

The SOLAR RAY

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



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December 2011

Into every life, a little snow will fall.

OTTER CREEK WILDERNESS AREA, WEST
VIRGINIA

by Karen Stauble

The trip to Otter Creek Wilderness Area was quite an adventure! **Gary Benninger** organized the trip and there were a total of eleven of us who participated. I had just completed the Fall beginning backpacking class and was glad to see an opportunity to keep my feet wet. I had no idea how literal that would turn out to be!

Otter Creek is located in the Monongahela National Forest of West Virginia. The area had been heavily logged until about 1914 so most of what is there today is second growth. The trails are breathtaking with thickets of rhododendron, walls of boulders, ambling brooks and the rushing Otter Creek, and views of the autumnal-colored mountains. We saw artifacts of the activity that took place in the past in the form of horseshoes, old chains and bowl-type objects. Otter Creek is in what is basically a bowl surrounded by mountains.

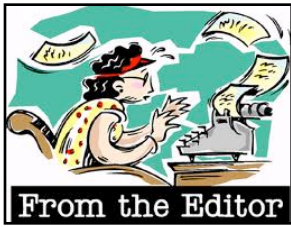
We started out on Friday morning with beautiful weather and immediately I was in awe of the abundance of rhododendron that covered the area. I'm used to the squeaking-by, on life support rhododendrons we usually see around here; these were mammoth and they were everywhere we looked. There was also an



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Ahh.... Fall is drawing to a close and winter's on it's blustery way, as the winds of the last few days and the articles in this month's Ray remind us. Heidi Tietjen writes a lovely article on one last fall hike in Ohio(p. 3), while Karen Sauble's article on the Otter Creek trip (cover story, p. 1) shows us how winter can sneak up on us at anytime up here in the cold north, a great reason to add to Cindy Taylor's pitch for EMW(p.4).

On page 11, we have a new feature to showcase the more spontaneous outings that are at the center of the SOLAR culture. I hope you'll enjoy reading about these, and joining in whenever the mood strikes you! This is why its great to have friends who like to be outdoors.

And with that we bid adieu to 2011 with wishes for an even better 2012!

SOLAR WELCOMES THE FOLLOWING NEW MEMBERS:

Jerry and Artemae Anderson**

Beth Flannery

Eva Forman

Mary Fritz

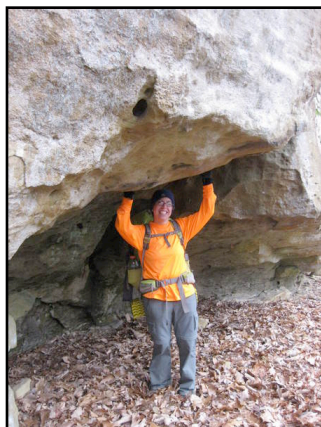
Mary & Steve Greenland



*****A special welcome to
Jerry and Artemae,
members # 500 and 501!***



Fall's Last Hurrah: Wayne National Forest Backpacking Trip by HEIDI TIETJEN



Erin Camargo and I sat on a large rock outcropping in the warm November sunshine as we looked across the valley to the bare trees on the facing slope and the clear blue skies above it. We were tired and hungry as were my dogs, Marco and Tilly, who were stretched out beside us, eyes closed, only opening them occasionally to receive a morsel of cheese or apple from my lunch bag. Erin and I agreed that it doesn't get much better than this.

"This" was the perfect weather and the great hike we were taking in the Wayne National Forest in southeastern Ohio. Reluctant to put away our backpacks for the season, we had headed down to the Ohio River about 20 miles from Marietta, Ohio on the afternoon of Thursday, November 10. We set up camp in the closed-for-the-season Leith Run Recreation Area campground along the river under a bright full moon and were in our sleeping bags by 11:00 pm. We heard the truck traffic on State Rte. 7 pick up around 2:00 am but just nestled further into our warm bags. Morning would come soon enough.

