

## **MEMORIES OF HAM RADIO SUPPORT TO THE IDITAROD DOG SLED RACE 1979-1980**

*Tom Moore KL7JDH, KL7Q, WX4TM and Mary Moore KL7JDI, KL7P, WX4MM - September 2010*

The first Iditarod Dog Sled Race from Anchorage to Nome occurred in 1973.

*In August 2010, early organizers, leaders, participants and supporters of the Iditarod held a reunion in Wasilla AK for the first 10 years of the Iditarod (1973-1982) with the goal of creating a DVD and maybe writing a book about those years. Mary and I were completely surprised and overwhelmed to be invited and immensely enjoyed attending the reunion.*

*While we have lots of memories, it was obvious that many had faded and gotten mixed up a bit. So, since we got back home, we have been diligently trying to piece together and accurately reconstruct memories of those fantastic years in Alaska and our participation in the Iditarod. We really don't expect Raine Hall or Gail Phillips to go to the expense, as they indicated they would, to come all the way to Alabama just to get our memories. So we've done our best to put them together here. Our dear friend Rosemary Hanrath at Montana Creek has been particularly helpful in providing much information and helping us to remember. To her and others who have helped us on this project we send our sincerest thanks and appreciation.*

### **ABOUT US**

*Though we were 'military', we were not new to Alaska. Mary's Dad was in the Army stationed at Ft Richardson in the late '50's. She was there for Statehood. I was in the USAF and first came to Alaska (Elmendorf AFB) in the summer of 1963. I was there for the earthquake in '64. Mary's Dad was reassigned to Ft Richardson in the Fall of 1964. I met her at church on my birthday in January 1965. She graduated from East Anchorage HS in May; we got married in June and moved to Texas in August. We had another tour at Elmendorf from 1972-75; got our Ham Radio license in Austin TX in 1976 and were back in Anchorage from the summer of 1977 to the summer of 1980. We have visited Anchorage several times since then. Do you think we love Alaska? Mary says that every time we manage to get back up there, it's almost like going home.*

*From 1977 through 1980 Mary and I worked with many organizations in Alaska: Red Cross, Alaska State Troopers, Alaska Division of Emergency Services, Alaska Native Hospital, Alaska Governor's Office, FAA, Alaska Search and Rescue, Elmendorf Search and Rescue, and others, providing Public Service and emergency communications assistance when and where needed. One of the most important things we learned was that we were there to provide a service, free of charge, with positive attitudes. We always did our best to explain what we could and could not accomplish and did our level best to do what the supported organization wanted us to do. From then till now, we have been continuously involved with providing that service. It was those years in Alaska that laid the foundation that has kept us involved with HAM radio public service and emergency communications and led us to careers in Emergency Management. The point is that the experiences we had in Alaska, and particularly the Iditarod, impacted our lives and careers far more than we ever realized.*

## **ALASKA: The '60s And '70s**

*In those years, there was no internet. Long distance phone calls to the lower 48 were very expensive. Phone service inside Alaska was somewhat dependable between the big cities of Anchorage, Juneau, Ketchikan, Fairbanks and others. These were mostly 'recovery years' from the Good Friday Earthquake of 1964. RCA ALASCOM had a state-wide microwave phone system with terminals in many of the smaller cities and villages. This often consisted of a single phone that was on a party line with others; and was down more often than up, it seemed. Suffice to say, it wasn't very dependable. Amateur, or HAM, radio played a vital role in public service and emergency communications in those days.*

*When the Iditarod Dog Sled Race from Anchorage to Nome began in 1973, it was difficult to get timely information about a musher getting to and departing a particular checkpoint. All that information reached Race Headquarters in Wasilla and eventually Anchorage 'when the phone came back up' or a musher or airplane pilot came back in off the trail with information. Though some HAMs were supporting the race, the coverage just wasn't enough. The cost of putting on the Race and providing prize money was growing fast. To get sponsors and draw media attention, timely information of Musher's progress became more and more important. Hence the need for better, more timely communications. As best we can tell with very little supporting data, HAM support dates back to the late '60's when the Iditarod was just short races. But the 1979 and 1980 races saw HAMs manning all but 2 or 3 of the 25 to 27 checkpoints. These two years marked a monumental increase of information from the trail which flowed quickly to Race HQ and then to media all over the world. National media became highly interested and International film crews came to film it. Suddenly, the world was interested and paying a lot of attention to the Iditarod.*

## **1967-1977 - The Early Years**

From Rosemary Hanrath at Montana Creek Aug 2010:

"Thank you so very much for the interesting information. Brought back so many memories. Original communications were by KL7CUK as you may remember. He started them in 1967 up until the Valley Club under leadership of KL7IEN (Jay Mead) took over. That may be why we cannot find any records for 1978, for it was in 1979 that you and Mary took over as New Controls per what I find in KL7JKW's log book. By the way we match for 1979. Some interesting relays--LOL

When Roy ran things Del did relays and I received and transmitted traffic from Roy via CB. That is how I became interested in Ham radio and Roy gave me my five word test. Later they moved to Florida and between him, Lucy Hilpert and my Del I quickly passed the needed 13 words. Rosemary"

*To our knowledge Roy Davies KL7CUK of Montana Creek provided the first support with HAMs and CB'ers at the request of Joe Reddington Sr. Participation grew over the years with HAMs manning more checkpoints. Jay Mead lead the Matanuska Amateur Radio Association (MARA) support in the mid '70's..*

*The two HAMs who have supported the Iditarod more than any others were Del Hanrath KL7JKW and wife Rosemary Hanrath KL7A, also of Montana Creek, who began helping Roy Davie in the late 60's and supported every race through 1993 when Del passed away. Rosemary continued 'on-the-air' support of the Iditarod through 2000. They were always 'official relay stations' and members of both MARA and the Anchorage Amateur Radio Club (AARC).*

### **1978 - Our Memories Of Iditarod Begin**

When an Iditarod representative came to the Anchorage Amateur Radio Club (AARC) meeting in January 1978 to ask for communications help, Don Bush KL7JFT, I and a few others volunteered. Later some of the Anchorage folks backed out. But Don Bush took the issue to MARA and they 'took on' the project. The result was that HAMS manned about 15 or so checkpoints and the Wasilla Iditarod HQ. My and Mary's participation came about as a result of them needing an HF relay in the Anchorage area and someone to phone in reports to Anchorage Iditarod HQ. Mary did most of that and I assisted whenever I was off work. Mary also picked up some net control duties. The only thing we have 'on paper' for this year was the Certificates of Appreciation received from Iditarod HQ.

### **1979 - Off To The Races**

We went 'big time' in 1979 when Don, with Mary's and my help from the Anchorage end, organized a massive effort, including HAMS from the MARA, the AARC and some from Nome and Fairbanks, to man all but two or three checkpoints (and eventually manned one of those at the urgent request of HQ when the ALASCOM phone went down - the same occurred in 1980). With Don's efforts, we received some ALASCOM funding through Iditarod to help our HAMS with generators and fuel and some commercial transportation. Our biggest problem was dealing with the Press who wanted to use our radios to file their reports and who would not accept our explanation of FCC rules and regulations prohibiting such. Our biggest success was, of course, quick and accurate reporting of all the musher info and the efficient handling of 'official' Iditarod traffic (logistics, transportation, etc). Mary did most of the on-air Net Control of the HF Side Band radio Net from our home on Elmendorf and phoned in reports to Hq at the Hilton while taking care of two kids, cooking meals and keeping the house clean. I assisted whenever I wasn't at work. She says that "while Iditarod traffic was fun, some of the most memorable events were providing the many phone patches for Mushers on the trail to 'worried' family and friends at home".

The Start and first 3 or 4 checkpoints were handled on VHF repeaters on mountain tops above Anchorage and Palmer. After that, it was all HF Phone on 80 and 40 meters and eventually on 20 meters to checkpoints near and at Nome. The northern lights and poor propagations occasionally caused enough problems that we had to go to CW (Morse Code). Elsewhere, You can read all about bad weather conditions in Alaska. Suffice to say that our HAMS operated with portable rigs on batteries, occasionally had generator or real electricity, camped out in tents, old log cabins and occasionally in someone's heated home, store or other facility in about the worse winter weather imaginable. Antennas were simple wires or dipoles strung up in any available fashion. The primary mission was to transmit the Musher's time in and out, and number of dogs in and out of a checkpoint. Next was all the Race logistic communications including the hauling of dogs, dog food, dog sleds, flight scheduling and all the other stuff it takes to support a race like this. After hours, or when things were slow, and conditions permitted, HAMS would provide phone patches for a musher or other support personnel at the checkpoint back to his family or friends.

