

# The Klondike Sun

May 23, 2007 Online Edition

Dawson City, Yukon

## Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in say "Welcome Home" to Residential School Survivors



Tobacco gifts are thrown in the Yukon River as part of the Welcome Home celebrations at the Dänojà Zho Cultural Centre on May 18.

Photo by Dan Davidson

Story & Photos by Dan Davidson

“Welcome Home” said the big banner in front of the Dänojä Zho Cultural Centre, but the event it proclaimed was not the usual sort of homecoming celebration. This event was to celebrate the symbolic return of people who still lived in Dawson, but who had once been away for a long time, and who had never quite felt that they fit in when they came back.

They think of themselves as Residential School Survivors and they have been meeting and talking about their experiences for about a decade now. As a group they call themselves K’änächa, which means “taking care”, and for the last three years they have been working to assemble a scrapbook which chronicles their history as survivors.

Celebrating that project, which will be a portion of the summer display at the Cultural Centre, was part of the evening’s purpose on May 18.

Related to that was the opening of the Legacy of Hope Foundation’s traveling exhibit, “Where are the Children? Healing the Legacy of Residential Schools”, which will be in Dawson for the summer.

As for the evening itself, it was called “Tr’ëhuhch’in Năwtr’udăh’a, or Finding Our Way Home” and was the product of work by the K’änächa group and the Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in Community Support Team.

Emcee Debbie Nagano began the evening by reminding people that the discussion and the exhibits might trigger a reaction in people connected to the events. There was a list of support workers printed on the back of the evening’s program, just in case.

Elder Angie Joseph -Rear opened the meeting with a prayer in Hän and English. Chief Darren Taylor continued with a greeting and an introduction.

“This exhibit and the events that follow, are to acknowledge and honour our survivors. It’s also the beginning of a healing journey. The amount of people that showed up today indicates to me that there is understanding and support, and that is what is needed on the healing path.

“We all have to understand the issue as community, governments and as community members. With that understanding ... we all can start to develop programs and services that will help out survivors on the healing path.”

Andy Carville, Grand Chief of the Yukon Council of First Nations, thanked the Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in for hosting the exhibits and opening up a discussion on the impact of residential schools and the long term damage they did to first nations people and communities.

“Today the survivors of residential schools are working together, with many other members of the communities, on healing the impacts.”

Commissioner Van Bibber regretted that she could not be in Dawson for this event, and wrote that she was there in spirit. Van Bibber noted that she herself, as a “halfbreed” (her word), did not have to go to residential school, but she was aware of the pain and confusion of those who did. She looked forward to moving beyond those emotions.

“Please keep an open heart, move forward, do not dwell on looking back. It is all right to look back, but don’t stay there, as in many cases it is not healthy and stops you from seeing the open doors ahead of you.

“It is events such as this that will make us stronger.”

MP Larry Bagnell spoke of the trauma inflicted on first nations by the residential schools, noting that while the system may actually have been set up with the best of intentions, the road to a lot of personal hells seems to have been paved with them. The system was, he concluded, a mistake.

Margaret Horn, a Mohawk representative of the Legacy of Hope Foundation, was on hand to explain the “Where are the Children?” exhibit, the purpose of which is to “let the public, the people of Canada and our own people understand the legacy of residential schools.”

Sharon Moore, a counsellor with the Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in, explained some of the background of the K’änächa group during the five years of her involvement with it. The members took a subject which had been taboo and found in it the answers to many of the challenges they had experienced in their lives and seen in the lives of others.



“Drinking, anger, suicide thoughts, difficulties being a parent; all of these challenges and more could be traced back to their childhood experience of being removed from their homes to attend school far away from their community.”

Angie Joseph-Rear explained some of the history of the K’änächa group, and how it all seemed to explode out a group watching a movie called “Where the Spirit Lives”.



The group’s members owed a debt of gratitude to Dorothy Roberts and her daughter Krystle, who was 12 at the time, who invited the group to their home, offered them food, got them talking in a circle and began the process of feeling and healing. Joseph-Rear presented Dot Roberts with gifts for herself and her daughter.

The heart of the evening’s ceremony involved a community circle exercise. The survivor group formed an inner circle, facing outwards towards an outer circle formed by the rest of the hundreds of people at the event. As each survivor was presented with a symbolic welcoming gift, he or she was led to take a place in the outer circle, thus being welcomed back into the larger community with a loud “Welcome Home!”

The Hän Singers and Dancers performed several numbers while representatives of the Wolf and Crow clans carried around the community circle a hide inscribed with the names of those survivors who had died over the years. Those in the circle were encouraged to offer a gift of leaf tobacco by crumbling it on the hide. When the trio had completed the circle, they took the tobacco filled hide over the dike and down to the Yukon River where they tossed its contents upon the water.

