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The Adams Club displayed the SAM trailer at their club booth at the Adams Aggie Fair. PHOTO BY JOE ROGGE



Burgy Bullet's new Skandic will be pulling a drag and smoothing the trails this winter. PHOTO BY KEVIN KUKUCKA

Club Photos

See Club News on page 3



Mill Valley Snowmobile Club members gather at Roll-A-Way bowling lanes in Ware for the end of the year bowling poker run fundraiser.

PHOTO BY NATHAN SANSOUCY



James Meara of the Chesterfield Four Seasons Club helps with some late season trail clearing last year.

PHOTO BY BILL GOLASKI



Future Knox Trail member Anthony Gamelli was 6 months old when he visited the Sled Expo for the first time with his mother, Sunshine Gamelli.

PHOTO BY JEFF GAMELLI

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The Snowmobile Association of Massachusetts is committed to enhancing safe snowmobiling in Massachusetts.



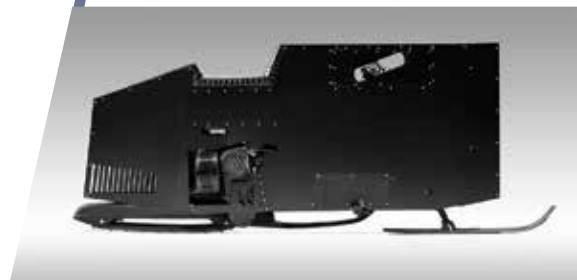
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ON THE COVER

Follow the leader, from one field to another, in the hills of Bernardston.

PHOTO BY DAN GOULD

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President's Message

BY DAN GOULD

The Off-Season

Good-bye. Good riddance. It was nice to know ya. Summer that is. In fairness, last winter wasn't all that great either, as in not at all, but at least my thighs didn't stick together.

The Farmer's Almanac insists this winter will be different, and if you can't believe them, who ya gonna believe... a television weather reporter in a \$1,500 two-tone dress? I'm leaning towards the Almanac's crystal ball and a snowy February, although statistically January is the snowiest month. I'm game for that, too. Considering that everyone already forgot we broke all sorts of snowfall records just two years ago, a little forgiveness is in order. We still love you Mother Nature.

My spring was pretty good. Actually it was amazing. First, I got to snowmobile in Russia, a saddlebag trip smack-dab into Siberia, where the snow is measured in meters. I spent another week sightseeing in Moscow, including a tour of the Kremlin. It was a breathtaking experience, which I plan on repeating in the near future. A full report of my adventures will appear in an upcoming issue of American Snowmobiler magazine, and in these pages, too.

If that wasn't enough, I fulfilled a lifetime dream of attending the Indy 500 with my

family this past May. The 100th anniversary, no less. It doesn't get any better than being surrounded by a half million fellow motor-heads at the world's largest one-day sporting event, while land-based missiles zing by at over 230 MPH. Having A.J. Foyt stroll by one morning was a stunner. My life is now complete.

What's not complete is the implementation of SAM's new online trail pass purchase system. We're close, though. This is a major undertaking, and once in place, will make obtaining a trailpass as simple as ordering socks or a hammer from Amazon. At least, that's the plan. We are shooting for January, maybe... fingers crossed, don't get mad if we're late. I'm a volunteer, after all.

In the meantime you can still get a trail pass the same way you've done in the past, except SAM now offers a significant early bird discount. Yup, if you haven't heard, SAM introduced a unified dues structure for 2016-2017, which you can read in detail on page 12. If you're as frugal as I am, purchase your trail pass before December 15 and save 20%. They will also be available at the Sled Expo, October 15 & 16. The Registry is also expected to be on hand, so you can renew or register a sled or OHV. See you there. 🐾

Online at sledmass.com

- Poll: Are you ready to ride or do you wait until the last minute?
- Sell Your Sled or Trailer at the Sled Expo's Used Sled Corral
- How To Register Your Vintage Snowmobile
- FAQ: Trail Map for iPhone & Android
- SAM College Scholarship Application
- The Sled Expo: October 15 & 16



ADAMS SNO DRIFTERS

by Chrissy Satko and Joe Rogge



We open our 2016 season looking forward to a successful year. A snowmobile club is involved with much more than simply clearing and grooming trails during the winter. We distributed free snowmobiling literature at the Adams Agricultural Fair, and will soon make a sizeable donation to the Fall Run Motorcycle Rally. Thank you SAM for use of the SAM trailer and materials. Great PR! We are working with landowners to keep key trails open. In one case, it will require a significant amount of work to get a major trail re-routed. Landowners need to feel they can trust our club to "do it right." Thankfully the landowner is supporting our relocation effort. The real work will be done during our Sunday Trail Trims. We are also eagerly awaiting to hear about the status of our grant application and development at the Greylock Glen area. Please do not take the trails for granted. Respect the trails or you may find them closed. We have also started our regular monthly meetings at the Adams American Legion on the 2nd Thursday of the month at 7pm. Check out our website adamssno-drifters.webstarts.com. That's it for now.

