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# HAIDA LAAS

News from the Council of the Haida Nation

July 2017



Photo: Haida Laas/Ileah Martice

## Totem in the Forest Raising a GyaaGang

See page 10 for full story



## HAIDA LAAS

NEWSLETTER of the COUNCIL OF THE HAIDA NATION

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# DOING THEIR PART



Haida Gwaii Museum  
at Kay Llnagaay

## **Resolution 2014-24** **Plastic Bags Ban on Haida Gwaii**

In 2014, local youth put forward a resolution to ban plastic bags in Old Massett and Skidegate. Gina Daahlgahl Naay (*Trading House*) is proud to enact this resolution and uphold the integrity of our young leaders.

Be It Resolved that the Council of the Haida Nation pass a resolution to ban the use of plastic bags in the communities of Old Massett and Skidegate and encourage the Villages of Masset, Port Clements, Queen Charlotte and Areas D & E to refuse the use of plastic bags.

This year, Gina Daahlgahl Naay is transitioning to recycled paper bags only. We are doing our part to eliminate harmful, disposable plastics from our environment. Along with this transition, we will be charging for all disposable bags and encourage you to reuse, recycle, or compost your paper bag.



Reusable  
Recyclable  
Compostable

Gina Daahlgahl Naay, Haida Gwaii Museum gift shop is enacting a resolution put forward by youth at the 2014 Haida Gwaii Youth Assembly to ban the use of plastic bags by businesses in Gaaw and HlGaagilda.

## **Xaad kil sk'adee iitl.ga hl tlaayd**

In March 2017, Haida Laas published a prayer that was recited by students of Chief Matthews School at the Winter Seasonal Session. At that time, we inadvertently published a mis-translation. Following is the corrected version.

**Saa 'laana, saa nang iitl'ssgidaas.**

Our father, who art in heaven.

**"Wiid uu ginn t'alang halaang.**

We are gathered here for a purpose.

**Xaad kil sk'adee iitl.ga hl tlaayd.**

Help us learn Haida language.

**litl'guudangee iitl'aangaa tlaatsgadaauu.**

Give us strong minds.

**Daa.uu iitl' hl ahl gatsa'ang.**

You are watching over us.

**Dang aa.uu hl kil 'laagang.**

I thank you. Amen.

# Coming and going

The Council of the Haida Nation keeps growing in number and capacity. The Secretariat of the Haida Nation Hiring Committee has been busy filling positions with new staff for various departments within the organization.

## Recent hires are:

- Bert Wilson - Field Technician, Haida Fisheries
- Jesse Williams - CFI Survey Crew, Heritage and Natural Resources
- Grant Moody - Dockside Monitor, Haida Fisheries
- Christina Moody - Custodian, HIGaagilda Office
- Daniel McNeill - Shellfish Biologist, Haida Fisheries
- Tanisha Salomons - Haida Gwaii Management Council Research Writer
- Ileah Mattice - Social Media Coordinator, Communications
- Karen Fladmark - Administrative Assistant, Communications
- Valerie Thiessen - Receptionist, Gaaw Office

Terri Bell is working with the Haida Oceans Technical Team as part of her placement with the Aboriginal Youth Internship Program.

The organization has again taken on Summer Students this year. Dion Lewis will be working with the Watchmen, Darius Alfred is taking on Internet Technologies, and, Angel Brown is working in Finance.

Yaahl Iiwaans *Brad Setso*, a 25-year veteran of CHN and the Fisheries Program Manager is moving on having taken on the manager's position at HaiCo's Haida Wild.



Alfred Davidson



Photo: Haida Laas/Tanisha Salomons

Nang Jingwas *Russ Jones* handing out CHN bursaries to some of the lucky recipients! l-r: Darrian Pollard, Annika Martynuik, Mary Williams and Crystal Young.

## Smart kids

Haida high school graduates going onto post-secondary education were given an opportunity to apply for the first ever bursaries being offered by the Council of the Haida Nation.

At the Haida Nation's Spring Session kil tlaats 'ga *Peter Lantin* announced an annual \$12,000 bursary program for students entering post-secondary school. Presenting the bursaries to students was hereditary leader Nang Jingwas *Russ Jones*.

CHN wishes all the students the best of luck with their studies and hopes to see their return to Haida Gwaii soon.

