

Meet Colonel James McGinn PAGE 10 | Annual Awards, Nominate Now! PAGE 7

# ON THE TRAIL<sup>MASS</sup> WITH

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**Mill Valley's new and improved SW-48 is ready for the trails!**

PHOTO BY NATHAN SANSOUCY



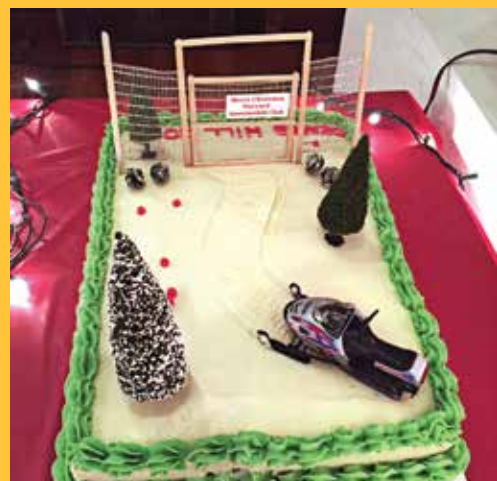
**A moose hung around Big Pond in Otis for the better part of a week. Often grazing along the trails of the Knox Sno-Riders, it ignored the gawking neighbors and snowmobilers, alike. The EPO's visited and declared the male moose to be fine. PHOTO BY ROCCO NOZIK.**



**Paige Stomski, of Chesterfield Four Seasons, prepares breakfast for the trail clearing crew. PHOTO BY BILL GOLASKI**

# Club Photos

See Club News on page 4



**The Harvard Snowmobile Club celebrated the grand re-opening of one of their most beautiful trails with an amazing cake.**

PHOTO BY JOE GIBBONS



**Members of the Easy Riders enjoy one of several club rides. PHOTOS BY STEVEN CONTI**





# Contents

VOLUME 31, ISSUE 4

## DEPARTMENTS

President's Message .....	2
SAM Scholarships .....	3
Club News .....	4
Annual Award Nominations .....	7
A Formula for Success .....	8
Meet Col. James McGinn .....	10
SAM Vintage Rides .....	14
SAM I Am .....	16
Marketplace .....	17

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



## FEATURES

# 12

### Crazy About Mercury

By John Ruffo



# 15

### Vintage Registration FAQ

By Jeff Gamelli and Randy Toth



## ON THE COVER

*A wild purple sky at sunset basks the snow in a vivid hue on the trails in Bernardston.* PHOTO BY

HARRY KENNEDY, BGL CLUB

# 17

### Thiokol: Poetry in Motion

By Brenda Mewcomb

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## President's Message

BY DAN GOULD



# On The Trails

I was fortunate to ride a decent amount the past two years, last year in particular. The biggest challenge last winter was that a storm seemed to bury us just about every weekend, which actually interfered with our sledding plans. Both seasons started late and ended late. It was as if winter shifted three or four weeks to the right. Quite frankly, snow in January, February and March is superior to November and December. Early season snow tends to melt before it piles high enough to ride, the ground and steams aren't frozen, and it interferes with holiday travel. More work than fun, I say.

Off the top of my head, I got to ride and explore the trails maintained by the following clubs: Adams, BGL, Buckland, Burgy, Coldbrook, Colrain, Conway, Florida, Goshen, Greater Whately, Hadley, Hilltown, Indianhead, Leicester, Northfield, Savoy, Snowbirds and Worthington. Might have been a few others, too.

I didn't choose to ride in any particular area, the choice was often made on a whim, by invitation, or by my riding partners. Sometimes the goal was a short three-hour rip, other times it was a dawn till dusk marathon.

It was fascinating to observe the different techniques the clubs use to mark and maintain their trails, and how it varied, not only from club to club, but by region, too. There seemed to be long honored traditions in certain areas: the way an intersection was marked, or how fields were flagged. We found handwritten signs dotting certain trails that promised food and gas or pointed the way to a special destination.

The challenges and victories were also evident. You could tell by the width of a trail, or the way it cut back and forth across a street, how it had evolved over time. New trails were not as finely tuned as long existing runs. There was clear evidence of large groomers on many trails, and then that of an



**Snowmobilers enjoy poking fun at each other's mechanical fails, but after the smoke and laughter clear, are the first to help with the repairs.**



old Frenchy drag along a twisting, hilly path. You know, the one with a steep drop-off to the side.

