

The SOLAR Ray

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

January 2011

Visit us at www.solaroutdoors.org

Fun at Base Camp

by Jeff Enterkin

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The High Ropes Course at Base Camp was great. There were 37 participants, split into two groups. SOLAR member and Base Camp employee Rachael Abler was our master of ceremonies. Rachael and her crew kept us safe while letting us have fun on the climbing wall and the high ropes course.



There were many first-timers on both the ropes course and climbing wall, and they did quite well!

First we all did an ice-breaker together at ground level, which was a great way to get to

know each other better. Some of us got a little competitive, but it was all in good fun. Then we split into groups to play on the climbing wall and bi-level ropes course (we switched later). At the end of the evening we had some time to spare, so the Base Camp crew led us in some bonus fun, including an activity called the "Flying Squirrel". If you've never heard of it then you'll have to come next time and see what we did.

I heard that our youngest participant, Annika (I believe she is 10), made it to the top of the climbing



wall three times, and I watched her as she moved with grace,

confidence and ease around the ropes course. I also watched her as she did the Tyrolean Traverse like a pro, although the gloves she wore were much larger than her hands, making her hands look like they were inflated. Ha!

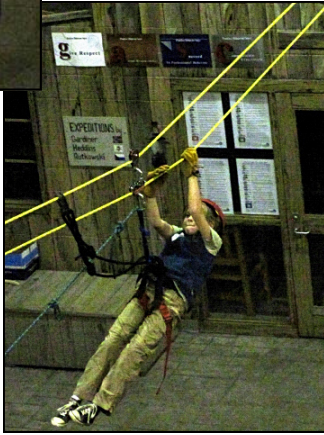
Best I can tell everyone had a good time. I know I did. I'd like to thank Base Camp, Rachael Abler, and her crew for having us and for a job well done. Look for another trip in the future!



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



More High Ropes Photos



SOLAR's Annual Photo Contest – January 4, 2011

by Debbie Zuchlewski, SOLAR Programs Chairperson

It's that time of year again when SOLAR amateur photographers can brag about their trips and show off their stuff. So, dig out those photos from 2010 and enter them into January's photo contest.

Categories:

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

Category Explanations:

Digitally enhanced: Photography has changed considerably with the advent of digital cameras. Digital cameras and software now make it easy to make slight exposure shifts, slight color shifts, crop photos, change the brightness and contrast. Since these features are now easily available to all digital photographers, for the sake of the SOLAR photo contest they will not be considered digitally enhanced. The SOLAR photo contest category of digitally enhanced will include photos that have been cut and pasted, extreme exposure or color changes, "stitched" photos, and

photos that were developed in a dark room using "dodge & burn".

Photo-Pro: Photos in this category won't be eligible for the "Best Overall" award. The photo pro category is for past winners of the best overall category.

Official Rules:

- You must be a SOLAR member to enter the photo contest.
- Photos must have been taken between January 1, 2010 and December 31, 2010.
- Standard photos must be no larger than 8x10 and panoramic no larger than 8x18.
- Mats on photos should be no larger than 11x14 on standard photos and 11x21 on panoramic photos.
- Photos must have been taken by the person entering them.
- Only one photo entry per person per category and only eight entries per person overall are allowed.
- Prizes will be awarded to the first place winner in each category and to the Best Overall.
- Photos will be voted on by SOLAR members who attend the January 2011 meeting, and winners will be announced the same evening.

Snowkiting Class Being Offered

by Chuck Smith

I've always wanted to try kiteboarding, and snowkiting is a good starting point. Professional instruction is pretty much necessary to play with big kites, to have some semblance of safety. I've arranged a class with MAC Kiteboarding in Grand Haven to show us the basics. It will be a 1/2 day class, held on Saturday, February 5, 2011.

The cost will be \$210 for about 4 hours of instruction and equipment use. We need a minimum of three students (including me :-), with a maximum of five. Students will need to bring downhill skis or a snowboard, helmet, knee & elbow pads, and dress to be playing outside in February. Previous practice with a training kite is recommended. SOLAR recently purchased a trainer kite, which is being tested. A (significant) portion of the cost of the trainer is included in class cost.

Lessons are weather-dependent.

