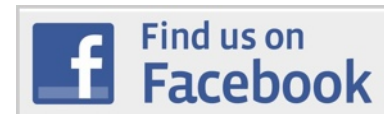


The SOLAR Ray



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

December 2012

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100 Miles in Maine

Bill Lynch

This was an ambitious trip— 12 days of hiking in Maine. On the last Saturday in August five SOLARites: Mike Hobig, Tom Simino, Rick Wisz, Paul Williford, and Bill Lynch left Detroit to hike the 100 Mile Wilderness Trail in Maine, the last section of the Appalachian Trail. We spent Saturday night at a KOA Campground south of Montreal and arrived at the starting point in

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Backpacking with a Borrowed Kid

Jennifer Tislerics

Our niece had been asking her parents to take her camping, but the logistics weren't working out. Ati and I offered to take her, but we wanted to do it Tislerics-style: with all of our gear and food carried on our backs, no campfires, no s'mores. A bit unsure about this

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North Manitou Meander

Bill Matthews

Five hardy SOLAR souls decided to roll the weather dice and take a chance on a Fall backpacking trip to a northern Michigan island in Lake Michigan. Heidi Tietjen (who organized the trip), Fred Miller, Inna Serkh, and Lois & Bill Matthews met for breakfast at 7 a.m. on Friday, September 20 at the Early Bird

Continued on p.4

The UltimateHike!

...and how SOLAR made a difference

Lou and Pam Szakal

On October 13th, 26 hikers and 10 coaches hiked 30 miles in one day on the Tecumseh Trail in Columbus, Indiana. Why would we do something this crazy, you ask? Let's start from the beginning.

In June, Heidi Tietjen and Jennifer Tislerics received information from CureSearch, a non-profit organization, that they needed a hiking

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WELCOME TO THESE NEW SOLAR MEMBERS!

Adrienne Bokatzian | Mary Joe Fernandez
Greg Willem

UPGRADED TO LIFETIME:

Add your name here next month! Contact Jennifer Tislerics, Membership Chair: solarmembership@solaroutdoors.org

100 MILES IN MAINE *continued from previous page*

Monson, Maine on Sunday afternoon. Phil, our native Maine contact, who was providing our food resupply and shuttle service, described the trail with the term:

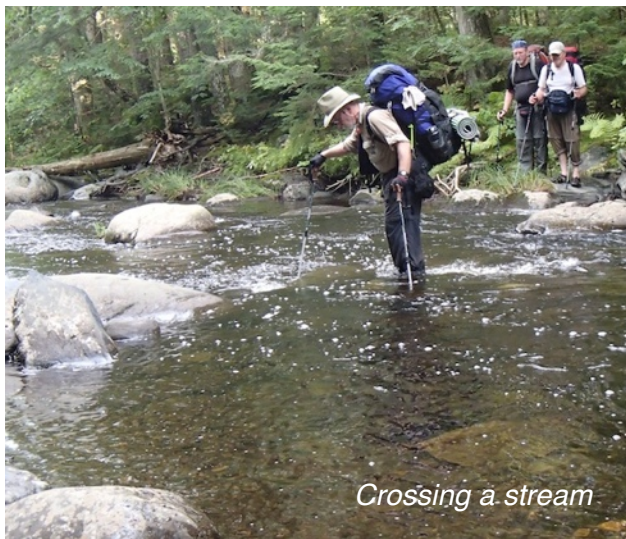
“GABE”: Grueling - Aggravating - Brutal - Exhausting

This proved to be an understatement. Some highlights:

Day 1: 9 am start at Highway 15 with the goal of Wilson Valley Lean-To (10.5 miles). The Monson Slate and tree roots were very slick which made the going slow. Rick decided to leave the trail “not having any fun”. He camped at a logging road and hiked out the next day. We dry camped at Big Wilson Cliffs (Elev. 1250 feet) and had some rain during the night. (7.7 miles)

Day 4: Break camp at 7 am, hike over Third (elev. 2050 feet), Columbus (elev. 2250 feet) and Chairback Mountain (elev. 2197 feet). Take side trail to East Chairback Pond and camp, arriving about 7 pm. (6.7 miles).

We are short of our goal, Tappan Campground, and about 10 miles (one day) behind schedule.



Crossing a stream

Day 5: Paul and Bill depart at West Branch Pleasant River (1.7 miles). Mike and Tom continue up over cloudy White Cap Mountain (elev. 3644 feet) to camp at Logan Brook Lean-To arriving at dusk 7:30 pm (14.5 miles). Tom claims Mike had “summit fever”, Mike claims it was a good steak he was given.

Day 8: Another dry camp on top of Nesuntabunt Mountain (elev. 1550 feet) for the night. Our first good view of Mount Katahdin, our destination 12 miles away. To stand on a mountain, to estimate the



Climbing Mt. Katahdin

miles and see a cloud caught on the peak. Why folks come this way (or not) is easy to grasp.

Day 9: Lots of aggravating roots on the trail. Mike thought this was the worst of it by far; slick roots, not an inch of dry ground to step on, this section truly was **G.A.B.E.**

Day 12: Up early to climb the great mountain, reached the summit at Baxter Peak (elev. 5267 feet) early afternoon. Baxter Peak is the

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100 MILES IN MAINE *continued from previous page*

northern end of the Appalachian Trail. This was a difficult climb with more of the aggravating roots and rocks to the tree line, then large boulders to climb up and over. There were steel rods in some of the boulders to pull you up. It was 5 miles plus and 4,042 feet to the summit. Total time to the summit and back down: 13 hours.

