

WMAC SNO-NEWS

THE JOYS OF "CAMP"

Snowshoeing 8 kilometers at the recent Camp Saratoga Snowshoe Race brought back some wonderful childhood memories. It is amazing as you grow up, how much you forget about being a child. Yet it is also amazing how something so simple, such as a place, can bring back memories that have long been forgotten. Stored somewhere in the file cabinets of your mind, it only takes a brief photo, someone saying something, or an old keepsake to bring those memories back to the present day. As for me, I had 8 kilometers on snowshoes to relish in the joyous days of being a child at summer camp.

When I was a little kid summer meant going to camp. It wasn't an over night camp, but an all day 7:30-5, get me out of my parents hair, keep me occupied and keep me out of trouble camp. The camp was only ¾ mile from my house at Look Park, named after the family who donated the land to the city. I remember so much about those days. Camp meant no school-work, but fun and games, swimming, and who knows what other kinds of fun and excitement that our imagination could muster up. Yeah, we did mischievous things but nothing ever malicious and destructive. Back only 20 years ago, video games, ipods, and 200 channel television were not the standard form of entertainment. It was kids using their imaginations and creating fun and entertainment from practically nothing at all.

Camp was something done outside. You got fresh air and learned about your natural settings. You played games with your fellow campers, you did arts and crafts, had scavenger hunts, went swimming in the river, climbed trees, played in the mud, looked for bugs and insects under rocks, swung from rope swings, played dodge ball, and countless other things that would make a child learn a great appreciation for the outdoors. Summer camp was also a place where you were safe. Your parents knew you were being watched and they wouldn't have to worry about you. They also knew that even though you thought you were just having fun and playing games, that camp was building your character and teaching you many life lessons in a very subtle but practical way!

Now that I am an adult, I do not know what opportunities lie out there for kids and summer camps as I do not yet have children. I do know that YMCA's and different organizations alike have programs for kids. However, are they like the summer camps we attended and experienced as children? Nowadays, Little Johnny can't look at Little Bobby wrong without one wanting to sue him or shoot him. When I was at camp, I broke my arm trying to impress the girls on the monkey bars. That was 1986 and no lawsuits or tort claims came out of that event, just a 7 year olds busted ego. How the times have changed. If that happened now, the camp counselor would be sued for not watching the child, the camp would be sued for hiring an incompetent counselor, the monkey bar maker would be sued, the guy who put the monkey bars in, and you get the drift. Actually now that I think about it, do we even have monekybars on playgrounds anymore? So the times have changed, and so

have summer camps having to adjust for our societies messed up issues.

Yet, as I snowshoed through the grounds of the Wilton Wildlife Preserve, I thought of how lucky the area kids must be to have a place like this. I then wondered if they realized how fortunate they were to have a special place like this. As I read the newspaper and watch the news, I see reports of how children are becoming more obese and disconnected with the natural world. It makes me furious that kids would rather stay inside all day and watch unrealistic television shows and dream of a reality that is so far removed from what the real world is. I know not kids all are like this because they have family and friends like us! That brings me some comfort. So at this wildlife preserve and camp, that 93 people were currently snowshoeing through, we were experiencing what I wish not only today's children could but, everyone in this world could experience. Snowshoeing does something to me and maybe to you too, that just makes you feel at a higher level of human existence. You feel at one with yourself or one with nature.

So these thoughts just kept drifting though my head as I meandered my way around this 8k course. The course was hypnotizing in some places, just made my worries disappear and allowed me to continue to remember the good old times of summer camp. The old cabins at the parking area are what I have to thank for bringing these memories back to me, also the name of the race, Camp Saratoga. Something so simple brought me back to my days of being young, free, and not having a concern in the world.



Jessica Hageman leading John Pelton early at Camp Saratoga

THE JOYS OF “CAMP” (continued)

Now I must say, I did have other thoughts in my mind. Those thoughts were of course race related. I had Kenny Clark and another guy right on my heels. I had another guy 50 yards ahead of me. Was I going to hold on to my current 5th place position? Could I catch the guy ahead of me? Were my legs going to fold and watch the sun colored singlet pass and pull away from me? Those were my other thoughts that were criss-crossing the frontal lobes of my brain.