There was plenty of humor, too. A sign in Bernardston points the wayward to the North and South Pole, another in Ashfield indicates you are on Interstate 91, but you're not. An army of machine gun toting Star War'ish statues hiding in Conway induce a brief bung-clench, and then a wow! There's a tree in Buckland decorated with the anatomy of splintered sleds. Snapped suspension bits, a smashed hood and blown belts lend a bizarre holiday spirit to the intersection. This reinforces the fact that snowmobilers enjoy poking fun at each other's mechanical fails, but after the smoke and laughter clear, are the first to help with the repairs.

It's amazing what a group of determined volunteers can do. That said, I want to remind you to submit nominations for the SAM Annual Awards, ASAP. I'm determined to ride more areas this year and add more clubs to my list. I'm open to invitations! See you on the trails. 🐾

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### ADAMS SNO DRIFTERS

by Joe Rogge,  
board of directors

As this is being written we do not have much to talk about concerning actual snowmobiling. However we have two ongoing projects that require a great deal of our time and collaboration. The first centers around one of our charities. We are supporting the family of Logan Manning (Google: Logan Manning Cheshire MA). Logan has serious intestinal health issues. He has had several surgeries. We have been successful in supporting this cause through our club newsletter, SAM magazine, our Christmas Party Raffle, and a dedicated Club Ride February 20. At our December Christmas Party we had local contributions of over fifty raffle prizes. We will announce dollar totals in a future release.

Our second project involves improving a trail in Cheshire that will greatly reduce on-road riding and provide for a better surface for grooming. This improvement was the result of intense communication on the part of club leadership and landowners somewhat reluctant to allow snowmobiles on their property. Use it properly or lose it! It also involved several trail trim hours on the part of our usual crew of eight or nine regulars.



### BERKSHIRE SNOW SEEKERS

by Randy Toth

Despite the terrible snowmobiling weather early this season, we are now, I hope, reaping the rewards of our extensive preseason groomer maintenance and repair operations as well as major bridge re-decking and trail clearing. A number of marathon groomer repair sessions have been held which enabled us to identify problem areas prior to the start of actual grooming. This year we had all three of our Tuckers Sno-Cats stored in the same location. It was a truly amazing sight to behold as our chief mechanic moved swiftly from machine to machine using his extraordinary expertise to diag-



*The Berkshire Snow Seekers prepare their groomer fleet of Tucker Sno-Cats for the trails.* PHOTO BY RANDY TOTTH

nose problems, formulate plans of action and give orders to us mortal tool holders and helpers. As individual tasks were accomplished, the chief mechanic came back to inspect, offer more advice and to perform the more complex mechanical repairs. This effort all took place under the watchful eye of our club president who occasionally found it necessary to apply an ancient form of motivational therapy to some the worker bees to keep things moving along. A great big thanks to all the folks whom attended our groomer repair sessions, bridge restoration sessions and trail maintenance sessions.



### BERNARDSTON-GILL-LEYDEN

by Brad Stafford,  
club president

Here it is the week before Christmas and all through our state, not a flake has fallen isn't it great! Actually, some of you might be surprised that I said that, but it's true. A lot of clubs out there, including ours, are behind on their trail work and even with snow, our trails wouldn't be open yet. These extra few weeks of warm weather are really helping us get stuff done. We finished our grant-funded bridge and are always working through trail changes and closures, machine maintenance and trail inspections.

Our club had a great turnout for the swapmeet, and the first-ever remote site for vintage and regular sled registration was a huge success! Our core group is awesome, but we could always use more volunteers to help with all that needs to get our trails ready so that when the snow gets here, there will be no delay in opening them up. We all have those same things to do at home and "IF" every snowmobile club member donated a single afternoon to a club, imagine what our trails would be like. So a quick question: If there was snow out on the trails, would you have enough free time to ride? Just something to think about. So next time you see a club's posting for help, go check it out. Keep the rubber side down.



### BURGY BULLETS

by Jon Tobin, president

Hi, everyone. Well, by the time everyone is reading this we should be well into our riding season and hopefully there's a great amount of snow on the trails. Here at the Bullets, we're hoping for some great, late-January riding so we can have Yamaha Demo Day at the clubhouse. Our friends at Valley Motorsports are going to bring up some new models January 23 and let you take them on the trails. The rain/lack-of-snow



**Burgy Bullets groom the trail to Conway along Corridor 93.** PHOTO BY JON TOBIN

date will be Feb 6. We're also planning a Family Fun Ride on February 13, Poker Run for February 27 and a Richard Camp Ride-In on March 12. We will be updating our Facebook page with specific times for the events.

