

December  
2003

## Soapstone Assault 2003



# Shenipsit Striders' Newsletter

Fifteen hardy runners came out on an unseasonably warm and muggy day to run this year's Assault. The later finishers were treated to light rain as well — as if this course wasn't hard enough already!

In case you don't know, the 5.5 mile course completes one loop around the base of Soapstone Mountain. The hard part is that you have to take every trail to the top and back as you work your way around the mountain. To make it more interesting, the start is at the parking lot on Gulf Road and the course finishes with a climb up "Killer Hill" and on to the top of the observation tower.

It is fun for many because of the age/sex handicapped starts. You can actually go out ahead of some people you aren't used to being in front of. And the fast runners start behind most of the field.

Our perennial leadoff man, Richard Busa, started first with a 17 minute and 14 second headstart over the open runners. In fact, he started eight minutes before the next starter. But he deserves it — he's 73!

It's also a good race to watch because you can position yourself at the top near the turnaround point and see people arrive at the 3rd, 4th and 5th climbs. That's where I was, handing out water with Tom Curtiss.

One thing became clear very quickly; Rob Higley was out to win the race. Rob is the 49 year old who just happened to be the fourth ranked runner on the NE

Trailrunners Circuit this year. He's had a truly amazing season, winning Northern Nipmuck outright. It wasn't long before he had caught Richard and taken the lead. He was running so hard that he had actually completed the fifth climb and descent before Ken Clark had begun it. He finished in a very impressive 44:28 scratch time and actually won the race outright by 2:58 over Kevin Glenn.

Ken Clark was our first Strider finisher in third, with Bruce Marvonek (6th), Bill Johnson (8th), and Bob Stoker (15th) rounding out the Strider contingent.

The race results are included later in the newsletter, and you'll see that all of the entrants are strong runners and ran very good scratch times. Over the few years of this race we seem to have weeded out the runners who don't like an extreme challenge like this.

Raina White was the first woman, finishing 11th in 1:04:00. You may know her from her runs with us on Saturdays. She got her trail start with the Striders, but has since moved out of town. Full results at the end of the newsletter. Kevin Simons

**Striders' Holiday Party**  
Saturday, December  
13th at Pastori's Restau-  
rant in Ellington.

1:00 to 3:00 p.m.

Open to club members of all ages. Pizza & beer or other beverage "on the club".

## At the Races

### Wapack Trail Race, 17.5 miles

September 7, 2003

This race almost didn't happen, as the race director had moved and no one seemed ready to pick it up. But at the last minute it was back on again. 45 people finished, including two more serious ultrarunners who ran the double version of 35 miles. This is a tough course, with a huge climb up Mt. Watatic at the turnaround and numerous other very tough climbs in the last 6 miles. It's also very scenic, with some really pretty views from the rocky, open summits.

Leigh Schmitt outdistanced his brother Keith by 1:33 to win the race in 2:32:10. Sarah St. Martin won the women's race, finishing 13th overall in 3:09:31. She won by over half an hour over Michele Tetrault. In the last newsletter you would have noticed that the Shaupeneak race was held on September 6, meaning that this race provided a "weekend double" opportunity. Ken Clark, Ed Alibozek and Bruce Marvonek all proved their Stonehead status by running both. Their results:

Ken Clark	10th	3:08:36
Ed Alibozek	29th	3:50:36
Bruce Marvonek	36th	4:28:38

Richard Busa, at age 73, also ran both races! The two ultrarunners were Bill Nawn and Craig Wilson, who finished in 6:47:01 and 7:41:42, respectively.

### Pisgah Mountain Trail Races, 50K and 23K

September 21, 2003

Pisgah State Forest is a beautiful spot in southern New Hampshire. These races run through it, starting at the Fire Station in Chesterfield. The forest is remote and the trails sometimes hard to follow, but you can count on some pretty views of ponds

and the fall foliage. 103 people finished the two races, with about 60% opting for the shorter course.

