



The SOLAR Ray

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

November 2006

A GLOOMY START TO A BEAUTIFUL WEEKEND

by Samantha Schafer

The weekend prediction for the weather was for rain and cold. With that kind of weekend to look forward to, we still gathered 12 brave souls and 1 excited dog to go hiking up the Manistee River Trail. Ten of us arrived on Friday night to drizzle and no clearing in sight. We set up tents (ok, Gary and I slept in the van) and started a fire, hoping for the best for the morning hike. It rained all night, but that did not dampen our spirits. In the morning as wet tents and gear were packed away, breakfast was eaten and last minute adjustments were made, the anticipation of the hike ahead was starting to grow. As we headed to the parking lot to start the day, the rain slowed to a stop and the last two hikers arrived.

We started our 8 mile trek with the wind and trees reminding us of the night before. With drops of water falling on us from the trees, the sky held off from dropping anymore. After a quick stop for a clothing adjustment, we were off and hiking. Lunch came to find us sitting with a beautiful view overlooking the river. The fall colors were just starting to pop and the sun was trying hard to show itself. The temperature was still not all that warm, so we need to get moving again to warm back up. We were all stopping to take pictures of the colors and cheered on a pair of fishermen who hooked a fish only to lose it as it got close to the boat.

After making it to the campsites, tents were set up, firewood was gathered, water was filtered and the fire was finally started. Once all the chores were done, we just gathered on the buff to watch the river and the now more sun then clouds in the sky. It was a great time to sit and get to know each other better.

When everyone got hungry, we pulled out the S'mores that were supposed to be for dessert and ate them first. Dinner then turned into a potluck with everyone sharing what they brought, including Thai Noodles, Curry Couscous, and three cheese biscuits cooked over the fire. The evening continued with watching the sunset and enjoying Halloween Oreos carefully hiked in. The evening ended with us enjoying a warm fire, a poem being read and watching the fog roll in below us over the river. For a day that started out so gloomy, it ended perfectly (well except for the burn hole in my hat from the fire).

When morning came, we all hurried to hit the trail and be on our way back. The day welcomed us with the fog that soon would burn off, and revile a beautiful blue sky filled with sunshine to enjoy the Michigan colors of fall. Hiking back to the cars seemed to be much quicker than the hike out the day before. (Why does that happen on the last day anyways?) More pictures were taken along the way and the conversation was about getting back to reality and what the next week was going to bring for us all.

Once we arrived at the cars, we met at a local restaurant to eat our last meal together before our long drive home. The weekend was great fun. I got to meet more people in Solar and learn more about the ones I only knew by name. I need to do more of these kinds of things.

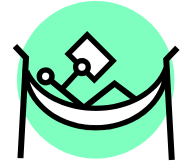


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THE RECUMBENT VOYAGER

by Winnie Chrzanowski



The Cruellest Journey: Six Hundred Miles to Timbuktu

By Kira Salak

National Geographic Society, 230 pages

ISBN 0-7922-7457-1

\$26.00

“In the beginning, my journeys feel . . . ludicrous . . . insane. This one is no exception. The idea is to paddle nearly 600 miles on the Niger River in a kayak, alone, from the Malian town of Old Segou to Timbuktu.” So begins Kira Salak’s physical and literary journey to Timbuktu along the Niger, a river more than 2,600 miles from beginning to end. She describes the Niger as “a kind of faith” because it twists and turns its way “through one of the hottest, most desolate regions of the world . . . surging through the sun baked lands, giving people . . . crops and livestock and fish . . . It humbles all who see it.”

Salak was inspired by the travels of the 18th-century Scottish explorer, Mungo Park, who is credited as being the first Westerner to discover the Niger River. Park’s account of his expedition, *Travels in the Interior Districts of Africa*, published in 1799 was her constant companion on the trip. Park’s account served as her travel guide and helped her learn how to relate to the various tribal people she met along the way. In many ways, says Salak, little had changed in the 200 years separating their travels.

A lone white woman (tubab) paddling a red inflatable kayak (an Innova Helios 380EX 12.5’ boat) down the Niger all the way to Timbuktu is an awesome sight. “At each village . . . people greet me with waves and exclamations . . . “ The women cheer her on, yelling out accolades for “les femmes fortes” (strong women). Village children stroke the kayak and stare. Although several men are hostile to her, most are helpful and carry her kayak into the villages for her. Nevertheless, she is a curiosity on the river, a tubab who is expected to dole out gifts of money along the way, and one who can’t accustom herself to the long streams of onlookers she accumulates each time she enters a village.