We met through hikers in camp and along the trail. Most just passed us by with their mile-eating strides born of months on the trail. It was interesting to hear their stories and get a feeling for their outlook on life in general and trail life in particular, a lot stemming from personal relations with others along the way. The 100 Mile Wilderness Trail is a section of the Appalachian Trail so we were referred to as “section hikers”. At this camp we dined with “through hikers” with trail names like “Sprinkles”, “No-Key”, “Diesel” and “Domino”. We met other hikers along the way with names like “Lamb-Chop”, “Mud”, “Cow Tail”, “Sherpa” and others like us without trail names: “the Russians”, the “Yuppie couple with the kid in sandals”, and “Mr. Fast and Light from Chicago”. Wonder what they called us. One interesting tidbit: Pop-Tarts are a favorite super food of the through hikers.

This was a strenuous and challenging trip. There is no place in Michigan that can duplicate the terrain and conditions that you will experience on this trail. The main thing is mental preparation. We would recommend a “zero-day” or rest day in the middle of the trip. On the plus side, we picked the right time of the year: the weather was great,

Trail's end: Baxter Peak, Mt. Katahdin.



mild temperatures, little rain and no bugs. There were several stream crossings, a couple of which might be dangerous in the spring. Another plus on this trip that cannot be overstated: good food, good drink and good companionship. Some of us will return to Maine. Some of us won't need to meet the challenge of this part of the trail EVER again, preferring, perhaps, a trip more like a vacation next time.

While we were completing the trail Rick and Paul took an alternate trip (see “*The Maine Alternative*” below), taking in another side of Maine, Campobello Island, Cutler State Preserve and Acadia National Park. They saw the coast and had lobster and shrimp, seeing other sights and tasting other delicacies. Did we mention beer yet?

Some of that Maine beer is good and our teammates left some with the food resupply....heavenly!

The Maine Alternative

Rick Wisz

After taking nine hours to cover the first 7 miles of the Wilderness, my body convinced my mind to take an optional ‘out route’. A ten mile walk the next day returned me to our Maine ‘base camp’ whose owner kindly let me help work clearing his 5-acre wood lot in exchange for a place to park my sleeping bag. Two days later two others from the group joined my party. One was to return to the hike with the food resupply while two of us went on an ‘alternative trip’.

Continued next page

THE MAINE ALTERNATIVE *continued from previous page*

Phil, the registered Maine guide, whose woodlot we were helping to transform into a 'campers/hikers' facility, suggested a trip to help us experience the rest of Maine. The two of us stayed at his cabin in the woods in Springfield, where we also took in the Springfield County Fair. Think a VERY small Michigan state fair, where we watched a team of two draught horses pull almost 7 tons from a standing start, as well as some of the traveling teams from the World Wrestling Entertainment Company. The next day we went to Campobello Island, which is actually a Canadian island, where we toured the Roosevelts' 'summer home' (all 32 rooms); saw part of the Bay of Fundy with its 40' tides; and did a self-guided tour of a fishing harbor and tried to identify lobster boats, scallop trawlers, and shrimp boats. After camping on the island we stopped at Cutler State Preserve which had some wonderful trails taking us to both the water's edge and cliff ledges. We spent that night at Acadia National Park, but our plan to hike the next day was foiled by fog that limited visibility to about ¼ mile. On our return to Phil's we spent several more days burning brush, moving logs, avoiding moose, and catching the beginning of the annual International Float Plane gathering.



The whole party at the beginning of the hike

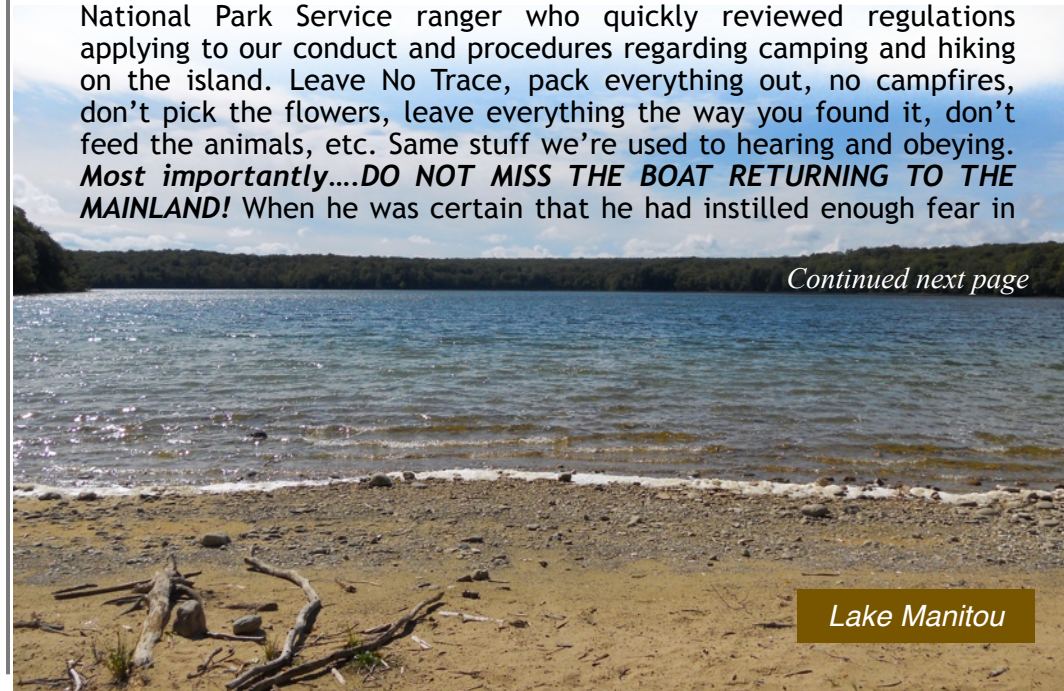
NORTH MANITOU MEANDER *continued from page 1*

Restaurant in Leland. Rain and wind had passed through the area the previous night and was promising to return in waves for the next two days. After a great breakfast, we unloaded our gear next to the Manitou Island Transit offices, parked at the long term parking lot and took the shuttle back to the ferry.

