

# DOG

Spring 2007

&

# Sled



*Canines For Charity*

**THE 2007 CASPER MOUNTAIN SLED DOG RACES**

**Marcia Horne**

**Interview**

*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 P.O. Box 32 Armuchee, GA 30105-0032 or online at [huskystuff@roman.net](mailto:huskystuff@roman.net) . Visit *Dog & Sled's* new website at [www.dx4solutions.com/dogandsled/](http://www.dx4solutions.com/dogandsled/)

**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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Alice E. White

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COVER: Two  
teams race for the  
finish line at  
Canines For Charity

# Talk & Bark

Commentary By Alice White



“We’re standing in line at a snack bar that’s probably had five customers during its entire existence,” someone said into his cell phone.

I almost laughed. The line to the tiny snack bar at the Wichita, Kansas, airport stretched out into the concourse and almost all the way back to Gate 12. The two women running the snackbar were obviously not used to serving over a hundred really hungry people. But then, we weren’t supposed to be in Wichita. We should have been in Denver, Colorado, except, as the captain had told us, “The weather gods are not cooperating”.

I must have stood in line for an hour before I finally got something to eat (a hotdog and some yogurt). Then I went back to my seat on the plane and ate while listening to the radio. Every half an hour or so the captain would inform us that “We have reports that the weather in Denver is rapidly clearing”.

At one point, I remarked to someone, “It’s *been* ‘rapidly clearing’ for the last *three hours!*”

That reminded me that I had definitely missed my connecting flight. I should have been in Casper, Wyoming, by now, at Allan and Tabetha Berge’s Deer Creek Sled Dog Kennels.

Meanwhile, another flight to Denver was cancelled and a flight came in from Atlanta so the waiting area at Gate 12 was packed with enough people to fill three planes. If I had not been so frustrated (I’d been there several hours already) it would have been funny to see the reactions of people who did not know what was going on.

“Good grief,” one person said. “This looks like a third-world country.”

One thing that happened was that the people on my flight sort of got to know each other. I never learned anybody’s name but it didn’t really matter. The result of this was that we started functioning almost as a team. When someone finally told us that there was a flight to Denver, we all punched the air and shouted “DENVER!”

A man, who had just arrived from an unrelated plane, turned to his wife and remarked “What is *wrong* with these people?”.

To make a long story short, I did arrive in Denver that night and met up with Robyn Alford and Mike Roy of the Continental Kennel Club who, fortunately for me, had missed a flight and were late getting into Denver as well. There wasn’t a flight to Casper that night so we rented a car and drove there. It was midnight Mountain Time (which is 2am at home) when we arrived in Casper and one of the first things I saw was a service station called “LOAF N’ JUG”. “We could go there and get our loaves and jugs,” I suggested. And that was the end of a VERY long day.

# Canines For Charity



The road up Casper mountain was steep and made my ears pop. I chewed some gum I'd bought at the Atlanta airport and that helped some. According to Allan Berge of the nearby Deer Creek Sled Dog Kennel where I was staying, "Casper Mountain is more like a hill" to people in this area. To two people from the Southeastern states, however, this was a really big mountain. There were aspens and lodgepole pines all over the mountain and, more importantly, there was snow.

Mike Roy, president of the Continental Kennel Club (CKC), and I were heading up to meet Pam Dunn, a musher who lived at the highest point of Casper Mountain. Pam is the organizer of the Casper Mountain Sled Dog Races held each February. Also known as Canines For Charity, these races benefit mentally disabled children through the ARC of Natrona County, a local non-profit organization.

We met Pam at Beartrap Meadow, where the races were to begin the next day, and then went to her Timbermist Tracks Sled Dog Kennel. The kennel, nestled in the woods, felt very secluded. Pathways in the snow led to the sled dog pens. Each large pen housed about three Siberian huskies and their dog houses. In one very large pen that backed up against a barn filled with dog runs there was a large group of Siberians running around and playing. As Pam showed us the dogs, two 14-year-old retired huskies followed us

around off-leash. Apparently they were not interested in running off and were content to walk about the kennel.

That night, the signup was held at the Parkway Plaza Hotel and afterwards there was a mushers meeting, also attended by race volunteers, fans and even one of the four-legged movie stars from *Eight Below*.

