

PAW PRINTS & SKI TRACKS

Another GREAT season of skijoring and skiing comes to a close. Many thanks to our dedicated trail groomers who kept the trails in good shape despite a rather strange winter with freezing rain in January and subsequent icy conditions. The Fun Races were their usual fun and the Trail Tours equally so. My dog will be BIG 10 this summer, but he still loves to attend all of the ASPA events.

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.

Is the ASPA Newsletter Still Worthwhile?!

I am hoping that all of the current ASPA members read this and will provide comments afterwards. First, I mentioned in the January 2014 issue that after eight years as the ASPA Newsletter editor, I was hoping to hand the reins to someone new. However, lately I've been wondering if the newsletter is still worthwhile given the advent of internet and social media. A LOT has changed in the past eight years! It used to be I had to have the newsletter on a schedule and asked for articles by the last week of every month. The newsletter was crucial for advertising upcoming races and relaying the details. However, now all races are advertised via e-mail, the ASPA website, Facebook, and the ASPA Hotline—which itself may be redundant as most members have internet now. Eight years ago not everyone had e-mail, but now cell towers are abundant and seemingly everywhere. Also, eight years ago there were no smart phones and now it seems as though most people—sans me yet—have them now. So, the newsletter is no longer a critical point for advertising upcoming events.

After races I remember looking forward to receiving the newsletter (obviously more than eight years ago) to look at results and photographs and wonder if anyone photographed us! Today, all photographs are posted on Facebook, results posted on e-mail and the ASPA website. So to put race results and photographs in the newsletter would be redundant. PLUS, rarely will anyone send me any photographs specific to the newsletter anymore! The surest way to get photographs is for me to take them myself.

The newsletter has been a source of good articles—at least I think so. However, except for very few people, I rarely receive these anymore. Likewise, I NEVER receive race results, anecdotes from events like races, or photographs. The last few articles I've added to the newsletter have come from primarily one other person and myself or stuff I've seen in other sources such as the Anchorage Daily News, etc.

So, a few questions for the membership:

1. First, is the newsletter still worthwhile to have? Clearly its long-time purpose to provide information on upcoming events and posting of race results, photographs etc. is very redundant and unnecessary now.
2. Does the ASPA membership still want to receive the newsletter? If so, what do you want to see? Should the newsletter maybe become a forum for things the membership wouldn't see on the ASPA website, Facebook, or e-mail such as interesting articles folks may come upon and send me, stories that are too long for Facebook or e-mail, etc.? If so, I could collect articles, photographs, stories, etc. and when I have enough for a few pages, submit a unique informational newsletter. I had to combine the October and November newsletter this year due to the lack of information sent me. It looks like I will be doing the same for the March and April newsletters.
3. Should this newsletter allow for broader articles? For instance, quite a few ASPA members do agility with their dogs. This plus other activities members do with their dogs would be nice additions. There could be room for dog humor, dog cookie recipes, etc.

Is the ASPA Newsletter Still Worthwhile?! (Continued)

This isn't meant to be just another article for the membership to read and ponder, but the start of a conversation amongst the membership. Please send ideas, suggestions, and comments to Lisa Stuby at my e-mail: las@acsalaska.net. OR BETTER YET to the skijor list to get the conversation going at

Skijoring@yahoo.com. I am curious to see how many people DO RESPOND to this article and who responds.

As a result of the redundancy I mentioned in this article, I will NOT be posting results from any of the Fun Races that we have had since the last newsletter.

Overnight Trip to Lee's Cabin by Lisa Stuby

We had the ultimate trail tour a few weekends ago as Sara Tabbert led a totally AWESOME overnight trip to Lee's cabin in the White Mountains National Recreation Area for the weekend of March 8 and 9, 2014. Lee's is notoriously difficult to reserve because it is only 7.5 miles in from the trailhead at mile 27 on the Elliott Highway. I remember years ago trying to reserve it for what used to be our annual Lee's Cabin Race and Show and Go (former trail tour) and showing up at the BLM office at 6:00 AM to stand by the door and be ready to charge in and try to reserve it as soon as BLM opened only to have another person waiting at the door tell me, "Lee's is MINE". I mean, she didn't even know what cabin I was going to reserve. So KUDOS to Sara Tabbert to even get this!

The trail to Lee's was in great shape. It was a bit cold this weekend, so I brought my good down sleeping bag and lots of warm clothes. Even though it was only an overnight, I ended up having a heavy pulk. My dog was a super trooper because he doesn't like my homemade pulk with wimpy poles that can swing back and forth while I am travelling downhill. Despite the cold, there was LOTS of sunshine, which made all not seem cold at all. I just know that white and green kick wax worked well.