The evening’s events closed with the official season’s opening of the Cultural Centre.

## Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in Score CDF Funding for Skateboard Park

Story & Photo by Dan Davidson

Klondike MLA Steve Nordick was pleased to present members of the Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in council with a cheque for a Community Development Fund Grant of \$83, 386.00 on Saturday, May.

Nordick explained that the grants was to assist the first nation in creating a skateboard park and installing playground equipment at the new Tr’ondëk Subdivision at the south end of Dawson City.

The project is expected to crate 320 hours of employment for two people.

The location of the skateboard park has not yet been determined, but it is a facility which city council promised to create some years ago and which died when the council was removed in 2004.



Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in leadership receive a large CDF cheque, L-R: councillor Bruce Taylor, Chief Darren Taylor, MLA Steve Nordick (Yukon Party), councillor Peter Nagano, councillor Roberta Joseph.

Skateboarding is a popular sport in Dawson City, but the town’s boardwalks and dirt streets are ill suited for it. Most businesses and public buildings do not encourage the activity on their boardwalks and decks due to the noise level and the wear and tear on wooden surfaces.

There has been a steadily deteriorating plywood skatepark in the old highway yard on Fifth Avenue, but it really is not safe to use any longer.

Speaking on behalf of the first nation, Ed Kormendy, Housing, Land and Resources Director had this to say.

“The Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in Lands Department are pleased to be a part of this important project. We worked hard alongside the Economic Development people at the Yukon Government to secure the funds for the skateboard park, and now I’m excited about moving forward to the construction phase.”

Otto Cutts, Executive Director for the first nation, added his support for the initiative.

“Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in Chief and Council have supported a new skateboard park in Dawson City for many years. It’s satisfying to see this project move closer to becoming a

reality. Our youth need healthy recreation choices, and a new skateboard park means they'll one more fun activity option."

## **Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in reverse Sewage Lagoon Ban, now willing to enter discussions**

By Dan Davidson

In a surprise move which rescinds a 2005 general assembly resolution to refuse the consideration of any Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in land for the purpose of constructing a sewage lagoon for Dawson City, the latest Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in General Assembly has authorized Chief and Council to propose a parcel of settlement land for the new lagoon.

The site currently under consideration by the Yukon government, which is in charge of all aspects of the project, is two parcels of land at the foot of the Dome Road, across from the ball park and soccer field on one boundary, and across the Klondike Highway from the first nation's Tr'ondëk Subdivision on another.

The Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in proposal would see the lagoon project moved to an elevated bench above the Tr'ochek (Lousetown or Klondike City) historic site.

The first nation has raised strong opposition to the government's chosen site since it was first identified, which it had not been at the time of the 2005 resolution, when the focus of the development was further down the Klondike Valley, either along the Bonanza Road or near the Quigley Landfill.

The current site is also above the town's main drinking water source, as all the other proposed sites have been, a fact which has met with a lot of opposition at public meetings on the subject. The bench proposal from the first nation is on a parcel of land that was previously identified as being very suitable for the lagoon development, but it was ruled out of the pool of possible locations after the 2005 resolution.

In a May 9 press release, Chief Darren Taylor discussed why the first nation has changed its policy.

"We've heard from Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in citizens and community members that such a visible lagoon will detract from Dawson's visual appeal," he said. "After discussing the issue with our citizens at a recent special general assembly, we're able to offer the community an alternate location."

"Our elders are concerned about the long-term safety of our water supply," said Taylor. "Building the lagoon on Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in land would calm any worries about sewage seeping into our drinking water."

"It's a solution that works for the entire community," added Taylor.

The government, through its spokesperson, Kris Sarson, has indicated that it wants to begin construction of the lagoon very soon, following 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.

While Dawson is currently under a court order to have its

treatment plant in place by December 2008, Sarson has admitted there is no way the YTG run project can be finished in that time frame. Sarson told his audience that 2010, 2011 or even 2013 could be realistic dates for having the \$14 million lagoon treatment system in operation.

A lot of design preparation has been done for the Dome Road site, but no construction has begun, and YTG could anticipate that when the Yukon court reviews a June project update, the judge would be happy to see the community unified on a chosen site, one which territorial engineers have previously said would be just about ideal, if only it had been available.

The Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in press release says that the first nation hopes to meet with YTG soon to discuss the suitability of the bench location.

"This lagoon will be an important piece of Dawson infrastructure," said Otto Cutts, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Executive Director. "We're looking forward to working with the Yukon Government and the City of Dawson to make sure it goes in the right place."