I stayed with Allan and Tabetha Berge and their kids. The Berges run Deer Creek Sled Dogs and run both Alaskan huskies and Seppala Siberian Sleddogs (a racing strain of Siberian husky). Their kennel is divided into two yards - one for females, one for males.

Most dogs were tethered to swivel posts beside their doghouses, which allowed them to move around and exercise but not fight with the other dogs. There was also a large yard where the dogs could run around off-tether. Puppies and a few older dogs were kept in chain-link runs.

On Saturday we were up before dawn getting ready to go to the race. The dogs were loaded into their truck boxes and we drove to Casper Mountain. When we were almost at the race site, a trailer tire blew.

“What do you bet everyone’s going to point it out to us?” Allan said as we limped into the parking lot. Sure enough, people began waving their hands and yelling “*You’ve got a flat!*”.

We parked and dropped the dogs. They were attached to a drop line beside the truck. There they would wait until it was time for them to be harnessed and hooked to the sleds, one of which I would be using. The previous day, Allan had told me that he would let me use some of their dogs in the 3-dog Jr. race. I was very excited but, surprisingly, not at all nervous. I just wanted to get going.

The longer races for large teams began first. The dogs burst into a cacophony of barks and yowls when they saw the harnesses. In some of



these first races, an ATV was needed to hold the teams back until start time.

When the teams took off, they raced into the woods. There would be a pounding of paws, the swoosh of the sled and they would be gone, with the next team in the starting chute, eager to be off.

It was a clear day and the sun reflected off the snow, making it impossibly bright. It was a bit warm too but that didn’t dampen the dogs’ excitement.

Teams came racing to the finish line a while later, some running neck and neck for a photo finish. However, total time, rather than who crosses the finish line first, determined placement.

After the teams came in, there was a 15-minute break and then the next race, a sprint,



began.

This continued throughout the day. Mike ran in the 4-dog Novice Sr. class and did quite well the first day, especially considering the fact that he had very little experience with snow mushing.



My turn on the sled came later that afternoon. I hooked up two wheel dogs named Oreo and Hoodoo and a leader named Timber. The one-mile loop trail seemed pretty short. I kicked along to help the dogs but, as Casper Mountain is a higher altitude than I'm used to, I became winded faster than usual. However, I had one of the fastest times and no wrecks or wipeouts. That would not be the case the next day.



The second day dawned cloudy on Casper. There was a dusting of fresh snow on top of the crust and there was a cold wind blowing.

This was good for the dogs - they ran better when the temperatures were lower. I did a lot of filming that second day. I trudged up the trail for the distance race and squatted on the side, waiting for teams to pass. Later, Robyn and I did the same thing on the sprint race trails. The unpacked snow had a crust but not a very thick one. We made little "snow nests" and watched team after team come charging down the trail, the dogs intent on what lay up ahead. Occasionally, a dog would look our way but most of them continued on.

That day, during my race, I wiped out twice, plowed over a trail marker and went charging off the trail. During the last stretch, I raced neck-and-neck with Josie Berge's team. Our sleds were inches apart and our dogs right together. Although I don't know who crossed the finish line first, Josie had a faster time than I did. We took 2nd and 3rd place, respectively and Mike won the Novice Sr. class!

1st through 3rd place finishers each received a hand-painted dog bowl and a patch. This year there was also a purse sponsored by the Continental Kennel Club.

Entry fees, donations and money raised at an auction Saturday night all went to a local charity - the ARC of Natrona County. On Sunday evening, the disABILITY Dash was held for mentally disabled children. Pam seated them on a special sled and rode behind them for a hundred-yard mushing dash. It was hard to tell who was more excited, the kids or the dogs.

After the races, several of us did some more mushing. I ran a 4-dog team with a sled and someone else went on a 1-mile skijoring jaunt with 6 dogs!

We all had a good time at Canines for Charity. Mike was talking about bringing his 6-dog team of Belgian Malinois next year and I was trying to figure out how to put together a team myself. We have a reputation to defend now.

