



SFN SELF-GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATIONS

SFN News

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Hets eday (Telling stories)

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Repairing Bridges—Traveling New Roads



The basis of all relationships is communication. Is communication important? If a message is not delivered in a format that the intended audience can understand you may lose the opportunity to form or maintain a positive relationship. A failure to communicate can all too easily lead to misunderstandings, sometimes with unintended consequences. Misunderstandings have, in some cases, even led to wars being fought. Communication is important.

Read More On



Pages 2-6

Inside this edition...

Communications Strategy
Page 2

Fort Selkirk Designation
Page 14

Chief and Council Messages
Page 3-6

From the Information Session
Page 15-16

SFN By-Election
Page 7

Northern Strategy Updated
Page 17

Financial Updates
Page 8-10

Fresh Start For E.V.B.S.
Page 18-19

Think Tank Report
Page 11-13

Returning to Learning
Back page



Bonnie Roberts

SFN Finance Committee Member...

Quote of the month

"The First Nation is making new investments in improving the lives of people, supporting youth and promoting traditional culture. These are initiatives like supporting the new school partnership with a full time School Counsellor and a Hot Lunch Program. A traditional culture program will be established, under the Lands and Resources Department, to support land based experiences, harvesting activities and development of traditional knowledge. Funding has been set aside to hire an Elders coordinator. These are initiatives that have been talked about for years and are now going to happen. Shaping this direction and making the decisions to move forward takes leadership, courage and financial commitment. These and other initiatives are happening because Chief and Council have made improving government their top priority. Those actions are also supported by the SFN Finance Committee."



SFN Communications 2010



Planning for Better Communications

During the last few months, it has become very clear that we need to improve our communications at Selkirk First Nation (SFN). This is mostly due to two reasons. Firstly, SFN Chief, Council and staff have a long list of activities and tasks that we are trying to accomplish and, secondly, we have been understaffed for some time. As a result, communications have sometimes not been done as well as we want. Chief and Council have taken some measures to improve that.

As part of our restructuring of the SFN government, we are working to create a new communications department that has enough staff and resources to carry out good communications over the long term. It will take a few months to set up the department and hire appropriate staff, but we hope that the new department will be in place in the new year, so that it can ensure that we keep our citizens informed about what we are doing, and also that we set up ways to ensure we know what our citizens want. You can read more about our restructuring work elsewhere in this newsletter. See *An Important Message to Citizens of the Selkirk First Nation from Chief and Council*, page 3.

We have also begun long-term communications planning. We have

hired a communications consultant to work with us for a short time to do this planning. Elaine Schiman, who is based in Whitehorse, is helping us plan how we will carry out communications in the future. She is also helping us do some of our communications work right now, until we have our new communications department in place.

Elaine has lived and worked in the North for 23 years, most of that time in Whitehorse. She has worked in media (for CBC Radio and Television), in communications (for Northwestel) and as an independent communications consultant since 2001. In the past nine years, she has had many clients, including the Council of Yukon First Nations, Vuntut Development Corporation, Northwestel, Air North, the Kwanlin Development Corporation, the Yukon Ombudsman/Information and Privacy Commissioner, the Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board (YESAB) and several departments within the Yukon government.

Elaine began working with us for a short period in June and then re-joined us in late July. She has been working with Chief and Council, as well as our staff and some of our citizens. She attended a Think Tank that SFN held at the end of August and had a chance to listen to the discussions and to suggest ideas for good communications. You can read

more about this Think Tank elsewhere in this newsletter. See *Think Tank Report*, Page 11.

The SFN Communications Group, which was formed in late July, is assisting Elaine. It includes Nesta Hager, Candice Menzi, Janie Lee Silas and Donna Conley. The Communications Group hopes to hold some community meetings to ask for your views on how to improve SFN communications. We hope you will find time to share your ideas.

The SFN Communications Group is planning to have a draft SFN Communications Plan ready for our next General Assembly. The plan will include an assessment of SFN communications, ideas for improvement and the projected costs for these improvements.

If you want to contact Elaine directly, you may email elaine@northwestel.net

OR

You can contact a member of the Communications Group directly.



Elaine Schiman

August 9, 2010

An Important Message to Citizens of the Selkirk First Nation from Chief and Council

RESTRUCTURING: BUILDING A STRONGER SELKIRK FIRST NATION GOVERNMENT

Several Selkirk First Nation (SFN) General Assemblies have provided direction to reorganize the administration and operations of the SFN government in order to improve the quality, effectiveness and efficiency of programs and services delivered to SFN members.

Over the last few years, based on this direction from the General Assemblies, several papers and reports were prepared for the SFN government, which identify the issues and challenges we face. These papers and reports have all made similar recommendations, but it has still been challenging to take the action needed in order to implement real change.

Chief and Council are committed to following through on the direction provided by General Assemblies to create a strong SFN government for the 21st century. **We have heard from citizens that they want to see a holistic approach to the delivery of programs and services to SFN citizens. We have also heard that citizens want to make sure that their SFN government is getting “value for money” in the delivery of those programs and services.**

In order to achieve what our citizens want, we recognize that we need to respect our past, but we must also build an administration that supports our vision and goals for the future. In order to do this, change is needed.

