

# PAW PRINTS & SKI TRACKS

*Annual ASPA membership dues are due. If you want to continue your membership, please complete the form included, and send it in with your dues. Thanks!*

## Skate Ski Clinic

December 1 and 15  
Birch Hill, 6:30 PM  
Joel Buth  
455-7148

## Show 'n' Go #1 and #2

December 2 and 28  
Call Peggy Raybeck for details  
457-4775

## Fun Race #3 and #4

December 10 and 27  
Creamer's Field,  
11 and 11:30 AM  
Don Kiely, 455-6749

## Training Clinic #2

December 9  
Creamer's Field,  
11AM  
Pat DeRuyter  
479-7853

## More than Just a Beginner's Clinic, an Adventure!

(by Sara Elzey)

November 18, 2006 dawned clear, sunny, and wait, -25! And still only a few inches of snow on the ground. Sigh. Not exactly the stellar conditions that I had hoped for the 2006 ASPA Beginners Clinic. The on-snow session would have to be postponed. I loaded up the truck with all of my gear and Myst (who models harnesses and generally presides over the entire affair in her true Princess fashion) and headed to Alaska Feed Company for the morning classroom session. Fifteen eager students showed up and we got started. I covered the various equipment needed or recommended for dogs and skiers, talked about training tips, passing, commands, explained the proper trail etiquette, and gave them tips that all beginners need - "keep your knees bent at all times," "avoid the brown Klister at all costs," "remember that your dog may have selective hearing," and most importantly, "never put your ski pole out in front of you while skiing because you will invariably hit something with it and then hit yourself (i.e. the ground, a tree, your dog, you get the picture)" and other important tidbits. Everyone signed up for a half hour time slot for the following Saturday for the on-snow session optimistically assuming that "we will most certainly have snow by then."

Well a long, snow-less, COLD week ensued. Thanksgiving came and went. And I postponed again. Washington state got up to 2 feet of snow in places and Juneau got more than that. Pat DeRuyter emailed the skijor list politely asking folks to double check the coordinates on their snow dances because they seemed to be not the coordinates for Fairbanks. December 1 arrived and with it a half inch of snow, thick heavy clouds and a high of +15! I figured Pat's email had worked and we were good to go. I sent out the email to Beginners Clinic students and volunteers that the on-snow session was a GO!



(cont.) Saturday, December 2 dawned clear, sunny and what!?! -14F. And no more fresh snow. What is up people!?! Too late to back out now, I headed to Creamer's Field hoping that my Beginners had true Alaskan spirit and would come out anyways. I was not disappointed! A few were unable to come due to the date change but most were there. Wendy & her borrowed terrier mix started the group off chasing Sarah Tabbert and Rosco. They proved that you don't have to be a sled dog to enjoy and succeed at skijoring. Wendy just may succumb and adopt her own dog from the shelter so she can go more often. Rosemary was not ready to try it with her dog but she came to observe and learn from the crashes, er, mistakes of others. Phil and his malamute named Akita tried out the far back field before braving the crowd. Andy Warwick and his dogs showed up to play "rabbit" and Blue demonstrated what experienced dogs are not supposed to do - slip out of the car and run free half way around the field without a skier! Shelley and her yellow lab then showed Blue how it was supposed to be done and Andy had to upgrade dogs to Zip & Licorice to keep ahead of her. Mike Malvick played a speedy rabbit with Mesa and Ingrid before bringing out his 8 month old pony, I mean pointer, Victor for his first lap around the field. Lily and her husky took a few passes around the field with Lisa Stuby and Killae and Theresa and Harley. Harley at age 10 wasn't sure that he really wanted to skijor and had some additional encouragement from "dad" in his first lap around the training loop. Brooke and her blue-eyed boy sped around with much enthusiasm that only involved a minor crash or two. Eric and his Hawaiian adopted pit bull/boxer, Mary, and his Alabama adopted, squirrel hound, Buster at first weren't too sure about the cold temperatures and their coats and booties but after the first pass had it all figured out. Next time out it's Amy's turn! Bryan and Angel quickly got the hang of it speeding around behind David French and Boone. Matt and Kudo chased Jim Herriges and Lily around the loop a few times before calling it quits. Carol Kleckner held dogs, gave tips and loved on all the dogs in the start/finish area. All in all there were smiles and wagging tails all around! Thanks so much to all the participants and to all the volunteers - Sarah Tabbert, Mike Malvick, Andy Warwick, Jim Herriges, David French, Lisa Stuby and Carol Kleckner.

