

# SNOSHU-NEWS

I've had the great pleasure of watching the sport of snowshoe racing grow over the past 5 years. I've enjoyed being involved with both WMAC and USSSA over the last few years (as an athlete, RD, and regional rep.). It has been great to meet with people interested in snowshoeing, racing, and just plain having fun in the outdoors during the winter.

As with any sport there are just as many reasons for people being involved, as there are participants. I think that this is a healthy thing for any sport. WMAC has done a great job of providing a venue for people to participate at whatever level they want. USSSA has provided the opportunity to compete regionally, and for those who qualify, nationally.

As with any organization there will be some things that are done that not all members agree on. WMAC, and Ed Alibozek specifically, has gone out and sought input from as many interested parties as possible to ensure that "we are going in the right direction". As some of you may know there has been some debate within the membership of USSSA on what direction the sport should go in. The national meeting held in conjunction with the national championships in Squaw Creek CA had some lengthy debates on many subjects. The debate carried over into numerous email exchanges. The discussion was held in the spirit of open dialogue where anyone who had an opinion could offer it at any time. In this issue of "SnoNews" you will find a summary of the national meeting and some of the emails that were exchanged after the meeting.

Keep in mind that these emails were written during healthy discussions. Many of the thoughts expressed were done on the spur of the moment based on current information. I for one, stand by what I said "AT THE TIME", but obviously opinions are subject to change over time. I may have started out feeling one way about a subject and further along modified or reversed my opinion. Such are the vagaries of life."

The goal of this is to keep you informed and seek out your input. We plan on having a meeting of all who are interested in the WMAC snowshoe series, USSSA, and snowshoeing in general to discuss some of the possible changes for next year. A specific agenda has not been worked out at this time, however some of the topics are touched on below. The meeting will take place at Northfield Mountain following the USATF New England Mountain running championships on June 5th. We have tentatively scheduled the meeting to start at 11:30AM.

Dave Dunham [dave.dunham@verizon.net](mailto:dave.dunham@verizon.net)

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 If you can't make the meeting send an email with ideas, questions or concerns that you would wish to have heard.

Our biggest issue may be the National Level/ Championship. The Northeast gets to hoist in 2006 and we have some people who want to do the work and put on a fantastic two-day event. The planning needs to begin now so we don't get behind the proverbial eight ball.

Farmer Ed [edtrnews@yahoo.com](mailto:edtrnews@yahoo.com)

**Don't "Not" Get Left Out in the Cold**

**OFF-SEASON SNOWSHOE MEETING!**

**Saturday, June 5<sup>th</sup>, 2004, 11:30 a.m.**

**Northfield Mountain Visitor Center**

**For everyone interested in any aspect of snowshoeing**

**Directions:**  
**From Rt. 2 proceed North on Route 63.**  
**The park entrance is 2 miles on your right.**

This meeting will take place after The Northfield Mountain USATF New England Mountain Running Championship.

## '04-'05 United States Snowshoe Association Board of Regional Representatives

**NORTHEAST:**

(NY, NJ, PA, MA, ME, CT, VT, RI, NH, DE, VA, WV, MD)  
 Kelli Lusk                      Dave Dunham                      Edward Alibozek

**NORTH CENTRAL:**

(MN, MI, WI, IL, OH, IO, ND, SD, ID, NE, KY)  
 Timmy Dusick                      Greg Hexum                      Cindy Brochman

**WESTERN:**

(CA, WA, OR, AZ, ID, NV)  
 Teri Smith                      Chris Gilbert                      Peter Fain

**ROCKY MTN.:**

(CO, WY, MT, NM, UT)  
 Bernie Boettcher                      Darrin Eisman                      Danelle Ballangee

**ALASKA:**

(AK, Hawaii)  
 Julie Udchachon                      Michelle Martin                      Eric Skidmore

**TECHNICAL:**

Bob Dion                      Adam Chase                      Tom Sobal

**ATHLETES:**

Ethan Hemphill                      Helen Cospolich                      Nikki Kimball

## '04 – '05 USSSA Board of Directors

Candice Bosworth, Executive Director.  
 Jim & Betty Schreiner, Amateur athletics.  
 Gene Bowen, Nordic Sprint, Technical Director at many races.

## '04 – '05 USSSA Officers

Mark Elmore, Sports Director  
 Mike Bucek, Marketing Director  
 James Joque, Educational Director

## USSSA NATIONAL MEETING 03-06-04

Please note: This is not an official recording of the National meeting held at Squaw Creek. This is just my take on what happened at the National meeting. With more than 1/2 of the total membership present at the meeting it was nothing if not "lively". Any errors, omissions, opinions (except when attributed to any one individual) are mine and mine alone.

Mark Elmore opened the 4th annual members meeting by thanking all in attendance for making the trip to Squaw Creek CA. He noted that in the past the event was put on by the local organization and USSSA was available as "support". This year USSSA was responsible for the event.

Mark went over some event management notes. The race would be a mass start at 8:30 AM. There will be a water-stop at 4m. Awards will be given out at 11 AM. Results will be posted at the finish and posted to the web site as soon as possible. Awards will be given to the top 5 men and women in the 10k. The top 5 in each age group will be named All-American and the top 3 will receive medals.

Course markings were discussed. The RD used bamboo poles along with small flags and spray paint to mark the trail.

Mark opened discussion up to the floor with the qualifying procedures being the first issue discussed. Mark had received suggestions about not having a qualifier and perhaps having qualification based on an outstanding performance in other events. There was a suggestion to have "high caliber" athlete's auto-qualify. One suggestion was to have state championships where qualifiers would come from. Mark noted that the goal was to get more athletes to qualify and run at nationals. A suggestion was made to open the race up to all comers such as USATF does with road running nationals. Mark noted that membership was 250 and this year was down to 167 members. He also stated that what is offered to the membership is limited by what is available to give the athletes.