After about two hours of skiing, taking photographs, talking to other skiers, snowmachiners, and bicyclists, I arrived at Lees. The White Wountains NRA is very popular in March and chances are if you've never been there and are worried about being all "alone", think again. You most certainly won't be alone! The scenery is gorgeous and you don't have to go far to experience this.

Sara Tabbert and Brandon McGrath had the cabin reserved for Friday night and so when we arrived Saturday afternoon, it was nice and WARM with cookies and other munchies around. Brandon travelled back Saturday morning for work commitments and Alice Stickney also joined us for the night. I had Killae, Sara had Dora and Rothko, and Alice had Raven and Ullr . Mara Bacsujlaky with Tansy did a day trip to Lee's and returned back to the trailhead in the afternoon.

As a courtesy, all who stay at Lee's or other cabins need to grab a saw and cut firewood. Luckily dead trees were available not too far from the cabin. Since we all had pulks, it was easy to cut, load, drag back, and saw them up for the night and to leave some for those who would be spending Sunday evening at this cabin.

Later that night Sara prepared a delicious veggie and meat orzo combo for dinner. I provided dessert of brownies. The following morning, Alice prepared a breakfast consisting of homemade scones, homemade yogurt, and homemade granola. I mean, except for the cutting wood part and dragging in a pulk, it kind of felt like a guided trip!

Overall, I am surprised more people did not join us? However, I am GLAD to see there was a lot of participation in the weekend's North Pole races. So many skiing and skijoring opportunities in March—so little time!!

If you have never been to the White Mountains NRA, I HIGHLY recommend it. There is something for everybody.

MANY thanks to Sara for organizing this Trail Tour!! Killae and I had a great time.

Overnight Trip to Lee's Cabin Photographs

Here is a collection of photographs taken by Lisa Stuby during the Lee's Cabin overnight trip. Enjoy!



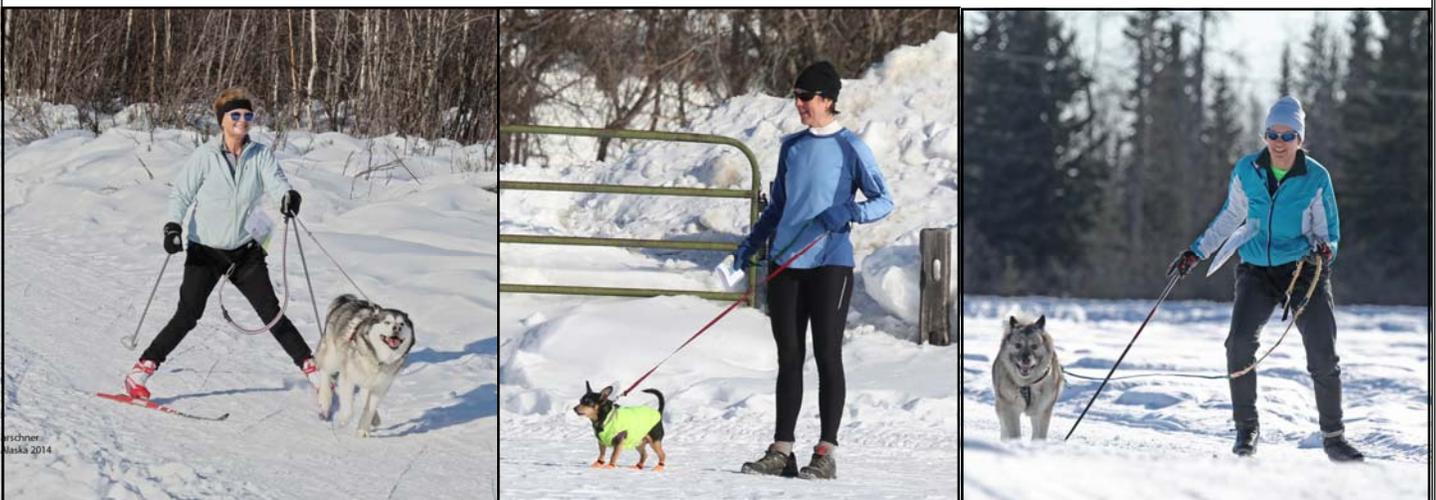
ASPA Orienteering Race by Lisa Stuby

This year's Orienteering Race was LOTS of fun as usual. Sunnifa Deehr was the race director and organizer. Pat DeRuyter who has coordinated this race in past years helped Sunnifa and helped her register participants. There were 30 and 60 minute SKIJOR classes as well as 30 and 60 minute walk/jog with your dog classes and each class had adult and child divisions. The Format was to gather as many points as possible in the 30 or 60 minute time allotment. Thirty "Controls" (sheets of paper with removable numbered tabs attached to wooden stakes) were placed around the Creamer's Field and ADMA trails between the ADMA Mushers Hall and the 16.4 mile turns on the ADMA trails and our Orange and Green loops. The Controls were assigned point values from 10 to 100 depending on how easy it was to find them or how close to the trailhead they were. Ten "Controls" were for walker/joggers only, ten "Controls" were for skijorers only, and ten "Controls" applied to all participants. Participants did not have to skijor or walk to the controls in any specific order or in any specific direction, so creative shortcuts were legal. Participants who went beyond their 30 or 60 minute allotted times were assessed ten (10) penalty points for each late minute. NO compasses were needed.

