

# The Alaskan Philatelist

The Journal of the Alaska Collectors Club • American Philatelic Society Affiliate No. 218



[www.AlaskaPhilatelic.org](http://www.AlaskaPhilatelic.org)

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# The Alaskan Philatelist

The Journal of the Alaska Collectors Club

ISSN #1096-5963

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Membership information and sample issues of this journal are available from the Secretary/Treasurer. Price of a sample issue is \$2.00 (stamps OK). Membership levels are as follows:

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Contributing Membership ..... \$20.00  
Sustaining Membership ..... \$30.00 (or more)  
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Jim Zuelow

## AWARDS

Colopex 2000—Silver-Bronze  
Colopex 2002—Silver-Bronze  
STaMpsHOW 03—Silver-Bronze  
Canada's 7th National Philatelic Literature  
Exhibition 2005—Silver Medal  
NAPEX 2007—Silver Medal  
APS Stampshow 2008—Silver Medal





**HELP WANTED:** Enjoy working with computers and websites? The ACC NEEDS YOU to help keep our website current and appealing! Check our site at [www.alaskaphilatellic.org/](http://www.alaskaphilatellic.org/) and contact VP Angela Watson for more information.

**FOR SALE:** "Grandfather's Collection" Beautiful Alaskan covers, mostly older, 7 hand colored/ drawn cachet with each order. Nice Alaskan covers. 35 covers \$110.00 Guaranteed. Victor Schwez, 10519 Casanes Ave., Downey CA 90241

**INFO:** ACC member Bob Beeman would like to hear from any member who could inform him about past ACC member Paul E. Smith, ACC Member 165, who previously lived at 305 Waldman Drive, Park Forest, Illinois 60466. Smith had, in 1966, been

active in promoting the issuance of a stamp commemorating the 100th Anniversary of the Purchase of Alaska with then Senator Paul H. Douglas of Illinois.

**HELP WANTED:** I am looking for information about the Anchorage Contract Station 11. I never found anything about it and I do have the numbers 10 and 12 and the existence of Number 11 is then logical. Dirk van Gelderen, Voorkade 74, 2771 ZB Boskoop, Netherlands. Email: [info@esveld.nl](mailto:info@esveld.nl)

**WANTED:** Any old postal cards or covers from the Chitna, McCarthy, Kennecott area, 1890 - 1950. Please send list to: Thomas Kinzer, P.O. Box 107, Chitna, AK 99566-0107

**HELP WANTED:** I am looking for mint and used postcards depicting ALASKA LIGHTHOUSES. Russell Bartlett, 5 Saint Clare Street, Braintree, MA 02184-8239

**WANTED:** Any era postal cards (government preprinted stamps, not picture) used in Alaska. No philatelic, please. Don Glickstein, 1300 University St. #9G, Seattle WA 98101. Email: [glickwolf@earthlink.net](mailto:glickwolf@earthlink.net)

**WANTED:** Censored civilian mail from Alaska and Western Canada from World War II. Eric Knapp, 4201 Folker Street, Unit C102, Anchorage, AK 99508. Email: [eknapp@gci.net](mailto:eknapp@gci.net)

**WANTED:** Mail from the gold rush era Alaska forts. Eric Knapp, 4201 Folker Street, Unit C102, Anchorage, AK 99508. Email: [eknapp@gci.net](mailto:eknapp@gci.net)

**LOOKING FOR JFK FDCs:** I notice that my interest in the 5-cent JFK commemorative stamp issued nationally appears on your web-site. So I ask: Do you have or do you know anybody who might have any 5-cent JFK FDCs from Alaska (i.e. covers postmarked May 29, 1964 with the 5-cent Kennedy stamp? By the way, two more cities can be added to this list: Moose Pass and Seward. Contact Henry B. Scheuer at 800-444-1155.

**WANTED:** Are there collectors of new modern postcards? I am looking for postcards of Aleut Islands, Nunivak, Diomedes, St. Lawrence, King, Pribilofs. Any offer will be welcomed. I can buy or exchange for other postcards. Please email me at: [npc@volny.cz](mailto:npc@volny.cz) Thanks and best regards, Peter Pindak

**WANTED:** I am looking for commemorative covers or philatelic items that feature Alaska dog sled team postmarked in the 1940s and 1950s. Also, if anyone has information specifically on the covers featuring Fay Muridge cachets, I would be interested in that as well. I can via Paypal or via credit card on a secure website. Please contact me at 10 Grand Rue, 34290 Lieuran les Beziers, FRANCE or [label34@live.fr](mailto:label34@live.fr). Thank you, David Thierry.

## TAP DEADLINES

ISSUE	DEADLINE
1st Quarter .....	February 1
2nd Quarter .....	May 1
3rd Quarter .....	August 1
4th Quarter .....	November 1

## Alaska Philatelic Cover Catalog Volume 1 & 2

Volume 2 of the Alaska Philatelic Cover Catalog, covering the Alaska Collectors Club, the Gastineau Philatelic Society and the Northern Lights Stamp Club is now available.

The catalog features illustrations of all major and minor covers issued by the three clubs.

The catalog is 8 1/2 x 11 loose-leaf format punched for a three ring binder.

Prices:

Volume 2:

\$25.00

Volume 1, Revised Edition:

\$25.00

Original Volume 1 Update:

\$3.00

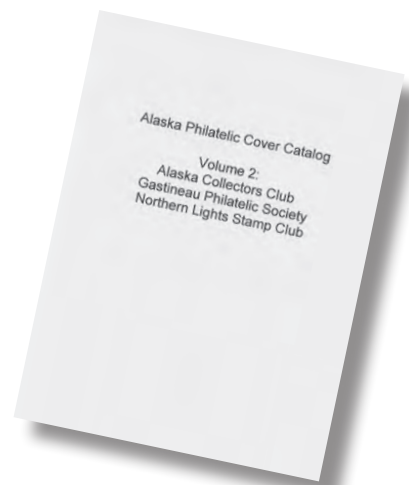
(All prices are postpaid)

For orders or more information, contact:

Eric Knapp

4201 Folker St., Unit C102

Anchorage, AK 99508



# President's Message

by Jim Zuelow ([jimzuelow@aol.com](mailto:jimzuelow@aol.com))

I imagine most ACC members, like me, also belong to the American Philatelic Society. If not, then I strongly encourage at least all U.S. members to join the APS.

I've been very impressed with the job APS President Wade Saadi has been doing since the unfortunate passing of Nicholas G. Carter. President Saadi has not only taken on the closely related problems of declining membership and the need to reduce APS expenses and staff, he has also pointed out the need to diversify the APS membership. In his February 2009 column, Wade reported that (in 2007) the APS membership was 89% male and more than 70% over age 60! President Saadi, in addition to offering some practical suggestions, asks for our advice about how to change the situation.

At least a few ACC members also subscribe to *La Posta: A Journal of American Postal History*. It's publisher is Richard W. Helbock, a former ACC officer and the author of the various Alaska postmark catalogs we all use. Dr. Helbock, facing similar demographics, has been considering the possibility of utilizing online publishing in order to insure the continuation of *La Posta* (*La Posta*, March, 2009, p.67).

