

# The Klondike Sun

December 5, 2007 Online Edition

Dawson City, Yukon

## Tent City unnecessary, says summer housing survey

by Dan Davidson

Despite an outcry by seasonal workers last summer that



there was a lack of affordable housing for them in the Dawson area, and in spite of nostalgic yearnings for the return of some sort of “tent city” option for Dawson’s summerdoughs, a study commissioned by the town indicates that there is less of a problem than people might think.

Some 9% of available jobs went unfilled in Dawson last summer, according to the study, which surveyed 35 employers in the town as well as 85 seasonal workers.

Michael Pealow Consulting undertook the study between August 14 and 19 last summer. The firm reached four conclusions after analyzing the data.

The first was that the various employers in the Klondike probably need to do some active recruiting, rather than relying on a “whoever shows up” approach to summer workers. There is, the report noted, a territory wide shortage of summer staff, and transients may need to be coaxed to come to Dawson in ways that they have not been in the past.

The second finding was that the quality of available summer housing was low and not well regulated. Owners of substandard accommodations could upgrade their units and charge more for them and still have no trouble filling them. Workers surveyed are willing to pay more for such basics as heat, power, water and toilets.

The third suggestion was the creation of an online

housing board to assist prospective summer workers in finding and booking housing before they even get here.

Finally, seasonal workshops to assist both landlords and tenants in knowing their rights and obligations should be held both in-season and off-season.

Implicit in the report was the conclusion that there was no need for a tent city type of situation: “It is unlikely that the reopening of Tent City will solve the shortage of summer workers.”

The study was received with some skepticism by town councillors on November 20.

Councillor Diana Andrew wondered allowed if the consultant had interviewed anyone who didn’t work for Holland-America, which provides housing for its employees.

Councillors noted that the study took place at the very lag end of the summer season. The crisis in housing, if there actually was one, had surfaced in June and July, when a delegation came to council and petition was circulated. Transient workers tend to start leaving after the Music Festival weekend, about three weeks before the study was carried out, so the pressure was off the housing market well before that.

No one on council actually wanted to throw out the idea of a tent city option. It was part of the Dawson summer experience for decades and the beginning of the decline in the number of available workers did coincide with the closing of the site a few years ago.

On the positive side, there was no opposition to making an attempt to implement any or all of the major recommendations stemming from the study. Most of these, however, would need to be tackled by the business community, so it remains to be seen how the study will be received by the chamber of commerce.

## Dawson to lose Town Councillor and Pilot

Story & Photo by Dan Davidson

Adam Morrison says that his upcoming resignation from Dawson’s town council has nothing to do with the fact that he was going to have to serve as deputy mayor for the next six months. Morrison’s turn in the rotation came up at the November 20th meeting.

“Yeah,” he said with a chuckle, “I got that on Tuesday

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night and then on Friday I told them I'd have to quit."

It's not the politics, though. Morrison has been handed a promotion and he has to move to fill the job.

"Trans North approached me about taking the operations manager's position. That's a Whitehorse job. You have to be in Whitehorse to do it."

For Morrison, who has been thinking about retiring from active flight duty since he was temporarily benched by a bout of arthritis and a pinched nerve in his left arm last summer, it was the classic offer he couldn't refuse.

"It's a big promotion and a big financial boost for us as well, and so it's something we've given a lot of thought to - and we finally decided that this could secure my retirement."

So, both reluctantly and expectantly, he and his wife, Maureen, are getting ready to make the move.

The possibility of leaving has been hovering quietly in the air (if one can say that about a chopper pilot) for about six weeks, when he was approached by other people from within the Trans North organization about filling an upcoming vacancy.

His first reaction was to refuse, because neither he nor



his wife really wanted to leave Dawson, where they have a fairly new home in one of the Dome subdivisions. But his colleagues in the company didn't let up the pressure.

"Basically, they talked me into it," he said and he actually accepted the position a few days before the November 20 council meeting.

"I didn't want to say anything then, though, because the news wasn't out yet."

His new job will begin on April 1. He was already planning to take holidays from mid-January to mid-February, and after that it now looks like he will be back and forth before the actual move. It made sense to pick a date to resign from council.

"So I told the mayor and city manager I'd participate in the next two council meetings - December 4 and January 8 - and that'll be it."

Morrison has been in Dawson since 1980. It was summers until 1984, when he took over the Trans North base here and ran it until 1989. He spent a year and a half in Whitehorse and then returned to Dawson to run the base, so

he's been here about 21 years.

At 55, he's been 28 years in the air and has flown about 14,000 hours in an aviation career that has covered 30 years,

"We're not going 'adios good-bye,' you know. We're not selling our house here and we're going with the thought in mind that we'll be back."

City manager Paul Moore indicates that a by-election may be held to fill the vacant position as early as March.

Quorum at meetings may be a little tight for a while as Ashley Doiron is on a two month leave of absence and Ed Kormendy has been physically unable to attend in person (though he has been present on speaker phone) due to a broken leg.

