

1999 WMAC SEASON – EDITION ONE

SNOSHU-NEWS

SOUTH POND IS IN THE PINK!

The South Pond Shuffle snowshoe race went off smoothly on January 16th, 1999, thanks to three generations of the Alibozek family. The Sherpa Company provided loaner snowshoes for the many people trying this for the first time. Farmer Ed sent 49 of us off on the start at 10:30 AM into some very difficult snow conditions. The snow was probably 20 - 24 inches deep with an icy crust on top. This made it extremely difficult for the lead runners to break the trail for the rest of us.

I started out at a fast pace with about six other runners, but after about a half a mile lost contact with them. At that point I had to move over and let some faster runners behind me get by in the single-track course. On the far side of Tyler Swamp the going became extremely tough. I was gaining on a pack of runners who turned out to be the lead pack. I thought I was hot stuff catching up to the leaders.

When I got to the back of the line, falling into about 9th position, I saw why I had caught them. The leader was having such a difficult time breaking the crusty snow that he couldn't do anything but a fast walk. Nine of us were lined up enjoying the freshly broken trail. I noticed that no one in the line sprinted past the leader and volunteered to take over the snow-breaking duties! Others began catching up to the back of the line as time went on. Some actually spurted past me cutting into the line, not realizing that there was nowhere to go unless you wanted to break crust at the front of the line.

When the course made the loop around Tyler Swamp, hitting the previously broken trail leading back, I knew all these good runners were going to take off. I was wondering whether I could stay with some of them when that happened. I never found out because the two guys who had spurted past me in the slow conga line hadn't been able to go with the pace of the leaders, and I was stuck behind them. Several attempts to pass outside the tracks proved comical.

With a trail opening I would gather my strength, try to sprint through unbroken snow to the outside, and immediately fall flat on my face as my snowshoe tips caught on the crusty snow. Finally, they must have felt sorry for me and preferred to let me pass rather than see me commit suicide with my kamakazi dives into the snow. One let me pass, then the other, and I was off to the races on the last half-mile to the finish. Unfortunately, I couldn't catch anyone by then, and finished 9th, about 45 seconds behind the 8th runner, awesome Beth Herder.

Sneaky Jim Campiformio, 10th place finisher, again tried to sneak up behind me for the kill. However, I knew he was there, as I kept looking over my shoulder on the 60 yard open road sprint to the finish line after exiting the woods. He had on

a really good disguise and was tiptoeing to keep me from hearing him come up from behind.

My daughter, Erin, had hopes of being first woman finisher. However, two factors stood in her way, veteran runners Beth Herder and her sister Sweep Voll, so Erin had to be satisfied with third woman finisher. Erin was in good shape for running, but hadn't been on snowshoes for a year. She fell down 12 times. Why she counted falls I have no idea, other than compulsivity inherited from her father. Erin only wore thin gloves, which are fine for running if you don't fall into the snow. Her hands got so cold from falls that Gotha Swann gave her his gloves. After the race Erin raved about the nice man that gave her his gloves. As I have said before, trail runners are great people; thanks Gotha for rescuing my daughter from frostbite. I don't think she could have finished as well as she did without those gloves, as she would have had to stop and warm her hands.

The top five finishers were Leigh Schmitt, Bryan Dragon, Keith Schmitt, Ken Clark, and Steve Cangemi. Bryan Dragon, at 15 years old, continues to amaze. The top five women finishers were Beth Herder, Sweep Voll, Erin Worsham, Laura Clark, and Debra Reno.

The fashionable red, white, and blue of the trail running season has given way to a stylish pink coat, rose colored glasses, matching hair band, and freshly clipped toenails, most likely with pink polish. I am speaking of none other than Sweep Voll. Sweep let me look through her glasses after the race; they made everything look pink. She actually ran the race with those glasses on. I noticed a small label on the back of her coat that said, "Warning: keep away from magnets." Beth told me that Sweep had a new piece of metal somewhere, but wouldn't volunteer exactly where it was located. I guess I'll have to use my imagination (or my metal detector). Eighty cents to go.

