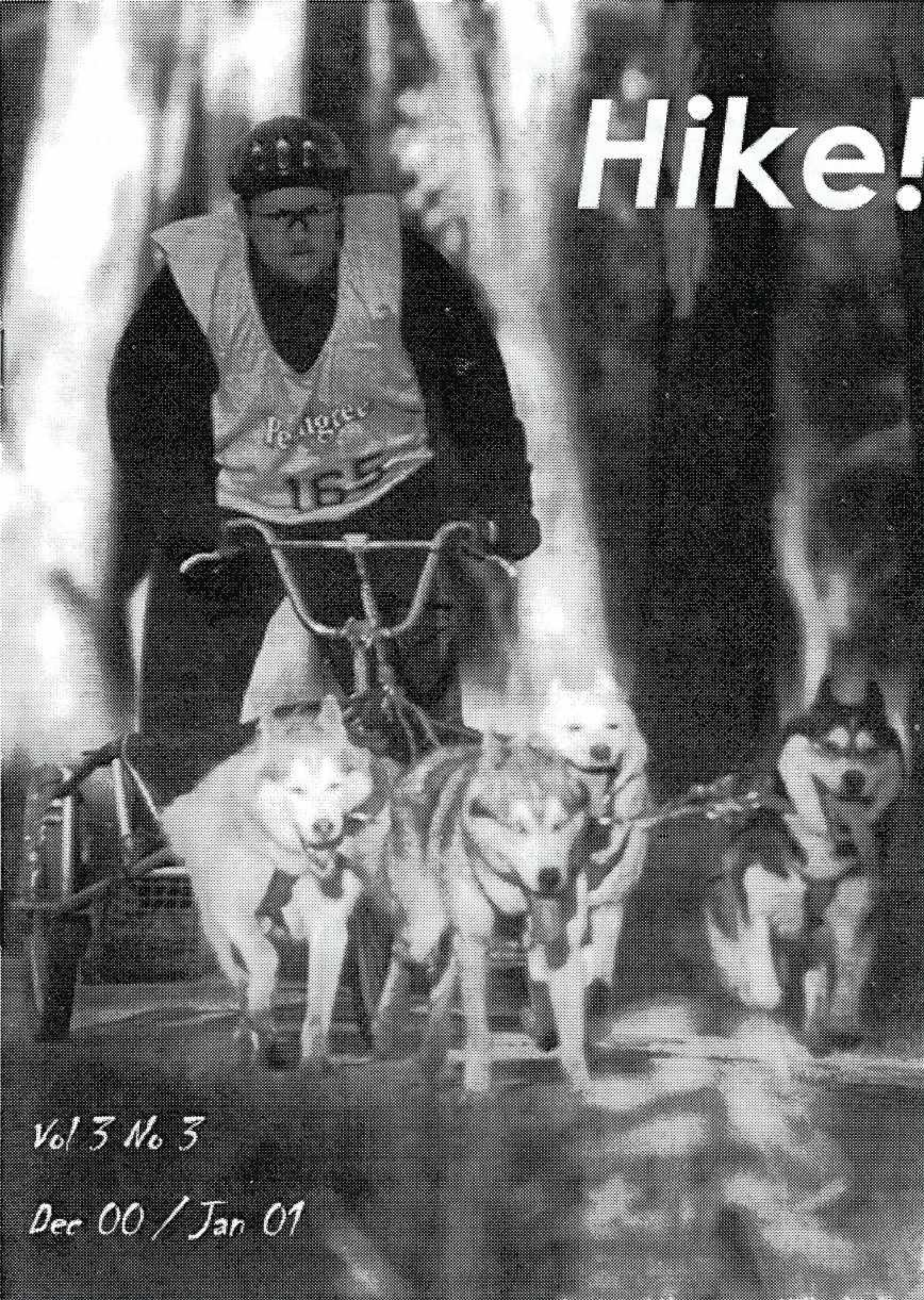

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MUSHER PROFILE – MERV TURNER

AGE: 45 and still enjoying the best sport of all.

WHEN DID YOU START MUSHING:Back in 91 I went to watch a couple of events near Bendigo, then went out and picked up my first two dogs, Alaskan Malamutes, TAURUS and YSYS. In 92 my Mals and I went and watched UNDERA at Undera near Sheparton (12 competitors then). I spoke to Bill Thorne, John Hynde, Terry Mace, Nola Randell to name a few. Got plenty of info from them on all sorts of things and then went off to do some training.

A mate in Ballarat helped build my rig (which I still use today), then went and purchased two harnessess. While getting the harnesses Andrew showed me how to go about running the dogs, so we hooked up to his rig and with him running along side off we went. He only got 5-10 metres and couldn't keep up so on he jumped . Two kilometres later he's trying to buy Ysys. The rest has been fun, YSYS still loves to run (won 3 AMCV ONE DOG RACES THIS YEAR and was 3rd. overall in the AMCV pointscore). Taurus has retired to amuse us at home and still holds the best pull on dirt in VIC. AT 1560 Kilos. MANY THANKS TO THESE TO DOGS. Gee we have had some fun.

ARE YOU A MEMBER OF ANY CLUBS: Current members of AMCV,SHCV, and SHAM. Also was a founding member of Altitude 5000.

HOW MANY & WHAT TYPE OF DOGS DO YOU HAVE NOW: Shelley and I have.7 Alaskan Malamutes, 4 Siberians, and one super sleddog Herbie the Schipperke. Not only do we race but also weightpull and most of our dogs are shown as well.

WHAT IS YOUR MOST MEMORABLE INCIDENT: Actually getting the snow race up and going, then being able to run Karen McCarthy's dogs for 2 seasons.

But wait there's more, following John Hodgson at Southern Cross in the four dog class. Wish I had a video camera that year.

STUPIDEST INCIDENT MUSHING: It was on a training run in prob. 94 when I decided to leave the rig home & take Taurus & Ysys for a run at Dandenong with the scooter. Anyway we had just blasted off when I realised the front wheel was turned wrong way. 20metres from starting trying to stop 2 Mals that can pull is not easy. Ended up the scooter cut my ankle (6 stitches) and nearly my achillies tendon as well. For next 2 races got plenty of photos. Will pull them out give them to Peter for HIKE.

WHAT TURNS YOU ON ABOUT SLED DOG RACING: Seeing the enjoyment of the dogs wanting to go & there antics out on the trail. Meeting people old and new, each weekend we get together to race. Being able to go out with a team & not have to get off the rig because the team are enjoying what they like to do, PULL & RUN.

