

## A Special Tribute To Iditarod's Volunteers!

This edition of the e-Runner is dedicated to ALL our volunteers. We couldn't pull this amazing event off without you!

Also, a very special thank you to all who submitted stories and/or photos for this issue.



By March 13<sup>th</sup> everything was funny to Unalakleet COMMS Volunteers, Linda Skeels, Veterinarian Karyn Colman, and Randy Johnson due to lack of sleep. And you thought volunteers didn't have fun!

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[www.iditarod.com](http://www.iditarod.com)



### Jim & Faye Palin, Wasilla, Alaska USA

For the last 6 years the Palins have been taking the Iditarod spirit to 4<sup>th</sup> graders in Thermal, CA during the Race. They donate Iditarod books to the library, read stories to the children, and show them where the mushers are on the Iditarod website. At the end of the presentation they give each student a dog bootie & Martin Buser trading cards (shown in photo). The students, whose second language is English, are so inquisitive about Alaska, snow, and the mushers.

# 2012 Volunteer Appreciation Picnic & 2013 Iditarod Musher Sign-Ups

On Saturday, June 30 at the Iditarod Headquarters in Wasilla the Iditarod Trail Committee hosted its Annual Volunteer Appreciation Picnic. Hundreds were in attendance and lunch was provided by the Golden Corral - Anchorage.

The day also included the 2013 Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race musher sign-ups. Sign-ups began at 9:00 AM AK Time and by the end of the first draw deadline at 3:00 PM, 54 mushers had signed-up, which included 9 rookies.

Current Iditarod Champion Dallas Seavey, four-time Iditarod Champions Lance Mackey, Martin Buser, Jeff King, 2011 Champion John Baker, and 2004 Champion Mitch Seavey joined a number of 2012 top ten finishers at Iditarod Headquarters for the June 30 sign-ups.

Cim Smyth and Jeff King won their \$3,000 entry fees back in a final drawing that marked the end of the 2012 Volunteer Appreciation Picnic. For a complete list of the 54, 2013 Iditarod Mushers, see page 7.



Stan Hooley Manning the Salmon Grill

Photo@Melody Gleichman



Volunteers Lisa Jeager & Tony Boyle Being Interviewed for Insider

Photo@Melody Gleichman



Dan Seavey Enjoying a Treat

Photo@Melody Gleichman



Aliy Zirkle Being Interviewed by Channel 2

Photo@Karen Laubenstein



THANK YOU, Golden Corral!!!



2013 Iditarod Musher Rudy Demoski - Last Ran the Iditarod in 1985

Photo@Karen Laubenstein



2012 Teacher on the Trail, Blyne passing the Ceremonial Sleeping Bag onto 2013 TOTT, Linda

Photo@Melody Gleichman



Can it be any more cute? Children and Puppies!



What do you think DeeDee & Martin are Thinking About?

Photo@Karen Laubenstein

# Tales from the Trail

Submitted by Past & Present Race Volunteers

## Tom Bennett of Bourbon, Missouri USA Age 68 / Iditarod 2012

“The experience of a lifetime” is not an over-used term when the experience is volunteering for the Iditarod. In no other prominent sport can a volunteer get his photo taken with the winners, care for the teammates fallen in the field, and mingle with people who share a common quest: to be a working part of the world’s most unique race.



I came to Nome hoping that this would be the memory I’d recall when I sit waiting as the lights of life dim. For that experience, the lights will dim more slowly.

*Yes, that is Tom standing on his head under the Burled Arch in Nome. Now, that is being part of the race!* Photo©Tom Bennett

## Jeff & Karen Sones, Texas USA 11 Year Iditarod Volunteers

I (Jeff) am a State Trooper in Texas. I first volunteered in 2001, hoping someday to do the race. I had been involved with the world's toughest canoe race in Texas for several years and so I thought I would give the Iditarod a try.

So I came up to Alaska to get involved. I met Deby Trosper at the Millennium Alaskan Hotel and she put me right to work. I did some errands for her, was a dog handler, did security work and also helped with setting things up for the Re-Start.

My wife, Karen and I have been involved with the race since 2002. We have also been involved with a group called Mission Match that assists with the Iditarod, led by Scott Kirby.

My wife and I have been involved for 11 years now. We have met some fascinating people and we really have enjoyed our time with Iditarod. The only time we missed the race was when it started in Fairbanks.



We have traveled to Alaska 36 times now.

In about another week we will be coming up for our 37<sup>th</sup> trip. We feel as if we are Alaskans. We love the state and its people. Maybe one of these days we will have our own place in Alaska. Photo of Jeff and Karen during Iditarod 2010. Photo ©Jeff Sones

Go Mush,  
Jeff & Karen Sones

## Russ & Renee Wilmot, Eagle River, Alaska USA 20+ Year Iditarod Volunteers



Sometimes you can get lucky and get your picture taken with the Governor at the Iditarod Start Line. Volunteers Russ & Renee Wilmot did prior to the start of the 2012 Race in downtown Anchorage.

Governor Parnell was seen having his picture taken with various Iditarod volunteers. Photo©Russ Wilmot  
(Tales from the Trail continued on page 4)

## 2013 Iditarod Trail Committee Board of Directors

President	Andy Baker	Director	Stan Foo	Director	Aliy Zirkle
Vice President	Danny Seybert	Director	John Handeland	Director Emeritus	Joe Redington, Sr.
Secretary	Mike Jonrowe	Director	Mike Owens	Executive Director	Stan Hooley
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# Did You Know?

That by the end of the 2012 Iditarod season there were approximately 1,200 volunteers representing 21 states and 4 countries donating over 35,000 hours of time! Simply amazing!

A BIG TAIL WAG to ALL our volunteers,  
past and present!



Henry Fischer & Lance Mackey in Nome Dog Lot

Photo@Tibby Fischer

*Tales from The Trail* ..... continued from page 3

## Tibby & Henry Fischer, Salt Point, New York USA 3 Year Iditarod Volunteers

My husband Henry and I are from New York and had our first Iditarod volunteer experience in Nome at the DOG LOT. I worked mostly during the day and Henry the evenings and night so we were able to have quite different experiences.

It was heartwarming to see teams like that of Hans Gatt working with their dogs. What a bond and respect they had for each other. Each day they would take their dogs out (never needing a leash) on to the frozen Bering Sea to run and exercise together! What excitement when a team came in! Watching those canine athletes so exuberant even after running a thousand miles was humbling. We met such sweet dogs and mushers to match. By the end of the week, we could almost pick out which dogs and mushers belonged together.



