



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!

Trail Tours Every Sunday

Check Hotline (45-SKIJOR) or alaskaskijoring.org

March 29 End of Year Race and Pizza Party

Musher's Hall
Jamie Marschner, 458-0462
Also, check Hotline (45-SKIJOR) or alaskaskijoring.org

April 4 Lee's Cabin Over- night or day trip

Sara Tabbert
stabbert@hotmail.com
479-0456

2015 Chena Lake and Birch Hill Races

Sara Tabbert again acted as race director for this year's Chena Lakes Race that was held at Chena Lake Recreation Area on the Mike Agbaba Trail System. Participants could race as short as 3.8 miles, with a few intrepid skijorers doing the 12-mile loop. The Race took place on Sunday and Parks and Recreation groomed the trails on race day morning. MANY thanks to their efforts on a day when most people in Fairbanks and North Pole sleep in, drink coffee, and read the Sunday newspaper. The trails were in excellent shape despite a much needed dump of new snow. The new snow meant that the later departing skijorers probably had to work harder as the trails did not have time to set up prior to the race. This did not seem to deter anyone from having a good time. As always, these trails provide opportunities for going astray, and we had a couple racers who may have chosen their own adventure. This is a traditional part of the Chena Lakes race.

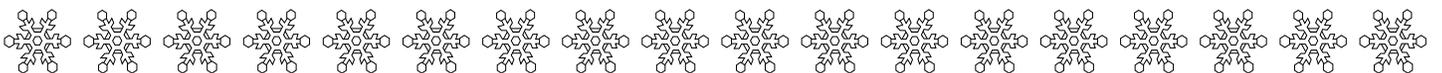
Many thanks to timers Chris Burrow, Alice Stickney, and photographer Bud Marschner, as well as several others who helped get racers to the start line. We had a good turnout and racers took on distances ranging from 3.8 to 12 miles. It was particularly gratifying to see many new faces among the dogs and humans at this event.

The following weekend was the annual Birch Hill Races on March 8, 2015. Nina Ruckhaus and Sunnifa Deehr were the race directors. The 2015 Birch Hill Race began with a large field of 11 racers in a mass start 7.5 km 1-dog race. First to the finish was Rebecca Knight with Clyde, shortly followed by Heidi Brook and Sasha, and Bruce Miller with Roy. The two-dog interval start race was led by Sunnifa Deehr, and followed by Sarah Elzey. The event was capped by a three-team relay race, with nine contestants and very evenly paced dogs and people.

The snowy, windy weather was ameliorated by excellent grooming prior to the start at 9am. Unfortunately, signs that were put out the night before were buried or removed to get the grooming equipment through, but no one got lost. For future races, course setters will need to do a last minute sweep. The early start was set up so that some racers could get to the North Pole Championships. Nina was assisted by volunteers Jesse and Andy Warwick, Lisa Stuby, Kathleen Boyle, Chris Burrow, Chuck and Tone Deehr, and Bruce Miller. This is the 14th consecutive Birch Hill Race put on by ASPA and it is one of the highlights of the year's skijoring events with contestants also from Anchorage and Whitehorse.

Race results for the Chena Lake and Birch Hill races can be found at: <http://www.alaskaskijoring.org/events/results/2014-2015/>

PHOTOGRAPHS FROM MARCH 1, 2015 CHENA LAKE RACE by Bud Marschner



Trail of the Month by Lisa Stuby

This month's trail of the month are the Mike Agbaba Trail System at Chena Lake Recreation Area in North Pole, Alaska. These consist of 12 miles of groomed, multiple-use trails along Chena Lake and surrounding park areas. You can choose from the 3.8 mi, 5.1 mi, 6.5 mi, 9.5 mi or 12 mile loops for skijoring or any other activity. Trailhead is located at Lake Park near the children's playground equipment. To get there from Fairbanks take the Richardson highway through North Pole and follow the signs. The turn off will be on your right and the park will be to the left off of the highway. Go through the main entrance and turn left on Lake Park Road. The trailhead is a short distance down this road near the children's playground. For those with weak bladders (me), before you turn left to the children's play area and start of the Mike Agbaba trails, to the right are two outhouses and they are usually stocked with plenty of toilet paper. A map of these trails can be found at www.alaskaskijoring.org.

These are among our favorites. They are usually groomed and well-signed. There tends to be a fair bit of snow machine activity, so you do need to keep a "heads up" to young and fearless snowmachiners and yes, they do tend to scuff up the trails. Ice fishing huts will dot the area and provide some pets to my social butterfly dog.

I can't talk about the Mike Agbaba trails without telling a little bit about the man the trails were named after. Despite much searching, I haven't found much about the man, although what I did discover made me realize how important he is to the present mushing community in Interior Alaska. Mike Agbaba was born on March 14, 1898 in Alaska and died on September 2, 1978 at the age of 80. The Alaska Dog Musher's Association (ADMA) was founded in 1948, in part through the efforts of Mike Agbaba and Jake Butler, to promote dog mushing, dog racing, the humane treatment of dogs, and especially, the North American Championships.

