

DOG

WINTER
2007/2008

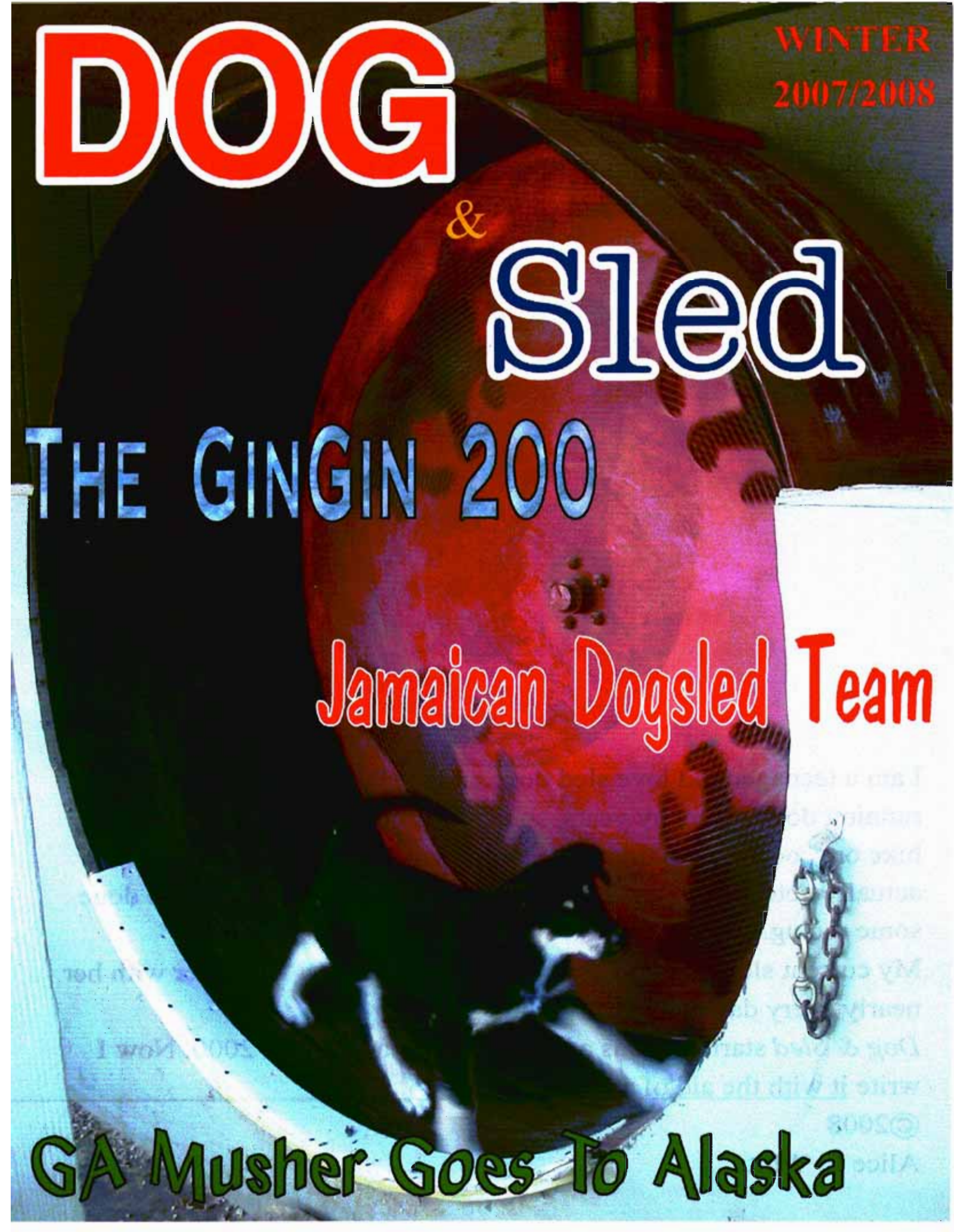
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Sled

THE GINGIN 200

Jamaican Dogsled Team

GA Musher Goes To Alaska



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

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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. Recently I have done some racing.

My current sled dog is Calypso, a Siberian husky. 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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Alice E. White

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COVER: One of Jeff King's Alaskan husky puppies runs on an exercise wheel at King's Husky Homestead Kennel.

