

# Tails of the 2010 CrowDitarod

January 16, 2010

WinterStar Farm

Cokato, Minnesota

THE TALLY:  
WORKING DOG TITLE  
LEGS EARNED AT THE  
CROWDITAROD

TEAM/LEAD DOG 22 LEGS	WEIGHT PULL DOG 4 LEGS
-----------------------------	------------------------------

## aka The Great Bakery Run

by Karina Burger

Forty-five people and fifty-five dogs attended the first ever CrowDitarod, hosted by WinterStar Farm.

### CROW RIVER DOGSLEDDING EVENT PROCLAIMED HUGE SUCCESS

#### NO ONE FELL IN

Safety is a big part of a successful event! Prior to the day, several mushers inexperienced with sledding on a river expressed their concerns. Questions ranged from "is a swimsuit proper attire?" to asking if we had ever broken through with our team. One musher wanted to bring an ax and chop a hole in the ice to water the dogs!

We assured people over and over that the Crow River near our farm is shallow, we've sledded on it for ten years, the winter has been very cold, and the ice is very thick. And advised them to carry water, chopping a hole would take forever! Yet even as we calmly explained these points, we wondered if Mother Nature might laugh at us, and for the first time ever, we would have a problem. When all seven teams returned from the 12+ mile river excursion dry and happy, we were ready to party! But next year, we may add a new fun event to the day - The Crow River Plunge.....stay tuned.

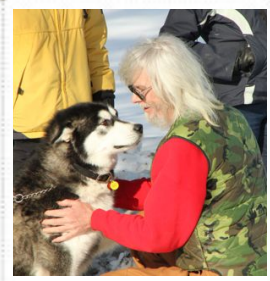
*Continued on Page 2*



*Charger and Freya ham it up for the camera!*



*Dogsledding - a spectator sport for kids AND horses!*



*Nora and Donaven become friends.*

Mushers ran 12+ miles or did fun runs, and even the dogs cheered at the weight pull!



# Dogsledding Event Poised to Become Annual Tradition

## VISION OF A DREAM

Many people have asked, "What made you decide to host the CrowDitarod?" The answer is simple: Temporary Insanity. We're feeling better now, thank you. No wait, it's that WinterStar Farm, 57 acres of rolling hills bordered by the North Fork of the Crow River in rural Minnesota provides fantastic trails for dogsledding excursions. We wanted to share this beauty with other mushers and also promote working dogs by providing an opportunity for dogs to earn legs toward working titles. The two miles of trail loops on our land combined with the river offer mushers options of going anywhere from one-third of a mile to over 12 miles, and we felt would encourage people with all levels of abilities and team sizes to participate.

## FROM DREAM TO REALITY

Preparation for the CrowDitarod, held on January 16, 2010 began in October 2009, through collaboration with Linda Dowdy, newsletter editor for the Minnesota Malamute Club. Linda described the kinds of events the Club had done in the past and gave us tips on what had worked well. After designing an invitation for the Club newsletter, we started inviting other mushers and Malamute owners we know. Early on we decided to invite some mushers to bring their teams for the weekend and stay in our home or guest house. We also asked for someone to be the "lead dog" for holding a weight pull.

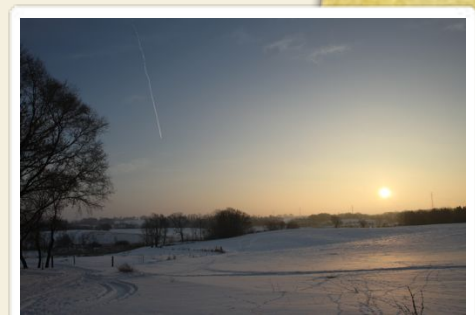
For weeks, no one replied to our invitations, creating fears that no one would come at all. But then Helen and John Schultz

stepped up offering to bring the equipment for the weight pull, and with an updated invitation we started receiving RSVPs. Soon we were planning food, lodging, parking, drivers, stake out space, volunteers, a photographer and all the other details needed to make the day go smoothly. In the end, 45 people and 55 dogs attended the WinterStar Farm CrowDitarod; six mushers and their teams stayed with us for the entire weekend.

