
Contact Information:

Katherine Frank

250.650.7271

www.komoksfestival.com

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**HISTORIC OPENING OF QUENEESH HOUSE BY HEREDITARY CHIEF YAX'NUKWALAS,
K'ÓMOKS & PENTLATCH HEREDITARY CHIEF NAMNAM'AM, KERRY NORMAN FRANK, ON
THE LANDS OF THE K'ÓMOKS FIRST NATION**

[Courtenay, British Columbia, June 21, 2024]—Hereditary Chief Yax'nukwalas, K'ómoks & Pentlatch Hereditary Chief Namnam'am, Kerry Norman Frank invites the community to witness the historic opening of Queneesh House on National Indigenous Peoples Day, June 21, 2024, on the Lands of the K'ómoks First Nation.

Queneesh House is built in the old style and incorporates designs from our ancestors from K'omoks and Kelsey Bay. It is named for the beautiful glacier of legend who watches over it. We call the Comox Glacier, Qʷənəs (kwun-ees). It is also the K'ómoks word for whale. The two are closely tied together in history and legend.

Our ancestors lived along these shorelines, rivers and estuaries, close to and in synch with the rhythm of the seasons and the tides. Queneesh House stands proudly on these shores and reaches back in time to call to them.

Her walls and wood feel the caress of the wind and salt off the sea. As we stand within them we will feel it, too, and smell the smoke from the fire, the fresh salt air of a new season—the bounty of sacred salmon in the Pit Cook. We will hear the drums, bare feet on the ground, voices rising and know that we celebrate just as our ancestors did in the time of Queneesh.

We invite you to join us as we mark the Solstice—sharing our culture, stories, and our communities' pride in National Indigenous Peoples Day—as we welcome a new season of life.

We will honour and open Queneesh House on this historic occasion through blessings, dancing and ceremony. There is a full day of activities to mark this momentous day as part of the K'ómoks Festival 2024.

The event will feature celebrated First Nation Artists, Carvers, Yisya'winuxw Dancers, Singers & Knowledge Keepers sharing their cultural gifts with all of us.

Learn the Story of the Frank Memorial Pole—Carved by Tlingit Kwagu't Master Carver, Tommy Hunt Jr., Waławidi & Feature Exhibition—Legends Behind the Masks.

Legends Behind the Masks—Guests will witness artworks on display by some of the most celebrated First Nation Artists and Carvers on the West Coast including artwork by Henry Speck Sr., Dicky Joseph, Tommy Hunt Jr., Waławidi, Wayne Alfred, Richard Hunt, the Late Beau Dick, Late Marcus Alfred, Late Douglas Cranmer, Geary Cranmer, Bruce Alfred & Rachelle Antoine.

Workshops include Bentwood Box Demonstrations with respected Kwakwaka'wakw artist and carver, Bruce Alfred, of the 'Namgis from "Yalis, Alert Bay, Cormorant Island, British Columbia.

Those interested in being an Archaeologist for the Day to join us on walking tours of the K'ómoks Fish Weirs and Middens along the foreshore at Comox Harbour to learn their history, and how stewardship and innovation have been applied in the past and lives on today.

We will share the work at Kus-kus-sum—a project to help restore balance and harmony to the land on the northern riverside of the Courtenay River at the confluence of the river and the K'ómoks Estuary with our community partners including Project Watershed, Interfor and the City of Courtenay.

Spend time with our Indigenous Knowledge Keepers, and hear talks on Climate Change, Stewardship, and Traditional Indigenous Ways of Governing versus Western Law. Participate in Traditional Medicine, Plant & Food Workshops, Sacred Salmon Pit Cook Demonstration, and Hands-On Learning through Art for Children & Youth—plus enjoy the delicious food and vendor market.

Guests of all ages are encouraged to participate in the 2024 K'ómoks Queneesh Under the Sun Community Art Project, a large-scale mural celebrating Queneesh which will live onsite after the event.

About K'ómoks Festival 2024:

K'ómoks Festival is a free, family-friendly annual event honouring National Indigenous Peoples Day. Everyone is welcome. June 21, 2024, 9 AM to 7 PM, 3535 Bayside Road, Courtenay, BC

Learn more about the activities planned at K'ómoks Festival 2024 by visiting
www.komoksfestival.com