

MOCCASIN TELEGRAPH – THIRTEENTH EDITION - May 11, 2003

Created by Sherron Jones sherronjones@shaw.ca

Happy Mother's Day to all the mothers in the group!

Thankyou to everyone who provided input for this edition. Now we need more for next week.

PRACTICAL EDUCATION

By Michael (Duff) Bellamy airmail@telusplanet.net

Michael Duff (Surname was changed in 84 to Bellamy reflecting my mothers side of the family), Yukon resident from 69 to 83.

The hard work and studying had finally paid off and I realized a life long dream. In 1970 renting aircraft from Ed Philip's Globe Air Services of Whitehorse I completed my flight test to become a Commercial Fixed Wing Pilot.

By January of 1971 I was flying out of Ross River under the employ of John Rolls, founder of Territorial Airways and his rotary wing cohort Dirk Zutter.

I had been a Yukoner for almost two years by that time working for Casino Silver, then driving a garbage truck for the City of Whitehorse, so I knew what I was in for.

Ross River had one general store and a hotel under construction by Jack Rolls called the Welcome Inn. I managed to purchase a small residential lot and made arrangements to have a mobile home trucked in from Whitehorse. While surveying my first ever land acquisition a fellow came by, welcomed me to Ross River and helped me stake out my possession with survey lath, his name was Al Kulan. I flew with him on many occasions after that.

The airstrip was gravel and a short distance out of town. During the winter aircraft were routinely taxied from the airstrip, down the main street and into town were they could be plugged in during the long cold nights.

Being a neophyte and flying for Territorial Airways you experienced first hand the glamorous life of a bush pilot from cleaning toilets to painting all manner of structures. When that was done you were rewarded; by actually being allowed to fly and earn some revenue.

It was on one of my very first trips that I learned about overflow, where water creeps over solid ice and insulated by deep snow does not freeze. Now I had experienced overflow before and learned how to skim the skis of an airplane across the lake without actually stopping. Then taking off again to survey my tracks looking for the dark trails of water. Bringing an airplane to a stop under those conditions would certainly mean a

protracted stay and as my wife Lynn had just arrived in Ross River I was eager to get back as soon as possible.

I arrived at my destination flying a Cessna 206 on Flui-dyne skis and surveyed the small nameless lake. In the trees and a few hundred meters from the shore sat the purpose of my trip, Beaver FHZ, twisted and crumpled a testimonial to the erroneous belief that full throttle does not necessarily ensure a successful take off.

Seeing the tracks from John's ill-fated previous trip I landed and keeping the power up described a circle at the end of the lake before taking to the air again. Carefully I flew over my fresh tracks looking for any sign that I wouldn't be able to get out again.

Confident that after unloading the salvage supplies I would soon be winging my way home, I landed. Everything was normal, I parked on the freshly made tracks and was just shutting down the engine when the airplane lurched with a sickening crunch to one side then leveled itself by lurching to the other. I grabbed the door and propelled myself as far as I could from the airplane, as I was certain that it was going through the ice. I looked back from where I sprawled in the snow to see that the airplane had settled belly deep in water and the skis had found secure footing two feet under water. The overflow had grown a thin layer of ice tricking me into believing that I had solid ice under the tracks.

For two days, in minus-thirty weather, I built a platform from tree branches and finally got the airplane free of the lakes icy grasp. I can still feel the muscle pain that came with packing twelve hundred feet of runway with a pair of snowshoes. A runway that was generously wide when I started narrowed perilously as the day and my legs wore on.

Back in Ross River the worst was feared as the weather closed in and I hadn't called in on the single side band radio. We didn't have radios installed in the airplanes but we did carry a portable that could be set up once on the ground. Someone however had forgotten to include some vital parts rendering the radio useless.

Frustrated by my inability to tell my wife that I was all right, the bitter cold and the daunting task of getting the airplane back into the air, my mind catalogued the first of many lessons the Yukon was to teach me. You are completely dependent upon yourself and if you are lucky enough to get someone on the radio all you're going to get is sympathy.

On the third day the weather cleared and I was ready, I had managed to keep the engine warm by running it every two or three hours then carefully wrapping it with an engine cover and my sleeping bag. The labouriously packed runway led away from the platform on which the airplane sat. I took one last look and then heard the approaching snarl of a Cessna One Eighty.

A few minutes later the Globe Air Cessna landed on my runway and a grinning Ed Philips along with a jubilant John Rolls and Dirk Zutter greeted me. It turned out the only one confident of my survival was my wife, a confidence that she still has after thirty-two years of catering to a pilot who took the lessons of the Yukon to heart.

A few years ago I was flying helicopters for the UN in a place called Kismayu on the coast of Somalia, east Africa with another ex-Yukoner, Dave Holden. We were discussing along with some British pilots on how to deal with the hazards of taking off and landing in blowing desert sand. My approach was to use the same procedures that were used in the Yukon with blowing snow. This suggestion was met with blank stares all except Dave Holden who was grinning, remembering lessons learned half a world away.

Well-done Mike! That's quite a story.

PS - we have the old payphone, (on our back deck) which lived in the Welcome Inn and witnessed the shooting of Al Kulan. – Sherron

And now you'll know the rest of the Story!

Sherron, are you ready for this? It's been like awaiting the birth of an elephant, but I managed to put it together (finally). Your comments are welcome...gh

Well-done George, and our heartfelt Thankyou for sharing your harrowing day. – Sherron

Stranded Haines Highway Travelers -The Helicopter Rescue

By George Howell, Pilot-Trans North Turbo Air (TNTA), Whitehorse

I received a telephone call at my home in Porter Creek around noon one January morning in 1975. Little did I know then, when I lifted the receiver, that it was the beginning of what would become one of the most difficult jobs I would ever encounter in my aviation career.

