

The SOLAR Ray

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

April 2012

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SOLAR members are encouraged to use the online calendar at www.meetup.com/SOLAR-Outdoors for convenient class and trip sign-ups.



Surviving the Porkies

By Eric Braun

Finally, after traveling 582 miles for 10 hours, snoooow! You may question my enthusiasm, but if you are planning a winter camping trip in the Porcupine Mountains, it is a necessity. And with the winter this year I had my doubts. On the way, of course, we stopped for pasties in Mackinaw City. Otherwise the trip was pretty much uneventful, until the next morning when we headed out on our adventure.

The plan was to head out from the Presque Isle campground and hike for 6 miles to the Big Carp River backcountry campsites, but things did not go as planned; the night before we got 6 inches of fresh snow. The road we had to travel



The road to the trailhead.

on had not been completely plowed. We were able to make it close to the campground, but the road was closed, so we had to come up with a plan B. While trying

to back out of the road leading to the campground Meg got stuck, even though the Trail Blazer we were driving has 4 wheel drive. Fortunately, with help from Tom, his Hemi truck and lots of shoveling we were able to get out even after his truck got stuck as well. Not knowing if the conditions would be even worse in five days when we returned to our cars, with 9 to 14 inches of snow forecast for Wednesday, we decided to play it safe and park at the park headquarters instead. This way we knew we had a way out should anything happen.

Once we were ready to go, Ati led the charge up the mountain. Each of us with our custom built sleds followed single file like a school of ducklings. Tom was



The aerodynamic fairing on the front of Ati's sled reduced drag by .03%.

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Why I'm Glad I Joined the SOLAR Steering Committee

By Jennifer Tislerics (current Membership Chairperson, former Ray Editor)

A couple years after we joined SOLAR, my husband, Ati, and I started attending Steering Committee (SC) meetings just to learn a bit more about how the club functions. For the next 2-3 years we volunteered for a number of different tasks that interested us, and the elected members of the group seemed to appreciate the help. People often encouraged us to run for one of the official SC roles, but we liked being able to pick and choose which tasks we took on, so we put it off.

In 2009 I decided to take the plunge and run for an elected position (Ray Editor). I had a bit of professional experience in writing/editing and desktop publishing. I thought it would be a fun, fulfilling role for myself. I was right! Putting the Ray together each month was a bit like putting together a puzzle, on deadline. I recruited some assistant editors, contacted people to write articles and submit photos, created some regular features, and added a bit of my own editorial taste to the Ray. I gained valuable leadership skills in the two years I was Ray Editor, and felt like I'd made a significant contribution to the club. It felt good to give back!

In 2011 it was time for a change of pace, so I ran for the Membership Chairperson position. This role has challenged me in entirely new ways, and I am still learning quite a bit. The ability to recruit volunteers and delegate (i.e., let go of the reins) has been crucial. The best part of empowering the Membership Committee members is seeing how much more is possible when they get to do what they do best. The committee members have been able to implement some of their own ideas, in addition to

mine. Most importantly, they have made SOLAR an especially welcoming group for new people.

Aside from skills gained in the specific SC roles I have held, I have also learned a lot about leadership in general. I have had the pleasure of working with people who are passionate about the club and its future, but who sometimes have different opinions on how we should proceed. It's okay to be outvoted, and sometimes you have to agree to disagree. A phrase I've come to appreciate, which may have been coined in the SC, is "supportive accountability". It takes some effort to get things done, but we get out of it what we put into it. We're all volunteers on the SC, and we help each other through the challenges. I now have a better understanding of how the club's finances work, how decisions are made, why it sometimes takes longer than expected to accomplish what one sets out to do, and how absolutely vital volunteers are to SOLAR's very existence.

Some of what I've learned on the SC has been helpful to me in my professional life. The leadership experience is also great for my resume. The warm, fuzzy feelings I get when I help the club function smoothly are wonderful. The friendships I've gained by working closely with people I might not otherwise have gotten to know are priceless.

I anticipate running for an SC position again this year, and I hope many of you will join me on the ballot! Our club is what we make of it. None of us is perfect, most of us are pretty busy people, but when we all chip in a few hours of our time the results can be amazing.



**SOLAR welcomes the following
new members to the club:**

Lisa Austin & Richard Russell, Jr.

Mike Kapusky

Teresa Maiorano

John McIntyre

Shirley White

We are pleased to welcome

Tim Davis

as our newest Lifetime Member!

WANTED: ALIVE

Positive Team Players Who Can Make a Difference in SOLAR



...by running for one of the 14 positions on the SOLAR Steering Committee.

On Tuesday, May 1, 2012, SOLAR will hold its annual Steering Committee elections. By running for one of the Steering Committee positions, or just by participating in the voting process, you can give back to the club and have a say in the direction SOLAR is moving. All currently paid members are eligible to run and vote. No experience is necessary - just a willingness to work with others to make SOLAR the best outdoor club it can be.

SOLAR is a loosely formed volunteer organization made up of people who enjoy the outdoors. SOLAR Steering Committee members are volunteers who give their personal time to participate in a larger way for the good of the club. SOLAR is what our members make it.

