

***RETIREE MEN'S ASSOCIATION OF GREENWICH, Inc. (RMA)  
invites you to attend its meeting, on Wednesday, Apr. 17, 2013.  
First Presbyterian Church, Lafayette Pl., Greenwich.***

***TURNER LEWIS, DVM***

***THE IDITAROD, THE GREAT ALSASKAN DOGSLED RACE***



The Iditarod is the annual long-distance sled dog race run in early March from Anchorage to Nome. Begun in 1973 to test the best sled dog mushers, teams frequently race through blizzards causing whiteout conditions, sub-zero temperatures and gale-force winds, which can cause the wind chill to reach minus 100° F. The 1050 mile race attracts a yearly field of over 75 mushers (as many as 108) and over a thousand dogs, and is the most popular sporting event in Alaska. The race's namesake is the Iditarod Trail, designated as one of the first four national historic trails in 1978, taking its name from the Athabaskan term for "far distant place".

Care and monitoring of the sled dogs is paramount. Modern racing dogs are all mixed-breed huskies bred for speed, tough feet, endurance, good attitude, and the desire to run. Each team is composed of twelve to sixteen dogs, and no more may be added along the race. Volunteer veterinarians monitor the dogs before the race, and at the checkpoints along the way.

Dr. Lewis has provided veterinary care for the Iditarod from 1993 through 2013. The Iditarod veterinarians work tirelessly under the most difficult of conditions in the Alaskan wilds. In addition, he has participated in pretty much every major dog sled race, including the Kusko 300 (Alaska), the John Beargrease (Minnesota), the Yukon Quest Canada and Alaska), and The Race to the Sky (Montana).

Dr. Lewis received his veterinary degree from Michigan State University in 1968 and practiced in Stoneham, MA, and later in Chelsea, MA, where he worked until semi-retirement in September 2006. He is past president of the Chelsea Rotary club, and served as Trustee of Kalamazoo College, where he did his undergraduate work. Currently he is a board member of the International Sled Dog Veterinary Medical Association, having served as Secretary/Treasurer for six years and now as Treasurer for the past three years. He now lives in Halifax, Vermont with his wife Kay; he has two adult children (both married) and five grandchildren. He continues to practice in semi-retirement, providing relief work for several veterinary hospitals.

**RMA members and their guests should arrive by 9:45 AM for our full meeting. The general public should plan to arrive at 10:30 AM. Meetings are held at the First Presbyterian Church, Lafayette Place, Greenwich. No Charge and No Reservations are required. Questions about any of the above, call Bernard Schneider, 203-698-2558; bgsesq@gmail.com.**