

# Kid's Korner

## Stakes are high in sled dog race

ANCHORAGE, Ala. — It's hailed as the "Last Great Race on Earth."

Early every March, the people of Alaska turn their attention to 60 mushers and 800 sled dogs battling their way across a white, frozen land.

The race begins in Anchorage amid a cheering crowd. The dogs pull on their harnesses, their tails arched, eager to go, barking into the wind and flipping snow with their noses. Their destination: Nome, Alaska, 1,137 miles away. The gun sounds and they're off on the run of a lifetime: the Iditarod Sled Dog Race.

The stakes are high. The first musher to Iditarod, a ghost town and halfway point on the trail, wins 240 specially minted silver coins. And the first to Nome takes home \$50,000. Even so, many run the Iditarod more to finish than to win. They savor the solitude and the challenge, bivouacking in their sleds and putting hard-earned miles behind them.

### Goldseekers Blazed Trail

Although the Iditarod Race officially has been run the past 13 years, its roots reach back to the winter of 1910-11, when goldseekers stampeding from Alaska's southern coast blazed the trail into the interior. The towns boomed and busted (Iditarod among them), but mushers still used the trail to carry mail and supplies. This was before the airplane came to Alaska, when the success or failure of a musher getting through could mean life or death.

Consider the case in Nome, far out on the Seward Peninsula, along the Bering Sea in northwestern Alaska. In January 1925, the town doctor noticed white membrane patches on the throat of six-year-old Richard Stanley. His

diagnosis: diphtheria. The boy was dead in days. The epidemic spread. There was no serum. Nome panicked.

The events of the following week became a symbol of Alaska's frontier kinship, and of today's Iditarod Race. Serum from Anchorage was sent by train north to Nenana. From there, 20 volunteer mushers relayed the small vials through 50-below-zero temperatures and extreme white-out conditions. Several dogs died.

The final musher, Gunnar Kaasen, had to grope for the vials with bare hands in the snow after strong winds flipped his sled just outside Nome.

He found the serum and got it through. Nome was saved.

The modern Iditarod Race may approach the serum run in spirit, but not in style. As the mushers arrive, they immediately tend their 13 to 15 team dogs, rubbing them down, patting their heads, dressing their paws in special protective booties, and feeding them chunks of dried beef and salmon. Thousands of pounds of dog food are taken to the checkpoints by a squadron of small ski planes — the "Iditarod Air Force." Packed in with the dog food are race officials, journalists, and veterinarians.

### Concern for Huskies

"They're running machines," says Dr. Tex Coady, inspecting the Siberian huskies, the most common breed of racing dog. "Lungs and rib cage and muscle, and that's all." Veterinarians stationed at each checkpoint have the authority to remove from the race any dog they consider injured or unfit to run.

Twenty-three checkpoints punctuate the trail. The mushers

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## DO YOU KNOW OUR PRESIDENTS ON A FIRST NAME BASIS?



MOST PEOPLE  
KNOW THE  
LAST NAMES OF  
OUR PRESIDENTS  
BUT DO YOU  
KNOW THEIR  
FIRST NAMES?



1. \_\_\_\_\_ FORD
2. \_\_\_\_\_ HOOVER
3. \_\_\_\_\_ COOLIDGE
4. \_\_\_\_\_ FILLMORE
5. \_\_\_\_\_ EISENHOWER
6. \_\_\_\_\_ CLEVELAND
7. \_\_\_\_\_ NIXON
8. \_\_\_\_\_ TRUMAN
9. \_\_\_\_\_ WILSON
10. \_\_\_\_\_ KENNEDY
11. \_\_\_\_\_ JACKSON
12. \_\_\_\_\_ POLK
13. \_\_\_\_\_ JOHNSON\*
14. \_\_\_\_\_ MCKINLEY
15. \_\_\_\_\_ GRANT
16. \_\_\_\_\_ MADISON
17. \_\_\_\_\_ MONROE
18. \_\_\_\_\_ TYLER

\* OUR 36<sup>TH</sup> PRESIDENT  
See Answers page B12

## COLOR THIS!

1. BLACK	6. ORANGE
2. PEACH	7. GREEN
3. YELLOW	8. LT. BROWN
4. BLUE	9. LT. BLUE
5. BROWN	10. LT. GREEN

LEMMINGS ARE RODENTS. THEY LOOK A LITTLE LIKE THEIR RELATIVES, THE RATS. ONE DIFFERENCE IS THAT THEY DO NOT HAVE LONG TAILS. THE LEMMINGS IN NORWAY ARE TRAVELERS. WHEN THEY MULTIPLY TOO FAST THEY TRAVEL FROM THEIR MOUNTAIN HOMES TO THE SEA WHERE THEY TUMBLE IN AND DROWN.

