



Anniversary Special Edition

20 years - Aven Manor

15 years - Yellowknife Seniors' Society

10 years - Baker Community Centre

Congratulations

In this Issue:

Messages

Commissioner of the Northwest Territories	3
The City of Yellowknife	4
NWT Seniors' Society	5
MLA's	6
Martha MacLellan	7
Cynthia Bekkema	8
Vivian Squires	9
MP Western Arctic	10

Looking back...	11
YKSS Logo	11
Anniversary Celebrations	
Review	12-15

Our Seniors' Stories

Arden, June Van Dine	16
Balsillie, (Moose) Pat	17
Carr, Bob	18-19
Collinson, Mabel	20-21
Crkvenac, Ana	22
Findlay, Joan	23
Gould, Josie	24-25
Green, Marg	26
Haener, Mike	27-31
Hunter, Don	32-33
Lambert, Loreen	34
Morrison, Marnie	35
Naidoo, Rathna	36
Neary, Patricia	37
Scullion, Jack	38-39
Williams, Chris	40-41
Wylie, Jim	42-43
Acknowledgements	44

From the Public Relations Committee...Mabel Collinson, June Balsillie, and Marg Green

It has been a pleasure to put together a newsletter in celebration of Aven Manor's, YK Seniors' Society, and Baker Community Centre's anniversaries.

The co-operation from contributing Seniors was tremendous. Historical and statistical information was researched and presented. The stories are great and through them our community members can gain an appreciation of "early days". The history of the YK Seniors' Society and of Baker Community Centre is encompassed in the accounts by the three Executive Directors' contributions. Thank you Martha, Cindy, and Vivian.

We wish to thank everyone who helped to create the success of the newsletter, and more importantly, the success of our week of anniversary celebrations. Special mention must be made of those committees who had a heavy load:

- 1. Report on history and programs of Baker Community Centre...Melanie Griffith and members.*
- 2. Anniversary Planning Committee...Kathryn Youngblut and members.*
- 3. Decorating Committee...Sharon Veitch and members.*

A big "Senior Thank You" everyone!





Commissioner of the Northwest Territories

Monday 11 June 2007

Mrs. Vivian Squires
Executive Director
Yellowknife Seniors' Society
2-5710 50th Avenue
Yellowknife, NT
X1A 1E9

Dear Vivian,

Celebrating National Seniors' Week: June 10-17, 2007

Thank you so much for including me this week in your group's activities.

I would like to congratulate and honour all Senior Citizens and Elders in the NWT, as we celebrate National Seniors' Week in Canada. This week is a wonderful opportunity to acknowledge the daily contributions that our seniors and elders make in our northern communities, and to society as a whole.

I would also like to thank all the organizations and volunteers who work so tirelessly on behalf of seniors and elders. In particular: the Yellowknife Seniors' Society, and the NWT Seniors' Society. It is important for people in our communities to pay respect to all of our seniors and elders this week, and throughout the year.

Sincerely,

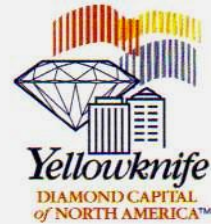
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Anthony W.J. Whitford', written over a large, stylized flourish.

Anthony W.J. Whitford
Commissioner



OFFICE OF THE
MAYOR

P.O. BOX 580, YELLOWKNIFE, NT X1A 2N4
TELEPHONE: (867) 920-5693 • FAX: (867) 920-5649
WEBSITE: city.yellowknife.nt.ca



April 5, 2007

On behalf of the City of Yellowknife I send our congratulations as you celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Baker Centre and the 15th anniversary of the Yellowknife Seniors Society.

Both the Baker Centre and the Yellowknife Senior Society have made great contributions for the citizens of our community. I wish you many many more successful years of serving our seniors.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Gordon Van Tighem".

Gordon Van Tighem
Mayor

THE CITY OF YELLOWKNIFE



NWT SENIORS' SOCIETY

March 28, 2007

President & Board of Directors
Yellowknife Seniors' Society
#2, 5710, 50th Avenue
Yellowknife, NT X1A 1G1

Dear President:

On behalf of NWT Seniors' Society I would like to congratulate you and your membership for the successful years at Yellowknife Seniors' Society. Your hard work and dedication to seniors has been exemplary.

NWT Seniors' Society was adopted by your group and provided with office space and support from November, 1996 to January, 2005. Your assistance and support is very much appreciated by all the seniors of the NWT.

It has been my personal pleasure to be welcomed so warmly by your group over the years whenever we attend meetings or functions at the Baker Community Centre. Your generosity is the spirit in the motto - "Seniors Helping Seniors".

Again, congratulations on your success and our best wishes go with you into the future!

Yours sincerely,


Beatrice Campbell
President

#102, 4916 - 46th Street, Yellowknife, NT X1A 1L2
tel: (867) 920-7444 fax: (867) 920-7601
email: seniors@yk.com website: www.nwtseniorsociety.ca

Dear Yellowknife Seniors

We send you heartiest congratulations on the 15th anniversary of your Society, the 10th anniversary of your success at the Baker Community Centre and the 20th anniversary of the opening of the Aven Senior Manor.

Your dedication, commitment, and leadership are a tremendous contribution towards improving the lives of seniors and elders, and to the well-being and enjoyment of the whole city.

Your actions demonstrate to Northerners the importance of active living, and keeping seniors connected to each other and the community. Thank you for your good work, and we look forward to supporting you in the future on issues that make a difference for seniors, and our community.

Hon. Joseph Handley
MLA Weledeh

Hon. Charles Dent
MLA Frame Lake

Hon. Brendan Bell
MLA Yellowknife South

Bill Braden, MLA
MLA Great Slave

Robert Hawkins, MLA
MLA Yellowknife Centre

Sandy Lee, MLA
MLA Range Lake

David Ramsay, MLA
MLA Kam Lake

Dear Yellowknife Seniors' Society:

Congratulations on your many achievements Yellowknife Seniors. Fifteen years and still growing!

I have been very fortunate to have been a part of so many firsts...

- ...to be there as the Baker Centre opened, doing my four month practicum as a Mount Royal gerontology student
- ...the first "Lunch with a Bunch" cooked by Kay Grabke and hoping at least twenty five people show up
- ...the new dishwasher after doing thousands of dishes by hand and always running out of hot water
- ...the five dedicated bridge players who met for almost two years and now are five tables regularly
- ...four new computers and will they use them?
- ...our Oktoberfest, Chuckwagon and Valentine dances
- ...the one and only road trip we made to Hay River
- ...birdhouses with the grade 5 French class
- ...cookies, hugs and entertainment from Toni Auge's kindergarten classes
- ...the dinner for Hon. Flora MacDonald
- ...the stories, the hugs and even the tears, plus cups and cups of tea and coffee
- ...the excitement in reclaiming the CNIB and NWT Seniors' offices-more space
- ...and the FLOOD

You have been great teachers and I have learned valuable lessons from you. I admire your dedication and hard work in getting the funds for the Baker Community Centre but also your tenacity in getting money those first years - catering, bingos, and selling raffle tickets for other service groups. I have formed many strong friendships and have fond memories working with you. I miss the laughs and the good food. I DO NOT miss setting up and taking down tables.

Here's to another fifteen happy and prosperous years!



Martha MacLellan
Past Executive Director

April 12, 2007

Cynthia Bekkema

Yellowknife Seniors Society,

I appreciate the opportunity to express my congratulations to the Yellowknife Seniors Society on their 15th Anniversary and the Baker Centre's 10th Anniversary.

