

Massachusetts

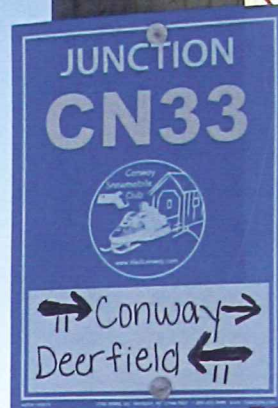
On the TRAILS with S.A.M.

November 2009

Boonville Mania!

SPIDER GATES TO THE CITY LIMITS:

Riding in Leicester



Trail Ethics 101



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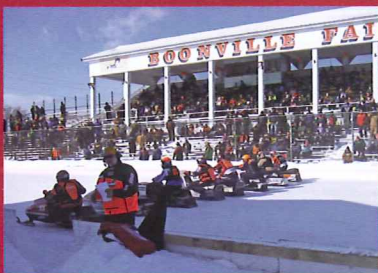


Racers at full speed during an event at Boonville in the early years.

REFLECTIONS

The Boonville Snow Festival:

4,000 race fans can't be wrong!



The starting line hasn't changed that much in three decades.

Report and Photos by Martin Marotte and Jay Egan

On January 30th through February 1st, 2009, Boonville, New York's Fairgrounds were alive and well with the sights, sounds and sweet odors of racing gas from the Northern New York Vintage Snow Sled Races (NNYVSR) vying for the historic Adirondack Cup, in addition to The Eastern Pro Tour Circuit for newer ice oval sleds. For those of us who don't live that far away, this event has become an annual ritual for many racers and spectators alike. It truly is a great time and not to be missed! I would like to elaborate on this

historic track and event: The first events were held in the 1960's and legendary racers from all over Canada and the US participated. The prestigious Boonville Speed Trials were also held not far from here on an old airstrip, or so I am told. The last event was held during the late 70's with the drop-off in popularity of SnoPro racing. Then again, much to the delight of many racers and spectators, the Boonville Festival was reborn in 2007 and has been held year after year since then.

Track preparation for the past year's event began on December 19th

and thousands of man-hours produced the 18-plus inches of hard, flat ice to run on. Along with the local lake-effect snowstorms and cold temps that Mother Nature has given to the area year after year, this facility keeps building a great track for racers and spectators to witness great vintage and modern day ice oval racing. Hats off to all who build and maintain Boonville year after year!!

The event started at 8 a.m. on Friday morning, all racers met with track personnel and were debriefed on the upcoming weekends racing. Test and

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1) Vintage racers are very popular at Boonville. 2) "Boonville, the snowmobile capital of the East." Who can argue with that crowd? 3) Larry Omans took home the Adirondack Cup! 4) A mid-engine snowmobile is spotted in the pits.

tune started later in the afternoon at 1 pm and concluded by 4 p.m. Friday evenings festivities kicked off with a torchlight parade sponsored by the Lost Trail Snowmobile Club, and over 150 sleds were led thru the center of town by 2009 Grand Marshall, Andy Seelman. Culminations of the day's events were a fireworks display at 8 pm!

306 vintage racers attended and raced for "The Cup" on Saturday. Competitors came from all over the US and Canada, just like the old days. A few of the famous names from the Midwest came to see what Boonville was all about: Mark Anderson on his blazing fast Polaris machines, along with Todd Persha on an assortment of different brands... to name two. Nearly 4,000 race fans were in attendance to witness Saturday's great vintage races--starting with the Kitty Kat classes all the way thru 17 different categories, including 440 IFS and open mod sleds.

On this half-mile ice oval with wide turns, speeds can reach over 95 MPH on the straights and 80-plus in the corners, with twin trackers getting over 100mph! Lots of room to pass here, almost anywhere!!! As the days events unfolded, heat after heat race provided the spectators with great racing in all classes. Very few crashes happened, with the exception of a turn 3 get-off that Roger Garman thrilled the crowd with! He was ok, bumped and bruised, but his sled didn't fare as well. I spoke with Roger recently and he is still recouping several months later... even the machine is slowly coming around!! Good luck, Roger! Due to the amount of racers, the finals for the Adirondack Cup went into early evening - actually dusk. When the checkered came down eventually, it was Mark Bellinger from NY to win on a Ski Doo! Congratulations, Mark!

On another note, Sunday's winner of the Eastern Pro

Adirondack Cup was none other than the recovering Jacques Villeneuve. On Saturday's mid-afternoon practice session, Jacques limped out on the track on crutches, then promptly handed them to his mechanic, fired up the sled and went off to blaze around the track at very fast times; he was amazing, with little notice of a broken leg that happened earlier in the season at Beausjour, Manitoba. You have to see this racer in action, even with a major injury; he still manages to be one of the fastest competitors on the circuit today. Villeneuve won the first Pro Tour Cup race in 2007, with Aaron Fellows winning in 2008.

To conclude, I would like to say thanks to the Boonville Snow Festival Board members, the track crew who spent countless hours preparing and building a first rate racing facility, and the safety personnel who were on hand those days, and all racers and sponsors. Without all of your energy and participation this event wouldn't

happen! It has been great to see this event return year after year. If you haven't experienced Boonville's Snow Festival, you are truly missing the Eastern US's biggest and best Ice Oval event!!! On a side note, this facility also holds a summertime vintage sled show and swap during early August, where many racers, restorers and collectors alike meet and gather sleds and parts for upcoming events. Another great time at the Boonville facility that shouldn't be missed.

Only a few months till the prep begins again, mark your calendar for January 29th, 30, and 31, 2010! 🐾

Editors note: Robert Dodge, who normally writes the "Reflections" column, liked the idea of the Boonville story so much he gave up his space this month. Secretly, I think he enjoys the rest!