

Message from the Board

In most areas, summer has finally set in. Although this is considered "off season" for mushing, most of us are busy repairing dog yards, building new houses, cutting trails, raising pups, and taking care of all the things around the house that were put off during the snowy months. Similarly, the Mush with PRIDE board is working through the summer to do maintenance for the organization.

The Guidelines Committee is continuing to iron out revisions to the Guidelines. They meet regularly by teleconference. If you are interested in helping with this project, please contact Swanny at swanny@norwestcomapny.com.

The Nominating Committee is gearing up for the upcoming Board elections. We will have five seats up for election (or re-election) this year. We are always interested in new ideas and energetic folks willing to help build and guide PRIDE. If you are interested in running for the Board, please contact Karen at northwapiti@xplornet.com or info@mushwithpride.org.

The Membership Committee has been busy chasing down answers for various questions from our PRIDE membership. Lately we have been pleased to be hearing from some of our international members and club members about their ideas to spread PRIDE's information across the seas.

PRIDE President Karen Ramstead participated in an Iditarod Board of Directors teleconference in May to discuss the role of PRIDE and Iditarod. She was able to answer some questions that Iditarod had about their involvement with PRIDE, and expressed their continued support of PRIDE.

The Board had a meeting in June to discuss the future of PRIDE, and brainstorm some ideas for directions to pursue. A discussion has been started on our Mush with PRIDE Yahoo Group, and we are actively looking for ideas from our members to help guide the organization into the future. We may be looking to revise some PRIDE bylaws in the future, so we are also looking for input on those too (available on the Mush with PRIDE website.) If you have ideas on what PRIDE can do, or what direction we should be looking at, please let us know! If you are not on the Yahoo group, you can send your ideas to info@mushwithpride.org.

In the meantime, keep cool, stay safe, and enjoy those summer days in the dog yard. Before we know it, it will be cooling off and training can begin again!

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Snow Deprivation Mental Disorder TC Wait

What is it about warm weather that reduces the ability of some people to make good decisions? More specifically, what causes a normally rational person to decide to hook two well-conditioned sled dogs to a bicycle (or scooter or grass board) and expect anything less than horrific consequences?

The answer may be something I call Snow Deprivation Mental Disorder (SDMD). I suffer from SDMD every summer, and the results usually involve various bruises, scrapes, near-misses, and the occasional sprocket scar. It's not that I don't realize what is going to happen. I read *Winterdance* and distinctly remember laughing at Gary Paulsen's description of his dogs-and-bike adventures thinking "what fool would do something like that?"

I am not a strong mountain bike rider - in fact, before biking with the dogs, the last time I had ridden a bike was probably sometime during Junior High, longer ago than I would want to admit. In "real life" I actually hold a respectable job that involves reviewing other people's plans to make sure they are making decisions that are safe and wise. Something happens to my brain about the time my husband finally refuses to load up early in the mornings to drive somewhere we can sled and hides the truck keys, and I find myself looking for my indestructible old mammoth of a mountain bike (rescued from a dumpster death from a coworker) and hitting the single-track with dogs that are also not ready to give up winter's fun.

I find myself reflecting on this strange behavior as I am currently recovering from the last weekend's SDMD mishaps. This time my shining moment occurred as I was hooking up in front of a group of sveltely agile skijorers who had gathered for an early morning scooter run. Eager to hit the trail, Liam (my less-than-focused wheel dog) decided to use the full force of his 4-year-old strength to launch down the trail after some of the other bike and scooter teams. Not prepared for his strength (which he rarely bothers to show me), I did a less-than-graceful, full-contact summersault over the handlebars - fully tangling myself in ganglines and bike parts and having a good old-fashioned drag through the gravel. As "fun" as that was, it was not nearly as impressive (or painful) as some of my more private wrecks.