Tibby in the Takotna Kitchen

Photo@Tibby Fischer

We worked with enthusiastic, charming, and interesting volunteers from all over the world. Two years later, we were at Chena Hot Springs and a woman came up to my husband and said "I know you". She was a former dog lot volunteer with him. A dog lot arm band remains over our headboard as a reminder of a wonderful experience.

Another year, my husband and I were able to volunteer at the Takotna checkpoint. We wanted to go to Takotna for years and finally Dan Seavey introduced us to Dick Newton (I feel he was the Mayor of Takotna!!) and he arranged for us to stay there as there are no hotels. He met us at the plane and was so dear and accommodating. His wife Jan had prepared meals for the mushers for years and was well known for her pies. Everyone wanted to stop in Takotna as they were treated like royalty and fed like it as well. What a friendly and enthusiastic atmosphere here. We helped in the kitchen, working with Misty, Jan and the crew.

Most of the mushers took their 24 here and any needs they had were met. I asked Dan Seavey if he wanted some just made chicken soup and his "nose went up"---hesitating-- I said how about a steak---then he smiled and said that was more like it!! Whatever the musher's wanted they got and with a smile! I learned about cooking for the multitudes different than cooking for my family of four. Being a volunteer simply means being part of it---meeting the mushers and dogs up close and personal and working with interesting and enthusiastic volunteers from all over the world. What could be better!!

*(Tales from the Trail continued on page 6)*



# THANK YOU Doesn't Seem to Say Enough

By Deby Trosper, Membership Director & Volunteer / Auction Coordinator

This year, the 2012 IDITAROD XL was full of excitement and challenges throughout the whole race. Not only did the mushers face cold weather, high winds, and quick speeds, the volunteers were also hustling to have everything in place before the mushers left the start line or checkpoint. On the whole, it takes a well-organized group with the insight to be prepared for obstacles that arise during all times of day, night, weather and locations of the Race. It also takes a core of veteran volunteers with the knowledge learned from previous races to lead the new volunteers through what it takes to prepare for the Race.

There are too many volunteers to list personally, but for those who follow the Race, yet are not able to volunteer, here is an idea of what it takes and what they do...

The first thing a volunteer should do is fill out an application online, get an assignment, then register during the week before the start of the Race at the Volunteer Check-In desk in the lobby of the Millennium Alaskan Hotel, the Iditarod's Race Headquarters.

Volunteers pack and load straw, food and dog food for checkpoints and ready everything in order for the Iditarod Air Force, professional pilots who donate their planes and time, to fly out to the checkpoints ahead of the mushers arrival. There are the trail breakers who mark the trail and trail sweeps that bring up the rear of the race all traveling on snow machines. Before the

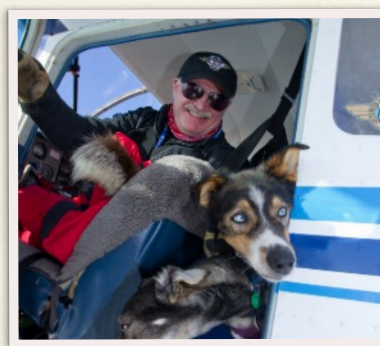
Race begins, the Start and Re-Start Coordinators work with chosen team captains to plan together for the Anchorage Start and Willow Re-Start by applying for permits and working with other volunteers in order to accomplish the tasks at hand. Snow removal and placement has to be coordinated with more volunteers

in order to have snow placed on Fourth Ave. for the teams departure and removed from Willow Lake and parking areas to provide spaces for shuttle buses, dog trucks, volunteer and sponsor vehicles, race staff and media.

While this preparation is taking place, another group of volunteers is working to ensure all the communication equipment is working properly and distributed from the Start, to all checkpoints, and Nome. The communication volunteers work at the Millennium Alaskan Hotel, Iditarod Headquarters, from computers to confirm the volunteers on the trail are moved from checkpoint to checkpoint to be one step ahead of the musher's.

Volunteers are flown in to checkpoints to help support the local villagers in their efforts to provide the best checkpoint on the trail. Raking, cooking and keeping the checkpoint clean inside and out are only part of the work. Hauling water or cutting a hole in a lake when the temp may be as cold as -20+ degrees to provide water for the dogs is also a job in some checkpoints. Setting up a small lot for any dropped dogs that may need to be flown back home is in every checkpoint. The dogs are flown back to Anchorage where an important group of volunteers transport the dogs from the airport to the lot at the Millennium Alaskan Hotel where the local musher's have handlers pick up their dogs, or they are transported to the local prison where the inmates take care of the dogs until they are picked up.

During the race, a core of volunteers work with tracking and posting race stats on the Internet in order to keep the information current and available for the media and fans from around the world following the Race on the Iditarod website. A phone room is set up with yet another group of volunteers to answer questions phoned in. Students from local schools work with other students who call in. This room is kept open 24 hours a



day from the time the first musher leaves the start line until the final musher is packed and has their dog team out of Nome.

There are other areas where many volunteers help to track the Iditarod progress throughout the Race, work as cooks at hubs, veterinarians who take a vacation from their home clinics in order to watch over the racing teams, volunteers who fly themselves to Nome to volunteer for the finish and volunteers to host both the Musher Drawing Banquet and Finishers' Banquet.

The number of volunteers and the jobs they accomplish are many. There is truly no way possible to put on the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race without the devoted volunteers who have become part of the Iditarod Family. The Iditarod says THANK YOU to these volunteers and looks forward to seeing them return year after year.

For those of you who watch this race from afar, always remember, it does take a village, or two, or three ... to put on The Last Great Race on Earth!

Reprinted from May 2012 e-Runner

**Sherrill Miller & Kellie Simon, Washington State USA  
7 Year Iditarod Volunteers**

The passion with the Iditarod began with an assignment. That an assignment was a 4th grade project. Where else do you learn about the most amazing race in history except in school? The students were asked to pick a musher and follow them along the trail line and this is where it all began.

My daughter, now 24 has been following this race ever since that 4<sup>th</sup> grade project. Since my job takes me to Alaska on a monthly basis, I began to follow the race along with her. It became an obsession after the race started to see who was in the lead and how long that would be over turned by another musher not far behind. This now was a contest of knowledge.



When she turned 16, what better birthday gift but to take her for a Mother-Daughter weekend and show her what her passion for race was all about. Who knew what the outcome would be, but we both fell in love. The dogs, the mushers, the excitement and you didn't think about how cold it was outside at the time because we were

too busy taking it all in. I could swear we must have looked like a couple of kids in a candy store.

At the age of 18, my daughter and I took the Dog Handler class at the Millennium Alaskan Hotel and from that point forward we have been dog handlers as well as dog chip reader volunteers for 7 years now.

