

# The Klondike Sun

July 4, 2007 Online Edition

Dawson City, Yukon



**Who Are These People?**  
**Keep scrolling down to**  
**find out.**

Photo by Dan Davidson

## Governor General visits Dawson City

By Brendan Reese, Summer Student Intern

As part of her cross Canada tour Her Excellency the Right Honourable Governor General of Canada Michaëlle Jean was in Dawson City on June 19th and 20th. Her visit marked the first time the Governor General visited the town since Adrienne Clarkson came in March of 2000. During her time in town, Her Excellency was able to meet with many members of the community and to discuss the issues affecting the town and its people.

On her two day visit to Dawson Her Excellency was able to attend a dinner at the Palace Grand hosted by Commissioner Geraldine Van Bibber, the opening of the Tr'inke Zho Daycare , a visit to the Dänojà Zho Cultural

Centre, and a community feast hosted by the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in. She also took part in a number of discussions with representatives of various social and cultural organizations in Dawson City.

The Governor General began her visit to Dawson with a speech at the Commissioner's dinner.

Speaking of Dawson's rich history she said "I feel as though I have entered a legend." While recognizing the excitement and riches the Gold Rush brought to the area she

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Governor General Michaëlle Jean and Commissioner Geraldine Van Bibber cut the ribbon at the opening of the Tr'inke Zho Daycare.

also stated that "I cannot help but think of the often brutal repercussions of the gold rush on the First Nations, who saw their environment and lifestyle turned completely upside down by the massive influx of prospectors."

Speaking of her trip to Dawson, with her husband, she said "I came to learn all about your experiences in this unique corner of our country and planet. We are listening. I have every intention of sharing your history and the spirit that lives here everywhere I go, both here in Canada and abroad."

The Governor General began her second day in Dawson with the opening of the Tr'inke Zho Daycare. After the ribbon cutting ceremony, at which she was invited to make



The Governor General accepts a flower from a young Dawsonite.

the snip, Her Excellency was given the opportunity to tour the new facility and was presented with flowers from local children.

After the opening of the daycare, the Governor General was able to attend discussions with the representatives of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in First Nation and a feast for the community was held in honor of her visit. Of these discussions she said "What I have seen here, and what I see today, will stay with me for years to come. I need to tell Canadians about your history and the spirit that lives here in this immense land .... The example you are setting for humanity is a beacon of hope and I want it to be seen south of the sixtieth parallel. I am very touched by this welcome and I will never forget you."

After her visit to Dawson Her Excellency was in Whitehorse to attend meetings with the Francophone community and take part in the celebrations for National Aboriginal Day.

This marked the end of her tour in which she

visited all 10 provinces and 3 territories.

## The Governor General enjoys dinner with the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in

By Judith Blackburn-Johnson

Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Chief Darren Taylor drew jolly good laughter from the guests at the Community Hall, Wednesday, April 20, when he welcomed their Excellencies, Governor-General Michaëlle Jean and her husband, Jean-Daniel Lafond, to a luncheon community feast with these words:

"No matter what CBC says, we are Number One", he quipped (referring to the network's Seven Wonders of Canada contest).

Then he observed that such a gathering would have been unlikely even 20 years ago.

"Look around you. We are one community. Together."

In reply, Her Excellency glanced once or twice at her prepared text before abandoning it entirely in favour of speaking freely of her impressions. That morning, she had officiated at the opening of the Tr'inke Zho Daycare, toured the Dänojà Zho Cultural Centre and met with citizens in a roundtable discussion at the lands office.

"You are setting an important example here, a solid example, that citizenship has the same value for everyone."

"Thank you, thank you for inviting the entire community to join us today".

Following the meal, truly a feast, prepared by Nora's Kitchen, their Excellencies and Chief Taylor exchanged gifts and brief speeches.

"My husband and I have concluded that we will have to come back, with our daughter, Marie-Eden, because this is a place where families are embraced". The Governor-General recalled an elder embracing her that morning at Dänojà Zho

and, throwing her arms wide, she laughed and exclaimed, “My gosh, it is like enlarging my family.”

The Hän Singers, who had opened the event with two rousing versions of their songs “Hello” and “Flag”, closed the gathering with the “Grandma Song”.

## Who Are These People?

Story & photo by Stephen Johnson

They came, they flew (very little, unfortunately) and they went.

Who are these people? Where are they from? How did they learn about Dawson City? These were the most asked questions last week as ten Japanese paraglider pilots arrived in Dawson City only to be somewhat disappointed by weather conditions which are normally very good at this time of year.

Last year in early September, Tetsuo Kogai, a paraglider pilot and editor of the Japanese paragliding magazine, Paraworld, visited the Yukon looking for places to fly. While in Dawson City, local paraglider pilot Stephen Johnson, met and flew with Kogai-san. The weather was not particularly good on the day he flew, however he did get a sense of how much fun the flying can be in Dawson City. His trip up the Dempster to the Tombstone campground the following day while visually satisfying in one sense, was not visually gratifying in another sense as he got “close and personal” with an animal on the road that resulted in his examination of the ditch with his rental car. He hitched a ride to the Dempster Corner and then onto Whitehorse where he had plans to meet with some members of the Whitehorse paragliding crowd. After Kogai-san returned to Japan, he wrote an article for the PARAWORLD Magazine (written in Japanese characters) complete with some excellent photographs.

It was a result of the PARAWORLD Magazine article that this trip “got off the ground”. On Wednesday of last week they arrived in Whitehorse and were met by trip organizer and translator, Yoshie Kumagae. They were anxious to fly and headed straight for Dawson City arriving in late afternoon where they were greeted by local paragliding enthusiast’s Stephen Kurth and Stephen Johnson. After the paper work was completed a tour of the flying area began. Starting at the landing zone (LZ) at Front Street, Stephen Kurth pointed out various things to watch out for when executing a safe landing. There are specific rules for flying in Dawson to ensure safety and everyone is given a quick and thorough orientation. We then headed to the “Dome” where the orientation continued. As a normal course of events, numerous pictures were taken. However, as was the case for most of the rest of their stay in Dawson, the winds were not cooperating as they were either too strong or from the wrong direction. In fact, the spring and early summer this year have been unusually bad for flying due to those same

sort of winds.

