

TAAJU

Summer Issue 2021

The language of **My Culture**

By Caitlin O'Shea

ALSO INSIDE

Journey to Tlingit Land by Joan Jack

Aá Tlén Shaa by Ben Louter

The Starling Line by Bryan Jack



TAKU RIVER TLINGIT
First Nation



T'aakú Téix'i The Heart of the Taku

Contributors to this publication include: TRTFN staff and members of the Health and Social Department Youth Program. Its aim is to showcase the amazing work of our TRTFN staff and share stories and knowledge within our community. We invite you to email us your comments, questions and things that you would like to see added in each issue (hss.media@trtfn.gov.ca).

Editorial Note: We hope you enjoy this summer edition of the TRTFN Taaku Newsletter. With each issue we invite you, our community members, to share your feedback, offer ideas and content you wish to see, and share this publication with your family and friends. Our goal is to share positive stories, learn about each other and bring together a sense of connection.

Please visit our website at www.trtfn.com for more information about TRTFN, and to download this issue and other issues to read and share virtually.

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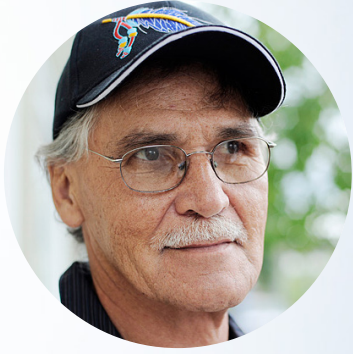
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JOHN WARD

TRTFN SPOKESPERSON

The Taku River Tlingit First Nation is a strong Nation. We have overcome so much as a people and we are here. We work daily to accomplish needs of the collective and the individual, and I am proud of the work that we have accomplished, no matter the struggles.

We are not enemies. We are family. We are a strong, resilient, amazing people. We need to build capacity in our people, to help them improve and realize their amazing skills so they can feel good about themselves and find purpose.

There is a light that shines out of all of us. Individual sparks of love, kindness, creativity and passion. When we pull our strengths and our unique abilities together, our lights bind together to create a beacon that will guide our people to remembering how wonderful and capable we are.



If you would like to speak to your Spokesperson John Ward please contact Dana Mills at **(250-651-7695 ext 108)** and we will help you set a time to meet and ask questions with him at the Drop-in center.



RESTORATION

Charles Pugh (CAO)

This Taaku magazine is a way to share stories and connect with community. When you bring your stories to light, others can hold space for you, to share those stories and get to know you better, while learning about your journey, what you've been through and how you view the world. We learn to hold space for each other and that communion is sacred.

This Nation is filled with brilliant and talented people, Elders and youth alike. People here have experienced difficult lives and they have overcome. There are survivors here and trailblazers. Despite the rocky roads traveled, you are here. The individual stories of the Tlingit people and those passed on by their ancestors can each produce volumes of an encyclopedia that yearn to be explored.


About 35 years ago I went on a canoe trip with a man. We talked about many things in his life. Among other things, he spoke about building a log cabin with his wife. He wasn't very old. He rolled up his sleeves one day on the trip and there was a tattoo that said "Saigon" on his arm. I was intrigued. I asked him, "Did you go to Vietnam?" He said, "Oh, yes. I don't talk about it because people don't want to hear about it."

I was so shocked. Here I was with this person and he had this five-year chapter of his life that he never shared with anyone. When it comes to trauma, I know people don't (or sometimes can't) share the details of their story. But on that day, I was so eager to hear his story I said, "I want to know everything, please tell me your story!"

It was a hurtful, horrific story of bravery and injury and all the things that he never told anyone. I think when you can listen to the chapters of people's lives, you find a person, you see the wonderful and powerful things that define who they are, and sometimes even the strength in yourself.

We all have a story. I want to encourage you to share yours. Be heard and be found. Be present in your community as we navigate forward on this powerful Tlingit land. Restoration.

Much appreciated, Charles



My vision for my time here can be summarized in one word—restoration. Restoring the Tlingit Nation and having the Tlingit people chart their destiny for their traditional territory. To do this, we need to assert self-governance in a way that is respectful to all Nations that share this traditional territory.





LATERAL KINDNESS

Charmaine Thom TRTFN Lands & Resources Manager

The Lands Department has been busy and our spring field season is well underway! Some of the projects we have initiated for this season include archeological site assessments such as an ambitious collaborative ice-patch project, and a Nakina hike trail that our Land Guardians are participating in with RELAW, Children of the Taku and Taku Atlin Conservancy.

Our fisheries program has started with a TRT staff now at Canyon Island, and water monitoring at Tulsequah and the placer areas is ongoing.

We are also undertaking a major reclamation

project at Otter Creek and participating in Tulsequah mine reclamation planning. The Lands Department has also conducted extensive strategic planning as a department. Our spring was very full and packed with important work.

I was very excited that my team undertook a Lateral Kindness workshop this spring. This was a two-day course in April, followed up by a three-day course in May. This training taught us how to recognize lateral and emotional violence and gave us tools to respond when we encounter it.

It taught us how to better communicate and

We must all do the work to get where we want to be.

collaborate within our department and our community.

This training encouraged our team to step forward and become "lateral kindness warriors." We learned to support other people who may be experiencing lateral violence at work, or at home. It showed us that we have a responsibility to support the people that need to be supported.

It helped us better identify when and how to stand up for something, or someone, not just be a bystander and allow things to happen. This takes strength and courage. Many of us needed guidance on how to speak up and be supportive of others in time of need. We

all have a responsibility to make our world better. This workshop was a great first step to make things better for our TRTFN citizens, and the people who live and work with us.

Our land is our future. When there are disagreements within our community, it is important that we know how to engage each other and address these differences with kindness and strength. I really believe that we all could benefit from this workshop in all TRTFN departments and in our community.

We all must do the work to get where we want to be. Most importantly, we need to move together and help each other if we want to arrive there to enjoy it.





