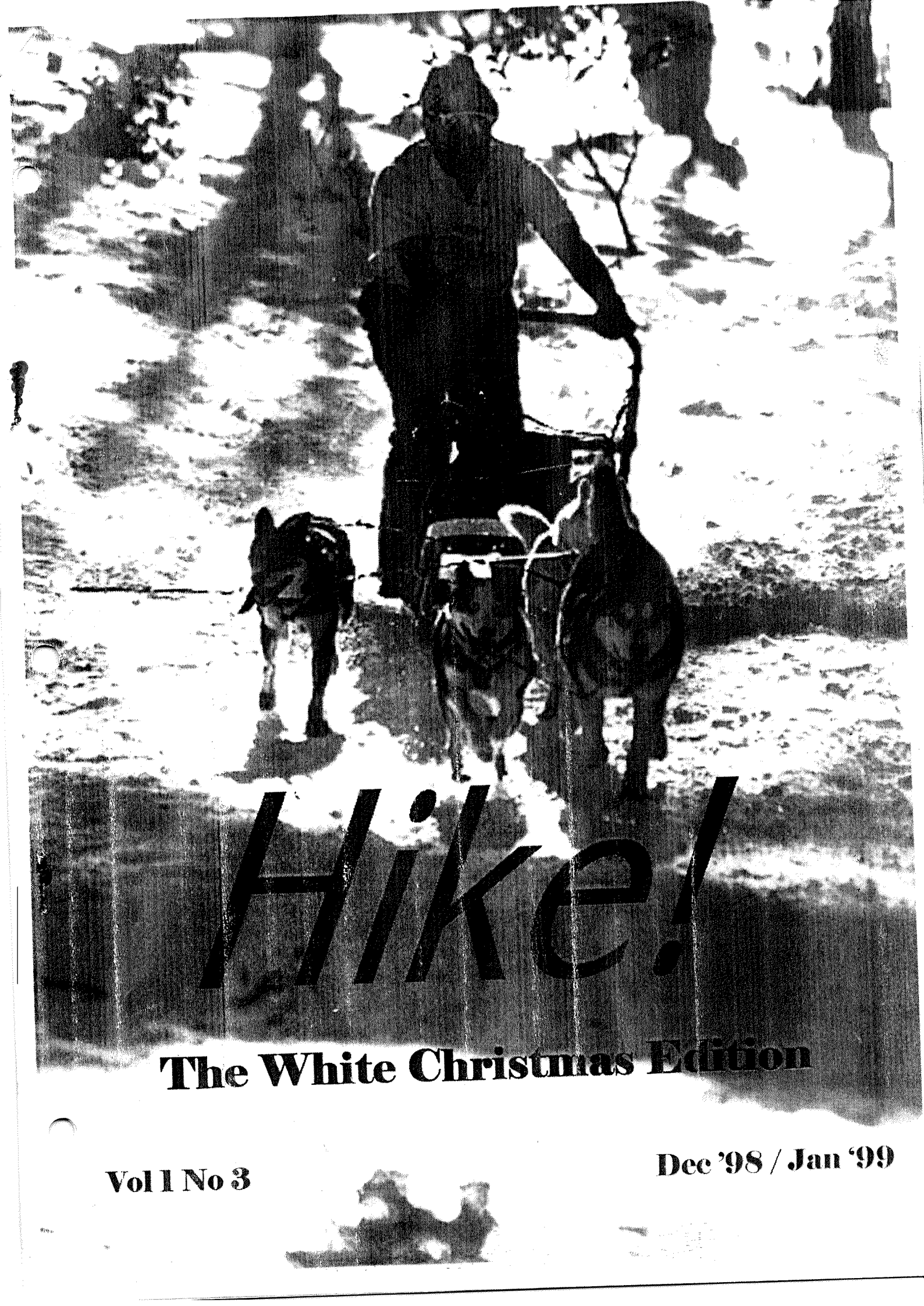


Hike!

The White Christmas Edition

Vol 1 No 3

Dec '98 / Jan '99

Vindelälvs-draget

The Vindelalvsdraget - meaning 'the Vindeln River Sled Dog Race' is truly a unique dog sled race. It is a 400 km long race consisting of 30 individual stages of between 6 to 22 km - over 4 days in March.

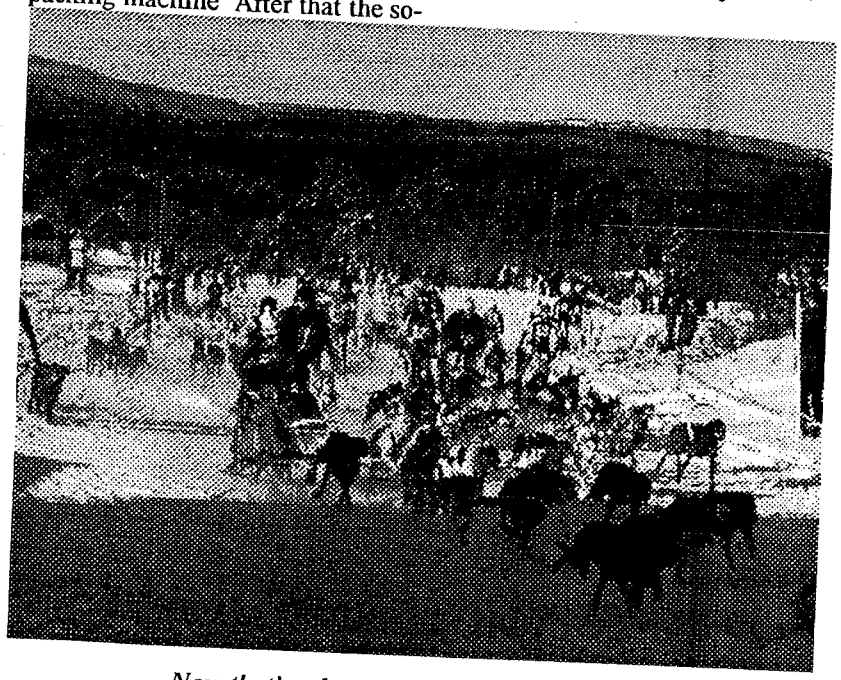
The race is run along the frozen Vindeln River in Sweden.. The competition starts in the mountain village Ammarnäs and ends in Vännäsby, where the Vindeln River flows into the Ume River.

