

The Tripod

April 2013



Spring board meeting

The spring meeting of the Iditarod Historic Trail Alliance Board will be at Iditarod Race Headquarters in Wasilla April 26-27.

Dogs still used to deliver mail

Greenland issued a stamp this year showing mail being carried by dog sled as a part of the multinational Europa series with the theme of postal vehicles. According to the stamp's designer Christian Fleischer Rex, dog sleds are still used to deliver mail in some areas along



Greenland's west coast.

Seward Mayor's Cup Race



The 18th annual Seward Mayor's Cup sled dog race was held on April 6. About a mile and a half, the race, a fund raiser for the Seward Iditarod Trail Blazers, is restricted to novice mushers. Businesses and

organizations pay a \$200 entry fee to sponsor a musher. Local dog mushers provide dogs and sleds.

The money raised is used by the Seward Iditarod Trail Blazers in its mission to restore the Iditarod Trail between Seward and Girdwood.

The race winner was Mot Jitjaruwong, sponsored by Holiday Inn Express, with a time of 8 minutes and 48 seconds, driving a Dan Seavey team.



The Iditarod Historic Trail Alliance promotes public 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, developing partnerships that foster stewardship commitments and support from land owners, local communities, organizations and others.

The trail for all seasons



Iditarod Historic Trail Alliance
PO Box 2323, Seward AK 99664
IditarodHTA@gmail.com
<http://www.Iditarod100.org>



For spectators and participants there was free coffee and chocolate, also hotdogs and marshmallows and a bonfire to roast them.

From the past...

The Alaska Mining Hall of Fame recently inducted three early miners from the Iditarod-Flat district: Merton Marston, Mattie Crosby (aka Tootsie) and Toivo Rosander. Following is a short biography of Merton Marston; the other two will be covered in subsequent issues. The information is courtesy of the Mining Hall of Fame.

Merton H. Marston (1871-1935)

Merton H. Marston was born in Indiana on July 22, 1871. Marston attended La Porte, Indiana schools, but there is no record of his graduation. He served as a store clerk during his teenage years, and then went to work for the *LaPorte Daily Herald*, eventually becoming city editor. But the lure of the Klondike Gold Rush led to his departure for the northland in 1898.

Little is known about his first years in the north, but by 1906 he was in the Fairbanks district of Alaska, actively mining and operating a saloon at "13 below discovery." By 1908 Marston had returned to his earlier career and was writing for the *Weekly Fairbanks News*.

While in Fairbanks, Marston met two prospectors, John Beaton and William A. Dikeman, who had been prospecting in the Innoko region with limited success. They decided to move southwest into the area drained by the Iditarod. Before they left for an all winter prospecting venture, they found a small boat and arranged for supplies and food through Marston, who was promised a 1/6 interest in any gold they found.

Beaton and Dikeman followed the suggestion of a local trapper that they prospect a stream known for its abundance of land otter, aptly called Otter Creek. On Christmas Day of 1908, at a depth of about 10 feet they encountered rich pay. Word of the discovery slowly leaked out and by late 1909, a stampede was under way, which Marston joined. He staked two claims on Otter Creek and brought the first gold dust from the Iditarod district to

Fairbanks on September 27, 1909. He had great faith in the new discovery and began building a large general store in the new settlement, known as Beaton City, under construction at Otter Creek.

By 1912 Marston began to partner with another Iditarod millionaire, Henry Riley. They would for a time jointly own the Riley-Marston dredge on Otter Creek.

Merton Marston and his wife Stella left Alaska in 1918. They lived in Washington for many years operating a chicken ranch and later a hotel. In 1931 they moved to Oregon, where they operated a hotel and later a restaurant. Marston died in 1935.

What others are doing

The Juan Bautista de Anza National Historic Trail story is now available on a video "The Anza Expedition." This Expedition of 1775-76,



was a journey of 1,200 miles by over 240 settlers and soldiers, led by the Spanish explorer Juan Bautista de Anza, across unknown lands from Tubac,

Arizona to the Pacific coast. Their goal was to build a presidio, or fort, to secure and protect New Spain's missions from encroachment by the Russians and British. Their settlement would become the city of San Francisco.

The video was produced by the National Park Service and the Environmental Education Exchange and was funded with National Park Service challenge cost share funds with a match from the Arizona Department of Transportation.

You can view it on YouTube in English (<http://youtu.be/uPwSlixeiU>) and Spanish (<http://youtu.be/elsJ4uXcGbs>). Contact The Western National Parks Association (www.wnpa.org) to purchase a DVD with all the extras.