

# SNOSHU-NEWS

## HOW TO ENJOY (SURVIVE) THE WINTER

### **I. Have a goal but know your limits**

If you normally cover that day's intended distance in time X, it may easily take 2X or 3X to do the same distance in winter. Because of this, and the fact that in the winter the air is extremely dry and thus "sucks" the moisture out of you and your breath, plan to take 2X or 3X amount of water. Also if you normally don't need food for time X, realize that you're burning calories not only for maybe three times as long but also to keep yourself warm (read: carry food). If you end up needing it, you'll be REALLY glad you carried it.

### **II. Be prepared**

This may sound Boy Scout'ish, but Boy Scouts rescue more than they need rescuing! The idea of spending a night or two, possibly hurt, in the woods in the winter is uncomfortable at best, deadly at worst. Make sure that if something happens you can pull yourself through. Be responsible for yourself!

#### **What to carry:**

A small first-aid kit; matches (or lighter); extra snowshoe binding or twine / rope (to make-shift a binding, if necessary); 2-liters of water (minimum); high-energy food; bivy-sack (if you have to spend a long time sitting in snow, you'll need to be waterproof). If you're not wearing them: Waterproof / windproof top and bottom; hat (something warm that insulates); mittens; insulation layer. All this "gear" adds up (for me) to 13 lbs. This may sound like a lot, but how fast are you really going to be going anyway...so what's a few more pounds.

#### **Amount of Clothes to Wear:**

Picture this. A winter "novice" starts out on a run (or hike, or climb) warm and in about 10 minutes of exertion they start to sweat. They're feeling good and continue this way until they have to stop (which may be during less than ideal conditions and miles from a heat source). Their clothes are now soaked with sweat and they get cold REALLY fast. I could go on forever with horror stories regarding this, but I'd rather concentrate on what to do right. Start out being cold! If you're comfortable as you take that first step, you're over-dressed. Period. Wear as few clothes as possible; you'll warm up (via exertion) soon enough. I find that running (or hiking hard) at 70°F and at 10°F is the same, in regards to clothing, except at 10°F you have to take under consideration the wind (wear a windbreaker and hat) and carry extra clothing for when you stop.

#### **Type of Clothes:**

There's an old saying that refers to clothing for the winter... "Cotton Kills". Take it to heart. Cotton clothing may be really comfortable for summer wear (it's soft, it doesn't scratch, etc.) but it should be left in the closet starting around November. Cotton absorbs and holds moisture like a sponge. When you're physically active in the winter, you're going to sweat. You MUST get rid of the moisture by venting your clothing (which allows the moisture to escape) and wearing clothes that do not retain the sweat you've produced. Also, if you fall in the snow / slush / a river, etc., your clothing had better be able to get dry quickly or you're in for a case of hypothermia.

I'll never forget the first time I was ever exposed to such a situation. I, with 3 others, had just climbed Mt. Liberty in New Hampshire (January, 1972). We were sweating bullets and broke above tree line to be greeted by 30 mph wind with temperatures around 0°F. Realizing that if we wanted to survive the night up there, we would have to get rid of the moisture we picked up. There was only one thing to do. Take our clothes off. This may sound counterproductive in our quest to stay warm, but if we didn't get rid of the moisture-laden clothes off our backs, dry our skin off by letting the wind blow-dry us, and put on dry clothes, we'd probably still be up there.

When it comes to winter clothing everyone has their preference, but I use synthetics throughout. Synthetics will retain the warmth even when wet (as will wool, which is an alternative) and will retain much less moisture than will any natural fibers. Gore-Tex, polypropylene, and pile fabrics (Polarfleece, Capilene, and Thermax are just a few of the trade names) make up my entire winter outdoor wardrobe. Being dry equals being warm!

### **III. Notify Others**

Tell someone, who isn't going with you, where you're going and approximately when you'll be back. This isn't wimpy, it's considerate and smart.

