# Hike!

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# *Hike!*

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## Photo Credits

**Cover:** Geoff Carter and Ian Higgins round a corner at the '98 Sydney Sled Dog Shield - Photo: Peter Komidar

**Sleds at the A5000 (Kontroversy Korner)** - Photo Fiona & Andrew Matthews

**Mark George at Sydney Sleddog Sprint '98 (Readers Speak)** - A&F Matthews

**Cyberhusky Sled Dog Pups in Ute (2nd last page)** - Andrew & Fiona Matthews

**Teekah on a hike in Lava Canyon (Mushing Sports)** - Marco Coleman

## Production Crew

Andrew & Lisa Gersbach.

# The Steve Carrick Column

## Iditarod Preparation Articles in *Hike!*

In a coup for ***Hike!*** Aussie musher Steve Carrick has agreed to provide monthly articles on his experiences in the lead-up to the 1999 Iditarod. These articles will feature his varied training and racing activities as he prepares for the great race.

## Distance Training Articles

But Steve's input to ***Hike!*** does not end there. Upon his return to Australia, Steve has agreed to provide monthly articles on training for distance races.

Each month, Steve will provide advice on where you should be at with your training regime.

## A Second Distance Race for Sydney

Steve, in conjunction with the Siberian Husky Club of NSW is also staging a distance race in 1999. Steve will be providing more details on this 50km race in future editions.

## Keep in Contact with Steve while he's in Alaska

If you are on the internet you can even email Steve direct. Find out what he's doing and where. Steve can be emailed at

crack@ozemail.com.au

**Peter Komidar**

# Mushing All Over the World - Part I

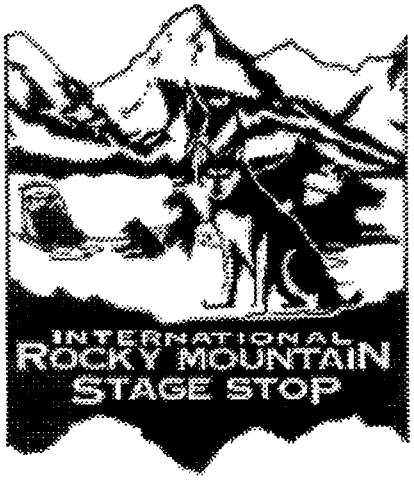
# The Race to Immunise

Wyoming's International Rocky Mountain Stage Stop Sled Dog Race, also known as "the Race to Immunise", runs from January 30th - February 10th each year through north-western Wyoming winter terrain.

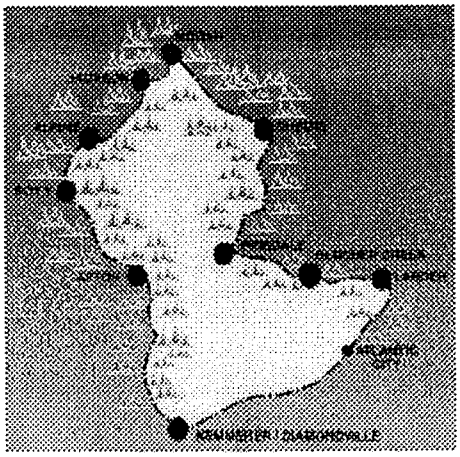
*Billy Snodgrass of Dubois, WY coming through Sinks Canyon on the trail to Lander.*

Organisers Jayne Ottman, and Frank Teasley created this annual event in 1996 to celebrate the contribution of the 1925 diphtheria antitoxin transport, via dog sled, to Nome, Alaska. The Race to Immunise also aims to raise public awareness of the need for children, especially those under the age of two, to be vaccinated against preventable diseases

Teasley, an avid musher himself, formatted the race to be a dog-friendly competition with spectator access.




The almost 400-mile course winds through ten Wyoming communities, starting and ending in Jackson Hole. Mushers also camp out in the winter elements during two legs along the way. Each day of the Race to Immunise is a brand new race, with the mushers leaving for the next stage in the reverse order of their arrival. Times are cumulative, with the shortest overall time determining the winner..



In 1998, race organisers added a night to the schedule during the middle of the race, where mushers and teams were required to camp out in the snow with no assistance from handlers.

The 1998 race included a pool of over $100,000 in prize moneys, divided among all teams who completed the eleven day "stage" race.

The competition is fierce. Last year professional mushers like Hans Gatt, Susan Butcher, Libby Riddles (first woman to win the Iditarod), Rick Swenson, and Tim White ran the race.