We were up early and drove about a half mile back down the road to the trailhead for the River Loop and Scenic River Trails. Our plan was to hike the River Loop Trail to the North Country Trail section linking up to the Archers Fork loop to the north. The next day we'd complete the Archers Fork loop and on Sunday re hike the NCT section and a mile of the RLT to join up with the Scenic River Trail to take us back to our car. It was small game and bow hunting deer season so we had our blaze orange gear handy, a shirt for Erin and a cap for me.

The River Loop Trail started out with an uphill climb and glimpses of the Ohio River below us and we soon came to our first rock outcropping. The gray stone with its coat of moss and lichen was typical of southern Ohio but very different from what one finds in Michigan so we made a brief stop for photos. We found these outcroppings exciting and photo-worthy at first but as the hike wore on and our energy wore down we became blasé and passed by much more spectacular ones with a brief "Huh, look at that one."

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Enjoying Michigan's Winter (EMW) Class

By CINDY TAYLOR



Did you know that there are usually two or three times as many instructors as students for the Enjoying Michigan Winters Class? Does it make you wonder why? Well if you ask those instructors, I'm sure they would tell you that they do it because they have so much fun, not only teaching, but participating in the practicals. I know they would tell you that Pigeon River in February is an amazing place to be! Many would also tell you that they never would have expected to be camping in winter before joining SOLAR.

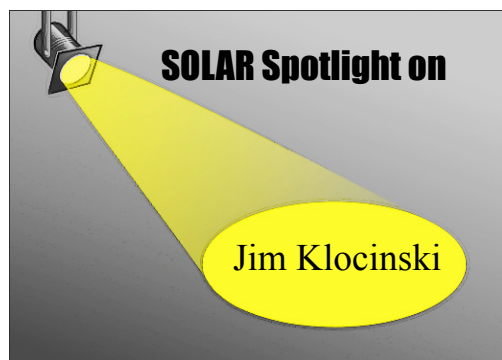
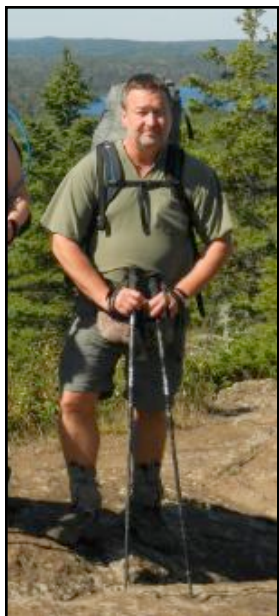
I am one of those instructors. I joined SOLAR in the fall of 2000, just in time to take the Beginning Backpacking class. When we finished the class, several of my classmates immediately signed up for Enjoying Michigan Winters. I told them there was NO WAY you were going to find me camping in winter. I do love the outdoors, but sleeping in the snow is just crazy!

Well that's what I said then. In the winter of 2002, someone convinced me to take the class. I don't remember who and maybe it was several people, but I am so glad they did because I really did enjoy it. I met some more great friends while learning new skills that I have been able to use in other sports such as X-Country skiing and snow shoeing. Most importantly, I have learned to appreciate the beauty of winter and, while summer will always be my favorite season, I consider winter to be the most beautiful season of all. I am no longer a couch potato in winter and I am much, much happier for it!

If you are one of those people who doesn't think that you would enjoy winter camping, you might want to reconsider. You just might find that you, like me, can have a blast camping in winter.

So go ahead, give it a try!

To find out more or sign up: contact Allen Duncan [734 276 3194] or allenduncan@aggienetwork.com



How long have you been a member of SOLAR?

This is the end of my third year in SOLAR. I joined in the January 2009 meeting.

How did you learn about SOLAR?

I heard about SOLAR from a person I had backpacked with once a few years ago.

What are some outdoor activities you enjoy?

The primary activity I enjoy is backpacking, but also mountain biking, orienteering, winter backpacking, and adventure racing.

What has been your favorite trip/activity so far?

I have done a number of backpacking trips with SOLARites.

