

MUSH ON!

Monthly Newsletter of the Iditarod Education Department

NEWS & FEATURES

Teaching Ideas &
Photo of the Month
PAGE 2

Updates from the
Teacher on the Trail
PAGE 3

K9 Journalist: Sled Dog Ed
PAGE 4

Husky Talk
PAGE 5

Teach with The First 10 Years
& The Insider
PAGE 6

If You Mush Know
PAGE 7

Primary Source of the Month
PAGE 8

Taking "Schultz" Style
Dynamic Photos
PAGE 9

Where Legends are Born
PAGE 10

Trail Mail Sales are Open!
PAGE 11
Calendar
PAGE 10

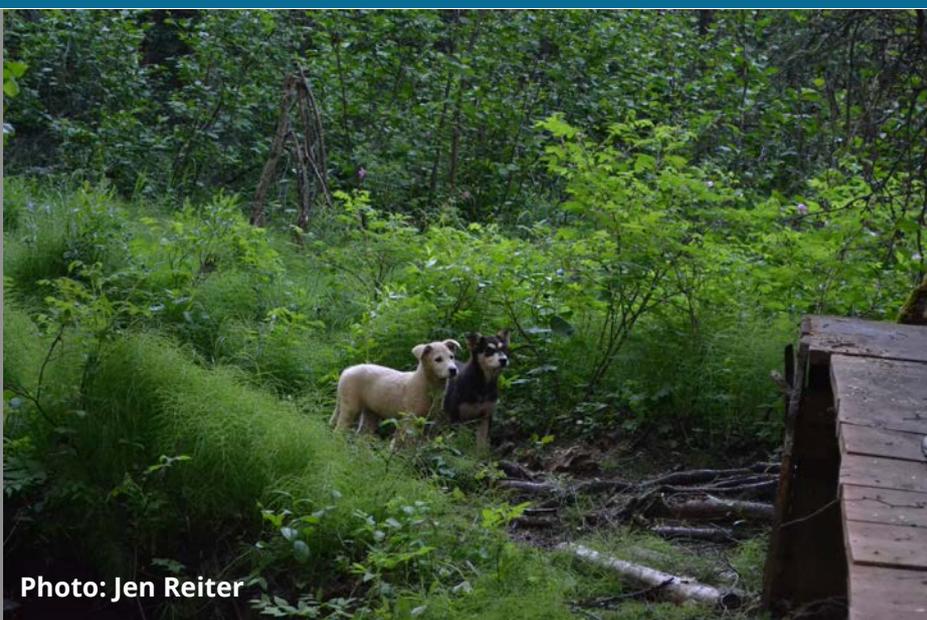


Photo: Jen Reiter

Thankful

BY JEN REITER

Gratitude is the theme of many classrooms for the month of November, and here at Iditarod EDU, we have much to be thankful for this year. Here's just a short list of what we are grateful for this month:

- All of the students who contributed artwork to our second annual Trail Mail Art Contest! Read on to see how you can send your own Trail Mail down the trail this year! Be sure to come back in December for the reveal of the winning artwork!
- The over fifty mushers and 700 dogs who are planning to hit the trails this year in the 50th running of the Iditarod Sled Dog Race. We can't wait to follow along on all of their adventures!
- Jon Van Zyle, Jeff Schulz, and all of the other artists and journalists who help us bring the race stories into classrooms across the world.
- Being able to gather together in person at this year's Winter Conference for Educators in Anchorage. Be sure to make plans to be there!
- And of course, we are grateful for educators like you. We know that this school year is extra challenging, and we applaud you for all that you do. We are grateful that you have hopped on the sled with us and look forward to watching the race unfold with you and your students!

We hope you have a wonderful fall and get to take a long, restful Thanksgiving holiday. When we see you again, it will be the most wonderful season of all... snow season!!



