

WMAC SNOSHU-NEWS

THE 2005 U.S.S.A. NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS: ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

After flying from Manchester, New Hampshire to Chicago, Illinois, then to Seattle, Washington, and finally to Anchorage, Alaska, I was pretty worn out on March 1st as I arrived in Anchorage at 10:00 PM Anchorage time. (It was 2:00 AM on my wristwatch.)

Nonetheless, with the time advantage of flying West, I was up early on Wednesday, anxious to find my way to Kincaid Park to check out the site of the 2005 USSSA National Championships. Sunrise at this time of year in Alaska is around 7:30 AM so as soon as the sun broke I was on my way to Kincaid. The sky was crystal blue on Wednesday – temps in the 30s.

Kincaid was a 15-20 minute drive from the Coast International Inn although the drive in my Subaru Legacy rental was a bit hairy as I soon found out that Alaskan's have very different views about plowing and sanding public roads. There was about 1 ½ inches of solid ice on the road all the way to Kincaid, (and in the rest of Anchorage I soon found out). After white-knuckled driving in my AWD Subaru, (AWD doesn't help you stop any better on solid ice), I reached Kincaid and was immediately struck by the beautifully groomed x-country ski trails and the incredible views of Mt. Sisitna, (known as *The Sleeping Lady*), many miles to the Southwest across open/frozen ocean water. I couldn't help but think of Mt. Greylock, (*The Lady*). No offense to the Adams, MA people of WMAC, but Alaska's Lady must be about 100 times larger than "the" Lady in Massachusetts. I'll diplomatically state, of course, that both ladies are beautiful.

I set out on snowshoes to see what the course was like and soon found that this course had more steep ups and downs than I expected at a sea-level course. I didn't intend to do the whole 10K course so I kind of jumped around to see portions of the course. I was particularly interested in the single track portions which were hard to find from the web description and my map of Kincaid. I eventually found some of the single track which sort of zigzagged through a wooded area. This trail was very narrow with some sharp turns. I had a great time running over moose droppings regularly and seeing only an occasional x-country skier, and was content meandering around the park on a beautiful day. I was in the park for about two hours, getting lost about six times and finding many places to enjoy scenery like I have never seen before. Portions of the course were already marked and were a welcome sign that indeed a race would occur on Saturday. My assessment of the course was that the course was quite hilly – up and down – and that there seemed to be a wide variety of trail conditions. Overall, to me, it appeared that the course was probably quite challenging. After one last look at "The Sleeping Lady", it was back to the hotel, and then time to be a tourist for the rest of Wednesday and all of Thursday.

For myself, Rick Busa, and Norm Sheppard, pre-race activities began shortly after registration sign-in at Kincaid Park on Friday when we attended what was billed by the USSSA as a pre-race dinner at the Sourdough Mining Company Restaurant in

Anchorage. Attendance at this event was a bit disappointing. After a few introductions, Rich, Norm, and I were seated with Paul Fiondella from New York and a gentleman who was a representative from a running shoe company. He apparently was selling shoes at the race event. Also joining us unannounced, and at his own behest, was Alaska's Nathaniel Grabman. The Anchorage Daily News picked Nathaniel as a race favorite. We all seemed to hit it off for this pre-race dinner, however the general consensus, I think, was that the food at the Sourdough was a "4" on a scale of 1-10. Although we didn't meet any other racers at the Sourdough, we all had a good time talking about a wide variety of topics.

The next morning, Rich Busa and I drove to downtown Anchorage to see the start of the Iditarod. After listening to numerous politicians drone on and on, the race finally started. The start of the race in Anchorage is now more symbolic than the actual race. The race actually started on the clock up the road in Wasilla, Alaska later. I couldn't help but notice that as the politicians were talking, 80 teams of dogs were yelping behind them. These dogs just wanted to RUN. As soon as each team took off from the start gate the barking/ yelping of that team quickly ceased and the dogs looked like they were smiling. (Perhaps the "non-dog" people reading this think I'm crazy, but those who know dogs completely understand what I just claimed.)

After seeing a few teams take off, Rich and I were quickly heading back to the hotel and then off to Kincaid to get our "game faces" on. The weather prediction suggested the temps would be around 40 degrees with rain. (Where's the cold of Hawley Kiln and Greylock Glen when you need it?) The clouds looked ominous, but although the temperature was warm, the rain held off for the entire race.

The usual warm-ups completed, Rich and I headed to the wide open start area known as the stadium. Snowshoers were warming up all around. Eventually, Mark Elmore from USSSA gave the pre-race "thank you's" and we were off running. After running through a tunnel at the end of the stadium, we were soon climbing and descending the biathlon course loop. I ran with, or slightly behind, Norm Sheppard for this loop. We both passed a competitor whose right snowshoe had completely fallen off and, moreover, it looked like he was quitting less than a mile into the race – heading back to the start.

When we entered the first wide single track, the freshly fallen snow of Thursday made for ankle bending running on that churned-up type of snow. Soon the race took a very sharp right where everybody in front of me, (maybe 10 competitors), were all walking up a very steep hill. Then the course went straight up and down along a fence where you could see runners far ahead. Eventually, the course entered the single track section that took us through an archery range where huge life-sized targets of game were sometimes within touching distance.

ANCHORAGE (continued)

(Racers were told that the archery range would be inactive while we were racing.) This single track section was filled with sharp, narrow twists and turns that reminded me of Rich Bolt's January race in Auburn, New Hampshire. (Later, Rich, Norm, and I all agreed that our Dion's performed especially well in the narrow single track portions of the race course.) After the first section of narrow single track, a short wide track loop entered the racers back into the more churned-up type single track. We raced along the narrow single track to a wide groomed trail which meant we had about 1 mile to go before finishing in the stadium. This course had a wide variety of ups, downs, single track, (wide and narrow), and groomed trails. Norm Sheppard broke an hour while I was a couple of minutes behind him.

Aaron Robertson, from New York, was the race winner for the men and Nikki Kimball, now a resident of Montana, was the women's champ. Meghan Young won the gold for the women's 20-24 age division. Dan Verrington was third in the men's masters 40-44 age group taking the bronze medal in a very tough age group. Congratulations Dan! Rich Busa took the gold for the 70+ age group. Without a doubt, Rich received the loudest and most exuberant cheer from the crowd of all the awards made. Rich and Norm both also won raffle prizes. Six competitors represented Massachusetts at this race including: myself, Norm Sheppard, Rich Busa, Dan Verrington, Britt Brewer, and Meghan Young. Not such a bad showing for the Bay State considering for all of us this trip was expensive and very far from home.

