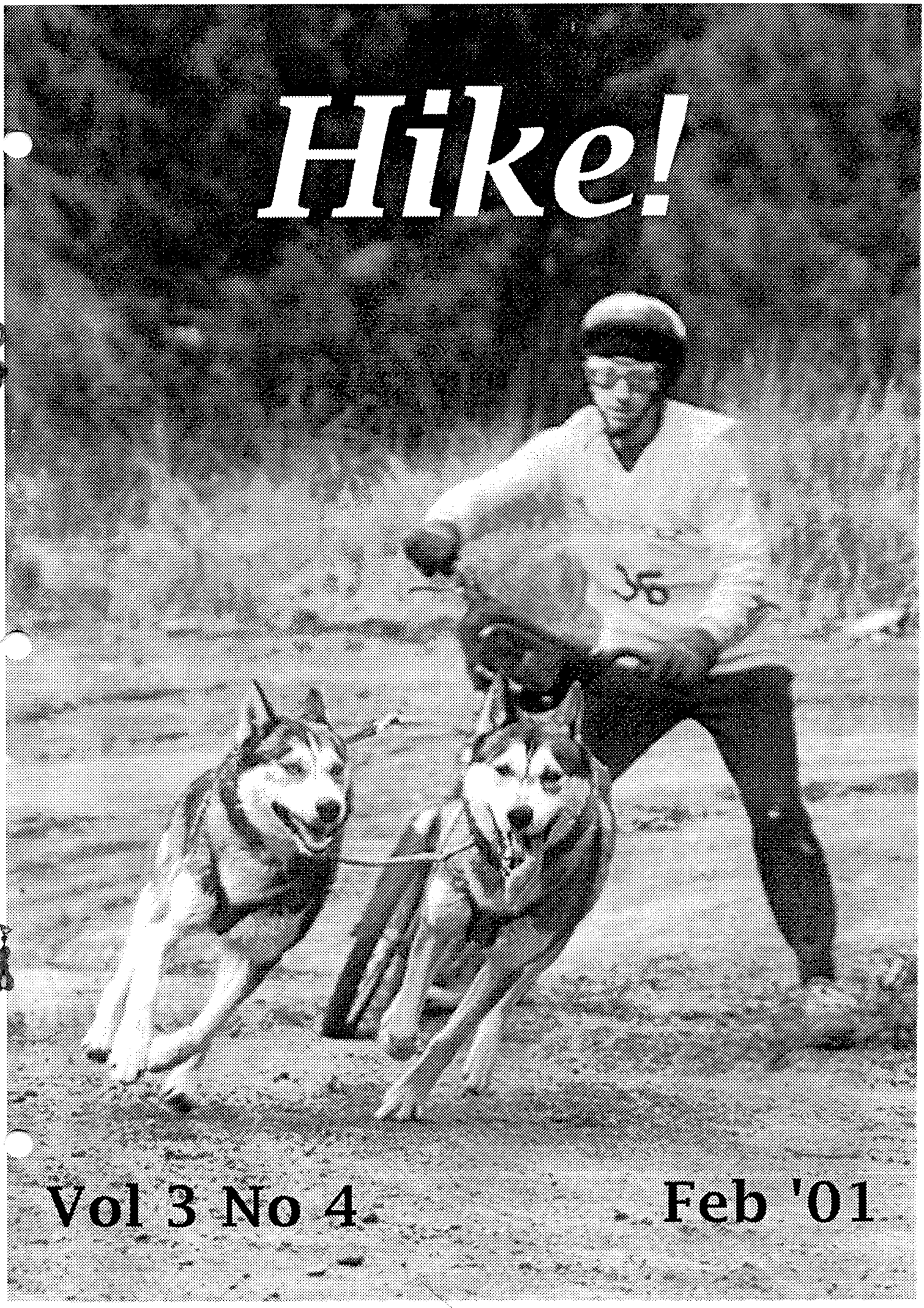
Hike!



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Hike!

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IFSS Report

IFSS World Cup to be held every year

Reprinted with permission from the IFSS Gazette

The International Federation of Sleddog Sports (IFSS) has approved the 2000-2001 World Cup Series, which was a gratifying success in the 1999-2000 inaugural year with the new format.

The World Cup Series provides opportunity for promotion of mushing and mushers and welcomes participation from race giving organisations in each class from all regions of the world. Events in Sprint, Mid-Distance, Long Distance, and Skijoring/Pulka may submit application for accreditation of their events. The most recent 1999-2000 World Cup Series included approximately 30 events in 6 countries around the world.

IFSS is currently seeking applicants to host World Cup events during this upcoming 2000-2001 season. The deadline for applications is December 1 2000 or 30 days before the event. Late applications will be accepted at the discretion of the IFSS Accreditation Committee.

There are seven IFSS World Cup Regions:

Region 1 – Central Europe
Region 2 – Scandinavia, Russia, Baltic States
Region 3 – Alaska, Yukon and British Columbia
Region 4 – Northwest Territories, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, Western USA to Minnesota, Wisconsin, UP Michigan
Region 5 – Ontario, Quebec, Lower Michigan and eastern USA
Region 6 – Japan
Region 7 – All other countries

All applications to host World Cup events can be submitted through an IFSS National Member or through an Associate or Founding Member or directly and individually by contacting the regional people below or IFSS Accreditation Chair Markus Luft, Strasse Zur Fiche 16, 04916 Freywalde, Germany. Further information may also be obtained from IFSS Secretary General Sally O Bair 16406 – 27th Ave, Big Lake MN 55309. An application form will also be available on the IFSS website at www.sleddogsport.com.

The Region 7 contact name and address for obtaining more information is Rae Bank, 66 King Street, Kingsland, Auckland 1003 New Zealand. Email rbank2@middlemore.co.nz

Time is short so act now to get your application in.

Accreditation fees for the 2000-2001 World Cup events depend on the Qualification Level of the event. Races may be accredited as 1-star or 2-star events. Only two and three day events will be accredited (no 1-day races). One star events are interregional or intercontinental. Two star events have higher accreditation fees and accumulate more points (1.05 times the event score) to competing mushers. Each organisation – together with the appropriate Accreditation Committee member and sponsoring IFSS Member – must decide what level to apply for. The fees are:

Pulka, skijoring, limited class
One-star events - $30/day/class
Two-star events - $120/day/class
Open Class
One-star events - $100/day/class
Two-star events - $400/day/class
Mid Distance 6 dogs
One-star events - $50/day/class
Two-star events - $200/day/class
Mid/long Distance 8 dogs up
One-star events - $150/day/class
Two-star events - $600/day/class

At the end of the race season, accreditation fees come back to the mushers. Fifty percent of each region's accreditation fees will be paid back in regional World Cup awards, 20% will go into the pool for overall World Cup awards, 20% goes into sport development and animal welfare and 10% to IFSS administration costs. From the accreditation monies collected in 2000, $2600 was paid to support the gastric ulcer research project during the Iditarod, and many mushers throughout the world who were Cup winners received some regional monetary reward from the World Cup program.

Regional medallists will be the mushers in a region with the highest number of World Cup points, regardless of where they earned them. So, European mushers winning World Cup points in Alaska couldbe Regional medallists in Europe, and Alaskan mushers winning points in the Lower 48 could be medallists in the Alaska Region. This is to ensure that local mushers receive some of the benefits even though a top-notch event attracts lots of competition from outside the region. For the overall awards, area of residency does not matter.

IFSS is a coalition of National Federations, Founding, and Associate Members founded in 1985. Its goals are to promote public interest in Sleddog Sports and to integrate sled dog racing into the mainstream of recognised sporting events. IFSS was organised to foster non-discriminatory international Sleddog Sports competition primarily by conducting international competitions and by developing, supporting and educating its members for such competitions.

~ □□□ ~

Musher Profile - Beth Bobroff

I am 23 years old. I currently live in Canberra, ACT, but in the next year or two I will be moving to a 200-acre property in Michelago, NSW.

Occupation: Not a student anymore! I now test software for a small information technology company in the ACT.

Are you a member of any clubs?

I am a member and enthusiastic campaigner for the AFSS (Australian Federation of Sled dog Sports).

When did you start mushing?

I remember when I was around 8 years old trying to get my family's Corgi to pull me on my skateboard, does that count? I really began running dogs in 1994, during my first year of University. I spent that first year training Brad Leeson's 4-dog Malamute team and photographing races. Since then I have gone to the majority of races either as a competitor or as a photographer/ handler. Over the last three years the photography has taken a back seat and I have been concentrating exclusively on racing.

How many and what type of dogs do you have?

My family currently has 9 dogs: 3 Siberian Huskies (Nikky - 5 years, Kash - 5 years and Quick - 8 years), 1 Alaskan Husky (Devon - 3 years), and 4 GSPs - German Short Haired Pointers (Drewe - 2 years, Roach - 8 months, Aiden - 8 months, Chloe - 3 years) and last but not least my family's Corgi cross (Vixen, 18 years old and getting younger every day).