What people get for their money was discussed. It was noted that many people don't know about the sport, and even those who snowshoe do not know about USSSA. The question was raised "what is the purpose of USSSA" and how is it marketed. Mark stated that the National Program is run by a committee that doesn't do anything.

Mark then discussed how USSSA (Mark) is working with European snowshoe organizations. It appeared that most of the European snowshoe organizations were mostly concerned with the Eruo-cup. In order to become a demonstration sport in the Olympics, twenty countries would be needed; currently only 8-10 are established. Mark is working with the European groups to get inter-country competition going. Other countries have an advantage as many are federally funded.

Discussion then moved to the budget. Some felt that the budget needed to be increased and that spending should be done more carefully. A statement was made that the organization needs to be updated, and that people present were willing to do the work. Mark noted that a lot should fall to the regional reps. this lead into a discussion about the incorporation of USSSA and how it is a privately owned entity that is not recognized as the National

Governing body. Candice Bosworth owns the USSSA and has allowed regional reps to do the work. A volunteer from the audience stated she would be willing to take on the task of marketing director.

After much debate, the consensus was that Mark should approach Candice and explain to her what took place at the meeting. The group decided that Candice should step down and a new board should be created. Barring this, the prevailing thought in the room was to form a new National body and start from scratch. Mark stated that he would talk to Candice and get back to the current regional reps by April 1st. The group decided that at that point nominations and voting would take place. A mission statement being created would follow that.

The next topic of discussion was how passing should be handled. Mark noted that you couldn't legislate good sportsmanship. It was generally agreed that if someone asked to pass the trail should be yielded. It also was noted that the passer should only ask to pass if they can maintain a faster pace.

Mark threw out some ideas for next year such as having additional events at the Nationals. Mark talked about the possibility of a relay or a longer race on the second day and the possibility of holding an open race along with the Nationals.

The meeting was closed with a speech by the coordinators of the Anchorage event. They talked about inexpensive flights to Alaska and how the 2005 event would be marketed better than any previous Nationals.

*Dave Dunham - [David.A.Dunham@irs.gov](mailto:David.A.Dunham@irs.gov)*

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### **From one of the Anchorage, Alaska Coordinators -**

Thanks for the recap. I could not make the meeting. Some thoughts on organizational changes:

On the subject of qualifying standards: We should follow USATF (they do not have qualifiers for trail championships) in making Nationals an all comers race especially if we now have to pay an entry fee to run the race.

All issues regarding the National series should be decided through voting by the regional representatives. Regional representatives should be chosen by members in their region by the process of nomination and election. References to Candice are disturbing. She appears to be uninvolved and has never addressed the members directly. As Mark has stated, the National competition program is run by the board of representatives, that is us. So lets start addressing issues and voting on them as a group. Anyone can request a vote; we can do it via email.

I have begun work on the racecourse for next year. What would you like? Lets vote? I propose 1/6 packed and groomed (start and finish area). 1/2 single track ungroomed but wide enough for passing. 1/6 unbroken but wide. 1/6 anything (variable). Elevation gain/loss min:600 and max 1200. All runnable, no sled hills etc.

Julie Udchachon - [julie714@hotmail.com](mailto:julie714@hotmail.com)

# USSSA's NATIONAL RACING PROGRAM

Hi Folks. There has been a lot of discussion recently about our Regional Board or Reps voting on various issues, some old - some new. I have no problem with that. I'm confident you'll soon see this Board of RR assuming even more authority concerning the conduct of the USSSA's National Racing Program. I believe you'll soon see a nomination period with full membership vote taking place to fill those seats (3 reps per region). But, lets make one thing very clear. The 2005 Nationals will be in Anchorage Alaska! The folks at the Anchorage Convention and Visitor's Bureau, who asked to host this event over a year ago, and Julie Udchachon and her local organizing committee have earned the privilege of hosting this event through their enthusiasm, hard work and commitment of time and money. I take complete responsibility for awarding this event to those folks in Anchorage. The Board of RR, quite some time ago, had agreed the NC's should rotate from region to region. I was following that established protocol. This is the end of discussion. Let's refocus our collective attentions on how we can expand the interest and participation for next season and seasons to come, instead of spinning our wheels debating an issue that has already been decided. I'll get off my soapbox now. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Mark Elmore, USSSA - [ElmoreM@co.clinton.ny.us](mailto:ElmoreM@co.clinton.ny.us)

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Mark: That could be a dangerous stand to take. I understand that you and the AK people have put in a lot of work for this event to happen, but if the masses say otherwise, what can be done? If the regional reps feel that it is in the best interest of the sport to move the Nationals and they have been elected by the members then they will be following the mandate.

I think that contrary to this being the "end of the discussion" it is just the beginning. If the athletes chose not to go to Alaska then it will not be much of an event should USSSA choose to dig in its heel and have the race there. I'm sort of in a strange situation here as my club has been able to fully fund us to go to Nationals. Our sponsor could probably get just as much from us being the New England Snow Shoe Independent Enterprises (NESSIE) Champions. Discussion is a healthy thing. Onward.

Dave Dunham - [David.A.Dunham@irs.gov](mailto:David.A.Dunham@irs.gov)

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I'll have to agree with Dave on this one. The Alaska organizers may be an enthusiastic group, but Alaska does not really have an active snowshoeing community supporting the sport or the event. A quick internet search of race results shows a half-dozen races - and aside from their 2004 Nationals qualifying race (with 14 participants), all races had 5-10 finishers. Is it fair to ask virtually 100 percent of the participants in the 2005 Nationals to travel to Alaska in order to compete?

