

The Epidemic

Excerpts from iditarod.com

In January of 1925, two Eskimo children died in Nome, Alaska. The town's doctor, Curtis Welch, diagnosed the cause of death as diphtheria. His supply of diphtheria antitoxin was 5 years old, and (if effective) only good for a few inoculations.

The nearest source of antitoxin was in Anchorage, but how to get it quickly to Nome? Some suggested an airplane, but air travel was in its infancy. All



the planes available were of open cockpit design, flown only in summer. The thought of piloting an open cockpit plane at -60 degrees was enough to give anyone pause. Even if the pilot survived, the airplane probably would not.

It was decided that the safest way to get the serum to Nome was by rail from Anchorage to Nenana and from Nenana to Nome by dogsled. Alaska's

Governor ordered that a relay team of dogsleds be organized. Mushers would travel to designated mail shelter cabins and wait their turn to transport the serum.

Shortly after midnight on January 27th, 'Wild Bill' Shannon received the 20-pound container of serum from the train conductor. 'Wild Bill' drove his team of nine malamutes to Tolovana. There he met Edgar Kalland, a part-time mail carrier. The two took the package to a roadhouse to warm it. The temperature outside was -56 degrees. The race to Nome went on again. Mushers transported the serum from one outpost to another, covering 465 miles in 75 hours. More than 200 miles remained and reports in Nome were that the epidemic was spreading rapidly.

The wind was howling off of the Bering Sea when Henry Ivanoff handed the serum to Leonard Seppala. Seppala, who had driven his dogs 170 miles in 3 days from Nome, decided to take a gamble. He drove his team directly across frozen Norton Bay. The team battled against gale-force winds and temperatures approaching -100 degrees, following the lead dog, Togo. Charlie Olson took the serum from Seppala at Dexter's Roadhouse, 70 miles from Nome at 3:00 pm. On January 31st.



Olson gave the serum to Gunnar Kaasen at Bluff. Balto, a husky that belonged to Leonard Seppala, led Kaasen's team. Balto was part of Seppala's 2nd-string team, which is why Balto was not with Seppala on this trip.

High winds flipped the sled over at Bonanza Flats. Kaasen looked for the serum, but it was not on the sled. In the failing light, Kaasen stripped off his gloves, and searched bare-handed through the snow, finally retrieving the package.

Kaasen's team staggered into Nome at 5:30 am. On February 2nd, delivering the serum to Dr. Welch, who quickly began to administer vaccines. No further deaths from diphtheria were reported.

The twenty teams that participated traveled 674 miles in less than 5 and ½ days, under horrific conditions. All recognized participants were given a 'donation' from the public fund, as well as a per diem paid by the Territory. Most earned between \$30 to \$40.

The Iditarod dogsled race commemorates the

“Great Race for Mercy”.

Iditarod Race Unit

Basic Design by John Manley at jmanley@esu10.org for Mushhusky Assemblies.

Objectives:

Apply research skills using the internet, encyclopedias, and magazines.
 Study maps and develop map skills.
 Apply mathematical skills.
 Develop artistic skills.
 Exercise organizational and critical thinking skills.



Musher Folder:

Students are assigned an Iditarod musher to research and monitor during the Iditarod Race (which starts the 1st Saturday in March). Students design Iditarod Folders to store and organize the information on their mushers. Additional information added to the folders could include:

Iditarod Maps	Iditarod History	Alaska History
Sledding History	Sled Dog History	Alaska's Various Cultures
Iditarod Photos	Iditarod Articles	Training for the Race
Weather Information	Previous Race Champions	Wild Trail Encounters
Iditarod Race Rules	Sledding Equipment	Keep a Daily Journal
Current Race Results	Controversial Issues (PETA)	Effects of cold on the body
Natural Phenomena (Aurora Borealis)	Dog Care	Alaska Native Food

Students use their creativity to organize, design, and decorate their folders. Once the folders are completed, students display and share their folders. If the teacher wants a grade, folders can be graded based on effort, following directions, mechanics, research, neatness and creativity.

Anticipatory Set:

Pre-race activities could include covering Iditarod and Alaska History. Covering the route of the Iditarod, its checkpoints, the Alaska Geography and Climate. Books and videos covering the Iditarod and dog sledding are also useful in raising student interest.

Daily Race Activities:

Once the race begins, daily race updates are shared with the students (iditarod.com; cabelas.com). Students chart their mushers' daily progress on a map of the Iditarod Trail. Mathematical skill can be applied by calculating distances between checkpoints, and finding the average distance covered and speed traveled by a dog-team or the dog-teams. A brief sharing and question time each day is effective. Students can share the progress of their mushers, race incidents, news stories, and the condition of the dogs. Students usually have many questions regarding the race and its rules, the mushers, and their dog-teams.

The Red Lantern:

Daily updates and map charting continue until the end of the race when the last musher (the Red Lantern musher) crosses the finish line in Nome. End of the race activities could include a classroom awards ceremony to the top twenty finishers and the Red Lantern Musher. A classroom Iditarod party could include the showing of a movie such as Balto, Snow Dogs, Iron Will, or Eight Below.

Learn about Iditaread from www.Iditarod.com.

Check out this web site: www.oregontrail.net/~thesmiths/iditarod/idityoutl.html

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In Memory of Joanne Alexander & Susan Butcher



Women on the Trail

Excerpts from Nicki J. Nielsen

**Dedicated to all the dog mushers who take to the trails to enjoy the peace and beauty of Alaska's countryside.
Especially dedicated to those women who have run the Iditarod Race.**

A Listing of a Few Courageous Women in Alaska's Iditarod History:

1974	Lolly	Medley	She started with 14 dogs and ended with 9.
1974	Mary	Shields	First female to mush across the finish line at Nome in 1974.
1975	Ginger	Burcham	3rd female to enter the race. Ran a team of Samoyed & Samoyed-Siberian Crosses.
1977	Dinah	Knight	First woman from outside Alaska to enter the race.
1978	Francine	Bennis	First ran in 1984. She started running dogs in 1978.
1978	Gill	Gill	Ran her first race in 1978.
1978	Susan	Butcher	1st woman to place in the money, 4 time winner, died Aug. 5, 2006.
1978	Varona	Thompson	2 nd woman to place in the money. She netted \$500 in 1978.
1979	Dee Dee	Jonrowe	Has raced many Iditarods since 1979. Still racing despite a 'bout with cancer in 2004.
1979	Patty	Friend	Ran her first race in 1979. Her husband is an Iditarod musher, also.
1980	Barbara	Moore	She became Nome's first female to compete in the Iditarod.
1980	Donna	Gentry	1980 Iditarod Rookie of the Year.
1980	Marjorie	Moore	In Nome at the finish line she commented, "No big deal."
1981	Firmin	Firmin	A lifelong Alaskan, she first ran in 1981.
1982	Rose	Albert	First Alaska Native woman to compete in the Iditarod.
1983	Beverly	Masek	1983 was her first race. She serves in the Alaska State House as of 2004.
1983	Chris	O'Gar	First entered the race in 1983.
1983	Connie	Frerichs	She is from Delta Junction, Alaska and first entered the race in 1983.
1983	Fritz	Kirsch	She ran in 1983 and estimates that it cost her \$15,000 to run it then.
1983	Pam	Flowers	1983 race was a beginning of her ultimate goal to sled to the North Pole.
1983	Roxy	Wright	Famous sprint racer who first entered the race in 1983.
1983	Shannon C.	Poole	First took to the trail as one of 68 racers in 1983.
1984	Diana	Dronenburg	First time that a husband and wife ran together in competition.
1984	Kari	Skogen	First female musher from another country to race the Iditarod.
1984	Miki	Collins	Mushed dogs for 10 years before entering the 1984 race.
1985	Betsy	McGuire	Last minute entrant in the 1985 race.
1985	Claire	Philip	She and her husband became the 1 st couple to complete the race together.
1985	Libby	Riddles	First female to win the Iditarod Race. She won \$59,000.
1985	Monique	Bene	First musher from France to sign up for the race
1986	Pat	Danley	She entered with her husband, Bill Hall
2005	Rachael	Scdoris	First legally blind musher to run the Iditarod (2005) & to finish the Iditarod (2006)

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In Memory of Susan Butcher

August 5, 2006

Four-time Iditarod champion Susan Butcher died Saturday in a Seattle hospital.

Susan was 51 years old and the mother of two young children when she lost her battle with leukemia.

Susan grew up in Cambridge, Massachusetts. She came to Alaska and carved out a niche for herself in the bush of Alaska while in her early twenties.

She liked spending time alone and through her twenties she dedicated her life to running a dogsled team and pursuing the goal of winning the Iditarod.

She ran her first Iditarod in 1978 and spent a grueling eight more years training before she won her 1st Iditarod Race.

She married Dave Monson in 1985 and won the first of her four Iditarods the next year. She would go on to win three more in the next four years.

Soon, Alaska became known as the state "Where men are men and women win the Iditarod."

In 1996 Susan decided to retire from mushing. She still continued, though, to breed and sell sled dogs and she regularly assisted various news organizations as a color-commentator.

Susan gave tourists a taste of dogsledding by giving them a glimpse of her dog yard and visiting with them as they floated down the Yukon River on a boat from Fairbanks.

"We were fortunate enough to meet her a few years ago. She came out and visited with us, showed us her place and was very friendly and open with us", remembered one tourist.

Susan was a part of the fiber of Alaska. Her life and personality



gave Alaska a certain characteristic that adds to it's uniqueness.

Many Alaskans thought that Butcher had beaten the leukemia.

People up here kept up with her fight via the radio and the television. Everyone was rooting and praying for her. No one really thought she would be beaten by the leukemia because, after all, she always came out on top, somehow.

She did seem to have beaten it for awhile. She came home from the Seattle hospital where she had received her treatments and Alaskans thought, boy that was close.

Then word came early this spring that Susan was back in Seattle undergoing more treatments.

People in Alaska began to worry that maybe this wasn't going to go the way it was suppose to go. Maybe 'our girl' really was up against something bigger than she could handle this time. Alaskans began to pray once again.

Her husband and their two daughters, Tekla, 10, and Chisana, 5, returned to Seattle with her.

