

NORTHERN MUSH!

2007



To our family, friends, guests and tourism partners we would like to thank-you for a tremendous year at Blue Sky Expeditions & Blue Sky Bed & Sled!



Where do we begin?..... there were so many “memorable” moments this year.....one thing is for sure.... never a dull moment living here in the North☺
..... we all must learn to adapt to our changing climate, and expect the unexpected, given polar bears live in our community (and backyard) while simultaneously coping with the challenges of a remote and isolated community. Juggling 30 sled dogs and a Bed & Breakfast (www.blueskymush.com) kept us very busy.....yes....we still only have one channel on our TV! A special thank-you to Jollean & Ken Sivertsen who made significant sacrifices to help us out both at the B&B and in the dog yard. Our guests left each day for their Tundra Buggy adventures after

scrumptious homemade breakfasts. Also Janet & Gemma from Scotland who helped us out immensely this summer.



The tourism community worked hard inviting the world to Churchill to visit our Beluga Whales. This world class eco-tourism experience was enhanced with nature tours on buses and tundra buggies. Hiking on the beaches and riding in carts with wheels kept many of our sled dogs in shape this summer, we discovered great swimming holes, always watching over our shoulder just in case a "summer" bear happened along.



Train travelers were frequently delayed, but everyone made the best of it! One extra day added to the northern adventure as we were able to accommodate all our guests ensuring no one was without a bed or a meal!

This year passed quickly, as do most days in the North. Before we knew it Polar Bear Season was upon us.....the moment so many tourists plan for.

Thank-fully it began as a quiet year for polar bears in our yard at Blue Sky Bed & Sled this year, but not so in our dog yard. We had to be vigilant about polar bear safety with increased sightings the area. On one occasion we witnessed a bear "breaking into" an outfitters tent nearby, much to the delight of a passenger from the UK in our vehicle. During the summer we had a couple from Ontario awoken at our B&B with "cracker shells" to see a polar bear standing near the railway cars from their bedroom window. We all hurried out the door and into our vehicle to get a closer look. The Polar Bear Police encouraged him to move on, while we watched in amazement. It was then we noticed that we were all sitting in the vehicle with our pajamas on! The Polar Bear police were also found "crackering" a bear in our back yard while several of our guests were getting out of a cab in our driveway. We spent many evenings looking at photos taken by our guests on their Tundra Buggy adventures. The number of bears and "up-close" images was astounding.



"I told you the ice isn't frozen yet!"

"Mom...I think they're all staring at me!"



Bear Cuddles



Unpredictable weather brought warmer temperatures, pouring, then freezing rain, followed by a blizzard with wet snow wet snow for the musher's of the 2007 Hudson Bay Quest (www.wapuskdogsled.com) trying to make a mad dash for the finish line in Churchill, leaving a few tense moments all with happy endings. Teamwork ensured everyone arrived home safe and sound (including the sled dogs!) thanks to the Canadian Rangers, dozens of volunteers and our Sponsors, most importantly CALM AIR and Gardewine North. No wonder the HBQ is now known as the most difficult "mid-distance" race in North America. Watching 4 time racer, Elder Phillip Kingusiutnak make his way down the main street might suggest otherwise though.

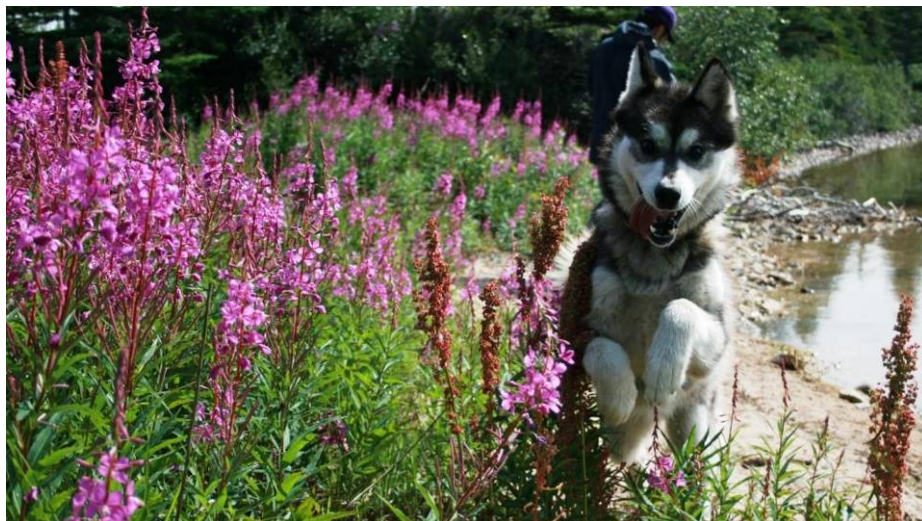


They all looked tired yet somehow serene & peaceful as they retained history, heritage and culture all the way to the finish line. What a treat for those Northern Light's tourists who witnessed this event.

Blue Sky Expeditions and Wapusk Adventures joined forces filming with several Canadian and International filming companies as part of a rising interest in the North. Keep your eye on YTV and Discovery channel!



The Canadian Press also discovered "Isobel" our Blind Sled Dog. We were overwhelmed with phone calls, e-mails and letters addressed to "Isobel" the Blind Sled dog in support of her wonderful story. Thanks so much to our "special guest" who made this story happen. If a blind sled dog can find a way to still run as a sled dog, surely we humans can find a way to make a difference in our changing world? As one of our guests put it "Just do something!" which is a motto we are adopting for this year.



Thunder, was not to be outdone with seeking the limelight, unfortunately, he insisted on checking out the other females in town, on repeated occasions. Polar Bear Alert may be his first hobby, but a close second is playing the role of an escape artist. Luckily for us he was "picked-up" and returned home.....it's hard to get angry with a retired sled dog.



"Grounded.....until next time"

Our sled dog adoption has gone well this year, thanks to so many friends and contacts in the south. Brandy, Tala, Braveheart, and Sarah are now living in Calgary, Ottawa and Winnipeg. Savik will be leaving in January for Brooks, Alta. It's hard to say good-bye to our friends but we know it's the right thing to do in their retirement years.

As 2007 draws to a close, we will be once again hitting the trails with our dogs every spare moment we can find. We hope that you will all remember Churchill, and Canada for the special place it is!and take the time to "Just Do Something" to make a difference.



.....happy trails!

Gerald, Jenafor & Family