So as soon as I had more kilometers behind me than ahead of me, I thought I would focus more on my race. As I had just been thinking about joyous times, I didn't think it was time to let them fade away so quick. Maybe if I continued to keep the file cabinets of summer camp open in my brain, I would not think about the race and just continue to truck along at my current pace and all would be fine. So I did. I kept the leg turnover at the same rate and thought about the fun times of camp. Kick ball in the fields, sword fights with branches and sticks, jumping off the bridge into the river, scaling the stone buildings of the park, hide and seek in the rhododendron bushes, and running through the underground water culverts.

Well it worked. Before I knew it I was making my way towards the finish, well kind of. As we all know Camp Saratoga has a false finish. Just when you think your finishing, your really not finishing at all, but you are just passing by the finish. This race deceives you because you run by the finish but you still have another kilometer loop to go before you actually finish. And this final kilometer is no walk in the park!



THE JOYS OF “CAMP” (continued)

So I continued to snowshoe towards the finish and thought about how wonderful of a time the children must have that do get the opportunity to enjoy a place like Camp Saratoga. I did get a wonderful sense of ease knowing that if a place like this exists here, then many more must exist all over the country. I thought how they should make new laws in State Constitutions that require all towns to have places like Camp Saratoga and that all children must attend summer camps or just camps in general. These camps should have requirements. They should be like outward-bound camps where kids can learn more from spending time in the woods than getting hours of electronic finger exercises while sitting on the couch.

Well with that final thought on my mind I barreled down the final hill and crossed the line in 36:27. I was psyched. I did the math in my head quick and knew that I snowshoed under a 7:30 pace. After I got my breath, I walked over to the finish to cheer on all my fellow peers as they crossed the line. Everyone seemed to be having an overwhelming sense of joy as they finished. The course, which was beautifully packed by snowmobilers, gave for many fast times. I did witness disbelief of some, who as they rounded the false finish were shocked as they still had more to snowshoe. I waited till the end to cheer in all the racers. There was some excellent sprints as Richard Busa and Konrad Karolczuk gave some all out busts of tremendous energy to beat a few racers by a matter of mere seconds to gain some extra points. The crowd then slowly dispersed toward the warm registration building where all finishers were greeted not only to some warm air, but a wonderful array of various chili's, cookies, and other yummy treats. And if you think the food is the topper, the race had excellent raffle prizes and 2 excellent massage therapists giving free sessions to our aching bodies.

As you think back to Camp Saratoga, I hope I jarred some long lost memories in your minds of things that may have been hidden and were suddenly brought to the forefronts. At times, the things we find that may be so important to us and we think we will never forget somehow get overwritten in our minds. Luckily we do have things that jar our memory and we can re-live those times once again. So lets remember the 2008 Camp Saratoga Snowshoe Race as a joyous day and keep the Barnyard Votes open for this race as it could fill many slots on the ballot!

Jay Kolodzinski



Photos courtesy of Brian Teague, from upper left clockwise — Leaders Robertson, Bolton and Merlis; Veterans Busa, Clark and Brockett; Early top ten Farmer Ed, Snowshoe Bob, Clark and Jay K.

UNDER THE WIRE AT CAMP SARATOGA

Prelude:

Once more Camp Saratoga Snowshoe snuck in under the wire, pulling through with another memorable day at camp to jumpstart the Winter Break school vacation. Last year, we had umpteen inches of freshly fallen snow over previously stark naked dirt, earning our event the "Most Difficult Race of 2007" title. This year, we had another layer of great snow, followed disappointingly by sleet, freezing rain, hail and other assorted earth-bound objects. But would we let that stop us? No way!

The following day a determined crew of volunteers arrived, eager to clear the trails. There is something about the prospect of using large pieces of equipment that seems to bring out the two-year-old in all of us. The pre-vacation campers were no exception. Pieter Litchfield, trail manager and President of the Preserve's Board of Directors, gleefully dispensed branch cutters and chainsaws and then led the parade on his snowmobile. While the preserve was a true winter wonderland with ice-coated branches forming fairytale archways, melting and falling scenery was not conducive to a fast-paced snowshoe race. That first day Pieter, Jim Carlson, Christine McKnight and Wayne Litke put in five hours of back-breaking toil. The following day Pieter, Jim and Wayne were joined by Nancy Burke, Charles Petraske, Lola and I for another three hour effort while Kevin Joyce marked the trail we had painstakingly cleared.

