



U'mista News



August 1995

Survival Of The Cedar People

For some 9000 years, and probably longer on the Pacific Northwest Coast, natives have migrated, settled and moved on, or been displaced by succeeding waves of other peoples. The history is a long one, recorded only in part by myth and legend until quite recently. It has been only a little over two hundred years since men with paper, pens and ink arrived on the coast in sailing ships to write down where they went, what they saw and whom they met. The men brought with them items of trade: iron, beads, mirrors, buttons, copper, cloth, iron pots and muskets. Unwittingly, they also brought diseases that had never been known in the land, and to which the people had no immunity. The worst was smallpox, which raged along the coast, wiping out whole families and sometimes entire villages, until the population dwindled to a pitiful few.



Edward Curtis photograph

The early explorer and traders were followed by missionaries and settlers, who were followed by Indian agents and the paternal hand of government. With them came the ban of the potlatch. The potlatch lay at the very heart of the native culture. The swift destruction of a thriving people were well documented by historians and anthropologists and by the people themselves. Time passed, but the quiet

strength and pride of the people did not. With a new awareness of their place on the coast, the Northwest Coast people are again a positive force on the coast, using their rights and privileges to the land, the sea and the rivers. They have emerged with a stronger voice and a rejuvenated sense of identity.

Many of our people are grasping the tools and

education to enable themselves to compete in a complex twentieth-century society, and many are focusing on the re-emergence of the old art forms. The cedar tree is often central to that art, providing, as in the past, the raw materials they needed: wood, bark, roots and withes. Women have not only revived the weaving skills they learned in their youth-exhibiting and selling their exquisite basketry - but are teaching it to the young people. Men, and occasionally, women, often with the apprentices at their side, carve totem poles and canoes, make baskets and steam-bent boxes, and create masks, drums and rattles. Large plank houses are again being built and used for feasts and ceremonies, and the return of the potlatch.

The Kwakwaka'wakw, as a people, a culture, have survived and continue to grow - STRONGER!

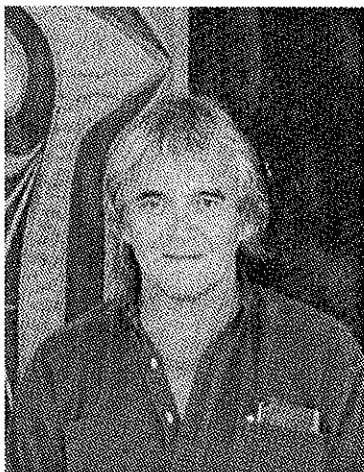
Our Annual General Meeting was held on June 20, 1995. The membership of Society, including elders from Fort Rupert, Quatsino And Alert Bay, reviewed the audit for 1994/95, the Annual Report for 1994/95, the priorities of the U'mista Cultural Society for the coming year and they elected seven board members.

At this time I would like to welcome our new Directors and thank the outgoing directors for all their support and help. The 1995/96 Board of the U'mista Cultural Society consists of Pearl Hunt, Lawrence Ambers, Christine Joseph, Gina Wallas, Spruce Wamiss, Peggy Svanvik, Andrea Sanborn, Roy Cranmer, Richard (Dick Dick) Dawson, and myself.

On August 13th your new board had the opportunity to meet. After each General Meeting your board nominates a chairperson, Vice chairperson, and secretary/Treasurer from the elected Board Members. I am again honored to serve as the Chairperson for another year. Pearl Hunt will serve as the Vice Chairperson and Andrea Sanborn has agreed to serve as Secretary/Treasurer for another year. Many of the ongoing projects are continuing as planned, and this is due to our dedicated administration. I recently attended another Kwakwala Steering Committee meeting on your behalf. Daisy Sewid-Smith hosted this meeting at the Campbell River District School Board office in Campbell River. Lou Ann Glendale has been hired to coordinate our activities including fund-raising and planning for a Kwakwala Conference to be held in Fort Rupert in September of 1995. We had the pleasure of welcoming her at this meeting.

At the Kwakwala Steering Meeting, I spoke about the need for a plan, including a budget, to be presented at the Conference. This plan is about a major undertaking in curriculum development, which will allow us to teach our children in Kwakwala from Kindergarten

Chairman's Report



*William T. Cranmer
Chairman of the Board*

to grade eight. It was suggested that a draft of this plan be sent to each Band Council for discussion prior to the conference so that the representative for each Band will be prepared to make a decision at the conference. There were others at the meeting who agreed that we should not spend another two or three days identifying reasons why most of our people do not speak our language. These reasons are well known and it is time we move ahead.

Each Band Council will be asked to send a Band Council Resolution That supports the work of the Kwakwala Steering

Committee and identifies their committee representative. The U'mista Cultural Society was committed to the development of a Kwakwala curriculum years ago, but it realized without the support of ALL our political leaders we could not proceed any further. I believe the Kwakwala Steering Committee has been able to successfully communicate to those in leadership the need for the cooperation of everyone to succeed in saving our language.

Some good news on our ongoing efforts to secure funding from the First Peoples' Cultural Foundation. We owe our thanks to Chief John Smith, and his brother Tom, of Ławitsis - Ma'amtagila.

Ławitsis - Ma'amtagila is now recognized as an independent Band and they gave us a B.C.R (Band Council Resolutions) supporting our application. They also supported our application for a capital expenditure feasibility study, which will produce architectural design drawings for the expansion of the U'mista Cultural Center.

Gilakas'la

U'mista has also applied to act as a Host Center for The Aboriginal Stewardship Program. In this program First Peoples are trained in the skills necessary to work

Continued on page 3

in museums and cultural centers. It is part of U'mista's undertaking to train our people when possible.

