



U'mista News



Retaining the Past and the Present for the Future

Photo by Terri Bruce

Well here we are again.....into our Fall 2003 Newsletter. It is hard to believe that we are coming up to the end of the year and nearly into another New Year.

So much has happened since we sent out our last newsletter from the U'mista. We had two projects completed with summer students. Lacey Perrault was with us for her second term as a summer student and we were very happy to have her back. Lacey is very beneficial to this program and to the U'mista. She undertakes a number of different tasks and completes them all very satisfactorily and in a timely manner. We do hope to be able to bring Lacey back from time to time as her schooling schedule allows. The other project we had involving a summer student was the totem pole carving project and the student carver was Shane Salmon. Shane was a participant in the totem project in the Summer 2002 as well and the Lead Carver in both projects was Stephen Bruce. Both totems now stand magnificently at the waterfront side of U'mista. We erected the 2003 Totem on Sept. 18th with many witnesses who then moved to the Big House for speeches and dancing. We were happy to have the crew and guests from the cruise ship Sea Bird attend as well. The U'mista thanks the sponsors for the Totem 2003 project. They were Western Forests Products for the log that they transported to the carving site for both totems, Evergreen Savings Credit Union, Alert Bay for \$5000.00, the United Church Healing Fund for \$5000.00, Human Resources Development Canada summer student position for \$1180.00, 'Namgis First Nation summer student position for \$2240.00, 'Namgis First Nation for labor and materials to build the concrete base and provide the equipment to pre-

Director's Update



Andrea Sanborn

pare the site. Stephen Bruce for donating his time and skills for the extra cost to carve a 25 foot totem rather than a 20 foot one, Community bingo's \$805.00 sponsored by 'Namgis and coordinated by Emma Alfred and visitor donations \$720.00. We appreciate all the support we received for this project.

All the researchers we had here during the summer have all returned back to their homes or educational institutions. We look forward to receiving their reports. Photographer Sharon Grainger will return in early November to assemble the photo exhibit of the Canoe Gathering hosted in 2002 by the 'Namgis First Nation. The E.A. Hunt Memorial exhibit of the artistic creations by Eugene ended in mid-October with the *Through Our Eyes* photo exhibit by the Alert Bay Elementary School being erected immediately after and it will remain in place until November 4th. The children's exhibit is absolutely amazing along with their stories. This is something they can always be proud of.

We thank Calvin and Marie Hunt for giving us the opportunity to host the E.A. Hunt exhibit. Eugene was pretty special to many of us.

Barb Cranmer is coordinating some research on objects identified in the Collections of the National Museum of the American Indian as being of Kwakwaka'wakw origin. This research will culminate in about twenty Kwakwaka'wakw pieces being selected for an exhibit to open at the National Museum of the American Indian's (NMAI) George Gustav Heye Center (GGHC) in New York in 2005 along with 10 other First Nations groups from the Northwest Coast. The community curators had their first meeting in Neah Bay in September 2003. In order to facilitate the selection process, Barb is conducting a number of community meetings where people are invited to come in to view the photos and give their comments about the objects and from there develop a theme and select the objects that will become part of the exhibit. Although all the pieces will not be included in the exhibit, the community meeting will certainly provide the opportunity to expand on any information we do have about the pieces or bring to light missing information about them. The next meeting of the coastal reps will be in December in Prince Rupert. I think this will be a very good exhibit. At the end of the exhibit in New York the objects will then travel to the communities they originated from for regional exhibits.

Following months of discussion with officials from Christ Church Cathedral and the Anglican Diocese of BC and the families of Charlie James and Charlie and Lucy Newman, the totem that once stood in Christ Church Cathedral in Victoria, BC has now been returned to the U'mista where it will remain in our

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Directors Update*Continued from page 2*

permanent collection. The totem will be officially gifted to U'mista in a small ceremony here at the month end. Now, we must plan on fund raising for another phase of our expansion plans and that is to build a space that we will be able to erect the Charlie James totem along with others we have already. This totem pole gallery space along with another similar in size, an increased personal regalia storage room, archival records storage room, carving room and curatorial and conservation workspace room have always been in the long-term plans for the U'mista Cultural Society. We have again reached a time in our history where we have to revisit these plans to accommodate the additions to the Collections, insure proper museum standard like storage areas for our archives and have a proper space in which to look after our objects as required. We will be planning a capital fund raising campaign in the very near future and if any of our members, friends and associates would like more information about this, please do not hesitate to contact us. Remember, every bit does help and the U'mista is able to issue official donation receipts for Income Tax purposes.

The summer brought us a very busy time with many visitors from all over the world coming to visit. This kept our tourism programmers very busy as well with guided tours, walking tours, dancing, story telling and catering. We hosted a number of FAM TOURS for the Wi'la'mola project that we have partnered in with Nimmo Bay Resort. So, miles of video footage were shot and hours of audio recording were made for promotional purposes, most of which is available for U'mista marketing projects. A number of us from our communities were able to take part in some of these

FAM TOURS and I can tell you from first hand experience, it really is an experience in many ways. To see the beauty and expanse of our territories first hand from a (thunder)bird's eye view is breath taking and attitude adjusting. We have also hosted a number of travel writers for various travel publications in the United States and Europe and look forward to seeing these articles and especially the guests they will bring us.

In August we received the Bob Harris chief's raven rattle that we acquired through a grant awarded from Canadian Heritage's Cultural Property Export Review Board. This is a superior example for this style of rattle and a fine legacy to Bob Harris. We now proudly exhibit it along with three oystercatcher rattles in our middle gallery. Adding to our Collection is a *yaxwiwe'*, a raven frontlet that was gifted to the U'mista by the daughter of the last collector of this object, Andre Breton. Mrs. Aube Breton-Elleouet and her daughter, Oona returned the *yaxwiwe'* in a ceremony on September 21, 2003 at the Big House. This *yaxwiwe'* was discovered by Anthropologist, Dr. Marie Mauze of Paris, France when she was invited to examine the collection of Andre Breton prior to it going to auction. She recognized the piece to be one from the Pacific Northwest Coast and upon further research discovered it belonged to the Potlatch Collection. When she brought it to the attention of Mrs. Elleouet the holder of the piece, Mrs. Elleouet said that: *it must be returned to the people from whom it was stolen.* The rest is history and we are very happy to have this artifact back where it belongs. Following the returning ceremony, the next morning Mrs. Elleouet and her party were taken to Village Island to view first hand where the Potlatch was held that resulted in the arrest of a number of our people and the confiscation

of their regalia. One of those accompanying her was Ethel Alfred who retold a number of stories about that era. We have since received a card from Mrs. Elleouet expressing her thanks for a most memorable adventure.

