



## Boundary Aboriginal Education Newsletter

*December 2006  
Vol. 1*

### Aboriginal Education Advisory Committee Members:

Maxine Ruzicka  
Joan Holmes  
Ann Rexin  
Anna Groeneveld  
Danny Williamson  
Erika Schoenefeld  
Leda Leander  
Louise Bayles  
Wanda Hecht  
Jennifer Turner  
Amy Allan  
Andrew Green

Welcome to the first edition of the Boundary Aboriginal Education Newsletter. We will be publishing at least two district newsletters this year. Our aims are to keep parents informed about district activities, to share some of the works and learning of your children and to profile Aboriginal individuals or groups who share their skills and talents with schools.

Last school year ended with the signing of the Boundary Aboriginal Education Enhancement Agreement on June 21, 2006. This document with the identification of our three goals was signed by representatives from our local Aboriginal community – the Metis Association and the Boundary All Nations Aboriginal Council, Ministry of Education and School District No. 51. The three goals that we are committed to work on over the next five years are:

1. To improved Aboriginal student achievement in:
  - Reading
  - Numeracy
2. To increase awareness, knowledge and respect for Aboriginal culture in all students. Students with Aboriginal ancestry will have an enhanced sense of belonging and pride in their Aboriginal ancestry.
3. To improve the Secondary School completion rates of Aboriginal students.

We will keep you posted on upcoming events and the successes of our students in their educational endeavors. The Boundary Aboriginal Education Advisory Council has room for a parent representative from each school. If you have time to work with us, please contact your school principal to put your name forward. The Advisory meets four to five times a year.

Maxine Ruzicka  
Director of Instruction

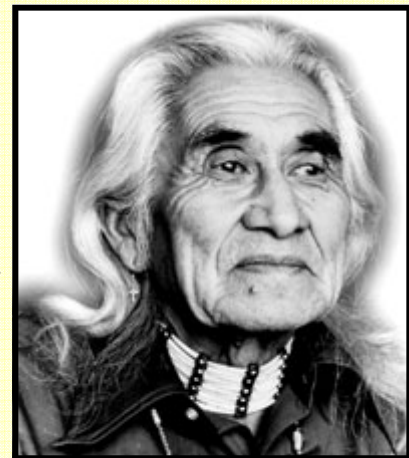
### **There is a Longing**

There is a longing among all people and creatures to have a sense of purpose and worth. To satisfy that common longing in all of us we must respect each other.

In the olden times man and creature walked as friends who carried the beauty of the land in their hearts. Now each one of us is needed to make sure the salmon can find a place to spawn and the bear cub a tree to climb.

There is little time left and much more effort needed!

From the Best of Chief Dan George



The Aboriginal Education programs at Perley, Hutton, and CLES have had an exciting fall. We have studied salmon, their environment, and their importance to aboriginal people. We have studied how each person's opinion carried equally importance and how all-aboriginal cultures showed a deep respect for our mother earth.

Next year, 2007, we have planned many educational hands-on events. Billy Metcalf will speak at each school to tell us how efficient the Aboriginal people were in using all parts of an animal. We will study the totem poles, how they were designed, and how totems were chosen. We will study legends and make some of our own.

I am very fortunate to be working with such wonderful students in such a stimulating and culturally rich environment. Please feel free to contact me if you would like to discuss any part of this program.