BERKSHIRE SNOW SEEKERS

by Randy Toth



Come experience the excitement of snowmobiling in the Berkshires. Our first-class groomer fleet consists of three Tucker Sno-Cats, a Thiokol, a tracked ATV and four snowmobile-based groomers. Dues are only \$70 for each snowmobile (\$55 if you join before December 15) and they include a club membership, a SAM membership and a trail permit. Join via snail-mail: PO Box 1102, Pittsfield MA 01202, via our website: berkshiresnowseekers.com, via a club meeting at 7pm on the 1st and 3rd Tuesday of the month from September thru mid-April at the Skyline Country Club on Route 7 in Lanesboro, or via one of our conveniently located trail permit outlets at a participating local business: - Pittsfield Lawn & Tractor (Pittsfield), Ronnie's (Pittsfield), Friendly Fred's (Windsor), Sangar's General Store (Windsor), Hinsdale Trading Company (Hinsdale) and Lanesboro BP Gas Station (Lanesboro). Please visit the SAM website to see our club's scheduled events and our grooming reports covering October Mountain State Forest, Pittsfield State Forest and the Windsor Area. Grooming reports are promptly posted in the SAM forums by our trail coordinators within hours of grooming. See you on the trails!

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BERNARDSTON-GILL-LEYDEN

by Brad Stafford, president



Don't blink... it's that time of year again. The days are getting shorter. The temperatures and the leaves are starting to drop. But the most important of all for our sport is that the snowmobile clubs are stepping up their efforts to get the trails ready with the hopes that it will be a snowy winter. Last year, as we all know, was a snow bust! But all the clubs and trails were ready. To do this takes a huge commitment of both time and money. The clubs rely on members' support. Make a special effort this year to help your local club in any way you can.

Our club will be hosting one of our biggest fundraisers on November 13. It will be our 15th annual Snowmobile Swapmeet and Vintage Sled Show. There will be new/used sleds, parts, accessories, food, registrations and we anticipate the Massachusetts Environmental Police mobile station will be there again for state registration, vintage inspections and more. Watch our Facebook page Bernardston Gill Leyden Snowmobile Club for updates and details. Hope to see you there! Until then, "Keep the Rubber Side Down."

BUCKLAND RIDERS

by Steven Howland, secretary



Will we get snow this year? I'm always optimistic that we'll get dumped on, but snow or no snow there's work to be done and we are always looking for more trail work help and more meeting partici-

pants. We are working on a couple of trail re-routes; one around a new home built right on a major trail. Fortunately, the landowners are willing to work with us, but it is always a reminder of how tenuous our trail system is and the importance of making contact with new landowners and making them feel like they are part of a community of friendly, outdoor loving neighbors. Trail work-day announcements go out by email, so please visit our webpage bucklandriders.com and sign up for the email list. We post on Facebook as well, so you can "like" our page at facebook.com/Buckland-Riders-Snowmobile-Club. Want even more fun? Join us for monthly meetings September through April. Meetings are held at the Buckland Fire Department on the second Monday of the month at 7pm. See you there.

BURGY BULLETS

by Kevin Kukucka, secretary



Hello fellow snow lovers! We are out doing trail work and always need extra help. We meet every Sunday at the clubhouse at 9 sharp. We are working to button up repairs on our grooming fleet to be ready for the massive amounts of snow this season! We are in need of some carpentry work on the clubhouse. If you have any time to donate please contact us, it would be a huge help. Club meetings are every 2nd & 4th Wednesday of the month at 7pm. We have memberships and SAM passes available at the clubhouse and at Valley Motorsports. Our annual holiday party is scheduled

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for December 3 at 6pm with a roast beef dinner and live band. We have also scheduled a club ride for January 14 and a poker run for January 28, both leaving the clubhouse at 9am. Don't forget our annual "Big Game" party with chili cook-off and the Daytona 500 party with pot-luck dinner. Check our Facebook page for details and updates of upcoming events, or call Kevin at 413-559-7920. A big thanks to all that continue to help the club to operate on a daily basis. Clubhouse winter hours start December 30 and are: Fri. 6-10, Sat. 10-10 and Sun. 10-6ish. Let it snow!

CHESTERFIELD FOUR SEASONS

by Bill Golaski, treasurer



Hello all, we're happy to see summer is gone. Now our thoughts turn to the snowmobiling season. The club has been very busy this fall with clubhouse rentals and events. We have also done a lot of improvements to the club grounds. Trail work has already been started but will continue into December. More help is always needed, so stop in and lend a hand with the trails. Please watch for any re-routes and please stay off the old trails.

