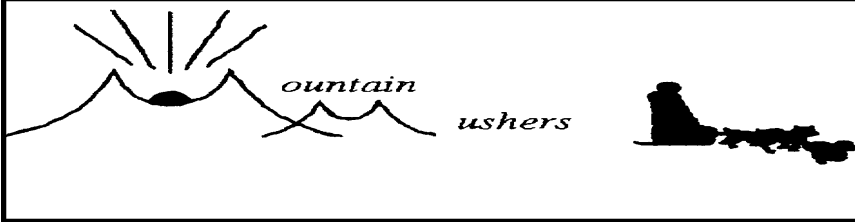


# Arizona Mountain Musers News



Vol. II No. 5

April 2008

## Officers for 2007-2008.....

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Backpack Chair:	Reignie Farley	<a href="mailto:siberianwingspan@yahoo.com">siberianwingspan@ yahoo.com</a>

## TREASURER'S REPORT:

### Checking Account Balance

as of 12-10-07 1705.00

### Expenses:

Jann--newsletter	13.50
White Mountain Races	<u>600.00</u>
and awards	613.50

1091.50

### Income:

Dues and Donations: 354.20

Balance as of 04-07-08

1445.70

## SECOND ONLY TO TIGER WOODS

**MACKEY #2 ON SPORTS ILLUSTRATED'S LIST OF TOP 25 TOUGHEST ATHLETES!**



The incredible Lance Mackey is once again basking in the sports limelight with a very distinctive honor. Last year, Mackey was one of the elite nominees for the highly-coveted ESPY Award. Last week, Sports Illustrated released its list of the **Top 25**

**Toughest Athletes**—Mackey placed second behind Tiger Woods. (Some of us even have his autograph...nana nana boo boo!!)

## HAVE YOU SEEN

If you want to oooh and ahhhhh, rent or buy this feel good flick...even Howard did not fall asleep! Good old Walt Disney...Ya gotta love him! A bunch of puppies and a kid take on the evil musher. Not as good as Iron Will or Stone Fox but you will be entranced!!



—Jann

## Hi Everyone....

We had a great fall auction at the fall campout. Now is the time to make the next one even better. So I am asking everyone to put on their thinking caps and give me some ideas.

I have a tote bag coming with Arizona Mountain Musers on it.....

Welcome to New Members:

**Alex Howarth..... Showlow**  
**Michael & Cheryl Martin.....St. John**  
**C.J. Kolb....Tucson**

Hope to see everyone at the BBQ in May.

Respectfully submitted  
 Val Dockter

## **MAY 3rd at 12 pm AZ MTN. MUSHERS POTLUCK PICNIC AND FUNFEST—**

**Come tell sled stories about your '07 season and share dreams for the '08 winter. Meet up with us on May 3rd in Flagstaff at 12:00 for a pot luck picnic. Bushmaster Park on Alta Vista and Locket is the location, under the shaded Ramada. Hamburgers and Dogs (the edible kind) will be the menu. So come on over and have a howling good time!!**

—Cheri

## FROM DA PREZ—

### Hello Out There!

Hope every one had a great season and are enjoying the warm temps. of Spring. Now that the sleds are put away, here are some things to think about for summer:

The Kennel Club had a meeting for our area and the subject was Disaster Evacuation. It was very interesting and is something you need to have planned.

Imagine having 45 minutes to evacuate... If you have a few or allot of animals and need to leave your house for a period of time you need to be sure you have items packed such as their medications, papers, I.D.tags on collars, your vets number, a picture of your animal incase they escape. Crates or something to confine them in if you have to go to a shelter or a dog friendly Motel.

You may want to ask other musher friends in your area to join you in a plan- if you can't get to your house to collect your pets, have them agree to transport them to a pre- planned destination? I would much rather have "dog people" help with my animals- the Police and Firefighters don't have time or manpower to collect critters. At times like those a plan is very important.

