

# W.M.A.C. SNOSHU-NEWS

## A Welcome Response to the WMAC (Snowshoeing) Barnyard Awards

While some folks obviously enjoyed our double header weekends this past snowshoe season, even going so far as to suggest we hold triple-headers, the normal barnyard animals were plain tuckered out. Immediately after the final event they turned out the lights and were not heard from again until Labor Day Weekend when they finally issued the 2007 Barnyard Awards. Apparently, they felt a fall holiday coming on and with it a natural urge to put on some insulating pounds for the tough winter ahead. Even Tippi lost her enthusiasm for chasing down stray orange flags, felled by a persistent case of sore paw pads, topped off by the stomach flu, which was probably brought on by too many undigested flag parts.

But with fall in the air and Monroe just over the horizon, the thoughts of all WMAC'ers are once again turning to snow. Just don't be like Pat McGrath who apparently forgot how to put on his snowshoes from one season to the next. Midway through the season, especially after all those double headers, it is a snap to pack your bag and go, basically because there is no point to putting all that gear away. But one of life's greatest mysteries is about to play out: What happens to all that winter stuff over the summer? No matter how careful I think I am, it always seems to disappear. Now that it is too cold to kayak in sandals and a T-shirt, I spent a frustrating morning looking for Jeff's shoes and long-sleeved shirts. One shoe was upstairs in our bedroom closet; one was downstairs in the front hall closet. Now I know very well that Jeff did not remove one sneaker downstairs and then hobble upstairs one shoe off and one shoe on. So before winter happens, and it will, probably all of a sudden, it is time to launch your own personal search mission.

And while we are at it, who was the dunderhead who thought it would be fun to snowshoe up Mount Washington? It's not exactly fun to run up Mt. Washington even in the summer. Typical spring months like May receive 100" of snow and trolls are still shoveling off their porches in June. I know, I know, "There is no such thing as bad weather, only bad clothes." But on the top, winter temperatures rival that of Antarctica, and that's not even counting the hurricane force winds. Go to [www.mountwashington.com/weather](http://www.mountwashington.com/weather) to see what that cozy little lodge hideaway looks like encased in chisel-only layers of ice.

Obviously, the person who wants the Mt. Washington run was not one of the group who wants fire at all the races except Northfield, where Smokey the Bear is obviously active throughout the winter months. And speaking of fire, are there any fire fighters among us? For this group sounds positively obsessed by starting fires, standing perilously near fires and preparing marshmallow torches inside of fires. More importantly, does the Hawley Fire Station know of our current obsession?

Congratulations to all the serious performance winners (including myself) and all the special category winners (did I mention, also including myself?). Well, one benefit apparently of tying for the Get a Life Award is that you are likely to pick up other awards along the way. Like the Hannon Award for writing the most stuff. And here I am, getting a head start on

next year's Hannon. Eventually, I plan to have an entire mantelpiece filled with invisible Hannonns. While I enjoy writing, I feel badly because mine is not the only perspective on a race. There are as many points of view as there are participants and I do not mean to make mine the defining moment of an event. Someone famous, maybe even Hannon himself, once said "If you don't write about it, did it really happen?" So take that first giant snowshoe step and become a new author this year. Or, if you are someone like Bob Worsham whom we haven't heard from in a while, feel free to start hammering away at those frequent author miles.

And finally, does anyone know what, or possibly who, is a Hoxie?

### No-brainer Crystal Ball Predictions for the 2008 Barnyard:

<b>Most Improved K2 Award:</b>	Chris Johnson
<b>Silverback:</b>	Rich Busa
<b>The Streak:</b>	Laurel Shortell
<b>Most Snowshoes:</b>	The Dions
<b>Top Dog:</b>	Tippi
<b>Windiest Location:</b>	Greylock Glen



## A BORROWED TUNE FROM A.T.R.A.

Prior to snowshoe running, I was not a big fan of winter running. The narrow streets and unforgiving drivers made the obstacle course that is road running in New England less than pleasurable. Now I look forward to the opportunity to train and race off-road in the winter and I enjoy the freedom that snowshoes give me. I'm also a terrible downhill trail runner, but I'm much better when I don't have to worry about my footing due to the forgiving nature of snowshoe racing. I also enjoy being able to race two or three times a weekend when we have enough snow. The aerobic benefits of snowshoe racing, combined with the minimal impact on leg muscles make it a perfect training method.

