

# Coast Salish Elders/S'ul'elehw<sup>1</sup>: General Background and Principles<sup>2</sup>

Wm. Arnold White, Andrew Cienski. November 2008



***“After the winter’s cold and icy winds, life again flows up from the bosom of Mother Earth. And Mother Earth throws off dead stalks and withered limbs for they are useless. In their place new and strong saplings arise.”<sup>3</sup>***

The quote from Chief Dan George sets up the classic dilemma facing modern program developers and teachers of First Nation children<sup>4</sup> – the challenges associated with understanding the place of the old people and the degree to which they speak of stability, of belonging and of balance within tribal communities.<sup>5</sup> This short paper attempts to define the role of traditionally trained elders<sup>6</sup> and make reference to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples.

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<sup>1</sup> Halkomelem which refers to elders who understand and work with traditional teachings. With immense thanks to Dan Cunin (Social Work, Uvic) who provided the photograph. To assist with his professional development in addition to formal Social Work courses met with the W.White then Aboriginal Liaison Officer, Uvic to increase his background knowledge about healing and balance mechanisms within traditional communities. It is this kind of collaboration which assists with stronger service delivery.

<sup>2</sup> This is an updated version of an earlier paper prepared for discussion by the B.C. Ministry of Children and Families Elders Advisory Council and selected Coast Salish program developers intending to work closer with elders in order to begin dialogue around their various roles and skills.

<sup>3</sup> Chief Dan George and Helmut Hirschall. *My Heart Soars*. Hancock House Publishers, 1974:77

<sup>4</sup> For examples Social Workers, Child and Youth Care Staff, Drug and Alcohol Counsellors, Employment Advisors, etc.

<sup>5</sup> See also “Thunderbirds, Thunder-Beings, Thunder-Voices: The Application of Traditional Knowledge and Children’s Rights in Support of Aboriginal Children’s Education” P. Cook B. White. *American Review of Canadian Studies* (Spring/Summer 2001): 331-347.

<sup>6</sup> This term identifies a person who is old, has traditional training associated with balance/spiritual function and understands the importance of these elements for the maintenance of stronger and healthier communities. Within traditional culture a person who is argumentative, sharp and or is angry is not deemed to be able to speak – to do so causes more turmoil.

Dan George like many old people of his generation understood the importance of hope and of those places of reflection which reinforced being clean and in balance. Not to understand the complexities of Coast Salish ceremonialism/traditions as a steadying force for the individual and the community leave only the understanding and repercussions associated with horrendous systemic change and oppression referred to by Dan George as “our sad winter”. In the case of the Coast Salish described by Barbara Lane<sup>7</sup> and Norman Feder<sup>8</sup> as the most conservative Indians on the Coast there is a complexity and strength which needs to be fully understood. Lane and Feder are of course referring to spiritual and community activities which predate the arrival of the European to Salish homelands and fundamentally are more significant than the statistics around alcoholism, depression, welfare rates etc. Suttles further suggested that not to recognize “continuities with the past” or “the emergence of new cultural forms fails to recognize the continuing and perhaps growing strength of the multi-village community<sup>9</sup>.” To begin to understand what some of the strengths is to begin the very slow process of beginning to understand the intricacies associated with the teachings of the old people. Anthropologist Wilson Duff in speaking about Stone Images said, “The Salish people of the area had highly developed powers of clairvoyance and prophecy.”<sup>10</sup> While another Anthropologist Wayne Suttles in speaking about a masking complex called Sxwaixwe said, “the artists who made and assembled these masks and costumes may have drawn from various sources and experimented over the generations to impress and mystify those people who came to the potlatch. They would be pleased to know that they are still impressing and mystifying<sup>11</sup>.” As administrators and leaders we have not had the opportunity to systematically counteract the effects of the ‘sad winter’ or to fully understand the full repercussions described by Chief Dan George as an ugly spirit called ‘bewilderment’ that brought torment.<sup>12</sup> Dan Georges’ descriptions are consistent with traditional Coast Salish specialists brought in by modern families to remove darkness and evil which bring about bewilderment.

