

September 2008

# The Wienecke Wire



## Having to become a man of character

Positioned at the south end of Lac Matemace on the snowy border between Quebec and Newfoundland lies the village of Kawawachikamach, “the winding lake”. It is the home of the **Naskapi** people, one of the first peoples of the land we now call Canada. Like many northern communities, the Naskapis rely on subsistence hunting, fishing, and trapping for a large part of their food supply and for many raw materials. After many forced moves, and illnesses imported by settlers, the group now numbers fewer than 900.



The language of the Naskapi people, like that of the Cherokee in the southeastern US, uses a unique script whose characters represent *syllables*, not single consonants and vowels. For example, in English the word “moto” has two syllables and is spelled with four letters. Written in the Naskapi script, the speech sounds “moh-toh” would be spelled with two characters: ᐃ ᐅ. How would you pronounce this word? ᐃᐅᐃ

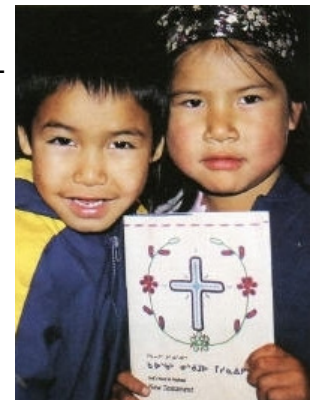
When Bible translators, Bill and Norma Jean Jancewicz, began living among the Naskapi people in 1988, they soon encountered a difficult problem. There was no way to type Naskapi text into their primitive, pre-Windows computer! At that time, the Naskapi used a hand-written script which had never been brought into the digital world. Consequently, there was no way to use the dictionary, database and text-editing software available to speed Bible translation.

Finding it impossible to manage their burgeoning language data with a only pen and paper, Bill was forced to add “writing-system developer” to his existing “Bible translator” job title. So, in parallel with phonological analysis and grammar studies, Bill began learning about character encoding, keyboard mapping and font development. The Naskapi language needed to be computerized, and Bill was the only one available to take on the task.

### But what if a Bible translator simply can't develop “character”?

By God's grace and the Jancewicz' efforts the Naskapi received their completed New Testament last Fall—praise Him! Most Bible translators, however, are simply unable to do the script engineering Bill had to do. How much more difficult would the task be for the many national Bible translators around the world for whom computers are largely unknown? How will those with only a hand-written script (*or even no script at all!*) be able to create text, build dictionaries, format Scripture or publish anything?

Initial	Vowel				Final
	i	o	a	wa	
∅	Δ	▷	◁	◁i	
p	∧	>	<	<i	◁◁
t	∩	∩	∩	∩i	◁∩
k	ρ	d	b	∩b	◁b
ch	∩	∩	∩	∩i	◁∩
l	∩	∩	∩		◁∩
m	∩	∩	∩	∩i	◁∩
n	σ	b	p	∩b	◁b
r	∩	∩	∩		◁∩
s	∩	∩	∩	∩i	◁∩
y	∩	∩	∩	∩i	◁∩
w	Δ		Δi		◁∩
h	∩Δ	∩▷	∩Δ	∩Δi	◁∩



Naskapi children with their Naskapi NT.

If there is no one with the specialized computer skills (which Bill “self-developed”) who can bring these scripts across the “digital divide,” Bible translation in today’s world is simply not possible. This is often a big reason why the hardest of the hard translation projects haven’t started yet. No one has yet “engineered” those scripts into digital existence. Millions of people remain Bibleless because of it.

## This is why you support our work, and why we appreciate you so much!

Dear NRSI,

*The Non-Roman Script Initiative (NRSI) team has been very helpful to me as I relate to not only the Naskapi project (still our primary assignment), but also other (especially Cree) projects that use Canadian Syllabics.*

*...All through the 1990s we received assistance from a number of people who eventually became involved in the NRSI...*

*...Thank you for all of the assistance the NRSI has provided over the years.*

*— Bill Jancewicz, July 2008*

The NRSI is the small Wycliffe team which helps translators like Bill do what must be done to get the Word translated, and Ken is a member of this group. But because he does not work directly as a writing-system developer, our next letter will focus on the specifics of Ken’s role (hint: [www.scriptsources.org](http://www.scriptsources.org)).

## The Praise and Petition Partition

- **Praise!** That week-long marriage retreat/counseling time that we had in April was very good and had immediate impact. *Thank Him for helping us get to it and through it.*

- **Praise!** Another “God thing” happened: our kids have 8 more horse-care/riding lessons this fall. *Praise Him that He not only meets needs, but sometimes He blesses us by fulfilling our desires!*

- **Praise!** Your prayers for Peter Martin’s health (chronic fatigue) are being answered. Peter is a crucial member of the ScriptSource team, and he is now usually able to work 75% of a normal workday.

- **Petition!** Our August income was \$2000 under quota. This is not abnormal during the summer, but please *ask God to balance this out in future months.*

- **Petition!** The ScriptSource development team will be meeting this month in England for an in-person working session (the 5-person group is geographically scattered and typically works via Internet connections). Ken will be gone September 19-27. *Pray for safety, productivity and grace for Katy and the kids while Ken is away.*

- **Petition!** Katy continues to experience serious joint and body pain that defies diagnosis. *Ask God to lead us to the source of the real problem.*

**Thank you so much for walking with us in this work! As ever, we remain...**

Your servants,  
Ken, Katy, Christopher and Charissa

<http://www.wysite.org/sites/wienecke>

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Partners in Bible Translation

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## To learn more about...

**the Naskapi people:**  
[www.naskapi.ca/en](http://www.naskapi.ca/en)

**The Naskapi language:**  
[www.native-languages.org/naskapi](http://www.native-languages.org/naskapi)  
[www.languagegeek.com/algon/naskapi/naskapi.html](http://www.languagegeek.com/algon/naskapi/naskapi.html)  
[www.biblescanada.com/catalog/products/4000.htm](http://www.biblescanada.com/catalog/products/4000.htm)

**Bill and Norma Jean Jancewicz:**  
[www.christianityh.ca/NetCommunity/Page.aspx?pid=5614](http://www.christianityh.ca/NetCommunity/Page.aspx?pid=5614)  
[www.norwichbulletin.com/homepage/x1633047631?view=print](http://www.norwichbulletin.com/homepage/x1633047631?view=print)