

# The Klondike Sun

July 18, 2007 Online Edition

Dawson City, Yukon



## Canada Day



Canada Day photos by Ed Vos

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## **“Fiddle Rush” brings ghosts to life at the Palace Grand**

By Brenden Reese, Summer Student Intern

Twenty-three young fiddlers took to the stage at the Palace Grand Theatre last Wednesday to tell the tale of the Gold Rush in a very different, and much more musical way. “Fiddle Rush” brings the Gold Rush story to life with singing, dancing, story telling, and of course fiddling.

The story begins when Dot (Trish Barclay) and Bert (Marc Desormeaux) attempt to raise the dead at the Dawson cemetery by playing some music on their fiddle and guitar. However they don’t have much luck until they are joined by the young Katie (Katie Furlong) who comes to the graveyard to practice her fiddle in peace. When they all play together they are soon joined by some long dead but very friendly young ghosts who can’t help but join in the fun and share their tales of life long ago in the Klondike. What follows is one of the most entertaining and enthusiastic interpretations of Gold Rush history ever seen.

The young fiddlers, known as the Fiddleheads, came to Dawson from Whitehorse for the show. They have added thirteen new members this year and are comprised of performers between the ages of five and fourteen. Some of the younger members of the group only began playing the fiddle this year. Their many hours of practice make for a seamless and professional show that amazes audiences every time.

The cast and crew are made up almost entirely of volunteers, many of whom are the parents of the young performers. For their second consecutive year they will be spending over a week in Dawson entertaining local people and tourists alike. “Fiddle Rush” is written and directed by Trish Barclay. The show plays at the Palace Grand until July 19th. Show time is at 7 p.m. and tickets are available at the Palace Grand Theater.

## **Uffish Thoughts: Dawson satisfied the Court, but some citizens still have their doubts**

By Dan Davidson

Among the disadvantages of being locked into a summer

travel plan months in advance so as to get the best use of our Aeroplan points was the fact that other events were scheduled after I was to leave Dawson, at times that made it impossible for me to attend them.

Commissioner Van Bibber had a pair of tickets for us to meet the Governor General while she was in Dawson, but they were for an event that took place the day before we had to be on a plane in Vancouver, so we had to decline. I would have enjoyed completing a hat trick of sorts by meeting three GGs in a row.

Even more than that though, I would have liked to have been present for the latest chapter in a story I’ve been following for years: the Dawson sewage system saga. I had been one of those lobbying quietly to have this set of hearings held in the town for the convenience of its citizens, rather than in Whitehorse for the convenience of the lawyers and intervening federal employees, but when the date and place were announced I found I would be elsewhere.

It took place while I was in either St. Catharine’s (hence the place name at the head of last weeks column, as at least one person noted) planning a side trip to Niagara Falls or in Stratford, attending a plethora of plays.

During my travels I noted a CBC North report in which the owner of the Eldorado Hotel, Peter Jenkins, was quoted as saying “You never build your outhouse right on top of you drinking water supply.”

While the YTG engineers have just about convinced me that they can have the lagoon built at the foot of the Dome Road without serious danger of spilling, leaking or leaching, Mr. Jenkins has captured the fears of a great many Dawsonites, fears which have been raised at nearly every public meeting I’ve attended (most of them) on this subject, and fears which have never really gone away in the minds of most people in town.

If this were not the case, there wouldn’t be a healthy number of names appearing on a petition to force council to reject the zoning variance, which would allow the project to be built there.

If this were not the case, the Tr’ondek Hwëch’in would not have reversed the decision of its 2005 General Assembly this year in order to open up the possibility of placing the lagoon on TH land, on the table above Tr’ochek.

Mr. Jenkins has also captured the distrust with which a great many Dawsonites view the professional class known as engineers. After all, engineers designed, approved, and built the Art and Margaret Fry Recreation Centre, which drove the last council into bankruptcy, cost the town 26 months of trusteeship, allowed our sewage and water infrastructure to decay still further when there was no money to do necessary work, and left us with a building which is still unfinished, will probably need a partial new foundation and almost an entirely new roof.

