

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!

February Trail Tours every Sunday

Janna Miller
479-5585

February 6 Practice Clinic Creamer's Field

Lisa Stuby
458-7657

February 12 Race Across Valley Series #3

Location TBD
Sara Elzey
378-5024

February 26 ASPA Distance Race

Sara Tabbert
479-0456

ASPA Race Across the Valley, December 11, 2010 by Sara Tabbert

The first leg of three for the ASPA Race Across the Valley took place at North Star Golf Course on December 11th. A small field of racers came out in the cold to run the first leg of this year's Race Across the Valley. Temperatures rose just enough for the race to take place (-8°F), as well as for Pat DeRuyter to get out with the groomer. She provided skijorers with a beautiful trail.

There were no entries in either six mile class, but short distance racers (3 mile) had plenty of competition. There were five teams in the two or three dog /three mile class. Andy Warwick and his quick team of Zip, Boots, and Joba won the race by a large margin. Second place went to Sara Elzey (Kate, Katrina, Bean) who was followed closely by Matt Sprau (Itty, Bitty, Tarsis).

Seven teams raced in the one dog/three mile class, which ended in a tie for first place. Bruce Miller (Roy) and Jim Herriges (Lena) both finished in 10:54. Second place finisher Janna Miller helped keep the prizes in the family.

Thanks to volunteers Pat DeRuyter, Lisa Stuby, Andy Warwick, and Janna Miller for their help with grooming, registration, starting, timing, and calculating results.

Alaska Skijor and Pulk Association, RAV #1

Saturday, December 11, 2010, North Star Golf Course

Bib #	Skijorer	Dogs	Time	Place
Three mile two and three dog				
0	Andy Warwick	Zip, Boots, Joba	10:19	1
3	Sara Elzey	Kate, Katrina, Bean	11:00	2
4	Matt Sprau	Itty, Bitty, Tarsis	11:08	3
2	Jim Herriges	Lily, Ole	11:49	4
11	Nina Ruckhaus	Tracker, Sam	13:26	5
Three mile one dog				
9	Bruce Miller	Roy	10:54	1
13	Jim Herriges	Lena	10:54	1
8	Janna Miller	Lilly	12:22	2
10	Ted Wu	Ty	12:55	3
7	Peggy Raybeck	Chico	14:27	4
5	Kimberlee Beckmen	Iris	17:28	5
6	Lisa Stuby	Killae	27:04	6

ASPAs Race Across the Valley, Stage #2, January 22nd, 2011

A freak 3-day rain storm in late November took its toll on trails in the Fairbanks area and limited training opportunities so the first leg of RAV was held at the North Star Golf Course trail system on December 11 (see page 1 of this newsletter). The Endurance Class was not held, only the Sprint & Mid-distance classes. Twelve skijorers and eighteen dogs competed, all in the Sprint Class. These racers will be eligible for special prizes if they compete in the next 2 legs of RAV as well. But for those who did not compete in the first leg it is not too late to get in on the action! The next leg of RAV will be held January 22nd at the Alaska Dog Musher's Association Jeff Studdert Race Track. We expect to offer all three distance classes - Sprint: 3.7 miles; Mid-distance: 5.9 miles; and Endurance: 9.3 miles. Racers will be grouped based on number of dogs. There will be two groups for each class - 1-dog teams and 2 or 3-dog teams. We hope that you plan to come on out and enjoy this great trail system. Pre-registering by Thursday, January 20, at 5pm will save you \$5 on entry fees. Send skier name, dog name(s) and class to kleckner@ptialaska.net to pre-register. Race day registration will take place at 11am with bib pick-up and race meeting at 11:45. The race will start at noon. And mark your calendars for the final leg of RAV scheduled for February 11, 2011, location TBA, but probably at UAF West Ridge Ski Trail system. Volunteers are always needed to put on events. If you are able to help out for either date please contact Carol Kleckner for January (kleckner@ptialaska.net) or Brian Charlton (bcskijor@yahoo.com) for February. Many volunteer positions still allow you to race.

Time to Renew your ASPA Membership for the 2010-2011 Season

It is that time of the year when I must remind our members to PLEASE renew your ASPA memberships for the 2010-2011 season. If you have not yet renewed your membership to ASPA you must do so in order to continue receiving the newsletter. Renewal information can be found on page 5. If you have renewed, but still get the "New Membership Year, Please Renew" on your mailing label, please contact the newsletter editor at lisa.stuby@alaska.gov.

Also, articles are welcomed for upcoming newsletters from our membership. Topics can range from skijoring to dog care, your adventures on a favorite trail, good dog cookie recipes, etc. Thanks and I wish everyone a great New Year.