Later in September, I travelled to Halifax for the First Nations Confederacy of Cultural Education Centres conference. This was to have been my first conference with them. My flight out east was pleasant but the next morning things started to go down hill. The conference started in the morning with a number of reports being presented, issues being discussed and all the while Hurricane Juan was winding up outside. We managed to get through the banquet that evening, all the while under very threatening winds building. Well you all know what happened on the east coast then.....Hurricane Juan released his fury and exploded on to the coast of Nova Scotia and part of New Brunswick. We were without power and in a terrible mess around us. The wind blew so hard that it blew the rain through any crack or seam it could find and then leaked on us in our rooms. It was amazing to watch the wrath of such a wind and the power of Mother Nature and to realize there was nothing we could do about it except to try and stay in a safe place. One does think about many things, when alone in the dark not knowing what is yet to come at you. You think about all the things you should be thankful for, that is your family and friends and your good health, and did you really make sure everything was clean at home before you left. As destructive that Hurricane Juan was, it was still an amazing sight to witness but I do not want to have to do it more than that once. A bright note was that BC had a very good contingent of representatives at the conference. Lawrence Ambers was there to represent the

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Directors Update*Continued from page 3*

T'lisalagi'lakw School and I kept him calm! Or was it, we supported each other. Needless to say, the conference could not be completed because we lost our quorum as many people from nearby areas rushed home.

Our Chairman attended the orientation of First Peoples Cultural Foundation's *First Voices* project. This project will include the archiving and digitizing of 15 endangered languages and kwak'wala is one of them. To undertake this project, we will further insure that kwak'wala remains a living and vibrant language to carry our culture into the next generations to come. Our Chairman, Bill Cranmer is also the Chair of the First Peoples' Cultural Foundation and was also present at the launch of *First Voices* in June 2003. Not only will this project work to archive and digitize endangered languages but it can also provide the tools for language resources curriculum development, raise the awareness of the

importance of language to our cultures, become a web-based language learning tool, provide a model for expansion of digital archiving for endangered languages across Canada and become the bridge to raise awareness of the importance of language maintenance among our Youth and Elders. A training workshop for Language Administrator and Language Recorders will take place at the U'mista from November 17 to November 20th and we will keep you posted on the progress of this exciting project.

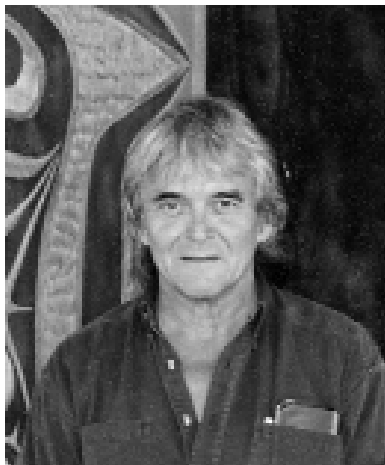
On November 23, 2003 we will host the Second Annual North Island Museum Conference at the U'mista. The First conference held in Port McNeill last year identified the opportunities for all our North Island museums to come together and share our experiences and learn from one another to insure we preserve our history in a professional and informative record. We as museum curators, administrators and collections managers have a responsibility to not

only provide all of our history and culture in record, but also to encourage you, the public, to use these facilities for your own pleasure and research. We must also encourage the youth, as our successors, to recognize the value in our Collections, as they will become the keepers of our histories.

In closing I will just point out that we are missing Juanita's photo and musings. She really did go. I had to take those nails out of her foot and let her go, moving on to the next stage of her life. So, all the staff has taken part in putting together this issue and we hope you enjoy it as you did those put together by Juanita. We just have to get our bean counter, Bob Godwin to submit an article now. Next issue and we will get him.

Our next newsletter will be out very soon after this one and we will return to our series on our Villages with Gwa'yasdams or Gilford Island to be featured next.

Chairman's Report



William T. Cranmer
Chairman of the Board

We do not include an article from our Chairman, Bill Cranmer in this issue. As Bill has been very busy working on our behalf and as our Winter 2003 issue is due very soon, we have told him that we will look for an informative article from him for that issue. He will tell you all about the projects, meetings and discussions he has been involved in on our behalf.

**Charlie James Pole to be permanently housed in the U'mista.
by Esther M. Alfred**

In 1925 Charlie and Lucy Newman asked Charlie James (Lucy's Father) to carve a totem pole for the Girl's Auxiliary of St. Paul's in Victoria, BC. The pole was carved as a symbol of gratitude for the blessings and gifts to their children. In September of 1925, Lucy James (Newman) traveled to Victoria with the totem on a barge to present it to the Church. The pole was moved to the newly constructed Memorial Hall at Christ Church Cathedral because there was no building big enough at St. Paul's to house the pole if it were to remain indoors. The Christ Church Cathedral was to act as guardian of the pole until suitable space at St. Paul's was available. The pole remained in Christ Church Cathedral for a period of seventy-seven years.

Due to a number of circumstances, the pole could no longer be exhibited at The Cathedral. It was at this time that a mutual agreement was reached by Christ Church, the families of Charlie James and the Newman family that the Totem be housed at the U'mista Cultural Centre. The families agreed that the pole should be placed in a location of honor, where people can appreciate the pole. The pole has been indoors the entire time. Therefore the pole has neither weathered nor decayed and still bears the original paint. In addition to that, it is without question, one of Charlie James' finest pieces of work. The pole stands 16' 3" and at its widest point measures 3'. It weighs approximately 2,700 lbs. The legend told in the pole is reprinted in its original form as follows:

"The Four Tests of 'Tsi-kumi"

The legend of this totem pole is a Quicuasutunuk tribal story of Tsikumayi, the great magician of the red cedar bark. At the time of a visit from Khanekelaq, a great mys-

tic character, to Metap on Viner Sound. At that time Khanekelaq cut off Tsikumayi's head.

