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British Columbia First Nations EMBRACE TECHNOLOGY TO SUPPORT LANGUAGE LEARNING

The wisdom, words and phrases of two B.C. First Nations languages can now be heard using an iPhone and iPod touch.

Developed as a mobile extension of language collections archived by First Nations communities at FirstVoices.com, the first two prototype apps feature the SENĆOTEN language of Southern Vancouver Island and the Halq'eméylem language of the Sto:lo Nation in the Fraser Valley.

Funding from the New Relationship Trust will give a further nine First Nations languages the opportunity to build their own mobile dictionary. The new languages to be included are Lil'wat, Sliammon, Tsilhqot'in, Ehattesaht Nuchatlaht, Dakelh/Southern Carrier, Nisga'a, Northern Státimcets, Ktunaxa and Kwak'wala.

FirstVoices Mobile provides First Nations dictionaries and phrase collections with audio recordings, images and videos that users can customize to make each entry their own. It also includes specially developed touch-screen keyboards that use the unique characters of a First Nations language, as well an English keyboard.

The apps allow users to customize their dictionaries. "Let's say you want to look up the SENĆOTEN word for bread," says Peter Brand, FirstVoices coordinator. "You can search for it in English or scroll

through the SENĆOTEN archive to find the word—SEPLIL—as well as hear how it's pronounced and see a picture. You can also take your own picture and include that as the image in your personal dictionary."

For Thelma Wenman, coordinator of the Sto:lo Shxweli Halq'eméylem Program, the appeal of FirstVoices Mobile is its convenience and accessibility for language students.

"Our language is taught at board-operated schools, head-start programs, public schools and local universities," she says. "The app makes it easier for
Continued next page...





John Elliott (STOLȚEŁ) talks to a group about FirstVoices.

students to continue on with their studies. They can download it and study the language wherever they are.”

Fostering young language learners is vital when you consider that each year, fluent Elders pass away.

“When Elders die, there goes our language as well,” says Thelma.

John Elliott (STOLȚEŁ) is a SENĆOTEN language teacher at the ŁÁU, WELNEW Tribal School and another strong advocate for the use of technology in language learning. His late father, Dave Elliott was the creator of the SENĆOTEN orthography and the first SENĆOTEN dictionary. STOLȚEŁ continued his father’s language revitalization legacy, creating FirstVoices.com along with Peter Brand; he was also instrumental in the creation of the SENĆOTEN app.

“This is especially important for young

people and people away from the community,” says STOLȚEŁ. “There are not enough Elders to go around so it’s important that everyone has access to their voices.”

FirstVoices Mobile was developed by the First Peoples’ Council with funding from the First Peoples’ Cultural Foundation. The Foundation provides funding to B.C. First Nations communities in the areas of language, arts and culture.

Download the apps for free from the iTunes store:

SENĆOTEN: <http://itunes.apple.com/ca/app/id398943185?mt=8>

Halq’eméylem : <http://itunes.apple.com/ca/app/halqemeylem/id398945845?mt=8>

Northern S̓táimcets Alphabet										
a	á	e	é	i	í	o	ii	íi	u	
ú	ao	áo	v	ý	p	t	ts	k	kw	
s	š	z	l	m	n	w	y	h	c	
cw	lh	q	qw	x	xw	g	gw	r	ʔ	
p̓	t̓	ts̓	k̓	kw̓	q̓	q̓w	ž	f	m̓	
ñ	w̓	y̓	r̓	g̓	g̓w					

CONGRATULATIONS TO THE LANGUAGE CHAMPIONS BEHIND THE NORTHERN S̓TÁIMCETS FIRSTVOICES ARCHIVE!

Their archive has reached the prolific benchmark of 5,000 words and 2,000 phrases and is now the largest on FirstVoices. The community will be receiving an iPod Touch from the First Peoples’ Council to acknowledge their efforts. To visit the Northern S̓táimcets archive and other First Nations language archives, go to www.firstvoices.com.