What is your most memorable moment?

There are so many memorable moments it's really hard to pick just one. But one incident that stands out was at the first race I entered, the 1994 Southern Cross sled dog classic. I ran a Siberian husky who I had borrowed for the weekend (I didn't own any dogs at that time). Down at the starting area while waiting in the line of competitors I introduced myself to the mushers in front and behind. Gabriel Tetzlaff was the musher in front of me. We were both at our first race and were both thrilled to find another running a 'little' dog (we both had little Siberian girls). I swear this was the hardest race I have ever competed in (even to date). There were huge pools right across the track (but that's all in the fun of Southern Cross). Somewhere around the track I managed to catch up to Gabby and we were having the best time running together, then suddenly we hit a huge dam across the track. We were both knee deep in water, side by side in the middle of the track trying to help our little girls to the other 'bank', when all of a sudden a guy and his dog flew passed us. The water parted before him as if he were Moses (soaking us in the process). And then he was gone. We were dumbfounded. It was the most impressive thing I had ever seen. Gabi and I finally pulled ourselves out of the pond and somehow managed to make it to the finish line together, very tired, very wet and very happy. I later met Moses, alias Jason Walkom and his Siberian, Nevar. They were not biblical in ability but they sure did know what they were doing and I was so new.

What was your most stupid incident mushing?

Well there have been a lot of them too. But trying to use Jozsef Toth's "rig of Death" back in 95' would have to be rather high on the list. Mark Bloomfield, Jozsef and I went out for an early March training run in a state forest near the Southern Cross race site, Victoria. Mark was running his 2 dogs on a scooter and I hooked up one of my dogs and one of Jo's to the "rig of Death". Now as this rig hasn't been seen out on the trail in some time let me describe it to you. It was basically made of thin old lawn chair piping, it was very light, its center of gravity was very high and the steering was super sensitive. My first mistake that day was that I thought it would be a good idea to use Jo's rig to run dogs. My second mistake was that I had never even stood on the rig until just before the dogs started to run. As soon as the dogs took off I tried to steer (my 3rd mistake), the front wheel locked sideways (not good) and within 10 meters of starting out the rig flipped and I was flung off on to the not so soft gravel track, with no helmet (4th mistake) and short-sleeved shirt (5thmistake). Hayley Coutts was kind enough to patch me up (and keep the "you stupid idiot" looks to herself), but it was a very painful 8hr drive home (to Canberra) that night nonetheless, especially with a squiggly 3-month-old Kash on my lap. On the plus side I did get to keep the scars.

What turns you on about sled dog racing?

EVERYTHING!!! I love the complexity of this sport. I love that there is so much to learn about - nutrition, genetics, canine health, training (human and dog), equipment, racing etc, etc.... I love that it's so hard to do really well and that it's constantly changing from day to day and year to year. I love the great people that I have learned from and the wonderful friends I have made. But most of all I love that my dogs love it!

What are your personal goals in the sport?

My primary goal is healthy happy dogs, everything else is icing on the cake. A silly goal that I have had for quite some time is that I would some day like to win 3 classes in a race (e.g. win the 1 dog, 2 dog, and 4 dog classes). Several people like Terry Mace and Clem Bittendorfer have won 2 classes in one race, but to my knowledge no one has ever won 3 classes. It may never happen and I'm not actively training for it, but maybe one day Ill give it a go. It sure would be one for the record books.

Advice for the unwary:

Don't ever allow your dogs to become thin, sled dogs should be lean

but never thin.

Training tip:

Train your dogs to be sled dogs; don't just run them in harness.

What have you been doing during the off-season?

After attending races for 6 years with up to 8 dogs slotted into my parents Nimbus (over the last few years there has been much speculation about its magical Tardis-like abilities), this summer I finally bought myself a second hand Ute and built dog boxes on the tray. The dogs love it and I'm really looking forward to driving it to the first race this year.

Readers Write - Point Score Suggestions

Karen McCarthy

My suggestion for the National Point Score would be to ensure that any one race counted to only one National Point Score Category, and that the intended category was indicated at the start of the yar and possibly on the Race Calendar. Ie in the Marathon/Distance races do the 4 and 6 dog classes count for the 4 and 6 dog Marathon/Distance Class in the National Championship or are they to be classified as the 'Open' Marathon Class. To me it is a bit silly to have a 'National Champion' declared on the basis of one race.

I guess that my personal opinion would be to do away with the 4 & 6 dog classes and call them open. That would be until such time as another Distance race was held which had clearly defined 4 & 6 dog classes.

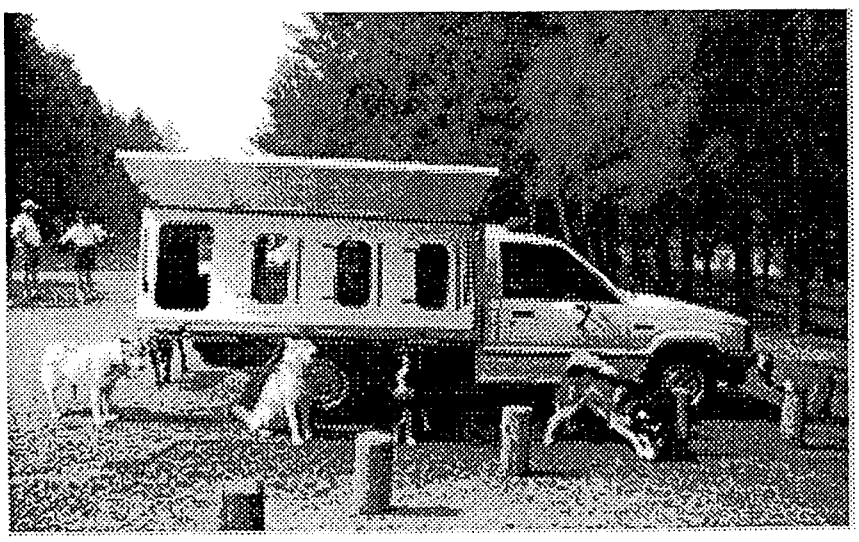
Hike! Response – Karen's suggestion is entirely feasible. This is because the Southern Highlands Freight Run (the only distance race which holds 4 and 6 dog classes) races the two classes over the same distance. Therefore they would be competing on a level playing field. Of course one and two dog marathon champions would still be determined by just one race as the Southern Highlands Freight Run is the only distance race open to these classes. Hike! would appreciate your views on this matter. This matter will also be raised with AFSS members for their views.

I would also like to see a National Junior Champion in each class. This would be for juniors that compete in the 'Adult classes'. I am not talking about the Pee Wee 500 metre classes – but those juniors who compete against the 'big boys'. It would not be any extra work for you, except for identifying these juniors – which I propose would be people who were under the age of 18 on the 1st of June of that particular year (that way they would be classified as a junior for the whole season).

Hike Response – Once again Karen's suggestion is do-able. Providing there are no serious objections, the Hike/AFSS pointscore will include from 2001 a junior champion in each class. Once again this proposal will be tested against the views of AFSS members before being implemented.

CLIFF FRENCH PLACES AT THE EMPIRE 130!

Aussie musher Cliff French scored a third place in the 6 dog class at the Empire130 Race – a mid-distance race held at Solon Springs in Winsconsin, USA. The winner of the race was Joel Nelson and Tim White came second. Cliff was running a team of Tim White's dogs.



Once Yearly Heartworm Protection – Prohart Injectable

Prohart Injectable is a recently released heartworm preventative. It is given by subcutaneous injection and releases its active ingredient (moxidectin) over 12 months. The cost is similar to 12 months supply of monthly preventable (more expensive for larger dogs, less expensive for smaller dogs). Prohart Injectable is a safe product but is not recommended for younger animals as their bodyweight is changing and it is difficult to judge correctly.

NOTICE.

YOU ARE INVITED
INDIVIDUALS AND CLUBS.

(Open and Breed Clubs)

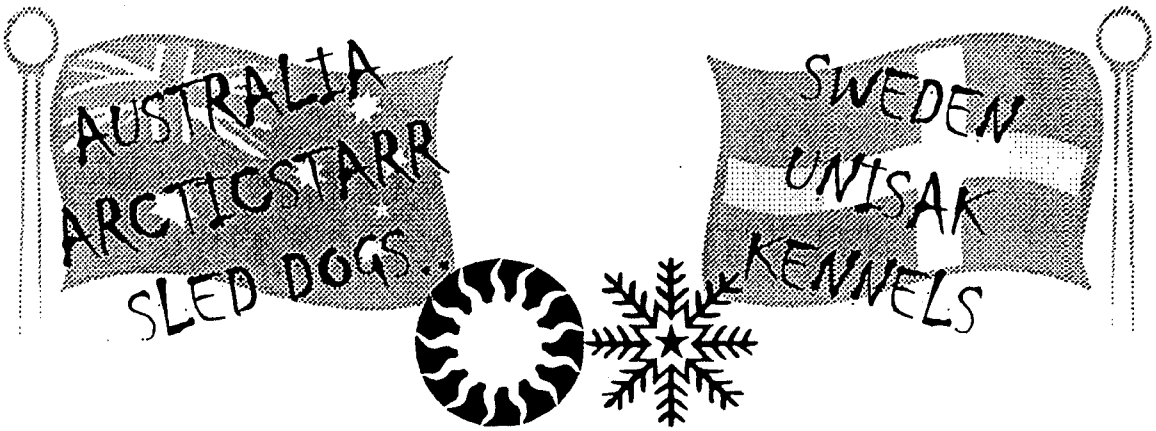
A meeting will be held on
Tuesday 13th, February 2001
The Adelaide Entertainment Centre
8pm.