WHAT ARE YOUR PERSONAL GOALS IN THE SPORT: Enjoy our dogs, & help others in the sport where we can. Maybe start another snow race when we get ourselves set up & in a house?.

ADVICE FOR THE UNWARY: Don't over feed your dogs. They enjoy it more if there in good condition & so will you.

TRAINING TIPS: Start by asking as many questions you need answers for.You never stop learning.Watch & learn.Ask people with simmilar breeds,as they are different slightly to train.Every one has got different methods of training,take it all in & work out what is best for you & your dogs.My main aim has always been to go around the course with out a tangle,take all the turns & not have to worry about being passed or passing other teams.If I can achieve this the rest is a bonus.

AFSS Update

Philosophy behind the AFSS Structure

By Cliff French, Chairman AFSS Steering Committee, aussiecliff@snowy.net.au

[This article is solely the work of the author who takes full responsibility for it's content]

But we think it is time mushers got an update, so here it is.

In September 1996 I decided to try to hold a national convention of mushers, to see if we could thrash out the structure for a national body. In the interests of efficiency, I proposed an outline of a constitution setting up a structure 'of the classic kind' and some projects that could be tackled by the new body. This was to give us a starting point for discussions. I got Steve Carrick interested, and we sent 13 letters of invitation to clubs and VSDRA to attend such a convention. We received three replies.

Therefore, those critics who think that this initiative is 'suddenly out of the blue' and not started with the knowledge of a lot of the mushers, are quite wrong. If a musher did not know of it, go back to your clubs and demand an explanation! [most Aussie mushers are club members, I am told]- unless it has slipped your memory, or you are a new member, they obviously did not tell you about my invitation, which was largely ignored.

I remember telling Tim White of the poor response, and his answer was, essentially, don't blame them, look to yourself - what you were offering [that 'structure of the classic kind']was obviously not what they were looking for. The most they were guilty of was discourtesy in not replying. He suggested I need to go back to the drawing board and try again, after doing a lot more homework.

Well, I did just that, and recruited Peter and Sharon Komidar along the way.

After 4 years, with some legal advice, lots of discussions, lots of input, lots of research, we are now convinced that the age-old 'classic' structure of a national body, made up of delegates from state bodies, made up of representatives from clubs, is not the way for us to go. For a start there are not enough mushers to warrant such a top heavy structure. We believe we can produce a more responsive organization that is more directly run by, and directly represents, mushers; one that we believe Australian mushers WILL embrace.

When it finally meets our standards[very soon, now] it will be offered to the mushers to vote for it, and vote for those directors and presidential positions, directly. This will be well before the next season; we expect quite soon. There is still a lot of logistical work to do, associated with informing the mushing community, calling for nominations, and the actual election procedure. Aussie mushers will vote for it, or their feet will vote against it. Once established any changes desired can be made by the members.

In attempting to make this National body a success, one of the questions that I posed to our group was "why has the 2 or 3 attempts to form and run a national body for our sport failed?" We needed an answer to that question before we went plunging ahead, to avoid taking that same path to failure again.

Another question needing an answer was "The Clubs seem to work well, and thrive - why?"

We believe that a major reason that clubs do well is the closeness, the camaraderie, and the fact that the mushers know that they each have some real input, that their voice is really heard.

With a national body "of the old kind" members become thought of as 'way down there at the bottom', so far removed from the center of the action at national board level, that a member naturally feels left out, not listened to, all but ignored.

Who would want this? NOT ME. I have experienced this in the Scouting Movement, a trade union and a professional engineering association. Maybe that is why I am not much of a 'joiner' anymore.

We don't think that we have, or will probably ever have, enough mushers to warrant a system where mushers join clubs, that join state associations, that join a national body like AFSS. **This is too much 'Government' for 300 odd members.**

The proposed AFSS constitution will set up an organization run by members FOR the members, with **control DIRECTLY from the bottom UP!** [I'll underline that, as it is really the most important 'plank' in our platform!] **With control DIRECTLY from the bottom UP!** - Not via a club or state association appointed representatives - directly by the mushers, through **directly elected Directors to the National Board.**

These directly elected members of the Board of Directors will have to canvass the members for their votes. The rules require that the status and vote of each Director will be recorded in the minutes and published on the AFSS web site. Therefore, promises made to win your vote in the elections for the Board, and President and Vice-President, can later be monitored to see if, in fact your representative at the Board did support your preferences. This **accountability** is another important and integrated 'plank' in the platform of the AFSS constitution.

Each 'mushing state' will elect one director, so a small mushing state will have at least one elected director; there will then be directors in proportion to the number of mushers, so we will see that the states with more mushers have more representation. Almost like a combined Federal 'senate' and 'house'. Clubs and associations will have a vote, just like mushers.

Mushers, who don't want to be in a club, **do not have to join a club to have a voice** [of course, this means they will miss many club benefits]. We will have **SMALL 'government'**, and mushers will be close to and part of, the decision making.

The rules governing terms of office ensure that a group of cronies cannot just swap positions year in year out. However, the proposed constitution will allow for talented officers to put their' stamp' on the AFSS agenda. What we have tried to do here, is to put every clause to the test of - "how can a future clique of directors/office bearers beat this? Twist it to their own purposes? Cheat the mushers of good representation?" If we see that it could be done, then that clause is reworded. Only a good and popular idea will be approved, because the approval is too hard to achieve unless it IS seen as a good, beneficial and popular idea.

The NZFSS and the IFSS constitutions and rules have been harvested for good ideas.

When you read this draft constitution, which will be readily available for study well before a vote is called, you will see that we have constantly hammered the following concepts.

We consider that the **members' initiated referendum**, the **direct election of the President and Vice-President**, **direct representation of the mushers by Board members** [rather than through clubs, assoc etc] **clubs voting** for Board members and **accountability**, are all vital to obtaining that all **so important** 'control from the bottom up'.

[Next issue Cliff will have more information on the structure of the proposed AFSS constitution.]

If you'd like to find out more about the AFSS write to: AFSS, PO Box 3084, Canberra, ACT, 2601.

NZ MUSHING RESOURCE HOMEPAGE

Looking for a web site with info on all facets of sled dog racing. Well look no further than:

http://homepages.ihug.co.nz/~sled-dog

The site was created by David Rawnsely, webmaster of the Auckland Sled Dog Club homepage and organiser of the Dusk to Dawn Race.