This has been an annual Mother-Daughter team weekend from Washington State ever since. We both have our favorite mushers that we follow: Jeff King, DeeDee Jonrowe, Lance Mackey, Aliy Zirkle, Justin Savidis, to name a few, making sure we get

autographs and pictures, as well as take part in other Iditarod events that same weekend every year in March.

We volunteer for both the start in Anchorage and the Re-Start in Willow, and our goal is to get to Nome to see the finish in 2013.

It is amazing feeling and we absolutely love it. The people we have met and new found friendships along the way, goes without saying – **The Best!!** Photo©Sherrill Miller

**Dr. David & Sharron Schertz, Tuscaloosa, Alabama USA  
2012 Iditarod Volunteers**

My wife and I (Sharron and David Schertz) volunteered to join our mission trip from First Baptist Church, Tuscaloosa, AL in March, 2012, along with several young folks and our Minister for Missions. It was a great experience for all of us! We not only had the chance to see the the winner, Dallas Seavey, come across the finish line, but were also able to witness several mushers finish. It was an experience we will never forget.



We helped at the Nome Recreation Center, cooking and serving food. In addition we served at the Mini-Convention Center providing information regarding the placing of the those in race. It was very exciting. In addition, we volunteered several days to help promote the wonderful memorabilia that the Iditarod Trail Committee provided.

We were privileged to walk on the the Bering Sea and take pictures we will never forget. Photo©David Schertz (Sharron far left and then David)  
*(Tales from the Trail continued on page 9)*



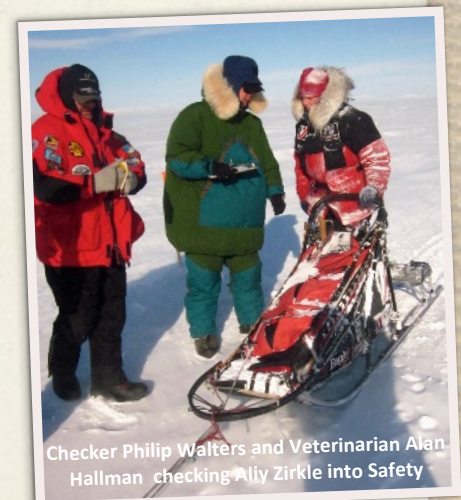
Alaskan Ketchup - Seal Oil & Tabasco

Photo©Gillian Dezzutto



Volunteer Gillian Dezzutto & Iditarod Musher Jan Steves in Galena

Photo©Gillian Dezzutto



Checker Philip Walters and Veterinarian Alan Hallman checking Aliy Zirkle into Safety

Photo©Philip Walters

# List of 54 Mushers Who Signed-Up on June 30<sup>th</sup>

Listed in order of their draw to be held at the  
Mushers' Drawing Banquet, Dena'ina Center in Anchorage on February 28, 2013

#	First Name	Last Name	Status	City	State	Country
1	Christine	Roalofs	Rookie	Anchorage	AK	United States
2	Newton	Marshall	Veteran	St. Ann		Jamaica
3	Ken	Anderson	Veteran	Fairbanks	AK	United States
4	Michelle	Phillips	Veteran	Tagish	YT	Canada
5	DeeDee	Jonrowe	Veteran	Willow	AK	United States
6	Gerry	Wilomitzer	Veteran	Whitehorse	YT	Canada
7	Scott	Janssen	Veteran	Anchorage	AK	United States
8	Pete	Kaiser	Veteran	Bethel	AK	United States
9	Gerald	Sousa	Veteran	Talkeetna	AK	United States
10	Jesse	Royer	Veteran	Darby	MT	United States
11	Michael	Suprenant	Veteran	Chugiak	AK	United States
12	Kelly	Maixner	Veteran	Big Lake	AK	United States
13	Robert	Bundtzen	Veteran	Anchorage	AK	United States
14	Luan Ramos	Marques	Rookie	Willow	AK	Brazil
15	Paul	Gebhardt	Veteran	Kasilof	AK	United States
16	Mike	Williams Sr.	Veteran	Akiak	AK	United States
17	Mitch	Seavey	Veteran	Sterling	AK	United States
18	Bob	Chlupach	Veteran	Willow	AK	United States
19	Ray	Redington Jr.	Veteran	Wasilla	AK	United States
20	Martin	Buser	Veteran	Big Lake	AK	United States
21	Rudolph	Demoski Sr.	Veteran	Wasilla	AK	United States
22	Jason	Mackey	Veteran	Wasilla	AK	United States
23	Cim	Smyth	Veteran	Big Lake	AK	United States
24	Susie	Rogan	Rookie	Whitehorse	YT	Canada
25	Paige	Drobny	Rookie	Fairbanks	AK	United States
26	Joar Leifseth	Ulsom	Rookie	Roros		Norway
27	Curt	Perano	Veteran	Christchurch		New Zealand
28	Angie	Taggart	Veteran	Ketchikan	AK	United States
29	Ed	Stielstra	Veteran	McMillan	MI	United States
30	Jan	Steves	Veteran	Edmonds	WA	United States
31	Kristy	Berington	Veteran	Kasilof	AK	United States
32	Jodi	Bailey	Veteran	Chatanika	AK	United States
33	Jerry	Joinson	Rookie	Ft. St. James	B.C.	Canada
34	Cindy	Gallea	Veteran	Wykoff	MN	United States
35	Jeff	King	Veteran	Denali Park	AK	United States
36	Aliy	Zirkle	Veteran	Two Rivers	AK	United States
37	Travis	Beals	Rookie	Seward	AK	United States
38	Allen	Moore	Veteran	Two Rivers	AK	United States
39	Karin	Hendrickson	Veteran	Wasilla	AK	United States
40	Mike	Ellis	Rookie	Two Rivers	AK	United States
41	Nicolas	Petit	Veteran	Girdwood	AK	United States
42	Linwood	Fiedler	Veteran	Willow	AK	United States
43	Mike	Williams Jr.	Veteran	Akiak	AK	United States
44	Rohn	Buser	Veteran	Big Lake	AK	United States
45	Ramey	Smyth	Veteran	Willow	AK	United States
46	Lance	Mackey	Veteran	Fairbanks	AK	United States
47	Aaron	Burmeister	Veteran	Nome	AK	United States
48	Jake	Berkowitz	Veteran	Big Lake	AK	United States
49	Charley	Bejna	Rookie	Addison	IL	United States
50	Justin	Savidis	Veteran	Willow	AK	United States
51	Dallas	Seavey	Veteran	Willow	AK	United States
52	Anna	Berington	Veteran	Kasilof	AK	United States
53	Kelley	Griffin	Veteran	Wasilla	AK	United States
54	John	Baker	Veteran	Kotzebue	AK	United States

