

# PAW PRINTS & SKI TRACKS

*This is the final newsletter of the 2010/2011 season. Indeed March was a FUN-filled month of skijoring races, trail tours, etc. I wish you all a fun, relaxing and safe summer. See you again in the fall. Let's hope for an early snow this year!!*

## 10th Annual Birch Hill Skijoring Race, March, 7, 2010 by Jim Herriges

The temperatures at Birch Hill on the morning of the 10th Annual Birch Hill Skijor Races were warm—hovering at about 32 degrees. But just before race time the temperatures dropped nearly 10 degrees to a more dog-comfortable 23, making for excellent conditions for both dogs and skiers on the well-groomed trails.

The short classes began the day's events as Sara Elzey (with dogs Zip, Licorice, and Boots) completed the 6K 3-dog race in 13:05, ahead of Don Kiely with Casper, Chance, and Jenny in 14:44. Carol Kleckner (with Millie and Blackberry) won the 2-dog 6K class with a time of 16:05 and Wally Bandeff running a single dog Finny was second in 19:03. Jesse Warwick and Joba ran the fastest 1-dog 4K race (an even ten minutes) and Kimberlee Beckmen and Iris came in second in 12:43.

The largest field of the day was in the 1-dog 9K distance class. Jim Herriges and Lena gained an early lead heading up the stadium hill, followed by Bruce Miller with Roy and Rebecca Knight with Clyde. Herriges and Knight traded places a few times on the far end of the White Bear loop before Rebecca began to pull away on the inbound trail. Rebecca held on for the win, with a time of 21:35, followed by Herriges about 30 seconds later, and Bruce Miller finished third in 24:18. Knight, a Mat-Su Valley resident, also won the Gold Run skijor class two weeks ago and plans to compete in the Limited North American Championships next weekend. Her dog Clyde has local origins in the Probert-Sanford kennel.

Jeff Wells with Klarney and Galena won the longest race of the day, the 2-dog 13K class in 33:22 ahead of second place finisher Dana Truffer-Moudra (Cooper and Saphira) who finished in 35:35.

In the team relay event Jesse Warwick and Joba gave his team a one-second lead over Sara Elzey with Zip in the first leg. Jesse's teammates Jim Herriges with Ole and Kimberlee Beckmen with Lily were able to expand that lead and finish 1st overall in a total time of 15:07. Overtaking Sara's team for second place was Gail Davidson with Cocoa, Janna Miller with Lilly, and Bruce Miller with Roy.

### **THANKS to all of the volunteers:**

**Trail setup:** Andy Warwick (with snowmachine), Lisa Stuby, Rebecca Gilbert, Jim Herriges

**Registration:** Kimberlee Beckmen and Gail Davidson

**Timing:** Clarice Dukeminier and Jim Altherr, **Race Starter,** Pat DeRuyter

**Photography:** Bud Marschner and Liz Kane

**Trail Cleanup:** Andy Warwick, Don and Erin Atwood, Sara Elzey, Kimberlee Beckmen, Jim Herriges, Bruce and Janna Miller

**Race Director:** Jim Herriges

**NSCF Trail Groomer:** Donovan Granger—Thanks!

Thanks to the Nordic Ski Club of Fairbanks and the Fairbanks North Star Borough for the always-wonderful trails and facilities. Thanks also to generous sponsors who provided prizes for the event.

**Dryland Training Clinic - Sunday May 23, 3pm, Alaska Dog Musers' parking lot. \$10 per person. One hour of "classroom" instruction covering equipment/gear, training commands & problem solving, followed by 1 hour practice session. Contact Sara Elzey [skijorex2@hotmail.com](mailto:skijorex2@hotmail.com) with questions.**

**3rd Annual Dryland Race, Saturday 9/25, location TBA. Classes for run-joring, bike-joring & cart. Distances from 1-6 miles.**