## **CIBC Salvage Operation would be a "worthy project" says Piers McDonald**

by Dan Davidson

The newest member of the board of the Heritage Canada Foundation, Piers McDonald, is of the opinion that it's time to do something to preserve the old CIBC building on Front Street in Dawson before it's too late.

"It's a very prominent building on the waterfront,"

McDonald said in an interview from his office at Northern Vision Development Corporation, "and it has been for a long time."

In the Fall/Winter 2007 edition of Heritage magazine, the magazine published by the Heritage Canada Foundation, the building's history was outlined in an article by Sheila Ashcroft (recently reprinted with permission in the Klondike Sun) entitled "Historic Yukon Commerce Bank on the Ropes".

This was part of a continuing series about endangered historic properties.

While the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce building was identified by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada as being historically significant in 1967, a fact

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noted on a plaque in a small memorial flower plot beside the building, nothing was done when the CIBC abandoned it for rented space in the Dawson Plaza in the 1990s, and sold it to the owner of the Plaza, Mike Palma, for \$1.

The bank itself had recognized the significance of the building some years earlier, and a weathered plaque noting that poet Robert W. Service once worked there is still mounted next to the front door of the building.

In its current state the building is far from being the “image of stability and permanence in the context of Dawson’s Gold Rush Days” that it was once noted to be in a Parks Canada commemorative integrity statement. The paint is peeling from its “elaborate Renaissance-style facade” and some of the metal siding and imitation stone ornamentation has been ripped off by vandals or the weather.

Palma obtained a grant of \$8,700 in 2004 to raise the building, which had been steadily sinking into the ground since the flood of 1979, and stabilize its foundation. The City of Dawson pressured him into boarding up the crawlspace thus created and finally to boarding over the windows which had been broken out over the years by vandals in love with the sound of shattering glass. The building is a subject of conversation, debate and a good many raised voices at any meeting dealing with the preservation of Dawson’s heritage. It was discussed during the round of meetings which led to the draft of the Integrated Community Sustainability Plan, and again during the consultations over the town’s new guidelines for historic zoning bylaws.

Just this month it consumed a good portion of the November chamber of commerce meeting, where hotel owner, Dick Van Nostrand, joined with building supply merchant Bill Bowie in condemning the condition of the building and what it does to the look of Front Street. Van Nostrand noted that it doesn’t matter how much he may do to keep his Downtown Hotel in top shape, he still finds that visitors are affected by the impact of a derelict such as the bank, especially when they realize that it’s actually considered to be an important place.

Eldorado Hotel owner Peter Jenkins had made much the same point at the chamber’s annual general meeting in October. Bill Bowie advocated that the chamber should begin to

agitate at all levels of government to get something done about the place.

“It’s an embarrassment to the community,” he said. McDonald said he had taken a look at the outside of the building last summer and gently suggested that it was getting to be a pretty good fixer-upper”. He had been looking because someone had suggested that his company might take a hand in such a move.

“I don’t know what the intentions of the private sector owner are,” he said, “but clearly there ought to be attempts made by community organizations and, ideally, government agencies, that might be persuaded to make it part of their agenda to engage in a conversation about this facility.

“It would be a terrible shame to see it deteriorate further and get to a point where it’s beyond repair.”

McDonald said he will be pursuing this matter as part of his concerns in his new position with the Heritage Canada Foundation, but that it was much too early to say what might be done.

“Certainly it would be a worthy project to salvage. There’s no doubt.”

## Lawyer Vows CIBC Restoration

by Dan Davidson

Frank Calandra opened the Whitehorse Star on November 21 to find that a project of his had become a news story (see above item). The Toronto based Bayview Street lawyer had returned to the Yukon to oversee work on the renovations of the former Airline Inn (soon to become the Skky Hotel). Calandra had arranged the financing for this endeavor about a year ago, but had ended up taking control of the project to safeguard his investment after the initial deal proved unsatisfactory to him.

Working for him on the Skky Hotel rebuilding as foreman is Mike Palma, one of the original deal makers on the hotel project. Palma owns a number of properties in Dawson City, including the former CIBC building on Front Street, which is generally thought by residents and business owners to be in deplorable condition and was the subject of the article Calandra found himself reading.

Calandra has plans for the CIBC. They’re pretty nebulous so far, and a lot depends on what financing he can line up and what demand there might be for the use of the building, but he was quick to contact the reporter on the file to put forth his concerns and his aspirations.

Calandra said he finds it distressing that a building with that much historic significance should be allowed to simply crumble away due to neglect. The CIBC is one of the oldest banks in western Canada, It dates back to 1901, and was the bank where poet Robert W. Service worked when he was first transferred to Dawson City. It bears a plaque commemorating the poet.

It has been designated as historically significant by the Historic Sites and Monuments Board of Canada which erected a plaque to that effect in a small memorial garden of

to the south of the building.

Calandra calls himself a history buff and says he did his undergraduate work in political science and history before taking up his legal studies at Oxford University

"I'm very much sympathetic to your article and to the issue," he said.

