Uyaqḥmis

March 2015 Issue 36



Fresh look for Huu-ay-aht

New brand honours our journey as a modern treaty nation

PM41913515

Huu-ay-aht Around Town



Dylan Haugen plays a bit of floor hockey with students from haauupayak School just before heading into the playoffs this season. Although the Bulldogs were eventually eliminated, they fought hard against the Nanaimo Clippers in the first round of playoffs. This will be Dylan's last season with the Dogs.

[Photo by Heather Thomson]

Engagement sessions touch on elections, culture, LNG and research

It is time for the next round of Community Engagement Sessions.

The February sessions were successful, with lots of citizens attending and gathering information on the rebranding project and our new logo and tagline, changes in legislation. That part of the presentation was a follow up on what has happened since the People's Assembly in November, 2014. Steelhead LNG and Huu-ay-aht representatives also offered an update on the proposed LNG project as it moves into the environmental stage (see Page 6 for more on this project).

The April session will include an update on the upcoming elections for Chief and Council in June. With the nomination period fast approaching, it is important for citizens to attend to find out all of the details.

Presenters will also be sharing another update on the proposed LNG project and some of the research that Universities are conducting in partnership with Huu-ay-aht. Finally, we will be touching on some of Huu-ay-aht's important cultural practices.

If you missed the last community engagement, a few items from the rebranding project are still available, along with other prizes.

Here are the times and locations of the April sessions:

Tuesday, April 14, 2015 - Vancouver session at the Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre, 3 to 6 p.m. Thursday, April 16, 2015 - Port Alberni session at the Hospitality Inn, 4 to 7 p.m.

Friday, April 17, 2015 - The Anacla session will be held at the Anacla Government Office from 3 to 6 p.m.

There will be more informal sessions in Victoria and Nanaimo. The Nanaimo session will take place at Acme Food Co. from 4 to 7 p.m. on April 21. On April 23, it will be held at Comfort Inn in Victoria from 4 to 7 p.m.

Light snacks and refreshments will be available for all sessions so come join us for food and conversation.

huu ay aht
ANCIENT SPIRIT, MODERN MIND

We, the Huu-ay-aht People, envision a proud, self-governing and sovereign nation. ʔiisaak will guide us as we work together to establish a healthy, prosperous and self-sustaining community where our culture, language, spirituality and economy flourish for the benefit of all Huu-ay-aht.

Huu-ay-aht Uyaqḥmis is printed up to six times per year in order to foster community engagement among a population of over 700 citizens. Huu-ay-aht Uyaqḥmis promotes the recovery and sharing of the Huu-ay-aht dialect of the Nuu-chah-nulth language, as well as knowledge of Huu-ay-aht culture.

Please send all comments and questions to the Huu-ay-aht Communications Department.

communications@huuayaht.org
Mailing Address:
Huu-ay-aht First Nations
3483 3rd Ave., Port Alberni, BC
V9Y 4E4

www.huuayaht.org
for the latest news and events, job postings, and a digital archive of Uyaqḥmis

Keep up to date with Uyaqḥmis on social media:
@HuuayahtFN

FOLLOW US ON twitter

Huu-ay-aht First Nations Facebook page

Like us on Facebook

Huu-ay-aht's new logo and tagline reflects a modern treaty nation

At the Community Engagement Sessions in February, Huu-ay-aht First Nations celebrated the launch of the new Huu-ay-aht brand. It will bring changes to the Nation's visual language, including logo, as well as tone and manner. At each of the engagement sessions, the c'iqaa was used as the new logo and tagline was unveiled, calling ancestors to be present and witness this important moment for the Nation.

The launch of the new Huu-ay-aht brand caps off more than five months of rebranding efforts that involved extensive consultation with the community, including meetings with Ḥaẇiih, elders, youth and citizens. It was carried out by the Huu-ay-aht communications department and directed by Trudy Warner, whose previous experience leading citizen-to-citizen engagement prior to Treaty Implementation helped to inform the rebranding work.

The Huu-ay-aht sacred principles of ʔisaak (respect), hišuk ċawak (everything is connected), ʔuuʔałuk (taking care of) were the foundation of the rebranding efforts. In addition, four power words were chosen to further shape the Huu-ay-aht brand, based on surveys completed by more than 125 citizens - Memorable, Strong, Connected and Informative.

