



Newsletter

Christmas 2023

WELCOME MUSEUM MANAGER - GRACE GUY

We are very pleased to welcome **Grace Guy** as museum manager! Grace Guy was born and raised in Yellowknife, and has been writing book reviews featuring Northern and Indigenous content for the local newspaper since 2019. She has completed a Masters of Arts degree from University of Alberta, and has been working full-time at the Yellowknife Book Cellar.



As museum manager, Grace will be leading the Society's main museum operations and programs, helping us to get up and running in time for the grand opening by March 2024. (*photo: Vincent Ret*)

MUSEUM CONSTRUCTION

All of our focus has been on finishing the building mechanical systems, construction of the entrance ramp, and exhibit development. We now have many of our display cases ready. The Introduction, Land Acknowledgement, Timeline, and Map panels are on the wall, and the Traditional Activities, Gold Discovery, Prospecting, Yellowknifers at War, Coming to Yellowknife, Mink Farm, and Life in Mining Camps cases and panels are installed. And of course, our three dioramas are largely completed, including the plexiglass barricades. The shuffleboard floor is also completed. Thanks to all the volunteers who have showed up to help over the past few weeks: **Helmut Epp, Ryan Silke, Walt Humphries, Marie Adams, Diane Baldwin, Conrad Schubert, Kevin Sheedy, Mike Borden, and Brian Latham.**

GEOSCIENCE FORUM AND CHRISTMAS SALES

We had our regular booth at the Geoscience Forum in November 2023 manned largely by member **Barb O'Neill**, and we even sold some merchandise at various Christmas sales. Thank you to **Pam Taylor** for organizing the Christmas craft sales, which brought in a nice amount of money. There has been lots of public interest in what we are doing.

DONATIONS

Some of the monetary donations in recent months include from **Barb O'Neill, Linda Lelek, Brian Latham, and Alice Payne** - Alice donated over \$9,000 through Canada Helps!

The **Yellowknife Curling Club** donated a number of old curling trophies, including the historic Stanton Cup, one of the bonspiel prizes for women curlers in Yellowknife from 1940 to 1960.

The family of **Karin Lundquist** donated a silver cup given to her in December 1938 by the Daughters of the Midnight Sun, to celebrate her birth as the first non-Indigenous, "white" child born in Yellowknife. Karin was the daughter of John & Nina Lundquist. She died in

August 2015 in Burnaby BC, and her niece, **Shelley Kritzer**, came to Yellowknife in November 2023 to see the North and donate the cup to the museum.

Norma Harder donated a Negus Mine “Hogans” fastball sweater worn by her father, Earnie Harder, who worked at the mine’s kitchen in 1952.

Allan Muir, son of Ken Muir, Giant Mine’s first mine manager (1944-1951), donated a 1951 oil painting of the mine by then well-known local artist and photographer John Rennie, and a rare colour photo of the pouring of the mine’s first gold brick in 1948.



TOURS

We were happy to provide museum tours to a number of visitors to Yellowknife. Some of these visitors included **Gren Thomas, Matt and Kit Spence** (a former Giant Mine family), **Linda Lelek** and friends, **Shelley and Darcy Kritzer**, and **Marie Legault, Brenda MacDonald**, and **Nazim Awan** from the Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency vice president territorial operations.

A 1940s YELLOWKNIFE CHRISTMAS - by Mildred Young

By the time Christmas came, night had fallen on the North. The children came to school in the dark and went home in the dark. A hazy sort of day hovered over us about noon then faded away again into the Arctic night. The stars sparkled above us most of the time, with the glow of their light on the snow lighting the landscape.

Christmas was a round of activities with some people not going to bed at all over the holiday season which was celebrated in almost complete darkness. All the mines held open houses to which we were all invited when we travelled from one house to the other feasting on goodies and drinking whatever was offered. Because of the spindly nature of the trees of the area, it was not easy to obtain a decent Christmas tree, but nearly every house had one decorated with electric lights. In one house, the tree had nothing but blue lights that reflected off the angels’ hair that lay around the bottom. I was enchanted. It was the first time I had seen a tree with electric lights anywhere but in a store, and I silently vowed that if I ever had a house of my own I would have a tree every Christmas resplendent with lights.

