

## MOCCASIN TELEGRAPH –400<sup>th</sup> Edition – November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2014

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



Yesterday [Nov 11, 2014] we had an air search exercise. Bryan set the target for the aircraft to find. Attached photo of swans and ducks on Lake Laberge.

It was a beautiful day at -3C with no wind. Thought you might enjoy the photos of early winter in the Yukon.

Donna Clayson [bdclayson@northwestel.net](mailto:bdclayson@northwestel.net) (In Whitehorse)

### **COURTESY WHITEHORSE STAR – YUKON HISTORY SECTION -**

#### **First all-elected Yukon Territorial Council**

Yukon Council - Territorial Legislative Body Now in Session. The Dawson Daily News of the evening of July 15 contained the following:

By Whitehorse Star on **July 9, 1909**

Three o'clock this afternoon marked an epoch in the history of Yukon territory.



Photo by Whitehorse Star

A GROUP PHOTO of the first wholly elected Territorial Council (10 members plus Clerk of Council) taken on steps of Administration Bldg. on 5th ave. in Dawson. Probably taken July 15, 1909. Back row left to right: M. Landreville, Klondike; C.B. Burns, C of Council; F. McAlpine, Bonanza; G. Black, South Dawson; J. W. Murray, South Dawson. Middle row left to right: W.L. Phelps, Whitehorse; A.W. McLeod, Klondike; R. Lowe, Speaker, Whitehorse; R.L. Ashbaugh, Bonanza; C. Bossuyt, N. Dawson. Front row with dog: A.W.H. Smith, North Dawson. MacBride Museum Coll./Yukon Archives.

The first all-elective Yukon council assembled at that hour, (in Dawson) with all members present.

They are:

*Charles Bossuyt and A.W.H. Smith, for North Dawson;*

*James William Murphy and George Black, for South Dawson;*

*Maxime Landreville and Angus McLeod, for Klondike;*

*Roderick Leander Ashbaugh and Frank McAlpine, for Bonanza;*

*Robert Lowe and Willard L. Phelps, for Whitehorse.*

The councillors-elect from Whitehorse arrived this morning on the Selkirk. Mr. Lowe took quarters at the King Edward, and Mr. Phelps, who is accompanied by his wife, is at the Angelus.

The members-elect appeared before Commissioner Henderson at noon today, and qualified as councillors by taking the oath of office.

At the appointed hour this afternoon, the councillors filed into the council chamber and took their seats. Clement Bancroft Burns, territorial secretary, entered at the same time, and was seated at the secretary's desk. After all was quiet, Mr. Burns rose and said:

"Gentlemen of the Council: I have the honour to inform you that I am commanded by the commissioner to request that you do now proceed to the election of a speaker."

Maxime Landreville, member from Klondike, then rose and moved that Robert Lowe, member from Whitehorse and senior member of the council, be elected Speaker.

The motion was duly seconded, and Mr. Lowe was elected and led to the seat. The selection of Mr. Lowe was agreed upon by the Liberal councillors today before the council opened.

It is understood that Mr. Phelps will be the leader for the government, which duty will involve the presentation of bills favored by the government and the budget and such.

On accepting the seat, Mr. Lowe expressed his thanks to the council for the honor shown him. A short message was received from the commissioner, stating that an ordinance for the revision of the statutes, and one or two other matters are to be introduced, and that the budget is being prepared.

A telegram received here (in Whitehorse) later than the above told of the unanimous election of Mr. Phelps as leader of the party in the territorial assembly.

A Note on the Previous Council.

Previously the Council was composed of eleven men; five elected by the people of the north, five appointed by the federal government, with the Commissioner making up the eleventh.

Until this point the council had been convened by the Commissioner annually, sitting for a week to ten days; now there were to be twice-yearly sessions.

Regardless of the fact that the Council was now wholly elected, the Yukon did not have responsible government.

The Commissioner was not responsible to the Council, they could draft all legislation, but the Commissioner held the power of approval or referral of this legislation to the Governor in Council.

Still, a wholly elected council was seen by the people of the north as a great step forward. Now, at last, the council members at least drafting the legislation truly represented the population.

## YUKON NUGGET

A CKRW Yukon Nugget by Les McLaughlin

Courtesy Rolf & Marg Hougen [marg\\*hougens.com](http://marg*hougens.com) (In Whitehorse)

### Lloyd Ryder – Part 2



Lloyd & Marny Ryder, Commissioners Ball 1995.



Lloyd Ryder - Wigwam Harry - Rendezvous 1969.



The original Ryder Whitehorse business.

The Ryder family began their Yukon saga in 1900 when Roland Ryder left his home in Chilliwack, B.C. and headed for Dawson City, where he hoped to make his fortune since he had a wife and eleven children to support back home. When he reached Whitehorse, Roland had travelled far enough and so he stayed. He began a water delivery service in the town of three hundred people.

His wife decided to stay in Chilliwack, but three of Roland's boys followed him. In 1923, his son George carried on with the business, adding stove wood to the water delivery business. Through the years, George was an undertaker, fire chief, and on the city of Whitehorse's first elected city council.

George married his wife Edith in 1919 and had three sons, Lloyd, Gordon and Howard, and a daughter, Audrey. The eldest, Lloyd, who was born in 1922, helped his father with the delivery services. Lloyd recalled feeding the family's horses every morning where they were pastured near Main Street.

After graduating from high school, he trained as an aviation mechanic in Vancouver. In the early 1940s, he worked for White Pass Airways and took part in surveying the Aishihik road. He spent a brief period with the Canadian military in Holland, at the end of WWII.

When his father George died unexpectedly at age 59, Lloyd took over the fuel delivery business and ran it until it was sold to Les Murdoch in 1965.

Meanwhile, Lloyd had retained his keen interest in aviation which he had developed as a teenager. He began flying commercially in 1965 and continued in this career until he retired in 1994 at age 72. When Lloyd and several partners bought out Yukon Airways, he began flying full-time under the new company called Great Northern Airways. When this company folded in 1971, he spent the bulk of his flying career with Elvin's Equipment in Whitehorse.

In 1969, on one of his many medivac trips, Lloyd met a young nurse from Ontario, Marny Prentice, and they were married later that year. They had two children, John, born in 1971, and Jennifer, born in 1974.