The number of mushers is restricted to thirty, and many 1998 participants have already committed to the 1999 race.

*The Race to Immunise is designed to maximise spectator participation*

**Peter Komidar**

Printed with the Permission of the International Rocky Mountain Stage Stop Sled Dog Race Organising Committee

**http://www.wystagestop.org/index.html**

# Kontroversy Korner

# Hopes Melt for NSW Snow Race in 1999

This month's KK article is about the sad demise of yet another attempt to stage a snow race in NSW.

Over the winter of 1998 Due South staged a concerted effort to secure a snow race in the Kosciusko National Park in NSW. Our efforts included liaison with NSW Government Ministers, local government, Parks agency officials, local business and community groups. Due South members hit the airwaves with interviews on regional and Sydney radio. But all our efforts came to a big fat nothing.

Not that we are going to quit, mind you. The year 2000 holds extra opportunities - with celebrations of the new millennium and the Sydney Olympics. It is also the year of the NSW elections - and if governments change maybe there will be a different policy on access to the snowline.

But all this notwithstanding, here are some of my gripes with the situation as it exists.

In NSW, every inch of ground above the snowline is inside a national park. There have been previous attempts - the most famous being that by Steve Carrick - and all previous attempts have failed. These are the arguments mounted by the NSW National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) in support of their position.

The NPWS has a policy of not allowing domesticated animals inside the Park.

This is in fact untrue. Anyone can take a domestic animal in the park - so long as they remain inside the car. But more than that there is a town in the middle of the Park by the name of Cabramurra (Australia's highest town). This town houses the many Snowy Hydro workers in the area and is situated in prime snow country. New residents of Cabramurra are allowed to bring in any domestic pets when they come to the town (however they cannot replace these when they die).

The question must surely be asked if its OK for Cabramurra dogs what additional harm can be done by staging a race once a year where the dogs are never let off lead? Both our submission and Steve Carrick's canvassed driving the dogs in for the race and then driving them out as soon as the race was over - but alas ..

*Sleds at the A5000*

**Dogs are scary**

We were also informed - on a separate occasion that the mere smell of dogs could strike terror in the hearts of native animals.

I found this pretty strange for a number of reasons. (1) There is a native dog - the Dingo - whose natural range included the national park. So any such fears must be a natural phenomenon - and therefore given that dingo numbers are on the decrease should be encouraged. (2) The park is in fact overrun with foxes - so much so that they recently announced a major fox baiting program. But surely these foxes are also scary - being dogs after all. Surely the addition of a few more sled dogs over a single weekend each year is not going to make that much of a difference. (3) How come the Cabramurra dogs aren't scary? (4) If we hold the race at either Cabramurra or at a ski resort then it is unlikely that we'll come across any native animals anyway!

**The Park is Fragile**

True. The alpine areas of the park are much more fragile than other areas. The soil is more erodible, there is more water, the vegetation cover is less dense. But on the other hand areas suitable to stage a dog race include towns, dams, power stations, quarries, even a pine plantation! And don't forget the ski resorts! These are virtually mini cities with all mod cons - and the environmental impacts they cause. Foremost among them is the clearing of hillsides so people can slide down them on skis! I don't think anyone could credibly argue that staging a snow race in one of these areas will significantly add to the already existing environmental impacts.

**Dogs are Dirty**

The more you dig the closer you come to the truth. And this is almost the truth. It reminds me of the signs on beaches saying that dogs attract sharks. Of course there is no real scientific fact to that claim - how the hell would a shark even know what a dog was? The real reason is that dogs crap on the beach and it is inconvenient to people who tread in the doggy do do.

The same could be said for having dogs in ski resorts etc. Except that its totally wrong. As we all know mushers go to great extremes to ensure that all poohs are picked up. Due South of course gave undertakings to physically scour the site after the race to ensure that any errant poohs were picked up. But to no avail.

**The Thin Edge of the Wedge**

At last our journey through the labyrinth of NPWS justifications leads us to what is probably the real truth - the political ramifications of staging a snow race. I suspect that the Parks Service has an unstated aim of returning the Park to as near to pristine state as possible. And so they should I suppose. And in the course of pursuing this ultimate aim, they see the staging of a sled dog race as a backward step. Moreover, it might be the thin edge of the wedge. Dogs first, then horse rides, then trail bikes, then 4 Wheel Drives etc etc. I have some sympathy with this. But I think the way to go about achieving the desired NPWS aim is entirely different.

