

# 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.*

## **November 14, 28**

### **Skate Clinics**

Birch Hill, Joel Buth  
455-7148

## **November 17, 25**

Fun Race #1 and #2  
Creamer's Field,  
11:30 AM, Andy  
Warwick, 474-9148

## **November 24**

Training Clinic #1  
Creamer's Field,  
11AM, Lisa Stuby  
458-7657

## **December 1**

Beginner's Clinic  
Classroom Session  
Alaska Feed 10AM-  
1PM. On snow 2-  
4PM, Creamer's  
Field

## **Fall Membership Meeting-October 29**

(photos and text by Lisa Stuby)

Twenty-four people attended this year's Fall Membership Meeting at the Dog Musers Hall. After Jamie, our most gracious hostess, introduced herself and thanked us all for coming, we dove into the excellent potluck. I was glad I didn't eat anything beforehand. The spread was downright gourmet! First, Jamie introduced the board and asked for new board members since we lost three people in the past couple of months. Three people volunteered and a little about them will be presented on the next page.

After the meal, we all gathered the tables and chairs into a circle and had a good discussion on skijorer "tricks and tips." Sara Elzey began the discussion with her two favorite tips. One of her dogs, Shadow, likes to dip snow and another, Ayla gets excited while in harness and likes to spin. To minimize tangles and make running in harness more comfortable for them, she uses the short-backed harnesses and will attached her dogs harness to harness, instead of the traditional neck to neck. This way, potential neck injuries as well as tangles can be prevented. This system may be especially valuable with smaller and/or younger dogs. Also, she found that instead of attaching a "neckline" with a clip, she uses a metal circle so that it can slide back and forth and her dogs can dip snow with comfort. Some dogs that don't like necklines may also benefit from this advice.

Carol Kleckner told of a tip from skijorer, Chris Terzi, to always take an extra tug line or rope (can tie around waist) so that if the skijorer gets into a big tangle, he/she can rope off to a tree and that will free the skijorer's hands to best untangle the dogs. Also, talking about skijor lines, she mentioned that some are recreational and others more professional. When purchasing a skijor line, it is important to know what type will best suit your needs. Some lines have longer bungees than others, and are meant for more than 1 dog. So, if you are thinking of getting a new skijor line, you can always ask Cold Spot feed to custom make you one and of course advice is always free.

Then the question of quick releases came up. For IFSS races, these are a requirement. Some people in the room liked using one, but others worry of inadvertent releases. Most agreed that quick releases are good for enthusiastic dogs that want to run to use a quick release as a means to let dogs that are tied to a post or tree, as the skijorer readies to go, to let them go. Brian Charlton warned against using a snap hook, that can snap away. Sara likes to use a carabineer to hold her dogs before she lets them run.

Tone Deehr, recommended wool glove liners that can be found at Beaver Sports as being much warmer than synthetic liners and are worth the extra money. As one who has done many a race stopping to warm up fingers in supposedly warm gloves, this is one tip I plan on trying.



Left, Carol Kleckner and Andy Warwick discuss the pro's and cons of using quick releases.



Right, participants eating and socializing

November 14 and 28—6:30 p.m. Skate Clinic at Birch Hill taught by Joel Buth. For Beginner to Intermediate skiers (learn V1, V2). \$5 fee. Open to ASPA members ONLY. Contact Joel at 455-7148 or joel@goldstreamsports.com. A GREAT deal!

## TRAIL TALK

### North Star Golf Club trails and Creamer's Field

As I go to press with this, Pat DeRuyter rolled Creamer's Field and North Star and groomed North Star. Much more snow is needed and the trails are pretty rough in most places. The buckets at Creamer's Field have been filled with snow and water and signs placed in them. Many thanks to Pat DeRuyter for dropping the signs and buckets off and the volunteers who filled them: Chuck and Tone Deehr, Karsten and Lori Hueffer, and Peggy Raybeck. I ran late and showed up to help, but the buckets and signs were already done, so I went skijoring instead and of course went to work on this newsletter. Soon, hopefully with more snow, very soon, Pat will organize putting up signs on the trees for the red, green, and orange loops. If you are interested in helping place signs and/or groom (Occasionally, once a month, once a week or as a backup when it snows a lot) contact Pat DeRuyter at patd@gci.net or 479-7853.

If you have any trails you enjoy and want everyone to know about them, send me a description and I will place it in the newsletter. Good trail information is a terrible thing to waste!!