Since I have a slow dog, this race was perfect for us as speed was not as important as strategy! Jamie Marschner with Dancer and myself with Killae did the course and even picked up a 100 point control, which made us proud. In past years I've encouraged Killae to run to the controls and touch them with his nose for a cookie—something he just won't forget! Elephants aren't the only creatures with good memories! Bud Marschner met us for some photographs and even called Jamie on her cell phone during the race so he could meet us at a control with me yelling, "hey we are racing" and he yelling back, "yeah right, since when!". At one point we ran into a walker with a cute little Chihuahua and Dancer was just enamored and wanted to play. I don't know if Killae got jealous or not—he's pretty fickle too. We ended up getting 650 points and were very proud and made it back to the start with 2 minutes to spare! Photographs below were taken by Bud Marschner.

At the end of the race as I was helping Pat and Sunnifa take the containers with the racing stuff to their cars, Pat asked, "Is Kathleen Boyle back?" We all realized after much asking around that the answer was NO and panic set in! I put my tired and almost 10 year old dog in the car and put my skis on and went to the juncture of the Extension Loops and yelled KATHLEEN over and over. Sunnifa went the other direction and headed on the ADMA trails towards Henrick Court. Turns out, Kathleen made a right hand turn on the 19.8 mile loop and past Henrick Court and onto the Extension and got lost. A different participant did similarly. These loops have no signs and can be confusing. Years ago Killae and I got on them and looped around and around for close to 3 hours. Well, happily Kathleen and her dog showed back up, tired, but happy to be back at the cars. Er, actually, in her own words:

"Tipi and I had a bit more of an adventure than we intended in this year's Orienteering race. In search of control point 28, we ended up on the ONAC Extension trails and with such beautiful trail conditions, continued on and on and on - expecting it to be just around the next corner. A special thanks to Sunnifa and her pups, Lisa Stuby and Pat DeRuyter for making sure we made it back alright. They even set aside treats for us for finishing the race and a prize for Tipi. I regret causing unnecessary concern, but we had a wonderful time exploring new trails. Happy Spring, everyone! Kathleen"



Wanted for the 2014-2015 skijor season: Volunteer trail groomers.

NO EXPERIENCE NECESSARY. WE WILL TRAIN ALL NEW GROOMERS.

Job description: We groom at -10 degrees or warmer. ASPA members groom trails at Isberg, Creamer's Field, and North Star Golf Club. You will use a combination lock to open the storage shed that contains the snow-machine (you don't need your own snowmachine), start the snowmachine using an electric starter, hook up the groomer, and drive very slowly over mostly smooth trails. Most grooming takes between 1 1/2 and 2 1/2 hours depending on snow conditions. We try to groom twice a week, again depending on snow conditions. You may volunteer once a month, only during certain months, or as many times as you are willing to volunteer. You may groom during the day, in the evening, or whenever you are available.

You will receive the thanks and admiration of hundreds of trail users!

Contact Pat DeRuyter at patderuyter@gmail.com if you need more information or want to volunteer. Thanks!

2014 Volunteer of the Year

Sunnifa Deehr is the ASPA 2014 volunteer of the Year. When Jamie Marschner asked the membership for Volunteer of the Year nominations, 100 % of all nominations received were for Sunnifa. Here is a compilation of some of the comments received.

"Sunnifa has stepped up and filled in so many gaps in the ASPA volunteer network this season - Race Director for 2 Fun Races plus Orienteering, and was also willing to do Birch Hill but Jessie did it (many thanks to him too!)."

"The Orienteering Race takes a particular long time to set up and there are many additional details to work out compared to the regular fun races."

"Sunnifa worked on and helped complete the race directors handbook. Sunnifa serves on the board and hasn't missed any meetings for the 2013 and 2014 season. She also came early both days of the North Pole races and helped with registration, handing out bibs, etc."



"Sunnifa seems like she's done a big share of the volunteer work this year, always well and with good humor. A teacher's busy time corresponds exactly with our season and it says a lot that she's willing to share so much of her limited free time. At all events sunnifa is cheerful and always welcoming to all participants."

So CONGRATULATIONS to Sunnifa Deehr for being our 2014 Volunteer of the Year and many THANKS for all of her hard work in well earning this distinction.

Sunnifa Deehr the 2014 ASPA Volunteer of the Year racing like the wind at the end of the year BBQ at the Musher's Hall on March 30, 2014. Photograph by Bud Marschner.

