

Self Government News

Volume 1, Issue 5

January – March 2007



Negotiations update—Estair Van Wagner

The Gwich'in self-government team started off 2007 with a very productive Main Table negotiation session with Canada and the Government of the Northwest Territories in Yellowknife, February 6-8th. Issues on the Agenda this session included:

- Structures of a Gwich'in Government
- The general provisions of the Self Government Agreement
- Reviewing jurisdictions of Gwich'in governance
- The annual communications work plan



Self Government team at Negotiations in Yellowknife.

At the table for the Gwich'in team were head negotiator Charlie Furlong as well as Margaret Gordon and Mavis Clark who were sitting in for assis-

tant negotiator Karen Snowshoe while she was away on leave. Chiefs Richard Nerysoo, Peter Ross, and Johnny Kay also attended the February session, and the self-government coordinators Eliza Greenland, Ruth Elanik and Patricia Van Loon were at the negotiations to ensure that each community was

represented and up to date on the self government process.

A large part of the February session was focused on Canada's proposed

"Transition Protocol" which responded to the "Gwich'in Issues" discussion paper tabled in the

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Special points of interest:

- Negotiations update
- Message from the Chief Negotiator
- Community Reports
- Traditional Governance Stories



Fall of 2006. There was some good discussion and the parties agreed that this could be the basis for the general provisions of the Agreement dealing with many of the major issues surrounding Treaty 11 and Aboriginal rights for the Gwich'in. While there is more work to be done on these issues the Gwich'in team was encouraged by the discussion that took place and looks forward to revisiting the discussions at the March negotiation session.

Another important issue discussed at this session was the importance of implementation and ensuring that the Gwich'in have adequate resources to put the new governance structure in place once an Agreement has been reached. This includes the need for capacity building within the Gwich'in communities to ensure that there are people ready to take on leadership roles within the new governance structures. The parties agreed that ensuring adequate resources and capacity building were priorities and should be dealt with in an ongoing manner.

The three parties have now started to review the old Agreement – In-Principle and work through the jurisdictions according to the 2007 work plan and timeline. The Gwich'in team expects this to move along quickly towards a Memorandum of Understanding as many of the jurisdictions have al-

ready been approved by the communities. At this session the Main Table Working Group is looking at the chapters dealing with Marriage, Wills and Estates, Heritage Resources, and Language and Culture. By the next session they will start on the chapters dealing with education and childcare.



L-R: Bill McGill (Gov't of Canada); Chief Negotiator for the GTC Charlie Furlong and Len Griffore for the Gov't of the NWT.

While in Yellowknife the self-government team also met with the Tlicho to discuss the experience of putting self government in place in their communities. The Gwich'in team spent the afternoon at the Tlicho Government office in Yellowknife with Bertha Rabesca-Zoe, legal council for the Tlicho

Government, learning about everything from creating the Tlicho Constitution to economic development. Bertha outlined many of the steps on the road to implementing their Agreement and getting the Tlicho government up and running. It was a very interesting and exciting afternoon and the Gwich'in team left with lots of food for thought! Although the Gwich'in communities will have a different experience with setting up self government, it is important to learn from the challenges and successes of others. Mahsi Cho to Bertha and the Tlicho Government for a great presentation and for sharing their experience.

For more on Estair Van Wagner please go to page 4.



From the office of the Chief Negotiator



Drin Gwiinzii
First of all I hope that you are all surviving the cold weather and looking out for each other. I remember our elders speaking

of -50 below in the good old days and they must have been tough people, because they didn't have all these extra warm wind-proof clothing we have today.

The "repatriation of our pre-existence" is a statement and argument that I use at the Self Government negotiations to try and educate and convince Government that the Gwich'in survived and looked after themselves long before the *uunjit* entered our Nation.

Our people made decisions by consensus and that meant talking among each other with as much input as possible so that everyone knew what was happening. Our leaders were chosen for their skills and knowledge of the Land and the ability to step forward and share their ideas on how the Gwich'in planned.

The Gwich'in were greatly influenced by the Missions, Hudson's Bay Company and Governments that were established after Treaty #11 was signed. The Indian Act later placed conditions and restrictions on our People and the settlement of communities slowly moved them from the Land.

The Band Council's were introduced under the Indian Act which allowed the Gwich'in to choose Leaders to represent them. The Gwich'in adopted the Band Council system and still chose their leaders by custom (consensus) until the 1970's when the Indian Brotherhood of

the NWT and the Department of Indian Affairs introduced the election system.

The Métis were also organized in the 70's but really had no land base and at times worked closely with the Band's who were recognized as Land owners.