The site has some great articles on:

- dog health;
- training;
- equipment;
- novice mushing guides; and
- comprehensive links.

And the site even includes some articles from the Hike! homepage - including Daniel Odgers' Musher Profile.

Check it out. Its the Sleddog Central of the Southern Hemisphere.

The Dos and Donts of Runjoring

Peter Komidar

There has been a lot of discussion lately, in Mushing Magazine and on the Sleddog L email list about runjoring. I have used runjoring as a major component of my training regime for three years now – so I thought I'd share some of the lessons I have learnt (often the hard way) along the way.

Sikjoring without the skis

So just what is runjoring? Well its basically like skijoring without skis. In short, the dog is attached direct to you and you both run – as simple as that ..... almost.

Why should I runjor

There are a whole host of reasons. Firstly, runjoring is fun! And lets face it, if its not fun why do it? Runjoring is also great lead dog training. If you think you already have a great lead dog – lets see how good your dog is on the "EASY" command when you are sprinting down hill flat out chasing a Kangaroo! But seriously, there is no better way to teach your dog its commands than by runjoring.

Runjoring is also great endurance training. Lets face it, with a human running behind for several kilometres, a dog is not going to go as fast as when its pulling a scooter. But the advantage of runjoring is that you can run your dogs over far greater distances than the average sprint race – building their endurance and giving them an advantage at the next race. And because your dog is not in harness and because it is not attached to a scooter or rig, the dog distinguishes between this type of training and racing. So you are not training your dog to run slow – which is what happens when you train your dogs over long distances in the traditional manner (ie with a scooter or rig).

Runjoring can be done from your front door! You don't need to drive out to a forest to train.

Because it is so different to training on a scooter or rig, it's a great way of increasing your dog's exercise levels without the boredom of overtraining by scooter or rig four or so times a week. (For example, by mid-season, I will scooter train the team for 3 days a week and runjor twice a week with the remain two days as rest days – only walking the dogs).

And finally, runjoring is a great way for the human part of the team to get fit too (and not let the team down when push comes to shove at a race).

What equipment do I need?

You'll need to a one dog lead with bungee, a skijoring harness which you wear – not the dog! (you can get these from overseas or from Australian outfitters – including many of those that advertise in Hike!) and a good pair of running shoes (remember you don't have any brakes when you runjor, so a good pair of shoes – preferably cross country runners – with lots of tread is vital).

Runjoring and the human physiology

Humans, with their long legs were obviously adapted – prior to civilisation – to be able to run and run well. However, runjoring adds some very unnatural stresses and strains on the human body – for which we were not designed to cope.

It is therefore important that you warm yourself up before runjoring. This will enable your muscles and tendons – and those of your dogs – to be ready for the stresses of runjoring when you start. It is good to walk some distance before you start to runjor. However, you'll find that your dog has different ideas! When they see you strap on the skijoring harness its as exciting from them as the start of a run with scooter or rig! They won't want to slowly warm up. They'll want to blast out of the house and down the street! This can be very difficult.

The skijoring harness transfers the full force of the dog's power onto the vertebrae of the lower back. To overcome this, it is important to choose a skijoring harness with the widest possible back flap – to dissipate the force over the widest possible surface area. The Wyndwalker harness is the preferred style.

The other great strain comes from slowing down your dog. You'll find that the way you slow a dog down – when it is not inclined to stop (remember encountering that Kangaroo while going down hill) is to slam your feet hard on the ground and lean backwards. This further concentrates the potentially damaging stresses to the spine.

And finally, there are injuries caused by falls. This will invariably happen. I generally budget for at least two memorable falls a season – with decent cuts and bruising – usually to the knees. So much so that I now always run with knee pads on.

Clearly, runjoring is not without its hazards – the most serious of which is potential spinal damage. If you ever experience backpain after runjoring DO NOT ignore it. Go and see your GP. I cannot stress this too much!

It takes two to tangle

I've spent a lot of time on the physical stresses and strains associated with runjoring. But I'd just like to add one more piece of advice in this regard. DON'T RUN TWO DOGS. The simple reason for this is that two dogs equal twice the force on the back, equal twice the acceleration, and equal twice the power that you may have to try and stop. It is possible to runjor two dogs. And I until recently used to do just that. But it is more than twice as difficult and the risk of injury is doubled. Take my advice and stick to one dog. Besides, if you have a two dog team and you runjor one dog at a time – then you'll be running twice as far in total and you'll be that much fitter. You just can't lose!

Harnessing the power of your dog

Do not run your dogs in harness – stick to a collar. There are two reasons for this – physiological and psychological. Physiologically, the collar gives you greater control over the dog than the harness. And remember, you don't have brakes like when you're on a scooter – so you need all the control you can get. Psychologically, you do not want to associate mushing with runjoring in your dog's mind. Otherwise you run the risk of training your dog to run slow (at runjoring pace rather than at racing pace).

Don't forget the 15 degree rule

Just because you are not attached to a scooter or rig, doesn't mean you can ignore the golden rule. In fact because it is much harder to pull you runjoring than when you are on a scooter, the dog works even harder runjoring. Personally, I don't runjor my dogs if the temperature gets over 10 degrees for this very reason.

Run for fun

I've probably focused too much on dangers of runjoring – but it is a difficult activity – and I for one have had far more spills runjoring than mushing. But if you take the precautions I've mentioned above, then runjoring can be a fun adjunct to your training regime. It's a great way to get race fit humans and race fit dogs. And if you want a second opinion runjor you dogs and see their reaction! They'll love you for it!

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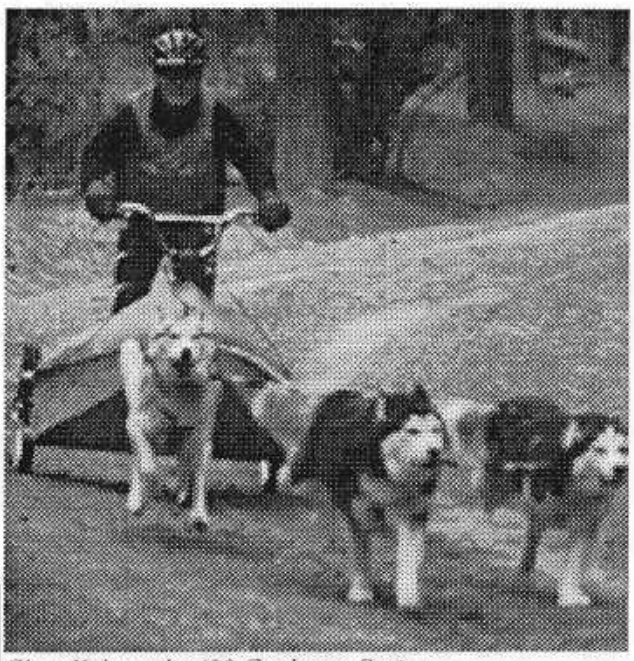
After 3 years, and increases in the cost of postage, envelopes, paper, toner and printing, time has come for the first Hike! price rise.

