

WMAC SNO-NEWS

A THANKFUL SNOWSHOE RACER

I feel very lucky to have discovered and become part of the WMAC Snowshoe Series. I first learned about the series through Dave Dunham, whom I'd met through the New England Mountain Running Series. I was relatively new to running and had encountered numerous running injuries due to a number of small leg deformities that resulted in structural difficulties once I began running regularly and competing in races. The difficulties were so great that I was told I would likely not be able to compete in a marathon ever again. I did not want to give up on my newly found sport however, and I eventually found a custom running shoe maker and a custom orthotics designer who together helped me overcome some of the structural problems. In an effort to find races that involved less pounding,

which I quickly discovered at the start of my first snowshoe race, the 2001 Prospect Mountain 10K, directed by Jack Quinn and John Pelton. During my preparations for this race, Jack Quinn offered me lots of advice over e-mail about snowshoe racing and made me feel very welcome. When I finished the race in second to last place, I was so pleased to have completed such an intensely difficult experience that I was hooked and knew I wanted to compete in more of these races. Leon Beverly finished very close to me and seemed to be just as happy as I was, and I felt like I had joined exactly the right group. When I then won an age group award in that race and had John and Jack sign my award certificate, I felt liked I'd started a new and exciting part of my life and was happy for the whole drive home.

My excitement for snowshoe racing never waned, and for that season and the next, I kept participating in every race, figuring out how to avoid blisters, learning how to run downhill in the snow without wiping out, and slowly getting to know the warm and welcoming fellow racers who came to most races. During this time, I was undergoing a lot of upheaval and stress in my work life, personal life, and health, and snowshoe racing became my saving grace. There was a long period of time when the races and post-race mingling were what got me through each week as I looked forward to racing, enjoying the wintry scenery, and getting to know the snowshoe racing gang. It meant a lot to me that runners from all parts of the pack and all levels of ability spent time with one another and shared the love of the sport together as a friendly and unified group.

At the end of my second season, I was not able to participate in the Moody Spring 9 miler on the day of the race, but series director Ed went out of his way to make it possible for me to make up the race later that weekend for race completion credit with no points. I didn't feel safe running in the woods by myself for such a long way, and Rich Busa very generously offered to run the course with me even though he was also running the same 9 mile race on the day when everyone else was competing.

On the day we ran together, Rich drove all the way from Central Mass to run with me (finishing ahead of me, at that!) and then drove all the way back. Ed's father arrived just after we finished racing to go and collect the course ribbons, which Ed had left out for me, and I felt deeply grateful that all of these kind men had gone out of their way so that I could participate in the race. What I did not know at that time was that the completion of this race meant that I had earned the title of The Streak. I had just been enjoying the races so much that I made sure to get to the races even if it meant driving through a blizzard, as dangerous as that was, so it was a surprise and thrill to have earned an award despite running at the back of the pack.

Once I earned The Streak title, I was very excited to keep it, and despite some more difficult stretches in my life outside of racing, not wanting to lose the title has served as strong motivation to come to the races no matter what else was going on in my life. I also found that as time went by and I got to know my fellow racers more, just having a chance to say hello to the gang and



'08 Hawley Kiln Notch – leading Worsham through the Beach Trees.

I first discovered that mountain running required a harder effort than road racing, but running uphill was gentler on the joints. When I learned from Dave about snowshoe racing, I thought that running on the softer surface of snow would be a great way to keep running outdoors in the winter while avoiding the high impact of pavement. Little did I know that snowshoe racing would require even more effort than running up mountains,

THANKFUL SNOWSHOER (CONTINUED)

enjoy a hot beverage together over a fire pit was personally heart warming and well worth the sometimes long car trips. This race series has meant so much to me that when I was applying to the graduate program I just completed, I checked to see if school would interfere with my snowshoe racing and possibly ruin my Streak title. I was relieved to know that it would not and pleased that I did not have to choose between snowshoe racing and school.

There have been so many fellow snowshoe racers who have helped me since I joined the series that I hardly know how to thank everyone. I am thrilled to have been a part of this warm, welcoming, and supportive group, and I look forward to many more years of racing together, enjoying the scenic beauty of the courses created by our hard-working and creative race directors, and spending time with good friends, old and new.

Laurel Shortell



THE DRAGON SLAYER

Laurel's continued improvement within our snowshoe series really is inspirational. Going from the near bottom of the results board during her first year racing (2002 season) to a 2008 season that had her winning a Bronze Medal at the USSSA Snowshoe Nationals and an age-division win at the Massachusetts State Championship Race at Northfield shows what determination and hard work can do. Loving the sport of snowshoe racing certainly helps – and Laurel is one of our Northeast Representatives in the USSSA.

On her journey along 86 straight WMAC Dion Series Races, Laurel has also won four events. Her steady improvement really peaked during the 2008 season, when suddenly snowshoers who

had managed to be ahead of Laurel started getting knocked off in the standings one by one.

Right from opening day at Woodford '08, Jim Carlson, Laura Clark, Bob Massaro, Walt Kolodzinski, Dave Boles and Rich Busa found themselves seeing a faster Laurel Shortell ahead of



them. By South Pond Young Farmer Ed was defeated. The ageless wonder John Pelton finished a spot behind Laurel at Saratoga Spa Winterfest... I was starting to call her "the Dragon Slayer..."

It wasn't over though, as at Hallockville Pond Orchard Pete Lipka and Tom McCrumm were toasted. While many veteran snowshoers were losing ground as the long season wore on, Laurel only appeared to be getting more inspired and stronger.

The many victories over friends, many who had been faster for years, was noteworthy... but the best performances were still to come. At Covered Bridge, Laurel approached the finish with a hard charging Martin Glendon right on her heels. Not only did Laurel hold Marty off, he blew out his hamstring trying to surge ahead. Things got better the following week, at Hawley Kiln Notch, when Laurel not only knocked out Old Farmer Ed, but Bob Worsham also. Later on, the two old snowshoers with over 120 snowshoe races between them, could only shake their heads in disbelief.

