



SPECIAL SECTION: Journey to Campbell River

CANOE FAMILY COMPLETES NORTHERN VOYAGE

Will Bill Jr., Muckleshoot Cultural Program Director and Captain of the Muckleshoot Canoe Family had these thoughts to share as we sat at a table outside the Java Shack in Port Campbell, British Columbia on Wednesday, August 9, 2017, the day after Muckleshoot did their protocol on the floor of Thunderbird Hall. – JL

I think that, overall, the canoe journey this year was definitely a journey to the unexpected. Each day was a challenge on the water that the crew met successfully. Even the days that we thought would be easy days turned out to be challenging.

For the most part, the weather was clear, but hot every day – very hot this year, in comparison to years past. Waters were challenging this year and for the most part, the crew did excellent, proof that all the practice and the training and gearing up that we do for the year paid off. The crew was ready for all of the situations we faced and handled them all successfully.

After 15 years or so of ocean-going canoe journeys, Muckleshoot has become a leader. We've really seen our progression in terms of starting as babies to now being a leader in this society and taking the helm in a lot of these situations.

Even the day that we swamped, you really saw the crew react immediately. They responded and did the appropriate things getting the people out of the water first, then worrying about the gear and the canoes securing them after everyone was safe.

We were blessed that there was no injuries, no hypothermia. Obviously, people were shook by the experience, but overall we came out very successfully. Eagle Spirit needed some repairs, but she was back on the water the next day and the crew rose to the occasion again – got right back on the water. Again, a testament to all their training, and also a testament to the spiritual work that goes into journey and finding the real purpose of Canoe Journey, and why we're here, representing our people, our tribe and our ancestors.

At right around 300 nautical miles, this is one of our longest journeys and really took a motivated group to get up every day and keep at it. Some of us have almost been gone over three weeks now and everybody's ready to go home, but with a couple days left in sight to finish off protocol, we're excited to stay, complete the work, and then make the trek back.

Many people had to return home because of work and family and other responsibilities, which is normal with this long of a trip but we've still got a nice, hardcore group that's here, still have camp and we'll stick it out to the end (the host's protocol) and then make our way home.

Some focal points this year: I would really just say a testament to our group out on the water this year, how they performed and were ready for any situation. We had several days – numerous days, I should say – that the weather and the water changed on us several times throughout the day, and they had to be ready at a moment's notice for that to happen.

As we went through some of the channels and some of the narrow areas up here, the water runs very quickly; the currents are very fast, and the tides also play a role. So, when you put all those together, they can create very dangerous situations.

Numerous canoes swamped, flipped on this trip, got turned around because of rough water. Even on the final day to Quadra Island, we passed two canoes that got stuck in a rip tide and were on the rocks as we went passed them. The instinct is to go over and help while we were getting through it ourselves. But, as a testament, this happened three days after we had swamped and our crew just put their heads down, pulled hard and went right through the riptide. Not many of the canoes made it through there. Most of them had to tow through.



Canoe Captain Will Bill Jr. clowning around outside the "Green Room" tent as Muckleshoot prepares to take its turn on the floor at the Campbell River Big House.

So, something that could have been a potentially negative lasting experience – having our canoe swamp off Nanaimo Bay – really turned into a positive. Our crew got back in there and were very strong, and we're talking from our youngest at 12 to our elder in the canoe in his fifties – that was Franklin Ross – everyone was pulling every day.

The Canoe Family definitely performed as a cohesive group, as a family and supporting each other and doing those hard things, because we had just been bucking the tide for the last two hours right before we swamped. So, I think you see a maturity level of our Canoe Family in those aspects now that I don't think we've had in the past, where an event like that would have really devastated certain aspects of our Canoe Family, and how we're growing as a group.

I think one of the real positives of Muckleshoot's Canoe Family is that we do have such a diverse group, in terms of we do have our youth, youngest at 12, to our elders in the canoe at the same time, but all working together with a wide variety of all in between. I think that really is a testament to how Journey can bring all types together.

We're super fortunate that the Exec Ed this year passed a resolution to support tribal members that are employees, allowing them to receive their salaried or hourly rate as they come on canoe journeys. That supported a handful of our Canoe Family members, enabling them to come and fully participate – people like Franklin Ross and Shane WhiteEagle, a young man who had just gotten hired by Wildlife literally the week before and was put into his position.

The support by their directors and administrators for tribal members to come is outstanding, because that doesn't happen everywhere. At very few places do they get that level of support and so we're super-fortunate. You see the payoff now that those people are still here, still participating, fully engaged in their culture and representing our people.