In addition to the monthly membership meetings, the Steering Committee holds a business meeting at 7:30 on the last Tuesday of each month. The meetings are hosted by Steering Committee members, so the location changes each month. In a club made up of people who love to travel and have adventures, it is understood that Steering Committee members may not be able to attend every meeting. However, it is important that members attend as many meetings as possible.

All positions are considered open until voting concludes on May 1, 2012. The Steering Committee is comprised of the following positions:

- President - Presides at General Membership and Steering Committee meetings.
- Vice President - Assists President and stands in for him/her when necessary.

- Secretary - Informs members of General Membership and Steering Committee meetings, records the minutes of Steering Committee meetings, makes required reports, carries out necessary correspondence.
- Treasurer - Has custody of SOLAR funds, processes bank deposits and expense reimbursements, provides the Steering Committee with an accounting of income and expenditures at monthly meetings.
- Activities Chairperson - Promotes activities in keeping with the purpose of SOLAR; maintains and revises Activities Guidelines; provides assistance to SOLAR members who organize and/or promote Activities.
- Bylaws Chairperson - Ensures that SOLAR actions and activities are consistent with the Bylaws; recommends changes to the Bylaws to meet changing needs; advises the Steering Committee on matters of parliamentary procedure.
- Education Chairperson - Coordinates and promotes educational programs offered through SOLAR; develops and maintains related guidelines; assists and supports members who develop, instruct, organize and/or promote these programs and explore new areas that may be of interest to members of SOLAR.
- Equipment Chairperson - Establishes guidelines for the loaning and use of all SOLAR property; maintains inventories; monitors the condition, and oversees the storage, maintenance and procurement of SOLAR property.
- Historian - Compiles records of SOLAR activities (written,

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photographs, etc.) to document SOLAR's success in fulfilling its mission.

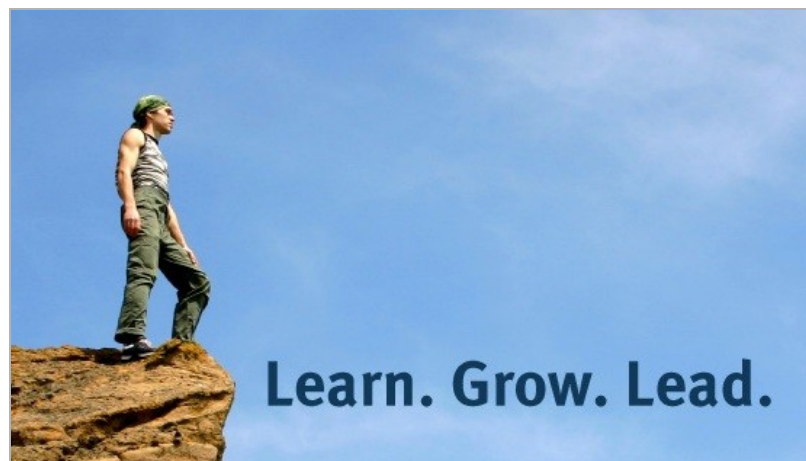
- Membership Chairperson - Strengthens and expands the membership of SOLAR; maintains membership records and mailing lists; provides new members with information about SOLAR.
- Programs Chairperson - Arranges, develops, and assists in carrying out the programs presented at the general membership meetings.
- Public Relations Chairperson - Promotes SOLAR activities and organizes and publishes other materials for the good of SOLAR.
- SOLAR Ray Editor (a.k.a. Communications Committee Chairperson) - Organizes and publishes the SOLAR Ray newsletter; ensures that all official SOLAR communications are consistent with club policies.
- Webmaster - Maintains SOLAR's online presence through the website, Meetup and Facebook.

If you would like more information about a specific Steering Committee position, please feel free to contact the current holder of that position, or any Steering Committee member:

President:	Chuck Smith, SOLARPresident@solaroutdoors.org
Vice President:	Laura Buhl, SOLARVicePresident@solaroutdoors.org
Secretary:	Ati Tislerics, SOLARSecretary@solaroutdoors.org
Treasurer:	Paul Williford, SOLARTreasurer@solaroutdoors.org
Activities Chair:	Heidi Tietjen, SOLARActivities@solaroutdoors.org
Bylaws Chair:	Tim Davis, SOLARBylaws@solaroutdoors.org
Education Chair:	Kevin Cotter, SOLAREducation@solaroutdoors.org
Equipment Chair:	Glenn Newa, SOLAREquipment@solaroutdoors.org
Historian:	Chip Kleinbrook, SOLARHistorian@solaroutdoors.org
Membership Chair:	Jen Tislerics, SOLARMembership@solaroutdoors.org
Programs Chair:	vacant (contact SOLARPresident@solaroutdoors.org)
PR Chair:	vacant (contact SOLARPresident@solaroutdoors.org)
Ray Editor:	Sheila Smith, SOLARRayEditor@solaroutdoors.org
Webmaster:	vacant (contact SOLARPresident@solaroutdoors.org)

You can also review SOLAR's Bylaws on our website (www.solaroutdoors.org/about/bylaws.aspx).

If you are interested in running for a position or have any questions, please contact Chuck Smith at SolarPresident@solaroutdoors.org. The final deadline to submit your name in order to appear on the printed ballot is April 29, 2012. After April 29 you can be a write-in candidate. All candidates will have an opportunity to introduce themselves at the May 1 SOLAR meeting before the voting takes place.



