

ISSUE 6 - MARCH 16, 2024



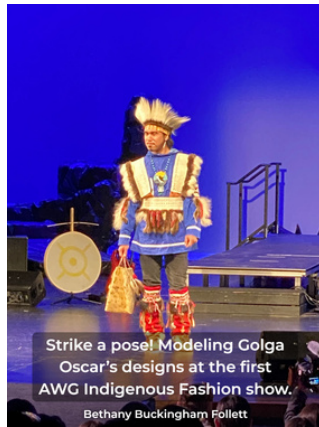
# ARCTIC WINTER GAMES ULU NEWS

Matanuska Valley, Alaska • March 10-16, 2024

AWG 2024 | Photo by Mary Webb

# SHARE YOUR GAMES PICS

Post your photos to our Kululu account and get them featured in Ulu News, or on screen at closing ceremony!



It has been an honor working as just a small part of the Ulu News team this week. I want to moment and give an extra special acknowledgement to our Ulu News Chair, Krysta Voskowsky, our Vice Chair, Charles Knowles. They have gone above and beyond every day from going home after 3am most nights to getting back to it at 7 in the morning, the both of them have kept the wheels turning all week and it could not have been done without them!

I also want to recognize Tina Tipner, our graphic designer. She has been working feverishly to complete each issue on time with only a few hour deadline between submission and publishing. Tina - your design work and expertise are so appreciated.

## EDITORIAL STAFF

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GRAPHIC DESIGNER  
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Kendra Zamzow

## ULU NEWS COMES IN MANY FORMS!

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Due to time constraints, there is no participant transportation to the winter carnival today, but it is open 11-4.

Futsal competition will continue today, held at Palmer High School. Get out and catch the last push of games before opening ceremonies!



Closing ceremonies begin at 3pm today at the Menard Sport Center. Please be in your seat by 2:50

# THINGS TO KNOW FOR TODAY



# WEATHER FORECAST



## Saturday | March 16

Snow likely, mainly after 4pm. Mostly cloudy, with a high near 35F (1.6C). Calm wind. Chance of precipitation is 60%. New snow accumulation of less than a half inch possible.

# BED SALE

BUNK BEDS (\$200) & SINGLE BEDS (\$100)

VISIT [SHOP.AWG2024.ORG/BEDSALES](http://SHOP.AWG2024.ORG/BEDSALES)

Contingent	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
<u>Alaska</u>	66	84	63	213
<u>Yukon</u>	57	42	57	156
<u>Alberta North</u>	41	42	39	122
<u>Northwest Territories</u>	26	37	30	93
<u>Nunavut</u>	24	16	22	62
<u>Kalaallit Nunaat</u>	24	9	19	52
<u>Sápmi</u>	9	9	8	26
<u>Nunavik</u>	7	11	8	26

# MEDAL COUNTS



## DAILY SPONSOR SHOUTOUT - SUPPORTER - \$5K+



\*We will acknowledge the various sponsor levels each day.

# LOOK OUT FOR WAYS TO EXEMPLIFY YOUR ARCTIC SPIRIT AND EARN A PLAY FAIR AWARD! BE FEATURED HERE!

**The Fair Play Pin**, produced by the Arctic Winter Games International Committee, is distributed to individuals who demonstrate an understanding of the philosophy and values of the Arctic Winter Games, on or off the playing field. Individuals may include participants, coaches, managers, officials, volunteers, parents, spectators or staff.

**The Arctic Winter Games International Committee values are:**

Respect, Accountability, Participant Centered, Integrity, Collaboration.

The philosophy of the Arctic Winter Games is symbolized by the three interlocking rings which promote athletic competition, cultural exhibition and social interaction among Northerners.

**Scan QR Code to submit pin recipient for recognition in Ulu News**



## FAIR PLAY NOMINATION

BY KENDRA ZAMZOW

We would like to thank Lisa Bultman and Laura Richardson of Wasilla for helping the medic for Team Kalaallit Nunaat (Greenland). The slopestyle snowboarding event held on Tuesday March 12 at Skeetawk could only be reached by chairlift, and only people with snowboards (or skis) and a lift pass could get there. The medic had neither.

Although he had talked to the ski patrol and some officials, he was unable to get permission to take the lift up or to get permission to walk up. Lisa and Laura helped to convey the message that the medic was needed to assess whether one of the boys on Team Kalaallit Nunaat should be allowed to compete, and helped get the medic and team member together. Thanks for looking out for our visitors!







# HOW HIGH CAN YOU FLY AT THE ARCTIC WINTER GAMES 2024?

BY SEAN REILLY

This was the question for the folks who cheered on the athletes at the Arctic Games in the **Two Foot High-Kick competition** on Tuesday. When the action began the mood of the crowd seemed subdued, but the pacing kept the crowd engaged.

Those competitors who were born in 2007 or later competed first, followed by open categories. The subdued crowd became more energized as an object shaped like a hacky-sack, although the size of a grapefruit, hung from a string and was raised mechanically on an aluminum frame.

As the object was moved higher in increments of two inches periodically, the challenge these athletes had ahead became more and more challenging. This of course narrowed the field!

Ultimately, there were six athletes left to compete, three in the boys category and three in the girls.

The results: Inutsiaq Rosing, from Greenland, won the gold ulu for kicking seven feet and four inches. Again from Greenland, Lars Jeremiassen took silver ulu, reaching a height of seven feet and four inches. Jordon Wills, from Team Alberta, received a bronze ulu by kicking seven feet and two inches.

In the first ever girls competition, the girls brought their enthusiasm for the sport. Randi Sigurdson, from Team Greenland, brought home the golden ulu by kicking it into high gear and winning first place, with a kick of six feet and three inches. Second place and the silver ulu, was won by Bree Labelle, for Team Yukon. She kicked six feet and two inches. Team Alaska's athlete, Daisy Vanblarcom, was also on the podium, taking home the bronze ulu for her kick of five feet and ten inches.

When the older athletes walked out onto the field to compete for the Two foot High Kick, it felt like the temperature in the room rose. The height of the jumps ratcheted up higher and higher. The crowd became louder and louder and the athlete's passion seemed to become heightened also. Depending on which particular athlete was readying themselves to run and jump the crowd could sense if they wanted complete silence or a rousing chant and cries of the bearded seal.



© AWG 2024 Norm Harris



## *HOW HIGH CAN YOU FLY AT THE ARCTIC WINTER GAMES 2024?, CONT.*

One very focused athlete, Colton Paul, from Team Alaska, would walk under the hanging ball and look at it intently. Then he'd walk back to the sidelines, and with a slight gesture of his hand he would signal the crowd to amp them up and also help psyche himself up to fly through the air. Then with both hands quickly pushing upward, Colton would call for the crowd to bring their best game, to help him bring his best game.

The crowd was whipped into a frenzy, with the energy reverberating across the field. Colton ran across the floor and as his feet left the ground he flew upward and upward, higher than anyone's living room ceiling. His foot contacted the Hacky-sack and he stuck his landing like a seasoned gymnast on the beam. People were screaming, applauding, and some were even crying for joy!

