

Councillor's Report for Leslie Johnson January 5, 2009

I was sworn in on December 1st. As the only new member of council, I met with Mayor Kulesha on December 4th and 10th to be briefed about some of the on-going issues such as roads and water. I was late, but I did stop by the Village's Birthday and Volunteer Recognition Day on December 5th.

I went to the coffee shop meeting with Gary Coons on December 9th and participated in a discussion of issues with local residents and Gary.

I enjoyed the staff and council luncheon on December 12th at the Oceanview Restaurant. I was sorry that Councillor Olsen's work schedule wouldn't allow him to attend.

I attended the two-day training session in Terrace December 15-17th, learning about such things as how councils work, conflict of interest, media relations. We also had short presentations by some of the corporate sponsors of the event: Rio Tinto Alcan, BC Mining Association and GeoScience BC.

There were two events that I attended on my own behalf that I think relate to the community and my work as a councillor.

I attended a skills development workshop called Heart-Based Communication December 6th and 7th. It was mostly about conflict resolution and making agreements—with one's self and others. I'm hoping that what I learned there will help me as a councillor.

I also attended the flagpole ceremony in honour of Ada Yovanovich at the SHIP building in Skidegate on December 5th (that's why I was late for the Village Birthday party). Ada and her family were long-time residents of Queen Charlotte, living beside the Sea Raven Motel for decades. Ada worked tirelessly for the rights of Native people like her who had lost their federal government "status" through various bureaucratic means associated with the Indian Act; the main one being the policy that Native women lost their "status" if they married a "non-status" man. For that reason many Haida women had to leave their community and extended family and live elsewhere. Many, like Ada, moved to Queen Charlotte and Skidegate Landing. Thanks to the hard work of Ada and many others, that national policy was changed in the 1980's and gradually, almost all the families from Charlotte that were affected have moved back to Skidegate. That's our shared history and an example of the complex social, political and cultural milieu in which we live here on Haida Gwaii. I think that one action has dramatically changed the demographic of our village and has had a profound effect on our community. I believe it also means that we have to work all the harder now to stay connected to our neighbours in Skidegate, both individually and as a community.

Thank you. That concludes my report.