Only this time around some of us were better prepared. Lola, being a Pointer, naturally pointed out all the branches we had neglected to pick up. Wayne, who now wielded a long pole device with a curved blade on top, took his job seriously. He sported a contractor's hard hat in official yellow and moved relentlessly forward, leaving the rest of us to scatter in his wake. Like Little Red Riding Hood's Woodsman, he was intent upon rescuing potential snowshoe racers from multiple whiplash burns. Unlike the seasoned Woodsman, however, he was so delighted with this unprecedented opportunity to experience nature while wielding large pieces of equipment that he neglected to warn the wool cap wearers of his impending victories over ice-bound deadwood. There is a good reason why the shout of "Timber!" is traditionally linked to logging activities.

Finally, as the rest of us trudged wearily back to camp, Pieter and Wayne were spotted huddling over a map, pencil in hand, marking out areas that would require considerable pruning come spring. Pieter Litchfield had just recruited one very eager helper.

The Main Event:

When we returned to camp, we became concerned. There was a reason why we were shedding jackets and gloves that unfortunately had nothing to do with honest sweat. A rise in temperature had turned the skating rink parking lot to slush. Despite our fondness for big machinery, we had no desire to spend race day afternoon rescuing mired motor vehicles before they succumbed to night's falling temperatures.

But luck and the parking lot held, as the following day saw single-digit temperatures and nary a puddle in sight. While this did have certain implications for the comfort of the outhouse users, it did save our race. A day earlier and we would have been pelted with lethal ice spears; a day later and we would have endured forty degree temperatures and yet another sleet/rain mixture.

Since the only salamanders currently allowed in camp are of the natural marsh variety, we no longer had a viable method of heating the cavernous dining hall. So this year we broke camp and regrouped in the cozy (read smaller) Winter Lodge with a working wood stove. Over the summer Larry Gordon and a group of volunteers had cleared out old bunk beds, knocked down walls and installed a working kitchen with electricity and even a refrigerator. Naturally, a previous ice storm had knocked out the electricity and repairs could not be made until the ground thawed in the spring. So our kitchen help Peggy and Andy Keefe, Dawn Pallor and Bill and Cathy Taylor organized some real camp cooking involving Colemans and an outdoor grill. Next year, I promise to remember the marshmallows! Peggy and Dawn even brought a blanket which they hung in a corner for an impromptu changing room.

Ninety-three finishers enjoyed a fast romp on a crushed ice course beaten into submission by numerous rounds of Pieter's snowmobile. Surprisingly, previous records remained undefeated by the fast course. Aaron Robertson of Rouses Point tied the 30:57 record set in 2003 by Richard Bolt, formerly of Manchester, NH, and Kelli Lusk's 38:14 set in 2005 is still intact following Laurel, MD's Carissa Stepien's 43:05 win.

The Epilogue:

It's difficult to say which was more fun – the race itself or the eating, socializing and eating afterwards. It truly amazes me how hungry we can all get after a satisfying day at Camp. But for me, what was the most gratifying was seeing how so many people can pull together to defeat Mother Nature and make this event happen once again. Thanks to you all!

The Finale:

Make sure you log onto www.snowshoeracing.com the weekend of March 8-9 to see how your Camp representatives fared at the United States National Snowshoe Championship in Ogden, Utah.

Jeff and Laura Clark

CAMP SARATOGA 8 KM SNOWSHOE RACE**February 16, 2008****Camp Saratoga****Wilton, NY**