Doctors began aggressive treatments to try to stop transplanted bone-marrow cells from destroying Butcher's digestive tract. She was often in excruciating pain from the disease and the treatments.

Doctors eventually managed to turn back the GVHD with a combination of steroids and experimental drugs.

"Then to our dismay and surprise, about a week ago, when we did a routine bone marrow test, we found that her leukemia had come back," Abkowitz said.

Butcher was given a tough choice: go home and die, or begin another round of painful and potentially deadly chemotherapy to drive the leukemia into remission in preparation for another bone-marrow transplant.

A mother of young children really has no choice, she must continue to fight.

She resumed chemotherapy, but on Friday her condition worsened.

She was moved into an intensive care unit. Her husband was at her side when she died Saturday.

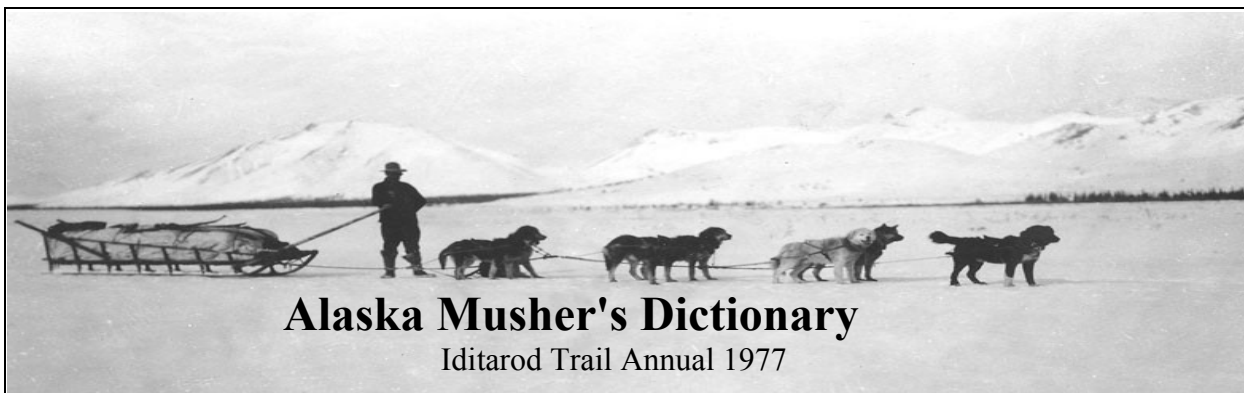
News of her death hit hard in Alaska. "She was too young to die and we are too shocked to let go," one Alaskan stated.

She made a difference in Alaska, in the sport of mushing and in the lives she touched. She will be greatly missed.

Iditarod legacy

Susan Butcher was a four-time Iditarod champion who finished in the top 10 in all but two of her 17 races.

1978 19 th	1987 1 st
1979 9 th	1988 1 st
1980 5 th	1989 2 nd
1981 5 th	1990 1 st
1982 2 nd	1991 3 rd
1983 9 th	1992 2 nd
1984 2 nd	1993 4 th
1985 Scratch	1994 10 th
1986 1 st	



Alaska Musher's Dictionary

Iditarod Trail Annual 1977

Lead Dog or Leader	Dog who runs in front of the others. Must be both intelligent and fast.
Double Leader	Two lead dogs who lead the team side by side.
Swing Dog	Dog that runs directly behind the leader.
Wheel Dogs	Dogs who are placed directly in front of the sled.
Team Dog	Any dog other than a leader, or swing dog.
Mush! Hike! Lets Go!	Commands to start the team.
Gee!	Command for a right turn.
Haw!	Command for a left turn.
Come Gee! Come Haw!	Commands for 180 degree turns.
Whoa!	Command used to halt the team, accompanied by heavy pressure.
Line Out!	Command to lead dog to pull the team out straight from the sled.
Tow line, Gang line	Main rope that runs forward from sled.
Neck Line	Line that connects dog's collar to tow line.
Snub Line	Rope attached to the sled which is used to tie the sled to an object.
Tether Line	Long chain with shorter pieces attached to it; used to stake out dogs.
Tug Line	Line that connects dog's harness to tow line.
Toggles	Small pieces of ivory or wood used by Eskimos to fasten tug lines to harnesses.
Trail!	Request for right-of-way on the trail.
Stake	Metal or wooden post driven into the ground to which a dog is tied.
Snow Hook, Anchor	Heavy piece of metal attached to sled by a line. Holds team for a short time.
Stove Up	Injured, generally temporarily. Applies to both musher and dogs.
Dog in Basket	Tired or injured dog carried in the sled.
Rigging	Collection of lines to which dogs are attached.
Runners	The two bottom pieces of the sled which come in contact with the snow.
Slats	Thin strips of wood which make up the bottom of the sled basket.
Husky	Any northern type dog.
Malamute	Original Alaska Breed, AKC recognized. They are big, & strong, but slow.
Pedaling	Pushing the sled with one foot while the other remains on the runner.
Indian Dog	An Alaska Husky that comes from an Indian Village.
Siberian Husky	Medium sized northern breed dog (AKC). They usually have blue eyes.

Note: Since dogs are not driven with reins, but by spoken orders, the leader of the team must understand all that is said to him and guide the others accordingly.



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Back in the Early Days

Excerpts from Alaska State Library and [Alaskan Southeaster Magazine](#)

You think you have something to complain about..... think about this:

Alaska had no legislature for forty-five years after the purchase of Alaska from Russia in 1867. She had no representative in Congress for 39 years of that period.

Sitka was the first capital of Alaska. Juneau was officially made the capital of Alaska in 1900.

In September of 1912 Alaskans were busy planning their first election for 8 members of the Senate and 16 members of the House. There were some top-notch mushers in the group. In the case of some members of the Northwestern Delegation, it was a case of mush or stay home.

The last boat had sailed from Nome near the end of October, just before the election was held. Two of the candidates, Charles D. Jones for the House and Elwood Bruner for the Senate, had been optimistic enough about the outcome of the election to leave on the last boat. They were both elected.

The other four successful candidates, Frank Aldrich, J.C. Kennedy and Tom Gaffney for the House and Conrad Freeding for the Senate, remained in Nome until January 7th.

On January 7, the four men hitched up their dog teams and headed for Fairbanks in a howling blizzard. The legislators were due in Juneau on March 3 and had a long way to travel.

The first part of their journey ended in Ruby on January 23. All four of the Nome delegates arrived about an hour apart, after 16 days on the trail. They remained in Ruby long enough to attend a banquet in their honor. Then they left for Fairbanks by dog team.

They mushed into Fairbanks on February 1st and 2nd. The legislators were again honored at a banquet before they started the last leg of their journey by dog team that ended in Valdez.

J.C. Kennedy was the first of the Nome delegation to reach Valdez on February 12. Tom Gaffney and Frank Aldrich arrived on February 13. Senator-elect Conrad Freeding pulled into Valdez on February 15 after covering 85 miles that day.

On February 18 at midnight the "mushing legislators" boarded the Northwestern and sailed for Juneau.

Dan Sutherland of Ruby, Harry Roden of Iditarod and Milo Kelly of Knik were three more members of Alaska's first Territorial Legislature. A portion of their journey had also been made by dog team.

Three legislators listed themselves as Democrats, three as Republicans, and the rest claimed some variety of independent or no-party affiliations. All the novice lawmakers were eager to serve. They would be paid, from federal funds, \$15 per day while in session plus fifteen cents per travel mile, round trip. Mileage was said to have amounted to an estimated \$600 to \$700 for the Nome mushers.

So, when Alaska's first legislators met in the Elks Hall in Juneau on March 3, 1913 for the convening of the historic first session of the Territorial Legislature there were some topnotch dog mushers in the group.



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A Tale from the Trail

Adapted from The Cruellest Miles

"It takes a Northman to survive the North. Not only the cold...but the terrible, silent menace of it, the soundless days without end; when the thought of being the only human in some vast stretch of its white wastes is too terrifying a thought for one companion-loving human to carry and keep his mental balance."

Bert Hansen, a U.S. Deputy Marshal of Alaska's Interior

Many have heard of "Balto", the sled dog, but few have heard of "Wild Bill" Shannon and his team of courageous sled dogs. Wild Bill was the first musher in the relay to deliver the diphtheria serum to Nome in 1925. Lanky and fair-haired, Wild Bill was a jack-of all trades and, like so many other men in the territory, master of quite a few. He was a mail driver, who was known to have the fastest dog team in the area. His skills as a driver, combined with a combustible mixture of hot temper, sharp wit and willingness to take risks on the trail no doubt accounted for this nickname.

On his way to the railroad station, Shannon had sensed that the temperature was dropping well below the minus 30 to minus 40 degree mark. When it was this cold, your breath formed into ice crystals and the air pinched your nostrils as you drew it in. It was like the sting of a bee and the pain cut short every deep breath.

Wild Bill was about to break the "rule of the 40's". The rule warned against running a dog team in temperatures below minus 40 degrees and above 40 degrees. At 40 below, 2 degrees below the point at which mercury freezes, there is little room for error. Tonight, actually, it was 50 below. A cup of boiling water flung into the air, for example, would become, as if by magic, a ghostly cloud of vapor. Steam rose from every finger on a bared hand as the vapor that passes continually through the pores became more visible. Spit froze. At 50 below, one driver explained, "a lost glove means a lost hand."

The leader of Shannon's nine-dog crew was Blackie, a five-year-old husky. He could be trusted. The eight other members of the team, all two-year-olds, were a different story. They would need close monitoring.

It would have been wiser for Shannon to wait at least until morning given the falling temperatures, but "If people are dying...let's get started", Shannon told the Post Office Inspector.

Taking the precious 20 pound box of serum from the train at 9:00 p.m., Wild Bill and his team of nine dogs headed out into the cold night on the first leg of the journey.

As Wild Bill traveled, he had great difficulty in staying warm. It became harder and harder, he realized, to warm his extremities. He had to take immediate action. At times he would get off the sled and run in front of his team to keep the blood flowing to his arms and legs. He began to pedal more frequently on the runners. At 3:00 a.m. he reached Campbell's Roadhouse in Minto, Wild Bill's face was black with frostbite. Cub, Jack and Jet, three of his dogs, were injured from the cold. It was sixty-two degrees below zero.

