

# 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!*

## **ASPA Trail Tours**

Every weekend,  
meeting times and  
destinations TBA.

### **November 19 Beginner's Clinic AK Feed (class) Creamer's Field (on snow)**

Sara Elzey  
378-5024

### **November 20 Fun Race #1 Creamer's Field Time To Be Determined Volunteers Needed**

### **December 5 Wax Clinic, Raven Cross Country, 6:00 PM**

Fred Raymond  
456-5070

## **ASPA Fall Membership Meeting, October 21, 2011**

The Alaska Skijoring and Pulk Association held its annual Fall Membership Meeting on October 21st at the Musher's Hall. Approximately 25 members showed up and as usual, the potluck was downright gourmet with some requests for recipes to be shared. During our dinner a slide show played with scenes from previous skijoring events and videos Don Atwood had created from last year's events.

After dinner our President Jamie Marschner made some introductions and we were treated to a presentation by Matt Sprau and Erin Trochim about the good and bad of using pulks. Pulks used to transport gear and/or for racing are popular in Scandinavian countries. One commonly sees Pulks used for transporting by parents out for a walk or ski at Creamer's field. For backcountry ski trips, pulks are much more stable to the skijorer than transporting gear in a backpack. When wearing a backpack, even one with a good internal frame, it can be hard to keep one's balance. With a pulk, one can keep their balance much easier, they are less tiring than carrying all of one's winter gear on one's back, and ultimately one can carry more gear in the pulk. From experience, once the newsletter editor switched from pack to pulk there was NO turning back!!

Matt and Erin demonstrated a couple of pulks that they commonly use and their attributes and drawbacks. A first pulk setup was a modified "little red sled" that are sold at Fred Meyers and other stores that children or those who are young at heart use to sled down snowy hills and embankments. Pricewise, these are fairly cheap. They will have the dogs pull from the front of the pulk with a line to the pulk followed by a line from the pulk to the skijorer. With this setup, the pulk is controlled from the back and the dogs pull the entire weight of the pulk. Given the distance from the dogs with the pulk and equipment between the skijorer and dogs, this is one of the few instances where it is okay to wear metal-edged skis without worrying about accidentally running into the dogs. A drawback is it can be hard to assist the dogs in pulling a heavy pulk up a hill, which can limit weight. The red sled has no runners, so the pulk will need to be tracked straighter or with turns the pulk can flip and slide off the trail.

The second pulk they showed to the participants was a much more expensive pulk that is meant to be pulled by a skier. This pulk is more stable with runners that attaches directly to the skier from behind. It tends to not flip and slide and as much as the modified red sled pulk. An advantage is with hills it is easier to help the dogs. Here the skijorer can pull much of the load. This can be an advantage for someone who has a dog that would flat-out refuse to pull a pulk (mine). However, from experience, it is good to have rigid frame structure attached from the pulk to the skier or the pulk can swerve, catch a bit of tree trunk and flip the skier on their butt. Still, much better than carrying a backpack which can do similarly with weight imbalance, but the pack can throw the skijorer off balance and cause them to fall on their butt-much more often.

Many thanks to Jamie, Matt, and Erin for organizing this fun event. Also, thanks to Bud Marschner who took photographs which are shown on the following page.

### Photos of the Annual ASPA Membership Meeting by Bud Marschner



#### Here are some tips for keeping pets safe at Christmas time:

- If you have a real Christmas tree, keep the water in the stand covered so your animals can't drink it. The pine sap and preservatives can be dangerous if ingested.
- Secure the tree to a wall or the ceiling with fishing line and a hook to prevent pets from knocking it over.
- Tree lights should not be left on when you're not around, since your pets may tangle themselves in the cords. Unplug the tree lights when you're not using them.
- Once you've decorated your tree, pick up all tinsel, ribbon and ornament hooks on the floor. These glittery items may be attractive playthings to your pets, but they can get sick if they ingest them. If a gastrointestinal blockage occurs, surgery may be needed to save your pet.
- If your pets express interest in playing with the decorations on the tree, decorate the bottom third of the tree with wood or plastic ornaments that won't break.
- Keep all gifts that contain human food off the floor so that pets are not tempted by the smells. Human treats can be dangerous for pets – especially food containing chocolate, alcohol, raisins and onions.
- Holiday plants such as poinsettias and mistletoe can be dangerous, too, if your pets chew on them. Keep holiday plants well out of reach of your pets, or buy artificial plants.
- Burning candles can also be a concern around this time of year. A dog can start a fire by tipping the candle over. Depending on the dog, a sweet-smelling candle can be enticing and a dog may eat it.



### How many dogs can you fit in a Jeep Grand Cherokee? By Sara Elzey

It all started last fall. I was looking forward to the first season in many years where all 3 of my dogs were young & healthy enough to go skijoring. But I was sad that I wouldn't have "extra" dogs to run like I had had for the past several years. I had been sharing dogs with Carol Kleckner & Don Kiely, but their kennel was getting up in years and they didn't have any "extra" dogs this year. One day I was talking with my friend, Amanda Byrd. She was in the midst of fall training and she told me that she was going to have to stop training some of her dogs because they just couldn't train with her main racing team of 10 dogs. I casually mentioned that I would love to "help" with the dogs and take them skijoring if she wanted me to. She thought that was a great idea! I wasn't sure how I would transport them since I don't have a dog truck, but we were sure we could figure it out. The first snow finally came and I met her at ADMA to try out her dogs. There were six of them; 3 older huskies (Miley, Avril & Tas), a "special" pointer-mix (Lucy) who really would prefer not to be a sled-dog, a young husky-mix (Kate) and a fast pointer (Katrina) who had some back problems. The 3 older huskies ran like pro's for me. The pointers and the young husky did great as well. We were very excited. But we needed to figure out how I could transport them in my Jeep because Amanda couldn't fit them all into her dog truck with her 10 racing dogs.