The club has won a second grant from the state for a groomer and drag. This will be a great boost to our grooming fleet. The trails and grooming has really been great the past few years and will be even better with a new machine added to the fleet.

The club will be doing its best to be open on Friday PM, Saturday 11 to PM, and Sunday 11 to 5 +/-, but it's always best to call in advance 413-296-4048. We hope to offer gas for sale this winter on a smaller scale and to increase our food options. Stay tuned!

Make sure to get your early bird membership and trail pass and save some money. Go to a meeting on the 2nd and last Tuesday of the month at 7pm or call the club at 413-296-4048 or Bill G. at 413-585-9403.

CONWAY

by Ed Skorupski



Another season is quickly approaching and I find myself checking the long-range forecasts more frequently than might be considered appropriate. I think that I can safely say that last season was a bit of a disappointment for most of us. A majority of our members reported zero miles ridden last season. While this is not what we like to hear, we were very fortunate to have had a number of members step up and volunteer their newly found spare time in order to ensure that the trails and equipment are ready to use when the snow does come. What does all this mean? This pre-season, since the equipment is ready, we can concentrate on enhancing and improving the trail system. As all of our volunteers know, the work of the club never stops.

Another positive bit of news from last season is that most of our regular members bought trail passes, supporting the club. Thank you to our loyal members for their continued support. Think snow and check us out online at sledconway.com where trail passes are available and if purchased before December 15, there is an early bird discount.

EASY RIDERS

by Larry McCullough, treasurer



Welcome back and think snow, especially after last winter. There was snow up in Northern ME, Quebec and New Brunswick last year, so that is where most Easy Riders went. Although we are a MA club, we are too far east in the state to have a trail system anymore, so, we are a traveling club. We have members all over Eastern and Central MA who ride in New England, QUE and NB, along with local rides here in Central and Western MA. We plan several trips up to northern Maine, Quebec and New Brunswick each winter. Any of this sound good to you? If so, come join us at one of our meetings and check us out. We meet the 2nd Tuesday of each month October through March at the Moose Lodge in Marlborough. Our 1st meeting is planned for Oct 14 with member registration, trip talks, and voting on some bylaw changes to keep us in line with the new SAM minimum advertised membership fees. Our 2nd meeting will be our open house scheduled for Nov 9. Check us out at ersc.net. You will find information including a little history on the club, our application, copies of our newsletter and plans for trips. We'll see you at one of our meetings, the SAM Sled Expo or on the trails.

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WARNING: Professional rider on a closed course. Polaris recommends that all snowmobile riders take a training course. Do not attempt maneuvers beyond your capability. Always wear a helmet and other safety apparel. Never drink and ride. ©2016 Polaris Industries Inc.

GREATER WHATELY

by Robert Sabola



Instead of complaining about how bad winter was last year I thought I would share a story with you that may bring back a few memories that you may have had of when you first came into the world of snowmobiling. I was maybe 11 or 12 years old when snowmobiling first caught my attention. My two brothers and I would look out the front window at night and count the snowmobile headlights as they descended down the hill about a ¼ of a mile away. We would at times count as many as 15 lights and other times maybe only one or two. No matter where we were in the house if someone shouted, "Snowmobile!," we would all hightail it to the living room to look out that front window. Today, that trail no longer exists. Houses and businesses sprang up along the trail and slowly the headlights disappeared. The memories still exist, but who knows, someday they may disappear. But for now I will cherish them for as long as I can. To be continued...

GWSC Meetings: Second Monday of the month September through April; Whately Town Hall; 7pm. Email us at: greater-whatelysnowmobileclub@aol.com, or visit us at sledmass.com/club/greater-whately-snowmobile-club.

HADLEY

by Dan Regish, treasurer



Everyone loves to enjoy the benefits of a job well done. A short time in the woods with a bunch of good people building a sturdy bridge will undoubtedly be time well spent. When the bridge is complete, it will provide many years of service to all kinds of folks and leave a group of bridge builders with the sense of accomplishment that comes with "tangible" results.

Some jobs are not meant to be finished. These are the jobs that are picked up where someone left off, and will be passed on to someone else. These are the jobs that motivate, and inspire people to come together and use time wisely. These jobs are never complete. They are the ones taken on by people who have great faith and pride in their community, and whose reward is being able to pass the torch to someone who really wants it.

Volunteer. Spend time with your club. There is no greater satisfaction. RIP Todd.

KNOX TRAIL SNO-RIDERS

by James Richard, media director



Hello snowmobilers! While you were enjoying your summer, the Knox Board of Directors met monthly to plan the upcoming riding season.

Once again you can win a 2017 Ski-Doo MXZ 600 Sport snowmobile in the Seventh Annual Raffle. Only 125 tickets will be sold at \$125 each. Entry includes a buffet dinner for two at the Stockbridge Sportsman's Club event on January 7, 2017. Tickets are available from knoxtrail.com, club officers, vendors, at the Sled Expo at the Big E on Oct. 15 and 16, or via the Sno-Phone at 413-269-0243.