As Stephen Kurth was working Thursday and Friday, “the other Steve” had the pleasure of guiding and escorting the group. Thursday revealed the same north-east and east winds as in days past and the group began it’s day by taking the ferry “to the other side” and headed west on the Top-of-the-World highway only to turn back to Dawson due to very inclement weather and very strong winds. On returning to Dawson, the group decided to meet up again later in the day. Around 3:00 p.m. the group reassembled at the Downtown Annex where Johnson rechecked the winds. The rallying cry became “Let’s Go” as the winds had switched and were generally from the south albeit a little strong. Arriving at the Midnight Dome the Japanese paragliding instructor Morio Yamamura (“Yama-san”) requested through our translator, that he and I fly first so that he could explain the conditions to his students. We took off and basically flew a “sled ride” to the LZ on Front Street. This is the type of flight that the locals like to see visitors take in order to learn about the take-off launch and LZ landing conditions as well as the basic flight path in between. Our enthusiasm was tempered by rain and gusty conditions shortly thereafter. We waited while the rain and wind passed and once again



headed to the Dome. Conditions were acceptable to good and the decision was made to launch the students. The two Steve’s were thankful that each student got to fly and that all launched and landed safely. After the group flew wind conditions changed again and we were happily “forced” to quench our thirst at the Downtown Hotel while watching the many tourists as well as two of our group participate in the Sourtoe Cocktail. Going to bed happy, we all hoped for good flying conditions for Friday.

Although sunny, early flying conditions proved just as disappointing as before as winds were from the east. It was decided to head for the Alaskan border as there are two sites near there that are normally good for ridge soaring if the winds were the same in Dawson. After a hour and a half drive, we found the wind was from the south, so that put a

quick end to our hopes for fun flying with a beautiful backdrop. Upon returning to Dawson, we headed up Bonanza Creek (after checking wind conditions, of course) and spent an enjoyable couple of hours at Claim 33 and Dredge No. 4. Jerry Bryde of Claim 33 expertly showed the enthusiastic group how to pan for gold. Each took his turn and cried "Bonanza" as the gold showed in their pan. We met up with Stephen Kurth later in the day and once again headed to the Dome to wait for flying conditions to improve. Kurth, Yama-san, Matsu-san and Tom Huxley (a visiting paraglider pilot working for Conair) flew to the delight of our group and the rest of the crowd of tourists. Unfortunately, conditions were not quite suitable for the rest of student pilots who watched as Steve Kurth put on a bit of a show for us by waving goodbye upside down in his harness and then performing a spiral dive before landing safely at the LZ.

Saturday saw similar, mainly unsuitable wind conditions as the other days as Steve Kurth took his turn at escorting and guiding the group. However, Saturday was very noteworthy as Yama-san became the first paraglider pilot to fly from the very top of the Dome in a north direction. The locals do have a so-called North Launch located about 200 metres downslope to the north, but Yama-san opted for flying from the top. We decided to name the new launch Loko Point Launch in honour of Yama-san as he has a launch with the same name in Japan and his business is called Loko Sky. Kurth became the second to fly from there as he felt somewhat compelled being the most experienced paraglider pilot in the Yukon with some 17 years "under his belt". The winds became unsuitable once again for any further flying until later in the day when Kurth and Yama-san took off to the south. However for fun in the afternoon, the group did some "kiting" at the Front Street LZ which attracted many curious onlookers. Proper "kiting" or ground handling is a very important aspect of safe take-off procedures, so the exercise was fun and the practice good in improving overall skills. During dinner at Antoinette's, Stephen Kurth presented each visitor with a small vial of Klondike good as a memento of their visit. The previous day, Stephen Johnson presented Yama-san with a caribou antler for his clubhouse and said that he would get the other side if he came back with another group. Following dinner, we took Yama-san to Diamond Tooth Gertie's for a bit of gambling and to watch the show. He reported having a great time at Gertie's.

Sunday, the last day of the Japanese group's trip, began with similar wind conditions as before and the two options given by Stephen Kurth were number 1 stay in Dawson and wait or number 2 to head up the Dempster to the Tombstone campground and check conditions there. The sky was clearing in town, but the decision by the group was to head up the Dempster. Our flying site there is the microwave site on the hill overlooking the campground but, again, the wind was cross to the take-off launch. As "Murphy's Law" came into effect, we found out later that a visiting paraglider pilot flew in very good conditions in Dawson while we were scuppered up the Dempster. At the Dempster Corner, we said goodbye and wished for their safe return to Japan.

It should be noted that this group of Japanese paraglider pilots are all retired and their ages range in the 60's and do not like to do a lot of climbing as is required in the Whitehorse area where flying can be awesome as well. They fly all over the world. They are a terrific group and lot's of fun. Yama-san has some 32 years experience flying hang gliders and paragliders and it shows. On this trip they saw wonderful Yukon scenery, we gave them the very best of Yukon hospitality, but unfortunately we could do nothing about the weather. Such is the life of a glider pilot. All managed to get at least one flight in the Yukon, and we are grateful for that.

## **Dawson gets good financial report card for 2006**

By Dan Davidson

The City of Dawson has come through its 2006 financial audit, prepared by MacKay LLP, with audit report giving the year old council an unqualified approval of its methods and financial record keeping.

Council discussed the audit package over a telephone link with Eric Hoenisch, who handled the assignment for MacKay LLP.

MacKay LLP was the only firm in the territory willing to take on the task of auditing Dawson's books three years ago, after the forensic audit commissioned by the trustee on behalf of YTG raked the town's former auditors over the coals and painted a very bleak picture of the fiscal practices of Dawson's former senior management team of mayor, CAO and treasurer.