To form the
South Australian
Sled Dog Sporting Association.
(SASDSA)
(Name Pending.)

Mushers in this state are in need of their own representation on the National Sled Dog Scene. Come along and register your support to have your own interests represented on the National Sled Dog Sports Scene. As more of us start to travel over the borders, it's up to us to ensure that we are at the forefront of the future growth of our chosen sport.

The aim of the first committee will be to organize a Constitution, become Incorporated, arrange insurance, develop a Mission Statement, encourage memberships and confer with *all* other clubs and organizations with the aim of holding the first AGM at the end of the 2001 race season.

Contact: Michael Herbst on 85243352 or 0418818816 or arcticstarr@chariot.net.au
: Dave Brown on 82896545 or 0419522519



Arcticstarr Sled Dogs are proud to announce the litter to start the new Millennium. The joint effort with Nils and Sickan Heljem of Unisak Kennels, Sweden and Michael and Liz Herbst of Arcticstarr Sled Dogs, Australia has resulted in a very successful AI taking place. Thanks must also go to Dr Woof for his great work.

D.O.B.: 10-1-2001 & 11-1-2001
MALES = 2
FEMALES = 3

Sire: Rookies Sadam (AI) (Sweden)
-Iglo Pak's Snow Bandit. (USA)
-Igloo Pak's Clyde (USA)
-Igloo Pak's Ann (USA)
- Snowtrails Melissa. (SWE)
-Igloo Pak's Beaver (USA)
- Alaskan's Mona of Anadyr (USA)
- PolarSpeed Pekko (FNL)
-PolarSpeed Pinja (Imp. FNL)

Dam: Cardiprin Melas Xena (Spice)
-Telkwa Jaa (Levi)
-Pettifers
-Arcticmoon Mela (AI)
-Snoshu's Xerox (USA)
-Arcticmoon Holly ByIndyd (AI)

This AI has brought some of the most influential lines from Australia and Sweden/USA together and they complement each other well. Unisak kennels concentrate on Sprint Racing that is very similar to ours in distance. Nils Heljem was the 2000 Nordic Open Winner a 3 x 18km race. Unisak Kennels also received the award for "Breeder Of The Century" in Sweden along with Snowtrails Kennel in 2000.

Arcticstarr Sled Dogs are starting the Millennium with the new line of racing dogs out of Scandinavia and are looking forward to a competitive future, adding to the great work that has been done by others to gather some of the best Siberian Husky racing dogs in the world.

If anyone is interested in further information on this litter feel free to contact myself (Michael) on 08 85243352 or 0418 818 816 or arcticstarr@chariot.net.au or keep an eye on the race tracks in 2002, be careful not to blink!

KEWL RUNNING!

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- Shock Cord

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- Lightweight Dog Packs
- Cover Up Boots (to keep your dogs feet & legs dry)
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For information on any of our products or any special needs you may have please do not hesitate to call Craig & Melissa Turner at

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Ph/Fax 02 42852457
E-mail xpress@shoal.net.au for a new catalogue

So You Wanna Be A Musher

Chapter 1: Before You Start

Peter Komidar

This is the first in a series of articles designed for beginners. The idea is to publish the set of articles in *Hike!* and then donate them to the AFSS for possible use as part of its education activities. Any suggestions to improve the quality of these articles would be gratefully received.

Is my dog a sled dog?

Sled dogs come in many shapes and sizes - and are certainly not restricted to northern breeds such as the Siberian Husky, Samoyed, Alaskan Husky or Alaskan Malamute. In Australia a whole range of breeds have been successfully raced including German Shorthaired Pointers, Weimaraners, English Pointers, Great Danes, German Shepherds and Newfoundlands. Neither is mushing restricted to pure-breeds. Sled dog cross breeds have included Shepamutes (a German Sheppherd-Malamute cross), Siberian Ridgebacks (Siberian Husky-Rhodesian Ridgeback cross) and Sibehounds (Siberian Husky-Foxhound crosses).

As a general rule however, a sled dog should be at least medium-sized. While it might be technically possible to run miniatures and toy dogs, you'd probably need a team of about half a dozen at least!

How fit does my dog have to be?

As they say, size is not everything - fitness is also an important factor. Your vet will tell you that all dogs should have regular exercise and a healthy varied diet. This applies equally to sled dogs.

For 'mushing' (the technical term for sled dog running), your dog(s) needs to be fit and healthy. If your dog suffers from any health problem, it is best to seek your vet's advice before commencing to run your dog.

Your first attempt at mushing should be over a short distance (less than 1 km). Even so, your dog's first run can be a strain - especially for those dogs (and mushers) that have had little regular exercise or are overweight. It is therefore preferable if you can prepare your dog in advance by increasing its exercise and, if necessary, decreasing its food intake. You'll find that this advice applies equally to yourself!

What equipment will I need?

Your first and most important need is to have an experienced musher supervise your first attempt. If you need more information on your closest musher/club, contact *Hike!* (see details in inside front cover of this magazine). You'll find that clubs and individuals are happy to assist newcomers to our sport – this is the way we ensure that mushing remains a vibrant growing sport – and we all remember that not so long ago we too were beginners!

The Club/musher will be able to provide you with a scooter, harness, lines & helmet for your first few runs. However, if you decide to continue with the sport, you'll need to get your own equipment. The club will be able to provide you with all the details on where to purchase these items. Ads for dog outfitters can also be found in *Hike!*

Can I mush all year round?

Unfortunately, this sport is confined to the cooler months of the year - which for most of Australia means between April and September.

The general rule is: "Never run your dogs when the temperature climbs above 15° C". If its humid the 15 degree rule is shortened to an even cooler temperature – just to be on the safe side.

The 15 degree rule means that in mid-winter months of June and July you can run your dog(s) at any time of the day - while in April and September you are constrained to running them early in the morning or late at night.

Is mushing cruel?

No one who has seen sled dogs in action would claim that mushing is cruel. Before running, the dogs are excited and keen to be off. During the run they require little encouragement to run as fast as they can - and the looks on their faces is all the proof you need to know that they are having fun. After the run they are tired and content.

No whips etc are used. The only encouragement a dog gets to run is its own enthusiasm and the vocal encouragement of the musher. Simply put, if a dog doesn't like running, it won't run and neither should it run.

Next Month: Your First Time!

Darren Higgins Head On
Photo: Sharon Komidar

Junior Mushing Program

Narelle Mace

To all the young mushers who keep the great tradition of sled dog racing alive.

This is a call to harness up.

The idea of setting up a program such as this is to ensure that the human children of sled dog families have the opportunity to partake in a program design to encourage them to stay within the sport of sled dog racing.

So some of the aims of the program:

- To promote the sport of sled dogs in the Junior Division
- To promote the correct care, welfare, feeding and training of sled dogs in the Junior Division
- To aid the advancement of Juniors through to the adult classes
- To promote a safety program for the Juniors and the dogs in conjunction with race clubs.
- To promote international competition through a merit based program.

Right now we are awaiting information from several OS sources to have a look at other Junior programs and how they are run. What we do need is ideas from the kids, the parents and any other person interested in helping to make this program work.

Programs OS allow the following divisions for children:

- Junior (10-15 years) 2-3dog race 2-5k
- Junior (7-10 years) 1 dog race 1-2k
- Peewee (3-6 years) 1 dog 200 mtrs

Now some children may fit into an age group but are not confident to run any kind of distance put them where they are comfortable with their abilities.

Some ideas

At the races held now the juniors could compete in specific events held in conjunction and with the help of the race club.

To hold merit events, like the Scouts carry out so that the Juniors have a good grounding in the sports without taking out the fun.

Training camps either held seperately or in conjunction with race club.

Teach harnessing, line making, booting up, feeding, watering, time keeping (most adults cant or wont touch a stopwatch), dog massage, reading a dogs body language. All those and much more .....

Events specific to age groups, where the older Juniors can help train the younger kids.

All this will help the kids form friendships within the mushing community, and hopefully outside all the political crap that has gone on in the past.

We have all seen Daniel Odgers running in races. He has successfully completed events guided for the most part by Karen McCarthy. Jessica Baker spent last season competing in the adult classes after spending her nights out on training run with her parents.

Jessica Mace has spent a lifetime in the sled bag passing comments on the dogs. Olivia Coutts, and Georgina Pettifer have all been racing since they were so young. Becka Blockley is always doing work with her dogs. It is all second nature to them to be doing this.