The bursaries covered the fields of stewardship, trades, information technology and communications, and governance and administration.

Ten recipients of the inaugural Council of the Haida Nation scholarship bursaries are:

- Dashaun Abrahams-Brown
- Koya Ignas
- Annika Ingram
- Annika Martynuik
- Calli McNeill
- Darrian Pollard
- Teanna Russ
- Ava-Beth Williams
- Mary Williams
- Crystal Young



## Haida Art Authenticity Certificate

**If you're a new Haida artist beginning to market and sell your work, you may not be aware that you can register with the CHN and receive a Haida Art Authenticity Certificate.** The Certificate along with an assortment of CHN labels and tags are available from the CHN offices in *Gaaw Old Massett* and *HIGaagilda Skidegate*. All of these items can help you in the following ways:

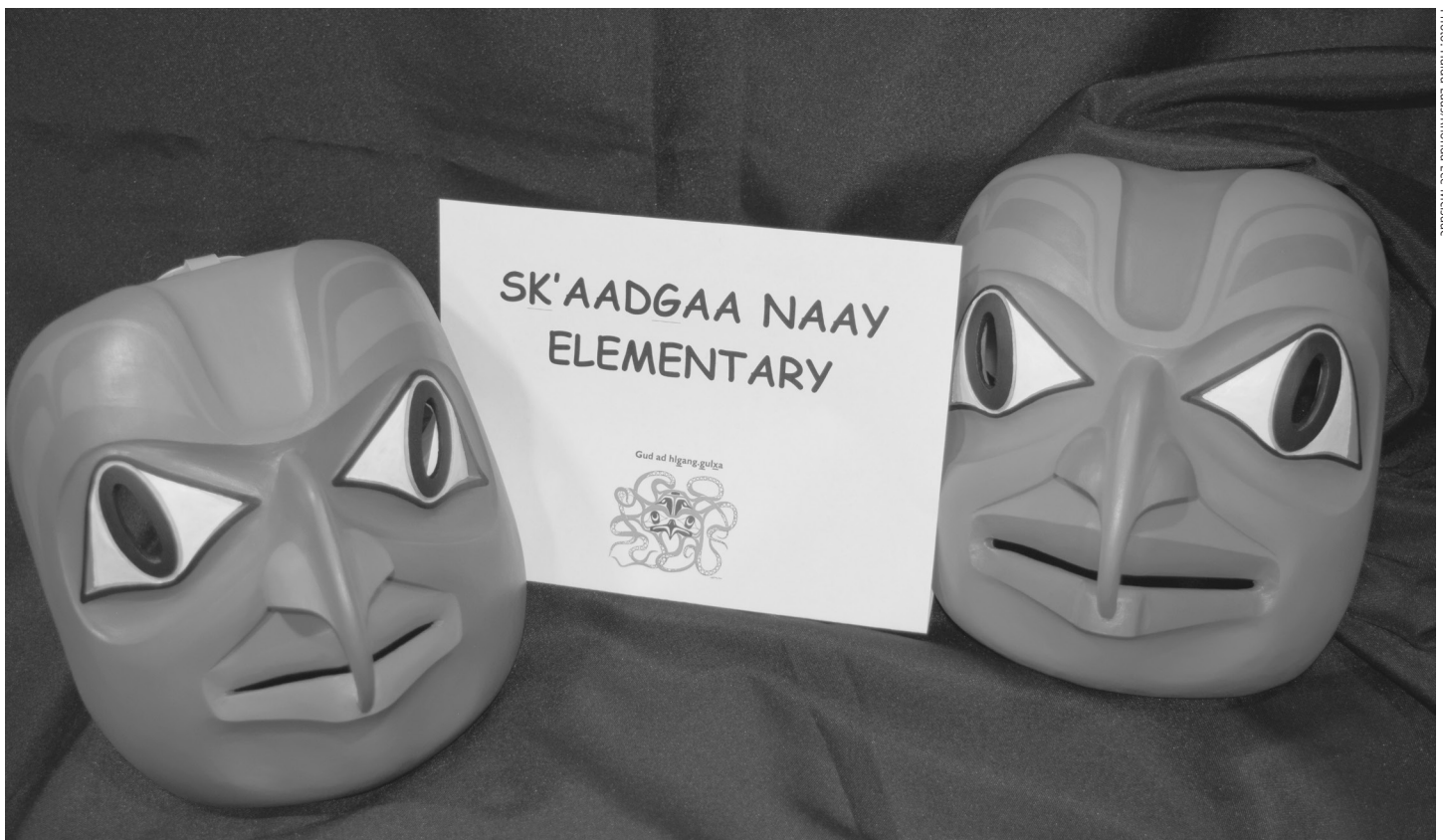
The Certificate confirms, to galleries, collectors and other buyers, that you are an artist of Haida ancestry. It also bears a personal registration number, which the CHN assigns to individual registrants.