Through these little adventures with my dogs and bike, I have learned many valuable lessons: bikejoring with 4 dogs is too many, rocks you would normally walk right past can cause bad things to happen on a bike, 25 mph on a bike feels a lot faster than it does on a sled, ALWAYS wear a helmet, dogs remember where the bunnies were from the last time

they were on the trail, you can drag a long, long way laying on top of your bike, and in a pinch, slamming the pedals into the backs of your calves can actually stop a team - briefly.

But even more interesting, I have learned that I am not alone in this self-destructive behavior. There are a growing number of people afflicted with SDMD. This spring, another musher from our local club had photos of an intriguing contraption resembling a skateboard on steroids that he had his dogs pulling. When asked how that went, he grinned and showed me the results of the adventure on his shins. NICE.

If you also suffer from SDMD, feel free to join one of our support groups or start one in your area. Generally we meet in the cool of the early mornings at a local trailhead. And remember to wear a helmet, bring lots of water, and be safe out there! Never fear - winter will return and things will be right in the world once again.

-TCW

The International Sled Dog Veterinary Medical Association (ISDVMA) has recently discussed the feasibility of doing PRIDE kennel certification by their member veterinarians. They are in unanimous decision to participate with PRIDE and let the vets decide what is a fair rate to charge kennels for this service.

Mush with PRIDE has a new discussion group on Yahoo!

Join in the discussions in our newly created Mush with PRIDE yahoo group at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/mushwithpride/> and follow the easy instructions to become a member (it is FREE!).

Join the discussion: What do you see as a direction for the future of Mush with PRIDE? What should PRIDE expect from its members? We would love to hear your ideas!

Chinook Project Update

Dr. Lisa Miller and Dr. Jane Magrath



This article has been reprinted with permission from the Sir James Dunn Animal Welfare Centre newsletter (Atlantic Veterinary College, University of Prince Edward Island).



Veterinary care is unavailable in many communities in Canada's North. The Chinook project received SJDAWC funding for the last two years to provide such care, first in Kimmirut and then in Cambridge Bay. These are small isolated communities in Nunavut where many residents maintain a traditional lifestyle involving hunting, fishing, and sled dog teams. Following a great deal of advance preparation, AVC volunteer veterinarians and senior vet students traveled North

for one week each summer and set up a clinic in a local school to provide medical and surgical care to sled and homebound dogs, including physical examinations, vaccinations, treatment for parasites, castration and spaying, and other treatments as necessary.

The Chinook Project teams were warmly received in both communities. Interested residents were invited to watch physical examinations and surgical procedures and to discuss basic care with veterinarians and students. Vaccines and dewormer, along with first aid supplies, were left with community members; e-mails were sent to remind them when booster vaccines were due. E-mail contact has been maintained to respond to questions and provide follow-up advice.



In recognition of the valuable and unique clinical experiences to participating veterinary students, AVC has approved the Chinook Project as a one-credit Special Topics Internal

Rotation. Through activities within the communities, the Project is also providing a valuable cultural exchange experience that broadens students' horizons in ways that benefit them both professionally and personally.

The response to the Chinook Project has been positive and overwhelming. The communities of Kimmirut and Cambridge Bay have provided feedback that suggests that the Project has made a significant difference, not only to the health and well-being of the dog population, but also to the people who care for them. The project offers help, and it offers hope for the future in these communities that struggle to try to cope—humanely—with large dog populations and without regular veterinary care.

Future plans

In addition to responding to new requests, it has become apparent that to make an effective difference in Northern communities requires an ongoing relationship and follow-up visits. To this end, in the first year of the 2008-10 project, the Chinook Project team made a return visit to Kimmirut in June. The team has been asked to visit Kugluktuk (Copper Mine) in 2009, which is close to Cambridge Bay—thus, a visit to Kugluktuk can be combined with follow-up to Cambridge Bay.

Chinook Sponsors

Travel and shipping of supplies to the North are very costly. The Chinook Project received renewed partial sponsorship from the SJDAWC for 2008-10, and the project leaders are pursuing external funding sources.

