

PAW PRINTS & SKI TRACKS

As I type this, water is pouring off of my roof and the temperature is 41°F. Spring has definitely sprung. Me and my dog Killae had our last, somewhat slushy skijor of the 2011-2012 season earlier today on April 14th and I hope to take advantage of Birch Hill trails one more time tomorrow before storing my skis for the summer. Many thanks to our dedicated trail groomers who have enabled us to skijor into mid-April and take advantage of warm, sunny spring weather. However, with a string of above 50°F forecasts next week, I am ready for a summer of hiking, running, fishing, and exploring. Killae is definitely ready for the lazy, hazy days of summer and all the good smells spring and summer brings.

MANY THANKS to all of the dedicated volunteers for organizing so many fun events this season. Here is wishing you all a fun and safe summer. See you in the fall.

ASPAs Orienteering Race, Creamer's Field, March 24, 2012 by Pat DeRuyter

Alaska Skijoring and Pulk Association sponsored the Tenth Annual Orienteering Event at Creamer's Field on Saturday, March 24, 2012. Nineteen people and 20 dogs enjoyed the wonderful trails. A light dusting of snow, warm weather and fresh grooming left a beautiful trail for the skijorers. The trail was a little soft for the walkers and joggers.

There were 1000 points available for each class of participants. Jesse Warwick (Joba) won the 60 minute Skijor Class and led all participants with 850 points. Sara Elzey (Faero, Miley) were second with 790 points. Kathleen Boyle (Tipi) finished third with 390 points.

In the closely contested 30 minute Skijor Class, Jim Herriges (Lena) came in first with 590 points just ahead of Taylor Kane (Ole) at 530 points and Liz Kane (BlackBart) at 520 points.

In the 60 minute Walk/Jog class, Carol Kleckner (Ivy) finished with the second most points overall and won their class with 820 points. Jim Altherr and Carol Davis both with Sophie tied for second with 650 points. Bud Marschner (Kazan) and Jamie Marschner (Bree) tied for third with 560 points.

In the 30 minute Walk/Jog class, Lisa Yancey (Summit) came in first with 410 points even after losing 60 points in penalty for returning 6 minutes late. Mara Bacsujlaky (Mac) came in second with 350 points and Courtney Pope (Max) and Cheryle Barrett (Charlie) both finished with 200 Points for third place.

Many thanks to Pat DeRuyter for organizing, setting up, and taking down the course and Penny Parker for timing and Jim Herriges for grooming the course.

60 minute Skijor

1. Jesse Warwick (Joba)--850 points
2. Sara Elzey (Faero, Miley)--790 points
3. Kathleen Boyle (Tipi)--390 points

60 minute Walk/Jog

1. Carol Kleckner (Ivy)--820 points
2. Jim Altherr (Sophie)--650 points
2. Carol Davis (Sophie)--650 points
3. Bud Marschner (Kazan)--560 Points
3. Jamie Marschner (Bree)--560 points
4. Clarice Dukeminier (Timber)--440 points

30 minute Skijor

1. Jim Herriges (Lena)--590 points
2. Taylor Kane (Ole)--530 points
3. Liz Kane (BlackBart)--520 points
4. Andy Warwick (Zip & Boots)--350 points
5. Erin Reece (Pinyon)--230 points
6. Lisa Allen (Senna)--230 points

30 minute Walk/Jog

1. Lisa Yancey (Summit)--410 points
2. Mara Bacsujlaky (Mac)--350 Points
3. Courtney Pope (Max)--200 points
3. Cheryle Barrett (Charlie)--200 Points

THANK YOU VOLUNTEERS!!!