For a short period of time, I was allowed the privilege of serving as the Yellowknife Seniors Society's Executive Director and hold special memories of my time spent with the seniors. I hope the general public, as well as the members, recognizes the special services the Society offers to the community. Many of these efforts go unrecognized, as they are carried out behind the scenes. Some of these include teaching a young Korean, not only the language, but also our customs. Other examples are supporting a fellow member through a difficult loss of a spouse, offering transportation to those who want to attend events at the centre, making and delivering meals to those who are unable to attend lunches, participating in the programs offered, spending time with youth, such as our reading programs, as well as seniors offering services to other organizations in the community.

In closing, I would like to take this opportunity to recognize and applaud the important contributions the Seniors have offered and continue to offer Yellowknife,

Respectfully,

Cynthia Bekkema

SOMETHING MAGNIFICENT HAS ARRIVED !!!

15TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE YELLOWKNIFE SENIORS' SOCIETY

10TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE BAKER COMMUNITY CENTRE

It gives me great pleasure to congratulate the Newsletter Team for the super job they do, compiling the information and producing the Newsletters for seniors.

This past year has been full of engaging moments for us all at the YK Seniors' Society. For me, personally, I want to begin by thanking the Board of Directors, staff, and volunteers at the society, for their labour of love, which keeps the programs at the Baker Community Centre operating.

Seniors have made the Beautiful Baker Community Centre a place where seniors can feel at home and participate in many educational, recreational, and social events and so continue to build a supportive community for the health of seniors. In the building named in his honor, Ed Baker's motto in life has become evident: "Home is Where Your Friends Are."

.When Ed Baker handed Cathy Praamsma, director of Aven Senior Centre a \$100,000.00 cheque in payment for the suspenders she had got him and he told her he wanted the money to be used to build a recreation center for Yellowknife Seniors, what a vision Ed Baker had. The City of Yellowknife and the Yellowknife Elk's Lodge each donated \$100,000.00 to the funding fund. With over \$10,000.00 collected through donations, the reality of Ed Baker's dream began. In honor of Ed's dream, the building would be called the Baker Community Centre.

As we reflect back over the years of dedicated volunteer work by each precious senior, let us not lose the vision that each of you have seen fulfilled in the Yellowknife Seniors' Society being formed and our Great Baker Community Centre being built. With torch in hand, my desire is to catch the driving vision that each of you seniors have and take that vision to the next generation of seniors.

Thank you seniors, for being such role models for us!!

Vivian Squires
Executive Director
YK Seniors' Society



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CANADA

**Congratulations
Yellowknife Seniors' Society
on your 15th Anniversary**

Thank you present and former members for your dedication
to provide outstanding service
to the citizens of Yellowknife.

I wish you all the best in the future.
It is my honour to represent you in Parliament.

Dennis Bevington

Dennis Bevington, MP
Western Arctic



HOUSE OF COMMONS
CANADA

**Congratulations
Baker Centre
on your 10th Anniversary**

Thank you for providing 10 years of outstanding service
to the seniors of Yellowknife.

I wish you all the best in the future.
It is my honour to represent you in Parliament.

Dennis Bevington

Dennis Bevington, MP
Western Arctic

Looking back...

These snippets of information were taken from long-ago minutes and from senior's quotes:

- In 1992, the seniors' organization was registered as Yellowknife Seniors' Society
- Before the advent of Baker Community Centre in 1997, meetings were held in homes, schools, churches, and in the Boardroom of Aven Manor after it was completed
- In June, 1994, fifty-three (53) seniors attended the AGM
- In December, 1994, the seniors' bank account was \$861.82
- By the time work started on the Centre the bank account had risen to \$7000.00
- The reality of Ed Baker's dream of a centre for seniors got its start with his own contribution of \$100,000.00
- Through the generous support of many businesses and organizations, in particular Elk's Lodge and Royal Canadian Legion, the work was completed and Baker Community Centre opened in 1997

Baker beginnings...

- For several years NWT Seniors' Society had its office in the room where the copier is now
- CNIB rented the space now known as the lounge
- Coffee time, social activities, and book exchange took place in the Poppy Room now the computer room
- The majority of programs introduced at the Centre in 1997, continue to this day with some additions
- The first Lunch with a Bunch was attended by thirty-four (34) people

You've come a long way, seniors!



The Yellowknife Seniors' Society Logo was designed by Wally Wolfe.

The flower symbolizes appreciation for simple things/nature/mountain avens.

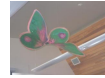
The purple symbolizes prestige/regality.

The gold symbolizes land of the midnight sun/golden years.

Submitted by Cito Domingo

Review of some of our activities during our Anniversary Celebrations:

June 10th - Opening Activity



- A special church service at Baker Centre
- Highlighted by music of the Salvation Army Band
- Seniors Gladys and Albert Eggenberger and Ed Jeske testified how their faith in God and God's love guided them through stressful times



A senior helping a senior.



June 11th - Impromptu Happening

- Regular coffee break became "special"
- Commissioner Tony Whitford joined us
- At Tony's request we all helped make a big hole in his birthday cake
- It was Bob's Carr birthday also



June 12 - Picnic

- Held at Centre...sponsored by Canadian North
- 135 people enjoyed the excellent food and the fabulous music by Bill Gilday's Sir John Franklin musical group
- Special bonus...Canadian North representatives served us and cleaned up. Also gave us a new wireless sound system



June 13th - Business After Hours

- Chamber of Commerce sponsored event
- Great wine and cheese provided by LeFrolic Bistro and Bar



June 14 - Open House

- Attended by sixty (60) people
- Enjoyed video "Hearts of Gold"
- Seniors' art display in Boardroom was a highlight
- Two tours of the centre, the manor, and the court were well received



June 15 - Fish Fry

- A favorite event for all seniors
- A big 'Thank You' to Elk's Lodge #314 for a wonderful meal
- Father's day gifts were handed out
- Mabel Collinson and Cito Domingo were presented with YK Seniors' Honor Roll plaques



June 16 - Banquet

- Held to honor people who were involved in the fund-raising, construction, programming, and operating of the 10—15—20 buildings
- Special thanks to YK Direct Charge Co-op for the food, the Squires Company for cooking it, Tai Chi for serving, Le Frolic Bistro and Bar for the wine, Josie Gould and Sharon Veitch for the superbly decorated tables
- Passing the key ceremony. Jim Wylie who received the key to our centre ten years ago, handed it on to Albert Eggenberger
- Thanks to Kathryn Youngblut and her committee for a fantastic Seniors' Week



Baker Community Centre



Yellowknife Seniors' Society



Aven Manor

My Journey to Yellowknife from Lunenburg

The year was 1984 - June 24th - that my sons Stephen, John and I began our drive to Yellowknife, NWT.

My daughter Judy and husband David had moved to Yellowknife in 1982 and having made a change in my life in 1982, I jumped at the chance to begin a new life.

Prior to starting our long drive, by mail I moved clothes, dishes, bedding etc. along with my portable Singer Sewing machine and artificial Christmas tree plus ornaments. Having family across our vast country made our trip a very memorable journey. So with my sons, TV, china and silverware we began our journey. We stayed two nights with Mom in Newcastle, NB, two nights with my sister Helen Ross and family, five nights in Sault St. Marie, ON and four nights with brother Ron, Jean and family in Yorkton, SK.

I can still flash back to the miles we traveled...each province has its own unique geography...NS, NB, PEI. I love Quebec with such rolling plains...Ontario such a vast province...loved Thunder Bay, Lake Superior...the prairies were beautiful...sky meeting the horizon. People forewarned us that it would be boring...not to me...June month...seeing the yellow fields of rape seed and golden grain for miles and clusters of forest. Judy and David met us in Edmonton. John flew back to Halifax where he was employed at National Sea, Lunenburg, NS.