Change is not easy. It has a real impact on our people and we recognize that. We also recognize that in order for our people to understand and accept these changes, we need to be pro-active in communicating the reasons for decisions have been made. We know that we need to do better on this front and we will do better.

For example,

One decision that caused some controversy was the dismantling of the SFN Self-Government Department. This department was only supposed to be in place for 2 to 3 years after signing the SFN Final Agreement in 1997. Instead, it remained in place for another 10 years. It was recognized that the budget associated with this department could be better used to support other aspects of the SFN government.

Individuals in this department were informed that they were going to be laid off effective March 31st, 2010. They were provided with severance packages. They were also encouraged to apply for the new positions being created within the SFN government that aligned with the reorganization of the administration. While decisions like this are difficult, they are necessary for your SFN government to survive and succeed with the new realities it faces.

This example is just one aspect of the important reorganization we are undertaking for the benefit of SFN citizens. All these changes are designed to make your SFN government stronger and to ensure that programs and services delivered to SFN citizens are more efficient and effective.

We can no longer afford to go on creating more “reports” or simply talk about the changes we want. **Action is needed, if we truly want results.** Chief and Council, along with SFN directors and staff, are moving forward on implementing the change that SFN citizens have consistently said they want.

The following are some of the key issues that we will deal with in this reorganization:

❖ **Redundancy**

More than one person does the same work. This is a waste of money.

❖ **Communication**

The communication between staff and management is inconsistent and unclear. Employees don't have a clear idea of their roles and responsibilities. Communication with SFN citizens about SFN programs and services also needs to improve.

❖ **Training and Education**

Staff do not get the training they need to help them do their jobs successfully. We need to focus on mentoring initiatives so we have more SFN citizens who can fill key roles in our government.

❖ **Lack of Policies and Procedures**

There is no clear guidance on how jobs should be done or who staff should report to. Sometimes employees refuse to perform tasks that don't seem to have any value.

❖ **Lack of Performance Management**

The goals of SFN administration are not clear. Because of this, the performance of staff cannot be properly evaluated to ensure they are working to support these goals.

❖ **Accountability**

Employees are not held accountable for failing to perform their duties completely and accurately. Accountability can only be achieved when employees clearly know what is expected of them.

❖ **Low Employee Morale**

Many of our workers are discouraged and wonder if they would be better off working elsewhere. We need to improve morale to ensure we have a happy productive workforce. We need to create a safe and professional environment so that individuals want to work for the SFN government.

In order to move forward on this reorganization, we have put together a team of SFN staff and experts to assist us in undertaking this restructuring.

Our goal is to complete this by March 31st, 2011.

We are excited about this project and confident that the changes will benefit the whole community. We look forward to delivering the real change SFN citizens has repeatedly said that they want for our government.

Throughout this process, we will continue to provide regular written updates on the progress being made. We will also provide a progress report on this initiative at our upcoming General Assembly which has been scheduled to take place in October.

SFN citizens should also be aware that there are several NEW employment positions that are being created as a part of this reorganization have been posted or will be posted in the near future. For more information on these job postings please come into, or contact, the Administration Office .

Please feel free to speak to any Council member if you have questions or comments about this project.



A Note of Thanks... and a Request

The Chief and Council of Selkirk First Nation (SFN) realize that the last few months have been very difficult for many of our citizens. We are in the process of change at SFN and this can be very confusing and upsetting for some people. In addition, as a self-governing First Nation, we face many new challenges and have a lot of work to do. This can be discouraging at times.

Chief and Council would like to thank our citizens for the positive constructive attitudes that many of you have shown. This is the kind of behaviour that we need and that will help our community grow and develop. The community meetings in Pelly Crossing in July could have been very confrontational and damaging to our community. But for the most part, SFN citizens were respectful, willing to listen and share information. We are grateful for this. The Think Tank that SFN held in late August was also very constructive. Chief and Council want to thank all who attended these meetings to work and discuss the future of SFN.

We are asking for more of this positive attitude and constructive behaviour. We know that there are some people in our community who still feel hurt and angry about some of the disagreements experienced earlier this summer. Chief and Council will be looking into ways to help our community heal and come together in unity.

In the meantime, we need all our citizens to be open to information that comes to them from Chief and Council and to share information that is factual and correct about SFN and other community members. We need citizens to work hard with SFN Council and staff. This will include attending community meetings and applying for new jobs that will be available after our restructuring is complete.

We all need to continue working together to create a better community for ourselves and our children.

Thank you.

Chief Darin Isaac, Crow Councilor Audrey Baker, Wolf Councilor Jeremy Harper, and Crow Councilor Jerry Alfred.

David Silas Leaves Position as SFN Deputy Chief



Selkirk First Nation citizen David Silas has resigned from his position as SFN Deputy Chief, as of June 11th, 2010. Mr. Silas asked that his decision be published in this newsletter so that all citizens would be aware that he is no longer a member of SFN Council.

