

VT MUSHES

NEWSLETTER

Liver Treats

Recipe for homemade, healthy, dog treats

Page 3

Fire Paste

Review of a fire starter for your camping trips, sled bag, hiking excursions

Page 3

Build Your Own Training Cart

To buy or to build?

Page 4

A Story of All Good Things in Time

Dog Bio on Braeburn's Much About Morgan

Page 5

cover photo by: iSkiVermont.net

WELCOME FROM THE PRESIDENT

com·mu·ni·ty *noun, often attributive \ kə-‘myū-nə-tē*

1: a unified body of individuals:

a : the people with common interests living in a particular area;

b : an interacting population of various kinds of individuals in a common location;

c : a group of people with a common characteristic or interest living together within a larger society

On behalf of the VTMA Board of Directors, the Communications Committee, and especially Newsletter Editor Judy Gilmore, I am pleased to welcome you to the inaugural issue of “VT Mushes” – the newsletter of the Vermont Musher Association. This newsletter represents the most significant effort of the members of the Vermont Musher Association (VTMA) to date to build a sense of community among Vermont Musher, and I couldn’t be prouder of what we have accomplished and the people who have made it happen. The current Board of Directors is committed to supporting the original mission of the association, but also is very committed to establishing and supporting a heightened sense of community within our group. A special thanks and recognition to our contributors in this inaugural issue and also to Jean Coffey and Erin Kelley who serve on our Communications Committee and a very special thanks to Judy Gilmore who has really been a moving force behind this publication.

I was a new member to the VTMA beginning in December 2012 and do not have as much experience, either in the sport of mushing or the association, as many other mushers in Vermont may have. What I do have is a strong conviction of the benefit of a sense of community amongst like minded individuals and



Dog Power:

Do you run, cross country ski or bike with your dog attached to a line?

Does your dog pull you on a skateboard or inline skates?

Do your dogs pull a rig, sled or cart?

Then you are a musher!

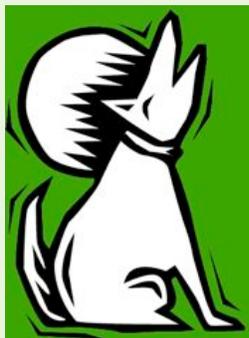


VT MUSHES



the belief of strength in numbers when it comes time to address issues that may affect the mushing community. I also believe that we need to have fun and effective communications in building our community. To that end, the Board of Directors has embraced such projects as this newsletter. But we can't do it alone, and this is just the start of what has the potential to be a vibrant association. We need as many mushers statewide to join our cause and be part of the building of community.

The Vermont Mushers Association began in 2004-2005 by establishing a Board of Directors, incorporating the association with the Secretary of State and adopting a set of bylaws. Additionally, a mission statement was developed.



The Vermont Mushers Association
was established to:

- 1. Unite all those engaging in dog-powered sports in the State of Vermont for the purpose of maintaining and promoting statewide trail privileges,**
- 2. Disseminate information,**
- 3. Promote the safe and responsible use of trails,**
- 4. Speak for and represent the Vermont Mushers Association to other organizations.**

The VTMA was fairly active for about three seasons and were successful on many of the projects they tackled; including, but not limited to developing and publishing a brochure on trail etiquette and safety, initiated dialog with VAST and made progress in regards to their policies regarding mushers on the trail, and followed legislative issues that may have implications in the mushing community.

Last December after several years of only modest activity, the VTMA officers and some mushers with a new or renewed interest in the association gathered in White River Junction to test the feasibility of a revitalized association. To that end, the members at that meeting voted to increase the number of members on the board of directors from 8 to 11, seated a new executive committee and established a meeting schedule for the 2013 membership year. Recognizing the geographical and travel challenges to uniting a statewide organization, we adopted a minimalist approach to the meeting schedule and more communication via e-mail. Through the dedicated and diligent work of the Board of Directors and mushers who share a vision of the potential benefits of a unified statewide association, we are making progress. It is exciting for me to notice that the VTMA has essentially picked up right where it was left off a few years ago, embarking upon such projects as continuing to follow legislative issues (most recently H.50), working on a new brochure "*What to Expect if You Meet a Team of Sled Dogs*", a renewed interest in a trail database and trail access and of course – this newsletter. The newsletter was an initiative from several years ago that, thanks to the efforts of many, has come to fruition.

Once again, we cannot do it alone. To be successful and fully realize our potential,

we need to expand our membership base and include as many mushers as we can with a variety of talents and resources.