My first race was in 1999 at the Western Mass Athletic club's (WMAC) Hawley Kiln seven-mile. I finished less than ten seconds behind the winner without knowing anything about preparing for racing on snowshoes. I lost my shoe four or five times during the race. Lesson learned, and I was hooked! By 2001, I was National Champion at the first USSSA Championship in Plattsburgh, New York.

The heart and soul of snowshoe racing in New England is the WMAC series. Although the WMAC races are centered in Western Mass, 6 of the 17 races take place outside of Massachusetts including 1 in Vermont, 2 in New Hampshire and 3 in NY. The series has grown over the years both in the number of races and the number of participants at each race. The oldest races in the series are the Hawley Kiln and South Pond races which will be held for the 11th time this year. Over the last five years the series has hosted fifty races with over 3,800 finishers. Scoring is done based on the number of finishers in each race and series champions and age group winners are crowned at the end of the season.

WMAC puts on races which are a throw-back to the "good old days" of racing. There aren't any T-shirts or goody bags, just the opportunity for participants to compete and then mingle while warming up around a big fire afterwards. Entry fees are low and courses are challenging and scenic. The WMAC adopted a "vow of chastity" to keep the races people friendly. The vow includes such suggestions that, "The event must be held in State Forest or on Private Land," but notes, "Event can also be held in a State Park if the area has not been overdeveloped to the point of being commercialized." Other interesting notes include, "Never try to make a 10 mile race fit in a 4-acre forest. Don't ever think of a distance and try to make the racecourse fit it. Find a route that flows, decide it is your course, and then whatever it is, let it be. The odder the distance, the better," and a reminder that, "Each participant is a link in the chain. Everyone is important, first to last." Great words to live by, and words that have made the WMAC series races popular from the serious racer to those out to enjoy a hike in the woods.

Note: Dave Dunham got into snowshoe racing after he won a pair of snowshoes for setting a course record at the Cranmore Mountain Hill Climb and has been competing ever since. He also directs 3 snowshoe races and looks forward to the opportunity to expose others to the sport.

*Dave Dunham, A.T.R.A.*

## WMAC SCHEDULE 2008

Sunday, December 30, 2007 <b>I LOVE WOODFORD</b>	Woodford, VT 3.5 Miles
Sunday, January 06, 2008 <b>BRAVE THE BLIZZARD</b>	Guilderland, NY 5 KM
Saturday, January 12, 2008 <b>NORTH POND</b>	Florida, MA 3.5 Miles
Saturday, January 19, 2008 <b>SOUTH POND SHUFFLE</b>	Florida, MA 4.0 Miles
Monday, January 21, 2008 <b>MERRIMACK RIVER TRAIL</b>	Andover, MA 3.3 Miles
Saturday, January 26, 2008 <b>COBBLE MTN</b>	Gilford, NH 5 KM
Sunday, January 27, 2008 <b>CURLY'S RECORD RUN</b>	Pittsfield, MA 4 Miles
Saturday, February 02, 2008 <b>NORTHFIELD MTN</b>	Northfield, MA 10.3 KM
Sunday, February 03, 2008 <b>SARATOGA WINTERFEST</b>	Saratoga, NY 5 KM
Saturday, February 09, 2008 <b>*****SIDE-HILLER</b>	C. Sandwich, NH 4 Mile
Sunday, February 10, 2008 <b>FROSTY'S DASH FOR THE CURE</b>	Atkinson, NH 5 KM
Saturday, February 16, 2008 <b>*****CAMP SARATOGA</b>	Wilton, NY 8.25 KM
Sunday, February 17, 2008 <b>HALLOCKVILLE – BASIN BROOK</b>	West Hawley, MA 8 KM
Saturday, February 23, 2008 <b>HOXIE THUNDERBOLT</b>	Adams, MA 3.5 Miles
Saturday, February 23, 2008 <b>COVERED BRIDGE</b>	Adams, MA 8.0 Miles
Sunday, February 24, 2008 <b>HALLOCKVILLE POND</b>	West Hawley, MA 5KM
Saturday, March 01, 2008 <b>HAWLEY KILN</b>	Hawley, MA 7.0 Miles
Sunday, March 02, 2008 <b>HAWLEY NOTCH</b>	Hawley, MA 5.0 Miles
Saturday, March 15, 2008 <b>2<sup>ND</sup> MASS CHAMPIONSHIP</b>	Northfield, MA 5KM or Greater