Practice Clinic #2—February 6th, 11:00 AM, Creamer's Field

Practice Clinic #2 is scheduled for February 6th. Unfortunately, Practice Clinic #1 had to be cancelled due to bitter cold temperatures. This clinic will emphasize the basics and is meant for novice skijorers. In my travels around town, at the dog park, Petco, etc. I've had folks who have tried skijoring, but are not good skiers and/or the dogs won't pull, etc. Well, this is the clinic for you! This year in particular we are going to discuss and practice SKIING basics. I will have both my skate as well as classic skis on hand. The biggest thing I've noticed keeping owner and dog from being able to skijor is the owner's inability to ski or stay upright. Having good balance and confidence in skiing is very important first step to successful skijoring.

We will meet at 11:00 AM at the Creamer's Field farmhouse and have a 30 minute question and answer session. Afterwards, we will practice skiing basics, using the skijor training trails at Creamer's Field across from the Farmhouse. Afterwards, if there is still interest, we can attach our dogs and continue to practice. The temperature cutoff for this event is -15F. Cost is free to ASPA members and \$5.00 for non members.

So come and practice skiing and skijoring and most importantly, HAVE FUN!! If you would like to help out with handling, advice, and/or show up with behaved dog(s) who will act as "rabbits" for novice dogs to chase later in the clinic please contact Lisa Stuby at 458-7657, or e-mail at lisa.stuby@alaska.gov.



A Not So Happy New Year

The fear builds causing the rapid heartbeat, sweaty extremities, and general feeling of being sick to the stomach. Am I talking about my dog during the New Year's Eve "Sparktacular"? Yes, but I am also talking about myself flying. A few years ago I had a near miss on a small aircraft that flew too close to a jet airplane while descending into the Ted Stevens International Airport in Anchorage and almost flipped over. Apparently, from what I've been told, this incident was investigated by the FAA. Anyway, travelling via commercial aircraft is still much safer than other modes of transportation like driving. However, after a frightening near miss, I still can't help my feelings while flying whenever the airplane hits turbulence. Phobias are hard to overcome, so whenever our dogs react to an event like the "Sparktacular" or fire crackers, etc. on New Year's Eve, we need to be understanding even though WE may think they are cool and fun. Most dogs either don't like them or are terrified of them. I know for me, I plan to spend the New Years eve comforting a frightened dog.

After browsing through numerous websites, here are some things you can consider on New Year's Eve, the Fourth of July, or whenever your neighbors have a party with fireworks. Many dogs and pets are terrified of the loud noises so for the safety of your canine companion, follow these fireworks safety tips.

- Make sure your dog has identification on. Fireworks cause many dogs to panic and reports of lost and missing pets tend to escalate as dogs seek any way possible to escape from the sounds including jumping over or digging under fences, busting through doors or windows.
- Walk your dogs. Play with them. Get them tired. Killae and I did the Green Loop on New Years Eve.
- Keep all your pets inside the house and give them a 'safe' area.
- Turn on the radio or the television to mask the sound of fireworks.
- Don't take your pets to any public celebrations. The events will be crowded and fraught with odd smells and sounds and unpredictable behavior.

Understand that the fact that a dog had no problems last year means nothing this year. As dogs get older, their ears are more sensitive, and dog's hearing is already 10 times more sensitive than ours. Also, like any phobia, repetition can worsen it.

I've also read that it is important to never scold or coddle a scared dog. Scolding will scare and confuse the animal, and coddling serves to reinforce fearful behaviors. Instead, assume your pack leader role and act confident and unbothered by the noise and activity outside. You can give your pet a gentle massage and cuddle if that is what they want, or if they want to be off in a corner by themselves and this seems to be the most comforting, let them be. You need to keep and be "cool" at all times.

I've tried playing Star Wars and old episodes of Lost during firework episodes and Killae knows fiction from reality and loud explosions on TV don't compute to that which is really happening. Also, Killae's safe spot is in my arms and he will leap on the couch and pretty much fall into my arms and want to be held and want me to pet him. So I do, keeping a happy, "this ain't nothin" tone. So, it is good to take some of this advice, but also good to figure out what works for your dog.

I read about an innovative technique from the most recent issue of "Unleashed! The Pet Care Forum's Newsletter for Dog Lovers" (www.vin.com/PetCare/Dogs.htm). Make an "anxiety wrap" using an adult or children's T-shirt. Put the dog's front legs through the arm holes, then knot the hem over the dog's back. This technique is related to the massage and Tellington Touch therapy approaches (I'm not sure what this is). Wrapping fabric around an animal can give the pet a feeling of greater security. I'll try this sometime.

Vets can prescribe tranquilizers for frightened dogs. Also, some people find that non-prescription remedies such as Rescue Remedy or Serene-um calm their dogs. However, I personally am VERY cautious with remedies that have not been tested safe in a laboratory and approved by the Veterinary Medical Association. Same goes for human remedies as I had a friend who ended up very sick trying to cure an illness with homeopathic remedies.

If you're going out of town for the holidays, entrust the care and feeding of pets to an adult friend or a boarding kennel you know very well. Most importantly you don't want your dog to get loose.

A Not So Happy New Year, cont.

