

# WMAC SNOSHU-NEWS

## TEN AND ONLY TEN THINGS TO DO BEFORE THE SNOWSHOE SEASON STARTS: 2005/2006

For all you OCD list makers the following is all you need to know before the snowshoe season starts.

1. Go look for your snowshoes in the garage or basement and dust the dirt and spider webs off of them. Check for hairline cracks in the cleats.
2. Get your fleece tops and vests out of the closet and wash them because you didn't do this at the end of last season. They smell.
3. Collect all your gloves and stocking hats from wherever you put them for the summer and make sure there aren't things living inside them. Wash them too after getting the living things out.
4. Make sure you have tread on your tires to get to Savoy's North Pond area through the snow. This location has two races, the South Pond Shuffle and the infamous "train race."
4. Get previous articles on 10 things to do before a race and during a race and study them.
5. Put Dion snowshoes on your Christmas list that you give to your spouse.
6. Order two dozen energy gels because you are going to get tired doing Hawley Kiln and Moody Springs.
6. Upgrade your internet connection to either cable or DSL in preparation for receiving the 4-megabyte pdf files of Farmer Ed's SnowNews.
7. Go to Edmunds.com website to begin researching and pricing vans, because you will want to buy one to sit in while waiting for a race to start or while changing clothes after a race. (But see my article Blowing Chunks at Moody Springs 2001.)
8. Look up what "spa" means as in Saratoga Spa.
9. Before the snow comes, pick a steep hill and do wind sprint repeats on it twice a week in preparation for the Northfield race. (And the Moody Springs race . . . and the Hawley Kiln race)
9. Get a bucket of water, empty four trays of ice cubes into it, stick your hands into it for 20 minutes, hold them in front of a fan, then practice putting your snowshoes on and adjusting them to a proper snug fit so they don't loosen during the race. Then practice tying your shoes.
10. Park your car in the grass and open your front door and your back door. Insert hands back into ice bucket for 10 minutes. Stand between the doors and practice peeing without your neighbors reporting you to the police or sex offender registry. Do this without peeing on your shoes or on your fleece pants or allowing pee to puddle around your shoes. Extricate yourself without stepping in the puddle.



With all these things done, get ready to have one heck of a good time. If you have any questions, or if you have a van, write me.

Bob Worsham - [bobworsham@charter.net](mailto:bobworsham@charter.net)

*Photograph of Bob Worsham courtesy of Gary Bridgman; March 1, 2003 at Moody Spring 9-Mile Snowshoe Race, West Hawley, MA*

## WMAC SCHEDULE 2006

Sunday, December 18, 2005 <b>5<sup>th</sup> I LOVE WOODFORD</b>	Woodford, VT 3.5 Miles
Sunday, January 1, 2006 <b>3<sup>rd</sup> MERRIMACK RIVER TRAIL</b>	Andover, MA 5 KM
Saturday, January 7, 2006 <b>9<sup>th</sup> NORTH-SOUTH POND</b>	Sav/ Florida, MA 5 Miles
Saturday, January 14, 2006 <b>7<sup>th</sup> GREYLOCK GLEN</b>	Adams, MA 3.5 Mile
Sunday, January 22, 2006 <b>4<sup>th</sup> CURLY's RECORD RUN</b>	Pittsfield, MA 4 Miles
Saturday, January 28, 2006 <b>2<sup>nd</sup> SIDE-HILLER</b>	C. Sandwich, NH 4 Mile
Sunday, January 29, 2006 <b>2<sup>nd</sup> MESSABESIC</b>	Auburn, NH 5 KM
Saturday,, February 4, 2006 <b>4<sup>th</sup> NORTHFIELD MTN</b>	Northfield, MA 9.3 KM
Sunday, February 5, 2006 <b>7<sup>th</sup> SARATOGA WINTERFEST</b>	Saratoga, NY 5 KM
Saturday, February 11, 2006 <b>2<sup>nd</sup> BRAVE THE BLIZZARD</b>	Guilderland, NY 5 KM
Saturday, February 18, 2006 <b>4<sup>th</sup> CAMP SARATOGA</b>	Wilton, NY 8.25 KM
Sunday, February 19, 2006 <b>5<sup>th</sup> MOODY SPRING</b>	West Hawley, MA 8 KM & 15 KM
Saturday, February 25, 2006 <b>4<sup>th</sup> COVERED BRIDGE</b>	Adams, MA 8.0 Miles
Saturday, February 25, 2006 <b>4<sup>th</sup> HOXIE THUNDERBOLT</b>	Adams, MA 3.5 Miles
Saturday, March 4, 2006 <b>9<sup>th</sup> HAWLEY KILN KLASSIC</b>	Hawley, MA 4.0 & 7.0 Miles
Sunday, March 12, 2006 <b>SPRUCE HILL CLIMB</b>	Florida, MA 5 Miles

