

ISSUE 5 - MARCH 15, 2024



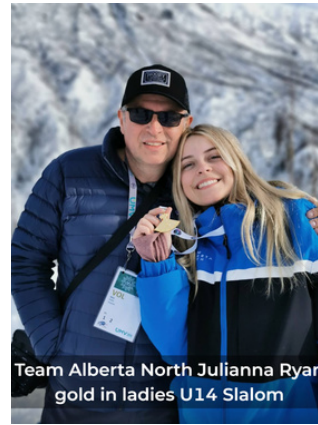
ARCTIC WINTER GAMES ULU NEWS

Matanuska Valley, Alaska • March 10-16, 2024

AWG 2024 | Photo by Jeremiah Young

SHARE YOUR GAMES PICS

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



Team Alberta North Julianna Ryan
gold in ladies U14 Slalom



THINGS TO KNOW FOR TODAY

MEDAL ROUNDS

There are medal rounds today for almost every sport. If you are not competing - get out and support our participants and spectate at a sport you may have never watched before!

[CLICK FOR FRIDAY SCHEDULE](#)



CARNIVAL

The Arctic Winter Games Carnival & Makers Market are open to the public at the Alaska State Fairgrounds today. Entry is free. Carnival is open 3pm-7pm today. Today is the last day for participant transportation to the fairgrounds.

CULTURAL GALA

The Cultural Gala will take place today at 3pm and 9pm at the Glenn Massay. The 7pm show is sold out. The 3pm show has a few tickets left for sale.

[CLICK HERE FOR RESULTS](#)

ULU NEWS COMES IN MANY FORMS!

[BLOG](#)

[FLIP BOOK](#)

[RADIO](#)

EDITORIAL STAFF

MARKETING PROGRAM MANAGER
Emerald Kroeker

ULU NEWS CHAIR
Krysta Voskowsky

ULU NEWS VICE CHAIR
Charles Knowles

MARKETING ASSISTANT
Annie Alderman

GRAPHIC DESIGNER
Tina Tipner

Today's Rotating Editors Include:
Kaje Rockwell, Kendra Zamzow,
Julie Spackman, Emily Forstner

WEATHER FORECAST



Friday | March 15

Mostly sunny, with a high near 33. Northeast wind 5 to 10 mph becoming light east in the afternoon.

BED SALE

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

VISIT SHOP.AWG2024.ORG/BEDSALES

Contingent	Gold	Silver	Bronze	Total
Alaska	45	56	48	149
Yukon	41	24	39	104
Alberta North	24	25	19	68
Northwest Territories	15	27	20	62
Nunavut	16	9	14	39
Kalaallit Nunaat	12	7	12	31
Nunavik	6	10	7	23
Sápmi	7	6	7	20

MEDAL COUNTS



DAILY SPONSOR SHOUTOUT - SUPPORTER - \$25K+

Thank you to our sponsors!



Richard L. & Diane M. Block Foundation

*We will acknowledge the various sponsor levels each day.

A TALE OF TEN CHICKADEES

BY ALEX WILDER

Palmer has been abuzz all week with the energy of youthful athletes, supportive parents and coaches, and dedicated volunteers. For many of the spectators and special guests, their first glimpse into the Arctic Winter Games began with ten adorable chickadees flitting about the arena as the audience took their seats for the Opening Ceremony. The perfectly round black heads pecked at balloons, amused onlookers, and joined in playful choreography. They could have been mistaken for real chickadees save for their teal, blue, fuchsia and acid green feathers—a lovely nod to the colors of the games.

The black-capped chickadee (*Poecile atricapillus*) is the official animal ambassador of the 2024 Mat-Su Arctic Winter Games. Despite its diminutive size, this feathered explorer embodies the very essence of courage and curiosity—a perfect representation of the talented athletes competing this week. Chickadees thrive in the Matsu Valley year round and their distinctive chickadee-dee-dee call makes their presence known, but it is their heeeyyy, sweetie song that reminds us all that spring is just around the corner.

I had the privilege of interviewing Bea Adler—one of the designers behind the delightful chickadee costumes—during a dress rehearsal before the games. She is a long-time Palmer-area resident and was nominated by local admirers over a year ago to design and make the costumes for the animal ambassadors.

Bea and her co-designer Linda Lockhart have been brainstorming ideas, drafting designs, and sourcing materials for the costumes since February 2023. “We got together and discovered that our drawings were almost identical. We were both thinking about crinolines and those big Civil War era skirts with the cages that held the skirt out. We thought that might make a nice, big, round bird body.” Bea then pulled in another talented local costumer, Colleen Wake, to complete the fabrication.



A TALE OF TEN CHICKADEES, CONT.

They worked on the costumes throughout the summer. Bea revealed that the most challenging part about making the costumes was finding the right material for the structure. “Linda and I tried multiple materials. We even got those little umbrellas that you can put on your dish of food on the picnic table to keep bees and flies away. We kept thinking it had to be light. It couldn’t make the costume hot...it had to be easy for a child to wear. So, the hardest part was finding the material.”

Bea has a habit of walking through hardware stores for inspiration. “The breakthrough really was wandering through the hardware store one day, I saw—in their trash bin—this green-colored, plastic, strapping material that was flexible yet stiff. It’s designed to strap around a load of lumber that gets loaded on railcars. With their permission, I collected a lot of it.” The hardware store employees were very friendly and helpful: “Every time I would show up, they would go and get this one woman who knew where everything had been put and she helped me get it together.”

Hot glue was not strong enough for the material, so the costumes are held together with metal rivets. There is a harness that goes over the shoulders and is adjustable with velcro. The covers are blankets from Costco. “The wings! They are something that Colleen focused on: cutting out thousands of feathers from an assortment of different materials. The colors of the Arctic Winter Games are incorporated into the tails and into the wings.” The heads are built on child sized bike helmets with see through fabric draped over the face.

After asking Bea if she is a seamstress by trade, she shared, “I supported myself through college as a custom dress maker in New York City. I’ve been doing theater costumes since high school. My first job in Alaska after arriving in 1981 was in the costume shop at the Anchorage Opera.”



Photo by Lisa Phillips

A TALE OF TEN CHICKADEES, CONT.

Telsche Overby—Arts and Culture Program Coordinator—contacted Mat Valley Dance Studio owner Lindsey Redmond about sourcing some tiny dancers to perform in the costumes. The dancers excitedly (and a bit nervously) took to the stage for 15 minutes before the Opening Ceremony. Everyone agrees: they are just SO CUTE!

What was the most fun part of it all for Bea? “Seeing them actually on someone! It was good because it was collaborative—knowing that you’re not the only one working on something...the collaborative effort is really so important. Then we actually got to see it on someone—because up until then I was using a dress dummy.”

“I am just so excited that I got to be part of [The Arctic Winter Games] and to do this collaboratively. What a great community effort this is!”

Keep an eye out for the playful chickadees return at this Friday’s two Cultural Galas as well as Saturday’s Closing Ceremony.



Photo by Lisa Philips



SKATING AT THE MAC

BY MEL KALKOWSKI

The skating action at the Harry MacDonald Center in Eagle River shifted on Wednesday from Speed Skating to Figure Skating with 31 athletes entering the first rounds of competition.