Gas is even MORE expensive this year and grooming takes a LOT of gas. If you use the Creamer's Field trails, the North Star Golf Club trails and/or the Isberg Trails, PLEASE donate to the ASPA trail grooming fund. For a frequent trail user, a \$50-\$100 donation would be appreciated. An occasional trail user should consider a \$20-\$50 donation. Mail your trail donations to ASPA, P. O. Box 82843, Fairbanks, AK 99708 or give them to an ASPA volunteer at any ASPA sponsored event.

## Annual Beginner's Clinic—December 1st

Mark your calendars! The Alaska Skijoring & Pulk Association's annual Beginner's Clinic is coming up in December. Please spread the word to all your "doggie" friends. Sara Elzey and Carol Kleckner will again be leading this clinic. Sara and Carol have had many years of experience in skijoring Alaska trails and in leading this clinic. Expect a comprehensive, informative, and fun class.

The classroom session will be given at Alaska Feed in Fairbanks from 10AM to 1PM. After a lunch break, the participants will meet at Creamer's Field for a half-hour "on-snow" session from 2-4 PM. You must attend the classroom session in order to participate in the "on-snow" session. Preregistration is REQUIRED and each classroom session is limited to 25 participants. If interested in attending, please sign up at Alaska Feed. The cost is \$15 per person.

For more information contact Alaska Feed 451-5570, the ASPA hotline 457-5456, or email Sara directly at skjorex2@hotmail.com.

To volunteer to help out with the "on-snow" session on Saturday please email Sara. She will need volunteers on skis with well behaved dogs to "be chased," volunteers on skis without dogs to be out on the trail to help beginners as needed, and folks on their feet at the start/finish area to help beginners get started.

### The Trail Less Travelled by Lisa Stuby

In passing conversations on skijoring, the use of classic versus skate skis inevitably comes up. For many years I skijored with an old set of classic skis. I was a poor, starving student at the time and couldn't afford to purchase a pair of skate skis or a "nicer" pair of classic skis. I did fine, not knowing any better with the differences in gear. Years later I did purchase a pair of skate skis and in order to learn correct technique, took lessons from the Nordic Ski Club of Fairbanks. At present, I have a rather sensitive dog who doesn't like it when I fall, even though I try to be good-natured about it, and find I have more control and stability with the skate skis on wide/groomed trails. However, there are times when I do prefer the classics when skijoring. Going from two huskies who had the innate instinct to pull and run to a hunting dog, who can get bored, I find to keep his interest up, sometimes we will skijor down a narrow snowmachine or ski trail that most folks wouldn't skijor down. With classic skis, we can easily travel down narrow trails. It is also fun for me, because I get bored with the same old same old. My dog doesn't tend to pull too hard, and is controllable (as were my huskies), so skijoring the classic way is doable. The biggest differences between classic and skate skis, besides stride, is that classic skis are usually a little longer with a camber in the middle and less narrow. Skate boots affirm the foot to the ski, whereas classic boots allow for lifting of the foot to propel one forward. Also, skijoring with classic skis allows us to travel trails that may harbor moose, other skiers/walkers, or possibly trapping activity and I can have my dog under my control, but still take him with me. In skijoring with little snow and/or rough conditions, like at present, I find I have more control with speed and stability with my classic skis.

For a dog, the "feel" of skijoring with someone in classics is different. Classic skiing will be a little noisier as the skier can slap the skis as they travel forward and make the classic swishing noise, and the forward/backward jerking motions that are inevitable are a little more pronounced with classic skis. I've found my present dog, who started skijoring with skating, was a little unsure of the motion given with the classics, but got used to it. In the past, it took some time for my huskies to get used to the noise and motion of my new skate skis. I've never owned a pair of combi skis, but if conditions are right, most people who can skate can always break into a skate with their classic skis. I don't recommend using metal-edged backcountry skis, particularly if you have an energetic dog(s) because of the potential to run into your dog(s) and cause injury with the sharp edges. If metal-edged skis are all you have and/or can afford, then be sure to take a file to the edges and make them less sharp. Of course, if you have energetic dogs that pull you the entire route you have chosen, then whether or not you are using classic or skate skis is mute. Then, all that matters is that you stay upright. The most important thing is to get yourself and your canine companion off of the couch and get out and have fun.



## Alaska Skijoring and Pulk Association Survey

The Alaska Skijoring and Pulk Association (ASPA) is interested in receiving feedback from you so we may structure our program/schedule to meet the needs of more people. Please take a few moments to complete the below questionnaire and bring it to any ASPA event or return it by mail to **ASPA, PO Box 82843, Fairbanks, AK 99708-2843** NO LATER than December 31, 2007. Please use the space on the second page for more room for comments, if you need it.

Thanks for your feedback!

