

The Klondike Sun

October 26, 2005 Online Edition

Dawson City, Yukon



A MONTH OF CONTRADICTIONS



Poem & Photos by Dan Davidson

Snow clad street or window washer,
which came first upon the lens?
And this yard so filled with clutter,
is it trash or ambiance?

When the Premier says we're "shored up"
do you feel safe or restrained?
Is the difference clear to you
or just a strain upon your brain?

And as you wonder 'bout the fairness
of this Yukon universe,
did you find time in October
to give thanks that things weren't worse?

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No Elections Any Time Soon for Dawson City

Story & Photo by Dan Davidson

Any Dawsonites hoping to hear that there would soon be a return to local democracy in the Klondike capital had to have been disappointed with the news from Premier Dennis Fentie during Monday night's cabinet meeting here.

The most optimistic answer the Premier would give, when asked for a date by local engineer Stephen Johnson, was that it would be "in the very near future."

"We would have hoped to get through this sooner," Fentie told artist John Steins, operator of the City of Dawson web forum, but he added that it just wasn't possible.

"Dawson City is broke," the Premier stated several times during the meeting, each time with a bit more energy.

In reference to any newly elected council that might emerge, he added, "Why would we hand them a broke city?"

The Premier did let it be known that the government is currently studying five options in terms of getting the town back on its fiscal feet again, which is more than has been said up to now. As was suggested by MLA Peter Jenkins at the Dawson Arts Society celebrations on October 6, all of these involve spending Yukon taxpayers' money here.

The town has been under the rule of a government appointed trustee since April 2004, when the council of six month's standing was retired by the territorial government on the grounds that it had not and could not meet its financial obligations under the Municipal Act.

The annual audit for the year 2003, which was completed in February 2004, shows that the council of the day ran a deficit of \$1,421, 758.00 as of December 2003.

That was on top of a debt to the territorial government of over \$4 million, money borrowed in order to work on capital projects, one of which, the recreation centre, has proven to be a disaster.

Fentie noted that it appeared it was going to cost \$1.6 million just to get that building to the "point where the roof won't fall in."

In all, he said, Dawson's financial woes were vast.

"We're talking millions and millions of dollars."

Aside from that, there was the matter, he said, of an RCMP investigation into possible financial mismanagement by senior town officials (the former mayor, chief administrative officer and treasurer), as well as civil actions pending over the construction of the recreation centre, and the resolution of matters related to that capital project.

In taking over the affairs of the town, something which he said should have been done long before his government did it, Fentie said that YTG followed the Municipal Act.

"We did nothing outside of the democratic process."

At this time, he continued, the government is still working through its options and is not prepared to end the trusteeship until everything is in place to insure that nothing like this happens again.

"We'll take the time necessary to do that."

In the meantime, "we are shoring you up," Fentie told his audience of about 60 people at the Dänojä Zho Cultural

Centre.

The Premier also indicated that the government was willing to further extend the rule of the Trustee. Ray Hayes was initially installed in April 2004 for a 12 month term. At the end of that time the Municipal Act states that the trustee shall set a date for elections.

"(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." (Division 3, subsection 14)

There is also a provision for extending the trustee's authority.

"(16) The Commissioner in Executive Council may ex-



tend the time for an election required by subsections (14) and (15)." (Division 3, subsection 16)

Hayes' term of office has been extended once and will run out at the end of December. He has been very clear about not wanting to go beyond that time frame, but he has also said he will not abandon the process if the end seems to be in sight.

City of Dawson offices indicate that Hayes has called his next advisory committee meeting for November 1.

At the roving cabinet meeting, Fentie said that YTG was prepared to extend the trusteeship again by a second Order in Council. There are locals, including Steins and council watcher Jorn Meier, who feel such a move to be improper, but Fentie was certain that it wasn't.

"You will have a mayor and council," Fentie said at the end of the meeting, "hopefully under this government's watch."

Many Topics featured at Cabinet Meeting

Story by Dan Davidson

It took a question from Bill Bowie of Arctic Inland Resources to lighten the mood at Premier Fentie's roving cabinet meeting in Dawson City on Monday night.

Bowie, also a member of the trustee's advisory council here, brought down the house with this comment.

"Is anyone up there gonna smile tonight?"

That the cabinet members had not been, and hadn't noticed it themselves, was perhaps indicative of the tentative nature of the exchanges during the first half of the meeting.

The question that was left waiting in the wings and took up a good deal of the two hour meeting concerned the timetable for restoring local democracy to the bankrupt town. The answer to that turned out to be “not now”, “later” and “when we’re sure it’s time” but the meeting went on for more than half an hour before getting to it.

The cabinet made a show of giving as much of the meeting as possible to questions from the floor, beginning by not having an opening speech about government accomplishments.

“This visit is about you, the citizens of Dawson, your concerns and your issues,” the Premier said. “You ... have issues that are very specific to this community, considering the number of challenges we face here.”

Those issues began with retired Reverend Ken Snider asking about plans for the upgrading of the Dempster Highway, which has, as Fentie noted, recently been recognized as part of the National Highway System, along with the portion of the Klondike Highway that leads to it from Whitehorse.

