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Savoy's new LMC 1800 groomer arrives under the cover of snow.

PHOTO BY MICHELLE VINCENT

Trail Shots

See Club News on page 6



Nickolas Keating and Tim Keating enjoyed a wonderful day of Mount Greylock riding. Trails were groomed flat and they put on 55 miles. PHOTO BY TIM KEATING



Hanging out by the fire at a BGL pit stop. PHOTO BY DAN GOULD

Burgy Bullets Mark Chereski claims that the the sign says it all. PHOTO BY KEVIN KUKUCKA



Ray White puts a new roof on the Knox Trail Groomer Garage. PHOTO BY JAMES RICHARD



Knox Trail sledders leaving the Knox Trail Inn under the watchful eye of a Ken Packie sculpture. PHOTO BY BEN HALLMARK

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ON THE COVER

Jacob Conroy, Chris Toomey and Ricky Fields make fresh tracks on connector trail number 4 from Conway to Deerfield.

PHOTO BY JAKE CONROY



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President's Message

BY DAN GOULD

Trail Protection Fund Launched

The importance of trail preservation and land conservation were outlined last month in this space. As I said then, trails are a priority. It's understandable how land sales have negatively impacted our trail system and are only going to get worse if we aren't proactive. It just so happens we have been working on this for years.

Approximately two years ago each delegate was given a questionnaire asking their club to identify key pieces of property that should be considered for trail protection, or property where a trail didn't yet exist but would make an interesting prospect for a new connection.

We then utilized an RTP grant to educate our members about easements and prepare the legal paperwork to execute them. We had several training sessions throughout the state and the documents were distributed to the clubs and are online at sledmass.com. Since then we've had several successful easements, which is absolutely amazing.

Land easements, partnering with trusts and possibly even buying property are realistic options, but cost money. Big money. The next logical question was funding such a program.

Last season the delegates debated several items related to a unified dues structure and a possible price increase. That was in response to

several clubs voicing concerns about grooming and trail maintenance costs, and variations in dues among clubs. This took months of study and thoughtful consideration but the body was split and it didn't pass.

A month after that decision, the delegates earmarked funds towards a specific land protection project, money that wasn't in the budget. They made the right call, they absolutely had to take action, but this isn't the proper way to implement such lofty goals.

The delegates quickly realized that there was a dire need to implement a trail protection fee of \$5 for each trail pass and took action. The new Trail Protection Fund will be a dedicated fund, allowing SAM to move forward as outlined in our strategic plan to maintain and expand our interconnected trail system.

There are plenty of twists and turns ahead but we are accelerating at a rapid pace, leaving a nice snow roost behind. Looking back it seems as though it was just a few years ago that our executive director rounded us up for a strategic planning meeting, when in fact it was in 2006. That was a long time ago. Goals like this can be so distant, so out of reach, that they seem impossible at first. I guess that what makes accomplishments and dreaming so sweet. 🐾

Online at sledmass.com

- Poll: What's your favorite type of helmet?
- RTP grants announced
- SAM meeting attendance 2012-2013
- E-15 fuel not approved for snowmobiles
- Cat, Polaris and Ski-Doo announce race sleds
- Farmer's Almanac predicts cold snowy winter





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	2013	POLARIS	600 SB PROR ES	745522
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	2013	POLARIS	600LE INDY SP	766960
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Safely Trailering your Snowmobile



By Randy Toth

**I was really lucky,
I thought, until I
realized that the sled
was momentarily
being held up by the
friction of the ski
tips against the rear
of the Bronco.**



**Photo and
illustration by
Dan Gould**

Have you ever seen a snowmobile sticking out of the back window of an SUV? It was an experience that I almost had firsthand. How the heck did I manage to get myself into that predicament? Actually it was really easy. I was attempting to load my snowmobile onto my tilt-trailer many years ago when I suddenly hit a patch of ice. The sled stopped moving forward but the track continued to spin. Before I could release the throttle to back up and try again, my studs suddenly dug in and the sled took off and rocketed up the tilted trailer.

The abrupt upward force of the trailer threw me backwards, causing me to lose grip of the brake but tighten my grip on the handlebars while attempting to stay on the sled. This caused my thumb to push the throttle forward increasing my rate of climb. The front end of my trailer arrived very quickly and gravity began inevitably pulling me, my sled and my trailer down.