The decline in APS and other related memberships is not limited to philatelic pursuits only. A friend of mine is head of a struggling Veterans of Foreign Wars chapter in Tucson that is barely keeping its head above water. The Lions, and many other kinds of organizations also face similar pressures.

Personally, I believe that recent macro economic trends and policies in the US have reduced the time and money most Americans have to devote to "extra-curricular" interests. Those Americans not lucky enough to inherit wealth, have a good retirement income linked to inflation, or enjoy a "middle class" income probably can't afford/enjoy hobbies such as ours.

Let's face it: a hobby is something the more affluent—in both time & money—are able to enjoy. I realize I'm one of the few who are fortunate enough to have a little of both in today's world. How do I grow our hobby and the collecting of Alaska postal history? In addition to the usual ways such as signing up new members, I vote for and try to provide the same opportunities I have had to others ... how about you?

Jim Zuelow



P.S.: I'm still looking for members who are willing to serve on our Nominations Committee or who are willing to be a candidate for office.

# Secretary Treasurer's Report

Eric Knapp ([eknapp@gci.net](mailto:eknapp@gci.net))

Hello everyone. Hope you are all having a great summer. This summer in Alaska has been much better than last summer.

I have been watching the market for the first day covers for the statehood stamp with some interest. There are a lot of them out on eBay and I have noticed some interesting trends. It seems that any that include the word Iditarod in the description seem to get lots of bids. That and pictures of animals in general. With any luck these are topical interests that will develop into wider interests.

That does bring up an interesting question. *What does it mean to collect Alaska today?* At one time, if someone said they collected Alaska you could almost be guaranteed they were trying to complete a postmark collection of all the post offices in Alaska. This is not so true anymore. I know it is not true for me. My "postmark collection" is restricted to a specific time and a specific collection of offices. I have not gone much beyond this.

People talk about whether collecting is living or dying. I think it is changing. The huge number of First Day covers created for the statehood stamp is a good example. There are lots of little makers rather than a few big ones. It makes the collecting challenge different than it used to be.

We need to be open to these changes as the hobby develops. If nothing else you might find something new you like.

We have a new member to welcome to the club.

#703

**David Jones • Anchorage, AK**

*Interests: Territorial Era, Statehood Era, APO's, Aerophilately, Dog Team Mail, DPO's, Expeditions and Explorations, Arctic mail, and Yukon Territory*

Until next time, happy collecting!



# Closed Album

## *Closed Album*

WARNER T. MAY

*(Condensed from the Anchorage Daily News)*

Longtime Alaskan Warner T. "Bud" May, 82, died peacefully May 5, 2009, at his Anchorage home surrounded by his loving family.

Bud was born June 17, 1926, in New Rochelle, N.Y., and graduated from Suffern High School in Suffern, N.Y., in 1944. During his senior year in June 1944, Bud enlisted in the Army Air Corps. He was honorably discharged in November 1945.

Bud signed on with the Bureau of Land Management and in February 1947, Bud drove the Alaska Highway and was stationed at the base of operations in Anchorage. In the fall of 1947, Bud returned to New York to enter Syracuse College of Forestry. While in NY, he decided that he liked Alaska so much that he came back to work the summer of 1948. That fall, he returned to Syracuse and enrolled for his second year at New York State College of Forestry. The pull of Alaska was strong. Bud headed north again for his first Alaska winter and third Alaska summer. He assisted the BLM with the

Homestead Act and other public land laws. He spent most of the summer on Kodiak Island.

Bud headed east to New York to marry his girlfriend, Caroline E. Malatinsky, in December 1949. After a full year of forestry studies and ROTC military camp at Fort Lewis in Washington, Bud and his new wife drove east to honeymoon at Niagara Falls in their brand new '49 Chevy.

Bud enjoyed spending time at his cabin on Big Lake. He was an avid snowmachiner. He hunted for big game in Alaska, including moose, caribou and goats. He spent many years working on his extensive collections of stamps and model trains. Bud chronicled each year of his life in extensive scrapbooks with photographs and the year's special mementos. The 1947 album includes his ticket stubs from the opening night of Anchorage's 4th Avenue Theatre. Bud was preceded in death by his parents, Paul and Helen May; his brother, Reese May; and sister, Betsy Van Tassel. He is survived by his wife of 59 years, Caroline; son, James and his wife, Anne; and numerous nieces and nephews.

## 50 Years Ago...

*(Editors Note: Linn's Stamp News has had a short column for many years looking back at past issues of the paper. Since this is the ACC's 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary I thought such a column would be an interesting addition.)*

The "A" cities town studies were reported to be coming in slowly. The study for Anchorage proved to be larger than planned and would be included in a future issue as a single study.

A technical issue with the printing of the first two issues was solved. The duplicating machine the club was using required a special type of paper.

The club got this paper and the printing results are much better.

A question was asked about Paquebot cancellations in Alaskan waters. In answer to a previous question the first list of Alaskan cities that issued precancelled stamps.

A contest was announced to choose a new name for the newsletter. During 1959 the newsletter was called "The Alaskan Collector."

The first of several discussions about the history of the Jack Wade/Steel Creek post office occurred. The big question was whether the two names refer to the same place.

*Thank you to all who provided material to make this issue possible. They include: Jim Zuelow, Eric Knapp, Angela Watson, Dave Schwantes, and Glen L. Smith.*

# The Raymond & Margaret Bates Correspondence

by Eric Knapp

Editor's Note: *This is a correspondence from the early days of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. They are letters to, from and about a pair of brother and sister teachers in northwest Alaska. The letters date from 1912 to 1915 and cover the teacher's lives at Kivalina and Wainwright. The letters include a long description of an overland trip from Kivalina to Wainwright in the winter.*

*This will be presented over several issues of TAP. It provides a fascinating look at the life of a teacher in Alaska in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.*

*This correspondence comes from the estate of longtime ACC member Robert Potts. Thank you to Ross Hallan (Robert's son in law) for bringing it to my attention.*

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DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
BUREAU OF EDUCATION  
ALASKA SCHOOL SERVICE

Nome, Alaska, June 26, 1912

Mr. F .A .Bates,  
c/o J.E.Mowers,  
E. High St.  
Hastings, Neb.

My Dear Mr. Bates

I owe you a big apology for not having kept my promise to write you after I returned from my trip north. But as you may have heard, upon my return I found twins at my house. Also, I have been waiting until I had some of my pictures finished so I could send you prints. I had so much work of all kinds to do that I have not been able to finish up my pictures until lately. I enclosed three of the best ones I took at Kivalina. I am sorry that one of the prints got stained.

My visit to Kivalina was splendid. It did me good to see the enthusiasm they both put into their work. They seemed to be so well pleased with everything. Both of them are doing splendidly and are a great credit to our service. But Kivalina is too small a place for them. We cannot pay the salaries there that they should have. I don't know just what will be done. I have suggested a change for them to Mr. Lopp, but do not know as yet what will be done. But you can be sure that I will do everything I can do to keep them in my district and to give them as good a post as we can. I have nothing but praise for their work. I hope that you found your family outside in good health, and that you are enjoying the pleasures of civilization, and a warmer climate.