The SFN Elders Council have authorized a by-election for the vacant position. (See below)

Mr. Silas's decision to leave his position was a difficult one for him, but he feels it is the best thing to do under the circumstances. He says his departure from Council is directly related to the conflicts that have been going on in the community. He provided the newsletter with a note summarizing what led up to his departure:

If I reflect back, I had a lot going on in my personal life that really made me re-consider what is important to me. The first thing is my own personal health and well-being. I have a history that many people are aware of. Being on Council is a very stressful thankless position. I needed to ensure that I keep on the right track for the benefit of my children and family.

This conflict and division amongst our people and community may take generations to repair. I don't think I will ever forget what transpired during the summer of 2010.

I apologize openly and honestly to those that I let down by my resignation and I thank all those that voted for me. I thank my fellow Council members for your support and understanding. It has been an honour to serve the SFN for a solid two years. I did my best! I will take this time now to improve myself and strengthen my family. I will be back in a different capacity soon and hope to continue to help out where I can for the benefit of our First Nation.

SELKIRK FIRST NATION 2010



BY-ELECTION FOR WOLF COUNCILOR

IN PELLY CROSSING

IN WHITEHORSE

ALL CANDIDATES FORUM

Friday, October 22

1:00 p.m.—3:00 p.m.

Link Building

ADVANCE POLLS

Thursday, October 28

12:00 p.m.—4:00 p.m.

Link Building

ELECTION DAY

Tuesday, November 2

10:00 a.m.—7:00 p.m.

Link Building

ALL CANDIDATES FORUM

Saturday, October 23

1:00 p.m.—3:00 p.m.

Westmark Whse.—Conference Room #1

ADVANCE POLLS

Thursday, October 28

12:00 p.m.—4:00 p.m.

Westmark Whse. —Canyon City Room

ELECTION DAY

Tuesday, November 2

10:00 a.m.—7:00 p.m.

Westmark Whse. —Canyon City Room

PUBLIC MEETING WEDNESDAY, November 3 at the Link Building in Pelly Crossing *starting at 2 p.m.*

SWEARING IN-CEREMONY Thursday, November 4 at the Link Building in Pelly Crossing *starting at 2 p.m.*

CONTACT: Chief Returning Officer: Crystal Trudeau at 867 996-2520 or Cell 867 332-1466

OR Election Coordinators: Toni Blanchard & Robert Van Bibber at 537-3331 (Work) or 537-3366 (Home)

SFN Finance Committee Report

Submitted by Bill Trerice and Bonnie Roberts

The Selkirk First Nation Finance Committee was mandated by the General Assembly with Resolution #14 -2009 to ensure transparency concerning the financial management of the Selkirk First Nation.

The Finance Committee members are dedicated and have spent many hours being briefed on and listening to updates on the FTA, Investment and Compensation Funds, the QMA and NSR Royalty payments, Northern Strategy and Journey to Self Reliance Projects, and the ongoing updates regarding the financial situation within Selkirk First Nation. We have provided, and continue to provide, recommendations and assistance with implementing sound financial practices that will provide **good** and **honest** governance for the citizens of SFN.

As members of the committee, we are accountable to the General Assembly and open to positive feedback. We are all dedicated to assisting Selkirk First Nation with moving forward and have nothing personal to gain from being part of this committee.

The SFN Finance Committee began after the last General Assembly in August 2009 with interim members Lori Sims, David Steele, Lena Joe and Betty Gill. The members today are Elder Marlene Drapeau, Lori Sims, Bill Trerice, Bonnie Roberts, Nyla Klugie and Michelle Kolla. We all came on board at different stages in the development of the Committee and it has been a huge learning experience for us all.

Our work plan to date has been as follows:

1. Participated in the 2010 budgeting process of SFN, which was an eye opening experience for the members that participated.
2. Provided guidance in the development of the Terms of Reference for the committee with Chief & Council.
3. Updated on the financial situation and history of SFN.
4. Updated, briefly, on the Northern Strategy and Journey to Self-Reliance Projects.
5. Participated in an information session with Deloitte & Touche LLP on the processes involved in setting up Trust Funds.

The Finance Committee feels that it is important that steps be made in the area of financial management to ensure a solid foundation of governance for Selkirk First Nation. In order to be a successful self-governing first nation we must all work together in going forward.

Recommendations:

1. That the Chief and Council, Directors and Finance Committee assist in the developing of an annual budgeting process that is approved and implemented. *Example:* Through this recommended process, all departments would be responsible for following the steps that lead to a better budgeting process. This would involve annual department planning meetings that focus on developing work plans with budgets attached, followed by a meeting of the directors to make sure there aren't any duplications of programs before meeting with council for approval of work plans, etc... These proposed changes will also make the annual budgeting process a much more positive experience for the staff. (Other Yukon First Nations have already successfully implemented this process).