What would your ideal trip be like?

I suppose my ideal trip would be a backpacking trip to an exotic place.

Which classes have you taken through SOLAR?

I've taken Basic Backpacking, Adventure Racing, Enjoying Michigan Winters, Wilderness First Aid, and probably a few I can't think of right now.

Tell us something about you that would surprise us!

When I got out of Tech School a few years back I spent an entire summer hitchhiking to Alaska and bumming around up there.

Do you have any pets? Kids? Significant other?

I have a wife, three daughters who have finished high school, one big dog (12-year old Lab), and sort of another dog (a miniature long haired Dachshund, who is supposedly owned by my oldest daughter).



abundance of hemlock and laurel. I imagine in my mind that the rangers are selling tickets to the hordes of people that come in to see the rhododendrons when they are in flower. I'm sure that's not the case but I can certainly imagine it.

It didn't take long before we had to alter our route. We came to a creek crossing that was much deeper and swifter than expected so Gary took a vote and we made a turn before reaching the Shavers Mountain Trail, to take the Mylius Trail to the Otter Creek Trail instead. Our trip would now be an up-and-back with our first camp higher up the mountain and our second one down again about two miles from the trailhead so we'd have a short hike out on Sunday.

As it turned out we ran into many areas that were rather difficult to cross, to put it mildly. The trails were extremely wet and muddy, often more like streams than trails. We expected to make one creek crossing sans boots on the first and the second day but we ended up wetting our toes twice the first day. We would have done the same the second day but at that point we were all pretty much just plowing through whatever we met up with. There were numerous stream crossings that were managed by stepping on boulders, rocks, downed branches, etc., sometimes with better results than others. Thank goodness we all had our trekking poles or there would not have been one of us that remained

upright between the water crossing and the steep climbs and descents. A couple of us still managed to topple over either by slipping off a rock or a snow buried tree root.

As Friday afternoon came on, the skies began to



gray and it grew cooler. We had watched the weather forecasts and expected temperatures of around 27 degrees at night and low 50s

during the day, with the possibility of rain/snow Friday evening and the next morning.

Approximately six miles into the hike and 1 and half miles from the camp site the snow started. It came down wet and heavy and it stuck. When we reached the camp area tents and tarps went up, water was filtered, and dinner was made as quickly as possible so everyone could go to their sleeping bags to warm up. After some brief discussion about the heavy snow and the wet clothing and boots some of us had, the decision was made to hike out the next day instead of staying the second night as planned. I will admit I was concerned about the trek out the next day. I had a soaked boot from dunking it into the water when I slipped off a rock and my toes were frigid. I dreaded all those stream crossings again. What kept me at ease was the fact that I was with experienced people and Gary and his wife **Helga** looked after us very well.



By morning we had a good five inches of snow. It



sure was pretty! I felt better about things as soon as we started on the trail. It was so beautiful and peaceful. Luckily all of us had brought enough layers to keep us warm as long as we kept moving so I don't think anyone was too uncomfortable even though the snow continued to fall throughout the day. *If someone was in need of something, someone else would come forward with help or a dry pair of socks or gloves.* We truly had a great group of people on this trip. On the way out we took turns taking the lead to break the trail and knock the snow away from the vegetation now hanging over the trail. We did take our boots off for one of the large creek crossings but it didn't seem as bad as the first time, probably because our feet were already cold and wet before we took our boots off. Water levels were a bit lower, too, than the day before but I think we were also less careful because we were headed for the cars instead of another night out in the cold.

With all the difficulty of the trail, I was still very happy to be on this trip. We still had our sense



of humor, with laughs and good conversation. Gary and Helga kept a good watch on us and **Jeff Enterkin** was very helpful with the stream crossings that required careful maneuvering.