Early bird trail pass discounts end on December 15. Save \$10 per sled. Discount is available by mail, online, through club officers or at the Sled Expo. After Dec 15, vendors will be announced.

Let's hope this season turns out better! There was no grooming last season so the groomer fleet is ready to work. The fleet features 5 sled-based groomers, 3 tracked groomers, and two volunteer-owned machines.

As always, volunteers are needed for trail work, groomer maintenance and operation, club events, etc. Would you like to help? Call the Sno-Phone, go to knoxtrail.com, write to KTSR Box 363, East Otis, MA 01029, visit us at the Sled Expo, or attend a meeting! See you on the trails!

LEICESTER

by Frank Bond, vice president



Hope everyone's summer went well. This is the time to start thinking about helping your local club get the trails ready. The Farmer's Almanac is predicting some significant snowfall for this season and getting the trails in shape is a priority after last season's disappointment. We would love to see everyone get involved whether it be clearing trails, grooming, or coming to meetings. Remember our meetings are on the second Wednesday of the month from October through March at 7pm at the Leicester Rod & Gun Club, 1015 Whittemore Street, Leicester. email: lscboarddirectors@gmail.com

MILL VALLEY

by Nathan Sansoucy



Here we go again with the start of another snowmobiling season. We are all looking forward to hopefully having a snow-filled winter. As we head into this season we are starting to work through our trail systems, getting ready for the first snowfall. Our club will be starting trail clean-up around the beginning of October. If you would like to donate your time to help keep our trails clean for snowmobile riders, and the other outdoorsy people that use our trail system during the off-season, your help would be greatly appreciated. Please feel free to contact Nathan Sansoucy via email at nrsansoucy@gmail.com and also check out our website for other information at millvalleysnowmobile.org.

PORCUPINE RIDGE RUNNERS

by Lew Starkey, president



Though there was barely any snow last season, the Ridge Runners were busy working on repairs and improving the infrastructure of trails in the surrounding areas of Shutesbury, Leverett, Wendell and New Salem. Most exciting is a new re-routed trail to the New Salem Country Store through beautiful DCR land. This is truly a nice ride offering scenic landscape of stately snow-covered pines and wildlife tracks. Consider traveling the trail and stopping at the store for a breakfast sandwich or slice of pizza.

Congratulations to lifelong member and legend, John Puffer; last season's Groomer of the Year for SAM. Even without much snow, John remained active clearing and upgrading trails and maintaining groomers. We are excited about a number of projects in the works and we hope to have great things happening here in our little slice of paradise.

Remember, safety first on our trail system. Be very careful on first snow and new snow. Our trails are for slower speeds, so slow down and enjoy the view. Always respect non-motorized trail users and our landowners, which are quite often one and the same.

Meetings are the second Monday every month at the Shutesbury Athletic Club, 282 Wendell Road, Shutesbury. We are always looking for new members to help with maintaining our trails and giving feedback and support.

Trail passes are soon going online, pricing has changed and fines are going up. It makes more sense than ever to buy early and support your local club and its volunteers.

SAVOY KANARY KATS

by Al Neal and Doug Decoigne



Hello everyone! We hope you had a good summer.

The SKK had a fairly busy summer starting with our summer picnic at Peppermint Park. About 60 people showed up and the food was outstanding as usual.

Following the feast, the Harold Rice Scholarship Fund awarded three deserving students, Layla Rougeau, Samantha Dolle, and Brianna Burdick, an \$1,100 scholarship each! Congratulations to all! Our raffle sled was at the Motorama Event in North Adams with Tommy selling raffle tickets. Our first meeting was Sept. 9 at the Hilltop, which reopened the day before! Some of us participated in the Savoy Loop Road Race on Sept. 10, Tommy Wandrei manned the grill to provide burgers and dogs to everyone. Trail work started on Sunday, Sept. 11.

Last year, again SKK had the most memberships of any SAM club. We have accomplished a lot on the trail work so far but much more needs to be done! Please consider spending a Sunday with us, we head out from the Savoy Store at 9am every Sunday, until snowfall at least.

WORTHINGTON

by Michael Sarafin, vice president



Greetings fellow snowmobilers! After a long very hot summer I know seeing the SAM magazine in my mailbox is a welcome sight.