Among the passengers was a Montessori school group of 25 boys and girls, aged 12 to 14, from Monroe, with a few teachers and parents. There was also an MSU research team studying ticks. The rest were various-sized groups trying to get in a final trip to the island before the ferry stops for the season. The group from the Montessori school were planning on camping in a campground on South Manitou Island, but were informed that weather and Lake Michigan conditions made the trip there too risky. Everyone would have to disembark at North Manitou Island. The students were not prepared to travel and camp around the island (several had their gear in large black trash bags), so they would have stay at the Village campground on North Manitou.

After getting off the boat, we received a welcoming brief from the National Park Service ranger who quickly reviewed regulations applying to our conduct and procedures regarding camping and hiking on the island. Leave No Trace, pack everything out, no campfires, don't pick the flowers, leave everything the way you found it, don't feed the animals, etc. Same stuff we're used to hearing and obeying. ***Most importantly....DO NOT MISS THE BOAT RETURNING TO THE MAINLAND!*** When he was certain that he had instilled enough fear in

Continued next page



Lake Manitou

NORTH MANITOU MEANDER *continued from previous page*

everyone of the consequences of disobeying (or forgetting) these requirements, he collected our wilderness permits, and marked them with our planned campsites for the next two nights. We hoisted our packs on our backs and headed west to the middle of the island to check out Lake Manitou, a large beautiful lake that was a perfect setting for enjoying our lunch. However, as tempting as it might have been, swimming was out, since the Ranger warned us that we would get “swimmer’s itch” if we did. After lunch, we took a few quick pictures and headed back on the trail. We had about five more miles to cover to get to our campsite. It was already mid-afternoon, and the weather looked like it couldn’t make up its mind if it wanted to rain or not. As we hiked it eventually began to sprinkle; enough so that Heidi was forced to don her “magic jacket”. It worked...the rain stopped! Soon Heidi declared that she was “tired of these woods” and moved to the front and set a blistering pace for the rest of us to maintain. There was much jubilation and relief when we finally arrived at our beautiful campsite just behind the sand dunes on the west side of the island. Bill made the water run down to the beach, where he took off his boots and socks and rolled up his trousers above his knees. However, the surf soon proved this inadequate. He was soaked from the mid-thigh down to the cuffs. Should have just removed the pants too. Modesty has no place in backpacking, I’m told.

Since campfires are banned on the island, after dinner and pictures of the beautiful sunset over Lake Michigan, everyone hunkered down in their tents for warmth and sleep. Bill and Lois were sharing a campsite with Heidi, and heard her moving around outside their tent in the dark. They heard her emit a disgusted “Yeccch!” and asked her if everything was alright. She replied that she was brushing her teeth, and in the dark grabbed a light-colored tube and squeezed the contents onto her toothbrush. Once it reached her teeth, she realized she had made a mistake...it definitely was NOT toothpaste. It was Tinactin...an athlete’s foot ointment. Guess she won’t have to worry about Hoof and Mouth Disease for awhile. That night it rained quite hard a few times. In the morning, though, things were fairly dried out, and a few good shakes got the remaining drops off our tent fly. We broke camp, and continued



Lois “sunbathing”

on our circle around the island, heading for the cemetery on the Southeast side. Once there, we set up camp and made our water run to the beach. This time, Fred decided to go swimming and fill up the water jugs at the same time. Brave soul...the water wasn’t too cold, but the wind certainly was when you came out of the water.

That night the wind really howled, and a little rain fell, but in the morning the sun was shining. We pushed off by 7:30 a.m. and ended up reaching the boat docks by 9:00 a.m., arriving with plenty of time to relax and talk to the other hikers about their experiences. It was a great place to hike and camp, and definitely worth the trip. Highly recommended to everyone, especially in the Fall when there are no bugs to bother you.

While on the ferry in August, Fred Miller photographed this buck swimming the 4-mile channel between North and South Manitou Islands in northern Lake Michigan. Fred mentioned this to the ranger when back on North Manitou Island in September. He was glad to hear that the buck made it safely to the shores of South Manitou Island.



The UltimateHike! *continued from page 1*

coach to help people to—what else? Hike! Lou was flattered that they contacted him; he reached out to Brecka Putnam from CureSearch. Within 20 minutes, Brecka called back, they chatted for about 10 minutes, and within 30 minutes Lou was hired.



You see, CureSearch is an organization that raises money to conduct research for childhood cancer and the Ultimate Hike is their largest fundraising effort, hosted in over 20 cities. Brecka and Lou met a few days later to seal the deal where he received a binder with some training and fund raising materials. The program needed a little work and like anyone who has been to one of his classes will know, he took it on with a passion. The main event would be a 30 mile hike in one day. Each hiker was required to raise \$2500.

Pam was on board immediately, and good thing. Our first meeting was with moms and friends of moms who had lost a child to childhood cancer. None of them had met before, but the hugs and tears said they knew each other in a special way. Lou's eyes welled up and Pam's were gushing. Pam, and the female touch, is what really held everyone together.