CELEBRATION OF FAMILY

Louise Gordon Governance Manager

We are working on finalizing the Comprehensive Community Planning Process (CCP). It is an important work, one that encourages our community members to be involved in creating a plan for themselves, that our Nation will begin to implement going forward. We will weave their ideas into a strategic plan that will provide the foundation for our negotiations for our self-government.

Our Celebration of Family was such a beautiful event. It embodied the essence of what our vision is for our Nation. The sound of the laughter of our children, our mothers, fathers and our Elders, sitting around a fire, together supporting each other, sharing traditional gifts, blankets and knowledge, and wrapping our families in it. This is what we are made of. This is who we are.

To hear our language spoken by our young people and know it's being taught to our children fills me with a sense of pride. As we move forward, let us embrace the work that is needed to be done. Be a part of the process and let's do this together.

My vision can be clearly understood as a Tlingit traditional hat. Every strand of this hat represents parts of our community. For this hat to look beautiful, everyone must be involved in weaving their strand into this hat. Our children need to be able to pick up this hat when it is their time and it shouldn't be all lopsided.

We want to create something that they can be proud to wear. It should be beautiful and complete and functional and infused with the strength and culture of our people, made by our community.








DROP-IN CENTER

This schedule subject to change. Keep your eyes and ears open about programming changes and additions



			TUESDAY 1	AA @ Tutan Hit 9:45am - 10:45 am
			SUNDAY 6	MONDAY 7
Elder Lunch Around the Fire 🔥 2-4pm @ Smile Point	AA @ Tutan Hit 9:45am - 10:45 am	AA @ Tutan Hit 9:45am - 10:45 am	Memoriam Fire 1-5pm Tutan Hit	
SUNDAY 13	MONDAY 14	TUESDAY 15	AA @ Tutan Hit 9:45am - 10:45 am	
SA week for July - Call Zoya to make Appointment 7900 x 306	National Indigenous Peoples Day - Office Closed Language Intensive course email childrenofthetaku@gmail.com	AA @ Tutan Hit 9:45am - 10:45 am	AA @ Tutan Hit 9:45am - 10:45 am	
SUNDAY 27	MONDAY 28	TUESDAY 29	AA @ Tutan Hit 9:45am - 10:45 am	
Svenja in Atlin	Svenja in Atlin	Svenja in Atlin	Svenja in Atlin	

JUNE 2021

Tutan Hit Drop in 1-4 pm daily

Everyday

Phone, Internet Café, TV, Exercise Equipment
Snacks & Tea/Coffee, Loaner Equipment (Basketball, Frisbee, slackline etc.)



WEDNESDAY 2	THURSDAY 3	FRIDAY 4	SATURDAY 5
Community Gardening 10am @ Greenhouse 	Parenting Group 10:30-12:00pm @ Tutan Hit AA @ Tutan Hit 4-5pm	Animal Points Counts with Ryan 9am Community BBQ - 12pm 5 Mile Point 	
WEDNESDAY 9	THURSDAY 10	FRIDAY 11	SATURDAY 12
Community Gardening 10am @ Greenhouse 	Parenting Group 10:30-12:00pm @ Tutan Hit AA @ Tutan Hit 4-5pm	Pay Day - Office Closed	
WEDNESDAY 16	THURSDAY 17	FRIDAY 18	SATURDAY 19
Community Gardening 10am @ Greenhouse   Osprey Survey with Land Guardians - call 7695 x 104 to sign up	Parenting Group 10:30-12:00pm @ Tutan Hit AA @ Tutan Hit 4-5pm	Animal Points Counts with Ryan 9am	
WEDNESDAY 23	THURSDAY 24	FRIDAY 25	SATURDAY 26
Community Gardening 10am @ Greenhouse 	AA @ Tutan Hit 4-5pm Safer Partying with Byte call 7695 x 104 to sign up	Pay Day - Office Closed	
WEDNESDAY 30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drop-in @ Tutan Hit 1-4pm - Monday to Friday • Culture Center Open by Appointment - Call 7837 • Carving @ Carving Shed 1-5pm, 7-9pm - Monday to Friday • Van Service from 5-Mile to Town - Call 7900 x 310 • Van Service to Whitehorse Pay Day Fridays - Call 7900 x 310 		
Community Gardening 10am @ Greenhouse 			





CHILDREN OF THE TAKU

Chantelle Schultz Taku River Tlingit First Nation Lead Negotiator

Many Tlingits grew up hearing words of our ancestral language from our Elders and felt deep despair that the link had been broken by colonizing abuse that meant no new language speakers emerged after residential schools. Language loss has always felt inescapable, as though some part of one's spirit has been torn off.

The grief becomes built into who we are as a people and a community. As the Elders and the language faded from the Taku River Tlingit people, we began to accept this as an unavoidable fact. This spring, I witnessed the resurgence of hope

in a way that forcefully swept my spirit into joyful celebration of true reclamation and reconciliation. Children of the Taku had a graduation of 12 students who proudly stood in front of their closest family members to share their past year of dedicated hard work at reclaiming their mother tongue.

Through weeks of studying and classroom teaching, the students told stories in Tlingit in the old way. Using their bodies and motions as props, with a flair for elaborate movements to accentuate their stories, the students took the viewers on a journey back to the history of our most ancient lessons.

This kind of healing comes from within our communities, from the young generations who refused to let language extinction become their birthright.

When Children of the Taku was invited to a Story-Telling Gathering for the inland Tlingit Dahk Ka Nation Rebuilding event on May 14 in Carcross, they took the collective breath away from the avid listeners in the beautiful Learning Centre.

In person and online, Tlingits from all three inland communities, and students as far away as Alaska, tuned in to hear story telling. The small group of six students from Children of the Taku stole the show as they listened intently to our remaining fluent elders speak in Tlingit. And the new students, many of whom have less than three years experience learning Tlingit,

were able to follow along and laugh with our speaking Elders. When the students told their own stories, it was the first time in generations that young people from our Nations were able to lead with our own language. Hearing the stories come to life in the words of our ancestors, many in the room hefted the weight of their own grief and loss from the broken chain of cultural transference that was forced upon us all.