So when another group of engineers comes along saying that a potentially risky proposition is as safe as houses, people tend to want to ask if these folks have any idea what ground movement in Dawson does to houses.

A source who prefers to remain A. Nony Mouse has

described to me the day of the court hearing in an email.

Predictably, there were people who claimed never to have heard of this project until now (I must be a failure as a reporter) and wondered just what the government was trying to put over on us this time.

There were people who had just read the letter from Zenon industries, outlining its unsolicited proposal to build a filtration plant without a lagoon.

There were people who thought a court date was like a public hearing and were “vociferously disappointed” when they found out they weren’t going to be allowed to vent.

Why didn’t they attend the meetings they could have spoken at? Well, some of them had been south for the winter and hadn’t been keeping up with events at home. Others said that they couldn’t be bothered going to that kind of meeting.

I have no sympathy for these folk. As an educator colleague of mine is fond of saying, “the world is governed by those who show up.”

Where are we now?

A.N. Mouse informs me that the judge ruled in favor of what the town and YTG have been planning up to now, and has told them to continue.

In his Mayor’s Blog at [cityofdawson.com](http://cityofdawson.com), John Steins has indicated that this was the best of the three court sessions he has attended since taking office, the best in that Environment Canada seemed to be coming around to the idea that their favorite sewage treatment solution, the sequencing batch reactor (SBR) plant, was out of range in terms of both construction costs and continuing operations costs into the future. Look up “unsustainable” in the dictionary and there is a picture of SBR Dawson next to it.

“Both the Court and Crown were satisfied with our progress,” Steins posted, “in particular Judge Lilles was very complimentary towards the Dawson/YTG project team in recognition of their many hours of hard work towards the advancement of this project. The treatment plant to be built on lot 1059 is now entering the environmental assessment process, most everything else is in place and with a completion date of 2011 our town will be able to close the book on a rather tumultuous chapter in our history.”

## **My Life as a Learner**

By Gordon Hardie

*Speech delivered at Yukon Literacy Summit in Whitehorse on May 26th 2007*

I was born in Whitehorse in 1958. We lived in the bush in Porter Creek. I had no preschool or kindergarten I just started school in grade 1. The teachers asked me if I was stupid because I could not recognize my name on my book. I told her I did not know how to read and write and that that was why I came to school. From that day on I had problems with education. I had difficulty reading and writing.

I was passed on from grade to grade and I think it was just to get me out of their hair.

In grade 10 I had my reading level tested and it was at grade 3 level. When I realized that I decided to drop out and

get a job. My first job was working for my uncle as a laborer. I’ve worked as a laborer for most of my life.

While I was in Whitehorse in 1989 my brother suggested that I go to find out what level of reading I was at. I had really low education in reading and writing.

There was a real good tutor there and I wanted to learn but I had to move back to Dawson. At that time there were no real good tutors in Dawson.

I felt that there was no hope and I was not getting any better. I could not afford to pay tutors. Then one day I found out that the government issued money to pay tutors so I went to Yukon College and they set me up with a tutor.

Now I work with a really good tutor and she has me in this Wilson Reading Program. I am learning to read 15 letter words. I never thought that I could read words like that.

I learn to tap, scoop and spell them. I really recommend it to anybody. I am now at a higher level than I was when I started.

I have more self esteem. I know I am not stupid anymore. If someone tells me I am stupid I tell them I am not. I can read and write better.

I think to stomp out illiteracy we need very good teachers and tutors for adults and children. This will help us to break the circle of having a bad education. If we have all of this it will make us better Canadians. But, this can not happen without your help. So please help us with your support so that we can learn.

If I had one wish I would wish that everybody would get a good education so that they could have a good lifestyle.

Thank-you very much for listening to my story and I hope that this will help someone else.

If you know someone who would like assistance with reading and writing please contact Gordon Hardie Yukon Adult Learner Representative at 993-6033.

