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# President's message

*Annita McPhee, President of Tahltan Central Council*



Greetings Tahltan members and Elders. This month we have many great stories to share with you. From young Austin Brown keeping the Tahltan tradition of trapping alive, to a celebration of George Edzerza's life and contributions to our nation, these Tahltans are an inspiration to us all!

At the beginning of January, I spoke at the "Save the Fraser Declaration" signing in Vancouver. On behalf of the Tahltan Nation, I signed the declaration to support coastal First Nations in their struggle to protect waterways and the coastline.

It is important for people to know as First Nations, we stand in solidarity from north to south to protect our watersheds. It is our duty not just as First Nations, but as people. We are in a critical time where our lands, water, and food sources are at risk.

On that note, I am honoured to announce that all new coal tenures have been paused in the Klappan by the

Province and Tahltan Central Council (TCC). This is a huge step towards our long-term vision of protecting our Sacred Headwaters forever!

Meduh to our land protectors who stood up for us, our Tahltan Nation, leadership and our allies. We are getting closer!

As a leader for our great nation, I work to protect our interests in our territory, whether that means creating benefits from our land through responsible development or protecting our waters and environment.

There may be some things happening in other territories that have the potential to negatively affect us so I feel it is my moral responsibility to fight for clean water and good fish and will continue to lend my voice in support of these important issues, both inside our territory and beyond.

Due to growing concerns throughout our nation regarding potentially negative impacts the Fukushima nuclear disaster may have on our fisheries, I sent a letter to AFN National Chief Atleo seeking action to ensure the magnitude of potential impacts is properly studied, and that everything within the power of our nations and Canada is being done to ensure our salmon are saved.

Last month, I also spoke at the Premier's Resource Forum about energy in Tahltan territory. I enjoy these opportunities to speak at forums geared toward industry and government audiences to share our Tahltan perspective on our territory and our approaches toward development.

I am able to spread our message that some of our lands and water are sacred to us and we will always protect those areas, but that there are areas we

are open to developing and receiving benefits from those developments.

It is important for us to have a voice at these events, as industry and government representatives need to hear how BC Hydro's new powerline is impacting our people and will continue to.

They needed to hear the line was built to access Tahltan resources and we will never allow companies to come in if there is no benefit for our nation, nor will we allow projects where the impacts are too great. We won't allow development in our sacred headwaters. There are some energy projects we have accepted, and clearly some we will never accept. There are many ways to stand up for what we believe in and not lose our integrity or dignity.

I am also happy to share with our nation that I am now a member of the Aboriginal Strategic Engagement Committee for BC Hydro. Out of 40 applicants, there were eight Aboriginal from across the province that were accepted, including me. I am honoured to help create change for our people.

Thank you to the people who inspire me with your courage every time you stand up for our land or yourself.

Thank you to all the people who are healing and helping us to heal.

Thank you to all the people who help without judgment to make people's lives better, including mine.

Meduh!

Annita

# Keeping a tradition alive



"I come from a long line of trappers," says Austin Brown, a 14-year-old Tahltan from the Crow Clan who has been trapping for two years. "My grandpa, my dad, and my uncle – they all trapped. So I'm happy to be keeping the tradition alive."

Austin traps around Telegraph Creek with his father, David Brown, who taught him everything he knows. Austin's friend, Waylon Tashoots, also 14, traps with them now too.

The Grade 9 students sell the furs (of wolverines, pine martens, fishers, lynx, foxes) to a large fur buyer in Prince George called the North American Fur Auction, which sells furs to people all over the world.

Furs can be mailed in or dropped off, and each type of fur has a set price. Austin is saving up the money he earns to buy a four-wheeler ATV quad.

Both boys know the trapping process from beginning to end: from making bait from fish they catch in the summer to building the boxes to hold the traps to stretching out the skins to dry on stretching boards.

Austin says that after making the boxes, which secure the traps and protect them from snow, they boil the traps to get rid of old smells. Then they drive out to good spots his father knows about. They set the trap in the front of the box, with the bait in the back. The animal is caught when it tries to go around the trap to get to the bait.

