

**ACTIVITIES REPORT — DECEMBER 2006**  
COVERING THE PERIOD JULY – DECEMBER 2006



The Yukon Native Language Centre offered a new teacher training session this fall as part of its efforts to foster the development of more native language instructors. The three-day *Introduction to Native Language Teaching* was designed as an orientation for those who are interested in native language teaching and would like to learn more about it. (See below for more information on this session.)

YNLC also completed a major rebuild of its website in September as a large step towards the goal of making as much material as possible available online. The new site is divided into five broad sections—information on the Centre itself, Languages, Culture & History, Materials, and Training. Please visit [www.ynlc.ca](http://www.ynlc.ca) to view our exciting and attractive new site, with its easy navigation bars and more consistent organization of material.

Kaska language lessons were recorded in August and are now posted to the website. YNLC now offers eight languages, including two dialects of Southern Tutchone, in online versions. Click on “Materials” and then “Audio Lessons” to find the different language lessons.

YNLC’s activities for the second half of 2006 are summarized in the table accompanying this report.



Participants at the Gwich'in Literacy session

### **Congratulations and Farewells**

Congratulations to native language instructor trainee Amanda Workman and her partner Rafe Etzel on the birth of their son Drake, who was born on November 28. Amanda, who teaches at Takhini Elementary with mentor Bertha Moose, will be on maternity leave for six months.



Kaska Instructor  
Doris Bob

This fall has seen the retirement of several long-serving native language instructors. Doris Bob, Kaska instructor at Ross River School, has retired after 11 years of teaching. Hazel Bunbury, a fluent speaker of Southern Tutchone, has retired after 16 years of teaching at Whitehorse Elementary. The Yukon Native Language Centre would like to extend its heartfelt thanks to both these dedicated instructors for their many years of service, and to wish them a rewarding retirement.

The Centre would like to welcome Florence Etzel, a fluent Kaska speaker with previous experience teaching adults, who is the new instructor at Ross River School. She will work with veteran teacher Josephine Acklack. We would also like to welcome Ruth Johnny to her new position as Upper Tanana language instructor at Nelna Bessie John School in Beaver Creek. She takes over from Rose-Marie Blair, who is now teaching in Destruction Bay.



Upper Tanana Instructor  
Ruth Johnny

## Teacher Training

### Certificate Training

This fall's Certificate Training session was held from September 18 to 22, with 14 participants representing eight Yukon and Alaskan languages. A special feature was a visit to the McBride Museum in Whitehorse to encourage instructors to include field trips as part of their language curriculum. Guests during the training session included CYFN Grand Chief Andy Carville, as well as the Executive Director of the Yukon Teachers' Association, Dennis Rankin, and Dave Sloan, Director of Learning for the Department of Education. Esteemed Ahtna Elder Lena Charley and her daughter Evelyn Beeter were also present during the session.

Attendance at the training sessions is part of the course requirements for the three-year Certificate program accredited by Yukon College. Participants must also complete three years of classroom experience in order to receive their certificate. Graduates of the Certificate program may go on to take a two-year Diploma program, during which they further develop their linguistic and teaching skills, create original teaching materials, and document oral history and traditional narratives.



Certificate Training participants at McBride Museum



Participants in the *Introduction to Native Language Teaching* session

## Introduction to Native Language Teaching

An orientation session for those interested in native language teaching was held October 3 to 5, with 11 participants representing three Yukon languages (Southern Tutchone, Northern Tutchone, and Tlingit). The session included lesson planning, teaching methods, and listening exercises. Participants also each prepared a 20-minute demonstration lesson. Several participants now plan to become substitute native language instructors.

