



*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!*

### Second ASPA Fun Race of the 2016/2017 Season!!

The second race of the 2016/2017 season took place at Creamers on December 14, 2016. Despite an ever-shifting weather forecast and some unexpected challenges in trail prep due to lots of new snow, a large field of skijorers showed up on a snowy day. The temperature was a balmy +10 and heavy snow fell during most of the race. Skijorers also faced the additional hurdle of trail damage from the previous night's snowmachine traffic, which was often hidden by the layer of fresh snow. We again had a good number of young racers and new faces. Thanks to Alice Stickney and Kathleen Boyle for timing, Lisa Stuby and Mara Bacsujlaky for helping with the farmhouse and registration, and to Nina Ruckhaus and Fred DeLepper for handling during the race, as well as to all the groomers who worked to get the trails ready. And many THANKS to Sara Tabbert for organizing this race. Photographs below were taken by Brendan Scanlon so the newsletter editor could "race".

### Weekend Trail Tours

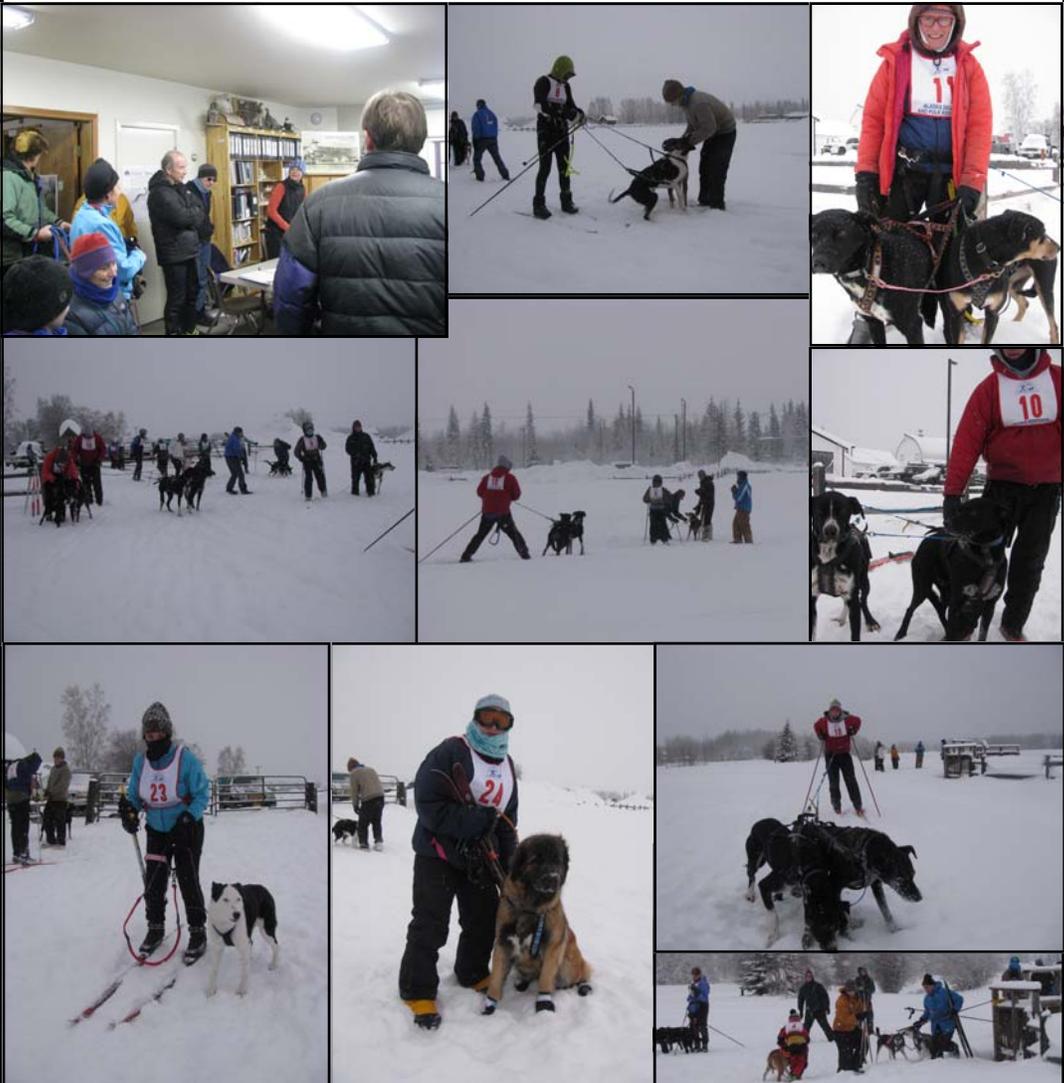
Check Hotline (45-SKIJOR), alaskaskijoring.org, or your e-mail list for upcoming tours

