



Newsletter

Christmas 2021

Welcome to our Christmas edition newsletter for 2021! It has been a busy summer of work for the Society and we have some exciting news to report to our membership and sponsors.

### SUMMER CONSTRUCTION WORK

Thanks to a **GNWT Industry, Tourism and Investment “Community Tourism Infrastructure Contribution Program”** grant of \$200,000, construction projects got underway this summer! **Wayne Guy Architects** were engaged to provide architectural drawings for Phase 1 of the project, involving insulation, construction of partitions, asbestos removal, door installation, interior staircase, and vestibule landing. This work was conducted by **Kasteel Construction** during the summer and fall of 2021. Work has been slow due to problems securing qualified labour. Warmer temperatures have allowed this work to proceed into the winter months.



Dingeman of **Summit Roofing Limited** did a small repair job using metal flashing to help move water away from a roof transition area.

Volunteers continued small demolition projects and repairs to walls and flooring. Material under the building, including old pipe and wiring, is also slowly being removed. A strong group of volunteers helped take apart and move the pool table. Thank you to all the volunteers who helped this summer in various ways: **Chris Cameron, Kim Hawkins, Jayda Hawkins, Marie Adams, Helmut Epp, Diane Baldwin, Blaine Kelly, Ryan Silke, Dave Kellett, Velma Sterenberg, Richard Bergen, Chris McMillan, Sarah Woodman, Klaus Schuehing, Memphis Silke, and Doug Smith.**

We also acknowledge the financial support of our members, **GNWT Education Culture and Employment, the Government of Canada (The Canadian Northern Economic Development Agency)** and the **City of Yellowknife** to pay for this summer's program!

## OLD TOWN RAMBLE AND RIDE

While events like the 'Beer Barge' had to be cancelled again due to the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, Yellowknife experienced a window of opportunity mid-summer to have some fun. In July, the 'Folk on the Rocks' music festival returned to form, and in August Old Town celebrated the 'Ramble and Ride' festival. It was the long weekend, and one of the hottest two days on record! The Yellowknife Historical Society set up a merch table and the popular Heritage Photo Booth at the old Johnson's building supplies property. We raised \$1200 in sales! Saturday was a busy day while Sunday the crowds settled down, but everyone was captivated by the 'Old Stope Bar' photo booth and we had a lot of interest in the museum project too.



Thanks to all the volunteers who made this possible: **Bill Braden** for his expert advice on photography, the **Rocher family (Lorna and Jeannie)** for use of the property, and the set up and tear down crew (**Helmut Epp, Sue Epp, Diane Baldwin, Cheryl, Kathy Unger**). We also had a great sales team of **Barb O'Neil, Marie Adams** and **Brian Latham. Ryan Silke** organized the event and did all the photography and processing of images.

## ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

The AGM was held virtually on September 29, attended by about 10 members. The regular update and financial statement was read, followed by a slideshow of work accomplished to date and some of the artifacts recently acquired.

The slate of directors for 2021/2022 are as follows: Helmut Epp, president; Ryan Silke, vice president; Marie Adams, secretary-treasurer; and Walt Humphries, Diane Baldwin, Mike Vaydik as directors. Tracey Bryant is coordinator. Terry Warner and John Clark have left the board after several years of service.

## ACQUISITIONS AND DONATIONS

Thank you to the following people and organizations for the recent donations:

**Andy Stuart-Hill** – Andy was a mill clerk at Giant Mine from 1958-1964 and sent us a USB stick of his digitized photo collection together with two Dog Derby tickets from 1959-1960. Thanks Andy! In the last issue of this newsletter, some of Andy's photographs were shown.

**Robert Carr** – Donated more artifacts from the Ptarmigan Mine area: power line insulators from the 1941-1942 period.

**Ken Hall** – Donated some of his family collections: Giant Curling Club stein, large glass carboy, first hard helmet worn in the Giant mill, and two brass fire hose nozzles from Giant's fire hall. Ken's father Albert Hall worked in the Giant Mine mill 1952-1986.