Colton Paul, from Team Alaska had taken the gold and first place and had flown to the height of eight feet and six inches. Nipping at his heels, Parker Kenick had flown through the air to a height of eight feet four inches and he had made it seem effortless! Rounding out the podium, Kyle Worl, of Team Alaska, was also a high flier; he reached seven feet and eight inches, gaining him third place and a bronze ulu. It was a clean sweep for Team Alaska's men.

The women's competition brought great energy, from both the crowd and the athletes. It was Danika Taylor, who took the gold for Team Nunavut with a height of six feet and two inches. Second place went to Ali Johnston, of Team Alaska, with a height of six feet. The bronze ulu went to Deseray Cumberbatch of Team Quebec, with a kick of five feet and eight inches.

**We truly had some high flyers in the house!**





# AMAZING WIN FOR NUNAVUT

BY ANNA CHEBUKINA

Nuna What!? Nunavut ! You can hear these words chanted at all events this week. Team Nunavut joins the Arctic Winter Games from the Eastern portion of the Northwest territories. From arrival day at AWG, you can see the proud Team Nunavut in high spirits and even higher determination.

Through the course of this week, Nunavut has taken: 16 gold, 9 silver, and 15 bronze medals, bringing them to a grand total of 40 medals. Nunavut has put their all into their sports. From Dene games to futsal, they have shown time and time again their sheer determination and spirit.

In last night's futsal game, the crowd celebrated a powerful cinematic win for Team Nunavut. Tied with Northwest Territories, 5 to 5, and two overtime periods, Nunavut netted the winning kick with 3 minutes on the clock of the second overtime period.

Silence only followed for just a moment before the entire crowd jumped to their feet. Team Nunavut has won - 6 to 5. Team members flooded the court as tears of joy were shared in celebration, and unending cheers echoed from the stands. It would be a night to remember for all of us!

Team Nunavut is a contingent of 280, representing three regions: Qikiqtaaluk, Kivalliq, and Kitikmeot. These three regions encompass 25 communities also represented in this year's AWG. Team Nunavut has shown tremendous bravery and absolute comradery. Through all the challenges that they faced this week. To describe this experience as uplifting is an understatement, and their sportsmanship towards the other contingents, exemplary. **Let's go, Nunavut!**



# FLAGS | NUNAVUT, NUNAVIK, GREENLAND, SAPMI

BY ANNA CHEBUKINA



## NUNAVUT

Nunavut became its own territory— and officially adopted its own flag— in 1999 when the cultural region separated from Northwest Territories. Their flag features a yellow and white background with an inuksuk —a traditional Inuit land marker— and a blue star that represents the North Star. The blue and gold are said to represent the riches of the land, sea, and sky. The red represents Canada as a whole. Matilda Pinksen says "There is a lot of pride in our flag. Specifically to AWG. You know, we used to compete with Northwest Territories as one contingent but now, being able to be here with our own flag representing our own land, it carries a lot of pride."



## NUNAVIK-QUEBEC

Nunavik is the "Far North" of Quebec. There, you can find polar bears, marine mammals, caribou, muskoxen, and larger-than-life landscapes. Nunavik displays Quebec's flag at AWG. It features a white cross on a blue background, with four white fleurs-de-lis. It was first adopted in Canada around 1948. The blue of the flag represents heaven, the white fleurs-de-lis represents Purity. Nunavik means "Great Land" in Inuktitut, the local dialect.



## SAPMI

The Sapmi flag is a series of colors. With Red and navy Blue as its background. It features two vertical lines in yellow and green with a red and blue circle running through them. The red part of the circle represents the sun, the blue represents the moon. green represents nature, blue - water, red- fire, yellow sun. The flag was first used in 1986 but wasn't approved as the official flag until 1992. One spectator spoke to us about their personal thoughts and feelings about the flag. " Our people live in 4 countries so the flag colors represent that we are together. We don't have our own country, state or land. The flag is not connected to any one people. It connects us all. We are proud to be here with our flag to represent the Sami people. It is an honor."



## KALALLIT NUNAAT

Kalaallit Nunaat is a sovereign State of Denmark. In 1978 Denmark granted Greenland home rule, making it a member of the Danish Realm. The present flag was designed by Thue Christiansen. It features two equal horizontal bands of white (top) and red (bottom) with a counter-changed red and white disk slightly off center. The white stripe represents the glaciers and ice caps, the red stripe represents the ocean. The red part of the disk represents the Sun and the white semi-circle represents the icebergs and pack ice. The colors themselves remained red and white to symbolize their place in the Denmark Realm.



# FLAGS & KID QUOTES

BY JULIE SPACKMAN



## ALASKA

Kate Connelly described the Alaska state flag: “Navy blue with gold stars in the form of the big dipper constellation, with the North Star off the dipper.” Connelly said that competing on behalf of Alaska is meaningful because, “Alaska is the only state in the USA that is far enough north to be able to participate in the AWG.” According to the University of Alaska, at the request of the territorial governor, the American Legion sponsored a competition in 1926 (Alaska did not become a state until 1959) to create a territorial flag. The winning design was submitted by a 13 year old young man, the child of a Swedish father and Aleut-Russian mother. The symbolism was described by the contestant: “The blue field is for the Alaska sky and the forget-me-not, an Alaska flower. The North Star is for the future of the state of Alaska, the most northerly in the Union. The dipper is for the Great Bear – symbolizing strength (sic).”



## ALBERTA

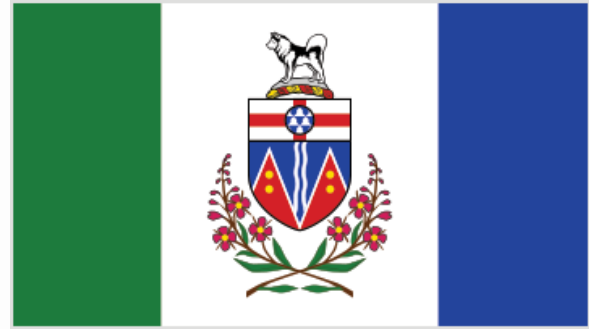
Alberta is the fourth-largest province in Canada and the southernmost contingent at the AWG. Jorgie Visser and Tayden Shott from Alberta North Archery Team described their flag and its symbolism. Visser said, “The bottom is for the wheat fields, there’s a lot of wheat in Alberta. The green is for the valleys, then there’s the mountains, and the blue sky.” Shott added, “the Mountains like Jasper”. Visser noted that the overall crest has something to do with the queen. According to Britannica, the middle of the flag represents the rough prairie land, and the “top of the shield is the red Cross of St. George, recalling the English settlement of the region.” Visser really appreciated that all eight of the AWG contingent flags were flying at the Screaming Eagle Archery venue, even though there only four represented as archery athletes in the competition.