I noticed the trailer tongue passing underneath and the rear window of my Ford Bronco rapidly approaching the front of my sled. As I slid my thumb off the throttle and tried desperately to apply the brake in a panic stop, I realized that I was, in fact, facing a theoretical dilemma made real from an old high school physics class.

It goes something like this. Let's say you launch a projectile (me on my snowmobile) at a specified velocity and gravity immediately begins pulling it down. Recognizing that gravity accelerates things at 32 ft/sec^2 , how far will the projectile travel in the forward direction before gravity causes it to hit the ground or in this case the Bronco's rear window? Practical experience has taught me that this sort of physical phenomena happens rather quickly and I could not possibly calculate the point of impact while remaining airborne. Luckily, I still had my helmet on so I sounded the collision alarm and braced for impact. The sled skis hit the Bronco about one-inch under the rear window, pushing in the sheet metal, barely missing the glass.

I was really lucky, I thought, until I realized that the sled was momentarily being held up by the friction of the ski tips against the rear of the Bronco. This situation was unstable and certainly no match for gravity which was continuing to pull the trailer down to its normal position. Suddenly, everything began to descend, with the skis scraping along the rear of the Bronco and heading for the gap between the front of the trailer and the rear bumper of the Bronco.



It occurred to me that perhaps I should go out and buy a front shield for the snowmobile trailer. Not only would it protect the snowmobile from road slush but it might act like an aircraft carrier arresting cable and prevent me from going off of the trailer in the unlikely event of another freak accident. This seemed to be a good idea and I made a mental note to go purchase one if I survived.

Meanwhile the sled continued to fall and securely wedge itself between the Bronco and trailer body with the skis pointed upward. This event almost escaped detection by my riding buddies since they were looking elsewhere at the time. Unfor-

tunately, I had to ask for their help to pry my sled loose from its entanglement.

That memory is triggered anytime I hear about the misfortune of others, such as the time I stopped at my local dealer who remarked that he had just sold two brand new sleds to some novices who had refused his help in loading up their new sleds onto their trailer. Thereupon, another customer came in and remarked that he had passed two new snowmobiles upside down in the road around the corner from the dealer. He said something about the fact that they apparently weren't tied down.

Then there was the time two guys drove up to Woodford, Vermont and got out of their truck to unload the sleds. All they found was an empty trailer. Backtracking, they were lucky to find the sleds right side up in a ditch just a short distance from the parking lot around the last corner. Amazingly, they had driven about

25 miles up steep hills and around many sharp corners without losing the sleds. Apparently they also neglected to do the walk around double-check.

Finally, there was the story of "Wild Bill" who drove his sled up onto his aging tilt trailer. There was a loud clang as the trailer came down, hit the tongue and leveled off. This was followed immediately by another loud clang as the trailer platform continued on down snapping the tongue off from under the trailer. Luckily, a kind hearted Vermont dealer left his Sunday football game and opened his shop to fix the trailer so we could get home. He asked for so little money that we all chipped in and gave him a big tip! When was the last time you crawled under your trailer to check the underside conditions?

Okay, so the message here is to be careful loading and unloading your sled, routinely check your trailer thoroughly for wear and tear and always perform a walk around double-check before driving away. Be careful out there! 🐾



ADAMS SNO DRIFTERS

by Chrissy Satko and Joe Rogge

As we write this we are looking at Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow. Under the heading "Yesterday" we look back at our participation in the July/August Street Fair and Agricultural Fair in Adams. We participated in the annual "Bike Night" and "Fall Run" to benefit the Shriners. It was a true team effort. Of course the "team" was pretty much the same group that does all the "special projects" but it does demonstrate what camaraderie and organization can do. As we look to "Today" we are organizing weekly trail trims. Leadership is working with landowners to insure a positive riding season. We continue to work with DCR to meet common goals for local trails. As we look to "Tomorrow" we anticipate a great riding season along with preparation for our December Christmas Party (check our website). Also we are in the process of discussing the allocation of club funds for various charities during this season. As mentioned in previous club news we have lost some trails due to landowner restrictions. However, we remain positive and hope to work with the landowner to regain access for special events.