I don't remember a single problem with any of our participating HAMS. They were a great crew who took on "the mission" without a single complaint. They made it 'fun'. We worked together. We did what

had to be done and had a fantastic time doing it. I think it was in 1979 that we first worked with Lois English (Hart) as the 'official' Iditarod communications person at HQ. When all the HAMs got back to the Palmer/Anchorage area, we had a big debrief party at our house where we went over lessons learned and made first plans for our participation in the '80 race. While at Skwentna, Bill Hall KL7IKR, Pat Danly KL7DS, Trapper Joe and crew wrote the first "Iditarod Blues". Bill and Pat sang it for us at the debrief. (A recording - Windows Media format file - is included on this CD. The words are here:

### **I DITAROD BLUES**

CHORUS

TURN ON YOUR RADIO, LISTEN TO THE NEWS  
GOT DOGS ON MY MIND, GOT IDITAROD BLUES

VERSES

SOME PEOPLE VACATION TO GET AWAY FROM HOME,  
BUT A MUSER'S VACATION ALWAYS ENDS UP IN NOME.  
SO TIGHTEN UP DOGS, GET READY TO GO,  
WE'RE RUNNING TO SKWENTNA TO SEE TRAPPER JOE.

CHORUS

STAYING UP LATE, WAITING FOR THE DOGS,  
STOKING UP THE FIRE, FEEDING IN LOGS,  
IDITAROD'S COMING, AND IT'S COMING REAL SOON,  
DOGS AND MUSER'S PULLING IN ABOUT NOON

MOTHERS AND FATHERS AND KIDS UP LATE,  
CHECKING IN THE MUSER'S, MARKING DOWN THE DATE.  
COFFEE ON THE TABLE, MUSER'S ON THE FLOOR,  
MOVE THEM IN, MOVE THEM OUT, WE'RE READY FOR MORE.

CHORUS

800 DOGS SLEEPING IN THE SNOW,  
WAKING UP EARLY, AND BARKING TO GO.  
HEADING FOR THE PASS AND IT'S BABE IN THE LEAD,  
I'M A KICKING ANDA SWEATIN ANDA BUILDING UP SPEED.

FROZEN THUMBS AND FROZEN HANDS,  
FROZEN MUSER'S CROSS FROZEN LANDS,  
THE WIND IS HOWLING AND THE SNOW BLOWS COLD,  
AT THE END OF THE TRAIL THERE'S IDITAROD GOLD.

CHORUS

THE TRAIL IS ROUGH, IT BREAKS MANY SLEDS,  
TIRED DOGS CURL UP TO MAKE A BED,  
THE OLD LEAD DOG, SHE IS THE ONE WHO KNOWS,  
HOW TO FIND THE TRAIL, WHICH DIRECTION TO GO.

THE PEOPLE IN SHAGULUK ARE NICE TO KNOW.  
 THEY HAVE WATER & SHOWERS AND A PLACE TO GO,  
 THEY MARK THE TRAIL WELL, GET YOU ON YOUR WAY,  
 TO MUSH UP THE YUKON RIVER **NEXT DAY.**

CHORUS

AMATEUR OPERATOR SITTING AT A RIG,  
 HIGH FLYING AIRPLANES DOING A JIG.  
 MY CALL IS KL7IXT,  
 WILL SOMEONE ON THE RADIO ANSWER ME,

CHORUS

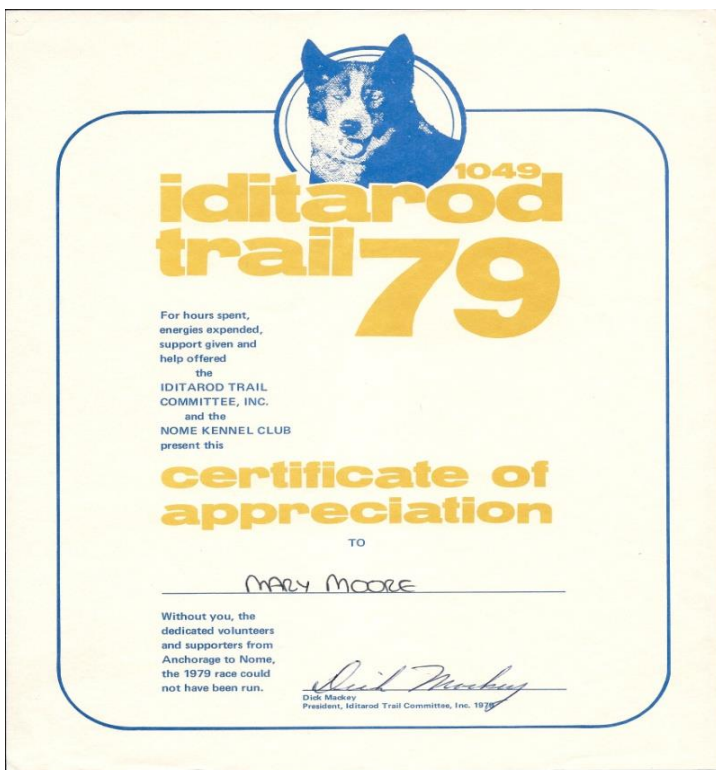
EXCITEMENT MOVES ON AND IT'S TIME TO GO HOME,  
 UNLESS YOU'RE A MUSHER STILL A HEADING FOR NOME.



Tom KL7JDH & Mary KL7JDI, 1979



Al Higbie AL7H and Pilot Erv Hobbs, Eagle 1979



*we all got Certificates of Appreciation from Iditarod*



*April 2 1979 Air Force Times*



## *Dog Days*

It takes more than just '55 drivers and 700 dogs to run the Iditarod, the annual 1049-mile dogsled race between Anchorage and Nome, Alaska (taking place this month). Many support people also help out. Dr. (Maj.) Terry Adkins of Warren AFB, Wyo. - shown exercising his 1978 team, at right - started out as the official race veterinarian in the first Iditarod in 1973. He's competed every year since then. TSgt. Alfred Moore, above, of Elmendorf AFB follows nearly every step of the competition from his home. He and his wife, Mary, are among 45 radio ham operators providing communications support. Requests for dog food and for airlifts for sick and injured dogs are routine for them. They also keep a log of times dogs go in and out, and they communicate flight plans for Iditarod aircraft and weather reports for the trail.

### ***From the IDITAROD RUNNER, May 1979***

*IDITAROD HAMS by Frank Gerjevic*

Ham radio coverage of the 1979 Iditarod race was funded by a \$3,000 grant from RCA Alaska Communications. As Alaska's only certificated long lines carrier, ALASCOM felt it was appropriate to support the efforts of these dedicate ham radio operators to provide the vitally needed communications for the 1,049 mile dog sled race from Anchorage to Nome. The grant paid for the operators' food, commercial airfare and, where electricity was not available, generators and gas. The funds also provided food and other requirements for private pilots who ferried dog food and supplies to the remote race checkpoints.

Amid strong spirits and song, smoke and laughter and the occasional soft click of a cue ball's kiss at McGuire's Tavern in McGrath, there comes a metallic crackle. Most of the McGuire's crowd is clustered at the bar or at the round tables. But there is a steady stream of visitors to the brightly lit corner next to a six-foot stack of cases of beer. From this corner comes the crackle and the static, the rough flow of the Iditarod Trail Race communications lifeline. It is early in March and the 1979 Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race has come to McGrath. With it has come Anchorage ham radio operator Herb Rosenthal.

"The smoke is unbearable.. the noise gets pretty loud," says Rosenthal, also known as AL7G. But the soft-spoken non-smoker says it with a smile. While conditions in the hazy warmth of McGuire's are not quite ideal for a ham radio operator, Rosenthal does count his advantages.

"Most of the hams don't have the luxury of electricity," he says. "My hostess, Mrs. (Eep) Anderson has been overly generous with everything including a hot shower this morning ."The shower is a blessing after a long day of feeding, relaying and receiving the steady flow of progress reports on 55 Iditarod mushers."

Like most hams, Rosenthal is hooked on his hobby. "I enjoy operating the equipment and designed and built most of my my own equipment," he says during a break in radio traffic. A member of the Matanuska Amateur Radio Association, Rosenthal has been a ham operator since 1946, when he took up the hobby as a high school youngster in Syracuse, N.Y. He pursued his radio link with far-flung corners of the world through his 26 years in the Air Force. Rosenthal, who before this year's Iditarod had handled race communications at Skwentna, says "one of the more satisfying things" in his Iditarod ham experience is putting the minds of mushers' spouses at ease. He tells of one musher's wife who had heard no word of her husband's whereabouts on the trail. Rosenthal went to work, the ham network came through, and AL7G passed on the good news that the "lost" musher was alive and well. "She was most appreciative of that", Rosenthal says. Another call, Rosenthal turns and goes back to work.