It was from Tom Nairn, Yukon Fire Marshall, and Emergency Measures Co-ordinator. He explained to me that 19 or so vehicles (including rotary snow plows, and graders) along with 30+ people had spent the last 30 hours drifted in and out of fuel near 64 mile on the Haines Highway. The people had found shelter as they crammed themselves into a propane-heated drome box on the back of a Linden Transport semi tractor. Colin Yulette, a long time Yukoner and Yukon Territorial Government (YTG) highways foreman was with the stranded convoy and in radio contact, keeping everyone apprised of their situation. The snowfall had abated, but the wind, still blowing at 60 mph with gusts to 70+ caused the blowing snow to keep surface visibility to near zero. He estimated that they had enough propane for 5 to 6 hours. The surface temperature, without wind chill, was near -25F. Chances of any rescue via surface vehicles in the next 10 hours were completely nil. Kenny Aylwin, Haines Junction road foreman and his crew were making slow progress clearing their way from Dezadeash. The situation had changed from serious to desperate.

As Nairn ended his explanation of the situation (I had been keeping track of some of the developments from news reports on CBC Radio), he made it quite clear that an attempt must be made to extract everyone (or as many as possible) by helicopter and fly them to the maintenance camp at 75 mile (5 or 6-24 mile round trips, depending on how many people we could cram into the 3 passenger rear seat). There were, in his estimation, no other alternatives or options. My mind (thinking of my options) started to drift to questions of: (a). the ability of the helicopter (a Bell 206 Jet Ranger) and more importantly, (b). the ability of me. Thoughts of trying to get a more experienced pilot to do this were zilch since everyone else was either on seasonal lay off or winter vacation (this being the slack season). I win (lose?) by default. I quite frankly explained to Tom that I had serious doubts that I could safely carry this out, especially with the anticipated violent mechanical turbulence generated from the mountains (the whole valley, which I knew fairly well, would be like a mix-master). I had no idea how thick the layer of blowing snow, which was obscuring the ground, would be. Was there any fuel for the helicopter at the camp? (Tom thought so.) He then, as subtly as possible, played his “trump” card by slamming me with, “George, you have to get as many people out as you possibly can.” It was “things unsaid”, that really got my attention. No “what ifs” or “what do I do ifs”. I told him I’d talk it over with Alex Kapy, our President. Tom said that he already had, Alex had given him my telephone number. The die was cast. I told Tom to meet me at the hangar.

Wind conditions, as we neared the St. Elias mountains and vicinity of the Three Guardsmen on the Haines Road gradually picked up to gale force even though the sky was relatively clear. Once we slowly groped our way at reduced airspeed into the main valley enroute to drop Tom off at the maintenance camp, I could see that the valley floor and the road to the South was completely obscured by a layer of blowing snow probably 150 feet thick. Somewhere in that murky whiteness was the stranded convoy. I made contact with Yulette on a YTG radio channel. We briefed each other on what had to be done (Colin was very familiar with helicopters and would be invaluable with the boarding and loading) and the best way to get people into the helicopter. Which ones we would take first (women and children do have priority) the best place to set down on the drifted surface and how I would need someone standing in the landing area so that I could use him for reference. With visibility in the blowing snow less than 100 feet in a grey-out, knowing where the ground was would be impossible to determine without a marker.

In our information exchange, another complication became apparent. When I asked for confirmation, I learned that there was no helicopter fuel at the camp. The crew making their way from the North had some with them but they would be many hours away. Another nagging concern was the fast approach of twilight. Time and fuel consumption would be critical. Add this to the thrashing and bashing from the gale and trying to maintain control of the Jet Ranger was becoming a real concern.

After I dropped Tom off at the camp, I made my way slowly southward, toward the stranded convoy, about 500 feet above ground. When I got to the more open area where the wind was strongest (and more turbulent) the layer of blowing snow completely

obscured the ground features. Eventually (while talking to Yulette on the radio, its battery also starting to fade) I could make out the dark shapes of the trucks, cars and equipment through the murky snow layer. He told me where he was, relative to which vehicle and where to put down. (One thing he didn't have to tell me was the wind direction!) All I could do was focus on the form of the vehicle, as I slowly settled into the "stuff" until very slowly, I could make out a human form, waving its arms and guiding me to a firm touchdown as the main rotor blades violently slapped and flapped in the gusting blast.

What happened next was quite incredible (as if nothing up to this point wasn't). People started emerging from the gloom in front of me, the front passenger door opening and someone thrusting a bundle into my arms as I held the cyclic stick between my knees, people being crammed into the back seat (meant to hold 3, I'm sure there were 5), ladies and 2 small children, somebody screaming, "Where's the baby!" The bundle in my arms squirming as the lady sitting next to me takes it and opens the blanket to expose a pair of small feet (the baby was given to me upside down!). The doors closed and Yulette giving me the thumbs up (GO) and threshing our way, as if coming up from deep underwater, through the gray into the brightness above, to the camp 12 miles away.

This was the repeat for the next several trips, my thoughts being after each one, something like; "OK, one more time, so far so good." As twilight set in, the fuel gauge needle slowly became magnetized by the "0" gallons mark on the instrument panel, and as my stop watch was fast agreeing that fumes and echoes are all that will be in the tank, I finally picked up the last three men (Colin being the last to board) and I was for the first time, very specific in telling them to secure their seat belts, as I was fully prepared to accept that we would encounter fuel starvation, and a power off landing, but I'd keep going as far as possible toward the camp in order to make the walk as short as possible.