The number can be written on the labels and tags, which artists then attach to their works; this confirms to the buyer that the artist is Haida and registered with the Council of the Haida Nation.

This system was developed to protect Haida art, artists, and buyers from the practice by some non-Haida artists, galleries and organizations of marketing and selling works of non-Haida people as Haida art.

Please call the CHN office in *HIGaagilda* at 205.559.4468 or the CHN office in *Gaaw* 250.626.5252 if you're interested in registering. •





New naaw masks carved by Yahl Aada for Sk'aadgaa Naay Elementary school.

# Gud ad hlgang.gulxa

## Working Together

Naaw are super cool; they have three hearts and eight arms! Two hearts pump blood through gills and the third pumps it through the rest of the body and there are about 300 different types of naaw in the world. They may seem creepy to some with their eight legs and curious looking heads but they play a great game of hide and seek, adapting to their surroundings by changing colour and texture.

This year, teacher Dan Burton and his Grade 5-6 class have been conducting research into these amazing cephalopods in preparation for an event celebrating the creation of two new naaw dance masks made specially for the school by artist Yahl Aadaa *Cori Savard*. A male and female naaw mask took approximately a month each to complete, stated Yahl Aadaa, "That includes the time to let the alder rest and dry before painting". The naaw masks will be brought

to life at Sk'aadgaa Naay on Wednesday June 14 at 1:15 pm.

Students Levi Burton and Teemo Laughlin will dance the two masks to life and they have also been busy making their own dance 'costumes'.

"They are light enough, and durable enough because of the properties of alder, for children to dance" says Yahl Aadaa.

The two boys have been camping as part of a school activity and will be fresh off the land and water when they come back to school and prepare for the debut of the two dance masks, said Jaad Tl'aaw *Paula Varnell*. "I gave them the lyrics before they left," she said, smiling as she imagines the two singing and practicing while camping up coast.

Working with the class on choreography and singing, is resource worker Jaad Tl'aaw. The class will be singing the school anthem

composed by Jisgang *Nika Collison*.

Yahl Aadaa's connection to the masks is more than that of being the artist who created these unique and beautiful masks.

"My personal connection to the masks comes from the coincidence that naaw is one of the crests of the Yahgu'laanaas Raven clan from Daadens, to which I was born into. It is also one of my daughter's crests. [She] will eventually attend Sk'aadgaa Naay and possibly dance one of the masks someday," she states.

The naaw crest came to the school in 2009 during a trip to Jungle Beach which resulted in a vision for former principal Vonnie Hutchingson, who likened the naaw to all children who have and will attend Sk'aadgaa Naay, as being the most intelligent of all the land creatures of Haida Gwaii.

# NATION BUSINESS SPECIAL HOUSE & SEASONAL SESSION

## HAIDA NATION SPECIAL HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY

It was a long time coming but the Special House of Assembly finally took place May 30 and 31 at the Haida Heritage Centre at Kay Llnagaay. The two-day meeting was called to deal specifically with constitutional amendments, the Citizenship Act, and election regulations. Following the Special House, CHN convened its regular Spring Session, June 1 and 2, also held at the centre.

“Citizenship is a fundamental pillar upon which the Haida Nation is built. Who is Haida and what that means, is the core question that the Nation needs to answer, and the answer to that is one that our clans decide,” said kil tlaats ‘gaa, *Peter Lantin*, President of the Haida Nation. The process is not dictated by the CHN but comes out of our hereditary system to which we all belong.”

The establishment of a citizenship act is not a superficial exercise, knowing where all Haida citizens live and the population of the Nation is critical to not only define the Nation but also in negotiations with the Crown. Negotiators bring the weight of the Nation to those tables the president said.