That means fall is right around the corner and we know what comes after that, that season that people tell us we are crazy for counting down the days. We had a fairly prosperous season last year, even with the winter we had. Our snowmobile raffle was a great success, as was our first-ever golf tournament held this August. The club would like to extend a great thank you to the members who made this all possible. We also purchased a brand new Arctic Cat Groomer Special outfitted with an Arrowhead drag. Hopefully this coming season we will be able to put it to the test. We will be holding another sled raffle this fall, so keep your eye out for tickets and help support the club and possibly win a brand new sled. We will be selling SAM passes at our usual locations as well as through our annual newsletter and renewal mailing. The Worthington Club would like to invite you all to renew or join for another great season of snowmobiling. Thank you very much and think snow! ❄️



Join one of 30 clubs in the Snowmobile Association of Massachusetts. Meet other snowmobilers, learn where the best trails are, where to park the trailer, and where to eat. Take part in trail clearing and see how SAM volunteers get the trails ready for snow. Have fun and become part of the decision making process.

Find a club near you at
<http://sledmass.com/clubs/>

SAM Annual Awards

Photos by Randy Toth



DEALER OF THE YEAR: AL JOY TIRE AND ARCTIC CAT, KNOX TRAIL SNOWMOBILE CLUB

Although Al Joy Tire and Arctic Cat are located in Connecticut they have long been a big supporter of the Knox Trail Sno-Riders in Massachusetts. The club often calls the dealership looking for parts, advice or technical information for their groomer fleet. Help is always offered.

The dealership sells SAM trail passes and is an advertising sponsor of the Knox website and map. Every year, for the past 20 years, Al Joy Tire and Arctic Cat have generously donated to the Club. They work hard helping make the club's annual raffle successful. In addition to promoting and selling the raffle tickets, they personally purchase tickets and attend the raffle dinner. Their support of the club has been long and generous.



Knox Trail members took home a few major awards from the SAM Annual Meeting.

JUNIOR SNOWMOBILER OF THE YEAR: COLIN MACKIE, KNOX TRAIL SNOWMOBILE CLUB

Everyone should meet this remarkable young man. Colin Mackie is a quiet, younger version of his dad, Keith Mackie. They both love working with their hands and being outdoors. Colin is an avid outdoors person who loves snowmobiling, fishing and flying model airplanes.

His love for riding started when he was only 6 or 7. With great interest, he watched his father build the club drags. Then he graduated to assisting with building new and better drags. This past season he built his own drag with his dad's guidance. He knows how to weld and what it takes to make it strong and durable.

During the summer he can be found clearing trails alongside his dad. He has his own saw and hand tools. In the winter

he's out signing the trails, putting up fencing and repairing bridges.

This young volunteer's world is best showcased in the family's home workshop. Everywhere you look there are projects; drags being welded, snowmobiles being rebuilt, and model airplanes waiting to be flown. With an endless supply of energy he is tackling all of these projects. Colin is the future of snowmobiling in Massachusetts, a leader for the next generation.



Indianhead president, Matt Crowningshield, was presented an award for his family's volunteerism.

SNOWMOBILE FAMILY OF THE YEAR: THE CROWNINGSHIELDS, INDIANHEAD SNOWMOBILE CLUB

The Crowningshield family is always working on trails of the Indianhead Club and always makes sure the Cookie Bash Landowners Appreciation Event happens, no matter what.

Matt Crowningshield is the president and treasurer of the club, and his family handles all the trail pass data input along with managing the club's Facebook page. Last year they help build a float for Charlemont's 250 anniversary parade and participated in the parade, too.

They actively take part in all club functions, trail work and grooming and whatever else needs attention. If something needs to be done, they make sure it happens. The Crowningshield family has had challenges but always rises to the occasion and makes sure that snowmobiling carries on its rich tradition in their community.

FRIEND OF SAM AWARD: ROBERT LIBIN

The 2016 "Friend of SAM" Award was presented to Robert Libin, General Counsel, House of Representatives, for the Joint Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture. Bob was instrumental in formalizing two key pieces of SAM sponsored snowmobile legislation; the Vintage Snowmobile Registration Bill and the Snowmobile Educational and Safety Bill which includes provisions for mandatory snowmobile operator safety education, a recreational trail land acquisition trust fund, a seat at the OCR stewardship council, a universal trail maintenance pass and a tool to help curtail damage to snowmobile trails.

The Vintage Snowmobile Registration Bill passed in 2015 and the Snowmobile Educational and Safety Bill {S1955} is up for consideration in 2016. Bob took the SAM sponsored legislation, drafted by the SAM Legislative Committee Chairman, Randy Toth, and turned it into a beautiful Beacon Hill appropriate piece of legislation. Bob and Randy spent quality time on the phone discussing SAM's legislative intent, the draft language, the legal issues it raised and the final polished legally appropriate language.

Bob learned much about snowmobilers, snowmobiling and how snowmobilers think while Randy learned much about how our elected representatives think, how lawyers think and just how tricky it can be to develop a truly effective legislative package which must be as "bullet proof" as possible before it hits prime time on Beacon Hill.



Robert Libin accepts the 2016 Friend of SAM award from Dan Gould.