NONE of the events that took place during the 2011/2012 season would have happened without the dedicated ASPA volunteers. Below is a list of volunteers for the 2011/2012 season

2011-2012 ASPA Volunteers

Groomers Extraordinaire

Pat DeRuyter
Jim Altherr
Kimberlee Beckmen
Brian Charlton
Clarice Dukeminier
Jim Herriges
Carol Kleckner
Don Morton
Andy Warwick
Jesse Warwick

Board members and Coordinators

President – Jamie Marschner
Vice President – Jim Herriges
Treasurer - Sara Elzey
Secretary – Mara Bacsujlaky
Trail Tour Coordinators – Don Atwood, Janna Miller, Sara Tabbert, Matt Sprau
Fun Race Coordinators – Don Kiely, Sunnifa Deehr, Sara Elzey, Sara Tabbert, Andy Warwick
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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

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Jim Herriges
Don Kiely
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Janna Miller
Matt Sprau
Lisa Stuby
Sara Tabbert
Andy Warwick

Dryland Race

Sara Elzey
Carol Kleckner
Peggy Raybeck
Paula Ruckhaus
Andy Warwick

Chena Lakes Race

Sara Tabbert
Kathleen Boyle
Sunnifa Deehr
Alice Stickney
Andy Warwick

North Star Plowing

Aaron Hawkins

Fall Membership Meeting

Jamie Marschner
Don Atwood
Carol Kleckner

Creamer's Trail Signs/Snow Filling

Pat DeRuyter
Kimberlee Beckmen
Don Kiely

Trash Bags/Trash Cans

Peggy Raybeck

Beginners Clinic and Practice Clinic

Sara Elzey
Carol Kleckner
Kathleen Boyle
Sunnifa Deehr

Peggy Raybeck
Matt Sprau
Alice Stickney
Erin Trochim

Fun Races

Sunnifa Deehr
Don Kiely
Matt Sprau
Andy Warwick
Eleanor Wertz

North Star Golf Course

Melinda Evans
Roger Evans

North Pole Race

Sara Elzey

White Mountains Event

Don Atwood
Erin Atwood

Birch Hill Race

Jim Herriges
Lisa Allen
Jim Altherr
Gail Davidson
Pat DeRuyter
Liz Kane
Bruce Miller
Penny Parker
Nina Ruckhaus
Paula Ruckhaus
Lisa Stuby

Orienteering Race

Pat DeRuyter
Penny Parker
Jim Herriges

Fun Race and Barbecue

Carol Kleckner
Jamie Marschner
Bud Marschner
Andy Warwick
Lisa Stuby
Penny Parker
Don Kiely
Paula Ruckhaus

Spring Membership Meeting notes from March 25, 2012 by Jamie Marschner

Thanks for attending the Final Fun Race and Pizza Party yesterday! We had a great turnout, and the weather and trails were wonderful! We want to thank the race volunteers: Andy Warwick the race director, Pat DeRuyter helped start and register, Lisa Stuby helped register, Don Kiely timed, and Paula Ruckhouse and Penny Parker helped handle dogs. We had a short business meeting after the fun race and all the great food. Here's what transpired:

The current board members and 3 new board members were approved:

Current Board Members:

Sunnifa Deehr
Sara Elzey
Jamie Marschner
Janna Miller
Matt Sprau
Sara Tabbert

New Board Members: (Thanks for volunteering!!)

Lisa Allen
Kathleen Boyle
Jesse Warwick

Leaving Board Members: (Thanks for all your help over the last several years!!)

Mara Bacsujlaky
Jim Herriges
Don Kiely
Carol Kleckner
Don Atwood

2. The President was approved and is still Jamie Marschner.
3. The Alder Award, judged by Don Kiely, was presented to Itty Bitty and her owner, Erin Trochim.
4. Special awards were presented to all groomers. Thanks for all your extra efforts this season!!
5. A special award was presented to Pat DeRuyter for coordinating all the grooming efforts this season, volunteering for many races and coordinating the Orienteering Race (which was great fun on Saturday!). Thanks again, Pat!!
6. Volunteer of the Year was won by Jim Altherr. Thanks for all your help this season, Jim!!

