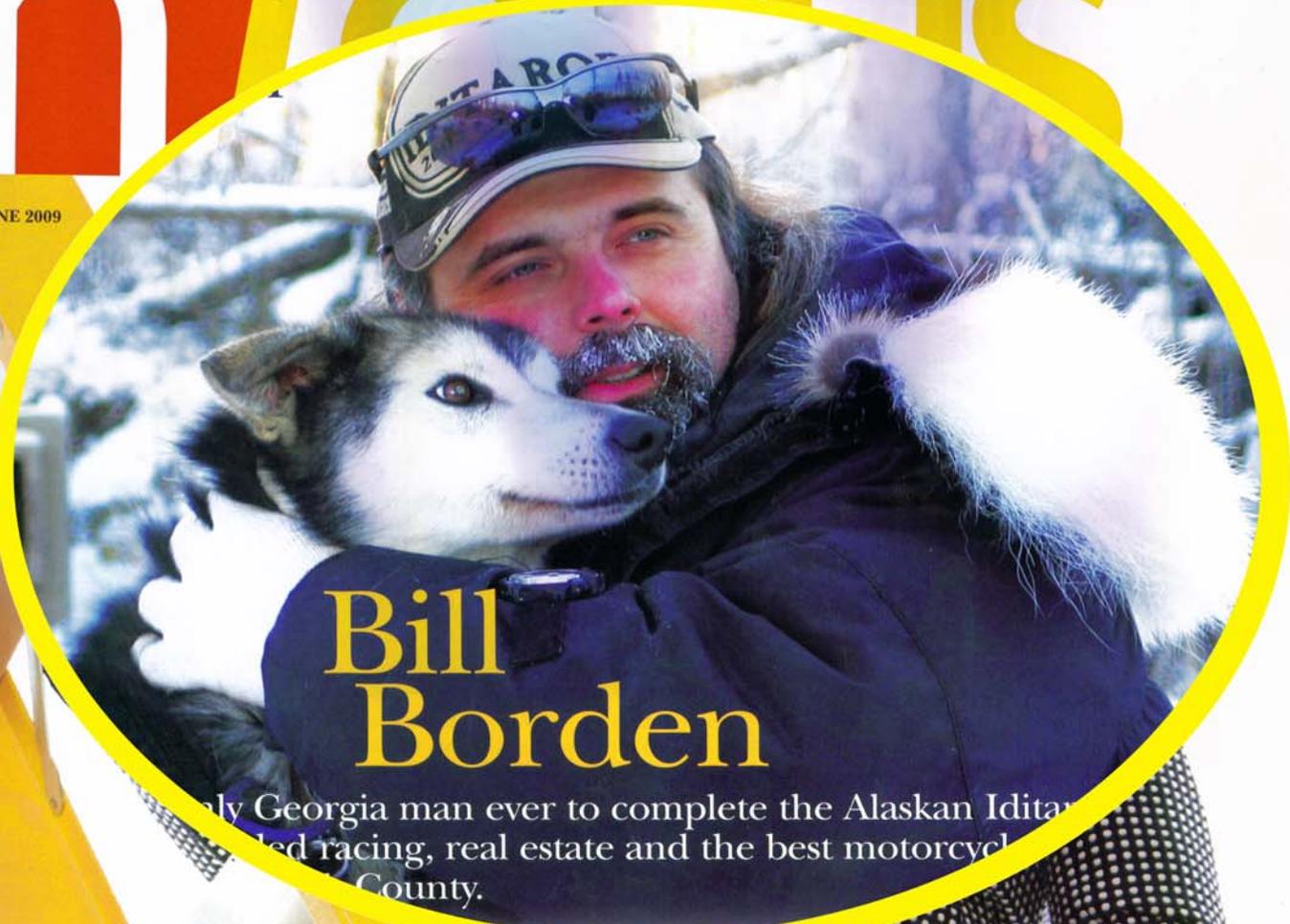


COBB

in focus

MAY/JUNE 2009



Bill Borden

...ly Georgia man ever to complete the Alaskan Iditarod
...ed racing, real estate and the best motorcycle
... County.