**Conclusion**

The real problem the parks face is that the entire alpine and sub-alpine area is situated within park boundaries. Some areas have outstanding wilderness values and only a member of the Looney Right would really suggest that they all be opened up to exploitation. But other areas are down-right degraded - and these areas include the ski fields, the township of Cabramurra and the vicinity of Snowy Hydro infrastructure. I would contend that the best way the NPWS could secure its aims would be to allow greater use of these degraded areas for activities such as sled dog races - and as a quid pro quo - make access to the wilderness areas even more difficult than it is today. That way we potential users get our slice of the pie - and the Park Service gets more of the pie than it currently has - and moreover the best bits of the pie!

This it seems must be the only chance of ever making everyone happy. And if the people like me who are currently knocking on the door to the park are satisfied then NPWS can get on and do what they want to do. Now I'm no astrophysicist, so if its obvious to me - why isn't it obvious to NPWS?

**Peter Komidar**

# Cross Country Mushing

The eternal quest for the perfect race site drew a bunch of Due South Sled Dog Racing Team members to McPherson's Plain Alpine Resort,. East of Tumbarumba - the backdoor to snowfields of NSW.

NSW readers would be aware that here in the Premier State,. access to land above the snow line is completely sealed off - all of it being within national parks. McPherson's plain at 1200 metres (altitude 4,000!) is the highest area in NSW on private land.

In early September, a number of Due South members checked out the joint in the hopes that it could form a suitable race venue.

Unfortunately, our efforts were stymied by two situations out of our control. There was no suitable 4-dog trail to be found and the resort was in receivership! Which is a shame really, as the accommodation was good - there was a restaurant, amenities block, electricity etc.

However, even though the resort was not to be, we did not go away from the place empty handed. Instead we were introduced to the joys of cross country mushing.

For the benefit of our international readers, in Australia all races - with the exception of Altitude 5000 our only snow race - are run on dirt trails. However, while we found numerous trails at McPherson's Plains we could only really link up a one and two dog trail by means of cattle tracks through the forest. In other words the trails had a large cross country component.

Undaunted by the rain and the cross country aspects, we decided to try the trails out. And what a blast it was!

Water skiing through rain drenched trails was fun in itself but this paled into insignificance as the trails ended and we proceed across open grassy country. The dogs were a bit disoriented at first - not having a wall of trees to guide them. But before long their ears were back - listening and obeying commands.

The run became even more exciting as the three teams entered a forested area - following just a goat (actually cow) trail. Now we were under the hammer! The dogs were flying and there were rocks, trees and uneven ground to navigate.

During the run I had the pleasure of being in the lead and at other times on the tail of a team. And both experiences had their own challenges. As front team, you had to break trail - pick the best route and rely on your dogs to obey your commands without hesitation.

Meanwhile when sitting on another team's tail, you could rely on your dogs to follow the team in front. However, in some respects you needed even quicker reflexes - as you could really only see up to the back of the team in front - which left little time to navigate rocks and ruts etc - all the time looking for a break ahead to enable you to overtake!

And what did the dogs think about it? Well we flew around the track - there were uphill bits that felt flat. The dogs were keen and interested - the trail was every bit as challenging for them as for the musher. Sure it was fun - but it was also a mind game - the brain as well as the body was thoroughly engaged. And when it was all over the dogs had grins from ear to ear for ages after.

Cross country mushing is fun and challenging. It is also a great adjunct to your training regime - especially towards the end of the season when dog and musher alike begin to get a little jaded. I tell you, if someone decides to hold a cross country race next year - I'll be there!

**Peter Komidar**

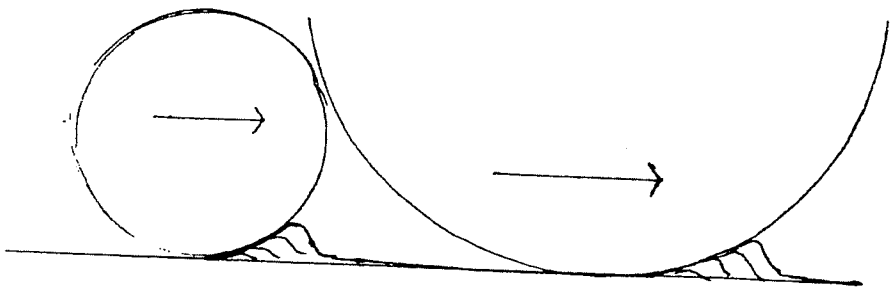
# THE READERS SPEAK!

