

# Iditarod Runner

MARCH/  
APRIL 1979



Rob Stapleton photo

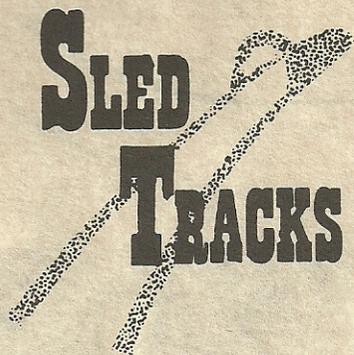
## 1979 Champ Rick Swenson

*When Rick Swenson crossed the finish line in Nome, the first thing he did was hug his leaders, Old Buddy and Andy. Watching them, it seemed like they would have done anything for him, and Rick in return would do the same. Above all, it*

*takes team work to win the Iditarod, and indeed this team of man and dog did work.*

*Congratulations to a great musher and a great dog team.*

# SLED TRACKS



*We encourage your views relevant to the sport of sled dog racing and to the Iditarod Trail Race. We invite you to participate through Letters to the Editor, The Iditarod Runner, Pouch X, Wasilla, Alaska 99687.*

**THE IDITAROD RUNNER**  
Vol.2, No. 6/7, March/April 1979  
Official Newsletter of the  
Iditarod Trail Race  
Raine Hall, Editor  
Rob Stapleton, Photographer  
The Iditarod Trail Committee  
Pouch X  
Wasilla, Alaska 99687

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*Dear Friends,*

*Everyone seems to agree that the "magic of the Iditarod" is created by the many many people who join together to put on this great event.*

*Indeed it is a family, a family from many walks of life and great distances. A family encompassing hundreds who have never met, each one playing an integral part in creating the whole.*

*On behalf of the Nome Kennel Club and the Iditarod Trail Committee I wish to thank you*

*all for making the 1979 Iditarod Trail Race a success. Our veterinarians, aviators, checkers, hams, headquarters personnel, communications personnel, trail breakers, race sponsors, mushers' sponsors, go-fers, check point personnel, dog care crew, chute crews . . . . . et al, this issue of the Iditarod Runner is dedicated to you.*

*Sincerely,*  
**RAINE HALL**  
*Editor*

## General Meeting

There will be a general meeting of the Iditarod Trail Committee May 7, at the Anchorage Westward Hilton. The meeting is set for 7:30 p.m.

On the agenda will be election of board members and officers, race reports and presentation of By-law changes.

The public is invited to attend.

## Gold Digger

Emmit Peters is noted for having one of the loudest and most enthusiastic of dog teams, led by a tough little dog named Digger.

Digger has led Peters to first, second, third, fourth, and fifth place finishes in the Iditarod . . . almost. In 1975 Digger ran double lead with his grandmother Nugget, only to be moved back in the team when Grandma came in heat out of Golovin.

This year Digger pulled a muscle outside of Skwentna and, when most dogs would have given up, he insisted on pulling. With a little help and loving care from driver Peters, Digger came into Nome in second place.

## Rick Swenson's Sponsors

Rick Swenson's sponsors were left out of the February *Iditarod Runner* inadvertently, and here appear in full:

Quality Meats - Fairbanks  
Romig Jr. High, Anchorage  
Laborers Local 942  
Plumbers Union 376  
Local 71 Public Employees  
Arctic Slope/Alaska General  
Lloyd Hopner  
Mobat Tire Co.

During the Iditarod Mushers Meeting in Nome the drivers voted Digger LEAD DOG OF THE YEAR and at the Awards Ceremony was presented a "golden harness" by Jules Mead.

## Reardon strikes gold - Twice

After outbidding all at the Awards Ceremony for the poke of gold nuggets donated by Sonny and Sharon Lindner, Breakers Bar owner Tom Reardon won the gold nugget raffled off by the Nome Kennel Club!

## Sportsmanship Award

The Iditarod Mushers voted Delta Junction driver SONNY LINDNER the winner of the KEN CHASE SPORTSMANSHIP AWARD. The trophy is sponsored every year by the Alaska Native Brotherhood. It was presented to Lindner by Ken Chase and Bob Etukeok at the Awards Ceremony in Nome.

Sonny first ran the Iditarod in 1978, finishing as top rookie in 11th place. This year Lindner blazed a good race to Nome, finishing third.