BERKSHIRE SNOW SEEKERS

by Randy Toth

Come and experience the excitement of snowmobiling in the Berkshires. Our first class groomer fleet consists of 3 Tucker Sno-Cats, a Thiokol and 2 snowmobile-based groomers. Dues are only \$60 for each snowmobile (\$50 if you join before December 1) and they include a club membership, a SAM membership and a trail permit. Join via snail-mail (P. O. Box 1102, Pittsfield, MA 01202), via our website (www.berkshiresnowseekers.com), via a club meeting (7:00 PM on the 1st & 3rd Tuesday of the month from September thru mid-April at the Skyline Country

Club on Route 7 in Lanesboro, MA) or via one of our conveniently located trail permit outlets at a participating local business: - Pittsfield Lawn & Tractor (Pittsfield), Ronnie's (Pittsfield), Friendly Fred's (Windsor), Sangar's General Store (Windsor), Hinsdale Trading Company (Hinsdale) and Lanesboro BP Gas Station (Lanesboro). Please visit the SAM website to see our club's scheduled events and our grooming reports covering the October Mountain State Forest Area, the Pittsfield State Forest Area and the Windsor Area. Grooming reports are promptly posted in the SAM Forums by our trail coordinators within hours of grooming. Think snow!



BERNARDSTON-GILL-LEYDEN

by Brad Stafford, president

It's that time of year again... Yes the kids are back and school and the holidays are right around the corner but so is snowmobiling season! Our club, just like the rest, have had meetings, met with landowners, have had work-bees both on the trail and in the garage getting the groomers ready. All of this is being done by volunteers. People that enjoy the sport like everyone else and are willing to donate their time and effort to better our sport. The clubs always needs extra hands whether it's every weekend or just once for a few hours. As always, I encourage you to at least go to a meeting or a club function to see how things get done in your area. As for our club, BGL has acquired another mini truck to add to our fleet of utility vehicles for trail work and grooming. We also had our 12th annual swap-meet. We've had some trail changes again this year so once the snow flies make sure you know exactly where you're going! Our club meets the last Monday of month at the Bernardston Vet's Club at 7pm. You can follow us on facebook and www.bglsnow.com. If you would like to be on our emailing list send a note to me at nvrplay2ty@yahoo.com. Keep the Rubber Side Down.



BURGY BULLETS

by Kevin Kukucka, secretary

Hello all. The Bullets have been out doing trail work and could always use extra help to finish up projects before winter. We meet every Sunday morning at the clubhouse at 9 sharp. Club meetings happen every 2nd & 4th Wednesday of the month at 7 and everyone is welcome. We have memberships & SAM passes available at the clubhouse, Valley Motorsports and The Riverview Bar & Grill (discounted price on membership until December 1st). We have our annual Holiday party on Saturday, December 7 at 6pm with roast beef dinner, live band & raffle. We are also working on putting together a Vintage Sled/Family fun day & some club rides, check on Facebook or call Kevin (413) 559-7920 for more info once it snows. And don't forget our annual "Big Game" party w/chili cookoff, or the Daytona 500 party with potluck dinner. A big thanks to all that continue to help the club to operate on a daily basis. Clubhouse winter hours start January 3rd, (depending on snow conditions) and are: Fri. 6-10, Sat. 10-10 & Sun. 10-6ish. Let it snow... Let it snow!



CHESTERFIELD FOUR SEASONS

by Bill Golaski, president

Hello all. The club has been busy working on groomers and our trail system. We have some more trail clearing parties set for November 3rd and 10th. Come to a meeting for more info. Club raffle this year is for a clam shell trailer or \$2,500.00 cash. Only 400 tickets to be sold, cost is \$20 each. Come to meeting or call to get your tickets. Check us out at sledmass.com for more club info. Hoping for a very white winter.



EASY RIDERS

by Steven Conti, club editor

Greeting snowmobilers. According to the Farmer's Almanac we are going to have a busy winter. So, the

Easy Riders have been busy planning trips in the US and Canada for this season. All we need is a little, or well, a lot of snow to make this season a lot of fun. All are welcome to check us out at our website ersc.net or in person at the Marlboro Moose, 4th Tuesday every month. Just like they say, the more the merrier. Wish you all a safe season and smooth trails, wherever you ride! Always thinking snow!



FLORIDA MOUNTAINEERS

by **Tim Keating, secretary**

Hello from the Mountain!

