

MOCCASIN TELEGRAPH – 361st Edition – August 25, 2012

Created by Sherron Jones sherronjones*shaw.ca

To use an e-mail address from the MocTel, replace the * with @.



Sunset Aug 20, 2012 – Whitehorse, Yukon

Photo courtesy Donna Clayson bdclayson*northwestel.net (In Whitehorse)

YUKON NUGGET

A CKRW Yukon Nugget by Les McLaughlin

Courtesy Rolf & Marg Hougen marg*hougens.com (In Whitehorse)

Elsa & Keno

Elsa, Keno, and Calumet are sometimes the forgotten communities in the grand scheme of Yukon history. They are, however, no less important to the history of the land. They are - or were - communities along the so-called Silver Trail.

Miners had prospected the area between Mayo and Keno City since the 1880s. Elsa was established in 1914. In 1918, large deposits of silver were discovered and large-scale mining began. In 1920, Keno Hill Limited, a subsidiary of the Yukon Gold Company of Dawson, staked six hundred silver claims on Keno Hill alone. A few years later, discoveries were made on nearby Galena Hill. At one time Keno City had five hotels. In the 1920s, the area's silver mines were famous around the world.

By 1932, deposits on Keno Hill were thought to be depleted. However, prospects on Galena Hill looked good so the company moved the mill from Keno to Elsa during the winter of 1932-33. Elsa gained importance in 1935 when the Treadwell Yukon Company moved its mill from Wernecke to Elsa because of the discovery of the Calumet mineral deposits.

By 1938, Elsa had a school, a hockey rink, stores, churches and a community hall. The mine employed almost two hundred workers on a year-round basis. Then, with the outbreak of World War II, the U.S. Government decided it would no longer buy foreign silver. Treadwell Mines closed their Mayo District operation.

In November 1945, the Keno Hill Mining Company was formed around the old Treadwell properties, financed by the Frobisher Exploration company and Conwest Exploration Ltd.

In 1947, the Treadwell Yukon Company reorganized under the name United Keno Hill Mines Limited, and revived the mines and town of Elsa. A tram line delivered ore from Calumet to the mill in Elsa whose population grew rapidly between 1950 and the mid-'60s, in part because the Calumet workers moved to Elsa so that services could be consolidated. By 1953, United Keno Hill had become Canada's second largest silver operation, and perhaps the fourth largest in the world.

Whitehorse was a busy place partly because of the endless truck loads of ore from the Keno Hill region to the waiting White Pass trains. However, in 1989, after years of losses and low silver prices, United Keno Hill Mines closed down its operations.

The residents of Elsa moved away and most of the houses and buildings have been dismantled. No one remains except for caretakers. But Keno City, population 20, still thrives, nestled in the mountains at the end of the Silver Trail.

A CKRW Yukon Nugget by Les McLaughlin



Canadian Pacific Airlines terminal at Mayo airport, July 1965
Photo courtesy George Leoppky [galoepky*telus.net](mailto:galoepky@telus.net) (In Richmond)

SOME OLD MEMORIES – JOYCE YARDLEY

By Joyce Yardley [Joyce*dataspan.ca](mailto:Joyce@dataspan.ca) (In Nanaimo)

Hi Sherron,

Fred and I have been away on an extended car trip.

Arriving home again I checked my computer, of course, and discovered a few articles I had started (and left in the middle of! Oh, dear!)

Anyway, here goes again!

In 1993 I published my first book, "Crazy Cooks and Gold Miners" with Hancock House Publishers)

In 1996 I published my second book “Yukon Riverboat Days” with (Hancock House Publishers)
(My own blurb on “Yukon Riverboat Days” ...)

“Writing this book was an interesting experience, because the subject matter was very close to me. I was brought up with those old Paddlewheelers on the river. And through my research many of the familiar names I had heard so often as a child... never paid much attention in those days, of course... because they were "grown-ups"... suddenly all came to life as real people. To hear their own voices, telling their own stories on the tape recorder – just held me spellbound. And that, combined with the photos I found at the archives in Whitehorse, was like watching a fascinating movie for me.

I knew of all the places they spoke of...the countryside was part of my life, too. And what tales they had to tell, and what unique and independent people they were. I am proud to have this opportunity to pass these fascinating memoirs on to you. They should not be allowed to die, unheard.

Together, they form a colorful mosaic of the early history of the “Riverboat days in the Yukon.”
Included here are Woodcutters,
Riverboat men, Mounties, and Trading Post Operators, and wives and families of these men.”

Source: Joyce Yardley

In 1993 I published my book “Crazy Cooks and Gold Miners”

In 1996 I published my book “Yukon Riverboat Days”

In 2005 I published my book “Yukon Tears and Laughter”

Just to keep you “up to date” on my publishing history. (As you can see, I need to come up with new material !!)

Love, Joyce Yardley

MOCTEL RECEIVED

Just Wonderful Sherron.. loved all the photographs. And Rusty and David,... very special, he is such a wonderful Son to her...and Donna ..what a selection.. Thanks so much..... Hugs Edward and Gillian [Campbell]

Sherron, another wonderful mix to gladden our hearts. Thanks Bill Dawson

MAD HATTER TEA

On August 1st, 2012, eleven lovely ladies donned Hats and came to my place for a "mad hatter" tea party... the weather co-operated and it was beautiful. I made tea from fresh Mint from my garden and tiny sandwiches also with some ingredients from my garden and a crazy hat shaped

cake that withstood tilting.. decorated by my son and grandson... I had to promise them a large piece of cake because men were not invited... we chatted, did bird calls and thoroughly enjoyed just "visiting" and reconnecting as women do. There are plans for next year's 2nd annual.

Betty Sutton elizabethsutton@yahoo.com

Retired

Whitehorse, Yukon



Betty's son and grandson decorated the Mad Hatter cake.



Betty presiding over the tea.



Well-travelled hat.



Lois Fraser, Kim Solomon and Davina Harker



Nancy Kowalysen and Irene Brekke



Joanne Oberg, Brenda Morrison and Jean Hinchey



Jan Koepke and Ione Christensen
Photos courtesy Betty Sutton elizabethsutton@yahoo.com (In Whitehorse)

ORIGIN OF THE PHRASE

Had you realized the truth in the phrase “Mad as a Hatter” ?

“**Mad as a hatter**” is a colloquial phrase used in conversation to refer to a crazy person. In 18th and 19th century England [mercury](#) was used in the production of [felt](#), which was used in the manufacturing of hats common of the time. People who worked in these hat factories were exposed daily to trace amounts of the metal, which accumulated within their bodies over time, causing some workers to develop dementia caused by [mercury poisoning](#). Thus the phrase “Mad as a Hatter” became popular as a way to refer to someone who was perceived as insane.”

When I was doing genealogy a few years back and came across a hatter in the extended family and a fellow (British) genealogist explained the origin of the term “Mad Hatter” to me. The census showed he did not work to a ripe old age. Found the above explanation in Wikipedia.

Sherron Jones

TRIP TO ATLIN

My son Dave, Sandra Pellegrini and I took a drive over to Atlin last week as Sandra had never been there. I hope I haven't attached too many.

Bye for now,

Rusty Reid rustyreid.yukon@gmail.com (In Whitehorse/Marsh Lake)



Sandra Pellegrini & Dave Reid in Atlin BC

Photo courtesy Rusty Reid rustyreid.yukon@gmail.com (In Whitehorse/Marsh Lake)



Rusty Reid, Jamie Tait, Dave Reid

For more information on Summit Air and James Tait see:

<http://www.ic.gc.ca/app/ccc/srch/nvgt.do?lang=eng&prtl=1&sbPrtl=&estblmntNo=234567035892&profile=cmpltPrfl&profileId=501&app=sold>

Photo courtesy Rusty Reid rustyreid.yukon@gmail.com (In Whitehorse/Marsh Lake)



Sandra Pellegrini & Dave Reid found something to buy in Atlin.

