



H A A N E E N A A

N E W S

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HAA NEE NAA LODGE

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OWNERS / OPERATORS



## YEAR IN REVIEW

### HAA NEE NAA BURNING!

**April 18, 2007** - In the intense heat of a fire fuelled by combustible red cedar and pine and seasoned with years of love, burned the memories of 17 years devoted to making memories. My deceased mother's countless hours of hard work, painting, cleaning, and staining; children running up and down the stairs, wet and cold from the back dock water fight; paintings and irreplaceable art work; the endless laughter of guests and staff; storms, sunrises and sunsets that still take my breath away, the list goes on and on. These were all distant memories as I floated around helplessly watching Haa-nee-naa Lodge burn to the water line on that cold April night, not knowing our fate for the years to come. Instead of tears I felt a strange happiness. I said goodbye to the Lodge in a fitting way, with joy, a tribute to the beautiful thing we had built. Our "baby" that had enriched our lives and brought so much joy to our world deserved happy prayers, not tears.

The fire seems to have been caused by a freak electrical fire which started on the workshop dock and quickly spread to the main lodge. Only twelve days before the tow to the north end of Dundas Island for the 2007 season, we found ourselves without a lodge, without a workshop full of tools and equipment, and without engines and fishing gear! Suddenly we were faced with the biggest business decision of our lives: Should we rebuild? Lease another facility and build next year? Cancel 2007 and get going again in 2008 or just say "this was our run and now it's time to move on to other things in life"? These were difficult questions to consider only hours after we had lost so much. In the end, Jennifer and I both agreed that this is what we do, it is what defines us and it is something we must at least try to rebuild. We owed it to ourselves, our children, customers, friends and staff.

It was exactly four hours after we officially put out the last of the flames that our dear friends, Gord and Melanie Erickson, arranged for us to view a beautiful floating facility moored here in Prince Rupert. Although the building was just a shell, it had a great footprint on which we could rebuild Haa-nee-naa II, bigger and more comfortable for all our guests to enjoy. Eight days later my brother-in-law Joe and I towed the new barge to Port Edward Harbour in pending 40-knot winds and tied her to where Haa-nee-naa Lodge had been only a few days earlier.

*Fish The Magic*

A new era was unfolding! We suddenly found ourselves in what felt like a reality television show, racing to complete construction by our June 15th deadline. Friends, family, staff and contractors all stepped up to help build the new lodge in record time. Jennifer spent endless hours shopping to furnish the lodge and re-stock what we had lost, a daunting task at the best of times but under these conditions truly amazing!



Our newly appointed manager, Robyn, helped preserve our sanity by pounding off endless hours keeping our business running through these trying times and thereby allowing us to concentrate on the countless projects facing us.

Haa-nee-naa II set sail for Dundas on June 1st, 14 days ahead of our initial deadline, a tribute to the endless hard work of our devoted help! After a record 12-hour tow on calm seas, we moored in our protected little cove for the 2007 season. We greeted our long-time customers and friends the Sather/Ellman group as our first guests of the year on June 8th. As the floatplane landed the final touches were still being put on the lodge, but we had met the deadline - as reality shows always do!

The 2007 season had begun after a very rocky start but as someone once said, "what doesn't kill you makes you stronger" and I am a firm believer in that philosophy.

## FISHING REPORT

Fishing was exceptional in 2007 - one of our best Chinook seasons in Lodge history. In total 168 guests harvested 563 Chinook with a very large average weight of 24.69 pounds per salmon, and an average take-home of 3.35 Chinook per guest. There were 124 Tyees landed, of which 100 were fish over 30lbs., 19 fish over 40lbs. and five monsters over 50lbs. This season's largest Chinook was caught by Russ Gattinger from southern B.C., a massive 55-pounder taken in early July. Halibut fishing was great again with chicken halibut in the 10-15 pound range making up the bulk of the catch. Most fish were caught close to the lodge on calm seas - a real bonus! In total 487 halibut were harvested during the season, with the largest weighing in at 78 pounds. This brute was reeled in by my buddy Mike Fitzgerald of Oklahoma and gaffed by yours truly.

The weather wreaked havoc on the north



coast this past summer. June and July were wet and cold for the most part, while late July brought a turn for the better and warm, sunny, calm days prevailed for most of the remainder of the season.

Coho fishing was good to excellent in 2007. The fly fishing anglers had great catches overall. During early August, due to the combination of small tides and annual seasonal returns, it was a little more difficult to find large schools of feeding fish in close to shore. However, once their hiding spots were discovered good fishing was had by all.

Those of you who have fly fished at Haa-nee-naa will fondly recall the English Channels. Fishing was again excellent in these massive kelp beds after a two-year absence fly fishing this area. Dry fly advocates were thrilled with the catch success using 'Gurglers'. As more Haa-nee-naa guests fish these floating flies, our confidence and excitement in the dry fly fishery grows!