She’s doing this trip under the sponsorship of National Geographic Adventure. She’s accompanied by a photographer who rents a motor-driven river barge and meets up with her every few days to take photos of her as she paddles the Niger. Salak does not rely on him for provisions or transport and lives off what she can pack in her kayak and on the kindness of strangers. Generous gifts (thanks to National Geographic expense money) to the various villages’ grand bubus (chiefs) help to assure their kindness and allow her to sleep in little adobe huts with local families and eat the local foods—millet, rice, cow’s milk straight from the udder. The villages have no electricity, no running water, no roads—no signs of Western civilization anywhere.

During her 600-mile paddle, she amuses the village women with her lack of cooking skills and amazes them by her lack of a husband. She encounters storms, hunger, sickness, injury, potentially dangerous hippos, Dogon sorceresses, a hot and grueling crossing of huge Lake Debo, despair, disappointment, triumph, the peace and silence of the river, and anti-climactic Timbuktu.

The Cruellest Journey is not just another travel book even though it provides a terrific geography lesson and insight into Malian culture. It’s a first-class adventure not only into Mali but also into the mind of a woman who wants to live an extraordinary life. “If a journey doesn’t have something to teach you about yourself, then what kind of journey is it?” she asks.

The Cruellest Journey was unputdownable. It is a study in endurance and self-mastery. The writing is as exhilarating as the trip. Was the journey worth it? For me it was. Read this book and see for yourself.

SPOTLIGHT ON MAUREEN DEFRANCE

by Rebecca Sweeton



HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN A MEMBER OF SOLAR?

I joined SOLAR in 1985. I had heard that there was a club in Southeast Michigan that taught rockclimbing. This had been a long time dream of mine. I couldn't afford to take Outward Bound or a NOLS class while working my way through college. I had to be satisfied with a huge poster of a rockclimber in action on the wall of my dorm room. I was estatic when there was a local club that could "show me the ropes".

HOW DID YOU GET INVOLVED WITH SOLAR?

I was on a downhill ski trip to the Austrian Alps, when I heard about SOLAR. I made up my mind right then and there to look into joining when I returned from my trip. I felt a little awkward when walking into the first meeting (I didn't know a soul). By the time I walked out of that meeting, I felt as though I was finally home!

HOW DID YOU START BACKPACKING?

Although I had been car camping throughout my childhood, I had never backpacked until I joined SOLAR. As a single woman, I was concerned that people would "do things for me", rather than truly let me learn how to do things for myself. SOLAR provided the avenue I needed. Within the first 1-1/2 years in SOLAR, I took almost every class they offered (Starting with rockclimbing, of course!). Since that time I have backpacked in Japan, Thailand, and many parts of the U.S. This past summer a group of us backpacked for 26 days and completed the John Muir Trail in California (220 miles). It was fabulous.

WHAT HAS YOUR FAVORITE TRIP BEEN SO FAR?

Although there have been many, many SOLAR outings that were fun-filled and rewarding, there have been three outstanding trips I have taken with my SOLAR family. Three years ago, over a dozen of us traveled through England and Wales together. The comradery and hiking were wonderful. Two years ago, 17 SOLARites hiked the Haute Route from Chamonix, France to Zermott, Switzerland together. The sites, the people, and the food were all fabulous. This

summer (2006), four of us backpacked the entire John Muir Trail. The scenery was spectacular -- it was the trip of a lifetime.

WHAT WOULD YOUR DREAM TRIP BE?

My husband and I hope to take a 3 month trip to Australia in 2009.

WHAT CLASSES WOULD YOU LIKE TO ADD TO SOLAR'S CURRICULUM?

SOLAR is as diverse as its membership. I have an interest in expanding some of the locations of our classes to fit the nature of what we learn. I'd like to see a multi-day practical for advanced backpacking take place in the mountains of Colorado.

WHAT HAS BEEN YOUR MOST REWARDING EXPERIENCE IN SOLAR?

