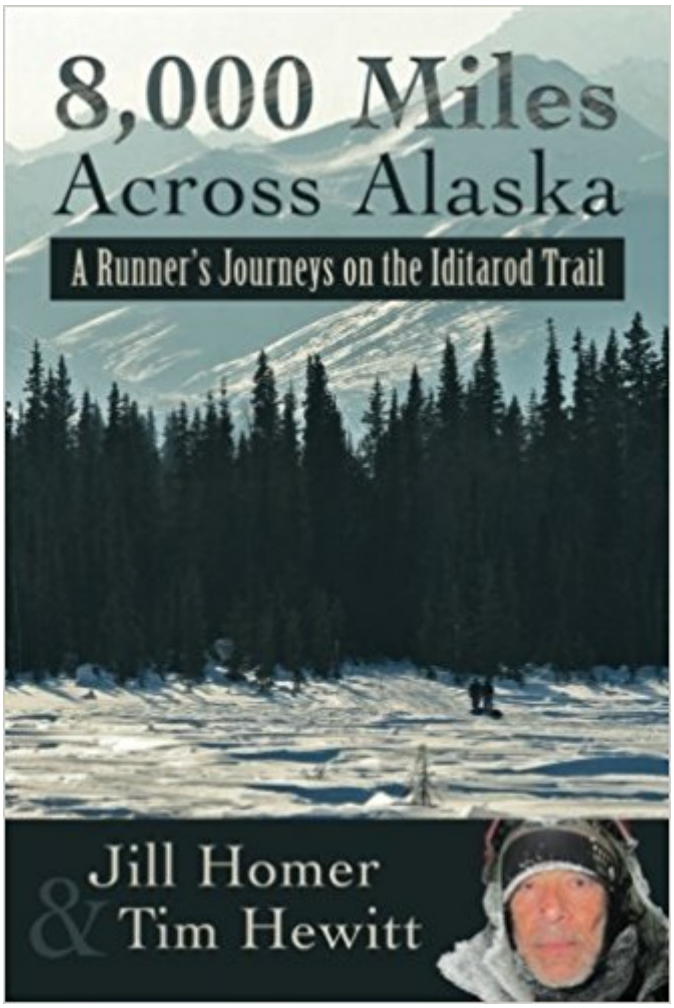
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8,000 Miles Across Alaska: A Runner's Journeys On The Iditarod Trail



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Synopsis

In North America’s Last Frontier, there are still untrammeled wildernesses where a man can stand alone in a region the size of entire states, where deep cold quiets every whisper of life and vast emptiness reigns. Alaska remains a mysterious place that, thanks to reality television, has captured the imagination of millions. Yet a minuscule fraction have acquired an understanding of the land afforded by exploring in their most vulnerable state Ã¢â ¬â •Ã Â on foot, towing all of their supplies, wholly independent. This is the perspective of Tim Hewitt, an employment lawyer from Pennsylvania with a unique hobby Ã¢â ¬â • racing across Alaska on the Iditarod Trail. What compels a man to run, walk, and trudge a thousand miles across Alaska? Ã¢â ¬Å“Because itÃ¢â ¬â„¢s thereÃ¢â ¬Â• isn’t an adequate explanation. Ã¢â ¬Å“As a challengeÃ¢â ¬Â• or Ã¢â ¬Å“for the adventure of itÃ¢â ¬Â• are closer, but still too vague. The thousand-mile dog sled race on the Iditarod Trail is often called Ã¢â ¬Å“The Last Great RaceÃ¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â •Ã Â but thereÃ¢â ¬â„¢s another, more obscure race, where participants donÃ¢â ¬â„¢t even have the help of dogs. The Iditarod Trail Invitational challenges cyclists, skiers, and runners to complete the distance under their own power and without much outside support. Tim Hewitt is the only person to have completed it more than three times. His actual number? An astonishing eight. Six of those, he won or tied. But no one who sees Tim Hewitt on the street near his law firm in Pittsburgh would ever suspect that battling hurricane-force blizzards is something he does in his spare time. Fifty-nine years old with a slim build, a bright smile, and cropped gray hair, he isnÃ¢â ¬â„¢t the stereotype of a grizzled Arctic explorer. HeÃ¢â ¬â„¢s a talented amateur runner, a father to four daughters, a husband to an equally adventurous wife, and achiever of a truly distinctive accomplishment. Far more people have reached the summit of Mount Everest than Nome under their own power, and itÃ¢â ¬â„¢s incredibly unlikely that another person will ever try for eight. "8,000 Miles Across Alaska: A Runner’s Journeys on the Iditarod Trail" chronicles Tim Hewitt’s adventures across Alaska Ã¢â ¬â •Ã Â the harrowing weather conditions, breathtaking scenery, kindness of strangers, humorous misadventures, humbling setbacks and heroic victories. From fierce competition with his fellow racers, to traveling backward on the trail to ensure the safety of his wife, to battling for his own survival, Tim Hewitt has amassed a lifetime of experiences amid the harsh miles of the Iditarod Trail. This is his story.

