

# Ahkiviana sets new world record in one foot high kick

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of age. For example, the first night started out with the 18-25-year-old men and women. The next group to compete is the 26-30-year-old adults, and so on until age 66. The last age group to perform are the "66 and up" group. Generally the older adults are the most enjoyable to watch.

The highlight of the games

for prizes is the one-and-two-foot high kick. Because the adult 18-25 age group can kick the highest, more than the usual number of people attend this event. A one foot high kick of 8'4½" was attained by Forrest Ahkiviana Jr., claimed by the judges to be a new world record. CONGRATULATIONS, FORREST!!

After the adult games for

prizes, the married versus single competition begins. This competition has two categories: men and women. The singles compete against the married participants in each category. During this competition only traditional games are played. No prizes are awarded to the contestants, but the people enjoy these more because one can cheer for his own team, either the marrieds

or the singles.

The married versus single competition started with the little-finger pull for men and the middle-finger pull for the women. The loser of the event must choose what the next event will be. For example, in the women's category, Rachel Anahugak won the middle finger pull event for the married women's team. Therefore, the

single women strategically chose the next event and won as a result.

The winner of the event is determined by which team hopped the farthest or defeated the most. Paul Bodfish defeated 20 single men in the Body-Yo-Yo event and won it for the married men's team. The contestants grapple in the center of the room, and when no further contestants of the losing team challenge the defender the winning team counts to ten out loud and says "HEEE!" to close the event. The countdown is a final challenge to the losers to send a contender out to the center.

Prizes were given to the first, second and third place winners; children received \$20 for first, \$10 for second, and \$5 for third place. Adults received \$30, \$20 and \$10. These prizes were used to coax contestants onto the floor.

Robert Aiken Jr. said "\$30 for first prize, that's a lot of hot dogs." About \$20,000 total

was distributed in cash prizes during the Christmas games. The persons awarding prize money and keeping track of who won were Robert Aiken Jr., Steve Gatten and Rosie Habeich. Serving as line judges were Johnny Adams, Beverly Ahgeak, Harry Kaleak, Margaret Opie and Clayton Sanders.

These games have been played since time immemorial. According to Harold Kaveolook, the Inupiat played traditional games in the winter when "the days were short and the hunting was not very good." During these times the people gather in "Qargi" or community halls to play games and do other activities.

The games were played more rough before modern day conveniences, such as crash-mats were brought North. Johnny Adams told of seeing one man knocked unconscious because he landed so hard on the floor. "It used to be a little bloody. Strength and endurance were the name of the game," said Johnny.

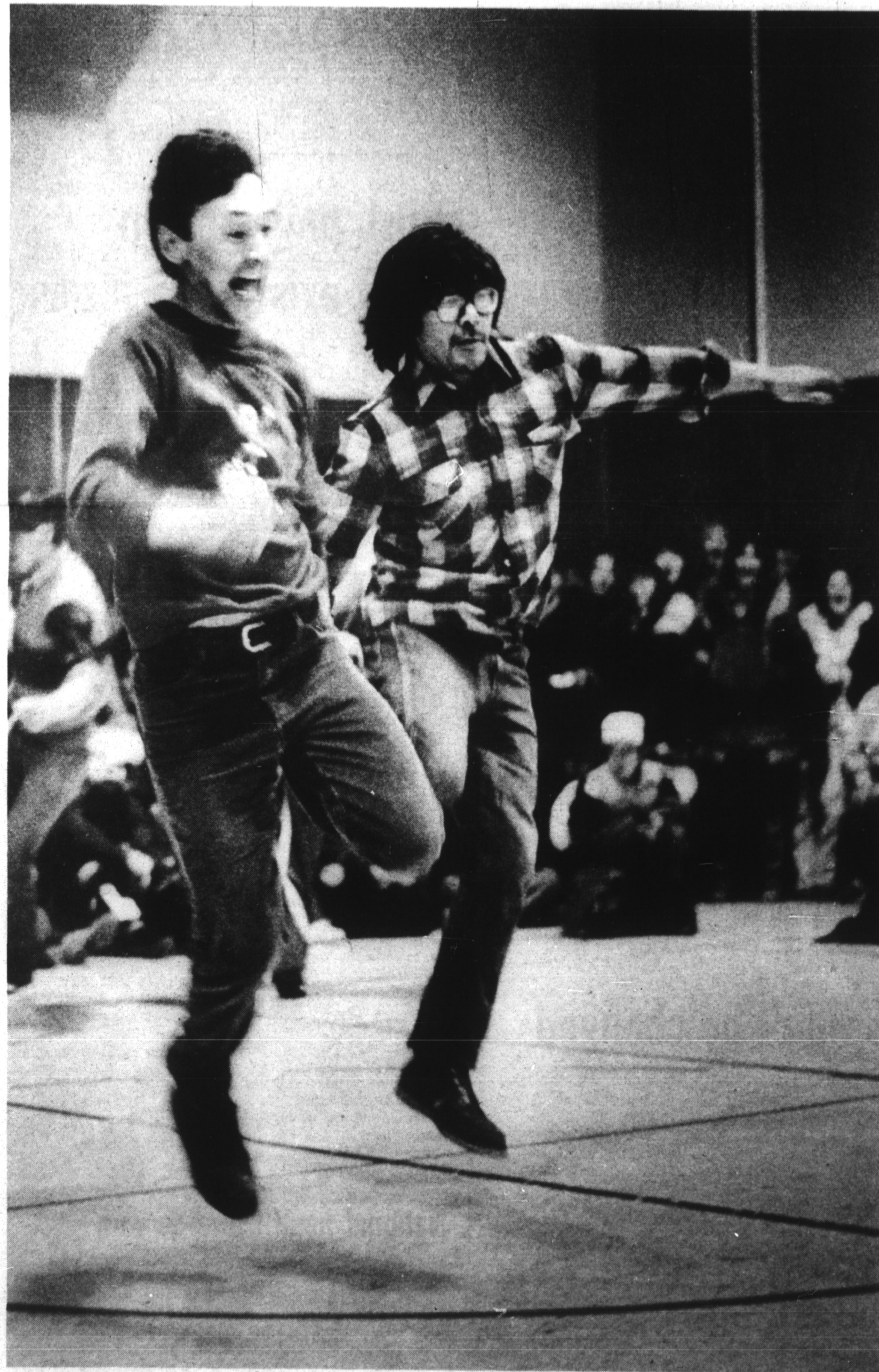
In addition to these rough

games, the young people would be taught survival skills, how to hunt, and how to fabricate tools and weapons. Dances in the "Qargi" would also be held.

