

ACTIVITIES REPORT — JULY 2013
COVERING THE PERIOD JANUARY–JUNE 2013



2013 Graduation

Yukon College Graduation was held at the Yukon Arts Centre on Saturday, May 11, 2013. The keynote address was delivered by Thomas Berger, former justice of the B.C. Supreme Court, well known for his work as commissioner of the Mackenzie Valley pipeline inquiry during the 1970s.

We are pleased to recognize and congratulate our five 2013 YNLC Certificate graduates. They include three Tlingit instructors, Lorraine Dewhurst and Connie Jules who both teach in Teslin School, and elder Norman James who serves as a Tlingit Instructor at the Ghùch Tlâ Community School in Carcross. Also graduating were Kaska speaker Linda Shorty from Ross River and Gwich'in elder Joanne Snowshoe from Ft. McPherson, Northwest Territories. YNLC hosted an informal reception for the graduates and their families before the official ceremony, with our long-serving colleague Wayne Towriss on hand to take pictures.

At the Arts Centre ceremony, CYFN Grand Chief Ruth Massie presented the Certificates to the YNLC graduates, assisted on stage by YNLC's Northern Tutchone specialist Anne



2013 YNLC Graduates Norman James, Lorraine Dewhurst, Connie Jules and Linda Shorty.

Ranigler and Dr. André Bourcier.

The YNLC graduates have worked with great dedication in their classrooms, their First Nations programs, their communities, and at YNLC to achieve their personal and educational goals. We salute them: Yak'ê ! Etie ! Gwiinzii !

Ruth Welsh Memorial Award

Northern Tutchone Elder Evelyn Skookum was honoured at the Yukon College Graduation Ceremony with the first Ruth Welsh Memorial Award, presented for outstanding service to Yukon Native languages and cultures.

Evelyn has taught her language and songs in Carmacks and at YNLC sessions for many years, and received her YNLC Certificate in 2003.

She has mentored her granddaughter, Jocelyn Skookum, who completed a YNLC Certificate in 2011. Both ladies are very active in the Little Salmon / Carmacks First Nation language revitalization efforts.



N. Tutchone Elder Evelyn Skookum, recipient of the first Ruth Welsh Memorial Award

January to June at YNLC

YNLC staff and students were very busy during the winter, spring, and early summer of 2013. Language sessions continued to focus on improving skills in literacy and teaching methodology, with separate workshops for Upper Tanana, Kaska, Southern



Erika Scheffen conducting Hän language listening exercise

Tutchone, and Northern Tutchone. A combined group of Gwich'in, Hän, and Tlingit trainees and instructors came together in late April to work on topics treated in both the Certificate and Diploma courses. Literacy sessions for these three language groups were offered in autumn 2012.

The YNLC staff were involved in a variety of other language-related projects and events, many of them summarized in the present Activity Report.

Language Training and Documentation Sessions

Upper Tanana In-Service

During a brief easing in January temperatures, Ruth Johnny and her husband David traveled from Beaver Creek to continue work with YNLC staff on her book



Nancy Sterriah teaching Kaska at Ross River School

of Upper Tanana Listening Exercises. Ruth had compiled much of the foundational work for this book as her Independent Project for the YNLC Diploma Course. The book contains many useful examples of Upper Tanana sound contrasts, complete with illustrative sentences and picture sets, for use both in school and community teaching programs. Originally from Northway, Alaska, Ruth speaks the characteristic dialect of her home region. Her husband David, former Chief of White River First Nation, is a fluent speaker who grew up at Scottie Creek very near the U.S. border. Ruth's book also contains examples of the slight differences in pronunciation heard on either side of the border. It will be a very useful addition to the list of teaching and learning materials for the Upper Tanana language.

Kaska In-Service

This session in late February focused on the curriculum needs of our two Kaska teachers at the Ross River School, Linda Shorty and Nancy Sterriah. In addition to developing new listening exercises, they worked with YNLC linguists André



Champagne and Aishihik Chief James Allen, Southern Tutchone instructor trainee Diyet Lieshout and Burwash Elder Lena Johnson at the April Southern Tutchone Literacy Session



YNLC's Elder Gerie Tom teaching with YNLC Linguist André Bourcier

Bourcier and Director Ritter to examine the Kaska words for colours and create full sentences containing clothing vocabulary with the colour words. They explored the Kaska verbs for 'to put on' and 'to wear' which are specific to the the actions involved, such as use of the hands or use of the feet. It is essential to understand the basic Kaska sentence structure - so different from English - in order to develop teaching sequences that enable the students to progress from simple to more complex statements.