FUN RACE #3 AND SEASON FINALE BBQ BY ANDY WARWICK, RACE DIRECTOR

Under clear skies, thirty-four teams participated in the Alaska Skijor and Pulk Association's final race of the 2011-2012 season at the Alaska Dog Musher's Association trails on Farmers Loop. Some of the skijorers had participated in the Saturday's 50k Sonot Kaazoot, but showed no signs of wear. In the competitive 4 mile, one dog event, Jesse Warwick bested Bruce Miller by only four seconds. In the next largest field of race competitors, the 4 mile two dog race, Jamie Johnson edged out Emile Entrikin by fifteen seconds. Other class winners were Gail Davidson in the 6.2 mile one dog, Sara Tabbert in the 6.2 mile two dog, Greg Jurek in the 4 mile three dog, Sara Elzey in the 2 mile two dog and Kimberlee Beckmen in the 1 mile one dog event.

Many thanks to volunteers: Andy Warwick the race director, Pat DeRuyter helped start and register, Lisa Stuby helped register, Don Kiely timed, and Paula Ruckhouse and Penny Parker helped handle dogs.

You can find a gallery of Bud Marschner's photos of the races and BBQ at:

<http://budsalaskaphotos.smugmug.com/>. This website has over 1300 photographs. Enjoy!!

End of Year Race at Musher's Hall, March 25, 2012 Results			
Skijorer	Dogs	Time	Place
8 mile, two dog			
Judith Levy	Sally & Boss	36:08	1
8 mile, one dog			
Janna Miller	Lilly	48:30	1
6.2 mile, three dog			
Sara Elzey	Dylan, Daria, Kate	21:45	1
6.2 mile, two dogs			
Sara Tabbert	Pete, Rothko	25:18	1
Erin Trochim	Itty, Tarsis	27:41	2
6.2 mile, one dog			
Gail Davidson	Cocoa	35:29	1
Lisa Stuby	Killae	53:14	2
4 mile, three dog			
Greg Jurek	Che, Rib, Jet	12:40	1
Jake Turman	Vicky, Sparky, Miriam	13:44	2
Sara Elzey	Katrina, Lucy, Lira	13:45	3
4 mile, two dog			
Jamie Johnson	Wrangle, Kriska	13:54	1
Emilie Entrikin	Licorice, Rika	14:09	2
Jim Herriges	Lily, Ole	15:52	3
Carol Kleckner	Shaman, Jenny	16:04	4
Lisa Allen	Piper, Indy	16:10	5
Iris Sutton	Enga, Grizley	17:24	6
4 mile, one dog			
Jesse Warwick	Joba	15:44	1
Bruce Miller	Roy	15:48	2
Nina Ruckhaus	Sasha	17:39	3
Mara Barsujlaky	Tansy	18:14	4
Kimberlee Beckmen	Iris	18:55	5
Brandon McGrath-Bernhard	Dora	20:23	6
Ted Wu	Ty	20:54	7
Kathleen Boyle	Tipi	24:09	8
Trish Gallagher	Aedan	24:21	9
Liz Kane	Black Bart	25:17	10
Elisabeth Padilla	Fox	25:28	11
2 mile two dog			
Sara Elzey	Taz, Avril	6:47	1
Iris Sutton	Pluto, Cranberry	7:38	2
2 mile, one dog			
Jamie Marschner	Bree	11:09	1
1 mile, two dogs			
Lisa Allen	Pinyon, Senna	5:58	1
1 mile, one dog			
Kimberlee Beckmen	Gemma	4:33	1
Sara Elzey	Ayla	5:55	2
Mike Ruckhaus	Tracker	7:54	3
Jamie Marschner	Kazan	9:13	4

All Photographs by Bud Marschner



2012 ASPA Alder Award

2012 Alder Award Winner

Itty Bitty and her humans Erin Trochim and Matt Sprau

By Don Kiely

The ASPA Alder Award was created by ASPA through a generous donation by Chuck and Tone Deehr in memory of Alder, one of their cherished dogs who crossed the bridge a few years ago. As the human who submitted the winning entry for last year’s Alder Award winner, Casper, it was my honor to select this year’s winner.