Needless to say, everything worked out and nobody got hurt. When I finally got the helicopter secured away for the night in the camp garage (Mr. Bell, you make a great helicopter) and made my way up to the kitchen and living quarters, I at last got to meet and talk to a few of the people. Ironically, some of the family people and others driving their cars (a lot of them wearing only light clothing) were more concerned with the disruption in their travel plans and well being of their vehicle (one lady gave her husband a talking to because he didn't lock the car before they left it, half buried in a snowdrift) rather than express any relief at finally being in warming safe shelter. (My commiserations went to the cook, who I'm sure must have had a very tired arm after opening many cans, trying to feed the masses until they were flown out the next afternoon when the wind abated.)

In the early hours of the next morning, the relief crew arrived in camp from the north and I was able to refuel and return to Whitehorse with Tom Nairn, the charter successfully completed.

That is the background on the rescue side of the story, which was given the one-line reference to, in the newspaper account of the incident.

By George Howell, Westbank B.C. - May 6, 2003 howellgm@shaw.ca

Hi Sherron. Since so many Yukoners live in the Okanagan, I thought maybe they'd like to read about Robert Service's connection to the area. - Les

Robert Service in Kamloops

By Les McLaughlin leslorne@cs.com

As Robert Service wandered the streets of Vancouver in the wet spring of 1902, the Scottish immigrant was destitute. Things were definitely not going as he had planned back in 1894 when he emigrated to Canada intent on becoming a farmer or a cowboy. Back then he fully expected that the British colony would be the stepping stone to a life of independence and perhaps riches.

Now six years later, the 29-year-old college dropout from Glasgow University needed employment of any kind. His years in Canada had produced nothing by way of security, much less affluence.

Most of his jobs had been menial, either as a farm labourer on Vancouver Island or on the end of a shovel for small road building outfits somewhere in the Pacific Northwest. The spring rains in Vancouver may have been good news for the daffodils, but for Service they only added to his melancholy misery.

Stopping in front of a bank in downtown Vancouver, he bumped into an island acquaintance and when asked how he was getting along, told the truth.

Poorly, he said.

He was unemployed and with no prospects. His friend looked up at the grey bank building and suggested that Service might enquire inside. He had after all worked for six months at the Bank of Scotland before sailing to Canada.

With nothing to lose, Service took the advice, entered the bank, met with the Inspector, lied about his age by two years and was told to return in a week.

Seven days later, in what Service described as "the twinkling of an eye," the bank inspector offered him a clerk's job in the small Victoria branch of the Bank of Commerce at a salary of fifty dollars a month.

For the next year and a half, Robert Service, now over thirty and quite comfortable as a bank clerk, forgot his former fancy of becoming a farmer.

One day in early 1904, as he entered numbers by hand into the bank ledger, the Inspector paid a visit to advise him that he had been transferred to "an inland branch" in a small town in the heart of cattle country with a river running alongside and cattle ranges all around.

It was, he had heard, the place where the bank sent "lungers" because of the dry, arid climate, a recommended place for "consumptives." Service had no trouble with his lungs. He was in fact in the peak of health and one of his first tasks on arriving in Kamloops was to buy a pony and take up polo.

He had some photos taken to send to his father back in Scotland and delighted in the thought that his father would be telling his cronies at the local pub in Glasgow that his

oldest son, Robert had become a prominent official in a big Canadian bank.

In Kamloops, the future poet found that life was pleasant and the work was light. Of the bank's four employees, one pink-faced young lad was always short of breath and certainly, thought Service, a "lunger." Another was a cadaverous man with a hollow voice.

The boss was a gregarious chap who had trouble balancing the ledger at months' end.

Nonetheless, work ended at four o'clock and then Service would ride his pony through the rolling ridges, into the eerie gulches and gaze at the ghostly mountains. He loved to ride alone imagining that he could see the world from a unique perspective on horseback with his mount adding to his sense of self-esteem. Even in rags, he felt regal.

He often encountered native people whom he described as superb horsemen and befriended cattle ranchers who held weekly dances in their isolated ranches. He delighted in riding back to his own quarters in the town centre by the light of the early morn.

At public dances in downtown Kamloops, he found it curious to see how office workers, like bankers, kept their distance from trades people. One side of the hall would comprise the shop-keeping crowd, while on the other gathered the so-called "elite."

He never dared to dance with the ladies who worked in the local stores, though, he said, he wanted to because he found them to be the prettiest. Yet to have done so would have not sit well with his own set.

During his teen years in Scotland and then while roaming western Canada and the Northern states looking for work, Robert Service was a voracious reader; devouring everything he could get his hands on. And he wrote doggerel verse for his own amusement.

In Kamloops, however, his sense of poetry and love of literature, abandoned him. Now, his whole ambition was to get on in the bank and to give it his lifelong loyalty.

He was determined to enjoy his life in the British Columbia interior and to succeed as a banker. His longing for adventure, so strong when he came to Canada in 1894, had all but disappeared. Still, he could not help but read newspaper accounts of the exciting Klondike story..

Bank employees recognized that a transfer to one of their branches in the Yukon was desirable. The Bank of Commerce had a colourful history tied to the gold rush. It was the second bank to establish in Dawson City during the great Klondike stampede of 1898 and provided current employees special benefits such as free living quarters and a financial subsidy for working in this remote region of the country. Even their laundry was paid for.

As a frugal Scot, Service liked that idea but never dreamed it could come true until one day, six months after his transfer to Kamloops, the manager called him into the office.

To his dying day, Robert William Service never forgot that meeting. The manager advised him that he was being transferred to the Yukon. A month later he was on a coastal steamer bound for Skagway, then on board the narrow gauge White Pass railway headed to Whitehorse.

Three years later, in 1907, while a teller with the Whitehorse branch of the Bank of Commerce, he self published a book of poems, called the Spell of the Yukon and other Verses. The Toronto firm that handled his printing job offered him a contract for the rights to the first and subsequent books of poetry.

By the end of the first decade of the twentieth century, he was the writer of three best-

selling books and the author of the most famous poem in Canadian history, the Cremation of Sam McGee.