# IDITAROD TRAIL<sup>®</sup>

## SUMMER RAFFLE



**2 GRAND PRIZES:** 2012 Dodge Ram 4x4 Pickup Trucks or any similarly priced New Dodge, Jeep or Chrysler vehicle

PRIZE	VALUE	DONATED BY
1. 2012 Dodge Ram 4x4 Quad Cab, you pick color & options, or a NEW similarly priced Dodge, Jeep or Chrysler vehicle	\$39,000	Anchorage Chrysler Dodge Jeep
2. Hot Spot Relay 6 Person Hot Tub	\$7,995	The Waterworks
3. Alaska Series 380A Inflatable Boat, rated for 25 HP Motor	\$5,400	Alaska Series Inflatables
4. Honda 2 HP Four Stroke Outboard Motor	\$1,292	Storm Chasers Marine Service, Inc.
5. 47" LG Smart TV, LCD, 1080p	\$1,000	Image Audio
6. One Way Car Shipment between Tacoma, WA & Anchorage, AK	\$1,250	Horizon Lines
7. Roundtrip Airfare for 2 to most PenAir destinations	\$1,725	PenAir
8. H2Oasis Season Passes for adult & child	\$838	H2Oasis Indoor Waterpark
9. Number 1 Race Bib signed by Dallas Seavey	\$1,500	ITC
10. 2012 Dodge Ram 4x4 Quad Cab, you pick color & options, or a NEW similarly priced Dodge, Jeep or Chrysler vehicle	\$39,000	Anchorage Chrysler Dodge Jeep
<b>TOTAL</b>		
<b>\$99,000</b>		

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Drawing held at the Alaska State Fair on Labor Day, September 3, 2012..... Need not be present to win.



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All proceeds benefit the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race.

Permit No. 12-0131

# \$99,000 IN PRIZES



# Memories Etched in History

By Stu Nelson, Iditarod Chief Veterinarian

Iditarod 2012 was an awesome “threepeat” year! The accomplishments and memories are etched in history. This remarkable success required a huge team effort by many. Musher, veterinarians, veterinary technicians, dog handlers, pilots, communications and logistics personnel, and many others, worked together diligently on behalf of the dogs. I am deeply grateful for each and every one of you!

This edition of the e-Runner is dedicated to our volunteers. Because it is such an important concept, let’s take a moment to review the definition of “volunteer.” In approximately 1600 AD, “volunteer” originated from the French word *volontaire* (voluntary) and from the Latin version *voluntaris* (voluntary, of one’s free will). It may be used as a noun or verb. In the former, it is defined as a person who voluntarily offers himself or herself for a service or undertaking, i.e., a person who performs a service willingly and without pay. As a verb, to volunteer means to offer oneself for some service or undertaking.

The Iditarod Trail Committee is blessed by a large cadre of volunteers....approximately 1,200! It has been a privilege

for me to work with many of them.

I was reminded of that just last week. I had received a message from a family member of one of my long-time volunteer staff veterinarians. Dr. Roger Troutman would be celebrating his 60<sup>th</sup> birthday



in June, and his family was organizing a surprise birthday party that would honor him for his many good works over the years.

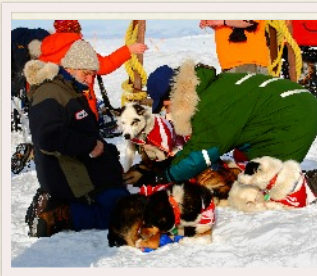
That was reason for contemplation. The years do go by fast, and soon they turn into decades. The rush of daily life typically consumes most of our time, and it is easy to take much for granted.

Roger has been a classic example of the colleagues, friends and dedicated Iditarod veterinary staff volunteers that I’ve been honored to lead for many years. Their work on the trail has been commendable, and their attitudes exemplary. For exam-

ple, I recall Roger’s often stated words. “Stu, send me wherever you need me. I’ll do whatever you want.”

It isn’t just the “will do” attitude that makes the ITC volunteers exceptional. The level of commitment is also outstanding. As defined earlier, volunteers perform their services willingly and without pay. Each of us has many responsibilities, including family and business. Volunteering takes time away from those, and requires a level of self-sacrifice. Granted, life on the Iditarod Trail is a richly rewarding experience for sure, but the point that I’m trying to make is that there is a lot of competition for the time and resources that our volunteers provide.

With an average of approximately ten days dedicated to the race for each of my volunteer checkpoint trail veteri-



Photo©Philip Walters

narians, over four-hundred days of veterinary professional time are donated by that group, alone. That doesn’t

even count the consultants, dropped dog veterinarians



and other veterinary staff members serving in support roles, including fifteen veterinary technicians.

In addition, the time and expense required for travel to and from their homes, adds substantially to the total value of the veterinary staff services. Although most are from the lower 48 states, veterinary volunteers came from as far away as Australia, France and Germany to be a part of Iditarod 2012. Certainly, travel costs can really add up in this day and age!

Yes, the ITC volunteers are a dedicated and generous group. They willingly offer services that the ITC could not otherwise afford. Simply stated, they are the greatest! I appreciate all that they have done, are doing and will do to support the Last Great Race on Earth. Thank you, volunteers, and I look forward to seeing all of you again in 2013!

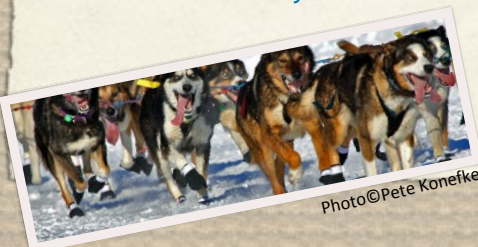
**Tales from The Trail** .....continued from page 6

I love working as a volunteer as it’s allowed me so many great memories and I’ve met so many awesome people from all over the country and the world. I’ve worked in Race Stats with Coleen Easley and Registration with Deby Trosper and I’m very excited about my upcoming 3rd year as a volunteer.

Volunteering has also afforded me the opportunity to get up close to the action.

Thanks, Pete Konefke

(Tales from the Trail continued on page 10)



Photo©Pete Konefke

**Amanda Patterson, Alaska USA**  
**3 Year Iditarod Volunteer**

I always knew I wanted to run dogs. When I was a young child in Oregon, I harnessed up my malamute, Jodi, to my red wagon. She was a fairly unmotivated "sled dog", so I ended up chucking bits of bread ahead of us so that she would pull the wagon at least a few feet at a time.

