



Vol. V No. 7

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Members: Please send your 2011 dues of**\$25.00 per residence to:****Val Dockter****P.O. Box 50752****Parks, AZ 86018****From da Prez:**

Hey There Club Members! Okay, so this hasn't been the best winter we've ever seen, but there are still two BIG events coming up as the winter season continues! The first is the Flagstaff Sled Dog Races to be held at lower Lake Mary, just south of Flagstaff on Lake Mary Road. The race this year is being organized by Charlie Odegaard and Odegaard's Sewing Center. As long as we get some more snow, the races will be held on Feb 5th & 6th. More information and updates on this race can be found at our club website (www.azmm.org) and the Sled Dog Central website (www.sleddogcentral.com) under "Current Race Info for 2011). You may also be able to find some information on Odegaard's Sewing Center website. Please continue to check our club website for updates.



The second event is the Flagstaff Weight Pull Challenge! This event will be held as part of the Flagstaff Winterfest activities and is planned for Saturday, February 26th, 2011 in Wheeler Park. We desperately need club members (or even prospective members) to come help with putting on a successful event. This weight pull promises to be a lot of fun for everyone, so please pack up your pup (or pups) and come on out to the Winterfest Weight Pull! For more information see Shirley & Dave Hendrick's article regarding this event and upcoming practices for the weight pull.

Here's hoping we see more snow and you and your canine companions at these two great events!

Happy Trails!

Gery Allan
AZMM Club President

**"Red Lantern Express: words about mushing from a complete novice"**

Let us consider the mushers meeting. I feel obligated to explain some things to everyone. I don't want the other mushers to feel that I am "unsportsmanlike".

Some people may believe the items listed below are obstacles. Not me, I've been gearing up for this since last year.

1. I've never been on a sled. Just found out it doesn't have a steering wheel.
2. I spent the day watching videos of previous winter - Games.
3. Two of my four dogs have never been in snow.
4. Gee and Haw they understand... Whoa is a foreign language.
5. We've never passed another team and another team has never passed me. So if you want to pass... well... I'll try to move over for you. I think that's called gee over&^%\$. Sibes you know are very so-ciable. So they find it rude to not stop and say hello.
6. Elevation - let's not even discuss that.
7. If I think of something else I'll let you know.

Despite, all of this I am so excited I can't stand it!

Thanks for letting me play!

by Debra E Carson

Dogs Decoded

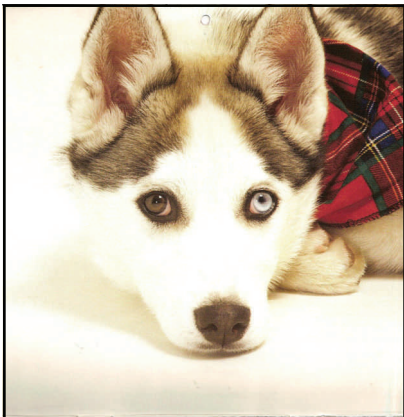
By Cirra's round-eared dog Frank Brown

The PBS/Nova special "Dogs Decoded" took a scientific look at why dogs are man's best friend. This was done through a variety of controlled experiments, and by interviewing some researchers conducting novel experiments. Researchers observed that people tend to look at the right side of a person's face in order to "read" that person. Then they filmed dogs looking at people in a controlled environment and their eye-tracking software observed the same trend. Researchers also observed dogs in action. Dogs in the process of barking in order to communicate something were filmed and recorded. The audio only portion was heard by different dog owners and they each independently and correctly concluded that the dog was asking to play ball or telling an intruder to go away.

New research is being conducted on the genetics of domestication. Using newly born wolf cubs from a wolf sanctuary, the cubs were adopted into a litter of puppies and others were adopted by humans who had raised puppies from that same age. In any of these cases, the wolf cubs were raised by people as if they were domesticated dogs. The results were interesting. While dependent upon humans for food and water, these domesticated wannabe's were not domesticated and at four months of age, each wolf cub had to be banished from the house and re-introduced as wolves at the wolf sanctuary.

Human-dog interaction was studied, and one series of experiments involved a person hiding a treat under one upside-down bowl but no treat under another identical bowl. The dog's owner/handler held the dog, the person hiding the treat then pointed to the treated bowl. The dog correctly read the pointing and knew that the person was telling it which bowl had the hidden treat. This experiment was repeated in the same manner with the "domesticated" wolves mentioned earlier. Each wolf tested did not read the pointing, and some did not even look at the person pointing to the hidden treat. Chimpanzees were also tested scientifically with the human pointing to the hidden treat. The chimps could not read humans, and often decided which bowl held the hidden treat before the human pointed, and did not change their behavior even with a person pointing the way. Dogs are exceptionally tuned into humans.

In Siberia, a research ranch was set up in 1959 to try to breed domesticated foxes. The silver foxes were raised in captivity, and the researchers selected foxes that were neither aggressive towards humans nor fearful. Only the non-aggressive foxes from each litter were then bred for the next 50 years. At the same time, they bred a control group of foxes that were always aggressive towards people. The results were amazing, simply by selecting based on aggression attitude. The non-aggressive foxes were physically different, in that they now and then had curly tails, sometimes shorter legs, and fox kits held their floppy ears for longer periods of time. The domesticated foxes raised in a home were independent but also as domesticated and wanting human interactions as a dog, according to their owners. For more information or to see a repeat of this show, go to <http://video.pbs.org/video/1634377233/> and, if you are interested, the meaning of dog barks is at <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/nova/nature/meaning-dog-barks.html>. The conclusions of this Nova program are that dogs are not only physically different but more importantly are genetically different. Not to confuse the issue, the program pointed out that wolves and dogs can still interbreed. But you can't get a domesticated canine simply from nurture with and from humans. Domesticated canines are a product of generations of breeding and human interaction to become our beloved canine pets.