## FLAGS & KID QUOTES, CONT.



### NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

The second largest of the three territories in Canada, adopted its flag in 1969. Greta Kohle, NWT Archer, described the flag with “the wolf’s head on the red background, and the green and gold next to it. There’s water above that.” A 17-year old from Manitoba designed the flag. According to the Northwest Territories’ Legislative Assembly website about the territories’ symbols, the blue side panels represent lakes and waters, while the white panel represents snow and ice. The coat of arms in the middle has two narwhals guarding a compass rose, symbolic of the magnetic North Pole. The white upper third of the crest represents the polar ice pack and is crossed by a wavy blue line symbolizing the Northwest Passage. The diagonal line separating the red and green segments of the lower part of the shield reflects the treeline. The green symbolizes the forested areas south of the treeline, while the red represents the tundra to the north.” This is Kohle’s very first archery competition and she is pleased to represent her province.



### YUKON

Adopted in 1967, the Yukon flag design resulted from a Royal Canadian Legion competition. Dawson Widney and Everett Stuartt, Yukon Archery athletes, described their flag. “The blue is water, and the green is land,” said Widney. “There’s a lot of fireweed in the Yukon Territories, so that’s the flower below the Crest,” said Stuartt. According to the Yukon Territories official page describing territorial symbols, the “coat of arms is red, blue, gold, and white shield surmounted by a malamute standing on a mound of snow.” In the center of the crest are blue and white, wavy stripes representing the Yukon River and the creeks of the Klondike, rich with gold. The red peaks symbolize the mineral-rich mountains. The cross of St. George recognizes the English explorers, and the “roundel in vair” symbolizes the fur trade. The flag was officially approved in 1956. Widney spoke of the honor he feels for being selected to compete for their province and added, “In the Yukon the AWG are really, really big! They are the biggest sporting event. The whole province is following the games – it’s on the nightly news and friends and family text us after live-streaming our events.” Stuartt agreed wholeheartedly with Widney’s feeling of great honor to be here competing. They feel especially proud of how well their entire team is performing in the archery shoots this week.



# INSPIRING YOUNG WOMEN: TEAM ALBERTA NORTH TAKES ON TEAM ALASKA FOR VOLLEYBALL GOLD

BY KYLA KAHRS

For the gold medal round, **Team Alberta North went against Team Alaska on Friday afternoon.**

The stands were full for this match-up. In the first set, both teams worked hard and kept the score close or matched point-for-point. The teams' ability to keep the ball in the air in the volleys is incredible. Team Alaska was able to squeak ahead and take the set point.

In the second set, Alberta pulled ahead quickly by a couple of points. Team Alaska tied it up at 12 but Alberta was able to pull ahead for set two point. Set three was Alberta's game for nearly the duration. They dug hard, as much as you can dig into a gym floor, and Alaska wasn't quite able to block or return the ball quickly enough. Set four saw Alberta pull ahead early. The team stayed ahead for the entire set and was able to earn the gold medal at three sets to Alaska's one.

There was more to the game than winning. The players on both teams, most of them 17, want to learn, meet others, and have fun. Many have played, or currently play other sports. A good number give

back to their communities by coaching younger players in their spare time. Also, as a testament to their hard work, a few are committed to playing at the collegiate level in both Alaska and Canada.

One member of Team Alaska, Regan Leilani Baker, wrote about her biggest role model, her mother.

"She can be tough, a little too honest sometimes, and she does not like excuses. She never gives up on me or my dreams even when things seem impossible she keeps pushing. My mom taught me that leadership means setting an example by serving others first and being one of the hardest working athletes (on and off the court). She taught me not to quit and the lasting satisfaction that comes from leaving things better than I found them."

Very few quotes embody the sportsmanship, leadership, and leave-no-trace ideals of the Arctic Winter Games. Thank you Regan, for sharing your mom's wisdom with us. **Great job to all the ladies! Keep up the hard work!**



# POLE PUSHERS GET LOW

BY KENDRA ZAMZOW

The sun rose over the Chugach Mountains, lighting bare-limbed birch and aspen that surrounded the outdoor field at Sutton\* Elementary. Two logs lay across plastic sawhorses. Each was ten feet long, about eight inches in diameter, and skinned free of bark.

Hands lifted the logs and carried them to the centers of two 20-foot diameter circles spray painted on the snow. The sport of Pole Push is the reverse of tug-of-war – instead of trying to pull your opponent across a line, you try to push them across.

Team Yukon men (U18 class) in white camo snow pants and t-shirts crouched to hold one end of a log, Alberta North on the opposite side. Orange tape marked the midpoint of the log. The game would end when the midpoint crossed the circle, or when the log touched the ground.

The push began, each team scrabbling in the snow, arms encircling the log. Team anchors – at the log ends – dug in and yelled to their teammates. The crowd joined in the advice.

“Push down! Use your weight!” called one. “Get low like you’re showing off for the aunties!” brought a laugh from the crowd.

Men heaved and the log was pushed first to one side, then to the other. Team members strained to keep a grip and gain the advantage. It only took one slip for the tide, or the pole, to turn, for one team that was on the losing end a moment ago to rally and make the final push over the line. Each match lasted only a few minutes. In a nearby circle, the U18 female teams were battling.





## POLE PUSHERS GET LOW, CONT.

With the weight of the log and the sheer strength and adrenaline put into moving it, the game has an element of danger. Medics with a pulka full of gear were lined in a semi-circle around one ring. Within the first few rounds, multiple athletes slipped and went down, fortunately none were injured.

By the end of the final round for the U18 men's event, Team Northwest Territories took first place, Team Nunavut second, and Team Kalaallit Nunaat third. For the U18 women's event, Team Nunavik took first, Team Alaska second, and Team Alberta North third.

We were proud to see that for this day, the Dene Games were played in Ts'es Tac'ilaexde, where the Ahtna Dene Chickaloon Native Village citizens have their roots and government. It seemed a fitting place to end the Dene Games. And perhaps to begin new friendships.

\* ***"Ts'es Tac'ilaexde"*** (swims among the rocks) is the Ahtna Dene name for Eska Creek, which flows through the town of Sutton, and is therefore also the name for the town of Sutton.





# YUKON TEARS UP THE COURT TO REACH THE TOP OF THE PODIUM

BY KYLA KHARS

Finishing up the week in **men's basketball was Team Northwest Territories against Team Yukon** fighting for the gold ulu. Northwest Territories won the tip-off and quickly got a 3-point shot. This team clearly goes for the longer shots whereas Yukon started with lay-ups.

The first quarter stagnated for a bit around four minutes into the game with NWT up 9-8. The game got more interesting in the last two minutes of the quarter with both teams fighting for every point they earned. The quarter ended with NWT up 15-12.

Yukon quickly tied the game up at the start of the second quarter with a 3-point shot and got two more within the first two minutes. In an incredible show, NWT was able to tie it up about a minute and a half left in the first half. However, the first half ended with YT up 37-36.

NWT started on offense for the second half. The teams were neck and neck for most of the third quarter, but more 3-points and free-throws kept Yukon ahead. They finished the quarter ahead 67-62.

The start of the fourth quarter brought a closer game. A minute and a half in, the teams were 69 Yukon, 68 Northwest. It was a very interesting, fast-paced game that was very close most of the time.