Photo courtesy Rusty Reid rustyreid.yukon@gmail.com (In Whitehorse/Marsh Lake)



Jamie Tait's – Short's SkyVan picture in the Pine Tree Restaurant.
See Short's Skyvan description at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Short_SC.7_Skyvan
Photo courtesy Rusty Reid rustyreid.yukon@gmail.com (In Whitehorse/Marsh Lake)



Pine Tree Restaurant in Atlin BC
Photo courtesy Rusty Reid rustyreid.yukon@gmail.com (In Whitehorse/Marsh Lake)



A home in Atlin BC

Photo courtesy Rusty Reid rustyreid.yukon@gmail.com (In Whitehorse/Marsh Lake)

TRIP TO DAWSON

Summer in the Yukon just isn't summer without a trip to Dawson City... this past weekend my husband Paul and I made the trek to Dawson for several reasons... Moosehide gathering, Pink Floyd tribute in the Pit, but the primary reason was to see Gold Dredge #4 in its last year of "tours".... because of recent federal government cutbacks, many of Parks Canada employees have lost their job... 30 employees in the Yukon... we've been told that this is the last year you can get a tour of the SS Klondike in Whitehorse and of Gold Dredge #4 in Dawson.

So... we were on the noon tour on Saturday, Aug 4, 2012 with people from all over North America.... a large bus tour had gone through just before us... the tour leader was excellent... so knowledgeable about the Gold Rush, dredges all over the world used in gold mining, and the amazing construction of this huge dredge that we were standing in... she was articulate, knowledgeable and interesting giving her tour... answering all sorts of questions, and never a word that this is the last year to do this tour... even the pieces of equipment shipped via the train and some pieces too big to get through the tunnels on the train trip from Skagway which had to be shipped via the Bearing Sea and then brought upriver to Dawson...she knew it all....and then assembled in bog like conditions... yes, black flies...!! and then the dredge paid for itself in the first year .. with gold.. amazing really.

I am saddened that our government makes these decisions to cut such a vital part of our history. Not to mention, the many dollars that have been spent to move, make upright, and restore the dredge to the condition it is in today.

If you're in the area, a trip to the dredge is well worth it.... and it's right next door to the Discovery Claim which is where Gold was initially discovered in the Klondike.

Betty Sutton elizabethsutton@yahoo.com (In Whitehorse)



Dredge #4

Photo courtesy Betty Sutton elizabethsutton@yahoo.com (In Whitehorse)



Paul Warner testing the feel of the gear controls.

Photo courtesy Betty Sutton elizabethsutton@yahoo.com (In Whitehorse)



Huge gear.

Photo courtesy Betty Sutton elizabethsutton@yahoo.com (In Whitehorse)



Pond adjacent to the dredge was where it last worked and laid until moved to its present location.

Photo courtesy Betty Sutton elizabethsutton@yahoo.com (In Whitehorse)

Yukon aircraft to be yarn-bombed with massive tea cozy

By Ainslie Cruickshank, The Whitehouse Star
August 7, 2012



Casey McLaughlin, with the Yukon Transportation Museum, works on a wing of the yarn cozy for the planned yarn bombing of Whitehorse's DC-3 weather vane. A historic wartime DC-3 is in the process of getting "yarn-bombed," an effort by a group of Yukon fibre artists to knit and stitch a giant tea-cozy like covering on the plane.

Photograph by: Vince Federoff, The Associated Press

An historic wartime DC-3 will be subject to a different kind of bomb in the coming weeks as a group of Yukon fibre artists knit and stitch a giant tea-cozy-like covering on the plane to raise awareness of the fibre arts.

Over the next few weeks, the 70-year-old Whitehorse landmark will be so-called “yarn-bombed,” or covered by a number of donated knitted pieces sewn together.

“It’s probably going to be the largest yarn bomb in Canada; we’re trying to see if in the world,” said Casey McLaughlin, curator of the Yukon Transportation Museum and initiator of the project.

The DC-3, registered in Canada as CF-CPY, was originally built in the U.S. in 1942 and has flown in the U.S., China and India.

In 1946, CEO Grant McConachie bought the plane for Canadian Pacific, a company McConachie started after combining smaller firms he owned in the Yukon and Alberta.

The plane was flown for the last time in 1970, but it was picked up and restored by the Whitehorse Flying Club four years later.

McLaughlin said while the target of the yarn bombing is clearly unusual, so is the way the project came about.

“It’s a unique group, it’s not very common,” she said. “In Ottawa, a museum can’t just phone an arts centre and say, “Hey, let’s just do this.”“

McLaughlin said she came up with the idea while travelling in Vancouver with a friend.

“We were walking through Lighthouse Park and there was this little, old, rusted sign post - no sign anymore just a sign post - completely forgotten, and someone had made a cozy for it,” she said.

At the time, McLaughlin said she thought to herself: “What a cool idea.”

That started a conversation with Jessica Vellenga, a member of the Yarn Bomb Yukon Collective, about yarn bombing the DC-3.

“When Casey approached me with the idea, I said, ‘Yeah, I can make this happen,’” said Vellenga.

She has been yarn-bombing around town with friends all winter.

As an artist and staff member of the Yukon Arts Centre focusing on community engagement, Vellenga said, “starting this project was really an extension of my art practice, which is community-based and fibre arts-based ... This just sort of tied in perfectly.”

“The whole process has been to get people engaged and enthused about fibre arts.”

McLaughlin’s said the DC-3 yarn bombing is a new and creative way to get the community engaged with the museum, especially with federal funding cuts to arts and heritage.

“Most museums are so stale, people walk in there and they’re like, ‘Don’t touch anything,’” she said.

“For me, it’s an opportunity to get the community connected with our collection and it’s great because everybody that’s donated is going, ‘So, it’s a DC-3? What’s a DC-3? What’s its history?’“

The tentative date for the fitting is Aug. 11.

YARN BOMBING PROJECT

By Casey McLaughlin - Yukon Transportation Museum's (YTM) Executive Director/Curator

As most Yukoners will agree the DC-3 airplane is a point of pride: it is a unique piece of Canadian heritage made into the largest weather vane in the world.

The movement of yarn-bombing began about 2005. This non-permanent street art employs colorful displays of knitted or crocheted cloth and has gained international recognition.

As such, I, Casey McLaughlin, the Yukon Transportation Museum's (YTM) Executive Director/Curator, thought yarn-bombing the DC-3 would be a fantastic way to put Yukon on the map as well as engage community partnerships. It would also be an opportunity to teach the public – locally, nationally and internationally – about Yukon aviation history, preservation of artifacts and about fibre arts. Furthermore the project will be recycled; Yukon charities will get blankets.

To get this project rolling, I received full YTM board support and joined forces with the Yukon Arts Centre and Yarn Bomb Yukon Collective.

Together we hope to make this the biggest yarn-bombing project in Canada. In fact, we are already getting national and international calls asking how to participate and donate.

Be assured that protecting the DC-3 is of utmost importance, so we are working closely with an Industrial Objects and Public Art conservator from the Canadian Conservation Institute in Ottawa, local conservators, as well as an aircraft maintenance engineer.

A local architect is also on board and has created a pattern specifically for the DC-3. The design involves linking blanket-sized sections together into one large cozy. A portion will be in military colours to represent the DC-3's first three years of being in United States Army Air Force camouflage colours and flying transport missions in India and China.

