



Zuma's
Paw Prints

YOU WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT ME

March 6, 2006

Hi Boys and Girls,

I have received several letters from students wanting to know more about me so I decided to write up a biography for you.

I was born in Wisconsin on August 29 and I am going on six. I have three brothers and one sister who stayed in mushing and actively run on teams. Although I've envied them at times, I've never regretted choosing to become mushing's Canine Reporter. I wanted the world to know about the fabulous athletes that pull sleds and compete in races around the world. I am employed by the Iditarod Race Committee to report on what goes on year around with the Iditarod and the news in the mushing community.

I am a single girl and, I am told, an attractive one. As a result, perhaps, I have had my share of flirtations, even a brief friendship with Martin Buser's famous lead dog D-2. By that time, I had started my career as a reporter and D-2, well, D-2 was a little bit too impressed with his fame. Between that and my job, the relationship faltered and didn't get serious. We remain friends though and he often explains details about a race or the trail that I don't quite grasp.

One of the questions I am often asked is, "Why did you become a reporter?" My mother and siblings say it was a natural for me as I've always been curious about things. I was always the one asking questions and sticking my nose into trouble as a puppy, so I've always enjoyed finding out about new and interesting things. The more I discovered how much humans enjoyed my reports, the more serious became about continuing my education and becoming a reporter.

Since my human is active with the Iditarod, it seemed only natural for me to focus on that after I graduated from the K-9 University of Alaska in Anchorage with a degree in canine journalism. It wasn't easy, but I now have my own column, Zuma's Paw Prints, on the Iditarod website. I am able to type, by the way, by using an extra large keyboard that was special designed for me. I use both my nose and paws to type.

I have to admit, while I've gotten pretty good at typing, it isn't my favorite thing in the whole world. Many think that my favorite thing is pizza and I have to admit, I really, really like pizza. Pizza is my favorite food, mushroom pizza, pepperoni pizza, double cheese pizza, barbecue pizza and any other kind of pizza. I just plain love pizza!

As much as I love pizza, I like meeting new people and learning new things even more. I meet new people every year because of the Iditarod. I don't run the Iditarod or any other race, but sometimes I do go out with some of my friends on training runs, so I get to meet new K-9 friends, too. In fact, I wish I could spend more time with them.

I like to travel and I am quite fond of children. I also like playing in new snow and being the first one to put footprints in it. I make snow dogs on the front lawn too.

I am godmother to my best friend, Lakota's five children. I wish I had more time to spend with them. I would spoil these kids rotten if Lakota didn't keep a firm paw on me. On the job, I have a human partner named Lois. She told me that humans are just the same. They wish they could spend more time with those that mean the most to them. She has several grandchildren and even some great-grandchildren that she loves to spoil. I bet she could give me some lessons in how to spoil my god-pups.

Working together, Lois and I try to provide information that students want to see. I write my Zuma Paw Prints column throughout the year, but only daily during the race. We're busy all year, however. The humans at Iditarod Headquarters say they start working on the next race even before the present race is over. Now that is busy!

I just love the email that my little buddies send me (zuma@iditarod.com). I also like to play nurse when my human or Lois is ill. If I had not become a successful reporter, I might have gone into nursing. I bet I'd be good at helping Lakota with her pups, too, don't you.

In fact, as much as I love being a reporter, I often wonder how good I might have been at other things. I know I love to write. But I think I would have made a great teacher or a nurse. I would love to write a book or two about my experiences and about some of my friends who run on trails of snow here in Alaska and other parts of the country. Life is an adventure to be shared. Don't be afraid to put your best paw forward and try something new. You might just find a whole new world opening up to you.

I will be reporting for the race daily and then fill you in as the 2006 race winds down during April and May. By the end of May, the organization of Iditarod 2007 race will be in full swing as we prepare for the opening of musher sign up in June. Let me know what you would like to know about here at the Iditarod and I will do my best to sniff out the news for you.

Until next time,



Lots of Tail Wags,
Zuma

Don't forget to visit the rest of the Iditarod website at www.iditarod.com where you will be able to find the latest updates plus terrific stories by my good friend, June Price, as the teams travel the trail to Nome.