Over the three year period, the new auditing firm has become increasingly confident in the town's fiscal management and this year ended the report with the words that every organization wants to read in an audit.

"In our opinion, these consolidated financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the consolidated financial picture of the Town as on December 31, 2007, and the results of its operations and cash flows of the year then ended, in accordance with Canadian generally accepted accounting principles."

In conversation with council, Hoenisch indicated that the process went very smoothly this year, thanks to the work of CAO Paul Moore and the town's newly created senior financial officer position, held by Jackie Oleson.

Hoenisch noted that the town's cash balance at the end of the year was 50% higher than in 2005, at \$1,558,073.

The report shows the town with revenues exceeding expenditures by \$562,764, over five times the figure of the year before.

While much of this is due to the financial restructuring provided by the territorial government, that act, in itself, was an admission that it was not Dawson alone which carried out the spending which bankrupted the former town administration.

In connection with that disaster, the audit report notes that no progress has been made in the matter of the \$201,672 that the March 2005 Forensic Audit identified as



being owed to the town by the former senior administration. At this point there has been no report from the RCMP's criminal investigation and the town has indicated that it cannot consider civil action against these individuals until the criminal investigation is complete.

Hoenisch noted that the town has established financial reserves in several areas, a move which the auditor had recommended previously. \$168,189 was earmarked for the three reserve accounts.

"We are pleased to see that the town has cash funded these reserves," said the report.

## Canada Council members impressed by three days in Dawson

Story & photos by Dan Davidson

The Canada Council for the Arts sponsors over half and million dollars worth of projects in the Yukon each year.

Director Bob Sirman, along with board member John Goldsmith and staff person Kelly Wilhelm, have been



Canada Council Director Bob Sirman, YTG's Laurel Parry, Berton House writer-in-residence Julie Burtinshaw, Canada Council's Kelly Wilhelm and John Goldsmith outside Berton House.

touring Canada a part of the organization's 50th anniversary strategic planning exercise.

They were in Dawson City for three days in June as part of a northern tour that had already seen them spend four days in Yellowknife and three in Whitehorse.

"This my first year as director of the Canada Council," Sirman said, "and I made a promise to myself that I would visit virtually all provinces and territories in the country during my first year. Especially to meet with the artists, and arts organizations, but also with the other funders."

"I'm hoping to ... get a more in-depth understanding of

what it means to be an artist in Dawson City, but also what it means to be an artist in the Yukon, what it means to be an artist in the North, what it means to be an artist not in a large urban center, but still requiring community support and still requiring the funding and support of the Canada Council, the territorial department and, of course, the municipality itself."

Shepherded by YTG Tourism and Culture's Laurel Parry, the group visited the Dänojà Zho Cultural Centre exhibits and theatre presentation; spent an hour at Berton House with current writer in residence, Julie Burtinshaw; visited the Klondike institute of Art and Culture's McCauley House artists' in residence program; were hosted at a reception in the ODD Gallery; and were coaxed into placing pieces into the KIAC puzzle wall in the ballroom of the Oddfellow's Hall.

"Dawson is a remarkable place," said John Goldsmith.

"The Board of the Canada Council was here in 2002 in one of its annual out of town meetings. Since then the School of Visual Arts has appeared magically on the horizon. I heard talk of it in 2002 and here it is.

"This truly an unusual community, a place that, despite its modest population, has been able to create an infrastructure for the arts that is, I would venture to say, unparalleled, for the size of its population, and its territorial population from which it draws financial support."

Both Goldsmith and Sirman were interested in analyzing the combination of factors that had contributed to what they see as Dawson's success.

Dawson, Goldsmith said, ought to be a case study on how to do great things in spite of being small.



Bob Sirman, Director of the Canada Council for the Arts, places a piece on the KIAC puzzle wall in the Oddfellow's Ballroom.

"It has the kinds of energy and positive development for the arts that we do not see in some other jurisdictions with much greater populations. but without, clearly, the kind of leadership, the willingness to work together in community, the kind of creativity, the ability to drive through the incredible obstacles and hurdles that face you in the development of these kinds of projects, and cobbling

together funding from different sources imaginatively. It is quite a striking achievement.”

“The KIAC School of Visual Arts was the most impressive single facility I’ve seen so far, Sirman said. “It’s a really stunning building.

“I’m told they’re expecting 20 students this season. I would really like to come back in a couple of years and see the program once it’s matured a bit.”

## **Attachés Impressed with Dawson Welcome**

Story & photos by Dan Davidson

The weather was perfect for the 2007 edition of the International Military Attachés’ Tour and the evening wild game barbecue provided by Dawson’s Rangers and their support group of spouses and locals on June 8. The early evening sun was hot at the North End Gold Panning Venue, but there was enough of a breeze to keep the day from feeling oppressive.

This tour is considered one of the plum opportunities of a defense attachés’ three year posting to Canada. They only get to take the tour once, but there is a good chance that



MLA Steve Nordick, Ranger Sgt John “Mitch” Mitchell, Commander Gerard Axel Moeller.

they will manage to make it unless other consular duties have to take priority.

Guests this year included attachés from North and South America, Africa, Europe and the Far East.

The trip’s purpose is to educate the attachés on aspects of the Canadian north that they might not normally have a chance to observe. There are lectures on government, industrial capacity and military matters, including the chance to meet the Canadian Rangers, who play such a large part in the defense of the North.

But it’s not all work for these soldiers. While in Dawson they were able to experience midnight golfing, pan for gold, gamble at Gerties and take in some of the evening shows as well as enjoy the taste of wild game, mingle with local residents at the barbecue and visit with Gertie’s Girls,

who made an appearance to pose for photos with the soldiers.

The group this year was led by Colonel McQuade, but Commander Gerard Axel Moeller of Germany was spokesperson for the group.

“The foreign service attaches and I, assembled here, had the pleasure to meet all the Rangers. As a matter of fact the Rangers led by their sergeant, Mitch (John Mitchell) were inspected by me. It was a wonderful opportunity.