Now we can make it so that these groups of kids and others who are coming along have the opportunity to have their say in a program. In the very youngest age group are about 20 youngsters to come into the sport, they could become the sleddog sporting world power.

Who is going to run the program.

For the most part the kids should be able to a say in what they want. We will need supervision and direction to be given by adults with experience in the sport. If, for want of a better word a working committee needs to conduct meetings then perhaps 3 adults and 5 children can work at issue and programs. By rotating parents around in the program everyone will get to share the workload.

Safety is an ISSUE

Insurance policies will not cover children under 7 years of age from competing in events. But the children under that age can "train" in seperate events not necessarily running dogs.

This sport is FUN but it is very DANGEROUS at the same time. Some parents put their kids in dangerous situations in the misguided false security of "nothing will happen to me". Kids on unsuitable bikes or strapped in prams with no helmets. I know the SHCNSW, Undera and CHA have disallowed kids competing on safety issues. Undera encouraging safety gear beyond the helmets.

The issue of kids with nasty dogs trying to compete in the Pee Wee classes because the dog wont be tolerated in the regular classes ..... the bad news is he wont be here either.

Sportsmanship is an ISSUE

Over the years we have seen many people drop out of the sport with kids in tow because they werent doing well. Some of us have been around

long enough to remember the kids who would run around sourcing the fastest dogs to run so they could win. Run the dog, drop the scooter and bugger off. These kids would have made great SP bookies on the sport but we do not need that kind of careless attitude to the dogs.

What to do now

Any of your ideas and responses to this program can be made in writing by 10th March to the following:

Narelle Mace
PO Box 422
Kilmore VIC 3764
welsh@primus.com.au

I shall collect and publish the issues presented and everyone shall be contacted again before the start of the race season.

Are the clubs interested in holding events around a Junior Program.

I plan on publishing a newsletter for the Juniors to go out with the March Hike so get your name into either myself or Hike so that we can make sure you (the kids) get a newsletter.

IFSS Junior World Cup

Peter Komdar

The IFSS Junior Harry Wheeler World Cup Race will be held in Antigo, Wisconsin USA, February 10-11, 2001!

There are no pre-qualifying criteria. Any junior musher from age 6-17 may enter.

There is travel money available for juniors from IFSS affiliated countries outside North America

Race Classes range from 1 and 2 dog classes for the 6-9 year old age group and 1, 2, 3, 4, & 6 dog classes for the 10-17 year olds.

Race distances range from 1 mile to 21 miles.

The AFSS will shortly be seeking affiliation with the IFSS. Once this has occurred, the way will be open for Australian juniors to compete against their peers in the world cup.

Supernumary Siberian Stills a Statisticial Anomaly

Recently *Hike!* received some feedback regarding the coverage givent to Siberian teams relative to other breeds. Based on the theory that if one person asks a question, there must be a number of others who think it, but don't ask - the following explanation is given.

While *Hike!* is not a breed newsletter, it is recongnised that there are more photos of Siberian teams than any other breed.

We would like to point out that other than photos taken by Sharon Komidar, all photos featured in Hike! are submitted by subscribers. The reason that there are more Siberian photos than other breeds is purely a factor of statistics.

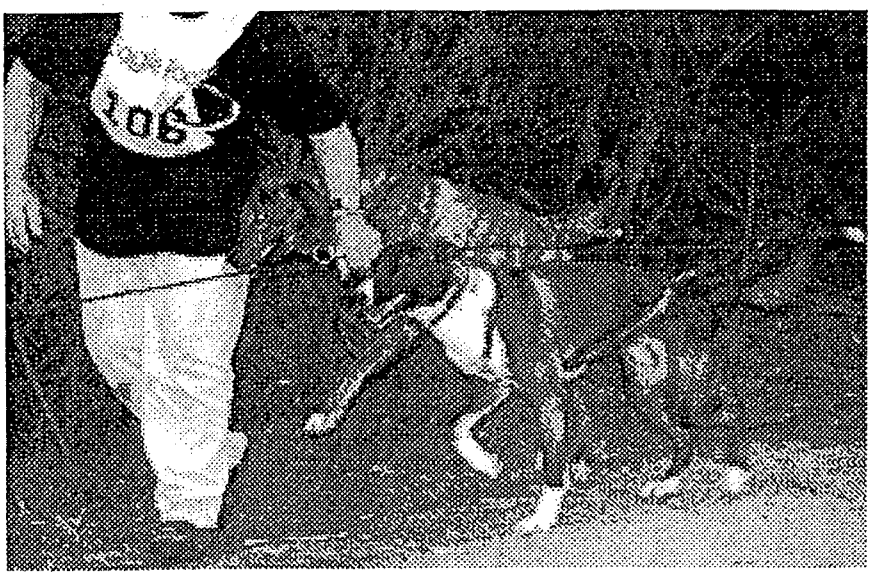
The fact is that there are far more Siberian teams racing on the national circuit than any other breed. Therefore anyone taking photos of races is more likely to photograph Siberian teams.

Following from this, there a far more Siberian racing *Hike!* subscribers than any other breed. Put these two facts together and it is hardly suprising that there are more Siberian photos than any other breed.

Hike! does not discriminate for or against breeds be they Sibes, Mals, GSPs, EPs, GSDs or cross breeds. Providing a photo or article is race related, Hike! will run it. If you would like your particular breed featured in *Hike!* why not send in some photos or articles.

Australian Mushing Photos Showcased on IFSS Web Site

Ten of Sharon Komidar's favourite photos from the 2000 season are now showcased to the international mushing communtiy on the IFSS website. To see who is featured in the photos - or to submit your own photos for display on the website, click on the Hike Web Page - Links Page for the the International Federation of Sleddog Sports and then follow the links.



Malamute Greyhound Crosses at Southern Cross 2000
Photo: Tam Hutchison

Dogs take acupuncture treatments in improved stride

Julie Marshall, Scripps Howard News Service
2 January 2001

Niner, an Australian shepherd mix-breed, has packed a lot of living into a life that started in a garbage dump. He has survived cancer and two abdominal surgeries. At 15, Niner has creaking, arthritic joints and severe skin allergies.

On the bright side, Niner didn't suffer any of the ugly side effects from chemotherapy. The old dog walks briskly for an animal coping with arthritis.

Niner's veterinarian and guardian say acupuncture - the Chinese art of inserting needles into the body to treat illness — is the reason behind Niner's comfort level and energy.

The longhair dog is one of a handful of pets veterinarian Candace Sayles sees each week for acupuncture treatments at Alpine Hospital for Animals in Boulder, Colorado.

Ten years ago, it was hard to find a veterinarian practising the 3,500-year-old Eastern art of medicine. That's not the case today. Charges in Boulder run to $50 for 20-minute needle sessions, which include examinations.

Veterinarians have used acupuncture to stop epileptic seizures, strengthen immune systems, loosen joints from arthritis and reverse behaviour problems. The American Veterinary Medical Association recognises acupuncture as an integral part of veterinary care, and the practice is growing.

"When (Sayles) first suggested acupuncture, I cracked up," says Niner's guardian, Penny Vardell.

But she went ahead, hoping to wean Niner off the allergy medicine Prednisone — a drug that in high doses can cause liver and kidney damage. Niner also was withdrawn and grumpy. "He no longer takes medication and now I have this bright light staring me in the face again."

Sayles says there is no evidence acupuncture slows down the process of arthritis, but treatments alleviate joint pain and make for a happier dog.

There are two schools of thought about how acupuncture works. The traditional Chinese medical view is that illness occurs when the normal flow of energy, chi, is blocked. By placing needles along specific pathways, called meridians, acupuncture restores the flow and lets the body heal itself. From a Western point of view, puncturing the skin with needles stimulates nerves and other measurable parts of the body, which can increase circulation and control pain. One way this is done is through the release of hormones such as endorphins — one of the body's pain-control chemicals.

No one knows for certain how acupuncture works, Sayles says. The manipulation of an animal's chi is not something that can be measured with Western instruments. And yet mainstream acceptance of acupuncture continues to grow for use on humans as well as animals.

Four years ago, the Food and Drug Administration decreed that acupuncture needles are "as respectable a medical tool as a syringe or a scalpel." That same year, an article in U.S. News & World Report said 12 million Americans have turned to acupuncture as a medical treatment.

At the Alpine clinic, Sayles inserts a stainless steel needle into the inside of Niner's back leg, called the liver point. The Chinese long ago created a map of specific points along the body's meridians. Each point relates to a specific organ or body function. The liver point is useful for treating pain in the hips, lower back, knees and ankles.

Niner intently licks a jar of baby food while 14 needles are placed into his hips, back and feet. Treats are one way Sayles distracts her clients during the mildly uncomfortable procedure. Niner lies down on a pink towel, licking Vardell's hand while needles are left in his body for 20 minutes. Animals put up with treatments because they enjoy the attention and the energy flow that's released from acupuncture, Sayles says. "It's not like these guys really enjoy getting needles stuck into them."

