

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!*

December 1
Beginner's Clinic
Classroom Alaska Feed
10AM-1PM. On snow
2-4PM, Creamer's
Field, Sara Elzey, 378-
5024

December 1, 27
ASPA Show'n Go #1
and #2, Peggy Raybeck,
457-4775

December 9, 26
Fun Race #3 and #4
Creamer's Field (#3)
and North Star Golf
(#4), 11:30 AM, Andy
Warwick, 474-9148

December 10
Ski Waxing Clinic
Raven Cross Country
6:00 PM, ASPA mem-
bers only.

December 12
Skate Ski Clinic 6:30
PM, Birch Hill, Joel
Buth, 455-7148

Welcome New Board Members!!

Sadly, at the end of the summer, three ASPA board members: Mike Malvick, Mara Bacsujlaky, and David French had to resign due to moving away from Fairbanks and other obligations. Happily, though, three awesome new people have stepped up to take their place. Here is a little about them.



New Board Members at their first ASPA Board Meeting. Peggy Raybeck is on the left and Laurie Hueffer is on the Right. Brian Charlton left before someone reminded me that I was going to take a picture for the newsletter. Photo by Lisa Stuby

Brian Charlton

I have been skijoring for seven years and currently have six dogs. I enjoy camping and running at high speed on the trails with my dogs. We mainly run on the Isberg Recreation Area Trails. See you all on the snow!!

Peggy Raybeck

I have six skijoring dogs who are all different speeds and temperaments, which makes running them challenging as well as lots of fun. All of my dogs are husky mixes. We skijor the ASPA trails and events and enjoy skijoring backcountry trails as well. Hope to see more of you at the ASPA show 'n' gos!!

Laurie Hueffer

Hello I am Laurie Hueffer and I just joined the board following the Membership meeting. This will be my 2nd winter skijoring. Last winter my husband Karsten and I learned the ropes with Suess and Grizzly. Thanks to Carol's great reviews and Karsten's enthusiasm, our kennel is now up to 5 dogs with the addition of Pence, Addie, and Mocha. See you all on the trails.!!

December 12—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!



Karsten Hueffer, Chuck and Tone Deehr, and Peggy Raybeck getting all of the buckets set up with signs and with smiles. Photos by Chuck and Tone Deehr.

TRAIL TALK

We would like to thank those folks who showed up on November 10th for the annual “Fill the Buckets Campaign” at Creamer’s Field. Pat DeRuyter dropped off the buckets and signs and Karsten and Laurie Hueffer, Peggy Raybeck, and Chuck and Tone Deehr brought water, shovels, and a “get er done” attitude. They had all of the buckets filled with water, snow, and the signs in about 20 minutes!! Later, after a few inches of snow had fallen, Pat rolled the trail, which is very rough right now, but doable. You just need to be careful and not hook up your fastest and strongest dogs. The old, slow, or just plain lazy are good for these trails now. Also, Pat has placed many of the buckets and signs along the skijoring trails at Creamer’s Field and even put a few signs up along the orange loop. I skijored this loop at lunch on November 23rd and won’t do it again until we get a lot more snow. Pat groomed the North Star trails a couple of times before the Sunday, November 25th Fun Race. I thought the trail was a little icy in some spots, but overall was GREAT!! I now need to stop checking the weather report every 30 minutes and maybe I will be surprised with snow!! A BIG thanks to Pat and the groomers.

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.

Fun Race #1, North Star Golf Course, November 25, 2007 as reported by Pat DeRuyter

North Star Golf Club hosted the first ASPA Fun Race of the 2007-2008 season. The trails were hard and fast, but surprisingly good considering the lack of snow and warm weather this past week.

Twenty-one teams took to the trails with triple winner Andy Seitz leading the field. The largest field was the 4-mile, 2-dog class with 9 competitors. Andy Seitz with Yeller and Waylon won with a time of 13:47. Jessie Warwick with Zip and Licorice came in second at 14:34 and Carol Kleckner with Robin and Jazz rounded out the top three at 15:38.