The large cozy will only cover the wings and fuselage; delicate portions will not be covered. The blanket will remain on the aircraft for less than two weeks. Once removed, the cozy will be separated into individual blankets and donated to charities throughout the Yukon.

We hope we have answered some concerns and welcome further dialogue. Interested parties are also invited to the YTM annual general meeting on Wednesday, June 13 at 5:30 pm. People with further concerns about this project can contact YTM or me directly at casey@goytm.ca

We also invite the public to donate yarn, related craft items and participate in other ways. Yarn Bomb Yukon is coordinating volunteers and organizing numerous events including Sit and Stitch nights every Wednesday from 5 to 7 pm at the T&M lounge.

Most workshops are in Whitehorse and community involvement is encouraged. Some specific workshops include:

- June 9 to 17 – World Wide Knit in Public Day, starting June 9 at 1 pm under the DC-3;
- June 11 – International Yarn Bomb Day under the DC-3 from 5-9 pm;

- July 6 to 8 – Atlin Arts & Music Festival;
- July 23 to Aug. 10 – Sit & Stitch yarn bomb assemblage at the Old Fire Hall; and
- Aug. 16 to 19 – Riverside Arts Festival in Dawson City.

Interested knitters can visit <http://yarnbombyukon.wordpress.com> for event updates and ask Jessica Vellenga questions. People interested in the project or who want to see other project photos can visit [facebook.com/YarnBombYukon](https://www.facebook.com/YarnBombYukon).

In closing, I would like to thank our numerous volunteers as well as the Arts Fund for their support and making this project possible.

If you have any further comments or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me directly.
Sincerely,

Casey McLaughlin
Yukon Transportation Museum (YTM) Executive Director/Curator

Jessica Vellenga, Bree-An Lucas and Vanessa Corkal
Yarn Bomb Yukon Collective coordinator and members

Mary Bradshaw
Yukon Arts Centre gallery director



Preparing a section.



Preparing another section



One section ready for the aircraft



Rolling it up to carry it to the aircraft



Ready to roll onto the aircraft



Covering the fuselage



Sewing the Canadian Flag onto a section



Tools of the trade



Draping a wing



Kyle Cameron draping the other wing



Working on both wings



Securing the sections on a wing.



Wider angle – securing the sections on a wing.



The pedestal is covered too.



All done.



Crew that worked on the yarn-bomb project

L-R Lucia, Amber Church, Alida Munro, Valery Monahan, Casey Lee McLaughlin, Kyle Cameron, Bree-An Lucas, Mary Bradshaw, Jerome Stuart, Jessica Vallenga, Vanessa Corkal, Heather, Doug Drake



DC-3 Whitehorse Transportation Museum - Yarn Bombed August 11, 2012
Photo courtesy Kyle Cameron via Donna Clayson bdclayson@northwestel.net (In Whitehorse)

Weathervane takes on new, colourful look

The DC-3 is officially dressed for winter, at least for the next two weeks.

By [Ainslie Cruickshank](#) on August 13, 2012 at 3:39 pm

The DC-3 is officially dressed for winter, at least for the next two weeks.

The plane, which sits on a pedestal outside the Yukon Transportation Museum, was yarn-bombed Saturday – the culmination of months’ worth of hard work.

Museum curator Casey McLaughlin said today the bombing went off without a hitch.

“We’re very excited,” she said.

“We had a bunch of great supporters come up and help and just cheer us on, and sit around with lawn chairs...we even had musicians show up and play.”

Volunteers started arriving at 8 a.m., and the plane was fully outfitted in its colourful cozy by 2:30 p.m., McLaughlin said.

The group of volunteers was supported by equipment, staff and expertise donated by Ketz Construction Corp.

“It was just amazing how all of a sudden the parking lot was full of people just sitting there for support and cheering us on,” she said.

“It was a really lovely community moment.”



Photo by Whitehorse Star
Casey McLaughlin

While it may be too early to tell how many visitors the yarn bombed plane will draw to the museum, McLaughlin said already every time you pull into the parking lot, there’s someone taking a picture.

McLaughlin came up with the yarn-bomb the DC-3 initiative after a trip to Vancouver, where she encountered an old sign post wearing a yarn cozy.

When she got back, she took the idea to Jessica Vellenga, a member of the Yarn Bomb Yukon Collective.

While McLaughlin and Vellenga had different goals for the yarn bombing, both were after community engagement.

McLaughlin hoped to promote interest in the museum and in the Yukon’s transportation history. For Vellenga, who also works at the Yukon Arts Centre, the project was a way to engage the community in fibre-based arts.

McLaughlin told the Star at the beginning of August that the DC-3 is the largest yarn bomb in Canada and quite possibly the world.

In the interest of preservation, the DC-3 will only sport its knitted cozy until Aug. 21.

WHITEHORSE DANCE BANDS FROM THE 1960'S - Shades, Zots, Specters Pictures wanted.

I was wondering if you could ask the gang out there if any of them have any pictures of the teen dance bands of the 60's from Whitehorse. **I played Fender bass** with the **Shades, Zots, Specters** and a few more at the time and those of us that are left would like to put a story together with a few pictures of ourselves and others in these bands. **Some of the players were Kerry Vars, sax, Bill Demmy, lead guitar, Paul Franklin, drums, Paul Erlam, guitar, Gary Smoler, guitar, Robbie McKay, lead guitar, Dwayne Guyett, drums, and others.** I know there were a lot of pictures taken of us at the Elks Club, Old Curling club, school dances, and the Army and Air force Rec centers, but none have ever surfaced, would appreciate anyone that finds a few to send them to either you or myself.

Harry Miller ee.miller@shaw.ca (In Coombs BC)

Wary waterfront residents taking precautions

The Reids bought their lake front property in 1967.

By [Ainslie Cruickshank](#) on August 10, 2012 at 4:08 pm

BRACED FOR TROUBLE – Dave Reid, seen Thursday afternoon, has built up his family's property at Army Beach since the 2007 flood and is prepared for high water (top).

CHALLENGING THE WATER – Yukon government crews sandbag the waterfront along Army Beach on Thursday afternoon.

MARSH LAKE – The Reids bought their lake front property in 1967.

It was one of the old-style cabins, like their neighbours', back then – but it doesn't look like that anymore.

About five years ago, they tore down the old one and started building what is better described as a summer home.

Dave designed it himself, Rusty, his mother, proudly told the Star Thursday afternoon, while sitting in the almost-complete living room of the main house, looking out over the lake.

Just behind the main house is Rusty's apartment, also newly built.

The Reids' property is one of the highest on Marsh Lake, so they aren't too concerned about the rising water levels in the Southern Lakes.

They've been told this year's flood levels will probably be similar to the levels in 2004.

“(It) was mostly a non-event, most people don’t even remember anything from 2004. We’re also the highest property on this beach here,” said Dave.



Photo by Vince Fedoroff

“We’re not concerned for us individually; our property’s OK. But there is concern for some of the other people, so I’m concerned for some of the other people but not for us.”

Ric Janowicz, the manager of the hydrology branch within the Department of Environment, said today “a few people are inconvenienced for sure at that level (2004), but the majority are not.

“Once it goes above that, then it’s a lot more serious.”

The Southern Lakes are primarily a glacial system, Janowicz explained.

“That’s why it peaks late in the summer, like it will, because it hasn’t peaked yet.”

“It peaks after the heat of the summer temperatures, which are maximized in July.”

Snowpack and rainfall also contribute to the rising water level, and Janowicz said the snowpack is quite a bit above average this year.

A report released Thursday by Wildland Fire Management said the snowpack is 136 per cent of normal.