TRAIL WORKER OF THE YEAR: JOHN RACKEM, BERNARDSTON-GILL-LEYDEN SNOWMOBILE CLUB

Here we have a snowmobile volunteer without an official title. John Rackem's role is out on the trails making sure projects are completed, organizing what is needed, where it is needed, and when. He had over 100 volunteer hours invested in our club and trail system last year.

He is our "Go to Guy" when it comes to trail work. He never asks for anything in return despite using personal tools, ATV and resources to help the club get the trails ready and after the snow flies. He should have been a mailman as he always delivers, through rain, snow, ice and even the hot summer sun.

He contacts landowners, organizes crews, helps out grooming, and all around loves the sport. Because John is a seasoned snowmobiling veteran, he's conscious of possible trail issues that might affect a young or beginner snow-



Jeff Miller presented John Rackem with the Trail Worker of the Year award, in honor of his outstanding volunteer efforts.

mobiler. They get rectified on the spot.

A man of few words but many actions, John would rather be out in the woods than sitting in a meeting. He doesn't need praise or to be put in the spotlight. A heartfelt thanks is all he needs to make him smile at the end of the day, and prepare him for the next project.



Active in the community and focused on great trails. That's what landed the Worthington Club at the top.

CLUB OF THE YEAR: WORTHINGTON SNOWMOBILE CLUB

It's important that clubs have a representative at SAM meetings. It's even better when three members attend on a regular basis. Participation in the state association is vital to a healthy organization. The Worthington Club participates in SAM's charity programs, donating every year to the Toys for Tots program and Camp Snomo.

If someone in their community suffers the fate of a house fire, or is in need, the

club donates to the cause. They also make regular donations to the Worthington Fire and Rescue Association and support the fire department's efforts to promote fire safety. They have donated to Russell H. Conwell School for book purchases.

The club prides itself in having the best snow and grooming fleet possible, with constant updates. They used raffles to raise money to purchase a 2016 Arctic Cat Groomer Special and drag.

As snowmobile activists, the club keeps in contact with legislators. They spend a

great deal of time meeting with landowners, new and old, to foster a positive relationship and maintain an interconnected trail system.

They also play an important role in the Legends of Snowmobiling Awards, where they honor local snowmobilers who have contributed to the recreation. This program brings old and new volunteers together, where they examine how far snowmobiling has come, but reflect on how the foundation has stayed the same, by being a family sport.

SNOWMOBILER OF THE YEAR: RUSTY COOMBS, COLRAIN SNO-DRIFTERS

This story dates back a few decades, to a time when a local club had fallen into disrepair and how an enthusiastic volunteer resurrected it. It was a time when nothing seemed to be organized, there wasn't any passion. So what did Rusty do? He rallied the troops - his zest for snowmobiling became contagious.

He helped lay the foundation to re-establish the Colrain Sno-Drifters at a time when the club had nothing; no equipment, no members and a disjointed trail system. In those early days it was extremely challenging, as the trails were fragmented, terrible at best.

Rusty spent numerous hours meeting with landowners to establish good working relationships, with a goal of reclaiming

old trails and establishing new ones. His diplomacy, genuine concern, and good humor continue today to help create strong and lasting bonds between the club and its neighbors in the communities where the club is active.

Twenty years later he still carries on tirelessly. He stores the club's groomers at his shop, where he maintains and repairs the equipment at all hours of the day and night. And he grooms... all night long, often until 2:00 in the morning, so that club members will have safe and pristine trails to ride. Those are the nights when his wife becomes a snow widow, waiting for him to come in at the wee hours of the morning from the cold.

Having been the club's figurehead, and one of its most committed members since becoming club president in 1995, it's clear that he is deserving of this honor.



Taking home the top award was Rusty Coombs, an ambassador for his club and snowmobiling as a whole.

GROOMER OF THE YEAR: JOHN PUFFER, PORCUPINE RIDGE RUNNERS

John Puffer is considered the backbone of the Porcupine Ridge Runners. "This is a guy who is constantly thinking and dreaming of that perfectly groomed trail, even with no snow" said club president Lew Starkey. You can be sure that the groomers are ready to go at a moment's notice and he is constantly using Yankee ingenuity to figure out how to make old equipment work better and faster with less effort.

Since he's the club vice president and the treasurer, he's responsible for all the trail passes, making sure the sale outlets are fully stocked. He is also the club's delegate.

John lives and breathes trail work and keeping the trail system open. He is constantly working on project that needs to be done before the snow flies, whether it be sawing out lumber in his sawmill or re-decking a bridge. John is always talking to landowners about a better route of



travel or working with town officials to get street signs moved.

Without this volunteer the club would have ceased to exist just a couple years ago. While he may be a little under-appreciated, and sometimes grumpy, the core of the club consider him a legend. 🐿️

John Puffer is congratulated by the officers of the Porcupine Ridge Runners for his award.