Very truly yours,

Walter Shields

# Letter to Club

Regards,  
Malcolm Litwin  
*collect4pleasure@hotmail.com*

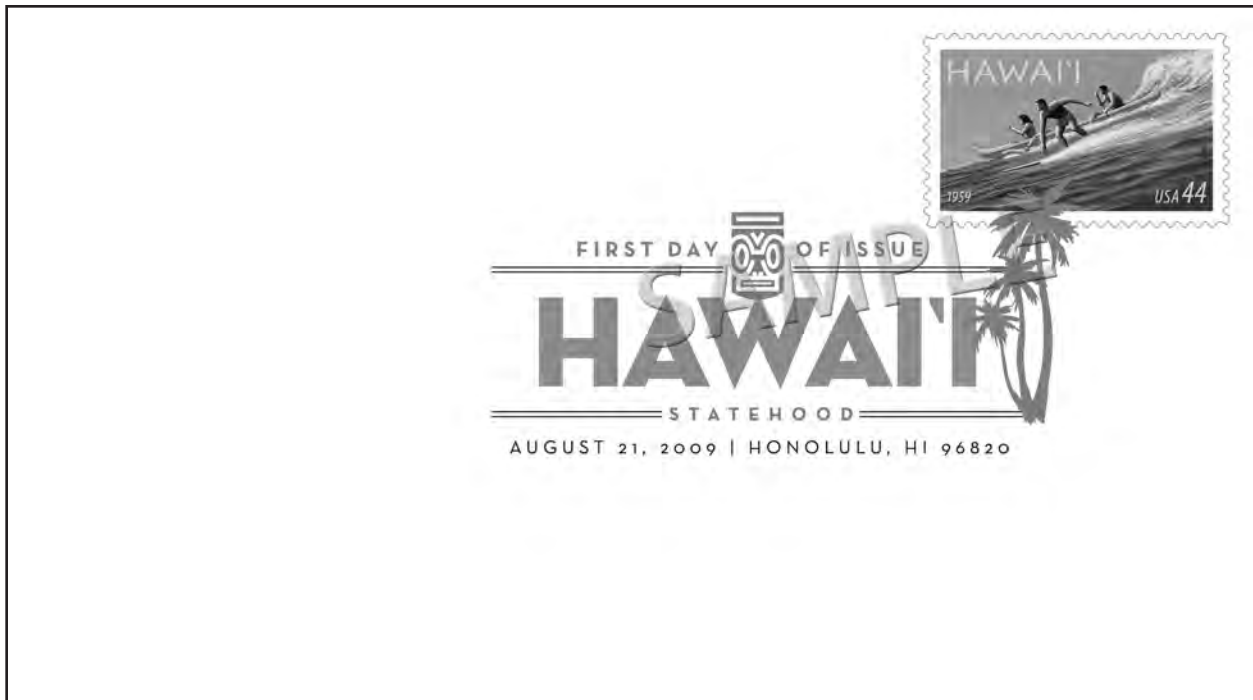
In next quarter's TAP, we will feature an article on the World War II USS Juneau, her loss and the loss of her crew, by Glenn Smith of the Universal Ship cancellation society. Look for it here.

Shipping charges: \$2.00 for first 6 issues, \$1.00 for each additional six issues or portion thereafter, \$5.00 maximum on any order. Limited quantities available. Refunds for those not available. Donations of back issues appreciated.



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# Hawai'i Statehood FDC Goes Digital



*On August 21<sup>st</sup>, the Postal Service will be issuing a stamp to honor the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Hawaii statehood. As with the Alaska stamp earlier this year, there will be a color digital postmark for this stamp. The artwork for the cancel is shown here.*

## A Mercury FDC from Alaska



Recently I was able to buy an otherwise plain cover with a First Day Postmark for the Mercury stamp issued nationwide on February 20, 1962 after the completion of John Glenn's historic flight. It is cancelled Anchorage Mountain View Station. In it is a letter dated June 12, 1962 written by Marion B. Hyatt of Anchorage to a Mr. Ebach mostly about sending covers from Alaska from which I quote the following: "I had only two of them cancelled, You have one". And a few lines further on: "Some one told me that the Mercury covers were easily worth a dollar or more cause no one had any cancelled here."

This is the first one I have ever seen from anywhere in Alaska. Have any of the members of the ACC seen more of them from Alaska? A short census would be a fun project. Please let me know by emailing me at [dirk@esveld.nl](mailto:dirk@esveld.nl). Any results to be published in a future TAP of course.

## Gold Nuggets

Eighty-seven people died in Nome in 1900. Most of those died from typhoid fever, pneumonia or tuberculosis. The sanitary conditions were not much better in Nome than in previous gold towns across Alaska and the Upper Yukon. The fledgling city government did make an attempt to control the spread of disease by fining those who did not use public latrines. The latrine tickets were sold for 10-cents each, or three for 25-cents.



# Ships Named for Geographic Places

## Navy & Coast Guard Vessels Named for Places in Alaska

*Compiled in 2008 by Glenn L. Smith, Lieutenant Commander, U.S. Navy (Retired)*

This list is intended to be an aid for collectors of naval covers interested in focusing on a collection representing a particular state. It was prepared using the *Dictionary of American Fighting Ships (DANFS)* as a starting point. Recognizing that DANFS is a flawed document with frequent errors and omissions, the author's own experience and knowledge and other sources were used. Wikipedia.org, another source that should always be used with suspicion, was one source for cross-referencing. The *Naval Vessel Register (NVR)* provided a useful reference for cross-checking facts. However, any errors or omissions are the sole responsibility of the author and do not reflect on any source.

As a general rule, only commissioned vessels are listed. However, not all vessels listed as being "commissioned" are listed. The reason is because in the 1800s and early 1900s, some very small vessels were so designated. For example ferries, yachts used for patrol duty, and other vessels that today would be listed as yard craft were "commissioned." Yard craft are not included, unless it is reasonably certain that mail could have been sent or received under that vessel's

name (example: Tatoosh YAG-1). As a rule of thumb, since this list is intended to be used to identify vessels that could be sources of mail, if the author did not feel that there was at least some chance of finding a cover from or to the vessel, it was not included.

This list includes only ships named for geographic places, such as the states themselves, cities, counties, towns, mountains, rivers, lakes, and the like. Famous people associated with states are not included, that could be the subject of another list of equal size.

Ships named for places in six or fewer states are listed in each namesake state. Ships named for places in more than six states are not listed, for example: USS Clay (APA-39) and USS Clinton (APA-144) were named for counties in 18 and nine states, respectively.

Some vessels were named after being placed in-reserve, for example landing ships & craft and some classes of patrol vessels. These vessels are listed for the collector to determine for themselves if the vessels should be part of their state-oriented collection.