One of the major challenges facing modern, First Nations as well as western organizations is to match the training and influence of traditional values<sup>13</sup>/Sinyews<sup>14</sup> with that of the program delivery which supports working with elders<sup>15</sup>. The purpose of this

<sup>7</sup> Barbara Lane. “A Comparative and Analytic Study of Northwest Coast Religion”. unpublished Ph.D. University of Washington 1953:1

<sup>8</sup> Norman Feder. “Incised Relief Carving of the Halkomelem and Straits Salish” in American Indian Art Magazine. 1983, Volume 3, Number 2. p. 52

<sup>9</sup> Wayne Suttles. “The Persistence of Intervillage Ties among the Coast Salish” in Coast Salish Essays Vancouver: Talon Books, 1987: 230

<sup>10</sup> Wilson Duff. Images Stone, B.C.: Thirty Centuries of Northwest Coast Indian Sculpture. Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1975: 82

<sup>11</sup> Wayne Suttles. “The Halkomelem Sxwayxwey” in American Indian Art Magazine. Vol. 8 No. 1 Scottsdale Arizona. 1982:64

<sup>12</sup> Ibid pp 18, 78

<sup>13</sup> For a fuller listing of values associated with Traditional Families see “Traditional First Nations Values” Floy Pepper/Creek and William A. White/Coast Salish.

<sup>14</sup> Sinyews is the Coast Salish Halkomelem term which encompasses all of the values associated with stronger families. A term which is acknowledged and understood for at least 12 generations and predates the arrival of the European to this coast. This is in contrast to the mistaken belief that it is okay to overlay an entirely foreign phenomena unknown by the community.

<sup>15</sup> For ideas about strengthening traditional knowledge/working with S’ul’elehw/Elders by using the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, see “Thunderbirds, Thunder-Beings, Thunder-Voices: The

brief document is to provide the cultural context for the place of traditionally trained elders within modern institutions. If you are a human service worker or teacher and have driven by any of the bighouses within the Salish region, heard the drums, saw all of the cars and know nothing about what goes on in those buildings this is a reflection of the problem. (see appendix 1 for a listing of Winter Dance Activities) If you have been inside one of the longhouses and know what goes on in them, then you are one of the very few.<sup>16</sup> In both cases knowing and understanding needs to be translated into developing programs which reinforce and value the teachings about respect, sharing etc. Values reinforced with Coast Salish institutions. Working across cultures is not an easy process.

The major cross-cultural dilemma is this. First, traditional leadership understands the complex roles and essential nature of working with traditionally trained elders or Spiritual Specialists on one hand. In part this is because they have seen the result of applying complex rules associated with 'being in balance' -they live and practice the rules required to work with elders/S'ul'elehw.<sup>17</sup> Second academic training for those who work with our people from provincial and federal governments for the most part have no idea what the various cultural, spiritual and social roles accorded those who work within tribal institutions, especially elders/S'ul'elehw. Not to understand the importance of traditional values and the role of traditionally trained elders exacerbates difficulties working across cultures.

Xwulanitum<sup>18</sup> who by virtue of their academic training have been taught to formally define their work, to identify issues, and to believe, until recently, that if ideas are not written then it is not entirely the truth.

Traditional leaders unaccustomed to this way of thinking likely see that approach as offensive, intrusive and wonder why they are being asked to validate simple things.<sup>19</sup>

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Application of Traditional Knowledge and Children's Rights in Support of Aboriginal Children's Education" Philip Cook and William White 2001 American Review of Canadian Studies

<sup>16</sup> If you have been inside a bighouse and or a Shaker Church you may have noticed the absence of such cultural phenomena as a 'talking circle', "medicine wheel", "use of tobacco and sage" commonly understand by those in the helping professions as essential tools when working with Aboriginal people.

<sup>17</sup> The importance of traditional values which help children learn they belong and the tribal institutions which drive those values generally speaking are not known to those outside of the culture. For this reason "All the People Here are Your Family... We Should Stand Together" and "Billy's Teachings About the Bighouse: With References to the Convention on the Rights of the Child" W. White and A. Cienski were written for the recent training "Child Rights in Practice: Tools for Social Change" International Institute for Child Rights and Development. Feb. 25<sup>th</sup> – March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2007

<sup>18</sup> Halkomelem (dialect of the Coast Salish) term for White people.

