Hike!

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Hike!

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The February Kiwi Edition

Hike! has a Kiwi theme this month with articles and photos from New Zealand. In particular, you'll find info on NZ races throughout the mag.

New Zealand is similar to Australia in many respects and yet in others it is so different. For instance, New Zealand probably has leads the world in rig design - just look at the front cover for an example! Yet they haven't embraced the speed and pure adrenalin rush associated with the utilisation of scooters for the one and two dog classes.

Similarly, the Kiwis are (literally and figuratively) miles ahead in of us in distance racing yet their sprint races are, by contrast, smaller in terms of competitors and sponsorship.

And of course not only are Kiwis blessed with our best soil and most of our rain, they also have heaps of snow - and consequently even a 50km snow race!

While there has been some cross fertilisation - for instance Finn Jensen's rig owes much to the Kiwi style of rig - there's still much we can learn from our neighbours from the land of the long white cloud.

Us here at *Hike!* central are secretly wishing that this month's edition will entice someone to take dogs and scooter to New Zealand and show them first hand (at races) the value of the Australian scooter! You know what they say: its not whether you win or loose - but its by how much you win or loose!

Thought for the Month

I hope life isn't a big joke because I don't get it. Jack Handy

Next Month

The theme for next month's edition is the Iditarod!

Notes from the Trail

Stephen Carrick

This is the first in a series of articles by Australian international musher, Stephen Carrick currently competing in Alaska. Over the coming months, Steve will share with us his experiences as he prepares for and competes in the most famous of all sled dog races, the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race.

The Iditarod starts in Anchorage (Alaska's largest city) on March 6th 1999. The actual start line and first few miles of trail are right in the centre of the city on snow that is tracked in and spread out the night before (Steve reckons its about equivalent to starting on George St Sydney).

The race finishes some 1850 Km later in Nome, a small fishing/ex-gold mining town on the Bearing Sea Coast.

Each year there are approximately 65 entrants each with 16 Dogs. That's 1040 dogs.

The race has an official web site www.iditarod.com This site is great with maps and lots of interesting information about the race, Including Musher Bio's.

NOVEMBER 1998

Well the first month of my Iditarod training is over already. All in all it has been a good month although it did start a bit sketchy in terms of the weather. The first two weeks were without snow. There had been snow early October but it had since melted or been packed into slick ice. This made driving a sled pretty challenging to say the least, plenty of rocks and trees to crash into. Of course as luck would have it, we wished a little too hard and now we have far too much snow. The past week has seen over four feet fall and it hasn't stopped yet. The temperature is being fairly kind not dipping below -20 Deg C too often, it isn't rising too far above it either (max about – 5 Deg C). Winter isn't over yet, in fact it hasn't even started, we are expecting to see temperatures drop to – 40 Deg C as they do every year.

The dogs are doing really well. We have four teams from this kennel running the Iditarod this year, one race team, two leased teams and my team of yearlings. Of course to enter this many teams into the race we have to train a huge number of dogs. In fact we have over 90 dogs currently in training all with approximately 480 – 750 Km on them. Keeping this many dogs in shape is a huge job and that combined with feeding and the normal chores (pumping water, chopping firewood, cutting up meat, etc) is what takes up most of my time.

Training started in August, by the time I arrived in November the length of each training run had already reached 16 Km. Now we are training at a distance of approximately 65 Km with a short rest somewhere in the middle. By the end of this month (Dec) the dogs should be fit enough to do anything, with each training run being anything up to 160 Km in length.

In addition to training the dogs to get fit we also have to try and teach them the skills necessary for them to be able to reach Nome. The best way to do this is through long runs with several hours of sleeping beside the trail and of course racing. This season we are planning to do quite a bit of racing. Some of the races we plan to enter teams in are:

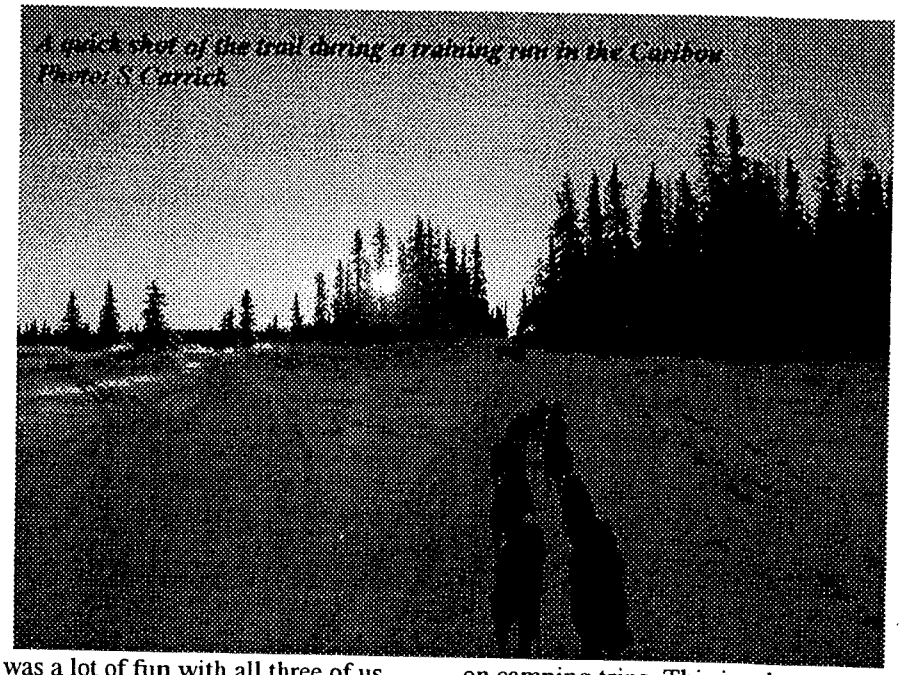
- Sheep Creek Classic – 135 Km (We are entering two teams).
- Two Rivers 200 – 320 Km (One team)
- Clam Gulch Classic – 100 Km (Four teams)
- Copper Basin 300 – 500 Km (Two teams)
- Klondike 300 – 500 Km (One team)
- Kusko 300 – 500 Km (One team)
- Iditarod – 1850 Km (Four teams)

I plan to run in the Glam Gulch Classic, the Klondike 300 and of course the Iditarod.

Anyway that is pretty much all that has happened so far. I will write sometime at the beginning of January and let you know how the racing is going.

Dan Dent crossing the finish line of the 1999 Copper Basin 300 Photo: S Carrick

DECEMBER 1998



A quick shot of the trail during a training run in the Caribou Photo: S Carrick

December and January are always our big months as far as training goes, and this month is no exception. The racing season begins during the final weeks of the month, and by January it is in full swing. As I said in last month's blurb we have a pretty busy racing schedule planned.

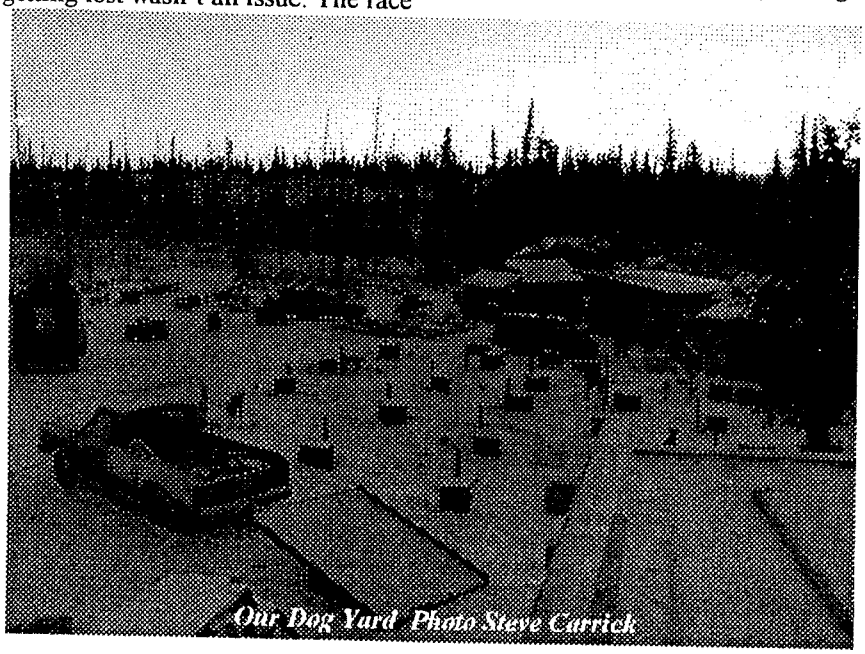
Dario Daniels took a team of our 2-4 year olds to a race near Fairbanks called the Two Rivers 200 (miles). They did well finishing in 19th place. This is a tough race because it is held in the third week of December, which means the dogs are only just ready to cover that kind of distance. Not to mention that being near Fairbanks in the interior of Alaska guarantee's some pretty cold conditions.