Not all of Silver's clients are success stories. Most come to the clinic after conventional medical treatments failed. Acupuncture is no panacea, Silver says, but results are strong enough to keep his practice buzzing, with up to 10 to 15 treatments each weekday. Silver has treated horses, llamas, pigs, gerbils, hamsters and reptiles, including an iguana and a snake, over 12 years of practising acupuncture. As one of the first veterinarians to practice acupuncture in Boulder, Silver has watched a steadily growing interest in the art. "You might think I'd be worried these vets would affect my business, but in fact I'm glad there is increased awareness."

Di Baker and Future Racing Dogs Reeba and Blaze. Reeba is owned by Don & Anne McIntyre and Blaze is owned by Jason & Jo Workman.
Photo: Wayne Baker.

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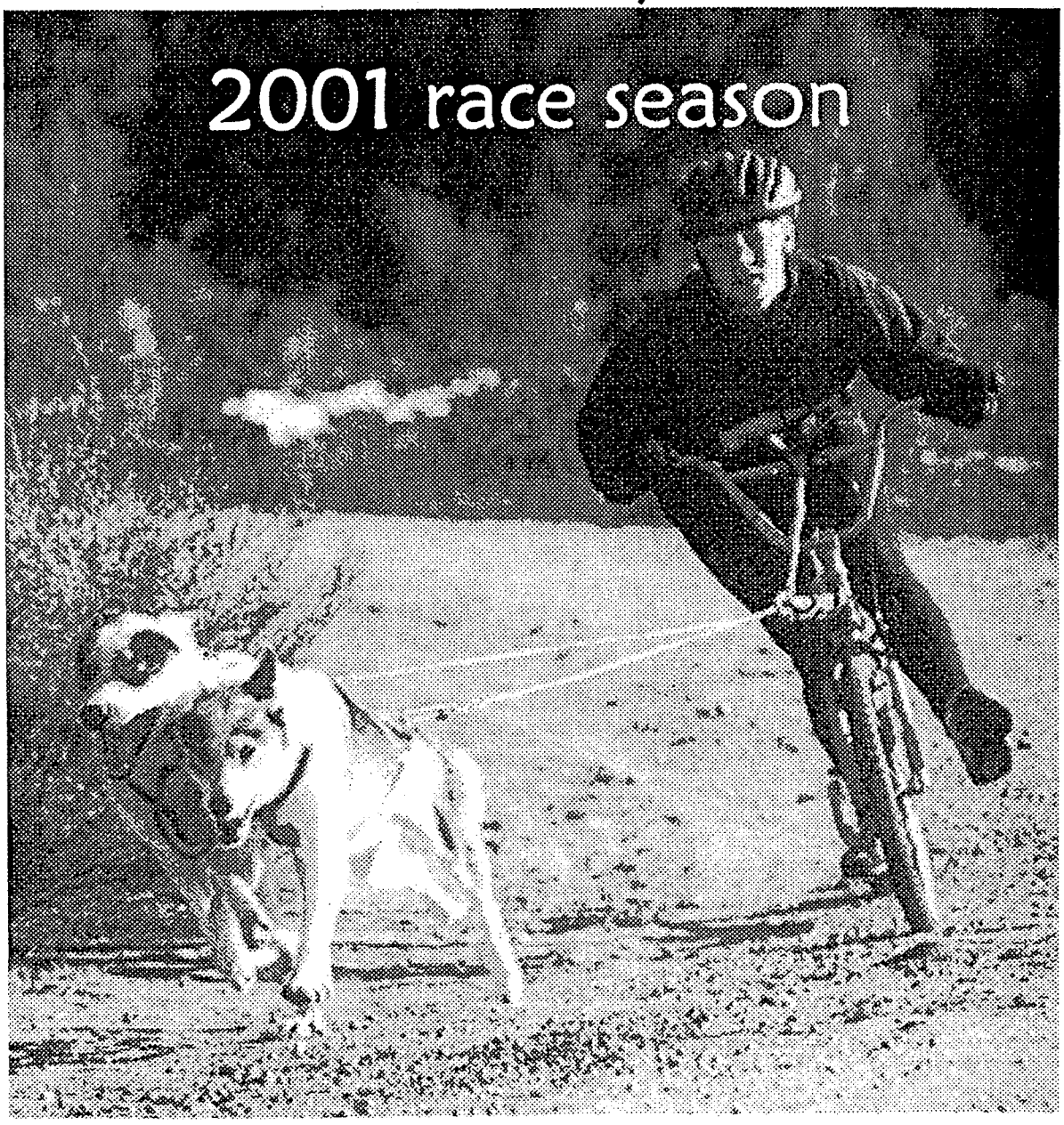

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Vale Nissa

Sharon Komidar

On boxing day morning, halfway through her regular morning walk, Nissa had a minor fit. An hour later she had died of what turned out to be heart tumour.

Nissa was our oldest dog. It was Nissa that initiated us into the ways of the Siberian Husky and it was Nissa who taught us how to race sled dogs.

In fact Nissa taught us many things. How to build escape-proof fencing. How not to relax your guard for second while getting a dog in or out of the back of the ute. And how interesting nappies can be to a dog – especially when they are being worn by a toddler.

But the greatest legacy Nissa left us was an understanding of the supreme power of a strong will. Those who knew Nissa would know that she was hardly built to be a winning sled dog. She had very short legs (we used to call her our Siberian Corgi), she suffered from allergies and regularly had impacted anal glands. In fact she holds the record at our vets for the longest medical record! But what she lacked in genetic make-up she more than made up for in an iron-clad will.

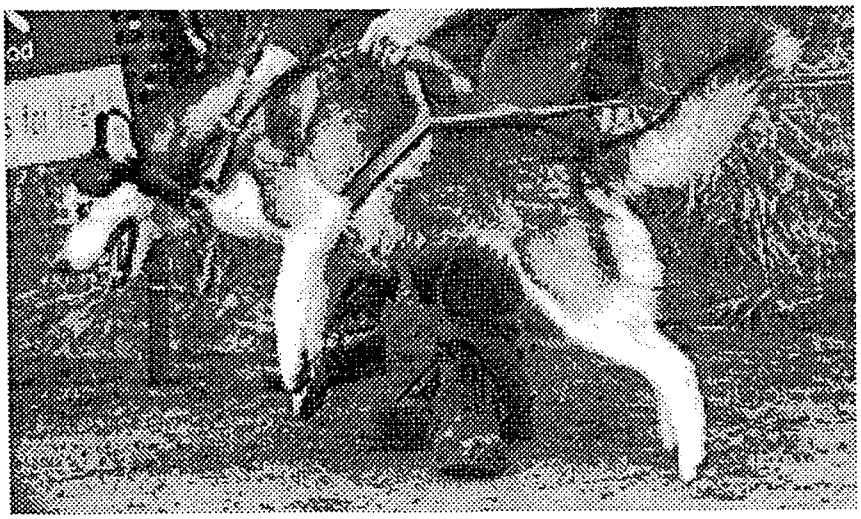
Despite these handicaps, Nissa was a proud and determined sled dog. And gave her all from the start line to the finish. So much so that together with Stormy, she managed to propel Peter into the top ten on more than one occasion. Her best being 4th at the Sydney Sled Dog Shield in 1997 and you would often find purpose bred racing dogs further down the rankings than our Nissa. Even last year – at 6 years of age, our Nissa dragged me into 11th place in the Hike!/AFSS national one dog point score.

If life is a race, then Nissa flew out of the start chute and sprinted the whole trail. Even at the ½ km sign we had no idea of her heart tumour – so tough was this dog that she ignored the pain of the heart tumour so much that we were completely taken by surprise – right up until the last day of her life.

Tough Nissa died in the car on the way to the vets. She howled in the back seat before she died. But it was not a high pitched howl of fear and pain. It was a deep defiant howl. Nissa looked death in eyes and roared her anger at the transience of life.

Peter and I will deeply miss our little friend.

Run panting delirious
White fur pink tongue
Eat a chocolate
Never trudge



ACT to ban dogs' tail docking

ABC News
20 December 2000

The ACT Government will become the first jurisdiction in Australia to ban the docking of dogs' tails when it officially launches new pet laws today.

From tomorrow, tail docking will be prohibited, the owners of nuisance pets can face on-the-spot fines, and it will be compulsory for dogs being transported in open vehicles or motorbikes, to be secured.

President of the ACT branch of the Veterinary Association, Dr Michael Hayward, says it has been a long fight to ban tail docking and he hopes other governments across the country will now follow suit.

"The Opposition in Western Australia and I believe also the Government have said that they intend to introduce a similar law and I know that the Northern Territory is also looking at it," he said.

"And the Veterinary Association is very confident that when other states see the positive public opinion and the benefits to the dogs, that they will introduce similar legislation in the next couple of years."

Did you know?