We have received word from the Museum of the American Indian, Smithsonian Institute that they have now completed taking photographs of the part of the their collection acquired during the period that our "Potlatch Treasures" were sold to them by Indian Agent William Halliday. The pictures will include the collection sold to them by Sgt. Angerman a few years after 1922. So far, one piece from the Angerman Collection has been identified as part of the "Potlatch Collection." You may recall that Sgt. Angerman was the arresting officer when our Old People were arrested in 1922 for attending Dan Cranmer's Potlatch at Village Island in December of 1921. He also served as the prosecutor at the trials. It appears that he may have kept some of the confiscated masks and other regalia for himself. Once we receive the photos from the Smithsonian we will research the pieces by talking to the Old People who might recognize them. There are also some pictures that were taken of the "Potlatch Collection" at the time it was surrendered and the pictures we receive from the Smithsonian will be compared to these. When the regalia is identified, naturally we will want them returned. There have been suggestions that we should demand the return of the entire Angerman Collection.

Another element of ongoing work is our Specific Claim to the Federal Government. We are requesting that the government redress the affects of the Potlatch Prohibition - the law that made it illegal for our people to practice our customs. We now have Band Council Resolutions supporting our submission from all the Bands except Gwawa'enuxw and Gwa'sala - 'Nak'waxda'xw. Stan Ashcroft, our lawyer, is redrafting our submission so that we can do the additional research that is required to prove our claim. This claim will probably take several years to resolve, but we will continue to fight for the resolution of this issue.

I think this coming year will be very challenging and interesting. Your Board invites you all to visit your

Chairman's Report - cont'd

Cultural Centre, not only to take advantage of all the resources which are available to you, but also to inquire about how you

may assist in making your Cultural Centre serve you better.

Yuam!

Gilakas'la

Bill Cranmer, Chairman

P.S It has come to our attention that a number of individuals in the community believe we should be paying the old people when gathering information regarding the language, culture and history of the Kwakwaka'wakw. While we realize that a number of our old people are in difficult economic positions, it has long been a policy of the U'mista Cultural Society not to pay the elders for their information. There are several reasons for this policy: Traditionally, the Kwakwaka'wakw culture has been one in which the Old People teach the children. All the information we gather will be made available to the children, grandchildren and all the future generations. With the many projects ("Talking" Dictionary Ethnobotanical Research Project, Genealogical Project and others) that are happening at the centre, we could not afford to pay **ALL** the elders for their time; it would not be fair to pay some and not the others. Not only are we supplying a copy of any audio or video tapes we make of the old people who were interviewed we are also making donations to the Elders Centers or the Bands in that particular Village. We must all work together to ensure that our culture, history and language are available for our children and our children's children.

When it is necessary, because of the training involved (i.e. Ph.D.) to hire outside if the community, if these people are paid, the U'mista Cultural Society retains the copyright for our people. Also, many of the outsiders are either volunteering a majority of their time or are charging the Society a lot less than their normal rate of pay. If the outsiders can donate their time and energy to help with survival if the Kwakwaka'wakw, we should be able to work for our children as well.

If we thought we were busy before, just wait until this coming month. Our new genealogical researcher has started work, the ethnobotany project will be carrying on and we are attempting to have a version of the "Talking" dictionary ready for the second term of the school year. To do all this we need everyone's cooperation and help. We will be contacting the various bands and Elders Center's because we wish to interview as many elders as possible in their coming months.

We are also working with the First People's Confederacy of Cultural Education Center's on Industry Canada's "SchoolNet" project. Industry Canada's SchoolNet is a suite of on-line information services directed at students and staff K-12 schools' across Canada. The SchoolNet mandate includes the connection of all schools to the Internet by 1998. The First Nation School Access Project undertakes to connect all First Peoples schools under

Administrators Report



Linda Manz
Administrative Director

federal jurisdiction by 1998 as well.

Industry Canada's intention is to provide an initial set of Aboriginal education materials, so that when the schools and communities finally get connected to the Internet and to SchoolNet they will have some Aboriginal resource materials as well as the non-Aboriginal resources available. Some of the content projects currently under FNCCEC development include: FNCCEC and individual Cultural Center Profiles, Aboriginal

Disability information, Kahnawake Survival School profile, history & programs, 7-Generations-Mohawk History textbook (excerpts), Nisga'a Tribal Council Nation & Community Profiles, U'mista Cultural Centre Virtual Gallery-A First Nation Collection, Southern First Nations Secretariat-Schools & Organizations.

All in all, an exciting fall awaits us.



Researcher Arrives...

Genealogy Project Underway

By Deidre Sanders

My name is Deidre Sanders and I have recently begun work with the Centre. My job is to work with you to record family histories so please feel free to come and talk to me about the project. I grew up in Port Alberni, where my family still lives, and I have been at U-Vic for the past six years. I have a Master's degree in Anthropology, a subject I find interesting because I like to learn

about other cultures and about their histories. Outside of work I enjoy activities like water-skiing, swimming, photography, and hiking. I think that this is a beautiful place to live and I'm excited about going out and seeing the area while I'm here. I know that I will enjoy living here in Alert Bay and I look forward to meeting and working with you.

Yo, wiksas, since the last newsletter, have I ever been busy. Spring had me springing all over the North Island researching and offering cultural activities locally and on the North Island. We are currently offering a Lunch and Dance Performance at the Big House, July 5, 1995 to August 26, 1995. This is an exciting performance with our young talents. Wayne Alfred- coordinator; Sharon Whonnock- Caterer; Singers- William Wasden, Bruce Alfred, Tyler Cranmer, Dancer's - Ron McKinney Jr., Cara Alfred, Caroline Rufus, PeeWee Alfred, Cara Isaac, John Prevost, Margaret Daley, John George.

It's a **must** to check out. Keep an eye out for possible performances in September and October.

The cultural activities that have been keeping me busy are the cedar bark projects. I was very busy in the early part of May, meeting with various forest companies, stomping around the forest with the experienced woodsmen and woodswomen. Canfor was very cooperative in working with the U'mista and took me out on a field trip one of our meetings. What a sight I must have been, trying to be a professional business woman while stomping through the forest on a beautiful warm spring day, wearing a skirt and light blouse, a hard hat safety vest. They took us to the future cedar stripping sight for the U'mista. At the site, we looked over the trees in the area, and without the proper tools, we proceeded to demonstrate the procedure involved in getting the cedar bark from a fallen tree. They had never seen anything like the cedar bark produced from a cedar tree before and were very impressed. It was fun and very educational for all parties involved. Next time I go to any forest company I'll wear **PANTS**.