“Coming together for a trip like this, from all different countries of the world, we go down into the Yukon. Especially in Dawson your airport is not very easy to approach, but we did it and then they are all lined up there to give us a warm welcome. It wouldn’t be really necessary, but it sort of underlines what the Yukon - this wonderful territory - is all about. All of them - senior Ranger, junior Ranger, the others - it was just fantastic, and I’d really like to thank you for that one.”

The Arctic trip was, he said, a highlight for the attachés based in both Ottawa and Washington, where they line up to be part of it.

Moeller was on his third trip to the Yukon, having also come on his own at least once.

“I feel like almost a prisoner of the North,” he said. One of the things that has made him feel this way is the number of times he has run into Ranger Sgt. John “Mitch” Mitchell, sometimes at ceremonial events and even on his private vacation.

Moeller presented Mitch with a case of German beer as a birthday present.

Also on hand was Klondike MLA Steve Nordick, who welcomed the attaches on behalf of the territorial government.

## **Uffish Thoughts: The Summer Jobs Fiasco just keeps getting bigger**

By Dan Davidson

The story of the Student Summer Jobs fiasco just keeps getting better and better - or worse and worse if you’re in the federal department in charge of it - as time goes on.

There are times when you happen upon a story because of who you know. I became aware of the problem with the Canada Summer Jobs Initiative when our local volunteer newspaper failed to qualify for a student position for the first time ever.

The Klondike Sun’s summer internship isn’t a high pressure or high paying job, but it does allow our students to gain experience in just about every aspect of the business. Our former employees have gone on to work in ad and graphic design firms in Whitehorse, to edit the UBC student newspaper, to work for the Star and other smaller city papers across the country, as well as move into reporters’ jobs with the CBC.

It costs our organization about \$1900.00 each summer to access the grant program and hire a fresh set of eyes to get excited about reporting on Dawson’s events. It’s worth it to us, worth it to the community, worth it to the students

and, I'm sure, worth it to the program.

A news story out of the Montreal Gazette, published a few days after my "Federal Summer Grant Changes Created Confusion" piece goes even further than MP Larry Bagnell did when I interviewed him for my story.

"Summer Jobs Program a Fiasco, Ottawa Admits" runs the headline from Elizabeth Thompson, who goes on to report that, as of June 7, the federal government actually had no idea what it was spending on this year's summer works program.

This is because they handed out all the money and jobs to those organizations that scored high on their new rating scale during their first round of grants, never bothering to look at the past history of applicants to see who had been successful and had used the program well in the past.

It appears that \$85.9 million had already been spent by the time the bureaucrats in charge of the new program realized there was a problem.

As the hue and cry grew from non-profit organizations and small businesses across the nation, the Human Resources Department reversed itself and began notifying applicants that they had qualified under a second round of funding. Opposition members are suspicious of this wording. Bagnell said he had been told that any organization that had been successful in the past and had been turned down this year, had most of their funding restored under the corrective second round.

None of this needed to happen, of course. It was the obsessive need of the group that still refers to itself as Canada's New Government (after a year in power) to put its own stamp on every organ of the government that caused it to cancel the existing summer works program and replace it with their own, leaner model, while at the same time seizing control of the grant issuing process.

The transition was not a smooth one, so messy, in fact that Thompson reports they are already analyzing "what went wrong in a bid to avert a repeat of this year's performance."

Here in Dawson, we got our grant money and will be seeing another student train with us at the Klondike Sun for the summer. It took some time. We were under pressure to have the hiring done the week that we got the notice that we had been approved, but it typically takes a week or so to post the job, gather applications and interview the potential workers. We are volunteers, after all.

We hired just a week and a day after we knew that we could. If we had known sooner we would have hired sooner, but that certainly wasn't our call.

I sincerely hope that this process will work more smoothly next year.

## **Dawson Considers Plastic Bag Ban**

By Dan Davidson

The Conservation Klondike Society is proposing, and Dawson's council is considering, a ban on plastic shopping bags. The topic first came up several council meetings ago and was the subject of a lengthy discussion and presentation

with members of CKS, which manages the town's landfill on a contract with the town, at the June 5 meeting.

Chris Clark, a member of society was on hand to discuss a proposal outlined in a letter by CKS vice-president John Bryant. Both the society council have noted an increasing problem with plastic bags at the landfill, where it has been estimated that over 400,000 bags find their final resting place every year.

If they would stay put they might be a little less of a problem. Photographs of the trees and the electric fence around the dump festooned with bags that have blown out of the landfill made an impressive display in the Klondike Sun a month or so ago. How many have escaped even farther into the bush around the area is anyone's guess.

Even if they do stay in the pit, they are not biodegradable and CKS warns that they are simply filling up the dump sooner than needs to happen. Quigley has been in service as the regional landfill for only about 15 years, but it may not last as long as the decommissioned Dome Road dump.

Clark and Bryant have a ban on bags as their eventual goal, but believe the town could get there by stages. They would begin by encouraging council to pass a bylaw imposing a 25 cent levy, to be paid by the consumer, on each bag used. Similar initiatives in Ireland and in parts of Manitoba, have seen a 90% reduction in the use of bags coming into the landfill.

Bryant provided a copy of the Leaf Rapids, Man., by-law with his letter. The levy there was a mere 3 cents, but CKS feels 25 cents would be more of a "disincentive to the consumer."

Clark suggested that a public awareness campaign needs to be mounted to make the issue stand out. She suggested marketing reusable bags emblazoned with the City of Dawson and CKS logos to provide an alternative to plastic.

Even before this issue first arose this spring, the Dawson City General Store had been selling an all-purpose tote bag for groceries, and has moving to offering an even larger version since then. Clark said that the Bonanza Market has also indicated it would be prepared to support a campaign to reduce plastic bag use.

