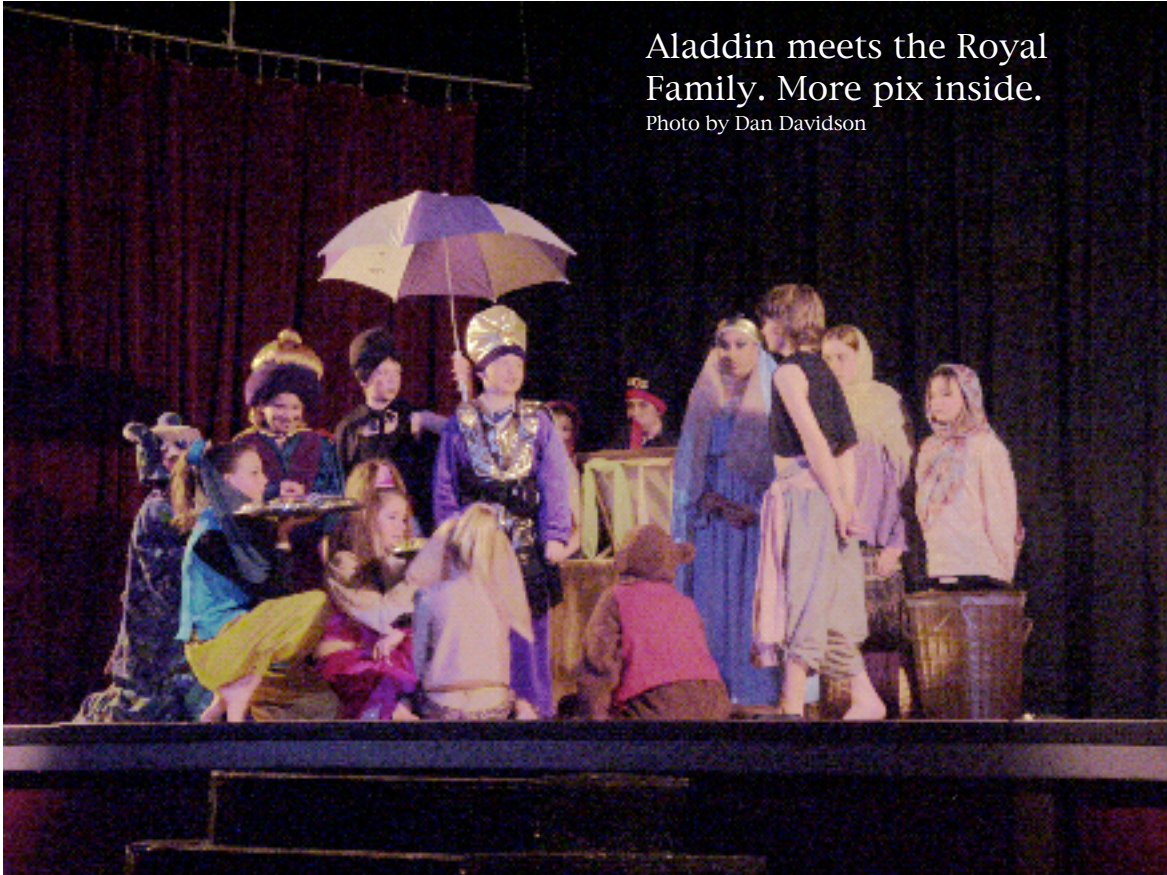


# The Klondike Sun

April 26, 2005 Online Edition

Dawson City, Yukon



Aladdin meets the Royal Family. More pix inside.

Photo by Dan Davidson

## Parks Canada Opposes George Street Bridge Site

by Dan Davidson

Parks Canada has come out in opposition to the territorial government's plans to build a bridge across the Yukon River at Dawson City.

Anne Morin, Superintendent for Parks in the Yukon, says the intention of the report is not to torpedo the building of a bridge, but merely to encourage the government to reconsider its location.

Titled "An Assessment of the Potential Impact of the Proposed Bridge at Dawson On the Heritage Values of the Dawson Historical Complex National Historic Site of Canada and the SS Keno National Historic Site of Canada," the report leaves now doubt as to what its subject might be.

Nor does the first page of the report leave any doubt as to its conclusions.

"The proposal in question represents a serious

compromise to the heritage values of two National Historic Sites. This threat to the heritage values, therefore, warrants formal comment."

The perceived threat comes from changing the viewscape related to the Dawson Historical Complex and SS Keno Historic Site.

Territorial government analysis has already indicated that the George Street site chosen, as well as four of the remaining five sites investigated, would alter the historic street grid of Front Street and the view heading north.