Men's fashion was again dominated by Karl Molitoris and his orange shorts. He is the only runner to go out in bare legs. Rumor has it that he hasn't washed those shorts since last year's race.

After the race the Alibozeks put on a great spread of food. It amazes me how they can provide a full spread of hot cooked food in the middle of a freezing wilderness. They even had hot chocolate! Thanks Donnalee for the extra touch you add to these events; you are the tiger! It's on to Bigelow Hollow in Union, CT on February 13th for the second in the snowshoe race series! Let's hope for powder. See you there.

Bob the WorSham

1999 SOUTH POND SHUFFLE 4 MILE SNOWSHOE RACE**JANUARY 16, 1999 SAVOY STATE FOREST, FLORIDA / SAVOY, MA**

1. Leigh Schmitt	26	South Deerfield, MA	51:20	49 points
2. Bryan Dragon	15	Cheshire, MA	51:35	48 points
3. Keith Schmitt	30	Lee, NH	52:05	47 points
4. Ken Clark	36	Somers, CT	52:10	46 points
5. Steve Cangemi	37	Red Hook, NY	52:55	45 points
6. Steve Jensen	37	Stafford Springs, CT	53:26	44 points
7. John Tremblay	37	Cheshire, MA	53:27	43 points
8. Beth Herder	40	Pittsfield, MA	53:28	42 points
9. Bob Worsham	53	Woodstock, CT	54:15	41 points
10. Jim Campiformio	49	Ashford, CT	54:20	40 points
11. John Carey	37	Oxford, MA	54:41	39 points
12. Jim Preite	34	North Adams, MA	54:42	38 points
13. Karl Molitoris	42	Stafford Springs, CT	54:50	37 points
14. Larry Dragon	38	Cheshire, MA	55:40	36 points
15. David Boles	52	New Paultz, NY	55:41	35 points
16. Sweep Voll	37	Pittsfield, MA	55:47	34 points
17. Poncho Mach	57	Adams, MA	55:48	33 points
18. Wayne Stocker	44	Hampden, MA	55:49	32 points
19. Paul Hartwig	42	Adams, MA	57:22	31 points
20. Ed Alibozek Jr	59	Adams, MA	57:40	30 points
21. Bob Dion	43	Readsboro, VT	1:01:10	29 points
22. Bill Donovan	44	North Adams, MA	1:01:12	28 points
23. Liam Bradey	42	Lynn, MA	1:01:20	27 points
24. Erin Worsham	21	Woodstock, CT	1:01:30	26 points
25. John Grenier	48	Leicester, MA	1:01:45	25 points
26. Ken Fairman	55	Granby, MA	1:02:15	24 points
27. Laura Clark	51	Saratoga Springs, NY	1:02:30	23 points
28. Debra Reno	44	Hopedale, MA	1:03:40	22 points
29. Leon Beverly	72	Stamford, VT	1:06:15	21 points
30. Stan Tiska	41	Hinsdale, MA	1:06:45	20 points
31. Richard Busa	69	Marlboro, MA	1:07:50	19 points
32. Linda Urko	44	Sheltonville, MA	1:09:05	18 points
33. Claudine Preite	31	North Adams, MA	1:10:45	17 points
34. Scott Rollins	50	Shelburne Falls, MA	1:10:48	16 points
35. Laurel Rollins	42	Shelburne Falls,	1:10:49	15 points
36. Steve Mitchell	57	Gansevoort, NY	1:10:58	14 points
37. Pat McGrath	34	Adams, MA	1:18:10	13 points
38. Tracy McGrath	31	Adams, MA	1:18:11	12 points
39. Charles Cutler	61	West Hawley, MA	1:18:45	11 points
40. Mark Syrett	50	Hampden, MA	1:18:50	10 points
41. Sarah Pandiscio	09	Simsbury, CT	1:19:20	09 points
42. Curt Pandiscio	37	Simsbury, CT	1:19:22	08 points
43. Bobby Voll	36	Pittsfield, MA	1:23:30	07 points
44. Karin Bradley	41	Pittsfield, MA	1:23:31	06 points
45. Chris Dunne	39	Rosendale, NY	1:29:15	05 points
46. Meg Dunne	38	Rosendale, NY	1:29:40	04 points
47. Konrad Karolczuk	46	Windsor Locks, CT	1:34:14	03 points
48. Gotha Swann	49	Pittsfield, MA	1:39:50	02 points
49. Ellen Mach	53	Adams, MA	1:45:15	01 points

