

The Klondike Sun

November 7, 2007 Online Edition

Dawson City, Yukon



**Dawson Goes
Volleyball Crazy**



Ferry Ride ends Earlier this year

Story & Photos
by Dan Davidson

Friday, October 26, was the day they pulled the George Black Ferry out of the Yukon River this year. It's a few days earlier than the last couple of years - Oct. 30 in 2005 and Oct. 31 in 2006 - but Dawson's had permanent snow on the ground now since not long after Thanksgiving, and while

daytime temperatures have been moderate, night times have been creeping down to -20, so the earlier ice was not a terrific surprise.

Once the ferry has to shoulder its way through the fizzle

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Mr. Davidson notes with disgust that the building's distinctive and rare pressed-metal exterior façade is in sad shape. The second-floor access stairs on the north end have been torn off, some of the metal siding has peeled away and paint is peeling off the rest of the building.

Working with the Owner

Although the Bank of Commerce was designated by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada as nationally significant in 1967, it is privately owned.

"Essentially, Parks Canada cannot tell the owner what to do," says Michael Gates, Cultural Resource Management Specialist for the Parks Canada Yukon field unit.

"Parks Canada already owns a representative example of a bank for its commemorative complex: the Bank of British North America.

ice, once you can hear the proto-bergs shattering against the side of the boat or against themselves as they jostle in the current, it's time to do the job.

West Dawsonites, an ever increasing population, have stocked up for the interruption of their commute for supplies or, if they have to due to their jobs, have found berths in town until the river freezes solid enough for traffic.

On Saturday afternoon the crew was busy putting away the thick cable, spools and pulleys and buttoning up the ferry for another winter season on its pad beside the dike.

Historic Yukon Commerce Bank on the Ropes

by Sheila Ashcroft

from *Heritage: the Magazine of the Heritage Canada Foundation*

Fall / Winter 2007 edition

Used with permission

Photo by Dan Davidson

When the opportunity arose to acquire the Bank of Commerce, Parks was undertaking long-term stabilization of dozens of other structures. The Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada (HSMBC) gave explicit instructions not to buy the CIBC."

Instead, the HSMBC recommended that it be commemorated by means of a plaque. Parks Canada also encouraged the preservation of the building by making technical and design assistance available to its owners.

Mr. Gates says that Parks Canada has made efforts to encourage the owner to move in the right direction. Parks Canada staff have approached the owner several times over the years to make him aware of various federal funding programs such as the National Historic Sites (NHS) Cost-Sharing Program and the Commercial Heritage Properties Incentive Fund (CHPIF).

"We have offered to provide advice and assistance

When heritage properties are ignored, today's work of art can become tomorrow's eyesore. Residents of Dawson City discovered this the hard way.

The Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce in Dawson City was once noted for its elaborate Renaissance-style façade. According to a Parks Canada commemorative integrity statement, the edifice presented "... an image of stability and permanence in the context of Dawson's Gold Rush days" (see sidebar, An Image of Stability).

But residents don't describe it that way now.

"It is an eyesore that generates comments any time the subject of community standards or public presentation is mentioned," says Dan Davidson, editor of The Klondike Sun in Dawson.

"It is in a prominent location, on the corner of Front and Queen Streets, right next to Parks Canada's beautifully restored S.S. Keno."

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regarding restoration techniques, materials, suppliers, historic photographs and building history research. Owners of national historic sites as well as owners of dozens of other heritage buildings have all benefited from our assistance. With the owner of the CIBC building, it was to no avail.”

Seeking World Heritage Status

According to Mr. Gates, Parks staff has also pitched plans to purchase and restore the building to the CIBC and other interested parties. Aside from that, the agency has relied on municipal heritage legislation to protect the building.

Doug Olynyk, historic sites manager in the Yukon Ministry of Tourism and Culture, explains that while Parks Canada had previously invested tens of millions of dollars in its Dawson Historical Complex, the agency is now hard pressed to maintain its holdings.

“The town and others who want to preserve and rehabilitate the bank are leery of the costs. I am working with the town to seek World Heritage nomination. The Klondike is on Canada’s tentative list and the building will be a huge issue. Its prominent waterfront location makes it a prime commercial property,” says Mr. Olynyk.