Communications was identified by Executive Council as a top priority for 2014-2015. To fulfill this commitment, the Nation reactivated the Communications department, adding three additional staff positions between June and September 2015. With this increased capacity to provide regular and timely information to Huu-ay-aht citizens, neighbours and partners, it was a fitting time to undertake these rebranding efforts. "A brand is all about what we do and how we do it," explained Trudy Warner. "When we make a brand promise, we set expectations. Implementing the brand aims to ensure that those expectations are met."



Executive Council selected the new logo and tagline from a number of options. "We wanted the logo to feel fresh and new to reflect the fact that Huu-ay-aht is now a self-governing, modern treaty Nation," said Elected Chief Councillor Jeff Cook. "At the same time, we wanted to honour where we've come from, our rich history."

The logo design selected draws strongly from the image originally created by Ron Hamilton as a shawl pin for the Ḥaẇiɬ at the time, Art Peters, which he gave to his daughters.
Through the years, the art has transformed and other artists, like Edward Johnson Sr., have added their own innovations. New versions have always built upon and integrated elements of those that have come before.

The tagline, "Ancient Spirit, Modern Mind," honours Huu-ay-aht's strong past and the traditions that are still important today, while acknowledging that the Nation is heading into a new post-treaty era. This is the image Huu-ay-aht it presenting to the world, and it is one that shows how important the past is and how exciting the future will be.

Hailey Jacobs does a Huu-ay-aht puzzle with her grandfather Jack Cook at the Vancouver Community Engagement Session on February 19. [Photo by Heather Thomson]

Uyaqḥmis Community Calendar

Community Engagement Sessions
The next round of Community Engagement Sessions are:
Tuesday, April 14, 2015 - Vancouver session at the Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre, from 3 to 6 p.m.
Thursday, April 16, 2015 - Port Alberni session at the Hospitality Inn, 4 to 7 p.m.
Friday, April 17, 2015 - The Anacla session will be held at the Anacla Government Office from 3 to 6 p.m.
There will be more informal sessions in Victoria and Nanaimo. The Nanaimo session will take place at Acme Food Co. from 4 to 7 p.m. on April 21. On April 23, it will be held at Comfort Inn in Victoria from 4 to 7 p.m.
Light snacks and refreshments will be available for all sessions so come join us for food and conversation.

Huu-ay-aht Councillor Happynook appointed Treaty Commissioner

Huu-ay-aht First Nations is proud to announce that Executive Councillor Tom Mexsis Happynook has been appointed Treaty Commissioner for British Columbia by the provincial government.

Happynook has been a member of Huu-ay-aht Executive Council since 2011 and served as the Huu-ay-aht Treaty Implementation Team Leader from June 2009 to March 2011.

As an elected councillor, he was responsible for overseeing completion of all the work that needs to be completed following the treaty effective date and ensuring that there is a smooth transition into Huu-ay-aht self-government.

Happynook believes his extensive treaty experience was instrumental in landing him his new position. He spent 18 years working through the treaty process with his Nation and an additional six years on treaty implementation.

“I am thrilled to have been selected to be the B.C. Treaty Commissioner,” he says. “I have spent the last 24 years fully engaged in treaty negotiation and implementation. I think my experience over the past two decades is one of the major factors in them selecting me to fill this role.”

Happynook first found out the province was considering him for the position when Minister of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation John Rustad approached him at a Liberal Leadership dinner on Feb. 10. Happynook indicated that he would like to be considered, and within two weeks he was notified that he was selected over two other candidates.



Until a new council is elected in June, Happynook will continue to attend important Executive Council meetings and partake in decision-making, but he will be taking an unpaid leave of absence from his elected position. He said it is important that he focus on his new duties, while still honouring the prior commitment he made.

“We would like to offer our sincere congratulations to Tom on his appointment as a B.C. Treaty Commissioner,” Elected Chief Councillor Jeff Cook says. “During the many years he served Huu-ay-aht, he has proven to be a very valuable asset to our organization. Although we will miss him as he moves on to a new venture, we wish him well.”