**Robert Powless** – Donated a silver presentation tray commemorating his 10-year anniversary of work at Giant Mine, 1977-1987.

**Wendy Carter** – Donated a steamer trunk brought up by Margaret Baker when she settled in Yellowknife in 1951. Margaret was wife of Ed Baker at Con Mine.

**Brian Latham** – Brian contributed money towards our Trust Funds managed by the YK Community Foundation, to which we are gratefully indebted!

**Anna Soinen** – Anna also contributed money directly to the Society. Thanks Anna!

**Ryan McCord** – We would like to welcome Ryan as a corporate member! Ryan is owner of ULA Services Ltd who does window cleaning around Yellowknife. Ryan and his partner Claire dropped by for a visit this summer while we were doing work and they were really interested in what we are up to in the old building. Happy to have you as a member, Ryan!

And thank you to the many other members who have renewed or signed up for the first time! **Velma Sterenberg** has been active in helping us engage with chefs to design the best possible museum café kitchen space. **Bill Braden** has been slowly cleaning out his shed and cabin and forwarding us interesting ephemera and books. And a special shout-out also to **Yvonne Quick**, long time member, who until recently was caretaker of our George Hunter photo collection for over 15 years.



## SPONSORSHIP SIGN

A sponsorship sign is now up on the site and the first batch of major sponsor logos put on. There is also a smaller sign promoting the project that is on the building itself. In the above photos we see Helmut Epp leading a volunteer crew to correctly place and level one of the signs, and Marie Adams, Diane Baldwin, Walt Humphries, and Ryan Silke posing after installing the larger sponsorship board.

## LETTERS FROM YELLOWKNIFE – CHRISTMAS 1937

In the last issue of the newsletter, we shared some letters from the Tony Stubbs collection. Tony came north with Cominco to work at Con Mine as an accounting clerk in 1937 and he wrote several letters home to his parents on the journey north and then regularly as he settled into Yellowknife life. The letters portray the gold community in its infancy as a construction camp and follow the trajectory of Yellowknife as it booms and then busts in 1939 with the call to war, and the subsequent deluge of workers, including Tony, leaving the north to sign up with the armed forces. Here is a letter he wrote to his mother during the Christmas season, on December 22, 1937:

*It is hard to realise it is nearly Christmas—it is so much different from any other I have ever had. Thanks so much for the parcel which came in a few days ago. I knew the Indian sweater would be there so I had to get it out despite the “Do not open”. However I did not look at anything else and wrapped the parcel up again ready for Christmas. Naturally I had to find out what Dad sent me as it was wrapped in the sweater—so I thank you both for these presents...My own Christmas shopping has been exceedingly limited and very belated—made doubly late by the poor flying conditions. Such as it is it may still be in the Yellowknife post-office. Cards were all sold by the time I got to the store and I have only been able to send two.*

*I was quite surprised to see a good assortment of mechanical toys in the Yellowknife store. I cannot imagine a young child with such a toy. Eric and I bought some tumblers in preparation for the festive season. They cost \$3.00 a dozen for ordinary cheap glasses. Daily papers are the only item I can think of that cost the same there as in Edmonton. While we were over there we had a few games of pool which cost us nothing as the barber has not got his license yet. Even up here he has to buy a \$75.00 license.*

*...A load of turkeys came in with my parcel. Also sausages to go with them. I hope the cook really excels himself when he cooks them...*

*...The camp wood is being hauled from a distance of about three miles away and there is quite a pile of logs on the ice near the staffhouse. For a while it was almost impossible to keep ahead of the enormous appetite of the boiler furnace but now they have a huge stack some ten feet high between us and the cookhouse which should last over the two holidays of Christmas.*

Visit <https://rdstubbs.ca/letters-from-yellowknife/> to read more of the letters.

## 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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