“The rainfall is contributing, the rainfall we’ve had in the last couple of days though it’s not as much as we initially anticipated, the amounts are causing the water level to come up now,” said Janowicz.

“At this point, I don’t expect it to go above 2004 (levels) unless it gets really warm or we get a lot of rain, but temperatures are tapering off now pretty quickly historically.

“Once we get to the middle of August, well, summer’s over, hate to tell you that.”

While the flood isn’t expected to be anywhere close to what it was in 2007, people are much better prepared than they were then, Dave said Thursday.

“After 2007, in 2008 everybody started saying, ‘OK, we got away with it this time’ and we all started doing the rock thing, and we’re much better prepared on an individual level and the government too.

“Last time water was coming in and you still couldn’t get sand bags ... now it’s like, ‘here’s your sand bags.’ I don’t even think it’s even going to be that bad, but everybody’s on top of it this time.”

Large sandbags, called Super Bags, have been placed in various locations along Army Beach, including along the beach front of some high-risk properties.

Public access to the beach has been closed and Pearson Road is being raised to minimize effects of flood water.

As of Thursday, 26,500 sandbags had been distributed around the Southern Lakes area.

Wildland Fire Management has recommended Southern Lakes residents prepare for possible flooding by taking extra precautions to flood-proof properties.

They can do so by moving hazardous materials to a safe location, removing belongings from crawl spaces and basements, knowing how to shut off electricity, fuel tanks, furnace fuel lines, and propane lines, preparing a personal emergency plan and ensuring they can be self-sufficient for at least 72 hours.

Thursday's latest information from Wildland Fire Management rated the flood risk for Marsh Lake, Carcross and Tagish as high.

The water level was 0.24 m below flood stage and was stable, but the report said a return to normal temperatures and/or moderate rainfall amounts would raise the water level.

"Peak water level normally occurs in August and is expected to reach the flood stage level of 3.43 m during the second or third week of August," it said.

Remembering back to the 2007 flood, Rusty and Dave said the one positive that came out of the disaster was the community support.

"The funny thing is how a disaster like that brings the community together, because you're all down there filling sand bags together and talking and there's somebody making coffee and soup and lunches, we were really like one big community. I liked that part of it," said Rusty.

"People came out from town and said. 'here we are – what do you want us to do?' " Dave added.

UPDATE August 23rd : My son, Dave Reid, whose picture was in the paper after Vince Federoff, from the Whitehorse Star interviewed him, says that the water level came up to about the 2004 level and are now going down. That is good news.

Bye for now,
RUSTY & DAVE REID

AGING AUNTIES

Hi Sherron,

Sorry to hear of Bill's mishap. Hope he is recovering well. I am planning to attend and will try to take a few photos. I'm sure others will as well.

Vera is recovering nicely from her hip surgery. I am still acting chief cook and bottle washer but she is able to move around quite well and to get into and out of bed and her chair by herself. She dresses herself as well, although I usually help with the socks! We visited her GP yesterday and he said she is doing very well.

I had to miss the Burian reunion in Kelowna on Aug 4th but it apparently went well. My cousin who lives there looked after things.

Some items you might want to include in the next issue of the MocTel are the following updates on my three Burian Aunts who many of the older set will know and who are now all in their 90s. Two of them are still living in the Yukon.

My Aunt Martha Collins, who will be 96 in September, travelled earlier this year with her daughter and son-in-law, Penny and Don Sippel, down to North Carolina to visit her grand daughter (Penny's and Don's daughter, Cindy). She returned after experiencing some health issues and after a stay in St Paul's Hospital in Vancouver, where I was able to visit her, is now back in Whitehorse and currently enjoying a time of respite at Macaulay Lodge. She still has her apartment but is contemplating whether it is time to move to a care home.

Vera and I were privileged to attend the celebration of my Aunt Meta Davis's 90th birthday in Kelowna in May when members of her immediate and extended family gathered at my cousin Louise Siegmann's home to fete her. All four of Aunt Meta's children and most of their families were able to be at the celebration as well. Aunt Meta lives in Kelowna with her son, Alfred.

My Aunt Amanda Rendell, who lives in an apartment in Riverdale, celebrated her 93rd birthday this month. When I called her to extend birthday greetings she told me that she was given a party the previous evening by the "kids" who use the local skateboard park. For many years Aunt Amanda has cleaned the park and encouraged the young people as she goes on her daily walks and has become known as the "Skateboard Gramma". They baked a cake for her and presented her with a gift certificate to buy either new running shoes or a new backpack, both of which she uses! My guess is that not too many 93-year-olds have a birthday party given in their honour by a group of skateboarders!

Harvey Burian
Parksville, BC Canada
E-mail: hburian*telus.net

Nunavut communities celebrate bowhead whale hunt

Both Repulse Bay and Arctic Bay successful in hunt

[CBC News](#)

Posted: Aug 14, 2012 11:06 AM CT

People in Repulse Bay and Arctic Bay in Nunavut are celebrating a successful bowhead harvest.

Michael Akkuardjuk, the chair of the local hunters and trappers association in Repulse Bay, said the hunters caught and killed the whale Monday afternoon about 30 kilometres away from the community.

Akkuardjuk boated out to meet them around 5 p.m. local time.

"We got four boats of hunters and on each boat they had four people. And there was one more boat with the safety patrol. But when I reached them there was a lot of boats there already - they were dragging it back to the community," he said.

Akkuardjuk said the whale was brought back to the community around 8 p.m. for butchering.

He described the bowhead as smaller than those caught in other years - about 27 feet long, or under nine metres.

The muktuk, or blubber, has already been divided up, but butchering the meat will continue Tuesday. Akkuardjuk said this is the fourth successful bowhead harvest in Repulse since 1996. Akkuardjuk took part in the last hunt, which was in 2010.

In Arctic Bay, it took a team of hunters less than an hour to chase the animal and then 35 minutes to kill it.



Community members in Arctic Bay, Nunavut, cut up the bowhead whale meat from the recent hunt. (Jobie Attitaaq)

"When we arrived at the harvest, the hunters were calm and very happy and welcoming, and it was a different scene from other harvests. And some of us had never seen a bowhead before because there had never been one harvested around here," said Jobie Attitaaq, the chair of the hunters and trappers organization there.

That whale was almost 30 feet long, or little over nine metres.

Attitaaq said most of the hunters were young men, but the captain and the lead hunters were older.

He added that anyone can order the muktuk, but they will have to pay the shipping charges.

Hunt was banned for years

For years, bowheads were off-limits to Inuit hunters as the whale population was believed to be in trouble.

But since the 90s, a limited hunt has been allowed.

Each year, three Nunavut communities are given licenses to harvest one of the massive whales. For some Nunavummiut, it's their first chance to participate in a cultural tradition.

Hunters in Taloyoak are now preparing to head out in search of this year's third whale, but few of them have ever been on a bowhead hunt.

INTERNATIONAL SOURDOUGH REUNION

The 80th edition of the ISR is coming right along. We have about fifty people signed up all the way from Fairbanks to San Diego.

We have the Yukon Commissioner as our Guest Speaker, and doing some of the tours. Goody Sparling and Howard Ryder are also coming down from Whitehorse, and maybe a few more if you put this in the Moc Tel. We also have a fair number coming from the Lower Mainland.

I would like to remind everyone who may be thinking of coming that the booking date for the hotel has passed but there will probably still be rooms available. We are using the Days Inn, because they put up a pretty good breakfast with your lodging.

The ISR has a farewell breakfast on the last morning which is covered by the registration fee. If anyone needs registration form or tour information they can get in touch with me at aksala49@gmail.com or by 'phone at 250-498-6887.

