

SOLAR 1st Meeting In the New Location with Guest Speaker Luke Jordan, aka "Strider"

Article and photos by: Rosemarie Attilio



On August 25, 2015 SOLAR began holding membership meetings at St. Paul's Presbyterian Church at 27475 Five Mile Rd, in Livonia. The room was packed with SOLARites new and old, eager to see the guest speaker Luke Jordan aka "Strider" who gave a riveting adventure talk titled: A Thru-Hiker's Journey: 2013 thru-hike of the North Country Trail.

Luke described the 4600 mile hike which took 201 days, of which 194 were hiking, the other 11 were zero mile days.

He carried roughly 35-40 lbs in gear. He wore out 3 pairs of hiking shoes. He braved an attack from an angry nesting Goshawk, hordes of mosquitoes, black flies, and ticks. He suffered through heat exhaustion and near freezing temps hiking through snow, sleet, flood. He spoke of the trail meandering through people's back yards, and other parts of the trail in brush so thick you were not sure you were still on it.

He had discouraging moments, when he almost gave up. He received an uplifting talk from world renowned hiker Andrew Skurka who convinced him not to give up his quest. He spoke of other trail angels that heard or saw him and left trail magic, various gifts and food on his path. He met other inspirational and exciting people such as Nimblewood Nomad.

Through all the hazards and perils of frozen shoes, frozen food, and frozen water, he said one of the hardest things to overcome is the mental part of the trail. He persevered and became the 4th person to thru-hike the trail in it's entirety.

Many SOLARites kept Luke busy answering a wide array of questions. If you have more questions or would like to read more about his adventure, you can reach Luke at his Website:

www.stridernct.com

email: stridernct@gmail.com

Fossil Hunt in Arkona, Canada *by Jim Gilfix*

On July 25, 2015, thirty two people from SOLAR, Michigan Adventure Club, and BS Hikers (and family/friends) joined me in Arkona Canada to participate in an unusual day event. We were on a Fossil Hunt, a trip I have led through SOLAR about 14 times over the years.

The trip began with a look in the museum seeing fossils we hoped to find. After that we hiked to the river, after a short detour on a really nice trail that ended abruptly at nothing. We scoured the banks of the river and found many things, including some fossils, shells, insects, frogs and birds.

We went back to the picnic area near the museum for a fabulous pot-luck lunch. Grilled hot dogs were provided and many people provided other mouth watering food for us to enjoy. Balloon animals were a big hit for the children.

After lunch another hike began, the fun, laugh-out-loud one which began with many standing under the 35 foot waterfall (the water was freezing) as we took photos. Then we hiked to another waterfall, this one had a cave behind it that some of us went in (for a video of what it is like to be behind the falls see the SOLAR meet-up photo page, Jeff Enterkin posted his video of last year's trip.) We again went to the river, this time going upstream to a sandbar, more fossils, more fun.

Many people interacted with others from the various groups, and friendships were formed. After getting back to the cars, changing into clean and dry clothes it finally began to rain, which signaled the trip was over what incredible timing. Many people expressed having a fun and different kind of day adventure. For those of you who went, thanks for helping make this trip a success. For those of you reading this who did not go, maybe I will offer the trip again next year.



Labor Day Mackinac Bridge Walk *by Heidi Tietjen*

When Jim Kadlubowski proposed participating in the Labor Day Mackinac Bridge walk as part of his quest to section hike Michigan's portion of the North Country Trail, I jumped at the chance. I pictured bright blue skies, the sun warm on my face, perhaps a gentle breeze riling up a few white caps on the water.

Cool drizzle is what we got, but close enough. It sure beat the storm that kept me awake in my tent at Straits State Park the night before we crossed from the Upper Peninsula to the Lower on the one day a year you can do it on foot. And the weather didn't dampen our spirits at all.

We headed north early on Sunday and stopped at our campsite to set up our tents. Straits State Park is located on the outskirts of St. Ignace—cross the bridge, turn right, and you're there. We then went to the lookout point in the park to see the bridge and to eat a picnic lunch. We had to hurry as we had some hiking to do.

Jim had learned that the local North Country Trail Association's Hiawatha Shore-to-Shore chapter was hosting a point-to-point hike east of the village of Trout Lake. As we hiked through the forest and eventually along Trout Brook Pond, we encountered many beautiful yellow mushrooms, some as large as a dinner plate. We also made a short detour off the trail to visit a beaver dam that was so long, even, and well-constructed that I wouldn't have known it wasn't a man-made structure.