The U'mista has been busy this summer offering various cedar bark workshops. We offered a course on

Cultural Update



Yvonne Wilson
*Cultural Coordinator/
Newsletter Editor*

the construction of a ceremonial cedar skirt and legging that are worn by the dancers in the ceremonial dance, the Hamat'sa. This workshop was taught by Alfred Matilpi. As a bonus, he also shared his Knowledge on how to make three quarter inch cedar rope. Donna Cranmer has been busy with us at the Centre as well. In July, she instructed a basket-weaving workshop. The workshop was attended by many first timers as well as repeaters. The workshop consists of constructing a cedar basket, and for the pros various finishes. The work shop was a success, with everyone completing their

baskets, some with simple finishes, others with a more difficult finish to their basket, but all was very proud of their final creation. The Cedar Weaving workshops have taken me to the village of Quatsino, where we made a ceremonial heading. That workshop has inspired Noreen Hunt to make arrangements for a workshop in the village of Tsakis (Fort Rupert). We at the U'mista are looking forward to offering the cedar workshop and working with the people of Tsakis in the near future.

The fall will also be very busy at the U'mista this year. We will be offering Beginner's Kwak'wala classes this fall beginning September 14, 1995. Christine McDougall will be Instructor of this course. It will consist of the basic sounds of the Kwak'wala alphabet. The past classes were done in a relaxed environment and are very educational and enjoyable. As a follow up there will be an advanced Kwak'wala class also offered in the fall, this course will consist of total immersion while participating in the classes. The continuation of our language is very important to our culture. It is important that the language is taught and learned, for there is no culture without the language

Collections Update



Juanita Pasco
Collections Manager

Section 8 of U'mista's Collections Policy States:

8. Regalia Stored for Families and Individuals

- 8.1 One of the primary functions of the Centre is to house and maintain the regalia and other objects of cultural heritage of Kwakwaka'wakw people and families and make these accessible for use as they wish.
- 8.2 Collections housed for safekeeping by families or individuals will be maintained to the same standards as the collections of the Centre.
- 8.3 Documentation on these collections will be maintained by the Centre and removal from the Centre will be treated in the same manner, as are loans from the collections of the Centre.
- 8.4 Regalia may be signed out through the authority of designated individuals within the family. Information pertaining to who has authority over regalia should be included with the documentation for said regalia.
- 8.5 The Centre will not be held responsible for the safety, insurance or condition of regalia or other material in storage.

A Word From...

The Co-op Students

Leanne McDonald and Kim Svendsen



Leanne McDonald - Canadian History and English Literature

It should be clear to many of you that they have been around too long to be classified as simple tourists! In actuality, they are co-op students from the University of Victoria. Kim Svendsen is entering her fourth year, majoring in English Literature and minoring in Anthropology, and Leanne McDonald is entering her fifth year (and final year) majoring in Canadian History and minoring in English Literature.

The Cooperative Education Programme, or more affectionately known as Co-op, was established to give liberal arts students (that's what they call students who do nothing but write essays and speak with words with lots of syllables!) marketable skills. School terms are balanced by work terms. Ideally, the student should seek a work term that is related to their field of study.

Kim, who plans to go into museum work after graduation, is enjoying her experience at the U'mista Cultural Centre: "Being here has been a tremendous opportunity for me. Not only have I learned skills which help me in achieving my future goals, but I've also learned a lot about myself my capabilities and my limitations." For Leanne, this is her fourth and final work term, and it follows placements at the Campbell River Museum and the BC Ministry of Health Library. She still doesn't quite know what she wants to do with her life, but agrees with Kim about the fantastic experience she's had up here in Alert Bay. As she told her Co-op supervisor from Victoria, "I believe every Co-op student should have an opportunity to work up here at the U'mista. Aside from the work experience, it's a wonderful opportunity to discover who you are." (As of this moment, Leanne is still not sure, but she still has a month to figure it out!)

Leanne and Kim will be leaving Alert Bay at the end of August to return to school and make way for new co-op students. They would like to thank all those people in Alert Bay who made their summer a memorable one: Gordie Peterson, for being an all around great landlord; Juanita Pasco, for taking them to June Sports and letting them get their desperately need dosage a T.V.; Richard the Psychiatrist (they

don't know his last name, but he's working in Tofino last they heard) who patiently explained the Potlatch; Linda Manz, for letting them sleep in her attic for the first few weeks; Andrea Sanborn for not letting them get away with anything she wouldn't do; Yvonne Wilson, for graciously giving up her title to sexiest woman on the Island for the summer; Aaron Glass and Rick Sanborn, for introducing them to Alert Bay Nightlife; Roy Cranmer for taking them fishing on his punt; Norm Wong, the computer guru, for being so personable so early in the morning; Tracey Cranmer, for letting them try on all of the jewelry at U'mista that they couldn't afford; Doug and Vivien Cranmer for telling them they made great coffee; Lois Dawson for getting them permission to attend their Potlatch; Wayne and Bruce Alfred, for sharing their infinite wisdom with them all summer; everyone who waved or honked at us while we walked to work every morning (thanks for those early morning confidence boosters!), and everyone else who smiled at them and made them feel welcome.

Gilakas'la



Kim Svendsen - English Literature and Anthropology

The Northwest Coast Natives

People of the Cedar

Revised from the book Cedar by Hilary Stewart

In a small clearing in the forest, a young woman is in labour. Two women companions urge her to pull hard on the cedar bark rope tied to a nearby tree. The baby, born onto a newly made cedar bark mat, cries its arrival into the Northwest Coast world. Its cradle of firmly woven cedar root, with a mattress and covering of soft-shredded cedar bark, is ready. But first the baby must remain on the cedar mat until its umbilical cord withers.

The young women's husband and his uncle are on the sea in a canoe carved from a single red cedar log and are using paddles made from lengths of knot-free yellow cedar. When they reach the fishing ground that belongs to their family, the men set out a net of cedar bark twine weighted along one edge by stones lashed to it with strong, flexible cedar withe. Cedar wood floats support the net's upper edge.

