

The Klondike Sun

January 31, 2007 Online Edition

Dawson City, Yukon

Feeling Exhausted by Winter?



So what if we're a little tired of winter? So what if Fulda doesn't love us any more? So what if winter colds have us hacking and sneezing? There's a little more sunshine out there every day, and we're that much closer to seeing that snow and ice vanish and turn to mud.

Well, maybe we can stand to wait a bit after all.

Hope this issue brings you a little Sunshine anyway.

YTG going to bat for justice group

By STEPHANIE WADDELL

Whitehorse Star, January 24, 2007

Yukon government officials are hopeful the federal government will heed its call not to cut funding to the Dawson Community Group Conferencing Society.

"Our hope is it will come through," Bob Riches, assistant deputy minister for community justice, said in an

interview last week.

The territory normally matches federal funding for the group, which amounts to \$50,000 in total, to use for optional solutions for resolving disputes and as an alternative to the traditional court system.

Late in 2005 (Ed. note - should be 2006), the group

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began expressing concern the federal funding for the program would end as of March 31 because no decision has been made by the federal Aboriginal Justice Strategy on whether it would continue providing funding for it.

“What we’re trying to do is secure funding,” Riches said.

Officials have been in contact with their counterparts at the federal level to stress the importance of the program, he added.

“We just haven’t got any answer,” he said.

Early this month, the society noted in a release that it not only serves as an alternative to the formal justice process, but also does conferencing in non-criminal matters such as disputes between community members.

In Robert Service School, as well, the group provides conferencing for individual students and educational classes.

The issue was also broached at a more national level last October at the justice ministers’ Conference in Newfoundland. There, provincial and territorial ministers tabled a resolution emphasizing the importance of funding and increasing those funding levels to initiatives in aboriginal justice.

The federal justice minister was also asked to work with the regions to address aboriginal needs.

The group is encouraging all those interested to contact their MP, MLA, chief, mayor or the group itself to show support on the matter.

“Conferencing is a valuable service to the community and restorative justice a wise and responsible use of the tax dollars,” the release stated.

Latitude has an Attitude in Dawson, says Mayor

By Dan Davidson

When Mayor John Steins talks about his council’s history with Latitude Wireless, it isn’t too long before he changes its name to “Attitude Wireless”.

Dawson’s council is less than happy with the process by which Latitude Wireless obtained a building permit for construction of its tower on the Dome.

The company arrived in Dawson during the summer of 2006, seeking land on the Dome next to existing broadcast towers. Council was initially annoyed that it had not been part of any discussion to that date concerning the arrival of cellular telephone service in the town, but requested merely that Latitude go through the appropriate steps to acquire approvals, including a land lease and building permit, and that the company consider making some sort of donation to the community in the form of a sponsorship.

Despite Latitude’s initial insistence that they were desperate to meet a deadline at the end of September, the town administration reported throughout the fall that the town’s correspondence on the matter was being redirected to one of Latitude’s partners, Northwestel (the other being the Dakwakada Corporation), where no one seemed to know what to do with it.

The building permit was not acquired and when, later in the fall, well past the optimum construction season, a work

crew arrived and began construction, the town’s bylaw officer was dispatched to stop them until the paper work was complete.



Finally, on December 4, 2006, Mayor John Steins and CAO Paul Moore signed a 15 year sublease at the site with Latitude officials. Cellphone service commenced in Dawson during December.

The building permit, on the other hand, never was signed in Dawson because Latitude Wireless obtained one from the Yukon Government.

Council discussions on January 23 reflected that the members were unhappy with the manner in which the company had carried out its business with the town and with YTG for allowing the end run around Dawson’s procedures. There had never been any doubt that the town would issue a building permit; Latitude simply didn’t deal with the town.

Councillor Ed Kormendy summed up the complaints in a motion directing the town’s acting CAO to communicate two complaints to both the company and YTG.

The first part of the resolution (to be copied to YTG) was to request that any further business arrangements be conducted with the City of Dawson rather than the senior government.

Further, Kormendy was of the opinion that a company such as Latitude should be prepared to make an investment in community infrastructure as part of its commitment to improving life in the town. He suggested sponsoring a sports team as a possible example.

In discussions with the company over community investment, Dawson’s Development Officer, Mark Wickham, was informed that the company had no policy for such an investment and that it was not doing this elsewhere.

