



March Madness for Skiers and Skijorers in Fairbanks, Alaska

No, I am not talking basketball, but all of the wonderful skiing and skijoring events that have happened during March 2016. It almost feels like a minor miracle too that with such a warm, low snow year that we were able to do as much skiing as we have. The Tour of Anchorage had to cancel again for the second year due to a lack of snow. Thankfully with snow-making equipment they were able to have some event at Kinkaid Park. Otherwise, I've noticed quite a few Anchorage skiers at Fairbanks events, where we at least had some snow. As I type this, yesterday was the annual Nordic Ski Club of Fairbanks Sonot Kkaazoot and I did the 20 km on the Chena River. Soon after the start at 10:30 AM, I skied through a puddle in the middle of the river up to my ankles! With wet skate boots, I persevered on. By the time I turned around on the inbound a second puddle was about a foot deep. We were told due to the potentially fragile ice, to keep between the classic tracks even if we get wet. From reading the Fairbanks Daily News Miner this morning some of these puddles became more than puddles and really, the river started breaking up during the race. Quite exciting and scary! Had this race happened a day later it would have had to been relocated off of the river. With the unseasonable warm weather, it is amazing that pretty much all of the races have happened with few if any cancellations. If you see any of the fabulous trail groomers, weather for ASPA or NSCF, ADMA, etc. be sure to THANK them for keeping trails skiable in a difficult winter. They are the force behind the miracles!

Also, be sure to THANK all of the volunteers who made this and other local races happen. Actually since the last newsletter reporting events, Sara Tabbert organized the Chena Lakes race on February 27, 2016. Weather was unseasonable warm for late February and trail conditions were EXCELLENT thanks to Ricky Borland and the Parks and Rec department at the Borough who groomed before the race. What could have been an icy lake, was fabulous instead. Eleven participants ran 12 and several club members who came out to volunteer, later took their dogs out for a non-competitive jaunt. Many thanks to Alisha Kottwitz and Alice Stickney for timing and Drew Warf who helped handle at the start line.

The next race happened the NEXT DAY, and the fun continued! This was what has become the annual UAF West Ridge Race and trail conditions were also FABULOUS! The UAF trail groomers groomed them to a fine corduroy. Given the low-snow year, I wasn't sure this race would even happen. But it DID! Many thanks to Brian Charlton for his last stint as the race director. Kathleen Boyle has helped out with many races this year as she did at this race and wrote up the post-race story and you can find this and other race descriptions, stories, and results at the ASPA website under Events/Race Results.

Then the fun continued the following weekend with the annual Birch Hill Race on March 6, 2016. MANY thanks to Chris Burrow for organizing this race and going through the registration process to make the 9k portion an International Federation of Sleddog Sports (IFSS) accredited event. Multiple skijorers were vying for points in hope of representing Team USA at the World Championships in Ontario next winter. However, even slow pokies like me and Killae could also "compete" (more like tour) these fabulous trails which, like the UAF trails are COMPLETELY CLOSED to skijorers during the rest of the winter and are for SKIERS ONLY! I helped mark the course the night beforehand and noticed the also AWESOME trail groomers were using the PistonBully—WOW, this is the Cadillac of trail grooming equipment. While I was setting up I thought the trails were a little icy, BUT the next day when we did the 9km loop, they were corduroy and really

March Madness Continued

nice. I was one BIG smile while doing this race. We weren't just slow because Killae is old, but I didn't want it to end! A huge thank you to the dozen or so race day volunteers, the fine folks at Birch Hill, and the Nordic Ski Club of Fairbanks for wonderfully groomed trails. Also, thank you to the race's sponsors, TRAX Outdoor Center and Aurora Animal Clinic, with a special thanks to Dr. Barb Cole for once again being the ASPA official race veterinarian for an IFSS event.

AND if this wasn't enough, the following week was our annual mid-March evening weekday race at North Star Golf Course. Pat DeRuyter, our long-time Groomer Extraordinaire worked from 2:30 PM in the afternoon until race sign up around 5:00 PM! Trail conditions were also FABULOUS and the race was FUN. A nice way of ending a day. THANKS for Sunnifa Deehr for being race director and a group of enthusiastic young adults that came out to help: Fiona, Josie, Tina, and Cody. According to Pauline Tise who invited them and also helped with this race, they are local middle schoolers who like to volunteer. Fiona helped by taking photographs with my camera and Josie, Cody, and Tina helped time the race. Fiona also quoted about volunteering at this event; "I had so much fun taking pictures of the skijor race. My hands got a little nipped, but I survived. The racers were really fast. One of the dogs ran up to me and tried to lick the camera. Then the racer fell, but she looked like she would be fine. I hope to do this again sometime."

As I type this, I am on the verge of attending our final race and Pizza Party at ADMA. Today is Easter and we are starting races in the afternoon. Sounds like the ADMA Groomer Extraordinaire (Sam Harrel) was out trying to ready the trail yesterday. I'll report on this event in the final newsletter of the 2015/2016 season in April.

I handed my camera to some willing volunteers who took photographs of the UAF Race and the mid-week race at North Star in the next few pages. Enjoy!!