After waiting four hours to warm up, Wild Bill headed back into the cold night. He left Cub, Jack and Jet behind. He was now traveling with only six sled dogs into the frigid, cold wilderness. Thirteen miles later, Wild Bill Shannon reached the roadhouse at Tolovana where Edgar Kalland was to continue on with the serum.

Wild Bill's journey was over. It was many weeks before his face healed enough so that he could shave. Cub, Jack and Jet died from their injuries.

Balto was immortalized for being the leader on the first team to reach Nome, but few remember those dogs that gave their all for the children of Nome.

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The Real Story of Balto

Adapted from The Adventures of Balto the Untold Story
by Patricia Chargot



Few people know Balto's true story. Only one small part has been told, and it has been distorted.

Leonard Seppala was a famous sled dog racer by 1922, the year that Balto was born. Sepp, as his friends called him, had won every big race in Alaska, including the 408-mile All-Alaska Sweepstakes 3 years in a row.

Sepp's No. 1 leader in 1925, the year of the diphtheria epidemic in Nome, was Togo, a nine-year-old male Siberian Husky. Togo was a born genius and champion veteran racer.

Balto was another one of Seppala's dogs. He was one of the lesser huskies, in Sepp's opinion.

Balto, though, appealed to Gunnar Kaasen who borrowed Seppala's 'B' team and was Seppala's dog handler. Seppala and Kaasen worked for a gold mining company, driving dog teams with supplies to the outlying gold camps.

The serum run was Seppala's most urgent mission yet. Children in Nome were dying and needed a diphtheria serum. In the original plan Seppala was supposed to make the entire run by himself. The total trip was 1,348 miles!

The plan was changed after Seppala left to pick up the serum. Now, it would include several mushers. Gunnar Kaasen joined the relay race at this time without Seppala's knowledge. Kaasen used Seppala's remaining dogs, and he picked Balto as the leader even though he knew that this would anger Seppala! Balto, though, rose to the occasion.

Meanwhile, Seppala and his dog team met the relay of mushers. He picked up the serum and continued on for his portion of the race. He and his team made a daring traverse across frozen Norton Bay. The team battled against gale-force winds and temperatures approaching 100 degrees below 0 all the way to Golovin.

Sepp then handed the serum to Charles Olson, who carried it to Bluff. Olson handed it to Kaasen.

Kaasen set off for Point Safety, but when he got there, he found his replacement, Ed Rohn, sleeping. Rather than wake Rohn up, Kaasen decided to make the final dash to Nome himself. Seppala, later, questioned this action.

Balto plowed through snow drifts and fought high winds for more than three hours in the swirling blackness. When the team arrived in Nome with the serum they became instant heroes.

By the time Seppala and Togo showed up, no one was quite as interested in their story, even though they had traveled 260 miles in comparison to Kaasen and Balto who had only traveled 106 miles. Kaasen and Balto had the spotlight and there was no room in the winner's circle for the other teams.

To make matters worse, reporters had mistakenly credited Balto with Togo's accomplishments. Now, Balto was the super Siberian, the veteran racer, skilled navigator, loyal leader.

Sadly, Togo had run himself to exhaustion and was badly injured. He would never race again.

Eventually, Gunnar Kaasen traveled to Hollywood with Seppala's 'B' team. The movie, "Balto's Race to Nome" was created. The movie was a tremendous success, but a great distortion from the truth.

Kaasen spent the next year and a half traveling across the country appearing in Vaudeville Acts with Balto and the team. Kaasen then sold the team to a dime museum (freak show) in Los Angeles.

Eventually, a kind man named George Kimble raised enough money to buy the team from the dime museum and Balto and the team spent the rest of their days in the Brookside Zoo in Cleveland, Ohio.

Balto died on March 14, 1933. His body was stuffed and mounted at the Cleveland Museum of Natural History where it can still be seen today.

Togo's mounted body stands in the Iditarod Trail Race Headquarters in Wasilla, Alaska.

Bronze statues of the two famous huskies have been placed outside the Wolf Wilderness Exhibit Center at the Cleveland Zoo and the two heroes of the north have been reunited, at least symbolically.

That is the real story of Balto.

Togo, a Real Hero

Excerpts from the International Seppala Association



A Norwegian man named Leonhard Seppala came to Nome in 1900. In Nome Leonhard entered the old ways of dog mushers and used this old Eskimo art to deliver mail and freight into the remote Alaska wilderness. He, like everyone else, used mongrel dogs some weighing as much as 120 pounds.

In 1913 he became involved with a different kind of dog, the Siberian Husky. This is how it happened, quoting Seppala himself:

"It was in 1913 that a man came to me and said that he had bought a group of Siberian females and puppies and wanted me to take charge of the raising and training of the young dogs. He said he was going to make Captain [Roald] Amundsen a present of a team of Siberians next year, at which time it was planned that Amundsen was to come to Nome with an expedition on his way to the North Pole. Hence, about fifteen dogs, mostly puppies and females, arrived at my camp and as soon as the snow began to fly I started to break in the oldest ones."

Amundsen abandoned his plans for a polar expedition once the Peary expedition got there first and the dogs remained with Seppala. He ran the All Alaskan Sweepstakes Race with these dogs and had a hair-raising experience in a blizzard nearly going over a precipice into the Bering Sea, sliding down an icy slope, unable to hold his team and stopping finally by means of his "emergency steel bar" jammed into the snow.

Seppala was hooked, no matter how dangerous his race had been. In the years 1915–1917 Leonard and his teams of Siberian Huskies astonished the mushing world by winning the All Alaskan Sweepstakes race three years in a row.

It was about this time that a skinny, mischievous pup named Togo worked himself into Leonhard's life. Seppala tried to sell Togo twice as he doubted the pup's potential. Each time Togo proved to be quite the escape artist and returned to Seppala's kennels. At eight months of age Togo freed himself to chase after Seppala's dog sled team, chased them up a trail and caught up to them easily.

Seppala had to bring the young dog along if only to keep an eye on him. By the end of the day Togo had proven himself & had earned a place hooked next to the lead dog, a position he held for 75 miles.

"In 1917 my team covered a greater distance than any in Alaska has ever done so far as is known -- for, in addition to traveling from the first snowfall until the last fall in June, I used the dogs as motor power on the Kougarok railway all summer, covering in all, approximately seven thousand miles."

My chief pride in winning the All-Alaska Sweepstakes race three years in succession was not in the purse or in defeating my rivals, but in the fact that in each successive race all the dogs arrived in harness and in as good condition as they did in 1915."

In 1925, the year of the Serum Run to Nome, Seppala had the dog he describes as his finest leader at the head of his team: "Togo", a small (48-pound) dog who was then 9 years old. Of the twenty mushers who rushed the serum to Nome, the man who drove the furthest in perilous conditions was Leonhard Seppala. The dog that led Seppala's team on a loop of two hundred and sixty miles, including a long stretch over the fracturing ice of Norton Sound was the same dog with an impressive record of race victories over the previous decade, Togo, the real hero of the serum run. It wore Togo out and he was unable to race much after that.

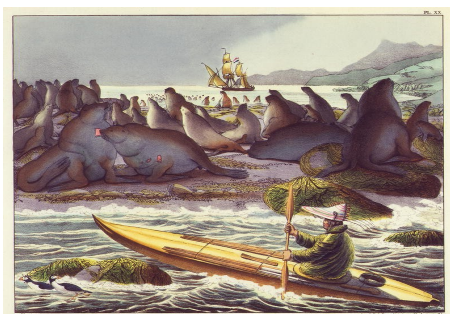
Togo lived for several more years, his most athletic endeavor, the serum drive, behind him. Togo sired multiple litters before dying in honorable old age.

Seppala retired to Seattle. He died in 1967 at the age of 90. His ashes were scattered along the Iditarod.

Together, without benefit of on-lookers, or cameras, in dangerous weather and conditions, Seppala and Togo, earned their right to be called true heroes and raced their way into a history that has, until now, overlooked their part in it.

Alaska's Dog Teams

Iditarod Trail Annual 1977



Prior to the coming of the white man, traveling by dog team was not an important means of travel to the Eskimos, or to the Indians in Alaska. Their traveling was usually done in summer by means of seal skin kayaks or walrus-covered oomiaks on the sea; and birch bark canoes and dugouts on the rivers. During the winter months the Eskimos and Indians rarely felt a compelling urge to move swiftly from one place to another.

In the late 18th century, Russian explorers initiated the use of dog teams in their adventurous fur buying expeditions. Until major new sources of wealth were developed in the

late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the fur trade dominated the economy of Alaska for more than 150 years. Following Bering's Second Kamchatka Expedition of 1741-42, the Russians began to barter sea otter pelts from Alaskan waters. China ultimately became the key market, where the upper classes sought luxurious pelts for their clothing.

The trade initially was conducted by Russian frontier merchants known as *promyshlenniki*, who indentured native Aleut hunters to procure furs for them. In time, larger Russian joint-stock companies replaced the activity of individual trappers and traders.

Then the Eskimos and Indians began to use dog teams for travel, too.

Many people might be surprised to learn that the sled dogs were a transplanted product. The imported dogs have long since been crossbred and blended with native dogs to form the familiar "Husky" of today. It is claimed, though, that the predominant blood strain is still that of hound and setter.

During the Klondike Stampede to the Yukon Territory in 1897-98 thousands of "Outside" dogs were unloaded from steamers that brought prospectors north to seek their fortune. It became as necessary for a prospector to learn the art of dog mushing, as it did for him to learn to pan gold from pay dirt.

Every dog has its day and for 30 brief years the sled dogs reigned as King of Alaska's trails.

However, the exhilarating form of winter travel steadily lost ground after roads and the Alaska Railroad were built. Dog powered traffic suffered even more when travel by airplane came to Alaska.

The thrilling sport of dog sled racing had its beginning in Nome. The men and women who promoted the races hoped the sport would help with breeding good sled dogs; and maintaining dog mushing because it held a high place in the hearts of Alaskans.

