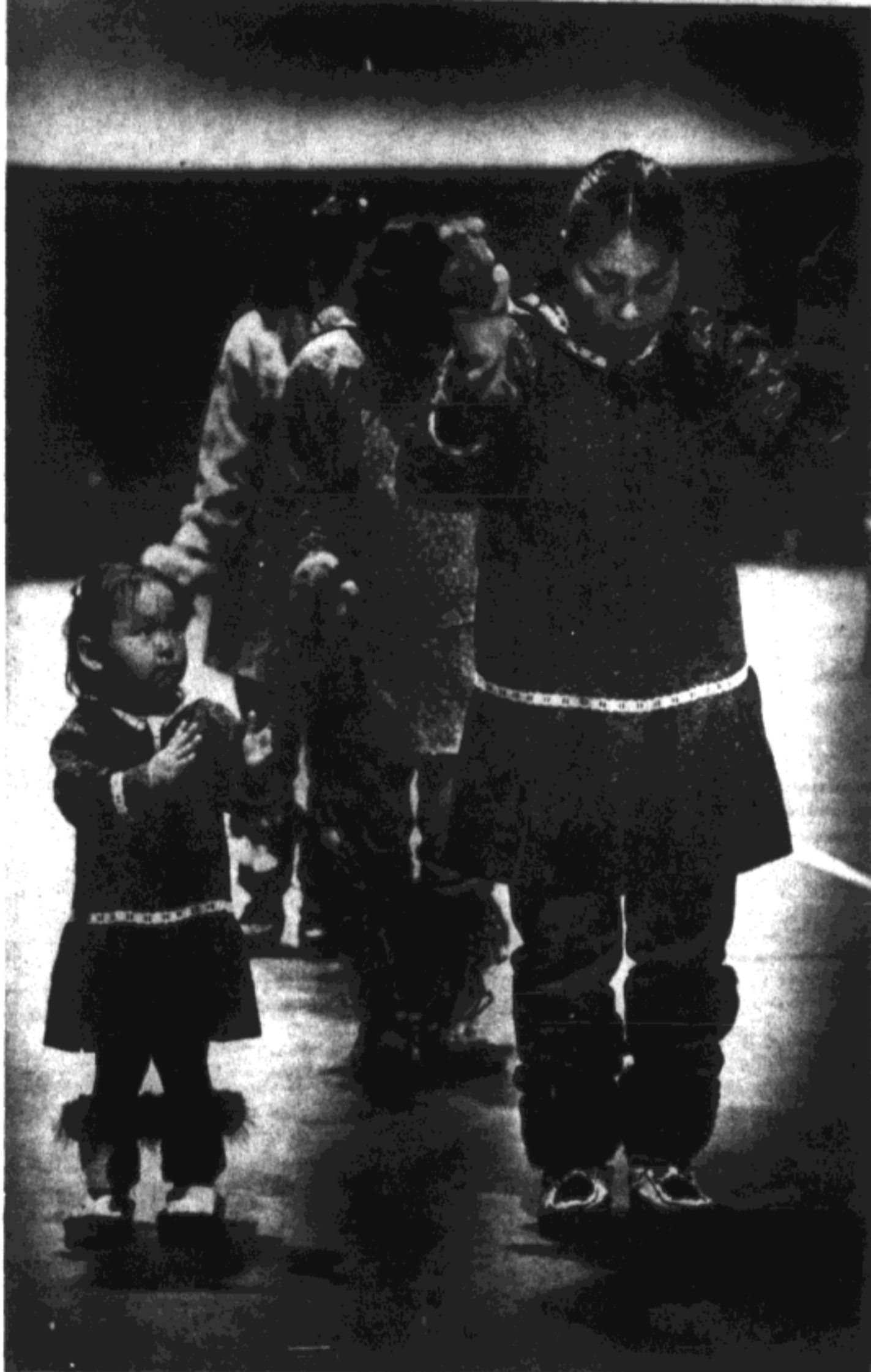




At last year's Northwest Native Trade Fair, Charlie Jensen and his wife, Lucy, won best man and wife dancers. Lucy has since died, and Charlie is now in a wheelchair; yet the spirit is still there, as Charlie proves here by dancing enthusiastically in this year's trade fair. More Photos on Page 3

PHOTO BY BILL HESS



Two year old Trina Kowunna dances alongside her mother, Dolly.

Photos by Bill Hess



Alvey and Virginia Shagload, share a quick embrace after their dance performance. The two were named "best man and wife" dancers. In team performance, Kotzebue won first, Nome, second, and Wainwright, third.

History comes alive

By BILL HESS

Tundra Times

An old tradition which once appeared dead proved itself full of renewed life as more than 2,000 participants gathered in Kotzebue earlier this month to participate in the Northwest Native Trade Fair.

The fair held annually for hundreds of years prior to the arrival of white men in Alaska, but fell by the wayside as Western civilization pressed its way into the land of the Inupiat.

This year, just as in times

past, Inupiat from Barrow to Nome and Savoonga gathered to compete in traditional games and dancing, to buy each others goods, and eat each others foods.

"I really like it here," said David Kagak of Wainwright as he sat in a stiff Arctic wind with his wife, Kay Francis, eating a small portion of the beluga and howhead muktuk, reindeer stew, salmon, sheetfish and other delicacies prepared for the visitors to the fair. "You get to see your friends, and Native people. I wanted to see what was going on in the past, what kind of things we Eskimos were doing. It's really good."

Maynard Morris, 17, participated with the first-place winning dance team, the Northern Lights Dancers of Kotzebue. "The old people told me to follow my own way," he spoke of his reasons for learning to dance.

Carol Pete, his friend, praised the concept of holding the trade fair. "It brings our spirit values together," she said, "to show what kind of feelings we have inside of us. It makes us feel happy. Good."

For Jeanie Thompson, coordinator, the fair was a lot of work. She had to oversee the organization of volunteer workers, make sure that the dance teams coming in from Barrow, Wainwright, Point Lay, Nome and Savoonga were properly cared for.

John Schaeffer, president of NANA Regional Corp. praised this year's event as being the best organized since the fair was re-established in 1979. "The first year, it was like something new, that people had to try out. Now, its beginning to feel like a tradition, something that will last forever."



There were kayak races, seal skinning, doughnut making, Native olympic events, and much dancing and eating at this year's fair, yet these two young ones found nothing more amusing than each other's own company.