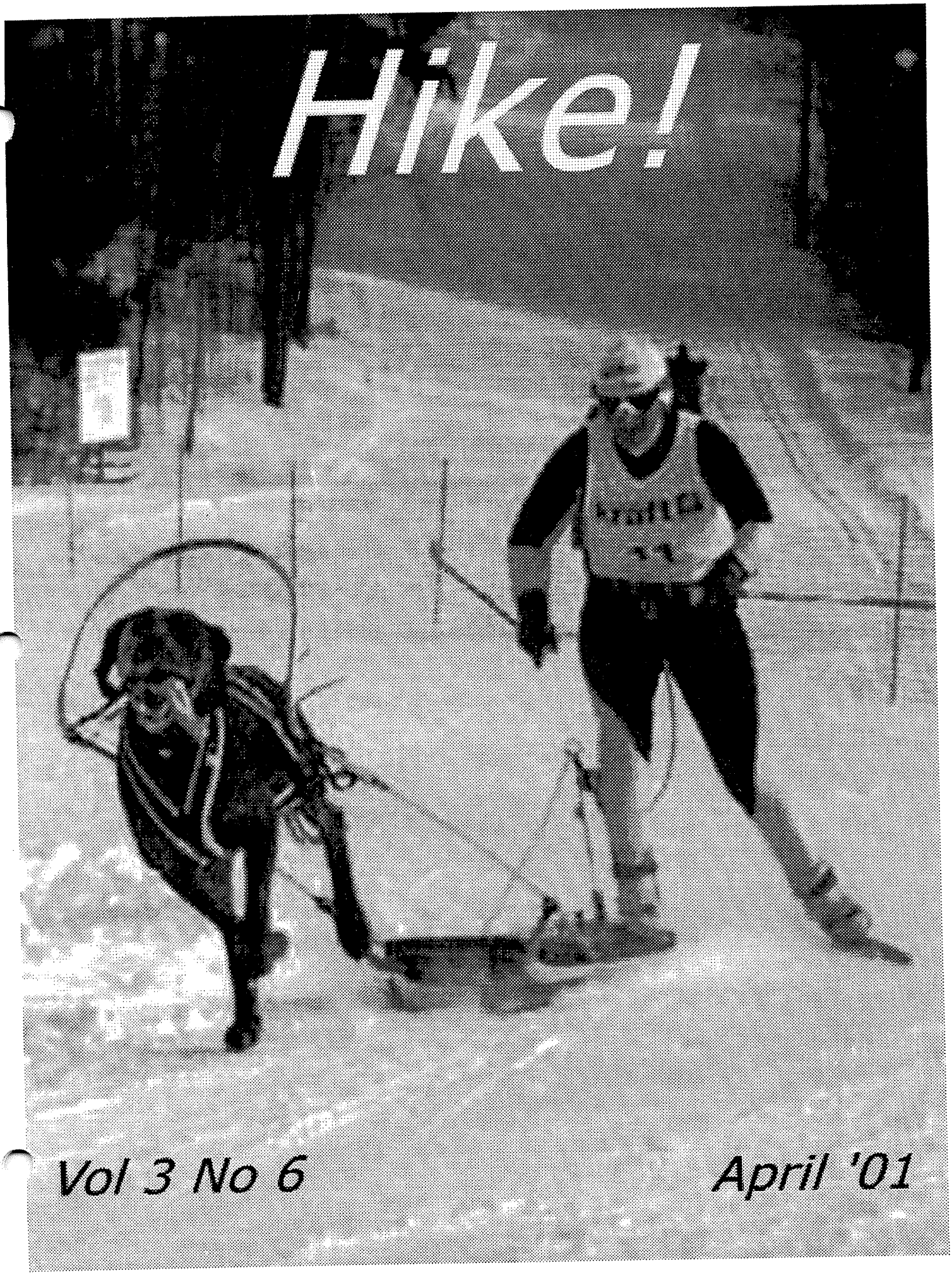
Hike!



Vol 3 No 6

April '01

Musher Profile - Eric Donkin - Part II

When the hunt began in the early 80's, people here started getting dogs from friends and relatives who lived in the few communities that still had them. Within a few years Arctic Bay had quite a few teams, reaching a peak in the mid 90's when there were twenty. It's gone back down again now to 12

The influx of new blood meant that I was able to upgrade my own stock considerably. One of these was a large husky that was badly injured during the melee of a hunt. The sport hunter had been using one of those new high-tech bows. The arrow had passed right through the bear, struck a piece of ice, bounced off and struck this dog squarely in the chest, laying him out. The arrowhead had been damaged in the course of its flight and did not penetrate as far as it may have otherwise, but it still gave him a helluva wallop. He looked to be done for and was subsequently abandoned. Amazingly, about two weeks later, he turned up back in town after hobbling over 60 miles. He was immediately set upon by a pack of loose dogs that were trying to finish him off. I managed to get him away from them and back to the house. The hunter's wife told me later that her husband had written off the dog and that I was welcome to keep him. He convalesced for the rest of that spring and summer and made a full recovery. He didn't have much speed but he gave 100% and pulled like a tractor. More importantly, he became part of the foundation of a line that goes right through to my present day dogs. Another part of this foundation was a female pup we'd brought back from Qaanaaq/Thule, a small village in Northwestern Greenland. This was the same place from where Peary and Amudsen got a lot of dogs for their Arctic and Antarctic expeditions. There were only a couple of very ancient snowmobiles in the village and these, owned by the store and Medical Center, were only allowed to be used under special circumstances. To the best of my knowledge, it has not changed much to this day. They were all using dog teams and seal skin kayaks and to their hunters were famous among Inuit for their skills. This was in 1979. The pup we brought back produced many litters but was too old and untrained to work by the time the sports hunt arrived. I scored a pair of pups from her last known litter that was bred into the line, which also extends to the present.

By the mid-1980's, my team, dog wise, was probably as good as any up here. It was essentially a hunting team and as I am a part of it, I cannot claim to be on a par with the great hunters. The best I could claim was "not bad for a white man".

I still had no knowledge of the "outside" dog-mushing world, in fact, I didn't even know of its existence. This was to change one spring day when a French musher (François Varigas) drove his team into town. No one had ever seen anything like it. There were ten dogs in five pairs, one behind the other. The sled too, was strange looking, with the driver standing on the back. I'd never seen sled dogs like these either. Shorthaired, I wondered how they would survive the winters. And so small, but very muscular. The most impressive thing about them though was their speed. He'd yell out a command in French and it was just like they'd shift into passing gear. He began his journey in Iqaluit on the south of the island, passed through Igloolik on his way to Arctic Bay, a distance of over 700 miles. His plan was to spend the summer in Arctic Bay, continuing his trip after freeze-up in the fall, traveling down to the Arctic Coast and heading west until he got to the Yukon. He was trying to make it to Whitehorse in time to start in the Yukon Quest. I don't know if he made it on time or not. I heard he had a number of adventures along the way like having to put wheels on the sled when there wasn't any snow. I never saw him again. I know he was living in Dawson, YT and entered several Quests, doing reasonably well. I learned quite a lot from him while he was here that summer, much more than I was able to absorb all at once, but a real eye-opener.

One of the first things I did was to buy a simple basket sled from a builder in Ontario. It was shipped up in pieces so I'd get a good idea of how they were constructed and be able to manufacture them here in the future. I was still using the traditional Inuit "fan" hitch, where all the dogs are attached to the sled bridle by individual lines. The next step was to make a gangline and train the team to operate in that configuration. The gangline specs were by trial and errors until I got it right. There have been a number of books published during the last fifteen years or so that deal in depth with the setting up a team, and can be a major help for a beginner. Two of the best I found are: George Attla's "Everything I Know About Racing Alaskan Sled Dogs" and Jim Welch's "Speed Mushing Manual". I sure wish that I could have had these books from the beginning, as I probably wasted about five years or more piddling about with ideas that had already been tried and discarded.

