

MUSH ON!

Monthly Newsletter of the Iditarod Education Department

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Photo: Jen Reiter

Fall Training is Under Way

BY JEN REITER

Fall training is well underway for the mushers and their teams and both are enjoying every moment they have outside together while they count down the days until the first snowfall. By now fall training is complete in classrooms around the country too. Students and teachers are well into classroom routines and are enjoying every chance they have to be outside and enjoy the weather. And more than a few are probably counting down the days until their first snow day!

Now that you are feeling settled about your new school year and a new group of students, why not think about branching out and joining us for a "new to you" Iditarod project! We have so many opportunities for you to partner with us this year. From hosting a quilt to donating centerpieces, to entering our art contest, to send a piece of mail down the trail, there is a project for everyone! Be sure to check out the complete listing on the last few pages of this newsletter!

More than anything, we hope you'll make plans to join us in Anchorage for our Winter Conference for Educators! It's going to be an epic year to visit as we celebrate the 50th Running!

Until then, enjoy the fall and enjoy this month's newsletter!



October Teaching Ideas

BY: HEIDI SLOAN

Citizenship and Community Service

Is citizenship and community service among your 21st Century learning goals this year? You can incorporate the Iditarod into a service project! Each year, a banquet is held for the mushers as well as guests, as they draw their starting positions from a mukluk, a skin boot. The tables are enhanced by centerpieces created by students from all over various countries. Can your students design a centerpiece and ship them to Alaska in order to add to the excitement of the banquet this year? Submit a design into the contest! See details [here](#).

How is the Iditarod team of dogs chosen by mushers? Who makes it and why? Sled Dog Ed wrote [an article](#) including some good points of discussion There are two lessons and readings on choosing a dog team as well as the 8 traits of the Iditarod citizenship readings.

Writing

Writing lessons with the Iditarod are very motivating for students! Here is a fairy tale activity where students must incorporate aspects of Iditarod culture. Can Cinderella be pulled to the ball in a sled by a team of dogs? Try out this [lesson!](#)

Math

Do you want to incorporate more of the Iditarod into your math lessons but lack the time to create lessons? This resource is just what you need! Practical lesson plans, materials, and engaging Iditarod fun are all wrapped up in this ["Mathing Down the Trail"](#) program. I have used many of the lessons with my students and they love the rigor and the real-life applications!

Teamwork!

Here is a photo to share with your students for a quick write activity. How does teamwork make a difference? Have the students write about a time being a part of a team helped them make something easier or made a task go more smoothly.

"Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much."

~Helen Keller



Photo: Jen Reiter
[Click for a larger image](#)

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 Teacher on the Trail Posts

Jim Deprez,

2021/2022 Iditarod Teacher on the Trail

Now that we have a few more weeks under our belts, teachers are starting to dig deeper into the curriculum. We are beginning to get baseline data for our students and really get the year rolling. With that being said, there are always activities you do that easily integrate the Iditarod into your curriculum! This first project is definitely one of the more fun activities that I do with my 3rd graders, and it also provides an opportunity for team building; perfect for the beginning of the year!

Classroom Connections: Sugar Cube Dog Houses

This is an activity that I usually do not get into until later in the school year when the 3rd Grade curriculum begins to cover multiplication and division. However, I wanted to get it out earlier in the year for those that might teach 4th or 5th grade. The sugar cube dog house activity is a great way to teach area models and arrays to kids who have been learning multiplication strategies. It is actually better suited for students in upper elementary as they have to deal with bigger products and quotients. The kids REALLY enjoy the activity and, be prepared, because it does get messy. I usually split the kids up into groups of about 4 and have them design a "blueprint" for their dog houses using the total number of whole sugar cubes in their box. After they make a design, and the teacher checks the math, the teams start building. Each team gets 1 box, and one container of vanilla icing to use as the "cement". (Once it dries, it is really solid if there is enough icing applied). The teacher then inspects each design, to see if it matches the blueprint. If it looks good, groups can extend the activity by constructing a roof or other items desired to complete their build. It is also a great exercise in "productive struggle".

