

MUSH ON!

Monthly Newsletter of the Iditarod Education Department

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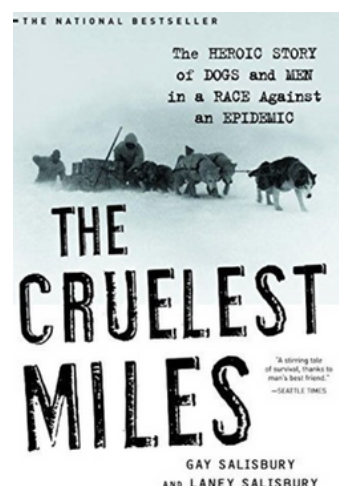
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100th Anniversary of Serum Run By Linda Fenton

In January, 1925 a diphtheria epidemic hit Nome, AK. In order to get the antitoxin to the people of Nome, a relay of dog teams was dispatched. Within 5.5 days, the teams traveled the 674 miles from Nanana to Nome.

We at Iditarod EDU acknowledge that the current Iditarod Sled Dog Race was not created because of the Serum Run. However, the Serum Run is a rich part of Alaska history - the dogs, the mushers, the doctors, and other support people should be celebrated. Because of their heroic actions, many lives were saved.

To learn more about the Serum Run, I highly recommend the book, ***The Cruellest Miles*** by Gay and Laney Salisbury.





The telegram telling the world that Nome had a diphtheria epidemic.
US Public Health Records

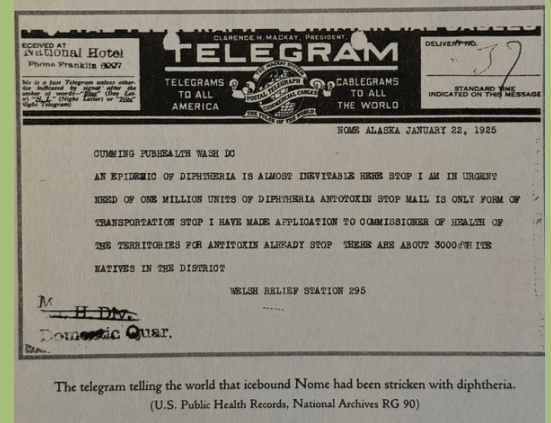
Boots on the Ground

by Jane Holmes

As of the writing of this article, there are 29 mushers signed up for the 2025 Iditarod. More than half are rookies! Click [here](#) to view the musher list. Being a rookie in the Iditarod means many things from having run it once and not finishing, to having run it multiple times and not having finished. And it's always important to remember that being a rookie in the Iditarod doesn't mean a musher is inexperienced - just hasn't finished the Iditarod. First year Iditarod rookies have had to complete qualifying races - click [here](#) for a link to the qualifying rules and list of those races. In 1973 - ALL of the mushers were rookies. And a rookie won the Iditarod for the first 3 years. It will be interesting to see where all of these mushers end up when they take off for Nome next March.

All of your students are rookies to your classroom, grade level, or maybe even your school. And you have never finished a race with this particular team of students, either. Maybe you are a rookie to using the Iditarod in your classroom; maybe you will be a rookie using just one new program this year.

Remember this about rookie students and teachers: all come with some background to build on, a desire to achieve a successful "race" (school year), and a team to do great things with.



The telegram telling the world that icebound Nome had been stricken with diphtheria.
(U.S. Public Health Records, National Archives RG 90)

AN EPIDEMIC OF DIPHTHERIA IS ALMOST INEVITABLE
HERE STOP MAIL IS ONLY FORM OF TRANSPORTATION
STOP I HAVE MADE APPLICATION TO COMMISSIONER
OF HEALTH OF THE TERRITORIES FOR ANTITOXIN
STOP THERE ARE ABOUT 3000 WHITE/NATIVES IN
THE DISTRICT

Meet A Sled Dog

by Kelly Villar

Welcome back to another exciting school year, and Meet a Sled Dog. Every other month, we will introduce you to one of the amazing canine athletes who has run in the Iditarod or will run in it in 2025.

This month, we meet Deke Naaktegeboren from Nautique Sky Kennel in Fairbanks, Alaska. Although he won't be mushing in the 2025 Iditarod, he has had quite an amazing career thus far. Deke ran his first Iditarod in 2020, finishing in 27th place. In 2022, he ran his second Iditarod, finishing in 29th place. Finally, in 2023, he finished in 20th with a time of 10d 19h 5m 2s!

