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# British Columbia: a Community of One

**W**elcome to the Fall *Scrivener*. What a terrific amount of informative and interesting reading we have for you in these pages!

This issue has been the most challenging to put together since I took over the role of Secretary/Executive Director of The Society, some three short years ago. As the articles were passed back and forth from writers and our editor to my desk, this magazine started to take shape. The authors present new legal terms, important historical information, and news about current laws that affect us all.

BC Notaries have just returned from the spectacular valley setting of Cranbrook, site of The Society's 77th Annual General Meeting and our 47th Fall Conference, hosted by the Delta St. Eugene Mission Resort.

We were privileged to be in the territory of the Ktunaxa Nation. We thank them for allowing us a glimpse into their home and their culture. Gordon Sebastian gave us a tour of the wonderful Interpretive Centre in the Mission and shared with the Notaries what life was like in the residential school and how the native children adapted to life within the Mission.

As I heard the stories and viewed photos from a time gone by, I was reminded of my childhood. I was raised in Kitimat, BC, a community that shared

space with the Haisla people. Some of my early chums and classmates were boys from the Kitimaat Village. I recall hearing how happy they were to be able to attend a school near their homes. I remember being astounded that somebody was actually glad to be closer to school!

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As I grew older and my friendships with some of the Kitimaat Village boys developed, I began to understand how traumatic and unjust it was that these youngsters had been taken away from their parents, their homes, their siblings, and their community and just shipped away to an unknown place to be educated—where nothing was familiar, where food was different, and where they had no access to the warmth and comfort of family.

I can recall some of my native friends sharing with me how being sent from a quiet little fishing village on the north coast of British Columbia to a city like Edmonton had such an impact on their life that it took them many years to adjust and recover from that exposure.

Over the years, we lose track of old friends. Many of these fellows went on to become accomplished athletes and well-respected leaders in their communities. After university, they returned home to work with local governments and the provincial and federal governments, to improve the living conditions for their people.



The media often reports on the success and failures of Treaty negotiations, the ups and the downs, the issues of all the stakeholders in the negotiations, and the ongoing issues of funding, cultural protection, and tenure of land.

We are talking about a major part of our life in British Columbia. No matter where you travel in this great province, there is contact with a native group who are and need to be an important part of BC, who contribute a great deal to our cultural makeup and who have provided us with a history and will continue to do so.

In this issue, you will read stories on how our First Nations people are attempting to keep their culture and their place in our province and to teach their young people the language of their ancestors.

The Notary Foundation is committed to providing, when funds are available, Grants and legal education for First Peoples and projects. The Foundation has provided Grants for a number of First Nations legal initiatives, such as the Prince Rupert Restorative Justice program (*Scrivener*, October [Fall] 2001, Vol. 10, No. 3; <http://www.notaries.bc.ca/article.php3?333>).

We recently provided a major Grant to the University of Victoria to establish a Chair of Aboriginal Studies at the Aboriginal Law School.

Enjoy your reading! ▲