

# The Klondike Sun

June 20, 2007 Online Edition

Dawson City, Yukon



Commissioner Geraldine Van Bibber addresses the attendants at the Commissioner's Tea.

## Graduation: a time for a time for “glee, gloating and laughter”

by Dan Davidson

Shakespeare may have written that “brevity is the soul of wit”, but he put the words in the mouth of a long winded chief councillor who could never say anything without a bureaucratic flourish, so it’s easy to imagine that it was a sentiment hardly ever honoured in the observance.

Just so, it’s hardly possible to imagine a commencement ceremony without a bevy of special speakers making every attempt to lay one last bon mot on the members of the graduating class.

The June 2 ceremony for Robert Service School’s Class of 2007 may have come as close as one can imagine to passing this test.

Dr. Philip Cull, the principal of RSS, set the standard for

the morning by honouring the grads’ request and not making a long speech at all, though he did make some brief comments concerning all the things he wasn’t going to lecture them about: chasing goals, living dreams, or hitching a wagon to a star.

Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in Chief Darren Taylor acknowledged that much of what he was about to say had surely been said before, “But as you are all aware, we have to repeat these things over and again to remind ourselves of our ... shared responsibility.”

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Principal Dr. Philip Cull introduces the graduating class of 2007.

Taylor spoke of the need to remain aware of where one has come from, and also of the need to be able to adapt to a changing world.

"On behalf of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in we support you in any way we can to in order to achieve the very best that life has to offer you."

While the future may be full of challenges, Taylor said, education offers the best way to be prepared to meet them.

School Council chair Joanne MacDonald reminded the grads that "love has helped to get you where you are today.

"As you enter the next step on your journey you're still going to need the support of your family and friends. They're going to be there for you, just like they have been. Don't be afraid to ask for help.

"Make your dreams come true; believe in yourselves; take time to enjoy each day; and remember that this is just the first step, because eventually you guys will be the top notch dogs running the country."

Klondike MLA Steve Nordick (Yukon Party) took the injunction to be brief very seriously after threatening to speak for an hour and a half.

"Don't be afraid to make mistakes," he told the group.

"Remember that the little decisions in life matter. Not long ago I was back in Saskatchewan and I made one little decision to come up to Dawson City to work for summer employment - and here I am today. It was one of the best small decisions I've ever made."

Yukon's Member of Parliament Larry Bagnell, notorious for lengthy graduation speeches in Dawson, was quite concise this year.

"You didn't get here by accident," he told the grads.

"You made an important choice ... to work hard ... to persevere. The boisterous celebration you will have today is well deserved."

Bagnell ended on the note he always sounds for Dawson grad classes, that coming from the town they are from lays on them the special duty of becoming ambassadors for the territory.

"Dawson is known around the world for its magic and mystery and it is the heart of the Yukon. Help to keep the Klondike as it is so that the gold in its creeks and in your veins will continue to enrich the people of the Yukon."

Regional Superintendent of Education Denis Gauthier was on hand to offer best wishes to the class of which his son was a part, and whose members he had come to know well during his seven years as principal at RSS.

His final task of the day was to introduce class valedictorian Jessica Burian, who had her own messages for her classmates, a series of affectionate and amusing



Evening finery replaced academic gowns for the banquet.



Flying motor boards outside the Palace Grand are a Robert Service School tradition.

anecdotes which brought down the house several times as she maintained her cheerful, deadpan delivery.

"I tried not to embarrass anyone too much," Burian said as she closed. "Parents, if you need clarification on anything I said about your children, please see me after class."

"I did not want to write a speech full of famous quotes, and my speech may not inspire anyone to future greatness. Some of you may have found it irreverent. I make no apology. This is a celebration, a time for glee, gloating and laughter. The real world will intrude soon enough."

The celebration continued with the handing out of certificates by Dr. Call and the school's "Mom", Administrative Assistant Bonnie Barber. There followed lots of photo opportunities outside the picturesque Palace Grand on a beautiful Klondike summer morning.

A formal dinner took place at the school that evening, when the grads shed their academic robes and paraded forth in their best finery for a great meal, some additional speeches, and a dance.

This year's graduating class consisted of Mindy Anderson, Ashley Bower, Jessica Burian, Mary Fraughton, David Gammie, Bradley Gauthier, Sydney Larson, Taylor Mayes, Patricia McLeod, Kevin Mendelsohn, Brian Naef, Daniel O'Leary-Baikie, Kylene Perry, J.T. Taylor, Joshua Vogt, Patrick Winkler.

## Celebrating Threads in the Fabric of Our Lives

by Jessica Burian, Class Valedictorian

When Dr. Cull told me that I had been chosen valedictorian and asked me if I would accept, I paused before answering. I really didn't want to write a speech. I was honoured to have been asked but it meant more work. I was already tutoring, working at my summer job and tidying house for my grandparents' visit. All of this was already

cutting into my party time. I didn't want to fall behind my classmates in that particular aspect of our lives. However, I accepted. It really is an honour.

I believe this is the most important speech I have written in my 13 years at Robert Service School. It is important because it is not a selfish speech - all about me. It is about 15 individuals I have grown up with in this community. Most of them I have known while still in the womb, with our mothers complaining about swollen feet and sore backs and our fathers hiding from their wives at the local watering hole.

