

ULU NEWS



OFFICIAL PUBLICATION OF THE 2006 ARCTIC WINTER GAMES WWW.AWG2006.ORG ISSUE NO. 7 / MARCH 11, 2006

Medal Counts

Alaska:

Gold:	77
Silver:	62
Bronze:	46
Total:	185

Alberta North:

Gold:	40
Silver:	41
Bronze:	35
Total:	116

Greenland:

Gold:	11
Silver:	10
Bronze:	8
Total:	29

Northwest Territories:

Gold:	26
Silver:	38
Bronze:	34
Total:	98

Nunavik Québec:

Gold:	13
Silver:	6
Bronze:	8
Total:	27

Nunavut:

Gold:	13
Silver:	24
Bronze:	36
Total:	73

Saami:

Gold:	5
Silver:	6
Bronze:	8
Total:	27

Yamal-Nenets:

Gold:	21
Silver:	21
Bronze:	7
Total:	49

Yukon:

Gold:	17
Silver:	19
Bronze:	43
Total:	79

Weather Forecast



Sunshine and patchy clouds
28/16



Photo By Brian Keith

Kenai Peninsula Borough Mayor John Williams and Dale Bagley, president of the 2006 Arctic Winter Games Host Society, receive a painting presented to them by Wendy Bilerou, AWG 2008 Yellowknife Host Society president and deputy mayor of Yellowknife.

2008 Arctic Winter Games return to birthplace in Yellowknife

By BRIAN KEITH
Ulu News

Like the salmon, the 2008 Arctic Winter Games will return to their birthplace two years from now when they are held where the games originated in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories, Canada.

This will be a special homecoming, since it marks 40 years since the inception of the Games, and the 20th time they have been held.

The original games were the work of Stuart Hodgson and James Smith, commissioners of the Northwest Territories and the Yukon. After discussing it with an enthusiastic Governor of Alaska Walter J. Hickel, the first games were born in 1970 in Yellowknife with 500 athletes and three contingents: Alaska, Yukon, and the Northwest Territories.

"It's going to be the biggest homecoming...there's big excitement in Yellowknife," said Tony Whitford, current commissioner of the Northwest Territories during a Northwest Territories 2008 Arctic Winter Games Host Society gathering at the Kenai Visitors and Convention

Center Thursday night. Many of the people in charge of organizing the 2008 games were present at the 2006 games to shadow their Alaska counterparts, as well as observe the general procedure to help with planning.

"What the real benefit of shadowing has done for us is to let us see how intimately everything is interlocked in the whole thing," said Cathie Bolstad. "If one thing changes, then everyone has to adjust. It was seeing it real life, real time. We got to see how things operate when they don't go exactly according to plan."

A key speaker during the formal part of the night was Floyd Rolland, Governor of the Northwest Territories, who was complimentary toward the Alaskans who have participated this year.

"Looking at the athletes shows me how well they've done," said Rolland, acknowledging the hard work accomplished by volunteers and others during this year's Games.

The speeches were preceded by a Dena'ina drum group, consisting of drummers William Landry, Lawrence Saboorin, Kile Krutko and

Richard Elleze. The performers treated the guests with a drum prayer, followed by "Circle dance," which received enthusiastic applause.

Yellowknife, capital of the Northwest Territories, is home to about 20,000 residents, and its main economy is gold and diamond mining.

Yellowknife was so named because of the copper knives

used by the local Dene and Chipewyan; pin replicas of the knives were given out by the 2008 Host Society during Thursday's event.

There are eight official languages in the Northwest Territories, but the five that are evident in Yellowknife are English, French, Chipewyan, Dogrib, and South and North Slavey.



Photo By Charles Pulliam

Two-year old Keely Burdine dances while Soldotna Elementary School students perform at halftime during a basketball game at Cook Inlet Academy.

Games involvement: Reasons vary; success the same

By JANICE HIGH
Ulu News

Arctic Winter Games general manager Tim Dillon likens himself to a conductor, with his orchestra made up of 2,800 volunteers. And he says he's well-aware that the motives that drove these people to devote their time to the Games varied.

"Some really identified with the spirit of the Games. Others maybe wanted something to add to their resumes. Others did it because their neighbors did. All those reasons are okay. Each member of this 'orchestra' had different sheet music; the point is that we all ended up playing in harmony."

Orchestras and conductors are not the words Will Hightower uses to characterize the Games' volunteers motive involvement.

"Doldrums," he said. "It's all about avoiding those winter doldrums. The Games gave us something to do."

For Hightower, that "something" was working as a bus driver during the Games, sometimes as a relief driver, sometimes making the city loop route. He's been driving for the Laidlaw company for about two years, and he's happy to show his various licenses and endorsements that qualify him for the job.

Hightower spent 23 years as a lead offshore oil platform operator in the oil fields, working for both Amoco and Unocal. After retiring in 1999, he tried his hand at a variety of jobs, from census taker to hotel night auditor—anything that was entertaining. Then he was approached by the Laidlaw field safety supervisor.