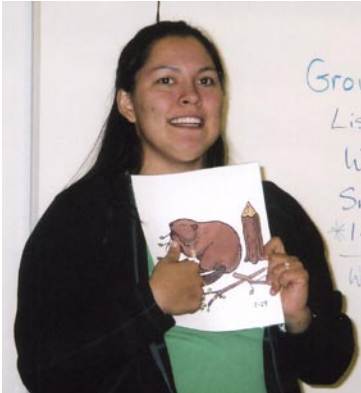
## Literacy Sessions

### Tlingit Literacy Session

A Tlingit Literacy session was held from September 11 to 13, attended by eight participants from Teslin, Carcross, Whitehorse, and Skagway. Led by Dr. Jeff Leer from the University of Alaska Fairbanks, the session featured in-depth examination of verb constructions and comparisons of Coastal and Interior Tlingit language structure and writing systems.



Ida Calmegane, Dr. Jeff Leer, Mamie Smith at the Tlingit Literacy Session



Ahtna Trainee Jessica Denny

### Ahtna Literacy Session, September 25-27

A session devoted to Ahtna literacy was held from September 25 to 27. It included participation by Jessica Denny, now in her third year of training, and Cynthea Ainsworth, Language Director for Mount Sanford Tribal Consortium. YNLC linguist André Bourcier and Director John Ritter reviewed various topics in Ahtna literacy and grammar.

### Gwich'in Literacy Session

A Gwich'in Literacy session was held from November 21 to 23. Participants worked on a story book and translating Christmas carols in Tukudh. The group included five visiting Gwich'in elders from Whitehorse, Old Crow, and Tagish. Students from grades 10, 11, and 12 in the Gwich'in program at F. H. Collins attended with their instructors Randall Kendi and Enna Vittrekwa. Guest speakers included MLA



Elders Helen Buyck and Irene Smith

Darius Elias and VGFN Chief Joe Linklater. F.H. Collins Vice-Principal Ernie Swerhun visited the session and assisted with logistics, as did Kim Rumley, the Whitehorse-area CELC for VGFN.

### Hän Literacy Session

Eleven participants from Fairbanks and Dawson City attended a Hän Literacy session from December 5 to 7. The session focused on vocabulary, writing a story, prayers, and carols.

Participants sang Hän Christmas carols for the annual Christmas lunch at Yukon College, and some of them were interviewed by CBC Radio reporter Leonard Linklater.



Ronald Johnson, Patricia Lindgren at the Hän Literacy Session

### School Visits

YNLC Program Co-ordinators Jo-Anne Johnson and Linda Harvey make regular visits to the schools and communities served by native language programs. They observe in the classrooms and offer feedback and advice where appropriate to the mentors, trainees and principals. They monitor how the trainees fulfill the requirements of the YNLC training programs. They also liaise with First Nations and community leaders and offer assistance as requested.



Instructor Amy Ekins with students at Tantalus School, Carmacks

A summary table of visits can be found at the back of this report.

### Presentations

#### New Yukon Teachers' Orientation

On August 23, staff members Jo-Anne Johnson and Linda Harvey hosted a display of YNLC materials as part of the orientation of new teachers to the Yukon, held this year at Airport Lake between Braeburn and Carmacks.

#### French Monitors

YNLC staff hosted an orientation for 11 French monitors from across Canada on November 3. André Bourcier, Jo-Anne Johnson and Linda Harvey spoke on Yukon languages, the work of the Centre, and the sharing of resource materials with native language teachers. Linda Harvey taught a demonstration lesson and led an activity game.



Instructor Margaret Bob with a Teslin School student on a field trip

## National First Nations Languages Conference, Winnipeg, Manitoba

Staff members Josephine Holloway, Anne Ranigler and Linda Harvey attended this conference from November 12 to 16, organized by the Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre in partnership with the Departments of Canadian Heritage and Indian and Northern Affairs. They attended workshops and hosted a display of YNLC materials.



Administrator Josephine Holloway with the YNLC display at Winnipeg

## Aboriginal Education Committee, Canadian Teachers' Federation

As a member of this national committee, Jo-Anne Johnson attended a meeting in Ottawa from October 9 to 11.

## CYFN Leadership Meeting

On December 6, Centre director John Ritter and Linda Harvey attended the leadership meeting. They provided an update on YNLC activities and answered questions.