This speech is dedicated to these 15 individuals who have become like family to me and to their parents who may not realize the outstanding job they have done in raising their children. At times your kid may seem like a total brat - disrespectful, rude, lazy - and all you feel like doing is smacking them around a little bit; but I am here to tell you that every single graduate here is someone you can be more than just proud of you can also be thrilled that they are leaving home.!!!

At this point I would like to say a few words about each of my fellow graduates. In no particular order and with no bias of course, I will start with my boyfriend, Daniel. Daniel came to us from Goose Bay, Labrador at the end of Grade 9. I knew where Labrador was; however, Goose Bay eluded me. Fortunately, I knew how to use an atlas. Thank you Mr. Sutherland. Daniel's taste is excellent. He is genuinely liked by everyone and that is an accolade that can be attributed to very few people. What else can I say? He's perfect!

Of all the graduates, Ashley has had the largest presence in my life. Our mothers were close friends and we shared many aspects of our lives outside of school. I'd like to thank her for all the permission slips she signed on behalf of my father and I'd also like to truly thank her for taking the time to help me with my Grade 12 chemistry when my hand was in a cast and I was unable to write. I could go on and on about Ashley's scholarly achievements but this speech isn't just about Ashley - so back to me - I mean, Brian.

Brian was born big. Everything he does in life is done in a big way, whether it's volleyball where he played for the Yukon team or his grades, which were excellent. My favourite class with Brian was Math. Now and then he would



arrive at school with waffle batter that Claudia had made and a waffle iron. Then the whole class would work on division - division of strawberries, division of waffles, division of syrup. They were mm-mm good!

The comment on Kyleene's report card almost every year was "Kyleene talks too much". It was true but not the whole story. She is the one that would get caught because her laughter is very distinctive, more like a cackle - no offence Kyleene. It's contagious and we love you for it.

Joshua has learned to read well, unlike the rest of us, and I am envious. If I read at least half as many books in my lifetime as Joshua has read so far, I will consider myself well-read. I wouldn't be at all surprised to find out that Joshua is hiding a book under his robe right now. I won't tell you what I think everyone else might be hiding underneath their robes buuuut ...

David - there are so many stories to choose from. Sylvie, Gary, what can I say that you would approve of? Your son has given us memories that we will never forget and believe me I would like to forget some of them. David is the one you can count on to cheer you up if you're feeling down, liven up a boring school day and make you laugh just because.

I remember Mindy from Band class where she played clarinet. She was good at it too, but English is where Mindy truly excelled. I know one of your dreams is to attend the University of Victoria and good luck to you with that venture.

I believe Patrick has what it takes to go far in almost any sport he chooses, whether it's volleyball, soccer, golf or couch chucking. I think he just needs to spend a little less time with the video games. If there is such a thing as a natural born sportsman, Patrick is it, and he had better remember me when he is making his millions as a sports icon.

I remember when Patricia and I were in elementary school and she would come to my house for lunch. We ate lots of "Ichibum" noodles. She was a lot of fun then and she's a lot of fun now. Trisha is going to have a "sweet ride" this summer - a buggy out at a mining camp.

Kevin, you are now and will continue to be a great asset to our community. You volunteer as a fire fighter and have worked with the youth and these are commendable qualities. I hope your skill as a boxer opens doors for you in the future.

JT finished off his last year in Whitehorse but we are thrilled that he is able to graduate with us today. I will remember JT's artwork because he drew on everything - homework, notebooks and the occasional textbook. It was fantastic! I hope it remains a passion for him.

Sydney is one of the most responsible people I know. I don't know how she does it. She looks after her siblings, helps out around the house big time, gets good grades and still manages to find time to party with the rest of us. Way to go, Sydney!

Bradley may seem like the quiet type but once you get to know him he really opens up and can be quite hilarious. He really is a good boy, and I mean that in the nicest way. They

are few and far between.

Taylor is man pretty. I know he would want me to say that. Is it true? You be the judge. I might not think he's as pretty as he thinks he is but I still think he's pretty cool inside and out. Taylor is one smart cookie too - he pulled off 90s in Physics.

That takes care of everyone in my class except myself and I'm not about to tell you any of my embarrassing moments. I'll save those for my ten year reunion.

I have tried not to embarrass anyone too much. Parents, if you need clarification on anything I've mentioned about your children please see me after class.

I did not want to write a speech full of famous quotes, and my speech may not inspire anyone to future greatness. Some of you may have found it irreverent. I make no apologies. This is a celebration - a time for glee and gloating and laughter. The "real world" will intrude soon enough.

At this time I would like to thank the teachers who never gave up on us - and for those of you who did, I'm sure you had your reasons, but look, we made it anyway!

To our families, our mothers and fathers, our brothers and sisters, and to everyone else who has been a thread in the fabric of our lives, thank you.

## **Federal Summer Grant Changes Created Confusion, says Yukon 's MP**

By Dan Davidson

Many businesses and non-profit groups across the country got a rude shock when they heard back from their applications for federal summer grants to employ students. Groups that had been using the program successfully for many years suddenly found that they had not met the new criteria and had been cut off.

