

Editorial—

Slim Randles and The Rejected Dogs

A fumbling, stumbling dogsled adventure took place last week from Mt. McKinley National Park to Anchorage—a distance of 300 miles. Although the dogmusher, Slim Randles of the Anchorage Daily News traversed the distance only halfway, he more than accomplished what he set out to do—capturing the hearts of thousands of people for the dogs he mushed for 150 miles and for himself, of course.

Slim Randles, a complete novice in the dogmushing arts, took eight rejected curs from the Anchorage dog pound, harnessed them and took them to the famous park. Some of the dogs were to be “put to sleep” in a few days because they were unclaimed and no longer wanted. Contending that they can still be useful dogs, Randles set out to mush them even though the dogs were as untrained as he was in the dogmushing procedures.

To try to mush an untrained team is one of the most difficult undertakings even for an experienced dogmusher. Untrained dogs can be frustrating. They can be laggards, unresponsive to commands, even playful or just stubborn. Above all, they can be short tempered against their kind—a trait Slim found when “Scarface” was killed by his fellow team members. This was an unfortunate tragedy but one that has happened numerous times in the dogmushing world.

In spite of being mutually untrained for mushing, Slim and his motley team achieved a working basis in two days of frustrating and tiring work—a usual and happy achievement for man and his animals.

The novice dogmusher beautifully dramatized the plight of unwanted and rejected animals. Some of them, we can strongly assume, may have been victims of desertion by their masters when those masters moved away from a city or town—a cruel fate. There are heart tugging scenes in human experiences and one of them is to see an obviously homeless dog vainly sniffing for a familiar scent on sidewalks or establishment entrances. Scenting none, the animal wanders elsewhere sad and dejected as only a dog can be.

At any rate, Slim’s homely, yet poignant adventure pointed the need for better treatment of dogs or other domestic pets. He has found homes for the rejected animals—a heartwarming reward for himself and his team.

There will always be abandoned pets, we are sorry to say, but Slim’s stumbling, fumbling dogsled venture moved us. We hope others have been moved likewise and make a lot of us become more aware of one of man’s baser faults—the cruel treatment and abandonment of his animals.