

From the President...

A friend of mine interviewed me for an article he is writing for the Alaska Demi-Centennial (50th anniversary of Statehood). His focus was on how dog mushing had changed in the past 100 years. So I began with prize purses and equipment and this and that, avoiding what he really wanted to know, which was dog care. I suspected this since he began with, "as the current president of PRIDE" not as the past winner of some race or the oldest living musher in Alaska both of which don't apply to me.

So where have we gone in 100 years or even in the past twenty and who are "we". If you look at the stories and photos of days gone by you would see examples of loving and caring owners, happy dogs and stories of dogs saving owners from icy waters. You would also read stories of whip-lashing characters like Phillias Fog (fictional character) beating dogs to near death. Today we have videos of owners swimming with dogs, happy dog photos at finish lines and "The Dog Whisper" on cable TV. On the flip side we do have professional athletes indicted for dog fighting or neglected and starving dogs posted in dog yards waiting for a rescue. In some ways very little has changed, which is very sad but there has been some improvement. Our past is surely edited by the selective memory of authors just as today the media can portray dog owners in almost any light possible with a few words in a newspaper.

So where are we in sled dog care in 2007? Medically we know more about our canine athletes than we ever have. We have sequenced the dogs genetic DNA. We have taken dog food formulation and feeding to the macroscopic level if not microscopic level. There has been so much progress from the scientific level that I could devote an entire newsletter to the subject but still mushers are constantly dancing around the dog care issue. Just like I have been doing for the past three paragraphs and like I did with my journalist friend.

We still have a long way to go as a society when it comes to animal welfare. Dog mushing has made great strides but has to admit that all is not perfect and that we do have some bad apples, there is room for improvement and that what was done in the past may not be what is best today. Today, organizations like PRIDE, The Second Chance League and many others exist to improve conditions by various means. PRIDE does this by education and establishing basic guidelines for sled dog care. It is also establishing standards of operation which are reflected in our voluntary kennel certification program. By far the biggest change in sled dog care is the ability for the public to learn and participate in dog mushing instantaneously. We need to continue moving forward in all aspects of dog mushing including sled dog care.

PRIDE is where it needs to be today, moving forward on dog care issue. To remain static is actually falling behind. We as an organization and you as members need to take part in the discussion. Is there something that needs to be addressed, let us know?

-MM

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Membership Survey Results

The summer newsletter included a membership survey to get a better idea on what direction the PRIDE membership would like to see the organization go, and what topics are important to them. Well, a BIG thanks to all of you who sent in your responses and comments! Here is a snapshot of what YOU had to say:

How often have you used any of the following PRIDE resources?	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often
Website	3	1	14	2
Email Forum	10	4	5	1
Newsletter	4	1	11	4
Dog Care Guidelines	0	1	10	9
Equipment Guidelines	5	2	8	5
First Aid Manual	9	3	5	3
Symposium Video	17	1	2	0



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Please rate the following issues based on what you think PRIDE's role should be:	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Very Important
Legal Rights for dog owners/mushers & Legislation	5	4	11
Responsible breeding & placement of unwanted/retired dogs	2	3	15
Educational outreach about mushing	0	7	13
Updating Dog Care Guidelines	0	6	14
Creating Race Care Guidelines	4	8	8
Supporting new mushers to run respectable kennels	0	7	13
Promoting responsible animal-human relationships	0	8	12
Developing new publications	11	7	2
Other	0	0	0

Other comments on PRIDE Membership Survey:

"Given my choice, this item [Responsible breeding of dogs] would be the focus of PRIDE's efforts until all the shelters' dog lots were empty."

"All [issues listed] are important; the question is as to PRIDE's priorities!"

"[Responsible breeding & placement] Not Important—local issues!"

"[Creating Race Care Guidelines] Not important—let races lead on this."

"Urban mushers don't weight pull"

"I really appreciate all the work you folks have done to keep this so important organization going."

"Kennel Certification program was the worst idea ***** ever had! This is just an underhanded way to make substandard breeders look better and sell dogs."

"I am very glad to know Mush with PRIDE has renewed life and is looking to the future of our sport through establishing excellence in canine welfare."

"What about scooters?" [Describe your mushing background]

"Somebody needs to update these [Guidelines] as I'm not giving them to any new people as is."

"You need outreach to non-Alaskan members."

"[Responsible breeding & placement] Promotion, but not acting as a rescue organization."

"PRIDE will never have credibility until all members start accounting for what happens to the dogs they breed."