Signs of Hope

Paula Hassard, Parks Canada curator at the Dawson Historical Complex, stresses that since 2002 Parks Canada staff has worked with the local planning board to help strengthen the historic guidelines, historic zoning and bylaws.

“We continue to be engaged in the development of the heritage management plan in collaboration with the city and the Yukon heritage unit. This plan will provide processes and incentives to protect and maintain all the remaining heritage buildings in Dawson,” she says.

Mr. Davidson thinks the bank could be developed as a commercial property or for instructional use as part of the Klondike Institute of Art and Culture School of Visual Arts initiative.

“The people behind this operation have shown a great aptitude for restoring failing buildings and making them useful again, buildings such as the Oddfellows’ Hall and the old territorial liquor store, which were condemned and derelict when they took them over,” he says.

References: Yukon Heritage Character Reports (www.yukonheritage.com/); Parks Canada (www.parkscanada.gc.ca); Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce (<https://www.cibc.com/ca/inside-cibc/history/story-cibc.html>); Dawson Historical Complex National Historic Site Management Plan (http://www.pc.gc.ca/lhnhs/yt/dawson/plan/index_e.asp);



A Guide to Canadian Architectural Styles by Shannon Ricketts, Leslie Maitland, Jacqueline Hucker. Broadview Press, Peterborough, Ont.

An Image of Stability

The Dawson City branch of the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, designed by architect WP. Skillings, opened in May 1901. The two-storey building featured traditional bank-teller counters on the first floor and an assay office on the second floor.

It holds a place in Canadian literary history. Famed poet Robert Service worked as a clerk there.

According to A Guide to Canadian Architectural Styles, although the beaux arts style was originally intended for large buildings, it worked well for smaller commercial structures with features scaled down but with the same sense of grandeur. The classical detailing normally worked in stone was replaced by prefabricated pressed metal.

The bank was constructed of native spruce. Its interior walls were fitted with shiplap and asbestos fireproofing and lined with polished B.C. fir. The first floor had Ionic columns rising to the ceiling along the walls.

The pressed-metal ceiling was suspended from iron braces, providing an open and spacious effect. The outer walls were covered with ironwork sanded and painted to resemble sandstone. Ornate scrolled metalwork was fitted to all counters.

I’d Buy That for a Dollar

Dawson City’s historic CIBC bank building is currently owned by developer Mike Palma, who bought the building for one dollar. “He is a developer and entrepreneur who is notoriously hard to pin down for interviews,” says Dan Davidson, who recalls that Palma once said he was interested in developing the building as a restaurant, but not in operating it himself. “He was looking for someone who would want to use the building and then he would fix it up according to their requirements,” said Mr. Davidson.

Nothing appears to have come of this proposal.

In 2004, under the Yukon Historic Properties Assistance

Program, the CIBC received \$8,700 for exterior repairs to the old Bank of Commerce. Mr. Davidson said that Mr. Palma did do foundation repairs and secured it against unauthorized access.

The former bank has sat empty for more than a decade. Barbara Hogan, historic sites registrar for the Yukon Ministry of Tourism and Culture, says that a few companies have shown interest in the building, but so far there have been no takers.

Uffish Thoughts: Taking a Canadian Journey in 60 Minutes

by Dan Davidson

One day in early July I spent an hour travelling through 1,000 years of Canadian history. We were in the Canadian Museum of Civilization, a remarkable institution located in Hull, just across the river from Ottawa.

The first floor tour through the Grand Hall, with its emphasis on First Nations culture from the West Coast, was very interesting by itself, and the imposing openness of the exhibition space gave lots of scope for the display of totem poles and the six interconnected "houses" that contained the smaller displays.

This was a summer for running into Dawson City references. Here, amidst the carvings and woodwork, what should I find but a plaque indicating that this wood panel, showing a "Shaman, Patient and Helping Spirits," had been collected by G.M. Dawson in 1885. That little guy sure did get around.