Half of the race is run on the frozen Vindel River and the other half on trails and unploughed forest roads adjacent to the river.

The track is maintained by Vindelälvsdragets track group and local residents that are located in almost every village along the trail. Great efforts are made to make the track as safe as possible. For example over 1000 test bores are sunk in the ice of the River to ensure that the ice is thick enough to bear the weight of the competitors.

Every year in the early February the track is prepared with a big ice packing machine After that the so-called "Vindelälvsleden" is opened with accompanying intense snowmobile traffic. Monday to Wednesday in the week before the start of the race, the track is prepared all the way for Ammarnäs to Vännäsby by driving the ice packing machine over the course. Every effort is made to ensure the 400 km snow track is of the same standard as a normal cross-country course.

A pulker at the race



Now that's what I call an exciting corner!

The race itself is open to everybody. Mushers, pulkers and skijorers all take part. The race is open to professional racers as well as recreational mushers. Teams of all kinds are welcome - any breed and any number of dogs - pedigrees as well as mixed breeds.

Moreover, all teams compete in the one class!

One hour before start of each heat a patrol of two snowmobiles takes off to block off crossing tracks, and set out the mark-out signs. 500 meters before the finish each stage there is a snowmobile to direct other snowmobiles away from the track. At the front of the pack during the race, one of the competition managers drives a snowmobile to control the competition. At the back of the field there's another snowmobile whose function is to overlook and control the competition. Behind this a snowmobile and a car follow along behind collecting signs picking up any litter or lost objects.

2 dog skijorer behind large team!

Because the population is greater than that of Alaska or Canada, a high degree of organisation is required to ensure the safety and enjoyment of all competitors. However, this level of detail has ensured that this race has become one of Europe's premier sled dog races.

THE READERS WRITE!

THE NATIONAL POINT SCORE

Alex Theuma

Alex's article arrived after I had already completed this month's Kontroversy Korner (maybe he's psychic). I reckon Alex has made some very valid points which if implemented would improve the point score system!

The reason I'm writing is because of the National Point Score which was in your first issue. I personally thought the idea was brilliant and the way in which points are allocated is excellent, I only wish I had thought of it first. There are however three suggestions I would like to make.

Firstly the eventual top ten champs should have the state or territory from which they come from next to their name so that mushers can not only aim for National Champ but State Champ as well (Something trivial I know but it still looks good).

Secondly, and in my opinion most important of all, has to do with the formula for working out mushers points. Due to the fact that there are 9 races on the calender and from the sounds of things, more to come. Then it is possible for two mushers to win 4 races each and as racing becomes more competitive this outcome is more likely to occur. What I'm suggesting is that instead of using the winners time to work out points, you could use the average time of the first three place getters (in seconds) multiplied by 1000 divided by competitors time which would mean if you won a race by a long margin then you would receive more points as compared to your competitors and vice versa. This would obviously mean that the winners would get more than 1000 points which would open the door for other goals such as highest record score out of 4 races in a season and so on.

Thirdly, I feel the snow race should be included in the point score, the fact that they didn't hold a one dog class is not a good enough reason to disallow it. Inevitably their will be races that specialise in classes for example one race may be for 1 & 2 dog class and another for the 4 & 6 dog class purely because of number of entries and a National Champion should be determined from every race possible in that class.

Thanks for listening guys and once again well done and if there is anything I could do to help please don't hesitate to ask.

Happy Trails
Sparkle Spice!

Antifreeze Poisoning

Hayley Coutts

Ethylene glycol is used as antifreeze and most new cars are now routinely purchased with the product already in the radiator.

It is a substance which until recently has caused more problems in the northern hemisphere than Australia but changes in the way cars are now presented means it is an emerging problem in Australia.

It is not unusual for home mechanics to have some in their shed, often in an open vessel if a radiator has been recently drained or alternatively the odd dripping radiator can leave a small pool on the floor.

The problem is that it is sweet to taste and both dogs and cats will happily lick it up. The quantity drunk is almost impossible to determine as is therefore the level of toxicity.

Ethylene glycol is in fact not directly toxic. But in the body it is broken down by the liver into toxic by-products, including glycoxalate and then to oxalate which combines with the calcium in the system to form calcium oxalate which precipitates in the kidneys causing renal failure.

And so the first symptoms of poisoning are those of reduced calcium, vomiting, depression, unsteadiness, muscular weakness sometimes progressing to seizures and coma, death occurs as a result of kidney failure.

Treatment in Australia is limited by the availability of antidotes.

In the US there is a commercially produced antidote but in this country we have to treat the poisoning indirectly by tying up the liver enzymes which break down the ethylene glycol.

This involves intravenous therapy with ethanol (common alcohol) for 48 hours plus extra veneous fluids to flush out the system and keep the kidneys viable.

Animals treated in this manner show all the signs of drunkenness plus the after effects of an apparent headache, a small price to pay.

If the dog is not actually caught ingesting this product the symptoms can form a diagnostic dilemma for the vet. However, if caught early, the affected dog can be brought back to good health with no long term side effects.

Obedience Classes

Station Street Park
Packenham
10:00 am Sunday Mornings

All Welcome!

Instructor:
Hayley Coutts

Kontroversy Korner

A Methodology for the 1999 *Hike!* National Point Score

With 1999 just around the corner - I guess its time to revisit the methodology used to determine the 1998 ***Hike!*** National Point Score Champions - to see if any changes are needed for the coming season.

The Methodology

For each race, the following methodology was used. The winner of a class was given 1000 points and every other competitor was given points as a proportion of their time relative to the winners.

The formula used was 1000 X Winner's Time divided by Competitor's Time.

So if the winner completed the course in 10 minutes (getting 1000 points) and competitor X did the course in 20 minutes then it would amount to 10 X 1000 / 20 or 500 points. (In practice, the time was converted into seconds).

The best 4 races were chosen for each individual and the total points summed - with the highest possible score being 4000. The person with the highest number was ranked first and so forth.

The formula seemed to work fine - but we here at ***Hike!*** Central would welcome any suggested changes.

Four of the Best?