Wanda Hecht 442-0034

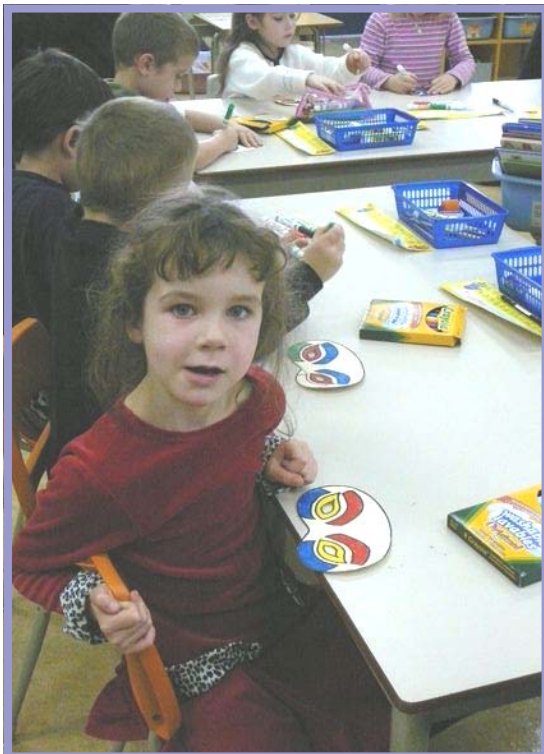


### **Hutton Elementary**

Mrs. Perry's, Mrs. Gustafson's, and Mr. Vanlerberg's classes recently began their study of the potlatch ceremony common to the West coast. We began by reading a book about a young girl whose family was giving a potlatch in her honour. During this ceremony she was given a new name. We have made headbands with our new name and exchanged potlatch invitations. We held our very own potlatch on December 14, 2006. Yum, Yum!!

### **Perley Elementary**

Mr. Konar's grade four class has completed their study of the talking stick. They learned how the talking stick ensured that each member of the Talking Circle was given equal respect. They made talking sticks, question feathers and wrote about the talking stick's uses. The talking stick Mr. Konar kept will ensure that respect contin-

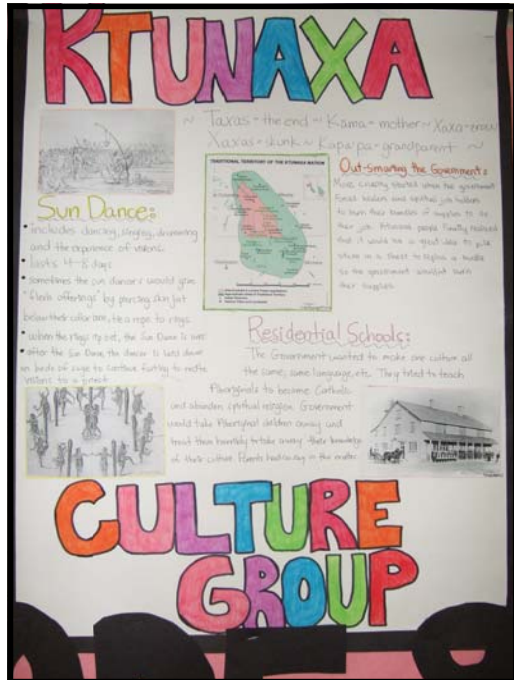


### **Christina Lake Elementary**

Mrs. Clemens' kindergarten studied the story of "Raven", the trickster. The story, a Northwest coastal tale, tells how the first people on earth got the sun. Once the masks were completed we wore them and pretended to be the tricky raven. What fun we had !

CLES held a potlatch celebration. Each class prepared a traditional dish and brought it to the potlatch table to share. The 6/7 class learned how to prepare candied salmon. They prepared the salmon and smoked it the same day. The 4/5 class prepared candied sweet potato and corn bannock. The 1/2/3 classes prepared bannock and the kindergarten class prepared fresh fruits and veggies. We were very honored to have Joan Holmes at the potlatch to offer the opening prayer. What a feast we had!!





West Boundary Elementary School Drummers



### Social Studies 9 - Ktunaxa Projects Grand Forks Secondary School

The objective of the Ktunaxa posters was to get students to research and visually interpret their traditional and contemporary culture of the Ktunaxa people.

The students displayed the posters in the school hallway to inform the rest of the students in the school about local Aboriginal presence in the Kootenay region.

### West Boundary Elementary School Aboriginal Education Program

The whole school was honoured with a presentation by Billy Metcalf on “Historical Uses of Animal Hides, Bones and Horns” - see biography on page 5.

With the collaboration of the classroom teacher, I have designed a unit of studies that parallels the grade seven Social Studies curriculum on ancient civilizations. We have highlighted the theory of the frozen land bridge, shown a video about the Inuit before the introduction of Europeans, and familiarized the grade six and seven students with plants and grasses used by the Northern and Southern Aboriginal peoples of British Columbia. The students heard a legend about the First Strawberry - a lesson about understanding one another and respect.