I also found a website: <http://dogs.about.com/od/dogbehaviorproblems/a/fireworks-phobias-in-dogs.htm> with some tips on how to desensitize your dog to the sound of fireworks and it can be done in a few simple steps:

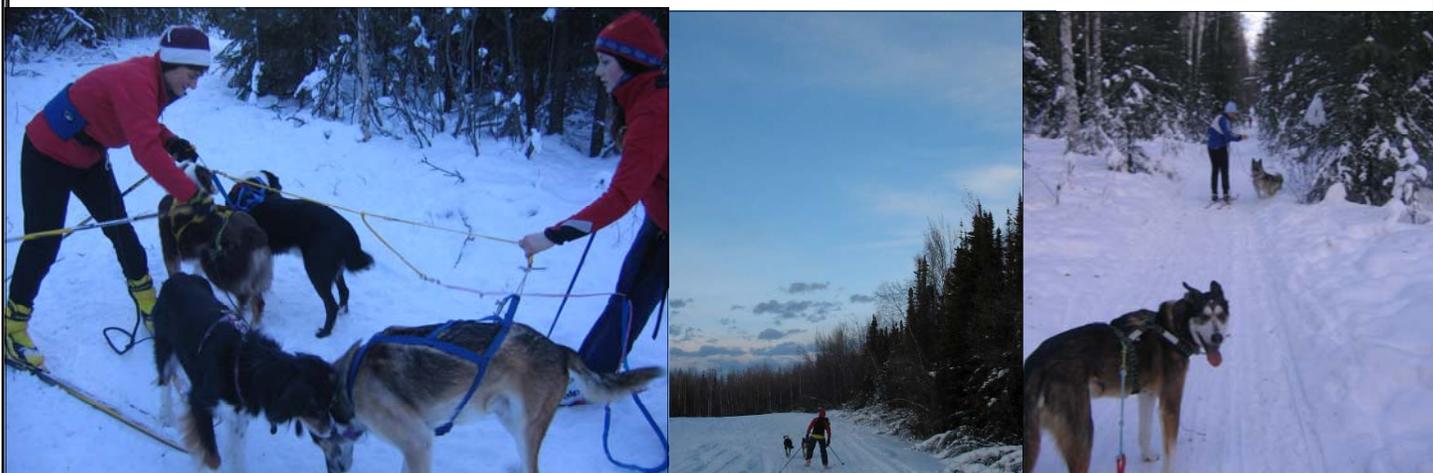
- Find a video or recording of fireworks.
- Play the video or recording at the lowest possible volume a few times during the day.
- Pair the sound of the fireworks with things your dog likes, such as treats, meals, cuddle time, or a game of tug-of-war.
- Slowly begin to raise the volume of the recording or video over the course of several days, and continue to pair the sound of fireworks with good things for your dog.
- If at any point your dog begins to show signs of fear, turn the volume down to a point where he feels more comfortable.
- Repeat this several times each day until your dog can hear the sounds of the fireworks at a fairly high volume without becoming fearful.

Unfortunately, not all advice works right away. My dog is doing better, but right now, four days post New Year Eve, he is very jumpy at any little noise, even me placing a glass of water on the floor.

Trail Tour, Sunday, January 2nd, 2011 by Lisa Stuby

Sara Tabbert with Pablo and Janna Miller with Roy and Lily led an awesome first Trail Tour of the new year up the Waterford Trail, further down the pipeline trail, and then back. The Waterford Pack Trail is an old trail dating back to the turn of the century and it along with the adjoining Big Eldorado Creek trail were important transportation routes in the very early days of the gold rush. Lately, when skiing and/or skijoring old trails I've become interested in their history as many trails that we commonly skijor have such great stories.

The Waterford trail begins where Waterford Road off of Goldstream Road turns into Molly Road. The trail can get a bit steep and Sara and Janna recommended skijoring with one dog for those unfamiliar with this trail. Distance from the trail juncture to the top where it meets with the Alaska Pipeline is 2 miles one way. It is a multi-use trail and we encountered numerous skiers along the way. I skijored with a new pair of classic skis, which I found worked well since the trail is a bit narrower than what I am used to skijoring. I ended up turning back shortly after getting up to the pipeline, which is a very nice, open area great for skiing (pipeline buried underground) because my dog wanted to get back to the car. However, Sara, Janna, and Nina Ruckhaus and her dogs kept going for a few more miles down the pipeline. At one point they ran into Tamara Rose and her dog team who was amazed and a bit worried that a skijorer with Aussies (Janna) was gaining on her. The trail conditions were very good, temperature was warm, and purple wax worked perfectly although now I have to scrape the sticky stuff off. So here's looking forward to another great skijor next Sunday.



Left: to Janna and Nina this is a tangle BUT to Sam, Tracker, Roy, and Lily it is a Meet and Greet. Center: skijoring on the pipeline trail. Right: Pablo smiles for the camera while in the background Killae sits for a cookie. Center photo Janna Miller, left and right photos by Sara Tabbert.

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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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