SFN Finance Committee Report *Recommendations continued...*

2. To re-visit the Investment Policy, as it may require changes.
3. To draft a Royalty Policy and make recommendations to the General Assembly.
4. Review and give recommendation for the Compensation Fund to pay back the Compensation Fund account (already accomplished). Measures such as the creation of Trust Funds are also being recommended to be put in place to ensure the security and accountability of the Compensation and Investment Funds.
5. That a policy on hiring Contractors/Consultants be developed for the Selkirk First Nation. This would include Reference Checks with prior employers.
6. Recommend that the Personal Loans policy be enforced as loans are not being repaid and there is a large outstanding amount owed.
7. That the Finance Committee review its Terms of Reference regularly to make certain that SFN's financial system is operating in a more efficient and effective manner.
8. That the Directors and Managers are responsible for ensuring that their staff members are financially accountable for programs.
9. That the key to success in all areas is good communication and teamwork.
10. Review the Financial Policy of the Selkirk First Nation.
11. Review the Self Government Agreement regarding the Programs and Services of the Selkirk First Nation and determine how they provide a link to both the needs of the community and the budgeting process of the First Nation.
12. That SFN review its organizational chart to determine whether the departments and programs require evaluations. This will be to determine whether the department and programs are still meeting the needs of the community.
13. Recommend that better controls be put in place with regard to limiting signing authority on purchase orders and other financial items. A policy needs to be put in place for all departments in this area.

We support the SFN Chief and Council in the hiring of a Chartered Accountant as the Finance Director. This department is one of the most important departments in our self-governing infrastructure.

The First Nation governance renewal process will continue through ongoing Department evaluations and restructuring. The Finance Department will be implementing the most dramatic restructuring through the new accounting system, adjusted audit process, financial forecasting and proposed budget development process. Land and Resources will be reorganized too with a new Director, a more agency model focus to deal with mine development and exploration, plus the new Traditional Culture Program. There will also be a professional land use plan developed for Minto Landing.

The First Nation is making new investments in improving the lives of people, supporting youth and promoting traditional culture. These are initiatives like supporting the new school partnership with a full time School Counsellor and a Hot Lunch Program. A traditional culture program will be established under the Lands and Resources Department to support land based experiences, harvesting activities and development of traditional knowledge. Funding has been set aside to hire an Elders coordinator. These are initiatives that have been talked about for years and are now going to happen. Shaping this direction and making the decisions to move forward takes leadership, courage and financial commitment. These and other initiatives are happening because Chief and Council have made improving government their top priority. Those actions are also supported by the SFN Finance Committee.

SFN Finance Committee Report *continued...*

Chief and Council, and the Finance Committee recognize that recent capital infrastructure development projects have created some of the deficit issues and that there were mistakes made implementing those projects. This awareness has transferred into adopting a more precautionary approach to those construction projects that involve complex design and multiple contractors. For example, this spring when the final decision had to be made on moving forward with construction of the Child Development Centre, Council made the decision to delay the project because there were concerns over the architectural design.

The 2010-11 First Nation budget represents the most significant change in the First Nation government ever. It is a dramatic change but achievable and necessary. This will provide the platform for better governance administration now, continued innovation later and a generally more effective government organization into the future.

The Selkirk First Nation Finance Committee has been working very hard to start a new process that is transparent for all. We feel that it is important to ensure that accountability, effectiveness, transparency, respect and above all, controls and policies are enforced and followed by all staff. This will ensure the viability of the Selkirk First Nation people and their future. We are all here to make sure that our First Nation succeeds at Self-Government and we all have a positive role to play in making sure that it succeeds.

Finance Department Update

New Finance Director Hired

Philip Fitzgerald is a Chartered Accountant with a strong commitment to training Selkirk First Nation staff members. He comes from New Zealand originally, and re-articled as a Chartered Accountant in Victoria, B.C., after his arrival to Canada 7 years ago. Mr. Fitzgerald initially came to the Yukon about 5 years ago to be the CFO for Kluane Drilling. Fitzgerald went on to spend the past 2 years in Whitehorse as the manager of the BDO office.



Philip Fitzgerald

On June 07, 2010, Mr. Fitzgerald accepted the offer to become the Selkirk First Nation (SFN) Finance Director. He made his decision to work with Selkirk in response to a request from Selkirk First Nation's Chief, Darin Isaac and the Executive Director, Sharon Nelson. Mr. Fitzgerald divides his workweek between Pelly Crossing and Whitehorse, as he has also been contracted to serve as the Chief Financial Officer for Selkirk Development Corporation (SDC). In addition, Fitzgerald assists the Selkirk First Nation Finance Committee when needed. The Northern Strategy Project covers a portion of the costs associated with Fitzgerald's contract.

Philip Fitzgerald and his team of SFN Finance Department employees have been spending many hours working systematically through the reconciliation of all the accounts and diligently meeting financial reporting requirements. They are paying bills, making sure that monies owed to SFN are received and getting the department ready for the arrival of M. McKay and Associates (Whitehorse), the newly appointed external auditors. The previous auditor retired, making it necessary to appoint a new auditor for the 2009-2010 fiscal year.

Mr. Fitzgerald reports that the Compensation Fund has now been repaid over \$3 million dollars including the recent anniversary payment of \$1.9 million dollars that was received and deposited straight into a portfolio fund. The Quartz Mining Act (QMA) and Net Smelter Royalties (NSR) that have been received from Capstone in 2010 remain in separate bank accounts.