Andy completed his "hat trick" with wins in the 2-dog, 2 mile event (Ed and Mabel at 7:16) and 1-dog 2 mile event with Willie at 7:59. Andy's day was not without adversity as he lost a ski pole at the 1 mile mark in his second race and finished with only one ski pole. Amanda Byrd with Rupert and Vince came in second in the 2-mile 2 dog event and Lisa Stuby and Killae finished second in the 2-mile 1 dog event.

There were 5 competitors in the 4-mile 1 dog class. Mike Kramer with Decoy came in first with a time of 18:14. Wallace Bandeff and Finny were second at 19:54 and Gail Davidson and Tobi finished third at 22:36.

Sara Elzey with Chert, Millie and Misty won the 4-mile 3 dog class in a time of 15:03. John Schaure with Tsaine, Riley and Willow were second at 15:47 and Don Kiely with Daikon, Chance and Casper were third at 16:47.

Thanks to the following volunteers for making this race possible: Race director and timer: Andy Warwick, Timers: Laurie Hueffer and John Hallsten, Starter and trail groomer: Pat DeRuyter and Roger and Melinda Evans for the use of the North Star Golf Course.

The North Star Golf Course gate will be open for skjoring on Tuesday, November 27 from noon to 1:30pm and again on Sunday, December 2 from noon to 1:30pm.

Bib #	Skjorer	Dogs	Time	Place
4 mile, 3-dog				
3	Sara Elzey	Chert, Millie, Misty	15:03	1
2	John Schaure	Tsaine, Riley, Willow	15:47	2
1	Don Kiely	Daikon, Chance, Casper	16:47	3

4 mile, 2-dog				
4	Andy Seitz	Yeller, Waylon	13:47	1
8	Jessie Warwick	Zip, Licorice	14:34	2
12	Carol Kleckner	Robin, Jazz	15:38	3
6	Lisa Baraff	Hope, Luna	16:48	4
5	Amanda Byrd	Jolene, Nickie	17:06	5
11	Iris Sutton	Pluto, Ice	17:22	6
10	Karsten Hueffer	Pence, Addie	17:42	7
7	Holly Carol	Dooner, Possum	21:20	8
9	Larry Bartlett	Sambo, Bella	29:35	9

4 mile, 1-dog				
16	Mike Kramer	Decoy	18:14	1
17	Wallace Bandeff	Finny	19:54	2
14	Gail Davidson	Tobi	22:36	3
13	Sara Tabbert	Rothko	24:58	4
15	Jim Altherr	Sophie	32:35	5

2 mile, 2-dog				
21	Andy Seitz	Ed, Mabel	7:16	1
5	Amanda Byrd	Rupert, Vince	13:00	2

2 mile, 1-dog				
20	Andy Seitz	Willie	7:59	1
19	Lisa Stuby	Killae	15:29	2



Larry Bartlett with Sambo and Bella race down the course.
Photo by Lisa Stuby

Importance of grooming your dog by Lisa Stuby

Proper grooming is an important part of pet care. It not only makes a companion animal look better, but contributes to his or her physiological and psychological health. Grooming keeps you focused on your pet. If you inspect your dog before each grooming session, you will catch any skin changes, painful areas, or anything else that looks strange, such as runny eyes, smelly ears, or dental problems. Give your dog a one-over with your hands, too. You might feel a lump that you couldn't see under all that hair, or discover that your dog's hips, foot, or ribs seem sore. A yelp, jerk, or shying away from touch will tip you off. Alert your veterinarian to anything unusual.

All breeds of dogs benefit from a good brushing. Brushing helps keep his or her hair in good condition by removing dirt, spreading the natural oils throughout the coat, preventing tangles from forming and keeping the skin clean and free from irritation. It is best to start brushing your pet at an early age, but do not despair if he or she is an older animal. It is possible to train one to enjoy grooming. Proceed slowly, and be sure to use treats and plenty of praise to make the experience fun!