Why Solar? And what is the impact? At the informational meeting and our first hike (about 3 miles), we talked about the 5 essentials for day-hiking and boots. They had lots of questions- what kind, where to buy, cost. So we started in with types of boots, differences, where to get them, breaking them in and so on. Class: Basic Backpacking.

As the hikes went on so did the miles: 6 miles, 8 miles 10 miles, eventually 22 miles. The starting times got earlier, colder, and darker. Clothing and layering became the main topic. Wicking materials were introduced, and how to stay warm. Classes = Basic Backpacking, Enjoying Michigan Winters, and Basic Mountaineering. None of the hikers had hiked in the dark so headlamps were discussed and a night hike was scheduled. Classes: Basic Mountaineering, Intermediate Backpacking, Advanced Land Navigation and Advanced Backpacking.

Over the 17 weeks of training we could not hike every weekend with our team, which had grown to about 10 people and expanded to include doctors, people who wanted to get fit, and those who wanted to give back for a cause. Most had never hiked a trail, not even a nature trail, or didn't realize the bounty of them in the area. The most they had hiked was on a neighborhood walk with their dog to take care of business. Getting them used to trails and how to get around took some navigation training and map reading skills. Classes: Basic Land Navigation and Adventure Racing. Nutrition was a big concern for this endurance event. Hikers had to test different foods and nutritional supplements over the 17 weeks to be prepared for hike day. They were amazed that they would burn as much as 6000-8000 calories over 30 miles. Classes: Basic Backpacking, Basic Mountaineering, Enjoy Michigan Winters, and Adventure Racing.

The day of the UltimateHike there were three teams from three cities- Detroit, Grand Rapids, and St. Louis. We started hiking at 4 am. The 30 mile trail was divided into 6 segments. Coaches were dispersed along the segments so they could rest in between and have fresh legs and minds to keep the hikers motivated to the end. Between segments, coaches and volunteers made sure that hikers were hydrated and fed. We also took care of scrapes and scratches, iced sore knees,

Continued next page

The UltimateHike!

continued from previous page

administered first aid for spider bites, and dealt with the biggest problem—blisters. Class: Wilderness First Aid. About halfway through the hike several hikers strayed from their group and got a little lost. They were okay, but there was some tension for a while. Class: Search and Rescue and Advanced Backpacking & Leadership.

We have been involved with SOLAR for over 13 years and during that time, have taken just about every course that has been offered. Little did we know how much of an impact SOLAR would have in the outside world. Yes, we knew we would use our skills outside of SOLAR, but to make such an impact on these Moms, Dads, family and friends who have lost a child to cancer was more than we ever expected. Watching these people walk across the finish line with tears in their eyes or just outright sobbing, not because their feet hurt but because they did it, had to be one of the most satisfying feelings ever. It is because of SOLAR that we had the necessary skills to make an impact in their lives.

Overall the three cities raised over \$68,000 which will be dedicated to research for childhood cancer. We will definitely be involved again next year and hope that more SOLAR members will be encouraged to join us as well.



Backpacking with a Borrowed Kid

continued from p. 1

strange manner of camping, but eager to have some fun with her adventurous uncle & aunt, she agreed to join us.

To fully appreciate the endeavor we signed up for I should point out that our niece was six and a half years old (half-year increments are important at that age). Although she is very much into stereotypical “girly” stuff, she also loves to climb trees and go exploring in the woods. A few years of idolizing “Dora the Explorer” goes a long way!

With the mantra of “cotton kills” running through my head, I endeavored to get this girl some synthetic clothing appropriate for the backwoods. Always up for a wardrobe expansion, she was happy to go shopping...until we discovered that 99.9% of children’s clothing is made with cotton (or so it seemed). It took a few visits to resale shops but we got the basics covered. All in various shades of pink, of course. You think I’m kidding? Nope. We even got her a pink headlamp! She was delighted. Hereinafter she will be known as Miss Pink.

Since my employer was sending me to Marquette for a day, we had a great opportunity to visit Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore. I was more apprehensive about the 16+ hours in the car than I was the backpacking. I gathered tips from veterans of long car rides with kids. We also brought Miss Pink’s favorite *They Might Be Giants* CD, which greatly pleased Uncle Ati.

The drive through the Lower Peninsula was gray and rainy, but the skies cleared shortly before we reached the Mackinac Bridge, where we stopped for lunch on the shore. I don’t know what Miss Pink had been told about the U.P., but boy was she excited to cross the bridge! A frequent refrain those first couple of days was, “I can’t believe we’re in the Upper Peninsula!” We finished work duties in Marquette

Continued next page

Backpacking with a Borrowed Kid *continued from previous page*

and headed to Munising to get our backcountry permits and swim in the hotel pool before setting off on our big adventure the next morning.

A veteran at camping with kids had suggested we pick up a disposable camera for Miss Pink, to allow her to photograph the trip from her own perspective. I had found a \$25 digital camera online instead, which we loaned to Miss Pink for the trip. In the right conditions it took surprisingly good photos. It even survived the trip! Many of the photos Auntie Jen took have matching photos taken by Miss Pink.

Our planned route and mileage was very modest by our standards, but seemed like a good fit for Miss Pink. Our 2.5 mile hike to the first campsite included a lunch stop on a fallen tree near Mosquito Falls. At Mosquito Campground we made camp and went for a swim in Lake Superior. Although the waves initially intimidated Miss Pink, she soon discovered the fun of splashing around in a Great Lake.