Dear K.K.

After reading some of your thoughts on big wheels versus small wheels in the last edition, I felt I had to contribute some of what I know on the subject. Before I go any further though, let's make something crystal clear. You can have the fastest, lightest, most high-tech scooter in the world, but if you don't have your dogs already performing to the best of their ability, it's worth nothing!

The main reason for using larger wheels on a scooter is that you have less rolling resistance. Although it was noted in the last issue that the tests conducted by some people earlier were inconclusive, I would suggest that those tests took place on surfaces that were less likely to demonstrate an obvious difference. In my experience, it's travelling through soft, sandy or muddy ground that the advantages of the larger wheels make themselves apparent.

In the diagram below I have illustrated what happens at the leading edge of a wheel when its travelling through soft ground. As



you can see the 'wave' created by the wheel pushing through the dirt causes a braking effect, ie rolling resistance. As you can see in the diagram, the larger wheel will tend to ride over this wave rather than push against it as the smaller wheel does.

The same principle applies to bumpy tracks as well. Just as soft ground will have a greater braking effect on the smaller wheel, bumps can slow them down by transferring momentum upward rather than forward. Again, even though the large wheel moves upward as well, its forward momentum is not interrupted anywhere near as much. The slowing effects of bumpy tracks is the reason that racing mountain bikes are fitted with suspension, but that's a whole new can of worms.

The main disadvantage of large wheels, to my way of thinking is the handling factor. It is definitely harder to throw a large wheel scooter around sharp bends at high speed than the smaller wheel variety, rapid changes in direction are harder to achieve due to the higher centre of gravity and the back end tends to hop rather than slide when it loses traction around corners. That's the main reason I use a smaller wheel scooter around the training tracks at home which can be pretty hairy at the best of times.

There are plenty of other factors worth considering such as tyre and wheel width, bearing wear and tear etc. But I have given what I believe are the main reasons for and against larger diameter wheels on racing scooters.

**Lawrie Coutts**
***CYBERHUSKY***

*I'd like to thank Lawrie for his convincing arguments in response to the first Kontroversy Korner. And I'd like to encourage all readers to not only respond to issues raised in KK articles - but also to submit some KK articles of your own!*

*Personally, I think this is the most important article of the entire magazine and would like to see it evolve into a forum where issues central to the development of the sport of sled dog racing are identified and thrashed out. That can only be good for the sport and also good for the magazine! (Ed).*

## The Perils of Running Dogs you don't know !

**By Brian & Kate O'Donoghue**

A funny story you might pass along. Some years ago, my old kennel partner, Tim Mowry, mushed a Redington team in the Moose Creek 300.

It was his first mid-distance race and he left the starting line clutching a sheet of paper with recommendations for placement of the dogs in the team. Well, his leader flaked. Tim lost the sheet of paper and by trial and error, and great frustration, he finally found a burly old wheel dog in the team willing to run out front.

Redington's chief handler at the time, a guy named Dwane, was startled when he saw Tim arrive at a checkpoint late in the race. "What are you doing with Martin in lead?" he cried. "Martin is blind!"

We've gotten a lot of laughs out of that true story through the years. I'm sure Martin was following the scent of the dozens of teams ahead. Leader "potential" is the sport's Holy Grail.

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**http://www.webheads.co.uk/sleddog/ezine/indexmain.htm**

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# Sled Dog Breeds II - The Mackenzie River Husky

## Donna Perry

I am an Alaskan born resident who first came across these magnificent huskies when I moved to an interior Alaskan bush community in the mid-1970's. My research and consequential breeding program began in 1990. In complete ignorance, I started asking questions and researching libraries and at the same time trying to locate any. I kept getting conflicting information both from people and from the small amount of published information I could find. I looked at a motley variety of dogs with only a precious few resembling my huskies, all claiming to be Mackenzie River Huskies.

The truth began to unfold after interviewing old-timers: Ed Moody, Norman Vaughan, both involved with the Admiral Byrd' s Antarctic Expeditions in the 1920's and 1930's; retired Canadian Mountie during 1950's and 1960's, Sandy Saunderson; author Lorna Coppinger of *The World of Sled Dogs*, and Alaskan trappers and mail-runners. Bill Carpenter of Yellowknife, who received a grant in the 1970's to bring back the Canadian Eskimo Dog, was gracious enough to share his research documentation on the sled dog with me.

