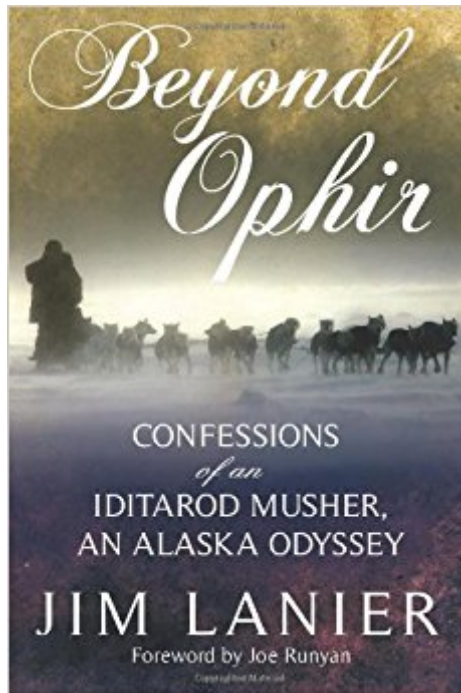


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Beyond Ophir: Confessions Of An Iditarod Musher, An Alaska Odyssey



Synopsis

Jim Lanier had a good life going: a great family, a successful pathologist, a sometimes singer. Then he went to the dogs, ran the Iditarod in 1979, and has never recovered. With that '79 race as the book's backbone, Jim tells its tale--entertaining, exciting, occasionally informative, and mostly the truth. From the bustle of metropolitan Anchorage to Front Street in Nome, it's no how to do. If anything, it's how not to--how not to give in to the urge to quit when the going gets tough, in life and in this metaphorical Iditarod.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I have read many books written by Mushers who tell their tale of participating in the Iditarod. I would come away feeling that they didn't tell the entire story, just giving me the highlights of certain stories along the trail. Jim Lanier puts you in his sled and takes you along the trail with him. Tales of checkpoints and the trail between checkpoints. He paints such a wonderful tale, ok sometimes not so wonderful. He certainly shows the glory and all the warts, loss of body parts, the love of family, friends and dogs, a real tale of getting to and down the Iditarod trail. Loved every word and picture.

On my latest visit to Alaska, I was so overwhelmed with joy that I ran into Jim and Anna at his son's baseball game and found out that his book was completed! I bought one on the spot and watched in awe as those strong, weathered and clearly marks of a multi-Iditarod finisher hands signed my book. I couldn't wait to get inside the cover and experience the Iditarod like no other book. And it did not disappoint!! It was funny, witty and inspiring to read. The book describes those things that

happen on the trail that don't make it into the media. More importantly, I felt the connection and appreciation from Jim of all those who touched his life in the preparation of the races and the races itself. From his close family, volunteers on the trail and those kids who kept him going. I couldn't put the book down. It left me wanting more stories from Jim and the trail!

I love Jim's sense of humor! This was a fast paced, yet thorough look at an early Iditarod race from the musher's point of view. It held my attention right to the end & I knew how it ended! Good read for Iditarod fans and those interested in the race.

Lanier's humor, unexpected remarks, and genuine writing style make for a truly pleasurable read. We've been reading Lanier's book aloud over dinner for a number of weeks now, and it has made for very entertaining evenings. The short bite-sized chapters – each their own self-contained story – are filled with humor, interesting information, reminiscences of days gone by, and the spirit of persevering adventure. Initially, I tried to keep track of my favorite chapters. Several dozen chapters later, I gave up – just about every little vignette contained a story or a phrase that I wanted to go and re-tell to someone. My solution: buy the book for friends, and let them enjoy the reading in its entirety. But the phrases still linger with me: "Though misery may love company, your company does not always love misery" or "This is what the Iditarod trail looks like for half of every 24 hours" (as caption to a solid black image of the night-time trail)... Same goes for the stories: how Lanier's dogs mushed straight into a chicken coop, or the misadventure in which he and his wife needed to be rescued by an army helicopter... Let me tell you – Jim Lanier is one funny guy! Read the book, and see for yourself!

I have to give this book only 3 stars because I don't have the cred to understand it. It's best enjoyed by someone who's had at least second-hand experience with dogs and the Iditarod. The author is the Real Thing, a famous Iditarod champion, and the organization and situations in the book assume some kind of familiarity with the subject, but ring hollow with me. I don't even rate as an armchair musher so should have saved my money for a romance or something.

Jim Lanier gives us a veteran musher's account of the Iditarod, introducing the reader to the race mile-by-mile and year-by-year. His writing not only perfectly describes the physical tribulations of traveling 1000 miles by dogsled, but also relates many trail tales and introduces us to a host of colorful Alaskan characters. It's a guided history of his five decades on the Iditarod trail -

complete with limericks, evocative musings on motivations for running the race, stories of the great Alaskan wilderness, and through it all, Lanier's warm sense of humor and passion for dog mushing.

I had the most amazing trip to Alaska which included meeting one of the mushers I have admired from stories while following the Iditarod for years. Not only for Jim Lanier's longevity but just as interesting to me the glorious resonant voice that seems to emanate from him whenever he is inspired. My two passions, singing and mushing (as a professional voice teacher and singer and recreational musher) and here I meet 3 amazing people that share those interests: Jim Lanier, his lovely wife Anna and their son Jimmy. Beyond Ophir was the book for me: inspiring, and with references to music that I could fully appreciate. Jim signed my book "here's singing you" and will be something I will always cherish. I couldn't wait to start reading once I got on the plane to head back to the lower 48. It was a great eye opening read. At times the stories were a bit TMI but it was the reality of the incredible situations he found himself in. Facing reality and making the right adjustments with a wonderful sense of humor, charm and wisdom makes this book an inspirational read. This bodes well for a long healthy life and relationships, and more stories to come from Jim Lanier, I hope. I write this with best wishes as Jim mushes to Nome for Jim's 2015 Iditarod.

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