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**“ My grandpa, my dad, and my uncle – they all trapped. So I'm happy to be keeping the tradition alive. ”**

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Austin's preferred method is the "Conibear" trap (a Canadian invention that catches animals on the neck and kills them almost instantly, ensuring less suffering for the animal and better fur quality).

Traps must be checked daily, he says, to make sure that wolverines don't eat caught martens and that unwanted squirrels are removed. Once Austin found a live wolverine in a trap, snapping and trying to get at him. He had to shoot it. Usually, however, the animal has been killed quickly in the Conibear trap and is already frozen.

Catching lynx is different. One way is to hang brightly coloured ribbons from a tree, with a trap set behind the ribbons. There are also snares and other kinds of traps and methods.

After catching an animal, Austin always spreads tobacco it and on the ground, then gives thanks for its life. His mother, Margie, taught him to do this. Soon, with the money he is saving from selling furs, Austin will be able to give thanks for a new four-wheeler!

# Natural-born artist Noah Allison



**A group of Tahltan youth in Ottawa for National Day of Healing & Recognition with Justin Trudeau. Second from the right: Noah Allison with Justin Trudeau to his left.**

Noah Allison was just three years old when he realized that he wanted to be an artist, and he has never swayed from that dream.

Now 16, he has already been recognized for his artwork, including being selected to travel from Prince Rupert to Ottawa to represent the Tahltan and Tshimsian people this past June at the National Day of Reconciliation and Healing.

At the event, Noah and three other students – Marina Ponzini, Kimberly Aksidan and Thomas Lavigne – presented a bentwood box and bear statue they had made.

Noah is thankful for the support of his large family, especially his parents Charlotte Etzerza and Mark Allison, and his mentor and cousin Alano Edzerza.

His grandparents were Carl Murray Etzerza, a Tahltan from Telegraph Creek; Dorothy Pahl (Clifton), a Tshimsian from Hartley Bay; George Vernon Allison, who

is Scottish; and Jeannine Fillion, who is French. His paternal grandparents live in Ottawa.

Noah's mother, Charlotte, remembers that when Noah was growing up he was always one of the most artistic kids in his classes, and that he was always passionate about his art, taking great care in his art projects for school.

"He was often chosen to do special art projects for the school, like posters," she said. "And twice, his artwork was featured on banners that are distributed throughout Prince Rupert in the summer months."

The story behind Noah being selected to go to Ottawa last year is a good example of Noah's dedication to his art. It all started when Noah's Grade 10 art teacher, Miss Parker, told the class that they would be making a bentwood box and a grizzly bear statue and that four students would be chosen to go to Ottawa to present it. The presentation

was to be a special part of the national day of recognition for the people who were taken to residential schools.

As both of Noah's maternal grandparents are survivors, this event was of great importance to Noah. He told Miss Parker, "I will be one of those kids you select." Then he came home and told his parents the same thing.

"Well, he worked endlessly and tirelessly on that project," his mother said. "He stayed extra hours after school, worked on his lunch hour, and also gave up 75% of his spring break to go in and work on this project til it was done.

"So we were not surprised when he told us he had been chosen to go to Ottawa as the team leader, and would be making a presentation in the Smálgayax (Coast Tshimsian) language.

"It was a proud day for us and for the Tahltan and Tshimsian people when he stood on Parliament Hill and spoke loud



and clear in our language. As we are generational survivors, it was an honour to stand and witness this day in history.”

This is just the beginning of proud days for Noah and his family; his passion for his culture and its art continues to take him places.

During the Christmas holidays, he was in Victoria participating in the British Columbia Youth Parliament. This organization serves the youth of BC

through projects that further their mental, physical, and spiritual well-being.

Recently, Noah was nominated for the Peter Henderson Bryce award for Children and Youth.

This award recognizes children and youth who, individually or in groups, advocate for the safety, health or well-being of First Nations, Métis and Inuit children and youth. The award recipient will be notified in February 2014.