"[Have you participated in the Voluntary Kennel Inspection Program?] No! None of your business!"

"[Responsible breeding & placement] Important but impossible to do!"

"Would the board please consider designing a decal or metal plate that can be displayed on our dog trucks stating we belong to or are certified by PRIDE?"

"[Promoting responsible animal-human relationships] Pride needs to get out of the animal rights business."

"[First Aid Manual] Don't have use for this and tried!"

"[Symposium video] Didn't know there was one" (3 people had this/similar comment)

"[Email forum] "Dead!"

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Mush with PRIDE Guidelines Committee Collecting Input for Updated Sled Dog Care Guidelines Edition

Thomas Swan

The Mush with PRIDE guidelines committee is discussing some potential changes to the Sled Dog Care Guidelines, and has been collecting input from members and other interested mushers. So far the most common theme among those contributing to the project is a need to increase emphasis on kennel population control. Although the topic is addressed in the current edition, most of those offering input felt we need strengthen that section. The issue of unwanted sled dog contributing to the Nation's pet surplus weighs heavily in many people's conscience and most have recommended that the guidelines increase the emphasis on limiting breeding to only the very best sled dogs and stressing the importance of sterilizing all sled dogs that are not part of a very carefully conceived breeding plan as the most reliable means of preventing unintentional breedings. It was also suggested that we include more specific information on terminating pregnancies in bitches that are bred unintentionally, most frequently by immediately spaying the dog.

Several respondents have suggested the next edition of the Guidelines include more information specific to urban & dry land mushing. Bikejoring, scootering, canicross and racing wheeled rigs are all growing in popularity, especially in warmer regions. Warm weather sports involve dog selection criteria and dog care considerations that are not currently addressed in the PRIDE Guidelines.

Other suggestions have included that we provide more information on controlling pests and the spread of infectious diseases in our kennels, providing additional information on safely traveling with our teams, and perhaps a section on etiquette at races and while training on multiple use trails. We have also received some suggestions for updating and improving the Mush with PRIDE Equipment Safety Guidelines.

If you have ideas or suggestions about changes you'd like to see in the Mush with PRIDE Sled Dog Care Guidelines, please share them with the committee. We can be reached by Email to pride@tworiversak.com or be snail mail to PRIDE guidelines c/o Thom Swan, P. O. Box 16237, Two Rivers AK 99716.

- TS



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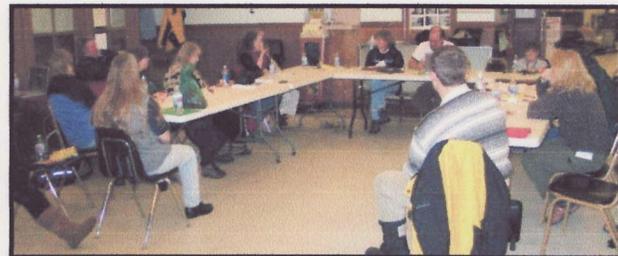
Over the course of the fall, Mush with PRIDE has been busy attending regional sled dog seminars, symposiums, and gatherings across the US. The Tour started on the East Coast with a booth at the Down East Sled Dog Symposium, made its way through the Midwest for the MUSH meeting, hit the Rocky Mountains at the Colorado Mountain Musers Fall Campout, and wrapped up at the ADMA Sled Dog Symposium in Fairbanks where a membership meeting was held in Pioneer Hall. It was great to see so many new faces joining PRIDE and old faces supporting PRIDE by renewing their memberships.

Ben Woodward and Shawn Linendoll represented PRIDE at the Northern New England Sled Dog Trade Fair & Seminar in September.

Bob Anderson spoke with the Mid-Union Sled Haulers about Mush with PRIDE at their membership meeting this fall.



PRIDE representatives at the 2007 CMM fall Campout October 2007.



PRIDE booth and staff at the Fairbanks Symposium (left); PRIDE membership meeting (right) October 2007

Mush with PRIDE Club Members

Colorado Mountain Musers
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Musers for Unified Trail Travel
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Does your club or organization support PRIDE?



Fall Training with Shawn Linendoll

These are some of the things I do for my team during fall training to get them ready for the mid-distance racing season. I am by no means saying I know it all or I am better than anyone else - everyone does things differently. What follows are things that work for me and my team, and I thought it would give people some ideas for their own training program. Many of you may already do these things, but I hope my thoughts can spark some ideas or answer questions that some people may have.