## **Boys’ Problems are neglected, says Berton House’s Burtinshaw**

Story & Photo by Dan Davidson

When Julie Burtinshaw first read about the Berton House Writers’ Retreat two years ago, she wasn’t looking on her own behalf.

“I work for a large website (Suite 101) and I was researching an article on writer’s retreats. I put in my application almost on a whim.”

She wasn’t sure she’d be able to fit it into her timetable.

“I work in Vancouver. I have a job at a bookstore, I work for a website and I’m doing my writing full time. What appealed to me was it being in the North, so I applied, thinking, as most writers do, that it wouldn’t come through.”

So she had never really planned on being selected and was left in a quandary when she got a call from Elsa Franklin (Pierre Berton’s business manager) eight months later.

“I said ‘Who?’ ‘cause it had gone right out of my mind.”

She panicked a bit and nearly turned it down. It was an honour, but she had her jobs and a son in grade 11, her

husband was a pilot who was often away, and she didn't see how she could even think of it.

Elsa told her to take a day and think it over. Her husband and son agreed with the part about it being an honour and insisted she do it, pledging to make it work. As she neared the end of her three month stay in early June she was really glad they did.

She started out with what she calls typical southern misapprehensions. Most of the website photos of the house don't show that it is situated in a quiet residential neighbourhood. She imagined herself in the wilderness, miles from anyone, or with no nearby neighbours.

"When I got here I was very thrilled to see that it was similar to my community. In the South our imagination is that everybody in the North is out isolated on farms, on big pieces of property, so I didn't imagine this at all."

Burtinshaw's Vancouver home is in Dunbar, out by the UBC campus.

Her husband was also impressed when he came to visit for a week, and she caught him musing about perhaps investing in a summer home here if something were for sale.

Interest in the North seems to be high. At the website Suite 101 (<http://www.suite101.com/>), where she is both a contributor and an editor, her personal blog (<http://burtinshaw.wordpress.com/>) has had over 2,000 hits - way up from normal - while she has been at Berton House and adding comments about Dawson City to it.

She didn't imagine her productivity either. In the first month, while she was still getting to know people and while things were quieter, she ploughed through what was to have been the final edit on her next young adult novel (working title: *Being Brian*) and found that she had added 20,000 words to the book. This would not necessarily be a good thing, but these seemed to her to be good words (even if some of them were "bad" words) and she was thrilled that her editor at Raincoast Books agreed with her.

*Being Brian* is about a boy caught up in the subculture of "cutting" and self-mutilation, a subject that is quite a change from the historical fiction she has been writing. Her first novel, *Dead Reckoning* (2000), was about a ship wreck somewhat similar to the wreck of the Princess Sophia. It was a book for teenage boys. It pushed her to leave her work doing business magazine research and writing.

A second novel, *Adrift*, followed two years later. While it did deal a bit with boating, the title had two meanings, the

other having to do with clinical depression and how the problems of adults can have an impact on their children.

*Romantic Ghost Stories* (2003) offered her the challenge of researching a variety of times and settings for a book of short stories.

*The Freedom of Jenny* (2005) was also historical fiction,

about the slaves who fled across the USA and ended up moving to Victoria and Salt Spring Island.

*Being Brian* is another contemporary novel, dealing with an issue Burtinshaw feels is being ignored by society. She says there are lots of books and studies dealing with eating disorders and self-mutilation in girls, but when it comes to boys her research pretty much drew a blank even though there is lots going on.

"They're ignored in medicine and psychology. There's a culture around them and when you listen to the music - really listening to the words and not just the noise - you hear a lot about it. I discovered this whole culture around cutting, which is really frightening."

To collect information she hung out in online chatrooms, monitoring conversations with permission and sometimes having her own, while admitting that she was not one of them. The members seemed to be pleased that she was taking an interest, and she's had the same response from high school boys when she's field tested extracts from *Being Brian* during school readings. They tune out during her other books and become visibly focussed when she reads from that manuscript, often coming up to talk to her about it after the reading and showing her the scars on their arms.