Tim and Will took two teams of adult racing dogs to a race called the Sheep Creek Classic. A lot of the big names were at this race as it is a popular venue for mushers to test out their newer and younger dogs. The guys did well finishing 7th (Tim) and 18th (Will).

The Clam Gulch Classic is held on the last weekend of the year. This year's course was shortened due to some logging activity that encroaches onto the trail. Randy, Kenny and myself all took teams to the race. The race trail travels 80 Km through the Caribou Hills just south of Soldatna on the Kenai Peninsula. These are also our local training trails so getting lost wasn't an issue. The race was a lot of fun with all three of us finishing in the top ten. Randy finished 8th, Kenny 10th, and myself in 5th. It was really positive to see the yearlings which I am running do so well in their first ever race.

It still hasn't stopped snowing here, we now have over 5 feet of snow on the ground and it still keeps falling. The good news is that as of the 21st of December the days started getting longer again. Only a minute or two each day but when you only have 4-5 hours of daylight every minute helps. Pretty soon we should be back to 8-9 hours per day (can't wait).

The training is going really well, we have started taking the yearlings on camping trips. This is where we take the dogs on a fairly long run, say a minimum 65 Km, but we stop for a couple of hours roughly halfway. At first when we stop the dogs just go crazy wanting to keep going or wanting to play with the other dogs in the team. But it doesn't take too long for them to realise that this is their time to sleep as we still have a lot of running to do before we are at home, those that don't sleep sure realise their mistake when we get going again and they are tired. After a couple of these trips most of the dogs make good use of their camping time. Usually on a camping trip we pack along some dog food, firewood and some wieners to roast on the fire. It makes for a pretty nice trip, sitting in the moonlight beside a warm fire roasting hotdogs whilst the dogs snooze after eating their meal.



Our Dog Yard Photo Steve Carrick

Next month is going to be huge, we have a couple of big races coming up including the Copper Basin 300, and the Tustemena 200.

I have decided to run the Tustemena race instead of the Klondike 300, mainly for economic reasons.

Anyway that's all for the time being. Take it easy and I will write again soon and let you know all about January

The 1998 Inaugural Waiorau 50 Snow Stage Race

Grant Cousins

The Waiorau 50 is a New Zealand 50km snow stage race. For those considering competeing, it is held at Waiorau Snow Farm, Cardrona Valley, Wanaka. The race will be held on 4 September 1999. More details are available on the 'net at: http://www.waiorau-50.org.nz/index.html

Also, spot the Aussie musher who was a spectator at the '98 race!

It was a dark and stormy night (true, it was).

The race started on time (surprisingly) at 6:00 pm, with the teams leaving at two minute intervals.

The weather was heavy overcast and getting worse. By the time the last of the eight teams had left the start line, it had started to snow.

By the time the teams had reached checkpoint one, the snow was so heavy that it had wiped out the trail. Coupled with this, the Race Safety Officer was in his vehicle broken down in a valley and as such was temporarily out of radio contact.

Departure was delayed from checkpoint one for approx one hour until the weather had started to lift.

During this time it was decided to reduce the length of stage two because there was no way of reaching the allocated checkpoint at Bob Lee Hut. This stage was now to be halted at Meadow Lea.

This meant that the overall race distance would be reduced to approx. 40Kms.

This did not prevent some of the mushers from attempting to cover the original distance though.

Peter Dobbs and his team of four German wire-haired Pointers set off and headed for the new checkpoint but in the snowy conditions he missed. Not once but three times. (I think his in built navigation device was malfunctioning!). He was finally 'reeled in' but had run an extra 50 minutes (approx. 17Km).

On the way to the finish from checkpoint two, Neil Harwood and his four Sibes took a wrong turn and were immediately followed by the remaining three 6 Dog Siberian teams. They all ended up back at Meadow Lea. This meant that they now had to re-run the third stage and therefore had increased their running distance by somewhere around 20km.

The only teams to have run the correct amended distance on the night were the two Alaskan Malamute teams.

By the time the first teams had reached the finish line, the weather had started to clear. The first teams finished in light snow with the last teams finishing under a bright clear moonlit sky. The event was arranged around the full moon. The preceding night and the night following the event were both beautiful clear nights. Isn't that just typical?

Despite all this, everybody said they had a great time and would be back for another go in 1999.

The event was rounded off with a prize giving and excellent brunch hosted by John and Mary Lee at the new lodge they are currently building on the ski field.

Working out the times was a bit of a nightmare but we managed. The following times/places take into account the total time spent out on the trail, without taking into account the overall distances travelled.

Grateful thanks must go to all who took part. To Nature's Recipe for their valuable sponsorship, to our Checkpoint Marshals; Susan Harwood and Keith Lawry, Timekeepers; Angela Watson and Maureen Gillam, Mountain Safety Officers; 'Possum', Jeff and Kit, Race Vet; David Marshall, Track

Marshall; Albert Beattie and to all the handlers on the night; Dianne Holliday, Jeremy Holliday, Melanie Counihan, Fiona Adams, Don Aldridge, Alan Hasell, Josie Stables, Henry Cordani, Mark Dewsbery, Kirk Gillam and to Nick, Brent, Cameron and Dale from Nature's Recipe who spent the night on the mountain getting involved in the thick of it. To anyone else I've forgotten, my apologies and grateful thanks, because without you, we couldn't have held the race.

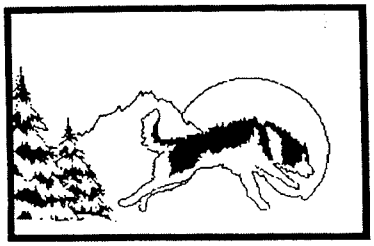
Special thanks to the mushers for the care and attention to their dogs.

Last but by no means least, thanks to Mary and John Lee from the Waiorau Snow Farm on whose property we held the race. Every year we hold races there, they bend over backwards to help and ensure we have a successful event. This year was no exception.

If you're reading this Mary, sorry for any stress we caused you this year on top of everything else you and John are coping with.

Results

Peter Dobbs	4 dogs	German wire-haired Pointer	3 hrs 04 mins 37 secs
Tony Turner	4 dogs	Alaskan Malamute	3 hrs 16 mins 14 secs
Peter Stables	4 dogs	Alaskan Malamute	3 hrs 18 mins 24 secs
Neil Harwood	4 dogs	Siberian Husky	3 hrs 24 mins 48 secs
Ray Holliday	6 dogs	Siberian Husky	3 hrs 34 mins 32 secs
Darren Watson	6 dogs	Siberian Husky	3 hrs 39 mins 16 secs
Bruce Brogden	6 dogs	Siberian Husky	3 hrs 42 mins 28 secs
Andrew McPhee	3 dogs	Alaskan Malamute	DNF due to injury.



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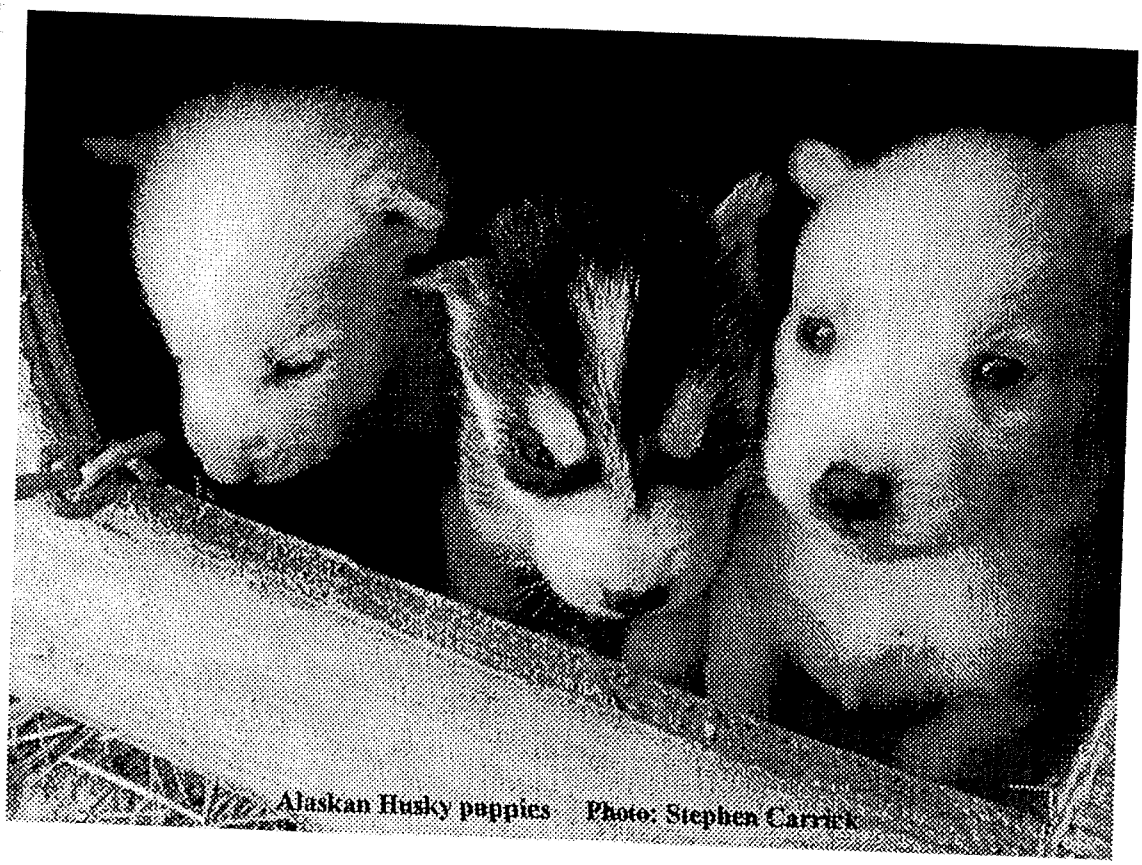