# SIBERIAN HUSKY ASSIST AN INTERVIEW

Marcia Horne is the director of the Bristol, VA, based Siberian Husky Assist rescue group. This past February, *Dog & Sled* talked to her about Siberian husky rescue and mushing in the South.

**DOG & SLED:** *Okay, Marcia. We'll start with the obvious first question. How did you become interested in sled dogs and mushing?*

**MARCIA HORNE:** I had an English setter, 'Jack,' that was a Therapy Dog. I took him to the nursing home to visit people. As he got older, he didn't seem to want to do it anymore. So Bob and I went to the Blountville, TN, animal shelter looking for another gentle dog. We found 'Macy', a dark red, blue-eyed, young Siberian husky. I walked and ran with her. She already knew sit, shake, down. Very sweet nature. Oh, she was a stray. So we adopted her, and she started going to the nursing home with me, Bob and Jack.

Bob and I read up on the husky, and wanted to see if she would pull something. I bought a harness and she pulled our lawn mower. So Bob and I then took her to Winterfest at Blowing Rock, NC, where they were having dogsled demos around Bass Lake. I was hooked, just watching. We enjoyed Macy as a Therapy Dog, and bought a Siberian husky puppy, 'Solomon', and when he was 3-4 months old, we hooked a trash can lid behind him to get him used to just having something behind him. When Solomon was about 7-8 months we bought our first sled from Dogsled Montana. Took them to an empty parking lot 4 houses away, and hooked them up. Away we went across the parking lot. After I got Macy, I started the rescue Nov, 2003, and Jan, 2004, we had our first rescue event,

"Bundle Up for Snow Pups". We had a pre-event article done in the newspaper and told the public we would harness up their dogs to pull the sled for FREE. We would use Solomon and Beverly Smeltzer's lead dog, Dakota, in front, and hook up one or two in a straight line, behind. They would run about a 250-300 foot circle run.

In 3 1/2 hours, 65 dogs were harnessed & pulled, and 50 were Siberian huskies. People want to see their dog do what it was bred to do.

The next event, we met Jim Kaser from Minnesota who would sled in MN, and he joined our rescue as sled dog coordinator. We started, then, to put together a team; "The Black Diamond Trail Seekers".

With Jim's help, our rescue now does Beginners Dog sledding classes as a fundraiser for our rescue.

We do sledding demos at events if it's not too hot. We've done demonstrations at the Biltmore Estate this year in Asheville, NC, and several Boyscout and school presentations, plus speaking engagements at civic organizations.

Next week, March 3 (Iditarod Start Date) we HOST a rescue event at the Sevierville Fairgrounds in TN. The ad we will put in the paper is "The Iditarod comes to Sevierville Fairgrounds. Dogsled demos; come see 'Cruiser', an Alaskan husky that was in the 2006 Iditarod; learn about dryland sledding with your dog;" - and more in the ad. Other rescues, and martial arts demo - saving a life and rescue is for people too!

**D&S:** *Could you tell us a little bit about the Blue Ridge Fun Run you held this year?*

**MH:** The Blue Ridge Fun Run is something I've been wanting to

do for a long time. Never having been to a race before, I had to do some research. I wanted to keep the first one a little smaller, so I started with a Trophy-only race. I'm very thankful for Alpine Outfitters in Marysville, Washington, who sponsored the trophies for our rescue.

The big problem was that the VA Creeper Trail is a straight trail and our rescue could not find a loop trail close by. We had help with communication and timekeeping at the start and finish lines with the Mountain Empire Amateur Radio Society. They also put a GPS tracking device on the first sled and would watch the sled's location on a laptop computer.

We had one problem due to the straight trail. One couple needed to use the same rig for both the 6 & 4 dog races. I thought I had it taken care of but the people left the other end before they got back there to start, and so one participant did not get to race. I still feel bad about it. I have since taken steps to make sure that does not ever happen again.

We wanted everyone to have a good time. We got a few door prizes; - I think I will have more of those next year. We are also going to combine the re-enactment of the 1925 Alaska Serum Run and the Blue Ridge Dryland Challenge for a weekend event which will be added to the town of Damascus' Winterfest. Race results are posted on Sled Dog Central.