For some time before the Christmas season, we had all, regardless of religion, been rehearsing for the Roman Catholic Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve. Night after frosty night, we travelled down into the Old Town to sit huddled in our parkas in Father Gathy’s little log cabin, singing all the familiar carols while someone peddled an old organ. If we leaned up against the walls of the cabin, our backs froze, for the cold came right through the logs and put little caps of frost on all the nail heads.

The Anglicans held their Christmas service at 11:00pm Christmas Eve in their tiny church nearby, finishing in time for the choir to hurry to the theatre building to sing the Midnight Mass for the Roman Catholics, a service attended by the entire population, including the girls from Glamour Alley. In the deep dark of winter, Yellowknifers seemed to draw closer together against the cast emptiness that lay all around.

(Mildred Young was a school teacher in Yellowknife from 1947 to 1950. The above story is from her book: *Into Canada’s North Because it was There*)

70 YEARS OF MARRIAGE CELEBRATED

A big congratulations to **Albert and Gladys Eggenberger** on celebrating 70 years of marriage on October 21, 2023! The Eggenberger family are long-time supporters of the Society's vision for a museum at Giant Mine.

The Eggenberger family came to Yellowknife in 1961 on the newly built Mackenzie Highway. Albert & Gladys established a milk distribution business and with their children Garth, Ed, and Jennifer have operated many other ventures, including J.J. Hobbies, a pool hall, storage rental, and the Mon gold mine. The Eggenbergers also brought Ocktoberfest north and were active swirl dancers.



BRUCE AND PATRICIA NIKIFOROW

We are sorry to learn of the passing of Bruce and Patricia Nikiforow on September 14, 2023 in Edmonton. Bruce Nikiforow was born on January 7, 1926 in Galt, Ontario. Bruce first moved to Yellowknife in 1949 and returned permanently in 1951 and started his career as paymaster at Giant Mine, where he worked for 38 years until retirement in 1986.

Patricia was born on March 16, 1928 in Provost, Alberta. Patricia moved to Yellowknife in 1952 and worked at Giant Mine's Cafeteria as the cook and baker. On September 12, 1953, Bruce was united in marriage to Patricia.

Bruce and Patricia spent 33 years of their 70 years of marriage in Yellowknife where they raised their family of three children: Carol, Bruce and Melody. They were dedicated and committed to their community, participating in many organizations.

GRACE RAVNDAHL

Grace Edith Jackson was born in Wilcox, Saskatchewan on September 2, 1927. Until her death on October 13, 2023 at the age of 96, she lived over 64 years in Yellowknife, first arriving in 1949 to work at the Bank of Commerce.

After two years in Yellowknife, she was off again - this time to Calgary, Uranium City and Edmonton. But the North beckoned and she returned to Yellowknife in 1962. With her new husband John Ravn Dahl, Grace raised two children, Cheryl and Clayton. She continued to work for the Bank of Commerce (later CIBC), retiring after 37 years. While raising her children and working full time, Grace made time to pursue her twin passions of curling and golf.

CHIEF EDWARD SANGRIS

Our condolences also to the family of Yellowknives Dene Chief Edward Sangris, and the entire community who mourned his passing on October 31, 2023. As leader of Dettah between 2007 and 2023, Chief Sangris dedicated his life to serving his people, negotiating the Akaitcho Land Claim and keeping the Wiiliideh language alive.

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Yellowknife Historical HALL OF FAME



Yellowknife's history is full of cherished family, friends, and interesting characters who made our community great.

Help us build a Hall of Fame at the Yellowknife Historical Museum!

Who would you nominate? Submit a 100-150 word biography of the person outlining their importance to the community together with a photo.



Email your ideas to the Yellowknife Historical Society

info@yellowknifehistory.com

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We are collecting coffee mugs for our new museum restaurant. Any standard sized coffee mug will do with a logo of a local existing business or past business or organization, sports team or any logo that has a Yellowknife connection to it. We want to have a collection of mugs that both supports and remembers the businesses and organizations that represent Yellowknife, past and present. If you have a mug to donate, please drop off to either **Quality Furniture** or contact Diane Baldwin yellowkniferocks@gmail.com for pick-up.



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