level, this is the class for you!



We will have six classroom sessions and two practical exercises 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 it's up to you - lay around on the couch all winter watching outdoor shows on TV, or take this class and actually live the adventure! After all, isn't that why you joined SOLAR?

The cost is \$100.00 for new students (there is a reduced fee for past graduates who want to retake the course). Classroom dates are December 2, 9, 16 and January 6, 20 and 27. Outdoor practical exercise dates are January 16-17 and February 5-7.

To sign up or to ask questions about the class, contact Allen Duncan at (734) 276-3194 or allenduncan@aggienetwork.com.

Sun, sand, sunsets and fun at Nordhouse Dunes

November 6-8

Not quite ready to put away your backpack for the season? Looking for just "one more" backpacking trip before the snow and the deer hunters? Then join us at Nordhouse Dunes the weekend of November 6-8. The only designated wilderness area in the Lower Peninsula, Nordhouse Dunes is a mix of Lake Michigan beach, sand dunes, and forest. Depending on the weather, possible activities include sunbathing, swimming, hiking, stargazing, and snowball fights. We will camp Friday night (exact location to be determined), hike about 5-6 miles and camp near the beach Saturday, then hike back to our cars Sunday.

Some backpacking experience, such as the beginning backpacking class, is required. Another trip I led there in November 2003 featured lake effect snow, as shown in the picture below. Of course, we could also see temperatures in the 70s. Regardless of the weather, you will get to watch some poor soul wade into Lake Michigan to get water.

There is no charge for this trip; participants will share any expenses. You can sign up by emailing me directly at [kdcotter\[at\]wowway\[dot\]com](mailto:kdcotter[at]wowway[dot]com) or see me at the November SOLAR meeting.

~ Kevin Cotter





Learning About Education in SOLAR

By Marie Martinko

This is the sixth of a continuing series of articles on SOLAR Steering Committee positions.



Being active in SOLAR provides boundless opportunities to learn – not only about outdoors skills, but also about the organization, how it works, and what I can do as your Education Chairperson.

Some Education Chairperson responsibilities are pretty visible. At SOLAR's General Membership meetings (the first Tuesday of each month at Colony Hall in Southfield), announcements are made about recently completed and forthcoming classes and workshops¹. I love hearing students share their experiences! Backpacking, kayaking, Wilderness First Aid, land navigation, adventure racing, mountaineering, cross-country skiing... every class has a story. Those stories are a great testament to what can be learned from dedicated SOLAR members who lead and assist with those classes. For upcoming classes, previous students may chime in to inspire people to sign up. After those announcements, I've added brief updates on Education Committee activities to help improve communications with the broader membership.

Other responsibilities include:

- ❖ Leading the Education Committee's efforts to fulfill its purpose: to coordinate and promote educational programs offered through SOLAR; develop and maintain related guidelines; assist and support members who develop, instruct, organize and/or promote these programs and explore new areas that may be of interest to members of SOLAR;
- ❖ Coordinating/administering class evaluations;
- ❖ Ensuring information about upcoming classes is accurate on the various online and print calendars;

- ❖ Responding to or redirecting questions about classes, and
- ❖ Providing Education Committee reports at monthly Steering Committee meetings.

One ongoing Education Committee project is the "SOLAR Guidelines – Coordinating a Class or Workshop" (Guidelines), released in May and posted to the SOLAR Yahoo! Group Files. The Guidelines are intended to help members through the process of coordinating educational programming and information for the SOLAR membership. SOLAR does not offer classes, but permits members to offer classes within the scope of SOLAR's core activities. You can read more in "How SOLAR Works – an Overview of the Club," also posted in the Yahoo! Group Files. The Education Committee is reviewing the Guidelines, seeking input from lead instructors and working to complete related guidelines for students. Classes are a huge benefit of SOLAR membership, so we're working to preserve the spirit and opportunities for SOLAR members to share their skills with and learn from one other.