Registration is on the 28th, but nothing starts until the 29th and runs through to Oct 2nd.

It's being held at the Days Inn in Penticton , a block or so from the Sicamouse. 152 Riverside.

We have a couple of spots open on the Cassabella Princess, but if we sign up twenty more we can get another sailing in the AM. There is lots of room on the bus tour and the KVR.

We will probably need a few volunteers with vehicles to get people around to the Cassabella Princess and the KVR tours.

We have Gillian Russel coming to sing for us at the Happy hour on Banquet night. Sue Morrison is looking after the "Skits" so if anybody has one please get in touch with her. We are lining up some pretty nice door prizes.

We don't have many "locals" signed up yet, but maybe when they figure out how much fun they are missing they may change their minds.

Joyce Penman this year's President is having a bout with cancer and just had a successful operation and is determined she will make it to Penticton. She will be hosting a party with food and drinks for all who register for the ISR.

I was hoping to go to the Island Picnic this weekend but have to drive down to Burnaby on Tuesday for the Senior's Games, and it would be too much for me.

Larry

'Steak Night' at the Marsh Lake Community Center.

Friday night is 'Steak Night' at the Marsh Lake Community Center. Sometimes it's pork chops or what ever.

A group of us that know each other planned to go last Friday, August 17th, 2102. The food is served up at 7:00 PM.

After the meal, my son Dave Reid, played his electric piano with some nice dinner music. Then his mum, Rusty Reid got her fiddle and Ken neighbour got his guitar and those two played some tunes and sang some songs.

Here are a few of the names of our friends that were gathered at the tables.

Rusty & Dave REID

Dave & Katherine ORDISH

Marg & Drew DUNN

Edith HEALY

Jim & Pat HEALY

Jim HEALY's 2 sisters - Barb & Diane

Arla & Corky REPKA

Shari REPKA (daughter)

Tyler REPKA (son)

Jim FORDYCE & his wife (did a lot of dancing)

Lloyd & Carolyn ATKINSON

Every table was filled and they had to set up more tables. A few people danced and a good time was had by all.

Bye for now,

RUSTY REID rustyreid.yukon@gmail.com (At Marsh Lake)



Ken Mason and Rusty Reid
Aug 17, 2012 at Marsh Lake Community Center
Photo courtesy Rusty Reid rustyreid.yukon@gmail.com (At Marsh Lake)



Jim & Pat Healey, Ken & Sandra Mason, Dave Reid
Photo courtesy Rusty Reid rustyreid.yukon@gmail.com (At Marsh Lake)



MARSH LAKE COMMUNITY CENTER

Gathering Light Celebrates Growth

By Dan Davidson uffish*northwestel.net (In Dawson)

July 6, 2012

There are a few notes for Raven Spirit Dance's production of *Gathering Light*, but I haven't seen them yet on the night of the performance at the Odd Fellows Hall ballroom. Attempting picture taking during any part of the performance seems like a bad idea. While there is a soundtrack to the show, my guess is that listening to it later on will not help when it comes time to write about what I am about to see.

There is enough light to scribble some notes by, and I fill three small notebook pages during the next hour, trying to get some sense of what is going on.

The performance is in the round and the circle holds a special significance for first nations people, as well as presenting interesting challenges for the performers.

There are four women, barefoot, dressed in white, posed on the floor in positions that suggest a kind of binding or restraint. Over the next hour they move around on the floor, stretching out from that cramped position and sometimes returning to it, working their way upwards by degrees until they are standing and moving about freely.

They seem to be discovering elements of themselves – hands, arms, legs. Some of this process seems to be marked by insecurity and even pain.

There are two solo dances as the hour continues. One seems the very essence of pain, confusion and anguish. The other floats free and seems joyful, rushing about the circle.

Towards the end there is a segment which features a determined exhalation of breath and an approach to the audience members in which the dancers' hands unfold as if offering something.

They have moved a vast distance from their huddled beginnings.

I check with others later and I am not the only one who sits wondering if the best response to this would not have been to mime acceptance of what was offered.

I know two of the dancers, of course. I first interviewed Kimberly Tuson some 28 years ago when she was dancing at the Diamond Tooth Gerties and later photographed her performances in the late, lamented Gaslight Follies at the Palace Grand. She has been here so often as to almost be a local.

Most recently she danced in a couple of other productions created by Michelle Olson, who is a member of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation and has been here often. Together, they have danced on the stage at the Dänojà Zho Cultural Centre, performing works drawn from local traditions and stories.

Julia Carr and Karissa Barry are new to town, and it is they who had the solo dances in this performance.

Later, I consult the notes linked to Raven Spirit Dance's website.

“Gathering Light is performed in the round, creating a sense of ritual space where transformation is an experience the audience intimately shares with the performers.”

Okay – I wasn't too far off.

“From seed to flower, from girl to woman, from structures that do not support our own truths to ceremonies that support our full bloom, *Gathering Light* explores the impulses rooted in our bodies and that travel through us to find the light.”

That causes me to think a little more closely on the contribution of the soundtrack and the shifting spotlights. It makes sense.

In the end, as someone who knows very little about dance and movement, I have to fall back on what spoke to me during the hour. The piece moved from constraint to freedom, from confusion and angst to certainty and joy. I left feeling good about the time I'd spent watching it.



Raven Spirit Dance: Julia Carr, Karissa Barry, Kimberly Tuson, and Michelle Olson.
Photo courtesy Dan Davidson uffish*northwestel.net (In Dawson)

Forty Years on the Dalton Trail

By Dan Davidson uffish*northwestel.net (In Dawson)

July 10, 2012

But for a chance invitation to leave a boring summer job in Alberta and come to the Yukon to spend a summer doing archeology in the wilds here, Gates might have followed his first plan and spent his career looking for ruins in Mesoamerica. He might never have visited the Yukon at all, and he certainly would not have written *Dalton's Gold Rush Trail* (Lost Moose), his latest book.

It is dedicated to Allan Innes-Taylor, a fascinating fellow in his own right, who was Gates' mentor on his earliest forays into the Yukon wilderness, beginning in 1971. It was then that he first ran across the name of Jack Dalton and the existence of the Dalton Trail. To a greater or lesser extent it's been on his mind ever since.

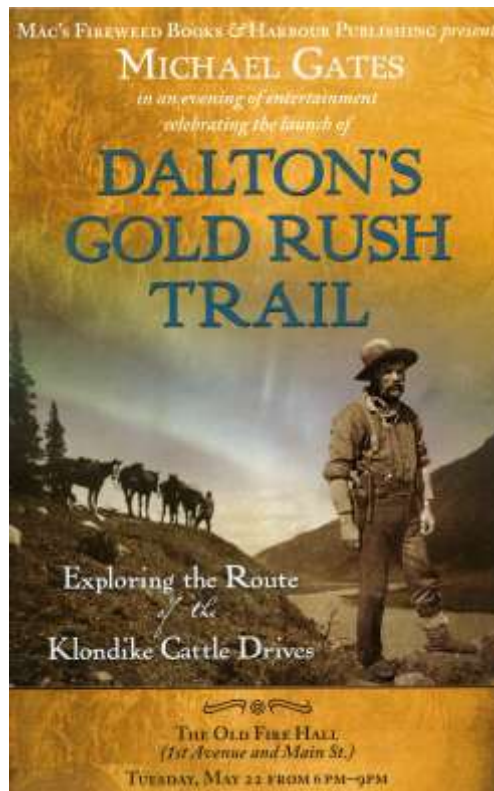
As he told the dozen or so folks who attended his reading and slide show at the Dawson Community Library late in June, “When I write of the Dalton Trail I have been there.” He has, too. Whether on foot, on horseback, on the rivers or in the air, Gates has been tracking down the vanished trail for years; a search that intensified after he retired from years spent focusing on the Klondike Gold Rush on behalf of Parks Canada while stationed in both Dawson City and Whitehorse.