Yukon's MP. Larry Bagnell, says that that this came about as a result of ill considered changes to the way student employment grants were handled this year.

"First of all, they cancelled the old program, which was working well, and then invented a new one. In the new program they had stricter criteria, and the local offices had to analyze each grant application related to the criteria."

Previously, Bagnell said, funding decisions had been made at the regional level, and the local funding agencies had tended to try to make sure that some money got to almost every applicant. This year, under the Canada Summer Jobs Initiative, the final decisions were made in Ottawa, and only the top scores got any funding at all.

In particular, Bagnell said, businesses were cut from the program, with the rationale being that they should provide their own funding. That left mostly non-government and non-profit organizations making applications. Organizations with high ratings got everything they asked for (which was usually more than they actually expected to get) and other organizations got nothing.

Bagnell said that a hue and cry went up across the country

in May when the funding rejection letters were received by many hundreds of groups across the country, groups that in many cases run tourist information bureaus, local museums, community recreation facilities and other activities that could not be run without that funding.

"We raised the issue in Parliament day after day, blasting them (the Harper government) for this - not for the ones that got students by the ones that didn't for the first time. There were groups - charities that help people with diseases - and all sorts of things that didn't get any money right across the country."

Bagnell stressed that the intent of the program isn't just to help NGOs and businesses.

"It gives the students training and experience, as well as helping them raise money for the education."

Unlike some other decisions that have been made federally, this one got changed.

"After the hue and cry raised by all the people that didn't get students and by the Opposition in Parliament, the government reneged on its new program and somehow magically came up with some finds, so that my understanding is that now everyone that got a student in the past has funding for a student now."

While Bagnell is relieved that this happened, he still feels it was unnecessary turmoil and that it delayed summer plans for many groups.

"You can't wait until the week you're starting to make your plans and advertisements and brochures and everything when you don't even know if you're going to have an employee."

"It really has been a mess."

(Ed Note - The Klondike Sun was one of the non-profit groups affected by the program change.)

## **Summer Workers Claim they Lack Suitable Camping Grounds**

By Dan Davidson

Failure to revive the Tent City concept for housing transient summer workers is creating hardship for young people who can find no place to live in Dawson's tight summer housing market.

A delegation of three young women, carrying a six page petition signed by many others, appeared at Dawson's town council meeting on June 5 to request that council find some way to help them find a place to pitch their tents.

The trio, who have been tenting just outside the town core on town property for about a month, had been approached by the city bylaw officer that morning and told they would have to relocate by the end of the week. Speaking for the trio, Anna Turje, who is currently working three summer jobs, told council how she, her friends and others have been unable to find suitable accommodation at what they considered a reasonable price within easily accessible walking distance of their workplaces.

She spoke of a group of six workers she knew living in a

shack at a rent of \$2000 a month and another couple who had moved out of their rental space into a wall tent "when their rent went up like crazy."

She spoke of the impact of the shortage, not just on the workers, but on their employers.

"I know that one of the places where I work just can't find enough workers for the summer. It seems that the town can't absorb all of its summer workers."

The trio were looking for solutions.

"We don't want to be violating a municipal bylaw, but as our residence there is as a direct result of the housing problem in Dawson City we'd like to know what we can do to work with you guys to solve the problem. If we have to leave we will, but we don't think that's a solution."

Councillors questioned the group, which had grown to seven by that time, as to whether they had looked into the options that do exist for campers. There is a camping option for summer workers at Guggieville, at about \$200 a month. The Yukon River Hostel accepts long term residents and has been a solution for some people. There is a territorial campground across the river, though people can only camp there for a limited stretch of time.

Before coming to the meeting, the trio had canvassed other summer workers they knew and in just two hours had collected enough names to fill six pages of a petition.

"The tourism industry here relies on a partnership between the businesses and the workers" Turje said. "We rely on each other and we need each other."

Turje hoped that council might be able to find a way to support the cause of the seasonal workers.

While councillors were sympathetic, there wasn't much that could be offered in the way of a remedy.

"A lot of us here understand your pain," said councillor Adam Morrison, but he went to cite the reasons why it's not possible simply to allow people to pitch tents anywhere.

Danger from bears, health and safety issues, and the danger from fires are all the things which caused the establishment of the original tent city in order to contain the problem.

There was discussion of a revival of that concept, brought forward by Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in management at a chamber of commerce meeting back in January, but city manager Paul Moore indicated that this proposal had fallen through due to some opposition from within the first nation, related to potential cultural artifact and burial sites at the old tent city location.

Councillor Ed Kormendy pondered the question of the employer's responsibility to provide accommodation.

"Don't you think there should be some onus put on employers?"

"We sure don't want to drive away seasonal workers." Morrison said.

Councillor Diana Andrew pointed out the local options and added, "I don't think there is a solution where you live for free."

Recognizing that month-end pay cheques often leave new workers strapped for ready cash, she suggested that some



kind of arrangement about payment could probably be made with the campground owners.

This is now the third season since the tent city operation was closed down at the expiration of the land claim related agreement that the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in had with the city. The summer housing problem seems to be getting more serious.