Any SOLAR member can propose a class, and while it takes a little effort, we want to make that process as simple and purposeful as possible! To get started, please contact me so we can walk and support you through the process. Once things are in place, the class will be added to the SOLAR calendar, you can announce the details at SOLAR meetings, and the class can be promoted in the SOLAR Ray. The Education Committee has resources from sign-up sheets to waiver forms. Someday I'd like to see an instructor mentoring program!

Have a passion for education but aren't looking to lead a class? The Education Committee has various opportunities for you to

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¹ Loosely defined, classes involve outdoor practicals while workshops do not; for this article I'll collectively refer to them as classes.

(Continued from page 7)

get involved! We could use class evaluation administrators, for example. Some goals I see us achieving in the months ahead include:

- ❖ providing general descriptions of classes on the SOLAR website;
- ❖ updating education-related information on the SOLAR website;
- ❖ furthering a process to gather/review/revise class information to make the "paperwork" easier for instructors and the Education Chairperson when the same class is offered in the future;
- ❖ developing a binder of classes with descriptions and photos, and
- ❖ reviewing/revising/expanding the resources available to instructors and students.

Following the Activities Committee lead, there is now a folder in the SOLAR Yahoo! Group files section for class flyers, which can also be linked to from the calendar in the online version of the SOLAR Ray. Please be sure to check with the appropriate instructor for the latest information on space available, any pre-requisites, etc.

While you'll continue to get education-related information from us, the Education Committee and I want to hear from you, too. Contact me anytime at SolarEducation@SolarOutdoors.org!

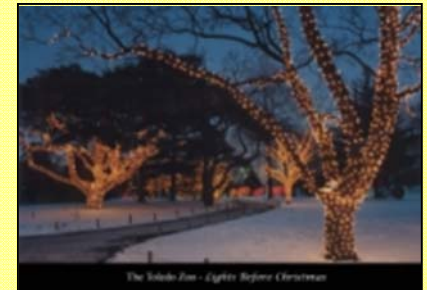
Toledo Zoo's Lights Before Christmas Friday, November 20, 6:00 - 9:00 p.m.

By Debbie Zuchlewski

The Toledo Zoo's Lights Before Christmas kicks off the holiday season with dazzling displays of lights, holiday treats and festive good cheer. On Friday, November 20, the Toledo Zoo will kick off a new season of the Lights Before Christmas with the ceremonial lighting of its 85-foot Norway spruce tree, decorated entirely with energy-saving LED lights. Adorned with over 32,000 lights, this spruce boasts more lights than the famous Christmas tree in New York City's Rockefeller Center!

Join other SOLARites, friends and family for the kick-off tree lighting ceremony between 6:00 and 6:30 p.m. on Friday, November 20. The Toledo Zoo has the best lights display in the area with over one million lights throughout the zoo.

We will enjoy hot chocolate and other holiday treats, carolers and ice carving demonstrations, and rides on the Safari Railway and African Animal Carousel, weather permitting. Admission prices are \$10 for adults, \$7 for children (2-11) and seniors (60+), and free for children under age 2, \$5 parking.



Plan:

- Meet at the zoo entrance, in front of the gift shop at 6:00 p.m.
(late arrivals should call me on my cell phone below so we can meet up)
- Tour the zoo
- Meet back at the gift shop at 9:00 p.m.
- Head to the Ground Round for dinner and drinks (Ground Round Grill, 5806 Telegraph Rd., Toledo, OH)

For More Information:

Please contact Debbie Zuchlewski by email at [Solarprograms\(at\)solaroutdoors\(dot\)org](mailto:Solarprograms(at)solaroutdoors(dot)org) or by telephone at 586 292-7058. You can also visit the Toledo Zoo's website for more information at www.toledozoo.org.

Please let me know if you are coming to dinner after the zoo so I can make reservations.

Upcoming SOLAR Programs

Debbie Zuchlewski

SOLAR Programs Chairperson

November SOLAR Program: Drummunity

A “Drummunity” circle is a high energy, fun and empowering activity. Lori Fithian, drum circle facilitator, will bring her collection of hand drums and percussion toys to the November SOLAR meeting to transform our community into a “Drummunity” - a word she invented for the community-building that happens when people come together around a circle of drums. Drumming can result in stress release, personal growth & empowerment, listening skills, team building, spontaneity and creativity, musical rhythmic experience and connection.