According to the Melbourne Age (26 December 2000) every day Melbourne's 300,000 dogs deposit about 90 tonnes of droppings. In fact in Summer councils around the bay area have applied restrictions on dogs to combat the pooh problem. Most councils have designated early morning times when dogs may be walked, and a couple, notably Brighton Beach – have set aside times when dogs may be walked off leash. Moreover, dog owners must take responsibility for their dogs' behaviour and ensure that they do not interfere with other beach goers or their dogs.

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Pet Expo hits Canberra

Mark Mulcahy

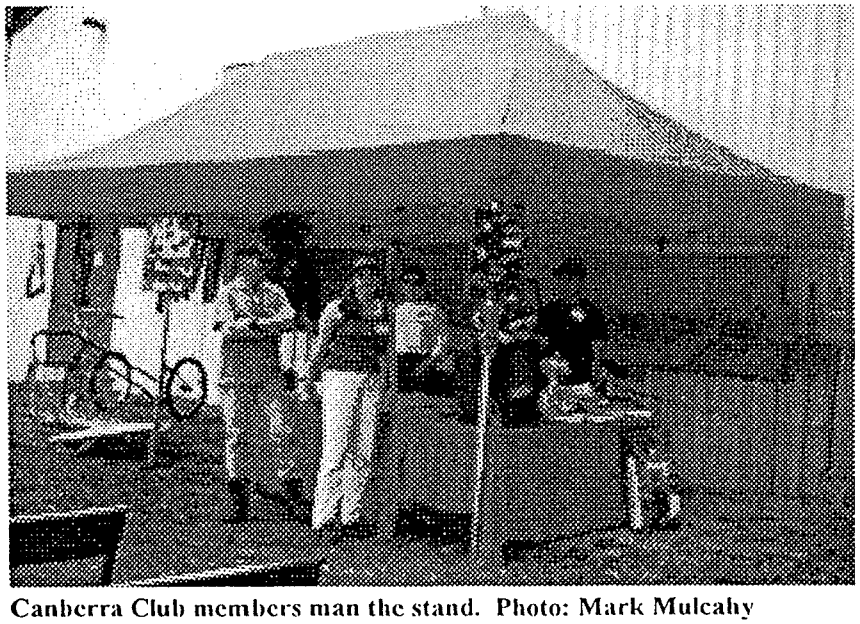
Club President, Andrew Gersbach's dogs (Dakota and Aspen) were a draw card. Photo: Mark Mulcahy

On 3-5 November 2000, the Canberra Sled Dog Club promoted not only the club but sledding (social and race) in general, as well as the breeds which we currently have attending this activity in Australia.

I believe the opportunity to promote sledding in Australia and help the public understand our sport should be embraced by all clubs if you haven't already done so in the past.

Over the weekend the members of the club took great pride in explaining the sport. And as the club organiser would like to thank those members and their dogs for their valuable time and efforts in making the Expo a truly great event.

I would also like to thank Hike! for the video footage which allowed the public to see our sport in action in the middle of Summer.



Canberra Club members man the stand. Photo: Mark Mulcahy

Whispers

Colour Cover Credits

Hike! would like to extend a special thank you to Andrew and Fiona Matthews who organised colour printing of the *Hike!* front cover - FREE OF CHARGE! We owe you BIG time.

A perv at Merv

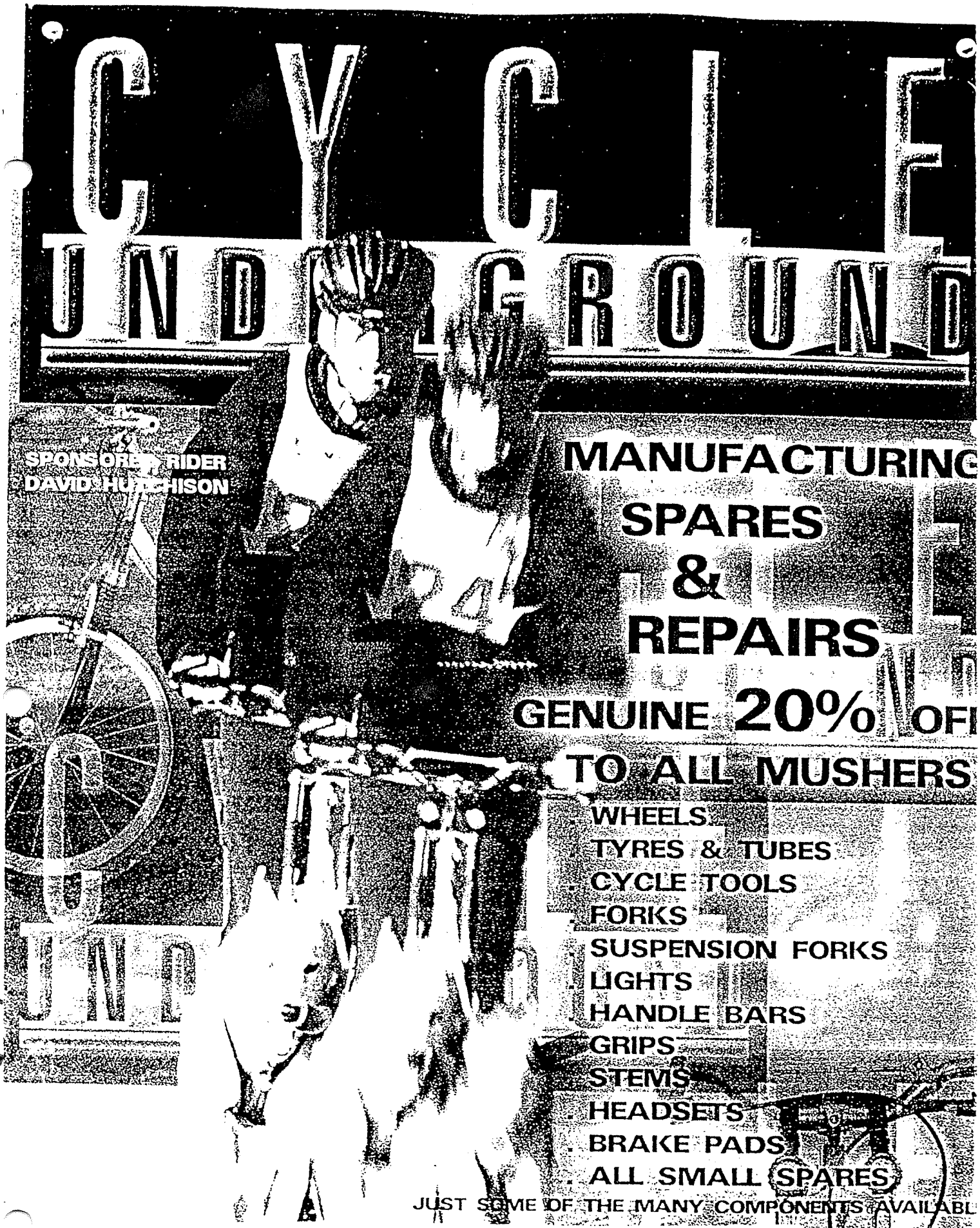
It seems that Merv Turner left out some important facts in his recent Musher Profile (Dec 00/Jan 01). The Hike! spy network has informed us that Merv and Shelly are to be married in March! We also hear that the Turners will be setting up a boarding kennel business. I hope there is also a little time left over for a relaxing honeymoon.

Taylor Colvin is doing fine!

Andrew and Natalie Colvin's baby, Taylor, is doing great and should soon be returning home to sunny Wollongong. Taylor was born late last year and has been spending some intensive time down at a specialist hospital in Melbourne – including 2 open heart operations! Ivan Douglas has been keeping everyone informed of Taylor's progress over the Ozworkingdog Email List. And we are happy to say that mum and baby are doing fine. Taylor has come through her operation with flying colours and the Colvin's life can soon get back to normal.

Hair today gone tomorrow

We know that cyclists often shave the hairs on their legs to cut down on wind resistance. And who could forget the mean machine – those Australian relay swimmers who shaved their heads – presumably to cut down on water resistance. We now we have a mean musher – yep our spies tell us that Darren Higgins has done a Romper Stomper and shaved his head. Hike! will be taking note of his times this year to see if there is a difference in performance arising from the reduced wind resistance.



