

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 Sunday,
meeting times and
destinations TBA.

January 21
UAF Skijor Race
UAF Trails
Brian Charlton
bcskijor@yahoo.com

February 5
Practice Clinic
Creamer's Field
Lisa Stuby
458-7657

February 13
Wax Clinic, Raven
Cross Country, 6:00
PM
Fred Raymond
456-5070

2012 ASPA UAF West Ridge Skijor Race

The annual ASPA skijor race on the UAF West Ridge trails will take place on January 21, 2012 at NOON. You must be a member of the Alaska Skijor and Pulk Association to race. Membership forms will be available at the race. This is a very rare opportunity to skijor on some of the best maintained ski trails in Fairbanks. Previous years have seen over 25 skijorers show up to race so please come join in the fun.

The race distances are 4 miles for the short class and 8 miles for the long one. Racers can compete at either distance in a one dog class or a mixed class of two or three dogs. We will also have a beginner class similar to last year which will be approximately 1 mile. One race per person, no racing multiple teams or multiple classes.

We will meet and start in the area behind the IARC building just north of the UAF Ski Hut. Please be sure to clean up after your animals so we can continue using this venue in the future. See the website for a map of the race course. And remember, **NO DOGS ON THE UAF TRAILS IN THE WINTER!!** Thank you. As always, beginners are welcome and encouraged.

Registration: Registration will be from 11-11:30AM. The cost of this race is \$10 for preregistration and \$15 for late registration. Half of the entry fees will be donated to the UAF trails club. All racers must be members of ASPA due to liability concerns. Membership forms will be available at the race for skijorers who are interested in joining the club. If you would like to preregister e-mail Brian Charlton at bcskijor@yahoo.com or call 479-3665.

The race will be cancelled if the temperature at 458-3745 extension 1113 is colder than -15 at 9:30 am. Updates on race status can be obtained from the ASPA website (www.alaskaskijoring.org) or hotline (457-5456) shortly after 9:30 on race day.

Like all races, volunteers are needed: 2 Trail Marshals - At major intersections to make sure competitors go the right direction, 1 Start Timer, 1-2 Handlers, and 2 Finish Timers. Please let Brian Charlton know if you can help.

See you all on January 21st!!



Food Allergies in Dogs

You've heard at races to always ask a dog's owner before "handling" a dog, i.e. assisting in holding or leading a dog to the starting line, etc. as some dogs can be shy and skittish. In addition it is always prudent to always ask the dog's owner if it is okay to give them a cookie. My elkie loves being "handled" (in his case petted) and is a cookie-a-holic. However, in the past couple of years has developed an allergy to certain treats that contain wheat flour. Below is information taken off of the Web MD pet website re. dog food allergies.

Just like people, dogs can show allergic symptoms when their immune systems begin to recognize certain everyday substances—or allergens—as dangerous. Even though these allergens are common in most environments and harmless to most animals, a dog with allergies will have an extreme reaction to them. As his body tries to rid itself of these substances, a variety of skin, digestive and respiratory symptoms may appear.

Food allergy is the third most common cause of allergic itching and scratching in dogs. It occurs in dogs of all ages. Unlike canine atopy, a food allergy is not seasonal. Dogs can develop allergies to chicken, milk, eggs, fish, beef, pork, horse meat, grains, potatoes, soy products, or dietary additives. A dog must have been exposed to the allergen one or more times to become allergic.

The principal sign is severe itching, sometimes accompanied by the appearance of small red bumps, pustules, and raised patches of skin. Characteristically, the rash involves the ears, feet, backs of the legs, and underside of the body. My dog would chew his feet, scratch his ears and tummy, and chew patches of fur out. Allergic dogs can also develop secondary bacterial or yeast skin infections, which may cause hair loss, scabs or crusts on the skin.

Since food allergy is less common than canine atopy and flea allergy dermatitis, the dog is often thought to be suffering from one of those diseases. Many dogs will start by showing signs just in their ears, with a red, moist rash. However, for my dog the rash appeared from constant licking and biting on his flank. His ears were itchy too. Other places there was no rash. When his allergies were most severe, he would scratch all night, keeping both of us awake.

Diagnosis is made by placing the dog on a hypoallergenic test diet and watching for a definite reduction in itching and scratching. For my dog, it was to take him off of all cookies except for hypoallergenic ones. An assumption of this being a wheat allergy proved correct and I didn't have to take him off of his normal, wheat-free kibble. A hypoallergenic diet is one that has a very limited number of ingredients. It should contain no added coloring, preservatives, or flavorings. Most important, it should contain ingredients that the dog is unlikely to have encountered in the past. Your veterinarian can prescribe an appropriate hypoallergenic diet after carefully reviewing the composition of the dog's current diet. Switching from one commercial food to another is not an adequate test, as these nonprescription diets contain too many ingredients and the dog is likely to have eaten some of them in the past. Unfortunately food allergies may show up in dogs at any age.

