



VGFN NEWS

NEWSLETTER
of the
VUNTUT GWITCHIN
GOVERNMENT



November
"Sheep Month"

Divii Zrii

Issue #08, Volume #04

November 2005



Sunrise in Old Crow on Friday
November 25th around 11:00
am



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**VGFN
NEWS**
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**VUNTUT GWITCHIN
GOVERNMENT**

VGFN News is the monthly
Newsletter of the Vuntut Gwitchin
First Nation Self-Government in Old
Crow, Yukon, Canada.
Contributions to VGFN News are by
the employees of VGFN.

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Mary Jane Moses Heritage Researcher

I attended DIAND Communications two-day workshop in Whitehorse.

Here is a list of some of the topics that I received handouts on: Community Roundtable Summaries, Collaborative Communications, Presentation to IWG, Planning for Implementation, INAC/YFN Communications Workshop, Web Content Report, Communications Plan Template, Strategic Communications Plan Template, IPACS Media Communications Toolkit, Communications Planning, Developing Effective Media Communications Skills, Communications Workshop for Yukon First Nations, Communication Products, Media Relations, Feedback on Communication Products, Building the Communications Budget. The intensive workshops attended also by representatives from other Yukon First Nation communities were very informative with excellent speakers and facilitators.

The following two days were spent at the Aboriginal Language Services meetings where I gave a Power Point presentation on our language related activities. All communities report on how they spent their language funding. This was excellent sharing as you can pick up ideas from one another. Our funding covered these projects, Gwichin classes and resources from Oct-March last year, Babiche Making Teaching/Resources held back at the tents, Gwich'in Language Immersion Camp held at Moses' Camp last August for a weekend, Gwich'in Language Immersion Calendar production and VGFN Cultural Geography Project with Elder/Youth involvement with place name mapping that happened in July with the chopper trips. Continuing language related projects will continue for the upcoming year. Thank you to the funding agencies for supporting native language initiatives throughout the Yukon.

Other Gwich'in language updates – Weekly Adult Gwich'in classes happen Wednesday evenings from 7-9pm at the college campus. An invitation is extended

to everyone to join in for fun evenings of learning basic Gwich'in ginjik. Our classes are now preparing for the Christmas concert. Singing carols

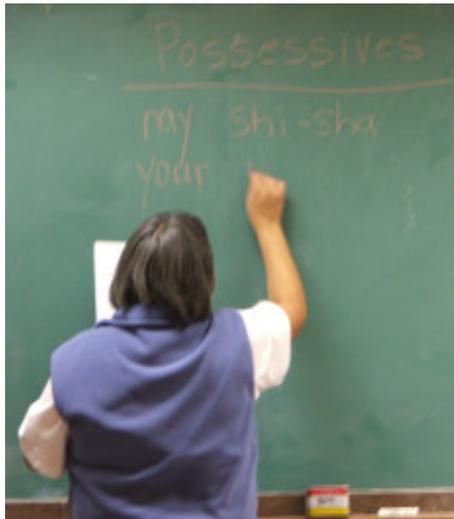


Photo By: Michael Peter

in Gwich'in, it's fun! I encourage you to join us and take advantage of this learning opportunity, bring along a friend. Mahsi' to all who have joined us thus far for taking the time to learn something new.

I have placed some basic Gwich'in words around the hallways of the VGFN Admin Building for those who want to learn some of the Gwich'in language. Positive feedback was received on that, so I will be changing words every so often.

I began working on a new task of compiling information from our Oral History and Cultural Geography database for another project, an online atlas. This will be a challenging task ahead for the Heritage staff but it will be exciting in the end when an individual can click on an atlas place name in the VGFN Traditional Territory and up comes information about the site, history behind it with Elder's storytelling and many other important information. For me, right now,



Photo By: S. Smith

its very overwhelming but knowing how all-important this will be in the end gives me the boost to go ahead with enthusiasm. This is another resource tool for our young people of tomorrow.

Safe travels to all trappers and hunters out on the land. Lots of snow this fall sometimes means lots of water underneath, so be careful out there especially on the lakes.

Ahh, gwiinzii, the spirit of Christmas is coming around the corner.



Photo By: Mary Jane Moses

SONJA FOSS LANDS MANAGER

The month started out with a meeting in Whitehorse. The meeting was the first Yukon meeting on the Circumpolar Biodiversity Monitoring Program (CBMP). The CBMP has had meetings in London, Copenhagen, and are set to have meetings in other places of the world. It was a great opportunity to have Vuntut Gwitchin Government representation there as the technical working group worked out what kind of indicators on the land they would monitor in the future. The group spent long days determining what research had been done to date in the circumpolar world and what gaps in research were evident. This effort ties in hand in hand with a new research initiative we will be looking into with great interest.

Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council and the International Polar Year Association have struck a partnership to allot funds to research. The research must specifically relate to climate change and adaptation and health in northern communities. Old Crow happens to be an ideal place for

such a setting as it corresponds to some community members' interests of conducting research in the Flats to start monitoring the changes and the changes in this community (new technology, development, lifestyle changes, and language use). There are six northern chairs of NSERC who are interested in developing a research project for the Old Crow Flats. Through communication with these chairs, the Natural Resources Department decided that the research questions should come from the community, and that VGFN members must be consulted about whether or not research even happens. We are looking forward to the outcomes of this consultation which is being planned for in January.

Another exciting opportunity for Old Crow is the research that will begin in June by Chris Burn. I am sure that most of you have learned who Chris Burn is over the years, but he is coming to Old Crow in January to discuss what research Old Crow would like to see in regards to permafrost. Do the water levels of the lakes in the Flats concern you at all? If so, please attend that meeting – dates to be announced.

A lot of my time has been devoted to finishing our strategic plan, organizing the office, responding to emails, issuing comments regarding policy and administrative processes, determining the department's goals, and attending meetings (such as the Old Crow Flats Technical Working Group meeting and the Management Committee meeting). The strategic plan will be finalized by December 9th, 2005 and ready for your viewing. The unfinished draft report is currently available on the new VGFN website www.vgfn.ca.

I have begun collecting information and references regarding oil spill contingency plans as well. Creating the contingency plan is specifically related to oil spills in the community and how to deal with spills if or when they do occur. I will be reviewing existing policies and plans supplied by Yukon Government and other First Nation Governments in order to provide some foundational necessities to a

VGG plan. I hope to have this plan ready for implementation a few months into the New Year.

Communication with Yukon Government has been steady regarding the mapped community boundary to be approved by November 30th, 2005. The mapped community boundary exempts community members from full YESAA (*Yukon Environmental & Socio-Economic Assessment Act*) processes. I had been told that it was finalized a few weeks ago, and then a new map came to me that had shrunk the border. We will see the boundary if the regulations are passed. The YESAA regulations may be passed either on November 30th, 2005 by the National Treasury Board or on December 15th, 2005. However, if there is an election called, we are fearful that the regulations may not be passed until March at the earliest – and we could even be working with a new government.

There is one person who has come in with their coordinates for the area of settlement land that they use for their camp. I checked out their coordinates with a GPS (Geographic Positioning System) and downloaded them into a software program. I am now checking with Government Services and Chief and Council about the future processes of providing Certificates of Possession to members. This process will not be created overnight, but I think that it is a good idea to start collecting information from interested members.

I would like to sincerely thank Dana Lord for taking on very time consuming and sometimes frustrating work from our department. We will be relying on Dana heavily to date and categorize some of our files as we slowly get ourselves organized (which is an ongoing process). So, thank you very much Dana.

Also, we have successfully nominated Randall Tetlich to the Yukon River Intertribal Watershed Council Working Group. Randall will be representing VGFN and THFN. Congratulations Randall.

Other than that, this month has gone by very quickly indeed. As the Christmas season approaches, I wish you all a very

happy time. Thank you all for being such great people!

Take care

Melissa Valja Natural Resources Planner

Hello! I hope this month (Divii Zrii) has been good for everyone.

Old Crow Flats Special Management Area

We have participated in two meetings by teleconference to plan the Open House in Old Crow. The Technical Working Group met in Whitehorse on the 16th and discussed the format of the Open House, and everyone has been very busy getting ready for it. The Management Committee met on November 23rd, and was updated by the Co-Chairs of TWG on the preparations for the Open House. On the afternoon of November 29th, there was an Elders Meeting, followed by a briefing with Chief and Council. On November 30th, there was an Open House during the day, followed by a community dinner and presentations that evening. There will be an Open House in Whitehorse on December 14th for the Vuntut citizens living there.

Porcupine Caribou Meeting with Tr'ondek Hwechin and Nacho Nyak Dun

On November 3, we hosted a meeting in Old Crow with delegates from Tr'ondek Hwechin and Nacho Nyak Dun. They spoke to the community about some of the hardships they face while harvesting caribou on the Dempster Highway. Specifically, the presenters identified the 500-meter no hunting corridor along the highway, and the "let the leaders pass" hunting closures are causing hardships to their membership. Mahsi' Cho to those that billeted our guests.