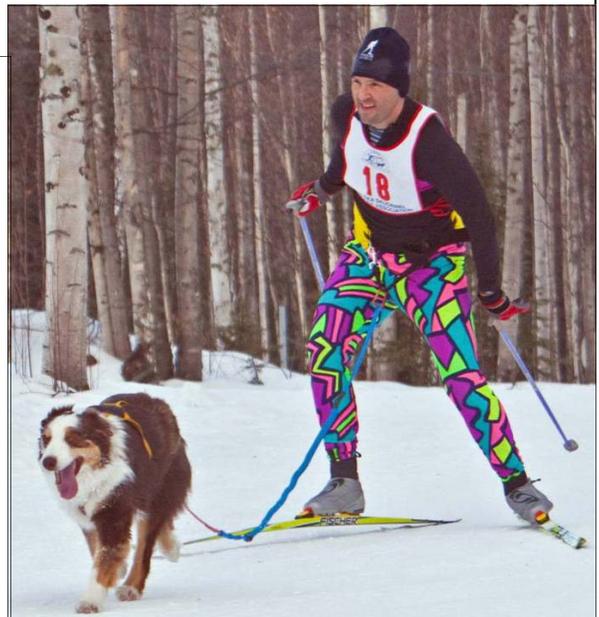
ASPA Annual Birch Hill Race, Saturday March 6, 2010					3 X 2 Kilometer Relay		
Bib #	Skijorer	Dogs	Time	Place	Finish Order	Teams	Time
<b>13K Two Dog Class</b>							
11	Jeff Wells	Klarney, Galena	33:22	1	1st	Jesse Warwick and Joba	4:17
13	Dana Truffer-Moudra	Cooper, Saphira	35:35	2		Jim Herriges and Ole	4:45
<b>9K One Dog Class</b>							
15	Rebecca Knight	Clyde	21:35	1		Kimberlee Beckmen and Lily	6:05
19	Jim Herriges	Lena	22:04	2		Total	15:07
18	Bruce Miller	Roy	24:18	3			
16	Sara Tabbert	Rothko	26:10	4	2nd	Gail Davidson and Cocoa	6:08
17	Janna Miller	Lilly	27:54	5		Janna Miller and Lilly	5:21
14	Lisa Stuby	Killae	41:11	6		Bruce Miller and Roy	4:33
12	Sunifa Deehr	Simon	DNF	DNF		Total	16:02
<b>6K Three Dog Class</b>							
2	Sara Elzey	Zip, Licorice, Boots	13:05	1	3rd	Sara Elzey and Zip	4:18
1	Don Kiely	Casper, Jenny, Chance	14:44	2		Don Kiely and Borax	5:39
<b>6K Two Dog Class</b>							
3	Carol Kleckner	Millie, Blackberry	16:05	1		Andy Warwick and Boots	6:37
6	Wally Bandeff	Finny	19:03	2		Total	16:34
5	John Carlson	Rev	19:25	3			
4	Gail Davidson	Cocoa, Tobi	20:59	4	4th	Sara Tabbert and Rothko	5:45
<b>4K One Dog Class</b>							
10	Jesse Warwick	Joba	10:00	1		Don Atwood and Harley	5:42
7	Kimberlee Beckmen	Iris	12:43	2		Wally Bandeff and Finny	5:22
8	Don Atwood	Harley	12:51	3		Total	16:49
9	Erin Atwood	Coho	23:41	4			



Left: Dana Truffer-Moudra with Cooper and Saphira.

Right: Bruce Miller with Roy.

Both photographs taken by Bud Marschner



**ASPA Fun Race #5, Wednesday evening March 10, 2010 by Don Kiely**

The Alaska Skijor and Pulk Association held its annual evening fun race on Wednesday at Creamer's Field. 23 teams took advantage of the lengthening days and hard, fast trails to spend some quality time with their dogs. Despite the low snow this year, the trails were well-groomed and the dips were the best they've been this season. With 23 teams on the trails, there were lots of head-on and overtaking passes, making it exciting for dogs and humans. Throw in a few wrong turns, and the evening was enjoyably chaotic.

Don Kiely, with Casper, Chance, and Jenny, had the 5.7 mile 3-dog class to themselves, finishing in 20:40. Peggy Raybeck with Carmen and Chico edged out Erin Trochim with Itty and Tarsus in the 2-dog class, 23:16 to 31:34. In the 1-dog class, Wally Bandeff with Finney finished in 27:16 to beat Gail Davidson and Cocoa's 31:34. Everyone doing the long course had to deal with groups of people on the trail as well as a moose that was smart enough to turn and run upon viewing the careering skijor teams.

In the 3.4 miles 3-dog class, Carol Kleckner was the only entrant with Millie, Shaman, and Blackberry, finishing in 10:43. The 1-dog class at that distance had one of the biggest fields of the day, with five teams. Janna Miller with Roy had a time of 12:52 to beat her husband Bruce with Lilly (13:15), who ran fast to catch up to mom. Ted Wu and Ty were third in 13:56. Dana Truffer Moudra ran twice, once with Cooper to finish in 15:15 and again with Saphira in 19:38.

In the 2.7 miles 3-dog class, Don Kiely with Pippi, Borax, and Raja again had the field to themselves, finishing in 10:45. In the 2-dog class, Rebecca Gilbert with Sharlee and Pepper won in 12:05. The other large class of the day was the 2.7 miles 1-dog. John Carlson and Rev won in 11:48, facing repeated head on passes from earlier starters.

Sara Elzey and Ayla and Dylan won the 1.5 miles 2-dog class in 5:09. Erin Atwood won the 1.5 miles 1-dog class in 14:09. And in the old dog half mile, Carol Kleckner and Robin finished in 2:45. Not bad for a dog who is almost 14 years old!

**Volunteers:**

Andy Warwick, race director and starter  
 Lisa Stuby and Peggy Raybeck, registration  
 Don Kiely, assistant race director and reporter  
 James, timer  
 Bruce Miller, calculator  
 Janet Bandeff, with Oliver, timer.