In his new role, Happynook will act as the keeper of the treaty process and will facilitate treaty negotiations. Treaty commissioners do not represent the principals that appointed them, but act independently. The First Nations Summit appoints two commissioners and the federal and provincial government each appoint one. The chief commissioner is appointed to a three-year term by agreement of the three parties, and the four part-time commissioners serve two-year terms.

Although the position is a big opportunity for Happynook, he said the decision was a difficult one.

“The biggest thing that helped me make the decision to take this position is my desire to help bring about successful conclusions to treaties in B.C.,” he says. “It was a difficult decision to move on, but I think I can still add value to our Nation building efforts.”

Happynook looks forward to sitting with Tla-o-qui-aht’s Chief Treaty Negotiator Francis Frank, as he was one of the appointees from the First Nations Summit.

Happynook will continue to live in Parksville, but the position is based out of Vancouver.

Happynook is the Hereditary Whaling Chief of Huu-ay-aht First Nations, which is part of the Nuu-chah-hulth Tribal Group, located on the West Coast of Vancouver Island. He has served as President of the Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council, which is made up of 14 different Nations.

A firefighter for 16 years, Happynook retired as a Deputy Platoon Chief (Captain) in 1998. He has been married to Katherine Ann Happynook since 1979. They have two adult sons, an adult daughter, two grandsons and two granddaughters.

Huu-ay-aht recognized by Douglas Magazine for honouring its past and exploring its bright future



If you picked up a copy of Douglas Magazine this month you will see a familiar face on the front page.

Huu-ay-aht Councillor John Jack is featured on the cover, and he is part of an article in the magazine called “Honouring the Past, Exploring the Future.” The article is part of a larger piece on, “First Nations Create a Better Future.”

The story came as a result of the magazine starting with the T’Sou-ke Nation. From that early beginning, it grew to include other Nations, and Huu-ay-aht was a natural addition given its approach to politics and business.

In addition to representing the citizens on Council, John holds the economic development, law and policy development portfolios and sits on the board of the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District. It is often through these roles that he finds himself speaking to groups or individuals on the opportunities that are available to groups willing to partner with First Nations. But he points out in the article that the reverse is also important – First Nations have to be open for business.

John was also recently nominated, along with Huu-ay-aht’s Executive Director James Edwards, for a Top 20 Under 40 Business and Community Achievement Award.

“While it is an honour to be individually recognized, the truth is that I am a product of the Huu-ay-aht approach to business and politics,” he explains. “This recognition of what the Nation is doing adds evidence to the fact that an inclination toward engagement rather than confrontation has real and concrete benefits.”

He explains that the interest people are showing in Huu-ay-aht’s post-treaty approach is good for the Nation and its goals.

“This exposure and influence is a type of power, a soft power. It is different that the court-based hard power that Huu-ay-aht was restricted to before treaty,” he says. “A rights-based approach to other governments and businesses is but one tool, albeit a powerful one.”

The treaty has given the Nation a different kind of approach for co-operative relationships. He explains that in the past First Nations had no choice but to make efforts to demand what they wanted. Now, with a treaty, they are given the opportunity to convince people and groups to partner with the Nation and work toward mutually-agreeable goals.

“The treaty gives us more options,” he says. “And a lot of benefits will grow from the relationships we are building out of collaboration and partnership rather than the ones we are forced to be in, or relationships we force others to be in.”

John says by sharing the story of Huu-ay-aht’s journey and what the Nation has learned along the way, it will help build stronger relationships in the future and offer positive exposure to a larger audience.

Spring begins environmental studies to proposed LNG project

This spring, Huu-ay-aht and Steelhead LNG will be continuing to explore the development of the proposed LNG facility at Sarita Bay. As a part of this effort, Huu-ay-aht and our partners will undertake a wide variety of environmental studies to understand the existing conditions at Sarita Bay and the surrounding area.

This month, studies being conducted will assess air quality, ambient light, as well as the weather in Sarita Bay. These studies will be carried out over a year or more so that researchers can better understand how these conditions change from one season to the next. Fieldworkers will be sub-contracted to support this research work through the Huu-ay-aht Development Corporation, providing a few short-term contract opportunities for Huu-ay-aht citizens over the coming year.