December SOLAR Program: Winter Gear Swap and a Presentation entitled “All About SOLAR”

The SOLAR Steering Committee will be sharing new (and old) information about the club. We will also be answering your pre-submitted questions regarding SOLAR. Please submit your questions to SOLARpresident@solaroutdoors.org no later than November 23 so we can work your questions into the presentation. We will have time for questions and answers at Mr. Joe’s following the meeting.

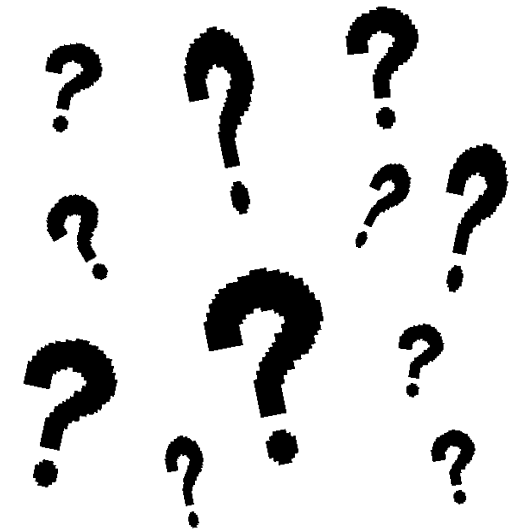
Annual Holiday Party: Friday, December 4 at Colony Hall

We will be holding our annual Holiday Party on Friday, December 4 at Colony Hall. The party will begin at 7:00 p.m. SOLAR will be providing turkey, ham, soda, water, and all of the paperware. Music will be provided by “Superior Sounds.” Please contact Debbie Zuchlewski at SOLARprograms@solaroutdoors.org if you would like to be part of the Holiday Party Planning Committee.

January SOLAR Program: Annual Photo Contest

SOLAR amateur photographers will have an opportunity to show off their camera skills. Dig up your best photos from 2009 and bring them to the January 2010 meeting. Details on the categories, official rules, and prizes will be distributed at the November SOLAR meeting, and are available on Page 4 of this Ray newsletter.

Please Note: All SOLAR Programs take place at Colony Hall immediately following the monthly SOLAR business meeting.



Submit your questions about
SOLAR, classes, trips,
policies and such for the
“All About SOLAR” program!

Send questions to:
SOLARpresident@solaroutdoors.org
By November 23, 2009



Even Cowboys Get the Blues

By Debbie Zuchlewski

However, none of the cowboys and cowgirls who went horseback riding with a group of 12 SOLAR members and friends got the blues. It was a beautiful day - the fall colors were at their peak, it was sunny and relatively warm, and all our hearts were lifted by a great horseback ride through the woods at Brighton Rec Riding Stables. After the ride we dismounted our horses and discovered why cowboys are bow legged. It took a few minutes to regain our land legs and then we proceeded to pull out our food for a traditional SOLAR potluck lunch. We had pumpkin soup, brats (thanks to Frank who brought a propane grill), chili, bean salad, sandwiches, fruit salad, hot apple cider, cookies, and Susan brought brownies that are a close match to Margaret's famous brownies. There was way too much food, so we invited the Brighton Recreation Riding Stables staff to join us for lunch. They couldn't believe the spread we brought for a picnic lunch. The staff enjoyed our company, stories, and food so much that they are anxious to see us come back. After a leisurely 90 minute lunch break the group then proceeded across the street to Bishop Lake where we hiked one of the park trails. What a beautiful, relaxing day. What's better than the great outdoors, good friends, good food, and exercise. You can't beat it, and it's guaranteed to lift even those cowboy blues. See you at our next adventure.



Bike Through the Lights

at Wayne County's Hines Park

Wednesday, November 18 at 7:00 p.m.

Wayne County Parks is hosting its annual holiday light show along Hines Drive in Westland. The night before they let the cars start driving through, the lightfest will be made available only to bicyclists.