(Continued from page 1)

sweep, packing some heavy metal (garbage can lid) for our campfires. I was carrying 2 fire logs, the greatest invention since freeze-dried food. Meg was a little slow since she was carrying 30 pounds of food for the SOLAR potluck. We neglected to tell her we weren't having one. Ati and Jennifer were pulling their weight without a problem. We slowly made our way up the cross country ski trails, blazed a single track trail through the back woods and finally arrived at our perfect camp site next to Union Hot Spring. Actually it was not a hot spring. It was frozen.



Trap Falls: Like a Jacuzzi, mostly. Ati said there was a waterfall here, anyway.



The snow was up to eye level in places, if you crouched down really low.

We all got busy setting up our campsites, common area and personal latrines. Before long it was home.

The next day over a yummy breakfast of oatmeal, we discussed what to do that day. We ended up deciding to hike out to Trap Falls, about 2 miles from camp. This was a lot easier without pulling sleds and the terrain was mostly flat. The park is just as beautiful in winter as in summer, and there are no mosquitos! Needless to say we made it there and back. That night, after our freeze dried gourmet meals, we had our first campfire. I just love those fire logs. From now on I'm always taking one with me.

Day three was another big snow day. So,

after securing our gear and building a shelter using tarps and piling up snow, we opted to stay in our tents for some well earned rest. All except Ati and Jennifer, who were determined to build a quinsy. It was quite impressive in size and design. The 5 of us could have slept in it

with room to spare. We had another fire that night. I tried to dry my gloves, but synthetics and fire do not mix. Next time I need to remember to bring along some marshmallows to roast instead.

On day four Tom and I went for a hike out to a warming hut while everyone else stayed behind to finish the quinsy. The hut turned out to be a cabin which is used during the summer. Next to the cabin was an outhouse which I took full advantage of (if you've been winter camping, you understand). While at the cabin we started a fire in the stove and enjoyed



Unidentified fauna lurk in the branches, waiting to drop upon and throttle unsuspecting hikers.



The dining hall (Jennifer Tislerics, Tom Hayes, Meg Braun, Eric Braun)

each other's company in warmth and comfort. While there, we met up with a skier who was staying in one of the yurts in the park. He referred us to some good off-trail hiking along a ridge which I investigated once we returned to camp.

Sadly, day five came and it was time to break camp and head back. Another thing we

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had to do was demolish the quinsy which was built to survive a category 5 hurricane and magnitude 9 earthquake combined. The engineer in me devised a plan to shovel out windows around the circumference. As soon as one of the remaining legs



Creek buried under snow.



Not that kind of widowmaker.

was removed, the roof dropped. Finally we were ready to head out. We arrived safely at the hotel, got cleaned up and headed out to a club house for steaks, fish and, of course, beer. Our table in the bar had a nice view of the golf course covered in snow. After dinner it was back to the hotel for a soak in the hot tub. Ahhhh, life is good. Once we had soaked our sore muscles, it was off to the bar for Meg, Tom and me to watch the Red Wings and drink a Widow Maker beer from a micro brewery located in Muskegon.

Life just got even better. That night we all slept like hibernating bears.

The drive home was an adventure in itself. Overnight up to a foot of snow, more in some places, had fallen from Ironwood to West Branch. The roads ranged from almost dry to not plowed at all and there was so much fog at the bridge you couldn't see it until you were right up on it. But we made it home safely and are anxiously awaiting Ati's plan for next winter's adventure. Hope you can join us!



Big trees, big snow.



A World of Challenges in Grand Ledge

By Michela Forest



I started running almost 3 years ago and love it. So far, in addition to numerous shorter races, I've run two half-marathons and am training for a third, the "Let's Move" Festival of Races in Clinton Township. I don't run these races to win. I like the challenge of running and run for fun.

I was intrigued when I saw notice of the Rock the World Race to be held on June 30 or July 1 (take your pick), 2012, in Grand Ledge, about 80 miles from where I live in Farmington Hills. It combines running with a really challenging set of obstacles. I'm not afraid of the running (it's about 5k of "steep inclines and dramatic descents") but I admit I am intimidated by climbing eight foot walls, scaling 14 foot climbing nets, bushwhacking a "jungle," swinging over a mud pit, and walking on tightropes! The obstacles are given names such as Great Wall, Eiffel Tower, Grand Canyon, Victoria Falls, and Swiss Alps but perhaps they should have been named "Pit of Doom" or "Mountain of Mayhem".

But even in racing an obstacle course, there is strength in numbers. Or, rather, I would draw strength—and courage—from being joined by a few fellow SOLAR members. I am, therefore, looking for other crazy runners/racers to form a SOLAR team with me.

Until April 15, the registration fee is \$67, which increases to \$77 until May 31 so I'd like to form a team and get our registration forms in soon. The race will start in waves from 10:00 a.m. every 45 minutes until 7 p.m. on both June 30 and July 1. Age/gender group prizes, schwag bags, food, beer, bands—they'll have everything that makes it a fun and exciting event for racers as well as those cheering them on. Oh, the best and most creative costume will take home a worthy prize.