**\*\*\*\*\*USSSA Northeast Qualifier Event**

**USSSA NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP  
WILL BE HELD MARCH 8 & 9, 2008 – UTAH**

## WHERE WE SNOWSHOE

The places we snowshoe are very special. They are state parks, reservations, and forests! This is land set aside by the state for the enjoyment of all to use. Many of these parks are rich in history. They hold keys to the past and many opportunities for the future. In Massachusetts, we as snowshoers, use four very special parks dear to me. They are Pittsfield State Forest, Mt. Greylock State Reservation, Savoy Mountain State Forest, and Dubuque State Forest aka Hawley State Forest.



As a child, I was taught to respect nature and care for it. That is what has brought me to my current occupation. This past summer I worked as a Park Ranger at Pittsfield State Forest where we have Curly's Record Run. Having worked at the federal level for the past 3 years, I was finally given the opportunity to come back home and help protect the places I love and grew up around.

It was not too soon after I started work I realized that the places we snowshoe, hike, and run in are not only used by caring, respectful, nature loving folks. Most of these places are remote, isolated, and far away from civilization. That makes these parks highly used for drug dealing and drug use, under-age beer parties, marijuana cultivation, illegal dumps, illegal hunting and the burning of vehicles just to name a small few. It really upsets me, as I consider myself a steward of the forest & parks, one who wants to preserve and protect it so our kids and grandkids can enjoy it. I have seen most all of the previous things I mentioned occur in the parks we use as snowshoers and trail runners. I am letting everyone know that these things occur because through my work days I come across many wonderful people who come to these places to get away from the daily grind, relax, and enjoy what our former stewards of the land have saved for us! Yet many people have no idea that these things occur at these wonderful places. That's why I am letting all of you know this because just as I am one park ranger who helps protect and preserve the parks, we must all be stewards and help protect these special places. We are the respectful ones, recreating in some of our favorite places, but we are also the ones who could see the bad things or bad people out there harming our parks. Here is few of my suggestions as what can you do to help...

1. **Report suspicious activity:** In my 4 years as being a Park Ranger, if something doesn't look right then it's usually not right. Let someone know. No matter how small it may be, if something arouses your suspicion to be out of the ordinary then it chances are it is. Then if it turns out to be nothing when someone investigates it, well that's a good thing!
2. **Get information & Descriptions:** I can't tell you how many times people would tell me something regarding a vehicle or ATV doing something wrong. When I asked for a license plate or description of the people, they hadn't a clue.
3. **Be a good witness:** If you see something occurring in the parks or forests don't confront someone. You never know who you could be dealing with. Just be a good witness and remember #2 from above.

Now if we can remember those things and work as a team we can all help protect and preserve all our state parks and forests. Now that we all are on the same team, I'd like to share with you some of the history and facts about my office, Pittsfield State Forest.

The Civil Conservation Corps built most of the trails and the road system at Pittsfield State Forest during the great depression. The CCC, as it was known for short, was a part of President Franklin Roosevelt's new deal plan that would help put young men to work during the great depression and create a forest and park infrastructure to promote recreation. (My Granddad was a CCC in Oregon) That's exactly what happened at Pittsfield State Forest. As you drive into the entrance of the forest this upcoming January for Curly's, notice all the huge white pines on your left. The CCC's planted all these back in the 1930's as part of a way to help reforest the landscape. Notice the massive size to these trees that are around 75-80 years old. Then as you drive down to the parking area, you'll notice the field where we start Curly's Record Run. This field was the location of the bunkhouses where the workers once slept. These long buildings are no longer there but if you look close, you can still see the foundations in the ground. (Depends on how much snow we have). Also take notice on your



## WHERE WE SNOWSHOE CONTINUED

right as you enter the parking area. You will see nothing but trees, but if you look closer you will notice where two long garages use to be. These garages housed all the machinery used back in that era. The stone foundations are in the ground and if you look around the area you'll notice bigger trees on the outside of the foundations and smaller 2<sup>nd</sup> growth trees on the inside. A slow succession of how forests grow. The brook we cross from the parking lot to the field is the Lulu Cascade brook. Back in the 1930's when the CCC's lived there, a long building stretched from the parking lot, extended over the brook, and into the field. This building which is now gone was the mess hall. Inside this building also existed a boxing ring where the workers would possibly let off some built up pressure from a long weeks work. Also take notice to the very intricate stonework on the bridges as you enter the parking area and as you start the race going up the hill. This shows you some of the excellent work still left by the CCC's.