The family loved the outdoors, and spent as much time as possible, camping out at the various Yukon lakes in their trailer and at their beloved cabin at McClintock Bay.

In 1995, Lloyd and Marny were honoured as Mr. and Mrs. Yukon. Lloyd was also active as a community volunteer for more than sixty years. He devoted countless hours to the Whitehorse Lions Club, CPR Yukon, Yukon Order of Pioneers, Yukon Transportation Museum, and the Boy Scouts of Canada. He received the Whitehorse Volunteer of the Year award in 2001.

Lloyd was a pioneer member of the Canadian Owner's and Pilot's Association and an inaugural member of the Yukon Flying Club. He was inducted into the Yukon Transportation Hall of Fame in 1997 and in 2007, he was honored with the presentation of the Order of Polaris Award.

Lloyd Ryder passed away peacefully, surrounded by family, at his home in Whitehorse on December 7, 2009, at the age of 87.

A CKRW Yukon Nugget by Les McLaughlin

## **A writing couple shared Berton House in the spring**

By Dan Davidson [uffish@northwestel.net](mailto:uffish@northwestel.net) (In Dawson)

Berton House is intended to be a retreat for one writer at a time, but it has happened that two writers have ended up there at the same time. A little over a decade ago it was the Spaldings,

Andrea and David. Most recently it was the last couple to inhabit the house, Alan Cumyn and Suzanne Evans.

The residency was Alan's, but there is space in the residence for two people to set up laptop computers and if only one of them actually needs to spread out research materials while the other simply searches for the material in his head, it can work out well, as it did in this case.

Alan and Suzanne learned about Berton House some years ago but set it aside in their minds to a time when they would no longer have kids living at home. Once Alan actually visited Dawson in 2012, and went back to Ottawa armed with photographs of the town and of the residence, courtesy of Tim Falconer, who was here at the time, there was a bit more pressure to apply.

They're so glad he did.

"This has been such a positive experience for both of us," Alan said in late June, a few days before their time was over.

"We love it," said Suzanne. "Alan just said, on our way downtown today, 'I don't think I'll close the bank account here.'"

Alan's project while in Dawson was a young adult novel with the improbable title *Hot Pterodactyl Boyfriend*. It will be a romantic fantasy of sorts set in a mundane high school where this teenage male pterodactyl swoops in one day and asks to enrol in classes. Where he came from will not be explained in any great detail, but lots will be said about the impact of him being there.

"My model for this," Alan said, "is Kafka, who never explained how that man transformed. He's just there."

Alan has previously written a number of young reader, young adult and adult novels, is a past chair of the Writers' Union of Canada, and teaches Writing for Children and Young Adults at the Vermont College of Fine Arts. He has been short listed for a number of prestigious awards, included the Governor General's Award, the Giller Prize, and the Trillium Prize.

Suzanne's project is a biography.

"It's about a Canadian woman from Manitoulin Island, Ethel Mulvany," she said, "who was a prisoner of war in Singapore during the Second World War, and while she was starving there, she wrote a cookbook. It was something of a survival tactic.

"The book is partly about the power of imagination. She was inspired by a poem by E.J. Pratt called 'The Depression Ends'"

In the poem the poet imagines a table in the sky laden with all the food they were still lacking in 1932 when he wrote it.

There are a lot of stories about prisoners or soldiers in dire straits describing wonderful meals to each other, and while it seems more like an exquisite form of self torture, Evans says it is such a consistent story that it must actually work.

After the war, she took her manuscript to a publisher and insisted on having it published. Then she used her profits to send food to England to ex-POWS who were still not getting enough to eat.

Evans previous book was also war related: Mothers of Heroes, Mothers of Martyrs: World War I and the Politics of Grief.

The couple was impressed by the changing seasons, having arrived in late winter and seen the place change from April through to June. They'd had a chance to travel to some of the gold fields and talk with all manner of people in the town: miners, artists, members of just about every walk of life in Dawson.

As with many Berton House residents they have expressed a strong desire to return and see some of Dawson's other seasons.



Alan Cumyn and Suzanne Evans greatly enjoyed their time at Berton House and hope to come back to Dawson.

Photo courtesy Dan Davidson [uffish@northwestel.net](mailto:uffish@northwestel.net) (In Dawson)

## **Dawson nursing station being demolished**

By Dan Davidson [uffish@northwestel.net](mailto:uffish@northwestel.net) (In Dawson)

The decommissioned Dawson nursing station is being demolished to make way for the planned replacement for McDonald Lodge on that site. The building has been vacant since the new Dawson City Community Hospital and Health Services Facility opened for business in December 2013, but it took a while to decide just what to do with it.

A typical Dawson City solution would have been to figure out how the various portions of the building could be recycled and where they might be located to await that eventuality. Such was the fate of the old Robert Service School in 1989, when the segments of the building were moved and repurposed in half a dozen locations around town, including what was at that time a major expansion of the Westmark Hotel.

The preferred territorial government solution, as demonstrated with the Kobo Apartment building a year or so ago, is to demolish the building and truck the pieces out to the Quigley Landfill.

Public Works Superintendent Norm Carlson commented on the process in a recent report to town council.

“The demolition of the old Nursing Station is proceeding and we are accepting the waste at the landfill ... provided it is segregated as much as possible. The contractor doing the demolition is responsible to segregate the waste and compact and cover all that is to be landfilled.”

Carlson also noted that the landfill has a projected lifespan of just two years unless its boundaries are expanded before that time expires.

The Dawson City Health Centre facility was originally constructed in 1969 as a hospital by the Federal Government. Since that time the facility had undergone renovations, expansions, several service and name changes, including a transition from a federal to a territorial facility, and ended its operating life as a nursing station called the Dawson City Health Centre. Along the way it was downgraded from what used to be called a “cottage hospital” status to a nursing station with an attached medical clinic.

By the mid 1980s local agitation for a replacement for the facility was a regular feature of municipal and territorial election campaigns, even before the health care transfer to the territory took place. After the transfer one set of plans for a “multi-level health care facility” was prepared and rejected when they met with general disapproval.