END

The forest in the WNF is old second growth, the original trees cut down in part to fuel the once booming iron industry of the region. (The iron for the hull of the Monitor came from this area.) The current old second growth is maple-beech, giving way to oak and hickory. Ghostly white sycamores, some ash, and a few elms stood in the moister bottom areas. In some areas we saw the leaves of tulip poplars and pawpaws. Near the roads in the valleys were a few pine plantations. The area has a long history of oil and gas extraction and there are still working wells and pipelines all over the hills. We saw ample evidence of deer and some coyote scat, including one impressive sample, but otherwise wildlife was scarce. The region is also home to black bears, timber rattlesnakes, copperheads, and all the usual microbear suspects.

We had been told by the ranger on a pre-trip phone call that the trail was in excellent condition because a large mountain bike race had been held on it a few weeks before. The River Loop Trail, which until a few years ago was

nearly obliterated by vegetation, has been cleaned up and blazed with yellow plastic diamonds by bikers. It was beautifully laid out with long switchbacks that took us past rock outcroppings, overhang caves, and moss-covered remnants of old buildings. While many of the stream beds we crossed were dry or just a little damp, it was easy to see that they would be beautiful with waterfalls and cascades in wetter weather. Since it was November 11, 2011, we stopped for elevenses at 11:11:11 (hat tip to Ati Tislerics) under gray skies through which we saw an occasional glimpse of sun. Around mile six on the trail we passed several campsites on the few places that level ground could be found. Camping is permitted anywhere in the forest but places where you wouldn't be sleeping in a stream bed or nearly upright on the steep slopes were few and far between.

Shortly thereafter we left the yellow blazes and gentle climbs and descents of the River Loop Trail for the North Country Trail. The people who laid out

this section of the NCT chose to take a direct route from point A to point B and the trail began with a nose-to-dirt steep ascent that had me taking two steps forward and sliding one step back. (Erin, who seems to be part mountain goat, didn't have this trouble.) Hello blue blazes and so long switchbacks! While the NCT portion of the trail was only 2.6 miles it was exhausting, especially with the miles we'd already hiked and the extra weight we added when we filled our water bottles. We couldn't imagine traversing the tight turns on this steep and rocky trail on a mountain bike and indeed, in several places along these trails there were bright yellow "Danger" signs.

It was about 4:15, with the sun dipping behind the ridges, when we came to a road with a sign pointing to the NCT in one direction and "Loop Trail" in the other. Our camp destination was about a half mile or less down the Archer Fork Loop trail but suddenly things got confusing. We passed a wide, overgrown path with a blaze on a tree at the far end of it but it ended in a mucky patch of briars. We kept

on what looked like a hiking trail but it didn't seem to be going in the right direction. There were no blazes anywhere but there was a deadfall tree overhanging the trail with yellow caution tape draped from it. Neither of us relished negotiating a steep, rocky downward trail in the twilight, especially since we weren't sure it was even the right one to our destination, so we retreated and found some clear, flat ground on which to set up camp. Flat is a relative term in the WNF and Erin and I found ourselves sliding downhill and off our sleeping pads during the night.

The next morning it was noticeably warmer and the sky was a clear, bright blue. Everything is better in the sunshine so we were cheerful as we packed up and hit the trail. We decided to not waste more time figuring out which was the correct path but walked down the road/NCT to

pick up the trailhead to hike the Archers Fork Loop clockwise rather than counterclockwise as planned.

After more climbs and descents, we came to a well-marked spur trail for the natural arch. Irish Run Arch is one of about seventeen natural arches in Ohio. It doesn't look like much as you are approaching it from the main trail but is much more impressive from the other direction. We stopped for some photos and as we were leaving met Henry, a natural arch enthusiast from Novi and possibly the world's foremost authority on Ohio's natural bridges and arches. He directed us to visit the website

www.naturalarches.org to learn more.