Another positive this year is really seeing our young people take more leadership over Song and Dance, and although we guide them through the process, numerous evenings they formed themselves into the singing circle or whatever we want to call it, and started Song and Dance on their own without our prompting. That started to happen more frequently as the journey went on. So, each night after people have showered and camp is set up, they were

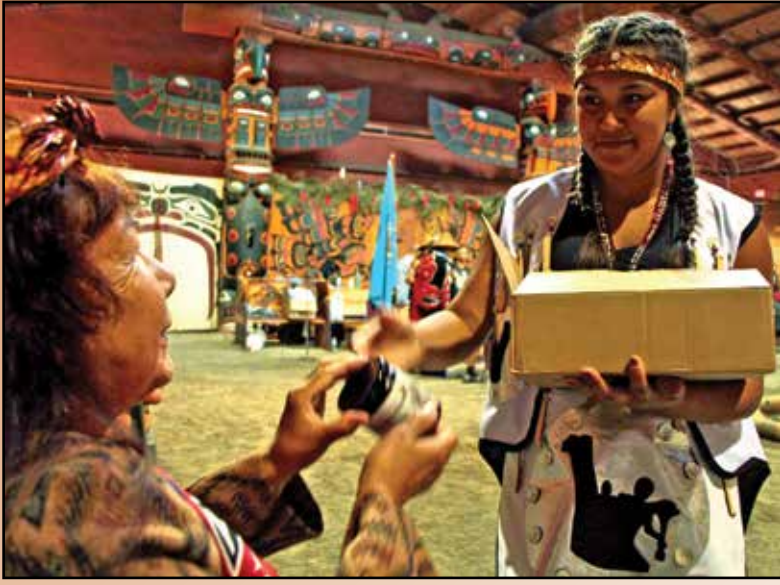
actively engaged. That's exciting, that while the adults we're busy handling other things, they took over the leadership on singing and dancing.

You really saw the culmination of all that practice during our protocol, how well our young people performed, having a new song brought onto the floor that the young men had composed a couple years ago in our summer youth program, and then having the accompanying dance brought out, and the kids were the ones that put all that together. We kind of kept a careful eye, but the youth did all of it. They composed the song, choreographed the dances for them and to see that come onto the floor was exciting. That's an evolution of our group at another level.

The majority of our songs are now Muckleshoot-based songs, language-based songs, and our youth again are the leaders, because they're the language speakers. As we see now over the last several years, our youth are the ones that do the formal protocol when we land, and that really started with our Youth Journey, that happened two or three years ago, where they were put in those leadership positions, and now many of them take that role and we just take a back seat to that. You see the impact on our host tribes when we come in to have those youth get up and engage in our language, how happy it makes them, and for our own elders to sit there and watch, and to know that that's not going to be lost, that it's here and it's strong.

So, this year when we landed in Campbell River, it was kind of a different protocol than we're used to, because we all landed on the beach and they came and welcomed us as groups and then we all walked up to a podium to do the official permission to come ashore. But, it all worked out in the end.

This is a neat experience up here, because we're kind of tight in their big house (it seated 300-400 people) but we're making it work. It's not the biggest facility, but it's an absolutely beautiful longhouse, with gorgeous with old-growth cedar and amazing artwork and totems in a traditional style. It's thrilling that our community got to engage

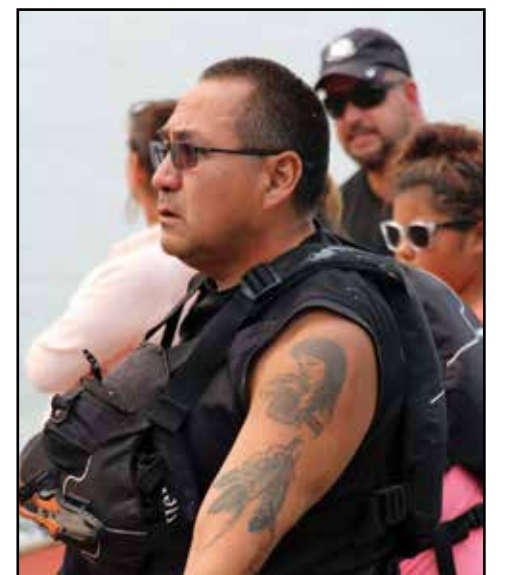


MUCKLESHOOT GIFTING. Darci Jansen hands a gift of Huckleberry jam to a Wei Wai Kum elder during Muckleshoot's protocol in the Thunderbird Hall at Campbell River. This honorable woman explained that she is a high princess of her people, the daughter of a chief and descended from a very ancient line. She said that Muckleshoot's gifts and the way they carried themselves up there in her country showed that they are very high class people. She raised her hands to each and every one at Muckleshoot.