From the Northern S̓táimcets archive: *Áma nscwákekwmíntsina*. Congratulations! I’m glad for you!

Heritage Toolkit Helps FULFILL FIRST PEOPLES' COUNCIL MANDATE

Meet Carla Jack, a member of the Penelakut Tribe and a linguistics major from the University of Victoria who worked as an intern at the First Peoples' Council through the Aboriginal Youth Internship Program. As part of her internship, Carla developed resources to help fulfill the heritage portion of the Council's mandate.

"Heritage is important to First Nations culture because it encompasses the deep connection to the land, the stories from the ancestors, the traditional way of life, the turbulent times and the requirements of modern life," says Carla. "Through heritage planning and the recognition and documentation of historic places, First Nations can better protect their sites from unwanted development or destruction."

Carla researched existing heritage resources and surveyed First Nations communities, tribal councils and cultural centres to assess their heritage conservation needs.

The end result was the *Heritage Toolkit*, which consists of facts sheets about:

How the values of community play a role in heritage conservation

"Value-centred management is the conservation of a historic place based on the values ascribed to it by the community," says Carla. "For conservation to be successful, the place must retain its significance and continue to be a useful part of the community."

Tangible versus intangible heritage

"Tangible heritage refers to physical sites such as trails, buildings and landscapes, while intangible heritage is knowledge, practices and skills such as language, art techniques and harvesting methods,"

says Carla. "For First Nations, the tangible and intangible are almost always connected—for example, the best fishing spot is tangible, but knowing where it is and the protocols to follow to fish there are intangible."

Heritage and sustainability

"As the architect, Carl Elefante said, 'the greenest building is the one already built'," says Carla. "Through the reuse and rehabilitation of buildings, we can

prevent a huge amount of waste from ending up in landfills, and can protect our green spaces by reducing the need for new buildings."

The *Heritage Toolkit* also includes a glossary of heritage terms and a database of heritage contacts, publications and funding programs.

The *Heritage Toolkit* can be found on the First Peoples' Council website – www.fphlcc.ca/arts/heritage-toolkit



"Practicing heritage conservation revitalizes our communities and strengthens our sense of identity through honouring our past."

— Carla Jack

China and B.C. First Nations Partner to Save INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES IN BOTH COUNTRIES

China, much like Canada, is a linguistically diverse country with many distinct minority languages at the brink of extinction.

To help protect one of the most endangered languages in China—Qiang—the First Peoples' Council recently hosted a delegation of academics, government officials, Qiang language experts and Qiang speakers as part of a unique study tour of British Columbia. The goal of the tour, which was funded by the Canadian International Development Agency, was to provide information and best practices on revitalizing First Nations languages in B.C. that can be used to make policy recommendations to help the Qiang language.

“While the Chinese delegation came to B.C. to learn from us, it was impossible to not also learn from them,” says Tracey Herbert, Executive Director at the First Peoples' Council. “We usually focus on delivering excellent programs and don't focus on policy, but I learned through our

meetings how important it is to make policy recommendations to governments to enact change.”

The Qiang, known as “the people of the clouds” live in the mountains of the Sichuan province in southwestern China and trace their history back 3,000 years. They were one of the most severely affected groups during the Wenchuan earthquake of May 2008 and lost approximately 10% of their population.

The earthquake and the subsequent evacuation of community members further fragmented an already endangered language and culture. Over 80% of Qiang people do not speak the Qiang language and it is not used in local government, media or schools.

The Chinese/Qiang delegation was welcomed to the First Peoples' Council office in the Tsartlip Nation in Brentwood Bay by Elders John Elliott, and May and Skip Sam before sitting in on presentations on the use of technology to document languages

and language immersion program models and successes.

They also met with representatives of the provincial and federal governments, academics, First Nations-run organizations, First Nations communities, First Nations leadership, cultural centres and schools. They were hosted at Chief Atahm School, the En'owkin Centre and Spirit Ridge.