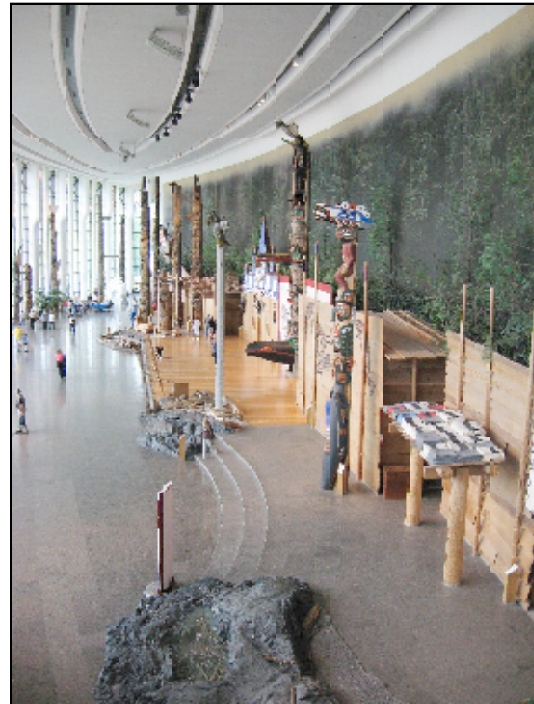


changing settings and street scenes.

There's a dreamlike quality to Canada Hall, with each of the 11 major stations blending into the next and leaving you to wonder just how they managed that trick.

Entering the hall you are suddenly landing on

Newfoundland with the Vikings, in search of adventure,



timber and trade. True to history that doesn't last long You pass through darkness and find yourself in a 16th century whaling station and before know it you're in an 18th century own square in the middle of New France.

The illusion is near perfect. You can peek through windows, walk into rooms in some of the buildings and feel yourself surrounded by the past, but it's a past that's constantly changing. Round another corner and you're in an Ottawa Valley lumber camp where another set of newcomers is learning to tame the land to their desires.

At the halfway point you find yourself on Ontario Street in the late 1800s, each bend in the street taking you farther across the country. Along your walk you can drop into an early 20th century print shop and see what pamphlets were being produced in Winnipeg in that era or stop to reflect further west in the ornately decorated St. Onuphrius Church.

Out on the prairies you see a model of those railway towns, and Pierre Berton's voice guides you to several audio and audiovisual displays dealing with the history of the Canadian Pacific Railway and the settlement of the west; the small towns laid out along the track, accompanied by the iconic grain elevators, which have since given way, further west, to nodding donkey oil pumps in the middle of a farmer's field.

The derricks come into view around another bend in the walk, followed closely by a B.C. fishing boat called the Nishga Girl. As a Yukoner, you may be disappointed that the entire North is represented by the very stereotypical Wildcat Cafe at the end of the tour, but that's not enough to tarnish the total effect.

A quick peek at the Children's Museum on the second floor is enough to make me wish we could roll back 15 years

and bring the kids here for an afternoon, but times passes and we cannot, by wishing, undo or redo anything.

In the end, we have to settle for the time we have and the experiences of those days. This was a good one.

Love and education

By Florian Boulais

Love and education; what is their connection??

We have to love to become better, we have to learn to become better. It is so easy to settle in a routine, and solitude isn't that bad after all. It isn't that our pain disappears but we get used to it. Being alone... it is better to be alone than badly accompanied, that's true. But every time we meet an inspiring person, it enlightens our day, gives us the will to become better. If we dare loving somebody, we accept to change, we accept to become more. But we're scared, we don't want to be disappointed, we don't want to feel the pain of not being taken in our stomach.

We have to learn to become better. I'm speaking about real learning, learning about how things work, trying to see what is behind things, what the connections are... it's not complicated, one just has to look for the answers. The more we learn, the more the connections get obvious and it is easy to make the right choices; and informed choice is always so much better... the more we learn and the more we see that change is the very material life is made of.

But it is so hard to change, to once more put everything back into question. It is so hard to find the energy... Love and learning are embracing each other, they work so well together, one helps the other, they bloom together. We have to dare loving, and we have to learn, it is the foundation of life.