Wickham negotiated a lease fee of \$2,000 per annum which, it was noted, was well in excess of what the company was paying elsewhere. The money has been placed in the Community Grants portion of the city budget rather than in general revenue.

Uffish Thoughts: Let's Respect Our Veterans' Wishes

by Dan Davidson

It seemed a simple enough proposal.

Of the 619,636 Canadians who served during the Great War, only 3 are still alive.

There seems to be a general decline in public awareness of that conflict and what our national contribution to it was.

How better to raise awareness, celebrate the troops (coincidentally boosting the morale of those currently on assignment) and promote our national history than to have a state funeral for the last surviving vet when his time comes?

One of them is 105 and the other two are 106, so it's not going to be that long.

The Dominion Institute led the charge, taking a poll and promoting a petition to get the government, which has already indicated a pro-military stance, to act on the matter.

Their spokesman, Rudyard Griffiths, was eloquent. "I worry, if there's no plan in place, this event could be on top of us before we might like."

In short order, a mere four days after the first media blitz, a poll was produced indicating that 75% of Canadians supported the idea. The website plebiscite scored 90,000 names in just a few days.

There hadn't been this fast a reaction since "This Hour Has 22 Minutes" tried to get Stockwell Day to change his first name to Doris.

Polls are funny things. The one that the promoters of this plan obviously had waiting in the wings was collected from 1,013 citizens contacted by Innovative Research Group from October 26-31. This means that 0.0000337 of the population was asked to represent all of us.

The 90,000 number (I was one of them) was probably more impressive, but it still only moves the decimal fraction up to 0.003, or three one-thousandths.

Still, this was a motherhood issue which no politician could really dare to question, and the House of Commons passed a motion in favour of the funeral on November 21, just 15 days after the matter was first raised, and better than two weeks before the petition was going to be presented to Parliament.

Seldom have the mills of government ground so quickly.

Mission Accomplished, as I believe George Bush was once heard to say.

Well ... not quite.

It appears that no one ever got around to asking the three survivors how they felt about it. We found out on January 2, as reported by the CBC: "none of the three veterans wants a state funeral."

"The niece of one veteran, Lloyd Clemett, said her uncle would rather have a simple memorial service.

"He himself feels there should not be attention given to the last person, but the attention should be given to them all," said niece Merle Kaczanowski, who is Clemett's guardian.

"Her uncle, who is in a Toronto hospital, turned 107 last

month.

"The other two remaining veterans, Percy Wilson and John Babcock, are over the age of 100 as well. Both have indicated that, for now at least, they are not interested in a state funeral."

I'm happy to note that the good people at Veteran's Affairs have said that there won't be any State Funeral if the families don't want one.

I'm less happy with the Dominion Institute, which is still pushing its proposal.

The pitch has changed now. It was about honouring the vets and recognizing their contributions as a symbol of the contribution made by all those who fought in the war.

Now it seems to be about massaging the Institute's own wounded pride, and carrying out their wishes come hell or high water.

You can almost hear those in charge saying to themselves, "Hey! What happened. We mounted a successful campaign. We won! We can't let it slip away now."

And so a spokesperson for the Institute began sounding like it was insisting that someone needed to become a symbol whether that person wanted to or not.

It would not, he said, be wise of the government to ignore the will of Parliament.

I don't even want to spend much time analyzing how semantically silly that statement is.

Let's leave it at this: if the men who might deserve the honour don't want it, then it would only be a bully who would insist that it be given to them any way.

Dawson lost power twice that Wednesday

By Dan Davidson

Wind and ice along the Mayo to Dawson transmission line continued to disrupt power on Wednesday (Jan. 24) about thirteen hours after the early morning power loss already reported.

The line went down again shortly after 3 p.m., with most of the town receiving power from the diesel backup station in less than ten minutes.

Yukon Energy spokesperson Janet Patterson gives the exact time as 15:07, with power restored some six minutes later, except at Hunker Creek where it took 32 minutes.

Dawson remained on diesel power during the night on Wednesday until the line could be checked for physical problems. A Yukon Energy employee flew the length of the line on Thursday morning. Patterson said.

"It was clear to him that ice and snow, along with wind, caused yesterday's outages."