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SAM Unified Dues and Online Sales



The goal is to empower the clubs with the ability to sell memberships and trail passes online, either through the club's own website or the club page at sledmass.com, or both.



In response to ongoing requests from snowmobilers in Massachusetts, SAM has implemented significant changes to better serve our members.

At the May meeting of the Snowmobile Association of Massachusetts, the Board of Directors voted on a number of key proposals setting in motion a policy to move our organization forward with a unified dues structure and an online trail pass sales system. The decision was to adopt a Minimum Advertised Price (MAP) for all trail pass sales.

Starting this season, 2016-2017, the MAP for the combined SAM trail pass and club membership will be \$55 for early bird, through December 15. After that date the regular season fee will be \$70 per sled.

The Executive Committee is actively investigating options for online trail pass sales. The goal is to empower the clubs with the ability to sell memberships and trail passes online, either through the club's own website or the club page at sledmass.com, or both. This will be a major convenience for clubs and our members.


These actions will eventually result in a streamlined trail pass acquisition process for the clubs.

- Elimination of all club paperwork associated with obtaining and processing trail passes and memberships.
- No upfront club money to buy trail passes.
- No trailpass books to manage and distribute, eliminating lost trail pass books and late fees.
- Automatic generation of membership lists for clubs and SAM.
- Automatic member subscription fulfillment for SAM's magazine.
- Monthly trail pass payout checks from SAM to clubs.



- 24/7 online trail pass sales.
- The possibility of "buy and ride" with a self-printed temporary trail pass until official sticker arrives via U.S. Mail.

The new pricing fee is effective immediately. We hope to have the online sales implemented before January but that could change. This season will feature a mix of traditional hand-written trail passes and online access.

The action by the Board of Directors took great vision and will improve the viability of snowmobiling in Massachusetts. SAM's efforts are being closely coordinated with the streamlining of trail pass sales in other states and Canadian provinces. Stay tuned for more exciting details become available. 

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PHOTO BY STAN KOPALA

Trail Tales: A Chip Off The Old Ice Block

By Brad Stafford

My snowmobile experience started, like many of my generation, on an Arctic Cat Kitty Cat. Then I remember that wonderful winter when my dad told me it was time to move up to a full-size sled. At the time he had a 1976 Arctic Cat Pantera 5000. Yeah, I know, it wasn't a 5000cc machine, it was 500ish twin, but that's the way they named the sleds back then. I had driven it before,

in the fields around the house under his supervision, but wanted to venture out on the trails myself, with my friends. Dad told me he was confident of my riding skills and that there was only one more step needed before I was free to roam on my own. I had to start the sled by myself. That was no easy feat, as I didn't have the strength to pull it over fast enough.

Everyday after school I would go out and try and try. I just couldn't get it to crank. Then came the day I actually got it to pull over but just not fast enough. I flooded it. With the spark plugs removed, I pulled her over to dry out the cylinders, then grabbed two clean plugs, when a light bulb came on in my head. What if I only put one plug in? So that's what I did, and I was actually able to pull it over. After a few good pulls she fired up. I can still remember the feeling of pure joy as she just sat there sputtering on one cylinder. I gave it a few minutes and let her warm up. I then started the other side the same way. Another few precious minutes went by it was gut-check time. It was probably the

adrenaline, but on the first pull, with both plugs in, she fired up and was purring like a kitten.

I was still out riding around when dad got home that day. He had a curious look on his face as he walked towards me, yet the smirk he was trying to hide told the real story. He asked if I had help from Grandpa or Uncle Bob. "Nope, it was just me." He poked around bit, asking just how I accomplished the feat. I was more than excited to tell my secret to success. He kept his word and from then on I was free to ride.

Fast forward twenty-some odd years to when my son was at that age where he thought he should be able to ride unsupervised. His first snowmobile was a Snow Skipper. Since he was limited to our small front yard, his favorite thing to do was to pack the entire area down until there wasn't a spot of untouched snow left. That little sled had a Briggs and Stratton engine and was quite the little machine. Of course we gave it some upgrades, widening the ski stance to make it more stable, adding heavy bed springs to the rear suspension, and installing a few ice picks. The biggest modification was replacing that awful steel-flipper throttle with a motorcycle twist grip.

After the thrill of the front yard wore off, my son began pleading to ride in the field across the street by himself. I told him there was only one thing keeping him from doing that. He needed to start the sled by himself. He tried and tried, but you had to hold the throttle open a little bit when you pulled it over, and he wasn't quite strong enough to do both at the same time. Then came that fateful day when he did. His experience was a little different than mine, though.