## The Commissioner's Tea

By Palma Berger,  
photos by Dan Davidson

The trees were a rich green, the Commissioner's Residence was resplendent in draped and flowing union jacks. The grounds were alive with colour as so many people, most in period costume, moved around the grounds, followed of course by quite a few photographers.

This was the occasion of the annual Commissioner's Tea; a tradition started during the Yukon's 75th anniversary and now continued to its 109th, for this is also the celebration of the territory's birthday.

Rob Watt, Superintendent of Dawson Historic Complex, in his opening remarks brought out the facts that at the first Commissioner's Tea there were 1000 sandwiches served, as well as 40 cakes. The only odd thing about the commissioner's tea then, was that it was presided over by the famous Martha Black, a lady from Chicago, and a lady who had probably been associated with the Daughters of the American Revolution and was now a key figure in the Imperial Order of the Daughters of the Empire.

At that time, the Federal Government was represented by the Commissioner of the Yukon for whom the Official Residence was built in 1901.

The present day Commissioner is a Dawson girl, Geraldine Van Bibber. Although the office of Commissioner no longer carries the weight of representing "Peace, Order and good government" for the Federal Government, the position is still the Queen's representative in the Yukon.

As the Tea is traditionally put on by the IODE, Joyce Caley as representative of that group welcomed everybody to the event. Joyce explained that the organization is no longer referred to as I.O.D.E., but has become IODE, just one word; as ideals, politics and times change, so did the title of the organization. It is still a group of Canadian women working together to improve the lives of children, youth and citizens in need. She quoted from the Queen's Commonwealth Day Speech, which deplored what the world of today has become and urged everybody to "find our diversity a cause for celebration and a source of strength and unity."

The M.C., Rachel Wiegers, next introduced the Commissioner, Geraldine Van Bibber. Geraldine had spent quite a few years of her life growing up in Dawson. She remembered as a young girl learning the proper etiquette of serving tea. Silver was polished, and fine china cups were taken out. Lump sugar was served for the occasion. Such a treat. Desserts were made, "something to wow the guests with their gooeyness". Gold nugget teaspoons were taken out of safe keeping to be used. But even washing up was an

event, she said, as one rarely handled these precious household items.

She introduced her special guests who included her son and wife, two former commissioners Jim Smith and Art Pearson and their wives, her Aide, Inspector John Brown, Minister of Tourism Elaine Taylor, Supreme Court Judge



The Commissioner's Residence was the site for the annual Tea.

Ron Veale, and wife Katherine, and Mr and Mrs Yukon 2007, Rudy and Jan Couture .

The entertainment of the day was from singer/ pianist Wendy Perry and sax player Fred Ossen.

Parks Canada's Johnny Nunan advised us all that Robert Service first wrote his Songs of a Sourdough one hundred years ago. To honour that occasion he recited "Spell of the Yukon" as Robert service wrote it in 1907.

The highlight of the day was the presenting of the commissioner's awards. These are chosen by a committee from the submissions sent to the Commissioner. There are two categories; one for Voluntary Public Service, and the other for Bravery.

Mayor John Steins spoke on the Voluntary Public Service Award which was to go to Dan Davidson for his many years on the local volunteer community newspaper, The Klondike Sun. Steins thought he should also get the bravery award as he is a newspaper man, and not everyone agrees with the views expressed in a newspaper.

But he is a communicator, Steins said. He goes to City Council meetings after meetings on his own time, covering

anything of consequence; also making sure the paper is put together in time and delivered to the public on time. Dan has been with the Klondike Sun for 19 years.

After accepting his award from the commissioner, Dan reflected on receiving an award like this. The problem, he said, is that there are many other people who do it with you, and he named many who have been involved with, or still are involved with the paper.

"It is also strange to receive an award for an activity one enjoys doing", he said. Some are addicted to cigarettes or alcohol, whereas he is addicted to writing .

The award for Bravery was announced by Dawson Fire Chief Jim Regimbal. He said this was for outstanding acts of bravery. These individuals saved the life of another usually in hazardous circumstances and at great personal risk. These people chose to take the risk to save someone's life. It is not known if these people make the decision with their hearts or their minds.

He commended Janice Kormendy, Margie Baikie, Anna Claxton, members of the Dawson Ambulance crew, for showing bravery of a high order. They risked their own lives by entering a burning building to rescue Mr. Joe Vigneau who was trapped inside. The house was filled with smoke. Burning toxins can paralyze anyone within seconds. Visibility can deteriorate rapidly.

Regimbal said he has known risks but they were part of his job. What Janice, Margie and Anna did was not part of their job as ambulance workers. They put their lives on the line to rescue Joe.

The Commissioner presented each with her award.

After the high of the awards, the cutting of the cake took place and all settled down to a tasty treats to follow on the treats served earlier.

And the sun came out again.

## Commissioner's Klondike Ball Celebrates Service Centenary

By Dan Davidson

Did Robert W. Service get a bad rap at the Commissioner's Ball? To be the judge of that you would have to have heard the presentation made by Johnny Nunan and Fred Ossan during the second half of the Commissioner's Ball on the evening of June 9. Their rendition of "The Cremation of Sam McGee" gave a whole new twist to the idea of strange things being done 'neath the Midnight Sun

Since Service and the celebration of it being 100 years since the publication of Songs of a Sourdough was the centerpiece of this year's Ball, it figured that there was lots of Service on tap.

