



Solar Outdoors

Steering Committee Minutes

Date: 11/18//2025

Meeting called to order at. 7:05pm

Note: Agenda is in regular font

Italic writing is additional information at the meeting

Quorum members present: *Jeff McWilliams, Lauri Miller, Krisanne Schmidt, Hanne Skaarup, Lori Syc, David Warnecke, Mary Winkler*

Others present: *Leslie Cordova*

Minutes approved: *Motion made to approve as presented by Tim Davies, seconded by Mary Winkler. Passed unanimously.*

President Mary Winkler

- Arrangements have been made for the holiday supplies to get to Lori at the church. We need to discuss funds (reimbursed? limit?) to replace needed supplies
- *Next Tuesday, will review the bins for supplies for the Christmas party.*

Vice President Tim Davis

- No updates

Secretary Hanne Skaarup

- No updates

Treasurer Carol McCrie

- Bank balance is \$11,830.16
- Statement of Activity dated 11-16-25 sent out with the agenda.

Activities Krisanne Schmidt

Past activities:

- *Continues to be light. There was more turn-out for Veteran's Day and the Lantern Hike*

Upcoming activities:

Bylaws/Historian Jeff Groosklaus (absent)

- I will not be in attendance for the Steering Committee meetings in October and November.

Education Laura Miller

- No workshops scheduled currently.
- *Some ideas include Getting Fit for Backpacking, Dehydrated Food Program, Campfire Cooking.*
- *Waiting on the Beginning Backpacking schedule.*

Equipment Chair Jeff McWilliams

- Equipment - Storage
 - We're currently paying \$180.00 / month, \$2160/year for a 10x10 environmentally controlled unit at Clover Self Storage in Livonia. It is a significant portion of the club's yearly budget. I looked at prices on Clover's website for smaller units:
7x10 2nd floor \$150.00/mo
10x5 2nd floor \$124.00/mo
1st floor units of the same sizes are more. You pay for the convenience factor.
 - I then checked my local Self-Storage.com facility, which is just outside my subdivision on Rochester Road in Troy. They have a 10x7 on the 4th floor for \$70.00 month but the guy thinks it's mismarked and it's actually a 10x8. . [Link to photo](#) I think we could easily move into a unit such as this with only a few minor adjustments. Raising rates: the manager said yeah, these big places like them reassess every 6 months and depending on the market, often raise rates by 8-12%.

Here is what the fee schedule looks like if they raise rates by 10% every 6 months:

Months	Monthly Rent
1-6	70.00
7-12	77.00
13-18	84.70
19-24	93.17
25-30	102.49
31-36	112.74
37-42	124.01

Months	Monthly Rent
43–48	136.41
49–54	150.05
55–60	165.05

Here's what the yearly costs would be:

Year 1: \$ 882.00

Year 2: \$1067.22

Year 3: \$1291.38

Year 4: \$1562.52

year 5: \$1890.60

- Clover Self has tried raising our rates before and we begged so they kept it the same. I can't imagine it will be like that forever. We're all seeing the effects of inflation on everything.
 - Insurance. Do we have insurance on our unit at Clover? I don't see anything on the receipt I get from them. I don't have a copy of the original contract, as I inherited the unit from Phil. The manager said a lot of private individuals have coverage on their homeowners insurance and show that to the storage unit. Otherwise a protection plan through Self-Storage.com is \$9.00/month. I would have to look into whether my homeowner's insurance policy includes protection for items in a storage unit before even offering to cover the club equipment through it.
 - I have reserved the unit in question for 10 days. There is no commitment on my end. I didn't give him a credit card or anything except my name, phone number, and email.
- Tent Testing
 - Several weeks ago two of our Nemo tents were returned from being borrowed, and it was reported that they leaked at the head and/or foot ends. These are TNT-34 and TNT-36. I finally got an opportunity to set them up in my back yard. See [photos and videos here](#). I hit them both with the garden hose on the "shower" setting, thoroughly soaking the ends of the tent for several minutes. I then crawled inside each tent to look around. I saw no signs of water intrusion through the fabric. Even though the rain fly fabric is quite aggressively cut "high" to maximize ventilation, it should be noted that the fabric that's exposed in those areas is waterproof "bath tub floor" level material. It should not leak any more than water puddling around the base of your tent should. I will leave them up until Sunday afternoon as there is some rain forecast for late Saturday or early Sunday. It's possible that users are experiencing condensation droplets forming on the inside of the fabric. Damp, moist air in the tent is meeting cold air on the exposed fabric surface and condensing and then running down the fabric, making it feel like the tent is leaking when it is not. On the upcoming 2026 Nemo DragonFly tents, Nemo has announced that they changed the design of the fly, significantly reducing or eliminating the way the aggressively cut the rain fly. You can see the Nemo rep talk about at a recent outdoor expo [at this](#)

[link](#). (watch for about 30 seconds) So, Nemo wouldn't have changed the design unless they were receiving some complaints from customers. It's good to see them revising the design.