MUCKLESHOOT CANOE FAMILY
CAMPBELL RIVER PROTOCOL GROUP, AUGUST 8, 2017

MOMENTS BEFORE TAKING THE FLOOR. Here's the Muckleshoot Canoe Family group that did Protocol at 9:00 a.m. on Tuesday morning, August 8, 2017, kicking off the 3rd day at the Campbell River Big House. Unfortunately, some key members had to leave to go back to work before Muckleshoot had its turn on the floor, but they were there in spirit nonetheless.

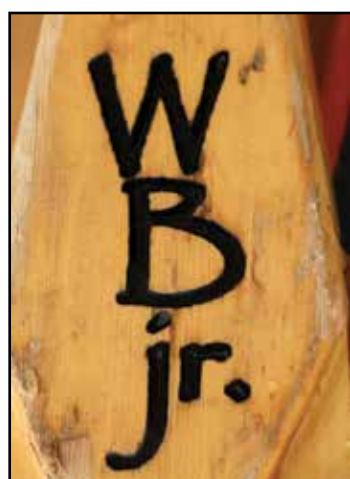


NORTHERN VOYAGE *continued from page 1*

and experience some songs and dance that many of us have ever seen before.

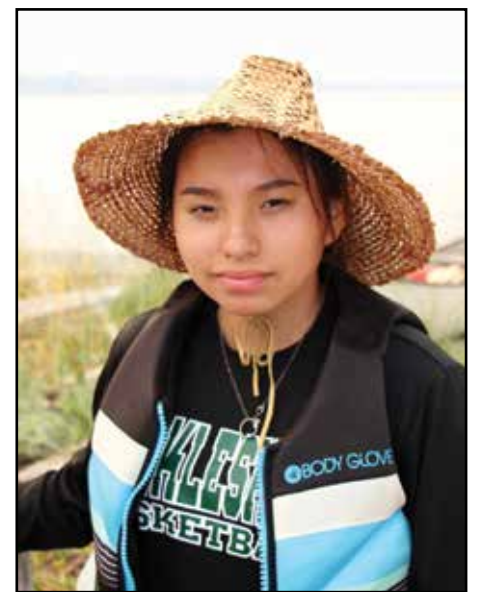
Participating in Canoe Journey, we get a little comfortable with where we know our Salish Sea people down in the south end, but coming up north here, further north, it's a different type of drumming (they drum on a log that's built into the house) and their mask dances. We got to experience one the other night that lasted almost an hour, it was one song.

So, we're excited to see what their protocol's going to look like. (It took place the following night.) If that's any indication, we might be here a while, but just an amazing experience and to feel the strength of that in their house has been really powerful.

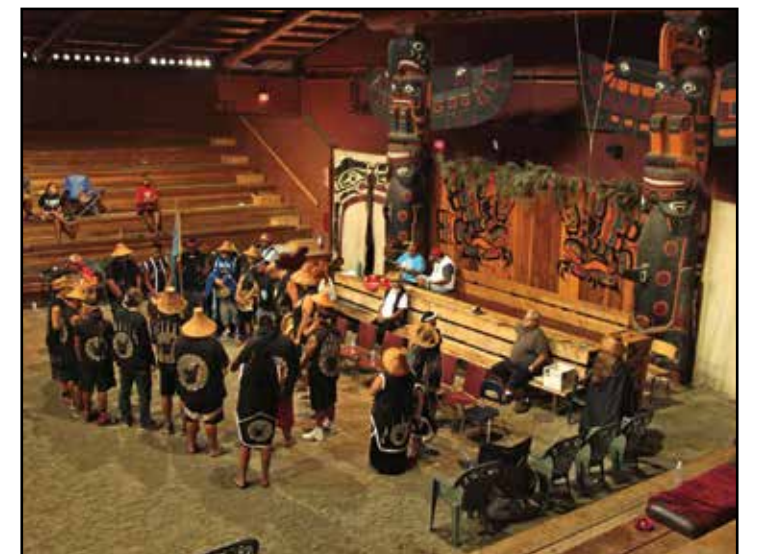
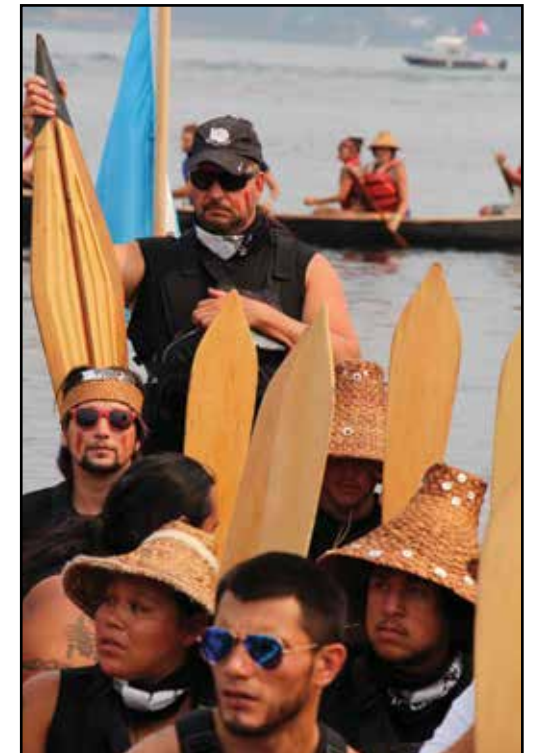


