

# The Klondike Sun

September 26, 2007 Online Edition

Dawson City, Yukon



## No Opposition to Smoke Free Places Act in Dawson forum

Story & Photo by Dan Davidson

The Select Committee on Anti-smoking Legislation outnumbered its audience by two when it met in the Downtown Hotel conference room on September 12. The committee and its entourage numbered ten.

Of the eight Dawsonites who turned out to offer their opinions on the proposed legislation, none were averse to the idea. The lack of opposition in the room was commented on several times and more than one person suggested that the smokers must have been having their own meeting somewhere else.

A couple of people pointed out that this meeting had not been well advertised locally, the committee having made no use of DCTV's rolling ads, the local newspaper or even a poster in the post office to get the word out.

Bill No. 104, The Smoke Free Places Act, is that rarest of beasts, a private member's bill backed by one of the opposition parties in the Legislature, which nonetheless enjoys the support in principle of all three parties. The measure was moved by Todd Hardy, leader of the New Democratic Party, but it has been taken up by all hands as a measure whose time has come.

There was no argument about that in Dawson, though

there has been in the past. The Everitt council passed the first restrictive bylaw in Dawson back in 2002, before any other action had been taken in the territory. The compromise then was to allow smoking in outdoor patios, but to ban it in any other place that might be entered by a minor.

This left bars free to be havens for smokers. The proposed territorial legislation will remove that option.

So much has changed since 2002 that there are no remaining jurisdictions in Canada that have not restricted smoking, and most have gone much, much further than Dawson's initial effort.

A further sign of the changed times would be the ease with which Minister of Health Brad Cathers (Yukon Party) shared the committee duties with John Edzerza (NDP) and Darius Elias (Liberal). Hardly a partisan word was spoken.

Mayor John Steins urged the committee, which is travelling the territory to get public reactions, to make no exceptions in the new legislation and to "display resolve." He noted that visitors from Los Angeles last winter automatically stepped outside Bombay Peggy's to light up,

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even when the local patrons were puffing away.

Steins has been pushing for YTG to take the lead on this issue since he became mayor in June 2006, maintaining that the current system of leaving it up to the municipalities, is incorrect and just another example of senior governments downloading unpopular responsibilities.

He also noted that if he, a forty year veteran of the practice, could manage to stop smoking, then almost anyone could.

Jim Taggart, recently returned from a trip to Scotland, noted that the non-smoking movement had taken hold there without much fuss that he could see.

"If it'll work in Glasgow, it'll work anywhere."

Brent Macdonald indicated his support for what he considered a "long overdue" piece of social legislation.

John Tyrrell told the committee that it was shameful to be the last jurisdiction in Canada to enter the 21st century.

All speakers felt that there was no need to delay this act or phase it in that the sooner it was the law the better and easier it would be to get used to it. The year long struggle in Whitehorse did not recommend itself as a model to follow.

The date on the draft legislation is June 1 2008, but that could change.

Wayne Potoroka cautioned the committee to pay no attention to those who might haul out the Yukon free-spirit argument, that, in his opinion, this was "bollocks". Potoroka, himself a former smoker, has been attending university in Victoria for much of the last two years and had observed that those who needed to light up had no problems leaving the bars and restaurants to do it, in spite of complaints there had been in the south when the bans were being debated.

"They whined for two days and got over it," he said.

There were some concerns about the draft bill expressed, particularly in terms of the responsibilities of bar and restaurant owners under the act.

There was discussion about the role of "power walls" in the sales of tobacco products and whether it was appropriate for such products to be sold in pharmacies.

With reference to second hand smoke in general, Barb Hanulik asked if the government was planning to attack the problem of idling vehicles.

Cathers reported that turnouts to this point in the tour had not been large, There had been 5 people in Mayo the night before, From here the committee was to move on to Pelly Crossing and Carmacks.

## Dawson Discusses "What ifs?" and 'What's nexts?'"

by Dan Davidson

As Dawson City awakened from the nightmarish prospect of having a known violent sex offender turned loose on the community, about 200 people gathered at the Robert Service School gymnasium to hear some of the details, ask some tough questions and, perhaps, just to take some comfort from community solidarity for a couple of hours.

"It's a great, great sense of relief that we have a resolution to this problem," Mayor John Steins told the crowd, "and all I can say is that if there is a silver lining in this incident it is that it's given us a bit of a wake-up call."

The incident in question was the sudden news, given last Thursday (Sept. 6), that Thane Moore, having served his full 14 year sentence, having expressed a wish to be relocated to the Yukon from PEI, having been banned from the city of Whitehorse, was, within a week's time, to be escorted to Dawson City and turned loose there.

As Steins described the situation, city offices had done little else but work on this issue since that news arrived, and a letter written by the mayor, presented to Moore in conjunction with some other information from the authorities, had caused the man to change his mind about attempting to reenter society in Dawson.

"We all live here for certain lifestyle reasons," Steins said, "and part of that lifestyle is the freedom to leave your door unlocked, that women can walk freely without fear of being attacked, women can work by themselves in the work place without fear, and we want to keep it that way."

As the two hour meeting progressed, the panel of nine at the front fielded questions on a variety of issues related to this case, questions which revealed the anxiety under which many in the room still laboured.

Panel members included Cpl. Mark London, Operations Commander of the Dawson RCMP detachment; Doug Harris,

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an advisory NCO from Whitehorse; Sgt., Dan Gaudet of the Dawson detachment; Mark Hill of the Workmen's Compensation Board; Lori Lavoie, legal counsel for the City of Dawson; Richard Meredith of Federal Public Prosecution office; Dennis Cooley, YTG's Deputy Minister of Justice; and Tom Elliot, a lawyer with Yukon Justice.

As Steins noted, it did show something of the seriousness with which everyone involved had viewed the Moore release that all the out of town guests made the trip to Dawson anyway, even though it was known by midmorning that the immediate danger had passed.

The meeting was also broadcast by radio and on the community cable channel by the volunteers at CFYT-fm/DCTV

Close to two dozen people stepped up to the microphones to ask a variety of questions, many of which were on the same subjects.

Q - What level of government was responsible for this mess and why were the RCMP going to escort Moore here?

A - It was a court order in New Brunswick and the Mounties were tasked to carry it out.

Q - Where did a mistake like this one come from? Why wasn't the government on top of this sooner?

A - The choice was not local, and the government, like everyone else, learned about it for the first time on September 6. Prior to that, Moore had not mentioned Dawson as a place he wanted to go, although he had mentioned the Yukon and had mentioned Whitehorse.

Q - How did Whitehorse manage to be lucky enough to have him banned from there?

A - He had violated his parole there in 2000-2001 and had threatened people there, so there was reason to ban him. He had no known associations with Dawson, nor had it been mentioned previously.