As of 1 January 2001 a year's subscription will now cost $30 in Australia and $40 for overseas subscribers.

The cost of advertising will also increase by $5 – check out the inside cover for details.

Hopefully this will be the last price hike – at least for another 3 years!



Clem Kyle at the '99 Canberra Sprint
Photo: A&F Matthews

Dog Humour

Out of the mouths of babes...

Anonymous

A Little girl asked her mum, "mum, may I take the dog for a walk around the block"?

Mum says, "No, because the dog is in heat".

"What's that mean?" asked the child.

"Go ask your father. I think he is in the garage".

The Little girl goes to the garage and says "Dad, can I take Susie for a walk around the block. I asked Mum but she said the dog was in heat and that I should ask you."

Dad said, "Bring Susie over here". He took a rag, soaked it in petrol and scrubbed the dogs butt with it. "Ok", you can go now but keep Susie on the leash and only go one time around the block."

The Little girl left and returned a few minutes later with no dog on the leash.

Dad said, "Where is Susie?"

Little girl said, "Susie ran out of petrol about halfway down the block and there's another dog pushing her home."

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BLEEDING

Dr Evan Thomas

This can result from an injury, a fight or even something as simple as clipping a nail too short. The basic principles of controlling bleeding are to immobilise the area, to elevate it and to apply pressure. So for a cut on the paw the best first aid would be to hold the paw still and off the ground (lie the dog down on its side if necessary) and apply a pressure pad (use a clean cloth, a ball of cotton wool, a tissue etc).

When applying pressure maintain it for at least 2-3 minutes. The pressure should be suficient to stop further bleeding so the pressure pad should not continue to become red (if it does then the pressure is not sufficient). Don't be tempted to remove the pressure pad every few seconds and then replace it. We are trying to allow time for a clot to form to control further bleeding and if you remove the pad before this has time to occur then the bleeding will continue.

For the same reason don't wipe at the bleeding area when you remove the pad as this will dislodge any clot that is forming. Siimply remove the pad and check to see if bleeding is controlled. If it is, then keep the area immobilised and elevated for another few minutes. If it is not then reapply a pressure pad and repeat the process.

Do continue to apply pressure, even if the bleeding continues when you remove the pad, until you can be sen by a vet. This will reduce the amount of blood lost.

Don't apply a tourniquet as this can cause severe damage to the tissues by starving them of oxygen.

Contact your Vet If bleeding persists or if it is bright red and pulsating (this is suggestive of arterial bleeding which is more serious than other types).

Fight Wounds

Fight wounds can appear quite minor but this can be deceptive. Dog bites, because of the pressure generated by their powerful jaws, can cause extensive tissue damage and bruising even though the skin wound itself appears minor.

Control any bleeding, as indicated above. Clip away the hair around the wound with a pair of blunt nosed scissors so you can clearly see the extent of the injury. Flush or bathe the area repeatedly with large amounts of some *mild* antiseptic (such as hibiclens or iodine diluted 1:20 with water) or with a saline solution (dissolve 0.5 teaspoon salt to 1 cup of hot water and allow to cool). This helps to wash away any bacteria that may be present.

All fight wounds that penetrate the skin should be seen by a vet as most need antibiotic therapy. This is because infection is often injected in under the skin by the bite. Flushing the wound thoroughly, as described above, is helpful in reducing this bacterial contamination but often it is not possible to flush adequately under the skin. The combination of damaged tissue from the trauma of the bite and bacteria usually results in infection of the wound.

Ideally it is best to start antibiotics within 8 hours of the injury. Starting antibiotics within this timeframe ensures that bacterial numbers do not have the time to build up to a serious level.

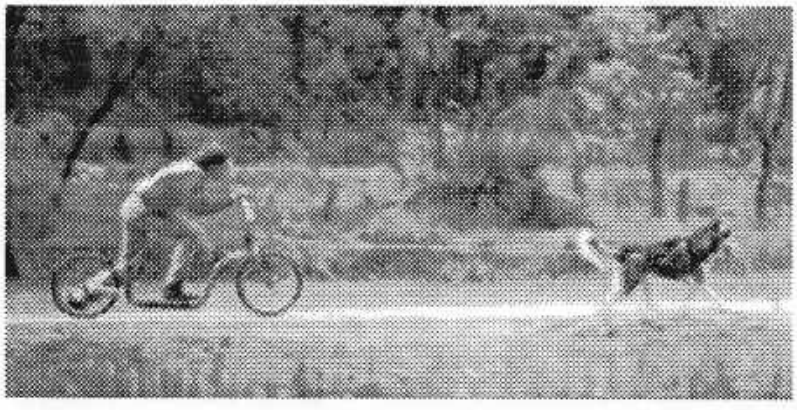
Many fight wounds are better left unsutured as this allows any damaged tissue and infection to discharge from the wound rather than be trapped under the skin. Large wounds are commonly sutured but a drain is placed to allow this discharge to escape from the tissues. The timing of suturing is not critical and it can be done a day or even more after the initial injury occurred.

Do check the animal thoroughly for wounds after a fight. Often the most troublesome injuries are the puncture wounds that go unnoticed initially.