So far in 2009 it looks like Laurel has picked up right where she left off last year. I am pleased that we have her participating at these events. Her positive attitude helps during those trying times all snowshoe directors go through. I hope her streak continues forever.

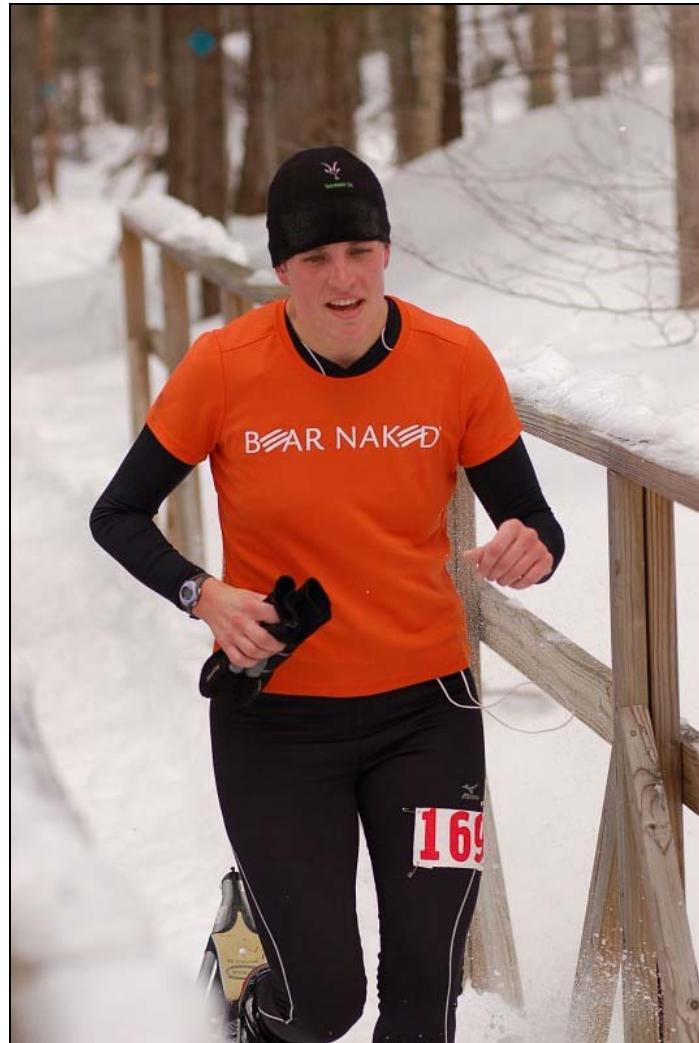
Farmer Ed

HOOT TOOT & WHISTLE 5KM SNOWSHOE RACE**January 24, 2009****Catamount Ski Trail****Readsboro, VT**

#	NAME	AGE	TIME	POINTS
01.	Justin Fyffe	28	0:27:30	100.00
02.	Greg Hammett	31	0:27:53	98.51
03.	Dave Dunham	44	0:29:18	97.01
04.	Ken Clark	46	0:29:32	95.52
05.	Paul Bazanchuk	54	0:30:38	94.03
06.	Brian Northan	33	0:32:50	92.54
07.	Edward Alibozek	46	0:33:39	91.04
08.	Rick Pacheco	48	0:34:24	89.55
09.	Jay Kolodzinski	29	0:34:49	88.06
10.	Erik Wight	49	0:34:52	86.57
11.	Amy Lane	29	0:36:04	85.07
12.	Nathan Pung	33	0:36:06	83.58
13.	Richard Chipman	48	0:36:19	82.09
14.	Ed Myers	57	0:36:30	80.60
15.	Chelynn Tetreault	33	0:36:43	79.10
16.	Bill Morse	57	0:36:48	77.61
17.	Mike Lahey	57	0:37:23	76.12
18.	Scott Deslongchamps	39	0:38:14	74.63
19.	Barry Braun	50	0:39:21	73.13
20.	Paul Hartwig	52	0:41:06	71.64
21.	Holly Atkinson	39	0:42:16	70.15
22.	Derek Thomas	13	0:42:27	68.66
23.	Jessica Hageman	33	0:43:12	67.16
24.	Brad Herder	51	0:43:17	65.67
25.	Ed Alibozek Jr	69	0:43:44	64.18
26.	Martin Glendon	62	0:44:02	62.69
27.	Denise Dion	50	0:44:17	61.19
28.	Laura Clark	61	0:44:59	59.70
29.	Laurel Shortell	42	0:45:16	58.21
30.	Jan Rancatti	48	0:45:40	56.72
31.	Niles London	17	0:46:09	55.22
32.	Dave Boles	62	0:46:22	53.73
33.	Bob Massaro	65	0:48:50	52.24
34.	Jodie Lahey	30	0:48:54	50.75
35.	Darlene McCarthy	46	0:50:34	49.25
36.	Maureen Roberts	51	0:51:43	47.76
37.	Kathy Furlani	60	0:53:24	46.27
38.	Jamie Howard	43	0:56:27	44.78
39.	Sue Snyder	54	0:56:59	43.28
40.	Chris Johnson	51	0:57:04	41.79
41.	Brian McCarthy	47	0:57:31	40.30
42.	Walter Kolodzinski	66	0:57:43	38.81
43.	Richard Busa	79	0:58:58	37.31
44.	Nelson Rix	50	0:59:05	35.82
45.	Ann Vaughn	53	1:00:33	34.33
46.	Bill Glendon	62	1:00:35	32.84
47.	Konrad Karolczuk	56	1:00:35	31.34
48.	Jennifer Jennings	48	1:00:35	29.85
49.	Jennifer Ferriss	37	1:03:22	28.36
50.	Sibyl Jacobson	66	1:03:24	26.87
51.	Sue Nealon	58	1:03:51	25.37
52.	Kate Hayes	60	1:03:55	23.88
53.	Marie Paige	45	1:04:45	22.39

