

NWT Mining Heritage



September 2011

The NWT Mining Heritage Society is a group dedicated to building a mining museum in Yellowknife. It was officially incorporated in July 2002.

The group owns several buildings at the old Giant Mine site and plans to renovate the recreation hall first, followed by buildings at the A-shaft area.

The society has also begun development of outdoor displays at Giant, surrounding the public boat parking lot.



Year in Review at Annual General Meeting

Welcome to this edition of the Mining Heritage newsletter which brings a new expanded format for your entertainment.

At the recent Annual General Meeting of the NWT Mining Heritage Society held in Yellowknife on August 31, a new board of directors was elected (see below) while president Walt Humphries provided a report on the year past. Highlights include the third annual Beer Barge Bash, repairs to the recreation hall

foundation, the distribution of geology DVDs to northern schools (see story Page 2) and the completion of a mining heritage brochure for Yellowknife.

Walt thanked the membership for their continued support and for the donations by corporate sponsors for the Beer Barge, and other contributions through monetary funds or artifacts to our activities and collections.

We are still many hundreds



Walt Humphries

of thousands of dollars away from our goal but we persevere in our dedication to opening a mining museum for the NWT at the old Giant Mine site, and we look forward to your continued participation!

Board of Directors 2011/2012

At the AGM held on August 31, some new faces were added to the Board of Directors while some long-serving members announced their resignations. We welcome Dave Ritchie and Norah Higden to the board, and with thanks for their years of service and dedication, we say goodbye to Mike Byrne and Yvonne Quick. Mike comes from a long-line of mining tradition and we know he won't stray

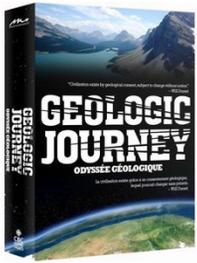
far from our activities, and the same goes for Yvonne, who has been instrumental in the organization of the annual Beer Barge BBQ bash. Good luck to them both but we know they will not be strangers!

Officers of the new Board were selected at a meeting held on September 14, and the new line-up is listed here.

Board Members

Walt Humphries, president
Mike Vaydik, vice-president
Norah Higden, secretary-treasurer
Diane Baldwin, Ryan Silke, Deb Bain, Gord Piro, Dave Ritchie, John Clark, David Jessiman
Coordinator: Stephen Clark

Society Supports Geology Education in Schools



The Society is very pleased to announce that we have arranged with the CBC for a copy of the program *The Nature of Things* series "GEOLOGICAL JOURNEY", to be placed into every community in the Northwest Territories and Nunavut.

We hope the students, schools and teachers enjoy it and make good use of this educational program. We chose this series because it features Canadian Geology. It shows people working in the field exploring different aspects of our geological history and it also touches on the importance of mining, to our country and to our economy.

The program will give students a new appreciation of our land and that it sparks an interest in pursuing careers in geology or mining.

This project was completed in partnership with the Walter Gibbins Memorial Trust Fund. The Fund was set up after Walter's passing in 1992. He was a government geologist who looked after the Arctic Regions of the NWT and what is now Nunavut. The money from this fund is used to promote geological awareness and education in the North.

We would like to thank the Yellowknife Community Foundation for managing the Fund, Boris Atamanenko of the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre, Kevin Chlebovec of the CBC Learning Department, Stephen Woolf of Diamond Duplicating for copying the DVDs, and teachers from across the north who have jumped on-board this project.

Wishing Robin Wylie Well

We were shocked to hear that Robin Wylie, one of our members, was onboard the First Air flight that crashed in Resolute Bay last month. Robin was one of three survivors and is now back in Yellowknife and recovering well in hospital. We wish Robin and his family all the best.

Promoting education in the field of geology is a mandate of the NWT Mining Heritage Society and we continue to work with the Walter Gibbins Trust Fund to celebrate science.

Recent Additions to the Collection



Ernie Hauca with his hockey jersey

Many thanks to our supporters who continue to send us information, photos, and memorabilia for entrustment to the mining museum collection. Here are some of the high-lights:

Ernie Hauca mailed us his **Giant Grizzlies hockey jacket** from the 1957-1958

championship year (pictured left). Ernie worked at Giant for a number of years and skated for the elite Grizzlies hockey club helping them achieve victory numerous times. Thanks Ernie!

Terry and Judi Cozzetto, former Con Miners, donated **memorabilia from their**

time at the mine, including old badges, stickers, and cups - wonderful collectibles, and we thank them very much!

Jeannie and Les Rocher for a **collection of maps, letters, and journals from trapper/pro prospector Frank Morrison** dating back to the 1930s, so thanks to the Rocher family!

