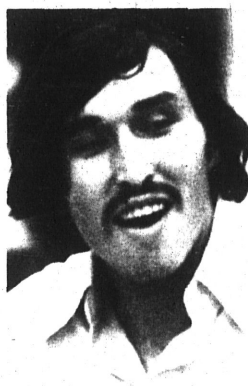


OOSIK SURPRISES TV HOST



FIVE THOUSAND MILE KICK — Lester Bodfish went up 8 feet to win the One Foot High-Kick and in so doing won a five thousand mile trip to Los Angeles and the "Johnny Carson Show".



LESTER BODFISH



LAURA BERGT

TOP ESKIMO-INDIAN ATHLETES ON "TONIGHT" SHOW

By LAURA BERGT

Thanks to the frantic efforts of Frank Murphy of Tundra Times and Craig Tennis of the Johnny Carson Show to have five of us appear on the Tonight Show with Johnny Carson this week, a chauffer in Los Angeles knows that people in Alaska do, indeed, speak English and quite well.

Reggie Joule of Kotzebue; Roger Kunuyak, Fairbanks; Les Bodfish of Wainwright, Fred Titus of Minto and I dashed out to the airport Monday afternoon and finally reached Los Angeles at 6:00 a.m. Tuesday morning after flying all night. We were met at the airport by a chauffer, in uniform, driving a beautiful black cadillac.

Our chauffer joined the crowd's curious stare at our baggage which included the high kick stand. Driving to the hotel, our chauffer informed us that his company had driven celebrities, foreign ambassadors, and people such as John and Martha Mitchell (we glanced around to see if there was a telephone in the car.)

Later in the afternoon, the studio dispatched another chauffer to pick us up in another beautiful black cadillac. We introduced ourselves in the lobby and chatted for a few minutes. Then all of a sudden, he burst out laughing and shook his head. He said that the studio told him to pick this group from Alaska up and deliver us to the studio and that, in all probability, we could not speak English and if he had any trouble communicating with us, he was to call this special number. He added "What the heck, you speak English better than I do." We thought it was hilarious.

After rehearsal, we were taken to individual dressing rooms. We were quite impressed with all this—even our names were on the doors. After being shown our dressing rooms, our crewman asked us to report to the makeup room. The boys laughed

(Editor's Note . . . On July 30, two days after the official 1973 World Eskimo-Indian Olympics ended in Fairbanks, a group of four outstanding athletes and their unofficial "ambassadors", Laura Bergt, were whisked aboard a jet bound for an appearance on the Johnny Carson Show in Los Angeles.

In the last-minute send-off, the crises included: talking airline officials into letting the high-kick stand go as luggage, boxing a set of ear weights, and rushing five Olympics jackets to the airport in time for take-off.

In the frantic scramble, one athlete, Fred Titus, was left behind and had to catch a later flight. Since the three athletes picked by the judges were all Eskimo competitors, money was raised on the very last day for Fred to accompany them so that Indian games could also be demonstrated.

Money for Fred's transportation was provided by George Bell on behalf of Bering Straits Regional Corporation, Frank Murkowski of the Alaska National Bank, Jerry Smetzer and Greg Thies of the Fairbanks Town and Village Association, Frank Murphy of the Tundra Times, and Chris Anderson for the World Eskimo-Indian Olympics Committee.

Laura Bergt gives a lively account of the group's adventures in television land.)

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Oosik Surprises TV Host ...

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thinking it was a big joke but soon found themselves sitting in the makeup chair having makeup applied and looking somewhat sheepish. After all, they were very strong men, having broken records during the the 1973 World Eskimo-Indian Olympics which tested their strength and endurance to pain.

After makeup, we had some time to rest for an hour or wander around the NBC studios. Right next to our dressing rooms, Red Fox (of the Sanford & Sons TV show) had his and we enjoyed chatting with him; he invited us to watch him rehearse his show. Other celebrities we saw were Dean Martin, Jerry Lewis, Dom DeLuise, and a few others.

Finally, it was show time. The boys and I chatted briefly about how I was to present the very special and unique Alaskan gift to Johnny Carson, which had been hurriedly given to me at the airport in Fairbanks. This gift was generously donated by Marie Olsen of the Alaska Native Arts & Crafts Cooperation. The problem was still unresolved when I was introduced first and had to appear from behind the curtain carrying this gift with me. I thought "Oh no, now what?" I shook hands with Johnny Carson and his sidekick, Ed McMahon, and sat down. We chatted and I briefed them on Alaska, the Olympics, and Tundra Times.

While we were talking, I was frantically trying to think of how I was going to present him with his gift. THEN the moment arrived and I blurted out that I had a very special unique Alaskan gift for him and empha-

sized that this was an artifact called a walrus oosik. I hoped he would say "thank you" and ask more questions about Alaska. He didn't. He picked it up, said "Thank you -- is this a walrus tusk?"

I looked at him, hoping that the horror in my eyes didn't show, and thought of the approximately 300 people sitting in the audience and wondered whose bright idea this was. I took a deep breath and said "No, this artifact is a walrus male reproductive organ."

The expression on his face was priceless, I'm sure my face was red and the whole crowd burst out laughing. Needless to say, everything said after that brought the house down. However, I was able to explain that it was used for years and years as a club, cribbage boards, and had other uses. In the meantime, behind the curtain, Reggie, Roger, Les and Freddie were rolling on the floor, laughing their heads off.

We introduced the boys who performed the games beautifully including the high kick, elbow walk, knuckle hop, ear pull, ear weight and drop-the-bomb contest. Johnny did exceptionally well with the elbow walk, beat Freddie in the ear pull, picked up 5 pounds with his ear in the ear weight, beat Reggie in the Indian stick pull, and tried "drop the bomb" but couldn't get off the floor. We were on the show for approximately twenty to thirty minutes.

We were taken to the special "Green Room" which is for guests and watched the rest of the show which included the guest appearance of Ricardo

Montalban, the famous hand some movie star. We chatted with him and others after the show and answered more questions about Alaska.

All in all, the trip for us was hilarious and exciting. The boys charmed everyone with our unique games and sports and I'm sure that Johnny Carson will always be overwhelmed with his special gift from Alaska.