In the first half of the evening emcee Johnny Nunan donned his other persona, reciting "Bessie's Boil" (that's "bile" when done with a Scot's accent) and acting out a high energy recitation of "The Shooting of Dan McGrew".

Commissioner Geraldine Van Bibber welcomed everyone to the 2007 Klondike Ball and introduced its theme.

"When he wrote "Spell of the Yukon" 100 years ago I am sure that he had no idea of the impact of his poetry, or that a ball would have a theme related to his words. I use 'The Spell of the Yukon' many times in my presentations because I just love that line 'and some would trade it for no land on earth - and I'm one.'

Van Bibber told of her own fascination with the history of her home town and spoke with pleasure of seeing some of these same events celebrated during the Historica Fair held



in Whitehorse in early May. There were projects on the Palace Grand, the Commissioner's residence and the old Bank of Commerce, among others.

"I told them of the gold dredges, big noisy creatures clanging and banging, leaving big huge caterpillars behind them strewn along the Klondike Valley; of the dust and cobwebs in old Palace Grand Theatre before it was restored; of the events that must have happened here: fancy balls, the who's who in town, to the miners who came to see the fine life, and perhaps pay dearly for a dance with a dance hall girl, or to hear Klondike Kate; of doing our banking at the now neglected and sad looking CIBC bank, where my nose just came up to the edge of the counter when I pushed my bankbook across to the teller peering down at me; where Robert Service spent his working days before heading home to his cabin on Eighth Avenue to write."

Klondike Visitors Association chairman Jorn Meier spoke of the living tradition of the ball and how happy the KVA was to be involved.





"It is part of our mandate to keep tradition alive in the territory."

The evening continued with a fine meal - a return to the banquets of old - the Robert Service recitations mentioned earlier, and a lively dance with music by the Swamp Donkies, who provided a slightly country/rock tinged sound ranging from interpretations of hits by Blondie, Dire Straits, the Beatles, Great Big Sea, Nancy Sinatra, Chubby Checker, and many more.

Guests were invited to attend Peabody's Photo Parlour on the second floor of the theatre to obtain a free souvenir photo of the evening and to take home a wine glass etched with the name of this year's ball. Finally, on the gift list, Natasha Burian won the door prize of a Princess Tours Cruise.

## Exciting year ahead for Dawson City Museum

By Brendan Reese, Sun Student Intern

The tone of this year's annual general meeting for the Dawson City Museum and Historical Society was positive. Newly appointed executive director Laura Mann sees a bright future for the museum. A new direction and a strategic plan to get there were the focus of the meeting.

The meeting began with an exciting announcement: the seats in the auditorium, notorious for being hard and uncomfortable, are being replaced this year with the help of Holland America. Linda Gould, general manager of the Westmark Hotel, was on hand to present a cheque to the museum.

There was also an announcement that there will be some additional funding for the operation and maintenance of the museum from the Yukon Territorial Government. YTG will

be taking over the janitorial responsibilities this year as well.

With this additional money Laura Mann also sees an opportunity to increase revenue by improving exhibits, increasing attendance, and offering some new and unique items in the gift shop.

Finances, however, were not the only thing discussed at the meeting. Over the past year the board of directors spent a great deal of time talking with members of the community and tourists about what they, as the Historical Society, could do for them. The expectations of Dawsonites and those of tourists were very different. Many tourists polled were interested in Gold Rush history, the region's geography, geology and wildlife, many others were interested in learning more about life in Dawson today and stories about the people who are here now. Local people are more interested in programs that could be offered throughout the year and ways in which the museum could work better with other organizations in the community.



Linda Gould of Holland America presents cheque to Gary Wilson of the Dawson City Museum.

Over the next few years the museum plans to address the concerns and suggestions of both groups. New exhibits and an improved gift shop are in the works for the future. There are also plans to work more closely with such organizations as the Klondike Institute of Art and Culture, the Dawson City Music Festival, Robert Service School, and others. New and improved winter programming is also planned for the coming year. There is even some talk of using the museum as part of the school curriculum. The goals of the museum may sound ambitious this year, but as Laura Mann sees it "world class museums don't make do, they make it happen."

## News from the Women's Green Haven 3rd Annual Tri-Challenge Triathlon!

Submitted by Sarah Winton

Join the Dawson Shelter Society on August 11th, 2007 for the third annual Tri-Challenge Triathlon! We would like to encourage both past participants and newcomers to take part in this exciting event for one, or both of the following reasons:



Challenge yourself!

Have you been meaning to become more physically active? Did you make a New Years resolution to include more exercise in your life but haven't quite had a chance? Perhaps it's time to put that plan into action!

With both competitive and fun categories for individuals and/or teams, there is a category available for all levels. Grab some friends or coworkers to create a team, or challenge yourself to do the event on your own.

There are two main categories to choose from; the Gold Rush and the Gold Poke. Participants in the Gold Rush category will be required to swim 20 lengths in the Dawson City Public Swimming pool, cycle 10 km and run 5 km. Participants in the Gold Poke race will be required to swim ten lengths, cycle 3 km and walk or run 3 km. If you are willing to do one of the 3 activities (Swim/Bike/Run(or walk)) but are not wanting to do the others, work on putting a team together. No matter what, when you or your team crosses the finish line you will experience a great feeling of satisfaction!