With just two minutes left in the game, Yukon was up by 5. Neither team was ready to give up just yet. Yukon scored one more time plus got a free-throw to win the game 83-74.

Going into this game, half of the top 10 scorers were playing for the gold. Despite the fact that Alaska and Nunavut have played an additional game, Brandon McAllister from the Northwest Territories was in the top five with 68 points entering the final game.

Following the game, Brendan McAllister and Jojo Mercado from Northwest Territories were both in the top five scorers for the tournament. Zachary Michael Mathison and Rex Turner joined their teammates in the top ten. Brittony Pagobo and Miguel Portea from Yukon joined in the top ten.

Both teams fought incredibly hard to earn their places on the podium. They not only shook hands at the finish, but there were many hugs passing between the teams. It was great to see the sportsmanship among these young men. **Good game boys, and congratulations!**





# PIN TRADING: THE 21ST SPORT OF THE ARCTIC WINTER GAMES

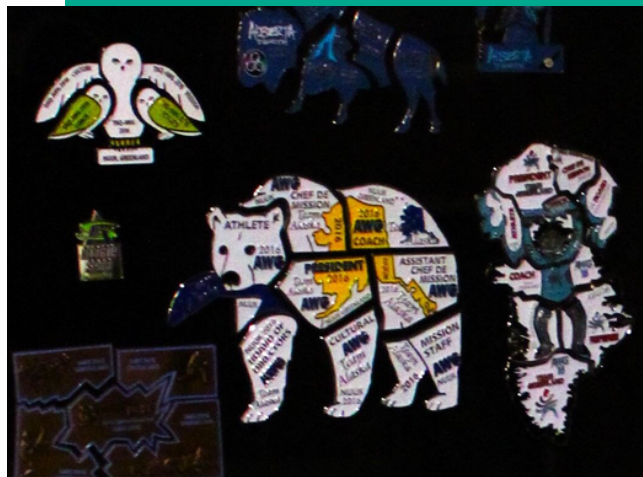
BY PATRICIA PARKER

Arctic Winter Games not only bring amazing athletes, happy guests and many different countries together, but also bring extensive pin collections and pin collectors to the Games. Many of these collectors have pin collections that number in the thousands. These pin traders have come from all over the country to be here at the Games.

The main location for all this excitement in pin trading can be found in Palmer, Alaska. The pin vendors have set up their tables, have their pins all laid out, and are ready to make a trade. The depot is not the only place to trade pins; however, pin trading is taking place valley-wide, and the pin traders are showing up, with a smile on their face, and a lanyard around their neck. Some of these lanyards are loaded heavily with many different pins. Some have just a few they are willing to trade with. But they are eager to start the hunt for a pin they just must have. The trading of pins is not just about the vendors with tables of pins. In the pin trading world, anyone you see with a lanyard with pins attached is someone who may have just the perfect pin for you.

You see a lanyard with pins, you walk up and introduce yourself. You show them the pins you have available to trade and they do the same. More often than not, a trade is made and both are happy with their newly acquired pin. This new pin then may be put back on the lanyard for another trade. Or tucked inside a pocket. As maybe this pin has now been “pulled off the table” so to speak, and is now part of the pin traders permanent collection.

Janet Pacey who has come from Yellowknife Canada to be here at AWG, and is one of the vendors at the Alaska Airline Arctic Winter Games HQ inside the Palmer Train Depot. Janet offers some pins for free to encourage everyone to participate in pin trading. She wants others to see how much fun it is, and how quickly you can become passionate about pin trading once you get started.





## *PIN TRADING: THE 21ST SPORT OF THE ARCTIC WINTER GAMES, CONT.*

Janet openly shares information about pins and enjoys meeting others from around the country. She has approx 20,000 AWG pins in her extensive collection. Her most coveted pin is the pin she received approximately two weeks ago which was the first pin to be introduced in 1972, the golden ulu.

Janet said she loves everything about pin trading and that “the cool thing about pins is that it brings people who don’t speak each other’s languages together”. Janet was sharing a table with George Smith, who was on the board of directors in 1972 and was instrumental in the very humble beginnings in the introduction of the first pin, the coveted 1972 golden ulu. Fast forward to 2024 where the pins offered for the AWG have over 150 flavors, styles, and varieties. A vast difference to just the simple one that was introduced in 1972. Many of these pins in the 2024 collections are highly coveted. As some of these pins are only given to the athletes so they cannot be bought at any of the venues that sell AWG pins.

Other pins can only be attained by shopping at other local venues who have a specific pin that they are handing out for free or with a purchase from their establishment. Another way to obtain a special pin, is by going to the events, or by being out and about and looking for others with lanyards of pins, and try making a trade. This keeps pin collectors on their toes in the hunt for that special pin that they may have been looking for since the day they arrived here at the AWG of Alaska.





# WALK IN THE PARK

BY IDA EDWARDS

The 2024 Mat Su Arctic Winter Games have sparked considerable excitement within the Valley. Game's week is packed with events. There are people to meet, sports to watch, and pins to trade. While most of the venues are indoors, the natural beauty of the Valley should not be missed. The stunning mountain views along the highway make for a great photo opportunity. I love watching light play on the snow capped ranges throughout the day. At one of my volunteer sessions, a local suggested that I visit Reflections Lake during my stay, so I decided to check it out. Trails like these provide a nice break from the fast-paced highway scenery.

Finding the spot off the highway was easy, although signage advertises the nearby Knik river. Seeing parked cars I figured I was in the right place. The snow covered forest and lake looked beautiful in the winter sunlight. The trail contains packed snow, making it important to watch your step. Halfway around the lake, I found a lookout tower, which offered great views of the mountains.

During my brief excursion, I met over a dozen locals out for a walk, showcasing the strong sense of community this trail fosters. I admired the runners who managed the ice with ease. Dogs have to be on leash to help protect the bird habitats and clean up stations were easy to access.

Reflections lake promotes community engagement and caters to various fitness levels. As a moderately fit individual, I found the walk manageable despite some icy patches. As a solo traveler, I appreciated the well-maintained facilities, including toilets, dog waste stations, and ample parking. Reflections Lake was a welcome break for all the indoor excitement of Game's week. Make sure not to leave the Valley before taking time to take a walk and appreciate our scenic surroundings.



Photo of Reflections Lake in Summer from Visit Mat-Su





# TRADITIONAL MEETS MODERN STYLE AT THE FIRST EVER INDIGENOUS FASHION SHOW AT THE 2024 ARCTIC WINTER GAMES

BY BETHANY BUCKINGHAM

Thursday's evening performances opened with Ashley Young, an artist from Yakutat who now lives in Anchorage, performing on guitar a few of her pieces from her *Window Seat* album and a new unreleased song. Her ballads set the stage for an epic night of culture and music. As the last strains of applause for Young's songs echoed through the Glenn Massey theater, the lights dimmed. It was time for fashion forward to take the stage.

The first designer to showcase her art, Merna Lonack Wharton, embodied tradition with her skin sewing masterpieces adorning models moving in a stylish walk. She is a proud Yup'ik woman from Akiacuaq (Akiachak), living in Anchorage, and is an Alaska Native artist, poet, seamstress and carver.