It’s a mystery to him why the trail has been the forgotten story of the Gold Rush era. Indeed his original choice of title for this book was *The Forgotten Klondike Trail*. Part of it, he says, is that it was, in many ways, a less demanding route, one where it was possible to guide a herd through and have them, in the right season, actually gain weight along the way.

Attempts to do the same thing over the Chilkoot or White Passes were failures, and it was only the construction of the White Pass and Yukon Route Railway that finally caused the decline of Dalton’s toll route.

Because the story is a big one, covering a great deal of territory both in time and space, Gates chose to focus his hour long talk on the book’s subtitle: “Exploring the Route of the Klondike Cattle Drives.”

In fact, he focussed on one particular cattle drive out of the 65 (at last count) that essayed the route with varying degrees of success. George Tuxford’s drive was documented in 250 pages of work by the man himself, an invaluable source for anyone attempting to chronicle this route. Gates had a limited personal experience with rounding up cattle when he was a young man and has an appreciation of the difficulties. For him once was enough.



The slides came from pictures taken by others who had used the route, and Gates has established a collection of present day photographs that match these sites.

The call for merchants to bring beef to the Klondike was the result of a near panic that arose between 1896 and 1899, as thousands of stampeders, many of whom were on their way before the Northwest Mounted Police imposed its rules about bringing a year's worth of provisions with them, descended on the place that was just becoming Dawson City. There was a serious concern that starvation would be their fate, as the land did not have the resources to support tens of thousands over the winter.

Dalton had already established his trail, which he basically stole out from under the resident First Nations people, and while he could not charge a toll once anyone crossed the ill-defined boundary between the USA and Canada, he made a fortune on his side of the border, even charging the Natives whose trails he had commandeered.

Gates' enthusiasm for his subject bubbles through whenever he talks about it, and this particular evening was no exception. It is a pleasure to listen to someone who is really caught up in his work and knows it well.

Those who think they may never encounter the Dalton Trail probably already have. Portions of both the Haines Road and the North Klondike Highway run along, or parallel to the route that Jack Dalton pioneered, and others used, to bring cattle to the Klondike.

Gates' estimates that 1500 to 2000 people used this route during the peak Gold Rush years, but the more significant number is the estimated 10,000 head of cattle and other livestock that came to the Klondike via the trail. Without them the history of the Klondike Gold Rush could have been tragic indeed.



Michael Gates autographs a copy of *Dalton's Gold Rush Trail* for Marc Johnson.
Photo courtesy Dan Davidson uffish@northwestel.net (In Dawson)

Mason Seeks to Expand His Range

By Dan Davidson uffish*northwestel.net (In Dawson)

July 16, 2012

Michael Mason is happy with the way his art has developed over the 16 or so years that he's been working on his one-line style. Using this technique, each painting and each carving begins with a single line that moves through to the end of the work, forming images as it grows.

He says that all his work is really an extension of that line, and one could, in theory set up everything that he's ever done in a display that would be a continuous line from the beginning of the exhibition to the end.

Mason says the images are coming thick and fast these days, faster than ever. He always has close to a dozen or more works on the go, working as he does in painting, carving and jewelry making. He'd like to be larger in two senses of the word. First, he'd like to have a larger market for his work, which is drawn from his life experiences and the stories on his Hän and Athapascan people, both here in Dawson and in Alaska.

"I'm at the level now where I can create this stuff, all the images, but if I could find someone, a partner, to just grab it and run with it, it's marketable," he says.



Mike and the single line – This canvas is so dense with imagery that it distorts your vision.

Photo courtesy Dan Davidson uffish*northwestel.net (In Dawson)

To that end he has begun a Facebook page (MichaelMasonArt), just to get his work out into the larger world.

In the other sense of the word, he would like to have the freedom to do larger pieces of art, the size that you find on display in public buildings, created to be seen from a distance.

He feels that art rendered at that size would create the kind of public awareness that he feels the native perspective on the world deserves to have for the wider population.

Mason had a show in the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Community Hall on the second weekend in July.



Animal images – Starkly outlined creatures stand out against colour washed backgrounds.
Photo courtesy Dan Davidson uffish*northwestel.net (In Dawson)

KDO Continues to Advance Services for Businesses

By Dan Davidson uffish*northwestel.net (In Dawson)

July 19, 2012

At the July 11 Dawson Chamber of Commerce meeting Mark Wickham of Across the River Consulting presented an update on the most recent activities of the **Klondike Development Organization**.

The KDO is a partnership of the City of Dawson, the Dawson City Chamber of Commerce, the Klondike Visitors Association, the Dawson City Arts Society and Chief Isaac Incorporated (the development corporation of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in) and was formed to pursue the building of an increasingly sustainable economy in the Klondike.

Its broad mandate includes:

- devising pro-active strategies and services aimed at retaining and growing a healthy business base
- increasing access to equity investment capital
- strengthening economic and social sectors critical to the future of the Klondike
- addressing strategic gaps in services

Wickham indicated that the Regional Economic Development Plan on which the KDO has been collaborating with the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in is in its final stages and is now awaiting responses from the federal and territorial governments, who were also partners in the process.

“There were 31 different projects identified in the plan and they are themed around investments in people, the place and businesses,” he said. It is too soon to actually make the plan available to the community at large, but that will happen some way down the road.

The KDO itself has been developing an online property search engine that will enable people to identify the different types of property available in Dawson just now. The good news from the display is that there are quite a few commercial properties and the bad news is that there are almost no vacant residential ones. A check at the Post Office will, however, reveal a healthy number of residential properties for sale in both the downtown core and the Dome subdivisions.

Wickham reported that the KDO is looking to update the local business directory and to assist businesses in selling goods both to the local market as well as to the territorial government.

On July 4 the KDO held the latest in its series of partnership forums, this one focussed on the availability of business support services, mostly from outside the community.

“It’s amazing who’s coming in and out of this town,” he said.

What was different about this two-part event – a daytime discussion followed by an evening service fair – was that it brought a lot of these agencies into one place. Participants included the North Yukon Business Advisory Outreach, Dana Naye Ventures, the Business Development Bank of Canada, KDO Enterprise Facilitation, Yukon College, the E-Commerce Yukon Advisor, and Yukon Government advisors from the branches of Regional Economic Development, Business and Industry Development and Tourism Product Development, as well as a representative from the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency.

It seemed clear to Wickham that many of these people were not necessarily aware of what the other agencies had to offer, and they often make the rounds in Dawson without the bulk of the community that might need to consult with them actually knowing they are available. Having them all in one place for a big event raised their profile.

There were 15 to 20 people at the four-hour discussion forum and 25 to 30 came to the evening fair.

Wickham reported that both sets of meetings were very positive and would certainly be followed up with more such events in the future.



The Trondek Hwëch'in Community Hall was the location of the Business Support Services Information Fair hosted by the Klondike Development Organization and the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in. Photo courtesy Dan Davidson uffish@northwestel.net (In Dawson)

History of Commissioners Reveals a Heart of Pure Gold

By Dan Davidson uffish@northwestel.net (In Dawson)

July 20, 2012

Linda Johnson has been busy chronicling the Yukon's political history for the last decade or so, longer if you consider that her first book on this subject, *With the People Who Live Here* (2009) was, according to its preface, about 20 years in the making. That book was a history of the Yukon legislature from 1909 to 1961.