The test diet usually consists of a commercial hypoallergenic prescription diet. Once a good commercial hypoallergenic diet is found, the dog can be left on that diet indefinitely. Eliminate all treats and chews. For my dog, eliminating treats, especially Yummie Chummies which he seemed to take particular reaction to and only giving him his normal Hills wheat-free food with hypoallergenic treats returned him to normal and we are sleeping soundly again.

A reduction in itching may occur within a few days of starting the test diet, but in many cases it takes several weeks. The test diet should be continued for at least 10 weeks. Once improvement is noted, various foods can be added one by one until the offending allergen is identified by noting that it causes an increase in the amount of itching and scratching. It took my dog a good 6 WEEKS to stop itching!

If you suspect your dog has food allergies, the first step is to visit your veterinarian. After taking a complete history and conducting a physical examination, he or she may be able to determine the source of your dog's allergic reaction. If not, your vet will most probably recommend skin or blood tests, or a special elimination diet, to find out what's causing the allergic reaction. Your dog may be put on an exclusive prescription or hydrolyzed protein diet. Once the allergy is determined, your vet will recommend specific foods.

With food allergies walks, trips to the dog park, skijor races or any social events will never be the same as you watch closely what your dog is sniffing and might possibly go into his mouth and treats others can unknowingly give him. I've had to really watch Killae and everyone who interacts with him.

SKATE SKIING BASICS PART 2

In the December 2011 newsletter I relayed to the membership some basic information on what makes skate skis unique from classic skis that I found on the REI website and decided to share it with the ASPA membership. This month I continue with skate skiing boots, bindings, and poles.

SKATE SKIING BOOTS

Skating boots offer more ankle support than touring boots to help protect against the twisting forces involved in the skating technique. They also have stiffer soles to help minimize torsional and forward flex, both of which can hamper skating performance. Comfort should be your number one concern when selecting any ski boot.

SKATE SKIING BINDINGS

Once you've selected your boots, choose a binding system that works with them. Skate ski bindings can use one of several lightweight systems:

NNN (New Nordic Norm): A favorite of advanced skiers. Must be used with NNN style boots.

NIS (Nordic Integrated System): These install easily onto skis with premounted NIS plates. Also compatible with NNN racing/touring boots.

SNS (Salomon Nordic System) series: Not to be confused with the old SNS bindings, new SNS series bindings are made by several manufacturers. Salomon's Pilot Sport skate bindings are distinguished by 2 connection points for enhanced control.

Note: Avoid NNN-BC bindings. These offer the durability backcountry skiers need but are too unforgiving for the high-stress lower-leg work of skate skiing.

POLES

To skate efficiently, your poles need to be long enough for you to use the major muscle groups in your abdomen and upper body to propel yourself forward. Skating poles should reach from the ground up to a point somewhere between your chin and your lips (as opposed to your armpits for touring poles). This pole length represents approximately 90% of your overall height.

Skating poles are quite long. They're exposed to considerable force, so they must be sturdy and stiff. They should also have special skating handgrips, asymmetrical baskets and adjustable straps that allow you to perform the skating technique comfortably and efficiently.

Given I have a small space left for something, but with the extreme cold weather we have been experiencing the past month, not much to report. So, to get us ready for the upcoming UAF West Ridge Skijor Race on January 21st, I've posted some photos from LAST years Race by Bud Marschner. Enjoy and lets hope THIS year's race is above -15 F.



Practice Clinic #2—February 5th, 2012 at 11:00 AM, Creamer’s Field

The second of two Practice Clinics is scheduled for Sunday, February 5th at Creamers Field. 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 a very important first step to successful skijoring. It is important when starting your dog in skijoring to not be frustrated when you fall. The most important thing for your dog as well as for you is to have FUN!!

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. All participants must be members of ASPA due to liability concerns. Cost is free to all ASPA members.

The Practice Clinic will be cancelled if the temperature at 458-3745 extension 1113at 9:30 AM on February 5th is colder than –15F .

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 las@acsalaska.net.

Wax Clinic at Raven Cross Country, February 13, 2012

Fred Raymond of Raven Cross Country will be presenting the second of two ski waxing clinics for the 2011/2012 season to ASPA members on February 13th 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 all of your cross country skis—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



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 25th of every month to las@acsalaska.net.

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