## BREAKFAST OF CHAMPIONS

We love to cook and wholeheartedly believe in John Gunther's quote "All happiness depends on a leisurely breakfast." So we dished up a gourmet feast to the 12-mile mushers and our guests the morning of the CrowDitarod. It is really fun to cook for hungry people with good appetites, but the highest praise came from Ricq and Melanie Pattay's 10 year-old daughter Gwen, who had an early start to her day to arrive here in time, and declared with conviction, "THIS was a breakfast worth getting up for!" We'll have to invite her more often!

We planned what order the teams would run, and then our helpers for the day started to arrive. It was time to load dogs and head upriver to begin! *Continued on Page 3*



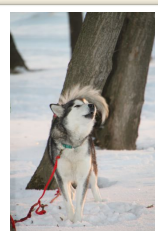
*Sunrise over the WinterStar Farm trails on event day.*



"Eat, Drink and Be Merry" was the motto of the mushers staying at WinterStar Farm, and was most rigorously enforced by Karina and Tim.



*Let's Load and Go!*





Helen Schultz laughing after her team successfully navigates the French bread hazard! (yellow circles) YUM!



## CRASH AND BURN

Bicyclists have a saying “The slower you go, the more likely it is you’ll crash.” Some of our CrowDitarod mushers seem to live by this credo, even though it was not written for dogsledders!

The 12-mile start was at a bridge on the Crow River. Mushers had the option of setting up on the bank and starting down a short but steep hill with a sharp turn at the bottom to head down the river, or setting up on the river itself. The first four teams mushed by Ricq Pattay, Tim O’Brien and John and Helen Schultz chose the bank. After Ricq and Helen crashed and Tim and John took the turn on one runner, the remaining teams opted for the river start!

Later Ricq said his initial assessment was “those hills don’t look that big -- my team can do them. Little did I know that it wasn’t my team I should have been worried about!” Ricq’s crash was quite spectacular due to his height of 6’5”. He sure takes a long time to fall! (See *Blooper Reel*, page 10)

Helen wins the “crash in style” award, she stayed low on her sled and gently tipped

over; we suspect she was pointing her toes, she was so graceful. No one let go of their sled, and our terrific volunteers helped get everyone up and running again. Helen commented “it was strange and kind of wonderful having people right there when I fell to help me back up on my sled!”

## THE GREAT BAKERY RUN

At our musher’s breakfast meeting, we went over some of the hazards on the river and sights to see. For example, deer like to yard up on the river out of the wind, bask in the sun and browse from the fallen trees. It is not uncommon to come around a bend and have 30 deer take off in all directions! In addition, the wild turkey population is growing larger each year. These birds don’t fly away until you are right next to them. Typically they are in the grass and brush beside the river and you have no idea they are there, when suddenly you think a bomb went off and wild turkeys are exploding beside you. The dogs take off running in these cases and if you are not prepared, they can leave you behind! Bald eagles nest along the river; always a majestic sight, and one farmer runs his beef cattle right on to the ice! Watch for frozen brown pies.....

*Continued on Page 5*



## Mushing the River

The scenic Crow River winds through beautiful countryside, home to deer, wild turkeys and bald eagles. But the river held an unexpected surprise for the 2010 CrowDitarod mushers.





## Meet the Mushers - Part 1

SCENIC DOGSLEDDING ENJOYED BY ALL



*Tim O'Brien and the WinterStar Farm seven dog Malamute team finishing the 12+ mile CrowDitarod run.*



*Ricq Pattay's three dog Samoyed team was first to go on the 12+ mile run, and set a fast pace. For Malamutes, anyhow.*



*Marv Larson, CrowDitarod fun runner.*

*John Schultz's team taught him how to cross bare ice. .NOT!*

*Maddy MacIndoe and Talus skijored the trails.*

# EXTRA, EXTRA! Read All About It

## WORKING DOG POINTS, LEGS, TITLES EARNED AT CROWDITAROD

### THE GREAT BAKERY RUN *Continued from Page 3*

Additionally, the ice on the river creaks and pops as it settles, which can be alarming to both dogs and mushers, but is normal.