Territorial and Local Issues Discussed at Open House

by Dan Davidson

There was talk of ambulance services, fur marketing, sewage lagoon locations, smoking legislation, economic development and decentralization of territorial government jobs at Klondike MLA Steve Nordick's constituency open house, held at the Legion Hall on Saturday, October 27.



Nordick, the rookie MLA who holds the post of deputy speaker in the Yukon party government, was accompanied on this occasion by cabinet office chief of staff Dale Drown.

This was not a formal community meeting, but an opportunity to sit and chat with Nordick and Drown about a variety of subjects. Attendance was not heavy at any given time during the afternoon, but there was a steady flow of constituents in and out of the building and conversation kept moving, along with the coffee and donuts.

Balloon Sculptures Redefine the Gallery Space

Story & Photo by Dan Davidson

Walking into "Off the Grid", the latest exhibition at the Odd Gallery, a person could be forgiven for wondering just what might happen to the inflated Tyvek sculptures in the room if he or she were to jump on them.



Not all of them of course. The blocks that extrude from the drop-ceiling panels wouldn't allow for that, but the ones on the floor, sitting there like some pieces of futuristic furniture, almost beg to be tried out. Sat on perhaps rather than jumped.

The atmosphere in the room is dim, with much of the light coming from inside the Tyvek balloons themselves, those slightly rounded rectangles puffed up by the fans which can be heard whirring slightly in the background.

"Recently, I have been working with Tyvek fabric to build air-supported sculptures, which balloon and expand, inhabiting the gallery space for the duration of an

exhibition," writes artist Marcia Huyer.

"The gallery is not just a venue for exhibiting work, but a participating medium, a canvas, if you will.

"Having the shape of the ceiling tile cascade and expand into the gallery offers the viewer a new visual and sensory experience of the gallery."

There is certainly a degree of disorientation associated with this exhibit. The placement of the inflated objects forces the viewer to navigate the room in a different way.

The objects themselves are not entirely static. Though anchored, they pulse slightly in time to the rhythm of the fans which keep them inflated. Touch them and they give way beneath the fingers, only to bounce back immediately when you let go.

It's a bit like the room is alive, but this seems to be a soothing rather than an alarming perception. It's certainly interesting to view the installation from different corners of the room and see how it affects the available space.

"Off the Grid" will be on display at the Odd Gallery until December 7.

Dawson has Best Mayor From *Up Here* magazine



(readers' pick)

BEST MAYOR

He's not your average city father: Dawson City firebrand **John Steins**, whose artwork was once banned from eBay because it lampooned the Bush administration, went from hell-raiser to "his worship" when he was picked as mayor. Readers seem to feel he made the jump well.

Runner up: Peter Clarkson (Inuvik, NWT)

Seniors Display their Artistic Talents

Story and Photo by Dan Davidson

The Oddfellows' Hall was host to a different sort of art show on October 27, when the members of the seniors class showed off their work.

"There's a great feeling of peace when they're all here working," said instructor Palma Berger as she looked around at the results of the Senior's Art course on display on the ground floor.

Berger had spent some 16 weeks working with the nine



students who had chosen to show their work to the public at this exhibition. The project was funded for 12 of those weeks by a grant from the federal New Horizons for Seniors Program. As for the rest, Berger says they just didn't seem to want to stop.

The classes began in the spring, but took a break during the summer when people had other things to do, and then picked up again in the fall.

The classroom space was donated by the Klondike Institute of Art and Culture, which operates out of the hall.

Most of the students had only a slight experience with drawing and painting, and some had none at all. In spite of that, they sketched still life settings with moose antlers (a northern touch), ball gloves, running shoes, hats and various scenes, both real and imaginary. They filled sketchbooks and completed frame projects.

And they all looked very pleased with themselves at their exhibition.

A number of other seniors who came to see the results wanted to know when the next set of classes might begin. Berger is looking at grant possibilities for the winter.

Uffish Thoughts: EMS Changes Are Taking Too Long to Implement

by Dan Davidson

I'd like to be charitable over the Yukon Party government's recent handling of the Watson Lake / Dawson Ambulance Crisis. After all, promising to come up with on-call remuneration and a full time employee to ease the load of the volunteers who are - well, were - the backbone of the Emergency Medical Service system in both towns sounds like a pair of awfully good ideas.