Parks expressed its reservations in June 2004, but continued to be part of the government selected Bridge Committee studying the issue.

Morin says this report, dated March 23, 2005, was presented to the government as part of this ongoing consultation, and she says Parks Canada was a little surprised by Premier Fentie's injunction, as reported on CBC radio on April 8, that Parks was meddling and should mind its own business.

She pointed to the concluding section of the report, in which it is noted that “Parks Canada has invested over \$75 million over thirty years in an extensive restoration and commemoration program for the national historic sites in the Klondike.”

Investments by YTG are noted as well as those by the Heritage Canada Foundation, private individuals and non-profit groups.

Morin feels that Parks Canada has a mandate to comment on matters related to heritage in the Klondike. The report makes its recommendation on three grounds.

1. that a bridge in the location preferred by YTG will have negative impacts on the two heritage sites already mentioned, “based on the ... values described in the Commemorative Integrity Statements for the two sites.” These CIS’s were developed in the mid to late 1990s, well after the construction of the dike along Front Street.

2. The bridge contravenes the spirit and letter of a federal policy document called Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places.

3. The government has not made a sufficient attempt to look at bridge sites which would fall in line with the “minimal intervention: approach” recommended in the guidelines.

One of the six options for bridge construction was upstream from Dawson City and would have had no impact on the townsite itself. While no technical work has been done there, government engineers have continually dismissed that site as being too expensive, likely to cost twice whatever the price tag of the north end options (which began at \$25 million and is currently estimated at around \$35 million) might happen to be at the time the question has been asked.

The Parks report states that there “is no evidence proposed solutions were given adequate consideration. Alternate solutions could result in much less impact on heritage values.”

Much of the report is a discussion of the nature of the heritage values in question, a detailed analysis of the significance of the twelve buildings in downtown Dawson owned and managed by Parks and their relationship to eight other privately owned buildings, as well as “physical setting of the Klondike and Yukon rivers and surrounding hills.”

The SS Keno is likewise described within its current physical context. It will be considered as safeguarded when “the views of the vessel and the river are maintained.”

If changes are to be made, then Parks recommends that “sympathetic development of the landscape as viewed from the town is encouraged to ensure the maintenance of the original visual relationship between town, river and surrounding hills.”

While the Premier has stated that it is the government’s commitment to “building a bridge that is in keeping with the historical theme of Dawson City... “ (CBC interview, April 8/05), the Parks report is saying that “the proposed bridge ... involves alteration and additions to the historic place.”

It elaborates.

“The scale of the bridge and ramps leading up to the bridge will dominate the immediate area and environs ...”

The sloped approach to the bridge will change the shape of the street grid in the north end of town.

Being thirteen metres above the normal summer river levels, the bridge “will dominate the view as visitors drive up Front Street.”

Referring to the federal guidelines, the report says:

“The Guidelines state the design of new projects in heritage areas should not obscure, damage or destroy the land patterns, spatial organization, views and circulation systems. In this case, the views, street grid, street levels and surfaces ... and the overall setting of the town would be significantly disturbed.”

The reports authors feel that “the issue of appropriate design has not been resolved, and given the size of the bridge, may not be able to be resolved in the context of this historic place.”

In light of all this, Morin says that the Parks’ request is that the Yukon Government reconsider its options and find a way to build a bridge (to which Morin says Parks has no opposition) in a less sensitive location.

“In planning the bridge and all other developments, it should be understood that once the authentic resources have been obscured, damaged or destroyed, they cannot be recovered.”

## **Planning Board Opposes Bridge Location**

Story & Photo

by Dan Davidson

The Dawson City Planning Board, a town appointed watchdog group which vets and approves building plans and uses within the historic downtown core area of the community, has come out firmly in favor of asking the territorial government to reconsider the placement of its proposed bridge across the Yukon River.

Appearing before Trustee Ray Hayes and CAO Paul Moore on a regular biweekly public meeting (when none of the government appointed advisory committee members were present) several members of the planning board addressed the issues raised by the recent Parks Canada assessment document, in which the federal agency recommended against the north end, George Street site for the bridge landing.

Chairperson Kathy Webster was clear in her letter to the Trustee and Advisory Committee.

“Since one of the mandates of the Dawson City Planning Board is to preserve the historical ambiance of Dawson City, we the board members, have the same concerns that have been expressed in the Parks Canada position paper on the location of the proposed bridge.

“We feel that the impact this may have on tourism could be very negative because of the detrimental effect on the historical atmosphere of Dawson City.