I can only narrow this question to 2 experiences. First, I met my soulmate and husband in SOLAR. We have been married for almost 18 years. Both of us feel that we have put more "life" into those 18 years than in our whole lives.

My second experience involves my SOLAR "family". I was very seriously injured in 2001, and had to stay in Colorado for a month. I was separated from my husband and family. Former SOLAR friends that had moved to Colorado took me in rather than have me stay in a nursing home. Back in Michigan, SOLAR members set up a "calling tree" to keep up my spirits while re Cooperating. Those were dark days for me, and SOLAR friends were my ray of hope. Since that time, I have learned to walk again, and even backpack again. These people will be my friends for the rest of my life.

HOW HAS SOLAR CHANGED DURING THE YEARS YOU HAVE BEEN A MEMBER?

The types of classes have changed with people's interests. Other than that, SOLAR has not changed. It always been, and will continue to be my extended family.

ENJOYING MICHIGAN WINTERS: BACKPACKING & WINTER SKILLS CLASS

by Tom Oloffo

Winter backpacking skill is not just for the winter; it is a useful back-up for the unexpected cold days in early spring and late fall. In this class we'll teach you how to keep warm and keep your energy level up when skiing or snowshoeing and how to build a snow shelter just in case something does go HORRIBLY WRONG on that simple 3 hour ski trip. You can also use these skills in the summer on glaciers and snowy peaks in the Rockies, the Cascades, Alaska, or Kilimanjaro.

This class will teach you the "ins and outs" of winter camping in Michigan. The first classes will be held on Wednesday, December 6 and Thursday, December 14 from 6:30 - 8:30 at Moose Jaw in Birmingham. All other classes will be held on Wednesday nights: January 3, January 10, January 24, and January 31. The practicals are the weekends of January 13 and 14 and February 9, 10, and 11.

The cost is \$ 100.00 for new students and reduced fee for past graduates who want to retake the course, pick-up further details at the monthly meeting.

This course is open to the graduates of the Beginning Backpacking Course; this course is the prerequisite for the Mountaineering and Winter Survival Courses. For safety reasons, the Wilderness First Aid Course is highly recommended for both of these courses. Keep your fingers crossed and pray for snow. To sign up or if you have any questions contact --- TOM OLOFFO. (313) 477-0221 or mcmountainman@yahoo.com.



SOLAR HIKE & BIKE SCHEDULE FOR NOVEMBER 2006

Hike, Swim & Bike with SOLAR. Non-members & children welcome. Hikes start at 9:30 AM. Hike Coordinator: Matt Dalton, contact at 248-360-0031 or mdalton@ameritech.net

Post a message on the SOLAR Yahoo! site, after you decide to join one of the hikes: discuss car pooling/ride sharing, obtain a list of other hikers, and obtain additional details or directions for the hike. Make plans for an after hike restaurant stop.

November 5, 2006 Sunday - 9:30AM, Solar Club and BS Hikers are hiking at Maybury State Park, Northville, MI. Meet at 8 Mile Rd entrance and parking lot by concessions area. Most hikers go out for brunch after the hike.

The first and third Sunday's of the month have been averaging over 25 hikers at Maybury State Park with the combined Solar and BS Hiker Hikes.

November 11, 2006 Saturday - 9:30 AM, Kensington Metro Park, Meet at the Nature Center, North of Kensington Rd entrance, past the golf course.

November 19, 2006, Sunday - 9:30 AM, Solar Club and BS Hikers, Maybury State Park, Northville, MI. Meet at 8 Mile Rd entrance and parking lot by concessions area. Brunch afterward for most of the hikers. (Bike Ride or Eat)

November 25, 2006, Saturday - 9:30 AM, Pontiac Lake State Park: North of M-59 Highland Rd. and west of Williams Lake Rd. Meet in the NW corner of the Gale Rd. parking lot. (Park is very popular for mountain biking.)

December 3, 2006, Sunday - 9:30 AM Solar Club and BS Hikers are hiking at Maybury State Park, Northville, MI. Meet at 8 Mile Rd entrance and parking lot by concessions area. Most hikers go out for brunch after the hike.



KAYAKING IN THREE EASY LESSONS

...Well, maybe a few more than three
by Winnie Chrzanowski (Photos by Al Chrzanowski)

Saturday dawned sunny and gorgeous—a terrific day to head out for some kayaking lessons and the practical needed to put those lessons to good use. Saginaw Bay, a mere two and a half-hour drive for us, glistened in the sunlight as we pulled into the Great Lakes Shores Marina. Matt Dalton, our intrepid instructor, had picked a great weekend for this outing.