Alaskan Husky puppies Photo: Stephen Carrick

Dogged Dusk Till Dawn

David Rawnsley

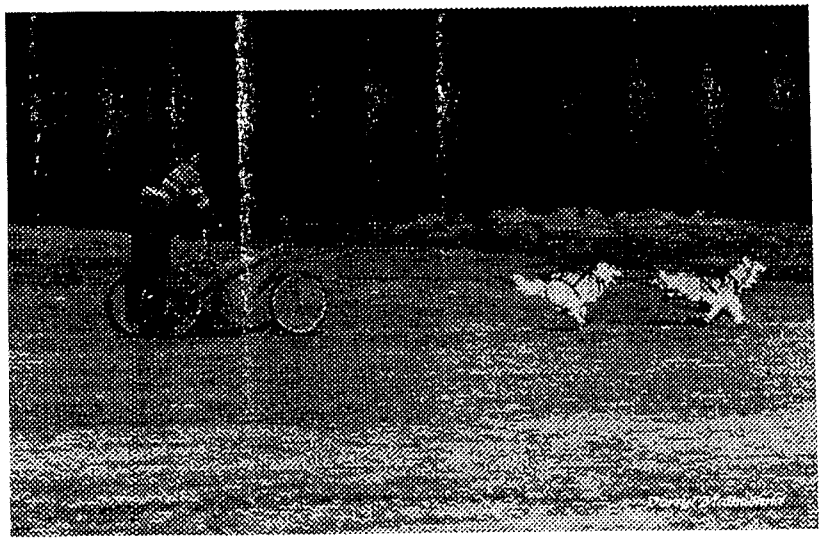
The inaugural running of the Dusk Till Dawn Sled-dog Race was to prove a stern test of dog & musher with nearly half the teams failing to make the finish. At 60km, the race is the longest ever to be run in the Southern Hemisphere &, as the title indicates, there was another challenge – THE DARK.

The race was run from 5 pm & finished at 10 am the following morning. Timing was a critical part of the race as a result it was organised in 5 legs split by 4 hour breaks. Run of mainly forest trails through the largest forest in the hemisphere, the course was easily a match for team endurance as well as technical ability. More than 80% of all the turns in the race were 90° making for a tricky time especially when the only light available was that of the musher's headlamp & the trail lights. Each leg comprised of fairly gruelling 12 km of relatively flat pumice & pine needle tracks.

A musher was to take the each leg with care, with a freezing -5°C air temperature & even colder -16°C ground temperature, made the ground turn into sandpaper. Great care was made by the organisers to make sure there was adequate medical advice for dogs & mushers &booties were a very important factor. It wouldn't take very much for a dog to lose a bootie & slowly wear his/her paw into a bloody mess. While the cold was help for the dogs it definitely gave the onlookers something else to worry about & especially the race co-ordinators. By the end of the evening everyone was huddled around a camp cooker & the warming brew of coffee.

A novel invention for the event was the use of small penlights with different coloured ends to signify turns hazards & onby's. Without which I am sure we would have been faced with a lot of disorientated mushers & dogs running the tracks of the Kaingaroa forest hopelessly lost. Much of the credit for the availability for the forest & indeed the event went to Fletcher Challenge Forestry & their man on the spot Craig Treloar. Without his assistance & the countless hours he spent getting lost finding even harder tracks the race would not of been such a success.

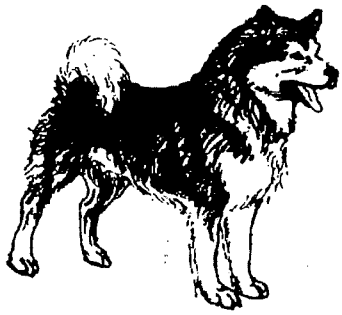
The morning of the race started out with a fun single dog bike race in -3°C temperatures boded very well for the rest of the day. The sky was clear & the mild breeze, which plagued many in the morning with a chilly wake up call, faded away into the most gorgeous of evenings. However by 5:30 PM Madness ensued as at all good races before the start. Dogs screaming mushers calling last minute instructions, the great race had begun. 8 months in the making hopes for a large entry faded as the days grew closer, but as a result it was very beneficial. It made the inaugural race a much more enjoyable event & easier to organise. A total of thirteen mushers & their determined teams turned up at the event, an event that in the end ran smoother than a sled over snow!!



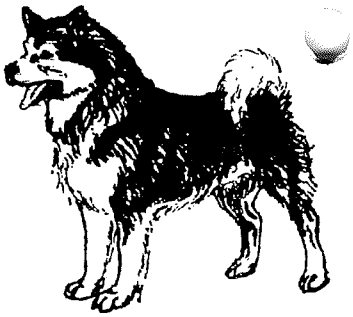
It's a race that caters not only to the more experience musher but also to those new to the longer distances that many of our dogs are born & bred for but very rarely get given the chance. One of the major positive things that came out of the race was the overall assistance that people got with their dogs & equipment not only off the track but on it.

The inaugural Dusk Till Dawn was a learning experience for all of the organisers & for a majority of mushers, set in idyllic surroundings, we couldn't of asked for a better weekend. Especially since it was one of the few races in the 1998 season which registered as below freezing.

Results & information about the race in 1999 can be found on the Auckland Sled Dog Club Website **http://homepages.ihug.co.nz/~sled-dog/index.html** or email. **sled-dog@ihug.co.nz**



SLEDDING SUPPLIES



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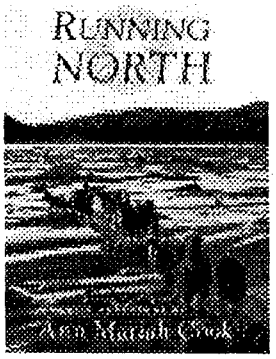
BOOK REVIEW by Marty Karow

RUNNING NORTH

Ann Mariah Cook

324 pages, 6" x 9" ISBN 1-56512-213-5
$21.95 hardcover No. 72213 World



RUNNING NORTH is about a recent and true life adventure about the Cook family racing the 1992 1000 mile Yukon Quest, which has been billed as the toughest sled dog race in the world RUNNING NORTH not only describes in detail the actual race on the trail but it also focuses on the life of the hard working handlers during a long distance race. It is also made more interesting by the fact that the Cooks had to drive from New Hampshire to Alaska many months before the race to train thirty Huskies, which only twelve would be selected, for the long and gruelling event. For Alaskans to enter the Yukon Quest is quite an effort, but when you're a rookie from the "lower forty-eight" and you don't know anybody, it makes the whole adventure very interesting.

I found reading about the local Alaskans fascinating. There are many varied local characters in the book. The day to day pre-race hardships and achievements also made for interesting reading. RUNNING NORTH is also educational. It is interesting to read about how other mushers deal with certain situations during training and out on the trail.

I thoroughly enjoyed reading RUNNING NORTH. The story moved smoothly from one event to another. But the beauty of RUNNING NORTH is that it is a true life adventure. I was left awe-struck, amazed and full of admiration for the people mentioned in this book. RUNNING NORTH will suit both the hard-core musher and the recreational sled dog driver alike. A must have for any sled dog enthusiast.

RUNNING NORTH is available from the Internet by typing "Ann Mariah Cook" or at AMAZON BOOKS.

RUNNING NORTH A Yukon Adventure

by Ann Mariah Cook

What happens when a woman and her husband move their family from New Hampshire to Alaska to train a team of pure-bred Siberian Huskies for the world's toughest dogsled race, the Yukon Quest? They endure thousands of miles of lonely training in the Yukon trying to avoid thin ice, wolves, and rogue moose; they put up with the amused scepticism of Alaskan locals; and they pit themselves against the ultimate, fickle adversary; nature.

Running North is the true story of how Ann Cook, her husband, George, and their young daughter, Kathleen, moved to Alaska and how their Siberians became the first team from the lower forty-eight states to finish the Yukon Quest. It tracks George on his horrific journey through the Yukon, recording the frostbite, the hallucinations that come with exhaustion, the wolves, and the nights out on the ice at minus ninety degrees Fahrenheit. This is the great story of man struggling against nature and surviving.