This activity is a lot of fun, just make sure the students don't eat the materials! :)



Sugar Cube Doghouse pictures from 2019 - students constructing, and then a final product
Photos: Jim Deprez



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Kaltag checker Richard Burnham congratulates Pete Kaiser as the winner of the Bristol Bay Native Corporation's FISH FIRST award for being the first musher to reach the Kaltag checkpoint on Saturday March 9th during the 2019 Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race.
Photo by Jeff Schultz/ (C) 2019 ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

Voices of the Volunteers: Richard Burnham

Richard Burnham is not just a lifelong Iditarod volunteer, he is also a race finisher. He ran from 1975-1978 and finished 18th in his final race, alongside many of the early pioneers of the Last Great Race. Richard lives in Kaltag and truly does everything in his power to make that checkpoint ready come race time. He has been the checker and trail breaker and has also helped with trail markers and cleanup crew. Truly, this man has done it all. Making a connection to the sugar cube dog houses above, Richard has also helped to build the tripod cabin that is still in use today. He has amazing stories from his times as musher and volunteer, with some very well-told musings from fellow mushers. Be sure to check back on the 30th to hear more from Richard Burnham and his time as a race volunteer in Kaltag.

K9 Journalist Corner

Vividly Describing What You See and Experience by: Sanka W. Dog



Fall is here! The days are shorter, the nights are cooler, the stars seem brighter and we have started fall dryland training runs! Here in Wisconsin, the temperatures are dipping into the 40s by morning so we are taking advantage of the coolness to harness up and run ahead of the 4-wheeler for a few miles early in the morning. We see that the leaves on the trees are beginning to turn bright colors and we've noticed big long yellow vehicles with lots of windows going past our kennel. Happy children are looking out the windows. I believe these exceptionally big motorized boxes are called school busses! I've never ridden in one, have you? School starting is a sure sign of fall!

I was very happy to receive the first issue of **Mush On** Vol 2. I like to see how children are learning through Iditarod. I noticed the story about the Arch Deacon of the Yukon, Hudson Stuck. I checked the kennel library and much to my delight there was a copy of **Ten Thousand Miles with a Dog Sled** by Hudson Stuck on the shelf. On a lazy afternoon, I flipped the book open to a chapter about the beautiful northern lights. I remember seeing the northern lights in Alaska before I moved to Wisconsin. Stuck's description of the colorful electric sky brought back memories for me.

Some of you have perhaps never personally seen the northern lights but by reading what Stuck wrote describing the northern lights he's seen; you might get the picture. Here's a short segment from chapter XIII of **Ten Thousand Miles with a Dog Sled**. Let your imagination create the scene Arch Deacon Stuck describes.

From Chapter XIII – The Northern Lights

“It began by an exquisite and delicate weaving of fine fluorescent filaments of light in and out among the stars until a perfect network was formed, like lace amidst diamonds, first in one-quarter of the heavens, then in another, then stretching and weaving its web right across the sky. For an hour or more the ceaseless extension and looping of these infinitely elastic threads of light went on with constant variations in their brilliance and never an instant's cessation of motion.” Later in the chapter, Arch Deacon Stuck says, *“Some claim to have heard frequently and unmistakably a swishing sound accompanying the movement of the aurora, and there are some who claim to have detected an odor accompanying it.”* Stuck says that he has never experienced hearing or smelling the northern lights even at the peak of their activity.

Considering that the “lights” are the result of collisions between gaseous particles in the earth's atmosphere and charged particles from the sun's atmosphere, it seems they might make noise upon colliding. Smell? Well considering that we dogs have really powerful sniffers, we'd know if they had an odor. What about feeling something like static electricity? The Arch Deacon of the Yukon never mentioned that in his description of the aurora.

Students, here's your challenge. Using these photos of the northern lights captured 1 minute apart during the Jr. Iditarod at Cantwell in 2015 (see next page), describe the scene in detail so that someone who hasn't seen the picture might fully appreciate how spectacular the aurora can be. The three photos show how dynamic the northern lights can be in a very short period of time. Or, you could decide to paint a picture with words of one of your favorite spots in nature.

Whichever you choose, try to include all of the senses – sight, smell, touch, hearing, and taste in your description. Have fun following Hudson Stuck down the trail of vivid descriptive writing!

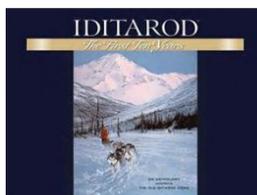


Photos:
Terrie Hanke

Teaching with the First Ten Years

by: Jane Holmes

IDITAROD: THE FIRST TEN YEARS



This month's lesson prompt, based on the book "The First Ten Years", is for pages 146 - 147, **"1979: So Cold That My Boot Liners Froze"** by Phil Meyer, D.V.M.