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WMAC's first snowshoe event was Moby Dick II, held February 18, 1996. Two of us participated on snowshoes, covering 28 miles up and over and back along Mt Greylock. You can read a full report in SnoNews 3.6.

The day took so much out of us that Georgie Hendricks may have never snowshoe'd again, and I didn't attempt the 28-mile Moby Dick again until 1998. But, it was a start.

On December 8, 1996 we held the 1<sup>st</sup> Spruce Hill Climb. Eight people and two dogs finished that one, in three feet of new snow. We followed that up with Tannery Falls on December 21, 1996, the 1<sup>st</sup> Moody Spring event on February 1<sup>st</sup>, and Moby Dick III on February 9<sup>th</sup>, 1997. We have been at it since.

## 2006 USSSA NE REGION QUALIFIERS

Sunday, January 08, 2006 <b>BOLTON VALLEY N.E. QUALIFIER</b>	Bolton Valley, VT 5 KM & 10 KM
Saturday, January 21, 2006 <b>MENDON PONDS WINTERFEST</b>	Mendon, NY 5 KM & 10 KM
Saturday, January 21, 2006 <b>HOFFMAN NOTCH</b>	Schroon Lake, NY 6 Miles
Saturday, February 4, 2006 <b>NORTHFIELD MTN</b>	Northfield, MA 9.3 KM
Saturday, February 18, 2006 <b>NESCOPECK STATE PARK</b>	Drums PA 5 KM & 10 KM

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## USSSA NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP

Saturday, March 25, 2006 <b>BOLTON VALLEY</b>	Bolton Valley VT 5 KM & 10 KM
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[www.snowshoeracing.com](http://www.snowshoeracing.com)

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## NORTHERN VERMONT SNOWSHOE CHALLENGE 8-KM

Sunday February 12th 2006 Smugglers' Notch Resort	8KM, 4KM & ½ KM Jeffersonville, VT, 05464
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Zeke Zucker  
zeke@pwshift.com

## WISDOM FROM THE BARNYARD

I have organized, directed or co-directed over fifty snowshoe events and races during the first ten years of WMAC Snowshoeing. I have made dozens of mistakes along the way, but have learned something from most of them. If any of you are thinking of organizing your own snowshoe event, here are “Things I have learned about organizing snowshoe events.”

**The Road Less Traveled.** When scouting locations, look for areas of good snow cover. Higher elevations, north or eastern exposed slopes, and less rocks on the trail are all positives.

**Parking Lots.** You must have parking available of some kind, and truthfully you should think about having more parking than you think you will need. Our early events didn’t have much else other than a plowed parking lot. We dropped gas grills off the back of pickup trucks and cooked in the lots. You can get by lacking a lot of things for a snowshoe race, including snow occasionally, but you have to have somewhere for the cars.

**Facilities.** A small building is a bonus – but not mandatory. It makes registration easier. But we have put on dozens of snowshoe races where we have been outdoors for everything. If everything else looks perfect but the location simply lacks a building, don’t worry.

**Keep it simple.** There are times you will be lucky to have only one or two helpers. Plan all you can, expect to be shorthanded, and stay simplistic.

**Beginnings.** If possible, avoid shuttling all your runners into a “funnel” right from the start. Try to include a wide, open spot for the start of the event. The longer this intro is, the better. A free flowing stream is a healthy stream.