## **Uffish Thoughts: Where's there's Smoke there's ... confusion**

by Dan Davidson

It didn't take nearly as long for Dawson City's smoking resolution to pass at the Association of Yukon Communities as it did to pass council here, but then AYC didn't have two months to bat the idea around - just an hour or two on Sunday morning.

But in that time there was room for hesitation and confusion.

The first problem with the resolution was that it had been rendered almost redundant by the Legislature's second reading of Todd Hardy's private member's bill on the same subject the previous week. Petitioning the Minister of Health to initiate such a bill was no longer necessary. Indeed, passing the original wording might have been counterproductive.

Thus came the first in a flurry of amendments that, at times, became rather comical, as voices were raised to amend the amendment, propose friendly amendments, and generally massage the original resolution into a useful shape.

Proposed: That AYC, on behalf of its membership, supports the legislature's move to deal with the issue.

Objection: The members from Faro have been sent to Dawson with specific instructions NOT to agree. Neither do the reps from Mayo and Watson Lake, so the resolution can't read in any way that makes it look unanimous.

Question: Is it fair to pass any such resolution when the membership is not united?

Reply: This organization runs on democratic - majority rules - lines. Total agreement, however desirable, is not necessary.

Considering that the assembly had already passed a resolution on air quality standards with very little in the way of opposition, this objection was almost odd. What is air



quality, after all, but the smoking issue written in capital letters?

Maybe that's the problem. The capital letter issue is large and abstract, nowhere near as immediate and personal as telling a person where they can and can't light up for a puff. Still, we got past seat belts and prohibiting alcohol consumption while driving in the past.

Question: Shouldn't there be community consultation on this issue before a vote is taken?

Reply: YTG has already preempted anything AYC might do and has already announced its own intention to consult, so there's no need for each council to do it by itself.

Consultation, as any observer of the political process can attest, can be an excuse for putting things off. When in doubt about the results of a process (say, the Education Act Review, for instance), take it back to the people. This often seems to prove that Hamlet was right, and that brave endeavors, sicklied over with the pale cast of thought can indeed "lose the name of action."

Objection: Just because the entire country and a good chunk of the G8 nations has pretty much moved towards tougher restrictions on smoking doesn't mean that we should do it here. We're Yukoners, after all.

Ah, yes, the famous reverse-bandwagon cry so often heard reverberating from the hills. Where was that pioneer spirit when it was time to take a stand against X-boxes, "tickle me" Elmo, cell phones, Cabbage patch dolls, bare bulging bellies beneath short tank tops over low rise jeans, and all the other trends that we ape so easily?

Objection: We don't need no regulation. We can regulate ourselves.

Right, the brick in the wall argument. The sad fact is that the Municipal Act doesn't assign public health to towns and villages, except when it comes to garbage collection and sewage treatment. Medical matters used to be run by the feds, but they now belong to YTG.

Parties of all political stripes have been ducking this issue for years. The Duncan Liberals gave Dawson an award when it passed the territory's first smoking restriction regulations, but YTG stayed away from tackling the issue itself.

Everyone's been waiting to see how it went over in Whitehorse, where most of the people (and smokers) live, before looking at the larger picture. There was lots of sound and fury, and a court case or two, but it seems the experiment has succeeded, so it's safe to go on.

It's time. After all, what's been happening has just been another exercise in downloading responsibility (without accompanying jobs or money) from senior government to junior.

Next thing you know it'll be taxis. No! Wait! They did that already.

And so the debate went on, surprisingly robust for an issue where it appears the decision has already been made by someone else.

In the end, however, there was an amended resolution in which AYC supported the move toward non-smoking legislation as outlined in Bill 104, the Smoke Free Places

Act, leaving Dawson's John Steins a very happy mayor.

## RSS Honours Retiring Secretary

Bonnie's Farewell

written by Clive & Laurel Betts and Betty Davidson  
chanted by RSS Staff at Bonnie's Assembly

I don't know but I've been told  
Bonnie has a heart of gold

Bonnie's leaving, such a shame  
RSS won't be the same

Bonnie is the heart of the school;  
We all know she's really cool

Bonnie's giggle filled the air;  
We loved to hear it everywhere

Phone numbers at her beck and call;  
We knew Bonnie had them all



Bonnie Barber looks on as co-worker Sonja Stephenson spoofs a typical day in the school office.