Alaska Skijor and Pulk Association				
Fun Race #5 Results				
Bib #	Skijorer	Dogs	Time	Place
<b>5.4 miles, 3-dog</b>				
1	Don Kiely	Casper, Chance, Jenny	20:40	1
<b>5.4 miles, 2-dog</b>				
2	Peggy Raybeck	Carmen, Chico	23:16	1
3	Erin Trochim	Itty, Tarsus	27:45	2
<b>5.4 miles, 1-dog</b>				
5	Wally Bandeff	Finney	27:16	1
4	Gail Davidson	Cocoa	31:34	2
<b>3.4 miles, 3-dog</b>				
7	Carol Kleckner	Millie, Shaman, Blackberry	10:43	1
<b>3.4 miles, 1-dog</b>				
10	Janna Miller	Roy	12:52	1
11	Bruce Miller	Lilly	13:15	2
9	Ted Wu	Ty	13:56	3
8	Dana Truffer Moudra	Cooper	15:15	4
13	Dana Truffer Moudra	Saphira	19:38	5
<b>2.7 miles, 3-dog</b>				
14	Don Kiely	Pippi, Borax, Raja	10:45	1
<b>2.7 miles, 2-dog</b>				
15	Rebecca Gilbert	Sharlee, Pepper	12:05	1
<b>2.7 miles, 1-dog</b>				
19	John Carlson	Rev	11:48	1
18	Don Atwood	Harley	12:58	2
17	Mara Bacsujlaky	Frosty	15:02	3
16	Lisa Stuby	Killae	21:58	4
20	Jim Altherr	Sophie	25:48	5
<b>1.5 miles, 2-dog</b>				
21	Sara Elzey	Ayla, Dylan	5:09	1
<b>1.5 miles, 1-dog</b>				
22	Erin Atwood	Coho	14:09	1
<b>0.5 mile, 1-dog</b>				
23	Carol Kleckner	Robin	2:45	1



**Fun Race #6, North Star Golf Course, 3/28/2010 by Andy Warwick**

Great weather and trails for the final race of the 2009/2010 season. The race was followed by an Easter egg hunt and a yummy pot luck. Jamie Marschner received the Volunteer of the Year award and was also re-elected President. The 2010 Alder Award was given to Alice Stickney's dog, Zephyr.

Many THANKS to the Race Volunteers: Pat DeRuyter (groomer and starter), Clarice Dukeminier (timing), Paula Ruckhaus (timing), Jana Miller (timing), Peggy Raybeck and Kimberlee Beckmen and Rebecca Gilbert (registration), Bud Marschner (photography), Sunnifa Deehr (cook), and Lisa Stuby (Easter Egg Hunt Coordinator).

ASPA 2010 Final Fun Race and BBQ Race Results				
Bib #	Skijorer	Dogs	Time	Place
<b>4 mile, three dogs</b>				
2	Carol Kleckner	Blackberry, Shaman & Millie	12:51	1
1	Andy Warwick	Zip, Licorice & Boots	13:40	2
3	Don Kiely	Casper, Chance & Jenny	14:58	3
<b>4 mile, two dogs</b>				
22	Jeff Wells	Klarney & Galena	15:48	1
4	Peggy Raybeck	Carmen & Chico	16:35	2
10	Nina Ruckhouse	Tracker & Sam	19:29	3
<b>4 mile, one dog</b>				
6	Bruce Miller	Roy	14:33	1
17	John Carlson	Rev	18:54	2
9	Don Atwood	Harley	21:14	3
8	Jamie Marchner	Bree	28:02	4
7	Lisa Stuby	Killae	29:23	5
<b>2 mile, three dogs</b>				
3	Don Kiely	Borax, Pippi, Raja	8:18	1
<b>2 mile, two dogs</b>				
13	Rebecca Gilbert	Sharlee & Pepper	7:57	1
12	Sara Elzey	Jazz & Loon	8:11	2
14	Peggy Raybeck	Charlie & Tracker	8:12	3
<b>2 mile, one dog</b>				
16	Gail Davidson	Cocoa	9:26	1
11	Bruce Miller	Lilly	9:38	2
15	Kinberlee Beckmen	Iris	10:18	3
18	Gail Davidson	Tobi	12:17	4
5	Alice Stickney	Ravin	13:30	5
21	Jim Altherr	Sophie	16:34	6
<b>3/4 mile, one dog</b>				
19	Kimberlee Beckmen	Lily	2:15	1
20	Sara Elzey	Dylan	2:19	2



All photos (above) of the last fun race by Bud Marschner.

### March 14, 2010 Olnes Pond Trail Tour by Janna Miller

If you weren't there, kick yourself now! Nine adventurous spirits and about 13 dogs set out from the end of Olnes Pond Road on a mushing/skijoring trail on Sunday, March 14 for what we all agreed was the nicest trail we've seen all season. Temperatures started at a pleasant 5 degrees and gradually warmed to about 20 degrees, great for socializing and snacks at the halfway point and for swapping stories and brownies back at our vehicles.

Everyone got a quick verbal set of directions and headed out when they were ready. We informally broke into about three groups of varying speeds, with the front runners occasionally stopping to ensure those following were still smiling and took the correct turn. We had one and two dog teams and most everyone found someone close to their speed to travel with. The trail benefitted from light snowfalls throughout the week to provide just enough cover that the grass and roots showing a month earlier were gone. The lone tricky spot - a short, steep drop onto a narrow creek then back up the other side - had some people laughing with excitement and gave others good stories about being towed uphill on their stomachs.