Once the snow flies, we should also have regular hours for the clubhouse to be open on the weekends. Keep an eye out for new BBSC T-shirts and sweatshirts, too! Thanks to our loyal trail crew for an awesome job clearing and signing trails and building bridges this season. The list of volunteers is huge, so thank you to all of you. You know who you are. For membership info, email [bbsc3326@comcast.net](mailto:bbsc3326@comcast.net) or call Jon at 413-727-2297. Think Snow!



## CHESTERFIELD FOUR SEASONS

**by Bill Golaski, president**

Things have been going very well with the club. I have been a member for a long time and it's great to see more

people at meetings and helping out with the trail work. Our trails have been getting better and better each year with our new groomers. We had the largest group of helpers this year in a long time. Thanks to everyone that helped out this fall.

We hope to have the clubhouse open once we have riding, on Friday pm, Saturday in the day and pm, and Sunday in the day, as allowable with our volunteers. It is always best to call before at 413-296-4048. If you'd like to help us stay open, come to a meeting to get involved. We offer restrooms, food, drink, parking and this year will try to offer gas.

The Game Supper is on January 30, game and domestic food will be served. For tickets call Bill at 413-585-9403 or go to a meeting. The Groomer Benefit Dinner is February 20, featuring prime rib and live band. For tickets call Todd at 413-527-7046 or go to a meeting. The snowmobile trailer raffle will be drawn at Groomer Dinner. \$20 donation for the



**The Chesterfield Trail clearing breakfast crew is composed of the mother and daughter team of Kathy and Paige Stomski, along with Raymond Laroche.**

PHOTO BY BILL GOLASKI

trailer or \$2,000 cash, maximum of 400 tickets sold. Please, let it snow!



## CONWAY

**by Ed Skorupski**

The season has started off slowly and hopefully by the time you read this the weather will have become more conducive to snowmobiling. We have taken advantage of the unusually warm fall and early winter by getting some much needed trail work finished, including: re-decking four bridges, a complete trail rebuild, and all of the needed maintenance on the grooming fleet.

While we have not had as many volunteers as we would've liked, we would like to thank the dedicated few that have put in the time and hard work required to maintain the trail system. We are actively seeking new volunteers to help share the load. No experience necessary, come on out and meet some new friends.

Our annual Pancake Breakfast is on the February 21 from 7:30 to 11am at the Conway Firehouse. This event is always a lot of fun for us, as we get to meet our neighbors and landowners. There is plenty of parking for both cars and sleds so come join us. We promise that you will not leave hungry.

Like us on Facebook or check us out online at [www.sledconway.com](http://www.sledconway.com) where we offer you the ability to purchase your trail pass online.



## EASY RIDERS

**by Steven Conti,  
vice president**

Hello sledders! By now we all should be in the midsts of another snowy snowmobile season, enjoying the trails and having a great time. The Easy Riders Snowmobile Club have trips planned around New England and Canada to different locations and making the best of this short and sweet season. We hope you are having a fun and safe season and also welcome all to attend any of our club meetings at the Marlboro Moose, located at 67 Fitchburg Street just off Rt. 495. We have club meetings every 2nd Tuesday evening at 7pm.



## GREATER WHATELY

**by Robert Sabola**

Come join the Greater

Whately Snowmobile Club on Saturday, February 13, for the David Scott Memorial Scholarship Fundraiser. All proceeds will go the Scholarship, which will be presented to a student at the Frontier Regional High School. The fun begins at 12pm at Scott's Farm on North Street in Whately.

For snowmobilers, there will be an obstacle course and time trials. The entry fee is \$20 for two runs. Prizes will be awarded to the winners. There will be activities for the younger folks, as well as sledding. Food and hot drinks will be available. Saturday, February 27 is the backup date if there is no snow. Contact Heather Scott at 413-512-0683 or Jen Skroski at 413-512-1681 if you would like to volunteer or have any questions. As the date approaches and for more details go to sledmass.com, click on Clubs and scroll down to Greater Whately Snowmobile Club.

GWSC Meetings: Second Monday of every month except June and July at the Whately Town Hall, located across the street from the Whately Inn. Meetings start at 7pm. Email us at: greaterwhatelysnowmobileclub@aol.com



## HARVARD

**by Joe Gibbons,  
board of directors**

Our 2015 Christmas party was a great success. Check out our cake!