YEAR 2 AT SOUTH POND

The 1999 Southern New England Snowshoe Series started with a shudder as temperatures hovered at 11 degrees for the duration at South Pond. Ice clung to the tree branches in a wrap of glitter that reflected sunlight that never was as participant's warm smiles threatened to melt both South and North Ponds.

Shuffling around the frozen wilderness known as Savoy, the 2nd annual Shuffle displayed a large field of participants that did not lack for heavy hitting talent. Eight of last years top ten finishers all were back, including 1997 New England Trailrunning Circuit Champion Bob Dion, the first ever overall winner at South Pond and forever wearer of the gray jersey. Hopeful successor to the throne, 1998 Snowshoe Series Champ Bryan Dragon, was back for a second attempt at the Shuffle having gone through what appears to be a healthy growth spurt. The remainder of the competitors included several who would have something to say about the quest for number one.

The ladies field included all but one of last season's finishers, with several possible new candidates for favorite. Initial women's champ Laurel Rollins was back defending her title from nearby Shelbourne Falls, and while the majority of ladies arrived from neighboring communities a few traveled a quarter of the day to take part in this event. The scope of ages for the ladies was really impressive as it ran from nine years old to mid fifties. Almost 30% of the overall participants were women, really encouraging news for those who are used to much smaller turnout for trailrunning events (snowshoes closest cousin).

While 1998 was "The Year of Speed" at South Pond, with the first 9 finishers over the line under 45 minutes, 1999 was "The Year of the Ladies". Women set course records in every age category available!! This is really remarkable considering the conditions were as tough as one could imagine for snowshoeing. A couple inch layer of crust on top of a couple feet of snow made breaking trail very difficult. The effort involved caused several lead runners to take turns at the front, and I imagine it wasn't until the 6th or 7th snowshoer through that the course actually became easy. Each step allowed feet to crash through to the soft snow underneath and the lip of crust would snag the uplifting foot trying to face-plant the leader. All those who put forth the effort breaking trail truly displayed heroic intentions for the followers, thanks!!

The course is 4 rolling miles around the east side of North Pond, the west and south sides of South Pond and all of Tyler Swamp. For inspiration, a glance at any of these frozen wonders should have been enough to brighten weary spirits. The solitude and quiet of winter in the woods is a pursuit worth striving for.

Leigh Schmitt showed tremendous strength edging out a 15 second victory over Bryan Dragon, who finished 2nd for the second consecutive year. Word from the front was Leigh did the majority of the breaking, making the victory even more remarkable. 1998 New England Trailrunner Grand Tree Champion Keith Schmitt finished 3rd, slightly ahead of a fast closing Kenny Clark and Steve Cangemi.

The top finish of the day for the dozen spectators in attendance was for positions 6th thru 8th. From out of the woods came 1st women Beth Herder, followed closely by John Tremblay and

first time snowshoer Steve Jensen. The final 60 - 80 yards over the open picnic area allowed for a sprint that ended with Steve surging past both Beth and John on the outside in the last 10 yards and JT also nipping Beth just prior to the wire. This was one motivational finish!!

Beth Herder put on one of the most remarkable performances in New England running circles at the 1998 Mt. Greylock Centennial Marathon, finishing in the top ten. Her display on snowshoes at the '99 South Pond Shuffle, while not at the level of the marathon, certainly shocked most in attendance!! Finishing this high in the standings on such a difficult day is mind-boggling. Beth started a surprising trend at this seasons Shuffle by setting a new ladies course record. Each age category of women also continued setting new marks.

