

# WET'SUWET'EN VOICE

## GITDUMDEN CLAN MEETING—ANOTHER CLAN MEETING THAT RESULTED IN AN EXCELLENT VISION FOR THE FUTURE

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### Clan Meeting Updates:

- Tsayu Clan meeting scheduled for August 14, 15 & 16, 2009 at the Moricetown Multiplex.
- See our website at [www.wetsuweten.com](http://www.wetsuweten.com) for more information.

The Gil\_seyhu, Laksamshu & Laksilyu and now Gitdumden have completed their first series of meetings with the Treaty Team.

Day one of each meeting Warner Naziel provided an overview of the History of the Wet'suwet'en and the Natural Resources department discussed projects on the particular territories, briefing on referrals, mineral exploration and parks.

Day two the clan travelled through their territories by tour bus while the elders passed on the history of the land and shared information regarding significant areas to their clan.

Day three the clans began developing their work plans depicting their vision of what they see as the future of their territories. The strategies included types of industry, cultural background/ information, economics, lands, agriculture, fisheries and water.

There were common themes amongst all clan groups that they foresee their territories



Gitdumden Clan members creating their work plan on Day 3.

It is clear that

kept in the pristine state as much as possible while working in partnership with industry to create projects that all Wet'suwet'en can be part of economically.

It was also apparent that fee simple lands are a contentious issue with all clans and they encouraged the treaty negotiators to discuss these lands with the governments. Pipelines were also discussed due to their detrimental impacts on the territories.

after the 3 clan meetings that the Wet'suwet'en have a clear vision of what they want for the future of their territories, and the future of their children. They are well on their way for a sovereign future.

*"Thank you for allowing me on this trip. I could hear voices of chiefs of days gone by and what we have to do to go forward. I look forward to where you want to go with this work."*

*Don Ryan*



## 2009 SUMMER CULTURE CAMPS

The deadline for culture camp application forms is **JUNE 15, 2009**. The dates for the camps are as follows:

July 5-11, 2009 BOYS CAMP (AGES 11-14 YEARS)

August 2-8, 2009 GIRLS CAMP (AGES 11-14 YEARS)

August 16-22, 2009 BOYS & GIRLS CAMP (AGES 8-12 YEARS)

For more information, please call Leonard Frazer at (250) 847-3630



deWitt. Photo: UVic Photo Services

## Hard work opens doors for Aboriginal business grad

By Dianne George

By any measure, Wet'suwet'en student Lisa deWitt is an inspiration. She not only graduates this June with a business degree (with distinction), but she is also close to achieving a certified general accounting designation, something normally earned post graduation.

She accomplished this while running a small bookkeeping practice, volunteering and parenting her 11-year-old daughter. "I had a lot of support from many people, including the Native Student Union," says deWitt, who served as their finance counsellor. "They were my family away from home."

In recognition of their support, and in her cultural tradition, she made and gave the NSU her first button blanket, which now hangs in their office. DeWitt says she treated school as a job and completed assignments and studied between classes during the day. "That was the only way for me, because I needed the evenings free for family time." She also held group meetings at her house, and swapped babysitting with other student-parents so she could get out to evening networking events.

"It's important to connect with others, have fun and get involved," she says, speaking from experience. Last year she won a UVic Blue and Gold award for her campus volunteer activities. She also served as a BC Ch'nook Scholar, one

of a network of Aboriginal students studying business full-time who also mentor and advise Aboriginal high school students.

"There are a lot of students taking law, social work or education, but not a lot of business students. I'd like to encourage them to think about business.

"My two work terms at KPMG opened many doors for me. My plan is to establish an Aboriginal accounting practice and educate others including practitioners. Many of them think we don't pay taxes. Well I pay taxes every day," she says with a laugh.

UVic has come a long way in improving Aboriginal awareness on campus, she says, but there is still an opportunity for more, particularly in business. She is inspired by her ancestors. "My great grandmother was a witness in the Delgamuuk'w decision, and the women in my family are very strong. I have a responsibility to my daughter to be a strong voice and strive for the day we as Aboriginal people are equal in this country.

"I'm at a crossroads now with a whole new set of doors opening. I want to serve the Aboriginal community and inspire others to see business as an option."

## WELCOMING POLE FEAST

On JUNE 3RD, 2009 FROM 10:00 A.M. TO 2:00 P.M. THE WELCOMING POLE FEAST WAS HELD AT THE SMITHERS SECONDARY SCHOOL GYM.

THE POLE WAS PRESENTED BY THE WET'SUWET'EN NATION AND SMITHERS SECONDARY SCHOOL.

INCLUDING - THE UNVEILING OF THE NEW "ELDER MURALS".

DONATIONS TOWARDS THE TOTEM POLE WERE ACCEPTED DURING THE FEAST. T-SHIRTS & PRINTS WERE ONSALE - PROCEEDS GO TOWARDS THE POLE.