<i>Pl</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Points</i>
01	Aaron Robertson	29	0:30:50	100.00
02	Bob Bolton	47	0:32:09	98.92
03	Josh Merlis	26	0:32:59	97.85
04	Courtney Guerten	32	0:35:40	96.77
05	Jay Kolodzinski	28	0:36:27	95.70
06	Matt Westerlund	35	0:36:48	94.62
07	Ken Clark	45	0:37:01	93.55
08	Ted Norton	42	0:37:27	92.47
09	Edward Alibozek	45	0:37:56	91.40
10	Jason Pare	35	0:38:13	90.32
11	Rich Gargano	30	0:38:49	89.25
12	Bob Dion	52	0:39:25	88.17
13	Dennis Fillmore	55	0:39:31	87.10
14	Charles Petraske	30	0:40:05	86.02
15	Stewart Dutfield	52	0:41:25	84.95
16	Marcus Jaiclin	36	0:41:50	83.87
17	Jeffrey Lutzker	56	0:42:11	82.80
18	Eric Recene	37	0:42:11	81.72
19	Derek Hammel	36	0:42:45	80.65
20	Brenan Tarrier	29	0:42:50	79.57
21	Carissa Stepsen	27	0:43:05	78.49
22	Norm Hecker	47	0:43:10	77.42
<u>23</u>	<u>Gretchen Nace</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>0:43:45</u>	<u>76.34</u>
<u>24</u>	<u>Jessica Hageman</u>	<u>32</u>	<u>0:43:57</u>	<u>75.27</u>
25	John Pelton	68	0:44:00	74.19
<u>26</u>	<u>Sara Brennerq</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>0:44:22</u>	<u>73.12</u>
27	Tom Mack	43	0:44:56	72.04
<u>28</u>	<u>Pamela DelSignore</u>	<u>38</u>	<u>0:45:07</u>	<u>70.97</u>
29	Mike Lahey	56	0:45:12	69.89
30	Sean Curtis	15	0:45:18	68.82
31	Tim Ratowski	35	0:45:29	67.74
32	Vincent Kirby	51	0:45:44	66.67
33	Steve McAlpine	47	0:46:01	65.59
34	Frank Paone	50	0:46:19	64.52
35	Ed (Sr.) Decker	53	0:46:52	63.44
36	Paul Fiondella	61	0:46:58	62.37
37	Mort Nace	41	0:47:23	61.29
38	Juergen Reher	58	0:47:33	60.22
39	Rich Tanchyk	56	0:47:47	59.14
40	Eric Kimmelman	43	0:47:48	58.06
41	Douglas Fox	55	0:48:11	56.99
<u>42</u>	<u>M. O'Leary-Laskey</u>	<u>47</u>	<u>0:48:33</u>	<u>55.91</u>
43	Ed (Jr.) Alibozek	68	0:48:34	54.84
<u>44</u>	<u>Clover Schwartz</u>	<u>41</u>	<u>0:48:39</u>	<u>53.76</u>
<u>45</u>	<u>Donna Ruppel</u>	<u>43</u>	<u>0:48:54</u>	<u>52.69</u>
46	J.J. Favat	63	0:49:55	51.61
47	Keith Decker	45	0:50:17	50.54
48	Jim Carlson	60	0:51:14	49.46
<u>49</u>	<u>Laurel Shortell</u>	<u>41</u>	<u>0:51:20</u>	<u>48.39</u>
50	David Zwald	46	0:51:21	47.31
51	Tom Wright	60	0:51:35	46.24
<u>52</u>	<u>Laney Lutzker</u>	<u>57</u>	<u>0:51:37</u>	<u>45.16</u>
<u>53</u>	<u>Lindsey Sabatka</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>0:51:50</u>	<u>44.09</u>
<u>54</u>	<u>Kim E. Scott</u>	<u>39</u>	<u>0:52:05</u>	<u>43.01</u>
<u>55</u>	<u>Katherine Best</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>0:52:37</u>	<u>41.94</u>
<u>56</u>	<u>Aurora Lamperetta</u>	<u>35</u>	<u>0:52:52</u>	<u>40.86</u>

