

# MUSH ON!

Monthly Newsletter of the Iditarod Education Department

## NEWS & FEATURES

20-21: A Thrilling Ride  
**PAGE 1**

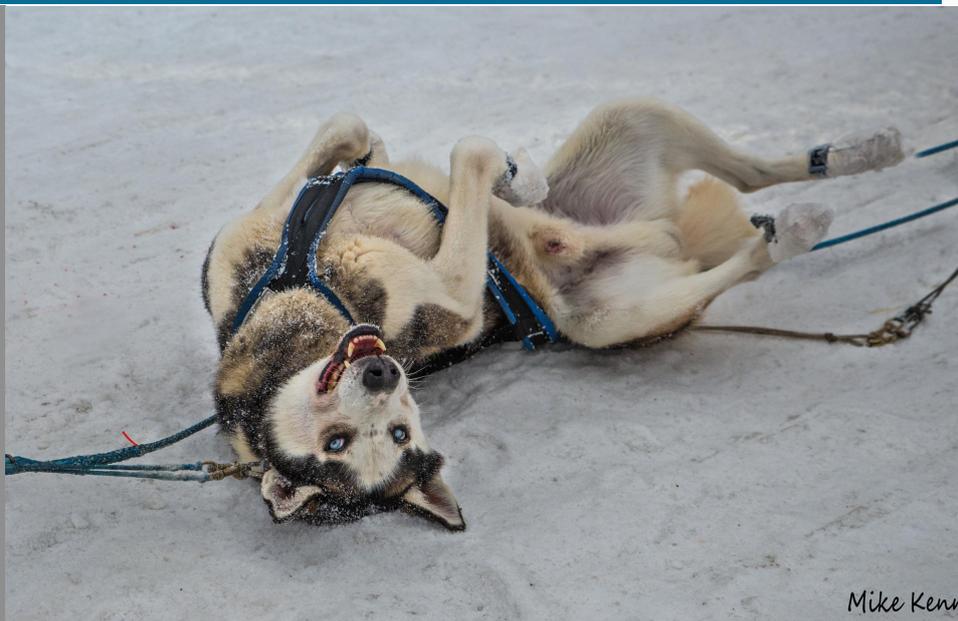
September Teaching  
Ideas  
**PAGE 2**

See, Think, Wonder  
Photo of the Month  
**PAGE 2**

Updates from the EDU  
Trail  
**PAGE 3**

Primary Source of the  
Month  
**PAGE 6**

Projects and Dates  
**PAGE 7**



*Mike Kenney*  
Photo: Mike Kenney

## 20-21: A Thrilling Ride

BY JEN REITER

We all know that that this school year is going to be anything but ordinary. It's going to take all of your skill as a teacher to keep your students engaged, entertained, and educated. Whether you are looking at virtual learning, in person learning, or a hybrid of the two, we are here to help you motivate yourself and your kids with The Last Great Race®!

Our monthly newsletter will bring you new ideas and reintroduce familiar standbys and will be helpful if you are a rookie or a veteran Iditarod Educator! So hop on the sled with us!



## September Teaching Ideas

HEIDI SLOAN

Here are some teaching activities to start of your year! These activities are great if you are in person, but are also easily adaptable if you are starting your year off virtually!

If you are new to teaching with Iditarod, here is some information to get you started: [Click Here](#)

Here are two high school science articles and lessons from Sid Lucas. The cells one could be adapted for my 5th graders during a living systems unit where cells are explored. [Click Here](#) and [Here!](#)

The picture book [Painter and Ugly](#) is fun to share as your students start to develop friendships in their new classroom. [Click Here](#) for an activity to go with the book!

