

The Klondike Sun

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Dawson City, Yukon



Look Out Below! Spring's Here!

All around town you can find buildings blocked off with safety tape as owners wait for the snow load to slide to slide off the roofs.

Photo by Dan Davidson

Lagoon Project has New Features

Story & Photos
by Dan Davidson

While the proposed site for Dawson City's secondary sewage treatment facility hasn't altered a lot since the last set of public meetings, there were some significant changes in the project reported to the two meetings - one at the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Heritage Hall and the other in Dawson's council chambers - that were held on April 3 and 4.

First of all, reported YTG's Kriss Sarson, the lagoon has grown. While favorable results on the system tests a year and a half ago had caused Community Services to reduce it to two cells, it has been redesigned for three. That would give the town the capacity to close one cell for cleaning or repairs and still have an effective aerated lagoon, as well as allowing for a projected 2 per cent per year growth in the population using the system over the next 20 to 40 years.

This has meant that the lagoon will have a somewhat larger footprint, up to 2.7 hectares from the previous 2.3, and that lot 1059, at the base of the Dome Road, is

not quite large enough. Fortunately there is lot 1058, right next door, part of which would accommodate the increase.

Another change comes in the form of a decision to relocate the town's screening plant from Fifth Avenue, across from the Museum, to the corner of lot 1059 just across the road from the ball park. There are continuing problems with the screening plant that make its replacement desirable. It will become a lift station. Its replacement will be a two story building which will include facilities for the dumping of educted sewage, thus eliminating the current practice of hauling all educted sewage to a site near the Dempster Highway.

In addition, the force main from the current screening plant to the outfall pipe under the river will be replaced by a new main running from the new plant.

The public works department has been anticipating problems with the existing main, based on the deterioration of other underground pipe in the town, and installing a new one, to be buried along the inner side of dike, appears to be a better solution than tinkering with the one now in use.

The rerouting of the pipes will also eliminate a persistent problem with sewage odor in parts of the south section of town.

Sarson reviewed the material on possible lagoon wall breaches or flooding, as prepared by Gartner Lee Limited, which indicated that there was virtually no danger of well contamination from a lagoon located upstream of the town's water supply. A flood large enough to cause a problem would actually inundate the town before it topped the lagoon, which will have berms a couple of metres above the current Klondike Highway.

The berms will be constructed to mimic the look of the tailings piles currently on those lots. There are a couple of tailings ponds on those sites now, but the natural dissolved oxygen levels in those ponds are so low that the water is already unable to sustain most life forms, something like a natural occurrence of the LC50 toxicity test that causes the

town's effluent to fail when it is examined during the peak use summer months. The lagoon will be screened from the Klondike Highway by a stand of trees though it will be visible from the Dome Road and from homes on Mary McLeod Road. While Dawson is currently under a court order to have its treatment plant in place by December 2008, Sarson admitted there is no way the YTG run



project can be finished in that time frame. It can be designed, but after that it will have to undergo a Yukon Environmental Socioeconomic Assessment Act screening, which could take anywhere from 340 to 820 days. Then the project will need a water licence, which could be another protracted delay.

Sarson told his audience that 2010, 2011 or even 2013 could be realistic dates for having the \$14 million lagoon treatment system in operation.

When Johnny went to Hollywood

By Dan Davidson,

Pictures supplied by John Steins

While Mayor John Steins had little difficulty getting the Yukon Film Commission to put \$1,000.00 into his very quick trip to Hollywood in mid-March, he senses that there are a few folks in Dawson who aren't happy with it.

"Somebody today called me John Everitt," he said at the March 20 council meeting - a reference to the many travels of former mayor Glen Everitt.

Aside from being very tired during and after his one-day visit to the Walk of Fame to see the star of Dawson born

actor Victory Jory, Steins' biggest problem on the trip was that Americans kept thinking he was Stephen King and demanding his autograph.

Victor Jory was born in Dawson City in 1902, and subsequently moved to California where he finished school, was in the Coast Guard, became a stage actor, and was snatched up for the movies when they moved to making talking pictures. He spent 50 years in front of cameras and on the stage, appearing as villain, hero and character actor in over 150 films and numerous television shows up until just a few years before he died in 1982.