**Interest beyond the Race.** Take advantage of what the forest has to offer. Try to include some mind-blowing features of the forest. Enough people will notice the small stonewalls, or the section of pine, or an old cellar hole to bring it up to you later. These little details cause people to fall in love with courses.

**Foundation.** If it is a first year event, unless you have a huge support staff to help, build slow. I always say when putting on an event, even an established one where we have had 100 participants in the past, that I hope for a dozen participants and if we get 20 I am overjoyed. Any more is a bonus.

**Stay Flexible.** Do everything possible to get the race in. Change the course, shorten the course, even move the course a short distance if you have to. We have even flip-flopped the schedule to head toward better conditions.

**Acceptance.** If things appear to be dangerous, postpone. We had a situation at South Pond where there was plenty of snow, but there was about 6” of freezing water underneath it. While many thought that they would have still enjoyed themselves, we couldn’t risk people ending up with frostbite.

**Reputation.** Let the product sell themselves. Don’t over promote. Spend money on the folks that show up, not on potential show.

*Farmer Ed*

## FROM THE STRYDERLAND WHITE HOUSE

In anticipation of an early snowfall, Madame President and her husband, Jeff, would like to take this opportunity to put in a plug for their snowshoe races as well as to discuss snowshoe politics (yes, Virginia, there is such a thing). The Winterfest and Camp Saratoga race applications are making their first tentative inroads into Stryderland, and believe it or not, we have received our first early bird entry for Winterfest.

When you look at the applications you will notice some changes. For the first time there will be a 4x1 km relay around the quad for any interested Winterfest participants with free day of race registration. In keeping with the trend towards multi-day events, the Northfield race held on Saturday, February 4th and the Winterfest, held on Sunday, February 5th, will join forces to create the Northeast Regional Championship for athletes who participate in both events.

You may also have noticed that this year neither Camp Saratoga nor Winterfest will be Empire State Games qualifiers and Camp Saratoga will not be a Northeast Regional Qualifier for Nationals. Although this gives Jeff and I considerably less paperwork to deal with, we are saddened by this turn of events.

Here is the background for this decision. Like the other snowshoe race directors in the WMAC series, Jeff and I do it strictly for love of the sport and any proceeds are provided to the park or preserve that hosts us. Usually, if you enter a kayak race, you are expected to own a kayak; or, if you enter a road race, you are expected to bring your own sneakers. But we are fortunate in that Bob Dion, designer of Dion Snowshoes, has generously provided us with loaners so that new people could also participate in our races. He has even lent me a few pairs for our Wednesday night workouts. He has often supplied Mark Elmore, of Empire State Games and United States Snowshoe Association, with loaners, and in fact, supported Mark’s efforts when others were reluctant to do so. When Mark’s decisions caused discussion about a splintering off from the United States Snowshoe Association, Dion supported Mark.

After requesting and receiving Bob’s support again this year, Mark asked Atlas for sponsorship and emailed all race directors that Atlas expected to be listed as the premier sponsor, with Atlas loaners and advertising, effectively shoving Dion Snowshoes out in the cold. Atlas makes fine snowshoes, but they are made in sweatshops in China, while Bob’s are produced right here in Vermont and are designed specifically for New England’s narrow trails and often wet, heavy or icy snow conditions. Previous sponsorship dollars have been used to cover USSSA expenses traveling to races in Alaska and Italy.

Jeff and I feel that we owe our loyalty to Bob Dion who has supported us all these years and who is struggling to make a quality product without big bucks backing. Other race directors are continuing to offer their races as state and national qualifiers and this is fine with us. We have, in good conscience, made a personal decision about the course we wish to take and hope that Stryderland residents will continue to enjoy many happy years playing in the snow.

*Laura and Jeff Clark*

*Note: Laura is the elected President of the Saratoga Stryders*

# THE GREAT NORTHEAST TWO-DAY SNOWSHOE CHALLENGE

## FEBRUARY 4<sup>TH</sup> & 5<sup>TH</sup>, 2006

The first ever two day snowshoe event to determine the best all-around snowshoers in the country!