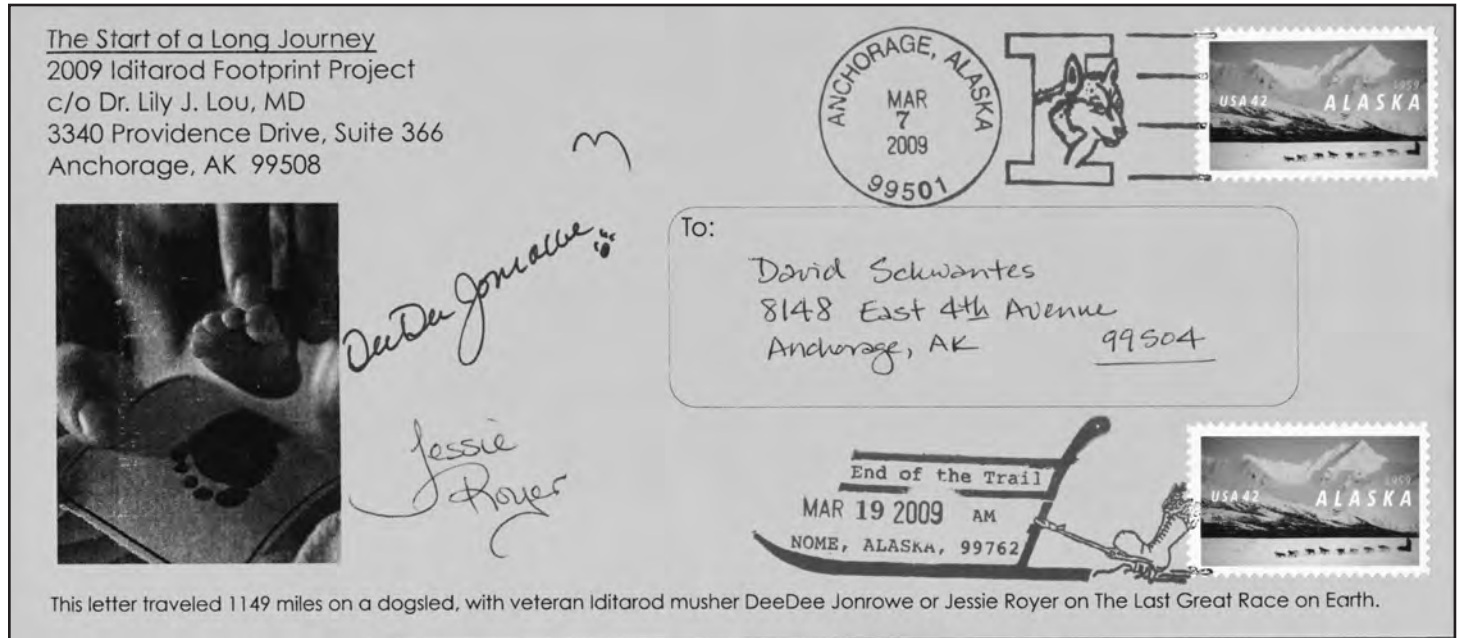
*Editors Note: If anyone would like the full list, please contact me. I will send you a copy.*

### ***The List For Alaska:***

- Akutan (AE-13): Island & volcano.
- Alaska (Screw Steamer, Trawler, CB-1, SSBN-732): State.
- Alatna (AOG-81): River.
- Anchorage (LSD-36): City.
- Atka (AGB-3): Island.
- Attu (CVE-102): Island.
- Bering Strait (WHEC-382 exAVP-34): The strait between Russia & Alaska.
- Besboro (AG-66): Island in Norton Sound.
- Castle Rock (AVP-35): Island.
- Chukawan (AO-100): River.
- Cook Inlet (AVP-36): Inlet north of Kodiak.
- Fanshaw Bay (CVE-90): Bay.
- Galena (Ironclad Screw Steamer c. 1862, Steamer c. 1860, PC-1136): Village named for the chief ore of lead.
- Gambier Bay (CVE-73): Bay.
- Great Sitkin (AE-17): Volcano.
- Hoggatt Bay (CVE-75): Bay.
- Juneau (CL-52, CL/CLAA-119, LPD-10): Capital city.
- Kadashan Bay (CVE-76): Bay.
- Kalinin Bay (CVE-68): Bay.
- Kasaan Bay (CVE-69): Bay.
- Kiska (AE/TAE-35): Island.
- Kitkun Bay (CVE-71): Bay.
- Kodiak (LSM-161): Town on Kodiak Island.
- Liscome Bay (CVE-56): Bay.
- Mount Katmai (AE-16): Semi active volcano.
- Mount McKinley (AGC-7): Mountain.
- Natoma Bay (CVE-62): Bay.
- Nehenta Bay (CVE-74): Bay.
- Norton Sound (AVM-1 ex-AV-11): Sound.
- Ommaney Bay (CVE-79): Bay.
- Orca (AVP-49): Bay.
- Petrof Bay (CVE-80): Bay.
- Point Barrow (AKD-1): Point.
- Prince William (CVE/ACVE-31): Sound.
- Rudyerd Bay (CVE-81): Bay.
- Saginaw Bay (CVE-82): Bay.
- Salisbury Sound (AV-13): Sound near Sitka.
- Sargent Bay (CVE-83): Bay.
- Shamrock Bay (CVE-84): Bay.
- Shilikof (AVP-52): Strait.
- Shipley Bay (CVE-85): Bay.
- Sitka (APA-113): Town.
- Sitkoh Bay (CVE-86): Inlet on Chichagof Island.
- Steamer Bay (CVE-87): Bay.
- Takanis Bay (CVE-89): Bay.
- Tolovana (AO-64): River.
- Unimak (AVP-31, later USCGC Unimac WAVP-379): Bay.
- Winder Bay (CVE-92): Bay.
- Wrangel (AE-12): Volcanic mountain.
- Yakutat (AVP-32): Bay.
- Yukon (AF-9, AO-152, TAO-202): River rising in Canada and flowing through AK.

# The Start of a Long Journey

by David Schwantes



“Like traversing Alaska by dog team, each baby in the Newborn Intensive Care Unit is embarking on his or her life’s journey with special challenges at the onset.” This quote is from the information contained in the cacheted letter shown above.

DeeDee Jonrowe and Jessie Royer each carried 62 of these covers during their running of the 2009 Iditarod Race. Each letter carried a copy of a footprint of a baby from the intensive care unit, along with important information about premature births. The letters were addressed to the parents of the babies, legislators, other medical people connected with prenatal care, and people who might promote public awareness of the importance of prematurity as a pub-

lic health issue for Alaskans and all Americans. People involved in promoting the project also received one of the letters.

Each year 11% of infants born in Alaska are premature. Many of them spend weeks and even months in the intensive care unit before being well enough to join their families. Some causes of prematurity are impossible to change. HOWEVER, there are risk factors that may be changed by education and improved access to care: infection, diabetes, hypertension, prenatal care, smoking, alcohol and illicit drug use.

This is the second “Iditarod Footprint Project” sponsored by Dr. Lily J. Lou, the Alaska Neonatology, and the March of Dimes.

## Gold Nuggets

Typhoid fever was the most common disease to haunt miners. Its appearance in camp after camp was no accident. The miners built their cabins and tents far too close to each other, on soil that was frequently a flat, boggy tundra.

The frozen ground, covered with moss and mulch did not allow for surface water to drain off. When that was added to the long, hot northern summers, disease was inevitable. Typhoid fever ravaged many camps, but would have been far worse had not so many miners constantly boiled their drinking water. Some who had originally gone north to mine made money selling uncontaminated bottled water in some camps. The disease was survivable, and in fact fewer than four percent of Dr. Riniger’s patients died of typhoid fever. Those who did were the ones who had waited too long for help, or disregarded medical advice.