November Teaching Ideas

BY: HEIDI SLOAN

Listening Center

Have you ever explored the photography of the Iditarod with your students? A center you could use with your students is called [Faces of the Iditarod](#). The link is located on the homepage of [iditarod.com](#), down on the right side. Jeff Schultz, official photographer of the Iditarod for many years, started a project of photographing mushers, dogs, and volunteers along the Iditarod Trail. Along with their portraits are their audio stories! Students could choose two dogs to read about and compare and contrast, two mushers or volunteers to listen to their stories and write a summary, or however, you want to set up the center!

Creative Innovation

Mushers are very innovative in their approaches to efficiency and equipment for the Iditarod Race. [This lesson](#) will give your students some background knowledge on some of the equipment improved upon through innovation and give them an opportunity to generate ideas and prototypes of their own!

Dog Care Brochure

Your students can research the thorough care regimen given the incredible Iditarod canine athletes. With their findings, they can [create a brochure](#) outlining dog care. This might possibly connect to their own pet dogs. It could also be a compare-contrast activity for sled dog needs versus pet dog needs.

Iditarod Problem Solving

Once your students know about the equipment needed for the race, use this motivating [math problem-solving activity](#) to challenge them! Math word problems involving figuring out the number of dog legs, booties, time zones, and looking up statistics on [Iditarod.com](#) in Race Archives to get more information are all aspects of this activity! It can also be a springboard for you to be able to create additional math problems using Iditarod statistics.

Encouragement Needed!

Here is a photo to share with your students for a quick write activity. What could the white puppy be nervous about? How could his friend encourage him to be brave enough to come out from under the house? Have the students write the dialog happening between the two dogs.



Photo: Jen Reiter

"Every musher
cried on the
night you died,
and every husky
howled your
name."

~from "Redington's Run"
by: Hobo Jim

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

November... Gearing up for the upcoming and busy holiday season that starts at the end of this month with Thanksgiving. Many of us will travel to see family and friends to celebrate and be together. With some families being spread throughout the country, airplane travel is a part of that travel. So for this month, both of my posts (and subsequent teacher lessons) will be about the Iditarod Air Force (IAF) and the road system throughout the state of Alaska. Being from the “lower 48”, there was much that I did not know about transportation in the great state of Alaska! Be sure to check back on the 15th and 30th to learn more about these topics.

Misconceptions and More: Roads and the IAF

This month's misconception is one that I just learned about within the past 5 years or so. I had always known that the Iditarod Air Force (IAF), our group of volunteer pilots for the Iditarod, were critical to the logistical aspect of the race. Yet I had no idea that they were an absolute necessity. Without the IAF and other airlines helping out with shuttling volunteers across the state, the race simply would not be able to occur. Why you might ask? There are a series of connected roads and highways that traverse the state north to south. However, there are no roads that connect the Eastern/Central part of the state (Anchorage/Seward/Fairbanks) to the Western part (Nome, Kotzebue)!

This just emphasizes the vital nature of the IAF, and the impact they have on the race. This post will look a little more closely at the road system in the great state of Alaska, and also the role of the IAF in the Iditarod race itself.

Alaska Road Map Image from:
<https://www.alaskacenters.gov/trip-planning/travel/road>