Flagstaff is putting together a animal friendly people shelter plan so animals can stay with their owners in those scary times. You may want to check with the health dept. in your area to see what they have to offer as suggestions.

**Spring is in the air!!!** There are new folks signing up and getting started in our great sport! We have new mushers needing carts so if you were going to up grade and have a cart for sale let me know and we will get you in touch with the mushers in need.

This is the time of year to add to your team. There are some great dogs available here in Flag so if you were considering an adoption please give us a call. Frank and I have young pups, adults and some trained leaders ready to go. I have evaluated some great rescue dogs up here this spring that need homes quickly. There are other litters coming from club members due shortly so if you are looking for a new addition give me a call at (928) 607-7520 and we will get you in touch with your next great athlete!  
—Cheri



## Shirley & David Hendricks' trip to Iditarod 2008.....

Well, we did "go north, north, north to Alaska" as the song goes. Our mission was to experience portions of the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race. We attended the Mushers' Banquet which was great fun; browsed the Official Iditarod Store where, of course, we spent money on many items. We met Jeff King with whom we had pictures taken; Karen Ramstead, Eric Rogers and Michael Suprenant, all of whom I had met through e-mails and mutual friends. We spent some time with Ken Anderson's mother. And, we schmoozed with some of Rick Swenson's dogs. Everyone was absolutely friendly and seemed willing to spend time talking to us.



We went to Anchorage as Iditarod Trail Committee (ITC) volunteer dog handlers. We were required to attend Dog Handler Class, which consisted of a lecture with lots of "Do's and Don'ts, and actual dog handling. Our class dog team was a team of 10 well-behaved sled dogs who helped make the task seem very easy. That false sense of confidence was shattered Saturday morning at the Ceremonial Start. First off, as an ITC volunteer, your dog handling assignment is totally random – decided on the spot prior to the start, by our ITC coordinator who checked with individual mushers to find out who wanted dog handling help and then he assigned us to various mushers and their teams. (Many mushers have their own handlers and do not use volunteers.) Fifteen other handlers and I were assigned with Sue Allen. Her team was lined out on H Street. She was running a team of nineteen month old "puppies". And, she told us she wanted them WALKED to the start line. Sounded easy enough. My pup was number 13 or 14, depending on how you were counting. Ms. Allen, as many mushers do, also uses leashes as an additional aid to controlling the dogs. I had my pup by the harness and also was given the responsibility of the leash on the gangline in front of my pup. This was a little awkward, but also seemed fairly simple. Well, it all worked until we reached the end of the H Street and made the turn onto 4th headed for the start line at C Street. I was so intent on taking care of my assigned pup that I am not really sure how "IT" happened, but IT did. It seemed that the lead dogs broke into a brisk walk, their handlers followed, the next pair of dogs and handlers followed suit, and so it happened on down the line, and when the momentum reached pup number 14 and me, we were at a fast trot! This team was not about to be walked to the start line. At that point my assignment became much more difficult than I had ever imagined! It was not easy keeping ones footing, staying mindful not to risk the safety of the dogs, and look like you were having fun. I was having fun and I would not trade the experience for anything.

All in all, our experiences were such that we hope to go back next year. We will volunteer again. (I will spend lots of time in the gym between now and then.) We want to extend our stay, get better acquainted with some of the newly made friends, and to make another trip to Homer and get to say, "Wow, another bald eagle".

## January 2008—White Mountain Winter Games

Photos courtesy of Val Dockter



Oops — who poured the white paint on these huskies????



Pretty Sibes but mighty slow and fat and older...ahem!



The Marine juniors helping out in the chutes

## IDITAROD FEBRUARY 2008

Photos courtesy of Mary Uhler



### **IDITAROD 2008** —by Mary and Don Uhler

This was the first time Don and I had ever been in Alaska. We went to the Iditarod as Karen Ramstead's handlers so had a real insider, hands on, experience. I could go on and on but will limit this to two experiences that really stood out.