We caravanned up the McKenzie Highway and enjoyed the splendor of the Great McKenzie River crossing by ferry. Everything was new and vast. We spent a night in Manning. The highway was not paved but was kept up...no flat tires!

On July 6th we arrived in Yellowknife and I began nursing July 16th at the Stanton Hospital. I loved it all! My plans were to see Stephen graduate from Sir John Franklin High School in 1987 and then move on. Guess what? I'm still here and retired here. I met and married the love of my life, D'Arcy Arden. Yellowknife is my home and is the best place to be.

June Van Dine Arden



Seven Going on Eight

When you're moving to another town when you're seven going on eight, you do not have a say as to what place you're going to, when you are going, or how you will get there.

As a result, when I was seven going on eight my family traveled from Fort Resolution on a boat called "Dease Lake" to Yellowknife. This trip took place on September 4, 1945.

The boat was pushing several barges which were unloaded at Con Mine, Ptarmigan Mine, Giant Mine and finally, at Yellowknife's Old Town docks.

At these docks, my mother and six kids left the boat and walked to our new home when I was seven going on eight.

I went to school and was put in Grade 2 behind students my age - seven going on eight.

In the late forties you could stand on Main Street and throw a rock. You would either hit a dog or a Balsillie - when I was seven going on eight.

Patrick (Moose) Balsillie



How did I end up here?

The year was 1972 and I was accepting a transfer from CBC Montreal to Yellowknife. I was told if I spent 18-24 months in the north, I could transfer to Vancouver, once a job became open. I spent a lot of time working for the Northern Service (CBC) in Montreal, broadcasting by shortwave to the north. The two Inuit broadcasters in Montreal (Mary & Elijah) told me that, contrary to most thinking, Yellowknife had no igloos. I arrived in Yellowknife on a DC-4 and booked into the Yellowknife Inn for two weeks. I found the CBC next day, located in the Hornby building and was greeted by Sandy the secretary, and then met other staff, one of whom I had worked with in Montreal (Steve Hook) a few months earlier.

It was September and I was told I needed a parka from the Bay. Ottawa mentioned that I would be living in the "high-rise ", only to find out that I would instead be given an apartment in an old renovated DPW row house on the corner of Franklin and 52 Street. The apartment was large and would accommodate the furniture I had shipped north. After a few days my furniture arrived so I booked out of the Inn. Soon the weather turned cold and by the end of October it was -40. The building had heat problems, cold asbestos wall panels and no storm windows. If I added too much humidity to the apartment, it would collect as droplets on the cold ceiling and fall like rain. The staff at CBC was very friendly and I had met another couple in the Inn who had arrived to start a new job, too.

Christmas arrived and so I was introduced to some great parties at Con and Giant Rec Halls and at CBC, of course. 1973 arrived and I was soon involved in bringing live, color satellite TV service to the north. Yellowknife and Pine Point were first and soon we were flying to Fort Smith and Uranium City to connect them up to huge satellite dishes installed by Telesat Canada. The first live color TV broadcast in Uranium City was a two hour opera!! Not exactly what the people expected. We went down the mountain, from where the transmitter was located, to the Bay store as they had the only color TV set in town. We made sure there was a good signal on it and got out of town before we were shot!!

Soon it was Carnival time in Yellowknife and CBC radio did a live show for three days from a trailer on the ice. We were part of the carnival events in those days and I feel we were responsible for getting a good crowd at the event site. I traveled with Justice Berger's crew to most communities in what is now the NWT, sending daily radio broadcasts of the day's hearings of Berger's pipeline inquiry. I also worked on several Arctic Winter Games broadcasts from Alaska to Northern Quebec.

Yellowknife in those years was very transient. One would just become friends with someone and then they would move south. Because most people were very friendly, one would soon meet others. I met and enjoyed the local Dene, who didn't move away, and soon was introduced to their culture. After two years in the north, I no longer wanted to move to Vancouver.

...continued

My job, as electronic technician was very interesting and a constant challenge as we often had to adapt to the extremes of weather and cold. If equipment worked in the north, it should work anywhere else in Canada.

Joe and Helen Tobie's friendship made me want to stay here. I met Mary at the "longest bar" during Caribou carnival, where Joe and I were enjoying the fiddle music of Angus Beaulieu. We married in 1976. I will celebrate 35 years in Yellowknife this year. Over the years I learned to drink Tri-milk, to expect no fresh produce come break-up and freeze up, bought beer in spring time that one could not see through, and tried to enjoy life at -45 degrees below for weeks on end. I always stood in the huge line every May to get my bedding plants before they all sold out, in hopes they would bloom before frosts in late August. The best steaks in Western Canada were served at the Hoist Room then and the best entertainment was at the Strange Range, not to mention the hair pulling contests at the Legion and Elks dances. In 1978, Yellowknife was selling lots in a swamp opposite the Corrections facility on a street named after prospector Jake Woolgar. I bought one of the first homes and spend every year jacking up my house so it won't sink too deep in the permafrost. I remember too, when Prelude Lake had fish in it and we were never skunked. This is all part of Yellowknife's life that isn't any longer, but it is still good enough, to return to after a visit down south.

Bob and Mary Carr



Over the Mackenzie Highway

Our first trip over the Mackenzie Highway was in 1969 when we moved to Yellowknife. For most of the ensuing yearly trips over this famous road, there was always some part of the road under repair or construction. No trip was without a substantial amount of trauma at some point; the trip I will describe is the “best” of the worst.

My ex-husband was a staunch member of the then Yellowknife band of male drivers who operated under the same Mackenzie Highway travel standards

You were to leave Yellowknife very early in the morning, supplied with lots of “people” food and varied beverages, two jerry-cans of gas and two spare tires. You were now set to travel steadily with as few stops as possible. When you had safely crossed over the Alberta-Northwest Territories border, these drivers would then consider the holiday officially underway!

On our previous trips over the Mackenzie, my ex would stop only at one scenic spot-Alexander Falls. Never would he drive in to other scenic attractions and waste travel time.

On this particular trip we convinced him, we still don't know how, to take us in to Lady Evelyn Falls, a trip of approximately four miles each way.

Our old clunker of a car had been working fine, so my ex drove us to the falls and even allowed us a precious fifteen minutes to explore the area!

As we traveled back to the highway, our cheery mood was soon shattered. We had a flat tire! As we pulled over to change it, it was discovered that another tire was rapidly losing air.

My ex, never a very patient man, approached a near apoplectic state over this situation. We (our two daughters, one son and me) were ordered out of the car, to help if asked, and stay out of the way if we weren't. Once out of the car, the heat, the black flies, and the mosquitoes made everyone irritable.

Continued...

...continued

My ex asked our ten year old son to cross the ditch and get a good-sized rock, the purpose of which I forget. By now, Dad is a sweating, bug-swatting, red-faced wreck because of the frustration of nothing going right.

His reaction to his son's request, "Hey, Dad, come over here and have a look at all the fossils I've found." was not that of a loving parent! In fact, the air may still bear faint blue streaks from the unprintable vocabulary my ex used in his enraged response!

Eventually, everything was sorted out, one of the girls managed to sneak some fossils on board for her brother's collection, and we were on the road again.

We were a very subdued group of passengers until we made it to a garage and obtained new tires.

Shortly after that we made it over the border and the mood among us lightened, for after all, we were now officially on holiday!

Mabel Collinson



My Canadian Story

Ten years ago I was living in my home country, Croatia. If someone told me back then that one day I would become a Canadian, it would simply be impossible for me to believe it. In my wildest dreams I could not imagine that one day I would be able to speak English and have many Canadian friends.