Although some citizens may consider reading through the Citizenship Act again and again to be tedious, those gathered at the Special HoA showed no sign of fatigue and tied into the text discussing all aspects of the legislation. A wide-range of knowledge was brought to bear on the detail and wording, and the debate was equally broad and insightful.

“Language, along with the Constitution and Citizenship Act are the most important pieces of the Haida Nation,” said Hereditary Leader Sdiithldaa *Frank Collison*.

This rigorous process of collective law making continues to refine the act and hone the principles upon which the Nation’s law is based. With the Citizenship Act now adopted the program is gearing up to register citizens and issue citizenship cards. Registration dates

will be announced by the Policy Committee in the near future.

Over the last couple of year’s citizens from around the world have been asking staff about the program. Enquiries are directed to the appropriate clan for discussion about inclusion on their tree. Each clan examines requests following their own internal hereditary and matriarchal processes and the collection of clan trees make up the Hereditary Baseline which is the foundation upon which citizenship in the Nation is based. There are 25 clans and 33 clan trees. Citizens can contact the program by emailing Delavina Lawrence <delavina.lawrence@haidanation.com> or phoning either CHN office. <Gaaw 250 626 5252> <HIGaagilda 250 559 4468> or go to haidanation.ca and click on ‘Citizenship’.

Following on the heels of the citizenship discussion were election regulations. After the 2015 general election, citizens asked the Policy Committee to review the regulations and a revised draft is now going through formal review. The Policy Committee presented changes to citizens at a series of open houses this past Spring, a second review took place at the Special House of Assembly. This August a final round of regional open houses will scrutinize the document before it is presented to the October House of Assembly for adoption. If you would like a copy of the latest draft, comment, or meet about the regulations, please call Brady Yu <250 559 4468> or email

<brady.yu@haidanation.com>.

## COUNCIL OF THE HAIDA NATION SPRING SEASONAL SESSION

### EXECUTIVE REPORT – TITLE CASE

After a short break the Council of the Haida Nation convened the Spring Seasonal

Session. On topic were updates from the Executive, new information on the Title Case, the Heritage Site Management Strategic Plan and committee reports.

The Title Case is making its way through pre-trial meetings with the Crown’s counsel and being overseen by Madame Justice Barbara Fischer. Justice Fischer is managing the workup and will be hearing the case once it goes to trial. The work up is a series of meetings where both parties and judge examine the scope of the case and agree on how to manage the trial prior to setting a trial date. Given the sheer size and complexity of the case, managing all the parts is a fearsome task and once the case hits court the hearing could stretch out over a couple of years. During the Executive report the committee shared more detail and explanation regarding procedural matters and ongoing talks with the Crown.

Reconciliation Committee members includes: Executive members kil tlaats ‘gaa *Peter Lantin*, Ginn waadluu un uula isdaa ayagang *Trevor Russ*, Xylang Jaad Xylaa *Leslie Brown*, Gaagwiis *Jason Alsop*, Gaahlaay, Sdiithldaa, Gidansda, Nang Jingwas, Billy Yovanovich and Ken Rae.

Working in parallel to the case is the realignment of CHN internal processes and staffing to support the case administratively.

“The best thing we can do to support the case and take our arguments forward is to be well organized,” said kil tlaats ‘gaa. “That includes honing our internal consensus-based governance structure to respond quickly to any situation. Once a trial date is set, which we expect to be in the late Fall, our relationship with the Crown will change but before then, we hope Canada can find their way to seriously engage in a reconciliation process – to date, scant progress has been made.”

*Nations Business continued on page 7...*

**Nations Business continued from page 6...**

## OCEAN WAYS

With the announcement of the federal government's \$1.5 billion Oceans Protection Plan in November 2016 and the Oil Tank Moratorium Act in May 2016, steps have been made to keep Haida Gwaii and the coast clear of heavy tanker traffic but kil tlaats 'gaa believes the moratorium may not go far enough.

"What about Liquefied Natural Gas and refined products," he said. "The moratorium does not include LNG, and we were led to believe that refined oil is covered by the moratorium. It's those details that we are addressing now."