At the Musher's Banquet Joe Garnie, a native musher, brought his two daughters on stage with him and said that this would be his last race as he had maxed out his wife's credit card but he wanted to revisit old friends while he was still physically able. More on this later.

On Monday, after the starts, we flew out to Puntilla Lake and the Rainey Pass Checkpoint. We had planned to spend the night at the small lodge there. Our timing was perfect because we saw all 95 teams come in and out throughout that day and into the next morning. The ITC was shorthanded so we ended up doing a little bit of everything from "parking" teams to sorting drop bags. Never having been around such a long race it was interesting to sort through the things that the mushers didn't put into their return bags. You could tell the mushers with the big sponsors. It was also interesting to see the different musher's strategies. One musher did his eight hours while others barely paused. Jeff King stopped his team within sight of the checkpoint to water and snack and then went straight through. He said he didn't want to get his dogs used to stopping and resting at every checkpoint. Because of a change in the weather, we ended up stuck there for three days along with about 45 people on a Cabela's tour who were only supposed to be there for three hours. They sure weren't used to outhouses and no running water. Fortunately, it was easy to stay away from the grumblers.

Back to Joe Garnie, He had to scratch at Rainey Pass as the fish, seal, and muttuk for his dogs ended up inside a Post Office where it thawed. Joe had not raced since 1999 and was amazed about what was left in the musher's discard pile. He said he was looking as he wanted to see what "others were feeding". When talking to him I felt it was the end of an era. He had built his sled himself. He had "village dogs" that did everything from hunting to transport. It was not surprising, but his dogs looked more like Siberians than Alaskans. They had all the traits that made them adapted to his environment. Can you tell I'm biased? Since he had expected to make it to Nome from where he could continue on home, he now had no way to get there. One of the "Gilligan's Island people" in Rainey Pass, a tugboat captain, bought Joe's hand made sled so he could afford to get his dogs home from Anchorage. It is a sad commentary that the people who originally ran "the last great race" are being eliminated from being competitive and even entering by the high tech, high funding promoters.

There were three and a half Siberian teams. Blake Freking's Siberian team actually set a new record for Siberians. Blake ran the entire race alongside his wife, Jennifer's, half Siberian team. This is actually pretty amazing when you consider how hot it was and that one of Jennifer's dogs was killed and another injured when a snow machine ran into her team.

All in all it was a pretty fantastic trip. You can see a few of our pictures at <http://picasaweb.google.com/maryuhler/AZMM>. But the best photos are at [www.adn.com/itarod](http://www.adn.com/itarod).

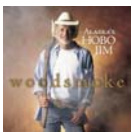
## OUR EXCELLENT ADVENTURE TO THE LAND OF THE MIDNIGHT SUN.....

When you own Northern Breeds, your mind naturally turns to mushing in the winter. Our mushing Mecca's are called the Yukon Quest or the Iditarod Trail. Shirley Ramsey has had Samoyeds for over 30 years and I have owned Huskies for 20....she said she had a free plane ticket to Anchorage and the rest is my history. We visited the place of my heroes: **Susan Butcher, Libby Riddle, Martin Buser, Dee Dee Jonrowe, Lance Mackey, Jeff King, Rick Swenson.** Those names mean little to most people, but to us they define our dreams.

We arrived in Anchorage on Wednesday evening and settled in. On Thursday we drove our little rental to Wasilla to visit the Official Iditarod Trail Headquarters. I am pictured here with the bronze of **Joe Reddington**, the "Father of the Iditarod Trail."



We attended a sit down banquet for **1800** people that evening. Known as the **Musher's Banquet**, it was a chance to meet and greet all 96 mushers; if you had the stamina to fight the crowds. Each musher is able to draw the number they will wear for the next 10-20 days. They may also give a speech. They are not a shy group! One woman musher is 62 yrs young and still able to race. WOW!