YNLC Northern Tutchone Specialist  
Anne Ranigler

## Kwanlin Dun and Ta'an Kwach'an Language Classes

YNLC staff have again offered support to the Kwanlin Dun language program this fall. Classes in Southern Tutchone and Northern Tutchone were taught from October to December by Linda Harvey and Anne Ranigler. Linda also taught Southern Tutchone at the Ta'an Kwach'an First Nation during the same period.

## Website Developments

The major rebuild of the YNLC website was completed in September.

Considerable work remains to be done to integrate the older pages into the new format, but everything has been relinked and everything is accessible. Please visit [www.ynlc.ca](http://www.ynlc.ca) to view our exciting and attractive new site, with its easy navigation bars and more consistent organization of material.

Work continues with the online Kaska language lessons of Testloa George Smith, and work has begun on a new set of Van Tat Gwich'in lessons with Lorraine Peter. *Aishihik Girl*, a new story written and recorded by Southern Tutchone speaker



Gwich'in speaker Lorraine  
Peter

Margaret Workman and illustrated by Susan McCallum, will be posted on the website in 2007. It will also have a print edition. The Centre plans to post more stories and language lessons as they become available.

Work is continuing on the development of a replacement for the old Yukon, Gwich'in and Tanana fonts. The new YNLC Legacy font replaces all these fonts and works in exactly the same way. Users will be able to use the new font to view and edit materials created with the old fonts, or can create entirely new materials in any Yukon language.

### **Kaska Language Lessons Online**

A partial set of language lessons in Kaska is now available online through the YNLC website. Testloa George Smith of Ross River completed the recording sessions in August with the assistance of YNLC director John Ritter and staff linguist Doug Hitch.

### **Ahtna Language Lessons**

YNLC has been working with the Mount Sanford Tribal Consortium to produce web-based language lessons and story books in the Ahtna language of Alaska. Elder Lena Charley recorded lessons in the Chistochina dialect, as well as stories in the *At Home* and *Fish Camp* series. Elder Katie John recorded stories in the same series in the Mentasta dialect. These lessons and stories are all available on the YNLC website. Language lessons by Katie John, which were recorded by Cynthea Ainsworth at Ms. John's home, will be available in the near future.



YNLC Co-ordinators Jo-Anne Johnson and Linda Harvey with Ahtna Elder Lena Charley

### **New Materials**

#### **Reprints and Literacy Reports**

Printed reports from the Gwich'in and Hän Literacy sessions held earlier this fall are now available. The Tlingit Literacy session report will be available shortly.

The Publications Catalogue has been updated and is available on our website at [www.ynlc.ca](http://www.ynlc.ca), or can be ordered from the Centre (see **How to Reach Us**, below).

Several publications have been reprinted due to demand. These include the Tukudh Language and Literacy sessions of 2002 and 2003, and *Haa Shagóon* (Our Family History) by Angela Sidney.



The late Angela Sydney

The following language lesson booklets have also been reprinted: Northern Tutchone (Gertie Tom); Kaska (Ann Mercier and Jocelyn Wolftail); Southern Tutchone (Margaret Workman); Southern Tutchone (Lena Johnson); Southern Tutchone (Kathy Birckel), and Tanacross (Irene Solomon).

All these materials can be ordered from YNLC (see contact information below).

### **Bessie Allen's Book**

A book by the late respected elder Bessie Allen (Champagne/Aishihik First Nation) will be available early in 2007. *Family and Traditional Southern Tutchone Stories* was compiled by Bessie's



The late Bessie Allen

youngest daughter, Lorraine Allen, who recorded the stories. Lorraine Allen is a long-serving instructor at F.H. Collins and Porter Creek Secondary Schools in Whitehorse. The book also contains lists of personal and place names, a map, family trees, and a number of photos.

### **Anne Ranigler's Listening Exercises**

YNLC Northern Tutchone specialist Anne Ranigler has now finished the first draft of her book of listening exercises. It will be printed in the spring.