<i>Pl</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Points</i>
<u>57</u>	<u>Diane Gray</u>	<u>44</u>	<u>0:53:13</u>	<u>39.78</u>
58	Jeff Hattem	56	0:53:31	38.71
59	Mike Schaefer	23	0:53:38	37.63
<u>60</u>	<u>Maureen Roberts</u>	<u>50</u>	<u>0:53:40</u>	<u>36.56</u>
61	David Boles	62	0:54:20	35.48
62	Doug Bartels	42	0:54:47	34.41
63	Charles Brockett	62	0:54:58	33.33
64	Tony Mangano	61	0:54:59	32.26
65	Bob Massaro	64	0:55:04	31.18
<u>66</u>	<u>Denise Dion</u>	<u>49</u>	<u>0:55:57</u>	<u>30.11</u>
67	Steve Mitchell	66	0:56:05	29.03
68	Joe Geiger	66	0:56:17	27.96
<u>69</u>	<u>Candice Murray</u>	<u>38</u>	<u>0:57:28</u>	<u>26.88</u>
70	Peter Thomas	60	0:57:51	25.81
<u>71</u>	<u>Susan Johnson</u>	<u>47</u>	<u>0:57:59</u>	<u>24.73</u>
<u>72</u>	<u>Laura Clark</u>	<u>60</u>	<u>0:58:27</u>	<u>23.66</u>
73	Glenn Schaefer	57	0:58:42	22.58
74	Raymon, Jr. Lee	65	0:59:36	21.51
<u>75</u>	<u>Jill Pederson</u>	<u>57</u>	<u>1:00:32</u>	<u>20.43</u>
<u>76</u>	<u>Jeanne Davis</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>1:01:33</u>	<u>19.35</u>
77	Richard Busa	78	1:01:34	18.28
78	Larry Peleggi	50	1:01:35	17.20
79	Peter Finley	46	1:02:20	16.13
<u>80</u>	<u>Penny Sheedy</u>	<u>49</u>	<u>1:03:03</u>	<u>15.05</u>
<u>81</u>	<u>Ellie George</u>	<u>52</u>	<u>1:03:09</u>	<u>13.98</u>
<u>82</u>	<u>Phyllis Fox</u>	<u>55</u>	<u>1:03:42</u>	<u>12.90</u>
83	Walt Kolodzinski	65	1:05:14	11.83
84	Jamie Howard	42	1:06:27	10.75
85	Konrad Karolczuk	55	1:06:41	9.68
<u>86</u>	<u>Laura J Milak</u>	<u>51</u>	<u>1:06:42</u>	<u>8.60</u>
87	William E Milak	55	1:06:45	7.53
88	Jan Roth	58	1:08:09	6.45
<u>89</u>	<u>Ann Miller</u>	<u>44</u>	<u>1:08:36</u>	<u>5.38</u>
<u>90</u>	<u>Christine McKnight</u>	<u>60</u>	<u>1:10:59</u>	<u>4.30</u>
<u>91</u>	<u>Sibyl Jacobson</u>	<u>65</u>	<u>1:11:44</u>	<u>3.23</u>
92	Jay Kapoor	41	1:27:40	2.15
93	Jorge Constantino	49	1:48:59	1.08



Camp Saratoga helpers and races Jim Carlson and Andy Keefe

HALLOCKVILLE POND "APPLE ORCHARD" 3.7 MILE SNOWSHOE RACE

February 17, 2008

DUBUQUE STATE FOREST

HAWLEY, MA

<i>Pl</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Points</i>
01.	Tim Mahoney	28	0:26:15	100.00
02.	Jay Kolodzinski	28	0:27:14	98.15
03.	Ken Clark	45	0:27:22	96.30
04.	Michael Townsley	39	0:27:37	94.44
05.	Jack Casey	54	0:29:19	92.59
06.	Andy Illidge	41	0:29:49	90.74
07.	Peter Malinowski	53	0:29:58	88.89
08.	Alan Bates	59	0:30:31	87.04
09.	Gabe Roxby	24	0:30:45	85.19
10.	Bill Morse	56	0:31:28	83.33
11.	Sheila Osgood	26	0:32:04	81.48
12.	Pete Katapski	48	0:33:24	79.63
13.	Phil Bricker	54	0:33:35	77.78
14.	Caleb Mitchel	18	0:33:44	75.93
15.	Jessica Hageman	32	0:34:08	74.07
16.	Mike Lahey	56	0:34:20	72.22
17.	Bruce Shenker	55	0:34:21	70.37
18.	Bob Dion	52	0:34:28	68.52
19.	Jan Rancatti	47	0:34:36	66.67
20.	JP Welch	50	0:34:43	64.81
21.	Ed Buckley	49	0:34:52	62.96
22.	Pat McGrath	42	0:34:54	61.11
23.	Howard Bassett	47	0:35:02	59.26
24.	Rich Godin	52	0:35:06	57.41
25.	Wally Lambert	62	0:35:22	55.56
26.	Larry Dragon	42	0:35:48	53.70
27.	Martin Glendon	61	0:37:21	51.85
28.	Vince Kirby	51	0:37:36	50.00
29.	Garrett Buckley	31	0:38:03	48.15
30.	Laurel Shortell	41	0:38:15	46.30
31.	Pete Lipka	56	0:38:23	44.44
32.	Liz Smetna	23	0:38:45	42.59
33.	Chloe McGrath	16	0:39:02	40.74
34.	Ed Alibozek Jr	68	0:39:03	38.89
35.	Sarah Glendon	29	0:39:15	37.04
36.	Dave Boles	61	0:40:46	35.19
37.	Tom McCrumm	62	0:42:22	33.33
38.	Bob Massaro	64	0:42:41	31.48
39.	Denise Dion	49	0:43:01	29.63
40.	Laura Clark	60	0:44:10	27.78
41.	Jackie Lucero	31	0:44:10	25.93
42.	Meghan Ecclesine	23	0:45:37	24.07
43.	Marian Welch	53	0:47:10	22.22
44.	Hana Nower	22	0:48:47	20.37
45.	Kristina Geiger	23	0:49:03	18.52
46.	Rich Busa	78	0:49:47	16.67
47.	Walt Kolodzinski	65	0:51:46	14.81
48.	Bill Milkewicz	53	0:51:52	12.96
49.	Kate Hayes	59	0:54:47	11.11
50.	Mary Warner	23	0:55:58	9.26
51.	Bill Glendon	62	1:01:30	7.41
52.	Konrad Karolczuk	55	1:01:31	5.56
53.	Jeff Clark	61	1:02:37	3.70
54.	Edward Alibozek	45	1:19:30	1.85



