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## January 2021 Newsletter

### 1. The COVID-19 Pandemic

It is now common knowledge that the Canim Lake Band introduced a community lockdown several weeks ago, and that it was lifted effective January 30th after the majority of residents had received a vaccination, and – most tragically – a treasured elder had succumbed to the virus. The loss of any Band member is a devastating event, but the elder in question held a place in the lives of our Society that makes her loss really personal. First of all, she was the mother of our Society's Vice President and immediate Past President, but as the custodian of so much Secwepemc history and as a guardian of Secwepemc language, she was instrumental in informing David Jensen's exhibit design team members during the community meetings they held with our Bands in late 2018 and early 2019.

Your editor has endeavoured to voice support for the community in general and for our Vice President and her family in particular during the past few weeks, without invading their privacy, and while he was anxious to draw attention to the situation, he was reluctant to do so without the express consent of the Band. However, the Cariboo Regional District and the Band, along with the District of 100 Mile House and the RCMP, issued a press release on the morning of January 30th that took the matter out of his hands. That press release is attached to this newsletter, and accompanies our Society's prayers, love and best wishes to the family of the departed and to all Canim Lake Band members.

### 2. Our Applications to Fund Further Exhibit Design Work

Earlier in the month, we received the disappointing news that our application to the Investment Readiness Program to fund the next phase of David Jensen's work was unsuccessful. We were told that requests to the Program had exceeded \$350,000,000 which spoke of almost impossible odds.

That news was, however, followed within days by a call from the Department of Canadian Heritage which informed us that our parallel application to its Museums Assistance Program for an amount to cover David Jensen's work with two of our Bands – one in the upcoming fiscal year and the other in the following one – were being recommended by the Department's Regional Office for approval by the Ottawa headquarters. While we can't be certain that we will be approved at that level, we have been given every reason to believe that Ottawa will endorse the Regional recommendation.

If events turn out as they are shaping up, David's team will engage the Canim Lake Band during the balance of 2021, commencing as soon after the end of April as circumstances permit, and of course with all the appropriate COVID-19 protocols in place. Those arrangements will be planned as soon as the Band administration is able to focus its attention on the matter.



### **3. Our Applications to Fund the Construction of our Centre**

As reported previously, our Society was confronted from the start of our quest for external funding by a Catch 22 situation, posed by the fact that two of the agencies to which we applied, each insisted on an approval by the other as a prerequisite to entertaining our application. We were able to arrange a temporary solution, but are now in the process of negotiating a line of credit with our Society's BMO regional office that will (a) cover the amount of the contribution required of us by the Canada - BC Infrastructure Program until we hopefully receive approval from the Northern Trust (NDIT), and (b) enable us to pay our contractors for the work they perform on the construction prior to us receiving reimbursement from the two senior governments. It's all a bit complicated, but the BMO officials with whom we have been dealing, have been wonderfully helpful and supportive, and we're able to look forward to a successful resolution of our dilemma in the near future.

In the meantime, we have not heard word of our three related applications – the third being to the First Peoples' Cultural Council – but we weren't anticipating learning the outcomes of any of our three applications until later in the year.

### **4. A Final Word about the COVI-19 Pandemic**

We are sure our readers will understand why our opening section focused on the Canim Lake Band, but our thoughts and prayers have in mind not only the members of our other four participating Bands but also everyone else in our broader community. We have felt for some time that notwithstanding the optimism generated by production and distribution of the several vaccines that have already gained approval, the challenge of this pandemic is far from over, and what were always our communities' best defences – face coverings, social distancing, avoidance of large gatherings and hand washing - remain absolutely essential going forward, both to defeat this one and to prepare ourselves for others yet to come. From our Society members to all our readers we again wish you safety and good health.

*The following 2 pages are the aforementioned Press Release.*



#### **Notes to the Reader**

1. If you would prefer not to receive future monthly Newsletters, please notify us by email addressed to [grahamleslie@shaw.ca](mailto:grahamleslie@shaw.ca).
2. If you are not on our direct emailing list, but would like to be added to it, please notify us by email addressed to [grahamleslie@shaw.ca](mailto:grahamleslie@shaw.ca).



Canim Lake Band

The Tsq'escenemc  
"The People of Broken Rock"



Jan. 30, 2021  
21 - 05  
For Immediate Release

## Canim Lake lockdown to lift on Saturday, January 30

*Outbreak status to continue another 4 weeks; phased-in reopening planned for schools and band offices*

Efforts to contain the spread of COVID-19 within the Canim Lake Band are showing success. COVID recoveries in the community now outnumber active cases and the majority of eligible members have received the first round of vaccinations. Working from guidance provided by Interior Health, the community lockdown that has been in place in the community will be lifted on Saturday, January 30.

To support these positive developments, steps continue to be taken to limit the risk of exposure. Affected families in the Canim Lake Band are remaining in isolation at this time and the outbreak status will continue for at least another four weeks. There will also continue to be limited access to the community.

"We continue to use our Secwepemc values to guide our response to the COVID outbreak in our community," notes Chief Helen Henderson. "The Canim Lake Emergency Operations Team has managed to keep our community safe, while dealing with their own sense of loss and stress through the last weeks."

"We recognize the impact this outbreak has had on the community," said Cariboo Regional District Chair Margo Wagner. "On behalf of the Cariboo Regional District I extend our deepest condolences to the Secwepemc people. The passing of elders has a deep impact on any community. It is even more devastating when we lose vital language and cultural knowledge at the same time as loved ones mourn the passing of a family member."

District of 100 Mile House mayor Mitch Campsall is looking forward to seeing the Secwepemc people emerging from lockdown.

"I recognize the sacrifices made by the Canim Lake Band have benefited everyone in the South Cariboo. Through collective action and a unified response, they not only fought back against the outbreak in their own community, but they helped to reduce the risk of virus transmission in the wider South Cariboo area."



# Canim Lake Band

The Tsq'escenemc  
"The People of Broken Rock"



All three local leaders are hopeful that a smooth transition out of lockdown will be achieved. They are asking area residents to play their part by being mindful of the following:

- The community has met Provincial Health Office criteria to end the lockdown
- They will continue to have COVID precautions in place, including limiting access.
- The CLB EOC will continue to support its members to follow the Provincial health orders.
- The Canim Lake Band is planning a phased-in opening of school and administration offices.
- CLB students will be returning to classes in School District #27, including riding the buses.
- Canim Lake Band members may be visiting nearby communities for appointments and to buy groceries and supplies.

Local RCMP and School District 27 are also voicing their support for the Canim Lake Band.

"100 Mile House RCMP will continue to support Canim Lake Band as they move forward to a new normal," said Staff Sgt. Svend Nielsen. "We were extremely proud to be able to support their community during this difficult time. Please remember to follow Public Health Orders in place and still enforceable in the 100 Mile Detachment area."

Superintendent Chris van der Mark said, "School District 27 appreciates the tremendous efforts of the Canim Lake community in keeping our communities safe, and we are excited to see our Canim Lake students returning to school!"

"It is our strong family values that allowed COVID to take hold in our community. But it is also our strong community values that allowed us to pull together and do what was needed for the good of the community as a whole," notes Chief Helen Henderson. "In the larger picture, we have learned many lessons about dealing with a pandemic that can be used to benefit other communities."

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