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Spring 2003



Iten Kennels

Dear Students,

Thank you for writing. I read each one of your letters and enjoy them very much.

Raising and training sled dogs is like living on a farm. There are barely enough hours in the day to take care of the animals so I hope you accept this newsletter instead of a personal letter.



Ed and team leaving Nulato

The Iten Homestead

*25 miles NE of
Kotzebue above
The Arctic Circle*

Have you ever imagined living in a place where there are no roads? Our family does not travel by car to get around. We travel by dog team or snow machine in the winter and by boat or on horseback in the summer.

Our nearest town, Kotzebue is a community of around 3,000 people who are mostly Iñupiaq Eskimo. Three passenger jets come to our airport each day—this is how we travel to the big city, Anchorage.

At our home we burn wood in our woodstove to keep warm and we carry water from the creek in 5 gallon buckets. It is ice cold and very thirst quenching. In the winter we have to chop through thick ice to reach the water below.

Raising dogs is a family affair. Cloudy, who lead the team to the

Iditarod 2003

I put on a lot of training miles to prepare for this race. Most of it was into the Squirrel River Valley which lies behind our homestead. For most of the winter we didn't have much snow so traveling on the step mountainsides was fast. We, myself and my dog handler, Tollef, had to work hard to keep the dogs slow (so they wouldn't get injured). Then we got tricked. We left the homestead to go on an overnight camp

out. It started to snow. When we finally got to camp it snowed so hard we could not leave the next day. By the third day, we had to get home because we were running out of food. The snow was so deep that the dogs could not break trail. Either Tollef or myself had to snowshoe in front of the dogs to get home. We were all mighty tired when we got home.

I entered the Iditarod Race with good tough dogs. I also work on

speed when I train. The first miles on the river flew by. It was different leaving from Fairbanks. None of us knew what to expect. I think I let my dogs go a little too fast because

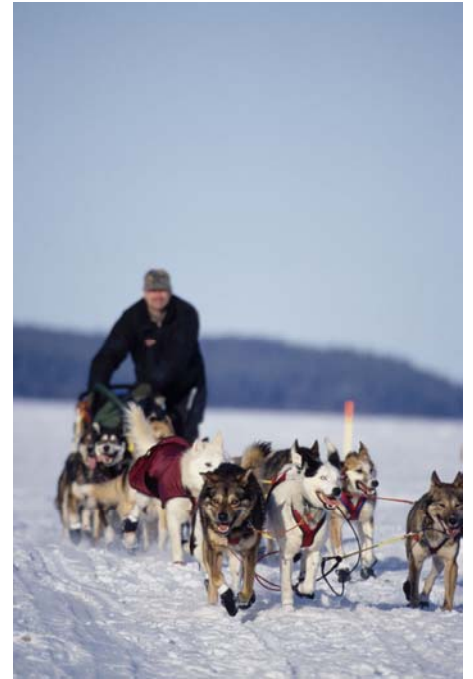


2005 Iditarod Team



Finishing Team

- Cloudy
 - Pee Wee
 - Dylan
 - Zoey
- Frost
 - Boy
 - Rex
 - Aussie



*Ed and team going into Eagle
PeeWee and Cloudy in lead*

Iten Homestead (Continued)

finish line in Nome is actually my son, Quinn's dog. He claimed her as a pup. She was white with black spots. My daughter, Kate, and wife, Ruth, joked that Cloudy looked like a cow. But Quinn loved her—now she is an excellent leader and a mother herself!

Katie and Quinn play with the puppies when they are newborn—this gets them used to people. Both children starting running dogs as soon as they could walk. They had a little dog sled with one dog pulling. Now Kate is 13. She runs in the 8 dog, 11 mile races. At 11, Quinn runs the three dog races.

Living on a homestead is a lot of work but we are all rewarded through the company of the dogs, the land, and the people.

Iditarod 2003 (Continued)

by the time I got to Galena they needed rest.

The people in Galena were wonderful. They showed real Alaskan hospitality to us all.

After Galena, my race went well. My team came together and traveled with a purpose. I met Sonny Linder who was traveling the same speed as I was. He and I enjoyed much camaraderie on the trail.

I gave my team a lot of rest. They were strong when we hit the wind storm on the coast. They drove right into

the storm. I'm real proud of every one of them. After traveling so long with them they become your best friends.

Now I'm training puppies and getting ready for another big race which we run every year. This race is called the Kobuk 440 and it is in the Northwest Arctic. We will enjoy traveling on the Kobuk River and seeing friends who live in the villages there.