

ACTIVITIES REPORT — JUNE 2009
COVERING THE PERIOD JANUARY – JUNE 2009



Highlights

YNLC warmly congratulates 2009 YNLC Certificate graduates Honalee Sanford (Ahtna) and Nancy Sterriah (Kaska), and Diploma graduates Mary Jane Allison (Southern Tutchone) and Bessie Cooley (Tlingit). These teachers have worked with great dedication in their classrooms, their communities, and at YNLC to achieve their personal and educational goals. We are proud of their accomplishments!

Yukon College Graduation was an especially festive occasion this year, held for the first time in the spacious and elegant Yukon Arts Centre. On Saturday, June 6th, YNLC Elder Ruth Welsh presented the certificates and diplomas to our graduates, and was joined on stage by YNLC's Linda Harvey who is a member of the Yukon College Board of Governors.



Ninety people have now completed the Certificate program since it began in 1983. Graduates must attend regular training sessions and complete three years of teaching experience. Twenty-nine of these graduates have also completed the two-year Diploma program to develop their linguistic and teaching skills. In the program they create original teaching materials, upgrade their English and computer skills, and document oral history and traditional narratives.

The YNLC graduates have served in virtually all Yukon schools with a significant First Nation population, and they have made profound contributions

2009 Graduates Mary Allison, Honalee Sanford, Nancy Sterriah and Bessie Cooley



Southern Tutchone Participants

to the cultural and language revitalization efforts taking place within their home communities. YNLC's extended family of graduates also includes a significant group of language teachers and specialists residing in Alaska, British Columbia, and the Northwest Territories.

Two very successful Southern Tutchone sessions were held this spring for new native language instructors and participants from the communities. YNLC

is seeing growing demand for instructor training from the communities as First Nations expand community language programs. Joining second-year trainee Jocelyn Skookum (Northern Tutchone) from Carmacks are new community language trainees Heather Jim and Lisa Jacobs (Southern Tutchone) from Haines Junction. These trainees learned their language at least partly through the school native language programs, and are now choosing to become language teachers themselves and keep the legacy alive.

YNLC's teacher training programs, literacy sessions, and materials also support CYFN's adult language classes offered in Whitehorse for Southern Tutchone, Northern Tutchone, Gwich'in, and Tlingit. Instructors Hazel Bunbury, Linda Netro, Kathy Shorty, Emma Shorty, and Emma Sam have all received training at YNLC. A special in-service will be held for these teachers in the fall.

As a Council of Yukon First Nations program, YNLC is participating in the ongoing discussions about the Council's re-organization. In April and May, CYFN Executive Director Ed Schultz visited YNLC to provide updates on developments at the central organization. The future of CYFN will be the dominant agenda item at this year's General Assembly, which will be held on the Yukon College campus in July.

YNLC's activities for the first half of 2009 are summarized in the table at the end of this report.



YNLC Co-ordinator Linda Harvey

Retiring Native Language Instructor Honored

Lorraine Allen was honored at the Southern Tutchone In-service on April 29 for her 20 years of service as a native language instructor. Lorraine began teaching at Whitehorse Elementary in 1989 with mentor Evelyn Green. In 1990 she joined Margaret Workman in the pioneer Athabaskan 11 and 12 program at F.H. Collins. Lorraine also taught at Elijah Smith Elementary and Takhini Elementary, and mentored current instructors Dorothy Bellerose, Bertha Moose, and Mary Jane Allison. In 1996 she was one of the first recipients

of the AAS degree in Native Language Education at UAF. In 1998, together with Margaret Workman, Lorraine received an Excellence in Education award from the Yukon Department of Education for their work with YNLC in producing the Dákeyi CD and Teacher's Guide featuring Southern Tutchone place-names.



Margaret Workman and Lorraine Allen

Teacher Training

In March, 21 participants representing seven Yukon and Alaskan languages



YNLC Coordinator Jo-Anne Johnson with Hän Instructor Georgette McLeod at the March Training Session

attended the five-day training session for students enrolled in both the Certificate and Diploma programs. YNLC staff presented material on language structure, teaching techniques, and professionalism. Participants led demonstration lessons, shared teaching ideas, and role-played classroom situations. Founding elder Gertie Tom and retired Southern Tutchone language specialist Margaret Workman also participated in the session. YNLC staff were very pleased with the progress shown by the trainee instructors.

Literacy and In-service Sessions

Ahtna Literacy Session

In early June, linguists John Ritter and André Bourcier worked with soon-to-graduate instructor Honalee Sanford and Dr. Cynthea Ainsworth from Alaska on Ahtna vocabulary (especially names of months) and listening exercises, using digitized materials recorded by fluent elder Katie John of Mentasta, Alaska. Honalee's grandmother Jenny Sanford was a guest at this session, and she provided interesting comparative forms from her Scottie Creek dialect of the Upper Tanana language.