This response set the tone for many of those which followed, answers in which Ministers Taylor, Lang, Jenkins and the Premier responded with small lectures on historical background, picked some points right out the pamphlets which the audience had been invited to read for itself, and led Bill Bowie, during a response to his later question about the airport, to ask for a plain language yes or no summary of Peter Jenkins’ remarks.

At one point in the debate over the delay of local elections, City of Dawson forum web master John Steins said he felt the Premier was giving very political answers.

Fentie shrugged and said that he was, after all, a politician.

These things were made clear in response to questions.

There are or will be plans for Dempster Highway upgrading.

A study on the railway options is due next summer and not much can be said about routes or anything else until then.

The Yukon River Bridge project is not dead, merely delayed, and will happen (perhaps still as a 3P project) when it can be done within the overall cost of continuing to run the George Black Ferry during the amortization period.

The government is still committed to pursuing World Heritage Status for the Klondike, even though it remains surprised that Parks Canada didn’t like the proposed location for the bridge. Fentie continued to maintain that the Parks’ position paper last winter came as a complete surprise to him, but denied that he had ever suggested that Parks should stick to its own mandate.

The Premier indicated that there would be news about the multilevel health care facility in the upcoming budget and that the government was aware that the only set of plans brought to the town for consultation so far had met with near universal disapproval.

Peter Jenkins indicated that studies to improve the Dawson Airport, particularly with respect to paving it, were ongoing, but seemed to be saying that the real solution was to

relocate the airport.

“There may be a way, like building a bridge,” he said, “that would open up other avenues and venues.”

After this year’s abortive attempt, the Premier announced that an interpretive centre for Tombstone Park should be ready for next season.

In a confirmation of a pre-budget announcement made two weeks ago by MLA Jenkins, Fentie said there would be a half million dollars for the Yukon School of Visual Arts project currently in progress by the Dawson City Arts Society in the budget.

A request that the government fund artificial ice for the arena, as it has in Teslin, foundered on the issue of whether the arena was safe to use at all.

Concerns about the sudden lack of volunteers and training for the local ambulance service saw Health Minister Jenkins agreeing to meet with former political opponent and ambulance volunteer Aedes Scheer in order to hear her suggestions for solutions.

Questions about Climate Change options led the Premier to say the territory was ahead of the game nationally in this respect, but that we were having to cope with changes, such as the spruce beetle, that were migrating from the south due to global warming.

There were issues of land use conflict, such as the overlapping mining and residential uses in the Dredgepond Subdivision and in Bear Creek, to which the Premier told resident Gary Parker, “I share your frustration.”

On the other hand, Bill Bowie was wondering why more development land wasn’t being made available along the corridor created by the Mayo to Dawson hydro line, and Jon Magnusson, of the Klondike Centennial Society asked about setting up protected areas to maintain some of the dredge tailings that are so much a part of the history of corporate mining here.

The meeting was generally respectful in tone and the audience seemed either inclined or resigned to accepting most of the cabinets’ responses without a great deal of debate.

Uffish Thoughts: Picking and Choosing the Laws You Like

by Dan Davidson

I heard a funny thing on the radio the other day. Premier Gordon (jus’ a lil one fur th’ road...) Campbell was speaking about what he thought the issues were in the teachers’ strike down in British Columbia.

Somewhere amid the bafflegab he said something like this (I’m paraphrasing here): People can’t just pick and chose what laws they will obey and what laws they won’t.

How droll.

Now, there’s no question that B.C.’s teachers have been breaking a law recently. There certainly is a law which says that they can’t go on strike, that they are an essential service, that they may not bargain, and certainly may not discuss such matters as class size and the provision of special services to needy students.

That IS the law. It's the law because Mr. Campbell and his "Liberal" party made it so.

Now, why did the government do that?

A few years ago the government put this law in place after it failed to negotiate a successful contract with its educators. Instead Campbell forced a legislated contract on them, kind of like what he's done again just recently.

The British Columbia Teachers' Union appealed that ruling to the courts and guess what? They won. The courts ruled against the Campbell government and said he had acted in bad faith and illegally, and that he had to fix it.

So, since you can't pick and chose what laws you will obey, he of course mended his ways and - aww, heck, who'm I tryin' to kid here? He did nothing of the sort.

What that government did was to cloister itself in the legislative chambers in Victoria and write a bunch of new laws, laws that applied not only from the date of their passing, but also retroactively.

Laws that overturned the rulings of the courts, entrenched the legislated "contract" and actually made it illegal to appeal such matters to the courts in the future.

Legal - well sure.

Ethical - well, surely not.

There are ways around any law. You can rescind them, re-interpret them, or completely rewrite them. Especially if you happen to be the government.

Take the provision of the Municipal Act that should have prevented the territorial government from loaning Dawson City the money it needed to work on its recreation projects. That loan could be said to be illegal, and certainly the action of the council of that day in accepting the loan has been called that often enough.

But that reading of reality ignores the fact that the government retains the power to bend the law if it wills to do so. One YTG government did what it perhaps should not have done and wrote Dawson a letter saying it had permission to exceed what would normally have been its legal borrowing limit.