<sup>19</sup> It is for these reasons that the course "Understanding Aboriginal Children's Rights: Traditional and Non-Traditional Perspectives (Uvic CYC 360, 1999 Dr. Philip Cook and Bill White) was developed. Students received academic background as pre-reading and then sat in a longhouse with traditionally trained elders such as Agnes Pierre, Dr. Samuel Sam, OC, Bernie George, Chief Adam Dick, Charles Elliott. In addition to the bighouse they also visited a Shaker Church service.



Dr. Samuel Sam, OC invoking a Prayer for Social Work graduation ceremonies Uvic.

The combination of both of these elements, traditional values and its' incorporation with modern programming can only assist working with traditional strengths and increasing the capacity to maintain stronger communities. An additional benefit to this approach is the reduction of acculturative discriminatory practices as well as improved cross-cultural relationships. The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples said that "deculturalization has been too great a price to pay for modernization" and further that elders "are crucial if traditional knowledge and values are to become a source of strength and direction in the modern world."<sup>20</sup> But first, who are the Coast Salish?<sup>21</sup> What languages did they speak?<sup>22</sup> What are those elements which have detracted from respectful and or collaborative interactions?<sup>23</sup> What are their cultural institutions?<sup>24</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples Perspectives and Realities Volume 4 Elders Perspectives 1996:118

<sup>21</sup> What was there territory? What about their history affects their interaction with you at present?

<sup>22</sup> What behavior terms are used most often? Who repeats these terms and under what conditions?

<sup>23</sup> Unless there is a clear understanding of the value of the past to the present and its application for the future cross cultural relations are likely to be difficult at best.

<sup>24</sup> And further how do those institutions frame values such as belonging, caring for one another, reinforce being in balance and most importantly teaching children respect and moving as a family. During the seventies the Federal Government not knowing any of these elements, thinking Indians are Indians, instituted a training program, Nechi, which imposed new cultural phenomena to Drug and Alcohol and Community Health Representatives.

## Language and Geography

Halkomelem language group sits in the middle of Coast Salish territory<sup>25</sup> in what is today Southwestern British Columbia and Northwestern Washington, covering an area approximately the size of France. The Coast Salish make up roughly half of the 23 extant Salish languages<sup>26</sup>. The designation *Salish* primarily refers to the language family, however Salish nations have similar world views. Within the language family is the further distinction of Coast Salish. Coast Salish nations are also inter-bound by a more than 10,000 year history<sup>27</sup> of trade, intermarriage, political alliance, and warfare. They also share a common religion and similar religious practices which perpetuate the values and customs associated with Winter Dance Complex<sup>28</sup> and later the Shaker Church.

## Culture and Contact

The smallpox epidemics of 1776 and 1862 more than halved British Columbia's Aboriginal populations.

## Losses through legislation:

- New legislations, treaties, and reservation settlements restricted Native rights to hunt and fish, and restricted community movement, thereby limiting access to seasonal food gathering. These resulted in a terrible poverty for a people accustomed to the inexhaustible bounty of the tides and seasons.
- In 1884 the annual cycle of winter dances and potlatches were made illegal by the Anti-potlatch law<sup>29</sup>. This same law also allowed for the theft of hundreds of ceremonial items and works of art by collectors and museums from all over the world.
- Autonomous Native control of education and the continuation of their linguistic heritage were further undermined by the residential school system which began in 1893 and lasted almost a hundred years. These state and church run schools created a huge generational and linguistic rift within Native communities. Cut off

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<sup>25</sup> (see appendix 2) Specifically, Salish territory covers from the Pacific coast of British Columbia and Washington to the head of the Missouri river in the East. From Oregon's central coast to the Bella Coola valley in northern Northwest British Columbia.

<sup>26</sup> The Pentlatch people occupied the central interior coast of Vancouver Island, from north of present day Courtney to south of Parksville. The Pentlatch culture effectively ceased to be with the death of the last speaker in 1941, though their relatives continue to live in the same area.

<sup>27</sup> Elizabeth Johnson, Kathryn Bernick. Hands of Our Ancestors: Revival of Salish Weaving at Musqueam. Vancouver: UBC Museum of Anthropology, 1986: 5

<sup>28</sup> Wayne Suttles, "Commentary. Continuity and Change in Northwest Coast Ceremonialism." In Arctic Anthropology. Vol. XIV (1977) p. 85.