Chief Darren Taylor of the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in thanked everyone for the swift actions that had been taken, but questioned the wisdom of the justice system as a whole, a note that was taken up by a number of other people during the evening. How, he wanted to know, could such a dangerous character be inflicted on any town?

The answer from the lawyers at the table, with their criminal code books before them, was that Moore, having served his entire 14 year term, had paid his assigned debt to society and was free to go where ever he pleased. Because he was considered a danger to re-offend, he had been placed under the unusual restriction of an 810.2 order, commonly known as a Peace Bond. Its conditions kept him from certain people, required him to report to local police regularly, and forced him to stay out of Whitehorse.

Moore could not even benefit from a gradual release plan for reintegration into society that might include parole, a halfway house and mandatory supervision, because serving the entire 14 year sentence as he had left the legal system with no hold on him.

People were dissatisfied that Moore had decided for himself not to come to Dawson, the undercurrent to that being questions like "what if he changes his mind again?" and "is there no way to prevent him or people like him from

coming to town?"

The answer is that there is no legal recourse. The law imprisons a person for what he or she has done, not for what he or she might do. Even where there is a threat, the lawyers and police said, courts are unlikely to ban a person from an entire territory or province.

In the discussion of "what ifs" during the evening, Sgt. Gaudet and Cpl. London advised the crowd that they might have been, or might be, asked to assist in monitoring someone like Moore, and that the arrival of a person like this in town would mean that individuals might have to beef up their personal security measures.

There are, London noted, towns both larger and smaller than Dawson that have to deal with issues like this one every day.

Mark Hill reminded the audience that "you will not always know the face of the threat" the way that the town did this time. Businesses, he said, need to develop contingency plans for problems like this one.

During the discussion some details emerged about the process and chain of contacts (the National Flagging System) that had led to Moore being banned from Whitehorse and some of the steps that had been initiated (such as the Public Notification Committee) to deal with the mess that appeared to be in the offing until Monday morning.

Gaudet indicated that there was a protocol for dealing with such matters, the outline of a plan that could be filled in according to local circumstances, but he conceded that 24/7 staffing at the Dawson detachment was not likely in the immediate future.

Mayor Steins gave a somewhat ambiguous summary of the events of the last several days when he said that the the authorities and the town had achieved their goal, and that Moore was not coming. But he also said that the town had "caught a lucky break."

While there was lots of applause for both questions and answers during the evening, and while it was essentially a positive meeting, the combination of those ideas left people feeling more like they had dodged a bullet than that one had not been fired in the first place.

## **Court places severe restrictions on P.E.I. rapist**

*Last Updated: Monday, September 17, 2007*

*CBC News*

*With material from a CTV News report and earlier CBC reports*

A British Columbia court has placed severe restrictions on the life of a convicted rapist from Prince Edward Island who was set free Monday, just days after he was arrested at Vancouver airport.

Thane Moore, 43, is considered a high risk to reoffend violently, and the Abbotsford, B.C., provincial court that released him to a halfway house in Vancouver is requiring him to comply with 17 separate restrictions in return for his continued freedom.



The location of the halfway house has not been disclosed.

Under some of the conditions imposed by the Abbotsford court, Moore must:

- Report to the sex offender unit in Vancouver and a probation officer for the next year.
- Tell police what car he's driving, and where he's working.

- Not be alone in a car with a woman.
- Not carry weapons, except roofing tools.

Moore also cannot use public transit without writing his probation officer.

Moore is facing these restrictions after police used a rarely used section of the Criminal Code to arrest him at Vancouver International Airport Friday afternoon (Sept. 14).

Moore had flown to Vancouver after being released from New Brunswick's Dorchester Penitentiary on Friday, where he had served a full 14-year sentence for a 1993 rape committed in P.E.I.

When his flight touched down in Vancouver, police arrested him under Section 810 of the code, which permits them to arrest someone for a crime they might commit.

Moore had flown to Vancouver after being released from New Brunswick's Dorchester Penitentiary on Friday, where he had served a full 14-year sentence for a 1993 rape committed in P.E.I.

Prior to his arrest on Friday, a high-risk offender committee had to decide whether it would make Moore's exact whereabouts public. The committee consists of police, Crown attorneys, justice officials and victim services representatives.

Moore had planned to go to Dawson City, Yukon, but the city's mayor persuaded him not to in a letter.

Mayor John Steins told CBC News on Monday that his letter expressed concern and was careful to show compassion towards Moore's situation.

Last week, a New Brunswick judge imposed 10 conditions on Moore.

Moore, who is originally from Murray Harbour, P.E.I., and still has family there, must refrain from contact with 13 individuals and their families.

Most of those people are from P.E.I., including the woman he raped 14 years ago, who spent five days in hospital after the attack.

In National Parole Board documents, Moore is described as a man full of rage and at a high risk to reoffend.

In the parole board documents, he describes himself as a "time bomb waiting to explode."

## Anti-Lagoon Petition Disallowed

by Dan Davidson

Dawson's town council followed the advice of its lawyer and voted to disallow the petition calling for a referendum on the location of the proposed aerated sewage lagoon at a special meeting held on September 13.

The meeting was partly in the form of a telephone conference with the city's lawyer, during which council was advised that there were certain technical problems with the petition.

The documents, containing some 260 signatures, were presented to Mayor John Steins and city manager Paul Moore on August 22. After a few weeks spent verifying the names of the list - 199 were needed for certain - city staff determined that 200 of them were legitimate. That's not to say that others weren't; there was simply no need to go further than that under the requirements of the Municipal Act.

All of the locations so far proposed by YTG for the secondary treatment Caley have shared the same problem: that they are upstream from the town's water supply wells. The current location, lots 1058 and 1059, just across the Klondike Highway from the Tr'ondëk Subdivision, across the Dome Road from the ball park and soccer field, is the site closest to the wells, and also in a location that some people have said would detract from the entrance to the town.

The Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, in particular, has been opposed to this location, and went so far as to offer up a site on its settlement lands as an alternative.

The petition was circulated by a group led by Jorn Meier, who has conceded that he did receive some advice from the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in's lawyers in putting it together. Meier is a TH employee, but maintains that he was not doing this in that capacity. He has said that he would accept the outcome of a referendum no matter how it might go, but that this is an issue he feels ought to be determined by a local vote rather than by a YTG department's work plan.

The City of Dawson's lawyer advised that the petition had a technical flaw which could leave it open to a later challenge, namely that the text of the proposition was not printed on each page. On that basis, and partly because it did not wish to have to repeat a procedure for which it might have to spend between \$5,000 and \$10,000, the council voted unanimously to disallow the petition.

Council could have allowed the referendum and taken the chance of a later appeal, or could have stick-handled around the issue and held a plebiscite instead. The latter procedure is non-binding, but would have been a cheaper method of providing the council with guidance.

