

The 2019 Canton Snow Daze Extravaganza
by LAA Member Mary Atwater

The Canton Snow Daze Extravaganza on Lake Anasagunticook took place on February 17, 2019, under gorgeous sunshine and with the very capable management of Steve Wills. The Canton fire department arrived early to determine if the ice was safe for fishing and other activities. Surrounded by a dozen firemen and junior firemen dressed for deep winter temperatures, the fire chief and firemen drilled two holes, large enough for a grown man to enter. The drilled ice hole at the beach end of the lake was measured at 30" deep. The ice near cottages one mile south from the Canton beach was 38" deep. The town of Canton encourages high school students 13 years and older to train as junior firemen.

The Canton fire chief selected one fireman to slide into the ice hole to confirm the safety of the measurement and, be rescued, for education and training of the junior firemen. (I would not have wanted to be on the fire chief's bad boy list on this Feb 17.) The population of Canton, ME, is just over 900 and a few strong teenagers can be a big help to the fire department. The teenagers can also learn valuable life lessons. The measurements were confirmed, the rescue took place and the feasting and games began.

LAA president Tim Kirwan, led the charge in the snow shoe race up Canton Mountain. The Canton Fire Department supervised the snow mobile races on the ice and the snow mobile rides up Canton Mountain to observe the wind mills. LAA Treasurer Biff Atwater leisurely consumed a large burger cooked by the Canton Snow Daze Extravaganza chefs, and, answered questions from first time visitors to the event while sitting in a comfortable beach chair and enjoying whoopee pies provided by LAA member Polly Bussiere. LAA Board member Bill Gray and his wife, Carolyn, walked on the ice and greeted visitors. LAA member Rob Bihlmeyer brought relatives from New Orleans who had never walked on a frozen lake, to attend. LAA Board member Diane Ray greeted visitors with a just baked pan of mouthwatering pastries for Snow Daze Extravaganza.

The "sneaker shoe" ice hockey game was a big draw in 2018. The star of the 2018 ice hockey game, a very energetic golden retriever, was invited to join the 2019 ice hockey game as goalie again.

Fifteen tents for ice fishing were counted just off the Canton beach. A dozen other tents on the ice were counted in the distance. It was estimated that 95 individuals were greeted by the LAA board members as they enjoyed the burgers, hot dogs, whoopee pies, brownies, pastries, cold drinks, hot chocolate and sunshine at the annual event.

Many thanks to Steve Wills for his time and creativity in organizing this happy celebration for the town of Canton, ME.

Fishermen participating in the Canton Snow Daze Extravaganza event are encouraged to forward their number of catches and size of catches to LAA members for record keeping.