Participants in the events are divided into four levels of skills and ages. The largest group in this year's Games are in level one with 13 competitors and level two with 11. The figure skating competition is female only at the Games.

Sarah Deveroux McCormick, Figure Skating Sports chair, explained that the Wednesday games saw the skaters compete in the short program. The short program includes required technical elements. On Thursday, skaters competed in the free skate and on Friday the team compulsory event will cap the event.

Depending on the level of the competition, the elements performed by the skaters will vary with difficulty increasing with the level of competition. With different countries attending the games, the "tech package" used by the judges is designed to accommodate differences in the host countries' packages.

"As you watch the higher level skaters you'll be seeing the elements with a twist...the variety of difficulty changes as they move up", said Deveroux McComick.

A skater in Games in the 1990s and a former coach, she said she has "amazing memories" of those experiences. "What's really cool is the spirit among the coaches and the athletes fits my recollection, that camaraderie and team spirit is really cool," she said.

Thursday skating action began with the return of Speed Skating with the 500 meter and 777 meter events running from 8 am until 2 pm. Then at 3:15 p.m. the Figure Skating competition returned with Free Skate rounds for all four levels of skaters.

Friday's Speed Skating events also start at 8 a.m. and are ticketed events for the 1500 meter and 3000 meter skates. Figure Skating will return on Friday at 3pm. with the Team Compulsory event.



Photo by Connor Mattson



Photo by Connor Mattson

NORTHWEST TERRITORY ACES BASKETBALL

BY KAJE ROCKWELL

“Let the coaches coach, let the players play, and let the audience stay positive!” The announcer’s gravelly voice boomed across the court, signaling the start of **Wednesday’s female basketball game featuring Team Alaska vs. the Northwest Territories.**

The event led off with the cheering and chanting of the Northwest fans. The score for NWT doubled, then tripled to a score of 18. Team Alaska squeaked its way to a struggling score of six.

The chanting in the stands dwindled until Alaska had its first free-throw of the period. Silent, they watched in hopeful anticipation, slowly breaking into a raucous drumroll.

The Northwest Territory Team raised the score again, but two shots on a free throw earned two points for Alaska, a point to a shot! Both teams huddled together at the sound of the buzzer to pour cool water down their throats. Then back to the center, leaping ahead to the rest of the game.

Cheers and whistles greeted the end of the first period. Hearty applause and feet drumming marked the second, saluting a powerful shot for Team Alaska! Knees bent, elbows out, she made her shot. A score! Three points clicked away for her team. But they would need much more to win.

Towards the middle of the game, fans were struck by the emotional upheaval of pauses in play, standing in stark contrast with sudden bursts of energy from the players.

Wild with energy, they finished the period, still light on their feet, ready for more. It was now 40 to 26. Back at it again! It’s a frenzy towards victory. Offense is pitted against defense to the left and to the right. We bubbled with excitement while Team Alaska regained its score, 20 points behind, but playing well & playing hard.

The heat intensified. Chants for the Northwest Territories quickened, faster, faster, as the score of 59 overshadowed Team Alaska’s hard-fought 34. A graceful shot through the hoop raised the score again for Northwest, now to 62. A shot from the side hurls them on to 65!

Straining ahead, red in their faces with aching feet and tousled braids, Team Alaska persevered. **NWT secured the win at 73 to 39. Both teams finished strong and can be proud of their hard work.**

50 YEARS IN THE MAKING: PRESIDENT JOHN RODDA SHARES THE IMPACT OF THE GAMES ON WHERE HE IS TODAY

BY KYLA KAHRS

President John Rodda has been with the Arctic Winter Games for 50 frigidly wonderful years. He is a lifelong Alaskan and participated in different roles within sports throughout his entire life. He has been a coach, participant, and volunteer in the sports community since the early 60s. From 1974 to 1997, he was involved in the development, construction, and management of four indoor ice arenas. He became involved with the Arctic Winter Games just three years after they began.

Mr. Rodda's early life was spent on his family's 160 acre homestead then moved to Anchorage in 1958 where he became involved in sports. This participation in sports became the foundation of most of his career. He learned the value of giving back to the community from his parents and friends who volunteered in support of youth athletics.

Due to how he was raised, and his passion for sports, he always had an interest in public parks and facilities. His career started in the early 70s managing the old Anchorage Sports Arena. From 1975 to 1978, he worked with former Mayor Sullivan to open and manage the Ben Boeke Arenas. In 1983, he moved to open the Sullivan Arena then on to the Harry J. McDonald Center in 1984. In 1998, he was appointed Sports and Recreation Director by Mayor Mystrom and continued to work for the Municipality of Anchorage as the Parks and Recreation Director until he retired in the Fall of 2019.

In 1973, as the Sports Arena manager, Rodda found out Anchorage would be hosting the 1974 Arctic Winter Games. Since that was the only indoor ice arena, they would be hosting all the ice events



other than curling. He had no idea how the Games would affect him.

He said, "It was such an incredible experience making it happen, feeling the enthusiasm and excitement of the athletes, and meeting people who have become lifelong friends. I tell people I was bitten by the Arctic Winter Games bug, and after 50 years, I have continued to be involved."

He said that he enjoys all of the sports, but Arctic Sports and Dene Games are his favorite. When asked if he had failed at any of the events he had tried, he told of a time he was confident with his athletic ability and felt he could play or try most of the sports. At one of the Games during practice, he tried the one-foot high-kick. He failed miserably and was mercilessly laughed at by his colleagues. He learned a new appreciation for how hard the athletes have to train and hone their crafts.

I didn't realize that John Rodda had such an impact on the Games. He seems to be responsible for the existence of some of the locations being used at not only this year's Games, but many over the past 50 years. While watching the skating competitions, we are appreciative of the time and effort put into the Harry J. McDonald Center. We are very lucky the 1974 AWG had such an impact on now President John Rodda. If you happen to see him around, make sure you thank him for everything he has done.

RISING STRONG TOGETHER: CULTURAL GALA CONNECTS PAST PRESENT AND FUTURE

BY JULIE SPACKMAN

When the last rays of the day's sun paint the tops of the Chugach mountain range the Glenn Massay Theater comes alive with the Arctic Winter Games Cultural Gala.

Every Arctic Winter Game holds a Cultural Gala. Galas are theatrical representations of the different cultures represented in the Games. Each team has a performance troupe in addition to the athletes. The performers practice all week for the final Gala. Over the last five days, troupes have held live practices in pop-up performances around the Mat-Su.

The Mat-Su Winter Arctic Winter Games' theme 'Rising Strong Together' is the heart of Friday's gala. Gala directors Erin Tripp and Rio Alberto say in the Gala program that the stage holds the Northern People's past, present and future. "We hope that you feel that sense of connection as you hear the voices lifted and hear the drum beating."

Friday's Gala decorations turn the Glenn Massay Theatre into the Auroras. The audience will feel as if they have been invited to grab hold of a ribbon of the Aurora and travel the circumpolar North as the lights touch down in different lands.

Galas interconnect all of the Northern cultures represented in the Games. On Friday the audience can look forward to a variety of performances, from powwow dancing from Alberta North to yoiks from the Sami performers. Together they rise - voices from across the North. Rising strong as they sing and dance their way into the hearts and imaginations of the audience.