What all this research disclosed, is the emergence of the freight huskies more or less below the arctic circle starting in the mid to late 1800's. These huskies were developed for small working teams capable of hauling large loads through deep snow, woodland trails, and hilly or mountainous terrain while consuming limited and erratic food sources. Each village or community, separated by hundreds to thousands of miles, developed amazingly similar characteristics based on their similar need. The resulting huskies were tall (27" to 32" at the shoulder), long legged and rangy built, averaging around 90 pounds, never exceeding 125 pounds, long backed with deep chests.

The catchy name "Mackenzie River Husky" was coined from newcomers seeing the freight huskies and not being able to differentiate the different villages while passing through an area. The locals knew the huskies by their different villages, naming them accordingly: Old Crow dogs, Fort. McPherson dogs, Arctic Red dogs, Porcupine River dogs, Hay River dogs, etc. The name really took hold in the 1960's, from which the distortions grew, especially as the freight husky began to disappear.

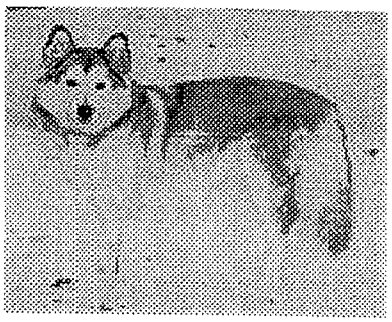
The demise of these magnificent huskies began in the 1960's as a result of several factors: the introduction of the snow mobiles; the discovery of oil and consequential formation of Native Corporations whose dividends allowed the people to afford snow mobiles; the Canadian government efforts to stop native sovereignty by the mass killing of dog teams in the 1950-1960's under the guise of eradicating rabies; and profitable sled dog racing that resulted in the development of a breed of small, running machines.

What has allowed me to find breeding stock is the 1960's movement that sent Vietnam Vets, draft dodgers, and hippies to the interior of Alaska to try a subsistence life style. A few hardy souls remain in bush communities that still have these huskies along with a few crusty old trappers. The few I found in Canada were so intermingled with the racing lines, that little of the old blood line remains.

The huskies I'm breeding for are tall (27 to 32 inches at the shoulder), lean built with deep chests (not wide), long legged that run with a foot-in-front-of-foot stride, high tail carriage, erect ears, white or cream masks, yellow or light brown eyes, they generally have a long mane of fur around their necks and shoulder and "feathers" down their legs front and back, and under the belly. They are big huskies weighing 70 to 125 pounds. Their colours vary from blond/red and tan with black highlights to black and white with red tints and varying sable colours of each.

I remain a coordinator in my efforts to bring these dogs back. I personally have two litters a year. Searching continually for new quality males to breed to my females as I expand my breeding pool for the future. I'm going into this with the firm understanding that its a 20 year project and there are no shortcuts that I'm willing to take. I follow each of the pups through their lifetime to ensure that my breeding program is on track. I depend on "my people" to help me with this project by their willingness to follow my guidelines for breeding, having pups and suitable placement. This is truly a labour of love on my part to keep these huskies from extinction.

The pups currently sell for US $250. Hopefully, this project will continue to snowball so that there will be more available in the future with less restrictions. If you're interested, keep in contact with me and be patient.



# Skijore Ski Selection

**Russell Gregory**
russell@CWAVE.COM

*The following posting appeared on Sleddog-L (internet sled dog mail list). I thought it might be of interest to readers considering taking up this exciting sport (Ed).*

My two cents on skis for skijoring having raced for a couple of years and have a ski instructor background.

For nice wide groomed trails the longer skis are fine - a combi ski or skate ski.

For narrow tracks I use the new short rebel skis that have metal edges - great for stopping and control and very beefy sidewalls for stability.

The short length also helps navigate on tight corners where there is no margin for error - believe me I have had enough face plants to know how fine that margin is.

I think the choice of skis depends on trails and my short - 130 cm skis are a wonder on the trails that are a sled width wide.

When talking skis you cannot ignore boots. Stability comes from the ski and from the boot - ankle support and stiffness is great for control but reduces speed. Skilled skiers can easily use the soft Solomon style and keep the control. Less experienced might consider renting heavier equipment - even backcountry gear for their first few times out. These skis tends to stay under your feet easier.

On a year end icy night time run with two wild young Alaskans on a downhill track I would not have survived without my rebels.

Your choice depending on your wishes.