My story began in 1995 when my oldest daughter married a Canadian man, moved to Edmonton and a year later to Yellowknife. It was for the first time in my life that I heard about a place in Canada called Yellowknife. My first visit to the Canadian North was in 1999. I arrived in Yellowknife in late September and was not prepared for the winter, which lasted long and was very cold and dark. I did not speak a word of English and I was not able to communicate much with my grandsons. I did not know anyone outside the family and hardly did anything outside the house. My feelings were a mixture of happiness, homesickness, and sometimes sadness.

However, my daughter asked me if I would like to immigrate to Canada and look after two grandchildren. I said yes although it was not what I really wanted to do at the time. After one year I still felt isolated, depressed, and unhappy and I knew I had to do something to change it. Enrolling into English program for newcomers seemed like a good way to start and I set out learning English as my number one priority. This gave me an opportunity to meet people with stories and life experiences similar to mine. It made me feel better and more optimistic right away.

A few months later I heard about the Baker Centre, a place where senior people gather and socialize. One Friday I decided to pay a visit to the Centre. As I entered through the front door I saw a nice, large room full of people, but no familiar face. I almost turned around to go home. Luckily a nice lady saw me standing at the door and came out to meet me. I asked if I could come in and she confirmed with a smile. Later I found out that her name was Jan Stirling. That was my very first meeting with senior people from Yellowknife and from that time on I awaited anxiously every Friday to go for the "Lunch with a Bunch". As time passed by, my language skills improved and I met many wonderful people who helped me make Yellowknife my new home.

In August of 2006, I was granted a citizenship and was sworn in as a new Canadian. It is still hard to believe that with a Canadian passport I can now travel wherever I want without going through a lengthy process of a visa application. Looking back to those first years of my life in Yellowknife, I am not sure if I would have survived without help from the people from the Baker Centre. Today I am a happy and a proud Canadian with many friends to share my happiness with.

Ana Crkvenac



Bob and I grew up in Northern Ontario. Bob went to Chiropractic College in Iowa and eventually we ended up in Edmonton. Bob went to work for Canada Manpower in the late 1960's and practiced Chiropractic in the evenings. One day the manager at Manpower asked if anyone would like to transfer north to Yellowknife.

Bob wasn't the only one who wanted to make the move. We both always wanted to get back north. He jumped in the van one weekend in late fall of 1969 and drove up the highway to check the place out. He fell in love with Yellowknife and we moved north the summer of 1970 and into government housing.

Bob wanted to practice Chiropractic too, and the feds said that he had to work for them for at least two years. After the two years, he left the government to go into practice. When we had to move out of government housing, there were no houses available, so we lived in two tents at Long Lake for the summer.

We had four children, ages two to eleven at that time. August was getting cold and we were getting a bit nervous about finding a place to live for the winter. Bob went to see the Commissioner to ask why we couldn't rent one of the many empty government houses. He would argue that with no housing available it was difficult for people to come in and start a business..

It just so happened that a house became available that day on 50A Avenue. Eventually, we bought a home on the lake in School Draw. Unfortunately, we were in trouble again as the lady we bought from couldn't move into her new house as it wasn't finished yet and we had to move out of ours.

We met Johnny Rocher one day and he said "Rent my shack at the top of Franklin Avenue until you can move into your house." Bob ran his Chiropractic Clinic in the front of the building, worked at Giant Mine on evening shifts and we lived in the back. It was very small and we had to cook on a camp stove and Bob's clinic x-rays were developed in the bath tub two nights a week. We managed and after many months moved into our house on the lake.

Yellowknife has been a great community to raise a family. We love this country...'the North' and now I enjoy the Senior residence at Aven Court.

Joan Findlay



Homeward Bound—Northern Lights

It was a cool November day in 1965 as my two daughters and I proceeded on our trip to Yellowknife, Northwest Territories. The plan was to move North to be a family once again. My husband, Howard (Howie), the girls' father came to Yellowknife in September 1965 to find us a place to live. Accommodations were very scarce but as luck would have it a family at Con Trailer camp decided to sell their trailer as opposed to renting it.

Five year old Valerie Gwen and four year old Dawn Marie and I rode the Greyhound bus from Edmonton to the Ferry Crossing. We would have to ride all day and all night on the bus. Being new to all of us, the unknown was a frightening place to be. The girls however, were excited and chattered with every stranger that would hear a little girl's tale. Being wary of strangers was not something our girls practiced. We were out of the big city and they were with mom and going to see dad.

I was immediately impressed with the kindness of the northern people we encountered. One particular act of kindness on our journey has never left my memory. There were a few rowdies on the bus that night and who didn't seem to care that there were two small children in their presence. A couple by the name of Gentle Mike and his wife Rita Paul requested the rowdies clear out of the back seat of the bus, made a bed for us and then appeared to stand guard so we could have a peaceful sleep.

A terrible dilemma was our next obstacle for when the bus reached the south river crossing, the ferry was making its last trip across the river, not just for the night, but until the ice road could be made, many weeks into the future. We would have to go to Hay River and book a motel room to sleep in for the night and then make flight arrangements the next day to get to Yellowknife.

My personal quandary was that I only had \$11.00 in cash and no credit cards. How would I feed the girls and pay for a motel room with just \$11.00. As we were descending the bus, an aboriginal woman asked me, "Don't I know you from somewhere?" We started talking as we waited for our luggage and realized that she and I were roommates at the University of Alberta Hospital for quite some time, back when we were children. We would sneak out our hospital window at night to play in the playground on the hospital property. We never did get caught. This would be my second guardian for she wanted to share a room with the children and me, assisting greatly with my financial restraints.

Continued...

...continued

Once settled in the hotel room I phoned Howard in Yellowknife and he made arrangements for the girls and me to fly to Yellowknife the next day.

We wondered how the girls would manage the northern bush plane. Just as we had never done a long bus trip, we had never ridden in a small plane before either. While I was sitting white-knuckled and too chicken to look out the windows, the girls played wide eyed with nary a care.

Our first night in Yellowknife was simply wonderful. The Northern Lights seemed to be dancing in the sky. It was hard to believe it could be so beautiful.

Josie and Howard Gould



Becoming a YKSS Member Through a Series of Events...

In July 1995 my husband, Charlie, died and I was left all alone in Newfoundland where we had lived for 29 years. Our three children had moved to other places in Canada. In October my daughter Wanda and her husband Bill phoned and invited me to move to Grande Prairie, Alberta. There I could help with my grand daughter Leah...taking her to and from school and stay with her until they came home from work. This I did.

In 1996 our daughter Sandra moved to Grande Prairie from Port Hope, Ontario and our son Robert also moved to Grande Prairie from Yellowknife. So there we were "one happy family". Robert got married to Juanita in 1996 and in 1999 he came back to Yellowknife for a job interview and started to work immediately.

However, there was another event...in January 1999 Juanita was going to have a baby and guess what...she decided to have it while Robert was in Yellowknife. Earlier, they had asked me if I would move to Yellowknife to take care of their baby so they could both work. I said no because I was contented in Grande Prairie. I got a call from Juanita to take her to the hospital and the nurse said she was a 'keeper' (I asked the nurse if Juanita was a good sized fish?!). So I was present when my grandson, Nelson, was born. The first time I held him in my arms within minutes after his birth I was *moving to Yellowknife*, no doubt about it!

Another event...in 2002 I was returning to Yellowknife from a trip to California when I met Gwen Sanderson at the Edmonton airport. We became friends immediately. She was working in Yellowknife and she invited me to join her on Saturday morning to go to the Mingles group for breakfast. There I met Helena To and Ana Crkvenac. They invited me to join them for lunch with the Bunch at the Baker Centre on Fridays. I then became a YKSS member and in 2005, Lauren McKeil nicely railroaded me into accepting a nomination for the YKSS Board of Directors. I am now in my third year with the board on the Public Relations committee.