Mike Agbaba won the Yukon and Alaska Territorial Championship in 1948 and mushed in the Fairbanks to Livengood Race in 1940 and 1941, called the "All-Alaska Dog Derby". Taken from a 1988 article by Susan Will in an issue of Mushing Magazine, "The history of major Fairbanks dog sled races extends back to the 58-mile 1927 Signal Corps race. This race started in Fairbanks, ran north to the community of Summit and returned to finish in Fairbanks. Then came the Sweepstakes Trophy Competition, which preceded the Livengood races and began in 1936. It consisted of three 30-mile heats from Fairbanks to the Chatanika River and Back. But, races to Livengood were different. In 1940 and 1941, the races ran 165 miles from Fairbanks to Livengood and back. This longer race developed in part as a result of several mushing organizers who were inspired by the earlier Nome All-Alaska Sweepstakes, a grueling 400-mile race run in the early 1900's."

The article continues: "The Fairbanks to Livengood dog race was the first to be broadcast live on KFAR radio. First place prize was \$3,000, a tidy sum in 1940 and 1941. Without adequate grooming equipment we have today, the trail committee spent weeks prepping the trail for the race using snowshoes, etc. The race began under the Cushman Bridge. Race progress reports were provided by small-plane pilots, staff members of the US Signal Corps and KFAR's transmitter station. The race was a nice distraction from World War II, but only briefly. This race was the last major Fairbanks race until 1946, when the first North American Championship was held. Of a field of 12 mushers in 1940, Mike Agbaba finished 9th and claimed a prize of \$50.00. His finish time in 1940 was 21:35:56. The winner was Bergman Kokrine with a time of 18:07:33. In 1941 out of a field of 13, he finished 10th, with no registered time. These are slow times by today's standards. The Livengood races faded into history, but they proved to be an interesting antecedent to what has developed into spring and mid-distance racing in Alaska today."

So, the next time you do a trail, rather than just put "time and miles" on your dogs, take a few seconds to remember where these trails come from, the history and people who have influenced the present-day mushing community in Interior Alaska.

Ways Your Dog Shows You Love

Here is an interesting article I found on the Vetstreet.com website by Dr. Marty Becker. The article dates to March 2, 2015 and can be found at: http://www.vetstreet.com/dr-marty-becker/ways-your-dog-shows-you-love?WT.mc_id=Outbrain%3BPremium

We know that we love our dogs, but do they love us back? Dr. Becker thinks they show us love in ways that are distinctly individual to each dog and person. Recently, scientists have begun to explore more deeply the question of which emotions animals feel and how they display them. Here are some of the ways, through body language, brain response and the choices they make, that dogs may show us love.

They are willing to make eye contact with us. In the world of dogs, making eye contact can be an aggressive act. Polite dogs, who just want to get along, avoid the long, hard stare that can intimidate or challenge other dogs. They don't stare at people that way either, but they accept our looks of love and will even seek out eye contact from us. When our dogs are happy and comfortable with us, they give us that special gaze that says, "All is right with the world." Their eyes are relaxed and normal size, showing little of the white. To build a closer relationship with your dog, you can teach him to look at you for guidance.

They react happily to the sound of our voice. Don't you love it when you come home and call your dog, and he comes bounding joyfully to you? It's even more special when he leaves a fascinating scent or favorite toy (or brings it to you) to come and greet you. I think it's one of the best feelings in the world, even if sometimes it's just cupboard love.

They know our scent. Did you know that your scent triggers activity in the reward center of your dog's brain? The area known as the caudate nucleus is rich in dopamine receptors, and in humans, it lights up when we anticipate pleasurable experiences, such as eating Mom's fried chicken or reuniting with someone we love. Neuroscientist Gregory Berns found that when he trained dogs to enter an MRI machine willingly and unsexed and then scanned their brains while presenting them with the odors of different people, only one type of smell activated the caudate: that of someone they knew. In his book, *How Dogs Love Us*, he writes: "Could it be longing? Or love? It seemed entirely possible. These patterns of brain activation looked strikingly similar to those observed when humans are shown pictures of people they love."

They wag their tails. Lots of people think a tail wag is always a friendly gesture, but it can have lots of different meanings— some not so nice. But when our dogs give a full-body wag with the tail held at mid-height, the message is clear: they're happy and excited to see the person they love. Take a close look next time you see one of these happy wags: If your dog's tail wags more to the right side of his rear when he sees you, it's a signal that he feels good about your presence. That intriguing bit of information was discovered by an Italian neuroscientist and two veterinarians who used cameras to track the tail-wag angles of 30 pet dogs as they were shown their owner, a person they didn't know, a cat and an unfamiliar dog. When the dogs saw their owners, their tails wagged most strongly to the right side of the body.

