U'MISTA CULTURAL CENTRE NEWSLETTER



November 1985

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HAPPY BIRTHDAY TO US!!

November 1, 1985 marks the fifth anniversary of the official opening of the U'mista Cultural Centre. In our first five years of operation, we have accomplished some very good things. Among the highlights are:

- 1. The "Learning Kwakwala" series 12 language books and a teacher's manual, completed in 1981. We still receive orders for sets of these, from Indian groups across the country, which are developing their own language programs.
- 2. Kwakwala Teacher Training Program now in its third and final year, this program has attracted students from Campbell River, Cape Mudge, Fort Rupert and Tsalgwadi. Our instructors, Jay Powell, Joy Wild and Vickie Jensen, have contributed much to the professional development of Indian staff in various schools in the North Island.
- 3. BOX OF TREASURES our second successful film. Not only has it been shown on national television in both Canada and the U.S., it has won two awards this year. The first, a Blue Ribbon, was awarded at the American Film Festival in New York. The second, a Golden Eagle, from the Council on International Nontheatrical Events, will be presented at ceremonies in Washington, D.C. during the first week of December. All award-winning films are to be entered in international film festivals, the first to be held in Brussels in November.
- 4. Salmonista Video. Judy Hoffman, who worked on BOX OF TREASURES with Chuck Olin, gave an 8-week video training course earlier this year to a group of students who have become known as the "Salmonistas". The first major project for the Salmonista Video Crew is a training video on Self-Government, for the Kwagu't District Council, to be completed by December 1st. Gerry Ambers and Barbara Cranmer are the full-time crew members, with Denise Cranmer, Emma Dick, Davina and Lorraine Hunt helping out when needed.

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Other accomplishments during our first five years include a successful dance program which, unfortunately, has been discontinued. However, we have a record of the great results of some of our activities in a video tape of Fran Dick's play potlatch held in June. Fran was a language teacher for the Centre, a member of the Singing class which meets weekly at the Centre and also, taught art in the Alert Bay School. In addition, she is one of our most enthusiastic students in the Teacher Training Program. For the play potlatch, she taught her students various songs for dances they had learned and some of them managed short speeches in Kwakwala during the evening. All in all, the event was impressive in showing what can be done and we at the Centre share the pride Fran and her students felt in making it all happen in such a positive way.

We continue to receive visitors from many parts of the world and we know we must be doing something right from the comments entered in our visitors' book, such as:

"Very fine exhibit; thank you for sharing with us."

"Beautifully displayed and explained."

"It's good to see a different viewpoint."

" Marvellous! Worth the trip alone!"

"Something to be proud of."

"Beautiful. Great emotional experience."

Our members can read many more such comments from our visitors any time you come to the Centre - it makes you feel good to be part of it!

Our first five years have given us a good foundation on which to build and grow stronger. Certainly, a lot of credit is due to our members who continue to support us and also to our Board members and volunteers who contribute to our on-going success. We are especially grateful to our old people who are very much a part of what we do and without whom we couldn't have done as well as we have.

So, after congratulating ourselves, we have to think about the next five years. What should our priorities be? We know what we planned to do, but have not yet done - such as building the two additional big houses to complete the Centre complex, finishing the necessary renovations on the Big House, publishing the book based

on our ramp exhibit, for example. We have a very small staff and funding is always a problem, but we do need to plan. Since our Centre opened, several of our important old people have died and although we were able to record some history with them, we need to do more in the time we have left with others of our old people. If we work together, we can make sure that our next five years are as good or even better than our first five.

STAFF

With Elaine Moore's resignation from the position of administrative assistant, we're down to two staff members again, Davina Hunt is back from her maternity leave and Gloria Cranmer Webster continues as curator. We wish Elaine every success in her new position with the Museum of Northern British Columbia in Prince Rupert.

GRANTS

From the Department of Secretary of State, we received \$8,000.00 to continue the Kwakwala Teacher Training Project.

From the Cultural Services Branch, under the Museum Assistance Program, we received \$5,000.00 to help cover our operations and maintainence.

While not exactly a grant, we have received a initial payment of \$5,000.00 from Commercial Communications, with whom we have signed a contract for \$20,000.00, to act as consultants for the program being developed for the GM Pavilion at Expo. Every little bit helps!

GIFTS

Some of our members will remember Rose McKay, who worked in the Alet Bay Post Office in the early days. For some years, Mrs. McKay was curator at the Campbell River Museum and has been retired for a long time. Mrs. McKay has given us three framed water colours, which were a wedding gift to her and her husband, Henry in 1941. The artist is Dorothy Studdy and if any one has any information about her, we would be happy to hear from you.

From the University of Washington Press, we received a cheque for \$413.43. The donation is part of the revenue from "Smoky-Top", a volume by Bill Holm on the life of Willie Seaweed.