Miss Pink's only significant concern was bears. We had given her some notice of what to do if we saw a bear (DO NOT RUN, get close to the adults, blow your whistle, DO NOT RUN), in the extremely unlikely event that we'd see one. She understood the importance of putting food and toiletries into the bear locker, but needed reassurance that the bears would not follow us through the woods as we carried our dinner down to the beach. We convinced her that Michigan bears were more scared of us than they were hungry for our food, and everything was fine again. Miss Pink quickly adapted to eating dinner out of a freezer bag with a long-handled soda spoon, and particularly enjoyed the pudding we made for dessert.



We waved to every boatload of tourists we saw, and many people waved back.

I was awakened at 5:30 the next morning by the sound of coyotes howling. What a treat! I woke Ati up, and we quietly deliberated about waking up Miss Pink, who had probably never heard coyotes before. We didn't want to scare her, nor did we want her to miss this rare opportunity. Being an exceptionally heavy sleeper, by the time she awoke the coyotes had stopped their morning banter. She didn't seem alarmed, and confirmed that she would like to be woken next time the coyotes were howling. That's my kind of kid!

Day two was our long hike—about 4.5 miles, mostly in the woods along the shoreline cliffs. The periodic breaks in the leaves provided gorgeous peeks at beautiful, blue Lake Superior and some interesting, colorful rock formations. Anyone who has hiked with Ati has heard his exclamations of “Yes! More UP!” on uphill. This trip was no different. His enthusiasm was contagious, and Miss Pink soon started echoing with “We like UP!” However, toward the end of the day she changed her mind and decided to join Auntie Jen on the “Down Team”.

Chapel Beach was a much bigger campground, spread out pretty widely. Unfortunately, the pit toilets were at the opposite end of the campground from our site. Miss Pink's feet were a bit sore from the long walk, so she got some piggyback rides that evening. We ate our freezer-bag dinners on the beach, and went for another swim in Lake Superior (which was much warmer than the gentle Chapel River flowing into it). Miss Pink and Uncle Ati went exploring upstream, where they found some fun spots to slide down the cascades on their bums.

Continued next page

Backpacking with a Borrowed Kid *continued from previous page*

The next day's hike began with a stop to admire Chapel Rock, a stand-alone sandstone formation with a solitary 100+ year old tree growing on top. The tree's exposed roots extend to the nearby cliff, the soft stone between having been worn away by the elements. It's a really unique feature of the landscape, to which Miss Pink really took a liking.

The route we chose from Chapel Beach back to the trailhead passed by 60' Chapel Falls, which was far less scenic than the 8' Mosquito Falls had



A typical view of Miss Pink on the trail. "Frilly", the baby unicorn, is able to breathe just fine with her head outside the backpack.

been two days prior. Miss Pink was more interested in taking photos of the green inchworm she spotted on the viewing platform than the falls themselves. The trail itself was pretty well developed:

flat, wide, and unchanging. Boredom was countered with a rousing game of "I Spy" and periodic spurts of energy so Miss Pink could run and retain her position at the front of the group.

As we reached the trailhead to complete our trip, I was overcome with pride for my niece. She had become a backpacker! As a treat we spent that next night in relative luxury—a car-camping site near a pool, with a fire and s'mores. Miss Pink enjoyed it immensely.

The next day we took the nearly 3 hour boat tour of Pictured Rocks, which ends just beyond where our hike turned inland. Miss Pink became impressed with how far we had hiked once she saw the distance by boat.

After a brief stop in town for souvenirs and ice cream (no trip is complete without an ice cream cone!), we headed back home. The weather turned gray and rainy again once we entered the Lower Peninsula, making our constantly sunny, warm time in the Upper Peninsula seem almost magical. We took a vote, and it was unanimous: the three of us had a good time backpacking together, and would like to do it again someday.



Tips for backpacking with a young child:

- Bring lots of little surprises (snacks, toys, games) but only present them as needed.
- A safety whistle is essential. As is learning not to blow it indoors.
- Cheap digital or disposable cameras keep kids interested in what they see around them, and photos make great souvenirs.
- Goldfish crackers, Craisins, and surprise stops for ice cream cones can really improve moods. And not just for the kids!
- Do give some notice of each day's agenda, while leaving room for on-the-fly changes. Having some idea what to expect helps build trust and confidence, especially early in a trip.
- The Salvation Army store in Ann Arbor has the best selection of used kids' clothes around, at a very reasonable price.

INTERMEDIATE BACKPACKING CLASS IN THE PORKIES

The Intermediate Backpacking class, comprised of those who have completed the Basic Backpacking class, plans their own trip, including the destination, with guidance from the instructors. The class is far less structured than Basic Backpacking. The only restriction is that the destination must be within a day's drive. This year's group went to the Porcupine Mountains. Here's what it looked like.



*Karen Stauble
gathering wood*



View from campsite #3



Fearless (if chilly) Leader Leslie



Bear bagging over the cliff



View from the first campsite on Mirror Lake



The last day

Celebrate the Season! Winter Party and Potluck

Friday, December 7, 2012, 7:00 pm • midnight at Colony Hall

SOLAR will provide: Ham and Turkey • Plates & Cutlery • Soda and Water • DJ & Music

Members to Provide: Dish to pass • Additional beverages • Dancing shoes and a festive spirit!

Volunteers needed to help set up from 5:30 p.m.

Contact Kirsten Cook at solarprograms@solaroutdoors.org



Cross-Country Ski Class and Trip

Instructors: Bill Halvangis, Cecil Moix, Ron and Peg Campbell

Date & Location of Class: Jan. 9th (Wed), 7:00 to 9:30 pm at the Universalist Unitarian Church, 25301 Halsted Rd, Farmington Hills, MI, 48335.