The head and the body came together again. Tsikumayi was then pushed into a box and cast into the fire. Again he came to life.

At last a heavy weight was tied to his feet and he was thrown into the sea. He sank to the domain of Konignwis, the great lord of the wealth of the deep. All about where people and things of the ocean's depths.

The earthly visitor was recognized as Tsikumayi and shown the great mystic cradle dance.

Of these things he was given the choice for the benefit of himself and heirs. Tsikumayi was also told to take the totem pole he saw there and commemorate his great future Yan'kwas with it. On this pole were the creatures of the deep-

**Na'anis, the Monster Ocean
Grizzly Bear**

**Ma'akinuk, a powerful man
Waakses the Frog and
Kuuma the Bullhead**

When Tsikumayi came to surface again with outstretched arms, as is done in red cedar dances, Khanekelaq was still there awaiting him.

The great mythic one then recognized Tsikumayi as mortal and presented him with the Frog and its power for his dance.

This Tsikumayi cast out from him at Metap, in order to show his supernatural attainments.

There is a monster stone shaped in the form of a frog which marks the spot today.

Kolus, the great Spiritual Thunderbird, which was the ancestor of Tsikumayi, adorns the top of the totem pole.

The families are in the process of planning a celebration set for October 30, 2003 here at the U'mista. We hope you will join us for this very special occasion.

About the Artist:

Charlie James was born in 1867 and lived most of his life in the 'Namgis Village on Cormorant Island. Until his death in 1938, James was known as a leader of a well-defined style of Kwakwaka'wakw art. His life and art spanned an era of increasing white influence among the Native peoples, which resulted in much social disruption due to the loss of native arts and culture. His perseverance, along with a handful of others, enabled the Kwakwaka'wakw culture to continue through this transitional period to flourish in more contemporary times. Although now known mostly as a carver of small totems, James completed many large totem commissions during his life. These pieces are now scattered all across North America in such places as the Harvard University Library, the Maxwell Museum of Anthropology in Albuquerque, New Mexico, the Simon Fraser University Museum in Burnaby, BC among others



Face on Charlie James' Pole

Photo Terri Bruce

October 9, 2003

Dear Chiefs & Community Members:

I am writing with regards to an exciting new project in partnership with the U'mista Cultural Centre and the National Museum of the American Indian. I have been contracted by the U'mista Cultural Society to act as community curator representing the Kwakwaka'wakw in a large museum exhibit to be opened in 2005 in New York City at the N.M.A.I.

The exhibit is highlighting the NMAI's extensive collection of Northwest Coast art. The following First Nations are participating; Tlingit, Haida, Tsimshian, Gitksan, Nisga'a, Heiltsuk, Nuxalk, Nuu-chan-nulth, Coast Salish, Makah and the Kwakwaka'wakw.

The Kwakwaka'wakw collection is comprised of 1473 objects ranging from ceremonial regalia like masks, frontlets, button blankets, aprons, cedar weavings, feast bowls, bent boxes, cedar chests, drums, everyday tools, fishing implements, hunting implements, whistles and games. My job is to visit with people in our

communities presenting these pieces, then to select 20 objects that will represent the Kwakwaka'wakw in the exhibit. It seems like an overwhelming task, but with the assistance of people in the communities I feel that it will be a great and exciting project.

I am also gathering as much information, history and stories on each of these pieces as possible. I have all the objects on three cds and also full colour 8X10 of some of the objects.

I have set a up some meetings here in Alert Bay to talk with Elders, artists and community members and have made some early selections of pieces. The themes of how these objects are presented as; distinctive Kwakwaka'wakw style, creation/origin stories and the life cycle/ birth/coming of age/ rights of passage/first menses/initiation ceremonies and the inheritance of names, songs, dances/memorial potlatches, and transformation.

This early selection of pieces was presented at the first meeting of all eleven

First Nations and staff from the

NMAI held in Neah Bay in September 2003. Each group presented their pieces/storyline and as a group we started to work on the overarching storylines and coming up with a working title for the exhibit. Our next meeting is set for December in Prince Rupert, so I have a very short time period to complete this work.

I feel this to be an important exhibit, one that will benefit all the Kwakwaka'wakw and other participating First Nations. I can be reached at 250 974-5124 to discuss with you details of the project and set times to come and visit people and show them the objects. I look forward to working and making the connection with people in our Nation.

Gilakas'la

Barb Cranmer
Community Curator
U'mista Cultural Centre/ NMAI



From left to right Shirley Muldon (Gitksan community curator) Barb Cranmer-(Kwakwaka'wakw community curator) Polly DeBari (Makah) Jay Stewart (Facilitator) Janine Bowedchop (Community curator Makah)
Photographs Courtesy Barb Cranmer



Harvey Humchitt (Community Curator Heiltsuk) Barb Cranmer and Bobby Joseph (Facilitator)
Meeting in Neah Bay

Yo! Everybody. My name is Lacey Perrault and for this past summer I have been the summer student at the U'mista Cultural Centre. This summer was much different than last year; this summer I had a somewhat of a chance to participate in the collection management training, when I wasn't in the gift shop helping reorganize the library. We (Esther, Terri and I) learned to do many different tasks. We learned that everything has its own place, and its own special purpose. For myself I learned that everything has a role in all that we do, everything has its own purpose, and everything has a reason for its being. If it's to teach or to learn there is always something to do.

For this article I can talk about who I am and where I come from, but I did that for last fall's newsletter. I would like to take this chance to tell you people where life has taken me since the last time we talked. Quite a bit has hap-



**Summer Student
Lacey Perrault**

pened, first things first, it is great to be back here at the U'mista Cultural Centre, and second, this fall I will not be returning to North Island Secondary School. This year I will be spreading my wings in the city of Nanaimo, BC. I will be attending Malaspina University-College.

I am very excited to be going to college, but also am very sad to be leaving

the only home that I have ever had. I know leaving my family is a big consequence, but going to college is a once in a life time opportunity. I am very fortunate to have the opportunity to further my education and I hope to make my family proud.