Bryant further suggested that any money raised by the levy should be put into an environmental fund, which could "subsidize reusable bags, clean up the existing plastic bag problem at (and near) the landfill, and support local waste management and environmental programs."

Council members wondered if there might not be some resistance among the businesses in town to the levy, seeing as they would have to administer the program and collect the money. Coun. Diana Andrew said she would prefer a voluntary program to the creation of another bylaw, but favoured the general thrust of the initiative.

Coun. Ed Kormendy spoke of the need to change public thinking about bags, citing the fact that he has such bags at home, but hardly ever remembers to take them with him when he goes grocery shopping.

Coun. Ashley Dorion agreed that public education was probably of key importance.

Council directed CAO Paul Moore is to pursue discussions with CKS and report back to a later meeting.

## New gallery offers home for local art

By Brendan Reese, Summer Student Intern

The Dawson City Art Society's (DCAS) Members Gallery opened to an enthusiastic crowd Friday June 16th. The Gallery, located in the new Klondike Institute of Art and Culture (KIAC) School of Visual Arts building, will provide a place to showcase the art of locals and summer residents alike.



Robby McCormack stands transfixed by the Trizonal Space Warper on an untitled piece by The Order

"There was a window of opportunity with the opening of the college" says Michael McCormack, member of the board of directors for DCAS. "The school just opened and the facility was there. It seemed like a great way to promote local artists and the new school at the same time .... With such an eclectic mix of artists in Dawson, this gallery provides a place for shows of a very diverse nature."

The gallery's first exhibit, Solstice, which finished July 2nd, was a huge success. It contained work by 18 local artists, some of them responding to the theme and others submitting existing work. With installation pieces, audio visual work, and more traditional art the first show had something for everyone.

The second show will be an open call, meaning all members will have the opportunity to submit something,

and will open on July 7th at 6 pm. Starting August 4th there will be a youth show with art from the KIAC summer art camp as well as other young artists. All members of DCAS are encouraged to submit work to the gallery throughout the summer. The cost of a DCAS membership is \$15 and memberships can be purchased at the gallery. The Gallery will be open all summer Friday through Monday from 3 pm to 7 pm. Admission is free but donations are appreciated.

## DCAS puzzle nears completion

By Brendan Reese, Summer Student Intern

photo courtesy of [www.hepuzzle.ca](http://www.hepuzzle.ca) (used with permission)

After six years the Dawson City Art Society's (DCAS) puzzle project is almost complete. The Puzzle, when completed, will contain 400 individual puzzle pieces created by 400 artists from across the country and around the globe. A variety of mediums were used in the creation of the puzzle pieces including, painting, carving, bronze, sculpture and photography. The completed puzzle will be 8 feet by 12 feet.



The Puzzle, originally designed to be used as an alternative to a fund raising thermometer, has become a promotional tool for Dawson City, and the Klondike Institute of Art and Culture's (KIAC) new School of Visual Arts. The original plan for The Puzzle was to add a puzzle piece for each \$5000 raised towards a new school of fine art. The construction of The Puzzle was not to begin until half of the money was raised. However before the assembly of the puzzle began the fund raising goal was met.

As part of the The Puzzle's new role as a promotional tool, DCAS has started an on line contest to guess what the picture on the puzzle will be. Figuring out what the completed picture will look like could be tricky, but there is nothing puzzling about the prize. Air North has offered a return trip for two from anywhere they fly to Dawson City for the Klondike Riverside Arts Festival, which will take place on Discovery Day weekend. The lucky winners will also enjoy dinner at the Westmark Inn and La Table on 5th and four nights accommodation at The Eldorado hotel and the 5th Avenue Bed and Breakfast.

The deadline for artists to complete their pieces was June



30th, the contest closes on July 15th, and the official unveiling of the puzzle will happen on August 17th as part of the celebration for the opening of the KIAC School of Visual Arts. To enter the contest and find out more about The Puzzle visit [www.thepuzzle.ca](http://www.thepuzzle.ca).

## Eldorado Hotel Rises from its Ashes

Story & photo by Dan Davidson

For someone having to spend over a million dollars restoring an entire floor and one wing of a hotel, Karen Jenkins sounds remarkably enthusiastic as she shows off the bare bones of the new second floor of the Eldorado Hotel in early June.

"This was originally 11 rooms plus the two suites that are all right. The 11 will be replaced with 6 large suites, one of which will have a four person jacuzzi."

The new hallway will run down the back of the building instead of the more traditional hallway in the middle, between the rooms.

"Hence not so many windows on the back end, but lots on the front with the new rooms."

"It's coming along very well, considering it's been seven and a half weeks."

On April 12 a second floor room of the Eldo caught fire when a frayed electrical cord ignited the bed and the room. Volunteer fire crews kept most of the fire damage to the second floor, though the south wing extension, containing rooms, the kitchen and dining room, were heavily damaged. The bar, at the other end of the building, had to be redone due to water damage.

Nevertheless, the fire team did a tremendous job saving the rest of the building, especially considering that fire safety building regulations in the late 1960s had provided the fire an easy building to spread in.

Restoration began almost immediately, with the Jenkins' priorities being to demolish the damaged floor, get the building framed, clad to the weather and a Third Avenue facade in place before Dawson got too far into its tourist season.

"Plus with the school right there and that whole back end burned, it was really important to us get that covered."

The new section has a red trim highlighting the windows and doors. Karen says it was a bit of struggle to persuade Peter to try this experiment, but it seems to be working well.

As for the cost, Karen Jenkins laughs when she remembers the initial damage estimate of \$500,000 plus.

"We just looked at each other and said 'No way'," she recalls.

Of the insurance settlement, she's keeping that confidential at the moment, and it isn't yet finished.

"Let's just say, it's been challenging, but they have been somewhat cooperative."

Peter and Karen Jenkins have had to spend a lot of money on the hotel in the last two years, starting with the repayment of a two decade old government loan that was finally called in last year.

