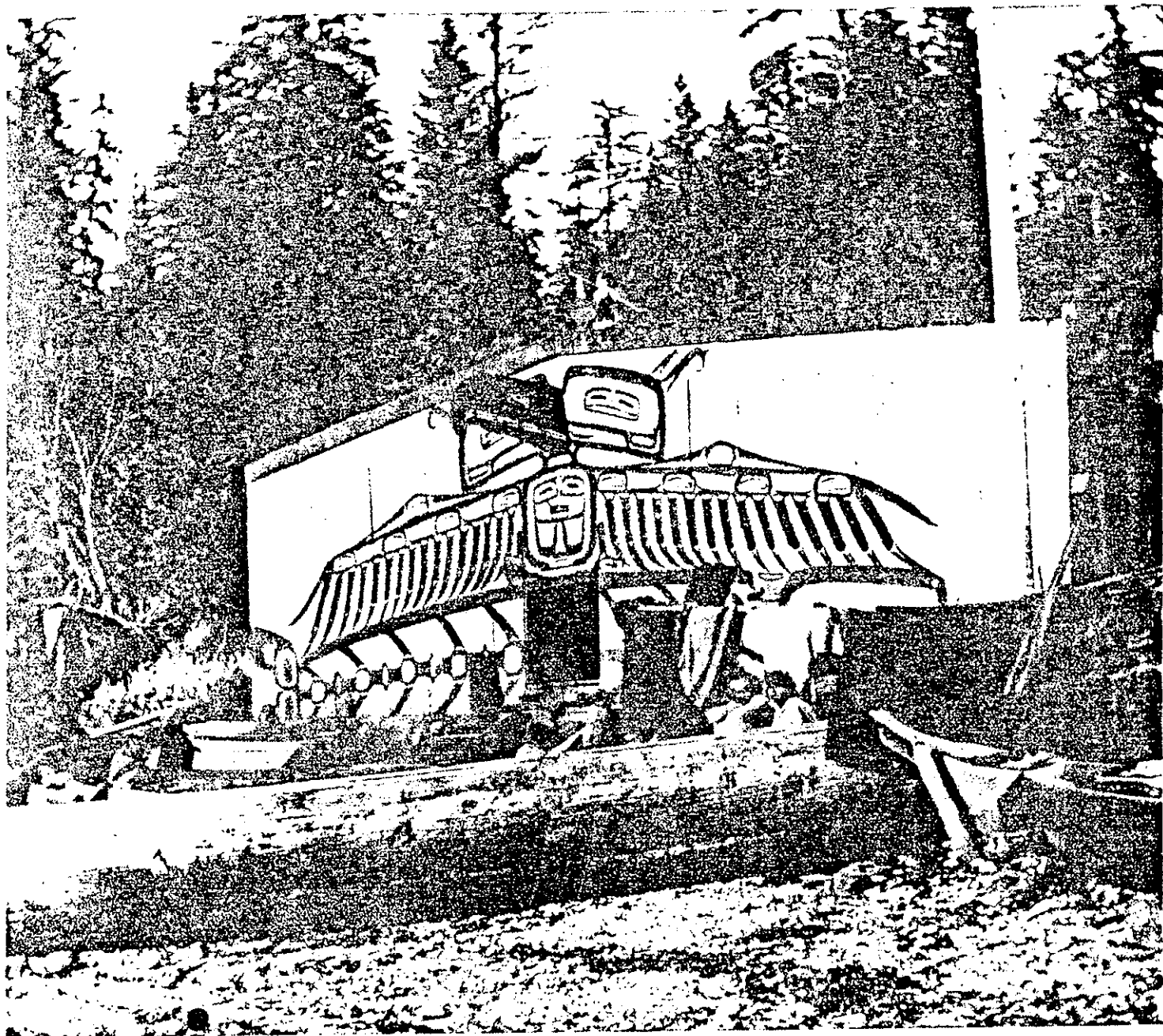


U'MISTA CULTURAL CENTRE NEWSLETTER



SEPTEMBER 1983

U'MISTA CULTURAL CENTRE

NEWSLETTER

Some of our members may think that, as we haven't sent out a Newsletter since November 1982, that not much has been going on. The reason for our long silence is that so much has been happening, that there hasn't been time for writing.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Annual General Meeting was held in April, with the following people elected:

Bill Cranmer, Chairman, replacing Chris Cook, Jr.
Donna Cranmer, Secretary-Treasurer, replacing Patsy Wilson
Elizabeth Nelson, replacing Billy Peters
Peter Smith, replacing Roy Cranmer

Board members, either re-elected or serving the second year of their terms, are:

J.J. Wallas, Vice-Chairman	Elsie Williams
Harry Walkus	Bill Hunt
David Hunt	Charlie Matilpi

At a meeting on September 18th, the Board members agreed to meet on the third Sunday of each month. The next meeting will be held in Fort Rupert on October 16, 1983. It was also decided that a joint meeting be held in November with the Board of Directors of the Cape Mudge Nuyambalees Society.