Golga Oscar graced the stage with his mix of traditional and modern seal skin designs. His evening gown with a fur yoke inspired admiring whispers. Golga is a Yup'ik artist from southwest Alaska who is self-taught and uses modern textiles. Through traditional art forms and sewing skills, he creates cultural attire, a vital visual element in his photographic imagery.

The next models for Kaylyn Baker meshed modern with traditional. "I heard a phrase one time – 'symphony of thoughts' – that I really like," she says. Her symphony of pieces meshes traditional techniques with very unconventional materials, mixing textures and colors.



© AWG 2024 John Rusyniak



© AWG 2024 John Rusyniak



© AWG 2024 Mary Webb Photo



## *TRADITIONAL MEETS MODERN STYLE AT THE FIRST EVER INDIGENOUS FASHION SHOW AT THE 2024 ARCTIC WINTER GAMES, CONT.*

“I give myself permission to try things. I do whatever I feel like in the moment,” she added. Baker is Northern Tutchone and Tlingit specializing in beads and tufts. She also incorporates black and white quillwork. Each piece is a memory or story told in textures, colors, and a unique material language. The highlight of her collection was a dress with moose antlers attached to the back like wings. The antlers appeared to be velvet but incorporated beaded appliques. The crowd was in awe of those antlers.

Britt'nee Brower led us further into how modern style meets tradition. Traditional Qupak motifs stood out on pants with a strong black and white contrast. Whether dressed up or dressed down, these pants and sweatshirts were the talk of the audience. Brower is a supporter of language revitalization, storytelling, art, and traditional tattooing of her Inupiat heritage.

One of the youngest designers to showcase their art was Cohen Quash, thirteen years old and taking the runway by storm. He is an accomplished fashion designer and beading artist from Watson Lake, Yukon Territory. He launched his first clothing line, Mesdzh Eskiye Designs, when he was eleven years old. His beaded medallions highlight his Kaska Dene, Talhtan and Tlingit heritage. Quash attributes his success to his family, mentors, and supporters, but he says his greatest inspiration is his great-grandmother, Pansy. As he and his models were lined up on the runway, they threw knitted hats to lucky crowd members.

The youngest designer was Hannah Itta, a twelve-year-old Inupiat from Utqiagvik. She started out by helping to model her mother's fashion designs when she was two years old. In 2022 she created two dresses for her mother to wear during her fashion show in New York. Itta uses iridescent materials to create a futuristic feel. This is her first fashion show, and the audience showed her love with thundering applause.





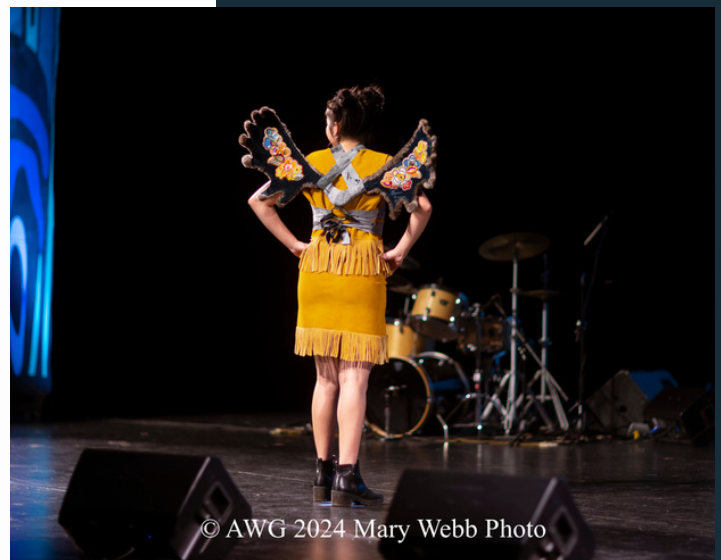
## TRADITIONAL MEETS MODERN STYLE AT THE FIRST EVER INDIGENOUS FASHION SHOW AT THE 2024 ARCTIC WINTER GAMES, CONT.

Closing out the fashion part of the evening was designer Bobby Itta Brower, an enrolled citizen of the Native Village of the Barrow in Utqiagvik. She learned to skin sew at the age of thirteen in her Inupiaq language class. Her seal skin motif clothing included outerwear and ready to wear fashions. The highlight of her collection, based on audience reaction, was an evening gown with seal skin and velvet. Bobby Itta Brower founded her own business, Arctic Lux. Her work has been in international fashion shows and national shows. Teaching the next generation of skin sewers helps her keep the Inupiaq traditions alive.

As the models and their designers lined the stage, the audience erupted in applause. Their creations brought traditional knowledge and skills into modern clothing that can be worn when practicing traditional ways of subsistence living or relaxing after competing in the Arctic Winter Games.

“I am glad they came to share their culture,” said Alma Ortega, an audience member. “The young designers have a gift to give us. I hope they continue with their work and pass on their knowledge. They were amazing!”

The bar has been set high as this fashion show could become the 22nd sport of the Games behind pin trading. We shall see what next year holds but there is excitement that the indigenous fashion show will continue in 2026.







# MIXED DOUBLES CURLING EMBODIES AWG VALUES

BY LIZ GOBESKI

Did you know there's an event at the Arctic Winter Games where athletes from different contingents are brought together to play on the same team? It's mixed doubles curling!

Each team has one female and one male. It's a fast-paced game where the communication and chemistry between teammates is absolutely crucial.

Normally a mixed doubles team would have months, if not years, practicing together, learning their teammate's strengths, weaknesses and how to motivate each other. At Arctic Winter Games, the teams weren't formed until after the female and male four-person team standings were finalized. This meant athletes didn't learn who they would be paired with until less than 24 hours before competition started.

That didn't faze the curlers. At Friday morning's round, these brand new teammates could be seen conferring before each shot, smiling, fist-bumping and supporting each other with just as much enthusiasm and focus as they demonstrated when playing with their regular teams. Talk about promoting the Arctic Winter Games' core values about cultural exchange, sportsmanship and adaptability!



# HEALING AND RECONCILIATION FOR VICTIMS OF INDIGENOUS BOARDING SCHOOLS

BY EMMA KEECHLE + KRYSTA VOSKOWSKY

As athletes, volunteers, and members of the public meandered through the busy isles of today's popup makers' market in Raven Hall at the Alaska State Fairgrounds, one booth in the corner filled with people of all ages stringing sinew through long bone beads to make their own necklaces while learning a few Ahtna vocabulary words in the process. Nearby, standing in front of a large 1940s photograph of Indigenous children at the Eklutna Vocational School, Angela Wade told me her family's true story.

"Imagine an entire village with no children. Not a single one." Wade asked me to picture it, and a sick knot formed in my stomach. "The loss, the confusion, the trauma—the forced removal of children from villages in Alaska was devastating for our family," she continued.