As I said in my presentation at the spring BBQ, in previous years I’ve listened to those tasked to pick the winner describe how hard it was to do, particularly since the award has become more subjective in recent years. How hard can it be, I’d ask myself. Well, now I know: it is very hard indeed. I am ever amazed and gratified by the intense bond between dogs and people—at least for those open to such bonds—and love how the entries showed how we learn at least as much from dogs as they do from us. Probably way more.

I’m very pleased to present, with only light editing, the best of this year’s Alder Award entries, starting with the 2012 winner, Itty Bitty.

Itty Bitty

Erin Trochim & Matt Sprau

We met a little lady named Itty Bitty at the shelter almost three years ago. I remember reading Carol Kleckner's description that she was tiny and pancaked at the truck, but that Itty had drive. A few weeks later she became our Second Chance League foster and potential new skijor dog.

At first, only Itty and I really believed in that possibility. Acting on friendly advice we upped her daily food until much to our surprise, she began to grow and filled out an extra 1/3 of her original size. That fall we started skijoring her with our neighbors yellow lab, who quickly figured out that Itty would pull regardless of the dog beside her.

Her adoption was my Christmas present and we became a permanent family. By the end of that season Itty had learned to lead solo, completed a few races, taken an obedience class and informed us that she needed a partner in crime. She trained her brother Tarsis from Dew Claw Kennel how to transition from long-distance mushing to being a good skijor dog who lives in the house. Last year we did more races and finished out the season with an 80-plus mile skijor trip in the White Mountains.

Itty drew upon these experiences as she excelled this year as an all-round leader in both racing and longer distance runs. In both the Birch Hill and Limited North American skijor events Itty set the pace for our team. She was an unstoppable hill climbing machine regardless of the distance and we repeatedly flew up the final pitches. She made me train for this on long runs going home up Miller Hill where her pace was only limited by mine. Although she knows our commands: “gee”, “haw”, “easy” and “come around,” she communicates her wishes to us by way of barks, paw slams and pokes.

Itty has kept us safe over the years in sketchy situations like tight passes with dog teams and encounters with moose. In the fall she recognizes that dirt patches mean her mom can’t ski over them. We built a new pulk this winter and on our inaugural trip headed out the Cache Mountain cabin via the Steese Highway. Itty kept the other three dogs going up the significant hills; we could not have done it without her. Itty has developed a preference for running with a partner and improved the leadership and fitness of many other canine friends. She reminds both dogs and us that we run because it's fun to go together. Before a challenge she performs best when I take her head in my hands and tell her how much I value our relationship.

As I write this Itty is in her typical spot lying beside me with her head and paws on my lap. She says that after work we are going skijoring. Itty is a loyal, smart pointer mix husky who is her own dog and we love her.



2012 Alder Award (Continued)**Sasha**

Nina Ruckhaus

I would like to nominate a very special dog of mine, Sasha, for the Alder award. Sasha was lucky to find me, but I believe that I was even luckier to find her, my little diamond in the rough. Here is her story:

A year ago I was working at Holy Dog Kennels, where I first met Sasha. At the time she was called Panda and she was extremely hyper-active and very skinny. She had originally come to the kennel from a man who had ran out of money and stopped feeding his dogs and then turned them in to Holy Dog Kennels. A week after Sasha and her kennel mate came to Holy Dog her kennel mate died of blood cancer. At the kennel she had been deemed a lost cause as a foster dog because all the potential homes she had been given had failed because of her energy level and tendency to bolt. The owner of the kennel was devastated and she asked me if I could try to work with Sasha to try to understand her more to find her a suitable home.

I agreed and I brought her home and started refocusing her pathway in life with no more chains and cages. She acted very independent and offish because she had lost trust for people. As she got to trust me more she developed a very sweet and friendly personality and I could see her intelligence and beauty. Once Sasha figured out that the skis were not going to eat her and that she could run as fast as she wanted if she pulled me along too, she loved it! She was so driven and strong and I couldn't believe that I had found a dog that fit in in my team so well in such an odd place. I re-homed Sasha to a woman named Susan Granata to use in her recreational sled dog team, but she became so much more than just a sled dog to both of us. She is a loyal companion for both of her owners and she also doubles as an outstanding member of our teams.