“As well, a bridge on Front Street could have a very negative impact on Dawson City being designated a World

Heritage Site.”

This is not a new position from planning board members, several of whom were representatives on the stake holders group that the government convened about over a year ago to form a Bridge Committee to study issues surrounding the proposal.

In a separate letter Rob Watt, the superintendent of Parks holdings in the Klondike, summed up his agency’s concerns, which center on the heritage values, viewscape and “character defining elements of the environs of the Dawson City Historical Complex National Historic Site of Canada and the SS Keno National Historic Site of Canada.”



The Parks assessment of the bridge project as it now stands was based on the agency’s application of the Standards and Guidelines for the Conservation of Historic Places in Canada.

“Parks Canada requested Government of Yukon reconsider the negative heritage impact of a bridge crossing the Yukon River at the proposed George Street location in Dawson,” Watt wrote.

“The bridge scale and the ramp retaining walls leading to the entrance of the bridge deck will have a negative impact, most significantly on the viewscape and the street grid (and) on the heritage values ...”

Webster and her board requested that Trustee Hayes forward the concerns of both the planning board and Parks Canada to the territorial government.

“We would like to know, as a Planning Board, if you are willing to write a letter requesting that the government seriously consider the concerns of Parks Canada.”

“We will prepare the necessary letter and see that you get a copy of it,” Hayes assured her.

In the past the planning board has indicated that it does not oppose the idea of a bridge as such; it merely has issues with any location which would have an impact on the Dawson townsite. This is identical to the position taken by Parks Canada in its analysis, which has already been dismissed as meddling by Premier Dennis Fentie.

## City Thanked by Minor Hockey Players

Story and Photo  
by Dan Davidson

Members of the Dawson Minor Hockey Association appeared before the advisory committee recently to express their appreciation for the town’s assistance with a hockey clinic which was held here over the winter.



*CAO Paul Moore and Trustee Ray Hayes*

The town donated ice time for the John Chabot Hockey Clinic, which allowed the association to put the money they would have had to spend for this back into other association needs.

On behalf of the DMHA two players, Jasmine Kaytor and Kristin Van Bibber, presented city manager Paul Moore with a commemorative plaque.

Advisory committee member Bill Bowie thanked all the parents for their involvement in making hockey happen this year.

It isn’t often that the town administration, elected or otherwise, gets thanked for anything that it does.

## Uffish Thoughts:

### “I don’t know” is not a sign of weakness

by Dan Davidson

In the cut and thrust of territorial politics there are times when the adversarial stance becomes so automatic that it actually short circuits the rational process, and perhaps even clouds the ability to detect moral ambiguity.

Such a moment seems to have occurred last Thursday, when the Minister of Education, John Edzerza, acting on behalf of his absent colleague, the Minister of Community Services, Glen Hart, answered a question directed to him by the the NDP’s Steve Cardiff.

The question concerned the term of office of the Trustee the government had appointed to oversee the affairs of Dawson just after that memorable Easter weekend one year ago. On April 13, 2004, Minister Hart, acting on a recommendation from Supervisor André Carrell, put the entire Dawson City council out to pasture and appointed Ray Hayes to look after things in the Klondike capital.

According to the terms of the Municipal Act, under which this deed was done, a trustee can be appointed for up to a

year, and during that twelve month period should endeavor to make arrangements to return democracy to the town.

“Section 336(14): ‘The trustee must make suitable provisions for an election of a new council to be held within one year of the trustee’s appointment.’”

Through no fault of Mr. Hayes’s, he hasn’t been able to do that. The government refused even to discuss the matter until the results of the forensic audit it (not Hayes) commissioned, and that came in half a year late and close to 300% over budget.

That meant there was a need to extend Hayes’s appointment as trustee, and that this extension should have been done by April 13.

“Section 336(16) says, ‘The Commissioner in Executive Council may extend the time for an election required by subsections (14) and (15).’”

So Mr. Cardiff asked, on April 14, whether this had been done yet, and Mr. Edzerza replied: “The contract has been extended to the end of the year.”

That was perhaps just an error, since the trustee’s contract, as Mr. Hayes has informed me, is an entirely different issue from his appointment. The former is about his pay cheque, and it actually expired at the end of March. The latter is about his authority to act, which is probably what Cardiff wanted to know.

When Opposition Leader Todd Hardy returned to the same theme minutes later, Minister Edzerza was a little more specific: “This government already addressed the issue with an OIC.”

An OIC is an Order in Council, and these have to be signed by the Commissioner before they take effect. Mr. Edzerza was clearly saying that this had already been done.

In fact, it had not.

