BIG HOUSE...
Renovations Completed

A lot of time and energy from people in the community went into this project to make it such a success. I would like to take this time to thank the many people and associations who had volunteered their time, energy, materials and funds into this project.

As the project comes to the final stages of completion I had the opportunity to talk to the Big House Renovations crew. The crew shared the same basic feelings in working on this project. Everyone agreed it was alright working on the Big House Project, fun was had by all.

There were some clinches such as the shortage of materials and learning to improvise in order to continue their work. But, they managed to complete the project.

The crew were all in a good mood as I walked through admiring the work and improvement of the Big House addition. They were busy cleaning up the saw dust sweeping, dusting and putting away the electrical tools. One hears whistling and joking amongst the crew. There is also a strong sense of pride from each of the crew as they tour you around the Big House addition and show you their workmanship.

Here are some of the stages of construction the Big House under went.
BIGHOUSE...

A Big Thank-you To All

The U’mistah Cultural Centre would like to thank its members for their continuing generous support. We sincerely thank the businesses and associations in the area for their generous support as well, not to forget the many personal and anonymous donations that have been given to the U’mistah Cultural Society and Centre. Listed are the many people who have supported the U’mistah Cultural Society in the past year:


Once again, I would like to thank everyone I have mentioned. I am sorry if I have missed anyone, all donations and volunteer time is of great importance to the U’mistah Cultural Society and Centre. The success of the Society and Centre would not be possible without your interest and generous support.

Gilak’sa

Effective January 1, 1885, the Canadian government outlawed the potlatch, and until 1951, the practice was prohibited by federal law. In many areas, potlatching all but disappeared. The Gitksan, Nuu-chah-nulth, and particularly the Kwakwaka’wakw peoples, however, resisted this law, and the potlatch continued, although often in secret.

In the words of Southern Kwakwaka’wakw chiefs, recorded at Fort Rupert shortly after the potlatch was banned:

Do we ask the white man, "Do as the Indian does?" No, we do not. Why then do you ask us, "Do as the white man does?" It is a strict law that bids us dance. It is a strict law that bids us distribute our property among our friends and neighbours. It is a good law. Let the white man observe his law. We shall observe ours.
The summer is over and like every other organization we enjoyed a two month vacation. Wrong!

Shortly after our Annual General Meeting, your Board of Directors carried on with business as usual. We welcome newly elected board member’s, Lawrence Ambers, Betty Walkus and Georgina Wallas. We thank the outgoing board members Bill Wasden, Colleen Hemphill and Christine McDougall for their past contributions and I’m sure that we can depend on their continued support.

The extension to the back of our Big House started in July, with the demolition of the old structure. The committee responsible for overseeing this project includes: Lawrence Ambers, Richard Dawson, Roy Cranmer, Andrea Sanborn, Linda Manz, and myself.

We hired a crew under a Job Development Grant from Employment and Immigration, Aboriginal Training Unit for construction and carpentry training. The carpenter in charge is Charlie Coon. The trainees are Donald Alfred, Eugene Isaac, Mabel Dawson and Tommy Speck.

We have had ongoing meetings throughout the summer to ensure that the project proceeded as originally planned. There have been some minor problems, but none your competent committee couldn’t handle.

We needed to have the extension operational before September 17th, when George Speck and his family had scheduled their potlatch. We are indebted to all the volunteers who showed up to assist in putting up the roof trusses on the weekend before the Speck Potlatch. We thank Bruce Parisian, Native Program Officer for Employment and Immigration for his assistance with this project. Another person we need to thank is David Cranmer who volunteered to fell the trees behind the Big House to allow for the extension. A big thank you to Steve Beans for milling the logs free of charge. I think it would be safe to say that Steve has been our biggest individual contributor to date. At the Speck Potlatch, N’ulis (Chief Edwin Newman), from Bella Bella donated $1,000.00 towards the Big House Project - Gilakas’la!! We will in due course recognize all those who have assisted us with donations, including Canfor and MacMillan Bloedel who donated the logs for milling. Thanks, also to Ernest Alfred (W11), Roy Cranmer (Katgora), and Gordie McNeil (Pilebuck) for volunteering to tow the logs to Alert Bay from Beaver Cove and Port McNeill.

The extension is fifty ft. by seventy ft. We have additional washroom facilities and space for all the other activities, which occur in the back room. We are still awaiting approval of a grant application for B.C. 21 funding. This funding would allow us to finish the project as originally planned. Without this component, we will only be able to finish to the basic shell stage with operating washrooms only. Although, only the bare necessities were completed for the Speck Potlatch, everyone agreed that this addition is a vast improvement when compared to the old structure.