Photo By Janice High

To be qualified to drive for the Games, Will Hightower and other Laidlaw drivers needed credentials such as a CDL license with passenger endorsement, State air-brake certification, first aid certification and a medical clearance.

"She told me, 'Come on over. We'll give you all the entertainment you want,'" Hightower recalled. "And it's turned out to be that way."

Hightower knows there were some logistical problems in putting on the 2006 Games, but doesn't give it much thought.

"It's a success if people have fun. It's a success if we all learn something from it."

He doesn't wax eloquent as to what the Games will mean in the long-term, saying he doesn't analyze his experiences, he just enjoys them. And what about next year's doldrums, when the Games won't be here to give us something to do?

"Oh, we'll think of something. We always do."

'Release the Spirit Within' closing ceremonies to be an event to remember

By CHARLOTTE NICOLET
Ulu News

The Closing Ceremonies of the 2006 Arctic Winter Games will mark the beginning of the end of an event that will last in memories for years to come.

Unlike the Opening Ceremonies in which teams came in under their own flags and banners, the beginning of the closing ceremonies will have the flags, team signs, athletes, coaches and performers entering the Soldotna Sports Center together. Because there will be trading of uniforms, it will be hard to recognize individual teams, Arctic Winter Games 2006 general manager Tim Dillon said at Friday morning's press conference.

"It is basically a celebration, but it's a little bit more

subdued. It is a happy time but a sad time, because as soon as the games are over when AWGIC (Arctic Winter Games International Committee) President Gerry Thick declares the games closed, there will be people leaving and there have been some great friendships made," said Dillon.

The ceremonies are expected to include a slide show of the events of the past week, as well as entertainment. After brief speeches by Dillon and Host Society President Dale Bagley, the Hodgson Trophy will be presented to the team whose conduct best demonstrates "the ideals of fair play and team spirit."

The AWGIC flag will be presented to Yellowknife Mayor Gordon Van Tighem. Yellowknife, located in the

Northwest Territories, as the host of the 2008 Arctic Winter Games.

Van Tighem and Thick are expected to give speeches during the closing ceremonies, followed by more entertainment and the extinguishing of the torch and final words.

When asked what he was most proud of during the past week Dillon replied: "I'd say the spirit of the games. The growth and the can-do attitudes of these communities are second to none. "That's the thing that I'm most proud of..."

"When you have an orchestra everyone has a different sheet of music, the key is that everyone plays in harmony. I feel pretty darn good about the music that is coming out of the peninsula right now."

Up to the Minute Results

To get the current results of all the events, go to www.awg2006.org.

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Team Yukon rendezvous with a comet; spacecraft status unknown

By ROBERT BELL
Ulu News

Twelve Team Yukon youth volunteers rocketed into space from the Arctic Winter Games leaving behind their Earth-bound comrades as they toured the galaxies.

Embarking on a simulated space mission to rendezvous with a comet, the crew—ranging from 12-17 years-old—blasted off from the Challenger Learning Center of Alaska on Friday. Their safe return to the Games is still in doubt, according to a Mission Control Communications officer who asked to remain anonymous.

To begin their journey to the stars, the young astronauts assembled in the orientation room and received a short educational presentation about comets and the rendezvous mission from Flight Directors Dale Hershberger and Ron Russell.

They were then split into two groups; one proceeded to the Mission Control Center,

while the other entered the spacecraft. Each individual was assigned a duty to perform and a work station corresponding to their task. Each job is vital to the survival and safe return of the members on the spacecraft.

Teamwork and communication were two important skills that were exhibited between the two crews while trying to accomplish the five mission goals. Scratchy radio communications and several emergency situations made both outcomes challenging with the crews under intense pressure to accomplish the mission.

Near the halfway point of the mission, with alarms blaring and a flurry of commotion, the space travelers heard, "Space station, this is Mission Control. Over. We have a message for life support," said Communications officer and Inuit competitor Sam Reimer.

Continuing his directions, Reimer informed the crew: "To solve the low humidity emergency onboard the spacecraft

you need to touch the black metal bars at your station prior to touching the computer."

"Repeat please," said gymnast and spacecraft Communications officer Anna Rivard.

Repeating the directions, Reimers added to his now more urgent call, "you need to discharge static electricity, over. Situation is imminent," he voiced through the mike.

"This is an emergency, this is not a drill," exclaimed Reimer.

And with that, the crews broke out in laughter and alarms went silent with the disaster averted.

The Kenai center is one of 53 Challenger Learning Centers in the U.S, with one in the United Kingdom, and one in Toronto, Ontario.

Pending any further disasters, Team Yukon is expected to re-enter Earth's atmosphere about 6 p.m. tonight, and touch down at the Soldotna Sports Center at 7 p.m., in time for the Closing Ceremonies.