According to Mr. Fitzgerald, all indications point to a stronger, healthier financial future for SFN—a reflection of the robust overall growth and financial stability that result from implementing long overdue changes to the Finance Department and establishing the policies and procedures that ensure financial accountability for SFN and its citizens.



SFN Think Tank Report

Taking Time to Think

At the end of August, Selkirk First Nation (SFN) held a 2-day Think Tank meeting at the Sundog Retreat. Here are answers to some questions you might have about the Think Tank.

What is a Think Tank?

A Think Tank is a group of experts that gives advice and ideas about specific problems. In the case of the SFN Think Tank, the experts were mainly SFN citizens, leadership and staff. This Think Tank was funded through the Northern Strategy project.

What was the goal of this Think Tank?

The SFN Think Tank participants were asked to come up with ideas related to governance, economic development, education and training that will raise the standard of living for SFN citizens. They were also asked to identify local resources and people who can help SFN meet its goals.

Who attended the Think Tank?

About 20 people were invited to take part in this Think Tank, including SFN youth, elders, Chief and Council members, other SFN citizens and staff. A small number of contractors were also in attendance to provide background information. Attendees names are listed at the end of this article. (See page 13)

Why was the Think Tank held at the Sundog Retreat?

Chief and Council chose to hold the meeting near Whitehorse for several reasons. Venues in our traditional territory were either not suitable or not ready to be used, plus it was thought that holding the event near Pelly Crossing would be distracting for the participants. Chief and Council wanted to hold the meeting in a place where participants did not have to deal with other issues, such as jobs,



other work or family matters. This meant that participants would be able to concentrate on the issues and get more work done. The Sundog Retreat was also chosen because it provided a good location for careful discussion and thought, including meeting rooms, meals and refreshments, accommodation and a facilitator.

What was discussed at the Think Tank?

The Think Tank discussions covered a number of important areas, including:

- SFN government restructuring
- Strategic planning

- Constitutional change
- Roles and responsibilities of elders
- Roles and responsibilities of all citizens
- Community wellness
- SFN policies, processes, procedures
- Training and orientation for staff and leaders
- Communications

To help focus the discussion, the Think Tank group used a report completed in November 2009 by Neil J. Sterritt (Sterritt Consulting) and Stephen Cornell (University of Arizona). It is called *The Current State of SFN Governance and Administration: A Report to the Selkirk First Nation*.

The group also identified both the challenges that SFN faces and its recent successes.

Challenges:

- the recent conflict in the community and the need for community healing to put conflict behind us
- some SFN citizens still feel hurt, abused or distrustful of other SFN citizens, staff and government
- a sense of entitlement to housing, money, transportation, etc, instead of a willingness to move toward self-sufficiency
- resistance to change
- the need to develop our people and our community so that they are healthy and productive

SFN Think Tank Report *continued...*

- poor communications
- the effects of residential schools



Successes:

- our self-government agreement
- more participation from elders and youth
- the growing sense that we all have a role to play in building the SFN government and community (empowerment for our people) more SFN graduates from high school, college and university
- improvements in literacy
- expertise and commitment amongst SFN staff
- improvements at the local school
- strong interest in traditional life-style and skills
- the way the community has begun to unite and work together after the recent disagreements during the summer

Did participants come up with ideas that SFN can use in the future?

Yes. Many exciting ideas were generated on a number of topics. Here are some examples.

Cultural/Traditional Skills:

- Conduct elders nights with youth
- Develop more actions to use and preserve traditional language
- Hire elders coordinator
- Teach youth about traditional medicines and surviving on edible plants

Communications:

- Hold more community meetings with Chief, Council and staff
- Use new technologies (like the internet and videos)
- Hand-deliver flyers to elders and use them to explain issues
- Reinstate community radio station

Community Wellness/Resilience:

- Hold circle to address effects of gossip and speak apologies
- Teach people to find their own solutions and be more self-reliant
- Have fun community gatherings just to celebrate
- Teach people what it means to be a responsible citizen and be involved in self-governance



Organizational Capacity and Training:

- Teach time-management and decision-making skills
- Develop information on roles and expectations for Chief and Council candidates
- Ensure new employees are provided with HR manual and orientation
- Change overtime, sick leave and other procedures to make sure people are paid appropriately for hours worked



What will come out of this Think Tank?

There is still a lot of work to do. It takes time and energy to turn ideas into action. At the end of the Think Tank meeting, the group discussed which ideas should be the highest priority for SFN and tried to think of people within the community who could lead this work. We need people to help out, so if you are interested in working on any of these ideas, please contact Nesta Hager, Project Manager Assistant, or Janie Lee Silas, Project Manager.

Our next Think Tank meeting is already being organized. We hope to hold it in November 2010 within the traditional territory. We'll keep you posted with more information, when we have it available.

Thank You!

SFN Chief and Council would like to thank the Think Tank participants for taking the time to be there. It was a useful and productive two days.