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BOX OF TREASURES

Our second film, BOX OF TREASURES, is now completed. The first time it was shown was at the International Congress of Anthropological and Ethnological Sciences, held in Vancouver in August. The response was very good and we are hopeful that the film can be shown on television.

"A truly beautiful record, and very wise and balanced into the bargain.

Some acid, justified of course, but just enough to convey the loss and injustice. And some emotion, proper and moving, but stopping short of any suggestion of soggyess."

These remarks were written to us, by someone who had seen the film at the Congress. We should all feel quite proud - finishing the film was a lot of work, but well worth the effort.

CULTURAL CENTRE STAFF

During Lorraine Hunt's two-month leave of absence during July and August, Buntu Lalear joined our staff. We enjoyed working with Buntu, who was especially helpful to visitors during the tour season. Lorraine has returned as a part-time language teacher and Geri Ambers is working as a part-time assistant to the curator.

In June, Michael Dick, who was training at the Kwakiutl Museum, came to Alert Bay and worked with us for three weeks. He was especially helpful in getting our June Sports Anniversary Exhibit ready.

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THE COPPER THAT CAME DOWN FROM HEAVEN

As mentioned in our last newsletter, Centre staff worked on the exhibit, which opened at the Museum of Anthropology, University of British Columbia on July 21, 1983. Davina Hunt, of our staff, spent three weeks at the Museum of Anthropology, to gain experience in mounting an exhibit, under the direction of a professional designer.

Some of our members attended the opening, at which our Chairman was one of the speakers. From his remarks, we quote the following:

"This exhibit, which includes some of the Potlatch Collection - the artifacts that were removed from us in the early 1920's because of the unjust law that made the potlatch illegal, generates a great feeling among us. There is a feeling of sadness and anger, remembering a dark part of Canadian history, when these artifacts were taken from us. There is also a feeling of great happiness that they have been returned to us and, with their return, a rekindling of the spirit that allowed us to retain our culture through very difficult times."

The exhibit is unique in that it is bilingual, i.e., English and Kwakwaka. Our Cultural Centre staff supplied the transcriptions and translations for object labels and the panels displaying excerpts from actual speeches given at potlatches. This job turned out to be more time-consuming than any of us had expected, but our contribution to the exhibit adds a lot to its impressiveness.

Part of the opening ceremonies included a performance of some of our dances, in which people from both the Kwakiutl Museum and the U'mista Cultural Centre participated.

There was considerable press coverage of the event and we invite our members to come in and read some of the articles, which were sent to us by the Public Relations people at the Museum of Anthropology.

THE BIG HOUSE RENOVATION PROJECT

As mentioned in our last newsletter, we had applied for funding to improve the "backroom" space of the Big House. The work was completed, as planned, with much more room for masks, potlatch goods and food storage.

From the First Citizens' Fund, we have received a commitment of \$20,000.00 for the next phase of the the B.H. Renovation Project. Beginning of this work will be delayed until the end of the fishing season, when workers will be available.

SUMMER VISITORS

Two cruise ships, the FAIRSEA and the CUNARD PRINCESS, stopped in Alert Bay during the summer. As our Cultural Centre was not one of the stops for the municipality's bus tour, ship passengers either walked from the Government Wharf, or took taxis. Our total number of visitors for the months of June, July and August was 1,914, down considerably from the previous summer.

We thank our volunteers for their help - Vera Cranmer, T.D. Nelson, Barbara Cranmer, Patsy Wilson, Denise Cranmer, Nancy Blyth and Emma Dick. Gilakas'la.

GIFTS

One of the most exciting things that has happened for us was the gift from Lorne Balshine of sixty objects, including a Chilkat blanket, dating from the 1880's. There are some very fine baskets in the collection, representing Salish, West Coast, Haida and Tlingit styles.