On these pages, Dr. Phil Meyer, veteran Iditarod veterinarian, tells tales of cold, danger, and fun during his first year on the trail in 1979. This narrative provides material for teaching literature reading and narrative writing skills. This [lesson](#) shows how to use it as a model text for personal narrative planning.

Grade level: 6 - 8. **Subject:** Language Arts

College and Career Readiness Standards practiced in this lesson:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events using effective techniques, relevant descriptive details, and well-structured event sequences.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.3.A Engage and orient the reader by establishing a context and introducing a narrator and/or characters; organize an event sequence that unfolds naturally and logically.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.3.B Use narrative techniques, such as dialogue, pacing, and description, to develop experiences, events, and/or characters.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.3.C Use a variety of transition words, phrases, and clauses to convey sequence and signal shifts from one-time frame or setting to another.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.3.D Use precise words and phrases, relevant descriptive details, and sensory language to convey experiences and events.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.W.6.3.E Provide a conclusion that follows from the narrated experiences or events.

Husky Talk Update

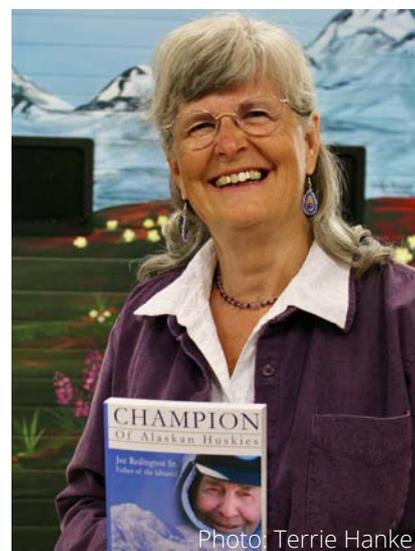
by: Erin Montgomery

We are excited to have started our 5th season of Husky Talk. This season we will be sharing stories and highlighting the history of the Iditarod to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Iditarod.

Our first episode of the season goes way back to the beginning. Do you know the true story of how the Iditarod started? We will be talking with Katie Mangelsdorf about her book, *Champion of Alaskan Huskies*. Katie talks with us all about Joe Redington, Sr., and how he founded the Iditarod race. She shares with us many inspiring stories about Joe. Katie also tells us how she feels about the incorrect story going around about how the Iditarod started.

Our second episode of the season takes us back to the 1970s. Jon Van Zyle has been involved with the Iditarod since he raced in 1976 and 1979. He continues to be involved with the Iditarod as the official artist of the Iditarod. We talk with Jon about what those early years of the Iditarod were like. He also shares with us the changes he has seen throughout the years.

Join us, sit back, and listen to some old stories of the Iditarod. If you have any questions for us, please email us at huskytalk1@gmail.com. We will read your questions on an episode.



If You "Mush" Know...

by: Lynne Witte

This month's question comes from.....

Aarav

What does it mean when a musher says a dog has "good feet?" Do only dogs with bad feet wear booties?

Happy Feet

A musher is a coach choosing his or her team and beginning to prepare the dogs to perform at their best. The dogs will be running hundreds of miles as they train in preparation for race competitions like the Iditarod. The dogs will run on different trail conditions, some of which are great for bare feet but some that can cause scrapes. A musher prefers their dogs, the athletes, to have "good feet." Good feet means they do not need to wear booties all the time.

Experienced distance mushers say good feet start with good nutrition, and proper nail trimming. They prefer tougher pads, like having callous hands versus soft hands. Some mushers find the dogs with black pads and nails have tougher pads. A tighter foot with good hair in its feet tends to keep ice balls from forming between the toes and the pads.

Dogs' feet are checked to ensure they are "happy feet". A musher will check each dog's feet before and after every run looking for small scrapes on the pads or any lesions between the toes. At a race, every dog is carefully checked by the veterinarians looking for any lesions on the pads or between the toes. If there is a lesion it is noted in the Veterinary Log Book for future reference. The dog will wear booties and possibly be treated with an ointment to help the lesion to heal.

Booties are used to protect a dog's feet. Mushers will decide if dogs with healthy feet need booties every run. Dogs running mainly in training runs or races might wear booties every run as a preventative measure to protect their feet from being scraped up. In areas where the snow is very cold, the dog will not wear the bootie to stay warm but rather because the cold snow can be very abrasive and rough. The snow crystals are very sharp. A bootie will protect and help prevent scrapes and sore feet. Like humans wear socks to protect our feet from cuts and blisters, the booties will be a sock for the dogs.