I moved to Alaska 9 years ago, with hopes of being a dog handler and eventually running the Iditarod myself. I now have two young children, so at this time it's difficult to imagine spending 10 days running a thousand miles through the wilds of Alaska. So, now I currently run my very talented "one-dog team", which consists of my best furry friend Axel and a light-weight dog sled.



I first volunteered for the Iditarod in 2009 as a dog handler at the Willow Re-Start. I also worked a shift in Race Stats. I loved my experience and knew I would be back. 2010 was a hiatus due to the birth of my daughter, but in 2011 I was a handler at the Ceremonial Start and did my first shifts with COMMS and Dog Drop. 2012 saw me at the Re-Start again, as a handler and I also worked

another COMMS shift. Unfortunately, I was not able to volunteer more this year due to family health obligations.

Volunteering for the Iditarod gives me a chance to feel part of the Last Great Race. This has been a dream of mine for over 20 years. I feel so blessed to live in Alaska where there are these opportunities and this sport is celebrated. There is a unique spirit about the Iditarod that is felt among mushers, volunteers, and spectators alike and I am very grateful to be able to experience it. Perhaps someday I will realize my grand dream, but right now I am thrilled to be an Iditarod volunteer. See you in 2013! Photo©Amanda Patterson, 2009 with Jeff King puppy



Volunteer Rob Wallace -  
Re-Start Crossing Guard

Photo©Rob Wallace



Ma'am, I think you are in my seat!

Photo©Jansen Cardy

**Vivian Coleman, Charlotte, North Carolina USA**  
**2012 Iditarod Volunteer**

*Edited excerpt from Charlotte, NC DOT Newsletter, June 15, 2012*

In March, Charlotte Department of Transportation's Vivian Coleman participated as a volunteer in the Last Great Race on Earth. Vivian returned to share her experiences and memories of her first, but certainly not last, journey through Alaska.

**What were some of your duties at the race?**

I worked dog handling, vet checks, communication stations and provided TLC to 'dropped' sled dogs. Dogs dropped from the race are flown by bush plane to Anchorage or Nome, Alaska and volunteers assist the vets with check-ups, providing food, water and straw for their beds. The reward is working with the dogs and being behind the scenes with access to the professional mushers.

**How did you get interested in participating in this event?**

To drive a team of 16 dogs for 1,000 miles on a sled through some of the harshest weather conditions and terrain in the world mesmerizes me. I have become obsessed with the sport of dog sledding and wanted to volunteer. I had to find out more.

**What did you learn about yourself by participating in the Iditarod?**

I firmly believe this was a life altering experience for me. I felt a connection to the dogs, the mushers, the people of Alaska, and volunteers from all over the world. As a city planner by profession, this trip confirmed that there is another part of me that yearns to spend more time in rural or wilderness areas. Photo©Vivian Coleman (Vivian with Jodi Bailey during Ceremonial Start)



Photo©Pete Konefke

# Iditarod Volunteers: An Extended Family

By Randy Johnson, Mokena, Illinois USA  
4 Year Iditarod Volunteer

## In Memory of Iditarod Volunteer, Mark Kelliher

When people ask me why I go "Up North" to volunteer for the Iditarod Sled Dog Race I tell them that I began volunteering to work during the race for the love of the dogs. I keep coming back because of the people. Siberian Huskies and the whole concept of man and dog working together as a team against the worst that nature can dish out has always been a fascinating challenge to me and one of the many compelling reasons for me to own and run my own dogs.

But I realized early on that I keep coming back to Alaska and to the Iditarod race not only for the dogs but because I find that the people are such an interesting and extraordinary group of individuals to work with. They come not only from Alaska but from all parts of the world to join together once a year to work at making this race a huge success.

The friendship, camaraderie, unified work ethic, and genuine concern for each other in the Iditarod Volunteer Com-

munity are not found in many other volunteer events anywhere else. My story is about one such Iditarod Volunteer friendship.

When I first volunteered in 2008 I met a man named Mark Kelliher during "food drop". He was the kind of guy whose face was one of the "faces of the Iditarod". With a



Photo © Randy Johnson

full white beard and a hearty voice he was the image of a man from the "Great White North". There are several such "Memorable Characters" in the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race, but Mark Kelliher was unforgettable. He truly loved his "job" during food drop and it showed. He always helped make a tough job fun with his jokes and comments during the

*(continued on page 14)*

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## 2013 Iditarod Trail Committee Board Election Results

On June 30<sup>th</sup> the Iditarod Trail Committee membership elected John Handeland (Nome, Alaska), Stan Foo (Anchorage, Alaska) and Rick Swenson (Two Rivers, Alaska) to the Iditarod Trail Committee Board of Directors at the Annual Membership Meeting. All will serve a three year term.

×

# Trail Talk

Happenings In and Around the World of Iditarod

Photo © Pete Korofke

## Our deepest apologies that these obituaries did not appear in a previous e-Runner

**Rae Foutz**, 64, died at her home in Anchorage on November 23, 2011 following a five year struggle with cancer. First she was diagnosed with breast cancer and was treated. Then two years ago she was diagnosed with pancreatic cancer and had been treated. Following that she was treated for colon cancer. This last spring the pancreatic cancer came back, so she went through the treatment again until no further treatment was recommended. Rae was an Iditarod volunteer for many years, working almost daily during the Race at Anchorage Headquarters in the phone room or the computer room, and for a number of years in Nome working in the dog lot, where she and her sister, Kay, were affectionately known as the "dog lot twins." She could always be seen at 7 AM on picnic day where she helped annually with the ballot counting process.

**Bob Hendershot** died suddenly on Saturday, December 3, 2011 in Brier, Washington. Bob, a lifetime member of the Iditarod, had been an avid fan and volunteer for many years. He had come up from Washington for the race and then again for the picnic on a number of occasions. He had volunteered in the Anchorage Headquarters, in Nome and on the trail. He and his wife, Connie, were planning to be in Alaska for the 40<sup>th</sup> running of the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race.

**Tony Waffen**, 73, died on December 4, 2011 in the Mat-Su Regional Hospital in Palmer following a heart attack. Tony had been an Iditarod volunteer for many years, working on the trail, in communications, ballot counting among other things.

See Tribute to Tony at right from Musher/Volunteer Sue Allen

## Tribute to Tony

By Iditarod Musher/Volunteer  
Sue Allen

I never would have made it through that first Iditarod without the support and encouragement from all the volunteers at home and on the trail. I have to especially thank Billy Honea and Debbie Trospen for getting me through that tough time in and around Ruby.