The Opposition pursued this matter again on Monday, April 18, when Minister Hart was back in the Legislature.

Steve Cardiff led the assault:

“Well, Mr. Speaker, last week, the acting minister stated that the commitments were met and that Cabinet had extended the time for an election by an order-in-council. When we phoned the minister’s office to inquire about the order-in-council, we were promised it would arrive on Friday or maybe even today. For the record, as of this moment — during the lunch hour, I talked with the minister’s assistant — we still haven’t got the order-in-council. So that would lead me to believe that this is a brand new order-in-council that was probably authorized last Thursday and signed by the Commissioner on Friday, and it is after the trustee’s one-year time limit had expired.”

As it happened, there was really nothing Minister Hart could do but to admit that Cardiff was correct.

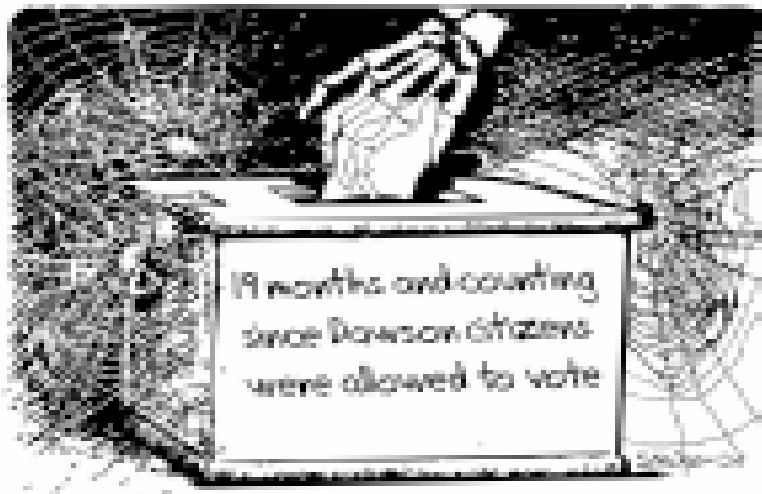
“Mr. Speaker, the order-in-council addressing the Municipal Act for the extension was signed on April 15 by the Commissioner.”

At no time in any of these exchanges did the ministers answering deign to admit that they might not actually have known what was going on, or that the government might actually have made a mistake in its timing on this matter.

Quizzed about this by the NDP, Hart would only respond, “As I stated, the order-in-council has been signed by the Commissioner. He has obtained the advice sufficient for him to sign the document, and that’s it.”

That’s not it, of course. The forensic audit which has caused this delay in the return of democracy to Dawson is, if it about anything, about the need to follow correct procedures and do things in a proper order. Following the rules isn’t just something that should apply to the City of Dawson, to past councils, or current and future administrations.

Aside from that, however, the arrogance of the whole



situation could have been ameliorated substantially by a simple admission that the minister didn’t know the answer and a promise to find out. Yes, it might have exposed him to a bit of ridicule in Question period, but it would still have been the most honest thing to do.

## Tent City Solutions Proposed for Dawson Summer Workers

Story & Photos  
by Dan Davidson

Transient workers arriving in Dawson City later this month and in May will have an approved place to pitch their tents and set up their trailers. The new owners of the GuggieVille camp ground, who also own the Bonanza Gold Hotel and campground complex next door, have announced that they will be offering an area where transients can set up housekeeping.

The walk-in path to the site will be a few metres south of the GuggieVille property, and is expected to have room for 150 sites.

As this site will be close to both of the company’s RV campgrounds, the notice warns that dogs will not be permitted and that there will be a strictly enforced quiet time

from 11 PM to 8:30 AM.

“There will be a communal cooking area with water, so no hauling will be necessary. there will be designated firepit areas (again if there is no ban), outhouses, and access to coin operated shower and laundry facilities.”

Costs and other information will be available from GuggieVille or Bonanza Gold.

The announcement, which was posted on the Dawson City.com website, noted, “We felt it was necessary to provide a location for seasonal workers this year. No other option has been recommended and squatting is dangerous.”



Tent City, located across the Yukon River, was established as an attempt by the City of Dawson to coordinate and organize the proliferation of summer campers who once set up housekeeping all over the place. There was a perceived need to centralize the danger of camp fires, deal with garbage collection and provide outhouse services.

The land originally fell within a tract given to the town's control by the Municipal Board during a controversial boundary expansion during the Jenkins' mayoralty. Subsequent administrations turned much of that West Dawson land back to the control of the territorial government, but retained the camping area.