Vice-president of the Haida Nation, Ginn waadluu un uula isdaa ayagang *Trevor Russ* has been focussing on the implementation of the Kunst'aa guu – Kunstaayah Reconciliation Protocol over the last few years which continues to throw up challenges as both governments endeavour to make joint management work 'on the ground'. Added to the difficulty is the new Green/NDP minority government. Once the new government is sworn in, the Nation will update them on progress that has been made with the fallen Liberal government and outstanding issues that require immediate attention.

Included in that discussion will be the overcutting of cedar which the CHN is addressing, in part, by meeting with the Chief Forester. The issue is time sensitive and critical to the Nation as any shortfall in cedar for domestic and cultural purposes will have a profound social and economic impact.

"CHN is well aware of the forestry problems and they are a priority issue for council," explained Ginn waadluu un uula isdaa ayagang, "We are seriously engaged with the Province on a number of forestry issues and on cedar in particular."

Also on the Executives work list is the British Columbia Timbers Sales logging around Pure Lake, permitting within the Heritage Sites; hunting regulations, including the length of the season and the number of tags for deer issued to recreational hunters; and the bear hunt. Although only four bears can be hunted each year, CHN

Guardians and provincial Conservation Officers are finding that regulating the hunt is challenging given the reporting system that's in place. Council has prioritized this issue the Vice-president said.

In the works for a couple of years, the Protected Area Strategic Plan was passed by citizens at the session. The plan first drafted in 2014, sets out a comprehensive strategy to manage the Heritage Sites. Places like Duu Guusd on the west coast, Kamdis and Yaaguun Gandlaay in the interior of the Islands, and SGaay Taw Siiwaay K'adjuu. Eleven sites fall under the plan and there are numerous projects in the works – everything from trails to cabins for field crews. A copy of the plan can be picked up at either CHN office.

Nearing the end of the Executive report kil tlaats 'gaa cleared up an issue stemming from an LNG benefit agreement that was published by the provincial government in 2016. The agreement is between the CFN/Great Bear Initiative Society and BC, and implied that the Haida Nation is a signatory to the agreement. Though the Nation is a member of the Coastal First Nation, the Haida Nation did not sign the agreement. In fact, the agreement was amended at a later date to clear up this misunderstanding, though the Gitga'at and Wuikinuxv did ratify the agreement, the CHN did not, Heiltsuk, Kitasoo and Nuxalk also did not sign.

In closing the executive report, the president announced 12, \$1000 student bursaries. "Our interest in supporting Haida students and providing opportunities is real," the president said. The bursaries fall into the areas of Stewardship Land and Water, Trades, Information Technology and Communications, and, Governance and Administration. The bursary winners were announced at the graduation ceremonies of both high schools this past month. "The Nation's government is growing and we require skilled citizens to take on this work and the important work of taking care of our homeland and building an economy on Haida Gwaii," remarked kil tlaats 'gaa.

A final piece of business was carried out just before lunch in a special presentation

to long term staff member, Yaahl Iiwaans *Brad Setso*. Yaahl Iiwaans is leaving CHN after 25 years of service to join Haida Wild as manager. An emotional Yaahl Iiwaans recounted his early days at CHN when it was a much different organization, he said, and spoke to his involvement up to recent years integrating the KKR, Gwaii Haanas Agreement, and SGaan Kinghlas agreement into staff operations.

Reflecting on that growth "it is important to acknowledge how the fisheries program has evolved and grown," he said. He also noted that it is very satisfying to be able to grow into another job "within the Nation's sphere."

## COMMITTEE REPORTS

In Communications, the committee reported that a Haida Gwaii Management Council (HGMC) research/writer position was approved by the Haida Nation and Province. Since reporting to the Seasonal Session that position has been filled by Tanisha Salomons. Ms Salomons will be producing material about the work of the HGMC and Reconciliation table.

In Gaaw, the program hired Ileah Mattice, who is coordinating all social media for the Nation and new Administrative Assistant, Karen Fladmark will be spending the next while tightening up operations and procedures at the CHN office in HIGaagilda.

The committee is also working closely with the Culture and Language Committee to coordinate film, research and culture requests that the Nation receives. The intention is to bring all requests under one umbrella for processing, and policy, forms, and procedures are being developed to process the requests in a timely manner. Associated with the requests coming into the Nation are queries about cultural practices. The committee hopes to set up a fee-for-service agreement with the Haida Gwaii Museum to assist in responding to these requests.