The Gwich'in will still continue to use the Band Council's as

their connection to the Crown and maintain that Treaty #11 was a nation to nation arrangement that recognized the Gwich'in right to be Self Governing. The Gwich'in also settled their Land Claim agreement in 1992 which gave certain rights to all Gwich'in and their descendants including Status, Non-Status, Métis and Gwich'in.



Joe Greenland and Pascal Baptiste standing outside the Hudson's Bay Company in Aklavik



Chief Negotiator's report continues.....

The Claim also created new institutions (Designated Gwich'in Organization's and Renewable Resource Council's) which confused people and in some cases caused conflict among the membership.

Under the Self Government Agreement we are trying to explore

ways that we can reduce the amount of Government bodies in the communities and to create a Community Government that will be more effective, transparent, and accountable to its citizens. The Self



Richardson Mountains on the Aklavik side

Government office will soon introduce a model that will need Community input and the draft Community Constitutions will be attached to these new models and hopefully this will provide a clearer picture of what a Gwich'in Community Government will look like.

We are at the same time looking at what a Gwich'in Regional Government may look like and what authorities the communities are willing to delegate.

The future of the Gwich'in nation looks positive in that we own our Land, systems in place to monitor and condition access on our Lands and the ability to profit from development on our Lands.

However our future as a Culture could be jeopardized because we are slowly losing our Traditions and Language. A Nation that does not exist by its Traditions and Language is powerless as a Culture and even though they can become economically independent they will

become systemized by standards set by others.

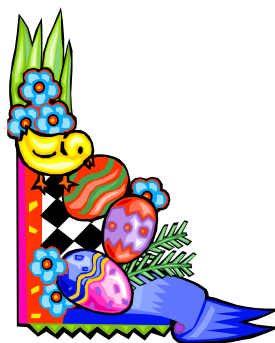
A future Self Government agreement would enable us to create certain laws and policy to direct future generations to incorporate the Gwich'in way into their Political, Economic and Social agenda's and to influence Governments and Industry

to respect and honor our Culture and Traditions.

Mahsi, to all Elders and Youth, and a very Happy Easter to all of you in the communities.

May God Bless

Chief Charlie Furlong



Law Student Estair Van Wagner

At this time every year we get a student from the Osgoode Hall Law school to help us out in the Self Government department.

In the past we've had students Sen Wung, Maggie Farington, Andrew Newman and Caroline McGrath. Each of these students proved to be a great help to us whenever we had a legal question to ask and they also did a lot of research for us.

Joining us this time around is Estair Van Wagner. Estair is a second year law student at Osgoode Hall Law



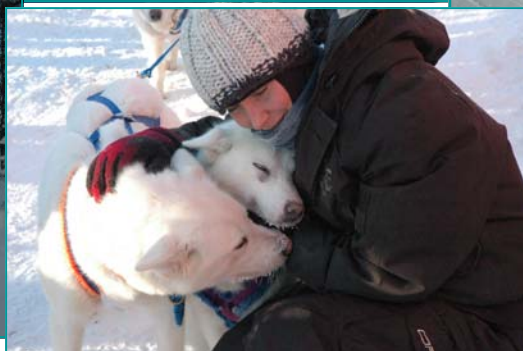
School in Toronto. She will be with us for seven weeks as part of the Aboriginal Lands and Governance Intensive Program. Estair grew up in Toronto but has spent most of her summers in northern Ontario, Quebec and Manitoba guiding canoe trips. She loves cross-country skiing and skating.

Estair has proven to be a great help to us as she works on developing a

Gwich'in Charter of Rights.

During her stay in Inuvik she has been skiing, dog sledding and drove on the famous ice road to Aklavik.

Mahsi Cho Estair!!!!!!



Estair's adventures in Inuvik were dogsledding, skiing, and taking a ride on the famous ice roads.

The Main Table

Margaret Gordon

My story begins like this. It was back in early January when Karen said that Mavis, Estair and I would be sitting at the Main table in her place. At first I thought sure, no problem....then I started to think about sitting with the big boys.

I call them the big boys because they've been at this longer than I've been.

The day of the negotiations we arrive at the Department of Indian and Northern affairs office where the meetings were to take place. The sun shines through the windows most of the day making it nice and bright. The board room is big and has comfortable chairs.

Soon others start to arrive and we shake their hands and introduce ourselves if we don't know the person.

Sitting at the table for the Government of Canada is Bill McGill Chief Negotiator, Hector McLeod Assistant Negotiator, and Jennifer Moores for Communications; for the Government of the NWT, Len Griffore Chief Negotiator, Ed McRae Assistant negotiator, Darren Pickup Legal Advisor and Nancy Gardiner for Communications.

Also at the table are Chief Richard Nerysoo, Chief Peter Ross, Chief Johnny Kay and Chief Charlie Furlong.