Southern and Northern Tutchone Certificate and Literacy Sessions

Literacy and Certificate training were combined for our spring Northern and Southern Tutchone sessions. This allowed the YNLC staff sufficient time to focus on the needs of a smaller number of trainees and teachers attending.

The Southern Tutchone session took place on April 3-5, 2013, with participation by teachers and trainees from Burwash, Haines Junction, and Whitehorse. Among the topics covered were the recommended vocabulary and sentence structures for springtime, the creation of a basic listening exercise, the number distinctions in common verbs such as 'sit', classroom games and activities. Elders Lena Johnson and Margaret Workman were on hand to assist everyone with fluent Southern Tutchone. Chief James Allen of CAFN visited the session and praised the trainees for their hard work and dedication. Also visiting was Mr. Sean Smith, Language Revitalization Program Manager at SDS and CYFN.

The Northern Tutchone session was held April 16-18, 2013, with participation



Gerie Tom working on a listening exercise at the April session

by teachers and trainees from Mayo, Pelly Crossing, and Carmacks. Elders Mary Battaja, Agnes Charlie, May Roberts, Evelyn Skookum, and Gertie Tom provided an enormous amount of fluent Northern Tutchone language that reflected the regional variations in pronunciation found in specific regions. Participants created a listening exercise in their own dialect to take back to their school classrooms. They also reviewed classroom methods with special emphasis on teaching the possessive constructions ('my hat, your hat', etc).



Long-serving Northern Tutchone Instructor Catherine Germaine with Jo-Anne Johnson and Linda Harvey

At the request of NND (Mayo) and WRFN (Beaver Creek), and attended also by speakers and students from Dawson City and Whitehorse, a second Northern Tutchone literacy session was held at YNLC on May 23 and 24, 2013. Many elders and now-retired Northern Tutchone language instructors were present at this lively gathering. Topics included translations, listening exercises, and songs. Four separate but interrelated dialects of Northern Tutchone were identified and exemplified during the session. With the closure of the Yukon College cafeteria, we were delighted that Gene Batten and staff were able and willing to provide a nicely catered lunch for the participants and guests on the second day of the session.

Certificate/Diploma Training Session, Apr 30–May 2

This session included instructors of Gwich'in, Hän, and Tlingit languages. Topics covered included the use of simple family tree diagrams to teach kinship terms, and the grammatical process of forming the possessed forms of nouns that differ from the unpossessed forms. It was noted that Gwich'in and Hän are spoken quite some distance from Tlingit, and the languages are only remotely related genetically, yet they all show similarities in the formation of possessed nouns ('knife' vs. 'my knife', etc). The possessive prefixes (my-, you-, his/her-, etc) were also reviewed and compared. Each trainee in attendance prepared and presented a demonstration lesson for feedback from the other students. The sharing component of the session was especially valuable in allowing the trainees to speak about current activities in their own programs as well as the successes and challenges of promoting their languages in local schools and communities.

YNLC Collaborations, Projects, and Publications

YNLC Programming at Yukon College

Officials at CYFN, YNLC, and Yukon College have continued conversations regarding the relationship of YNLC's programming to the evolving administrative structure at the

**THE MICHAEL E. KRAUSS
Alaska Native Language Archive
OFFICE • ROOM 232**

College. Current relations reflect the Memorandum of Understanding signed in 1995 by late Grand Chief Harry Allen and Yukon College officials of the

day. In order to provide an update on current YNLC activities, YNLC Director John Ritter and YNLC Linguist Dr. André Bourcier attended the February 2013 meeting of the YC Senior Managers Committee chaired by Dr. Deb Bartlett. The sharing of information was timely and appreciated by those in attendance. YNLC staff emphasized the importance of YNLC's print and on-line resources for use by the community campuses. An excellent example was presented in March when YNLC hosted a visit by students enrolled in the HACES program at the Teslin Campus. YNLC gave an overview of teaching and learning resources for the Tlingit language, including the on-line language lessons created by Mr. Sam Johnston, well-known Tlingit elder and former Chancellor of Yukon College. The adult students were pleased with their visit to YNLC and left with booklets and CDs for their personal use.