"For me to see a historical building like this languish is rather sad, to put it mildly."

He had already been aware of the CIBC problem as well as the two other high profile buildings that Palma owns on Fifth Avenue across from the Robert Service School, the former City of Dawson Youth Centre and the former Federal Building.

He had told Palma that he was prepared to take on the issue of the CIBC building as a joint venture with the contractor, provided he has 51% of the equity and control of the project.

To that end, Calandra has recently met with Piers Macdonald of Northern Vision Development to gain some contacts and with a representative of the architectural firm of Kobayashi and Zedda to discuss possibilities.

"I'm going to see what is available in terms of funding. If there is not anything available, then I guess the next thing, after I finish the hotel project, will be to seek other funding."

Calandra's law practice in Toronto is almost on hold at present though it is still open and messages are being forwarded. He will be in the Yukon until just before Christmas and then will be back in the new year. He has purchased property here, is planning a home, and intends to seek accreditation to the Yukon bar.

He is Mike Palma's council in the latter's legal battle with the Insurance Corporation of British Columbia over an alleged car insurance fraud scheme.

## **History Hunter: Remembering Bear Creek**

by Michael Gates

For three brief years, Dawson City was the epicenter of excitement, the ground zero for the Klondike gold rush, the Paris of the north. For six decades after that, it slowly sank into the shadow of its smaller but very influential neighbour, Bear Creek. In fact, Dawson City became a company town.

If you talk to the old timers, I learned, you quickly understood that they knew it simply as "The Company", though it was known officially as the Yukon Consolidated Gold Corporation, or YCGC.

The riches of the Klondike were released from the frozen ground with the greatest of effort. In the earliest years of the gold rush, this was accomplished by human sweat and hard labour, but only the richest ground could make you rich in this way.

Eventually, the miners worked out less productive ground, using more efficient steam technology, but there was still plenty of gold locked in the icy Klondike gravel. The problem was, to make money mining this marginal gravel, it took massive, sophisticated machinery, large

tracts of land and piles of money. That's where the big capitalists became involved.

Spurred on by two great entrepreneurs, Joe Boyle, and Arthur N.C. Treadgold, big money interests from the United States started investing in the gold fields. They built hydro projects, and huge water diversions, massive dredges and support camps to keep everything running.

Despite being great promoters, neither Boyle nor Treadgold proved to be inspired managers, and by the 1920's the big dredging interests were in a state of chaos, in particular the Canadian Klondike Mining Company, centered at Bear Creek.

Eventually, through various deals and corporate manoeuvrings, all of the different mining interests were assembled under one gigantic corporate monopoly, and thus was born the YCGC.

The doubling of the price of gold in the 1930's was a shot in the arm for the interests of the YCGC, who invested in extensive testing to locate and prove the extent of the gold trapped in the ground, and constructed a fleet of new dredges to replace the aging machines built two decades before.

By the late 1930s, YCGC had a fleet of 10 dredges working in the goldfields, and 700 employees at peak operation. A fifth of these, the most skilled and highly trained, worked and lived at Bear Creek.

Dawson City functioned completely in harmony with the YCGC, who was the biggest customer, and biggest employer, in the Yukon. After the lay-offs in the fall, local businesses carried employees on credit through the winter, expecting them to return to the payroll in the spring. For other employees, company paycheques went directly into the bank, which paid bills submitted by local businesses.

In the 1930s, YCGC became the largest dredging company in Canada. Power generated at the North Fork and Twelvemile plants was distributed to the main camp at Bear Creek, the thawing and dredging operations in the goldfields, as well as Dawson City. I have heard many Dawson residents from this era complain of the poor quality and restricted hours of distribution of electricity to their homes.

The company operated their dredges and had large crews on huge monsters chewing up the gravels to recover the gold. A transportation network tied the all together. blacksmithing and machining. Because of its isolated location in the north, materials and spare parts weren't readily available, so the company stored large quantities of raw materials and spare parts to replace broken ones.

Gold recovered from the dredges was brought to Bear Creek in its raw form where, in a special smelting facility called the "Gold Room", it was separated from impurities and melted down into ingots. The millions of cubic yards of gravel processed by the dredges was reduced to a few small, heavy bars of pure gold.

Homes were provided for the senior staff and the skilled craftsmen working at Bear Creek. The company provided tennis courts, garden plots and a ball diamond. They stored employee perishables in refrigerated space in one of the

buildings. Later, a community hall and curling rink were added to the social amenities.

I heard former residents talk fondly of the Tom and Jerry parties at Christmas (Do any of my readers remember these?).

Bear Creek was a vibrant corporate community which kept Dawson from becoming a ghost town through the lean years and survived as long as the company continued to operate.

In 1966, after more than 60 years, dredging ceased in the Klondike. Bear Creek was abandoned, the calendars on the walls forever displaying the month of November. Nine years later, it was purchased by Parks Canada, which has adapted some of the old buildings to support its historical restoration work at Dredge Number 4 and Dawson City.