This race has chosen Ele's Place, "a healing center for grieving children in the Lansing and Ann Arbor, Michigan areas," to receive a portion of the race proceeds.

If you'd be interested in forming a team with me, sign up on the SOLAR-Outdoors Meetup page by April 15 (before the rate increase) or by May 31. You can also contact me by e-mail (preferred) at: fmfriuli@hotmail.com or call me at 248-252-4441 (after 7 p.m.). So far there are two of us signed up and a third who expressed interest.

If you are interested in participating in this adventure, I'll need to know a few things:

1. Which day you are available for the race: Saturday, June 30 or Sunday, July 1 (the date chosen by the majority will be our race day). My preference is for Saturday, June 30;
2. Your experience in anything like this and if you are a runner;
3. Where you live (city);
4. If you are available to meet once a week in Shiawassee Park, in Farmington (Shiawassee Rd. and Farmington Rd.) to train.

You can learn more about Rock the World at <http://rocktheworldrace.com/tag/grand-ledge/>.



Craig Lake: Three Hikers in Search of Winter

By Bruce Coppola



As with many SOLAR winter activities this unusually warm and dry year, a late winter camping trip during the first weekend in March seemed to be in doubt. Even parts of the Upper Peninsula had scant snow cover. Pictured Rocks, our first thought for a destination, had nearly none left.

Heidi Tietjen and Dennis Phillips widened the search to the limits of a practical driving distance for a weekend trip; Craig Lake State Park, about 35 miles WSW of Marquette, was the choice. It had snow - a base of about four feet. It had lakes, trails, wolves, and moose - sounded like a winner!

But it presented challenges. It is a nine hour drive from southeast Michigan. It's the most remote state park in Michigan. The four mile long access road from Hwy 41 is difficult in any season; a high clearance 4WD vehicle is strongly recommended even in summer. The road isn't plowed in the winter, rendering it impassible to all but snowmobiles.

A phone call to the ranger, however, revealed that a small patch of the road right off the highway is plowed to create a parking area for the hardy few who would snowshoe or ski in. Good enough! The three of us, two relative winter camping veterans and a freshly minted Enjoying Michigan Winters grad (me), met at Denny's place in Southfield late Thursday afternoon (March 2nd). We jammed our packs, sleds, snowshoes and bodies into his 4WD Hyundai SUV and headed north to our reserved Super 8 motel room in St. Ignace, then continued on Friday to our destination - or fate.

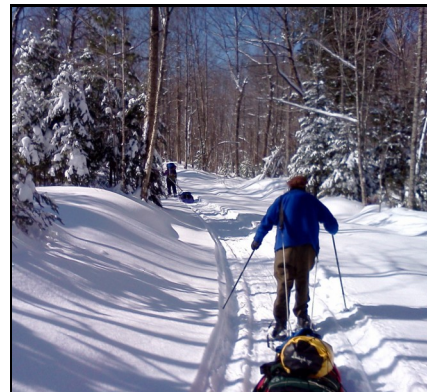
A midweek storm had freshened the snow in the UP and even made the Grayling/Gaylord area white again. This briefly tempted us to detour to the much closer Pictured Rocks, but it was soon obvious that most of the snow had fallen to the west. We stuck to the Craig Lake plan, arriving at the access road and hitting the trail at about 2:30 p.m., along with two young men who had rented the yurt at Teddy Lake and were expecting to be

joined by two others. Theirs was not to be a Spartan test of man vs. nature; their sleds were laden with beer and food. Our plan was to pack the five miles to the campground on the shore of Craig Lake where, Heidi said, the ranger had thoughtfully left firewood for us in an outhouse.

For me, this was to be my first "real" winter camping experience without the luxuries provided by a dozen-plus instructors trucking in firewood, stoves, and Oreos. It was also the first trial of the new winter gear I bought at end-of-season prices in a flush of enthusiasm following EMW: a zero-degree down bag, snowshoes, down parka, and a cheap kid's toboggan for hauling bulky and community gear. I'd also rigged up what I thought a clever rope-and-pole harness using some aluminum handle sections from a broken roof rake. It worked well except for one detail: I hadn't padded the poles and a somewhat arrhythmic, persistent clanking alerted any wildlife to our approach. At one point Heidi punctuated the ragged tintinnabulations with "Bring out yer dead!" (clank!). Oh for a piece of pipe insulation.

Having postholed a few times before putting on our snowshoes, we were glad to see that the ranger's snowmobile track gave us a "groomed" trail to follow. The earlier storm added at least a foot to the already deep snowpack. Even with snowshoes we sank calf-deep in virgin snow. Early on Denny tripped (it was a "snow snake", he said) and, reflexively bracing himself against the fall with stiffened arms, punched through the snow up to both shoulders, still well shy of touching solid ground.

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Even with the snowmobile trail the going was slow though the terrain was fairly flat to start-and we had yet to hit the “two big hills” the ranger had told Heidi about. The hills turned out to be long gradual slogs mixed with small but fatiguing ups and downs. We were reassured somewhat to see that the young guns weren’t that far ahead of us. All that beer must have been heavy.