But unlike most accounts of high adventure that centre solely on the adventurer and the quest, **Running North** is also the story of Ann Cook, who drove the truck and carried the gear and kept the family together. In the tradition of My Old Man and the Sea, she tells both stories in simple, elegant prose that reveals the tragedy, joy, and folly that lie on either side of the curtain separating the adventurer from the world left behind. They run up against crazy landlords, win over gruff neighbours, drive a broken-down truck that sucks oil like Alaskans suck coffee, listen to a radio show that keeps trappers in contact with the world, meet mysterious fishermen who appear without notice and disappear without a sign, fight with a young cousin who will betray them in the end, protect their young daughter from the dangers of their new wild world, meet legions of silent, bearded men, and stare awe-struck at the wide, triumphant sweep of Alaskan landscape.

At its heart, **Running North** is the thrilling story of two very different adventures on the edge: one among the racers braving the Yukon and the other among the people they leave behind.

About the Author:
Ann Mariah Cook

Ann Mariah Cook was born and raised on a farm in New Hampshire. She was educated at the Phillips Exeter Academy and graduated in 1976 from the University of Rochester with a BA in fine arts/art history. After graduation she worked as an antiques dealer and a graphic artist.

When she and her husband bought a Siberian Husky, Cook discovered a new passion. Since then, everything in her life has been somehow related to these dogs. Soon after getting their first Siberian, the Cooks bought a second husky and then a third. In 1978 they founded Alkasiber Kennels to train huskies for sled dog races.

In 1986, Cook became a freelance "dog writer," working as a columnist for Siberian Husky Club of America Newsletter and contributing to the American Kennel Gazette / Purebred Dogs. Two of the publications she worked for won the Dog Writers of America Publication Award. She has also co-written and co-edited several books about Siberian Huskies.

Since 1995, Cook has been an American Kennel Club judge, participating both in national and international dog shows.

In 1991, Ann Mariah Cook went to Alaska with her husband, George, and daughter, Kathleen (then three years old), to train for the Yukon Quest International Sled Dog Race. Ann Cook's book, **Running North: A Yukon Adventure,** tells their story.

Ann Mariah Cook lives with her husband, daughter, and thirty-five pure-bred Siberian Huskies in New Hampton, New Hampshire.

PAW CARE FOR SLEDDOGS

Dianne & Wayne Baker

With the commencement of another training season we can expect to have a few paw injuries, these can range from minor cuts and abrasion's to major cut's in the paw.

For minor cuts and abrasion's the easiest treatment is simply keep the wound clean and apply an antiseptic (e.g. DETTOL & ANTIBIOTIC POWDER), and rest the dog for a few days or until the dog is walking / running without limping. Next time you take your dog out put a lubricant like Trusty Husky or Vaseline on their softer paws then boot them part or all of the way. Gradually toughen up their paws by taking it easy; don't push the dog too hard. Certain dogs have paw injuries every year at the start of the season and sometimes only yearlings have a problem in their first season of running.

Be aware of smart dog's that fake a limp to stop working, if the dog does this stop the team go up to the dog and check it's foot out thoroughly if it does not complain continue with training.

For major paw injuries or injuries that don't heal always seek veterinary advice.

Most paw injuries are caused by running down hill too fast on hard and rough surfaces or by running the dog's too hard early in training, as the feet become tender during the off season. Some surfaces are more abrasive (gravel roads) than others so beware of that. To stop the injuries from happening, keep an eye on your team while training - if one of your dogs starts to change it's gait then it is time to stop and check it's feet. If you do have a dog that has cut it's pad while out training bag (put the dog on a Rig if you are training with one) the dog if you are able or you can put a bootie on the injured paw so you can bring the dog back to your vehicle at walking pace.

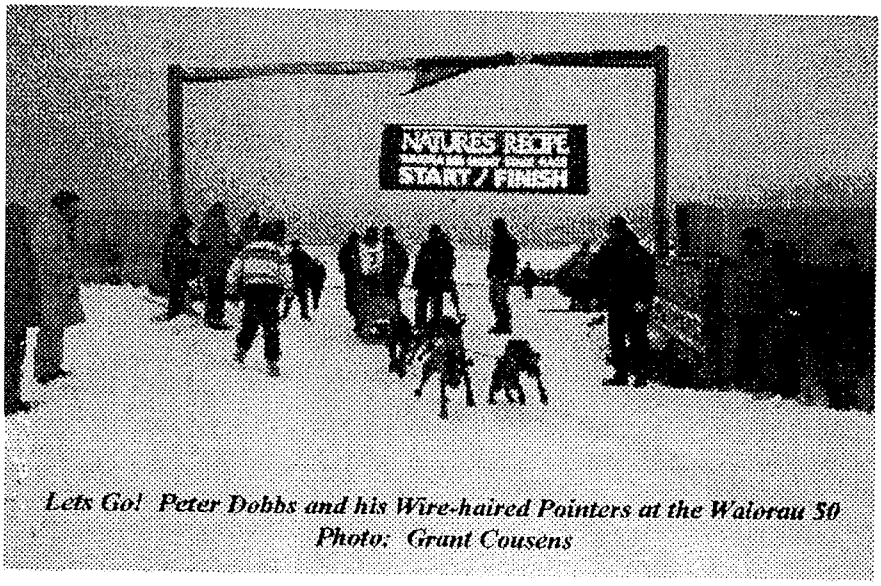
Please do not train your dogs on concrete or bitumen because it causes serious paw injuries, shin and shoulder injuries.

It is a good idea to carry booties and have a small first aid kit in your car.

WARNING !

Diane Baker alias Crash Test Dummy will be in the four dog class. If you see me go by uncontrollably don't panic I always look like that. Lucky my dogs have been trained by Wayne and they know what to do. If I yell out to Finn and Joe don't worry it is not Finn Jensen or Jozsef Toth in the rear its my wheel dogs. I have decided to name my dogs after Australian mushers. How does Marty and Beth sound or Alf... or Clem? I would have to be able to yodel to call a dog Clem wouldn't I. Goodbye for now and see you all on the trail or I might make my own trail.

Di Baker



Lets Go! Peter Dobbs and his Wire-haired Pointers at the Waiorau 50
Photo: Grant Cousens

Eukanuba Sled Dog Derby

24-25 July 1999
Waitarere Forest.
New Zealand

In 1998 the first heat was held in the north Waitarere Forest over a distance of 12 km on Saturday morning.

The second heat was in the south Waitarere Forest over a distance of 8.75 km on Saturday afternoon.
The Senior Bike race and Junior Rig race were both in the south Waitarere Forest on Sunday morning. Both races were over a distance of 3.75km.

The Readers Write

On Things Methodological

Owen Robertson

I would like to start by commending the people who were committed enough to attempt and succeed in creating the first Australia wide Sled Dog Driver Championship. The method that was used in 1997 was a sound starting point which generally worked well. Whenever you work with stats, and especially with a low base of stats you will always find an anomaly or two.

I also agree that some form of re-engineering is required for 1999 to ensure that the quality of the outcomes is enhanced. I also believe that this will not be the final version and we may be a few years away from a stable points score system. The following is a list of issues which I believe must be taken into account:

1/ Quality of fields

If the current point score system is expanded to include more races we leave ourselves open to the Petrol Champion syndrome. While I'm not suggesting anyone would deliberately enter smaller races with lower quality fields, the potential is there. Would a driver who wins 4 Alaskan Malamute club races, turning up with a leading Husky team be a worthy winner?

2/ Who did you beat?

I was lucky enough to win two major races this year (NSW Husky Club Race and Canberra Sled Dog Club) and potentially could have won 4 putting me on equal points with Lawrie Coutts. I would argue though that the fields I beat were not as strong as those beaten by Lawrie Coutts in some of the Victorian Races. Top two dog mushers including Raelene Kwong and David Hodgson did not compete in these races.

3/ Types of race

If you look closely at the form of various teams we have definitely got a horses for courses syndrome happening in Sled Dog Racing in Australia at the moment. There are teams who seem to be outstanding in short/easy races who fall out of contention as the distances increase or the tracks get harder. In races like Bannockburn and Sibe Express where the distances are longer and the heats closer the top teams had huge margins on the field. In sprint races like Undera the times are much closer together.

This problem is actually going to get worse as we are now looking at mid distance racing starting up in Australia.

The "Type of races" problem introduces two difficulties:

- There are more sprint/easy races than hard races
- The gaps between teams will always be much larger in longer races

Who is the better team

Team 1 Wins S Cross
Wins Undera
Wins CHA
6th in Sydney by 7 minutes
5th in Bannockburn by 8 minutes

Team 2 3rd S Cross 10 sec to winner
3rd Undera 15 sec to winner
2nd CHA 15 sec to winner
1st Sydney
1st Bannockburn

I don't know the answer but it is food for thought. I would suggest the 2nd team has had a better overall result.