Dedication of the Michael K. Krauss Alaska Native Language Archive

YNLC Director John Ritter bravely drove to Fairbanks, Alaska, in mid-February to attend the dedication of the Michael K. Krauss Alaska Native Language Archive at the University of Alaska Fairbanks. The Archive comprises thousands of documents (including visual and audio recordings) related to all of Alaska's aboriginal languages

as well as many spoken in Canada and beyond. Krauss began the painstaking work of collecting these documents - many now extremely rare - when he first arrived at the University of Alaska in 1960. The collection has grown in size over the years, and although Krauss retired about a decade ago, he continued to acquire copies of fieldnotes and recordings for the Archive. The dedication and festive reception were held on February 22 in the Rasmuson Library



The founder of the Alaska Native Language Center, Professor Emeritus Michael E. Krauss, at the dedication of the archives of Native Language materials named in his honour

building, where the Archive is now permanently housed. Many of Krauss's friends and colleagues were on hand to celebrate the occasion.

SGS Language Conference

A YNLC delegation attended the First Nation Language Conference, March 5–7, 2013



Students from Ghùch Tlá Community School in Carcross visit the YNLC display during Education Week at the Kwanlin Dun Cultural Centre

held at the Kwanlin Dun Cultural Centre on the Whitehorse waterfront. On the first morning, YNLC Linguist Doug Hitch and Northern Tutchone Specialist Anne Ranigler presented information about the resources for teaching and learning made available by the YNLC since 1977. They discussed a range of print and web-based materials from the first professionally produced book with special characters, *Èkeyi: Gyò Cho Chù—My Country: Big Salmon River*, by Gertie Tom, to an interactive online game for teaching the challenging sounds of Yukon Languages. The authors of many of the materials were present at the gathering including Sam Johnston, Percy Henry, Hazel Bunbury, Rachel Tom Tom, and Margaret

Workman. Anne Ranigler also maintained the YNLC booth in the Elders' Room along with YNLC's Josephine Holloway. Mary Jane Allison, Southern Tutchone Instructor at Porter Creek School, represented YNLC on the Language Service Provider Panel on March 5.

Education Week

Linguist Doug Hitch and YNLC Programs Coordinators Linda Harvey and Jo-Anne Johnson maintained a YNLC table at the one-day event hosted by the CYFN Education Department on April 15th. Busloads of students and teachers from across the region visited the booth to learn about the resources available from YNLC for teaching and learning languages.

Listening Exercises Game for Hand-held Devices

A number of new sets have been posted in Anne Ranigler's interactive online Northern Tutchone Listening Exercises. Students can, for example,



YNLC's Linda Harvey presenting gifts to a visitor from the Teslin campus

learn to distinguish between t and t', ch and ch', k and k', and tl and tl'. Visit: ynlc.ca/iole/northern_tutchone

Travels to the Alseck

Long in preparation at YNLC, the edited and supplemented travel narratives of Edward J. Glave, *Travels to the Alseck*, will be completed this summer. Some minor work is underway on the preface and the index, and the entire manuscript will soon make its way happily to Friesens in Winnipeg for final production.

Southern Tutchone Dictionary

YNLC Founding Elder Margaret Workman continued working with YNLC's Dr. André Bourcier on the development of an on-line dictionary for Southern Tutchone. Margaret began to compile this dictionary as a written document many years ago as part of her teaching and documentation work at YNLC. Much progress has been made since January. She created and recorded nearly 400 new sentences that illustrate or amplify the meaning of individual words, often providing a cultural context for clarification. Our aim is to make this substantial body of language material available on-line with sound so that students and scholars can hear the language spoken as well as see the written words and phrases of Southern Tutchone. YNLC staff are currently working with computer specialist Dave Rogers to develop an online interface for the dictionary that will, for example, permit online searches in English and Southern Tutchone.



Jocelyn Skookum and friend teaching Northern Tutchone in LSCFN daycare program

Publications

Reports from all the winter 2013 literacy sessions are now ready - Gwich'in, Hän, Kaska, Southern Tutchone and Northern Tutchone. In addition, an audio CD is available of Chilig and prayers from the November 2012 Gwich'in Literacy Session.

Audio CDs and booklets of language lessons are in great demand. We have produced a new audio CD of Kathy Birckel's Southern Tutchone lessons, and have reprinted Margaret Workman's Southern Tutchone lessons, Percy Henry's Hän lessons, and Lena Johnson's Southern Tutchone lessons. Work continues on digitizing Josephine Acklack's and Grady Sterriah's Kaska lessons, and Rachel Tom Tom's Northern Tutchone Lessons.

Requests for YNLC print products remain steady, so a good many reprints were made this spring. Among them are the book of Northern Tutchone listening exercises by YNLC's Anne Ranigler, and reports from many literacy sessions: Hän 2012; Gwich'in

2012, 2011, 2010;
Southern Tutchone
2012, 2008, 2001, and
2000.