The work was steady for most of the 52 amateur ham radio operators who made up the communications network of the 1979 Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race. The trail stretched from Anchorage to Nome, spanning more than 1,200 miles (official distance - 1049 miles) of Alaska. In the absence of telephone communications at many checkpoints along the trail, the Iditarod network, staffed by members of the Matanuska Amateur Radio Association, relayed a steady stream of information on mushers' progress and problems to Iditarod Race Headquarters in Anchorage. In addition, the hams relayed 300 personal messages, 150 telephone patches and two emergency messages, according to Iditarod ham radio personnel director Don Bush

Bush and his wife, Judy, handled communications at Wasilla, where they logged a three-week stint of hours that ranged from 7:00 a.m. to 11:00 p.m. daily. Long days were part of the job for all of the Iditarod hams. The hams provided their own radio equipment, as well as their volunteer time. They served at 15 checkpoints along the trail, staying until the last musher checked out.

Bush said he is satisfied "for the most part" with the 1979 coverage. "We put in about a year's work on the planning of it" The hams' coverage of the 1979 race was "the most intensive" provided by the volunteers in the race's history. "We learned a lot this year," Bush said. He added that the ham operators are planning even more ambitious coverage of the 1980 Iditarod Race.

At the mushers' meeting in Anchorage prior to the race, Bush said "there was quite a bit more interest" in the hams' services than in years past. In 1978, the ham network consisted of eight radio operators and a shoestring budget of \$50, according to Bush. Communications for this year's race were handled by 52 operators and funded with a \$3,000 budget provided by RCA Alaska Communications. The hams had their own small "air force" for transportation to and from the remote sites on the trail. Even so, Bush said, his group was "running pretty much out of logistics" at race's end. The challenge of providing logistical support for the hams generally was met. But the individual operators needed some flair for improvisation to keep the line alive.

At Farewell Station, about 350 trail miles northwest of Anchorage, 15 year old Brian Crawford encountered sub-zero challenge.

The challenge included scrambling atop the snow roof of FAA employee Bill Guest's two-story home, where Crawford grew slightly frantic in trying to rig an antenna. Forced to abandon the roof when his plans didn't pan out, he used a little imagination and stretched his antenna between an oil drum and a wooden pallet, with the sagging center propped up by a broomstick. The effort paid off and Crawford's setup, after a few hours of sweat and fine tuning, was operational in time for the steady stream of mushers that began to arrive Tuesday night, February 27.

Ironically, by the time the game young operator had his equipment working, the Farewell telephones, which had been out of commission, were repaired. "I didn't expect spend my 16th birthday here" the Anchorage resident said while doing some repair work the following day. But Crawford, who turned 16 March 2, did indeed celebrate the day in Farewell, with a cake flown in by a kind pilot.

Al Cronk, the ham operator at Grayling, encountered another sort of surprise. Cronk had his gear nicely squared away at a table in the Yukon River village's community center as the mushing traffic grew heavy. But he opted to move out when a wake was moved in.

The body of a young man who had died in the lower 48 was flown to Grayling for funeral services. The man had been raised by an uncle in the village and residents held a potlatch at the community center. Cronk was invited to stay at the center, in another corner, but decided it would be better to move his operation. Cronk moved his gear to a vacant house and resumed operation. He said there was little problem in the move, though the relocation took him away from the action at the checkpoint. Does Cronk plan to return to the trail next year? "You bet," he said, explaining that the combination of the bush, the race and the opportunity to provide vital communications makes for a choice assignment.

While Cronk was making way for a wake, fellow ham Orville Gilbert was weathering the bitter cold of Iditarod. Gilbert handled communications from a tent at this austere checkpoint, sharing the canvas lodgings of checker Gordon Castanza, who also ran the Iditarod Winter Survival Camp. Gilbert was the key man in the ham network's part in getting medical aid to Mrs. Jim Fleming, who suffered second-degree burns on her arms when a pressure cooker exploded at the Flemings' cabin at Iditarod. Gilbert relayed word of the emergency to a ham operator in Flat, eight miles away, who passed the word to a ham in Montana Creek. That operator contacted a doctor in Anchorage who provided instructions for treatment of Mrs. Fleming.

Meanwhile, in McGrath, Rosenthal got word to the public health nurse, who was flown by an Iditarod Race pilot to the Flemings' cabin where she treated the woman's burns. Mrs. Fleming was later flown to Anchorage for more extensive care.

The ham network swiftly responded to another emergency situation during the race; this one at White Mountain, 77 trail miles from the finish at Nome. A small plane's landing gear collapsed on touchdown there. There were no injuries to pilot or passengers. But within five minutes, according to Bush, the hams had alerted emergency service personnel in Nome.

Another aspect of the 1979 Iditarod coverage that pleased Bush was the performance of the younger hands - Crawford, 16 year old Tony Spangler and 18 year old Dave Goodyear. Goodyear served at three checkpoints along the trail -- Finger Lake, Kaltag and White Mountain.

"Dave lost a stove. Little chilly for him," Bush said of Goodyear's setup at Finger Lake. But Goodyear was able to warm his bones at the cabin of Gene and June Leonard when he wasn't manning the communications lines.

Spangler was yanked out of classes at Chugiak High School to take over radio duties at Anvik. "A neighbor of mine called the club... they called me up at school and asked me if I wanted to go up there and I said yes" Spangler said of his appearance in Anvik. "they were kinda short on hams, I guess." The Chugiak student had his share of problems in Anvik. "Right now, race headquarters can't hear me," he said one morning there. "The bands bad". Spangler explained that the hams try to communicate with the fewest number of relays but that the bands are subject to the fluctuation of atmospheric conditions. He listed sunspot activity, the motion of the ionosphere and the northern lights as natural elements that can thwart good radio contact. Though Spangler had difficulties with his equipment at Anvik, Bush said, he was able to do sufficient repairs to keep his station open. One advantage that Spangler had was his location, right at the Anvik checkpoint. So he had little trouble in staying on top of the race, using Anvik checker Rudy Demoski's list.

For other hams, "trying to get information from the checkers" was a problem, said Bush. "our radio operators were not always set up with the checkers." The checkers themselves had to set a mean pace at times in keeping tabs on the mushers heading in and out of checkpoints. Hence they could not always stay in touch with the radio operators. Such was the case in McGrath, where Rosenthal's corner at McGuire's Tavern was several hundred yards from the FAA station which served as the checkpoint.

Bush has a solution in mind for that problem. He said the hams are planning extra teams and the pairing of radio teams, with one operator equipped with a portable unit enabling him to "run with the checker". The portable-equipped operator would relay the information directly to the operator at a fixed base. That operator could then transmit the latest update within seconds to the race headquarters.

The ham operators used the portable units to monitor the first leg of the 1979 race, from Anchorage to Knik, a hectic stretch due to heavy traffic and spectators in Anchorage, Eagle River, at Lake Lucille and along the trail.

This year, Bush said, information of the top ten mushers 'throughout the race was transmitted within minutes to race headquarters. Word of the later arrivals, he said, "took a little bit longer."

Use of portable units is just one of the refinements Bush has in mind for 1980's Iditarod coverage. "We've looked over the trail from our experience this year," he said, adding that plans are afoot to "check out sites beforehand" to ease the logistics strain.

One element that is unlikely to change is the volunteer spirit of the hams. "No matter where they needed us, they just had to drop the guy in," Bush said.



## **Worldradio June 1979** page 4

Tom Moore, KL7JDH

Anchorage to Nome by dog sled - via the Iditarod trail which crosses two mountain ranges, passes through ice locked wilderness, winds along 200 miles of the mighty Yukon River and 200 miles of the Bering Sea coast. It endures the absolute worst of nature's elements - winds exceeding 70 mph, blizzards with blinding snow and zero visibility, and consistently sub-zero cold, commonly 20° to 40° below.

Several attempts in the 60s to gain support for a dog sled race failed due to lack of musher and sponsor interest, but finally on 3 March 1973 hundreds watched as 34 mushers left Anchorage. When the winner reached Nome, the celebration was like July 4th, Christmas and New Year's Eve all wrapped into one day.

Thus began the annual Iditarod Trail Race. Just as challenging as the race itself is the logistical and communications support. Food, fuel, and other supplies have to be airlifted to each checkpoint along the trail. Enter the Amateur Radio operators of Alaska.

Imagine camping out in a tent at 40° below zero, operating your TS-520 off a Honda generator and waking up in the morning to find your precious radio literally caked in frost, day after day after day.