In his Mayor's Blog, Mayor Steins wrote: "I believe that council wishes to hear the opinion of our citizens regarding the location of the proposed Waste Water Treatment Plant. Therefore the petitioners have the option to submit another petition for referendum to Mayor and Council."

## RSS Runs for Terry

by Dan Davidson

Students at Robert Service School raised \$592.00 this year during the school's annual Terry Fox event on September 14. This year the entire school did the walk-run event together on the dike, with elementary students being partnered by high school students.

Everyone gathered on the dike beside the old CIBC building shortly after 2 p.m. and Grade 12's Laura Audet sounded the horn on the megaphone to start them off.

The run was a bit of a surprise for several Swiss tourists, who had been planning to sit on one of the dike benches to eat a late lunch, but thought better of it and moved to the gazebo when they realized that they were about to be run down by several hundred students and teachers.

According to organizers Ms. Woods and Ms. Bells students in grades 4 and 5 were the best fund raisers, bringing in nearly half of the total amount. One student, Blake Loewen, raised \$125.00 by himself and will receive "the much coveted Terry Fox T-shirt" in recognition of his effort.

While there was a bit of a breeze along the dike path, students were encouraged to keep moving at a decent pace by the arrival of a horde of black flies looking for a mid-afternoon snack. They weren't too bad as long as you kept moving.

## Uffish Thoughts:

### If you want to hear from the people, you have to tell them when you will be listening

by Dan Davidson

Did YTG deliberately stack the deck against opposition by doing a sloppy job of promoting the recent tour of the Select Committee on Anti-smoking Legislation?

Certainly the meeting was not well advertised here in Dawson City. They did not put an ad in the local paper, nor did they use the rolling ads on DCTV's channel 11 or even put up a poster in the Post Office - all pretty standard things to do here in Dawson.

Speaking for the Klondike Sun, I can certainly say that the advertising agencies which do the government's bidding know where to find us and what our rates and deadlines are. Since we're only a biweekly, it does require a bit of advance planning on the part of the department doing the advertising, but that should be a matter of looking at calendars, day planners or PDAs.

Just putting ads in the two territorial papers, both of which arrive here anywhere from a day to three days after



their publication dates, is not the way to reach the local populace.

To their credit, the three amigos, Minister of Health Brad Cathers (Yukon Party), John Edzerza (NDP) and Darius Elias (Liberal), were quick to agree that something seemed to have gone wrong with the promotional plan.

The committee members told us they'd met with only five people in Mayo, and subsequent news reports indicated that the entire tour had seen them talk to only about 20 people. This was odd, considering the amount of debate there had been over this very subject at the spring meeting of the Association of Yukon Communities when that organization met here in Dawson.

While a resolution supporting the government's initiative passed at that meeting, it was by a simple majority rather than by the unanimous vote that would have been preferred by its backers. Three communities voted against it. Mayo being one, so it seemed quite odd that the turnout there would have been small and limited to folks who agreed in principle with the proposed legislation.

To someone with a more cynical frame of mind, it might have seemed that the powers that be had arranged for the word to get out only to those people who would agree with the substance of Bill No. 104, The Smoke Free Places Act.

So when Duncan Spriggs of the Westminster Hotel, a fervent opponent of the bill, called me at the Sun offices yesterday afternoon and said pretty much that, I really wasn't surprised to hear him say it, not as surprised as I had been the week before when the poorly attended meeting had no opposing voices in the room.

Now, I don't really think that's what happened. I think it was just poor planning. Most other government departments seem to get their advertising out in a timely fashion. Every issue we run here seems to have its share of announcements about consultations, meetings and proposals. It may be that the department which runs the Legislative Assembly just isn't used to dealing with issues outside of the chamber.

After all, this is the same agency that buried the internet questionnaire for the committee two layers deep in the government's website instead of putting it on the front page.

At this rate, the same mess will reduce attendance at Premier Fentie's community meeting here later this fall. I have learned through other channels that it will take place on October 11, but I have yet to see an ad to that effect. It doesn't yet say that on the YTG website and his people have already missed one of the two deadlines which would allow it to be promoted here.

Unfortunately, that's not unusual.

When the day arrives I fully expect to hear people saying that they didn't know the meeting was happening. That's what I heard last year this time. That's what I heard last week.

If you want to hear from the people, you have to tell them when you will be listening. This particular part of the government's advertising strategy never seems to improve.



## **We danced on our grave sites, says returning Dawsonite**

by Dan Davidson

"This is home. This is where I grew up and where I'm going to be buried," said 77 year old Roberta Speers, whom some Dawsonites may remember as Bobbie Daily.

Bobbie lived in Dawson from 1935 to 1942 when her father was the assistant manager of the Yukon Consolidated Gold Corporation. They had come from Fairbanks, where her father had worked for the Fairbanks Exploration Company, and they lived in the log house at the corner of Fifth Avenue and Princess Street.

"Everybody calls it Joyce Caley's house," Bobbie said impishly, "but I lived there first. It had been a bakery and they converted it so we could move into it."

She's not kidding about planning to be buried here. She and a brother and one of her sisters were here last year and looked after that.

"We picked out cemetery plots and danced on our graves so we could have a good time while we were alive."

She says she hasn't been back to Dawson often enough to suit her. Both of her recent trips have been with her children. Julia Christiansen is an architect in Boston and the Ross Speer is a geologist with the Bureau of Land Management in Colorado. She says both of them have also fallen in love with the Klondike.

This year's trip was for ten days, culminating in the Discovery Days parade, which she found most satisfactory.

"We've had a real good time. I love being back here."

"Seeing that parade this morning, in my mind I could go back to 1942 and see the kids who were on the floats I remember."

Her only regret from this trip was that she didn't get out to Dredge #4, which she says was designed by her father, Art Daily.

"Our summer home in those days was out on Bonanza Creek - and the dredge is now parked on the borderline of where our family claims were on Bonanza. We'd drive by it while it was being constructed. We have movies of when it was new and the flag was flying and all kinds of things. So that's OUR dredge."

The first time Bobbie came back to Dawson was in 1992, fifty years after leaving it, and one of the first places she wanted to see was that dredge, which military engineers were then just in the process of relocating to where it now sits.

She met the officer in charge of the project who told her about the job of floating and moving it, and that he had been afraid it was going to crack and fall apart after all the stresses of releasing it from the permafrost.

Not knowing who she was, he told her that when the dredge floated free and didn't sink he had wished he could shake the hand of the man who had designed it.

"I said that that was my dad."

Bobbie lives in Amarillo and teaches geology and archeology at one of the branches of Texas A&M University and really enjoyed seeing the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in's cultural displays.



"I love getting back here and seeing what the first nations people have done in archeology and sub-arctic archeology. We've had a wonderful time. I brought some beadwork from here in the early days from Moosehide and some pictures. "

She also spent some time at the Museum and brought a few things for the collection. A few years ago her brother brought back the gold scales from the original Klondike of 1898. Another time they donated the piano that had once been in the Flora Dora Hotel.