Tribal citizen and Cultural Project Manager for Chickaloon Native Village, Angela Wade is brimming with righteous rage—and for good reason. Starting in the late 1800s, as part of a political land-grab disguised as social reform, the US government and various church groups started kidnapping native children to fill their newly established industrial boarding (residential) schools for American Indian and Alaska Native children. Forcibly removed from their homes and separated from their families, these children experienced years of systematic abuse, forced labor, and government sanctioned violence at the hands of school administrators—a collective traumatic experience that's still impacting tribal communities today. The Eklutna Vocational School, similar to so many others, was designed to "civilize" tribal children and assimilate them into white culture. This amounted to cultural genocide, and families are still suffering from this mass injustice decades later.



## HEALING AND RECONCILIATION FOR VICTIMS OF INDIGENOUS BOARDING SCHOOLS, CONT.

“We had an entire generation of children who grew up without parents, so when they grew up and had children, they had no idea how to be a parent. It was like *Lord of the Flies*,” Wade recalled. “My grandmother was one of eleven kids, and she was the only one who wasn’t taken. Her grandparents hid her because they knew...”

Wade went on to describe the way this traumatic separation resulted in many of her family members becoming addicted to alcohol or drugs to numb the deep psychological wounds left by this practice. “I found records for my Uncle Peter, somehow, at Morningside Hospital in Portland.” Wade went on to explain that many rural Alaskans at the time would express surprise when they witnessed an electric light turn on for the first time, and thusly would be diagnosed with “delusions” regarding electricity, deemed insane, and involuntarily deported out of Alaska by the federal government to live at Morningside Hospital in Portland, Oregon. They were taken from their families and communities by dog sled, train and boat, often escorted by failed gold miners looking for free or discounted transport back to the lower 48. According to the Morningside Hospital archival documents, at least 3,500 Alaskans were sent to Morningside between 1904 and the 1960s, and many people were never heard from by their families again.

Unfortunately, family stories like Angela Wade’s are far too common, and the list of atrocities is too long to completely cover here. Which is why Wade and others at the Tribal Historic Preservation Council are committed to raising awareness about the damage the residential school system did to Indigenous children, their families, and their cultures.

Today Wade and her colleagues spent the afternoon educating passersby about this history in an effort to bring dark secrets into the light, provide comfort and cultural context to those who’ve suffered. Because, when we learn about the past and work to heal together, then we can prevent further atrocities like this from happening in the future.







# TEAM YUKON TAKES BRONZE IN WOMENS BASKETBALL

BY EMILY FORNSTER

If the 2024 Arctic Winter Games are more about rising strong together than competitive sports, it could not have been more evident than on Friday morning on the Wasilla High court. The **girls basketball battle for bronze between Team Nunavut and Team Yukon** had it all, plus an impressive show of tenacity.

After an explosive first quarter, Team Nunavut's 18-9 point advantage had the Nunavut's side of the bleachers in full cheer mode. But, by the end of the first half, Team Yukon narrowed the lead by two points. Yukon continued to outscore- but not out-try- and ended the game with the bronze at the final buzzer 56-41.

"The game is intense," Leah Apaluktuq said. She and her family are from Bakers Lake, Nunavut. Her daughter Haley Hachey wore jersey #5. "The girls have been playing with heart all week,"

Nunavut ran a game designed for offense the first half of the game. Meriva Ayuk scored a team high of 11 points, six of those during the first half. No player on Team Yukon scored more than two points during the first two quarters. Things changed after half time though.

Team Yukon came out of the locker room refreshed, and controlled the ball for the rest of the game. Yukon's Mya Warren sank a two-pointer to tie the game 29-29 within the first minutes of the second half.

Ayuk rebounded a missed shot by Yukon's Rosalie Langlois and in the process two players went down. Yukon received the ball out of bounds, but not before Yukon's Robin Mueller helped the Nunavut player up and made sure everything was alright. There were no hard feelings when Mueller turned around with a lay-up that edged the score in Yukon's favor 31-29.



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## *TEAM YUKON TAKES BRONZE IN WOMENS BASKETBALL, CONT.*

Third quarter saw 17 points in the bucket for Yukon to the four points making it in the Nunavut net. Nunavut revived in the final quarter with Cassidy Deverson and Niego Killulark finishing out their 10 points total for the game. But it wasn't enough to make up the difference. **Yukon's top scorer Mueller made the final basket and captured 28 points total for the game.**

The Yukon supporters in their signature red and black plaid flannel shirts cheered on both their teammates and Nunavut's never-say-die attitude. Karen Baxter from Whitehorse came to cheer on basketball while waiting for her daughter's futsal championship game later in the day. "We're here to cheer on my daughter's friends." She said many of the Yukon girls play on high school teams throughout the Yukon Territory though the majority of the team live and play in Whitehorse.

Nunavut's team spreads out more geographically. Nunavut covers one-fifth of all Canada with only 28 communities. Teammates came from Baker Lake, Cambridge Bay and the territorial capital of Iqaluit- over 800 miles from Baker Lake and 1000 miles from Cambridge Bay.

"The girls come from all over Nunavut. They didn't play together all year long," Apaluktuq said. "Not until they got together in February for a week in Regina (Saskatchewan).

"We couldn't be more proud of the girls. They are awesome Nunavut ambassadors."

**Team Northwest Territories won the gold in the girls final basketball game against Team Alaska 64-45.**





# DAZZLE ON THE ICE! TEAM FIGURE SKATING HAS A BEAUTIFUL SHOWING AT THE ARCTIC WINTER GAMES

BY MANNY MELENDEZ

Team figure skating began on Friday with a three-minute warmup for the “jumper” skaters. The first element was the single axel, a hypnotic introduction to the rest of the competition with Team Yukon going first. Watching all the skaters introduce themselves via their flexibility and speed while the crowd watched enthralled set the pace for the rest of the elements.

Double-double combination was next, starting with Alberta North, then Alaska, followed by Northwest Territories, and Yukon. All teams exhibited grace and agility even when some of their skaters missed turns or spins, though Team NT definitely led the others on the rink with a flawless double-double exhibition.

Double jump was the third element, beginning with Team Alaska, displaying gorgeous form despite a stumble at the very end. Team NT was after, with a restrained but competent display. Quite a few of the skaters across all teams stumbled on the ice during this element but the crowd, as they showed all throughout the event, were supportive and cheering everyone on! Team Yukon and Team Alberta North had good double jump runs, especially Alberta North, who recovered admirably from an initial stumble on the ice. There’s always a nail-biting moment or two during this element and today did not disappoint!

Jump sequence with axel was the next element with Team NT up first. They did a wonderful job, arguably the most poised in this element, side by side with Alberta North.

The rink did seem particularly wet today, with many of the skaters struggling to land axles or jumps, perhaps a result of the rink being wetted down just before the initial warm up. This does not, however, reflect on how capable each skater was in getting back up and continuing their performance, always a graceful balance between the human and the sport.