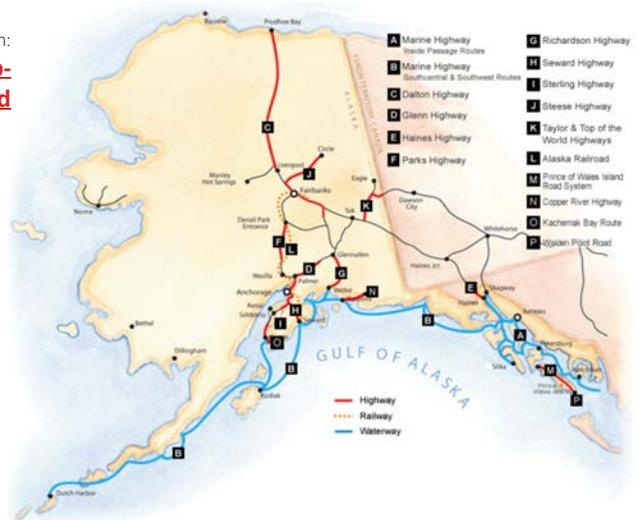


photo: Jeff Shultz
Faces of Iditarod

Voices of the Volunteers: Monty Mabry

Continuing this month's theme of exploring the role of the Iditarod Air Force, I thought it would be interesting to hear from one of the veteran pilots themselves. Monte Mabry is “Director of Operations” and a volunteer pilot for the Iditarod Air Force. He has been a volunteer pilot for 25 years and has seen the race evolve quite a bit over that time. He grew up around airplanes and it is kind of in his genes; his dad and 2 brothers are all pilots as well. In this interview he talks a lot about the camaraderie amongst the IAF pilots, the evolution of the IAF itself and a lifesaving mission during the Iditarod race many years ago. A favorite quote of his, I feel, rings true for all volunteers, “We try to be behind the scenes, and if people never realize all of what is going on, that's great. We are doing our job.”

K9 Journalist Corner

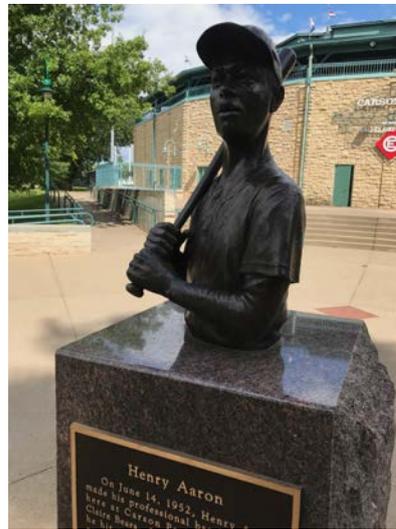
A Statue to Remember...50 Years of Iditarod by: Sled Dog Ed



Greetings Fellow Educators!

The month of November signifies *thankfulness*, and this year is no exception. It is truly a year to celebrate all that we are thankful and grateful for in our lives, families, communities, and the world.

I, Sled Dog Ed, decided to get out of the kennel with my friend, Topaz, and took an excursion around our local town observing all that our community had to offer - the natural beauty, the parks, the buildings, and the people. Topaz and I enjoyed gazing out the back window of the car and marveling at all the beauty that existed beyond our kennel. Every so often, we were given the opportunity to jump out and explore. At one of our stops, a local park, we noticed a variety of interesting statues throughout the grounds. The two of us looked at each other, wagged our tails, and began thinking. What did each statue represent? Was there a person or event the statue was commemorating? Why was the statue placed at each location? Here are a few examples we found on our exploration at the park.



Photos:

Paul Bunyan and Babe the Blue Ox

Henry "Hank" Aaron

photos: Nancy Wendt

In the midst of our dogversation, Topaz reminded me that Alaska has many statues as well. Some commemorate the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race in various ways and others represent historical events or people of Alaska. Topaz pulled out some of her pictures from the great state of Alaska and shared the following statues and sculptures.



Redington Junior/ Senior High School
photo: Terrie Hanke



Joe Redington, Sr.
"Father of Iditarod"
Iditarod Headquarters
photo: Nancy Wendt



Captain James Cook
Anchorage, Alaska
photo: Nancy Wendt

Sculptures and statues represent multiple aspects of our society and create symbolism. The objects are reminders of what was, what is, and what could be and are important parts of our lives. This upcoming Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race is a commemorative race; it is the 50th year of Iditarod! Happy Golden Anniversary, Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race!!! Since 50 years is quite an accomplishment and span of longevity for an event, it seems only appropriate that a statue or sculpture be created in its honor. Here lies the seed of an idea to share with your students.

Pose the following hypothetical situation to your students:

The Iditarod Trail Committee, Inc. would like to commission you to design and create a statue or sculpture to commemorate the Golden Anniversary of the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race.