Book Information

Paperback: 200 pages
Publisher: Arctic Glass Press; First Edition edition (August 17, 2014)
Language: English

ISBN-10: 0692263365
ISBN-13: 978-0692263365
Product Dimensions: 6 x 0.5 x 9 inches
Shipping Weight: 12.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)
Average Customer Review: 4.7 out of 5 stars 32 customer reviews
Best Sellers Rank: #468,906 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #16 inÃ Â Books > Sports & Outdoors > Outdoor Recreation > Iditarod & Dog-Sledding #304 inÃ Â Books > Sports & Outdoors > Winter Sports #2583 inÃ Â Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Travelers & Explorers

Customer Reviews

Jill Homer grew up in Salt Lake City, Utah, and graduated from the University of Utah with a degree in journalism in 2000. She began her career working in community weekly and daily newspapers. In 2005, she moved to Homer, Alaska, to pursue adventure in the Last Frontier. She never viewed herself as an athlete, but she was looking for a unique kind of challenge, and an esoteric sport called snow biking fit that description. A couple of years worth of (mainly mis)adventures landed her in the 350-mile Iditarod Trail Invitational in 2008. The unforgettable experience was the genesis of her first book, Ghost Trails: Journeys Through A Lifetime. Although she was often less than a half day in front of Tim and Loreen during her 2008 ride, she didnÃ¢â ¬â„¢t officially meet Tim until she returned to Iditarod Trail in 2009. After stepping in overflow on Flathorn Lake, she developed serious frostbite on her right foot. She was holed up at the Yentna Station checkpoint, mulling whether the injury and potential consequences would prevent her from continuing in the race. Tim Hewitt approached her and said, Ã¢â ¬Å“You know you canÃ¢â ¬â„¢t go on.Ã¢â ¬Â• She still credits Tim with persuading her out of an extremely bad decision. After moving to California and establishing a career as a freelance writer and journalist, Jill returned to Alaska in 2014 to attempt the 350-mile race to McGrath on foot with her partner, Beat. She enjoyed many memorable adventures while dragging a sled along the Iditarod Trail with Tim and Loreen, before bidding goodbye to the group in McGrath as they prepared to go on to Nome. She currently lives in Los Altos, California.

If you run, hike, adventure, climb, or participate in any endurance sport this is a must-read. Jill Homer paints a beautiful picture of several treks to Nome by one of the most accomplished endurance athletes on the planet. It is at times harrowing. It feels like you are on the journey yourself. This book will remind me of the struggles of others when I face my own adversities for

years. An amazing piece of work. An unbelievable story. Astounding.

A well-written account of epic journeys across inhospitable territory. From descriptions of the preparations to the actual crossing of the cold lands of the north, with vivid images of the grueling journeys and their aftermath - with the thoughts, emotions and feelings movingly recorded. A very good read for anyone who has ever contemplated or accomplished an endurance activity. Quite how Tim Hewitt and others like him who have attempted the crossing of Alaska, actually survive, is incredible and make the book useful in understanding how people do this. In my opinion, some more practical details might have been given on what physical and mental training was undertaken and how these changed over the years. The repeated trips finally merge one into the other, which is understandable but does not add value to the account. The book becomes a bit of a blur finally, which is a pity - more focus by the author would have enhanced the book. All in all, a remarkable account well-worth reading.

This is a gripping read. The ability for Tim to bear pain is remarkable, and difficult at times not to wonder if he is not human. Here and there there are some great pieces of writing about the relationship with the land and the wonderment of being in this amazing place. Jill Homers own love of these wild places and her experiences of pain and competition no doubt contribute to her capacity to write about this race very competently.

After reading the first story I found myself wondering how the stories in this book would fill up an entire book but they sure did. Each journey that Tim took was more captivating than the previous. It’s hard to believe that the human psyche and the human body could do what Tim did.

Very few people have time, dedication, strength, and skill to run through Alaska wilderness for a month. Sleeping in the snow and navigating through fresh snow for miles and miles is not what we do now and then. The book opens a window in those unique experiences.

I read Ms. Homer’s other two books -- both very compelling 1st person adventure stories. I’ve been curious about Tim Hewitt and his many 1,100 mile races to Nome; Jill evokes the spirit & substantial grit of those adventures in this ’biography’ of Tim’s racing experiences. Looking forward to more writing from Jill in the future...

This is the incredible story of Tim Hewitt walking 1000 miles from Anchorage to Nome in the winter not once, but eight times. No one else has done this. Tim stands alone in the annals of recorded ultra distance racing with his outstanding physical, mental, and emotional achievement. I recommend this book to every adventurer, armchair or real, who values true grit and fantastic fortitude.

Jill Homer is one of the most talented writers.

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