

Iditaroding It

By Enid Brown

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After deciding that work and trying to check was too much, Robert (better known as "Honuck") gave up checking. But the dogs didn't know that. For up to three years after he stopped checking the dogs tried to pull up by our house, thinking this is where we go, by golly.

Along with the growth of the race, the more people came through the village. More planes, more media. I can remember counting 37 planes on the ice in front of the village one time. Everybody eagerly anticipating the arrival of the first mushers into the village.

After not being involved for several years I became a part of the Iditarod again as manager of White Mountain Lodge. The village corporation, owner of the lodge decided to contribute to the Iditarod by offering a hot meal, shower facilities, and a place to rest to the racers.

We also offered use of the hot tub. However, not very many took advantage of it. They were worried after doing the hot tub they would become too relaxed, fall asleep and wouldn't wake up.

One of the things I looked forward to in the latter years, was the arrival of the ABC film crew. Peter Henning, Tony Ony and Lyn Swann provided invigorating company while waiting for the front runners.

In the earlier years, the checkers were flown into Nome and given tickets to the banquet as a way of appreciation by the powers that be. Honuck and I had a chance to go. It was incredible to see the difference in some of the mushers! You would almost not recognize some of them. By the time they had reached White Mountain, they had been on the trail for 10, 11, 12, days. Some of them looked and smelled like it. At the banquet they looked like a completely different person. They were rested and cleaned up. What a change!

One of the things the media tended to neglect was the mushers towards the middle and the rear. They were not given the recognition I think they deserved. Although they received the same

treatment from the vets and volunteers it was like, once the front runners

were through, the media forgot the rest.