

## Fall 2012 Newsletter

Mahoosuc Guide Service and Mahoosuc Mountain Lodge

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*Cormac, the wonder dog, and team!*

The fall colors are past peak and the ground is becoming covered with beautiful shades of orange, brown, faded red, and yellow leaves. It is fun to walk the puppies in the woods at this time of year and see them play in all the new "toys" that have fallen from the sky. Snow is coming to the mountaintops that surround us in the Bear River Valley and eventually will be at our doorstep. That means it's time to hook up the dogs up for some exciting runs!

In the meantime, we will be training with ATVs with no motors, conditioning the dogs for pulling and teaching new

leaders without the many distractions of guiding. We are excited to be training our new pups. This is one of Polly's favorite parts of her job—watching the puppies grow and learn. It is amazing how much they learn from the older dogs. The desire to pull is in their blood.

We had two litters of puppies this summer. Kevin kept four (Angus, Siobhan, Weeko, Killian), and Polly kept two (Damara and Bonnie Bee) to replace the retiring dogs in their kennels. For our familiar clients, you will be sad to



*Martin with his two new pups in Austria*

hear that Cormac, Maeve, and Roisin have retired. They have joined Mickey, Nola, Cathal, and Roanan in our daylight basement retirement home. Everyone is enjoying themselves on their soft beds with dog bone treats before bed.



*Bonnie Bee*

In September, six of the puppies from our last litter went to their new homes. One went to a past apprentice and now guide, Tom Rosenberg, in New Hampshire; one to faithful clients in Massachusetts as a family dog; two to a

beginner musher and past client in Vermont; and two to an experienced musher and established kennel in Austria. Polly had the tough job of hand-delivering the puppies to Austria as they were 10 weeks old and needed to be accompanied (airline rules). Polly was very impressed with their new owner, Martin Eigentler. For anyone wanting to run dogs in the Austrian Alps, we can recommend [www.husky.co.at](http://www.husky.co.at). It is beautiful mountainous country!



*Martin's daughter relaxing with the puppies in Austria*

On a little side trip while there, Polly went on a four-hour bus tour in Salzberg to hear and see the filming of the classic movie, *The Sound of Music*, one of her favorite movies. You can picture her now riding on a bus full of people and singing, "Raindrops on roses and whiskers on kittens..." or "The hills are alive..."

We are very happy to have two apprentices returning for the winter, Eliot Whitten and Anna Soltys. We are welcoming Stephen Eren from North Carolina with one winter's experience mushing in northern Michigan. They are all very helpful and are enjoying the dogs and puppies.

Kevin is headed to Minnesota later this month to the 14th annual Winter Camping Symposium. He will be the keynote speaker on Saturday evening talking about his experiences working with and traveling with sled dogs from Maine to Alaska to Nunavik to Nunavut in Canada.

We revised our website this summer/fall. Please check it out at [www.mahoosuc.com](http://www.mahoosuc.com).

As our firewood piles grow, canoes and paddles are put away, while dogsleds and harnesses come out and get ready for action.