Bobbie says her family were great collectors in their day here and she has trunks of stuff that should probably find its way to the Museum, including a lot of paperwork.

"The corporate era is a big hole in the history of the area and we're glad to be able to contribute information to it."

The Speers were leaving town the day after the parade, but all have vowed to return soon, and more often.

## **Canada Post Celebrates Literacy Achievements**

Story & Photo by Dan Davidson

The 2007 Canada Post Community Literacy Award was presented to Gordon Hardie in a special ceremony at the Dawson post office on September 7. Hardie is an adult learner who has spent many years trying to learn to read.

"As a business dedicated to delivering the printed work, both physically and electronically, we understand the importance of good reading and writing skills," said postmaster Lambert Curzon.

"Whether reading a book or a computer screen, understanding the written word is a basic survival skill."

Canada Post, he noted, adopted literacy as corporate



cause 15 years ago and sponsors a variety of outside programs as well as its in-house Letters to Santa program and some letter writing contests.

Canada Post partnered with Canwest Global Communications and the Lowell Martin Group to put on this year's contest. It received 126 nominations, which were then judged by volunteer committees.

Mayor John Steins spoke of the opportunities and personal benefits that are opened up to those who know how to read and congratulated Hardie on his achievement.

"Not all Yukoners are yet where they need to be," Steins said. "It is precisely this reality which gives purpose to this award today. It provides encouragement to people who bravely confront their literacy issues."

"I congratulate Gordon on his achievement. It's not easy to do what you did."

"I think you're an inspiration and a role model for people of all ages," MLA Steve Nordick (Yukon Party) told Hardie.

Hardie has been enrolled in a reading program through the local campus of Yukon College for a number of years and recently, working with his tutor, Marjorie Logue, has made a breakthrough in his studies. His award was in the Individual Achievement category and included a certificate of accomplishment as well as a cheque for \$300.00.

Curzon explained that 22 ceremonies were taking place across the country that day, with awards also being given in an educator category.

"Our literacy award winners come from all ages groups, many walks of life and diverse circumstances," he said. "The common thread that ties them together is their commitment to the value of reading and writing."

The ceremony concluded with coffee and cake.

## Matti Goes Home

By Helen Winton

*Poetry winner in the 2007 Authors on 8th Contest sponsored by the KVA*

1918

Few people heard of Matti's passing.  
So many others dying at the same time

Who could keep track?

Headache, fever, blackened feet...  
He knew he was done for even before  
The delirium hit.

No time to contact his family back in Finland.  
Couldn't anyway,  
So far up there on Hunker Creek

Miles away from the telegraph station,  
Not even time to jot a few lines,  
It happened so fast

He never made it to the lonely graveyard under the slide  
Where other victims of that pandemic  
Silently protested their sad demise.

But his partner, Lasse, did his best.  
A hastily-dug grave down by the creek.  
A few days later, and he was gone too.

There by the creek Matti befriended the ravens and wolves,  
And then, over time, joined the company of the  
Graylings, gravel and black muck.

His family wondered about him though –  
The long lost son who had escaped the civil war  
In his search for adventure and gold.

Often in their thoughts at first, and then  
Slowly forgotten as ten, twenty, seventy years  
And more slipped away.

2007

Seppo - a tourist, a miner, an amateur gold panner  
Dips his pan at the world championship event.  
Dips and swirls, dips and swirls.

Plucks out a strange-shaped object and  
Tucks it in his pocket for  
Later investigation.

Dips and swirls, dips and swirls,  
His patience and practice soon rewarded when  
He takes first place.

Later, back in his hotel room,  
He nudges the forgotten object in his pocket and  
Retrieves it to have a look.

"What's this?" he exclaims. "A tooth - a big one too!"  
Soon to become his good luck charm and  
Souvenir of victory in Dawson City.

Now it is nestled around his neck in a soft skin pouch

As he boards the plane for Finland. Safe and secure, Matti's going home at last.

## **Immortality Might Create a Human Conscience, says award winning S.F. Writer**

by Dan Davidson

Robert J. Sawyer writes science fiction with an emphasis on the science, but also with an emphasis of the implications of the science. In his most recent novel, Rollback, he is not merely concerned with describing a process whereby humans might achieve effective immortality, but also with describing the impact that this process has on the moral and ethical life of his viewpoint character Don Halifax.

Sawyer believes that prolonging human life could ultimately benefit the planet.

When 87 year old Don and Sara are funded for rejuvenation treatments by an industrialist who wants to make sure Sarah lives long enough to translate the second message mankind has received from the stars, just as she translated and replied to the first one decades earlier, tremendous strains are placed on their 60 year old marriage when the process works for Don and not for her.



The treatments take Don back to a physical age of 25, prey to all of a young man's urges and temptations, too young to be retired and to out-of-date to be employed, and the envy of all his aging friends, who want him to put in a good word for them.

"H.G. Wells used to call the novels he wrote scientific romances," Sawyer says, "because the term science fiction hadn't yet been coined...and I think this is what (Rollback) is. This is a love story that's driven by a scientific invention."

Sawyer's reading to his audience at the Dawson Community Library showed the tension that was growing between the agile minded Don and his now much older wife, even while they were discussing so simple a thing as Sarah's favorite Jodie Foster film.

Immortality is one of the standard themes of the SF genre, but Sawyer has tried to give it a bit of a twist in his version. The legendary editor John W. Campbell used to tell his writers to do more than describe how a future invention worked; they had to explain how it affected people.

Sawyer does a lot of that, and his next novel, Wake, the one he is writing in Dawson City at Berton House, will deal with another big theme, artificial intelligence. He's taken a stab at AI before, notably in The Terminal Experiment, which also dealt with life after death, but the WWW Trilogy (Wake will be followed by Watch and Wonder) will be about the world wide web achieving consciousness and what that might mean for it and for humanity.

"In my field, sequels and series are very popular," Sawyer said. "I don't particularly like writing them, but there's an economic incentive to do so and they sell very well."

Sawyer has been writing most of his life. The earliest evidence is a story called "Bobby Bug" written when he was seven.

"I always wanted to be a writer but I never thought that I could make a living at it. I was stunned when I found it was something that I could do professionally. I always thought it would be a hobby."

His first story sale came in 1979, during his first year at Ryerson University, and his first novel appeared in 1990, so he's been a published writer for 27 years and a novelist for 17. He does continue to produce shorter works and has two collections in print, with another due out next spring.

It will be called Identity Theft and Other Stories. The lead story (which won the John W. Campbell Memorial Award) and one other are set in a Martian boom town called New Klondike.

He credits the space race of the 1960s, the original run of Star Trek and viewing 2001: A Space Odyssey when he was eight as major influences on his choice of what he wanted to write.