Jennifer Tislerics is coordinating a group of SOLARites to ride through the lights together at this event. Please register your participation directly with Friends of Wayne County Parks, using their downloadable form, found in the Files section of the SOLAR Yahoo! Group, or at this shortcut: <http://bit.ly/BikeLights>.



The registration fee is \$18 on/before October 31, from November 1-17 it is \$20, and on event day (November 18) it is \$25. It's only \$12 for those in high school or younger. Your registration fee includes a free t-shirt (to the first 300 registrants) and snacks after the ride. Funds benefit the Friends of Wayne County Parks.

Check-in begins at 5:30 on Wednesday, November 18th, and ends at 6:45. The 16K bike ride starts at 7:00 p.m. There is a contest for the most decorated bicycle—and people often have a lot of creative fun with their bikes and costumes!

SOLAR members will gather near the registration area that night, to ride together through the holiday lights.

Contact Jennifer Tislerics with any questions — [jtislerics \[at\] yahoo \[dot\] com](mailto:jtislerics@yahoo.com) or 313-794-0164.



Additional Photos from the Glacier National Park Trip

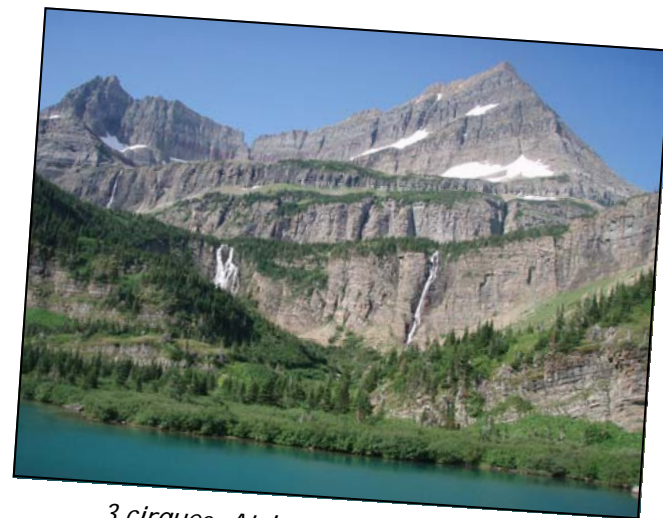
Submitted by Sara Cockrell



Bill & Kevin enjoying the view of Blackfoot & Jackson Glaciers



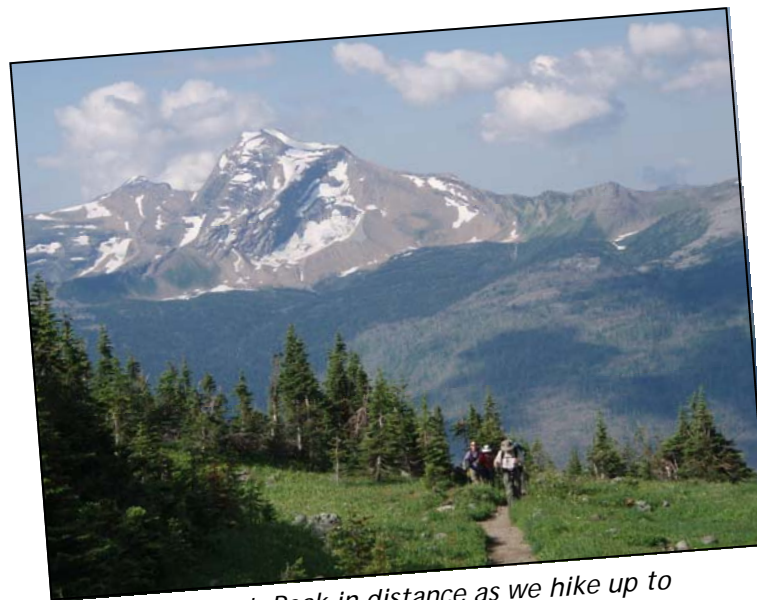
SOLAR group leaving Flattop Mountain campsite: Bill Ahlstrom, Kevin Cotter, Carolyn Francis, Bert Courson, Sara Cockrell & Maria Edwards



3 cirques, Atsina Lake, Atsina & Palota Falls, Shepard Glacier & Cathedral Peak from Stoney Indian Pass Trail