Date & Location of Practicals: Jan. 12th and 19th (Sat), 10:00 am to noon, Huron Meadows Metropark, 8765 Hammel, Rd. Brighton, MI, 48116 . Equipment rentals available for \$10.

Date & Location of Trip: Weekend of January 25-27, in Roscommon MI. Formal meeting at 1:30 pm on Saturday at the at Cross-Country Ski Headquarters.

The purpose of this class is to introduce novice-level students to cross country skiing or refresh those with some experience in the sport. The class will focus on the fundamental principles of the classic/diagonal ski technique although there will be some time spent on the skate technique. There will be a variety of skis and equipment at the classroom session.

The class will explain equipment and clothing ideas, health, safety and conditioning issues, in addition to hands-on and video instruction of ski technique. There will be a ski wax demonstration and discussion of the advantages and disadvantages of wax verses waxless skis.

The cost of class is \$20 and includes instruction and booklet. It does not include Metropark Pass, equipment rental, or costs for the trip to Roscommon. Resource information for area rental or purchase of equipment will be provided as will information about downstate and upstate cross country ski areas.

The practical and ski trip are dependent on snow conditions and will be reevaluated with the class should there not be sufficient snow.

Questions? Contact Bill Halvangis, halvangis@att.net

X-C Ski Trip Lodging

January 25 - 27, 2013

Bill Halvangis, halvangis@att.net

Seven 2-twin bed rooms are available for SOLAR members at the DNR's CCC-built MacMullen Conference Center in Roscommon, 8 miles from X-C Ski HQ. Trails are right outside the door!

First dibs go to X-C ski class members, who can reserve one or two beds, who sign up by **January 10**. After that, we'll open it up to all SOLAR members.

Price of \$145/bed (with shared bathrooms in hall) includes 1/25 & 26 lodging and all meals from Saturday breakfast through Sunday breakfast. You can sign up for Friday dinner, \$18, separately. Staying at the MacMullen Center is optional. There are other hotels in the area.

New Year's Day Gathering and Huron River Paddle

**River Hawk Lodge, Proud Lake State Recreation Area, Milford
January 1, 2013, 1:00 pm until ???**

Organized by Al Heavner and Al's right hand woman, Heidi Bay, 248-240-6097

Heavner Canoes, with the support of the DNR, is organizing this popular family-friendly event once again! Snowshoeing, hiking, cross-country skiing, paddling (that's right!), storytelling, eating, and whatever other fun you want to bring to the party at the River Hawk Lodge. The fun starts at 1:00 pm and goes on into the evening. Come for an hour or stay all day and into the night.

Lots of other groups and the general public are invited to this event so you'll be sure to find someone to do something with. If you're willing to lead a hike, snowshoe trek, or ski or organize something else fun, indoors or out, let Heidi Bay know.

- ♦ Kid-friendly! Bring one, bring two, bring a few!
- ♦ Outdoor activities are dog-friendly
- ♦ Snowshoe rentals available - \$5/hr
- ♦ Canoe and kayak rentals available, weather permitting. *Experienced paddlers only.* \$5/hr per person; kids under 12 accompanied by an adult are free. *Advance reservations are strongly encouraged: (248) 685-2379.* Bringing your own boat? Return transport provided for a small fee
- ♦ Cross-country skiing if there's enough snow (fingers crossed!)
- ♦ Indoor fun--bring cards, board games, music (the kind you make or the kind you buy)
- ♦ Bring your own snacks and water
- ♦ Bring a dish to pass for dinner. *This is truly pot luck; what people bring is what you get*
- ♦ Hot chocolate and soft drinks provided
- ♦ RSVPs requested but not mandatory

This event is free but donations to the Nature Connection's "No Child Left Inside" Program are welcome and encouraged!



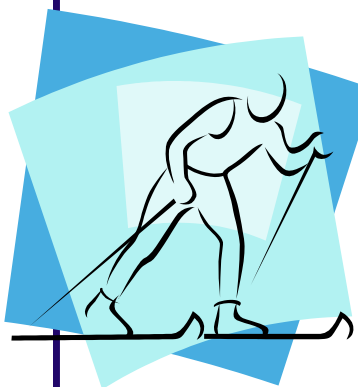
Photos by Pablo Balan

VASA Cross-Country Ski Trip • February 8-10, 2013

Organized by Jeff Zabel, jzabel@twmi.rr.com

Come join us for the VASA ski race in beautiful Traverse City on January 9. The race course is groomed for Classic and Freestyle skiing. The 27K and 50K races are timed and you can be awarded ribbons if you are the fastest skier in your age category. Racers will be assigned different start times with faster skiers starting earlier. First time participants will be assigned to a later start time. There is also a 12K race. Registration costs are from \$35-\$65 before January 9 and go up after that. To register online www.vasa.org.

We will be staying at the Timber Ridge Resort, adjacent to the VASA trail. The heated cottage fits six people, has electricity, a kitchenette with utensils and a refrigerator, and sleeps six. The cost of \$238.00 will be divided equally among everyone staying in the cottage. There is no refund for the cottage or ski race registration. If we don't have snow, we will tour the nearby wineries or go hiking.



Learn to Ice Climb

February 10, 2013, 2:00 pm
Fenton, MI

Organized by Jeff Enterkin,
jente6969@aol.com

Peabody Ice Climbing Club is a man-made ice climbing venue. Two towers, 45 and 72 ft tall, are iced over in the winter to offer a place for experienced ice climbers to train and those new to the sport to learn. No climbing experience is necessary.