It was hoped that Dawson would be restored to the grid by early Thursday afternoon, but the generating station on 5th Avenue was still running around 3 p.m.

In Praise of Generators

by Dan Davidson

January 26, 2007

Thank goodness we've still got the diesels.
"Thank goodness," you'll hear people say.
The sound of those engines is so reassuring
when the hydro goes away.

It may go with the weight of the snowfall,
or go with a gust of wind,
with the flip of a switch or the sneeze of a raven;
all we know is the darkness begins..

It may go in the midst of the afternoon
or deep in the still of the night.
It may pass without notice until the next morning
and leave you to wake in a fright.

Your clocks may run slow or your clocks may run fast
in the wake of a power-up surge,
but your VCR will simply blink,
to prompt your reset urge.

Your computer data isn't safe
when the power comes and goes.
Precious entries may turn to pixel dust
right in front of your nose.

So let's all give thanks for the diesels,
that give us back the light.
They may be loud and their smoke may be black,
but they sure drive away the night.

Berton House is an Incentive to Write, says Cook

By Dan Davidson

After ten years in operation word of mouth seems to one of the most common ways by which new applicants learn about Berton House. Greg Cook, who was here in the fall of 2006, was personally acquainted with Pierre Berton through his work with the Canadian Writers Federation, of which Berton was a staunch supporter, but it was two former writers-in-residence - George Fetherling (2003) and Ken McGoogan (2002) - who prompted him to apply.

There are, after all, 38 writers who have lived in the house up to the end of 2006, and they all seem to remember the place fondly. Science Fiction writer and Hugo Award winner Robert J. Sawyer, who will be here in late summer and early fall of 2007, says that he was prompted by Audrey Thomas (1997).

To Greg Cook, though, goes the distinction of living in the residence BDG and ADG, which is to say Before and After the Designer Guys.

The television show arrived a few weeks after Cook, when he had already begun to make good progress on his biography of Ernest Buckler, and bumped him out of the

residence for a fortnight while they were working their magic.

Fortunately, Berton House has a good local support network, and Greg found comfortable digs at the home of Suzanne and Akio Saito, cat and dog sitting while they were away on a trip. Walking Jack a couple of times every day probably got the deliberately reclusive Cook out around the town more than he might have otherwise.

He was, after all, here to work, and while he fulfilled all his public reading obligations while in the territory, his main task was to triple the word count on his manuscript and stretch out as far as he could the various grants that were letting him have the time to write this book.

That said, he was very pleased with one of the big changes that came about as the result of the renovations. Berton House has a study now, converted from what had been the smaller of the two bedrooms. Previously the writers' desk and working area had been directly in the traffic route between the kitchen and the living room. Having a study, Cook says, means that it is possible to walk away from the work for a while, get out of the room and do something else to recharge the system without having the eye of your laptop glaring at you from the desk.



Overall, the rest of the house has changed quite a bit. It had been furnished, by and large, by donations of cast-off furniture and even appliances from locals, along with one or two really nice antique items and an assortment of newer bookcases and cabinets which had been purchased because they were needed. The net effect, in the words of Cook's wife, Leslie Jeffery, who visited both before and after the show, was to change the place from a comfortable rural cabin to an upscale bed and breakfast.

The relative isolation of Dawson appealed to Cook. "It's on the fringes," he said, "and I grew up on the fringes in Nova Scotia."

It's out of the way. One of the problems with being a writer, Cook says, is that people never seem to believe you're actually working, and if you are known to be at home then the telephone rings and the door gets knocked on and people pop over or ask you to do things because they assume you have a lot of free time.

Because people could not do that he figures that he accomplished in three months what it would have taken him six to do back home in St. John, adding 50,000 words to his biography of Ernest Buckler. He figures this is about the halfway point for the first draft.

“It’s a very good incentive when you look out the window and see Robert Service’s Cabin and down the street and see Jack London’s, your whole consciousness is ‘well, there’s only one purpose in my being here, and that is to keep working’.”

Cabin Fever and Phobias

By Sylvia Sands Johnson

I know this is a weird subject to bring up in the middle of winter, but when Cabin Fever sets in all sorts of strange things come to mind – mainly things that happened during the Spring, Summer or Fall. I tend to recall things like the lady, one summer, who told me she would never visit our fabulous garden in Rosswood, “[e]ven if there is one mouse in it.”