Report card days were such a pain;  
She'll never have to do them again

Attendance books were such a drag;  
Bonnie had to nag and nag

Regal, Avon, scrapbooks, too;  
Bonnie has the stuff for you

Bonnie's backroom's full of clutter;  
All we hear is Sonja's mutter

Tuxedos were her specialty,  
Measured up with lots of glee

Bonnie loves to take out slivers;  
Visit her without a shiver

If you have a bloody nose,  
Bonnie knows where the icepack goes

Christmas time won't be the same;  
We'll never get her crafts again

If you need an awesome cake,  
Bonnie loves to bake and bake

Bonnie's treats were very handy;  
We all loved to eat her candy

She made ice pool tickets sell;  
The right date, she'd never tell

Now it's time for her to go;  
Lots of quilts for her to sew

Many crafts both big and small;  
She'll have time to do them all

She did her work without a fuss;  
We're so sad she's leaving us

Sunless days were such a pain;  
Now she'll see the sun again

No more late calls in the night;  
All the keys must hang up right

If you need to find some stuff,  
Don't call Bonnie, she's had enough!

Now we all will get a rest;  
No more calling us a pest

We're all feeling really sad,  
Because we won't hear "You're bad!"

Bonnie'll be home twenty-four/seven;  
Chuck'll think he's gone to heaven

On the last day, we will cry,  
'Cause we all must say good-bye.....

## Will it be Wheels or Walkers on Mary McLeod Road?

Story & Photos by Dan Davidson

It's officially Mary McLeod Road, though some still call it the old Dome Road and still older folks call it the AC Trail. Coming off 7th Avenue at the top of King Street, it's a narrow, winding road, scarcely wide enough for two cars to pass in some places, with a posted speed limit of 30 kph at the top near the graveyards and 25 kph coming down the hill towards town.



The first problem is that a lot of people don't drive it that speed.

The second is that it is becoming more and more popular as a walking trail, whether for recreational walkers or for those out with babies in carriages.

And two questions are being asked. Is it safe? Can it continue to be shared by vehicles and foot traffic?

This has been addressed now at two council meetings. Dr. Suzanne Crocker, who lives on the high side of the road after it passes the graveyard on the way to the (new) Dome Road, appeared before council on May 1 as a delegation of one to express her concerns about speed and safety and to present some unofficial survey results which she had collected to explore options for making the road a safe place.

She recommended three options: speed troughs (inverse bumps) to slow people down; the creation of a walking trail; the closure of the lower and steeper portion of the road, roughly between 7th Avenue and the Crocus Bluff Recreational Site.

The road is already closed during the coldest part of the winter, when a groundwater glacier a metre or so thick renders it impassable except to foot traffic and snow machines.

Public Works Superintendent Norm Carlson reported to council on May 16, recommending that the best option to explore was the road closure. Widening the road would actually be the best way to go on safety issues, he said, but the town cannot afford that.

RCMP Sgt. Dan Gaudet was also present and noted, as part of his monthly report, that the road was seeing heavier pedestrian traffic and that the detachment had received a few

complaints about speeding in recent weeks.

Council requested that the detachment give this road some priority in the coming weeks and report back as to findings.

In addition, council decided to conduct its own survey of residents and develop a plan for dealing with the problem. While there was distinct inclination to close part of the road, councillor Ed Kormendy reminded council of the furor that erupted last summer when some unpopular stop signs were erected on one end of the 5th Avenue block controlled by Westmark. He recommended studying the matter for a month before acting, and giving people time to react to the possibility of a closure.

## **Quigley Landfill Users are turning the place into a Dump**

Story & Photo by Dan Davidson

The Conservation Klondike Society (CKS) is being frustrated in its attempts to manage the Quigley Landfill by thefts and access issues, and is also losing operating capital to theft from the site.

In both cases, the large number of keys to the facility, located just at the southern edge of the town's boundary, seems to be a major part of the problem.

In a letter tabled at the May 15 Council meeting, society administrator, Kath Selkirk, complained of two thefts in recent months.

"On 14 February cash was stolen from inside the locked office.

"On 17 April one and a half pallets worth of large glass liquor bottles, with a value of approximately \$300, were taken from the pallets on the deck."

Selkirk noted that CKS can ill afford to lose the revenue from such thefts. The non-profit society manages the landfill on a contract with the town and uses any money it can generate to pay the attendant and run the recycling center in town.

"That both these incidents occurred when the site was closed suggests that the thefts were perpetrated by key-holders," Selkirk wrote.

"Both incidents were reported to the RCMP, but due to loose control of access to the site, it is doubtful that a culprit will be found."



At the meeting Paul Moore, Dawson's CAO, said he really had no idea how many keys were out there, but the low end of his guess was dozens.

"Hundreds," said a voice from the gallery.

Selkirk's letter went on to indicate some other problems that are caused by people visiting the landfill outside of its regular posted hours.