Tickets for the 3 p.m. matinee are still available at tickets.awg2024.org.



Photo by Suzanne Reilly

ONE LOCAL ORGANIZATION IS FEEDING 2000 VISITING GAMES ATHLETES WHILE SIMULTANEOUSLY KEEPING HUNGRY KIDS FED ACROSS ALASKA

BY SAM DUELETTE

How the heck does the 2024 Arctic Winter Games host society feed all these hungry athletes? It takes a village to feed all those athletes and one local community non-profit answered the call providing the Arctic Winter Games villages with 200-600 sack lunches made daily using only the freshest ingredients. What's more, Kids Kupboard is still serving their regular 400 to 500 meals to communities across the Matanuska Valley from Willow to Sutton and beyond to reach hungry kids

across the last frontier. If you are following the math, that's anywhere between 600 to 1100 fresh-made meals, they make to feed the community on a given day.

At the core of Kids Kupboard's success is its passionate and committed staff, working tirelessly to address the urgent needs of vulnerable children dealing with food insecurity. These individuals, driven by a shared mission, understand the profound impact that a nutritious meal can have on a child's physical and emotional well-being. After reaching out to Kids Kupboard I got the chance to talk with Chris Haugom the operations manager who shared how valuable this experience has



FEEDING THE
SUCCESS OF
ALASKA'S CHILDREN

www.kidskupboard.org



DONATE NOW



ONE LOCAL ORGANIZATION IS FEEDING 2000 VISITING GAMES ATHLETES WHILE SIMULTANEOUSLY KEEPING HUNGRY KIDS FED ACROSS ALASKA, CONT.

been for him and for Kids Kupboard. Chris shared “this has been lots of fun and that it has been great to see the community come together for this event”. After talking with Chris it was evident that the staff and volunteers of Kids Kupboard are like a tight knit family. Chris gave credit to his team of eight to ten regular volunteers as well as staff who have helped make all these fresh meals possible each day. In a unique twist I would find out later that Chris was an Arctic Winter Games celebrity in his own right having won the golden ulu in the 1990 games in Yellowknife for indoor soccer. Talk about giving back to the athletes after all these years.

One of the core aspects of the 2024 Mat-Su Arctic Winter Games is community. Kids Kupboard’s valiant effort to continue feeding Alaskans while also providing fresh, nutritiously balanced meals for our visiting athletes and the wider community throughout this event is what the games showcase. Kids Kupboard operates on a fundamental belief in the strength of community. For this non-profit it is not just about filling stomachs; it’s about building a network of care and support around children who need it the most as well as ending food insecurity for all Alaskan children.



© AWG 2024 John Rusyniak

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

CANDICE, THE ARCTIC SPORTS COACH FOR TEAM ALASKA, RECEIVED A FAIR PLAY PIN FOR TEACHING THE BLANKET TOSS TO ALISON (A MEMBER OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE) AT THE FEAST.



FIRST YOU PLANK, THEN YOU HOP

BY IDA EDWARDS

Imagine lying in the snow, hunting seals on a winter's day. You lie motionless, with your harpoon positioned under your chest crossways. Gripping the harpoon with your knuckles on the ground, you begin to move forward in a seal-like motion, utilizing a combination of knuckle and toe pushes toward your target while maintaining the starting position of a full push-up. The sport requires incredible core strength, endurance and physical prowess. The participants made this challenging task appear effortless. Yet, it is anything but.

At the Mat-Su 2024 AWG, athletes happily embraced the challenge of **knuckle hop**, with an excited crowd rallying behind them. Colony Middle School Gymnasium buzzed with energy as spectators filled every available seat, the audience eager for knuckle hop to begin. The atmosphere crackled with electricity as cheers, applause, and even imitation seal barks and honks echoed through the gym. As each contestant assumed their starting position, a hush fell over the crowd, giving their full focus to the athletes. Once the athletes began their journey across the floor, the crowd erupted into thunderous applause, their fervor intensifying with every meter covered, their eyes fixed on the tape track guiding the athletes forward.

Officials meticulously observed the athletes' form, ensuring athletes didn't break from the required parallel position to the floor. Any deviation from this form resulted in a halt, with the athlete's distance being measured from that spot.

Among the crowd favorites was Kyle Worl, representing Alaska, whose father had previously set the world record for knuckle hop. Kyle's remarkable performance earned him the Gold Ulu, traveling an impressive 47.854 meters. Inuuteq Josefsen from Kalallit Nunaat, claimed silver with 41.129 meters, while Parker Kenick from Alaska secured bronze with a distance of 26.213 meters.

Congratulations to all the athletes, coaches and support teams on a job well done.



© AWG 2024 Brittany Wesseling



© AWG 2024 Le Losier



FUTSAL GETS AGGRESSIVE AS THE COMPETITION HEATS UP

BY EMMA KEECHLE

At 12pm, female U16 teams Nunavut and Yukon faced off. The first half unfolded at a slow pace, lacking many thrilling moments. The half concluded with Yukon leading 3-0. As the second half commenced, both teams ramped up their intensity, resulting in a much faster paced game. Yukon ultimately secured victory with a score of 10-0.

At 1pm, male U16 teams Sápmi and Northwest Territories took the court. The match kicked off with a rapid pace in the first half, with Team Sápmi taking a commanding 7-0 lead. The momentum carried over into the second half, with Team Sápmi maintaining their dominance and ultimately winning 12-0.

At 2pm, male U18 teams Alaska and Nunavut clashed in a fiercely competitive game from start to finish. The match was marked by a high tempo and aggressive play throughout. Team Nunavut's repeated fouls resulted in numerous free shots on goal for Team Alaska.

Amidst the fierce play, a particularly aggressive incident led to a red card for a Nunavut player, leaving their team a player short until halftime.

Despite the challenges, Team Nunavut managed to end the half with a 3-2 edge. However, tensions remained high throughout the second half, with confrontations between players and heated exchanges between coaches and referees. The tension from the game even carried into the crowd, resulting in volunteers standing between fan sections as a precaution. Nunavut held their lead and won this fierce matchup 6-3. After the game referee Nathan Grey said in response to the question 'how do you handle a game as heated as this?'. He stated, "You wanna make sure you stay fair and be aware that some players might lose their cool...you have to have wits about you... as a ref you live for these games."



Photo by Byron Corral Photography



©AWG 2024 Byron Corral Photography



TEAM SÁPMI DOMINATES CROSS COUNTRY SKI SPRINT

BY KENDRA ZAMZOW

Four girls in skin-tight leggings leapt forward as the starting horn blared. Less than one minute later, two members of Team Sapmi skidded across the finish line like baseball players sliding to home base.

“I try to get out in front right away,” Ebba Stina Rimpi said.

That strategy sure seemed to work. Ebba had just won the gold ulu in the 400-600 m cross country ski sprint for U14 girls with a time of 52:29 seconds. Her friend Alma Svonni grabbed the silver two seconds later at 54:09 seconds. Cali Zuber of Team Alaska took the bronze ulu followed by teammates Talia Smith and Solvej Lunoe in fourth and fifth place.

Ebba had a full support team on the sidelines. Her grandfather Paul Rimpi cheered as he raced up and down the sidelines, Sapmi flags sprouting from a black backpack, “Hey ya NA!”