Another member of the U'mista staff will not be returning this fall. That is Juanita Pasco. This will also be her last summer here at the Centre. There shall be a great part of the U'mista Cultural Centre missing. Juanita will be greatly missed; and I wish her all the best in what life brings her next. I would like to thank everyone for the great summer that I have had, this will definitely be a summer that I will not forget. On that note good-bye and I wish everybody a great fall season.

H̄lakas'la, Lacey Perrault.

Collection Manager Trainee Up-date

Summer is most definitely over and fall is upon us. The days are now darker and shorter and our friends from near and far have returned home to attend school and/or get back to their work environment. Even though tourism has decreased for the fall and winter months, work here at the U'mista has not slowed down in the least. There is always something to prepare, organize or deal with.

First we celebrated our second pole raising. The head carver was Stephen Bruce and Shane Salmon was the student carver.

The pole stands proudly in front of the U'mista beside the pole, which was also carved by the same two artists. Following the "unveiling" (windy conditions made the unveiling somewhat try-

Collections Manager Trainee



Esther Alfred

ing) we all went up to the Big House for some dancing and refreshments. Our biggest thrill was when our yaxwiwe' was returned to us all the way from France! Juanita wrote extensively about

the piece in the last newsletter and you will read more about the event in this edition. As part of my training, I was in charge of organizing the celebration. This consisted of arranging the feast which of course meant making sure there was enough food etc. I won't bore you with all of the little detail, dance program (singers etc.) wood for the fire along with a volunteer to tend the fire. These little details may seem meager, however *everything* must be organized just so for events as important as this to be successful.

The Eugene Hunt exhibit came to a close on October 14, 2003. It was an honor to display such excellent pieces of Kwakw̄ka'wakw art from an artist who was as well known and respected as Eugene was. Once Eugene's exhibit was dismantled another exhibit had to be put into place immediately. This was another event that was part of my training.

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**Giftshop Clerk
Zabrina Brotchie**

Hey, it's me Zabrina Brotchie, I am back again. I am very excited to be back working here at the U'mista. I love working here; it is so interesting and informative. I still learn something new everyday. It has been a very interesting summer; meeting new people, learning some new things about where they come from.

It is quite different without Juanita around. We are sure going to miss her here at the U'mista and in Alert Bay; I would just like to wish her all the luck in what the future holds for her.

In September we had a totem pole raising here at the U'mista. That went very well, and after the unveiling of the pole a ceremony was held at the Big House where Andrea Crammer's dance group T'sasla performed. It was an excellent performance; I am actually hoping to join her group so my two children and I will learn a lot more about our dances and culture. There were also presentations made to the people who helped in the making of this beautiful pole.

On September 28th 2003 I had the honor of witnessing the unveiling of Yaxwiwe', a piece a wonderful lady

from Paris has returned to us. The night went by very well. We started off with Chief Bill Crammer thanking all those who were present for coming to witness the wonderful event. Then we all ate dinner, which was great. I would just like to say thank you to all who cooked and brought their food to the Big House for this event, without you it would not have meant as much. So thank you very much.

After dinner, Mrs. Andrea Sanborn, Mr. Lawrence Ambers, and Mme Aube Breton-Elleouet (the wonderful woman who brought our piece back) and her daughter Oona carried the piece into the Big House. When they carried it in you could see the emotion in some of our Elder's faces, it was an amazing thing to witness. I also felt so good to see this piece coming back home to us. Then there was dancing where Chief Bill Cranmer, Chief Adam Dick and Chief Don Assu danced around the fire holding the yaxwiwe, celebrating its return. After this was done there was some peace dances done to show how the piece is used. Also Bill Cranmer asked Mme Elleouet to join in with a ladies dance and later she was given a Kwak'wala name, which is U'ma, which means, someone who has done something special. This was an awesome thing to do and to witness.

So, in closing I hope every one had a great summer. I know I did and I hope every one has a safe and happy time in the up and coming months. CHRISTMAS IS JUST AROUND THE CORNER! Watch out for our Christmas Sale Flyer. We will have some awesome stuff on sale for Christmas so make sure you come and check it out.



**Terri Bruce
Collections Manager
Trainee**

As I mentioned in the last newsletter, I am now taking over the responsibility of designing the quarterly newsletters. This is my first one, and was a bit of a challenge as I did not have much time to work with Juanita and learn all her tricks. Bear with me as I face this challenge. Andrea expects quality work, and I thank her for giving me this opportunity and having faith in me to get this job done. I know with a bit more experience I will be able to produce a top notch Newsletter for you all. My sister Esther has taken on the responsibilities of the other half of the newsletter, which is of course gathering all the information and doing the write ups. I think she has done a great job, for this too has been her first time doing it. As Andrea mentioned we will be returning to the series on our villages on the next newsletter. with Gwa'yasdams being next. If you have any suggestions or something you would like to read about, please let me know.

Gilakas'la

*Kwanxwala'ogwa
Terri Bruce,*

RETURN OF ANOTHER ONE OF
OUR LOST TREASURES.

YAXWIWE'

by **Esther M. Alfred**

Our celebration on the 21st of September 2003 went very well. The evening began with a huge feast. Both the dinner and dessert were plentiful and delicious. The feast would not have been such a success had it not been for all the people who contributed such tasty dishes. In fact one of our visitors from Paris approached me and motioned his hand towards the food table and exclaimed "magnifique!" On that note I would like to thank everyone who donated to the feast. I had originally planned on making a list of people who had brought food for the occasion. However, I realized it would be impossible to list everybody because it was difficult to keep track of the people who brought food to the buffet table. Therefore I am thanking everyone all together, Gilakas'la! Thank you also to the Namgis First Nation for supplying the Salmon, (with the exception of one fish), buns and an abundance of desserts Gilakas'la! A very special heart-

felt thank you to my lovely Mother In Law Dora Alfred for preparing the 10 sockeye from the Namgis and barbecuing them all day in the rain. When I went to check on her progress she was humming a song and it didn't bother her in the least that it was raining out. Gilakas'la Mom! Additional recognition goes to Roy Cranmer for his wood donation and for tending to the fire all night. A big thank you also goes to Tamara Scheck who helped with the setting up and cleaning up. Gilakas'la Tums!