“There are so many parallels between our two countries,” says Tracey. “Sharing models and best practices can only serve to strengthen indigenous language revitalization activities in both countries.”

The project was lead by Geospatial/Salasan Consulting Inc. and funded by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) and the Government of China.

Qiang language delegation dons Cowichan hats for photo with First Peoples' staff.



“While the Chinese delegation came to B.C. to learn from us, it was impossible to not also learn from them.”

*—Tracey Herbert,
Executive Director,
First Peoples' Council*

Conversation with a Language Champion

MANDY NA'ZINEK JIMMIE



Mandy Na'zinek Jimmie is a Nt̓əʔkepmxc̓ín speaker who has been working on language revitalization for over 20 years. Mandy received her MA in linguistics from the University of British Columbia in 1994. She is a language instructor at the Nicola Valley Institute of Technology and a community language champion.

Q. How did you learn your language and get involved in language revitalization?

A. As a child, I learned my language primarily from my mother whose first language was Nt̓əʔkepmxc̓ín and the Elders around me. Later, I studied linguistics to better understand our language since there were no language courses offered then. While completing my Master's degree in linguistics, I was totally "book immersed" in the language and that helped me a lot. Since returning to my home community in the early '90s, I have primarily taught adults, which has enabled me to continue to learn the language. Of course, my mother continued to speak to me in the language until her passing 10 years ago.

In my early adulthood I realized how important language was for our identity. It was at that time that I began the early stages of learning the written component of our language. In the late '70s, I was

Mandy Jimmie (RIGHT) accepting her "First Nations Language Champion" award from Tracey Herbert (LEFT) Executive Director of the First Peoples' Council.

exposed to some of the early linguistic work of Laurence C. Thompson and other linguists, but I quickly realized I could not make heads or tails of it. It was this "obstacle" that drove me to pursue my lifelong work [in language revitalization], which I am still passionate about.

Q. What is the best way to learn to speak a First Nations language?

A. Learning the language as a child is still the best way—we need to immerse kids more in our infancy/daycare/headstart programs. Otherwise, I have found adults who make language learning a priority and fully commit themselves to learning the language do very well, which is very hopeful.

Q. Do you see more interest in learning First Nations language than in the past?

A. Definitely. I see more interest and more commitment. Students today do not have the negative experience of residential schools and other experiences to hinder their language learning.

Q. What can be done to ensure that First Nations languages will survive?

A. Communities need to make language a priority. Some communities have established policies for their councils and staff to learn the language; others have successful immersion programs. Also, communities need to make our languages living, functional languages. It is so easy to fall back on English when we don't have a way to express it in our language, but fluent speakers can easily relay what needs to be said in our languages.

MINISTER OF CANADIAN HERITAGE ANNOUNCES INCREASED FUNDING FOR B.C. LANGUAGE PROJECTS

In December, we attended an event at the Museum of Anthropology where the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, the Honourable James Moore, announced a three-year renewal of the Aboriginal Languages Initiative (ALI), a new funding formula for First Nations language funding and an increase in funding for B.C. language projects—from \$232,470 to \$834,400 per year. The Minister of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation, the Honourable Barry Penner was also in attendance and we presented both ministers with iPod Touches with the SENĆOŦEN and Halq'eméylem FirstVoices apps on them.



FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Pauline Terbasket, Chair of the First Peoples' Cultural Foundation; the Honourable Barry Penner, Minister of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation; the Honourable James Moore, Minister of Canadian Heritage; Dr. Lorna Williams, Chair of the First Peoples' Council; and Tracey Herbert, Executive Director of the First Peoples' Council. (Photo courtesy of the Department of Canadian Heritage)



Young First Nations Filmmakers CELEBRATE B.C.'S INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES

The First Peoples' Council recently partnered with Knowledge to develop *Our First Voices*, a series of short films about 13 of the First Nations languages of B.C. The films can be found online and between programs on Knowledge.