"The gates are frequently left open, allowing unsupervised access to users and to wildlife.

"At the times when no attendant is present to supervise disposal of waste, irresponsible dumping is prevalent; commodities on the whole remain unsorted, and dangerous or toxic items are thrown into the burn pit."

Councillors discussed the need to come up with a plan for dealing with this issue, ranging from a campaign of public awareness to recalling all outstanding keys or changing the locks and limiting access to regular posted hours.

Selkirk's letter also noted that solutions could include a security fence around the property.

In the letter and the discussion it was noted that ineffective use of the landfill will reduce its life span, something that the town can ill afford to have happen. Dawson has already filled up one landfill in the last 40 years. It took an extensive search of locations to find the Quigley site as the landfill on the Dome Road reached the end of its time in the 1990s.

Most land in the valley is porous and that allows groundwater to seep into the aquifer, posing a risk to the well water which serves the town. This complaint has been made with regard to the Quigley site itself, which was originally established as a heavy metal dump by YTG and then converted to use as the district landfill under the town's control.

## **Ferry Season Begins Early this Year**

Story & Photos by Dan Davidson

There was no wild slide into the Yukon River this year, as the George Black Ferry was eased into the water with hardly a splash on Friday morning.

While delegates to the 28th annual general meeting of the Association of Yukon Communities registered and got organized for their first presentation of the day, the crew from the Dept. of Highways were just across the street and over the dike, easing the ferry into position on the wooden rails that would carry it to the river.

There were only a dozen or so people outside in the

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drizzle to watch the operation. It was damp enough that even the ravens, which normally swoop in by the score for a snack once the wooden runners have been lubricated with lard, were conspicuous by their absence.

The ferry spends the winter on level ground at the top of



its slipway, and has to be pushed out to the tipping point of the runners before gravity can assist its launching.

Loaders with large beams fastened vertically where their buckets might normally be, eased it forward from either end



of the vessel, while cables from the bow and stern ran back to two cats further up the bank which acted as controlling anchors for the operation, keeping the George Black on the straight and narrow as it crept to the beginning of its slide.

In just a few minutes it was all over and the ferry was in the water. Regular 24 hour service began a few hours later and will continue until sometime after Thanksgiving.

The Top of the World Highway, according to the weekend Road Report on the YTG website, is only open as far as Kilometre 4, and the Customs Station at the border remains closed.

## AYC Seeks Clarification on Yukon Government Funding Announcement

Association of Yukon Communities (AYC) president Doug Graham welcomed the planned increase to municipal funding announced this weekend by Community Services Minister Glen Hart. "We are very appreciative of the government's recognition of the chronic under funding of Yukon municipalities."

While Minister Hart announced that the Yukon Government will be increasing the Comprehensive Municipal Grant (CMG) after completing a review, there was no announcement about the amount of the increase, or the nature of the review. "While we thank Minister Hart and the Yukon Government for the commitment to increase municipal funding, we need to understand how AYC and Yukon municipalities will be involved in the funding review," Graham said, "nobody knows the needs of Yukon municipalities better than the municipalities themselves."

Graham called on the Yukon Government to work with AYC to define a review process that:

- Includes the full involvement of AYC and Yukon municipalities,

- Considers the long term operations, maintenance and capital requirements of Yukon municipalities,

- Fulfills the Yukon Party election commitment of indexing the CMG.

"This is a critical review that will impact all Yukon families and businesses that pay municipal taxes," Graham said, "we must ensure that municipalities are able to provide the services and infrastructure that Yukoners rely on while maintaining municipal taxes at fair and reasonable levels."

## AYC Came to Town



Mayor  
John  
Steins



MLA  
Steve  
Nordick





Chief  
Darren  
Taylor



M.P.  
Larry  
Bagnell



## **RSS Grade Two Adventure I hope that someone gets my message in a bottle...**

Hi! My name is John. I am in Grade Two. I live in Dawson City, Yukon, Canada. My best friends' are John Karl and Will. My teacher's name is Mrs. Betts. My favourite food is perogies. My brother's name is Charles. My Dad's name is Ray. My mom's name is Marjorie. My dog's name is Sparky. Do you have a dog? We named our dog after his Dad's name. Some people in the class call me the funniest kid in the class. Soccer is my favourite sport. What is yours? Where did you find my bottle? I live in Sunnydale. During freeze up (when the river freezes), we drive across a bridge made of ice. Where do you live? I used to have a cat. Its name is Kitty. But we had to give it away. It was black and white. Do you have a cat? I like cats.