Later that evening, Rich, Norm, myself, and Rich's former neighbor, Eileen, (who transplanted to Alaska 20 years ago), had a dinner in honor of Rich's gold medal victory at one of Anchorage's finer restaurants. I'm not sure if Rich Busa has taken his gold medal off since the race in Anchorage.

I'm glad I made the trip to Alaska. Alaskan scenery was beyond description, seeing the Iditarod live was something I've wanted to do for decades, and, in my opinion, the snowshoe race itself went off well. It will be nice, however, to witness this race in Bolton Valley, Vermont in 2006. Time for snowshoers from other parts of the country to not only enjoy long plane flights, but moreover New England.

Finally, the Alaska trip/ race was, for me, just part of a great snowshoe season. We had plenty of snow throughout New England. I got to know a few more personalities in the snowshoe world. Plus, I got to see Rich Busa make one more "snow angel". What could be better?!?!

Bill Morse

JUNIOR WOMEN'S AND MEN'S 5KM

01. Jason Ayr	MA	23:14
02. Zachary Rivers	NY	25:46
03. Nicholas Wujciak	NY	27:08
04. Anna Leib	CO	27:53
05. Lindsay Dick	CO	35:58
06. Heidi Lovett	AK	36:23
07. Breanna Gunnarson	CO	41:47
08. Rita Purcell	CA	45:21

BRITT BREWER NATS REPORT

My initial impression of the USSSA National Championships held last Saturday in Anchorage is how wonderful it was to see so many friendly faces from the WMAC series way over at the other end of the North American continent. With jaw-dropping views of Cook Inlet and snowcapped mountains on three sides, the Kincaid Park setting For the race was truly spectacular. An artful combination of groomed cross country ski trails and undulating, twisty-turny, almost Hawley-like single track, the course featured terrain hilly enough to challenge the hardest of snowshoers. Throw in a top layer of snow softened by the 40+ degree temperature and healthy competition from a sampling of the nation's finest snowshoe athletes, and there were all the ingredients for a vigorous, pulse-pounding jaunt across the scenic snowscape.

I didn't see any moose (nor any meese for that matter!) on the course, But I saw plenty of gazelles. Swift, snowshoe-clad gazelles from the WMAC series, that is. Suffice it to say that our region was exceedingly well-represented at Nationals. Camp Saratoga victor Aaron Robertson overcame an early snowshoe mishap to storm past the field and win the race going away. Although she lives in Montana now, past WMAC series participant Nikki Kimball retained her national title, stomping her closest opponent by more than four minutes! Westfield (MA) High School's Jason Ayr continued the region's Alaskan gold rush with a victory in the junior men's division.

First place divisional finishes were also claimed by Springfield College junior Meghan Young (20-24), Mark Churchill (25-29), Gary Fancher (40-44), and the legendary Rich Busa (75-79). Divisional silver medals were earned by Chary Griffen (55-59), Maggie Masella (20-24), honorary New Englander Ed Myers (50-54), and Paul Fiondella (55-59). Dan Verrington (40-44) did CMS proud with his divisional bronze medal. Overall, the men's Northeastern team improved upon its third place finish from last year, claiming second place behind the Western squad in the first USSSA team competition to have complete teams from all five regions.

The region's luck continued in the postrace prize drawing, with many New Englanders heading home accompanied by useful snowshoeing-related items. It pays to be both fast AND lucky sometimes! Mark Elmore is to be commended for putting together another fine championship event so far from the USSSA home base. Even with Iditarod mania permeating the city, the meet clearly made its mark. The local television news covered the race, and all over the place there were promotional race posters and programs gracing the image of our own Richard Bolt ascending the mountain at Squaw Valley in last year's championships. From a personal perspective, the only real downside to the trip was having our airplane sitting on the tarmac for two hours with a mechanical problem on the way home. Unfortunately, even Rich Busa's gold medal couldn't persuade the mechanics to pick up the pace and I ended up missing my connection to Hartford. All will be well, however, when my hefty commission (shared with Rich Busa, Bill Morse, and Norm Sheppard) for pimping Dion Snowshoes comes through!

Britt Brewer

FIFTH ANNUAL NIKE ACG U.S. NATIONAL SNOWSHOE CHAMPIONSHIP

SATURDAY MARCH 5, 2005

KINCAID PARK

ANCHORAGE, ALASKA

01. Aaron Robertson	26	NY	42:19
02. Charlie Wertheim	42	CO	43:12
03. Jesse Haynes	32	CA	43:40
04. Mike McManus	39	OR	43:55
05. Mike Decker	28	MI	44:11
06. Tom Borschel	47	ID	44:14
07. Mark Churchill	29	VT	45:26
08. Gary Fancher	43	NY	45:30
09. Chris Bell	29	OR	45:50
10. Victor Vilar	25	WI	45:51
11. John Clark	44	AK	46:53
12. Dan Verrington	42	MA	47:26
13. Kenny Brown	35	CA	47:44
14. Eric Bohn	38	CA	48:04
15. Nathaniel Grabman	20	AK	49:09
16. Nikki Kimball	33	MT	49:30
17. Frank Mungeam	43	OR	49:43
18. Chad Carroll	33	AK	49:54
19. Britt Brewer	41	MA	50:42
20. Brian Purcell	48	CA	50:46
21. Brian Gunnarson	38	CO	51:12
22. Wayne Cottrell	42	UT	51:43
23. Christian Fuller	30	CA	52:24
24. Mark Miller	38	AK	52:56
25. Brent Weigner	55	WY	53:32
26. Karen Melliar-Smith	30	CO	53:35
27. Rocky Reifenstuhl	52	AK	53:42
28. Ed Myers	54	PA	53:54
29. Adam Chase	39	CO	54:08
30. Jim McDonnell	51	MN	54:19
31. Tim Moser	33	AK	54:25
32. Jim Graupner	60	MN	54:29
33. Mark Rickman	43	CO	54:31
34. Lynann Lorenz	25	NY	54:44
35. Laurie Lambert	43	TX	54:47
36. Andrew Duenow	39	AK	55:04
37. Jamie Boese	45	CO	55:05
38. Cindy Brochman	39	MN	55:53
39. Meghan Young	21	NY	55:59
40. David Jansik	35	CA	56:25
41. Christine Cannard	33	AK	56:32
42. Heather Gasaway	29	AK	56:50
43. Steven Rivers	43	NY	57:13
44. Hal Needham	30	NY	57:46
45. Stephen Holonitch	47	CO	57:53
46. Bill Hamlin	54	WA	57:58
47. Norm Sheppard	47	MA	59:20
48. Amy Johns	44	AK	59:22
49. Paul Fiondella	58	NY	1:00:18
50. Michelle Mitchell	30	AK	1:01:16
51. Bill Morse	53	MA	1:01:25
52. Laura McDonough	44	AK	1:02:12
53. Mike Most	54	WI	1:02:32
54. Frederick Wilson	54	AK	1:08:02
55. James Holloway	54	MI	1:09:13
56. Andrea K-Wheeler	44	CO	1:09:25
57. John Stauffer	53	CA	1:09:29
58. Amy Carroll	34	AK	1:11:13

