



The Wolf's Den Kennel

The Howler

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Trapper Jack

Trapper Jack is an acquaintance of mine, and although he lives in the bush, and refers to himself as Trapper Jack, I really don't know if he does any trapping. In fact, I really don't know what he does out there. What I do know about Trapper Jack is that he apparently has spent so much time alone in the bush he has no idea how to have a two-way conversation, he answers his own questions and he refers to himself in the third person. He occasionally drops by, probably because I'm willing to listen, and I primarily listen because he doesn't stop talking, and he is always talking about a topic I find fascinating: sled dogs.

Well, it looks like spring 's here. I guess I'll put the sled up for the up'n comin' summer and I reckon I'll start gettin' in some real good dog trainin'.

Hold'er up Trapper Jack, did you just say somethin' about it being spring and somethin' about how you was lookin' forward to some real good dog trainin'? Now come on now, dog mushers know that real dog trainin' don't start until the fall.

Well, I guess a lot of so-called dog mushers are still a little confused between trainin' and conditionin'. Trapper Jack agrees, conditionin' starts in the fall, but Trapper Jack knows that trainin', just like everythin' else, starts in the spring. You see it's like this, Trapper Jack says, most trainin' happens right in the yard, not on the trail.

*Dream big,
dare to fail*

Col. Norman Vaughan

Oh I'm sure you must be thinkin', that old Trapper Jack he's crazy, and you might even be right, old Trapper Jack might be crazy, but old Trapper Jack, he's got eyes, and he can see. He can see that a dog is always learnin' whether or not you mean to teach'em anythin'. So the way I see it, and I just told you I could see, is that if the little buggers are gonna go around learnin' all day, they probably ought to be learnin' what I want them to learn.

Well, maybe now you don't think old Trapper Jack is all that crazy, and maybe you want to know what it is that old Trapper Jack wants his dogs to be learnin'. Straight away, it's like this, it ain't one thing in particular.

Trapper Jack, sure he lives out in the bush, but he's heard it, on the short waved radio, some psycho-ologist, talkin' real serious like, about how the lack of communicatin' is the ruination of all relationships. Well I'll be, some PHD-ed feller, from, I don't know, maybe someplace like New York City, who'd for sure'd get lost in the shade of a lonely tree, has figured out what dog trainin' is all about. Old Trapper Jack, he's trainin' and his dogs well they're learnin', so I guess what we really got goin' on is that we're just communicatin'.

Communicatin', buildin' a rapport, that'd being a fancy word for sure, but that folks is dog trainin'.

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Nebraska

Nebraska's (AKA Ned) health had been deteriorating for the past year or so, and this past fall when the temperature started to drop we could see that he seemed a little stiff in the mornings so we brought him indoors. Unfortunately, even though he was much more comfortable these past few months, his health continued to decline, and we were forced to end his suffering.

I bought Ned many years ago, and he has taught me more about mushing than perhaps all the mushers I've ever met and learned from, and certainly more than any other dog I've owned or run.

Ned was cross-eyed, and I'm pretty certain his peripheral vision wasn't all that great. I firmly believe that his diminished visual abilities, not only required him to rely heavily on his other senses, it also forced him to depend on me for direction. Quite accidentally, I learned that I had to be careful with giving Ned turning commands. Whenever I would give Ned a turning command, he would turn ninety degrees and it didn't matter if there was a trail there or not. He would jump a cliff, into four feet of snow, our straight into the trees.



Ned

The first time I goofed with the timing of just such a command, Ned jumped a bank and dragged the team and me on the ATV, into a significantly large river. The truly incredible aspect of this unbelievable ordeal, was that despite the widespread panic running rampant throughout the team, Ned was doing the best dog paddle I'd ever seen, and appeared quite content to cross the river. The bank was fairly steep, and the ATV sank quickly, getting incredibly stuck. I waded out and started to unhook dogs, and without really thinking and certainly not

expecting anything, I said, "Come Haw," (a command used to turn a team in place.) I stood there in chest deep water, and watched in total disbelief as Ned did a one hundred and eighty degree turn and swam past me, towing a much happier bunch of dogs back to and up the river bank he had just jumped from. All the dogs seemed quite relieved to have all four feet back on terra firma, yet Ned wasn't the least bit fazed by the ordeal.

Ned wasn't the fastest dog I've had, but he had plenty of speed, and he wasn't the strongest dog I've ever had either, but his tugline was always tight. Ned was special to me because, when he was up front I knew there was absolutely nothing we could possibly encounter that we wouldn't get through.

The experiences we've shared are many.
The memories sweet.
He will be missed dearly.

Ned's last race, at 10 years old

Phillips Brook Back Country

Jan 22nd 2000

6 dogs 30 miles

2:42:12

3rd place overall, 1st place purebred

MOUNTAIN RIDGE
*Racing Alaskan Husky Sled Dogs
 Manufacturers of Sled Dog Equipment*

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March Madness

Are you crazy! Who cares about college hoops? March Madness in mushing circles means only one thing, IDITAROD.