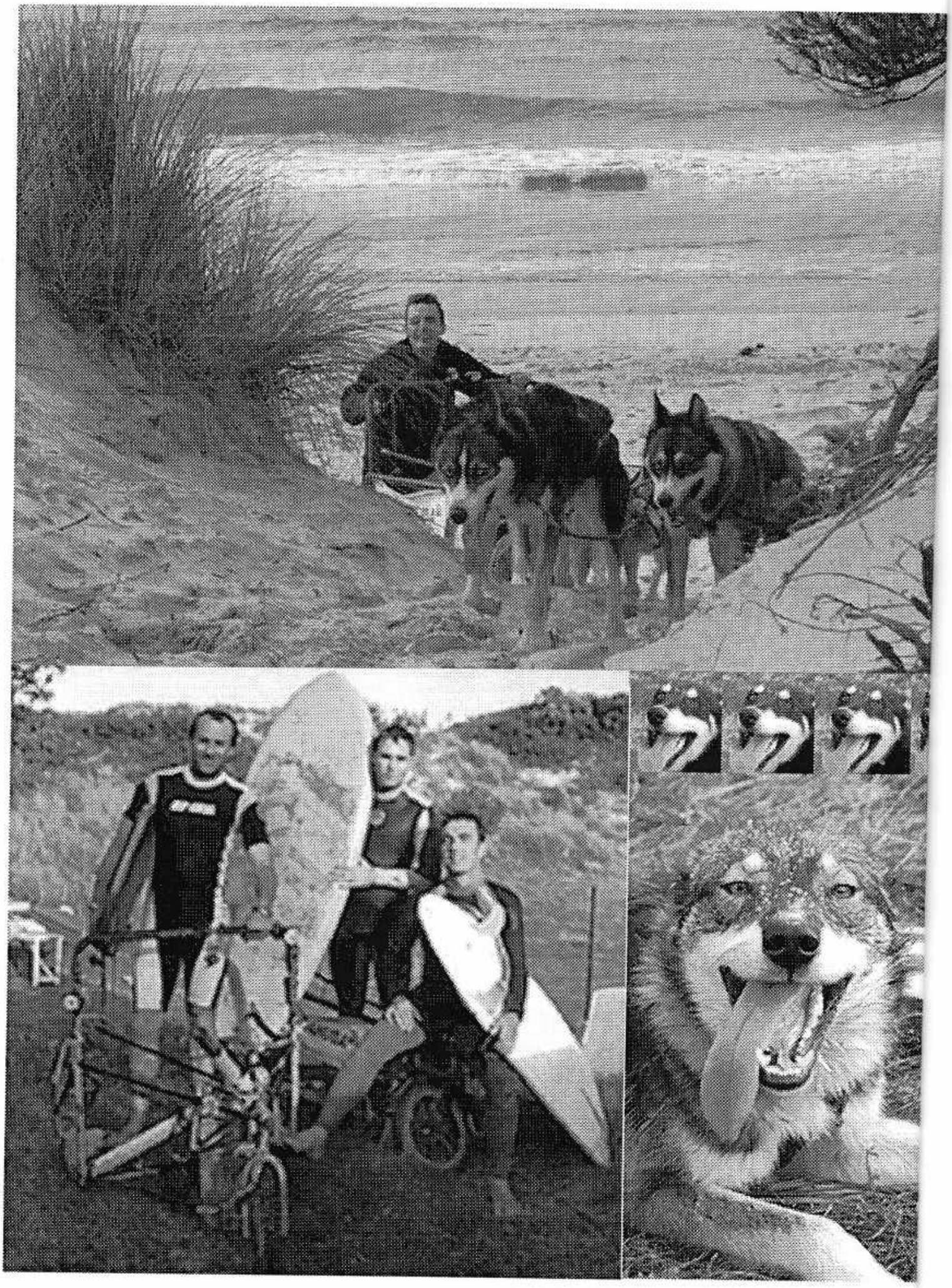
Don't use strong disinfectants or antiseptics. They damage healthy tissue and slow healing.

Contact your vet

- if the edges of the skin pull apart and you can see underlying tissue;
- if any underlying tissue protrudes through the skin;
- if there is uncontrollable bleeding;
- if the animal cannot walk or is very distressed.



The first ever now-famous muffler scooter widely in use in Australia. It was designed and built by Greg Davis (pictured). The dog in the photo is Chukchii Black Jack, successful competitor in many early SHCV races. Photo: Annie Jackson.



The Evolution of the Scooter

Esa Mononen

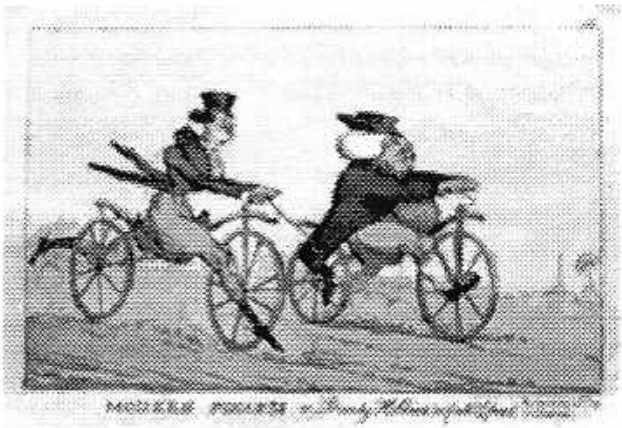
Baron *Karl Drais* von Sauerbronn (1785 – 1851) from Germany was an ingenuous but slightly eccentric inventor, who left his name in the history of railways as the inventor of the handcar.

Besides being the father of the handcar, Karl von Drais invented another vehicle called Draisine by his contemporaries. Before 1816 the wheels of two-wheeled carts and carriages had always been positioned parallel to each another. Von Drais threatened the laws of nature by positioning them behind the other and inventing a steering system for turning the front wheel. He compared his "Laufmaschine" to skating: "In truth, it runs a considerable distance while the rider is inactive, and with the same rapidity as when his feet are in motion."

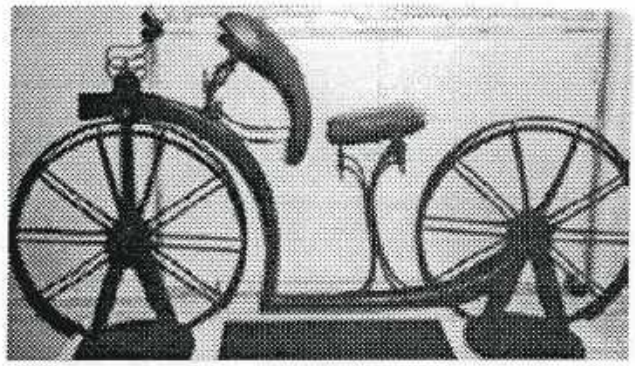
Due to the diversity of European patenting systems and the philantropic views of the inventor the idea of Draisine became known and imitated in different countries. In England, coachmaker Denis Johnson obtained a patent for an improved version of Draisine. Commonly called "hobby horse" it became a vogue in spring 1819. Several other names were used for it, for instance, "pedestrian curricle" and "swiftwalker".