The Archers Fork is a



challenging but pleasant trail that took us up and down hills and along ridges. Each narrow valley has a stream (called a "run" in these parts) running through it and many have a rock cave at their head. The Archers Fork Trail isn't as well laid out as the Scenic River Trail but it is lovely, and we were glad the leaves were off the trees so we could see the terrain and have a clear view of

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*How did it get so late so soon? It's night before it's afternoon.
December is here before it's June. My goodness how the time has
flew. How did it get so late so soon? - Dr Seuss*

the far slopes. Marco loved running down one long steep slope and up another, becoming a little speck of white against the brown leaves on the forest floor. I'd call him back before he would disappear over the ridge.

As we walked along a ridge a large doe bounded in front of us and disappeared into the undergrowth. Shortly thereafter we met a bow hunter coming in the opposite direction. He was from West Virginia but said he preferred hunting in Ohio. Because of stricter hunting limits, Ohio bucks are larger and more plentiful than in his home state, he said. His brother had shot an eight-point buck earlier up on the ridge and the animal had conveniently run down the hill to the road and died.

Shortly after this encounter we began our descent into one of the wider creek valleys where we planned to camp. The first site, which was by the road, was already occupied by a hunter so we walked another quarter mile to another camper-established site. We ate dinner by the light of a ziplock candle lantern (hat tip to Fred Miller). We watched

Jupiter, incredibly bright, rise over a ridge and Erin spotted a shooting star, probably part of the Taurids meteor shower. We saw two satellites moving in tandem. Erin and I were somewhat indignant at the sound of vehicles on the nearby road. What are these people doing out so late, we wondered, until we realized it wasn't even 8:00! The moon had not yet risen when we went to bed.

The next morning's hike under gray skies began with a long climb and lo and behold towards the top was a deadfall tree wrapped in yellow caution tape! We had been on the right trail after all! We then left the Archers Fork Trail and started back onto the dreaded NCT connector. It was tiring but not nearly so arduous in the morning with packs lightened of most of their food. The mile of the River Loop Trail that we needed to cover before getting to the Scenic River Trail, however, seemed much longer and we were happy when we finally hooked up to the SRT. It was three relatively easy miles as we were mostly on a ridge but we wondered at the naming of the two trails. The River Trail with its rock outcroppings and moss-

covered ruins was by far the more scenic of the two.

The drive back in daylight was interesting because we could now see what was obscured by darkness on our way in. Although these trails are located in the most rural part of Ohio, they certainly are not in wilderness. There were old farms and barns, quaintly named roads, and the beautiful foothills of the Appalachians, but there is also a big nuclear facility and an industrial plant sited between the Ohio River and State Rte. 7. We also observed that there was more fall color left on the trees as we headed *north*—go figure.

According to the USNFS website, this section of the Wayne National Forest has more than 47 miles of trail. While hiking we had passed a sign pointing us to the Covered Bridge Trail and another to the Ohio View Trail. The NCT continues north from the Archers Fork Trail. This corner of Ohio clearly has more to offer to the Michigan hiker looking for new paths to explore.

END

YOOHOO! YAHOO! ANYBODY UP FOR A.....?

Ever wake up on a Saturday morning just itching for a hike but unsure where to go or whom to go with? SOLAR is great for organized activities and we recognize the organizers of these activities at the monthly meeting each month; but we also excel at spontaneous outings posted on the Yahoo! Group (and now the Meetup calendar as well). We want to recognize those outings in this new feature in the Ray. If you participate in or organize any of these, drop me a line (pictures are a bonus) at solarrayeditor@solaroutdoors.org. We'd love to recognize your efforts and hopefully draw more attention to these spontaneous adventures.

Beautiful hike at Proud Lake on Oct. 23, 2011
- 5.5 miles on the west side of the park, mostly on horse trails.



Deep into meadows, hills and swamps - really felt like we got away!- **J. Hill**

Pat Charbonneau, her brother **Steve**

Hunt, and I hiked the five-mile red loop of the Waterloo bridle trails on Friday, October 21. The day was overcast but we still enjoyed the fall colors, especially looking out from the

scenic overlook. We also visited the Phyllis Haehnle Sanctuary to see the sandhill cranes coming in for their night roost. Unfortunately the cranes were uncooperative and we only saw them from afar as they flew past to roost elsewhere.- **H. Tietjen**

11/11/11 Hike at Pontiac Lake- **Ati Tislerics** led at least 13 intrepid souls through Pontiac Lake SRA on this momentous date!