Newsflash: Martin Buser accidentally severs the tip of his middle finger off just days before the race. Note, the accident had nothing to do with race preparations. Apparently Martin is so well organized that he had enough spare time to do a little Bob Vila on the old hacienda. Unbelievable, spare time prior to Iditarod, and R+R isn't the way it's spent.

With Robert Sorlie's second win compounded by Bjorner Anderson's remarkable 4th place rookie finish, it's starting to look like if you're planning to win the Iditarod, you're going to have to beat team Norway.

Rick Swenson scratching? Well, if global warming continues and snow becomes increasingly difficult for mushers to find, I suppose we can all move to Hell because apparently it's frozen.

Un-Official protest: Apparently Lance Mackey's incredibly enthusiastic team makes such a ruckus leaving checkpoints that many competitors can't sleep through the uproar.

Un-Official Resolution: The ITC is considering the possibility of amending their longstanding corralling rule; perhaps a private coral for Lance's ponies is in order.

A caboose? A windshield? Is there no end to what Jeff King is willing to try?

The Iditarod will never be the same without Charlie Boulding.

Regular price of an Iditarod video: \$20

Price of an Iditarod video with a comment or two from Charlie:

PRICELESS

My personal favorite

"A good idea doesn't have to be your own to get in on it."

The Wolf's Den Merchandise has arrived! Help support our dog team!



The Wolf's Den Patch
\$10.00



The Wolf's Den Fleece Jacket
by Northern Outfitters

High quality, 13.5 oz. fleece.
Full-zip, two side pockets,
elastic cuffs, drawstring waist.

Red or grey.

XS-XL

\$60.00

To order email info@wolfsdenkennel.com

All proceeds go indirectly to Eukanuba.
The fuel that keeps us mushing.

Fund Raising Doggy-Style

Good friend and sponsor/fundraiser extraordinaire, Jim Wheeler has once again gone out of his way to keep us in the pink, (the color of the Eukanuba dog food bags, the stack of which is how we are currently measuring success.)

The first weekend of March is of course the start of Iditarod, but in Longmeadow, MA, it is Winter Fest. This year, Winter Festers were thrilled that Jim and his huskies were there giving rides. Part of the proceeds were donated to the Longmeadow PTO, and Jim said that he and his huskies voted unanimously to donate their share to us here at The Wolf's Den.

The official count was 172 rides, (that's not a miss-print,) and Winter Fest organizers have expressed interest in having Jim back next year.

Our sincerest thanks to everyone who participated. A very special thank you to Kim Wheeler, who had to work a double shift the night before in order to be available to give rides. To Krista Wheeler who not only gave rides herself, but also convinced her friend Ashley King to help out, and gave Ashley a crash course in driving a sled. Also, thanks to Jeff and Kathy Pokomy who were in charge of loading, and subsequently unloading, very happy children. Many thanks to Jim's wife Joy who went to work so that Jim could play in the snow with the dogs on Saturday.



And of course, we would like to thank Jim's dogs who eagerly went around that short loop 172 times. Jim often states the test of a sled dog's mental toughness is mushing all day long into a 30 MPH headwind or breaking new trail through 2 feet of freshly fallen snow; however, he has added pulling children loaded sleds in a 300-foot circle all day long to that list of what makes a sled dog mentally tough.

Jim and Joy also gave a mushing presentation at Blueberry Elementary School. They brought two of their Siberian Huskies with them as well as a sled, harnesses, booties, and cold weather gear. The biggest hit was the PowerPoint presentation that showed photos of The Wolf's Den dogs and the puppies that we have bred over the past year. Again, Jim was generous enough to donate the profits to our kennel. I honestly miss doing the school presentations myself. The kids' questions and comments were always my favorite part.

Thank you for everything Jim, your support is making our dreams possible!

Interested in a Sled Dog Presentation?

If you are interested in a sled dog presentation for your school, or in a sled dog demonstration for your group, or for sled dog rides for your event please contact us.

Details:

info@wolfsdenkennel.com

Here At The Wolf's Den

This excerpt of, *Here At The Wolf's Den*, should probably be titled, *Where Is The Wolf's Den?* We are on the road again, however, unlike the song of the same title, we are not looking forward to being continually on the road, which is one of the primary reasons for our move. Once we started to buy and breed dogs in Alaska, we began to re-think our future plans, and we concluded that if we wanted to run Iditarod wouldn't it just make more sense to already be in Alaska?

We were sad to leave our friends and our kennel in Quebec,* however, once we had everything we owned packed into the Uhaul, the dogs loaded in the dog truck, and we headed Northwest, we became excited by all the new challenges and adventures which were ahead of us.

Caitlin was a little nervous about the trip because not only is the dog truck temperamental about starting, but also because Alberta's litter, (4 male, 3 female Iditarod hopefuls,) who currently look more like lion cubs than husky pups, were only 3 weeks old when we left. We checked on them frequently on our first couple of days and were quite impressed that they seemed totally unaffected by the sounds, sights, smells, and the gyrations caused by 5000 miles of spring's fresh potholes, frost heaves and washouts. They just nursed and slept as if they never left home.