It was 2000 before a report by Options Consulting prepared a Functional Program for the redevelopment of the health centre, McDonald Lodge and Dawson Ambulance Service and 2009 before the Yukon Hospital Corporation and the Yukon Government decided how they were going to jointly proceed with the project.

The new hospital construction was fraught with difficulties and ran over budget as well as being a couple of years late being finished. The federal Auditor General was very critical of the planning and consultation that went into the project.

The demolition has had to deal with problems related to asbestos and other hazardous materials found in the building. A detailed work plan approved by Occupational Health and Safety branch was put in place to deal with these materials, which will also end up in the landfill.



Rear view of the demolition under way.  
Photo courtesy Dan Davidson [uffish@northwestel.net](mailto:uffish@northwestel.net) (In Dawson)

## **From Whitehorse to Circle by York Boat**

By Dan Davidson [uffish@northwestel.net](mailto:uffish@northwestel.net) (In Dawson)

Joachim Kreuzer (aka “Red Badger”) and Manfred Schroeter of Germany pulled up alongside the Dawson Dyke on July 13, finally completing a significant part of a river trip they had tried to undertake the year before.

Nasty weather on Lake Laberge in July of 2013 scuttled their first attempt to sail their home made, scaled down York Boat down the Yukon River, delaying completion of a trip they had been planning for two years at that point.

“The inspiration for me,” said Red Badger, “is that I’m a member of the Northwest company in Germany.”

Schroeter, he said, had been going to do a river trip by canoe, but Kreuzer persuaded him that they could build and use the York Boat instead, dress in period garb and make the trip into a film.

The original York Boats used by the Northwest Company were 14 metres long and carried a crew of six to eight men. The Confiance (Confidence), at 7.85 m, is a tight fit for the two German voyageurs and all their gear.

They are members of an historical re-enactment group whose goal is to recreate historical events and film them. According to Kreuzer the inability to film after their equipment was damaged was the main reason for calling off the 2013 trek.

This year they started out on June 27, a few days after the Yukon River Quest, and were fortunate in that the turbulence which had plagued the paddlers had died down by the time they launched. On their second day they had headwinds that forced them to row hard all day, but on the third day they were able to use their sail and made good time.

That wasn't the case for most of the trip.

"The wind come on us and we had to row mostly," Kreuzer said. "It is a square sail and it is only possible if you have the back wind. No matter which way the river goes, the wind it is always on the nose for us. So if we don't row we make circles in the water."

They were 17 days out of Whitehorse but quite happy with their progress, having made 76 km rowing against the wind the day before they arrived in Dawson.

Since they had a time limit on their trip, they were looking to stay in Dawson for a couple of days and then push on either to Eagle or Circle, at which ever place they could catch a ride back to Whitehorse.

Schroeter needed to be home in Germany by August 3, and this wasn't the sort of trip in the sort of boat that Kreuzer could continue by himself.

The boat might be left behind if they are unable to find someone to sponsor getting in back to Germany.

"We have not the money for that," he said.

In Dawson they were offered a cabin at the Triple J Hotel by owner Brad Whitelaw and were pleased to spend some time with Driftwood Holly and his family, as well as having the opportunity to meet Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in elder Percy Henry and hear some of his stories.

On July 23 the pair reached Eagle and two days later were in Circle, where they ended their river trip. According to their Facebook page (New Historical Adventure) they arrived back in Frankfurt on August 1.

On their arrival in Circle, after several days of rain, they were "wet like beavers" as it "poured as from buckets." They were "overjoyed and need a long time to process the many impressions (of the trip)."



Confidence - The pair had the confidence that they could make the trip and so they named their boat that, choosing to use the French word as most of the voyageurs were French.

Photo courtesy Dan Davidson [uffish@northwestel.net](mailto:uffish@northwestel.net) (In Dawson)



York Boat Voyagers - Joachim Kreuzer (aka "Red Badger") and Manfred Schroeter

Photo courtesy Dan Davidson [uffish@northwestel.net](mailto:uffish@northwestel.net) (In Dawson)

## **Celebrating 118 years since the discovery of gold**

By Dan Davidson [uffish@northwestel.net](mailto:uffish@northwestel.net) (In Dawson)

There were mammoths waiting at the Visitor Information Centre when the wail of the visiting piper alerted the crowd that the Discovery Days parade was about to begin at noon on August 16.

The morning had begun chilly and damp, but the sun dispersed the clouds about an hour before the parade and gave the town a glorious sunny Saturday for a change this summer.

As the piper and the members of the Yukon Order of Pioneers, along with the RCMP and pickup truck float from the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, marched past the crowd at the corner of King and Front streets, the prehistoric pachyderms slipped into the parade. As they moved out into the open, all the dogs on Front Street went nuts, to the delight of the watching crowd.

The piper hadn't set them off, but the sudden appearance of these ungainly creatures was too much for them.

The parade was the usual mix of fire trucks, colourful floats, a horde of decorated bicycles and various sorts of dignitaries. Mayor Wayne Potoroka and Deputy Chief Jay Farr drove Dawson's own Rendezvous Queen Liz and Miss Congeniality. The Best in Snow couple from Thaw di Graw, Louis Gerberding and Catherine Vulpes, rode high in the back of one of the fire trucks.

Premier Darrell Pasloski and his wife, Tammie, walked the parade, along with MP Ryan Leef.

Candy littered the streets as the parade passed by, and some of the drivers were a little worried that the dedicated candy collectors weren't watching the traffic quite carefully enough.

The parade wound down King Street, south on Front, up Princess and south again on Fifth Avenue to end at the Dawson City Museum, where there was much picture taking and a number of speeches before the parade and yard awards were handed out.

The crowd was actually a bit thin at the Museum, as the Riverside Arts Festival had a clown show scheduled to start right after the parade and the area about the Waterfront Gazebo was packed. Still, the line-up for smokies, desert and drinks didn't seem to be much shorter than usual.

City of Dawson Recreation Director Lana Welchman introduced the speakers for the formal portion of the events.