We are now working on an exhibit plan for the Collection and will announce an opening date, once the cases are installed and the objects in place. It is an indication of the reputation we have achieved that, when Mr. Balshine decided to donate his collection to an Indian-operated museum, he chose the U'mista Cultural Centre, because he had been told by several people that it was the best.

PHOTOGRAPH AND VIDEORECORDING WORKSHOPS

Vickie Jensen gave two workshops in photography for interested member, earlier this year. Some of the same people also participated in the video classes taught by Judy Hoffman. Both workshops were provided the kind of training we need, so that we can properly document and record our history.

One of the developments of the video workshops was the production of a short introductory video cassette, on which Davina Hunt, Barbara, Donna, Denise and Doug Cranmer, and Lorraine Hunt worked. Plans are to use this cassette to promote tours of our Centre, once the titles are completed.

ARCHAEOLOGY

Through a summer employment program of the British Columbia Heritage Trust and Employment and Immigration, we were able to hire two archaeology students and three of our own young people to continue the work begun in 1980.

Fran Dick has prepared the following report:

"During the summer, Donna Cranmer, William Wasden and I worked over at the Nimpkish River, under the supervision of three archaeologists. We spent five days a week there.

There were two sites excavated, an old site with no original name, so it was labelled EdSrl2 and the old village site, Xwalkw. Out of these two sites, four units were excavated.

Excavation begins with two 50 cm x 50 cm squares, along side a sample pit, a screen set up close by and the digging begins. This is done with a trowel very carefully, so we were able to record the different layers as we went down. Each layer has a different name. We all took turns excavating our first unity. Each different layer is sifted through the screen and the findings, such as flakes, bones or tools are bagged and recorded, along with each different layer of soil. F.C.R. (fire-cracked rock) is weighed also, from different layers, recorded, then disposed of.

When the last layer is no longer cultural, the walls of the unit must be cleaned straight up and down, any protruding rocks or roots must not be pulled out from the walls, but brushed clean. Then the profiling begins, that is, each wall of the unit is drawn on individual sheets of graph paper, the different layers are drawn in, along with any rocks or roots obvious to the eye. The same thing is done with the floor of the unit. After the profiling, the walls and floor of the unit are photographed and recorded.

During the project, seven petroglyphs were found, three with distinct faces. These were also photographed, recorded and rubbings taken of them. We found many different artifacts during our excavations, tools made of bone and stone, different types of shells. There were many interesting things we learned about the archaeological field. It was even more interesting to learn exactly where our old people lived and how they lived."

An Open House was held during the last week of the project. Visitors were taken on a tour of the sites by the archaeologists and our own students. All in all, it was a very successful summer and we hope that, next summer, we can continue. A major part of the funding for the summer's work was provided by the Nimpkish Band, under its Research and Development Program.

JUNE SPORTS 25th ANNIVERSARY

As U'mista's contribution to the anniversary celebrations, we hired Barbara Cranmer, Bernice Wilson and Svea Svanvik, under a provincial "Museum/Tourism" program. The crew worked from January to March, gathering photographs, uniforms, trophies, etc. Owners of photographs generously loaned them to us and, in most cases, we were given permission to make prints. Some of the earliest photographs of soccer teams dated back to the first classes in St. Michael's School. Names of players were provided, where possible.

The response to the exhibit was very good. After it was taken down, the photographs were placed in albums and are available for visitors to look at.

BOARD OF TRUSTEES - NATIONAL MUSEUMS CORPORATION

On May 16th, we welcome members of the Board of Trustees on their first visit to our Cultural Centre, during which time they toured the building, saw a rough cut of the film and were guests at a lunch prepared by our staff and local directors. Among the remarks of the Trustees written in our Guest Book were:

"Many, many thanks."

"Immensely impressive."

"You deserve to be proud of your accomplishment here."

"Well done! A fine achievement."

"Heart moving."

"A privilege to visit."

"We go back, admiring what you have done and understand much better."

In the absence of Chris Cook, Sam Cook took our visitors out on the Nimpkish Producer for a short cruise down to Village and Turnour Islands, before they returned to Port McNeill. We received letters from them, thanking us for an enjoyable visit.