I admire Sasha very much. She always gives it 110% on runs and looks so stylish in the process, but what makes her so special to me is that she adores me back. When I go to her other house to pick her up to go skijoring she is always jumping and screaming with happiness to see me. When I trip while skiing or get frustrated she politely checks on me and ensures me that it is okay. She is the queen of my pack of misfits and my best friend.

Sasha also loves to race. In a mass starts she gets really competitive with the other dogs and loves to be in front. Before I got her racing was just a fun activity, but with Sasha I found the obligation to try my hardest to please her. She has taught me that it does not matter what size, breed, or age a skijor dog is; running is all about what's in their heart. I believe that she deserves the Alder Award because she has the rare quality in a skijor/mushing dog to be a natural leader as well as being a pleasure to have in the home and in the yard.

Aedan

Trish Gallagher

I would like to nominate my wonderful husky-mutt, Aedan, for the 2012 ASPA Alder Award. Aedan is 3½ years old and is my Shining Star. I first met my beautiful Shining Star in the fall of 2008 when I spotted him at the Animal Control Shelter. He was labeled as a 7 month old Chesapeake Bay Retriever/Labrador Retriever. I had always wanted a Lab and was so excited to bring home such a beautiful red Lab puppy. It wasn't until he ran off for the third time that I suspected I had fallen into the clutches of a mislabeled husky! Luckily for him, I was already deeply in love with his playful antics and lovable golden eyes.

Aedan and I started our skijoring career last winter after a heart wrenching break-up. I had always wanted to try skijoring, but always found an excuse not to. Once it was just me and Aedan, I needed a way to keep my feet (and mind) busy. I borrowed an old pair of classic skis and a harness from a friend and set out to learn skijoring as I went. It turned out that there is only one thing that you never have to actually teach to a husky—how to pull! Aedan was a natural while I continually struggled. Aedan really stuck with me (I think being tied to my waist helped with that) and through a series of bruises, bumps, and one bent ski pole, I finally started to figure out what I was doing. But, of course, by that time, the snow was almost gone! Determined to improve, we spent the summer and fall bike-joring. I even undertook the challenge of teaching Aedan gee and haw—something that came a little less naturally to him.

2012 Alder Award (Continued)

This winter’s skijor season started a bit slow for us. We didn’t get around to joining the ASPA until December when I deemed us advanced enough to try our first skijor race. We entered the 3.2 mile class at the Fun Race. Both Aedan and I raced as hard as we could that day. Even though we came in last in our class, it was still lots of fun and I learned a lot. Particularly that I need to buy some skate skis! Those old borrowed classic skis just won’t cut it for next season. Aedan and I have become an awesome skiing team, and I need to learn how to keep up! This season, he finally has gotten the general idea of “gee”, “haw”, and “on by.” I’m so proud of him! And, I absolutely love his big doggy smile when we get finished with a ski. With the help of skijoring, I have lost 10 pounds this winter! I have also started running, so that I can better keep up with my Furry Athlete during our first 5K—the Beat Beethoven!

Aedan is such a wonderful skijor dog. My mom came to visit in December and really wanted to try skijoring. My mom had never been cross-country skiing before, so I was a little nervous. Aedan took such great care of my mom on the trail! He pulled like such a gentleman. He pulled the whole time so all my mom had to do was stand there and pole along. He also didn’t go zooming off into the bushes (which all skijorers know happens sometimes!). He got lots of hugs and kisses that day.

Like any good parent, I have about a million pictures of Aedan. The photograph below is a picture of Aedan with his best dog friend, Bailey. This was just before the 2011 Midnight Sun Run. Like a diligent husky, Aedan pulled on the leash for the whole 2 hour, 10 kilometer walk. That’s my boy!

Thank you for allowing me to go on and on about my Shining Star!



2012 Alder Award Winner and Runner’s Up

Top Left: Aedan (right) with his buddy Bailey. Photo by Trish Gallagher

Top: the 2012 Alder Award Winner Itty Bitty (right) running in the final ASPA race and BBQ with Tarsis and her human, Erin Trochim. Photo by Bud Marschner.