1. Are you an ASPA member? (circle one) Y or N
2. If no, have you been an ASPA member in the past? (circle one) Y or N
3. If you are no longer an ASPA member, why did you let your membership lapse? (Please mark all that apply)
  - a. I am no longer skijoring
  - b. I am not interested in the events put on by ASPA
  - c. The membership is too costly
  - d. Other: Please be specific: \_\_\_\_\_

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4. If you are currently an ASPA member, what events do you participate in? (Please indicate *how many per year*, on average.)
  - a. Fun Races \_\_\_\_\_ #
  - b. Show-n-Go's \_\_\_\_\_ #
  - c. Training Clinics \_\_\_\_\_ #
  - d. Competitive Races (ie Birch Hill, Race Across the Valley, Lee's Cabin) \_\_\_\_\_ #

5. What additional events would you like to see ASPA offer?

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6. Do you use the ASPA website? (Please mark all that apply.)

- a. Schedule of Events
- b. Race Results
- c. Race Rules
- d. Training Tips & Etiquette
- e. Fairbanks Area Skijor Trails
- f. On-line membership
- g. Look up sponsors
- h. Look up Board of Directors

What additional features would you like to see on the website?

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## The Alder Award 2008



Above: Andy Warwick, here with Zip and Licorice won the 2006 Alder award with the rescue and training of Blue.

Right: Sara Elzey with Shadow wins the 2007 Alder Award. Shadow won with a 10 Year career and over 80 recorded events



### **The Zen of record keeping makes the skijoring fly!**

ASPAs annual fifty dollar Alder Award is meant to distinguish the most improved skier/dog combination during one racing season. It is an *ad hoc* award that encourages record-keeping and the canine résumé. It will be awarded at the spring barbecue and membership meeting in March 2008 to the most improved skier and dog in ASPA-sponsored events for the 2007-08 season. The winner will be determined by the ASPA Board of Trustees on the basis of the ASPA Dog Résumé submitted by each skier for each dog entered.

The 2006 Alder award went to Andy Warwick and his dog Blue, who was rescued through a foster care arrangement with Animal Control from a dog yard where the lot had been tethered for weeks without food or water. Blue, who started out clueless about a harness, doubled his weight and gained new strength in Andy's care, and soon began to improve his skijoring performance recorded in the spring fun races. The following year, Sara Elzey won this award with her dog Shadow, an all-out, true-blue, Please-take-me-skijoring-Mom, I-love-to-run, ever-ready bunny, lead dog. Adopted from the Animal Shelter in October of 1994 at 4 months of age, Shadow began skijoring at an ASPA Beginner's Clinic three years later. Fool-proof (nearly) on commands, runs lead, wheel, and plays "rabbit" at Beginner's Clinics. Sara attests that "this dog's done all that I've ever asked and more". Like many of us who have "aged" with this sport, this dog's heart is still willing but the body just can't quite do it all anymore

This is the third season for the Alder award initiated by Chuck and Tone Deehr in honor of Aspenlair's Alder, an 80 lb AKC Siberian Husky, who has patiently given his strength and endurance to ASPA events for a number of years. Like so many of the dogs we often take for granted, he is quiet in the starting gate, has broken two Apocalypse skijor harnesses on the word "GO", encourages other dogs while on the trail, and squabbles with no one.







## 2007-8 ASPA BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND COORDINATORS

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**Vice President:** Carol Kleckner, 479-0430. kleckner@ptialaska.net  
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**Show & Go Coordinator:** Peggy Raybeck, 457-4775, paycheck39@hotmail.com  
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**Trail Grooming:** Pat DeRuyter, 479-7853, patd@gci.net  
**Beginner's Clinic Coordinator:** Sara Elzey, 378-5024, skijorex2@hotmail.com  
**Stage Race Coordinators:** Sara Elzey, Don Kiely (see above for contact information)  
**Board Members at Large:**  
**Sara Tabbert:** 479-0456, stabbert@hotmail.com; Brian Charlton, bcski-  
 for@yahoo.com; Laurie Hueffer, 458-0858, llantage@40hotmail.com.

**Paw Prints and Ski Tracks** is a monthly newsletter published during the winter season by the Alaska Skijoring and Pulk Association. Computer and photo shop consultancy has been provided by Bud Marschner. The coordinating editor of Paw Prints and Ski Tracks is Lisa Stuby. Your comments, articles and pictures are greatly appreciated. Please e-mail the information before the 25<sup>th</sup> of every month to lisa.stuby@alaska.gov.

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### Alaska Skijoring and Pulk Association

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Hotline: 907-457-5456 ♦ Website: <http://www.sleddog.org/skijor>