Once the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in land claim had been settled, that land passed to the control of the first nation, which served notice that it would continue to offer the service for only seven years. That time expired last summer.

During that time, there has been another limited option in Deiter Reinmuth's Dawson City River Hostel, also located across the Yukon River and adjacent to the old Tent City site. Reinmuth has been accepting seasonal workers at reasonable rates for a number of years now, and people who wanted a little more structure in their summer camping experience have gone there.

## **It's time for an election, say watchdog duo**

by Dan Davidson

Jorn Meier and John Steins are anxious to get democracy back to Dawson. Addressing Trustee Ray Hayes and city manager Paul Moore on April 19, they argued that the terms of the trustee's appointment under the Municipal Act had been violated by the failure to provide for elections in Dawson within a year of the act being invoked.

“Section 336 (Trustee)

(14) The trustee must make suitable provisions for an election of a new council to be held within one year of the

trustee's appointment.”

While Hayes has consistently indicated his preference for early elections - as early as January 2005 - he has ultimately been frustrated in this quest by the lateness of the forensic audit and YTG's reluctance to do anything until that was finished.

Since that date, March 31, the government has also tabled a Dawson Municipal Governance Restoration Act, and belatedly (two days late) extended the term of the trustee, as provided for in the Municipal Act.

“(16) The Commissioner in Executive Council may extend the time for an election required by subsections (14) and (15).”

Minister of Community Services Glenn Hart has also indicated that elections will not take place this spring, but are more likely to occur in the fall, and that the term of the trustee has been extended until the end of 2005.

This does not make Steins and Meier happy. They have appointed themselves the watchdogs of democracy, and were in council chambers to argue for swifter action.

“We would like,” Meier said, “to have the Advisory Committee think about having an election sooner rather than later.”

Meier runs Klondike Infotech in Dawson, and can't actually vote in municipal elections because he lives in West Dawson, but the recently minted new Canadian is most concerned about the lack of democracy in the Klondike capital at present. Steins is a well known graphic artist, and webmaster of the busy City of Dawson.com discussion forum, and has been expressing his concerns for over a year now.

“We are not here,” said Meier, “to take any sides in past quarrels within this town, but we are concerned that, in a lot of ways, over the last few years, this town has been almost ripped apart by two camps.

“It became harder and harder not to take sides and we had hoped that over time this would subside and this town would find peace. It did ... to some extent.”

“We tip our hat to you, Ray,” Steins said, “for holding the town together.”

The pair are concerned that people were generally expecting an election in the town after the audit, and now that it isn't happening people seem to be choosing up sides again.

“The only way to bring peace, to heal this town, is to hold an election sooner rather than later,” Meier said.

“We also believe there should have been an election under the terms of the Municipal Act.”

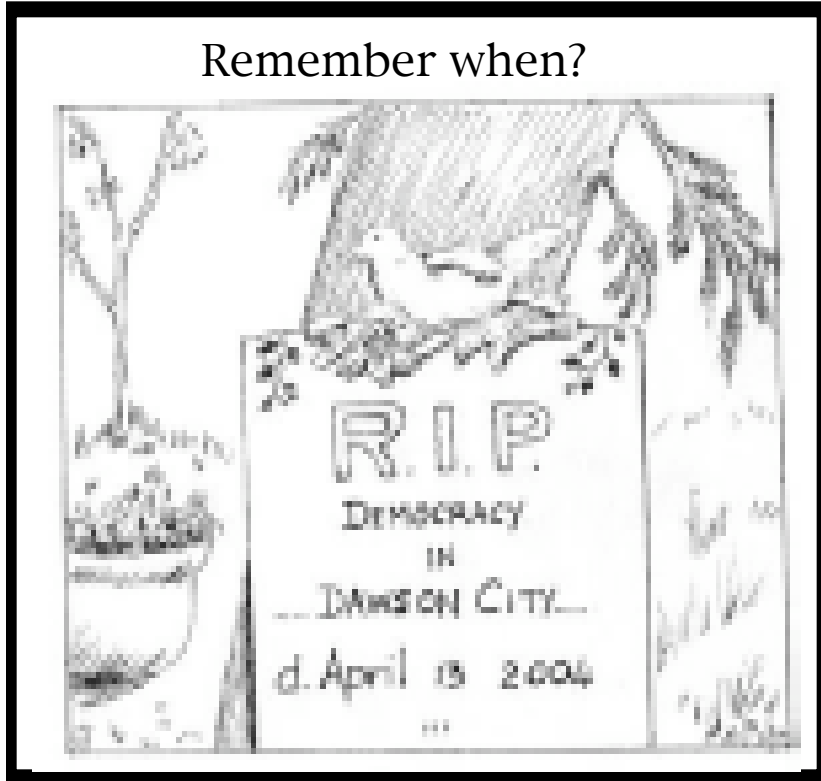
Meier went on to say that he felt the government's late renewal of the trustee's position amounted to a retroactive waiving of the election requirement.