MUCKLESHOOT'S LEAD PULLERS. Two strong and dedicated young women, Leila Sam and Sovereign Bill, were honored at Protocol. At ages 13 and 12, respectively, they were the youngest crew members, yet they set an example that was admired and respected by all. They were the first ones up in the morning and ready to go, and pulled every day for 17 days – 300 nautical miles, often in strong and unpredictable currents – without a single complaint. These girls, both of whom have grown up with Tribal Journeys, love their culture and were living it every day, learning the ways of the past and gaining wisdom that will help their generation build the future.





JOURNEY'S END. Here's Muckleshoot's Eagle Spirit canoe gliding to the shore at Tye Spit, Campbell River, BC, August 5, 2017, after a long and sometimes very trying journey. They came through it strong in body, mind and most importantly, heart. The nose of Eagle Spirit may be broken, but never the spirits of its crew. We are all so proud of each and every one of you!



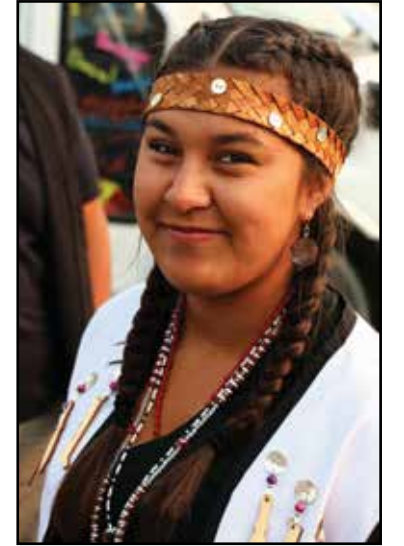


ELDERS VISIT THE JOURNEY. A contingent of Elders traveled up to Lummi and enjoyed a pleasant time on the beach watching the canoe activity.



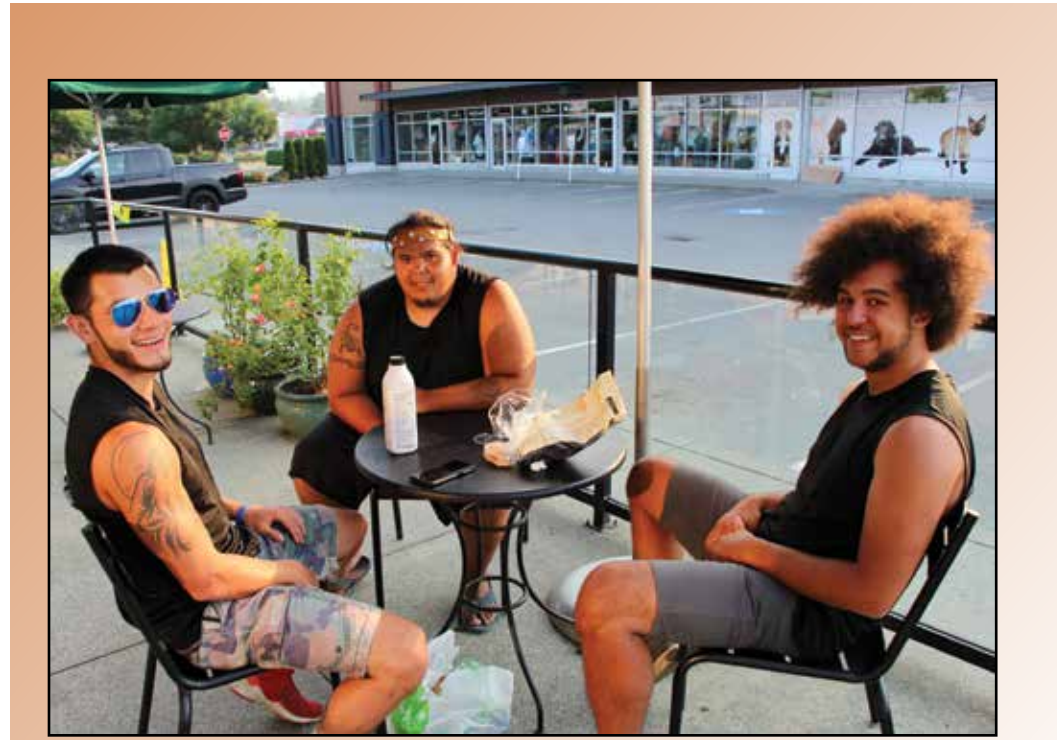
SHINNECOCK LADIES. These two young women have represented the Shinnecock Nation six times on Tribal Journeys. Their tribe, of Algonquin ancestry, has been federally recognized since 2010 and is headquartered in their ancient homeland at Southampton on New York's Long Island. They sing beautiful songs.