Papa mountain goat greeting us on top of Gunsight Pass, with Lake Ellen Wilson's hanging valley below (& our night's campsite)



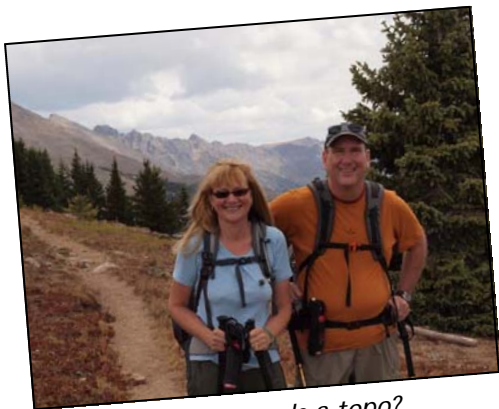
Heaven's Peak in distance as we hike up to Swiftcurrent Pass

DAY HIKES YIKES!

An Unexpected Night in Colorado's Holy Cross Wilderness

By Marcia and Matt Murphy

Gratitude to all the knowledgeable and dedicated SOLAR instructors who share their wisdom and time to make our lives in the backcountry safer and more enjoyable.



Who needs a topo?

would go on a 10 mile day with two liters of water, some trail snacks, a map and, occasionally, a jacket each. Our tale depicts the teachings we heeded and those we have since revisited.

This year, our first destination was the White River National Forest in Colorado. The forest has seven ranger districts and covers 2.3 million acres including eight wilderness areas. We drove from Detroit to Denver and arrived late Friday, September 4. On Saturday, before driving to our cabin in Glenwood Springs, we did an eight mile hike suggested by the ranger in the Dillon district. For each park we visit, our routine is to

stop at the ranger's office or visitors' center to ask the locals about their favorite hikes and to flesh out our map cache.

On Sunday, we drove to the Glenwood Springs ranger office only to find it closed. Since Glenwood Springs was the superintendent's headquarters, and it was a weekend, we drove to the Carbondale office. Carbondale was closed also. After a call to the answering machine in the Eagle district, we decided to choose our Sunday and Monday hikes from the materials we had purchased before leaving home — a national forest guidebook with sketch maps, distance, elevation change, difficulty ratings and narrative and a National Geographic Trails Illustrated map covering only a minute portion of the area.

After hiking an out-and-back trail on Sunday, we wanted to find a loop for the Monday hike. Dismissing the trails on the topographic map, we found the perfect loop in the national forest guide—the Ironedge and Lake Charles trails. From the trailhead, Ironedge starts at approximately 9,400 feet, climbs to 12,000 feet and ends around 11,000 feet over six miles. The Lake Charles trail climbs to a 16 acre lake at 11,300 feet in five and a half



Peter Estin Hut—anyone need water?

We sent the link to my Blackberry and created a bookmark, available offline.

After skipping our typical lumberjack breakfast on Monday morning, we headed out to the trailhead. Before I left the car, I tore a few pages out of the national forest guide having the sketch map and descriptions on surrounding hikes. We started up the Ironedge Trail around 10 a.m. The trail was well marked with blue



Off the ridge

miles. From the sketch map, it appeared the trails intersected approximately one half mile before Lake Charles. From Matt's computer, we checked the national forest website for additional information and viewed the topographic maps.

blazes until it crossed into the Holy Cross Wilderness at the site of a public hut. The hut, unoccupied at the time, had a water pump, a fire pit and wood.

The trail was

(Continued on page 13)

(Continued from page 12)

unmistakable as we traveled up towards the tree line. We met a party of six hikers and, after chatting, joined forces and followed the trail out of the trees and across the ridge to the highest point. We rested for awhile, enjoying the views. Matt commented that we'd forgotten our camera and a couple offered to take our picture and email that with other photos from the hike. As a group, we began making our way down to the Lake Charles connection, but I was hungry and Matt and I broke off for lunch.