The novelty and remarkability of the hobby horse appealed especially to the fashionable and exquisite young gentlemen. Hence, the hobby soon earned a controversial honour to be associated with these dandies, the yuppies of the era, so that it got several nicknames after them: "dandy horse", "dandy hobby" or "dandy charger". The price of a patent pedestrian machine was around 10 pounds, which implied that only the reasonably well off could afford such an extravagance. However, in some big cities riding schools and rental agencies and were established, and many more took to the road on hired machines.

There were also minuscule races. Press and public could arrive from relatively remote locations to witness these most exciting events. The velocities were perilous indeed, average speed might be more than 10 mph. Downhills proved to be hazardous to the health of many a hobby horse rider.



Caricature (1819) Modern Pegasus - Dandy hobbies in full speed.



The ladies' version of the hobby horse

The ladies' version of a hobby horse deserves another glance due to its construction. The frame was close to the ground in order to prevent skirts rising indecently up to the beam. Nowadays there remains only one example which is property of British Science Museum. The shape of the frame is quite interesting; by dismounting the arm rest and saddle it would be quite a perfect predecessor for some modern scooter models. A scooter enthusiast would like to imagine that this actually happened and all the others were kicked into oblivion. Unfortunately there is no proof for such a hypothesis.

Hobby horses didn't become a life-time hobby for the general public, on the contrary, they vanished from the headlines rather hastily. In England their glory lasted merely six months in 1819, on the European continent a bit longer. There is no notion of push scooters from that time, on the other hand, the pedalled bicycle was not invented before 1850's. What caused the sudden eclipse of such an fashionable gadget ? Was it the dandy reputation, muddy roads or sweaty journeys ?

The most likely reason seems to have been the mischievous consequences for health. One could ride comfortably only on level parkways. In many towns pedestrian pavements would have been the best surfaces for riding, but there was a plenty of collisions and discontent. Soon diverse bans were issued restricting the use of hobby horses. Accidents and injuries caused by hobby horses were widely depicted in the press.

From this safety viewpoint one might ponder, whether one can draw any parallels between the heyday of hobby horses and the currently fashionable small-wheeled scooters.

Aussie Musher's Busman's Holiday List

I am indebted to Hayley Coutts who floated this idea in the suggestions section of the *Hike!* resubscription form. 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	Greg and Robin Beall
Address	Grand Marais, MN, **USA**
Email	rbeall@boreal.org
Kennel Size	37
Race Type	Mid and Long Distance

Name	Rikke Bergendahl
Address	Revestien 17, 2016 Frogner, **Norway** (3o minutes from the main airport of Oslo)
Email	rikke@netcom.no
Web Page	http://home.online.no/~ri--ber/
Phone	63 82 09 35
Kennel Size	20
Breed/Type	Siberian Huskies
Race Type	Mid-Distance

Name	Rick & Angie Hendrick
Address	SnoStorm Siberians, 3141 E. Shockley Rd. Muncie, IN 47302, **USA**
Email	rhsnostorm@aol.com
Web Page	www.teamsnostorm@nethop.com
Kennel Size	22
Breed/Type	Siberian Huskies
Race Type	Sprint

Name	Rhonda Hendry O'Hearn
Address	274 Fremont Road Sandown, NH 03873, **USA**
Email	ROhearn1@mediaone.net
Web Page	www.mishawum.com
Phone	603-887-7137
Kennel Size	17
Breed/Type	Siberian Huskies
Race Type	Sprint

Name	Nigel Hill (ex pat Australian!)
Address	P.O. Box 46, Grandora, Saskatchewan. S0K 1V0, **Canada**
Email	nigel.hill@sk.sympatico.ca
Phone	306-933-4225 or 306-933-9317
Kennel Size	30
Breed/Type	Alaskan and Siberian Huskies
Race Type	Mid-Distance

Name	Terry and Carolyn Hinesly
Address	78 Franks Way, Grand Marais, MN 55604, **United States**
Email	hinesly@aol.com
Phone	218-387-1676
Kennel Size	24 dogs
Race Type	Mid-Distance

Name	Jerry Scedoris
Address	Oregon **USA**
Email	rachael@bendnet.com
Web Page	www.sleddogrides.com
Breed/Type	Alaskan Huskies
Race Type	Mid-Distance & sled dog tour business

Name	Greg Smith
Address	Sibetzu Kennels, 046570 Con 2, R.R.# 5 Dundalk, Ontario, N0C-1B0, **Canada**
Email	Darmstrong@hurontario.net
Phone	1-416-925-1972
Kennel Size	37
Breed/Type	Alaskan and Siberian Huskies
Race Type	Sprint

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.

Name	Peggy Billingsley
Address	Venture Out Expeditions, General Delivery, Kearney, ON P0A 1M0 **Canada**
Email	dogsledding@excite.com
Web Page	http://dogsledding.tripod.com
Phone	(705)-788-4072
Kennel Size	53
Breed/Type	Alaskan Huskies
Race Type	Dog sledding tours

Snakebite - not so simple as A, B and (Vitamin) C

Jonathan Happold BVSc

Submitted by Jon Richards

The following article was submitted in response to an earlier article submitted by a Hike! subscriber which appeared in the September edition. Hike! is keen to be used as a forum for frank and open discussion by you the readers. If you wish to take issue with any article printed in Hike! or any issue relevant to the sport of mushing - please feel free to submit an article. Providing the article is not libleous, inhibits discussion or in poor taste, we will print it.

Snake bite is an issue that can weigh heavily on the minds of Canberra pet owners during the warmer months of the year. As a potentially life threatening condition it should, indeed, be taken seriously and it concerns me greatly to hear of certain individuals advocating the use of vitamin C as a treatment for snake bite. Vitamin C is NOT an accepted treatment for snake bite, not even as an alternative or "second-best" option. The few vague and anecdotal stories reported are not supported by scientific evidence.

Snake venom is composed of numerous toxins which are diverse in their effects on the body. Neurotoxins are often the most important, causing paralysis and eventually preventing breathing. Some toxins prevent the blood from clotting, while others damage the heart, muscle and kidneys.

The signs of snake bite vary considerably depending on the species of snake, species of victim, the dose of venom and where it was delivered. Early signs may include vomiting, trembling, salivation, excitement, weakness and dilated pupils. More severe weakness and incoordination may follow, eventually leading to a generalised flaccid paralysis, respiratory failure and death. The Rapidity of onset of the signs is related to the dose of venom received and may range from a few minutes to several hours.

