



Left: Bundle up for the ceremonial start of the Iditarod in downtown Anchorage, for it's usually windy and cold that first Saturday in March. But it's worth it to see the dedicated mushers and exuberant dog teams as they dash from the starting line.

WHAT'S ON YOUR LIST?

BEEN THERE—HAVEN'T DONE IT ALL YET

A **LASKA IS HIGH ON MANY** people's bucket list—or life list, as senior editor Michelle Theall calls it in her essay on page 32. There are so many ways to experience the Great Land: everything from a streamlined package tour of highlights (think bears, glaciers, auroras, mountains) to signing on for a summer as a volunteer state campground host, complete with the most mundane duties like outhouse maintenance (more on that in Amy Bushatz's article on page 70). Each of those extremes comes with its own opposites, of course. Solitude is elusive when you're bussed with a crowd to the next destination; and despite having to "police" rowdy campers, hosts might get to witness an early morning cow moose with twin calves sauntering past while all is still quiet.

No adventure is ever perfect, but Alaska, with all its variety, guarantees your time here will be interesting.

Whether you have a bucket list or life list or are just winging it on a whim, Alaska's got your back. In this issue: go fly fishing along the Parks Highway; visit far-flung communities like McCarthy or McGrath or Nome; appreciate local art and music; attend an event like the Arctic Winter Games, Cama-i Dance Festival, or a sled dog race; play in the

snow; or, if you just can't be here, order up some gifts by mail.

Already living the good life in Alaska? You can still do all of the above and brag to your out-of-state friends—then invite them to visit.

It's easy to fall into a rut, though, wherever you call home. Recently, I was chatting via Zoom from my home office with some folks from the Anchorage Mushing District, a non-profit that highlights the history and continued importance of dog mushing to the city, and I realized it had been ages since I'd wandered around downtown Anchorage just to see what's new. One of the organization's projects is a mushing-themed arch, designed by a local artist, that will span historic 4th Avenue at the starting line of both the Fur Rendezvous Open World Championship Sled Dog Race and the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race. Both are extraordinary annual events that should be on everyone's bucket/life list. I think it's time to add "being a tourist in my home state" to mine.

Susan Sommer, Editor

editor@alaskamagazine.com



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