Marg Green



MIKE HAENER

In 1953, I was working construction work on manholes and the sewer system at the Penhold Airport, south of Red Deer. I met and worked with Max Andersen there. It was a wet spring; we had to wear rubber boots and we weren't too happy with the work. One night, we heard a radio program about Giant Mine looking for carpenters. We decided to go to Yellowknife to see what it was like and get a job there. We planned to go for one year!

Before moving to Yellowknife, I wanted to return to the family farm in Cremona to visit my father and sister, so Max headed north before me. He sent word that he got a job at the mine and it was okay for me to come up, too. In order to plan my trip, I learned that it was a gravel road from Edmonton to Hay River. At the time, I had a 1934 Model-A Ford with hand brakes that were known for not lasting too long. I decided to sell the car to a friend in Didsbury for all of \$175. He said he would send the money later on. I am still waiting!

Now, I had to buy a heavier car. Max had already bought a 1948 Dodge Chrysler that seemed to work well, so I bought one almost identical to it. I drove for several days to Hay River and had to stay there. At that time, vehicles were barged across the Great Slave Lake by Northern Transportation Communication Limited, but they did not take people across.

The only way I could get across the lake from Hay River was by Canadian Pacific Airlines. It was to be my first venture on an airplane. The DC3 did not leave until the next day and I didn't have much money left to pay for a place to stay the night. Bobby Portz owned a small store and he let me sleep in the backroom where he kept all the goods and furs he sold. I can remember waking up the next morning, and getting quite startled to see wolf skins hanging down from the ceiling above me.

I had never been on a big plane before. I got on the DC3 and took off from Hay River. I was holding onto the seat when half-way across the Great Slave Lake with only water in sight, one engine conked out and the plane dipped suddenly to the side. I was thinking I was going to fall out. The pilot did a good job and landed the plane in Hay River. I had to wait for three days for another motor to come up for that same plane to get fixed and take me across. I was pretty nervous getting on that plane but told myself they had fixed it. The flight went good, I even managed a look out the window to see the shoreline and lake. We landed in Yellowknife to find a small 16' by 20' shack for the terminal.

Somehow, I caught a ride into town. I was hungry and ended up at Jack Glick's restaurant "The Cave". It had a really low ceiling, so you could hardly walk in it. I talked to Jack a little bit. He sized me up when I told him I needed a place to stay overnight. He had a little two story shack in the back and said I could stay one night.

The next day, I met up with Max Andersen and stayed with him for a couple of days until I could get my bearings and find a job. I went to Giant Mine. They found out I had back surgery in 1949 and they would not hire anyone who had a disc operation. I hunted around town and met Bert Lundstrom and started to work with him. He was a small contractor doing jobs in town. I had my tools sent up from the farm by plane. I did some work with Lundstrom but he did not have much work ahead of him.

I got to know a Swede named Iver Johnston. He had a construction outfit doing a general contracting business building mostly houses with a carpenter shop in Old Town. I started work with him and was paid \$1.75 per hour. At that time, a meal in the restaurant cost me \$1.25. After I got going, I ran a tab at the Gold Range Cafe. I could get my food there before I went to work, because we were working long hours, mostly 10-12 hour days to get ahead. I would get most of my breakfasts there. Newton Wong was there running the restaurant, Randy Pond was serving and Jimmy Pond came to work in the restaurant later. They ran the Gold Range Cafe for quite a while. Newton later broke away from them and was building apartments and doing commercial building.

Yellowknife had both an Up-Town and an Old-Town. The Bank of Commerce was a small building next to the alley where the present bank is now. The Up Town stretched to where the Multiplex is now. That was where Bevan's Dairy was located. All the cows were milked by hand to supply milk for the town. Somehow, there must have been more grass growing back then for the cows to eat.

Max and I lived in Old Town. We paid rent but it was not very much as it was only a one room shack next to Weaver and Devore (where Just Furs is now) with the toilet out back. We cooked our suppers on our electric stove. When we were really hungry and wanted to treat ourselves, we bought steaks from Slim Hodgen's grocery store right across the street, at the base of what is now called Pilots' Monument.

In Old Town, there also was Busy Bee's Coffee Shop, just up the hill from the Wild Cat. The Wild Cat was already closed and getting run down. Tom Doornbos was delivering lake water by the bucket for 25 cents. Back then, communication with my family in Alberta was by mail or the occasional message on the two-way radio at Jack Glick's store. He charged for it, so I only used the radio at Christmas time.

In 1956, I got to know a German carpenter named Warner Jahns. I remember he had a 1956 Mercury car. I had saved enough money and wanted to travel a bit. Warner and I bought tickets to travel to Europe. In the winter, we drove to New York to get on the S.S. United States, a 35,000 tonne ocean liner. We went over on the ship to England. It was a four day trip. It was rough in February and the water was so rough I only had one meal.

We toured London, including the Windsor Castle, and took a ferry to France, where we rented a small Fiat car. We went to Paris to see the Eiffle Tower, inland to Hamburg to visit relatives. We both had relatives in Germany. Then we went to Switzerland. I visited my cousins from my mom's side in Morges. They still lived in the house where my mother had been born, along Lake Lucerne. We also went to the Alps and took a cable car up a mountain which I think was called Young Frau. Up there, they had a tunnel to walk through that was cut into a glacier. We went to Rome to see the Colliseum and then onto the city of Milan, but there were so many bicycles everywhere, it was hard to drive there. After a month of touring we returned home.

When I returned to Yellowknife, I continued to work for Iver Johnson. One spring, I ended up in the hospital, which was built Up Town at the current RCMP building site. I got jaundice and other people had it too. My pee was just about black and I was very weak. I think it had something to do with the water. I spent a week or 10 days in the hospital but it took a good month or more to get over it. I wasn't able to work much, but had saved up enough money to get by.

After working for Iver Johnson for two or three years, I went to work for C.H. Whiton. It was a company from Edmonton which had the contract to build the current Post Office building. Max had left the mine and worked on this job with me. We did the framing and all the floors which were done with 2x5's laminated on edge and nailed together. We had to bend down all day long, nailing the planks. It was a lot of hard work.

In 1958, Max and I started Haener-Andersen Ltd. Our first job was for Wardair to build their two story office building near their float base, just down the road from the Wild Cat Cafe. The building is still there today. We built it on piles supported by steel beams. Max's brother, Gunner helped us with this job. We started in winter and worked until the summer of 1959 to finish it. Max Ward had a construction outfit of his own in Lethbridge, so he knew his construction work and would come around to check on our work.

Around 1960, Haener-Andersen Ltd. went to work on the Roman Catholic Church still located on 53rd street. This was our nicest job; it had lots of detail work, windows, the tower and brick work. We hired an Italian, Vince Finore, as the concrete finisher and a couple of Scotchmen to do the brick work. The Church was built on piles to bedrock, but I don't think it has moved at all. Haener-Andersen also built four houses on what is now 48th street (across from Boston Pizza). Two of these Muttart prefab houses are still there. We also built some metal framed buildings in Old Town that were garages/shops. The company bought a cement mixer, called the Eleven-S to pour concrete. Peter Hovatt had showed me how to place and finish concrete floors with a power trowel.

Haener-Andersen was doing well, so we built our own carpenter shop across from where the bowling alley is now. It was a 48'x 24' shop built out of wood framing covered with straw panels on the walls and roof called Stramite, which was made in Innisville. Although, we paid rent to the Town for this location, the Town did not give us the option to buy this land. It was sold and our shop had to be moved. We went to Rat Lake next to R.M. Williams Trucking owned by Smokey Heal. Today, this would be along the section of Rycon Drive closest the Con Mine.