Grandmother Susanne Rimpi waved a flag and her father and coach Christian Rimpi cheered alongside teammates dressed in navy blue down jackets with “SAPMI” in bold yellow on the back.

“It was a very tough race,” Ebba said. “The competition is very good, very very fast.”

This was Ebba’s first Arctic Winter Games. She made quite an impression, winning an Ulu in all three of her races. In addition to the gold Ulu for the sprint, Ebba won the gold ulu for the 3.75 km classic ski and the bronze for the 3.75 km free technique ski.



© AWG 2024 Jeremiah Young



Photo by Jeremiah Young



TEAM SAPMI DOMINATES CROSS COUNTRY SKI SPRINT, CONT.

“And it is so great that my friend Alma got the silver in this (sprint) race. And the opening ceremony was really nice; it felt like home with all the sharing.”

Ebba and her grandparents are from the towns of Jokkmokk and Falun, Sweden. This is the first time she and her grandmother had been to Alaska.

“It’s just wonderful,” Susanna said. “The sun, the people, there is good energy everywhere and with each other. And yesterday we drove towards Denali and had a picnic where we could see the mountain.” Or most of the mountain, she said. The peak was too shy to show.

It wasn’t the first time for Ebba’s grandfather and father, though. They had been here in 1990 for moose hunting, and Christian came again in 2004 on a scholarship to compare moose management in Alaska to that in Sweden, “In Sweden we have the highest moose population in the world.”

If this race was any indication, they also have some of the fastest young skiers in the world.



Photo by Jeremiah Young



© AWG 2024 Dakotia Race





YOU'RE INVITED TO A

MMIW INTERACTIVE ACTIVITY & TALKING CIRCLE AT ARCTIC WINTER GAMES 2024

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC AND AWG PARTICIPANTS



TATIANA TICKNOR

DATA FOR INDIGENOUS JUSTICE



SABRINA DUNPHREY

DATA FOR INDIGENOUS JUSTICE

**MARCH 15TH
2024**

3PM - 8:45PM

**RAVEN HALL AT THE STATE
FAIRGROUNDS**

CO-HOSTED BY:



WWW.AWG2024.ORG



TEAM NUNAVIK FINDS THEIR POWER AT AWG

BY MISTY GILLAND

Team Nunavik arrived at the Mat-Su Arctic Winter Games from villages within the Northern parts of the Quebec Territory in Canada. Team Nunavik consists of 54 athletes and 6 cultural performers and supported by 11 coaches, two cultural managers, and eight mission staff.

Team Nunavik can be recognized by their lime green jackets and black pants. Their flag is from Quebec Province. (Nunavik Territory's flag is similar to Quebec's flag except with a stylized fleurs-de-lis.)

On the AWG2024.org website, Nunavik Team writes that the sentiment of cultural pride is also felt by many community members. A video shows community members cheering on the team and reminding them to take pride in who they are, where they come from, and their cultural heritage. "You are part of a big family, so be proud of it. You are not only representing yourself, but you're representing your family, your community, and your region...Team Nunavik FIND YOUR POWER!"

According to the team's website, "...Team Nunavik-Québec has been growing stronger and stronger, both in terms of athletic performance as well as organization...Athletes that become part of Team Nunavik-Québec are selected based on athletic performance, good sportsmanship and leadership qualities."

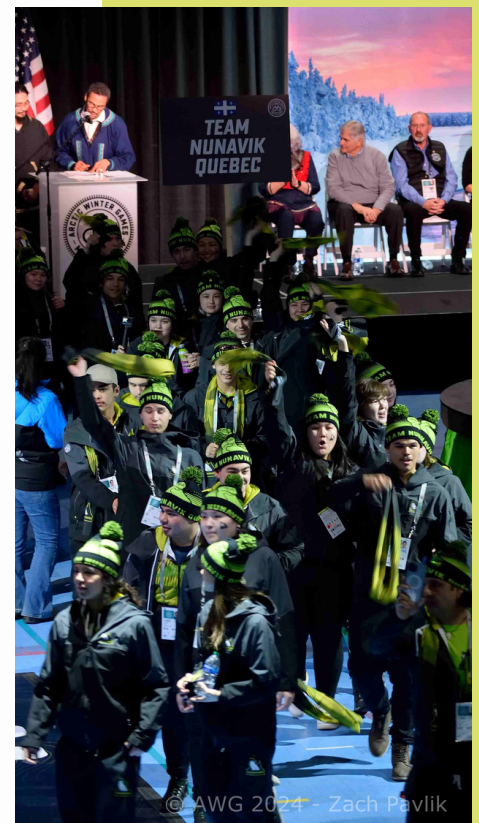
The Nunavik region has been participating in the Arctic Winter Games since 1972. This year's games are the team's 16th Arctic Winter Games. The Nunavik team likes to share their culture and competitive spirit. Team Nunavik has participants in the cultural performances, the Dene Games and other AWG sports. The team wants to have fun and to do their best in the competitions.

So far in the 2024 Mat-Su Arctic Winter Games, the team has earned 23 medals, six gold, 10 silver and seven bronze.

Nunavik means the Great Land in the local dialect Inuktitut. It is the homeland of the Inuit of Quebec.

The region is the northern half of the Nord-du-Québec region and includes all the territory north of the 55th parallel. It is an extremely large and sparsely populated region with only 14 villages. There are no road links between Nunavik and southern Quebec.

Fans are invited to show their team support and to send messages of encouragement on social media: @TeamNunaviukQuebec.





THE VILLAGE MAYORS

BY KENDRA ZAMZOW

While many of us are out basking in the sun watching Alpine Ski, Snowshoe, and other events, a dedicated group of people are making sure everything is running smoothly at the Participant Villages.

There are six Participant Villages – at Palmer, Wasilla, and Colony middle and high schools. Each has its own “Mayor”.

“My wife and I have been involved with the Arctic Winter Games for two years,” said Cory Smith, Mayor of the village at Palmer Junior Middle School. “We chose to help out as Mayors at this school because we know the layout. We had four kids go through this school, and my wife worked here.”

He is a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (LDS). “We have six congregations in Palmer and eight in Wasilla. When the call went out for volunteers to set up beds, we knew we could do it with all our congregations.” They were able to supply 600 people to help set them up, and they’ll be taking them down this weekend.

“Mostly we try to get answers to everyone,” he said. This was demonstrated as he helped two participants with getting the bus to the winter carnival, another that needed a key, and received information on whether plumbing was fixed in a shower – or not.

“And I would like to give a big thank you to all the people volunteering their time and talent. Arctic Winter Games could never have done this without every volunteer.”

Over at the Palmer High School Participant Village, Tonya Loyer and Leslie Norris were manning the Mayor’s office. The big office windows looked out at two big posters of the bus routes available to the participants to get around. “We’re the point of contact,” said Tonya. “And the Door Dash stop.” They also hold the key to rooms. Rooms may have up to eight people, but there is only one key. “So we need to go with the person to open the room.” The two of them man the mid-day shift from 11 am to 5 pm. A husband and wife team take the morning shift from 5:30 am to 11:30 am, and another volunteer takes the night shift from 4:30 to 11 pm. Curfew for participants is 11 pm.