They snuggle with us. Touch is an intrinsic part of any loving relationship. There's nothing so satisfying as sitting or lying on a sofa or sprawling on the floor with one dog tucked in at the crook of your knees and a couple more snuggled in on either side of you. Other dogs might lean against us, sleep with a head on our feet or lay a paw on our knee. I don't know that there's any scientific proof that this means our dogs love us, but it sure feels that way to me. They could lie on their beds or curl up with each other, but they choose to be physically close to their human family members. That's really special.

They smile at us. Canine smiles have several meanings, but when your dog's mouth is open and relaxed, what you're most likely seeing is a calm, happy dog. That expression may demonstrate that our dogs are glad to see us, according to research showing that humans and animals use the same muscles to express emotion — including the muscles that form a smile. Naturalist Charles Darwin, who loved dogs, wrote about canine affection for people more than 100 years ago: "But man himself cannot express love and humility by external signs so plainly as does a dog, when with drooping ears, hanging lips, flexuous body, and wagging tail, he meets his beloved master. Nor can these movements in the dog be explained by acts of volition or necessary instincts, any more than the beaming eyes and smiling cheeks of a man when he meets an old friend."

Fun Race #3, March 18, 2015, Creamer's Field by Mara Bacsujlaky

After a week of temperatures that turned trails to sandpaper, made skijorers shiver and grumble, and sled dogs happy (except for perhaps the pointers), our penultimate fun race got underway at 6:00 PM at Creamer's Field. Balmy temperatures put the fun in this particular event. A total of 14 racers and 24 dogs turned out to ski, soak in the sun and roll in the snow. For some racers and their dogs, the event also included a stretch of agility work – as racers and dogs found themselves weaving through an obstacle course of about eight people sitting on stools and chairs in the middle of the race trail – apparently enjoying the sun in a late-afternoon coffee klatch.

The 5.7, 1-dog class and the 3.6 mile, 1-dog class were the largest, with four racers in each class. Gail Davidson with Darna took first in the 5.7 mile, 1-dog, while Kriya Dunlap behind Boomer the Wonder Dog placed first in the 3.6 mile, 1-dog. Other first place finishers were Sara Tabbert with her hard-headed dogs (Moose-the-loaner, Dora) in the 5.7 mile, 2-dog class and Andy Warwick (Yogi, Freddie) in the 3.6 mile, 2-dog class. Sara Elzey (Daria, Kate, Dylan) and Elena Vayndorf (Taiga) took first, second and last in their classes – as they were the only competitors, respectively, in the 3.6 mile, 3-dog class and 1.5 mile, 1-dog class. Thanks to all of the volunteers and especially Mara Bacsujlaky the race director.

A complete list of results can be found at: <http://www.alaskaskijoring.org/events/results/2014-2015/fun-races/>
Photographs below were taken by Lisa Stuby.



IF DOGS RULED THE WORLD

We'd always find somewhere to bury our troubles.

Our spirits would be unleashed.

We'd stop barking up the wrong trees.

We'd always paws for reflection.

Beggars could be choosers.

We'd have faithful friends and loyal love.

We'd give a lick about each other.

From the Sled Dog Central Website

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 _____

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>

2014-15 ASPA BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND COORDINATORS

President: : Jamie Marschner, marschne@arsc.edu

Vice President: Vacant

Treasurer: Sara Elzey, skjorex2@hotmail.com

Secretary: Kathleen Boyle, kboyle@ptialaska.net

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, las@acsalaska.net

Membership Coordinator: Jamie Marschner, marschne@arsc.edu

Beginner's Clinic Coordinator: Sara Elzey, skjorex2@hotmail.com; Carol Kleckner, kleckner@ptialaska.net

Website & e-mail list Coordinator: Don Kiely, donkiely@computer.org

Trail Grooming: Pat DeRuyter, patderuyter@gmail.com.

Board Members at Large: Sunnifa Deehr, sdviolin@hotmail.com; Pauline Tise, puckspazz@gmail.com; Jesse Warwick, harding247@hotmail.com; Mara Bacsujlaky, mbacsujlaky@acsalaska.net; Hilary Schwafel, hschwafel@gmail.com; Sara Tabbert, stabbert@hotmail.com, Nina Ruckhaus, noruckhaus@alaska.edu; Chris Burrow, 619crb@gmail.com

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.



Alaska Skijoring and Pulk Association

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

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

ASPA SPONSORS

Lead Dogs (>\$149):

Alaska Feed Company
Animal House & Noah's Ark
Apocalypse Design
Beaver Sports
Don Kiely Consulting, LLC
North Star Golf Club
Play It Again Sports
Raven Cross Country
Splash n Dash
Warwick and Schikora, CPAs

Swing Dogs (\$100 to \$149):

Aurora Animal Clinic
Cold Spot Feeds
North Pole Veterinary
Santa's Vagabond Travel
Mt. McKinley Animal Hospital

Wheel Dogs (\$50 to \$99):

Denali Chiropractic

Couch Dogs (<\$50):

Marmot Press
Stony Hollow Woodworking

**PLEASE REMEMBER TO
THANK AND SUPPORT THE
BUSINESSES AND INDIVIDU-
ALS WHO SUPPORT ASPA**