Married versus single competition has always existed, but having games for prizes has only existed since the 1930's, said Harold Kaveolook. And the prizes awarded back then were materials, clothes, and food. It was not until the Navy came to Barrow during World War II that cash existed in amounts large enough to serve as prize money.

The games were not always held during the Christmas week, but were held whenever terrible weather or poor game conditions existed. The introduction of religion to the Inupiat people caused a natural correlation of the outsiders' Christmas celebration and the Inupiat game celebrations.

"Every year people celebrate New Year — and this is how we do it," said Vera Kanayurak.



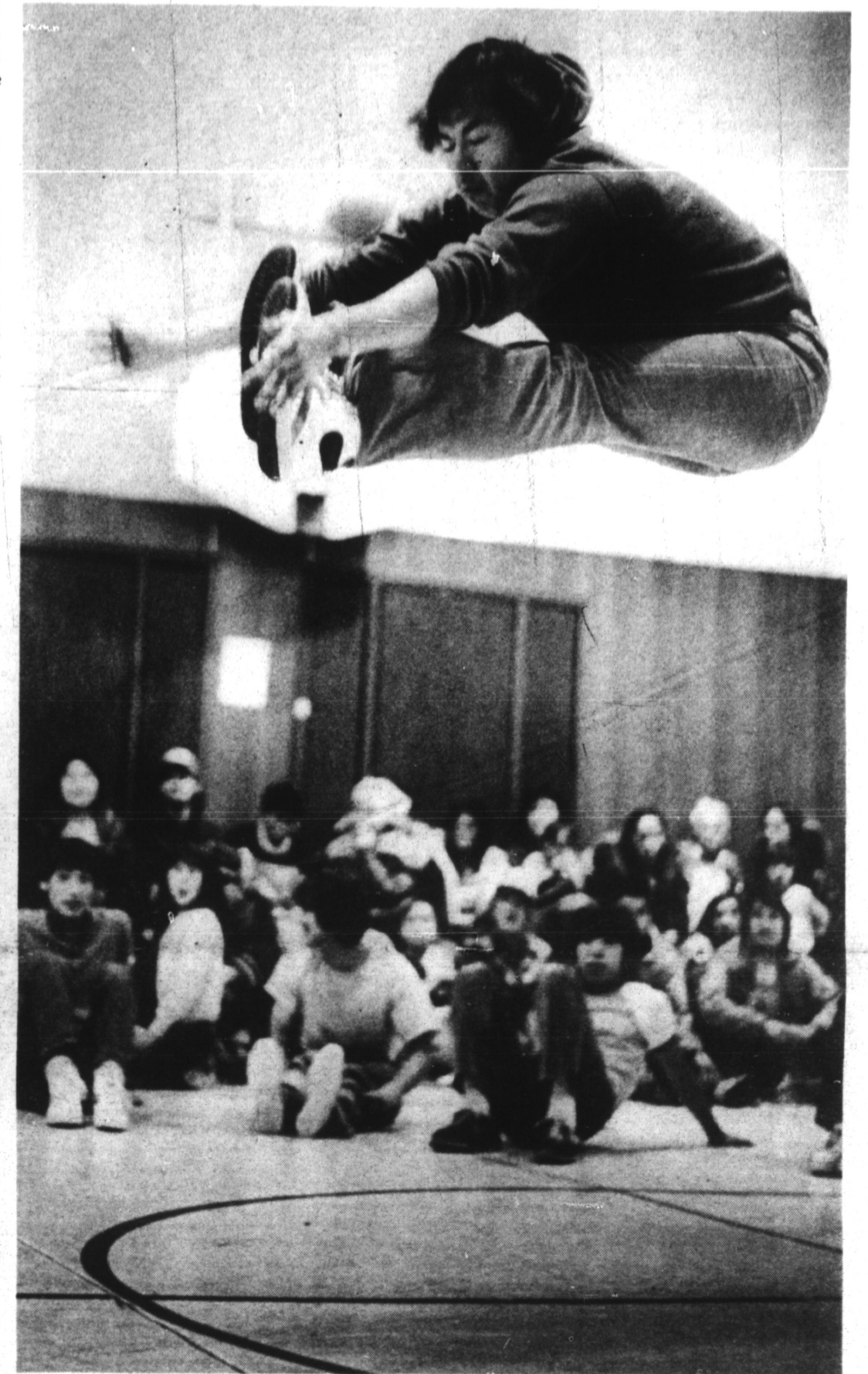
William Leavitt and Stanley Nusunginya sprint toward the finish in a one-legged race.



A young winner collects her prize money.



Arthur Sakeagak and Johnny Adams try to best each other in a finger pull event.



A young athlete goes high in the two-foot high kick.



Maria Ahgeak, (left to right) Flora Ekkowanna, Rhoda Nageak, Flora Ayagak, Mamie Matumeak and Irene Itta (behind) get ready to go.

PHOTOS BY JEFFREY MAUPIN