Most northern dogs are double-coated. They have a woolly undercoat that serves as the dog's insulation against cold or heat, and a layer of longer, harsher outercoat that grows through the undercoat. Shedding will occur once or twice a year (generally spring and fall). High humidity or excessive heat may make the shedding worse. The shedding process usually takes from three to six weeks, with a new coat growing in during the next three to four months. During the active shedding period, groom the dog daily. Between shedding times, regular brushing should take care of the excess loose hairs. If you maintain a weekly grooming pattern, you should not be plagued continually by hair left behind wherever the dog has been, as is common with some other breeds. The main aim of grooming is to remove dead hairs that are clinging to the coat. In the process, you are cleaning the skin and shafts of the living hair.

A wide-toothed comb and a bristle brush are good tools for grooming northern dogs. The tips of the comb's teeth must always be rounded, and the bristles of the brush must be long enough to reach through the coat to the skin. The comb should be used to run through the coat to break up any mats or snags and to remove the dead hairs. Knots should be worked out a little at a time, using the comb and the fingers to gently tease the hairs apart. It is especially important to comb through the undercoat during shedding. A fine-toothed comb is handy for the areas under the chin and tail and between the ears. Use the brush once the combing is complete to finish off the coat. Brush the coat forward, over the head and shoulders, before combing it back. Brush the rear areas in the direction of the lay of the coat. Extra attention should be given to the hindquarters, as guard hairs in the area often accumulate into mats.

A good bath will eliminate dirt in skin folds that can attract bacteria, as well as debris that tangles your dog's coat. Most people who own Alaska huskies and other northern dogs rarely give baths. These dogs often hate water and too many baths can cause dry skin, but a yearly bath can be good. I once knew a dog groomer who would get dogs that were running the Yukon Quest and other long-distance races and give them baths before the race. A good bath and brushing cleaned and fluffed up the dog's coats, enabling them to stay warmer on the course. If you do bathe, be sure to brush him or her before each bath in order to get all of the mats out of the coat. Human shampoo, which is PH balanced for humans, can dry out and damage a dog's coat and skin and is not recommended. If you do bathe your dog, place cotton balls in their ears to keep them dry, and use only the smallest amount of shampoo needed to later well. Be sure to rinse out all of the shampoo since leftover shampoo can cause itching



Importance of grooming your dog (Continued)

And of course, don't forget the ears and teeth. Most northern breeds have fairly trouble-free ears, but people who own many sporting breeds like retrievers and pointers with floppy ears need to pay special attention. Ear care is an important part of grooming. Ear infections can not only be painful, but lead to permanent hearing loss. The signs of a problem with a companion animal's ears include redness, constant scratching, head shaking and odor. Like their owners, dogs can get cavities and develop periodontal disease, so their teeth should be cleaned with pet toothpaste at least twice per week. In addition, dental bacteria can cause serious health problems. Periodic brushings can be performed with a small toothbrush that has soft bristles. Cleanings performed by a veterinarian may also be required. Appropriate chew toys and chewies are important.

Of course, don't forget the nails. Plan on trimming nails at least once every 6 weeks, if needed. Trimmed nails are important for healthy and functional feet and are important for performance as well as health.

Sources used for this article include: Grooming the Siberian Husky at <http://www.geocities.com/Petsburgh/5150/grooming.htm>, "Beyond Beauty" Dog Fancy, September 2007, Community Animal Welfare Society (CAWS) at <http://www.caws.org/dog-grooming.html>

Canine Massage by Lisa Stuby

While we are on the subject of grooming, you may want to take this one step further and massage your canine. All dog breeds enjoy getting a massage. The benefits of massage therapy for your dog are very apparent. Dogs, like humans, respond positively to touch. This is evident when they respond to your petting and rubbing.