The catch is that they sound remarkably like the ideas that the volunteer crew in Dawson sent to the Minister of Health who used to be in charge of the system last April. The letter that went out was endorsed by Dawson's town council and everyone had high hopes that it might be the beginning of productive discussions towards solving a crisis in the making.

Instead, as you will recall, the letter apparently never

got to Mr. Cathers' desk, there was no response from the government, tempers flared, and volunteers in both towns signed off and laid down their bulky radios at the end of a shift in mid- summer.

They didn't exactly quit. They just said they weren't going to sign on to take calls until the situation was fixed.

The government promptly decided to treat this as a labour-management issue, as if the volunteers had gone on strike and needed to be bullied back to the table for negotiations. Any Volunteer 101 training course could have told the folks in charge that this was a dumb position to take, but it appears that no one had even audited that course.

Premier Fentie, often an astute man, blundered into this particular situation with platitudes blazing, eager to tell the populace that this was a matter of principle, and that the principle at stake was volunteerism. This was a bit like throwing gasoline on a fire as far as the volunteers were concerned.

They understand volunteerism. They understand community service, They understand commitment. They have been willing to interrupt their private lives and turn out at all hours in all manner of weather to make sure that people don't die.

They also understand that the big guns can only bully you when they actually have a pay cheque to dangle over your head like a sword of Damocles. They understand that this is not an employee relations issue.

The government compounded the problem by proclaiming repeatedly that no amount of money was too much to spend in order to maintain a decent level of service during this crisis. Then YTG proved it was serious by placing 24/7 salaried ambulance attendants in both towns, paying them overtime, room and board, and hiring a consultant to analyze the needs of the system.

That last thing might not be a bad move, but the initial requests by the EMS volunteers could probably have been met on an interim basis with the money spent on the rest of the response between midsummer and now.

The latest announcement, of course, sounds like it might be close to a solution, but it's taken way too long to get there. A cynical person could easily say that it looks like a response designed to rob the issue of steam during the next few weeks of legislative debate, while not actually accomplishing anything until the Leg has closed for the winter.

Finally, the deputy minister of the department that used to run EMS was still in employee relations mode when he visited here a week or so ago, and it was made clear to the volunteers that no one was interested in what they might have to say about improvements to the system unless they were willing "to go back to work". No, no one actually said that from what I've been told, but that is what it sounded like.

One can only hope that the Dept. of Community Services will have a better strategy for the care and feeding of EMS volunteers. We need them too badly to have this situation continue.

Hallowe'en at RSS



SURPRISE IN GRANVILLE Y. T. - 1958

by Sylvia Sands Johnson

Bobby Madland already had 5 children, so it came as a great surprise when she announced to one and all, that she was giving birth to her sixth child AT HOME — 50 miles from Dawson City and the nearest Doctor. The village of 12 families was all a-twitter, and anyone who had the book, Canadian Mother, read it twice, just in case they were called upon to assist in some way. Of course, Bobby and her husband, Roy, lived just through the 'bush' from Hazel Kilbride, who was esteemed as the unofficial village nurse. I must say that Hazel took it all calmly, while some of us cast dire predictions, most of which we kept to ourselves. What if some emergency or something unexpected happened at the birth? Or the baby was born the wrong way around? There were many "what if's," as the months passed. Some

thought that Booby should go into town to have her baby, but kept their counsel. It was her decision.

Fortunately, the baby was due late Spring, which meant the roads weren't impassable because of mud and the small glaciers that crossed them; while holes broke through as your tires struck them, and it sounded like the underbelly of your car was ripped wide open. Mostly, you had to just 'gun it' and pray. Either way it was a mudbath.

Since I lived about 2 miles from the village, it came as a great surprise, one morning, when there was a loud knocking at the door, along with some yelling. All I heard was, "Bobby has had her baby. Bobby's had her baby. Come quickly." This meant the kids had to accompany me to the village, which they loved because it gave them a chance to play with the other kids. I couldn't believe when I walked through Bobby's door — nearly ALL the village women were there. And there was Bobby, as calm as a queen with her new baby. Bobby was like that, a stoic type of woman, always calm on the surface. How can you describe the character of a woman who takes life as it comes? The baby boy couldn't have looked more contented, bundled as he was in a warm blanket, held in Bobby's arms. It was as if nothing unusual had happened at all. Everyone was in a jubilant party mood, the kids all chattering gayly outside. The men were either working on the dredges, or had enough sense to stay away.