The Serum Run and Fun Run both brought out more people with interest. Mushing in the south is growing. Our Siberian Husky Rescue is proud to have a part in it.



**D&S:** *I think people in the South are very interested when they see anyone mushing dogs. When I was at the Serum Run this year I was amazed at the crowds of spectators. Were you surprised by the turnout?*

**MH:** Yes, very much so. We were not prepared for traffic and parking problems. At the finish there were probably 400-500 people, not to mention people at each relay site, and some went from one site to the next to watch the serum be transferred to the next musher. Watching the dogs run is something I, too, would stop what I'm doing and watch even if I was driving down the road. I heard at a local meeting that only a few people thought it may seem cruel for one dog to pull the weight of one person. They felt 2 dogs were okay, but that one dog pulling seemed cruel. I explained to that person, that if a dog does not want to pull, they won't. They will stop. That these are our personal pets and we love them like people love their Yorkies. They are in our homes, and some sleep on our beds or next to them. I told him, if I had on a body harness, and you had on skates, I could pull you around all day, no problem. Also that we help our dogs. We peddle, and give them chances to catch a break. Great care is taken in watching each dog. There will always be people who think it's cruel. I will admit when I was younger I used to think the same thing. BUT it was ignorance of the strength of the dogs and that the musher cares about the dog. Being a musher myself now, I cared as I started to lengthen the miles my dogs would run and build their endurance. These dogs are my family. The dogs we rescue that have a lot of energy, we try training for sledding. Events like the Serum Run help

educate the public about the dogs and their abilities. I also hope some went home and started to think about what can they do with their dog to enjoy together. I think they come to see the dogsleds and personally, I appreciate someone questioning about one dog pulling one person. Because they care about an animal, plus it gives me an opportunity to educate them. Then they tell someone, and that person tells someone, etc. Our rescue has had calls from 3 people wanting to give us their dog due to its high energy. We invited them to a practice. We worked with their dog, ran it on the sled just about 1/4 mile with the team. They became proud of their dog. They even had photos of their "sled dog", and decided to keep the dog. Seems the dogs energy level dropped a little, and they realized they just need to get the energy out.

**D&S:** *That's great! I know you still take on rescued huskies though. Are most of these turned in by their owners or are they strays?*

**MH:** Most in the shelters are strays. I do get calls from people not wanting to take their husky to a shelter, and want us to come pick it up. but we pull from shelters first. This month we got 3 from Knoxville shelter. I get emails all the time, its sad to say " sorry we are full". We feel education about the breed is a big part of stopping the madness.

**D&S:** *What is required of prospective owners who want to adopt a dog from you?*

**MH:** We want them to understand the breed, not just want the looks and blue eyes. Just yesterday, I got emails from 2 people. One wanting me to take

her 1 year old husky that bit her little girl. The other a 10 month old husky pup. "We work full time, and the kids are now in sports and we have no time for the dog." Gee, should have thought of that 8 months ago? I have people that say, I have 200 acres they can run on. They don't understand. Or I want to take him hiking with me (sounds good, but then the "off leash" comes). Or I want a black and white with blue eyes, has to have blue eyes. We ask for references from people that would know how they are with their other pets. AND always do a homecheck, always. Just since Jan 2004 when our first rescue got adopted, we've taken back about 8-10 huskies. That is a lot to me, because these are families that were going to be "forever homes". Most were divorce, poor health - heart attack, 2 were going to have or had a baby. One family came and the wife said "my husband has wanted a husky since we met". Well we tell them about the roaming, quickness past you to get out the door, and RUN, hair, energy, escape artist. We tell them everything. Oh, "we understand". First week the dog gets past the 12 year old son 3 times, out the front door. They no longer want the husky. They "will get a small dog". Understanding the breed, # 1 thing we look at. # 2 homecheck - "I have a fenced yard". Well, they at least call it a fenced yard. So we tell them everywhere the husky will get out. One family told me, yes we saw that spot and will take care of it, because we thought the same thing. The next week the dog got out where we told them it would,

where they knew it would - because they didn't fix it. One lady wanted to foster: "I have a 30 x 50 dog kennel they can stay in until they get a home". She expected the dog to stay inside a chickenwire kennel while chickens and goats were roaming outside.