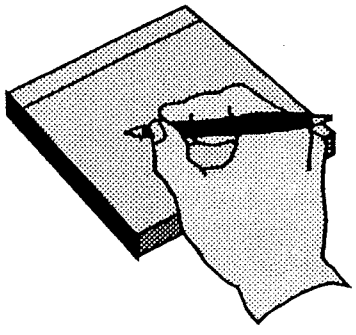
Suggestions:

- Using time in the formula is a good way of weighting a win versus a win
- Time must be included. If you beat a quality field by a large margin this must be rewarded.
- Look at a ranking formula to stop "Petrol Champions"
- If you want to introduce more races they must be ranked by the field. Probably the only way to do this is by looking at the size of the field. While this still doesn't guarantee the field quality it is as good a way as I can think. This won't work as the sport grows in size as you may beat a large, poor quality field. The ultimate answer would see you ranked against who you beat (maybe use last years top 10 as a guide).
- Four races must be the absolute minimum or else we will have specific distance specialists beating a consistent team.

So the formula should include:

PLACING, TIME, RANKING

Regards
Owen



Snail Bait Poisoning

Snail bait poisoning is an all to common problem in suburban areas. The problem occurs when a dog eats a quantity of snail bait either from a garden or direct from the packet (which was carelessly left in reach).

Two main types of snail baits are commercially available. Defender Snail Pellets are coloured green and contain metaldehyde. Meanwhile, Baysol snail pellets are coloured blue and contain carbamate.

There is an antidote for carbamate so if you feel you really need to use snail pellets then Baysol should be the preferred option.

The signs of snail bait poisoning are generally the same as can be expected from most organophosphate chemicals. These chemicals act by inhibiting the enzyme which stops transmission from one nerve fibre to another. As a result transmission from one nerve fibre to another is not inhibited and excess stimulation occurs to various parts of the body. Thus the dog will exhibit sudden salivation, vomiting and become uncoordinated (as if it were drunk). This rapidly progresses to seizures and uncontrolled movement of the legs; the neck and head become arched back and the jaws clamp. If not treated the dog may well die.

Because of the two different types of snail bait, it is important that the type of pellet be identified before taking the dog to the vet.

When the dog arrives at the vetrinary clinic treatment will begin. Treatment of early cases consists of making the animal vomit - to empty the remaining snail bait from the stomach. Intravenous injection of muscle relaxants and/or anaesthetic agents may be needed to control the fitting. As mentioned above, an antidote to Baysol can be given but there is no specific antidote to Defender.

If you consider it necessary to use snail bait around the house, here are some handy hints:

- use Baysol and not Defender
- use snail pellets sparingly so there are no piles accessible to your dog
- prevent access to the poisoned garden bed for example by use of chicken wire
- do not rely on labels which suggest that the product contains a 'pet repellent' - these are not effective in all cases
- store snail pellets in an inaccessible place.

And remember, if your dog shows signs of snail bait poisoning, contact the vet immediately and bring a sample of the pellets - or better still the packet - along with you.

Peter Komidar

Sammie 1-dog Kiwi-style on bike
Photo: Debra Ogier

The Grumle

23 - 24 July 1999
New Zealand

Saturday 23 July 20km Start 4:30 pm
Sunday 24 July 20km Start 7:30 am

The trail will be over well maintained gravel roads along the upper reaches of the Rangitata Gorge

Entry fee: Half a dozen rashers of bacon and three eggs (Your brunch on the Sunday)

No prizes. It's just for the fun of it.

The winner cooks breakfast for the last musher home!

For further information contact Ray and Dianne Holliday on

- telephone 03 - 696 3898
- or fax 03 - 696 3897

Gearing Up to Run

Hayley Coutts

Scientists have discovered that dogs are able to run swiftly because their legs change gear in a similar way to a car.

David Carrier, a physiologist at the University of Utah in Salt Lake City, United States, believes legs provide a gearing system that keeps muscles working at peak efficiency.

He compares this with what happens in cars. "In a car we shift from first to second to maintain the optimum engine speed", he told *New Scientist* magazine.

Previously, most scientists believed when an animal ran, excess energy was stored in tendons stretched like rubber bands. As the animal pushed off for the next step, the tendons shortened and released the stored energy.

But Dr Carrier believes the rate at which muscles shorten is the key to efficient running.

Muscles can shorten at different rates, but they work most efficiently at less than the maximum shortening speed.

Maintaining the optimum rate of muscle shortening requires a gearing mechanism and Dr Carrier said this was provided by altering leg leverage.

Dr Carrier and his research team tested the theory by implanting transducers into the quadriceps of labrador-pointer cross breeds to measure the reate at which their muscles shortened as they ran.

They found the dogs altered the leverage of their legs so that muscles constantly shortened at the optimum speed.

Musher Fitness

By Geoff Carter

Just How Fit Does a Musher Have to Be?

Good Question! I suppose that depends mainly on how good your dogs are, how tough the track is, what the weather is like, what the opposition is like, what sort of scooter you have, what sort of trip your dogs had, ... A bit to consider there, so, I reckon the best way to do your best is to be as fit as **you** can, to give dogs a better chance. How many times have you been in the middle of a race with someone else, whether it be at the top of the rankings or trying not to be the bottom and you've given it everything you've got and then had to give up and say "Sorry fella, you'll have to drag me from here". I'd say at a guess that everyone has been in that situation at least once. If not, you haven't been trying or you haven't been racing long enough. Imagine how "Fella" feels. He's trying just as hard as he can, when all of a sudden **you** give up.

Who's racing? If your in it purely for fun and don't really care where you come so be it. Carry on having fun because racing or recreation, we're all here to have fun. If you find however that the race bug has bitten, then get serious and help your dog(s). It's a bit much to expect your dogs to compete against someone else who has minimal weight on the tow line when you have you on the tow line.

As I said earlier, there are a number of things to consider in helping your dog(s) out. I will try to address one of them over the next few issues of Hike! That one is **you**! OK, so where do I get off telling you about people fitness?

Here goes my disclaimer.

I have no formal qualifications as far as fitness training goes. Before commencing any fitness programme a doctor should be consulted to determine your suitability to the programme. Any advice I provide is a general guideline and should be taken with regard to your current individual fitness level.

That should do it!

So what ***do*** I have then? To date I have 15 years of running experience. I have run 3 marathons as well as a number of ultra-marathons and competed in the Australian Defence Force Inter-service Marathon 8 times with 6 years at the top of the tree and competition experience overseas with the Combined Services Cross Country Team. The running scene also includes countless fun runs and athletic competitions in which I still compete. I made it to the dizzy heights of Captain of the Army Cross Country Skiing and Biathlon Team and competed at the Interservice level and in civilian competitions. With this, I kept up a training regime of up to 160km per week (without dogs), as well as other factors like good food, plenty of sleep (good beer), etc. etc. As I said, no formal qualifications, but after 15 years of pounding the pavement, plenty of practical experience. In any case. if you don't like it, don't do it.

To round off the introduction to musher fitness, a few preliminaries. Any fitness programme should commence gradually and we'll be doing that. We'll start off with mainly easy aerobic exercises to get the blood circulating and progress from there. If you're overweight, try a medically prescribed diet and lose a bit before you start. If you're unfit, try 20-30 minutes of walking on flat ground to start getting ready. Well, not too much of the programme yet but we'll get there soon enough Something to think about over the holiday season anyway, so all the best.

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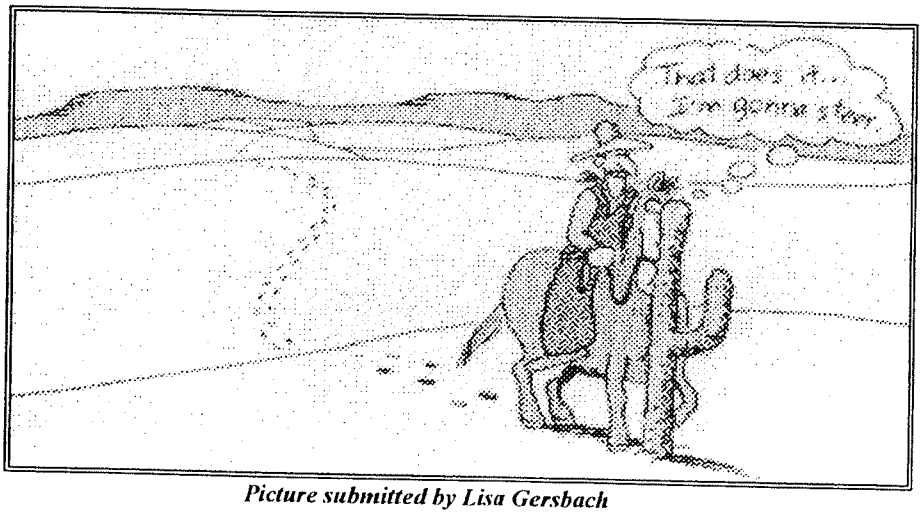
Out of the Dark! - Tony Turner with Badger, Timtu, Hama and Ploddy - at the Waiorau 50 race
Photo: Grant Cousens



Picture submitted by Lisa Gersbach

Vetsearch Tips

Building Better Blood – A 3 Point Approach

John Konhke BVSc RDA

This is the first of a series of articles which Vetsearch International (makers of a range of Greyhound performance products) have given Hike! permission to reprint. I think there is much we can learn from our colleagues in the racing industry and each month I'll be including some valuable hard won tips (Ed).