“We’ve got feedback about how well everything is run,” said Tonya. “Although we did get a complaint that the bus actually left right on time,” chimed in Leslie, “it wasn’t even one minute late.”

If you are going to Palmer High to watch futsal, or to one of the other Participant Villages where events are held, **take a moment to say “thanks” to the Mayors.**

SPORTS VENUE SPONSOR | \$15K +

SPORTS VENUE SPONSOR | \$15K +





FRENZIED FUTSAL SEMIFINALS AT PALMER HIGH SCHOOL

BY MIKE DEGEN AND MANNY MELENDEZ

The afternoon semifinal match between Yukon and Alaska was a heated showdown! Yukon entered the game as a one seed after winning all three matches in the group stage. They seized an early lead and maintained it throughout, securing a 3-1 victory. However, the intensity of Alaska's play, particularly in the second half, cannot be overlooked. Despite several missed opportunities, Alaska displayed fiery determination. Unfortunately, a few of their players resorted to questionable sportsmanship, actively shoving Yukon players resulting in at least one foul during the second half.

The game was chippy from start to finish, with some questionable calls made due to the heated interactions between Alaska and Yukon on the court. At one point, a Yukon player stopped in his tracks after being shoved into the bleachers and shouted, "Calm down!" to the Alaska player that pushed him.

After the game concluded, a sense of sportsmanship prevailed. Players from both teams could be seen shaking hands and engaging in brief conversations as they left the court.

Right after, in the highly anticipated second semifinal, second seeded Team Northwest Territories squared off against third seeded Team Nunavut. It was a rematch of Monday's exciting 10-7 victory by Team NT. Team Nunavut's fans made their presence known with horns, shouts, and claps, in an evenly matched start to the game.

Leo Whittaker of Team Yukon leads all players in the competition with 13 goals. Following close behind is Stephen Moore from Team NT with 7 goals. Emmanuel Johan Tanoh, led Team Nunavut's attack, as the third leading scorer.





FRENZIED FUTSAL SEMIFINALS AT PALMER HIGH SCHOOL, CONT.

In the match between Team NT and Team Nunavut, Roald Peters opened the scoring, highlighting Team NT's laser-focused attention to the game's stakes. Ronit Bhanot added a second goal. However, Team Nunavut managed to pull one back shortly after, igniting the crowd.

Tanoh equalized the score minutes later. Bhanot eventually scored a second to take a 3-2 lead. A minute later, Peters hit the woodwork. Tanoh wasted no time responding in adding his second goal before the thrilling first half came to a close.

13 seconds into the second half, Nunavut seized the lead. Stephen Moore responded empathically, quickly evening the score! Both teams refused to play defense. A costly mistake by Nunavut led to a fifth goal for Team NT. Nunavut tied a minute later to continued roars from the crowd whose enthusiasm remained unwavering throughout the match.

The game slowed down in the final ten minutes with neither side able to break the deadlock, sending them into overtime. Early into the second overtime period, Nunavut found a golden goal in a deadly counterattack, which sent them into the final against undefeated Yukon, the heavy favorite.





THE ULU

BY ANNA CHEBUKINA

The ulu has been used to clean skins, cut up meat, filet fish, make clothes, cut hair, trim blocks of ice, and more. There is a deep culture around the ulu we don't hear of often.

The ulu has a history in the Yup'ik, Aleut, Dene, and Inuit cultures in Alaska, Kalaallit Nunaat (Greenland) and Canada. Their history is said to span from more than 5,000 years ago. Historically, the ulu was made of slate, quartzite or shale for the blade with ivory, wood, antler, horn, or bone for the handle. Some Canadian Inuit used native copper for the blade. The curve of the ulu blade ensures the force is centered. The shape of an ulu may tell you from what culture or area it originated. In the Alaskan Inupiat style, the centerpiece of the blade is cut out and the handle is fitted to both edges of the blade. Styles found in the West Greenland have the blade attached to the handle by a single stem. In the far north and northwest of Alaska are triangular blades, while in the Northwest Territories and West Greenland ulus may

be a combination of triangular blades attached to the handle by a thin stem. In Eastern Greenlandic, styles with pointed blade ends may be found.

As the ulu was mainly used by women, to get an ulu passed down from your mother and grandmother was an honor. Inuit rights activist Shelia Watt-Cloutier has noted that when an Inuk woman dies, her ulu retains her energy, making ulus powerful spiritual objects. The ulu itself is a unique implement which makes Inuit culture and traditions very rich and very much alive. Using an ulu is one of the ways that Inuit women connect to Inuit culture as well as give back to it.

The ulu has been integrated into the modern day culinary world. Many who use the ulu in their homes or restaurants appreciate the curved blade, which allows for easier handling and chopping, and the comfortable handle allows for less stress and fatigue in the hands.



Photo by Le Losier



GEAR UP!

BY ANNA CHEBUKINA

As game week comes closer to the end, let's touch on some amazing merchandise that is available for purchase!

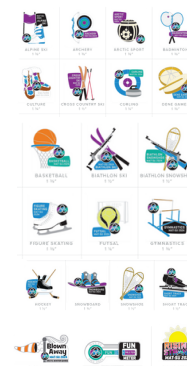
Hockey Pucks - coming in at the bottom of our list but not for the reason you think! The hockey puck is just 1 inch thick and 3 inches around, featuring this year's AWG logo. It's at the bottom of our list due to its late arrival. As it has become more readily available, it has quickly become a crowd favorite and is flying off the shelf!

Fishe Cap - with blue tones and an aquatic feel, and is quickly being noticed for its gentle colors. It pairs well with the tote bag of the same design!

Contingent Sweatpants - these sweatpants have been walking off the tables faster than our volunteers are able to restock. These sweatpants feature the flags of all the teams that have come out to participate in this year's Arctic Winter Games.

Chickadee Crew Neck Sweatshirt - if you are looking for this sweatshirt in the soft blue-teal or soft lavender color, you might be disappointed. These sweatshirts were off the hangers before they could get them up. With Arctic Winter Games written on the front and beautiful black-capped chickadees hovering in the corners, it is the second best seller this week.

Pins - this might not come as a shocker, but this year's ultimate must-have item are PINS! Not only is pin trading considered the 21st sport of the AWG, it is also a great way to make connections and interact with all contingents. There are an array of sport related pins as well as contingent sets available.



DEAL OF THE WEEK!!

All who purchase a scarf will get a free, yes FREE, pair of gloves! Find your nearest merchandise shops now!



INCREDIBLE TALENTS SHOWN AT FIGURE SKATING

BY KYLA KHARS

Although the temperature outside is barely cold enough to keep ice frozen, inside the Mac Center the ice is perfect and ready for the free skate competitions. With spins and jumps, skaters show off impressive skills. They also show incredible sportsmanship on and off the ice. When an athlete took an unintentional tumble, the audience encouraged them to get up and endure, and they were quick to recover. Their compatriots cheered them on at every twist and turn.

In the Level 1 competition, 13-year-old Solenn Kikoak from the Northwest Territories skated with style to “Pretty Baby, I need you baby”. Fifteen-year-old Aidyn Lewis from Alaska was clearly a crowd favorite, not only for her skating but for her work raising over \$1,000 for Scott Hamilton Cares outreach for cancer research by selling cupcakes. As impressive as these two were, sadly neither placed in the top three.