There is another Iditarod volunteer who became a very dear friend and very important part of my life, thanks to Iditarod. When I first got into dog mushing in 1997, I met the most wonderful couple. Tony and Dolores Waffen have been good friends since then. Both spent years volunteering out on the trail at checkpoints and helping numerous musher's prepare for the race. All these years they have been a staple in my life. Call for a favor and you can't even finish the sentence before they're at the door.

Tony left us unexpectedly a few months ago. I don't know how to "do" Iditarod without Tony. Food drop packing, helping at vet check, hauling food drops into Anchorage with me, always with us on 4th Avenue helping to get us to the start line, and most selfishly for me....seeing his smiling, friendly face at checkpoints when a warm, familiar face is desperately needed. I have not known an Iditarod without Tony Waffen. Tony is truly my hero and he will always be a part of Iditarod. We've lost a great one! We miss you and love you, Tony

## Condolences to the families & friends of ...

**Bill "Gov" Gore**, long time member of the Iditarod Trail Committee and former volunteer, died on following a massive heart attack in South Carolina, where had had lived. The Gores had moved from South Carolina to Anchorage following his retirement. He volunteered for the Iditarod both in Anchorage and Nome while living in Alaska.



**Lynda Havens** died suddenly and unexpectedly at her home on July 3. Lynda was very involved with the News Media end of the Indy 500. After meeting Martin Buser at the Indy 500, she came to Alaska for the Iditarod in 1993 to handle for him and returned several times. Her last trip was in 2005. She became a huge fan of the Iditarod and in the early days of the Internet, she provided constant updates on the Alaskan race for fans around the country.



## Other Trail Talk Around the Dog Lot

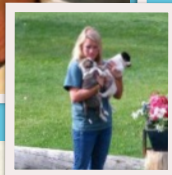
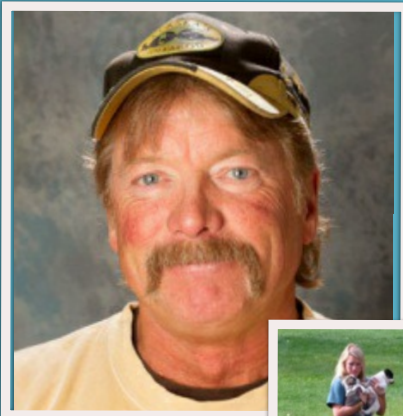
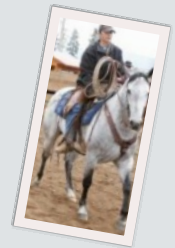
**Jim Strong** (four year Iditarod from back in the early 80's) was at the local Fred Meyer store this week. He says he is still alive and well living up at his homestead near Anderson, off the Parks Highway toward Fairbanks. He's still following the Iditarod and said he's always interested in what is happening with the Race.

Thought we might be seeing **Tracy** or **Chuck Schaeffer** in the 2013 Iditarod. Tracy was at the picnic and said that neither of them had plans to run. Guess they have their hands full getting their new place in Willow ready for winter!

Sounds like another musher on the move. **Zoya DeNure, John** and **Jona** just bought a place near Delta Junction and will be moving from Paxson. Zoya says she'll be signing up later.

We haven't heard from **Jim Lanier, Trent Herbst, Brent Sass, Mike Santos, Josh Cadzow** or **Sigrid Ekran** about signing up for 2013 and of course, **Rick Swenson**, Iditarod's only five time champion always keep us guessing until the last minute.

We missed **Jesse Royer** at sign-ups but her Facebook shows her in Montana herding bison. That sounds like a great way to spend a summer! See Jesse's photo to the right.



### Sonny Linder

is planning to sit out 2013 while his daughter, **Ava** (inset photo), does her rookie year in the Iditarod.



### Kirk Barnum

formerly of Idaho, has made the move to Alaska. He's now living in Talkeetna and plans to sign up for this year's race



### Hugh Neff

seems to have become a world traveler. He spent July 4 in Belford, NSW, Australia where he was the Race Marshal for the Hunter Alley Sleddog Sprint on July 7. Wonder what his plans are for Iditarod 2013?

## Births...



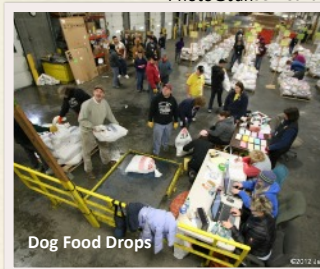
**Megan Taylor Farr**, was born at the Mat-Su Regional Hospital on July 10. Her proud parents are **Mike and Molly Farr**, both Iditarod volunteers. Megan is being welcomed by her big brother, Matthew, who just turned two this past April. Congratulations to the Farr family!

Iditarod Volunteers: An Extended Family ..... continued from page 11

days of hauling, weighing, mail tagging, and sorting of over 100,000 pounds of musher dog food and gear. I think in 2008 with a record number of musher's entered, we had 164,000 pounds of musher bag "stuff" weighed in during that food drop which had to be extended from 2 days to a 3 day event. It was a hard job but Mark and many other volunteers helped to make the work fun in many ways. One example in particular was that whenever a musher bag designated for delivery to Shaktoolik came across the scale, Mark would holler out: "Shaktoo-ooo-lik! Woof! -Woof! - Woof! We were all supposed to chime in with the "Woof! - Woof! - Woof!" part and if we didn't yell it out loud enough Mark would make us do it again. ....with lots of laughter and giggling trailing off afterwards. It lifted our spirits and I found that I looked forward to those bags marked for Shaktoolik! I learned later that supposedly a man who lived in Shaktoolik used to say this and that is where the phrase came from, but I wonder if Mark didn't think it up all by himself.... just for fun!

Anyway, our friendship grew as we worked together in McGrath doing pre-race "load-out" and in doing other chores together. I have many fond memories of Mark and

many things to thank him for, but I will try to keep my story short. Mark was the "go-to" guy in McGrath, in charge of the operation coordinating loads flown out from the McGrath "Hub" to remote checkpoints by the Iditarod Air Force, and I was just a rookie volunteer. One day



Photo©Jansen Cardy

during my first trip to McGrath when we had a little down time, he asked if I wanted a guided tour of the town. "Sure," I replied. So off we went, headed for "Linda's Shoppe" and other points of interest in the small town of McGrath. I really just wanted to hear more of his stories and the walk with him was an opportunity to get some more one on one listening time with him. As we were walking towards "town" in the brisk snowy afternoon he stopped right in the middle of the road during one of his colorful stories to say to me: "Now if I keel over, reach into my coat pocket and give me one of my pills." I thought he was kidding at first, a starting point to one more of his stories. But he was serious. I kept the promise al-

though I never saw him falter even one little bit in all our times together "on the trail". However, years later no one was there with him when he did indeed need that kind of help. On that day we had finished the load out of musher bags and were headed back to Anchorage. I remember the day vividly as I left with most of the crew. Mark stayed behind to finish up some odds and ends. I don't remember if he was staying there for the race or if he was leaving back for Anchorage a day later. I waved a "good-bye" to him and said: "See ya later Mark!" He replied with a broad smile and a wave back to me as I walked towards our plane. Little did I know that I would not see him again.

