

# MUSH ON!

Monthly Newsletter of the Iditarod Education Department

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(c)Iditarod.com/mikekenney

Photo: Mike Kenney

## Fall Training

**BY JEN REITER**

As the weather starts to turn cooler, minds turn to fall training. Mushers hook anxious dogs up to four wheelers and hit the trail. As teachers and coaches, mushers teach their young charges to follow commands, they gradually increase mileage to build stamina, and build the dogs' teamwork mile by mile.

For classroom teachers, fall is much the same. Students master classroom routines. They work to build their stamina for writing and reading. They learn to collaborate and communicate to build their classroom teams.

This month, the Iditarod EDU team is building our team by inviting you to join us for the Virtual Fall Conference! You aren't going to want to miss it! In addition to presentations by former and current Teachers on the Trail, Aliy Zirkle will be on hand to present her new education program. You can learn more about Aliy's program on page 7 and learn all about the fall virtual conference [HERE](#). We sure hope you can join us!



## October Teaching Ideas

HEIDI SLOAN

**The Arts:** Jon Van Zyle shares how he creates his Iditarod and Alaskan masterpieces. Students watch his [video and become inspired](#) to create their own artwork.

[Create a sled](#) as a STEAM project in class or virtually!

**Technology:** This can be a [lesson](#) for asynchronous work or within the classroom, combining technology with Social Studies and the Iditarod.

**Writing:** Students who are learning in person or virtually can begin learning about mushers and [write to one](#)! Many of the mushers will write back if a self-addressed, stamped envelope is included. Classes can write someone as an entire class, cooperatively with a group, or individually. To learn more about each musher, go to [iditarod.com](http://iditarod.com): Mushers: Musher Profiles. Click on each musher for information.

## Tell the Story

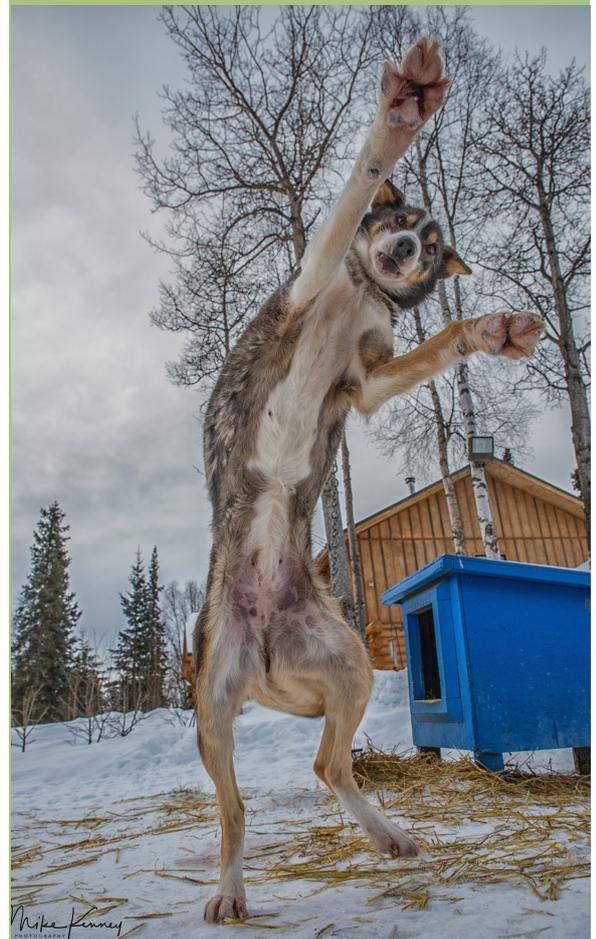
Need an quick journal prompt? Share the photo to the right by Mike Kenney. Have the students write a story inspired by the photo. Or, use it in a Morning Meeting to tell a group story: each student adds to the story and passes it to the next person!

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"I do not know the word quit. Either I never did, or I have abolished it."