Alexis Robinson and Mya Hussey, both 13 from Team Alberta North, took first and second; Alexis also earned gold in the Short Program. Laura Ruiz, 12, earned her place on the podium and the bronze ulu to take back to Team Yukon.

The Level 2 competition had even more impressive stunts. Fewer teams were represented at this level. Some of the favorites for this round were 14 year old Niobe Clinton from Northwest Territories, 15 year old Madisyn Millar of Yukon, and 14 year old lyla Wagner of Alberta North. But it was Elyssa McLellan, 15, and lyla Wagner, 14, of Alberta North who earned gold and silver, and Ruby Shyne Kim of Alaska, one of the youngest figure skaters at 11, took bronze. All three medaled in the same positions yesterday in the Short Program. As a fun fact, Elyssa McLellan wants to become a Sports Psychologist as her future career.



© AWG 2024 Connor Mattson

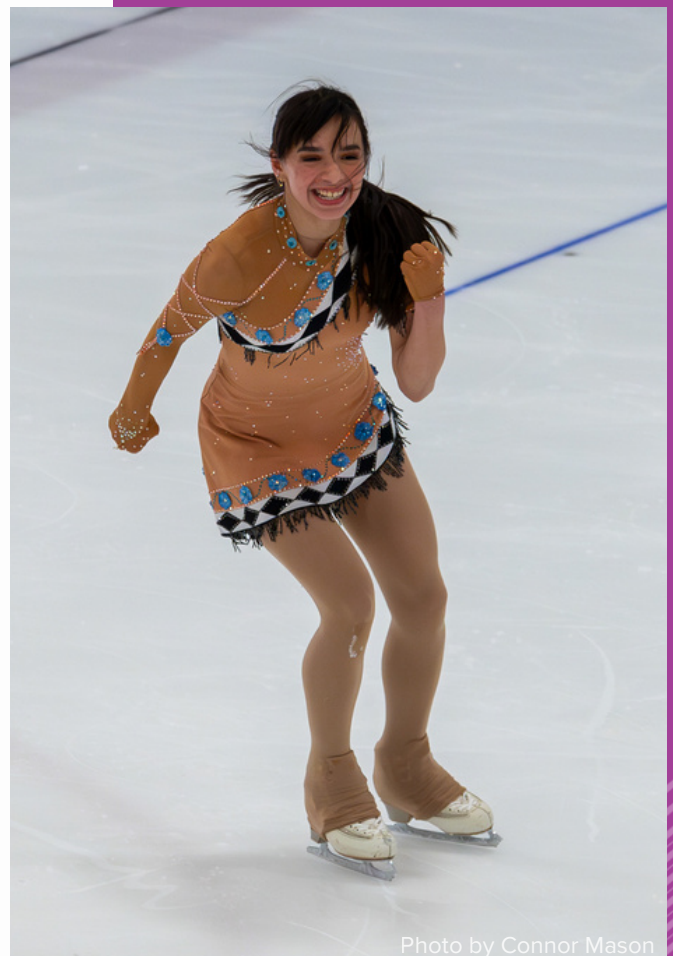


Photo by Connor Mason



INCREDIBLE TALENTS SHOWN AT FIGURE SKATING, CONT.

For the Level 3 competition, the routines really ramped up. Competitors showed off their combination spins with more command of the ice. There were only three skaters at this level, but all three had been skating for nearly their entire lives. Julianne Howse from Alberta North started skating at the age of 3 in Newfoundland. Kaley Boucher, 17 of Alberta North, blew the other two out of the water to reach the top of the podium. Miah Reid Harris, 16 of the Northwest Territories earned the silver ulu, and Julianne Howse, 17, ended this round of the Figure Skating Competition with bronze.

Finally, the Level 4 competition showcased the hard work and determination of four more amazing athletes. The talent of these young women, with their dizzying spins and speed, is incredible to behold. Lily Brennan, 16, took home another gold ulu for the Northwest Territories. Kaitlyn Joseph, 14 from Anchorage, has been skating for just four years and reached the second step on the podium. Finally, Gwendolynn Cheney, 16 from Eagle River, earned bronze on her home ice rink.

As youth leaders in their homelands, many of these amazing young ladies teach and coach younger and less experienced skaters. Given the time they need to dedicate to training and studies, it is truly inspiring that they also take the time to give back in this area they love. Each of the competitors worked incredibly hard and tried their best. Congratulations to them all.



TEAM SÁPMI PROMOTES CULTURE THROUGH SPORTS

BY MISTY GILLAND

The Sámi celebrate sports as part of culture; witness their events of reindeer racing, lasso kasting, and cross country skiing. The purpose of the Sámi Sports Association, Sámi Valáštallan Lihttu, is “to promote Sámi traditions, cultural interaction, and friendship through sport.”

Sápmi is the name for the traditional territory in which the Sámi people live. Sápmi land spreads across the northern parts of Sweden, Norway, Finland, and the Kola Peninsula of Russia. Within that area are 50,000 to 100,000 Sámi people, speaking as many as nine distinct dialects. The Sámi lived on the land long before European national boundaries were established, and are governed by their own elected parliaments that act nationally and across national borders. They came together in 2000 to form a Sámi Parliamentary Council which serves as a joint council for the people.

Team Sápmi is participating in two sports at the Arctic Winter Games 2024: cross country ski and futsal. The Sápmi ski team spent a year preparing for the 2024 Arctic Winter Games, choosing eighteen skiers and nineteen futsal players. Most of the skiers were selected based on results from the Sámi Skiing Championships held in Guovdageaidnu (Kautokeino) Norway. Sámi youth have come to compete, but also to strengthen the unity of and pride in the Sámi culture and to network with other northern cultures.

Be sure to ask the players and fans about their heritage and homeland. Just do not ask about how many reindeer they may own - It is considered very rude. **Good Luck Team Sápmi!**



© AWG 2024 Brittany Wesseling



RECORD BREAKING!

BY CANDACE BOECHLER

The ice is fast at Harry J McDonald Memorial Centre in Eagle River for short track speed skating!

Ola Gawlak of Team Alberta took the Gold Ulu today in Short Track Speed Skating when she skated the 1000m in one minute and 51.03 seconds. (1:51.03).

Saiya McEachern of Team Northwest Territories also took home the Gold Ulu when he set the new Arctic Winter Games record in the juvenile U15 boys division. McEachern's one minute, 46.52 seconds (1:46.52) is thirteen one hundredth's of a second (0.13) faster than the former record set by Lucas Taggart-Cox in 2018. Taggart-Cox still holds three other records at the Arctic Winter Games.

Tuesday saw more records set in speed skating including Team Alberta's June Lynch who broke the U15 girls 400m record in her opening heat, only to skate even faster in the Semi Finals with a time of 42.09 seconds.

Team Nunavut's Akutaq Williamson-Bathory broke an eighteen year old AWG record in the junior girls under 19, 500m. Her 48.84 seconds surpasses (NWT) Jill Gilday's 49.1 from 2006. Jill's Dad, Assistant Referee David Gilday of Yellowknife was on the ice as it happened, as was Akutaq's ataata (father) Stephen, the Chief Track Stewart.

Speed skating resumes Thursday morning at 9am and again on Friday, where there's potential for more records to be smashed, and more hope for athletes to continue rising strong.