Pfizer Canada has generously donated products in each year, both for the Northern clinics and for follow-up care. Vets Without Borders has assisted the student participants with Air Miles. The Chinook Project has received very generous reductions on air fares and shipping from First Air, as well as generous assistance from Pfizer Canada, Iams Pet Food, the Cogsdale Corporation, Home Hardware (St. Peter's Road, Charlottetown), Bernard's Lock and Key Ltd. (Moncton, NB), and the Victoria City Kennel Club (Victoria, BC). Donations to support the Chinook Project may be made through the SJDAWC.

Balto's Tale

Project participants are keeping journals about their experience, with the intention of producing publishable pieces of writing under the guidance of UPEI English professor Dr. Jane Magrath. Below, Dr. Rachel Lee (a senior veterinary student at the first clinic in Kimmirut) describes what happened when it was time to discharge Balto, a loveable dog with a lopsided grin, following his castration.

"Balto immediately began to lick his incision. Ordinarily this action would have won him a fancy, plastic Elizabethan collar to wear for the duration of his recovery, but those were in short supply in our Kimmirut clinic, so we dressed him in the next best thing: an oversized beige T-shirt with Inuktitut lettering in blue that (very) roughly translated to 'our language is important.' His Inuit owner returned as promised, later that afternoon, and I sat down to review the important post-op instructions with him.

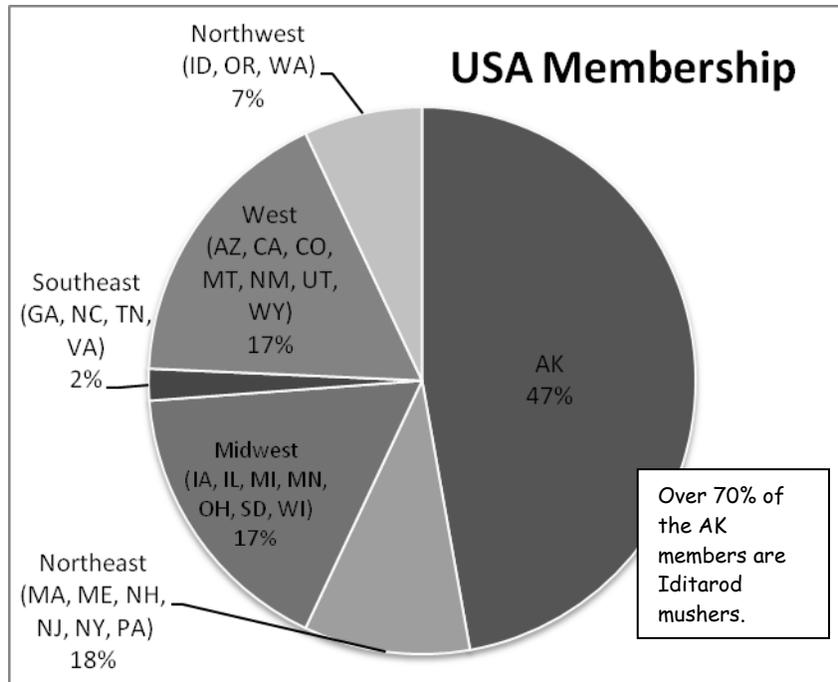
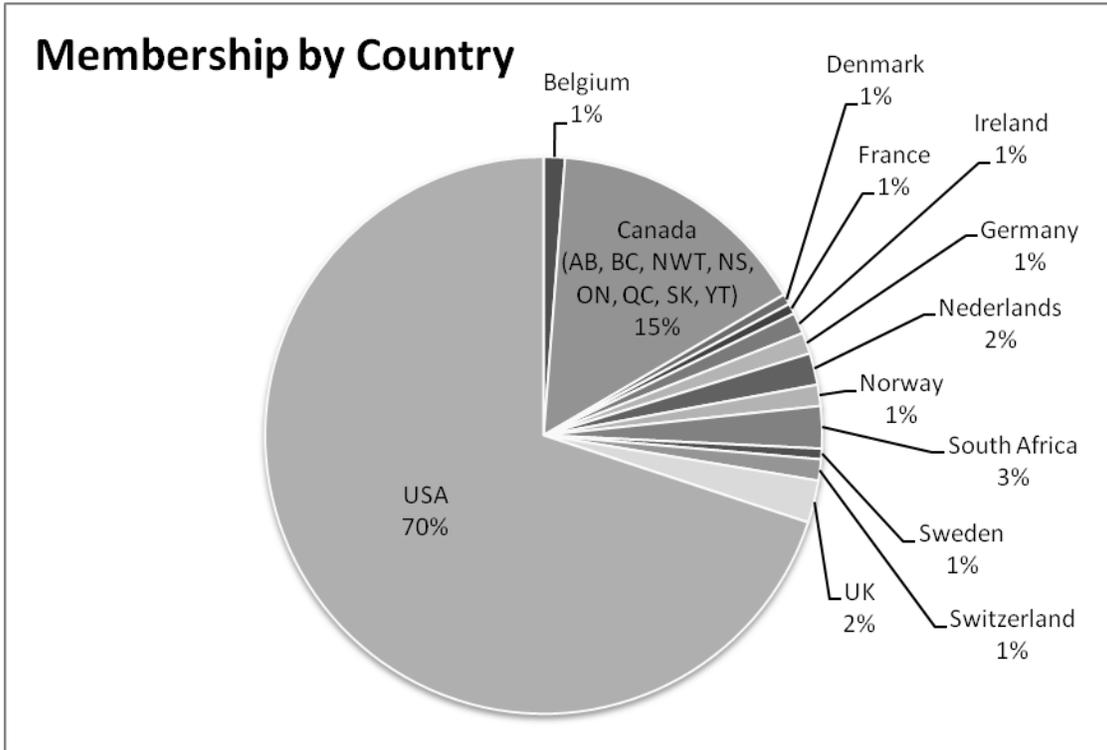
"My spiel went something like this: 'Your dog Balto had surgery today to remove his testicles. He won't be able to make any more babies. He may fight less. He has a small incision on his belly, and there are stitches that will dissolve in several weeks. It will take some time for the incision to heal, so it is very important that he is quiet for the next week and a half. You should not allow him to run around or play, because otherwise the incision might open. It is important that the incision is clean, so he should not sleep in the dirt or mud. The incision should not get wet, so Balto cannot swim for the next week and a half. And he needs to be watched so that he doesn't lick his incision or tear out his stitches. We have put a T-shirt on him to help prevent him from licking. This is very important for his incision to heal. No running, no swimming, no licking!'