She added “If I see a mouse, I jump on the table, waving a broom around, screaming.”

I didn’t have the heart to tell her that when I lived in Granville in the Yukon, many years ago, I used to have mice playing under the chair while I was reading, and then a weasel would enter the kitchen hell bent on the chase. One night, I even had a mouse gnawing on my ear when I was in bed. It felt like an electric shock. Mouse events like that are very rare.

Then, two other women said “Sylvia, if you have even one snake in your garden, I’ll never come out there.”

One lady was from Mexico, and God knows what scary varieties they have there. The other one was from Africa, where the snakes would leave me mesmerized with terror. I am not an admirer of Black Mambas, except on TV. After all, I’m from the Okanogan and one confrontation with a rattlesnake, at close quarters up in the cliffs of Penticton, was enough for me.

Ahh – spider phobia. How many spiders and beetles have I rescued as they were about to drown in a water barrel? How many times have I thought to myself “[t]hat has to be a brown recluse. What else is that big and brown?”

One day I was going to check up on some new trees I’d planted, to help stop global warming, when I saw a spider that had the hugest body I’d ever seen. When I dared to touch its web with a twig, the monster came bounding back to its palm-leafed winter home like it was at the Kentucky Derby Racetrack. I decided that the trees would have to wait. Later, I did find the courage to relocate the spider to an area I never go to. It’s not everyone who has a mother who was bitten by a black widow spider on the hip and had to pay \$10 (in the 1940s) for an antidote shot.

Have you ever noticed how often it is those people, who laugh at other’s phobias, who are terrified of bats? Now I am definitely a bat-lover and even have a bat house to prove it. after all, bats can catch 600 mosquitoes in an hour; what could be better than that? But, as you might have guessed,

the bat house is still vacant. It seems the bats prefer it under the cedar siding of the loft, discovered when a swarm of bats flew into my carpenter’s face when he re-did my upper roof. They are still there, tolerated guests, as long as they remain outside the house.

But my worst phobia is bears. This is one of the reasons I love winter so much. One year, it was November 5th, when I last saw a set of bear tracks heading south on my ten acres in Rosswood. That’s when I put my trusty trumpet away, the one I paid \$25 for at a garage sale. You have no idea what a blast from that trumpet did to a mother bear and her cubs when they were rooting around in a hill of red ants not far from the house. Gonzo. I wouldn’t part with that trumpet if they offered me a fortune for it at the Antique Roadshow.

I was eight months pregnant, 47 years ago, when my then-husband and I arrived in Dawson City in the Yukon, so famous for its hospitality. Our hosts, Les and Jean Butterworth, had agreed to rent a cabin to us for a mere twenty-five bucks. It was out “on the creeks” where the gold dredges were.

Suddenly she announced “[a]nd don’t be surprised if you see a bear when you go to the biffy at 5:30am.”

I laughed that off until I found myself trying to hang curtains in a dilapidated log cabin, and hello, two gigantic black bears gingerly walking by. That is when the bear phobia first set in.

Later, when we had moved into another cabin, one-eyed Henry’s, I heard the birds give a warning whistle outside. I was still in bed and alone with two children. The window of the bedroom was low to the ground and much to my astonishment the bear jumped right on top of the tin roof. CRASH.

That is what I mean about phobias, they start from the ground and work their way up. Now, where was I about cabin fever?

Training Continues in Prince George

Press Release submitted by Rob van Adrichem

Aedes Sheer of Dawson City is a member of Canada’s first physician-training program focused on preparing doctors to work in northern and rural communities.

She is a member of the third cohort of students in the Northern Medical

Program, the result of a collaboration between UBC and the University of Northern British Columbia in Prince George. The program started in 2004 and its primary mission is to increase the number of doctors



practicing in the North by training them here.

Like the other Northern Medical Program students, Aedes completed her first semester of courses at UBC in Vancouver and is now continuing with coursework at UNBC in PG. During the course of her education, she'll have the opportunity to work with physicians in communities throughout the North.

Heavy Snow and Wind Cut Power

By Dan Davidson

Dawsonites without backup batteries in their alarm clocks may have been running a few minutes late on the morning of January 24.

Heavy snowfall and wind on the transmission line between Mayo and Dawson City resulted in a brief power outage in Dawson during the middle of the night.