Lastly, Gilakas'la to Andrea Cranmer and the T'sasa'a Dance Group. Your performances are truly an inspiration to all of us!

Following dinner came the speeches from Chief Bill Cranmer, Chief Adam Dick and Chief Don Assu. Their words were very emotional as well as appreciative to Madam Aube Breton-Elleouet for so graciously and without question, returning our frontlet. After the speeches Chief Bill announced that Aube Breton-Elleouet, Andrea Sanborn and Lawrence Ambers will present the

Yaxwiwe' for public viewing for the first time since its arrival. The crate which held the long lost treasure was carried in and placed in front of the Chief's bench. Chief Bill lifted the Yaxwiwe' up high for all to see then proceeded to dance around the fire with a long procession in tow. We circled the fire four times with Chief Bill Cranmer, Chief Adam Dick and Chief Don Assu taking turns proudly displaying the piece.

Next was the Ladies dance, which was performed by Andrea Cranmer's T'sasa'a dance group.

Then there was a peace dance that Zabrina and I respectfully participated in. There were more dances including the Bak'was that was performed by Charlie Smith and Stephen Smith. Then there were more peace dances; one where Madam Elleouet and her daughter took part. All in all it was a very exciting and joyful evening for all who attended! If I have forgotten anybody, please forgive me and know that we are very grateful to all who helped make this a special occasion. Gilakas'la!



Left to Right Don Assu, Andrea Sanborn Chief Bill Cranmer, Chief Adam Dick and Madam Aube Elleouet

Photograph Courtesy Chrissy Johnny



Chief Bill Cranmer visibly elated at the return of our Yaxwiwe' as he holds it high for all to witness

Photograph Courtesy Chrissy Johnny

Collection Manager Trainee Update*Continued from page 7*

After some discussion with Andrea, it was agreed that in one display case, we would display the three oyster catcher rattles and the chief's raven rattle that is attributed to Bob Harris. The raven rattle was acquired with the generous support of Canadian Heritage, with the award of a grant through the Canadian Cultural Export Review Board. I must say that it is a wonderful display. There were two display cases to be filled so we chose some pieces carved by the late Gordon Scow which were donated to us from his family. The display consists of four of Gordon's *hamsamala* dancers along with unfinished pieces, which shows the process in which the artist followed to complete his work.

Other than honing my organizational skills, compiling items for this newsletter (as well as newsletters yet to come) is yet another huge task I must perfect as part of my training and with the help of my talented sister Terri, I'm feeling very optimistic. It's very refreshing to have the modern technology that we have today, when we run into difficulty we can always e-mail Juanita for advice. Lastly, the Alert Bay School's photo exhibit opened here at the U'mista on October 17, 2002. I was so pleased since I didn't get to see it when it was first put on display in the Old Court House. It is an excellent exhibit and I encourage anyone who hasn't seen it yet to hurry down and view this wonderfully entertaining exhibit.

Gilakas'la

Iktsamgila'ogwa
Esther Alfred

T'SASALA CULTURAL GROUP

"to be determined"

PAVING THE WAY

The Tourism season has come and gone and the T'sasala Cultural group has had another successful year. In the early spring we began sharing our culture and educating visitors about our rich history. We danced for visiting ships that stopped by our community on their way to Alaska and our regular three day a week dancing throughout the summer months. We travelled to Nanaimo to share culture in four schools in May and June.

Andrea Cranmer, T'sasala's coordinator says, the success of our group is due to the passion of the parents of the younger members that want their children to learn the culture of our people. It is a way of educating the visitors who come and also our own group which ranges in age from 10 months to 92 years. We are thankful to those who make that commitment. We see ourselves having something to offer visitors and when they leave Alert Bay they have a better awareness of our history. Many people return each year to see our group and share in the culture.

Barb Cranmer has produced a dynamic 9 minute promotion dvd/video for the group. It will be sent to all tourist operators in Canada and Internationally as well. So look out for it on most local television stations near you.

Members of our Cultural program

Elder Ethel Alfred
Elder Vera Newman
Elder Emma Tamilin
Chief Norman Glendale
Tara Ambers
Jane Cook
Andrea Cranmer
Norine Charlie
Donna Cranmer
Barb Cranmer
Edgar Cranmer
Eric Glendale
Trevor Isaac
Jordan Wadhams
Alexander Alfred
Eric Isaac
Morianna Nelson
Kelsey Nelson
Sidney Nelson
Denise Joseph
Doreen Joseph
Stephen Smith
Frank Smith Jr.
Moses Smith
Karissa Glendale
Gwantilakw Cranmer
Karen Joseph
Mary Joseph
Ernest Alfred
Eli Cranmer
James Glendale
Gloria Hunt
Nola Hunt
Natalie Hunt
Norma Louie
Emily Cook
Kodi Nelson
Clifford Glendale
Renea Smith
Marley Cranmer

We want to thank the 'Namgis First Nation and the U'mista Cultural Centre for our successful partnership in putting Alert Bay on the map. When we work together anything is possible.

**The Attempted Destruction of a
Civilization- part II**

by Esther M. Alfred

As I had mentioned in the last newsletter, the Canadian Government outlawed the potlatch in 1884. However, the authorities felt that this particular action was not quite enough to completely wipe out the Indian way of life which to them was *a foolish, wasteful and demoralizing*

custom", that custom being our potlatch. In the mid 1850's, the British Crown and then the government of Canada had a policy to "Canadianize" Aboriginal people. In 1881 British Columbia became a Province thus making it possible to establish schools anywhere in BC as long as there were at least eight students in attendance.

Part of persuading the Natives and adapting them to the "Canadian" ways

of life was to convert them to Christianity. Therefore, the Government and several churches and religious Orders collaborated to run Residential Schools.

Residential schools had already started to open in other parts of BC. The list below is based on information from the Department of Indian Affairs and RCMP records. If you attended a school that is not on this list, please let us know.