In September we held Our annual election of officers. Sworn in were President Scott Fortini, Vice President Brad Furlon, Treasurer Derrick Wissman, Secretary Tim Keating, Equipment Manager Merrit Burdick, and Trail Masters Nick Keating and Jim Bourdon. Our annual Christmas party will be on 12/7 at the Golden Eagle Restaurant in Clarksburg. A buffet dinner will be served. Social at 6pm, with Dinner at 7pm. Please bring an unwrapped gift to be donated to a needy family in the town of Florida. We will again have a 50/50 raffle for this year's club fundraiser. Tickets will be \$5 each, 400 sold, with the winner getting \$1,000. Trail trims have started. We meet at the Whitcomb Summit every Sunday at 9am. Please show up and give us a hand. Call Tim Keating for directions, 413-662-2705. I hope everyone has a great Thanksgiving!



HARVARD

by **Joe Gibbons**

Looking forward to seeing club friends for the start of the upcoming season. The board of directors will meet in the next week or two and set the agenda for the 2013-2014 season. There are some awesome possibilities for reopening an old section of trail in the Still River section of our trail system. Your board of directors is working on this as well as trying to secure permission to ride the Bolton Flats. This is the year we will finish the trail from Mill Road to Ayer Road. We will need all hands on deck. A suspended type pontoon/floating bridge will be created to pass through this area. New members are always welcome! Come join us. Think snow.



KNOX TRAIL SNO-RIDERS

by **James Richard, media director**

The groomer garage received a new roof. White's Home Improvement did a full strip and re-shingling. Thank you town of Otis! The trail crews are busy getting the trails, ramps, bridges, and signs ready for what's to come. The board of directors hopes you enjoyed the Sled Expo and the first full meeting took place on September 29. The Twining Pond negotiations are progressing and a note of thanks goes out to Berkshire Natural Resources for allowing a trail to Route 57. Negotiations continue the on extending that trail to the new Silver Brook Store. Unfortunately, the safety course has been discontinued. As of this report, 30 of the 100 Raffle Tickets have been sold and additional prize donations for the drawing event are rolling in. There will be live music at the drawing. Be sure to get your ticket before they're gone! Please donate your prize items by calling 413-269-0243 or by emailing info@knoxtrail.com. Go to knoxtrail.com to get your tickets!



SAVOY KANARY KATS

by **Douglas DeCoigne**

Hello fellow snow addicts!

The SKK is very busy with a myriad of projects this fall. We are finalizing our latest RTP grant details, purchased another LMC 1800 groomer, purchased and installed 4 more gates to protect trails from ATV damage, etc., purchased cleats and track rubber to upgrade the tracks on both LMC 1800 groomers, as well as many other miscellaneous equipment repairs. The club is also building a 32'x60' building which will be a huge addition to the club, enabling the club to maintain, repair and store our grooming equipment indoors. These projects are in addition to our regular fall work bees to clear trails of trees, brush, etc., maintain and build bridges, water bars and clean out culverts, ditches and so on.

The SKK would like to give a very heartfelt thank you to all you club volunteers who make everything possible. We always welcome new volunteers to attend out Thursday night work bees and the Sunday trail work bees. Think snow and cold temps!



SNOWBIRDS

by **Brad Rand, president**

The weather is cooling off so that means trail clearing is under way! If you can spend some time assisting in a crew on the weekends, we sure can use the help! Please contact Brad at 508.892.1563. Leave a message and I will get back to you that night. The more work done now gives everyone a better time on the trails when it counts. We have moved the location of the meetings so be sure to check our website or our FaceBook page for updates. Meetings are held the last Thursday of the month at 7:30PM, although the dates have been changed for November and December due to the holidays. We would like to thank all the exhibitors, spectators and volunteers that arrived at our Old Iron Dogs Vintage Show held just after Labor Day. The turnout was great, the show was better and the food made the event a hit. Great work by all involved. In preparing for a good snow season, our Groomer Chief, Dave MacLeod, is gearing up. Please contact Dave if you have any interest at all in grooming the trails or working on the grooming equipment. He is available at all meetings or contact him through the website. Have a safe and enjoyable Thanksgiving!