Wearing a cedar bark hag cape and skirt to protect her from the rain and the cold, the baby's grandmother digs into the pebbly sand of the beach at low tide to collect clams. She loads them into a basket of cedar withe and roof adjust the broad cedar bark tumpline across her forehead and returns home along the beach.

The embers in the centre of the big cedar plank house leap into flame as the clam gatherer's niece adds more wood. Smokes billows past the cedar rack above, where small split fish are hung to cure. It curls its way past the great cedar roof planks. The young girl

takes red-hot rocks from the fire with tongs, dips them into a small cedar box to boil water for the clams her aunt has gathered.

Outside the house stands a tall, carved cedar memorial pole, bearing the prestigious crests of her family lineage. It has been raised with long, strong cedar withe ropes and validated with the ceremony. The house chief and nobleman had taken out their ceremonial regalia from large storage chest of cedar wood, dancers had worn cedar wood masks adorned with cascades of soft-shredded cedar bark and performed in front of screens made of cedar planks. Guests had been served quantities of food from huge cedar bowls and dishes, wiping their hands clean on soft-shredded cedar bark.

A young slave woman coils two fresh diapers from soft-shredded cedar bark and goes to tend a crying baby, while the child's father prepares long, slender cedar withes to lash a stone hammer head to its shaft. When the hammer is finished, he uses it to pound wedges into a cedar log to split off a plank for a tackle box to fit in the bow of his canoe. He will use the other withes he prepared to sew the corners of the box once he bends the plank into shape. In a year or more he will make a cedar wood cradle in a similar fashion for his sister's new baby, when it grows too big for the woven cedar root cradle. He smiles at the reassuring cries of the newborn infant resounding through the forest.

Throughout her life the newborn

baby girl, born before the coming of sailing ships from far-off lands would rely on the magnificent cedar as an integral part of her life on the Northwest Coast. The child would grow up to respect the cedar tree above all others, believing in its spirit and power. She would refer to the cedar's supernatural spirit as "Long Life Maker" and "Rich Woman Maker" because it provided the necessities for a comfortable and full life.

Her people would travel by canoe on long trading journeys to bring back foods, raw materials and various goods not otherwise available. A large canoe would carry her entire family out to their summer village on the outer coast to fish for salmon and gather other resources that would see them through the winter. Without the nets, traps, wires and harpoons, all made of cedar, to harvest the salmon, and the large cedar wood boxes or root baskets in which to store foods for the long winter, her family would have found it difficult to survive. Practical clothing on the raincoast also came from the cedar, as did large structures to house and shelter extended families from storms of winter and rains of spring. When people died, their remains were wrapped in cedar mats, put in cedar burial boxes and sometimes lashed to the branches of a cedar tree. From birth to death, the wood, bark, roots, withes and leaves of the mystical, powerful cedar tree provided generously for the needs of the people of the Northwest Coast—materially, ceremonially, and medicinally.

Developing Relationships } Forestry vs Culture

By: Yvonne Wilson

Great cedar trees, with clear, true grain, are becoming difficult to find as more of them succumb to the logger's saw. Yet there are no other trees that can provide our people so generously, so totally and so beautifully. Although this statement remains true, there is a relationship developing between forest companies and aboriginal people along the coast. Though the process is a slow one, there are positive steps for the protection of our forests being taken by the forest companies and our people.

This at times may be hard to believe. When we travel through the Nimpkish Valley and see the damage that clear cutting has done to the forest, we have to question the past and present forest practices. Nevertheless, there are conservation and management practices in place, such as replanting, pruning and cultivating, to protect our forests, though it will be a long time before the forests will show the efforts of today. Also of importance we are becoming aware and involved with the decisions respecting the future of our forests.

The U'mista Cultural Society has also been working towards developing a positive relationship with forest companies, like Canadian Forest Products Ltd.(Canfor), Western Forest Products Ltd.(WFP), J&T Silviculture Ltd. and the Kwakwaka'wakw Tribal Councils in the area. As a result we were able to offer a Cedar Bark Gathering Workshop on May 27 & 28, 1995. With the efforts and assistance of the 'Namgis First Nation Band Council, Canadian Forest Products Ltd. (Canfor) and J&T Silviculture in the Nimpkish Valley. We are very grateful to these companies for giving us the opportunity to practice our cultural heritage.

We were happy with the workshop's success. There were four participants on the first day: Bruce Alfred, driver, Annabelle Harry, Gordon Twance and myself. Having Bruce along as the driver was very educating. He set the mood for the day. He played a tape of Wah (William) Wasden singing our traditional songs, and he told a legend of the landmark in the Nimpkish Valley, like the mountain top that our people use as a landmark for

direction and to mark their territories (the mountain top that looks like the Fools Mask, Nalamal).

Once word got out that we were stripping cedar bark, we doubled the attendance for the next day. The participants the second day were Shannon Whonnock - driver, Gordon Twance, Annabelle Harry, Johnathan Whonnock, Vickie Cook, Vivien Cranmer, Debbie and Richard Hunt, Ruby Isaac and myself. We had such a great time and everyone was so involved with their new found knowledge that we decided to stay in the woods for a couple of hours longer. We accomplished a lot of stripping. In the end everyone had their hard work for the day all folded and packed away in their bags and with a feeling of achievement we headed for home. Each participant donated a portion of their cedar bark to U'mista. This will be used in future weaving workshops offered at U'mista and other villages. We appreciate the generosity of the donations because the weaving programs are vital for continuing the art.

Gilakas'la.

The Cedar Tree

Customs, Preparation, and Uses

Adapted from Cedar by Hilary Stewart?

CEDAR BARK

The importance of cedar-bark to our past culture has left us many beautiful treasures from that era. The many beautiful baskets, mats and blankets that were produced for everyday uses, and the regalia that was made for purification ceremonies and the winter ceremonies. The Kwaguitl people are people having a great respect for the mother earth and give thanks to all its creatures great and small that provided life to its people. They had customs and prayers for all that they took from her. Many of those customs are still associated with the activity. The same remains true of the cedar-bark customs.