Back in the early days, the hardiness and willingness of the sled dogs to struggle against all odds at the urging of their master brought thrilling tales of dog mushing out of the North. The Iditarod Race is called the "Greatest Sporting Event in the World" and is accomplishing exactly what the early backers of dog mushing had hoped that their races would accomplish ---- the breeding of good sled dogs and maintaining the sport of dog mushing in Alaska.



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Iditarod Historical Trail Map

The Iditarod National Historic Trail, Inc.

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The word Iditarod has several meanings:

- Iditarod means "clear water" and was named by the Shageluk Indians for the Iditarod River.
- Iditarod, comes from the Ingalik Indian word "Haiditarod", the name for the river. It means "distant place".



The original surveyed mail route from Seward to Nome was 938 miles. The Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race uses two alternate routes from Anchorage to Nome which are each substantially longer than the historic route. Each of the two race routes are approximately 1,100 miles from Anchorage to Nome.

Wildlife living along the trail is moose, caribou, brown bear, bison, wolf, dall sheep and many varieties of birds and smaller mammals. Near the Bering Sea Coast live seals, walrus and occasionally a polar bear.

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The Jr. Iditarod



In 1975 Eric Beeman, Rome Gilman, Mark Couch, Susan Wagon, Clint Mayeur, Carl Clawson and Jesse Reynolds had a dream of starting a competitive race and providing a training ground for young mushers like themselves interested in distance racing. During the next two years other young people joined them and turned this dream from extended camping trips into the beginnings of the premiere race we know today.

Joe Redington Sr. after discussing the idea with these young people, advised them to “go for it” and that was the beginning of the Jr. Iditarod.

This dedicated group of young mushers, with the help of their parents and other interested adults, worked very hard and saw their dream realized when the first Jr. Iditarod Trail Race took place in March of 1978. From then on, the race has grown in stature and professionalism to an event of approximately 160 miles in length. It is held annually on the weekend immediately preceding the start of the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race and it draws young mushers from all over Alaska and from outside the state; as well as Europe with Thomas Krejci of Czechoslovakia being the first international entrant in 1992.

Age Range of Mushers: 14 to 17 years of age the day the race begins.

First Lady to Win : Christine Delia from Skwentna, Alaska in 1981.

Possible Temperature Extremes During Race: Extreme temperatures reported have been mid 50's above in 1981, making the trail conditions punchy and very wet, to -50° at Pt. McKenzie in 1979.

Teams: A musher must have at least 7, & up to 10 dogs at the starting line, and must cross the finish line with at least 5 dogs on the tow line.

Mandatory Rest: All mushers are required to take a mandatory 10 hour layover at the Yentna Station (where they sleep in the open) before returning to Wasilla on the second day.



Mark Ruzicka at the starting line of the 2005 Junior Iditarod Sled Dog Race---- Wasilla, Alaska



Learn more about the Jr. Iditarod:

[Dashing Through the Snow – The Story of the Jr. Iditarod](#)
by Sherry Shanahan

[Iditarod Dream – Dusty and His Sled Dogs Compete in Alaska's Jr. Iditarod](#) by Ted Wood

www.iditarod.com/jr

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The Yukon Quest

www.yukonquest.com, Laura Johnston

The Toughest Sled Dog Race in the World

The Yukon Quest began as a shared dream of musher Leroy Shank and non-musher and historian Roger Williams. They dedicated their vision to the gold seekers, mail carriers, trappers and the traders who settled the great North during the turn of the century.

This international sled dog race began in 1984 with 27 teams. It covers 1,000 miles of trail through some of the most spectacular geography on the American Continent. The trail route runs between Whitehorse, Yukon to Fairbanks, Alaska. The race takes place each year in mid-February. The starting point alternates between the two cities, even years from Fairbanks and odd years from Whitehorse.

There is no other race like the Yukon Quest. It is not a staged race, but a true distance race. Mushers cannot replace sleds during the race and cannot have stoves and equipment flown into any of the checkpoints. Some of the distances between checkpoints will be as long as 200 miles. So, the mushers must carry many of their supplies with them on the trail. In general, only 2/3 of the teams entering the race will reach the finish line.

The Yukon quest gets its name from the old "Highway of the North", the Yukon River. Mushers cross some of the meanest, least populated terrain in North America, following trails first used by fur traders, gold seekers, missionaries and the Canadian Mounties, who considered the successful completion of a winter "patrol" through this country one of their highest honors. Mushers battle fierce winds, temperatures that drop as low as 80 below without wind chill, icy open water and four summits higher than 3,000 feet.

The Yukon Quest, while equal in length to the better-known Iditarod, is considered more challenging by many mushers. The terrain is more varied and arguably more difficult. But the most significant difference is one of power -- dog power. Quest mushers are limited to 14 dogs, which is intended to allow smaller kennel owners to compete.

The Quest is deliberately less commercial than the Iditarod. Backed largely by local sponsors, the race's low profile has enabled organizers to avoid the kind of criticism that has dogged the Iditarod in recent years. According to mushers who have run both races, the Quest is what the Iditarod used to be, before large-money sponsors put pressure on race organizers to match more of the standards of the Lower 48. In fact, the Quest encourages values of the North, expecting mushers to look to each other for support on the trail. Indeed, mushers travel together, build campfires and tell stories as their dog teams bed down, nose to tail. That doesn't mean mushers aren't competitive. Former Iditarod champion Rick Mackey, who stopped running that race in favor of the Quest, sums it up: "I'm not here for the money. I'm here to win. The money is second."

Sleep deprivation is a major factor in long-distance races. Mushers tell tales of mirages seen under the Northern Lights -- log cabins with lit windows, or inviting warm, blue lakes. The Yukon Quest, a race for the strong of heart! Mushers and dogs who go beyond their limit and experience the victory of completion.

This is a true race of the north. This is the Yukon Quest!

Yukon Quest Winners:

1984 - Sonny Lindner
1985 - Joe Runyan
1986 - Bruce Johnson
1987 - Bill Cotter
1988 - David Monson
1989 - Jeff King
1990 - Vern Halter
1991 - Charlie Boulding

1992 - John Schandelmeier
1993 - Charlie Boulding
1994 - Lavon Barve
1995 - Frank Turner
1996 - John Schandelmeier
1997 - Rick Mackey
1998 - Bruce Lee
1999 - Ramy Brooks

2000 - Aliy Zirkle
2001 - Tim Osmar
2002 - Hans Gatt
2003 - Hans Gatt
2004 - Hans Gatt
2005 - Lance Mackey
2006 - Lance Mackey

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The Blind Musher

Excerpts from Wikipedia, & 

Jeannette J. Lee, Associated Press, March 19, 2006, Anchorage Daily News



Rachael Scdoris, (born February 1, 1985 in Bend, Oregon) is an American dog musher who became the first legally blind person to compete in the 1,049 mile 'Iditarod Dog Sled Race' across Alaska.

"There are times when I'm out there and I think, 'Man I wish I could see what's going on around here,' "said Scdoris. "But, you know, I don't know anything different and this is what I have, so I'm going to use it."

Scdoris was born with congenital achromatopsia, an uncorrectable visual disorder. Her vision is 20/200, and she is color blind.

In 1997, Scdoris competed in her first dog sled race and placed 4th in the 'Frog Lake Race'. She later won several local short-distance races. In 2001, she competed in the 500 mile 'International Pedigree Stage Stop Sled Dog Race'. She became the first blind person and the youngest musher to complete an event of that distance. Rachael carried the Olympic Torch for the '2002 Winter Games'.

In 2003, the Iditarod Trail Committee approved her request under the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 for special accommodations to compete in the much longer and more rigorous 'Iditarod'. Scdoris completed the qualifying races in 2004, placing 11th in the 350-mile 'Race to the Sky' in Montana and 6th in the 400-mile 'John Beargrease Mid-Distance Marathon' in Minnesota.

On March 5 she started the '2005 Iditarod' in Anchorage, Alaska with "visual interpreter" Paul Ellering, who warned her of trail conditions by radio, or shouting. The two-way radios broke several times during the race during crashes, which are relatively common especially among rookies. "I had a nice little encounter with a tree... the tree won". Rachael was not able to complete this race because of the condition of her dogs.

In the '2006 Iditarod', Rachael Scdoris fell asleep while mushing, as many mushers do, and became separated from Tim Osmar, her visual guide. She awoke in a place that had no tracks from other dog teams, which meant that her dogs had no scent to follow. As it turned out, Scdoris was close enough to Koyuk to make out the lights of the village. She guided her team over jumbled ice and open leads into the Koyuk checkpoint:

"It was so flat and so early in the morning, it was hard not to doze," Scdoris said. "I'm not really that brave. I'm actually kind of a chicken, but this is something that I've grown up doing."

Rachael finished the '2006 Iditarod'. She came in 57th out of 71 mushers. Rachael Scdoris is the first blind athlete to finish the 'Iditarod'.

Her determination to achieve her dream has created new hope and inspiration for all who hear her story. We look forward to following her future achievements.