*The Old Goat*

*This was great information when Karl Molitoris wrote it back in '97, and it still holds up now. Remember, some of the suggestions are meant toward heading out solo on a long journey – not for an organized event on marked trail. You should be able to manage without the extra gear at one of our snowshoe events! As for the running at 70°F and at 10°F, I recently read where Amby Burfoot said the same thing regarding this seasons Manchester Road Race; when racing he dresses the same for 30 as he does 70.*

# WMAC SNOWSHOE SERIES 2003



Ron DiNicola, Debbie Briggs, Ken Fairman and Laura Clark start the 2001 Hawley Kiln Klassic. Larry McCandrew is in view to the rear right.

Photograph contributed by Chris Dunne.

\*\*\*\*\*

## WMAC SERIES SCHEDULE 2003

Sunday, December 29, 2002 Woodford, VT  
**2nd Annual WOODFORD** 4 Mile

Saturday January 4, 2003 Day, NY  
**SARATOGA BIATHLON CLUB** 5KM

Saturday January 11, 2003 Florida, MA  
**6th Annual SOUTH POND SHUFFLE** 4 Mile

Saturday January 18, 2003 Adams, MA  
**4th Annual GREYLOCK GLEN** 3.5 Mile

Sunday January 26, 2003 Pittsfield, MA  
**1<sup>ST</sup> CURLY's RECORD RUN** 4 Miles

Saturday, February 1, 2003 Northfield, MA  
**1st NORTHFIELD MTN (Reg. Qualifier)** 5km

Sunday, February 2, 2003 Saratoga, NY  
**4th Annual SARATOGA WINTERFEST** 5km

Saturday, February 8, 2003 Saratoga, NY  
**1<sup>st</sup> Annual WILTON WILDLIFE** 8km

Saturday, February 15, 2003 Hawley, MA  
**6th Annual HAWLEY KILN KLASSIC** 7 & 4.5 Miles

Saturday, March 1, 2003 Hawley, MA  
**3rd sort of Annual MOODY SPRINGS** 15km & 10km

\*\*\*\*\*

We have started to update the WMAC Snowshoe website:

[WWW.RUNWMAC.COM](http://WWW.RUNWMAC.COM)

Click the snowshoe button to keep up with the news!

\*\*\*\*\*

# DION DEMO DAYS/ FUN SHOES

Sunday, December 22, 2002 Savoy, MA  
**Dion Demo Day #1** 5 Miles *Tannery Falls*

Sunday, February 23, 2003 Florida, MA  
**Dion Demo Day #2** 5 Miles *Spruce Hill*

Saturday, March 15, 2003 Florida, MA  
**Dion Demo Day #3** 5 Miles *Blackstone Farm*

\*\*\*\*\*

## A RABBIT'S TALE AT MONROE 2002

Monroe/Dunbar Brook, Oct 14, 2002...

A terrible early winter blizzard hit the Monroe/Dunbar Brook area on Oct 10<sup>th</sup> and raged for 3 days straight.... 38" when it was all said and done.



The Dunbar Brook Race had been scheduled for Sunday, Oct 13th and WMAC was determined to have the event

go off as planned. After all they had all those neat reflective running vests to give out as awards.

But little did the event organizers know, that even as the last few inches were falling, Dion continued to clutch his Black Toenail Amulet close to his heart, invoking the god Snowsomemore to do his deal. Then quick as a bunny, he suggested that MAYBE instead of a runningshoe race, there should be a runningsnowshoe race. "What a brilliant idea," said Farmer Ed, as he broke out his instruments to measure Functional Surface Areas. While David Boles clasped his hands together, and jumping up and down, he could be overheard saying "Goodie-Goodie." Laura Clark was busy attaching her swimmies and Richard Busa strapped on his GPS. Karl Molitoris even showed up in his orange shorts.... "Now this is my kind of race."

As Dion perched atop the picnic table, everyone crowded around and oohed and aahed his new Dion Snowshoes.... "Gather around all you racers in all shapes, sizes and abilities....."

As the thrilled snowshoers donned their brand new Dion Snowshoes with the Patent-Pending Modular System and dashed off the start line, Dion raised his eyes to the heavens, kissed the Black Toenail Amulet, kicked back in his custom made camp chair with the automatic foot rest and 2 drink cup holders and gave thanks to the god Snowsomemore for an early dump.