Huu-ay-aht citizens who are looking to prepare themselves to be ready to work in the construction or operations phases of the proposed LNG Project—should it go ahead—are encouraged to get in touch with Huu-ay-aht's Post-Secondary Education Coordinator, Brent Ronning.

"I have heard from citizens that sometimes they are hesitant to pick up the phone and call me when they don't yet have a clear idea about what they want to study," Brent explains. "I encourage anyone who is thinking about their training and education options to get in touch, even if they're just in the beginning exploratory stages. I can provide career tools that can help you get started."

The education and communications departments are currently putting together a list of citizens who are interested in training and employment to ensure that these citizens receive employment-related updates.



Citizens participate in the February Community Engagement Session in Port Alberni on February 16. It was an opportunity to hear more about the environmental phase of the project, as well as more about the jobs and training that will be available. LNG representatives will offer another update on the project at the April Community Engagement Sessions. [Photo by Edward R. Johnson]

Under the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which was signed with North Island College in February, 12 seats will be reserved at the Port Alberni campus for Huu-ay-aht citizens in trades programs relevant to the LNG industry. This means that, provided a citizen has all the pre-requisites and grades needed, they will have the first opportunity to fill the seats available in these programs.

The MOU commits Huu-ay-aht and the college to work together to bring new trades programs to the Alberni Valley that are not currently offered. There are also programs offered at other institutions like Camosun, Vancouver Island University and BCIT that are relevant to the LNG industry, and Brent encourages citizens to explore all of these pathways. Relevant programs include training for electricians, welding, carpentry, boiler making, pipefitting, equipment operators and millwright work. Huu-ay-aht citizens, wherever they live, may be eligible for education funding to attend suitable programs that are already in place in their area. A living allowance may also be available for those who are attending a full-time trades program. Please contact Brent to discuss your plans and options. He can be reached at 778-421-1022.

In addition to education and training efforts, this phase will see Huu-ay-aht continue to provide updates to Huu-ay-aht citizens, with a renewed focus on communicating with neighbouring First Nations and the general public.

Since January, Huu-ay-aht and Steelhead LNG have met to discuss the proposed LNG Project with the Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council, Maa-nulth Treaty Society, Ditidaht and Uchucklesaht, as well as the Alberni-Clayoquot Regional District and Port Alberni City Council. A Town Hall meeting for all Alberni Valley residents will also be held on Tuesday, March 31. These meetings are intended to bring our neighbours up to speed on news about the project that has previously been shared with Huu-ay-aht citizens at Community Engagement Sessions.

Nations' Executive Director among three local winners of Top 20 Under 40 honours

Huu-ay-aht Executive Director James Edwards was one of three young professionals in the Alberni Valley to take home a prestigious Top 20 Under 40 Business and Community Achievement Award on March 14.

James, along with Port Alberni residents Kama Money and Drew Bradley, took home trophies, and were recognized for being leaders in their community. Other nominees included Huu-ay-aht Councillor John Jack and Hupacasath member Jolleen Dick, as well as Eric Waldriff, Kris Patterson, Michelle Lapointe and Rebecca Palmer.

James says this is a true honour, and one that he believes reflects well on the Nation. It really says something about Huu-ay-aht that two of the nine nominees from this area represent the Nation, he explains.

"It shows the commitment and value we add to the community around us," he says. "The work we are doing is complex and high profile, and it is being recognized outside our area."

He believes the work he has done with Huu-ay-aht played an important part in his win, but James also believes his personal story helped him gain recognition.

"I dropped out of school in Grade 9, but eventually completed my upgrading and now have three university certifications behind me now, including a masters degree," he explains. "That, and the fact that I worked myself across the country in senior positions at a very young age, makes me kind of unique."



(Above) Huu-ay-aht First Nations Executive Director James Edwards was named one of the Top 20 Under 40 at the Business and Community Achievement Awards in Courtenay on March 14. Huu-ay-aht Councillor John Jack was also nominated for the award.

He says it is a great honour to get nominated and pretty exciting to win, but he did not get there alone.

"It is certainly nice to be recognized," he says. "But it is important to acknowledge my wife and family, and the part they play here. My wife puts up with the long hours and has supported me through the whole process, I couldn't have done any of it without her support."