59. Shane Holonitch	54	CO	1:12.03
60. Colleen Peterson	58	AK	1:13.34
61. Chary Griffen	56	NY	1:13.48
62. Craig Stephen	31	AK	1:16.45
63. Maggie Masella	21	NY	1:19.42
64. Bob Durband	61	MN	1:20.44
65. Rich Busa	75	MA	1:25.30
66. Tina Oberheide	58	CO	1:29.51

Canadian Athletes participated but were non-eligible/ awards.
Actual overall place listed

05. Andrew Clark	CANADA	44:01
19. Dom Repta	CANADA	48:52
44. Michael Burns-Campbell	CANADA	56:49

Photos by Norm Sheppard



The view from the race location.



Northeast in Alaska; Meghan Young, Britt Brewer, Norm Sheppard, Bill Morse, Richard Busa and Dan Verrington.

The Northeast showed up as big as anyone, with 16 of the 66 finishers. This tied Alaska for participation. Rockies added 14 finishers, Western Region added 11, and North Central added 9.

SLIP SLIDIN' AWAY

End of snowshoe season 2005... sad... it started off with a whole bunch of no snow and ended up with us begging for no more. Quite a season. It was nothing or all or somewhere in between this season.

For some of us it was the end of a different kind of season. For some an abrupt end, for some a long drawn out end and for others it's still playing out. But enough of that melancholy crap. It all worked out in the end.

Some Observations of the Season.... The season started with anticipation as event after event was challenged with the prospect of not enough cover. Race Director's fingernails were chewed down to the quick. They worried and fretted and went out and moved mountains of snow for us to run on.

The season ended with more snow than you could shake a stick at and the funniest fun end to a snowshoe race ever, with practically the whole field galloping together to the finish at North / South Five of the Toughest Miles You Will Ever Run Snowshoe Race.

The race directors held on... to probably the strangest snowshoe season yet... they never lost faith as they put on race after race... some of us never lost faith in them as we showed up race after race.

Good group these race directors. We show up, register and run our legs off, happy and content, chow down afterwards, get in our nice warm cars and go home tired, but happy. Race Directors and their crews spend all season setting courses, resetting courses, grooming, regrooming, marking trails, unmarking trails, lugging all the crap to the race site, lugging all the crap back, setting up in the freezing cold, giving us our numbers so we can be counted, making us happy with shirts, counting us at the finish and posting results and feeding us after. They worry the most about our safety and going off course and getting lost and confused (a given in this sport). They are just tireless workhorses working for the love of the sport and the joy it gives to us, their participants. The more of us that show up to run, the more work they have to do, the more they love doing it. Just incredible. They provide shelter, food, snowshoes, the best marked courses. Their crews and partners and supporters in the effort are just the best. Thank you to the RD's, their partners and offspring, the haulers, the soup makers, the finish line crews, the cookie bakers, the course markers, the editors and writers, the snowshoe providers, the mathematicians who do totals and %'s, the photographers, the website managers, the sweepers, the spectators, and of course the runners...without runners, this wouldn't happen and we wouldn't make our RD's and crew as happy as we do. So from MA to NY to VT to ME to NH... hats off to another outstanding snowshoe season.

Warmest sight of the season.... Eddie Alibozek (the younger farmer) and Tippi, just the two, making the right heading into the woods in the deep snow, on the North/South Pond Shuffle course, together, to take down the ribbon that showed us the way to the finish of the last race of the season.

Here's to the snowshoe season.... long live the snowshoe season... Bring on the green green forests and mountains and mud... lotsa MUD!!

Kaniac - March 2005

SETTLE DOWN AND BEHAVE?

Lately it seems as if the WMAC snowshoe races have been multiplying exponentially. With the old standards – South Pond, Greylock and Moody -- jealously guarding their treasured slots, a bunch of upstarts began to nudge their way in – Curleys, Winterfest, Northfield, Covered Bridge. Seeing that they were enthusiastically welcomed, others clamored for a piece of the action, squeezing into back-to-back weekend dates. Did we holler Uncle? No way! Other promising sites soon ganged up to stretch the calendar at both ends: North Pond, Woodford and Bunny Demos took advantage of December snow, and fun runs proliferated way beyond Moody in March.

With the calendar pretty much set and WMACers poised to mail in their application packets, certain series troublemakers got together and decided to shake things up a bit. Woodford, obviously acting on a hot tip from the Weather Gods, decided to sleep in the day after Christmas and immigrate to a snowier March. North Pond refused to freeze, and South Pond offered a belated last-minute welcome with a snowy fun run after the main points event was cancelled.

Even in January, South Pond still stubbornly refused to acknowledge her traditional Saturday reservation and was reluctantly pushed to the back of the line up. And while Merrimac at least showed up, she did so spitefully, featuring ice, not snow, which felled even Dave Dunham, her loyal race director. Finally, Curleys broke the curse with a foot of fresh powder that left the course in great condition, but the access roads buried.

In February, Northfield, Winterfest and Camp Saratoga were true to their roles as obedient middle children and it looked as if the rebellion was finally squashed. But then, along came a sulking, shortened Hawley and a Bum No Blizzard, which performed a credible imitation of slippery Merrimac.

And while Covered Bridge came through with flying colors, Moody, true to her name, failed to make an appearance. Fortunately Hawley, long jealous of Moody's Maple Sugar House come-on, volunteered her long course to pancake enthusiasts. After Woodford enjoyed a successful, if belated run, North/South Pond had second thoughts and stepped in to host the final series race, again in a snowstorm and with a field limited to those with four-wheel drive and studded tires (the cars, not the snowshoes).

But many unanswered questions still remain. How many fun runs can we squeeze into the March calendar? Will Bob Dion be renting snowshoes for Northern Nipmuck? Where will Tannery Falls find a free weekend slot? Could we run two races back-to-back in one day? And most importantly, will the WMAC series settle down and behave next winter?

laura clark

All of us who enjoy reading about the events and adventures really owe a big thanks to Laura Clark, Carol Kane and Bob Worsham. These three have continuously written about most events we have held since 1998.