It seems that the overwhelming consensus among snowshoe racers is that holding the 2005 Nationals in Alaska will be bad for the growth of the sport. Despite Mark's contention that this is the, "End of the discussion", I think this is certainly a valid debate - one that needs to be held and voted on by the regional reps.

Darrin Eisman - [darrin@racingunderground.com](mailto:darrin@racingunderground.com)

What do you mean bad for the growth of the sport? Bad for growth where? Are you saying it is bad for the growth of the sport to encourage participation in a region that is undeveloped? That has the perfect weather, terrain...

Julie Udchachon - [julie714@hotmail.com](mailto:julie714@hotmail.com)

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Spin it 180 degrees, would having one Iditarod guy show up in Massachusetts help grow the sport of dog sledding out here?

Dave Dunham - [David.A.Dunham@irs.gov](mailto:David.A.Dunham@irs.gov)

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Well... yeah... maybe... if there was a group of grass roots dog mushers trying to start a dog mushing movement out in Massachusetts... yeah it would. And the dog musher went out there with a supportive attitude, to interact and show the Massachusetts dog mushers what racing could be. I'm hoping more than one famous snowshoer (such as yourself) will show.

Julie Udchachon - [julie714@hotmail.com](mailto:julie714@hotmail.com)

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Dave brings up a good point. The hard work and enthusiasm of Julie and the Anchorage Convention and Visitor's Bureau will be in vain if only 30 to 40 people show up at Nationals. In addition, the value of the "National Championship" will suffer if the best athletes can't afford to participate.

Having skied at Kincaid in several National Championships and one Olympic Trials, I'd love to go back there for a snowshoe Nationals. Kincaid is first class! No doubt it will be the best facility to ever host a snowshoe Nationals. Kevin Costner also had a super baseball diamond in his corn field but didn't host a major league game (except in his own mind). If you build it they won't necessarily come. If however you FUND it, then they may!

Any chance that Julie and the Anchorage Convention and Visitor's Bureau can get support from AK Airlines? Subsidized flights? This would go a long way towards lowering the barrier to entry - in particular for those of us in New England. At the meeting in Squaw Valley the rep from the Anchorage Convention and Visitor's Bureau said that flights to Anchorage were "not that expensive". The point is that they are MORE expensive than flights to anywhere else.

Next batter... ?

Richard Bolt - [rbolt@emersonecologics.com](mailto:rbolt@emersonecologics.com)

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I have to say I agree with Rich on this one. I would love to be there next year, but with flights, housing, food, car... It does add up. Julie has said that she would try and help me out with housing. And that is great -- but will everyone get this help? And still flights are expensive. I have no sponsorship that helps with my snowshoe travel. So it really does cut deep to have to make the trip out of my own pocket. I am sorry to say that I won't be in Alaska next year unless some help can be provided. And I am sure that there are many in the same boat as I. Subsidized fights? It would make it possible for more people.

Anita Ortiz - [amo@vail.net](mailto:amo@vail.net)

## USSSA NATIONAL RACING PROGRAM

I don't think you can really call any area of the US "developed" when it comes to snowshoeing. We need to continue marketing participation to the masses. Certainly I can speak for the New England area where races are turning out an increasing amount of snowshoers even this winter in bitter cold... numbers well up into the 100's. It would make sense to focus on holding events where there already exists an infrastructure to successfully market the events nationally. The more participants, the greater interest to the media.

Here in the New England area, we have photographers who specialize in snowshoe photography and attend the events. We have freelance writers who are able to attend and write and pitch both post-event and pre-event stories to the press. All this adds up to maximum coverage for the sport, and that means more interest and more participants, support for existing sponsors and perhaps the attention of more sponsors.

We just had the USSSA Nationals on March 7th in Squaw Valley. I may have missed it somewhere, but I have read or seen nothing on this event other than an email recap that Dave Dunham was nice enough to send out. I have searched for stories and photos and all I can find are a handful of photos on the USSSA website, which incidentally, people new to the sport know nothing about. It doesn't take much to get a mention on the RunnersWorld.com daily website, or to mail out a press release to sports publications. It does help if you have more than 87 total participants in the event... even if that means holding a "people's race" in tandem. I think we should work on increasing participation and interest in the sport in highly populated areas that are already showing growing numbers, and work to develop others using the resulting momentum.

Jennifer Rapaport - [jrapaport@hotmail.com](mailto:jrapaport@hotmail.com)

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A couple years ago I attended what I believe was the 1st USSSA meeting in NY. Before this, there was really no organization for snowshoeing, nor any qualifiers or championship races. Since that meeting, the sport has come a long way. I give so much credit to Mark Elmore for making it happen and for putting a tremendous effort into helping the sport grow and for providing the opportunities that we have all had to take part in qualifying and championship races the last few years.

Please, before everyone decides that Alaska is too expensive, I want you to think about the effort that has gone into making the USSSA what it is. That small group of people, and mainly the leadership of Mark Elmore, made some decisions to "get things moving." It is great to see all the discussion and I encourage more, but please realize that the choice to make Alaska a "region", and therefore a qualifier location has been done. I think Alaska will be a great host and an awesome vacation destination! I really think extra \$200 or so for a flight will be worth it! Decisions were made that got us this far and I see a very positive movement with the sport. Also, the decision was made for Alaska to be the championship in '05. Let's leave it that way and be supportive. I think we need to focus on what we can do in the future to make the sport of snowshoeing even better, not try to change what has already been done.

Danelle Ballengee - [danelle@colorado.net](mailto:danelle@colorado.net)

I agree too, that we should live with the decision made. I just know that I can't be there if I can't find an affordable flight.