Having only averaged a mile an hour, we trudged through the gate to the Teddy Lake yurt and access area around 6:30. Tired and hungry, we decided to make an overnight camp at Teddy Lake, near the actual park boundary. The snowmobile tracks only went as far as the yurt and that additional mile would be through deep, unpacked snow. Thinking we would relocate to the larger Craig Lake for the remaining two days, with the cheerful assent of the guys in the yurt we set up camp in the fading light. It was a nice site - about 300 feet from but out of sight of the yurt, on high but fairly level ground and (yay!) conveniently close to the outhouse. Still, it was soon clear to this winter neophyte that making camp in several feet of snow takes a lot longer and is a lot more work than three-season camping; or for that matter, than building a quinzhee with the assistance of a battalion of helpers. By the time we erected Heidi’s Megamid sans center pole by suspending the peak from a tight line strung between two stout trees, pitched a tarp shelter, and ate, it was late. Striking camp and slogging another hard mile only to do it all over again was not appealing, so we agreed that this would be our base camp for the weekend. Someone else would enjoy the firewood at Craig Lake eventually.



We went to bed around midnight. The allegedly four-person Megamid was snug with just us three. But sleep was delayed. As I began to drift off there arose a bloodcurdling cacophony of snorting, gurgling, and roaring sounds at



distressingly close range! What fierce predators were contesting the remains of a kill? As full consciousness returned I realized it was not Nature red in tooth and claw I was hearing. It was only Denny snoring! Where were those ear plugs...?

Before Denny began his basso recital, however, I believe I heard the faint, distant howling of wolves from across the lake.

We awoke Saturday morning “at the crack of ten”, as Denny put it, with frosty nylon in our faces. It had snowed several inches overnight and the tent had sagged. After breakfast we set about making a proper base of our hastily pitched camp: re-pitching the Megamid higher and tighter with a snow wall around the perimeter, adding a dining fly, and organizing our piled-up gear. I had the inspiration and energy to build a bench and “kitchen counter” in our cooking/dining area that turned out to be quite a comfort.

What wasn’t a comfort, however, was the need to wear our snowshoes continually around camp. In spite of all our stamping and walking around, the snow would not support us without them. Sitting, cooking, and eating were chores with the snowshoes strapped on one’s feet - let alone the “usual” difficulties in winter camping. “Is it always such a pain in the ass?” I plaintively asked Heidi and Dennis. “HA! This is EASY!” they answered in near unison. “You should see what it’s like when it’s REALLY cold!” and went on to describe tying knots with numb fingers and other dubious joys - with a wee bit too much sadistic enthusiasm, if you ask me.

In contrast to my jaded partners, our neighbors in the yurt were struck with admiration and amazement at these old folks camped out there. They seemed little affected by their alcohol intake. Everywhere we went during the weekend they had broken trail before, and their footprints continued on after we turned back. One young man visited us regularly, sprinkling his cheery descriptions of their day’s activities and past adventures with



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casual F-bombs. Learning of Denny's septuagenarian status he pronounced him "f*cking AWESOME!!" On his first visit Saturday afternoon after they had passed our silent campsite early in the morning, he told us he was expecting "to do a body

check". Another time, after proffering a politely declined bottle of Wild Turkey, he inquired about what we used for a heat source. Heidi pointed to her light down jacket and said, "This is it."

Joshing about my momentary distress aside, I (and we) had a splendid time thanks in large part to an excellent group dynamic. No one was trying to eat miles or prove anything. Things needing doing just got done. And our day hikes were larks: stopping to take photos, breaking when one of us got a bit winded, oohing and ahing over critter tracks, and much mutual joking. Not having a thirty pound pack plus a loaded sled helped, too. My new snowshoes worked like a charm. The down parka kept me snug against cold winds blowing off the Siberian expanses of the frozen lakes. The wind off Craig Lake in particular confirmed the wisdom of our chosen campsite. And finally, on Sunday evening, we found we could at long last walk around camp in regular boots! Mealtime became something like luxury dining compared to the days before. But I was soon to get a taste of "real" winter camping.

Late in the day Sunday the temperature began dropping noticeably. We made sure to melt lots of snow and put hot Nalgene's in our bags. Mittens froze stiff. We built a small fire with wood from the now-vacated yurt's wood supply and a Duraflame log in a little steel pan set on some logs we'd brought for the purpose. The small fire brought some cheer to the cold night and warmed numb, uncooperative fingers.

My new bag proved its worth. I awoke a bit chilly in the wee hours but snuggling up the draft collar took care of that. Good thing too: the

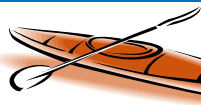
temperature dropped below zero that night. Monday morning we laboriously struck camp in bone-chilling cold. Shoelaces and snowshoe bindings only reluctantly yielded to manipulation by benumbed digits. Frozen knots stubbornly refused to relax their grip. Fortunately, things soon improved. After three days of light but unceasing snowfall, the sun came out! We hiked in a sparkling wonderland of snow and lambent light filtered through the trees. After clearing the "big hills" we took a lunch break, skimmed across the flats, and were soon at the car. We arrived at nearly the same time of day we had departed four days earlier. The hike out took as much time as going in but seemed shorter. We were quickly packed up and headed straight for home, but with a stop for the most eagerly awaited part of any outdoor adventure: the first "real food" at a restaurant. Burgers and sandwiches and pancakes, oh my! We traded shifts at the wheel and I was in my bed by 2am after spreading damp gear around the house to dry.