The meeting begins with a prayer and then we get into the first item on the agenda I start to observe what is being said and by whom. I especially listen closely to what our Chiefs and the Chief Negotiator are saying. These are the people who are speaking on your behalf and making



Main Table Negotiations in Yellowknife in February

ing sure that we get the best possible deal. I must say that you don't have anything to worry about because our Chiefs and Chief negotiator are doing the very best they can.



The main topic was on how to communicate our progress to the people so that they understand what we are doing and that we are not just traveling, but actually doing a lot of hard work when we go to the Main Table for negotiations.

As a courtesy to all, the negotiations are heard in each of the four Gwich'in communities, Yellowknife and sometimes in Ottawa.

Well as it turns out we didn't have a thing to worry about because we had the support of our Chiefs, Chief negotiator Charlie Furlong, and our Community representatives. We enjoyed our one day sitting with the big boys and would like to do it again soon.

Constitutional Workshop Margaret Gordon

In mid November we hired Coordinators in the four Gwich'in communities. We brought them to Inuvik for a two day workshop on the community constitution. We looked over the three draft constitutions and we had some good discussions on why the constitutions were a little different. Each community constitution will be a little different because they need to make sure that it suits that community. At this time we suggested to Inuvik that they adopt one of the constitutions as their own or to revise to fit this community.

I gave a presentation on communications because that is what we are doing when we take information to the Gwich'in participants. It explained how we can't give too much information at once because the individuals will tune out and will not understand the document.

We must make sure we are passing on the right information to all ages so that they can have an opportunity to give their comments.

I also told them about the Canadian Constitution and how this is what we are basing our community constitutions on. We only went over some parts of the document because it was too large to do in two days.



L-r Mildred Edwards of Aklavik, and Ruth Elanik of Inuvik at a Constitutional workshop

I mentioned to them that once the constitutions are accepted by Chief and Council then it needs to go to the participants for their comments. This is being done in Tsiigehtchic, Aklavik and Inuvik. Fort McPherson will be doing theirs as soon as Coordinator is hired.



L-R; Elders Florence Raddi, Ruby McLeod, Elizabeth Firth and Sarah McLeod-Firth

Once the participants at the workshop start to understand what we are talking about they started to ask more questions which helps us understand this better. I always try to make a comparison when I'm talking about a particular section, such as how we will deal with criminals. Along time ago the elders would take the individual aside and have a talk with them. Of course that is not the case today, they are dealt with by the courts.

As you are reading this we are going door to door with the constitution in all communities so that participants are kept updated on where their band is.



Traditional Governance

Margaret Gordon

A few issues back I spoke about Traditional Governance. Traditional governance is the way our people looked after their families and themselves a long time ago. The Gwich'in use to govern themselves before the Europeans came. The Europeans came and started trading with our people and introducing them to an easier way of life.

They introduced us to the fuel stove, we didn't have to burn wood anymore, running water and electricity. Our people began to get lazy and did not practice our way of life anymore.

In 1998-1999, Beaufort Delta Self Government fieldworkers went to the communities and interviewed elders on how they use to govern themselves.

I took all those stories and have put them into my computer so that they are kept safe. These stories are in the words of the person telling the story.

While reading the stories you will hear them talk about respect for elders, others and especially your parents and grandparents, helping others without asking for pay, not to waste any wildlife, and how the men and their hunting equipment were looked after real good. These are some of the values that we want in our Gwich'in Government.

In this issue and others I will put in these stories for your reading pleasure.

We will hear stories from elders in the Gwich'in communities such as Catherine Mitchell, Mary Kendi, Eunice Mitchell, and others.

If you would like to tell your story and you didn't get a chance to back then, give me a call and I can arrange a recording of your story.

Some of the stories are long and some are short but really interesting.



Gwich'in boy setting snares for rabbits. This boy was probably taught by his parents or grandparents.



A long time ago the Gwich'in used dogs to hunt and trap, until they were introduced to the Élan. (skidoo)



Long before the 512's (gov't issue housing) we lived in tents or tent frames.



Traditional Governance Stories told by Gwich'in elders Elizabeth Greenland



Elizabeth's parents were Alfred Bonnetplume and Annie B. She was born in the Yukon and raised in Fort McPherson.

Elizabeth says, "My mother

and my dad, me, I was first born. There use to be no mail, only when steamboat came we got mail. My grandmother's daughter died so my father took me over and told them that, "you have the child" so don't feel bad. So my dad was a very cranky old man. Me, I was the first born, I was their baby.

This is how they use to sympathize with one another long ago. That is the way they gave me away, gave me to my grandmother.

My grandmother raised me up. My grandmother brought me up, really raised me up good but my brother John and another brother died. So nobody to work for us. I used to do a man's work. I use to....I didn't know how to sew for long time before I use to see my friends sewing. I use to get lots of wood and then in the evening I would sew by candlelight. Even that it was alright.