Early Days at Giant Mine – by Dale Attrell

In the summer of 1946, I was working in Edmonton, Alberta when I read in the paper that the Northwest Chamber of Mines was hiring workers for the mines in the north. I went to see them and was offered a job at Giant gold mines as a flunky in the kitchen. The pay was \$300.00 per month plus room and board and air fare to Yellowknife and return after one year.

The day that I left Edmonton was very exciting. I had never been on an airplane before so when a small group of us boarded an old DC3 war plane I was a bit nervous. The plane shook and rattled and there was lots of black smoke when we took off. I really enjoyed the lights of the city as we flew over them. The route took us first to Hay River. I was the only passenger from Hay River to Yellowknife.

We landed on the ice of the bay close to old town. A truck came and unloaded supplies and the pilots walked to town. I was left standing there by myself and about ten minutes later a car drove out. It was Bill Frame in his taxi. I told him I had no money to pay him. He laughed and said I could pay him when I got paid. He drove to Giant mine and we found the cook was still there so he took me to the

bunkhouse and got me settled in.

When I arrived at Giant it was very strange at first. However it didn't take very long to assimilate into the group that I worked with. We started work at 6am to 9am then back at 11am until 2pm. Our third shift was from 4pm to 6:30 pm. As a flunky our duties consisted of setting and clearing tables. We also cleaned stacks of dirty dishes. The kitchen staff were like a family unit. We all got along and had a lot of fun working together.

We soon got to know some of the office staff and miners as well as other workers. One morning we saw a team of dogs approaching. It was a native Indian looking for food scraps to feed his dogs. We always had some food left over so we gave him some and told him to come back and we would save the best leftovers for him. He would come around about once a week. We were very certain that we were feeding more than his dogs. His name was Stan Mercredi. We became friends and he told us that the food that we gave him was very welcome. Otherwise all they had to eat was fish and dried caribou meat.

We would go into town as a group and usually gather at



Giant Mine B-Shaft
1946

the old hotel beer parlor where we would enjoy friendly rivalry with Con Mine workers and town people.

I found the town to be a very friendly place. There was a mixture of people: native Indians, prospectors, miners and business people. There were float planes taking off and landing every few minutes. There would be a lot of excitement when a tug hauling barges or a sled train arrived with supplies. As a rule the hotels stayed open 24 hours so there was always somewhere to go to keep warm. The people of the north would always help anyone who needed it.

We in the bakery were very busy during the peak construction. Fred Wilson and I worked long hours to keep up. There were 600 to 700 men working during that period. I managed fairly well

“We would go into town as a group and usually gather at the old hotel beer parlour where we would enjoy friendly rivalry with Con Mine workers and town people.”

continued next page...



NWT Mining Heritage Society

Box 2818
Yellowknife, NWT
X1A-2R1

Phone: 867-873-6078
Fax: 867-873-6079
E-mail: info@nwtminingheritage.com
Coordinator: Stephen Clark

We're on the Web!
www.nwtminingheritage.com

This newsletter is published periodically as events are planned and organized.
Edited by Ryan Silke



RECOGNIZE THESE FACES??

The first person to correctly guess five or more of the names in this 1985 photo of the Giant Mine mechanical crews, posing with the mine's 10,000th gold brick, will get a free Giant Mine coffee mug! We are currently attempting to identify people in our extensive collections from Con and Giant mines and will appreciate the help.

More photos to come in future newsletters!

Email your guesses to: info@nwtminingheritage.com

...Early Days at Giant Mine, continued

with most of the baking by working very long hours. Art McMahon, the head cook, helped me out by baking cookies by the dozens.

As the crews were working three shifts, Fred and I became short order cooks for the late night shift. We would cook bacon and eggs toast and lots of coffee for them. They were a good bunch of guys and we had a lot of fun with them.

At the official opening in 1948, we were very busy preparing a special dinner for visiting dignitaries. This was a very special day for all of us.

The entire kitchen staff, except the cooks, were given the day off and a catering company took over. All of the visiting dignitaries were fed in the dining hall. For everyone else, there were long tables set up outside. There was a large crowd of people at the concentrator site for the pouring of the first gold brick.

This was a very exciting time for most of the Giant employees, a culmination of years of hard work. The remainder of the day was party time where we all mingled with the government MPs from Ottawa and other officials.

We all went on a tour of the concentrator and watched the first gold brick being poured. The next day, Fred and I took four government officials on a fishing trip up to Prosperous Lake, where they caught several large lake trout.

Several weeks after the grand opening, the company hired a catering company to provide food services and most of us left at this time to return to our homes.

- Cheers to Mr. Attrell for sharing his story with us! The full version is to be published in Ryan Silke's upcoming book, "High Grade Tales".



Fred Wilson, cook
at Giant kitchen
1947