Race Marshal Pat Herron praised Lindner's attitude on the trail, telling of a time when after being lost for several hours, Sonny retraced his tracks to where the trail was improperly marked and reset the markers so that the teams behind him would not meet the same fate.

A quiet, unassuming man on the trail with a ready smile, Lindner drove his team with a steady and determined hand. He brought a dog team across the finish line that had given all it had to give . . . but it didn't give too much. It is a fine line, and Lindner found it.

Rob Stapleton photo



Sonny Lindner rests his youngest son on his knee in McGrath, while contemplating his next move.

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### A MESSAGE FROM THE GOVERNOR TO ALL FINISHING MUSHERS

*As governor of the State of Alaska, I am pleased to extend my congratulations to you for taking part in the 1979 Iditarod Trail Race. In the few years since the race was first held it has come to be a symbol of the free and rugged lifestyle we enjoy in Alaska.*

*Mushing the Iditarod Trail is one of the challenges only those with great skill and courage can meet. The testing of man and dogs against time, distance, climate and geography is done here as it is nowhere else. Those who meet the test are recognized by Alaskans for their efforts to help our state protect its rugged and unique character.*

*I join with the people of Alaska in congratulating you for your efforts in the 1979 Iditarod Trail Race.*

**JAY S. HAMMOND, GOVERNOR**

# Results 1979

## Thanks!

*The Land Company  
Whitney Fidalgo Seafoods  
Atlantic Richfield Company  
Wien Air Alaska  
RCA Alascom  
Alaska Airlines  
ABC Sports  
British Broadcasting Corporation  
Alaska Magazine  
Iditarod Trail Annual  
Anchorage Westward Hilton  
Pizza Hut of Alaska  
The Hideout  
Moore's Woodworking  
Alaska Commercial Company  
also  
Rainier Brewing Company  
Cal Worthington Ford  
Alaska Piper  
Governor and Mrs. Jay Hammond  
The Honorary Iditarod Musers  
Airland Transport  
The Nome Kennel Club*

*THERE ARE SO MANY  
HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE WHO  
CONTRIBUTED TO THE 1979  
IDITAROD TRAIL RACE  
THAT IT IS IMPOSSIBLE TO  
PRINT EVERYONE'S NAME IN  
THE IDITAROD RUNNER. WE  
THANK YOU ALL FOR YOUR  
CONTRIBUTION TO "THE  
LAST GREAT RACE."*

*The Iditarod Trail Committee*

### MUSHERS

### ELAPSED TIME DAYS HRS. MIN. SEC.

1.	Rick Swenson, Eureka	15	10	37	47
2.	Emmitt Peters, Ruby	15	11	19	7
3.	Sonny Lindner, Johnson River	15	14	17	32
4.	Jerry Riley, Nenana	15	19	29	44
5.	Joe May, Trapper Creek	16	1	9	15
6.	Don Honea, Ruby	16	2	21	41
7.	Howard Albert, Ruby	16	7	26	40
8.	Rick Mackey, Wasilla	16	11	0	1
9.	Susan Butcher, Knik	16	11	15	32
10.	Joe Redington, Knik	16	11	34	1
11.	Gary Hokkanen, Eureka	16	16	57	5
12.	Terry Adkins, Cheyenne, Wyo.	16	19	45	16
13.	Dick Peterson, Chisana	17	3	37	37
14.	Ken Chase, Anvik	17	4	43	7
15.	Ernie Baumgartner, McGrath	17	4	47	48
16.	Melvin Adkins, Willow	17	4	54	23
17.	Boc Chlupach, Willow	17	6	23	19
18.	Victor Katongan, Unalakleet	17	7	35	6
19.	Keith Jones, Ambler	17	9	16	8
20.	Patty Friend, Chugiak	17	9	47	16
21.	Brian Blandford, Nome	17	16	4	54
22.	John Wood, Chugiak	18	2	20	35
23.	Ron Aldrich, Rustic Wilderness	18	8	10	31
24.	Eep Anderson, McGrath	18	11	33	33
25.	Myron Angstman, Bethel	18	19	22	32
26.	Walter Kaso, Talkeetna	18	22	23	40
27.	Jim Rowe, Nome	18	22	29	43
28.	Steve Vollersten, Takotna	19	1	25	40
29.	Rick McConnell, Anchorage	19	6	57	57
30.	Rome Gilman, Chugiak	19	13	1	43
31.	Bud Smyth, Fairbanks	20	0	42	14
32.	Bill Rose, Palmer	20	1	2	38
33.	Steve Adkins, Willow	20	1	31	48
34.	Cliff Sisson, Soldotna	20	4	36	53
35.	Ron Brinker, Wasilla	20	4	37	9
36.	Del Allison, Rustic Wilderness	20	8	23	23
37.	John Barron, Palmer	20	9	26	6
38.	Karl Clauson, Wasilla	21	12	8	29
39.	Jerry Lavoie, Anvik River	22	8	23	44
40.	Gayle Nienhueser, Anchorage	22	9	14	53
41.	Richard Burmeister, Nome	22	12	57	37
42.	Jon Van Zyle, Eagle River	22	13	50	50
43.	Jim Lanier, Anchorage	24	6	44	18
44.	Ron Gould, Clear	24	7	25	50
45.	Don Montgomery, Lima, Ohio	24	7	27	11
46.	Prentice Harris, Fairbanks	24	7	37	9
47.	Gene Leonard, Finger Lake	24	9	2	22