The 23K produced a course record and a very tight finish. Gregory Hammett ran 1:35:14, beating Mike Casner by 38 seconds for the win. Greg is a Chesterfield resident, so perhaps the "home course" advantage played a role.

Ruthie Ireland won the women's race in 1:57:14, finishing 15th overall

Ken Clark was the only Strider entrant, finishing 8th overall in 1:47:42.

The long race also was won in record time by David Herr. He ran 3:45:26 to beat Ben Nephew by 5:09. This was strictly a two man race, as the third place finisher was 41 minutes back.

Ellen McCurtin, a nationally known ultrarunner, ventured north from Danbury, CT to win the women's race in 4:55:21. She finished 5th overall and edged out Tracy Rose by 9:10.

An interesting note is that in addition to the New England and New York participants, the race also had runners from Louisiana, Minnesota, Wisconsin and Florida. Maybe the runners scheduled this one as part of a "leaf peeper" tour.

### Breakneck 20K Trail Race

Bigelow Hollow, October 5, 2003

Karl Molitoris has been putting this race on as a very low key event for a number of years. In addition to a nice course, the race features a post-race meal put on by Karl's mother. If you need any extra motivation to finish, just think of the excellent meal waiting for you!

The course runs approximately 4 miles to Breakneck Pond, then 4 miles around the pond, and then 4 miles back to the start. You can choose to run the pond loop either clockwise or counterclockwise just to make it interesting. At the end of the pond is a 50 yard section that's usually knee-deep water. But this year we had a new course addition provided by some industrious beavers. About 3 miles into the race we reached what

previously had been a small beaver pond. This year the beavers had expanded the dam so that we had to wade through thigh deep water for 30 yards or so. And of course this section was also included on the return! The weather was brisk, with starting temperatures around 40 degrees, so you can imagine how warm the water felt. It didn't seem to bother Paul Young, who won the overall title in 1:42:44, nosing out Rob Higley by one second! Sarah St. Martin won the women's race in 2:00:52, finishing 8th overall.

We had a good Strider contingent, and some strong finishes.

Ken Clark	4th	1:47:11
Ed Alibozek	6th	1:55:05
Bruce Marvonek	16th	2:10:05
Ed Alibozek, Jr.	25th	2:28:28
Kevin Simons	31st	2:39:28
Konrad Karolczyk	43rd	4:23:44

I have to thank Konrad for entering so that I could avoid being "last Strider" for the umpteenth time this season.

## Dunbar Brook Trail Race

October 12, 2003

Even though it's not the last Circuit race of the year, it usually is the last race that draws the majority of the trail regulars. They have a great meal at the end, and everyone usually hangs around and socializes afterward.

The foliage is past peak, but still offers some beautiful views. We've had snow squalls in the past to make it even more interesting. The course is challenging, but not impossible, and the distance is very reasonable at 10.5 miles. It's basically a long climb to the top of Spruce Peak, then a steady downhill back to the parking area. It's spiced up a bit by a knee-deep stream crossing about a mile from the finish.

David Herr ran another strong race to win in 1:16:32, beating Keith Schmitt by 51 seconds. Strider Deb Livingston won the women's race in 1:31:45, finishing 18th

overall. She won by almost six minutes. We had nine Strider finishers:

Ken Clark	7th	1:26:54
Deb Livingston	18th	1:31:45
Ed Alibozek	22nd	1:34:08
Bruce Marvonek	34th	1:43:26
Ed Alibozek, Jr.	41st	1:48:03
Carol Kane	44th	1:52:44
Kevin Simons	59th	2:00:40
Dave Soule	60th	2:00:47
Konrad Karolczyk	94th	3:09:13

But there was another "race" of sorts that I have to mention. About 3 weeks earlier Dave Soule and I agreed that we'd race for a six pack of beer, no handicap, no excuses. I was foolish enough to take up the challenge because I figured there was at least a 10% chance Dave would either arrive late or forget to bring his running shoes (he's done both in the past). Sure enough, Dave was nowhere to be found at starting time. So I ran the first 8 miles "in the lead" and was starting to feel pretty good when he caught me. We ran together, both whining about being exhausted and having nothing left. Then with 100 yards to go I sprinted by on his left side and got the sweet victory. I think he actually let me win, but that's OK!