2nd overall women and new CR holder for the 30+ division was Sweep Voll, who out ran WMAC President Poncho Mach and Wayne Stocker down the stretch for 16th overall. Nice display of courtesy, guys. Erin Worsham finished 3rd overall and was found picking the brains of the Sister Act for training secrets afterward. The young Ms. Worsham broke her own CR for 20+ females. Laura Clark was the 4th overall women to finish and set a brand new 50+ CR in the process. Her traveling companion Steve Mitchell had to be the happiest shoer of the day as he immediately thought of re-entering the woods for another loop after finishing!! The next two ladies across the line, Deb Reno and Linda Urko traveled about 6 hours round trip to participate and really had fine finishes for their effort. The final CR set for the ladies was by Sarah Pandiscio, whose time of 1:19:20 stands for all ages from 01 - 19!!!!

The one Course Record set in the Men's Division was by Richard Busa for 60+, in his final year of eligibility (he hits 70 this October). It was a fierce battle between Richard and the oldest competitor of the day, Leon Beverly (72) as Richard told me Leon passed him with ½-mile to go. A third 60+ participant, Charles Cutler also had a fine finish. I hope that we can continue to draw a good representation of more mature shoers for these events. The smiles on the faces of Richard and Leon as they embraced after it was over was truly heartfelt.

Special thanks to Tim Zelazo, Acting Park Supervisor at Savoy Mountain State Forest, who made sure we were well taken care of for the event. Next year Tim hopes to install a wood stove in the changing building for our use!! I would like to thank our sponsors: Coca Cola, Hammer Nutrition, NMC, Eric Perez, Runners World, Sherpa Snowshoes, Snowshoer Magazine, Eric Thibaud, WMAC.

Finally, the race helpers: Judy and Ed Alibozek Jr, Konrad Karolczuk, Chloe McGrath, Tracy and Patrick McGrath, John Scalise and most of all Donnalee Vanier. The lot of you made the event happen, while I just had to stand around with a clipboard. I am grateful to all of you.

And all of you who brought extra food !! Thank you very much for helping make this event a success. To each participant... your smiles made the work worth it!! Thank all of you for making the day special!!

Farmer Ed

CHURNING THIGHS OF FURY

On Saturday, January 16, I went to Savoy State Forest to run the South Pond Shuffle 4 Mile Snowshoe Race. On Friday, in spite of frigid temperatures, it rained all day, creating about two inches of crust on top of the generous covering of snow.

When we got to Savoy on Saturday, the opinion seemed to be unanimous; it was going to be tough out there. The crust was not strong enough to support any of us. Each step involved breaking through the crust, and sinking up to ones knees.

As we lined up for the start, it was fascinating to see the variety of snowshoes and clothing we all choose for this sport. The best dressed award has to go to Bob Dion, in his one piece, yellow and blue, aerodynamic, Nordic skiing outfit. Karl Molitoris also made quite the splash in his orange shorts, wearing nothing but skin underneath. In the eleven degree cold, I tried to think as little as possible about bare legs. Me? I went with my usual polypropylene underneath fleece on my top and hands, with a single layer of tights on the bottom and a fleece headband. Of course I was wearing my trusty Good Thunder Lightenings.

As Race Director Ed yelled "go", we were off. It felt like the start of a cross country race at Van Cortlandt Park, at a super concentrated strength. The runners were condensed into a much smaller space, and all had enormous feet. There were churning thighs of fury, flying snow, and clattering snowshoes. Somehow, I emerged from this melee in seventh place. As we headed further into the woods, there was a considerable length of broken trail. We were able to continue this pace, separating ourselves from the rest of the field. At first, being at the back of the lead pack seemed like a good place to be. That was until I noticed the domino theory working in this single track of broken snow. Every time the runner ahead of me stumbled, I had nowhere to go, and stumbled as well. As a few of us straggled, I thought it was time to move up in this pack. As I ran out of the track, my upper body maintained forward momentum, while my legs came to a full halt. The resulting face plant may have been my best ever. Maybe passing isn't part of the rules of today's game. I returned to my position at the back of this pack, and played nicely.