Kaniac  
Oct 2002

\*\*\*\*\*

## WINTER TRAINING WHEN THERE'S TOO MUCH SNOW TO RUN IN

Looking for a change of pace, snow-shoeing in deep snow with a pack on over rugged terrain can be a trail runner's savior come wintertime. If you're worried that "A walk in the woods is a waste of training time", and "It won't do anything for me", you're wrong. Back in the 80's, I was on a run-of-the-mill hike up Galehead Mt. in the New Hampshire White's. Carrying a 52-pound pack (planning on spending the night), I reached the junction of the A-T after about 3 hours of 'shoeing'. Good time for a water and food break, I thought, so I stopped. It was so quiet that I could hear my own heart...and after 3 hours of hard, steady climbing, it was beating very fast. How fast, I thought, and took my pulse. 184!!! Understand that at the time, I was a mere lad, but that's still cook'n for just walk'n. By the time I reached the summit, I figured that I had just completed a 4-hour, 5 mile, marathon-equivalent with a pulse rate of 85-90% of max., and I didn't run a step of it! It may not do much for your speed but it'll make up for that in spades regarding your strength, endurance, and serenity of mind (hiking in the mountains beats running indoors on a treadmill all to #@%!)

*The Old Goat*

\*\*\*\*\*

## GREAT NEWS FROM NORTHFIELD

The course is EXCELLENT. There is a slight modification, that I feel improves the course. The snowshoe race will be **7.25K**, not the originally described **6K**. The race will begin with a 1400m loop which is not only spectator friendly, but gives the racers ample opportunity to pass prior to hitting the single track trail (which runs from 2.3k to 4.6k). The final 2.6+K will descend on wide groomed trail. The total climb/descent remains unchanged by this move.

Blurbs on the race below.....

1st Annual Northfield Mountain 7.25K Snowshoe race  
February 1, 2003 8:00 AM  
Northfield Mountain Visitors Center

Part of the WMAC Snowshoe circuit. (Event #6)  
USSSA East Regional Qualifier  
Top 10 finishers in age groups will qualify for the US National Championships.

\*\*\*\*\*

## NORTHERN VERMONT SNOWSHOE CHALLENGE 5KM

Saturday February 15th 2003 10:30 a.m.  
Nordic Ski & Snowshoe Adventure Center.  
Smugglers' Notch Resort, Jeffersonville, VT, 05464.

Zeke Zucker 802-644-1173  
Zeke@pwshift.com or call.

\*\*\*\*\*



*Jim "Oil Man" Preite and Bruce "Cemetery Man" Marvonek fight to the finish at the 2002 Beaver Brook Snowshoe Race in Hollis, NH. Photograph contributed by Rich Bolt.*

\*\*\*\*\*

## 2003 MAINE SNOWSHOE SERIES

{Hosted by the Crow Athletics Club & Down East Trail Runners}

- Event #1:**  
Sunday, January 26th, 2003 9:00 A.M.  
**Schoodic Mtn. Snowshoe** 2 & 6 miles  
Schoodic Mtn. Lodge in Franklin, Maine
- Event 2:**  
Sunday, February 2nd, 2003 9:00 A.M.  
**Great Pond Mtn. Snowshoe** 1.2 & 2.5 miles  
Craigbrook Nat. Fish Hatchery, East Orland, ME
- Event 3:**  
Sunday, February 9<sup>th</sup>, 2003 9:00 A.M.  
**Beech Hill Snowshoe** 2k, 4k, 6k  
Beech Hill Farm, Mount Desert, Maine

Peter Keeney  
25 Woodbury Road  
Bar Harbor, ME 04609  
1-207-288-8381

[Keeneye@midmaine.com](mailto:Keeneye@midmaine.com)

*Each Event is \$5 per person with no fee for 65+ and 12 & Under. T-shirts can be purchased for \$12 on race day only while supplies last.*

\*\*\*\*\*



## SNOWSHOEING IDEAS

### (HOW TO SNOWSHOE WITH NO DAYLIGHT WHILE AVOIDING ROCKS AND NOT GETTING SHOT)

Officially, the first day of winter is supposed to be December 22<sup>nd</sup>, but I believe most of us already feel that it came a bit earlier. There has been a fairly decent blanket of snow covering the ground since before Thanksgiving, and for those who chomp at the bit to get a little early snowshoeing in, it's been fantastic.

