

UCHUCKLESAHT TRIBE GOVERNMENT CULTURAL PACKAGE





The Uchucklesaht Tribe is a self-governing nation, and one of five Maa-nulth Nations who have signed off on the Maa-nulth Treaty.

The Uchucklesaht Tribe consists of approximately 257 people and has a large territory located in the area of the Barkley Sound, approximately 24 miles down the Barkley Sound, southwest from Port Alberni.

The Uchucklesaht Government consists of a Legislative branch, an Executive branch and a Uchucklesaht People's Assembly.

The Ha'wiih (Hereditary Chief) traditional role is to look after their Ha- Ha'houlthee (territory and resources). The Ha'wiih system is still alive among Uchucklesaht Tribe People. It is the most important part of our history. Every Hereditary Chief has advisors. No Ha'wilt speaks for himself, unless he has good news, or something good to share. All Ha'wiih have speakers, who are trained, from an early age, for these duties.

Speakers should be fluent in our language and have a very strong knowledge of the history of the Ha'wilt seat (including lineage) and his Ha'houlthee.

Uchucklesaht Tribe has blended their hereditary government with modern-day government by ensuring that the Ha'wiih form part of the Uchucklesaht Tribe Government.

The details of the government structure can be found in the Uchucklesaht Tribe Government Act and the Uchucklesaht Tribe Constitution. Currently the people holding the Hereditary Seats in the Uchucklesaht Tribe are:

Tyee Ha'wilt Clifford Charles



Ha'wilt Thomas Rush



Ha'wilt Martin Sam



Ha'wilt Chris Watts

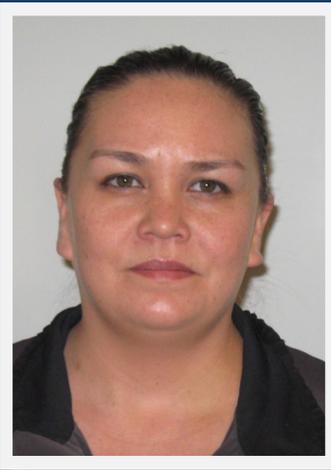


The Uchucklesaht Tribe Government is a mixture of modern and traditional government. There are five elected council seats voted on by the five main families of the nation. The Chief Councillor seat is also an elected seat voted on by all of the Uchucklesaht Tribe Enrollees/Citizens. The Hawiith seats are not voted on and they are able to participate as a Legislative Councillor if they wish to do so.

In 2013— the Legislature and Executive consist of the following people:



**CHIEF COUNCILLOR CHARLIE
COOTES—ELECTED**



**CARLA HALVORSEN
COUNCILLOR AND EXECUTIVE—
ELECTED**



**WILFRED COOTES JR.
COUNCILLOR AND
EXECUTIVE—ELECTED**



**JOSEPH GINGER
COUNCILLOR—ELECTED**



**CHRIS WATTS COUNCILLOR AND
HAWIILTH**

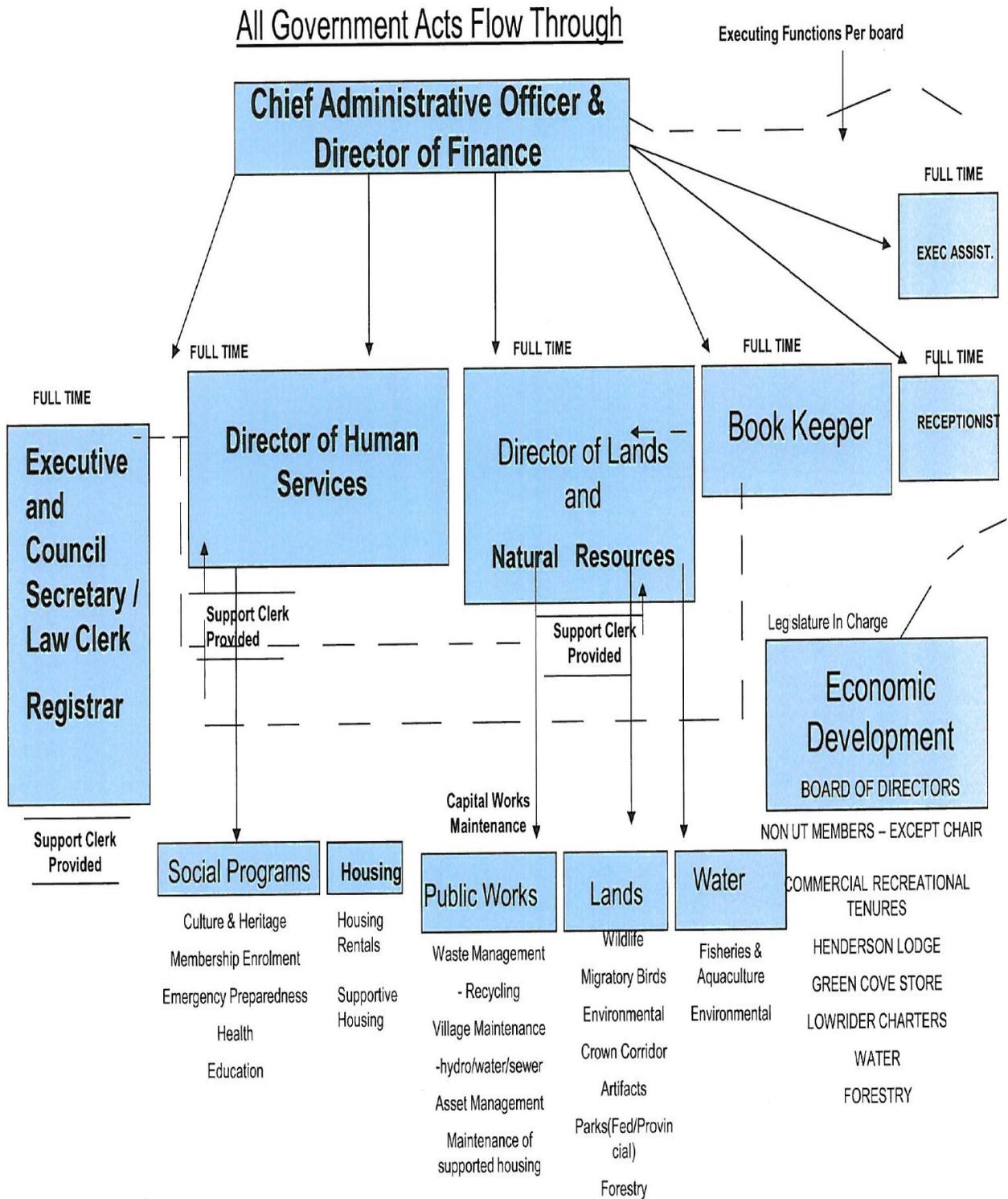


**THOMAS RUSH, EXECUTIVE AND
COUNCILLOR AND HAWIILTH**



**CLIFFORD CHARLES—COUNCILLOR
AND TYEE HAWIILTH**

The Uchucklesaht Tribe Organization Chart as of April 1, 2011 is as follows:



The first village of the Uchucklesaht Tribe is immediately past the Uchucklesaht Inlet on the West side of Barkley Sound, named "Cowishulth". The second village is located at the head of Uchucklesaht Inlet and is named "Hilthatis". Uchucklesaht means "the people in a safe sheltered place—the inner bay".

In October of 2003, the Maa-nulth Nations signed a stage four BC Treaty Process Agreement in Principle with BC and Canada and on December 9, 2006 the Maa-nulth Leaders initialed the landmark agreement in Victoria, BC. April 1, 2011 was the effective date of the Maa-nulth Treaty.

