



P.O. Box 553
108 Mile Ranch, B.C. V0K 2Z0
tel: 250.791.7267
fax: 250.791.7297
email: grahamleslie@shaw.ca

July 2020 Newsletter

1. A Changing of the Guard at Esk'et

We are saddened to report that Ashley George has stepped down from her role as one of the two Esk'etemc First Nation's Society members. Ashley was Employment & Training Coordinator at Esk'et, and has decided to take a leave of absence from her position there during the coronavirus pandemic. Ashley was appointed by her Band Council in September 2018, and brought a passion to her role as a great representative of the younger generation of Band members. She will be truly missed, but will hopefully return to her position at Esk'et in due course where her continuing interest in, and support of our project will be of great value. We are also grateful for the support Ashley received from her immediate supervisor Bettina Johnson, Esk'et's Economic Development Manager.

Our Society could not be more blessed than it is by Esk'et's decision to replace Ashley with Charlotte Gilbert who was a founding member of our Society in 2006, and who along with her husband Irvine Johnson, has continued to be a staunch supporter of the Society and of its goal to build and operate a Cultural Centre at its 108 Mile Lake site. We are thrilled to have Charlotte return as a member where she will join our President Esk'et Band Councillor Kerry Chelsea in representing their community.

2. The Exhibit Design Process

We continue to have our insights set on a handful of funding opportunities that will arise in the early Fall. If any of our applications are successful, we will hope to be able to commission David Jensen and his team to resume their task of moving the exhibit design development work forward early next year. We don't expect to have much, if anything further to report on this for a few more months.

3. The History of Our Project – Deferred

So that we don't detract from the focus on our beautiful bridge, we have decided to defer our continuing account of the history of our project until next month's edition.

4 The 5th Anniversary of the Building of Our Bridge

In 2014, our overall project was at a temporary standstill. We had received our wonderful celebrated Conceptual Design report from *McFarland Marceau*



Architects Ltd. in December 2013, and had acquired sufficient funding from *INAC* to permit us to prepare a comprehensive business plan and a Phase One Environmental Site Assessment during the first half of 2014, but had no immediate prospects for obtaining the additional funding needed to have our architects continue with their work.

We then learned of a funding program offered by *ArtsVest BC* — an arm of *Business for the Arts* — for which we might be eligible. The program was designed in large measure to match donations contributed to the Society by local businesses, and in fact encouraged applicants to interest their business communities in their projects. We did apply, and we were successful. Then began the exhilarating task of soliciting the support of the larger and medium-sized businesses in Williams Lake and 100 Mile House.

The response was overwhelming, and with the support of more than 30 businesses and organizations in our communities, along with a handful of generous individuals and a very generous contribution from the *New Pathways to Gold Society*, we were able to construct the beautiful bridge that was completed at the end of June 2015 and dedicated in a very moving ceremony on July 1, 2015,

A detailed account of the bridge construction, the subsequent ceremony and the list of contributors can be found on the Society's website page ([click here](#)), and readers are invited to take the opportunity to visit. Any of you stopping at the Government Rest Area at the 108 Mile Lake can get your own first-hand look at the bridge which connects the Rest Area to the site of our proposed Centre.

5. A Final Word

As the coronavirus is spiralling out of control south of the border, and showing disturbing signs of spreading in various regions of Canada, we take this opportunity to wish all our readers and their loved ones a safe journey to the time when we have a vaccine that will offer us all some protection.



Notes to the Reader

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