The Tourism Committee has been busy with the season underway and is leading the work on higher level plans, such as a destination management plan focusing on



long term tourism on Haida Gwaii, with the Northern BC Tourism Association. The committee is also looking at orientation for visitors at key entry points to the Islands, specifically about Haida society and culture.

Heritage and Natural Resource Committee met three times in the last quarter. On their agenda is the Cedar Stewardship Area Management Plan which involves getting crews out to inventory cedar stewardship areas. The department is also exploring the idea of cross-training with the field staff from Haida Fisheries, Protected Areas and Marine Use Planning. Staff have also been taking courses on Monumental Cedar Identification; Cultural Feature Certification; Rare Ecosystem Identification and flying drones. The department also supports the Haida Gwaii Management Council and Solutions Table.

The Energy Committee is charging up and planning to get out to the public to discuss the Island Energy Plan. The department will be taking that charge to the Haida Gwaii Youth Assembly coming this September. The committee includes: Stephen Grosse (Chair), Ernest Swanson, David Smith, Ken Rea, Ginaawaan and Gitkinjuuwas; they are supported by staff person Kevin Brown.

Marine Planning continues to work on completing and implementing marine plans for Haida Gwaii, Gwaii Haanas and the SGaan K'inghlas – Bowie Seamount Protected Area. Over the last quarter, a highly technical exercise is in progress to implement the Haida Gwaii Marine Plan, signed in August 2016 with BC. Highlights from the departments progress include their involvement in developing a Marine Protected Area Network for the Northern Shelf Bioregion; participation in the drafting of the Gwaii Haanas Land, Sea, People Plan; and the shipping file which is getting a lot of attention with the Haida Marine Working Group and Haida Oceans Technical Team providing support to CHN's discussions with Canada.

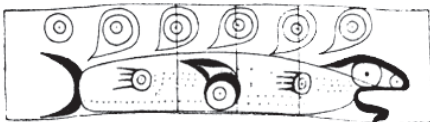


Photo taken in Oliver, BC (l-r): Terri Bell, Amy Simon (grandmother) David Bell (father), Franchesca Bell (sister).

# Swimming with the Sharks

The Council of the Haida Nation Marine Planning Program is excited to introduce their new summer intern.

Tara-Lynn Bell (Terri) will be helping with the program's communications and outreach projects throughout the summer. Terri is an adventurer, university graduate and member of the Osoyoos Indian Band. She grew up in Oliver, BC a small town in the Okanagan and began learning Syilx culture and traditions while attending Sen Pok Chin Elementary school, an independent school located on the Osoyoos reservation. During her undergraduate studies she lived abroad in Australia for a year, studying at the University of Western Australia. Upon completing her undergraduate degree in psychology at the University of British Columbia (Okanagan) she went back home to work at Sen Pok Chin. When Terri finished her placement at the elementary school she embarked on a solo

adventure to Panama. A highlight of that trip was scuba diving with Whitetip reef sharks, an experience which sparked an interest in marine life.

In the fall of 2016 she was accepted into the Aboriginal Youth Internship Program and went to work at the BC Pension Corporation as a Communications Coordinator for nine months. Terri says she is excited to spend the last three months of her internship working with the Haida Nation and experiencing the natural beauty of the islands.







Photo: Haida Laas/Rhonda Lee McIsaac

## The kiss of a hummingbird Grade 5 cedar bark harvesting

Successful cedar harvest meant big smiles and good energy for the next grade five class to get when they make their cedar hats for their graduation ceremony

Heading to the forest for an outing at the end of the school year involves a lot of patience and cooperation to get the job done and that's exactly what the Chief Matthews Xaad Kil Sk'adada Leeygaas, Haida language teacher, K'aayhl'taa Xuhl Rhonda Bell's Grade 5 class pulled off this past spring.

The class has been going into the forest each spring to carry on the tradition of providing ts'uu and Sgaahlan cedar bark for the class of Grade 5's that will follow them. The cedar is used to make woven cedar bark graduation caps.

"Gathering cedar involves patience, responsibility and respect," Kung Jaadee Roberta Kennedy told the students before saying a prayer prior to harvesting cedar. "And it involves fun too," added Aadiitsii Jaad Marni York, Camp Coordinator for the Cultural Feature Identification field crews for the Council of the Haida Nation.