Long time ago when we were brought up it was hard times. Now I see it. That time when we were young I see we use to have lots of them, now today kids they don't know anything how to work out in the bush. While that white man new way they're going to teach young people the new way. It was really hard time to raise children long time ago. They went to push away the old way and bring up the modern way.

"I always say always help other people that need help. You young don't ask for pay. This is the way we were brought up. This is the way I was brought up when I was young. Whoever is really want to do something or need help you immediately help them."

My grandchildren I bring them up like the old way. I tell you James, if you see an elder passing you should never pass that elder, always say hello to that elder. All this I teach my grandchildren. I always say always help other people that need help. You young don't ask for

pay. This is the way we were brought up. This is the way I was brought up when I was young. Whoever is really want to do something or need help you immediately help them.

These days young generation it's no use talking to them. They even laugh at you when you try and talk to them. Even that try, keep on trying talking to them, maybe they'll listen to us. Even in Fort McPherson I went to meeting in Fort McPherson, I see some kids got little ear-phones on. They are not even listening to what meeting was going on. How they're going to learn?

Traditional Governance story continued.....

It is very good way we were brought up long ago. We use to do all our work that have to be done around the house and inside and outside and then we can....whatever we want to do in the evening we always play outside. We use to make lunch and we go for a picnic. Even when it's cold like this nobody is cold. Some of us has rabbit skin outfit and caribou skin outfit, nobody say I don't like this and I don't like that. Now today, young people are really in trouble because they don't dress warm and in years to come they'll be having bad arthritis...and Christopher's wife said that when you are fat you look fat, it's not fat, it's you get a cold and that what stays in your flesh. You don't dress warm this is what's going to happen to you.

Long time ago it was very nice way we were brought up. We never see anybody drinking. When we see somebody is drinking we run around the house and sneak from there. Half breeds were the first ones to have alcohol. They use to order it, one in a while they get it and then they drink. We use to be really scared. We use to be scared of them; even today young children are drinking. I feel really bad for young people. I wonder how they are going to be years to come.



Photo: PWHC

Like now can't even, we don't even have to put wood in the stove or anything like that. We have oil to burn and we don't have to do that. Whatever you are going to do for the young people you say it's really good idea. You teach them lots of things out in the bush that will be good.

Long time ago we had dog team. We never knew skidoo, not today we don't even have snowshoe. This is why I worry about all that. Long time from now everything is going to be really hard. Today young children they don't even know how to make snowshoes. That is why we keep talking. Why can't they make snowshoes? Somebody should teach them. Last winter when whoever makes snowshoes, my sister Jane in Fort McPherson, her son makes snowshoes. I always tell Jane that, tell them to make lots of snowshoes and some day we're going to really depend on him for making snowshoes. Whoever know how to make snowshoes should be instructor for these young people to make snowshoes.

Everything we got, everything is so expensive nowadays. Today, people that use skidoo is very expensive. Right now, I don't have skidoo, my children really wish for something like that. Who is going to work for us. All our husbands are dying and only women are alone, all our widows are poor, our grandchildren are wishing for this and that. Some of them are not too good too.

Traditional Governance story cont....

One of my grandsons is going to court. Pretty soon he will be going to court and I feel really bad. Sometimes lots of them are like that, worry about their grandchildren. We don't think its okay for our children. But I remember your aunt use to cry. This is how I am now, really feel bad. Whatever you say I hope is really, it will be good. Long time ago they use to take the kids and they use to bring them to grandmothers and we use to look after them. Now I want him to, but they finish the court and he's going to go to jail. He's not old enough, but six months he will be in jail. I felt so bad that I cried. I came home and I cried too. I tell Barry that you should put him here with me, the family can't do that he said.

It that's what you're going to fix up for us, I hope you do. Anybody can't raise the family we brought up, why you say abuse. Nobody ever did that long time ago. Me, I was given to my grandparents. Sometimes I cry for my parents. I use to cry alone and where nobody can hear me. My sisters were in Whitehorse school. While that I was here alone; sometimes I wish for lots of things. When I see

something really good I wish for all that. I don't want my grandchildren to wish for anything. Lots of times I cried for my Mom and Dad. I remember whoever grandchildren I see on the street I always talk happy to them because I know that it's....you can't, people look at them mad, that is not the way I am. I always be happy with them.

I was alone when my grandmother brought me up. Chief Julius fix that up. Around there he seen me when he went over the mountain traveling my parents



Photo: L. Norbert

Dog team race in Fort McPherson last year.

came over half way. Around there when they met, he told my mom and dad, they came back after he told them that your daughter is just like an orphan, why you live here, you should go back over to her. This is how fast they obeyed the chief. They never

think of going back to Dawson. This is how we really respect the Chief. This is how we should do things, all that. This is why you have to respect the chief.