Anita Ortiz - [amo@vail.net](mailto:amo@vail.net)

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I agree with Anita. If the decision has been made, hopefully the Alaska race will have a good turnout. But any way you look at it, it's still quite a bit of money to get there. And some people may not be able to plan/ look for flights months in advance because they won't know if they will qualify... (unless I missed some discussion points about that). Even with digging for cheap fares, Alaska is still pricier than most... but I'm sure people would love to be able to go there. Subsidized flights would be great.

Lisa Jhung - [LJhung@ASmagazine.com](mailto:LJhung@ASmagazine.com)

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Interesting exchange of e-mails over the past week. As somewhat of an outside observer, but a true supporter in both time and money, it is clear that the USSSA is beginning to serve a useful purpose and that is good. It is also clear that what we started in Glens Falls, NY a few years ago now needs to mature or the organization faces the real possibility of dissolving.

It is my point of view that if a commitment was made the organization should live with it and support it even if only a handful of racers are able to attend. It is our intention to do so at Atlas and Tubbs. Additionally we should all focus our energy on creating the bylaws that guide these and other pertinent organizational decisions in the future, including I might add dealing with ownership of USSSA. That's my point of view and you can count on me to help craft the bylaws if asked.

Ed Kiniry - [edk@tubbsnowshoes.com](mailto:edk@tubbsnowshoes.com)

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Ed (Kiniry),

Thank you for your commitment! Alaska is the perfect place to develop snowshoeing. Now we need the support of the snowshoe community. I join with you in calling for organizational changes for the USSSA. To all, I intend to spend a great deal of time preparing the race-course in hopes to create the "ultimate" snowshoe race. I sincerely hope you make it and would like to see you all there!!!

Julie Udchachon - [julie714@hotmail.com](mailto:julie714@hotmail.com)

## \*\*\*\*\* QUALIFYING STANDARDS

### **Anchorage, Alaska Coordinator J Udchachon**

On the subject of qualifying standards: We should follow USATF (they do not have qualifiers for trail championships) in making Nationals an all comers race especially if we now have to pay an entry fee to run the race.

Julie Udchachon - [julie714@hotmail.com](mailto:julie714@hotmail.com)



# QUALIFYING STANDARDS FOR USSSA NATIONALS

I definitely think that having qualifying events builds interests in the Nationals. Having an all-comers race decreases the prestige and also the excitement for it. It (all-comers race) could possibly bring in more people, but it would also decrease the value on a state and regional level to the supporting race directors who put on the qualifying events. If the concern is participation, then the national event could offer two events, one for national qualifiers and one for an all-comers open race. This would be positive for leaving a local legacy at the community hosting the national and also offering a racing opportunity for people who may not have qualified at their regional/state race.

As for qualifying races, it needs to be revamped to identify and encompass state championships/ state-level events. The regional races have worked thus far, but in many regions of the country, the regions are too spread out to really capture all the potential racers. We could start identifying state races by even the people on this email. We all live in many states in the country where at least one snowshoe race has happened over the past few years. Let's approach those state race directors and ask them to bid on a state qualifier for next year's nationals. I could assist Mark Elmore (or whoever else is working on the bids) to manage this process.

This is really exciting to see the changes happening with snowshoe racing. It was also very cool to be at the national championships this year with so many outstanding athletes in both the men and women's fields. I think this says a lot to the dedication of these athletes to the sport and also to the growing competitiveness of it on a regional and national-level.

Kelli Lusk - Amherst, MA - [luskelli@verizon.net](mailto:luskelli@verizon.net)

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Although, I wonder if having qualifying events helps to build interest in Nationals? I'm not so sure a Snowshoe National Championship would still get the turn-out of racers (excluding elite snowshoers who are vying for the overall win) who have to fly to attend, had those racers not qualified in some local event. Qualifying, somehow, adds prestige to the event.

I think that eliminating qualifying events would only work if USSSA actively advertised and promoted Nationals around the country throughout the season. I do, however, think that the local turnout (except in Alaska, of course) would be huge and the National Championships would see a much larger group of finishers than it has ever seen before.

Darrin Eisman - [darrin@racingunderground.com](mailto:darrin@racingunderground.com)

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Another idea would be to have more qualifiers. There are athletes in remote areas that simply cannot make it to regional events. I like Kelli's idea of keeping the citizens "all comers" race to be run along with the Championship. It gives people a taste and would encourage them to try for the medal race next time around. But the race must be on the same day and the same race. I also think we should offer more variety to adult divisions. As of now the Championship is really a "10k snowshoe championship"....

Julie Udchachon - [julie714@hotmail.com](mailto:julie714@hotmail.com)

Perhaps a compromise would be to have mandatory qualifying races but to make the standards a bit more forgiving, especially in regions where making the top ten requires that the racer be exceptional. There were races in New England and Colorado this winter where the top 20 finishers were professional or, at least, elite athletes when they were in their "off" season.

Perhaps that is more exclusive than the USSSA should be and we may retain the prestige of the National Championships while expanding participation by merely lowering the bar a bit and going with a standard such as top 20% -- that is a random percentage and we can dial in a more appropriate number based on analysis of past qualifiers -- of the field in the specific age/gender division or within 20% of the top finisher's time in a specific age/gender division. If a regional or state qualifier has a successful showing with a strong field, there is no harm in having many of those participants qualify for Nationals. Then again, if there are only a handful of folks that show up for a regional or state qualifier, it seems absurd that each participant be vested with qualifier status merely for being present and residing in a region or state that has dismal snowshoe racing participation. A more inclusive and somewhat flexible qualification guideline would serve to meet the desired goal of churning interest without discouraging those who are not quite on the super elite level.