## Groton Town Forest Race, 9.5 miles

October 26, 2003

This is a nice race held in the Groton Town Forest as the name implies. The Forest is bordered by some developments, but still has a good trail quality. There aren't any mountains, but there are many rolling hills. The course winds around and doubles back a few times, so watching the markings is essential.

Keith Schmitt was the overall winner in 1:03:40, edging Nick Cotton by six seconds. The women's race was a good one, with Becky Flowers winning in 1:12:01. She was 4 seconds ahead of Sarah St. Martin and

*(Continued on page 4)*

1:12 ahead of Summer Harrington. They finished 17th, 18th and 19th overall. Our Strider runners had a good day:

Ken Clark	4th	1:05:58
Ed Alibozek	28th	1:15:32
Bruce Marvonek	39th	1:19:51
Carol Kane	54th	1:24:26

I'm sure Carol had to get even with the course — last year she DQ'd because she got lost in all the turns.

### Wilbraham Turkey Trot 5 Miler Thanksgiving Day, Wilbraham, MA

I hate crowds, so Manchester just doesn't fit in my schedule. This race is also 3 miles from my house and only costs \$4. Even though it's a road race, I just have to run it.

It's also incredibly hard. The hill starts at about 1/2 mile into the race and goes for 1.1 miles. And this hill will bring tears to your eyes. Once to the top you run along the ridgeline overlooking Wilbraham for about a mile and a half before beginning the long descent to the finish. And it's the descent that really kills your legs.

We had perfect weather, and a local cross country team member, Erich Fiedler, won the race in 28:28. Christina Langevin won the women's division, finishing 19th in 34:19.

Strider finishers:

Bruce Marvonek	23rd	34:38
Bob Mellberg	25th	34:51
Kevin Simons	40th	37:46

It was actually nice to run a road race again. Unfortunately, my legs were so sore that I could barely run for three days afterward!  
Kevin Simons

**Ever run a 4:46 mile? Well, Paul Tergat of Kenya ran 26.2 of them in a row at this year's Berlin Marathon. That figures out to a 2:04:55 marathon and a new world best. We're all gonna have to train harder!**

### Response.....

To an inaccurate and vicious article in the November Shenipsit Striders Newsletter, by a Strider Club Member (and "former" friend) whose name I will not mention, as not to embarrass his very nice wife, Dottie.

I have noticed that this person is always first in line "dishing it out", now let's see how he can "take it." Herewith he will be referred to as the "Dreamer" (breaking the tape at Boston Marathon, yeah, right). The only thing this guy "breaks" is wind, from both ends.

Eight months have passed since the February 15th happening to the present time, but obviously not enough time for the "Dreamer" to get the facts straight. But I wouldn't expect that anyway, from a guy who spends his time watching his favorite movie, "Dumb and Dumber."