THANK YOU VOLUNTEERS!!!

NONE of the events that took place during the 2013/2014 season would have happened without the dedicated ASPA volunteers.

2013-2014 ASPA Volunteers**Groomers Extraordinaire**

Pat DeRuyter
 Jim Altherr
 Brian Charlton
 Jim Herriges
 Carol Kleckner
 Peggy Raybeck
 Andy Warwick
 Jesse Warwick
 Krista Wilkinson

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 Birch Hill Race Coordinator – Jesse War-
 wick
 White Mountains Event – Sara Tabbert
 Beginners Clinics - Sara Elzey
 Training Clinics – Lisa Stuby

North Star Golf Course

Melinda Evans
 Roger Evans

Dryland Race

Sara Elzey, Kathleen Boyle, Sunnifa Deehr,
 Andy Warwick

ASPA Schedule and Sponsors

Jamie Marschner
 Pat DeRuyter
 Sunnifa Deehr
 Sara Elzey
 Nina Ruckhaus
 Sara Tabbert
 Jesse Warwick

Chena Lakes Race

Sara Tabbert
 Chris Burrow
 Alice Stickney
 Andy Warwick

Fall Membership Meeting

Jamie Marschner
 Jesse Warwick

Creamer's Trail Signs/Snow Filling

Pat DeRuyter
 Peggy Raybeck
 Nicole Silvers
 Lisa Stuby
 Andy Warwick

Trash Bags/Trash Cans

Peggy Raybeck

Beginners Clinic and Practice Clinics

Sara Elzey
 Carol Kleckner
 Mara Bacsujlaky
 Kathleen Boyle
 Sunnifa Deehr
 Mari Hoe-Raitto
 Carol Kaynor
 Nina Ruckhaus
 Lisa Stuby
 Sara Tabbert
North Pole Championship Race
 Sara Elzey
 Sunnifa Deehr
White Mountains Event
 Sara Tabbert
 Brandon McGrath-Bernhard

Fun Races

Kathleen Boyle
 Chris Burrow
 Chuck and Tone Deehr
 Sunnifa Deehr
 Pat DeRuyter
 Brandon McGrath-Bernard
 Penny Parker
 Alice Stickney
 Sara Tabbert
 Pauline Tise
 Andy Warwick
 Jesse Warwick

Birch Hill Race

Jesse Warwick
 Jim Herriges
 Kathleen Boyle
 Sara Elzey
 Carol Kleckner
 Lisa Stuby
 Andy Warwick

Orienteering Race

Sunnifa Deehr
 Pat DeRuyter

UAF Race

Brian Charlton
 Emma Charlton
 Michelle Charlton
 Jan Lokken
 Penny Parker
 Alice Stickney
 Lisa Stuby

Fun Race and Pizza Party

Jamie Marschner
 Pat DeRuyter
 Sara Tabbert
 Andy Warwick
 Don Kiely
 Alice Stickney
 Pauline Tise

Thank You ASPA Sponsors!

AND in addition to our AWESOME volunteers, ASPA could not offer the nice prizes, etc. that we give out at our races if not for our SPONSORS! Please support the businesses listed and let them know you appreciate their support of the Alaska Skijoring and Pulk Association.

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Raven Cross Country
Splash n Dash Car Wash
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Bud Marschner photographs from the Final Fun Race and Pizza Party, March 30th at the Musher's Hall



2013-14 ASPA BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND COORDINATORS

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Trail Tour Coordinators: Sara Tabbert, stabbert2hotmail.com; Mara Bacsujlaky, mbacsujlaky@acsalaska.net, Janna Miller, janna@alaska.net

Hotline: Sara Tabbert, stabbert2hotmail.com

Newsletter Coordinator: Lisa Stuby, 458-7657, las@acsalaska.net

Membership Coordinator: Jamie Marschner, 458-0462, marschne@arsc.edu

Beginner's Clinic Coordinator: Sara Elzey, 378-5024, skijorex2@hotmail.com; Carol Kleckner, 479-0430

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Trail Grooming: Pat DeRuyter, 479-7853, patderuyter@gmail.com

Board Members at Large: Sunnifa Deehr, sdviolin@hotmail.com; Hillary Schwafel, hschwafel@gmail.com; Jesse Warwick, harding247@hotmail.com; Mara Bacsujlaky, mbacsujlaky@acsalaska.net, Sara Tabbert, stabbert@hotmail.com, Nina Ruckhaus, noruckhaus@alaska.edu

Paw Prints and Ski Tracks is a monthly newsletter published during the winter season by the Alaska Skijoring and Pulk Association. 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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Alaska Skijoring and Pulk Association

P. O. Box 82843 ♦ Fairbanks, Alaska 99708-2843

Hotline: 907-457-5456 ♦ Website: www.alaskaskijoring.org