Yukon Energy spokesperson Janet Patterson reported that the power went out at 1:17 a.m. and was restored in Dawson nine minutes later.

Dawson was reenergized using the diesel generators on Fifth Avenue.

The Hunker Creek area was restored 30 minutes later, while Partridge Creek took just under an hour and 20 minutes, which, Patterson says, is the same time that it took for Dawson also to be restored to hydro power.



Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in gets MRIF Grant for Playground

press release

Whitehorse (January 24, 2007) Four Yukon community-based infrastructure projects will get funding from the Canada-Yukon Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund (MRIF).

The federal and Yukon governments recently announced more than \$10.5 million in project funding for the 2006-07 fiscal year.

The projects are the Hamilton Boulevard extension in Whitehorse, road improvements in the Mayo region, a new playground in Dawson City and a new sewage facility for Pelly Crossing.

The MRIF project funding for the City of Whitehorse will contribute up to \$10 million of the \$15-million project cost of the extension of Hamilton Boulevard by five kilometres.

The extension – discussed for years – will improve traffic flow by providing a second access road to the

Granger, Arkell, McIntyre, and Copper Ridge neighbourhoods by creating new access and egress routes.

The extension will join the Alaska Highway opposite the Robert Service Way intersection.

The First Nation of Nacho Nyak Dun in the Mayo area will receive an MRIF contribution of \$233,333 toward the \$350,000-upgrade of the three-kilometre cemetery access road, located near Mayo at km 47.5 on the Silver Trail.

The road also acts as the access point for the first nation's settlement land area, which is currently under review for potential residential use.

The Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation will be receiving an MRIF contribution of \$150,000 toward a new \$225,000-playground to be constructed in Dawson City.

"As a culturally-influenced resource with age-specific equipment, the playground will be located adjacent to the Tr'inke Zoo Childcare Centre, which is currently under construction," MRIF officials said in a statement.

The Selkirk First Nation will receive \$166,666 from MRIF for the development of a long-term sewage disposal facility in Pelly Crossing. The total project cost is \$250,000.

"Safe and healthy communities are our number one objective," Community Services Minister Glenn Hart said in the statement.

"These projects reflect the Yukon government's ongoing commitment to creating healthy and safe communities, and we are very pleased with the participation we receive from Canada and our local governments in reaching these goals."

"Canada's new government is proud to be a part of projects that ensure that rural communities have the infrastructure to help them grow and develop," said Jim Prentice, the federal Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development.

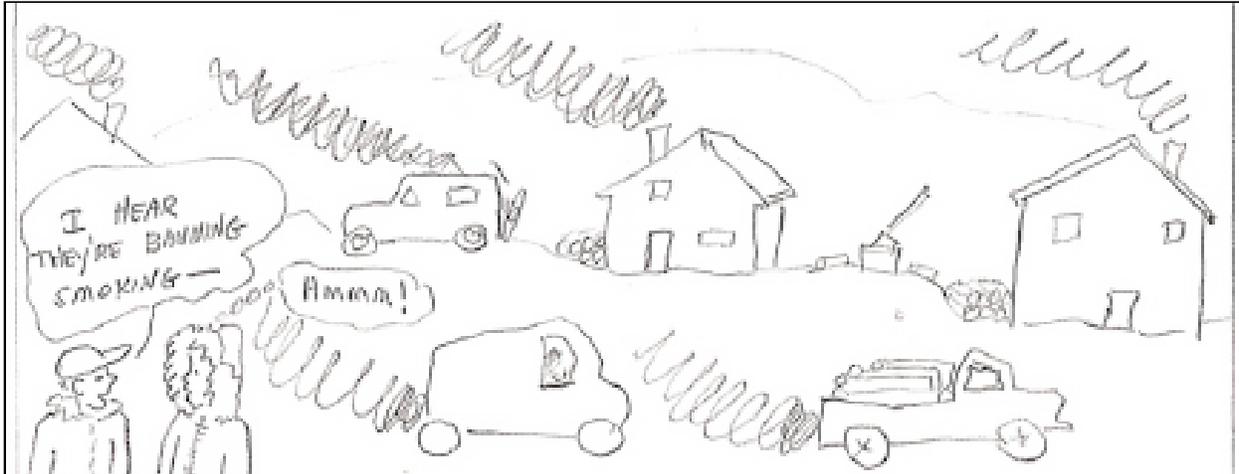
"I am pleased to see the success this funding program has delivered in terms of improving community infrastructure and creating new employment opportunities in the North."