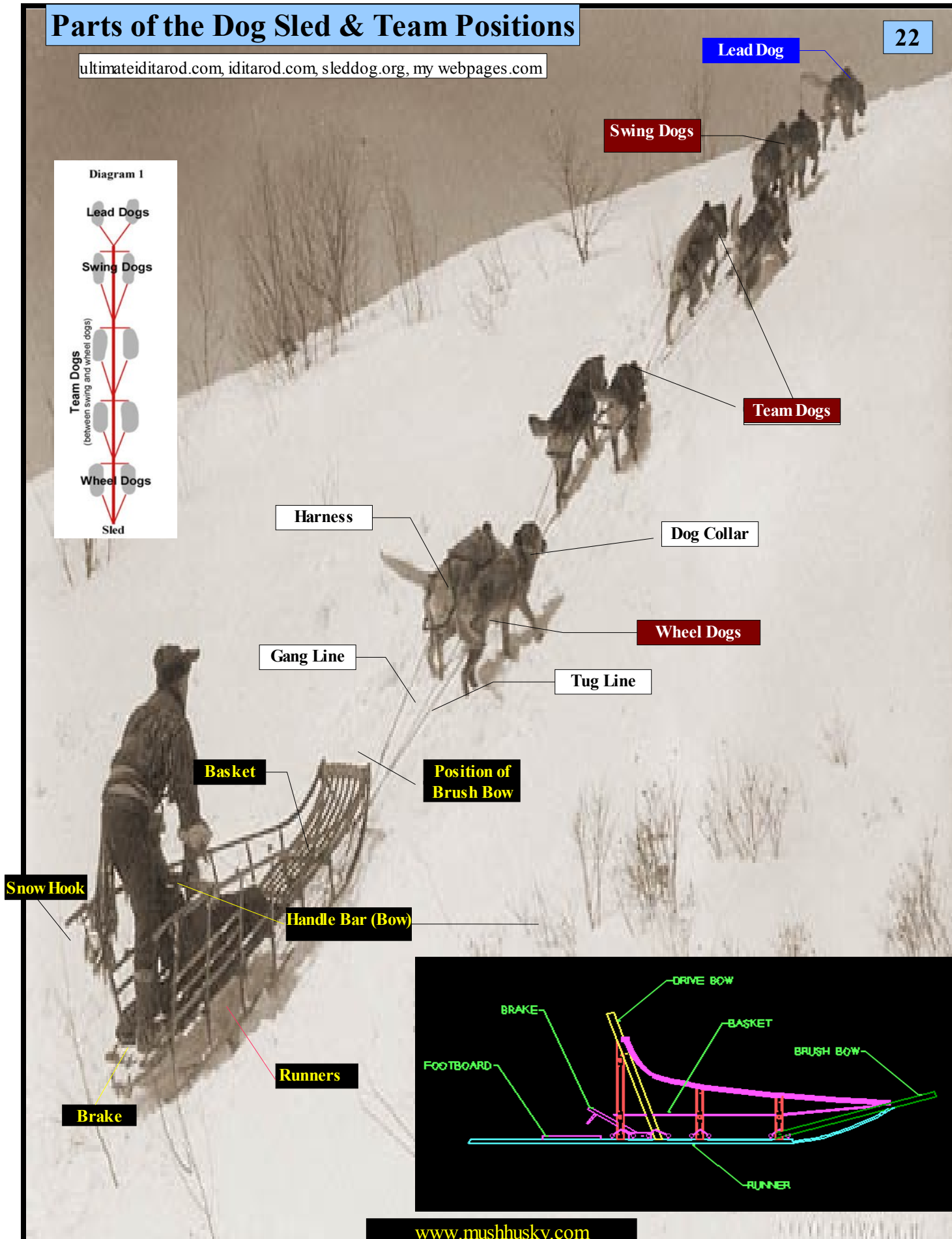
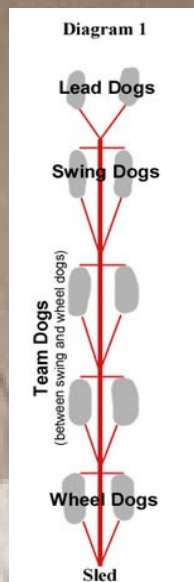


Tim Osmar & Rachael Scdoris – Mar. 18, 2006

Parts of the Dog Sled & Team Positions

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ultimateiditarod.com, iditarod.com, sleddog.org, mywebpages.com



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The Iditarod – Fact, Not Fiction (Answering the Critics)

Dr. John Bramante

1. Assertion: “In Iditarod Kennels many dogs are permanently tethered on chains.”

Tethering, or staking a sled dog out is a time-honored practice not only among mushers, but dog owners in the lower 48. It is utilized by the U.S. Government which maintains a kennel of sled dogs in Denali National Park. No one wants dogs to be tied up and forgotten but, unlike many backyard dogs, sled dogs are freed and given regular attention and exercise.

2. Assertion: “Sled dogs are aggressive dogs.”

These dogs are literally surrounded by hundreds, maybe thousands, of fans & dog lovers during the Iditarod's start & restart. No hiding an aggressive, abused dog here! They're in clear view of fans & television cameras from around the world from the moment they arrive until after they leave. All teams in the race are subject to petting (& pestering) by everyone. There's no room for maladjusted dogs in the Iditarod!

3. Assertion: “A sled dog can easily catch parasitical diseases by stepping in or sniffing his own waste.”

First, how can an animal “catch” something from itself: Dog yards are cleaned on a regular basis and dogs always have plenty of room to “take care of their business”. Sled dogs are vaccinated against just about everything.

4. Assertion: “Dogs have died in the Iditarod from strangulation in towlines, hemorrhaging, etc.”

No one denies that dogs have died or been hurt in the Iditarod, but it goes without saying that no musher wants a dog to die or to be hurt. The musher's life depends upon the dogs' well being and most have raised these animals from puppies and consider them to be members of their family. The Iditarod has extremely strict rules. Very few dogs have died in the Iditarod Race. True, the Iditarod is not a walk in the park. Yet, these dogs are bred for it, trained for it, & love it. The dogs are shiny, healthy and happy at the beginning as well as at the end of the race. Cameras from around the world catch all of this. As four-time Iditarod champion, Jeff King has said, “You can't push a rope and if the dogs decide not to pull, well, that musher isn't going anywhere.”

5. Assertion: “The Iditarod Trail Committee provides inadequate veterinary care during the race.”

The medical care given Iditarod dogs is arguably among the best in the world. In the months before the race, dogs are given two comprehensive blood tests, an electrocardiogram and a thorough physical examination. Dogs are monitored constantly. During the race, veterinary support is superb. The vets are the very best in their profession and are chosen in a highly competitive process from a worldwide pool of volunteers. There are at least three vets at every checkpoint along the race, often more, to ensure that every dog, in every team gets a hands-on physical examination if possible. The acronym the veterinarians use to guide their exams is HAWL. “H” stands for heart and hydration, “A” stands for appetite and attitude, “W” is for weight, in other words is the dog maintaining his weight during the race, and finally “L” is for lungs. Probably the most common reason for dropping a dog is some sort of a limp.

6. Assertion: “Sled Dogs, distantly related to wolves, are forced to run further than a wolf would run in nature.”

The statement that dogs are “forced” to run is fantasy. One of the most prized attributes of these dogs is their independence, even when it brings you to a crushing standstill in the middle of nowhere. The dogs do not run the Iditarod non-stop. The ratio of run to rest is usually equal to, or more in favor of rest. They don't actually “run” the entire time. They trot, or even walk. Whether or not they are related to wolves is another argument, but the bottom line is, if the dogs did not want to run – regardless of their ancestry – there would be no Iditarod, or even anything resembling distance mushing.

Given the intense media attention this race garners, it is impossible to hide anything about the dogs.

Consider reading: [Jeff King: The Man & His Dogs](#), or [Mrs. Morgan's Iditarod Adventure](#)

There are no secrets. This wonderful world of mushing is open for all to see and experience. Don't rely on the experience of others. Come, visit Alaska. Go to the Iditarod Race, meet the dogs and the mushers.

See the wonderful world of Alaska for yourself.



Native Alaskans

Alaska Geographic, Thinkquest.org, Travel Alaska

Natives comprise almost 16% of the population of Alaska. There are four distinct cultural groups. Each group has its own language.

Eskimos – Spread out along the entire Alaska Coastline except for the Aleutians and Southeast Alaska. More than 20 groups, all known as Eskimos, inhabit Alaska. Three linguistic groups occur within these areas. 1.) Northern Eskimos – Inupiat 2.) Siberian Yupik occupy Saint Lawrence Island and areas of Siberia. 3.) Yup'ik speaking people inhabit the remainder of Eskimo Territory.

Athapascans – They were nomadic hunters and fishermen who migrated around the same time as the Northwest Coast Indians. They used canoes made of birch bark and moose hide as well as sleds and dogs. They speak many distinct languages, all a part of the greater Na-Dene linguistic family. These include amongst many: the Navajo and Apache of the American Southwest and 13 Northwest Coast and California tribes.

Aleuts – They lived in oblong houses covered with grass. The ancestral home of the Aleuts consists of the western portion of the Alaska Peninsula, the Shumagin Islands and the many islands of the Aleutian chain, which arcs gently for 1,000 miles into the Bering Sea. Water determined their way of life.

Northwest Coast – They were accomplished boatmen and traders. They built canoes out of cedar for traveling. They built permanent winter settlements. They were a complicated diversity of tribes and languages including the following: Tlingit, Haida, Tsimshian, Eyak, Kwakiutl, Bella Bella, Bella Coola, Coast Salish, Nootka, Makah, Chinook, Coos, Umpqua, Tolowa-Tutuni, Yurok, Karok, Hupa, Wiyot.

Sod houses were used in western Alaska until well into the 20th century.

Maine mammals, generally found in great abundance on the coast allowed the establishment of large permanent villages. Smaller fishing camps were established for summer use.

The oldest of the Eskimo cultures is Odvik, dating to just before the birth of Christ. Most artifacts found dating to this time period have been discovered in conjunction with burials and are considered to have been tied in some way to Shamanism ritual and ceremony presided over by a shaman who was in direct contact with the supernatural.

Native Alaskan's Crafts

Ivory Carving
Skin Garment Sewing
Basketry

Woodworking Crafts
Whale Bone Carving
Beadwork

Weaving
Masks
Language Preservation

Native Alaskans today, are actively involved in preservation of their culture and their languages. They participate in politics, education, Alaska History Preservation and corporate preservation & development of the Alaska Wilderness. Native Alaskans run in the Iditarod and the Yukon Quest and a Native Alaskan, Peggy Willman, was Miss Alaska in 2002. Their culture is active and prevalent in the Alaska Lifestyle.

Alaska, the land of the Native and the Homesteader is alive and well today.