But with all the things we talked about to prepare everyone for the run, we missed what turned out to be the biggest trail hazard encountered at the CrowDitarod - French bread!

What, you ask? FRENCH BREAD????? Yes! As the mushers neared the halfway point, they came around a bend to see strange objects scattered on the ice ahead. Lo and behold, it was 50 loaves of bread! Apparently the people who live in the house on the bluff above that section of the river had thrown the bread down for wildlife. The reactions of the teams varied. Some of the dogs completely ignored the bread and ran by. Others decided to take advantage of this trail-side delicacy! And both Tim and Ellen reported getting a loaf caught in their drag brakes and struggling to take it out while their teams ran. In fact, Ellen yelled "BREAD" back at Karen who was right behind her and threw her loaf into the path of Karen's team - some kind of musher's food fight! Now there's another idea for a fun event to add next year!

Back at the farm, the consensus among the mushers was that in all the years they had sledded, they had never run into bread on the trail. Everyone laughed about the Alaskan Malamute

Club of America forms to be filled out to document this leg for Working Team Dog titles, and could not wait to answer the question "Describe any hazards encountered on the trail"!

After the hilarious storytelling of each team's "close encounters of the bread kind", the suggestion was made, seconded and decided that this year's CrowDitarod also be known as The Great Bakery Run, to honor not only the bread on the trail, but our cooking! We now are considering whether we will provide all participants in future years with butter and garlic!

### WORKING LEGS FOR WORKING DOGS

Working our ten Malamutes is our biggest joy in owning them. We like to sled in the winter, and backpack and cart in the fall and spring. And we tried weight pulling at the CrowDitarod after a 12-year break from it! The dogs love it and learn great teamwork - they are so excited, they don't want to grumble at each other or compete for pack rank when in harness. We are proud that nearly every dog in our kennel has earned at least one working title from the Alaskan Malamute Club of America (AMCA).

Working Team Dog titles from the AMCA can be earned when a dog pulls a sled or cart for at least 10 miles, at least four times. Each time is called a leg. Working Lead Dog titles require the same distance, but the dog must run in single lead, and if multiple teams are running, the dog must be on the leading team for the entire leg. For

weight pulls on snow, dogs earn qualifying legs when they pull at least eight times their body weight.

Samoyeds also earn working titles through their breed club; they use a point system. For Samoyeds that earned working points at the CrowDitarod, I count them here as earning a leg.

The CrowDitarod event succeeded in encouraging people to work their dogs. Seven teams totaling 31 dogs completed the 12+ mile run. Most of these mushers stayed at WinterStar Farm and ran again on Sunday, and two teams ran Monday on the Martin Luther King Day holiday. By the end of the weekend, 21 legs for Working Team Dog titles, one leg for a Working Lead Dog title, and four legs toward Working Weight Pull Dog titles had been earned. Congratulations to all these dogs, especially those completing their final legs to receive working titles!

### FIRST IN NEEDS FIRST AID

Unbeknownst to us, musher Ricq Pattay sprained his ankle when he crashed at the start. But nothing would deter Ricq from this run! His racing Samoyed team "may not finish first, but always finishes in style!" But today Ricq was starting as the first team, and most of the other teams were Malamutes, slower freighting dogs. At last, he thought, a chance to finish first, even if this is not a race. Think of the boost in morale for both musher and team! I can live with the pain!

*Continued on Page 7*



Meet the Mushers - Part 2

GREAT BAKERY RUN PROMOTED CAMARADERIE - AND FOOD FIGHTS



Ellen Bogardus-Syzmaniak taught her racing team of Alaskan Huskies patience running with the slower Malamute teams. And started a food fight!



Helen Schultz had a great run with her three dog Malamute team.