Character development work is always a feature of beginning of the year lessons, Here is a great one to get you started: [Click Here!](#)

## See, Think, Wonder

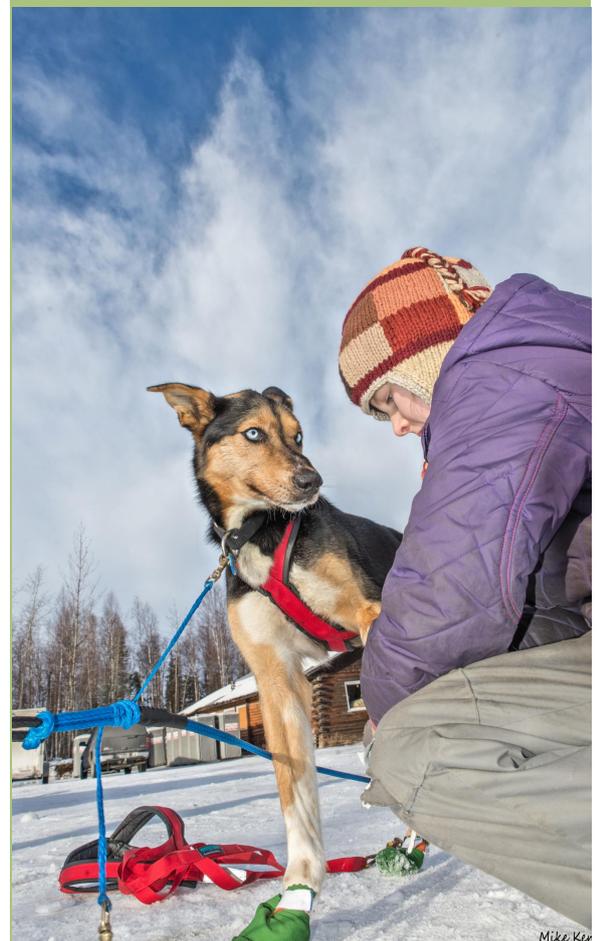
Need a quick warmup? Need a great activity for a Morning Meeting? Share the photo to the left by Mike Kenney. What do they see, think, and wonder about it? Or, use it as an idea starter for a creative writing activity! Click the photo for a larger version of the image!

---

"Even with the struggle you face in the race, the satisfaction and pleasures stand out so much."

---

Joe Redington, Sr.



# Updates from the EDU Trail

Checking in with our EDU Team to see what you can expect this month:

## A Sneak Peek at the Teacher on the Trail™ Posts

Jim Deprez,  
2021 Iditarod Teacher on the Trail

Starting out the school year on the right foot is crucial for all teachers, and this year is no different. For the month of September I have put together a couple things that might help facilitate this in your classroom and connect it to The Last Great Race®! So here is a quick preview of the things you will see in September.

**Moments with Mushers: Camaraderie** One of the things I love about this sport and race is the bond between the mushers. Yes, they are competing against each other, and want to do the best they can; but they are always willing to help a fellow musher in need. This is something that translates very well to the classroom. Teamwork, sharing, integrity, and respect are all important qualities we want in our students. Listen to some stories of camaraderie from the trail and apply them in your classroom to help set the tone for the year!



Lance Mackey and Paul Gebhardt  
Photo: Terrie Hanke



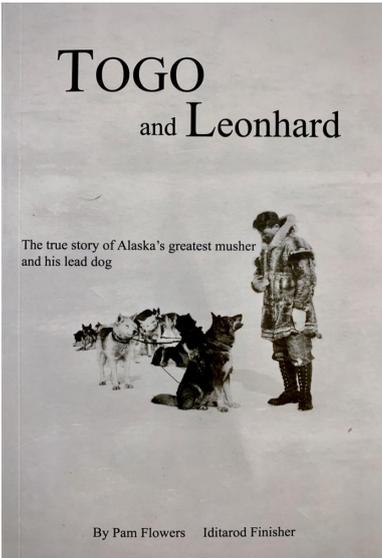
Teacher on the Trail Sleeping Bag  
Photo: Jim Deprez

**Classroom Connections: Personal Patch Making** Since many of us are starting the year virtually or in some “hybrid” model, making connections to classmates and finding activities to get to know each other is more challenging. The patches found on the Teacher sleeping bag and other patches seen all over Iditarod each have a special meaning and significance. In this lesson students will create a patch that represents themselves which will be drawn and explained to the class. Check out this lesson on the 10th!