We caught up with the four First Nations filmmakers who directed *Our First Voices* to talk to them about which of the films they connected with the most.

ZOE LEIGH HOPKINS

"I really enjoyed *Spelling Bee*," says Zoe Leigh Hopkins. "It was fun imagining a world where all of our First Nations languages would be on par with English and French and imagining that none of them had been lost or damaged. It was interesting to think about where we would be today if our languages and our cultures had been upheld. It would be a whole different world."

For *Our First Voices*, Zoe directed *Ktunaxa*, about the use of technology

to save the Ktunaxa language, *Airplane*, a look at the use of Heiltsuk for the in-flight safety message for flights into Bella Bella, and *Spelling Bee*, which follows a young First Nations girl competing in a spelling bee with Nt̓ə̓kəpmxc̓in, S̓t̓á̓imcets and Nisga'a words.

"I thought long and hard about what I wanted people to come away with when watching these films," says Zoe. "I wanted to impart that language is culture—that if we lose our languages, we lose unique ways of thinking and unique ways of being in the world."

Zoe is Heiltsuk from Bella Bella and Mohawk from Six Nations. Her films include *Prayer for a Good Day* and *One-Eyed Dogs Are Free*, which was nominated for Best Live Short at the American Indian Film Festival and was a semi-finalist for the B.C. Film Signature Shorts Competition in 2006.

LISA JACKSON

"One of the more touching stories for me was Earl Smith's," says Lisa Jackson.

Lisa directed four *Our First Voices* films: *City Speaks*, a walking tour of Vancouver in the Sk̓wx̓wú7mesh sn̓ichim language, *Typewriter*, about the creation of the SENĆOŦEN writing system, *Songbringer*, the story of a Haida man who dreams about the Xaad Kil language, and *Earl Smith*, a look at Nuučaanuł language revitalization effort in Zeballos.

"You can see that it's a real grassroots community effort that people are devoting themselves to because they care so much about Nuučaanuł," Lisa says. "There's so much joy when the Elders get together to speak the language. It's really inspiring to see them reconnecting with it and passing it on to younger people."

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP LEFT: Helen Haig-Brown, Kelvin Redvers, Lisa Jackson, Zoe Leigh Hopkins, still images from *Airplane* and *City Speaks*.





Lisa is an Anishinaabe filmmaker whose films include *Suckerfish*, an examination of her relationship with her mother and her own identity, and *Reservation Soldiers*, a documentary about First Nations youth and the Canadian Armed Forces.

HELEN HAIG-BROWN

Through her *Our First Voices* films, Helen Haig-Brown takes the audience to the Chief Atahm Secwepemctsin language immersion school in *Math Class*, presents a choir of Nsyilxcən singers as a single, shifting form in *Sylix Song*, and tells her own personal story of growing up with a Tsilhqot'in-teaching mother and a grandmother who speaks only Tsilhqot'in in *Mom n' Me*.

"*Mom n' Me* has a very "home-video/ cinema vérité feel, playing with the fact that I'm the camera person and a character in the movie. That's something I've wanted to try for a very long time," says Helen. "On a personal note, it was emotional to do a piece on my family, my mother and my language, talking about my personal feelings of language loss and the regeneration of it."

Helen is a Tsilhqot'in director, director of photography and teacher. Her latest film *?E?anx (the Cave)*, a ten-minute sci-fi dramatic film in the Tsilhqot'in language, was named one of "Canada's Top Ten" short films of 2009 by the Toronto Film Festival.



KELVIN REDVERS

"I think *Lullaby* was my favourite to film," says Kelvin Redvers, a Métis filmmaker and recent graduate from the Simon Fraser University. "It [usually] takes a lot of consideration to figure out how to shoot something, but for this one, I saw in my mind how it needed to be made. It's such a beautiful story."

