

DOG

WINTER 2006/2007

&

Sled

Mushing
Kentucky

Sled Dogs In
The Olympics

History Of
'Dog & Sled'



Dog & Sled is published quarterly. Each issue contains articles, news and information on the world of sled dog sports.

For more information, contact *Dog & Sled* at: huskystuff@roman.net

Submissions are welcomed.

ALICE E. WHITE Editor, Writer, Publisher and Distributor



I am a teenager and love sled dogs and sled dog sports. I have been running dogs for many years, sometimes on foot, sometimes with a bike or scooter or, in the rare case that my home state of Georgia actually gets significant snowfall, with a sled.

My current sled dog is Calypso, a yearling Siberian husky. She is already showing the potential of being an outstanding sled dog. I scooter with her nearly every day and she loves it!

Dog & Sled started out as a handwritten magazine in 2000. Now I write it with the aid of a computer.

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Cover: A sled
dog team runs
through the
Kentucky
woods.

Photo courtesy of
Jeff Blewett

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Talk & Bark

Commentary By Alice White



This is shaping up to be a pretty amazing Winter for me. My husky, Calypso, is now over a year old and able to run hard and fast. Recently, we made a four-mile scooter run with no break. Calypso was ready to keep going!

Last December, for Dogs Across America, Calypso and I ran with two other teams on the Viking Trail at Berry College in Rome, Georgia. In 2007, we hope to hold the event again and attract more local mushers.

I have also received a sponsorship from the Continental Kennel Club (CKC). This will allow me to participate in more races and events than in years past. My first sponsored event was the Serum Run "Re-enactment" in Damascus, Virginia. The event was held by Siberian Husky Assist (a rescue group that promotes dog mushing in the Southeast) on January 27, 2007. It was a lot of fun and there was a great turnout.

Unfortunately, I am going to miss the first Southeastern sled dog race (again, put on by Siberian Husky Assist). Actually, there is a rather large upside to this. The reason I won't be in Virginia is because I'll be in Wyoming covering the Casper Mountain Sled Dog Races for *Continental Kennel Club* magazine.

Then there are other events. There's talk of another Southeastern sled dog race in the Fall, possibly in North Carolina. And, of course, there are other dryland events farther North to be considered.

I have also decided to learn how to skijor. I have a pair of cross-country skis that I plan to learn to use - if it ever snows! Who knows, in a few years I might be competing in skijor races in New England.

In yet another exciting development, my family is also planning a trip to Alaska this August. I'll be able to visit some of the places I've been dreaming about for years...

Yes, I think 2007 is going to be an interesting year for this GA musher.

A SHORT HISTORY OF *DOG & SLED*



Dog & Sled came into existence one day in late 2000 when I was sitting in the waiting room of a doctor's office.

It was one of the many doctor's offices we had been to since my Dad had hurt his back the month before and I was bored with sitting around looking at magazines that didn't interest me in the least. However, it just so happened that this particular office had about a dozen issues of *Ski* magazine. As I flipped through them, I began to wonder why

there wasn't a dogsledding magazine. I would later learn that there *were* magazines dedicated to the sport but I didn't realize that at the time so I resolved to write one myself.

That evening, back at home, I began writing down possible names for a sled dog magazine. *Dogsled*, *Dogsledding*, *Dog Sled*, *Dog & Sled*. I finally settled on the latter title and began to work on the first issue. With magic markers and colored pencils, over the next week I wrote the entire magazine by hand. I was very pleased with the result and decided to write a new issue of *Dog & Sled* every month.

By about mid-2001 I had decided to change from a monthly format to a quarterly one. That way I would only have to write 4 big magazines instead of 12 little ones. Late that Summer, I experimented with something new - I wrote an issue of *Dog & Sled* using a computerized program. I was able to scan pictures into the computer and easily change errors. The end result was much better than the handwritten editions so all of the issues since then have been written entirely on the computer.

I have written everything from fictional stories to detailed accounts of sled dog events. And I'll admit it - I've written a lot about my own mushing experiences.

When I first began writing *Dog & Sled*, I really had no idea how far my new hobby would go. Today I am sending copies of *Dog & Sled* to mushers and sled dog enthusiasts all across the Country and the magazine has even been featured in our local newspaper. There are a lot of people in this area who are now aware of sled dog sports.

I hope that I can continue to write the magazine in the coming years. Who knows where I'll go with it? Perhaps someday it will be an "official" publication...