A common question – verbalized or not – is "What are the benefits of joining?" That inquiry should also be paired with "What are the penalties of not joining and association of like minded individuals who share a common passion?" How does one place a value on a sense of community and the networking opportunities that exist? We need to build our membership base and be inclusive of all mushers, and identify the talents and resources within our group. Additionally, we can more fully understand what the desired benefits are that members are looking for, and most importantly identify the resources available to realize those benefits. To that end I encourage you to join VTMA if you have not already (we have an "early bird special" attached to this newsletter (pages 7 and 8) for the rest of 2013 and the 2014 membership year). I encourage you to continue as a member if you have already joined and I fully encourage you to embrace the sense of community and be a participating member of the VTMA. One of the concerns of a newsletter is the sustainability of such a publication. Read the articles and stories and consider submitting one of your own. Our goal is to build an inventory of material from as many mushers as possible so the newsletter becomes a sustainable and valued part of building our community – and we would love for you to be part of that.

~Allan Tschorn, President of Vermont Mushers Association

VT MUSHES



Liver Treats from Tsan Tsulan Siberians

1 ¼ pounds fresh liver
 1 ½ Cups Tapioca Flour
 2 Tablespoons of Water (optional)

Pulse liver in food processor to as uniform a consistency as practical.

Add tapioca flour (which eliminates the possibility of a wheat allergy or reaction in the dogs, and tapioca is actually a processed root product.)

Line a large baking sheet with parchment paper and spread batter evenly.

Bake at 250 degrees for an hour to an hour and a half. If necessary, remove and flip entire contents over after one hour to get complete and even baking (de-hydration). Cooking can be stopped at a “jerky” type stage, or continued to a crispier cookie type stage.

Cut into squares. Often we will return the portioned pieces to the pan and the cooling oven for further de-hydration. If left too moist the cookies may mold before all are used. Now I know there are a lot of hunters out there that discard livers in the field, so why not bring it home and share some of the bounty with your best friend?



A Spoiled Dog

Braeburn's Kaleb of Tsan Tsulan Siberians enjoying some pillow time after Poppa vacates his bed in the morning.

Photo by Allan Tschorn

Do you have a spoiled dog? If so, submit your picture of your spoiled dog(s) to: ainnirbard@gmail.com!



Coghlan's Fire Paste: fire starter for your sled bag kit

Product Review from Anam Cara Siberians: Coghlan's Fire Paste

This is the best fire starter I [Jean Coffey] have used to date. The product is a paste in a tube similar to toothpaste, which makes it easy to pack in a sled bag or backpack. A small amount is enough to get a good flame burning in any conditions. We used it on the snow in the rain and it lit up right away and burned steadily. We also used it sandwiched between pieces of birch bark, which was a great way to spark the fire in the small tent sized wood stove. It is odorless and does not flare when lit. It is not affected by heat or cold. The only problem is it was hard to find in any of the local stores so I had to order it at Amazon. The 3.75 oz tube was \$5.75. This will last awhile, as a small 1-2 cm ribbon is plenty to start a flame. It is a great add to the winter camping gear, but can also be a nice addition to any fire starting situation.

VT MUSHES



*Top photo: First designed cart
Middle photo: First cart finished
Bottom Photo: Second cart*

Building Your Own Custom Training Cart - Peacepups

After trying an ATV for a couple of seasons I [Ken Haggett] decided that I really preferred having something without a motor to train our teams with. I like the lack of exhaust fumes, the quiet, and the fact that I can really feel what the dogs are doing. I was fortunate to find a Fritz Dyck Tom Cart locally the second year that we were running dogs and it was a wonderful rig for training six dog teams. Once we started offering rides we needed something that would accommodate two passengers so I invested in Fritz Dyck Touri. Again; a very well made rig which worked



out well for several seasons. It was when I decided that we needed a second rig in order to get all 20 dogs out at the same time that I began to re-evaluate what we were using. I looked into buying a second Touri and at the time it was going to cost

around \$5,000.00 to get one here from Germany. The wheels started to turn and I began looking into the cost of buying a welder, wheels, brakes, and other components necessary to build a cart myself.

I decided it might be possible and my first purchase was a M.I.G. welder. The only welding experience I had was from eight grade shop class but I had heard that M.I.G. welding was pretty easy to learn. Luckily this turned out to be true! As I began researching sources for cart parts such as wheels, brakes, and suspensions I quickly found the cost for those items added up rapidly

continued on page 6

**What are you guys watching?
Squirrels!!
Photo by Judy Gilmore**



VT MUSHES



A Story of All Good Things in Time: Braeburn's Much About Morgan

Morgan was born April 23, 2010. I [Kathy Bennett] was extra jubilant for a silly reason; she was a red and white, not only an uncommon color, but reminiscent of her phenomenal red and white great grandfather. This "extra" might have ended with her color, but it did not. She immediately demonstrated focused energy, playfulness, maternal instinct, and speed; no one could catch her in games of tag! Her future as a sled dog and mother was bright.