Susan Butcher

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# Updates from the EDU Trail

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

## A Sneak Peek at the Upcoming October Teacher on the Trail Posts

Jim Deprez,  
2021 Iditarod Teacher on the Trail

With school still in the beginning stages for some, and really digging into the curriculum for others, the month of October is a big time of transition. The topics of my posts this month include writing prompts to do with your class, the continuation of establishing routines through an examination of core beliefs from Alaska Native cultures, and mushing connections to the military. Here is what to look forward to this month:

### Moments with Mushers: Scariest Moments

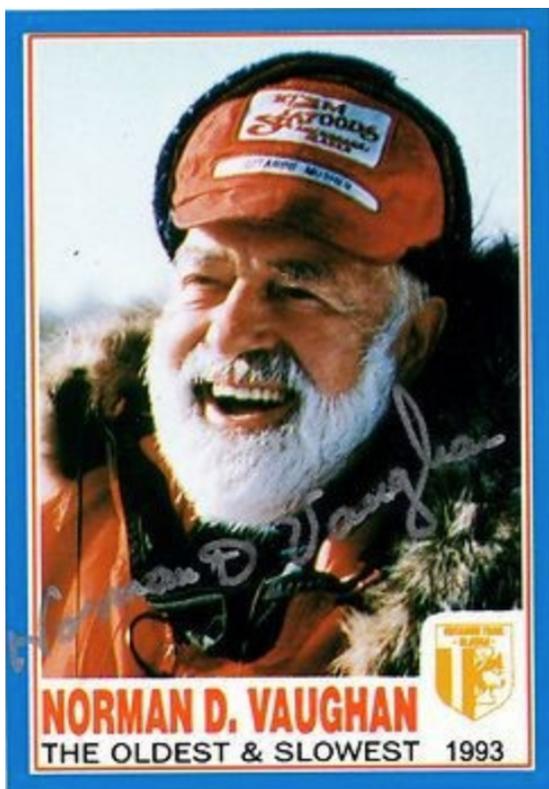
What better to go along with Halloween than reading some of the scariest moments from a musher's career? Although it may be "scary" for very different reasons than those associated with Halloween, it is still fitting. Hear first hand stories of survival from both racing and practice runs that you may not have heard before!

### Classroom Connections: Ten Universal Native Values

We all love the race, the dogs, the atmosphere and draw of the wilderness in Alaska. But just as important are the people who live there, especially the Alaska Native communities. There is a set of 10 "Universal" Native values that are part of the teachings of each group. In this lesson, learn how to integrate these core values into your classroom and how they correlate with values we want to see in our own students.

### Misconceptions and More: Mushing and the Military

This post will focus on the "more" rather than explore a misconception associated with the race. As we prepare to celebrate Veteran's Day next month, I wanted to share a few interesting things that I learned when it comes to sled dogs and the armed forces. There are even some past mushers that got involved in various global conflicts. Be sure to check back on the 20th to learn more about these connections between mushing and the military!



# What's New in Iditarod Education

by: Zuma

I may just be a dog, but it's hard to miss all the changes in Iditarod Education. We know teachers are working extra hard to keep students engaged while teaching during a pandemic, and we'd like to do everything we can to help out. So stick with us as we make changes to keep up with everything going on.

First of all, my friend Jane Holmes took over as Interim Associate Director of Education. Jane is currently a 6th grade teacher and was actually the 2008 Teacher on the Trail so she knows mush (human term: much) about the trail as well as the expectations of teachers in today's schools. Read the announcement [HERE](#). Howl out to Jane who is doing a fantastic job!

Each year we welcome a new Teacher on the Trail and this year the job goes to Jim Deprez. Jim is a 3rd grade teacher in Ohio and he is enthusiastic about sharing lesson plans and ideas he has about the race. He will post on the 1st, 10th, and 20th of each month so watch for his lessons [HERE](#).

Speaking of Teacher on the Trail . . . why don't YOU apply? There are a few upcoming changes in the application so if you have already downloaded a copy, you may want to wait and print a new copy. No worries if you already started, we understand all the work that goes into applying and will be happy to accept your application in the older format. For the past 22 years some amazing teachers have been a part of the Iditarod and we would LOVE to have you join us. Come on . . . come on . . . Check it out [HERE](#).

Finally, I'm so excited to be a part of Mush On!, the new Iditarod Education newsletter edited by my human friend Jen Reiter. Having all this information in one place is priceless. We hope you share the link with your teacher friends. Grrrrreat job Jen!