While he is primarily interested in the written word, he admits that he is "not the barrier" to having his work translated to film. Ten of his 17 novels, including Rollback, are under option as possible film or television projects, but so far nothing has come close to production. His biggest pay cheque per page, however, was the series bible, or writers' guide, that he was hired to do for the television series Charlie Jade, a Canadian/South African co-production which is currently in reruns on the Space Channel. He also worked on the revival of the Robotech animated series.

Sawyer came to Dawson from California, where his expenses were paid to attend a conference of the subject of the Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence (SETI), one the other SF themes in Rollback. SETI activity has been going on since 1960, and so far nothing definite has been detected from space, which is discouraging for participants in the various projects.

Sawyer explained that it is even more discouraging because delegates are afraid it might mean that any civilization technologically advanced enough to broadcast radio waves to space may not, one way or another, survive its own technology.

the dropping of the first atomic bombs in 1945 until just recently, the fear often expressed by scientists and SF writers was that humanity would destroy itself by means of war, but Sawyer said that most of the delegates at this



conference were convinced that the biggest danger facing the planet at the moment was human caused climate change.

One of the reasons Sawyer hopes that the “rollback” procedures he has written about will come to pass is that he believes the short term view of our relatively short lived species contributes to environmental degradation.

“That short life span, that three score years and ten that the Bible speaks about, is the reason why we don’t think about the long term consequences of things. If you had a longer life span, if you had perspective, it’s not just about your selfishness, it’s about giving a conscience to the planet.”

The way we are now, Sawyer says, we just don’t take a long view. Really, it’s almost impossible.

“You worry about your children, You worry a little bit about their children You kinda sorta like the thought that maybe their children’s children might think of you once in a while, and after that nobody remembers you and you don’t care about them - and that’s why we piss in the water we drink from.”

## **Commissioner Van Bibber Recalls Her Childhood Home**

Story & Photo by Dan Davidson

When a building has been around as long as the restored KIAC School of Fine Arts building there is bound to be a lot of history attached to it. As people toured the new facility after the opening ceremonies on August 17, it was easy to tell in which era they had known the place based on their comments.

“That’s where social services used to be.”

“Remember when the public library was there?”

“Yukon College used to be in this space.”

Twenty years ago the bottom floor of the building was the liquor store and territorial agent’s office, while the top floor contained social services, the public library, the offices of the Dawson Housing Association and a few other services.

For several years, after the public and school libraries were fused together in 1989, Yukon College was at home on the second floor, and it was in those days that a small group of Dawsonites sat round a conference phone and worked with a similar group in Whitehorse to design the Berton House Writers’ Retreat program.

Later, the top floor housed the Tr’ondëk Hwëch’in offices when the Chief Isaac Building burned to the ground, and the City of Dawson offices when the 5th Avenue building was being relocated to Front Street.

For Commissioner Geraldine Van Bibber, however the memories go back further than that, and are more personal. For Van Bibber, in the late 1950s and early 1960s, the old building was home.

“I was not on the speakers’ roster, so I said I was going to pull rank and speak anyway, but they did invite me,” she told the crowd that day.

“It’s with many memories that I am here today. I used to live in this building when I was very young. I’m really

dating myself now. My foster dad, Mac Munroe, was the territorial agent, and we lived upstairs with a big picture window.

“As territorial agent he was all things: liquor vendor, liquor licence issuer, J.P., registrar of motor vehicles, selling licence plates and other duties assigned to keep the town legal and operating for the government.

“The liquor warehouse was in the back and there was an entrance at the back steps and to the apartment upstairs that could be reached from the flight of stairs. One of my Saturday chores was to sweep those long, narrow steps.

“The public health nurse had a clinic next door with an apartment upstairs next to ours as well, and down the hall were many rooms, with a large kitchen and living room at the opposite end of our place was called the teacherage. This is where all the single teachers were housed on their arrival to Dawson City, and where the single guys tended to congregate, with Principal Gartside ever watchful.

“Down those back steps, then to the left, in a small room, was our public library, where I would pad down the hall in my slippers to visit. I developed my love of reading because I had ready access to, it seemed, my own private



library.

“The street was busy, as drama unfolded each and every day our own reality hit of the day. There was the Penguin Cafe and Beer Parlor, the BYN Store, the Westminster Cafe and Hotel, the Occidental Hotel, the original Downtown Hotel. It was a happening area in town and with the fire hall next door we knew when action was taking place there as well.”

Van Bibber went on to praise the initiative and vision that has seen the once shabby, condemned building restored instead of razed to the ground.

“This keeps history alive,” she said, “and keeps with it the story that comes with the sight of a building or a street.”

## **Celebrating the Ladies of the Day**

Story & Photos by Dan Davidson

Alaska historian Jane G. Haigh is frustrated by the emphasis that current popular interpretations about the Gold Rush tend to place on a certain type of female stampeder.



She says that contrary to what a lot of people seem to think, the females that caught gold fever were not exclusively made up of prostitutes, cancan dancers and “good time girls”.

Her August presentation at the Dawson City Museum was entitled “Ladies of the Day” and was a combination lecture and slide show, intended partly as a promotion of her latest book, *Searching for Fannie Quigley*.

Quigley’s story is actually the first one she began to research some twenty years ago, and it was along the trail of that Yukon and Alaska pioneer woman that she met Claire Murphy and ended up co-writing *Gold Rush Women*, *Children of the Gold Rush*, and *Gold Rush Dogs* (all from Alaska Northwest Books) over a period of a decade.

It was while researching Fannie Quigley in the museum at the Dawson Museum Library she came to realize that the role of women during the gold rush was so slanted.

“It’s a mystery to me why the Yukon wants to be represented by cancan girls.

“It’s quite ironic that after all the work that middle class women and women of the church did to rid the town of dance hall girls and prostitutes that the government would come in and through government sponsored entities use the image of prostitutes and casino gambling in order to make money all over again.”

The cancan girl image is particularly strange, since research has established that there were none during the gold rush and that the first cancan dancers appeared in Dawson during the early days of the Klondike Visitors Association, when tourist shows were staged on the S.S. Keno.

Haigh dedicated the evening’s presentation to Kate Carmacks, who was decidedly not a good time girl, who worked hard for her husband George, was with George, Skookum Jim and Tagish Charlie when gold was discovered on Rabbit Creek, and who was later dumped by her husband, who then married the sort of woman that the Yukon seems to want to celebrate, a gold digger.

Haigh says she used to blame the fact that Klondike women are not generally well known about on Pierre Berton, whose seminal gold rush study, *Klondike*, hardly mentions them at all, not does his photo essay collection, *The Klondike Quest*.

There are photos of women in the later book, she says,

but they are usually not identified, and it’s often not clear why they are there. But it was women’s photos in the second book that triggered some of her research, so she began to look further back to see why there was so little information.

“Lately I’ve decided to go back to the Yukon Order of Pioneers,” Haigh said.

