

VT MUSHES

NEWSLETTER

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cover photo by: iSkiVermont.net

VTMA UPDATE

The last VTMA meeting was held on April 11th at Great River Outfitters in Windsor, Vt. It happened to be one of the best attended meeting and we had Vermont native Gwenn Bogart, currently from Wasilla, AK talk about her progress qualifying to compete in the 2015 Iditarod.

Discussion at the meeting also included the challenges the VTMA faces in engaging the membership given a variety of schedules and the geographical challenges of travelling to a central location for meetings and / or social gatherings. Despite those challenges, the board is pleased with the progress we have made in membership numbers as well as accomplishing tasks such as building the new web site, revising the by-laws of the VTMA, establishing sound financial and accounting practices and renewing relationships and membership with the Vermont Trails & Greenways Council, The Vermont Federation of Dog Clubs, the Vermont Traditions Coalition and the Vermont Outdoor Guides Association. Members of the board have also been

busy answering inquiries via e-mail from the website, developing a code of ethics soon to be adopted and pondering the content and development of a brochure. We continue to discuss and seek ways to not only engage the current membership, but to recruit new members and mushers in Vermont who have not yet joined VTMA.

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Code of Ethics

VTMA is working on a Code of Ethics for the treatment of our dogs. Below is a draft. Please weigh in on the draft, either through VTMA Members FaceBook page or by email.

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One immediate and necessary way to engage the membership is to seek participation on the board of directors and / or one of the committees we have established. The current Board of Directors and committee members are listed on the website. Currently, there are two vacancies on the Board of Directors as provided in the by-laws and there will be two additional vacancies that will need to be filled by the annual meeting in September, if not filled before then. The VTMA was notified of a change of venue by two key members of the Board of Directors and members of the Executive Committee - Jay and Jean Coffey have relocated to neighboring New Hampshire. Jean has served as vice president of the association, and Jay has served as treasurer and membership secretary, and though they will be missed here in Vermont we are all very happy and pleased they have located to a residence that will have improved trail access for them and their doggies. They have both agreed to continue in

their current capacity until replacements are found or the annual meeting, whichever comes first. On behalf of the VTMA membership, I would like to sincerely thank both Jay and Jean for their work in the VTMA. They have both been instrumental in the re-initiation of the association and their efforts have been greatly appreciated. They have vowed to remain members of the VTMA and work with the committees to continue advancing the agenda of the VTMA. The by-laws allow for a Board of Directors of 11, of which we have two immediate vacancies and two pending vacancies. Please give consideration to serving the association as a member of the Board of Directors, the executive committee or any one of the other committees we have established.

~Allan Tschorn, VTMA president

photo by: Kathy Bennett of Braeburn Siberians

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The Vermont Musher Association endorses the humane and ethical treatment of all dogs, and therefore promotes excellent standards of care both on and off the trail. We aim to serve as a positive representative of dog-powered sports in Vermont.

On the trail, safety and humane treatment come first. We advocate attention to environmental conditions and the dog's physical limits and training limits in order to maximize long-term enjoyment for all canine athletes.

To this end, our philosophy includes practicing high standards of dog care which include:

- ~ Food, Water, Shelter
- ~ Safe Confinement
- ~ Exercise
- ~ Sanitary Management
- ~ Veterinary Care
- ~ Responsible Breeding
- ~ Training and Socialization

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Titanium Goat Tent and Stove

Thinking of Winter Tenting with the Dogs?

I had the opportunity to have a modified winter camping experience as part of the Vermont Outdoor Woman's Doe Camp at the Hulburt Center last March. The instructors, David Shed and Tim Johnson were amazing. The 3-hour seminar flew by as they spoke about personal winter camping adventures and demonstrated the gear necessary for a safe trip.

The hands on learning included setting up camp for the night with a lightweight tent and stove made by Titanium Goat. The website <http://www.titaniumgoat.com/tents.html> reviews all the products and includes a picture gallery.

We assembled the 6.5 tent, which is a two to three-person model depending on the amount of gear and stove size. The stove folds flat for transport. The total weight of the tent is 4 lbs 6 oz. and the stove is an additional 1 lb. 10 oz., a total of six pounds on the sled for lots of warmth.



The stove is fueled by bundles of twigs and fire starter. The bundles light quickly and the tent is warmed enough to make changing comfortable. In the morning we had some bundles set out and literally lifted one arm out of our sleeping bag to light the stove. In a few minutes we were warm enough to dress. The larger stove has an optional cook top.

This was a very nice tent for winter camping. The total price for tent is \$600 and the twelve inch stove is \$275. For the serious winter camper this is well worth the money to assure a pleasant and safe camping experience.