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Tlingit (Klingkit) Language and Use



<http://www.ccthita.org/> , Wikipedia Encyclopedia,
welcometoalaska.com,

Ch'aak'	eagle
Du tlaa	his mother
Eesh	father
Gooch	wolf
Gunakadeit	sea monster
Heen	Water
Ixsixan	I love you
Keet	killer whale
Kooteeyaa	totem pole
Neigoon	nagoonberry
Neil si goot	welcome
S'EEK	black bear
Shaawat	woman
Sha	head
Sit	glacier
T'a	king salmon
T'aaku	wind
Tleikw	berry
Woosh-Jee-een	working together
Xaat	salmon or fish
Xaatl	iceberg
Xoots	brown bear
Yeil	Raven
Akl	little lake
Auk nu	little lake fort
Dzantik'i Heeni	where the flounder gather
Kitschkin	eagle-wing river, now Ketchikan
Klumu Gutta	spirits' home, tlingit name for Taku Glacier
Khutz-n-hu	bear fort, on Admiralty Island
Skagua	home of the north wind, now Skagway
Sumdum	booming sound when icebergs clave from a glacier



CCTHITA (Central Council of the Tlingit and Haida Indian Tribes of Alaska) is the Tribal Government representing approximately 26,000 Tlingit and Haida Indians worldwide. We are a sovereign entity and have a government to government relationship with the United States. The Council's headquarters is in Juneau, Alaska. The history of the Central Council is intricately intertwined with the struggle of the Native peoples of Southeast Alaska for equal rights. Over 50 years ago the Council evolved out of the struggle of our people to retain a way of life strongly based on subsistence. That struggle included the rights of our people to claim lands we had used from time immemorial, lands we were given no claim to under the Western concept of land ownership.

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Traditional Inupiat Education

Excerpts from Paul Ongtooguk www.alaskool.org

Address by Eben Hopson



Inupiat Society: The Myth

Traditional Alaska Natives are often thought of as a common, nomadic culture that moved almost randomly with little more than hope to guide decisions about where to seek the next meal and where to set up the next shelter. The Hollywood image of Alaska and Alaska Natives reinforces this stereotype as the film image is one of fur-clad people living in blinding blizzards of constant snow. Imagine the camera, as it pans up to a thin line of specks on the horizon. The camera slowly closes in and the specks become visible as people who are walking into a blizzard. (I don't know why we always walk into blizzards). Then, the narrator, in a low, serious tone announces "In a ceaseless quest for survival, the hearty Eskimo are in search of the caribou." The image is an important one, as it represents most peoples' only visual encounter with the traditional life of the Eskimo. It is also false! It portrays the Eskimo as playing survival roulette, wandering about hoping to chance upon some caribou.

Inupiat Society: Some Realities

A culture would not long survive in the Arctic, much less develop over several thousand years, if it were dependent on such random luck. Rather, the Inupiat cycle of life developed through a careful consideration of the environment. Some traditional foods were caribou, marmot, seal, walrus, several variety of whale, many kinds of fish, bear, rabbit, ptarmigan and a variety of roots, eggs, seeds and berries. Hunting and fishing were planned based on the knowledge of where animals and fish had been found in the past and knowledge about weather conditions and the changing patterns of climate.

Camps were carefully chosen locations. The camp, or living area was selected because it was perceived as the most likely location of a concentration of food. Thus, it was not mere hope and persistence that allowed Inupiat society to develop in the North.

In traditional Inupiat society the community is a school. When, where and what lessons occur are dependent upon the time, the place and the season. The lessons are tied to the traditional cycle of life. Hunting skills and conditioning were and are learned through traditional games and competition: wrestling, weight lifting, the one and two foot high kick, etc. Further, Inupiat Society has developed many art forms including: sculpture, music, dance and story. Celebrations and ceremonies are a part of Inupiat communities as are people who are philosophers and historians.

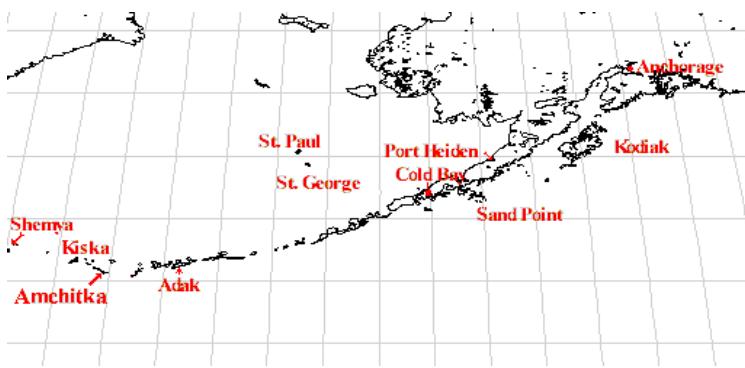
Excerpts from Eben Hopson's Address:

Inupiat North Slope Natives have successfully fought to regain control over their educational system and have succeeded with 'Home Rule'. Their stated goals according to former mayor of the North Slope Borough, Eben Hopson, are: "To have teachers who will reflect and transmit our ideals and values. We must have Inupiat-centered orientation in all areas of instruction. I do not want my children to learn that we were "discovered" by Columbus or Vitus Bering. I do not want to hear that we were barbaric or uncivilized. I do not want to see school planning surveys, which list hunting, fishing, whaling or trapping as social or recreational activities."

For 87 years the Bureau of Indian Affairs tried to destroy our culture through the education of our children. Those who would destroy our culture did not succeed. However, it was not without cost. Many of our people have suffered. We all know the social ills we endure today.

Our children must be taught in our Inupiat language, with English as the secondary language.

It is important to remember the lessons of the past. In addition, we must search and master the new changes if we are to continue to dominate the Arctic. We have demonstrated we can survive the trespasses that have been perpetuated upon us. We have been successful in establishing our own home rule government. We have been able to achieve self-government. We must strive to ensure that our borough, our city governments and our school systems reflect our Inupiat ideals. We are Inupiat!"



World War II in Alaska – The Forgotten War

Excerpts from Alaska Geographic 1995 Vol. 22, Number 4
National Park Service

The only fighting on North American soil during the war took place in Alaska's Aleutian Islands. The events of the Aleutian Campaign include the bombing of Dutch Harbor by the Japanese in June 1942, the evacuation and internment of the Aleuts, the Japanese invasion of the islands of Attu and Kiska, the Battle of Attu, the Allied invasion of Kiska, and the bombing of Paramishiru.

The Aleutian campaign resulted in recovery of an intact Japanese Zero fighter plane, the first time the enemy's superior weapon was available for allied scrutiny.

The Alaska Highway, built as a military road, is still the only way to drive in and out of most of the state without putting your vehicle on a boat.

More than 300 military installations would be built in Alaska, at a cost of more than \$350 million, before the war was through. In Alaska, troops received overseas duty pay, and a welcome bonus; regular pay at the time for privates was \$1 a day.



Living conditions were bleak for many soldiers, particularly those in the Aleutians where tents routinely sailed away in the swirling winds, collapsed in the rain, and sank in the mud; where meagerly fueled stoves and inadequate clothing did little against the penetrating cold. Colonel Simon Bolivar Buckner Jr. was assigned to command the newly created Alaska Defense Force. He later commanded the U.S. 10th Army at Okinawa, where he was killed on the front lines.

The number of Japanese on Attu is now judged to have been at least 2,500. On one ridge, the Japanese were killed in their fox holes in a daring ascent led by a single soldier through enemy machine-gun fire.

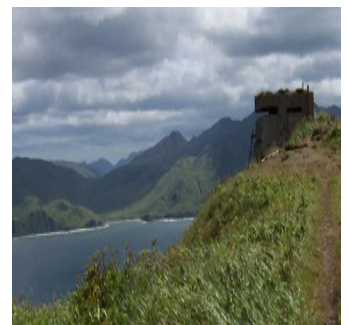
Hand-to-hand fighting with grenades, bayonets and rifle butts characterized the enemy's resistance as the Americans pushed forward.

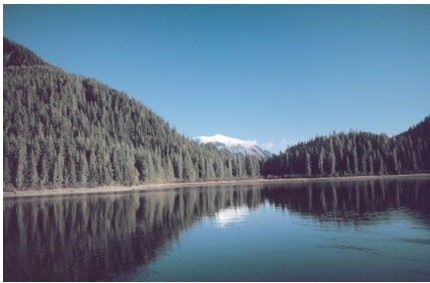
The morning of May 29 found the Japanese encircled by American troops. Believing that death was more honorable than capture, the Japanese Commander ordered that all injured soldiers be killed with injections of morphine. His remaining men, about 1,000 of them, charged up the valley in a suicidal counterattack. The advancing Japanese were stopped by gunfire. Finally, the remaining few Japanese soldiers blew themselves up with grenades.

About 2,350 Japanese soldiers died on Attu; only 29 were taken prisoner. The battle claimed 549 American lives, some of them killed by friendly fire.

Attu was one of the most costly assaults in the Pacific, according to an Army history, second only to the taking of Iwo Jima, which occurred in early 1945.

Now Kiska remained. Unbeknownst to U.S. Commanders, the Japanese fleet sailed into Kiska Harbor and rescued their troops. It was an amazingly efficient operation. Enemy radar had found an opening in the American blockade, and broke radio silence with a terse code, signaling the troops to assemble. The men were waiting on the beach when the ships arrived, and they quickly boarded 39 landing craft. Within 55 minutes, all 5,183 men were aboard six destroyers and two cruisers, and the ships were on their way home. The Japanese had given up the Aleutians.

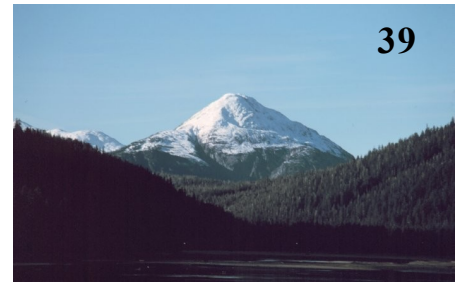




The Alaska Coastline

Alaska Department of Natural Resources,
U.A.A. Research Summary by Eric Larson

Welcome to Alaska's coast!



If you walked one thousand miles a year, it would take thirty-four years to hike Alaska's Shoreline!

Alaska has 6,640 miles of coastline and, including islands, has 33,904 miles of shoreline.

As you walked you would have the chance to meet almost three quarters of the state's population, who choose to live in Alaska's coastal communities. You would, also, see industries like commercial fishing, logging, tourism and oil and gas projects that produce over 80% of the state's economic product.

Your forays into coastal towns would be separated by long stretches of coastline so raw and untamed the pressures of modern-day life would fade and seem almost unreal.

Alaska is the largest peninsula in the Western Hemisphere. The Arctic Ocean borders it on the north and northwest, on the west are the Bering Strait and Sea, and the Pacific Ocean and Gulf of Alaska surround it on the south. Alaska shares an eastern border with Canada which extends for about 1,150 miles along mountains.