<sup>29</sup> The Treaty Negotiation Process Federal Treaty Negotiation Process. Indian and Northern Affairs. 1994

from traditional knowledge and living with the fractured community that resulted from the schooling system, several generations of children returning from the schools were separated from the influence of their parents and elders. On the other hand, Western ideologies associated with industry, individualism, ownership of property, and ethics through Christian based doctrine had successfully undermined traditional ideologies<sup>30</sup>; however they had not been internalized to the point of complete conversion. This period also created several generations of individuals who no longer embraced or understood the importance of traditional values and tribal institutions.

Traditional cultural strengths which protect children are inextricably bound with and reinforce the roles of traditional leaders and are intertwined with spiritual and cultural mechanisms. Given the history of systemic discrimination by church and state moving and then moving beyond the roles of elders as adjuncts to modern social programming, ie being fully represented and or consulted in the agenda process, is not always an easy task<sup>31</sup>. Issues such as land claims, Indian Residential school system, Potlatch Law according to the legal historian Bradford Morse “have robbed generations of their parenting skills, eroded cultural knowledge and linguistic comprehension, fostered family disintegration, and sapped self-respect<sup>32</sup>.” The education of First Nations children in the public school system has caused as much cultural loss and damage to self-respect as well. We are also faced with repercussions from at least a century and a half of change resulting in the need to define what our cultural institutions are<sup>33</sup>? What they do and more importantly to clarify and explain the roles of elders. There are several fundamental questions with regard to strengthening cross-cultural relations which make this process much easier and perhaps sustainable. These are:

1. What efforts, groundwork can be laid to increase participation within the meeting process? For example if Elders/Traditional leaders are brought in to invoke a Prayer in language/or to sing a traditional Prayer/Welcome Song – to then connect the concepts about creation, balance, humility, togetherness, helping out etc. within the invocation and to ask if those concepts are reflected in the proposed programs being discussed.
2. Our experience suggests that this is possible if two new phenomena are taken into account. Both of which are not an easy task, essential but not easy. And that is the capacity of the Traditional Specialists/Elders to step outside of their culturally defined role and to work in a secular setting. At the other side

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<sup>30</sup> David Wallace Adams. “Fundamental Considerations: The Deep Meaning of Native American Schooling, 1880—1900.” Harvard Educational Review vol.58 No.1 Feb 1988:1-28

<sup>31</sup> For example it is a huge mistake to continue to create an agenda item in which elders might open meetings and then to not fully integrate their knowledge in the change and or meeting process. At some stage it would also be important to integrate language terminology into the meeting process and or at least translation by elders of the topics at hand.

<sup>32</sup> Bradford W. Morse. “Two Steps Forward and One Step Back: The Frustrating Pace of Building a New Aboriginal-Crown Relationship in Canada.” In Human Rights of Indigenous Peoples ed. Cynthia Price Cohen. Transnational Publishers, New York. 1988. pp 303-356.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid 308-309

of the equation is the capacity of the academic institutional participants to step outside of their cultural role (which may emphasize the importance of the individual ie my marks, my degree, my thoughts, my reactions...) and then to step outside of their academic role (cv, hierarchal reinforcement) which may entail the application of classic Academic approaches determined by concepts associated with degree work. This is particularly essential if lets say in History/Anthropology/Sociology/Political Science no background was provided in terms of working from a place of strengths with First Nations persons.

### Coast Salish Institutions which drive the Voices of the Elders

The major urban areas situated in southwestern British Columbia and northwest Washington State sit in the heart of Coast Salish territory where two very powerful ritual institutions continue to operate – The Winter Dance complex<sup>34</sup> and the Shaker Church<sup>35</sup>. It is from these places of ‘power’ that ‘new and strong saplings arise.’ Their knowledge and its application within Indigenous institutions are at least 15 generations old and pre-date the arrival of the European. During the height of the Winter Dance Season, normally from December to March of each year at selected bighouses throughout the territory at least 1000 people gather to transfer rights/names and perhaps hold memorial potlatches. It is during this period as well that initiations into the Winter Dance Complex occurs.