The races are **open to all snowshoers of all abilities**, in a rare chance to test yourself on two classic New England courses. No special registration is required (sign up for each race individually).

### DAY 1 – NORTHFIELD MOUNTAIN 02-04-06

Northfield, MA has hosted a race for the last three years. This year's course will be a mix of old and new. The new more challenging and scenic course will feature an opening stretch of 5 Kilometers of uphill. The uphill section will include the "black diamond" Chute section, which is an 11% grade. The race will top out at the viewing platform overlooking the lake on the summit of Northfield Mtn. The final 5 Kilometers is all downhill and includes two single-track sections. There will be a mix of groomed and ungroomed trails. As in the past the race will start and finish at the indoor heated facilities at the *Northfield Visitors Center* (99 Millers Falls Rd., Northfield MA). The race is part of the highly popular WMAC series and will also serve as a qualifier to the USSSA National championships.

Quotes: Stephen Peterson (CMS), "The Northfield snowshoe course has a unique combination of grinding it out and then letting it fly. It's all about how fast you can grind and how well you can fly. Up and down and done."

Notes: 9:00 AM start time.

Directions: From the intersection of Rt. 2 and Rt. 63 proceed North on Rt. 63. The park entrance is located approximately 2 miles North, on the right side of the road. Application can be downloaded on [www.runwmac.com](http://www.runwmac.com) or by emailing the RD at [dave.dunham@comcast.net](mailto:dave.dunham@comcast.net)

### DAY 2 – SARATOGA SPA 02-05-06

Saratoga Springs, NY has hosted the Winterfest 5K Snowshoe Race for six years. This can be a fast snowshoe race, with the course record set at an amazing 6:03 per mile pace. The route is a scenic run through a flat quadrangle and in the woods of the Spa State Park, covering the same ground as the Cross Country Championship. It consists of wide trails, some single track and a few interesting hills with a variety of options for spectator viewing. The trails are not groomed, but are often rutted and hard packed due to recreational use. Heated facilities in the Victoria Pool area will be available for registration and post-race lunch. This is the largest snowshoe race in the Northeast and is part of the WMAC Snowshoe series.

Quotes: Rich Busa, The Saucony Man, "The initial sprint around the quad is the most difficult part of the race, especially if it has just snowed. Everyone is raring to go and the level ground offers no excuse to take a break."

Notes: 11:00 AM start time.

Directions: Take Interstate 87 to exit 13N. Go approximately 6 miles north to park entrance. Go up Avenue of Pines. Follow signs to Victoria Pool Parking Lot. Application can be downloaded from [www.runwmac.com](http://www.runwmac.com) or [www.saratogastryders.org](http://www.saratogastryders.org) Go to Stryders website for a link to [www.active.com](http://www.active.com) for online registration.

To take a virtual tour, go to the Stryders site, click Places to Run and then Saratoga Spa State Park.

Athletes are asked to sign up individually for each race. Each race is a stand-alone event (there is no requirement to do both, unless you want to be in the Two-Day challenge). All snowshoers who do both races will be ranked based on their combined times from the races. Results will be posted in 5 year age groups.

**Added bonus:** There will be a **first time ever** 4 x 1 Kilometer relay after Saratoga Spa following the 5K race. The race will be run within the confines of the quad, which should be great for spectators. Pick-up teams are welcome.

Additional information:

WMAC website:

<http://www.runwmac.com/snowshoes/default.htm>

Northfield Mountain visitor's center:

<http://www.nu.com/northfield/default.asp>

Saratoga stryders:

<http://www.saratogastryders.org/>

USSSA:

<http://www.snowshoeracing.com/>

Central Mass. Striders:

<http://www.cmsrun.org/>

Dion Snowshoes (proud sponsor of the WMAC circuit):

[www.dionsnowshoes.com](http://www.dionsnowshoes.com)



## PEOPLE YOU SHOULD KNOW

Peter Keeney is one of our originals. Back in the late '90's Peter was one of the few that actually showed up to snowshoe with us. During those early years, he was the fastest snowshoer any of us knew.