I've been in numerous discussions concerning the merits of the various hitch styles. They all have their own advantages for the particular terrain and seasons in which they're used. As it's not exactly particle physics, I don't think it's too much to expect the dogs and driver to be familiar with the main ones. I like to use the gangline for most of the year because the pulling vectors are good, and the dogs, being closely tied fore and aft, have little opportunity to fool around or fight, and just stick to the business of working. In the springtime I prefer to use the fan hitch together with a long (20') qamotik, as the dogs need a lot of individual freedom to maneuver around bad patches of ice and to be able to jump over or swim across open leads. Or if they do go through a bad patch of ice and into the water, they have the freedom of movement to swim and scramble out again without pulling their mates in with them. There have been a few accidents down south over the years with mushers training on lakes in the fall when the ice can be

Some teams at the Arctic Winter Games Territorial Trials in Yellowknife Photo: Eric Donkin

"iffy". When the dogs go through with the gangline they just drag each other down.

The next major milestone in my development was during the winter of 1987. A distemper epidemic, which seemed to have come out of the Western Arctic, swept across the north, killing thousands of dogs. Moreover, it moved fast, carried by wolves and foxes across the hundreds of miles between communities. As we listened to radio reports, we estimated that it was coming our way at about 100 miles a day. Vaccination was unheard of at that time. Vaccine was rushed in but it was too late; it arrived around Christmas time and within a couple of weeks we had lost 125 dogs. Of my own dogs, only five out of twenty-five survived.

For the previous couple of years, I had been in contact with various racing kennels across the country. In order to make the best out of a bad lot, I thought that this would be an opportune time to replace lost stock and upgrade my kennel as well. I had been doing a fair bit of research into the Western races and the Alaskan Husky and had a pretty good idea of what it was that I was after. I came back from that first trip with eight dogs and was well pleased with what I'd got. I bred them with each other and with the remainder of my original stock. I tried creating several different lines and various combinations of those. Some of them worked; some didn't. It was made more difficult by the fact that my goals kept changing. This was due mostly to my own inaccurate foresight. During the mid 80's, it had seemed to me that dog sledding in the Arctic would make the transition from a traditional activity to a sport, but there was an aspect of this which I'd failed to consider. The idea of competitive sport where competitors train for months beforehand and put so much importance into excellent performance and winning is incomprehensible to traditional Inuit. Games are part of the culture and dog team races were always part of the games, but they were a far cry from organized sport.

I also failed to recognize that most Baffin Inuit had quit having dogs in favor of the snowmobile and the one and only reason they had returned to them was to enable them to do the polar bear hunt. There's a little bit of tourism, mostly in the spring, but when it was over the dogs would be tied up and set aside until the following year. It would be wrong to say that at least some of the families don't take pride in having good teams, but for the majority, the main motivation is always money. As the elders died out so did the traditional values, that had served Inuit for millennia. The following generations were being taught in the schools the new reality and the importance of wasteful consumerism, where in order to have a constant supply of "things", it is necessary to have an unending supply of money. There would be a few short races each year but nothing over 20 miles. A good sprint team or any half decently prepared unit would have cleaned up. But that's not the way it happened. The races were always questionable, and as the years progressed and the prize-money increased, they became increasingly dishonest to the point where it was no longer worth the effort to even participate. This trend has continued in one form or another, to the present time.

On a more positive note, the Arctic Winter Games, which are the Arctic Olympics, introduced the sport of Dogsledding to the games in 1990. This was a breath of fresh air and I supported it wholeheartedly. It is restricted to young people from 11 to 19 years old and is run in two classes: 5 and 7 dogs. The Games are held every two years at different venues. The distances for the two classes of 10 and 13km make it very much a sprint race. This brought about yet another change to the direction of my breeding program.

Those participating in the AWG's are: Greenland, Nunavik (Northern Quebec), Nunavut Territory, Northwest Territories, Northern Alberta, Yukon Territory, Alaska and Russia. Each Territory, State or country is allowed to send four teams (2 juvenile, [11 to 14 years old] and 2 junior, [15 to 19 years old]) to the finals. A team consists of an athlete (driver) and coach, who doubles as a handler. There is an elimination process of regional and territorial trials, which produce the four finalists. As the Arctic and sub-Arctic produce some of the best sled dogs in the world, we face awesome competition, especially from the West.

The developmental process of changing a bunch of half-wild dogs running loose into an organized kennel should also be mentioned. The Inuit's first attempts at having their dogs tied up (when the necessary materials eventually became available) were the picket lines. These would be fastened to the ice in front of the community. They probably got this idea from the Royal Canadian Mounted Police who used dog teams long ago.

Hardly anything has changed to this day and the teams are still picketed on the ice throughout winter. During the spring and summer they are moved to various locations and are usually picketed alongside a stream or river. Some communities have an abundance of small islands in the vicinity were the dogs are left to run free for the duration of summer and fall, returning to the community of their own accord after freeze up.

The first time I went out to buy dogs was a real revelation as far as kennel management was concerned. Firstly that the dogs were all individually chained and housed. I had never known a sled dog to be housed; it was just not done. They lived their entire lives out of doors. I could see though that these shorter haired racing Alaskans I was getting would not be able to survive the high arctic winters and the terrible blizzards without some form of shelter. As soon as I got back home, I began construction of half-inch plywood kennels. The locals thought that I had taken leave of my senses! Their suspicions were confirmed when I also had a dozen bales of straw flown in. I am always looking for ways to make improvements. I was visiting Grant Beck's kennels in Yellowknife a few years ago and he was showing me how he'd insulated all of his dog houses. Therefore, the following summer I rebuilt all the kennels with 4 inches of Styrofoam insulation sandwiched in between double plywood walls. I also built a whelping box along the same lines that enables me, if the need should arise, to have litters during the winter. The insulated boxes are quite heavy and this in turn allows me to attach the chains directly to them, eliminating the need for stakeouts. For the spring, summer and fall I move them to the land. I have a couple of spots for them, which I alternate from year to year in order to, give the ground a chance to recover. They are situated along the shore and on a slope, which allows good drainage and prevents mud.

At present, I have a total of 14 dogs. Of these about 9 are competitive; the remainder are retired leaders, brood bitches and older studs. The younger dogs would be suitable for anything from distance to sprint; it's mostly all in the training, conditioning, and feeding; they have the breeding. With the AWG's coming up next winter, they'll be training by running short distances flat out with some splits in between. Right now, we're at the winter solstice (Dec. 20) and at this latitude, we get about 23 hours of darkness and an hour of very dim twilight each day so I'm not doing much with them at present besides feeding and watering. The light returns at the rate of about ten minutes a day making it light enough to run by mid January. It's very cold until mid March. – 35°C most of the time and sometimes dips down to – 50°C when it's very calm and clear. Of course, I love the extreme cold else I wouldn't live here. By mid April we'll have 24 hours of light that will continue until September. Sledding season lasts into July but you need to keep your wits about you as by that time there are many open leads (cracks) and the ice is getting rotten and I can tell you from experience that at 26°F the water's bloody cold. A good team will keep adventures to a minimum.

As for advice for the unwary ... well, *be* wary. The unwary end up as prey.