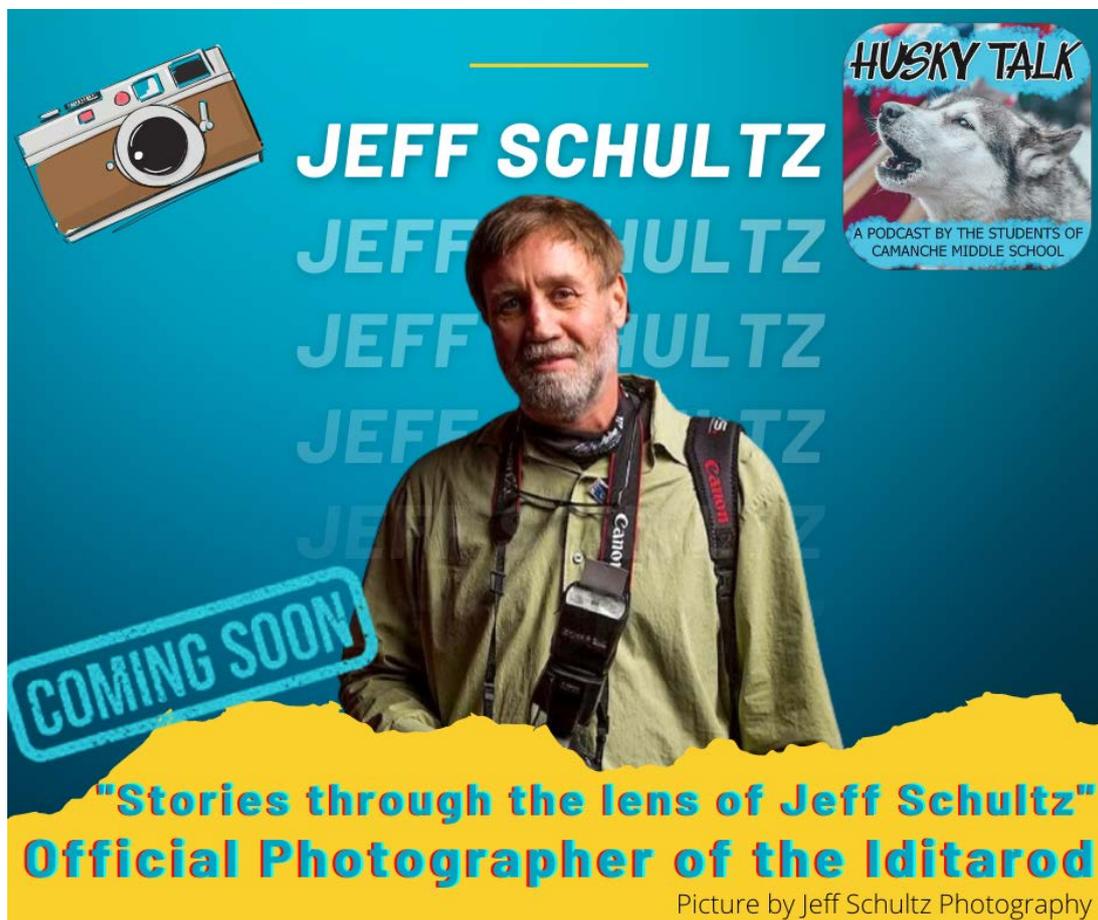
Your students can embark on creating a design, making a prototype, and including an explanation regarding the significance of the statue or sculpture. The explanation should include what the design represents, its connection to the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race, the location for the finished product, and a sample of what could be written on a plaque that would be placed on or near the finished sculpture or statue.

Students would incorporate art, language arts and writing, social studies, communication and speech, mathematical concepts, and science while working on this project. The project could be modified for younger students by eliminating some of the components and extended to be more challenging for the older students. Encourage the students to do research on various statues, even in your own community, their meanings, locations, materials used, etc. Perhaps you will even have students prepare an oral presentation of their design to the class. It seems the possibilities are endless with this project. Be creative!!!!

Teachers, you might even connect this lesson with the [Musher Banquet Centerpiece Contest for Students](https://www.iditarod.com/edu/) found on the Iditarod EDU Home Page <https://www.iditarod.com/edu/>. Your class could design one statue or sculpture to use as the basis for creating centerpieces to submit for the Musher Banquet. Let your imagination guide you forward!