NEWS FROM THE WEIGHT PULL CORNER

(By Canine Correspondents, Taki and T.J.)

Well, here we are again; Woo, Wooing to all you four-legged weight pull enthusiasts, your handlers, and friends.

You might have been wondering what has happened to our Arizona Mountain Musher, 2010-2011, Weight Pull season. Well, let us just say, it certainly has gotten off to a slower season than any of us ever anticipated. Did we say SLOW? Yes, we did, and let us give you some of the particulars.

First, quoting our human sponsors and an AMM official, after canceling a couple of practices; **"It became ABUNDANTLY clear, that we needed a better way to communicate weight pull information with all of you"**. Our human sponsors have asked that you and your handlers RSVP your intentions at least three days prior to the scheduled practice, demonstration, or event. And they have placed four (4) as the minimum number of handlers needed to conduct a weight pull practice.

We, your Canine Correspondents, think we have several good methods of communication (if you use them). First, there is the group howl, which we are very happy to send up, even though we know that it is not usually heard by anyone except us – it makes us feel good! There is the AMM website, which keeps you all posted with lots of information, and it is routinely updated. Then, there are the "News From the Weight Pull Corner" postings. Regular weight pull practice notices are sent out by Jann, our wonderful newsletter lady; and sometimes we even send out extra-special, personal notes. Now, none of that helps if you do not have regular access to the computer. And, not having thumbs, we know how difficult it is to always be on top of things.

We do know the weather has played a major role in our inability to keep things going on a regular basis this season. Weight pull practices were cancelled because roads were slippery, making travel hazardous, snow was deep; air was cold; and there were high winds.

Another negative was the fact that the weight pull equipment trailer could not be pulled to our practice site at Olsen's Grain, because the handlers who usually bring it to the practice site were not able to get to Flagstaff due to road/highway closures and bad weather advisories. And, since that equipment trailer now lives out in the open, in its rental storage spot, we are not even sure that it wasn't frozen to the ground. Can you imagine not being able to get your four paws off the ground so you could run, romp, and pull! Wow, that would not be good!



So, moving on.....

Gery Allan, our AMM president, has gotten the "go-ahead" for us to host a weight pull event at Wheeler Park, in Flagstaff, on Saturday, 10:a.m.–1:00 p.m., February 26, 2011. Set-up is at 8:00 a.m., so if you're able to help, please plan to show up at 8:00 a.m. sharp! We did this event last year and it was very successful! We had good participation from our Arizona Mountain Musher's club members, and we had good participation from non-members. Our weight pull event will be part of Flagstaff's WinterFest. We CAN do it again!. Get it on your calendars right now. It is open to the public. Invite your friends!

In order to be ready for the Wheeler Park event, we do need to get in at least one practice. SO, how about putting the following date and information on your calendars for weight pull practice. The practice will be Sunday, February 13, 2011, in the parking lot at Olsen's Grain, 2250 North Steves Boulevard in Flagstaff. Set-up will begin at 11:30 a.m., and practice will begin at 12:45 p.m. We can always use help with the set-up! PLEASE remember to RSVP for this weight pull practice and for the Wheeler Park event.

Remember, All of our canine weight pull activities are open to Arizona Mountain Musher's members and their dogs, as well as non-AMM members and their dogs, as long you are all well-behaved, at least one year of age, and not a female in heat. We do follow the International Sled Dog Racing Association (ISDRA) guidelines for weight pulling.

All dogs participating in any Arizona Mountain Musher's weight pull practice/training sessions or weight pull events MUST wear a properly fitted weight pull harness. If you (canine participant) do not own one, our experienced trainers can give you advice about harnesses and we do have a few for temporary loan.



We are calling on as many of you as possible (if, in fact, you are still in the area and are still in the mood for weight pulling) – Aly, Boomer, Buddy, Charlie, Chuckles, Cirra, Desi-Rae, El Divo, Franklin, GeeZee, Jake, John, Lightning, Lupo, Manilow, Mizu, Montana, Monte, Mochi, Nemo, Nuvak, Phobos, Relic, Sable, Saifa, Thunder, Toby, Wagish, Yuki, Zee, are just a few of our canine weight pullers at previous events.

Our human sponsors always need weight pull assistance (announcer (1), judges (2), timers (2), registrars (2), cart handlers (2), and 3 to 4 additional humans for set up/take down help). Now, if you were counting, you can tell that it takes at least twelve humans to help us canines make an event successful.

We know that out there somewhere, are aspiring canine weight pullers just waiting for the opportunity to join us at the remaining practice and the "big event" at Wheeler Park in Flagstaff, Arizona! Grab your handlers and your gear.

As always, remember to bring lots of water, and your friends,

Please continue to check the Arizona Mountain Musher's website, which is <http://www.azmm.org> for additional information/updates.

For additional information, also, contact Shirley Hendricks, Weight Pull Coordinator, at shirleyh@asu.edu or by telephone at (480)488-3700. OR, you can even contact Gery Allan, the AMM president.

Wooing out for now,

T.J. and Taki

Canine Correspondents



 Arizona Mountain Musers

The mission of the Arizona Mountain Musers is to promote dog sled sports by sponsoring cart races, sled races, weight-pulling contest, backpacking trips, behavior classes, obedience classes, and nutritional development classes. And to engage in any other activity relevant to those listed above intended to promote the welfare of dogs and persons associated with dogs.

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"Arizona Mountain Musers prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, creed, color, national origin, political beliefs, sex or sexual orientation."



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