Burtinshaw tries to leave her readers with hope at the ends of her novels, with realistic endings rather than with complete solutions or despair.

"What I like to do in my writing is that I like to do a lot of research, which is why it's either historical fiction or it has to be based on something. I don't want to moralize wither. I just want to write about stuff that's going on out there."

A project that came to mind while in Dawson was to combine her residency with another interest - west coast history - and see if she could research a book that would tie those together, the link being the Princess Sophia disaster of 1918, in which the crew of 75 and 268 passengers, many of them from Dawson City, perished in the Lynn Canal, midway between Skagway and Juneau. She admits she'll need to insert a survivor other than the dog in order to



tell her story.

She's been digging through the resources of the Dawson City Museum, which she says has opened all its doors to her in cooperation. Like everything else in Dawson, from the library, to the Women's Shelter (where she's done a workshop) the Klondike Institute of Art and Culture and Bombay Peggy's, where she's met lots of people, she's enthralled by the place and reluctant to leave.

Dawson City has been just great, she said, and though she had three weeks to go at the time of this interview, she could hardly wait to come back.

## **Bunkhouse offers home for transient workers**

By Brendan Reese, Summer Student Intern

If you've been by the Dawson City Bunkhouse lately you may have noticed something a little different. This year the Bunkhouse known for its clean affordable accommodation, and beautiful location overlooking the Yukon River, has been taken over. At least half of the hotel has been set aside as a home for many members of Dawson's City's summer transient workforce. As a result of this a community of people from across the country and around the globe have come together to share a common place.

General manager Jamie Koski saw the need for affordable temporary housing after the loss of Dawson's tent city in 2005. So this year she decided to try and fill some of the void by opening up half of the hotel for monthly rentals. The results have been outstanding, and within a month all available monthly rooms had been filled.

The Bunkhouse has become more than just a place to live for many of its residents. It's not uncommon to see those living there tossing a frisbee in the yard, hacking a sack in the parking lot, or playing some of the best live music in Dawson City on the front porch. There are often barbecues on the lawn, and even a message board where you can post your favorite thing about summer in Dawson.

Whether the hotel continues in to provide a home for summer workers in the future is to be seen. One thing is certain though, the memories and friendships acquired by its residents will last a lifetime.

## **Heavyweight Champ delivers knockout talk**

By Wayne Potoroka

Former Canadian heavyweight champion George Chuvalo was never knocked out or knocked down in his 22 years of professional boxing. He came pretty close to hitting the mat, though, in his personal life. Chuvalo, 69, lost three sons and a wife to suicide and a heroin addiction: a devastating blow that would have leveled most people. He survived the ordeal and now tours Canada, sharing his tale and warning youth about the dangers of drugs.

Chuvalo was in Dawson City this past June to tell his story to nearly 150 people in the Tr'ondëk Heritage Hall. His visit to Dawson happened almost by accident. Charles

Eshleman, TH recreation worker, was on the phone to a colleague in Yellowknife when he heard someone in the background on the other end of the line talking about Chuvalo.

"I thought 'Wow, Chuvalo. Could I get Chuvalo up to the Yukon?'" said Eshleman. "The thought never left me. I pursued it, and it all came together."

Eshleman was familiar with Chuvalo's story and felt he had a message for Dawson.

"We're trying to keep one step ahead of the dangers to our community, especially the dangers of drug use," said Eshleman. "George has a positive effect by sharing his experiences with people and turning something negative into a positive."

Unconsciously bobbing and weaving on his stool as he spoke, like a fighter dodging punches in the ring, Chuvalo spared no detail as he recalled losing four members of his family and surviving his "own personal holocaust."