# 20 Years at the Nome Finish Line

*by David Schwantes*

About ten years ago, I recall stating in my annual Christmas letter "The Iditarod is the greatest event that takes place each year in Alaska." I have not changed my mind! Each year in March the Iditarod brings together the mushing community of 70-90 mushers and some 1200 to 1400 dogs; hundreds of volunteers; and thousands of tourists.

Also, during the two-to-three weeks the race is being run, thousands of school children all over the world are following the race via the internet. It has developed into an event that NO ONE could ever have imagined when the race first started in 1973. Joe Redington must be smiling up in heaven.

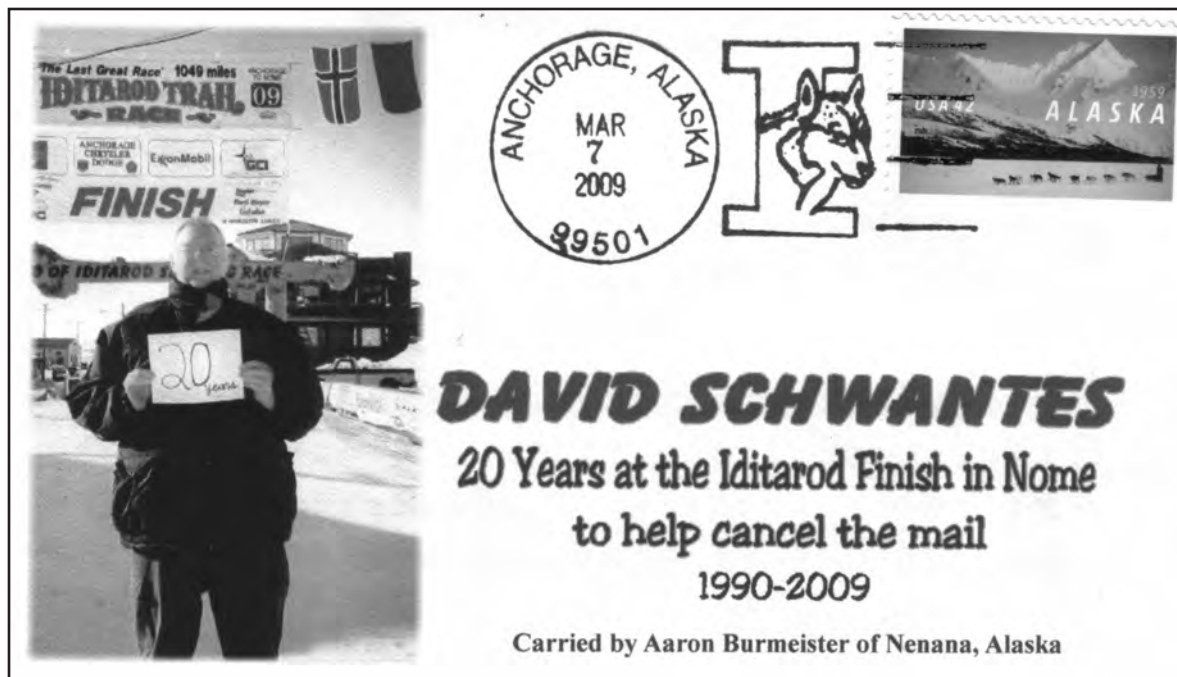
I have been a fan and follower of this great race since the first one thirty-seven years ago. I watched the races from Anchorage each year, and always dreamed of going to Nome to see the finish. At the time, I was a school teacher and couldn't go to Nome. In 1990, the Anchorage School District had its first "spring break," and it was also a break for me!

I headed to Nome to see my first finish of "The Last Great Race." Susan Butcher won her fourth race that year. I have been back to Nome every year since to see the winner cross under the burlled arches. I have become part of the "Iditarod Family" and it is great. I

have met most of the mushers, and many, many of the volunteers. Many of the Nome residents recognize me, and say "Welcome back."

My first interest in the Iditarod was as a stamp collector. I thought the race was so historical that I wanted some mail to be carried during the race. I was able to work things out, and I had covers carried over the trail that year, and every year since. Now, each musher in the race is required to carry a package of "Official Iditarod Trail Mail." My job as a volunteer is to help stamp the mail and then apply a special Iditarod cancel to each envelope. In the twenty years I have been in Nome, I figure I have hand-canceled about 65,000 official covers, plus about 10,000 other items that were carried during the races.

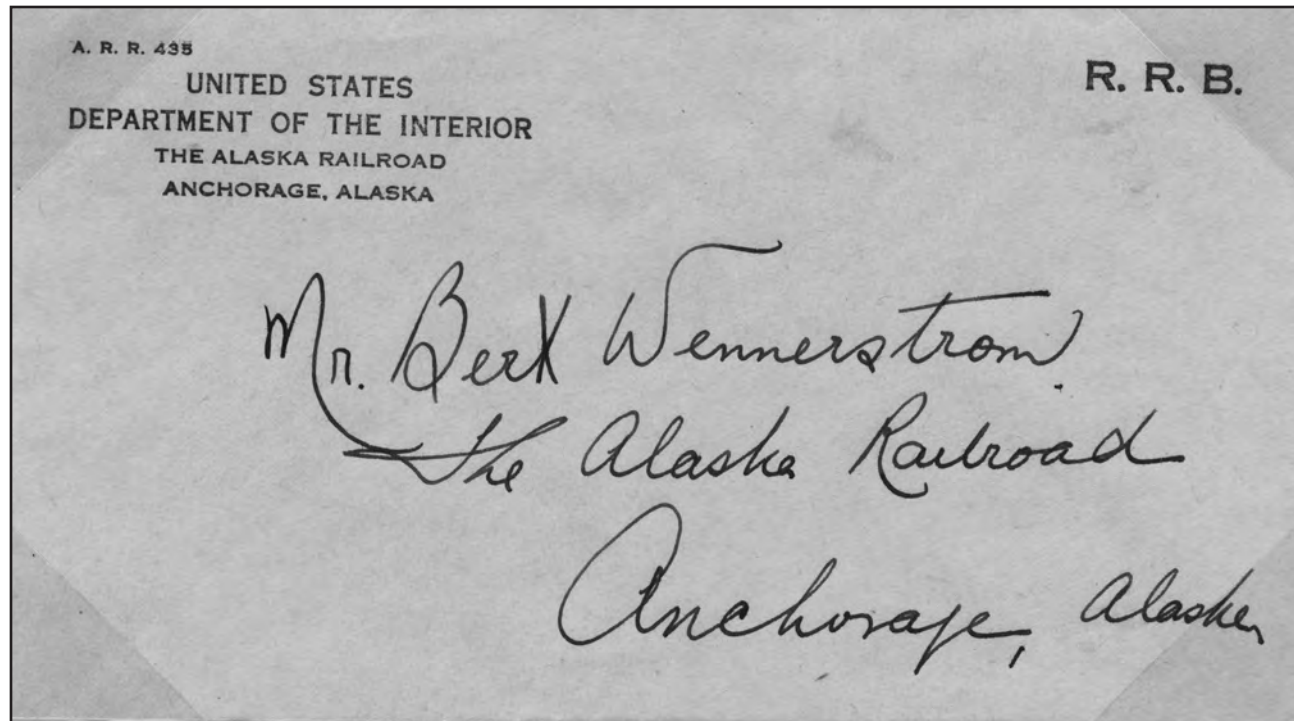
This being my 20th year, I made a little sign and had my picture taken under the arch. My good friend Aaron Burmeister carried some envelopes for me during the race, and after I returned home, a friend applied the picture to the envelope. This special cacheted cover ties together my interest in stamp collecting and my love of the Iditarod and the volunteer work I do each year. I look forward to making the trip to Nome for many more years.