The first unforeseen problem with the methodology was the fact that not that many competitors actually participated in 4 races. In fact, there were only 29 1-dog competitors, 19 2-dog and 10 limited 4-dog. Moreover, some well placed racers were omitted from the point score because even though they attended many races, by swapping and changing between classes during the year they did not actually compete in 4 races in any particular class.

We could of course have scored all competitors, but the problem with this is that people who only did 3 races would only get a score to a maximum of 3000 out of 4000 possible (ie if they came first in all 3 races). It was decided that ranking them would give a false impression of how good they are (ie ranked below someone who competed in 4 races but came in the middle of the pack). I know I'd rather not be ranked than ranked that way.

Is there anyway to overcome this. We could lower the number of races to 3. But would this be too small a number to qualify for national champion status? Alternatively, we could just sum the scores and the more races a competitor entered the better his/her scores at the end of the season. We originally decided against this option because while it rewards dedication, it is not a really fair comparison of sporting achievement as it could give rise to petrol champions (that is people who are average racers but have the time and money to attend more races than everyone else).

What's your view? Is 4 races about right - should there be more or less? Do you have any alternative ideas?

Which Race?

Another decision was to limit the point score to the national sprint circuit races. That is, Southern Cross, Underra, Great Grey Bound, Bannockburn, Wild Dog Derby, Canberra Classic, Sydney Sprint, Sydney Shield, and Northern Exposure. A number of other races exist which were not included such as the Altitude 5000 race, the Southern Highlands Freight Run and a number of smaller State-based breed club races in Victoria and South Australia.

There were two reasons that these races were omitted. Firstly, the Altitude 5000 race was considered substantially different from the other races - in that it was run on snow rather than on dirt trails and therefore required different skills and equipment. The Freight Run was excluded because it was a mid-distance rather than a sprint race. And finally, the smaller breed club races were excluded on the basis that some may be breed-specific and also that not being on the national circuit, interstate competitors would be at a disadvantage. In other words we were worried that competitors in these States (ie Victoria and SA) would have an unfair advantage in that they'd have far more races to choose from to get their best 4 races and that for these races, the competition would be less competitive - with few if any interstate participants.

What is your view. Should some of the above races be included in the methodology? If so, which ones?

What about the 3 and 6 Dog Classes?

There were not enough 3-dog or 6-dog races to qualify for inclusion in the point score - especially with the decision to exclude the snow race. So the 3 dog scores were incorporated within the limited 4 dog class and the 6-dog results were ignored.

An alternative would have been to have determined the champions in these classes based on the number of races held. We decided against this on the basis that would seem a bit funny for a person to be called national champion of a class that only had 2 or 3 races over a whole season (as compared to 9 for the 1,2 and limited 4).

Which way should we jump in 1999?

We would welcome comments on the above issues and any other issues concerning the proposed methodology. We would also welcome any alternative proposals. If you think you can contribute please write, fax, phone or email ***Hike!***

Peter Komidar

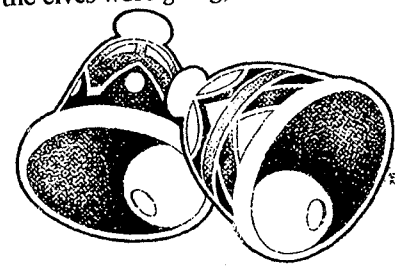
Four Christmas Tails
Or
How Nissa, Storm, Chilli And Jet Girl Lost An Elf But Saved Christmas

Sharon Komidar

Some of you may remember last year when Nissa and Storm, with the help of some their friends, helped Santa out when his reindeer came down with the flu. They pulled Santa's sled whilst the reindeer stayed at our place recuperating (and making a tremendous mess). So this year, I was hoping for a quiet Christmas with no wild adventures, and no irritable, sneezing reindeer. Just the dogs, Peter and myself, lots of food and drink and several large bones (of course!). But, as I will explain, it was not to be. It all began in the afternoon on Christmas eve, when nothing was stirring, not even a dog, (mainly because it was too hot!).

I was doing a last minute survey of the fridge, making sure that we had enough supplies for Christmas day, and waiting for Peter to come home. The dogs were hanging out in various cool spots around the house. I was feeling relaxed, calm, the holiday season had arrived and we were all going to have some fun. I heard a knock at the front door so I shut the fridge and went to answer it thinking that perharps Peter had forgotten his keys. The dogs all jumped up hoping that it was Peter and that soon they could all go for a walk. So you can imagine how I felt when I opened the door and saw not thin, dark haired Peter but rather a fat white haired man, with a long bushy beard, wearing a distinctive red suit

'Ho, Ho, Ho!' he said, 'Merry Christmas'. 'Hi Santa', (yes, it was Santa), I said, 'same to you, you'd better come in'. The dogs were going nuts, Santa was a firm favourite of Nissa and Storm. Chilli and Jet hadn't met him before but Chilli decided that if the other guys thought he was alright then she would too, so she gave him a Grade A Chilli kiss in the ear. Jet Girl was a little more suspicious, she wasn't sure what all that white stuff was coming from his face, so she decided to investigate. 'Ouch' said Santa, as he disentangled Jet from his beard, 'steady on'. 'Sorry ' said Jet 'I didn't realise you had fur'. Here we go again, I thought, the dogs can all talk. 'That's all right little Jet Girl', Santa said, 'I understand, now, how are you all'? 'We're fine" said Storm, 'its really nice to see you again, how's Rudolf'. 'He's fine' said Santa. The dogs all gathered around Santa and caught up on all the news since last year, their race results, the arrival of Chilli and Jet Girl, how all the elves were going, that sort of



thing. I stood there in amazement, firstly that he was back, and secondly that the dogs could talk again. I'm not altogether sure that talking dogs is a good thing. After last year's adventure we ended up having various arguments involving the length of walks and the amount of food that was doled out every day, most of which I lost. It came as a relief when Santa finally left last year and silence descended on the house. Thank goodness they only seem to be able to talk when he is around.

