

MUSH ON!

Monthly Newsletter of the Iditarod Education Department

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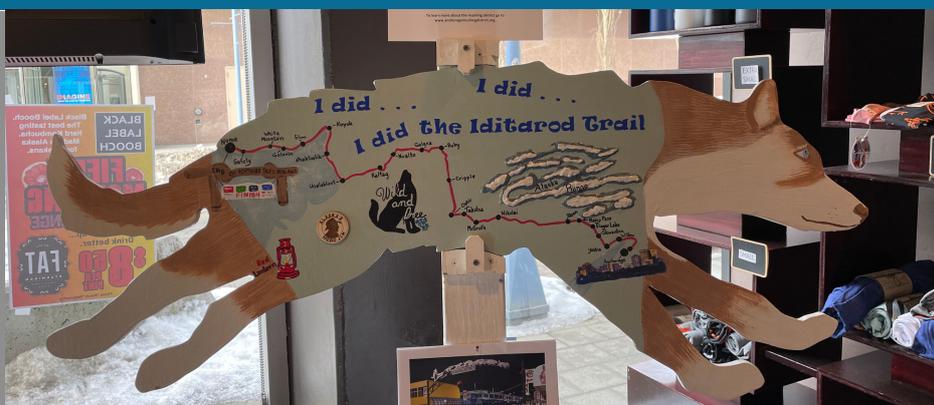
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At the Start Line

BY JEN REITER

The time is here! We are finally at the starting line for the 50th Anniversary of the Iditarod! I'm writing to you from the Lakefront Hotel where the Winter Conference for Educators is in full swing! The hotel has been transformed into Race Headquarters for the duration of the race and volunteers are arriving and checking in. The Junior Iditarod has wrapped up, but the stories are still being shared. The starting order is set and everyone is keeping an eye on the weather.

Our view for the conference this week is Lake Hood which is the largest and busiest seaplane base in the world. It's pretty quiet out there today, but later this week it will be hopping and the Iditarod Airforce pilots start their flights delivering supplies and volunteers out to the trail.

If you haven't ever thought about using the Iditarod Airforce as a part of your Iditarod lessons, give it a shot. It's a great tie-in to lots of lessons about flight, forces, and motion. Read here to learn more about the IAF.

Enjoy following the race.... We know you will!





March Teaching Ideas

BY: HEIDI SLOAN

Social Studies

Mount Rushmore is intriguing to students of all ages. Combine their interest in mushers and the landmark in South Dakota with [this lesson!](#) Students work together to choose mushers whose likeness deserves a spot on Mt. Rushmore, defend their choices (good critical thinking skills), and then actually create a scene with the mushers' faces on the mountain!

Calendar Fun

If you have the little calendar dates that are changed daily or monthly in your classroom, [here are](#) some Iditarod-themed dates you can use for the month of March! For little ones, they could be used for finding patterns.

Forms and Info for Following the Race

Your students can daily check the progress of their mushers on this [tracking form](#), [race map](#), and [checkpoint distances](#). Statistical information, comparing and contrasting, math computation, geography distance calculations, and more can be utilized with these tools! The link that defines the [special awards](#) along the way can get your students excited in looking to see who will win those prizes during the race.

STEM

Here are two lessons for your students to incorporate STEM into their thinking. The first has to do with the paws of dogs contrasted with the hands of humans; students build [robotic hands and paws](#). The second is [building a solar oven](#) that could be used on the Iditarod Trail!

Photo of The Month: Mind Readers...

What do you think is going on in the minds of these sled dogs as they hook a ride with the Iditarod Airforce? Have your students write a speech bubble for each puppy that tells how they are feeling! Click the photo for a larger image.



"A few things that come to mind when I think about what makes a great team are communicating with each other, having a plan for success, and doing what you can to highlight each other's strengths."