Thereby hangs a tale of red ink, bankruptcy and eventual dissolution of an elected body, but I didn't bring this up to dwell on it this week. It's just an example of the mutability of law.

Another would be the same act's provisions regarding the term and responsibilities of a trustee, once one is in place.

Here we can see the manner in which a Trustee is supposed to bring his appointment to an end and how long it ought to take. A reading from Part 9, Division 3, 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.

"(15) If the election under subsection (14) does not result in the election or acclamation of at least a quorum for a new council, the trustee must make suitable provisions for another election to be held within the year after the election, and so on from year to year until at least a quorum for a new council is elected or acclaimed."

And here, folks, is the legal loophole for all of the above.

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

Such amendments are made by Orders in Council, which do not have to be debated in the legislature or any other public forum. Such a vital little piece of legislation apparently has no qualifications or time limits built into it. The addenda and definitions for this section might read "when the time is right" or "when we feel like it" or "only when these (problems) have been laid to rest."

So there we are - another law which can be interpreted to suit the occasion.

All Dawson's voters can hope for is that we will eventually get past subsection (16) and get to the rest of the Part 9, Division 3, Section 336, which reads.

"(17) In subsections (13) to (15), making suitable provisions requires at least

"(a) appointing a returning officer to be responsible for the administration of the election;

(b) establishing the place for making nominations;

"(c) establishing one or more places at which polls will be held if a poll is required and, subject to section 85, setting hours during which polls shall be open."

When that time comes, we'll be here.

Ed. Note: With regard to mention of BCTF matters, it should be noted that ye editor is a former executive member of the Yukon Teachers' Association (4 years), has served on one contract negotiations committee, and is on the current edition as well.

LETTER "Special Events" in Dawson

To Whom It May Concern:

The article in the Whitehorse Star dated September 27, 2005, entitled "Keep the Special Events Coming", by Dan Davidson, prompted this response.

Now that everyone's ears have quit ringing from the applause, the thank you speeches are over, the awards have all been passed out, the banquets have ended and the hordes of spectators have left the river bank, let's take a look at a "Special Event" that took place this spring.

I'm talking about the International Federation of Sled dog Sports World Championship Sled Dog Race that took place here in Dawson City this past March. To say the least, it was a half baked event with nowhere near the competitors or spectators we were told would be here. Why was that?

Usually when someone is hired to manage a "Special Event", part of his/her job is to promote the event so that it is a success; and, of course, after the "Special Event" takes place, you assume the person who writes about the event has a good idea of what is a success or failure.

Now, the I.F.S.S. Sure, they thought it was a great event, and of course they would, they padded their bank account to

the tune of \$30, 000 because Dawson City wants “Special Events”.

The Race Committee and those that participated in putting the race worked really hard to do a good job. Lots of them volunteered time and effort to make this a “Special Event”. Trouble is, none of them have ever been to an event like this before; as a matter of fact only three individuals I know in Dawson City have ever been to an event like this as a spectator or a participant. So I guess in their eyes it was a magnificent event.

Also, the I.F.S.S. may have tried the mass start format here in Dawson City for the first time, but mass starts were definitely not pioneered here. Mass start races have been going on and recorded from 1916. If you knew anything about sled dog racing and its history, other than just The Percy and The Quest you would know that mass starts pioneered in Dawson City is an erroneous and misleading statement.

When the “Race Manager” position was posted a number of people approached me and encouraged me to apply for the job, but there was one individual who sat on the race committee who, on three separate occasions, told me that “it was mostly office work and probably wouldn’t suit me [sic]”. Naturally, I applied. I mean, after all, I had participated in all the major races on the speed circuit for the past 25 years and know all the people that planned and put these events on. I wasn’t even granted an interview! But I was told they had me slotted for the Trail Manager position. After the Race Manager position was filled in June 2004 I heard rumors that Rangers would get the bid for the Trail and I thought “now they’ll be busy with the Quest trail”, besides, they’re a volunteer group and the Trail was to be tendered out. The “Trail Manager Position” was put out to tender, I did up my proposal and the Rangers got the job, and man did they do a job considering the time they had, once they got started on it, three weeks before the “Special Event” took place. Making use of the fancy new groomer that sits in front of Gerties now rusting and rotting away for all to see (more of your tax dollars wisely spent). Problem with the late start on the trail was three weeks before the race they still didn’t know exactly where the Trail was going to go.

Two and three months before the race took place people were phoning me to ask what was happening (yes, I still maintain contact with people on the speed circuit and I still maintain a small kennel of dogs). I had to tell them I didn’t know. I told them to “check the website”. They did. Fact is, there was nothing on it. The information on it was no information. When asked about the Trails prior to the three weeks leading up to the race, I had to say there were no trails yet. This makes speed mushers nervous. Why? Because we race on a race track, not on a trail. March is a crucial month for most of us, most of the bigger money is made in March. So, if you’re planning to go to the North American Championships in Fairbanks or the Arctic Coast of Alaska or the Mackenzie Delta, these races are all on FLAT hard fast tracks that have been in use all winter, some since snow was on the ground in October. After countless times putting trails out here on Sulpher Creek you start to realize that the best way

to do it is to get on it as soon as you can because of the dryness of the snow and cold weather you can’t really get a good base unless you get on it and stay on it all winter. And I quote Mr. Starflinger and Mr. Hartum, “it was not a speed trail.”