Then I got the full story. Apparently, Bobby had awakened very early in the morning, even before Roy had to go to work on the gold dredges. She was in heavy labour. In fact, she said, as if it happened every day, "Roy got up just in time to take the afterbirth out." Bobby had given birth to the baby on newspaper.

Everyone was in a celebrative mood, especially because everything had gone so well. In fact, the baby had been born quickly — which may explain why Bobby had decided to have it at home in the first place. She knew better than anyone how fast her babies were born.

Someone was making coffee and passing it around. Then, as I understand it, Hazel, our village angel, had been notified later — and came over to check and re-tie the baby's umbilical cord. Everyone was elated — I can't describe the atmosphere that prevailed — perhaps relief is a better word. Besides, who isn't thrilled with a new baby? It was a moment for great rejoicing. Bobby and the baby were safe.

It was an occasion I'll never forget. Bobby always took everything so casually and sometime the next day, she and her husband travelled to Dawson to see the Doctor, and have drops placed in the baby's eyes, etc.

Even in 1958, I had never seen or heard of a baby being born at home. that was something you read about in books, a thing of the past. The day of midwives. Nor have I heard of one since, unless it was an accident, or one on the way to the hospital.

Ironically, when I was visiting a friend in Quesnel a few years later, I heard that Bobby had died of a brain haemorrhage, some years after she left the Yukon to go 'outside.' She was not very old when it happened. She belonged to another era there is no doubt — the tough-

spirited, pioneer women of the North. She'll never be forgotten.

Bookends: Every Picture Tells a Story

by Dan Davidson

Scenic Adventures in the Yukon Territory

by Chris Caldwell

C. Caldwell Productions

138 pages

\$59.95

With all the talk about disclosure in journalism and reviewing, I'd better admit up front that I got to read this book some time ago. Chris contacted me in the early spring and asked me to look the galley proofs over before it went to print. If you find any remaining misspellings or lapses in sentence structure (and there weren't very many by the time I got to it) I'm the one to blame.

It was somewhat more than a simple read through, as you can guess from that description. You could read the book in a couple of hours, I'll wager. I spent about 6 on it, and then had some fun looking at the pictures, prints of a number of which hang on our walls.

That sidesplitting Alaska Highway memorial poster from 1991, "Glory Road," looks down on my desk every time I sit here to write. I've often thought of it as a metaphor for the odd journey my own life has taken.

The thing about Chris's work is that that every picture is simply packed. In one interview I did with her some years ago, she admitted to taking a bit of a Mad Magazine approach to her work. "Glory Road," since I've already mentioned it, has those poor shocked chaps in army fatigues facing an untamed wilderness of enormous bugs, slavering carnivores, tangled trees and swamps with looks of horror their faces. Their first nations guide rides in front, laconically picking his way through the mess and beckoning them on. In addition, take a closer look: all of the characters can be matched with the cast of the Wizard of Oz. Some Yellow Brick Road, eh?

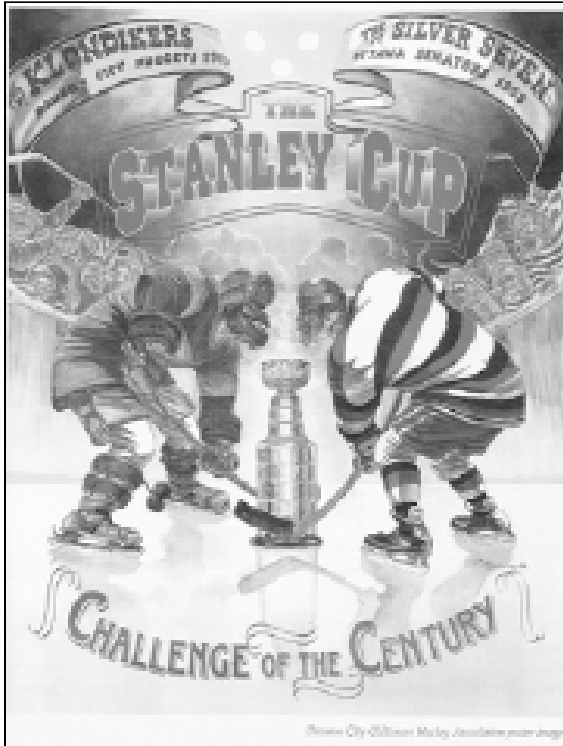
With Chris, every picture tells a story, often more than one.