#	NAME	AGE	TIME	POINTS
54.	Nicki Steele	62	1:05:52	20.90
55.	Susan Neuman	55	1:06:55	19.40
56.	Sue Seppa	67	1:08:55	17.91
57.	Anne Wehry	51	1:15:58	16.42
58.	Tiger Waterman	62	1:16:02	14.93
59.	D. Coombs	52	1:16:05	13.43
60.	Ronald Waterman	66	1:17:53	11.94
61.	Heidi Peterson	46	1:17:55	10.45
62.	Christina Butcher	11	1:17:55	8.96
63.	Ellen Comai	55	1:26:03	7.46
64.	Adam Buursma	37	1:49:00	5.97
65.	Joanne Birch	54		4.48
66.	Anna Butcher	8		2.99
67.	Ken Butcher	43		1.49

#65 – #67 Shorter Course – No Times

Amy Lane on her way toward Victory at the 1st Hoot Toot and Whistle 5km Snowshoe Race.Photo courtesy of Beth Herder – www.berkshiresports.org

TOUGH SNOW / READSBORO - FAST SNOW BUT TOUGH CLIMB / PITTSFIELD

I've been looking forward to this weekend for a while as I've enjoyed racing Curly's Record Run before. It is probably the series race that is best suited for me (tough climb, run-able downhill). I won the race last year and although I wasn't as fit as last year I hoped it would be one of my better performances.

Things quickly changed as I woke up sick on Monday morning. I've run through illness and injury before, but there was no doubt on Monday that I would not run. I slept from 10 AM until the next morning. Then I ended up staying out of work on Wednesday as I still was dizzy nauseous and just plain sick. So Monday was my first day off in 89 days and then I was only able to muster 4 miles each of the next three days. On Friday I started to feel slightly better, probably because I was able to eat again on Thursday night after not eating for over three days. I figured there are only so many opportunities to race on snowshoes in any given year and I didn't want to miss any. My goal became to just get through the weekend and not get myself sicker.

On Saturday morning I headed out for the nearly 3 hour drive to Readsboro. I hit a couple of snow squalls in Greenfield and then some rough road as I drove through Heath (MA). I came out in Vermont and wouldn't you know it, right in front of me on route 100 was Ed Alibozek and the gang from CT. I followed them the last 15 miles into Readsboro.



After checking in at the Readsboro inn (nice to have indoor facilities) I headed out for a warm-up. There really weren't any side roads so I just ran out & back on route 100. This also gave me a chance to check out how far it was from the Inn to the start (about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile). I felt okay warming up and thought that there was a chance this could be my day to pick up an elusive win. You never know, especially with first time races. I think it was right about that time that I saw Justin Fyffe and he mentioned that he brought Greg Hammet along. Oh well!

About 70 of us gathered at the Catamount ski trail and we found that Bob Dion was not kidding when he described it as single track. The trail was very narrow and it was broken out one person wide. That would make for an interesting start. It would also make for an interesting return as a good portion of the race would be out & back on the rail trail.

Conditions were decent, 20's and sunny, when we took off in a desperate sprint for position and snow flying everywhere. Justin and Greg went right to the front and Ken Clark was in third with me right behind. I figured Ken would be the guy I'd be aiming to beat. After the race he noted that he "hated going out fast" as it took him out of his normal rhythm. I felt the same way, it was nearly an all-out sprint for the first 400m. At that point we had to jump a stream and there were two trails. I went left, Ken went right, and I apologized as I bumped my way in front of him. After that I tried to push really hard and get some distance on Ken. I could see Greg and Justin each taking a turn at the lead. Justin said he took the lead because he was sick of Greg kicking so much snow on him (or maybe it was the other way around?). Anyway, they seemed to be having a good battle up front. Meanwhile I tried to get into a "coast" mode. I couldn't hear Ken behind me and I had images of me gapping him by a lot. I checked my watch as we passed the point we'd be coming back on and saw 11:34. Three minutes later I was exiting the rail trail and in the woods. This gave me the chance to check out where Ken was. Boy was I surprised, he was right on me, maybe only 10 seconds back. Ugh!

I started pushing harder, thinking "I'll push to the rail trail then see where he is". I was back on the rail trail at 18:06. Ken was still right on me and I was struggling. I thought "I'll run 5 minutes hard then see where he is". A long difficult 5 minutes later I snuck a peek and he was still right there. Ugh! I thought "Five minutes to go, don't give it to him after you worked for 23 minutes". I ended up pushing right up to the finish instead of maybe saving something for the next day and was very pleased to get third. Justin took his second win in as many races running 27:30 with Greg 23 seconds behind him. I came across in 29:18 with Ken 14 seconds behind me and Paul Bazanchuk taking the 50+ age group and fifth overall a minute later.

After a warm-down it was back to the Inn for some soup and hot cocoa and a ton of awards. All category winners got a cool authentic rail spike and a pick of anything on the prize table. I got a huge box of homemade chocolate chip cookies. Justin took a Dion winter hat and seemed quite happy sipping away at a local brew with Greg, and it wasn't even NOON.

*Photo – D. Dunham racing Tim Van Orden downhill in Pittsfield Mass.
www.Berkshiresports.org* Brad & Beth Herder Archives

TOUGH FAST TOUGH (CONTINUED)

I headed off to Pittsfield for the afternoon. I had hoped to do some climbs or town runs or something, but being sick had really taken the wind out of my sails. Instead I just got something to eat and was in bed by 5 PM.