After watching the website once it was up and going, sort of, I thought I’d place an ad on it. Maybe get a few people out to the homestead, where they could train. I went to the race office, wrote out an ad and gave them \$214.00 to place my ad on the website. I found it curious that they had absolutely no receipt book in the office, I found that odd. Not to worry though, they took my money and assured me that my ad would be placed on the website. So I waited and I waited, finally I phoned and was assured the webmaster had all the information. So I waited some more. Finally, I went to see the webmaster and was told he had never seen the ad or heard anything about it. I went back to the race office to ask where was my 214 bucks? Shortly after that I did see an ad on the website that wasn’t even remotely close to what I’d written down but it kind of put our place on the map, but I’m still waiting to see the deposit slip for \$214.00 that proves to me that the 214 bucks went into the right pocket.

People calling me two and three weeks before the “Special Event” asked the same thing, what’s happening? Check the website I said again. They said “there’s nothing on it.” Phone the race office. There’s never anybody there and the answering machine can’t give us any answers. Truth is, I watched the entire major dog driving publications all winter zippo, nadaa, diddly, nothing on the “Special Event” to take place in Dawson City. Then a week before the race full page ads in The Klondike Sun, The Whitehorse Star and the Yukon News. Problem with that is most dog drivers from Alaska and the lower 48 states also the Territories and Provinces and Europe don’t read The Yukon News, The Whitehorse Star or The Klondike Sun.

So I guess my point is when it comes to blowing \$300, 000 of tax payer’s money on a “Special Event” it pays to be a member of the right club or at least someone in the family should belong. And when you’re told by members of the hiring committee, and I quote, “we need someone who could schmooze” and “you must accost people in public”. I always thought when you see public money being squandered you had an obligation to point that out.

So members of the board of Special Events, let’s have lots more of these successful events happening here in Dawson City and at least all the members of the right club will do well. Always remember when you’re feeding the hogs, feed the sow first and separately so she can suckle her piglets and doesn’t go cannibalistic.

Yours truly,
Mark Peirson

P.S. The nepotism here in Dawson City makes a person want to puke and nowhere is it more blatant and disregarding than here.

Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in Welcome a New Council

Story & Photos by Dan Davidson

The Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in celebrated the recent election of its chief and council with a community feast and swearing in ceremony on October 14. In the past, elections have been low key and little noted in the community outside of the first nation itself, but things were different this year.

Candidates' names were published in the local and territorial

newspapers and a list of winners, along with a press release came out following the election day.

The feast was another first. Elders Percy and Mabel Henry (this year's Mr. and Mrs. Yukon) could not recall that anything quite like this had been done in the past.

After an opening serenade of the "Welcome Song" and "The Flag Song" by the Hän Singers, master of ceremonies Bonnie Rear began organizing the community dinner. After an opening prayer by Clara Van Bibber members of the new council and elders' council were served by Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in youth before the rest of the hall lined up for their meals.

The new council included Chief Darren Taylor, returning for a third three year term, as well as Peter Nagano, Bruce Taylor, Steve Taylor and Roberta Joseph.

Grand Chief Andy Carville addressed the audience briefly, thanking the first nation for inviting him to their traditional territory. He praised the youth of the community for taking their part in this ceremony.

"It will indeed be an honour to carry on working beside the chief and the council. to continue to work for the benefit of this nation, this community. to stand along side the chief and continue to fight for the inherent rights, and the treaty

rights that the first nation has entered into."

Following a bountiful meal the new chief and council were sworn in by Justice of the Peace Lisa Hutton, each member swearing that they were citizens of the first nation, that they had not and would not take financial advantage of their position and would serve faithfully in their elected role, having gained it fairly and without any manner of

trickery. Bruce Taylor was out of town and will be sworn in later. There followed a presentation of gifts to, and



The new council included Chief Darren Taylor, Roberta Joseph, Peter Nagano and Steve Taylor. Bruce Taylor was unable to attend, being out of town.

former council, including Robert Rear, Jenny Christiansen and Clara Van Bibber. Elder Ronald Johnson led in this portion of the program.

Speeches by the newly elected council members ended the official portion of the evening.

Chief Taylor acknowledged that his last six years in office have not always been easy.

"We've had difficult times, sometimes we had arguments or differences, but I think that's important for a government, and for a political structure. If we weren't able to discuss issues openly and honestly, we really wouldn't get a good perspective on the real issues and we couldn't come up with satisfactory solutions."

He thanked the families of the outgoing council for

having allowed them to give so much of their time to the work of the community.

"I look forward to working with the newly elected council, I think they bring to the table a good wealth of knowledge."

Each new council member also gave a short speech and the evening closed with a prayer by Clara Van Bibber.



DCAS Celebrates 7 Years of Achievements and Poses a Puzzle for the Future

Story & Photos by Dan Davidson

"DCAS legend has it," DCAS executive director Gary Parker told a full house on October 6., "the idea of a Dawson City Arts Society was conceived – circa 1998 – up on 8th Ave – in the vicinity of the social, cultural and economic synapses between the Steins and Hakonson residences – I imagine. It may not be factual, but I believe it's true."