Once we set up camp and got our gear in order, we headed out for a nice leisurely paddle from our campsite to the Pine River. Since the duck hunters were out in the bay also, we had to be careful and dodge a few bullets every now and then. The river entrance is rather difficult to find, but we kept our eyes peeled and found it. Paddling it was fine, but finding the “rest stop” at the boat launch was even more welcome than finding the entrance. The paddle back wasn’t as leisurely as it was starting to get dark and the wind freshened a bit. After about a 7 mile round trip, we devoured the potluck dinner we put together. Sleep came easy.

Sunday woke up sunny but a bit on the windy side. It was windy last year so maybe that’s a standard state of affairs for this area. So, hoping the wind would subside, we headed off to Wheeler’s for a sumptuous breakfast. Norman’s called after that, so a bit of shopping in one of the least expensive gear stores I’ve seen seemed to be in order.

The low turnout for this two-day excursion gave the students who participated a lot more one-on-one with Matt. Although Chad Morris, Al & I are not total beginners, we figured refreshers and more instruction couldn’t hurt. Matt, therefore, refreshed our memories on the basic paddling strokes and safety precautions, hinted that we should learn more about edging into the wind (for another class) and stressed how important it is to know how to do rescues and wet exits. Chad demonstrated a wet exit and paddle float entry while Matt monitored the activity. Al & I watched and vowed we would try that next time Matt gives a class.



YEEE-HA!

JOIN US FOR THE FOURTH ANNUAL SOLAR HOEDOWN

by Moe DeFrance

Come and join in for an old fashioned country hoedown!

WHEN: Saturday November 18, 2006

TIME: 8-Midnight. Do not be late. This is a team sport.

WHERE: Directions to the Lazy J are on the back

COST: \$20 per person. Limit is 80 people

INCLUDES: 100+ year old barn, caller and enough fun to knock your socks off.

YOU SHOULD: Bring your own pass around snacks (Hors D'oeuvre) and drinks (liquor allowed). Dress appropriately. Jeans, boots, handkerchiefs, checkered shirts. Layer as we will get hot.

The Lazy J Ranch is truly a one of a kind facility located in the beautiful farming area of Milford, Michigan. The two-story barn was built at the turn of the century and provides a wonderful old fashion atmosphere. Originally built as a dairy barn, the Lazy "J" has been restored and converted into two square dance halls operating year round, complete with indoor restrooms. We have the old hay loft reserved.

The evening is a full program of square dancing and mixers designed for the fun and enjoyment of beginners only. No prior knowledge of square dancing is necessary, nor expected.

The Lazy "J" Ranch Hands will be available from the time of your arrival to smoothly handle every detail of the evening. The square dance caller orchestrates the entire program of events ensuring a relaxing and memorable experience for everyone.

Sign up at the November meeting and give or mail your check to Maureen De France, 2692 Court Lane North, Howell, MI 48843. E-mail address is moedefrance@comcast.net. Phone number is 517-552-3660.



HUCKLEBERRY RAILROAD AND CROSSROADS VILLAGE

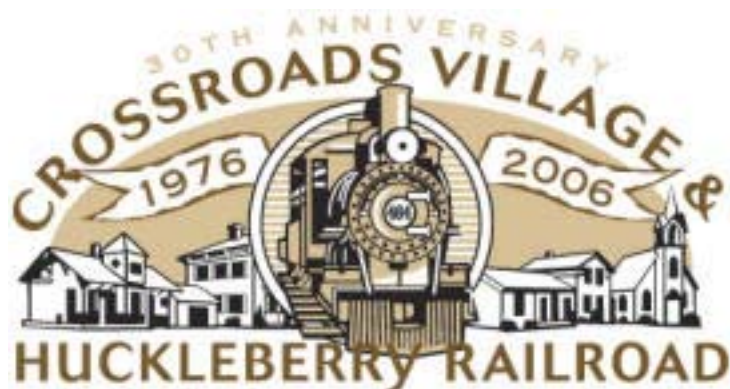
by Leslie Cordova

This holiday fantasyland features over 600,000 lights and Michigan's most spectacular moving light display, the Huckleberry Railroad. The entire village is aglow with colored lights and more lights decorate the railroad's locomotive, coaches and trackside displays.