From these Salish institutions the great faith and hope of the elders and of our ancestors is captured for a new time and place.<sup>36</sup> It is within these very old institutions that elders/traditional families receive training which reinforces a number of values associated with belonging and then interaction with the natural and supernatural worlds. Within these systems children learn that families move together, support each other and periodically the natural and supernatural worlds merge to reinforce belonging and healing. Individuals who operate within these systems over the course of their lifetime receive training from their respective elders. Roles they would ultimately fill when a community chooses to validate them.<sup>37</sup> There is no other tribal group in British Columbia which continues to interact with each other through these formal and pre-contact social/ceremonial institutions.

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<sup>34</sup> Community functions held in longhouses from November to March of each year where during the peak season 1000 people gather. Here individuals might receive ancestral names, be formally initiated into dance societies. Traditional and or ceremonial mechanisms are at least 15-20 generations old.

<sup>35</sup> A post contact institution which applies healing mechanisms from the Winter Dance Complex and Catholicism.

<sup>36</sup> For a recent description of complex interactions within one aspect of Coast Salish ceremonialism see “All The People Here Are Your Family... We Should Stand Together: New Dancers Return to the Nanaimo Bighouse, October 2, 2006” W. White and A. Cienski. Currently being revised to incorporate elements of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

<sup>37</sup> This is to differentiate an individual who for example may not have any formal training and who is merely old.

Traditionally trained S'ul'elehw/ elders continue to provide the contemporary link which affords “the teachings of the ancestors, ceremonies, rituals, prophecies<sup>38</sup>” all of which result in the proper way to behave and drive the values which reinforce good relationships with all living things. The Chief Dan George quote speaks to one of the most fundamental values associated with the teachings of being strong and in particular having a strong mind “Qwam Qwum tun Shqwalawun<sup>39</sup>.” Until such time as professional training of Human Services workers (Social Workers Child and Youth Care, Nursing, Physicians etc.) can during an interview process respond to a question raised by traditional community members, “Stemala taii Qwam Qwum Tun Shqwalawun?” and further “please explain how your training assists you to apply these fundamental teachings in your work with our community?” there will continue to be huge gaps in service delivery.

The presence of the Winter Dance Complex and the Shaker Church institutions serves as the most visible reminders of the importance of tradition and S'ul'elehw to the Coast Salish. Both of these institutions reinforce values such as a profound respect for the old people, for sharing with others, for moving as a family, the application of strict rules for listening, for the application of specific training for speakers and specialists exists within these systems.<sup>40</sup>

Traditional leaders and or elders by virtue of age and experience determine all actions within these two systems.<sup>41</sup> It is for this reason as well that traditional leaders may not necessarily be the oldest members of the community, but those who have under the influence of elders, also carry the teachings.<sup>42</sup> During the fifties to early seventies at many communities on southeastern Vancouver Island each time a family met to plan an event at least eight to ten Sulalewq, each formally invited to assist with this process, would rise during the course of the meeting to provide formal advice to the families. In this way families are provided with the formal mechanisms to maintain and strengthen families.<sup>43</sup> Our relatives from central Canada explain their cultural world view through discussions around a medicine wheel. While some of our leaders might use that concept it is nevertheless a phenomena from outside of the territory. During the seventies Health and Welfare Canada initiated a training process for Community Health Workers and Drug and Alcohol Workers which introduced the medicine wheel as a healing

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<sup>38</sup> Elders Perspectives. Perspectives and Realities. Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. Volume 4 1996: 118

<sup>39</sup> Elders within the Halkomelem region have often been heard repeating this phrase which means “To Make your Mind Strong.”

<sup>40</sup> These values might be found within other non-tribal cultures but are not reinforced within their economic and educational systems as consistently as they are within the Salish world. For a fuller description of these values please see “Traditional First Nations Values” Floy Pepper W. White. International Institute for Child Rights and Development.

<sup>41</sup> A recent paper by William White and Andrew Cienski, “All The People Here are Your Family... We Should Stand Together: New Dancers Return to the Nanaimo Bighouse, Oct. 2, 2006” describes the application of caring, helping one another and systematic cultural reliance on those who are older.

<sup>42</sup> *ibid.* p. 118. And thus knowledge of the rules for good living, rules which entail respect for others and knowledge of the supernatural constitute being a Traditional Person.