Now if we could just get some actual snow and have a Fun Race.....

### **SKATE SKIING CLINICS at Birch Hill Recreation Area ( by Lisa Stuby)**

On November 10, 17, and December 1<sup>st</sup>, for a mere \$5.00 per class, Joel Buth conducted some excellent skate ski clinics. We all met in the warming hut at Birch Hill Recreation Area at 6:30 PM and usually ended class near 8:00 PM. Despite the lack of snow, trails at Birch Hill were in fairly decent shape. A few of us had not skied or skied much before taking the class, including Joel for the November 10<sup>th</sup> class. Nevertheless, Joel looked effortless and seemed to barely break a sweat or even breath heavy as he skied around us, demonstrating proper stance and movement. As we all moaned and groaned as we practiced our strokes with and without poles, Joel emphasized that the key to skate skiing with less effort is to have good technique and that only comes with PRACTICE!! He emphasized the importance of landing on a flat ski. A flat ski is a FAST ski!! Also, Joel emphasized the importance of leaning a little forward with a bend to the knees and not "Sitting on the Potty," which I seem to excel at. In achieving a flat ski, alignment is also paramount and we worked on setting our ski down in alignment with our eyes and nose over our skis. We left our ski poles by the fence and made little diamonds with our hands and held them to where our skis go down in order to help our bodies align with the skis. It became easy to forget one was tired with this mental exercise.

We also practiced the correct way to place our poles, double poling, and the "wimp skate," which is a variation on the 'ole herringbone and makes going uphill much easier and faster than the traditional V1. Of course, we also practiced the proper V1.

Joel Buth kept emphasizing in addition to trying to form muscle memory of correct movement, to also keep it fun. Worrying about whether you are doing things right or wrong is also tiring. He kept telling us to not worry about falling, it is only part of learning and shows one is willing to push the limit of balance and then know where the correct stance should be. Whenever someone fell, we all clapped. Also, towards the end of class, to help us use what we learned and to enable us to not think about technique so much, we played "Follow the Leader" around obstacles like trees, took sharp bends in the trail, and skied ever tightening circles.

Joel will be offering to give one more clinic in December 15<sup>th</sup>. If you haven't attended one of his clinics yet, this is a great chance to brush up on your skate skiing skills, which will only make you a more effective and controlled skijorers.

## THE STORY OF A SNOWFLAKE

(Condensed from *The Snowflake: Winter's Secret Beauty* by Kenneth Libbrecht and Patricia Rasmussen )

With ASPA events getting cancelled (to be rescheduled later) such as Fun Race #1 and #2 and the first training clinic due mainly to a lack of snow, and calls for everyone to do their snow dances, thoughts have turned to snow, or the lack thereof. So, what is this white stuff that makes us and our canine friends so happy during the long, dark Fairbanks winters?

Snowflakes and snow crystals are made of ice, and pretty much nothing more. A **snow crystal**, as the name implies, is a single crystal of ice. A **snowflake** is a more general term; it can mean an individual snow crystal, or a few snow crystals stuck together, or large agglomerations of snow crystals that form "puff-balls" that float down from the clouds.

Snowflakes are not frozen raindrops. Sometimes raindrops do freeze as they fall, but this is called *sleet*. Sleet particles don't have any of the elaborate and symmetrical patterning found in snow crystals. Snow crystals form when *water vapor* condenses directly into ice, which happens in the clouds. The patterns emerge as the crystals grow.

The story of a snowflake begins with water vapor in the air. Evaporation from oceans, lakes, and rivers puts water vapor into the air, as does transpiration from plants. Even you, every time you exhale, put water vapor into the air.

When you take a parcel of air and cool it down, at some point the water vapor it holds will begin to condense out. When this happens near the ground, the water may condense as dew on the grass. High above the ground, water vapor condenses onto dust particles in the air. It condenses into countless minute droplets, where each droplet contains at least one dust particle. A cloud is nothing more than a huge collection of these water droplets suspended in the air.