Martin and Sarah Glendon



Ed Buckley



SCA Americorps Gang

Photos courtesy of Brad Herder -- www.berkshiresports.org

LISTEN TO YOUR FIANCÉ! (A MISHAP ON THE WAY TO HAWLEY)

I was excited! It was Sunday morning and Sheila and I were heading off to do our 3rd snowshoe race of the year together. We had previously done the Woodford and Cobble Mt races and we would soon be tackling the trails at the Kenneth Dubuque State Forest in the town of Hawley. She was excited, as she has had many other things going on this season that has prohibited her from racing a lot. I, on the other hand was more tired and sore, as I had run at Camp Saratoga the previous morning.



We left Sheila's early as we are both very punctual and like arriving at races early so we can do all our pre-race needs like registering, multiple port-a-jon runs, pre-race warm-ups, gu or hammerge downing, proper attire selection for the race, and of course socializing. We left at 7:45, knowing it was only an hour and 10 minutes to the rustic camp of the SCA volunteers who work at the State Forest. Before we left, I called my father who was going with his Polish Comrades, Wally Lempart and Bill Milkiewicz, because I didn't have my sneakers. I called him to make sure he would bring them so I didn't have to race in my clogs. We also decided to stop at Panara to avoid having to make breakfast. Well actually it was more suited for me as I needed to get my coffee fix and Sheila didn't have any coffee at her apartment.

Hawley, it's a place all us snowshoers know. I was surprised to tell someone (A family member who doesn't run or snowshoe) that I was going to do a snowshoe race in Hawley this weekend and they said, "Oh, I've been there, its by the Quabbin." I was like, "No, actually its by Savoy and Florida." Well the Florida part through them off quite a bit, but they then said, "Ok, yeah I know where that is, somewhere in the Berkshires." I was like, "Yep, you got that right." Well that conversation ended quickly and we were on to other topics of less desirable things. However, I did start thinking how much going to races has made me aware of where things are. I have learned how to get everywhere in New England and not have to use a map. I may not know the street names or route names but I know how to get there. It is a great feeling when you know shortcuts that Google Maps and Mapquest do not know. This wonderful sense of direction was soon about to get Sheila and I in a predicament that could cause us missing the race.

When heading to Savoy, Mt. Greylock, Pittsfield, or Hawley, we almost always go Route 9 through the Berkshires. It's a very scenic road and you can drive reasonable the whole way unless you get stuck behind Ma and Pa Kettle who are out for a Sunday

morning stroll after church. Knowing this road well and knowing all the possible shortcuts to Hallockville Pond, I just simply wasn't paying attention when I was attempted a shortcut.

As you drive route 9 North, you turn right off 9 in Cummington and head towards Plainfield (Rt. 116). Well not thinking or maybe just because I was talking too much, I turned one street too soon. I turned right before the green truss bridge when I was supposed to turn right after the green bridge. Instead of turning around, I decided that we could continue driving towards the Swift River Inn and then turn down Stage Rd and that would bring us back to where we should be. At that point Sheila didn't question my move. She had trust in me. Before we got to the old Swift River Inn, I turned left down a steep dirt road. Well this road being dirt and with the recent weather we had, was all ice. As we went down the hill, the car wasn't sliding or anything so I didn't think much of it. I mean all we had to do was drive down to the bottom of the road, cross the bridge, head up the road to the other side and we would be back on the road we were supposed to be on. Well the downhill went fine and as we started to ascend the tires started spinning. I looked ahead and the road was much steeper than the side we just came down. I started thinking some bad words to myself. I didn't want to stop the car and lose momentum, but we were soon stopped dead in the road on an uphill covered with ice.

