

March 4, 2023: Moonlit Snowshoe Hike Recap

written by Amy Oestreich | March 9, 2023

"Find Joy in the Unexpected" – Amy Oestreich





This year, the month of March is presenting early signs of Spring for the Keweenaw. The day skies have been sunny, the temperatures warm and the snow has been crunchy. Of course In other parts of the Northern Hemisphere that enjoy the winter season, new grass is already appearing between melting snow piles, bright yellow daffodils are poking through compressed decomposing leaves and Robins are feasting on worms. On [Saturday, March 4th, 2023](#), adventurous participants gathered at the [Outdoor Activity Center](#). Under the light of the near full moon, Chris Guibert, OAC Lead, and myself, guided these folks on our 3rd Moonlit Snowshoe hike of the season; letting our eyes adjust to the “Worm Moon” of the Spring.



As I settled into the pace and comfort of nature, my mind wandered. I began to think of change: the changing temperatures, the changing climate and the changes or “advances” in technology. I appreciate time in this serene atmosphere; it is conducive for creative thinking. I always seem to ponder the past while maintaining my concerns of the present; how do we adapt to such changes? How do we adjust? How do we weave our past with our future? When I am traveling by snowshoes, especially under the moonlight, I feel a strong connection to our ancestors. This connection gives me a sense of security that we will continue to evolve with the changes. And how could I not?

Snowshoeing is an ancient mode of transportation that originated thousands of years ago among indigenous peoples in the Arctic regions of North America and Eurasia. The earliest evidence of snowshoes dates back to 4000 BC, when people in Central Asia used them for hunting and travel. I admire that not much has changed with this technology. Sure, snowshoes were originally made from materials such as animal hide and wood, and the basic design involved a frame made of wood or bone that was laced with more animal hide or sinew. It wasn't until the 20th century, with the introduction of new materials such as aluminum and synthetic fabrics, that the snowshoe evolved. And even then, the basic shape and concept prevailed.



While we may not be hunting or traveling in the traditional sense, we are definitely enjoying the evolution of snowshoes as a recreational activity. There is something magical that happens when we allow our minds to disengage from technology and draw our bodies closer to nature. The light of the moon seems to act as a catalyst for this. The thrill of the visual hunt propels our legs forward to experience memories.



We gathered tonight with hopes of hiking under a blanket of stars, clear skies, a bright full moon and perhaps even a display of Northern Lights. As expectations were built, one may have been let down by the cloudy night and blurred moon. Thankfully our mental adjustments have allowed us to adapt our attitude to enjoy the beauty the hazy sky has offered. The stars were not bright, The Northern Lights did not dance for us, but we did stop and reflect on the beauty of the unexpected. The cold, damp, foggy night air offered us an amazing ring around the moon!



A lunar halo is a ring of light that appears around the moon at night. It is caused by the reflection, refraction, and dispersion of moonlight by ice crystals in the Earth's atmosphere.

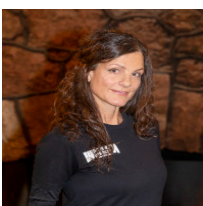
The ice crystals in the atmosphere act like tiny prisms, bending the light and separating it into different colors. The angle of the light passing through the ice crystals determines the size of the halo, with larger halos appearing when the angle is smaller.

Lunar halos are usually white, but they can also display a range of colors depending on the angle of the moonlight and the size and shape of the ice crystals. The colors can range from red on the inside of the halo to blue on the outside.

In awe, we stop for photos; we are not let down! We are delighted with our chance viewing of the beautiful lunar halo. As we continue our snowshoe hike back to the Lodge. I enjoy listening to the guests laugh with each other, compare experiences and share their stories. I noticed a common theme: "find Joy in the unexpected".



Life can be challenging at times. Change can also be challenging. This challenge may force us to try new things, adapt, adjust, evolve and embrace the advances in technology. Just know, if it ever gets to be a bit much; you can always connect with nature and find joy...maybe even in something unexpected.



[Amy Oestreich](#)

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