



Zuma's  
Paw Prints

## WHAT TO DO ON A RAINY SPRING DAY

May 19, 2006

Hi Boys and Girls,

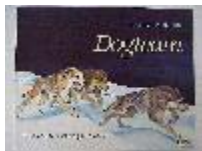
I hope everyone is enjoying spring. The grass is getting greener and greener and it's hard to resist looking out the window when I should be working. I bet you are getting excited about summer vacation. There will be some great times outside, but then there will be those "rainy, have to stay inside" days, too. For me, there is nothing like curling up with a good book on days like that. There are a lot of good books about dogs, mushing and the Iditarod that you can read this summer. You can find a list of books at the Iditarod's website at this address: <http://www.iditarod.com/4-4.html>. Just pick the category you want to browse and go find the information on books that will interest you.



Do you like to lie on your stomach to read? I do! I take my book and lie on the floor in front of a window so that I can watch the rain falling when I look up. It looks gloomy and cold outside, but I am nice and comfy inside on the carpet, enjoying a great story. Try it sometime, boys and girls, you will like it, I know you will. It's really great to be able to imagine you're someone else for a while. I love to read. I even like to read catalogs! I pick out my Christmas gifts way in advance and get them all wrapped and

addressed so all I have to do is mail them. Hmm, this would be a nice gift for Lois. She likes things like this. I'll have to mark this page to come back to.

Books are even more fun. I looked at the website and selected a few books for me to read this summer. When I am waiting for a tour bus to arrive, I can stretch out on the grass in the sun and read. Here is a book by one of my favorite authors, Gary Paulsen.



**DOGTEAM BY GARY PAULSEN** (YOUTH grades k-4) On a moonlit winter night, a team of dogs pulls a sled, taking the narrator and readers on a wondrous ride through the snow, into and out of the woods. It is a ride you'll wish would never end., approx. 28 pages.

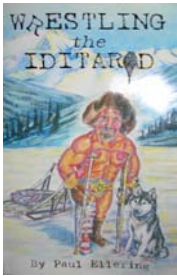
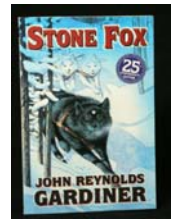
**ALASKA'S LITTLE CHIEF BY JUDY FERGUSON** (YOUTH grades k-4) Mush with 10 year old David Salmon and his pet ermine through Gwich'in Athabascan traditional life. In the 1920s, epidemic forced David, today's First Traditional Chief of the Interior, and his father to leave their village and trap for eighteen year in No Man's Land... 36 pages.



Both of these books are new at the Iditarod web store. So be sure to look for them at the links provided. It's almost as good as being at a bookstore.

For my little older buddies, here is a book that I have read a couple of times and enjoyed each time.

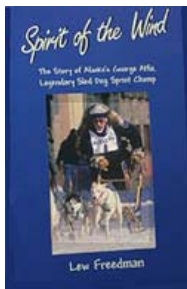
**STONE FOX BY JOHN REYNOLDS GARDINER** Intermediate grades 5-8 - The story of Little Willy and his race against Stone Fox to win the prize money to save his family's farm. Soft cover, 81 pages. Written by John Reynolds Gardiner.



For students in middle school and high school as well as adults (join the kids in front of the window on a rainy day and read a good book), there are a couple of books I will recommend now and more to come later.

**WRESTLING THE IDITAROD BY PAUL ELLERING** ADULT - In this book Paul Ellering, a professional wrestler for many years, tells about his adventures preparing to run his first Iditarod.

**RIVERS BY MIKE DILLINGHAM** ADULT - This is the story of caring, healing & love between a blind sled dog and a man. Soft cover, 160 pages. Written by Mike Dillingham. This book is also available in a set with Rivers II. **RIVERS TWO** ADULT - This is the sequel to the book *Rivers*. Soft cover, 127 pages.



**SPIRIT OF THE WIND BY LEW FREEDMAN** ADULT - This is the biography of George Atta, legendary sprint musher of Anchorage Fur Rondy fame. George had tuberculosis of the bones as a child and has little use of one of his legs, but he overcame this "minor" handicap to dominate sprint racing for many years. Soft cover, 224 pages. Written by Lew Freedman.

I know that at whatever level you read, you will enjoy these books. I did and that is why I am recommending them to you. I will let you know about other books as the summer progresses. There are more great books in the Iditarod "library" and I will be checking them out.

Everyone here is really starting to get excited about the annual Veer picnic and First Day Musher Signup on June 24<sup>th</sup>. This day is probably as important to everyone connected with the race as start day is. This is when everyone gets together, tells stories from their volunteer position or musher prospective, and shares a great meal provided by Iditarod's wonderful sponsor, the Millennium Anchorage Hotel this year. I can't wait to see what they have for me. Do you think they'll remember how much I love pizza? Whatever it is, I know it will be good.

That day is also when everyone gets an idea of who is going to be running in the next race. It is always fun to be around the volunteers and mushers. It is Iditarod's way of honoring the army of volunteers. We could never get this race from Anchorage to Nome without the volunteers. This is their day. I like to make a point of thanking as many of them in person as I can.

Well, boys and girls, I am off to lie on the grass and read a little. I don't think there is another bus due this evening so I should be able to get pretty far into my book before I go home.

Until next time,



Lots of Tail Wags,  
Zuma