Help generate funds for the Dawson Shelter Society!

The money generated from the Triathlon goes directly to the day to day operations of the Dawson Women's Shelter, Healthy Families, Healthy Babies Prenatal Program and to the popular Kids Time Childcare service. The registration fees collected from this event will go directly to one of the above services. As the Dawson Shelter Society only receives partial funding for its programs, the money generated from events such as the Triathlon is essential to our non-profit organization.

#### MORE IMPORTANT INFORMATION!

Registration, due by July 31st, is to acquire at least \$50 worth of pledges per individual or \$150 in pledges per team. If registered by July 21st, 2007, you will be entered into an "Early Bird" draw for a fantastic gift. The race package will be given to participants at a Pre Race meeting on Friday August 10th at 6 pm at the Gazebo, (at the Dyke on Front St.). The package will include a race number, safety pin, a draw ticket, a discounted meal ticket and a Tee-shirt. At this time you will meet race officials and have an opportunity to ask questions about the race, route and the rules.

The previous two annual Tri- Challenge Triathlons were a huge success for, not only the Dawson Shelter Society and its services, but also for entire Dawson community and promoting a healthier lifestyle.

## The Klondike Joins the Great Unsolved Mysteries Web Experience

By Dan Davidson

Two mysteries were addressed at the palace Grand Theatre on May 25. The first was a modern mystery, How do you get young people of the wired generation to take an interest in the past? The answer, according to Dr. John Lutz of the University of Victoria's History Department, is to put the past online and make it a bit of a game.

Thus was born the Great Unsolved Mysteries of Canadian History project (at [www.canadianmysteries.ca](http://www.canadianmysteries.ca)) which, after

ten years, is a series of nine interactive web adventures.

"We take really interesting history," Lutz explained, "from the past and draw Canadian students, especially, but the curious of all ages, into the study of our past by trying to solve mysteries."

The latest of these mysteries is "Who Discovered Klondike Gold?" which is, of course, the reason why the team was gathered in Dawson City to launch the site.

As Dr. Ken Coates, Dean of Arts at the University of Waterloo, and one of the research directors for the project noted, we don't actually know who found the first sign of the gold that drew 30,000 people to this area.

That mystery was the second one of the day. There were four people on Rabbit Creek (now Bonanza Creek) when the discovery which set off the Klondike Gold Rush was made, and only one of them never claimed to have anything to do with it.

The standard account of the find credits it to George Carmack, who registered the claims at Fortymile. First Nations' lore credits the find to Skookum Jim, Carmack's brother-in-law. Several sources also attribute the find to Kate Carmack. Only Dawson Charlie, Kate's and Jim's nephew, never claimed to have found the first nugget.

And then there's the question of Robert Henderson, who suggested that the quartet prospect the area in the first place, and eventually received a pension from the federal government for his role in triggering the Gold Rush, even though he did not strike it rich himself.



Dr, Ken Coates was one of the research directors for the project.

Lutz and Merna Forster, the director of the project, explained that each of the mysteries is accompanied on the web by photos and source documents which students can explore to reach their own decisions.

"We put the evidence on line and we ask you to solve the mystery," Lutz said.

Coates, who feels his own career as a historian specializing in the North was jump started by a visit to Dawson when he was eight years old, stressed the

importance of the Klondike Rush.

"The Gold Rush is the only event in Canadian history that's known around the world. It is THE best known story from Canada's past.

"I walked into a mining town in South Africa and there was a big sign across the street which said 'South Africa's Klondike'".

Another gold mining town is referred to as "the Dawson City of New Zealand". There are dozens of place and street names in the United Kingdom with Klondike references, named by people who had been here or knew about Dawson.

Coates was overjoyed to join with his frequent writing partner, Dr. William Morrison, to participate in this project.

Rob Watt, Superintendent, Parks Canada, Dawson Historical Complex, gave a brief overview of the events of 1896 and 1897, leading up to the actual stampede in 1898, and some of the impact it had on both Canada and the rest of the world.

"This discovery of gold opened up not only the Yukon, but Alaska as well," said Watt, "and changed this part of the North forever. For a short period, Dawson City was the largest settlement west of Winnipeg and north of Seattle."

The mystery of the actual discovery was clear even back in the 1920s, Watt said, when the federal government's Historic Sites and Monuments Board decided to commemorate the Gold Rush. They erected a plaque to the event itself rather than to the person who triggered it.

Mayor John Steins was called up to the podium to assist Dr. Lutz in pressing the button to launch the web site.

The grand opening was enlivened by music provided by pianist and singer Wendy Perry and saxophonist Fred Osson, as well as an impassioned and interactive recitation of "The Shooting of Dan McGrew" by Johnny Nunan.

In addition, the Parks staff presented a skit showing a miners' meeting in which the members debated the question of who should get the credit for the gold discovery. It was nice to see even a small drama on the stage after a two year drought.

The ceremonies were followed by a demonstration of the website on a couple of computers, and topped off by a table of refreshments.