A musher wants his dog team to have happy feet. Nutrition, daily care, and correctly fitted booties will help maintain healthy happy feet.



Snow
White's Foot
photo:
Lynne Witte

Lynne's
Team in
Booties at
the
Beargrease
photo:
Kris Ausland



© Kris Ausland Photography

Primary Source of the Month

By: Jen Reiter

Using the Source With Students

1. Display the map for the students and have them share what they See, Think, and Wonder about the object.
2. This is the modern race map and the one that students are most familiar with seeing when they are tracking their mushers.
3. Tell the students that this map was not always the "official" map of the race. Prior to 1977, only the Northern Route was used. As told by [Zuma](#), this was done to help alleviate stress on the smaller villages year after year.



Click photo for a larger image.

4. Share the [original \(1973\) race map](#) with students and allow them time to compare and contrast the two maps. Alternatively, the *First Ten Years* has a copy of the original map on page 94.
5. In recent years, other alternative routes have been used as well due to weather, or like last year, as a response to the pandemic. Share with the students the [Gold Trail Loop and Fairbanks Route](#) maps and allow time for them to compare and discuss.
6. Pose the following question to the students: "Given that this year is the 50th Running of the Iditarod, which route do you think the mushers should take and why?" Their responses could be shared in a variety of ways: as an oral response, a journal entry, or a larger written opinion piece.

[Associated Resources: Other Map-Based Lesson Plans](#)

- [Augmented Reality Topo Map](#)
- [Kids' Version of the Northern Route Map](#)
- [Coding the Trail with Ozobots](#)
- [What's An Average Leg? \(comparing the trails\)](#)

Partner with Iditarod Education This Year! Find a Project to Join!

IditaRead Digital: Set up your free account or login to last year's account and get your students started down the Iditarod Trail of reading. If you used it last year, you still have an account and v2.0 is about to be released. [IditaRead Information](#)

Writing to Mushers: This program is back better than ever! Read about the project, and send an email to [Jane Holmes](#), Director of Education, to request a musher contact list for the 2022 race if you would like to participate. [Writing to Mushers Information](#)

Musher Banquet Centerpiece Contest: We are thrilled to once again have our Musher Banquet Centerpiece Contest. What an honor for your students to have a centerpiece on a table at the 50th Anniversary Banquet of the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race.

[Centerpiece Information](#)

Iditarod Quilt Project 2021-2022: The Iditarod Quilt Project is back for the 2021-2022 school year! This year there will be eight quilts traveling across the country from school to school. Each quilt is unique and teaches students all about the race– from inspirational quotes to character development, the quilts make a great addition to any Iditarod classroom! To register to receive a quilt this year, [click here](#) and if you have questions about the program, contact Annie at iditarodquiltproject@gmail.com.

2022 Educational Trail Mail Art Contest and Project: We are thrilled to announce the second year of our Educational Trail Mail Project! Once again, we will be sending classroom projects down the trail in envelopes featuring one student's amazing art. Students in grades 5-12 are invited to enter a piece of art in our contest to be featured on this year's Trail Mail. Classrooms will be given the opportunity to send a project down the trail with a musher. [Trail Mail Art Contest Information](#). Trail Mail sales for classroom projects will begin on November 3rd. Watch for details in the November Newsletter.

Become an Iditarod Certified Educator: The Iditarod EDU Teacher Certification program is a four-month-long professional development program offered to preschool - high school teachers across the world. The program is divided into four checkpoints that combine synchronous and asynchronous coursework for teachers. The first cohort will launch at the Winter 2021 Conference for Teachers in Anchorage, Alaska! The Introductory Checkpoint will be offered during the conference as an add-on for those interested in participating. [Certified Educator Information](#)

Mark Your Calendar

November 1: Trail Mail Art Contest Entries Due
November 3: Educational Trail Mail Sales Begin
November 12: Banquet Centerpiece Entries Due
December 1: Trail Mail Art Contest Winner Announced
December 1: 2023 Teacher on the Trail Applications Due
December 1: Centerpiece Winners Announced
February 1: Educational Trail Mail Projects Due
February 20: Final Centerpieces Due in Anchorage
March 1- 4: Winter Conference for Educators - Anchorage
March 5: Iditarod Start
March 6: Iditarod Restart



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