Whenever I see Graham Lloyd pitching relief for the Yankees and Jays, I'm reminded that if you want to excel in certain areas, you have to leave home and venture far afield. This rule applies equally to the Jamaican Bobsledders and the Australian Dog Mushers as it does to the guy from Brooklyn who wants to play professional Aussie Rules.

I remember that the Government over there has some pretty stringent rules pertaining to the importation of animals, so it would be difficult bringing in any stock. You may, if you've not already, prefer to develop your own bloodlines. If you have any of those good Seppala Siberians, you might try breeding them to Greyhounds, Black and Tans, and Border Collies. A kennel in Northern Europe has had a lot of success by breeding Alaskans to German Shorthaired Pointers. (Pulka dogs). Their short coats, which are a problem here, would be more than ideally suited to your warm climate. Of course, the recreational dogger may not want to have to deal with a bunch of screaming, wall-eyed crazies. For the stone competitor though, driving a fast sprint team along a trail through a forest while negotiating the curves... Nuff said.

Starting Area AWG's in Yellowknife. These are run on a very large lake (Great Slave)
Photo: Eric Donkin

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RACE TRAINING

MICHAEL HERBST

I find this to be the busiest and hardest time of the year. With the dogs still going through their conditioning stage you need to start working on speed, but you can't train fast all the time. Keep some fast ones for the racetrack. I try and work up to a fast run over several training sessions. I find that you need to keep your dogs happy at this stage of consistent training and I think the key word here is consistency! To keep my dogs happy, but still working hard, they do their conditioning portion on a walker and then off to the Greyhound track for a quick free run. (Minus the rabbit chase, it's a fenced in area which is safe to use for free running.) This gives them the chance to stride out without any weight behind them, running to their maximum speed. All harness work is kept fairly short at this time as well. (This is for Sprint racing and not Mid distance. There are other people that can inform you better on that.) This is the time to install a good **basic speed** and a **response speed**. The speed that you will demand when you need it. As the races approach, you need to select which ones you would like to do very well at and train towards that distance. Remember to keep that fast run for race day. Over the past few years I have adopted the principal of training to just under the race distance that we are approaching. I feel if I have conditioned my dogs well and have been consistent it is easy to get that extra distance out of them on race day. With all the excitement around the race site and the ½ km home run to a crowded finish line your dogs will be on a natural high and will cope with the extra distance with no problem. I find that this reduces them from pacing for a programmed distance.

Of course a big key to this is the benefit of good nutrition, health and motivation. A lot of time is devoted to feeding properly and checking physical conditioning. Weight comes in to this as well. I have the support of a chiropractor to keep my dogs in good physical condition. Motivation comes from being happy and enjoying what they are doing with the rewards at the end of the days training. With dogs this is best given with food and human contact. EASY! With all of this going on don't forget about yourself, because a slug behind the dogs won't do your speed any good on the racetrack.

LAWRIE COUTTS

The change from pre-season training to pre-race training is an important and essential period of transition for the serious competitor.

Once your pre-season conditioning is on track, your focus should be on the vital components of a successful race season

One of the first training exercises I like to begin around April is the setting of the alarm clock for a ridiculous time of the morning, followed by a rigorous stumble around in the dark packing and tying last minute items you knew you should have packed the night/day before. If you find that, because of the time of year , it is too light and you can actually see, BE TOUGH!! Put a bag over your head and get used to banging your shins against the towbar in the dark. Unfortunately at this time of year, the temperature may not be cold enough, so it may be necessary to perform this exercise in your underwear, even though it may still be impossible to replicate that cold, numb feeling in the fingers.

Another important aspect of your training will be to practice your understatement. If you have a team that is ten times better than the one you had last year you certainly don't want anybody to know it. Train yourself to continually use phrases like," Oh, I'm just out for a bit of fun this year". Or "I'm not going to push them this year they're just pups," even if they are four years old and breaking your training track record every week. So if you do well, it will seem like you have done even better. And if you don't do so well you can still rave about how happy you are about your teams' performance and how much fun you're having.

Just as eastern philosophy teaches the way of the Yin and the Yang, balance in opposites, so must we mushers. Therefore, exaggeration technique is just as important as our understatement. Telling everyone you got a tangle on the track that took 15 seconds to fix isn't going to convince anyone that's why you are coming 63rd, but telling them that you had a rats nest of a tangle to the point where you had to cut your lines and re-splice them might carry it off. Good training for this is being deliberately late to work and presenting outlandish excuses to your boss. A benchmark for success will be if you still have a job when race season starts. A side benefit to this will come during the season when you have to come up with reasons for having so many Mondays and Fridays off on race weekends.

There is one part of training that I try to continue with even in the warm Summer months and also the part I enjoy quite a lot. This is the resistance to certain beverages training. You cannot hope to handle the constant barrage of understatement and exaggeration without the proper post race lubrication. But be warned: it takes commitment and dedication and you may need to spend some quality time with seasoned mushers to get a handle on the proper techniques and formulas.

It is always a good idea to start training your family and friends this time of year. Stop returning their calls, decline any and all invitations to anything not racing related with nothing but a "Sorry, can't do it, it's race season". If they get used to it now, they will stop asking and leave you alone during the actual season.

Finally, as the race s get really close, organise a trip away with some close mushing friends and put all the above into practise. Try and arrive with some good bruises on those shins, then tell everyone that you're just there for a social run while you're calibrating your new cycle computer to work accurately on your carbon fibre rims. Then, while you are deleting your Mother's voicemail message off the cell phone, open another bottle of Wild Turkey and tell the guys how you got those bruises by getting dragged along under your rig for eight kilometres before your team would stop running full tilt up that mountain.

Terry Mace

With our hot summers and cool winters I don't really differentiate between 'pre-season' and 'race training'. All training is race training. My aim is to build the dogs fitness and ability to work in an increasing rate so that they peak at their maximum ability in time for the first race. All this needs to be done while keeping the dogs as injury free as possible. With the very hot and long summer this year and the first race not even in winter, the task is made even more difficult than normal.

That having been said the most important fact required to train for a race

Pre-Race Training Continued

Assuming that the 'pre-season' training (conditioning and fitness) have gone according to plan (we all have a plan don't we?) then the race training is essentially conditioning the dogs mental attitude to cope with the upcoming race. This is achieved by training the team over tracks of similar conditions and 75-80% of the trail length. Experienced lead dogs will associate this training with the next race and will probably be running the race in their heads. The aim of this training is to teach the dogs that they have the ability to run at the speed that I set, for the conditions I have chosen. For example the lead up to Undera would be some flat out sprints over 4-5km on a flat track.

All training presupposes that the dogs are 100% fit physically and mentally, and are fed a diet (ours are fed Pro-Plan) that meets these requirements.

I aim to give the dogs a hard workout on the weekend before the race (it may be another race) and then a light workout on the Wednesday before the race, which is basically an attitude run. If all goes according to plan then the dogs should be raring to go on race day. I always endeavor to give the dogs two days off before and after a race.

As the season progresses it is a matter of balancing the fitness of the dogs, with attitude training to meet the requirements of the races that are entered. Where this training becomes very difficult is when the length of the races have a great deal of variation and the dogs have to adopt to greatly varying speed regimes, which puts them under a lot of mental and physical stress. This is one of the reasons that I do not enter 'sprint' races (nominally 2km per dog) that are in the greater than 12km for a 4 dog team range.

AFSS Update

Peter Komdiar

AGM date & venue confirmed

The inaugural AFSS Annual General Meeting has been confirmed for 2pm Saturday 26 May. The AGM will be held at the Southern Cross Pro Am Race site in the amenities room adjacent to the presentation room.