When I asked Deke to tell me about one dog that holds a special place in his heart, he introduced us to Jasmine. Here is what he had to say:

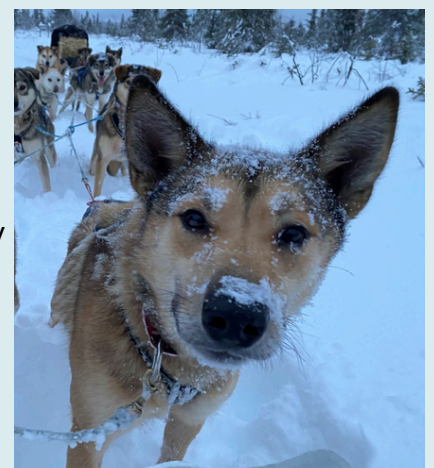
“That dog would be Jasmine. The Queen of the Kennel! She’s five years old and has been my main leader since she led the entire Yukon Quest 1000 as a two-year-old. In that race we encountered an epic storm atop Eagle Summit, the crux of the race, and our team went out in the storm with Jasmine in the solo lead. We couldn’t see up or down, left or right, but somehow, Jazz got us caught up to a group of 3 other mushers. The other mushers heard me haw and geeing Jazmine and started calling her name. She followed their voices until we were right behind the now 4 team train of dog sled teams, making it up and over Eagle Summit and into the checkpoint!”

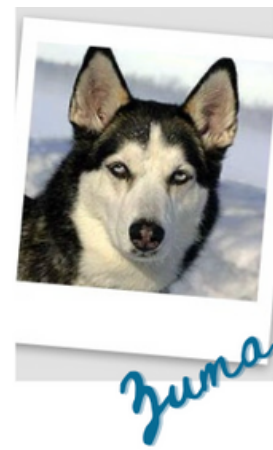
The following year on Iditarod, being part of the Elim 11, we were last to leave Elim. The trail on little McKinley started to vanish, and we eventually passed four teams until the trail was completely gone. Then, with Jasmine in lead, we had four teams following her and were, somehow once again, able to find the trail until our half of the Elim 11 caught up with the other half. A few mushers following even thanked her!

She’s started in lead every single race since 2018, she’s never had to be dropped, and she often has free range of the dog yard patrolling to ensure each and every dog knows she’s in charge!

She started as my main leader in the 2022 Iditarod! PRINCESS Jasmine!”

To learn more about Deke Naaktegeboren and Nautique Sky Kennel, visit his website at <https://www.dekesdogs.com/> (he has a great story about another special dog Nautique, and how his kennel was started).





Hello friends,

We here at Iditarod Education are sad to say goodbye to our Lead Dog, Jane Holmes. After 4 years, she is stepping aside to pursue other endeavors. However, this doesn't mean she is saying goodbye to the Iditarod. We will be seeing her on the trail as she works COMMS in various checkpoints. Jane will also contribute every other month to this newsletter with her "Boots on the Ground" articles where she will educate us on other events that take place in Alaska.



Former team dogs, Jim Deprez and Linda Fenton, will now share the Lead Dog duties. Jane leaves big mukluks to fill and it will take both of them to run the show.

Tail wags,
Zuma



Paws and Get Ready!

Check out some of the exciting plans for the month of September from Maggie Hamilton, 2025 Teacher on the Trail™.



Maggie Hamilton, the 2025 Iditarod Teacher on the Trail™

A Classroom Without Walls: The lesson this month introduces a way to use distances between checkpoints along the Southern route of the Iditarod. The beginning of the school year is the perfect time to help students develop or sharpen their number sense. This math lesson focuses on place value and expanded form.

More to Discover: Find out more about how The Last Great Race was started, what a volunteer shift at the Anchorage Call Center looks like during the race, and how mushers are training in September. Plus you can learn more about how I am using the race in my school and classroom!

CLICK [HERE](#) TO FIND ALL OF MAGGIE'S LESSONS!

Mushers and Diphtheria Survivor Honored

by Terrie Hanke

When the calendar pages reveal the arrival of January 2025, there's an anniversary that begs to be celebrated. January of 2025 will mark the 100th anniversary of the Serum Run, sometimes referred to as The Great Race of Mercy. Twenty drivers and about 150 sled dogs carried the diphtheria antitoxin from Nenana to Nome in five and a half days to stop the spread of the deadly disease.