Lost in thought I only just managed to catch the end of the conversation. 'So do you think that you could help me out', said Santa. The dogs answered with a resounding 'oh yes' and disappeared in the direction of the spare room. 'Just what's going on', I said to Santa, 'what are you getting the guys into'. The dogs all re-appeared wearing their harnesses. Well Nissa, Storm and Chilli had their harnesses on correctly, Jet seemed to have most of her's over one ear and the rest was draped rather fetchingly over her tail, (she hasn't had as much practice putting hers on). 'Just what do you think you're doing, and where do you think your going dressed like that' I said to the dogs rather tersely . 'Now don't be angry with them' said Santa, 'there going to do me a favour. I've got so many parcels to deliver this year, more than ever before, that in order to get around everywhere I thought that I would ask if Nissa and Storm would help out and pull my spare sled around Australia tonight. I didn't realise that you had some new additions to the family, but they have agreed to help as well'.

'No way', I said, firstly Jet is too young to pull a sled, she's only 7 months old, and secondly I'm not having those reindeer in the house again, I still haven't gotten the stains off the rugs from last time. 'It's OK', said Santa, 'Rudolf and the other reindeer won't be staying here, they'll be with me covering the rest of the world. I just need your guys to cover Australia, and don't worry about Jet, she can stay here if you think she's too young'. 'Oh no I'm not', said Jet, 'I'm big enough, I have my own harness now and you're not going to stop me'. 'Really', I said, 'just how are you going to go if I decided to put you in the dog run'. Jet decided that I meant business and promptly burst in to tears, 'Its not fair' she said, 'I'm always left out because I'm the youngest, oh please, please let me go, I promise I'll be good'.

'Please let them go said Santa, 'I've got so many presents for Australian children that if they don't help then many will be without any presents at all on Christmas day'. 'Yes' said Nissa, 'think about it Sharon, would

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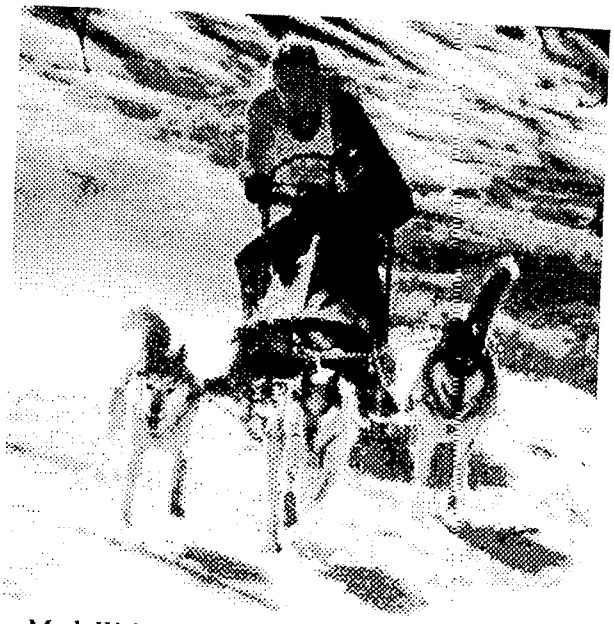
ten years to go & wait at the train station for the professor.

But this is not just another book filled with great stories about dogs. Masson has a more profound assertion to put forward & it is simply this, that the master emotion of the dog is love, & that if we look closely at dog behaviour we can see this first hand. Throughout the book he gives examples of just how dogs express love & why they feel it. Perhaps we tend to take for granted that our dogs love us as much as we love them. But is this simply because we feed them & take them for walks. Or, as suggested by Masson, does it go deeper that just a learnt response to having your physical needs taken care of.

He discusses the example of the rescue greyhounds he met. In the US it is common practice for greyhounds that aren't winning or running fast enough to be shot. Most of the dogs are not socialised & are kept in small runs & shown little or no affection, the theory being that they need to be aggressive to win & affection lessens the aggression. Yet when he went to meet these dogs at a ranch that had set itself up as a greyhound sanctuary he was struck by their gentleness & trust. They possessed the ability to love & forgive that allowed them to transcend the trauma of their earlier treatment.

There are so many penetrating insights into the mind & emotions of dogs in this book that its very hard to put down, the chapter on smell alone is fascinating.

However several times I felt compelled to put it down & go out & sit in the garden & interact with the dogs to try & understand first hand some of the experiences that Masson discusses. I found myself agreeing with Masson that the master emotion of dogs is love. You only have to see the expression on our dogs faces when they are running to see love first hand. So perhaps this book won't make your dogs run faster but I think that it does give us the language to understand a little better just is what is going on in their heads. I would have to give this book four paws out of four.



Mark Waldock & Team Photo: F&A Matthews

ABORIGINAL SAMOYED DOGS OF THE YAMAL PENINSULA

By Vladimir Beregovoy

During early part of 20th century, Russians did not pay serious attention to Northern aboriginal dogs of their country.

Communist rulers in Moscow believed enthusiastically in a rapid technological progress to move the country forward into the 20th century. Dogs were considered as vestige of the past and should be replaced by motor driven vehicles. Therefore, they simply ordered local magistrates to shoot dogs without delay. Dogs were tied to poles outside villages and shot. Luckily, they could not accomplish it everywhere primarily because of vastness and lack of accessibility of their northern territories.

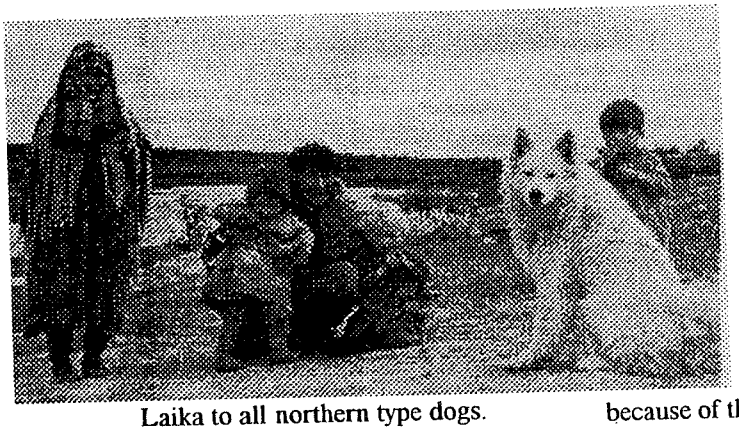
After World War II, with the expansion of labour camps and industrial development in the Arctic regions of Russia, the identity of the remaining aboriginal dogs became threatened by influx of European breeds arriving with people.