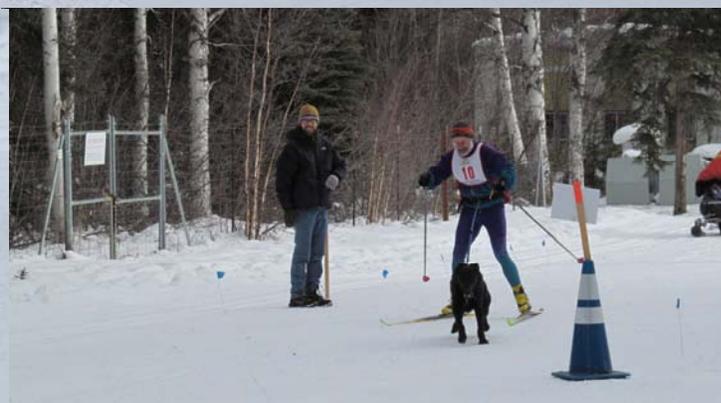
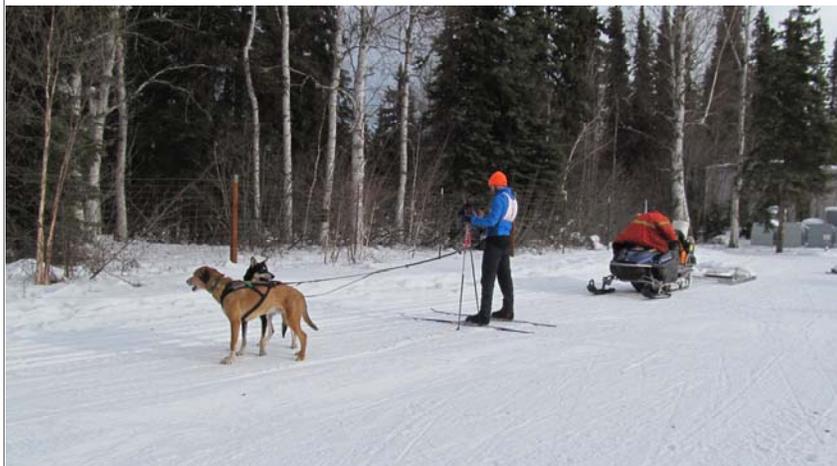
ASPA Looking for New Board Member for the 2016/2017 Skijor Season

I am fresh from the awesome end of year skijor race and BBQ, followed by the post-race skijor meeting. Now, I'll write more about the race in the next newsletter, but I do wish to let the membership know that ASPA is looking for an additional board member for the 2016/2017 season. Board meetings take place once a month during September to April and are very fun. Jamie Marschner will continue to be the awesome and now very long-term ASPA president and she always brings yummy goodies to the meetings. Term can be for one year or more. It is always good to have new people, with new ideas, etc. Likewise, if you don't want to commit to being on a Board, you can always volunteer in other ways or be a non-board member. I ceased to be on the board a few years ago, but continue to be the ASPA newsletter editor. ASPA is always looking for people to help coordinate the fun races. You never have to worry about taking on the reins and being alone in the howling wind, there will always be plenty of support and most of the tasks aren't that complicated.

Speaking of the newsletter, I've been the ASPA newsletter editor for over 10 years now and am running out of ideas. I have some promises of articles for the next season, which is great, after all we gotta keep the newsletter from becoming the "Lisa and Killae's EXCELLENT Winter Adventures Show" because other ASPA members do such neat things too. I just need to hear about them! But after next season I will be wanting to turn the reins over to someone new. I'll still contribute articles and photographs. So, in planning for the October and November 2016 newsletters, I will want the membership to be thinking of sending me stories and photographs of neat things you and your dog(s) do during this summer. One thing I've noticed in this club is most people do many different activities with their dogs, from agility, fun races (thinking Mosquito Meander, Jingle in July), more serious dryland races, hiking, backpacking, or just daily walks/runs. Any articles you submit don't have to be long or even with correct grammar. In a hurry, just type out something in a few minutes, attach to an e-mail and hit SEND. I'll edit it for typos, etc. if you wish. Writing and submitting articles doesn't have to be a DRAG.

Next month's newsletter is what I like to call, "The Volunteer Edition" where I will announce the 2015/2016 season Volunteer of the Year award and list all of the volunteers, without whom, this season would not have EXISTED! If you are interested in joining the ASPA Board, send an e-mail to Jamie Marschner or really any board member listed on the last page.

Below are some photographs Jan Marshall took at the UAF Race on February 28, 2016



Below are some photographs Fiona took at the week-day ASPA Fun Race at North Star Golf Course on March 16, 2016



2015-16 ASPA BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND COORDINATORS

President: : Jamie Marschner, marschne@arsc.edu

Vice President: Vacant

Treasurer: Sara Elzey, skijorex2@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, lstuby@gci.net

Membership Coordinator: Jamie Marschner, marschne@arsc.edu

Beginner's Clinic Coordinator: Sara Elzey, skijorex2@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; 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 lstuby@gci.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
Aurora Animal Clinic
Beaver Sports
Cold Spot Feeds
Don Kiely Consulting, LLC
Holy Dog Kennels
Metropolitan Garage
North Pole Veterinary
North Star Golf Club
Raven Cross Country
Splash n Dash
Warwick and Schikora, CPAs

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

Mt. McKinley Animal Hospital
Santa's Vagabond Travel

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

HooDoo Brewery

Couch Dogs (<\$50):

Marmot Press
Stony Hollow Woodworking

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