<sup>43</sup> Western institutions who have no academic or background knowledge about traditional communities may be faced with individuals who self identify as ‘spokespersons/elders’ who in fact do not have the required training within our cultural systems and who may merely be old. Elders for example should not be abusive and argumentative as this suggests being out of balance.



mechanism. It is for this reason that it is a cultural concept deemed essential for working within all First Nations communities. This is problematic in part because of the great cultural diversity found within the province. More importantly if programs and additional training is offered along these lines what does that say to traditional elders who might not have been raised with this teaching?

### What is that Elders/S'ul'elehw do?

1. S'ul'elehw who are familiar with the rules associated with good living and who understand the mechanisms of change within our worlds, both traditional and non-traditional “have special gifts” and are considered “exceptionally wise<sup>44</sup>” in terms of our relationships with the creator, the natural and supernatural worlds. They are best equipped to provide advice to individuals and communities (a) who wish to conduct ceremonies or (b) to provide advice to individuals and or communities who are under stress. All of this for the purpose of assisting individuals and the community to understand the importance of ‘relatedness’ to all living things including the natural and supernatural worlds. In addition they understand the importance of applying ancestral teachings to maintain balance and order.<sup>45</sup>
2. S'ul'elehw are considered “essential to the perpetuation and renewal of the traditional way of life”<sup>46</sup> They are the ones consulted when names are to be conferred, when ceremonies are determined, and who define what preparations might be undertaken. They are the individuals who are best equipped to ensure the perpetuation of values and or approaches which result in continued and or good relations with individuals and communities. It is because of their knowledge and experience of the traditional way of life and specific applications of teachings associated with ‘being strong and clean’ they may be asked to lead prayers and ceremonies which involve transformation and change. In a secular sense because of their familiarity with the requirements of consistent application of teachings they are called upon to either lead ceremonies or provide opening songs, prayers for community functions.<sup>47</sup> Elders may also wish to introduce traditional cleansing mechanisms for individuals or community to introduce the individual to the sacred, or to teach focus.
3. Their knowledge based on a rich ceremonial/social systems and its inter-relationships enables them to serve as “counselors, guides and as resources” and

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<sup>44</sup> Elders Perspectives. Perspectives and Realities. Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. Volume 4 1996:110

<sup>45</sup> To assist with correlating the role/s of traditionally trained elders within modern organizations please see “Thunderbirds, Thunder-Beings, Thunder-Voices: The Application of Traditional Knowledge and Children’s Rights in Support of Aboriginal Children’s Education” P. Cook and W. White in The American Review of Canadian Studies. Spring and Summer 2001. pp 331-247

<sup>46</sup> *ibid.* p. 118

<sup>47</sup> From other territories an elder might conduct and or introduce methods of prayer and or ceremonies such as a ‘Sweat Lodge’ ceremony to introduce individuals to ‘the other’ and perhaps to introduce ‘a sense of belonging.’

further provides the “authority, wisdom, insight<sup>48</sup>” to assist the young of our nations who may not have the advantage of traditional training or who may not understand their place in the world.

4. Traditional training meant to assist families and the young to cope with changes and to prepare for their role in our social/cultural systems are also meant to assist with personal and cultural issues (ie poverty, racism). It is for these reasons that an elder maintains a lifestyle which is free from alcohol, drugs as well as great sadness and or pain. It is of course preferable that a traditional elder who operates with the young and or the vulnerable has lived a clean life for at least 10 to 15 years. Sulalewq who may have once offended others might also be able to speak to ceremonial cleansing systems he or she has undertaken to ‘cleanse’ themselves of bad behaviour. Individuals of various ages, in particular elders, are expected to apply healing mechanisms to maintain either community and or individual stability. It is this path of understanding the mechanisms associated with openness and maintaining great humility which allows them to continuously access sacred energies.

During the seventies and eighties elders, more appropriately called S’ul’elehw within the Salish region who worked with agencies within our reserves were faced with government and or funding policy which suggested elders should volunteer their labour<sup>49</sup>. The degree to which it has not been possible for our own organizations and federal and provincial governments to catch up with the recommendations contained within the recent Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) which provides systematic and convincing evidence about the value of traditional knowledge and those who carry teachings elders may now be faced with an archaic system which devalues traditional knowledge.