Or was it the... **8th SOUTH POND SHUFFLE (AT NORTH POND)?****MARCH 12, 2005****SAVOY STATE FOREST****FLORIDA/ SAVOY, MA**

01. Jim Schultz	42	1:26:53	100.0000
02. Shaun Sutliff	47	1:26:55	96.8750
03. Jay Kolodzinski	25	1:26:59	93.7500
04. Jack Casey	51	1:27:05	90.6250
05. Ryan Isakson	32	1:27:06	87.5000
06. Bill Morse	53	1:27:08	84.3750
07. Bob Dion	49	1:27:10	81.2500
08. Edward Alibozek	42	1:27:14	78.1250
09. Annie Schultz	41	1:27:16	75.0000
10. Christophe Lanuad	38	1:27:20	71.8750
11. Eric Iannacone	32	1:27:23	68.7500
12. Bob Worsham	59	1:27:28	65.6250
13. Carol Kane	59	1:27:35	62.5000
14. Jim Woodman	40	1:27:39	59.3750
15. John Dent	51	1:27:41	56.2500
16. Kelli Short	24	1:27:42	53.1250
17. Jacqueline Lemieux	38	1:27:45	50.0000
18. Paul Bazanchuk	50	1:28:08	46.8750
19. Ed Alibozek, jr	65	1:28:31	43.7500
20. Paul Hartwig	47	1:30:17	40.6250
21. Laura Clark	58	1:31:50	37.5000
22. Jessica Hageman	29	1:36:35	34.3750
23. Denise Dion	46	1:36:40	31.2500
24. John Kline	38	1:36:42	28.1250
25. Laura Shortell	39	1:37:02	25.0000
26. Bruce Grisafe	51	1:37:30	21.8750
27. Bob Massaro	62	1:38:19	18.7500
28. Walt Kolodzinski	62	1:41:37	15.6250
29. Richard Busa	75	1:43:46	12.5000
30. Mary Kennedy	46	1:44:34	9.3750
31. Konrad Karolczuk	52	1:49:59	6.2500
32. Jeff Clark	58	2:05:41	3.1250

AGE GROUP CHAMPIONS

20 – 24	Kelly Short	1:27:42	
25 – 29	Jessica Hageman	1:36:35	Jay Kolodzinski 1:26:59
30 – 34			Ryan Isakson 1:27:06
35 – 39	Jacq. Lemieux	1:27:45	Chris. Lanuad 1:27:20
40 – 44	Annie Shultz	1:27:16	Jim Schultz 1:26:53
45 – 49	Denise Dion	1:36:40	Shaun Sutliff 1:26:55
50 – 54			Jack Casey 1:27:05
55 – 59	Carol Kane	1:27:35	Bob Worsham 1:27:28
60 – 64			Bob Massaro 1:38:19
65 – 69			Ed Alibozek Jr 1:28:31
70 – 79			Richard Busa 1:43:46

What a way to end up the Series! Mad dash to the finish with more than half the field within a minute of each other.

It was great seeing so many share time at the front of the pack, breaking trail was a beast. Thanks everyone, especially Paul Bazanchuk, who really sacrificed his own race for the rest of us. He really gave an all out effort for as long as possible. Extra credit should be given to Annie Schultz also, who took three turns leading and breaking from mile 2 ½ to mile 4.

Sprint to the finish with Jim Schultz, Shaun Sutliff and Jay Kolodzinski.



A big round of applause is in order for Beth and Brad Herder, who helped register, timed, took photos and finished up the results for us. Our entry fees went to the Pittsfield Boys X-County Team, which Brad coaches.

A second big round of applause is also in order for Bob and Denise Dion, from DION SNOWSHOES. They are so much help to all the directors, it would be great to thank them everytime we see them.

Thanks to Tim Zelazo, and Kenny and Ed, at Savoy Mtn State Forest. Tim tried to say they didn't do anything for the race, but the parking lot was plowed, the cabin was opened, the stove was going, the Tyler Swamp Trail was cut back and fixed up so we could use it again after the logging. They did plenty.

Finally, Paul Hartwig and Ed Jr, who spend hours marking and unmarking the trails with me all season, and all the snowshoers who managed to make the trip today in tough weather!



USSSA National Champion (70 +) Richard Busa in the CCC Shed at North Pond, displaying the Gold Medal.

NORTH POND SNOWSHOE 2005: A SCHULTZ KIND OF DAY

Has the Farmer gone totally nuts? Has he become confused about the races he puts on? We had a Hawley that wasn't Hawley, a Moody that wasn't Moody, a Moody that was Hawley, a Hawley with maple syrup, and now a North Pond race that is part South Pond Shuffle, part Savoy Mountain Trail Race, and part old North Pond snowshoe race. Actually, this is the Farmer's genius at work to provide the rest of us with variety, fun, and games in the snow. Besides he gets a kick out of confusing me.

Think about it. Where can you go to drive on a mountain in a blizzard, slog through 18 inches of fresh snow, watch 11 people cooperate to break trail, see a big guy smile from ear to ear all day, see Beth Herder with long hair, Richard Busa with no shirt on, and watch a woman pull a Lycra wedgie out of her butt? The North Pond snowshoe race of course!

The trip there was somewhat scary to say the least. I carpooled with Richard Busa, and as we approached Greenfield on I-91 road conditions began to worry me. The drive on Route 2 up the mountain was an adventure in itself. The normally talkative Busa got very quiet as we wound up the mountain with deep gorges at the side of the road. Finally, after reaching Central Shaft Road off Route 2, we discovered it had not been plowed. There were car tracks in it though. Do you realize that this road is named after the air ventilation shaft that exhausts train diesel fumes from the Hoosac Tunnel?

This turned out to be one of the greatest days ever in the history of snowshoeing. It wasn't a race; it was like a party in the woods. For the first two miles Paul Bazanchuk broke trail for everybody in 18 inches of fresh powder; then promptly bonked, saying that he had never put out this much effort in anything he had done in his life. I wasn't there to see it happen, but this must have been the point where the magic of the Farmer took over. Thanks to Beth Herder who did the finish line, the Farmer was able to run in this race, oops, party. After following Annie Schultz for about two miles, during which time I had the fortune to watch her pull a big Lycra wedgie out of her butt after extended digging, we came up behind about the first 10 leaders. They were taking turns breaking trail.

Jay Kolodzinski, Annie, and I had caught them because the unbroken depth of the new snow prevented the leaders from going any faster. Since the three of us were running in their broken tracks, we were able to catch them, as were many others who eventually came up behind us. Jay slowed and stayed back about 30 yards. Impatient Annie said, "I ain't sittin' back here," and she passed Jay to fall into the back of the "train." I closed the gap to Jay, and he said he wasn't going up there because then he would have to help break trail. After a few minutes I got impatient and jumped past him; I wanted to catch that train.