The descent off the ridge



View from the highest point

After lunch, we saw our new friends ahead of us on the trail below. We caught sight of the party

once more as we hiked down from the ridge into a muddy meadow around 3 p.m. After five minutes of following the trail through the meadow, we came across a sign for Ironedge with an arrow pointing straight ahead to what appeared to be a "T" in the trails. There was no additional signage; however, based on the map we had from the national forest guide, Matt and I were confident the trail going right was the remaining hike to the lake and the trail left was the Lake Charles connection. We took a pass on the lake and turned left.

The trail through the grass and mud was clear and occasionally marked with rock cairns. We passed the remnants of two cabins and, after hiking fifteen minutes, we began to descend into pine, spruce and fir trees. We hiked for another half an hour until we started crossing a boulder field. I had been lost in my "pace and place" routine, saving my knees and ankles for the hike down to the parking lot. Matt broke my pace when he shouted "hello". He was clearly agitated and commented there were no signs that a party of six had been down this trail. There were no marks from their hiking poles and there were no recent boot prints. We stopped, pulled out our map, and read the download off the Blackberry. The narrative did not mention the remnants of the two cabins, nor the need to scramble across a boulder field. The topographic maps did not appear in the download. After a frantic debate, we

agreed to continue another fifteen minutes down the trail to see if we could glean any usable information.

We descended to a lake, which was too small to be the 16 acre Lake Charles. The trail continued in the approximate direction we needed to go but we could not anchor our current location. Again, we consulted the sketch map, but there was no other lake on our route. There was a lake south of our route but we were reasonably confident we hadn't turned that far off course. Since it was already 4 p.m., we began to retrace our steps to the last sign post. As we raced up the trail, we calmed ourselves by discussing our options. If we found the proper connection to the Lake Charles Trail, we could easily make it to the car before dark. If not, we could take Ironedge to the public hut, where there was water, wood and hopefully, newly-arrived residents.

With the rush of adrenaline, we made it back to the sign post in 45 minutes. Whistles at hand, we slogged around the area. Matt climbed to a high spot to look for obvious trails amongst the

furrows made by runoff while I scouted in the vicinity of the signpost. The "T" to the right seemed to go nowhere. After awhile, we convinced ourselves the "T" to the left was the correct direction and retraced our steps hoping to catch sight of a connecting trail.

About 6 p.m., we

(Continued on page 14)



Muddy meadow—Hmm... Which way, dear??

concluded we did not have enough information and the only way back to the car was via Ironedge. However, given the time and our adrenaline hangover, we doubted our ability to make it to the hut. Furthermore, we could not risk getting caught above the tree line overnight. The decision to spend the night in the Holy Cross Wilderness was a surprising relief.

Matt suggested we settle near the remnants of the two cabins. We hoped a fire would not be necessary; however, we gathered wood and prepared the teepee for a fire. The survey of water and food was disheartening. Of the 4-1/2 liters of water we carried in, we had one liter left. For food, we had less than two cups of trail mix, a granola bar and a cracker sandwich. Our strategy was to save our food and water until daybreak. Then, we would consume small amounts throughout the hike back across Ironedge. However, having skipped a filling breakfast and suffered the dehydrating effects of the hike in that elevation, we were concerned whether this was the best strategy. We bemoaned the fact I had water purifying tablets but, when at the lake, hadn't even considered the possibility of filling an empty Nalgene bottle.

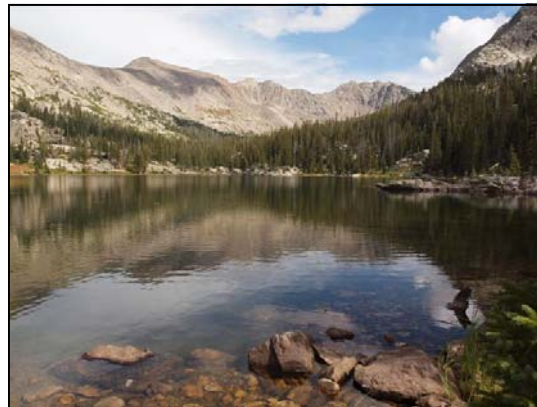
Having our decisions made and camp ready, we put on our headlamps, fleece and rain gear and crawled into our emergency bivy bags. As protection against curious or opportunistic wildlife, we huddled close to our bear spray and hiking poles. The bivy bags provided clammy warmth but the cold ground had us shivering in a short time. We got up, cut pine boughs for insulation and tried again to catch a few hours of sleep before the temperature dipped into the 40s.