I serve as a USATF representative and have worked on selecting Colorado trail race championships in a number of distances and the bidding process is not that complicated and I would hope that with all of the representatives and interest we have here with the USSSA, we could administer a similar program without too much effort. RDs certainly benefit from having their race designated as a qualifier and, in most cases, it adds both credibility and participation, so that bonus should help the USSSA recruit more qualifiers. The number of snowshoe races has ballooned in the last few years, so the pool of races should be adequate to serve our needs.

Them's my thoughts,

Adam Chase - [Adam@statetax-law.com](mailto:Adam@statetax-law.com)

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I like the comparison with USATF National Championships -- as open / all comers and then the winners are national champions, but anyone can run. This would surely open the event to more competitors and then if there were too many runners some year, have two races.

Best,

Nancy Hobbs - [Trlrunner@aol.com](mailto:Trlrunner@aol.com)

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## QUALIFYING STANDARDS FOR USSSA NATIONALS

I agree with Kelli and Darrin that having a series of regional qualifiers for the Snowshoe National Championships helps build interest in the championship and brings what amounts to a regional championship to each region. "Regional Championship" might be a stretch of a definition but certainly all elite racers in each region view the regional qualifier as a significant event.

Regional qualifiers also bring extra viability to our generous sponsors. Regional qualifiers allow Nike ACG, Atlas and other sponsors to showcase their product across a wider time and geographic span.

I think Adam's on the right track by suggesting that qualifying be based on a percentage of participants rather than just top 10 by age group. Furthermore, I think Kelli is really on the right track with regards to state (or even regional) championships. Building strong state and regional organizations and races should help Mark and the Board of Regional Reps (at the national level) build a stronger national organization. To build a tall pyramid you need a large base.

Regarding getting the business of the national competition program done, Julie Udchachon stated: "lets start addressing issues and voting on them as a group. Anyone can request a vote. We can do it via email."

One of the major issues brought up by several members of the Board of Regional Reps is that the Nationals are in Alaska next year and the Board of Regional Reps never got to vote on it. Perhaps the board should review the selection of Alaska as the site of the 2005 USSSA National Snowshoe Championships. I'm not on the board but I would like to see that issue addressed if the board is empowered to do so.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Richard Bolt - [rbolt@emersonecologics.com](mailto:rbolt@emersonecologics.com)

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The 4th Annual Nike ACG U.S. National Snowshoe Championships featured our best turnout yet, 88 starters and 87 finishers. The race went very smoothly, thanks to all the work put in by local event coordinator Peter Fain of Truckee CA.

At the Members Meeting, a second event at the NC's was discussed. There seems to be considerable interest in a relay event on day 2 of the Championships. A 3-4 x 5km Relay seems to be a popular idea. This addition might increase interest and participation. Please check around your regions and see if there is support for this addition to the NC program. If there is enough support, I would like to suggest we try to add it to the 2005 NC Program. This new event might serve to better complete a full weekend of racing in Anchorage Alaska next March! FYI; the Anchorage folks are planning on conducting a Citizen's and Kid's race around the NC events.

Also discussed at the Members Meeting was how we might increase participation at the NC's by changing our qualifying procedures. We need to investigate how we can formulate a plan

that will allow more athletes to qualify in events and regions that have many more participating athletes than some of the other regions. Or, do we do away with qualifying all together and simply require an athlete to be a USSSA member to be eligible to compete at the NC's, as the USA Track & Field Association does with its NC events. Should we add additional regional qualifying events per region? This might prove to be the most difficult option to choose, since it will require further travel from the athletes. Currently, the top 5 overall men and women in the 10km and the top 3 overall junior boys and girls in the 5km (these are the US National SS Team members) get automatic eligibility for the following years' NC's. Do we expand this to include, perhaps, the top 5 finishers in each age group? Any insights you can offer on this issue would be greatly appreciated.

I'd like to thank those who served as Regional/ National Event Directors, i.e. Dave Dunham, Peter Fain, Darrin Eisman, and Julie Udchachon. Obviously, without your dedication and energy, this season would not have been possible.

Mark Elmore - USSSA Sports Director

[snowshoeguy@yahoo.com](mailto:snowshoeguy@yahoo.com)

[elmorem@co.clinton.ny.us](mailto:elmorem@co.clinton.ny.us)

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(To Mark Elmore and the USSSA Board)

I just received SNOSHU-NEWS 2.7 from the WMAC snowshoe series, and on the last page, there is an article recapping the USSSA National Meeting and also a response by one of the Alaska Coordinators. I wanted to respond to the suggestion mentioned in both articles about making the national competition open to everyone by dropping the regional qualifying events.

I strongly urge you not to drop the qualifying events. Part of what is special to me about competing at Nationals is the fact that people have to qualify to be there. Even in a season like this past one when I qualified without having to finish ahead of any USSSA members in my age group, I still had to compete in the qualifier to earn my place, and that was meaningful to me. At this year's Northfield qualifying race, when you announced my name and then told the crowd that this would be my second year competing at Nationals, that made my day and motivated me even more to find a way to make it to Lake Tahoe even though I was already competing in an East Coast race the day before the event. If Nationals had just been an open event, I wouldn't have been able to justify the expense of going, since I am too far back in the pack to be competing for a spot on the national team. I went to Nationals because it meant a lot to me to have qualified, and I was excited to have earned my place in the competition.

I like the current way of qualifying, but if you change it to be even stricter, that is fine, too, even though that might mean I'll fail to make the cut. If that happens, then that just gives me something to shoot for.