As for CCC buildings, only 2 are left at this forest. They are the Nature center and the Ski lodge. All that have done Curly's know of the nature center because this is the building we all cram into for some warmth before and after the race. The nature center, which was going to be torn down because of neglect, used to house the CCC offices. Luckily due to some special money from the state, it was refurbished and saved for all to enjoy and use. The ski lodge, which many of you might not have seen, is not located at the parking area where we run the race. It is located at another area of the park. To see this building is to take pride in the craftsmanship of how the CCC's worked! When you finish running Curly's, and are preparing to exit the forest, take a right and drive about 200 yards down the road and you'll see the building on your right. It is worth the extra two-minute drive.

Some other facts about the forest we run in are that the Shakers logged off the entire mountain and the fields were used for sheep farming back in the 1800's. At the top of Berry Mountain, which is one of the few mountains contained in the forest, is a fresh water pond called



Berry Pond. This pond is spring fed and at 2,150 feet is the highest natural water body in the state of Massachusetts. The auto road, which is closed in the winter, is 5.4 miles and takes you to the scenic vista. This awe-inspiring vista is a beautiful lookout to the west where you can see the Catskills and New York State. The top of Berry Mountain also has 65 acres of wild azalea fields, which is a prime reason why you should re-visit the forest in June so you can see them in bloom. Also within the forest is Balance Rock. It is a 165-ton boulder that is balancing on top of another smaller rock. Upon first glance you would say that shouldn't be. However, many have tried to tip it over by either using dynamite or oxen pulling it with ropes but it hasn't moved. Unless we get an earthquake, this big rock isn't moving. And finally one last unique history fact is that the Berry Mountain and Berry Pond are named after William Berry. William Berry once owned the top of the mountain hence why the features are named after him. However, what many do not know is that he was given that land by George Washington for his participation in the revolutionary war.

So if you have only visited Pittsfield State Forest in the winter to do Curly's, I highly suggest you re-visit in the summer months and take on the many recreational opportunities that exist in this special place. Whether to hike or camp, what else could be better than enjoying our natural world! And remember, its up to us to protect it!

Jay Kolodzinski

**From Farmer Ed...** Jay Kolodzinski proposed to Sheila Osgood on top of Angels Landing in Zion National Park in Utah a little while back, and Sheila said "Yes!" Congratulations to the entire Osgood and Kolodzinski families regarding this wonderful news.

Photos – Page 1, Chris Johnson;  
Page 3, Jay Kolodzinski and Sheila Osgood;  
Page 4, Walt Kolodzinski.

All Photos courtesy of Beth & Brad Herder - - please visit and support their effort at [www.berkshiresports.org](http://www.berkshiresports.org) as well as checking other snowshoe updates on:

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

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

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

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

## ADDITIONAL SNOWSHOE SCHEDULE

Sunday, January 27, 2008	East Orland, ME
<b>GREAT POND MTN</b>	2.3 Miles
Peter Keeney <a href="mailto:pktrldrt@midmaine.com">pktrldrt@midmaine.com</a>	207-288-3909
Saturday, February 23, 2008	Madbury, NH
<b>KINGMAN FARM</b>	5KM
<a href="http://www.acidoticracing.com">http://www.acidoticracing.com</a>	
Saturday, March 15, 2008	Biddeford ME
<b>WINTERS LAST HURRAH</b>	5KM
<a href="http://www.acidoticracing.com">http://www.acidoticracing.com</a>	
Saturday, March 8, 2008	Pittsfield, VT
<b>PITTSFIELD PEAKS MARATHON</b>	6, 13 & 26 Miles
<a href="http://www.peak.com/snowshoe.html">http://www.peak.com/snowshoe.html</a>	