"Balto's owner looked at me, nodded, and then asked if Balto could run along after the four-wheeler to the campsite on the way home from the clinic. A bit startled (after all, my instructions had been so clear!), I met Balto's owner eye to eye and emphatically stated: 'No! No running, no swimming, no licking!'

"The next morning, as we walked to the clinic to begin the day, I caught a glimpse of beige T-shirt flash by. I exclaimed, 'That's Balto!' Sure enough, there, running at breakneck pace through town, was the tall, lean, dirty white, wire-haired mutt with the lopsided grin, still wearing his T-shirt promoting literacy. We decided that we should try to get a hold of him and make sure his incision looked ok, especially considering the obvious lack of compliance with post-op instructions. We stopped, and Balto came trotting over. He was only too happy to stand up on his hind feet, with his front ones in Jen's hands, as I bent down to look at his underside. Sure enough, his incision was intact. Not only that, but it looked great—no swelling, no oozing, no damage whatsoever. In fact, it looked better than most incisions done in fancy hospitals for hundreds of dollars. Balto lingered for a moment when we were through for a quick pat, and then he shot off again."



Mush with PRIDE Membership Stats - June 2009





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\$15 individual, \$20 family, \$5 youth under 18, \$10 associate, \$100 business. Quarterly newsletter included for all memberships, a copy of Sled Dog Care Guidelines and Equipment Guidelines included with new memberships. PRIDE membership year starts October 1st (those received on or after June 1st are good through the following membership year). Don't forget membership for your local mushing club!

Sled Dog Care Guidelines _____ Quantity \$ _____

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