We traveled about seven miles in to a large pond where the dogs who wouldn't run away were set loose for an impromptu dog party. The people snacked on hot tea, homemade bread and cookies and enjoyed each others' company for about half an hour until a chill started to set in and we headed back. Retracing our outbound journey, this time the creek was a bit less exciting due to either having already conquered it or knowing it was there and dreading the snow-eating to come.

The entire trail is flat or a very gradual up- or down-hill. It's wide enough to skate a narrow path. Minutes after passing under the pipeline, you will feel like it's a very remote, peaceful location. As we finished for the day, several courteous snowmachines were exiting the same trail and a musher was headed out on it so do be mindful that others may be just around the bend.

To see this wonderful trail for yourself, drive to about mile 10.5 of the Elliott Hwy and turn left onto Olnes Pond Road. Go down the dirt road just over a mile until the gate blocks further access. Park off to the side as Alyeska Pipeline vehicles occasionally pass through the gate. Strap on your gear and continue down the road on the opposite side of the gate, about 1 1/2 miles, until you come to the pipeline. (Due to the fresh powder, the day we were there the entire road was in excellent skate skiing condition.) Facing the pipeline, jog to the right about 50 feet where the trail crosses under the pipeline. At the immediate Y, take the left trail. Stay on this trail. In about two miles you'll pass a decrepit old cabin and a mile beyond that is a four-way intersection marked with surveyor's tape. Take the right turn. The creek crossing is about 1 1/2 miles after the junction. Keep going until the pond or beyond if you like. All photos below by Janna Miller.



Melissa with Biscuit and her friend, Alice with Raven, and Gail with Tobo and Cocoa join the pond party (Above). Sara with Irene and Rothko and Bruce with Roy enjoy a break to admire the cabin while Lilly looks on (Right).



Don and Harley, who suggested today's course, are all smiles.

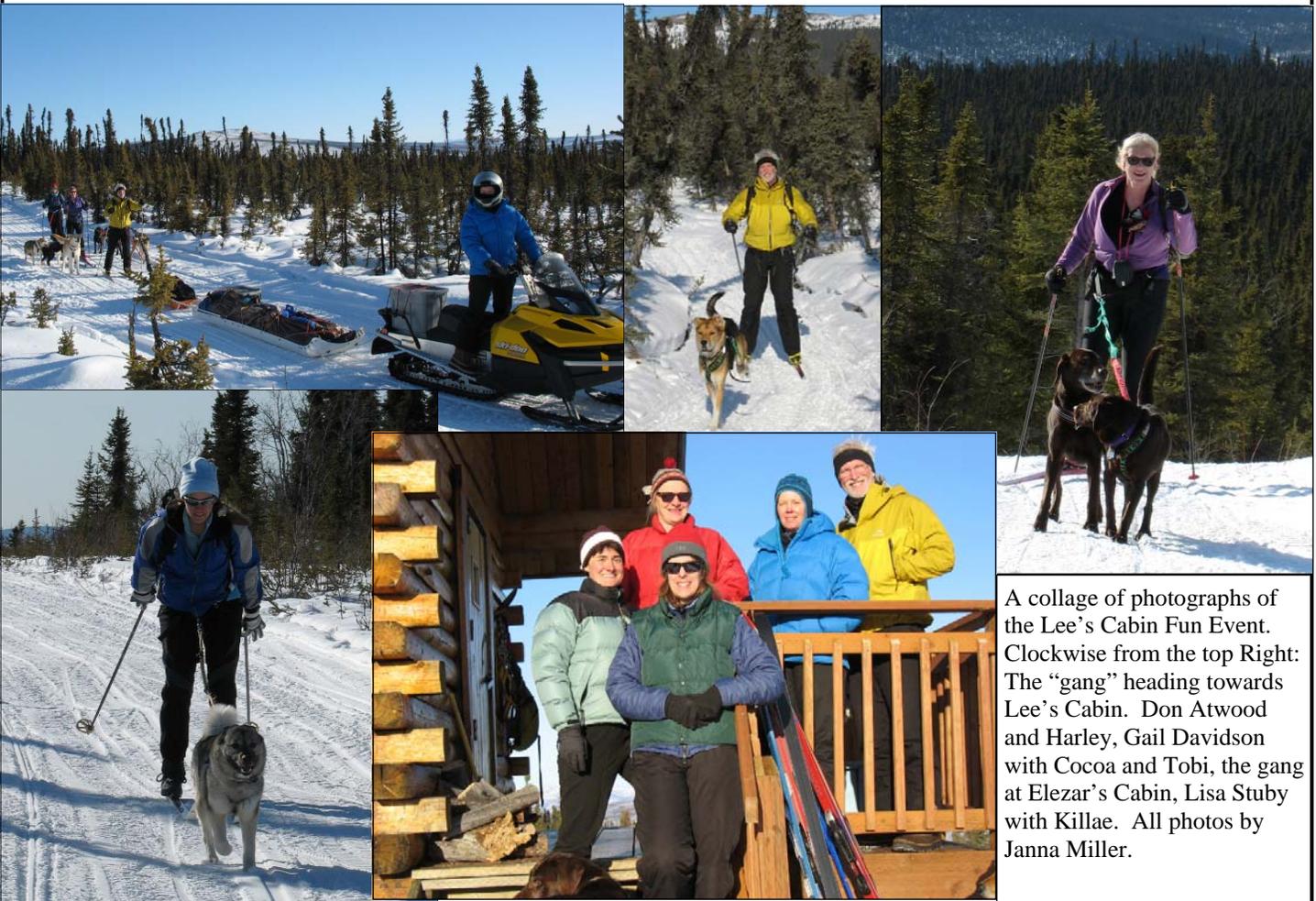
### ASPA White Mountains Event, March 20-21, 2010