## **British Couple Fascinated by Break-up**

By Dan Davidson

Terry Boyes and Caroline Mawston are fascinated with break-up time in Dawson. As a couple they've been back nine times to try and catch the sight, and were very happy to have made it for this year's event.

Terry has been here more often, the first time being 14 years ago when they took the bus from Vancouver to Dawson and stayed at the Yukon River Hostel for six weeks.

The former sports centre manager and international swimmer from York retired when he was 57 and made his first trip to the Yukon and Alaska when he was 58. During that first trip he spent 28 days camped on the Slide area in the north of town. in the Yukon River Hostel across the

river from Dawson.

From here they hitchhiked all over Alaska and back to Skagway to walk the Chilkoot Trail.

"When we'd finished the trail I felt that I'd been on it before," Terry said. By coincidence took a photo identical to one he later saw in a book and this caused him to want to visit again, which he did, bringing his son over and hitchhiking some more from south to north.

As a school teacher whose holidays were shorter than the times Terry could travel, Caroline didn't make it on all of Terry's excursions. She wasn't along the first time he saw the Yukon River break up here.

Nine years ago Terry nearly got run over by an iceberg. He was in the North End, near the point where Dawson used to dump its garbage over the winter many decades ago.

"I was down at water level when it broke, filming it. A big piece broke into two and started to spin, and suddenly one piece started to push the other and I realized - looking through my lens - that it was coming straight at me.



"I threw the camera up over the bank, which was about 11 feet high, and scrambled up just as this great slab of ice hit the bank. It ripped out a tree right where I'd been.

"I was really smitten by the whole thing - by the tremendous power of it. So I've just kept coming."

He tries to time his visits to see the ice going out and sometimes, like this year, he manages to do that.

Terry has stayed in a variety of places on his trips here, from the Slide, to the Hostel, to a 1950s bus parked at Guggieville. He even roomed with a teacher who lived here until two years ago, who he had met during one of his Chilkoot hikes.

When he travels with Caroline she insists on staying in more comfortable (she says "civilized") lodgings. This year they were in one of the nicely appointed cabins at Klondike Kate's.

One story they both enjoy is of their 2003 trip. They came during Caroline's spring school holiday, in mid-April, which meant they could not stay long enough to see the ice go out, which happened on May 1 that year. What they could do, which they had not done before, was walk out into the middle of the river, on the ice, which generally starts to

get a bit punky around then.

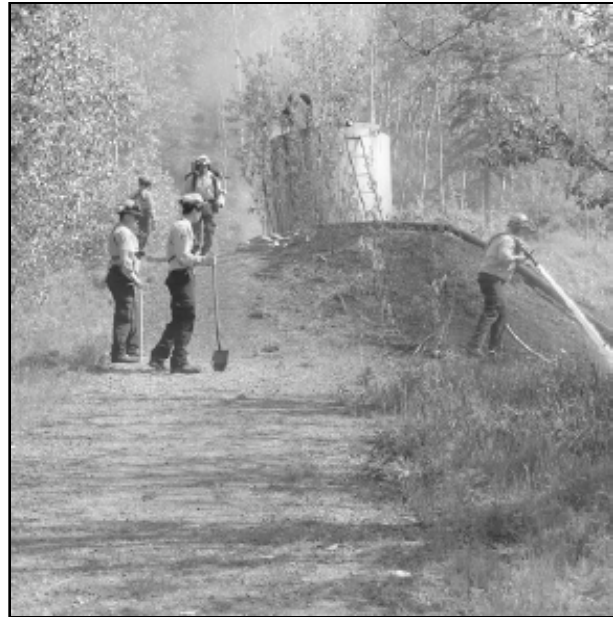
"We walked into the middle," said Caroline, "then over to the other side and then back again. We met another guy walking, but he was towing his canoe just in case."

Terry picked up the tale: "That's when I uttered the immortal words, 'If the ice breaks stick up your left hand for rescue,'"

The joke is that he had proposed to her on the ice and that was the hand she was wearing the diamond ring on. It's been a long engagement in spite of that joke. The couple haven't set a date for the wedding yet, but Caroline's caught the break-up bug.

"Having now seen it I can now see why Terry's fascinated by it. There's a lot of anticipation among the locals as well. I was sitting on the bench at the front there, and people kept coming up and having a look, checking when it was going to go out. it seems a bit of an anticlimax once it's gone."

Terry himself is looking to spend a winter here and has been discussing housesitting with people that they've met here over the years. Caroline isn't quite so sure about that, but she's keen on seeing the river go out again.



## Crocus Bluff Fire Met with Quick Response from Local and Territorial Fire Crews

By Dan Davidson,  
photos by Karen MacKay

It was not a lazy Sunday afternoon for Dawson firefighters as they fought down and extinguished a blaze near Crocus Bluff at the entrance to town on June 3.

Fire Chief Jim Regimbal got the call about 3:50, one of several calls that reported the fire.

Karen MacKay was one of those who reported the fire while several local residents, including John Wierda and Jack Fraser, tried to put it out with shovels.

"We were four or five minutes after the call came in," Regimbal said, "but Wildland Management were there with a couple of attack crews."

By the time Regimbal's crew was on the scene a Trans North chopper flown by Adam Morrison was already hitting the fire with buckets of water.