YNLC's website www.ynlc.ca has some new material. Two articles printed in the *Yukon News* are now posted on our website (with permission). One focuses on Tish Lindgren's language work with the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in of Dawson City, the other on Rev. Bella Savino's role as an Episcopal priest and student of Tukudh. The tribute to the late Elder Ruth Welsh used at the memorial at YNLC in November 2012 is now available.



Tlingit visitors at YNLC for a meeting of the Yukon Geographical Place Names Board. YNLC's Josephine Holloway is at right.

All the school native language programs that use flashcards as teaching tools have now been supplied with new sets of small playing cards as well as large flashcards.



2013 YNLC Graduates Connie Jules, Lorraine Dewhurst with son Trinity, Linda Shorty, and Norman James holding potlach bags received as graduation gifts from YNLC.

Yukon Geographical Place Names Board

YNLC assists the Yukon Geographical Place Names Board in ensuring the correct spelling of Yukon First Nations names submitted to the Board for consideration as official names. Three YGPNB meetings were held at YNLC in the first six months of 2013. YGPNB and YNLC will collaborate on a photo documentation project later in the summer, and YNLC will also assist in digitally recording First Nations names pronounced by the Elders, who also provide the history and cultural background of the names to assist in the Board's review process.

CYFN General Assembly

CYFN's annual General Assembly was held during June 25-27, 2013 at the Yukon Convention Centre in downtown Whitehorse. In attendance were leaders from all member Yukon First Nations as well as community representatives and visitors from



CYFN Grand Chief Ruth Massie, Anne Ranigler, André Bourcier, and CYFN Executive Director Michelle Kolla at the YNLC display during the CYFN General Assembly at the Yukon Convention Centre, June 2013.

throughout Yukon and neighboring jurisdictions. Grand Chief Ruth Massie was elected to another three-year term during the GA. YNLC participated by maintaining a display of teaching and learning resources for Yukon First Nations languages. Staff members Anne Ranigler, Dr. André Bourcier, and Director John Ritter were pleased to greet the many individuals who stopped by to discuss language issues and view YNLC's publications and materials.

Upcoming Events

The Yukon Native Language Centre and individual teachers are busy planning for the fall sessions. 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, ynlc.ca, or contact us by:

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



View along the Alaska Highway between Donjek and Koidern Rivers, May 2013

YNLC Training Sessions and Presentations

Upper Tanana In-Service	Classroom Literacy	Jan 15-16
Yukon Geographical Place Names Board	YNLC Collaboration	Jan 17
CYFN Leadership	YNLC Attendance	Feb 12-14
Kaska In-Service	Classroom Literacy	Feb 27-28
SGS Language Conference	YNLC Participation	Mar 5-7
Yukon College, Teslin Campus Visit	YNLC Presentation	Mar 20
CYFN Summit	YNLC Participation	Mar 20
S. Tutchone Certificate & Literacy Session	Classroom Literacy	Apr 3-5
Education Week at CYFN	YNLC Participation	Apr 15
N. Tutchone Certificate & Literacy Session	Classroom Literacy	Apr 16-18
Certificate / Diploma Course	Teacher Training	Apr 30-May 2
Yukon College Graduation	YNLC Participation	May 11
N. Tutchone Literacy Session	Teacher Training	May 23-24
CYFN General Assembly	YNLC Participation	June 25-27



Erika Scheffen and Mary Henry with Hän Language Students at Robert Service School, Dawson City

Language Program Consultations

by YNLC Coordinators Linda Harvey and Jo-Anne Johnson

Chief Zzeh Gittlit School, Old Crow	Gwich'in	Jan 30-31
J.V. Clark School, Mayo	N. Tutchone	Feb 19
Eliza van Bibber School, Pelly Crossing	N. Tutchone	Feb 20
Little Salmon Carmacks FN Language Program	N. Tutchone	Feb 21
Ross River School	Kaska	Apr 23
Kluane Lake School, Destruction Bay	S. Tutchone	Apr 25
Johnson Elementary School, Watson Lake	Kaska	May 7-8
Teslin School	Tlingit	May 9
Kluane Lake School, Destruction Bay	S. Tutchone	May 13
St Elias Community School and CAFN	S. Tutchone	May 13
Robert Service School, Dawson City	Hän Program	May 14
Tantalus School, Carmacks	N. Tutchone	May 16
Takhini School	S. Tutchone	May 22
Porter Creek Secondary School	S. Tutchone	May 23



TOGETHER TODAY... FOR OUR CHILDREN TOMORROW

COUNCIL OF YUKON FIRST NATIONS

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