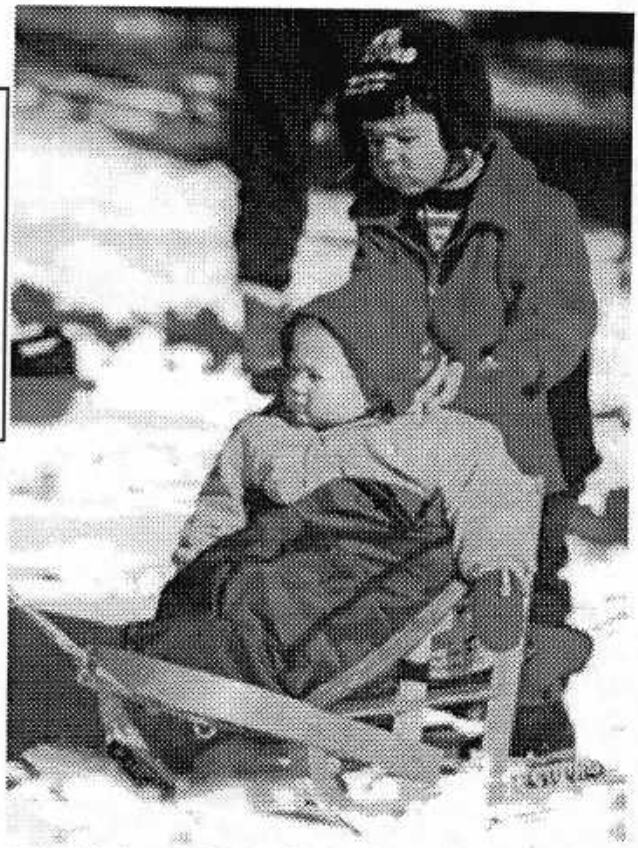
The mainstay of therapy for the treatment of snake bite in domestic animals is the same as that for human patients; ie the prompt administration of adequate amounts of appropriate antivenom. Supportive care, including intravenous fluid therapy, supplementary oxygen, other medications and close observation in hospital is often vital.

Snake bite is potentially lethal, but the chance of a dog surviving is significantly greater if treated with antivenom. I would urge readers to consider this during the warmer months and not risk the lives of their pets by attempting vitamin C or other unsubstantiated treatments.

Race Update

Southern Cross Confirms Dates

2001 race dates for the Southern Cross Pro Am have been confirmed at 19-20 May.



Mini Mushers and Mini Sled - Photo: Sharon Komidar

Police Take Ferret into Custody after Assault on Dog

Canberra Times
19 November 2000

Police in Melbourne's inner north have ferreted out the owner of a fighting-fit ginger ferret they were holding in custody in a milk crate.

The ferret was 'arrested' after it got into a fight with a dog on Friday night. Burnswick police said the ferret bailed up a huky many times its size.

"The [dog's] owner woke up to discover his Alaskan Malamute coming off second best to the ferret", Senior Constable Scott Murray said.

The man rescued his poor mutt, and yesterday morning contacted police. They held the ferret "in temporary custody" – its holding cell was the bottom of a milk crate lined with towel – until it was claimed by its owner at about 4pm.

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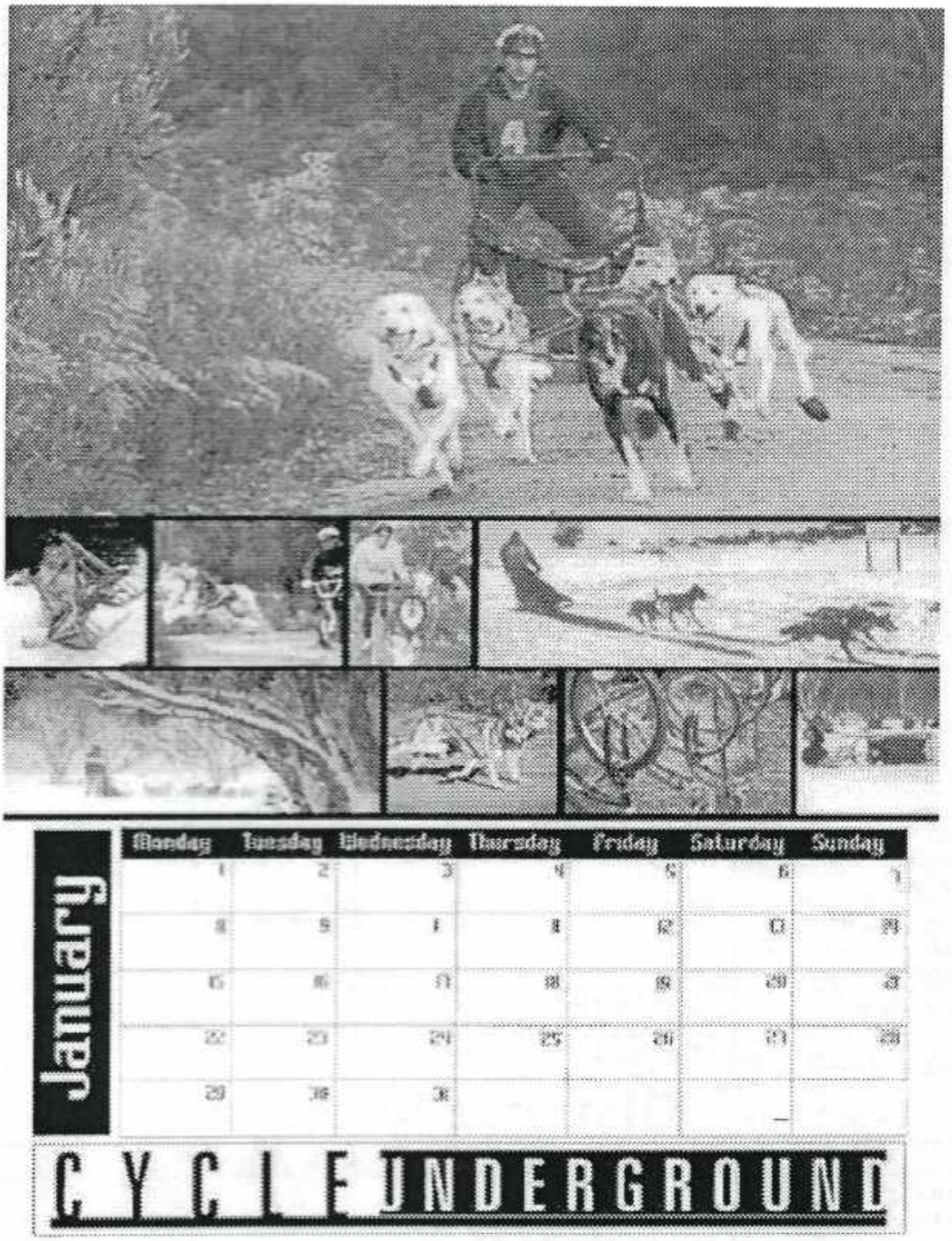