Topaz and I wish you and your students all the best as you create a "Statue to Remember...50 Years of Iditarod".

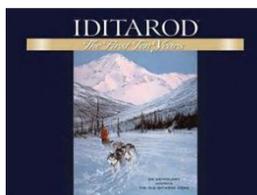
~Sled Dog Ed



The graphic has a blue background. In the top left is a brown and silver camera. In the top right is a circular logo for 'HUSKY TALK' featuring a husky's face and the text 'A PODCAST BY THE STUDENTS OF CAMANCHE MIDDLE SCHOOL'. In the center is a photo of Jeff Schultz, a man with a beard wearing a green jacket and a camera strap. The name 'JEFF SCHULTZ' is repeated in large, white, bold letters across the middle. In the bottom left is a blue stamp that says 'COMING SOON'. At the bottom, a yellow torn-edge banner contains the text: '"Stories through the lens of Jeff Schultz" Official Photographer of the Iditarod'. Below this banner, it says 'Picture by Jeff Schultz Photography'.

Teaching with the First Ten Years

by: Jane Holmes



Reading Informational Text

Following our Teacher on the Trail's theme of the Iditarod Air Force, **this month's lesson prompt**, based on the book The First Ten Years, is for pages 114 - 115, 117 - 118: "The History of the Early Iditarod Air Force" by Rob Stapleton. The comparison text is "**Iditarod Air Force: Lifeblood of the Race**" by Dorothy Olmstead on Iditarod.com.

This lesson shows how to use both texts to compare text types and the author's point of view.

Grade Level: 6 - 8

Subject: Language Arts - Informational Text

College and Career Readiness Standards practiced in this lesson:

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.6.3 Analyze in detail how a key individual, event, or idea is introduced, illustrated, and elaborated in a text (e.g., through examples or anecdotes).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.6.6 Determine an author's point of view or purpose in a text and explain how it is conveyed in the text.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.6.9 Compare and contrast one author's presentation of events with that of another (e.g., a memoir written by and a biography on the same person).

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RI.6.4 Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including figurative, connotative, and technical meanings

Email Jane Holmes at jane.holmes@iditarod.com for more information.

Teaching with the Insider:

Insider subscribers - Here is how you can continue to use your subscription **right now** to enrich your Iditarod lessons.

Meet the rookies! So far these rookies have Insider videos on Iditarod.com: Amanda Otto, Kattijo Deeter, Martin Massicotte, Sean Williams

Watch them early and check for new video clips to be added.

And if you aren't a current subscriber, you will want to subscribe soon to get the most out of your subscription.

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Rookies Martin Massicotte, Kattijo Deeter, Amanda Otto, and Sean Williams

photos: Jeff Schultz

If You "Mush" Know...

by: Lynne Witte

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

Ava

Why do mushers sometimes use four-wheelers with the dogs?

Are the dogs really pulling those?

Or are the mushers driving them?

Ready ? Start your Engines!

When temperatures drop the musher and dogs are ready to begin their training season. An ATV is a good choice for the best training equipment. The size and style may vary but the ATV allows mushers to maintain control of their teams during training.

The ATV allows the musher to have solid brakes when needed for stopping and offers the ability to assist the dogs on uphill giving them some gas if needed. The musher can vary the amount of pull on the dogs by the gears used. In first gear, the dogs will be pulling harder but using 3rd or 4th gear means the dogs can travel faster with less pulling. Using an ATV allows a musher to hold the dogs to a steady pace for distant training. A solid training program will have dog teams varying their workouts during the week between interval speed workouts, longer slower speeds, or speed workouts increasing over time.

ATV training gives the musher the opportunity to evaluate the individual dogs in a team safer than on a sled. They can observe the gait of individual dogs in harness knowing they have less worry of tipping or stopping.

A musher can be more confident training young leaders with ATV. The team can be stopped if needed to correct gee haw commands. Teams can train together for passing and parking alongside each other.