He cracked the throttle with one hand but decided to lock it open with a little wedge of some kind. That would allow him to use both hands to pull it over. Good plan? Well, almost. He was able to pull it over, and it did start, but the throttle was locked open a little too much. I was inside at the time and heard the engine come to life. I was surprised and proud at the same time. In an instant that was all erased when I heard the engine rev up and my boy scream. I ran outside to find him in the driveway, head down, with tears in



Thousands of kids got their first taste of snowmobiling aboard a Kitty Cat, left, or a Little Skipper. KITTY CAT PHOTO BY AKAHODAG AT FLICKR



his eyes, and his sled was across the street buried under a guardrail. The impact knocked the wedge out of the throttle and she was just sitting there idling away. Nobody got hurt and fortunately no vehicles were going by at the time. We walked over, got it out, brought it in the garage and did damage assessment. He was hurting more than the sled.

Once emotions calmed down, we had a great talk about how proud I was of his Yankee ingenuity. Maybe it was that adrenaline rush, but after that day he

could start the sled by himself, without that wedged throttle, and the field next door was now his to explore. Yup, he was definitely a "little chip off this old ice and snow lovin' block."

On the heels of a winter that registered one of the lowest snowfall totals in many years, many of us are telling stories of winters past. Hopefully this upcoming year will bring all of us lots of snow, new stories and adventures to share. I'll see you out on the trails... "Keeping the Rubber Side Down" 🐾

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Elections, Legislation and Phone Calls

It is hard to imagine that the current presidential campaign could get any more interesting! Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump have very different personalities and political views, both have been called “polarizing.” The upside to this is that more people may become attracted to the elections to vote.

Of equal importance and interest to us, are the state senate elections. All 40 state senators in Massachusetts are up for election in November, and as the electorate you will determine who will hold those 40 seats for the next legislative session. On voting day let us not forget our friends and snowmobile supporters. This campaign offers much potential for us, so please take some time to meet the candidates.

How can we have an impact on these elections? Studies show that Western Mass is already an active political area. The fact that all three of these districts are comprised of a large number of snowmobilers underscores that the elections are important to us. For example, the town of Conway has a population of approximately 1,887 with 80% registered to vote and 82% of those folks actually coming out to vote. The town of Pelham has similar numbers with a population of 1,274, with 80% registered and a voter turnout rate of 87%. So, please, register to vote by October 19, discuss the issues with the candidates, help your candidate with some lawn signs, and be sure to vote Tuesday, November 8.

SAM's legislation is closely tied to the state senate elections. Why? Our SAM legislative bill S1955 currently resides in the Senate Ways and Means Committee. It will need to be moved out for action before the end of the session on December 31. How can you impact our bill? You should write, email, snail mail, phone or visit your legislators. It varies somewhat as to which method has more impact, but it is generally acknowledged that a personal visit or handwritten letter is preferable. It has also been said “a dozen phone calls” will get things moving. Any contact is good, so to get things rolling let's set a goal of having at least a dozen of us contact Senate President Rosenberg, 617-722-1500 or Stan.Rosenberg@masenate.gov, and ask him to help move S1955.

Again, I offer special thanks to all of you that have helped with our SAM legislative program. Keep in touch with your legislators and I hope to see you at the polls to cast a ballot on Tuesday, November 8. Remember, all snowmobilers are players on the legislative team. 🐾



Snoped Snow Vehicle Concept

SNOPED SPECIFICATIONS:

Length: 76"

Width: 6"

Design: Joey Ruiter -
jruiiter.com

Fabrication: Jeff Long

By Dan Gould

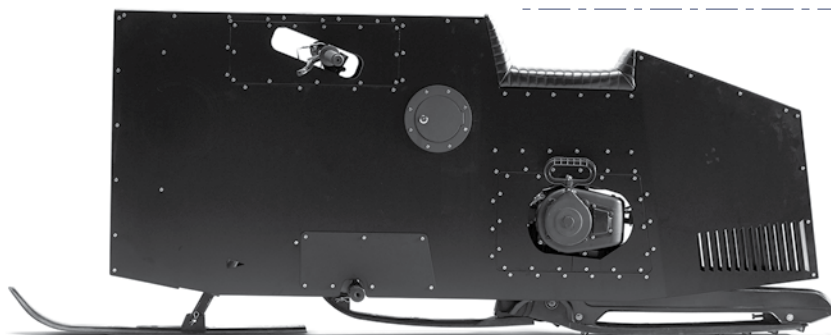
The avant-garde Snoped concept by American designer Joey Ruiter combines the raw edge of Mad Max with the beauty of machined black granite. Exposed mechanical bits, grade-five bolts, and laser cut grill push the industrial design forward.

The sleek prototype appears to be more of a moped for winter commuting, rather than a trail machine. As daily transportation, the 90cc Snoped might be ridden on snow covered roads in cities and towns among other motor vehicles.

Go to sledmass.com for more details, an in-depth photo gallery and video. 🏂



PHOTOGRAPHY STUDIO SHOTS: DEAN VAN DIS, PHOTOGRAPHY OUTDOOR: BRIAN KELLY, APPAREL: AETHER APPAREL



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