The course is a big lollipop. By the end of the stick, the distance between the leaders and my end of the pack had stretched a bit. Early in the loop, I caught up again. "This is great!", I thought. "I'm back with the leaders, running really well". Then I realized what was happening. We had reached the unbroken part of the course. The trail could not be broken at faster than a walking pace. As the leader broke trail, the rest of us followed in single file. Three or four runners took a turn at the lead, but one runner did most of the trail breaking. I thought it should have been like a bicycle race, with all of us in that pack being compelled to take a turn at the front, but I never worked my way up closer than fourth place.

As this long march continued, the pack would pick up more runners. Positions only changed when the someone would voluntarily relinquish their position, or when someone would fall. Significant dips in the course proved to be most fun. At

the bottom of the dip, several of us would fall. Then we would scamper up, reforming our line in scrambled positions. Late in the loop, during one of these scrambles, I received an eyeful of snow, which is better than the eyeful of snowshoe I almost received. When I regained my vision, I realized I had lost another place. I thought this was no big deal, since we'd been shuffling around all run. I obviously had no idea what was about to happen.

Soon, the leaders finished the loop. Finding themselves on broken trail, the pack just exploded. Before I knew what had happened, the leaders were out of sight. Meanwhile, I was behind runners who weren't interested in picking up the pace. I became very itchy, looking for a chance to pass. Finally, on a sufficiently straight section of trail, I announced my intentions to pass on the left. I moved out of the track, bulled through the high powder for a few strides, then pushed my way back into the track, perhaps somewhat rudely. I then took off, running faster than I ever have in snowshoes. It was too late to catch the pack, but I was sure going to feel like I had raced. I went into the event wondering what a short, four mile snowshoe race would feel like. The question should have been what would a half mile snowshoe race would feel like. I finished in 52:55, which got me fifth place.

Many snowshoe races are held on groomed, or snowmobile flattened courses. There is certainly a place for such events, but my snowshoe sentiments are similar to my ski sentiments. What's the use of having these things if we have to stay on groomed trails? The tiny bit of my consciousness that wasn't devoted to placing my snowshoes in appropriate places, and picking them up without catching the tips on crust, noticed that this was a beautiful course. I don't know when I've had this much fun at a race.

Afterwards, as advertised, the Alibozeks put out an impressive spread, featuring burghers, pups, chili and soup. Though the temperature had soared to fifteen degrees, it still struck me as somewhat cold to hang around outside, eating and talking. This did not dissuade these hardy souls. If there is one thing we seem to like more than a good trail run, it's chowing down after a good trail run.

The next race in the Southern New England Snowshoe Series is the Frigid Figure Eight, at Bigelow Hollow State, followed by the ever popular Hawley Kiln Klassic. See you there!

Steven Cangemi

SNAPSHOTS FROM SOUTHPOND

We arrived late, just barely before the start. Ed and John helped us very quickly put those contraptions on our feet. Ed described it as like a scene from the Indy 500 - our pit stop crew was lightening fast! No time to practice with those snowshoes, we made it to the start line just in time to hear Ed say "go". Wait. I haven't even got my watch set! Oh well...

We were at that very back of the Pack - and, I have since discovered, that is not the place to be in a snowshoe race. There were a number of us lined up behind one guy, and it seemed impossible to pass anyone in those conditions. I'm sort of glad to know that everyone had the same trouble, as I thought it was just my inexperience that kept me falling on my face every time I tried to go around! I spent alot of time laughing and trying to pick myself up out of the white stuff! It took me over a mile to finally break free and then I was pretty much by myself the rest of the time. Hey. there's a "water stop"! Frozen fig newtons and all! What a treat, Ed! Hmm... what's this? Snowshoe tracks that lead off the trail, dead-end beside a tree and there's a suspicious looking discoloration in the snow. Guess I'll forget about picking up a handful of snow to wash down that newton...