Porcupine Caribou Management Board

Georgie Moses has been nominated by VGG as the nominee for the next term of Vuntut Gwitchin membership to the PCMB, and we will be looking for an Alternate member. Thank you to Dennis Frost Sr. who has served as the Vuntut

Gwitchin representative to the PCMB. There was a PCMB meeting in Inuvik on November 4-6 in which Georgie (currently an alternate member) and I attended. These few days were informative as people presented on different research, the Bluenose Herd decline, and community concerns. Please talk to your new representative to the PCMB about any issues you have. He needs to hear what the community opinion is in order to represent Old Crow well at the Board.

Climate Change

Youth Summit on Climate Change/ COP11

On Monday November 21, NR dept. received news that two youth from Old Crow could be eligible to go to the Beyond Kyoto –It's us! (An international Youth Summit on Climate Change), occurring November 24-28th. The next day Crystal Linklater and Frances Bruce were on their way to Montreal to represent Old Crow. An important aspect to the meeting is the Youth Declaration that they will present to the COP11 United Nations Meeting. They return on November 30th.

Awareness Projects

NYRRC (Darcie Matthiessen), Community Steward (Jen Smith) and I are slowly working with the youth (senior class at CZGS) to research climate change, and work toward developing a mural with a local artist. From their research and community input, we will also be able to make a Gwich'in English pamphlet.

ANCAP

I attended a meeting for the Aboriginal and Northern Community Action Program in Whitehorse on November 10th. This was funded by ANCAP and was not a VGFN expense. Much of the committee attended and we voted to change the structure of the committee and our relationship to the Pathfinder with the hope of making ANCAP work better for us. Upcoming dates in February are the proposals intake for ANCAP funding, and a 3 day workshop on renewable energy and energy efficiency.

KimBlake Projects Coordinator

Good Day everyone, I hope you are all in good spirits and health. Just for everyone to know, my job title has changed from Caribou Coordinator to Projects Coordinator. This means that I coordinate Chief and Council meetings, General Assemblies, special events, Caribou coordinating, and also working with the Enrollment program. All positions that go out for hire will go through our Human Resources Department for advertising.

The beginning of November was a very tense time, as the whole Gwich'in Nation were all so concerned about the Senate and House votes on the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. It was proven that we have a lot of people on our side that are with us on saving the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, and working hard to preserve it. As a community we must stay focused on the issue and be positive.



**Photo By: Michael Frances
Update on U.S. Reconciliation Bill:**

With the House and Senate both now having passed a different version of the budget reconciliation bill, the two versions will go to a conference committee to work out those differences.

The Senate version of the budget reconciliation has drilling in America's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, and has approximately \$30 billion in cuts to domestic programs, and the House has no drilling provision and has \$50 billion in cuts. The next step in the process is a conference committee between the Senate and the House versions of the budget reconciliation bills where they will attempt to work out the differences between the two versions. As the conference committee moves forward, the Senate will put

tremendous pressure on the House to accept their version of the drilling provision. It will be very important that all of those moderate Republicans to continue to oppose any budget that allows drilling in America's Arctic National Wildlife Refuge.

A week ago, when the moderate Republicans forced the leadership to remove the provision, they also pledged that they would stand firm and do everything they could to make sure that the issue didn't come back. "We made it clear... we will not waver in our position" throughout the upcoming conference committee negotiations, Representative Charles Bass (R-NH) said at a news conference, flanked by four members of the moderate Republican Main Street Partnership Coalition. Representative Mark Kirk, (R-IL), called the dropping of the Arctic drilling provision a "great victory" for moderate Republicans.

"I and other like-minded members will not vote for the final package when it comes back if it has drilling in the Arctic there," said Bass, who helped to lead the effort to remove the Arctic drilling language from the House version of the reconciliation bill.



Photo By: Michael Frances

But Republican leaders said they had made no promises to keep the drilling out of a negotiated measure. "We take this issue on one vote at a time," said Representative David Dreier (R-CA), chairman of the Rules Committee. "It would be a premature exaltation to celebrate ... [this] is just a temporary detour," said longtime Arctic champion Ed Markey (D-MA), adding that he's certain the GOP leadership will put pressure on its moderates to change

their mind about the Arctic drilling provision. Marnie Funk, a spokeswoman for Senate Energy Committee Chairman Pete Domenici (R-NM), said Domenici considers the Senate-approved Arctic Refuge drilling provision "one of the most critical components" in the budget package.