## DAZZLE ON THE ICE! TEAM FIGURE SKATING HAS A BEAUTIFUL SHOWING AT THE ARCTIC WINTER GAMES, CONT.

The fifth element was spins with Alberta North having a particularly strong showing in this element with some commendable knee control as they slid on the ice after each spin and some mesmerizing agility and dexterity. Alaska also showed beautiful spin control and symmetry on the rink, their second attempt likely one of the best in the competition, gathering quite the cheers and applause from the crowd. Team NT, with an intense swan-like pose that had the skater hold her chest to keep balance in the first attempt, was another Impressive moment during this element. What a hearty and dizzying collection of poses, a testament to every skater's talent and devotion to their sport.

Spin combination with no change of foot with Alberta North up again first. Their first attempt impressed their coach enough for the skater to receive an emphatic nod from them! Alaska and NT also shined during this element, maybe the closest at this point of the competition. Yukon was also quite excellent during this element.

The steps sequence was the sixth element with Team Alaska opening it up. All teams seemed very, pun intended, in their element here, each providing a lovely and shining exhibition on the rink. Yukon, especially, nailed a lengthy and ambitious step sequence which had the crowd and the judges in rapt silence until the cheers broke.

With one final bow from all the teams, including an adorable wave that included all the skaters, figure skating came to an end, and although all teams highlighted impeccable sportsmanship and devotion to their talent and hard work, it was Alberta North who received the gold with 18.36 points, with Northwest Territories and Alaska being awarded silver and bronze, with 15.85 and 10.97 points respectively.





# HIGH KICKS AND KNEEL JUMPS AT THE ARCTIC SPORTS

BY ANDREA HACKBARTH

The atmosphere in the Colony Middle School gym on Thursday intensified as the U17 Male One Foot High Kick event progressed towards the final few competitors. In this event, each competitor gets three chances to kick a small ball, dangling from a string held by a metal frame. The athletes must kick this ball with one foot, then land on that same foot. In the final rounds, this ball was suspended well above the athletes' heads. It's a sport that takes incredible skill, including strength, flexibility, and coordination.

The audience that packed the gym's bleachers was respectfully silent as each competitor prepared for his kick. But some athletes preferred noise and signaled the audience to clap in unison. A steady drum beat of claps and foot stomps grew louder and faster as the athlete prepared for his attempt. Whether silent or loud, the air was thick with the audience's anticipation as well as the competitors' concentration. Then, release and an athlete's foot hit the ball! Unsuccessful attempts drew disappointment but also encouraging words and applause.

Finally only two competitors remained. They would attempt the highest kicks yet, at 106": Lars Jeremiassen of Team Kalaallit Nunaat (Greenland) and Leif Richards of Team Alaska. Unfortunately, neither was able to make contact with the ball. Both had successfully kicked the ball at 104". Because he'd had fewer misses at lower heights, Jeremiassen took first in the event. Richards came in second, and Carlos Magsucang of Team Yukon took third, with his highest kick at 102".

Next was the Open Female Alaskan High Kick. While the set up was similar to the One Foot High Kick, the Alaskan High Kick is a much different type of sport. Competitors sit on the ground, holding one foot in their opposite hand.



Photo by John Pyeatt



Photo by John Pyeatt

## *HIGH KICKS AND KNEEL JUMPS AT THE ARCTIC SPORTS, CONT.*

They then balance on the other hand and kick the other foot up towards the ball. They must land on their kicking foot, without any other part of their body (aside from the hand they're balanced on) touching the floor. Again, it's an impressive event that necessitates strength, flexibility, and great coordination.

The women concentrated intensely as they prepared for their kick, demonstrating that the sport took as much mental skill as physical prowess. The final round had the ball at 5'8" and three contestants were still competing. Danica Taylor of Nunavut kicked the ball at that height, taking first place, Ali Johnston of Alaska came in second, and Kate Koepke of Yukon was third.

Meanwhile, records were being set at the Open Men's Kneel Jump. In this event, competitors have to start in a kneeling position and jump as far forward as possible, launching from the tops of their shins and feet, and landing in a standing position. Colton Paul of Alaska set a new record with a jump of 65 ½", Joseph Nowkawalk of Nunavik followed with a jump of 62 ½", and Alaska's Kyle Worl took third place with a 58 ¾" jump.

Make sure to check out the results of all events online and make time to see some of these events in person if you have a chance!





# CULTURAL GALA

BY BETHANY BUCKINGHAM

University of Alaska, Mat-Su Campus - Young culture bearers from around the circumpolar north educated and entertained a captivated audience at the Glenn Massay Theater in one of the last large cultural events of the Arctic Winter Games. These thirty-three representatives brought professionalism and dedication to sharing their culture with the community.

“It touches your soul,” said Terri Lawson, an audience member. “They all have amazing gifts to share.” The evening began with seventeen local youth from Mat-Valley Dance, split between the two gala shows, entertaining the crowd dressed as chickadees flitting and twittering around the theater, from the stage to the aisles and back again. They were stopped by many for photo opportunities.

The chickadees waved and glided off stage and the lights dimmed. Erin Tripp and Rio Albert, co-directors of the gala, opened the event with a land acknowledgement to the Ahtna and Dena’ina Dene who have stewarded this area of Benteh and Nuutah for thousands of years, offering respect to the Elders past and present and to the current Tribal leaders.

Tylour Miller Fisher or TMO, the Director of the collaborative piece, explained that all the performers combined their creativity and passion into one final performance that they developed and practiced during this week.

The lights dimmed again, and pow wow music began, ushering in the first performance of the night. Team Alberta North, dressed in regalia and dancing traditional pow wow, invited the audience to settle into the gala space. With fringe swaying, and fancy footwork, nineteen-year-olds Kassandra Hamelin and Melaney Scott, competitive pow wow dancers, brought energy to the night dancing down the aisles to the stage. Their scarves twirled and floated through the air, centering the audience on the cultural exchange at the heart of the gala.



## CULTURAL GALA, CONT.

Silence ensued as they exited, and the lights returned to the stage where Team Nunavut dazzled with throat singing and drum dancing. The sound of voices raised in harmony echoed off the walls mixing to create a song that enveloped the audience in a truly northern experience. The Inuksuk Drum Dancers include Ella Estey, Mia Maurice, Miria Quassa, Jaia Healey Arearok, Aura Kwon and Taiga Las, under the direction of Dr. Mary Piercey-Lewis. They chose a selection of traditional and contemporary Inuit songs from across Nunavut, connecting with their audience and sharing Inuit traditions, values, and language.

Junnama Ole Mahtte of Team Sápmi shared a selection of joiks including the national Sápmi joik. Another performance was of a goodbye to the mountains joik written as Sápmi from Russia were fleeing to Finland after World War II. Mahtte explained that during his stay here in Alaska, a joik came to him in a dream about the mountains, nature, and land of the Mat-Su area. He said he had to write it down and offered it to the people, singing his Alaska joik to a captivated audience. Team Yukon bounded onto the stage in flannel using diverse song and movement to tell the story of life in the north. Theater for Young People includes Luca Spires, Michael Gwynne-Thompson, Andrew Woolridge, Heidi Vallier, Ezra Baker, and Cameron Greer, under the direction of Cultural Manager, Jerry Woolridge. This group is committed to sharing the story of how fortunate they feel to be young in the Yukon.