CUSTOMS RELATING TO CEDAR BARK

Before the process of cedar bark stripping was done there were customs that were taken into consideration before starting. When the young cedar-tree is quite smooth they do not take all the cedar bark, for, the people of olden times said that if they should peel off all the cedar bark of a young cedar-tree the young cedar would die, and then another cedar-tree near by would curse the bark peeler, so that he would also die. Therefore the bark peelers never take all the bark off a young cedar tree. The bark of the red cedar is gathered by the women. Before gathering of the red cedar-bark begins the woman who has found a young cedar takes her adze and stands under the young cedar tree and looking upward to it, she prays:

CEDAR BARK PRAYER

"Wiga, dukwala gaxan kastagan gaxi git'sa laxs komakos ka's hema'akus gaxite ka's waxa'os gaxanuxw. Yas kisa'akus kis igasaxis gaxita'os

bax'walisa, yixganuxw ki'sek kis hitamxida asus ka'os ala'kas a'exstotsayowus komakus. Hedan gaxit git'sa lottgalgaldo kwalaxgan xugwat'sig-ilitgot. Wa, la'misan a'isayottut kasta ka's kisitt'o's udzamga'at'elatsgan gwala galdzaslex lat. Wa, la'misan hawaxalut kasta ka's nila'osaxans ninamukwaxgan hanat'met'ex gat'sot laku. Wa, kasta, wiga yat'att'a; a'lamt'as dadamawit gaxan kan ki'se gagut'amaasa laxa tsitsaxkolame dta'wa dzidzax'ila. Wa, kasta."

"Look at me, friend! I come to ask for your dress for you have come to take pity on us; for there is nothing for which you can not be used, because it is your way that there is nothing for which we can not use you, for you are willing to give us your dress. I come to beg you for this, long-life maker, for I am going to make a basket for lily root out of you. I pray you, friend, not to feel angry with me on account of what I am going to do to you; and I beg you, friend to tell our friend! Keep sickness away from me, so that I may not be killed by sickness or in war, O friend!"

Once the prayer has been said the stripping procedure begins. A cut in the bark of a young tree, near the bottom is made and a split on each side extending some little distance upward is made. Then the bark is pried up with a large wedge made of hemlock or bone of whale. After it has been started, it is pulled off upward in a long strip, which finally tears off from the tree. After the material has been obtained in this way the outer bark is removed and the inner bark is dried and folded up in bundles which are then tied near each end with a strip of bark.

As time passes and causes change, we have also

Continued on page 11

The Cedar Tree Customs, Preparation, and Uses

Continued from page 10

adapted to our changing times in gathering cedar bark. The procedure of gathering cedar-bark from young cedar trees has not changed drastically over the many hundreds of years. The changes that have occurred in the procedure is the customs and the tools. The prayer is no longer said and the tools of whale bone and hemlock wedges are no longer used. Modern materials and modern tools have taken their place.

When the bark is further prepared for weaving mats and basketry, the bark is split into three layers with a splitter made of a deer's ulna. While this is being done, the bark is covered with mats to keep light off. The outer layer serves for making very coarse mattings, while the innermost layer is used for the finest matting. The middle layer is used for making ropes. When the bark is to be used for making matting, it is soaked in water and split through with the nail or with a bone needle.

The same materials serve for making shredded cedar bark. When this is to be made, the bundle of bark unfolded and placed over the edges of a paddle which is put up so that it rests with the handle. With the right she holds the shredding-implement with which she beats the bark right along the edge of the paddle, thus severing and softening the fibers. The material that is obtained is used for towels, for infants bedding and for making cedar bark rings used in purification ceremonies. When dyed red in alder bark, this material is used for making the cedar bark rings and other types of regalia used in winter ceremonies.

PRAYER FOR THE FALLING OF A CEDAR TREE

The Canoe Builder takes four chips and throws them individually behind the tree. He throws the first chip and says:

"O supernatural One! Now follow your supernatural power."

"Wa, 'nawalakwa, la'ams lal lasgamil xis 'na'walagamus."

He takes the second chip, throws it and says,

"O friend! Now you see your leader, who says that you shall turn your head and fall there also."

"Wa, kasta, la'ams dukwalaxis gwa'yi'lelasus 'ni'kis hilakus gwa'xtux'widtla la'sas."

He takes the third chip and throws it in the same way and says:

"O, Life giver! Now you have seen which way your supernatural power went. Now go the same way."

"Wa, g'algaldukwila la'am dukwalax la'sas dalalaxis 'na'walakwana'ya; la'am las lal lax la'sas."

He takes the last chip and throws it to the back of the tree that he is chopping and says as he throwing it:

"O, friend! Now you will go where your heartwood goes. You will lie on your face at the same place. "

"Wa, kasta, la'ams las lal lax la'sas du'max-dus; la'ams las hix'ulstlul lax la'sas."

After he has said so, he answers himself:

"Yes I shall fall with my top there."

"We, he'amtlan gwaxtuxwidtli."