The annual ASPA White Mountain Event took place on a beautiful March weekend with clear skies and temperatures in the 20s. Participants had a choice of day skiing to Lees Cabin or proceeding onto Eleazar's Cabin for a stay-over. Lisa Stuby and Killae put in a solid 14 round trip mile run to Lee's Cabin (she didn't want to miss the Orienteering Race on Sunday), while Jana Miller, Gail Davidson, Melissa Shippey, and Don Atwood skied the twelve miles onto Eleazar's for the night. Each skier had two dogs; although there were a couple of notable slackers in the canine work force. Logistic support was offered by Erin Atwood with snow machine and sled. Moral support for the return trip on Sunday was offered by Bruce Miller, who skied out to meet the returning skijorers.

Although a change from years past, Eleazar's Cabin proved to be a great venue, offering a fun wilderness trail and spectacular vistas of the White Mountains. For those familiar with the Lee's Cabin trail, the trail to Eleazar's continues (steeply) down into a beautiful valley and a final ascent up to the eagle's perch of Eleazar's Cabin. With a warm cabin, tasty potluck meals, canine companionship, and a game of Balderdash, all participants had a great weekend.

Through a remarkable coincidence of having eight dogs and eight awards, every dog was a winner. The awards were as presented as follows:

- Fastest dogs with no tails (two years running) - Roy and Lily
- Best Hill Dog – Biscuit
- Best Female Vocalist – Cheyenne
- Best Male Vocalist – Harley
- Best Cabin Guard – Coho
- Most Lively Trail Dogs – Tobi and Cocoa (associated Purple Heart award went to Gail Davidson)



A collage of photographs of the Lee's Cabin Fun Event. Clockwise from the top Right: The "gang" heading towards Lee's Cabin. Don Atwood and Harley, Gail Davidson with Cocoa and Tobi, the gang at Eleazar's Cabin, Lisa Stuby with Killae. All photos by Janna Miller.

### ASP A Orienteering Race, March 21, 2010 by Pat DeRuyter

The Alaska Skijoring and Pulk Association's Orienteering Event was held at Creamer's Field on Sunday, March 21, 2010. Fourteen teams enjoyed the wonderful spring weather and great trails to complete either 30 or 60 minutes on the trails.

Peggy Raybeck and Chico won the 60 minute skijor class by collecting all 1000 points. They were assessed a 30 point penalty for returning 3 minutes late so finished with a total of 970 points. The teams of Jamie Marschner (Bree) and Lisa Stuby (Killae) tied for second with 840 points each. Orienteering Rookie John Carlson (Rev) finished fourth with 550 points.

Rebecca Gilbert (Sharlee) won the 30 minute skijoring class by collecting 260 points.

Maria Bray with Natasha defended her 60 minute running class title by collecting all 1000 points in 37 minutes. Mara Bacsujlaky (Mac) also collected all 1000 points but took more time so finished second.

In the 30 minute running class, Janet Smith (Bert) collected 810 points but was assessed a 30 point penalty for returning 3 minutes late so finished first with a total of 780 points.

In the 60 minute walking class, Sunnifa Deehr (Lexi) won with a total of 950 points. Charles Deehr (Jessie) finished a close second with 900 points. Clarice Dukeminier (Crisco) came in third with 780 points.

In the Childrens 12 and under Division, in the 60 minute Run/walk class, Emma DeRuyter, age 6 and Ozlo DeRuyter, age 4 with their St Bernard, Richard gathered 610 points to place first. They also were the youngest competitors and had the biggest dog. Ethan Gilbert, age 8, with his dog Pepper won the 30 minute Run/walk class by collecting 480 points.



Gentle giant, Richard, with Emma and Ozlo DeRuyter winning the Childrens walk gathering 610 points. Photo by Bud Mar-



DAAAAAAD, Bree seems to say as she tries to nose the camera lens and the photographer, Bud Marschner, as Jamie reminds Bree this IS a race (Yeah right!!).

### 2009/2010 ASPA Crash Pool by Sara Elzey

The 2009-10 Crash Pool was not as popular as last year. Perhaps the low snow fall and rough trail conditions caused folks to crash more and they were unwilling to admit it. Perhaps skijorers were too busy enjoying the great outdoors to keep track of their adventures in a log sheet format. I don't know. But for the three participants, it was a fun & rewarding activity. For those who don't know what the Crash Pool is, let me explain, it is really quite simple. The skijorer logs each skijoring trip and notes if they crash on that trip. They contribute \$0.25/ trip & per crash to the pool. Some folks also like to track their mileage and the location of each trip. At the end of the season we divide the number of crashes by the number of trips to find the "crash percentage." The person with the lowest crash percentage wins the pool. The crash percentages are revealed only to the other members of the pool, not to the general public just in case anyone feels sensitive about it.