Photo By Lee Johnson

Flight Director Dale Hershberger assists Team Yukon figure skater Kayla Hollonquist with important spacecraft maneuvers during Friday's space mission. Team Yukon is expected to return from the galaxies prior to the Closing Ceremonies tonight.

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SATURDAY @ 3:00 PM
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Saturday Sports Schedule

Badminton

Soldotna Middle School, Soldotna

- 9 a.m. Juvenile Mixed Medal Rounds
- 9:45 a.m. Juvenile Male Doubles Medal Rounds
- 10:30 a.m. Junior Mixed Medal Rounds
- 11:15 a.m. Juvenile Female Doubles Medal Rounds
- 1 p.m. Junior Male Doubles Medal Rounds
- 1:45 p.m. Junior Female Doubles Medal Rounds
- 2:30 p.m. Juvenile Female Singles Medal Rounds
- 3:15 p.m. Juvenile Male Singles Medal Rounds
- 4 p.m. Junior Female Singles Medal Rounds
- 4:45 p.m. Junior Male Singles Medal Rounds
- 5:30 p.m. Medal Presentations and Badminton Closing Ceremonies



Indoor Soccer

Soldotna High School, Soldotna

- 8 a.m. Juvenile Female Bronze Medal Game
- 9 a.m. Juvenile Male Bronze Medal Game
- 10 a.m. Junior Female Gold Medal Game
- 11 a.m. Junior Male Gold Medal Game
- 12 p.m. Juvenile Female Gold Medal Game
- 1 p.m. Juvenile Male Gold Medal Game
- 2 p.m. Into. Female Gold Medal Game



The 'Spirit of the Games' remains strong as closing ceremonies near

By AKIN FRANCISCONE
Ulu News

Many people involved with the Arctic Winter Games realize that the Games are as much about kindness, honesty and hard work as they are about competition. Examples can be found nearly every day.

"After exchanging \$600 in currency, one young man lost his wallet. The wallet was returned with all of the money still in it," said Tim Dillon, general manager of the Games.

"Here's another example. The Yaml-Nenents figure skating team did not have enough skaters to compete. So other teams volunteered a skater to Team Yamal so they could participate," said Dillon.

When the vehicle trans-

porting Dylan Salvisberg's dog team from Yukon was derailed by a collision with a moose, members of competing teams loaned Dylan some of their own dogs.

"This is just another amazing event that really makes up the spirit of the games," said Dillon.

The dog team situation garnered a lot of media attention, which came as a surprise to Dylan, his father, Mark Salvisberg, and coach Shawn Fitzgerald.

"It's part of our tradition and our culture. If someone can't compete, others give up their dogs. It comes from the nature of the sport," said Mark Salvisberg.

"It's a problem-solving sport. Things happen on the

trail every single day. The dogs are like little ambassadors. They don't know about nationalities," said Fitzgerald.

"There is something very special about the participants. It does not matter where they are from; all of them have huge hearts," said Dillon.

With the closing ceremonies approaching and the cauldron still burning, the spirit of the 2006 Arctic Winter Games lives on in the hearts of all the participants, volunteers and all the people who have helped to make the games a reality. Everyone has transformed his or her vision of what can be done with some positive energy, leaving everyone a winner. On that note, one could propose a toast, "Ulus to all."

Knuckle hopping competition 'seals' end of Inuit Games

By KELLIE MASSA
Ulu News

The Inuit Games came to a close Thursday with the Open Men's knuckle hop competition. The final gathering of volunteers, spectators and participants all were in good spirits as this part of the Arctic Winter Games wound down.

The knuckle hop was at one time a way to move across the ice while hunting seal. As in the past, the men stretched out over the "ice" on their fist

and toes in a lowered push-up stance, and then they hopped across the gym floor. The crowd cheered the men on as they crabbed their way to see who could go the farthest.

Team Alaska's David S. Thomas knuckle hopped 99' 2" to win first place and the Gold Ulu.

Lots of firsts were expressed by many; "First time at the games, first time in the U.S., this has been big excitement. I've medaled in events and met lots of new people,"

Sandra Ruben, a Nunavut athlete said.

"The experience has been fantastic; fun, busy, and the athletes have been cooperative and have followed and been respectful of the rules," said Debbie Tracy, security volunteer.

The participants in this year's competition were Alaska, Alberta North, Nunavut, Northwest Territory, Nunavik-Quebec, Greenland, Yukon and Yamal.