From, John

Hi! My name is Madison. I live in Dawson City, Yukon, Canada. Where do you live? We get snow in the winter, leaves fall off of trees in fall, grass and flowers grow in summer, snow melts and crocuses bloom in spring. In the summer, my family and I are going to Japan. We are going there to visit my mom and dad's friends. Are you going somewhere special? I like to swim. Do you like swimming? I like to explore science and do science

experiments and study the ocean. Do you like science? I have two dogs and a parrot. I like to make crafts. Do you like to make crafts. My mom's my teacher. My dad teaches grade four. We are studying the ocean. My animal is the common dolphin. My favourite ocean animal is the lion fish. What is your favourite ocean animal? When I grow up, I'm going to be an orca whale trainer. What are you going to be when you grow up and what are you if you're a grown up now? My favourite kind of food is ichiban noodles. What is your favourite food? I am 7 years old. (Almost 8 years old.) How old are you? I live in a house on the Dome. Where do you live in your city or town? Can you please write back?

From, Madison

Dear Someone,

Hi! My name is Nylan. I live in Dawson City, Yukon, Canada. I am 7 years old. I like math, dogs, cats and books. I have two brothers and a lot of cousins. I have a fish, a bird, and a guinea pig. I love my guinea pig! Do you like bugs? I have my own playground in my backyard! My mom and dad organize the Trek over the Top. It's a snowmobile adventure. Are you a boy or a girl? Do you play a lot or work a lot? In math we are learning multiplication! In June my aunt is coming. I play the keyboard! I have a cool bike. Do you like biking? I want to be a farmer when I grow up! Do you have cows, horses, chickens or sheep? I like my teachers, Mrs. Betts and Christine! Do you like your teachers (if you are a kid)? Do you have Christmas or Hanukkah? I have Christmas. Can you tell me what you do on holidays? Do you have a video camera? I do! What kind of house do you have?

From, Nylan



Dear Someone,

Hi! My name is Jasmin. I live in Dawson City, Yukon, Canada. I am 8 years old. I go to Robert Service School. I am in grade 2. My teachers are Mrs. Betts and Christine. I like to play tag. I like to ride my bike. I like to have fun. I like to read. I like Elizabeth.

From, Jasmin

## New Fire training Facility Ignites Enthusiasm

Story & Photos by Jim Regimbal - Fire Chief



On Wednesday, May 9, Dawson's and Klondike's firefighters held a joint training night to commemorate the inaugural opening of the fire training facility - unlike the breaking of champagne bottles on new vessels - firefighters do things a little riskier and more on the edge - we have a fire and send firefighters in to understand fire behaviour prior to extinguishing it. After the fire is out is when we enjoy the champagne.

One of my personal mandates when I first joined the team was to see what I could do to put in place a training facility that would enable us the opportunity to learn the skills necessary on an on-going basis, in real life scenarios that depict what we will face during an emergency - A Fire Training Facility was the way. We now have a facility in place that will enable us to train on mastering the skills required to effectively save lives and preserve property. The facility could never have been acquired except for the amazing support from the City of Dawson, Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in



Government, Parks Canada, The Fire Marshal's Office, Property Management YTG and of course the Government of Yukon Department of Economic Development for their support and approving the application process. Thanks also go to Jack and his gang for erecting the facility.

## First Nation's Lagoon proposal will either muddy the waters or clear them

Story & Photo by Dan Davidson

The muddy question of where to dispose of Dawson's effluent became even more muddy this week - unless it actually became clearer - with the introduction of a new element to the mixture. The Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in's decision to overturn an earlier general assembly resolution and allow some of its settlement lands to be considered as a sewage lagoon site will require a major readjustment to the planning that has been done on the project so far.

Not that it hasn't already changed a number of times. While anyone new to the process might have been led by the most recent Powerpoint presentation here to believe that the current favoured site for a sewage lagoon - the lots just below the Dome Road - had been picked out by the Norns from the beginning of time to become the answer to Dawson's sewage problems, that's just an illusion created by the power of a visual aid. Lagoon potential has been investigated

before, and rejected due to lack of available good sites. We sidetracked down the trail leading to a sequencing batch reactor mechanical plant until the capital cost soared to over \$19 million and the annual O&M checked in at three quarters of a million.

The current price tag on the lagoon is around \$14 million, up quite a bit from when it was first proposed in 2004, and it may well hit the SBR price tag by the time it actually gets built. The real lure of the lagoon is that it will only cost about one-third of the O&M dollars to run and it won't need some rarified (expensive) species of engineer to do the running.

It's only a year or so ago, however, that the "best site" for this project was many kilometres out of town, either in a swamp or on land controlled by a placer miner.