Most trainers consider that a good blood count is essential for race performance. Certainly, whilst a dog with a poor blood count is unlikely to perform to its maximum speed, many trainers do not realise the importance of regular worming, sprint exercise, and boosting the diet regularly with blood building nutrients. A combination of these 3 points will help ensure that the blood responds to training and maintains an optimum red cell count for racing.

1. Control Blood Loss by Regular Worming

When a greyhound comes into a kennel from an outside yard, it should be wormed out to remove blood sucking parasites, such as hookworms, and treated for fleas. It is good practice to repeat the worming a month after the initial worming to help control any other worms that have completed their lifecycle in the first month of training, prior to commencing sprint training. Conditioning work by walking on the lead for the first 3-4 weeks, followed up by short sprints over 150-200 metres twice a week for 2-3 weeks, will help provide a good foundation of strength and basic fitness for the next phase of the training program.

2. Attention to Diet

During this time, it is essential to feed a well balanced diet to provide the raw materials for blood production, muscle growth and bone strength. Nutrients such as iron and B complex vitamins are vital for red cell production, Vitamin E for muscle development, and calcium for bone strength. These are important foundation co-factors to ensure the greyhound can adapt to faster work.

Feed the Bone Marrow

A two week course of Bloodfood for Greyhounds, given as 2 tablets daily for 7 days, miss 3 days, then 2 tablets for another 3 days, provides the nutrient boost to "kick start" and feed the bone marrow to produce red cells as the system responds to exercise.

A course of Bloodfood for Greyhounds is helpful to improve vitality and red cell numbers in any greyhound that has had hookworms, or has a dull coat and pale gums

If you are feeding a high proportion of dry food, or basing the meat part of the diet on chicken meat, then the extra supplement of iron, as in Bloodfood, is useful to help provide a boost of raw materials for blood production during the first 2 weeks of training. Chicken meat only contains about 30% of the iron content of red meats. A course of an iron booster helps ensure that iron reserves in the bone marrow, spleen and liver are built up in readiness for faster sprint exercise as training progresses. Although the red cell numbers and haemoglobin content of the red cells will not increase until the greyhound is given regular sprints, it is always important to build up the reserve of iron in readiness for blood production stimulated by fast exercise.

It must also be remembered that no matter how much iron is given, the increase in red cell count and haemoglobin count is also dependant on the need for oxygen in the contracting muscles. If a greyhound is walked for a long period without regular sprints, its oxygen need in the muscles will be less than an animal that is given regular sprints once its initial road work is finished. In early training, additional B complex will help complement the extra iron, which can generally be provided by products such as Feramo-Greyhound as a base, with Bloodfood tablets given over the tongue in the standard booster course during the first 2 weeks of training. Once the greyhound starts regular trialing and racing and to help maintain the appetite and provide extra for blood production, a booster course of Bloodfood tablets at 3-4 week intervals will help maintain the red cell count in greyhounds under stress.

3. Introduce Sprint Exercise

Walking a greyhound on the lead or walking machine is a useful method of conditioning in early

training. It will help to strengthen the bones and thicken the joint surfaces in preparation for the wear and tear of racing. However, walking will not increase the cardiovascular, muscle anaerobic capacity or fitness for all-out sprint exercise. Stamina for speed can only be conditioned by giving the greyhound sprints over 100-150 metres initially, for 2-3 weeks, building up to 200-300 metres and short trials three times weekly to maximise oxygen uptake for maximum speed. This will help ensure that the greyhound can run as fast as possible, burning up energy at maximum efficiently in its muscles.

Many greyhounds, in fact only find their form after 2 or 3 initial races, as they are often "under done" and not fit enough to sustain all-out speed. By trialing or racing once every 5-7 days for 2 or 3 times, they "top-off" their fitness, and then are able to perform right to the post.

Regular courses of Bloodfood for Greyhounds given at 3-4 week intervals, particularly when a greyhound is trialing or racing regularly twice weekly will help to maintain the red blood count at its peak for performance.

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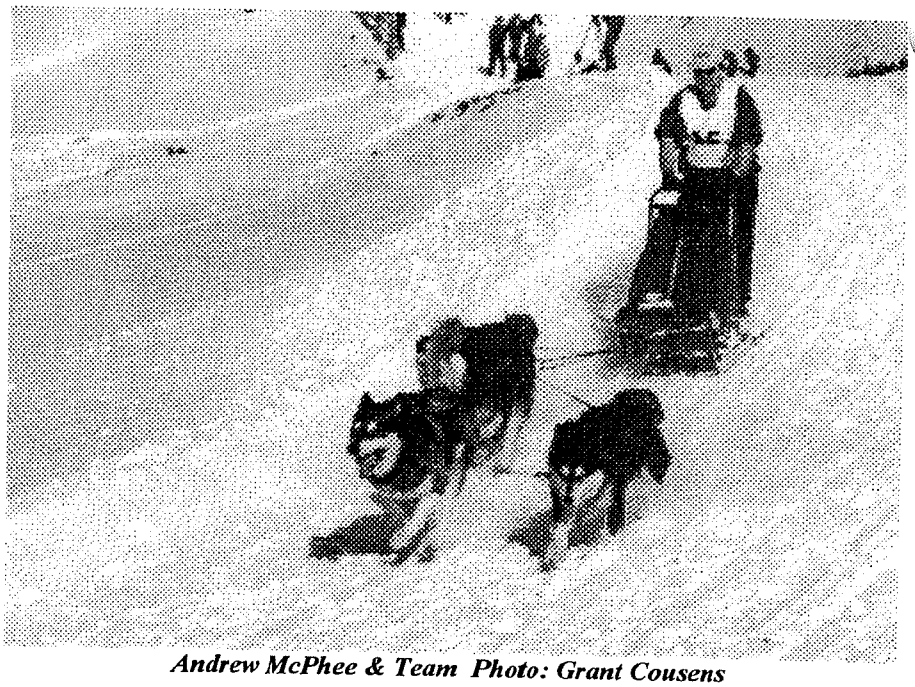
1800 810 792
E-mail.General@vetsearch.com.au

And they're off! Photos: Debra Ogier



Andrew McPhee & Team Photo: Grant Cousens

The Stage Race

August 6th & 7th 1999
Iwitahi Camp Kiangaroa Forest
Taupo - New Zealand

The Stage Race is a 3 stage 50km race. The stages are 15km, 20km, 15km. (30km for 2-dog teams).

The Stage Race was the first long distance sled dog race ever held in New Zealand. Now in it's fourth year and growing more popular all the time.

For more information, contact:
Susan Harwood 04- 293 2946
or
Estelle Lawry 04- 298 5890

Wanaka Sled Dog Festival

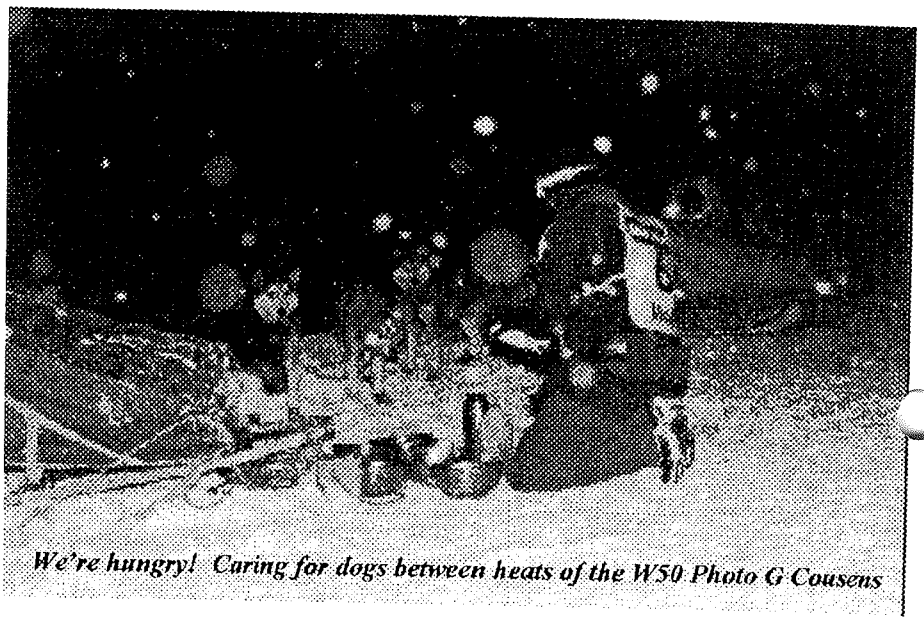
August 29to September 1 1999
Hosted by the Southern Regions Sled Dog ClubNew Zealand

The Wanaka Sled Dog Festival is a single race comprising three heats of 6 km - 10 km each.