Tim Mahoney w/Leaders; Bob Dion and Mike Lahey nearing the finish.



LISTEN TO YOUR FIANCÉ! (cont)

We were stuck! As I tried to not lose my cool and continue to show Sheila I was “the man”, I just continued to spin the tires and smell burning rubber.

After about 5 minutes of tire spinning, I knew we were stuck. The first thing Sheila said was, “Lets drive back down the hill in reverse and go back the way we came.” Well I understood what she was saying but we would then have to drive back up the hill we had just come down in reverse and I didn’t want to because I didn’t think we could. So I had Sheila get behind the wheel and I said I’d try to push the car up the hill. Your saying to yourself that’s not gonna work! Well your right! How could I push a 1-ton car up an icy road? Well I was desperate and I felt horrible because we would miss the race and at that point would be willing to try anything. Well try anything I did. There was an old farmhouse about 40 yards up the road, so I left Sheila at the car and ran up to the house. There were 2 cars in the driveway and a tractor in the garage. I figured some nice old farmer would come out and help us and pull the car up the icy covered road to the main road and we would be all set. Well I knocked on the door and banged on the house for a few minutes. No one answered the door.



Vince Kirby letting it rip!

LISTEN TO YOUR FIANCÉ! (cont)

It was 9 o’clock and no one answered. I then thought about it, we were in the middle of nowhere Plainfield MA, these people were probably still in bed and were thinking who would be knocking at our door at 9 in the morning. That or they were watching us from their bedroom window thinking, “Stupid City folk in a Saturn tried to drive up an icy road in Plainfield, serves them right.”

Well after no avail I did see buckets of sand on their porch but I didn’t dare go on the porch and take them because I didn’t want Farmer Joe coming out with a shotgun and shoot buckshot at me for a simple bucket of sand. So I went back to Sheila and we tried to make progress up the hill by smashing some snow under the tires. Heck, I was desperate and would try anything. Well that didn’t work. 20 minutes had now gone by and I figured we were (Bad word). Well Sheila then said that we were going in reverse down the hill. I was still hesitant but she said it couldn’t be any worse if we stay where we are. If we can get out this way we might as well go down, if we get stuck further down the hill, we are still stuck and gonna need help either way.

I learned a great lesson in this ordeal... Listen to your Fiancé! I was worried about my pride and she was just using common sense and what do you know, her original idea worked. She put the car in neutral and rolled back down the icy road to the bridge and then continued to drive up the opposite hill in reverse to where we saw a spot we could turn around in. She turned the car around and drove back up the hill with no problems. I should have just listened to her to begin with. We were (again) on our way and a good lesson learned was that leaving early is a good thing. Another topic that came up after this slight detour was what if this had happened to Laurell Shortell? This would have been her worst nightmare considering she hasn’t missed a race in years! Sheila said, “Laurel is much smarter than you and would stick to the main roads.”

We arrived at the SCA camp with 30 minutes to spare. My father was wondering where we were? After parking in the congested upper lot I ran down to the main lodge to register while Sheila visited the facilities. I was in a hurry because we were late so I ran down the shoveled path to the building. Right at the end of the path, my feet came out from underneath me and I fell right on my butt. Everyone inside saw this and I heard some chuckles. No one knew what kind of ordeal we had just went through. As I signed up, my father, Walt, said, “I’m sorry but I forgot your racing sneakers, I guess you’ll have to run in your clogs.” That was the last thing I needed to hear! I then yelled at him, “I called you before you left and reminded you not to forget them.” He then commented that when his fellow comrades arrived at the house he forgot them in the shuffle of conversation. AGGHGHH, I thought! I then saw him wink to Bob Dion and saw Bob laughing and at that moment knew he was kidding. Not what I needed to hear at this time!