For many, the language of our mothers cannot be given back to us. The pain was palpable for those Elders who bravely spoke of that vulnerable hurt. But students from Children of the Taku gave us a balm

for our aching spirits, a sense of hope, and, finally, a recognition of the true meaning of reconciliation and revitalization. This kind of healing comes from within our communities, from the young generations who refused to let language extinction become their birthright.

As their stories and words called the ancestors down to sit with us, the hope for our future became a reality. We are walking forward with our language back in the lives and mouths of our young ones. We are not without

hope after all. This is only the beginning of a new time for the inland Tlingit, a new way to replenish our lonely spirits with medicine that we once began to despair of ever gifting back to our babies.

Gunalcheesh to the brave and strong new speakers who are leading us down the journey of revitalization with integrity and honor. Our ancestors are singing in joy with us.





O&M and CAPITAL

Andy Carlick & Moses Track

We have lots on the go! So much to let you know about and many exciting new developments in our departments.

We have four houses that are ready for construction this year. A 1-bedroom, two 2-bedroom houses and a 3-bedroom house. We are working with fisheries in the lands departments, and building a two-story space for fisheries storage and offices.

Our youth continue to apprentice with us. Jaden Scout Williams and Brandon Williams are working full-time through our youth apprentice program, which is funded by CMHC. We were able to complete the renovation of the safe house and it is currently being occupied by one of our young families.

Lets Support each other, know that we are here to help

We have had a few difficulties. Our sand shed caved in this year and we are dealing with that. As the snow began to melt in the spring, we experienced flood in several locations at Five Mile and in town. This past winter showed us 118 per cent above normal snowfall, so twice the amount it had ever snowed in 15 years. Lots of water to deal with in the warmer months.

In May, our INAC funders came by to assess our community buildings. Radloff & Associates did an extensive report on all our housing inspections. This information will give us a good idea of what needs

to be prioritized going forward. We will be able to accurately define the needs for each building and assets that we are responsible for.

Our water treatment plants will be getting an upgrade and revamp this season. We are building a new sewage lagoon that will serve the whole town and Five Mile residents this year. Along with continued Fire Smart work, we will improve the areas around our residences for the upcoming seasons. We will be purchasing a mobile trailer for our Emergency Support Services this summer. This mobile trailer will serve our community in a crisis to store supplies and operate emergency management in a designated safe zone. We are calling for volunteers to serve as emergency personnel. We will provide training.

Our teams here at O&M and Capital are working to support you, meet your individual needs and to achieve the goals of our community. We ask that you do your part to help us, by keeping communication open regarding your assets and any maintenance you see that's needed. Let us know what we can do to help you. Our doors are open and we are here to listen.

This summer, we invite youth that are interested to chat with us. If you need a summer job, or are interested in learning a new skill, we have opportunities that may interest you.

Our dream is to see a big house one day. It's a dream that many of us in this Nation share. We encourage you to share your dreams with us, so we can do our part to bring them to the table and make them a reality. Let's all support each other. Know that we are here to help where and when we can. Our community is a place we are proud to call home.



COMMUNITY HEALTH REPRESENTATIVE

ROGER THORLAKSON

“You cannot grab what is in front of you, if you are hanging on to what is behind you.”

We continue to provide a service that acknowledges and meets your individual and family needs. Please contact us for more information regarding the following services and events for the coming months of summer.

Diabetes Awareness and prevention meetings
Small changes lead to big results. If you've been diagnosed with prediabetes, know that small changes to your lifestyle will lower your risk. Find out more about this meeting.

Mobility aids for those in need

Elders sharing knowledge
Sit and share your stories and knowledge around the fire. Listen to the Elders and spend time together. Times and locations will be posted.

Naloxone training
Naloxone can save a life. Learn more about this at this easy workshop. Contact CHR for scheduling.

Walking Club Starting the end of May

HAVE YOU THOUGHT ABOUT WRITING A WILL?

A last will and testament is beneficial to anyone who wishes to dictate how their assets will be distributed after they pass away instead of leaving it up to the court.

You should consider a Last Will In Testament if you:

- ◆ Get married, have children or separate from a spouse
- ◆ Have monetary assets, such as investments or savings you wish distribute to family or friends
- ◆ Own property or a business

Please Contact Community Health Representative at
250 651 7900 ext 301
hss.chr@gov.trtfn.com

DO You or Someone You Know Have A CRIMINAL RECORD?

Need help getting a RECORD SUSPENSION?

All information will be kept
Private & Confidential

The Community Health Representative Will help you understand the Process of getting a record suspension



The Language OF MY CULTURE

Caitlin O'Shea

I never expected to come so far with my language so quickly. I didn't grow up in Atlin. I didn't know my background, or my culture growing up, so coming up here and getting involved means a lot to me.

My Grandma attended residential school and she shared a few stories with me. One of them was of a brother who was with her at the school. In class one day, he couldn't understand what the teacher was saying in English, so my grandma translated it for him. She was severely reprimanded for it. I felt the pain of this story when she told me. It is so hard to express the sadness and anger that I feel for the children who experienced that and so much more.

My time learning my language with Children of the Taku was so healing for me. I didn't know how much it would ground me. It created in me a whole new sense. Now I can look at the world through a Tlingit lens. This whole new realm allows me to remember who we are. Being able to ground ourselves within our language.

We would play bingo with my grandma often, and she would tell me to say, "show me the money" in Tlingit. Learning my language is a purpose fulfilled, not just for my grandmother or grandfather, but for our ancestors. All who have gone before us. We connect to them through the language.

In the classroom, the methodology that the Children of the Taku are using, they are very protective of us, of their students. They are very supportive. You could be going through all the trials and tribulations of your life and it gets left at the door of the language class. You are in focus and having a great time. There is no correction and there is no English spoken in class. You learn as a child would, over and over, until you get it yourself. It's an incredible experience.