They will be run mid to late morning on Monday 30 August, Tuesday 31 August and Thursday 2 September.

New Zealand Federation of Sled-dog Sports sanctioning has been applied for and the race will be run under NZFSS rules and regulations.

The entry fee for the event, ie all three heats is: $NZ60.00



We're hungry! Caring for dogs between heats of the W50 Photo G Cousens

Book Reviews

Diane Baker

Since the Racing season has finished I have done a bit of reading about our long distance cousins overseas. Hoping to pick up a pointer or two, I was inspired and motivated and wishing we were at the Iditarod handling for Steve Carrick this year but our goal is next year.

1. ***Race across Alaska* by Libby Riddles the first woman to win an Iditarod.**

Libby who lives in Teller Alaska ran the Iditarod in 1985. Her partner Joe Garnie helped her train a number of dogs, which were hers, his and some borrowed, dogs to fulfil a dream to run the Iditarod. Joe Garnie has run a few Iditarod's and is running this year. Due to her strength, commitment, and training she made a decision to trust her and her dogs ability to endure a whiteout, severe wind and freezing temperatures (-45) to gain the lead and win. Rick Swenson a well-known musher was convinced she would die with her team. The story covers each step of the Iditarod race in detail.

2. ***My Lead Dog was a Lesbian* By Brian O'Donoghue**

This was a story filtered with humour. He had to laugh or he would have cried. He recaps his training and racing of the Iditarod. Brian is a journalist who decided instead of writing about the Iditarod he would do it. Easier said than done. He brought a dog team for $4000 after being told they came from Reddington lines (he believes later he was conned). He is the first person to start the Iditarod first and come last. That is not what he wanted though. He even thought about giving up in Safety, 30 miles from Nome. This story covers the frustration and strength needed to complete an Iditarod from a person as a Rookie and running last. He had to endure the cold, wind, snow and dangerous trail. But he also had to contend with two of his team mating, the team getting into a dump and having to run a few miles back into town for help, losing a team and having a lead dog (the lesbian) mounting the other female lead dog's. **He said he left Anchorage with a team of dogs and arrived in Nome with a sleddog team.**

3. ***Running North* by Anne Cook.**

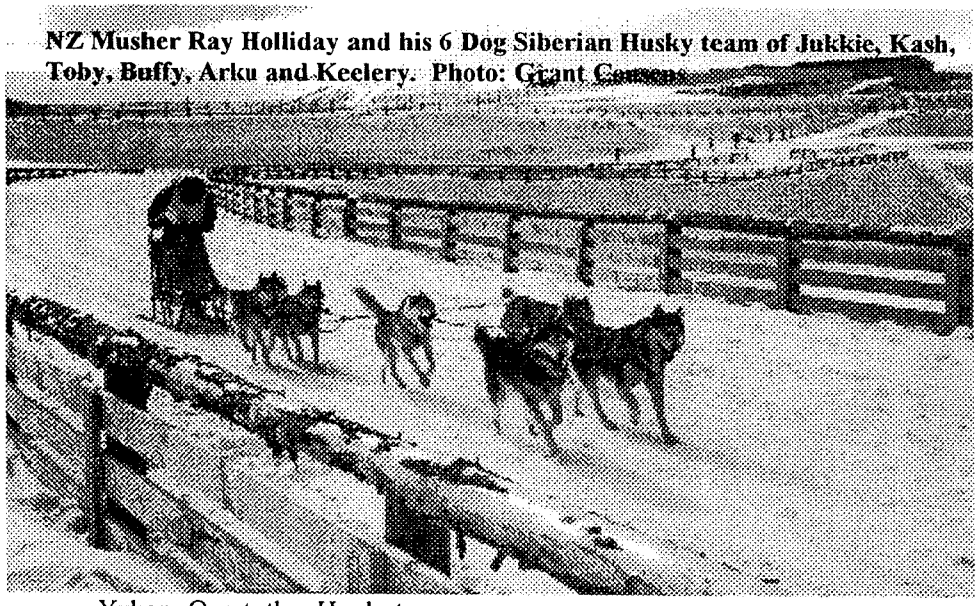
Anne, George and their daughter came to Australia a couple of years ago. This is a story about a family who made the decision to run the Yukon Quest the Hardest race on Earth. They packed up the family left a nice home in New Hampshire with the luxuries of life; in an old dog truck and 35 Siberians travelled to Two Rivers Alaska to train and compete in the Yukon Quest. After a while and many incidents they learnt to love Alaska and found it hard to leave after the Race to go back to New Hampshire. They formed a lot of great friendships and learnt a lot about sleddog racing, the Alaskan culture and way of life. George finished last but what they learnt as a family was so positive.

✪✪✪

All the stories were unique and once I picked up each book I found it hard to put it down until completed. Wayne and I have a dream to move to Alaska for a couple of years and mush dogs. This is not such a crazy dream. We are now planning for it.

All three books are available from Amazon Internet book buying service.

I am reading Mel and Lee Fishback – *How to Train a Lead Dog* and Wayne is reading *Winning Strategies for Long Distance Mushers* by Joe Runyan Next month we will have reviews on those books.



NZ Musher Ray Holliday and his 6 Dog Siberian Husky team of Jukkie, Kash, Toby, Buffy, Arku and Keelery. Photo: Grant Cameron

NZ Siberian Husky Racing Championships

10-11 July 1999
Southern Waitarere Forest
New Zealand

The purpose of this race is to give Siberian Husky owners a chance to compete against Siberians only.

Kontroversy Korner - Bitching about Races

OK, its time to turn the Kontroversy Meter up a notch or two and talk about race organisation. We all like to have a whinge about race organisation - especially when its not our own race! But I think some honest race bitching is good for the sport. So you don't think I've got some hidden agenda, I've chosen things common to most if not all races at some stage. So without any more delay here's my 10 cents worth (that's about 70 dog cents!)

Glittering Prizes

I've never come in the top three in any race. So I think I can be considered an unbiased observer in matters relating to prize money.

At present, very few races advertise in advance the prizes on offer. In many you don't find out what's on offer unless you're lucky enough to open the envelope and read the cheque.

However, with more and more races coming on the scene it would seem to be in the interests of races to advertise their prize pool - in order to attract not only the top order racers - but also mushers like myself who like to judge their performance against the best in the sport.

And when it comes to people who are in the running for prize money it would be useful for them to know what's on offer. For example, if prize money for the 3-dog class is greater than that for the 2-dog, its likely to influence your decisions when filling out the application form is it not (providing you've got the dogs).

Silly Race Rules

Another gripe is the silly race rules - which are never enforced.

Three spring immediately to mind.

1. ***Cutting Equipment***: Most races require mushers to carry cutting equipment. Now for a 3-dog team or above - no arguments - there might be a dog fight etc and cutting the line will be the quickest and easiest method to isolate the dogs. But I seriously doubt the need for cutting equipment for a one or two dog team (especially the former). Its not that I'm being picky - I just can't think of a situation in which it would be required. (Ie where you'd need to cut the line rather than unclip it).
2. ***Equipment Checks***. Q: How many race rules refer to equipment checks? A. Heaps
   Q. How many actually carry out the equipment checks. A. Very few!
   Now I have nothing against equipment inspections - especially in races that draw a lot of relative new-comers. But if you are not serious about inspecting - why include it in the race rules?
3. ***Drug Testing***. Now this is a doozie. We all know that dogs won't be tested. They never have yet! Sure if you decide to do it - great include it in the race - but if someone decided to dope their dogs, I seriously doubt the threat in the race rules will put them off! I also have to chuckle when I think of the drug testers chasing dogs around and waiting for them to cock their legs in order to get a urine sample - it would make a great comedy sketch! And also, if you were going to test for drugs, why limit it to the dogs - what about the mushers! Although I will admit some rules do apply the drugs embargo to humans.

   But seriously, I'd like to know when race organisers really intended to take my dogs' blood samples - Because having seen vets have trouble finding a vein in a dog - you can be sure that I wouldn't be entering the race! Once again if its only in the race rules for some politically correct reason - why not just admit it and omit it.

Drivers' Meetings

While all of the above examples are trivial and only annoying in impact, this last one is of real concern.

I must have been to over half a dozen races in which the following incident has occurred.

At the bib draw, the race marshal makes all the right noises and confidently announces that any musher who fails to attend the morning's drivers' meeting will be disqualified.

(Now frankly I don't think its a disqualifiable offence not to turn up to one of these - but that's a decision for the race organisers).