As a novice, I enjoyed the chance to spend a night like a real winter camper. Thanks to my daughter Erin, who joined me in the adventure.

~article by Jean Coffey of Anam Cara Siberians

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Poop Scoops

Top photo: store bought poop scoops

Bottom Photo: Peacepups poop scoop

Industrial Size Poop Scoop

When our dog numbers grow beyond three or four dogs scooping poop becomes a big part of our function as dog owners. There are several readymade options available at most pet supply stores that will work just fine for one to four dogs, but beyond that number the size of the scoop often dictates multiple trips to empty the scoop. We started out with the standard aluminum scoop and light weight rake (see picture top left). We find these to work well and still do use these on the truck when traveling but four dogs can fill one of these pretty quickly.

I wanted to have something larger that would allow me to get through my entire yard of 20 dogs in one pass, without heading back to empty the scoop three or four times. This may seem like a minor issue, but if you are scooping your yard two or three times a day, fewer trips to empty the scoop can save a fair amount of time over the course of a week.

A trip to our local hardware store yielded a ladder rack and a square feed bucket which I combined to make a large scoop that is comfortable to carry, strong, and can collect the waste from over 20 dogs in one fell swoop. These buckets come with a plastic hook for hanging them in a barn. I cut

that off with a saw and then bolted the ladder rack to the top of the bucket. The buckets are very thick plastic and have typically lasted me six or seven years before cracking. The length of the combined ladder rack and bucket works out to be just about right to carry along at arm's length and doesn't require much bending over to scoop.

Our local garden supply store sells a small rake with a 5" head that we use with this scoop bucket in the summer months. In the winter when things are frozen I use a standard garden hoe with the handle cut down to about three feet.

~Article by Ken Hagggett of Peacepups Dog Sledding

Dog Quotes

Acquiring a dog may be the only opportunity a human ever has to choose a relative.

~Mordecai Siegal

A really companionable and indispensable dog is an accident of nature. You can't get it by breeding for it, and you can't buy it with money. It just happens along.

~EB White

There's just something about dogs that make you feel good. You come home, they're thrilled to see you. They're good for the ego.

~Janet Schnellman

Next VTMA meeting is Friday, June 13th. Stay tuned for location and time.

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.

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Addicted?

You wonder why in the world someone does not make a 100% nutritionally balanced human kibble and you can't resist tasting your sled-dog mix.

You diligently research breeds for your new “pet”. You decide on the unbelievable beauty and a unique coloring of the Siberian Husky is for you. You love their disposition. You find a breeder willing to sell to an inexperienced Siberian owner “wanna-be”.

You are told you really should consider two...they are very social you know. “Naw...It's only a pet, and we hear they can be very headstrong and challenging to train. One will be fine.”

Seriously lacking judgment, but curious about this pulling instinct, you loop your belt through the leash and attach your cross country skis to your feet. YAAAA – HOOO I am skijoring. SNAP! goes your belt, off runs your dog.

You buy all of the available Siberian videos on Amazon.com.

Let's do it right. You buy an x-back harness, a line and shock absorber. In the catalogue you find yourself looking at what is needed for a two dog set up.

Skijoring is fun, but only one at a time. **IF** we had just one more dog, we could do this together. The search is on.

Skijoring takes a lot of balance, as the dogs get stronger (and faster), we question if this is really safe. Wanna try a sled?

Spring is here...what shall we do for exercise without snow? You spend your stimulus check from Uncle on a Paw-trekker for your dogs. (Yup...2 now!)

It's August. A sled shows up in the living room for a birthday present. Ya-hooo. Means more dogs, right? The sled acts as a coffee table until snow flies.

A “small” landscape project to make a level area 10' x 30' for a kennel ends up as a major backyard renovation resulting in a 20' x 40' kennel with room to add on. (Can



you say “Home Equity Loan”?) This is justified though because landscaping does add to the value of your home.

You triple the size of your garden so you can put up vegetables for the winter and afford to feed more dogs. A room in your home (previously occupied by one of your children) has been transformed to “the dog room”. Crates, harnesses, gang lines, hooks, food, treats, poly rope, etc. is the décor.

You realize that most people are disgusted by dog poop. Scooping the kennel has become the most tranquil part of your day...no phone, no interruptions, just you and the doggies. AND you pay attention to the size, shape and consistency of the dog poop as a barometer of the health of your kennel.

People identify you as “The one with all those dogs.” Or “the one with those beautiful Siberians.”

People stop asking about the family, but everyone asks how the dogs are doing.

Resistance to 'the call' is futile. Your life has changed. You prefer your dogs to people. You no longer consider yourself a member of society; You have been promoted to being part of a pack.

Sound familiar?

~Article by Allan Tschorn of Tsan Tsulan Siberians