"The positive end of it is that we are getting to rebuild and put some new things in. It's turning out to be a beautiful building. I'm very happy with the front."

The Jenkinses can rent only four rooms in the main building yet, so the business has been surviving on those, the 24 rooms in the annex building, and the 6 in the Yukon Hotel on Front Street while the construction work continues. The bar was functioning again, though upholstery work was still under way, and Karen Jenkins expected to be able to move the reception desk back into the main lobby within a week of this interview.

"That first couple of weeks were horrendous," she said. "Driving into town from Whitehorse and having no idea what to expect. It was pretty devastating when we first came inside the building. My knees went weak."

She credits her husband with keeping her spirits up and driving the reconstruction effort. While the interior work may have to wait on time and money, she's not sure her husband has the patience to let it wait long.

"Peter's a very determined man, as we all know. He's been the push behind this. He's very motivated these days."



## Dawson Discusses Heritage Planning

By Dan Davidson

From the number of council discussions there have been on the role and mandate of the town's Planning Board, to the expressions of frustration by planning board members and some members of the public, it seems clear that the Town of the City of Dawson has, for some time, needed to take a close look at the heritage aspect of its town plan.

Specifically, there has been a perceived need to replace the Parks Canada design guidelines which have influenced the look of new construction and restoration in the town core for the last 25 years.

In fact, the town has tried to do this at various times over the last decade, but has been frustrated by funding that vanished in the wake of territorial and federal elections, as well as by the financial crisis that led to the removal of the town council in 2004.

During the period of the trusteeship there was a reluctance by those in charge of the town to proceed with the consultation needed, feeling that it was the proper purview of an elected government, which was restored only slightly more than a year ago.

However the history may be, it does mean that Dawson is several years behind in getting to this process now, and the consultation runs the risk of getting lost in the welter of studies going on at the present time, including the Official Community Plan, the Sustainable Infrastructure Plan and the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in's regional socioeconomic study.

Perhaps this is part of the reason why only 16 people were on hand to participate in the priority setting exercise conducted by Hal Calman of Commonwealth Historical Resource Management Ltd. and Catherine Jacobson of Environmental Dynamics, in early June. CHRM is the Vancouver based company hired to oversee the process and prepare a report.

The steering committee for the report includes representatives from council, city staff, the chamber of commerce, the first nation and Parks Canada. The report itself is intended to be ready by March 2008, but various draft materials will be ready for viewing and feedback at stages along the way.

"There's no point in this whole thing unless it produces what people want," said Calman.

Discussion ranged quite widely at this meeting, but did remain mostly within the flexible boundaries set by Calman's guiding questions.

Why should Dawson preserve its heritage?

It was generally accepted that Dawson occupies a unique position in the history of the Yukon, of Canada, and even of the world, having been the last and biggest of the gold rush crusades of the 19th century, the benchmark against which rushes in Australia, South Africa and elsewhere have been measured. Unlike many such North American boom towns from the 60 year period of gold rushes, Dawson still exists.

What is Dawson's heritage? What should we preserve/protect/enhance?

While the most obvious aspect of the face Dawson

presents to the world reflects the Gold Rush period, that's not all there is to be said, and Parks Canada's mandate of 1898-1910 doesn't tell the whole story. Before the gold rush there is the story of the first nation and its occupation of the area. After that, there is the corporate mining period, the years as the territory's capital, the "almost a ghost town" years, and the shift in emphasis from mining to tourism between the 1960s and 1990s.

Dawson may have boardwalks and some reconstructed buildings, but it's not a Barkerville, frozen in its time period. Dawson may see tens of thousands of visitors each tourist season, but it's not a Skagway, which increasingly exists to service that industry and which almost vanishes behind boarded up windows and doors in the winter.

Pierre Berton was fond of calling Dawson a "living, historical community" and that term implies a whole host of internal contradictions in which there will be frustrations as well as triumphs. How, asked Councillor Diana Andrew, does the town marry heritage to its economic needs to come out a winner?

Related specifically to heritage building guidelines is the question of what should be permitted/encouraged in terms of construction in Dawson. What siding, windows or roofing should be regulated? What are the costs to builders of following these guidelines? There is a widely held belief in town that heritage construction inflates building costs, but it seems this is supported by anecdotal evidence rather than hard numbers.

On the other hand, even if there is no cost differential, some people expressed a simple reluctance to being told what they can or cannot do with their homes. This is perhaps a reflection, said Calman, of Dawson's status as the town at the end of the highway for most of the year. the "interface between civilization and the wilderness".

How should Dawson preserve its heritage?

How much of Dawson should be in the historic control zone? Originally the zone was smaller than it is now. Does making newer buildings look old run the risk of making interpretation into parody?

Is it more effective to regulate housing styles and features with rules or to offer financial incentives to do things the way the guidelines suggest?

How can the general public be engaged in this consultation?

It may be, as long time resident Cassandra Crayford suggested, that Dawson's real character is to be found in the nature of its history and its people, but that leaves a number of questions unanswered. Without the buildings and the historical look, what would trigger a discussion of that heritage? If there are no memorials and no visible stimulus to prompt questions about the past, would they ever be asked? What would be lost if they weren't?

The debate continues.

## Panning for Voice of the Heart

By Gregory M. Cook

Flying [further] north of Air Canada, mountains and rivers unfold their lonely story in hieroglyphics of transportation tracks, communication lines, and prospectors' scratches. Air North takes you from Whitehorse to Dawson City on its route to Inuvik – above the Arctic Circle.

Descent to Dawson reveals herringbone patterns of stone larger than your fist in tailings the size of skating rinks. These are deposits of recent gold extracting from leavings of previous generations since 1898. Then Dawson was a Yukon moose swamp of nearly 40,000 gold panners and hangers-on. Fleeing the world's "Long Depression," they created the Klondike Gold Rush.

Today's population of 2,000 is dwindling toward 1,200 when I arrive in October 2006. Most of the yearly 60,000 tourists have left, the earth tilts away from the sun, frost arrests mining, and many year-round residents are "outbound" – to shop, visit southern family and friends, or holiday in Mexico and Hawaii.