It takes two weeks for the winner to reach Nome. Amateurs have to be at some checkpoints more than a week - longer if they get weathered in and can't get airlifted out.

The Matanuska Amateur Radio Association (MARA), led by Don Bush, KL7JFT organized Alaska's amateurs to support this year's race. After a year's planning, the operating budget to cover fuel for aircraft, commercial transportation, food and some unique supplies, came to about \$3,800. RCA ALASCOM, the Anchorage ARC and the Iditarod Race Committee came up the total amount. Participating amateurs donated their vacation time and risked thousands of dollars worth of radio gear.

On 24 February 1979 thousands of spectators and media reporters watched as 55 mushers and dog teams (about 800 dogs) departed downtown Anchorage at two-minute intervals on the first leg of the 1,049-mile race to Nome.

The largest amateur communications network ever put together for such an event, the Iditarod traffic net, was operated by Tom, KL7JDH, and Mary, KL7JDI, Moore from their QTH in Anchorage. They handled all traffic to and from race headquarters. Though - "time in, dog in" and "time out, dog out" were our primary communications responsibility, logistical messages to and from the communications headquarters made up the bulk of our traffic.

Once the mushers, residents and guests along the trail heard of our capability, we relayed hundreds of messages and completed over 150 phone patches.

Dave Cloyd, KL7IYH, was net control of the two-meter net which saw the mushers from Anchorage through rural countryside - to the community of Eagle River.

At one point Alaska SCM Roy Davie, KL7CUK, some 70 miles north, relayed news of high winds coming from the north. Amateurs put out the word and within an hour, 40-knot winds raked the area, shaking up airplanes and campers. Those who heeded the advance notice now took a closer look at our amateur operation.

A visiting amateur at White Mountain was providing information for Nome headquarters more efficiently than their phone system. After witnessing our superb performance during the race, headquarters requested another amateur to replace the visitor who had to leave.

At Skwentna, Bill Hall, KL7IKR, and Pat Danly, KL7DS, and others put to music the original "Iditarod Blues," which was later played all along the trail.

Participating amateurs were too numerous to be credited here individually, but their help was much appreciated.

Because of the excitement generated during the Iditarod race, we now have amateurs wanting to become mushers and pilots - and checkers, pilots and mushers wanting to become amateurs!

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### **"HAM's IDITAROD 79"**

BY TOM MOORE, KL7JDH

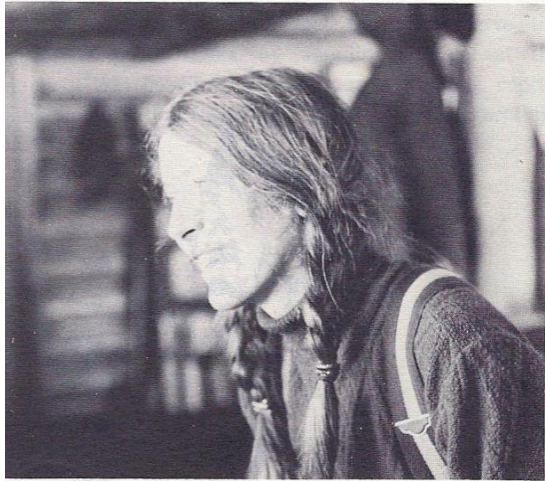
1979's Iditarod HAM communications support began right after the completion of the 1978 race. The Matanuska Amateur Radio Association (MARA), led by Don Bush, KL7JFT, organized Alaska's HAMS to support the 1979 race. After a year of planning, our operating budget to cover fuel for "HAM dedicated aircraft," commercial transportation, food and some unique supplies, came to about \$3,800. RCA ALASCOM supported Iditarod and the HAMS by donating \$3,000 and the Anchorage Amateur Radio Club chipped in \$250. The rest came from the Iditarod Race Committee budget. Participating HAMS donated their vacation time and risked literally thousands of dollars worth of sensitive electronic gear. By the day the 1979 race was to begin, the largest Amateur Communications Network ever put together for such an event became operational - "The Iditarod Traffic Net."

Dave Cloyd, KL7IYH, and two of his Novice Class students provided "time out, number of dogs out" from the Start line and was Net Control of the VHF Net which saw the mushers through to Eagle River. Manning checkpoints between Anchorage and Eagle River were: Lucy Hilpert, KL7LH and Conrad Hilpert, KL7JKE, at the New Seward Highway crossing; Bob McKinney, KL7JKG, at Lake Otis; Don Werkama, WL7ADK, at Goose Lake; Wayne Gilmore, KL7GSK, at Tudor Rd; Tom Bender, KL7HOJ, out behind Chugiak Foothills subdivision; Dan Cismoski, KL7IYL, at Oil Well Road; Dave Olson, KL7DC, and Patti Olson, KL7CO, at Arctic Valley Road; Tim Michael, KL7JGK, and Sue

Michael, WL7ADK, at Ft. Richardson overpass; Don Bain, KL7IGE, at the Weight Station; Ralph Whitmore, WL7ACO, at Highland Road; Darrell Daily, KL7DN, down at the Eagle River crossing; Jim Moody, KL7JCE, and Cathy Moody, WL7ABO, at the Old Glenn Highway crossing in Eagle River.

At Pippel's Field in Eagle River, Bill Reiter, KL7ITI, furnished "Time in, Dogs in" to Don Bush, KL7JFT, and crew: Mike Eppler, KL7ILA; Rosanna Eppler, KL7IRE; and Gil Woods, KL7AAX, at the Wasilla/Lake Lucille checkpoint. Here, the HAMS displayed a large map showing the progress of each team from Anchorage to Eagle River. During the restart at Lake Lucille, Roy Davie, KL7CUK, at Montana Creek, relayed news of high winds coming from the North. HAMS put out the word and within an hour 40 knot winds raked the area. Those that heeded the HAM's advance notice now took a closer look at our operation.

From Wasilla to Susitna Station, Roy Mesecher, KL7BZ, at Settler's Bay; Norm Dietz, KL7IPA, at Knik; and Jay Mead, KL7IEN, at Susitna provided VHF communications to keep the public up-to-date on where the mushers were.



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### ***KNOM Nome 1979 Race Diary, from the Iditarod Trail Annual 1980***

FRIDAY, MARCH 2 1979 Meanwhile the Iditarod amateur radio communications network came into play today .. Kathy Flemings, wife of Jim Flemings in Iditarod, was severely burned in a scalding water accident. She is currently nursing a baby. Iditarod's temporary Ham, Orville Gilbert, KL7IZL set up a phone patch with an Anchorage doctor, who relayed medical instructions. At McGrath, ham Herb Rosenthal, AL7G, contacted the public health nurse there, who assembled medical supplies to be shuttled to Iditarod. And Race Marshal Pat Hurren who hails from Whitehorse, Y.T., was hurriedly purchasing baby food to be shipped by race airplane.

## Report provided to Iditarod HQ after the 1979 Race:

HAM'S IDITAROD '79, by Tom Moore KL7JDH

1979's Iditarod HAM communications support began right after the completion of the 1978 race. The Matanuska Amateur Radio Association (MARA), led by Don Bush, KL7JFT, organized Alaska's HAMs to support the 1979 race. After a year of planning, our operating budget to cover fuel for "HAM dedicated aircraft", commercial transportation, food and some unique supplies, came to about \$3,800. RCA ALASCOM supported Iditarod and the HAMs by donating \$3,000 and the Anchorage Amateur Radio Club chipped in \$250. The rest came from the Iditarod Race Committee budget. Participating HAMs donated their vacation time and risked literally thousands of dollars worth of sensitive electronic gear. By the day the 1979 race was to begin, the largest Amateur Communications Network ever put together for such an event became operational - "The Iditarod Traffic Net".

Dave Cloyd, KL7IYH, and two of his Novice Class students provided "time out, number of dogs out" from the Start line and was Net Control of the VHF Net which saw mushers through to Eagle River. Manning checkpoints between Anchorage and Eagle River were: Lucy Hilpert, KL7LH and Conrad Hilpert, KL7JKE, at the New Seward Highway crossing; Bob McKinney, KL7IKG, at Lake Otis; Don Werkama, WL7ADK, at Ft. Richardson overpass; Don Werkamak, WL7ADK, at Goose Lake; Wayne Gilmore, KL7GSK, at Tudor Rd; Tom Bender, KL7HOJ, out behind Chugiak Foothills subdivision; Dan Cismoski, KL7IYL, at Oil Well Road; Dave Olson, KL7DC, and Patti Olson, KL7CO, at Arctic Valley Road; Tim Michael, KL7JGK, and Sue Michael, WL7ADK, at Ft. Richardson overpass; Don Bain, KL7IGE, at the Weight Station; Ralph Whitmore, WL7ACO, at Highland Road; Darrell Daily, KL7DN, down at the Eagle River crossing; Jim Moody, KL7JCE, and Cathy Moody, WL7ABO, at the Old Glenn Highway crossing in Eagle River.