Steins said the vagueness of the act's wording on the matter of extension seemed to mean that rule by trustee could go on and on, “so we're now waiting for the pleasure of the minister as to when we can have an election. To me that seems unacceptable.”

Trustee Hayes, who will the person recommending the date to the minister, could not be definite on a time frame,

but expressed a desire not to run out the length of his extension.

He is waiting for YTG to decide exactly what it intends to do about Dawson's finances (see related article). The town is currently getting its regular yearly financial audit ready for presentation to the government. Hayes said that will be late being filed, due to a lack of human resources and expertise (the town no longer has a treasurer, for instance). He has been given permission to do that.



This, of course, is another exception to the Municipal Act, though it is a fairly common practice and a number of communities, including Dawson, have received extensions in the past.

Still, Steins saw this as another flaw in the system.

“What is the point of having an act like the Municipal Act if our government picks and chooses the bits that suit them best? It suited them, perhaps justifiably, to dissolve our government here, but it didn't suit them to insure that the financial statements were in on time, providing you with the extra manpower to do so, nor did it suit them to see that the 12 month rule was adhered to.”

An election would be held sixty days after the appointment of a returning officer.

### **“Every single safeguard in the system failed”**

by Dan Davidson

Dawson's former financial supervisor doesn't understand why there hasn't been more of a media frenzy over the material in the recently released Forensic Audit.

André Carrel was the government appointed second supervisor to oversee the financial affairs of the City of Dawson. He filed a report titled Trusteeship: Background and Consequences just under a year ago, on April 30 and then departed the file.

While it was possible that he might have been kept on retainer for the sake of something that Minister of Community Services Glen Hart called “corporate memory” during debates in the legislature last spring, that did not happen. Trustee Ray Hayes has indicated that it has been many months since he last talked with Carrel.

Nevertheless, Carrel, who also lectures on municipal government for a college in BC and has a biweekly regional radio commentary spot called “Thought and Afterthought” in the Rossland area, has been vocal on the subject on Dawson's financial situation since the audit appeared in print.

Initially, Carrel engaged in private correspondence with this reporter, indicating that “To publish my views would only inflame what is already a rather sad situation in Dawson.” Since that time, a few weeks ago, he has consented to several radio interviews and repeated most of what was written in those e-mails over the airwaves.

In a April 22 interview with CBC radio, Carrel indicated that he felt the financial situation in Dawson was worse than the federal sponsorship scandal. He didn't understand why Dawson's story had not made national headlines.

Indeed, it has done so only once, on the day in late March that CBC began

running stories based on the material which had been leaked to a reporter in Whitehorse.

“I have never before seen what every single safeguard in the system failed,” he told the reporter, Susan Stanley.

Earlier, he had written, “I had to look into the mirror more than once and ask myself if I was seeing or dreaming things. I had never seen anything remotely like it in my entire career. I ended up feeling like the little boy in ‘The Emperor Has No Clothes!’ It was all way beyond what I could have dealt with as Supervisor.”

While Carrel has no sympathy for the former City of Dawson officials castigated in the recent forensic audit prepared by Ian Doddington for the territorial government, he does not believe that the blame should stop, or even start, there.

To both the CBC and this reporter, Carrel has listed off everyone who might possibly have had anything to do with the mess. He starts at either end of the hierarchy at different times, laying blame on the external auditors (BDO Dunwoody), the various deputy ministers of finance and community services, the first supervisor (Ken Hodgins), the

former CAO (Scott Coulson), mayor (Glen Everitt), treasurer (Dale Courtice) and the council itself. Since three councils dealt with these matters, that spreads the responsibility quite widely.

In his actual report, a year ago, Carrel lambasted the government itself for failing to warn Dawson of its peril, when he says it should have been clear by October 2000. He quoted a letter from then Minister of Community Services, Pam Buckway, who authorized the final \$4.8 million loan which sank the town's fiscal ship.

"The minister's letter of approval opens with 'I am pleased to confirm that I have authorized...' and concludes with 'I am delighted that we could assist you in this endeavor.' Not a word of caution, No hesitation."

In his radio interview Carrel opined that YTG would really need to forgive most of the town's debt, as no municipality could even afford the interest payments. This is in line with the recommendations in his written report, which stated that "The municipality's long term debt ... should be reduced to \$1.5 million."