On flats or downhills I'd get tantalizingly close; on uphill I'd fall back from it. When I got close enough to it I heard the magic of Farmer Ed in action. He had formed up the train into an Indian Ladder (or should I say a Native American Ladder?). Every minute the leader would step off the trail and number two would take the lead breaking. The former leader would then fall in behind the train. Then Ed would be saying, "Twenty seconds! Forty seconds! Ten seconds left! Switch! Way to go!" Then the

process would repeat. It wasn't a race. It was the embodiment of cooperation and a bunch of people having the time of their lives.

Next thing I know I hear Farmer Ed saying, "You're up Annie!" Annie Schultz had worked her way up to the front and was pulling that 10-man train. If Annie could do it I wanted to pull that train too. I kept inching my way up, but it seemed that whichever leader had stepped off to let the others take over would then jump back into the line in front of me. They must not have thought I could actually do it, but I could have on that day. Later Ed told me I couldn't get into the train because I didn't have my "death face" on. I guess it's because I had my "happy face" on and I was having too much fun watching this spirit of cooperation.

When we got to the top of the mountain that is the first hill climb in the Savoy trail race, I thought we were going to be going fast down the hill. However, the snow had collected deeper on this trail through the side of the mountain, making for even harder breaking. After we bottomed out we were heading back in on a forest road, and probably with $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile to go the 60-seconds rule changed to a 30-second rule. The luck of the draw would place someone at the front of that line when we hit the homestretch. We did come out onto a 40 yard section of wide, packed snow where everybody could take off and pass if they could. Jim Schultz hit the finish line first, and I came in 12th only 35 seconds behind him and only 14 seconds behind Farmer Ed. What a day! That was one of my best memories of the season to run in these conditions and watch the lead pack work together. So with Annie pulling both a wedgie and a train, and with Jim winning the race, all in all, it was a Schultz kind of day. They got to leave the kids home and have another "snowshoe date" day.

After putting on dry clothes I ate some cookies and drank a hot chocolate and watched all the smiling faces. So what did the Farmer do? After all this was over he took his dog Tippi and ran the five mile course again on his snowshoes. What a way to end the season.

On the way home I reflected on today's race and the conditions. I thought back to the Hawley 7-mile race. Both races had lots of deep snow in deep forests on beautiful trails with no supporting "resort facilities" and no commercial trappings. This is what snowshoeing should be about in New England. This is real snowshoeing and not just foot-racing with snowshoes on highly-groomed highly-packed snow. This was an adventure in the forest and the snow, and the participants who come out to run in these conditions are the truly devoted purists.

We should all give a special hand to the Dions who have come out to all these races hauling loaner snowshoes so people can try out this great sport. They have to be among the first to arrive and the last to leave, carrying all that stuff, and they always provide unending advice and information about snowshoeing and equipment.

My only regret is that I didn't get to pull the train.

*WorShamer
(Bob Worsham)*

IT'S A WRAP!

On the drive over to Curley's we were treated to Alarmist Weather with dire predictions of impassable roads, downed power lines and ransacked video stores. On the morning of the third South/North Pond attempt we heard nary a whisper from the Weather Guessers. After shoveling four inches of snow from our walk and rescuing the cat from an aggressive snowbank, we set George II on autopilot for his final winter trek around the Hairpin Turn. Properly chastised, Alarmist Weather had morphed into Outdated Weather, cheerfully predicting barely an inch of snow. Jeff speculated that they were really forecasting an inch of snow at a time, as in "the ice cap inched slowly forward."

By the time we reached the mountains by Grafton Lake, we were surprised at the number of people snowblowing that one inch of snow over and over again. Lulled by a false sense of security, the snowplows were sleeping in and the Saturday morning drivers were out in full force. Even Jeff, who regards driving in a snowstorm as an exciting challenge, much like cruising around the Champs-Elysees for fun, was tempted to head for the nearest snowbank and wait it out. We finally made the turn onto Central Shaft Road, following in the tire tracks of other dedicated WMACers, much to the puzzlement of one elderly gentleman who was obviously trying to figure out why so many cars were hurling down his otherwise peaceful country lane in the middle of a blizzard.

The reason was, of course, that we were all late for a very important date: the third and final North/South Pond attempt. Incredibly, thirty-two foolishly dedicated WMACers rose to the challenge, which was to prove a true test of courage (the drive over) and stamina (the trek over unbroken trail). After parking George II, we were poised to take a flying leap out the door, into our quick-as-a-bunny bindings and onto the trail, certain that everyone had already left. But wisely, Edward had delayed the start until ten o'clock, probably because he wanted to have more than a handful of people show up. And lo and behold, he got six handfuls plus change.

This was a good thing since the lead pack consisted of nineteen runners in chain gang formation, each taking a one-minute turn in scout position before falling exhausted to the back of the heap. The real race didn't occur until the final dash to the finish, where more than half the field clocked in within a minute of each other. Much credit goes to the unsung hero who manned the stopwatch – clicking off nineteen places just a few seconds apart shows considerable computer game expertise.

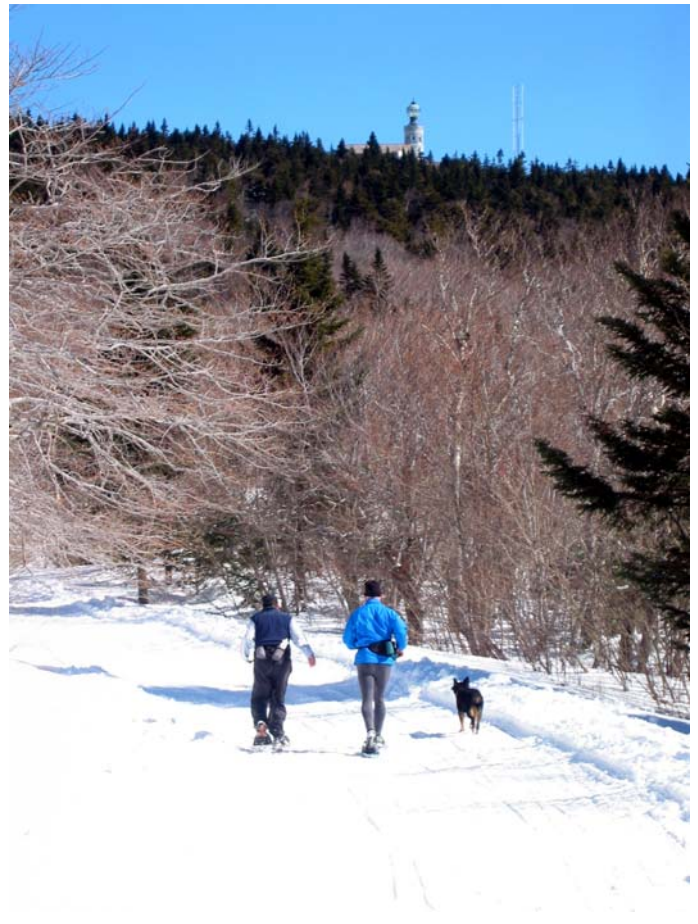
The second pack, led by Paul Hartwig and, incredibly, myself, formed a less cohesive unit, riding loosely in the wake of the Little Engine That Could. We were placed just far enough apart that, with the exception of Denise Dion and Jessica Hageman, it felt like we were all alone in the world. The only advantage, for me at least, was the fact that it was impossible to wander since this was the only visible trail. At one point, I passed a snowshoer who exclaimed, "You mean I'm not last?!" He asked how much farther we had to struggle and I replied with the dreaded "Almost there." Whoever it was, I wasn't trying to secure the advantage, but just showing my shaky grasp of the situation. Believe me, I was just as disappointed to