Scratched: Mark Couch, Joe Garnie, Isaac Okleasik,  
Herbert Nayokpuk, Kelly Wages, Terry McMullin, Lee Gardino,  
Clarence Towarak.

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# THE RACE OF 1979

AN OVERVIEW BY FRANK GERJEVIC

The Norton Bay ice stretches smooth and flat in the cool, clear Iditarod night. In the southern sky a full moon pales all but the brightest stars, illumines wind-blown sheets of cloud.

On the northern horizon the aurora slowly flickers white, its rippling ribbon of light curling to doughnut shape over the low, dark hills in the northeast.

To the west, the ice yields to the sea. To the east, the ice breaks in a jagged line against the land.

Between land and sea, the Iditarod Trail. And six mushers driving for Koyuk. Forty miles separate Emmitt Peters, in the lead, and Joe May, just out of Shaktoolik.

The six gliding over the ice on this Friday night will be the first six into Nome. But not in their present order. Five of the mushers run with headlamps on, white light over team, trail and

The race began at Anchorage's Mulcahy Park under a blazing blue sky amid a large crowd of spectators. The opening stretch, to Eagle River, seemed more or less for show as camera toting spectators lined the trail.

At Eagle River, the mushers loaded their teams into trucks and headed for Lake Lucille, the race restart and a roaring wind.

Dogs, sleds and mushers hit the ice as the wind, gusting to 60 miles per hour, scoured the frozen lake. Teams were blown across the slick surface in the struggle to reach the shelter of trees across the lake. The howling, icy stretch was only a few hundred yards long, but afforded no easy passage. One of Rick McConnell's dogs blacked out in the tangle of team lines as the dogs fought to keep their feet against the ice and wind. Eep Anderson took a bonecracking spill when his team veered and his sled tipped over.

(Cont'd next page)

trailstakes of driftwood and spruce.

One musher stands on the gliding runners of his sled in darkness broken only by the glow of his cigarette. Rick Swenson is running just a few miles behind Peters, tailing the Yukon River Fox as he has frequently done throughout the race. If Peters looks over his shoulder and sees a light, it won't be Swenson's. Race tactics? Perhaps. But the Fox knows Swenson is there. The two mushers have defined the race that they predicted.

The race has been on since the leaders — Swenson, Peters, May, Don Honea, Sonny Lindner and Jerry Riley pulled into Unalakleet the night before.

"Wait till we get to the coast" had been the leaders' line throughout the long haul from Anchorage — the camping trip.

Some camping trip.



Rob Stapleton photo

Emmitt Peters crosses the finish line, with a big smile, in second place.

## The Race of 1979

All 55 mushers weathered the restart and hit the trail for Knik Lake, where they picked up the Iditarod Trail.

Warmth plagued the mushers in the early going. The sunny skies necessitated an easier pace by day, swifter running in the cooler nights.

Sunday most of the mushers made Skwentna, where they were treated to the trail hospitality of Joe Delia and family — and a rendition of “The Iditarod Blues,” a homegrown musical addition to the lore of the trail.

The character of the race began to take shape Sunday night. Trapper Creek’s Joe May took the lead, breaking trail with his seasoned trapline team. His stop at Finger Lake was brief, but long enough to down a cup of coffee at the cabin of Gene and June Leonard. May was running his own race, on his own schedule, the Iditarod for him a superb test of his dogs, of the quality of his breeding and training methods.