After a good night sleep I headed over to the state forest for Curly's Record Run. The temperature was five-below zero as I drove through town. It did warm up to zero at race time and actually didn't seem too bad in the sun. I had no illusions of a win on day two. My goal was to finish and I figured I'd aim to run with either Ken Clark or Abby Woods . I still wasn't sure how much the flu had taken out of me and I had felt pretty beat doing a flat 3.3 mile the previous day.

I did 3 miles of easy running on the road and that did nothing to improve my predicted place. I felt pretty much dead on my feet. I decided to stick with my normal race warm-up (3 miles on road then a mile in snowshoes on the course) but I'd skip the usual strides. I figured I only had so much gas left in the tank and I didn't want to use it doing sprints before the race. I saw Ben Nephew and Matt Cartier and Tim Mahoney who I guessed would be the top dogs, although rumor had it that there might be a bunch of William's college kids showing up (they didn't). I also bumped into Tim Van Orden (TiVO) who had also been sick all week and not run a step since the Greylock race the previous Sunday. Right before the start TiVO got a bunch of us to help someone who got their car stuck in a snow bank and were blocking the road. Nothing like ten 125 pound runners trying to move a car in snow!

After some instructions and one question ("How did Curly get the name Curly" – "He had lots of hair") we were off. The snow was solidly packed which would make for fast going. Ben went right to the front with Matt, Tim, and TiVO tucked right behind. I was off the back in the first 100m and had gapped 5th place by an equal amount. So much for running with Ken or Abby as I was in the lonely gap between groups. I started to

feel a lot better as the climb progressed and I felt like the lead four were coming back to me. About $\frac{1}{2}$ way up the hill TiVO started walking and soon after I was around him. I noticed that Ben was walking which isn't unusual for him on steep climbs, but he seemed to be walking early and often (in my opinion). I was steadily closing the gap and thinking "Ben must be running a tactical race, biding his time". Tim yielded the trail at about $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way up and I went into the powder to get around Ben soon after. I was feeling GREAT, but working very hard. I could see that we were almost to the top and I got it into my head that I wanted to be King of the Mountain, so with 50m to go I went around Matt and hit the summit in a little over 17 minutes leading the pack.

As expected, not even 50m later Matt blew by me and Ben went around as well. Soon they were flying out of sight. Tim was right behind me keeping me honest on the drop. I hit the bottom 4 minutes later thinking "17 minutes up and we lose it all in 4 minutes". No time to relax as Tim was right on my tail. I like the last mile or so of twisting trail where you can get a look behind without really looking. I kept looking and checking my watch every couple of minutes. Finally I hit the half-mile to go where I had warmed up to (great way to check out the finish to

TOUGH FAST TOUGH (CONTINUED)

the course so there are no surprises) and made one final push for the line.

I was surprised that Ben had not passed Matt on the Shadow Trail as I think of Ben as one of the best descent runners in New England . Matt ran strong on the down and Ben didn't take him until a little more than $\frac{1}{2}$ mile to go. Ben got his first win of the year and his 5th all-time WMAC win. Matt rolled in 10 seconds later and I took third 49 seconds later. Tim kept it close finishing 12 seconds behind me. TiVO had a battle with Paul Bazanchuk , taking him by 8 seconds at the finish. Paul had a heck of a weekend, taking the 50+ in two consecutive days and finishing 5th and 6th respectively. There were a bunch of age records set on the fast snow and Abby took 8th overall breaking her course record by more than 30 seconds.



Jodie Lahey focuses on the downhill turns at Pittsfield. Jodie was one of ten snowshoers to finish both ends of double headers two weekends in a row... Glen, Blizzard, Hoot Toot and Curlys! Brad Herder photo.

Brad & Beth Herder's site WWW.BERKSHIRESPORTS.ORG

Is a great spot for snowshoers to see thousands of photos from our events. The photos are available for purchase – support them if you can.

WMAC**2009 DION Snowshoe Racing Series****WMAC****6th ANNUAL CURLY'S RECORD RUN 4-MILE SNOWSHOE RACE****January 25, 2009****Pittsfield State Forest****Pittsfield, MA**