Now today if they were wearing their uniform we even, us elders we'd be scared of them. That's how powerful they look in their uniform. Me, I always respect the Chief, really respect the chief.

William Koe, the Chief William Koe when I see him I think of a little baby, walking to him and I just love him so much from my heart. Sometimes our

Traditional Governance story cont....

Chief here, James Firth really look after us good. When we go hunting he never miss, he bring me meat. All my children here eat my caribou meat and then my deep freeze will be filled up again.

This is how we use to respect Chief long ago We wouldn't let the Chief; we would leave what the Chief was saying. Whenever we're going to travel up on the mountain for caribou the Chief will have three teams, one for him, and one for his daughter and one for his wife. The best team they have, with that he'll travel.

Whenever people wouldn't travel with out minister, Christopher or Peter Thompson, James Simon, sometimes another man names Jifus Mitchell. ..Grandfather and whoever know how to make service, who never miss. Whoever know how to preach or say the Lord 's Prayer pray with us every Sunday. Every Sunday we have to have service. This is how we were brought up.

Nobody idle around, they have to work everyday, always working doing something out in the bush. Summer time we use to go out fishing, make lots of dry fish, any kind of fish we make dry fish with. This is for eating and for our dog team. And that dry fish make really light load. You

can carry it long way, it's not heavy because it's dry.

Me, I think if we get lots of fish it get bad with us, sometimes it get spoiled. Here in Inuvik at the dump they really throw away lots of good food. I go there sometimes. One time I seen one whole caribou there. I talk about it too. In spring time people go around and want to sell meat. First time I use today okay, it was old meat. I cooked it and my grandson start to eat and it washe told me it



Photo: PWHC

was really old meat. After that I never buy meat again. Why if you're going to do that with I, why you kill lots. You should give it away, you shouldn't keep it. You have to share the meat with other people. You don't keep it long. And when you share it you have good hunting and you be lucky. You don't keep it until it gets spoiled.

You share the meat.

You really talking good about what your are going to do. I really feel good about it. You told me all about it really good.

Long time ago what we done, even today minister whatever I talk about even in the service is changing. We see minister come in, we see minister come in we all stand up and then they tell us to stand up and then they tell us sit down. All that I don't like it. I tell them about it, they told me that's long time ago. I know it and letting you know.

Traditional Governance story cont...

This winter I remember long time ago I remember we get baptized first. When you get baptized you're a Christian and when your baby. And then after that when you could talk we should pray over you. There you take your holy communion, you'll more be Christian there. This is still how we use our religion and beliefs. Now today you see people around the church and they come to you and they tell you "I'm big Christian" us we know, we are all baptized and we....bishop pray over us and then were Christians. This is the way it was, now today everything is different. They told us to stand up and take Holy Communion. Us Anglican and those we kneel down, today we don't kneel down. We sit on the chair and we stand up. At the alter there is cushion there to kneel down, they took them away. Now we have to stand up. Of course me I didn't like it. And then when we had a meeting I told him about it and he asked me what I want to say something. I told him all about it. Look here I said, we kneel down when we pray, all that you take away from us. Today we take communion, we use to kneel down, you tell us we don't have to do that.



Photo: PWHC

The new church, they're going to start that all over again. Today is new you said, even that I'm telling you and the young children have to learn that. Sure we were stuck out in the bush, some place we kneel down, God is going to listen to us because he told us to kneel down when we pray. All this we should teach our children all that. This is the way they should be doing things with us.

Long time ago we tell them all about how we were brought up long time ago.

James, you say long time ago in the Gwich'in language, you really say it good.

Long time ago, my uncle Peter Thompson went to the garbage dump where the Hudson Bay throw their garbage. I'm going to tell you this; they use to ...where the kids went walking around there.

There was a big jar of jam and there was a little bit in it. Kids use to put their hand in it and they eat it. They pile up on it, even me, I put my finger, and when I did that I cut my finger. ... me and my sister Sarah. He said it was peanut butter and then he said it was jam. He had a big jam can on his table. He said I see that jam on the table I don't even want it.

Those days we use to wear rabbit skin suit and nobody throw away the rabbit skin. After you put it on it gets really big.

Traditional Governance story cont...

Peter Thompson said he use to slide down the hill with it lying down on his stomach. Then whenever he get itchy, he get itchy, he put his finger through the little hole and scratch himself. This is the way we use to live, have lots of fun...kids use to just love those rabbit skin outfit and caribou skin outfit. They know it's really warm.

Today you can't tell kids what to wear because they don't like this and they don't like that. I made a parky for one of my sons and he was gone.