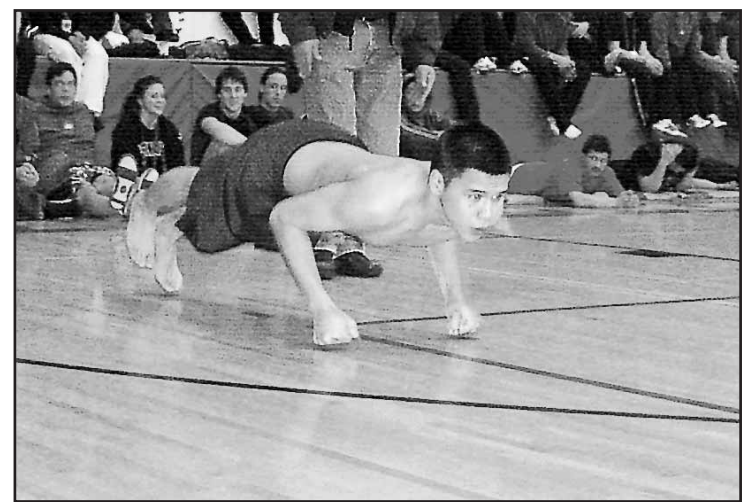


Photo By Kellie Massa

Team Alaska's Manuel Tumalak does the knuckle hop.

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Team Alaska's Kami Cabana skis to Gold Ulu...every day

By KELLY SPRINGER
Ulu News

Kami Cabana didn't set out to be an international skiing champion; it was something that came naturally to her, just like her ability to shred the slopes.

Growing up in Girdwood, Alaska, home of the world famous Alyeska Resort, Cabana never showed the desire to ski. But her younger brother did, according to her mother, Bari Cabana.

So she enrolled both in the Alyeska "Mighty Mites" program for children, and that's all it took. The younger Cabana now skis four and five days a week in the winter and it shows. The teen has placed sixth in the state championships for the giant slalom this year, and third in the slalom.

Those were just practice sessions for Cabana, as she won the Gold Ulu each day in each event she competed in at the 2006 Games: the slalom, giant slalom and the dual slalom.

Her drive to do her personal best has carried her through injuries like a recent torn ligament in her thumb at the beginning of the season. Her mother says she was in a brace for six weeks and missed out on the first three races of the season, like the Coca-Cola Classic.

When Cabana is on the skiing slopes, it is easy to forget she is only fifteen. Off the course, however, her shy grin and short answers to questions

say that she is still not used to interviews.

She had better practice that along with her skiing, because as it has been proven before, Girdwood is the breeding ground of Olympic champions like Tommy Moe and Rosey Fletcher.

Kami Cabana just might be the next athlete's name added to the list.



Photo By Kelly Springer

Northwest Territories faces off against the Team Yukon hockey team Friday morning to determine the winner of AWG Bronze Ulu in bantam men's hockey

Team Yukon powers through longer periods to ice hockey Gold Ulu

By STAR MCGLASSON
Ulu News

Team Yukon's bantam hockey team won the Bronze Ulu in a playoff game against Northwest Territories with a final score of 5-1 on Friday.

Fatigue and injuries were evident during the game and could be attributed to the longer periods played during the medal rounds that have NHL-length, 20-minute periods compared to the normal 15-minute periods played earlier in the week. As a result, these games are typically more physically challenging and exhausting.

"Pretty tired" is how Darren Van Langen, Yukon assistant coach, described his team after their bronze win. Van Langen is coaching in his first Arctic Winter Games in his first year of coaching.

"They hit hard, worked hard, never gave up," said Van Langen about the NWT team. "I think we were in better shape; we've played in quite a few tournaments over the year and showed it by keeping strong in the end," added Van Langen.

"Call it a confidence thing, especially with the lack of offense and now two injuries," said Gregg Rowe, Northwest Territories head coach, explaining his team's upsetting loss to Yukon. "Yukon was pretty strong much of the week," he added.

"We didn't have the intensity after losing a tough game yesterday," said Rowe, recalling how his team was up 3-1 until the third period in a game against Team Yukon Thursday night when Yukon came roaring back, scoring four goals and winning 5-3.



Photo By Kelly Springer

Friday Event Results

Due to the volume of finishing events on Friday, the Ulu News was unable to process all of the event result information before our press deadline. For complete Arctic Winter Games event results please see:

www.awg2006.org



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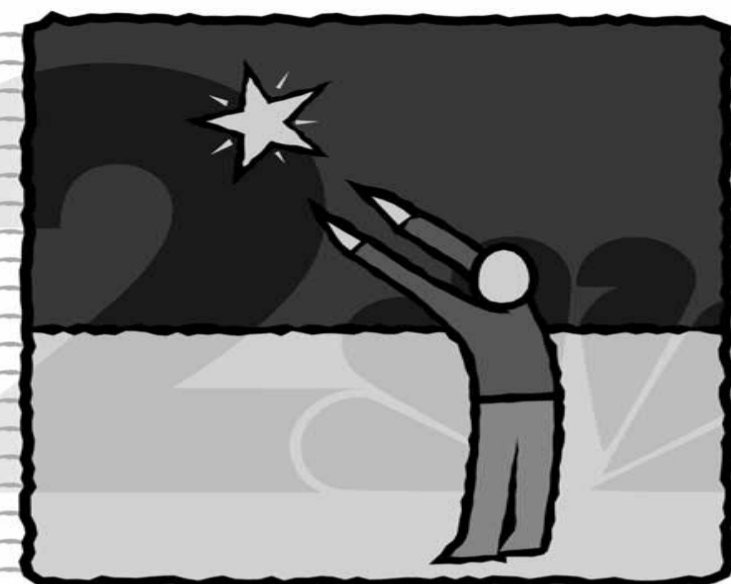
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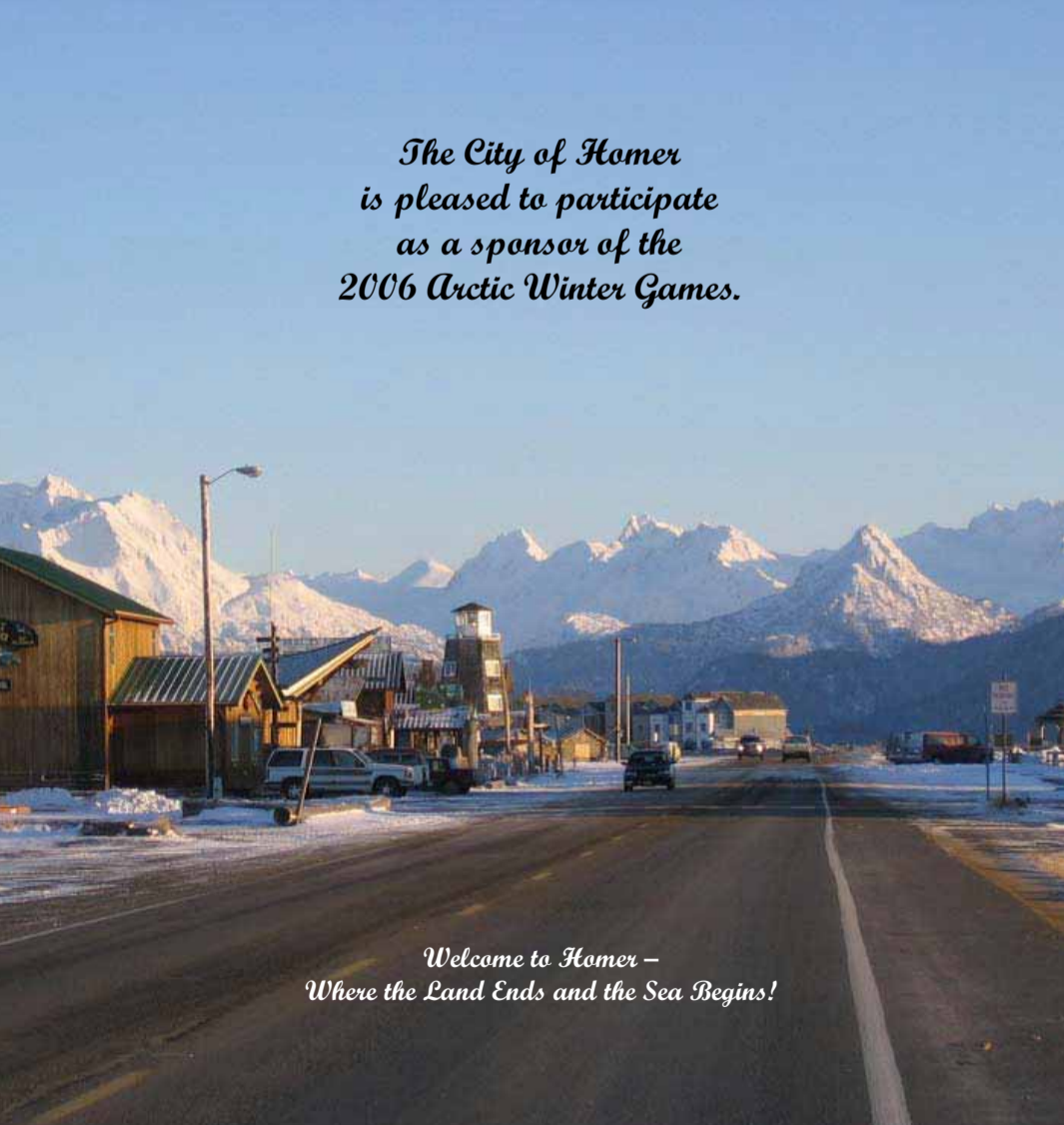
Over the last decade, Soldotna has increasingly become a hub of business and visitor activity. Several malls and clusters of stores, banks, restaurants and offices form the commercial district. Vacant land and undeveloped property are available for business expansion and new ventures within the area.

The people of the City of Soldotna are brought together many times throughout the year by participating in many of our community events.



For more information on how to enjoy life in Soldotna contact the Soldotna Visitor Information Center at 262-1337 or www.soldotnachamber.com

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Last day to buy Alaska-made handiwork, art at AWG Craft Fair

By RHONDA LARSON
Ulu News

While Alaskan-made crafts at their best have been available at the Arctic Winter Games Craft Fair since Thursday, participants and spectators better hurry to get their souvenirs before departing for the far reaches of the circumpolar north after Saturday's Closing Ceremonies.