He says credit should also go to the people who offered him leadership and teachings along the way. This includes the guidance and teachings he has always received from his parents and Elders, and the principaled leadership he has learned from Huu-ay-aht's Elected Chief Councillor Jeff Cook and Ḥaẇiiḥ.

James says it is these kinds of relationships that has led to his success.

He adds that it is an honour to be among such a dedicated group of hard-



Cultural Corner - Wedding traditions

Tuupaatii - finding a worthy partner in life

About eight metres, that was the distance to jump ahead. Four contenders, one prize and the rocky shore of Luh'taa as a venue.

Breathless, hearts beating like a Formula 1 car, adrenaline pumping non-stop - only one survived. Only one brother proved to be worthy of Chief Hayoqwis'is's daughter. Hayoqwis'is means "the one who brought 10 humpback whales at a single time." No wonder he came up with such an interesting tuupaatii.



The Welcoming Figures that once stood in front of the chief's house in Kiixʔin represent the first man and first woman - Ḥuminʔiki and Načquʔa.

Was this a Huu-ay-aht version of the Olympic games? Certainly not.

This is a tradition that men still honour. Ask Tayii Ḥaẇiɬ Tliishin (Derek Peters). He shared his story with Communications Assistant Ambar Varela.

Tuupaatii is a test, or a series of tests, that grooms must pass in order to become the right partners for their future wives. They are also used in other ceremonies.

Breaking the barriers of love

The first Huu-ay-aht wedding was between Ḥuminʔiki, the woman who descended from the moon to Kiixʔin, and Načquʔa, the man who used to stand on the stars. He was so dazzled by her ways that he abandoned his family to live with her.

The Cultural Coordination of Huu-ay-aht First Nations Port Alberni Office (PAGO) offered information about the steps that a couple follows nowadays before having a traditional wedding.

The process shows the methodical nature of the culture and the relevance of planning for a successful future:

1) One or two years before the wedding, there is a dinner in which the prospective groom states his intention to marry his sweetheart.

2) For a year, regular family meetings take place before the engagement party occurs. Remember that families belong to a house. If you want to know which one is yours, contact the head of your family who will put you in the right direction.

3) He comes for her. This means knocking on the girl's door or as Tayii Ḥaẇiɬ Tliishin Derek Peters did, bringing a canoe ashore, asking to be welcomed in Irene Williams' family land (Ucluelet) and requesting her hand. Peters told part of his wedding story during the last staff meeting on July 4, while touring in Anacla with new members of the team. He said that it was a unique moment to paddle in that canoe and perform a ceremony in the same way that his ancestors had done it about a century ago.

4) Tuupaatii time! Each family has its own different challenges. The suitor chooses friends or family to undertake the tasks, for example carrying a boulder to a certain distance, dancing in front of the future mother-in-law or climbing a pole to get the prize set on top of it.

What for? It is to show that he is serious to take her home as his wife, and that he can take proper care of her. Any guest of the bride's family can ask the groom's family any question they feel to ensure to safety of the bride.

5) Relatives handcraft prints, baskets, hats and carvings become the wedding gifts.

6) The ceremony consists of the bride's family building a barrier by interlacing their arms. Once the groom's family manages to bring the bride to their side, they are married.

See Page 9 for more...

Contract signing signifies next step in project

Huu-ay-aht First Nations and Steelhead LNG have signed a contract with WorleyParsons, which could be worth in excess of $30 million,for the proposed LNG Project at Sarita Bay on Vancouver Island. Most immediately, it will mean they will carry out environmental studies.

WorleyParsons' LNG activities cover more than 10 countries, and the company is a recognized global leader in the modularization of process plants. WorleyParsons has played a key role in the design, construction, and maintenance of 40 per cent of the LNG trains in operation around the world and has participated in various front end development phases of 12 proposed LNG projects in British Columbia.

Over the past 25 years, WorleyParsons has also worked with numerous First Nations across BC and has provided specialized services for some of the largest projects in the province.

The proposed Project, a 24-mtpa (million tonnes per annum) land-based facility, is one of the largest proposed LNG projects in British Columbia. The new contract will encompass environmental impact assessments, preliminary Front End Engineering and Design (pre-FEED) studies, geotechnical investigations, and permitting approvals support for the project.