When we shuttled back to our starting point, Jim and I headed down the trail in the other direction to see the bit of the Niagara Escarpment that juts out of the earth, forming cliffs among the hemlock trees. We then headed into Trout Lake to join a few of the NCTA hikers for dinner. By the time we arrived back at camp we were ready to head right to our sleeping bags.

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Beaver Dam



Labor Day Mackinac Bridge Walk *by Heidi Tietjen, continued*

Overnight the weather changed. The temperature dropped and a storm came driving in. I slept fitfully but was snug and dry when I started to hear loudspeakers in the distance around 5:30. It was still raining when the runners began to assemble for their 6:35 am start but music set a festive atmosphere.

Straits State Park was a great launching point for the Bridge Walk. We walked out of our campsite and pretty much right onto the North Country Trail. We stopped at the overlook again hoping to see the crowds who were already on the bridge but the rain and mist obscured all but the top of the towers. In a few minutes we were on the bridge surrounded by walkers of all ages, including babies in strollers and people being pushed in wheelchairs. The water was fairly calm and we saw kayakers in the water below. When we looked up, we saw a few people up on the towers.

Two lanes of the bridge are reserved for walkers and two lanes were open for vehicles. Buses from school systems for miles around shuttle walkers from Mackinaw City to St. Ignace. National Guard members were posted along the bridge and always had a friendly and encouraging word for those who passed. Every so often Jim and I would walk on the inner lane, which is a steel grid so we could look straight down into the water and see the forest green painted structure of the bridge itself.



Our walk from campsite to Mackinaw City took about an hour and a half. The actual span across the straits—shore to shore—is about four miles but the “approaches to the bridge,” whatever they are, make the crossing about five miles in total. We walked on through town hoping to run into some of the other SOLARites we knew were also walking the bridge and then on towards Wienerlicious, the you-can't-miss-it restaurant with the giant hotdog on top. There we picked up the NCT heading south. The trail is paved here but lovely. We encountered a couple of cyclists but otherwise had this portion of the trail to ourselves. After a couple miles we turned around, had a pasty lunch (well, I did; Jim, the native Yooper, ordered ravioli), and boarded the bus to take us back over the bridge.



I came across this article from the June 1990 SOLAR Ray. One of the great things about SOLARites is their commitment to helping preserve our natural resources.

TREES, PLEASE

By Mary Dunn

Comraderie and summer weather were enjoyed by sixteen SOLAR members on April 28 as they planted 2000 hardwood pine and spruce seedlings at Independence Oaks County Park. The seedlings will be raised as nursery stock for future use in the park. The project was completed in three hours and followed by a complimentary lunch. A good time was had by all as we agreed there was a "pine"line between fun and work. Special Thanks go to workers: Marie Carriere, Gary Crimaldi, Dave Bombard, Sonja, Kelly and Jim Craig, John Comerford, Barb Elinton, Keith Germain, John Karestas, Roger Lynne, Mike Mannebach, Josetta Mushaka, Michael and Dennis Phillips, Joe Paronish, and Bob Wagenman.



Request for new classes:

From the Education Chair: Is there a class related to outdoor activities that you are interested in? Do you want to learn new skills? Are you very knowledgeable in something and want to teach others? The Education committee is always looking for new ideas for great classes to improve and build on our member's skills. If you do, let's talk! Contact me at solareducation@solaroutdoors.org.

Thanks! Ilene Smith

Your 2015-2016 Steering Committee dedicated to keeping SOLAR great.

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SOLAR IS FEATURED ON STREET BEAT BROADCAST

SOLAR President Jennifer Tislerics and member/instructor Jeff McWilliams appeared on a recent television episode of channel 50 (CW50) STREET BEAT. The show aired on Saturday Morning September 19, 2015. The host, Karen Carter, interviewed Jennifer and Jeff. They discussed what the SOLAR group was about, how to join, what type of activities or classes we do and other informative information.

The hostess gave a positive view of the group and how people can join to have fun with friends, or to meet new friends and enjoy the outdoor experience with others. She asked many questions of how long the group has been active, and what types of classes our members attend. Jennifer and Jeff proudly invited new members to come and enjoy all our club has to offer. See the link to the show on our SOLAR website.