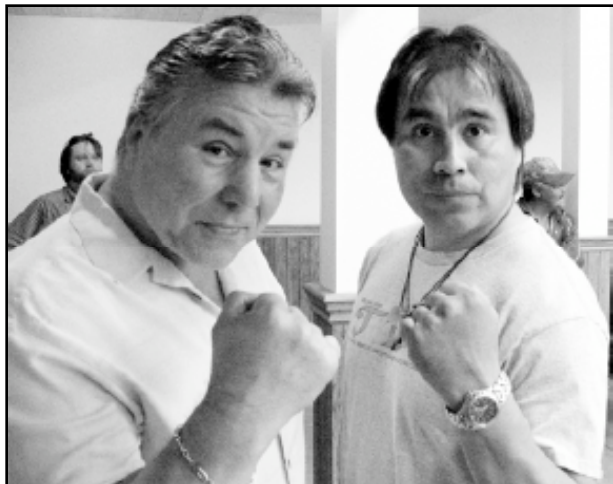
"Emotional pain is different than physical pain," said Chuvalo. "When you lose a child, you're wounded forever... You never really recover. You never forget someone you love, your flesh and blood, your child."

Chuvalo said it was the love of his remaining family that got him through it. Now, he tries to make something positive of the situation by giving speeches about his experience, something he's done 125 to 175 times a year for the past 11 years.

"I focus on young people because it's the most important part of a person's life, the most difficult part of our lives," said Chuvalo. "It's when you're young that you make the decisions that affect the rest of your life."

Chuvalo said that helping youth make better decisions than the ones his kids made motivates him.

"So long as I have those things to look forward to, I've got steam to keep moving forward," added Chuvalo. "In



George Chuvalo & Charles Eshleman

terms of helping young people, if I didn't get the kind of positive feedback that I get every time I speak, I couldn't continue. It's the kind of thing that I need to keep going."

Chuvalo left the crowd with a simple message: 'When

you have love at home, you're happy, you're on solid ground. And when you're on solid ground, you want to be a solid young citizen. Simple as that."

At the end of his talk and a lengthy round of autographing signing and photograph taking, Chuvalo said he was exhausted, much like he would at the end of a fight. Chief Darren Taylor, one of several former Art Fry students who attended the event, said it was important to bring people like Chuvalo to town.

"Celebrities are role models, and people have a tendency to think that they have these perfect lives," said Taylor. "It's important for them to come out and speak of their personal experience in relation to their family troubles, to show everyone that they're regular people with problems like everyone else. It's important, for youth, particularly, to hear that message."

As the evening closed, Eshleman offered the perfect assessment of Chuvalo's talk: "You hear a story like that and you remember it for the rest of your life."

## **The Stairway to Hell**

By Sylvia Sands Johnson

Don, three children and I were still living in One-eyed Henry's cabin in 1959, Granville, YT., when I got this brainwave. I had always been attracted to landscaping, especially since the days when my father had been the Head Gardener at the Queen Alexandria Solarium (for crippled children) in Mill Bay, Vancouver Island. He always had a neat vegetable garden at home, too.

So, I thought, it's time to rev up the appearance of the old log cabin. Don was home too, so I didn't have to worry about watching the kids. Since the cabin was at the top of a hill, the first thing I decided to do was cut out a stairway leading to the front door. So I gathered up my tools - a mattock, a shovel, a saw, an axe and a sledge hammer - just about everything we had in our tool arsenal.

The plan was to work from top to bottom. I was surrounded on all sides by small, leafy aspen trees. Dozens of them. First I axed a tree or two out of the way, then began to dig out the first step. The second plan was to fortify the back of the step by cutting hunks of aspen that would be pounded along the back, so that if it poured rain, the dirt would have some support and not come sliding down. I was beginning to work up a real sweat.

I had read numerous books about the grand and wonderful north, but there was one thing I had forgotten. The Mongolian Hordes. Quite suddenly, I was being attacked, not by a few mosquitoes but by a massive cloud of them. How could I have forgotten their existence? Where were they all coming from?

I'm one of those people who has a theory that mosquitoes are territorial like everything else, but on this day it seemed like the only territory they recognized was me. Also, I'm the only one who has come up with that theory. Then, the answer came to me. Bug dope. Why had I forgotten it? So, I ran to the house and slathered it all over my face and neck. I was not going to let a few mosquitoes

defeat me.