From the "Bush Panic" single panels of the early 1980s to the full colour paintings of today, Caldwell has always had a loving eye for the wonderful and the absurd. When you think of a musher and a dog team following a cat trail, you probably don't come up with quite the solution to be found on page 21, but when you see it, you find yourself nodding.

As for "How Legends are Made," I confess I had never actually seen two dogs locked in that particular connubial embrace until about my second year in Beaver Creek, and I didn't know any more about it than the befuddled bankers in the painting.

"...And yet so far" on page 36, with its baffled lynx could be about a lot more than just a frustrated fishing trip. Many individuals and town councils have been caught with that look on their faces.

"Hero in Red Serge" probably manages to incorporate



just about every Mountie cliché that you can imagine.

Caldwell's work has graced just about every organization and special event in the territory at one time or another. The fundraiser for the Whitehorse General Hospital's Children's Ward could be the starting point for many a story, while her posters for the Yukon Quest and the Canada Winter Games are a thorough delight.

One of my favorites, of course, is the one of the "Challenge of the Century," the depiction of the truly unique Dawson City Oldtimer Nuggets hockey player facing off against a member of the Ottawa Senators. It's a great picture.

This book is a pleasant walk through Chris's history as an artist working in the Yukon. It contains just about every sort of art that she does: the posters, the paintings, the logo designs and even a generous selection of those hard to find Whitehorse Star "Bush Panic" cartoons from way back when.

We have to hope this sells well, because she's already told us what her next project will be. The Petfolio: the Secret Lives of Pets and their People looks like it would be a scream.

Library Notes

November 2007 Submitted

by Miriam Havemann

Now that a good part of the town is cut off from us, traffic has calmed down in the library and I am sharing coffee and tea every Saturday with only a few faithful people. Although I much prefer seeing more people in here, this leaves me with quite a bit of time to order in more books which you requested and which I think are essential for a library. We are getting there! Meanwhile we are still receiving old orders and random acts of generosity almost on a daily basis.

The cinematographers amongst you might be delighted to hear that the Dawson City Community is proud to announce the extension of its DVD collection. Come in and check out our new feature films ranging from Charlie Chaplin to Alejandro González Iñárritu and David Lynch, presenting Marilyn Monroe, Clark Gable, Leonardo DiCaprio and Dolly Parton (yes, she is still around, amongst many others) and new animated films for both kids (Nickelodeon classics) and adults ("Two Winters" is a prize-winning story of the Tutchone people for all ages).

I was delighted to see that the last column inspired some of you to come in and take out some of our last recommendations. If you enjoyed those, please do not miss out on this month's new books. We not only received new novels by P.D. James and Anne Rice (always popular, as it seems), but also such treats as David Adams Richards's *Mercy Among the Children* or Marcel Theroux's *The Confessions of Mycroft Holmes*. But to be honest, this time the list of new good novels is too long to be completed. For those who would like to refresh their knowledge on history, there is Nick Hazlewood's *The Queen's Slave Trader* on John Hawkyns, Elizabeth I, Queen of England and the trafficking on human souls in the 16th century. For those who prefer more recent history, we received even more books on the Gold Rush (*Klondike Fever* by Robert Currie), on WWI and Edward Crankshaw's account on *The Fall of the House of Habsburg*.

For the more visually inclined amongst you, there are also new comic books (yes, a new Calvin and Hobbes as well as a new Garfield; I am still waiting for the complete Peanuts comics, though. I guess Whitehorse's generosity knows some limits in the end and I will never live to see them up here...).