As Unalakeet’s Victor Katongan pulled in and prepared to bed down for the night, May loaded dog food on his sled, his headlamp the only light on the still, frozen lake. He figured he had no business being in the lead, with the likes of Peters, Swenson, and Shishmaref’s Herbie Nayokpuk in the race.

But May would be with the leaders for a long time.

At Finger Lake a few mushers began to mutter about the diarrhea and dehydration that in the course of the race would afflict virtually every team. The ailment was a puzzle — some said dogs had picked up a virus in Anchorage. Others maintained the ailment was due to the warm weather and the stress of the race.



Rob Stapleton photo

**Don Honea after finishing sixth. “I’ll be back next year, but don’t tell Clara!”**

The veterinarians treated the sick dogs. The weakest were dropped and the race went on.

On to Rainy Pass Lodge, where Jules and Leslie Mead did yeoman’s work in the kitchen, cooking a feast for mushers and

all comers.

Clear skies, millions of stars, the northern lights glowing in the northeast . . . outside the lodge, the crackle of a cooking fire as mushers fed their dogs . . .

Peters reflected that Swenson

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was worried about him. But Swenson was confident as he fingered lamb chops from the hot broth of his cooker and fed them to his dogs. In the cold night Isaac Okleasik's dogs howled a wild chorus.

"They're happy," said Swenson...

May and Katongan had already left for the rugged trek through Rainy Pass, through the Alaska Range to Rohn Roadhouse. But the favorites in the race were not worried. It was still early.

The mushers looked forward to getting through the pass and into the colder weather of the Interior. But one, Gayle Nienhueser of Anchorage, was forced to take his mandatory 24-hour layover and fly back to

Anchorage. Thought to have suffered a broken arm in a fall at Mulcahy Park, Nienhueser lived with the pain until Rainy Pass Lodge, was examined and found to have a bad sprain. The arm was put in a small cast and Nienhueser returned to the trail.

About 100 miles northwest of Rainy Pass, at Farewell, Swenson worked a bit of race strategy. And the fox was foxed.

The two Iditarod veterans played their game — Swenson affecting a swagger, Peters claiming his team was slowing down. Both said they were leaving for McGrath about midnight. But Swenson decided to take his 24-hour stop at Farewell. A surprise for Peters. "It's strategy," a grinning

Swenson said later.

At McGrath, the cold, clear weather prevailed — as did the party atmosphere at McGuire's Tavern, fabled trailside stop for mushers, relatives, friends, press and anyone following the race.

Emmitt Peters was the first into McGrath, pulling in at 10:30 Wednesday night. Meanwhile, Lindner was getting lost between Nikolai and McGrath, chalking up what he later called "a bonus 5 1/2 hours." But Lindner rearranged the confusing trailstakes so that mushers following him would stay on the trail. That work earned for Lindner the Ken Chase Sportsmanship Award.

With Peters taking his 24-hour stop in McGrath, May picked up the lead again. He led the way through the gold-mining hills to Ophir then camped on the trail. He was soon joined by Swenson, Peters, Honea and Katongan. Finally May made the move, leading the pack to Iditarod.

A cold wind blew in all the all-but abandoned town when May pulled in Saturday afternoon. But Jim and Cathy Fleming were warm hosts, providing hot tea and stew to the mushers in their small cabin overlooking the Iditarod Slough.

A light snow, whipped by the wind, began to fall in the silent town Saturday night. Checker Gordon Castanza, who also ran the Iditarod School District's Winter Survival Camp there, had his youngsters lending a hand with dog food and other supplies as the mushers made cold camp.

The Flemings' cabin was an isle of repose. The glow of a kerosene lamp shed a warm light on the faces of weary mushers May, Swenson, Honea, Terry Adkins, indulged in the comfort of tea



Rob Stapleton photo

Trapper Creek's Joe May trots up the Chute in fifth place. Al Crane and ABC Cameraman Bill Philbin in tow.

and the Flemings' company. The mushers lingered, talking of their dogs, trapping and the trail while the wind buffeted the cabin.

The trail turned tougher on its way to the Yukon River. Winds drifted stretches with snow, though the weather remained, for the most part, clear. It was Monday afternoon before Jerry Riley, running just seven dogs, pulled into Anvik, the first checkpoint on the Yukon.