MP Ryan Leef was first to the microphone:

“What a wonderful parade this was this morning, It was great walking in with the Premier and the Mayor. It's great to see all the Yukon Order of Pioneers out here... Everybody is marking Discovery Days here the way it should be done. The discovery of gold in our territory isn't just important for Dawson City but for the entire Yukon so it's a great opportunity to reflect on our history today. It's an absolute honour to be here and join you in the celebrations.”

He said he absolutely agreed with the parade watcher who had called out “welcome to the center of the universe.”

“It certainly is an honour and exciting this year to help celebrate Discovery Days,” said Premier Pasloski. “It’s humbling to be here with all the Yukon Order of Pioneers and what they have meant to this territory from the beginning. Discovery Days is really about this part of Yukon and what it has contributed to the entire history of our whole territory.”

Pasloski thanked all the volunteers that were making the day happen and welcomed all those who were visitors to the territory on this day.

Mayor Wayne Potoroka had the longest speech, outlining some of the history of the Gold Rush, its seminal influence in ending the late 19th century’s depression and, of course its role in the creation of the territory itself, which would otherwise have remained part of the NWT.

“If you live here you probably know this story,” he began. “If you don’t it’s worth hearing.”

The discovery of gold on what was then Rabbit Creek on August 16, 1898 was “the dime on which so many histories turned,” Potoroka said.

The impact on North America itself is unquestionable and, while it is not the largest of what author George Fetherling has termed the Gold Crusades of the 19th century, it was, without a doubt, the best documented in words, in photographs and even in moving pictures.

As historian Ken Coates recently told a Dawson audience, Klondike has become the baseline against which other gold rushes are measured.

“It inspired artists from around the planet,” Potoroka said, “and posed one more challenge for the First Nations people who have faced a host of them in the thousands and thousands of years they had occupied this land. It was an unprecedented collision of people and traditions.

“Today the Klondike is still known world wide for the gold rush that led so many people for a brief burst of time. We celebrate it, as Dawsonites, as the event that brought, and continues to bring, so many of us together in this incredible place. While Discovery Days is certainly a celebration of the initial gold discovery, and our rich, gold mining heritage, it is also a celebration of our diverse and welcoming Klondike culture that has taken root over the past 118 years and a reminder of the good things that can happen when we get together and get along.”

Potoroka and Welchman handed out the various categories of parade awards and the mayor was joined by Suzanne Saito to announce the garden and property awards.

Following lunch the crowd dispersed, many heading to the waterfront park where the horticultural fair and Riverside Arts Festival were under way and would continue for another day.



Belching exhaust.jpg – This truck is ready for the mud bog  
Photo courtesy Dan Davidson [uffish@northwestel.net](mailto:uffish@northwestel.net) (In Dawson)



Gertie and her Girls always ride in this venerable fire truck.  
Photo courtesy Dan Davidson [uffish@northwestel.net](mailto:uffish@northwestel.net) (In Dawson)  
*[Count the fire trucks !! ]*



Mammoths caused a canine stir on Front Street  
Photo courtesy Dan Davidson [uffish@northwestel.net](mailto:uffish@northwestel.net) (In Dawson)



The parade approaches on Firth Avenue  
Photo courtesy Dan Davidson [uffish@northwestel.net](mailto:uffish@northwestel.net) (In Dawson)



The Pioneer Women of the Yukon  
Myrna (Hadley) Butterworth and Janet Leary.  
Photo courtesy Dan Davidson [uffish@northwestel.net](mailto:uffish@northwestel.net) (In Dawson)



Spider-man joined the bicycle parade.  
Photo courtesy Dan Davidson [uffish@northwestel.net](mailto:uffish@northwestel.net) (In Dawson)

## **The Beaver Creek RV Park and Hotel is open for business**

By Dan Davidson [uffish@northwestel.net](mailto:uffish@northwestel.net) (In Dawson)

Sitting in the office of the Beaver Creek RV Park, with Beat Ledergerber and his wife Jyl Wingert, it's easy to reflect on the many changes that have occurred in Beaver Creek since the three years that my wife and I spent here in the late 1970s. For one thing, we're sitting in what used to be the Canada Customs depot, which used to be located directly across the road from where it now sits. New comers to town had to clear Customs to get gas until the agents got to know what your car looked like.

The border station is now located just outside town on the way to Alaska, but the staff still live in town. There are more of them, and they have some impressive looking homes in a cul de sac located behind the ones they used to live in.

The biggest change in this village of around 100 people isn't the brand new \$3.15 million fire and EMS station that is currently under construction after some difficulties with the original tendering.

No, the biggest change is that Holland/America, whose 174 room Westmark Inn complex came close to doubling the population of the town every summer for decades, is gone. The sleek motor coaches no longer travel the north Alaska Highway, and hotel operations have ended in both Beaver Creek and Tok, Alaska.

Beaver Creek is a little better off than Tok, though. The Tok Westmark is just collecting road dust at the junction. The Beaver Creek complex has been sold to Ledergerber and Wingert and they are slowly adjusting the place to a size they can use.

Beat Ledergerber, who arrived in Canada's Most Westerly Community in 1961, has run a sawmill and a garage in his time, and started doing work on the buildings that eventually became the Alas/kon Border Lodge and then the Westmark Lodge back as far as when the original building was privately owned by Clyde and Helen Wann. His sawmill supplied much of the lumber that built the rest of the buildings in the compound. He was on-call for maintenance and other issues for years through a couple of different owners and was the full time property manager after 1982.

"'Try it for a summer,' they said to me. 'We'll pay you year 'round' and they made me a good deal," he recalls.

Jyl Wingert arrived in 2001 and held a variety of administrative positions in the hotel for a number of years, including front desk and controller. When she and Ledergerber got together the senior management put her in charge of the RV park portion of the operation and she ran that for the last eight years.

She says they got the complex's death sentence from the Princess Tours people running the hotel side of the operation on April 19, 2003. Both of them agree that they had seen it coming for a while. At its peak the lodge had employed over 80 people, housing them in a two story motel-like complex at the east end of the compound. In recent years the staff complement had declined to 45 or 50 and the budget for maintenance and upgrading had been thinner.

“We were open then,” Beat recalls. “We were sitting in the main dining room and the guy (from Princess Tours) said ‘I guess you know now.’ We said ‘Know what?’ and he said, ‘We’re gonna close the place down – here and Tok.’”