For this season Sara Tabbert, John Schauer and me, Sara Elzey, participated in the pool. Since I am the administrator of the pool, I disqualified myself from winning the pool. I enjoy record-keeping so I do it for fun. Sara T & John had very nearly the same crash percentage, although Sara T was 1% point ahead. All 3 of us tracked our mileage this season and Sara T traveled an impressive 700 miles in only 65 trips! We now understand why she wants to host a Distance Race. I had the most number of trips (84) but the lowest mileage (220). I definitely like the short, fast skijor trips. John was in between us, traveling 365 miles in 54 trips. With such low participation, the pool was pretty small so we all agreed to keep our money for participation next year. We hope that more folks will join us next year!! Have a great summer everyone.

**THANK YOU VOLUNTEERS!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!**

It has been said many times, but without a group of **DEDICATED** volunteers **NONE** of the Fun Races, Trail Tours, Skijoring Clinics, Trails, etc, would have happened. Many thanks to the folks below and anyone whose name we may have forgotten.

**Groomers Extraordinaire**

Pat DeRuyter  
Kimberlee Beckmen  
Brian Charlton  
Jim Herriges  
Carol Kleckner  
Don Morton  
Peggy Raybeck  
Andy Warwick

**Board members**

President – Jamie Marschner  
Vice President - Carol Kleckner  
Treasurer - Sara Elzey  
Secretary - Lisa Stuby  
Trail Tour Coordinators - Peggy Raybeck, Janna Miller  
Fun Race Coordinator – Andy Warwick  
Hotline Coordinator – Carol Kleckner  
Newsletter Coordinator - Lisa Stuby  
Program Coordinator – Jamie Marschner  
Website Coordinator – Don Kiely  
Permits – Don Atwood  
Birch Hill Race Coordinator - Jim Herriges  
White Mountains Event – Don Atwood  
Beginners Clinics - Sara Elzey  
Training Clinics – Lisa Stuby  
Race Across the Valley Coordinators – Sara Elzey, Brian Charlton  
Board member – Rebecca Gilbert

**ASPA Program and Sponsors**

Jamie Marschner  
Don Atwood  
Pat DeRuyter  
Sara Elzey  
Rebecca Gilbert  
Jim Herriges  
Don Kiely  
Carol Kleckner  
Janna Miller  
Lisa Stuby  
Sara Tabbert  
Andy Warwick

**Birch Hill Adopt-a-Trail Program**

Brian Charlton  
Emma Charlton  
Gail Davidson  
Carol Kleckner  
Peggy Raybeck  
Lisa Stuby  
Dryland Race  
Sara Elzey  
Cindy Bachert  
Wallace Bandeff  
Scott Chesney  
Andy Warwick  
Janet Smith  
Lisa St. Clair  
Sara Tabbert

**ADMA Symposium**

Jamie Marschner

**Snowmachine Grant**

Jim Herriges

**Snowmachine Maintenance**

Brandon McGrath-Bernhard

**North Star Plowing**

Aaron Hawkins

**Fall Membership Meeting**

Jamie Marschner  
Don Atwood  
Carol Kleckner

**Creamer's Trail Signs/Snow Filling**

Pat DeRuyter  
Jim Herriges  
Peggy Raybeck  
Lisa Stuby  
Andy Warwick

**Trash Bags/Trash Cans**

Peggy Raybeck

**Beginners Clinic and Practice Clinic**

Sara Elzey  
Carol Kleckner  
Lisa Stuby  
Rebecca Gilbert  
Nina Ruckhaus  
Paula Ruckhaus

**Fun Races**

Andy Warwick  
Janet Bandeff  
Pat DeRuyter  
Alina Evans  
Don Kiely  
Jamie Marschner

Bruce Miller  
Don Morton  
Peggy Raybeck  
Lisa Stuby

**North Star Golf Course**

Melinda Evans  
Roger Evans

**Race Across the Valley**

Sara Elzey  
Brian Charlton  
Scott Chesney  
Pat DeRuyter  
Clarice Dukeminier  
Jason Garron  
Don Kiely  
Carol Kleckner  
Bud Marschner  
Tom McGrane  
Janna Miller  
Lorien Nettleton  
Matt Steffey  
Lisa Stuby  
Andy Warwick  
Distance Race  
Sara Tabbert  
Andy Warwick

**White Mountains Event**

Don Atwood  
Erin Atwood

**Birch Hill Race**

Jim Herriges  
Jim Altherr  
Don Atwood  
Erin Atwood  
Kimberlee Beckmen  
Gail Davidson  
Pat DeRuyter  
Clarice Dukeminier  
Sara Elzey  
Rebecca Gilbert  
Liz Kane  
Bud Marschner  
Bruce Miller  
Janna Miller  
Lisa Stuby  
Andy Warwick  
Brandon McGrath-Bernhard