Finally, I arrive at the finish. It seems strange that the pedestrian pace I was "running" was absolutely the best I could do coming down those final yards. And what do I see after crossing the invisible finish line, but Karl M. wearing SHORTS, with knee high argyle socks and particularly attractive knees, bloodied from his kamikaze attack of this course. Where are the fashion police when you need them? I hope that picture I took of you comes out, Karl!

Here comes Richard Busa! Smiling like everything, he amazes me. The guy just did a 50k a week before, and he's here still going strong! And here's my friend, Linda, her first time ever in snowshoes, and she's doing great. She says she counted about 30 times that she fell. but she loved it! Afterwards, we're freezing and someone directed us to the changing area. About to go inside, I hear men's voices. "Hey", I said, "I thought this was the WOMEN'S changing area!!" "It may be," a male voice answered, "but we're all in here together!" That's why I love these trail races. We're just all one big happy family!

Donnalee and Ed had prepared an unbelievable feast in those wintry conditions! However, trying to eat, or open a soda can, with frozen fingers that just WOULD NOT COOPERATE made this a bigger challenge than those four miles of crusty snow!

We left to go back home - a six hour round trip for us. Nobody at the race seemed to think it was at all unusual that we would drive 6 hours for a 4 mile race! Maybe that says something for our mutual obsession!

All in all, it was great fun, and I would love to try it again. However, I heard through the grapevine that Karl designed the course for the next event, and that means there's no telling

what we'll be doing there! Will you get the dartboard out again, Karl?

Deb Reno

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1999 SOUTH POND SHUFFLE AGE GROUP WINNERS

00 - 19	Bryan Dragon	51:35
	Sarah Pandiscio	1:19:20
20 - 24	Erin Worsham	1:01:30
25 - 29	Leigh Schmitt	51:20
30 - 34	Keith Schmitt	52:05
	Claudine Preite	1:10:45
35 - 39	Ken Clark	52:10
	Sweep Voll	55:47
40 - 44	Karl Molitoris	54:50
	Beth Herder	53:28
45 - 49	Jim Campiformio	54:20
50 - 54	Bob Worsham	54:15
	Laura Clark	1:02:30
55 - 59	Poncho Mach	55:48
	Ellen Mach	1:45:15
60 - 64	Charles Cutler	1:18:45
65 - 69	Richard Busa	1:07:50
70 - 74	Leon Beverly	1:06:15

WMAC SNOWSHOE SERIES
93 BRANDYWINE LANE
SUFFIELD, CT 06078

CUT ENTRY FORM ALONG DOTTED LINE AND SEND WITH FEE TO:

EDWARD ALIBOZEK 93 BRANDYWINE LANE SUFFIELD, CT 06078

NAME _____ **AGE** _____ **GENDER** _____
ADDRESS _____ **NEED SNOW SHOES?** _____ (**PLEASE ADD \$3.00 IF YES**)
CITY _____ **STATE** _____ **ZIP** _____
PHONE _____ **ENTRY** \$ _____ **\$5 Figure 8 / \$7 Hawley by 02/01/99 / \$10&\$12 AFTER
TEE** \$ _____ **M L XL (\$5.00)**
SHOES \$ _____ **\$3.00**
TOTAL \$ _____
EVENT _____ **FRIGID FIGURE EIGHT 5KM 02/13/99**
HAWLEY KILN KLASSIC 7 MILES 02/20/99
BOTH

In consideration of this entry being accepted, I hereby for my heirs, executors and assigns waive and release any and all claims for damages I may have against the director, sponsors, their representatives, property owners, successors, or assigns for any and all injuries suffered in said event.

Signature (parent if under 18) _____ **Date** _____