I am the 34th guest in 10 years to reside in Berton House Writers' Retreat – thanks to its namesake Society. Thanks as well to The Canada Council for the Arts, The Yukon Arts Council; and, not least of all, the late Pierre Berton and his family.

Had I come here panning for poems I would tell you more about how frost, gold prices, fire, and floods make the buildings walk – on the spot, across town, and through the centuries and heritage law – to remain almost more like the past than they were; how the talking raven dances with mating dogs; how art is installed in the bush and bars; how frozen boardwalks speak lines of poems wanting writing; how regiments of trees stand to attention, ghostly in hoar frost and thaw-stripped overnight; how solar flares paint 360 degrees of night sky here – where earth spins, at the top of the world.

Had I come here as journalist, I would pan more architecture – how homes and commercial buildings still standing were constructed of lumber from derelict river boats or sided with recycled beef tins; how the simple style in Jack London's and Robert Service's log cabins has been sophisticated for modern homes of physicians, nurses, teachers and successful miners.

I would show you signage of the sense of humour in a land used to exploitation and abandonment, a land of winter darkness and summer midnight sun, like: "Cowboy Parking Only / Violators Will Be Castrated," or "Free Ride / In a Police Car / For Theft or Break-in or Damage," or "Manic Depressive Tours."

A native fish camp before the gold rush, Dawson's three economic engines are now government, tourism and gold mining. Recently eleven 11 of fourteen 14 Yukon First Nations undertook self-government. Their land claims settled, first nations are entrepreneurs integrated in Dawson, where the "Community Library" is attached to the school. Dawson's newspaper is run by a not for profit literary

society.

In Dawson City time is collapsed into an eternal frontier. At the confluence of the Yukon and Klondike rivers, wedged between Alaska and The Northwest Territories, and just under the tundra meeting the tree line, weather and wildlife are the day's determinant. The leading issue of environment is a matter of daily experience.

Were I a historian, I'd read the house library of Pierre's 60 books and their many complements; tell you about the junior high school history fair featuring adolescents costumed as long-dead explorers, writers, and Klondike Kate – as well as a native boy representing his grandmother, who cures hides and does moccasin beadwork that might be among the finest in the world.

If I were writing fiction, the people who opened their homes and minds to me, toured me toward Alaska and the Arctic Circle, and up Bonanza Creek – as well as the eccentrics, like Dawson's "Caveman" – they'd all have a place in my book.

Under the working title "Voice of the Heart," I retreated to Berton House to write a biography of the shy, reclusive Nova Scotian, Ernest Buckler (1908-1984), author of the classic novel *The Mountain and the Valley* (1952). His major career breakthrough occurred while Pierre Berton was an editor at Maclean's in 1948, when Ernest won the magazine's \$1000 fiction prize. Ernest later wrote to Pierre: "I know you'll be glad to hear that Henry Holt and Company have just accepted my novel, for publication next fall" (January 17, 1952). Ernest expressed gratitude for Pierre's and the magazine's assistance during the "long years I was carrying it [the novel]."

I am writing these few words to express my gratitude to the Berton family and all those individuals and institutions responsible for the opportunity to complete 50,000 more words towards Ernest's biography – and for the magical experience of being mirrored in the land-and-commune-escape of the Yukon.

If you qualify, consider applying for a retreat to Berton House. See: <http://www.bertonhouse.ca/>

*Gregory M. Cook's latest books are Alden Nowlan: Essays on His Works (Guernica), Songs of the Wounded: new and selected poems (Black Moss), One Heart, One Way / Alden Nowlan: a writer's life (Pottersfield). He lives in Saint John, New Brunswick. Greg spent the fall of 2006 in Berton House.*

## Uffish Thoughts: The Challenge of Living in the Past and the Future

Story & photo by Dan Davidson

Barkerville is a lovely place, a piece of the 19th century frozen in the time. It had been close to 20 years since the last time we visited the place, and we were truly impressed by the extended size of the streets, the ambition of the programming, and the detail that has gone into making the place an experience that a person really ought to take two days to enjoy.

It takes time, after all, to visit 125 reconstructed

buildings, take in a number of presentations, attend a live theatre show and just wander up and down the streets. Sadly, we had only an afternoon, and that was packed, even though we took in just a couple of presentations and did merely a little bit of shopping.

In addition, the weather was not at all cooperative - or perhaps it might have been.

Environment Canada gave us a real mid-June Caribou downpour, which began right in the middle of the judge's harangue in the Methodist church. The young man doing the spiel was well into his presentation when his voice was eclipsed by the staccato pounding of hail on the roof. Moving to the window, his robes swishing, he managed to maintain his British accent while muttering, "Migod, it's golf balls."

It wasn't of course, but it was mothballs, a ton of them, so many that it piled up like snow and the elevated boardwalks had to be shovelled off by the shopkeepers; so many that the stuff had melted by the time it ran down the wooded hillsides and cascaded into Barkerville's dirt streets, making small lakes and rivers heading in the general direction of the administration building and Visitors Reception Centre.

Lots of people have compared Dawson to Barkerville, its older cousin. Some have said that Dawson should be more like Barkerville, that we ought to make more of an effort to keep the older ambiance alive.

We can't do that, of course, Dawson has a couple of things that Barkerville hasn't had to contend with: people and change.

The town boomed to 5,000 people during its gold rush and was, in a variation of the phrase that is often used to describe gold rush Dawson, "the largest town north of San Francisco and west of Chicago". It was born in 1868 and declined slowly over the next 30 years, with a slight revival in the 1930s. That mini-boom also created the town of Wells, which is the actual living community today, just a few kilometres from its historic brother.