Twenty booths line the fair exhibiting a wide array of superbly made crafts, art and handiwork. Featured items include beaded jewelry, hand-made scarves, fur hats, gloves and pillows, stained glass art, smoke-tanned moose hide moccasins, intricately carved woodwork, along with a variety of other items.

Alaskan Eskimo Artwork's Lenwood Saccheus is originally from Elim, Alaska, "a check-point on the Iditarod," he said. His beautiful Eskimo hunter spirit mask is made from soapstone, whalebone, ivory, baleen, feathers and wood. Edna Saccheus' lovely seal skin dressed dolls with ivory faces are also available.

Alaska Tribal Cache of Seldovia boasts an excellent selection of Alaskan picked and made berry products.

"The blueberries and Salmonberries were exceptional this year," said Kris Burt. A



Photo By Rhonda Larson

Rick Scott carving a Wood duck at the Arctic Winter Games craft fair being held at the old Carrs Mall, near Sears, in Kenai.

sample of blueberry jelly proved that to be true. They offer gift boxes that include an Alutiiq Berry Picker in a Bidarka handmade ornament, Alaska tea and a choice of berry products.

Games' volunteers staff a "Kid Zone" booth where youngsters can color, do crafts and play while parents shop. A concession stand offers refreshments and local musicians entertain patrons throughout the day. The fair runs from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. today at the old Carrs Mall, near Sears, in Kenai



Photo By Courtney Proctor

Skaters from Team Yamal and Team Alberta North joined together to capture the Gold Ulu in the Team Competition. Back Row: Arcacia Miller and Kayla Spragg of Team Alberta North, and Tatyana Borisova of Team Yamal. Front Row: Suneeta Whiteside of Team Alberta North and Viktoria Lobanova of Team Yamal.

History in the making: First-ever combined teams skate to Gold Ulu

By COURTNEY PROCTOR
Ulu News

Figure skaters from Team Alberta North and Team Yamal proved they know what the Arctic Winter Games are about when they made history Thursday night.

Yamal's two skaters joined the six athletes from Alberta North to compete as a team in the Team Competition. Not only that, they walked away with the Gold Ulu.

"To my knowledge, this is the first time something like this has happened in the history of the Games," said Kathy Moore, Figure Skating chair. "Two teams joining together

to make sure everybody can compete."

To compete in the team competition, there must be at least four, and no more than eight skaters. Each team performs the same elements, and the team with the overall strongest scores wins. Team Yamal only had two skaters, so they approached Alberta North, who has six skaters, about joining together.

"All the teams agreed. It made the most sense," said Deborah Antypowich, Team Alberta North's coach. Despite the enthusiasm of the skaters, the decision to allow the teams to combine rested with head figure skating official, Pam Chislett. Chislett

agreed, and history was made.

Both teams' skaters had become friends earlier in the Games. According to Cheryl Luken, a coach with Team Alberta North, the skaters began to bond on the very first day. "We have rooms across the hall from the Yamal skaters, and the girls sat down in the hall together and got to know each other."

"Right after our arrival, we used gestures to get to know each other," said Tatyana Borisova of Team Yamal. "Now we have taught them a little Russian, and they taught us some English."

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Team Sami marks second Games by winning Ulu, showing team spirit

By AARON YANKEY
Ulu News

This year marks just the second time the Sami people have participated in the Arctic Winter Games and it likely won't be their last if team spirit and the 16 Ulu—four of them Gold—as of Thursday, is any indication.

Sami people call northern Scandinavia home and may live in Sweden, Norway, Finland or Russia. Their first appearance was at the Games held in Wood Buffalo, Canada.

This year they competed in sports such as cross country skiing, snowshoeing and biathlon. As they did at the 2004 Games, they sent along a cultural group this year as well.

The Sami culture group was at Skyview High School on Friday in Soldotna to cheer on their skiers. As their skiers passed the crowd, the group would drum and chant something only their athletes would understand.

"It's very nice and fun to be here," said Rolf Morten, one of the Sami drummers. "I get to meet nice people."

Morten likes all the different people here and said "The Greenlanders are very nice; we live in the same room."

Lill Therese, also in the Sami cultural group, participated in the last Games and says she can appreciate this one more because she's older.



Photo By Aaron Yankey

Rolf Morten, a member of the Sami culture group, plays his drum at a cross country skiing event at Skyview High School on Friday.

The housing situation is different here than it was in Wood Buffalo since they are living with other cultural contingents and can interact with them at Kenai Central High School.

"It's nice because we get

to meet all the other culture groups," she said.

The Sami may only have 41 participants in the Games but that doesn't stop them from showing off tremendous amounts of team spirit and winning Ulu, too.