**Orienteering Race**

Pat DeRuyter

**Final Fun Race and Barbecue**

Carol Kleckner  
Andy Warwick

**This Year's Alder Award goes to Alice Stickney's dog, Zephyr. The Alder award honors progress in any one form in the working relationship between a person and their skijoring dog(s). This does not necessarily imply improved speed and race results. The emphasis is equally much based on the dog's improved ability and skijoring focus and, of course, trail courtesy. Carol Kleckner was this year's Alder Award judge. We thank her as well as Charles and Tone Deehr for continuing this wonderful tradition. Below are the write-ups for the winner and runners-up from their adoring owners.**

#### **2010 Award Winner, Zephyr by Alice Stickney**

Well, I would love to nominate Zephyr for lifetime achievement, but obviously she has NO race records and can't show any progress for the year except for the fact that she is still surviving despite everything. No one else in the skijoring club would know her besides you (Carol Kleckner) and Don and Gail Davidson (Lisa the newsletter editor has also met her). But she was my first "serious" skijoring dog, the dog I could count to get me into and out of cabin trips, that would make sure I would still complete a long skijor long after the loaned Greenlandic husky decided it was too tired to pull anymore, the dog that introduced several novice skiers to skijoring, the dog that I could drop on downhills and get back at the bottom, the dog that would check on me if I was running singly at the start with another dog on wilderness routes, even though she (Z) was trying to stay with the front of the pack, the dog that had the heart to catch up with and try to beat dog-mushing friends after being way behind with a novice skier. She wasn't ever flashy or fast, but she had heart and determination and was tough. She also trained Nigu to skijor, and gave him confidence to be out in new and strange places. Luckily, Raven came with her own confidence as by that time Zephyr was too old and slow to keep up. Zephyr also came back from the first bout with the tumor, when I thought she was going to die, to not only be able to run behind me and Raven for 7-8 miles last spring, but also to carry a doggie pack and make it out to Upper Angel Creek Cabin for a last camping trip.

This past week a friend came up from Girdwood and I wanted to introduce her to skijoring. I had forgotten how over time I have habituated to faster dogs, but my friend was not ready for the speed of the borrowed pointer mix I put her with. She asked me where the old, slow dog was, and I really wished that I still had Zephyr in her prime for just such an exposure.

#### **And now the runner's up starting with the brother and sister team of Licorice (Andy Warwick) and Blackberry (Carol Kleckner) by Andy Warwick and Carol Kleckner**

##### **Andy Warwick**

I nominate a brother and sister who came from deplorable conditions from which they both ultimately survived. Both were frightened, and scared two year olds, rescued by the Second Chance League, up to that point having known only misery, hunger, and fear. Both have turned into great skijor dogs, which crave attention and love, and they in turn provide their owners with the same.

Licorice and Blackberry are now eight years old and are integral parts of their owners' skijor teams. Licorice was on the team that won the 2007 and 2009 LNAC three dog skijor championships. Blackberry's teams win as a matter of regularity, and the speedy girl usually beats her brother, Licorice. Both are in great physical shape, and are expected to be active skijor dogs well into their later years.

##### **Carol Kleckner**

When Licorice and Blackberry were turned into the shelter the owner actually signed them over for euthanization!! The shelter manager at the time went and talked to the ex owner and he ended up re-signing them over for adoption. They were barely alive. Emaciated to the point of near death even the hospital after seeing their bloodwork panels asked if the dogs were still alive. Blackberry was on the winning 2008 LNAC 3 dog skijor team. So both her and her brother are champions! (of course in our minds they would be champions if they came in last each time.)

Both of these dogs have come a long way!!

### A DOG NAMED WIGGY by Brian Charlton

The most important aspect of a skijor team is not determined by the fitness of a skier, or by the breeding or speed of the dog. Nor can it be defined or measured by wins or victories. The true measure of a skijor team, both on and off the trail, is found in the depth of the relationship that is created between them. So, is this a relationship between a skier and a tongue flapping, drool flinging, pooping in full sprint running machine, o no, no, no. This is a relationship between two emotional beings and the immense amount of emotional needs and baggage that tags along. A very strong, deep and often times subtle relationship is established between the skier and the dog. Undeniably the dogs have the better end of the bargain with simpler responsibilities, such as being required to stop (the sooner the better) dragging you face first through the snow/ice/poop long enough for you to wonder where your hat is and to focus on which way your knees are facing before they start pulling again. It's the skier's end of the bargain that gets a bit more difficult. We have to look past not just what we want from them, or what we want them to be, to what they need and want. Which leads us to examine the relationship between a skijorer named Brian and dog named Wiggy.

Wiggy came from a loving home but, like some dogs, needed more patience and socialization than he was getting as one of many out in the dog yard. He had several health issues growing up and for some unknown reason had become quite fearful of men, especially those with beards. When Wiggy was young he pulled a Junior musher to some good results, but she grew up and went to college. His health problems, along with an innate fear of the world made him hard to place. For a year or two before we got him he was passed between some sprint and open teams but did not match well with them. Brian picked him up in 2006 when he was six years old. Now, as the teller of the tale of Brian and Wiggy I have to tell you when we went out to look at Wiggy the first time I thought "gheesh, this dog is a mess, why are we even here". But Brian looked past the patchy, dandruff infested coat barely covering the big lanky bony fearful body that was weegy (as he was called at the time) and decided to take him home.