<u>Place</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Dates</u>	<u>Organization</u>
Metlakathla	Metlakathla	1819-1908	Anglican
Mission	St Mary's	1861-1984	Roman Catholic
Sardis (Sto'lo)	Coqualeetza	1861-1940	Methodist
Chemainus	Kuper Island	1890-1970	Anglican
Williams Lake	St. Josephs Mission	1890-1981	Roman Catholic
Kamloops	K.I.R.S.	1893-1988	Roman Catholic
Tofino	Tofino	1900-1983	Roman Catholic
Lytton	St. Georges	1901-1979	Anglican
Fort St. James (Fraser Lake)	Lejac	1940-1922 1922-1976	Roman Catholic
Sechelt	Sechelt	1912-1975	Roman Catholic
Port Alberni	Alberni	1929-1975	United Church

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The Birth of St. Michael's Residential School



In 1929, Anglican Missionaries opened the doors to Alert Bay's St. Michaels Residential School (St. Mike's). Children from the surrounding 17 Kwakwaka'wakw tribes were removed from their families and villages and placed in the school. This was yet another means of trying to assimilate the natives. Of course, there were families who tried to oppose this and as a result, they were threatened with jail sentences. Since many of our people had already been imprisoned for potlatching, this threat was taken seriously and with little argument. For instance, I know of a couple of cases where the parents hid their children from the authorities sparing their children from the ordeal of attending the Residential school. I was told by an Elder that he was one of the children who was hidden away and kept

from attending the school even though his father was threatened twice that he would be sent to jail if he did not allow his son to go to school. The Elder's father explained to the Indian Agent that he did not want his son to forget his language, as the language is the strength of our people. The Elder informed me that although he is grateful to his father for protecting him from the sufferings that he would have undoubtedly gone through, but then at the same time he regrets not receiving an education, in fact he said this to his Dad when they moved to Alert Bay;

I think you made a mistake when you didn't allow me to go to school because now I can't read my mail and I can't speak English".

Obviously it was unpredictable what the future would bring. Who would have known back then that we would be so dependant on the modern world and that the modern world would have the respect for our culture, the same culture that was once forbidden and scorned upon. If only there had been some foresight, imagine the wealth of knowledge about us that this great Nation of ours would hold today. Unfortunately, this was not the case. Therefore, history must be told in the same manner in which it happened.

I have undertaken considerable research from several books on Residential Schools. Also I have taken some information from our St. Michaels residential school files, that contain interviews from our old people, most of these peo-

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ple are no longer with us. The first principal to run the St. Mike's School was a man named Mr. Anfield.

Mr. Anfield was well liked by our people. Everyone (*interviews I've read*) had nice things to say about him. Of course, each one emphasized his strictness, but they also credited him for the life skills that he insisted his pupils learn and also for his love of sports. Mr. Anfield provided the school with football, baseball, track and field, basketball and of course the ever-popular game of soccer. Although the Principal was a kind man, that did not take away the pain to want to be at home and with their family.

From what I have read in the earliest files, these things were appreciated by some of the students:



Photo Courtesy Stan Hunt

Sports skills

All Residential schools encouraged sports. In my research, I learned that all Residential schools turned out first-rate teams regardless of the sport. This brought about another type of discrimination from people outside of the institution.

Cooking skills

Some of the students were taught to cook formal meals. Unfortunately, these meals were not for the students, the fancy dishes were for the teachers and caregivers. As one stu-

dent put it, **“the staff ate like Kings and Queens”.**

Ironing skills

Due to the lack of funding, the students were required to do all of the labor, including the ironing.

Reading & writing skills

Obviously a necessity for the modern world.

Religion

Fortunately, Christianity benefited many of our people. Although the Residential school broke many spirits, it also saved lives with its church. When many of our people turned to alcohol to mask the results of the residential schools afflictions. Others turned to Christ as their savior. This proved to be a positive factor in these people's lives because they interpreted bible teachings to be very similar to what our people were taught by their Elders. Those who held on to their Christian



Photo Courtesy B.C. Archives UPN 00704

beliefs continued to live somewhat satisfying and contented lives.

Farming skills (tending to cows, horses and vegetable gardening)

This particular skill proved to be unnecessary with the exception of growing vegetables because our people's primary livelihood became commercial fishing. Because fish was and still is an important part of our diet, fishing was not new to the Natives and therefore the fishermen did very well for themselves in this industry. The men were very familiar to all the fishing spots. They knew exactly when the first and last run of the salmon was and so on and so forth.

Carpentry skills

This valued skill was learned at the Residential school. When many of the boys left the institution, they were capable of building their own homes and this expertise came in handy for many other reasons.

The Government and religious orders were adamant on civilizing the Indians and they felt a good solid English education was the beginning. However, unlike the Non-Native children, Native children were not permitted to go beyond grade eight. If that was not bad enough, the children only received half day of schooling because the other half was spent doing chores in and around the school to maintain it. Surely, one cannot receive a proper education on such a meager schedule. One former student was quoted as saying;

“I don't think they wanted Indians to get educated to tell you the truth.”

Anonymous.

Apart from the fact that the government did not allow the Native children to go beyond grade eight our people faced

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many other injustices.

Other injustices were:

Families were broken up.

At first, the children had no idea what was in store for them when they entered the school. They were brought to the school not knowing that their parents would be returning home without them. Some children thought that they were going to the school to visit older siblings but when their parents turned and fled without so much as a goodbye, they became extremely terrified and confused. In most cases, the children did not speak English upon their arrival at school, which made this ordeal even more frightening. The fact that most of the children had siblings in the school was of no consolation because family members were forbidden to communicate with each other in any way, shape or form. This was all part of the plan to "assimilate" the Natives. If the children exchanged words with family members or even friends, the authorities feared that their task of stripping the Natives of their language would fail

All the children were not allowed to think for themselves.

This did little for their self-esteem and made decision-making very difficult in the years to come. This restriction on self-expression often led to ill-fated choices in later years, for example, alcoholism, drug addiction, prostitution (male/female), self-destruction, imprisonment etc., became a way of life. The proof is obvious; more so on the streets of major Canadian cities than it is in smaller close-knit communities.