The cake was made in tribute to the grand re-opening of one of our most beautiful trails that has been closed for the last four seasons. Our gratitude goes out to The Community Harvest Project in conjunction with the Worcester Food Bank for allowing this trail to re-open. With hard work and lots of club participation two massive gates were constructed and engineered to allow passage of sleds while keeping the real problem out of the orchards. We have a considerable deer population here in Harvard and they can do considerable damage if the orchard gates are left open. This trail now reconnects the trails leading to Still River and Bare Hill Pond.

Our new and improved trail intersection signage is now in place. Harvard just gets easier and more sled friendly with the new sign program. Come ride in Harvard! Parking at Depot Road ballfield lot, stay left on ballfield. Trail passes at Toreku Tractor at the rotary near the Harvard-Ayer line on Rt. 110. A trail map comes with every membership. Pray for snow and please keep the gates closed when passing through the orchards.



## KNOX TRAIL SNO-RIDERS

**by Jim Richard,  
media director**

Happy 2016 fellow sledders! Here is the latest "perfect world" trail report! The trails are all open and the conditions are fantastic! The groomer team is working overtime because the snow is so deep. The new trails are a hit with the riders, and the local establishments are doing a brisk business!

So began the club report exactly one year ago. When it came out, these were the exact conditions! I hope that happens again because as I write this less than a week before Christmas, it's raining with record high temperatures. It is so difficult to write the next to last report of the season when the riding hasn't begun.

But there is good news to report! The raffle is days away and it looks like all tickets will be sold. The Lyons Hill Road Trail 9 bypass is complete with a spur direct to Trail 7. Many thanks to all of the trail workers who made this happen. As we wait for the snow, work progresses on the groomers, trails, bridges and ramps.

On the calendar for January 23 is a Family Ride and on February 21 is the Poker Run at W26.

The officers and board of directors thank everyone for being patient as we struggle through the Great Snow Drought of December 2015. See you on the trails!



## MILL VALLEY

**by Nathan Sansoucy**

As we reach the end of the green grass, we hope for a thick blanket of snow. On December 16 we had our annual club Christmas party. This year we had a great turnout with around 35 members and their families showing up and enjoying the festivities with us. Thanks to our members' donations, we had three tables of gifts for the Chinese raffle and three tables full of food for our potluck dinner that night.

Our trail cleaning crews are hard at work putting the finishing touches on our trail system and grooming machines. From the Mill Valley Snowmobile Club we send our sincere gratitude to the hard working men and women that are making this season possible for the rest of the riders.

As the snow arrives we urge our members and fellow riders to please come visit our website at millvalleysnowmobile.org. The link for our Facebook page can also be found on the website. We will be updating the snow conditions, trail openings and closings as much as possible, to keep the riders up to date on current conditions. On the website you can find our trail maps and club events. We are planning new events for this winter, so be looking out for them!



## SAVOY KANARY KATS

**by Doug Decoigne**

Hello, a warm December will bring a flip of the weather "switch" in January, bringing winter temps and abundant snowfall we crave.

Our Christmas party at the Hilltop was a great success! Excellent food was provided to all and was put together by our new secretary, Michelle Perrier. Good job!

We are continuing trail work and I need to say it is awesome to see some youth age volunteers showing up! Thanks to you youngsters. Hopefully your efforts



will inspire many more of the young people that enjoy our beautiful trail system to become volunteers as well. I guarantee that those who do so will find a new appreciation for their riding experience and will be eager to contribute to the club's efforts in the future.

There are myriad ways to help the SKK. Trail work is a large part but there are many more ways. Members, young and not so young, can participate. Help is always welcome in organizing and working at club events, working on SKK equipment, operating grooming equipment, helping with processing trail passes (almost 800 per season in recent years) and more.

We at SKK hope we all are enjoying good sledding conditions as we read this publication! 🐾

## SAM Annual Awards

Nominations for the SAM Annual Awards are due **March 1**. Any member of a SAM club can make a nomination. Download entry forms at [sledmass.com](http://sledmass.com) or call (413) 369-8092 for a form.