WorleyParsons' environmental team, with experience permitting similar facilities worldwide, will be supported by Hemmera, a Canadian environmental consultancy, creating a team of leaders in environmental and social sciences with expertise in Environmental Assessment, marine and terrestrial ecology, and experience working with First Nations.

"WorleyParsons and Hemmera bring local knowledge and global proficiency to the project, and we have faith in the process set out before us," explained Huu-ay-aht Councillor John Jack. "Huu-ay-aht looks forward to working with both and moving into the future."

The new contract is an extension of the strategic relationship that already exists between WorleyParsons, Steelhead LNG and Huu-ay-aht First Nations. WorleyParsons played a key role in the recently completed Preliminary Assessment & Screening stage.

"This deal is a reflection of our commitment to Huu-ay-aht citizens and British Columbia at large to investigate possible environmental impacts of the project, along with other technical and economic aspects, prior to making any decision to proceed with development" said Nigel Kuzemko, CEO, Steelhead LNG.

The contract marks the first major milestone for the proposed Project since Huu-ay-aht citizens voted in favour of continuing to explore the proposed project at their People's Assembly on November 29, 2014.

Respecting past traditions by continuing tuupaatii

Generally, a civil ceremony is celebrated before.

7) The ladies present the newlyweds with a shawl that the wife wears as a symbol of the changes ahead.

8) The first anniversary of the couple is celebrated with a party to make sure that the wife leads a happy life. If that is not the case, her family will take her back and even return the wedding gifts to the husband's family.

Memories of a bride

A mixture or curiosity, nostalgia and excitement filled Hazel Cook's heart on August 1, 2009. Her family taught her strong cultural values. So, she always knew she would like to get a traditional Huu-ay-aht wedding.

She stayed in Port Alberni one week before tying the knot. Her father and her uncle (Jack and Jeff Cook, respectively) were in charge of the planning.

When her husband's cousin, Johnathan Henderson, climbed the pole, she was as concerned as other guests because he was on his own and could not get a human ladder or anything of that sort to accomplish the task. Don was luckier, as he did a ten-minute dance in the sand.

Hazel wore her father's shawl that features a thunderbird. Among the gifts offered to the newlyweds' family were jarred fish, flour and sugar. A drum her son Daniel keeps and a hat made of dark cedar bark that her cousin Edward Johnson Jr. has, were items asked for and given to show some of their wealth.

Remember that as a Huu-ay-aht citizen, you are entitled to enjoy and nurture this tradition that chiefs have kept alive. Tuupaatii is more than a task. They test acceptance, fitness, creativity, endurance and even problem solving skills.

Metaphorically speaking, you can apply the Tuupaatii teachings to any other situation in which you look for the right partner. Any partnership starts with expectations of a brighter future that will come true as long as its members are willing to undergo the challenges as one.

Meet the new faces at Huu-ay-aht

We would like you to meet the new faces working for Huu-ay-aht First Nations.



The communications team has a new member. ʔukłaamaḥ **Ambar Varela**, and she is the communications assistant. She currently lives and works out of Port Alberni, but Venezuela aksup.

"This is a great adventure and I am grateful because you have welcomed me with arms wide open, especially during Mondays' Dance Practice," she says. "I am eager to learn more and keep promoting Huu-ay-aht's rich cultural legacy."

Together with Heather Thomson (Communications Coordinator) and Annie Merritt (LNG Community Engagement Coordinator), she will keep moving the Nation forward through the media and by reaching out to the community.

Ambar holds a B.A. in Social Communications (Andres Bello Catholic University, Venezuela, 2001) and a Higher National Certificate in International Business and Trade (Dundee College, Scotland, 2009). Her experience spans an extensive career in traditional and interactive media within Venezuela (Cargill Foods Inc), Scotland (Tayside Biodiversity Partnership) and Canada (Gordon Neighbourhood House). She used to teach Spanish, French and English too. That was a very rewarding time when she got students from all over the world.

At Huu-ay-aht, Ambar has been involved in the rebranding process, website redesigning, Facebook page, Uyaqḥmis, Community Engagement Sessions, LNG and People's Assembly, among other projects.

"I am looking forward to paddling in this canoe with all of you for many, many years," she says. "ƛ̓eko."



Cory J.W Howard Jr. is currently working as the Education Assistant in the Bamfield Community School.