Our trip across Canada and up the Alcan was quite spectacular. We had gorgeous weather for the



The seemingly endless wheat fields of Saskatchewan

entire trip and because it was so early in the spring there wasn't really any traffic to speak of. The compelling aspect of our road trip across this magnificent North American continent, was how its diverse and immense landscapes began inviting me, if not begging me, to absorb or perhaps ingest all of its beauty and wonder.

I would find it hard to believe that any traveler who crosses this land wouldn't be compelled, as I was, to reflect on the significance of it all. To go to that disturbing place within ourselves where we privately ask the tough questions of why we are here, and what should we doing with our time here, if in-fact there is anything in particular we should be doing with it. Unfortunately those tough questions never seem easily resolved, and I certainly didn't take from the experience anything



other than a surreal feeling that hopefully will linger. A feeling that I always get, and that I assume is mutually shared by others, whenever the old raggy voice of Louis Armstrong is heard singing:

"What a wonderful world, oooh, yeaahh."

On the lighter side, Willie, our beagle, who doesn't travel so well, actually became quite useful as we began our trip up the Alcan. He literally turned into a big-game radar detector. He was riding up front with me in the Uhaul, and he spent most of the trip either drooling, shaking, passing gas, and generally



looking pathetic. However he totally forgot his displeasure for traveling the instant

One of many stone carins lining our route

Thank you

We would like to thank our newest sponsors,
Eric and Holly Sundquist
Thank you for supporting our team!

I would really like to thank my parents, John and Nancy Brady for everything they have done to support us, our dogs, and our dreams. They have provided everything imaginable from financial assistance, legal council, constructive advice, and even puppy name suggestions.

Thank you, having you believe in us and our goals means a lot to me.



Our new neighbor

he saw his first moose. The bell-ringing clear sound of his baying echoed through the cab, to the extent that I became worried that the pitch, volume, and intensity might shatter the windshield. As that first moose faded behind us he quickly remembered that we were moving and returned to his displeased state. Subsequently he again sprung to life, and before I could see the next moose, he buried his nose in the dashboard's air vent, and started snarfing.

[Snarfing is what Willie does. It isn't at all like simply smelling something, it starts deep in his lungs and seams to require several almost violent inhales and exhales that ruffle his cheeks, followed by plenty of what appear to be uncomfortable grunts and snorts, some wheezing, whistling, and a lot of audible jowl smacking, jaw chattering, forehead popping, and body quaking reactions, or impulses. I swear that once Willie begins this





incredibly intense sequence of events, I could light his tail on fire and he wouldn't even notice.]

Anyway, I spotted the moose approximately a mile later, and shortly there after the baying commenced again this time in earnest. Willie did not miss

one single large animal for the remainder of the trip. He literally warned me of every moose, deer, caribou, elk, and mountain goat we would eventually encounter.

We've finally arrived at our destination, and hopefully the permanent home of The Wolf's Den Kennel, Cantwell, Alaska. Year round population of two hundred people, a rather large population of rather large moose, countless caribou, and of course more then the occasional grizzly. Did I forget to mention the best snow in Alaska? It starts in September and it is still waist deep in many spots.

The area also has arguably one of the best views of Denali, and a reputation for frequent and utterly remarkable displays of the aurora borealis. I think it's quite clear why Cantwell is the kind of place we perceive as being ideal.

We found a temporary home, and we are hoping to buy some land and start building our kennel. For now the puppies are happy to be back in their puppen, Willie is happy to be back on the bed, and we are happy to be meeting all of our new neighbors.

We are very excited by all of the possibilities, and a little frightened by the uncertainties, but at the very least I'm sure our adventures will give us plenty of material for future "Howlers."

In addition to our move, the past two months have been exceptionally busy, and emotionally draining. While still in Quebec preparing for our move we received a lot of company from many of our fellow mushers and friends. All of whom came up to look at the dogs we had for sale. It was extremely rewarding to be able to show off our dogs' talents, but doing so usually meant that we would be saying goodbye to one or more of our canine friends. We sincerely wish all who purchased dogs from us the best of luck.



The view from downtown Cantwell



Ice, Icarus, Inca, and Indiana

*Three things I already miss about Quebec:

One: "Steamies tout garnie," from the Fringale Chez France, on the bank of the St Laurence river. Literal translation, steamed hotdogs, "all dressed," (with all the fixings, or with the works, of course without ketchup, which just doesn't seem to be very popular in Quebec.)

Two: The utter frustration of the French language. For example, the word vin, (pronounced "vein,") is French for wine. Not at all confusing, until you realize that the word for the number twenty is also pronounced "vein." And as if that weren't enough, the French word for wind, you guessed it, is also pronounced "vein."

Three: Samuel LaForce, the ten year old son of my friend, neighbor, and former employer Erick LaForce. Samuel, often felt like my shadow, especially, whenever we were doing something dog

related, or had company over who were interested in dogs or mushing. He would frequently jump on our sled or ATV when we passed his house with our

dog team, and whenever he was around and saw us heading to our kennel he'd run over just to hang out and watch what we were up to.

Good luck Samuel, hope you can get to Alaska someday.

The Howler

Mike Santos and Caitlin Brady

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