That meant everything, including the excellent “Rendezvous” road show in the dinner theatre roundhouse at the back of the compound.

“Nobody could believe it in the town here and along the highway,” he said, recalling the shock of the announcement.

The company seemed to be undecided about what to do with the property and so Beat and Jyl put in a bid and were accepted. They actually would have preferred to buy just the RV park at the time, but the company wouldn’t split up the property. They had a good combination of practical and administrative experience with the operation. It took some time to finalize the deal and it wasn’t really all in place until June of this year, but the couple got the go ahead to begin operations in May, even before the final papers were signed.

The new owners knew they needed that early part of the season to have a good year.

“That’s when the people come up to Alaska from the south,” Beat said. “This is the natural first stop along the way.”

That meant there was no hope of getting any advertising out for this year, but that was okay because there was some work to be done. The RV park was able to run smoothly as soon as the season opened, but there was work to be done at the rest of the compound. The entire facility had been plumbed to run in a circuit. In order to open just some parts of it Beat had to rework the water and sewer arrangements.

This summer the 65 room building Westmark had called the Bear’s Den was partially open, with 32 rooms available for the travelling public. Over time the couple hope to attract enough customers to fill the entire building and eventually the main lodge, though they aren’t sure about reviving the restaurant.

“We knew our first year (without advance advertising) was going to be rough,” Jyl said. “It’s all been word of mouth, but it’s been better than we expected. We’re in good shape.”

The RV park is the main moneymaker at the moment, offering some knick-knacks, gasoline and some supplies.

The road actually has helped our business this year,” she adds, “because they’re tired after that they are just ready to stop at the first place they see, and that’s us.”

Two bus tours have stopped, both from companies that were accustomed to stopping there in the past. The African Children’s Choir filled some rooms just a few days before this interview.

“We’ve had a lot of interest from ones that used to stay with us,” Jyl said, “that find going from Whitehorse to Tok in one day is just too far for comfort.”

“This is beautiful,” Beat said. “Between Fairbanks and Whitehorse this is the middle and that’s what they like.”

They have their promotional material ready for next year and are optimistic about their future.



Beaver Creek RV Park & Motel.  
The main building for the RV park used to be the Customs Post.  
Photo courtesy Dan Davidson [uffish@northwestel.net](mailto:uffish@northwestel.net) (In Dawson)



Beaver Creek Motel old main lodge. This was the main lodge and office of the former Westmark Inn.

Photo courtesy Dan Davidson [uffish@northwestel.net](mailto:uffish@northwestel.net) (In Dawson)



The Bear's Den. The new owners have 32 rooms open in the 65 room building.  
Photo courtesy Dan Davidson [uffish@northwestel.net](mailto:uffish@northwestel.net) (In Dawson)



The RV Park.  
Photo courtesy Dan Davidson [uffish@northwestel.net](mailto:uffish@northwestel.net) (In Dawson)

**Michael Bruce Laforet (July 10, 1940 - October 18, 2014) "Black Mike"** has exited the Yukon for the final time, after a prolonged and valiant battle against C.O.P.D. and emphysema.

He first came to the Yukon in May of 1966, with partner Jim Winberg, to prospect for gold in the Tombstone Mountains. This was a major departure from his previous history, where he had made his mark in Olympic-style wrestling, the martial arts and as a Military Policeman. He had also succeeded in the business of advertising, with newspapers, radio, and national ad agencies.

Old-timers may remember Mike from seven years as the bouncer at the old Whitehorse Inn, working with "The Canucks." Those were different and exciting times, but he could brag that he never started a fight, and never lost one.

He also made his mark, for six years, with a weekly column, "The Sourdough Sage" in the Yukon News, as well as a daily morning feature on CBC Northern Service. He then left the Yukon for two years to accept a position as Chairman of the Communications Department for a prominent Ontario college.

Back in the Yukon, Mike began a new career when he opened "Black Mike's Gold Mines" on a promising property 20 miles south of Whitehorse.

For 15 years, he entertained and educated Yukon visitors about the importance and history of Yukon placer mining. During this time, he was called on by fellow placer miners to champion their fight against the bureaucracy. This led to the biweekly newspaper, "The Placer Mining Times," where Mike was both editor and publisher.

When he married a pretty Swedish girl on August 17, 1980, the event was called the "Social Event of the Season" by local media. Black Mike had been divorced since 1985, and had long ago, lost touch with family members, once based in Brampton, Ontario.

Mike was especially proud of his 30-year membership in Whitehorse Toastmasters, where he excelled at training newcomers in the areas of "Using Humor in Public Speaking," and in the effective evaluation techniques.

In recent years, Mike was featured in the local media, now and then. After two seasons on the Whitehorse Trolley, telling his jokes and sharing our history, Mike made news. Sometimes he would write biting and funny Letters to the Editor, defending the rights of the placer miners against excessive bureaucracy.

He told friends he had once been the emcee at a totally nude beach wedding, and he noted, "Boy, you could sure tell who the Best Man was."

As a tough old guy, he wasn't afraid of death. He kept busy every day, creating Water Licenses and Y.E.S.A.B. applications for old placer mining buddies.

His long-time friend, Jim Robb, defines him as "definitely one of our colourful five-percent."

The Yukon is a somewhat lesser place today, as the likes of "Black Mike" Laforet will be missed.



Photo courtesy Whitehorse Star

**LATE ICON REMEMBERED** – Alex Van Bibber celebrates his 98th birthday last April at the 98 Hotel. Here, he cheers the crowd after they sang ‘Happy Birthday.’

### **‘Alex Van Bibber enriched the lives of our nation’**

By Christopher Reynolds on November 26, 2014

Fourteen years ago, Alex Van Bibber sat alone on a gravel bar in the northern Mackenzie Mountains, enduring a blistering snowstorm.

At 84 years old, the legendary Yukon outfitter, trapper and educator wasn’t letting age or the elements deter him from meeting up with a fellow hunter in the remote reaches of the Northwest Territories.

“I had dropped him off from an airplane,” Kelly Hougen, his long-time trapping partner and best friend, recalled during an interview this morning.

“He didn’t have all his gear yet, and a front came through that was just nasty, snowing and blowing.”