From MACKite's website (mackiteboarding.com):

What's Included: Lessons and camps include all necessary kites and harnesses; you must bring your own protective gear (a helmet is mandatory) and skis or snowboard. We operate our school with a maximum of 2 students per instructor to maximize your learning potential and enjoyment.



What is covered: We will strive to pair students of similar experience levels, so that each group's needs are met. If you are a total newbie, we will start with trainer kites and kite theory to build your experience from scratch. Don't fear however, we find that even complete beginners are generally riding significant distances by the end of Day 1. More experienced kite fliers are often holding their ground, or even riding upwind by the end of that first day. This is why we love to teach on snow, your progress is double or triple what it is in the water.

What to expect: Dress warm in layers. Imagine you are going to start out dressed as if you were downhill skiing and riding a long chair lift in between runs (meaning short periods of activity). As the day progresses, your activity level will increase nearly to the extent of cross-country skiing. You may need to remove a layer, so plan ahead.

Protective gear list: A ski/snowboard helmet (mandatory), knee and elbow pads (recommended), and butt/hip pads (optional).

Knot Tying Class

Monday, January 3, 2011

6:30 - 9:00 p.m.



A working knowledge of a few knots can make camping and being in the outdoors both safer and more enjoyable. A bit of line and some simple knots can solve a lot of problems and make life easier!

We have a bunch of helpers for this class. The plan is to split into small groups, each with a helper, and to learn and practice knots by actually doing things with them. Instead of saying, "This is a clove hitch and it's used for..." we are going to use the approach of, "Here is a tarp, how are we going to set it up?"

I'll have some very small "mini tarps" to play with; we can practice setting clothes lines, and maybe even a bear bag. (Okay, I'm not sure how to do all this inside a house. We're SOLARites - keep a sense of humor and we will figure it out.)

The McWilliamses are graciously hosting us at their home in Troy - near REI.

There can be a maximum of 20 students for the class. It will be tight, but again, bring that sense of humor.

The cost for all this fun and knowledge is only \$10. To sign up contact me at cbryansmit@gmail.com, or on Meetup.



Square Dancing with SOLAR

Join us for a fun night of traditional square dances, mixers, and finish the night off with the Virginia Reel. We'll start the night with a traditional SOLAR potluck dinner, then we'll dance the night away. If weather permits, there will be a bonfire on the patio with all the makings for s'mores. This is a family-friendly event.

When: Saturday, March 12, 2011

Time: Dinner 6-7:30, dancing 7:30-10:00 p.m.

Who: All are welcome. Family-friendly. Babysitting available for an additional fee. (Please indicate that you will need babysitting at least 5 days in advance of the event.)

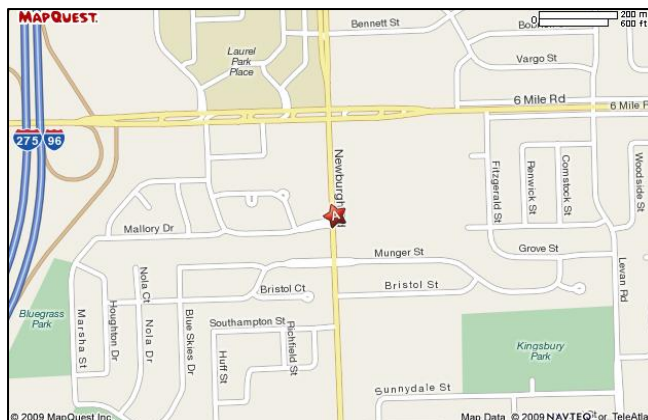
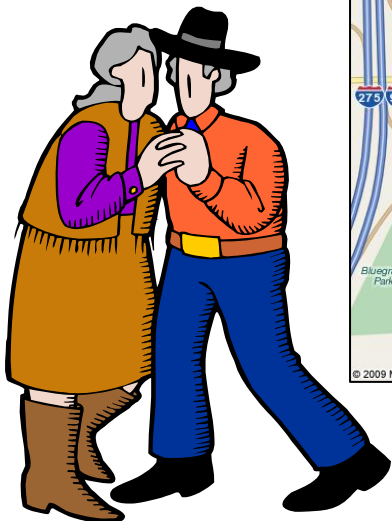
Where: St. Timothy's Presbyterian Church, 16700 Newburgh Rd., Livonia, MI

Directions: From I-275 take the 6 Mile Road exit. Go east one block to Newburgh Road. Turn right onto Newburgh Road. St. Timothy's Church will be the third driveway on the left.