**Misconceptions and More:** We all know and love the Iditarod. Most of us are familiar with the “Serum Run” as well. But not everyone knows that they are 2 entirely unrelated events. The Iditarod is not run to commemorate the Serum Run as is seen in some places on the internet. Check out this post to learn more about the start of these two events and some interesting things that you might not be aware of!

# TOGO and Leonhard: A Book Report

## by Sanka W. Dog



It's Sanka W. Dog here to bring you a book report. My friend, Pam Flowers, has recently written **TOGO & Leonhard**. So I want to tell you about it because it's a great read.

**TOGO and Leonhard** is a true historical account of the role Leonhard Seppala and his lead dog, Togo, played in the 1925 Serum Run. Many of the Balto and Togo stories and movies that are out there are a bit jazzed up - based on the true story but not entirely factual. **TOGO and Leonhard** is based on almost two years of research and sticks to the facts.

Pam Flowers said it was difficult to find information because the Serum Run happened in 1925 – ninety-five years ago. She used information from thirty-two sources including the Center for Disease Control, stories published in the Nome Nugget and an article that was written by Nome Doctor, Curtis Welsh, and published in the Journal of the American Medical Association in 1925.

The book was a real page-turner. I especially liked it because I knew it was true. Togo was pretty sick when he was born. With lots of tender loving care from Seppala's wife, Togo grew into a mischievous puppy with a mind of his own. He was small and didn't have the build of either a freight dog or a racing dog. His future on Leonhard's team didn't look bright. It appeared he'd make a better pet than a sled dog. But Togo had other ideas. He was destined to become a great Alaskan hero.

Time was important in getting the Diphtheria medicine to the children of Nome. The medicine travelled from Anchorage to Nenana by train. Nenana was still 674 miles from Nome. Now what? Several plans were in the making.

Airplane enthusiasts said flying the medicine would be the fastest. Others said it was too risky to fly in such frigid temperatures. If something went wrong, the medicine would be lost and likely the pilot too. That was plan one and it was scrapped.

Plan two involved two dog teams and drivers. One would leave Nenana, and the other would leave Nome. They'd meet half way and exchange the medicine. This was the plan Leonhard knew about.

Plan three was devised after Seppala departed from Nome. To move the serum even faster, a relay of twenty teams was organized. Each team would carry the serum for a short distance of between 18 and 53 miles. Every time the serum was passed off it would be warmed.

With remarkable speed the serum reached the coast of the Bering Sea. Likewise from Nome, the Seppala team was moving rapidly toward an undetermined rendezvous point along the coast. The weather would play a factor as a storm was brewing. The wind would determine if it would be safe to cross the frozen surface of Norton Sound. Would it be safer, although longer, to go around Norton Sound by land?

With the serum secured to his sled, Henry Ivanoff left Shaktoolik in a brutal winter storm. Ivanoff decided to cross Norton Sound. He had no idea where Seppala was or what route he would take toward Shaktoolik. Seppala had no idea where the serum was as he headed across Norton Sound toward Shaktoolik. The chance meeting of the two mushers and the exchange of the serum is one of the most thrilling parts of this story.

Togo, and the rest of his team traveled 264 total miles from Nome to the exchange on Norton Sound and back to the Village of Golovin. Unknown to Seppala, more mushers were in place to relay the serum from Golovin back to Nome. After surviving indescribable blizzard conditions between Shaktoolik and Golovin, Seppala was glad to hand the serum off to a fresh team and a warm musher.