Mayor John Steins poses with young Victor Jory at his famous grandfather's Hollywood Star.

Steins was invited by CBC to become part of their investigation of the Jory story, which is scarcely well known in Canada or the Yukon. The work is expected to get national as well as regional exposure and Dawson's council felt it was something Steins should pursue once he was asked.

Steins paid his own way to Whitehorse and back, a contribution he figures is worth just over two hundred dollars.

"I think it was a very worthwhile exercise because of the exposure we're going to get, assuming people aren't embarrassed by my shenanigans or television and radio, is

considerable."

Shows are planned for both radio and television to celebrate the Yukon reclaiming this unknown son of the North.

It was a whirlwind trip, Steins told the meeting, and he never knew when he was going to be asked to be on camera: snoozing on the plane, walking in and out of buildings, standing by the Jory star with the actor's grandson and namesake.

Steins had to walk back and forth in front of a restaurant called the Yukon Mining Company that they suddenly spotted while driving in Los Angeles. There were even multiple takes at the airport security.

"I was even embarrassed standing at the star with young Victor Jory with people milling around thinking that I'm Stephen King and hassling CBC's Al Foster to get to me."

This also happened at the airport and other places.

"I was certainly put through my paces. It wasn't relaxing in any sense of the word. It was not a junket, not a holiday. It was hard work."

The CBC crew were there after Steins had headed home, still interviewing Jory's living contemporaries in tinsel town, as well as colleagues in Salt Lake City, where Jory was a great supporter of local live theatre and where his daughter lives.

Young Victor is a 28 year old film student who plans to come to the Yukon, Steins said, now that he's more aware of the connection. Jory's son, John, teaches theatre arts in Seattle.

One his mayor's blog Steins recorded some additional comments about his trip.

"Young Victor is definitely Dawson material, we need to find a way to have him visit either at Film Fest time or Music Festival. He seemed very curious about 'Dodge' and was pleased to receive a bag of swag containing trinkets and souvenirs that Joy (Taylor) at the office put together for me to present."

A Victor Jory Film Festival? Now there's another idea for the currently abandoned Palace Grand Theatre.

DC Ambulance Requests full time staff as Callouts increase

by Dan Davidson

Dawson's Volunteer Ambulance crew is too busy and the territorial government needs to think seriously about stationing some full time attendants here.

Volunteers Margie Baikie and Janice Kormendy came before town council on March 20 to request council's support for a proposal the group is putting forward to YTG.

Baikie explained that increased calls on the crew's services is straining both its volunteer base of 14 members, and the willingness of the volunteers' employers to release them for daytime callouts.

Fourteen might have been a healthy number a year ago, but when ten of them are not able to carry the response radios in the daytime and the other four able to carry only when there is not a job conflict, the situation is dire.

Baikie herself is now carrying a radio 24/7.

"We're doing up a proposal," she said, "hoping that the council and the people of Dawson will realize the essential service we provide."



Kormendy said that calls on the group have doubled in the last year, since March 2006. By the beginning of last March there had been 24 calls; a year later there were 50. In 2006 there was a total of 397 calls, an average of more than one per day.

"This has resulted in our employers putting a halt to us responding to every call. So often there is actually only one person available."

"I know the importance of that," Mayor Steins said, "since you guys had to carry me out on a gurney a year ago. It would have been pretty tough with just one of you hauling me out."

The proposal includes a call for nine positions at 12 hour shifts, seven days a week. This is primarily to cover days as Baikie says the group seems to have no trouble covering evening and weekend calls.

"Monday to Friday is the problem."

In discussion after delegations council discussed several options, including making its own proposal to YTG, but settled on providing a letter of support for the ambulance crew's request.

DCMF Gets Home Lease Renewal

by Dan Davidson

The Dawson City Music Festival Society has renewed the lease on its home for another five years.

The society has occupied the property it now uses for the last ten years, having purchased and relocated the former CFYT-fm building at that time. In addition the property contains the society's storage shed, the steel frames for the festival tents and other items needed to stage the festival each July.

Dylan Griffiths, DCMF producer and artistic director,

appeared before city council on March 20 to pitch the society's case for renewal of its lease.