Talk & Bark

Commentary By Alice White



I am trying to sort things out right now - where I want to go, what I want to do. The future holds an infinite number of paths and it's hard to choose which one to take. Every time I think *Okay, that is what I am going to do*, it occurs to me that there are other options.

What I do know is that I have some major things going on this Winter. In February, thanks to sponsorship from the Continental Kennel Club, I head out to race in Wyoming's Casper Mountain Sled Dog Races. This will be my second time at the event. Then, in March, I will probably head back to Alaska to work at a kennel for a little while.

At the time of this writing, I just competed in the Blue Ridge Dryland Challenge and placed 4th. The Challenge, held in Damascus, Virginia, is the only sled dog race in the Southeast...so far! We must remember that interest in mushing is at an all-time high, according to a recent article published in *The Washington Post*. I just learned that the Continental Kennel Club (my sponsor) may host a scooter competition in Louisiana this April and there is talk of a race in Kennesaw, Georgia.

A few years ago, this would have seemed crazy. As I said at a recent meeting to discuss the formation of a Southeastern sled dog club, "When I first got interested in the sport, there was *no such thing* as Southeastern dryland mushing."

Well there is now. And it's kind of ironic. Happening right now is what I used to dream about - a solid mushing community here in the South. And I'm thinking about heading off to Alaska to build my distance-mushing life - just when everything is happening *here*.

So, beyond this Winter, I honestly don't know what I'll be doing or where I'll be. I just know that whatever the future holds - both for myself and the sport of mushing - it's going to be interesting.

The GA Musher Does AK...Part One

Last issue, I wrote an article about different Alaskan sled dog kennels I visited while in Alaska in August and September. That article was an overview of these kennels - this article is a more personal account of my experiences.

The first thing that struck me about Alaska was that everything was about ten times bigger than I was used to. The Chugach mountains around Anchorage were like nothing I'd ever seen before.



The second thing I noticed was the time difference. Coming from Atlanta, GA it felt like 2am when it was only 10pm Alaska time. This was very nice the following morning - my parents and I felt like we slept very late when it wasn't late at all by AK time.

We spent the first couple of days in Eagle River, exploring the surrounding areas and getting (somewhat) used to the time difference. We took the Alaska Railroad to Seward and went on a day cruise around Resurrection Bay.

After Eagle River, we headed north towards Denali Park, stopping at the Iditarod headquarters in Wasilla. There really is a lot there for the serious mushing enthusiast - race movies, trophies, memorabilia, etc. My



favorite thing was the small dog yard set up outside. I first approached a small, yellow dog (whose name I have

forgotten). She wagged her tail and acted quite pleased to see me. It seemed that was her job - greeting visitors. This dog, along with all the others, belonged to Raymie Redington, who took us on ride in his dog cart. The eight dogs hooked up were delighted to go on the run. They dashed around the gravel trail in what I'm sure seemed a very short distance to huskies who have run



the Iditarod. Also at the Iditarod HQ that day was Raymie's son, Ray. We talked for a little while and I gave them a couple of issues of *Dog & Sled*. I learned quite a bit about the dogs that were at the Headquarters that day. When we were getting ready to leave, Ray told me to "Come back and run dogs".

That sounded like a pretty good idea.

Afterwards, we continued our drive north along the George Parks Highway. That afternoon, we entered the Alaska Range which seemed, if anything, more rugged than the Chugach mountains. The weather kept changing. One minute it was sunny, the next cloudy and rainy and the next, sunny with rainbows. We didn't see Mt. McKinley/Denali as it was too cloudy by that point. We stayed at Carlo Creek, just south of the entrance of Denali National Park. I had a feeling of being on the outskirts of wilderness.

The following morning we drove back to where Mt. McKinley can be seen on a clear day. It was still cloudy but you could tell it was clearing. Finally the clouds moved away, the sun came out and we saw Mt McKinley with nothing to obstruct our view!