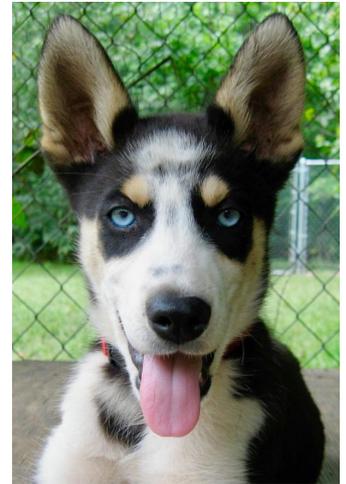
What inspired Pam Flowers to write this book? Pam says, "I believe if an author is going to write a book on a subject already written about they need to have something new and unique to say. As a veteran of nine arctic expeditions and an Iditarod finisher I knew I could write a book not only from the perspective of a musher but from an expedition musher."

Flowers has some pretty impressive credentials to give her that unique perspective. She further explains, "My dogs and I have sledged over many of the same trails as Leonhard Seppala, been trapped for days in powerful blizzards hundreds of miles from home, and learned to depend entirely on ourselves. I know what it's like to find myself trapped on breaking sea ice with no way to shore. I know what it's like to fall through the ice and look back on the event and realize I owe my life to a dog. I believe these experiences allowed me to have a unique insight into how Leonhard Seppala felt when these things happened to him and his dogs."

**TOGO and Leonhard** is packed full of drama and details about Togo's journey from being a sickly, rascal puppy to the celebrated lead dog that played a crucial role in saving the children of Nome. It paints a vivid picture of the selfless and skilled dog driver, Leonhard Seppala. Flowers describes the conditions the courageous relay of drivers and dogs traveled through in such detail, you can just about feel the bone chilling cold and brutal winds.

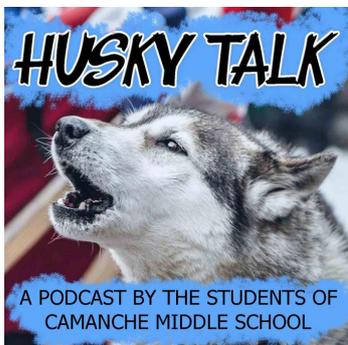
Well there you have it. I'm glad I could tell you about **TOGO and Leonhard** and the author, Pam Flowers. Hope you will get a copy and read it. Running and pulling a sled is what I like best, but reading is perfect for the Dog Days of Summer when we don't put a lot of training miles on.

Born to Run,  
Sanka



## Husky Talk - Season Preview

by: Erin Montgomery



Do you ever wish you had the opportunity to sit down and chat with your favorite musher? Husky Talk is here to help. Husky Talk is a student developed podcast designed to make you feel like you are in the same room as guests on our show. The goal of the podcast is to interview individuals that have a connection to the Iditarod trail. We have interviewed mushers, volunteers, veterinarians, human-powered event athletes, and many more. All interviews are done over the phone, recorded, edited, and turned into a podcast. One of our goals this year is to do some of our interviews via Zoom and live stream them for you and your students to watch from class or home (wherever you are learning this year).

We are hoping to get Season 4 up and running in September. On our list of potential guests are; 2020 Iditarod Champion, Thomas Waerner, members of the Elim 11, 2021 Iditarod Teacher on the Trail, Jim Deprez, Martin Buser, 2021 rookies, 2020 Iditarod award winners, and many more. If you or your students have someone you would like to see as a guest on our show, please email us at [huskytalk1@gmail.com](mailto:huskytalk1@gmail.com). We would love to include your student questions on our show as well. Follow the Iditarod EDU Facebook page where we will post who we are interviewing each week. You can comment with your questions, we will choose a question and say your name on an episode.