SAM presents the following nine awards every year:

**Groomer Operator** of the Year  
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R4ALL  
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# A Formula for Success

By Brad Stafford

There are many questions that every club and their volunteers get... "Where can I get a SAM Trail Pass," "Where can I park," and "Where can I get a map?" But I think the hardest ones to answer are, "When are the trails going to be open" and "Why did you close them?" Last year in our neck of the woods we were teased early in the season with lots of measurable snow, but it was what I call "Fairy Dust": Very light and fluffy stuff that despite having a foot or more, just wouldn't pack down. After just two or three sleds it would simply be push off the trail, exposing the frozen ground underneath.

I had numerous calls from club members who were frustrated that we had all

that snow but the trails remained closed. I would explain the reasons and for the most part people understood, but I know there were some that didn't. That got me thinking. There are so many people out there who still don't realize it's not just the snow that keeps our trails system open and available to us. It's a complicated combination of many things that all have to come together to get the end result we all hope for, which is, open snowmobile trails. So despite barely making it through algebra, I believe it boils down to an equation that looks something like this:

If  $(LP) \times (SCV + TM) \times (SD > AMin) \times (R + STP) \times (R4ALL) = YES$  then our TRAILS are OPEN

It might look like gibberish but let's break it down. First, as you know, anything times 0 = 0. So if we lose any of the pieces of this formula then the end result would be a NO, and trails are closed.

LP = Land owner permission. This is the foundation building block for all trails. Also remember, it's not always your neighbor or a private landowner, it could be a private entity like a land trust or a state agency, like the Department of Fish



PHOTOS BY HARRY KENNEDY AND DAN GOULD



and Wildlife. Without landowner permission our trails would be closed.

SCV + TM = Snowmobile Club Volunteers and Trail Maintenance. Without the countless hours from numerous club volunteers working around the calendar getting landowner permissions, clearing trails, making bridges and maintaining equipment, trails would be closed.

SD > AMin = Snow Depth is greater than Agreed Minimum. This one is tricky as it can be different across different properties. State regulations say four inches of hard packed snow. That doesn't mean four inches of that light fairy dust. It means a hard pack, something you can walk on top of, snow that would be a pain in the neck if you had to shovel it. Some entities require at least six inches. I know of clubs that have agreements with landowners across specialty fields that have sod or low-lying plants that without proper snow coverage could be destroyed by sleds. Without the proper snow pack, trails are closed.

R+STP  
SCV+TM  
SD>AMin

**Do what you can to make  
a positive impact on this  
formula. Ride like you want  
the trails to stay open.**

■ ■ ■

R + STP = Registration and SAM Trail Pass. This should be self-explanatory. Without being properly registered and having a Snowmobile Association of Massachusetts trail pass, the trails are closed to you, unless you dare to ride anyways, which then makes you eligible for fines up

to \$500 and having your sled impounded.

R4ALL = Respect For All. If, as snowmobilers, we do not respect landowners requests and respect and support local clubs with both time and money, obey the signs on the trails, and don't wait for the minimum snow pack, you could personally cause a trail to be closed. Not just for the season, but permanently!

How can you help to get trails open and keep them open you ask? Do what you can to make a positive impact on this formula. Ride like you want the trails to stay open, leave the snow pack on the trail to be measured, and obey all signs, since most are there for your safety. Add to the equation by volunteering your time, energy and resources to your local club. Respect the work that so many others do, including the landowners, local club members and all those that keep SAM running smooth, keeping us all organized, and riding on well-maintained and open trails. Until next time, keep the rubber side down. 🐾



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# Meet **Col. James McGinn,** Director of the Massachusetts Environmental Police



By Larry Tucker

Each day I watch as the temperature continues to drop, hoping that snow, as in heavy snows, will soon be here. While snow is important to the enjoyment of our trails, safety on our trails is also foremost on the minds of everyone. Who's in the driver's seat when it comes to safety on our trails?

The Massachusetts Environmental Police (MEP) have the wintertime responsibility of assuring the safety of our trails, managing the registration process and responding to landowner and snowmobiler concerns. The Director of the Massachusetts Environmental Police is Colonel James McGinn.

In early 2015, as part of the incoming administration of Governor Charlie Baker, Colonel McGinn was chosen by Environmental Secretary Matthew Beaton to take the helm of the MEP. Officially known as the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs Office of Law Enforcement, Colonel McGinn oversees the Bureaus of Coastal Enforcement and Inland Enforcement: Boat OHV and Snowmobile Registration, Boat and Recreation Vehicle Safety, Marine Theft, and the Environmental Crimes Bureau.