When he died at his home in France on September 11th, 1958 at age 84, Robert Service was not only a millionaire, but also arguably the best-known poet in the world.

Donna Clayson's Story Section ytdogteam@telus.net

FACT OR FICTION? I have submitted a few items that I would classify as fact or fiction. Will we ever know for sure? How many of you have heard or seen something you really can't believe but, then, maybe it could be true. Read on and send me anything you think could be classified as "Fact or Fiction?"

AISHIHIK LAKE

In 1963 veteran fisherman, Dick Stevenson, was pulling a trout out of Aishihik Lake. Just when he was about to land it a monster swirled up out of the depths and hit his catch. Later he found the whole tail of the trout was torn off and in turning, the monster slammed against the bow of his boat putting a hefty dent in the aluminum hull. Local Indians have also told of a lake monster in the area so it may not be as far-fetched as Stevenson thinks.

Editor's Note: We were fishing at Marsh Lake in the seventies. We were out in the middle of the lake in a 14 ½ foot Commander aluminum boat with a 20 horsepower motor. I'm not much of a fisherman and I actually prefer to clean them than catch them as most of what I hook gets away anyway. This one bright, hot day I was enjoying the sound of the waves slapping against the boat and half-asleep when, wham, something pulled the rod out of my hands. If it weren't for the quick actions of my partner I'd have lost the rod and reel. With his help we got the fish up to the boat and it was a whopper. Obviously our net was too small for this huge fish. My partner and I were both at the back of the boat in front of the motor when I looked over the side at the fish on the line and I saw another head of a fish – much bigger than my fish. Just as I yelled to my partner to come look he yelled out, "the other half of him is on my side!" This monster that wanted my catch was so large that I could see his entire head and bottom fins on one

side of the boat and my partner could see his back fin and tail on the other. Well, I know water can magnify the size of a fish but we could feel this monsters body hitting the bottom of the boat.

Any at rate, I lost my fish to something way bigger and I'll tell you, this was one time I truly didn't mind giving up lunch. We were just thankful we weren't the meal!

UFO BLINDS TRUCK DRIVERS

By Richard Ross

Richard Ross was a student driver and his teacher, Arnold Emslie were driving a White Pass ore truck from Cypress Anvil mine about 4:15 a.m. November 17, 1975. They were carrying a load of lead when they saw an object at Mile 31.5 on the Klondike Highway, north of Whitehorse, beside Fox Lake.

The truck began acting like the brakes were dragging. Arnold stopped the truck and Rick got out to check the wheels while Arnold drove ahead. No dragging of the wheels was noticed. Approximately two minutes later Arnold noticed a blue light in his rearview mirror and saw something swooping down from above. Arnold said it was about 105 feet above the rear of the trailer. Both men said it was round-shaped and about the size of the moon. The truck did not act up again. It was pitch black outside but the light was so bright it was blinding and lit up the entire area including the lake.

The brightness lasted for about 15 seconds before the UFO took off at a speed so great that it receded in size in about three or four seconds.

Arnold said, "He had never been more frightened by anything in my whole life. Two hours later, I was still shaking."

Neither Rick nor Arnold noticed any sound while the object was following the truck, but vehicle noise could have drowned any out. When they pulled in to the weigh scales at Whitehorse, the attendant there said he had seen the light as well.

Story Editor note: I was married to Rick at the time. When he came home from his experience with the UFO it took some time for him to convince me the story was true. It wasn't really until the newspapers from Edmonton, Vancouver and Ontario began telephoning wanting an interview. All these newspapers wrote articles and the calls didn't stop from reporters for at least two weeks. Arnold received the majority of the calls and after all this attention both Rick and Arnold swore that if they ever encountered another UFO they would keep it to themselves. They both had to make out statements for the RCMP.

Story Editor note: While spending several days at a time visiting friends at Lake LeBarge we had witnessed UFO's hovering over the lake at night. The UFO's didn't appear very large but perhaps they didn't because of distance. It seemed these craft were "sucking" up water from the lake. We would observe them for approximately five minutes before they would depart at a very high rate of speed. Now, I'm not saying I believe in UFO's but I saw something that I can't explain.

Readers, now it's your turn. Have any of you seen anything you can't explain? There are numerous reports on UFO sightings in the Yukon. Check out the following websites:

<http://www.ufobc.ca/yukon/yukon1960s.htm>
<http://www.ufodigest.com/yukon.html>

Last week I asked readers if they knew what the Sourdough Thermometer is. Kerry Lyle responded quickly. I have my own version, which follows.

From the Book – The Gold Fields of the Klondike by John W. Leonard
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SOURDOUGH THERMOMETER

Jack McQuesten invented the "Sourdough Thermometer" which became famous all through the north in the early 1880's.

He developed the idea during the start of the Fortymile gold camp. The thermometer consisted of a row of four bottles, each containing either quick-silver, coal oil, an extract of Jamaica ginger or Perry Davis' Painkiller.

They would be placed outside the cabin in a location where they could be seen from the window. If the mercury froze it was nearly 40 degrees below zero. The coal oil froze at -50 degrees. The ginger at -60 degrees. And if the painkiller finally froze too, it was unsafe to travel very far from a fire because the temperature was then as low as 70 degrees below zero.

The popular patent medicine of those days -- Perry Davis' Painkiller -- turned white at -60 degrees, crystallized at -70 and froze solid at -75.

Most stayed home when the mercury (quicksilver) froze. It was an effective way of gauging the cold in the remote north country where thermometers were few or nonexistent. Laura Beatrice Berton, travelling from Whitehorse to Dawson in winter by stage, noticed painkiller bottles set outside roadhouse windows as thermometers. The stage driver would not leave the roadhouse if the painkiller had frozen to slush.