WORTHINGTON

by **Jeff Smith**

Hello from Worthington. The Holidays are fast approaching as is the snowmobile season and as is the case every year, the club could use some able-bodied individuals to help with trail clearing and trail maintenance. We typically meet on Sunday mornings around 8am and work until 1. If you can help out, please let us know. You can email me at pacodella@aol.com your information and phone number and we will be sure to let you know when we need help. Every year we need help but this year it is especially true to help our club obtain some new equipment. Every man-hour gets us closer. Current members, newsletters will hit your mailboxes soon. The easiest way to renew your membership is by returning that application. As it turns out, the more applications we get back, the more snow we get. Go Figure! 🐾



A blown belt can ruin a day, especially if you don't have a spare.

Beating the Odds

By Brad Stafford
Photos by Gerry Balchuinas

We've all heard the phrase "Beating the Odds." Maybe it was as you watched the underdog sports team "Beat the Odds" and win a championship. Or maybe someone you know has battled an illness and they "Beat the Odds" and made a full recovery. Some would say it was just luck, perhaps it was, but I believe it was more. I believe part of their success came from that team practicing and preparing for that game, and that person sought out the best medical help, as they all took the right steps to help themselves to "Beat the Odds."

In some way or another we all try to beat the odds and we should take the steps to be on the right side of them. I looked up some quick facts about random odds. The odds that a person will get hit by lightning are 1 in about 600,000. That means that for every 600,000 lightning strikes one person gets hit. To beat those odds during the storm, stay indoors, stay away from tall objects and don't wave your 6-iron over your head while in the fairway.

How about getting hurt while operating a chainsaw, 1 in 5,000. That means for every 5,000 times someone operates a chainsaw, someone will get hurt. To beat the odds, use proper safety equipment, don't push your limits and don't let the

neighbor convince you to take down that tree after the neighborhood BBQ.

The odds that you will be audited by the IRS are 1 in 175. Simply, if you know 174 people that have never been audited I hope you didn't claim your cat as a dependent. On the flip-side of beating the odds are the times you try to be the select few. Who out there hasn't tried to beat the odds of about 1 in 14,000,000 by buying 2 tickets for Megabucks to make it 2 in 14,000,000?

But seriously, in our sport we don't always do all we can to be on the better side of the odds. How many of us have heard of someone being stranded out on the trail with a blown belt, bad plug or have run out of gas? They thought they could beat the odds, that they wouldn't need that backup plan.

Help yourself "Beat the Odds". Don't let that happen to you. Don't ruin your ride or your group's ride and always carry spare parts. Know how to change them and top off your gas and oil every time you go for a ride.

How many of you have read stories of sleds going through the ice, sometimes taking the lives of the riders? Beat the



Having a spare is half the battle, make sure you know how to install it.

odds and don't ever take chances on any body of water that you're not absolutely sure of. Be aware that ice conditions can change during the course of a single day. Also before riding on new trails check with the local clubs for both trail and lake conditions.

How many of us know of someone that has been or have personally been in a snowmobile accident? Every year there are more than 10,000 snowmobile accidents nationwide requiring medical attention, and more than 100 riders lose their lives, changing their family's lives forever. "Beat the Odds" by always riding under control, wearing a helmet, even if its just in your backyard, and respect all trail markings and the rights of the other riders out on the trails. Ride Safe Everyone and Keep the Rubber Side Down. 🐾

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Worldwide Snowmobile Sales Jump 12%

By Ed Klim

A long lasting winter and continued enthusiasm and interest in snowmobiling powered snowmobile sales to increase worldwide to 144,601 new sleds sold this past year. This is an increase of over 15,000 units, which is a 12 percent gain from last year.

Sales in the United States were flat at 48,536 new snowmobiles sold, while sales in Canada rose over 8 percent to 44,022 new sleds sold.

The snowmobile community is optimistic following the above average snowfall throughout most of North America this past season. The 2014 manufacturers spring snowmobile shows reported dramatic increases in attendance. In many of the spring shows, visitation was up over 30 percent. Spring orders are up and that points to a good 2014 sales year!

The snowmobile industry reports an increase in registered snowmobiles in North America to approximately 2 million registered sleds. Increased registration in Northern Europe and Russia continues, and there are over 700,000 registered units in the European community and Russia.

Snowmobile related tourism also increased in North America and beyond. This can be seen in economic impact studies conducted throughout North America by major business colleges and universities.

Miles ridden by snowmobilers (which is always predictive of economic impact) showed a 20 percent increase in the 2012-2013 season. This is a result of good riding conditions and improved and expanded trail systems.