But that's a long way from now. Today, *Dog & Sled* remains a small hobby magazine written for anyone who enjoys reading about sled dogs and their mushers.

Kentucky Snow

Story and photos by Jeff Blewett



WOW! What a weekend it was! My friend Rodney from Tennessee and I had been planning this trip to Kentucky's Land Between the Lakes for several weeks for this past weekend.

The forecasts showed chances of snow, and some called for a substantial snow fall. Around here, you never can tell. The weather can be so funny: sometimes we may get a lot and sometimes nothing--no matter what is forecasted. I did feel confident that the temps would be as predicted---low 20's on Friday night, then dropping more on Saturday, not getting out of the teens.

We arrived at our usual campsite at almost the same time---8:00pm---crazy work week always gets in the way of having fun! We established camp as fast as we could, dropped

the dogs and caught up briefly on each others' busy lives. The temps were in the mid 30's #at this point with a slight wind. The dogs were dropped and watered and absolutely ready to go---they must have known what was to come later...we then decided on a night run.

We hooked all 9 dogs up (in the dark of course), and both carts tandem---this is a new concept that we have been utilizing that seems to work well for us when the dogs are fresh and strong and ready to run.

We took off from our campsite at a very good clip, all dogs working well. The gravel/mud road was in good shape and a little damp.

Our dogs are as follows: Chelan, Chinook (the mals in the team) and Maverick who is half Sibe and half Mal, and the others are all Siberians---Muktuk, Domino, Hilo, Kona, Speedy and Zorro.

We did our regular 6.5 mile trail probably in record time. Running at night certainly has its own magic. We had 2 deep creek crossings---one was only about 1/4 of a mile into the run, the other, deeper and longer was at the very end, right near the campsite. The dogs blasted through the first one, but by the second one, were a little thirsty and paused just long enough to get our boots wet---they still did well.

After a snack and a warm drink, it was back in the boxes for the night. Rodney slept in the back of his truck with a topper and his four dogs, while I was in the backseat of my pickup. My dogs were in their boxes in the bed of my pick-up.

I could not quite stretch out fully, but have slept there before on trips, so I stayed pretty comfortable. I pretty much fell right to sleep at about 11:00pm. It was only 30 minutes



later I awoke immediately to the familiar sound of an ice squall moving through---it only lasted a couple of minutes, but in my groggy but comfortable state of mind I wondered if there was any merit to the predictions that were forecasted.

About 1:30am I woke up with one of the dogs stirring in his box--evidently excited by the impending weather. I looked out the truck window and immediately thought, "I must have fogged up the windows," because all I could see was WHITE.

Further inspection revealed that it was not the condensation on the windows of my truck, but snow! I sat up a little, scrunched my toboggan up over my forehead and looked out.

Absolutely beautiful! There was already a good inch of snow and still coming down! I felt my dry lips smile as I snuggled down in my warm sleeping bag, feeling like a real musher and anticipating the morning run.

I awoke at about 6:00am and immediately grabbed my clothes from the floor of the truck and drove them deep into my sleeping bag to warm them up. I could not really see outside, the windows were totally encrusted with a layer of snow. I could stand it no longer. I quickly dressed and jumped out of the truck to an absolute paradise!

It was SO quiet...the snow was still falling really hard and we had 2-3" at that point. Every branch, every rock and all our gear had a beautiful layer of white. I really began to wonder if we should have brought the sleds! I was concerned that it would be too slick for the rigs with their tires. How do you like that for a paradox? A couple of mushers getting stopped by the snow!

I heard Rodney getting up, so we needed to discuss what we were going to do. The radio in the truck announced that snow was likely through the afternoon and the temperature was currently 16 degrees!

Rodney's rig is a little heavier than mine and has nobbly tires, so we decided it would be best for one to drive the truck ahead and the other to mush all 9 dogs on his rig.

We had a little breakfast for us and a warm snack and drink for the dogs. They were BEYOND frisky and ready to go - they were literally fit to be tied!

It was decided that Rodney would drive the truck first and go ahead of the team, stopping along the way to take pictures. I would start out on the cart.

I'll tell you that when I released the panic strap, it was the most indescribable experience! Any words I use would not do



justice to the power I experienced! For about the first mile, I had absolutely no control. The brakes were useless in the snow and I fishtailed until the first incline. The dogs did not really slow down, it was just enough pause to gain a fraction of control. I was just basically holding on and trying to steer.