SOLAR Equipment

Many of you already know about and use some of the basic equipment that SOLAR has, but did you know that we have hiking poles, lanterns, tarps, GPS units and a bear box?

Here is a brief list of what we currently have for member use:

Tents	Sleeping bags	Sleeping pads
Backpacks, internal and external frame		Day pack
Tarps	Hiking poles	Stoves
Fuel bottles	Cooking pots	Water filters
Lanterns	Shovels for winter camping	Walkie talkies
GPS units	Bear box	Water jug, 3 gal
Volleyball net and ball		Snowshoes
Caving equipment		Mountain climbing equipment



To use our equipment, contact Glenn Nawa at fessick9@mi.rr.com and place a request. There is no charge for members, only a deposit refundable upon return. There is limited supply of some items so first come- first served. SOLAR events and classes will take priority over individual use.

We also take gently used equipment that you may want to donate to the club for others to experience.

Porcupine Mountains Winter Camping

Have you taken the Enjoying Michigan Winters class, and finished the class thinking, "Wait, I was just getting the hang of it!?!?" Me, too. This trip will use those skills and add to them.

When: Sunday, February 26 – Saturday, March 3; 5 days/4 nights in the backcountry.

The plan is to start from the west end of Porcupine Mountains Wilderness State Park, hike in 6-8 miles along Lake Superior to the area between Little Carp and Big Carp rivers, base-camp there, spend three days day-hiking, building quinzees and/or goofing off, and hike back out.

Cost: \$200 per person includes backcountry permits, 2 nights lodging, and gas.

Prerequisites: Enjoying Michigan Winters class, other intangibles. This trip is intended to be quite challenging, so for the good of the group and my own peace of mind I will be cautious about who I welcome aboard.

Group size will be limited to six initially; that could (and hopefully will) increase if there is enough interest from people with winter camping experience beyond the EMW class.

Things I'm looking forward to about this trip (results may vary!):

- ★ Building a quinzee, now that I think I know what I'm doing
- ★ Listening to the silence of a winter wilderness
- ★ Snow deeper than I've ever seen before
- ★ Frozen waterfalls
- ★ Seeing Lake Superior in its least hospitable season
- ★ Stargazing in a clear winter sky
- ★ Challenging myself to do something a bit outside my comfort zone
- ★ Having a great adventure to look forward to, all winter long!



Interested? Want more information?

Contact: Ati Tislerics, atisleri@umich.edu, 313-794-0164



CHINESE NEW YEAR DINNER

Thursday, January 26, 2012

Organized by Leslie Cordova
(248) 421-2080 or lesliegene@aol.com

- Incredible 12 course meal (served family style)
- Drawings for prizes
- Traditional lion dance
- Music, entertainment, and fun

We will have several large round tables.

Location: New Peking Restaurant 29105 Ford Road,
Garden City (734) 425-2230

Time: 6:30pm - 9:00pm (Plan to arrive early to get
the best seats)

Cost: \$31.99 per person, \$10 of which is a non-
refundable deposit. Drinks and tip extra.

Bring \$10 deposit, payable to Leslie Cordova to the
December 6 SOLAR meeting to reserve our tables.

The remaining \$21.99 plus drinks and tip you will
pay yourself at the restaurant.

Come hungry and adventurous!

SOLAR PROGRAM ANNUAL PHOTO CONTEST

January 6, 2012

Contact Christine Pawyl, Programs Chair
solarprograms@solaroutdoors.org

It's that time of year again when SOLAR amateur photographers can brag about their trips and show off their stuff. So dig out those photos from year 2011 and enter them into this year's photo contest.