### February 4 Ski Practice Clinic for Beginners

10:00 AM Creamer's Field. Meet at the Farmhouse. More info contact Lisa Stuby, lstuby@gci.net

### February 6 Wax Clinic at Raven Cross Country, 6:00 PM

Pre-registration recommended. Fred Raymond 456-5070



## Photographs of Second ASPA Fun Race of the 2016/2017 Season (Cont.)



### **Ski Practice Clinic—February 4th, 2017 10:00 AM, Creamer's Field**

A SKI Practice Clinic is scheduled for Saturday, February 4th at Creamers Field. This clinic will emphasize the basics and is meant for novice skijorers. We are going to discuss and practice SKIING basics and I will share some tips and tricks to skiing and skijoring. 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 10:00 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 Creamers Farmhouse. The clinic will be cancelled if the temperature is colder than -15 at 9:30 am.

The Practice clinic will be fairly low-key compared to Sara Elzey's very comprehensive and detailed Beginner's Clinic that she held during late November 2016. Nevertheless, since this clinic is geared to beginners please be cognizant of the other novice participants. In past years I've gone out after discussing skiing basics with my dog, who used to play "rabbit". He is now 12 years old and pretty slow these days. However, if I end up with a SMALL group with SLOW couch potatoes, we could practice skijoring with our FRIENDLY, social dogs.

So come and practice skiing in preparation for skijoring. If you would like to help out please contact Lisa Stuby at 371-6460, or e-mail her at [lstuby@gci.net](mailto:lstuby@gci.net).

### **Wax Clinic at Raven Cross Country, February 6, 2017**

Fred Raymond of Raven Cross Country had the first of two ski waxing clinics for the 2016/2017 season to ASPA members on December 9th at 6:00 PM at his Well Street shop. The second clinic will be on February 6, 2017. Fred is an expert on waxing and caring for skis and is a great source for advice on all things cross-country skiing. A good wax job like knowing proper technique can make a WORLD of difference that will make skiing more enjoyable!

Space is limited and pre-registration is required. Contact Fred at 456-5070 or e-mail at [ravenxc@alaska.net](mailto:ravenxc@alaska.net). Come and learn how to best take care of those new skis you got for Christmas--and prepare to give them the glide you and your dogs will appreciate! Clinic is for ASPA members only.



## Keeping Dogs Safely Behind a Fence by Sara Tabbert

*I WELCOME articles, especially from ASPA members. Below is a good and important article on keeping our dogs safe.*

It seems like there have been a number of sad events for community members where escaped dogs have met bad ends. I don't think there is any way to guarantee that a dog will NEVER get loose – they are dogs, we are humans – and our agendas sometimes differ greatly. However, I thought I'd resubmit this article about our personal attempt to solve the problem. It has been working well for nearly ten years. A couple of updates are at the end of the article.

### Article from 2007 –

I wanted to put up a fence that provided my dogs with a large area to run, had a good level of security, and fell within my financial resources.

I decided to combine two fencing systems. I bought an “invisible fence” package that utilizes a boundary wire and shock collars (or “radio-static” collars – trust me, it's a good shock!) These systems are designed to be buried around the edge of a yard. When the dog gets close to the wire, the receiver on the collar first beeps, then if they remain in the area, zaps. I knew I couldn't trust this alone. Instead of burying the boundary wire, we strung it along the lower portion of seven foot high black poly fencing. The actual poly fence provides a visual barrier and some measure of protection; the shock collars are a reminder to the dogs to stay away from the fence. With our boggy ground it is nearly impossible to put in anything they can't dig under. I opted for the wire/receiver option over a standard electric fence for a couple of reasons – one, it seemed simpler, two, the dogs wouldn't have to touch the fence to get the message.