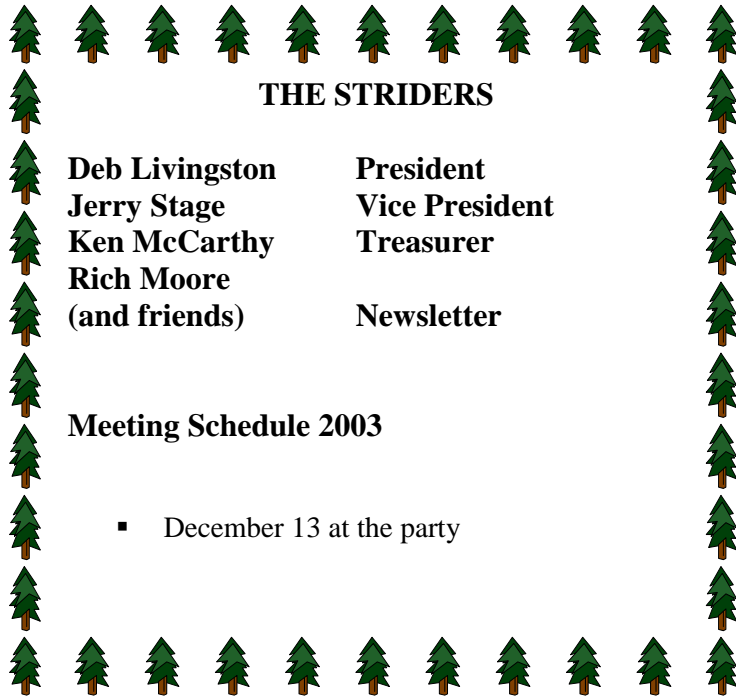
Come to think of it, "Dreamer" was not even there. He took the shortcut from the trail to the parking lot in order to be there first for the drinks and munchies (he goes by hearsay). According to Webster's New World Dictionary (someone please explain to the "Dreamer" what that is) "lost" is "to become unable to find". Joe and I were just temporarily disoriented. We found our own way and did not need any assistance.

"Dreamer" thinks "Otto" has 2 letters and "Willi" 3 letters. I wonder what school he went to. Ah, yes, Assumption College (they assume a lot there). Everything he ever learned was from the class clown (or maybe he was the class clown, "street smart and self taught").

Yes, I did have my cell phone with me and if we needed to call someone we would have. Besides, what is "Dreamer" talking about? He was home in bed, dreaming. However, little did Joe and I realize, that there were some "real friends" still in the parking lot waiting for us and yes, for them I am sorry that I did not have my cell phone on. (I wanted to conserve battery power in the cold temperatures.)

No, I did not have a GPS with me (another assumption by "Mr. Dreamer").

Yes, I have been Scout Master and still am a Scouter in Ellington for the last 35 years. I have forgotten more about outdoor skills and survival than the "Dreamer" ever knew. No, we do not have a Troop 196 in Ellington (assumption). Yes, "to be prepared" -- we were! Otherwise we would



### THE STRIDERS

**Deb Livingston**      **President**  
**Jerry Stage**        **Vice President**  
**Ken McCarthy**      **Treasurer**  
**Rich Moore**  
**(and friends)**        **Newsletter**

### Meeting Schedule 2003

- December 13 at the party

have gotten lost.

No, to Boy Scout rule #1 ("pay attention"). There is no such rule. You see what I mean. When he does not know what he is talking about he tries to baffle everyone with nonsense. What does "Bullsh\_\_ Willi" mean? It must be some Irish intellectual proverb. Here is a guy who hates the British so much, yet he borrows and uses their language to the fullest. Oh, no, I am wrong. No self-respecting Brit would use such phrases. It must be an Irish drinking song. In closing I would like to say that I feel bad for poor Joe and the unfair ripping he had to endure (he is somewhat sensitive). We are trying to increase our club's membership, however, but because of "Dreamer's" comments and name calling ("dip" and "neophyte"), Joe has not been back since February. We miss you, Joe! In the meantime "Mr. Dreamer" keep on dreaming and breaking wind!!

Willi Frederick

Editor's note: I'm glad Willi brought up the Moonlight Run, because it's now tentatively scheduled for February 28th at 11:30 p.m. Judging from all of the excitement last year, everyone should plan to show up just to see what transpires this year!

So get your survival gear ready, charge your cell phone, get new batteries for your GPS. And maybe this year make sure Dan Wright doesn't get so far ahead.....

## 2003 Northeast Trailrunner's Circuit Final Standings

All 20 events are done, and the results are in! The final points standings were highly competitive, with Ben Nephew regaining the championship by edging David Herr, 99.58% to 98.55%. 2002 Champion Leigh Schmitt finished third at 98.13%. Both Ben and David won four races, while Leigh won 2. Sometimes winning the Circuit comes down to priorities, and it should be noted that Leigh stepped to ultras this year, almost winning the Vermont 100 and later winning at the Vermont 50. Paul Low didn't qualify by running 6 races, but won three races in some impressive times.