Uchucklesaht Tribe has been working at improving social and economic conditions in the community for years. The treaty has seen that Uchucklesaht Treaty Lands were turned into fee simple lands and gave Uchucklesaht direct control over those lands.

Uchucklesaht has 233 hectares in former reserve (village) lands and an additional 2834 hectares of treaty settlement lands—totaling 3067 hectares of land. The pre-approved lands for potential purchase totals 448 hectares.

A requirement of the treaty is that all Maa-nulth Nations complete their detailed Official Community Plans before any development occurs in the various areas of the Uchucklesaht Territory. The Legislative Council has formed an Advisory Planning Commission in July of 2013 to start that work and consultation with the Uchucklesaht Community. The Uchucklesaht Tribe Draft Land Use Plan that was developed back in 2008 will help to contribute some important information to the OCP.

Terms and Terminology: General Terms—

INCORRECT TERM

Indian Band

Indian

Reserve

Band Council

Band Office

Band Council Resolution

CORRECT TERM

Uchucklesaht Tribe Government

Uchucklesaht Tribe Citizen

Village or Uchucklesaht Lands

Uchucklesaht Tribe Government

Uchucklesaht Tribe Administration

Uchucklesaht Tribe Government Resolution

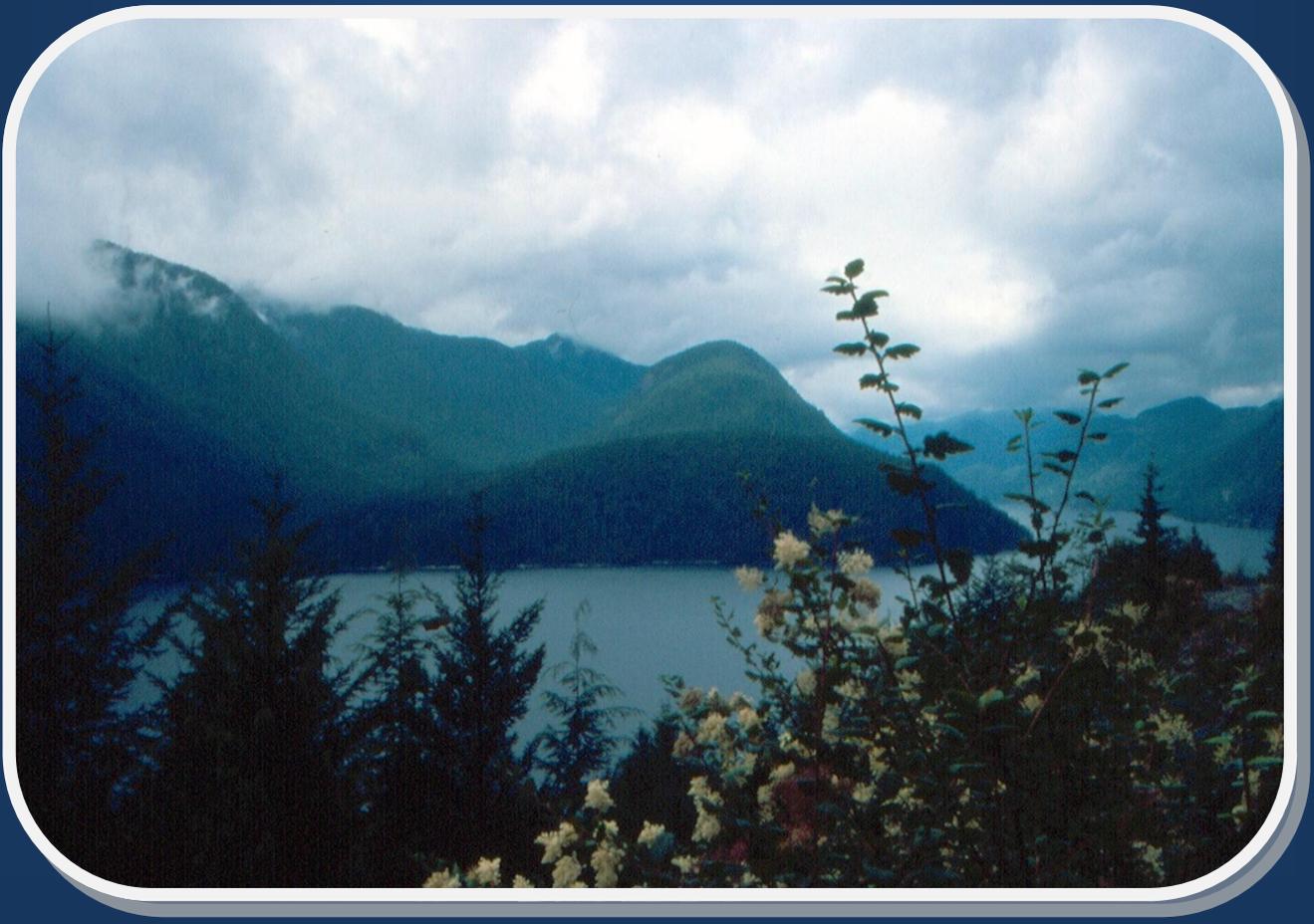
TII'TSKIN PAWATTS—HOME OF THE THUNDERBIRD