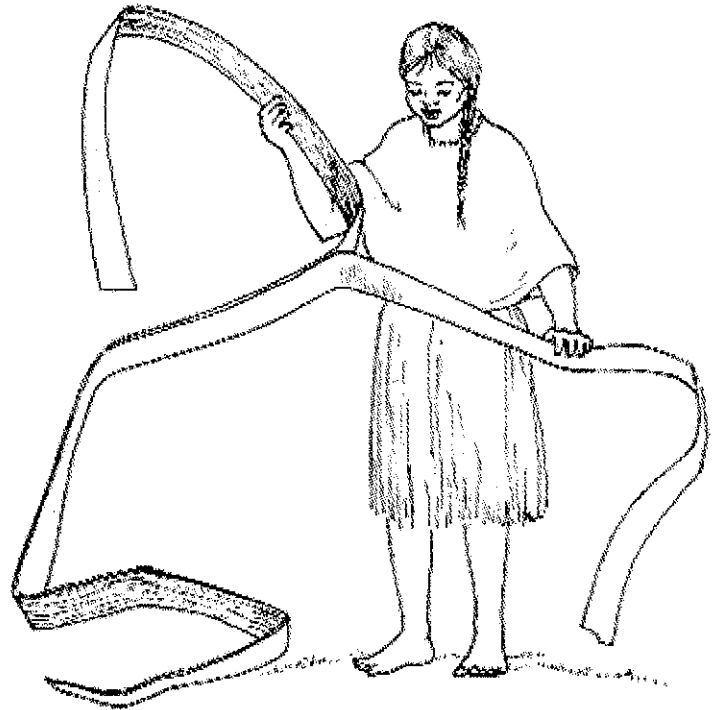
As time passes, we have adapted to our changing times in gathering cedar bark. The procedures of gathering cedar bark from young cedar trees has not changed much over time. The changes that have occurred in the procedure are the customs and the tools. The prayer is no longer said and the tools of whale bone and hemlock wedges are no longer used. Modern material and modern tools have taken their place.

Cedar Bark

Traditional Gathering Methods

CEDAR BARK - 1

When daylight comes, the Kwagul man goes into the forest, carrying his bark lifter. When he comes to a place with many young cedar trees, he searches for the cedar tree that has no twists in the bark, and no branches. When he finds the right tree, he gathers cedar withes from another young cedar tree, he twists them from one end to the other, and puts them around the butt of the young cedar tree he has chosen. The cedar withes are tied tightly approximately halfway up his chest, above the ground. After this he takes the bark lifter and pushes it through the layers of bark approximately one and half feet beneath the twisted withes which are tied around the cedar tree. He then begins to lift the bark off the tree. When he is almost around the tree and the cedar bark is lifted to the cedar withes, he takes the cedar withes off and throws them away. He takes hold of the bark and puts the ends together, although they are split into shreds, he pulls upward without it splitting. When it is whole it measures approximately 6 to 8 inches in width. When he has pulled the bark off the cedar tree, he steps back from the place where he first stood, from the foot of the young cedar. He continues pulling the



Woman separating cedar bark. Image courtesy "Cedar" by Hilary Stewart.

bark off and backing away from the tree. When he reaches the branches, the far end of the bark that he is pulling off becomes narrow and breaks off. When it comes down, he turns the cedar bark over so that it lies on its inner side, with the sap side downward, and he pulls off another piece, the same width and treats it in the manner as the first one. As soon as everything has been taken off the good side of the tree, he stops. The reason for this procedure is that the women want the cedar bark as broad as possible when they peel it off. If they did not put the cedar withes around the young cedar tree the bark would come off in narrow strips.

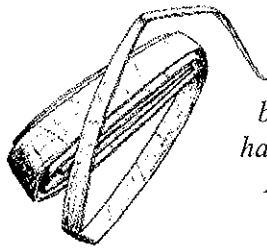
The bark of a young cedar tree is best when the outside bark is mouldy in colour and measures two spans in diameter at the butt

end of the cedar tree. When the cedar bark is black outside, the bark is tough and is good to use for shredding the cedar bark. If the cedar bark is taken from a large cedar tree, it is too brittle, therefore they do not use it.

Once the bark peeler has peeled off enough cedar bark he begins to take off the outer bark of what he obtained. He takes the long stripes of what he has peeled off and he measures three spans. He then : bends the bark over so as to break the outer bark towards the inside, and he presses the pieces together on the inner side. This is the place where the outer bark splits from the inner bark, and the bark peeler lifts the broken end of the outer bark and peels it off. When it is off he measures again

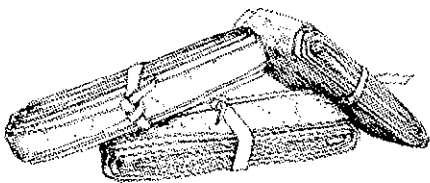
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Continued from page 12



Cedar bark bundle before it has been tied off. Image courtesy "Cedar" by Hilary Stewart

the same length as before, and again bends it over and breaks the outer bark and lifts it up, where the outer bark has been broken it is peeled off. He continues to do this beginning at the broad end of the bark and going towards the narrow end. After he has peeled off the outer bark he folds the cedar bark in the places where he folded the cedar bark to break. He begins folding the broad end first and uses the narrow end to tie the middle of the bundle of cedar bark. When it is all tied in the middle he places the bundles one on top of the another. Then he ties them at each end so as to make one bundle out of them.



Tied cedar bark bundles. Image courtesy "Cedar" by Hilary Stewart

After he does so, he takes two pieces of twisted cedar twigs and ties the end of them on each side of the end tyings. After this has been done he puts his arm through the packing straps on each side of the bundle of peeled cedar bark and carries it home. When the man returns home with

the cedar bark on his back he then puts it down in the corner of the house, for he does not want the heat of the fire to reach it, nor the light of the sun to touch it, when it is not covered and before it is split. The cedar bark will get dried and stiff, therefore it becomes difficult for the women to split apart.

As soon as the woman has given a meal to her husband, she takes out her bark splitter made from the fore leg of a black bear or of a deer, it has a flat end and is sharpened on sandstone. She goes and sits down where the bundle is and she unties the end straps and takes out one piece of what her husband has peeled. She unfolds the piece she has chosen and covers the rest of the bundle until worked on. Starting at the broad end she splits it and pulls it apart, going towards the thin end. When it is off, she uses the splitter again to remove the middle layer, and finally she splits off the inner side. As soon as everything is split off she hangs it up outside of the house. This is so that the wind may blow through it and let sun on it, so it will dry quickly. After this has been done she goes back into her house and takes another pieces of bark and does the same as she did with the first one when she splits into four pieces. Now after it has been split into four pieces, it is called danas. After it has been drying for four days outside of the house it is quite dry and it is stiff. Then she folds it in the same way as it was folded first by her husband in the woods with the broad end is folded first.