"My role is to assist in the classroom, work with our youth one-on-one and to bring culture into the school," he explains. "Some of the activities that I can provide are singing, dancing and some language. What I cannot teach, I will bring others in to teach."

Cory is the son of Cory Howard Sr., his parents are William and Beaulah Howard from Mowacht First Nations. Cory's mother is Tammy Howard from Huu-ay-aht First Nations, and her parents are Clifford and Marie Nookemus. Cory has three younger siblings – Vince Howard who is currently working at the Market, as well as two sisters Helena and Alexyss Howard, who are still in school.

"When I am not working, I enjoy biking, ball hockey and being on the



beach," he says

Coraleah Johnson is the new Administrative Assistant to Directors, Managers and Committees for Huu-ay-aht First Nations.

Coraleah is a Huu-ay-aht citizen, and her parents are Coral and Kenneth (Paulo) Johnson.

Her grandparents are the late Joan Johnson (Mack) and Ken Johnson. "I am excited to be a part of the team and assist with any projects that each one is working on," she says.

"I am eager to learn and apply my skills that I have learnt throughout the years."

Coraleah is originally from Grappler Creek (Bamfield). She says she has always loved being outdoors, and exploring old hiking trails is a great past time, as well as fishing and swimming.

After high school, she moved from Port Alberni down to Tofino and worked and various departments in resorts. "So being close to beaches was always nice," she says.

Growing up with two brothers, Coraleah has always loved playing sports, and since moving back to Port Alberni she has been fortunate to get back into playing in a few leagues, and hopefully more.

"I am really big on travelling the world and trying all different types of food," she adds.



Julie Miller-Rushton is now Huu-ay-aht's new Child and Family Services Coordinator. She brings to the Nation with an extensive background in community development, focusing predominately on creating systemic change for children and families.

"Researching and creating new programming to address a family's needs is a passion of mine," she explains. "I have spent several years as a child care consultant within the West Coast and North Island regions, helping organizations and service providers create and provide quality child care services.

Over the past five years, Julie has been the Make Children First/Success By Six and Alberni Valley Childcare Connections Community Facilitator. Over the past few years, she has been contracted by the United Way to complete Island-wide community research around program feasibility and implementation in communities.

Her education lies within the early childhood field, community research methods, health, adult education, and she is now approximately halfway through her degree in psychology.

"Although I enjoy my work in the community, I live my life to be a mother to my four beautiful children."

"I have a daughter who is eight, and three sons, 13, 15 and 18 years old."

She looks forward to supporting the Nation's children and families to grow healthy and happy, she says.



Before landing her job in Huu-ay-aht's Finance Department as a finance clerk, **Susan Roth** worked in a similar position at the Huu-ay-aht First Nations Group of Businesses. This has given her a strong understanding of the business side of Huu-ay-aht.

For most of her life, Susan worked in the forest industry.

"Then, in 2008, when the industry was at its knees, I headed back to school," she says. "I studied Business Administration at North Island College and Vancouver Island University."

In 2011, she built an E-commerce business – an online farmer's market. The idea of making healthy local food more accessible was good, however the distribution costs proved to be too high. But she says at this time, she is still rethinking the idea.

"Huu-ay-aht is at the beginning of building a new nation," she says. "That's exciting to me. I can help Huu-ay-aht create a vibrant and sustainable future by ensuring my work is impeccable."

Susan is a self-proclaimed "number cruncher" that thrives on challenge, thinks creatively and likes people.

"I am proud to serve Huu-ay-aht First Nation's citizens," she adds.



Betsy Potter (nee Mack) says she is very excited to be working with Huu-ay-aht as Administrative Assistant for Council.

"My first day was February 23, and the warm welcome and friendly, familiar faces have helped with this new and exciting path," she says.

Her position will be to provide administrative support to Executive Council and Committees. She assists in coordinating meetings, developing and drafting of organization practices and maintaining up-to-date files on best practices on policies and standards.

Her mother is the late Nancy Mack (nee Joe), and her father is late Mark Mack, and she is a member of Tseshaht First Nation.

"Growing up we spent many summer holidays in Sarita with my aunts - times I remember fondly," she says. "I have two children, Deborah (16) and Jacob (13) both of which are my pride and joy. I am the youngest of three sisters, Naomi, Ann and Debbie, who are my best friends."