I learned the next morning that Mark had suffered a fatal heart attack and had died at his Iditarod COMMS desk just hours after we had left.

The Iditarod Air Force had a breathtaking and moving tribute to Mark as his body was flown back to Anchorage.

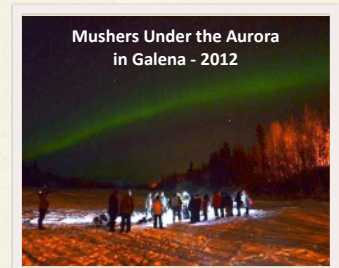
The real point of my story is that as I sat in the church during Mark's funeral I saw and felt something that made a very deep impact on me. I felt the integrity of friendship that the Iditarod volunteers have for each other. I saw that not only Mark's family and Alaska friends and

neighbors from Eagle River were there but that the church was filled with Iditarod volunteer friends from all over the World. They had dropped everything they were doing to come to Eagle River to pay their respects to Mark Kelliher and his family.

It was a beautiful funeral service.

I miss him greatly as a friend "On the Iditarod Trail", and "Shaktoo-ooo-lik Woof!-Woof!-Woof!" will always have a very special meaning for me.

Thanks Mark!



Photo©Angie Taggart

### Volunteer Area Spotlight Sled Holders



Photo©Russ Wilmot

The Sled Holders on Dallas's right are Renee Wilmot in front and Mike Wuerth behind her. Steve Boyle is immediately to Dallas's left and in front of him is Pam Regan

The photo above and to the right, of this year's 2012 winner, Dallas Seavey at the Ceremonial Start waiting to move up to the start line. The Volunteer Sled Holders play an important role in holding the sled in place until the dogs are set free upon countdown at the start.

These Sled Holders are constantly running up to the start line with the teams, holding the sled until the musher and team leave the start and then running back to assist the next musher in line. It is a physical demanding job but a great one!



The Team at Skwentna

## Joe & Norma Delia Skwentna Checkpoint

Joe and Norma Delia have opened their home and organized their own crew of volunteers at Skwentna since the race began. This checkpoint is unique in that it is at a family home rather than a lodge or village along the trail. The race has changed and evolved over the years and so has the checkpoint. But there was a constant thread throughout those years - Joe and Norma's whole-hearted hospitality. The Delia home has a plaque above the front door that reminds us to be hospitable to strangers. *"Be not forgetful to entertain strangers; for thereby some have entertained angels unawares."* (Hebrews 13:2) I don't think Joe or Norma ever once needed reminding. It simply is who they are. Those of us who have had the opportunity and honor to volunteer at the Skwentna Checkpoint have been blessed abundantly. Those who have served understand. It's one of those, "you had to be there" experiences.

The Delia home bustles with activity as the Skwentna Team descends each March. The team is comprised of "Sweeties" and "River Crew" and they work in tandem to provide a warm welcome to Skwentna. The River Crew prepares the river in advance and once the first team arrives they work tirelessly through the night checking and parking dog teams, and providing hot water on the river. The Sweeties dish up the Delia's trademark brand of hospitality. Iditarod officials, vets, press, mushers and the crew all share in the warmth of the checkpoint cabin throughout the race. The River Crew, fondly referred to as the "Darlings", venture north each year from the Tacoma area, with the core group returning year after year. Lifelong friendships have developed over the years as Sweeties, Darlings, and their families gather at a place that is special to us all, the Skwentna Checkpoint.

My fondest memory from the "old days" of the race, is laying in bed upstairs in the Delia home, which is now the checkpoint cabin, and listening to Joe and the "old timers" sitting around the table downstairs. Names like Herbie Nayokpuk, Joe May, Joe Redington, Emmitt Peters and Jerry Austin come to mind. We would lay there in a state between consciousness and sleep, listening as they reminisced and swapped stories all night. My all-time, favorite memory though, is the year the Skwentna Sweeties won the Dodge Dash. A "packed house" of Race officials, media, Dodge Execs and spectators alike, all shared in the frivolity. It was pretty anti-climatic when Joe Garnie, the actual first musher, pulled into Skwentna a few hours later!

Sadly, Iditarod 2011 marked the last year that the Delias would host the checkpoint. 2012 marked Joe's 82<sup>nd</sup> birthday and the Delia's recent move onto the road system. As Norma has said, it was time. The stage has been set for the Checkpoint Family, two generations of Sweeties and River Crew, to continue what Joe and Norma started years before. It harkens back to a by-gone era of Alaskan open-door hospitality. As the race and checkpoint grew and changed over the years, the Delias adapted and found even more ways to extend hospitality. Joe and Norma have been the heart of the checkpoint and will be sorely missed. Joe will always be remembered for his infectious laugh and tales of adventure, and Norma for her wit. We have some mighty big boots to try and fill. Young or old, newcomer or veteran, we are honored to be able to continue their legacy.

Cyndy Fritts  
Skwentna Sweetie

(continued on page 16)

# A Wonder Dog

By Claudia Nowak

This is a true story of an incredible dog who works hard all day and all night. Faithful and true to his master, he never quits, goes the extra mile when he is needed the most, and is much loved for his talents and abilities. No, I am not talking about an Iditarod sled dog; however the Iditarod is at the very heart of this story about an unforgettable dog named Juke.

You see, there was a young Inupiat boy named Logan who lived in the windy, cold village of Unalakleet, Alaska. Probably most people would not know of this village except for the fact that it is an important checkpoint in the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race, the 1,049 mile race that stretches from Anchorage to Nome, Alaska. Iditarod is a mighty test of musher and dog team as they battle the elements, using the savvy knowledge of the man or woman on the sled. This story involves one of the most famous women on an Iditarod sled. A small woman, tough in spirit but warm of heart, who has made this journey across the Alaskan wilderness over 25 times. This lady is Iditarod racer DeeDee Jonrowe.

Logan, age 8, was dealing with the challenges of autism. He had many characteristics of other autistic children. There was the lack of connection to people in his life. There was the habit of waking at night, wandering out of his house, *(continued page 17)*



Photo@Erikson Family

## Joe & Norma Delia .....continued from page 15

I began heading to the Skwentna Checkpoint as a youngster, year after year from "town," the big city of Anchorage. Sharing the duty of Skwentna Taxi with my older brother Zach, was an adventure the two of us looked forward to every March. As the years grew, and so did we, the responsibilities of our time at the Skwentna Checkpoint became more "Efficiency Driven"- with the introduction of the "River Crew" aka "The Darlings!" With a river bend parked to the gills with Teams, the Darlings began implementing the infamous "Herring Bone."