# The Alaska Railroad, 1914–1945

by Angela Watson



*This is a cover from the Alaska Railroad's private post. This post was discussed in an article "Alaska's Private Government Post, Rare New Finds", Issue whole number 190-34.*

The Alaska Railroad began in 1914, President Woodrow Wilson authorized construction of a federal railroad to open up to vast lands of the newly territorialized Alaska. It was just as big a job as the just completed Panama Canal, so much of the construction from that project was shipped north along with one of its chief builders Army Corps of Engineers Lt. Frederick Meers.

He carved a staging camp out of the Alaska wilderness and called it Anchorage. His rail gangs set out from there, felling trees and laying track, both north and south. Mud and mosquitos plagued the men, while rock-slides and accidents killed them by the dozens.

In 1918, over 4,000 men steamed into Anchorage to help build the railroad; created for their housing was a very large tent city and of course, all the attendant problems a sudden upsurge in population would cause. Men were earning \$3.00 a day, which by 1918 standards was a great wage.

Rail layers had to drive spikes into frozen ground and try to "hold gauge," that is, not move the rails outside of the 56-1/2 inches required for the trains to run. Why 56-1/2 inches? Believe it or not, this measurement was based on the Roman Chariot width of two horses' rear ends!

Snow slides shot the ARR even before it was finished.

In 1919, after four years of hard labor, the track between Seward and Anchorage for 40 miles was shut down due to avalanche.

Besides avalanche, the high amount of seismic activity can also cause rails to go out of gauge. Some tunnel structures date back nearly 100 years and the modern day engineers of the ARR are working to dismantle these unstable tunnels and bridges and build new structures that can handle the potential for earthquakes.

The ARR is the coal lifeline for Fairbanks throughout the year. Without it, the entire city could go dark and very cold. In 1918, when the U.S. entered World War I, getting the very necessary reserves of coal to run the U.S. Navy's warships became an important priority. Although the ARR wasn't completed in time, by 1920, the ARR was supplying coal to much of the Pacific Fleet. Today, 40% of Alaska's premium low-sulfur coal is exported overseas, mostly to Asia.

Seven years into construction, the final section was completed with a bridge over the Tanana River. After eight years and \$56 million (yes, that's with an "M"), the ARR was a reality. On July 15, 1923, President Warren G. Harding drove the Golden Spike and the Alaska Railroad was open for business.



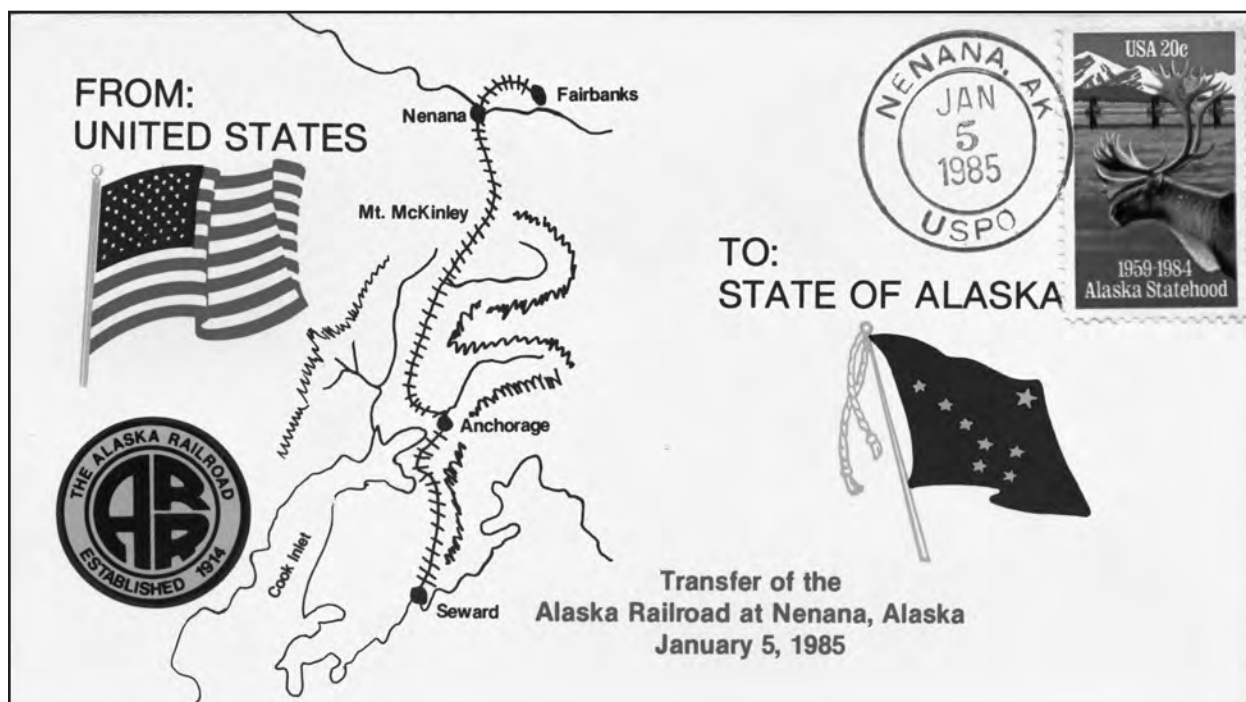
## AK Railroad (continued)

During World War II, the ARR and the city of Seward found themselves in the crosshairs of the Japanese war machine. After Pearl Harbor was attacked, the U.S. figured that Alaska and its vital railroads would likely be next. So, the Army rushed to build a secret new terminal where it was remote and geographically hostile to possible attack. This rush to relocate the ARR headquarters came about after Dutch Harbor in the Aleutian Islands was bombed in 1942 by the Japanese.

Enter Whittier: 120-knot winds, driving rain and as pea soup fog. Access is limited by the longest rail/auto tunnel in North America. Whittier Tunnel was carved out of 14,000 feet of solid rock and took more than a year with two crews going at it from each end. When they met in the middle, they were less than 11 inches off center from each other. Completed in 1943, the enemy never did discover the secret port of Whittier.



*25th anniversary cover with a rubber stamp cachet.*



*Transfer of ownership from the federal government to the state of Alaska.*

# Iditarod 37, March 7, 2009

by David Schwantes

A carnival-like atmosphere greeted the thousands of fans that showed up on Saturday March 7<sup>th</sup> to watch the ceremonial start of the thirty-seventh running of the Last Great Race. Barking dogs, mushers, photographers, fans seeking autographs on books or hats or shirts, and vendors selling hot chocolate, coffee, donuts and reindeer hotdogs, all created a fun-filled morning.