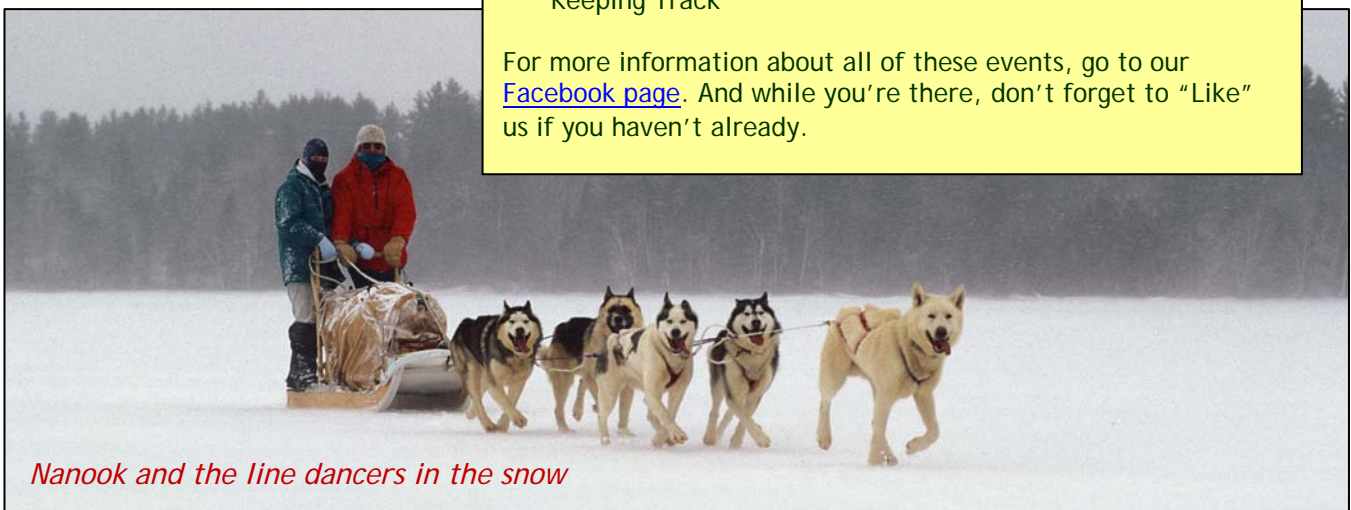
We hope to see many of you on the trail this winter! Until then...

Happy trails!  
*Polly, Kevin, and all the doggies*

#### Upcoming Events at Mahoosuc Mountain Lodge

- November 17—Bluegrass Concert with Tricky Britches
- December 7-9—Tracking Workshop with Susan Morse of Keeping Track

For more information about all of these events, go to our [Facebook page](#). And while you're there, don't forget to "Like" us if you haven't already.



*Nanook and the line dancers in the snow*

# From the Mailbox

*This letter is about Elisabeth, our oldest client to date at age 91!*

*Dear Polly and Kevin,*

*You both made for a great experience for Elisabeth. She talked about it all the way back. She thought it was a great experience.*

*You were both so good with Elisabeth. She thought you, Polly, were an exceptional person with a very calm demeanor—she needs that and needs to see women in strong, capable roles. And, Kevin, she was just head over heels for you. She would have taken you home with her! Thanks for flirting with her a bit—she enjoys that so much and at 91 there is not too much of that around.*

*You made it a great experience for Elisabeth! Thanks to you both and to those great dogs.*

*Betsey  
Maine*



*Polly and Elisabeth on the trail*



*Let's all follow Nelly!*

*Dear Kevin and Polly,*

*It's wonderful to be back with the dogs again. After working here a few summers ago and mushing once with my family, I've finally arrived as an apprentice. As it starts to get colder, I'm looking ahead at the winter with growing excitement for clear mornings and soft snow.*

*Eliot  
Apprentice*



# The Retired Sled Dogs' Fund, or, in Memory of Minnie

by Carolyn Hoffman

It was love at first sight. When I walked into the dog yard, on the first morning of my first dog-sledding trip, Minnie came up to me, wagging her tail, saying, "Love me!" My internal response was, "I do!" Over the course of several years of returning to Mahoosuc Guide service for dog-sledding trips, Minnie and I continued our affection. As she aged, I even asked Polly if she ever adopted out dogs when they retired from sledding. However, after discussion with my partner and with Polly, we all decided that it was best for her to age in place (rather than a suburban NY home with cats.)

Unfortunately, Minnie developed degenerative myelopathy, a paralysis that began with her lower hind legs and moved up to her trunk and then also front legs. She was walked with a support under her until she passed on.

Polly and Kevin have a wonderful retired dogs' home on the lower level of their own home, and the retirees receive love and compassionate care the rest of their lives. All the retirees enjoy sitting outside in the company of the active dogs. There is no other place like it. The veterinary bills are enormous.



*Carolyn  
kissing  
adorable  
Maeve*



*Devoted Minnie*



*Handsome Mabou*

Every time I came up to Maine, I visited Minnie and the other retirees, and have continued to do so after she passed away. The one way I could help out from a distance was to contribute money for the care of the retirees. It was a drop in the bucket, perhaps, but it helped.

I would like to encourage others to do the same, in gratitude to the wonderful dogs who have given us such love and pleasure in the sledding, and in gratitude to Kevin and Polly, who take such wonderful care of them.