Jerry Alfred

Millie Johnson

Nicole Alfred

Desiree McGinty

Audrey Baker

Sandy McIntosh

Nesta Hager

Candice Menzi

Lizzie Hall

Helaina Moses

Jeremy Harper

Catherine Poole

Robert Hathaway

Elaine Schiman

Darin Isaac

Janie Lee Silas

Danielle Joe

Dan Williams

Lena Joe



In Closing

This article is a short summary of what took place at the Think Tank. If you would like additional information on the Think Tank discussions, or if you would like to be involved in the next Think Tank, please contact Nesta Hager at 867-537-3331 or email hagern@selkirkfn.com

Looking Back...



Pelly Crossing's First Science Camp



Health & Social Services Community B.B.Q.



New Post Office & Bank Open



Jerry Alfred & Band, Closing Day at Big Jonathon House

OFFICIAL NO-TO



Government

FOR RELEASE #10-149

August 6, 2010



Fort Selkirk designated a Yukon Historic Site

WHITEHORSE – The Yukon government and Selkirk First Nation are pleased to announce the designation of Fort Selkirk as a Yukon Historic Site under Yukon's *Historic Resources Act*.

"Fort Selkirk is a place of great historic significance to all Yukoners," Tourism and Culture Minister Elaine Taylor said. "For years it served as a waypoint for travelers, a centre for trade and a home for the people who settled there. The Yukon government is proud to partner with the Selkirk First Nation in preserving this irreplaceable part of our shared heritage."

Fort Selkirk is located near the mouth of the Pelly River, in the heart of the Selkirk First Nation traditional territory.

"Fort Selkirk was home to our ancestors and has been a traditional harvesting and gathering place for our people for thousands of years," Selkirk First Nation Chief Darin Isaac said. "Our people are deeply attached to this site and we have worked together successfully with the Yukon government to protect and manage it. We're very pleased that this partnership will now be enshrined through the site's designation as a Yukon Historic Site, as set out in the Selkirk First Nation Final Agreement."

From the Northern Tutchone people's first encounter with Europeans in the mid-1800s until the 1950s, Fort Selkirk was a thriving cross-cultural community featuring trading posts, Christian missions and a North-West Mounted Police post. The two cultures worked, played and prayed together until Fort Selkirk was abandoned after the construction of modern roads, which ended the sternwheeler era. Today, Fort Selkirk provides visitors with a unique experience amidst stunning natural surroundings, exceptional historic buildings and a rich cultural heritage.

The Selkirk First Nation and Yukon government have been working together to preserve and maintain Fort Selkirk since 1982. As part of the ongoing management of the site, Selkirk First Nation work crews preserve buildings, provide tours to visitors and maintain camping areas with funding and technical support from the Yukon government.

Fort Selkirk is the seventh Yukon Historic Site and the largest one designated so far. A date will be announced in the future for a formal ceremony recognizing the designation. For more information about Fort Selkirk and other Yukon Historic Sites, visit www.tc.gov.yk.ca/historicsites.

-30-

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FORT SELKIRK

Yukon's Newest and Largest Historic Site



Youthful Words of Wisdom

On July 9th, 10th and 11th, our community held meetings in Pelly Crossing to share information from Chief, Council and staff, as well as the Minto Mine owners. During the 3-day meetings, many citizens had a chance to share their views and offer their ideas about the challenges being faced by our First Nation. One person who spoke with great wisdom and commitment was Nesta Hager. With her permission, we have reprinted her speech below.

Good evening everyone. I would just like to take a few minutes of your time to speak to this assembly as a youth, a concerned citizen and also as your past leader.

For years I have attended our annual general assembly either as a staff member or as a concerned citizen. Over time, I have witnessed a lot of hurt and disrespect toward our government, our leaders and most of all toward each other. Each year, we gather together to make decisions for the overall picture... our future generation. I am sure this was the drive behind our forefathers when they united together and fought for the rights of each and every one of us in this room. We are their "Future Generation." Their voices thundered across this great nation, all the way to Ottawa, just to protect our rights. Today, their tears fall upon us. Instead of working together and

making their hopes and visions for us become a reality, we are struggling in a battle... a battle with each other. I guess we can say that they were fortunate that they never had to live to see this day. We, however, are not.



"I've seen what our community can do when we put our heads and hearts together. We pull through and because we do, we come out stronger and wiser."

Nesta Hager

Every day I ask myself "what are these people trying to prove?" I literally can't think of any other logical explanation other than selfishness. Now I am not saying that there are bad people in this situation. As a matter of fact, there are some very strong, powerful, passionate people who just got lost along the way: citizens and even some of our elders who were misguided into this opposition, based on false information.

Where did the value of community go? No one wants to step up to the plate and make a difference for the best interest of our people. Instead, people would rather point the blame on everyone else, or revolt against our leaders with no real vision other than to kick up the dust and put up

barriers to positive change. It's easy to sit back and say "Chief and Council this... Chief and Council that..." but I ask you now, how could you feel so entitled to pass judgement on these leaders when you have never walked a mile in their mukluks? And to the past leaders who have turned their backs on us now, they have only proved to us that they never really were true leaders to begin with.