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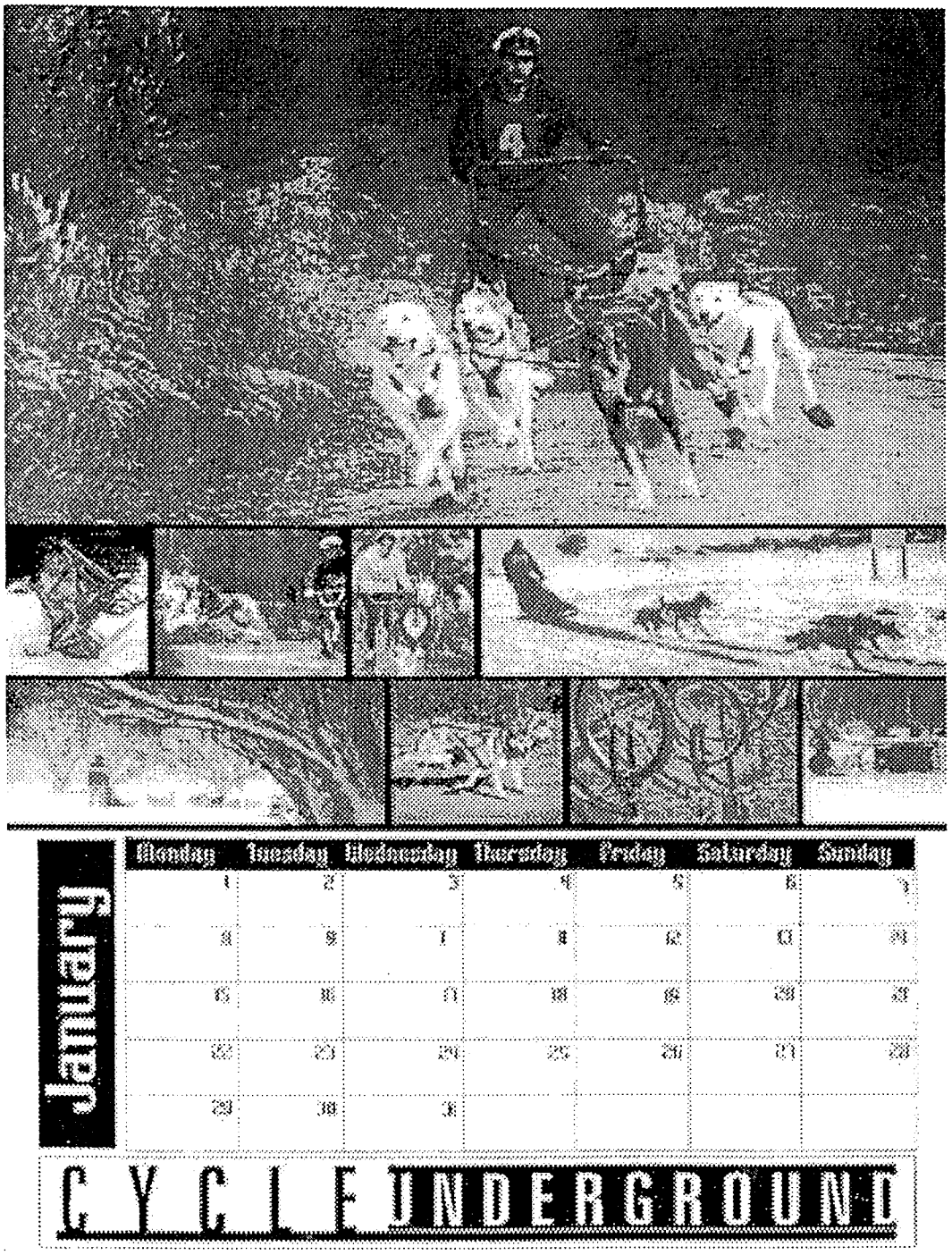

2001 Sled Dog Racing Calendar

This full colour A3 size 12 month calendar captures action shots from all Australian national circuit races. Order your calendar for Aud $20 + postage (available for sale to international as well as Australian readers)

To view the calendar in living colour – check it out at the *Hike!* web site. Follow the links at http://members.dynamite.com.au/komidar/Index.html

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Reply to Runjoring Article

Michaela Paul

I would first of all like to send a thank you to Hike! and especially to Peter and Sharon Komidar. My name is Michaela Spackova Paul and Stephen and I have moved to Narooma NSW. Without the help of Peter and Sharon (their response is always fast) I don't know what we would do. I will not write a long story for the moment. Just a simple THANK YOU.

I decided that we needed to change the training a little bit in 2000. So I took it upon myself to positively reinforce to the Sibe that it is OK to be on the start line and not to be shy. After the first week the girl is standing with the line tight, waiting for the command to move forward. The rope is in my hand or around my waist. She is running up front and I am more or less dragged behind her. But yes she can stop on command. All is going well until something happened and I was on my stomach kissing the asphalt road. When I picked up my head I saw that the girl is finishing her exercise. She walked by herself to the stake out chain, lining herself out and waiting for the release or finish work command.

So I get up and try to walk, which was impossible. Luckily a local farmer drove by and gave me a lift to our paddock, which is about 30 metres up the road, where my husband is already attending to the dog. So I gave her the release command while I was sitting on the grass thinking that I must have been bitten by a tiger snake – which breed in the hundreds in Alexandra. When I explained to Stephen what I though just happened, he just shook his head and pointed to my feet. I did not understand his gesture at all.

By the time I returned home, the pain was unbearable. I was forced to walk in circles around the kitchen table for two hours. I later found out that my right thigh muscle had snapped in half and would take some time to recover. As I was waiting for my recovery, I could not stop wondering about my accident. I was also wondering whether Stephen was following my firm instructions about the training.

It then came to me – as clear as a picture. There was no logical explanation to my accident. Alien youths playing war games must have hit me with an invisible laser operated cattle prod. I was running like a mad woman with a petrified dog across their battlefield. Of course I should have realised aliens were responsible for most of the unexplained falls suffered by men, women and children – after all the X-Files have warned us!

Anyway I could not wait for Stephen to return from training so I could tell him all about it. Despite all the patience my husband shows any time I try to explain myself, this time he was not so understanding. He goes firmly [to my surprise] back to day one of the accident, points with his finger at my feet [again] and there they were – steel capped Blunstone boots. I only manage to mumble "So aliens are not out there".

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Race Updates

A5000 VSDRA Membership Rules Relaxed

As reported in the VSDRA quarterly newsletter 'Victorian Musher', the Alpine Shire has reviewed its sled dog racing requirements for Dinner Plain. As a result, competitors will no longer be required to be financial members of VSDRA in order to compete.

Trail Changes at Wild Dog

Michael Herbst confirmed that there may some changes to the trails but the Wild Dog crew will try and keep the distances close to what they are now. They are looking at taking the tracks into the forest more and staying away from the long paddock trail. We'll keep you posted on developments.

Undera to stay put

There were some rumours last year that the Undera Sled Dog Dash may move from its existing site. However, Helen Pettifer has confirmed that Undera will remain at the Belstack entrance to Moira Park.

Possible Changes at Southern Cross

The next meeting of the Southern Cross Race Organising Committee is on 4 February. The meeting will consider a number of proposed changes to the race. *Hike!* understands that the Committee will be asked to consider moving the date of the race back a week to 26-27 May. In addition, the Committee will consider a proposal to combine the Pro and Sportsman's classes into the one class and add a Novice Class. The March edition of *Hike!* will include the decisions of the 4 Feb meeting.

NSW Siberian Husky Club gets new pee wee musher

Serina and Kim are now the proud parents of a baby boy. Jacob Dylan Pratley was born on Wednesday 29 November 2000 at 11:40 am weighing 6 pounds, 15 ounces.

Aussie Musher's Busman's Holiday List

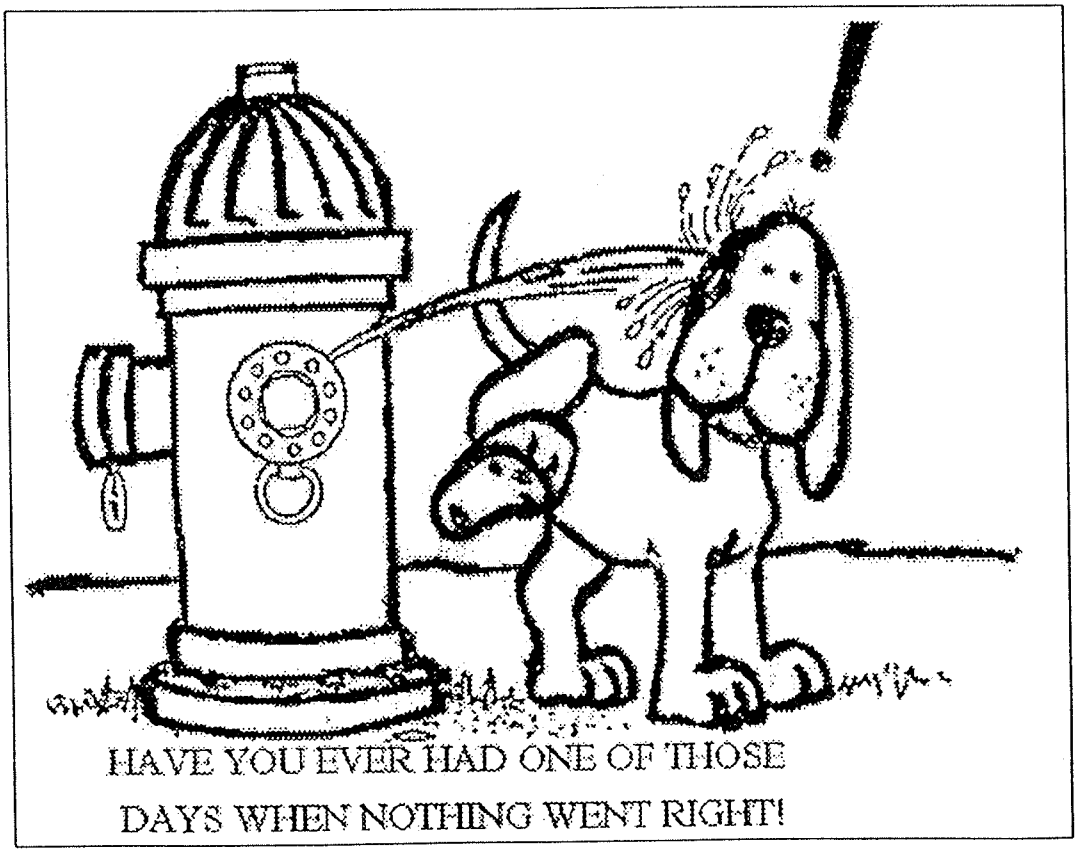
Last month we ran a list of overseas racing kennels which would be interested in having Aussie mushers on holidays come and help out. Over December/January some more kennels asked to be included on the list. These are attached below. If you are travelling overseas and would like to visit a kennel – whether it be for an afternoon's visit or a whole season as handler – contact the people below.