The time commitment was hard at times, but no matter what—rain, sleet, sun, wind—you got to class. Susan Carlick and I would cruise on to Whitehorse together to get to class. I always knew I was doing the right thing and that's where I belonged.

The feeling in class among 15 students, some of us know each other well. But when you are together,

there is a feeling of safety. You feel secure and happy and peaceful and whole. It's always a feeling of being in the right place at the right moment. That truly describes what learning my language did for me. We had the best people in K'èdukà Jack, Jenoh Esquiro and Neilatóo.atsien Allan. They are so incredible in the way that they are supportive and make sure that you succeed. To be able to bring that to our community, to see the happiness and wholeness that language brings to our people, would be incredible.

To see the world through a Tlingit lens, the connection between things, like the animal and spirit world.

Graduation was emotional. Mostly because we all got so comfortable with each other and found each other as we found ourselves, coming so far within our language. Through that kind of revitalization, you create a family bond. Knowing we would all be moving forward in our own ways was emotional for me. You could invite three people and I invited my grandma, my daughter, Hannah, and my cousin, Michelle, to be a witness for me.

My grandma said, "Don't forget me k'!" I said, "No, I won't forget you, you are the reason why I'm in language. I did this for us." My revenge for what they did to you in residential school.

We had to pick a story out of a hat. We had to memorize our story and present it on stage at the graduation. It was great! I got through it and felt so wonderful.

Once you embrace your culture, it will take a hold of you and define you. You will thrive and succeed within it.

One of my favorite memories was last September. Shauna Yeomans, Hannah and I decided to check in on Auntie Lorraine Dawson and June Jack one day. We went in. Sh.itixhdu.u is always playing cards. Hannah sat at the table with the two Elders and she said, "Do you know how to play go fish?" Lorraine said, "I can play it in Tlingit!" So they all played Go Fish at the table together in Tlingit.

TRADITIONAL GIFTS



In the olden days, when a baby was born, the whole community celebrated, got together and gave gifts to help the new family get by for the first year. Gifts including firewood, food, blankets, free rides to doctors and much more.

Our community is so special. As we celebrate all these beautiful new babies and families, I do my part and offer the gifts that I can. I created these lovely quilts for the new babies just as my mother did when we were young.



250 651 7664

Contact Joanne for information about medicines





Generations of Builders

We built every one of these houses on this lane here, all the way up to the band office. It's been many, many years now. Almost 50 years have passed. When my kids were young, we would get to work and we would let them help us.

A few weeks ago, Jaden and Brandon, while working on this project, found a piece of cement broken on the foundation. When we had the daycare here, we poured cement and we went and gathered up the boys, who were little babies at the time, and put their hand prints into it.

Years later, these same two little boys whose hand prints were there are working with us on

this building and find the tablet with their hand prints in it.

There is no doubt in any of our minds that we would much rather be out here doing this kind of work than be in an office somewhere. We love the work we do. Rain or shine, it's rewarding and fun.

I love working with my family, especially my grandkids, Jaden and Brandon. Jaden picks up this carpentry work so easily, he's a natural, Brandon is interested in mechanics. Being around them both, working with my sons and my family in this way is the best feeling. Time well spent.

I love working with my family and especially working with my grand kids

What would you like to see for your community?

Something for the youth, a multipurpose building, a skating rink, a pool, floor hockey, a gym. A space dedicated to them for their use and that represents what they need and want to do. We don't seem to have any place that is for them.

I would like to see a hunting camp for them. Years ago, I applied for funding from TAC and got money to create a hunting camp for the youth, but the Nation couldn't agree on the details of it. I returned the money for it. But I think a camp just for them, to experience their first hunt and learn about the land in their own space, is my dream for the youth.

Article Credits: Jaden Scout-Williams, Robert Williams, Phillip Tizya, Phil Williams, Brandon Williams & Michele Dupree



FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION

Robyn Moore, Administrative Assistant/Finance Assistant

The finance office is always a busy place, but it's been a little extra busy the last couple months. At the end of March, I (Robyn) transitioned from the Admin Reception position to Accounts Payable, while Laura moved down to the TFLC. We are both enjoying our new positions.

I attended Yukon University and graduated with a diploma in Business Administration. This program was focused heavily on accounting.

I am excited to be in a position where I am better able to apply my post-secondary education. I enjoy the work I am doing in Accounts Payable.

Finance is taking steps toward moving the accounts payable process from paper to electronic. This will make the process quicker for myself and the managers.

This will also reduce the amount of paper waste. Having invoices and PO's online makes it easier for managers to access and approve them. It also reduces the possibility of having an invoice misplaced or lost.

Laura made great progress in this project before I took over. I look forward to continuing on with it once I am a little more settled in with my role.

**WE WELCOME ALL THE NEWEST
EMPLOYEES TO TRTFN!**







TLINGIT FAMILY LEARNING CENTER

JORGE LLACA BUZNEGO, PHD. Education Manager



We have eight kids full-time! That is a wonderful thing for us to report. We are working at full capacity and we encourage our community to please bring your children and come enjoy the space. We have a lovely staff working for us.

What we hope is to have a language nest that we can develop and have implemented soon. We hope to work with Children of the Taku and find a way to collaborate with them as we plan ahead for this. As summer is here, we will announce our summer camp in July. It will be one week and land-based as much as possible. We will have lots of activities and events planned along with Wayne Carlick, Debra Michel and our staff here at TFLC. We will have land-based learning, games and activities for the children.

The children that come to us each day are provided an amazing breakfast, lunch and snack. Laura L is trained in nutrition for children and we have a specially designed menu to encourage healthy nutrition and eating every day.

Jorge Llaca Buznego

SCHOLARSHIP OPPORTUNITY!

The Taku River Tlingit First Nation (TRTFN) is pleased to announce a new scholarship fund. This funding was secured through the Taku Atlin Conservancy (TAC) and flows thru the TRTFN Lands Department.