The average age of a snowmobiler this past season was determined to be 43 years of age. The average age increased slightly due to the fact that many younger adults are struggling to pay off school loans and are struggling due to the slower growth of the economy.



SNOWMOBILES BY STATE

There are approximately 1.4 million registered snowmobiles in the U.S. Here are the top 20 states:

1. MN	251,986	11. WA	28,000
2. WI	224,716	12. IA	25,917
3. MI	205,808	13. VT	25,238
4. NY	115,017	14. UT	23,184
5. ME	80,000	15. CA	20,184
6. AK	52,400	16. OR	15,129
7. MT	46,606	17. SD	14,845
8. NH	42,000	18. ND	14,528
9. PA	38,500	19. OH	14,000
10. WY	30,728	20. MA	12,845

SOURCE: SNOWMOBILE MANUFACTURERS ASSOCIATION

Surveys conducted by ISMA have shown that slightly over 70% of first-time buyers in the snowmobile market purchased a used snowmobile. Many of them are young adults and they move on to purchase a new snowmobile later in life.

The majority of snowmobilers in North America are Club members and/or Association-Federation members (over 50%).

These active, involved, outdoor enthusiasts build the trails and support snowmobiling access. Snowmobilers are also active charity fundraisers who raised over \$3.4 million dollars for National Charities last year.

The Go Snowmobiling website serves as another strong indicator for the interest in snowmobiling. This year more than 4.4 million visited the Go Snowmobiling site. This is a 15 percent increase above last year. Statistics show that approximately 20 percent of those visitors are individuals who do not own a snowmobile but are expressing a great deal of interest in owning a snowmobile and going snowmobiling.

It was also noted that approximately 20 percent of the visitors to the site visited the rental outlet pages of the site. Indications are that many of the individuals visiting the rental site do not own a snowmobile but want to rent one during the winter vacation. This activity and interest in renting bodes well for future sales and the growth in the snowmobile rental market.

Additional surveys have found that snowmobilers are active in many outdoor activities. Many snowmobilers are also

boaters, motorcycle riders, camping enthusiasts, hunting enthusiasts and general outdoor recreational activity participants.

Many individuals have discovered that snowmobiling is a great recreational family activity in the winter. Many of those individuals are snowmobiling for reasons such as viewing the scenery, be with family and friends, and to get away from the usual demands of life and be close to nature.

The continued broad-based growth of the snowmobile community includes the increased number of visitors and exhibitors in snowmobile shows. States and provincial organizations continue

**Many snowmobilers are
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to grow and expand club membership. Many organizations report that new trails are being developed to support the positive economic impact of snowmobiling and job growth for the rural community

Economic impact studies generated by universities in North America show that snowmobiling is growing in importance as part of the overall economic engine and job growth for winter tourism. Estimates show that snowmobiling now generates more than \$30 Billion Dollars of economic activity in North America. The economic activity generated by snowmobiling provides many jobs and investment opportunities and generates considerable tax revenue for local governments which eagerly support snowmobiling. 🐾

Ed Klim is president of the International Snowmobile Manufacturers Association (ISMA)



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The Tech Corner

BY JIM TUCKER

Ice Scratchers: Do They Work?

Photos by Jim Tucker

This month we are going to look at a novel product that just might increase your confidence level heading into that next ride. Snowmobiles are off-road conveyances and as such they encounter some pretty nasty trail conditions out there. Rocks, dirt and ice have adorned some of the trails encountered at one time or another in our riding careers. Hey, we're supposed to ride on snow right? That white stuff that makes everything beautiful and the machines work oh so good.

One thing no rider likes to see is a freeze-thaw cycle that sets the trails up to be bulletproof hard pack, or worse yet, icy conditions here and there. We've all been there and rode that and lived to tell the tale. Making it home in one piece is numero uno in this writer's book. I'll save the subject of studded tracks for another time, however, the machinery takes a real beating in these types of conditions. I don't know about you, but I love to have all the goodies on my sled that make it suitable for anything I encounter.

One such goodie is a set of ice scratchers made by Duraflex. I scored these bad boys late last season for testing purposes and hoped to have some miles under my belt so I could tell you if they were a thumbs up or thumbs down product. After many miles of testing I can thankfully say they rock! Let me explain...