For the 67 mushers and their teams, the start in Anchorage can be stressful, as it is so different from what the real race is like. However, they take it all in stride and just pray that they and their Idita-riders can get out of town without any mishaps and still provide excitement for all the fans along the streets.

There was no doubt what was on Lance Mackey's mind as he left the starting line that morning: he held up three fingers as he passed a group of fans and photographers. Could he win it for the third time in a row?

Of the 67 mushers who started the race, 48 were from Alaska, thirteen from other U.S. states, and six from other countries. There were 52 veterans and fifteen rookies; 54 men and thirteen women. Five former champions were looking for another victory: Rick Swenson, Martin Buser, Jeff King, Mitch Seavey, and Mackey. The re-start was at Willow on March 8<sup>th</sup> at 2:00 p.m. The weather was great during the first part of the race.

Aaron Burmeister was near the lead at the beginning of the race, and was the first musher to reach

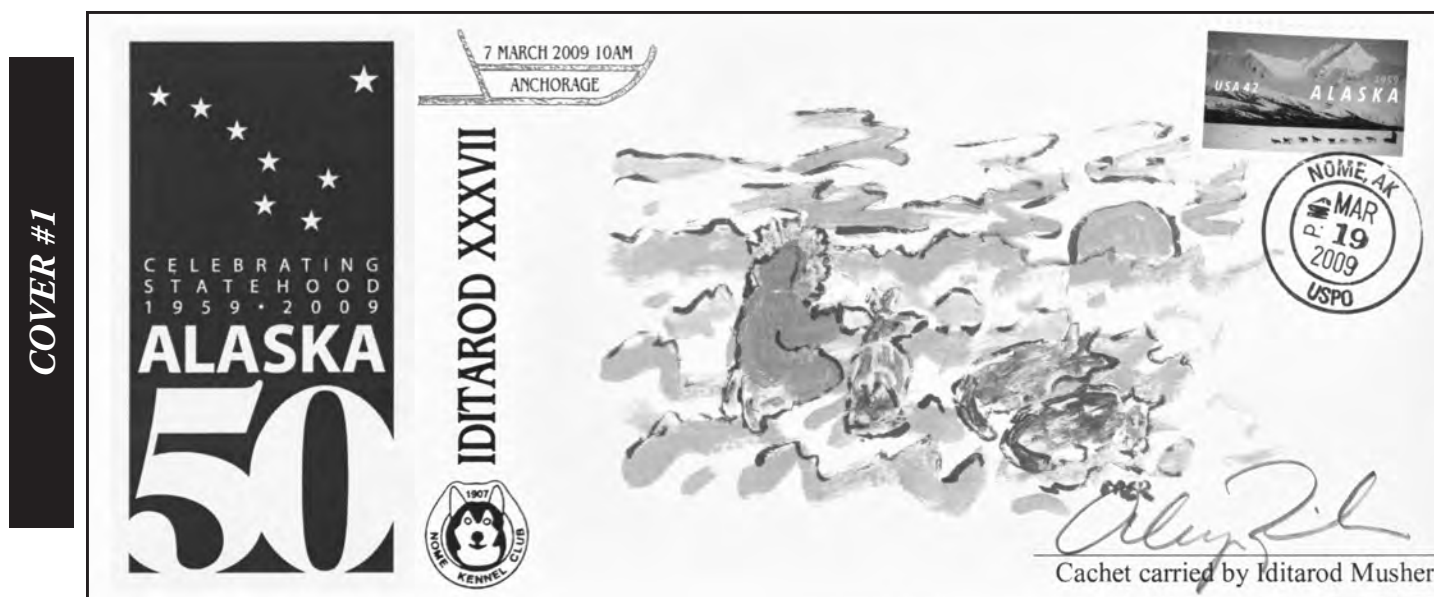
McGrath. He continued to lead until just before the half-way point of Iditarod, when Mackey passed him. Mackey took the lead, and never really looked back, although stormy weather and strong winds near the end of the race did create some hectic moments for all the mushers.

However, Mackey arrived in Nome on March 18<sup>th</sup> at 11:38 a.m. to claim his 3<sup>rd</sup> Iditarod victory in three years. This had only been done twice before: by Susan Butcher (1986-1988), and by Doug Swingley (1999-2001). At this time in the mushing world, he seems unstoppable, but time will tell.

Meanwhile, behind Mackey was a group of about ten mushers whose positions had changed drastically due to the stormy weather the last few days of the race.

Among them were Burmeister, Cim Smyth, Sebastian Schnuelle, John Baker, Jeff King, Jessie Royer, Mitch and Dallas Seavey, and Ramey Smyth. Schnuelle and Baker were able to break away from that pack and finished 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>, about eight hours after Mackey. Mitch Seavey and Cim Smyth finished 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup>. It was the first time finishing in the top five for both Schnuelle and Smyth. Dallas Seavey finished 6<sup>th</sup>, and after leading most of the first half, Aaron Burmeister still ran his best Iditarod, finishing in 7<sup>th</sup> place.

52 teams crossed under the burlled arches at the finish line in Nome. The weather near the end of the race was responsible for a number of scratches, as fourteen teams dropped out, and one team was



## Iditarod 37 (continued)

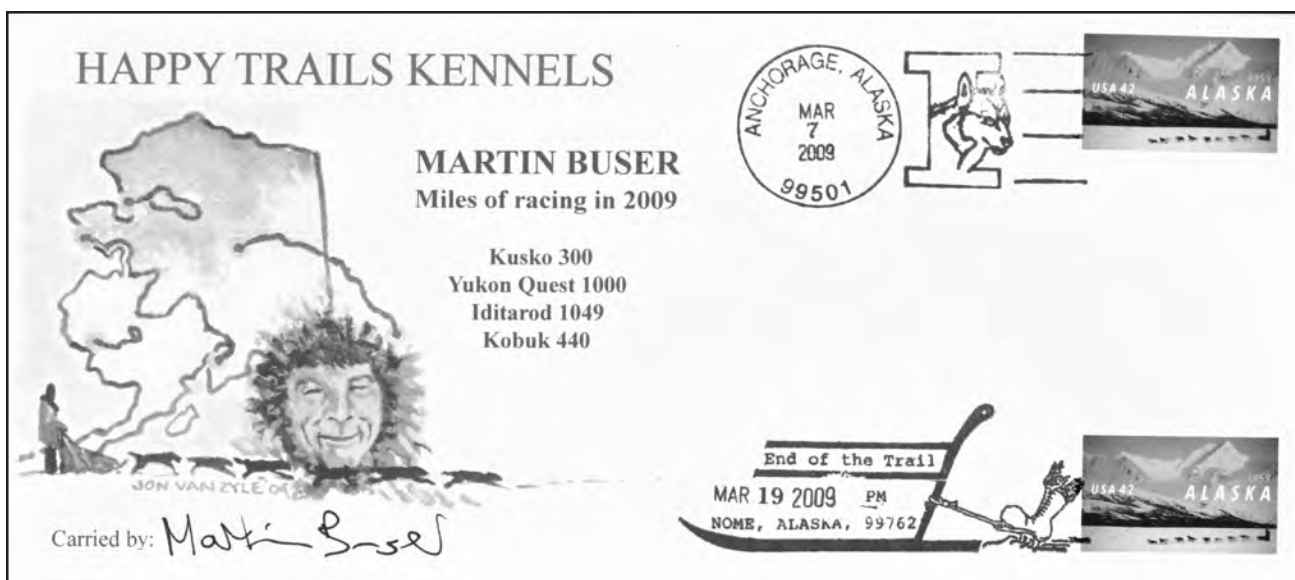
withdrawn. Things got a bit hectic, and a number of mushers found themselves needing help from the storms, and a number of dogs died during the race. But all in all, the 37<sup>th</sup> running of the Last Great race was a success.