In June-August, 1961, I travelled with a team of zoologists to the Yamal tundra, where I worked on my postgraduate project in ornithology. We spent about two months in Arctic Ural area and Southern parts of the Yamal Peninsula. I had an excellent opportunity to watch local dogs and ask local people about their dogs.

Near cities, most of local dogs had traits of certain imported breeds, such as loose lips, lop ears, barrel-like chest, short legs, wavy hair and unusual coat colours. It seemed that people did not care what kind of dogs to harness for pulling sleds. Further from cities, however there were more uniformly Spitz-like medium to large size dogs.

Nomadic people who live in this Arctic Ural area and Yamal Peninsula call themselves Nenets. In their language this means simply a human being. In old Russia, these people were called Samoyede (Samoyeds) that in the Russian language means literally self-eaters (cannibals). Because this term sounds derogatory, Russians began calling them "Nentsy", instead of "Samoyeds".

In the Russian language, the aboriginal dog of the Nentsy is called the Nenets Deer Herding Laika. As we know, in USA and Europe, the term Samoyed stuck with a breed originated from the aboriginal population of dogs of the Nenets people. Russians apply the term



Laika to all northern type dogs. Street mongrels with a similar look would be also called Laika. Thus, the first dog sent in Sputnik was a smallish female mutt with partly lop ears was named Laika. Although this dog had nothing in common with any of the aboriginal dogs of Russia, her personal name "Laika" gave reason for erroneous information that Russians used Laikas in their space research programs disseminated in the Internet and in some printed publications.

Description of Aboriginal Dogs of Nentsy.

Most of these dogs have a long coat similar to the Samoyed. However, their size and colour of the coat are more variable. Because of the shaggy coat, these dogs seem sturdier than they actually are. They all are lean and lightly built. The weight ranges from approximately 30 to 60 pounds.

The coat consists of long straight and harsh guard hairs and very thick woolly undercoat remaining on the dog even in the summer. The coat helps to keep them warm in winter and protects from mosquitoes in the summer. There are many dogs with biscuit and white coat colour, but white dogs with black patches and entirely black dogs are very frequent. White and biscuit dogs have brown noses.

The head is wedge-shaped and triangular in view from above.

Teeth are large and strong, evenly spaced and with a scissors bite.

Eyes are brown, almond-shaped and set oblique.

Ears are of medium size and always stand upright, if not injured in dogfights.

The neck is strong and of medium length, but it seems short because of the long and thick coat on the neck.

The tail is carried high curving over the back and lays to either side or over the back. There are dogs with tails curled over the back and sickle shaped.

The body is lean, but muscular. The chest is deep and relatively narrow. Larger dogs have proportionally longer legs than smaller dogs. In larger dogs, hind legs are well angled at stifles and hocks and, if viewed from behind, slightly cow-hocked.

Feet of the aboriginal Samoyeds are elongate, with long well arched toes and strong hard pads and nails. Actually the majority of local dogs we saw had east-west front feet and cow-hocked hind legs.

Breeding Females come in season two times per year and not fixed with

any season. Number of puppies per litter ranges from three to seven.

Barking. Aboriginal dogs of Nenets bark very well and often. Barking is heard quite often when dogs are excited, herding deer or treeing small game. They always bark when an unfamiliar person or dog is approaching their home territory.

Way of Life with Nenets People. Near Salekhard and Labytnangy, dogs are seen everywhere. The majority of these dogs are pulling sleds in the winter, but in the summer they are allowed to wander free. They are not fed regularly and are always looking for food. Their typical prey includes lemmings, voles and other rodents as well as Arctic Fox and Arctic Hare

Nenets and Hanty people treat their dogs well. The typical number of dogs per household ranges from one to five. Nenets and Hanty allow their dogs inside their chum (a teepee-like conical house made of wooden poles and deer skins). Overnight dogs are allowed to stay inside and sleep with people keeping each other warm.

Diet. In the summer Nenets and Hanty feed their dogs all table scraps. When dogs are used for work, they are fed reindeer meat, seal or whale meat with blubber and plenty of fish of any kind.

Now, Nenets People are free to continue their life with their dogs and reindeer. I only hope that pure aboriginal type dogs still exist in the Nenets country and Russians already working on establishing the Nenets Deer Herding Laika (Nenetskaya Olenegonnaya Laika).

Relation to Humans. Aboriginal Samoyeds are friendly to people and wag their tails greeting visitors. However, after the first greeting, they stay away from the stranger. Although they are human-friendly dogs, they always bark when unfamiliar people approach their village.

Relation to Animals. Dogs of Nentsy belonging to the same household establish hierarchical relationships and live in peace with each other most of the time. However, they are competitive and small fights for dominance usually occur. Unfamiliar dogs are fought enthusiastically and may be killed, because all the dogs may attack the "intruder" simultaneously.

Utilization. In the Arctic Ural area, Yamal Peninsula and further to the east long-haired aboriginal dogs similar to the Samoyed are used for herding reindeer. In winter, dogs help to track and find lost reindeer. When dogs find stray reindeer far away from people they stay with them for a long time, sometimes even for few days without food guarding the deer. The dog's barking helps their master to find where they are. Endurance, courage and determination of these dogs is amazing.

Another common form of using of aboriginal dogs of Nenets people is hunting. When hunting, these dogs act like bark pointers helping to find and tree grouse, squirrel and other small game.

In Arctic Ural area and Yamal tundra, where pastures of lichens for reindeer exist, reindeer is the major draft animal. Further to the north, in Arctic tundra, where reindeer can not survive because of the absence of lichen pastures, these dogs are commonly used to pull sleds.

In winter, aboriginal Samoyeds are often left tied out or guarding reindeer in a bitter cold. These dogs often have to work under the harsh conditions of a blizzard or freezing rain. In the summer their life is hardly easier than in the winter. In June-July, in the Yamal tundra, the mosquito population is at its peak. The muzzle of every dog is covered with scars and bleeding sores, because dogs frequently rub and scratch themselves on anything.

Native people normally never kill dogs for food, except rarely during desperate situations in winter.

Health. Dogs of Nentsy and other peoples of Arctic Ural area and Yamal Peninsula are very hardy.