Thanks for listening

Laurel Shortell

[Laurel@shortell.net](mailto:Laurel@shortell.net)

## WMAC RACES WISH TO SERVE AS THE 2006 USSSA CHAMPIONSHIP

I am preparing to put in a bid to be the operator of the 2005 10K Championships. I called Steve at Prospect Mountain. He said his March snow is on a par with Lake Placid. His base lodge is highest in the East. Super size parking lot. Direct flights from Denver to Albany, which is 1 ¼ hours away. Plenty of motels and restaurants in Bennington. Half an hour from “shop til you drop” Manchester. I can design a 10K no repeat figure 8 course using the lower trails and a single trip over the top. Please get back to me with your ideas or any alternate sites

Jack Quinn - [Jack.Quinn@adelphia.com](mailto:Jack.Quinn@adelphia.com)

I know that you got the message from Mark Elmore regarding the 2006 Nationals. I think we should host it in our area, since this is arguably the snowshoe racing capital of the U.S. Right! It needs to be somewhere close to the airport, lodging, and have reliable snow. There has to be a 5K course for juniors and a 10K course for everyone else. I could see a course at Greylock Glen, or maybe South Vermont or Saratoga Springs. What do you think? I would hate to lose the race to Lake Placid or Northern Vermont. I think we have the resources to pull it off. There were about 90 racers at Squaw Creek. I think we could expect at least 125 here.

John Pelton - [jnpltn@sprynet.com](mailto:jnpltn@sprynet.com)

National site selection: Is there any way to make it democratic or at least reasonable? At the National Meeting last year everyone (with the exception of a very small Alaska contingent) groaned at the prospect of having Nationals in Alaska. Now, the 2005 nationals are in Alaska. Why is this happening? Look at race results, (don't make me quote that Northern Ireland guy).

To summarize, CO, NE (New England, not Nebraska), and MI had qualifying events with healthy fields and demonstrate a high level of snowshoeing interest and participation in these regions. Races in CA and VT had moderate attendance (43 and 38 respectively) although it should be noted that the VT race was 1) really far north, 2) really, really cold, and 3) held one day before 108 people ran Curley's Record Run in the neighboring state of MA. Races in OR and AK had 21 and 6 finishers respectively. 6 finishers! Finishers listed are from the qualifying race only, some races had additional events such as 5 Km's. In mountain running we have come to the realization that there are a few regions of the country that have stronger traditions / athletes than others and we base our national races / trials location selection with this in mind. What is wrong with a site selection policy that helps to limit travel?

Paul Low - [low@geo.umass.edu](mailto:low@geo.umass.edu)

### The Breakdown on the '03-'04 Regional Qualifiers. Format is: Site, Total Participants & Total Qualified.

Western #1, Bend OR	43	21
Western #2, Olympic Valley, CA	36	10
Alaskan, Alyeska Resort	14	4
Rocky Mtn. #1, Eldora Resort	158	16
Rocky Mtn. #2, Eagle-Vail, CO	55	31
North Central #1, Traverse City, MI	203	13
North Central #2, Luck, WI	114	13
Northeast #1, Burlington, VT	51	38
Northeast #2, Northfield, MA	81	21

(To Mark Elmore) I know that the USSSA is looking for a suggestion on sites for 2006, and I have one from the Western Mass Athletic Club.

- Saturday, 7.25 km at Northfield Mountain., MA  
Directed by Dave Dunham.
- Sunday, 10 km at Prospect Mtn in Woodford, VT  
Directed by John Pelton and Jack Quinn.

WMAC Snowshoers will turn out to race, help, and we will bring the fire and the stoves to cook. It would be a masterpiece. We get around 100 at a regular race, so this would do well.

The Overall Champion could be either lowest combined time over the two days - or lowest combined place, however it gets decided ahead of time.

We will have a backup site (Hawley or Savoy) in case of snow trouble at Northfield. Woodford is the highest base lodge in the east, so that should be ok before anything else is.

Our thinking is we have as good a following and as good support as anyone anyplace, and we have two sets of people wanting to host nationals, Dave Dunham and Jack and John.

Before the event gets farmed out to a resort area in upstate Vermont, serious thought should be given to holding the Nationals someplace where there is a set series in place. That is us.

Most snowshoers that I have talked with are in favor of a second day of individual racing for National Champion. We have had a few doubleheader weekends in our series and they work. Last year 80 people did Northfield trying to qualify for Nationals and the next day 140 people went to Saratoga Winterfest. It isn't easy but it isn't supposed to be for the Championship.

I think it should also be considered that USSSA go to 5-year age divisions? This would open things up. At Northfield Mountain, it was very difficult to make the cut this past season.... that was a brutal field of runners.

From a WMAC standpoint, opening it up some would make it a bit less intimidating also. We don't get all our regulars at Northfield due to the extra stress of the top-ten thing hanging over the day. I like the idea of having to qualify, it does make it a truer championship, qualifying only needs slight modification.

When you ask “what factors should the USSSA take into consideration when evaluating bids for Regional events and especially the National Championships event?” We feel that a group that has a successful series of events like WMAC / CMS should be given priority over a ski resort that just wants to host the thing. We have had 43 races the last 7 years, most having over 80 people racing. If someone in our group (Bob Dion, say) wants to work with a resort - and that person is an experienced director, than fine. Other wise, let the people who know snowshoe directing and racing do what they do.

Edward Alibozek – [edtrnews@yahoo.com](mailto:edtrnews@yahoo.com)

## WMAC RACES WISH TO SERVE AS THE 2006 USSSA CHAMPIONSHIP

(Ed) - Thank you for all the time you put into this reply, and for all you do with the awesome series that the WMAC conducts each winter! I will be sure your responses here get passed along to the proper folks. The USSSA is just starting a campaign to elect new Regional Athletic Delegates who will comprise a Board of Directors, if you will, for the USSSA's Racing Program. Each region can elect up to three Delegates to sit on this Board. We have just begun a 2 week nomination period. A full membership vote will follow. I expect to seat this Board by the first of May or so. Then, there will be a new Site Selection Sub-Committee chosen from this general Board (I expect one rep per region). That sub-committee will be responsible for evaluating and awarding site bids for hosting Regional and National USSSA events. As I expected, I've been pleased to see a number of parties in the Northeast show interest in hosting the 2006 Nationals. All are valid bids. Some offer more than others. But it is encouraging to see the interest growing. I'll be sure the Selection Committee receives your materials. Thanks again for all your efforts. I certainly hope we can continue to count on the support of the WMAC in the coming seasons!