Ahtna graduate Honalee Sanford (with her children), Jenny Sanford, Dr. Cynthea Ainsworth

Honalee is the second Ahtna student to complete the YNLC Certificate Program and was supported throughout her training by Dr. Cynthea Ainsworth as well as by the Mount Sanford Tribal Consortium in Chistochina, Alaska.

Gwich'in Literacy Session

In late May, YNLC's André Bourcier and John Ritter conducted a session for staff of the Gwich'in Language Centre in Ft. McPherson, Northwest Territories. Mr. William Firth, Language Program Manager, accompanied by colleagues Edward Wright and Margaret Thompson, brought a number of works-in-progress to review as well as published materials to donate to the YNLC library. During this session, the group proof-read and edited several booklets designed for use in Gwich'in teaching programs. A follow-up workshop will likely be scheduled for the autumn.



Gwich'in visitors William Firth, Margaret Thompson, Edward Wright

Southern Tutchone In-service and Literacy Session

In April, YNLC staff organized and taught two separate Southern Tutchone sessions: an in-service for the younger generation of language instructors in Whitehorse schools, and a literacy session for community members and community language instructors.



S. Tutchone guest instructor Daniel Tlen

Guest Southern Tutchone specialists included Daniel Tlen from the Dept. of Education, and YNLC Founding Elder Margaret Workman. Margaret told a traditional story in the language emphasizing the importance of sharing food. Participants discussed a possible Southern Tutchone name for the Whitehorse Food Bank, which led to a lively discussion about the old ways, including sharing and other traditional values.

Participants also studied vocabulary for body parts and springtime; practiced listening exercises; and reviewed possessives, word order, verbs and tenses, all under the guidance of elders and YNLC staff.

Northern Tutchone In-service (Little Salmon/Carmacks First Nation)

Ten participants attended a Northern Tutchone In-service session in April for community language instructors and elders from the Little Salmon/Carmacks First Nation. Linguistic issues were outlined and reviewed by YNLC's John Ritter, André Bourcier, Anne Ranigler and veteran Tantalus School instructor Grace Wheeler. Participants studied the Northern Tutchone alphabet; studied vocabulary for traditional cooking, names of fish and Carmacks-area place names; and practised listening exercises. They also developed a

printable Certificate for Native Language Learning in Northern Tutchone to be awarded to community members.

Elder May Roberts was a special visitor to the session and was presented with a gift to mark a recent significant birthday. She has attended and assisted in Northern Tutchone literacy sessions since the first one held in Mayo in 1984.



LSCFN Elder May Roberts and Instructor Grace Wheeler

Kaska In-service

In April, YNLC's linguists André Bourcier and John Ritter organized and conducted a Kaska literacy in-service

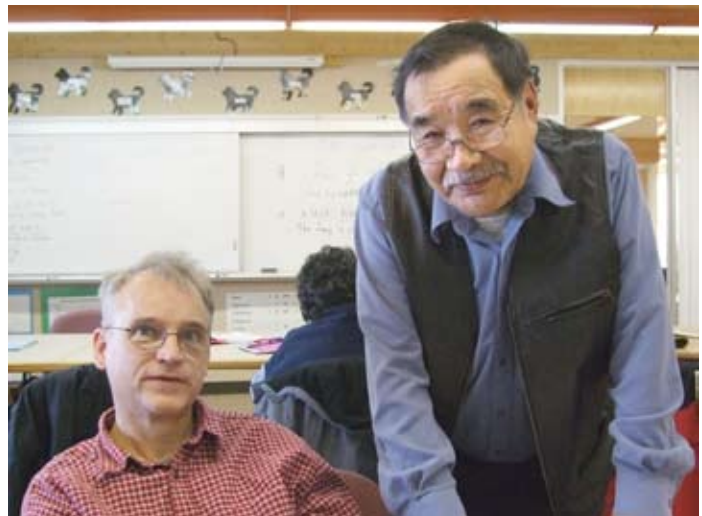


Kaska Instructor Nancy Sterriah

session attended by nine participants, including Ross River School's Josephine Acklack and Nancy Sterriah, Kathy Magun from Watson Lake Secondary School, and guest Janet McDonald from the Dept. of Education. As well as reviewing the Kaska alphabet and practising listening exercises, participants learned two new teaching songs, studied spring-time vocabulary, and prepared teaching materials and a Kaska Certificate for Native Language Learning. Ross River Elder John Acklack was a special guest at this session, helpfully providing Kaska vocabulary and phrases for landforms and water conditions.