Don't ever underestimate the power of observation of a dog.

Tail wags to all and stay safe, Zuma



## Husky Talk - Season Preview

by: Erin Montgomery



The kids of Husky Talk are very excited to bring you season 4 this school year. Our first guest of the season will be the 2020 Iditarod Champion, Thomas Waerner. Waerner first ran the Iditarod in 2015, where he earned Rookie of the Year honors after placing 17th. He has also won the grueling Finnmarkslopet race in Norway, Europe's longest sled dog race. After Thomas' victory in the Iditarod, he and his dogs were stranded in Alaska for two months due to Covid-19.

Our student reporters will be having a conversation with Thomas regarding his 2020 Iditarod championship. They will talk with him about the differences he sees in European races and the Iditarod. The students will also find out what those two months were like for him while he was stranded in Alaska without his family.

Get your students ready for our Thomas Waerner podcast by having them complete the Iditarod Champions Hyperslide activity. Students will be able to explore the Iditarod website and learn about some of the former Iditarod champions, as well as Thomas.

If your class wants to be featured on Husky Talk, follow our Iditarod EDU Facebook page to see who future podcasts will be with. Your students can email us at [huskyspeak1@gmail.com](mailto:huskyspeak1@gmail.com) and ask a question they would like us to ask our guest. We will ask their question and say their name. You can also email us if you would like to hear a certain guest on our show.



Photo: Thomas Waerner

### [Iditarod Champions Hyperslide Activity](#)

# Teaching with the Insider

by: Jane Holmes

Combine the experience of world class videography with musher interviews, dogs, race footage, compilations, checkpoint action, dogs, pre and post musher interviews, veterinarians, dogs, wilderness vistas, and did I say dogs? Each month this article will have a standards based lesson idea connected to one of the Insider video clips. There will be ideas for all ages and areas, so check for it each month.

## Summary:

In this video segment, veterinarian musher Jessica Klejka, from Bethel, Alaska, shares her story about how her career was influenced by mushing and the science she applies to give her sled dogs a happy, healthy life.

### Jessica Klejka Isn't Just a Musher August 20, 2020

#### Common Core Standards:

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.6.2** Determine a central idea of a text and how it is conveyed through particular details; provide a summary of the text distinct from personal opinions or judgments.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.2** Interpret information presented in diverse media and format (e.g., visually, quantitatively, orally) and explain how it contributes to a topic, text, or issue under study.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.4** Present claims and findings sequencing ideas logically and using pertinent descriptions, facts, and details to accentuate main ideas or themes; use appropriate eye contact, adequate volume, and clear pronunciation.

**CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.SL.6.5** Include multi-media components (e.g., graphics, image, music, and sound) and visual displays in presentations to clarify information.

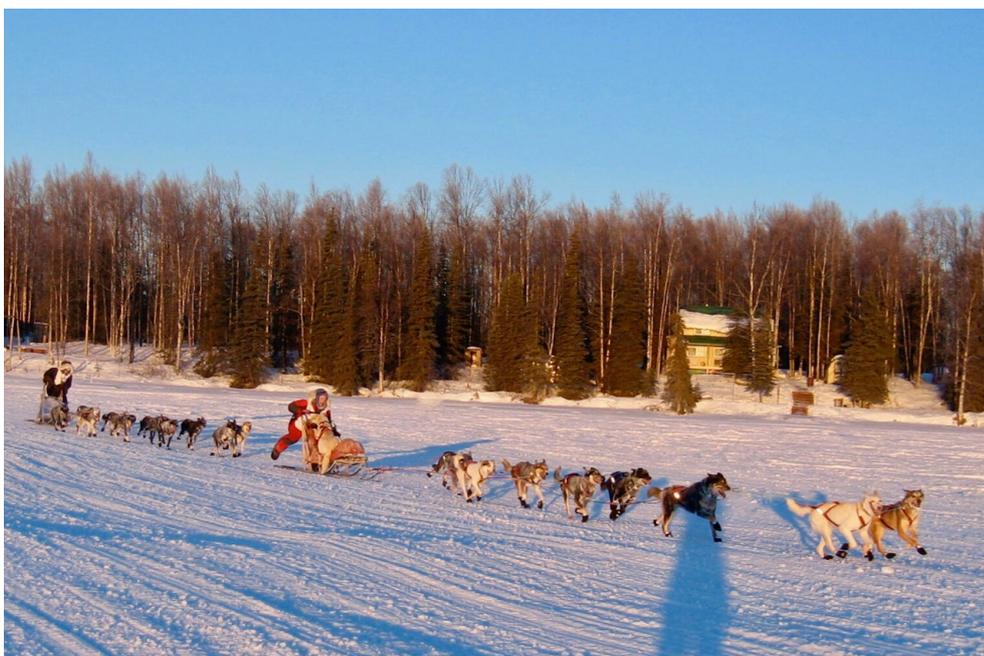
#### Lesson suggestion:

Use the video and graphic organizers for students to identify the central idea and details of her message. It could be shared over ZOOM. They could then create a presentation that states the central idea and then supports that with details from the text. You could add requirements for pictures, writing requirements, or anything you'd like.



Before competing in the Iditarod, Jessica competed in the Junior Iditarod. In 2008, she finished just two seconds before Cain Carter to win the race (right).

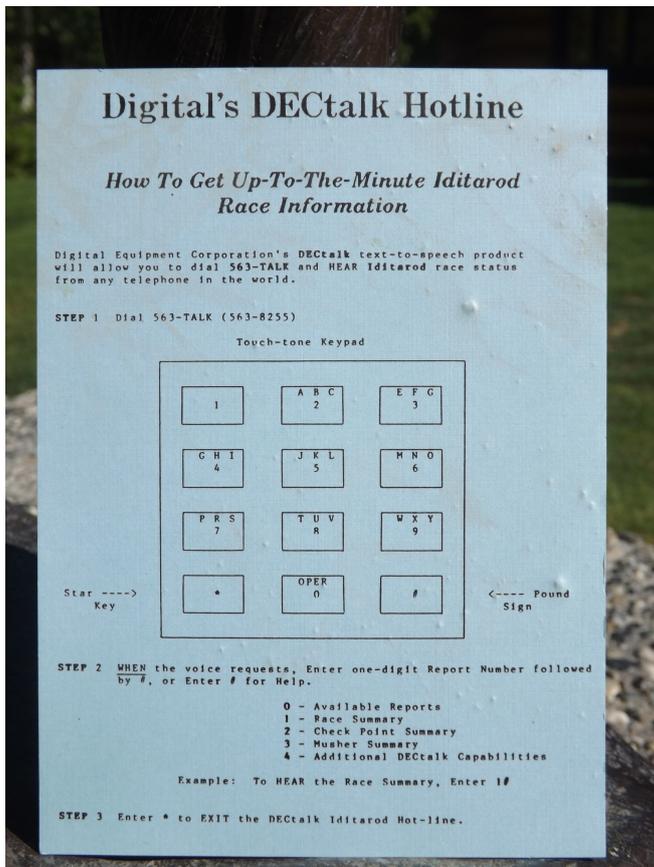
Photos: Terrie Hanke



# Primary Source of the Month

Jen Reiter

Our Virtual Fall Conference this month is focused on technology as teachers around the world are pushing tech to its limits dealing with distance, hybrid, and in person learning, sometimes all at the same time! Technology used by fans, students, and teachers to follow the race has certainly grown and changed over the years. Today, we can essentially follow the race in real time thanks to the Insider and the tracker. But how did it used to be? I remember, when I started teaching in the early 90's, sending students to the school office with my calling card to call the Phone Room in Anchorage to get race updates! This month's primary source dates back even before that. Digital's DECTalk Hotline was used from the mid 1970's to the mid 1980's. Race fans could call the hotline and type in a number to listen to a prerecorded message. Topics included Race Summary, Checkpoint Summary, and Musher Summary. Click on the image to see it in the [online museum](#).