In the grade one and two classroom, to correlate with the Social Studies and Science units of Preparing for Winter, we read legends about the cranberry, the strawberry, the first food for the people, examined the cornstalks and corncobs, learned about the corn-maidens, the Three Sisters, ground some corn kernels (or tried to), baked corn bread, ate squash seeds, tasted dried cranberries and sunflower seeds. We made bannock and ate it with wild berry jam. We completed a weaving project (rainbow fish) then the teacher finished a collage of seeds with the students.

An opportunity to make pine needle baskets at noon hour will occupy those who wish to sign up .... already some grades fours and fives have shown interest.

Ann Rexin  
Aboriginal Support Teacher  
West Boundary Elementary School



## **Billy Metcalf Traditional Hide Tanner**

I tan deerhides using hand scraping and natural tanning agents, brains and smoke. The result is a very soft chamois like leather known as buckskin. Other names are "brain tanned" buckskin, "Indian tanned", "home tanned", "smoke tanned", and there's probably some more.

Though very soft and comfortable to wear, buckskin is also very tough and durable. This is one of the oldest ways of tanning hides that people have developed. It was used all over the world at one time or another and the First Nations of North America used this method, in different variations, almost exclusively.

I've been tanning hides this way for twenty years now. About seven years ago I started tanning full time for a living. I tan about 150 deer hides a year now. I've sold my hides all over North America including Alaska. They've been used for Pow wow and ceremonial regalia, water drum skins, historic re-enactments and wedding clothes.

### **Sinixt - A Nation Forgotten**

Submitted to the Grand Forks Gazette by Merissa Kelly, Gr. 9 Student, GFSS

Marilyn James spoke to students about how her people, the Sinixt are considered extinct in Canada. Students did not understand how that could be because, if the Sinixt are extinct, then why was she even there? The British Crown, which was the government of the time, took the land from the Sinixt and when they prepared the legal documents about the land, they proclaimed that the Sinixt were extinct. Today, the Sinixt are fighting to get their land back and once again become recognized as a nation. If and when they win that fight they will be entitled to the benefits other Aboriginal peoples have on reserves in Canada.

For example, if you are living and working on a reserve you don't have to pay taxes on your income or on the items you purchase on the reserve. That's a benefit but it isn't as great as it sounds because, as Marilyn explained, there really isn't a lot of work available on reserves.

What's most important about the Sinixt becoming recognized as a distinct nation is that it officially gives them back their identity - and identity is important to all of us. If you think about it, until they get their land back and are recognized by the government and the rest of us, in some ways, they are only ghosts!

## When the Wind Blows

When the wind blows, feel it, as it rushes past your ears  
Know it, as it comes  
Embrace it when it washes over your body

The wind is never mean  
And it is always clean  
And is very pure

Let it be your friend, for it is your only true friend

Who is never mean  
Yet is always clean  
And is always very pure

When the wind blows, it does not push you, nor hurt you, but embraces you like a friend  
The wind does not get mad, but it does get mighty cold

Because it is never mean  
And is always clean  
And will always be pure

If you are sad or mad, let the wind help, for it will wash clean away  
Your pains and sorrows, and blow them away and so,  
When the wind blows always remember;

The wind is never mean  
And it is always clean  
And will always be pure

For when the wind blows, it will blow you away

by Spencer Holmes  
Grade 11  
Boundary Central Secondary School

## Aboriginal Education Counselling Report Amy Allan

The counselling support program was off to a flying start quite quickly this year. Because I have been involved over the years with many of the kids and school staff, it seemed that it was a fairly easy stepping-in process. I have been extremely appreciative of everyone in the District who have been so gracious in offering their support and guidance, as well as their patience when need be. Also, Joan, Erika and the Métis group have been instrumental in helping me get into the flow of things. I am working in six schools (GFSS, GES, MES, BCSS, FWLC & BLC) in three days and thus feel like I might soon need to grow wings. I am working with kids individually as well as doing some group art work in the two alternate programs. So far it has been a very full and enriching couple of months. I look forward to seeing how everything will move and develop as this program grows.