The upper bench site that the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in are now willing to discuss was one of those investigated sites that would routinely vanish from the screen during the Powerpoint show. It would be noted that it was a good site - away from the watershed, sunshine almost year round, out of sight and out of mind - but the GA '05 resolution meant that it was not available and so the moving pointer of destiny had to look elsewhere.

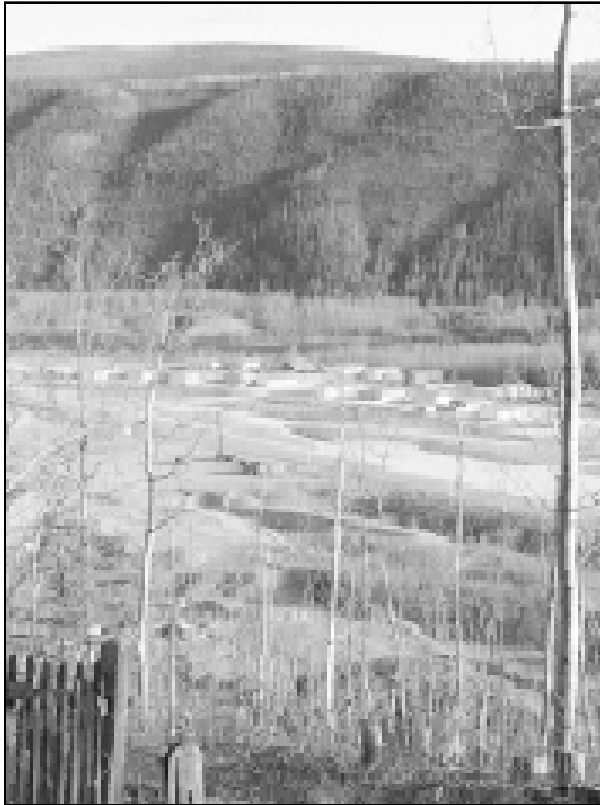
Then the tests at the screening plant revealed that our effluent was so weak you could barely detect it any more after it had been through half the usual number of treatment

cells. (Why DID we ever plead guilty in the first place?) That meant the project could be smaller, and that opened up some new “inevitable” locations.

The north end site under the Moosehide Slide was rejected due to slope instability. The tailings land under the Dome Road - the road which isn't very stable either, when you look at it closely - was deemed suitable.

By this time the first nation had close to two dozen houses in the Tr'ondëk Subdivision, and no wish to have a lagoon located almost across the road from its pride and joy.

Otto Cutts, the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in's Executive Director, ripped into the proposal at a number of meetings, questioning the aesthetics of the location, the safety of the



water supply, the science behind the microbial action in the lagoon, and the requirement for the government to consult with the first nation before doing anything like that so close to TH land.

At various points in the public discussion it would not have been surprising to hear of a law suit being launched.

Instead, the first nation has decided to offer an olive branch, complete with a dove sitting on it. The proposal they appear to be ready to consider would solve most of the problems associated with every possible inevitable lagoon site the government has been looking at since 2005. I can't see that there's any way the government wouldn't want to consider it, and I can't see the court objecting to any slight delay that might be caused by these negotiations.

## **Lorenzo Gremard: La vie d'un vrai mineur du Klondike!**

Par Marielle Veilleux

C'est en DC3 de Vancouver que Lorenzo Gremard débarqua à Dawson City, en 1948. N'ayant pas encore de route reliant Whitehorse à Dawson, les bateaux à roue sur la rivière Yukon étaient le moyen de transport favori et bien entendu l'avion pour ceux qui pouvaient se le permettre.

En provenance du Temiscamingue, Lorenzo avait l'expérience pour travailler dans les mines d'or, cependant cette région du Québec n'avait pas la renommée que la ruée vers l'or du Klondike a connue au tournant du siècle.

Lorenzo, étant un grand romantique, avait décidé dès un jeune âge de suivre dans les traces de ceux qui l'avaient précédées. C'est avec cette notion qu'il entreprit de poursuivre ce rêve et donc débuta le plus grand voyage de sa vie.

Ses aventures commencèrent à bord des trains de cargaison; «c'était l'époque de la grande dépression» me raconte-t-il «et ceux qui désiraient aller dans l'Ouest du pays devaient essayer d'embarquer sur ces trains et ça sans être aperçus. » Le voyage pouvait être d'une durée d'une semaine ou même s'étendre jusqu'à un mois. Lorenzo fut assez chanceux lors de son premier voyage et débarqua à Vancouver quelques jours plus tard seulement.