Peter participated and finished 1<sup>st</sup> at several WMAC Snowshoe events, including the Robert Frost Trail in November of '97; Spruce Hill Climb II in December of '97; Moody Spring I, Moody Spring II and Greenfield Mountain Park all in January of 1998. One big reason we couldn't attract many participants in those days was the events were all fairly longish, with the shortest being Spruce Hill and Greenfield at 7 miles, and the others all being



between 12 and 20 miles. This didn't bother Peter any, as more distance meant more time in the forest, which is just fine with him.

Peter moved out of the area to Maine around 2000, and he took his dedication to snowshoeing with him, starting up a Maine Snowflake Snowshoe Series in 2003. Peter has continued with bringing snowshoe events to those up north continually since. 2006, like the three seasons before it, has Peter organizing and directing three events. I always tell him we could really use him back here (WMAC Series), but what he is trying to accomplish in Maine is more important.

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### MAINE SNOWFLAKE SERIES

January 15, 2006 <b>BLACK HOUSE</b> Woodlawn Black House Museum	Ellsworth, ME <b>2.2 MILES</b> 1:00 p.m.
January 29, 2006 <b>SCHOODIC MT</b> Donnell Pond State Park	Sullivan, ME <b>5 MILES</b> 1:00 p.m.
February 19, 2006 <b>GREAT POND MTN</b> Craigbrook National Fish Hatchery	East Orland, ME <b>2.2 MILES</b> 1:00 p.m.
Peter Keeney PO Box 106     Salisbury Cove	207-288-3909 Maine 04672 <a href="mailto:pktrldrt@midmaine.com">pktrldrt@midmaine.com</a>

*Photograph courtesy of Gary Bridgman, South Pond, 2003.*

## ROBERT FROST TRAIL 11/16/97

*Note: I thought it would be fun to look back at one of the special events Peter Keeney organized for our snowshoeing pleasure.*

I am fairly sure that when organizer Peter Keeney scheduled the Robert Frost Trail Runs he wasn't expecting the course to be covered with snow, not 4"-8" of it anyway. While this kept many potential runners away, we were in our glory and welcomed the snow with open arms, wool garments and snowshoes!!

The peaceful start from Cranberry Pond in the Mt. Toby Reservation (Sunderland, MA) was even more tranquil as only Peter and I would be willing to attempt the journey. Off we shuffled in unbroken virgin snow huffing and puffing steadily up the side of the hill that would turn into Mt. Toby (1269'), a 900+ foot climb in the first two miles. Five minutes into the jog we both ripped off our outer jackets as the chore of the climb materialized plenty of warmth around us, despite temperatures in the 20's. Peter was kind, running slowly in front of me the whole way to keep me on course.

As the shuffling continued, I remembered the '95 Trail Championship put on here by Fred Pilon and Peter Gagarin. The blast down hill from the fire-tower at Toby was a real treat as we kicked up snow propelling ourselves off the mountain. As we chugged up and over Roaring Mountain a great big rise loomed directly in front of us, causing me to ask, "what is that?" It was Bull Hill (937') which looked much bigger than it was but still contained about 500' of climb.

The snow was layered upon the tree limbs, sinking branches down towards earth, the numerous brooks were barely perceptible under the pure blanket of white, the air was clean and cool and crisp and there was nothing and no one but the two of us making our way through the forest. As the sun began to warm things up, a great blue sky opened and I was truly glad I was taking part in this event on a most magical day. Winter and it's snow brings a whole new look to many of our forest, making them appear to be entirely different entities. The lonesome and secluded nature that arrives with the first snowfall is welcome as crowds disappear.

The route sent us towards the wooded ledges of Pulpit Hill, past the scenic and slowly icing Puffers Pond, sharp steep rises to a wonderful bluff overlooking Cushman Brook, all in all continuing to send smiles to our faces.