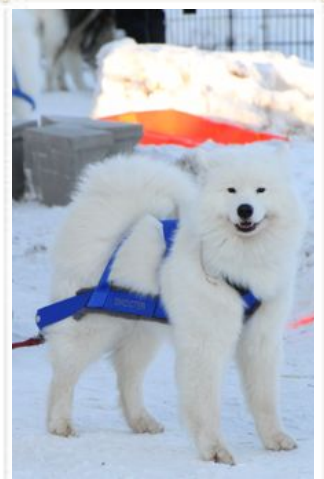
Raissa Hinman came all the way from Michigan to live her dream of river dogsledding



Pam Warrichaiet and Karen Taylor both borrowed dogs to make larger teams, and had great runs.



Tim brings Penny up for her first pull in Novice class.



Shooter psychs himself up for the pull.

## FIRST IN NEEDS FIRST AID *Continued from Page 5*

It was a great plan, working fine until Ricq reached the end of the run and had to climb the riverbank onto the WinterStar Farm property. He could not step up the bank! A call to wife Melanie brought her down to assist him to the house, where she packed his ankle in snow and force fed him ibuprofen (Melanie and I plan to start a support group for spouses of mushers soon). Ricq's ankle was pretty swollen, it is amazing how dogsledding 12 miles on an injury can do that! Melanie innocently asked "do you have any elastic wrap to bandage Ricq's ankle?"

HA HA HA, do we have bandages? Melanie did not know that both Tim and I are veterinarians. Owning five horses means we keep the bandage bag stocked. In no time at all, we had Ricq fixed up with a support wrap strong enough for a horse, but made for a musher! He thanked us for "not putting him down as if he were a lame horse", to which we replied "well, thank YOU for not kicking during the bandaging procedure!" All in all, we feel Ricq would do it the same way again, for the fun of finishing first!

## WHEN THE WORLD SAYS "GIVE UP"....

....Hope whispers "Try it One More Time." At the CrowDitarod weight pull, hope did not whisper! The enthusiastic crowd shouted encouragement to the dogs and instructions to owners of dogs in the Novice class, many of them trying weight pulling for the very first time. Cheering and laughter followed successful pulls, and the Winterstarz Malamute team sang several pack howls (we could not make them stop).

Weather conditions made the pull a challenging competition. Near freezing temperatures softened the snow and increased the chance that the weight pull sled would freeze to the ground. The most successful dogs broke quickly and got the sled moving. Seventeen dogs competed for cash prizes. Pam Warrichaiet's Malamute "Moose" pulled 770# with some help, for the top spot in Novice. Linda Murray's Samoyed "Gabby" pulled a whopping 705# in the under 60# class. Raissa Hinman's Malamute "Atka" pulled 640# to win the 61-80# division, and John Schultz with Malamute "Emrys" pulled 770# to win the 81-100# class and top weight pulled. Congratulations to all competitors!

**PULL IT, PULL IT,  
PULL IT!**

Laughter, cheering and howls echoed through the Crow River Valley as 17 dogs competed in the CrowDitarod Weight Pull.



## A HOWL OF A GOOD TIME!

EXCITING WEIGHT PULL COMPETITION COMPLETES DAY



John and Helen Schultz's dog Emrys pulling 770#, the top weight pulled. When he finished, John had him do it again just for fun!



Raissa hands her dog to Lynne for hooking



Lee Ann Herbert's dog Tia digs in.



The ringer in this competition was Gabby, first ever NADSR Weight Pull Grand Champion! Gabby pulled over 13X his weight!



Raissa Hinman's dog Bootstrap placed 3rd in the 61-80# class.



Marv and Gusty discuss strategy.



# A Great Day, Due to Great Volunteers

## THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO HELPED

### "IT TAKES A VILLAGE.....

...to raise a child," the old saying goes. Well, it takes great friends and neighbors to host a successful dogsledding event!

Grooming our land trails started New Year's Day, when neighbor Todd Lundeen snowmobiled over and spent three hours packing the deep snow received Christmas Day. We have enjoyed our great trails ever since!