Scholarship amount is \$7,500 CDN. Please note that this sum may be split between several applicants.

the fund will consider a wide variety of education and training as eligible including: post secondary education, trades, art, culture, language, and personal development

All enquiries about the Taku Atlin Conservancy Scholarship should be directed to: Name: Susan Thorn, administrative assistant, or Dr. Jorge Llaca, Education Manager Address: 19 Taku Drive, PO Box 203, Atlin, BC V0W 1A0 Phone: 250-651-7739 Email: education@gov.trtfn.com

The children we care for are enjoyable to be around. I took a course recently that I enjoyed. It's called My Plate and it follows the guidelines for healthy nutrition for kids, emphasizing the importance of healthy, balanced nutrition. At meal times, I ask them questions about what's on their plate, teaching them to identify their food and where it comes from. Learning happens all around us, even on our plates.

The children learn about the good vitamins and minerals in what they eat. Teaching happens constantly throughout the day, spontaneously and authentically. Crafts, free play, meal times, gym times, walks and reading times are all moments to learn and laugh and grow.

It takes a whole community to build up a child. It's important that, within our programming, we involve the Elders, language speakers and community members who have things to share.

We have the space at TFLC. We welcome you and your children.

Laura Lubben

LIVING IN THE MOMENT

Shaun O'Shea

Challenges come, that's just life. Maybe bad, maybe good, who knows? Sometimes it seems to come out of nowhere, but all we can do is continue forward. We embrace each challenge, see what door opens and we step through.

I turn 70 in a few months and am thinking back on what brought me here. I've done so many things, been to many places and met so many people. When I was younger, I started working in hotels in Arizona. I was 16. I started out greeting guests and working as a busboy. It was fun. I came from a small farming town in Alberta. One day I jumped in this old car. Three days later, I was in Phoenix, then going through Vegas, looking out at the strip and thinking "Oh WOW, I didn't know that this was what the world was like."

Following the sun, I'd go from Phoenix to Santa Barbara to Seattle. I did that for three years. One fine day, I ran into a guy in a bar and he asked me if I wanted to go to Inuvik. I said ok.

So, Inuvik it was. I headed north. Working with a company for three years. Then one fine day, they shut down. I was out of a job and stranded.

At that time of year, the only way to get out of Inuvik was to fly. As my luck went, CP Air was on strike and, after a few weeks stuck there, I was flat broke.

They finally went off strike and I went to one of the pilots and said, "So how far will \$45 get me?" The pilot said, "Well, it's \$46 to Whitehorse." So I ended in Whitehorse with no

idea what I was going to do next.

I decided to go for broke. I checked into the Yukon Inn. I knew a few guys were staying there under the name of this big company that put its employees up before heading out to work. So I said I was one of the guys and they gave me a room.

That night I sat in the lounge telling one of the guys about it. "I don't know what I'm going to do tomorrow morning when I check out, I owe for this room and my meals."

The next morning, when I got up to check out, I was gearing up for the police to be called in to haul me off to jail. I walked up to the counter and the guy behind the desk looks at me and says, "Sir, your room and your meals are paid for, and here is \$200 to get by for the next four days until they pick you up for work." I was stunned. I asked who, what, why? He said Mr. Harrison of Harrison Mining paid the bill.

I didn't know until later that this Mr. Harrison was sitting behind me with his friend in the lounge the night before while I was telling my sad story. It was a stroke of luck. Sadly, however, the miners unionized. The union took over sometime later and again I was out of work.

Two weeks later I was back in that lounge, wondering what would happen next. And right in there I saw my beautiful wife. We moved and worked in many places in the Yukon, Faro, Alberta and Chilliwack. Now, 48 years later, we are here, still living in the moment.



Aá Tlén Shaa

Benjamin Louter (Heritage)

Every morning as I drive through the village, Aá Tlén Shaa peers down at me from its dominant position in the skyline. Since I first arrived, the majesty of the mountain has consistently overwhelmed me. Just sitting down by the lake looking out at the mountain, in any weather, leaves me feeling as if I'm being charged by a battery. Or, perhaps, energized by a friend is a better analogy.

I've slowly learned to recognize the many moods of the mountain, from the snowless and rocky pinnacles laid bare by the endless July sun, to the imposing crown of ice and snow that are on display in late February. On no two days does it look exactly the same. The evergreen blues and blacks at the base constantly seem to be shifting in tone and texture, and the three distinct pyramid ridges always call my eyes back for one last look. But no matter how hard or long I look, there's always some detail that manages to escape my grasp.

I grew up on Vancouver Island, a child of white settlers, in the unceded traditional territories of the We Wai Kai, Wei Wai Kum and Kwikwaka'wakw First Nations. Massive cedars, deep moss and snow-capped peaks are what I think back on when I reflect on my childhood. But my mind is also filled with images of enormous clearcuts, eroded hillsides, and logging trucks barreling down the highway near my family's home.

Climbing mountains has always provided me with an escape from ordinary reality; get up high enough and eventually the clearcuts, roads and developments disappear into cloud-filled valleys. Internet and cell service grind to a halt. Soon, you're left with only those immovable features that have stood the test of time. The vital essence of life comes back into sharp focus: the next step, breath of air, sip of water, bite of food. The route ahead is all that matters. When I'm up in the mountains I feel so strongly connected to all beings, organic and inorganic. Even the rocks

When I'm up in the mountains I feel so strongly connected to all beings, organic and inorganic.

seem to come alive (which is probably why every surface in my cabin is covered by them!). In those moments it makes perfect sense why so many Indigenous communities call mountains by names that would be given to a relative. When you spend time on the land, driven by your own two feet, you can't help but be a part of it. Inevitably, your sweat, blood and spit mix with the rocky soils.