**Left: Noah with Lorne Cardinal of Corner Gas in Ottawa for National Day of Healing & Recognition.**

**Middle: Noah in his regalia with the Bentwood Box and Grizzly bear that is on display at Wabano Health center in Ottawa.**

**Right: The entire group of youth during session at Youth Parliament in Victoria.**

## Find out more about Noah Allison

Here are some links detailing Noah’s contribution towards creating and presenting a bentwood box as a part of National Day of healing and reconciliation in Ottawa.

<http://www.thenorthernview.com/news/202420571.html>

<http://www.wabano.com/news-media/box-of-hope/>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R9qibE5r4yl>

Here is a link to Noah’s interview with Trevor Jang on CFNR Radio’s Journies program.

<http://www.classicrockcfnr.ca/?s=Noah+Allison>

Noah was away over the Christmas holidays to participate in the British Columbia Youth Parliament. More information about this organization is available from their website.

<http://www.bcp.org/>

# Community update

## *Message from Chief Marie Quock - Iskut Band*



Our Chief Louie Arena was fully completed last week, except for the ice plant. Unfortunately we will not be able to get the ice plant until the transmission line is hooked up to our community which is scheduled for May 2015.

Our community was not able to use the arena due to mild temperatures until the past two weeks when the weather turned cold. The first hockey game played in Chief Louis Arena was on February 1, 2014.

Our community members are extremely happy and proud to have an arena and are making great use of it. It has quickly become the 'place to be' during the evenings either to play hockey or to watch hockey. We are planning to have the official opening of the arena in the next few weeks.

Feddie Louie is the Band Manager for the Iskut Band as of December 1, 2013, and has resigned from the position of Health Director for the Iskut Band. Feddie was employed in both positions previously. Jolene Louie is now the Education Manager for the Iskut Band. Jolene was previously employed as the Education Co-ordinator for the Iskut Band. Terri Lynn Nole is the new Health Director for the Iskut Band. Terri took on this position as of November 12, 2013.

## Artist Profile: Lorraine (Pinky) Henry

Lorraine (Pinky) Henry is a Tahltan craftswoman who sells her traditional craftwork through her own little business, "Pinky's Crafts." (She's had her nickname since infancy; her father called her "my little pinky" because she was swaddled in pink when he first saw her.) Now 68, she is based in Fort St. John.



Pinky's specialty is Tahltan regalia – vests and scarves made of Melton wool and featuring traditional designs embellished with beads and quills. She also makes wall hangings and takes custom orders. Her crafts fly off the shelves of the local businesses that sell them – in fact, she has nothing in stock right now and has trouble keeping things for herself. "The eagle and eagle feather designs are the most popular," she said. "Once, I was wearing a vest with a large eagle design, and someone liked it so much they insisted on buying it right then and there!"

Long recognized in the community for her beautiful craftwork, Pinky was invited to participate several years ago in a large project called "The Quilt of Belonging." This quilt consists of 263 fabric squares, with each square featuring designs by 70 different Aboriginal groups and 193 immigrant nationalities in Canada. The Tahltan square was the distinctive Tahltan crest, which features the two clans of the Tahltan nation, the Wolf Clan and the Crow Clan. Pinky contributed the abstract wolf and crow designs, which she embellished with beads and quills. All of the Elders in Telegraph Creek participated by sewing on one of the small faux mother of pearl buttons that framed the Tahltan square of the quilt. (To see it, visit [www.invitationproject.ca](http://www.invitationproject.ca).)

# AltaGas is seeking qualified Tahltans for the Northwest Projects Operations Team



AltaGas is looking to develop a small team of dedicated professionals and Journeymen to manage the operation and maintenance of their Forrest Kerr, Volcano Creek and McLymont Creek Generating Stations.

Before advertising generally for these positions, we are looking for qualified individuals within the Tahltan community to fill Senior Operator and Junior/Apprentice positions.