By giving your dog a massage it is much more enjoyable than simply just petting. Massage is a deliberate touch. It is a deep touch to relax and calm your dog. If you have an older dog, he will benefit from massage because age takes a toll on your dog's body. Stiff joints, aches and pains, a lack of movement or mobility, are all common issues for older dogs. By having a regular massage your dog can become more flexible and mobile and will have more energy.

Massage helps with confidence in dogs. I had a hard fall a couple of weeks ago and my dog has been shy about getting in front of me and has just seemed stressed when harnessed up. A massage in the evenings afterwards is really helping. Dogs feel happier and healthier after receiving a massage. Some dogs suffer from depression just like humans and by having a deliberate massage it will lift their spirits and gain their confidence. Some dogs that are very nervous around strange people will also benefit from regular massage. Even dogs that have behavioral problems can be helped because someone is actually taking the time to be with them and massage them, they will really enjoy this. I remember years ago reading a book about raising and training sled dogs that talked about using a whip to encourage a dog to come out of his shell. I also had the chance to visit with an "old school" musher who did the Iditarod numerous times who swore that if you gave a sled dog too much attention you would take away the work ethic. Thank goodness times have changed! Dee Dee Jonrowe once quoted, "You can never waste time sitting still and cuddling a puppy. That time comes back to you later in affection from the dog and its willingness to run for you."

If your dog has had a recent injury, massage can help because the other parts of the body have had to work harder while the injury is healing. To help in the healing process, massage will help get the blood flowing back to the heart.

Massage is a great tool for pre screening your dog for health issues. Any unusual, lumps, bumps, hot and cold spots, changes in the fur or changes in the muscles or bones become apparent during a massage and can then later be brought to the attention of your veterinarian. It is better to find out earlier rather than later any signs of a health issue.

Canine Massage (Continued)

An old massage book I have from the early 1970's, long out of print, gives a few tips on massaging animals. According to this book it is important to pay particular attention to an animal's spine. Working up and down in the two furrows lying on either side of the spine is almost always effective. You don't want to massage the bumps on the spine. The base of the skull, which is as high tension area for animals as it is for humans, is a good place to start. I've found kneading here can calm down a rambunctious puppy. Probe all around the shoulder blades with counterclockwise circles. Some dogs, of course, love having their stomachs lightly kneaded (tummy rubs). In general try to keep your touch consistently focused and definite. Animals tune in almost immediately, and if they feel that you know what you are doing they will start trusting you right away. Follow the ribcage with your fingers.

While researching this article, I watched a 70 minute video that I purchased after listening to a talk on canine massage by the keynote speaker, Chris Zink, who talked about the benefits of canine massage at the 2000 Sled Dog Symposium. The video, "Bodywork for Dogs", is by Lynn Vaughan and Deborah Jones, who are licensed massage therapists. I watched through it the other night while typing and assembling this article. Anyway, below are some key points, and all were well appreciated as I tested them out on my dog.

Begin stroking from head to the tail. Some dogs object to handling. It can be helpful to introduce massage when your dog is tired and has had a visit outside. As for amount of pressure to use, areas with less muscle will take less like the elbow and wrist. Areas with more muscle can take more pressure. Best to start with less pressure than more and build up to what your dog is comfortable with. Here were a few strokes mentioned in the video.

Skin Rolling: Pick up loose skin at base of neck and roll with hands.

Kneading: Place palms around shoulder above the elbow with fingers on the underside and thumbs on the outside, squeeze and relax the muscles from hand to hand.

Circles: With one or two fingers make dime sized circles, take 2 to 3 seconds per circle. If your dog is relaxed vary between clockwise and counterclockwise. If your dog is not relaxed, stay with clockwise.

Stretching: Place one hand around the back of the shoulder above the elbow and under and around the wrist. Move leg towards the head with the hand behind the elbow. When you feel the slightest resistance, but well within your dog's comfort zone, hold it there for a couple of seconds. Then slowly guide leg back toward the tail and repeat, then return leg to natural resting position.