The following is a comment by "Stroller" White, an early Dawson and Whitehorse newspaper writer and columnist, regarding Perry Davis' painkiller and ice worms:

"Where Perry Davis' painkiller has remained frozen for a period of seven weeks at a time, ice worms have been known to attain a growth of 27 inches. These are much sought after by the Indians who eat them raw with Snyder's Ketchup." (Dawson Weekly News, Oct. 15, 1909)

My Version of the Sourdough Thermometer

By Donna Clayson

When I was mushing dogs we were always careful not to take the dogs out on a real cold day. If it was 30F degrees below or colder the dogs' lungs could freeze, however, it wasn't unusual to get caught on the trail when a cold front moved in. As the frost collected on our faces and around the rim of our parka hood you could usually tell how cold it was. When your eyelashes begin to get heavy and close from the weight of the frost it must be at least minus 30. When the frost gathers around your mouth and you're licking it off with your tongue it has to be at least minus 35. You had to be careful you didn't break your eyelashes off when rubbing the ice crystals off.

How many of our readers went swimming in the Takhini Hot Springs on a cold winter day? That was the best time as the water was too hot to enjoy in the summer. It was fun to dive into the water from the edge of the pool when it was at least 25F degrees below. When you're hot and wet from the heat and your head breaks the surface it was instant freeze. If you touched your hair it could break off. I can think of better ways to get a haircut that wouldn't look like a butcher job. We would jump out of the water, roll in the snow then jump back in. Invigorating to say the least. I believe that's how I destroyed my natural thermostat as I can't control my temperature and have difficulty warming up when cold or vice versa. My medical doctor has officially called me a Polar Bear and there is, apparently, a condition called that in the medical field.

It was fun at the time and I can't remember ever getting sick doing it.

I'd love to hear your rendition of the Sourdough Thermometer and how many of you did the same as I, enjoying the Hot Springs on a cold winter day?

Donna ytdogteam@telus.net

From the Book – The Gold Fields of the Klondike by John W. Leonard
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THE SOURTOE COCKTAIL

Strange things are done 'neath the Midnight Sun...and one of the strangest is the Sourtoe Cocktail.

You would expect a Dawson Bar to have a specialty Sourdough Cocktail. That seems reasonable, but what about a *Sourtoe* Cocktail?

That's right. This drink is world famous, and it contains a petrified human toe.

If you walk into the Sourdough Saloon in the Downtown Hotel most any day during Happy Hour, you'll see a seafaring-type character initiating the brave into the Sourtoe Cocktail Club. Captain Bill Holmes will tell you the story of the original appendage connoisseur, Captain Dick Stevenson, as he gently plops the pickled toe into the drink of your choice. (Sorry, no water allowed.)

If you swallow your fear (and NOT the toe - Capital Bill is strict in his rule that any lost toe must be replaced) and slam back the toe-filled drink, you are officially among the nearly 15,000 world-wide members of the Sourtoe Cocktail Club.

Bill Holmes took over from Dick Stevenson as captain of the Yukon Lou, a paddlewheeler that tours the Yukon River each summer. The other duty he took over was the toe.

Captain Dick began the sourtoe saga in September of 1973. The idea sprang from a human toe found in Dick's new cabin, and a conversation about an Ice Worm drink in a famous Robert Service poem.

From there, Captain Dick's club became a success. By the time Captain Dick retired, he had gone through seven different toes (some swallowed) and had a log book containing almost 13,000 names of sourtoers.

Captain Bill has added to the list, which includes a 6 month old child and a 91 year old toe-swallower. The Sourtoe Cocktail Club is sure to draw crowds, as 1999 is the 26th anniversary of the toe.

I found an interesting item in my collection. It is a menu from 1935. I have reprinted it below:

Arcade Café
Harry Gleaves, Prop.
Dawson, Yukon Territory, Canada

AUGUST 1 1935

M E N U

THURSDAY

TOMATO JUICE25
FRESH MILK 25
CRANBERRY SAUCE..... 25

STEWED PRUNES25
GRAPE FRUIT25
TOMATO SOUP50

- S A L A D S -

COMBINATION SALAD PICK _ SHOVEL DRESSING1.00
SLICED TOMATOES & CUCUMBERS PURE GOLD DRESSING75
ASPARAGUS TIPS WITH MAYONNAISE75

- S O U P -

FRESH YUKON VEGETABLE

- F I S H -

FRESH CAUGHT KING SALMON FRIED OR BOILED75
KING OSCAR SARDINES ON TOAST & SALAD75

- B A K E D -

PORK SPARE RIBS WITH DRESSING CHEECHACO STYLE75

- E N T R E E -

FRESH KILLED MOOSE LIVER BED ROCK SPECIAL..... .75
BABY MOOSE STEAK WHISKEY HILL STYLE75
ELDORADO CARIBOU CUTLETS LAST CHANCE JELLY75
YUKON GOLD LUNCH & ICE WORM SALAD75
FRESH KILLED VEAL CHOPS PAT STREAK GRILL 1.00

- R O A S T S -

PRIME RIB OF BEEF SOURDOUGH ROAST1.00
MILK FED CHICKEN & TRAIL OF NINTY EIGHT.....1.00

- V E G E T A B L E S -

YUKON STEAKED & MASHED POTATOES
COLD SLAW SNOW SHOE DRESSING.

- D E S S E R T -

PAYSTREAK PUMPKIN PIE 25 GLACIER APPLIE PIE25
MIDNIGHT SUN FRESH RHUBARB PIE.

SKOOKUM JIM COFFEE.

MIDNIGHT DOME TEA.

LIGHT HOT ROLLS.

Story Editor's Note: How many of our readers can remember eating food that is not the regular fare of today? Send in your recipes and stories. We'd love to see them.