PL	NAME	AGE	TIME	PTS	PL	NAME	AGE	TIME	PTS
01.	Ben Nephew	33	0:31:11	100.00	54.	Laura Clark	61	0:56:27	38.37
02.	Matt Cartier	33	0:31:21	98.84	55.	Ed Steele	43	0:57:28	37.21
03.	Dave Dunham	44	0:32:10	97.67	56.	Ginny Patson	40	1:01:59	36.05
04.	Tim Mahoney	29	0:32:22	96.51	57.	Doug McBournie	50	1:02:01	34.88
05.	Tim Van Orden	40	0:34:14	95.35	58.	Colleen Quinn	52	1:02:12	33.72
06.	Paul Bazanchuk	54	0:34:22	94.19	59.	Stephen Richardson	48	1:02:13	32.56
07.	Jay Kolodzinski	29	0:35:37	93.02	60.	Jamie Howard	43	1:02:19	31.40
08.	Abby Woods	30	0:35:54	91.86	61.	Pat Rosier	50	1:02:38	30.23
09.	Ken Clark	46	0:37:08	90.70	62.	Eric Fisher	45	1:03:10	29.07
10.	Edward Alibozek	46	0:37:52	89.53	63.	Jeff Plodkin	43	1:04:03	27.91
11.	Larry Dragon	48	0:38:06	88.37	64.	Kendel Jester	18	1:06:15	26.74
12.	Richard Teal	30	0:38:32	87.21	65.	Theresa Apple	47	1:06:16	25.58
13.	Alan Bates	60	0:39:09	86.05	66.	Bill Hart	67	1:06:51	24.42
14.	Erik Wight	49	0:39:32	84.88	67.	Larry Peleggi	51	1:08:50	23.26
15.	Peter Malinowski	54	0:39:36	83.72	68.	Walt Kolodzinski	66	1:09:25	22.09
16.	Scott Brew	43	0:39:42	82.56	69.	Mary Lou White	53	1:11:05	20.93
17.	Bob Dion	53	0:40:22	81.40	70.	Stephen Omeara	59	1:12:38	19.77
18.	Clint Morse	46	0:41:00	80.23	71.	Bill Glendon	62	1:14:13	18.60
19.	Scott Graham	50	0:41:32	79.07	72.	Konrad Karolczuk	56	1:14:14	17.44
20.	Tim Rudin	38	0:41:42	77.91	73.	Tony Saathoff	40	1:14:49	16.28
21.	Ed Myers	57	0:42:17	76.74	74.	Chris Johnson	51	1:15:00	15.12
22.	Glen Tryson	55	0:43:08	75.58	75.	Cecilia Harris	23	1:15:01	13.95
23.	Nico Scibelli	46	0:43:26	74.42	76.	Richard Davis	38	1:19:43	12.79
24.	Mike Lahey	57	0:43:58	73.26	77.	Sibyl Jacobsen	66	1:20:02	11.63
25.	Patrick McGrath	43	0:44:27	72.09	78.	Kellie Carnevale	43	1:29:15	10.47
26.	John Pelton	69	0:45:22	70.93	79.	Lynn Penna	49	1:29:20	9.30
27.	Sweep Voll	47	0:45:47	69.77	80.	Maria Accomando	56	1:52:20	8.14
28.	Dan Buttrick	28	0:46:52	68.60	81.	Jacky Jorgenson	29	1:52:20	6.98
29.	Pete Lipka	57	0:47:13	67.44	82.	Bobbi V	46	1:59:50	5.81
30.	Scott Phillips	48	0:47:42	66.28	83.	Gloria Name	XX	1:59:50	4.65
31.	Paul Hartwig	52	0:47:52	65.12	84.	Rick Name	XX	1:59:50	3.49
32.	Bob Worsham	63	0:48:44	63.95	85.	Susan Wilen	45	2:03:31	2.33
33.	Ed Alibozek Jr	69	0:48:52	62.79	86.	Jennifer Accomando	29	2:03:31	1.16
34.	Bruce Shenker	56	0:49:47	61.63					
35.	Rick Friedrich	35	0:49:56	60.47					
36.	Mark Raymond	46	0:50:11	59.30					
37.	Tom Mack	44	0:50:21	58.14					
38.	Ed Buckley	50	0:50:26	56.98					
39.	Scott Bradley	54	0:50:45	55.81					
40.	Aubrey Fleszar	30	0:51:05	54.65					
41.	Laurel Shortell	42	0:51:33	53.49					
42.	London Niles	11	0:52:05	52.33					
43.	Denise Dion	50	0:52:23	51.16					
44.	Sarah Edson	32	0:52:27	50.00					
45.	Scott Latvella	49	0:52:33	48.84					
46.	Martin Glendon	62	0:52:35	47.67					
47.	Jeff Hattem	57	0:52:40	46.51					
48.	Joe Bouck	46	0:53:40	45.35					
49.	Jody Lahey	30	0:53:42	44.19					
50.	Steve Petke	54	0:55:09	43.02					
51.	Bob Massaro	65	0:55:23	41.86					
52.	Darlene Buttrick	29	0:55:30	40.70					
53.	Jacqueline Lemieux	42	0:55:52	39.53					



Brad Herder on race day, Curly's Record Run 2009

WEEKEND FACTS AND FIGURES FROM DOUBLE "D"

Twenty-two runners doubled up this weekend, racing 3.3 miles in tough snow at Readsboro , VT and then taking on the fast snow but tough climb of the 4 mile course in Pittsfield , MA . Ten of them also did the double on the previous weekend (**bolded**)!

Edward Alibozek	Ed Alibozek Jr
Paul Bazanchuk	Laura Clark
Ken Clark	Denise Dion
Dave Dunham	Paul Hartwig
Martin Glendon	Bill Glendon
Jamie Howard	Sibyl Jackson
Konrad Karolczuk	Chris Johnson
London Niles	Bob Massaro
Walter Kolodzinski	Jay Kolodzinski
Mike Lahey	Jody Lahey
Laurel Shortell	Erik Wight

With the second double-race weekend wrapped-up a total of 6 races have been held in five weekends. There have been 342 unique finishers in the six races (199 men and 143 women). The average age of the runners is 42.4 with the youngest being 8 and the oldest 79. 246 runners have done one race, 42 have done two races, 18 have done three, 18 have also done four, 11 have done five, and seven have done all six races.

There have been 101 races since Bob Dion won the first WMAC snowshoe at the South Pond shuffle back in February of 1998.

Here are the All-time Top Twenty WMAC finish leaders:

Rank	Name	Races
01.	Konrad Karolczuk	89
02t.	Laurel Shortell	86
02t.	Richard Busa	86
04.	Bob Dion	85
05.	Laura Clark	78
06.	Edward Alibozek	76
06.	Ed Alibozek Jr	75
08.	Ken Clark	66
09.	Bob Massaro	65
10.	Dave Dunham	55
11.	Denise Dion	52
12.	Peter Lipka	48
13t.	Walter Kolodzinski	47
13t.	Paul Hartwig	47
15.	Jay Kolodzinski	46
16t.	Mike Lahey	45
16t.	Martin Glendon	45
16t.	Bill Morse	45
19t.	Lawrence Dragon	44
19t.	David Boles	44
19t.	Jim Carlson	44



All-time WMAC point leaders:

Rank	Name	Points
01.	Bob Dion	6980.23
02.	Ken Clark	5927.91
03.	Dave Dunham	5097.09
04.	Edward Alibozek	5064.26
05.	Ed Alibozek Jr	4164.81
06.	Jay Kolodzinski	3694.55
07.	Leigh Schmitt	3242.14
08.	John Pelton	3129.14
09.	Laura Clark	2946.52
10.	Mike Lahey	2922.8
11.	Ben Nephew	2761.09
12.	Bob Worsham	2704.89
13.	Laurel Shortell	2667.88
14.	Bill Morse	2631.32
15.	David Boles	2607.65
16.	Peter Lipka	2585.9
17.	Richard Bolt	2454.67
18.	Lawrence Dragon	2390.29
19.	Dave Hannon	2344.17
20.	Paul Hartwig	2313.88

Some All-Time landmarks reached this weekend:

Bob Dion – 85 races

Ed Alibozek Jr. – 75 races

Bob Massaro – 65 races

Dave Dunham – 55 races

Mike Lahey, Martin Glendon, Bill Morse , Jay Kolodzinski – 45 races

Ben Nephew – 30 races

Peter Malinowski and Tom Mack – 20 races

Paul Bazanchuk – 15 races

Tim Mahoney – 10 races

Dave Dunham and Edward Alibozek both passed 5,000 points this weekend. Chelynn Tetrault passed 1,000 points.

Sunday Feb. 8th at Smugglers' Notch, it's a qualifier for the Nationals. I can provide housing to a half dozen or so folks if it's desired. Go to www.snowshoeracing.com enter and on the lefthand list click 2009 Events Calendar. That gives all of the races, so scroll down to Feb. 8th and there it is. The entry form can be downloaded right there. Thanks, our conditions up here are also fantastic. Zeke Zucker

Phone: 802-644-8282

Cell: 802-238-8464 (Only when traveling)

Zeke Zucker

zeke555@verizon.net

SHADOW TRAIL REVISITED!

The last time I ran Curly's was in 2005 and that year was a doozy! Approximately one foot of snow had fallen the night before and the trails were completely unbroken. I was the 4th person in a line of many to push through the powder that year, only trailing Shaun Sutliffe, Jim Shultz and Bob Dion. Those three barely made a difference in the trail by the time I came through. It was like running through unbroken snow because its composition didn't allow for any packing. The climb that year was more of a power walk than a run. With snow up to your knees it was difficult to even make a stride. For the entire uphill I could see those guys but as everyone knows, you might be able to see them but that doesn't necessarily mean you can catch them. Once I hit the top of the hill and turned left for the relatively short distance to the downhill, those guys were out of sight. At that point I just wanted to get back to the finish and huddle around the fire. When I hit the crest of the Shadow Trail and looked downhill I saw ¾ of a mile of fun. I flew down Shadow Trail with snow flying everywhere, a man out of control. Once I hit the bottom of the Shadow Trail, I had a struggle to finish because of the deceiving nature of the course and thinking that it was much closer to the finish than it actually was. That downhill run was the highlight of my snowshoeing career. I felt so carefree and reckless at the same time, all the other downhill runs I have done since haven't even compared. Maybe I have become a little more cautious, but I would have to say the Shadow Trail is one of those downhill's where you can leave your worries behind and just unwind! After a 4-year absence and the right conditions, I would say that memorable run down the Shadow in '05 has been matched this year.

This year the pre-race preparations have changed quite a bit from previous years. I no longer live with my father so I would have to drive to his house to pick him up. Knowing his history of being "just a little" late, I made sure I called him before I left to inform him I would be at his house in 30 minutes and to make sure he was ready. I made sure I was leaving myself some extra time in case he wasn't ready. Old habits are hard to break and after arriving at his house I had 15 minutes to wait for him to get ready. Once he finally got all his stuff in my truck we were on our way towards Pittsfield along scenic Rt. 9. With the sounds of Polka music filling the air we chatted about all the previous trips we have made along that route en route to trail races and snowshoe races. I did allow him to listen to his choice of music on the way to the race since I no longer have to wake up every weekend morning listening to the sounds of an accordion.

After making a stop at the Pittsfield McDonalds we took Crane Road. to get to the Forest instead of driving through the center of town. Driving to the forest we were treated to beautiful views of the Taconic and Greylock Ranges, as well as a nice view driving across the causeway of Lake Onota. I was able to speculate that the temperature was a bit cold because we saw very few ice fishermen on the Lake. I really don't know if that was a good gauge on temperature because ice fishermen are a different breed than snowshoers, plus they don't create enough body heat by jigging for fish on the ice.

As we turned left off Dan Casey Way (the causeway) we spotted the first of the now famous, "Race Dion Snowshoes" signs with an arrow pointing us in the right direction. These signs are wonderful to let people know they are in the right neck of the

woods and not to mention they might bring more spectators to our events if they have any bit of curiosity about snowshoe racing. After passing the contact station, we entered the forest and saw the "NEW" Pittsfield State Forest welcome sign. I have to vent a little bit here because I have noticed all the state parks, forests, and reservations in the state have changed their entrance signs. They have gone from the rustic forest log type signs to a plain billboard sign with the park or forests name. Some genius behind a desk had this idea to make the parks more modern and urban and bring in more people? Well it may be good for an urban park in Boston, but I say lets keep the rustic appeal to our forests in this end of the state. So as we passed that sign we took the mile long drive to Lulu Field or as we snowshoers know it, the Curly's Start.

After driving down the long straight a way, I could see the parking area was becoming filled and we had to park on the edge of the road. We were lucky that no snowmobilers had arrived early and messed up the parking lot with their trailers. Registration was very quick as the Race Directors, Beth and Brad Herder, have already practiced for this event by putting on a prequel two weeks earlier with the Turner Trail Snowshoe Race. After nicely requesting bib number 100, I pinned it on and made my way up the Berry Pond Loop Road for a warm-up. I asked for #100 because as many runners have different quirks I am trying to complete a bib number collection of 1 to infinity. I have a big metal loop and every race I run in, I write down the race, conditions, splits, etc...on the bib number and then put it on the metal loop in numerical order. My lowest number is bib 2 and my highest is my Boston Bib Number, which is 4978. I am currently trying to complete all the even numbers below 100 and knew I needed it so I took the opportunity to request it.