What I am concerned about is when at the drivers' meeting a roll call is taken and lo and behold someone is missing. Now if its Jo Citizen more often that not the person doing the roll call will call the name a couple of times and then the person is disqualified. (No argument here).

But if that person happens to be a 'known' racer - how often have you heard someone say (sometimes even the person doing the roll call!) "Oh s/he's just went out to check his/her dogs". And funnily enough the person is NOT disqualified.

And let me tell you. The majority of racers - ie those who would have been disqualified if they'd failed to attend - are not fooled for a second. In fact, the "Oh he's checking his dogs" line is often accompanied by muffled laughter.

Now no one wants to disqualify people and its particularly hard if they've travelled half a continent to get there. But the dilemma is easily solved - if you're not prepared to do the deed - don't make the rule in the first place.

What do you think? Am I being to critical? Or do you think we need to revisit our race rules (for example, can anyone explain to me why you can't race 3 dogs on a scooter?).

Peter Komidar

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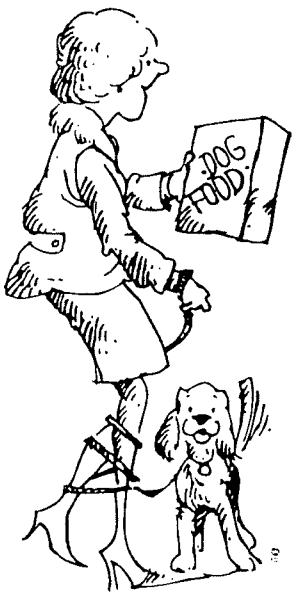

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sire: **TELKWA HAMAHAKKI** (iid Finland) better known as **"SPYDER"**
dam: **CYBERHUSKY TYPHOON** better know as **"EESHA"**

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EESHA is the daughter of **Norstarr Utikuma** (Kuma) and **Northomes Cliff** (Cliff) and is a full sister of **Cyberhusky Cyclone** (Gecko) and **Cyberhusky Whirlwind** (Sade)

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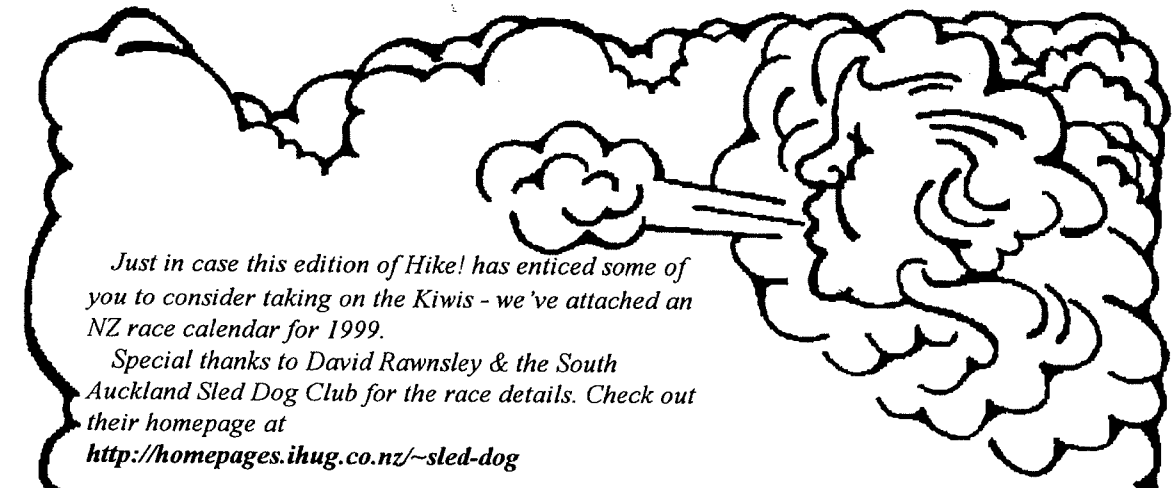
1999 Sled Dog Events Forward Planner

May	Southern Cross Pro-Am (Vic)	22-23 May
June	Underra Sled Dog Dash (Vic)	12 - 14 June
	Ridge Runners No Frills Race (Qld)	12 - 14 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
	Belangalo 50 Stage Stop Race (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



Just in case this edition of Hike! has enticed some of you to consider taking on the Kiwis - we've attached an NZ race calendar for 1999.

Special thanks to David Rawnsley & the South Auckland Sled Dog Club for the race details. Check out their homepage at ***http://homepages.ihug.co.nz/~sled-dog***

1999 New Zealand Sled Dog Events Calendar

May	1	Auckland Sled Dog Club (ASDC) **Qualifier** Hunua (Bike & Rig)
	1-2	Central Tablelands Siberian Husky Club (CTSHC) **Qualifier** Waiterere (B&R)
	15-16	South Island Sled Dog Sports Assoc (SISDSA) **Bike Race** Christchurch
	22-23	Ridge Runners Sled Dog Racing Club (RRSDRC) **Qualifier** Waitarere (B&R)
	29-30	South Island Siberian Husky Club (SISHC) **Winter Warmup** (Rig)
June	5-6	ASDC **Winter Warmup** Maramarua
	5-6	Southern Regions Sled Dog Club (SRSDA) **Sandy Point Scarper** Invercargill
	6	CTSHC **The Autumn Burn** Waitarere (Rig & Bike)
	6	Trailblazers (TB) **Rig Race** Maramarua (Rig)
	12-13	ASDC **Bike Race**, Maramarua (Bike)
	19-20	SRSDC **The Origin** Dunedin (Rig)
	19-20	Main Range Sled Dog Club (MRSDC) **Central Rendezvous** Santoft (B & R)
	26-27	SISDC **Solstice Race**
July	3, 4	RRSDRC **Taupo** Taupo (Bike & Rig)
	9-11	ASDC **Dusk Till Dawn** Taupo (Rig)
	10-11	SRSDC **Oamaru Outing** Oamaru (Rig)
	17-18	SISDSA **Stage Race** (Rig)
	24-25	Independent **The Gumle** - Rangitata Gorge
	24 25	CTSHC **Sled Dog Derby** Waitarere (Bike & Rig)
	31/7-1/8	Auckland Siberian Husky Club (ASHC) **Great Northern Classic** Rotorua (B&R
	31/7-1/8	SISDSA **Double Banger**
August	6-8	Independent **Stage Race** - Kaingaroa (Rig)
	14-15	SISHC **Sled Dog Challenge** Hamner Forest (Bike and Rig)
	21	SISDSA **Charity Race**
	21-22	TB **Butch Black Label Classic** Maramarua
	21-22	MRSDC **Plateau Challenge** Turangi Area (Rig)
	29/8-1/9	SRSDC **Wanaka Sled Dog Festival** Wanaka (Sled)
Sept	4	Independent **Wairau 50** (Sled)

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HOW MANY DOGS DOES IT TAKE TO CHANGE A LIGHTBULB?

ALASKAN HUSKY: Let me see that light bulb. What's it made of, what's inside of it, what will happen if I drop it. I might change it, but let me think about it. You're not trying to tell me what to do, are you? Hey, I just had a great idea. I think I'll change that light bulb!
MALAMUTE: Let him do it, you can pet me while he's busy.
SAMOYEDS don't change light bulbs, although sometimes their agent will get a German Shepherd in to do the job for them.
SIBERIAN HUSKY: Light bulb? Light bulb? That thing I just ate was a light bulb?
AKITA: It's your light bulb--change it yourself. Unless.....is there food involved??
GERMAN SHEPHERD: "I'm kinda busy right now! I have to chase the cat, protect the kids, herd the horses, beg for food and take a nap. I'll add the light bulb to my "To Do" list...."
AFGHAN: Light bulb? What light bulb?
POODLE: Sorry, Just had my nails done.
LABRADOR: Why change it? The darker it is, the longer I can sleep.
BASENJI: light bulb?? We don't change no steenking light bulbs!!
BOXER: If I could stop wiggling my butt long enough to quit falling off the chair.....
GOLDEN RETRIEVER: "I'll be glad to change the light bulb for you, but first can't we play catch the tennis ball, or frisbee - and then I want to lick your face & rest my head in your lap & look up at you with my sad eyes. What, you're changing the light bulb yourself - you didn't have to do that - but I looooove you so much for being my friend and doing that."
CORGI: I cant reach the stupid lamp!
STANDARD POODLE: None. Go get human, sit under it, look up and point it out--then go lie down in disgust that it took so long.
BORDER COLLIE: Just one. And he'll rewire the house.
DACHSHUND: Well, first get me a ladder and a treat.....no, you took too long. I want TWO treats and I'll do it...No, not that treat, the oth kind. Geez.. do I have to do everything?
IRISH SETTER: It only takes one, but it will put in a really dim bul
PIT BULL TERRIER: Jump and take hold of old light bulb. Now, l go of old light bulb.....I said let go of light bulb. Please????
Anonymous
http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Delphi/5655/

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