Left: Sasha, the second Alder Award runner up. Photo by Nina Ruckhaus.

My First Season of Mushing by Sara Elzey

After 15 or so years of skijoring I tried something new this season – a sled! It is way harder than it looks. Three out of the first four runs I tipped the sled. But each time I kept my firm grip on the sled, never lost my team, and got upright immediately and was off again. With each run I felt my body learning the delicate equilibrium between balance & steering, it is definitely an art, and completely different than skijoring. It took me almost 10 runs before I could truly say it was “fun.” But I had good teacher in my friend Amanda. Her favorite motto is “your matt is your friend.” Unlike on skis where you snowplow a bit to slow down, a sled has a piece of rubber (like the belt on a snow machine) that you can put down between the runners. This matt drags along the ground and slows the sled by itself, or you can put your foot on it to really slow the team. On corners you can put varying degrees of pressure on the matt to help control the outward rotation of the sled. At first I was too timid in my use of the matt. On skis, cornering successfully and fast is all about staying light on your feet and stepping around the corner. On the sled it requires a much more aggressive posture – weight hard on the outside runner, heel on the matt if necessary to prevent the sled from fish-tailing outward, upper body pushing the bow of the sled into the turn. Steering the team is a whole new thing too. On skis, it is fairly easy to steer the dogs. Even in a 3-dog team you can manually move the dogs to one side of the trail for passing things. You can pull yourself right up next to the dogs and get a grip on them. And if you have dogs that are driven and not afraid of the skis you can do this without even losing much speed. Not so on the sled! You can move the sled from side to side in the trail but the dogs don’t necessarily follow! I know I have a lot more to learn so I’m looking forward to next season. Now I just have to figure out how to put a sled on the roof of my Jeep Cherokee.....



Sara Elzey with her team at the North Pole Races, zooming above to the finish.

To the right Sara Elzey with her “entourage”, i.e. the other post-skijoring participants in the North Pole Race and prior to the 4-dog sprint, which calculates out to one person for each dog. Lisa Stuby took the photographs and helped get the dogs excited about running.

New Article Feature, Dog(s) of the Month

We would like to introduce a new feature in the ASPA Newsletter – the Dog of the Month. Submit a brief write-up (300 words or less) and photo of your dog by the monthly deadline. We’ll include one or two each month. Think your dog is really special, tell us!!



April 2010 DOG of the MONTH, Miley Elzey

MILEY: I call Miley a “rock star” dog. She’ll do anything you ask of her and do it with a good attitude. She is one of those dogs that is always eager & happy. She’s friendly without being needy. She can run with any dog, she tolerates the obnoxious ones, gives confidence to the insecure ones, and drags along the reluctant ones. This season she proved her versatility. After training with me skijoring all of the early season she led my team on my first sled run, patiently waiting for me when I tipped the sled. She ran in the Junior North American in the 1 & 2 dog classes. The next weekend she did the skijoring class in the Limited North American, running with 2 much faster & younger dogs. I expected to drop her the final day but she ran all 3 days. Two weeks later she did the Orienteering Race. She can loose run and walks fairly nicely on a leash too. She is one of those special dogs that comes along once in a lifetime. I feel lucky to know her.

2012 ASPA end of Year Race and Relay

After the end of year race and before the pizza party started and final season membership meeting, ASPA hosted what has become an annual tradition: The relay. Participants laid their skis down in the small field near the Musher’s Hall parking area and waited on the outskirts. No ski poles were allowed. At the GO all with one dog ran and skidded to their skis, quickly or not so much, with or without falling, attached the skis to their boots and raced a 1-mile portion of the Jeff Studdert race ground in a mass start. Below are the top five finishers. Photograph to right is by Bud Marschner.

LeMans Start, Top Five Finishers

- 1.Nina Ruckhaus
- 2.Jamie Johnson
- 3.Bruce Miller
- 4.Jesse Warwick
- 5.Jim Herriges



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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