Acupressure: Acupressure is an ancient oriental practice that focus's on "master points", gentle fingertip pressure on specific points along an energy pathway that flows beneath the skin's surface. Acupressure can strengthen muscles, alleviate pain, and create harmony in the body. A couple of key points emphasized in the video were base of skull, base and tips of ears, tip of tail, ligament of back leg, and between toes. Also, when massaging the legs, end up giving the paw a squeeze.

In my experience, massaging my first two dogs that were rescued sled dogs completely changed my relationship with them. They became more responsive and loyal towards me and more social towards people and other dogs in general. It really changed their personalities for the better. Now, this change didn't happen overnight. One of my dogs, Bears, was extremely paw shy for one, and it took a long time before he was comfortable with me even being able to touch his paws. He had been handled very little in his first year of life and it was another year before I could really pet him and have him come into the cabin, etc., but with persistence and patience, he calmed down and turned into a real love sponge.

Information taken from http://www.smallanimalmassage.com/dog_massage_training.asp, <http://www.freewebs.com/happytailsmassage/benefits.html>, "The Massage Book" by George Downing, 1972, and "Bodywork for Dogs" by Lynn Vaughan and Deborah Jones.



Two of the three participants for the Saturday, November 24 training clinic. Left is Franziska Kohl and her very friendly akita/border collie mix, Mojo and Diane O'Brien with her very well-behaved Australian Cattle Dog/husky mix, Trixie. Center is Killae as I couldn't get the timer to work on my aging camera so I could join the picture. Photo by Lisa Stuby

Training Clinic #1 by Lisa Stuby

Three people and three very friendly and well-behaved dogs participated in the first of two training clinics meant for novice skijorers. We started out with a 30 minute question and answer session in the Creamer's barn and ate cookies. Two of the three dogs were very young and inexperienced and one could skijor, but tended to be sensitive to things like falling, as is an issue I am currently facing. Anyway, after chatting, we went outside and skijored the training loop and Alaska Feed Side loop a couple of times. The trail was icy and we could have definitely used more snow, but overall the loops in the Alaska Feed Side loop and training loop were doable. All of us carried doggie cookies in our pockets and made sure to keep an upbeat attitude, even if we fell. We took numerous cookie breaks and dished out lots of praise to our dogs. At one point we were skijoring a ways as a pack, instead of one dog chasing another. It is important to keep skijoring with dogs that can be uncertain of the activity and/or very young, FUN. These dogs need to leave wanting more and hopefully the next time their owners bring them back to Creamer's, they will be whining with anticipation. We worked a little on passing, which was surprising when it happened given all four (including mine) were social and playful, and thankfully wanting to please.

As we were finishing up the question and answer portion of the event, Mark Ross of ADFG, who was helping with Thanksgiving for the Birds event that took place later in the morning, talked to us about the importance of having control over our dogs while skijoring, especially if we skijor on the designated walking trails. Apparently, he had received a complaint a couple of days ago from a man who was walking his small dogs and a skijorer unexpectedly came up from behind and ran into him and his dogs. Apparently, no one was hurt, but the man was very upset. With so little snow and the unseasonably warm weather we have been experiencing and even some drizzle, the skijor loop has been a little iffy (but doable, see above paragraph) and the walking trail has probably been in the better shape. Nevertheless, it was brought to our attention that these trails are multiuse and we must be respectful of the different users. Hopefully soon we will get some snow and the skijor trails will be groomed and in better shape.

Ski Waxing Clinic, December 10, 2007

Fred Raymond of Raven Cross Country will be presenting a ski waxing clinic to ASPA members on December 10th at 6:00 PM at his Well Street shop. Fred is an expert on waxing and caring for skis and is a great source for advice on all things cross-country skiing. Space is limited, and pre-registration is recommended. Contact Fred at 456-5070 or e-mail at ravenxc@alaska.net. Come and learn how to best take care of those new skis you want to get yourself for Christmas--and give them the glide your dogs will appreciate!