Parker was speaking next to the giant jigsaw puzzle which was the focal piece of the evening's celebrations. At 7 years of age, DCAS has already been operating for nearly six years out of a restored Oddfellows' Hall that was just another decaying memory of Dawson's heyday when the fledgling society and its executive director of just four month's standing opened its doors to the public in December 1999 and held an inaugural ball on that New Year's Eve.

The renovation was accomplished with generous funding from the City of Dawson and territorial governments led by all three major parties. Thanks also were due to the Klondike Visitors Association, which had done enough work on the building to preserve it over many years, and was persuaded to turn it over to DCAS for its rebirth.

DCAS also partners with Parks Canada, under a memorandum of agreement signed in August 2000.

The 12 foot by 8 foot puzzle, conceived by former Dawsonite Kim Matthews and brought into being through the work of Sharon Edmunds, will contain 400 pieces when it is complete. About fifty of these, some of which actually interlocked with several others, were placed by their creators and other DCAS stalwarts at the Thursday night meeting.

Edmunds placed the first piece, while John Steins and Greg Hakonson were second and third.

DCAS quickly spawned KIAC, the Klondike Institute of Arts and Culture, and Karen Dubois was the first program manager of that busy organization.

DCAS also spawned the ODD Gallery, which was officially opened during a visit here by the former Governor General, Adrienne Clarkson, in March, 2000. Since that part time curator Mike Yuhasz and his board have presided over a lot of activity.

In nearly six years, said Parker, "(there have been) over 50 exhibitions of contemporary art by local, regional and international artists plus at least that many associated talks, workshops, and special gallery projects."

That same year saw the first run of the Dawson City International Short Film Festival, which will have its seventh showing next spring. David Curtis, who once worked in construction on the building and is now KIAC's program director, was instrumental in bringing that to life.

In October 2000, KIAC partnered with Dawson Campus of Yukon College, with funding from the Department of Advanced Education and the Klondike Region Training Fund, to inaugurate the Arts for Employment program. From September through April of each school year students take courses in fine arts, computer graphics, design, photogra-

phy and film making. Some fifty students have been through the program now and have moved on to employment or further study in this area.

The success of this program has led to the dream of a two year fine arts diploma program in Dawson, which will, with the help of the Yukon Government and the Tr'ondëk Hwëch'in, begin to operate out of a second restored building, the Old Liquor Store, as the School of Visual Arts, in September of 2006. The agreement was signed at this gathering and further YTG funding of half a million dollars was announced by Klondike MLA and Deputy Premier Peter Jenkins, who also placed a piece of the puzzle.

It is hoped that the completion of the arts school will move the government to construct a new, permanent home for Yukon College, which has been floating around town for the last decade, on the lot adjacent to SOVA, and the build-



The current DCAS Board: Jayne Fraser, Greg Hakonson, Palma Berger, Karen Dubois, Leslie Chapman and Valerie Salez.

ing has been altered with that extension in mind.

In 2001, DCAS and the ODD Gallery began what has become the annual Yukon Riverside Arts Festival. Parker noted that this event has reinvigorated the Discovery Days weekend.

At the same time, KIAC began what has been an ongoing series of artists in residence, working out of Parks Canada's historic Macaulay House. Artists from all over the country live and work there for from one to three months on a year round basis.

In November of 200 KIAC began its annual Youth Art Enrichment program, during which about 30 high school

students from all over the Yukon spend four days in Dawson working on advanced skills beyond those taught in the average high school art class. Two local participants in that program, Robyn Touchie and Jessica Burian, each placed a puzzle piece.

The Oddfellows Hall has also been a hotbed of lower key activity at all times during the year, which community based classes in pottery, drawing, painting, pottery, stained glass, film making, music lessons (piano, fiddle, guitar) and dance featured on a regular basis. In addition, the society partners with the Dawson City Music Festival Society and Whitehorse groups such as Jazz Yukon and the Yukon Arts Centre, to bring concerts, plays and special events to the community.

The giant puzzle remains a mystery at this point. Some sections are giving hints as to what the whole might show at some later date, but its final

image is far from clear, and the hints are more tantalizing than helpful. The puzzle is clearly most appropriate as a symbol of the future of the DCAS/KIAC/SOVA project. There are many pieces which remain to be placed.

Boosting the Blacksmith's Shop

Story & Photo by Dan Davidson

Princess Street has been narrower by a lane for the last couple of weeks while Parks Canada crews have been working on the preservation of Billy Biggs Blacksmith, which is located at the corner of Princess and 3rd Avenue.



The property is maintained as an example of that particular type of industrial and cultural activity as it once was practiced in Dawson, but it suffers from a problem common to many buildings that have not been worked on extensively since the 1979 flood.

In order to get a crown on the road and facilitate drainage, the streets of Dawson have been slowly rising over the years, as much as 45 centimetres in some places. At Parks, people have been heard to complain that the resulting water drainage is hard on foundations.