Costumed villagers prepare for the holidays in the village's homes and shops. The Colwell Opera House presents live entertainment and Santa talks with the children. Model trains, craft demonstrations, holiday music and unique shopping opportunities delight all ages.

We are planning to meet at the gate at 4:00, tour the village and take the 6:40 train ride. Advanced reservations for the train are recommended. I will make a reservation for dinner at 8:30 at Billy's Roadhouse, just 2 miles away. Please let me know if you are joining us for dinner, so I can reserve enough seats.

The cost for all this fun is \$10.75 adults, \$9.75 seniors (60+), \$8.50 children (3-12). Dinner costs are additional. This is a non-SOLAR trip, so bring your friends, family and co-workers. Contact Leslie Cordova (248) 547-5626 or lesliegene@aol.com if you are interested in attending.



FALL IN THE ADIRONDACKS

by Pete Lamb

Devilishly steep. Incredibly rocky. Deeply muddy. These are just a few of the adverbs and adjectives that describe the Adirondacks. It's also an area of beautiful lakes, stunning waterfalls, wonderful Fall color, and quaint little towns. Don Wold led six SOLARites (Karen Kish, Michelle Delaporte, Bonnie, Carolyn Francis, Jim Coe, and Pete Lamb) on a trip to this awesome area at the height of the fall colors.

We got a mid-week special rate at the Adirondack Lodge, which, for \$40 per night each, included breakfast, lunch, and dinner. (We did have to camp one night though.) The lodge, between Lake Placid and the Keene Valley, is centrally located, so it is possible to bag many of the peaks in the area—which we attempted to do.

It's easy to underestimate the difficulty of hikes in the Adirondacks. We soon found that doing a 13-mile hike and two peaks in one day was way more than we could manage. Flat or easy hikes in this area just do NOT exist despite what Don told us every time we went out. On our first day there, in a state of blissful ignorance, we attempted to bag the summit of White Face Mountain. Most of us made it to the top. Unfortunately, only three made it back down, and they had injuries. The other four were to await a car rescue three hours or so later. Yes, after climbing the bloody thing, we found a road going up it. Fortunately for us, we had a blond with us, and she got us lifts to the bottom of the mountain. It was fortuitous as the road closed at four o'clock that day and would not open again until spring of 2007, which was a bit longer than we were prepared to wait.

The next day, nursing blisters, twisted knees, sore heels, and an assortment of other ills, we hiked up to Avalanche Lake, a supposedly easy day. Actually, it was a very nice hike though it required some boulder climbing skills and a bit of a head for heights. In one area, the whole side of the mountain had just peeled off down to the bedrock for a quarter mile up the mountain and dumped thousands of birch trees in a huge pile at the foot of a small cliff. Someone with a chain saw had spent quite a while hacking a path through this Lincoln Log mess as it was in a very narrow canyon, and there was no way around it. However, the woodpile is not why it's called Avalanche Lake; it's because the sheer cliffs on each side of the lake drop straight into the water and, during the winter, the avalanches roar straight down the cliff onto the ice of the lake.

On day three, the party split up because of injuries and the weather report, which predicted very high winds on the peaks. One group (me and three of the women) went off to conquer Indian Head, one of the lower peaks while Don, Jim and Carolyn set out to do Gothic. That group was turned back by high winds on steep terrain short of the summit. The second group had an enjoyable hike alongside Gill Creek admiring the many waterfalls on that stream.

The trail finally veered away from the stream and became steep and rocky. The party had to do some easy rock climbing to reach the top of the sheer cliff of Indian Head overlooking Ausable Lake; it was a great view although it was blowing like hell. After making a slight detour to see Rainbow Falls—no sun so no rainbow, but well worth the detour—we were back on the road. At this point we had a choice, three miles on the road or three miles on the river trail. We opted to walk the river trail back to the cars; after all, how bad could a riverside path be since rivers go down hill. Part way down the trail, we met the rest of the group who was also doing the river trail. The river trail was three miles of hell that had us clinging for dear life to the sides of cliffs and enduring many hundreds of feet of altitude change. It was getting late; we were in danger of missing dinner, so Karen and I rushed off ahead. Finally, she gave me her backpack and stuff and started running for the cars (I was most impressed since it was a two mile run). I got within a quarter mile of the car park and got picked up by Karen. She drove me back to get the second car, and we went back and picked up the rest of the hikers. It was a very weary group that emerged from the woods and piled into the cars after that fiasco.