As the class took to the forest, chaperones trailed behind shepherding them along. "Don't run with the axe! Point the knife blade down

as you walk! Let us know where you are going! Share!" they call out.

Cultural Feature Identification Audit Coordinator, Yaahl Xunjuaas Robert Kennedy supervised the stripping of the cedar walking around helping each group of earnest workers. Grunts and loud groans followed him through the forest as small hands pulled bark from the trunks of the trees. The creaking and splitting of fibres crackled as the peeling began – some pulls were short and others long. Many strips of cedar were gathered over a couple of hours and rested on the ground like mushrooms popping up from the K'inaxan moss, and as the bundles grew from one to many, the freshly coiled cedar scented the air.

The best strips of pulled bark came from trees that were tall and straight. "The first pull is important because you can see which way it's going to pull right away," said weaver su lung gugung Sharleen White. Aadiitsii Jaad Marni York shared good humour with the students telling stories and providing lessons

on bush craft; like, how to safely handle small knives and axes and to be mindful of the terrain as you walk through it.

While harvesting, and with some help, the students composed a new song which they sung as they walked from the forest with two big bags of cedar strips. As they walked out to waiting Elders faint grumbling was heard when it came another student's turn to carry the bags of cedar. The young bark strippers took 100 steps before handing the bag off to another carrier. For one student, a skuuntl'a kiss on the cheek from a passing Hldants's iixid or dakdakdiya hummingbird was payment enough.



Tyson Brown





Photo: Haida Laas/Rhonda Lee McIsaac

Shirley Wilson (above) attended at the ceremony in HlGaagilda.

# Dedicated to all

by Rhonda Lee McIsaac

Under the watchful eyes of both raven and eagle, a crowd of Elders, many who are survivors of residential school, joined with families and other intergenerational survivors, youth and visitors to witness the unveiling of the National Indian Residential School Marker.

The National Indian Residential School Commemorative Marker is an initiative of the Assembly of First Nations and the Aboriginal Healing Foundation which placed 139 markers across Canada in former residential schools and other locations.

After a brief introduction, Gitkinjuaas and Isobel Brillon, withdrew a black cloth from a cedar box to reveal the marker. Between heartfelt greetings and reserved silence, the gathering then sat and listened to lessons shared by former students – now survivors – and to community leaders who reflected on

the colonial instrument that sought to remove the “Indian from the child”. The resilience of those survivors was apparent at the gathering and shows in the following generation of community leaders; like those representing the Skidegate Band Council, the Council of the Haida Nation, the Haida Gwaii Museum, the Haida Heritage Centre and Ngystle Society.

The unveiling of the sculpture took place at the Haida Gwaii Museum pole gallery. The artists who created this special work say it is “dedicated to all those who did not make it through, and to those who moved through this difficult part of our collective history on this land ...”. The marker is in the shape of an open hoop and with two braids on the outside of the ring and pictograms surrounding the inside. A wand is also part of the artwork.

The intimate event was hosted by the



Photo: Haida Laas/Rhonda Lee McIsaac

The marker is in the shape of an open hoop and with two braids on the outside of the ring and pictograms surrounding the inside. A wand is also part of the artwork.

Ngystle Society with the support of Gwaii Trust, Gwaalaga Naay, Haida Gwaii Museum, Haida Heritage Centre at Kay Llnagaay, the Skidegate Band Council, and the Council of the Haida Nation and volunteers.





Photo: Haida Laas/Ileah Martice

GyaaGang raised at Tlielang on Aboriginal Day, June 21, 2017.

# Raising a gyaaGang

by Graham Richard

Hundreds of witnesses raised a gyaaGang *monumental pole* in honour of the ancestors who occupied Tlielang *Hiellen Village Site*, thousands-of-years-old Haida village this June 21. The gyaaGang now stands beside Hl'yaalang *Gandlee*, the river that runs beside Taaw *Tow Hill*.

At a carving house behind Thluu *Xaadaa Naay* Canoe People House in Gaaw, eight apprentices and three journeymen helped gyaa k'id IlGaayGa carving expert Kiltghuulans *Christian White* to transform a 62' ts'uu *Red cedar* into a monumental pole. Together they transformed the 600-year-old ts'uu from a raw log harvested from the

centre of Graham Island into the monument that now stands at 52' high. The gyaaGang was carved in the round, an undertaking that took the team six months to complete.