The T'iitskin Paawats is a place without any permanent structures and is a very important and sacred place for the Uchucklesaht Tribe People. It is comprised of five named mountain peaks, which enclose a valley with a river; a trail, pools of water and waterfalls for bathing, and food-gathering areas which are all contained within the territory of the Uchucklesaht Tribe. The T'iitskin Paawats is made up of five named mountains, a creek, bathing pools, food and material gathering area, and archaeological sites.

The mountain names are: *Tuutuuchpiika* 'Thunder Mountain/Eldest Brother;' *Titskakuulth* 'Thunder Face Mountain;' *Uusajuu-is* 'Ritual Bathing Mountain;' *Uu-aatsuu* 'Second Eldest Brother Mountain;' *Kalthaatik* 'Youngest Brother Mountain;' *T'it'iiskakis* 'Thunder(bird) Creek;' and, *T'iitskakis* 'Thunder (bird) Beach.

The T'iitskin Paawats is the home and nesting place of the Thunderbird. T'iitskin Paawats translates to 'Thunderbird's Nest' and is where the last remaining Thunderbird lives. They control the rain and thunderstorms. Thunderbirds are also connected to whales, whaling, and whaling power. As such, Nuu-chah-nulth whalers visit the T'iitskin Paawats to pray, fast, and bathe in ritual preparation for the dangerous activity of hunting whales.

The spiritual sites within the T'iitskin Paawats include bathing pools. These are places that Uchucklesaht people go to '*osimich*. A process of '*osimich* was crucial to the proper preparation of whalers and others seeking to cleanse themselves spiritually.



THE PAINTED CURTAIN

Uchucklesaht Tribe has sent our elders to museums in order to identify artifacts that were created by our ancestors of the Uchucklesaht Tribe. Our tribe is interested in bringing our peoples artifacts back home for the sake of keeping our identities strong.

In May of 2002, Helen Rush-Robinson of Uchucklesaht Tribe joined relatives and other members of the tribe for a long trip to New York to retrieve an artifact important to the Nuu-chah-nulth and even more dear to Robinson: a painted curtain that her father, a chief of the Uchucklesaht band, had commissioned for her coming-of-age ceremony nearly 60 years ago.

This curtain showed a thunderbird filling the sky, serpents flanking it breathing lightning and a whale roaring thunder. It had disappeared from a closet in her attic shortly after her father's death in 1963. Helen had the support from different bands among the 14 nations of Nuu chah nulth to go and reclaim her curtain. George Watts, the chairman at the time, asked that each nation contribute \$2,000 in Canadian currency to pay for the curtain so that she could bring it back home and all the nations agreed. Helen Rush found her curtain over in New York.