That afternoon, we went on one of 4-time Iditarod champ Jeff King's Husky Homestead Tours. Their bus picked us up at one of the area's big lodges and took us out to the Husky Homestead kennel. It just so happened that Jeff King himself was driving the shuttle that day! "They don't usually let me drive the bus," he told us and the other visitors. When we arrived at



Goose Lake Kennel, we drove around the edge of the dogyard where over a hundred dogs and puppies were housed. Jeff stopped the bus outside a building overlooking the kennel. We were handed puppies when we stepped off the bus, which everyone enjoyed, even though the pups were rather fussy!

While we waited with the puppies, a couple of other buses arrived. When everyone was there, Jeff stepped to the front of our tour group and welcomed us to Husky Homestead.

"Dogs Across America?" he asked me, referring to the sweatshirt I was wearing (my Mom had, in fact, suggested that I wear that shirt - a fact which she is not likely to let me forget any time soon). "Did you write me?"

"Yes," I said. I'd sent Jeff a couple of copies of *Dog & Sled* earlier in the year.

"You're that girl who's dog-crazy in the South!"

The second part of the tour was led by some of the handlers. We sat under awnings at the edge of the kennel while the handlers talked about Husky Homestead, Jeff King, the Iditarod and sled dogs. There was also a demonstration of the exercise carousel, a merry-go-round-like wheel which the dogs pull around. You could tell the dogs LOVED this part of the tour!

The tour finished inside the large building above the kennel. Cali, one of Jeff's daughters and an Iditarod veteran herself, gave us all a demonstration of sledding equipment and told us about race strategy, caring for dogs on the trail and even about area wildlife.

At the end, everyone had a chance to talk to Jeff. When he talked to us, he asked what we were doing the rest of the day. When we said we didn't have any real set plans, he invited us to come back and watch him swim some of his dogs later that day, and to come back for the evening kennel tour. "My treat," he said, adding that "the evening tour is going to be *very* different."

When we arrived again, everyone was busy at Husky Homestead. Jeff came riding up on an ATV and explained what he was planning to do. He would be



in the front boat, guiding the team and I would ride in the rear boat with Caitlin, one of the handlers.

To lead the dogs to the edge of the lake, a line was strung between two All Terrain Vehicles - a normal 4-wheeler at the front and another one that looked like a miniature blue tank at the back. At intervals along the



line, fourteen plastic-covered foam floats and one wooden float were attached. I watched while the kennel workers hooked a dog next to each float. The dogs all were yapping excitedly and dashing around their circles. Next to where I was standing, a yearling named Tot danced on top of his doghouse. But the team being taken out on the lake was composed of older dogs, some of which were from Jeff's main race team.

When all of the dogs were hooked up, the ATV drivers slowly moved the line of huskies out of the dogyard, across the gravel drive and to the edge of the lake. There, the front of the line was disconnected from the ATV and hooked to Jeff's boat. The dogs entered the water without hesitation. The end of the line was hooked to another boat in which Caitlin and I sat.

Guided by Jeff, the dogs kept the line curved out ahead of the boats. I sat and talked to Caitlin a little bit. In the pictures my Mom took from the bank, I appear to be clinging to the sides of the boat, as if afraid of falling out. I wasn't, though. I was just sitting there observing the dogs. Jeff's main leader, Salem, was nearest our boat. The dogs paddled on, making *whuff whuff* noises. Caitlin explained to me why one of the floats was a wooden block. Apparently, the dog that swam in that position had a tendency to eat the foam floats!

Near Jeff's boat was a new dog that didn't know the ropes. He kept trying to swim the wrong way and seemed surprised to find the other dogs going in the opposite direction.

After the swim, the dogs all climbed out of the water.



They were unhooked and allowed to run free. Some loped back towards the kennel with Caitlin and another handler. Others stayed by the edge

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BOOK REVIEWS

GRANITE

By Susan Butcher & David Monson

Illustrated by Sarah Douglas

If there is any sled dog story that has been long-awaited, it is this children's book written by 4-time Iditarod champion, Susan Butcher. When Butcher died in 2006, some wondered if the book would even be published. But Butcher's husband, David Monson, kept the story alive and *Granite* was published in 2007.

Any sled dog fan is going to love this book! Written third-person, the true story follows Granite, one of Susan Butcher's sled dogs, as he learns to be a sled dog and becomes a superstar leader.