Cost: \$10 per adult, \$5 per child (4-18 years old).

Please pre-register by March 1, 2011. For more information please contact Margaret Martin at 734-721-2821 or mpluscat@yahoo.com.

Note: Due to the fact that this is a family-friendly event, please do not bring alcoholic beverages.



Post-Turkey Day Hike — November 26, 2010

by Charlotte Zinkus

Eight SOLARites met at Island Lake State Park on the Friday after Thanksgiving to hike the 9-mile, blue loop trail. It was so nice to meet up with old and new friends, as we were all connected in some way to one another.

It was a happy time walking off the turkey, mashed potatoes, gravy, and pumpkin pie while sharing stories of our family celebrations and summer travels. In that moment, we were school children enjoying a day of outdoor fun.



*Pictured (left to right) in front row: Howard Weiss, Dana Buxton; middle row: Kelly Coe, Cindy Taylor, Jim Coe, Roxann Bittner; back row: Charlotte Zinkus, Mark Lipson
Not pictured: Don Jones*



SOLAR Gives Back

Thank you to everyone who brought non-perishable food to the SOLAR Holiday Party! Forgotten Harvest estimates we donated more than 200 pounds of food to feed the hungry in our community. Awesome!



How SOLAR Works: an Overview of the Club

(This article is being re-run for new and long-term members alike.)

SOLAR is a loosely formed volunteer organization made up of people who enjoy the outdoors. In general, activity coordinators and class instructors are members just like you and are not trained professionals, but rather volunteers who share their knowledge and experience. As a club, we do not sponsor, approve, or have the resources to “qualify” our offerings. The club’s role is simply to get people who want to offer something together with people who want to do or learn something. If a person seems to know what (s)he is doing, the Steering Committee will generally allow him or her to present an activity or a class. As somebody wanting to participate in a particular activity or class, it is imperative that you are comfortable with the person running it, the plans, requirements, abilities needed, etc.

The actual requirements for running a class through SOLAR are very simple. Basically, the leader or coordinator should have knowledge to share, background in the specific class topic, and a plan/outline acceptable to the Education Chair. (There may be other requirements such as a Wilderness First Aid and/or CPR Certification, depending on the class.) If the leader or coordinator appears to know what (s)he is talking about, the class will generally be presented. SOLAR may or may not look into claims of experience or history made by a potential class leader or coordinator.

Most of our classes are run by volunteers who are donating their time and knowledge in hopes of sharing those skills with others who may enjoy them. A few of our classes are offered by certified instructors and may offer actual certifications from organizations such as the American Red Cross. This is the exception rather than the rule.

Activities work similarly. If a member wants to coordinate an activity, (s)he can present a plan to the Activities Chairperson. If it is

something that is of interest to members and/or broadly falls into “enjoying the outdoors,” it will generally be presented to the club. We really don’t look into how qualified or experienced the leader is.

If it appears that an activity or class may be outside of SOLAR’s comfort zone, the steering committee may decide it should not be formally presented to members. If somebody presents the activities chair with a plan to attend the zoo, it will probably be presented. If that same person wants to go to the zoo to feed tigers, that would probably fall outside of the club’s comfort zone and be turned down.

The SOLAR Yahoo! Group gives members a way to communicate between meetings and/or find other people to do things with. If a member wants to hike, sell their used gear, meet for dinner or feed the tigers without presenting at a SOLAR meeting, the Yahoo! Group is the place to advertise. The group has some basic guidelines -- e.g., political, religious, and inflammatory posts may not belong there and will hopefully be blocked by the moderators. If a member posts that (s)he wants to get a group to go to the zoo to break into the tiger enclosure and feed them bits of steak, nobody will block it. Just because it’s on the Yahoo! Group does not mean it’s a good idea! You are responsible for yourself. Don’t blindly follow anyone to feed the tigers!

The bottom line is that SOLAR is what our members make it. SOLAR gives members access to affordable and unique opportunities. Once again, as somebody wanting to participate it is imperative that you are comfortable with the person running the class or activity, the plans, requirements, abilities needed, etc. If you really like to read policies, we have them. Look for guidelines on coordinating and/or participating in activities and classes on our website (www.solaroutdoors.org).