I recently had occasion to sit with Colonel McGinn, and he shared many insights, information, and a vision for his department.

Colonel McGinn lives in Lynn. He served 23 years with the Massachusetts State Police prior to his post at the MEP. He has a master's in criminal justice from Westfield State College and is a member of the Massachusetts Bar as an attorney. He loves to water ski and downhill snow ski, with his favorite mountain being Wildcat in New Hampshire. He has enjoyed snowmobiling and we hope that he will join some of us on our trails this winter.

On an average day Colonel McGinn has approximately 70-80 Environmental Police Officers (EPO) working in the field, many providing coverage for multiple towns. In his efforts to better serve the public, there were approximately a dozen



new academy graduates that joined the ranks this year and an additional 10 are expected in the spring.

While discussing the process of registering snowmobiles and OHV's, he expressed his desire for "convenience" and "one-stop shopping," where one could pay

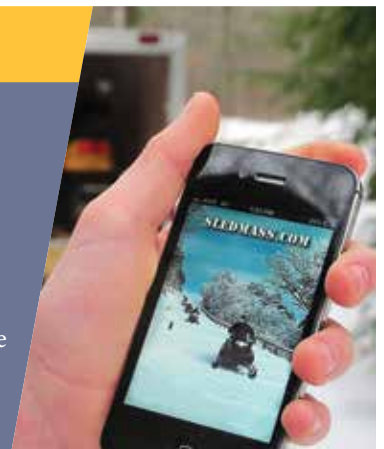
the sales tax, obtain a state registration and get a SAM Trail Permit all at the same time and location. In October Colonel McGinn attended SAM's Sled Expo where the EPO's had a booth and offered remote registration on-site. Also proving to be popular was the MEP mobile command center at the Bernardston swap meet in November where nearly 100 sleds were registered, including several vintage snowmobiles that were able to register under the new vintage registration program. Colonel McGinn also attended that event and took time to answer dozens of questions and discuss snowmobiling with our members.

Colonel McGinn is a friend of snowmobiling. He is streamlining the registration process and determined to improve it even further. He has launched a very active Facebook page for his organization, improving communicating and interaction with the public. He is an equally strong advocate of "enforcement, education and public outreach" as shown by the fact that his staff and officers have always been willing to meet with snowmobilers and discuss the laws, rules and regulations regarding their duties. The Colonel and his staff also met with the SAM Board of Directors and Officers at the September meeting, taking part in a detailed discussion about snowmobiling in Massachusetts.

Please join me in offering a special "thank you" to Colonel James McGinn for all that he does for snowmobiling. And, remember, all snowmobilers are members of the Trails Safety Team. 🐾

## Online at [sledmass.com](http://sledmass.com)

- Poll: Your Choice, Electric Start or Reverse?
- Insane Rapid Deployment Snow Vehicle
- Flashback: Top 10 Sled Stories of 2015
- Take a Chance: New Club Raffle Listing
- Planes Trains and Snowmobiles: Part 2
- SAM Featured in Worcester Living Magazine



# Crazy About

# MERCURY

Story and photos by John Ruffo

**F**our years ago I picked up a gem, it was set back, behind the crowd of others. After looking over the same old Ski-Doos, Cats, Yamahas, etc, I found an odd-ball sled that until now I had only seen online and in old magazines.

It didn't take a close study to realize it was rough but there was still some meat on the bones. The Mercury's chrome front and rear bumper had some rust but was polishable. The steering was tight, it had a rust free steel fuel tank, but there wasn't a track. What the heck, for 45 bucks it would be a cool build or parts sled.

While looking for odds and ends this past summer I stumbled upon a complete 1973 Mercury Max 440 in Plainville CT. It was similar to what I had bought four years ago but everything was still attached. While trying to maintain a good poker face and avoid drooling all over the machine, I noticed something odd. The engine tag read KEC-440/22. That was the ice breaker! Normally you find KEC-440/21 but the 22 designation is a for a higher output engine, 47HP, which was crazy for that time period.

My brother and I loaded her up and started working on it right away. First I took the skis off and replaced the bottoms,



seeing I couldn't even bolt up carbides. After melting and fusing hot iron and drilling, I laid some beads on the skis, just as extra insurance. Since the weld bead is stronger than the steel patch, it would hold up better to rough surfaces, like pavement.