Once the bitterness of the winter subsided and the days began to lengthen once again, I decided to climb Aá Tlén Shaa with my friend Hannes, who moved to town a few months earlier. Beginning at dawn, we skied across the lake, catching the first glimpses of rosy sunlight on the face of the mountain. By 10 a.m., we were boot-packing up a steep couloir so we could gain access to the 50-degree headwall that leads to the peak. We didn't say a lot, for there isn't much that can be said in such a place. Finally, we emerged from the cauliflower rime

that coats the summit and the Southern Lakes unfolded under our feet.

Standing on top of the mountain, I could see so many landmarks that played a special role in her world; places that continue to be significant to this day. To the south I could see Jánwu X'aat'i (Mountain Goat Island, aka Theresa Island), Dliwoowo Shaa (Mountain that Shines aka Cathedral Mountain) and A Shuyee (Foot of the Glacier aka Llewellyn Inlet).

Every bay, peak, feature and contour of this land has a name, and is known intimately by the Łingit people who have always inhabited this territory. In that sense, I'm not exploring anything; merely respectfully visiting that which has always been known.

MEET our COUNSELOR



KATIE ISRAEL

Do you experience mental health challenges including depression, anxiety, substance use and addiction? Maybe you are at a crossroads and feel stuck? Come and let's join hands in creating new pathways to increase wellness and inner peace.

Jason Williams Fisheries Supervisor



It's been a long winter, I am so happy for summer. The lake has opened up. It's beautiful and warm. We completed our Wilderness First Aid training in April at the Learning Centre and it was quite good. We will be headed out on the land to do work more frequently. I'm looking forward to being on the land I love, surrounded by trees and lake and animals. I enjoy that so much.

Currently we have one of our valued employees, Logan, out at Canyon Island, working on the fish wheels, tagging Salmon and such until late September.

We are working on some exciting projects this season. One I am particularly excited about is the Sonar Project. This project has erected a sonar unit and video camera to determine how and when grayling are moving back and forth between Surprise Lake and upper Pine Creek. This is funded by the Hydro expansion project and the information gathered will be helpful in ensuring that flow control structures at the lake outlet do not interfere with grayling migration.

This land is my home, and I am so happy to be apart of the team that serve and protect it.

For more information on Lands and Fisheries Projects please see our 2020/2021 Newsletter.





SURVIVORS

Wayne Carlick Cultural Coordinator

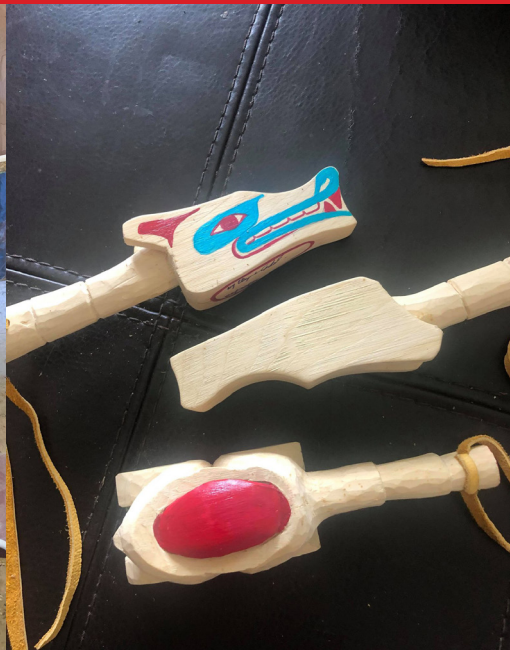
As a Survivor of residential school, it hurts so much as I think about the 215 children found buried in Kamloops and the treatment of Our People for all these generations.

The racism and injustice that have formed the foundation of our systems in Canada and around the world still have deep impacts in our lives today. We see it everywhere. We feel the pain of our ancestors and our own pain daily. We do our best to overcome, but it's difficult when things just don't seem to change.

How do we start to address systemic racism? I believe that educating ourselves and educating others is a start. Let's start talking. Let's start listening to the stories of our people and let's make changes in how we think and see ourselves as Tlingit people. We are a strong people. Let's talk about how to heal together.

The last few weeks, I have been overcome with emotion and taken back to the residential school that I attended as a child. I could feel the pain of loneliness and cultural shame that began for me when I was stolen and taken to that school. I know many of our people are feeling this way right now. Let us lift each other up and show support and kindness where we can.

Our Cultural ceremonies are so powerful, we need to connect to our ancestors and our land to heal from the past. We need to practise our culture and speak our language so we can become stronger people and remember who we are. We need to live our culture so our children can lead the way.



CARVING WORKSHOP with Wayne Carlick at the Center for Culture
For Workshops visit the Center for Culture for info **Monday - Friday 10:30 - 4pm / 5pm - 9pm**

JOURNEY TO THE **TLINGIT** LAND

by Joan Jack



I am from Manitoba. I am Ojibway. My First Nation has about 3,000 people on reserve.

My father bought a grocery store from his father, who was originally from Lebanon. Dad's mother was from England. Back then, I was considered mixed blood as my mother, Stella McKay, is from the Goosehead family in Berens River First Nation in Manitoba and the Peltier family of the Cowessess First Nation in Saskatchewan. Mom also has a wee bit of French and Scottish in her tree.

Even when I was young, I knew who I was. I grew up identifying as Indigenous. In those days, we didn't say Indigenous or First Nations. We said Indian or Métis.

Our community didn't identify me as Indigenous because of our family store. My people there would call us "Little Joe Alix" because he was my grandpa and our community saw us as descendants of a storekeeper. It really wasn't about race. It was about place in our community and our store was our place in the community. I grew up nearest the Métis side of Berens River on a very small island just inside the mouth of the Berens River where our store was located. Mom's family all lived on the Metis side, as First Nations (registered Indians) lived on the north side of the Berens River.

I was born in 1960. For the first 11 years of my life, all we experienced was the little island, our Metis relatives, and my dad and mom's store. In 1971, our community was hit all at once with diesel hydro, ring crank telephones and CBC TV. Until that point, the river was the highway. Everyone had boats and skidoos to get in and out. When the

technology came in, roads began to be constructed and things began to change.