discover that "almost there" took at least another twenty minutes of plowing. I think what fooled me was the fact that I kept hearing voices and assumed that I was approaching the finish. Only later, when Bob Dion mentioned that he could see me chugging along behind whenever he dropped to the back of the pack, did I realize that it was the gang ahead just rattling their chains.

Yes, that gel quote on the website was mine, too. I learned that in situations like this, there is a definite place for double-caffeine power gels. While we did not get to top off the year with the considerably longer Moody Springs race, North/South(?) or South/North(?) Pond gave us equal bang for our buck and showed us that it is possible to run five miles and feel as if you've run ten.

*Happy trails!
laura and jeff clark*

While Laura did the actual writing, Jeff supplied many of the concepts, such as Alarmist and Outdated Weather, mostly while he was trying to keep George II on the road. In case you were wondering, George II (black exterior) is the replacement for George I (green exterior). The name in no way harks back to the George of Boston Tea Party fame, but rather to the green money George Washington. After all, we're talking financial advisor here.



Paul Hartwig, Old Farmer Ed and Tippi a mile from Mt Greylock Summit on March 26th, 2005.

Based on Best Six Scores, Minimum Four Scores Needed for Age Group Title

Showing Everyone with at Least Three Finishes (Thanks for the Support!)

01. Paul Low	31	Amherst, MA	593.82	57. Richard Busa	75	Marlboro, MA	161.81
02. Rich Bolt	34	Nashua, NH	590.99	58. Ed Buckley	46	Southampton, MA	158.90*
03. Ben Nephew	29	Foxboro, MA	577.36	<u>59. Laurel Shortell</u>	<u>38</u>	<u>Northampton, MA</u>	<u>155.05</u>
04. Shaun Sutcliffe	47	Adams, MA	567.44	<u>60. Laura Monti</u>	<u>34</u>	<u>Chicopee, MA</u>	<u>149.15</u>
05. Jim Schultz	41	Pittsfield, MA	565.70	61. C Robert Suarez	36	Boston, MA	148.44*
06. Bob Dion	49	Readsboro, VT	543.67	<u>62. Eva Van Stratum</u>	<u>45</u>	<u>Avon, CT</u>	<u>140.60*</u>
07. Edward Alibozek	42	Suffield, CT	510.89	63. Norm Sheppard	47	Bedford, MA	124.62*
08. Kelli Lusk	34	Amherst, MA	506.05	<u>64. Sandra Superchi</u>	<u>48</u>	<u>New Salem, MA</u>	<u>118.59*</u>
09. Jay Kolodzinski	25	Florance, MA	505.90	65. Mark Syrett	56	Hamden, MA	114.34
10. Patrick Riley	26	Becket, MA	472.44	66. Richard Hunt	65	Auburn, MA	107.16*
11. Jack Casey	51	Harvard, MA	469.08	<u>67. Kelly Short</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>Goshen, MA</u>	<u>100.60*</u>
12. Elijah Barrett	28	Keene, NH	466.92	<u>68. Sally Goade</u>	<u>46</u>	<u>Wynantskill, NY</u>	<u>94.14</u>
<u>13. Michele Tetreault</u>	<u>29</u>	<u>Fairhaven, MA</u>	<u>445.09</u>	69. John Loring	57	Jamaica Pl, MA	93.31*
<u>14. Annie Schultz</u>	<u>41</u>	<u>Pittsfield, MA</u>	<u>444.69</u>	70. Alan Beebe	55	N Chelmsford, MA	91.83*
15. Bill Morse	53	Dracut, MA	400.73	<u>71. Lisa Mentzer</u>	<u>36</u>	<u>Millbury, MA</u>	<u>90.28*</u>
16. Leigh Schmitt	32	Conway, MA	387.19	72. Ken Deary	52	Dudley, MA	89.10*
17. Mike Cohen	26	Hoboken, NJ	386.24	73. Konrad Karolczuk	52	Windsor Lck, CT	82.87
18. Kelly Herrington	30	Schenectady, NY	374.89	74. Martin Glendon	58	Windsor, MA	82.44*
19. Paul Bazanchuck	50	Amherst, MA	371.68	75. John Aldrich	46	Dalton, MA	82.14*
20. Ed Alibozek Jr	65	Adams, MA	368.21	76. Peter Finley	43	Saratoga Sp, NY	78.10
21. Ed Saharczewski	51	Adams, MA	367.75	77. Gareth Buckley	28	S Hadley, MA	66.06*
<u>22. Larina Riley</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>Becket, MA</u>	<u>356.78</u>	<u>78. Mary Kennedy</u>	<u>46</u>	<u>Williamtown, MA</u>	<u>44.27</u>
23. Paul Hartwig	48	Adams, MA	352.54	79. Jeff Clark	58	Saratoga Sp, NY	39.29
24. Rob Smith	37	Charlestown, MA	352.08	80. Andy Keefe	74	Saratoga Sp, NY	31.74
25. Bob Worsham	59	Woodstock, CT	347.01	81. Gerry Beale	57	Saratoga Sp, NY	27.52
26. Christophe Lanaud	37	Guilderland, NY	332.92	82. Art Gulliver	66	Leominster, MA	22.25*
27. Vincent Kirby	48	Mechanicville, NY	321.86	83. George Andrews	55	Seymour, CT	18.80*
28. Scott Bradley	50	Pittsfield, MA	315.22				
29. Alan Bates	56	Pittsfield, MA	311.62				
30. Jan Rancatti	44	Readsboro, VT	290.98				
31. Greg Hammett	27	Chesterfield, NH	285.97*				
<u>32. Carol Kane</u>	<u>59</u>	<u>Weston, CT</u>	<u>285.82</u>				
33. Paul Kirsch	38	Madison, NH	270.33				
<u>34. Jessica Hageman</u>	<u>29</u>	<u>Schenectady, NY</u>	<u>261.72</u>				
35. Britt Brewer	41	Wilbraham, MA	257.73*				
<u>36. Laura Clark</u>	<u>57</u>	<u>Saratoga Sp, NY</u>	<u>256.40</u>				
37. Dave Hannon	33	Newton, MA	247.48*				
38. Tom Mack	40	Wynantskill, NY	237.75				
<u>39. Jacqueline Lemieux</u>	<u>38</u>	<u>Williamtown, MA</u>	<u>230.10</u>				
40. Bob Massaro	61	Chicopee, MA	229.20				
41. Jim Carlson	56	Gansevoort, NY	226.52				
42. Andrew Rickert	25	Albany, NY	225.79*				
43. Will Danecki	54	New Milford, CT	219.43				
44. John Kline	38	Adams, MA	218.02				
45. Peter Malinowski	50	Beverly, MA	213.20*				
<u>46. Maureen Roberts</u>	<u>47</u>	<u>Gansevoort, NY</u>	<u>200.16</u>				
47. Bob Dick	49	Townsend, MA	198.09				
48. Nick Jubok	48	Yorktown, NY	196.10*				
49. Craig Brumwell	47	Avon, CT	194.29*				
50. Tom Parent	28	Providence, RI	189.84*				
51. Stephen Judice	33	Winchester, NH	187.82*				
52. Todd Hagobian	35	Sunderland, MA	185.80*				
53. Walt Kolodzinski	62	Florance, MA	183.63				
<u>54. Denise Dion</u>	<u>47</u>	<u>Readsboro, VT</u>	<u>177.80</u>				
55. Jeff Hattem	53	Natick, MA	166.16				
56. Barry Braun	46	Hadley, MA	166.02*				