## 2007 CREW

Our 2007 staff consisted of both old and new personnel. Robyn Bertrand, who has been with us for five years, completed her BSc. at the University of Alberta in Food Business Management and has relocated to Prince Rupert, becoming an integral part of the Haa-nee-naa team. Robyn will be running much of the office and bookings this winter, so you'll be hearing from her! Ben Waterer came out of retirement this season and played a key role in getting the new lodge going in early season. Brothers Scott and Brett complemented our team perfectly. Brett delighted us with his culinary treats and good nature, while Scott's engaging stories and knowledge of all things fishing, kept staff and guests entertained throughout the season. We were also fortunate to have Terry guiding, his years of experience and passion for fishing were second to none. Ben's baby brother, Rory Waterer, did a terrific job on the back dock and was joined in August by 'Dockhand in Training' Daniel Bertrand, Robyn's baby brother,

who was a great help to everyone at the lodge this summer. Rory is now enrolled in a Fisheries Biology course at BCIT and we wish him all the best! Fly fishing guru Peter Morrison also conducted 11 days of fly fishing seminars at the lodge in mid August and will be returning again in 2008 for some more exciting coho action. We were also fortunate to have Auntie Kate hosting the airport lounge, and Becky Spenceley whose hard work and positive energy made switch-over days a pleasure for all of us.



## 2008 FISHING FORECAST

After such a tremendous season, only Mother Nature really knows what the salmon returns will be like in 2008.

With many thousands of miles to swim and as many obstacles in their way – predators, commercial, sport and native fisheries, floods, ocean survival and factors which range from poor food supply to disease, to changing water temperatures – it is a wonder that any salmon make it back to our coast to spawn! Every year, millions do make it back, and millions pass through the waters of Dixon Entrance right past the doorstep of Haa-nee-naa Lodge. Returns for Chinook on the Nass and Skeena watersheds were close to average in 2007, according to the Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO). Returning four-year-old adults in 2008 are from the 2004 brood year. Escapements were better than usual in '04, so we would hope to have decent returns in 2008 (in the north a majority of returning Chinook are four-year-old fish).

On the other side of things, 2005 returning coho numbers were above the 10-year average for the Nass and Skeena systems. The majority of returning coho are three-year-old fish, which make 2008 returning coho the progeny of 2005 escapements. Providing they do well running the gauntlet, fly fishing and fishing in general for coho should be quite good in 2008. Coho destined for many coastal streams migrate past Dundas every year.

It's important to note that fluctuations in escapements vary accordingly from stream to stream with infinite local variables as part of the formula.

In 2007 lodge guests caught almost 500 halibut, more than any previous season. We again expect halibut numbers to be up in '08. Contrary to the Pacific Halibut



Commission estimates, we have found halibut numbers increasing in our area. Whether it is the abundance of halibut, the fact that our guests are targeting them more or that we're dialing in the halibut spots better has yet to be determined, but I feel it is probably a combination of all these factors. We expect to once again catch more of these tasty flatties next summer.

Always the optimist, I again look forward to some terrific catches this coming season, but please remember forecasting is not a science – there are far too many factors involved to accurately forecast returning salmon runs eight months in advance.

## MEMORABLE & NOT-SO MEMORABLE MOMENTS

### TIP OF THE HAT

Tip of the hat this season goes to Rick Blankenship. Rick, who has been fly fishing at the lodge the past several years, hooked a 22lb. Chinook salmon on a chartreuse clouser minnow, using a 9wt. fly rod. Incidentally, I had been fishing in this exact same spot the day before and was spooled by what could only have been a Chinook. However, not only did Rick hook this hog, he also skillfully landed it, unlike me. This is no easy feat and I was not the only angler on the water that day to be chartreuse with envy!



An honourable mention goes out to Burt Sarver who hooked and landed a 21lb. Chinook salmon while bucktailing in the exact same spot – Chinook Alley.

### ROOKIE OF THE YEAR

Todd Wingerson, from Carnation, WA., while fishing in early July, hooked and landed four large tyees 29, 37, 40.5 & 41.5 pounds respectively. His hopes of taking home the Grand Prize and all the glory in their house derby were crushed when Duong (big-fish) Cun ousted him from top spot the final morning with a 42.5lb. hog.



### 2007 HALL OF FAME 50lb CLUB.

RUSS GATTINGER	55 lbs
PHIL McMAINS	54 lbs
BRETT ROBERTSON	53 lbs
WAYNE CAREY	50.5 lbs
JERE INGRAM	50 lbs

An honourable mention goes to long-time friend Greg Shimek from Tacoma, WA. In addition to photos of awesome whale shows and two quadruple headers, Greg took home four beauties weighing in at 26, 33, 38 and 46lbs.

And congratulations to Barry Feder who rounded out his catch with a personal best – a 39 lb. spring at the end of July.

### CONGRATULATIONS!

Congratulations to Jason Tonelli, long-time guide and friend of Haa-naa-naa Lodge. In February of 2007, Jason opened his own fly and tackle store, Pacific Angler, in Vancouver, B.C. If you are in Vancouver check him out at 232 West Broadway or on the internet at [www.pacificangler.ca](http://www.pacificangler.ca). We wish you all the best Wonderboy!