A Message from the Membership Chairperson:

As the new year starts, it is once again time for all SOLAR annual members to renew their memberships. Annual memberships expired December 31, 2010, except for new memberships paid between October and December 2010 (which will roll over through December 31, 2011). All Lifetime members are now being asked to complete a membership form every year. It is every SOLAR member's responsibility to review the liability waiver on the membership form and sign the form.

Membership forms can be downloaded at the SOLAR website (www.solaroutdoors.org). Select the Membership tab. The link to the membership application can be found at the bottom of the page. I will have plenty of forms available at the upcoming general membership meetings, too.

The good news is that the membership prices remain the same:

- \$40 for a single annual membership
- \$55 for a family annual membership
- \$175 for a single lifetime membership
- \$250 for a family lifetime membership

I can be reached at 248-477-7547 or SolarMembership@SolarOutdoors.org with any questions or concerns.

Mary Price, Membership Chairperson

We asked SOLAR club members...
What has been your biggest challenge in SOLAR?



Nancy Austin

Keeping up with the other folks in the Beginning Backpacking course at Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore. It felt like I was always bringing up the rear.

Have a question to suggest? Contact the Ray Editor at SOLARrayeditor@solaroutdoors.org.



Laura Buhl

Being patient during the construction of our plastic tarp shelter on the first EMW practical.



Harry Price

When we lost a student at Hoist Lakes. (It was spring, there wasn't much cover, and she wanted some privacy.)



SOLAR would like to welcome the following new members to the club:

Bruce Gumke

Michael Harrison

Brandon Nascimento

We're excited that the following people have become Lifetime Members:

Brian & Ruth Kowalk

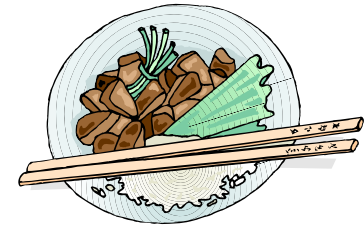
John Ostrowski

Sheila Smith



Chinese New Year Dinner

Monday, January 31, 2011



Come join fellow SOLARites (and whoever else you wish to invite) on Monday, January 31, 2011 for a Chinese New Year dinner celebration. The festivities will be held at the New Peking Restaurant in Garden City.

Included are:

- 12 course meal (served family style)
- Drawings for prizes
- Traditional "Lion Dance"
- Music, entertainment and fun!

We will have several large round tables, the exact number of tables will depend on how many people reserve a spot.

Location: New Peking Restaurant, 29105 Ford Road, Garden City (734) 425-2230

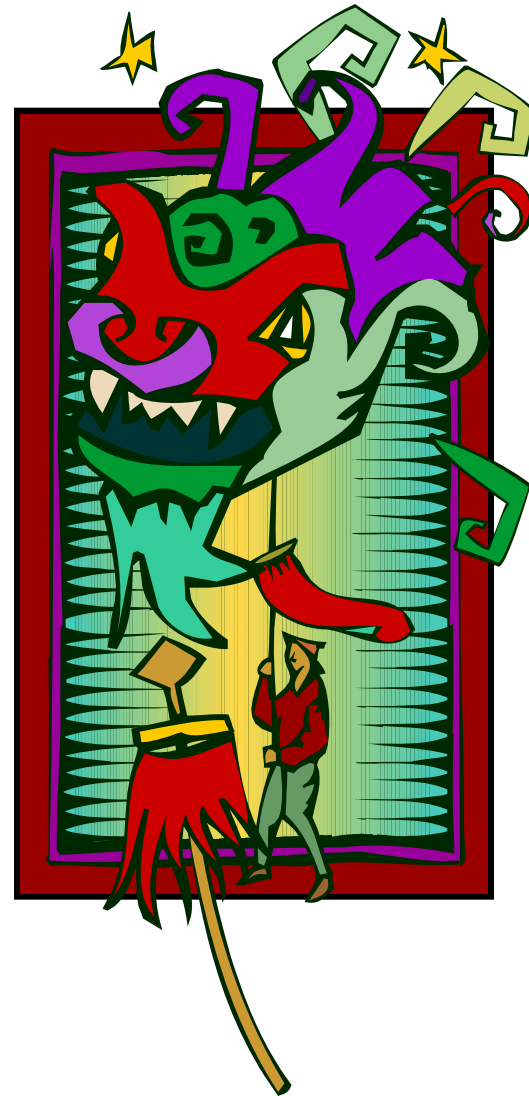
Time: 6:30 p.m. - 9:00 p.m. (Plan to arrive early to get the best seats.)