MORE MEMORIES

Hi Sherron,

I'd like to say a quick hello to Maxine Fromme Horner and her brother Alan, both of whom I recall from Whitehorse days. Nice to recognize 'old' names from my days there in 1956–1959. Am also wondering if anyone knows Alva Gray from those days; would enjoy contacting her very much. (Alva was an 'army brat' from Camp Takhini as well.)

Still looking forward to hearing even more reports about the Yukoners' meeting this past while in Vancouver. Sounds like a remarkable time! Would love to attend a gathering one of these years.

I recall someone was trying to remember the 'song', The Outhouse Mouse and meant to forward this earlier. Mind you, these are likely the lyrics that everyone does know. (Hadn't been aware of other verses, so am interested!) Anyway, all I ever knew were the following words, sung with great gusto at every opportunity:

*The liquor was spilled on the barroom floor,
The bar was closed for the night;
The out house mouse crept out of his house
And sat in the pale moonlight.*

*He licked up the liquor on the barroom floor
And on his haunches he sat;
And all night long you could hear him cry--
Bring on the goddam cat!*

Hope this helps, Pat (Kaye) Barker.

Hi Sherron,

Time to add my two cents worth here.

Our family moved to Beaver Creek in the fall of 1962, and actually lived at the US Pump Station at Mile 1204. There were six trailer homes there, with an assortment of children to keep things lively. Our entertainment was made up of outdoor activities that we arranged for ourselves: bike riding in the summer, soccer, skiing, snow-shoeing, softball, and a variety of games that are now extinct such as Kick the Can. The "big kids" had to look out for the "little kids" and judge our activities for the day accordingly. I wonder now where our parents thought we were at times? We spent a great deal of time outdoors, due in part to the tiny trailers we all lived in, 10' x 52' for a family as big as 5. Our fathers worked shift work, so we had to keep quiet inside at times and it was easier on our mothers if we were outside.

We had no TV, and CBC radio finally arrived to brighten our lives. I am happy to say that I was brought up on CBC radio, and our family did not have a TV until I was 18 years of age.

The other winter entertainment was our curling rink. As soon as we were big enough to get the rock from one end of the ice to the other, we were on a team, mukluks and all. Two feet in the hack, little bums up and down. The curling rink was the center of activity for the town in the winter, and we often heard how nice it was to have "warmed up to 30 below". Fahrenheit, that is. After a cold evening at the rink, our car tires would be square. If you didn't curl, you were an avid spectator and coffee drinker, as that was where the social life happened.

Once a week we had the pleasure of a movie at the army rec. center. The movie would get passed up and down the highway, and when it arrived the moccasin telegraph would spread the word that tonight was movie night. Often you had no idea what it was you were going to see, but it didn't much matter, as none were X rated back then. The movie titles would get altered by the time you heard it anyway. Two of my favorites examples of this were "Dr. No" that became "Knock on the Door Upstairs", and the "Ticklish Affair" with Doris Day that was reported to be "The Itchy Something".

Movies were 10 cents, a can of Orange Crush was 25 cents, and the movie screen was a few squares of plywood fastened together. As the kids would run around the hall during the movie, one of the taller ones would invariably reach up and push the screen, so we had a real moving screen until the motion slowed down. Reels had to be changed which was a good time for a break and a refill.

Good times all in all, and a big change to the organized activities, 100 channels of TV, the Internet and home videos that we have today. Great memories!

Bev Buckway, Whitehorse

HELLO FROM VERNON

By Susan Watt susanwatt50@hotmail.com

Hello Sherron,

Thank you for the efforts you have made to keep past and present Yukon people in touch with one another. I have very much enjoyed the site and look forward to hearing from other long removed Yukon people and families.

Brief history: Rod and I both moved to Whitehorse in winter of 1973 GOOD GRIEF!!! That's thirty years ago. We met in Whitehorse, married, moved to Dawson City in spring of 1978. Rod flew for TNTA and I worked a few odd jobs, the one I enjoyed the most was at the airport working as caretaker. Our daughters were born in (Sara) 1982 and (Jessica) 1983. In 1984 we moved to Vernon BC where Rod had secured a position with Vernon Helicopters. And in 1985 our son (Daniel) was born in Vernon. We continue to live in Vernon, we have raised the kids on a farm with orchard, horses, etc. overlooking

the Okanagan Lake, it was a wonderful place for kids to grow up at. Sara is now in St. Johns, Newfoundland completing her 3rd year of a degree in science (Chemistry) she received a full scholarship from Canadian Helicopters International Division for 5 years at Memorial University. Jessica is home and in 2nd year of a science degree in nursing and baby Daniel is just getting ready to graduate high school and begin an engineering degree. I went back to school in 1997 and completed a certificate program as a sterile technician and work in the local hospital as a casual employee, which means I can work when I choose. I should add that Vernon Helicopter became Canadian Helicopters several years ago and Rod manages the Salmon Arm and Vernon bases, he still flies as well.

I still see a few Dawson people that you may be interested in hearing about. Hal and Jeanine Gysler are in the Fraser Valley. I last visited them in the summer 2002 and they are healthy and happy and busy. Debbie and Ken (Jeanine's daughter) and two wonderful children are still in Campbell River on Vancouver Isl. Debbie is a stay at home Mom, which is to say she is going 24-7 just to keep up and Ken is managing a fish packing plant. Donna and Murray Crockitt live in Vernon and we bump into each other at hockey games and around town. We are in touch with Gerry Carlson, a geologist who worked for Brasscan out of Dawson years and years ago. Gerry and family live in Vancouver and just visited us a few weeks ago while on a boat-buying trip. Recently spoke to Debbie (Murdoch) Winston who is currently working on the TV show Stargate in Vancouver. She is well and very happy. For those of you who remember Norm Rafuse TNTA base manager before Rod, well Norm is an up and coming visual artist and last year had a showing in Vernon, and he is very good. Scott Fletcher, who worked as a TNTA engineer in Dawson is now living in Kelowna working at the airport in a government position, he too is well and happy. Diane, Tim and Andrew Spandier are in Nanaimo. Diane is a physiotherapist and a Gramma!!! Phyllis Loftsgard who was one of the original Bakery gals back in the early 1980's married in California where she lived for 13 or so years and at age 40 adopted twin girls from Vernon. She and daughters now live in Mission BC and Phyllis is office manager at the Funeral Home, which supplies us with a lot of teasing materiel. Phyllis and daughters and me and my three kids all took a three-week trip to eastern Canada two years ago. It was the most wonderful time, and I would love to go again.