Preservation. In Arctic Ural area and the Yamal Peninsula and as far to the east as Taimyr, longhair aboriginal dogs herding reindeer, hunting and pulling sleds are still common. During recent years, smaller dogs are becoming more frequent, because they need less food. Using snowmobiles for reindeer herding also eliminates need in fast, strong dogs.

Dogs in the Cargo Hold

Andrew Gersbach

So you had a great season running dogs, your results were good and now you think you could take on the world, well maybe you should!

If you're planning the 1999 racing season and you would like to include waging war across the Tasman then read on.

Transporting your best friends internationally can be a nightmare, but if you follow this guide hopefully you will be more prepared to shell out the $$$.

First up decide where and when you're going.

You then have two options the do it yourself (1) or the full service (2)

1. Do it yourself.

- Speak to your chosen airline and give them at least 5 – 10 days notice of your plans to travel, this allows them to allocate space in the cargo hold.
- Buy or hire a crate for transport, but be careful airlines have varying requirements, so consult them. A crate can be purchased for between $99 and $300 and then it's yours or hire it for $45 each way for domestic flights, this may work out expensive if your travel companion likes to chew.
- Contact the Australian Quarantine Inspection Service (AQIS) on 02) 9364 7222, they will advise you on what paperwork is required for your destination, any vaccinations, inspections, washing or worming that may be needed.
- AQIS will refer you to a local Government Vet normally in the city of departure. Minimum requirements to exit Australia are a Health Certificate and Export permit. Your local vet can help you organise these things too.
- When thinking about how much money you will shell out, the following will be happy to accept, AQIS, Vets, Airlines, Freight companies and the government.

If all this seems too hard considering you aren't on the plane yet and you are OK with paying a premium for the convenience then option 2 is for you.

2. Get someone else to do it!

There are companies set up expressly to deal with your every need, after all they do it all the time, they include:

a) Animal Travel
02) 9652 2635

b) Dogtainers
02) 9317 2301

c) Pet Carriers
02) 9565 4855

d) SkyPet
02) 9605 5522

Crates, the costs and what's acceptable.

Acceptable materials include – fibreglass, metal, rigid plastics, wickerwork, weld mesh, solid wood or plywood.

Mandatory inclusions – ventilation, a fixed food and water container able to be accessed externally, handles for carrying, a "This Way Up" label, a green IATA "Live Animals" label and enough room for the animal to stand up and turnaround.

The cost of transportation is worked out by the volume of the crate or the crated weight of the animal whichever is greater.

Volume = length/width/height of the crates extremities.

As a guide Ansett's charges for freighting are:

- Upto 45kgs
  $9.50 per kg one way
- 45kg to 100kgs
  $7.20 per kg one way
- 100kgs +
  $6.40 per kg one way
- allow $150 for documentation
- $200 for sundry charges

Quick tips

If you still want to go to war with the Kiwi's or the natives from some snow-covered country, then go in a group and approach the airlines for sponsorship. If the group is substantial they will normally transport freight free or at least discounted.

Don't sedate your dogs, they might forget to breathe as air pressures change and they need to be alert.

Don't transport with human remains, it sends the dogs birko. You will find the airlines will reschedule the dogs flight around it.

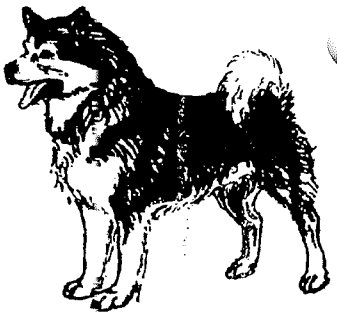
It is rumoured that United Airlines, depending on place of departure and destination will fly your dogs as hand luggage for $100. (interesting)

Allow plenty of time to organise everything.

Most of all enjoy it and if you do go please send ***Hike!*** Some photos.

Lawrie Coutts & team *Photo A&F Matthews*

SLEDDING SUPPLIES



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ISDRA REGION 13 DIRECTOR (Southern Hemisphere)

MARTY KAROW – Melbourne, Australia

I have the honour to inform the sled dog racing community both here in Australia and in New Zealand that I have been appointed the ISDRA Region 13 Director as of 1st September 1998.

I was asked if I would accept this position in July 98 by ISDRA Board Member, George Cook, USA. I declined his initial request but George asked me to take time to reconsider the appointment. I spoke to a few people in Victoria and New South Wales and asked if they would consider the position or if they knew of any other likely candidates. They all declined because of one reason or another and were unwilling to suggest others, but they were quick to concur with ISDRA that I should take the position. After more faxes to and from the USA I agreed to accept the position.

Why was I selected for the position?. Well it could be for a number of reasons. George Cook, as a respected and senior ISDRA Board Member, his personal recommendation would certainly have been a factor. George has seen me in action many times during training and racing dog teams in the USA and Canada. I've also spoken to him at length about various issues about sled dog racing and expressed to him my priorities and concerns about the sport. Maybe he liked what he saw and what I had to say. I could also have been asked because of my experience with Dog Clubs and Sled Dog Races. However, I believe that I was asked because of my good alliance with the Australian Sled Dog Clubs in general. In this position I will need to be able to positively liaise with all Sled Dog Clubs. In the past I have tried to support as many races as possible. I understand all the ups and downs of being on a sled dog race committee and I know what it's like competing in races. Therefore I can sympathise with Race Organisers and Mushers alike. I think I will be able to listen to clubs and members concerns and offer recommendations as suggested by ISDRA.

My position as the ISDRA Region 13 Director will be to use ISDRA as a vehicle to positively promote Aust & NZ sled dog racing to the rest of the sled dog racing world. Most places in the world have no idea how our sled dog racing is conducted or progressing down here. I will attend the ISDRA Board of Directors annual meetings in the USA whenever possible and I will keep Aussie & Kiwi mushers and clubs informed of current events and trends relating to ISDRA. Of course on the way I will be promoting individual ISDRA memberships and ISDRA sanctioning of races. There are a number of benefits from being involved with ISDRA as an individual member or as a sled dog club, but I certainly won't be forcing these issues. If individuals or clubs want to join ISDRA, that's great. If not, I'll respect that decision also.