Team Couch at a respectful distance from fence



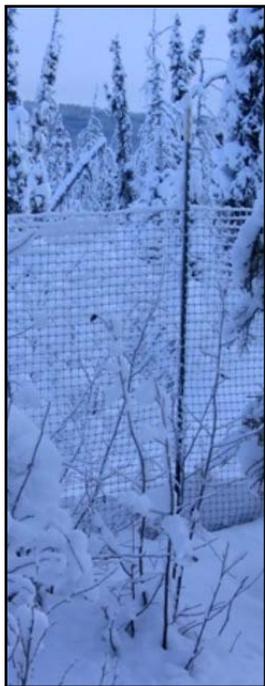
Boundary wire attached to gate and fence

We mounted the poly fence on ten foot metal stakes using the wire ties used for rebar. The “invisible fence” wire is mounted to the “visible fence” using plastic coated twist ties. A box inside the house sets off an alarm if the wire is broken (It can easily be spliced back together). We built in some loops of slack into the wire so that if a moose crashed through, the wire wouldn't break. There appeared to be one moose that got in and out this summer with minimal damage. I have seen several moose right on the edge of the fence, but they seem mainly to be deterred.

The black boxes that deliver the shock came mounted on rather flimsy collars with plastic buckles. I went ahead and remounted them on standard nylon collars and they have held up just fine. I don't always put the zap collars on, but I do it frequently enough to remind the dogs that the fence is not to be messed with.

In all, I have about an acre of fenced area. I enjoy having my dogs come in the house and into my studio, so we more or less enclosed the “living area” of our property. The fence went up in May, and there have been no escapes since that time. The batteries on the collars seem to last quite a while. I still tie up my dogs every time I leave home.

## Keeping Dogs Safely Behind a Fence (Continued)



Stake and fence



Remounted collar

There are a few drawbacks to consider. Although my dogs won't go out, it is possible for loose neighborhood dogs to find their way in. It hasn't happened much, but it has happened. Also, my dogs dig. This doesn't really matter in my yard, but some of you with more civilized homesteads might want to consider the potential damage. Of course, an area separate from your front yard could be fenced off. I can expect to have to maintain the posts and fence when the ground thaws again and things shift around (But that's true for everything in permafrost). And last but definitely not least, it costs a good chunk of change.

The entire thing (invisible fence, two pre-built metal gate sections, four receiver collars, fencing, and posts for an acre) cost about \$1,600. The collars cost \$50/ each, making it a viable system for three or four dogs, but probably not for many more than that. This is a lot of money. It also took about two solid days of work to get the fence up.

At the same time, consider how much it can cost to repair an injured dog, let alone any of the other potential hazards I mentioned earlier. I still think I'm money ahead. It's a lot of fun to watch everyone run and play, and my dogs and I seem quite satisfied with our compromise. And to paraphrase the TV commercial – "Peace of mind that comes from knowing where your dogs are at 3 am – Priceless."

### 2017 updates:

We have had a few one-dog escapes when the batteries on the collars die, or we've forgotten to put the collars on. It seems like the season for attempted breakouts is the spring, so we're pretty vigilant during that time. We have added a dog to the pack who has never known life pre-fence and she has zero interest in getting out.

We also put a 2' run of chicken wire around the bottom of the poly fence to keep the hares from chewing through it. For whatever reason after the first year we have not had a single moose go through the fence. Do moose learn? I don't know.

As for neighbor dogs breaking in, that has stopped, but three years ago a porcupine did get inside when all the dogs were loose, with predictably poor outcomes for dogs and porcupine.

### Piton 1985-1996 by Philip Marshall

*And here is another good article sent to me from an ASPA member. Philip Marshall sent me a VERY cool story of a very cool and special dog. I hope reading this inspires other members to submit articles on their current or past furry companions.*

Jan Lokken Marshall and I obtained Piton, a Husky mix, from Dick Flaherty here in Fairbanks in May 1985. She named him well as you'll read. "Piton" means a rock spike used to protect climbing. Piton was the lone survivor of a pack of pups; he had had the tip of his tail chewed off. He had a distinctive black fur patch at the base of his tail on his back. I do believe he was not far removed from his wolf predecessors. He was somewhat reserved all his life, except when playing "Keep Away" from the broom I wielded.

The following year we hiked in the McCarthy area. He almost bailed off the cable tramway into the Kennicott River, as he so disliking the metal-grating and roaring river underfoot. Mosquitoes were out and eating him up, so we put a dab of DET on his nose. He licked it and threw up.

Piton grew to be a 100-pounder. One summer on Skyline Drive he tried to bring down a speeding pickup by biting the truck's tire. He fractured his front leg that the fine vet at Ballaine Vet Clinic pinned and fixed. Piton preferred to sleep out in his doghouse all year round. Long winter ski-tours began with Bob Sutherland, Mike Schmoker, Margaret Mannix, Paul Nault and Mike Sterling.