After a mile or so, the dogs settled down a little and got into a good running rhythm. We then climbed a very large hill we call K2 and I finally felt a little more in control.

Rodney took the team at about the half way point and I got to ride in the warm truck. I honestly don't know what I liked best.....it was wonderful driving the dogs on the snowy trail, but driving the truck up ahead of the team and seeing them running towards me, was surreal. Could not believe that this was KENTUCKY, of all places - looked like a scene from the far north!

Our run ended too soon. The dogs were winded, but still could have probably gone further. The snow was still coming down heavily (the pictures do not reflect this, but trust me, it was a hard driving snow).

We rested the dogs, another warm drink and a snack followed, and we broke camp down. We were able to make it to the blacktop, but with the heavy snow, we could really tell no difference between it and the gravel roads we were just on.

The drive home was uneventful but just slow due to the weather. As I crossed the bridge leaving Land Between the Lakes, I glanced in the rear view mirror one last time to witness the winter woods and to remind myself to cherish this day, this run, this time with the dogs.

*Jeff Blewett can be contacted at
kymusher@yahoo.com*

VIDEO REVIEWS

6On - 6Off

The Toughest Sled Dog Race In The World. That is how the Yukon Quest International Sled Dog Race, held each February, bills itself. The Quest trail winds 1,000 miles between Whitehorse, Yukon Territory and Fairbanks, Alaska following the Yukon River and crossing steep mountains in below freezing temperatures.

The race is almost as long as the Iditarod but the first thing you notice when you watch *6On-6Off* is that this race is not the Iditarod. For one thing, media hype and commercialism is absent - the Yukon Quest seems more of a throwback to the old days of sled dog racing.

6On-6Off (the title refers to the run/rest routine wherein mushers and their dogs run for 6 hours and then rest for 6) follows teams as they compete in the 2005 Yukon Quest.

You'll meet a variety of mushers and listen to their tales of adventure along the trail. Although the documentary has a very gritty feel to it, that is what makes it as good as it is. You get a clear feeling of what the race is actually like.

6On-6Off is a documentary that can be enjoyed by both seasoned mushers and those who have had no experience with sled dogs.

Pretty Sled Dogs

Here is a video that shows what most Iditarod documentaries ignore - everything that goes on *before* the race.

In *Pretty Sled Dogs*, filmmaker, Donna Quante, follows Iditarod musher Karen Ramstead and her Siberian huskies as they prepare for the 2005 Iditarod.

The film has a very "behind-the-scenes" feel. You visit the kennel during the Fall when the sled dogs are pulling an ATV and then travel to Alaska for final training and preparations. Before race day, there are numerous meetings, vet checks and a number of unexpected obstacles.

There's lots of good footage of training with an ATV in the Fall and with a sled in the snow. Mushers and serious sled dog enthusiasts will probably love this film.

However, those completely unfamiliar with the world of dog mushing will probably be left with a few questions as the film assumes you know a fair amount about dogsledding. But these people are probably not the target audience anyway.

Pretty Sled Dogs is a film for Siberian husky fanatics who can't get enough of seeing sled dogs run.

Iditarod 2006: Mother Nature's Turn To Dance

Each year, the Iditarod Trail Committee releases a video about that year's Iditarod. Some of these videos are better than others.

Mother Nature's Turn To Dance is one of the better ones. It has better trail footage, better interviews and generally flows better. It covers both the top contenders and some of the back-of-the-pack mushers whose victory is merely reaching the finish line. You'll see teams running through wilderness, pulling into checkpoints and talking about the race.

One thing this documentary does incessantly is to speed up the film on its trail footage. As someone who could watch hours and hours of nothing but sled dogs running through the snow, I found this rather annoying. However, I understand that if every clip was shown at normal speed the video would be VERY long. While that wouldn't bother me, those who aren't as intensely interested in sled dog racing would probably find it monotonous.

I have to say, the ITC did an excellent job with their coverage of the 2006 race. I hope their next video will be as good as this one.

THE SLED DOG TRAIL TO (OLYMPIC) GOLD



Photo courtesy of Ann Stewart

Sled dog sports are growing in popularity. More and more attention is being brought to the sport as new events, races and demonstrations are held. This increase leads us to revisit a question that has been nagging at the sled dog world for many years: Should sled dog events be included in the Olympics?

In past years, dog mushing events were included in the 1932, 1952 and 1994 Winter Olympics. Probably the most famous Olympic sled dog event was the 25-mile race held at Lake Placid in 1932. This race saw such mushing legends as Leonhard Seppala competing for the top prize with their 7-dog teams. In the end, Emil St. Godard from Canada won and Seppala came in second.