Because of the Indian Act and the sexist discrimination within it, our family line was disenfranchised, so I identified as Métis. My grandparents, George and Mary-Louise McKay, were founding board members of the Manitoba Métis Federation, which is the largest and (in my opinion) strongest Métis organization in Canada. I grew up listening to my grandparents talk about Métis rights and Indigenous pride. What I now know as racism, and internalized racism, I believe began for me when my grandfather would say to me, "Don't you ever forget you're an Indian!" even though they were identifying as Métis. It was all so interesting to me.

Identifying as Indigenous is a really personal process. Apart from the personal decolonization process, the acknowledgement of the existence of legalized racism today in Canada is a really important first truth. Knowing and discovering who you are is a deeply personal and spiritual process—a journey.

I was raised in a family that was very political and business-oriented on both sides of my tree, which means that at the core of my heart lives a passion for life and independent business.

I did my first degree in business education. When I completed that degree, I received an interesting letter. My mom was in Nanaimo on her healing journey. At that time, the Department of Justice Canada sponsored 10 non-status or Métis people per year through law school. My mom saw this Department of Justice poster and she wrote to me and added this sponsorship information in the envelope. She said, "I really think you should be a lawyer." I was like, "Huh." I'd never thought of being a lawyer. So I wrote the LSAT, applied to three law schools and was accepted into all three.

I chatted with Shirley Olson (deceased), who was an Ojibway lawyer from the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs. She said, "Go to UBC, there are lots of First Nation students there." This was in 1988. There were approximately 20 Indigenous students in every year.

Law school doesn't really create a sense of community. It creates competition and frenzy and panic. All you do is survive, go to class, go home, do the reading and do it all over again day after day.

Unlike college or university now, all the exams were 100 per cent. There was no course paper worth 40 per cent of your grade, or participation project for 20 per cent of your overall mark, or extra credit scores. You walk into all of your exams with a 100 per cent pass/fail in two or three hours. The pressure was crazy!

I went to law school with Jenny Jack who is Bryan's cousin. As we neared completing our third year of law school, my phone rang one day. On the other end was one of the top 10 criminal lawyers in Canada. He said "My firm has been watching you and we want to interview you and offer you articles." I was so surprised, but I accepted. However, not before I made it quite clear to him that he would have to pay me for the real reason he called me. I said, "I know I am only here because I am brown, so you're going to have pay for the brown." He laughed and agreed. I'm brown and smart!

During the time I spent at law school, I learned and came to understand a great deal about how the Canadian State had implemented legalized racism that still exists today. I was angry about it.

I don't know if this happens to you, but some moments and memories are frozen in my mind. Sometimes they're negative things. On April 14, 1991, Jenny and I were walking through the law school parking lot. We were talking about life after law school and I said to her, "Jenny, I'm afraid that when the first blond-haired, blue-eyed person says 'go photocopy this for me' in the wrong tone of voice, I am going to tell them off and be fired!" When I said that, she stopped me. She touched my shoulder and looked at me right in my eyes and said, "You should come and work for my people." I said, "You better not be messing with me, Jenny." She looked at me and said, "oh no, Joan, my people will hurt you, but you are strong enough!"

So Jenny set up an interview for me. Maybe others spoke, but I only remember the question Chief Sylvester Jack asked, "What is your view of Aboriginal Law?"

I spoke for what felt like 10 minutes. When I was done speaking, he asked when I could be there. So they hired me on the spot to be the TRTFN Lands and Fisheries Manager. I didn't even know where Atlin was, so I went and bought a map at a gas station. I went home to my mum and said, "I got a job in some place called Atlin, lets find it! Lol! " We opened the map and found it. It was so far out of our realm of reality, being from central Canada. I didn't even know about Whitehorse, Yukon. I looked at the big

lake on the map and I said to my mum, "I'll go if you come with me." My mum is an adventurer and a creative spirit, so she said yes.

At that time, I was a single mum. I had Loni already and I was pregnant with my daughter, Shirley. The TRTFN paid for my move, I put what I had in a van and we set out on our adventure.

We drove into Atlin on April 28, 1991. I will never forget it. Some people can feel the Tlingit land. I am that kind of human being. I feel life. There was a place along the Atlin road where the vibe of the land got so strong that it made me start to cry. I wondered what was going on. I looked to my mom and there were little tears rolling down her face. My mom is tough, from her Indian day school experience and she does not cry often, but she was crying too. I said, "Oh my god Mum what's going on? I'm scared!" She said, "no, no we are coming home, we've been here before I can feel it."

I still love that part in the road. Tlingit land is so powerful. This space on the globe is so powerful. Having been here 30 years now, I believe the Tlingit land chooses who it wants to be here to stay, regardless of race. The land decides if you are just a visitor, or how long you stay. The people who are here, regardless of their political opinions and differences, all love the Tlingit land.

We pulled up to the old band office and Chief Sylvester Jack just happened to be going in the building. It was so sunny; it was truly a beautiful day. I got out of my van and said, "Excuse me!" Chief Sylvester looked at me and asked "Are you Joan Crowe?" I said, "Yeah I am!" I walked toward him with my hand out, ready to shake his hand and he said, "Around here, we don't shake people's hands, we hug 'em." He was such a big, towering man. He gave me this big, welcoming hug.

**This story will continue in the
Taaku Newsletter Fall Issue 2021.**



THE STARTING LINE

Bryan Jack, Watsait, TRTFN Wolf Clan



The scared children were stolen and left at Lower Post Residential School. The school didn't accept them and beat the language out of them. The children came home and their parents wouldn't accept them because they had changed and couldn't speak the language. We were confused. The children forgot their Tlingit names, forgot how strong and beautiful they are. They were left alone. When you get left alone, you are ready, ready to fight your way through it. So, we learned to fight, with the bottle and with our own people.

