

ESKIMO YOUNGSTERS LEARNING THE DANCE

High Schoolers Show Up Early; Can't Keep Little Ones Out

The kids show up early at Kotzebue Day School to learn Eskimo dances. At first, classes were just for high schoolers, but it's impossible to keep the younger ones out. They cram the doorways and dance when they're given a chance.

Paul Green, head teacher, predicts they'll be as good as the seniors if they keep at it. And the seniors are really good.

Eskimo dancing is part of a new native arts program at Kotzebue. As soon as materials arrive there will also be skin sewing and ivory and soapstone carving under artist Charles Iyapanna.

The program, which involves \$80,000 in federal funds, will run through the summer and Principal Charles Perry hopes to expand it next year. There's even talk of an Eskimo language class which he figures might be scheduled just as French and Spanish are now.

As for charges that dancing may be witchcraft, Perry just shakes his head.

"Our kids are not fully accepted into the white culture and they have very little left of their own," he said. "We're trying to provide the best of both and Eskimo dancing is just part of the program."

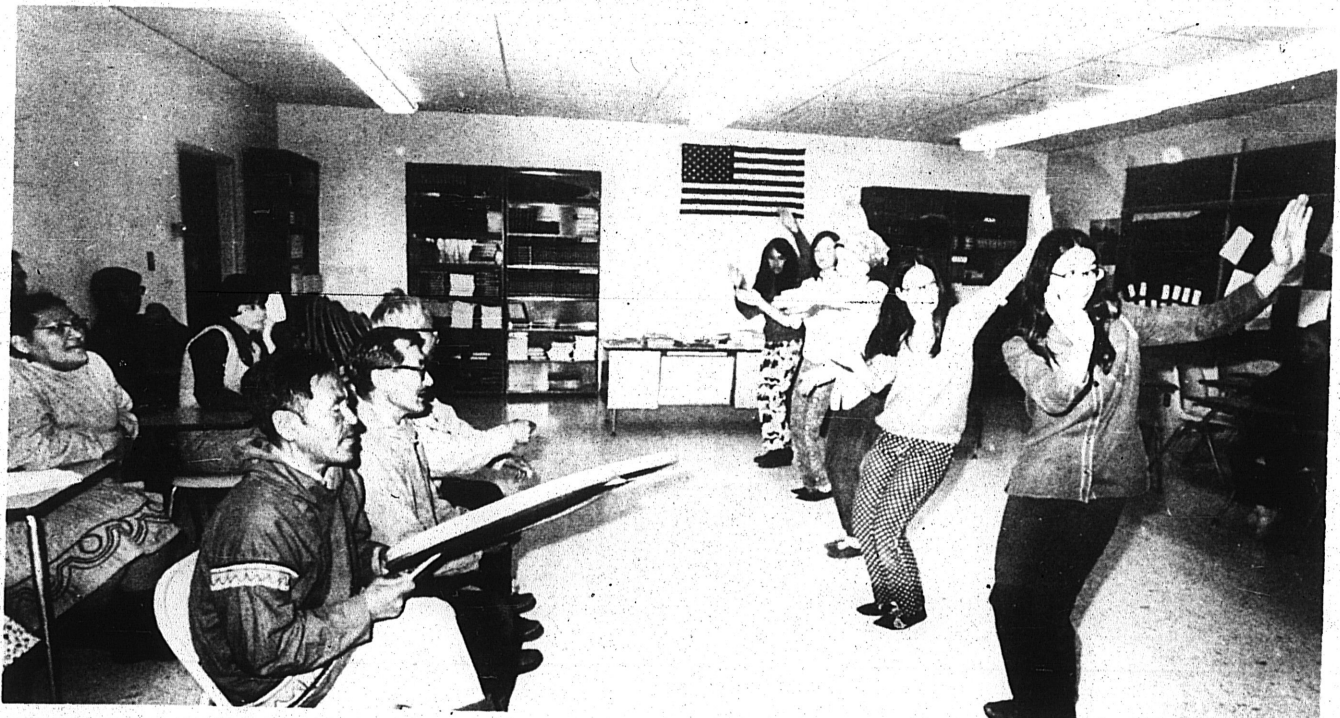


ENTHUSIASTIC TEACHERS—Alvely Shagloak, Walter Kowunna, Paul Green, Letty Susook and Clara Forslund turn out for early morning instruction, above. Below, would-be dancers watch and wait for an invitation to join in the dancing.



INVITED AT LAST—One of the smallest of the would-be dancers gets his chance and applause for his efforts.

(Photos by Lael Morgan)



LADIES ONLY—The boys in the class are asked to sit one out while the girls show their skill. The class has been practicing for four weeks and already has 10 dances learned. A-

mong the titles are "Reindeer", "Bow and Arrow" and "I Broke My Long Stick."