We spent one rainy day at the museum of the Adirondacks where there are some magnificent hand-built guide boats. The museum was well worth the \$15 admission fee. The museum complex contains 21 buildings to see, so it is an all day trip with plenty to look at.

Much to Don's delight, we finally had a two peak day. We did Cascade and Porter Mountains. It was quite a slog to do both, and close to the top we had to watch for ice-glazed rocks. Even the deep mud puddles were ice covered. Don was hoping to do ten peaks in the week we spent there, but that was not to be. Nevertheless, we accomplished quite a bit.

The Adirondack area is an outdoor enthusiasts dream--a wonderful place to visit any time of year. Besides more hiking trails than you could do in a lifetime, the area offers rock and ice climbing, and down hill and cross country skiing—not to mention a 700-mile canoe and kayak trail and many places to fish. The towns boast the usual tourist traps but they also offer many interesting places to eat. On our last day there four of us did the Olympic bobsled run. It was a blast! Karen and Jim beat Michelle and me by four one hundreds of a second and now we owe them beers. I, for one, will go back to this wonderful area that is as big as Yellowstone Park.



BASIC MOUNTAINEERING & SAFETY SKILLS CLASS

by Lou Szakal

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to stand on the Summit of a Mountain? Or to even know what it takes to get there?

How about just advancing your Winter Camping or Snowshoe and Cross-Country Ski skills to include one to two week expeditions? How about expanding your knowledge of surviving in the winter during a snowstorm or in an avalanche area? What do you do about frostbite?

Here is your chance to find out!

Starting in December 2006, through January 2007, I will be teaching the Basic Mountaineering and Safety Skills Class to a some lucky students who are interested in devoting their time and energy to the sport of Mountaineering and Advanced Winter Adventure.

TOPICS COVERED

- Self Arrest
- Fixed Lines
- Roped Travel
- Running Belays
- Risk Assessment
- Snow Shoeing Skills
- Health/Fitness Issues
- Cross Country Ski Skills
- Basic Mountain Skills
- Avalanche Issues
- Ice Axe Use
- Leadership
- Navigation
- Prussiks
- 2 Mountaineering Books
- Technical Tool Usage
- Mountain Safety
- First Aid Issues
- Crampon Use
- Nutrition
- Knots
- Weather
- Glacier Travel
- Climbing Issues
- Frost Bite Issues
- Winter Safety Skills
- Z & C Pulley System
- Optional Mountain Trip
- Clothing
- Rappelling
- Gear Issues
- Effects of Cold
- Crevasse Rescue
- Reading Material
- Expedition Planning
- Environmental Ethics
- 2 Weekend Practicals
- Altitude Awareness
- Ascending Ropes
- Ropes/Webbing
- Alpine Rescue
- Sled Skills

PREREQUISITES

MANDATORY

- Basic Backpacking
- Land Navigation
- Winter Camping
- Belay Card (Rock Gym)
- Rock Climbing

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED

- Wilderness First Aid
- Intermediate Backpacking
- Advanced Backpacking
- Search and Rescue
- First Aid/ CPR Certification
- Winter Survival

EXPERIENCE HELPFUL

- XC Ski/Snowshoe
- Ice Climbing
- S.M.O.C. Experience



COST

- \$150

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Lou Szakal
Phone: (248) 709-6773
Email: Everest2008@comcast.net

CLASS SCHEDULE

Location: TBD
Time: 6:00 - 9:00 PM

Class 1	12/7	Thursday
Class 2	12/13	Wednesday
Class 3	1/11	Thursday
Class 4	1/18	Thursday
Practical 1	1/19-1/21	Weekend
Class 5	1/25	Thursday
Class 6	2/1	Thursday
Practical 2	2/2-4/7	Weekend