Categories

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

Category Explanations

Digitally enhanced: Photography has changed considerably with the advent of digital cameras. Digital cameras and software now make it easy to make slight exposure shifts, slight color shifts, crop photos, change the brightness and contrast. Since these features are now easily available to all digital photographers, for the sake of the SOLAR photo contest they will not be considered digitally enhanced. The SOLAR photo contest category of digitally enhanced will include photos that have been cut and paste, extremely exposure or color changes, "stitched" photos, and photos that were developed in a dark room using "dodge & burn".



Photo-Pro: Photos in this category won't be eligible for the "Best Overall" award. The photo pro category is for past winners of the best overall category.

Official Rules

- ❖ You must be a SOLAR member to enter the photo contest.
- ❖ Photos must have been taken between January 1, 2011 and December 31, 2011.
- ❖ Standard photos must be no larger than 8x10 and panoramic no larger than 8x18.
- ❖ Mats on photos should be no larger than 11x14 on standard photos and 11x21 on panoramic photos.
- ❖ Photos must have been taken by the person entering it.
- ❖ Only one photo entry per person per category and only eight 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, 2012 meeting and winners will be announced that evening.

SOLAR DECEMBER 2011 CALENDAR

www.SolarOutdoors.org

Click to get
the details on
Meetup.com!

Winner of the November Activity Organizer Drawing: Carol McCririe, Detroit Zoo Lion Habitat Visit

SOLAR MEETINGS AND PROGRAMS

12/6	Tues	Monthly Meeting 7:30 pm	Colony Hall	Chuck Smith	SolarPresident@SolarOutdoors.org
		Program: Winter Gear Swap	Colony Hall	Christine Pawyl	SolarPrograms@SolarOutdoors.org
1/3	Tues	Monthly Meeting 7:30 pm	Colony Hall	Chuck Smith	SolarPresident@SolarOutdoors.org
		Program: Annual Photo Contest	Colony Hall	Christine Pawyl	SolarPrograms@SolarOutdoors.org
1/31	Tues	Steering Committee Meeting, 7:30 pm	TBD	Chuck Smith	SolarPresident@SolarOutdoors.org
2/7	Tues	Monthly Meeting, 7:30 pm	Colony Hall	Chuck Smith	SolarPresident@SolarOutdoors.org
		Program: Living in the Shadow of the Moon-Dog: A South Pole Diary	Colony Hall	Christine Pawyl	SolarPrograms@SolarOutdoors.org
2/28		Steering Committee Meeting, 7:30	TBD	Chuck Smith	SolarPresident@SolarOutdoors.org

SOLAR RAY DEADLINES

12/16	Fri	January SOLAR Ray Deadline		Sheila Smith	SolarRayEditor@SolarOutdoors.org
1/20	Fri	February SOLAR Ray Deadline		Sheila Smith	SolarRayEditor@SolarOutdoors.org
2/17	Fri	March SOLAR Ray Deadline		Sheila Smith	SolarRayEditor@SolarOutdoors.org

ACTIVITIES

12/2	Fri	Annual Winter Party	Colony Hall	Christine Pawyl	SolarPrograms@solaroutdoors.org
12/3	Sat	Noel Nights and Afterglow	Detroit, MI	Carol Rogers	cjrune30@yahoo.com
12/17	Sat	Holiday Nights at Greenfield Village	Dearborn, MI	Vera Morris	vem4@yahoo.com
1/13-16	Wknd	Lake Ann Cross-Country Ski Weekend	Lake Ann, MI	Pete Lamb	petekandu@yahoo.com
1/26	Thur	Chinese New Year's Dinner	Garden City, MI	Leslie Cordova	lesliegene@aol.com
2/24-26	Wknd	Cross-Country Skiing on Mackinac Island	Mackinac Island, MI	Linda Hill	riverwoman@comcast.net
2/26-3/3	Multi	Upper Peninsula Winter Backpacking	Western U.P.	Ati Tislerics	atisleri@med.umich.edu