COBB'S
First
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...missioners.

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& Your Business**

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Bill Borden

Kennesaw's own mountain man Bill Borden talks about his Iditarod experience and his real estate career.

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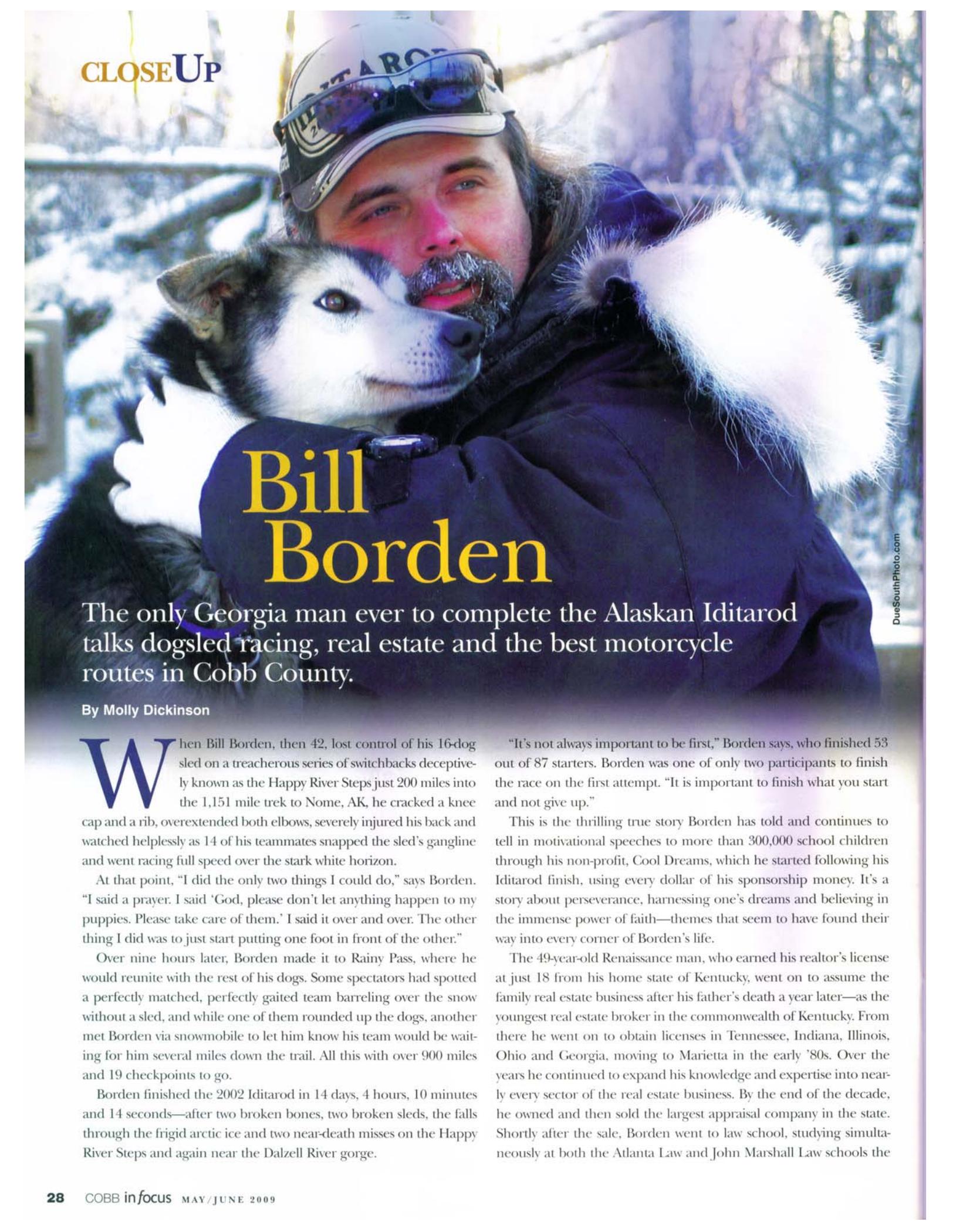
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Bill Borden

The only Georgia man ever to complete the Alaskan Iditarod talks dogsled racing, real estate and the best motorcycle routes in Cobb County.