A failure to acknowledge the intellectual, cultural, social and spiritual value of the role of elders is inconsistent with the recent Royal Commission Report which recommended:

- Aboriginal, federal, provincial and territorial governments acknowledge the essential role of elders and the traditional knowledge that they have to contribute to rebuilding Aboriginal nations and reconstructing institutions to support Aboriginal self-determination and well-being. This acknowledgement should be expressed in practice by
- c. compensating Elders in a manner that conforms to cultural practices and recognizes their expertise and contribution.

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<sup>48</sup> Elders Perspectives. Perspectives and Realities. Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. Volume 4 1996: 109

<sup>49</sup> This unfortunate perception was wrapped in the perception that ‘Indians’ had no value or were fraught with social problems. In addition there are few if any University College courses which provides systematic an understanding of the complex nature of traditional communities.

## Appendix 1

### Songs, Masks, Rattles, Teachings Emerge, Namings and Memorials: Coast Salish Winter Ceremonials<sup>50</sup> 2007 - 2010<sup>51</sup>

Danny Daniels & Family	June 16, 2007	Siem Lelum <sup>52</sup>
Baker-Nahanee Memorial <sup>53</sup>	June 30, 2007	Capilano, N. Van
Fred George <sup>54</sup>	July 28, 2007	Georgetown
Modeste Family/Marie Joe	Aug. 4, 2007	Siem Lelum
Ida Thompson (Modeste) Memorial	Sept. 1, 2007	Siem Lelum
Elsie Canute Memorial	Oct. 20, 2007	Siem Lelum
Modeste/Jones Families	Nov. 03, 2007	Esquimalt
Mildred/Andrew Peter Memorial	Nov. 03, 2007	Penelakut
Leonard Thomas Memorial	Nov. 10, 2007	Malahat
MaryAnn Martin Memorial	Nov. 17, 2007	Somena
Mack Seymour Family	Nov. 24, 2007	Chemainus Bay
Smith Family	Nov. 30, 2007	Chemainus Bay
Francis Louie Memorial	Dec. 01, 2007	Clem Clem
Don Charlie	Dec. 08, 2007	Quamichan
Harvey Family	Dec. 08, 2007	Tulalip, Wash.
Pearl Bill Rodriguez Memorial	Dec. 15, 2007	Lummi, Wash.
Williams/Jimmy Memorial	Dec. 21, 2007	Quamichan
H. Modeste Sr. Memorial	Dec. 29, 2007	Somena

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<sup>50</sup> Within Coast Salish territory, Northwest Washington State and Southwestern British Columbia, operate two Ritual/Religious Institutions the Shaker Church and Winter Dances/Indian Dances (this listing). Both reinforce values (ie working together, helping each other out, having respect for the old, for silence, sharing, having stronger secular and sacred families etc.) and traditions which predate the arrival of the European to our homelands and are seen by the Xwulmuxw as Sacred. The first portion of the title is meant to assist the reader to understand the complexity of this Ritual Institution.

<sup>51</sup> Louise Underwood "Indian Dance List 2007 -2010" Revised April 2007 in Quw'utsun Newsletter Cowichan Tribes April 2007 Volume 4: 19 - 20

<sup>52</sup> Siem Lelum Gymnasium, Georgetown, Somena, Clem Clem a Luts, Quamichan are located on the Cowichan Reserve, Duncan, B.C.

<sup>53</sup> Normally a family would host a memorial event four years after the death of a member of their family. A memorial signifies the end of the mourning cycle. Outside specialists using either a Mask/Sxwaixwe or Rattle/Shulmuxstes are hired to help bring balance to the family and to protect them from the

<sup>54</sup> A family may plan a full year to three or four years before hosting a Dance. Prior to holding a formal dance immediate families might have met two or three times a year in order to either share the costs associated with holding a naming ceremony, to remind families of moving together during such an event. It is also believed that younger members would be taught how to move in and prepare to host an event. Specialists who may be invited to sing ancestrally owned songs, perform rites with a Rattle/Shulmuxstes or Mask/Sxwaixwe are normally visited a year before the event and formally asked to 'help out'.