Southeast Alaska includes more than 1,000 islands as well as the 16.8-million-acre Tongass National Forest which is the largest forest managed by the U.S. Park Service.

Along the Pacific coast, the shoreline is deeply indented. The Inside Passage, sheltered from the open ocean, is a calm body of water. The coast of the Gulf of Alaska has tides that reach as high as 20 ft. It is buffeted by major storms, and occasionally by tsunamis caused by earthquakes under the ocean.

The current through the Gulf of Alaska is known as the Alaska Current. It flows westward and then, in the eastern Aleutians, turns northward to bring warm water along the western coast of Alaska all the way to Point Barrow.



Alaska Marine Mammals

Seals	2.25 million
Pacific Walrus	200,000-280,000
Sea Otter	100,000-160,000
Stellar Sea Lion	Under 50,000
Beluga Whale	25,000
Other Whales	A few hundred to several thousand
Polar Bear	Approximately 5,000

Alaska Fish

We do not know the exact abundance of many fish and shellfish and the numbers can only be estimated by the commercial fishing numbers. More than half of the U.S. Seafood production is from Alaska waters.

Birds of Alaska

Estimated Population is 445 species, numbering in the millions, many migratory.

ShorebirdsMost, or all of the worldwide populations of a dozen species nest in Alaska.

Seabirds.....An estimated 90% of all U.S. Seabirds nest along Alaska's Coastline.

Raptors.....Alaska is a stronghold for bald eagles; 28 species of raptors are found here.

Landbirds.....262 species found in Alaska; 31 species stay year-round.

Waterfowl.....90 million acres of wetland habitat; hundreds of thousands of migratory waterfowl.

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Volcanoes in Alaska

Alaska Geographic Vol. 18, #2

"<http://www.volcanolive.com>" & Alaska Science Forum, USGS

Centuries ago people living on a small Mediterranean Island, Vulcano, believed that Vulcano was the chimney of the forge of Vulcan, the blacksmith of the Roman gods. They reasoned that the lava and ash from the peak were byproducts from making thunderbolts for Jupiter and Mars.

The first recorded attempt at volcanology was in 79 A.D., when 'Pliny the Younger' sent two letters to a historian describing the eruption of Vesuvius. Vesuvius' blast buried two Roman cities in ash so deep 1,700 years passed before their ruins were discovered.

This warning, carved in stone, is dated Jan. 16, 1632:

"Vesuvius burst into flames, always with huge extermination of those who hesitated. I warn you so that it does not find you undecided, this mountain has its womb heavy with pitch ... if you are wise listen to the voice of this stone."

Good Advice Never Goes Out of Style

WEB SHOTS

Alaska contains over 100 volcanoes and volcanic fields.

Forty-two Alaska volcanoes have spit up magma, or molten rock since people started writing down eruption observations in 1767. These make up about 80% of all active volcanoes in the United States and 8% of all active above-water volcanoes on earth.

Most of Alaska's young volcanoes occur along a 2,400-mile arc that extends from about Mount Spurr, 80 miles west of Anchorage, to beyond Buldir Island in the western Aleutians. The arc forms one of the most spectacular chains of volcanoes around the Pacific Basin and is this continent's major link in the basin's "Ring of Fire". Every year about five eruptions occur along this arc.

The most violent volcanic eruption of the century took place in 1912 when Novarupta Volcano erupted, creating the Valley of Ten Thousand Smokes which is now part of Katmai National Park.

When Mount Redoubt erupted in December 1989 a Boeing 747 descending toward an airport in Anchorage flew through an ash plume at 27,000 feet which caused all four engines to quit. The pilots were able to restore power and land even though investigators later discovered that the engines contained glassy deposits created after the ash had melted and then resolidified.

Pavlof, one of the world's most active volcanoes with 41 eruptions since the late 1700s has erupted in mid-November six times in the past 25 years.

Alaska has become a laboratory for scientists who are trying to unravel details of the mystery of earth processes.

Teachers!

Topics to study:

Lava	Tectonic plates	Shield volcanoes	Pyroclastic Flows
Ash flow	Composite volcanoes	Cinder cones	Mount Veniaminof
Tephra	Stratovolcanoes	Lahars	Mt. Augustine

Check out these web sites to learn more about volcanoes:

<http://volcano.und.nodak.edu/learning.html>
<http://www.nearctica.com/geology/volcano.htm>
http://volcano.und.nodak.edu/vwdocs/volc_images/img_vesuvius.html
http://newport.pmel.noaa.gov/nemo_cruise98/multimedia.html

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Aurora Borealis (Northern Lights)

Excerpts from: Asahi Aurora Classroom, Alaska Geographic



Years ago I spent the summer working at Denali National Park where I met an old 'Sourdough' (An Alaskan who has had many years of experience in the 'Last Frontier'). This Sourdough started to tell me about his experiences with the 'Northern Lights'. He had spent the winter alone at his cabin up by Denali that year and he swore that the northern lights spoke to him and danced for him. This was my first introduction to the phenomenon called the aurora borealis, or the northern lights. Since that time I have had the awe-inspiring experience of watching the northern lights dance on many occasions. Did they ever speak to me? No, but I can almost believe that they could have; and that maybe they spoke to him that winter in Denali.

Doug Ruzicka
MushHusky!

Aurora Borealis: Named after the Roman goddess of the dawn, Aurora, and the Greek name for north wind, Boreas, since in Europe especially, it often appears as a reddish glow on the northern horizon as if the sun were rising from an unusual direction.

Aurora Borealis	Aurora in the Northern Hemisphere
Aurora Australis	Aurora in the Southern Hemisphere
Anders Jonas Angstrom	Discovered the auroral spectrum is different from the solar spectrum.
The Auroral Oval	Occupies a belt bounded by the 60° - 70° latitude circles, on average.
Colors	The colors of the aurora come from oxygen and nitrogen gas.
Oxygen	Produces both green light and a brownish red.
Ionized Nitrogen	Produces bluish light.
Excited Nitrogen	Produces red light.
Colors and Altitude	Highest part of the auroral is red, middle is greenish, lower is pink.
Homogeneous	At its least active.
Rayed Arc	Slightly more active.
Active Aurora	May form folds from 10-100 miles wide as they swirl and move.
Rising Vapor Column	Appears to rise like smoke.
Corona	Appears as rays shooting in all directions from a single point in the sky.
Aurora	When the solar wind blows past the magnetosphere it generates as much as a million megawatts of electricity. A small part of this electricity causes discharge in the polar upper atmosphere and creates light much in the same way a neon sign creates light. This is the aurora.

Awesome web sites to help you in your study of the Aurora Borealis:

www.exploratorium.edu/learningstudio/auroras/

www.oso.noaa.gov/poes/

www.sec.noaa.gov

www.thursdaysclassroom.com/index_18may00.htm

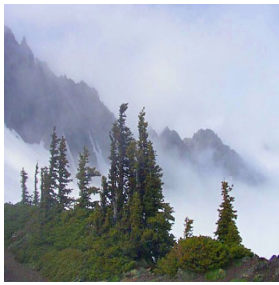
www.eagle.ca/~matink/themes/Physphen/aurora.html

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The Rain Forests in Alaska

S.E. Alaska Discovery Center, Life Science Nature Series
Richard Lachowsky, Southern Arkansas University

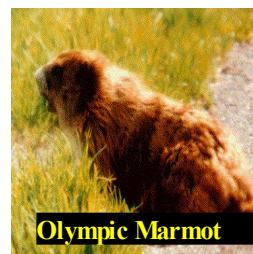
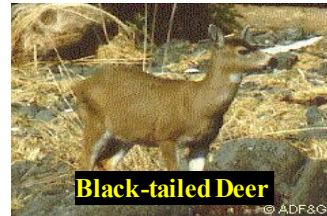
A Rain Forest in Alaska? Yes!

The Tongass is the earth's largest intact temperate rain forest containing 14% of the world's total acreage of temperate rain forest.

Temperate rain forests cover only about 3% as much land as tropical rain forests.

Temperate Rain Forest	Tropical Rain Forest
1. One long wet winter/spring season	1. Even distribution of rainfall annually
2. Range of differences in daytime and nighttime temperatures.	2. Warm temperatures with less variation during the year.
3. Jungle-like appearance, but epiphytes, ferns and mosses are more common than vines.	3. Typical jungle look with thick vines covering the trees.
4. Conifers such as Sitka Spruce, Western Hemlock, Red Cedar. Some deciduous broad-leaf trees.	4. Most common trees are broad-leaf evergreen trees including palm, bamboo and tree ferns.
5. Most animal life exists on the forest floor.	5. Greater variety of animals. Most animal life occurs in the canopy.
6. No poisonous snakes present.	6. Poisonous snakes and other creatures.
7. Less vulnerable to effects of destruction, fast recovery period.	7. More vulnerable to destruction, longer recovery period.

Some Rain Forest Animals:



Tropical rain forests have the greatest diversity of organisms of any ecosystem on earth.

Temperate rain forests (which are found in regions receiving more than 55 inches of annual precipitation, with mean annual temperatures of 40 degrees to 54 degrees) have the greatest biomass (the total weight of all living organisms) of any ecosystem on earth.

Snowshoes

by Joseph Robertia Peninsula Clarion, Carl Heilman, University of Alaska



Traditional snowshoes are the snowshoes that have been used by the Natives of Alaska for hundreds of years. They are often made of willow or other wood; with a decking of moose sinew or thin strips of hide. In modern times, traditional shoes continue to have frames made of wood with a decking material of rawhide or synthetic webbing such as a neoprene coated nylon. Wooden shoes are classics still favored by many old-timers and veteran snow-shoers. Traditional shoes are often considered more simple in design and more elegant in appearance.

Modern snowshoes, sometimes called technical shoes, usually have aluminum frames with solid synthetic decks, rather than lacing, which increase flotation. Plastic molded frames also exist, but are not as common.

The aluminum alloy is much lighter. You lose about a pound per pair compared to other materials; and every pound off your feet is equivalent to 6 on your back. Modern shoes tend to be much more durable and resistant to abrasion as well.

Flotation

Flotation is what your weight will be on top of the snow. Denser snow often allows for a smaller shoe.