* Denotes Three Finishes

We managed an amazing 15 races in 2005, with 910 total finishers and 451 different finishers. A pretty tough challenge as winter took its time to get here (knocking out two early events, North and South Pond and making Merrimack an event without snowshoes). But, by the time it was all over, we offered up racing every weekend from January 2nd to March 12th. Sometimes we even offered two races per weekend! Only Merrimack and Brave the Blizzard went off without snowshoes. In 2004 we held 12 races, and in 2003 we held 10. We are moving forward pretty well and we are remaining flexible.

Paul Low and Kelli Lusk are our 2005 Champions. Paul began the season just crushing everyone and then narrowly held off a tremendous end of year surge from '03 Champion Richard Bolt, winning by less than 3 points over 6 races. Kelli repeated as Champion, she won last year also. Kelli has a 7 race winning streak going, stretching from '04's Course Record performance at Hawley Kiln to this season's Moody Spring at Hawley Kiln.

We had 10 different Men's winners, and 7 different Lady's winners. Kelli Lusk won 6 individual events, Michele Tetreault won 3, and Annie Schultz won 2. For the men, Rich Bolt won 4 and Paul Low won 3. All others were single race winners.

Thanks for the support! See you next season.

DUNHAM REPORT: THE MT KEARSARGE SUNSET RUN – MARCH 18, 2005

Here is how this run came about. I was looking for something interesting to do this winter, as I have been limited in the amount of running I could do. There have been many opportunities to snowshoe this winter with the large amount of snow we received. My injured hip left me unable to run at all from mid-December through the beginning of Feb. Once I started running, I started looking for fun things to do.



My original idea was a sunrise run up a local mountain. I sent out an email looking for suggestions and then settled on a run up Mt Kearsarge. I'm pretty familiar with the road to the summit from racing up it many times since the first organized race back in 1995. I had never been up the road in winter and was hoping it would be in good shape from the snowmobiles that zip up and down it throughout the winter. Richard Bolt was immediately interested in the run, as was Alan Bernier. Rich has been training a lot on snowshoes and racing well this winter. Al has been doing a lot of Mountain hiking. He is working on hiking all of the 4,000 footers in winter and recently did a 21-mile presidential traverse. Dan Verrington, my training partner on most days, was also up for the run.

We decided that we would be better suited for a sunset run, rather than getting up in the early morning hours. Dan picked me up at my house and we drove up to Bedford NH to get Richard. We then piled into Rich's turbo machine and zipped up to get Allen at a NH park n' ride. Finally with the group assembled we headed for Warner. Rich did his Rally-Car imitation as we zoomed the 5 miles from Warner to the state park.

Once in the parking lot we quickly suited and got on the proper snowshoe gear to run to the summit. The entrance to Rollins state park is at about 1,000' and the parking lot where the race ends is about 3.5 miles up the road. After the parking lot there is a half-mile trail to the summit at about 2,900'. I estimated that we'd need a little less than an hour to get up without missing the 6:02 PM sunset. Unfortunately we were a bit behind schedule and had about 45 minutes.



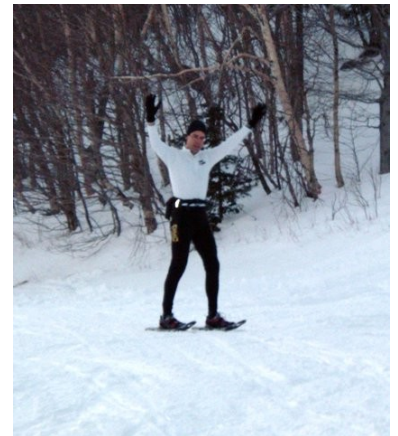
We set off, and right away I was off the back. My aerobic form is not very good; the time off did not sit well with me. Al and Rich chatted away and Dan chugged along. Dan had thought we were hiking up but he is usually game for another run. He had run nine miles at lunchtime and was slightly concerned about wearing himself out as he is racing a half-marathon on Sunday.

The first mile of the climb is the toughest, with no breaks in the

climb. We saw a snowboarder who had hiked up and was flying down the road. A little further up we passed a man heading down the hill towing a child in a sled. The road was excellent for sledding or snowboarding down. Running up was good as well, but lung busting.

We got some breaks after the first mile with some flat sections and even a couple of downhill parts. It seemed very familiar to me despite the absence of leaves and the presence of a few feet of snow on either side of the road. We took a very brief break at about two and a half miles to check out the view. There is a great open part on the road and you can see for miles looking out to the East. We had perfect weather, clear skies and views for miles upon mile. We could see the alpenglow and the shadow of Mt Kearsarge projected over the landscape.

From two and a half miles you can see the summit and it looked to be only a few hundred feet higher. Rich pointed out the clearing where the parking lot (finish line for the race) is. He also mentioned having a round-trip snowshoe race. I heartily agreed that it would be a very cool and very challenging course to race. We were getting close to sunset and it looked like we had it timed out correctly. We hit the parking lot in 39:34 and took a couple of pictures. Next up was the final push to the summit; this was a steep half-mile trail. I had never been up to the summit despite racing here a 1/2 dozen time.