We found it easy to travel and very kid friendly. The fact that all the kids are French immersion students was invaluable in some places. Especially in restaurants since my French language skills got me ice cream instead of soup!!!! I traveled to Newfoundland to visit Sara in her first year and I had a great time. I know you have heard it before, but it must be said again. The people in the Maritimes have a general warmth and generosity of self that is infectious, if you have never been, I highly recommend anyone to go.

Several years ago we took on the task of building a cabin on the Shuswap Lake, sounds simple enough, the biggest problem being the property is boat access only. But we and two other families persevered and now we all enjoy our cabins each summer. I had to learn how to operate a boat, the driving was the easy part, many times I was responsible for sending dock users running for shore, but we haven't lost anyone yet. Rod built the cabin and since he is the only one who had ever built anything he was in constant demand

as a source of advice and guidance by the other builders. He seemed not to mind at all and enjoyed the experience of working with his hands again and the beauty of the remote out of doors. Rod uses the cabin quite a lot in the summer since he is often in the area so he parks the machine on the beach and has a relaxing time. Meanwhile back at the farm we have, 150 apricot and peach trees that bare fruit for about 5 weeks. We operate the orchard as a U pick and people are coming and going pretty steady all day and evening. We meet people from all over the province and even have had Japanese tour buses arrive. Just think how many pictures of us are in Japanese family albums as I speak.

Vernon has been a good place to raise the kids; because of its size and population it afforded opportunities for sports participation that in a larger city, with a larger field of player selection, would not have been available. The kids played and still play soccer. They have rowed and paddled, been horseback riding, dance, music, skiing (Fantastic here), gymnastics, and basketball. We have two large and beautiful lakes here with beaches and lots of boat access. The parks and recreation sites are plentiful and well appointed; near lakes and hiking and biking trails. We are only 4 hrs from Vancouver and about 8 hrs from Calgary. The main industries here are logging, farming (fruit) tourism and manufacturing (e.g. glass plant, big foot campers etc., mills, Far West Outdoor clothing Co.) Sounds like I am in the tourism business, I'm not; just enthusiastic about the place that has been such a great place for us, and our family.

Good-bye for now, special hello to all in Dawson. Its funny to me how often a story or situation comes up that reminds me of Yukon and find myself thinking and wondering about people I haven't seen for years, especially those we got to know through the flood experience. The community spirit was outstanding and will never be forgotten.

Susan Watt susanwatt50@hotmail.com

Now that Susan has said all these wonderful things about Vernon, I will testify they are true. I also want to do an ad of my own – please keep in mind my husband Bill sells real estate here in Vernon and can send you information via e-mail. - Sherron

WRITING A BOOK

Hi Sherron

Various folks have been sending me the Moccasin Telegraph (mostly all the same issues, though). Got it first from Bill and Jeri Weigand.

Please sign me up. I'm very interested, as I've been working for a few years now on a book about the YTG. The basic idea is that anyone who tries to tell the story of how self-government grew in the Yukon from the 50's to the 80's and beyond will never get it right if all they look at is government records and newspapers. You had to be there to have any hope of getting the story right, though having been there is no guarantee (I was just a kid in those times).

Anyway, I've been in the Yukon pretty constantly since 1950, though I was away for most of the 90's and am only back about half time right now. But my mom is still there

(she taught French and English in the high school until the mid-70's), and brothers Eric and Chris

Keep up the great work!
Jim Almstrom

ARE THERE OTHERS OUT THERE THAT WORKED FOR YTG ?

Thanks so much, Sherron. This is a wonderful thing you're doing.

Funny you should mention Dave Gairns, as I just wrote to him last night for the first time, having seen his email address on your list. I had a photo of him taken by Jim Whyard in the federal building in the 50s before Dave went to work for the City, and I'm hoping he can tell me a bit about those times.

In my research now I'm really focusing on the 50's, as so many people who can tell us what was going on are crossing over the Great Divide. However, I'm eagerly picking up stuff on the 60's and 70's whenever and wherever I can.

I figure I can always go to the archives for old newspapers and government records, as they are going to be there forever. Getting the pictures, and especially getting them before they get thrown out and before there's no one left who can say what they are pictures of, is a really high priority. I'm running into so many people who think no one's interested in their old family photos and either have given them the heave-ho or are about to do so. And the archive already has thousands of pictures with nothing to say when or where they were taken, or who's in them. I'm working on a little brochure to give out to encourage people to take care of their pictures, give 'em to the archives, whatever, and please, please, please, write on them (in pencil on the back) when, where, & who. It also helps to note who's providing the info and when.

Yes, I would like to hear about your experiences in the 70s. Sorry ... it's too soon for me to have specific questions. I worked for Chris Pearson at the Executive Committee in 72 and 73, then with Padge O'Donoghue after 78 and into the early 80s. I even did some work for the City ... I remember a Traffic Bylaw and a Zoning Bylaw. This would be when I met Dave.

You may remember Gerry van der Wolf (he was City Clerk). I've been keeping in touch with him ever since they left for Ontario. He's now clerk in Port Moody.