## Using the Source With Students

1. Share the source with your students and allow them time to investigate it on their own. Students could be asked to complete a See, Think, Wonder chart.
2. Have the students share with a partner or small group their observations, thoughts, and questions
3. Discuss as a group: What modern technology has replaced this? What benefits does the tracker have (allows fans to follow the race in real time, is a safety feature for mushers as the help button is included).
4. Share some of the resources below to investigate the modern trackers.
5. How has the modern tracker changed the race? Are all the changes good? Does everyone agree with the changes?
6. As a follow up, students could write an opinion piece or participate in a debate on the question: Has the tracker had a positive or negative impact on the contemporary Iditarod Race?

## Associated Resources:

- [GPS Trackers](#) from K9 Reporter, Gypsy
- [High Tech Helps Connect Fans to Off-The- Grid Iditarod](#) from CTV News
- [Iditarod Mushers Wary of GPS Tracking](#) (2008: first year the trackers were used) from NPR

## Extension Activities:

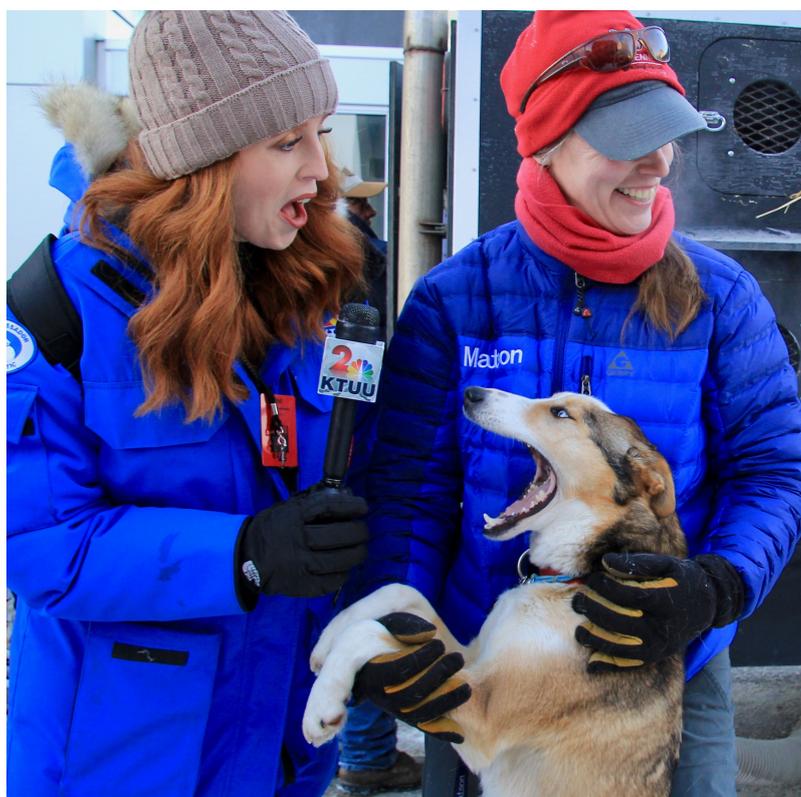
- Students could use the alpha numeric combinations on the primary source for code making or math review. How many points would the race checkpoints be worth? Their favorite musher's name?
- During the race, the Phone Room is still alive and well! Fans can call the Phone Room to send Musher Grams to their favorite teams! More details [HERE](#). Musher Gram Drafting Sheet [HERE](#).

# Virtual Learning With Husky Homeroom

by: Terrie Hanke

Adapting: being able to adjust to new conditions. Mushers have been doing that ever since dogs pulling sleds became a means of transportation. Over the past six months we've become very adept at adapting every aspect of our lives. Virtual learning is a way of adapting. Aliy Zirkle and Allen Moore of SP Kennel have stepped up to the challenge of staying connected with students even though they can't do it in person. Zirkle and Moore in conjunction with sponsor, Matson, have developed Husky Homeroom, a virtual education program.

In the Husky Homeroom introduction video available on the SP Kennel webpage Aliy says, "We are excited about education. We are excited about learning. Living is learning. Life is an adventure. We always learn from our experiences." With the help of some of the SP Kennel superstar athletes, Aliy and Allen will deliver lessons based on their experiences. Content areas of mathematics, science, geography, history and healthy living, along with Alaskan history and culture will be explored in the Husky Homeroom.