SOLAR 2006-2007 CALENDAR
 School for Outdoor Leadership, Adventure and Recreation
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NOVEMBER ACTIVITIES					
11/3-11/4	WKND	Wedding Celebration**	Bald Mountain State Recreation Area	Rebecca Yoo/ Dave Sweeton	rebeccayoo@gmail.com
11/7	TUE	GENERAL MEETING	Colony Hall	Lou Szakal	Everest2008@comcast.net
11/7	TUE	Program: Mountaining	Colony Hall	Karl Overheul	cybernomad@backpacker.com
11/11-11/12	WKND	Backpacking Trip	Nordhouse Dunes	Natalie Jewell	woodsromer@yahoo.com
11/18	SAT	Hoedown**	Milford, MI	Dave and Moe DeFrance	defranceomnex@comcast.net
NOVEMBER CLASSES					
11/8, 11/17- 11/19	WED/ WKND	Outdoor Cooking and Nutrition	TBA	Pam Riehl Szakal	pariehl1@netscape.net
DECEMBER ACTIVITIES					
12/2	SAT	Crossroads Village Holiday Lights**	Huckleberry Railroad and Crossroads Village	Leslie Cordova	lesliegene@aol.com
12/5	TUE	GENERAL MEETING	Colony Hall	Lou Szakal	Everest2008@comcast.net
12/5	TUE	Program: Holiday Party	Colony Hall	Karl Overheul	Cyber.nomad@comcast.net
DECEMBER CLASSES					
12/6, 13, 1/3, 10, 13- 14, 24, 31, 2/9-11	MULTI	Enjoying Michigan Winters	Moosejaw; Waterloo State Park, & Pigeon River State Forest	Tom Oloffo	mcmountainman@yahoo.com
12/7, 13, 1/11, 18, 19- 21, 25, 2.1, 2-4	MULTI	Mountaineering	TBA	Lou Szakal	Everest2008@comcast.net
JANUARY ACTIVITIES					
1/2	TUE	GENERAL MEETING	Colony Hall	Lou Szakal	Everest2008@comcast.net
1/2	TUE	Program	Colony Hall	Karl Overheul	Cyber.nomad@comcast.net
1/12-1/14	WKND	Skiing & Snowshoeing Weekend (FULL)	Hartwick Pines State Park	Kevin Cotter	solar@wowway.com
1/26-1/28	WKND	Crawlathon	Carter Caves State Park, Kentucky	Leslie Cordova	lesliegene@aol.com
JANUARY CLASSES					
1/20	SAT	Cross Country Skiing - Striding	Cross Country Ski Headquarters, Roscommon	Larry Mergentime	larrymergentime@yahoo.com
1/27	SAT	Cross Country Skiing - Skate Skiing	Cross Country Ski Headquarters, Roscommon	Larry Mergentime	larrymergentime@yahoo.com
FEBRUARY ACTIVITIES					
2/6	TUE	GENERAL MEETING	Colony Hall	Lou Szakal	Everest2008@comcast.net
2/6	TUE	Program	Colony Hall	Karl Overheul	Cyber.nomad@comcast.net
2/9-2/11	WKND	Dogsledding	South River, Ontario	Karen Bates	Lady_musher@yahoo.com

All classes and activities are limited to SOLAR members except for non-SOLAR events marked with **. If you would like to help plan and/or lead a SOLAR activity, please contact Kevin Cotter at (248) 544-9637 or activities@solaroutdoors.org. SOLAR has a no-refund policy. If you are unable to attend an activity you may "sell your spot" to another club member.

** Denotes non-SOLAR activity (SOLAR will not be held responsible for these activities)

WHAT IS SOLAR?

SOLAR is a non-profit club with 400-plus members dedicated to the intelligent enjoyment of nature and outdoor pursuits.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership is only \$40 a year per person (\$55 per family) and includes discounts to a number of retail outfitters, access to 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, virgin forests, scenic shorelines, and the experiences to be found there.

MEETINGS

Our monthly meetings are held the first Tuesday of every month in Southfield at the Colony Hall, 21780 Evergreen (between 8 & 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 Mary Price at hmprice@ameritech.net.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Submissions for the SOLAR Ray are due on the Friday two weeks prior to the monthly Steering Committee Meeting (November 17 for December issue). Electronic documents only. If you have any questions, please contact Rebecca Sweeton at rayeditor@solaroutdoors.org.

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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 what topics are discussed, 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 Lou Szakal at president@solaroutdoors.org.

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