I can still remember vividly the first time I took Wiggy (as he was soon renamed due to his tendency to "wig" out over everything, like men with beards) went free running. Now this was a good three months after first acquiring him and I thought he was ready, but along the way he and his buddies met two horses on the trail. The horses didn't mind the dogs but a few of the dogs did and went running. Three ran off down the trail, including Wiggy. With the help of some neighbors we eventually found them at the home where the horses lived. Two of the dogs hopped right in the car. Not Wiggy. We spent over an hour trying to entice him with treats and could never get closer than 5 feet from him. We realized that while we couldn't touch him, we could get him to follow us. So with one dog on a leash, and Wiggy following, we made it back to the house. Getting home was one thing though; getting him to his house was another as he was still scared. For several hours Wiggy and Brian did a dance around the dog yard. He must have gone through two pounds of treats. Several times Brian was within a few inches of his collar but missed when he tried to grab it, something that as we all know only results in "wiggling" the dog out even more. Eventually Brian was able to catch Wiggy and tie him to his post. After that it was a long time before Wiggy was free again.

Having never spent much time off his chain or inside the house life with Wiggy hasn't been easy but it has been very rewarding and educational. Due to his food allergies we've been forced to learn more about nutrition. It's a constant battle and we are always modifying it but we've finally found a food combination that keeps him healthy and hairy. He also forced us to learn more about animal behavior, such as how to work through problems and help develop social skills. It took many trips into the house and many runs before Wiggy could fully trust us. After two years of patient friendship Wiggy was trusted to free run again and regularly came into the house, even sleeping inside. He was still scared of most people but loved to pull and never seemed to stop running.

It is now 2010, and Wiggy is ten years old, recently celebrating his Birthday with his friends by having a cooked bone party. He can sit and wait for treats, greets people at the door, and recently started wagging his tail instead of hiding it between his legs. People that haven't seen him in a while invariably ask, "Is this Wiggy?" In fact, he got to see his original owner (the junior musher) this year who remarked, "He's so furry" which is a pretty amazing statement for him.

Wiggy has always been fast and a great puller. Is he faster now, who knows? Although he still gets scared sometimes, gets into the outside trash if left unsupervised for long enough, and has some recurring health issues (but who doesn't), what we do know is how much he has grown as a dog. As I sit writing this, Wiggy is standing next to me, resting his head on my leg and enjoying some petting. He is very relaxed and happy as after running around the yard he waited at the bottom of the stairs to be let in and got to spend the night inside. Wiggy has come a long ways and will continue to improve for hopefully many years to come. In fact, more often than not we don't even call him Wiggy anymore, we call him wiggles.

### Runner up Tracker by Nina Ruckhaus

Tracker is a ten-year-old retired distance sled dog. He completed both the Iditarod and the Yukon Quest with his prior owners. What is so unique about Tracker is his gentle, mellow personality and how friendly he is. He is so easy going and laid back but he really fires up for races, it just clicks the second he smells all his buddies and sees the trucks. Tracker taught me how to skijor three years ago, even though he had never done it before. I was hooked on skijoring from the first run I took with Tracker. My skijor racing team includes Tracker, Sam, and sometimes adding foster dogs. Tracker trained all of the dogs I have added to my race team over the last three years. He is a natural leader with younger dogs (his people too). This season has been especially good for my team and I. We had more days on the trail and better races. This year our race starts were in better control and we went for long skijors almost every weekend plus many during breaks. Tracker continues to amaze me everyday with how active and enduring he is despite his age and injury (he broke his wrist in the Iditarod). When Tracker runs he is out for the long haul; he never really sprints but he is always going strong to the end. Skijoring with Tracker is and always has been a piece of cake; he seems to like it that way. He sits patiently as I put on my skis, no stress and as convenient as it can be. He is quite the silly guy, when he wants something, or he is really happy he talks to me by howling. He is also the world's cutest alarm clock, how could I not wake up when he howls and nudges me to pet him every morning at six. As I write this he is sitting right beside me with his face buried in my lap. Clearly this special pooch is enjoying life. Ever since the day I first met Tracker I knew I would never really be his boss, I would just get the privilege to be his partner. After all, since he is in the front leading me on skis he should decide where I go. Tracker is always willing to run wherever his nose takes him and lead me to new places to explore.

### Photos of the Alder Award winner and runners up



Alder Award winner Alice Stickney and Zephyr (Above)

Tracker (Right)



Andy Warwick with the gang during the September 2010 Dryland race. Licorice is 2nd from left



Wiggy (Below)



Carol Kleckner with, from left to right, Shaman, Millie, and the Alder Award runner up, Blackberry, during the March Fun Race and BBQ.

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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 25<sup>th</sup> of every month to lisa.stuby@alaska.gov.

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