The residential schools taught us to hide things away, to forget who we are. They drilled in our young minds the words, "You will never become anything." That was our goodbye. I was beaten down and my anger was born in that school. I was just a child. But I am not a child any longer. I know the truth and I want the leaders to know the truth—the Elders, the Clan leaders, our people. I want them to know that we are strong, resilient people and we can overcome and lift each other up and out of the darkness.

We need to get it together.

We need to acknowledge that when our anger, or pain comes up, it is part of the residential school. The system sets us up in a fashion where we end up in-house fighting, beating each other up. And so we are sitting here today, where we really believe our people are the enemy. They are not the enemy.

Jenny Jack said it the best when she said, "You people have to realize we have no enemies among our people. We need to stop fighting and find our pride in ourselves."

I believe our Nation is in a state of confusion. Members are looking for help. Our leaders and managers are confused about what their jobs are. Our people suffer and healing never seems to arrive.

We have ongoing suicide attempts, sexual abuse and alcoholism. We have drugs in our community. We have Elders who are overlooked and not cared for in a proper fashion. I think all of these things need to be addressed and we need to draw a starting line.

The starting line should be discussion and a plan around what our first steps should be. All too often our Nation says, "We want to hire our people, but they don't sign up for the job. Or they are drinking all the time!" We see the reality and we agree it is what is happening, but we never truly go in-depth and say, "Well, maybe they need healing. What does healing look like for each of our members and for our Nation as a whole?"

We need to build pride within our Nation. We need to hire and train and build up our young men and women. We need to invest and help them heal, no matter the cost. Our mandate should never be "Well, it's the best we can do right now."

There has to be a training program that follows up with our hurting people to lift them out of the darkness caused by residential school.

I believe that the Elders can help to draw that starting line. They already have. A constitution was drawn up by our past Elders. My wife, Joan, was hired in 1991. She and Jenny sat with the Elders, both Wolf and Crow, who were interested. For three years she asked them all the

questions needed in clarifying the laws of the Tlingit government. The dos and don'ts for the Nations. The Elders would put their opinions down and knowledge all things related to our functioning as a Nation and community. Antonia Jack and Mrs. Elisabeth Nyman were lead, while Sylvester Jack, Edward, and a host of other Elders and members who are now Elders sat at the table. Even youth were included. They are young men and women now. The rooms were filled with knowledge.

After it was done, there was a celebration. We had a constitution. Not long after, it was shelved and forgotten though. It still sits there today. I want it to be opened up and used as a blueprint for a starting line that we need to guide our people forward. We are so deep in the mud that it's hard to move our legs. When you have people who are unhealthy and they are reaching out for help and they get their hands slapped, they don't reach out anymore. They go deeper in hiding and deeper into themselves. Hurt people hurt people.

Our dollars and cents should be used in the way the community truly needs it. We will never know what we truly need if we are top-heavy. Our young people, our Elders and those hurting in our community need a voice. Better yet, they need a space free of the laws that protect the managers, so they can ask for what they need, share painful truths and create the desires that can become part of the starting line.

We need healing. The priorities that should be mandated at the JCM's must include healing, language, land and stories. The heritage is full of Elder stories we have yet to use. Our Elders hold the history; we hold the stories; the stories are where the strength and pride of our community lives. Our culture, our language.

Our leaders should be asked to stand in front of our members and state why they want to become our leaders. I want to become your leader because I am honest, or because I see a better future for our children. I want to become your leader because I am a mom and I see a better future for my child, or something pertaining to the goodness of all. Not how many votes you have.

It's like going up to a stop sign on your way to success, and 10 years from now you are still at that stop sign. How do we tear that sign down and get past it?





I GO TO THE LAND

Terry Jack

We waited for the perfect day this winter, a nice and sunny day, to film ice fishing on Atlin Lake. Phil and his son captured the most wonderful footage under the ice and the experience of gathering the fish from the net.

I just accepted a contract with our TRTFN Lands department as a floating consultant in the department. Being out on the land and being connected is what rejuvenates me. In this position I feel I can continue to experience true joy and fulfillment. I am not a scientist, but I have been on my land for 54 years. I've been schooled by it. I was taught by the land and taught by my father on the land. I know it inside out. Before my father passed away, he told me to study the animals.

Our Tlingit knowledge teaches of strength and power in the land and the animals, the earth and the water.

all fit together and work together. One cant make it without the other.

Our Tlingit belief, our knowledge, has been with us for generations. We had the power to connect and communicate with the land and the animals. That power is not lost. It's alive and well. Because of our lifestyle, we have not embraced it. We left it behind. It never left us. My father taught me to honor our Elders, to remember them, remember their stories. Their teaching came from a time when that connection was mighty, like the Taaku River.

I'm grateful that I was a part taught by a generation that remembered that magic and experienced it when their parents taught it to

Pay attention to them, they will never lie to you. That was just something that was ingrained in me as a child.

Life brings you trials. I've seen councilors and people to help me and its been helpful to a degree. The biggest help I have ever found however, especially in the last couple of years, was my culture and my tradition. My beliefs. When you look at our culture, everybody had their place. And you are called to do the thing you were very good at.

Everyone had a job in the tribe. Hunters, tool makers, gatherers, healers and so on. When you look at animals, animals had their place and they

them. Now its is our responsibility to share that knowledge. I feel strongly about that responsibility. To share knowledge is to be Tlingit.

I remember when I was six years old and I would set net with my mother. She'd send me to the non native neighbors and I'd bring them fish. She taught me the power of sharing. I still enjoy sharing. I hunt for my family and my neighbors. I honor the land and it honors me and my people.

The Creator has given everybody their own culture. The Land is a part of ours. When I am feeling down, I go to the land. When I need to be rejuvenated, I go the land. The land never lies to me; it communicates with me, it heals me. The land always has the answers we need.



When I am feeling down, I go to the land. When I need to be rejuvenated, I go the land. The land never lies to me; it communicates with me, it heals me, the land always has the answers we need.