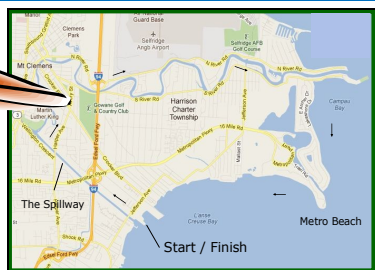
What can I say about the challenges and joys of winter camping that haven't been said by innumerable outdoors writers before? Yes, even relatively tame landscapes take on a wildness that visitors in milder weather never know. Yes, the winter landscape has charms that compensate for its challenges. I can only say from my experience that if the first snowflakes send you scurrying to Florida or to the comfort of a blanket and book, winter camping is not for you. However, if you already enjoy spending a day out in the snow it's

only a small stretch to spend the night out too. With a good winter sleeping bag, the clothes you probably already own, and the knowledge gained from a class like Enjoying Michigan Winters, you have everything you need. Take some more trips with experienced companions and you too may come to regard the prospect of waking under a canopy of frosted nylon or walls of packed snow with eager anticipation. There is also that peculiar amusement to be derived when your non-outdoorsy friends tell you yet again that you're crazy.

Crazy or not, I took the next day off work. I might be a hardened winter camper now, but I'm not Superman.



East Side Mid-Summer Kayak Tour



July 1, 2012

8:00 a.m. meet, 8:30 launch

Organized by Mike Hobig, mhobig@ford.com

A circle tour of the east metro area! An east side adventure! Our route will take us up the Clinton River Cut Off (locally known as the Spillway) to the Clinton River, down the river through Mount Clemens out to Lake St. Clair, past Metropolitan Beach Metro Park and back to the launch.

Distance is estimated at 18 miles, which should take a good part of the day, including food and rest stops in Mt. Clemens, Metro Beach, local parks, and possibly a private home.

Experience necessary, as there's an open water portion on Lake St. Clair but most of the route is calm. Shorter routes and shuttle options are possible.

You'll need to provide your own 14'+ kayak, either sit-upon or with front & back bulkheads or float bags. Everybody wears PFDs while on the water.

Plans will be discussed and made in advance. Ramp fees or Michigan Recreation Passport needed to launch.

Pete Seeger Sing-A-Long

May 3, 2012 at The Ark in Ann Arbor, MI

7:30 opening, 8:00 show time

Organized by Chuck Smith, cbryansmit@gmail.com

Where Have All the Flowers Gone. Kisses Sweeter than Wine.

Turn! Turn! Turn! To Everything There is a Season. Wimoweh.

Are these songs familiar?

All were written in whole or part by Pete Seeger. He's written or familiarized hundreds of songs and ballads. To celebrate Pete's 93rd birthday and pay tribute to this icon of American folk music, The Ark is holding a sing-a-long of Pete Seeger songs. Songs will be led. NO singing skill is needed—just a lot of joy.

Ticket price at the door is \$10.00, or you can get tickets in advance through SOLAR on Meetup for \$13.00.

We'll plan to meet for dinner before the show. Time and place to be announced.

For more information see <http://theark.org/3011.html>

Earth Day Park Cleanup at Stony Creek

April 21, 2012

Organized by Bill Morse, billc095@yahoo.com

We get great pleasure from our area parks. On Earth Day we have a chance to return the favor.

"Earth Day Park Cleanup," 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.; registration from 8 a.m. to 9 a.m. at Eastwood Beach. Volunteers can enjoy a complimentary lunch, plus a drawing for prizes. Registration required by April 15. Call 586-781-4242 or 586-781-9113 to register.

Let's meet at Stony Creek's Eastwood Beach at 8:45 and help out in the morning. After lunch, let's go for a hike or bike ride. Let me know if you're coming and I'll look for you!

Nordhouse Dunes Beach Clean Up

June 22-24, 2012

Organized by Vera Morris, vem4@yahoo.com



We're going back to Nordhouse Dunes/Lake Michigan Recreation Area! It's a favorite spot for car campers and backpackers alike.

The plan is to head up on Friday afternoon or evening and set up camp. We will spend a couple of hours Saturday morning cleaning the beach of any garbage and bits of plastic (you'd be amazed how much plastic washes up). After that, we'll hang out and enjoy the beach, the beautiful trails and each others' company.

There will be a potluck Saturday night. We typically hit the beach or hike on Sunday morning and start heading home Sunday afternoon.

This is a kid-friendly trip.

The cost of this trip is \$20 per person.

Nordhouse Wilderness Dunes is about a 4-hour drive from Southfield, near Ludington. They have new flush toilets, but no showers.

For information on the campground and directions (as well as GPS info) please see the website: <http://tinyurl.com/6h9xcu>

Hope to see you there!

Sunset Paddles at Proud Lake

Organized by Margaret Martin, mpluscat@yahoo.com

Reserve your spot directly with

Heavner's Canoe & Kayak Rental

2775 Garden Road, Milford Phone: (248) 685-2379

Sat. May 5 7:45 meet Season Inaugural paddle

Sat. June 2 8:00 meet

Sat. Jun 23 8:00 meet Solstice paddle.
Dessert provided at the dam.