RISING STRONG WITH ARCTIC CULTURE

BY SEAN REILLY

In Arctic cultures people lift each other up to achieve excellence. The culture supports each other to be the best that they can be. There is a culture of unity. Ultimately, it is not the winning where the true joy is to be found, but in the camaraderie.

The Arctic Winter Games exemplify this northern people's culture day in and day out. It is evidenced daily by the athletes, the coaches, the officials, the families, the friends and interactions between competitors.

On the edges of the courts, athletes who are at the top of their game cheer for and advise both teammates and opponents.

Team Alaska Coltan Paul competed in the Two Foot High Kick. Coltan was just shy of his target. He went back to the sidelines and his competitor, Team Alaska Parker Kenick gave him some advice and new perspective on his technique. On the next run-up, Coltan jumps off and hits the target landing squarely on both feet.

Next up was Parker Kenick. He motioned to the crowd to help lead him into the jump. The stomping of the bleachers, the quickening clapping of hundreds of hands, and the Clarion call of the bearded seal prompted Kenick's feet to start to move. He leaped toward the sky, feet outstretched and made contact.

The aluminum pole went up two more inches. The kick was now eight feet six inches. Coltan Paul hit the target and stuck the landing. Parker was not as fortunate. So, this time it was Coltan Paul who from the sidelines encouraged his competition. Even if it meant that Parker might blast past him, Coltan was not really competing against Parker, but rather they were both rising together.

Kenick gave it all he had and still fell just shy of his mark. In the end it was Coltan Paul who took the gold ulu home.

It was after the event was over that the culture of rising together shined Parker continued to try and make the six foot eight inch kick. The announcer gave advice. And Parker tried again and missed. Then an experienced two foot high kicker athlete was called out of the crowd. He coached Parker now. Never giving up and surrounded by support, Parker succeeded in making contact at eight feet six inches. Unofficially in one sense. Officially though, a champion of sportsmanship and resilience.

It can be emotionally moving to witness this culture of "we," that comes out of the Arctic lands. It is uplifting to witness this attitude of inclusiveness and support.

***Mat-Su Arctic Winter Games
Rising Strong Together***



© AWG 2024 - Zach Pavlik



Photo by Norm Harris



TEAM ALASKA GETS THE GOLD!

BY KAJE ROCKWELL

They swarmed around the rink, rocketing dozens of rubber pucks against the glass. We could feel their energy, swinging to the same beat of the overhead loudspeakers, cheering on our favorite players who we hoped would be champions in **tonight's male hockey finals between Team Alaska and the Northwest Territories.**

Almost superhuman, they slide to the center. The first slapshot strikes the goalie, sending families, friends, and visitors into a symphony of applause. A scattered cluster slams against a corner, a helpless puck beneath their blades. Their sticks cross, slashing mercilessly at each other's feet. They break free, gliding to the opposite side, Team Northwest Territories' protected goal. It's a score for Team Alaska! They chase the puck from one end to the next as if it has a mind of its own. Another slapshot into the goal! The referees convene in a sudden silence as the ice clears of players, and they wait to hear the final verdict for the shot. Heroically, the announcer booms, "It's another goal for Team Alaska!"

Alaska's fans leap in excitement as a blue-jacketed fan runs down the first row of the stadium, waving Alaska's flag with pride and joy. The rest of the first period is a mad rush of encounters. They slam, slide, and slapshot at every move. From the balcony, it sounds like bullwhips crackling below. From the lowest front row seats, they are more like the popping of a small caliber rifle.

The crowd screamed with the announcer's booming voice, leading off the second period. The score is already 4 to 0, a score that holds throughout the period.

Coasting back to the center of the ring, then fanning out to Team Alaska's home goalie, the Northwest Territories strike their first goal! Bursting into action, it's a warzone of players, a race with every inch of their strength. Team Alaska sweeps the puck away from the Northwest Territories, hurling it into the goal. Another point!



TEAM ALASKA GETS THE GOLD!, CONT.

It was hard-fought through many penalties, through scrambling and scuffling and any number of aggressive scraps to change the odds for NWT, but here they shoot their shot and strike a fair point.

NWT fires back into action, speeding ahead to defend their goal. It's well-defended, but a player for the blue and gold sweeps another slapshot into the net. "Team Alaska Goals! They never die!" bellows an elated announcer. An aroused audience erupts with a rolling chant for Team Alaska! Players stare each other down after a penalty. The puck rolls carelessly into the clutches of an NWT player. His slapshot sends it flying at the goalie for Alaska. He saves it with a quick reaction, locking his left knee to the ice, sending it skittering back at the Northwest players. The period ends a score of 6 to 1, one period closer to victory!

Someone blares a horn at the start. Northwest Territories has the puck—they swing and miss by a hair! They make the attempt again and again, hewing chunks of ice from the ring, but to no avail. Alaska surrounds them, chucking the puck away. It's an attack and retreat for Team Alaska, swift and effective. NWT encircles, now swarms in, now fights for life! Alaska nearly scores, but NWT is aggressive. They are battling for their ground. Players clash in arm locks. It's a shuffle back to the goal, and to another penalty.

In front, behind, and around the Northwest goal, Team Alaska fires another shot. Another goal! 3 minutes away from the end of the game is a chaotic scramble after the puck. Another score for Team Alaska happens in a flash to the amazement of her fans! The countdown strikes. Team Alaska clearly wins, leaving a rink littered with gloves and helmets among their surrendered hockey-sticks. We turn to the flag of our nation. Team Alaska hums the old melody, "Oh, say, can you see?" We turn to these athletes now. Oh, say, can you see our champions? Sons, grandsons, brothers, and friends? We see heroes in the making as they have gold medals hung around their necks. Turning to the Northwest Territories, we see tomorrow's champions, silver medalists after a well-played game.





AWG EXHIBIT IS MORE THAN MEMORIES

BY BETHANY BUCKINGHAM

Wasilla – The Arctic Winter Games embodies culture, youth, and the northern experience. While the spirit of AWG can be experienced in person through sporting competitions and cultural exchanges, the history and stories shine through the 50 Years of Arctic Winter Games exhibit on display at the Wasilla Museum and Visitor Center.

“I think today the Arctic Winter Games is truly a northern experience, relying on ice, snow and native sports,” said George Smith, who spoke at the Museum Wednesday night about the exhibit and his experiences with the Arctic Winter Games. He was first involved in Team Alaska Mission Staff from 1992 through 2003 and then became a member of the state board in 2005. He has seen a lot in his years involved with AWG. Smith worked with over fifty AWG collecting enthusiasts to gather the items in the exhibit. Every item has a story. “I had a friend tell me that my Jersey was on display at the Museum,” said Syrilyn Tong a current volunteer for the AWG2024, who lives in Fairbanks. “I was a goalie on the 1990 Team Alaska women’s hockey team.”

“We lost in double overtime that year to Yukon,” she said. “We started at 8 pm and we played for four and half hours straight. I was actually relieved when the game ended!” Tong brought her wife, Sarah Albers, to see her Jersey on display in the exhibit. It brought back a lot of memories for Tong, which she shared.