Her most recent book, *At the Heart of Gold* (2012) covers a wider range of history, but concentrates on the role of the Commissioner, that office which is unique to the three northern territories and which has undergone such a complete transformation over the last 30 years.

Both books were supported by the office of the Speaker of the Legislature, which was occupied by former MLA Ted Staffen at the time when Commissioner Geraldine Van Bibber first proposed the book. It was her notion to have it be a personal look at the office, structured as a series of interviews with the still living men and women who held the position.

At the time that Johnson began the process the last ten Commissioners were still living. The work of the incumbents before that time occupies the first 65 pages of the book. After that, the text is based on interview transcripts supported by research.

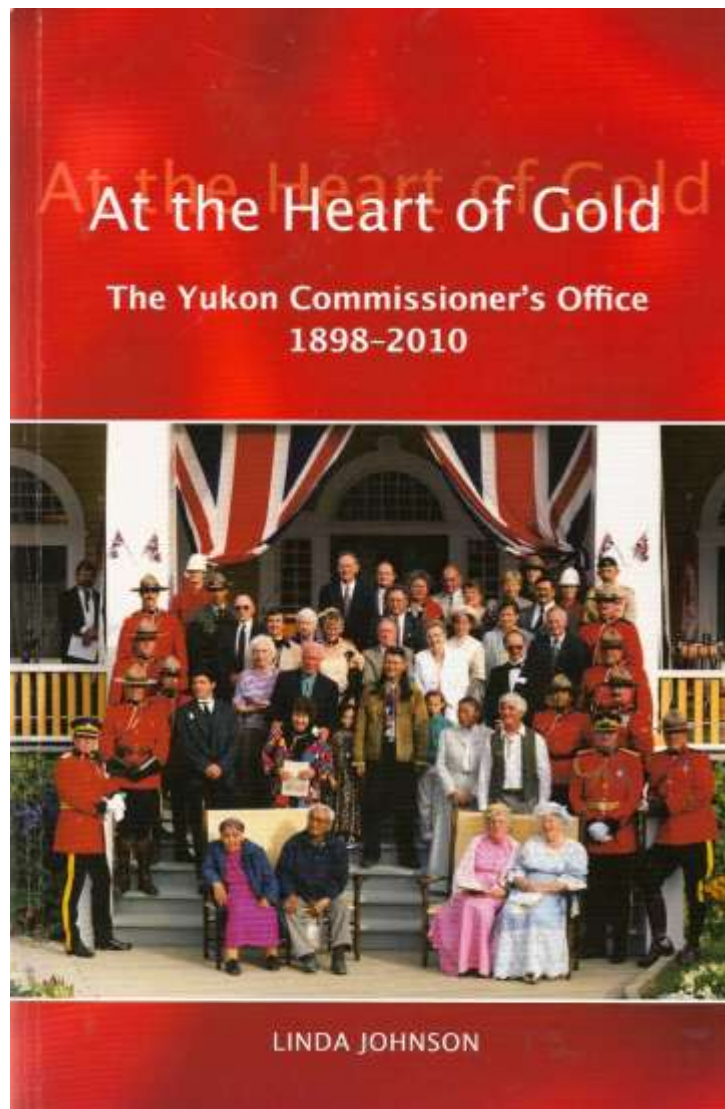
The book was launched officially at this year's Commissioner's Ball in June, at which Johnson and the present Speaker, David Laxton, discussed its origins and purpose.

Laxton credited Van Bibber and Staffen with initiating the project, which he inherited after the most recent territorial election.

The Ball was he felt, a most appropriate place to introduce this particular book.

“Geraldine and Ted shared an interest in Yukon history, particularly the history made by Yukon people. They both are part of our history. Both believe that those stories are uniquely ours to celebrate, to learn from, and to preserve for future generations. The result is this book, *At the Heart of Gold: The Yukon Commissioner’s Office, 1898-2010*.

“Although this book covers a long span of history, the majority of it is about the last 10 Commissioners and their stories. They are, in fact, the superheroes in this story and created the main text of the book. Our ten living Commissioners and their families have shared their personal histories, insights, memories and reflections of their times as Yukon’s Commissioner. Sadly, Gordon Cameron was too ill to record his own narrative and passed away during the early months of the project. Happily his four sons ... were able to supply the bulk of the information about their father and mother.”



Heart of Gold cover.

Photo courtesy Dan Davidson uffish*northwestel.net (In Dawson)

Linda Johnson reflected on the genesis and significance of the book.

“It started as a wonderful idea in the minds and hearts of Geraldine and Ted. It came to life in the personal narratives as the ten living Commissioners and Gordon Cameron’s sons, embraced the idea and made it their own. The book is based on oral histories, building on the long standing tradition of Yukon’s story tellers.”

Many years ago now, Angela Sidney coined the phrase, “my stories are my wealth” and for Johnson this concept is at the heart of her latest book.



Book launch - Ted Staffen, Commissioner Doug Phillips, Speaker David Laxton, Geraldine Van Bibber and Linda Johnson

Photo courtesy Dan Davidson uffish@northwestel.net (In Dawson)

Johnson provided each of her subjects with a basic outline to follow and gave them time to think before the interviews began. Once completed these were transcribed at Yukon College (the full tapes are in the Yukon Archives) and Johnson sat with her subjects once again to decide what extracts to include in the book, sculpting the chapters from the text.

“The result is a candid, first person window on our Yukon world. Each chapter is as unique as the individuals recording their stories, and together their narratives illuminate the fabric of a place we all love to call home.

“As you read through the chapters of this book you will journey back and forth through Yukon history, gathering understandings of events from many different points of view. Collectively these men and women have served us now for more than half a century, and the office itself is more than 110 years in the making. During those decades there have been huge changes in the Yukon and in the Commissioner’s Office. The position has often been a center of conflict and controversy, as citizens struggled to move from colonial governments, with viceroys appointed from far away, to democratic, responsible government elected by all of the Yukon people, with Yukon people serving as our Commissioner.

“What the Commissioners and their families have shared with us in recording their stories for this book is pure gold, a tremendously valuable legacy for us in the present and for all future generations.”

Floating on the Breeze

By Dan Davidson uffish*northwestel.net (In Dawson)

July 21, 2012

A paraglider launches from the Midnight Dome to soar over the Klondike Valley and land on the dike's greensward beside Front Street. The ride might take 15 minutes or more than a half an hour, depending on the air currents.



Paraglider.

Photo courtesy Dan Davidson uffish*northwestel.net (In Dawson)

WHITEHORSE FISH LADDER WEBCAM

I looked on August 14th and lots of chinook salmon were on hand waiting to go up the ladder.

<http://yukonenergy.ca/community/multimedia/fishcam/>

Once you reach this site click on
“Click Here to stream to your player”
``Allow`` the exe file and then open it.

Fish-Cam

The fishladder is open for the 2012 season and the salmon cam has been re-activated.

The underwater camera is located at the base of the fish ladder. It provides a rare opportunity to see a variety of species of Yukon fish, including arctic grayling, whitefish, lake trout, long nose sucker, and starting in early August, Chinook salmon.

In 2011 a total of 1,532 salmon travelled through the ladder: 959 males and 573 females.

In 2012, our first Chinook salmon passed through the ladder on August 7 at 3:10 p.m. It was hatchery-raised, very healthy looking female.

Totals to date this year (as of August 20th):

Wild female: 84
Hatchery female: 45
Wild male: 109
Hatchery male: 199
Total: 437

First fish through the fish ladder Aug. 7th
Aug 17th.....177
Aug 20th.....437
Aug.21st.....530
Aug. 22nd.....579

How to tell a wild fish from a hatchery fish....

http://www.ehow.com/info_8043937_difference-hatchery-fish-wild-fish.html

Fins

- The fins display one of the greatest differences between most hatchery and wild fish. Hatchery fish are raised in contained areas and they do not develop and shape muscle like a wild fish. The fin

size is slightly stunted and, in hatcheries with concrete pens, the fins are worn and torn. **Hatchery employees usually will also clip the adipose fin** on the fish to help anglers identify them as keepers.