Tlingit Literacy Session

In February, YNLC sponsored a visit to Whitehorse by Dr. Jeff Leer of the Alaska Native Language Center, University of Alaska Fairbanks. While here, he conducted a Tlingit literacy and grammar workshop attended by community language instructors and trainees. Thirteen people, including former Yukon College Chancellor Sam Johnston, took part. Participants reviewed Tlingit vowel and consonant sounds, studied grammar and word order (syntax), and



Dr. Jeff Leer (UAF) and Tlingit Elder Sam Johnston

practiced listening exercises in both the Teslin and Carcross dialects. Experienced Teslin instructor Bessie Cooley created the listening exercises as part of her Diploma program requirements. Her work formed the basis for the careful grammatical analysis and dialect comparisons which took place during this excellent Tlingit session.

Upper Tanana Literacy Session

Linguists John Ritter and André Bourcier organized and conducted an Upper Tanana literacy session in February. Ten people attended this session, including three from Northway, Alaska. Participants reviewed Upper Tanana sounds, practiced and recorded listening exercises, and studied vocabulary. Mrs. Martha Sam once again served as expert Elder speaker for the Northway dialect. She recorded a number of examples illustrating special linguistic features such as voicing alternations and tonal contrasts. Her daughter, Ruth Johnny, is the Upper Tanana Instructor in Beaver Creek and now in her second year of the Certificate Program. White River FN Chief David Johnny, Ruth's husband, also attended and provided Scottie Creek dialect examples.



Upper Tanana Elder Martha Sam recording with Ruth Johnny

YNLC Presentations

CYFN Language Program

In June, CYFN Gwich'in language teacher Linda Netro brought her adult language class to YNLC where they met with YNLC staff and learned about the Centre's work and web site.

Bachelor of Social Work, Yukon College

In May, Linda Harvey participated in the orientation for new students entering the BSW Program in the fall. She sang a welcome song and spoke about the work of YNLC. In March, Anne Ranigler taught a demonstration lesson in Northern Tutchone to the introductory BSW class, and Linda Harvey told the students a traditional native story.



BSW students play a language game

Chief Atahm Immersion School Language Conference, Chase, B.C.

Jo-Anne Johnson and Linda Harvey attended this conference in February and also observed K-Grade 3 immersion classes in the Secwepemctsin (Shuswap) language at Chief Atahm School. They shared their impressions in subsequent training sessions.

CYFN *Living the Language* Conference

In February, YNLC Director John Ritter and staff members Linda Harvey, Jo-Anne Johnson, Anne Ranigler, and Doug Hitch attended this conference, along with retired Southern Tutchone language specialist Margaret Workman and Gwich'in elder Ruth Welsh. They made a presentation on the work of YNLC and hosted a YNLC materials display.



Elders Gertie Tom and Ruth Welsh at the CYFN Living the Language Conference



Yukon College students at YNLC

Introduction to First Nation Studies, Yukon College

YNLC staff made a presentation to students in this introductory course at the college. André Bourcier spoke about Yukon native languages and their traditional areas. Anne Ranigler told a traditional Northern Tutchone story, and Linda Harvey led a demonstration lesson in Southern Tutchone.

Website Developments

YNLC has begun developing a new series of online story books called *Hiking*. Linguist and computer specialist Doug Hitch is working on changes that will allow the new picture format to display properly.

In March YNLC was invited to submit a proposal to the Inukshuk Wireless online learning program, which is looking to showcase northern communities. If approved, the funding will support adding interactive listening exercises to the YNLC website, and the site will become available to cell phone users with web access. The interactive exercises will allow users to repeat sentences aloud, the same way as in the online language lessons, but they also allow users to hear and correct their responses. A PDF of the print version of Anne Ranigler's Northern Tutchone listening exercises was prepared to support the application and is available at www.ynlc.ca.



She is cutting fish.

What do you hear?

- t' - t
- t - t'
- t'

Check my answer

prototype web quiz

New Materials

Hän Language Lessons CD

Staff linguist André Bourcier compiled a new CD from earlier soundtracks of language lessons by fluent speaker Percy Henry. This required re-editing as well as enhancing the sound.

Session Reports

As well as the reports from all the spring sessions, 15 previous literacy session reports were reprinted due to demand. The language material (from as far back as 1994) is still very useful for teaching and learning. Six language lesson books and YNLC staff member Anne Ranigler's Northern Tutchone Listening Exercise book were also reprinted.



Gwich'in Elders sing Tukudh Chilig

Chilig CDs

YNLC has produced a set of two CDs featuring 30 Tukudh Chilig (traditional hymns) sung by the participants at the Gwich'in literacy session in November 2008. Prayers by several of the elders are also included. YNLC's André Bourcier engineered the sound and edited the materials for transfer to CD. The Chilig were originally translated into Tukudh by Archdeacon Robert McDonald and Gwich'in people in the 1860s. They still play an important role in worship, family life, and community events today.