Probably mid December we will know more, I will keep in contact with Erik Dumont down in Washington, DC at the Wilderness League office and if there is anything new that happens or will happen on this very important issue I will put a notice on oldcrow.ca

I still have a list of names of community members that would like to travel for the Caribou Department, if you would like to be on this list, you are welcome to submit your name to the office. I cannot stress enough how important it is that we continue to lobby to save the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, and how important it is to send delegates down to the states. We have to stay on the positive side and stay focused on the issue.

After the Christmas holidays I will give an orientation on the Citizen & Beneficiary Enrollment program by Tracy Kassi, this will give me a better understanding of the program and help me better assist the public with any questions that they may have.

Thank you for your time and I hope you all enjoy the rest of November! And if you have any questions or comments, please feel free to call me @ (867-966-3261 ext.229)

Louise Creyke
Manager, Health & Social Programs

It's that time of year again, one month till Christmas and like most people I am already excited as this is my favorite time of the year. My family will be coming up and again we will be together. Many interesting things have taken place over the past several months.

First and foremost being able to do what I enjoy and that is working with my people. There's so much more than to sit at a desk doing SA, following policy that

I do not have a choice but to follow, or help to make a

difference. Over the last while I learned what it is really like to live in the community. To see and hear concerns of the people. Many memories of the past have opened my eyes to the changes, some good and some otherwise. In saying this, I believe the problems of this community are ours and it will take us to solve our own problems. We sometimes rely on outside help to "fix" our issues for us but it begins by each person doing their part, which means taking responsibility for ourselves. If we are part of the problem then we need to be part of the solution for things to change for the better.

Taking responsibility means not relying on SA only but to remember it is for those in need and more so those in CRISIS. When you are not in need and abuse the system then you are taking away from the less fortunate, and whether anyone likes it or not we know those in our community who are in need and those who just depend on the system. This is not to say I do not agree with the program. I hear community concerns, I continue to do my best and respect those who need assistance.

Into the New Year there will be some changes to the Social Assistant policy. Hopefully this will help us to address some of these issues.

I had the opportunity of learning a new system called AIS (Aboriginal Information System), which many First Nations are using to organize their workload. Although it took sometime to adjust, I enjoy the new system making paperwork much more convenient.

Last month I was chosen to go to Whitehorse to attend an AIDS Trainers Training workshop. In doing this I now have to prepare and follow up in Old Crow with a workshop as well. This will take place early in December and I will have a sign up letting you know what to expect. It is a known fact Aboriginal people are the fastest growing population contacting AIDS/HEP C. Many people come and go from your community and we need to understand that this is a huge concern especially our young people.

There has been a lot of work around the Health Fair "Its All About Action"

in the last while. I would like to congratulate all the workers for their commitment and hard work in organizing this event. The turn out went well and it was good to see those who attended. Congratulations to Madison Lord on winning the return ticket to Whitehorse.

There always seems to be so much to say and you wonder what you have missed. With that all said and done I hope anyone with concerns feel they can come and talk to me. I will be honest and say I try hard not to judge anyone because I too have my own issues. Mashi' Cho



Renee Charlie
Home and Community Care Worker

HELLO TO ALL!

This months newsletter will be short with upcoming Christmas Schedule: Health Fair was held November 23 and 24/2005, it was a very informative get together. I learned a lot on health issues and how to make healthy choices. I like to thank all the citizens who attended.

Meals – On – Wheels is going well. All elders 65 years & over are enjoying meals being delivered to their homes on Sunday. We have 21 Elders we deliver meals too each week. During Christmas Holidays meals will discontinued and continued again, January 7, 2006.

Hot Lunch Program at School will be December 2, 5,6,9,12,14 and 16th. Monday, Wednesday and Friday. So far, lunch program is going good, all volunteers help out, setting up tables/chairs, serving lunch to students and supervise students after lunch. Students are back in class 12:45 noon. I'd like parents to call in and volunteer, so far I have staff from our first nation volunteer. we need donation's of caribou meat and fish. All

students appreciate the lunch program, they tell you, Mahsi' Cho. And, it is a Good feeling. Mahsi' Cho, to my cooks and cooks helper. You're all doing a great job.

Homecare Workers

I am looking for Homecare Workers, for Elders 65 years & over. Please, call me if you're interested in working before Christmas. Annual Elders Christmas Dinner will be December 16 Friday-Time: 5:00-&:7:00pm. At the Community Center - Santa will make an appearance with a gift for each elder.