Name	Lynne Cyr
Address	Fort Kent Northern Maine **United States**
Email	lydencyr@sjv.net
Kennel Size	8 dogs
Breed	Alaskan Huskies
Race Type	Mid-Distance

Name	Eric Donkin (Expat Aussie)
Address	Arctic Bay Nunavut North Baffin Island **Canada**
Email	edonkin@hotmail.com
Kennel Size	25

Name	Jeffrey Dinsdale
Address	British Columbia **Canada**
Phone	(250) 992-9143
Email	jdinsdal@quesnelbc.com
Kennel Size	20+
Breed	Canadian Eskimo Dogs
Race Type	Recreation, Camping and some Mid-Distance racing

Name	Chuck Weiss
Address	Triune Guide Service, 19 North Second St, Perkasie, PA 18944, **USA**
Email	triunedogs@cs.com
Kennel Size	7
Breed/Type	Freighting Dogs
Race Type	Conducts dog sled assisted camping trips throughout New Hampshire, New York, and Canada.



2001 Race Calendar

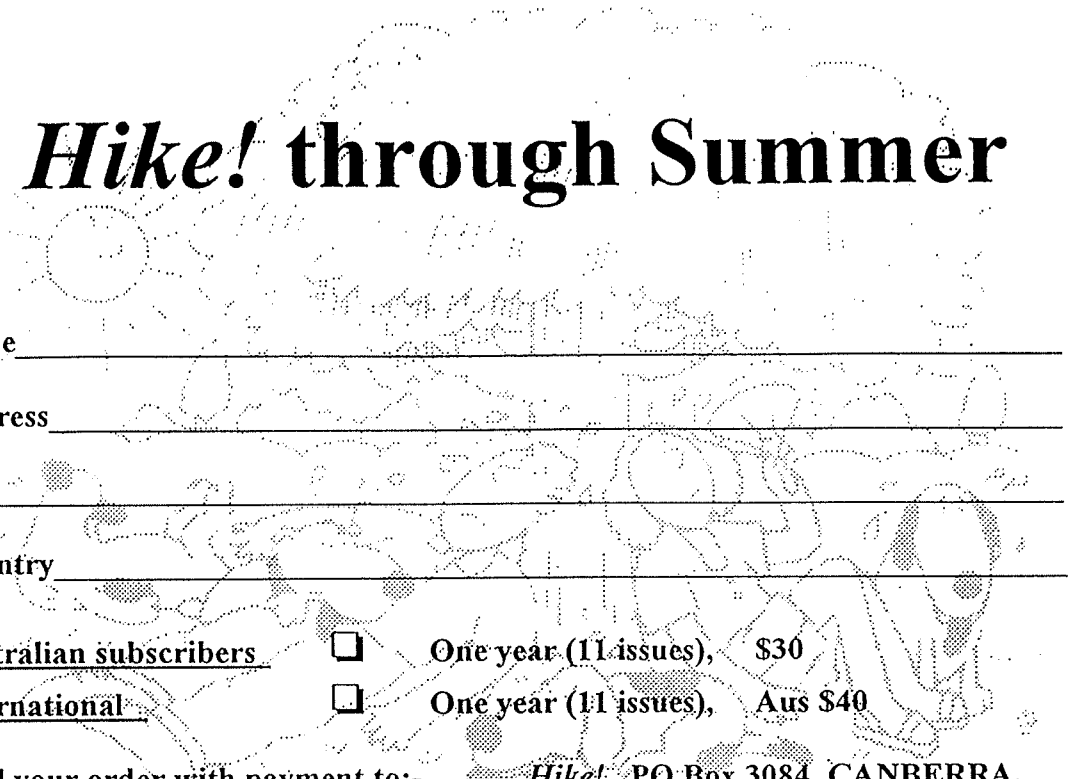
Sprint Races

Race	Distances	Date	Contact
Southern Cross Pro Am (Victoria) TO BE CONFIRMED	1 Dog Class – 2 heats of 3km 2 Dog Class – 2 heats of 4.8km 4 Dog Class – 2 heats of 6.8km	19-20 May (Possibly 26-27 May)	Karen Johnson kazjohn@netspace.net.au (03) 9853 0193
Undera Sled Dog Dash (Victoria)	1 Dog Class 3 heats of 2km 2 Dog Class, 3 heats 4.5km 3&4 Dog Class 2 heats 7km + night heat 4.5km, Novice 2 heats of 2 km -no night heat	9-11 June	Helen & David Pettifer pettifer@bigpond.com
Sydney Sled Dog Sprint (New South Wales) TO BE CONFIRMED	1 Dog Class 2 heats of TBA 2 Dog Class 2 heats of TBA 3 Dog Class 2 heats of TBA 4 Dog Class 2 heats of TBA 6 Dog Class 2 heats of TBA	23-24 June	Craig Turner ionamal@shoal.net.au (02) 4285 2457
Northern Exposure Classic (Queensland)	1 Dog Class 3 heats of 2.5 km 2 Dog Class 3 heats of 4 km 4 Dog Class 3 heats of 6 km	29/6 - 1/7	Donald Maillet d.maillet@mailbox.uq.edu.au (07) 3822 6427
Great Grey Bound? (Victoria)	1 Dog Class 2 heats of 2.4 km 2 Dog Class 2 heats of 6.5 km 4 Dog Class 2 heats of 9.0 km 6 Dog Class 2 heats of 12.7 km	7-8 July	Jacqui McNicol mcnicol@ruralnet.net.au
Wild Dog Derby (South Australia)	1 Dog Class 2 heats of 3.6 km 2 Dog Class 2 heats of 5.9 km 4 Dog Class 2 heats of 7.6 km	14-15 July	Michael Herbst arcticstarr@chariot.net.au
Sydney Sled Dog Shield (New South Wales) TO BE CONFIRMED	1 Dog Class 2 heats of 3.6 km 2 Dog Class 2 heats of 4.6 km 3 & 4 Dog Class 2 heats of 8.2 km	28-29 July	Ivan Douglas skylaska@zip.com.au (02) 9824 7759
The Burn (Victoria)	1&2 Dog Class 2 heats of 7.5km 3, 4 & 6 Dog Class 2 heats of 15km Junior Class 2 heats of 3.8km	4-5 August	Lisa Hodgson lihuk@netspace.net.au (03) 5281 5283
A5000 Sled Dog Derby (Victoria) TO BE CONFIRMED	TBA	11-12 August	Robert Stevens sleddogs@ssc.net.au (03) 5428 3285
Canberra Classic (ACT) TO BE CONFIRMED	1 Dog Class 2 heats of 3.6 km 2 & 3 Dog Class 2 heats of 7.2 km 4 Dog Class 2 heats of 9.0 km	18-19 August	Len Tomlinson Kivawolf@bigpond.com (02) 6258 8063

Distance Races

Race	Distance	Date	Contact
Southern Highlands Freight Run (New South Wales)	1 Dog Class 2 heats of 7.8 km 2 Dog Class 2 heats of 14.9 km 4 Dog Class 2 heats of 20.8 km 6 Dog Class 2 heats of 20.8 km	7-8 July	Becky Walters bknown@ozemail.com.au
B60 (New South Wales)	6 Dog Class 2 stages of 30km (min 4 dogs)	21-22 July	Stephen Carrick crack@ozemail.com.au
Kooyoora Challenge (Victoria)	2 heats of 25 km 6, 8, Open class (min 4 dogs)	4-5 August	Barry Burden frostbyt@acepia.net.au
CSDC Distance Race (ACT) TO BE CONFIRMED	2 stages of 15.5km (min 4 dogs)	18-19 August	Andrew Gersbach andrew@dataflex.com.au 0414 690 204

Hike! through Summer



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