~Dallas Seavey

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

It's here! The 50th running of the Iditarod is finally upon us. This week, mushers will be headed across the great state of Alaska en route to the Burred Arch in Nome. Over the years, the trail and route have changed, but the thing that has remained consistent has been a great race every year. This month, I will focus on the race route itself. The mileage has always been very intriguing for me. The 1,049 miles that are usually associated with the distance traveled is a traditional mileage, not the actual mileage. The smaller adjustments that have been made from year to year due to mother nature also changes the course and therefore affect the miles traveled by the mushers. Mother nature doesn't just affect the course, but the mushers as well. Volunteers that run Search and Rescue for the race also need to be aware of these minute changes. Dan Harrelson, village public safety officer in White Mountain is one of these volunteers.



Photo Courtesy of Daniel Harrelson - www.nsedc.com

Misconceptions and More: Race Route

Most of us are aware of the alternating route (heading north in even-numbered years, and south in odd years), but the smaller changes in the route were the thing that I was more interested in. I had the pleasure of talking with race marshal, Mark Nordman, about these smaller changes. As the point man on the race routes each year, he offered some incredible insights as to the trail usage, the natural obstacles, the areas where there is more variation, and the perennial trouble spots for the trail breakers and mushers alike. Be sure to check back on the 15th to learn more about the changes in the route from year to year, and the things that affect those changes.



Photo Courtesy of: Dan Harrelson

Voices of the Volunteers: Dan Harrelson

Dan Harrelson has been a very big figure in the small community of White Mountain for decades. Not only has he been the mayor, but he is currently a member of the city council and the VPSO (Village Public Safety Officer) in the community. He is the man that is called when something at the checkpoint needs to get figured out or if there is an emergency that needs to be addressed. Dan has been volunteering with Iditarod since 1982 and has had the privilege to host the 8-hour mandatory layover in White Mountain: the only checkpoint in the race where all mushers are required to stop for an extended period of time. During his time on the search and rescue team, he has saved lives and helped many stranded mushers and other travelers to the area. Check out this post on the 30th and hear what things are like in White Mountain during the Iditarod.



K9 Journalist Corner

by: Zuma



Hello friends,

My 4 paws have been busy here at Iditarod Headquarters. Musher's have been coming and going, making last-minute preparations, and generally waiting to hit the trail for the 50th running of the Last Great Race. We are trying our hardest to keep everyone protected by separating mushers from the general public because we want to keep our interior villages safe as my K9 friends head out on the trail.

There are also a lot of pawsome events leading up to the Iditarod. One being the **Junior Iditarod**. This year 15 brave mushers ages 14-17 raced in two 64 mile stages. This happened because of overflow on the usual race route. It was rookie Emily Robinson who won the race this year. Awooooooo! Only 6 seconds separated first and second place - another girl - Hannah Wappett. High paws to all of our 2022 Juniors.

It's almost time! Get your classes prepared for this year's Iditarod. It will be another exciting race as we once again hit the Northern Route of the Iditarod Trail.

Tail wags,

Zuma



Photo: Jim Deprez

If You "Mush" Know...

by: Lynne Witte

Illustrated by: Jon Van Zyle

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

From Mr. Schloeder's 5th Graders:

Do you think the dogs know it is a race?

Do they want to win?

5-4-3-2-1-Hike!

Sled dogs are ready to run and race! Whether training or racing, teams of dogs spark each other to go! They have a routine of regular feeding and running habits. The best care and preparation have been given to each dog in daily routines.

Running is exciting to sled dogs. The sounds and smells of race day stir the dogs. Their heads pop out. Let's go! After a pre-race meal or snack, the sled and harness are laid out, the dogs are harnessed, feet are checked, and dogs are attached to the gangline with their partners. There is a chorus of barking and leaping to go. It is race day! The dogs are ready.

Do they want to win? The dogs want to chase another team down a trail.

Do you think they want "barking rights; with their friends when done? We know the dogs are excited and ready to run.



Dog of the Month!

by: Kelly Villar, with Eric Kelly

March brings along the excitement that the 50th Iditarod is finally here! With that, we travel to DayBreak Mushing, home of Iditarod rookie Eric Kelly. Eric shares the story of how Barbaro, a 4-year-old wheel dog, came to his kennel and the special bond they have.