The musher can drive and train their team monitoring the speeds and amount of pull by using the ATV gears and brakes. As with a sled, remember to hang on - especially if a passenger is on the ATV. Ready? The dogs will be pulling to go!



Rig Session
October 2021

Photos courtesy of Lynne Witte

Primary Source of the Month

By: Jen Reiter

The late 1980s belonged to one woman: Susan Butcher. In 1986 she became the second female winner, the second four-time winner in 1990, and the first person to win four out of five consecutive years. The first Saturday of March is now known as Susan Butcher Day.

Using the Source With Students

1. Display the photo for the students and have them share what they See, Think, and Wonder about the photo.
2. Tell the students that in the late 1980s and early 1990s the race was dominated by a male/ female rivalry between Susan Butcher and Rick Swenson. Have them check the [Iditarod archives](#) to see the winners list for those years.
3. This rivalry spurred a t-shirt logo that carries on to this day: "Alaska: Where Men are Men and Women Win the Iditarod."
4. Since this is a special year in race history, maybe it's time for a new t-shirt logo! Have the students create a t-shirt design and or logo for this race year.



Click photo for a larger image.

Associated Resources:

- [Granite and Susan Butcher: Hero and Heroine](#)
- Susan Butcher wrote a picture book about her lead dog entitled [Granite](#). Used copies are readily available.
- [Remembering 40 Years of Iditarod: The 80s](#)

Taking “Schultz” Style Dynamic Photos

By Terrie Hanke

Teacher on the Trail, Jim Deprez, featured Jeff Schultz in a recent [Voices of the Volunteers](#) post. Schultz has brought the race to fans around the world with his photos since 1981. He knows every nook and cranny of the trail and uses both art and science in his trade. His photos are lively, they are captivating, and each one tells a story.

When Jeff was in 7th grade, a friend brought a 35 mm camera to school. Did he know this was going to be his life’s work when he first looked through the viewfinder? As he held the camera, he was intrigued and inspired. He read books about photography, studied the camera, and practiced. His career was born. Incidentally, it was 49 years ago that Jeff first held that camera. His love for photography and the Iditarod were born at nearly the same time!

As the Teacher on the Trail in 2006, I flew the trail with Jeff. I had plenty of time to observe him working and ask questions. As the Eye on the Trail journalist, I found myself standing next to Jeff many times capturing the same scenes, I asked more questions. Participating in his photo adventure tours, I’ve learned much about the science and the art of photography. I studied Jeff’s work to get a feeling for the art and dynamic nature of his photos. It’s part of the art I’d like to share with you – composition. More specifically, using the Rule of Thirds.

The Rule of Thirds gives the person behind the camera some guidance in where to place the subject, focal points, or the horizon in the photo. While framing a shot in the viewfinder, divide the frame into thirds up and down as well as side to side. You’ll have nine squares. The Rule of Thirds helps the shooter make the photo more interesting by placing the subject outside of that “center” box. Yes, your photo isn’t “centered” but by not being centered it’s usually far more interesting and more engaging.

This shot of DeeDee Jonrowe which I took in 2017 as she was leaving Unalakleet demonstrates the Rule of Thirds. It’s the same photo just aligned differently through cropping. In the one with gridlines, she’s centered as is the horizon. All in all, a not very interesting photo. In the other, her face, a focal point, is located at the upper left intersection of the lines and the horizon runs along the upper line. With DeeDee’s body at the left line, the dead space behind her is eliminated and she has room to move forward which implies action. This photo is far more interesting.



Jeff Schultz would encourage us to apply the Rule of Thirds while shooting. That’s very good advice. But DeeDee was in motion and wasn’t going to stop so that I could get this just right using the Rule of Thirds so in my original shot, she was pretty much centered. But thankfully we have editing options. So I applied the Rule of Thirds using the CROP tool while sitting in the comfort of the checkpoint rather than outside in the subzero temperatures with a moving subject.