N'ayant pas beaucoup d'argent de poche il dû se procurer du travail immédiatement, c'est alors qu'il rencontra un Norvégien; Walter et tous deux décidèrent d'aller travailler sur l'île de Vancouver dans un camp de bûcheron.

Ils ont travaillé ensemble pendant quelques mois avant de décider de tenter leur chance au Klondike. Et c'est en DC3 qu'ils arrivèrent au Yukon pour la première fois, en 1948.

En arrivant à Dawson, Lorenzo, avec son expérience, ne trouva aucune difficulté à déboucher un emploi chez un des mineurs locaux. «Dans ce temps-là, il y avait beaucoup de main d'œuvre, » me dit Lorenzo, «Dawson était la capitale du Yukon, sa population consistait surtout d'américains et amplement de Canadiens-Français», ce qui ne fut pas trop dépayçant pour lui. Il poursuit en disant: «On y opérait encore les dragues, en effet, il y en avait 8 qui étaient toujours fonctionnelles. Ses grosses machines qui fonctionnaient à l'aide de vapeur étaient de peu de maintien, comparé aux machines d'aujourd'hui» m'explique Lorenzo. Notons que les mines du Yukon, à l'opposé du Temiscamingue, sont des mines en surface, souvent dans des cours d'eau, où l'on retrouvait ses dragues ainsi que les fameuses pépites d'or.

Après avoir travaillé dans les mines d'or du Klondike, de celles d'argent de Keno et celle d'Asbestos à Clinton Creek. Ainsi que d'avoir fait un séjour dans l'Arctique pour une compagnie de pétrole, et presque s'être écrasé en avion faisant de la prospection pour une compagnie minière en Colombie-Britannique, Lorenzo décida finalement «de partir à son compte. »

C'est à 60 miles, sur le bord de la rivière Yukon, en aval de Dawson qu'il obtint sa première «claim. » Il acheta les anciens bâtiments de Flat Creek, qu'il transporta jusqu'à 60

miles. Celles-ci, lui ont servi de cabine personnelle et de cuisine pour le camp.

Lorenzo se souvient du temps où il a dû faire face à un ours noir, qui était entré par la porte de la cuisine pour voir ce qui était sur le menu, et n'étant pas trop satisfait, il déchiqueta le linge de vaisselle et ressortit par la fenêtre, au grand soulagement de Lorenzo qui avait laissé sa carabine à côté de la porte.

Jadis, le procédé pour extraire l'or pouvait prendre une couple d'années surtout à cause du pergélisol. «La première année, » m'explique Lorenzo « on devait y creuser des 'pipes' afin que l'air puisse entrer dans le sol et l'année suivante on procédait à l'extraction de l'or dans le sol, alors dégelé. » Ayant essayé plusieurs procédés, il opta de travailler à l'aide de grue «caterpillar D-4 et de D-6. »

Ne travaillant pas l'hiver, Lorenzo avait pris l'habitude de retourner au Québec visiter sa parente, pour ensuite

passer le reste du temps à séjourner à Miami ou à Haïti «afin de revenir en forme pour la saison estivale» m'avoue-t-il. «J'ai toujours eu de la main d'œuvre du Québec, je voulais leur donner l'opportunité de venir travailler au Klondike avec moi, me permettant de conserver ma culture francophone» ajoute-t-il.

Au fil de sa carrière, Lorenzo a vu le prix de l'or varié de \$35.00 jusqu'à \$800.00 l'once dans les années '60. «Nous vendions nos pépites d'or au gouvernement, tout ce que nous avions à faire, n'étaient que d'emmener nos sacs d'or à la banque et c'est ainsi que nous étions payés» m'explique-t-il.

Lorsqu'il a accumulé 25 claims Lorenzo décida de vendre et de prendre sa retraite.

Il s'acheta un petit morceau de terrain à Dawson ouest, et se construisit une petite maison et un grand jardin qu'il garda pendant plusieurs années. Vivant toujours à Dawson, Lorenzo a gracieusement accepté d'interrompre sa partie de crib afin de répondre à mes dernières questions. Lorsque je lui demande si ça lui manque les mines, il me répond tout simplement: «Oui. »





## Reflections on the Changing Season by Dan Davidson

We've been dodging round these puddles now for just about a week,  
and it's hard to find the streets these days for sure.

It's not a lot we're asking, it's not a lot we seek:  
just a route back home to get our craft to shore.

But when your craft has wheels and the road has turned to water,  
then the way cross town's more complex than before.

Still, the snow must melt in April and the melt helps thaw the river,  
and a gradual thaw means less chance of a flood.

So we'll pick our way in gratitude and dig out boots and rubbers,  
for we know that after water - then comes mud.

May 6, 2007