Wood and heating fuel

December, 2005 heating fuel will be delivered next week, as most of the Elders had their December fuel delivered, you must be responsible to fill your own fuel tanks. As an Elder you either receive heating fuel or wood.

Weekly Elders Tea is every other Wednesday, due to my busy schedule. I will call each Elder on time and date of next get together.

The First Nation Office will be closed, December 16, 2005. For Christmas Holidays. Take care of an Elder.

Joe Tetlich **Justice Coordinator**

Health Fair

The Health & Social teams prime mandate is for the wellness of individuals and the community as a whole. We are always seeking direction and suggestions as to how we achieve our goal. The Health Fair was an idea from our team to coincide with Alcohol and Drug awareness week. The staff met numerous times to go over who should attend and to put together a draft agenda. By all taking on different tasks and delegating, we accomplished the structure of the Fair.

We felt that the theme would be "It's all about action". In order for the community to get results we all have to take responsibility. We each have different strengths that would be beneficial to this worthy cause. Bringing in outside resources also showed that we wanted to utilize as many people as we needed. The week started off with a sober walk in the

community, which was well attended by all. The Health Fair started on Wednesday morning with a round table discussion on individual introductions and a history about our positions and us. This was a very powerful start to the conference. As the two days progressed different people presented on topics from rational recovery to FAS. We also had a few icebreakers to reenergize and to get away from sitting too long. To get people out to our conference we had door prizes and also breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

This conference was for community and transient members also, as we all live in the community and we want the best for the children and the community. Putting on a conference takes a lot of time and energy. We can only hope that individuals and families take these opportunities to move forward in creating healthy atmospheres at home.

Overall the Health Fair was a success. We had members sitting in for the whole fair and we also had people that just dropped by to see what it was all about. All the presentations were very enlightening and powerful. In the future we will be doing something like this again. We had questionnaires out and we collected feedback on the conference so we can fine-tune our conferences. Thanks to all the Elders, presenters, coordinators, speakers, and the general public for attending the fair. Hopefully we all came out with something that we can use.



Barry Drury **Director, Government Services**

I first must apologize for not putting anything in the last few newsletters.

We are extremely busy in GS-Housing. The projects that we are working on at the moment are as follows.

Arena update - The structural components are all installed and we now have to wait until later in the year to install the

fabric as the temperature and wind does not allow for safe installation. The project will be completed as soon as possible in 2006.

We have applied for funding to construct another five washroom additions. Plans are in the works to construct housing units next summer in conjunction with some expected CMHC funding.

We have a carpentry course planned to be held in Old Crow early in 2006. The course is being worked on by GS/Housing, our Education and Training department, Human Resources VGG, and Yukon College.

Our next fuel haul will take place in early December.

We plan to move the old airport terminal building as soon as possible. Possibly to a temporary location until a decision can be made with regards to the long-term use of the building.

Kathy Nukon is taking a three-month sabbatical beginning January first 2006.

Applications for another RRAP repairs projects is in, as well we will be doing renovations on at least three CMHC units in the new year.

The renovations have been approved so we are just waiting for materials at the moment.

We will have on call personnel during the Christmas shut down. If you need assistance during the time from December 16 to January 3 please call Barry Drury - 966 - 3150.

We wish you all a very merry Christmas and happy New Year.

Please be safe. Mashi' Cho



Donna Frost
Employment & Training
Officer

Good day to one and all.

November has been quite a busy month. We are busy with all students handing in their applications for the November 30th deadline. It is nice to see students going back to further their education.

I have been volunteering for the hot lunch program at the school. It's going very well. It's nice to see everyone helping out. Parents are encouraged to volunteer their time to help with this program. It runs Monday, Wednesday and Fridays. Please come and help out.

I want to wish a few people a very Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.....

The "Whole" Frost Family, I am so glad you will "all" be here for Christmas, it shall be one to remember always.

To my babies David, Koda and Cheyenne, wish you could be here with us, but will wait for Spring Break.

Verna and Jared Shay Nukon, wish you could be here for the holidays. Miss ya

Deanna, Vernon & Kayleen, also Edna, Tyrone & Makayla Kyikavichik

Amanda, Sherri-Lynn, Natasha, Crystal, Lisa & Bobby, Malinda B, Tracy & Steven, Kim, Clayton and Myles Rumley.