For years, it was open to the public for guided tours, but that is no longer the case. Many of the sixty or so old buildings now lie abandoned, their shelves filled and walls covered with the paraphernalia of bygone technologies. As time passes and the buildings age, things don't look good for their survival.

The team of Parks Canada staff are now looking at the future of Bear Creek, and the preservation of its past, but they can't do it alone. They need the recollections of former residents and employees to help preserve the memories of this once-important community.

Does anyone reading this have personal memories of Bear Creek that you would like to share, to help keep the story of Bear Creek alive? If so, I'd like to talk to you. You can contact me at: Michael.gates@pc.gc.ca.

## **Uffish Thoughts: Dawson says “enough already” to sloppy property owners**

by Dan Davidson

The City of Dawson is saying “enough already” to residents and property owners who don't or won't look after their buildings and land.

This is partly a response to pressure from the business community, which has been making its feelings on the subject of shabby structures, junk on empty lots and abandoned buildings known at a number of recent chamber of commerce meetings, as well as at public meetings in regards to town planning and historic preservation.

At one recent chamber meeting business owner Helen Bowie laid into town manager Paul Moore for the town's attention to the problem of plastic bag pollution (apparently not realizing that the city was simply lending support to an initiative by the Conservation Klondike Society) when there were eyesores such as the Old Bank of Commerce Building and the former Youth Centre about which nothing was being done.

At a previous meeting former mayor and MLA Peter Jenkins had stated that the town had a nuisance bylaw which wasn't being acted on firmly enough, and this was raised at the later meeting by another hotel owner, Dick Van Nostrand.

Moore replied that the town had received a lawyer's

advice that the existing bylaw was not legally enforceable. That, and the fact that the town was between bylaw officers at that point, accounted for some of the delays in enforcement.

Well, there's a new bylaw officer in town now, and there's new bylaw, a short version of which appeared in Dawsonites' mail boxes as a brochure early this week.

It deals quite specifically with “untidy and unsightly property”, “junked vehicles”, “dilapidated (sic) buildings”, “unoccupied buildings”, yard maintenance, snow removal, “incessant noises”, and outdoor storage of materials and a more detailed list which can be found in the actual bylaw.

If the chamber members are really serious about their stated positions, and not just reflexively attacking the town council, which they have been known to do sometimes, they can't be anything but pleased by the town's intentions as stated in the bylaw.

“The purpose,” it says, “is to provide for the proper maintenance of property and the abatement of nuisances, including property or things that:

“(a) affect the safety, health and welfare of people in the neighborhood; or

(b) affect the amenity of the neighborhood”

My only problem with any of this is that they seem to have opted for the American spelling of the word “neighbourhood”. Darn those U.S. spell checking programs anyway.

This bylaw seems to have some teeth, including some hefty fines of \$500 to \$2000, sometimes up to \$500 daily, and the possibility of jail time for some types of offences.

It will be interesting to see if this new stance makes any difference to things here.



## **LETTER: Good Luck Opposing Lagoon Plan**

Howdy:

I was just discussing this and decided to just send in a few idle thoughts. I've been working around the Yukon for the Fed government on sewage lagoons, old and current landfills, mine sites and other interesting places for about 20 years now. I have spent quite a bit of time with the Town in the past working on drinking water and sewer issues over



the years and have a ton of respect for Norm and his staff.

I can't imagine how YG thinks that a sewage lagoon, built in a flood plain, at the entrance to a historic townsite, across from a ball diamond and adjacent to a subdivision, is a good idea. Aside from the smells and other aesthetic issues there are quality of life and some sanitization issues.

In working around sewage systems since 1984, I can say with confidence that they will always be aromatic at some point and attract seagulls like beer attracts college kids. They play 'pass the wand' with plastic tampon applicators, drop them all over, eat lord knows what from the lagoon, and specialize in aerial defecation. The gulls, not the YG engineers. Who would want to send their kids to play in the park/ball diamond with all of that going on?

I wish your community the best of luck in getting a more sensible approach to the issue. In my personal experience YG Community Engineering is quite vindictive with communities that question their plans or, heaven help you, their capabilities. Please don't take good will for granted.

best regards  
Pat Roach

## Library and Berton House host a literary evening

Photo & Story by Dan Davidson

Berton House writer in residence George K. Ilsley held a prose writing workshop and round table in the Dawson Community Library on the evening of November 19, attracting an enthusiastic group of a dozen would-be writers, with offerings ranging from essays to memoirs, dramatic scripts and almost poetry.

Ilsley didn't have too many ground rules for the evening other than a tongue in cheek admonition to listeners to be nice and to readers and to pay no attention to anything anyone might say about their work.

Florian Boulais presented an impassioned essay on the need for world peace, expanding on his own background with the French navy and commenting on a great many of the challenges facing the world today.

Mary Fraughton read from her notes towards the development of a play, which included some monologues based on various fairy tale characters. It is hoped that the play will actually be presented some time in the spring.