The other two Olympic sled dog races took place in Norway.

The 1952 Olympics at Oslo even included pulka races. Pulka racing is very much like the now-popular sport of skijoring except that the dog pulls a small sled (pulk) that is hooked between the animal and a musher wearing skis.

However, efforts to include a sled dog class in the 2006 Winter Olympics at Torino were unsuccessful and mushing enthusiasts have set their sights on the 2010 games, which will be held in Canada.

That means that first the International Olympic Committee (IOC) will have to accept dogsledding as an Olympic sport.

The International Federation of Sled Dog Sports (IFSS) has been working hard toward this end.

“The [IFSS] is now a member of the General Association of Sports Federations, which is in turn under the umbrella of the [IOC],” Iditarod champion, Joe Runyan, wrote in a 2003 article on Cabela’s Iditarod website. “Technically, that means the IFSS is a recognized governing body, but

practically speaking it means that the federation must prove itself to the IOC by actively overseeing sled dog events around the world.”

This isn’t the only obstacle. In 2003, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) launched a campaign against having mushing recognized as an Olympic sport. Others, including some mushers, contend that the games are meant to showcase human athletes rather than animals. To this, supporters are quick to point to horse events held in the Summer Olympics.

Whether or not the 2010 Olympic Games contain sled dog events remains to be seen. It would give mushing some needed publicity and give mushers a chance to compete in a race unlike any we have seen in a long time.

Sources:

www.cabelasiditarod.com

www.sleddogsport.com

NEWS

Second Dogs Across America Held

In November and December 2006, many teams took part in the second annual Dogs Across America relay.

In this relay, coordinators of each participating state selected a trail and held a dryland mushing relay along its length.

2006 saw a number of teams participating in the event, some using scooters with just one or two dogs, others using rigs pulled by several.

Initial results show that teams ran a combined total of over 700 miles nationwide. The actual number is higher as results are still coming in.

Source:
www.dogsacrossamerica.org

Herbie Nayokpuk Dies

Native Alaskan dog musher, Herbie Nayokpuk, known as the "Shishmaref Cannonball," died on December 2, 2006, weeks after a massive stroke left him in a coma. He was 77. Nayokpuk ran the Iditarod 11 times and his best finish was second in 1980.

In 1982 he underwent open-heart surgery and went on to claim fourth place in the 1983 Iditarod, only five months later.

"It's a big blow to all of us," Iditarod champion, Libby

Riddles said of Nayokpuk's death.

"He cared more for the dogs than he did about winning," Joe May, another Iditarod champion, added. "And I think that is the highest compliment another dog driver can pay."

Source:
www.adn.com

Rachael Scdoris Named Woman Of The Year

Glamour magazine named legally blind musher, Rachael Scdoris, one of its Women Of The Year in 2006.

"For me to be associated with this group of truly amazing women is such an honor," Scdoris, 21, said. "I hope that this award can help inspire others to pursue their dreams, despite the obstacles or barriers that stand in the way." Rachael Scdoris finished her first Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race in 2006.

Other recipients of *Glamour's* 2006 Woman Of The Year award included Sandra Bullock, Queen Latifah and Katie Couric.

Sources:
www.gorachaelgo.com
www.glamour.com

KY Ordinance To Affect Dog Owners

A new Louisville, Kentucky ordinance that would include

limits on the number and breeds of dogs that a person may own has drawn criticism from many pet owners.

"The new dog ordinance is one of the worst ordinances we have seen," Maureen Hill-Hauch of the American Dog Owner's Association said in her letter to the *Louisville Courier-Journal*. "It places unfair burdens on good, law-abiding, responsible dog owners and does not hold the irresponsible dog owner accountable."

Sources:
www.courier-journal.com
www.louisville-pets.com

Race To Be Held In Southeast

The Southeast's first sled dog race, the Blue Ridge Dryland Fun Run, will be held on February 10th, 2007 in Damascus, Virginia.

This race will consist of 1 and 2-dog scooter classes, as well as 4 and 6-dog rig classes. Prizes include trophies, plaques and ribbons donated by Alpine Outfitters, the event's sponsor.

It is hoped that the Blue Ridge race will become an annual event.

Source:
www.siberianhuskyassist.com

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Virginia Musher, Sam Akers, sports a tattoo designed by his wife, Jenny!

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