



Newsletter



Christmas 2022

Welcome to our Christmas edition newsletter for 2022! Works continues on the museum project and we are pleased to announce some significant donations and progress on the building.

MAJOR DONATIONS TO SOCIETY

The Yellowknife Historical Society is pleased to announce three recent monetary donations. Thank you to **Alice Payne**, the **Eggenberger** family and **J&R Mechanical** whose combined contributions injected over \$225,000 dollars into the Society's museum project. A wonderful Christmas present towards Society projects!



Tom Payne

Alice Payne is the daughter of famous Yellowknife prospector Thomas Payne who was responsible for staking gold claims at what became the Con Mine, and continued to invest in Yellowknife for many years. Ms Payne wrote an exciting biography on the life of her father entitled "Quin Kola: Tom Payne's Search for Gold" and she continues to have an interest in the future of the city.

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 twirl dancers.

J&R Mechanical, owned by Joe & Elise Chorostkowski, is one of Yellowknife's only plumbing and heating contractors in business since 1976. The family has supported our Society for over 20 years and J&R is one of our main construction contractors.



J&R Mechanical

These families as long-standing supporters of Yellowknife have time and again proven their charity to local causes, and their donation towards our museum project will go a long way towards helping celebrate and present the Yellowknife story of which they have been a major part.

We have secured significant funding from various levels of government together with private donations from Yellowknife businesses and residents who all have generously provided the capital needed to make our museum a reality. A complete list of sponsors to date can be found on our [website](#).

SUMMER CONSTRUCTION WORK

Construction continues on the **museum project** although delays in the availability of contractors has pushed back our anticipated completion date into next spring. Carpenters continue to drywall and mud and tape the walls; J&R mechanics are fine-tuning the infloor heating system and installing unit heaters. Kitchen equipment is being ordered. The boiler seacan has arrived in town and was foamed and cladded by Kasteel at their lot.



Diane Baldwin, NWT premier Carolyn Cochrane, Marie Adams, Helmut Epp, Pamela Taylor

GEOSCIENCE FORUM

It was great to be back in person at the **Geoscience Forum** again after three years. The Trade Show ran each day from November 15-17, 2022. We exhibited our display and sold merchandise at the table. A big thank you to all the volunteers: Helmut Epp, Marie Adams, Ryan Silke, Diane Baldwin, Fran Hurcomb, Pamela Taylor, Yvonne Quick, Barb O'Neill, Bruce Davidson, and Walt Humphries. We made about \$800 in sales of merchandise and memberships and made some good connections.



Cameron Bay – precursor boom town to Yellowknife

A special merchandise feature was limited edition copies of Ryan Silke's book "**Cameron Bay, Great Bear Lake – The Story of the NWT's First Boom Town**" which was finished this year. The donated books quickly sold out. The book is available for free online at: https://www.yellowknifehistory.com/sites/default/files/cameron_bay_history.pdf

ADDITIONAL DONORS AND SPONSORS OF NOTE IN 2022

A big thank you to all of our supporters in the past year! Here is a list of some of the donations of artifacts and money since our last update in the spring of 2022:

Vern Christiansen donated an old 'Town of Yellowknife' sign that once hung in the old City Hall on 50th street.

Judi Beduz donated an assay scale that may have come from Discovery Mine.

Ron Williams donated an oil painting by Sheila Hodgkinson of the Con Mine headframe.

Gord Piro donated a number of curling trophies from his mother's sport collection and loaned for display Mike Piro's RCAF uniform and war medals. He also donated two Cambro coffee urns.

Terry and Stephen Woolf donated a homemade coffee table they made, constructed from an old cast-iron stove base and core boxes.

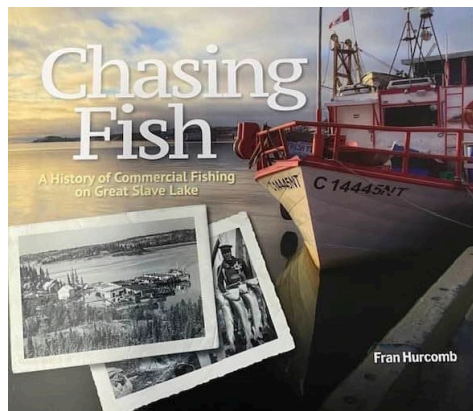
Jeremy Flatt, owner of the former Fat Fox Restaurant, donated some kitchen equipment that will be of use in our proposed restaurant.

Norah Higden donated memorabilia from her brother Doug's collection.

Dan Haldorson donated a tap and die set from an old mine that he cleaned up.

Workers Safety Commission donated some mine rescue equipment that it was surplus, since it has given up the role as running the mine rescue competitions in the NWT.

Private monetary donations were from **Denise Lockett** who donated \$500, **Barb O'Neill** donated \$250, **Elaine Spencer** donated \$200, and **G. Thompson** donated \$100.



FRAN HURCOMB'S NEW BOOK

Congratulations to **Fran Hurcomb** of Yellowknife, one of our members, for the completion of her treatise on the history of commercial fishing industry around Great Slave Lake!

The book is now for sale at Down to Earth Gallery, the YK Bookcellar or by contacting Fran at franhurcomb@gmail.com

"Chasing Fish" takes a deep dive into the fishing industry on the lake and the impact it had on the area between the 1945 and today, and it includes an over-view of life on the lake before then. It is a fantastic book.

CHRISTMAS IN YELLOWKNIFE 1947

In 1947, Santa Claus visited the Dene village of Dettah for the first time. Well-known Yellowknifer Gerry Murphy, for whom our hockey arena was later named, dressed up as Jolly Saint Nick. Here is the excerpt from *The News of the North* newspaper, January 2, 1948 edition:

“Christmas Party at Indian Village”

The Indian village of Ettakke, about four miles southeast of the town of Yellowknife received its first visit from Santa Claus, or Johnny Claus, as the Indians say, on Christmas day. A snowmobile furnished by Carl Jensen and driven by Bob Guck, took ten persons across the bay to the village. In the party were Gather Gathy, Father Ebner, Brother Vincent, Miss M. Young, Miss M. Dubetz, Miss F. Betz, Henry Busse, Mike Murphy, Jack Rennie, and Gerry Murphy. Mr Murphy was dressed as Santa for the occasion.

When the villagers saw the snowmobile coming they flocked to the mission. There were 65 bags of candy given out. The candy was left over from the arrival of Santa at Yellowknife on December 21, arranged by the Daughters of the Midnight Sun. It had been donated to Father Gathy for the purpose.

When Santa had handed out all the candy bags and the local photographers in the visiting party had taken numerous pictures, Chief Suzie Abel spoke a few words of gratitude.

ABOUT THE MUSEUM PROJECT

The Yellowknife Historical Society envisions the museum site at Giant Mine as a place that celebrates all aspects of Yellowknife's interesting history, from its Indigenous stories, geological setting, prospecting, the industrial activities of the gold mines, and the pioneer entrepreneurs that laid the foundation for the town in the 1930s. The museum will diversify current tourism-related opportunities and is expected to appeal to visitors as well as residents of Yellowknife.

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MAJOR SPONSORS

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ALICE PAYNE