# Excerpts from the Polar Manual

*Readers of last month's magazine would recall Geoff's extracts from the 1950's US Navy booklet - the Polar Manual.*

## Feeding

In camp each dog gets 9 lbs of seal meat every three days. On the trail they are fed once daily at the end of the run with one pound of dog pemmican (for the average-sized dog). In the north, fish may be substituted for seal meat or pemmican. A farly good dog pemmican formula from New Zealand is:

| | |
|---|---|
| Meat Meal | 42% |
| Tallow | 40% |
| Whole Wheat Meal | 10% |
| Wheat Germ | 5% |
| Molasses | 2% |
| Cod Liver Oil | 1% |

**Geoff Carter**

# Mushing Beer Drinking Song

**Traditional**

*For a lot of mushers racing and drinking seem to go hand in hand like wages and tax. So I thought I'd add a beer drinking song to the magazine (Ed).*

**Do'h** a beer, give me a beer
**Ray** a friend who buys me beer
**Me** a guy who likes his beer
**Far** I'll go a long long way for beer
So give me another beer
**Lager** is a type of beer
**Tea** no thanks I'll have a beer
And that brings us back to **beer!**

**Peter Komidar**

# Did Wolves Domesticate Humans?

**Shelly Simonds**

According to latest estimates, dogs and humans have been living and working together for about 100,000 years. This fact in itself is still controversial in academic circles.

However, one Australian National University academic has created a new controversy with his latest hypothesis about the human-dog relationship.

Dr Colin Groves is setting accepted theories on their head with the proposal that domestication was not a one way street. Yes, according to Dr Groves it is true to say that humans domesticated dogs - but it is equally true to say that dogs domesticated humans!

According to Dr Groves, dogs acted as the humans' alarm systems, trackers and hunting aids, garbage disposal facilities, hot-water bottles and children's guardians and playmates. "This symbiotic relationship was stable over 100,000 years and intensified in the Holocene Period (10,000 years ago) into mutual domestication" Dr Groves said. "Humans domesticated dogs and dogs domesticated humans".

It is known that horses experienced a 16% reduction in brain size after domestication while pigs' brains shrank by as much as 34%. For domesticated dog breeds the loss ranges from 10-30%.

However, over the last decade, archaeologists have uncovered enough fossil evidence to establish that for humans, cranial capacity declined by at least 10% beginning in the Holocene Period.

And what areas of the brain were affected? It is the areas controlling smell and hearing. Faculties which dogs have acute abilities!

**Adapted from *Theory Suggests Greater Role for Man's Best Friend* by Shelly Simonds, ANU Reporter Vol 29 No 1 with permission.**

# The Missyplicity Project

I'm sure you've heard of the now famous "Dolly" the successfully cloned sheep. Well, I guess it was only a matter of time - and now efforts are under way to clone a dog.

The Missyplicity Project - as it is called - seeks to clone a dog for the first time in history - a specific dog named Missy.

Missy is a beloved pet, getting on in years, whose wealthy owners wish to reproduce her - or at least create a genetic duplicate (which of course is not the same thing).

Missy, the pet at the center of the high-tech project, has her own website featuring several photos, a wagging-tail animated graphic and pages of stories from her "human mother" about the dog's endearing exploits. The woman confesses to a "deep and permanent love" for Missy, who is a border collie with a bit of husky tossed in.

In addition to cloning Missy, this project also has socially-beneficial goals, and is strongly ethics-driven.

The Missyplicity Project is being executed by a team of world-class scientists and technicians headquartered at Texas A&M University (TAMU), in College Station, Texas. Several senior scientists from other major universities and institutions have also been recruited.

The goals of this project are to:

1. improve basic understanding of reproductive biology;
2. enhance reproduction of endangered species, especially endangered canids;
3. develop improved canine contraceptive and sterilisation methods; and
4. replicate specific, exceptional dogs of high societal value.

This project will involve research into cloning of adult dogs, and has already recruited senior scientists from several universities and other institutions, working with a privately-funded budget of $2.3 million for the first two years.

Canine reproductive biology is a seriously under-funded area of science. This is largely due to the fact that it lacks the commercial interests associated with livestock - which of course led to the Dolly cloning.

Despite limited commercial potential, better understanding of canine reproduction could be directly applied to the repopulation of endangered canids, including many species on the brink of extinction.

**Peter Komidar**

Printed with permission of the Misssyplicity Project.

**www.missyplicity.com.**

***Missy***

# Balto to Visit Alaska!

The stuffed body of world-famous sled dog Balto will be on loan to the Anchorage Museum of History and Art in Alaska for a special exhibition to coincide with the 1999 Iditarod.