At Pippel's Field in Eagle River, Bill Reiter, KL7ITI, furnished "Time in, Dogs in" to Don Bush, KL7JFT, and crew: Mike Eppler, KL7ILA; Rosanna Eppler, KL7IRE; and Gil Woods, KL7AAX, at the Wasilla/Lake Lucille checkpoint. Here, the HAMs displayed a large map showing progress of each team from Anchorage to Eagle River. During the restart at Lake Lucille, Roy Davie, KL7CUK, at Montana Creek, relayed news of high winds coming from the North. HAMs put out the word and within an hour 40 knot winds raked the area. Those that heeded the HAM's advance notice now took a closer look at our operation.

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Don Bain, KL7IGE, in Anchorage, logged over 400 contacts with interested people in the lower 48 advising them of Race progress here in Alaska. From these contacts, people listening in from Europe and other foreign countries heard more 'now' information about the Iditarod Race than ever before.

William Lee, KL7IUI, radio personality Chip Lewis, managed to get in a few bit spots on KFQD radio about the HAM's part in the Iditarod. In Wasilla, Judy Bush and Rosanna Eppler, KL7IRE, kept Wasilla Headquarters updated through their constant monitoring and participation in the "Iditarod Net".

Pilot Mike Barbaric, KL7IXT, organized pilots Tom McGillvary, KL7IYG; Wayne Gilmore, KL7GSK; Irv Hobbs and Don Bowers and their aircraft for dedicated support to the HAMs.

At Skwentna, Bill Hall and Pat Danly, KL7IKR and KL7DS, and others put to music the original "Iditarod Blues" which was later played all along the trail. Orv Gilbert, KL7IZL, provided emergency communications from Iditarod when Kathy Flemings, a mother of a small baby, was severely burned in an accident.

Al Folden, W7KAP, a visiting HAM at White Mountain was on the spot with emergency communications when an airplane crashed there, luckily with no injuries.

Because of the excitement generated during the Iditarod, we now have HAMs wanting to become mushers and pilots - And checkers, pilots and mushers wanting to become HAMs.

Our participation could not have been successful without the understanding and cooperation of the checkers at each checkpoint, Dick Mackey, Gail Phillips, Raine Hall and especially Lois English. To these

fine people, we extend our sincere thanks and appreciation. And to our hosts at each checkpoint; to those who provided lodging, and to the super nice people in the villages along the trail, we extend our warmest gratitude.

It isn't often that Amateurs get the opportunity or are afforded the privilege to participate in communications support of an event of such magnitude as the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race. The successful communications support to this year's race dramatically demonstrates that Alaska's HAMs have the overall leadership, individual cooperation and teamwork available to provide total communications support not only to race officials, but to participants, friends and relatives and, within regulation, to the news media.

HAMs may be justly proud that the professionalism and personal integrity they displayed while performing as checkpoint communicator, either VHF or HF, as pilot hauling HAMs and supplies, as base station relay in Montana Creek or Wasilla, or as wives keeping logs and making telephone calls - will serve as an outstanding example of the public service role of Amateur Radio. HAMs consider it a privilege and honor to have been associated with all who support Iditarod and look forward to the 1980 race."

## **1980 - *Bigger And Better***

Soon after the 1979 race, Don Bush moved to Juneau and I picked up responsibility for organizing HAM support for the 1980 race. While I wrote a 'wrap-up' for the '79 HAM effort, I can't find it for the '80 race. Therefore my comments about it are based almost entirely on my and Mary's memory along with information provided by Rosemary, and the few articles included here.

We held several meetings during the rest of 1979 and early 1980 planning our organization for the '80 race. In the '79 race, a few HAMs had experienced some antenna problems. During one of our meetings, Radio personality Chip Lewis KL7IUI (William Lee) presented plans for building the "Iditarod Special" antenna. We then had a couple of antenna building parties prior to the '80 race.

Based on Mary's and my close working relationship with Clyde Bloker KL7IBY who was the Communications Officer for the Alaska Division of Emergency Services and the need to get more HAMs involved as Net Controls, we decided to move our HAM headquarters from our home to the ADES facility which had had a fantastic array of Collins radios and antennas and was closer to Iditarod HQs at the Hilton. However we could only use the ADES facility from 7:00AM-11:00PM so we continued to use our station at home to monitor overnight for any emergency traffic.

# RADIO IDITAROD

## THE OTHER PART

Well boys and girls...here it is...the moment you've all been waiting for. The unveiling of the Iditarod Special trail antenna <sup>AND</sup> moose garotte. Actually, this thing's so simple I'm surprised I was able to put it together.

Here's what you need: 120 feet of wire - #14 will do nicely  
15 feet of nylon cord -  $\frac{1}{4}$  inch  
1 barrel type insulator  
4 alligator clips  
2 hours (approx.)

The first thing you need to do is belt down a beer or Coke to steel yourself for the monumental task ahead. Then assemble the 20 meter dipole first using the  $468/\text{freq. in mhz}$  formula to determine the length. In this case the length of each leg is 16'6". This distance is measured from the hole through which each leg is tied to the center insulator to the end of the wire including the loop you'll put in the end of each leg. Make sure the loop is secure because there'll be a lot of tension on it. Your 20 meter section is now complete (resonant frequency 14.292). Time for a beer.

Next, take your nylon cord and cut two sections just over 3 feet long each. You need to make them longer than three feet because you'll be looping both ends and the loops must be added to the total length. Tie one end of your cord to the loops you have made in the 20 meter dipole. The other end gets looped and tied to another length of wire. We are now ready to build up the 40 meter section. Make sure your cord length is exactly 3 feet loop to loop on each leg of the antenna. To get the 40 meter antenna completed, add 13 feet of wire to each leg. This length again is measured loop to loop. Loop and tie one end through the cord already attached to the 20 meter dipole. Loop the other end of each 13 foot wire. Now prepare the remaining nylon line exactly as you did the first pair, and attach them to the 40 meter sections you have just completed the same as before. To the free ends of each leg add 24'6" of wire to each leg and loop the ends. This completed the major portion of the antenna. All you need to do now is attach jumper wires to the outboard ends of the spacers (see diagram) long enough to barely make up the space, attach alligator clips to the free end and there you are. To operate 20 meters (14.292) simply disconnect all clips. To operate 40 (7.250), connect the innermost set of clips and leave the outer clips disconnected. To operate 75 (3.940) connect all the clips. The antenna is designed to be operated from a height of about six feet. You'll need to really cinch up on the support halyards to eliminate sag and therefore the loops you make have got to be strong. Also, supporting the center might help. Feed it with RG58 and wrap the whole thing around a coffee can to transport. That's it...and it works. I had great results on 20 with the antenna only three feet above the ground. Worked the Papuli Net on 40 the same way and S-9 in Juneau, Nome and Fairbanks on 75.

higher +  
bands

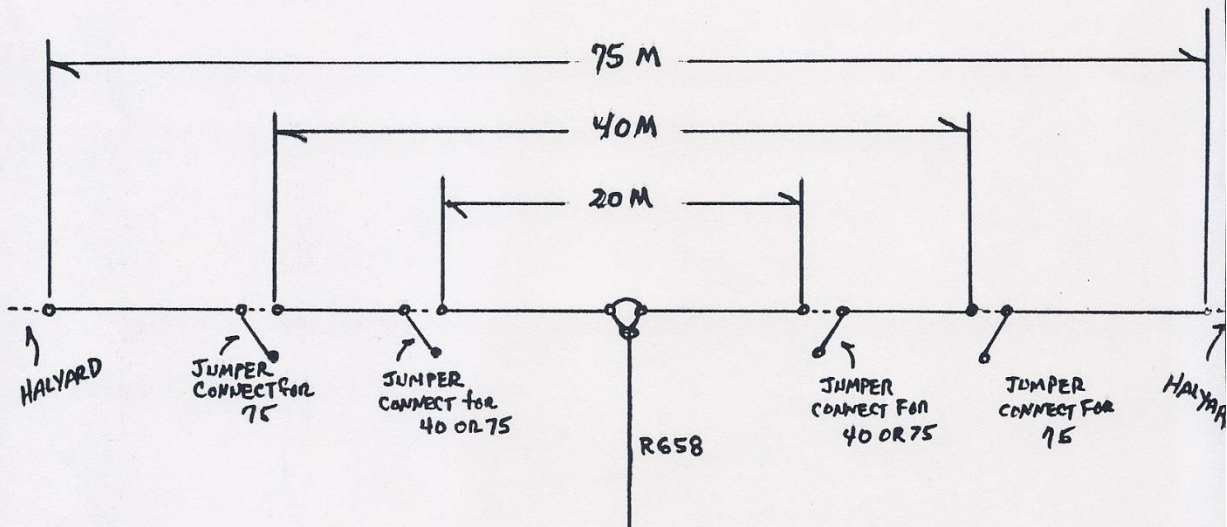


The antenna obviously displays some ground characteristics. The higher it is the happier it is. But keep it at a distance where you can change bands without having to take it down. That's the whole idea. We'd like everyone going out on the trail to use this type of antenna. It's reliable and very portable. An that's what we need. Due thanks and recognition for this inspirational piece of gear goes to Mike Barbarick KL7IXT who has to fly all that extra weight around during the race and also decided he didn't want to smoke the 120 again.