After my warm-up and getting some positive inspiration from Farmer Ed. telling me that I would be having a great race today, I started to feel a little better mentally than I felt physically. I felt really tired from the previous day's race in Readsboro, the Dion's 1st Hoot Toot & Whistle 5K along the old Railroad Bed. From what I heard the railroad has been gone many years but I was able to figure out where it had been. Anyways, I ran in that race and was hoping for a fast snowshoe 5K. Much to my dismay I had a terrible race. I didn't feel well physically and the snow conditions just made it worst. The race was like running in quick sand. I just couldn't find any good traction in the snow and every time I put my foot down I slid. I was glad to find out after the race that many other racers shared my view. The course was great but the conditions were terrible. In 47 snowshoe races I have to say that ranks in my top two in terms of worst snow conditions for running. Hawley Kiln 2008 is the other. While mulling around the Readsboro Inn afterwards, I was chatting with newcomer Erik Wright, who has taken a liking to the sport, and we were discussing snow conditions and how tomorrow's race course could be and would be totally different. I specifically remember telling him how a bad race today could mean a great race tomorrow. Well minutes before Curly was to blow the whistle for the race, how little did I know how right I was. Moments before I didn't feel like I had it, mentally or psychically. However, I knew I wasn't alone because Paul Bazanchuk, who also raced at the Hoot Toot and Whistle said he was feeling it from yesterday as well. So as the

SHADOW TRAIL REVISITED! (CONTINUED)

crowd lined up in the snowy hard packed field, I couldn't help but think of what Ed said to me before the race. He said "...your running form isn't really geared for those type of conditions. You lift your legs really high instead of pushing through the snow, and with snow like we had in Readsboro it just wasn't your day. With packed trails like today, you will fly." I was hoping that was true but to be honest I didn't feel that way, even though I hoped I did.

Once the gun went off my goal was to stay back behind Ken, Paul and Abby as the four of us have seemed to be coming in around each other, not necessarily that order but we all know who we are usually around. After making it through the field and hooking the left off the Loop Road we settled into the Paul, Ken, Abby, and Jay foursome. It would remain that way to the Shadow.

The climb was as relentless as I had remembered. However, this year I wasn't alone nor was I trudging through freshly fallen snow, the trail was hard packed. As we made our ascent we kept the order and throughout the climb Paul slowly pulled away. I kept right behind Abby on the climb but with a $\frac{1}{4}$ mile left to climb my right calf was getting really tight. I backed off a bit and Abby and Ken gained some distance on me and when I hit the summit they were out of sight. I did look back at that point to see if anyone would be trying to catch me from behind but I didn't see anyone and I decided to just give it my all on the downhill. The Shadow Trail was hard packed and the sides were unbroken. My calf no longer hurt and it actually felt really loose so with my thoughts on Curly's 2005, I put it in Kamikaze mode... put my head down and my arms starting spreading out like wings. I then went full tilt and let the snow fly. After about 3 minutes of descending I picked my head up and saw Ken Clark. I was shocked that I had caught him and yelled that I would be passing him. Not too long after passing him I saw Abby. I was amazed at how much ground I had made up since I started to descend. I could tell I was moving much faster than Abby and soon yelled I would be passing. As I did that I wondered if I could catch Paul. As I let the snowshoes kick high up in the air I could see an obstacle in the path. A tree was blocking the trail and at the speed I was going it was coming up fast. I saw the detour went to the left and around. Just as I was about to hook left to make the detour I saw a glimpse of Paul on the trail. He was moving in high gear and my goal at that point was to catch him. After rejoining the trail I continued down the Shadow in hopes of catching Paul. I didn't know that the next time I would see him would be while I ran through the field near the end as he crossed the finish line.

Once I hit the bottom of the trail I turned left and recollected on how much fun that was and how similar that experience was to the one I has 4 years ago and was trying to decide which year's descent was better. I opted for 2009 due to competition. However, I had to leave that for later because like as in prior years this course is deceiving and just when you think it's over at the hill (bottom of the Shadow Trail), you still have over a good mile to go. This last mile has some nice climb in it and as I reached the climbing section I could tell I had spent my energy reserves on the downhill and would be feeling spent for the remainder of the race. I never looked back for the rest of the race. I didn't have to, as I knew Abby and Ken would be right

there. Kris Kozuch and Gail Richardson who were out on the course cheering people on gave me some insight on how far ahead I was. As I passed them, I quickly looked at my watch and when I heard them cheer for Abby I looked at my watch again. I had 20 seconds. I know in a snowshoe race and this one in particularly that 20 seconds can mean anything. So with hearing them cheer I kept digging deep for the twists and turns in that final $\frac{1}{2}$ mile stretch. Once I reached Lulu field I saw Paul crossing the line and knew he had an awesome race and I hadn't caught him like I had hoped for. I then had some new-found energy appear from who knows where and started feeling great again. I didn't hear any footsteps right behind me but I still ran through the last 100 yards of the field like someone might possibly try to catch me. In that final stretch I had no problems at all and finished with my fastest Curly's Record Run time ever. Abby came in approximately 20-seconds behind me, setting a new women's course record. Paul said he had a great race and he did capture the masters title . Ken followed Abby and rounded out the four of us. I can see by the first five races of the season that the four of us are going to be battling it out for the rest of the year. That's great because the four of us battling the snowy trails will only make us all stronger.