Traditional Nuu-Chah-Nulth artifacts can be found in museums and private collections around the world. The curtain still remains protected within her family.



A Family And Tribe Regain A Piece Of History

By RITA REIF

ON that Friday in May, Helen Rush Robinson, an elder of the Nuuchahnulth people, packed the black and red cape she had emblazoned with images of her family story — a moon, a canoe and a thunderbird — and joined relatives and other members of the tribe for the trip by car and ferry to Vancouver.

It was the first step on their journey from Port Alberni, on Vancouver Island in British Columbia, to New York to retrieve an artifact important to the Nuuchahnulth and even more dear to Mrs. Robinson: a painted curtain that her father, a chief of the Uchucklesah band, had commissioned for her coming-of-age ceremony nearly 60 years ago.

That night in a motel at the Vancouver airport, while the others slept, Mrs. Robinson stitched together headbands of cedar bark, rabbit's fur and abalone shell, working in the dim light from an open bathroom door. The headbands were for all to wear in New York when they conducted a ritual of return practiced by the Nuuchahnulth, an ancient Northwest Coast tribe.

While working on the headbands, Mrs. Robinson, who turns 70 today, thought about the curtain that she had not seen for decades, since her coming-of-age ceremony in the early 1940's. Her father had orchestrated the event, defying Canadian laws at the time that banned such rituals as well as the potlatch feast that followed. She recalled being anxious and shy during the celebration, and her memories of it were ambivalent. But she had not forgotten the huge painted curtain, a 12-by-14-foot depiction of mythic images attributed to the artist and rendered in a nontraditional reminiscent of 1940's magazine illustrations: a whale breathing lightning,



Shayne Morrow

The long-lost painted curtain commemorating the coming of age of Helen Rush Robinson, above right, nearly 60 years ago.

a whale roaring thunder and a man demonstrating his strength by lifting a hefty column.

By the 1960's, when she became more curious about the tribal stories depicted on the curtain, it was gone, she said, probably stolen from a closet in the attic shortly after her father's death in 1963. She feared she would never see it again.

"For the Nuuchahnulth people, painted curtains are the most important art works," said Alan L. Hoover, who was manager of the anthropology department at the Royal British Columbia Museum in Victoria before retiring last month. Mr. Hoover helped organize "Out of the Mists: Treasures of the Nuuchahnulth Chiefs," a two-year traveling exhibition of painted curtains — including a boldly graphic one from the estate of

Andy Warhol — and other artifacts. The show, which ended last month in Los Angeles, presented the evolution of Nuuchahnulth art, from painted wooden screens in the 18th century to cotton and muslin curtains from the 1860's on, when artifacts related to tribal ceremonies became illegal and fabric paintings proved easier to conceal.

It was that exhibition that brought about the discovery of Helen Rush Robinson's curtain. George Terasaki, a retired New York dealer of American Indian art, had lent three curtains to the exhibition and told Mr. Hoover about three others that he owned. Mr. Hoover passed the information along to the Nuuchahnulth tribal council, and one of the curtains was identified as Mrs. Robinson's. Mr. Terasaki said that

when he bought the curtain 30 years ago from Norman Feder, a curator at the Denver Art Museum, it came without any historical documentation.

Mrs. Robinson became excited when she learned in March that her curtain had been found in New York. "That curtain is like a book of family history," she said. "It holds the proof of who I am. There are songs that go with the curtain that tell all the family stories."

Mrs. Robinson appeared in April with other members of the Uchucklesah band at a meeting of the Nuuchahnulth tribal council, a body that represents 7,500 people in 14 nations, to ask for help in acquiring the curtain at the price Mr. Terasaki asked: \$17,000, or 28,000 Canadian dollars.

"She stood up and told her story," said



Ron Hamilton

Susan Lauder, one of Mrs. Robinson's nine surviving children. "She told the council that white people and everybody had taken away much of the Indian culture, but if the curtain came back to her, it would mean she had it all."