The dream of an Iditarod championship for Granite and Susan is marred by a moose attack and, later, by illness. Granite is flown to a veterinary clinic where Susan stays with him 24/7 until he recovers. Still, the veterinarians tell Susan that Granite will never race again.

So Granite is brought back to the kennel to live a less adventurous life. But he isn't happy about being inside Susan's cabin while the other dogs train outside. Granite, it seems, doesn't give up any easier than his musher!

Granite is, quite literally, an underdog story. And everyone loves a tale where underdogs come out on top - especially if it is a true story! Sled dog fans will love the book and Sarah Douglas' beautiful illustrations. And I think others with little knowledge of mushing will be captivated by the book as well.

Who knows, maybe some of the children who read *Granite* will be inspired to become mushers someday. And that would be a true tribute to Susan Butcher's memory.

BACKSTAGE IDITAROD

By June Price

There have been numerous books written about the Iditarod race itself - the mushers, the dogs, the competition. But *Backstage Iditarod*, as its title suggests, brings us behind the scenes for the story of what it takes to organize and put on a major long-distance sled dog race.

Backstage Iditarod covers everything that happens before the race - the mushers' sign-up in June, the mandatory meeting for Iditarod rookies in early Winter, preparing and sending out bags of supplies to checkpoints along the race trail.

You'll also read about pre-race vet checks and EKGs for the sled dogs and many other things that must be done in the last few days before the race.

There are chapters on mushers, checkpoint veterinarians and the race marshal. There is also a lot written about the hundreds of Iditarod volunteers who do all manner of tasks, everything from sewing booties for the mushers to use on their dog teams to checking teams in and out of the stops along the trail.

Although all of this has been mentioned in other Iditarod books, it is the main focus of *Backstage Iditarod*. Readers really see what makes the race happen and keeps it running smoothly.

For anyone wanting to know more about the Iditarod - get this book! It is a great resource for anyone interested in sled dog racing.

Jamaica Causes Stir With Dog Sledding Team

By Aurora S. Thompson

Jamaica has done it again! It has proven that just because it is an island with no snow does not mean it can't have the same fun as those with it! Just give Jamaican mushers Devon Anderson, Damion Robb, and Newton Marshall a few dogs and a cart with wheels and they can give you a fun and exciting alternative to sunbathing on their beautiful beaches in Ocho Rios.

It all began a couple of years ago with Danny Melville, owner of Chukka Adventures and the team's founder, a cart bought in Edmonton, Canada, and a few lucky stray dogs adopted from the Jamaican SPCA. With a little help from a trainer in Scotland, another from Minnesota, and a few months of hard work, both the dogs and lead musher Devon Anderson were ready to run!

And run they have. Not only have they led countless tours on the island, but throughout this fall two members of the team spent extensive time training and competing in both the US and Canada. Robb kicked off his first tour of the US by placing second in the Byllesby Dryland Classic, third in the annual Dirty Dog Dryland Derby and first in the East Meets West Dryland Challenge.

While Robb has been busy competing and making headlines, Anderson has been chasing the team's dream of competing in the Yukon Quest in 2009. He has arranged to lease a team from Whitehorse, Yukon, musher and winner of the Quest, Hans Gatt, and is spending the next few months getting used to a completely different climate with this highly experienced musher.

For more information and some awesome pictures, check out JamaicaDogSled.com, watch the recently released *Sun Dogs*, or head to the Caribbean for a little dog-powered tour!

Aurora Thompson lives in Charleston, SC. This is her first article for Dog & Sled

"The GA Musher Does Alaska..."
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of the lake. Salem was one of those at the edge. He was sopping wet and wearing a camouflage jacket that seemed to be made out of wetsuit material. I patted him on the head and he seemed to like that.

When we returned for the evening tour several hours later, the dogs were just about dry. They were lying around, enjoying the evening sunshine. There were MANY more guests on this tour than there had been for the earlier tour. The temperature was colder in the evening but the visitors did not seem to mind. The pups greeting the visitors welcomed this change in temperature. So did the other dogs. Not only were we treated to a demonstration of the canine carousel but Jeff took a team of younger dogs on a 4-wheeler run. The din of barking huskies was deafening - even Jeff stuck his fingers in his ears! The young dogs were misbehaving a little and Jeff had to stop one that was chewing on everything in sight - the dog on the other side of the gangline, the gangline itself..