Worried, Hougen flew back through the storm to check up on the minimally equipped Van Bibber.

“He had a fire going, and basically scolded me for coming to get him. That was the kind of guy he was.”

Van Bibber, who continued to hunt and teach for the next decade-and-a-half, died early this morning [Wednesday, Nov. 26, 2014] at Foothills Medical Centre in Calgary.

He was 98.

Hougen first met him as a teenager 42 years ago. He was hired on as a horse wrangler at the Ruby Range ranch, where Van Bibber was chief guide.

“We worked together that summer, and we’ve been the best of friends ever since,” Hougen told the Star.

He would go on to marry Van Bibber’s granddaughter, Heather, in a wedding where the backwoods master would serve as best man.

“He was guiding hunters well into his 70s. And most of the younger fellows had a heck of a time keeping up with him,” Hougen recalled.

“He just never stopped, didn’t need much sleep, tough as nails. Strong.

“The Yukon without Alex is like a day without sunshine,” Hougen said from Calgary, where he spoke with Van Bibber at his hospital bed hours before he died. “It’s been sunny since I got here (last week), and the day Alex passed away, it got overcast.”

Van Bibber, whose storytelling skills were as famed as his good humour, began to pass on his traditional knowledge more formally as chief trapping instructor with the Yukon government in 1976, though he’d already been doing it in the bush for 60 years — even guiding then-U.S. senator Robert Kennedy up the Yukon’s Mount Kennedy in 1965 and presenting him with a gold sheep-head necktie.

“He basically has been the face and the name behind trapper training for at least the past 30, 35 years,” said Harvey Jessup, a close friend and member of the Yukon Fish and Wildlife Management Board.

Van Bibber, who earned the Order of Canada in 1992 for his role as an instructor and educator, would go on to co-ordinate curriculum development for the board.

He also founded the summer kids camp with Hougen at the Fish and Game Association and became active with the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations and schools in Whitehorse.

Jessup recalled going with Van Bibber to a community hall in a village on the Black River in Alaska, south of Old Crow near the border, for a trapping workshop in the mid-1990s.

“Alex brought out his great 330 Conibear trap, and they all took a step back. And he set the trap and they take a further step back. His arms are waving and it caught him,” Jessup said.

“And when that trap hit, it got Alex’s watch, and it just exploded, and the whole place lets out a gasp and jumps up and chairs are falling over.

“He says, ‘Now what are you gonna do — you’re caught in your own trap.’ He just took it in stride. It was intentional, and he wanted you to know there’s no need to be afraid of the trap,” Jessup said.

“I’ve been all over north-western Canada, and I’ve never ever seen anybody do that.”

Van Bibber was 77 at the time.

Born on the banks of the Pelly River on April 4, 1916, Van Bibber was one of 14 siblings raised in a Champagne and Aishihik First Nations family.

From a young age, he and his siblings would travel by homemade raft along the Pelly River to Dawson City for seasonal schooling, ending his formal education in Grade 5.

“His dad would say, ‘Alex, if the raft starts to sink, pull onto the shore and put another dry log under it,” said Commissioner Doug Phillips, who has known Van Bibber as long as he can remember.

“He was 13 years old when he did that.”

The commissioner said he recalled reading stories as a young boy in the Star of Alex Van Bibber “as one of the best wilderness guides in the world for hunting.”

Years later, Phillips went looking for big game with Van Bibber on multiple trips.

He recalled a bison-hunting excursion in the 1980s, “and he was as much an active person in the camp as anyone, cutting the wood and butchering the meat.

“And at night, when we were sitting around the table and the rum came out in the cabin, that would open up Alex’s stories. And there was one after the other, and Alex would just mesmerize you,” he said.

“Sometimes I don’t even think he knew he was passing on this really valuable information. And he loved to laugh,” Phillips added.

Starting his professional hunting and guiding career in 1943, Van Bibber left the gold dredges of Dawson in 1943 to tread the territory for six decades as a renowned outfitter.

For 20 years, he operated his own guiding territory with his wife, Sue, also born and raised in the bush.

Renowned Yukon artist Jim Robb worked with Van Bibber on a crew in 1956 to locate the ideal site for the future Whitehorse Rapids Dam, built two years later.

Van Bibber was the straw boss, transporting and co-ordinating the labourers, while Robb — then in his 20s — wielded a shovel.

“I’d dig a hole and place some dynamite and they could tell by the explosions how solid the bedrock was,” he told the Star.

“He was a great guy and an interesting person to talk to,” said Robb — high praise from a man famed for documenting the so-called “Colourful Five-percent.”

“He told us a story one time about how he just saw something move, like snow move, and it was a grizzly getting ready to charge him,” Robb recalled.

“Very calmly, he just loaded up the gun, it got up close to him — the way he tells it was much more interesting — and he did what he had to do.”

Van Bibber was active at the fish and game association through last summer, said Gord Zealand, the executive director.

For decades, he led children on overnight hikes to his mountain cabin, “and it was never the same, there was no standard program that he followed,” Zealand said.

“He passed on his knowledge of the outdoors and things to do and not to do in the wilderness ... and when you ask the kids what stood out for them, it’s always the times with Alex that were the real special times — every one of them said that,” Zealand added.

“They don’t build them like that guy anymore.”

MP Ryan Leef recalled working with Van Bibber as a conservation officer.

“It just came so naturally to him, his skill and his knowledge and his advice to people. He had a story for every example he gave, and he kept people entertained and captivated,” Leef said.

“He saw so many changes in this world, and was an element of a lot of that change in our territory. Motor vehicles coming through our territory for the first time, to the change from horse-drawn ways to trains, to the disappearance of the paddle wheelers and now Netflix and Youtube.

“It’s going to take a lifetime of ours just to talk about his. He absolutely enriched the lives of Yukoners,” Leef said.

“Alex Van Bibber enriched the lives of our nation. He was an outstanding Canadian. Our thoughts and prayers are with his family.”

Over the years, he was formally recognized with awards including the Order of Canada in 1992, the Yukon Fish and Game Association Sportsman of the Year Award in 1995, and the Canadian Wildlife Federation Roland Michener Award 1996.