Mark Elmore - USSSA Sports Director  
[snowshoeguy@yahoo.com](mailto:snowshoeguy@yahoo.com) - [elmorem@co.clinton.ny.us](mailto:elmorem@co.clinton.ny.us)

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 Mark - I would be very much in support of Ed's plan for a 2006 USSSA Nationals. In my opinion sites of some previous USSSA eastern regional qualifiers have not been all that great (VT Fairgrounds 2004, Cascade Ski Tour Center 2003 and Killington 2002). I would not want to see one of them host Nationals.

Unlike the above-mentioned sites, which hosted "one-off" events, the WMAC events and their RD's have had a long history and will continue to host races in the future. Keeping in mind the value of your time as Director of USSSA, the WMAC venues and RD's will not need any hand holding by you to pull off a high quality event.

Richard Bolt - [rbolt@emersonecologics.com](mailto:rbolt@emersonecologics.com)

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 Thanks Ed, for the effort you have put into the sport and for your well-thought out e-mail. I like the idea of two events over the weekend. I'm sure Dave Dunham could measure out a shorter course for juniors, so that they were not racing more than 5K each day. I know, and your father and Rich Busa will tell you also, that your body doesn't always feel like two in a row. However, after doing Essex Jct. qualifier and Curley's Run on successive days, I think I can get my knees to give the OK.

I also like 5-year age groups, which is how most major national races do it, whether on the track, roads or mountains. It would be especially valuable for the open, masters, and veteran age groups, where most of the competitors are. I would also like to see a 70+ group, which make it fair for people like Busa. I think having a two-race weekend makes a lot of sense, especially when some travel so far. I like the fact that we can be united in presenting these plans, and not two different groups from this part of the east.

John Pelton - [jnpltn@sprynet.com](mailto:jnpltn@sprynet.com)

Hi Rich - Thank you for your comments concerning the site of the 2006 NC's. I will certainly pass them along to the site Selection Committee, once that group is formed. I agree with you, in part, that most of the previous sites of Northeastern Qualifier events are not adequate to host the NC's. Those being the Trailside Lodge in Killington VT and the Cascade Ski Touring Center in Lake Placid, NY. I do believe Tom Oddy at the Champlain Valley Exposition and Fairgrounds in Essex Junction VT will be bidding to not only host a 2005 Regional event but also the 2006 Nationals. I do believe that site could work if there was some major tweaking done on the racecourse, for example, extending the course down off the back to the river and utilizing the hills and woods. I think both the Olympic Regional Development Authority (ORDA) in Lake Placid and Paul Smiths College will also be placing bids for the '06 NC's.

From what I've been told, ORDA would offer use of the Olympic Nordic and / or Biathlon Centers for the event(s). We have also received interest from Gore Mountain in North Creek, NY and Bellayre Mountain in the Catskills. In the end, the Site Selection Committee will have the final say in where the events are awarded. I'm guessing, but I think that Selection Committee will be comprised of 1 representative from the full Board of Regional Athletic Delegates from each Region. Thanks again for your input. As I said earlier, I'll be sure the committee receives your email supporting the WMAC proposal.

Mark Elmore - USSSA Sports Director  
[snowshoeguy@yahoo.com](mailto:snowshoeguy@yahoo.com) - [elmorem@co.clinton.ny.us](mailto:elmorem@co.clinton.ny.us)

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 Mark - Actually you're right, the race at VT fair was not really all the bad. The facilities were fantastic but the course was extremely flat and open. Given the location of the site, I don't see how those 2 items can be remedied. I think it was nice for spectators to be able to see the race unfold, but that can be accomplished at almost any other site by using multiple small loops (as done by X-C ski and Biathlon). In addition, VT fair doesn't really showcase the best terrain, views and local culture that New England has to offer. It's kind of hokey looking, the area traffic is bad, there are no good views and it's not a very "natural" setting.

It's great to see so many others interested in hosting the 2006 Nationals. I think ORDA could do a great job at Van Ho. I'm sure Gore and Bellayre might be good, but after less than ideal sites at Utah and Tahoe I'd like to see the Nationals move away from Alpine Ski Areas where we always seem to get pushed to the fringes. Kincaid Park is a perfect example of a very snowshoe (or at least xc ski) friendly venue where we will be the center of attention and not a sideshow.

Richard Bolt - [rbolt@emersonecologics.com](mailto:rbolt@emersonecologics.com)

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 I agree and support the aims of the group. Incidentally, I was in Woodford this morning (4/2/04) and Woodford State Park had about 8" on the driveway. Prospect seemed to be about the same. One point you didn't make to Mark is the relatively closeness of Northfield Mass and Woodford, Vt. to each other.

Jack Quinn - [Jack.Quinn@adelphia.com](mailto:Jack.Quinn@adelphia.com)



## BELLOWS PIPE

The first day of spring seemed as good a day as any to climb Mt. Greylock. We hoped to take the lower Thunderbolt to the Bellows Pipe, and include a side trip to the top of Ragged Mountain. The climb up T-Bolt to the Bellows is 700' vertical.

Our route for the day started at the Gazebo in Greylock Glen,



Adams, Mass. We traveled along the Covered Bridge Route but instead of turning right over Hoxie Brook we continued uphill along the Thunderbolt Ski Trail until it connected us with the Bellows Pipe, Thoreau's favorite route to the summit.