A clause in the existing lease allowed for renewal, but the society seemed a little uncertain about its relationship with the city after the town's new facilities use policy, passed during the trusteeship, imposed fees that the festival had not previously had to pay for the use of Minto Park during the three day period of the festival.

Griffiths spent some time outlining the history of cooperation between the town and the festival, which he noted brings a lot of business to the community, as well as a national and international profile.

He also emphasized that, while the festival makes use of the Minto facilities each July, it also helps to maintain them and has, in the past, painted the interior rooms, replaced the decking and installed a power pole in the park which is also available to other park users.

While some of DCMF's materials are stored in the city yard at Callison Industrial Subdivision, the organization makes those things available for free to anyone who needs to use them for community events. This material includes a sectional dance floor, benches and snow fencing.

In addition, the society sponsors and holds at least three other musical events in the town during the year.

In return for its service to the town, a service which brings in an estimated \$450,000 in visitor expenditures as well as the society's own expenses of about \$70,000 a year, the DCMF has enjoyed a revenue neutral lease arrangement with the town, one which sees it pay \$3600 a year in rent, while receiving a \$3600 grant.

The society wanted to maintain the status quo for the next five years, but indicated that it is looking to change the arrangement after that.

"It is our intention," Griffiths said, "to buy this property outright in five years, in order to make it our permanent home."

Griffiths expressed the hope that the town and the society would continue to work in cooperation as they have for nearly 30 years now.

"Together, we can provide leadership in arts presentation and present a diverse and dynamic array of cultural events and learning opportunities throughout the year. Together, we can engage Dawson's youth, entertain Dawson's families, and expand the cultural and social horizons of all of Dawson City's residents. Together we can continue to leave visiting artists and festival attendees with what they and we perceive as a very enviable vision of a tiny, isolated community which is able to unite and come together to create something so much larger than itself."

There was some discussion amongst the council members as to the implications of renewing the lease without any changes, since council has on its agenda the review of its lease policy, as well as the implications of accepting the DCMF vision and what that might mean for other non-profit organizations wanting space.

In the end, however, the majority of councillors argued for accepting the proposal without any re-negotiation, extolling the worth of the society's work and the fact that a

renewal clause was in the original agreement.

The motion to instruct the town's CAO to proceed with the lease was passed by a 4 to 1 vote.

Berton House Writer Promises Not to Expose Dawson's Dark Secret

Unlike the majority of the three dozen writers-in-residence who have lived in Berton House for the last decade, Lisa Pasold was looking for an opportunity to return to the Yukon.

There's a paragraph in her official bio that is quoted by everyone who brings her to a convention or a reading.

"She's been thrown off a train in Belarus, been fed the world's best pigeon pie in Marrakech, has taken the wrong bus in Bohemia, mushed huskies in the Yukon, learned to polka at Danceland, and been cheated in the Venetian gambling halls of Ca' Vendramin Calergi. Her favourite game is roulette."

The mushing part is true and took place about four years ago after she and her husband, Bremner Duthie, spent some time in Whitehorse.

"We went to the hot springs and also to a dog musher's and also saw a couple of short sled races. It was just fabulous. We had a wonderful time. At that point Bremner and I had even made a list of places we could consider moving to if we came back to Canada. Whitehorse was in the top two at that time.

"So we wanted to come back, and Dawson seemed even more attractive than Whitehorse. I was attracted not so much by the gold rush history but the rush aspect of the gold rush, where people go on these mass movements and as a result you have ... well, big sections of Canada, basically."

Though she was born in England, Pasold grew up mostly in Montreal and studied at Concordia, where she earned an Honours B.A. in Communications & Creative Writing. A fan of the work of Ernest Hemingway, she followed the well worn path of many a young writer and spent some time in Paris, returning to North America, where she lived in Vancouver, working as an arts administrator, and then to New York, where she began to work as a journalist.

Writing for a real estate publication might not seem the way to hone one's skills, but Pasold said that it held some interesting challenges.

"It was interesting to find different ways to say 'kind of all right view of the next building.' I like the challenges language poses."

She returned to France with her husband and they now divide their time "between a tiny house" in Paris "and various borrowed addresses in Toronto." There have also been summers on the fringe theatre circuit.