In the Dawson Municipal Governance Restoration Act, YTG has listed the following:

- (a) the consolidation of the whole of Dawson's debt;
- (b) the issue of a new debenture to cover any such consolidation;
- (c) the retirement and cancellation of the whole or any portion of the existing debenture debt, the outstanding debentures, and the existing debt to the Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, on the issue of a new debenture to cover them or in exchange for them;
- (d) the terms, conditions, places, and times for exchange of a new debenture for outstanding debentures; and
- (e) the reduction in the rate of interest on the new debenture.

This would appear to be a range of flexible options rather than a step-by-step plan.

Carrel was critical of the debt consolidation measures taken when the \$4.8 million loan was arranged (it involved the then current debt plus more than half a million from a previous administration's borrowing), saying that he thought it would actually cost the town more in the long run.

In his correspondence, Carrel has fleshed out the financial conundrum somewhat. He hasn't offered a definitive opinion on the current proposal, but did provide this overall analysis of debt servicing problems as regards municipal governments.

"If debt servicing costs exceed 5% of the municipal budget over a prolonged period (e.g., more than two years), the municipality - any municipality - does not stand a chance of remaining viable. Infrastructure cannot be maintained with such a debt load. So, unless Dawson could handle a 70% tax increase which would be necessary to carry that debenture without assistance, something will have to give on interest and principle because even a 0% interest rate, repaying the principle over 35 years, would leave you well above the 5% limit."

*DD Note - I do not make a habit of turning off-the-record conversations into stories. When I decided to write this one, for the reasons noted in the article, I sent André Carrel a copy of it. He replied that evening that it was a fair story which represented his point of view accurately.*

## **"Grab your veil and come along..."**

Story & Photos  
by Dan Davidson

Months of preparation and practice came to an end on April 8 and 9 when Robert Service School presented its spring musical, Aladdin and his Wonderful, Magical Lamp, from the book by Tim Kelly and with music by Pam Hughes.

The grade 4 to 6 choir provided the core of the Aladdin company, with high school students from grades 7 through 12 taking on some of the senior roles in the production and pitching in to assist with sound, staging, lighting, make-up, concession, props and sets.

Co-directors Chuck McLeod and Betty Davidson coaxed some solid performances out of their young actors.

This tale of Aladdin is somewhat different than the Disney version, Pascal Causer-McBurney's Aladdin is much closer to the irresponsible pest of the original story rather than the Horatio Alger type of Disney's movie. You want to cuff the lad side the head, charming though he may be. Miriam Moore's Princess Jasmine is a level headed foil for the boy.

The royal family, played by Rukshana Imram-Mangal and Justin Millar, are appropriately dense and arrogant, while Robyn Touchie's Jamal the sorcerer is very evil – but not too bright.

Jamal tricks Aladdin into finding him a magic lamp, but the plot goes awry and Aladdin ends up with the power. He meets and falls in love with Jasmine and uses the lamp's genie to impress her parents. Jamal manages to get hold of the lamp and almost ends up ruler of the land. Aladdin, however, has the assistance of two less powerful genies and manages to foil the evil wizard's plans.

The twenty-five cast members and forty or so people (students, parents, teachers and community volunteers) who provided the backstage assistance needed for the play to work provided their audiences with some good fun during the play's two night run.

As always, it's too bad that a production this good could not be toured somewhere so that a larger audience could see what our school can do.

*For Photos of the play, move on to the next page ----->*



*Aladdin Photos*  
by Dan Davidson





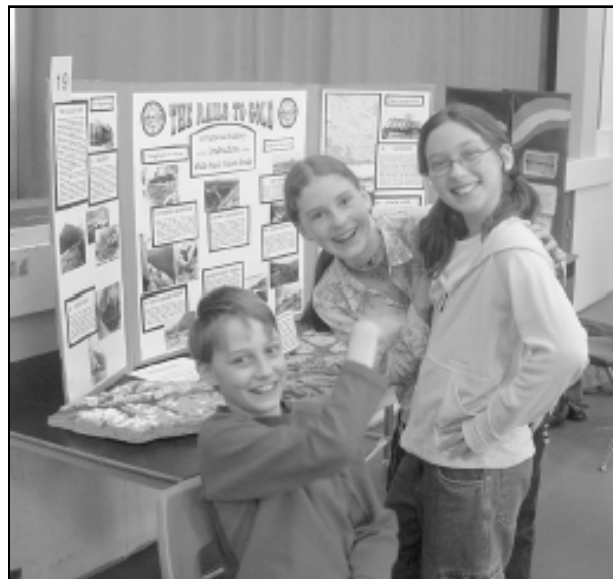
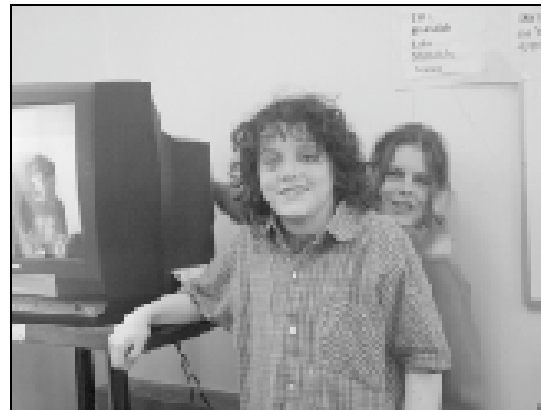
Story & Photos  
by Dan Davidson