Last but not least, is our thanks to the Nimpkish Band. They have assisted in many areas including public works equipment and manpower, payroll accounting and a cash donation yet to be established. Thank you to Band Manager, Lawrence Ambers, for his co-operation.

One of our ongoing projects is the Insiders Outsiders film project. This film will tell the story of how Franz Boas and George Hunt worked to record the early history of our people. Nina Wisnicki, the film maker we are working with, has been busy taking footage we may use in the project. I have been reading a lot of the correspondence, written from 1897 to 1933, between these two amazing men. There must be a lot of information stored in a number of places, which would be very useful to us in our ongoing work to keep our language and history alive.

We joined the Hanuse family, at the Speck Potlatch, in marking the transfer of their family treasures from the Kwagiulth Museum and Cultural Centre in Cape Mudge.

We have now been asked by the descendants of Sam Charlie to request the transfer of his pieces, which are also housed at the Kwagiulth Museum. A letter requesting that the transfer take place has been sent to the Board of Directors of the Kwagiulth Museum and the documentation is now being processed. This will be another very special event, not only for the immediate family but for all of us.

We received a bit of bad news from the First Peoples Cultural Foundation in June of this year. They informed us that they had no choice but to refuse our application for the $75,000.00 operating grant because the M.T.T.C. chose to support the Nimpkish Band’s Application for the 'Hisalagi'llakw School’s Cultural Program.

Continued on page 4
Chairman's Report

Continued from previous page

A major requirement of the First Peoples Cultural Foundation policy is Tribal Council support for an application. We feel this is very unfortunate, because this is one of the very few funding sources to which we as a Cultural Centre can apply for funds. We feel that the Nimpkish Band has more than enough resources to fund the school’s programs. This means that some of the work that needs to be done will have to be put on hold.

We have attempted to meet with M.T.T.C. to discuss the very real danger of our language disappearing, but I guess this isn’t very high on their priority list. You can be assured that we will continue to use our limited funds in an attempt to prevent the loss of our language and history.

Of interest to you, the M.T.T.C., some members of the Nimpkish Band Council and the First Peoples Cultural Foundation is the fact that the Nimpkish Band’s Education Program has a significant amount in accumulated surplus to date. One would wonder why they would choose to scoop what is the only real source of operating dollars available to the U’mista Cultural Centre. The Kwaigulth Museum and Cultural Centre in Cape Mudge receives operating funds from the First Peoples Cultural Foundation with the support of the Kwaigulth District Council.

On the same subject, I attended the annual meeting of the First Nations Confederacy of Cultural Education Centres (formerly the National Association of Cultural Education Centres) at the Kahnawake Reserve, which is across the river from Montreal. We receive a grand total of $14,205.00 annually from this program. These funds, in the past, have been administered by DIAND. One of the recommendations from the executive of the F.N.C.C.E.C. is that all the funds be transferred to the F.N.C.C.E.C. and they would administer the present program, as well as lobbying for more funds. This transfer has the support of the Assembly of First Nations. The transfer should be completed before November of 1994.

Other major business included the election for national president of the F.N.C.C.E.C. Linda Pelly-Landrie from Saskatchewan is our new President. Some of the other resolutions passed included the establishment of a standing committee on aboriginal languages to review all work, past and present, and to determine the status of aboriginal languages at the community level, a First Nations Curriculum Development Plan, long term organizational plans and human resource requirement for F.N.C.C.E.C. and finally the creation of a national native language data base. U’mista has done and will continue to do what is being proposed at the national level, but what we need are the resources to proceed. I need not remind you that our recent language survey, which we reported to a joint Tribal Council Assembly last year, showed us that barely 10% of our people speak Kwak’wala. Unless some drastic action is initiated, this number will continue to decline to the point where in a couple of decades only a handful of people will be fluent in Kwak’wala. I attended a language workshop at the conference and again we are doing similar things in language. The major difference between their program at Kahnawake and His’alagi’lakw School’s is that they have specific goals for each grade, similar to goals expected in other or regular curriculum.

Other activities at the Conference included opening ceremonies in the Longhouse including the offering of tobacco and a welcome by the traditional leaders of the Longhouse. Dinners were served in a large tent located on an island. This island was used by the Canadian Army as a helicopter landing site during the Oka Crisis. The Mohawks say that there is still a lot of hostility from the non-native population and the police still hassle them at every opportunity. This site is right beside the St. Lawrence Seaway. It was very strange to see ocean going ships sailing by the field, where we were assembled. Some after dinner entertainment included local talent in both the cultural and pop venues. We sang our Nimpkish feast song at the last luncheon to thank everyone for the hospitality extended to us. I believe that the B.C. delegation is organizing the next general assembly. We will keep you informed.