The scratchers are a cable-type device with carbide tips at the end. They bolt onto each slide rail of the rear suspension and hang down to drag on the ice and snow. This dragging action sprays snow up onto the heat exchangers and hyfax. As you may well know, bony trails make for some hot running engines and burned up slides. Slides need water to stay lubricated and snowmobile engines need snow thrown up on to the heat exchangers to keep that dreaded hot light



Once deployed, the Duraflex scratchers spray snow into the suspension.

They bolt onto each slide rail of the rear suspension and hang down to drag on the ice and snow. This dragging action sprays snow up onto the heat exchangers and hyfax.



on the dashboard from coming on.

The scratchers are stored up on the rail when not needed but when the trail turns sour you can easily pull them out and let them hang down. I have a video of us heading across an icy lake you can check out on my YouTube page at Teamgreen71111

Taking them out of the package revealed a very beefy cable and some really top notch, well thought out construction.

Installation was easy, as my Cat already had a hole in the rail that fit the bill. Mount the scratchers as far forward as space allows to get maximum benefit from the spray. Some rails will have to be drilled to accept the threaded bolt that holds the cable tight. Thread locker should be used on the bolts as the suspension really vibrates and cycles. Be sure to find a place on the rail that allows enough clearance so that the chassis will not hit the cable at full compression. Adjust the cables so that they are perpendicular to the snow for maximum spray.

Lest you think these are throwaway devices, the carbide tips are replaceable and that just sweetens the pot, purchase-wise. Previous scratchers were wire devices that bolted to the slide rails but never worked in reverse. The Duraflex units work in reverse mode without hanging up or breaking off, so us saddle baggers can have our cake and eat it too!

One word of caution is in order. When the scratchers are deployed they will drag lots of debris into the suspension. Riding through muddy areas brought dirt and grit into the skid, so be careful there. Regardless, this is proof positive that they really throw up a lot of "whatever it is" you are riding through, hopefully snow! My riding partner, who did not have them installed, had a snow-white suspension while mine was brown during that particular outing!

They retail for about \$80 and should be a necessary part of any rider's arsenal. Mountain riders benefit greatly, as they have longer paddle tracks that essentially move the track farther away from the snow, not to mention there is a lot longer hyfax to worry about. I remember a particular media trip when I was riding a mountain machine behind the leaders on groomed trails. The trail was hard pack from the previous day's freeze-thaw cycle and I began to smell burning candles! Hyfax burning, hello! Some folks had their hot lights come on but the ones who had scratchers were okay.

Duraflex scratchers have been around for a while but the latest generation seems



Left: When not in use, it can be hung on the rail.

Below: Replaceable carbide tip is durable.

to have all the bugs worked out, something I have been following quite closely over the last few years. If you search YouTube you can find all sorts of homemade contraptions that do the same thing but they all have some sort of failings. I say buy the best and you won't be dissatisfied.

So, to conclude, this is a worthy upgrade for any platform out there. One that will serve you well for years to come and just give that little extra edge when heading out on the next adventure. I rate it five out of five carbides! 🏆



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Legislative Corner

BY LARRY TUCKER

SAM Legislation off to a Very Good Start

We are all finally out enjoying the cool, crisp autumn weather, the leaves full of color and working with our fellow club members to enhance our trails before the snow begins to fall. The Snowmobile Association of Massachusetts legislative team has also been very busy at moving our legislation forward. But, it has been over a year since we last reviewed our legislative progress. So, let's first recap what has transpired and then we'll update the current session.

During the past legislative session, which ended on December 31, 2012, we brought our SAM legislation not just to the "one-yard line" but right down to the "one-inch line." It was that close, but unfortunately our bills did not pass. To summarize, four of our bills were combined into one, which was then reported favorably out of committee. It then passed its first and second readings, but unfortunately time ran out in the session before receiving its third and final reading.

In the current 188th session of the legislature our two SAM bills are H752, which is the vintage registration bill and H715, which is titled "establishing a snowmobile educational safety program." H715 includes the issues of creating a Land Stamp Fund, strengthening our trail permitting to include state properties, creating a penalty for damage to snowmobile trails by wheeled vehicles, and adds a seat for snowmobilers on the Stewardship Council for the DCR. These issues are all equally important for our sport.