Woman transporting tied cedar bark bundles. Image courtesy "Cedar" by Hilary Stewart

Then she ties the middle with the narrow end and she puts the cedar bark in a basket. The basket with the cedar bark is hung on cedar poles so that the heat of the fire just reaches it and keeps it completely dry. It will never get mouldy when it is kept really dry. If the cedar bark were not thoroughly dry it would get mouldy. Once the preparation of the cedar is completed and the bark is thoroughly dried, it is put away and she works with it in the winter.

CEDAR BARK - 2

The woman goes into the woods to look for young cedar trees. As soon as she finds them she picks out the one that has no twists in the bark and whose bark is not thick. She takes her hand adze and cuts the back of the bottom of the young cedar. She leaves a

Continued on page 14

Cedar Bark Traditional Gathering Methods

Continued from page 13

strip four inches wide, which she does not cut, when she cuts around the tree and she peels off a strip two inches wide. This is what the women who get cedar bark call "making a road," for after that, she peels off a broad strip which is to go high up. After she has taken off the narrow strip which makes the road she begins to peel at the lower end starting with her adze at the place where she cut around. The broad piece is four to six inches wide. Then she peels it off and it goes up high, she steps back from the place where she stands. If the young cedar tree is smooth high up, she goes far back.



Cedar Bark Beater

While she is going backward, she holds slack the cedar bark that she is peeling off. What she is peeling off becomes narrower as it goes upward, and it runs into a point and breaks off immediately the woman puts it down on the ground, with the inner side downward, and the outer bark outside. Then she peels off other pieces as she did the first one. She stops peeling when a strip of four fingers is left on the cedar tree. That is what the people of the olden times refer to as being left on the young cedar tree, so that it should not be without clothes and to keep alive.

As soon as the woman has enough, she takes up the broad end what she peeled off, and she breaks off the outer bark. She goes on peeling off the outer bark towards the narrow end, she continues doing this until she gets to the end. When the outer bark has been taken off, she folds the broad end first, after she finishes the full length, she ties the narrow end around it. She does the same with the other she has peeled off. As soon as all have been tied in the middle she takes a long narrow strip of cedar bark and puts it around the end, and she repeats the procedure on the other side to make packing straps. Carrying her cedar bark on her back she heads home.

YELLOW CEDAR

The yellow cedar bark is peeled during the last week in July. The same procedure is done to peel yellow cedar bark, as done to red cedar bark. The cedar bark is also dried in the sun and wind outside the house for approximately six to eight days. The yellow cedar bark is quite thick, therefore it takes longer to completely dry. When it is dried thoroughly the woman takes it down.

Once the woman gathers the yellow cedar bark, she puts it into her small canoe, and she paddles to a place where there is a deep bay and where it is always calm inside. This is so that waves never get into the cedar bark and the saltwater is always quite warm. She lands on the beach and puts the yellow cedar bark into the water. She places it down lengthwise at low tide mark and puts stones on each end. The

yellow cedar has to be in the salt-water for ten days to a month or until it becomes spongy. After this is done, she goes home. She will return to check on the cedar bark to test it every now and then.

After the yellow cedar bark has soaked, the woman goes in her canoe carrying a whale bone beater and a flat diabase pebble or a round stick of yew wood and a board as wide as the cedar bark is when laid on it. When she comes to the place where she put her cedar bark, she takes out a mat and spreads it on the beach, she takes out the round stick of yew wood and board, or the flat stone and puts it down on the mat. She takes the cedar bark out and puts it into a pool of saltwater on the beach. While the cedar bark is wet, with the inner bark outward it is beaten across the fibre, with the bark beater, she uses a whale bone bark beater to beat the bark. She begins at the broad end of the bark and works her way to the narrow end. The outer layer is pulled off and the inner part of the bark is kept and coiled into her canoe. Once finished this procedure to the bark she heads home. As soon as she arrives home she hangs the beaten yellow cedar bark on halibut poles. When evening comes she gathers the beaten cedar bark and spreads a new mat over it. This is so that it will not get damp again. After four days of drying it will be thoroughly dried. She then folds it up and puts it away in a basket until winter. Then she will work with it, sometimes the yellow cedar bark is used and mixed with that of the red cedar.

Precious Treasure Lost Once Again!

It is hard to describe the feeling we felt when it was discovered that a theft had occurred at the U'mista Cultural Centre. But I think horrified would be along with great sadness.

It was on Sunday, August 27, 1995 that we discovered that pakiwe' (frontlet) from the Potlatch Collection had been *removed without authorization*, i.e. stolen!

It is with great pride that we invite the rest of the world to visit our Centre to learn more about our culture. Visitors are more than welcome, however some one or group of persons was not one of our visitors. Our visitors are most respectful of our Culture Centre and most often show a genuine interest in learning more about us. It is through this kind of knowledge that our visitors can better understand why we are

working hard to keep our culture alive for our future generations.

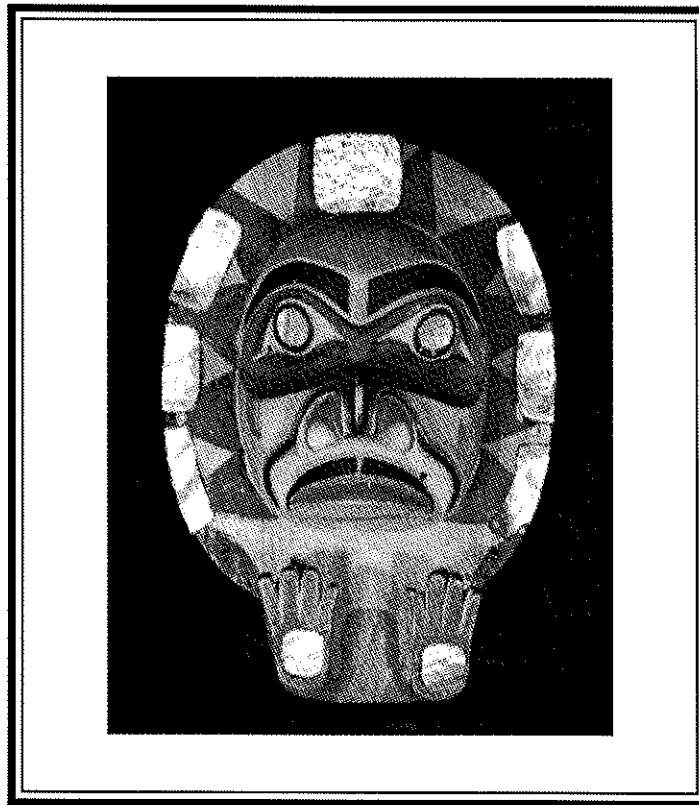
"Gilutłikw" is our

it was like "taking away our soul". This person or persons is not a visitor. The person is

our artifact treasure to us.