We are still working for the return of regalia from the Potlatch Collection housed at the National Museum of the American Indian. There has been a delay caused by priority being given to the return of human remains by the N.M.A.I. to the tribes from which they came. We look forward to an early start in our ongoing negotiations with the N.M.A.I. in New York.

We have talked to the specific claims office about our ongoing work. This involves not only the return of the potlatch pieces but also restitution for the damage caused by the actions of the Federal Government during the potlatch prohibition. The specific claims office suggested that we will require legal council and as a result we have forwarded a copy of our files to Stan Ashcroft. He acted for the Nimpkish Band in their specific claims. Stan said he will review our files and suggest a plan of action.

As you can see the summer has been quite busy. There were many other activities, including all the visitors we entertained. The list is too numerous to publish at this time, but one we should mention is the Polynesian Voyaging Society from Hawaii, who visited us in June. They will be travelling through our territory next year on their way to Alaska in their large ocean going canoe. We will of course extend our usual hospitality on their arrival.

Yu'am! Gilakas’la
Editor’s Update

Yvonne Wilson
Cultural Coordinator/
Newsletter Editor

Yo 'Wiksas, a year has almost past for me here at the U'mista Cultural Centre, I would like to take this time to thank you for your support and patience with me. Without your understanding and support this job at the U'mista Cultural Centre could not have been as enjoyable as it has and I look forward to another year of learning and new challenges.

Spring/Summer 94 Activities were finished June 1994 and very much a success. I would like to send a special thank you to all the people who have made the past activity programs successful.

The Fall/Winter Activities have started at the U'mista Cultural Centre. We are offering FREE Singing and Traditional Dance Classes on Wednesday Nights From 7pm to 9pm with Ethel Alfred, Wayne Alfred and William Wasden instructing the classes. This program will be running until December 15, 1994 drop-by and join in on the fun. On Thursday nights the U’mista Cultural Society is also offering a Button Blanket Making Drop-in Night at the U’mista Cultural Centre from 7pm to 9pm. this will be available until December 16, 1994. We look for-ward to seeing you at the U'mista Cultural Centre so drop-by and say “hil” and check out what we have to offer you.

Many changes have been happening at the U’mista Cultural centre’s staff. The summer students have since come and left the Centre. We at the Centre had the pleasure of working with Jackie Dawson, and Tyler Cranmer along with Chasity Bruce the last few weeks of the summer. We at the Centre also had a student, David Chan on loan from the University of Victoria. David was working with Randal Macnair cataloguing photographs and videos. Earlier this year we also had the pleasure of working with a student, Reggie Robinson who is originally from ’Nisga. We also had the pleasure to work with Debbie Prince and meet her son Matt. They had travelled from Winnipeg. Great People.

The permanent changes to the staff of the U’mista Cultural Centre is that Ruby Isaac, Gift Shop Manager has made a career change and we wish her the best in her future. The Gift Shop Manager position was filled by Tracy Cranmer, we are happy to have her join our staff.

Randal Macnair has also left the staff of the U’mista Cultural Centre. Randal did some travelling in South America before returning to work at the Museum in Sidney, B.C. Randal’s plans also include returning to classes at the University of Victoria on a part time basis. We wish Randal and Sharon the best and hope to see them soon. P.S. We miss you both LOTS!

Juanita (Johnston) Pasco has also returned to the U’mista Cultural Centre from Vancouver where she was studying at U.B.C. and was contracted to do a Conservation internship. We are very happy to have her back as part of the staff at the U’mista Cultural Centre. Congratulations are also in order to Mr. & Mrs. Kevin & Juanita Pasco for your SNEAKY Wedding Ceremony in Victoria, B.C. on November 12, 1994.

As you may notice the Newsletter is still under going more changes. I appreciate your patience and understanding with us as we try to improve the newsletter.
While there is still a lot of finishing work to be completed on the Big House Addition, the Employment and Immigration Canada, Aboriginal Training Program is now over.