Maybury State Park celebrated its 40th anniversary on August 30 and SOLARites joined the festivities to showcase one of our favorite local hiking venues. In addition to cake, ice cream, and lawn games, there were ranger-led history hikes to tour the traces of the TB sanitorium that was on the grounds from 1919 to 1969, and nature hikes led by Ron and Peg Campbell. SOLAR PR Chairman Bill Morse and PR/Welcome Committee member Jeff Enterkin set up an information booth with a nice display board and brochures to hand out. They were able to introduce a lot of people to the club. Several other SOLAR members spent some time at the booth, too, helping or just visiting: Margaret Martin, Mark Mirzoian, Mark Carson, Ken Hymes, Bill Matthews, Bruce Wolf, Heidi Tietjen, and Moe and Dave DeFrance. After the official festivities ended, Bill Morse led a group of SOLARites and others on a hike in the park.



Upcoming: Point Pelee National Park Monarch Migration October 10

Every autumn, thousands of monarch butterflies gather at Point Pelee National Park in Ontario before embarking on one of nature's most astounding journeys—an over 1,800 mile trip to central Mexico. The tip of the Pelee peninsula, Canada's southern-most landmass, acts as a jumping-off point for the butterflies, providing a shorter way across Lake Erie as they head south.

We will meet at Pt. Pelee Nature Center at 10am (inside the visitor center). We will leave at 10:15am. Pt. Pelee is about an hour drive from the Windsor Tunnel/Bridge. If you arrive early, you can walk the Woodland Nature Trail behind the Visitor Center. It is a 50-minute hike; there is a self-guided book available at the Nature Center gift store.

The plan is to check out their AWESOME nature center, then at 10:15 take the free Shuttle, which is a service that leaves the Visitor Center and travels 2 km (7 min) to the Tip's outdoor exhibit, which highlights the migration phenomenon. We will walk to the most southern Tip of mainland Canada and take pictures of this wondrous place where the fall monarch migration takes place.

After viewing the tip we will return to the visitor center and drive to their Mars Boardwalk area for our “infamous” lunch pot luck. PLEASE bring a dish-to-pass. Then we will walk the boardwalk area, a 45-minute trip (an easy 1 km loop). The boardwalk area has a tower providing a panoramic vista of this unique habitat.

We can then decide to do another hike or not. The additional hike is the DeLaurier Homestead and Trail, it is a 50-minute walk. The DeLaurier House and Trail is 1.2km loop. If it rains or we finish early we can go to Colasanti's, a 15-minute drive from the Point (towards Michigan). I hope you can join us!



A Male Monarch butterfly that SOLAR member Rosemarie Attilio hatched a few weeks ago from a chrysalis. She released it, so it could head to Mexico. Maybe you will see this one at Point Pelee National Park !

Contact: Jim Gilfix 313-387-3077 or UncleJimtc@sbcglobal.net

This is a kid-friendly trip. This is in CANADA. Do not bring dogs.

How to Get to Point Pelee:

The Tunnel: At the tunnel exit, turn left on to Park St. Turn left again onto Ouellette Ave. Travel south on Ouellette which becomes Dougall. Continue south to the end of Dougall. Shortly thereafter, exit right for Howard Ave. (Do not enter Hwy. 401) and continue south to the third set of lights turn left onto Highway #3.

The Bridge: When you leave the bridge follow the signs for Highway #3. You will be on Huron Church Rd. which is also Highway #3. Do not go onto the 401, stay right for Highway #3 (Leamington).

Either way, now follow Highway #3 for approximately 35-45 minutes. There are 2 exits for Leamington. Take the second exit for Erie Street. Turn right onto Erie Street and travel through eight stop light intersections. At the ninth intersection (Erie St. & Seacliff Dr./County Rd. #20) turn left. Drive approximately 1 km (1/2 mile), and you will see a large Point Pelee National Park sign indicating a right turn. After making the right turn on Bevel Line, follow this road for approximately 10 minutes to arrive at the front gates of the park.