I am happy to report that our President, Deb Livingston, repeated as women's Circuit Champ! She averaged 82.49%, easily outdistancing Sheryl Wheeler's 78.51%. Sheryl could still be happy as Women's Masters champ. Deb won four races, while no other woman won more than two.

Two other Striders finished in the top ten! Ken Clark finished sixth with 94.32% and Ed Alibozek was tenth with 83.78%. Ken was second in the Masters category, and it took an unbelievable performance by Rob Higley to beat him. Rob, at age 49, finished fourth overall at 98.10%. I guess all of us in the 50-59 age group can forget winning anything in 2004. Ed must be very pleased with his top ten placing, as last year was disappointing. This year he came back with a couple of top ten finishes at races and ran really well everywhere he raced.

Speaking of 50-59, we had a Strider winner there, too! Carol Kane easily outdistanced her competition (and easily kicked my butt, too) averaging 69.55% to win the age group by over 20 points. We've taken Carol's excellence for granted over the past few years, but it rivals Rob Higley's in his age group.

The men's 50-59 was a tough group. At

least it seemed so to me. Dave Raczkowski (Mr. NipMuck Marathon) repeated as Champ, with 83.05% per race. Paul Rabenold came back out on the Circuit to average 81.20% to finish second. Strider Bruce Marvonek must've enjoyed turning 50, as he grabbed the third spot with 77.50%. Remember, Bruce is still young compared to most of us Striders!

Moving to the 60-69 age group, no one could keep up with Vic Laport at 70.48%. Strider Ed Alibozek, Jr. was close, finishing third with 66.57%. I happened to run with Ed early in some races (before he left me in his dust), and I can only say that Vic seemed to be working awfully hard to win, while Ed was enjoying the day. Maybe it's back to priorities again....

There was no women's 60-69 age group, but I have to think that there will be soon. And that's depressing, because I couldn't even win that one!

Fittingly, there was only one in the 70-79 age group, the incomparable Richard Busa. Richard not only qualified with six races, but ran everything in sight (including the Vermont 100 again). He averaged 60.09% despite running an estimated extra 2-4 miles each race. It seems that Richard is directionally challenged.

Now let's look at how the Striders fared overall:

Ken Clark	6th	94.32
Ed Alibozek	10th	83.78
Deb Livingston	12th	82.49
Bruce Marvonek	18th	77.50
Carol Kane	25th	69.55
Ed Alibozek, Jr.	32nd	66.57
Kevin Simons	36th	61.68

There were only 45 runners persistent enough to complete 6 Circuit races to qualify. As is usually the case, Dave Soule ran 5 races, just missing qualifying. I believe he was concerned that he would've finished behind me again this year.

**Moonlight Run 11:30 p.m. February 28th, 2004**  
**We'll run/walk 3-6 miles in the snow, get lost a bit, then enjoy snacks in frigid conditions. Don't miss it! Remember, Tom, it's 11:30 p.m. not midnight!**

## NE Trailrunner's Circuit Stonehead Rankings

There is no more important category than Stonehead! And the Striders excel in this category. Ken Clark won again (this was his seventh year in a row!) with 1,396.68 total points. He had a 270 point lead over Rob Higley, but still didn't ease off at the end of the season. I guess he just loves what he's doing!. Back in fifth place overall is Bruce Marvonek, enjoying that new age group with 874.15 points. Ed Alibozek almost caught him, finishing seventh with 836.41 points. Now remember, to be a Stonehead, you have to run just about every weekend in the Spring and Fall, sometimes doubling up with races both days.

We also had the women's Stonehead, Carol Kane was 16th with 602.43 points. This was her third consecutive Stonehead Championship! I know she could've run more if she didn't run so many road races.

Deb Livingston also could've contended for the Stonehead award if she didn't take time out to go out west to run 50 milers. That, and quite a number of Adventure Races with Scott, kept her from amassing 1,000 points. When you move down the list a bit you find Ed Alibozek, Jr. (I know, why is Ed, Jr. older than Ed?) at 399.42 points. He just looks like he's enjoying this too much to worry about points.