The pole's predecessor stood at Hiellen for a century until 1920, when it was cut down and moved to Kxeen *Prince Rupert*. It was returned to Haida Gwaii in 1970 and stayed in a carving house belonging to gyaa k'id IlGaayGa and kilsdlaay *hereditary leader* Iidansuu *Jim Hart*. While it is not an exact replica, this new pole is a contemporary interpretation of its predecessor.

The crew of carvers arrived at the pole-raising in style, paddling a thluu canoe to

Tlielang as a bear danced on the bow. They were welcomed ashore by singers and drummers led by SaanuGa *Gianna Williard-Flanery*. Language champion and master-of-ceremonies Jaskwaan guided an audience of hundreds through the ceremony that followed.

It takes a community to raise a pole, and many contributors were recognized. Kiltghuulans started by presenting kilsdlaay and veteran-logger Dayaang *Donald Bell* with a stone adz blade from a Māori carver Aotearoa New Zealand, in thanks for coming to Thluu *Xaadaa Naay* to make the first cut six months before. Apprentices and journeymen also made speeches thanking the community





Top: Skil Jaadee White and Kuuyaang Lisa White blessing the pole with eagle down and feathers.

Bottom: Gud Xyee Charlie White of the Tluu Xaadaa Naay Dancers, dancing around the gyaaGang wearing an Eagle mask and regalia.

for providing so much support. Elders from the Skidegate Haida Immersion Program then prayed in Xaayda Kil before women cleansed the pole with cedar boughs and eagle down. The carvers then danced around the pole, tools in hand, in accordance with Haida law. At last the gyaaGang was ready for the hundreds of people who would pull together to lift it into the sky, pulling it up on five lines.

With the gyaaGang towering above the longhouses of Tlielang, Kiltguulans was careful to point to the women for whom all gyaaGang are necessarily dedicated. As a matrilineal society, all property, crests and rights are passed on through women. It is therefore impossible to raise a gyaaGang that does not recognize women as the foundation of society.





Jadxaayyas Fallon Crosby and daughter Bella having fun exploring the different booths on Oceans Day at the Haida Heritage Centre at Kay Lnagaay.

# Tang.Gwan Siiwaay Sii.ngaay Oceans Day

By Terri J. Bell, CHN Marine Planning

On Thursday June 8, the third annual Tang.Gwan Siiwaay Sii.ngaay Haida Gwaii Oceans Day was held at the Haida Heritage Centre at Kay Lnagaay. The event was one small part of World Oceans Day, established by the United Nations to celebrate the importance of the ocean and raise awareness of how to protect it.

“The goal is to bring local people and visitors together to think about why the ocean is important. It doesn’t only have to be from a scientific view, it can be from an emotional point view as well,” Parks Canada Interpretation Coordinator Jody Bissett explains.

This year’s World Oceans Day theme was Our Oceans, Our future with a focus on plastic pollution prevention. The venue was colorfully decorated

with ocean-themed poetry, art and photography. People of all ages could be seen at the event, with over forty people in attendance.

Children were entertained with art and craft stations, where they made buttons and decorated cut-out sea creatures. The event also featured performances by local artist, poets and musicians. Marine biologist Lynn Lee, shared her artwork which brought together art and science; Weweshkiinzhigook Rhonda Lee McIsaac shared her story about her journey to Haida Gwaii from her Anishinabek homeland; and Sean Muise pulled on heartstrings with folk songs inspired by the ocean.

Keeping Haida Gwaii waters clean of garbage and plastic will help keep the ocean healthy for all of us and our children. Consider these three tips to be a part of the change:

1. Swap plastic bags with brown bags or reusable bags! Even when plastic bags are thrown out they can still end up in the ocean via local water ways. The Haida Gwaii co-op stores offer brown bags if you ask the cashier!
2. Avoid plastic bottles and use a reusable container. Plastic is non-biodegradable and breaks down into toxic tiny particles that fish eat. For more information, check out this Haida Laas article about microplastics.
3. Avoid plastic straws! Straws are some of the most common plastics found in the ocean.

Haida Gwaii Oceans Day was sponsored by the Council of the Haida Nation, Gwaii Haanas, and the Haida Heritage Centre at Kay Lnagaay.