We have attempted to thank everyone who helped in other parts of the newsletter, but I wish to add my personal thanks to some very special volunteers: Richard Dawson, who spent so much time and energy ensuring completion of the project and teaching me about construction; William Cranmer, who made sure the roof was on for the Speck Potlatch; Steve Beans, who milled all the lumber; Andrea Sanborn, who never failed to lend the practical point of view; Cyril Mountain, who helped find all the little extra's (i.e. wheelbarrows, transportation for the lumber, parts for the toilets, etc.); Roy Cranmer, Ernest Alfred and Gordie McNeill who brought over the logs; Kevin Dalton, who transported the plumbing supplies from Nanaimo; Charlie Coon, who donated extra time to the project; and Lawrence Ambers, who suggested various ways to fund the project.

Again, I wish to thank everyone who donated their time, money and energy to the Big House Addition project.

The U'mista Cultural Society, through your help in our fund-raising efforts, has contributed over $71,000.00 to the Big House in the last two years. Also, MacMillan Bloedel, Canfor, Employment and Immigration Canada and B.C. 21 deserve a major thank you for their contributions to the project.

As you will have noticed in other parts of the newsletter, a lot of things are happening at the Centre these days. In the new year we will be starting a genealogical research project, an ethno-biological project (to identify the various plants and animals used traditionally by the Kwakwaka’wakw), finishing off the Big House Addition, mounting the Potlatch regalia repatriated from the Smithsonian or transferred from the Kwaguilth Museum and Cultural Centre in Cape Mudge, fundraising for an expansion of the Centre and investigating the establishment of a world wide distribution network for Kwakwaka’wakw artists.

Drop in and visit us sometime! May you all have a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.
Collections Update

As you may have noticed there are a number of changes happening in the Contemporary Gallery (III) and in Gallery II, where the Balshine Collection is located. We are currently replacing the old “Legacy” exhibit cases with newer cases which were used in the Mungo Martin Exhibit.

These cases will enable us to place more of the gifts on display which were in storage due to a lack of exhibition space. I would also like to thank Canadian Fabricators for the use of their forklift to move the crates over to U’mista, the Nimpkish Band for donating workers to assist us with the move and Joey Wilson, Dick Johnston and Stephen Johnston for volunteering their time and manpower.

We also have a travelling exhibit being installed in the contemporary gallery. This exhibit will consist of 47 paintings done by artists from this area (circa. 1950). The artists include Ben Dick, Chas Dudoward, Godfrey Hunt, Allen James, David Rufus, Henry Speck, Lloyd Wadhams, William Walker, Marshall Speck, Tommy Speck, Tom Wallace, Robert Whonnock and George D. Wilson. All of the paintings were produced in 1958 for a Hungarian art dealer Gyula Mayer and he kept them together as a single collection. The exhibit opening is tentatively scheduled for the 30th of November but we will keep you posted.

U’mista Needs You!

Can you spare a few hours to do some volunteer work for U’mista? We will be needing your help for a variety of things at different times. For example, volunteers are needed to:

- Help out with the newsletter
- Preparing the newsletter for mailing
- Help with tours through the centre
- Help put up and take down exhibits
- Do minor construction projects
- Provide transportation for elders to U’mista activities
- Help out with other miscellaneous things that may arise from time to time.

If you are interested, please fill out the form to the right and mail to us or bring it down to the centre, you will be contacted when your services are required.

Yes! I am interested in volunteering my services.

Name: 
Address: 
Phone: (H): (W): 

I would be willing to help out with:

______________________________

Newsletter Transportation
Museum Tours Exhibit Assistance
Minor Construction Other
Contributing Writers ...  

AIM HIGH!  

Paula Cranmer Underhill

In order to have a bright future we need to encourage our people to become educated. Many First Nations people have inadequate education. Native students tend to drop out earlier and more frequently than their non-native counterparts. It is a fact that approximately 80% of native students do not finish their high school education. This situation is keeping us down, and it limits us severely in the choices we can make in life. With little or no education we can not compete for the jobs and lifestyle we would like. This keeps us in low paying manual labour jobs, or on U.I.C., or on welfare. With no education we are powerless to change. This is a vicious cycle we need to break.

Native people need to be encouraged and supported in their educational pursuits. We, as first nations, have a common goal to become self-governing and self sufficient. To make this a reality, we need educated people.

A common stereotype of natives is that we lack the mental capacity to succeed in school. This is not true, there are many educated successful native people in many different professions.

We need to be motivated and to apply ourselves. With motivation and application we can achieve our dreams. Our people need to be uplifted, to be told they are capable and intelligent and be encouraged to aim high!

Learning is a lifelong experience. If we stop learning we will stagnate. We need to expand our horizons, not to be limited in our thinking. We need to keep our traditional ways, and also learn how to use the educational system to our advantage so that we may become competitive in the larger society.