Jackie, Glen, Samantha, Jessica and David in Whitehorse

Kris Allen, wherever you may be!!

Robert, Dorothy and Phillip Rispin, Mike & Darcy

Tracy, Kecia, April & Tyrel

Teresa Kendi, Keith and Samantha in Whitehorse

Michelle way over in England, we will be thinking of you over the Holidays. XOXOXO

Tracy, Cheyanne and Dean Kapuschak Carla, Seth and Marshall Boss in Haines Junction.

And Everyone else I forgot to mention. Have a very safe and enjoyable Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year to everyone. Mashi Cho

So far the fuel delivery has been going okay. I process invoices commercial customers that are purchased from the store for heating fuel and to be delivered to the paying units.

If anyone would like heating fuel for their residence/ home, you go to the Northern Store purchase a Fuel Slip, and Inform the clerk at the store if you want Gas or Heating Fuel.

Please, take the fuel slip of Government Services and they will get the fuel delivered to your home per their delivery schedule. The fuel delivery person will issue you a fuel delivery slip to sign and you will keep the original white copy for your records. The white slip you received from the store is left with the fuel delivery personnel.

I would like to say Mahsi' Cho to the following people for doing such a wonderful job. It's just a way to show my appreciation.

To: Chief and Council, Mahsi' Cho for all your hard work you've done for our community and commitment to your jobs; All VGG departments and especially Government Services. The work you have done this year has been enormously wonderful, we have another year to look forward to, so keep working hard and keep smiling. Thank you to Catherine Mwenda and Ida Tizya for the large amount of work you have done to let us (employees) have a payday every second week, also for keeping everything up to date. The plumbers, Karols Foster and Lawrence Charlie you guys are doing a wonderful job, keep it up. Your hard work is most appreciated. To: Jimmy Linklater and Marvin Frost, Thank you for waking up early to drive the children to school on time, also for driving our elderly people to social events and meeting. Phillip Frost, thank you to for keeping up with the fuel deliverie. To the guys at YTG. and the the RCMP, Mahsi' Cho!

Marla Kaye
Accounts Receivable Clerk

Good Day,
Information Reminder

Rent: Thank you to those people who keep their rent up to date. I prepare Rent Invoices and send them out in the beginning of every month.

Government Services is working on getting rental agreements for all rental units that should be paying monthly rent. They will be starting with CMHC Housing and then moving on to First Nation Housing. Most people will start getting billed monthly for rent.

Water & Sewer

Invoices are mailed out at the beginning of each month and this is based on a list from YTG of who has received water the previous month. For example the invoice you will receive on December 1/2005 will be for water delivered from November 1- November 30/2005. This information is shown under the

description column on the invoice. Please note that an invoice for \$35 will be sent if you received water for the whole month or part of the month.

Those of you who do not keep up with you payments will either have a choice of

- Being cut off (No water & sewer delivery till there is a payment made on your account or you come in to discuss a payment plan). Government services issues the disconnection notices.

- Be requested to sign a deduction form (employees), it would be deducted from your paycheck on the agreed pay period.

- If you do any work for VGFN then you will be asked to take pay off your water and sewer bill, by signing a deduction form.

It is part of my job to follow up on any outstanding debts and to ensure the accounts that are kept current. If an account is overdue, a statement will be sent out stamped OVER DUE.

Fuel

Tracy M. Rispin-Kassi **Director of Education**

Drin Gwiinzii Shilak Kat!

Seems like everyone is getting excited about the upcoming season of Christmas cheer. I have been driving around looking at some lights in people's window and of course, the bright colorful Christmas lights in the yard of Stephen & Ethel Frost. I'm sure the people of Old Crow enjoy your yearly explosion of colorful lights. Mashi' Cho!

November started off with the Hot Lunch program again at the school. This year the Home & Community Care worker, Renee Frost, coordinates it. The first two lunches were a little tough to get the kids adapted to the new program but now after a month, the kids are well adapted to the routine and show respect to all that volunteer. Each Monday, Wednesday and Friday the boys and girls take turns in the gym and library. Seems to be working well. Having some of the parents volunteering their time supervising the students has made a great difference and I have also heard this from teachers, where some parents have visited their classroom.

I would like to encourage more of your visits to your child's classroom, to observe the teachings they receive. The Principal and teachers also encourage this and are happy to have you visit the classroom. You can visit up to an hour or less!