Sat. July 7 8:00 meet

Sat. Aug 4 7:45 meet

Fri. Aug 31 7:00 meet Labor Day weekend

Sat. Sept 29 6:15 meet

Sat. Oct 27 5:15 meet Season Close paddle

There will be an ample break in Milford for those who want to go for ice cream or a meal at their own expense. There will be a bonfire after each paddle.

The price is \$25 per person. Children under 12 (with a parent) are free, children 12-17 (with a parent) are half price.

Free Pre-Paddle Kayak Lesson

May 5, 5:45 p.m.; June 2, 6:00 p.m.

Instructor: Matt Dalton, mdalton@ameritech.net

Limited to 20 people

Get a FREE 2-hour kayaking lesson before the Sunset Paddle. Children age 10-17 get the lesson *and* paddle for free as part of the *No Child Left Inside* program. Pre-registration is necessary. Sign up at Meetup.com/SOLAR-Outdoors.


Organized by Heidi Tietjen, h_tietjen@yahoo.com

Shenandoah National Park includes 300 square miles of the Blue Ridge Mountains in the southern Appalachians. The park rises above the Virginia Piedmont to its east and the Shenandoah Valley to its west.

We'll be doing a loop hike near the southern end of the park, covering about 34 miles in 5 days of hiking, which includes one day without packs on. We'll visit waterfalls, mountain streams, and scenic vistas on this challenging trip.

May 20 will be a driving day (about 10.5 hours from Southfield) for most people and we will begin our hike on Monday, May 21. We'll finish hiking on May 25 so those interested can drive to meet up with the SOLAR group camping in the Hocking Hills (about 6 hours drive) and finish out the week there.

Permit costs will be shared by participants but should be very reasonable. Backpacking experience a must.



Shenandoah National Park Backpacking Trip May 20-25, 2012

INTERMEDIATE BACKPACKING CLASS

Thursday April 26, 7-9 p.m.; September 21-24; other dates to be arranged

Lead Instructor: Leslie Cordova, lesliegene@aol.com

\$10 plus trip expenses; limited to 12

Have you taken the beginning backpack class? Are you looking to put your new skills to the test, but need a little more guidance? Are you ready for your next big adventure in backpacking? Then this class is for you!!

You and your fellow students will plan your own backpack trip from start to finish. Class will start out with a 2-hour lecture and discussion on trip planning. After that, where, when and how often we meet is up to you.

Learn to pick the area to backpack, when to go, who to go with, how to obtain permits, local regulations, climate, trail conditions, crowds, trail difficulty, hiking speeds, training/conditioning, etc.

The only rule is that the trip must be within a 12-hour drive of the Detroit area. Weekend training hikes are encouraged but not mandatory.



Basic Land Navigation Don't Get Lost

Spring, 2012

www.solaroutdoors.com/flyers/bln.pdf

SPOTLIGHT ON...



Glenn Schultz,
SOLAR Member

How long have you been a member of SOLAR?

I became a lifetime member at my first meeting in March 2008. I sensed something good here.

How did you learn about SOLAR?

In February 2008 I googled "southeast Michigan outdoor clubs" and found the website enticing. I saw that Dave & Moe DeFrance were leading a John Muir Trail trip, I emailed Dave and from there on it has been quite exciting.

What are some outdoor activities you enjoy?

Backpacking, camping, campfire cooking, archery, peak bagging, canoeing, slow water kayaking, and white water rafting. If it involves a trail, a view, and a splash, but not necessarily simultaneously, I'm in.

What has been your favorite trip/activity so far? Pre-trip packing, post-trip laundry, enduring long rain storms, fixing rain gear with duct tape, putting out lightning strike fires, getting terrain disorientation solo or with friends, removing cactus burrs, getting zippers stuck, night hiking, bear bagging, meeting wildlife, fighting with mosquitoes, wrestling with sleeping bags, post holing through deep snow, wind burn, rock slides, watching gear roll downhill, slipping into streams, all the while being fully committed to having a good time.



Each trip and activity has its own unique moments and memories and sharing them with friends makes each special.

What's the most challenging thing you've done through SOLAR?

2011 was a huge year with the mountaineering class in January, the Olympus/Rainier trip in June/July and then backpacking the Grand Canyon rim to rim to rim in what turned out to be the fourth hottest September in Grand Canyon history. I had great cohorts on these hikes.

What would your ideal trip be like?

A trifecta of backpacking, summit scrambling and white water rafting. The Tetons, Yosemite and the Adirondacks fit that bill.



Which classes have you taken through SOLAR? What classes do you wish were offered that are not currently?

Beginning & Intermediate Backpacking, Basic Land Navigation, Knots, Enjoying Michigan Winters, Mountaineering, and Search & Rescue. SOLAR members offer a lot.

Tell us something about you that would surprise us! I have been married 30 years and Jana, my wife, is only 29.

Do you have any pets? Kids? Significant Other?

I had a St. Bernard and then downsized to a dachshund. I have a cute fluffy dog right now. If I had a bulldog, I would name him Grits. Jana and I have three sons in their 20s and all enjoy the outdoors.

What would you like to see changed in SOLAR in the next year?

I would like the monthly meeting to begin at 7 p.m. in order to get home at an earlier time. In some years perhaps moving the July gear swap & picnic to June and having an October or November chili fest.