In the 1960s, we started ready-mix concrete with a couple of old trucks and a conveyor. We built Peter Bromley's house. It is now the Great Slave Medical Clinic. In 1962, we started to build the Bromley Building which is still on 51st and 50th Street. Back then, it was called Bromley Building Supplies and sold lumber and hardware. It was a pretty big job to build their original store; it took over 100 yards of cement.

In the 1960's, we also did work for Engineer Homes supplying the concrete. At that time, the houses were built and then jacked up. The forms for the basements were built, we poured the concrete through a basement window and then the house was let down on the basement walls. Despite the locations being approved by the city engineer for the School Draw area, the first half dozen houses shifted so badly their first winter, the basements had to be dug out in the summer and the houses were moved onto pilings. I remember Sven Lund had just started up a company and he did the pilings.

In 1965, I bought Max Andersen's shares in the company, but didn't bother to change the company's name and married Helena (Len) Tetterroo. I had met Len at Sutherland's Drugs. I remember her English was not very good. I would go in and buy toothpaste and soap and talk with her a bit. After we were married, Len moved into my apartment which was on 52 Avenue but we were already building our own house which we still occupy on 53rd street. At that time, our house had a clear view down to Great Slave Lake.

I saw a business opening to provide concrete for the construction work around the town. Frank Ruman had a shop near the current Fitz Theil Ball Park and was a good welder. Frank built me a conveyor and I set up a Batch Plant at our Rat Lake location. At that time, I had a shopman named Horst Pitch, and two carpenters named Knud Skibstad and Marvin Soderstrom working for me. The company built houses for their families. Mike Tettenborn is a cousin from Germany for whom I paid his way to travel from Germany to Yellowknife, when he was only 18, so he could work for our company.

In 1970, Len's brother, Louis Tetterroo came directly from Holland and lived with us and our growing family of three kids. Louis and the other workers helped build a couple of houses on Con Road and a number of other houses Up Town that were later rented out to Northwestel for their staff.

After three or four years at the Rat Lake location, we had to move again. A German named Hinz Luders had started his company of Arctic Transit Mix in Fort Smith and then moved it to Yellowknife. He had a portable batch plant with a conveyor and hopper for weighing the material but still used bags of cement. Hinz put up a silo at Kam Lake and used his conveyor to fill the silo with the cement bags. Hinz Luders had worked on the Yellowknife Inn but wanted to sell and leave for Edmonton. In 1967, Haener-Andersen bought Hinz's shop office and equipment. I re-named it Capital Transit Mix and it is still there today.

Work continued to grow and so did our family. Len and I raised five children. The four girls are raising their families in Yellowknife. Our son and his wife live in Calgary, Alberta. My sister, Denyse and her husband live in a small town called Tappen, British Columbia. In addition to family and work, I was also active in the community including golf (before the clubhouse), softball (player, coach and sponsor), curling (player, sponsor and executive member), bowling (player, coach, executive member and sponsor), Boy Scouts, Recreation Hockey and many school clubs. In 1987, I was honored with the Volunteer of the Year Award from the City of Yellowknife.

For 15 years (1961-1976), I was a volunteer firefighter. The firehall was behind the current Salvation Army building and they used to summon the volunteers from our work/homes with a loud siren that was heard from Old Town to Kam Lake. The two fires that stand out the most for me, were the Old Stope and the hospital. The Old Stope burned down on New Year's Day. It was minus 40 and we only had one fire truck. It kept freezing up so we couldn't pump water. We had to watch it burn. The hospital, which was at the current RCMP location, also burned during the winter. It was 1965 or 1966. It's replacement was built at the current Baker Centre location.

In 1975, Arnold Smith sponsored me and I became a member of the Rotary Club. Throughout the years, I have contributed to the Caribou Carnival Dog Derby, the Canada Day Parade, the Rotary Bike Auction and many other activities. I am still a member.

Mike Haener



How I Came to Move to Yellowknife

In 1966 I was employed with the Government of Alberta as Senior Probation Officer with the Juvenile and Family Courts in Lethbridge, Alberta.

The Federal Government advertised a recruitment program to establish a Department of Corrections for the building of both Adult and Juvenile Correction Facilities in the Northwest Territories and Yukon Territory. This included the hiring of probation officers within this new department.

I submitted an application for the position of Probation Officer and was hired. One of my reasons for making the application was an interest in the social and economic problems of the native people.

I grew up in Gleichen, Alberta, a small farming community of 500 people located 60 miles east of Calgary. Our neighbors were the Blackfoot people's reservation of 3500 people. I went to school with some of the native students and found that while they were just as able to achieve academically as I, they often experienced serious social problems when they tried to leave the reservation. I was also interested in learning more about the Eskimo (Inuit) people.

Earlier in my career as a Social Worker, I opened the first Adult Probation and Juvenile Offender Office in Red Deer, Alberta in 1957 and enjoyed this pioneer work. The prospect of being part of establishing a new service in the North appealed to my sense of adventure and the challenge of pioneering in Canada's last frontier seemed the right thing to do.

All persons recruited for the new Corrections Department of the Northwest Territories were assembled in Ottawa April/ May 1966 which included Superintendents and Deputy Superintendents for Adult Correctional Facilities, five Probation Officers and two Business Managers. This group lived in Ottawa doing research and ground work preparation in advance to the move to the Territories in September, 1966.

As an unmarried person I mainly traveled with Circuit Courts to the various communities until 1968 when I moved to Hay River and served the Fort Smith, Fort Simpson areas. In April 1970 I moved to Frobisher Bay when the Government of the Northwest Territories took over services for the Eastern Arctic. I served with Corrections/Social Services until March 1977 when I moved back to Yellowknife as the Institutional Social Worker at the Yellowknife Correctional Centre.

...continued

In June 1978 my wife Dolores and I married in Calgary and she moved to Yellowknife to join me. Dolores found work with the Department of Justice in the Sheriff's Office and remained there until she retired in 1994.

In 1986 I moved from the Correctional Centre to the area office of the Department of Social Services as a Probation Officer and retired in 1995. We had every intention to move from Yellowknife following retirement and to that end had purchased a second house in Courtenay, BC in 1986. After retiring we discovered we had formed some meaningful attachments to Yellowknife and the possible move was put on hold. We spent a winter on Vancouver Island house-sitting for a friend and spent some time in Penticton, BC. Our conclusion was that if we were to move south we would prefer the Okanagan to the west coast. As time went by Yellowknife and its wonderful community of seniors and friends won the day.

In 2006 we sold our Courtenay house and have rented an apartment in Calgary close to original roots and family. We are doing more commuting and enjoying the best of both worlds. Yellowknife will continue to be our permanent home.

Don and Dolores Hunter



How I Came North

Eight cats and I arrived in Yellowknife on May 11, 1969.

I lived in Calgary, working for a law firm there. One of the partners in the firm, Alice Ostrowercha, had gone to Yellowknife to practice the previous year and was enjoying the experience very much. I was bored and wanted a change so I wrote to her asking about jobs in Yellowknife. I never heard from her and decided that was a lost cause. A couple of months later I received a call from Alice's partner, Brian Purdy. His secretary was leaving and Alice had told him of my letter. She was away on court circuit at the time, so he went to her apartment and searched until he found my letter, then telephoned me. Legal secretaries, or indeed any experienced secretaries, were at a premium in Yellowknife, and after a short interview I agreed to come north.