Searching for a couple of snowmobilers who could be safety officers and check on the teams running the river, we were referred to Char Hillmyer, President of the Wright County Snowmobile Association. Char and her husband Robin met us at the start for the 12-mile run and exceeded our expectations the entire day! From righting fallen mushers and sending them down the trail, to offering helmets and rides to anyone who needed them, stopping some reckless ATVs on the river, and assisting teams to cross the scary looking black glare ice under the bridges, we had several

occasions to be grateful that Char and Robin were on our team.

Our good friends and former neighbors Dianne, Andrew, Sarah and Benjamin Brinza are guardian angels that came to save us! Some of the key volunteers we had lined up to help cancelled at the last minute, and it was the Brinza Family to the rescue! Sarah and Benjamin held down the fort at home while Dianne and Andrew came out to help start the 12-mile teams and drive the rigs back to the farm. We simply could not have pulled off this event without their help. They also organized all the food for the potluck so that everyone was able to eat a great hot lunch!

You can't have a weight pull without weights, and here we were aided by neighbor Dan Leinonen who dug our trailer out of a snowbank, and our home builder and friend Dave Schmidt, who found us cement block. And a huge THANK YOU to Helen and John Schultz for bringing all the equipment and officiating at the pull.

We profusely thank Jerry and Nancy Torrison, friends of ours who weighed dogs and worked the pull, as well as many other tasks. Hope we can get you back next year! Lindsey and Dane Peterson cheerfully handled dogs and moved block - thank you! Lynne Glaus learned to hook dogs to the pull sled. Thanks Lynne! Linda and Donaven Murray brought a karaoke machine, er, I mean a public address system for the pull, it was great! We were also thrilled to have Pam Warrichaiet's trailer driving expertise when moving rigs. Thank you all.

Finally, we most heartily thank Dave LaHaye, our photographer and great friend from Bullfrog Sweatshop. Dave put in a long day capturing superb images for us, which we will enjoy for many years to come. You can view and purchase images of the 2010 Crowditarod on the Bullfrog Sweatshop website at [www.bullfrogsweatshop.com](http://www.bullfrogsweatshop.com). Thanks for the memories Dave!

Thanks Again, Karina and Tim

*WinterStar Farm is home of Winterstarz Alaskan Malamutes and veterinarians Tim O'Brien and Karina Burger. Visit us online at [www.winterstarfarm.com](http://www.winterstarfarm.com).*



*John Schultz instructs participants on the rules of the weight pull.*



*Mission Impossible? Andrew, Karina and Dianne head to the start.*



BLOOPER REEL

PHOTOGRAPHER DAVE LAHAYE WONDERED "HELP? OR TAKE PHOTOS?" WHAT DID HE DECIDE?



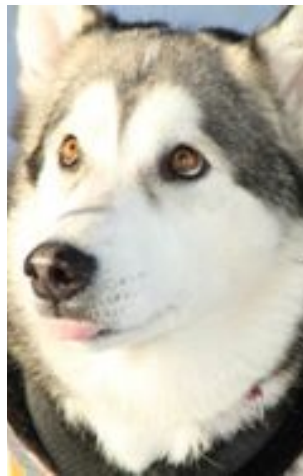
*The Ricq Pattay crash sequence. That had to hurt!*



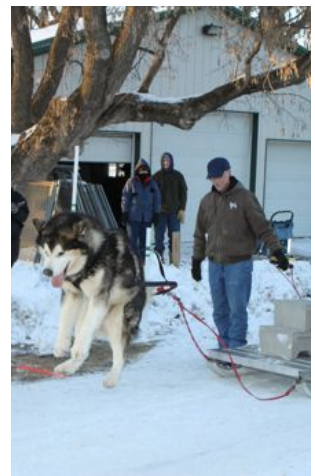
*Nora graciously cleaned Dave's lens!*



*Talus says "Mom, Get Up!"*



*You want me to pull what?*



*Up, Up and Away!*



*The Helen Schultz crash sequence - grace under fire!*