MEMBERSHIP

We welcome the following people, who are new members of the U'mista Cultural Society and thank them for their support:

Stephen Ruttan Jenny Thurber John Speck George Hunt, Sr. Thomas Parkin Lou Crabe Bill Thompson

We also thank the following people for renewing their memberships and continuing to support us:

Malia Southard
Sandra Waarne
Nola Johnston
Buntu Lalear
Donald Dodman
Davina Hunt
Gordon Taylor
Ethel Alfred

Charline Alfred
Betty Lindberg
George Rasmussen
Gloria Snively
Barbara Hunt
Vivian Cook
Jennifer Butterfield

As we've said in earlier Newsletters, membership is vital to the success of our Centre and we encourage our members to recruit new members for us. Just a reminder of the advantages of membership -

- 1. copies of U'mista newsletters
- 2. free admission to the Centre
- 3. invitation to previews of new exhibits
- 4. 10% discount on purchases from the Gift Shop(more about this later)
- 5. Not very often, but a chance to go on trips, such as the members' tour of the "Smoky-Top" exhibit last year in Seattle.

For the friend or relative whose birthday is coming up - how about a gift membership? It lasts all year and helps support the Centre.

SPECIFIC CLAIM

On November 14th and 15th, our curator and chairman of our Board of Directors will meet in Toronto with representatives of the Royal Ontario Museum and two representatives of the Nuyambalees Society, which operates the Kwakiutl Museum in Cape Mudge. The purpose of the meeting is to finalize the arrangements for the return of the potlatch material still held by the Royal Ontario Museum.

There are 145 artifacts at ROM, which were transferred there from the National Museum of Man, in 1922, with the approval of

Indian Affairs. We don't expect any problems with the ROM people and, after the return of this part of the collection, we will then concentrate on the return of the 33 objects still held by the Museum of the American Indian/Heye Foundation in New York.

Part of our Specific Claim is compensation for the loss of the artifacts for 58 years, plus posthumous for those who were charged under the potlatch prohibition law. Our Board of Directors is working together with the Board of the Nuyambalees Society on this joint claim. We are proposing that compensation be in the form of guaranteed annual funding to both the Kwakiutl Museum and the U'mista Cultural Centre, so that we can expand the programs we offer to the people we serve.

Sale! Sale! Sale! Sale!

Davina Hunt, our Gift Shop manager/secretary receptionist, announces the ANNUAL CHRISTMAS SALE at the Gift Shop. For U'mista members, there will be a 15% discount on <u>EVERYTHING</u>. To start off the sale, members are invited to a wine and cheese part at the Centre on November 30th, beginning at 7:30 p.m. Mark the dates on your calendar - NOVEMBER 30th to DECEMBER 6th - during this week you can do your early Christmas shopping and pick up some real bargains in books, prints, jewellry, T-Shirts and our 1986 calendar.



Hard at work in the video corner of our storeroom are: Eva Cook, Donna Cranmer, Davina Hunt, Gerry Ambers and Denise Cranmer. Absent are: Barbara Cranmer and Emma Dick.

THREE VERY SPECIAL VISITORS came to Alert Bay in September - Norman Boas, his wife Doris and daughter Barbara. Norman's grandfather was Franz Boas, who spent many years in our area, working with George Hunt, documenting aspects of our culture which might otherwise have been lost.

Descendants of George Hunt welcomed our visitors and everyone enjoyed the visit. We have made new friends in the Boas family and hope that they will return soon to meet other members of the large group of Hunt descendants. In fact, in a recent letter, Norman wrote: "Did you know that September 19, 1886 will be the 100th anniversay of the meeting of George Hunt and Franz Boas at Fort Rupert? Perhaps we can visit again in a year."* He also said about our Centre: "We saw the movies, of course, and were deeply moved by what you have done at the museum and for your people. You have established a magnificent historical base for the future and you should be very proud."

OUR COVER PHOTOGRAPH

Part of the record of our opening day on November 1, 1985, the photo shows some of the chiefs gathered for the speeches at the entrance to the Centre. Earlier in this issue, we talked about old people we have lost, who were important to us. Since the photograph was taken, Sam Henderson, James Charles King and Tommy Hunt have died. We continue to mourn the loss of these outstanding men, who contributed so much to the survival of our culture. In following the path they showed us, we honour their memory and remember their teaching. The late Beatrice Jack, from the West Coast, also appears in the photograph. Her contribution to the cultural life of her people is well-remembered by those who knew her.

A REMINDER TO KTTP STUDENTS: THE NEXT SESSION WILL BE ON NOVEMBER 19th, 20th and 21st - same time, same place.

TO ALL OUR MEMBERS - BEST WISHES FOR A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A VERY HAPPY NEW YEAR:

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