We have been forced to go to great expense to secure each and every artifact in our collection. This will run into thousand of dollars and it is something that was not included in our current years budget. However it must be done to help protect the rest of the Collection from unscrupulous persons out there.

At this time, all domestic and international law enforcement agencies have been alerted of this theft. Anyone with information about this incident is asked to call the R.C.M.P. at (250) 974-5544, or the U'mista Cultural Centre at (250) 974-5403. All we want is our treasure back.



Pakiwe' (frontlet) -- Artifact Stolen From The U'mista Cultural Centre. Anyone with information regarding this theft, please call the R.C.M.P., Interpol or the U'mista Cultural Centre

term that best describes the person or persons who stole the artifact from our Potlatch Collection. This was done already in our history and it was said

a thief likened to a snake in the grass. One can only hope and pray that this person has an ounce of conscience and chooses to do the right thing by returning

Native Sisterhood Gives Gift...

The children of Kitty (Whonnock) Carpenter, Nam'nasolga would like to acknowledge and express their appreciation for the great honor bestowed to the memory of their mother, grandmother, and great grandmother.

It was at the potlatch of Edwin and Vera Newman, in May of 1995, that the Native Sisterhood of B.C. presented a beautiful memorial copper in memory of Nam'nasolga. This copper was made for this special occasion and presented to the family.

On behalf of her family, Max Green, Vera Drake, her grandchildren and great grandchildren and Whonnock

Family wish to express their sincere appreciation for such a special honor and gift.

Kitty (Whonnock) Carpenter Nam'na'solga was an active member of the Native Sisterhood of B.C. She was the president for many years before retiring. Kitty was the daughter of Chief John Whonnock and Mary (Humchitt) Whonnock, of Bella Bella

Gilakas'la

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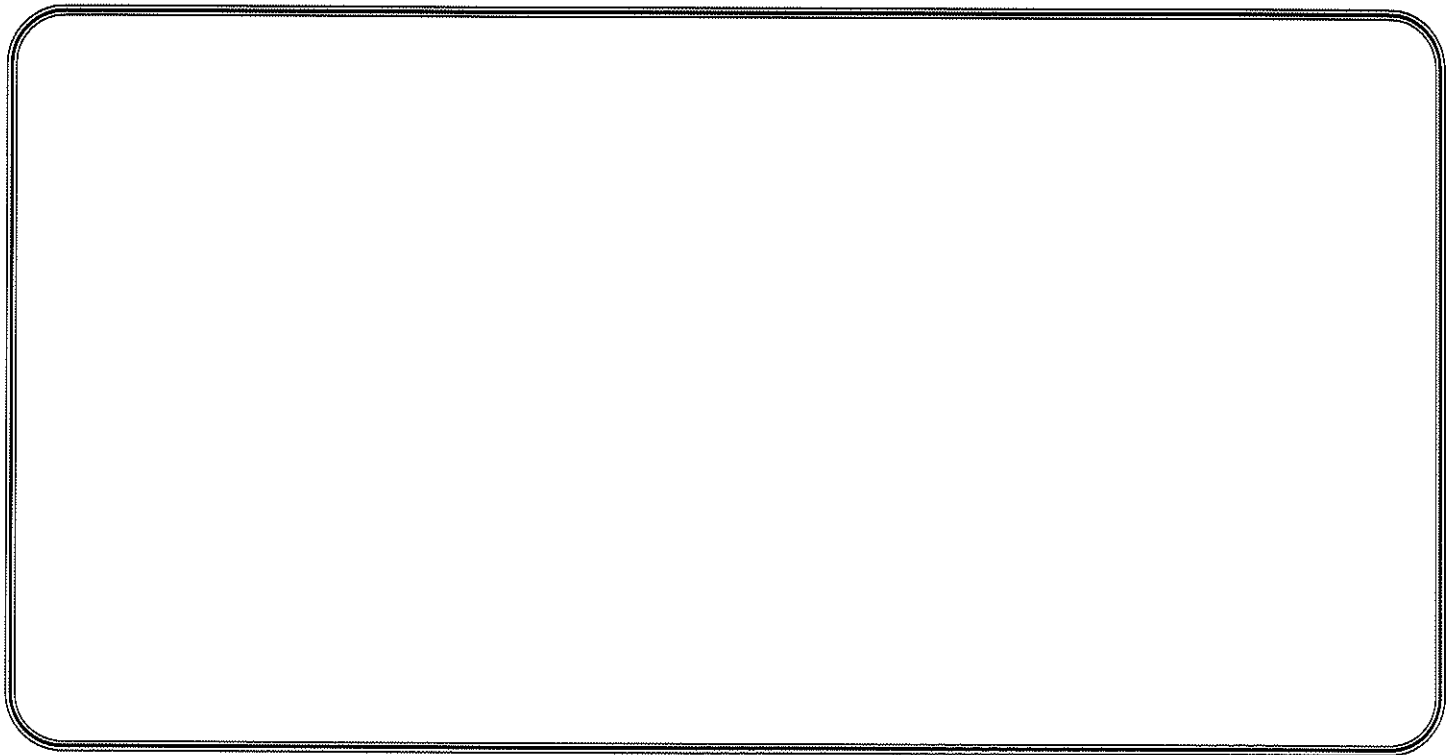
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Illustrations by Nora Johnson



U'mista Cultural Society

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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: [umista @island.net](mailto:umista@island.net)

Or drop in and see us!

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 |

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U'mista Cultural Centre

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