She says the foundation of that men’s-only group did a lot to put women in the shade. “We’ve got mustaches. We’ve got a club only for men. We’re going to pat ourselves on the back and write stories about ourselves as the discoverers.”

Haigh pointed out that the three key traders, Arthur Harper, Al Mayo and Jack McQuesten, who grubstaked most of the early prospectors, all came to the Yukon River basin and married native wives, women who made it possible for them to live comfortably and communicate with their first nations customers. While the McQuesten family is quite proud of that connection today, Haigh noted that Kate McQuesten was not mentioned at all in the small booklet about Jack’s life that was produced by a member of the YOOP many years ago.

“I think that the focus on the prostitutes demeans the role of women in the Klondike,” Haigh says, by making it seem that only that type of woman came north to answer the call.

A lot of women may have spent some time as dance hall girls, but that activity, Haigh said, was much like the taxidancers of New York City.

“When you hear about a woman who came to the Klondike and worked in a dance hall, she may have had this job for a week or even one day, and then gone on to some other occupation.

“In a dance hall, women would dance with a man, once around the floor for a dollar, for a couple of minutes, and then take him to the bar and get a cut of any liquor than he bought. It was not a demeaning occupation and was not the equivalent of being a prostitute.

In *Klondike Women*, Haigh and Murphy chronicled the lives of of two dozen women who were prospectors, entrepreneurs and pioneers in their right.

“They were already on the trail, They did not just arrive after everything had been built and everything was ready to go.”

Haigh’s slide show was made up largely of photos that can now be easily found on the internet, and it showed women in a variety of occupations, from launderers, to cooks, to co-owners and operators of roadhouses and owners of businesses.

“The point of this is that there really were lots of women here, and it wasn’t very hard to find pictures of them.”

The slide show and lecture pretty much proved her thesis.

## Yukon Announces Significant Increase To Municipal Grant Funding

WHITEHORSE (August 27, 2007) - Yukon government is significantly increasing funding for Yukon communities beginning April 1, 2008 to be phased in over five years.

Community Services Minister Glenn Hart announced Comprehensive Municipal Grant funding will increase by 32 per cent from its current level of \$12.538 million per year to \$16.575 million by 2012.

"The increase of \$4,037,500 over five years shows this government's commitment to Yukon municipalities," Hart said

In addition to the increase in the Comprehensive Municipal Grant, Hart also confirmed there will be a proportional increase for funding to unincorporated communities.

"We recognize that the cost to deliver services in unincorporated Yukon is also increasing," said Hart, "The Department of Community Services will receive an additional \$605,625 over five years in order to meet these demands."

Doug Graham, president of the Association of Yukon Communities (AYC), welcomed the increased funding. "This is the first substantial broad based increase to the Comprehensive Municipal Grant since its inception in 1991," said Graham. "I am pleased to recognize the minister's efforts on behalf of all Yukon municipalities."

By increasing the overall Comprehensive Municipal Grant Fund, the Yukon government will be investing an additional \$12.11 million in Yukon communities over the five year period.

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) was used as a guideline to determine the increase to the Comprehensive Municipal Grant Fund dating back to 1991, when the fund was first allocated under the Municipal Finance & Community Grants Act. The increase also considers the projected CPI to 2012 as a method to keep pace with inflation as the increases are phased in.

In addition to the announced increase to municipal grants, the Department of Community Services and AYC have reaffirmed their commitment to continue working together to address other municipal issues.

Graham stressed the importance of a strong partnership between Community Services and AYC in the future. "It is critical that we continue to work with the Yukon Government to define and address the long term infrastructure needs that face Yukon municipalities," he said.

## Washed Out

By Jessica Simon of Whitehorse

*Short Story winner in the 2007 Authors on 8th Contest sponsored by the KVA*

I won't make it to the World Goldpanning Championships this year. In fact, I won't even make it to Dawson City, and for that I blame Dick North.

Not that I know him personally, as I

tried to explain to the owner of the saloon beside the "other" Jack London cabin in Oakland. But, when it came out that I live in the Yukon, the barkeep exclaimed how touched she'd been by Mr. North's invitation, years ago, to the gold rush centennial. Would I get a message to him? Umm, really, I only know the man by reputation, I'd said, but she'd pressed the handwritten note into my hand, a duty to deliver.

Okay, so, Dick North isn't fully at fault, but I wish he'd never given me the idea to scout Henderson Creek.

See, I'm reading his new book, *Sailor on Snowshoes*, about Jack London. It's the tale of how Mr. North tracked the Yukon's most famous author from the Southland to the Northland, right to the front door of "one of several" cabins inhabited by the "miner, author" during his eighteen months in the Klondike.

"Several cabins," hmm... I've got a week left of vacation. I figured that's time enough for an excursion on my way to the Championships.

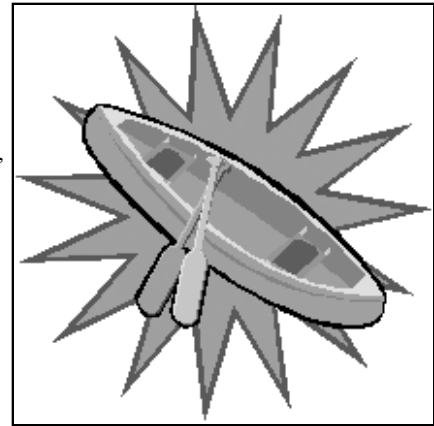
The day before yesterday, I packed the essentials and drove with my sturdy cedar stripper to the Stewart River put-in at McQuesten airstrip. The summer's constant rainfall raised the river well above high water mark. The road access stopped ten feet closer than normal from the top of the bluff.

In twenty years, I've paddled plenty of rivers in flood. Besides, I've got a tip. Not just that Jack London had haunted Henderson Creek, but that he haunted Henderson Creek.

Not a word of a lie. Another paddler told me how he'd spent five hours prying into the slough there before he found his way back to the Yukon's main channel. The whole time he'd been spooked by the feeling of being watched.

It was probably one of the locals, the son of a family raised downstream at Stewart Island where the waterway dumps into the Yukon. I know the fellow's sister; she said her brother keeps close watch over his claim.

I set out yesterday on a head of quicksilver water. By late



afternoon I eddied out at Maisie May, the abandoned townsite where my girlfriend was born. The memories poured out as the rain poured down.

Before they fled to civilization, a commune of hippies got back to the land here. They'd made an industry of preparing hides. Skinning racks and pelt stretchers littered the yard. The tannery reminded me of London's description of the laundry at Shelly Hot Springs.

Martin washed woolens that day, by hand, in a large barrel, with strong soft-soap, by means of a hub from a wagon wheel, mounted on a plunger-pole that was attached to a spring-pole overhead.

Two man-high wooden washer drums, self-made like the fictional rigging, rocked on an axle mounted beside a water pump.