Today, even young kids carry cell phones. The fantastic phone cameras apply the science and let the shooter compose the picture. As I did with DeeDee’s photo, the Rule of Thirds can be applied to a hurriedly taken or so-so photo by using the CROP tool found right in the phone’s photo app. Some phones have the option of having the gridlines visible in the viewfinder.

How can The Rule of Thirds be used in the classroom? Art teachers, have at it when explaining composition and what makes a picture or drawing more dynamic and interesting – send kids out to practice with their cell phone camera. Classroom teachers, are your kids working on a photo board for a project or taking pictures for a Powerpoint presentation? Introduce the Rule of Thirds to help your students create photos to use in their assignments that are engaging, appealing, and do justice to their presentation.

Where Legends Are Born

By: Jen Reiter

The Iditarod EDU family has lost some of its biggest legends in the last months. At every conference we lead, when we post the question, "What got you interested in using the Iditarod as a teaching tool?" at least half the room mentions Gary Paulsen and his novel *Woodsong*. When we ask our returning teachers to name one highlight of Iditarod season with their students, half the room mentions singing Hobo Jim's *Iditarod Trail Song* with their students. While we are saddened to say goodbye to these two legends, we are grateful for their work that we can still share with our students every Iditarod season.



Hobo Jim
photo: Terrie Hanke



Gary Paulsen
photo: Martha Dobson

Here's a look back at some of our favorite lessons featuring the work of these two legends:

- [Hand Washing with Hobo Jim](#)
- [Teaching Theme with Hobo Jim](#)
- [Iditarod Trail Song in Concert](#)
- [Woodsong Novel Study](#)
- [Inferring with the Iditarod Airforce \(features the novel Hatchet\)](#)
- [Figurative Language and the Iditarod](#)

"You're never the same, after you run the Iditarod, and I still just to go out and run with dogs, even though that I know I shouldn't. But I'd give just about anything to be able to do it again. To see the horizon again from the back of a dog team would be wonderful."

-Gary Paulsen

2022 Iditarod Trail Mail Project

By: Jen Reiter

We are so excited to announce that sales for the Educational Trail Mail Project are open! This is an amazing chance for your class to send a piece of mail down the trail in one of the 2022 student-designed cachets, and help us raise funds for our education programs at the same time!

It's very simple for your class to participate:

- Head over to our [sales link](#) to purchase your spot on a sled for just \$5.
- Once your purchase is complete, you will be emailed further directions about how to send your piece of mail to be included. Basically, you will be sending one 8 1/2 x 11 sheet of paper down the trail. What is on your paper is totally up to you! Your students could write a poem or story, they could create a piece of artwork, they could all include their signatures... Whatever you and your students decide.
- Once your piece of mail is received by our program coordinator, it will be put into an Educational Trail Mail envelope that will feature this year's winning student art piece.
- Your now filled cachet will be taken to the Musher Meeting in Anchorage that is held on the Thursday before the race. Your musher will sign the envelope and it will be collected back by our volunteers who will have it postmarked in Anchorage and then packaged for safe travels down the trail.
- Your mail will next be delivered to your musher at the race restart on Willow Lake and will be packed safely on his or her sled for its journey to Nome.
- Once it arrives under the Burred Arch, your letter will be postmarked in Nome and put into the mail stream to make its way back to you!

Please note: We are unable to honor requests for specific mushers to carry the mail. We are also not responsible for mail being lost in the US mail system.

Each musher is limited to carrying Trail Mail from 4 classes, so be sure to take advantage of this opportunity soon! Sales begin on November 3rd and are limited to one piece of mail per class or homeschool family. If you have questions, please email

trailmail@iditarod.com



Mark Your Calendar

- 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



Newsletter Staff

Editor: Jen Reiter

Contributing Writers:

Jim Deprez
Terrie Hanke
Jane Holmes
Erin Montgomery
Heidi Sloan
Jen Reiter
Nancy Wendt
Lynne Witte

Photography:

Martha Dobson
Terrie Hanke
Jen Reiter
Jeff Schultz
Nancy Wendt
Lynne Witte



Newsletter Feedback, Questions, or Suggestions?
email: jen.reiter@iditarod.com