“I’ve been a player, a coach and volunteer,” she stated. “I volunteered to run the broomball event in the 88 games when women’s hockey was canceled. Then I was asked to be the assistant Chef de Mission and later Chef de Mission for Team Alaska in 2012. It was great traveling to all the different places with AWG including Yellowknife and Whitehorse.”

Tong and Albers are members of the Fairbanks Community Emergency Response Team contingent that came to volunteer at the Arctic Winter Games. This is Albers first-time volunteering for the games.



AWG EXHIBIT IS MORE THAN MEMORIES, CONT.

“As volunteers we get to experience a lot of different games and events,” said Albers. “We’ve been security for hockey and Dene games which has been great to watch the crowd and the athletes.” “It truly warms my heart to see the athletes,” says Tong with fond memories of her time in the Arctic Winter Games. “I was there, as an athlete and a coach and now a volunteer. To see the engagement of the athletes and to know they will meet each other year after year like I did, it is such an important part to see happen again.”

“To see these kids compete in the various sports, but when they come off the ice or the court, they are friends,” said Albers. “That is truly the spirit of the games.”

And that sentiment is continued throughout the exhibit curated by Smith and the Alaska State Museum. “I feel the three main parts of the Arctic Winter Games are the youth, the culture, and the northern experience shared by these athletes,” said Smith. “I’ve seen the games evolve from 500 athletes from The Northwest Territories, The Yukon and Alaska grow to over 2000 athletes to include the nations of Northern Alberta, Nunavut, Greenland, Russia, Sápmi and Nunavik. It’s great to see so many people involved.”

The sports have also grown from ten sports to twenty. The Arctic and Dene Games were added in 1992 but were solely men’s competition. In 2004 the international committee decided to include women in the Dene Games. With the sports expanding in the year 2000 and the athletes’ numbers growing, the international committee had to decide on 1. Get rid of some of the contingents, 2. Get rid of some of the sports, or 3. Get rid of the adults competing, according to Smith.

“One and two were not very popular options,” said Smith. The international committee decided to eliminate adults from the sport except for the Arctic and Dene games.

“They did keep the adults competing in the Arctic and Dene games because culturally the knowledge is passed through competition between elders and youth in the villages,” Smith stated.

The big question from the audience at his talk, ‘What about the pins?’

One of the highlights of the exhibit is the over 1900 pins on display showing how far pin trading has come since the early days of the games. Pin trading has been called the twenty-first sport of the games. Athletes, coaches, volunteers, venues, sponsors and more create and exchange pins throughout the week of the games.

“In the beginning, 1970, there was only one pin, and it was the international committee pin, the gold ulu,” Smith reminisced. He stated that by 1980 pin collecting was catching on, and in 1982 we see the first sports pins. It wasn’t until 1992 that the first and probably only puzzle pin came out.

“Everyone was collecting these pins and were looking at them wondering why they were all different shapes,” Smith remembers. “It wasn’t until Friday that they revealed a paper that had the outline when all the pins were put together spelled out AWG.”



AWG EXHIBIT IS MORE THAN MEMORIES, CONT.

Smith notes that there was not much change in pins or any other puzzle pins until 2004 when Team Nunavut created an igloo with their contingent pins. According to Smith, it wasn't really until 2012 that you see the addition of multiple pins creating one image that we see today.

"I think the teams started getting together the year before to see 'what can we do better than last year'." Smith has been impressed with the ingenuity and artistry of the pins each year.

In 1986 there were 80 pins total. By 1994 that number has increased to 108. The largest number of pins in one game was the 2000 games with 195 pins. This year during the AWG 2024 there are about 157 pins available to collect. Be on the lookout for pin trading at the Palmer Depot or any of the venues you attend. Start your pin trading collection today.

"I collected a few my first games and thought, this is fun," Smith said. "By the end of the week I was hooked. You get to meet great people through pin trading and share your memories of the games."

The Arctic Winter Games exhibit is on display at the Wasilla Museum and Visitor Center, located at 391 N Main Street in downtown Wasilla. **The Museum is open Tuesday – Friday 10 am – 3 pm.** Call 907-373-9071 for more information or to schedule a tour of the exhibit. The exhibit will be at the Museum through Friday, March 29, 2024.





WASILLA MUSEUM HOSTS YOIKING PERFORMANCE

BY BETHANY BUCKINGHAM

The audience at the Wasilla Museum was entranced by the lyrical voice of Matthew from Team Sápmi who shared his culture through traditional joiking.

“Joiking is not singing, it is a way of greeting and sharing a story through a chant,” Matthew explained. Matthew is his chosen English name as he said that is easier to pronounce for English speakers than his Sápmi name.

“I joik while in my home, or outside doing chores, driving my car, anywhere,” he said.

Matthew explained the three personal joiks he would perform: those for people, those for animals and those for nature or places. Children receive their own joik and when they become adults, they are given an adult joik.

“This first joik is for my cousin who is getting married tomorrow,” Matthew said. “I won’t be able to be there with her, so I will perform her joik in honor of her.”

The animal joik tends to mimic the sounds of the represented animal. Matthew engaged the audience, inviting them to guess which animals were portrayed in the song. His first joik had a howling tone to it, prompting someone to shout, Moose! However, a Nunavik cultural team member suggested it sounded like a wolf, a guess Matthew confirmed. The next joik had a guttural, grunting cadence, leading another Nunavik team member to remark that it resembled a bear. The final yoik threw the audience. Guesses of fly, hummingbird, and bee were shouted. The last guess by an audience member was a mosquito.

“Yes, it is a Mosquito!” Matthew affirmed. “There are a lot of mosquitoes in Northern Norway in the summer. Which is why Sami people move from inland to the coast.” He noted that within the joik for the mosquito there is a phrase indicating that the mosquito may not be here now, but we know they will inevitably arrive.



WASILLA MUSEUM HOSTS YOIKING PERFORMANCE

“The mosquito comes in mid-summer, so in the joik we say, ‘after mid-summer it will come, anyways.’” This resonated with many Alaskans in the audience.

Matthew performed the final two joiks, both centered around places. The first one recounted a story about his mother’s hometown, which faced a threat from a dam project in 1970. Although the community could not halt the project entirely, they successfully persuaded the company to construct it in a manner that prevented their town from being flooded and lost.

The final joik of the morning was dedicated to nature. After performing it, Matthew invited the audience to join in. “Even if you don’t know the words, you can follow the tune and join me,” he encouraged. The audience added their voices creating a beautiful chant honoring nature, cultures and forging stronger bonds between people.

As he Thanked the community for joining him, Matthew expressed his hope that he honored his fellow cultural members from team Nunavik, who were unable to perform due to an injured team member. Team Nunavik and Team Sápmi will perform at the cultural gala on Friday.

MAT-SU 2024 ARCTIC WINTER GAMES



TICKETS ARE ON SALE NOW!

MARCH 10 - 16, 2024

SCAN TO BUY TICKETS NOW!
AWG2024.ORG



the mat-su 2024 arctic winter games presents:



WINTER CARNIVAL & MAKERS MARKET

MARCH 15 + 16

Free entry! Don't miss the fun!
Alaska State Fairgrounds, Palmer
Friday March 15, 3 - 9pm
Saturday March 16, 11am - 4pm



LEARN MORE
AWG2024.ORG

STEWARD | \$10K +

STEWARD | \$10K +