Before fall hook-ups begin, I go around the kennel and try harnesses on each one of my dogs. The reason for this is so I have an idea of what size harness I should grab once I start hooking up teams and the excitement builds. As many mushers know, dogs bodies change during the season, and often they need a different size or style than they were using at the end of the last season. Also this gives me a chance to inspect all of the harnesses for any in need of repair I may have missed before I put them away in the spring. I then go through the ganglines I will be using and check for damage and bad snaps. I replace what is needed, including any "iffy" parts so I can lessen the chance of a problem on a training run. After that, I go over to my early season rig, which in my case is a 410 lb. motorless ATV. I check tires, brakes, hoses, lights, and basically give it a once over. Then I grab a grease gun and pump the grease to all the fittings on the rig. This helps with a smooth pull and no noise. I hate something squeaking while I am running dogs!

Then it is time to hook up the dogs. I personally do not run above 50 degrees Fahrenheit. Everyone has their own feelings on what temperature limit to use (this depends on the type of dogs running, length and strenuousness of the run, etc.) and 50°F is my magic number. I bring out the ATV to where I hook dogs, which is right in the kennel (this helps a bunch). There I lay out the gangline. This time of year I run many smaller teams of 6 to 8 dogs. This helps with control of speed, excitement, and the amount of weight each dog pulls. I want the dogs working hard and not running flat out. I hook my leaders in first and have them hold out the line. This for me pays off BIG time later at races, and with bigger teams. I then go and harness each dog that is running for this run. I harness them at their house and unhook them from their tethers. They then race around up to the ATV and wait for me to hook them in. For me this works, and if for some reason a dog gets loose at a race or somewhere, all I have to do is set out a gangline and harness and the dog comes over to be hooked in.

OK we are all hooked in and ready to go! I get on the ATV and say OK! We are off. I ride the brakes for a while to keep the speed where I want it. In early training I don't want the dogs above 10-12 MPH. I have the ability with the area where I live to train on hills and I use it to build their muscles



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hand, I get off and run alongside the rig. When the dogs see this and feel the lighter weight, they look back at me, almost as if saying "wow he does work!" This builds confidence in my dogs letting them know we work as a team.

During the first month, I keep the runs SHORT, less than 5 miles. This keeps it fun and the dogs are never overworked, which always leaves them looking for more. During these short runs I will stop once, just to let them chill. I walk up the gangline, pet each one, and give them a "GOOD DOG." This also helps the younger dogs get the idea of when we stop to stand and face straight ahead with no goofing off.

When we get back to the kennel, I let each dog off the gangline to run free. This time gives me a chance to watch the dogs to see if any are sore or tired. If I see the dogs playing with each other, I know they have plenty of energy left and it is ok to bump up the miles. I make sure PLENTY of fresh water is available all over the kennel so when they get back they can drink until they don't need any more.

On short runs (under 5 miles), I don't carry water on my ATV. BUT on the ATV I always carry a leatherman tool, spare neck line, spare tugline, and a complete eight dog spare gangline. YOU NEVER KNOW!!!! The roads I run on are hard-packed gravel. This does a number on feet if you go too fast, so in these conditions you need to keep the speed down. The key to foot problems is prevention. I would rather spend a few hundred dollars on booties for training to save the feet instead of trying to repair cuts after they happen.

I usually run three teams a day this time of year, and progress mileage as the dogs are ready. You can not worry about how many miles you have or how many miles your competition says they have. KNOW your team and work at what is best for them. A strong healthy team will appear before your eyes as the season goes by.

Summary

- 1) Check and know your equipment
- 2) Know your dogs and what is best for them
- 3) GO SLOW
- 4) Build miles as the dogs get stronger
- 5) Keep the dogs happy and healthy
- 6) DON'T get caught up in the "I need 500 miles by Christmas mind set"
- 7) Enjoy yourself. If you aren't having fun, neither are the dogs.
- 8) Relax

-SL

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These and additional items are also available through the Mush with PRIDE website (www.mushwithpride.org) through **PayPal**.

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Sled Dog Care Guidelines _____ **Quantity** _____ \$ _____

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Equipment Safety Guidelines _____ **Quantity** _____ \$ _____

Based on a survey of experienced mushers, covers the basics of safe equipment choices and use. Includes chapters on dog gear, lines, sleds & rigs, skijoring, dog yards, traveling, etc. 36-page book \$5 each or \$3.50 each for 10 or more.

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