

# Chevak dancers get best seat in house

By Jennifer Gordon  
Tundra Times reporter

Out of the thousands of people who turned out to see President Bush at Elmendorf Air Force Base on Wednesday, the Chevak Dancers probably had the best seat in the house — on stage.

"I got to shake Bush's hand," said Franklin Matchian, leader of the Native dance group. Matchian and the six other members of the group danced for the president and Barbara Bush before Bush made his speech.

Matchian said that before he went on stage his heart was pounding, but that once he was up there he calmed down and enjoyed the event.

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Bush's hand.'*

*—Franklin Matchian*

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Xavier Noratok, another member of the Chevak dancers, said he wasn't as lucky as Matchian. He said he tried to shake Bush's hand, but the president turned around as he was about to do so. Noratok said he shook the first lady's hand instead.

"I just can't describe it," said Noratok, when he was asked to tell what it was like to stand in front of thousands of people with the president.

The Chevak dancers came to Anchorage not only for the president's speech, but to perform in the Glasnost Folkfest that was held Friday night at the Performing Arts Center in Anchorage.

While Matchian said they did not get to spend much time with the delegation of 90 Soviets in Alaska last week,



*Franklin Matchian, a member of the Chevak dancers, center, greets President George Bush and Barbara Bush.*

he and the others learned about Soviet life first-hand three years ago. The Chevak dancers toured the Soviet Union in 1986 with Camai, a group

of performing artists from Alaska. Camai is Yupik for "hello."

Matchian said his first impression of the Soviet Union is that it was sun-

ny. He said that Americans hear such gloomy things about the Soviet way of life, that he just expected it to be cloudy.