Earlier in May, we had a visit from Ronal Bourgeois, Director of the National Museum Assistance Programmes. In a letter from Ottawa, Mr. Bourgeois wrote, in part:

"We were impressed by the facility but even more by the Centre's active programming and its role as a major cultural force in the community. We were also pleased to learn about the very close collaboration between the Centre and other British Columbia institutions such as the Provincial Museum and the UBC Museum of Anthropology. It was obvious that none of this could have been accomplished without the active support of the native community and the Centre's Board and without the energy and enthusiasm of yourself and your staff."

Also, from the mysterious East, the Canadian Conservation Institute Mobile Laboratory came to the Centre for three weeks. Bob Barclay and Janet Mason, who travelled with the Mobile Lab, provided some badly-needed conservation treatment to a number of our artifacts, with priority given to the objects loaned to the Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia. We have asked the Director of the Canadian Conservation Institute to send Bob and Janet back for three weeks next summer so that further treatment can be carried out.

From Bob and Janet's report, we quote:

"Throughout our visit, we were impressed with the environmental conditions, the sound display techniques, and the general level of understanding of the staff. The method of display chosen for the Potlatch Collection is unique and very impressive, giving by inference a profound reading of its own history. The extensive programmes conducted by the Cultural Centre, the educational publication series, the craftwork, and the integration of the museum into the cultural life of the community all made us very aware of the completeness of the achievement."

MEMBERSHIP

We welcome and thank the following new members for their support:

Jay Stewart	Brian Moloney	Emily Baker
Richard Sumner	Doreen Caldwell	Lilac Fehlauer
Deane Wadhams	Ria Hofferd	Rod Sherell
Maureen Wright	Margaret Brown	Alan Haig-Brown
Carol Wilson	Jane Sink	Bernie Epting
Elizabeth Whiting	Bruce Bjornson	Helen MacDermid
Vickie Brotchie	Fran Dick	Lewis Krakauer
Harry Prevost	Joan Hood	Laura Ann Recalma
Hans Amering	Margaret Murrell	Henry Beans
Bruce Parisian	Kathleen Richards	Tracy May
Bert Isaac	Kevin Neary	Sandra Waarne
Pauline Waterfall	Geri Dick	Jan Worthington
Ruth Kine	Ethel Alfred	Fred & Connie Hull
Beatrix Hopkins	Paul Bujold	

Quite a number of our new members are from out-of-town, including Portland, Oregon; Littleton, Colorado; Wetaskawin, Alberta; Edmonds, Washington and other exotic places such as Williams Lake, Waglisla, Victoria, Port Coquitlam and Vancouver.

There isn't space to list all of the people who continue their support by renewing their memberships, so we will just say, "Thank you", to all forty-eight of you! We appreciate your help.

SMOKY-TOP - THE ART AND TIMES OF WILLIE SEAWEED

As some of our members know, the above exhibit opened at the Pacific Science Centre in Seattle, on September 11, 1983. Bill Holm curated the exhibit and we have had good reports from the few members who were able to attend the opening.

The Centre staff are now beginning to plan a special trip to see the exhibit, getting estimates on renting a 15-passenger van, mileage, meals, ferries, etc. To make the trip worth while, we are considering four days, two for travelling and two full days for seeing the exhibit in Seattle and the Copper from Heaven exhibit at the Museum of Anthropology, University of B.C. There might even be time for a little early Christmas shopping!

To help cover the cost of the trip, i.e., the bus rental, etc., we will have two fund-raising events between now and whenever the trip takes place, which, we hope, will be some time in November. The U'mista Gift Shop is donating a bracelet, paddle and doll for a raffle. We have also asked the Cormorant Recreation Association for permission to hold a Bingo to raise money. If we are successful, as we will be, if everyone supports our efforts, it should be possible for us to pay for everything, except for hotel and meals.

In order to facilitate planning, we would ask you to let us know if you are interested in this trip. As space will be limited, we will accept names on a "first come, first served" basis.

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That's it, for this time. We apologize for neglecting to keep in touch with our membership for such a long time, but hope that these pages will give you all some idea of how busy the time has been at the Centre so far this year. As we approach the end of our third year of operation, we can be proud of our success, and all work together for even better achievements in the future.

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THE COVER PHOTOGRAPH

The house of Tlakwudlas, chief of the 'Namgis. This original design differs from the housefront design of the U'mista Cultural Centre in that the "ears" of the thunderbird are painted, whereas the Centre's thunderbird has "ears" that are carved and project from the flat design. Also, on the roof of this house is a small human figure, holding a spear. This photograph was used as a cover on the invitations to the opening of the U'mista Cultural Centre.

HALAKAS'LA