Pow wow music began, and the colored lights flashed up as Team Alberta North returned to the stage dancing Women's Fancy, which represents the opening of the cocoon when the butterfly emerges.

The stage grew dark, and Team Kalaallit Nunaat took the stage in an original show created from scratch in the span of 10 days. This work involved the audience as the performers moved through the aisles dressed in black with black and red face paint. They encouraged the audience to react to the team however felt natural. Some audience members were unsettled by the slow movements and loud calls from the performers, while others laughed and reacted back to the artists. Merging their unique strengths and skills, Lili Karlsen, Petra Bidstrup, Louisa Ignatiussen, Poul-Erik Kristiansen, Qarsog Rasmussen and AJ Korneliussen created an eerie but bewitching performance.





## CULTURAL GALA, CONT.



Team Nunavik prepared the stage for an acrobatic marvel with a selection of pieces ranging from music, singing, throat-singing, circus arts, dance, and theater. Using activities such as dancing, playing, camping, fishing, listening to stories from elders and hunting, they created a snowbound landscape in which they connected to the audience. Moving seamlessly from acrobatics to throat-singing on stilts, to team aerial acrobatics to synchronized twirling, Team Nunavik dazzled the audience. This performance was a creative collaboration from Leah Qavavauk, Siasi Ulluria Padlayat, Sarali Angnatuk, George Johannes, Connie Ittukallak, and Jacqueline Tulugak with artistic counselors Rebecca Devi Leonard and Tommy Putulik. They were inspired by their answers to the question, 'What is Culture?' in Nunavik.



Pow wow music brings heat and healing to the stage as Team Alberta North returns with another beautifully executed dance.

A lone performer emerges onto the stage with a single fiddle. With the spotlight focused on her, Penelope Mercredi delighted the audience with her fiddling for Team Northwest Territories. Mercredi has been fiddling since 2018 and is a member of the Aurora Fiddle Society's Fiddle Cats, a performance group for the past three years. The audience enjoyed her performance.



The sounds of metal cones ushered in Team Alberta North with a Women's Jingle, a healing dance that originated from the Ojibwa tribes.

Team Alaska from the Alaska Native Heritage Center Dance Group concluded the individual performances with three works incorporating song and dance. One was the seal boy which is based on a story about a boy who lived with the seals. The seals gave him love and the knowledge of how we should be living with nature. Dancers Peter Pilak Griggs, Mandy Nan'iq Peters, and Dustin Moses, along with Cultural Manager Mari Nauraq Hansell and Pamyua artist Ossie Kairaiuak performed for the audience.

The collaborative performance saw all the teams come together mixing cultures, songs, movements, and voices to one central performance. The Kalaallit Nunaat team mixed singing with the team NWT fiddler to draw in the throat singers from teams Nunavut and Nunavik. Team Yukon blended voices with Team Sápmi joik while Team Alaska drummed and danced with Team Alberta North. They became one northern team no longer divided by culture or language and circled the stage before flooding into the audience. Smiles and high-fives ensued as they danced and sang in the aisles bringing the audience to their feet to dance and share with the young culture bearers. These young culture bearers are the future, keeping traditions alive, but also coming together to make a better world for us as one voice. In the end they were all one spirit, rising strong!



# ARCTIC WINTER GAMES CARNIVAL HIGHLIGHTS INDIGENOUS JUSTICE

BY LOREE RAYBACK

In the Raven Hall during the Arctic Winter Games carnival, vendor tables are set up row after row, and tucked away in a corner of the building is a **unique vendor, dispensing knowledge and promoting justice**. The booth had pins, stickers, pens, balls, and literature to give away, as well as water bottles. A map with red pins marking places important to missing or deceased loved ones took up part of the space. A large pile of life-size red paper kuspuk silhouettes are ready for names in memory of friends and loved ones passersby can fill out. This is a booth where Knik Tribe has collaborated with Data for Indigenous Justice to raise awareness of a serious problem: Missing and Murdered Indigenous People. Photographs of some of the Alaskan missing and murdered indigenous people line up across the floor.

Missing and murdered indigenous people (MMIP) is a heavy topic. The statistics bear witness to the heart wrenching extent of the crises: murder is the third leading cause of death for Native women, and 30% of the cases of murdered and missing indigenous women and girls do not exist in law enforcement records.[i] The way data is collected, the absence and poor quality of data and the way it is shared or not shared across agencies is a huge part of the problem. In spite of the absence of data, a 1922 congressional report stated that “3.6% of the missing persons included in the National Missing and Unidentified Person System (NamUs) were identified as AI/AN, which was approximately four times their percentage in the U.S. population (0.9%).”[ii]

Charlene Aqpik Apok, executive director and co-founder of Data for Indigenous justice was there at the booth, explaining the obstacles, and highlighting some of the resolutions that have been made through her collection of data. Apok is very serious about the importance of good data collection practices, standardization of definitions and terminology in order for data to be shared accurately, and interagency cooperation in order to promote awareness and solutions toward MMIP. In 2021, her group gathered and were able to reclaim 229 cases, and today they have documented over 1,000 cases.





## ARCTIC WINTER GAMES CARNIVAL HIGHLIGHTS INDIGENOUS JUSTICE, CONT.

Jessica Svetkovich, Department of Justice Coordinator for Knik Tribe said that currently there are 4 MMIP investigators in Alaska; Investigator Cook, who is housed over at the Troopers Station in Palmer, is assigned to the Matsu Borough. As an initiative of the justice department, Knik tribe adopted a community response plan to missing persons and formed a Community response team. The cooperation between Cook and the Community Response team has been good, and they meet every month.

The Indigenous led MMIWG2S Alaska Working Group is an interagency coalition that combines the Alaska Native Women's Resource Center, the Alaska Native Justice Center, the Alaska Native Heritage Center, Data for Indigenous Justice and the Native Movement to promote change for the good. MMIWG2S stands for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women, Girls, and Two Spirited. They are committed to shared values and the safety and well-being of Native people. They strive to push for action to address the MMIWG2S crisis in Alaska.

Knik tribe held an interactive activity at the MMIP booth. Large red paper kuspuks were meant to be filled in with a murdered or missing indigenous loved one's name and a sentiment. The finished kuspuks will be laminated and displayed during an MMIP Call to Action during the week of April 29th through May 3rd, culminating in MMIP day of May 5th. Knik will host a sign making event, a red kuspuks making event, a movie night with a speaker, a rally downtown Palmer, on the corner of Parks Highway and Crusey Street.

Svetkoich said that recently, this cry for justice, increased activity, and larger voices have led to more awareness surrounding the topic. She said the MMIP logo of the Knik Tribe is displayed on the water bottles she is handing out. It is a red handprint surrounded by red feathers, below which is the term "Q'u Shih Qugh" which means "Enough!"

[Our Bodies, Our Stories](#)

[Missing and Murdered Indigenous People \(MMIP\): Overview of Recent Research, Legislation, and Selected Issues for Congress](#)