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL SMITHERS SECONDARY SCHOOL (250) 847-2231



Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs & Welcoming Pole

## WET'SUWET'EN CHILD & FAMILY SERVICES AUTHORITY

### Planning Committee Update

The Office of the Wet'suwet'en and the communities of Moricetown and Hagwilget are excited to announce that planning has resumed for creating our Wet'suwet'en Child & Family Services Authority. Moricetown hosted a tri-lateral meeting on May 6th, 2009, involving representatives from:

Hagwilget Band, Moricetown Band, and Office of the Wet'suwet'en  
BC Ministry of Children and Family Development (MCFD)  
Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC)

### History & Background

Planning originally began in 1992-93, and was resumed in 2004-05, for the creation of an on-reserve Delegated Agency. A "delegated agency" is an organization enabling First Nations to assume responsibility from MCFD for services in accordance with the *Child, Family and Community Services Act* (the "Act"). These services generally include Child Protection, Guardianship (child's legal guardian), and Resources (foster/group homes).

A Feast held in January 2005 saw the Provincial Director, MCFD, refuse to support our Delegation Enabling Agreement (DEA), despite completion of all Aboriginal Operational Practice & Standards and Indicators (AOPSI) requirements. The Provincial Director questioned viability for service provision due to inadequate resources to support on-reserve delegated services.

Service area planning has now been expanded to include Wet'suwet'en members residing off-reserve. Confirmation of Wet'suwet'en viability - per a Ministry model service plan - was received at the May 6, 2009 tri-lateral meeting.

### The Work Ahead

The Wet'suwet'en Child and Family Services Authority Planning Committee has secured \$130,000 from MCFD (Province) to support over a six-month period (May '09 - Oct '09) completion of operational planning requirements and agreements, including:

Planning Committee meetings and community consultation engagements to ensure all Wet'suwet'en members have opportunities for inclusion

Community Social Worker Carmen Nikal will lead community consultations, support local planning, and facilitate ongoing communications during the planning period

Advisors Bill McKenzie & Allen Cummings will be retained as Planning & Negotiations Advisors

Completion of AOPSI requirements including: Governance, Service Delivery Model, Finance & Administration, Communications, Information Sharing,

Records Management, and Facilities

Completion of a Delegation Enabling Agreement (DEA), which allows transfer of resources and delegated authority responsibilities to Authority staff as per the *BC Child, Family & Community Services Act*

**We Need to Hear from You** as we complete planning to develop our Wet'suwet'en Child & Family Services Authority and reclaim our inherent rights and responsibility for our children, families, and communities. For further information please contact:

Carmen Nikal (250) 847-3630

E-mail: [car-](mailto:car-men.nikal@wetsuweten.com)

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## Office of the Wet'suwet'en

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## Message from the Executive Director:

As we move into the summer months, we prepare for harvesting of our traditional foods and preserve our foods for the winter months. Throughout the Wet'suwet'en Territories, there are an abundance of fresh berries, healthy fish and wildlife and medicinal plants ready for human consumption. The Wet'suwet'en Hereditary Chiefs are working hard to protect the quality and quantity for our foods which we rely upon annually.

Our resources are being impacted daily by land development and increased activities out on the land. Our rivers, streams lakes and aquifers are being impacted by the increased pollution of our pristine waters. These pollutants are a result of sewage from communities to energy development to various industries to agriculture. The Wet'suwet'en Chiefs look at all of the impacts collectively to assess the true state of our lands and water systems to ensure that you can continue to enjoy the foods which sustain us and that you continue to freely access areas throughout the traditional territories.

Any suspicious activities you may witness that stops your ability to access your hunting grounds, berry patches, medicinal plants or any activity that you believe is a danger to the health of your harvested foods, please contact the Office of the Wet'suwet'en to report your findings. While you are out on the territories, or on the rivers and lakes, please make sure that you have a safety plan in place and ensure that someone knows your travel plans. Have a safe and productive summer.

Sney Kahl Yah,

## NEW TO OUR ORGANIZATION

Jessica Michell is the daughter of Trish Naziel and Roger Michell. She grew up in the Smithers area and moved away for school and is now back in the Beautiful Bulkley Valley. Jessica is a member of Likhtsa'misyu (Freedee Clan), Misdzi Yikh (Owl House).

Jessica holds the receptionist position at the Office of the Wet'suwet'en as of June 2009.

She has a beautiful daughter with Justin Creyke named Jorja Ann Nicole. Jessica also has her fifteen year old cousin Tanisha Naziel living with her. She loves to spend time with family and enjoys any time with her daughter. Her new passion is learning more of

her people and the lands of the Wet'suwet'en Nation. Jessica's next goal is to finish her post secondary schooling.

The Office of the Wet'suwet'en welcomes Jessica and we all hope she finds success in her new position.



**WELCOME JESSICA!**



**We are on the Web!!**  
[www.wetsuweten.com](http://www.wetsuweten.com)