Kelvin was responsible for *Ts'ak*, about a charming puppet that teaches children the Nisga'a language, *Sisters Sam*, about three sisters and a mother who are all teachers of Naka'zdli Dakelh, and *Lullaby*, the story of a young woman and her grandmother who work together to create a song in Halq'eméylem for the woman's child.

Some of Kelvin's work is archived at the National Museum of the American Indian in Washington, D.C. His latest film, *Firebear Called them Faith Healers* screened at the imageinNATIVE Film Festival and the North American Native Film Festival.

He is currently working as a producer on *First Story*, a First Nations current affairs show on CTV.



Our First Voices was produced by Sharon Bliss, Catrina Longmuir and Marilyn Thomas of Bliss Pictures.

The films created for the *Our First Voices* project can be viewed as individual shorts or as a one-hour piece at www.knowledge.ca/program/our-first-voices-shorts

DVD copies can be ordered from Moving Images Distribution in Vancouver. Visit www.movingimages.ca for more information.



Former AADA Recipient Gives Back BY MENTORING A YOUNG ARTIST



LEFT: Rande Cook with carved wooden panel of “Forever Family.”
BELOW: Darryll Dawson Jr. carving wooden panel.
PHOTOS: By Kate Cino for artopenings.ca in April of 2010 at the studio of Rande Cook.

Rande Cook is a Kwakwaka’wakw artist who grew up in Alert Bay and now lives in Victoria, B.C. He mixes formline and contemporary design to push boundaries in his painting, carving and drawing.

Rande received funding from the First Peoples’ Council’s Aboriginal Arts Development Awards (AADA) in 2002 to mentor under John Livingston, with whom he apprenticed for six years. Eight years after receiving his AADA grant, Rande is now “paying it forward”—mentoring Darryll Dawson Jr., a young artist who received an AADA in 2010.

We recently asked Rande some questions to find out more.

Q. What did your mentorship with John Livingston through the AADA do for your artistic development?

A. The [AADA] award was probably the greatest thing that had happened for me as an artist. I did two years of post-secondary at Camosun College and felt like I was floating—not sure of what I wanted to do. I knew I wanted to be an artist, but I didn’t know which direction to go. I was thinking about either Emily Carr or an apprenticeship under someone. I didn’t feel like I could get the true teachings of what Northwest Coast art in school—you have to apprentice.

Luckily, John Livingston opened his door for me. I started working there and then I was really exposed to carving. I applied for the [AADA] grant and got it and that helped me move into wood carving. I spent six months training and studying grain and three-dimensional carving. That was very beneficial. Those six months changed my entire life and how I looked at art—it became a career.

I met so many people that influenced me working with John—Art Thompson, Susan Point, Robertson Davidson, Joe David. I learned that they developed their own styles by studying the forms from before, so I started spending all my time studying and now I’m at the point where I can start creating my own style. That’s the biggest thing I can pass on to young artists: study, study, study.

Q. Now that you’ve become a mentor for Darryll Dawson Jr. through the AADA awards, it completes a circle of mentorship. What are you working on with Darryll and what lessons are you trying to pass on?

A. Darryll has come to me to study carving techniques, and whatever is in his brain we work on. I let him do his own thing but help by providing tools and guidance.

Creativity comes from within—nobody

can teach that, but if you understand the basics and have the foundation, it makes creativity flow that much more smoothly.

Q. Is there anything that your mentor, John Livingston, taught you about mentoring that you are trying to pass on to Darryll?

A. I think the greatest tools that I got from John were focus and discipline. When you’re self-employed, that discipline can be that hardest thing because you don’t have anyone pushing you. But for most artists who are passionate about what they do, it’s a career. They get up every day and drive themselves.

What I learned from John is that to be successful and to keep getting better all the time, you must work, work, work. Also, enjoy what you do. If you’re having fun every day, it will show through in your work.