The Darlings helped where they were needed, and brought entertainment too! All the while, Joe Delia and my late Father Robbie Fritts would tag team checking in dog teams - the River Crew organized their own area, and brought radios! Skwentna in the heat of the night became Grand Central Station, via one frequency.

My experience at the Skwentna Checkpoint has been an opportunity to be re-grounded each year. I get to remember the important things in life. For all who have been, you'd agree that even the Landfill in Skwentna is an Angelic place! My belief is because of Joe and Norma presence, this land has been blessed.

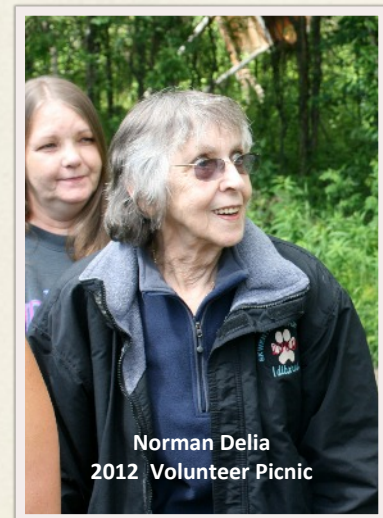
Joe & Norma Delia have passed on a living trust...The parameters are: Love thy Neighbor, Love thy Vet, Share your experience with all! I feel an immense honor and privilege to have helped encapsulate the Skwentna Checkpoint, as a Timeless Legacy...

Keegan Fritts  
Second Generation Checker



Oldies, but Goodies  
Joe Delia & Dick Mackey

Photo@June Price



Norman Delia  
2012 Volunteer Picnic

Photo@June Price



## A Wonder Dog.....continued from page 16

and getting lost in the tundra. There were all of the fears, frustrations, crying, screaming and such. And thru it all, Logan had never spoken a word. Not a "Mommy or Daddy"; nothing, in all his years of life on this earth.

Then one summer day, not long ago, DeeDee went to Unalakleet and met with a group of children. She brought her dog Mr. Miyagi with her. The dog caught and held Logan's eye. He inched closer to the dog to pet it while DeeDee was speaking. He seemed utterly taken with the dog. Then DeeDee and the dog left the village and flew home. The next day Logan spoke his first word ever! The word was "Miyagi!" Logan asked his Mom for DeeDee's dog.

Logan's mother joyfully contacted DeeDee to tell her about the miraculous change in her son. When DeeDee heard this, she began to think about how this experience might help the anguish in the life of this special boy. With the help of Lori Henry, Kathy Fiedler and a lot of other people, a plan began to form. They would get a service dog for Logan that would be his dog alone! First they needed thousands of dollars for the trained dog. Fund raising efforts kicked into high gear. They hit up Iditarod staff, Iditarod vets, Iditarod racers, their friends, and family. They asked anyone who would listen to donate so Logan could get a dog. In the end, DeeDee made a last personal appeal at the big Iditarod Musher's Banquet with over 2,000 people in attendance. At the end of the night, the fund was still

short of its goal. Thankfully, one of DeeDee's sponsors, Eagle Pack, put in the last few thousands of dollars that were needed.

Today, Logan and his dog Juke are never far apart. When Logan leaves his house, Juke is tethered to his belt. Juke is trained to track



Photo © Erikson Family

Logan anywhere if he should wander off. Juke is there during school, plane rides and trips to medical appointments. Logan is learning to speak more words. Juke is there when the crying and screaming start and he lies on Logan to calm his fears. Logan sleeps with his hand or bare toes touching warm Juke in bed at night.

Juke can do what people cannot - he keeps Logan peaceful and secure. Things are not always perfect in Logan's life, but Juke has made a huge positive impact on the life of one boy and his family. The bond that they have formed is as close as a musher and his dog team. Juke and Logan travel many miles together each day. There are hills, valleys, and even mountains for him to climb. Logan is able to do it with Juke at his side. In the words of Logan's mother, "I have never known anyone as faithful, loving, forgiving, and loyal as Juke". Thank you Juke. You are truly a Wonder Dog!

## Arctic Paws for Service

[www.arcticpawsforservice.org](http://www.arcticpawsforservice.org)

Arctic Paws For Service is an organization of dedicated Alaskans, whose primary activity is to provide trained service dogs to Alaskans with disabilities to promote independent living.

Arctic Paws for Service was created because of Logan in Unalakleet (see story *A Wonder Dog*, page 16).



## Volunteer Area Spotlight Phone Room

By Cheryl Zachary Race HQ Coordinator

The days before the Internet, cell phones, sat phones, etc., Race fans would call the ITC Headquarters in Wasilla for Race information. As the years went by and the Race grew large enough to have a Race Headquarters in Anchorage during the Race a new call-in number was created. The current Phone Room, located at the Iditarod Race Headquarters inside the Millennium Alaskan Hotel, gives out information on the Iditarod such as facts, Race statistics, and directions. They even assist fans with the Iditarod website.

The Phone Room has between 75 - 100 volunteers who take 4 hour shifts 24/7 for 3 weeks. These volunteers receive a variety of calls ranging from musher's families & handlers checking on their musher's Race status and/or dropped dogs, media & Race fans from around the world wanting a variety of information as well as classrooms and school children doing Iditarod homework. During the Race there are two Jr. High School students who work in the Phone Room under the supervision of elementary teacher, Gail Summerville, to assist students who call regarding Iditarod homework along with regular calls.

One unique thing the Phone Room does is take **Musher Grams**, messages of encouragement to the mushers. These messages are taken and then sent along the trail via the Iditarod Air Force or hand carried by volunteers going to checkpoints along the trail.

Since the Internet has come into play, the Phone Room has downsized from 20 phones that were busy all of the time to 8 phones & computers that stay busy before and throughout the Race.

The Phone Room also serves lunch, dinner, snacks & drinks to volunteers & Race staff 24 hrs/day. The Phone Room opens the Monday before Race day and stays open until the last musher crosses the finish line. Anyone can call our special number 24 hrs a day **active only during the Race** 907-248-MUSH (6874).

# Volunteer Val Ledbetter & DeeDee Jonrowe Past & Present



Photo@Val Ledbetter



Volunteer Picnic 2012



©2012 Jansen Candy  
Photo@Jansen Candy

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