However, once they took off, the young pups looked like a team and Jeff came back in one piece so I don't think there were any major mishaps.

To conclude the tour, Jeff gave an informative (and very funny) indoor presentation. He talked about running dogs and the dogs' different personalities and made sure we all understood that "moose have antlers! There is no such thing as a moose horn!"

We talked for a couple of minutes after the tour and then it was time for us to get going. I'd had a great time at Husky Homestead and felt more than a little overwhelmed! It had been, I decided, a perfect day.

NEXT ISSUE: Fairbanks and the Northern Sky Lodge and Kennel

2007 GinGin 200 A Racer's Account

By Zoya DeNure

The Gin Gin team:

Sebe, Bridle, Sadie, Galen, Bligh, Naked, Dude, Peak, Harley, Probe, Trapper and North

The night before the race we had a full house and excitement was in the air.

Everyone was here from good friends visiting to race staff busy with their preparations. After we gobbled down John's famous-around-here homemade pizza, we all met at the round table to talk about the race in regard to the rules, organization and logistics, trail reports, and the roles of each volunteer. 9 p.m. came around and I was off like shot to change my sled runners and pack the truck. It's nice to visit but I had big plans and I wanted to be ready to roll the next morning by 5.

I had done my homework preparing all my race food and gear on Tuesday and Wednesday in hopes of having some time to visit with everyone without having to run around like a chicken trying to get everything ready at the last minute. I actually went as far as to pack my sled with everything I took on the 200 mile race (food, gear, etc) to see **just** how I would pack it all in race morning and to know **exactly** how it would feel driving a LOAD. Well, it felt like a load! My Gin Gin team ran 16 miles on Wednesday with "the load"

and I didn't see any difference in our speed. North didn't seem to mind as we slid across the lake ice and over frozen sloughs. My main race sled is 4 feet and 3 inches and I've been tweaking it for awhile so it would drive easier with more flexibility. It walks over tough trails which makes the trip so much better for the team.

By 9:40 p.m., all mandatory gear was loaded; snow bibs, parka, personal bag, dog food, shovel for truck, poo bags, extra harnesses, extra lines and the many checklists were now all in the truck stowed in their special place. All I needed to do now was hit the sack and get some restful sleep. Easier said than done. By 10:00 p.m. the house was pretty quiet, just about everyone went to bed. John and Chris, our friend and handler from last year, worked on the snowmachine till 2. Joanne was snoring well past 10 and Jan lay awake reading while trying to ignore all the dogs barking from outside. My friends Rebecca and Franchesca were here with their three dogs and the yard had a little something to say about it. I lay down about 10:30 and got up about a half a dozen times for water or juice. I think it must have been about 1 a.m. before I finally fell asleep. Laying in bed my head was spinning and all I could do was think about tomorrow... *race day..the start...Do I have everything ??* Galen and North were to lead us out for the first 50 miles.

My thoughts were buzzing so loud...."*Galen has never led me out of the chute and is very shy, what if he holds us back? North is inexperienced with races and can be a little gun shy too, what if he freaks out? How will this play out? I can always count on Sadie, Bridle or Sebe...BUT we're going to stop that right now Zoya and visualize positive thoughts.... North and Galen running the show out of the chute because that is what I had planned and I believe they are the two gentlemen for the job, they can do it! They are good together up there.*"

Deep breath in Zoya...then ... long exhale. *That's better!*

Ahhh...then come details.. "*Sebe needs her harness off right away at the 1st layover, she'll chew it up if I don't...give yourself 45 minutes to get team ready to go before departing checkpoint, Naked needs to eat 15 minutes prior to running due to low blood sugar, Bligh needs to be hooked in last at start because he will go nuts on my line if he's hooked in any sooner...remember to tell our start help to bring Bligh up last....team list on clip board...get food soaking ASAP at Maclaren...make sure snow hook is secure in river ice before leaving team for lodge/water, make sure to sign out of Maclaren for both 109 mile run and last 42, then the list of items in my vet kit bag...*

I must have gone through this mentally 4-5 times. *Wraps, pink ointment, Zalox, vitamins...* I get obsessed with these things. I look ahead and I play it out in my mind to get organized. This works for me and helps me fine tune the details.