A bit of unrelated info. Packets for checkpoint operators will be handed out shortly after we compile the list of operators etc. You will receive the equipment list the night of the meeting when you sign up. Folks staying in Anchorage, remember, anybody will be able to operate net control (Radio Iditarod). So grab the dog, mom, dad, the little old ladies and sign up. Shifts at ADES will be 7:30AM - 1130:AM, 1130AM - 330PM, 330PM - 730PM, and 730PM to 1130PM daily. We start on the half hour because we'll be passing dog traffic on the hour and don't want to be changing guard then. There will be three complete stations operating at the same time on the three bands. We'll need at least two operators plus the control operator for each shift.

We have also been meeting with Bill Hutchinson about the computerization of the race. He has devised a system which we will describe at the meeting, but rest assured it is an incredible information system which will tell us automatically if there's trouble on the trail and just what's going on where.

73,  
Chip, KL7IUI





*Tom KL7Q preparing for Iditarod at ADES HAM HQ 1980*

*From the AARC NL MARCH 1980 V*

Tom Moore (KL7Q) reported that the plans for the Iditarod are moving along just fine, although volunteers are still needed. Tom also said that a meeting for check point operators would be held at the ADES Building on February 13 at 7:30 p.m. This meeting will give check point operators some training in weather readings for helping our pilots. The "Golden Book of Weather" on sale at the U. of Alaska book store (\$1.95) would also be helpful. This meeting is open to interested hams besides the check point operators. Tom also announced that Chip (KL7IUI) had been successful in raising over \$7500 from Alascom for sponsorship of our Iditarod activities. Well done Chip !

Pat Danly (KL7DS), Bill Hall (KL7IKR), and Chip Lewis (KL7IUI) sang and accompanied themselves on violin and guitars. Their presentation was the "Iditarod Blues" which they wrote last year while at Skwentna for a check point during the 1979 Iditarod. It was a lively tune which really inspired a lot of people to get involved in Iditarod this year.

The '80 race was the first time for Iditarod and HAMs HQs to use computers to document race results. Learning how to use the computers and software consumed much of our time and added an extra element of training, concentration and closer coordination with Lois at HQs. But working together, we did it and did it well. The computers and software were provided by Bill Hutchinson, a super guy to work with. Along with the computers, we activated another Ham Radio mode; that of using teletype to send information from our Communication HQ at ADES over to Iditarod HQ at the Hilton (we didn't have computer networks back then). That worked quite well, reducing a lot of telephone traffic. I think Wilse Morgan KL7CQ was instrumental in getting us the use of all the necessary equipment to do this with.





*Bill Hutchinson and Tom Moore KL7Q*



*Lois English learning the computer*



*Deanna KL7IZJ and Mike KL7IXT at Cripple*



*Harley Steward KL7IZZ at Nome*

Del and Rosemary were all set to perform their relaying services from Montana Creek and the Matanuska Valley crew were set to take care of Race HQ in Wasilla. We had lots of positive support from the MARA and AARC Radio Clubs with volunteers to man most checkpoints on the trail. Where we didn't have a volunteer, we planned to 'leap frog' a HAM from a checkpoint at the rear of the race where all the mushers had passed, to one at the head of the race. Mike Barbaric KL7IXT again organized a crew of pilots and aircraft to provide dedicated transportation support for HAM's.

This is the organization we remember for the 1980 race. It was a fantastic group of people. The only problems, as I recall, was the crash of that Spanish (or Italian??) crew who was filming the race and the outstanding professionalism demonstrated by our 19 year old Ham operator on the trail reporting it; and the lady who got burned at Iditarod by an exploding pressure cooker - it was the HAMs who arranged to get a nurse airlifted down there to take care of her.

In all our radio communications, we had to be very careful about what and how we said certain things because we knew the media and others were listening. So we develop a simple code. For instance, if any musher's dogs died, we reported that the musher came in with X nr of Big Macs. We were not

prepared, however, how to report an aircraft crash or accident. We were not faced with that until the film crew's aircraft crashed. Our HAM operator tried to tell us, without saying exactly what had happened but once we realized there was an aircraft emergency, we went to morse code, which only the HAMS could decode, to send and receive the details.

*Special thanks to Rosemary Hanrath KL7A for researching old logs and charts kept by Dell Hanrath (KL7JKW) now deceased. The (name) below is Tom and Mary's effort to put names to the call signs provided by Rosemary from Dell's records. Those with (no find) are the results we got from looking them up on QRZ.COM and the FCC archives. Sure sorry we couldn't put names with all of them. Nor do we have ALL the names and Callsigns of ALL who helped at the ADES HAM radio HQ in Anchorage or those who helped at the HAM HQ in Wasilla.*

**From Rosemary Hanrath at Montana Creek September 11, 2010:**

**"Subject:** Re: 1980

Nancy Lake: KL7BZ ED (Roy Mesecher) however, we did not keep times there.  
Susitna Station: WL7AAZ (no find)  
Skwentna: KL7DV (George Strother now KL7GS)  
Finger: KL7DS/KL7IKR (Pat Danly/Bill Hall)  
Rainy: WL7AJT (no find)  
Rohn: KL7JKC (Dave Goodyear)  
Farwell/Nickoli: KL7FD (Ken Delp)  
McGrath: AL7G (Herb Rosenthal now W5AN)  
Ophir: KL7BI (Glenn Greeley)  
Cripple: KL7IZJ (Deanna Barbaric)  
Rough Ridge: AL7AU (Tom Kuffel??)  
Ruby: WB7QYG (no find)  
Galena: WL7ACY (Dave Shiplett now AC4MU)  
Nulato: KL7BE (no find)  
Kaltag: KL7IZL (Orv Gilbert)  
Unalakleet: KL7GQ (Roy Hansen)  
Shagtoolik: KL7JKC (Dave Goodyear) (of note here: is change to Bering Sea Time. No longer do we have this time change) //I think this is where the film crew's aircraft went down.. Tom//  
Koyuk: KL7BI (Glen Greeley)  
Elim: KL7BB (Bill Balzarini)  
White Mountain: WL7ABC (no find)  
Safety: KL7JEO (no find)  
Nome: KL7IZZ (Harley Steward)  
From log of KL7JKW, I note Del made a phone patch for KL7IXT from Rainy Pass on 2/25/79 and later passed dog traffic for KL7DS at Skwentna. I don't remember which year you came out and asked Del to do the relays. But since 79/80 we were always called official relay stations. The last log contact I find for 79 was JKW with Mary, KL7JDI (Mary Moore) on March 14, 1979. For 1980, I found a March 2 contact with WL7AJT at Pontilla Lake (Rainy Pass). and last I noted was contact with KL7P (Mary Moore) on March 18. I think both years races started in Feb. I gave Raine an outline for Iditarod net called by control calling hams at involved checkpoints each morning at 0800 hrs, asking first for emergency traffic, followed by exchange of local and checkpoint weather to be provided to pilots and race personnel; exchange of dog traffic, morale messages, etc. Advised hams monitored 24/7 for two to three weeks or however long it took last musher to make Nome. I also reminded her of the time change, as that did cause confusion. That is all I can think of today. Hope I didn't make any typos. Rosemary "

### ***from Elmendorf AFB Newspaper - March 1980***

#### **Military volunteers assist dog race by flying & providing communications**

"We moved to this building to get more people involved in Iditarod this year," states TSgt. Alfred T. Moore, referring to the Alaska Division of Emergency Services building. "It also serves to test Alaska's RACES program of which I am a part of."