The blacksmith shop is a sectional building, which was moved out into the street in two segments in order shore up its supports and replace some of its pad. This seems to have been a temporary measure. Complete foundation work was proposed a few years ago, following a couple of seasons of archeological work inside the building, but that has yet to

be funded.

Ferry Remains as the River Flows Smoothly

Story & Photo by Dan Davidson

Things may be cooling off in the Klondike, and there may have been snow on the streets and lawns in town since October 9, but that doesn't seem to have had any effect on the Yukon River. On October 18 the surface was so clear and placid that the George Black Ferry actually cast a rippled reflection in the river.

There has been so little sign of ice that one member of the ferry crew was recently heard to joke about planning a Christmas party on the boat in the middle of the river. While that's not likely, it could be well towards the end of October or even into November, before the ferry is pulled.

The preparations have been made. The spools of heavy cable are sitting on top of the dike and the highway crews have had lots of practice getting the boat out in a hurry.



LETTER

Dawson City Housing Board's Pet Policy

an editorial comment by Gigi Bigras

Some readers may recall from way back in March, 2004, an article in the Klondike Sun submitted by the Humane Society in Dawson. The article made comment on the Dawson City Housing Board's sudden decision to begin enforcing their 'No Pet' policy for social housing tenants. After several years of lax to nonexistent enforcement, Yukon Housing sent out letters to several social housing tenants, telling them to get rid of their pets and that "failure to comply will result in further action". The Humane Society was appalled by this decision and stated many reasons why they disagreed with its implementation – one reason given was that it was an unfair and discriminatory policy.

As it turns out, the Yukon Human Rights Board of Adjudication agreed with them in a decision reached on October

5th. How do I know this? I was one of several tenants in the social housing program who received a letter and one of three who subsequently submitted a complaint with the Yukon Human Rights Commission. At the core of my complaint was the belief that the Yukon Housing Corporation (YHC) was discriminating against me based on my source of income.

When my daughter and I first moved into Yukon housing in June 2002, she had to give away her dog because the rental agreement had a 'no pet' clause. The housing manager said that the 'no pet policy' was under review but that it was still in place at present. A year and a half later, after seeing dogs and cats come and go in housing units all around me, I thought the pet policy no longer existed, and when my daughter saw a puppy she wanted, I said yes. When a friend told me that the 'no pet' policy was still in place, I called the housing manager and asked if it was true, and if so, then why did everyone around me have pets, and why did it seem that no one was having to get rid of them? That's when I found out that tenants in 'staff housing' are allowed pets; but tenants in 'social housing' aren't allowed pets! Any of the pets I saw in social housing had been grandfathered (owned before the 'no pet' policy was put in place in Feb. 1998), and the tenants wouldn't be able to replace them when the pet died. This was not, in fact, the case as many tenants had moved into social housing since that time and many of them had dogs, cats etc. The 'no pet policy' hadn't been enforced for years.

I told the housing manager that I wouldn't be making my daughter give up her dog twice and that I'd be expecting a letter in the mail. The letter arrived in January, 2004 telling me to get rid of my pet. I addressed the Dawson City Housing Advisory Board in February, 2004, and made what I thought was a reasoned argument against their 'no pet' policy. DCHA boards' response was, "after careful consideration of your presentation the board has decided to let the current policy regarding pets stand".

I started looking for alternate housing. I also contacted the Yukon Human Rights Commission (YHRC) at the suggestion of a friend and lodged a complaint against YHC. The Commission determined that the complaint deserved further investigation. Two other tenants of the social housing program also put in complaints and the three of us along with the highly admirable assistance of counselors for the YHRC tried to settle the complaints informally, however, no agreement could be reached. The decision was made to join the complaints together, as they were similar in many respects, and they were then referred to the Yukon Human Rights Board of Adjudication.

The hearings took place in Whitehorse on April 6,7 and 8 and because of the necessity of an adjournment, the hearings were completed May 12th, 2005. The following is the verbatim report of the decision and subsequent orders of the Yukon Human Rights Board of Adjudication:

"Policies and practices which are levied on a group based on source of income or social condition or, in fact, any of the prohibited grounds in the Yukon Human Rights Act are discrimination. To levy a No Pet policy on Social Housing

tenants whose eligibility is determined by their income, and not on Yukon Government employees, both of whom reside in the same housing complex, is discrimination based on source of income.

The units are not exclusively designated as employee units or social housing units. The analogy used was that if you entered the house by the back door, you had certain rights; if you entered the house by the front door, you had more rights; yet, both people are in the same house. The argument was made that the net effect is that a person who is an employee of the government may occupy a unit with a pet and upon departure, a social housing tenant may move into that unit, and be forced to give up their pet.

That being said, it is not discrimination to establish policies that are incumbent upon every tenant and are put in place for a reasonable purpose or goal, adopted in good faith and in the belief that it is necessary to meet that goal and/or does meet the test of undue hardship (Meiorin Test).

The Board of Adjudication does not believe that the No Pet Policy reflects the spirit of the Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms and that a reasonable policy, in this case, a Pet Policy, could be established that sets expectations and management requirements for all their tenants to adhere to in a like manner without exceeding the test of "undue hardship".