Balto will be on public display at the Anchorage museum beginning on October 20 and will continue to be on display until after the Iditarod. Balto will return to Cleveland in late-March 1999.

In addition to Balto, the Museum is loaning the Anchorage museum historical documents, photographs and film footage.

As nearly every musher is aware, Balto was the lead dog of the final sled team that raced through hurricane-force winds and minus-50-degree temperatures to bring serum to the diphtheria stricken town of Nome, Alaska, in 1925. Balto and the other dogs became international heroes, but the glory showered on them was short-lived. Within a year, the dog team, including Balto, were lost in the world of vaudeville, sideshows, and the whirl of the roaring twenties.

On a visit to Los Angeles, a Cleveland businessman discovered them in a "dime-a-look" museum. For the fee of 10 cents, visitors (men only) were allowed into the back room where the dogs were on display. As an animal lover, the businessman noticed that the dogs were ill and mistreated. He knew the history of the famous dogs and was outraged.

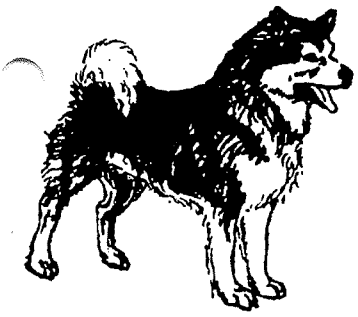
A bargain was struck to buy the dogs and bring them to Cleveland. To fulfil the deal $2,000 had to be raised in two weeks.

With the help of the local media, Cleveland's response was explosive. Cleveland public school children collected coins in buckets; factory workers passed the hat; hotels, stores and visitors donated what they could to the Balto fund. The money was raised in 10 days.

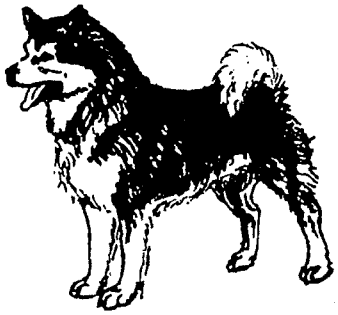
On 19 March 1927, Balto and six companions (Tillie, Fox, Sye, Billy, Old Moctoc and Alaska Slim) were triumphantly brought to Cleveland and given a heroes' welcome in a parade through Public Square to City Hall. The honored dogs were then taken to Brookside Zoo where they lived out their lives in dignity. Approximately 15,000 people visited them on the first day!

Balto died on 14 March 1933, at the age of 11. His body was mounted at The Cleveland Museum of Natural History, where it has been kept as a reminder of the gallant race against death. Because of age, Balto is carefully maintained in cold-storage archives. His trip to Anchorage is his first trip outside of Cleveland.

**Peter Komidar**



# SLEDDING SUPPLIES



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# Sled Dog Sports II - Hiking

Summer has arrived and its too hot to train your dogs. The dogs are getting edgy and it won't be long before you too are going stir crazy. But what activity can you do that involves your dogs? Well have you ever considered hiking.

**Climate and Geography**

Now only a fool would set out on a 30° C day. However, if you pick your day and your destination, then hiking can be an enjoyable way to spend the odd summer weekend.

The best weather is a cloudy mild day - preferably with a decent breeze blowing -if you can order a southerly change then all the better! The best time is in the morning or evening - for instance the hardy hiker could start out in the morning and once the day starts heating up you could set up a picnic or barbecue and laze around until the cool of the afternoon for the return journey.

The type of terrain is also important. A wooded area is best - for shelter from the sun's rays. And access to water is always an advantage - allowing the dog(s) to cool off. A river, lake or beach will do just great. And of course if you can walk in the mountains then it will generally be cooler anyway.

**Doggy Preparation**

Being a musher, your dogs should be well able to handle the hike - but here's a few eggs to teach your grandma to suck. You know the old stuff - make sure your dog is fit enough (especially if its lazed around for a few months!), not too young or too old (for instance, I wouldn't take a pup under 9 months on a longish hike). You know the drill.

**Packing a Pack?**

Obviously, you'll need to take a backpack to carry the water etc you'll need to take along. However, many people like to really get their dogs in on the act by having them also carry a backpack! Its a great way to lighten your load and also a method to increase the fitness level of your dog(s). Doggy backpacks are available in Australia and retail for around the $100 mark - I'd suggest you contact your favourite outfitter. There are a couple advertising in this magazine!