We try and tell him to wear some warm clothes and then police went out and found him. Now we don't want him to freeze to death anywhere. This is why we worry about them.

This is why it's really good you're going to do something. Now whenever I go to bed and that I'll be praying for you all the time. This is the only way we can help you too. You ask us it's really good. I'll tell you everything. You ask me question I'll always do it for you.

I never went to school so when I want to know something I ask. Girls have their own job and boys have their own job.

Now even boys wash dishes. We respect boys....if my parents have

It. Everything, his clothes everything is clean all the time. No girls should sit on it. A boy sitting on the floor or something a girl cannot step over his leg and you're not supposed to do that. You have to respect man, especially boys. You really have to watch around the boys when you are a young girl and I teach my girls that and even the young girls they know it. Those little girls. A woman can't step over a man that is sitting on the floor.

"We respect boys....if my parents have a boy and his bed nobody can't sit on it.

Everything, his clothes everything is clean all the time. No girls should sit on it. A boy sitting on the floor or something a girl cannot step over his leg and you're not supposed to do that. You have to respect man, especially boys."

This is why we were told that by our mothers, another thing is that we don't step over food. If caribou meat is on the floor or something were not supposed to step on it. We have to ask. It's really a strict rule.

When your young man is growing up and he's around the house you don't treat him any old way because he is going to be the big hunter and he may be the leader some day and he need lots of respect.

Another thing to, we don't use a hunters knife. If my knife is dull and he try and hand me the knife, I'll say no. I can't use his knife and put it away. And my knife was dull other day those girls washed it in boiling water.

A hunter man we have to really respect their hunting equipment. We have to make sure they make new things for them when there going to go hunting, brand new mukluks, parky and everything and dress warm. Whatever you kill, who-

Traditional Governance story cont...

-ever want to share the meat with. Give meat to anybody and they don't have to get paid for it. Sometimes when there is nobody that is...didn't get any caribou you give him a whole caribou.

Now to-day, one time I went to talk about this. When you go up hunting and then you take the guts out. You pull the caribou around with skidoo, that's not right. I hear somebody was saying that. Why don't they get sled and they can handle that meat really good. They just pull it around with string around its neck, that is not really good. One time I was on the caribou and this is what one neighbor was doing. I sure didn't like it. I always think about that. And this is how....I guess they can't put sled and skidoo on the truck, that is why maybe they do that.



Cutting up caribou meat...making sure nothing is wasted.

Yeah, this I just want to mention it because maybe they...but just mention it to them so they'll know that is not the way to treat food.

I feel so sorry for them. They don't even know how to set tent, that is how poor they are now a days young children. I guess I should just tell you this much.

James is telling Elizabeth that long ago hunters use to have each of them have one tent each, some of them even have that tent for ten years and file too.

Elizabeth says, " Yeah, they have their own file. They have everything, everything they have. I guess those days when you get things and it's really hard to get it so you really have to look after them good, axe especially. You look after that really good. You leave it outside and if it snows you might loose it. So you really have to take care of it

In the next issue we will feature the story of Pierre Benoit from Aklavik.



Photo: PWHC



Nihtat Gwich'in Council

Ruth Elanik



Drin Gwinzii Shilakat,

My name is Ruth Elanik, Self-Government Coordinator for the Nihtat Gwich'in Council

My first day of work was on November 8, 2006.

I was very excited because Self Government was here for the last 10 years and I've always heard about it but was never really interested because I was so busy in my other work place. My first month was just reading lots of material on self government and where the Nihtat Gwich'in Council was with Self-Government.

Since December, I've been busy holding workshops on the Community Constitution with the Self-Government Committee and the public and this is still continuing until end of March.

In the first week of February the Self-Government Group traveled down to Yellowknife to see how the Tlicho



An information session at the Nihtat Gwich'in Council with the Self Government Committee.

Self Government ran their Government. It was a real eye opener for me as we are going in the same direction they are

I have 2 field workers, Vincent Firth, and Marjorie Greenland. They will be bringing the Community Constitution door to door starting first week in March.

If you need more information or questions please call me at the Nihtat

Gwich'in Office in the Alex

Moses Greenland Building or you can call me at 867-777-6658 or if you would like to e-mail here is my address:

relanik@ngc-inb.ca

Vincent Firth is a fieldworker at the Nihtat Gwich'in Council. He is going door to door explaining the constitution to participants. If you have any comments please see Vincent or Ruth.





Tetlit Gwich'in Council

The Community of Fort McPherson has no coordinator and are looking for someone to fill that position.

This community has also passed their community constitution and it still has to go to the participants for their feedback. Once a coordinator is found we should be able to start having more information sessions on Self Government.