CLASSES

11/30; 12/7, 14; 1/4, 14-15, 18, 21, 25; 2/3-5	Wed, Sat, Wknd	Enjoying Michigan Winters	Schoolcraft College/Northville, Waterloo State Rec Area, Pigeon River	Allen Duncan	aduncan85@gmail.com
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SOLAR HAS A NO-REFUND POLICY. IF YOU ARE UNABLE TO ATTEND AN ACTIVITY, YOU MAY "SELL YOUR SPOT" TO ANOTHER CLUB MEMBER

SOLAR General Meetings take place on the first Tuesday of the month at Colony Hall, 21780 Evergreen, Southfield, MI, at 7:30 pm. The business meeting is followed by a chance to sign up for classes and activities and an informational program on a topic of interest to members.

December Program: Winter Swap Meet

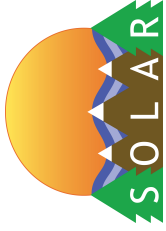
It's easy to collect too much gear and outdoor clothing as we search for the item that's just right. But what might not be right for you but it could be perfect for another SOLAR member! Clean out your closet, basement, or gear room and bring in your excess or no-longer used items to sell.

January Program: Annual Photo Contest

Hit us with your best shot! The photo contests let's SOLAR's amateur photographers brag about their trips and show off their stuff. So dig out those photos from year 2011 and enter them into this year's photo contest.

February Program: Living in the Shadow of the Moon-Dog, A South Pole Diary

Just days before Paul C. Daniels left Detroit to spend nine months locked into the most remote and isolated outpost on the face of the earth, he bought a Sony-Handy-Cam to keep a video-diary of his experience. He captured everything from melting ice for drinking water, to his five jobs, to his social life as a "POLIE". Through equipment failures, conflict and crisis the 15 scientists and 35 crew members of the US Antarctic research station could rely on no one but each other to survive. A combination of -100F temperatures, fierce storms, hypoxia, stress and the unexpected illness of the station's doctor all conspire to push people to their limits.



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, tranquil forests, scenic shorelines, and the experiences to be found there. Lifetime memberships are available for \$175 (single) and \$250 (family).

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 Jennifer Tislerics 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. Please attach images separately as JPG files. If you have any questions, please contact Sheila Smith at SOLARrayeditor@solaroutdoors.org.

STEERING COMMITTEE

OFFICERS

President: Chuck Smith
Vice President: Laura Buhl
Secretary: Ati Tislerics
Treasurer: Paul Williford

Activities: Heidi Tietjen

Bylaws: Tim Davis
Education: Kevin Cotter
Public Relations: (vacant)
Ray Editor: Sheila Smith

Historian: Chip Kleinbrook

Membership: Jennifer Tislerics
Programs: Christine Pawyl
Equipment: Glenn Newa
Webmaster: Bob Innes

PRESIDENTS AT LARGE

Michael Banks | Leslie Cordova | Allen Duncan | Al Fylak | Steve Gardner | Bill Halvings
Cindy Harrison-Felix | Tom Hayes | Joan Hettinger | Doug Lanyk | Larry Martin | Tom Oloffo | Lou Szakal | Cindy Taylor | Joan & Bob Westbrook

STEERING COMMITTEE MEETINGS

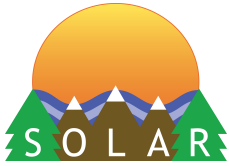
The Steering Committee meets on the last Tuesday of every month at 7:30 pm. These meetings are usually open to the general membership. Anyone who is interested in learning about the decisions being made or contemplating running for a position on the Steering Committee is welcome to attend. If you are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

SPECIAL THANKS TO THE SOLAR RAY ASSISTANT EDITORS

Karen DeCoster, Heather Hall, Jennifer Hill, Ken Lemieux, Helen Peters, Janet Schester, Pamela Schmelzer-Anzicek, Elizabeth Shaw, Ati Tislerics and Jennifer Tislerics.

MORE INFORMATION

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



SOLAR

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