In December 1988 we drove Outside to coach at the Fairplay (Colorado) Nordic Center run by Gary Nichols. Due to ice we rolled the pickup at the end of the Cassiar Highway, but it didn't upset him. Farther down the road, he had a terrible blowout in the back of the pickup where he would spend the night. Later, we thought sure he was a goner when he tried to cross the BC Highway in front of a semi. Out of sight, he then miraculously reappeared, unscathed.

The Nordic center was at 10,000' elevation. Piton was content to be picketed all day long in the snow amidst the aspens, greeting skiers travelling to the trails. Gary and I had some superb mountain skis ascents and descents on Mts. Bross, Lincoln and Elbert accompanied by Piton. Buffalo Peaks with three feet of fresh snow finally bogged him down and it was the one time he wailed to stop. We lived on the 1,400-acre Silver Heels Ranch near Como. It had a two-mile long driveway on which he would pull in our sled of groceries after a fresh snowfall. Once when it was plowed, we clocked him sprinting at over 20mph for a mile. Packs of coyotes routinely circled our cabin and called to him. One afternoon returning to the house, the coyotes were in full view and talking to him. He took off after them and they ran away. He disappeared over a rise and I had the sinking feeling that they had lured him in to a deadly ambush. Thirty anxiety-ridden minutes later he reemerged unscathed, jauntily trotting back to the cabin. We shall never know what transpired between those canine cousins.

That season we visited Aspen Ski Area. We tied him up in the nearby woods since we couldn't have a loose dog at this fancy place. He howled mightily as his pack left him, perhaps forever he must have thought. While riding up the chairlift I spotted a wolf running across the slope! Then I thought, "Geez, that looks like Piton". Sure enough, he had chewed through the line, followed the car scent up the road, then our scents wafting down through the air onto the ski runs. I got off as quickly as I could, raced down calling for him, and finally snagged him before the Ski Patrol! What a heart-felt reunion followed. So we parked away from the other cars in the lot, chained him to the truck ("truck" signified "home" and it had Alaska license plates) outside since it was sunny and "hot" for a husky, and continued skiing since we had day passes. His presence was just too much attraction for one passer-by who insisted on petting him even though Piton had warned him otherwise. It didn't help that he had just experienced such a close call and he did bite the man. Amazingly, the man told us and apologized for having acted so unwisely. We added a sign: "DO NOT PET THE HUSKY! HE'S CRANKY."

The Southwest was hard on Piton. Desert cactus needles punctured his paws. Once he was tied up in Crested Butte and a skunk sprayed him! And he was scratched and bloodied by a raccoon in Cuba, New Mexico. Finally, we all had to flee for our lives after he became a chicken-murderer on a ranch in Taos! (We did leave a sizeable payment for the rancher).

### Piton (Continued)

On the return drive back to Alaska, we paused in Banff. Here Piton met his first fire hydrant. And at Lake Louise, Japanese tourists asked to be photographed with the “Eskimo Dog.” After days driving back, by Tok he smelled home and became ebullient.

Piton’s climbing career took off. He ascended the West Ridge of Institute Peak above the Canwell Gacier. It was amazing to see how at ease he was him climbing and traversing 50-degree, thousand-foot slopes we were cramponing across. His crampons were built in. One summer he climbed a rock step above Michael Creek in the Deltas that his human handler couldn’t follow. He made winter and spring climbs of Bivouac, Norwegian, and other peaks near the Augustana Glacier. One involved a lengthy climb up from the Delta River. Once up in the high basin I spotted two wolves, one black and one gray, crossing the drainages. Luckily he never saw them and we went on to bag the summit of the basin. I say luckily because once climbing Miller Peak above the Delta he just took off down into the next basin, thousands of feet below, probably after sheep. Finally, he heard me calling and returned quite spent after his own expedition. He loved nothing better than to make solo forays in the back-country, as he did one summer to the west of Tangle Lakes. He was absent for over two hours, following his nose, probably after caribou, but we had the rare opportunity to track him with binoculars in this open country. It was astounding to witness such an athletic display of strength and grace flowing across the landscape.

This dog did have other run-ins with the law. He was territorial and would bark at pedestrians. The dog-catcher nabbed him and so we constructed the fenced-in kennel. But off-line on a hike to Triple Lakes down by McKinley Village, out of the Park we thought, he was arrested by the Park Ranger who approached us asking, “This is the friendliest wolf I’ve ever met. Is he yours?” Apologies and a bigger fine ensued.