The Elementary grades at RSS researched and organized a Heritage Fair, an idea sparked by Historica (the folks who brought you those History Minutes on TV).

Exhibits included posters, models, video interviews, models, booklets, and even live action presentations.

While a good many of the exhibits featured local history such as the Yukon Order of Pioneers, the Flood of '79, Klondike City, and Jack London himself, others looked to the broader history of Canada with themes such as the building of the CPR.

Student exhibits were judged by a panel of local citizens and the best of the bunch headed off to Whitehorse to a regional fair last weekend.



## Dawson Budget Forecasts Some Increases, but More Stability

Story & Photo

by Dan Davidson

Dawsonites can expect some increases in fees and reductions in subsidies as a result of the recently completed 2005 budget, as presented at the April 19 Advisory Committee Meeting.

Cable television subscribers will see their rates increased across the board in all categories of service, with the basic residential rates moving from \$35 monthly to \$37.45

Most other raises are in the \$2 to \$3 range, though the



*The advisory committee includes Paul Moore (CAO), Kevin Hewer, Helmut Schoener, Ray Hayes (Trustee), Corrine Gaudet and Bill Bowie, shown here at the April 5 meeting. On April 19, only Hayes and Moore were present at the table.*

rates for rental rooms in hotels and businesses will only jump by 84 cents per unit.

The exception to the general trend can be found in the new business license bylaw, which lowers the rate for licenses to \$100 from its previous rate of \$200.

This change also signals the end of the City of Dawson's working agreement with the Dawson City Chamber of Commerce. For a number of years now, 80% of the money raised by the sale of the \$200 business licenses has been forwarded to the chamber as an operating grant, and the chamber itself has been able to reduce its membership fee to a token amount.

That agreement expired on March 31, and the town is not renewing it. The council that was removed a year ago was also planning to terminate this arrangement. When the chamber's part-time paid manager, Corrine Gaudet, was appointed to Trustee Ray Hayes' advisory council, it was widely rumored that the chamber would somehow use this position to ensure its continued financing.

Both Gaudet and Hayes denied this for months, and it has turned out that the rumors, perhaps born of the fact that many people did not realize when the contract was due to expire, were wrong.

While property tax rates have not gone up in Dawson this year, the final reduction in the long standing homeowners' grant, which has been shrinking for a number of years now, will make it appear that residents are being taxed more. Only seniors will now receive a residential grant to reduce their taxes.

The budget worked out by Hayes and new town manager Paul Moore anticipates refinancing of Dawson's debt by the territorial government, and so looks larger than it really is. It also anticipates increases in revenues of most services offered by the town, but the unconditional grant funding from the territorial government has dropped again, from \$1,189,900 down to \$1,150,000.

The money being spent on community development activities which, in the past, included massive infusions of cash to such organizations as the Klondike Institute of Art and Culture (around a half million dollars during the life of a multi-year funding agreement which expired in 2004), has been reduced from \$100,300 to \$47,500.

Protective services costs are going up, from \$222,000 to \$282,000, at least in part due to the hiring of a full time bylaw enforcement officer / animal control officer. This is somewhat offset by the fact that the town no longer has a treasurer's position in the administrative offices. This position was repealed as a result of Bylaw #05-09, which was passed at the April 5th advisory committee meeting

## Pre-festival School Concert



*Mrs. Davidson's Robert Service School Choir and Ms. Rowe's band classes put on a show before heading to Whitehorse for the annual Rotary Music Festival.*

Photos by Dan Davidson



*The Sun keeps an Eagle Eye out for all the news.*



*This edition of the online Sun was prepared for posting on April 14, 2007.*