All for now, Jim Almstrom

A QUESTION FOR YOU

Do you remember CBer's by the name of Fleury? At least I think that was their name. They were avid Skidoo types and their handle was Artic Cat? Others ie: Grey Ghost, Roundhouse, etc. Thanks to CRS I am drawing blanks on names but have vivid pictures

of faces. I would love to hear from any of the "old skip...ers"

I am in the lower mainland and have recently, thanks to Sherron's efforts, come in touch with my past. In fact.....I'm homesick.

Diamond Willow

AkaMaryAnn Kelleway (Geddes)

We had the pleasure of a visit from Mary Ann and her Husband Doug, they happened to be holidaying in Winfield when she signed on using her pocketmail e-mail. I was delighted to have some laughs with MaryAnn after some 27 or so years. - Sherron

NEW ADDITIONS

Hello Sherron, Sandy Campbell has been after me to register for the Moccasin Telegraph so here I am. Please add my name to your Yukon registry.

Karen Shaw #205-24950 Thrift Avenue White Rock, BC V4B 2J9

Phone: 604 541-7441 e-mail: kcrshaw2003@yahoo.com

I, and my twin sister Sharon moved to Mayo in 1949 with our parents, Archie and Ruth Shaw. At first, Dad drove taxi and later did a variety of jobs including construction and working at Mayo's Northern Commercial store. By 1954 when we moved south, he was the chief of Mayo's volunteer fire department.

I will forever remember my childhood in Mayo where I believe I learned life's greatest lessons. When asked to describe Mayo, Sister Sharon often said that Mayo was so small that we knew everyone ... and their dog ... by their first name.

I have written some stories about Mayo and will share them with you in the future.

Thank you. Karen Shaw

Hi! I'm Gail Webster (Wilcox). My brother Stan Wilcox called last night to give me your name and E-Mail, and suggested I pass my "E" address to you as well. He has already heard from numerous folks whose names hadn't been thought of for years. It brings back a lot of interesting memories! I, as well as Stan grew up mostly in Whitehorse. I married an airman, Dave Webster in 1963. In 1965 we transferred from Whitehorse to Germany and Holland for five years, then came back to Ottawa for 12 years. We moved to Vancouver in 1982 and have remained in this area since then.

Stan said you pass on the E-Mail addressed and names of all of us "Old" Yukoners.

Looking forward to hearing from you soon. - Cheers! Gail (Wilcox) Webster

Hi Sherron: I thought I had previously passed on Nancy Knechtel's (nee Parker) to be added to the list but I don't see it yet. I saw Nancy at the Yukoners' banquet in Vancouver and she wants to be added to your list. The address is knechtels@telusplanet.net.

Thanks again for all your work in putting this together. I was just up in Whitehorse at the end of April and hit the wonderful heat wave they had and reconnected with some of my Mayo friends (now living in Whitehorse). - Cheers, Marg Arthur

Hi Sherron - My name is Nancy Knechtel (nee Parker) I lived in Whitehorse from 1958-1968 attending FH Collins. Left when it was time to go to university. I am now living in Banff /AB 403-762-3442 Margaret Arthur referred me to your list. Let me know if there is anything else you need to know. Oh maybe an address Box 4482 Banff T1L1E8 - Cheers, Nancy

NEWS FROM THE NORTH

Hello Sherron and thank you for the mail you forward. I enjoy it all but had a hard time lately, to keep up with e- and other mail, as I was away twice for 4 days and things seem to pile up. I had wonderful mail from old friends and neighbours and surely want to have my e- mail address in your book. Went to the Lion's Tradeshaw in Whitehorse as a representative of the Faro Golf Club and saw lots of people I had known and not seen for a while. We also celebrated Poldi Fuerstner's 80th. Birthday. Poldi, Max, Konrad and I came over together from Europe in 1951. This Saturday, I will be 50 years in the YUKON- time went by fast. Hope to hear from you again
Warm Yukon Greetings Anne Domes

DELETED FROM LIST

For several weeks now the e-mails have been returned and attempts have been made to get corrected addresses. These attempts have been unsuccessful so I have deleted the listing for Betty Mackie and Ingrid Dick.

BUBS VISITS VERNON



*Bubs spent a night with us last night on her way back to Alberta.
It was so good to see here after about 30 years.- Sherron
Drop her a line if you remember her. bubs.fraser@shaw.ca*

FOR PREVIOUS EDITIONS OF THE MOCCASIN TELEGRAPH

Please contact Sandy Campbell northernlyght@shaw.ca

To date **twelve previous editions of the Moccasin Telegraph** have been produced, along with **five special editions**. One titled Sternwheelers on the Yukon River, one Basketball in the 50's, Fifty-six years ago the world looked at Snag, Camp Takhini and the Alaska Highway. For the time being I will send out copies of the Special Editions after each dozen or so new people sign on.

Sandy Campbell has kindly agreed to send out copies of the earlier editions of the regular Moccasin Telegraph upon request. Please be specific as to which editions you are requesting.

Sandy is a working girl and will get to the requests at her earliest convenience.

Contact Sandy at northernlyght@shaw.ca

DATES TO REMEMBER

Mayo 100th Anniversary Celebrations – June 3 – July 1 -

http://www.yukonweb.com/community/mayo100/calendar_of_events.html

Okangan Yukoners' Picnic – June 22, 2003 - Summerland Orn. Gardens - Larry Chalmers

larryjoanchalmers@telus.net (Edition 6)

Island Yukoners' Picnic - August 16 – Nanoose, St. Mary's Hall - contact Stan Hegstrom

seaair@bcsupernet.com (details to come)

YXYCP Reunion - September 26 – 28 – Parksville, Bayside – contact Pat Besier jpbesier@seaside.net

(see edition 5)