Cost: \$30.99 per person, \$10 of which is a non-refundable deposit. This does not cover drinks or tip.

You need to make a \$10 deposit at the January 4th SOLAR meeting, checks made payable to Leslie Cordova, to reserve your spot. The remaining \$20.99 plus drinks and tip you will pay yourself at the restaurant (they will do separate checks).

We did this last year and it was a lot of fun. Come hungry and adventurous!

Contact Leslie Cordova (248) 547-5626 or lesliegene@aol.com to reserve your spot.



SOLAR JANUARY 2011 CALENDAR

www.SolarOutdoors.org

SOLAR MEETING AND PROGRAM DATES

1/4/11	Tues	Monthly Meeting 7:30 p.m.	Colony Hall	Allen Duncan	SolarPresident@SolarOutdoors.org
		Program - Annual Photo Contest	Colony Hall	Debbie Zuchlewski	SolarPrograms@SolarOutdoors.org
2/1/11	Tues	Monthly Meeting 7:30 p.m.	Colony Hall	Allen Duncan	SolarPresident@SolarOutdoors.org
		Program - TBA	Colony Hall	Debbie Zuchlewski	SolarPrograms@SolarOutdoors.org

SOLAR RAY DEADLINES

1/13	Thurs	February SOLAR Ray Deadline		Jennifer Tislerics	SolarRayEditor@SolarOutdoors.org
2/11	Thurs	March SOLAR Ray Deadline		Jennifer Tislerics	SolarRayEditor@SolarOutdoors.org

ACTIVITIES

1/21/11	Multi	Lake Ann Ski Trip	Lake Ann, MI	Pete Lamb	petekandu@yahoo.com
1/23-30	Multi	Yellowstone in Winter Trip	Yellowstone National Park	Moe and Dave DeFrance	moelifeisgood@lavabit.com ventures@lavabit.com
1/31	Mon	Chinese New Year Dinner	Garden City, MI	Leslie Cordova	lesliegene@aol.com
2/4-6	Multi	Immersion in Ice Climbing	Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore	Don Jones	jonesdlus2@yahoo.com
3/6	Sun	Fight for Air - Climb Detroit	Renaissance Center	Mary Donahue	mldonahue824@gmail.com
3/12	Sat	Square Dance	Livonia, MI	Margaret Martin	mpluscat@yahoo.com
4/2-9	Multi	St. John Escape	St. John, VI	Jim Gessner	gessnerj@comcast.net
6/11	Sat	Tour de Cure	Brighton, MI	Carol Rogers	cjrjune30@yahoo.com
7/2-8	Multi	Alaskan Expedition Cruise	Alaska	Robert Schwenke	robert.schwenke@yahoo.com

CLASSES

12/1,8,15, 1/5,15- 16,19,26, 2/2,11-13	Weds, Wknds	Enjoying Michigan Winters	Schoolcraft College Waterloo State Rec Area Pigeon River State Forest	Allen Duncan George Zapp	allenduncan@aggienetwork.com gzapp@comcast.net
12/9,16, 18,1/6- 9,13,20, 27, 28-30	Thurs, Sat, Wknds	Basic Mountaineering and Safety Skills	Berkley Community Center Nordhouse Dunes	Lou Szakal	everest2008@comcast.net
1/3	Mon	Knot Tying	Troy, MI	Chuck Smith	cbryansmit@gmail.com
2/5	Sat	Snow Kiting	Grand Haven, MI	Chuck Smith	cbryansmit@gmail.com
2/19	Sat	SOLAR X/C Ski Day	Roscommon, MI	Larry Mergentime	larry.mergentime@yahoo.com
2/23, 3/9,23,4/6, 16,30,5/7, 22 (Tentative dates)	Multi	Adventure Racing	TBA	Pam Riehl	pariehl@gmail.com
3/10,17, 19, 24 (Tentative dates)	Multi	Digital Photography	Proud Lake	Howard Andrews	hwandrews@wowway.com

If you would like to plan/lead an activity with SOLAR, contact our Activities Chairperson, Jennifer McWilliams, at SolarActivities@SolarOutdoors.org.