I was met at the airport by Alice and Brian and taken to what is now my home and introduced to my new room-mates. Brian had purchased the house for his staff, as housing in 1969 in Yellowknife was very scarce. We then went to Alice's apartment for lunch and I decided it was safe to let my three adult cats and five four week old kittens out of their cage for a break. Of course, after a plane ride, an automobile ride, and in the midst of strangers, they were a little nervous. Alice had opened the oven door to check on lunch, and for some reason only known to her, one of my cats immediately jumped into the oven. Fortunately she wasn't hurt. Then a couple of the kittens thought Brian's leg was quite attractive and climbed all the way up with their sharp little claws digging into his nice trousers. He must have really been desperate for me to stay, because I learned later that he wasn't fond of cats. Despite a slightly embarrassing beginning, we all became friends and I worked for Brian until 1976 when he sold the firm.

Of course I had only come north for a couple of years for the adventure, but I'm still here. I never thought I'd be a part of the seniors scene in Yellowknife. As Yellowknife was such a transient town in the early years, most of the friends I made have left and I know fewer and fewer people. I'm very grateful for the Baker Centre since I retired. The Centre provides an opportunity to re-establish acquaintance with many people and to make new friends, as well as opportunities to keep on learning and keep on being active.

Loreen Lambert



Why I Came to Yellowknife

Twenty years ago my daughter, son-in-law, and grandson were transferred to Yellowknife with the Armed Forces. I visited them at least once, or more often, twice a year. I enjoyed all the daylight in the summer and the beautiful flowers and, of course, all the friendly people.

I was fortunate in participating in the first Elderhostel held in Yellowknife. It was a great experience and I made friends and corresponded with my roommate for many years. Once I retired, my daughter thought it would be a good idea for me to live in Yellowknife, so I said I would have to think about it.

Ten years ago, while in Calgary I had major surgery. My daughter came down to Calgary to look after me, and brought me to Yellowknife to live with her and her husband. Shortly after moving north I had surgical repairs done and, thanks to all the good folks here, it didn't take long to recuperate.

I decided that it was time to get out and meet the seniors so I joined the Yellowknife Seniors' Society and have enjoyed all the activities and programs offered at the Baker Centre.

So here I am ten years later, still going to the Baker Centre and participating in all the activities and enjoying all the friendly folks in Yellowknife.

Marnie Morrison



Rathna Naidoo's Trek to the North

I made my trek from the beautiful coastal city of Durban, South Africa in the summer of 1986 with my daughter and her family to my son's residence in Yorkton, Saskatchewan. The decision to leave South Africa was not a very easy one to make. With the apartheid practices in South Africa, the growing turmoil in the country, and a bleak future for my grandchildren; we decided to make the move to Canada, the land of opportunity and security.

After a few months of residing in Yorkton, Saskatchewan and Edmonton, Alberta and no solid job prospects for my son-in-law and daughter; the decision was made to head north to Yellowknife in August 1987 on prospect that my son-in-law and daughter would find permanent jobs in order to provide for the family. Within a week of arriving in Yellowknife, my son-in-law and daughter found permanent full-time jobs. This indeed proved that Yellowknife did give newly immigrant families the chance to prosper in their new adopted country.

Over the past 19 years, Yellowknife has provided my family and me with wonderful opportunities, friends, memories, and a secure and prosperous life.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the Yellowknife Seniors' Society on their 15th anniversary and the Baker Centre for celebrating their 10th anniversary this year.

Rathna Naidoo



How I came to Yellowknife

I came a couple of times for a visit in the summers. Then the last time it was for a visit also. But I liked it here so much I decided to stay here. I didn't know what the winters were like but I sure found out!

Patricia Neary



Immigrant Landed

The Montreal immigration officer, scrutinizing my papers, requested the purpose of my visit. I had come to work for Giant Yellowknife Gold Mines Ltd., Yellowknife, N.W.T. Having assured him that I had about \$100.00, with fares paid all the way, he wished me good luck on the "wild frontier" and welcomed me to Canada. Passport stamped, IMMIGRANT LANDED August 19, 1958, and relieved to be admitted as a new Canadian, I headed for the railway station and Yellowknife via Edmonton.

About six months earlier my two boyhood and lifelong pals, Phonsie Bradley and Tom Hurl arrived in Yellowknife to work for Giant. They must have impressed mill boss Lloyd Ross, as he employed me, solely, on their recommendation. Aware of my impecunious circumstances, they immediately forwarded enough funds to cover my fare and expenses. True friends indeed.

Although we had received a first class education in Northern Ireland, this counted for little. Work was scarce, prospects few and, as far as I was concerned, no future existed in the land of my birth. I caught the first available boat.

After clearance by the Chamber of Mines, Edmonton, and my first ever flight, I finally reached Giant on August 26, 1958. The Giant Camp was completely self contained and included a commissary, laundry, recreation hall and, best of all, an excellent cafeteria. We lived in comfortable bunkhouses, with full board for a few dollars per month. All of this, and wages ten times that U.K. average, I had landed on my feet.

The cafeteria welcomed outsiders. Town families would come for Sunday lunch. A standard charge of about \$1.50 or so applied, whether the visitor had a full meal or just a sandwich. This rule was not always appreciated. On one amusing occasion, I recall the immortal Tom Doornbos failing to negotiate a lower price for a bowl of soup. Old Tom, reputed to be "loaded", left without his soup.

My first days in the mill were spent scrubbing filters and various other odd jobs. After a short time, I was transferred to the crushing plant, where I spent the rest of my working life in Giant. The crushing plant had noise, dust and Johnny Botic. Johnny was about fifty, short and stocky with the demeanor of an angry bantam cock. This diminutive charge hand allegedly had the pinks, who spoiled his day, for breakfast. Initially, we had communication problems. He found my Irish accent incomprehensible, and soon suggested that it would be a good idea if I learned how to speak English. I thought this "rather rich" as after some thirty years in Canada, Johnny was still 90 percent illiterate. Deceitfully, I told him that, as we "No speak English" in the old country, I was on a tough learning curve. Johnny showed little sympathy. He too had early language problems, -No Kidding-! But just look at him now. Despite this unpromising start, and the occasional future altercation, Johnny and I became quite good friends and workmates. I was the longest surviving "punk".

Our bunkhouse companions were a mix of Canadian and many other nationalities. Most were single and in their twenties, all attracted by the “top dollar”. The ethos was work, work, and more work, with plenty of sleep in between. No wonder the Giant camp had a peaceful and trouble free reputation. A convivial atmosphere prevailed in those long ago pre TV days. People visited each others’ rooms for chat, banter and card playing. The rec. hall and cafeteria were everyday meeting places, where all mixed freely. Well heeled youngsters could indulge in expensive hobbies and toys. Pricey camera equipment, radios and Rolex watches were common. One of our number, Hans, would fly his plane, for a couple of miles to attend Sunday morning mass at St. Patricks. Vacationers returned from exotic Mexican, Hawaiian or Las Vegas holidays often stony broke, to start all over again. Other had more simple, if unusual pursuits. Bruce, a huge miner, took up knitting and when visiting, always brought along his latest creation to astonish us with his expert needle craft.

Many outside activities were laid on by the mines and town organizations. In summer we played soccer. The giant team organized by Rec. hall manager “Draggy”, never won a game, some sort of record I suppose. Our best result, a draw at Discovery, was memorable, only for the float plane flight there and back. Winter saw us cheering the “Grizzlies” and attempting wobbly skating. We took part in curling bonspiels and in spring, won the “broomball” tournament on the melting arena ice. An indoor cultural highlight was the visit of the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra, April 1959. It was the first ever symphony concert, for both Yellowknife, and many in the Akaitcho hall audience, including myself.