Around 10 p.m., the yipping of a coyote family

convinced us it was time to light the fire. We shredded our emergency tinder, lit it and tried to get the flames to catch. The first attempt failed and we rebuilt the teepee with smaller sticks from pine trees. Before long, the fire was blazing. The rest of the night was spent tending the fire, taking turns trying to sleep, looking for wild eyes in the light and admiring the beauty around us.

Matt put the last log on the fire around 5:30 a.m. When that burned out, we started breaking camp. There were some old tin cans near the collapsed cabins so we gathered water from puddles in the meadow and put out the fire. Matt scattered the pine boughs and made an arrow out of wood pointing in our direction of travel.

By 6:30 a.m., it was light enough to hike, so we



So that's what Lake Charles looks like

began eating and drinking before setting off the way we had hiked in. Our legs felt like lead and we were dizzy from lack of sleep, food and water. We dragged ourselves across the muddy meadow, back to the signpost and started the climb back up to 12,000 feet. Despite our physical tiredness, each familiar piece of

landscape along the hike gave us assurance that we were doing the right thing and would make it out of the wilderness.

About 8:30 a.m., we reached the hut. Matt & I filled our Nalgene bottles at the water pump and started down. Shortly after 10 a.m., we caught sight of our car in the parking lot. At that moment, we truly understood gratitude.

Our first stop in Eagle was the ranger's office. We got a topographic map and studied it to see where we had been. The map shows a pack trail which shoots off Ironedge before the connection with Lake Charles. The pack trail goes past an unnamed lake before intersecting with the Lake Charles Trail. Our best guess is we took this trail, actually shortcutting the hike. An email from Jill, one of the individuals we met on the trail, confirmed what the topographic map also showed --that Ironedge met the Lake Charles Trail at the lake proper.

There are many lessons in this tale—both good and bad. For us, having a topographic map, studying it and tracking our progress at all times would have likely prevented this drama. Also, while our attitudes toward eating are appropriate when there's a vending machine or refrigerator a few steps away, they are inappropriate for wilderness hiking.

Again, I want to thank the SOLAR instructors for the valuable information and training which enabled us to get through this situation in safety and reasonable comfort. Having gotten in this situation, Matt & I are confident we made the correct decision to retrace our steps, spend the night, and exit the wilderness on the trail we knew would get us to the car.

In retrospect, the experience was actually quite enjoyable!

Good Morning Byron

Dawning quiet six a.m.
Daylight is newly spreading
Kneeling on the western bank
Towards morning I am gazing

Sun's rays begin to warm
Glow through the rows of pine
That crown the eastern hillside
Of this Byron Lake divine



Fine wedge of ginger orange
Reflects on water's plane
Expands in vibrant color
As height the sun does gain

Fog mist is softly swirling
Low, cross the water top
Moves quickly from the shoreline
In lake center vortex stops

Small circles one can see
That randomly appear
Rippling dots on water
Nudged by fishes rising near

A beaver swimming silently
Throughout the water gliding
His head and only ruff revealed
Drifts into glades for hiding

Near shallow water's edge
Where gnats amassed are dancing
Amid this visual wonderment
All is serene, enhancing



The osprey left his evening roost
The robin darts through trees
The crane back at our Friday camp
Stands Hoist Lake South Sentry

No hikers have emerged
From cocoons of sleeping bags
Their colored shelter canopies
Set back from lake shore's ridge

This mystic morning waking
This dawn in time does make
A symphony of dance and song
Good morning, Byron Lake.