For more information about Rande and his work, visit: www.randecook.com. To find out more about the AADA awards, visit: www.fphlcc.ca/arts



New Master-Apprentice Team EMBRACES OPPORTUNITY TO LEARN THE NISGA'A LANGUAGE

"I am doing this program to get my language back," says Esther Stewart. "I grew up with it. When we were going to school, we spoke the language and we got hit on the knuckles for talking our language because they didn't know what we were talking about," she says. "I want to get our language back."

The Master-Apprentice Program pairs a fluent First Nations speaker (a "master") with a committed learner (the "apprentice") for 900 hours of complete language immersion over three years. Twelve master-apprentice teams representing 11 B.C. First Nations languages completed the initial three-year pilot program last March with enormous success. A new group of 10 Master-Apprentice teams began in November.

Esther is the master and Edna Nyce is the apprentice for the Nisga'a language team. Although they both live in Vancouver, far from traditional Nisga'a territory, Esther and Edna are committed to practicing their language and culture. They have only recently begun the three-year Master-Apprentice program, but already the two have completed 50 hours of language immersion and are noticing results.

"I'm already using the language way more than I did before, even when I'm not with Esther," says Edna. "And people are starting to notice—my husband, my children, my mom definitely notices. I'm even using it at work."

"People are interested. They'll hear Edna say one word and they'll go 'oh, yeah. I know that one,'" says Esther. "It's like a chain."

"It's really exciting," says Edna. "They're inspired and in turn, that inspires me."

Edna's main goal for the program is to

learn to speak Nisga'a fluently, but in the future, she hopes to create a language-immersion childcare program in Vancouver. As a fully licensed early childhood educator, she's well suited for the role.

The Master-Apprentice Program is made possible with funding from the New Relationship Trust and the Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation.



MASTER-APPRENTICE PROGRAM

This three-year program unites committed language learners ("apprentices") with fluent speakers ("master") for 300 of complete language immersion per year over three years. The following teams began the Master-Apprentice Program in 2010.

Secwepemctsin Team

Masters: Andy Chelsea, Julianna Johnson, Phyllis Chelsea
Apprentices: Ivy Chelsea, Fred Johnson Jr., Lori Marsh

Wet'suwet'en Team

Master: Sophie Ogen
Apprentice: Carla Lewis

Słkwxwú7mesh Team

Master: Vanessa Campbell
Apprentice: Dustin Rivers

Nisga'a Team

Master: Esther Stewart
Apprentice: Edna Nyce

Haisla Team

Master: Bernice Wilson
Apprentice: Sandra Robinson

Hesquiaht (Nuu-chah-nulth) Team

Masters: Ang Galligos, Charles Lucas, Lawrence Paul
Apprentices: Layla Rorick, Robin Rorick

Nte7kepmxín Team

Master: Marion Dixon
Apprentice: Jackie Johnson

Éy7á7juuthem Team

Master: Harold Harry
Apprentice: Katelynn Harry

Tse'khene Team

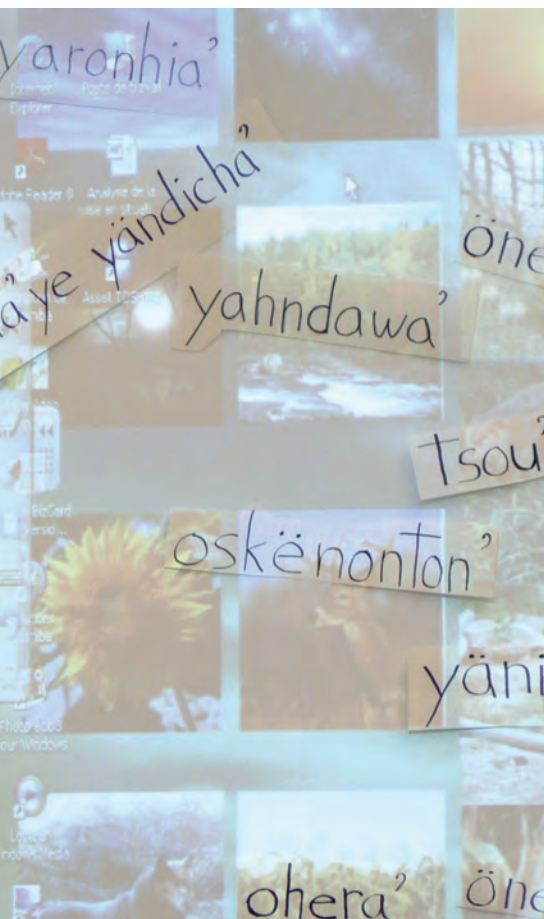
Master: Agnes Solonas
Apprentice: Sharon Solonas