So I quickly registered both Sheila and I with Beth Herder, who was volunteering her services at the registration table and quickly warmed up my hands at the fireplace. I then met Sheila inside the cabin and told her I’d meet her back at the car in 5 minutes. I had to take care of some business, possibly caused by uptight nerves, before going back to the car to get ready to race. By the time I got my snowshoes on and got properly dressed,

LISTEN TO YOUR FIANCÉ! (cont)



Jackie Lucero's head-gear worried Laura Clark into a sprint finish!

everyone was congregating at the start line, which for this version of the Hallockville Race, would be in the upper lot. I quickly decided that I needed to get a warm-up in. Well this warm-up would be only about three minutes, as I knew the race would be starting very soon. I have been trying to get in a two-mile warm-up this season before racing.

After doing my short jaunt up the snowmobile trail, I saw the beautiful dogs of Brad Herder and knew he would be out capturing photos of the 54 racers who opted to take on the challenge of a 10K but were treated to the 3.7 mile course instead due to hazardous conditions on the 10K course. Snowshoe Guru Ed Alibozek was directing the race and he gave us the pre-race instructions. He basically said you couldn't get lost as long as you kept your head up. Well Pete Lipka, who made a much anticipated surprise appearance, must have missed that part of the speech, as he went off trail around the apple orchard. It was good to have Pete back and hear his jovial comments as he has been missed by many so far this year!

From the start of the race, Tim Mahoney of CMS took the lead and never looked back. Tim who is in his rookie season captured his first snowshoe victory this day. As for the next 3 positions it would be a fight to the finish, with Mike Townsley,

LISTEN TO YOUR FIANCÉ! (cont)

Ken Clark, and myself dueling it out. Mike Townsley was in second, Ken was third, and I was in fourth. These positions stood this way for the out part of the race and also around the apple orchard. When we finished circling the orchard Ken and I had closed the gap on Mike and we were now in the same order but separated only by a matter of feet. I knew I was feeling sluggish from racing the day before, and knew Ken was probably feeling the same. Mike, I had learned only after, was racing in his second snowshoe race ever. As we were making our way back, I knew I had to make a move. I didn't want to make it too early but also didn't want to wait too long. So not too long after passing the last racer who was still on there way out I put on a kick and passed Mike and Ken. I was hoping this move would be smart as I had never raced this course before and was having a hard time judging where I was and how much farther I had left! I knew Brad Herder, who was taking photos, would be a good marker but that would be only yards away from the finish and too late to wait for a kick. Once I passed those two guys I could hear their snowshoes the rest of the way. I didn't look back and just dug down deep trying to avoid the moguls on the trail. Before I knew it, the finish came and I captured my first 2nd place ever in a snowshoe race. I was very pleased after having raced the day before. No sooner had I finished and turned around, Kenny was crossing the finish line. It was a close one. Within seconds after Kenny finished Mike crossed the line. Mike later said he is slowly learning this snowshoe-racing thing. I know he is going to a force on the circuit if he continues snowshoe racing.

I then waited in great anticipation for Sheila, as I was hoping she would be the first woman. After I saw Bill Morse cross the finish line, I saw Sheila. She came hammering down the hill to the finish line. She was the first woman and I could see the gleaming smile on her face and she then smiled at me. I could see the happiness in her. I could also read her mind at that moment and knew that she was thinking that if I didn't listen to her with the car episode and she missed the race, that I would have been in major trouble. Well good thing I listened to her!

After we both regained our strength we 'shoed back to cheer on remaining snowshoers and also join in with my father Walt, who has been having knee pain the past few races, and his friend Bill, who he was now racing against. My father overtook Bill in the last 100 yards, and you could see the agony on his face caused by his knee. Even though his left knee might be shot his determination isn't! Like he says, I had the right one operated on 3 years ago, come March they can do the left knee!

I learned one great lesson from this day and it is listen to your fiancé! I also learned another thing... I ran in two races in two days and was exhausted, sore and tired and one would think you wouldn't do that again, but after talking to the crazy (in a good way) Josh Merlis of ARE fame, I will be doing my first ever three snowshoe races in a weekend this coming weekend. As an extra bonus I get to ride in the van, I can't wait. Oh wait, one more thing; I can't forget to push for what Hallockville Pond "Apple Orchard Version" gives to the Barnyard, best Scenic Wonder, running around the old orchard!

Jay Kolodzinski

Photos by Brad Herder – www.berkshiresports.org