And I even got some good sleep that night. The alarm went off at 5 a.m... *it's time to roll.* John was up making coffee, everyone in the house was now up and moving around slowly, looking for coffee. John was busy in the kitchen working out last minute race details about the time I was out loading dogs into the truck. Judy and I were on our way to Paxson Lodge by 7 a.m.

We were 2nd out that morning at 11:02 Galen & North led me out of the chute beautifully. Just like the picture in my mind and just like it's been going in training. *Why do I second guess myself?* Nerves, I guess. The rest of my team was hooked in one by one -Bligh in last- all dogs lunging forward and pawing at the ground. The sky was clear and temperatures cooling down to -17 that morning. The first 30 miles ran west on the Denali Highway. This route is very scenic taking the teams above timberline through rolling hills, hard packed trail and gorgeous terrain. The mountain scenery is spectacular! There's been a great deal of snow machine traffic and wind on the Denali this past week and the snow is

marginal in some spots making it almost impossible to hook down with a fresh team. I held the dogs back for the first 50 miles. They want to run that first 50 like mad dogs but I ask them to trot out slowly instead because I know we have another 150 miles to go.

We turned right off the Denali Highway at milepost 30 for a nice 17 mile jog through the mountain loop (Glacier gap). This trail was just put in and is good fun, very soft in spots with narrow sharp turns and a few little ice bridges. The dogs moved well through this stuff, and I still had to make an effort to keep them slow. The snow was deep if you ventured off. I dumped the sled twice on sharp corners. Yes, the load got the best of me and I was just slightly off the trail in snowbanks up to my nose. The sled felt really heavy now sitting there on its side in snow waist deep. I was trying to get it up, breaking a total sweat, feeling like an idiot for nose diving in the first place. The dogs looked back at me as if they were saying "*C'mon mom! what are you doing back there? Get up and get pushing!*" Well, that's what I did and we got going again. I looked over my shoulder hoping no one was coming. I didn't want anyone to see me face first in the snow!

We got in 2nd, about sunset, the light was very dim and flat. The Maclaren dog area was empty and quiet. Judy was doing her chores as I pulled in next to her.

I got into Maclaren with snow still down my parka and up my sleeves. The dogs seemed happy enough to be there although I could see a little confusion in their eyes as we blew through our summer kennel to park on the river ice. Check routine: leaders secured, straw down, booties off, snack for dogs and off for hot water. This was a nice bonus. The dogs settled right in and we were in our groove. Sebe managed to get that harness within seconds - and I mean at least 5 seconds and no more than 15 - little rascal! I took it off her as I shook my head. After chores were done and dogs were fed, I got away from the team so that they could rest. I went into the lodge, had dinner and then lay down for an hour in the sleeping cabin. I rested, not slept, that one hour down. By the time I got up and came out, I had 50 minutes to get the dogs ready to roll before departing Maclaren. It was snowing lightly out and seemed pretty warm. Maybe 1 above zero. I was wide awake and ready to get going. I refilled my thermos, had a few sausage snacks from Delta Meat & Sausage before heading out.

All the dogs were standing up looking my way as I walked to them. If they could talk they might have been saying "*Where did ya go, Ma?*" I gave them all a little petting, kissed Peak on the nose and gave a piece of fish to each dog and then got the booties out. By the time I had booties on 6

dogs, the rest of my team was feeling very impatient. Bligh of course was pawing at the ground getting the team all hot. Robin in wheel with Trapper was barking and lunging and jumping over the top of Trapper. I had given myself too much time to get this team ready to go. About one minute prior to departure, the team pulled my hook and I grabbed the sled and whoa'd them to a stop near the water shed. Finally, the checker said GO! I pulled the hook and away we went, west on the Denali with Sadie and Galen in lead. About 2 miles out, Galen declined the opportunity to run with Miss Sadie. I stopped and switched them out for Sebe and Bridle. Jodi came up behind me. Her team was moving good and we seemed to have similar speeds. The run from Maclaren Lodge to the Su bridge seemed to fly by. The road was hard packed and after we reached mile 62, it was all downhill - literally. There are many sections on road where you feel the rocks and gravel under your runners. I kept looking off in the distance for Judy's headlamp. We were hoping to find her and eventually we did. About 6 hrs into the run, we passed her camping on the trail near the firewood John had cut for mushers. I had thought about camping there with the team, too. The dogs looked great, tails wagging, smiling faces, all were eating like maniacs and I felt they could use this run for future racing experience. Jodi and I stopped about 200 yards from Judy's

camping spot, tended our dogs and headed back out for Maclaren.