Pursuant to section 23 of the Act, the Board orders:

1. Yukon Housing Corporation as the owner of housing complexes throughout the Yukon, administering both Social Housing and Yukon Government employee housing, must not resign from their responsibility to ensure that no employee or policy contravenes the Yukon Human Rights Act.

2. Yukon Housing Corporation must review all pet policies and no pet policies to ensure compliance with the Act where similar conditions of joint usage of housing units exist throughout the Yukon Territory.

3. Yukon Housing Corporation will facilitate a human rights awareness seminar/workshop for appropriate staff and members of each Community Advisory Council, to be delivered by the Yukon Human Rights Commission, or their designate. The purpose of the workshop is to provide information about Human Rights, and to ensure that everyone is aware that each directive, practice and policy must be reviewed with consideration of the requirements of the Yukon Human Rights Act.

4. Each Complainant shall submit and be reimbursed for expenses by the Yukon Housing Corporation which were not paid by the Yukon Human Rights Commission; the Yukon Human Rights Commission shall submit and be compensated for the expenses incurred on behalf of the Complainants, including those expenses to have them attend the hearing in person or by videoconference.

Dated this 5th day of October,2005 at the City of Whitehorse."

This issue should have been settled at the beginning with the DCHA board. It wasn't. It should have been settled

informally with the YHC. It wasn't. It took the Board of Adjudication to make YHC see the light. Now, I see two possibilities here. Either most YHC employees involved in this, don't know what constitutes discrimination, in which case the workshops and seminars should help with their education on the matter. The other possibility is that they all know what discrimination is but refuse to do anything about it unless they are forced to. If that's the case, then we should all be more than a little concerned that this attitude is so prevalent in our enlightened society.

Dawson City hot spot for September

Press Release

September this year saw the Yukon recording warm temperatures and above normal rainfalls except from Whitehorse to the southeast where it was drier than normal. Temperatures were above normal in all the reporting stations in September with Dawson City seeing an average temperature 1.9 C above normal for the month. The warmest day was September 21 recorded at the Carcross highway camp while the coldest day was -9 recorded at the Beaver Creek highway camp. Old Crow and Ogilvie Highway Camps were both reporting several days of snow during the month, with Ogilvie getting 31 cm over a three-day period at one point.

Central Yukon saw some good rainfalls with most stations reporting nearly normal amounts. Overall the greatest total precipitation for the territory was 60 mm recorded at the Klondike highway camp on the Dempster.

Whitehorse saw an average monthly temperature of 8. The airport reported an average that was 0.9 degrees above normal for the month. Both the mean daytime highs and overnight lows were above average for the month.

The warmest day saw the temperature reach only 17.3 on Sept. 23 while the coldest day and the first killing frost at the airport was -4.7 on the Sept. 26. Overnight lows along with killing frosts would have varied widely because of local topography, exposure and winds. No temperature records were set or tied this year. The snow stayed on the ridge lines and never made it down into the valley and the rain we did receive only totaled 26.1 mm, just 77% of normal for the month. There were 11 days that saw measurable amounts of rain while another 5 saw trace amounts recorded. Sept. 8 recorded 13.4 mm, which was a new record for that day breaking the old record of 12.7 mm set back in 1962. Two wind storms occurred during the month with the major one on Sept. 24 resulting in several power outages. A much less active system passed through a few days later with some minor short-lived power outages occurring. There was nothing like the major tree blow downs that we had last year. The peak gust was 65 km/h from the southwest on Sept. 24.

October is looking really quite nice throughout Canada with only a small area in Nunavut not forecast to see above normal temperatures. The newest edition of the winter forecast for October, November and December has pretty much all of Canada looking forward to above normal temperatures except, once again, for the same small area in Nunavut. Precipitation is a much different story, with the whole country

being very uncertain about just how much precipitation is expected. There is no real discernible pattern between near normal, above or below normal amounts with the possibilities spread all over the map of the country. The Yukon has near normal to below normal amounts forecast.

Records:

- Maximum temperature – 17.3/2005
- Extreme – 26.7C/1942
- Minimum temperature – -4.7/2005
- Extreme – -19.4/1983
- Total snowfall – 0.0 cm/2005
- Extreme – 41.7 cm/1992
- Total Rainfall – 26.1 mm/2005
- Extreme – 52.3 mm/1980

For climate information for northern BC and Yukon contact Environment Canada at 867-667-8459 or william.miller@ec.gc.ca.

The data for this article originated with Environment Canada.

Percy DeWolfe Race faces Tough Times

Submitted by the Race Committee

Greetings to everybody,

As many people in the territory and mushing community know The Percy DeWolfe Memorial Mail Race hosted the 2005 World Dog Mushing Sprint Championships in Dawson City The Percy DeWolfe Race Committee would like to take this opportunity to inform everyone of our current situation, and dispel some of the rumors that are circulating regarding our current position and the future of the Memorial Mail Run.

While the World Championship Races themselves were by all accounts a great success, from a financial point of view the event has placed a great burden on the Percy DeWolfe Committee. There are several reasons for this: the cost of the event was more than anticipated, there were misunderstandings about the contribution agreement with the International organization, not as many people came as we expected, some of our bills were not submitted and unfortunately some unnecessary expenses were incurred.