Joanne Bell shared a chapter from a young adult novel in progress about a teenage girl with a speaking disorder who gets a job observing birds on the Dempster Highway.

Jane Fraser read from a chapter of her memoir about growing up Catholic, but not quite Italian enough, in Hamilton.

Pat Thomas read an extract from a series of works she has been writing on how people react to legends and landscape. She called it a polyphonic work.

Jack Fraser read from "The Middle Years" a memoir about his first trip by land to Dawson



in 1956, when he began a long stretch as an engineer and construction worker on the Klondike Highway.

Barb Hanulik read a protest letter she had written to government leaders some years ago about the encroachment of mining activity within the boundaries of Dawson.

Each piece teased forth a discussion and comments from the group, and the evening ran quite a bit past its original time, causing several people to note that there ought to be more such gatherings.

Ilsley will be doing a reading of his own work later in December.

## Bazaar Draws a Crowd

Photo & Story by Dan Davidson

It's easy to tell when the pre-Christmas season begins in Dawson. Just watch for the coming of the annual Christmas Bazaar.

On November 17 the school gym was packed as usual with folks looking for that locally made item which would make a good gift for relatives Outside. The choices ranged from locally made parkas to the simpler joys of jams and jellies, with sweaters, pottery, locally produced holiday cards and craft items in between.

Some of the table were staffed by local shop owners looking to cash in on the bazaar atmosphere.

The Thrift Store staffed by the Anglican Church Women, normally busy on a Saturday any way, moved some of its goods to the bazaar and did a brisk business in second hand ware and baked goods.

Santa was busy on the stage, getting his picture taken with the younger set while doting parents looked on.



In the next room the Grads of 2008 were busy promoting the sale of tickets for a cake walk.

For some it was simply a chance to get out and meet others, and there was a lot of chatting done amongst the displays.

The bazaar is always a busy event and this year's was no exception.

## **KIAC presents the Seventh Youth Art Enrichment Program**

Story & Photo by Dan Davidson

The Oddfellows' Hall and the KIAC School of Visual Arts had more than their usual complement of bodies in attendance on the week of November 14-18, when the seventh edition of the annual Youth Art Enrichment program enlisted thirty-three young people from all across the territory to come to Dawson and explore three forms of art.

Tara Rudnickas, Programs Coordinator for this year's YAE, said that students in the program came from Robert Service School in Dawson, Vanier Catholic, Porter Creek, the Independent Learning Centre and F.H. Collins in Whitehorse, as well as schools in Pelly Crossing, Haines Junction, Watson Lake and Carmacks.



In the first floor classroom at the Oddfellows' Hall Dan Sokolowski taught the basics of animation and students were busy filming stop-motion movies with clay figures against constructed backdrops, as well as other techniques. The prospectus spoke of "frame by frame movement, storyboarding, editing and sound construction" and the use of a variety of computer programs to create a finished DVD.

In the upstairs ballroom Joanna Close led her students through various techniques of fabric dyeing, silkscreening, paper-making, bookbinding and weaving, again with the aim of creating a finished product over the four days.

In the member gallery at the SOVA building Meshelle Melvin conducted a drawing class, using still-lifes, self-portraits and figure-drawing with pencil, conte, ink, erasers, pens, markers and collage to teach her students how to "see" the objects they were drawing and respond to them in different ways.

Each student was invited to produce one piece of work which will be part of a travelling exhibition later in the winter, starting with a show at the Odd Gallery which will move through the communities until it ends up in the Yukon Arts Centre.

Each day's classes on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday were followed by a lecture on some aspect of art at the Dänojà Zho Cultural Centre, while the Saturday session wrapped up with a banquet and a walking tour of the three activity centers by members of the community, during which the students showed off their work.

Meals were provided daily by community volunteers at St. Mary's RC Church classroom. KIAC staff Rudnickas and Evelyn Pollock note that the program could not be as successful as it has been without the high level of community support it receives, in addition to the funding from the Yukon government and the cooperation of the schools which send students each year.

## **North's Jack London Opus Published in Italy**

Story & Photo by Dan Davidson

Surrounded by boxes and files in his apartment at Fairview Place, Dick North looks like he has more of an oversized writer's study than an actual residence. He's been cataloguing the files and photos that fit the stories which have been his obsessions for many years: the Mad Trapper, the Lost Patrol, a Reindeer Herd and, of course, Jack London.

His latest book, *Sailor on Snowshoes: Tracking Jack London's Northern Trail*, the chronicle of his search for London's Yukon literary roots, has taken on a life of its own and, much to his surprise, has been translated into Italian and published in Italy as *Il Marinaio Nella Neve: Jack London e il Grande Nord*.

"It was this guy, Davide Sapienza, that did it," North said. "He got here after I left last year, sometime in October. He happened to get hold of my book and he liked it. He's a great Jack London fan."

North said his contacts in Jack London fandom have told him that Sapienza was a guest speaker at a recent Jack London conference in California.