Barbaro came to DayBreak mushing as a six-month-old puppy. Upon arrival, he was somewhat oversized for his age which made him a little clumsy. He also came with a ton of energy; he was a handful, to say the least. I spent a lot of time with him solo, building trust and working with him on his manners. When fall came it was time to get him in a harness for the first time let me tell you that was one heck of a process but we finally got it done. The victory was short-lived as he almost immediately chewed his harness off and we had to start all over.... lol. Once we finally got him in his gear and to the line he was as wild as ever but once we started moving he was like a natural he went right into a trot and looked like a seasoned veteran. It didn't take long for him to find confidence in his ability and once he knew what his job was, he matured quickly.

Barbaro is named after a Kentucky Derby winner and as he got older and in shape, he is built like a racehorse and very, very strong. Barbaro has found his place on the team as a wheel dog (closest dog to the sled) and he excels at his job, always steering us where we need to go.



Photos: Eric Kelly

Once we started doing our longer runs, including camping on the trail, Barbaro struggled with settling down and resting, which can be an issue. So when we would stop to camp, I would unhook him from the gangline and bring him back to the sled and put straw down and we would take a nap together. 3 years later and he still naps with me at every camp & checkpoint.

I love all of my sled dogs but Barbaro is certainly one of my favorites and I can not wait to travel the Iditarod Trail with him.

Follow Barbaro and the whole team from DayBreak Mushing at the 50th running of the Iditarod!

Teaching with the First Ten Years

by: Jane Holmes

This year's race marks a milestone in the history of the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race - the 50th running! This is the perfect time to have your students engage in a living wax museum project based on the champions of the first ten years.

This month's lesson prompt is based on the book *The First Ten Years*, chapter 10 "The Champions", pages 205 - 259. Teachers should preview all pages before deciding how to use them in the classroom.

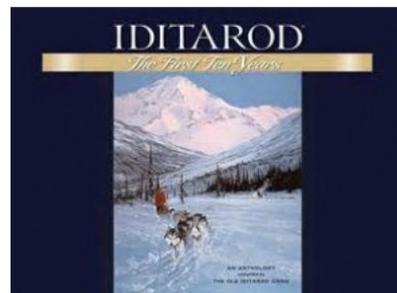
Grade Level: 6 – 12

Subject: language arts and social studies

College and Career Readiness Standards practiced in this lesson:

This project intertwines numerous standards in these strands:

- Reading Informational Text
- Literacy in History/Social Studies
- Writing
- Language
- Speaking and Listening



There are many elements to this project that teachers can adapt to meet the needs of their classroom, and since there were only 7 distinct people that won the first ten races, students can design their museum display in groups and take turns personifying the champion they are representing or divide the information gathered and present different parts of it. Teachers can also expand the project to include Iditarod champions from all years.

The basic project is that students will research an Iditarod champion, write a report, create a museum display, give a first-person speech, and publicly present their historical Iditarod figure.

Educators may purchase a copy of *The First Ten Years* at cost, \$30.00. Email jane.holmes@iditarod.com for the discount code.



HUSKY TALK

Dick Mackey - Released in February
Anna and Kristy Berington - Released in February
Angie Taggart - Released in February
Bridgett Watkins - Released in February
Pam Flowers - Coming in March

NEW EPISODES

Join the Insider!

Share in the excitement of the 50th running of the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race as if you were there! Now is the time to renew or subscribe to the Insider to get live coverage, trail coverage, full GPS tracking capabilities, and access to Insider videos - new content is being added all year long! There are special education subscription options. Check them out [HERE](#) and subscribe today!

Mark Your Calendar

March 1- 4: [Winter Conference for Educators - Anchorage](#)

March 5: Iditarod Start

March 6: Iditarod Restart

March 20: Nome Finisher Banquet

June 22: First Day to Sign-Up for the 2023 Iditarod

Fall 2022: Second Iditarod Certified Educator Cohort Begins



**Thanks to Joe,
it's off we go...
Happy 50th Run,
Iditarod!**



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