What began as an off-season assignment quickly turned into the great snow adventure of 2011 for Photos By Dave & Andy.

We jumped at the opportunity to interpret the assignment we’d been given, “Morgans in Snow.” From the start, we knew we wanted to capture the individual experience of how we all love our four-footed kids outside the show ring and we wanted to honor and capture those experiences for all their splendid differences. We were overwhelmed with folks who wanted to participate, and we wish there had been enough snow and hours in a day to make it to every farm. Thank you to all of the farms who volunteered their beautiful Morgans for this assignment.

Our first stop was to see Christine Nava at Timber Hill Stables. We went, literally in the middle of a snowstorm. The shoot was amazing and we caught some wild pictures of the Western stallion Equinox Bossanova having a grand time in the turnout.

From Timber Hill, we went north to Burkland Farm with Josh Noble. Josh is the grandson of Dr. Bob Orcutt and is keeping things going at Burkland Farm. There we got to shoot two of his horses pulling a sleigh. There were friends of the Noble Family there with three kids that tied a sled to the back of the sleigh! Even the dogs got to ride in the sleigh. It was beautiful and relaxing and picture perfect!

From Burkland, we headed even further north to Taylor River Farm in Hampton Falls, New Hampshire where Sarah Gove and Richard Boulé welcomed us with open arms and some of our favorites were captured. The beautiful and typey stallion Sea-Vu Justified and Sara Heffernan’s new hunter, CBMF Head Of The Class, put on a great show in the snow. We were proud of Richard for daring to come outside the warm “bubble” of the indoor!

Maggie Hood’s KGA Morgans with trainer Nikki Rae Woodworth was next and we spent about five hours shooting there. It was a gorgeous day! Some favorite moments captured included Maggie Hood’s gorgeous stallion Whispering Whammunition playing with Nikki Rae’s two bulldogs, Gracie and Patty-Pants, in the turnout. Another favorite moment was watching Nikki slip and land in a snow bank while LNT Cassanova was being lunged. She was laughing so hard, she could not get up, which made me laugh so hard, I could not see through my lens.

From KGA, we headed northwest to Meadowmere in Vernon, Vermont. Over 600 acres gave us a plethora of backdrops to pick from and hiking up the mountain to find those spots made me happily “NOT” regret eating the chocolate-chip cookies for breakfast! Kyle Sewing and Katelyn Houghton were wonderful hosts.

Next stop was Dave’s neighbor Mary Kuhn. Mary literally lives just a short hike over the mountain and through the woods from Dave’s house. Dave’s daughter Hayley was beyond thrilled that we were coming to take pictures of her reserve world champion equitation horse, Versailles, and Mary turned out Kris Kroft Hot And Spicy for a fantastic and accommodating visit. A favorite moment was watching Hayley spontaneously jump on Versailles bareback in the pasture. We even got treated to a father-daughter ride with Dave jumping on Callie and Hayley on Sy. That’s the good stuff!!

From Mary’s we headed to Judy Wesson Candage’s house where we shot her daughter, Kayla, on her mare Sassy. She was an amazingly peaceful subject and it was a treat to watch her horse respond to her kindness. Judy took us in her home after shooting and made us a lunch. Dave was a happy man being that because of his cancer treatments has to eat every couple hours—just like a newborn!

The ride to Cedar Spring in Charlotte, Vermont was very last minute decision due to the fact they finally got snow, and also somewhat treacherous as it stormed two out of the four hours.
up but wow, was it worth the ride! Dave, who was not feeling so
good due to chemotherapy, was forced to be a passenger on this
trip so he could rest. I got to drive his new Ford F-150 that is
approximately the size of a herd of elephants and from someone
who has a Toyota Corolla, has the maneuverability of several
large airplanes tied together with dental floss. It made for a funny
and interesting trip. I am proud to say, there are no dents in the
truck! Dave would also like everyone to know, there was very little
“resting” as he watched me drive.

MEM Bailamos. In a word: amazing. Keely Sogolof made
for a fun and funny host as Dave, Keely, myself and two Corgis,
Iris and Oliver, waded through waist-high snow drifts to capture
this magnificent boy. It was cold, windy and overcast, with fresh
snow and endless acres of beautiful paddocks and mountains as a
backdrop. Keely and her beautiful dogs, did a wonderful job chasing
him around, even though at some points we lost both Keely and
the little dogs in a snow drift. Bailamos did not disappoint. What a
treat to shoot a horse like him—so full of presence; so charismatic,
and so willing to run Andy over while she stood in the middle of
the ring. Then, the unexpected happened! I got the offer of a life
time to ride the king himself. Poor Dave had to listen to me talk
non-stop about it the entire ride home, all night and even a week
later, to any stranger on the street or in the office who would listen.
I still have my perma-grin on.

Next, we were lucky enough to shoot Carol Wessons’ two
pregnant mares! Lucky for us, Carol only lives a short ways from
Dave. As most breeders will, she regaled us with amazing stories,
as we shot, of wonderful horses and the ever-present excitement of
the babies to come in March. Finally, after 10 shots, her mare Diva
treated us to a roll in the snow! Snowy muzzles and whiskers were
the theme of the day and we captured them all in their relaxed
winter glory of being heavy in foal. Carol’s husband, Seth, was kind
even with hand and feet warmers and enough layers
of clothing and socks for several people, it was still a chilly day
to shoot. Moreland had a wonderful group of kids and amateurs
to shoot and we captured some truly memorable moments and
group shots!

There are endless things about this assignment Dave and I
will never forget; Andy getting run over in the turnouts at every
shoot by exuberant ponies and Dave wearing his moose hat. We
logged over 43 hours in a car. Yes friends, that’s 43 hours of Andy
singing at the top of her lungs. I now feel like I am great personal
friends with the lady that is the voice of the GPS (her name is
Barbara). Both my car and Dave’s truck look like a tornados hit
them—water bottles, juice containers, empty hand warmer
packages, pairs of winter boots, extra coats, gloves and camera
supplies scattered throughout. Oddly, I have also gotten used to
driving Dave around like Miss Daisy and him suddenly pointing
to a Friendly’s yelling out “FROSTY,” scaring me to death while
I swerve to get the man a snack. Dave and I got to experience
everything from a two-stall backyard barn, to pregnant mares, to
huge show barns with multi-titled world champions, to horses
that climbed snow-covered mountains so I could find the perfect
backdrop. With no show rings in sight, we got to witness Morgans
and the owners that truly love them being who they are; relaxed,
mellow, crazy, playful, funny and soulful. We laughed throughout
every single shoot- we were met with open arms and open hearts
and we felt so honored just to have been asked to do this by The
Morgan Horse. When summing up our collective experience, the
quote that truly encapsulates it is: “People take different roads
seeking fulfillment and happiness. Just because they’re not on your
road doesn’t mean they’ve gotten lost.” –H. Jackson Browne.

Would we do it again? You better believe it! We are already
asking for our next assignment!

Andy Illes
Photo Essay ~

Morgans and their people enjoy the snow
MEM Bailamos owned by Nau Is The Time photographed at Cedar Spring Farm
The dogs join the fun
Dave & Andy
Sleighriding at Burkland Farm
Photo Essay

Whispering Whammunition owned by Maggie Hood photographed at KGA Morgans
Equinox Bossanova owned by Heidi Kunkel photographed at Timber Hill Stables
Snow inspires Morgan high-jinks
Sea-Vu Justified owned by the Gove Family Partnership photographed at Taylor River Farm
Photo Essay

FCF Montego Bay owned by Joanne Kieger photographed at Bellewether
A fond farewell from the snowbelt