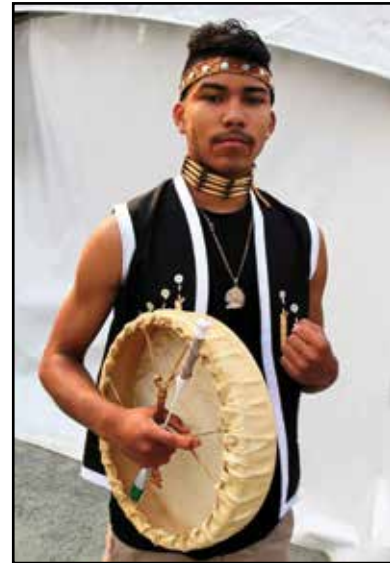


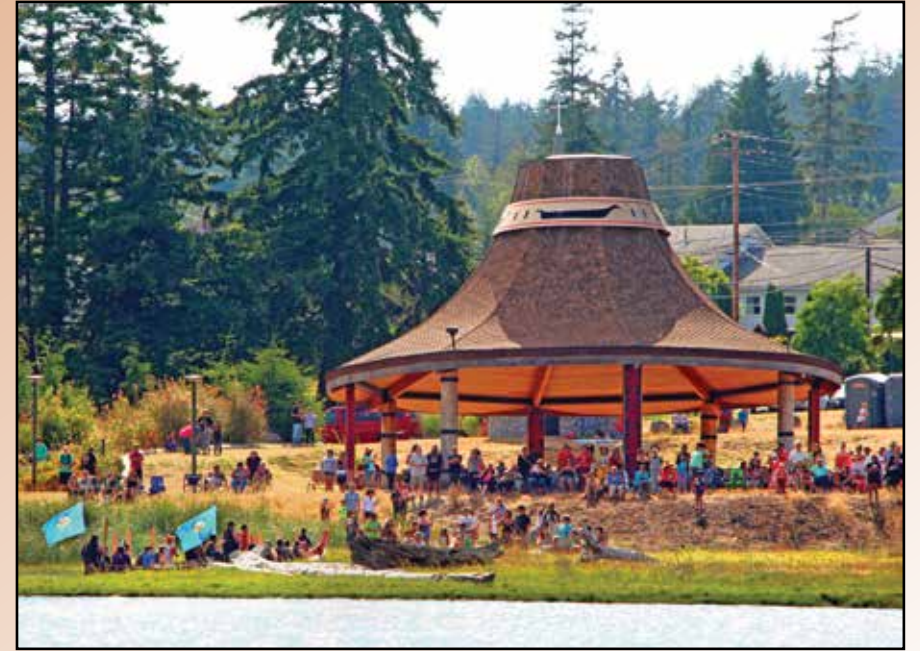
MUCKLESHOOT HOSTING. After the South Sound canoes landed at Alki on July 19, they were hosted by the Muckleshoot Canoe family, eating at the Sla-Hal Shed, and camping and dancing on the ballfields.





EVEN IN CAMPBELL RIVER. It may be pretty far up the island, but Campbell River is not so remote that it doesn't have Starbucks! It has two of them, in fact.





SWINOMISH. The Muckleshoot canoes are shown here making their way up the Swinomish Channel, passing under the Rainbow Bridge before landing in front of the famous Swinomish Hats.



PHOTO CREDITS:
Evan Avila: Muckleshoot Hosting, Suquamish, Lummi
John Loftus: Alki Beach, Swinomish & Campbell River, BC