We have a great need for professional people in all fields; medical, dental, social, psychological, law, technical, computer, office, construction, development, engineering, architecture, business, management. The list is long, but native people can achieve and compete in all of these professions.

Natives need to find their dreams and actively pursue them. Find out what you must do to get where you want and then take the steps necessary to get there. When you have a plan of action and know you are on the right path, you can be confident in the steps you take.

After years of being told by society that we can’t we must boldly step forward and say we can. We need to praise our young people and guide them to do whatever they have been given the aptitude to do. This is not limited to the young. I know many older people, including myself, who want more out of life. I want more than a 9-5 job, I want satisfaction out of my labours. Armed with the education that I am acquiring it will be up to me to choose what kind of work I will do, and where and when I will do it, I must be educated.

It is never too late to educate yourself. I recently met a man, 58 years old, who returned to school 5 years ago. This man started with a grade 5 education. He now has 45 of the 60 credits needed to graduate from college. He is proud of his accomplishment, and rightly so. It takes courage to go back to school, especially as a mature student surrounded by recent high school graduates. After graduation this man plans to return to his homeland to help tutor and instruct others who share the common goal of educating and bettering themselves. I hold him up as an excellent example for our people that with hard work you can do or be anything in life that you desire. The only thing holding you back from realizing your hopes and dreams is yourself.

Don’t let the nay sayers keep you down with their negativity. Break through all that has been holding you back from being the best that you can be and go for it. With education, as a Nation, our future will be bright.

“History has transplanted us. But we haven’t forgotten where we came from.”

— Nella Nelson
Artist Information Corner

WAYNE ALFRED
Carver/Instructor
Born: March 20, 1950
Place: Alert Bay, B.C.
Band: 'Namgis - Nimpkish
Training: Wayne started sketching and painting in 1971 by 1975 he began to study carving under Doug Cranmer and Beau Dick.
Besides carving, Wayne has taught a carving class for future Kwakwaka'wakw carvers.

ALFRED SCOW
Carver
Born: December, 1966
Place: Alert Bay, B.C.
Band: Kwicksustainuk - Gilford
Training: Alfred is better known as A.J. He comes from a large family, 3 of his brothers also carve. A.J. began carving with his brothers Rupert and Barry Scow and in 1994 he branched off onto his own. He says carvers such as Wayne Alfred, Shawn Karpes, Barry Scow and Vincent Shaughnessy have guided, encouraged and inspired him with his art work.

WILLIAM E. WASDEN JR.
Painter/Singing Instructor
Born: October 14, 1967
Place: Alert Bay, B.C.
Band: 'Namgis - Nimpkish
Training: William worked with Doug Cranmer, Simon Dick, Beau Dick, Wayne Alfred, Bruce Alfred and Don Yeomans in his youth.
Then he moved to Victoria and studied with Don Yeomans at Victoria High School.
U'MISTA BIG HOUSE RAFFLE

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<th>Prize</th>
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<td>U'mista Cultural Society</td>
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<td>Wayne Alfred</td>
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KWAKWAKA'WAKW DOLL RAFFLE
Donated by Vivien Cranmer  
Winner: Jamie Hunt
KWAK'WALA ALPHABET

WORLD SCRAMBLE

1. baals
2. wiat’s
3. kawtla
4. lu’gnai
5. a’wat’s

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

CLUES

Across
2. We fly and travel in this.
5. Without this we cannot use our canoe.
7. Children get this at Christmas.
8. Babies play with these.
10. We use this to carry water from the well.

Down
1. Bambi is one of these.
3. You use this on your head.
4. These birds have long necks.
6. Blows
9. These animals fly high in the sky and are good hunters.
Super Sale
For
Christmas '94

Watch for our flyer in the mail!

The Last Word is Yours!
Do you have any suggestions for future newsletter items?
Or suggestions for activities or events you would like to see at the U’mista Cultural Centre?
Please write to us with your ideas and we will look into it.
Please include your name and your phone number so we can contact you.
Send your suggestions to:
P.O. Box 253
Alert Bay, B.C.
V0N 1A0
Or
E-Mail us at: u’mista @north.island.net
Or drop in and see us!

U’mista Cultural Society
Board of Directors
Executive:
William T. Cranmer Chairman
Elizabeth Nelson Vice-Chairman
Andrea Sanborn Secretary / Treasurer
Board Members:
Peggy Svanvik
Roy Cranmer
Christine Hunt
Lawrence Ambers
Gina Wallas
Flora Dawson
Betty Walkas