Outside, the rain let up. I speculated about the prospect of the midnight sun poking through the soggy sky above the workhouse. Then, as high and dry as possible, I staked my tent, strung a tarp and sparked a fire. While my boil-n-serve dinner boiled, I read more about Dick North and the Sailor's story.

It didn't matter that I was only on Chapter Three of Mr. North's book. I'd read the short Jack London Interpretive Centre booklet while I was binding it at the job printer where I work in Whitehorse.

An acquaintance of mine had been cook on the London cabin expedition. She'd been some miffed when Mr. North struck her from the rolls in the initial retelling of the story. Well, he made up for it in his latest release.

After dinner, the clouds cleared. In the vain hope that the turbulence had turned up new gold I dipped my pan in the scarce shallows. I came up with a dish of water the colour of over-sweetened cereal milk. I swished it around and out and washed the pan clean. No shiny paydirt streaked the ripples. A few shovelfuls were enough to discourage me.

Overnight, the water rose an inch an hour. I launched under drizzle this morning and skirted the shore – not easy in “visibility: cotton”. Islands, everything from marooned willows to three acre sandbars, leapt up from nowhere. I was a twig on the surface of a force greater than any I'd ever known. My freighted craft skittered across the boils like a leaf.

At the confluence of the Stewart and Yukon, I sculled past Stewart Island. Slack water, on the edges of the combined river, squirted upstream. The historic clapboard General Store rested on skids fixed to a backhoe ready to haul it from the crumbling edge.

Permafrost was stripped bare. Clots of thawed muck dunked below the surface. The river chewed up the landscape. It chewed whole logs raw. Upended trees became sweepers that sucked all manner of material into their branches.

I had to get out. A pronounced “V” surged ahead and powered me toward Henderson Creek. A notch in the overgrowth indicated a camp, trail, or at least a big inch of land to latch on to.

The eddy line gripped my paddle when I pivoted into a

backwater out of the maelstrom. Rolling waves swamped my spindly transport.

Up the slick mud bank I hauled my soaked boat as high as I could. The tree I anchored to looked as well-rooted as anything that clutches to life in the Yukon's thin soil.

To my joy, I found this cabin. Not the one I was looking for, granted, but a squat, solid, sod roof structure with a chimney and stove – a stove! Inside, I lit a quick fire from the stockpile left for such emergencies. I'm warm and dry and at this table braced against the lowest point in the room I've had enough of a breather to write down what's happening.

I'm not alarmed that the building pitches thirty degrees down to the chop. I am alarmed by the fault line out back, though. Long ago, the river rose and froze. The expanded vein of ice cleaved a twelve foot rift behind my refuge and now yards of slurry sluices through the cut.

On the opposite side, the river's become a ravenous serpent thrashing to the sea. Its devil current rips up the island frontage and leaves jet black waste. It carries a dock free of its moorings and, hear! There's a splintering shriek. I must take a look.

The monster has felled the tree I tied up to. My kit and canoe are lost. But, although I'm up the proverbial creek, I've rescued my paddle. I'm stranded with it on the rickety table upturned to hold my salvaged stores. And, as if the water isn't rising fast enough from below, it's bucketing from above.

My square of land shakes like diggings in a hopper. An earth-shattering heave has tipped my perch into the drink. I'm nauseous. The best I can do now is to throw this short-lived diary onto the hard part of the land. I'm already afloat.

THE END

## **New Drinking Water Regulation Comes Into Effect**

WHITEHORSE (September 12, 2007) – Health and Social Services Minister Brad Cathers announced today that the Yukon government has approved a new regulation for large public drinking water systems and bulk water delivery.

The regulation adopted a source-to-tap approach to drinking water quality. It covers water source protection, drinking water system designs, and maintenance, treatment, water sampling, operator training, emergency response and contingency planning, among other things.

“The regulation is part of our ongoing commitment to ensure safe drinking water throughout Yukon,” Cathers said. “Our first step was to look at the large public distribution systems and the bulk delivery of drinking water.”

In a comprehensive consultation, departmental officials met with owners and operators of large public drinking water systems and commercial bulk water deliverers to obtain their input. As a result, the draft guidelines were revised to incorporate the views and recommendations of owner/operators. There are 16 large public drinking water

systems throughout Yukon, ranging from ones serving smaller communities like Carcross to the drinking water system in Whitehorse.

“Staff from Environmental Health Services will work with owner/operators to help them meet the requirements of the new regulation,” Cathers said. “Many owner/operators are already implementing the provisions of the regulation.”

## **TR’ONDĚK HWĚCH’IN DEFEND RIGHT TO HUNT AGAINST YTG**

DAWSON CITY - (September 12, 2007) The Tr’ondĕk Hwĕch’in (TH) have successfully defended their inherent hunting rights against a Yukon Territorial Government (YTG) court challenge.

Charges against a TH citizen under section 6 of the Yukon Wildlife Act and 4.3 of the Yukon Wildlife Regulations were stayed, August 9.

TH were forced into court after YTG charged TH Elder Robert Rear, who was observed harvesting caribou within the YTG-imposed 500-metre no-hunting corridor along the Dempster Highway, during the one-week hunting closure.

TH argued YTG did not consult when they imposed the hunting restrictions recommended by the Porcupine Caribou Management Board, in 1999. TH also asserted the 500-metre no-hunting corridor and one-week hunting closure restricted TH’s inherent harvesting rights.

“YTG has a duty to consult First Nations and give full and fair consideration of their concerns when considering rights-limiting laws,” said Chief Darren Taylor. “They also have a duty to uphold the First Nations constitutionally entrenched right to hunt. They failed on both counts.”

Taylor noted the YTG had a chance to prove whether they had properly consulted by seeing the court challenge through, but chose instead to drop their case.

“The Yukon Party government deliberately opted out of an opportunity to clarify whether they properly consulted TH on changes to the Wildlife Act,” said Taylor. “In doing so, they spent a lot of public money chasing down a court battle they could not win.”

Without the clarity that could be provided by the courts, Taylor is unsure whether more TH citizens will be charged by YTG in the future. He added that under the terms of the Final Agreement TH citizens have a treaty right to subsistence harvest, so the YTG limitations don’t apply.

“The Tr’ondĕk Hwĕch’in have practised safe harvesting methods for thousands of years,” said Taylor. “We want guarantees from YTG that TH citizens will not be charged in the future and our inherent hunting rights will be respected.”

## **ONLY ONE THING WORSE**

By Sylvia Sands Johnson

There’s only one thing worse than an attacking grizzly, and that’s a mosquito humming next to your ear in the dark.

In order to defend yourself you must understand how mosquitoes operate. Number one: they always attack from below and behind. Secondly, they prefer to launch their attack from a dark background.