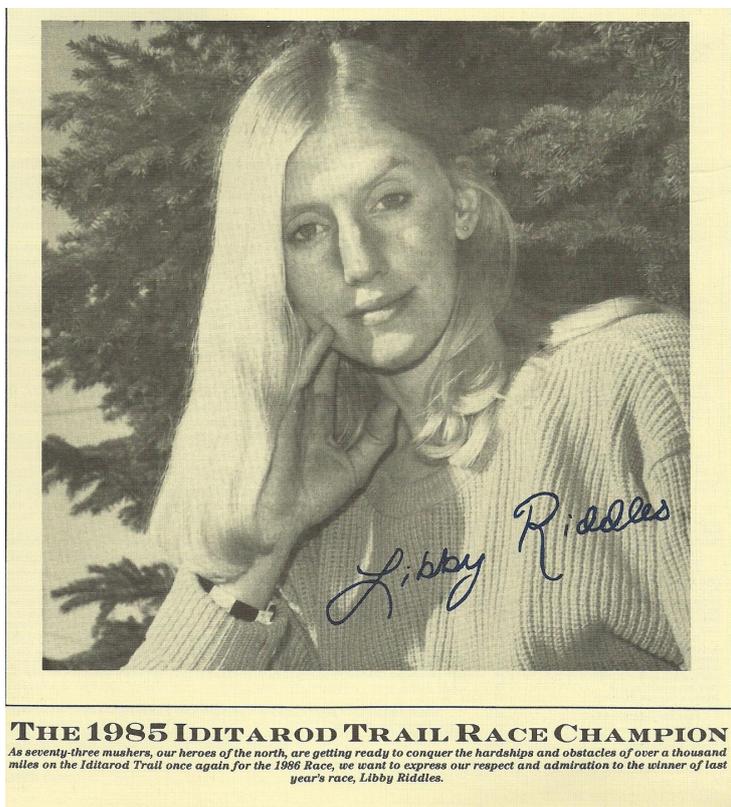
Get your kids excited about this upcoming season by playing one of our old episodes of Husky Talk with fan favorite, [Aliy Zirkle](#).

Our podcast can be found anywhere you get your podcasts; Apple Podcasts, Spotify, Stitcher, Soundcloud, and more.

# Primary Source of the Month

Jen Reiter

In August, the hashtags #womenshistory and #Beyondthe19th were trending. Here's a little bit of Iditarod #womenshistory for you and your students!



1. Share the primary source with the students and give them some time to examine it on their own. This source is featured in the Iditarod On-Line Museum (click the photo for a larger image). Why is it so important?
2. Discuss the source with the group. What do they notice about the object? What questions does it bring up? How could more information be gathered?
3. Let the students explore the associated resources to discover all about Libby Riddles.
4. As a follow up, the students could design a trading card for Libby.

Associated Resources:

- Alaska Sports Hall of Fame (this source includes a video): [Article Here](#)
- From the Smithsonian (this source includes a photo of her sled, which might make a great primary source to start this discussion as well): [Article Here](#)
- Libby's Iditarod Record: [Data Here](#)
- Storm Run: Libby's picture book would make a great follow up to this activity! [Click here to purchase a copy and support the race at the same time!](#)
- Husky Talk Podcast with Libby Riddles: [Click Here](#)

"I had an agreement with myself before I left. If I take off, I'm not coming back, even if it's crummy."

~Libby Riddles

# EDU Project Updates

## Quilt Project

Annie Kelley McGuire

The Iditarod quilt tradition will continue this year, but with a twist (for the safety of everything). We will be launching a digital quilt project this fall. More details will be out this September, and teachers will be able to register to participate in the coming weeks. We hope you will join us on this new adventure!

## Postcard Project

Jen Reiter

The Post Card Project is on! We are going to give last year's participants a chance to sign up first, and then will open it to teachers from others states as needed! Check this space next month for details!

# Mark Your Calendar

November 30, 2020, midnight: Last Day to Sign Up for the 2021 Iditarod Race

March 6, 2021, 10am: Iditarod Start

March 7, 2021, 2pm: Iditarod ReStart

## Newsletter Staff

**Editor:** Jen Reiter

**Contributing Writers:**

Jim Deprez  
Terrie Hanke  
Annie Kelley McGuire  
Erin Montgomery  
Heidi Sloan



**Photography:**

Mike Kenney  
Terrie Hanke

Newsletter Feedback, Questions or Suggestions?  
email: [jenreiter2014@gmail.com](mailto:jenreiter2014@gmail.com)