By Molly Dickinson

When Bill Borden, then 42, lost control of his 16-dog sled on a treacherous series of switchbacks deceptively known as the Happy River Steps just 200 miles into the 1,151 mile trek to Nome, AK, he cracked a knee cap and a rib, overextended both elbows, severely injured his back and watched helplessly as 14 of his teammates snapped the sled's gangline and went racing full speed over the stark white horizon.

At that point, "I did the only two things I could do," says Borden. "I said a prayer. I said 'God, please don't let anything happen to my puppies. Please take care of them.' I said it over and over. The other thing I did was to just start putting one foot in front of the other."

Over nine hours later, Borden made it to Rainy Pass, where he would reunite with the rest of his dogs. Some spectators had spotted a perfectly matched, perfectly gaited team barreling over the snow without a sled, and while one of them rounded up the dogs, another met Borden via snowmobile to let him know his team would be waiting for him several miles down the trail. All this with over 900 miles and 19 checkpoints to go.

Borden finished the 2002 Iditarod in 14 days, 4 hours, 10 minutes and 14 seconds—after two broken bones, two broken sleds, the falls through the frigid arctic ice and two near-death misses on the Happy River Steps and again near the Dalzell River gorge.

"It's not always important to be first," Borden says, who finished 53 out of 87 starters. Borden was one of only two participants to finish the race on the first attempt. "It is important to finish what you start and not give up."

This is the thrilling true story Borden has told and continues to tell in motivational speeches to more than 300,000 school children through his non-profit, Cool Dreams, which he started following his Iditarod finish, using every dollar of his sponsorship money. It's a story about perseverance, harnessing one's dreams and believing in the immense power of faith—themes that seem to have found their way into every corner of Borden's life.

The 49-year-old Renaissance man, who earned his realtor's license at just 18 from his home state of Kentucky, went on to assume the family real estate business after his father's death a year later—as the youngest real estate broker in the commonwealth of Kentucky. From there he went on to obtain licenses in Tennessee, Indiana, Illinois, Ohio and Georgia, moving to Marietta in the early '80s. Over the years he continued to expand his knowledge and expertise into nearly every sector of the real estate business. By the end of the decade, he owned and then sold the largest appraisal company in the state. Shortly after the sale, Borden went to law school, studying simultaneously at both the Atlanta Law and John Marshall Law schools the

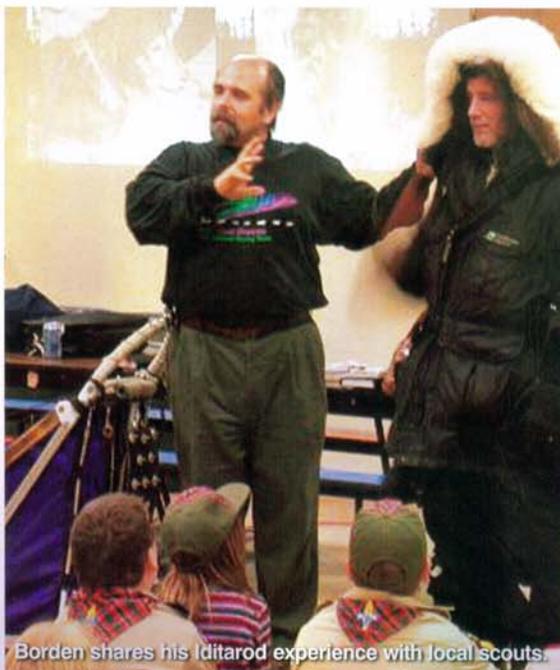
first semester to expedite the process and opening a real estate law practice before he even graduated.