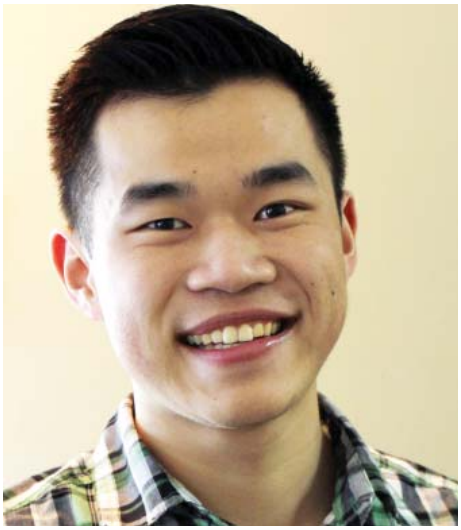
Prior to taking this job, Betsy worked for Tseshaht First Nation as Executive Assistant to Council, so she

is familiar with working with governance.

"I am now learning quickly about Huu-ay-aht Treaty governance and legislature," she says.

She also worked with Nuu-chah-nulth Tribal Council for many years as NIHB Clerk and then Community and Human Services Executive Assistant, which she says was a great challenge.

"I am grateful and proud to become part of the team and look forward to working with Nation."



As the Human Resources Assistant, **Ezra Tsai** is responsible for providing administrative and functional support to the human resources and office management teams.

"I am thrilled to be serving alongside such passionate and driven people," Ezra says.

He looks forward to learning from those around him as he fills this new role with the Huu-ay-aht First Nations.

Ezra grew up in Port Alberni and loves the home-like feeling of the small town. Serving and helping people has always brought him joy and a sense of fulfillment.

In his interactions with people he says, "The two most important things to me when interacting with people is one, to always treat them with care and respect, and two, to never burn my bridges."

Ezra has just returned from studying Criminology at Simon Fraser University in Vancouver where he was planning on serving the public by being a crown prosecutor.

However, after discovering Human Resources, he has decided that it is a much more suitable fit for his personality and ideal working environment. Now Ezra is pursuing a career in Human Resources, with the goal of specializing in recruiting and training.

In his free time, Ezra is almost always in the water. He loves swimming and has served as a Lifeguard and Water Safety Instructor at the City Pool in Port Alberni before moving to Vancouver. Besides swimming, Ezra has recently been introduced to surfing and loves the sport already.

Out of the water, Ezra has become an enthusiastic swing dancer and has even opened his own club, Harbourside Swing, where he teaches and hosts dances on the weekends in Port Alberni.

• • • • • •

Heather Thomson became the new Communications Coordinator in November.

Heather has been calling Port Alberni home for more than six years. For most of that time she served as the editor of the Alberni Valley Times. Shortly after leaving that post, she started working in the Communications Department on a short contract. When she was offered a full-time positon, she jumped at the chance.

"I felt so welcomed when I first started working for Huu-ay-aht, and I knew right away it was a good fit for me," she says.

Her knowledge of the local nations has served to be invaluable to Heather in her current role, and she looks forward to learning even more.



Along with Annie and Communications Assistant Ambar Varela, Heather is tasked with ensuring citizens, staff and business partners are kept informed with what Huu-ay-aht is doing and what important changes are taking place. Although a big task, it also means she gets to have close contact with citizens, and that is something she really enjoys.

"As soon as I read the mission, vision and values for Huu-ay-aht, I wanted to work for them," she says. "But in the past I have also had such great experiences with Huu-ay-aht and other Nuu-chah-nulth Nations that I knew this would be a good change."

Some of the highlights Heather remembers is paddling into Huu-ay-aht territory in the Nuu-chah-nulth canoe during the Pulling Together Paddling Journey. "We got stuck there for a few days, and I can't think of a better, more welcoming spot to be stranded."

She was also there to witness the final ceremonies as the Maa-nulth Treaty was signed and celebrated. She now looks forward to being part of the team that will lead Huu-ay-aht into a new future as a modern, self-governing treaty nation.

Do you have an event or announcement you would like included in the community calendar? Email us at communications@huuayaht.org, and we will include it.