## FROM THE BENCH

### KELLY DAVISON'S Polar Popper

**Hook:** #2 Mustad 34007ss for hook shank  
#6/#8 black Gamakatsu Octopus for stinger

**Eyes:** Stick on

**Thread:** Clear

**Body:** 2-3" White polar bear, crystal flash

**Head:** Deer hair (white or light brown bucktail)

**Tying Instructions:** Place #2 stainless saltwater hook in vice, tie in stinger hook about 1.5 inches

behind with 30lb. Berkley Fire Line or similar product using a bend. The sparse body is tied with a white polar bear or bucktail and a few strands of crystal flash. The head is spun bucktail trimmed short with glued-on eyes. Finally, cut the top hook off at the bend. As a variation, wrap the top hook with lead thread for quicker sink rates in faster currents.

**Fishing:** This simple pattern fishes equally well on either dry or sinking lines, depending on conditions. Kelly's Polar Popper proved irresistible to feeding coho last August. Not the prettiest fly, this simple but effective pattern either resembles a slow swimming sculpin or the silhouette of a wounded herring. Whatever the reason, it out-fished the traditional chartreuse clouser minnow 4-1 many times last summer and worked well on finicky, well-fed salmon. Thank you to Kelly for sharing this pattern.



## FOCUS ON BUCKTAILING

By Jason Tonelli

If you like explosive takes followed by blazing runs or enjoy watching coho crash your fly right behind the boat, then you will enjoy bucktailing.

When bucktailing a typical spread is three lines: one on either side of the boat with 60 to 100 feet of line out and one out the back of the boat on a short line so your fly is skipping in the prop wash. You can use either an 8 wt fly rod with a full sinking line, or a mooching set up with no weights, just the bucktail attached. A heavy leader – ten feet of straight 20lb. test is recommended. The key to this technique is to troll quickly and erratically, covering lots of water. When turning, your bucktails will speed up on the outside of the turn and slow down on the inside, often triggering a strike. Coho are also attracted to the prop

wash generated by the high speed troll and it is not uncommon to watch them come up and grab the bucktail you have skipping right behind the boat.

I have found the most effective bucktail patterns to be green, or green with a chartreuse back and white belly, or even pink backs with white bellies. For added attraction I use two or three beads in front of the bucktail and a small nickel spinner blade on a clevis. The flash and vibration from the spinner makes the bucktail irresistible to these aggressively feeding coho.

So if your arm gets tired from casting this year, you want to locate some fish or you just want to try something different, give bucktailing a try. You won't be disappointed!

## TESTIMONIALS

"It was a pleasure meeting you, you are perfect lodge hosts and you provide your guests with a wonderful and memorable experience. The accommodations, meals and staff are absolutely top notch. The lunches delivered to the anglers on the water were a very special touch. The fishing was great and I definitely plan on returning. Thank you again for providing me with an enjoyable and memorable experience".  
*John Harder (RIO Fly Lines), Idaho Fall, ID. August 2007.*

"Thanks for your thoughtful attention to my special needs. It is deeply appreciated!".  
*Grant Hendrickson, Redmond, WA. August 2007.*

"What a wonderful experience! Now I know why Joe likes coming here so much. You are all so nice, polite, helpful and friendly. We are both so happy and grateful to be here. The best always",  
*Jo Uhlman, Olympia, WA. August 2007.*

## RECIPE BOX

### Xena's Rice Krispy Deep Fried Fish

1 cup all purpose flour	Salt & Pepper
1 cup rice flour	1-2 teaspoon garlic powder
1/2 cup Rice Krispies	1/2 teaspoon paprika
1 egg	1 Beer

Mix all ingredients in a large bowl. Add water until batter has the consistency of thick pancake batter. Cut fish in 3-4 ounce pieces, firm whitefish works the best (halibut, lingcod, red snapper). Fill a deep pot 1/2 full of peanut oil, heat to 375 degrees. Roll fish in flour, then coat with batter. Fry fish until golden brown.

## REMEMBRANCES

We would like to say goodbye to Francis Willis, of Calgary. Francis was a wonderful angler and friend, she passed in 2004. Francis and husband, Craig, have been long-time guests of the lodge; she will be missed.

Bud Kurtz, of Napa, CA. passed away in March of this year. Bud was a passionate fisherman and we will remember him fondly.

Steve Lubbers from Florida left us suddenly last year at an early age. Featured in the 2003

newsletter, he was one of the combatants in the Jack Daniels boxing match. Steve wore the black eye patch of the man who lost the fight. He was a great guy, always full of smiles and laughter.

Our dear friend and fellow angler, Jo Clark, of Oregon, passed away this winter. Those of us who had the privilege of meeting and fishing with Jo will remember her kindness and passion for life, friends and family.

## OBITUARY

By Jennifer Nelson

It was a sad day on April 18, 2007 as Haa-nee-naa Lodge met her demise.

After 15 years of giving us all she had to offer, she burned to the water.

We will ever be grateful for the love, excitement, courage, security and beauty she shared with us during her time.

Our gratitude is undying.

Who knows why such a tragedy would ever happen, but it has.

Her material self has been destroyed but will never be forgotten. Her memories and spirit will live on in our hearts and minds forever.

Thank you Haa Nee Naa, you are so very missed!