OBITUARIES

Don Neff of Dawson City YT passed away, in Whitehorse YT on January 17, 2012. Don was born in Vancouver BC but moved to Dawson City with his parents and siblings in 1939 when his father, Dr. Neff, established a Dental Practice there. As a young man he worked on the Gold Dredges in the Klondike and in South America. After returning from South America he worked and lived in the Dawson area and built his home at Rock Creek where he lived with his wife Gene. Don was predeceased by his parents Dr. and Edith Neff, his wife Gene and his brother Frank. He is survived by his sister Jean Cook and her children Bea and Jim, his sister Margaret Jordheim and her children Karen, John, Craig, Kim, and sister In-Law Doris and her children Tracey and Philip.

Larger-than-life priest helped many

Friday August 17, 2012

By Jacqueline Ronson

Father David Albert Daws was a priest, a mentor, a recovering alcoholic and a friend. But to Patricia Daws and Nora Sumner, he will always be their big brother.

David Daws passed away Saturday in Abbotsford, B.C., at the age of 64 after a storied life.

He came with his parents Albert and Florence to the Yukon at the age of two, and was big brother to Patricia, Laurance, Roberta and Nora.

Everyone who knew him remembers him as a humble guy who would do anything for anyone.

Nora recounted a story remembered by her sister, Roberta, in which David had just returned to Whitehorse from Teslin, where he was stationed as a priest.

David was always his mother's baby. Though he was in his 50s and probably four times her diminutive size, she liked to make sure she was taking care of him, Nora said.

When his mother saw him in midwinter without gloves on, she immediately drove downtown and bought him a beautiful, fur-lined, leather pair.

"She was all happy that she was looking after him," said Nora.



David Daws went from a rough-and-tumble life to the priesthood during his eventful life. Daws died Saturday in Abbotsford, B.C., at age 64.

Submitted Photo/Yukon News

“She gave him these gloves and said, ‘Now you wear those. It’s cold outside.’ And he drove downtown with Robbie and they were driving down Second and saw a fellow cleaning the sidewalk, chipping ice, and it was really cold out and he didn’t have any gloves on.

“David pulled over and said ‘Here, here, wear these,’ and gave him the brand new gloves.

“They went home and Mom was ... Robbie said Mom just hit the roof! So it was back downtown to buy new gloves and she’s like, ‘Don’t you give those away!’”

As a child, David was always the protector of his siblings.

“He just looked after us and made sure none of us would get into trouble,” said Patricia. “I mean, he would (get into trouble), but we weren’t allowed to. It was very important to David that we just... we were home by curfew, we didn’t do anything wrong.”

David managed to get himself into a fair amount of trouble, however.

He suffered a series of accidents, including a car crash that broke both his legs.

He jumped around from career to career, not sure where he fit.

In his 20s he began struggling with alcohol addiction.

He hit his lowest point while working as an accountant in Inuvik, and there he finally reached out for help.

It was in Haines Junction, while working for Parks Canada that he became more involved with the Catholic Church and finally decided that he wanted to be a priest.

The career switch may have been a surprise for some of his friends, his sisters said, but it wasn't a shock to them.

Their mother was a devout Catholic, and always wanted a priest in the family.

Even as kids, the house was always full of David's friends, who came to stay if they were in a bind.

"It was like bringing home stray cats; he would bring home people," said Nora.

After four years in seminary school in Edmonton, Father David Daws was ordained on May 31, 1986.

A few years later, Nora, her mother and young son would stay with David in the Porter Creek rectory for a few weeks while they were waiting for their new house to be ready.

"It was unbelievable," said Nora. "I was exhausted living there, because the phone would ring day and night. People would be pounding on the door. You'd hear the door go, or you'd hear the phone ring and he'd be up, and you'd hear him talking, and you know if it was a call that somebody needed him, he'd just be gone, in the middle of the night."

But it wasn't until he left the Yukon for Fort Nelson around 2005 that his family realized how much he meant to the community, Nora and Patricia said.

They would get constant calls from people looking for him, saying they needed him for a wedding or a funeral, or a baptism, or just to talk.

David's own experiences allowed him to connect with the people who needed the help the most.

In particular, he was very important to a community of people struggling with alcohol addiction.

Tom Amson was one of those people. He said that being able to come clean about his past mistakes to Dave was a turning point in his life.

"I wasn't always a nice guy," Amson said. "So you take an inventory of your life, and tell somebody like Dave. So that was a huge step, as you might concede. To me it was a really divine intervention that I knew him, because I don't know if I would have done that with anybody else."

Twenty-five years later, Amson is still sober.

Amson remembers Father David as a “larger-than-life” priest with big tattoos on his forearms who used to bounce at a local bar and liked to play cards.

For Father David, the normal rules of Catholicism didn’t always apply.

Daws married Amson and his wife Debbie on the banks of the Takhini River in 1990.

Normally, Catholic weddings are not permitted outside, Amson said.

Kevin Barr, who was in the wedding party, kept teasing Father David by calling his stole, a symbolic religious garment worn by priests, a scarf. This one had been knit by Daws’ mother.

“We’re about 300 feet above the river, and David just grabbed Kevin and picked him up and took him over to the bank, ‘You call this a f---ing scarf one more time and I’ll drop ya,’” Amson recalled.

Father David never lost touch with the community that needed him, and he was always self-effacingly humble.

“There isn’t another one like him,” said Amson.

Bishop Gary Gordon remembers him as a devout priest and a servant of the community.

“He was a man of prayer. Oh boy, I tell ya. He was a man of prayer. And loved the people.”

Daws moved to Abbotsford in 2008 to be closer to medical care for his numerous health problems.

His family worried about him being away from home, but he found community there with characteristic ease.

At a memorial service in Abbotsford earlier this week, the church was packed with people who all shared fond memories of their short time with David, his sisters said.

“He was not alone,” said Patricia.

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

Be thankful we're not getting all the government we're paying for. - Will Rogers

RECIPE OF THE WEEK

The Star Cook Book – Yukon Chapter No 1 O.E.S. – 1942

Raisin Pie

1 ½ cups seedless raisins
¼ cup lemon juice
½ cup brown sugar
2 cups boiling water
2 tablespoons butter
2 tablespoons corn starch
2 tablespoons cold water
½ teaspoon salt

Soak raisins 1 hour and drain. Add lemon juice, salt, sugar, boiling water and butter. Boil 5 minutes. Thicken with corn starch which has been moistened with cold water. Turn into pastry lined pie plate and bake in a hot oven. - Kay Ameron

SIGN UP TO RECEIVE THE MOCCASIN TELEGRAPH

If you have received this copy of the Moccasin Telegraph from a friend and wish to sign up to receive future editions yourself, the criteria is that you **are or were a Yukoner**.

The goal of this project is to provide an opportunity for folks to reconnect.

There is an annual subscription fee of (\$20 - \$25. your call) for the Moccasin Telegraph.

An easy way to send a money transfer is via your internet banking. Log into you bank's website, find "Money Transfers" or "Email Money Transfers" or however your bank may list it, enter the amount, my email address of sherronjones@shaw.ca and enter a password ie: moctel and press "Send". It's that easy. Then please send me an email to confirm your payment.

– Sherron Jones sherronjones@shaw.ca

MOCCASIN TELEGRAPH

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