The main item of business for the AGM will be the election of the first AFSS committee.

Cliff French does it for Australia and the AFSS

Cliff French came an astounding 2nd in the 6 Dog Mid Distance World Championships. And thanks to his AFSS accreditation Cliff was able to run under the Australian flag! This is an amazing achievement as it means to beat this an Australian musher would have to be the best in the world in their class!

But that's not all! By coming at the top of the field in a World Championship race, Cliff has single-handedly jumped the largest hurdle to gaining official recognition of the AFSS by the Australian Sports Commission. That means that once some final administrative details are ironed out by the new committee (eg like voting on a final constitution for the organisation etc), then the sport of mushing will be able to get Australian Sports Commission accreditation and assistance. This assistance ranges from administrative assistance, training and coaching assistance, junior mushing program assistance, and funding assistance to further the sport in Australia and to assist Australian mushers competing overseas.

With Cliff's fantastic result in Michigan and the benefits this will soon bring to all mushers in Australia, it can truly be said that mushing has moved from a hobby to a national sport. Good on ya Cliff!

There is no better time to join

If you were ever toying with the idea of joining the AFSS well now is the time. If you join before the AGM you will be entitled to have your say on just who gets to govern the organisation for its first (and most important) year. Why is this important? Because the first elected committee will be entitled to decide, among other things, on the organisations constitution. In other words the inaugural committee has the power to determine just what the AFSS does. For instance, what role (if any) will State bodies have in the AFSS, will breed clubs be encouraged to join, will the AFSS liaise with local and state governments to improve kennel regulations (see Tam's article). In short, will the draft work program and constitution developed by the AFSS Steering Committee be adopted or rejected.

So if you would like to influence the future of this sport, or if you want to make sure that you have a say in who gets on the committee, or even if you want to shut down the AFSS. You can do this by voting at the AGM. And you can only do that if you are a member of the AFSS. So join now!

But why limit yourself to voting – why not nominate. And remember the model rules stipulate that if only one nominee applies for any position – then they are automatically elected to that position! So the more nominees the more democratic the process.

How do I join

Membership and nomination forms appear in this edition of Hike!

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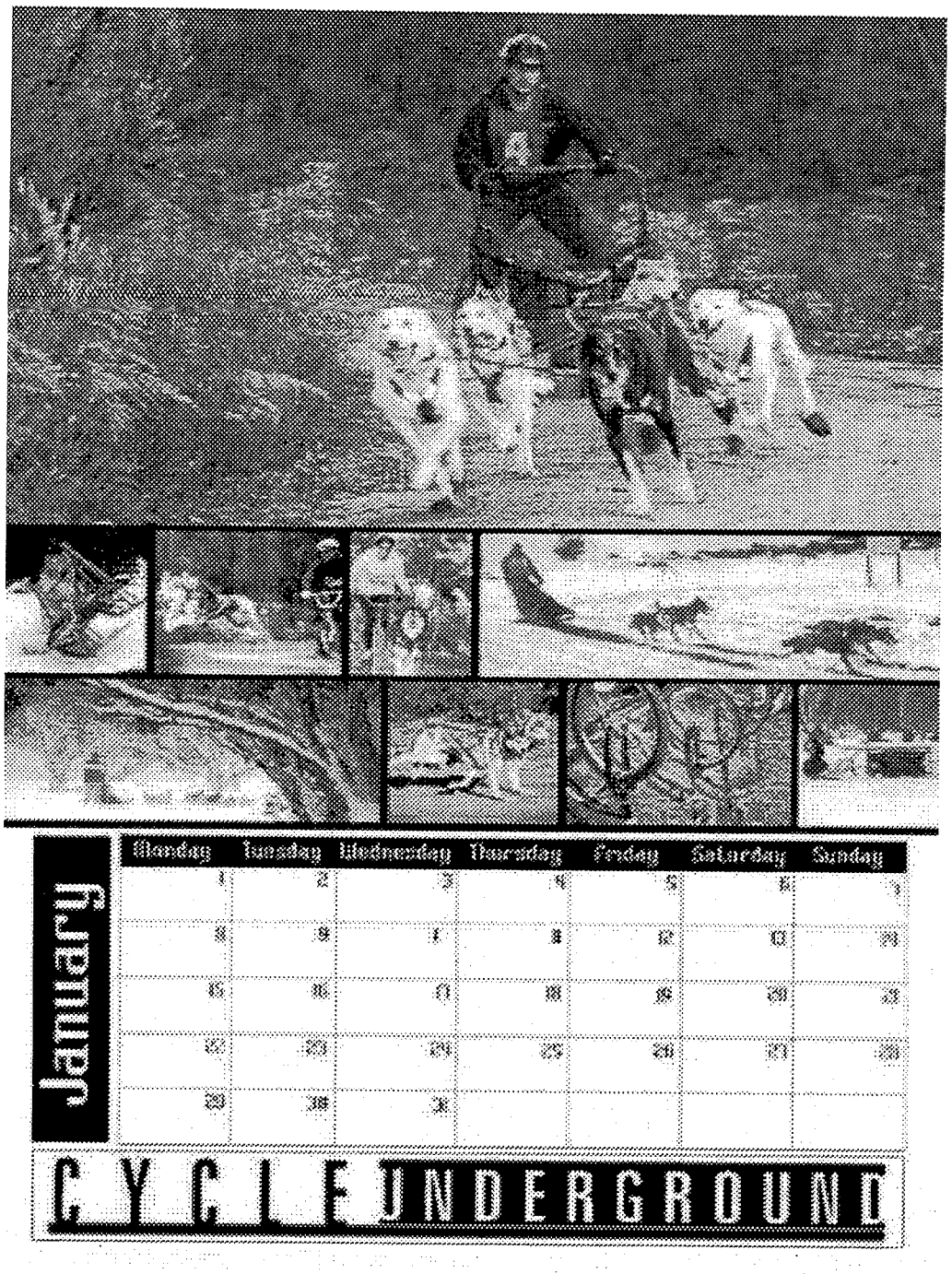

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IFSS Mid Distance World Championship 2001

February 17-18, 2001
Sally Bair

Marquette, Michigan USA — Amid lake effect blizzard conditions, on the evening of 16 February, 2001, Mike Johnson of Leroy, Michigan USA, led a field of forty-seven mushers pushing off from the Chatham, Michigan, start chute for the 1st IFSS 6 Dog Mid Distance World Championship race. Nine and a half hours later Frank Holmberg of Newberry, Michigan USA, crossed the finish line in Escanaba, Michigan, to claim first place, covering the 65 mile trail in a time of 5 hours, 58 minutes, 48 seconds. Close on Holmberg's heels with a time of 6:13:56 was Cliff French of New South Wales, Australia and bringing in third place honours with a time of 6:19:21 was Tim White of Grand Marais, Minnesota USA.

Helga and Hatchett did the honors at lead for the 29 year old Holmberg, a naturalist by profession. They negotiated the trail through the blizzard into the Rapid River checkpoint. Holmberg was the first team intoRapid River.

Light was dawning when he took to the trail again, and he made swift time across the bay into Escanaba under a bright sun and single digit temperatures F. Beamed the musher, "It is unbelievable that we werewinning at Rapid River and had made such fast time across the bay. Fourteen miles in one hour, three minutes – that's 14 mph!"

In accepting his award, Holmberg remarked that "I am an unlikely champion since I don't own any dogs!" Indeed, so it is. The champ has been racing dogs from the kennel of Bob and Jan Shaw of Newberry. The Shaws do a lot of the cart training while Holmberg works in Minnesota during the summer months.