The MRIF is a federal-territorial funding program created to help address the infrastructure needs of urban and rural areas.

The program began in 2005 and will run for five years. It aims to help municipalities ensure that their residents have access to the same quality of public infrastructure as communities in the rest of Canada.

For 2006-2007, more than \$10.5 million in MRIF project funding has been provided.

By the end of the five-year program, up to \$48 million will have been spent to improve infrastructure in the Yukon, the statement said.



I can't say what it could have been: Wolves v. Bears

By Walley Lilley

The buzz had been building for weeks. Not only had Roy Johnson organized an old school road trip, he had also fortified what Hockey Day in Canada, January 13, meant to 15 Dawsonites.

Yes folks, some of the sleepy travellers hadn't even slept in their own beds; however, each loaded one the gear and embarked. Luckily in our vehicle, Master Corporal Chris Evans was not so sleepy. All I'm saying is that Steve and I slept most of the way, and when I awoke to The Grateful Dead and glorious sunshine, I glanced over to see the corporal at the wheel; smiling and styling, with hockey on the brain. Bring it on.

Each separate party arrived at the Pelly arena to a scene like one from an old western movie. I'm talking ghosttown. We kicked around some ideas, jokes and stories to pass the time. Some wondered if the game was even going to occur. Soon enough, Pelly had a fine team iced and we got it on. And they worked us 4 to 1! Humbling to say the least. Tails between our legs, we hit the dressing room.

It was pretty quiet in that room. Guys staring at their skates, searching for that elusive answer. Myself, I was pondering whiplash: that's how fast the Pelly players had been going around me.

It could have been those delicious concession burgers or the half hour break, but game two was a much different story. The Wolves hit the ice with a heat-fired vengeance. We jammed it into fifth gear and skated our way to a 10-3 win.

JP Hawkins kept six (a term used to refer to someone who is keeping watch) between the iron and did a stellar job. Rounding out The Wolves squad were (and I will inform you that the time sheets were very confusing) : Matt Elliot (2pt), Leon Sidney (1pt), Corey Taylor, Axle Nordling, Steve Shatilla (1pt), Wally Liley (I know pitiful Roy, I'll do better! Just don't cut me yet), Chris Evans (5 pt & sweetness), Douglas Johnson(2 pt), Pait Johnson (2 pt), Jason Johnson, Freddy Farr (3 pt, nice work bro), Clinton

Taylor(3pt & cool) and Bruce Taylor.

The talented Selkirk Bears consisted of (and again I apologize for the confusion with the timesheet): Sheldon Joe in net (and really great), Jeremy Harper(1 pt), Richard Sims, Kevin McGinty, Ricky Joe, Matthew Fairclough(1pt), Micheal Harper, Mark Stub (6 pt& great job), Morris Morrison (1 pt), Benny Joe (1pt), Richard Hager.

Speaking for the group, I would like to thank all of Pelly for a very special experience. I understand that you are coming up for our tournament on February 9, 10 and 11: coolio!

It's coming on to Valentines so :
roses are red,
violets are blue,
Roy Johnson ,
here's to you.

You've given myself and a pile of other dudes a registered top notch Hockey Day In Pelly.

Can this be an annual event please? ..I'm begging here.
Peace out.

Life in Dawson's Winter: We struggle on

Photos by Dan Davidson

ICE BRIDGE PEDESTRIAN: It's a long walk home for some. Most of the people who live on the far side of the Yukon River live in rural subdivisions that are way up the hill from where this walker is trudging in the mid-afternoon sunshine.



OPEN WATER: Open water steams grey in the winter sun at -29°C, creating the illusion that the ice is burning. At colder temperatures the steam appears to be black against the ice.



ICY HIGHWAY: An overflowing creek not far south of the Dawson City boundary has had highway crews building an ice berm just in front of the trees to keep the water back. Warning signs proclaim that there is ice on the road, melting and refreezing as the afternoon sun waxes and wanes.



SUNNY DAY: Even at twenty-nine below zero the sun can cut swathes in the shadows as it peeks around the corner of the hills and onto our streets at last.