Teekah on a hike in Lava Canyon near Mt. St. Helens.

A good pack should be easy to put on and remove with the snaps in an easily accessible position. The pack needs to be stable on the dog otherwise it will mover from side to side as the dog walks. And importantly, it should have drain holes - for when the dog inevitably jumps in a creek to cool down - if the water can't drain out then that's extra weight for the dog to carry. (On this last point always remember to pack everything in a sealed plastic bag inside the pack!)

It will take some time for your pooch to get used to this strange device strapped to its back - so you'll need to have some practice runs around the block. Start off empty and then gradually increase the load - remembering to evenly distribute the weights. A fully fit dog should be able to take a 3rd of its weight in a pack. And importantly, before you set off on your first hike make sure your dog is comfortable doing toilet duties with the pack on!

**On the Trail**

When hiking with your dog always be prepared to assist it over difficult terrain and keep a way eye out for snakes and any signs of exhaustion or heat stress. When you rest, check the dog out for ticks (if you hike on the coast), burrs (particularly between the pack and the skin - which can cause nasty problems) and check out the dog's pads for wear and tear. The latter is particularly important because if your dog gets particularly bad feet, you'll need to carry it home!

**Stuff to take**

Obviously, the amount is determined by the length of the planned hike but here's some items you should consider taking along

- spare leash
- collar with name/address on the tag
- extra water, food
- brush if dog is long-coated
- 1st aid
- dish
- stake out line.

**One Last Word**

Dogs and backpacking are a great combination - but remember that not all people feel this way. Keep the dog under control and clean up after him (ie. bury it!), and both you and others on the trail will have a great time. Many hikers hate seeing dogs on the trails -- this is your opportunity to show them that it doesn't have to be a problem.

**Peter Komidar**

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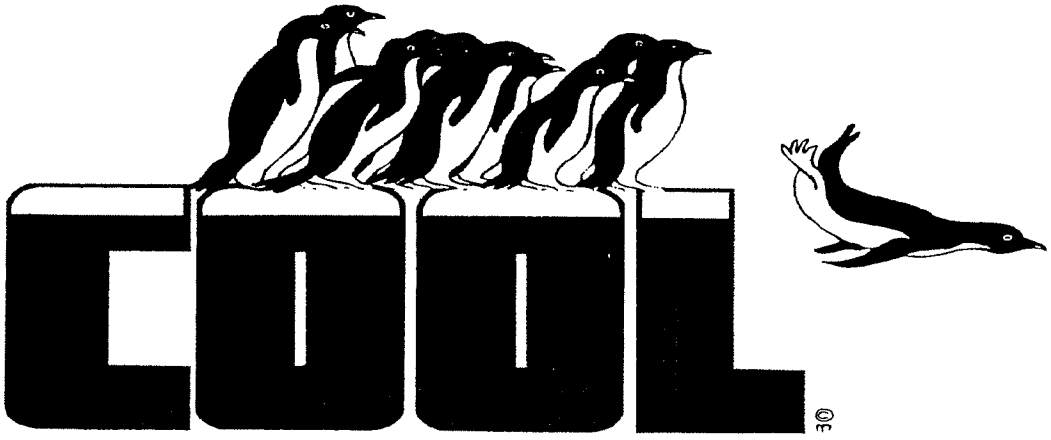
# 1999 Sled Dog Events Forward Planner

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *May* | **Southern Cross Pro-Am** (Vic) | **23-24 May** |
| *June* | **Underra Sled Dog Dash** (Vic)<br>**Siberian Express - Sydney Sled Dog Sprint** (NSW) | **6-7-8 June**<br>**27-28 June** |
| *July* | **NEGRC - Northern Exposure** (Qld)<br>**CHA - Great Grey Bound** (Vic)<br>**Sthn Highlands Freight Run** (NSW)<br>**Wild Dog Derby (SA)**<br>**SHCNWS - Sydney Sled Dog Shield** (NSW) | **3-5 July**<br>**11-12 July**<br>**11-12 July**<br>**18-19 July**<br>**25-26 July** |
| *August* | **Bannockburn SDC - The Burn** (Vic)<br>**Altitude 5000 - Pedigree Pal Sled Dog Derby** (Vic)<br>**CSDC - Canberra Sled Dog Classic** (ACT)<br>**Due South - Alpine Sled Dog Challenge** (NSW) | **1-2 August**<br>**8-9 August**<br>**22-23 August**<br>**29-30 August** |



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