We traveled together for a long night that went by surprisingly fast. We had a good time with our teams on new trails. There was some ice, a little bit of overflow, soft areas, animal tracks and the night sky was lit by a sliver of a moon, dim through the clouds and snow. The last 10 miles seemed to kind of drag by, dogs were trotting along nicely but my stomach was growly—I was getting very hungry for Susie's HUGE pancakes and yummy hash browns. It was like I could almost smell them! We were ready to get there as each bend in the river held our hopes high for sight of the lodge. The dogs trotted in smooth and happy. We stopped to get checked in and they were pulling again on their tugs to get moving forward. We parked now on the river ice facing our kennel. Check routine: secure the leaders out, harness off Sebe, undo tugs, straw was already on ground, dog coats were already on, booties off, small snack for dogs, off to get hot water. The dogs lay down within minutes. I had a quick bite to eat, fed the dogs and lay down for nap too. This time I slept for about an hour and a half total. Not much sleep. But it felt so good! I think I ordered the biggest breakfast I could attempt to eat and then hit the sack for an hour. Maclaren was quiet when we rolled in-- it was just us. As I had my

meal inside, Judy and Lance pulled in. I never did see Lance and Judy only in passing.

After our rest, it was time to get going for that final stretch. I regretfully dropped North only because he seemed tired. This wasn't the case however. It has taken me a long time to understand North and his unique personality. After I dropped him, he pulled the checker so hard he almost had them down on the ground. Then he barked and howled as his team left without him. So sad. I am sorry, North. He is no doubt a force in my team and we missed him on that final 42 miles. Bridle and Sebe in lead. The checker said GO! and the dogs took off and then drove us up to our cabin door and onto the porch through the out trail. This was a very difficult moment! It happened to me on the Taiga 300 last April, too. It's NOT easy asking the dogs to go through and pass their home over and over again! I was in a hurry and Jodi was going to be leaving shortly after me. But the dogs were trying to tell me something else, they could care less if Jodi was coming. I convinced them to get moving and once again we were back on the highway headed toward Paxson. About 2 miles later, Harley had stomach cramps and couldn't run. His head wanted to go but his stomach was tight.

Jodi came up on me and passed me, leaving me in her dust. I loaded Harley at milepost 40 as fast as I could

and secured him in the sled bag before chasing Jodi up the Maclaren Summit with 10 dogs on the line. She got away from me within minutes. I could see her headlamp in the distance and it seemed like we were closing in the further we traveled. Around milepost 22, one of the race staff was heading back to Maclaren from Paxson on his snow machine. He slowed down to tell me something about the wind on 13 mile, I couldn't hear over the machine but I hollered "Where's my musher?" He said "About one mile ahead." *OH GOOD!* I thought we could catch her.

My team was moving fast and looked real good, eager to run harder when I asked. We got to 17 mile on the Denali when the wind started to pick up. I could see Jodi's headlamp in the distance traveling up through the wind and over the summit. She was still close. I thought to myself that this didn't feel good. The wind was strong & steady as we climbed the summit. The dogs, my sled, and I started to get picked up off the road by this heavy wind, unforgiving and relentless. It felt like it was a fight to the top and a fight to stay on the road. Keeping dogs safe and moving was priority #1. The wind was blowing so hard, my team dogs were getting blown off the road and my sled flipped. I stopped the team and got my sled upright, Harley upright and re-secured, then went up into my team during a bad gust of wind, holding them for a moment,

lining the team out into the middle of the road and then back to my sled while my hero leader, Bridle, waited patiently for my command.

The wind was horrific, forcing my team to the ground over and over again. I had secured a little Petzel headlamp to the sled handlebars in case we got separated. When the wind quieted down, we moved fast and kept moving until we were forced to stop and wait another 4-10 seconds. Finally at milepost 6, it was a little breezy but the strong winds were behind us. I stopped at milepost 4, snacked the dogs with fish and petted their heads. That killed another 5 minutes but I needed to give a quick "thanks" to the team. They worked hard and did a good job.