Kwak'wala Team

Master: Florence Hunt-Vesey
Apprentice: Trish Rosborough

"We are so happy with the results of the Master-Apprentice program," says Xway'Waat (Deanna Daniels), the language program manager at the First Peoples' Council. "All the apprentices became much more fluent in their languages and we are so proud of them."

To download a copy of *Culture Camps for Language Learning: an Immersion Handbook*, visit www.fphlcc.ca/language/publications.



Bringing Our Languages BACK FROM THE BRINK

A “sleeping language” is a term used to describe a language that has no fluent speakers. Theoretically, a sleeping language can be revived if enough documentation is left behind, although in most cases a language dies out with the passing of its last speaker.

Languages hold the knowledge of its speakers—their stories, their cultural practices and their understanding of world. All of this is lost when a language disappears.

Remembering the Lost Languages of British Columbia

Three languages and three dialects in British Columbia have gone dormant within recent memory and it is unlikely that they will be heard again.

Nicola is the name linguists have given to the Dene (Athapaskan) language whose speakers lived in the Nicola Valley. The language is believed to have become a sleeping language in the early 1900s. It is unknown what they called their language because so little was recorded, but their Salishan speaking neighbours called

a Dene (Athapaskan) language, whose speakers lived in the Portland Canal area in northwestern B.C. The last known speaker was reported in 1927.

An additional language, Lhe’chelesem (also known as Nooksack), is a Coast Salish language spoken by the NookSack people in parts of what is now northern Washington state and B.C.’s lower mainland. Lhe’chelesem became a sleeping language quite recently, in 1988.

The three sleeping dialects in B.C. are Lekwungen, Semiahmoo and T’Sou-ke of the Northern Straits Salish dialects language group. Each is part of a language group that includes dialects still spoken today. With so many closely related dialects in close geographic proximity (SENĆOŦEN, and Malchosen), these dialects could theoretically be reconstructed given the proper documentation.

Other Examples from Around the Globe

Although it is rare, sleeping languages have been woken from their slumber in the past. The most well-known example is Classical Hebrew, which was rarely

*Languages hold the knowledge of its speakers
— their stories, their cultural practices and their understanding of world.
All of this is lost when a language disappears.*

them the stuwix (“the strangers”).

Pentla’c’, as it was known by the neighbouring speakers of Ey7a’7juuthen and She Shashishalhen, was spoken by people who lived on the east coast of Central Vancouver Island, now home to Kwak’wala and Hul’q’umi’num’ speakers. It became a sleeping language in the 1940s.

Wetalh (also known as Tsëts’aut) is

spoken except in limited religious contexts until the late 19th century when there was a concerted effort to revive the language. Now it is the national language of Israel and is spoken by over five million people.

On a smaller scale, the Miami language, an Amerindian language (Algic, Algonquian family), which became a sleeping language in the 1960s is being

revived by Daryl Baldwin and the Miami Tribe of Oklahoma. Daryl taught himself the language and is now one of several speakers.

Many other languages have been revitalized from near extinction, including Welsh in the United Kingdom, Catalan in Spain and New Zealand's Maori.