I began to chop out the next step feeling quite proud of my endurance and sticktivity. The more I dug with the mattock, and pounded in the back supports, the more the monsters gathered for the feast. I couldn't believe it. There was nowhere in BC, where I had encountered mosquitoes like this. The sweat ran off me like a waterfall, as the beasts moved into my eyes, and one even flew into my mouth, tasting bitter, acrid and totally inedible. I was starting to wave my arms around like a Dutch windmill, or a banshee - cursing the day I had ever set foot in the Yukon.

It was unbelievable that so many insects could exist in such a small place. I now had four steps completed that may still be there, even though a tree or two may have broken through them. But now I understand what the old-timers, gold-muckers and stamperders had truly endured. I could now believe that some horses had actually tried to commit suicide coming over the Chilkoot Pass. The horse flies must have been unbearable along with the other winged lovelies.

Of course, it had never occurred to me to wear mosquito netting, which is what I do now in our lavish garden in Rosswood.

That was the end of the stairway to Hell, but I comforted myself with the thought that I had at least tried.

## **Dawson City Ambulance Service "signs off"**

It is with deep regret that the Dawson City Volunteer attendants inform the public that we are officially "signing off" at 10 a.m., July 12, 2007.

As ambulance attendants we are on call 24 hours a day. We are unable to go into loud venues, to enjoy a hike out of town, to go across river or leave town at all and we cannot enjoy a glass of wine with our family at dinner. Providing emergency services is a high stress occupation at the best of times. We volunteer to be available for an emergency call at any time of the day with the assumption that we are able to continue our obligations to employers and families. We take pride in and are passionate about the service that we provide; however, the combined pressure of maintaining our private lives and fulfilling our positions as volunteer ambulance attendants have made our service unsustainable.

Did you know:

- Dawson City averages more than one call a day?
- Whitehorse has the only non-volunteer medics in the Yukon?
- Rural attendants do not have the same training opportunities as Whitehorse attendants?
- We are not paid for being on stand-by?
- We fundraised for basic life saving equipment, such as Automatic External Defibrillator (AED), Propac and pulse oximeter?

We care deeply about the quality of emergency health care service in our community and for this reason we are taking a stand. We are calling for improvements to Dawson City Emergency Services and we will not return to "call" until improvements are made. By taking a stand at this time,

we are supporting Watson Lake attendants who share common concerns.

The improvements to the Emergency Medical Services in Dawson City that we are asking for include:

- 4 full time paid attendants to allow us to have a paid "lead" on call at all times, year round.
- Paid attendants must be Dawson City residents. These employees must be trained to the equivalent level of Whitehorse attendants.
- Primary Care Paramedics training for a minimum of 2 Dawson City volunteer attendants per year at the expense of YTG Health & Social Services.

## Hoping Ambulance Woes Find Solution

It was indeed sad news to hear that both Watson Lake and Dawson volunteer ambulance crews are forced to quit.

These volunteer people have done a superb job in looking after their communities.

Again they are not as high profile as other groups, and one doesn't really appreciate their great efforts until one has to use their services.

Beginning last fall when my husband Fred, lost the use of his legs after a blood transfusion in Whitehorse, we have had to rely on the Dawson City volunteer ambulance crew to get him to and from the Nursing Station or Medical Clinic.

This was no easy task, because at that stage he was still a big man. The ambulance crew knew all the techniques for getting a big man slowly down or up the stairs. Or in or out of an ambulance. The men were no Arnold Schwarzenegger types, and the females were just slim young women.

At all times they were cheerful and encouraging.

Then this January we really tested them. On our return from Vancouver where my husband had an operation from near neck to navel he insisted on driving the stretch from Whitehorse to Dawson. We didn't realize he would be just too tired to handle this, and a few kilometers south of the Dempster Corner we found ourselves spun out and stuck in a snow bank off the road. At night. At -33 C.