November also brought the final budget reviews for the last six months. Seems like everyone is monitoring their budgets very well. The cultural program at the school may have to be cut in the New Year because of the lack of funding, but, Mabel is trying to locate funding through letter writing and proposals. More information will be given in the New Year. The Cultural program consists of Traditional cooking, sewing and Industrial Arts, as well the Crowflat cultural camp. Some funds have come in from the Crime Prevention Yukon. The last day of Cultural programming for this year is December 9th 05. Mashi' Cho to all our cultural teachers in the community, Mary Tizya, Maureen Vittrekwa, Florence Thomas &

Derek Kapuschak.

It was great to hear Gwich'in Language teacher, Randall Kendi on CBC during Gwich'in Literacy Week, November 21 – 25th at the Yukon College. Randall had his students there with him and demonstrated his teachings. From the feedback I've received on this from Mr. Dave Sloan, Randall is doing an excellent job! Keep up the great work, Randall! The students sounded really great and sung a Christmas carol on the radio. It was beautiful. Elder Annie Lord was also in attendance and made a good talk on the radio regarding our language. Yes, it's important we all try to speak our language as much as we can. Look at my niece in England, I speak to her often and she told me that she has no one to speak Gwich'in to over there. She says this because her roommate is from Hong Kong, China and she has friends who she can speak to in her language. I was very proud to hear my niece say she's teaching her new friends in England some of our Gwich'in language. Michelle is quite popular with people asking her about Old Crow and our life style. She is our very own Youth Ambassador for the Vuntut Gwitchin.

On November 29th, the VGFN Department of Education hosted the Final Report of the 1999 Strategic Plan, done by Mr. Bob Sharp and Ms. Tina Jules. A dinner was hosted and I must say "Mahsi' Cho" to everyone that showed up with interest in this Plan and of course, Education. Your comments were well taken and it gives this department direction of where we can focus on. It was great to hear other people's points of concern and the interest in education out there in the community. We come to work each day, doing paperwork, seeking funding to improve programs and most days there are just not enough hours to finish up a day's work. Improvements take time but know that work is being done, and things cannot happen overnight. Our next step is to carefully look through the Plan and identify which recourses will be held responsible. Some steps in the Plan are already in implementation, Examples are this department's involvement with the

School Council meetings.

As Director, I have made the commitment to sit on their monthly meetings at the school. It is important that communication is shared with everyone who is in the education field. Other areas of education such as the Land Base programs will take time to getting use to but a priority for our cultural camps. Meetings will have to take place in the New Year to educate camp workers on the new structure. This year the kids will be doing most of the work to set up camp. New things take time to adapt, so patience will be asked of everyone. We all learn from mistakes to make things better. I'm sure this will be the case in our first year of offering this new cultural program.

Finally we have two positions for the Homework Tutor. Sonja Foss and Catherine Mwenda have been hired as part-time tutors for the community. Because it is so close to the holidays they will be working on their schedules for the New Year. Postings of their schedule will be sent home with the students and posted in the community. This was the second closing of this position and these two ladies were the ones to apply.

December, of course, Comes with excitement of the holiday just around the corner. Decorations are up and there is a sense of happiness all around the office. Many are quite busy as elves trying to finish up projects before our closing date of December 16th. Coordinators have been hired by the First Nation to plan the holiday events in town and the children are practicing for their annual Christmas concert. Welcome home to our High School students, have fun during your visit home. Merry Christmas to all our other students out in Whitehorse, Alberta and British Columbia! Keep up the good work and best wishes in your studies in the New Year.

2005 has been a year of good positive changes in our department and we hope to continue this in the New Year of 2006. Please drop by our office if you have any new ideas for implementing our education programs or if you have any concerns. We will be happy to hear from

you.
Have a wonderful Christmas to my staff and I look forward to our working together in the New Year!

Ida Tizya
Finance Payroll Clerk

Greetings to everyone:

It's that time of year again for the Christmas holidays and finance will be busy until the office closes down.

For Employees the schedule for the last three pay periods has been posted. The final pay for 2005 will be on December 16, 2005. This is also the last day of work for the year as we break for the Christmas holidays until Tuesday January 3, 2006.

Payroll checks and pay slips are distributed to departments every pay Friday, thus the staff should contact their respective departments for their checks and pay slips. If an employee is not in town, finance keeps the pay slip and cheque in our office for safekeeping to be collected when they come back.

Most staff have bank accounts and they get a direct deposit to their accounts.

We have a schedule for short-term assignments hires (for instance cooks, translators, boat operators and other short term work) The payroll is processed on Thursday of each week and the checks distributed out on Friday morning.