Van Bibber, weakened by pneumonia and influenza in his final days, died surrounded by the nearly 30 friends and family members who had flown down from the Yukon to be with him.

He is survived by four of his 13 siblings, as well as a daughter and numerous grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

He was predeceased by Sue, who passed away four years ago at age 99, as well as two children.

## **Alex Van Bibber, an incredible Yukon trapper, just may have been the toughest man in Canada**

National Post  
Tristin Hopper  
Friday, Nov. 28, 2014



Alex Van Bibber in 2010. The trapper, who died this week at 98, often told school students, “I’ve been trapping since I could bend over and put my snowshoes on, and I’ll be trapping until I can’t bend over and put the snowshoes on.” Ian Stewart/Yukon News

Alex Van Bibber was probably the toughest man in Canada.

He was born under a spruce tree and he went to school at age 13 by piloting a log raft down the Yukon River.

At the age of 82, he dislocated his arm after rolling his ATV, and hiked three miles to catch a ride to the hospital. At 93, he walked five miles through thick snow after his snowmobile broke down.

One time, already well into old age, the veteran trapper was demonstrating a powerful new steel trap to a classroom of his peers when it suddenly slammed shut on his wrist, shattering his watch and sending pain shooting up his arm.

Without blinking or missing a beat, the trapper turned back to the stunned class and said “Now what are you going to do? You’re caught in your own trap. You have to get out because you can’t go home because your wife will laugh at you.”

“He comes from a generation the likes of which we’re likely never going to see again,” said friend Harvey Jessup.



Alex Van Bibber at his 98th birthday party. Assembly of First Nations/Facebook

On Wednesday, Mr. Van Bibber died surrounded by family at a Calgary hospital. He was 98, and only weeks before — despite suffering from congestive heart failure and the bruises of a nasty fall — the member of the Champagne and Aishihik First Nations had still been running his trap line.

This week, aboriginal and non-aboriginal leaders alike praised the passing of an icon of self-reliance.

“He’s completely at home in the bush, if you gave him a gun and some matches, he’d survive,” said Chris Widrig, a Yukon outfitter who married into the Van Bibber family.

“If you were in dire straits out in the middle of nowhere, you’d definitely want Alex with you,” said Yukon Senator Dan Lang.

“His generation was a true example of a generation that says ‘what can we do for the government’ not ‘what can the government do for me.’”

In a lengthy statement, Northwest Territories Premier Bob McLeod called Mr. Van Bibber a symbol of “what the North once was and what we hope it will continue to be, a place where, with hard work and self-sufficiency, a man can make his mark.”



Alex Van Bibber on a snowmobile in February 2014.  
He welcomed the arrival of mechanized transport and aboriginal self-government to the Yukon.  
Family photo

Born in 1916, Mr. Van Bibber was a child of the Klondike Gold Rush.

In 1898, his father, Ira, had joined the thousands of Americans hiking the Chilkoot Trail to the Yukon goldfields. After meeting Eliza, a Northern Tutchone woman, the couple had 14 children on a Pelly River homestead where winter temperatures regularly dipped to -60 C.

“It’s a lot warmer now than it used to be, you don’t have the cold snaps we used to,” he said in a 2011 interview.



Alex Van Bibber at the Dawson City Fur Show where he was the chief judge since the show's inception. Family photo

By his early teens, Mr. Van Bibber was being sent out by his father to pick up flour and sugar for his mother — a days long expedition that involved tracking and shooting a wild sheep, snowshoeing to the nearest community to sell the meat and then shipping the groceries home on a train.

In the decades since, Mr. Van Bibber has played a hand in almost every major event in Yukon history.

He became one of the first Canadian Rangers in 1947, he pioneered the Yukon’s robust outfitting industry, he led the humane shift from leg-hold traps to full-body traps and he worked eight

summers on a gold dredge, the building-sized monsters that chewed up Klondike streams for gold dust.



Private Alex Van Bibber on his first day in uniform, 1944. TheMemoryProject

At Whitehorse’s MacBride Museum, one of the premier artifacts is an albino moose Mr. Van Bibber shot in 1968.

When the U.S. Army pushed through the territory to counteract a Japanese invasion of Alaska, Mr. Van Bibber was on a dogsled to survey a pipeline intended to provide fuel to American trucks and planes.

For the last months of the war, he was in a Canadian Army uniform, but never saw action because of a mumps quarantine.

When a grief-stricken Robert F. Kennedy came North to climb a Yukon mountain named for his just assassinated brother, Mr. Van Bibber was hired as one of the expedition guides.

In 1963, when plane crash survivors Helen Klaben and Ralph Flores were famously rescued after spending 47 days in the Yukon wilderness, Mr. Van Bibber was sent to the crash site to verify their story.

And, like many Northern elders, Mr. Van Bibber survived an air crash of his own while performing a survey for the Canadian water resources department. The least injured of three aboard the plane, he cared for the other two while waiting for help to arrive.

“Alex Van Bibber is one of the threads that ties together almost a century of Yukon history,” said Northern historian Kenneth Coates, calling him a First Nations leader who “was worried greatly by the loss of traditional skills among the young people.”

Mr. Van Bibber's nine decades saw the welcome arrival of mechanized transport and aboriginal self-government to the territory, but also the growth of alcoholism and welfare dependence — both of which irked the uncompromisingly independent old trapper.



Alex Van Bibber, right, and friend Harvey Jessup on a lake near Van Bibber's trapping cabin.  
Family photo

“There’s so many in these towns and villages now they’re off onto alcohol and drugs, wandering from one bar to another - bumming money,” Mr. Van Bibber told a 2007 documentary.  
“If you can’t get a job you can at least set a trap.”

It’s part of why one of his most lasting legacies was his nearly 40 years as the territory’s leading trapping instructor. Only weeks before his death, the 98-year-old was still visiting Yukon schools teaching lessons on the ways of the bush.

As he often told students, “I’ve been trapping since I could bend over and put my snowshoes on, and I’ll be trapping until I can’t bend over and put the snowshoes on.”