Radio Amateur Civil Emergency Services is an official program set up by local and the state government to take over vital communications in the event of a disaster. The Iditarod this year proved to be an excellent opportunity to test the program. They were able to prove that they could maintain a sustained communications capability.

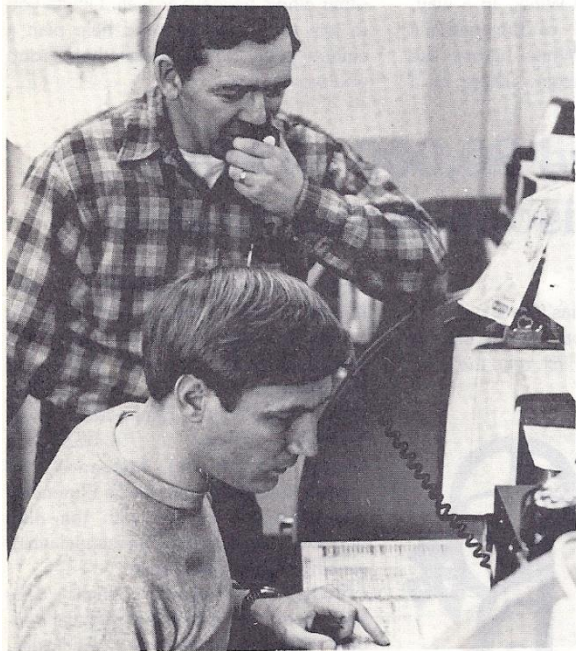
This is Sergeant Moore's, and his wife Mary, third year with Iditarod and the move of communications from their home to the new location has indeed attracted more volunteers. Three other ham operators from Sergeant Moore's squadron 6981st Electronic Security Squadron have volunteered their time. They are TSgts. Jim Moody and Norm Trent and A1C Fred Brooks.

In addition to the 6981st volunteers were TSgt. J.D. Delance from the 1931st Communications Group and three pilots from 616th Military Airlift Group. The three pilots, Lt. Col. Phil Hubbard and Capts. Erv Hobbs and Ty Lee flew their own private aircraft over the Iditarod course, deploying hams to 27 radio check points.

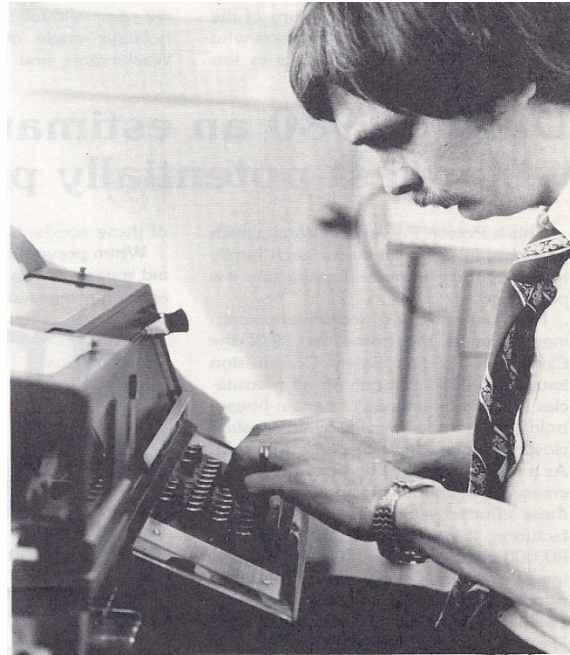
The Iditarod, a 1,049 mile dogsled race from Anchorage to Nome, takes from two to four weeks to complete and requires a great deal of support for the 63 teams and more than 700 dogs involved.

The communication center reports the time in at the various check points, the number of dogs in, time out and number of dogs out. The information they receive is then relayed directly to Iditarod headquarters.

In addition to traffic reports, the communication network handles requests for sick and injured dogs to be picked up by aircraft. They also forward flight plans update weather reports, trail conditions and requests for dog food and a variety of other supplies needed to support the race.



GIVING INSTRUCTIONS TO another ham at a checkpoint along the



Giving instructions to another HAM at the checkpoint along the Iditarod trail is TSgt Tom Moore while Ken Delp (left) plots the musher's time in and out. The information is then relayed to Iditarod HQ via teletype by Chip Lewis (right). More than 30 people helped in the communications center for this year's race. (U.S. Air Force photos by Sgt Jess C. Edmisten)



Lois English at Nome HQ 1980

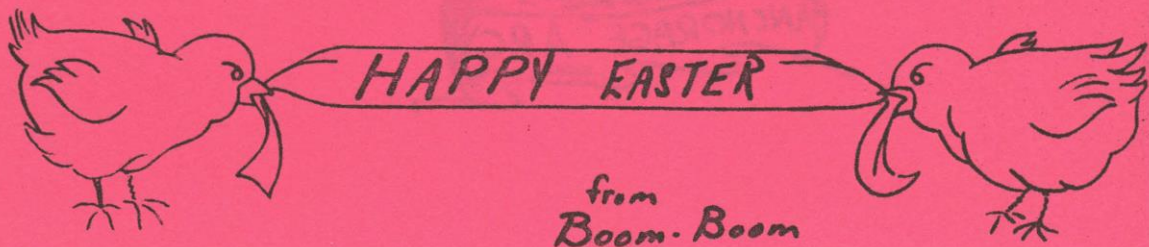
I vaguely remember the after-the-race debrief parties at our home in 1979 and at Orv Gilbert's home in 1980, often getting events of the two parties confused. I remember Bill Hall and Pat Danly singing the 'original' Iditarod Blues and everyone joining in, with lots of laughter and smiles. It was a great time. Trail stories were told and retold and a few gags were 'pulled off'. Little did we know that what we had done was making a bit of history in what has become one of the greatest events on earth.



In those days, it took the winning Musher up to two weeks to make the 1049 plus miles from Anchorage to Nome. Stragglers would take as long as a month to make it, sometimes more. It should be strongly noted that as long there was a Musher on the trail, we kept our HAMS at checkpoints ahead of him and as long as there was a HAM at a checkpoint or enroute to or from, there was always base stations on the air listening for any reports from or about him. We never shut off our Base Station radios or left them unmanned until all mushers finished the race and our HAMS got all the way home. Some of our HAMS were 'on the air' for a solid month or more!

*from the AARC NL APRIL 1980*

The Iditarod de-briefing party was held March 29 at Orv Gilbert, KL7IZL's home for all who participated in the communications effort of the race. Hams as well as the supporting pilots came and enjoyed an evening of food, movies, awards presentations and tons of trail stories. Next month we will have a follow-up article on the overall race.



*from the AARC NL APRIL 1980*

Tom Moore, KL7Q, gave a report on the Iditarod race and the amateur support of the race. Ken Delp, KL7FD, presented Tom, KL7Q and Chip Lewis, KL7IUI with a beaver tail as a remembrance of Nikolai.

Some colorful trail trivia stories can be told about Poka Dot shorts being lost and found by 'Boom Boom' at McGrath and about the 'beaver tail from Nikolai'.



## 1980 Awards Banquet

### PROGRAM

6:00 p.m. - - - - Doors Open (Eat and Drink as you Please) Entertainment - Frivolous Front Street Follies with Adison Stacey at the Piano  
6:30 p.m. - - - - Invocation, Rev. Everett Bachelder Introductions, Presentation  
6:55 p.m. - - - - Al Crane, Pres. Iditarod Trail Committee Moment of Silence  
Presentations  
7:10p.m. - - - - Auction of Iditarod Trail Cachets  
7:20 p.m. - - - - Entertainment - Follies  
8:00 p.m. - - - -: Drawing of \$50,000 Raffle begins  
8:00 p.m. - - - - LIVE RADIO AND AWARDS CEREMONY  
Welcome and Introduction,  
Howard Farley, Nome Coordinator, 1980 Race Mayor Leo B. Rasmussen, Pres. Nome Kennel Club Sponsorships - by Stan Summers, KICY Radio  
Presentation of Special Awards,  
Al Crane President of the ITC  
Presentation of Rookie of the Year Award & \$1,500 Prize provided by the village of St. Michael; by Jerry Austin. Presentation of the First Musher into Galena Award.  
Presentation of the 3rd Annual Edgar Kalland Trophy (First Musher into Klaltag) - Edgar Kalland, Original Serum Run Musher, 1925.  
Presentation of Golden Harness Award.  
Fastest Time Award, Safety checkpoint to Nome, given by Nome Kennel Club, Trophy and \$500.  
Awards to Musher in reverse order 33rd place to 1st with 3 breaks on live time radio.  
Presentation of Awards, Certificates, NKC Belt Buckles, Trophies, Checks, and the WINNER OF 1980 Iditarod by Al Crane, Pres. ITC, Howard Farley, Coordinator; Leo Rasmussen. Pres. NKC; and  
Congressman Don Young. \_ ...  
END OF LIVE RADIO PRESENTATION  
Approx. 10:00 p.m. - Auction of Remaining Cachets by Mac McCarty Drawing of the NKC Gold Raffle.  
Completions of the 150,000 ITC Raffle  
COMMUNICATIONS To a great group of people, our sincere thank you for help and assistance in communications. From Lois English and staff at the Anchorage Headquarters to Julie Farley and staff at the Nome Headquarters, and to the Hams who provided many hours of assistance - a vital link for Iditarod - thanks to all. Thanks to Nome's Ed Trump and the Ham Network's organizer, Tom Moore and his crew.