Reporting to the Operations Manager, responsibilities include:

- Responsible for all aspects of routine day-to-day operations, as well as routine maintenance and facility emergency repairs.
- Day-to-day inspection and recording of operating parameters including output levels, temperatures, vibration levels and condition status
- Investigation and repair of major and minor equipment faults – both mechanical and electrical – on a 24/7 basis while on duty.
- Assistance with planning major maintenance activities.
- Completing routine and unplanned maintenance as part of the team that may or may not include outside contactors.
- Preparing, or assisting with preparing, operation and maintenance reports.
- Monitoring and reporting on river flows or other environmental factors.

## Senior Operator position

The Senior Operator ideally has experience operating a similar run-of-river hydro generating station. However, the role is also suited to a Journeyman Electrician, Millwright, Mechanic or I&C specialist with 10 years' experience in plant maintenance in another industry.

## Junior/Apprentice position

The Junior or Apprentice position is suited to an Apprentice or Journeyman with limited experience in the above trades. A Mechanic may also be considered.

Successful candidates will be hands-on self-starters, capable of working effectively in either small groups or alone, as needed. The ideal candidate will have good trouble-shooting techniques and the ability to diagnose and correct equipment malfunctions. A safe work ethic is mandatory. Basic computer skills are required and advanced computer skills are considered an asset. Basic physical fitness is required.

## About this opportunity

- A permanent camp will be constructed for the operations team. The facilities will be designed to reflect the permanent nature of the positions, and will include spacious sound-proofed bedrooms with semi-private washrooms and other amenities.
- The schedule will be 15 days on shift, followed by 13 days off. During time on, Operators will be "on-call" to deal with emergencies.
- On-the-job training will be provided.

AltaGas offers competitive salaries and generous benefits for all permanent employees. If a permanent position with a progressive and dynamic company in the clean energy sector sounds appealing, send your resume to [careers@altagas.ca](mailto:careers@altagas.ca).

# Agouta — George Edzerza

April 8, 1908 – Jan 31, 1987



**Left: George with the Nonnock flag. He participated in all Tahltan AGMs. Top Right: George & Grace Edzerza were married for almost 61 years and raised 18 children. (In front of his parents' house in Goondachagga). Bottom Right: George (L), with only Grade 3, built two barges to carry machinery across Dease Lake when Highway 37 was being built around the lake. Johnny Williams (right) helped build and operate them.**

Quotes from *My Story*, a private tape.

George Agouta Edzerza was the son of Etheny (Mary) and George Etzerza, born in Goondachagga (Tahltan village). A marriage was arranged between George and Grace Creyke by his mother and Grace's grandmother, Naddahootma (Honey Jo). They were married February 8, 1926.

*"Nonnock was my Uncle. He taught us that we needed to lead the people because we are in the Chief's Family. Old people would lecture and tell stories to teach us. We worked hard to live: dried meat, put up fish, cut wood, tanned hides, trapped..."*

George followed Nonnock's ancestral teachings: At age, 14 he walked to Treaty Creek to participate and witness a Peace Treaty gathering with the Nisga'a Nation. He continued to be involved in politics within our Nation, BC, and Canada. He was a force in the election of his friend Frank Calder, Nisga'a. And

was on first name terms with the likes of Bill Bennett (Victoria) and Paul Martin (Ottawa).

*"We learned to read and write from the Anglican missionaries. They also taught how to get on with other people, about other places and other countries.*

*"I saw what a handicap we lived under—we had to follow rules from missionaries and the Indian Agent."*

Going Outside for an education was not to happen for George so he got work wherever he could. George worked as a geologist's helper, pack train hauler, boatman, and builder of roads, bridges and buildings. He hauled mail between Telegraph Creek and Atlin by dog sled—and spoke of reaching Atlin on April 22, 1922 on his first trip.

George and Grace homesteaded Ten Mile where they grew vegetables, fished in the Stikine River, and hunted to provide for their family.

George moved his family to Lower Post in 1943. In 1948, George received his Enfranchisement so his children could attend public school and would also allow him to own property.

George moved his family to Atlin in the early 50s where he owned and operated Cassiar Safari Outfitting, one of the largest big game outfits in BC, catering to Europeans and Americans.

George retired in Whitehorse in 1968 where he lived until his passing in 1987.