SOLAR APRIL 2012 CALENDAR

www.SolarOutdoors.org

Click to get
the details on
Meetup.com!

Winner of the March Activity Organizer Drawing: Laura Buhl, Winter Hike on the Potawatomi Trail

SOLAR MEETINGS AND PROGRAMS

4/24		Steering Committee Meeting, 7:30	Colony Hall	Chuck Smith	SolarPresident@SolarOutdoors.org
5/1	Tues	Monthly Meeting, 7:30 pm	Colony Hall	Chuck Smith	SolarPresident@SolarOutdoors.org
		Program: Steering Committee Elections	Colony Hall		SolarPrograms@SolarOutdoors.org
5/29	Tues	Steering Committee Meeting, 7:30	TBD	Chuck Smith	SolarPresident@SolarOutdoors.org
6/5	Tues	Monthly Meeting, 7:30 pm	Colony Hall	Chuck Smith	SolarPresident@SolarOutdoors.org
		Program: Climbing Mt Kilimanjaro	Colony Hall		SolarPrograms@SolarOutdoors.org

SOLAR RAY DEADLINES

5/18	Fri	June SOLAR Ray Deadline		Sheila Smith	SolarRayEditor@SolarOutdoors.org
6/15	Fri	July SOLAR Ray Deadline		TBD	SolarRayEditor@SolarOutdoors.org

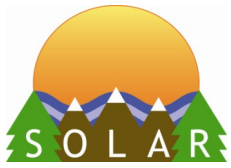
ACTIVITIES

4/21-23	Wknd	Waterloo-Pinckney Trail Backpacking Trip	Waterloo & Pinckney State Recreation Areas	Heidi Tiejen	h_tiejen@yahoo.com
4/21	Sat	Earth Day Cleanup Project & Fun Day	Stony Creek	Bill Morse	billc095@yahoo.com
5/3	Thur	Pete Seeger Tribute Sing-A-Long	Ann Arbor, MI	Chuck Smith	cbryansmii@gmail.com
5/5	Sat	Season Inaugural Sunset Paddle	Proud Lake, Milford, MI	Margaret Martin	mpluscat@yahoo.com
5/12	Sat	Bicycle Tour of Detroit's Near East Side	Detroit, MI	Jerry and Artemae Anderson	artemaemarie@gmail.com
5/19	Sat	Spring Hike on the Potawatomi Trail	Silver Lake, Pinckney State Recreation Area	Laura Buhl	buhl@yahoo.com
5/21-25	Multit	Shenandoah Backpacking Trip	Shenandoah National Park, Waynesboro, VA	Heidi Tiejen	h_tiejen@yahoo.com
5/25-28	Wknd	Hocking Hills Memorial Day Weekend	Logan, OH	Nancy Prall	pralln@yahoo.com
6/2	Sat	Sunset Paddle	Proud Lake, Milford, MI	Margaret Martin	mpluscat@yahoo.com
6/23	Sat	Summer Solstice Sunset Paddle	Proud Lake, Milford, MI	Margaret Martin	mpluscat@yahoo.com
6/22-24	Wknd	Northouse Dunes Beach Cleanup	Free Soil, MI	Vera Morris	verm4@yahoo.com
7/1	Sun	East Side Mid-Summer Kayak Tour	Harrison Twp, MI	Mike Hobig	mhobig@ford.com
7/7, 8/4, 8/31, 9/29, 10/27	Var	More Sunset Paddles	Proud Lake, Milford, MI	Margaret Martin	mpluscat@yahoo.com
8/28-9/8	Multit	100-Mile Wilderness Backpacking Trip	Monson, ME	Bill Lynch	blynch@mayne-mckenney.com
10/20-27	Multit	Cape Hatteras Wind and Water Trip	Cape Hatteras, NC	Chuck Smith	cbryansmii@gmail.com

CLASSES

4/26, 9/21-24	Thur, Multit	Intermediate Backpacking	Detroit, MI	Leslie Cordova	lesliegene@aol.com
5/5, 6/2	Sat	Pre-Paddle Kayak Lesson	Proud Lake, Milford, MI	Matt Dalton	mdalton@ameritech.net
5/23, 5/30, 6/6, 6/9-10	Wed, Multit	Basic Land Navigation	Berkley Community Center, Waterloo Rec Area	Jeff McWilliams	jeff.mcwilliams@gmail.com
10/4, 10/6, 10/11, 10/13-14	Thur, Sat, Wknd	Advanced Land Navigation	Troy, Ortonville Rec Area, Waterloo Rec Area	Jeff McWilliams	jeff.mcwilliams@gmail.com

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, 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, preferably in Microsoft Word. 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
Equipment: Glenn Newa
Historian: Chip Kleinbrook

Membership: Jennifer Tislerics
Programs: (vacant)
Public Relations: (vacant)
Ray Editor: Sheila Smith
Webmaster: (vacant)

PRESIDENTS AT LARGE

Michael Banks | Leslie Cordova | Allen Duncan | Al Fylak | Steve Gardner | Bill Halvingis
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

33228 W. 12 Mile Road

P.O. Box 220

Farmington Hills, MI 48334

Visit our website: www.solaroutdoors.org