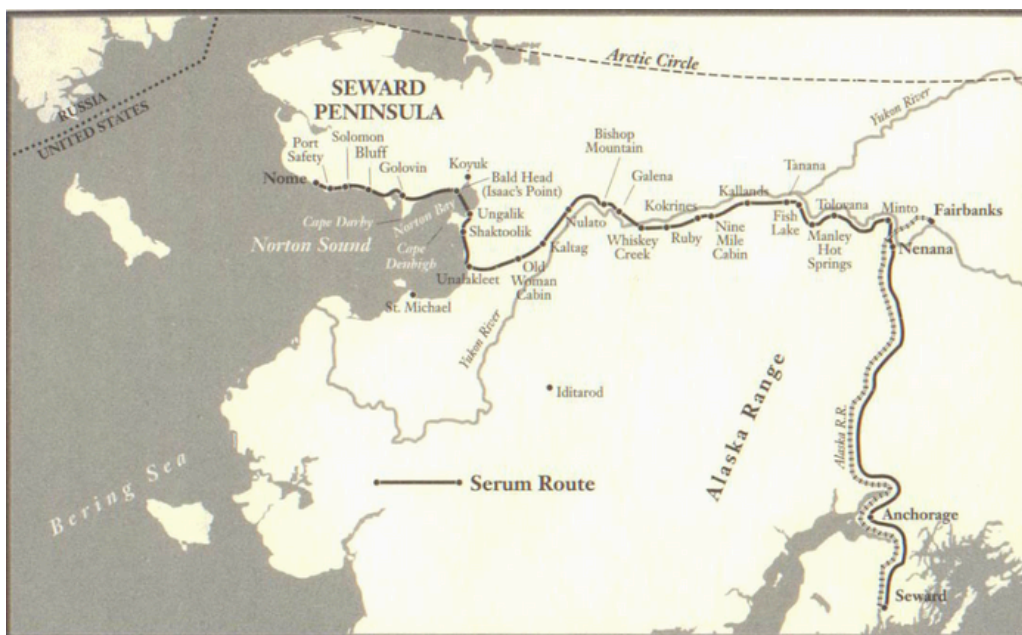
Remembering and celebrating the courageous mushers and indomitable sled dogs of 100 years ago will be a big part of the Iditarod in 2025. While commemorating the Serum Run wasn't on Joe's short list of goals, Iditarod has honored the great feat of the mushers and dogs who saved the children of Nome since the very first race.

The Honorary mushers for the first eleven years of Iditarod were all serum runners! Leonhard Seppala, who accidentally met Henry Ivanoff on Norton Sound north of Shaktoolik for the handoff of the serum served as the Iditarod's Honorary musher from 1973 to 1979. In 1980, both Seppala and Wild Bill Shannon who ran the first leg of the relay out of Nenana, were named as Honorary mushers.

For the 70th anniversary of the Serum Run in 1995, Joe Redington, Sr. was instrumental in organizing a relay race over the 1925 Serum Run route. The relay race would commemorate the life-saving 1925 Diphtheria Serum Run to Nome and encourage vaccinations for all children in the villages under the age of two.

[Serum Run Lesson](#) by Jim Deprez.

The full [Eye on the Trail](#) story about those honored and the 2005 Honorary Musher, a survivor of diphtheria.



Map of the Serum Run from *The Cruellest Miles*, by Gay and Laney Salisbury (W.W.Norton & Co., 2003)

CHECK OFF YOUR BUCKET LIST

- APPLY FOR 2026 TEACHER ON THE TRAIL™ AND EXPERIENCE THE JOURNEY OF A LIFETIME. LOOK AT THE [APPLICATION](#) AND TAKE THE LEAP. PORTFOLIOS ARE DUE DECEMBER 2, 2024.
- ATTEND THE WINTER IDITAROD EDUCATORS CONFERENCE - WATCH FOR UPCOMING POSTS.



Each month, good friend of Iditarod Education, Jon VanZyle, creates artwork for our Newsletter. These beautiful paintings will be on sale during our Winter Conference with proceeds going to Iditarod Education.
Thank you Jon!

Iditarod® **EDU**

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