We started off with 1 large dog crate & 1 small crate in the far back of the cargo area and my 3 dogs loose in front of the crates. At first, the "special" pointer, Lucy, would not come with me unless Amanda was there to load her in my car. So that left only 5 of Amanda's dogs. I put 2 in the small crate and 3 in the big crate, and my 3 (Ayla, Dylan & Faero) loose. It was a bit crowded but not too bad. We all had a blast! But I was determined to win Lucy over, there was no reason for her not to join us. After a few weeks I was able to win her trust and she gladly jumped in my car. The smaller crate just wasn't working but I didn't think I could fit 2 large crates side-by-side. I borrowed one from Carol and they fit just barely! That meant that I could now fit 3 dogs in each crate, with my 3 still loose in front of the crates.

In the meantime, Daria, a fast pointer who injured her wrist last season, was having trouble running the distances that the 10-dog team was training, her wrist just wasn't strong enough yet. So Amanda asked if I would skijor with her as well! That meant I was up to 7 of her dogs and 3 of my own - 10 total! I wasn't sure it would work but we tried it. I put the biggest dog, Miley, loose up front with my 3 dogs, allowing one of them to ride in the front seat. My skis and poles just barely fit along the side of the seats and crates on the passenger side. I put my ski boots and gear on the floor of the passenger side, bowls, water, biscuits, harnesses, jackets, & tug lines tucked in here and there. Every crevice & crack was filled! I'd usually put 2 pointers & the smallest husky in one crate and the 2 bigger huskies and one pointer in the other. They were squoshed! Amanda & I laughingly called them "sardine dogs." But it sure beat staying at home in the dog yard and not running at all and they knew it. Everyone excitedly jumped into the car for the trips to Creamers, North Star or ADMA. And there was very little growling or disagreements about being so crowded. Once at the trailheads I always had 2 or 3 dogs out skijoring so there never had to be more than 2 waiting in a crate. It worked out pretty well. Although if I forgot to leave the windows cracked they would be completely frosted up by the time I was done with all those dogs breathing hard in the car! I sure did get some looks when I would start unloading dogs. People couldn't believe that I actually had TEN dogs in the car! I still can't quite believe it myself. But what a fun winter I had! I skijored over 600 miles and ran almost 160 trips with teams of 2, 3 or occasionally even 4 dog teams. And my aging body held together too, I have a few aches & pains, but nothing permanent.



**Photo proof that you can fit a lot of dogs in a Jeep Grand Cherokee, Photos by Sara Elzey**



**Wax Clinic at Raven Cross Country, December 5, 2011**

Fred Raymond of Raven Cross Country will be presenting the first of two ski waxing clinics for the 2011/2012 season to ASPA members on December 5th 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](mailto: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 you and your dogs will appreciate! Clinic is for ASPA members only. Please pre-register.

**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. Gas doesn't look like it is going to be getting any cheaper in the future. 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. Thank You**

### Pet Photos With Santa

There are many opportunities this November and December to have your pet's photo taken with Santa. The money raised from these events go to pet rescue organizations.

Saturday Nov. 12th and 26th at Alaska Feed from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM

Sunday November 13th and 27th at Alaska Feed from 12:00 PM to 4:00 PM

Saturday Dec. 3rd at Sadlers Building from 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM and Sunday Dec. 4th from 12:00 PM to 4:00 PM

#### Proceeds support the Fairbanks Animal Shelter Fund

Saturday/Sunday Nov. 19th, 20th, and December 10th, 11th, 17th, and 18th at Cold Spot Feed from 12:00 PM to 4:00 PM. **Proceeds support Homeward Bound Pet Rescue and Referral**

Come out and have fun with your dog(s) that will be tired from skijoring and support good causes for homeless pets.

Here is wishing everyone a safe and happy holiday season.



### Membership Form for the Alaska Skijoring & Pulk Association

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Last First

Mailing Address \_\_\_\_\_  
Street or P. O. Box

\_\_\_\_\_ City State Zip Code

Phone (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail \_\_\_\_\_

Are you interested in receiving the newsletter on-line? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

#### Membership Type:

- Individual \$20.00/year \_\_\_\_\_ Individual Lifetime \$175 \_\_\_\_\_
- Family \$30.00/year \_\_\_\_\_ (No lifetime available)
- Affiliate Club: \$10.00/year \_\_\_\_\_ (If already a member of your local skijor club.)
- Trail Donation \$ \_\_\_\_\_ (\$5/day or \$50/season suggested)

Club Name \_\_\_\_\_

Club Address \_\_\_\_\_

Club Website \_\_\_\_\_

Mail membership form to: ASPA, P. O. Box 82843, Fairbanks, Alaska 99708.

\*Membership year is from October 1 through September 30.

Payments can also be made on the ASPA Website using Pay Pal at <http://www.alaskaskijoringl.org>

## 2011-12 ASPA BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND COORDINATORS

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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 las@acsalaska.net.

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