We were serenaded at the banquet by **Hobo Jim**, the Alaska legend and official "Alaskan Balladeer". He is a fabulous folk singer who sings of commercial fishing, Joe Reddington, canneries, mining, logging, ranching, Northern Lights and the Iditarod. His topics are all about his gorgeous state. What a treat for us!

Perhaps the most enjoyable of all was our trip to Willow on Friday for an open house for **Karen Ramstead**, pictured to the left. Karen, a Canadian, is one of only a handful of Iditarod mushers to run a team of registered Siberian Huskies, which she also shows in conformation. (She took Open Dog class at our National this year with "Crunchy" who is one of her leaders). She definitely has the "prettiest" sled dogs in the race! Pictured to the right is Shirley with Mary Uhlir, a Tucson AMM member and Siberian breeder, who gave us our invitation to the open house! You can see some of Karen's dogs in the background.



Saturday was the big day for us. The race has its "false" start in downtown Anchorage for the public and press (the real start is in Willow on Sunday). Each team goes out in their number order. It was electric on the streets of Anchorage. Also, a chilly 10 degrees above zero with wind off of the sound. Brrrrrrrr. The governor pronounced the first Saturday in March to be "**Susan Butcher Day.**" Her husband and children were there and it was really touching. Pictured left is a photo of Susan displayed at the Anchorage airport.

Well, we finished our stay by driving through the **Kenai Peninsula** which is probably some of the most gorgeous scenery in this world. We almost made it to Seward but had to turn back due to heavy snow and icy roads. Tip to the wise: rent a 4 wheel drive when you go to Alaska in the winter!

We were two tired but happy girls as we made our way to the airport in Anchorage Saturday evening to return home on the redeye. What a trip! It was better than any of my dreams!



PS. 1  
Left is "Q." He was my favorite of Karen's team. He looks so much like my first Siberian lead dog, and piebald, "Alfie!"

PS. 2 Then, we have to picture the **Northern Lights**...the goal of our next trip to the Last Frontier!!!



## Mushing: Mt. Hood, Oregon

This past winter I had the good fortune of being able to join Twila Baker and her handler, Liz, on a 3 day mushing/camping trip at one of Mt. Hood's many Snowparks. After much fall training (up to 18 miles/day) and equipment purchasing (yikes!) I struck out just after New Year's Day for Mt. Hood. The 2-day drive was rather uneventful (thank God!) and after arriving at Mt. Hood and meeting up with Twila I spent the next day packing and getting ready for the "mushing expedition." Three, 8 dog teams left the next morning in the midst of falling snow, which added to the 14 feet that had accumulated from winter's onset. This was the first time I had ever mushed and camped with dogs, so it was quite an experience. I learned important things like how to heat up snow using an alcohol cooker AND making sure it doesn't tip over after melting the snow it's sitting on! The first day we did about 30 miles then stopped for the night at a warming cabin built by the Mt. Hood Snowmobile Club. After setting up our tents and feeding/watering the dogs we were able to go inside the warming cabin, fire up the woodstove and thaw are frozen little fingers! The second and third day was more of the same: mushing on great trails through beautiful, snow-laden pines. All in all we did about 75 miles over the course of 3 days. The dogs seemed to be enjoying every minute of it and performed exceptionally. If you ever get a chance to go to Oregon in the winter, you definitely need to check out the Snowpark trails. There are at several Snowparks to choose from --- all with PLENTY of snow!

Cheers,

Gery



**The mission** of the Arizona Mountain Mushers 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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JOE REDDINGTON ... 'THE FATHER OF THE IDITAROD TRAIL!!



Dave's Forum:

[http://www.astrobio.nau.edu/  
azmushers/azmushers/](http://www.astrobio.nau.edu/azmushers/azmushers/)

**Arizona Mountain Mushers website:**

<http://www.azmm.org/>

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