Yukon girls, Alaska boys win Bronze Ulu in basketball

By CHARLES PULLIAM
Ulu News

The Yukon girls basketball team overcame foul trouble and injuries to beat Nunavut 75-63 in the Junior Female Bronze Ulu game at Cook Inlet Academy on Friday.

Also Friday, the Alaska boys notched a bronze finish after a convincing 118-64 win over Nunavut.

"It's a great finish to the season and I think we are satisfied with our play," Yukon girls' player Janna Tait said.

Tait finished with 17 points for Yukon while Noria Deacon pitched in 13 points in the win.

"We ran into foul trouble and then two players couldn't play because of ankle injuries, and another had a problem with her shooting hand," Yukon coach Mark Hureau said. "They [Nunavut] had some very good shooters. After being tied at the half, I think our huge height advantage bailed us out."

For Nunavut, Melissa Aknaviagak finished with a game-high 24 points.

In the boys' game, Alaska drained 13-of-31 3-pointers en route to a 2006 Arctic Winter Games basketball scoring high of 118 points while securing the Bronze Ulu for Junior Male competition.

Alaska's Kyle Fossman poured in 34 points in the victory, including 12-of-13 free-throw

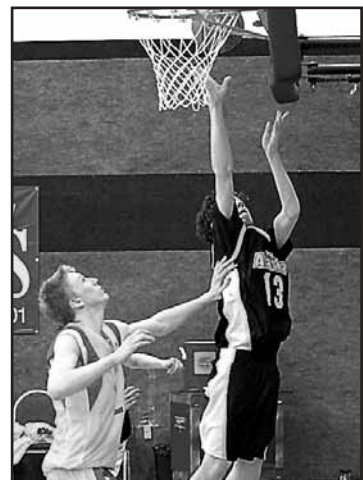


Photo By Lee Johnson

Michael Pate of Team Alaska goes up for a lay-up in front of Nunavut's Sam Carter.

shooting and sinking four 3-pointers.

"Kyle (Fossman) was a great leader... leadership was very big for us," Alaska coach Mike Adams said. "All these boys have never played together and only two of them are from the same community so to play together and not get frustrated is very neat."

Jonathan Mazzella scored 24 points for Alaska and Jeremy Head added 18 points in the win.

Nunavut's Sam Carter and Peter Ohokak paced Nunavut with 17 points apiece.

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Welcome to All & Good Luck to the Athletes!

An interview with Gerry Thick, President of the Arctic Winter Games International Committee

By Katherine Wells
Ulu News

Involved with the Arctic Winter Games since 1984, Gerry Thick, has been the president of the International Committee since 1996, and has been overseeing various responsibilities of the Games throughout the week. The Ulu News was able to catch up with him on Thursday and asked him about this year's Games and what they mean to him.

Ulu News: Why are you involved with the Arctic Winter Games?

Thick: "Because it's exciting." He added that the Games give people from across the North a chance to get involved in the games competition and share their cultures.

Ulu News: What has been your biggest challenge with the 2006 Arctic Winter Games?

Thick: "That's a hard question. Probably the biggest challenge for me personally has been the travel." President Thick lives in Whitehorse, Yukon Territories, Canada. He said if he were to fly here from home he would have to first land in Seattle before flying to Alaska. "I end up choosing to drive here most of the time. That's a long ways. We've been here about seven or eight times since 2004. It's a 15-16 hour drive."

Ulu News: What has been your biggest joy of the Arctic

Winter Games?

Thick: "I have two joys. One was when I saw all those youth marching into the opening ceremonies. It was a good opening ceremonies...a great opening ceremonies. My other joy is going around to the different venues and teams. Talking to these kids and seeing if they're having a good time. I haven't met any that have said they aren't having a good time."

Ulu News: What has been your biggest disappointment?

Thick: "I don't really think I have any big disappointments. I only see and concentrate on what the results are. And the results are that these kids come here to this community and they have a great Arctic Winter Games experience. The other thing I like to see is that the volunteers have a good Arctic Winter Games experience. The ones I have talked to are all having a good experience. It's all part of the program."

Ulu News: How will the 2008 Games differ from the 2006 Games?

Thick: "The 2008 games will differ because it's a smaller community hosting the events. There won't be as much travel in the community. The terrain and scenery are different."

Ulu News: What has the International Society learned from the 2006 Games?