What happened next occurred while North was in the USA, having a hip replacement operation in Idaho. While North was out of touch Sapienza contacted Harbour Publishing and struck a deal.

"I was kind of surprised when I eventually heard about it. The book was out (in Italian). He'd published it by that time.

"What he did was he went back to Italy, found a publisher, translated it all from October through the spring, and, by gosh, came out with the published book in May or June.

"He must be a fast worker."

North wasn't as surprised that there would be a market for the book. Jack London and the Klondike are internationally known, he said, and London is a favorite author, both in



English and in translation, throughout Europe.

“The summer before last, we had more Italians than we had had in a long time, and they came through the Jack London Museum.”

North is excited by this turn of events.

“This is the first book I’ve ever had translated into a foreign language. It’s quite a thing for me.”

it might not be the last though. North has been talking with someone who might be interested in doing a German translation.

As for the Italian connection, North served in Italy with the 88th “Blue Devil” Division of the US Army after the Second World War ended, and was in the parade in Gorizia when the peace treaty with Italy was signed in 1947.

The 88th recently held a commemorative event in Gorizia, and North’s book, now in translation, was presented to Mayor Ettore Romolia by Fred Lincoln, the president of the 88th Division Association.

## **New Legend of broken treaties possible, says Penikett**

By Dan Davidson

DAWSON CITY – “To make peace – to make a treaty – takes the courage to make compromises, and to surrender thoughts of total victory and total defeat.”

So said Tony Penikett, reading from his book *Reconciliation* which, while it may be subtitled “First Nations Treaty Making in British Columbia”, certainly had its roots in his work on the Umbrella Final Agreement.

That land claim deal was largely worked out during his tenure as government leader/premier of the Yukon from 1985 to 1992.

Penikett went on to become the deputy minister of negotiations and later deputy minister of labour, for the government of British Columbia.

He has continued to be involved in aboriginal rights negotiations all across the North and throughout Canada over the last 20 years.

Indeed, his preferred title for his current book was *Treaty Time*, something he couldn’t persuade his publisher to use.

“I had come to realize that what we were doing in the Yukon was part of a story that was 500 years old and continent-wide, and that what we were engaged in during the decades of negotiations here were simply some recent chapters of that story – a story that continues, of course, in British Columbia today,” the 62-year-old former premier said in an interview in Dawson last week.

Penikett liked his choice because he felt it encompassed that notion, but his publisher opted for *Reconciliation*, with a cover image of a piece of ripped and soiled parchment.

He figures the change probably contributed to his being invited to speak at all sorts of conferences which had reconciliation as their theme.

Reconciliation traces treaty making back to the first arrival of the Spanish in the Americas, and the Canadian treaty experience to the Royal Proclamation of 1763.

Penikett, however, tends to concentrate more on the successful military campaign led by Pontiac, the chief of the Ottawa tribe, whose resistance made it clear to the British that they would need to seek some form of accommodation with the first nations in their newly-acquired territory after they won the French and Indian War/Seven Years War.

In his reading at the Danoja Zho Cultural Centre, attended by about two dozen people, Penikett concentrated on just a few of the themes in his book.

In his first reading, he emphasized that the treaty process in British Columbia has not really been the open, public process it was supposed to have been, and described the very restrictive atmosphere under which one hearing he attended was conducted.

The very people who were going to be affected by the treaty were allowed little or no place in the discussion at this meeting. One little old lady was escorted from the room by an RCMP officer just for being there.

This lack of communication within the first nations groups themselves is seconded only by the lack of information that gets to outsiders, what Penikett often refers to as “settler culture”, the numerically dominant population which needs to be reassured that it won’t lose out in the process.

In the Yukon, the aspirations of the local chambers of commerce needed to be taken into account, as well as those of municipal governments.

“We understood that the most skeptical audience for treaties was the working class white male. The average working man wanted assurance that after the treaty he would



still have his job, his cabin by the lake, and a chance to hunt a moose.”

One of the biggest problems with the entire process is that treaties tend to be written in impenetrable legalese, a side effect of the historical fact that earlier, shorter treaties were so easily broken and set aside.

One of Penikett’s Ten Recommendations for Policy Makers, listed at the back of the book, is “Write treaties in plain language as principled agreements and constitutional documents, with the details attached in appendices.”

He says this, noting that the founding document which defines the dreams of the founding fathers of the United States of America, runs to fewer than a dozen pages.

The Yukon Umbrella Final Agreement, by contrast, runs to 200,000 words, spread over 29 chapters, beginning with seven pages devoted to definitions, and another nine on general provisions.

One of Penikett’s objectives during his B.C. experience was to try to devise a “fast track” treaty process that would streamline the paperwork and shorten the working time.

“Compare the new European constitution, a two-year project of 333 pages for a population of 450 million, with the Nisgaa Treaty, a 20-year exercise of 252 pages for a community of 6,000.”

The single greatest problem in the treaty process so far, Penikett said, has been the failure of governments, including the federal government, as noted in the recent report by Auditor General Sheila Fraser, to implement the treaties it has signed off on.