Because the engine is mounted on the tunnel, essentially in the center of the sled, there's less ground pressure on the skis, which can cause issues on hard packed surfaces. Several solutions ran through my mind... ski wideners help stability and steering but bend easily. Then I remember my



grandfather and his buddies talking about the old days when they used to mount one-inch tall blocks between the leaf springs and spindles, which added enough ground pressure to make steering manageable.

Next was the chain case. Everything looked good, so I slapped in new seals, fresh oil and called it good. Now it was engine build time. The engine is very interesting. It's a Canadian Curtis Wright but is made by Kioritz Corporation in Japan.

As we all know, every project has some sort of turmoil, now was that time. I had to remove the Salisbury clutch, so I made a puller out of grade 8 bolts. And to no surprise, the aluminum had bonded to the steel crank. Eventually the threads stripped and the clutch cracked apart, but it was still on the crank! They are noted for this ugly trait. I couldn't use a die grinder without the risk of hitting the jugs. As much as I hated to use heat on the crank, there was little choice. I melted the aluminum until it popped off the taper.

I then stripped the engine down,



installed new seals and re-bonded the case. After that the cylinders were honed, new wrist pin bearings were added and just about everything else was cleaned or replaced.

Then another speed bump tossed me off the Merc. One of the rings was a couple thousandths too big. So another was ordered. Then I started to think about carburetion. The old Walbro bolted to the intake are notoriously temperamental, snowmobilers often swapped to a Tillotson. Being a reed engine I figured the best approach for snappy response was to go to a 38mm flatslide Mikuni.

One thing leads to another and the

thought of fuel capacity came to mind. Last year we made it to the base of Greylock from Savoy with the five-gallon tank still half full. So, I thought, why not a tanker! I located a five-gallon tank from a generator that fit perfectly under the seat, completely out of sight. All I had to do was modify the fuel line adapter from the bottom of the tank to the front end and I'd be haulin' 10 gallons for the long hauls.

I wasn't too thrilled with the original color, the black hood was dull and boring. It needed paint, orange paint. Orange stands out in the crowd, it looks sharp, and still retains that '70s and '80s vibe.

Next is the exhaust, which is on hold as I consider my options. I picked up a decent set of 440 twin pipes that can be modified to fit the machine. They are as close as I can get to the engine size without dyno-tuning and testing, all for only a couple more horseshes. I'm still thinking this over. Until then (and part two of this project), see you on the trails. Be Bold and Ride Old! 🏂



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# SAM Vintage Rides

**T**he Snowmobile Association of Massachusetts and the Mass Vintage Snowmobile Club have awarded Vintage Snowmobile Rides to three clubs for 2016. The events have become extremely popular, allowing SAM members to ride their vintage sleds in a parade-like atmosphere, reliving the past. Even if you don't own a vintage machine, just watching the old iron-dogs going down the trail is a sight to behold. Everyone is welcome to participate.

## **JANUARY 23, Savoy Kanary Kats Snowmobile Club**

1254 Main Rd, Savoy. 25-mile ride starts at 10am, registration at 9.

## **FEBRUARY 14, Bernardston Gill Leyden Snowmobile Club**

Kringle Candle, Rte 5, Bernardston. 25-mile ride starts at 10am, registration at 9.

## **FEBRUARY 20, Florida Mountaineers Snowmobile Club**

Chilson's Pond, 80 Tilda Hill Rd, Florida. 20-mile ride starts at 10am, registration at 9.

Vintage sleds must display a Mass Snowmobile Registration. Special vintage registrations are available via the registry. Vintage sleds do not need to display SAM decal for these three special events. However, you need to provide a current pink SAM trail pass slip (from another sled) as proof of membership. Don't worry if you don't have one, memberships will be available at events. Keep an eye on the sledmass webpage for more details.

PHOTO BY  
JONATHAN  
HOLLAND





# Massachusetts Vintage Snowmobile Registration Frequently Asked Questions

Compiled by Jeff Gamelli  
and Randy Toth

**T**he following is a brief summary of the vintage FAQ and in no way answers every question or should be considered a definitive document. Details are available on the vintage page at [sledmass.com](http://sledmass.com). If you have any doubts or questions, contact the "Boat, Recreation Vehicle & Snowmobile Registration Bureau Registry Office" for clarification.