In the winter, snow-forming clouds are still mostly made of liquid water droplets, even when the temperature is below freezing. The water is said to be *supercooled*, meaning simply that it is cooled below the freezing point. As the clouds get colder, however, the droplets do start to freeze. This begins happening around -10 C (14 F), but it's a gradual process and the droplets don't all freeze at once.

If a particular droplet freezes, it becomes a small particle of ice surrounded by the remaining liquid water droplets in the cloud. The ice grows as water vapor condenses onto its surface, forming a snowflake in the process. As the ice grows larger, the remaining water droplets slowly evaporate and put more water vapor into the air.

Note what happens to the water -- it evaporates from the water droplets and goes into the air, and it comes out of the air as it condenses on the growing snow crystals. As the snow falls there is a net flow of water from the liquid state (cloud droplets) to the solid state (snowflakes). This rather complicated chain of events is how a cloud freezes. And now for a few commonly asked questions.

**Why is Snow White?** What's happening is that light is partially reflected by an ice surface, again just as it is from a glass surface. When you have a *lot* of partially reflecting surfaces, which you do in a snowbank, then incident light bounces around and eventually scatters back out. Since all colors are scattered roughly equally well, the snow bank appears white. Now the ice actually absorbs some light while it's bouncing around, and red light is absorbed more readily than blue light. Thus, if you look inside a snow bank you can sometimes see a blue color.

**Is it Ever too Cold to Snow?** In principle it can snow at any temperature below freezing. It snows at the South Pole even though the temperature is rarely above -40 C (-40 F). In more hospitable climates, however, it doesn't snow so much when the temperature is below around -20 C (-4 F). When a parcel of moist air cools, it starts producing snow before it gets that cold. By the time the temperature drops to -20 C, the snow has already fallen and the air is pretty dry. The clouds that remain are made of ice crystals, and these don't produce much snow.

**When will it snow again in Fairbanks?** After everyone does their snow dances!!!

### A Rescue Pet's Christmas Poem

'Tis the night before Christmas and all through the town,  
every shelter is full - we are lost but not found.  
Our numbers are hung on our kennels so bare,  
we hope every minute that someone will care.

They'll come to adopt us and give us the call,  
"Come here, Max and Sparkie - come fetch your new ball!!  
But now we sit here and think of the days  
we were treated so fondly - we had cute, baby ways.  
Once we were little, then we grew and we grew,  
now we're no longer young and we're no longer new.

So out the back door we were thrown like the trash,  
they reacted so quickly - why were they so rash?  
We "jump on the children:", "don't come when they call",  
we "bark when they leave us", climb over the wall.

We should have been neutered; we should have been  
spayed; now we suffer the consequence of the errors THEY  
made. If only they'd trained us, if only we knew,  
we'd have done what they asked us and worshiped them,  
too.

We were left in the backyard, or worse - left to roam,  
now we're tired and lonely and out of a home.  
They dropped us off here and they kissed us good-bye,  
"Maybe someone else will give you a try."

So now here we are, all confused and alone,  
in a shelter with others who long for a home.  
The kind workers come through with a meal and a pat,  
with so many to care for, they can't stay to chat.

They move to the next kennel, giving each of us cheer,  
we know that they wonder how long we'll be here.  
We lay down to sleep and sweet dreams fill our heads,  
of a home filled with love and our own cozy beds.  
Then we wake to see sad eyes, brimming with tears,  
our friends filled with emptiness, worry, and fear.

If you can't adopt us and there's no room at the Inn,  
could you help with the bills and fill our food bin?  
We count on your kindness each day of the year,  
can you give more than hope to everyone here?

**By David the Dogman, as seen on many animal shelter websites. Shelters throughout the USA receive a large volume of pets in December and January. Please remember a pet is for Life not just for Christmas.**

**If you would like to make a donation to the Fairbanks Animal Shelter Fund AND have a little FUN. Saturday, December 2nd and 9th is the annual Pet Photos With Santa from 11am to 6pm at Alaska Feed Company on College Road. All types of pets are welcome. Great for Christmas letters and seriously a LOT of fun!!**





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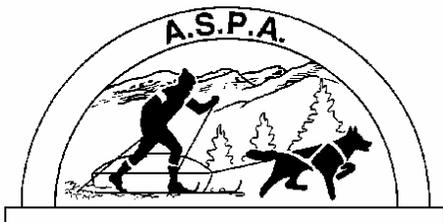
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