In 1958 the government of British Columbia took a look at the corpse and decided to make it a monument to its time. That's what it is. I've watched it grow tremendously over the last 25 years or so, but it hasn't changed its essential character. Partnered with Wells, which has absorbed all the changes and modernity, like some municipal Picture of Dorian Gray (a horrible analogy, really, for Wells is an attractive little town), Barkerville can remain grey, unpainted, rooted in the fashions and feelings of the 1860s, with a bit of modern merchandising going on behind the weathered facades.

It is a grander version of the Pioneer Village in Dawson Creek, but it is essentially the same idea writ large. It has a future only in terms of its homage to the past.

Dawson is something else again. Pierre Berton called it a living historical town, revelling in the oxymoronic reality that term implies. Dawson has colour, maybe some of it a little like the more exuberant pallet of Ted Harrison than anything that might have been in vogue during the 1898 to 1910 period Parks Canada has chosen to celebrate,



Hail hit Barkerville on June 17, with temperatures a mere 4 degrees above freezing.

but it helps buoy the spirits in the winter.

Dawson has people, and people need services beyond what a slavish adherence to its past can provide. They need decent streets, modern utilities, cable television, high speed internet and (gasp!) cellular telephones.

Dawson has a future, and though not everyone agrees on just what that future ought to be, they agree on that much, and that ought to be enough to prompt the discussion we need to have over the next year.

### From the French Corner...

### Dawson reçoit le Conseil des Arts du Canada

De Marielle Veilleux

C'est parmi une fin de semaine rempli d'évènements culturels que je me suis rendue à la galerie d'arts ODDs de Dawson pour la réception tenue à l'honneur du cinquantième anniversaire du Conseil des Arts du Canada qui avait lieu vendredi.

«En effet, la vie culturelle de Dawson est en son plein essor, me dit Mme Sally Sheppard le ministre du tourisme et culture pour le Yukon, tout en admirant les tableaux de l'artiste Fortin: «Nous avons des dignitaires de partout au pays ainsi que des dirigeants du gouvernement du Yukon, nous voulions nous rendre à cette réception aussi. »

En effet, une trentaine de personnes surtout des artistes locaux y étaient. M. Bob Sirman, directeur du Conseil des Arts du Canada est arrivé vers 17:30 en compagnie de deux de ses collègues. Ils ont passé l'après-midi à visiter les infrastructures de la communauté artistique de Dawson ainsi



que le centre culturel des premières nations «Trondek Gwachen. »

Ces visites font partie des objectifs que le conseil s'est donné cette année, m'indique M. Sirman afin d'être plus familier avec les besoins des artistes. Il continue en disant qu'il désire visiter le plus de communautés possibles à travers le pays «non pas seulement à cause du cinquantième anniversaire mais parce que c'est aussi une promesse que je me suis faite. Je veux voir de mes propres yeux, ce que les communautés ont accomplis et y rencontrer tous les artistes locaux. »

On est interrompu par M. Gary Parker, directeur de DCAS qui désire faire une introduction formelle de M. Sirman à la salle.

«La ville de Dawson devrait être fière de sa vie culturelle si abondante.» Ainsi débute M. Sirman. «Dawson city fut une révélation pour nous. Nous sommes étonnés de voir tant d'infrastructures dans une ville de moins de 2000 habitants. Cet accomplissement nous laisse perplexes à savoir comment vous avez pu faire cela en si peu de temps. » Il poursuit en donnant un bref historique des débuts du Conseil des Arts: «Il y a 50 ans lorsque le conseil a été formé, il existait très peu d'investisseurs au pays et le Conseil jouait un rôle très important pour les communautés comme la vôtre. Maintenant notre rôle est minime, nous contribuons qu'une petite partie car les communautés reçoivent des fonds de différents organismes. Mais un de nos mandats au Conseil des Arts du Canada, est de connaître nos différents partenaires et d'essayer de convaincre ces investisseurs davantage que les artistes et leur créativité sont une partie intégrante de notre société et que leurs contributions y jouent un rôle essentiel. On sait que ce n'est pas tout le monde qui croit aux bénéfices d'une vie culturelle dans une société. Mais ici, à Dawson city, on en a la preuve. Vous avez une école des arts visuels, le SOVA, une résidence pour les écrivains, la maison du fameux écrivain Pierre Berton, vous avez cette galerie d'arts, ODDs, le centre KIAC avec tous les événements qui s'y passe dont le festival international du film que nous sommes très fiers d'attribuer des fonds, le festival des arts et sans mentionner les partenariats que vous avez accomplis, entre autres avec les premières nations Tr'ondëk Gwachen et autres. » Il mentionne que l'énergie qu'il perçoit ici est très positive, que ce n'est pas normale même. «C'est très encourageant et je le redis, je crois sincèrement que Dawson city devrait être très fière et définitivement vous êtes le modèle à copier pour tous les autres communautés à travers le Canada. »

M. Sirman continue en invitant les gens à partager leurs idées sur le site Web du Conseil pour les Arts afin de leurs aider à formuler un plan stratégique qu'ils publieront en octobre prochain.

«L'argent qui est attribuée aux communautés n'est pas seulement sur une base de mérite me confie-t-il, après son discours «il y a aussi beaucoup d'autres facteurs à considérer. Pour le Yukon, nous y attribuons environ \_ million de dollars annuellement mais c'est un bon investissement je crois pour les citoyens canadiens et j'en ai la preuve aujourd'hui. »

Il m'avoue d'être très impressionné avec cette petite ville du Yukon qu'est Dawson city et est heureux d'avoir tenu sa promesse de visiter toutes ses petites communautés.

## **Buds Erupt to Greet the Summer**

By Dan Davidson

The leaves came out last week  
erupting from their buds like overeager puppies  
dying to go for a walk,  
to chase a ball or a stick,  
to do anything but just sit there  
waiting for the right moment.

The sun worked its magic,  
the buds swelled, extruding small green tips  
which tasted the air,  
took the temperature,  
sampled the humidity  
and reported back to the branches  
that it was time -  
past time.  
“Let's go,” they said.  
And so they did.