2001 Sled Dog Racing Calendar

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)

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2001 Provisional Calendar

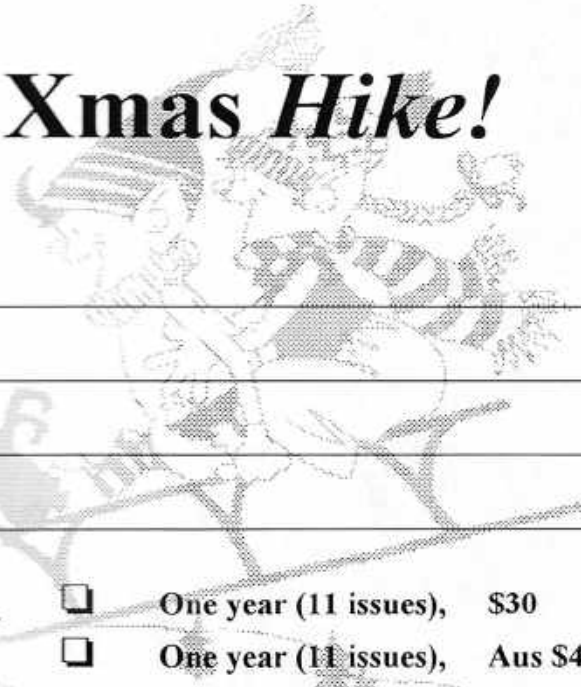
Sprint Races

Race	Distances	Date	Contact
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	19-20 May	Karen Johnson kazjohn@netspace.net.au (03) 9853 0193
Undera Sled Dog Dash (Victoria) TO BE CONFIRMED	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 4km 2 Dog Class 2 heats of 8km 3 Dog Class 2 heats of 12km 4 Dog Class 2 heats of 12km 6 Dog Class 2 heats of 15km	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	Dave Brown davebrown@ozemail.com.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) TO BE CONFIRMED	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	Beckie 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) TO BE CONFIRMED	2 heats of 25 km 6, 8, Open class (min 4 dogs)	4-5 August	Jacqui McNicol mcnicol@ruralnet.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

Xmas *Hike!*



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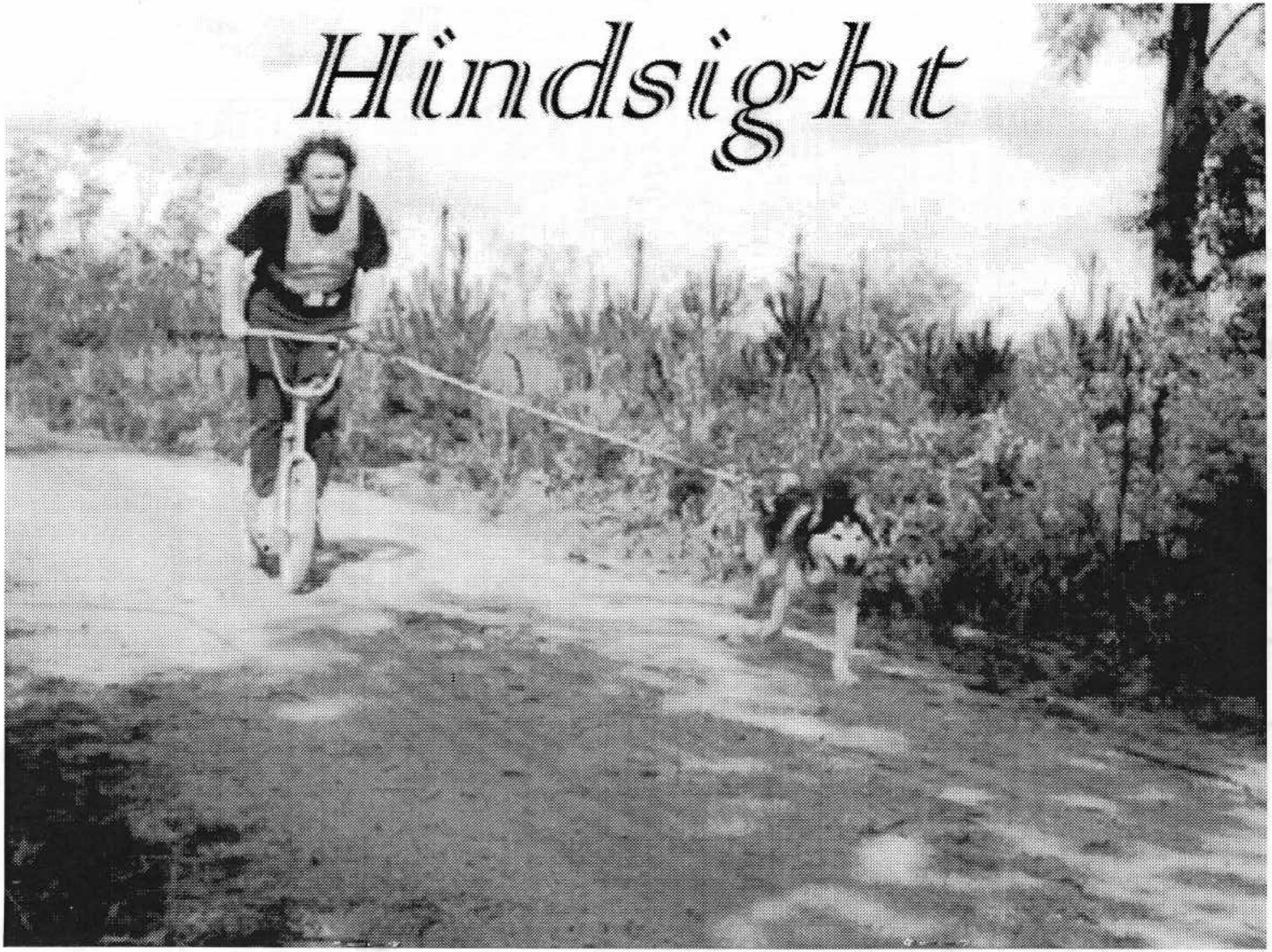
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