The committee is also not meeting and haven't for about six months. This committee is also looking for more members to replace those that left. If interested please call the band office or you can write a letter of interest.

The Chief and council will make the final decision as to who sits on this committee.

We've had some people who have taken on the coordinator position for a short period of time. Thanks going out to Jayda Andre for taking care of things this fall. Good luck in your studies.

If you would like to learn more or have any questions you call your band office at 867-

952-2330 and they will direct you to the right person for your answers.

Watch out for the constitution to come door to door when a coordinator is hired.



Chief Johnny Kay





Gwichya Gwich'in Council Patricia Van Loon



Drin Gwiinzi
My name is Patricia Van Loon and I've been the coordinator for Tsiigehtchic since November.

My office is now located at the old store in the Café part.

Since I started I've done some interviews and also did some programming on our local radio station.

We've been without a Coordinator for Self Government for about a year and since then the Committee hasn't been meeting. Some members of the committee have left so I am looking for replacements so that we can start having regular monthly meetings. If

anyone is interested in sitting on this committee please call me at 867-953-3111.



Elder Noel Andre at a Self Government Committee meeting.

The committee helps by keeping us on track. They also will provide advice to the Gwichya Gwich'in Council Self Government staff on issues related to Self Government. The Gwichya Gwich'in Council will make the decision as to who will sit on the committee.

I've also been talking to some of the elders and youth about Self Govern-

ment and hope to continue this.

I've been finding it particularly hard to pass information on to participants in Tsiigehtchic because they are still unaware of the process. Participants outside of the Gwich'in Settlement Area have asked me how will they be getting information on Self Government. I hope to get as much information as I can so that they can start to read up on this and ask me any questions they may have.

Noel Andre is helping me on the radio by explaining the community constitution in the Gwich'in language. That program can be heard on Monday, Wednesdays and Fridays on the local radio station.

For more information call me or e-mail:

patricia_vanloon@hotmail.com

Mahsi Cho!!!!





Ehdiitat Gwich'in Council *Mildred Edwards*



I started work for the Self Government department at the Gwich'in Tribal Council on November 21, 2006.

I went to Inuvik the following week for training on the constitution and how our community constitution will relate to it. We learned a lot about the Canadian Constitution and what it means if we break any of the laws. Our community constitution will be the same but will be unique to Aklavik.

Audrey Snowshoe also agreed to work with me as a Fieldworker and she attended the constitution workshop as well.

Both of us are new to this position so we read up on Self Government and where it is now.

A few weeks later we returned to Inuvik for a one day workshop on putting our community constitution in simpler language so when we start going door to door we are passing on the right information, and have answers for those that ask questions.

Margaret introduced the "bubble form". This is a box located in the constitution where we write down a simpler version of what is being said in the legal document.

Audrey has been



Coordinator of the Ehdiitat Gwich'in Council
Mildred Edwards.

busy going door to door with our community constitution and explaining what's in it to the participants. She did about fifty homes.

I've also been trying to form a committee here so that we can start having regular monthly meetings.

The Self Government Committee will assist me in putting information out there for the participants

to read and also to give me direction on what to do about self government in this community.

If you are interested in sitting on this committee please leave a message for me at the band office and I will get back to as soon as I can.

Since I began in November I've been to a couple of Main Table Negotiations and have found them to be very interesting. The more I understand about the process of Self Government it begins to become more clear.

Our next sessions will be in the Gwich'in communities with the next one being in Fort McPherson the end of March.

For more information contact the Ehdiitat Gwich'in Council at 867-978-2340 and leave a message. I will try to get right back to you with answers.





Mavis Clark Regional Coordinator

I was hired on as a Regional Self-Government Coordinator November 6th, 2006.

My first two weeks were introductory to the self-government office, what Karen has been doing as the Director of self-government and what Margaret has been doing as the Regional Coordinator.

Margaret and I will be job sharing for the next few months. I will be responsible for the communities of Fort McPherson and Tsiigehtchic and she will be in charge of Inuvik and Aklavik.

Our first priority was to get back into the community's and make sure we had Community Coordinator's and field staff in each of the four communities. After this objective was complete we held a three day workshop on the progress of self-government and did a review of each community's constitution.

I have been busy attending Committee and

Band/Charter meetings, along with attending the Negotiations Meetings, and training that is needed to get the job done.

I love the work and working along side Karen and Margaret who are both so knowledgeable and enthusiastic on Self-Government issues.



L-R: Liz Wright Representative for Tetlit Zeh and Regional Coordinator Mavis Clark

Self Government is moving along in the communities. Right now we have all the community constitutions done and those are being taken door to door in Aklavik, Tsiigehtchic and Inuvik.