National Post



Merry Christmas everyone !!  
Edward and Gillian "Santa and Mrs Claus"  
Photo courtesy Gillian Campbell [gillianklondikekate@shaw.ca](mailto:gillianklondikekate@shaw.ca) (In Burnaby BC)

## **OBIT**

### **A fond farewell to Alex Van Bibber.**



**Alex Van Bibber died Nov 25 2014, in Calgary, at age 98. Rest in Peace Alex.**  
(See Whitehorse Star and National Post Articles in this MocTel)



**Clifton (Peter) Kelly**  
**October 18, 1952 - November 21, 2014**

With his family by his side, Peter passed after a courageous battle with cancer.

Born in Pembroke, Ontario, Peter came to the Yukon with his family at the age of 2. At the age of 17, Peter joined the Army and was posted to the PPCLI out of Calgary.

After his service in the army, Peter returned to Whitehorse to pursue further education. Peter then worked for his two brothers at K&R Electric, which led him into his own business called P&G Electric.

After a few years of running his own business, Peter decided to pursue his true dream of becoming a helicopter pilot. He took his training with Trans North Turbo Air Ltd and received his pilot's license.

In 1978 he met his wife Donna and in 1990 their son Michael was born.

Peter continued to work as a helicopter pilot until 2000. His love of computers lead him to a new job as a system tech for the Yukon Government, where he worked for the last 10 yrs.

Peter had many interests and hobbies. One of his favourite past times that he was passionate about was building and flying remote controlled planes.

Peter will be loved and forever remembered by his wife Donna, son Michael, brother Brian Kelly and sisters Linda Adams (Ed) and Debbie Kelly, as well as in-laws Sheila Murphy, Kevin Murphy, Lori Richardson (Greg), Kerry Murphy and many nieces and nephews.

Peter was predeceased by his parents Frances & Cliff Kelly and brother Richard Rotondo.

Peter will also be greatly missed by his best friend, the family dog Shelby.



**Clifton (Peter) Kelly**

### **Sunset's Light**

The long, long day is slowly ending  
And now surely I can take my rest  
To fill my soul with peace  
From the sun's gentle rays at their best.

Gently her heat warms the breezes  
As with a baby's touch they caress  
And with the last fiery warmth from her birth  
Each of us she does willingly bless.

The world appears different now  
As peacefully it unwinds;  
All the problems of our past  
Seem no longer able to bind.

In love she touches the greenery  
With a last sparkling kiss  
And for one brief final moment her rays  
Dance on the water, and our hearts know bliss.

The shadows slowly lengthen  
As her light we more dimly see  
And with one final blazing statement  
Behind the pine-treed mountain she flees.

Debbie Kelly

## **QUOTE OF THE WEEK**

*However difficult life may seem, there is always something you can do and succeed at.*  
- *Stephen Hawking*

## **RECIPE OF THE WEEK**

### **Zucchini Carrot Cake**

Looks just like a carrot cake but this zucchini carrot cake recipe has finely grated zucchini hiding inside. Zucchini, like carrot is very moist when baked so makes a wonderful ingredient in a cake.

3 eggs  
1 1/4 cups vegetable oil  
1 1/2 cups granulated sugar  
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract  
2 cups sifted all-purpose flour  
1/4 teaspoon baking powder  
2 teaspoons baking soda  
2 teaspoons cinnamon  
1 teaspoon allspice  
1 teaspoon salt  
1 cups grated, peeled zucchini  
2 medium carrots, grated

### **Cream Cheese Frosting**

1 package (225 g) brick cream cheese, at room temperature  
1/4 cup butter, at room temperature  
3 cups confectioners' sugar, sifted  
1 teaspoon pure vanilla extract  
1 teaspoon lemon juice

**Garnish**

1/4 cup shredded coconut

**Directions**

Preheat the oven to 375 degrees F.

Line a 9x13 inch baking pan with parchment paper, then grease with butter.

Peel the carrots and zucchini and either use a food processor to grate them or a hand grater.

In a mixing bowl, using an electric mixer, beat the eggs lightly.

Beat in the oil, sugar and vanilla.

In another bowl, stir together the flour, baking powder, baking soda, cinnamon, allspice and salt.

Slowly add the dry ingredients to the wet, beating in as you add.

Stir in the grated zucchini and carrots by hand to combine.

Pour into the prepared baking pan and place into the preheated oven.

Bake for 40-45 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in the center comes out clean.

Remove to a wire rack and let cool for 20 minutes, then invert the cake onto the rack, peel off the parchment paper and turn back over, right side up.

When completely cool, frost with cream cheese frosting.

**Cream Cheese Frosting**

In a mixing bowl, with electric beaters, beat the cream cheese and butter until smooth.

Add half of the confectioners' sugar and beat until smooth.

Beat in the vanilla and lemon juice and then beat in the remaining confectioners' sugar until light and fluffy.

**DATES TO REMEMBER**



**Vancouver Yukoners' Association  
87th Annual Reunion  
April 10-12, 2015**



**Banquet - Saturday, April 11, 2015**

**River Rock Casino/Resort – Whistler Ballroom  
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**Banquet Reception:** Ballroom Foyer No-Host Bar 5pm – 6pm  
**Welcome followed by Dinner:** 6:15 pm

For group seating reservations, please follow directions on website at  
[www.vancouver-yukoners.com](http://www.vancouver-yukoners.com)

**Hospitality Room:** Open Friday from 4 pm and Saturday from noon  
**Note: Pick up tickets in Hospitality Room**

.....  
**FOR TICKETS CONTACT VIVIAN STUART:**

**Email:** [lornellis@shaw.ca](mailto:lornellis@shaw.ca)  
**Address:** #217 – 3255 Cook St, Victoria BC V8X 1A4  
**Phone:** 250-383-1349  
**\$58.00 per person with cheque payable in advance to  
Vancouver Yukoners' Association**  
(Maiden names too please – Helps to find friends of years ago)

**We encourage Yukon residents to fly Air North  
Contact them for any special discounts they may offer**

**Check [www.vancouver-yukoners.com](http://www.vancouver-yukoners.com) for updates**

## **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](mailto:sherronjones@shaw.ca) and enter a password ie: motel and press "Send". It's that easy. Then please send me an email to confirm your payment.

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## **MOCCASIN TELEGRAPH**

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