An ISDRA member who competes in an ISDRA sanctioned event is eligible to for the following awards at the end of the season:

(a) ISDRA International Champion* + *Medals awarded by ISDRA*

(b) ISDRA Regional Champion (Aust & NZ)* *Certificates awarded to top 5*

© ISDRA National Champion (Aust)* *Certificates awarded 1st through to 15th*

** Conditions Apply.*

+ Possible, but not probable for an Australian or New Zealand musher.

Gig Race Classes which qualify for ISDRA sanctioning range from Limited One (1) Dog Class through to Mid-Distance Ten (10) Dog Class. Sled Dog Clubs that are ISDRA members and who hold ISDRA sanctioned events compete for the "Event of The Year" Award. This is determined by Entries, Prize-Money offered and Driver Report Forms. For instance here in Aust & NZ our ISDRA sanctioned events could be awarded the 1999 6 Dog, the 4 Dog, or the 3 Dog Event of the Year.

Other benefits that ISDRA Clubs will be privy to include, but are not limited to, Directions for the Race Marshall, help with Press Releases, ISDRA Drivers Release Agreements, ISDRA Sponsor Thank-You

The International Sled Dog Racing Association Inc (ISDRA) was formed in 1966 as the central governing body of sled dog competitions.

ISDRA's historical objectives have been constant:

- **to promote public interest in the sport,**
- **to encourage co-operation between race organisations,**
- **to create and maintain standardised race management procedures,**
- **to promote the highest standards of animal welfare for canine athletes,**
- **to aid in sponsor relations for ISDRA members and ISDRA sanctioned events.**

ISDRA focuses on providing products and services to the sled dog community world-wide. ISDRA is comprised of 13 geographical regions, two (2) national federations, many Regional Clubs, and over 750 individual members world-wide.

ISDRA sanctions 50 to 60 sled dog events each racing season. Events are comprised of multiple race classes with varying team size and distance requirements.

Skijoring and weight pulling competitions are also eligible for ISDRA sanctioning.

Program, event entry into ISDRA Database and Web Site, INFO Magazine, sanctioning materials kit of the necessary Race Rules, Driver Report Forms and Free Software, assistance with recommendations for future events on receipt of driver report forms and your event is promoted world-wide.

For the 1998/99 Sled Dog Season, ISDRA has incorporated new rule changes. For instance:

- The rule of trail distance being 2km per dog for GIG Races has now been increased to between 2km and 4km per dog. Therefore a 1 Dog Class event can be between 2km and 4km in length, a 2 Dog Class event can be between 4km and 8km in length. (Note: At time of writing this article I had not confirmed distances for Mid-Distance GIG Racing events.)
- The 15c temperature rule still stands, however if the temperature falls below 15c for at least 1 hour in duration then classes may resume at the discretion of the Race Marshall.
- The front "axle" of a scooter shall determine the starting point of the team.
- ISDRA recognises both "All Breed" and "Registered Breed" groups for each racing class. Each group may have a separate prize purse and drivers are eligible for the purse in their group regardless of overall finish position. The amount of the Registered Breed purse may not exceed the amount in the All Breed purse in each class.

There have been other changes too numerous to list here. Also, ISDRA does not require that persons competing in ISDRA sanctioned events be members of ISDRA.

Annual ISDRA Membership and INFO Magazine Subscription costs $35US. ISDRA Life Membership (a once only payment) is $500US. ISDRA Sled Dog Club Membership is $100US. Sled Dog Clubs must be members of ISDRA to apply for ISDRA Race Sanctioning.

I'm sure that you will all agree that over the past few years we have seen many positive advances in Australian Sled Dog Racing. ISDRA Rules and Regulations first helped get sled dog racing started in this country and still today most sled dog races held in Australia are based on ISDRA Rules and Procedures. Recently the sport has literally exploded in all facets of organisation, popularity and professionalism. Overseas visitors have noticed, and have spoken to others, about our high level of commitment to sled dog racing down under. The Southern Hemisphere, in particular AUST & NZ, have now been rewarded with a seat on the ISDRA Board of Directors. This has put us on the sled dog racing world map.

As the ISDRA Region 13 Director I intend to be available to help and support any individual or club who joins the International Sled Dog Racing Association Inc, and I will positively promote our sled dog racing to the rest of the world. ISDRA is supported by some of the biggest names and companies in sled dog racing. ISDRA is a well respected international organisation with a very hard working and progressive Executive Committee. As an individual member or as a club, ISDRA will definitely be a great organisation to be associated with.

For ISDRA membership applications please send a self stamped addressed envelope to:

Marty Karow, 22 Day Crescent,
Bayswater North, VIC 3153,
AUSTRALIA

Mush On and Merry Christmas,
MARTY KAROW
ISDRA Region 13 Director
Ph & Fax: (03) 9761 6336
E-Mail: hkarow@ozemail.com.au

Riding the Spray!
Photo A&F Matthews

210 dogs on gangline .... together

Grant & Cathi Dunham
<vegdun *a* YKNET.YK.CA>

Well you folks missed an incredible sight today (24 October)!!

Picture this.....210 sled dogs, 1 800 ft cable attached to a sled that is further attached to a flatbed truck with a loader on the flatbed.

Yup, the Yukon Quest attempt at putting together the longest sled dog team was a huge success !!!! The dogs were great, crowd was fantastic and of course the volunteers made it all worthwhile.

The dogs pulled the truck several blocks with the crowd cheering, clapping and encouraging them on. It was certainly the highlight of my weekend..

We will be sending the info etc to Guiness for the Record Book and we hope that they will accept it. Have had a hard time explaining to them the power of 210 dogs and why they would not be just pulling a sled. So we put in a sled.....just in front of the truck but we had a sled!

Will keep you posted.

Cathi

DANCES WITH WOOFS

By DAVE BARRY Miami Herald 12 December 1993

I want to talk about the hidden lives of my dogs.

Until recently, I wasn't aware that my dogs had hidden lives. There were many times, such as when they'd take turns repeatedly eating a deceased lizard and throwing it back up, when I wasn't even sure they had brains.