From Paris, she has managed to carve out a career in journalism which has seen her published in everything from the Globe and Mail (Toronto) to The San Francisco Examiner, New York Living, Fodor's and Billboard Magazine.

In addition she has produced two books of poetry, Weave (2004) and A Bad year for Journalists (2006), a guide to historical buildings in Paris, which is part of the online magazine, Paris Notes, and a novel, Rats of Las Vegas,

which her agent is currently flogging for her.

The guide comes from her other enterprise, which is a series of two hour themed walking tours that she offers during the seasons when she's living in Paris.

"What's your first love?" I ask as we sit on the new couch in Berton House and she goes blank, exploding into laughter when I add, "Literarily speaking, of course."

"Poetry," she says, "although poetry can become theatre ... or a novel."

As an example she offers the play which she was developing from A Bad Year,

in Toronto just before coming to Dawson in January. She could see that becoming a novel as well, but it seemed to come to her as a series of linked poems, as had her first collection, which was really about the stories her grandmother told.

The words, she says, stayed pretty much the same, but the number of voices shrank from nine to two and the through line of the plot had to be more sequential to assist the audience.

"Berton House has been wonderful," she says after a sip of tea. "I'm sure all your writers say that, but it's true."

For her January and February were a perfect time to be there, in spite of some of the intense cold. It's been nice, she said, to see the beginning of the thaw in March, but she likes winter, and this one reminded her of what winters used to be like when she was growing up in Montreal.

She got quite involved with the many activities sponsored by the Klondike Institute of Art and Culture; she volunteered with the local Yukon Quest organization; she did a public reading and joined in the Library Board's January and February celebrations of poetry.

She taught a writing course with about a dozen students at Yukon College for several weeks, and found that especially nice because they were all people who knew each other already. Usually, she said, writing classes have to spend a lot of time getting comfortable with each other and with sharing their work, but this one was well past that stage and was a lot of fun.



Lisa Pasold, with a favorite mug of tea, a Hudson's Bay blanket and the unexpected Yukon sunshine.

"This was great. We just started off on a whole other level."

This was also a three month crash course on Pierre Berton, whom she recalled seeing on television when younger, but hadn't really read much of before.

"Now I've worked my way through everything here except The Great Depression. It's been wonderful. I love his work."

"I've been sitting on this sofa with a Hudson's Bay blanket and tea, reading Berton and watching this light change."

She says Dawsonites are guilty of perpetrating a hoax about the winter darkness and lack of light here.

"You've pulled the wool over the eyes of Southerners so we don't all move here. You've convinced the world that you spend six months in darkness, and in fact you don't. You're completely lying."

"I'm not going to report you - but now I know."

Pasold and Duthie left during the last week in March, disappointed that they could not stay long enough to take in the Short Film Festival, but determined to be back for a summer stay in a couple of years, probably timed to take in the Dawson City Music Festival.

Cabane a Sucre

By Danielle Ouellet

First time in Dawson! The Maple sugar shack dinner was on Saturday March 31st 2007 at the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Band Hall, and it was a great success!

As I was setting up the room with volunteers prior the dinner, one of them being from France asked me "So tell me what is the story behind this Maple syrup?" And I said, "Well it's funny you ask me that, because you make me realise that it is a nice coincidence that we are doing this event at the TH Band Hall."



I was lucky during my childhood in Quebec, when spring time came we would go to the country side and up a little mountain top where my grandfather had his maple sugar shack, it was my favourite time of the year! I always loved

nature and felt strongly connected to it, but seeing the maple trees with their little silver buckets hanging and drinking out from it (my favourite thing to do) this delicious sweet water, this was magical to me. I was in awe with this gift from nature and to be honest I was in awe of my ancestors since I thought they had discovered this magnificent gift. Finally one day I asked the question I had in mind for so long "How did they discover that you can make a hole in a Maple tree, and at this very precise time when the weather warms up during the day and drops down during night, how did we find that out?" And then I'm told that we didn't discover this! This is one of the many gifts that we learned from the First Nation of this land. They had the ingenuity to discover this wonderful gift from nature.

It was not the first time I was made conscious of such a gift to my culture coming from their culture, but this for me as a child who loved so much the magical process of making of maple sugar, this added to my gratefulness toward the native people who had taught so much to my ancestors; survival skills, trapping, canoeing, etc.