- I will be putting TNT-35 for sale on FB market place or other areas. It's a trekking pole tent from Asia that has seen exactly 1 person try it since it was purchased in 2022. TNT-29, another trekking pole tent, has similarly seen very little use. Our members want to use traditional free-standing tents that are easy to understand, even if they are heavier.
- Attachments area
[Preview YouTube video Sneak Peek: New Camping & Hiking Gear Coming in 2026!](#)
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- *Have 14 tents in inventory including a dragonfly tent – new in 2025 & a Nemo – 2018 model in like-new condition.*
- *Motion made by Mary Winkler and seconded by Jeff McWilliams and passed unanimously to move storage locations.*
- *Christmas party will have a gear swap and all but the 2 new tents will be brought to this.*

Membership Dana Buxton

- 84 Total Annual Members
- 359 Lifetime Members
- 0 New members since 10/21
- 2 Renewals since 10/21
- 7 Non-renewals
- Sent renewal email to 9 members for memberships that expire in November

- I will not be at the Nov Steering Committee meeting but will be at the General Meeting on 11/25.

Programs Lorriane (Lori) Syc

- Need contact information for Laura Miller's paster to discuss with him the opportunity for him to present at the February 2026 meeting
- heavily promoting the Food for Foraging presenter for this month -- Meetup and all social media formats.

- have a commitment from Jim Plaunt of Bike Tour Vacations LLC based out of Dexter to present at March's monthly meeting. I'm an avid cyclist and I have taken a trip with this company and can attest that they are fabulous. <https://biketourvacations.com/>
- *will check with Mike Rice's availability to talk about his 400 mile journey on the NCT.*
- *In Jan, Leslie and Bob will talk about Scotland trip.*
- *Manitou Island trip – Ann Kuzma – about 6 participants per year and will borrow club's equipment.*

Public Relations/Communications David Warnecke

- Posted to Facebook and Instagram about the upcoming general meeting with the Foraging for Food presentation.
- I pulled the videos from my NCT scouting trip. I am working on a spreadsheet designating parking locations, campgrounds, water sources and potential backcountry camping areas of what I think is an underutilized 116-mile section of the NCT just south of the Manistee River Loop. I am hoping this will help us to design some beginner-friendly weekend+ trips.
- I spoke to a couple of people regarding an idea to post a video to YouTube promoting the Beginning Backpacking Workshop. I have taught myself some basics of video editing and think we possess the skills to pull this off.
- The time to register for the Quiet Adventures Symposium is coming up. I am not sure if it is worth it. I have volunteered for 3 or 4 of these and never saw much potential. I believe it was Carol that mentioned they set up a tent and "fire pit" last year and still did not get much interest.
- In reference to the "trip leading incentives email", I posted an idea to have an "Activities Planning" event in which we bring in members who have contributed to the club to show our appreciation. (How many people would this actually be?) It would also be open for other members with the understanding that they are willing to assist the club with their time. There was very little response to this, other than the cost aspect.
- I brought up the question if the steering team thinks that (below) are issues facing the club. There was very little response to this.
 - Positive cash flow to keep the club funded
 - Motivating existing members to lead activities
 - Having enough volunteers to operate the steering team
 - Expanding active membership by attracting and retaining new members
- What does the bulk of the general membership want from the club at this time? Are they happy with monthly presentations and trips like cabins at Lake Ann or is there still an appetite for kayaking, bicycling and backpacking?
- *The Christmas party and the gear swap events need to be advertised.*

Webmaster Stacie Kitchen

- Updated the 50th anniversary story on the "about solar" page.
- I believe I have something so we can display the YouTube videos and photos as well, *and to promote the Basic Backpacking class.*
- I may not be at meeting. Mom is still in Rehab facility til Sat.

Unfinished Business : none

New Business:

- *Photo contest categories in 2026 will be the same as in 2025*

- *Survey – owner is Tim Davies*
 - *located under google docs.*
 - *Send link to invite to participants inquiring about interests in kayaking, hiking, XC/snowshoeing, etc*
 - *Comment made that Solar people have migrated to the Meetup group MAC*
 - *What does membership want?*
 - *What motivates people today?*
- *Need more activities on the calendar including Save The Date for Ice Climbing @ Peabody's. Laura wants Feb 27*
- *Trip Planning Workshop – have templates. Include guidebook on how to post things. Should try to identify leaders from the general club population.*
- *Include co-leading*
- *Used to have tables set-up at the monthly meetings*
- *Show appreciation – key component*
- *Set up a table for this upcoming (Nov) meeting – its expected to be lighter.*
- *No meeting in Dec.*

Next Meeting Jan 20, 2026

Meeting Adjourned: 8:35pm

Meeting minutes notes taken by Hanne Skaarup