Weight also must be considered in selecting the right size shoe. Many snowshoes have a tag or label identifying the weight range the model shoe is designed to support. Weight includes not just body weight, but gear weight, a child in a backpack, whatever.

Articulation and Comfort

Articulation refers to how the foot moves in the snowshoe. You want a natural stance and stride on the snow. Articulation can relate directly to bindings, and these are one of the most important features on a snowshoe.

Bindings are generally either fixed (holding the foot in place) or allow for rotation. Snow shoes with limited-rotation bindings lift completely off the ground with every step. The tail does not drag as it does with a free-rotation system. This can reduce energy exerted and increase efficiency on flat or gently rolling hills and packed trails.

Free-rotating bindings are intended for the steep terrain and hill climbing a hiker would encounter in back country backpacking and mountaineering; with free rotation, the tail falls and drags, but this allows the user to really dig into a slope with his or her toes.



“Walking in the snow on snowshoes is one of the most enjoyable and relaxing things I've done. It's hard to explain to someone how something so simple can be so rewarding until they've tried snowshoeing themselves. Each time I put on my snowshoes and walk in an enchanted woods that's draped with a fresh mantle of snow, I still feel the same magic I felt the first time I put on a pair of snowshoes and headed off across the snow.”

Carl Heilman II

Learn how to make the traditional snowshoe:

www.birchbarkcanoe.net/books.htm

Lesson Outline for Cultural Understanding:

www.ankn.uaf.edu/Curriculum/units/snowshoe.html

Recommended Website: www.carlheilman.com/snowshoe.html

Books:

1. The Snowshoe Experience: A Beginners Guide by Claire Walter
2. Snowshoeing by Steven A. Griffin

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The Size of Alaska Compared to the Size of the United States

The U.S. Is the 3rd largest country in the world.



Denali National Park, Alaska

1. At 586,400 square miles, Alaska is the U.S.'s largest state, over twice the size of Texas.
2. It is larger than the three largest states in the USA combined.
3. Alaska's population of 626,932+ makes it the third least populous state.
4. There is 1.0 person/sq. mi. (2000) in Alaska, compared to 79.6 people/sq. mi. in the entire U.S.
5. The 3.5 million acres of the Alaska State Park System constitutes the largest park system in the United States.
6. In 1971 the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act passed. Natives received compensation not reservations.
7. There are more bald eagles in Alaska than in all other states combined.
8. Alaska still has most of its land mass unorganized in political subdivisions.
9. Alaska has more than ten thousand glaciers - of which, one, is larger than the state of Rhode Island.
10. It has 33,904 miles of shoreline which is twice the length of shoreline in all of the lower 48 states combined.
11. The main mode of private transportation in the U.S. is by private automobile; while in Alaska it is small planes.
12. Alaska has one pilot for every 58 residents, 6 times as many pilots & 14 times as many airplanes per capita as the U.S.
13. Two states use words other than "county". Louisiana uses the word "parish". Alaska uses the word "borough".
14. Largest recorded earthquake in the U.S. was in Alaska in 1964 registering a 9.2 magnitude.
15. Alaska now provides the greatest opportunity for minerals exploration and development in all of North America.
16. One of the things that makes Alaska special is that all three species of North American bears flourish there.
17. Juneau is the largest city in the U.S. by land area. It's 3,100 square miles makes it larger than Delaware.
18. Alaska is only 55 miles east of Russia.
19. The only state to have coastlines on three different seas; Arctic Ocean, Pacific Ocean and Bering Sea.
20. During hibernation, the body temperature of the arctic ground squirrel drops to the lowest of any living mammal.
21. Alaska's moose are the largest of their species.
22. Alaska has almost twice as many caribou as people.
23. There are places in S.E. Alaska where you can find brown bear populations as dense as one bear per square mile?
24. Gray wolves inhabit 85% of Alaska, Minnesota is the only other state that has a substantial population of wild wolves.
25. Alaska's time zone is 4 hours behind the East Coast.

Eight stars of gold on a field of blue-Alaska's Flag,
May it mean to you, the blue of the sea,
The evening sky, the mountain lakes, and the flowers nearby;
The gold of the early sourdough's dreams,
The precious gold of the hills and steams,
The brilliant stars in the northern sky,
The "Bear" (the Dipper)- and shining high,
The great North Star with its steady light,
Over land and sea a beacon bright.
Alaska's flag- to Alaskans dear,
The simple flag of a last frontier.



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Facts You Might Want to Know

The Alaska Almanac

Excerpts from the editors of Alaska Magazine, The Milepost, The Alaska Journal and Alaska Geographic

The United States bought Alaska from Russia for \$7.2 million on March 30, 1867 which was called Seward's Folly.

Daylight Hours:

Maximum (summer solstice, June 20 or 21)

	<u>Sunrise</u>	<u>Sunset</u>	<u>Total</u>
Barrow	(Sunrise continuous for 84 days from May 10–August 2)		
Fairbanks	12:59 a.m.	10:48 p.m.	(21 hrs., 49 min.)
Anchorage	2:21 a.m.	9:42 p.m.	(19 hrs., 21 min.)

Minimum (winter solstice, December 21 or 22)

	<u>Sunrise</u>	<u>Sunset</u>	<u>Total</u>
Barrow	(no daylight for 67 days from November 18–January 24)		
Fairbanks	9:59 a.m.	1:41 p.m.	(3 hrs., 42 min.)
Anchorage	9:14 a.m.	2:42 p.m.	(5 hrs., 28 min.)

1. First Alaska gold discovery (Russian on Kenai Peninsula) was in 1848.
2. Alaska became a state on January 3, 1959.
3. Alaska's capital is Juneau and its state motto is 'North to the Future'.
4. Sled dog racing is Alaska's official state sport.
5. The highest recorded temperature for the state is 100 degrees Fahrenheit at Fort Yukon in June 1915.
6. The second most destructive earthquake in the world hit Alaska on March 27, 1964.
7. Eskimo Ice Cream (akutak): whipped berries, seal oil, snow, raisins and sugar.
8. Alaska has over 3 million lakes (94 with surface areas of more than 10 sq. miles).
9. Alaska has more than 3,000 rivers.
10. There are 79 thermal springs in Alaska.
11. Languages include: English, Haida, Tlingit, Tsimshian, Aleut, Eskimo and Athapaskan.
12. Wildlife includes: bear, bison, caribou, deer, elk, moose, wolf, goat, sheep, musk ox, wolverine, beaver, coyote, fox, lynx, muskrat, marmot, marten, raccoon, otter, squirrel, weasel, bat, hare, lemming, mice, rats, porcupine, shrews, vole, woodchuck.
13. Marine mammals include: whale, dolphin, walrus, porpoise, sea otter, seal, sea lion.
14. The largest Salmon ever caught was at the Kenai River, Alaska, weighing in at 97.5 pounds.
15. Mount McKinley (Denali) is the highest mountain on the North American continent.
16. There are more active glaciers and ice fields in Alaska than in the rest of the inhabited world.
17. Seventeen of the 20 highest mountains in the U.S.A. are in Alaska.
18. More than 500 different species of mushrooms abide in Alaska.
19. There are over 100 volcanic fields, a great amount of which has been active since 1760.
20. For all practical purposes, reptiles are not found in Alaska outside of captivity.
21. In 1943 Japan invaded the Aleutian Islands; the 1st battle fought on American soil since the Civil War.
22. Alaska's most important revenue source is the oil and natural gas industry.
23. Alaska accounts for 25% of the oil produced in the United States at this date, 2006.
24. In 1926 13-year-old Bennie Benson from Cognac, Alaska designed the state flag.
25. There are 375 million acres of land and inland waters in Alaska, about one fifth of the entire U.S.
26. The state of Rhode Island could fit into Alaska 425 times.
27. Nearly one-third of Alaska lies within the Arctic Circle.
28. The moose was made the official Alaska land mammal on May 1, 1998.
29. The pheasant-like willow ptarmigan is the state bird. This bird changes color from light brown to white.
30. Snow Machining (mobiling) in Alaska means skimming over 6-7 feet of fresh snow.

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Iditarod Word Puzzle

Ages 10 and up

t m i l e s n o w s h o e s d
 l b e o s n o w h o o k h c a
 v o c l l e a d e r c o a t r
 m o o s e d i c e b a l t o k
 r t l a h e a d l a m p s n e
 e i d i t a r o d d p n o m e
 d e s w i n g d o g s s n o w
 l s l e d c n i g h t o s u i
 a t r a l h a m s d o g s n n
 n e u t t o g o r d v n n t d
 t k n e h r m u s h e r o a e
 e r n a l a s k a t o o e i r
 r e e m d g o j e f f k i n g
 n o r t h e r n l i g h t s h
 b a s k e t r a i l h a r d y



Iditarod
 Alaska
 dogs
 moose
 basket
 Togo
 Anchorage
 red lantern
 snow

ice
 team
 miles
 wheel
 sled
 night
 hardy
 musher
 dark

mountains
 leader
 coat
 runners
 camp stove
 wind
 snow shoes
 hook
 cold

Jeff King
 swing dogs
 hat
 Balto
 Nome
 Northern Lights
 head lamp
 booties
 trail

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Dream Big and Dare to Fail

Norman Vaughan

Iditarod Quiz

In what year was the first Iditarod held? _____

Who was the first woman to win the Iditarod? _____

Who was the first person to win the Iditarod? _____

How many Iditarods did Susan Butcher win? _____

Who holds the record for most Iditarod wins? _____

Who is considered the father of the Iditarod? _____

How many dogs can a musher start with in the Iditarod? _____

What is the command to turn right? _____

What is the command to turn left? _____

The Iditarod commemorates what historical event? _____

What is the symbolic distance of the Iditarod Race Trail? _____

What does the word Iditarod mean? _____

Who is the mother of the Iditarod? _____

Where is the Iditarod's traditional start _____

How is the Iditarod's Finish Line marked? _____

What is the most dangerous part of the Iditarod Trail? _____

How many Iditarod's has Jeff King won? _____

Who was the first blind musher to finish the Iditarod? _____

What was first prize for the first Iditarod? _____

Who was the youngest musher to finish the Iditarod? _____

What is the prize for last place? _____

Who is the oldest musher to finish the Iditarod? _____