Second place finisher French of Australia and fourth placer Peter Dobbs of New Zealand both ran teams of Tim White's dogs. In his award speech, French was passionate in thanking White for the opportunity to choose the dogs for his own team for the race.

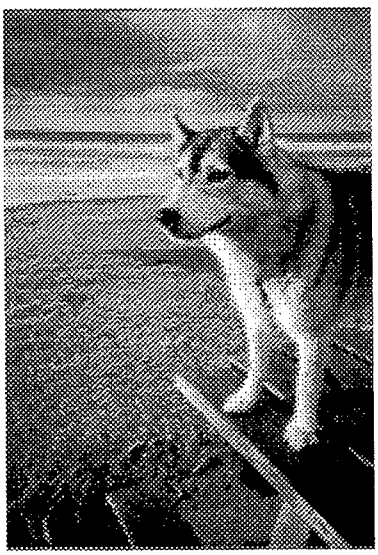
While the mushers and dogs were braving the blizzard, handlers were busy at Rapid River preparing for the teams' mandatory rest, laying out the necessary straw, getting water, etc. And, of course, they took advantage of the opportunity to socialise, eat and catch maybe a few winks of sleep in the sleeping room provided by the race organisers for handlers and mushers if needed. A certain "esprit de corps" developed among them as conversation turned from "Am I ever glad that snow didn't last any longer!" to "Remember when?"

The mushers had their own anecdotes to tell when they began arriving in Rapid River and Escanaba. Many remarked on the spectators who built campfires along the trail and roasted wieners while watching the mushers pass by in the wee hours of the morning. To many mushers, this added a special ambience to the event. On one occasion, however, a musher was rather perturbed when an enthusiastic spectator, clearly in an intoxicated state, interfered with his team. Overall, though, mushers enjoyed the uniqueness of these campfires. The only other adversity reported on the trail was a strange motion sickness that a few noted on the Ackerman Trail section, where the route was characterised by up and down hills and around curves in rapid succession. Perhaps the darkness and the zero visibility exacerbated the sensation.

The awards ceremony also saw the presentation of the Cooley Award for Veterinary Care go to Linda Hart of Stillwater, Minnesota USA, for her excellent care of the dogs during the race. Cooley was theoriginal veterinarian for the Midnight Run Race. Tim White was recognized by his fellow mushers with the Tom Porn Sportsmanship Award for his dedication to the sport, his vision in gaining IFSS championship status for this race, and for his efforts to bring competitors to the race from around the world. Many mushers commented on the added prestige of the IFSS championship affiliation and the increased credibility this gave to the 6-dog class in mid distance racing.

Adding to the international flavor of the race were not only the competitors from Down Under but also those from Belgium, Russia, Canada, and Poland.

Overall, the mushers thought the race was "super!" Some commented that they were blown away by the good sportsmanship demonstrated by their peers' courtesy and respect when passing. Truly a race for all champions, the 1st IFSS 6 Dog Mid Distance World Championship exemplified the best that the sport has to offer in terms of musher expertise, a challenging race course, and camaraderie.



Malbec's Postcard from the Beach
Photo: A&F Matthews

IFSS JUNIOR WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

Day 3 (Final Day) February 25, 2001

Sally Bair

FAIRBANKS, ALASKA USA — The third and final day of the IFSS Junior World Championship saw more flip-flopping of positions as mushers peddled their best to pick up valuable seconds. When all was said and done, Laurn Debuse of Salcha, Alaska, captured the top honor in the 1 Dog class with a total three day time of 1:15.237, only a split second ahead of 2nd place finisher Forrest Sylvester of Fairbanks. Megan Tuttle of Fairbanks claimed 1st in the 2 Dog class with a winning total time of 10:11.569, 29 seconds ahead of McKenna Ford. In the 3 Dog class Sean Sylvester of Fairbanks flipped places with Curt Kokrine to cop 1st place with a time for the three days of 39:43.722, only a second ahead of Kokrine.

In the 4 Dog class, Jason Baxter of Inuvik, NWT Canada, managed to repel a strong challenge from Frank Attla, who had the fastest time for days 1 and 3. Baxter had a total time of 37:37.976, nearly 30 seconds ahead of Attla. Al Palma of Alaska relinquished his top position in the 6 Dog class after Saturday, jockeying with Carey Erhart again, who took home the 1st place medal with a total time of 47:08.715, only seven seconds ahead of Palma. 8 Dog class competitor Kelly Wright of Chugiak hung on to his 1st place with a total time of 1:39:24.849, nearly four minutes ahead of Sigurd Erdal-Aase of Norway.

Kelly Wright, winner in the 8 Dog class, commented that he had really good runs all three days. The sixteen-year-old had a bit of trouble one day, but it was not significant. On Sunday two moose jumped across the trail in front of him. Several of the 8 Dog mushers also reported moose on the trail. Luckily, none of the moose interfered with the teams, and they had disappeared by the time subsequent classes took to the trail. Wright said that what he liked best about the race was the sportsmanship shown by all the clean passes. Kelly has been mushing for 3 1/2 years under the coaching of Rex Jones. His dogs in the 8 Dog class come from Egil Ellis (Sweden) and Norway.

Two-Dog class victor Megan Tuttle is seven years old and in the first grade. Her leaders were Lucy and Jasper. She has been mushing since she was two years old and felt good about winning being especially pleased that her dogs went so fast. Megan would like to go on into bigger classes (more dogs) eventually.

In the 1 Dog class, five-year-old Laurn Debuse has been around animals all her life. She ran Dillon, who really likes to run. She had previously told her father that maybe she really didn't want to win after all since she would have to go up in front of everybody to accept the trophy. The upshot was that she did go up in front of the people at the banquet to accept her trophy and did so with poise and dignity.

Twelve-year -Jason Baxter, winner in the 4 Dog class, had good runs on all three days. On Sunday, he ran into a bit of down time because his wheeler got a leg over the neckline. He has been mushing for eight years and has a small kennel of about fourteen dogs. His leaders were Raggy and Anne. He most enjoyed the challenge of the competition and the superb set up of trails. George Attla and Grant Beck are his favorite mushers. But it was Tim White who nicknamed him the "Delta Rocket" after seeing him smoke out the other teams in the Yellowknife, NWT Canada, race a few years ago. Jason was sponsored by Dowland Contractors — Inuvik/ Anchorage.

In the 3 Dog class, nine-year-old Sean Sylvester clocked in the winning total time. A fourth grader, Sylvester had good, clean runs all three days. On the first day, however, he thought maybe his dogs weren't as fast because it was warmer out. His leaders were Gringo and Mo. Sean is a member of the Fairbanks Junior Dog Mushers' Association.

Carey Erhart of Fairbanks, who is sixteen years old, said it really felt good to win the 6 Dog top honor. Her parents do a lot of training of the dogs, but she also does her share of training and dog chores. Her leaders were Limo and Conan. A participant in the sport for the past thirteen years, she attributes her performance in this race to her good leader, Conan. Her dream is to run the Anchorage Fur Rendezvous, where she can picture herself going up Cordova Hill. The most valuable piece of advice she has received is "Don't look behind you."

The juniors, parents, and guests joined together Sunday evening at the River's Edge Restaurant in Fairbanks for the banquet and award ceremonies. In accepting their awards, the young mushers extended their appreciation to the sponsors, their parents, most of all, the dogs. Each also received a trophy to commemorate the event, a piece of equipment (collar, harness, etc.), and their bib. They then made the rounds of the icons of mushing who were present to get their autographs on the bib. George Attla and Gareth Wright each had quite a line of kids waiting their turn for their signature.