There was more mail carried over the trail this year than any other year that I know of. I have acquired seven different cachets carried by the mushers during this years 1149 mile race. Most of the cachets were franked with the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary Alaska Statehood Stamp.

1. The official trail mail carried by each musher contained the 50 anniversary logo. The cover shown here was carried by Aliy Zirkle.
2. Martin Buser carried his 10<sup>th</sup> cover which showed the four different races he ran in 2009.
3. Paul Gebhardt continues to carry a cover each year he runs.

4. Jessie Royer has been carrying covers for a few years and I have been able to acquire some of her past covers. This year's cover shows her with her 2009 team.
5. DeeDee Jonrowe carried a special cover this year for the first time. They are being sold on her web site to help with the cost of running the race. Jona Van Zyle did the artwork for the cover. They are printed on pink envelopes and hand-colored. They contain a letter written by DeeDee and are signed by her on the front.
6. Last is the cover from my set. It is the 37<sup>th</sup> cover in the series, one for each year of the race. It was carried by Aaron Burmeister, and because of its size, the Nome cancel on the back of the cachet. Because of the information on the cover, it is printed after making the trip to Nome.

COVER #2



COVER #3

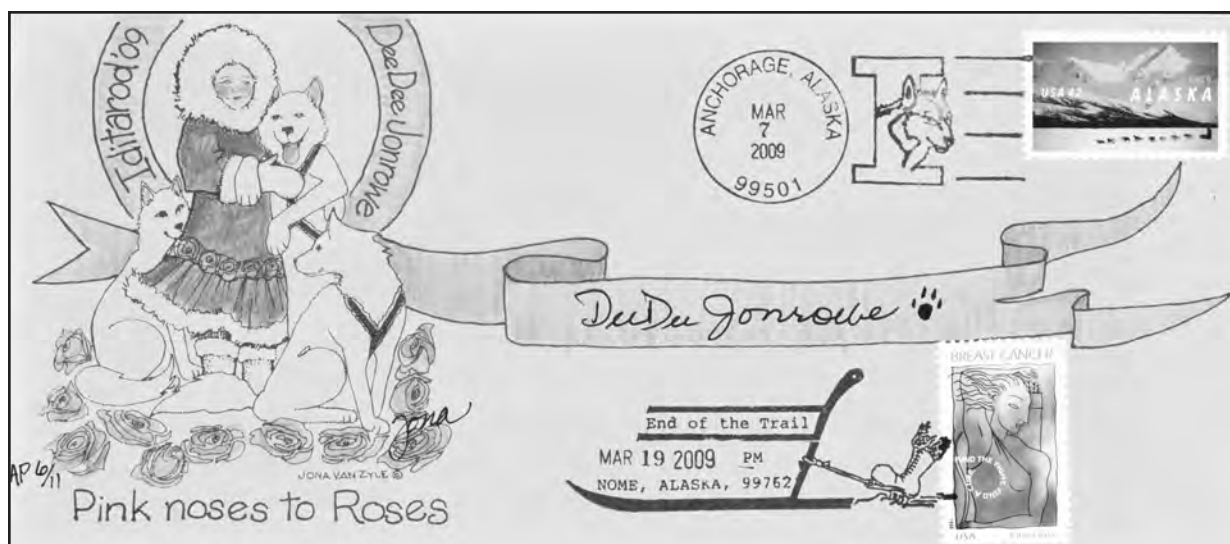




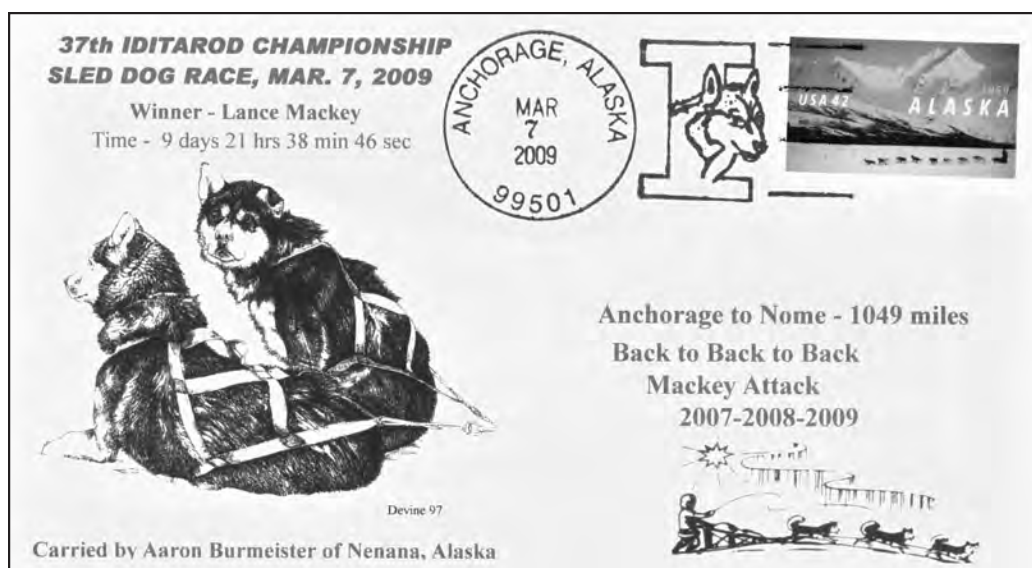
COVER #4



COVER #5



COVER #6





# The Club Auction Needs Your Help

by Eric Knapp

*The Alaskan Philatelist* has run member auctions since the first issue in 1959. It has been a good way for members to make material available to each other at a reasonable cost. It has worked well over the years, but it has always worked because a variety of members have been willing to sell material through the auction.

Our auction manager Terry Shaw has been doing a great job for us, but he does need help. He needs members to provide material for sale in the auction. In past years, Terry was able to visit several stamp shows a year looking for Alaskan material, but his most recent job change has curtailed his ability to get to shows.

So Terry is more dependent on us for material.

I have tried over the years to help Terry out by sending material, but I know I can do much more. I have a lot of stuff to go through and I just haven't done it yet. So here is where you come in.

Let's make a deal, you and I. Let's each of us go through our collections and find ten items that we want to sell. Then take those ten items, create brief descriptions of them and send them to Terry for the auction. As always, nicer material will sell better but good Alaska material is always in demand.

Thank you and I hope to see what YOU have in the next auction.



SEND YOUR AUCTION ITEMS TO:  
TERRY SHAW, AUCTION MANAGER  
P.O. Box 1435  
PRINEVILLE, OR 97754-0757