Both SAM bills had public hearings on June 20 before the Committee on Environment, Natural Resources and Agriculture. SAM members presented favorable written and verbal testimony. As of this writing much effort is being put into



PHOTO BY BECKY JUREK

Our legislators have worked hard for our legislation in both the last session and the current session.



improving the clarity of H715 to help ease the passage of this bill. We should thank Legislative Chairman, Randy Toth, for his time and effort with this process. One other important aspect of H715 is that a

relatively high number of legislators, 17 to be exact, are petitioners for this bill.

It should not go unnoticed that our legislators have worked hard for our legislation in both the last session and the current session. To come this far we should recognize our legislators. It is the extra effort put forth by Representative Anne M. Gobi (D) Spencer that have brought our SAM bills so close. If you are a snowmobiler in Massachusetts or, in particular, if you live in Rep. Gobi's district, consisting of the towns of Ware, Barre, Brookfield, Hardwick, New

Marketplace

Braintree, North Brookfield, Petersham, Phillipston, West Brookfield, Spencer or Templeton, would you please join me in giving a big thank you to Anne by calling her office at 617-722-2210 or by emailing her at Anne.Gobi@mahouse.gov.

Please extend a big thank you to the following legislators also:

- Rep. Don Humason (R) Westfield, 617-722-2803
- Rep. Paul W. Mark (D) Peru, 617-722-2013
- Rep. Stephen Kulik (D) Worthington; Vice Chair, Ways and Means, 617-722-2380
- Rep. William Smitty Pignatelli (D) Lenox, 617-722-2582
- Rep. Gailanne M. Cariddi (D) North Adams, 617-722-2450
- Rep. John W. Scibak (D) South Hadley, 617-722-2030
- Rep. Todd M. Smola (R) Palmer, 617-722-2240
- Rep. Denise Andrews (D) Orange, 617-722-2460
- Sen. Marc R. Pacheco (D) Taunton, Chair; Comm. On Natural Resources, 617-722-1551
- Sen. Stephen M. Brewer (D) Barre, Chair; Senate Ways and Means, 617-722-1540
- Sen. Benjamin B. Downing (D) Pittsfield, 617-722-1625
- Sen. Jennifer L. Flanagan (D) Leominster, Vice Chair; Ways and Means 617-722-1230

As our legislature begins this 188th formal session we should take a moment to extend congratulations to Senator Stanley Rosenberg (D) Amherst, who was recently awarded the honor of Dean of the Senate. With 21 years of service, Stan is now the longest serving State Senator and has a large district of 24 towns, which includes a high concentration of snowmobilers.

I hope to see you all soon, and thanks again to those of you who wrote, called or spoke to your legislators in the past session. And remember, snowmobilers are environmentalists. ❄️

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BY TERRY HOLLAND

Brian Blanchard



Club: Snowbirds

Years snowmobiling: 42

First snowmobile: A red 1973
Scorpion 290

Current snowmobile: 2013
Ski-Doo MX-Z Renegade 1200

Sled mods: Adjustable 10-inch
riser so I can stand when riding.
I'm 6'8".

FAVORITE RIDING AREA: Rutland Prison Camps. As a small child, my father took my brother and sister riding in the camps. Last year I got the chance to go back again and ride with my brother Mark. It has not changed, it's just as I recalled it from childhood. Awesome!

TELL US A STORY (OR TWO): A few years ago I took a few beginners riding for the first time. 18 miles from our starting point, a friend went off the trail and broke a ski. After pulling it out of the tree, I rode his sled back on one ski to a dealer. He rode my brand new sled after his crash. I guess that's trust.

My dad was an active snowmobiler and so it follows that the family was, too. As a kid I once sat behind my sister Karen as she took off on our 1980 Scorpion Whip. She rode the machine around the lake like she stole it and didn't realize until she got back and saw me standing there that I slipped right off when she started.

TELL US SOMETHING INTERESTING ABOUT YOU: I can draw people into a conversation about snowmobiling almost everyday, 365 days per year if I want. I love this sport and continue to educate people on how much fun it can be. I would love to own a dealership someday so I can continue to talk about sledding everyday. 🐾

This new feature will profile SAM members from across the state. Know someone interesting? Contact terry.holland@sledmass.com.



SOUND OFF:

This sport is incredible. Great time with friends and family, no doubt. It always amazes me that at the end of a day, 250 miles later, how these sleds get me from point A to point B, since I stand 6'8", 260 pounds with no issues. Best sport ever. All I can say is, stay to the right!





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