Then I got "The Hidden Life of Dogs," the best-selling book by Elizabeth Marshall Thomas, who has some astounding insights into dog behaviour. For example, in an effort to find out what dogs do when they're on their own, she spent months following a husky named Misha as he roamed all over Cambridge, Mass. What Thomas discovered was that Misha, who at first appeared to be simply trotting around aimlessly, was in fact earning a degree from Harvard Business School. No, I am joshing. Harvard does not accept huskies unless their parents are extremely wealthy. What Thomas discovered, after much observation, was that Misha spent his time -- and here I will attempt to summarise two full chapters of "The Hidden Life of Dogs" -- sniffing other dogs and peeing a lot.

This might not strike you dog-owners as all that deep of an insight. But trust me, it seems like one when you're reading the book. Because where you might see just a plain old dog engaging in non-rocket-scientist behaviour, Thomas sees a highly sophisticated organism responding to elaborate socio- biological stimuli and performing complex problem-solving tasks. It's not her fault that the solution to the problem is usually to pee on it.

Anyway, reading this book got me to thinking about my own dogs. Did they have a hidden life? If so, could I discover it, and - more important - write a best-selling book?

To find out, I removed my dogs from the confined, controlled environment of our house and put them outside, where they were free to reveal their hidden lives. I observed them closely for the better part of a day, and thus I am able to reveal here, for the first time anywhere, that what dogs do, when they are able to make their own decisions in accordance with their unfettered natural instincts, is: Try to get back inside the house. They spent most of the day pressing sad moony faces up against the glass patio door, taking only occasional breaks to see if it was a good idea to eat worms. (Answer: No.)

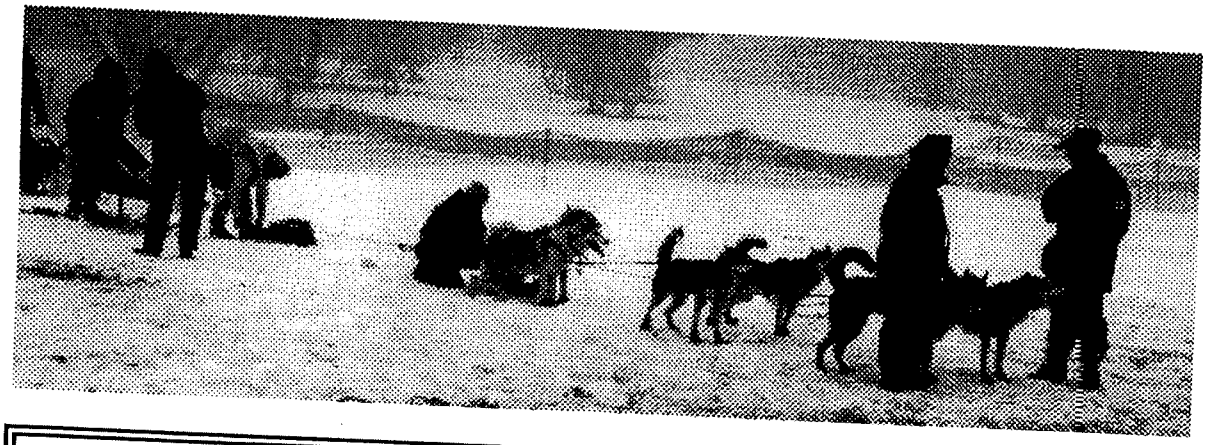
Of course the dogs have important and complex socio-biological reasons for wanting to get back into the house. For one thing, the house contains the most wondrous thing in the world: the kitchen counter. One time a piece of turkey fell off of it. The dogs still regularly visit the spot where it landed, in case it shows up again. There's an invisible Dog Historic Marker there.

Another reason is that the house provides a better echo for barking. Dogs employ barking as a vital means of communicating important messages, such as: "bark." Barking also serves a vital biological purpose: If a dog does not release a certain number of barks per day, they will back up, and the dog will explode. (Whenever you hear an unexplained loud noise in the distance, it's probably a dog exploding.)

Our large main dog, Earnest, spends her day sleeping directly under my desk, and three or four times a day she'll have a pressure build-up, causing her to wake up, lift her head, release a bark and immediately go back to sleep. Her bark, travelling at the speed of bark, quickly reaches our small emergency backup dog, Zippy, who is sleeping elsewhere in the house. He wakes up and rushes up to the outside of my office door and starts barking at it, because there is clearly something wrong inside. (Why else would Earnest have barked?) This in turn awakens Earnest, who leaps up, bonks her head against the bottom of my desk, then rushes over and starts barking at her side of the door. Each dog is firmly convinced that there is Big Trouble on the other side, possibly involving their arch-enemy, the U.S. Postal Service truck. It comes around every day, and usually Earnest and Zippy are able to drive it off by barking at it and getting spit all over the windows by our front door, but now apparently the truck somehow has gotten into the house and is on the other side of this door bark bark bark bark bark bark bark bark bark!

This is what my dogs are thinking (if "thinking" is the word I want here) as I get up, walk past Earnest, who is now insane with rage, and open the Zippy, who is charging bark bark bark into my office. Each one goes about five feet, then - wait a minute! - skids to a stop, whirls around, and charges back the other way, still barking. Sometimes they'll pass each other three or four times before they run out of momentum and lie down again, confident that, thanks to their alertness, the house is once again safe.

This is the hidden dog world that goes on every day in our house. I admit that, socio-biologically, it is not as interesting as the things that Elizabeth Marshall Thomas' dogs do. But Earnest and Zippy are the only dogs I have. Make me an offer



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1999 Sled Dog Events Forward Planner

May	Southern Cross Pro-Am (Vic)	22-23 May
June	Underra Sled Dog Dash (Vic)	5-6-7 June
	Siberian Express - Sydney Sled Dog Sprint (NSW)	26-27 June
July	NEGRC - Northern Exposure (Qld)	2-4 July
	CHA - Great Grey Bound (Vic)	10-11 July
	Sthn Highlands Freight Run (NSW)	10-11 July
	Wild Dog Derby (SA)	17-18 July
	SHCNWS - Sydney Sled Dog Shield (NSW)	24-25 July
August	Bannockburn SDC - The Burn (Vic)	31/7-1/8
	Altitude 5000 - Pedigree Pal Sled Dog Derby (Vic)	7-8 August
	CSDC - Canberra Sled Dog Classic (ACT)	21-22 August
	Due South - Alpine Sled Dog Challenge (NSW)	28-29 August