Over the years, I've seen a lot of people spit fire at our leaders, making statements like "Well if I was on council, I'd be doing things this way" but really, I have yet to see them run for leadership. There is a lot of talk but no action. When I got fed up, I stepped up to the plate and ran, because I believe in making change, walking your talk. When I did so, I thought I had a general idea of what I was getting myself into, but I was way off. I tell you now, don't claim to know anything about being on council unless you really do. You have no idea what they have to go through on a day-to-day basis!

"We are at a defining moment in our history where the true meaning of community will surface."

But we don't do that, do we? No, instead of exercising our right to be informed and finding out information, we fill in the blanks with malicious and hurtful lies and cast shame upon one another. We ignore all the great achievements, all the hard work that has taken place, and the monumental moments in our history that have shaped us into who we are today. We'd rather focus on petty issues that don't really matter, when we look at the overall picture. Now look at us, at war with each other... Community A and Community B.

"I do believe that there is sunshine after the storm however and that is what keeps me going every day; my daughter's future keeps me going every day."

Look around this room and ask yourself this. "Does my vision for my people match that of my neighbour?" I've seen what our community can do when we put our heads and hearts together. We pull through and because we do, we come out stronger and wiser. Why must we create more tragedy for our nation than we already have suffered? This division of our people has shamed us. Our dirty laundry has been aired on the media! For what price? What is the whole point of this?

I do believe that there is sunshine after the storm however and that is what keeps me going every day; my daughter's future keeps me going everyday. We are at a crossroads in our history. We have the opportunity to rise up and unite to stand up for what we believe in... OUR FUTURE. Let us take this chance to pull forward and support our leaders and work toward making this community/government one we can be proud of: a government we can all have peace leaving behind to our children, knowing that they will take over and make us proud. We will hold our heads up high and not be defeated at the mercy of greed and selfish motivations.

We are at a defining moment in our history where the true meaning of community will surface.



Mr. Pooley told one of my friends here that there needs to be opposition for a group to become stronger. If you know in your heart what is right, then one day we will all walk together (not in front, not behind, but TOGETHER). Forty to fifty years from now, when we are elders, or elders-in-training, we can look back on this time and smile, knowing that we made it through. It is then when we will know that we have lived our legacy.

Mussi Cho,

Nesta Hager

"We are at a crossroads in our history. We have the opportunity to rise up and unite to stand up for what we believe in.... OUR FUTURE."

Northern Strategy Project Saved

Herculean tasks have been accomplished since April 2010—the Northern Strategy Project has been saved.

The funding agency is very pleased with the work that has been done since the new Project Manager Janie Lee Silas and Project Management Trainee Nesta Hager assumed their positions. Having struggled through the daunting backlog of unmet requirements dating back to 2008/2009, there is now only one 2009/2010 narrative report left to be completed by the Project Manager.

Once these reporting requirements have been met, the funding agency will approve the reimbursement that the project is entitled to for expenditures during the last fiscal year (2009-2010). The total of this reimbursement will be approximately \$600,000. In addition, SFN will also receive the reimbursement of a 10% holdback

(\$50,000) from the Yukon government.

The necessary budgets, work plans, etc that were prepared have met the funding agency's requirements. The current relationship with the funding agency is excellent and the funding agency fully supports the work being done. They are satisfied that the project is on track and will fund the last year of the project.

As part of the Northern Strategy Project, work will continue on various ongoing Economic Development projects through the Selkirk Development Corporation. There will be improvements made to the accountability system for SFN—including the retention of certified accounting services. Communications and Oversight Strategies, Think Tanks and a range of work on SFN policies and procedures are slated to carry on throughout the coming year.

Addressing the needs of the community's youth is a major priority of the

Northern Strategy Project this year. SFN Chief & Council have strongly encouraged the Northern Strategy Project to direct its efforts towards the Youth Strategy initiatives proposed for this year.

As the Project Management Trainee, Nesta Hager's primary focus is on the implementation of the Youth Strategy—though she is also tasked with a myriad of additional administrative duties. Ms. Hager has been providing her customary excellent support to the project, SFN and the Project Manager. Her latest endeavor brought the highly acclaimed "*Blueprint for Life*" workshop to the youth of Pelly Crossing on October 4-8. (See below)

Other reports dealing with the Northern Strategy Project are available to all citizens. Drop by the Northern Strategy office located in the Selkirk First Nation's Administration Building to request further information.



BluePrintForLife offers dynamic, culturally appropriate programs designed to provide youth with a survival toolkit that will help participants deal with complex issues like drug and alcohol abuse, family violence, sexual abuse, anger management and suicide.

BluePrintForLife programs explore the positive elements of Hip Hop, using Hip Hop as a tool to engage First Nations youth in workshops that pro-

mote healing of individuals and communities. In addition, the workshops enhance leadership skills and aid in developing plans to ensure that the benefits of these programs are sustainable.

Students from Eliza Van Bibber School and youth in the community (10 to 30 years old) attended this intensive 5-day workshop, October 04 – 08/10, at the Link Building.