The Yukon villages — Anvik, Grayling and Kaltag — turned out in force for the race, youngsters running to greet the mushers. Anvik residents prepared a feast at the community center there. In Kaltag, villagers opened their homes to the mushers, and Iditarod Air Force chief Larry Thompson provided food, bunks and torrents of hot coffee at his home there.

Edgar Kalland, veteran of the 1925 serum relay to Nome, greeted Don Honea, the first musher into Kaltag. Honea won the annual award for leading the pack into the last stop on the Yukon.

Lindner led the way out of Kaltag Wednesday night. The rest of the race leaders followed Thursday morning, heading west for the Norton Bay coast and Unalakleet.

Unalakleet was spring. Warm after the Interior, the village was whipped by a March wind from the east that stripped the hillsides of snow. Temperatures rose to the high 20s, balmy weather that spelled night running for the dogs.

The leaders arrived Thursday night and went to work in the urgent, howling wind. Dogs to be fed and briefly rested. For the mushers, a quick dinner, a nap.

The leaders were gone by Friday morning, driving into the

hills along the coast, over stretches of trail scoured of snow by the wind. Then they turned deeper into the hills, where the snow remained and the trail wound through stands of spruce and red willow, taking their teams over a series of crests and finally to the long, downhill run to Shaktoolik and the coast.

The top mushers were now beyond catching. Friday night, March 9, Swenson overtook Peters in the last stretch to Koyuk. They arrived within a minute of each other.

From Koyuk, 150 miles from Nome, the work became harder, the wind having carved a thumping, washboard trail. The strength and speed of the Swenson's and Peters' teams were tested as the two mushers raced together. Late Saturday morning, Peters pulled into Elim—a scant 12 minutes ahead of Swenson. Lindner was two hours behind; Honea two and a half.

Swenson and Peters continued to run in tandem, pulling into Golovin late Saturday night. After a brief search for the checker, they pulled out for White Mountain.

By 3 a.m. Sunday, they were drinking coffee and munching pilot bread at the home of Enid and Robert Lincoln, just 77 miles from Nome.

The finish was less than 17 hours away.

For Peters, the question mark was Digger, his lead dog that had run lame from Skwentna, only 150 miles northwest of Anchorage. Both Peters and Swenson had trimmed their teams at Golovin, Swenson cutting to 10 dogs, Peters to nine.

From White Mountain, the two mushers headed west for the trek over seven exhausting hills, a rugged stretch of drifted, roller-coaster trail that fed into a howling snowstorm off Solomon.

"We just took turns breakin' trail up through the hills," Swenson said later. "A little while later we started racing". I think Emmitt actually made his move first."

Swenson said he stopped to switch the positions of his dogs on the trail while Peters forged ahead in the unholy, 50-mile-per-hour winds of Solomon.

(Cont'd on Page 12)



Rick Swenson (foreground) and Emmitt Peters take a break enroute to Nome. Soon Swenson was to make his move and pull away from the Fox.

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# Iditarod 1979

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Al Crane — Nome End Race Coordinator  
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Al Crane — Judge  
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Ken Chase, Trail Coordinator  
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Henry Warren, Eagle River Checkpoint  
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Bill Karp, Nome Winter Carnival Director  
Dorothy Page, Editor *Iditarod Trail Annual*  
and Mother of the Iditarod Trail Race

Special Report: IDITAROD  
PILOT DAVE DAVIS BECAME  
THE FATHER OF A  
BOUNCING BABY BOY ON  
MARCH 10, 1970. Dave who has  
been flying for the Iditarod since  
the first race said that he and  
Sherry had decided to bring the  
baby right into the Iditarod  
family. They named him Joseph  
(for Joe Redington) Rohn (for  
Rohn checkpoint) Davis. Joseph  
Rohn Davis weighed in at 8 lbs.

Larry Thompson, Race Marshal  
Pat Herron and his pilot Mike  
Moore catching a brief moment  
of R & R.