After finishing, I got a bit relaxed and had some hot chocolate to warm up and then I ran back to see how my father was doing. I was worried about him with his knee and the downhill, and he might not think straight and put the pedal to the metal. When I saw him approaching Lulu field he was looking good. He said he felt fine and he wanted to catch the guy that was in front of him by 20 yards. I told him don't do anything stupid and especially don't blow out your knee again. He must have taken caution because he seemed to slow down just a bit. He didn't catch the fellow in front of him but he did finish and he has now run five races this season after surgery. He says his knee is good to go and hasn't been giving him any grief during the races. He credits the new high tech knee braces. I keep asking him if the doctor knows he is wearing them to run in. He says yes, but I still wonder. I mean do they make special knee braces to snowshoe race in? I also think he might have come to realize that his biological age and body are not the same as his mental age. Whether that is a good thing is up for debate.

Curly's '09 helped me re-live some snowshoe fun and let me have my best to-date descent on snowshoes. I have to thank the Herders for putting on a great race and Ed for giving me some good inspiration at the start. Ed, who has been doing this for fifteen plus years, knows just about every aspect of this sport and everybody involved. We all may come out to these snowshoe events for different reasons, but one thing is for sure... this sport is on the verge of change and I just want everyone to remember where it all started!

Jay Kolodzinski

2009 USSSA REMAINING QUALIFIERS

Feb. 07	Sidehiller
Feb. 08	Northern Vermont Snowshoe Challenge
Feb. 14	Camp Saratoga

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

DOUBLEHEADER WEEKEND #2

Quote of the Week: *Used to be the only time we had back-to-back-races was when we had a make-up event. Nowadays, it kind of seems normal.* Konrad Karolczuk, #1 on the WMAC Hit Parade of Points Leaders, so he should know what he is talking about.

So, are we getting better, or simply obsessed with trying to cram in as much snow fun as we can into a too-short winter season? Or perhaps we are on our way to a Last Man Standing weekend. At any rate, I am beginning to view the five day work week as a welcome recovery break.

It is always comforting when race #2 is shorter &/ easier than race #1. Last year that's pretty much how it went. But this year, apparently, we are either getting tuffer or dumber. Doubleheader #1 Greylock and Brave the Blizzard hearkened back to Ye Goode Olde Days. This past weekend we weren't as fortunate. On paper, the Hoot-Toot & Whistle 5K seemed like an easy ramble alongside the Deerfield River. After all, what stream goes uphill? Curley's, on the other hand, involves going up and down a black diamond ski trail. So we thought we were faced by a relaxed romp followed by a serious effort on Sunday. Were we ever mistaken!

Bob and Denise Dion's inaugural Hoot-Toot & Whistle, a gentle grade single track, introduced many of us to the Catamount Trail, the longest XC ski and snowshoe trail in North America which meanders 300 miles from Reedsburg into Canada. Thankfully, we only had to cover three miles. Railway fans were thrilled to be traveling along the narrow gauge rail bed of the Hoosac Tunnel, Wilmington and Deerfield River Railroads. Proceeds were donated to the E.J. Bullock Building and Restoration Fund, and as such, the townspeople were enthusiastic supporters of the event. So much so, that I'm guessing this race scores in the Barnyard Awards best raffles category. It seemed like just about everyone went home with a prize. We are all especially wondering if Jessica Hageman's strawberry whipped cream cake made it home in one piece. It's a fairly long ride back to Schenectady!

Perhaps her cake lasted at least till supper time, though as the Readsboro Inn's buffet was truly impressive—three different types of soups served in bean pot ceramic bowls. And we even had awards—impressively heavy railroad spikes. All that and a race too! We were bussed in waves to the trailhead and had the choice of remaining at the Inn until the last minute or opting for the early bus and a warm-up opportunity.

From then on, things got curioser and curioser. Once again we relearned Bob Worsham's dictum, "It all depends on the snow." Justin Fyffe won the race in 27:30, which exactly matched his winning Greylock time. Greylock was 3.9 mountainous miles, while H&T was a gently rolling 5K. And it's not as if we had a major snowstorm the day before. The snow was just overwhelmingly slippery. So much so that I found myself wishing for my old Sherpas with their giant cleats. This was clearly Ken Clark's dream race!

For some reason, I seem to do well in lousy conditions. While it was difficult to get a rhythm or any kind of grip in the snow, I rather enjoyed just going with the flow. Soon I began passing

folks I normally would never even see except in the refreshment line. At first I almost felt like apologizing, figuring they'd just have to pass me again later on. But that never happened. While the trail was indeed narrow gauge, Bob had created convenient passing lanes and everyone seemed to be having such a difficult time that they were more aware of folks coming up. Buoyed by each small victory, I gained confidence and pressed ever onward. The result was a railroad spike, double my usual number of points and a great sense of satisfaction.

Edward Alibozek expressed the sentiments of many when he commented that at times he just felt like quitting and turning back. I guess the problem, besides the tuff snow, was mental fortitude. We were expecting a relaxed stroll in the woods and were dealt something entirely different. And then there was our Sunday rendezvous with Curly's mountain looming in the background pushing on our mental brakes.

For me, though, the moment was NOW. Sunday, I reverted back to my usual 38 percent, but that was OK. For a brief moment in time I followed the whistle of a much faster train.

Laura Clark

2ND WILDLANDS SNOWSHOE RUNS

January 18th, 2009 East Orland, ME

Non-Competitive Trekkers

1. Pamela Farrar
2. Cheri Domina
3. Gunilla Kettis

4-Mile Run (No Snowshoes)

1. Patty Craig 44:49 CR
2. Judd Estey Kendall 49:50. Master CR
3. Katrina Bisheimer 56:48

4-Mile Snowshoe Run

1. Tom Kirby, 54:55
2. Patricia Hansen, 56:10 (CR.)
3. Sean Sullivan, 62:12
4. Tom Russell, 65:34
5. Diane Kay, 69:20
6. Tom Turlo, 87:45(started late)
7. Par Kettis, 49:00 Ski

Thanks to:

Jake Maier
Jennifer Riefler
Cheri Domina
Karen Keeney
Patrick Reid

*Sincerely,
Peter Keeney.*