*In the Summer of 1980, Mary and I moved to Texas where I retired from the Air Force in 1983 and we eventually moved to Alabama.*

*Ken Delp KL7FD from the AARC organized HAM support for Iditarods 1981 and 1982. We have been unable to contact him so don't have a lot of information but we're including some excerpts we found from the AARC Newsletters about those years. Some newsletters of that time were not available.*

### February 1981

It was announced that the dates for Fur Rondy are Feb. 20, 21 & 22. Chip announced that Ken Delp, KL7FD, will take over arrangements for AARC participation in the Iditarod. The ALASCOM board has recommended approval of the total \$9950 budget.

Iditarod: Chip KL7IUI requested a discretionary fund for the Iditarod AARC chairman to use for administrative purposes. \$300 was appropriated. Another \$250 was authorized to the Iditarod committee to get the club on the list for a numbered memorial plaque.



May 1981

Ken Delp KL7FD reported on the Iditarod and received a standing ovation for his contribution. The Iditarod party for all volunteers will be held Saturday, 4/11, at Chugiak Senior Citizens Center.

March 1982

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"WE NEED OPERATORS DURING THE WEEKDAYS FROM NOON TO 5, AND ALSO FROM 7 AM TO NOON!!!" So sayeth Ken Delp KL7FD, our chief Iditarod Ham coordinator. Ham HQ will be in the Alascom Building on Gov't. Hill this year. It is a secure building, meaning that NO DROP-INS WILL BE PERMITTED! If you want to work HQ during Iditarod, you must sign up in advance with Joe Talbott KL7NK ASAP, call him at 271-5040work or 688-9041 home. PLEASE SIGN UP NOW AND AVOID A HASSLE DURING THE RACE!!!!

Email from April Delancey ALCV August 2010

One of my favorite memories when I first went out alone in 82 was learning that the team going into the next checkpoint (Rhone River?) by dogsled had tipped their sled, lost most of their battery power, and needed supplies sent on to them. They could only transmit in very low power, which meant using Morse code, and apparently only I could hear them. No pressure there! Here was my first big "real world" test using code to communicate. I was so wound up over the whole experience that at first I thought I'd have to communicate (transmit) with them by code as well, and my skill was reading code, not sending code. They assured me that they could hear voice just as easily as code and all I really needed to do was get their information and relay it on to HQ, which I did. Up there in Rainy Pass, surrounded by the breathtaking scenery, helping a fellow ham via my code skills, I felt like this was what being an Alaskan was all about. I will always treasure my Iditarod experiences.

April/AL7CV



## **WRAPUP**

While talking with Dick Mackey at the reunion, it was interesting that he said "I wish the HAMs were still doing it. It was 'personal' back then".

We didn't ask Dick to explain his comment. But I suspect he meant that we were 'close'. We all worked together, as good friends, with a common goal. When and if there were problems, we worked them out and quickly moved on. We cared for each other and showed it - **WE WERE FAMILY!**

As we reflected upon the years we were involved, we are, especially after the reunion, more proud than ever, of the job our HAMs did to support the Iditarod in 1979 and 1980. We're proud of every single HAM who put up their vacation time, their valuable equipment, and risked their lives to support Iditarod with such 'can do' enthusiasm, professionalism, positive attitudes and good cheer; and all the other HAMs who supported us from their homes as relay stations, or were there to help and support occasionally.

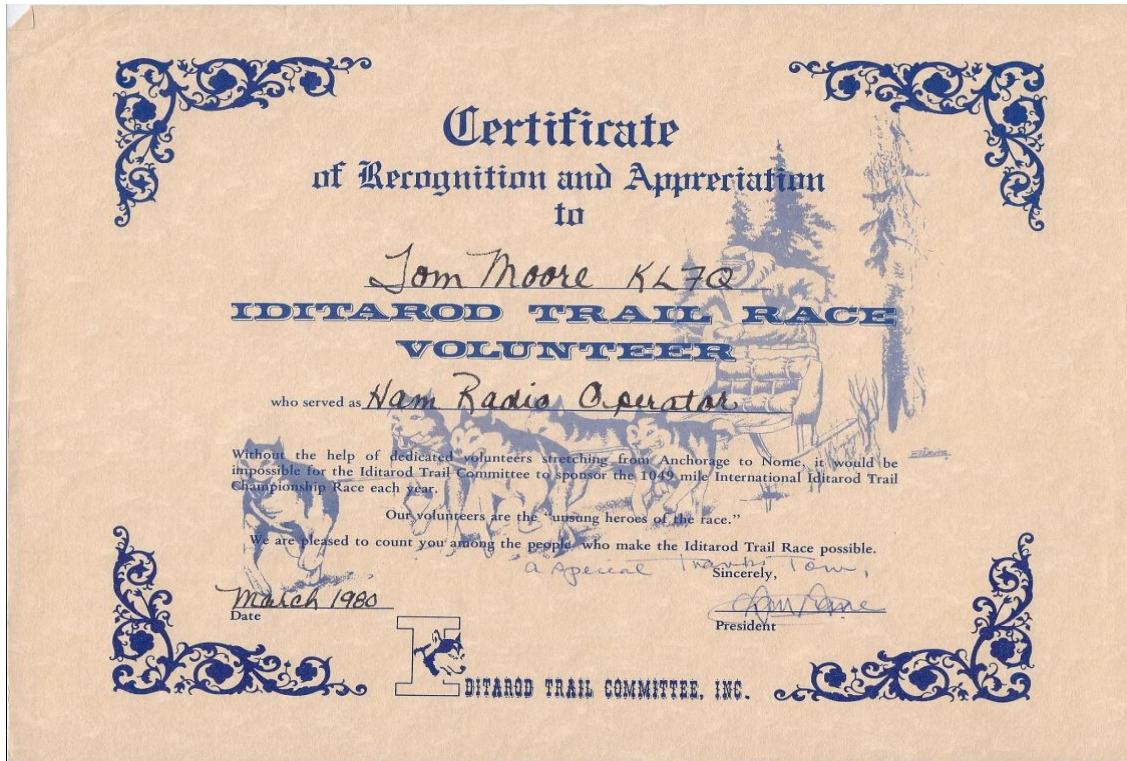
ALL who supported and participated in Iditarod 1979-1980 - what a fantastic group of people. Mary and I consider ourselves very lucky to have ever had the opportunity to work with and for them.

The musher's who run the Iditarod Race are a very unique breed. They are amongst the few on this earth who can sense a great adventure and dare to 'live the dream' by taking on the challenge at all costs; and to do this, the Iditarod, with dogs that they love and care for.. FIRST - just boggles the mind! I think their commitment, alone, was the driving justification for so many volunteers to contribute their time and skills in any way possible to insure the overall success of the Race.

After all these years, as Mary and I looked back searching and renewing old memories, we only now realize the honor we feel for having had the opportunity to be just a small part of Iditarod. We are humbled in realizing just how fortunate we were.

**It was indeed very personal!**

There's so much more. We are frustrated and saddened that we are unable to recall the names of all those HAMs, not mentioned here, who gave their time and effort to support the Iditarod during the years we were involved. To these people, if you should ever read this, we offer our sincerest apologies.



**Perhaps it is I and Mary who should have given the Iditarod a Certificate of Appreciation**

Thank you Raine Hall, Walt and Gail Phillips, Rob Stapleton, Jon and Jona Van Zyle, Dick Mackey, Jules and Leslie Mead, Lois English Hart, all who attended the reunion, and especially our dear friend Rosemary Hanrath for having given us this opportunity to relive the most fantastic three years of our lives.

Tom and Mary Moore  
1593 Lee Rd 375  
Valley AL 36854  
Ph 334-745-0962  
email Tom wx4tm@tm-moore.com  
Mary wx4mm@tm-moore.com



Tom WX4TM & Mary WX4MM

September 2010