Rob Stapleton photo

MARCH/APRIL 1979



# Iditarod Sweepstakes Winners

The winners of the 1979 Iditarod Trail Sweepstakes were determined at a drawing held at the Awards Ceremony in Nome, March 16. Winners were drawn for 20 prizes based on the

winning mushers' bib numbers. For example, 20th musher into Nome, Patty Friend wore bib number 43. 43 tickets were drawn for 20th prize. From those 43, the winning number was

drawn. The remaining 42 were put back in the barrel for a second chance at prizes 19-1. The winners, their ticket numbers and home towns are as follows:

20th prize:	1049 Bottles Rainier Beer	Donald & Zellma Hall, Delta Junction, Alaska	No. 0761
19th	\$300.00	Emmitt Peters, Ruby & Carol Cappleman, Anchorage	No. 0292
18th	\$300.00	Bill Hodgson, Whitehorse, Y.T.	No. 0038
17th	\$500.00	Stan Hewitt, Ketchikan, Alaska	No. 0351
16th	\$300.00	O. Thomas & Helen Beirne, Anchorage	No. 0827
15th	Hawaii trip	Willard Larson, Big Lake, Alaska	No. 0288
14th	\$400.00	G. Krei/H. Nayukpuk, L. Nayukpuk, Nome, AK	No. 0003
13th	\$400.00	Roy Mendenhall, Kotzebue, Alaska	No. 0096
12th	\$600.00	Alaska Native Brotherhood, Anchorage	No. 0307
11th	\$400.00	John May, Ruby, Alaska	No. 0666
10th	Arctic Cat Panther	Warren Winger, Michael Storto, Eagle River, AK	No. 0014
9th	\$500.00	Ralph Mann, Willow, Alaska	No. 0593
8th	\$500.00	J.T./D.M./J.P. March, Anchorage & Homer	No. 0411
7th	\$1000.00	Bill Oman, Nome, Alaska	No. 0647
6th	\$500.00	Paul & William Beans, Mt. Village, Alaska	No. 0417
5th	1979 Ford Pickup	Alan T. Jones, Anchorage, Alaska	No. 0811
4th	\$500.00	Philip Granberry, Fairbanks, Alaska	No. 0566
3rd	\$2100.00	Bill Magnuson/Bob Craven, McGrath, Alaska	No. 0700
2nd	\$500.00	Gary Weber, Anchorage, Alaska	No. 0683
1st	Super Cub Airplane	Sharon J. Hess, Wasilla, Alaska	No. 0951

A total of 862 tickets were sold out of 1049 available. The Sweepstake prizes total \$50,000. The remainder of the proceeds

were used to support the mushers purse which is also \$50,000 and paid to the first 20 finishers in the 1049 milerace from Anchorage to

Nome.

Plans are already beginning for the 1980 Sweepstakes to help support the race effort.

## Checkers

Anchorage — Anne Patch  
Eagle River — Arthur Potts  
Wasilla — Carolyn Kennedy  
Knik — Vernon Hill  
Susitna — Jess and Peg Ward  
Skwentna — Joe Delia  
Finger Lake — June Leonard  
Rainy Pass — Bill Devine,  
Jules and Leslie Mead  
Rohn River — Don Burt & Kathy Money  
Farewell Station — Harry and Patty Lacy  
Nikolai — Ignatti Petruska  
McGrath — Bill Penland & Erin Gerrin  
Ophir — Audra Forsgren

Takotna — Dave Miller & John E. Cooper  
Iditarod — Gordon Castanza and Students  
of Iditarod School District  
Shageluk — Frank Benjamin & Allen John  
Anvik — Rudy Demoski  
Grayling — Joe Maillelle

Eagle Island — Steve and Ralph Kanaster  
Kaltag — Violet Burnham and Michelle Boyle  
Unalakleet — Jeanne Koutchak & Alice Charles  
Koyuk — Roger Nassuk  
Elim — Ernie Nylin  
Golovin — Ralph Willoya  
White Mountain — Robert Lincoln  
Safety — Dave Harding  
Nome — Leo Rasmussen

IDITAROD RUNNER

# TRAILTALK

The drivers cross the finish line in Nome and what do you think they're talking about. . . . NEXT YEAR!!!!

Not happy with his performance this year, KEN CHASE will be scanning the interior for some new blood to add to his team. After seven races, he tells us it's time to stop messing around!

EMMITT PETERS stated in Nome that he wouldn't be running next year. Well, you can't keep a good musher down . . . EMMITT has a whole mess of pups that need training, and what better training than to run the Iditarod.