Eventually our time in Giant ran its course. Phonsie and I, still in our early twenties, no longer wished to prolong our monastic bunkhouse lives. Kindly Lloyd Ross offered to hold our jobs open and shift boss Arnold Smith predicted a “great future in the North”. Arnold’s forecast was correct and, to this day, I wonder if I made the right decision. We bade farewell to Yellowknife on Saturday, April 9, 1960.

Almost half a century has swiftly passed. Giant is no more. The tiny, wilderness settlement is now a modern city. In Ireland, three old Yellowknifers get together. John McCusker, Phonsie Bradley, and Jack Scullion are conducting a meeting of the “YK Seniors” in exile. The seniors reminisce and retell endless tales of their youthful lives, in that strange, wild and beautiful Northland and of warm Canadian welcomes.

Note: My long time girlfriend, Peggy and I were married Easter 1961. We settled in London, U. K., where I had commenced what proved to be a successful banking career. We raised five children, three girls and two boys and, thank God, are still fit, healthy and able to enjoy our seven grandchildren.

Jack Scullion
January 2006

Yellowknife! Here I come!
Yellowknife! There I go!

The first time I came to Yellowknife I was just passing through. It was August of 1960 and I had been in Canada for a *whole week*, a new missionary for the Anglican Church on my way to Kugluktuk, then known as Coppermine. I had arrived in Toronto the previous Sunday by Boeing 707 from England. I didn't know it at the time, but I was the first person the Diocese of The Arctic ever brought to Canada by plane; those before me and quite a number afterwards coming over by boat. Nor did I realize that Transatlantic jet travel was then only just over a year old. After a couple of days in Toronto, meeting the Bishop, I had my first view of Canada out of the window of the CN Transcontinental on a four day journey to Edmonton.

The next day we left Edmonton Municipal Airport by DC3, half passengers and half freight; side by side, not the way they do it these days. When we landed at Waterways (now Fort McMurray) and came to a bumpy stop somebody remarked, "It feels like we've got a flat tire". We got off and looked. We had *two* flat tires, one on the main wheels and the other on the tail wheel. There was another DC3 on the ground at the same time, but only one set of stairs which were shuffled back and forth between the two planes as we waited for the tires to be repaired.

When I arrived in Yellowknife I was whisked away by Mr. and Mrs. Ken Philpott to their home at Con Mine, at the end of one of the bunkhouses overlooking Great Slave Lake. Ken was, I believe, the Safety Officer for the mine at that time. My memories of the few days I spent with them are a little hazy after 45 years, but some things have stuck with me. I saw my first bowling alley in Con Rec Hall, and never saw it again until 28 years later when we were back at the Rec Hall for my son's wedding reception. I saw my first game of Ice Hockey on the television, even if it was film of the Leaf's game from the previous Saturday flown in by plane and rebroadcast on the local station a week late. I took a walk on the Con Dock, slipped on a wet patch and had my first, and only, swim in Great Slave Lake.

One evening we drove into town to go to the cinema. I remember we drove in through the bush and I think it must have been the present trail over Tin Can Hill. The cinema was in the dusty Main Street where the Scotia Centre now stands. I have an impression of a wide staircase leading up from the street into the foyer but I can't reconcile this with the old building, now moved to Old Town.

...continued

On Sunday, because the minister, Mr. Douglas was on holiday, I conducted my first church service in Canada. Later in the afternoon we took another trip through the bush; this time quite a bit further, to visit with friends of the Philpotts at Giant Mine.

My initial, if brief, stay in Yellowknife ended after four days when the weather cleared in Coppermine and we were told to be on the dock in Old Town the next morning, early. We took off from the Wardair Float Base in what I believe was Max Ward's first Single Otter, although he was not the pilot. I am reminded of this every time I pass by the Wild Cat Café and see the Wardair title still visible even after all these years on the old fuel tank across the road.

Four hours later I arrive in Coppermine. *(I thought we were landing at Echo Bay Mine on Great Bear Lake, but that's another story!!)*

Bishop Christopher and Mrs. Rona Williams



Driving to Yellowknife

In July of 1965, I got a phone call asking me if I wanted to go to Yellowknife for a diamond-drilling job. I accepted the job which would start in the new year.

By December 30, 1965 we had packed our car (a 1954 Oldsmobile) with all our possessions. On top of the car was a 4 ft by 6 ft sheet of plywood covered with boxes containing all our "stuff".

We left Nipawin, Saskatchewan on January 2, 1966 to go to Yellowknife via North Battleford, Edmonton and then North. We reached North Battleford at noon so had lunch and headed for Edmonton. On the way someone turned on the radio only to hear blizzard conditions were so bad people should stay off the roads. We continued on anyway and made it to Edmonton to Marion's sister's place by 5:30 p.m.

I became sick and we had to spend two days there plus the storm lasted that long. We left Edmonton on January 4th. Just out of Sigunda, we had a flat tire, changed it and continued on to Fox Creek where I was able to pick up a good spare to replace the flat tire.

We continued on. Up to this point there had been some traffic, but after crossing the Athabasca River junction with Highway 43 and heading north to Valleyview, the highway became just a track with deep snow. Lady Luck was with us and we did not meet any traffic for about forty miles. The track now had two lanes. We filled up with gas, had lunch at Valleyview. The weather was getting colder. We made it to Manning with no problems and stayed there for the night with the car plugged in. However, when we got up the next morning, the temperature was -35 degrees and someone had kicked out our car plug-in!

The owner-manager of the Riverside Motel was extremely helpful: got the car under cover, opened his heating fan full blast and heated the whole car. At around 10 a.m., I tried the motor and it responded. I picked up the family at the motel and once more we were under way to Yellowknife - only 600 miles left!

By this time I am sure my wife and family were wondering when we were going to fall off the end of the earth. It was our first trip of such a distance.

We went through High Level and on to Enterprise with no trouble, just cold! Cold! Cold!

Continued...

We stopped at Providence to fuel up. I asked Mr. Arichuk how cold it was.

His reply was, "What do you call that red stuff in the thermometer?"

I said, "Mercury."

Mr. Arichuk answered, "Well it has never come up beyond slightly above - 40 degrees!"

I left the car running, grabbed some sandwiches and at 7:15 p.m. we headed out for the last 200 miles into Yellowknife. It got so cold that it penetrated the car to the point my wife and kids covered the sides of the car with blankets to try to keep the inside warmer.

We arrived in Yellowknife at 12:45 in the morning. I left the family in the car while I checked our rented house to see that there was heat. There was! So the family took what they could carry and went in. I took the car through a snow bank to the back of the house where it sat until April. I did carry in the rest of the boxes.

To this day I have never had such a nerve-racking trip nor one so long.

We are still living in Yellowknife and have been retired for 15 years. We still love the people and the country.

Jim and Marion Wylie 2007





#2 5710 50th Ave.
Yellowknife, NT
X1A 1G1

Tel: (867) 873-9475
Fax: (867) 873-4318
E-mail:
ykseniorsociety@theedge.ca
Web site:
www.yksenior.ca
Lounge Tel: 867-766-3250

Thank you to all sponsors of our special anniversary events during Seniors' Week

Diavik Diamond Mines Inc.

Yellowknife Direct Charge o-op

Canadian North

Shoppers Drug Mart

Office Compliments Ltd.

Lake Awry Cap and Crest Ltd.

Elk's Lodge #314

Le Frolic Bistro and Bar

Yellowknife Chamber of Commerce

Tai Chi

Northern News Services (Mike Scott)

Patrick Balsillie

*Yellowknife Association of
Concerned Citizens for Seniors*

Yellowknife Seniors' Society