Have yourself a great Holiday.

Mahsi' Cho

Catherine Mwenda
Finance Director

The year is coming to a close quickly and we are busy here in finance department. December is a short working month for us and also a very busy month. The office closes for Christmas break on Friday 16th December 2005 at 4.30 P.M and reopens on Tuesday, January 3, 2006. I am taking holidays from January 3, 2006 to February 17, 2006 to visit my family in Kenya.

I would first like to thank my staff here in Finance department for all the hard work they have put in this

whole year. Thanks to Ida, Marla and to Majida who is on maternity leave. We are a small finance department compared to other First Nations and we still strive to provide the best service to other departments and to the public. It is the dedication and hard work of the staff that makes this possible.

Also a big thank you to all VGG staff for the hard work during the year and support that you have given to finance.

Mahsi Cho.

CCRA Tax year-end

We are starting to work on various returns for CCRA year-end and reporting. These will be mailed out in February 2006, (no later than 28th February 2006 per the Government requirements).

Forms issued are as follows

-Employees- T4

-Elders-T4A

-Students-T4A and some of those funded under AHRDA funds T4E

-Contractors- T4A for the labor portion of the contract.

-Social Assistance- T5007

In case we do not have in our records your SIN number and current address we will contact you for this information in the New Year. Also if the name we have in our records is not the same name on your SIN card, please advise us immediately.

Work

With the Christmas break office closure; the following are the dates for processing of payments for Elders checks and student allowances for January 2006

January 2006 Elders Checks- January 4, 2006

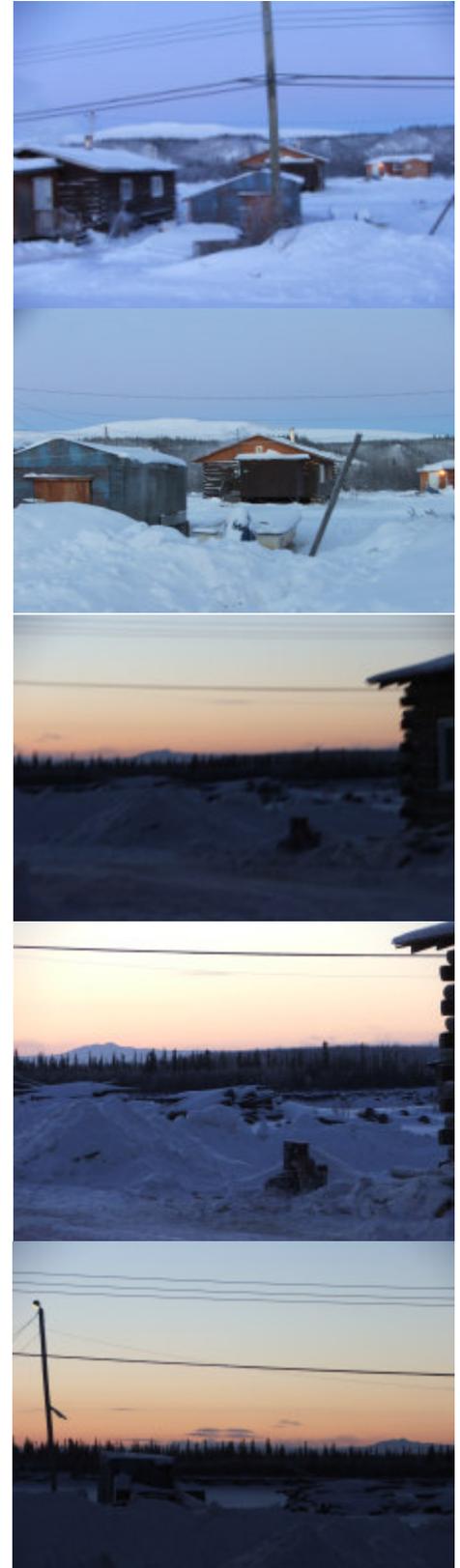
January 2006 Student Allowances- January 4, 2006

The budget reviews with all the nine departments were completed on the week ending November 10/2005. This was followed by a review of the budgets with all the directors the following week. We are closely monitoring our expenses as a government to ensure we stay within our budgets. The 6-month review of the budgets did confirm that most expenditure items are within budget and also departments are within budgets.

A copy of the 6-month (Un-audited)

Income Statement will be included in the newsletter.

I take this opportunity to wish you all and your loved ones a Merry Christmas and a happy 2006 full of good health, wealth and wonderful memories.



Photos By: Tammy Josie