The last section was very steep in parts and Rich and Alan quickly moved out of site right away. I took a couple of pictures and hit the summit just missing it dipping below the horizon. It was very windy and cold on the summit and the sweat from climbing was quickly cooling us down. We took some pictures and enjoyed the panoramic view. It had taken over 7 minutes to do that last half-mile.

Running down the half mile to the parking lot was not particularly quick as it took me a good five minutes. It was slowly getting dark but the view was excellent. Rich pointed out Jay Peak and surprised us all with the sight of Wachusett. It appeared very close and was incredibly bright. We also had a clear view of Monadnock and could see lights from the metropolis that is Warner below.

As we made our way down the crescent moon was bright enough that we cast shadows when we got into the tree-lined sections of the road. We made it down in 30:42 and it was fully dark by the time we got to the car. Our total time was 1:22:53 for 8 miles with nearly 2,000' climb and descent. I'm not sure what the next unusual run will be, but Rich mentioned trying to do all of the USATF NE mountain circuit races via snowshoe. I'm guessing we would only have a few more weekends to do it, but maybe we could get one or two before the snow melts. *Cheers, dd*

FROM THE ARCHIVES: "ODE TO REAL COLD MEN"

So I thought I had seen and done it all vis a vis running in strange places for insanely long distances. Then the farmer called to remind me of Mount Greylock and his plans to conquer the beast in sneakers. I looked out the window that morning and groaned. True dead of winter stuff here, folks. Driving through northern Massachusetts I looked over at the grin on this guy's face and knew I was in for it. I mean he's Fitzcarraldo, the windmill dude, Dr. Strangelove, all of the above when he gets this look in his eye. I knew there'd be no stopping him on this quest.

We arrived at the visitor center around 9 in the morning and dodged obnoxious snowmobiles as we walked toward the hospitable lodge. I sat on the couch and admired the pretty park ranger while Ed ran his hands over the diorama of the Mountain, mentally tuning his Zen state for that morning's fun. No kidding now. This was really the last place on earth I wanted to be. At least that's how I felt when I saw that Ranger Sally had a wedding ring. Then our fellow ghouls straggled in and I could see that this was a for real event. So I disappeared into the bathroom to write some graffiti on the wall and hoped against hope that Ed would forget I had driven up with him.

SADDLE UP, EASY RIDER! His voice shook the stall. I fell off the seat. Here we go again. Fortunately the crew had left 5 minutes earlier in pansy ass sneakers. We Bulls would be lashing Snowshoes for this trek. Only problem was that I had never worn snow shoes. It wasn't a pretty sight. The first 7 miles to the base of the summit were, however, quite beautiful. Ed and I even managed to smoke Dion, Joe and the boys. I should have relished the moment. It'd be the only Moment that day. Because Lord Greylock was readying some payback for the proud.

Leaving the protection of the trees below the summit was like getting hit in the chest with a sledge hammer. Naturally, I wore my 1930's issue wool hunting uniform and I was soaked in sweat. 50 mph gusts of arctic wind sift through those fibers and find your very white blood cells in no time. I knew my number was up at the summit, mile 8. Bob Dion joined us at the top, allowing me a chance to pullback from the duo a little while I waited for the downhill section. So I waited and waited and waited. Mile after mile after mile and the damn mountain wouldn't go down. Truly dispiriting. So I did the old, walk, trot, jog, walk thing until I met up with Ed and Bob coming back up the turnaround. They looked like Chechen Rebels home from a night at the front.

"You don't want to go there. Don't do it," they warned. I would have gone, really would have done the upright thing, finished the steep section, real man and all that. But they had good food. I thenceforth trailed them like a beggar, picking up scraps they'd toss over their shoulder. Believe me you lose your pride pretty quick out in no man's land. That's why they call it no man's land.

It was a mutually beneficial run from there. Bob and Ed set the pace just ahead, providing me with a little motivation to put one weary foot in front of the other. And I gave them that healthy

fear of failure, of being passed by a highly competitive opponent breathing down your neck. Yea right.

At the junction leading back to the summit, we stopped to discuss making the extra 3 mile run to the top and back. I fiercely argued that we had to go the extra yardage and finish the quest or we couldn't live with ourselves. Ed said something about bad luck visiting a mountain top twice in a day. Bob kept looking down the hill with an insane smile on his face. I decided that this crew really didn't have the je ne sais crois necessary to reconquer Greylock so I took command and ordered my men down the mountain. Of course I trailed at a good healthy distance in case either of them fell by the wayside. A really good healthy distance.

Bob and Ed bounded down the hill like kids at the final bell. I stayed behind and ran to the summit on my own. And I did it extremely fast. Extremely. Extremely enough that I ended up finishing the race in about 7 hours. The latter hour of which found me crawling on my hands and knees as women in thongs and fine tan lines whizzed by on flaming green and red snowmobiles. I must have looked pretty scary because nobody stopped to pick me up. By the time I hit the parking lot, Bob and Ed were fast asleep in their cars inhaling carbon monoxide. I pulled off my socks in Ed's truck and watched as my toenails came off in the process. Seems the crusty buggers had snagged on my wet wool socks. I hadn't felt the pain because of the frostbite.

So here's a healthy Bronx cheer to those of you who decided to opt out of the Greylock quest. I'm going to say that you really missed out on the time of your lives, a unique opportunity to test your primal bounds, to run with the wolves, to gasp on the edge of being, to wake up around oh.... 11:00 on a Sunday morning, lounge on the couch in the sunroom and browse through the paper, enjoy a piece, two pieces of cinnamon raisin toast, take a nap, take another nap, watch an old movie with a pint of ice cream and some cute thing. Ahhhh heck. So maybe I made all this up. But maybe I didn't. If any of you get a mouthful of hair when some freak streaks by you this coming season, just look down at his mangled toes. You'll know where you should be next February.

Georgie Hendricks

2nd Annual Moby Dick Marathon **February 18, 1996** **Lanesboro, MA**

1. Edward Alibozek 28 Miles / Snowshoes 6:16:43
2. Georgie Hendricks 26 Miles / Snowshoes 7:07:00

4th Annual Moby Dick Marathon **February 1, 1998** **Lanesboro, MA**

1. Edward Alibozek 28 Miles / Snowshoes 6:19:40
2. John Scalise 28 Miles / Snowshoes 6:19:40

This was a semi-official event from the Lanesboro Visitor Center to the summit of Greylock and all the way to North Adams and back. It would be nice to bring this back somehow, even as a do-it-yourself (DIY) type event where a person could go out with a buddy or two and keep their own time any day they wished? We could keep records of it even.