IFSS extends its sincere thanks and appreciation to the Fairbanks Junior Mushers Association for their hard work in making this race a success.

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Super Swede Sets Record

Chris Talbott
Fairbanks Daily News-Miner

Fairbanks — Egil Ellis walked away from the Open North American Championship Sled Dog Race with the hardware, but the elation belonged to Buddy Streeper, the "winner" of the world's oldest and most prestigious sprint race.

Ellis easily shattered another pair of records and took home his third straight Open title, but that was expected. Streeper won the race for second place, the unofficial championship for a sprint-mushing world demoralized by Ellis' dominance.

"I love coming here to Fairbanks," said Streeper, the youngest member of a famous family line of racers. "There's not many places you get to race 20 dogs right off the street. There's not many places you get to race guys like Neal Johnson and Egil Ellis."

If Streeper, just 19, sticks with it, he might one day join those two in the circle of Open North American champions. Second was good enough this weekend with the world resigning itself to chasing the super Swede with the doggie touch.

People shook their heads in wonder as Ellis' finish time was read over the public-address system on Second Avenue. He finished the 27-mile heat in 1 hour, 28 minutes and 45.9 seconds with 12 dogs, nearly two minutes faster than the standard he set last year of 1:30:40.1. With a total time of 3:27:13.8, that's a light-speed average of 3 minutes, 16 seconds per mile in the race that featured 19.2-mile heats Friday and Saturday.

"Just another day on the job," Ellis joked after his eighth straight major Alaska victory.

Ellis compiled a total time of 3:31:46.3 last year.

The only thing keeping him from being a prohibitive favorite to win his third straight "Triple Crown" — Fur Rendezvous Open World Championship, Open North American and the Tok Race of Champions next weekend — is that the Rondy was canceled for lack of snow.

"When they called the Rondy off, that blew my chances for that," Ellis said. "So I will have to come back next year."

Ellis said he was glad that he and a few other racers took a "leap forward" by breaking record times: "I don't know where we'll end up."

He doesn't think his standards will sit around long waiting for the next great champion.

"I'll break them next year," he said with a smile.

Both Streeper and fourth-place finisher Joee Redington Jr. of Manley Hot Springs used record runs to jump a place in the standings. Streeper, whose father, Terry, shouted "Yes" when he saw his son appear on Second Avenue, erased a deficit of more than 30 seconds and jumped past Neal Johnson with a run of 1:29:20.7 for a cumulative time of 3:31:23.2.

Johnson (1:30:47.3) was third overall in 3:32:18.9, while Redington became the top Alaskan finisher after passing Curtis Erhart with a run of 1:29:18.4. Redington, son of Iditarod founder and Alaska legend Joe Redington Sr., finished with a total time of 3:33:06.9 to Erhart's 3:34:56.1.

Redington called the run "better" than his multitude of second-place finishes in the race (Michi Konno won the Open in 1998 running a team leased from Redington).

"I had a real good team this time," he said. "Everything was perfect. The trail was as good as it could possibly get. Officials were everywhere on the trail. We have a great sponsor. You couldn't get a better run race than this. Except maybe we should get a little faster."

Redington thank his wife, Pam, for the training she's done over the years and reflected on his family's place in the sport. Redington has had a string of misfortunes in the past four years, from the bypass surgery he went through in 1997 to the loss of his father to throat cancer.

"My whole family is behind all of us in dog racing," he said. "We didn't become doctors or lawyers, but we all grew up to become pretty good dog mushers. I think my dad would be proud."

Businessman's phone dilemma hard to swallow

ABC News 9 March

A Kenyan businessman trying to trace his missing mobile phone rang the number from his house telephone and heard the gadget ringing inside the stomach of his two-year-old German Shepherd.

Kamal Shah says when his mobile went missing from the bedside table, he thought his toddler son had removed it.

However, when he dialled the number, he says he was shocked to hear the mobile ringing inside his hungry pooch, Snoopy.

The dog later underwent surgery to remove the gadget.

At last report, both Snoopy and the telephone were doing fine.

Lead Dog Theory - A Reply

Jozsef Toth

I couldn't help myself but to write something in reply to Michaela Paul's "lead dog theory" article. I do not wish the arguments in this article to be taken as a criticism of Ms Paul but rather as counter arguments in the spirit of free and open debate.

ARE ALL DOGS ARE BORN EQUAL?! I am a believer the "A Lead Dog Is Born" along with probably 80-90% (estimated number, don't shoot me for it) of mushers in the world and a great number them are lot more experienced and knowledgable than either myself or the author of the article. It is in that context I submit my humble argument for in support of the Born Leader .

Firstly, I'd like to clarify the term "a lead dog is born". This implies BORN not ready made. By that I mean born with the ability to lead, with the willingness to run at the front of a pack. What are the qualities of a good leader? Hardiness, Strength of Will, Drive, a Keenness to Please, and an ability to fulfil commands while negotiating the trail. These are all traits not acquired knowledge.

To believe that every dog can be trained to be a leader ignores evolution and survival of the fittest. Consider for instance a litter of pups. Are they all born of equal weight? Would they all make it to adulthood without our intervention? Would they all become the pack leader? I think not, otherwise we would have a lot of lonely alfa dogs. If all dogs are born to be leaders can we then assume that all of them will be born with equal speed, or stamina.

The way I interpreted article was that all dogs are born with the ability to be lead dogs, but it is up to you to train it to its full potential. But to further this debate lets examine the argument in more detail.

To begin with Michaela talks about Border Collies and their trainability. This implies that if equal training was applied they will all become equally good sheep dogs. If this were true, then sheep dog trials would always be won by the same Trainer, no matter what dog he entered with.

Then she argues that Sibes have been breed to pull sleds for many years and will naturally become leaders. Well here she gives the answer herself. Sibes were bred to pull sleds not bred to be leaders.

I would also like to address the claim that you generally get about the one leader per litter. I believe it to be highly fictitious, some litters may have a lot of leaders some none at all. But one is always going to be better than the rest, without saying that it is going to be good.

Further, she uses the one and two dog classes to prove her point, well to me, her definition of lead dog is obviously quite broad. In my opinion a lead dog is a dog whom lead other dogs or team of dogs. If leading a scooter is a job for a leader, then do you require eight lead dogs to run in the eight dog class? Without offending those few truly capable leaders whom happen to race in those classes, most of those dogs just run happily along and in difficult situations wait for the scooter or the driver to literally point in to the right direction.

Half way through her article Michaela talks about "MR NATURAL" saying she can't accept that "being born with the ability to do your turns and stopping and slowing on command without training", well on this one I fully and without reservation agree with her, although I have to wonder where that statement come from. "MR NATURAL" still needs training to become a leader, but if he is not "MR NATURAL" than you can train the crap out of him and still at best he only becomes "MR AVERAGE". Otherwise I should be able to shave my head, get a dark tan and become Mike Jordan the "MR NATURAL" of basket ball, what do you think how much training would I need?? Or Better Yet could Andrew Gaze ever match Him? I let you figure out the answer to that one.

So let me summarise what I've been trying to explain.

LEAD DOGS ARE BORN , with the ability and traits required to become one AND WITH the correct TRAINING THEY WILL BE.

In closing, I'd like to add 2 points.

One; there are two kind of lead dogs are (No, I wasn't going to say that one that was born and one which was trained). The GEE-HAW LEADER, these are the true leaders, able to perform single or double lead and understand and execute turns and other commands. And the TRAIL LEADER usually only able to perform in double lead, not reliable on commands, has a great willingness and drive to be at the front of the team but happy to surrender charge to the other leader.