We have much to be thankful for. Our family patriarch gave up his heritage and moved our family to provide us with an education, in his eyes, one of the most important things in life. It was very important to him that his family remembers who we are, where we came from, and that We Are Tahltan. Meh-du.

Written by his children

# 'The world's biggest button blanket'



Making beautiful button blankets is a traditional art form practised by Tahltan First Nation artists, so the idea of making “the world’s biggest button blanket” – as a way to bring attention to both the art form itself as well as issues of concern within the Tahltan Nation – came naturally to Peter Morin, a 36-year-old Tahltan artist.

Peter has been creating and exhibiting various artworks since 1997, after earning a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the Emily Carr Institute of Art & Design and a Master of Fine Arts from the University of British Columbia.

The six metre by six metre, 300-pound blanket is made of Melton wool, abalone and mother of pearl buttons and innumerable stitches.

Its creation, which was part of a University of Victoria course entitled “Special Topics in Art,” began with a conversation between Peter and Dr. Carolyn Butler-Palmer, an assistant professor in History in Art at the university.

Under their guidance, about 25 Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal students and community members took part in sewing sessions three to four days a week, from September to November 2013.

Elders were involved in the sewing and also gave talks on the history of button blankets during the sessions.

“The inspiration for this project was the Klappan, the Sacred Headwaters, and the Elders and others who are working to protect these vulnerable waters and our territory,” said Peter, who now lives in Brandon, Manitoba, where he is an assistant professor in Visual and Aboriginal Arts with Brandon University.

“When you live away, you are guided by the force of love for your traditional territory. I wanted to contribute, so I tried to support my home community’s efforts with this blanket project, to call attention to the work they’re doing as well as their art. The design on the blanket represents the Klappan. While we stitched, I spoke to the students about this sacred place that needs protection.”

The blanket is being exhibited at Victoria’s Legacy Art Gallery from January to April 2014.

Traditionally, a blanket is “danced” once it is created. Peter and his students “danced the blanket” on January 29th at the First Peoples’ House at the University of Victoria as part of the opening reception for the university’s 2014 Diversity Forum.



# THREAT: The Tahltan Heritage Resources Environmental Assessment Team

*Update from Nalaine Morin*



The Tahltan Heritage Resources Environmental Assessment team (THREAT) was created by the Tahltan Central Council in 2005 to provide advice on resource development projects in Tahltan territory.

THREAT is a unique team that is widely recognized by industry and government in BC and across Canada.

Our mission is to ensure that we continue to meet and uphold the work of our ancestors as written in the 1910 Tahltan Declaration.

We continue to develop our team and work to ensure that we are representing

Tahltan interests regarding land resource management and protection.

We are currently working with people from the Iskut and Telegraph Creek communities on the Klappan strategic initiative to develop strong recommendations for land protection in the Klappan.

The Tahltan and Iskut community member representatives are Dwayne Day and Peter Jakesta. They will be hosting community meetings and talking to Tahltans about the Klappan over the next few months.

We are actively working on developing

our administrative department as well. We welcome Roxanne Ball to the team. She is based out of the Dease Lake office and will be supporting THREAT in planning community meetings, reporting and various other tasks.

We are planning on community meetings this year for THREAT and will be having our first set of meetings in the next few months. Our main projects for this year will be to continue developing our department, community engagement and work on the Tahltan lands database.

As project manager for this team, I am happy to have the opportunity to work with our people.

# Seabridge Gold: KSM project progressing through EA process

*Update from Seabridge Gold*



Seabridge Gold is still in the midst of its Environmental Assessment (EA) application for its KSM Project, which is located 65 kilometers northwest of Stewart.

The project is now one year into the review by the BC Environmental Assessment Office (BC EAO) and the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency (CEAA), along with Treaty and First Nations and other government agencies. We are optimistic about a Government decision later in the year.

As part of the EA process, we held community open houses from July through October in the Tahltan communities of Iskut and Telegraph Creek; in the Nisga'a communities of Gitlaxt'aamiks, Gitwinksihlkw, Laxgalts'ap and Gingolx; and in Terrace, Smithers and Stewart. These Open Houses gave people living in the area the opportunity to learn more about the KSM Project from the team who designed it.