One man, ( I guess felt he was Cesar Milan - dog whisperer), told me he has wolf hybrids and several other dogs including huskies that he walks off - leash on his mountaintop.

He would take a year if need be to train a dog to stay within a 5 mile radius . Then even if it runs off, it could find its way home. He got upset when I told him we do not adopt to people that would let the husky off leash. That the Siberian Husky Club of America will even say 99% have to be on leash. Yes, there is 1% but who wants to take a chance with their dog getting hit by a car or malnourished, ending up in a shelter in the next county. That is what we get most of from the shelters; strays that the owners never find.

We have "Why A Husky?" on our website. It almost talks you out of them but if I can talk someone out of it by telling them the truth, they should not have gotten the dog anyway.

Our rescue takes our dogs back at any time rather than them being put in a shelter somewhere. That is a pledge we make to the dog when we take it out of the shelter- that it will never go back to the shelter.

There are lots of people buying backyard breeder huskies at flea markets for \$50.00, never get papers, so-called breeder long gone. "The dog is sick can you help me?" or "I didn't get papers, the breeder gave the brother and sister to me free, but they are pure because they have blue eyes. I'm getting a divorce. Can you take both the puppies?

They are a year old." I love the true Siberian husky breed. The true characteristics are being bred out by backyard breeders. I've had people call me to get a shelter husky to breed.

One lady got a puppy from out of state and wanted one to breed so she "could keep the line pure".

I said "Pure? I have no papers to say what is or is not pure. I don't know what is in these dogs' background other than to say that they look husky".

She got another dog somewhere else, bred, called me and asked me to come tell her which dogs were male and which were female so she could fill out the "papers".

**D&S:** *But do you feel like you are making a difference?*

**MH:** Oh of course. All the ones that we've pulled from shelters were ready to be put down due to not being adopted. People need to realize shelters fill up fast. Strays are kept so many days for the owners to find them, then if not adopted, they can be put down. What people don't realize is that it can take months to find one dog pulled from a shelter a home that will be a match.

Happiness and sadness, emergencies, care, love, hugs, socialization - so much goes into rescue.

**D&S:** *It must be heart-wrenching at times. What are your goals for the next five years?*

**MH:** Oh wow. We need desperately more fosters that are knowledgeable about the breed. We cannot get all the dogs in shelters because we just do not have enough foster homes for them. We cover Roanoke in VA to the Smoky Mountains in TN . I like my fosters to only have one rescue. If that does not work out or they don't want to foster

anymore, I only have to worry about finding room for one to come back - not 3 or more.

A lot of the dogs that were strays, seem to have been housebroken and indoor family pets. So I am also in great need of fosters that will allow a dog inside their home.

When we put them at a foster home where they are outside-only, they bark all the time.

I want to be able to educate the public more on the breed characteristics, and that includes sledding . Sledding is a part of the Siberian husky history and who they are. It is in the true Siberian husky nature to pull , as it is for a bird dog puppy to point, front leg up. It's just something they have in them.

Fundraising, of course, is a challenge for a one-breed rescue. We work hard for our rescue dollars and so do our huskies.

Biggest goal? I want a sanctuary where we can have the older or handicapped huskies. They would still be up for adoption but if they never found a home, they would always have one with us - not just a bunch of kennels but more of a place that looks like those really fancy doggy daycares with home-like rooms, where at least 2 dogs can live together and a doggy door to go outside . Also a BIG run area, for group pack play. It would have an educational area for kids to learn about the dogs. I want to have more classes, a place to run the dogs and a weight loss/exercise wheel. It's always nice to have big goals to reach for that mean something to the heart.

*Visit Siberian Husky Assist online at [www.siberianhuskyassist.com](http://www.siberianhuskyassist.com)*

# **NEWS**

## **Lance Mackey Wins 2007 Yukon Quest and Iditarod**

Lance Mackey captured his third straight Yukon Quest victory, becoming only the second person to win the 1,000-mile race more than twice. He also broke a speed record that had stood for over ten years.

"And I think I can do it faster,"

Mackey told reporters, adding that he would "like to be the first to win five [Quests] in a row."