"He'd been taking a tour in his chopper, dropped them off and within minutes he was up there and had dropped two loads of water, which significantly stopped the progress of the fire."

Morrison had also notified Wildland Fire Management, according to Area Protection Officer Sadie Jabbar. WFM had also received three calls and had its personnel on the scene in about 10 minutes.

The base is at the Dawson Airport, normally about a 15 minute drive from town. An air tanker was also on standby at the base in case it was needed.

Jabbar's team has seldom fought a fire actually within the town limits, and usually deals with fires from lightning strikes. Not so this time.

"I wouldn't call it an arson," he said on Monday. "but it was definitely a man made fire."

The fire erupted on a slope just below a water tank

connected to the town's sewage system. Initially the team could see only the pipe and they weren't sure what it was or whether it might pose a problem for them.

"When you get close to town like that you're always on edge," Jabbar said.

Winds had been high on the Fire Dome that day, and it was breezy down below, which posed the risk that the fire might take a run up the slope near the Crocus Bluff Recreation Site, but it was contained before that could happen.

Regimbal says his crew wrapped up shortly after five o'clock, leaving the actual fire investigation to Wildland Fire Management since they were first on the scene.

"If it wasn't for the quick response from Wildland, who were fabulous, and then Adam, and then us coming in, it could really have run up Crocus Bluff the way the wind was blowing."

It was an unusual place for a fire, Regimbal said, but the dryness in the area has left the region in an extreme fire hazard danger.

"With conditions as they are, there should be absolutely



no burning whatever,” he said.

Jabbar hopes that’s the closest call he will see this summer.

“We don’t want it that close, but whatever happens we will be ready for it.”

## **Proposed Road Closure Sparks Debate at Council**

By Dan Davidson

The idea that Mary McLeod Road might be closed to traffic on a trial basis for part of the summer has raised concerns among some residents who live in the Dome Road subdivisions farther up the hill.

Kevin Hastings, who rides a four wheeler to work a lot of days, had serious objections to closing the road, objections fueled by a letter to Dome residents from the town’s development officer, Mark Wickham, in which road closure was mentioned as one of several alternatives to dealing with safety issues on that road.

The letter said that council was “considering” an experimental closing of the road to nonresident traffic during the months of July and August, but went on to describe the plan in such detail that it did sound like it was a definite thing.

“Signs will be installed at either end indicating ‘no through traffic’ and gates would be erected below the Crocus Bluff parking lot,” Wickham wrote, “allowing pedestrians to pass but not motor vehicles. These gates would be opened in the event the road must be used during an emergency or closure of the Dome Road. The roads would still be maintained. All vehicle traffic would use the Dome Road for access to properties.”

Dr. Suzanne Crocker, who lives along Mary McLeod, had appeared before council on May 1 to outline her safety concerns and present the results of her own informal survey of residents along that road, which runs up past King Street, past the graveyards, and connects with the Dome Road at its far end.

The road is part of Dawson’s residential expansion on to the Dome, which began in the 1980s. There are currently 8 to 10 country residential lots occupied along that road itself and several of the families have small children.

“I agree that there’s a problem,” Hastings told the council. “It’s way too windy and people don’t follow the speed limits.”

Closing the road to traffic, however, is not something he supports.

“I think you should hear more before a decision is made,” he said.

Hastings also indicated that he felt the situation had improved since the RCMP had stepped up enforcement along that road.

The great circle route that is made by walking the Millennium Trail beside the Klondike Highway to the Dome Road, up that road to Mary McLeod, and then back down to 8th Avenue in town, is a popular one with evening walkers and families pushing their baby carriages.

Dome resident Bill Bowie also appeared during question period, to protest the notion of a road closure. He said that if the safety of walkers was a concern then alternative routes should be considered for walkers. He suggested, whimsically, that if vehicles were to be banned from the Mary McLeod Road, then walkers ought to be banned from the Dome Road.

He went on to say that many of the walkers he’s met were just as dangerous as the speedy drivers, in that they walked three or four abreast on the wrong side of the road and seemed not to be concerned about blind corners or any kind of road safety themselves.

Councillors indicated that they have begun to receive phone calls about this issue since it was first aired in the local paper, and later in the town’s monthly news flier. Most said that the people they had heard from, many of whom did not live on the Dome at all, were largely opposed to any permanent traffic ban on the McLeod Road.

Fire Chief Jim Regimbal indicated that he would not be in favour of a road closure from an emergency measures standpoint. During the recent Crocus Bluff fire, Regimbal had sent one fire truck to the top of the bluff by means of Mary McLeod, to head off the fire if it escaped the lower brush on the hill below. He felt this could be an important access route in some situations.

Acting Mayor Ed Kormendy, who had counselled against any quick action when this issue first arose, reassured both Hastings and Bowie that the council was merely considering options and that no hard and fast decisions had been taken. He acknowledged that Wickham’s letter had sounded rather like the experiment was a done deal, but he said this plan was still just an option, not a fait accompli.

Hastings indicated that he was quite prepared to organize a petition against the move if that was what it would take to stop it.

The matter will be on the next council agenda, for a meeting which will be postponed until June 26, due to the Governor General’s visit coinciding with the regularly scheduled meeting the week before.