If you're interested in sitting on your local committee contact the Chief in

your community. It is important to have someone in your community so that they are kept in the loop when it comes to more discussions on Self Government. Soon we will be talking about how all our community constitutions will fit into a Regional Constitution. We will also start to look at different models of government structure that will work for us.

If you have any comments or would like to be involved please call your band office or you contact myself at 867-777-7918 or Margaret Gordon at 867-777-7941. We are always happy to hear from you, and will try to answer any questions you have.

At this time the Staff of the Gwich'in Tribal Council Self Government would like to wish you all a Happy Easter.



Terminology

Aboriginal Title – a way for Canada to recognize that certain pieces of land belong to Aboriginal people, because they have always been there. The Aboriginal people who own the land are allowed to do with it whatever they want, as long as they are still able to carry out their traditional practices on the land. The Aboriginal people also have a right to set up their own government on the land to decide among themselves how to use the land. So far, no Aboriginal nation has been recognized by Canada in this way.

Fiduciary – when one person promises to act for the best interests of another person, when she has power over the other person. That means she must do only what is good for the other person, and never do anything that is bad. The Queen, through the Canadian government, has promised to be a fiduciary for Aboriginal peoples. The law requires the Canadian government to act only in the best interests of Aboriginal people whenever it has power over them.

Delgamuukw – the ruling from the Supreme Court of Canada in 1997 that made the law in Canada that recognized Aboriginal title as a way for Aboriginal people to own land. See also “Aboriginal Title.”

Badger – the ruling from the Supreme Court of Canada in 1996 that made the law in Canada that governments are allowed to break the promises they made in treaties with Aboriginal people, as long as the courts recognize that the governments are breaking the promises for the right reasons. See also “Treaties.”

Treaties – Promises that nations make to each other, that as long as the nation exists as a community, it will keep the promise. Canada and the First Nations made many of these treaties. Sometimes, Canada and the First Nations promised each other peace and friendship. Other times, First Nations promised to allow settlers onto their land, while Canada promised to protect the First Nations, and to give them money, medicines, and schools.

Gwich'in Terms for a Gwich'in Government

English Term	Gwich'in Term
◆ Participants	gwats'at tr'iinjii kat
◆ Traditional	ndòo dàgwitee'aa k'it
◆ Governance	k'adagwidaadhat k'it
◆ Land Claim	nan srìdatr'igwijìinlik
◆ Indian Act	Dinjii Zhuh Eenjit Dàgwìdijj'e'
◆ Culture	Nekhwek'yùu, Jidìi giik'yàanjik
◆ Resources	Vik'ighe' giik'àtr'aanjii
◆ Devolution	T'aih k'àdagwidaadhat nichii, zhàk ts'àt goots'an tr'ahtsii
◆ Grandmother	Jìjuu, nekhwetsuu
◆ Grandfather	Jìjii, nekhwetsii
◆ M.O. U. (Memorandum of Understanding)	Łagwiinaadhan k'it nihtat gòonlii

Mahsi cho to William George Firth, Language Programs' Director with the Gwich'in Social & Cultural Institute in Fort McPherson for the translating.



**GWICH'IN TRIBAL COUNCIL
SELF GOVERNMENT**

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Assistant Negotiator Karen Snowshoe
Phone: 867-777-7924
E-mail: ksnowshoe@gwichin.nt.ca

www.gwichin.nt.ca

Self Government is the inherent right that aboriginal people are born with and have always had. The Government of Canada refers to this right as the, "Inherent right to Self Government." "Inherent" means that it has always been there and always will be.

The Gwich'in are negotiating with the Government to have Self Government in the NWT. We will have the right to govern ourselves and to choose programs that will benefit us.

Upcoming:

- ◆ *Contact your local band office to find out what is planned for April 22nd.*
- ◆ *Happy Easter to all participants and hope you enjoy the spring weather and all the carnivals.*

Self Government Photo Gallery



Main Table Negotiations in Yellowknife in early February



Regional Coordinator Mavis Clark and Patricia Van Loon of the Gwichya Gwich'in



L-R: Mavis Clark, Charlie Furlong, Karen Snowshoe...Margaret is missing...the Self Government team

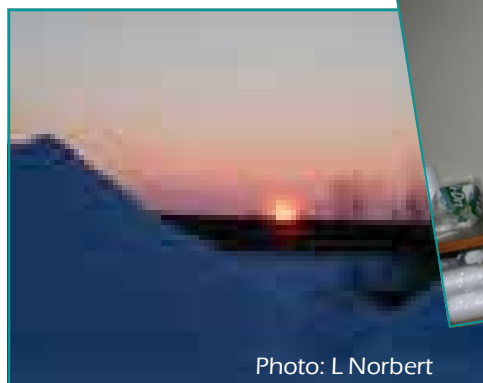


Photo: L Norbert

**Happy
Easter**