

# 2010 Iditarod Honorary Musher Orin Seybert, An Alaskan Pioneer

Orin Seybert still remembers when he first arrived at Pilot Point with his parents at the age of 13. "My mom was in charge of the Pilot Point School. It was a great place to grow up. It was a great place to learn about village life in Alaska's Central Peninsula." said the 78 year old retired Chief Executive Officer of PenAir.

What Orin Seybert learned had a lot to do with trap lines, transportation, and the means to get from one village to another: the Alaska Sled Dog.

"Sled Dogs were a vital part of village life. It was an essential part of life." recalled Seybert. He also recalled with great admiration a Fish and Wildlife pilot who taught him that aviation was the future of Alaska. That pilot later became one of Alaska's most admired statesmen, Governor Jay Hammond.

"He became friends with my parents and would stay over at the Pilot Point School when he worked with Fish & Wildlife. He always had time to talk to me about flying, and about the places he'd been. He was my hero." said Seybert.

Governor Hammond's impact on a very young Orin Seybert was profound. He learned how to fly, and at the tender age of 16 Orin travelled to Seattle, purchased his first plane and flew it back to Pilot Point.

"Part of my reasoning for having my own airplane was that in my village there were no girls my age. I knew I needed to get out and see who else was out there, so I went all over the central Peninsula and discovered all kinds of great adventures."

At 18, Orin already had his commercial pilot's license. One day a physician from Dillingham asked him to consider contracting with him to provide those in surrounding villages in need of healthcare with air transportation.

That request turned into the beginning of a rich Alaskan Aviation tradition, PenAir.

As Orin began his business, he also discovered the woman of his dreams, Jennie, in the Central Peninsula Village of Chignik. "We spent 42 wonderful years

together, raised eight great children and we hopefully gave back to the place we love so much: Alaska."

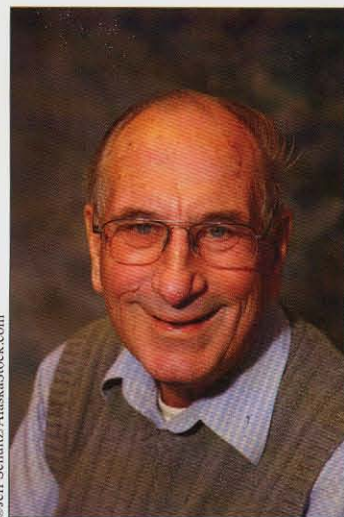
Over the past 55 years, PenAir has grown to the largest regional airline in the state, serving Southwestern Alaska, the Aleutians and Pribilof Islands. The airline has provided millions of flight miles to Southeast residents, business travelers and thousands of fishermen. PenAir also has been transporting Iditarod race personnel, supplies and hundreds of the sled dogs that meant so much to him growing up in Pilot Point for nearly two decades.

The role that PenAir plays in the Iditarod today is critical to the race's ability to provide the continuum of logistics that is so vital to the success of the Iditarod Trail Sled Dog Race. We think it's safe to say that Orin Seybert and PenAir have given back to the tradition of the sled dog and the way of life that it represents in so many of the communities that count on PenAir each and every day.

For Orin, there's one more thing to do that he is really excited about.

"It's been 50 years since I've been on the runners of a sled. I can't wait until March 6th, and the opportunity to ride in the basket of the first sled to take off in Iditarod XXXVIII."

The Iditarod is thankful for the proud tradition that Orin Seybert embraces. That tradition continues with his son Danny, who is now at the Helm of PenAir. That tradition is what makes the Iditarod "The Last great Race on Earth."



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