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The Iditarod Historic Trail Alliance is an equal opportunity program provider and employer.

The Iditarod Historic Trail Alliance promotes awareness of the Iditarod Trail and its gold rush and Alaska Native heritage by encouraging education programs and historical research, assisting in the protection, improvement, maintenance and marking of the Trail and developing partnerships that foster stewardship, commitments and support.

## From the past...

*Alaska Evening Post*, Seward, January 4, 1917

### DOG RACES THIS YEAR TO BE REAL EVENT

NOME. —With a lot of money already donated, Nome will have more dog races this winter than during any other season in the history of the Bering Sea city. The All-Alaska Sweepstakes Race, the great sporting classic of the north, will not receive individual attention for premiership honors this year, for a new contest, the dog race marathon, has been inaugurated, according to Charles Sangford, former editor the Nome Nugget.

John Borden, Chicago millionaire, who started North on a sporting expedition last summer that ended when the power schooner Great Bear piled up on Saint Matthew Island in the Bering Sea, was the creator of the marathon for dogs. Borden reached Nome after a wet and chilly experience in the surf of Saint Matthew Island and became interested in dog racing. He sent to Chicago for the handsomest silver cup that the silversmiths of that city could furnish and donated it for race over a marathon course. The trophy weighs more than 60 pounds without the pedestal.

The Nome Kennel Club, with Borden's assistance, laid out the rules under which the trophy must be competed for. The course will be 26 miles and 300 yards. The event is to be run under the most favorable climatic conditions, it being the desire of both the Club and the donor of the trophy to learn exactly how fast a team of dogs can cover this distance. The big cup must be won three times by the same team owner, but each winner will

be given a smaller silver cup. It is likely that the Marathon Race be held a few days before Christmas, but the date is dependent upon the weather.

Eight teams are in training for the event.

Perry Riley, Russ Downing, Grant Jackson, Fay Delzene, Charley Ross, John Erickson and Billy Webb are getting their animals in shape for the test.

Only five teams will compete in the All-Alaska sweepstakes race, from Nome to Candle Creek and return, a distance of 412 miles and the contest is likely to simmer down to a battle between the malamutes with pointed ears and malamutes of lop-eared variety. Leonhard Seppala has

acquired all the pointed ear Siberian dogs in the country and Fay

Delzene has a monopoly on the best lop-eared dogs. Seppala and Delzene each have won a victory in the great event. \*

Leonhard Seppala with some of his dogs



Perry Riley is training a team of Missouri bird hounds, crossed with malamutes, which may upset the general



belief that crossed breed animals are not good racers. The dogs are said to be very fast but there is a question as to their having the staying qualities as needed in a grueling race of 412 miles.

The ladies amateur race this year promises to bring out considerable rivalry. George Bokum, a Chicago sportsman who accompanied Borden to Nome, donated a beautiful bronze and silver vase for this event, and already the women dog fanciers of Nome are arranging to borrow a few dogs from the crack racing teams. There will be about eight other races during the winter.

Sanford says there will be more prospecting in Nome this winter than ever before, but he has never seen the time when miners wouldn't take a few days off to watch a dog race, no matter how much gold they were gathering from deep in the earth at the time. When a dog race starts all other activities are suspended.

\*Fay Delzene won the All-Alaska Sweepstakes Race in 1913, Leonard Seppala won the All-Alaska Sweepstakes Race in 1915, 1916 and 1917.

*Daily Empire*, Juneau July 30, 1920

#### **ALASKA NOTES**

F. M. Ayer, driving his famous team of huskies, won the fourth annual John Borden cup race over the Cape Nome course after a lively contest with the Webb team. Seppala also was an entrant, but his dogs refused to work, and he was forced to drop out. This makes the third time Ayer\* won the race and the cup is awarded to him permanently under the rules.

\* Ayer won the 1917 and 1918 races, Leonard Seppala won in 1919.

#### **International Trails Summit**

American Trails (AT) and the Professional Trail Builders Association (PTBA) will co-host the International Trails Summit (a collaborative effort of the 25th International Trails Symposium and Training Institute and the Sustainable Trails Conference) in Reno, Nevada during the week of April 17, 2023.

The event will bring together a diverse trail and outdoor community to learn, build relationships, and find solutions to the challenges of developing outdoor recreation opportunities for everyone.

American Trails and the Professional Trail Builders Association have selected Ku Stevens as one of the keynote speakers for the International Trails Summit. Ku is a Reno local Citizen of the Year and organizer of the Frank Quinn Remembrance Run every summer. Frank Quinn was Ku's grandfather who was taken from his Paiute family near Yerington, Nevada and boarded at the Stewart Indian School in Carson City. He escaped several times and ran 50 miles, crossing the Carson River and the Pine Nut Mountains, to get back home. The Remembrance Run follows Frank's route, creating a direct connection to his experience.

For more on the Trails Summit: <https://tinyurl.com/ye2xmc2p>

#### **New Book on Iditarod Race**

"Ten Feet Tall and Bulletproof, Alaska Natives Blazing the Iditarod Trail" by Judy Ferguson and the Yukon-Koyukuk School District, Epicenter Press, 2020, 2022, 240 pages, \$19.95.

While organizers of the Iditarod Sled Dog Race still reference its Native roots, this aspect of the Iditarod has been largely lost on the public. In an effort to compensate for this oversight, as well as to encourage young Alaska Natives to embrace their heritage, Judy Ferguson and the Yukon-Koyukuk School District have published a book that features stories from 13 Athabascan men and women who have completed at least one Iditarod.

Many of the 13 contributors gathered in this collection were early entrants in the Iditarod, and their race tales are very different from today's high tech-event.

The book combines personal histories with tales from the race. While all the contributors talk about their race experiences, they also talk about their own lives and the lives of their parents and grandparents.

**Trail Work** - The September Alaska-Trails Newsletter reports that on August 29 a crew of volunteers brushed over a mile of trail out near Moose Pass. They hiked the Falls Creek Trail and pulled small alders, spruce, and devil's club out of the ground in the trail corridor, lopped larger alders, cleared some drains, and removed a fallen tree on the trail.