If you would like to suggest or teach a class with SOLAR, contact our Education Chairperson, Chuck Smith, at SolarEducation@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.



WHAT IS SOLAR?

SOLAR is a non-profit, volunteer-based organization with 400-plus members who enjoy the outdoors. Members share their knowledge and experience with each other by leading classes and coordinating activities/trips.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership is only \$40 a year per person (\$55 per family) and includes free access to most club-owned equipment, a monthly newsletter, and a chance to meet hundreds of other like-minded adventurers drawn together by a common love of pristine lakes, breathtaking vistas, deep forests, scenic shorelines, and the experiences to be found there. Lifetime memberships are available for \$175 (single) and \$250 (family).

MEETINGS

Our monthly meetings are held the first Tuesday of every month in Southfield at Colony Hall, 21780 Evergreen (between 8 Mile & 9 Mile Roads) at 7:30 pm. Everyone is welcome to attend.

SOLAR RAY NEWSLETTER

The *SOLAR Ray* is a monthly publication of SOLAR and is available online at www.solaroutdoors.org. To receive a copy in the mail, please contact Mary Price at SOLARmembership@solaroutdoors.org.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Submissions for the *SOLAR Ray* are due on the Thursday three weeks prior to the monthly Membership meeting. Articles, poems, recipes, etc. should be submitted in electronic format, preferably in Microsoft Word. Please attach images separately as JPG files. If you have any questions, please contact Jennifer Tislerics at SOLARrayeditor@solaroutdoors.org.

STEERING COMMITTEE

President: Allen Duncan	Activities: Jennifer McWilliams	Membership: Mary Price
Vice President: Heather Hall	Bylaws: Ati Tislerics	Programs: Debbie Zuchlewski
Treasurer: Mary Donahue	Education: Chuck Smith	PR: Samantha Mozdierz
Secretary: Glenn Schultz	Equipment: Marcia Murphy	Ray Editor: Jennifer Tislerics
	Historian: Pam Riehl Szakal	Webmaster: Jeff McWilliams

PRESIDENTS AT LARGE

Mike Banks | Leslie Cordova | Al Fylak | Steve Gardner | Bill Halvingis | Cindy Harrison-Felix
Tom Hayes | Joan Hettinger | Doug Lanyk | Larry Martin | Tom Oloffo | Lou Szakal
Cindy Taylor | Joan & Bob Westbrook

STEERING COMMITTEE MEETINGS

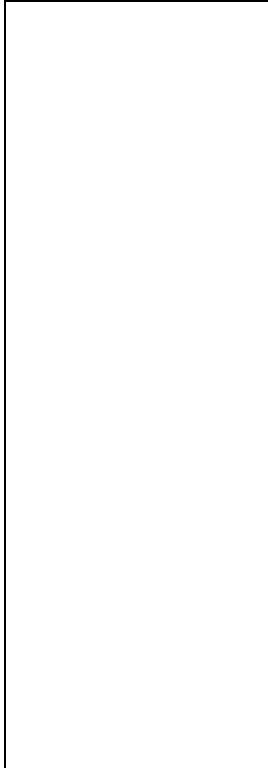
The Steering Committee meets on the last Tuesday of every month at 7:30 pm. These meetings are usually open to the general membership. Anyone who is interested in learning about the decisions being made or contemplating running for a position on the Steering Committee is welcome to attend. If you are interested in attending the Steering Committee meeting, please contact Allen Duncan at SOLARpresident@solaroutdoors.org.

SPECIAL THANKS TO THE SOLAR RAY ASSISTANT EDITORS

Winnie Chrzanowski, Jennifer Hill, Ken Lemieux, Helen Peters, Janet Schester, Pamela Schmelzer-Anzicek, Elizabeth Shaw, Rebecca Sweeton and Ati Tislerics.

MORE INFORMATION

Please visit our website at www.solaroutdoors.org or attend one of our monthly meetings.



SOLAR

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Visit our website: www.solaroutdoors.org