The Bellows Pipe Trail is the route

Henry David Thoreau took in 1844, when he heeded Hawthorne's and Emerson's advice to visit Greylock. At one of the homes along the trail, now a cellar hole, Thoreau stopped to converse with a lady who was combing her long tresses. You can read about that in "A Week on the Concord and Merrimack Rivers". Thoreau spent the night on a wooden tower at the summit, and when he awoke, the clouds had closed in below him, and he found himself, "in a country such as we might see in dreams, with all the delights of paradise."



Why this area is called "Bellows Pipe" remains a mystery. Thoreau said "bellows" because of the force of the wind rushing through the notch, like a fireplace bellows.

Why "Pipe" then? Maybe as in a musical instrument played by the wind?

Paul Hartwig loves the Bellows Pipe Trail so much he climbs up Greylock several times a week just to explore this trail. He says the wind blows the snow around "like it is constantly snowing." It appears to have "fresh snow" every day due to this phenomenon.

Once on the Bellows, it was really gorgeous. We couldn't find the side trail to Ragged Mountain, though, so we continued to descend on the Bellows awhile. Finally, we turned around and met back up with K2.

We climbed back up past the Bellows lean-to, and wondered how they had gotten to material in to build it. We continued to dig upwards toward the intersection with the Appalachian Trail. This final bit of uphill added another 1200' to the climb. We were tired, but ready for the descent along the Thunderbolt. Mike and I had never gone down it during winter on snowshoes!

The Thunderbolt was exciting, and tough to stay upright on. The foot of snow wasn't really enough to make you comfortable. Coming down it was sort of a cross between running and skiing, there wasn't a great deal of control

Once toward the bottom we took a right along the Mountain Bicycling Trail, and then another right onto David's Path. This brought us down a nice ravine with a brook flowing split down the center.

Once along the bottom we cut through some fields to avoid a dog that Paul worries about so much. We finally hit bottom behind the Gould



Farm, and met up with K2 who backtracked from the lean-to.

Looking back at the power-line cutting straight up the mountain, Mike said that the cover of his high school yearbook (early '70's, I don't know if it was Hoosac Valley by then or still Adams High School?) had a picture of him and twenty of his classmates climbing straight up it during winter.

### BELLOWS PIPE March 20, 2004

### MT. GREYLOCK Adams, MA

1.	Brad Herder	4 miles	1:30:00
2.	Konrad Karolczuk	6 miles	2:50:00
3.	Mike Lahey	8 miles	2:50:00
4.	Paul Hartwig	8 miles	2:50:00
5.	Edward Alibozek	8 miles	2:50:00
	Summit, Sierra and Tippi		

*Photos - Mike chasing K2 up Bellow's Pipe; Mike and Paul overlooking T-Bolt; Mike remains upright, barely, and Paul Hartwig slides down Thunderbolt...*

*Material about Thoreau and the Bellows Pipe taken from Lauren R. Stevens book "Hikes and Walks in the Berkshire Hills."*

# La Sportiva Presents:

## The Northfield Mountain USATF NE Mountain Running Championship 13.2K of Up/down with 1800' of elevation change!

**June 5, 2004 9:00AM Northfield Mountain Visitors Center**  
**Directions: From Rt. 2 proceed North on Rt 63.**  
**The park entrance is 2 miles on your right.**

Pre-entry: \$10 Checks payable to Dave Dunham. Send to 108 Ferry RD, Bradford MA 01835 (sorry no refunds).  
Race day: \$15 Registration 7 AM – 8:30 AM. Questions: [dave.dunham@verizon.net](mailto:dave.dunham@verizon.net)  
USATF NE Mountain championship & part of the USATF NE mountain running circuit.

**More information on the 2004 New England Mountain Circuit:**  
[www.usatfne.org/trail/index.html](http://www.usatfne.org/trail/index.html)

### Other races in the series

**May 23 - Wachusett Mountain**, Princeton MA, 4.3 miles, 9:30 a.m.  
Note change to Sunday this year! Contact: Barbara McManus, 508-890-8811 [barbm301@charter.net](mailto:barbm301@charter.net) [www.cmsrun.org](http://www.cmsrun.org)

**May 29 - Mount Kearsarge** (Warner NH) 8.5 miles, 10 a.m.  
Contact: Paul DiGeronimo, 603-456-3029, [p\\_digeronimo@mcttelecom.com](mailto:p_digeronimo@mcttelecom.com)

**June 26 - Mt.Ascutney Run to the Summit**, Windsor VT, 3.8 mile, 9:30 a.m.  
Contact: Mt.Ascutney State Park, 1-800-299-3071 [dominick\\_25@hotmail.com](mailto:dominick_25@hotmail.com)

-----Cut Here and Mail with entry fee to: Dave Dunham 108 Ferry RD Bradford MA 01835-----

Waiver: I understand that running a race is a potentially hazardous activity. I should not enter and run unless I am medically able and properly trained. I agree to abide by any decision of a race official relative to my ability to safely complete the run. I assume all risks associated with running in the event including, but not limited to: falls, contact with other participants, the effects of weather, all such risks being known and appreciated by me. Having read this waiver and knowing these facts, and in consideration of acceptance of my entry: I hereby, myself, my heirs, executors, administrators, waive and release any and all rights and claims for damages I may have against Northfield Mountain, USA track and Field, Dave Dunham, race sponsors, their agents, representatives, successors, and assign for any and all injuries suffered by me on the way to take part in the race, during the race, and leaving the scene of the race. I ASSUME ALL RISKS ASSOCIATED WITH THIS EVENT. The use of Headphones and/or baby strollers are strictly forbidden.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Sex \_\_\_\_\_

Club/Team (if any) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_