Again we called for that volunteer ambulance crew.

They turned up and were able to safely extricate him and transport him to the Nursing Station. Here they waited till he was treated and brought him home again. They took care of his subsequent trips to the Nursing Station and Medical clinic as needed.

They are greatly appreciated.

I think it is totally unfair of the government not to offer them better support either in manpower, better facilities or financially. They suffer and so does the community.

Hoping this matter can be resolved ,

Yours truly

**Palma Berger**

## The Hermit Thrushes of Granville, YT

By Sylvia Sands-Johnson

When my son, Paul and I visited Dawson City in 2006, and then drove out to see our old home in Granville, YT (where we lived when he was a baby) one of the things I hoped to hear was the Hermit Thrush. We were too late, the thrushes had already reared their young and left. Even though Paul had a Whisky-jack eating out of his hand, where Hazel Kilbride used to live in the village – I did not hear the wondrous, rising flute-like notes of the Hermit Thrush.

In fact, in the early days I didn't even know the name of that bird. All I recall is that every spring it was as if a symphony made up of flute players had arrived and the air was filled with spectacular melody from one end of the village to the other. I can't remember another bird being there, unless it was the ubiquitous raven.

It was when we came to Terrace, BC and my children were in their teens, that I caught bird fever and went a little mad, running around with a pair of binoculars and a bird book crying, "What's that bird, what's THAT bird?"

Robins, crows and sparrows had become boring. I happened to read something about Hermit Thrushes and it was sad, "While Canadians may go to England to hear the song of the famous Nightingale, an English birdwatcher would be inclined to come to Canada to hear the song of the aria of the Hermit Thrush – if he wanted the equivalent thrill." So I decided I must find a Hermit Thrush. It never occurred to me that I had heard zillions of them in the Yukon winter land.

It was when I was scouting to find new birds in the Copper River area, which is forested with large spruce, cedars and hemlocks that towered way over my head, that I heard a distant voice, a small echo in the wilderness that sounded vaguely familiar.

One little bird was singing its heart out and I said to myself (birdwatchers talk to themselves), "I know I've heard that song before," and then, kazoo! I was right back in the Yukon. I would stalk that bird until I could identify it.

Only Emily Carr really understood what the BC jungle is about; when you are overshadowed by monster trees, trip over tangled hardhack or are clutched in the thorny arms of a swamp laurel and then fall headlong into some weirdo swamp plant that eats people. I have this secret theory that Hermit Thrushes love to sing after a song but that's a discovery that only I've recorded.

It took a while to creep up to that huge tree the bird sang in and I knew that I would only have seconds to focus my binocs onto such a tiny brown, camo-feathered bird to identify it.

"I've got you," I said aloud as all the markings matched in my now damp bird book. And yes, the Hermit Thrush did migrate to the Yukon.

The only time I was thrilled in bird watching is when I first saw a Pileated Woodpecker, the largest woodpecker in the world – as he loudly ripped bark off one of the flowerbeds - and I was sure there was a bear in the yard.

So as much as I was disappointed not to see a Hermit Thrush on our trip, occasionally when I'm out in our garden



in Rosswood, north of Terrace, and a storm has passed, I hear a flute in the forest, rising up the scale, notes fading into thin air the unmistakable voice of a Hermit Thrush. I pause to listen and am magically transported to the world of a young mother and her children, where aspens grow profusely in a land where the gold dredges are silenced forever.

#### The Hermit Thrush

I hear a bird that sings like a flute,  
Above the spotted coral root;  
I know the rising scale of wolf's howl  
And hear the Great Horned Owls' hoot;  
I feel the dainty fingers of a moth  
Play upon my naked skin –  
And know that man and moth are kin.

Note: the spotted coral root is a small orchid that grows in BC. Also, the Hermit Thrush's song was very common in Granville, YT in the 1950s although I did not know the name of the bird at that time.

## Yukon Goldpanning Championships

Photos by Ed Vos

Results from the competition will be in our next issue.