In each of these cases, government involvement, immersion programs, language documentation and public commitment played a large part in the language's resurgence.

Reviving Huron-Wendat

The Huron-Wendat in Wendake, Quebec present further proof that sleeping languages are not necessarily extinct languages.

Huron-Wendat is an Iroquoian language with no living speakers, but was documented by Jesuit priests in the 1600s and 1700s. And while there may be no fluent Wendat speakers at this point in time, if the efforts of the Wendake community are any indication, there may be some in the near future.

The Wendake community has partnered with the First Peoples' Council, Laval University and the Council of the Huron-Wendat Nation as part of the Yawenda Project, a \$1 million Community-University Research Alliance (CURA) project to re-awaken their sleeping language.

The results of the Yawenda Project have been impressive:

The Wendake community has reconstructed and standardized over 200 words and almost 200 expressions for their FirstVoices archive with funding from the Department of Canadian Heritage.

Interest in adult classes exceeded expectations last year and they are now offering

another round of level 1 classes as well as a new level 2 class.

They have also written four children's books with audio tracks and will offer Wendat language lessons in elementary schools next fall.

"Bringing back our language is more than just learning a few vocabulary words or expressions," says Megan Lukanic, Wendat linguist and teacher. "It is a rediscovery of a way of thought, a reawakening of our ancestry and a renewal of our identity as Wendat people."

Visit this link to find out more about the CURA funding program:

www.sshrc-crsh.gc.ca/funding-financement/programmes-programmes/cura-aruc-eng.aspx

Looking for more information about the First Nations languages of B.C.? Visit these links:

The First Peoples' Language Map of B.C.

<http://maps.fphlcc.ca>

2010 Report on the Status of B.C. First Nations Languages –

www.fphlcc.ca/language/language-report

Nathalie Shendaehwas Picard (LEFT) with Megan Lukanic (RIGHT), Huron-Wendat teacher and linguist.



FIRSTVOICES LANGUAGE TUTOR A FINALIST FOR VIATEC 'PRODUCT OF THE YEAR' AWARD

The First Peoples' Council's latest tool to teach First Nations languages was a finalist in the "Product of the Year" category at the 2010 Victoria Advanced Technology Council (VIATeC) Technology Awards.

The FirstVoices Language Tutor, developed in collaboration with the First Peoples' Cultural Foundation and Uduku Online Learning Solutions, is an online interactive language-teaching application. Aboriginal communities can use it to create language lessons and track their students' progress, which makes it ideal for classroom use.

Visit the Language Tutor online:

firstvoices.com/tutor

We have also created a four-minute video about the Language Tutor: www.fphlcc.ca/media-room/videos

FROM LEFT TO RIGHT: Tracey Herbert, Executive Director, the First Peoples' Council; Pauline Terbaske, Chair, the First Peoples' Cultural Foundation; Peter Brand, FirstVoices Coordinator; Shaylene Boechler, FirstVoices Trainer; Alex Wadsworth, Senior Systems Analyst, First Peoples' Council



Staff, board and advisory committee of the First Peoples' Council at Quaaout Lodge near Chase, B.C. for our 2010 Annual General Meeting

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WEBINARS HELP THE COUNCIL CONNECT TO ARTISTS AND LANGUAGE CHAMPIONS

We're now offering online seminars to inform our community partners about how to apply for grants through the language and arts programs.

Webinar participants can watch First Peoples' Council staff deliver PowerPoint presentations through a live feed. Questions can be typed in and are answered right away. It's a great way to find out about program criteria and get tips on applying for grants without leaving your home or office.



Find out when the next webinar is being held by following us on Facebook or Twitter or by checking out our website at www.fphlcc.ca. You can also call (250) 652-5952 for more information.

FIRST PEOPLES' news

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FIRST PEOPLES' CULTURAL FOUNDATION



Canadian Heritage Patrimoine canadien