Clarks and Edwards	Dec. 31, 2007	Swinomish, Wash.
Chester Joseph Sylvester Memorial (no children)		
	Jan. 05, 2008	Somena
Mitchell/Harris Families	Jan. 12, 2008	Chemainus Bay
Sparrow Family Memorial	Jan. 12, 2008	Musqueam
Edwards Family <sup>55</sup>	Jan. 19, 2008	Malahat
Norbert Bagley Memorial <sup>56</sup>	Jan. 25, 2008	Somena
Dorothy/Denise Joe	Jan. 26, 2008	Somena
Seymour Family	Feb. 08, 2008	Quamichan
Dickie Lewis	Feb. 02, 2008	Musqueam
Doug White Sr. Memorial	Feb. 09, 2008	Nanaimo
Emily/Howard Manson Memorial	Feb. 15, 2008	Nanaimo
Rose James Memorial	Feb. 16, 2008	Penelakut
Wayne Seward & Family	Mar. 15, 2008	Nanaimo
Dora Sampson Memorial	Feb. 23, 2008	Chemainus Bay
Dennis Alphonse Sr. Memorial	Mar. 01, 2008	Clem Clem
Lillian Jack-Munson	Mar. 08, 2008	Somena
Dan/Lila/Gail Sam	Mar. 22, 2008	Tsartlip
Yvonne Johnny Memorial	Mar. 29, 2008	Clem Clem
Phyllis Modeste-Tallman Memorial	June 21, 2008	Siem Lelum
Norman Johnny Memorial	Nov. 01, 2008	Somena
Lillian Charles Memorial	Nov. 08, 2008	Beecher Bay
Gloria Aleck Memorial	Nov. 08, 2008	Chemainus Bay
Karen/Wally Paige & Maude Thomas	Nov. 15, 2008	Esquimalt
Sara (Sampson) Thomas Memorial	Nov. 22, 2008	Chemainus Bay
Arlene Point Memorial	Nov. 29, 2008	Musqueam
Mary/Ernie Charlie	Nov. 29, 2008	Kilgaard
Kelly Antoine	Dec. 06, 2008	Somena
Norris/Thomas Memorial	Dec. 13, 2008	Clem Clem
Ester (Bear) Joe Memorial	Dec. 27, 2008	Clem Clem
Doreen Baker Memorial	Jan. 10, 2009	Beecher Bay

<sup>55</sup> A full year before a date has been set the host family normally attends regional dances and with the use of a formal speaker/Qwe Qwals will walk around the bighouse announcing the date of their work and inviting communities around the bighouse to attend.

<sup>56</sup> If the memorial is held for a person who was a member of the Winter Dance Complex/Siowan his or her song would be sung for the last time at the memorial. Senior Men and Women who belonged to Siowan are hired to practice the song four nights prior to the event. For these practice events the host family hires a QweQwal, cooks to prepare an evening meal for all of the guests. Men are hired to cut and bring wood to light and warm the bighouse.

H. Henry Memorial	Jan. 24, 2009	Malahat
Effie Brown Memorial	Feb. 07, 2009	Nanaimo
Guerin Family Memorial	Feb. 21, 2009	Musqueam
George Jack (Che-Chong) Memorial	Feb. 28, 2008	Somena
Dave, Isabelle Johnny. Annie and Joe – Paige Memorial	Mar. 14, 2009	Clem Clem
Loretta Johnny/Andrea George	Mar. 28, 2009	Clem Clem
Edward Canute Memorial	Sept. 26, 2009	?
Loretta Sam/Lorena Jones	Nov. 07, 2009	Songhees
Basil Point Memorial	Nov. 07, 2009	Musqueam
Francis K. Joe Jr/Norris Memorial	Nov. 14, 2009	Clem Clem
Peter, Arlene Sam	Nov. 28, 2009	Penelakut
Alice Bagley Memorial	Jan. 23, 2010	Clem Clem
Lisa Underwood	Jan. 30, 2010	Tsartlip
Eva George Memorial	Feb. 06, 2010	Chemainus Bay
Gerald Point Sr. Memorial	Feb. 13, 2010	Musqueam
Roger Morris Memorial	Mar. 06, 2010	Esquimalt
Clarence, Monica Rice Memorial	Mar. 06, 2010	Esquimalt
Madeline, George Daniels Memorial	Mar. 27, 2010	Quamichan
Agnes Aleck Memorial	Nov. 06, 2010	Chemainus Bay
Madeline Thomas	Nov. 13, 2010	Tsawout