“I am someone who believes that the treaties negotiated by Canada and the other parties over the last three decades of the 20th century are remarkable, admirable, nation-building achievements for Canada,” said Penikett.

“However, in the course of working across the North over the last few years and in B.C., I have concerns about where we’re going ... about how slow the process is.”

He is worried about the practice of using so-called “accommodation agreements” as a substitute for the treaty process.

These do not settle the ultimate question of land tenure even though they may pass some benefits on to the first nations. While he feels these might be used as adjuncts to treaty making, they should not be used to take the place of treaties, he said.

“The federal government seems to have a policy of negotiating treaties but not settling them,” Penikett said.

“Every one of the groups that has negotiated a treaty in the last three decades has had complaints about implementation.”

He blames the federal Department of Finance, “which still seems to see these (treaties) as short-term contracts rather than covenants involving the honour of the Crown.”

As for adjudication disputes, Penikett said, we have yet to find a good method of settling them.

“We are risking, in Canada, creating a new legend of a new set of broken treaty promises, thereby putting at risk our reputation as Canadians, not only at home, but also internationally.”

Penikett says he is not intending to make a partisan comment when he states that the federal government – no matter what party is in power – needs to understand the true nature of treaties.

“This is not an Indian Affairs Department problem, nor a Justice Department problem, nor a Finance Department problem.

“It is a problem for the Crown of Canada that needs to – on behalf of all of us who are ultimately the sovereigns of the country – make sure that we find a way to adjudicate these implementation disputes fairly, very, very quickly.”

In answering questions later in his talk, Penikett noted he had served as an expert advisor on two of the Auditor General’s reports on this topic.

While he was not involved with the most recent report, it would appear his influence is still being felt.

Penikett held forth for about an hour and half to a very friendly audience, many of whom were acquainted with him and many of whom he knew by name.

Some might have been more interested in talking to his son, Tahmoh, well-known for his continuing role as Helo in the science fiction series *Battlestar Galactica*. Penikett suggested asking him to come for visit as well.

#### TIME TO COME CLEAN

By Sylvia Sands Johnson

Now that some of the Paradise Alley buildings are being moved to a new location in Dawson Y. T., I would like to pass along some rumours I heard in the 1950’s, and to say that I briefly SAW Ruby and Bombay Peggy on the streets of Dawson City. Actually, they were pointed out to me. I believe in the mid-fifties Ruby was retired, but usually carried her small dog, Fifi, in her arms, wherever she went. Other than that, I know little about her. But because there were still many single men working on the Gold Dredges, it is possible that Bombay Peggy was still in business, however discreetly.

If she wasn’t then I heard a story about her I’ll never forget. It was quite humorous. I hope that I will not consider being a gossip for passing it along at this late date, but I think any history to do with Dawson City is important to preserve.

The story went like this. Bombay Peggy had a room where the girl or girls worked, just overhead from the drawing room, or whatever. So this is what I was told: “If the girls took too long, Bombay would take a broom and rap it loudly on the ceiling.” The message that the broom conveyed is that the customer was taking too long and should get with it. I was just turning 20, so of course I thought this story quite amusing. Bombay was quite the character from what I heard.

I’m not sure whether Madame Ione was actually running a business, but I hear from a reasonably good source that she was, perhaps in earlier years. But she was a very talented and gifted woman — a seamstress, as well as playing the organ in church. I met her and she was an extremely colourful and likeable character. I heard that she

came from a very good family — in fact, they sent a card to me after her death from cancer — thanking me

for having written to her while she was very ill.

But there were other rumours afloat that I heard from old-timers in the Yukon — about

two other women who were supposed to have been in the business, as far back as 1905. Out of respect for one of the elderly women, I actually met, I won't give out her name. She was married for some years and she and her husband not only ran a business in Granville Y. T., but later, a respectable establishment in Bear Creek.

If Dawson rumours would free the ice from the Yukon River, it never would have piled up in the first place. We'll never know for certain whether Ruth (a fictitious name) was really 'one of the girls.' But both her and her husband were very affable people when I met them, and had been popular with others for years.

Later, I am planning a booklet about the last woman. Needless to say, she had also

led a respectable existence as she grew older, but she must have been very attractive at one time, because what I heard in Granville is that she had three lonely bachelors still fighting to stay in her good graces. One of them saved her from burning to death. I know this for a fact, because I cut the man's hair at one time and you could see that the crown of his head had burn scars. My mother happened to be with us for a visit, and because the old prospector had the odor of old snoose about him, she said, "I don't know how you can do that." I replied to her, "I just have to breathe through my mouth." The truth is that he was our only close neighbour and I knew that he had saved a life. I didn't think it was any big deal cutting such a man's hair. He was a hero in my eyes.

Even when I arrived in Dawson, the year of 1957, two women could not go into a bar without someone sending over a free drink. In fact, one evening when I was in the Pearl Harbour, (which I hear eventually burnt down) — a salesman who was promoting the sale of clothing, outrightly gave me a very attractive red, plaid shirt. I really liked that shirt and wore it for years.