We hired Glen Everitt two weeks before the Dawson Council was dissolved. We used a standard hiring procedure and Glen easily topped the field.

Wayne Rachel generously volunteered to look after the truck raffle and was responsible for ensuring the sales of the tickets went so well. He was also responsible for part of our problem: during our raffle last spring a portion of the money from ticket sales went missing. It appears that this money went missing from the VRC during the races. This matter is currently under investigation by the RCMP. Unfortunately, we fear we may not be able to recover this money, as it was some time before the missing funds were reported to the Race Committee. The disappearance of this money has hurt not only the Percy DeWolfe Race, but also Dawson as a whole, and if anyone has information that may lead to the recovery of these funds we urge you to come forward to the RCMP.

Despite all that has happened, we have no reason to suspect self serving wrong doing, including theft, by either Wayne Rachel or by Glen Everitt.

Because of the financial situation we are in, some of the businesses and organizations in our community have been, and are, waiting to be paid. We really regret this, and would like to thank them for their continued patience and understanding as we work to pay our debts as rapidly as possible. We are currently investigating a variety of fundraising options. Watch for more details to come soon.

In light of our situation after the 2005 Sprint Races, we have decided to withdraw from our commitment to host the 2007 IFSS Mid-Distance event, in order to allow us time to get our organization back on its feet. This also means that we will be able to focus our time and energy on making our own event the best that it can be.

Some may recall that the Percy has fallen on hard times before and will therefore remember that the mail always got through and that we arose, phoenix like, to be bigger and better than ever. We have every intention of rising again this time and are developing plans to do so.

2006 marks the 30th anniversary of the Percy DeWolfe Memorial Run, and we would like to state emphatically that just as Percy DeWolfe always got the mail through, we have no intention of canceling this year's run.

Our plan for regrouping does include reformatting the annual Percy DeWolfe Memorial Race into a Mail Run, which works like this: You write a letter to someone, and purchase a special commemorative envelope that includes an explanatory leaflet. On race day, the mail given a special frank and is carried by dog team to Eagle, Alaska where the letter reenters the regular mail system and is delivered to the recipient. These letters make a unique and personal gift for friends and family 'outside' and we believe it will have potential to become a good fundraiser for our group in years to come.

This is similar to the format that the Atlin Mail Run used for many years, and will have many advantages, including:

- We do not need to provide a purse,
- being more inclusive as it will be accessible to a wider mushing community, thus bringing the event more in line with our goal of encouraging dog mushing,
- actually turning a profit, which we can use to continue to build our event and further our organization's goals and raising the community profile through the mail.

There will still be the opportunity for mushers to race; but racers will be responsible for throwing money into a pot to build the purse themselves. We anticipate that other aspects of the event will remain the same as they have been in previous years.

The Percy Race Committee is blessed with some dynamic new blood this year, and as a group we are dedicated to continuing to hold a fun dog mushing event to pay tribute to one of the legendary figures in Yukon history.

We thank Dawson, the Yukon and the mushing community for their support over the years, and ask for continued understanding, patience and support whilst we

regroup.

Yukon Family Services Re-Opens for Business

Submitted

Yukon Family Services Association is pleased to announce the hiring of Lindsay Brown as the permanent Counsellor for Dawson City, Pelly Crossing and Mayo. Lindsay has relocated to Dawson from Nemaska, a small Cree community in Northern Quebec, where he worked for 8 years as a professional counsellor. He is very well regarded for his therapeutic work and his contributions to community development.

Lindsay's previous Clinical Supervisor in Nemaska described his clinical skills as excellent and affirmed that he is very knowledgeable regarding wide variety of issues. His experience working in a semi-isolated northern community developed Lindsay's sensitivity to cultural and traditional ways of life. This is a strength and openness we can all benefit from. His references all spoke highly of his professional work and his contribution as a team member. He is described as having great crisis intervention skills and is seen as a calm resource during times of crisis. He has been a suicide intervention trainer and provided leadership on a community-wide Emergency Measures team. Lindsay is an independent worker and the people of Nemaska were very sorry to lose him. We gave him a choice of workplaces. Lindsay chose the Dawson office, and the communities that it serves. We look forward to the contribution of his many skills and years of experience.

Lindsay has not quite settled into his home in Dawson yet, there are still boxes to unpack. He has left behind his immediate household, but they will be joining him in stages. He plans to bring his dogs up shortly after Christmas. His partner, Christiane, will be joining him after the end of the school year as she is currently finishing the school term in Nemaska working as the Principal. Lindsay is used to working in a small community and in finding creative ways to get things done. He hopes to spend much of the coming winter pursuing photography (black and white of course) by skis or snowshoes. He is looking forward to experiencing and becoming a part of the Dawson area. We think that he will be a great fit and welcome him wholeheartedly to the Agency and to the Dawson Office.

Lindsay is 'Open for Business'. For appointments please call 993-6455. His next trip to Pelly will be November 2nd and Mayo on November 3rd, and every second week after that. Listen for announcements on the local radio stations. For appointments in the communities contact Lindsay by calling our Dawson office collect, at 993-6455, or contact your local Health Center.