All specialized gear is provided, dress for the weather. A warming barn is available. Instruction and gear fitting will take about an hour, then we will have about 3 hours to climb to our hearts' content. We will be finishing up after dusk under the lights.

\$40 per person covers all costs including hot drinks and light snack. Feel free to bring your own food or non-alcoholic beverages. Climbers should be at least 16 years old, but spectators of any age are welcome. Peabody needs to know your boot size ahead of time in order to have the right equipment available for everyone. Let me know when you sign up.

RSVPs close at midnight Wednesday, February 6. **This event is only open to SOLAR members.** For convenience, the +1 guest option is available but PLEASE only use this for a family member who is also in SOLAR.

If the weather in preceding days is too warm for safe ice, event will be cancelled and money refunded.

WINTER OUTDOOR SAFETY CLASS ▪ January 26, 2013

Contact Instructor: Lynn Dubay, ldubay2002@yahoo.com

This one day class will prepare novice cross-country skiers and winter hikers for their day trips. Topics include winter hazards, heat management, clothing, hydration, nutrition, hypothermia and frostbite, trip planning and basic trail navigation.



This class will be held at River Hawk Annex, Proud Lake State Recreation Area, Park Headquarters Rd (off Wixom Rd), Milford, MI, from 8 am to 2 pm with a hike after the class. The fee is **\$18**. There is no prerequisite for this course. The registration deadline is the January 8 meeting.

Enjoying Michigan Winters: Winter Backpacking & Skills Class

Lead Instructor: Allen Duncan, aduncan85@gmail.com

Do you have basic backpacking skills and a desire to learn valuable skills for camping and trekking in the "fourth" season? Would you like to have a lot of fun doing so?

Would you like to feel safe and confident in the cold and wet weather that can strike the upper Midwest during the "other three" seasons as well?

If your answer to these questions is "Yes!," Enjoying Michigan Winters is the class for you. Class sessions alternate between classroom instruction and discussion and on-the-trail practice and learning at Kensington Metropark. You'll learn how to keep comfortable and safe in controlled and unexpected situations and to have fun despite—or because of—the cold.

12/05	Schoolcraft College	01/09	Schoolcraft College
12/12	Kensington Metropark	01/19-20	First Practical: Waterloo State Rec Area
12/19	Schoolcraft College	01/23	Schoolcraft College
01/02	Kensington Metropark	02/01-03	Second Practical: Pigeon River

Cost is **\$120**. This cost covers a book, handouts, and all camping fees. Most equipment can be borrowed from SOLAR. You'll need a State Recreation Passport and Metropark Pass and to pay for your hotel before the second practical.



SOLAR Annual Photo Contest

February 5, 2013 - Get your 2012 photos ready!

Kirsten Cook, solarprograms@solaroutdoors.org

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





American Red Cross First Aid/CPR/AED

Saturday, February 16, 2013

10:00 am – 5:00 pm

Course Fee \$70.00

Instructor: Tom Black

tblack@cityofsouthfield.com

Would you know what to do in a cardiac, breathing, or first aid emergency? The right training will help you recognize an emergency and how to prioritize care for injuries and sudden illnesses.

With an emphasis on hands-on learning, this first aid/CPR/AED course covers the following:

- Cardiac Emergencies
- CPR and how to use an AED
- Breathing Emergencies
- Injuries to Muscles, Bones and Joints
- Environmental Emergencies
- Soft Tissue Emergencies
- Anaphylaxis and Epinephrine Auto-Injector
- Using a Tourniquet

The \$70 course fee includes a First Aid/CPR/AED Manual, First Aid/CPR/AED Ready Reference Cards and a two year American Red Cross certificate.

Class to be held at City of Southfield Parks and Recreation Building, 26000 Evergreen Road, Southfield, MI.

Learn to Downhill Ski or Snowboard

Adults and Children!

December 15, 3:00 pm

Pine Knob, Clarkston, MI

Organizer: Michael Dwyer
travelandadventure@yahoo.com

\$40 per person provides a first time

skier/boarder with:

- Beginner Area Lift Ticket (2 magic carpets, 2 rope tows, and 1 chairlift)
- Boots, Poles, & Skis or boots and snowboard
- 90 minute lesson (you can ski until 11:00 pm)



If there is interest in snowboarding, I can offer that too, same price/date/time. We need at least 10 people for skiing and 5 for snowboarding. Open to adults and children ages 7+ for skiing and 10+ for snowboarding.

Arrive by 3:00 to gear up and be ready to go by 4:00 pm.

Pine Knob makes snow and is usually open by December 1st and before we receive a natural snowfall.

Hike the Adirondacks in Their Autumnal Beauty!

September 21 - 27, 2013

Organized by Janet Schester,
j40makayla@gmail.com

We're looking ahead and have booked the entire loft at the Adirondack Loj to catch 2013's changing colors. Hike or paddle amid the amazing colors of an Adirondack autumn!

Price of \$380 includes 5 nights, 9/22-27, in a 12-bed loft at the Loj plus breakfast, packed lunch, and dinner from 9/22 dinner through 9/27 lunch. Cost of lodging on 9/21 (at Lake Placid hostel, \$40, if open) and Loj bar tab are extra.

Sign up the SOLAR-Outdoors site on Meetup.com if you want to register and pay on-line. Deadline is July 20, 2012.



If you would like to join the SOLAR Stair Stars training for the March 3 Fight for Air Climb, contact Mary Donahue at mldonahue824@gmail.com.