September SOLAR Meeting

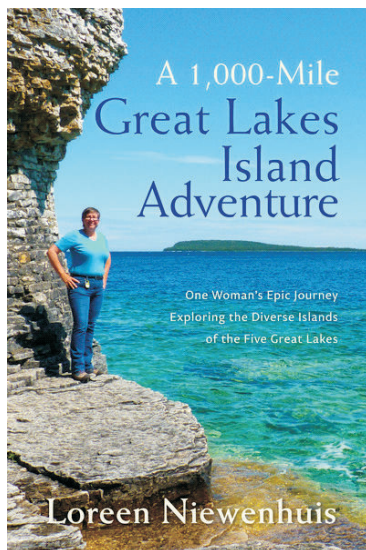
A 1000-MILE GREAT LAKES ISLAND ADVENTURE

Guest Speaker: Loreen Niewenhuis

On Tuesday, September 29th, SOLAR held the second meeting at our new location in Livonia. We hosted a kick off event anticipating viewers from the recent television broadcast and readers of the newspaper article on SOLAR would attend. Our room was filled with attendees, who sat with rapt attention to our guest speaker, Loreen Niewenhuis, who in 2009 walked the perimeter of Lake Michigan and wrote the best selling book, A 1000-MILE WALK ON THE BEACH. In 2012, she headed out on another adventure, hiking 1000 miles of shoreline touching all five Great Lakes. The book about this adventure, A 1000-MILE GREAT LAKES WALK. In 2014, she visited many of the islands of the Great Lakes. In 2015 her book: A 1000-MILE GREAT LAKES ISLAND ADVENTURE was released.

In this presentation, she took us to islands in each of the five Great Lakes. The talk was very diverse, with tales of finding the largest Moose skull on Isle Royal while working on research projects, to conservation of the endangered piping plover on the Manitou Islands. She discussed amazing geological formations, and botanical wonders.

Since Niewenhuis has a M.S. degree in the biological sciences, she was able to give a very informative talk that was scientific, and entertaining. We look forward to her next adventure and presentation.



Upcoming Events

Camping at Friends Lake

Friday, October 16, 2015 6:00 PM

to Sunday, October 18, 2015, 8:00 PM

Friends Lake Community

1000 Long Lake Road, Chelsea, MI

This is car camping, so feel free to bring your toys & cooking gear!

OctoberFest

Saturday, October 17, 2015 6:00 PM

Carol McCririe's home

2619 Pinckney Rd, Howell, MI (map)

It's that time of year again - falling leaves, cooler weather, and Octoberfest!

Joins us for our annual Octoberfest party on Saturday, October 17th.

The party begins at 6pm and we will have brats and sauerkraut.

We have wood gathered for a great bonfire

Stair Climb Kick-off Potluck and Stair Training

Sunday, November 8, 2015 11:00 AM

Bloomer Park

345 John R Road, Rochester Hills, MI (map)

This activity is to learn about the stair climbing event, meet the team, learn about training/fund raising opportunities and doing the famed "Bloomer Stairs".

Plan to meet at the Stone House by the parking lot.

Contact Mary Donahue for more info: mldonahue824@gmail.com

SOLAR CALENDAR

SOLAR OCTOBER CALENDAR www.solaroutdoors.org

ACTIVITIES

Oct 10	Sat	Point Pelee One Day Trip	Point Pelee Provincial Park Ontario, Canada	Jim Gilfix	unclejimtc@sbcglobal.net
Oct 11	Sun	Bike on Harsens Island	Harsens Island near Algonac, MI	Steve Kobylarz	skobylarz0925@sbcglobal.net
Oct 16-18	Multi	Camping at Friends Lake	Friends Lake, Waterloo area	Chuck Smith	cbryansmit@gmail.com
Oct 17	Sat	Octoberfest Party	Carol McCririe's Home	Carol McCririe	cmccririe2sbcglobal.net
Oct 22-25	Multi	Winter Camping Symposium	Sturgeon Lake, MN	Jim Kadlubowski	J.Kadlubowski@att.net
Oct 24, Nov 28	Sat	Heavner's Moonlight Paddle	Wixom, MI	Al Heavner	http://Heavnercanoe.com
Feb 5-7, 2016	Fri to Sun	Roscommon Winter Trip	MacMullan Conf. Ctr. Roscommon, MI	Bill Morse	billc095@yahoo.com

SOLAR MEETINGS

SOLAR holds monthly meetings on the **LAST** Tuesday of the month at 7:00 pm.

Meetings are held at:

St. Paul's Presbyterian Church • 27475 Five Mile Road, Livonia, MI 48154

SOLAR PHOTOS