After cresting Mt. Boreas and reaching Atkins Reservoir I knew my day was done. Peter told me the next bailout point was merely a half mile downhill, and after that was a four mile section that would take us over the backwoods of the Pelham Hills and Mt. Orient. Simple decision for me as 3:03:56 for fifteen miles on the first snowshoe run of the year was plenty.

Peter continued and I rode the sag wagon to Amethyst Brook to pick him up, close to 20 miles of running in snow for Mr. Keeney. After 3:50:33 of running he still looked very fresh at the end, no doubt due to the slow pace he kept to stick with me (thank you Peter, I appreciated the company). Eight years later, this is still one of my all time favorite snowshoe adventures!

## PEOPLE YOU SHOULD KNOW... OUR 2005 WMAC SNOWSHOE CHAMPIONS

We were really lucky having a husband and wife combine to win the individual titles for 2005 WMAC Snowshoeing. That isn't something that normally happens, I bet.

Kelli Lusk repeated as WMAC Ladies Champion for 2005, matching former champs Beth Herder, Ken Clark, and Leigh Schmitt with a streak of two straight titles. Kelli went undefeated during our '05 season, winning all six events she entered, and her current WMAC Snowshoe win streak is at 7 straight. I believe Dave Dunham holds the longest WMAC Snowshoe winning streak at 8 straight.



Kelli's WMAC Series Race Results from 2005 are as follows:

Greylock Glen	12 <sup>th</sup> overall
Messabesic	14 <sup>th</sup> overall
Northfield Mtn	18 <sup>th</sup> overall
Camp Saratoga	9 <sup>th</sup> overall
Hawley Notch	9 <sup>th</sup> overall
Hawley Kiln	7 <sup>th</sup> overall

Kelli is the current course record holder at the following WMAC Snowshoe events:

Old Greylock Glen (2000 – 2004)	29:38
Curlys Record Run	36:38
Messabesic	25:05
Hawley Kiln	1:11:17
New Greylock Glen ("Pecks" – 2005)	34:10
Northfield Mtn	36:35
Camp Saratoga	38:14
Hawley Notch	32:13

Of all Kelli's WMAC Snowshoe course records, I believe the most impressive is from Hawley Kiln, set in 2004. I believe this for two reasons; First, the race has been held since 1998, and prior to Kelli's 1:11:17 the record was Beth Herder's '99 time of 1:14:00. That mark had held up for a while. Secondly, Kelli outran three time USSSA Snowshoe Champion Nikki Kimball that day, which is always a bonus.

Kelli continues to sit on the board for the Northeast Region of the United States Snowshoe Association (USSSA). She has competed at three of the five USSSA National Championships, coming in 4<sup>th</sup>, 1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> from 2002 – 2004.

Kelli has participated within the WMAC's Snowshoe Series during the 2003, 2004 and 2005 seasons, completing 12 events and totaling 1025 points. This places her in 33<sup>rd</sup> position all-time, and 5<sup>th</sup> place for women.

For the men, it was Paul Low winning his first WMAC Snowshoe Series title. Paul currently ranks 20<sup>th</sup> for all-time points with 1107. Points have been accumulated since the 1998 season.

Paul has been the USATF Mountain runner of the year in 2002 & 2003. He also won the prestigious 2003 North American Snowshoe Championships.

It was the third season Paul has snowshoed with us, and his six events in 2004 saw him placing as follows:

Greylock Glen	1 <sup>st</sup> overall
Messabesic	1 <sup>st</sup> overall
Northfield Mtn	1 <sup>st</sup> overall
Camp Saratoga	2 <sup>nd</sup> overall
Hawley Notch	2 <sup>nd</sup> overall
Hawley Kiln	3 <sup>rd</sup> overall

Paul is the current course record holder at the following WMAC Snowshoe events:

Messabesic	21:18
New Greylock Glen ("Pecks" – 2005)	27:14
Northfield Mtn	30:20



*Photograph of Kelli Lusk, upper left courtesy Brad Herder;*

*Photograph of Paul Low, upper right, courtesy Gary Bridgman.*

*Photograph of Kelli and Paul together, courtesy Brad Herder.*