Class Survey Administrator Needed

SOLAR is looking for someone to take over the class surveys that are sent out after each class is completed. Our current volunteer is moving on after several years of supporting this activity. This is a great way to get involved with the Education Committee with minimal commitment. Contact Jackie Ostrosky at ostroskyjm@gmail.com if you can help with this.

SOLAR DECEMBER 2012 CALENDAR

www.SolarOutdoors.org

Winner of the November Activity Organizer Drawing: Mary Donahue, Stair Climb Kickoff and Potluck

Click to get
the details on
Meetup.com!

Click names to
send email!

SOLAR MEETINGS AND PROGRAMS

12/4	Tues	Monthly Meeting, 7:30 pm	Colony Hall, 21780 Evergreen, Southfield, MI	Chuck Smith	SolarPresident@SolarOutdoors.org
		Program: Winter Gear Swap		Kirsten Cook	SolarPrograms@SolarOutdoors.org
1/08	Tues	Monthly Meeting, 7:30 pm	Colony Hall, 21780 Evergreen, Southfield, MI	Chuck Smith	SolarPresident@SolarOutdoors.org
NOTE DATE!		Program: Amazing Amphibians		Kirsten Cook	SolarPrograms@SolarOutdoors.org
1/29	Tues	Steering Committee Meeting, 7:30 pm	TBD	Chuck Smith	SolarPresident@SolarOutdoors.org
2/5	Tues	Monthly Meeting, 7:30 pm	Colony Hall, 21780 Evergreen, Southfield, MI	Chuck Smith	SolarPresident@SolarOutdoors.org
		Program: Annual Photo Contest		Kirsten Cook	SolarPrograms@SolarOutdoors.org
2/26	Tues	Steering Committee Meeting, 7:30 pm	TBD	Chuck Smith	SolarPresident@SolarOutdoors.org

SOLAR RAY DEADLINES

12/13	Thur	January SOLAR Ray Deadline		Bruce Coppola	SolarRayEditor@SolarOutdoors.org
1/17	Thur	February SOLAR Ray Deadline		Bruce Coppola	SolarRayEditor@SolarOutdoors.org
2/14	Thur	March SOLAR Ray Deadline		Bruce Coppola	SolarRayEditor@SolarOutdoors.org

ACTIVITIES

12/07	Fri	SOLAR Winter Party and Potluck	Colony Hall, 21780 Evergreen, Southfield, MI	Kirsten Cook	SolarPrograms@SolarOutdoors.org
1/1	Tues	New Year's Gathering & Huron River Paddle	Proud Lake State Rec Area, Milford	Al Heavner	
1/18-20 or 21	Wknd	Lake Ann Cross-Country Ski Trip	Sleeping Bear Resort, Lake Ann, MI	Pete Lamb	petekandu@yahoo.com
1/24-27	Multi	Boyne 4-Day Weekend at Ski-Out Ultimate Party Mansion	Boyne, MI	Jim Stange	jimstange@gmail.com
2/8-10	Wknd	VASA Cross-Country Ski Trip	Traverse City area	Jeff Zabel	jzabel@twmi.rr.com
9/21-28, 2013	Multi	Adirondack Fall Hiking Trip	Lake Placid, NY	Janet Schester	J40makayla@gmail.com

CLASSES

12/15	Sat	Learn to Downhill Ski or Snowboard	Pine Knob, Clarkston, MI	Michael Dwyer	travelandadventure@yahoo.com
12/5, 12/12, 12/19, 1/2, 1/9, 1/19-20, 1/23, 2/1-3	Wed, Wknd, Multi	Enjoying Michigan Winters	Schoolcraft College, Kensington Metropark, Waterloo State Rec Area, Pigeon River	Allen Duncan	aduncan85@gmail.com
1/9, 1/12, 1/19, 1/25-27	Weds, Sat, Wknd	Cross-Country Ski Class	Farmington Hills, Huron Meadows Metropark, Roscommon	Bill Halvangis	halvangis@att.net
1/26	Sat	Winter Outdoor Safety	Proud Lake State Rec Area, Milford	Lynn Dubay	ldubay2002@yahoo.com
2/10	Sun	Ice Climbing for Beginners	Fenton, MI	Jeff Enterkin	Jente69690@aol.com
2/16	Sat	First Aid/CPR/AED	Southfield, MI	Tom Black	tblack@cityofsouthfield.com

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

You Can Organize a Class or Activity SOLAR works by members sharing their knowledge, skills, and adventures with other members. If you have an idea for a class you would like to teach to fellow SOLAR members, contact Eric Braun at solareducation@solaroutdoors.org. If you would like to organize an activity or trip, contact Heidi Tietjen at solaractivities@solaroutdoors.org.

January Meeting Date Note!

The January SOLAR meeting is January 8, the 2nd Tuesday of the month. That's because our usual meeting day, the 1st Tuesday of the month, is New Year's Day.

You probably have other things to do that day anyway.

From the Editor

The deadline to send articles and pictures about your outdoors fun for the next issue of the Ray is Thursday, December 13.

Your Editor has a close working relationship with a certain jolly old elf who has an unlimited open account with REI, Moosejaw, and other quality outfitters—and who maintains a considerable stockpile of coal in stocking stuffer-sized lumps.

Just saying.

So don't pout and don't cry. Send your stories and photos to:

SolarRayEditor@solaroutdoors.org



SOLAR
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Box 220
Farmington Hills, MI 48334

Visit our website at www.solaroutdoors.org