

Maggie and Chris Entertain



BEATING THE DRUM AT CONVENTION — Maggie Lind and Nick Chris entertain delegates to the State Democratic Convention held in Fairbanks last week. Listening to the traditional Eskimo songs and dances, little children, party regulars, Ad Hoc delegates, Eskimo and Indian,

old and young, all gathered around in a rare moment of pure enjoyment as the Bethel couple performed in both Yupik and English. Proceeds from the performance helped pay expenses of Native delegates from their district.

— Photo by FRANK MURPHY

By JACQUELINE GLASGOW
Staff Writer

"We should all be one people. I sing both the English and Yupik."

Maggie Lind and Nick Chris of Bethel personified a spirit that was much in need at the state Democratic convention held in Fairbanks last week.

Performing informally in the main lounge area at Wood Center, Nick, playing the drum, and Maggie, singing and dancing, attracted a large crowd that cut through all political differences.

Delegates gathered around, sitting on the floor or standing in a semi-circle as the Bethel couple performed an ancient and beautiful Eskimo chant.

The audience was spell-bound as the strong drum beat sounded and Maggie's expressive hands and body moved in graceful patterns. They wore bright yellow summer parkas with headpieces of wolf and wolverine.

Small children and grown-

ups, Ad Hocs and party regulars, Natives and non-Natives, all leaned forward in rapt attention as Maggie performed a story-song about a bird who flapped his wings and flew away. In her hands she held fans made of woven reeds, ptarmigan tails and goose wings.

After several traditional Eskimo songs, Maggie began to sing "You Are My Sunshine", first in Yupik, then in English, with the crowd joining in on the English portion.

Maggie and Nick would then go right from the old Eskimo chants to "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star," or "Row, Row, Row Your Boat" in both languages.

Orphaned at the age of seven, Maggie was raised in a Moravian orphanage, where she seems to have acquired, along with her education, an immense joy in life.

Her husband's father was the first white man in Bethel and acted as interpreter between the

missionaries and the Eskimos.

In much the same way, Maggie Lind and Nick Chris acted as interpreters to the convention, their music forming a bridge across the cultures and uniting the delegates for at least a fleeting interlude.