Two; I've had a few leaders but none could compere to Cliff. He DID receive training to learn the commands etc. but he did not get more training than some of the others, more likely less. He was happy to be at the front from first go. More importantly over the years he started doing things I never trained him at least not conscionably. For example, he started to keep to the left side of the road when training, I liked the idea but failed to train my other leaders to do so, he is the only leader of mine whom does a complete 180° turn on command with large team behind him and more importantly without tangling up the team. In training when I am heading home due to the fact that Cliff keeps to the left I have to negotiate a really sharp left turn to make it back to my drive way. The first time we did this with a six dog team, he made the turn perfectly except the wheel dogs and the rig ended up in the ditch! Next day I was bracing for the ditch when about 30-40 metres from the turn Cliff suddenly went wide to the right and as I followed him we all made the left turn without ending in the ditch and I did not give him any command or move the rig until he made his move.

Anyway I would be happy if the Michaela was right and it was possible to train any dog to be a GOOD LEADER. Life would be a lot easier, but until than I just keep waiting for another one to BORN.

Dogs and Councils just don't mix!

Tammy Hutchison

From time to time you hear of Mushers having problems with their local council after neighbour complaints for noise etc and also of the harsh dog keeping laws in some states affecting how many dogs you may have and whether or not they are desexed. I have often sympathized with these people, as I have been fortunate enough to live in "dog friendly" shires. That was until yesterday when I was informed through a public notice in our local free paper that our council is planning on implementing a new tough set of dog keeping laws.

We live in a rural area south of Wollongong, with many greyhound and showing/boarding kennels within the shire. The laws, as they stand now are you may have pretty much as many dogs as you like providing that there are no complaints about noise, smell etc, they are kenneled cleanly and that they are microchipped and lifetime registered. The new set of laws, if they get passed will limit 2 dogs per 1000m2 block and under, maximum dogs allowed on 1100m2 block and over with out a development consent, 4 dogs and one litter with registration as a Hobby Breeder. Then if you wish to own more than four dogs, you must be living on 5 or more acres, but there are also restrictions on number of dogs and number of litters.

They have spilt the dog owning population into categories. This is where things get hazy in terms of where sled dogs fit into the scheme of things (categories 2 and 4 could fit us, but so could 1) in Councils pro posal.

1. Dog Keeper, person who owns one or more dogs.

2. Hobby Breeder, person who is eligible to register protengy with the Royal NSW Canine Council and train and keep up to 4 dogs. Must have concrete or brick kennels not located within 15 metres of residences. Exercise yards must be enclosed with 1.8m high fence and the area must total 10square metres per dog or 30 square mtres which ever is greater.

3. Guarded Premises Dogs.

4. Professional Breeder, person registered with Royal NSW Canine Council or licenced with the Greyhound Board who breeds and or trains more than 5 dogs.

5. Working Dog, person who trains and keeps dogs to work on farm with stock etc.

By now you may be wondering if these laws get passed what are people expected to do with their excess dogs. This question was put to council and the reply will astound you! It seems they will give an 18 month time span in which the offending dogs must be rehomed to someone who is not over the limits or failing that they must be surrendered to the council pound to be destroyed!

The local Obedience and Kennel Clubs (representing all dogs, pedigreed or not and their owners) have joined forces with the NSW Canine Council to fight these proposed new laws. How we will go in our endeavour to stop them or at least have them amended is anyone's guess, but we will not go down with out a fight.

Our local councils need to be educated in all aspects of our sport (and in some cases that we actually exist), so that adjustments can be made to existing dog laws, which prevent us from having an operational sled dog kennel. Hopefully one day we can get sled dogs accredited with local councils, similar to greyhounds, as purpose bred racing dogs, which would then allow us more freedom in kennel size.

With the inaugural AFSS AGM and subsequent election of office bearers for the first term coming up, I urge those considering running for office to not only focus on popular policies such as gaining more access to the alpine regions, but to consider including Local Government Dog Keeping Laws in their key policies. We need to be able to keep appropriate numbers of dogs, just to be able to continue to run dogs.

Whispers

Hike! is advised on good authroity that Mr Michael Allsop is now a married man. Congrats Mike and Elizabeth!

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Junior Musher - Jessica Baker and a very excited team!
Photo: Wayne Baker

Canberra Sled Dog Club Summit Challenge

The CSDC Summit Challenge is on again in Canberra. The date is the 18th of August and the location is Deeks Drive the same site as last year.

This year the format will be 2 Heats of 20Km's with a 3 Hour layover at the most scenic spot on the Sled Dog circuit. As many of you know, Pizza and a warm fire is never far away in Canberra.

The start time for the event will be 6.00pm with drivers and handlers required to be on-site for briefing and reconnaissance from 1.00pm on Saturday.

At this stage we will be offering Prize money for 1st to 3rd, an impressive trophy for the winner and patches for finishers. 2000 Patches will also available to the finishers from last year.

Claw drag brakes this year won't be allowed due to safety issues raised during last years event and the maximum number of dogs will be 6 with a minimum of 4.

If you would like further information please contact Andrew Gersbach on 0414 690 204 or via email at andrew@dataflex.com.au.

Canberra Sled Dog Classic

The CSDC Classic will be held on the 18th and 19th of August at the same site as last year -Deeks Drive in the heart of Canberra.

For the first time in years we won't be changing the tracks, so the distances will be:

1 dog = 3.6Km's x 2 Heats
2 dog = 7.2Km's x 2 Heats
4 dog = 9.0Km's x 2 Heats

The flat start seemed to be hit with most, but the uphill finish tested a few. All in all it is better for the dogs.

We will be running afternoon activities and races for the juniors and peewees.

There will be a rich bounty of cash and prizes up for grabs with 1st to 10th being rewarded. We are expecting the cold season to continue longer and as a result running temperatures ofaround 5'C or below are expected.

If you would like further information please contact Len Tomlinson at kivawolf@bigpond.com or Andrew Gersbach at andrew@dataflex.com.au or 0414 690 204.

Sydney Sled Dog Sprint and Mid-Distance Race Distances Confirmed

Distances for the Siberian Express race have been confired at:

1 dog = 3.8km
2 dog = 5.5km
3/4 dog = 9.6km
6 dog = 12.3km
Night distance race 1heat = 18.5km

3 dog class gets reprieve

Due to musher pressure the Sibe Express race organisers have decided to bring back the 3 Dog class. (You will recall that in the last edition, it was announced that the 3 dog class would be axed). However, the reprieve may be temporary and if there is poor response this year, it may be scrapped forever.

Rumours of big changes at the A5K Race

Rumour has it that the A5K is in the process of securing 2 additional major sponsors and the name of the race may even be changed. It is also rumoured that while classes will remain the same there may be a cap on the number of 2 dog entrants to about 40. Meanwhile it seems that prize money has received a substantial boost and the A5K have invited an experienced North American sled builder/musher/race marshal. Stay tuned for more info!

Sled Dog Shield Confirmed

The Sydney Sled Dog Shield is confirmed for the weekend of the 28-29 July.

Announcing the Dash on the Downs

Peter and Vanessa Neale

We were wondering if it isn't too late would you be able to add a new race to your Race Calender.

It's a new race called "Dash on the Downs" which is a by a new club just started in Qld. It has been started by some current NEGRC members who want to organise a new race in Qld.

The race is sponsored by "Hill's Science Diet" and is going to be run at Peachey Forest in Toowoomba Qld.