Bad Passer's Anonymous Gatherings

Do you have a dog with bad passing manners? Do you have dogs with good passing skills who could use more practice? Are you nervous about how your dog will perform in a race setting with lots of other dogs? If any of these sound like you, please join ASPA for an informal free weekly gathering of Bad Passers Anonymous. We will meet every Thursday at Creamer's Field from three to four (or however long participants want to ski). We will meet at and practice on the training loop and front field across from Alaska Feed. The usual race temperature cut-off of -15°F will hold for this group as well. You will have to monitor the temperature yourself, though, as I won't be able to send out notices of cancellation. We will practice passing from behind as well as head-on passes, and suggestions of any other skills participants want to work on are welcome.

Here are the rules:

Rule #1

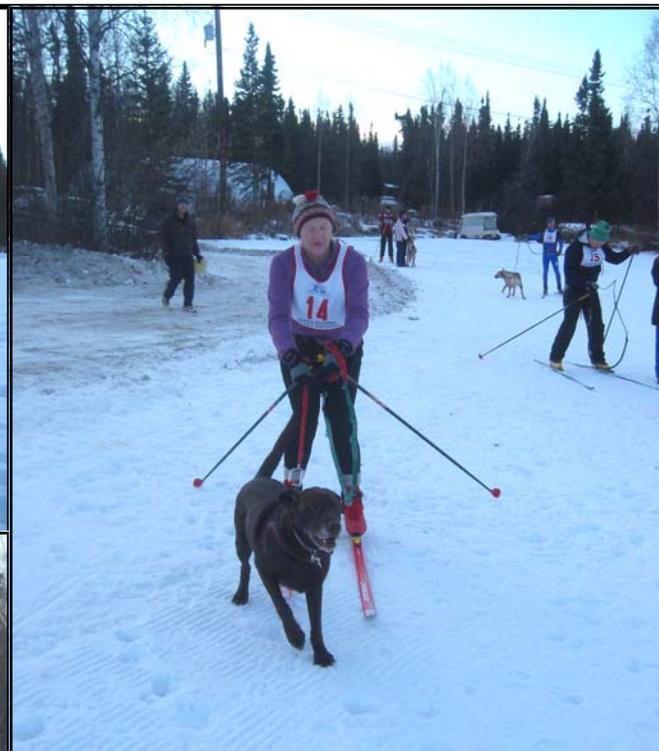
- this is a time for building skills, so what happens at Bad Passers stays at Bad Passers. Gripping about how "bad" other people's "bad dogs" are is highly discouraged. Let's work together to help each other out. I claim NO expert status or special knowledge of any of this - I have some bad dogs, too!

Rule #2 - VERY IMPORTANT!!!

If you have an "alligator" or a dog that has a history of aggression towards other dogs, make sure you have that dog well under physical control or consider using a greyhound muzzle. Skijor with just that dog to be sure you can keep it from making contact with other animals. This behavior can spread from dog to dog, so we need to be certain that we are making things better, not worse.

Questions? Please contact Sara Tabbert (stabbert@hotmail.com), Otherwise, see you at Creamer's on Thursday, November 29 at 3 pm. This first meeting will be contingent on trail conditions; I'll send out a cancellation if it's too rough.

Some Photos from the First Fun Race of the 2007-2008 Season



Lisa Baraff with Hope and Luna (top left) leaving the start. John Schahre with Tsaine, Riley, and Willow at the start (bottom left). Back in action after knee surgery, as eager to go as ever is Tobi with her mom, Gail Davidson (right).

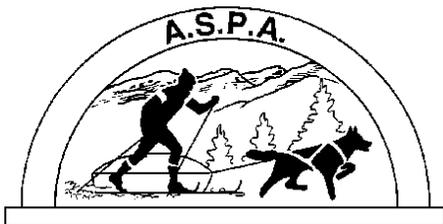
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Paw Prints and Ski Tracks is a monthly newsletter published during the winter season by the Alaska Skijoring and Pulk Association. Computer and photo shop consultancy has been provided by Bud Marschner. The coordinating editor of Paw Prints and Ski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

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