At 4 months old, while roughhousing with her siblings, Morgan tore an anterior cruciate ligament (ACL) in a freak accident. She endured 6 months of surgery and rehabilitation with patience and good humor. She couldn't run with her siblings in their first season, but she did take her own first run just shy of her first birthday. She required absolutely no instruction. Jubilant poetry in motion!

At 17 months, unbelievably, Morgan tore her other ACL. She had to miss her second season, but did complete her second run just shy of her second birthday; more jubilant poetry!

We made the heartbreaking decision to spay Morgan in case the cause of her unusual double injury was heritable. Then, happily, she became an aunt! She exercised her maternal instincts, co-parenting her "off-spring" with zeal and



tenderness. Morgan celebrated her third birthday with the completion of a stellar first season as a sled dog, even becoming a leader with her super star mother! All good things in time!

~Photos by Kathy Bennett

Do you have an outstanding dog? If so, submit your story of your outstanding dog(s) to: ainnirbard@gmail.com.



Individual dog food servings.

Kennel Tips: Feed Procedure from Anam Cara Siberians

We [Jay and Jean Coffey] have a small recreational mushing kennel. I am always looking for ways to improve my dog care. Early on in the first years I experimented with many different ways to feed the dogs. Most of my methods ended with kibble becoming airborne or portion control going uncontrolled. I came upon the idea of single serve dinners for the dogs and it has been working well ever since. I purchase either the Ziploc or Rubbermaid 4 quart food storage containers. Each dog has a container. I measure out the individual amount of food based on weight and pour it in the container. I mark the level of the food with a sharpie and then label the cover with the dog's name. I put the containers in a carry tray and feed each dog their customized food. I can also add any meds in the container with the food. The covered containers are easy to carry into the runs and dump right in the bucket of water. Since using this method I find I am more

continued on page 6

VT MUSHES



continued from page 4

and that it would be easy to spend \$2,000.00 on parts if you bought them new. The idea of finding a dead ATV came to me one evening. It would have all of the parts needed to build a rig. I was able to find my first one nearby for a mere \$500.00.

From there I basically cut the ATV in half and created a frame to go between the two halves. After creating a wooden mock up I started cutting steel and welding parts together. The frame was fairly easy to design. Bigger challenges included setting up the brakes to work from the rear of the cart and the steering. The steering design had me scratching my head and scouring the internet for a few weeks before I finally found a solution.

The first prototype was built with the passengers seated one in front of the other. This made for a long wheel base and not much leg room for the passengers. After using this cart for

two seasons we revisited the design and came up with the current side by side seating design. This makes for a shorter wheel base while not changing the overall width much at all. The cart body is still the same width as the rear wheels. It allows passengers to have ample leg room, to talk much more easily, and they both have the same view of the team and trail ahead. The seats on the new version are readily available on line and are much more comfortable for the passengers than my original homemade bench type seats.

Over the years there have been many trials and tribulations; blown out brake seals, exploding universal joints, and locked brake calipers while out with a team to name a few. Most of these have been worked out now and I feel the carts are very reliable and fun to drive. We use them on dirt roads and class 4 unmaintained town roads. They

have good clearance and excellent braking. They weigh 400 pounds. With passengers or 140 pound sand bags they will “typically” hold a ten dog team if the brakes are locked so no ground type brake is needed.

We have had requests to build these to sell and though I enjoyed the process of designing the four carts that I have built it really is not something I want to get into doing as a business. I have helped others build similar carts of their own and am happy to provide advice and parts sources to anyone interested in creating their own version.

~Photos by Ken Haggett

We hope that you enjoyed the first VT Mushes Newsletter, a product of the Vermont Mushers Association, Inc. If you, as a member, have articles and/or pictures you'd like to submit for future use, please send them to Judy Gilmore at ainnirbard@gmail.com.

accurate in the amount of food for each dog. For the past three years most dogs have been within a pound of the previous year's weight.

The containers are about \$3.00 to \$4.00 each (at the holidays you might

find them on sale), however they last at least 5-6 years. I just replaced them all this winter. They are dishwasher safe and easy to label. I found the trays at the local hardware store for \$1.00 each.



continued from page 5