### **Southern Tutchone Dictionary**

and sound files. The dictionary now contains over 5,000 entries, each with sentences to show usage and meaning, and with accompanying soundtrack. YNLC hopes to print the dictionary in the spring.

Retired YNLC staff member Margaret Workman has been returning to the Centre to complete the final editing on the Southern Tutchone dictionary. Together with staff linguist André Bourcier, she has gone through all three volumes of the dictionary to make corrections to both the written



YNLC Founding Elder Margaret Workman

### **Planning for Spring 2007**

YNLC literacy and training workshops will be announced as information becomes available.



Hän Elders Percy Henry, Ruth Ridley

## How To Reach Us

If you would like more information on the Centre's programs or publications, please consult our website at [www.ynlc.ca](http://www.ynlc.ca) or contact us:

- by telephone at (867) 668-8820, toll-free 1-877-414-9652
- by fax at (867) 668-8825
- by email at [info@ynlc.ca](mailto:info@ynlc.ca)
- by mail at Yukon Native Language Centre, Yukon College, Box 2799, Whitehorse, Yukon, Y1A 5K4.



Participants at the Gwich'in Literacy Session



TOGETHER TODAY... FOR OUR CHILDREN TOMORROW

**COUNCIL OF YUKON FIRST NATIONS**

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**School and Community Visits by Jo-Anne Johnson,  
Rural Programs Co-ordinator**

| <b>School, Community</b>                | <b>Native Language Teachers</b>                                      | <b>First Nation</b>                 | <b>Date</b>    |
|---|--|-------------------------------------|----------------|
| Robert Service School, Dawson City      | Mary Henry, Mabel Henry, Principal Philip Cull                       | Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation      | October 16-18  |
| Teslin School, Teslin                   | Bessie Cooley, Margaret Bob, Principal Richard Burke                 | Teslin Tlingit First Nation         | October 27     |
| Nelnah Bessie John School, Beaver Creek | Ruth Johnny, Principal Erin Davies                                   | White River First Nation            | November 15-17 |
| Tantalus School, Carmacks               | Ragene Blackjack, Grace Wheeler, Amy Ekins, Principal Cully Robinson | Little Salmon-Carmacks First Nation | November 23    |

**School and Community Visits by Linda Harvey,  
Urban Programs Co-ordinator**

| <b>School, Community</b> | <b>Native Language Teachers</b>                     | <b>Date</b>            |
|--------------------------|---|------------------------|
| F.H. Collins             | Randall Kendi and Enna Vittrekwa (Gwich'in program) | September 8            |
| Porter Creek Secondary   | Mary Jane Allison                                   | September 9, October 6 |
| Elijah Smith Elementary  | Stephen Reid and Janet Burns                        | October 20             |
| F.H. Collins             | Randall Kendi and Enna Vittrekwa (Gwich'in program) | October 24             |
| Takhini Elementary       | Bertha Moose  | December 5             |
| F.H. Collins             | Randall Kendi and Enna Vittrekwa (Gwich'in program) | December 5             |

## YNLC Sessions July - December 2006

|  |                    |            |
|--|--------------------|------------|
| Kaska Language Recording                 | Language Lessons   | August 7-8 |
| Yukon Teachers Orientation               | YNLC Display       | August 23  |
| Tlingit Literacy Session                 | Classroom Literacy | Sept 11-13 |
| Certificate Course                       | Teacher Training   | Sept 18-22 |
| Ahtna Literacy Session                   | Classroom Literacy | Sept 25-27 |
| Introduction to Native Language Teaching | Teacher Training   | Oct 3-5    |
| Robert Service School Visit              | Classroom Literacy | Oct 16-18  |
| Teslin School Visit                      | Classroom Literacy | Oct 27     |
| YNLC Orientation for French Monitors     | YNLC Presentation  | Nov 3      |
| Gwich'in Literacy Session                | Classroom Literacy | Nov 21-23  |
| Gwich'in Language Recording              | Language Lessons   | Nov 27-29  |
| Hän Literacy Session                     | Community Literacy | Dec 5-7    |
|  | <b>13 Sessions</b> |            |