During November and December we held nine full-day Working Group meetings where we presented information about components of the KSM application

and responded to reviewers' questions. Members of the Tahltan Heritage Environmental Assessment Team (THREAT) participated in these meetings.

During the Open Houses and the Working Group meetings, we received a lot of positive feedback from reviewers about the level of detail contained in our application, as well as the time and effort that's gone into this review process.

We believe KSM is technically sound and designed in a way that addresses the concerns of local citizens. Even more important, it is environmentally and socially responsible and represents an important opportunity in Northwestern BC and across Canada.

Following each Open House and Working Group meeting, we respond in writing to any questions or comments about the application.

Once this process is complete, the BC EAO and CEAA will make recommendations to their respective ministers regarding the EA certificate.

In November, Seabridge opened a

KSM Project office in Dease Lake and hired Patricia (Pat) McIntosh as Communications Officer. This is our second community office and is designed to provide Tahltan people with a place to ask questions and to learn more about the project. Our other office is located in Smithers and has been open since 2011.

We are committed to the communities in which we operate. We want to ensure everyone has the opportunity to learn about the KSM Project near where they live, and our community offices are open to anyone who wants to know more.

We welcome questions or comments about the KSM Project. Please email [ksm\\_community@seabridgegold.net](mailto:ksm_community@seabridgegold.net). You can also call our Smithers office at 250.847.4704 or visit the project team at 1235 Main Street. In Dease Lake, we can be reached by phone at 250.771.3301 or in person at Block D, Highway 37 (Service BC Building).

Seabridge and the KSM Project team look forward to continuing to work together with the Tahltan Nation to build strong, healthy and prosperous Tahltan communities.

# Congratulations Tahltans!

## Births

Tamara Quock and Rob Manion are pleased to announce the birth of their baby girl Aailyhia Lacey River Aggie.

Grandma Geraldine Henry is pleased to share that her Tahltan prince arrived on June 4, 2013, weighing 6lbs and 15oz. His proud parents are Darlin Walker and Levi Braun.



Iskut's baby welcoming has a tentative date of March 1. The community will be celebrating 12 new babies this year.

## Birthdays

Agnes Hunter (Dennis) turned 97 on January 12 in Iskut BC. She is one of the eldest Tahltan Elders.

Diane May Burrows (6 Mile Lady) turned 68 on January 19.

## Anniversaries

Tom and Gerry Creyke celebrated their 16th wedding anniversary on Jan 24.

## Tahltan Central Council Facebook Page

If you are not yet a fan of TCC's Facebook Page, please head to [www.facebook.com/tahltancentralcouncil](http://www.facebook.com/tahltancentralcouncil) to stay up-to-date with nation news and events, job postings, member birthdays, anniversaries, and other accomplishments.

## Have a story idea, event, or announcement for the next TCC Newsletter?

### Contact us at:

Tahltan Central Council

PO Box 69 | Dease Lake, BC | V0C1L0

info@tahltan.org | toll-free: 855.TAHLTAN (824.5826) | tel: 250.771.3274 | fax: 250.771.3020

[www.tahltan.org](http://www.tahltan.org)

## Life after High School



Life after high school has been a continual learning experience for George Ball Jr. Shortly after graduating from Dease Lake Secondary, George began his first real job - assembling transmission towers for Valard, a large utility contractor with full-service capabilities for transmission, distribution and communications.

The job involves a lot of heavy lifting, moving steel for the towers around and helping with building them.

George's workday starts at 6:30 a.m. and ends at 6:30 p.m. Workers stay at a work camp near Iskut in three-week shifts. In the evenings, after supper at the kitchen trailer, they sometimes play cards.

George enjoys working outdoors, and doesn't mind the long hours. "It's been like starting a new high school," he said.

"There is so much to learn, and there is a good feeling of accomplishment when you have done the work." He doesn't mind the money either, he says, and plans to stay in the field for the foreseeable future.