Mrs. Robinson ended the band's plea to the council by saying, "This is all I have left; please don't take it away from me again." She was in tears, as were many who heard her. Immediately, several young women rose to pledge support from different bands among the 14 nations. George Watts, the chairman, asked that each nation contribute \$2,000 in Canadian currency to pay for the curtain, and all agreed.

Five weeks later, Mrs. Robinson was at the Vancouver airport for her first airplane trip. That night she experienced another first: a ride in a stretch limousine, provided

**A painted curtain given
to a Nuuchahnulth girl
is discovered, decades
later, in New York.**

by Mr. Terasaki, from Newark International Airport to a Manhattan hotel, where the group of 13 stayed as his guests.

Everyone rose early on Sunday morning. By 8, Mrs. Robinson was in her cape and her new headband, taking taxis with her family and the others to Mr. Terasaki's East Side apartment. They gathered outside his door so that the men could apply paint to their faces and don their robes and headbands, and they watched Ron Hamilton, a consultant who studied the curtain's history for the family, shake his rattle to spread bird down on the floor in the hallway. "We spread down as a way to bless that place," Mr. Hamilton said.

Thomas Rush, a nephew of Mrs. Robinson's who will soon become a chief of the Uchucklesah band, was to enter the apartment first. "I peeked from the hallway at the curtain," he said. "I could barely contain myself. I wanted so badly to go in before the chant. They had to hold me back."

Mrs. Robinson followed him into the room. "When I first saw the curtain again, I said 'hello' to my father and mother," she said. "I'm here now to take you home you're coming home with me." I said 'own language. And I thanked the day."

Prayers:

Before Uchucklesaht Tribe Events or Meetings—it is common practice for a person to start the session with a prayer to the Creator on behalf of the Uchucklesaht People.

Talking Stick:

The talking stick used to be the instrument of aboriginal democracy in the past. It would be passed around amongst a group of leaders as a symbol of their authority to speak. This method was used in order to give everyone a chance to speak. Today, the Uchucklesaht Tribe Government practices a more common Roberts Rules of Order in which the Chief Councillor is responsible for chairing and ensuring those Rules of Order are followed. The Uchucklesaht Tribe Government would like to once again incorporate our traditional practices with the more modern ones and so will be hiring a local first nation carver to carve a Uchucklesaht Tribe Talking Stick for the Uchucklesaht Tribe Government.

Traditional Foods:

The Uchucklesaht Tribe People collect a variety of traditional foods from the mountains and ocean in their territory.

Salmon has always been the most common food that has been smoked, canned and dried and many of the salmon was fished in Kildonan or in the Barkley Sound.

Deer and Grouse have been hunted in the mountains surrounding the tribes territory, from Useless Inlet, to Kildonan and to the back of the Henderson Lake. Berries are collected in the villages and in the mountains. Bottom Fish such as Rock Cod and Halibut, Sea Urchins, Clams, Prawns and Oysters continue to be harvested everywhere from Kildonan, BC out into the Broken Group in the Barkley Sound.

Being able to provide to the Uchucklesaht Tribe People their traditional foods is important to the Uchucklesaht Tribe. Every year the nation hires contractors to fish salmon, halibut, black cod, and various other traditional foods for the people and distributes to all interested Uchucklesaht Tribe Enrollees and Citizens.

Traditional Foods, Culture, Language and Practices contribute to a healthy lifestyle for our first nation people.

Culture and Heritage:

Every Wednesday there are traditional workshops available for Uchucklesaht Tribe People to participate in. There are workshops provided that teach the people how to harvest cedar, weave cedar, pick grasses (for creating traditional regalia or other items), preserving salmon, pick and preserve berries, language practices, drum making, and many other common traditional practices.

It is the Uchucklesaht Tribe Department of Human Services that is responsible for setting up the Culture and Heritage Activities for the Uchucklesaht People.