The dogs rolled in nicely - looking for their truck of course! Robin was still bouncy, Dude, still wagging his body all around, Bligh, Naked and Peak still wagging tails and giving kisses. Bridle, Sebe and Galen, all happy to be there, Trapper, just happy to be anywhere mom is and Harley, glad to be getting out of the sled bag. When we got in I warned the checker that Harley had a poo accident in the sled bag just 2 miles prior to the finish (covering most of my mandatory items). She checked me in and gave an "ewww, stinky." Yes, it smelled very bad but Harley on the other hand was feeling so much better now. When we got home about an hour later,

the dogs all ate like mad and Harley was the first one with his paws up looking for his meal.

This team is a team I think I've been dreaming about since my life in mushing began. These dogs are happy all the time, they recover fast on short rests, they eat just about anything, all the time and they run steadily. They are a strong team with lots of personality and pizzazz. I've bred and hand raised 8 of these dogs.

My Copper Basin 300 team is a different operation. It's a mixed bag of dogs, some older, some younger. We're going back to the Copper Basin 300 to finish and qualify [for the Iditarod]. My Gin Gin 200 team is the core of my Iditarod team and that team will head to the Tustumena 200, later in the month.

Zoya DeNure and her husband, John Schandelmier, run Crazy Dog Kennels and Sled Dog Rescue in Paxson, Alaska. Visit their website at www.dogsleddenali.com

This account was originally posted on Zoya DeNure's blog dogsleddenali.blogspot.com It is reprinted here with her permission.

More on the 2007 GinGin 200 can be found in Dog & Sled's news section on page 13

NEWS

Sheep Mountain 150 Cancelled

What would have been Alaska's first big sled dog race of the Season, the 150-mile Sheep Mountain race, was cancelled due to lack of snow.

"We need 8 to 10 more inches of snow," race organizer Zack Steer said in the *Anchorage Daily News*. A notice was posted on the Sheep Mountain 150 web page saying: "At the time of this post there is only about 12 inches of snow on the ground which is not enough to safely stop/control a 12-dog team."

The cancellation of the Sheep Mountain 150 prompted a fun race to be held on the Denali Highway, where snow cover was much better.

Sources:

www.adn.com

www.sheepmountain.com

Money Raised for Ulcer Prevention in Sled Dogs

Nearly \$3,000 was raised in memory of Snickers, a Siberian husky who died of a stomach ulcer in the 2007 Iditarod.

The Snickers Memorial/ Ulcer Research Fund was

set up by Snickers' musher, Karen Ramstead, who is sending the money to help fund research in ulcer prevention in sled dogs.

"The list of donators is HUGE – over 80 individual donations from around the world," Ramstead wrote on her website in June 2007. "We are very grateful and touched by this wonderful outpouring."

Source:

www.northwapiti.com

Jodi Bailey, Lance Mackey Winners of GinGin 200

Jodi Bailey and Lance Mackey won the women's and men's division, respectively, of the 2007 GinGin, a 200-mile sled dog race run along the Denali Highway in Alaska. Bill Steyer and Sonny Linder finished second and third in the men's class. Zoya DeNure and Judy Currier finished second and third in the women's class.

The GinGin was Alaska's first major distance race of the Season. For more on the GinGin, see page 9.

Source:

www.dogsleddenali.com

Ryan Redington Wins Knik 200

Ryan Redington, grandson of Iditarod founder Joe Redington, took first place in the 2008 Knik 200.

Trail conditions were icy with scant snow for the first part of the race but then teams ran into deeper snow farther along.

Ken Anderson took second place in the Knik 200.

Sources:

www.adn.com

Fun Run Events Held in the Southeast

Mush Between The Lakes, a non-competitive training run was held at Kentucky's Land Between The Lakes in November 2007.

Mush Between The Lakes was also part of the 2007 Dogs Across America relay event, which is held yearly across the United States. Teams in each state select a trail and then run a dog-powered relay along the length.

Sources:

mushbetweenthelakes.zoomshare.com/0.html

dogsacrossamerica.com

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