While it has been cold enough, and snowy enough, there have been problems with the conditions also. For one thing, the amount of sunlight available after 4:00 P.M. (when most of us start arriving home from work) is limited. Another dilemma is that it is hunting season throughout most of New York and New England. Finally, the snow has been very powdery and dry. While this type of snow looks fantastic while covering the ground, and creates small clouds in the air around your feet as you plow through it, it doesn't really do much about supplying adequate coverage over rocks and roots which are all too plentiful in the woods here.

Over the years I have developed some tricks that allow more time for snowshoeing. These suggestions should work for both beginning early and extending your snowshoe season longer than expected.

I have found that the best place to snowshoe early in the season when the snow cover is barely adequate and darkness sets in is fields. I am lucky enough to have the Suffield Academy Athletic fields within walking distance of my home, and the several hundred acres or so of Academy property joins with hundreds more acres of farmers fields. When visiting my folks in Adams, there are hundreds of acres of fields available between the Alibozek, Hoellerich and Clairmont farms for use (these are popular areas for snowmobile traffic as well).

Other options for surfaces to search out include nature centers, parks, golf courses (Ken Clark's choice) athletic fields, bicycle paths and unplowed dirt roads that many state forest are filled with. Just see what is in your area and available to you.

The reason fields work out so well is that the ground is typically soft without rocks, which allows for snowshoeing with very little snow cover. There is little risk in damaging your snowshoes on this type of surface, and any tripping hazard is basically nil due to the surface being flat and rock free. (Well, the first couple times out still are plagued by face plants due to "stubbing your toe", right?)

Addressing the lack of sun, you won't need much daylight at all to navigate your way around the perimeters of fields. I often do my shoeing after 7:00 P.M. or before 5:00 A.M. I usually start the season by wearing a headlamp, but after a few times out I get comfortable with the route and usually go

without it. If there is any moon at all, that is usually more than enough illumination.

As for hunting, try to find fields that are posted or athletic fields that disallow hunting. Ask people you run into (you'll be amazed at how many other people utilize these spots to ski, walk their dog, bird watch etc) whether they have seen hunters in the area just to better assure yourself. If it is much after dark, there shouldn't be anyone hunting anyway, but nothing is always as it should be.

The route you chose to follow around these fields depends on their size. I am lucky that there is enough land available so that I do not have to do repeating figure eights; I can just run perimeters and it adds up just fine. Running the perimeters works well because wind will cause snow to drift at the edges of fields where usually a section of tree line begins. These edges will often hold twice as much snow as the middle of the fields, which will mean the difference between not being able to snowshoe comfortably and being able to.

As you find your own spots to snowshoe, I bet that there will be short trail sections that lead from your field toward yet another adjacent field. So what may look like a 40 acre parcel could turn into much more. It is always easier for me to do one big loop rather than repeating loops in the same small area. The size of the field isn't that big a factor either, as roughly a forty acre field adds up to about a mile and a half around its outer perimeter.

As warm weather invades, and the snow in your field(s) begin to melt, search out the tracks left by snowmobiles. These get continually packed each time the sleds travel through, and will last longer than the soft snow around them. Use these trails to extend your routine for several extra days or even weeks when you wouldn't normally be able to snowshoe. If March rolls around and you still want to explore on snowshoes, I have found that the best bet is to head to the hills of Western Massachusetts and follow snowmobile trails. Many years I am able to comfortably snowshoe well into April on these higher elevation trails.

In a perfect snowshoeing world, we would all have plenty of daylight available to get out onto our favorite deep woods trail to snowshoe in half a foot of deep powder on top of a knee high base. Except for a few weeks each year, this just doesn't happen. If you want to train on and enjoy snowshoes, you have to be adaptable to what the weather offers. Be willing to improvise through the less than optimal times so that when the big snow hits, you'll be in shape to tackle the deep fresh snow.