Borden found what he considers to be his true career as a mortgage broker when he looked across the table at those whose homes and businesses were being closed on due to misleading loan terms and a lack of financial knowledge. Borden turned to his wife, Brenda, an equally experienced real estate professional, and said, "We can do this better." They started their own company, Checkpoint Mortgage, in 1996, and by 2002 (the year Borden completed the Iditarod) the *Atlanta Business Chronicle* had named it the 20th largest mortgage company in Georgia.

In between his continued dedication to his work and his family (wife Brenda, son Jordan—the youngest ever Junior Iditarod finisher and only Junior finisher from Georgia—daughter Satina and his four grandchildren), Borden also found the time to rack up auctioneer and pilot's licenses, become a dive master and expert-level marksman, learn two disciplines of martial arts, work with multiple organizations, boards and committees, including starting two Boy Scout troops, acting as Past President of the West Cobb Business Association and President Elect of the Vinings Business Association and serving as a 2009 Cobb Chamber of Commerce Board member. He is also a member of MENSA and has been named an Honorable Kentucky Colonel for Life—twice.

"I like to do things that are a bit extraordinary," says Borden, whose passion for spreading Cool Dreams' message and for helping people sort out their financial lives is rivaled only by his love of traveling and adventuring all over the world. "We've [Brenda and I've] been to the Amazon to swim with the piranha, we've been to Jamaica to swim with crocodiles." But Borden insists he doesn't have to go too far from his current home in Kennesaw to find a bit of adventure. "There are beautiful, curvy, tree-lined roads to ride [motorcycles] on all over Cobb, Kennesaw Mountain is a great place to hike, Swift Cantrell is great for dry mushing, Lake Altoona has a beautiful beach and it's perfect for boating...there are great restaurants...There's not many alligators," he admits, "or much snow, but it does take care of my outdoor interests."

"[Cobb County] is America at it's best,"



Borden shares his Iditarod experience with local scouts.

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Borden adds, rattling off a glowing list of attributes from summer concerts and festivals to low property taxes and dedicated business leaders, which proves he won't be moving to Alaska anytime soon—at least, not full time. "If you want to step back in time and you're looking for that sense

of family values, Cobb County has that," he says. "If you want to step forward into the future with economic development, Cobb County has that as well. You can't beat it."

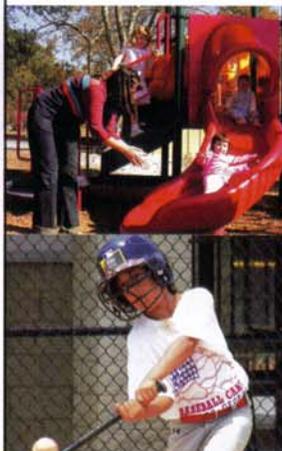
And as far as the Iditarod goes? Though Borden has returned every year since his finish in 2002 to emcee, auctioneer, support, cheer on and basically help "keep the dogs' heads screwed on straight and the mushers' heads screwed on straight as they're leaving the starting line," he hasn't run another race—yet.

"If you print this, my wife will see it," Borden laughs, as he mentions plans to enter the Iron Dog 2,000-mile snowmobile race in a few years. "I think there are a few motorheads I can connect with [when I do my motivational speeches] if I can talk

about running 120 mph across a frozen lake."

"I'd also like to do the Iditarod again," he adds, almost wistfully. "For the love of the dogs, the passion of the race and just getting back out into nature." Perhaps, he says, on his 60th birthday. ■

Come discover why **Kennesaw** was named one of Family Circle Magazine's **Ten Best Towns for Families**



- Historic Downtown with specialty shops, dining and entertainment.
- Exceptional schools and higher education opportunities including Kennesaw State University.
- Family-oriented activities, festivals, concerts and cultural events.
- Abundant parks & greenspace and close proximity to Kennesaw Mountain.



The City of Kennesaw - A Great Place for Families