Another small event that happened really caught me by surprise. I had been given piano lessons in my youth. And I've always loved old music and have quite a collection of it. So when a dredgemaster's wife and I dropped into the Occidental Hotel, it was our intention to have ONE drink only. But when I saw the piano I could not resist trying to play an old tune by ear. I chose, "It's Only A Shanty In Old Shanty Town." Well...it wasn't long before I was swamped with free drinks from the bar. It's a good thing the other lady was doing the driving because when I left the piano stool, I was almost staggering. It was a long ways back home to Granville, and I think we sang old numbers most of the way. A very memorable evening I must say.

## So Many To Choose From

Submitted by the Humane Society

The decision to add a dog to your life is but one consideration. Not only are there many questions to investigate in choosing a dog but also there are so many dogs with varying personalities looking for a home. It can be difficult to find the perfect fit for your family, one that may require a great deal of thought and time to find just that special one.

In my experience working at humane societies, I have frequently heard one phrase from adopters: "Every day for the first month I thought about returning the dog to the shelter, but I stuck it out, and I'm so happy I did." If you're adopting a dog from a humane society, chances are it was surrendered due to behavioral problems, such as high energy and difficulties in training. This is why it is so important to be honest with yourself and accept how much time and energy you have to dedicate to a new dog. Does the dog have the potential to become a great, well-behaved dog? Most always, the answer is a yes but it can take months of hard work, patience and time-consuming energy in all forms of weather to work diligently with your new dog to guide her. Too often people overestimate the amount of energy and time they are willing to or capable of expending for a new dog that may take several months to bond with you.

It is a common mistake that people adopt a puppy based on the assumption that you can train him to your liking. While training a puppy to behave in the manner you wish does have its benefits, how many of us have the energy to keep up with a puppy? Animal shelters often see people surrender young dogs who have underestimated the amount of time, dedication and patience required to train a puppy. It is repetitive, constant, and everyone involved in the care of the puppy must follow the same structure to prevent confusion in the puppy which will hinder progress. It is often that not until a dog passes the 5-year-old mark that you begin to see a drop in the demand for exercise. That may be difficult to swallow if you're thinking about a puppy. Are you prepared for the amount of exercise the puppy will require? Are you willing to deal with numerous accidents and potty breaks in the middle of the night?

Another common mistake is to focus on a specific breed or appearance without taking the time to understand the needs and requirements of that breed. Everyone in the Yukon knows that huskies have a penchant for howling and running but what about the behavioral traits of the other common dog breeds to be found in the Yukon? Border collies are very intelligent but also high energy. This is a breed that has been bred to herd. It has infinite energy and does have a habit of nipping, not a desirable trait around children but incredibly useful in herding livestock. Breaking the habit of nipping can be frustrating (and painful for the humans involved) and requires patience and training. German shepherds are highly intelligent and loyal but they are also known to be excellent guard dogs. This is a trait that shepherds can take to an extreme if they are not trained and socialized properly. I have heard of German

Shepherds who not only have food bowl guarding issues but will also guard entire kitchens from their owners. This behaviour can quickly escalate into a dangerous situation because the guarding of valued resources is what a shepherd is hardwired to do.

Take these traits and add them to the high energy, selective hearing traits of a husky and you have the type of dog that makes up the majority of the Yukon's dog breed crosses. While these breeds and breed crosses can become fabulous lifelong pets, they often also demand large quantities of time to train that perhaps some other breeds may not require.

Too often people forget all the advantages that come with adopting an older dog. Older dogs are often already well behaved and trained with the knowledge of basic obedience. They are more likely to appreciate cuddle time on the couch than a young dog wanting to go out for a run in the rain. One wonderful example would be Lady currently at Humane Society Dawson. The highlight of her day is laying down by your feet receiving words of encouragement and pats on the head. She enjoys her walks but nothing tops a good cuddle and a cookie. She is already house-broken, knows basic commands and isn't demanding in exercise, just attention. If you don't have a lot of time in your day for training, an older dog can provide the love and company without the sacrifice of your time for training.

Remember that if you do stick it out with your new dog, you can develop a strong, long-lasting bond and will make the hard work rewarding in the end. The road will not be an easy one, but it is possible that you could be one more person who finds herself saying "every day for the first month I thought about returning the dog to the shelter, but I stuck it out, and I'm so happy I did."

It is devastating for a dog to be returned to a shelter environment after spending several weeks or months playing with you and your children, getting walks in the evening, sleeping on a cozy bed inside. Deciding to adopt should not be a decision made hastily. If you dedicate the time, though, you could end up with a sparkling, wonderful new addition to the family.

Whichever type of dog you do adopt into your life, please make sure she/he is spayed/neutered. Not only will you have a calmer, more dependable dog, but you will also know that you won't be adding to the problems of homeless dogs and overwhelmed shelters.