## **Q** How is the sled age calculated when registering as vintage?

**A:** It must have been manufactured more than 25 years ago, in original or restored condition and not modified.

## **Q** My sled is over 25 years old. Will it automatically be registered as vintage?

**A:** No. You must request that it be registered as a vintage snowmobile.

## **Q** How long is the vintage registration good for?

**A:** As long as you personally own the sled.

## **Q** Can the vintage snowmobile be registered online?

**A:** No. You register a vintage sled by mail or at a registry office.

## **Q** If I register a vintage sled, can I ride it anywhere and anytime I choose?

**A:** No. The vintage registration was established for collectors of old snowmobiles. "A vintage snow vehicle registration issued by the Director for a snow vehicle shall authorize the vehicle to be operated only for the purpose of traveling to, returning from and participating in an exhibition,



*Two officers from the Massachusetts Environmental Police perform an inspection on a vintage snowmobile.* PHOTO BY DAN GOULD

parade or other public event of interest and for occasional personal use."

## **Q** What if I want to ride my vintage sled as I do my regular snowmobile?

**A:** Simply register your sled as a regular snowmobile.

## **Q** If I participate in a SAM authorized vintage ride, do I need a registration?

**A:** Yes. Either a vintage registration or a regular registration.

## **Q** What do I need to register my sled as a vintage?

**A:** Before heading to the registry: An inspection is required before your vintage sled can be registered. Call 800-632-8075 to make an appointment. There is no fee for the inspection. Allow at least 7 to 10 business days for inspection. The officer

will complete and sign a form for you to submit to the registration office. Bill of sale, proof of sales tax paid (ST-6 form) and a completed registration application.

## **Q** How do I prove ownership without a prior registration or bill of sale?

**A:** You need a notarized statement of facts concerning the sled, including but not limited to: How long you owned the sled, how you obtained ownership, a description of the vehicle, the VIN, and any registration history.

## **Q** What if I do not have proof of having paid sales tax?

**A:** Contact the Mass Department of Revenue at 800-392-6089.

## **Q** Does a vintage sled need a trail pass to ride SAM trails?

**A:** Yes. The same laws, regulations and safety measures apply. 🐾



## Member Profile

# Ron Hawkes



**Club:** Conway Snowmobile Club

**Years snowmobiling:** 40

**Current snowmobile:** 1997 Polaris Indy Trail 550

**Sled mods:** Studs and carbide skags

**Club position:** Past president. I've served as president of the Conway Club so many times I can't remember how many. I've been kind of a trail honcho for many of those years, too.

**VOLUNTEER WORK:** I do all kinds of trail work, including assist bridge building, trail clearing, and signage. I also organize and cook at the Conway Snowmobile Club's pancake breakfast and provide equipment for the club's food booth at Festival of the Hills in the fall. I keep busy getting trail pass materials out to our venders, etc, etc, etc.

**FAVORITE RIDING AREA:** Mainly around Conway and Franklin County.

**TELL US A STORY:** Many, many years ago, I was out one night with a friend on my old '67 Panther. We were riding across a field, and just under the snow was an electric fence wire that barely cleared the top of the skis and caught the spindles. It was a strong wire. I came to a sudden stop and went over the windshield, snapping one side of the handlebars off... you know, the side with brake handle. I held onto the center of the steering column with my left hand and steered with the right. In order to stop, I had to grab the dangling left handlebar with the brake handle still attached and squeeze it.

**TELL US SOMETHING INTERESTING ABOUT YOU:** I've been on the Conway Fire Department for 50 years, serving as deputy chief since 1985. I've also been a part time police officer & constable since 1977. 🐾



PHOTOS BY CRAIG WARNER



# Thiokol-Trail Groomer

A poem by Brenda Mewcomb

Orange caterpillar  
Inches along ambitiously  
Her job demanding

Growling-Swish- Swoosh  
Mighty feet tread over snow  
Pulling body behind

Smoothing Snow - oh a large  
Lump, Bump, Thump - Nose in air  
Then Plump back on ground

Swishy wind in her face  
Puffs snow... she blinks and grinds  
forward  
Ever more determined

Steadily, gently  
Along the remarkable path  
Under the archway treading

Snow sprinkled greenery  
Green bush tips tickle her sides  
Bridges - frozen lakes, streams

Trees snow attired  
Astounding beauty she passes  
Nature at her finest

Quiet - no wildlife  
Just the sound of her churning  
Through the massive forest

Another Snowy Day  
Her body dragging along  
Smoothing, Sweeping Snow

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PHOTO BY JIM RICHARD, KNOX TRAIL SNO-RIDERS

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