Religion

Prayer was forced upon our people, it did not matter that our people respected and gave thanks to all living things on this earth as well as gave thanks to our

Creator. Christianity was forced upon the students. Although religion is aforementioned as being a positive factor, I discovered in the course of my research that the religious figures of long-ago also instilled fear upon many of the Natives with such threats as "You will go to hell if you continue on with your "heathen" ways" etc. Therefore, many of the Natives grew up with negative feelings about themselves, fear and self-esteem was destroyed and consequently major identity crisis began to grow amongst the Native population.

The residential school offered absolutely no nurturing, spiritually or physically to the children. This is something they received unconditionally from parents and grandparents. As a result, parenting and life skills were lost. Children were taken from their homes and placed in the Residential school as young as four years of age. These children were deprived of the traditional teachings that they would have received had they been raised by their parents/grandparents. Before European contact, the old people taught life skills to the younger generation and the residential school put an end to that. This alone did damage to the bonding and communication, something held in high regard amongst our people. Those children who were raised in the Residential school stumbled into adulthood and when faced with parenthood, some former students had a difficult time making the right choices when it came to child rearing. The vicious cycle spun out of control and is evident to this day. Again, this is more so evident in cities across Canada.

Lack of food

Besides the fact that the food rations was scarce, it was also disgusting and without any nutritional value what so ever. Former St. Mike's school students remember feeling continuous hunger

along with being driven to steal food regardless of the consequences they knew they would face if they were caught. I had a conversation with one former student who recalls stealing a large turnip by wrapping it under his sweater and sneaking it up to his dorm. The starving student looked forward to bedtime because he was looking forward to eating his prized possession. Once the prayers were said and the lights were turned out the young boy began to chomp into his turnip and another young fellow overheard this and whispered a plea, "hey buddy, give me a bite of your turnip" his answer was "nope, this is my turnip and I'm going to eat it all by myself" I was told that it took that young man all night to consume his turnip. He said that he had finally finished it when the sun came up. Sadly, the former student claimed that the the authorities found out about his turnip and as a result, he still has a scar on his behind because of that incident.

Punishment was often and very severe

The one major cause for punishment was speaking kwak'wala. The earlier students arrived speaking only kwak'wala. Some of the punishments imposed on the St. Mike's students were strappings which (on many occasions) drew blood and having to write on the chalkboard "I will not speak kwak'wala" 500 times. Others were being sent to bed without dinner, having to scrub the stairs from the basement up to the top floor with the smallest brush they could find and lastly losing ones weekend pass. Another school (Roman Catholic) had different techniques for snuffing out the Native language like being made to stay in a closet for long periods of time. If a child was caught speaking his language he/she would be punished by having sewing needles pushed through their

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tongue. This was a routine penalty for language offenders.

The children held their parents responsible for their being placed in the school, as a result the children began to slowly mistrust their parents and some even began to lose respect for them.

HOWEVER.....

The parents/grandparents were, as a rule, forbidden by the Missionaries to visit their children for fear that their presence would have a "negative" impact on the schools quest to civilize the little Indian boys and girls. However there were cases when family from other villages were given visitation rights. These family members would supply their children with baked goods and other treats.

I thought that it would be interesting to document the impact on some former students from St. Mike's.

**The people who I interviewed wish to keep their identity anonymous so I used fictional names:*

Q. What is your name?

A. "Allen"

Q. Which year/'s did you attend St. Mike's?

A. 1939

Q. How old were you?

A. Going on 9 years old.

Q. How many years did you attend?

A. Four years, four ugly years.

Q. Were there other family members that attended the school at the same time as you?

A. There were lots of us.

Q. Were you able to comfort each other?

A. Yes, we stuck together, all of us that were there. Family and friends from Kingcome, Turnour Island and Gilford.



Alert Bay, about 1897
BC Archives UPN 0103

Of course they are all dead now.

Q. Which language did you speak upon your arrival to the school?

A. Kwakwala. You kwakwala for the first two years at least. That is why I always got into trouble. Every time they caught us, we would be whipped. We had to stay in for the weekend; we did not get to spend our allowance. Allowance was not much in them days, ten or fifteen cents. We would have to stay in and scrub the floors and stairs. There is many stairs in that building. One of these days, I am going to count how many stairs there are from the basement to the top floor.

Q. If you were from a distant Village, did your parents/family visit you often?

A. Not every weekend. My Mom would come one week and my Aunt would come the next week, bring us goodies, which was good because we were starving in there.

Q. What would happen if you were caught speaking your language in school?

A. We got trouble all the time! That language. There was a staff member waiting always, to catch you. But, we used to go and enter that field where there was a whole bunch of us; I knew many guys in

there from all over the place. We all get together and we go to the bushes at the end of the field and talk our language. I remember nine years old when I first went to school, my Aunty told me real name is "Allen_____" (Allen was used to his nickname), and that is all I remember. They ask me when I go to school; the kids start asking me "where you come from?" "Allen_____", "How old are you?", "Allen_____". I answer just like that; I don't know English at all. They would ask, "Who's your Mom and Dad?" "Allen_____". I remember saying that. We find out we get in trouble if we are caught (speaking Kwak'wala). We get whippings and we stay in for Saturday, we are not allowed to go out.

Q. Many people talk about the food, or lack of it. What are your comments regarding the food and how it was prepared?

A. The Residential School was ugly that time. We only get a little bit of food and it was always bad. We were looking forward to a biscuit. We would get one biscuit (pilot) everyday at three o'clock in the afternoon. That was something boy. I was looking forward to that cod liver oil too.

Q. You were looking forward to it?

A. Sure! Because we were hungry. There was a big pot sitting there and I take a spoon and take about four or five spoons of that cod-liver oil. Yes, you were hungry all the time. I remember once, somebody's Mom and Dad brought a large amount of ooligans. We were told that we were going to eat them on a weekend. Boy O' boy did I look forward to them ooligans! I kept thinking, "fried ooligans!" Then when the time came for our feed of ooligans, they just put the whole works of them in a big pot and boiled them! Gee, that was terrible.