I would like to say thank you the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in for donating the use of their Hall for this event. Also I like to say again how these events are not possible without volunteers and I would like to thank them all including those who just asked if they could help during the event. But most of all I want to thank our number one volunteer, our dedicated Chef, Louise Piché.

Thank you to all who came and enjoyed this feast!

Separated At Birth?



**John Steins
&
Stephen
King**



**Who
knew?**

RSS CARNIVAL 2007



Uffish Thoughts: The Many Assaults of April the First

by Dan Davidson

Sunday was an odd combination of days. After all, how often does Palm Sunday, one of the mini-celebrations of the Christian church year, fall on April Fools Day? Not that I felt at all silly marching around St. Paul's with a cross made from an intricately folded palm leaf in my hand, but the juxtaposition of dates did make me wonder, just a little, what else the day might hold.

Of course I'd actually forgotten all about the great time adjustment scam, and didn't really think of it until my wife, who had gone to the school to do a bit of prep work in the afternoon, called me up to ask what time it really was. Why, she wondered, were all the school clocks an hour fast - or was there something wrong with her watch.

And then I realized that we had, as President Bush once said, "misunderestimated" our ability to cope with the changing times. Yes, that actually Bushism does contain a double negative idea and therefor means the opposite of what it sounds like. But I'm going to blame the whole thing on him, since going to Daylight Savings Time early was his cockamamie idea in the first place.

Really, we had overestimated our ability to cope. At the school, three weeks ago, we had dutifully set all the clocks ahead within a day or two of the actual change, and now the program that had been written to make the normal seasonal adjustment had kicked in around 2 AM on Sunday morning and moved everything ahead by another hour. We'll have to make further adjustments.

As it turned out, the computer giants really did have this covered. Apple made available a "patch" routine that reprogrammed its operating system to recognize the new dates and change computer clocks automatically. Any computer which used the patch, as I did with the machines in my classroom, were not at all confused by Bush's assault on time.

At home, however, I had manually changed the time on our several machines before I knew of the patch, and all three of them jumped ahead an hour on Sunday, along with the internal clock on my Palm PDA, for which there was no programmable fix that I heard of.

My laptop got terribly confused by the whole thing and refused to access the airport wireless system we use here for most of the day, suddenly recovering its ability to connect to the rest of the world later in the evening, after it had been off for a few hours.

People do love their April Fools jokes, don't they? The most public one I can recall here in Dawson was the year that the Mayor and council declared Dawson a smoke free zone and, in collaboration with the MLA of the day, made the announcement at the town council meeting which happened to take place a few days after April 1 that year.

Despite all the individuals involved coming clean within days of the event, you can still find folks in town who believe that the hoax was real and that it was only the massive public outcry that caused the council to reverse

itself.

Had that been the case, it is doubtful that the council would have had the nerve to propose and pass the bylaw which did restrict Dawson's smokers just a few months over a year later.

Having the day fall on a Sunday did save me from having to deal with the relentless assaults of our cleverer high school students, for whom mild April Fool's pranks have the same irresistible allure that knock-knock jokes have for primary students.

April 1 is, of course, the beginning of a new fiscal year for the territorial government, but we won't know if that's a joke or not until we see the spring budget document.

Matuk Takes CWG Bronze in Boxing

From CWG media package

Photos supplied by Helen Dewell

An interesting story with the Ontario Team is Kyle Matuk, a 91 kg athlete who lived in the Yukon for 13 years. Kyle now lives in Oshawa, however his mother still resides in the Yukon and he is looking forward to a reunion with many family relatives who will be there to cheer him on.

From the Motor City Boxing Club News

In the 91 kg division, only former Yukoner now Motor City Boxer Kyle Matuk could go the distance with eventual gold medallist Simon Keane from Quebec as Keane consistently overwhelmed his opponents with his size, speed and power. Kyle Matuk earned his bronze medal and is arguably the 2nd best heavyweight boxer in the country with only 9 bouts under his belt at the conclusion of the Games.

Kyle was also profiled on TSN. See the video at http://www.tsn.ca/canada_games/.



Kyle Matuk with Charles Eschelman, Chad Dyce, and Don Nelson after his fight at the CWGs.

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