Violet and Aliy Get Interviewed by Kim of KTUU  
Photo: Terrie Hanke

Lesson One: Science and Dog Anatomy (aka: What makes dogs dogs?) is available at [SPkennel.com](https://www.spkennel.com) under the Husky Homeroom heading. Students explore the differences between dogs and humans and investigate animal adaptations and the important role these adaptations play in survival of the species. While it sounds complicated, it's guaranteed to be fun with Aliy and Allen and the support of a couple of their extraordinary Alaskan huskies, Violet and Nomex.

Aliy says, "The lessons are evolving because of our continued interest in dogs. But I also think they will be lessons that touch on what's going on in our world today." How does a dog become a teaching assistant for a lesson? Aliy responded to this question saying, "Dog teaching assistants are chosen because of how cute they are that day." Aliy and Allen are very grateful for Matson's sponsorship of Husky Homeroom. Aliy praised Matson saying, "Matson is a long term sponsor and after we told them our ideas for this program, they asked how they could help."

Husky Homeroom lessons are certain to be enjoyable learning experiences for both students and teachers in the ever-evolving learning environment. These standards based lessons are sure to motivate students and capture their interests in a virtual, hybrid or in person learning setting. Check out the Husky Homeroom [HERE](#).

## "Dog teaching assistants are chosen because of how cute they are that day."

# EDU Project Updates

## Postcard Project

Jen Reiter

The Post Card Project is on! The idea is to send a postcard to each class on the list and receive one from each class in return. In the message portion, please tell us some facts about your state including your state dog and state sport! Postcards must be sent before the first musher leaves the starting line for the start of the 2021 Iditarod!

We are still looking for participating classes from the following states: Alabama, Arizona, California, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Iowa, Louisiana, Maine, Mississippi, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Utah, Vermont, Washington, West Virginia, and Wyoming.

If you are interested in joining in, please send your name, school name, grade, mailing address, and email to [jenreiter2014@gmail.com](mailto:jenreiter2014@gmail.com)

## Mark Your Calendar

October 16 & 17, 2020: [Virtual Fall Conference](#)

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

December 1, 2020: [Applications for 2022 Iditarod Teacher on the Trail Due](#)

March 6, 2021, 10am: Iditarod Start

March 7, 2021, 2pm: Iditarod ReStart

## **EDU** Newsletter Staff

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### **EDU** Virtual Fall Conference

*Technology in an Ecosystem that Demands Greater Access*  
Registration fee – \$100  
Can't attend on these dates? No problem, a digital copy is available for \$89.

**Friday, October 16**  
Iditarod EDU Fireside Chat  
2 – 4 p.m. Alaska Time

**IditaRead digital mapping update:** We are almost there!  
**Husky Talk:** podcasts for students.  
**Iditarod EDU monthly:** up-to-date information on a multimedia platform.  
**EDU quilt gone virtual:** a new twist to an old tradition.  
**K9's are back!** Our K9 reporters hit the trail with new stories to BARK about.  
**Who's next:** Iditarod Teacher on the Trail™ update.

**Saturday, October 17**  
Technology in an Ecosystem That Demands Greater Access  
8 a.m. – 12 p.m. Alaska Time

**Guest Speakers**

 <small>Jim Deprez, Ohio 2021 Iditarod Teacher on the Trail Teaching on purpose.</small>	 <small>Kelly Villar, New Hampshire 2020 Iditarod Teacher on the Trail Explains how to create Idita-lessons on Seesaw software.</small>	 <small>Jen Reiter, Maryland 2014 Iditarod Teacher on the Trail Talks about how mobile technologies can add a new dimension to activating learning opportunities.</small>	 <small>Ally Zirkle, Iwo Rivers, Alaska One of Iditarod's leading figures is headed to the classroom! Shares her latest project, Husky Homeroom from SP Kennel.</small>
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For more information, contact Jane Holmes at [jane.holmes@iditarod.com](mailto:jane.holmes@iditarod.com)

Register for the conference at  
<https://iditarod.ejoinme.org/MyEvents/2020VirtualIditarodEduFall%20Conference>

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