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The Attempted Destruction*Continued from page 15***Q. Ok, is there anything that you would like to add?****A.** I think that's it, for now.**Thank you very much for taking the time to answer my questions and for allowing your story to be printed in our newsletter. Gilakas'la****Q. What year did you attend St. Michaels School?****A.** 1949**Q. How old were you when you first arrived?****A.** Five years old. I don't remember anything about when I first attended but I remember being three years old in Gilford. It was good times then.**Q. Who was the Principal when you were a resident of the School?****A.** His name was Mr. Dalton, no wait now, it was Mr. Todd. Mr. Todd was the Indian Agent at that time too.**Q. How many years did you attend?****A.** Nine years.**Q. Were there other members of your family there at the same as you?****A.** Yes (remember to refer back to the latter part of the paper!)**Q. Were you able to comfort each other?****A.** No. Like, I had a younger brother that I didn't even know he was in there, I had two younger brothers and one older brother in there at the same time as me. We all didn't know each other. We were all on different levels. There was a dorm on the bottom floor, and I was on the middle floor and then a third on the top floor. We were all on different floors.**Q. Was it like three different worlds?****A.** Yes, three different worlds. And I had

two sisters, I would be a foot away from them and I couldn't even say hello to them. We were back to back on the table (dining room). The girls were on one side of the room and the boys were on the other side. We weren't allowed to talk to the girls at all.

Q. That must have been hard.**A.** I guess we just got used to it**Q. Which language did you speak upon your arrival to St. Mike's?****A.** Kwak'wala. We used to wonder, later, *how did we pass? We just got pushed to the next grade whether we passed or not they had to make room for the next batch coming in.***Q. Were you able to visit your family on weekends?****A.** They visited us maybe twice a year. Sometimes my Sister would take me out on the weekends, but my parents only visited (From home village) twice a year. We had to be signed out too.**Q. What is your best memory of St. Mike's?****A.** I do not even know if there was any. No good memories to tell you the truth. There are little things that I won't mention because they weren't good enough to talk about.**Q. What is your worst memory?****A.** A lot of it is way after the fact when you realize what you went through. Lots of loneliness, hunger. Yes, loneliness and hunger that was the worse for me.**Q. Do you think your parents had any idea what you and your brothers and sisters were going through?****A.** No.**Q. Is there anything that you would like to add to this interview?****A.** I don't think so.**Thank you very much for your time****and honesty. Gilakas'la.****Q. What year did you attend St. Michael's Residential School?****A.** 1972**Q. How many years were you there?****A.** Six months**Q. Were there any other family members there the same time as you?****A.** Three other sisters and many other relatives.**Q. What were some of the rules that really stand out in your mind?****A.** It is so hard to remember because I did not like being in the residential school. (Remembers) Just doing our chores.**Q. What were your chores?****A.** Cleaning up, cleaning up the bathroom, taking the garbage out. Like I said, I don't really remember very much about that place because I chose to block it out. I don't recall doing the stairs or anything.**Q. Were you and your siblings and cousins allowed to speak to one another and comfort each other?****A.** No, because we were all in different sections. All the different age groups were in different dorms. There were four age groups, four dormitories. My youngest sister was the youngest that was in that Residential School. She was only four and I remember her taking the garbage out. I remember my oldest sister going to help her after she had finished her chores, she (the eldest) had to go help her lift the garbage bin lid because it was too high and ya, I don't remember what *my* chores were but I didn't like what my sisters went through.**Q. Children often have ways of getting around rules, did you or anyone***Continued on page 17*

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you knew?

A. Ok, how I remember bending the rules was, ok, well we were allowed to taken out during the weekends, but we didn't so I had friends who would forge letters from my Mom to take me out on weekends. And my sisters were in there during that time.

Q. That sort of answers my next question, how often were you allowed to go home?

A. I don't remember ever being allowed to go home. It was my cousins and friends who helped me get out of there.

Q. What is your best memory of St. Mike's?

A. Having, on the weeks when I was

there was having dances and being connected with the boys and girls up on the top floor. Just being connected with the whole school. There were no treats, just dancing from what I can remember.

Q. What is your worse memory of St. Mike's?

A. Going down for breakfast and having my older sister not show up and to find out that she was in the infirmary. I wondered what the infirmary was all about then I found out it was the sick room. My (eldest) sister was ganged up on by three or four girls late in the night. That was the worse thing I remember about being in the residential, from there I don't really remember too much because I blocked the time I spent in there. I was so closed in that it was hard for anybody to get close to me. I shut down and that's where my memory loss is because

I didn't let anyone or anything get close to me.

Q. Would you like to add anything to this interview?

A. No, like I said I blocked everything out.


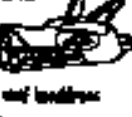
Now then, I would just like to thank you very much. I could tell this was difficult for you, Gilakas'la.

It is very difficult to wrap up an article such as this because there is so much more to be said on this topic. The effect of the infamous Potlatch prohibition along with the Residential School system goes much deeper than this. Because our culture was an oral culture, the early books written were by Non-Natives and that was the only history known to the world.



Photograph Courtesy of British Columbia Archives PN HP99715

KWAK'WALA ALPHABET

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<div data-bbox="284 525 446 703"> <p>g goggo goose</p>  </div>	<div data-bbox="462 525 625 703"> <p>b bwat bat</p>  </div>	<div data-bbox="641 525 803 703"> <p>d d'ogya dog</p>  </div>	<div data-bbox="820 525 982 703"> <p>dt dt'ok tree</p>  </div>	<div data-bbox="998 525 1161 703"> <p>dz dz'ogya jeans</p>  </div>	<div data-bbox="1177 525 1339 703"> <p>e egas eggs</p>  </div>
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U'mista Cultural Society

Canadian/ International Membership Form

Do you have Band Membership or can you trace ancestry to a Band member of Kwakwaka'wakw? Yes / No

If yes, give Band Name and Number: *(**If Band Number completed, G.S.T. is not applicable**)*

INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP

<input type="checkbox"/> Canadian Annual Fee: \$15.00 (Add \$1.05) GST if applicable	<input type="checkbox"/> International Annual Fee: \$26.75 (GST included)
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Name: _____	D.O.B. _____/_____/_____
Name: _____	D.O.B. _____/_____/_____
Name: _____	D.O.B. _____/_____/_____
Name: _____	D.O.B. _____/_____/_____
Name: _____	D.O.B. _____/_____/_____

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