Thick: There have been a couple of little things. Although the community has

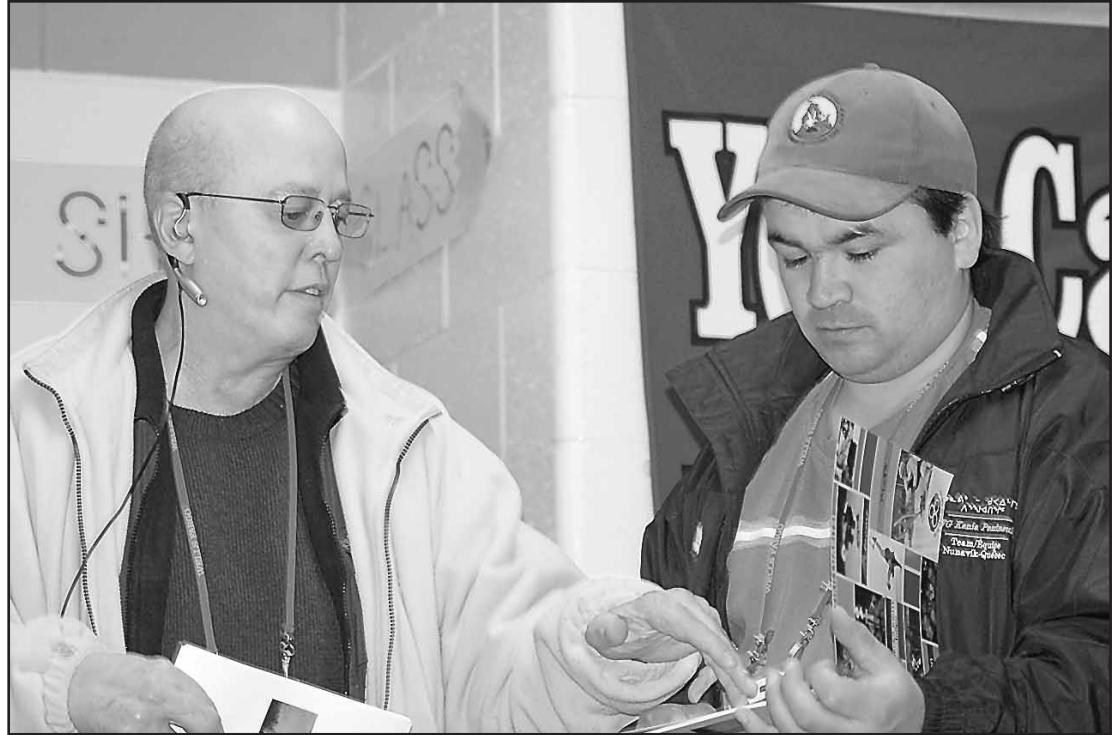


Photo By Katherine Wells

President Gerry Thick and Frankie Gordon, Chef De Mission of Nunavik, Quebec, discuss the 2006 Arctic Winter Games on the Kenai Peninsula.

done really well in the transportation area, the length of time it takes to go to Alyeska and the amount of time those kids have to travel might be a little long. In saying that though, those kids had a great experience on that hill. And just for an example: most of the Alpine Skiing is over Thursday, there's only snowboarding happening, and those skiers want to go out skiing again on Friday too. That tells you that even with the travel, it's not that bad."

Ulu News: Why was the Kenai Peninsula chosen for the 2006 Arctic Winter Games?

Thick: "The Kenai Peninsula was chosen because they submitted the best bid for the games. The bidding process in Alaska was that com-

munities submitted bids. My committee evaluated the three bids and in that evaluation process my committee chose what they felt was the best bid. I think it was a good choice. I think it's great that the games are on the Peninsula because we have been able to expand the experience of the Arctic

Winter Games to Alaska. A lot of Alaskans previously didn't know about the games. Now that they've been involved they're going to want their kids to have the opportunity to participate in the Arctic Winter Games, whether its involvement in the trials, volunteering or the actual games."

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Can-do spirit guides organizers of 2006 and 2008

Arctic Winter Games

By JANICE HIGH
Ulu News

As the organizers of the 2006 Arctic Winter Games bring their duties to a close, the 2008 team is eager to step forward. Both groups addressed challenges during the closing days of the current Games.

Friday morning's cold temperatures—minus 20 degrees in Soldotna—resulted in frozen water pipes at Sears Elementary School, one of the athlete resident villages. To allow those young people the opportunity for hot morning showers, they were bused to Kenai Central High School to use the facilities there. Problem solved.

Not such a quick solution for a geography reality facing the organizers of the 2008 Games in Yellowknife, Northwest Territories. That reality is that Yellowknife sits in the middle of expansive and beautiful—but flat—tundra. Alpine skiing, one of the major sporting events of the Games requires mountains, or at least big hills. It was an issue addressed at Friday's media briefing by Cathie Bolstad, president of the 2008 Games Host Society.

"Well, there's never been a challenge too big to take on," she said.

The details on how mountains would be brought to the

competitors or how competitors would be brought to mountains are yet to be worked out. Meanwhile, Bolstad focused on the unique opportunities Yellowknife can present.

"The vastness of our tundra landscape provides an

incredible scene. We'll even offer nighttime dog sled rides out on the tundra, for viewing of the aurora borealis. And Yellowknife is the diamond capital of North America, so there will be mines and polishing facilities to visit."

Mountains and diamonds

are not, according to Bolstad, the focus of the preparation for the 2008 Games.

"We want to keep the Games special, to remind us of where we came from; our roots in our sports, and our roots in our culture."



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