And then there's me, Kevin Simons, half killing himself to get a lousy 377.09 points. But don't forget, I got my 13th straight Escarpment Trail this year (not a Circuit race!).

Dave Soule, Bob Mellberg and Bob Stoker also had at least two races this year. I know that if Bob had wanted to, he could've been a top 10 Stonehead! And after an outstanding Northern NipMuck, where would Lisa Hageman have placed? But it's important to be "mom" first!

Let's keep up that Strider Stonehead tradition in 2004!

Kevin Simons

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## On The Trails

The season's done, the races are over. We didn't have a newsletter all summer, so I couldn't bore you with my thoughts. But let's reflect a bit...

It was a tough season. For the first time I can remember, I was in such lousy shape that I skipped the early races. It was a relief in a sense in that I didn't have an awful time struggling to finish. But after a while I decided that I needed to run even if it wasn't very well. I needed the momentum to get back into shape. Well, you could challenge that decision. Everywhere I ran, I ran "personal worsts". It was embarrassing finishing so far behind my usual times, and occasionally behind people who had never beaten me. Remember, I'm a competitive type, and finishing ahead of me is "beating" me!

I got used to it to a point, and enjoyed the few good things. I was running so slowly that my recovery time was shortened. I finished Savoy and was fine the next day! Other races weren't so good. Escarpment, a point to point 30K, was so bad that I considered dropping out. I mentioned this to Jean Kerr at the 10.2 mile mark, and she persuaded me to continue because it was actually harder to drop out than just go on! Maybe it's all in your head — the last two miles that day I actually ran harder than the whole rest of the race.

So on I went, at least finishing 6 races to qualify for the Circuit rankings. I still had my pride to consider!

Funny thing, by the end of the season finishing slowly wasn't so bad because I was improving. When the season was over, I actually decided to lose some weight and get into shape. Then I began running some roads again. Well, you see, I do have this Thanksgiving Day road race that I just have to run. Suddenly, it was more fun again. And I got a little faster. Then I had a good day on Thanksgiving. So now I'm ready for next season again. I can't wait to get started. Maybe I'll even run another Ultra!

Well, maybe that won't happen, but I sure feel better. Have you ever been through this sequence of events? Don't give up! Back to the trails and the seasons again. I can always remember my different seasons by specific things that seem to represent them. The brisk, invigorating winter runs. The muddy, sloppy Spring runs. The cloudy, breezy Fall runs. One of the things that I always remember about Summer was the dry smell of running in the woods. Maybe it was the open meadows, or maybe it was the pine forests, but there was a smell that I can always remember. Dry and hot, but typical only of Summer. Well, this Summer was different. I never experienced that smell. The long rainy, humid period just wiped that out. I guess it's not important, but it was something that really stuck out in my mind.

We're closing in on Winter again, and I can't wait for the first "snow running" day again. Many of the regular trailrunners are waiting for snow for a different reason — they run snowshoe races. But I really just like running on a snowy day, even in six or more inches of snow. They are some of the best days of the year.

Let's not forget the Fall, however. Fall is the best season to get out on trails and try out some trails you've never been on before. The visibility is so great without the leaves that it's easy to get your bearings and not get lost. Got that, Willi?

It's already December, and New Year's Resolutions aren't far away. Since we're all current or former runners, we must all have some Resolutions to make. I'm trying to share my thoughts to maybe get you thinking about some targets for 2004. Maybe it's qualifying for Circuit rankings, maybe it's running a road 5K. Whatever it is, maybe coming out to the Forest on Saturday mornings will help reinforce the commitment. Think about it! 2004 can be a great year. The Striders can help!

Happy Holidays! Happy New Year! And please show up at the Holiday Party!

Kevin Simons

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**Shenipsit Striders' Newsletter**

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U.S. Postage

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***Kevin Simons***

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