The highlight of the *BluePrintForLife* workshop was the evening event held at the Link Building on October 07, 2010. The community had the opportunity to witness the unveiling of the mural created by the local workshop participants and a showcase of performances by both the youth of Pelly Crossing and the performers from *BluePrintForLife*.

For further information you may contact Nesta Hager or visit the website:

www.BluePrintForLife.ca.

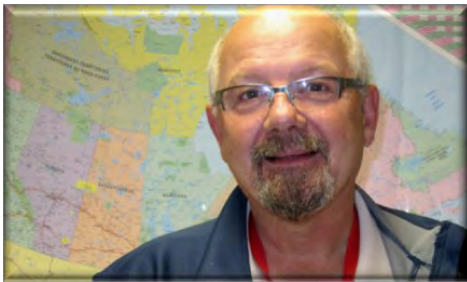
A Fresh Start For Education



The E.V.B. 2010-2011 school year began at 9:00 a.m. on Monday, August 30, 2010.

The first day was only a half day, as the staff needed the afternoon in order to plan the new school year. We have new staff members: the principal, the teacher for Grades 4-6, and the teacher for Grades 8-9. Currently, we also have some unfilled staff positions, as well as an urgent need for substitute teachers. We encourage you to apply!

A Few New Faces and Some Changes at Your Community School



Michael Gilbert is our new principal. Though he has spent the past 30 years working in northern Manitoba at a school run by the Sagkeeng First Nation, Mr. Gilbert actually comes from Nova Scotia originally.

His passion in life is the fascinating traditional first nation sport of lacrosse—in fact, at this point Michael remains the President of the Manitoba Lacrosse Association. Principal Gilbert brought up plenty of his own lacrosse equipment and has already had our enthusiastic high school students practicing their new skills.

The long-range plan is to have students from all three Northern Tut-

chone schools trained and practiced enough to have the first games between the communities by March 2011.

CBC Yukon has assured us that they will be stopping by our school to do a story on the start of lacrosse in Pelly Crossing.



Sandra Cashin, the Grades 3-6 teacher, is also from Nova Scotia. She says that Pelly Crossing is a huge metropolis to her. The tiny town Ms. Cashin is from had 72 residents—until she left—now they have a population of 71.

Chances are you may have already met Sandra, as she is an outgoing woman and an avid walker.



Claus Vogel does *not* come from Nova Scotia. Mr. Vogel moved here from Pangnirtung, Nunavut. He has spent a number of years in the far north, including Northern Quebec. Claus has taken over teaching the Maths & Sciences for Grades 8-12. So far, we have learned that besides his obvious love of teaching, Claus is an outdoorsman, traveler, photographer, and writer.

New school hours:

School starts 9:00—11:55 a.m.

Lunch 11:55—12:50 3:30 p.m. dismissal



2010-2011 Picture Day at Eliza Van Bibber School



Community Pancake Breakfast September 8th



Students at BlueprintForLife Workshop October 7th



Georgieann Sam & Patrick McGinty –The Class of 2011 at Eliza Van Bibber School



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Editor's Note

Greetings Readers,

Each year at this time, the newest little ones experience their first days at our school and I take joy in the wonder that I see reflected in their eyes. My hope for them, and everyone else, is that we can work together to repair the bridges that will allow us to travel across the troubled waters and meet again on common ground; to travel new roads with a common purpose—to build the legacy we wish to leave these children.

Donna Conley

SFN News contributors: Elaine Schiman, Bill Trerice, Bonnie Roberts, Nesta Hager & Donna Conley

Congratulations to the many SFN Citizens who are leading the way back to school...

Lauren McGinty, Robert Joe, Janelle Hager, Anniesia Hager, Gina Gill, Frances Gill, Teri-Lee Isaac, Danielle Marcotte, Tara Roberts, Candice Menzi and Nesta Hager—to name but a few!



You Make Us Proud!



ELIZA VAN BIBBER SCHOOL CALENDAR 2010-2011

DATE	REASON FOR CLOSING	TOTAL SCHOOL DAYS by month
Friday October 8, 2010	School Closed Day	
Monday October 11, 2010	Thanksgiving Day	19 October
Thursday November 11, 2010	Remembrance Day	
Friday November 12, 2010	School Closed Day	20 November
Monday December 20, 2010 to Monday January 3, 2011	Christmas Break Back to school Tuesday Jan. 3, 2011	13 December
Friday January 28, 2011	School Closed Day	19 January
Friday February 25, 2011	Heritage Day	19 February
Monday March 14, 2011 to Friday March 25, 2011	Spring Break Back to school March 28, 2011	13 March
Friday April 22, 2011	Good Friday	20 April
Monday April 25, 2011	Easter Monday	
Friday May 20, 2011	School Closed Day	19 May
Monday May 23, 2011	Victoria Day	
Friday June 17, 2011	Last day of School (full day)	13 June
Length of School Day: 5 hours 20 minutes per day	*School closed days are non paid days and are not included in the total number of days	Total School Days in year: 178 days per year