*By Glenn Schultz ©2009
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SOLAR NOVEMBER 2009 CALENDAR

www.SolarOutdoors.org

NOVEMBER ACTIVITIES

11/1	Sun	Moonlight Paddle	Proud Lake Rec Area	Margaret Martin	mpluscat@yahoo.com
11/3	Tues	Monthly Meeting 7:30pm	Colony Hall	Cindy Taylor	SolarPresident@SolarOutdoors.org
11/3	Tues	Program- Drummunity	Colony Hall	Debbie Zuchlewski	SolarPrograms@SolarOutdoors.org
11/7	Sat	Going to the Parade Company in Detroit	Detroit, MI	Mike Hobig / Janet Schester	j40makayla@gmail.com
11/12	Thurs	December SOLAR Ray Deadline		Jennifer Tislerics	SOLARrayeditor@SolarOutdoors.org
11/18	Wed	Bike Through the Lights	Hines Park, Westland	Jennifer Tislerics	jtislerics@yahoo.com
11/20	Fri	Lights Before Christmas	Toledo Zoo	Debbie Zuchlewski	debz6178@yahoo.com

NOVEMBER CLASSES

11/12, 11/14-15	Thurs, Wknd	Wilderness First Aid (Re-certification option available)	Southfield, MI	Mike Malon	mmalon@comcast.net
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DECEMBER ACTIVITIES

12/1	Tues	Monthly Meeting 7:30pm	Colony Hall	Cindy Taylor	SolarPresident@SolarOutdoors.org
12/1	Tues	Program- Winter Gear Swap and Presentation about SOLAR	Southfield, MI	Debbie Zuchlewski	SolarPrograms@SolarOutdoors.org
12/4	Fri	SOLAR Holiday Party	Colony Hall	Debbie Zuchlewski	SolarPrograms@SolarOutdoors.org
12/5	Sat	Holiday Movie at the Redford Theater	Redford, MI	Darrell Ahlberg	dahlberg7@comcast.net
12/17	Thurs	January SOLAR Ray Deadline		Jennifer Tislerics	SOLARrayeditor@SolarOutdoors.org
12/26 - 1/3	Multi	Glenview for the Holidays	Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario	Leslie Cordova	lesliegene@aol.com

DECEMBER CLASSES

12/2,9,16	Weds	Enjoying Michigan Winters	Schoolcraft College Livonia, MI	Allen Duncan/ George Zapp	aduncan85@gmail.com gzapp@comcast.net
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JANUARY ACTIVITIES

1/5	Tues	Monthly Meeting 7:30pm	Colony Hall	Cindy Taylor	SolarPresident@SolarOutdoors.org
1/5	Tues	Program- Annual Photo Contest	Southfield, MI	Debbie Zuchlewski	SolarPrograms@SolarOutdoors.org
1/14	Thurs	February SOLAR Ray Deadline		Jennifer Tislerics	SOLARrayeditor@SolarOutdoors.org
1/30 - 2/6	Multi	Western Swing Ski Trip	Breckenridge, CO	Darrell Ahlberg	dahlberg7@comcast.net

JANUARY CLASSES

1/6,16-17, 20, 27	Weds & Wknd	Enjoying Michigan Winters	Schoolcraft College Livonia, MI Wknd - Pinckney, MI	Allen Duncan/ George Zapp	aduncan85@gmail.com gzapp@comcast.net
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UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

2/19-21	Wknd	Cross Country Ski and Snowshoe	Lake Ann, MI	Darrell Ahlberg	dahlberg7@comcast.net
2/28	Sun	American Lung Association Climb Detroit	Detroit, MI	Mary Donahue	mldonahue824@gmail.com
9/9 - 10/7	Multi	Gaelic Adventure	Ireland/Scotland	Jim Gessner	gessnerj@comcast.net

UPCOMING CLASSES

2/5-7	Wknd	Enjoying Michigan Winters	Pigeon River State Forest Vanderbilt, MI	Allen Duncan/ George Zapp	aduncan85@gmail.com gzapp@comcast.net
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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 Mozdzierz	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

Winnie Chrzanowski, Jennifer Hill, Ken Lemieux, Pamela Schmelzer-Anzicek, Rebecca Sweeton and Ati Tislerics.

MORE INFORMATION

Please visit our website at www.solaroutdoors.org or attend one of our monthly meetings..

SOLAR

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Visit our website: www.solaroutdoors.org