The next month, Mackey won the 2007 Iditarod (using a team that included many of the dogs that won the Quest), becoming the first musher ever to win both races in the same year. The 2007 Iditarod was one of the toughest in years, according to several racers, and bad trail conditions injured two top contenders, DeeDee Jonrowe and Doug Swingley, forcing them to scratch. Ramy Brooks, a former top contender, was disqualified after he hit his dogs with a trail marker.

*Sources:*

[www.adn.com](http://www.adn.com)

[www.yukonquest.org](http://www.yukonquest.org)

[www.iditarod.com](http://www.iditarod.com)

## **Dog Team An Option For AK**

## **State Quarter**

An image of a musher running a team of dogs beneath Mount McKinley and stars may appear on Alaska's state quarter, due out in 2008. The design, with the caption "North To The Future", is one of four options for the quarter. The winner will be decided by Alaska Governor, Sarah Palin, in late April. Other options for the quarter include a polar bear, a grizzly bear or a prospector.

*Sources:*

[www.adn.com](http://www.adn.com)

[www.gov.state.ak.us](http://www.gov.state.ak.us)

## **Fund Started for Ulcer Research in Sled Dogs**

Iditarod musher, Karen Ramstead, is raising money in memory of her lead dog, Snickers, who died of an "acute hemorrhage due to a gastric ulcer," according to a press release issued by the Iditarod Trail Committee. Ramstead, who shows and races purebred Siberian huskies, scratched from the 2007 Iditarod and started the Snickers Memorial/Ulcer Research Fund soon thereafter. For more information, visit Karen Ramstead's website at [www.northwapiti.com](http://www.northwapiti.com)

*Sources:*

[www.iditarod.com](http://www.iditarod.com)

[www.northwapiti.com](http://www.northwapiti.com)

## **New Race Started In Nunavut**

A new race called the Qimualaniq Quest may help revive sled dog sports in Nunavut, Canada, where snowmobiles have made transportation by dog team obsolete.

The race, which runs 320 kilometers on Baffin Island, attracted five teams this year but that number is expected to grow as the race becomes an annual event.

*Source:*

[ca.news.yahoo.com](http://ca.news.yahoo.com)

## **Movie Premiere**

*Sun Dogs*, the new documentary about the Jamaican sled dog team, will premiere April 12th in Toronto, Canada.

*Source:*

[www.jamaicadogsled.com](http://www.jamaicadogsled.com)

# CLASSIFIEDS

## Equipment

### BLACK ICE DOGSLEDDING EQUIPMENT

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### PETSCAPE PRODUCTS

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[www.diggler.com](http://www.diggler.com)

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Sled dog equipment store located in Chapin, SC. Sells harnesses, ganglines, booties, skijoring belts and more.

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Online at [www.scdogsled.com](http://www.scdogsled.com)

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SIBERIAN HUSKY ASSIST RESCUE is now a distributor for MANMAT harnesses to help raise funds.

If you're interested in purchasing one, you can see the harnesses and get sizing and color information at

["http://www.howlingdogalaska.com"](http://www.howlingdogalaska.com)

To order, please call Marcia at:

276-466-9856; or email her at:

["mailto:siberianhuskyassist@bvunet.net"](mailto:siberianhuskyassist@bvunet.net)

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# THE LAST WOOF



Flat tires happen to dog trailers too!

## Publications

### MUSHING THE MAGAZINE OF DOG-POWERED ADVENTURE

Bi-monthly magazine covering all aspects of dogsledding, dog packing, carting, skijoring and more. Recently merged with *Sled Dog Sports* magazine.

Call (917) 929-6118 or visit  
[www.mushing.com](http://www.mushing.com)

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### TEAM & TRAIL MAGAZINE

Monthly magazine full of sled dog news, stories and information from around the world.

Call (717) 244-0671 or visit  
[www.team-and-trail.com](http://www.team-and-trail.com)

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### CONTINENTAL KENNEL CLUB MAGAZINE

Magazine of the Continental Kennel Club (CKC) with articles about dog sports and activities as well as breed profiles, health information and news.

Call 1 (800) 952-3376 or visit  
[www.ckcusa.com](http://www.ckcusa.com)

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