Yes, it's true that SONNY LINDNER did sell his team in Nome, but only because "they're not good enough . . ." SONNY, voted recipient of the KEN CHASE SPORTSMANSHIP AWARD by his fellow drivers this year, has already been in Anchorage to secure his sponsor for next year, THE ALASKA RAILROAD.

Affectionately known as the "happy musher", Wasilla's RON BRINKER is hooked. He's buying dogs and gearing up for 1980, seems that COLONEL VAUGHAN wants his dogs back so he can go to Nome next year too! (RON ran some of VAUGHAN'S dogs this year.)

BABE and IRENE ANDERSON were sitting at home outside of McGrath having just reserved themselves to the fact that they would not be in Nome for the first time in years to join in the festivities. According to IRENE, "BABE" was sitting in his chair on one side of the room and I was in mine on the other, just to see who could out-pout the other," when BILL MAGNUSON landed with an empty airplane."Needless to say, the Nome bound airplane left the Anderson homestead . . . quite full.

When GENE LEONARD won the Red Lantern in Nome, he said, "I'll be back next year" and everyone cheered . . . except for wife JUNE. GENE and JUNE have been the checkers at Finger Lake for years and this year JUNE was on her own, maybe next year will be her turn to go to Nome!!

When DON HONEA was asked about his plans for next year, the veteran driver from Ruby winked and said, "Well, I guess I better check with CLARA now while she's still having a good time in Nome! We think CLARA said yes . . .

According to all accounts Willow musher DEL ALLISON did one heck of a job driving his rather large team . . . DEL left Anchorage with 21 dogs and maneuvered his way through Rainy Pass.

(Cont'd next page)

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## More TRAIL TALK

Arriving in Nome with 12 dogs, ALLISON and comrade Iditarod musher RON ALDRICH are continuing on from Nome to Barrow in support of Native Whaling. We salute you both and wish you good trail!

SWENSON protege GARY HOKKANEN of Eureka drove his team into Nome in the 11th position to claim the title, ROOKIE OF THE YEAR. At the Awards Ceremony GARY was presented a trophy and check for \$1,500 sponsored by The People and Businesses of St. Michael. Mayor Jerry Austin was there to do the honors . . .

Definitely one of the highlights of the Awards Ceremony was when, much to his surprise, our Iditarod Chief Pilot LARRY THOMPSON was presented a very special trophy. What did it say? "THE WORLD'S GREATEST AVIATOR", what else? LARRY received a standing ovation from the

crowd . . . a well deserved acknowledgment for his years of active duty beyond call.

From New York we hear that PETER HENNING, director and chief cameraman for the ABC Sports Special on the 1979 Iditarod is looking for a dog team . . . You don't suppose he wants to run the race . . . do you?

Last but not least, our intrepid 1978 Champ DICK MACKEY is crossing the Great Water this spring to narrate BBC's film and promote the race in Europe. And, 1979 Champ RICK SWENSON may be heading for the Big Apple (New York) with his sidekick OLD BUDDY to do their share of promoting too.

To all our friends up and down the Trail, get your break-up boots out and enjoy the wonder of an Alaskan Spring!

## The Race of 1979

Continued from page 8

But Swenson gained ground, overtaking Peters before Safety, the final checkpoint 22 miles from Nome. Beyond Safety, he steadily increased his lead.

In Nome, the jostling crowd on Front Street cheered Sunday night as the siren wailed for Swenson's last mile. Swenson, grinning, finished the race at the head of his team, running down the chute into the blaze of lights and the cheers of the crowd to his second Iditarod victory. At the sweet end he leaped to slap the

burled spruce of the Iditarod Monument, then tumbled to the snow and into a kiss from wife Cathy . . . and the congratulations of Dick Mackey, the man who nipped Swenson by one second in the classic finish of 1978.

"It's better this time than the first time," the sweaty, windburned but exhilarated Swenson said.

Peters tasted the cheering finish 42 minutes later. Digger had been unable to pull at full strength, giving Peters no chance to match Swenson's pace over the final miles.

"I give Rick a lot of credit,"

the Fox said after the race.

Lindner arrived several hours later, the last musher to finish on that Sunday night in Nome. And then the partying started.

Front Street's bars did a booming business. Nome was a carnival.

But it was quiet on the icy shore of the Bering Sea. The moon shed its cold light on the celebrating Gold Rush City. A few clouds reflected the moonlight.

The race was won. But down the coast, to the east, was the trail. And a thousand tales still to be told.



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