One fall out at “Janheim” at Cleary-Summit, Piton disappeared. For five days we called, looked and pined for him. We thought for sure he’d been hit on the Steese Highway or shot. One last time we went out to Cleary calling for him, and lo and behold, came the most plaintive wolf howl from the tool shed! I had accidentally shut him in the shed and there he had remained, quiet, until now. There was no BM, but he certainly peed immediately.

He dearly loved fishing at Chitina and snagged more than one red that had slipped out of the net on to the rocks. His favorite sport was bagging squirrels. He’d point to them up in the tree, then I’d come over to shake the black spruce. Tamiascurius would make a “Leap for Life” to another tree, and if they didn’t make it, he dispatched them in one chomp. Moose encounters were a standoff and luckily he never got kicked. Once I brought back moose ears for him; his eyes always grew big with that scent.

Porcupines were another matter. After his first face-full of quills, he did seem to seek revenge. Numerous visits to the vet finally resulted in our carrying Ketamine (when one could still get it) so that we could anesthetize him and not cut short our outing.

This dog was a natural puller. He loved to skijor and uphill made no difference. The first time I skijored him was out at the nordic trails on Eielson Air Force Base. He just took off like a sprinter from the blocks. The downhill turns were unbelievable. Jan entered him in his first race at Creamer’s and they won, winning with a pulk. He once skijored Peg Schaffhauser, Jan and sled all the way out from Wolf Run Cabin to the Elliot Highway in a heavy storm and low temperatures. Kay Kindt once borrowed him for a multi-day skijor up and down the Canwell Glacier. He pulled her everywhere. On another spring mountain outing on the Augustana Glacier across the Delta River from Pump Station 10, he went after a moose and disappeared for quite awhile- still hooked up to a sled!

Piton was a pyro- he loved fireworks! Every New Year’s in the back yard he would bark at the Roman candles going off and jump several body-lengths up into the air to try and snag the helicopters lifting off.

In later years he would luxuriate lying on our bed upstairs. Morning visits to rouse us to feed him ‘breakie were the few snuggles he would allow himself with humans.

### Piton (Continued)

The inevitable too quickly arrived. Piton slowed down in a few months. Then one morning going out to get the newspaper, his legs became wobbly and he just keeled over. We rushed him to Aurora Animal Clinic. Dr. Carol Stewart performed the exploratory surgery that revealed extensive liver sarcoma. The big wooly's decent life had come to an end. Dr. Val Stuve sadly put him to sleep and there wasn't a dry eye in the clinic because he was well-known and esteemed as a dog's dog.

His ashes are beneath a piton tied to a spruce in our dog lot, and beneath a spruce down at Michael Creek. Thus ended a life well-realized as a canine, climber and companion.

Here are a few photographs of this remarkable dog taken throughout his life and adventures.



Piton and Philip Marshall at 12 Mile Summit, May 1985

Piton and Jan Lokken Marshall on Gilmore Ski Trail, Nov 1986



Piton on Mt. Prindle, June 1990

Piton at Kennicott Glacier, McCarthy, June 1986

K-2 and Piton on Gilmore Trail Rd., Dec 1990

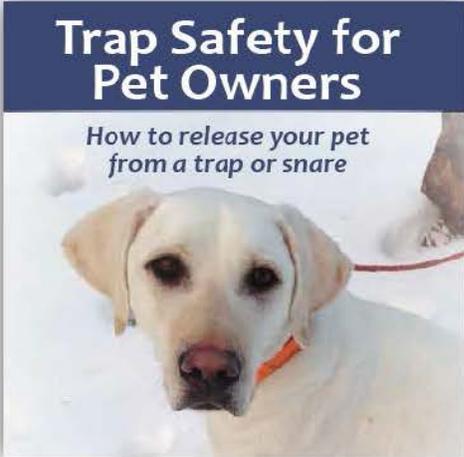
# Sharing trails & safety around wildlife

## A workshop for dog owners

Sponsored by the Alaska Department of Fish and Game  
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- Hands on practice releasing traps & snares
- Recognizing & avoiding high risk situations
- How to react when encountering moose, wolves or bears
- Performing resuscitation & first aid to your injured dog



**Monday, February 13<sup>th</sup> 2017**

**6:00 pm**

**Hunter Education and Indoor Shooting  
Range Classroom, 1501 College Road  
Fairbanks**

Presented by Mike Taras, Bob Hunter  
and Dr. Kimberlee Beckmen



**Sign up by emailing name and contact number to:**

[dfg.dwc.vet@alaska.gov](mailto:dfg.dwc.vet@alaska.gov)



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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. 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 25<sup>th</sup> of every month to lstuby@gci.net.



**Alaska Skijoring and Pulk Association**

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