The classes will be:

4 dog - no less than 8km
2 dog - no less than 4km
1 dog - no less than 3km
Novice 1 dog - no less than 3km
and a Junior Pee Wee race.

There will be a Night Run for all classes except Novice and Junior Pee Wee.

The race will be held on May 5,6 and 7th (Labour Day Weekend (QLD)) and camping is available at the Crows Nest Caravan Park who have full facilities only 3km from the Race Site.

The contact for the Race is : Daryl and Sue Morris (07) 3266 2170

SHCNSW Pointscore Race

The SHCNSW Pointscore Race will be held on 5/6 May at Daly's Clearing (old SX site) Belangalo State Forest NSW.

Classes 1 Dog, 2 dog 3-4 Dog – distances to be finalised. Racing commences approx 6pm on Saturday 5 May Bib draw & drivers meeting at 4pm. Entry Fee $5.00

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Iditarod - Swingley Wins Third in a Row - Four Total

Iditarod Race Organising Committee

2001 Iditarod Champion Doug Swingley gets a kiss from his lead dog Stormy in the winner's circle. Peppy is by his side. Doug Swingley won the 29th annual Iditarod at 6:55 am on Wednesday the 14th. His winning time was in 9 days, 19 hours, 55 minutes and 50 seconds with 11 dogs in the team. Congratulations Doug.

The Red Lantern was taken out by Karen Ramstead who crossed under the arch at Nome at 10:53:16 a.m. AST on Monday March 19 ending the 29th running of the Iditarod Sled Dog Race. Karen is from Canada and this was her second attempt at finishing the Iditarod, she scratched in 2000.

Aussie musher, Steve Carrick scratched at McGrath on 7 March due to lack of dog power.

1. Doug Swingley - 9 days 19 hours
   Finished with 11 dogs
2. Linwood Fielder -10 days 3 hours
   10 dogs
3. Jeff King - 10 days 7 hours
   8 dogs
4. Rick Swenson - 10 days 15 hours
   11 dogs
5. Paul Gebhardt - 10 days 20 hours
   7 dogs
6. John Baker - 10 days 21 hours
   11 dogs
7. Rick Mackey - 11 days 2 hours
   9 dogs
8. Jerry Riley - 11 days 6 hours
   10 dogs
9. Sonny King - 11 days 12 hours
   12 dogs
10. Dee Dee Johnrow - 11 days 14 h
    10 dogs

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Sleddog Training

Michaela Paul

The conclusion to my theory about lead dog training started back in 1999.

The first run in March 1999 was a terrifying experience for me and the Sibe. Thanks to her partner, an Alaskan Husky who took off so fast that the Sibe and I stumbled for couple of meters and it took us some time to realize what is going on.

The training was progressing just fine, but sometimes the Sibe did not enjoy running. We thought she was a bit scared of the speed. At the Southern Cross race 1999 I realised that there was something wrong. The Sibe was looking for an escape at the start line and all the way around the track she tried every trick in the book to not have to run.

Different people suggested all sorts of thing to punish her for not wanting to perform at the race, I listened to some of them and I even tried some of their suggestions. But all the advice was useless.

The Undera race approached and we still did know whether she was going to run again.

Finally we got a positive response from Barry Burden who actually took the time and listen to what we were saying. His first question was if whether her speed dropped, which of course it had. He concluded that there could be some muscle or joint problem, and he was right. She did have torn calf muscle and at the same time her hip muscle had slipped. But that is another story.

The same afternoon we had a chat with a young lady musher who brought to my attention a couple of books. To help with the girl's shyness I bought the cheaper book as I do not like to spend money on some one else's opinion on how to train my dogs.

Well the book arrived and I did read it once, twice three times, I still read the book on and off. The cry baby chapter is my favourite, as the author describes with uncanny accuracy our Sibe! That year I did try bits and pieces and at the last fun race at Bendigo she actually started leaning into her harness and was focusing at the start line on our voices .No more ducking out.

I could not wait to start training the following autumn and as soon as the weather permitted I started with both of the girls.

Be firm the writer said and so I was. It took two weeks day in day out for only 10 minutes at a time to teach the Sibe to lean into the harness and wait. And at the end my cat was boxing her and she would not move from her position.

Third week in to training and she would not sniff the unfortunate bunny, killed by a car.

Week four and she is correcting the line any time I give her more rope.

Week five and she did not take a turn unless I told her to. Just because we turned there yesterday does not mean we are going that way today.

The best thing that happened as a result of this training regime was the realisation that there is no way we were going to be the big winners are grinners. But we are going to have a well trained team and be confident with their performance. There will always be a certain doubt with passing, aggression and all the things we never train the dogs for. And we do let them get away with little mistakes at one time or another. But now we know that we are never going to say that the dog did not want to run. It will be us who did not train the dogs for the right things.

And what about the winning? Well you must have properly matched dogs as well as well trained dogs.

And then there was the Alaskan Husky!!!

Why the hell she took the wrong turn *30* metres from start chute at Southern and left my husband laying on the ground for good 10 seconds (so he says).

What was she thinking??? WELL THAT'S ANOTHER TALE TO WRITE. Ha Ha jusk kidding.

David DeBono at the Y2K A5K
Photo: Tam Hutchison

Dog Humour

Submitted by: Di Baker

OK - so there was a musher that lived way out in the middle of nowhere with his dogs. Suddenly, in a big cloud of dust, a young man in an expensive suit pulled up to his front door in a shiny new SUV. He approached the musher. "If I can tell you exactly how many sled dogs you have, will you give me one of them?"

"Well, OK," said the shepherd.

The man hooked up his laptop, his cell phone, his palm pilot: got onto the net, accessed satellite imagery, did calculations, and a few hours later got back out of his SUV. "You've got 352 sled dogs," he said.

"That's correct," said the musher. So the young man grabbed the nearest animal and put it in the back of his car.

"Now before you go," the musher said, "if I can guess your occupation, can I have him back?"

"Well, OK, " said the young man.

"You're a consultant, right?"

"That's correct! How did you know?"

"Well," said the musher, "you arrived uninvited out of nowhere, charged an exorbitant price to tell me something I already knew, and you don't really understand my business at all. Now...can I have my cat back??"

2001 Race Calendar

Sprint Races

Race	Distances	Date	Contact
Dash on the Downs (Queensland)	1 Dog Class – No less than 3km 2 Dog Class – No less than 4km 4 Dog Class – No less than 8km Novice Class – No less than 3km	5-7 May	Daryl and Sue Morris (07) 3266 2170
Southern Cross Pro Am (Victoria)	1 Dog Class – 2 heats of 3km 2 Dog Class – 2 heats of 4.8km 4 Dog Class – 2 heats of 6.8km	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)	1 Dog Class 2 heats of TBA 2 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
Gold Seekers Race (Victoria)	1 Dog Class 2 heats of 3 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)	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)	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
SX Distance Race	6 Dog Class (min 4 dogs) Distance TBA	23-24 June	Craig Turner ionamal@shoal.net.au (02) 4285 2457
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)	2 stages of 20 km (min 4 dogs)	18-19 August	Andrew Gersbach andrew@dataflex.com.au 0414 690 204

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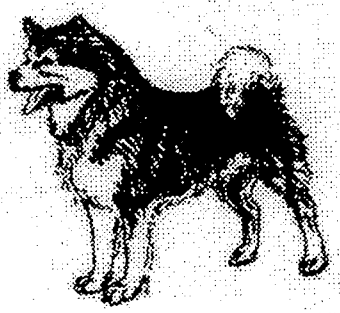

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