Alas, what can I say. You will have to come in and see for yourselves what you would like to read in the dark winter hours to come.

Apart from the fantastic additions to our collection, I would like to invite everyone who is interested to come along and join George K. Ilsley for his prose workshop. As the Berton House writer in residence and author of *ManBug* and *Random Acts of Hatred*, George is offering a workshop where you can read and discuss one of your pieces which is currently under development. The workshop aims at helping with your unpublished text, be it a piece of fiction, non-

fiction, journalism, a memoir, a journal entry or an essay. It will be a great opportunity to talk about developing voice in your writing, saying what you want to say and finding the right format. If you are a writer you can get inspiration and motivation from discussing your own and other writers' texts. If you are just interested in prose, you are still welcome to join us in the library with tea, coffee and snacks on Monday, November 19th 2007 at 7 p.m. For those who are interested in more detailed feedback, a follow-up is possible in a one-on-one session sometime later in the month.

Those who would like to present a piece of writing are asked to bring an excerpt or a whole text between 500 and 1000 words plus a copy for George. I will take care of copying if you bring in the text to the library by Friday, November 16th.

If this got you interested, just drop by. Our tea and coffee bar is still open every Saturday for you to warm up. And if you are still around by 5:30 on Saturdays you bet I will beat you in an end-of-the-week-after-work snowball fight outside!

Our opening hours are and will be for the next few months:

Tuesdays: 12:00-7:30

Wednesdays: 12:00-6:30

Thursdays: 12:00-7:30

Fridays: 12:00-6:30

Saturdays: 10:00-5:30

If you have any questions concerning the library, our events or us just call 993-5571 or send us an email to dclib@klondiker.com.

What's in a Bag?

Submitted by Conservation Klondike

A general nuisance worldwide, we humans are producing a mere three trillion plastic bags every single year. Dawsonites are responsible for approximately 400,000 plastic bags destined for the landfill, annually. Plastic shopping bags, convenient for carrying groceries, also carry fairly serious environmental impacts. They are unfriendly company in a landfill as it can take up to 1000 years for these bags to break down. The course of events is to allow our waste to breakdown but because of the plastic bag, it does not. They also tend to blow out of the landfill and the smaller toxic bits that they break into contaminate soil, waterways and pose threats to wildlife. Generally speaking a good idea gone bad.

Conservation Klondike and the City of Dawson, along with the business community, and concerned citizens are pulling together to promote the drastic and (hopefully) sudden reduction of the amount of plastic, non-

biodegradable bags entering our waste stream. And we hope to do it soon. Fortunately, though the problem itself is HUGE, the solution is wonderfully simple.

Both of the main grocery stores now carry affordably priced reusable shopping bags. All you have to do is buy them and use them...and the problem is half solved.

The glitch of course is that many people, self included, have been using the bags for household garbage for many long years...which is why they are at the landfill. To complete the circuit, we have to use biodegradable garbage bags for our household waste. Conservation Klondike has been doing research on sourcing the least harmful bags for household use. We will be selling samples of the different types of bags available on the market today at the Christmas Bizarre on November 17th. Come and try them out. We will be selling sample/variety packs and giving some away too at our information booth.

The business community has been very supportive of these efforts - aside from selling reusable bags, the grocery stores are investigating the alternatives for household garbage and hopefully we will see these new bags for sale in the new year. The issue of alternatives for the tourist gift bags is also being looked at by several businesses in town.

The main thing for Conservation Klondike is that we begin to seriously address the plastic bag problem so that the landfill can function in the way it was intended.

Your wise use of reusable shopping bags and purchase of bags that are the least harmful to the landfill is the least, and for now, all, you have to do to make the problem start to go away.

Thank you and Mahsi Cho to all for their cooperation.

If Dawson can do it, the world can. Lets show 'em how its done!

Let's get this problem in the bag.

Check out these resources on line:

BioSak: www.cttgroup.com/ralston/english/BioSakGeneral.html

BioSolo: www.indaco.ca

Ecosafe: www.ecosafeplastics.com

Al-Pack: www.mycompost.com

www.bringyourbag.com

On the Local Scene