Publications Catalogue

The new 2009- 2010 YNLC Publications Catalogue, listing all YNLC's publications, will shortly be available free of charge. A pdf version, as well as a printable order form, will be on the website at www.ynlc.ca.

In Progress

A partial Southern Tutchone noun dictionary by retired YNLC Southern Tutchone language specialist Margaret Workman in her Aishihik dialect is in progress. Her language lessons are also being prepared for the YNLC website.

YNLC is continuing to research the place names on the Kohklux maps (discussed in the YNLC Activity Report for December 2008). All the labels and many features from both maps have been put into a database. The research is both linguistic and geographic, as YNLC staff are attempting to determine which geographic features are being illustrated and what the underlying Tlingit or Athapaskan words are in the names. During the

spring, YNLC linguist Doug Hitch developed a presentation on this work to be given in Copenhagen, Denmark, at the July 2009 International Conference on the History of Cartography.

In June, Dr. Julie Cruikshank completed the manuscript of E.J. Glave's writings which YNLC plans to publish later in the year. Glave's accounts of his early travels to the southern Yukon (1890–1891) contain many references to native place names, personal names, and cultural practices. Long available only in specialized libraries and archives, Glave's writings, along with fascinating unpublished material in his field journals, will provide a valuable addition to the literature of Yukon First Nations geography, history and culture.

Shedding Light on YNLC

All the original 1988-era ceiling lights at YNLC were replaced in June with energy efficient fixtures and tubes which noticeably brighten residents and visitors alike.

Planning for Fall 2009

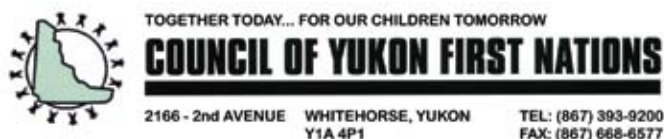
The Yukon Native Language Centre and individual teachers are busy planning for the fall session. Please contact YNLC for updates on scheduling.

How To Reach Us

If you would like more information on the Centre's programs, or would like to order our publications, please consult our website at www.ynlc.ca, or contact us by:

- local telephone at (867) 668-8820
- toll-free 1-877-414-9652
- fax at (867) 668-8825
- email at info@ynlc.ca
- mail at

YNLC
Yukon College
Box 2799
Whitehorse YT Y1A 5K4



2009 Graduates Mary Allison, Nancy Sterriah, Bessie Cooley and Honalee Sanford



YNLC Training Sessions

Upper Tanana Literacy Session	Community Literacy	February 5-6
Tlingit Literacy Session	Classroom Literacy	February 16-18
Certificate Course	Teacher Training	March 2-6
N. Tutchone In-service for LSCFN	Teacher Training	April 21-22
Kaska Literacy Session	Community Literacy	April 23-24
S. Tutchone In-service	Teacher Training	April 27-28
S. Tutchone Literacy Session	Community Literacy	April 29-30
Gwich'in Literacy Session	Classroom Literacy	May 26-27
Ahtna Literacy Session	Classroom Literacy	June 4-5

YNLC Presentations

Bachelor of Social Work, Yukon College	YNLC Presentation	January 6
Introduction to First Nation Studies, Yukon College	YNLC Presentation	January 13
Bachelor of Social Work, Yukon College	YNLC Presentation	February 3
Chief Atahm Immersion School Language Conference, Chase, B.C.	YNLC Participation	February 19-21
CYFN <i>Living the Language</i> Conference	YNLC Presentation	February 24-26
Bachelor of Social Work, Yukon College	YNLC Presentation	March 24
Yukon College Graduation Ceremony	YNLC Participation	June 6

Program Consultations

Porter Creek Secondary School Visit	S. Tutchone Program	January 14
Consultation with CAFN Community Program, Haines Junction	S. Tutchone Program	January 14, January 29
First Nation Partnerships Meetings	YNLC Participation	January 16
Nelna Bessie John School Visit	N. Tutchone Program	January 27
Kluane Lake School Visit	S. Tutchone Program	January 28
St. Elias Community School Visit	S. Tutchone Program	January 29
Consultation with Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Community Program	Hän Program	February 10
Robert Service School Visit	Hän Program	February 10
Consultation with Little Salmon Carmacks FN	N. Tutchone Program	April 9
Porter Creek Secondary School Visit	S. Tutchone Program	April 21
Ghùch Tlá Community School Visit	Tlingit Program	May 5
Teslin School Visit	Tlingit Program	May 6
Takhini Elem. School Visit	S. Tutchone Program	May 21
Ross River School Visit	Kaska Program	May 19-22



Kaska class in Ross River



Haines Junction children playing a S. Tutchone language game