So when I hear a spitfire coming in, I plan the perfect defense. First, I kneel on top of the bed, surrounded by a light-coloured pillow and white sheets. I know that mosquitoes love carbon dioxide, which proves that they’ll be the last living creatures upon earth. I begin to blow carbon dioxide straight down the pillow runway. Then I listen very carefully for the most annoying sound on earth. The mosquito, who has by now decided that YOUR blood is the only blood it will ever need, something like Dracula, decides to make a go for it. The main thing is to listen to the direction it has launched its attack from. If it aims for the back of your head, flip around quickly, slapping your hands in every direction.

The mosquito will then make a desperate and fatal move. It will circle around and head toward the brightest light, which is where the lamplight hits the pillow.

You must not move too fast, or the rush of air will act like a hurricane, blowing the enemy right off it’s intended course. Keep gently blowing carbon dioxide across the pillow where the smell of human blood is the strongest. You will only have one chance to kill the beast. Your aim must be flawless, always just a bit ahead of the monster’s flight plan. WHACK. The mosquito is either flattened or you are in for a battle to the death. (How much better it would be if people would bet on mosquito fights to the death, than gamble on innocent dogs or roosters.)

If you have missed your chance, the mosquito will now head for the stratosphere, which is your ceiling. That is when you need a reliably flat magazine that you have kept at hand for one purpose. You now stand up, balanced precariously on the bed, swiping repeatedly at the ceiling. Go wild. Failing once again to disarm the enemy, the mosquito will generally hug one wall. That can be a fatal error on its part. Continue to blow out carbon dioxide as if your life depends on it.

If you have failed to smash the mosquito against the wall, there is only one thing left to do. Turn off the light and cover everything with the bedcovers except your nose. Sooner or later, in its lust for blood, the hideous insect will land right on your proboscis. It may cause a swollen nose but this is your last chance. SPLAT. The mosquito has fallen into the most elaborate trap a person can set — their own nose or ears.

You turn the light back on, determined to find the instrument of your torture. There she lies feet turned up. “Ah, haa,” you cry, “Got you at last, sucker.” The nightmarish drone of your worst enemy has been defeated by YOUR best strategy. Victory is yours, except one little thing. You begin to scratch your neck and discover your last swipe was a fraction late. But, after all, it is the challenge of the game hunt that counts. The rest is trial and error.



## Road Hockey Rumble a Lopsided Contest

Story & Photo by Dan Davidson

Watching the warmup period of the great Cheechako-Sourdough contest during the prelude to the Road Hockey Rumble taping was enough to make a person suspect that the score might be a bit lopsided in the main event.

Sure enough, when the actual game began, the Sourdoughs were up 3 to zip in the first 20 minutes and it just got worse after that.

The final score was 13 to 3 in favour of the home boys, while the newbies struggled to contain their frustration.



In the stands at the Minto Park tennis court which contained the makeshift rink, the fans hooted equal measures of encouragement and derision and mugged for the cameras for the 2 and a half hour event, which will be edited down to half an hour by the time it airs next spring.

Road Hockey Rumble plays on the Outdoor Life Network. Co-hosts Calum MacLeod and Mark McGuckin go from town to town recruiting teams to back them up in a season long rivalry that pokes a bit of fun at one of our national pastimes.

The end result ought to be the music video for Jughead's classic tune, "The Hockey Song" with its rousing chorus:

"Well, I play Air hockey, Ball hockey, Barn Hockey, Bubble Hockey, Field hockey,

"Floor hockey, Ice hockey, Kitchen hockey, Road hockey, Roller hockey, Table hockey, Twist hockey

"And I play hockey, hockey, hockey, hockey, hockey, hockey, hockey, hockey, hockey, hockey,

"hockey, hockey, hockey, hockey, hockey, hockey, hockey all the time!"

And at the end of the evening, both teams couldn't have been happier.

Images of the Afghan War Do Not Comfort the Mind  
Story & Photo  
by Dan Davidson

The Canadian War Museum begins well by being honest about what it is. It is a commemoration of combat.

There was a time when government departments that dealt with war actually had that word in their names, but these days it's all about "defense" as if all the military ever do is respond to attacks rather than initiating them.

From the outside this building is all sharp angles and edges and, though there is lots of glass in evidence, it manages to look like it's dug into the ground, like some sort of a bunker. An impressive building, to be sure, but somehow threatening.

The first of the special exhibits this summer is topical. "Afghanistan : A Glimpse of War" will be on display for the rest of this year.

They'll have to keep making changes to the exhibit since it ends with a computer generated slideshow about all the soldiers who have died there since the conflict began. It's reminiscent of the slideshows we use at our graduation banquets here in Dawson - a life outlined in a dozen images, culminating, in this case, with the grown man or woman standing proud in their military outfits.

There were 56 dead when I visited the museum in July. There are more now, so it will take longer to view the slideshow. I couldn't finish it. A dozen young lives flickered past me and I found I had to move on.

The exhibit seems quite thorough. There are displays of the 9/11 Attack, what we would call the inciting incident if



all of this were a stage play. There's a piece of one of the airplanes that hit the World Trade Center towers. It's odd how bits of shattered artifacts like this one don't seem to look like anything, as if they lose their identity by being taken out of context.

Context is, of course, what this exhibit is trying to provide to the Canadian public. Why are we involved in this country? What are we hoping to accomplish? What is the emotional and physical cost? What is it like to be there?

I suppose the exhibit does as good a job as any at providing such answers as can be suggested by a selection of documents, photographs, artifacts and video clips. As effective as it all is, and as sympathetic as I have been to the reasoning that led us into this combat zone, I leave more troubled than when I walked into the exhibit.

In the middle of the room there is one display that seems symbolic of the entire effort so far. It's a Canadian military vehicle that has been blown up by a roadside mine. The passenger end of the olive green SUV-like troop carrier looks as if it might be repaired, but the front end, the engine and all its parts, looks like it's been through a meat grinder. It's hard to imagine it as having been a functional piece of equipment.

The war in Afghanistan is like that - an operation that began with high hopes and what seemed to be the best of intentions, with a seemingly straightforward set of objectives, but which has now become a tangled mess that seems like the fabled Gordian Knot.

In legend, Alexander the Great simply cut through the knot in order to win the contest associated with it but, of course, this Alexandrian solution merely destroys the thing to which it is applied, so we have to hope that something better can be devised to end the fighting in Afghanistan.

## Neil Young Tribute Night at the PG

photos by Dan Davidson



## Fashion Show at Dänojà Zho Cultural Centre

photos by Dan Davidson



## Tree Fall Thought to Have Killed Power

by Dan Davidson

It was "lights out" for Dawson residents for a very brief period on Monday morning September 10. The power went off at about 9:13 and came back about seven minutes later.

At Yukon Energy, spokesperson Janet Patterson said that the company isn't quite sure what happened, though it is believed that a tree came down somewhere on the Mayo-Dawson hydro line.

"Luckily," Patterson said, "we were able to get power back on very quickly."