

Klondike Placer Miners' Association Miners of the Year Awards, 2003-2006

by Mike McDougall

President, Klondike Placer Miners' Association

For more than 20 years, the Klondike Placer Miners' Association (KPMA) has honoured miners who best represent, or who have made a special contribution to, the placer mining industry. We congratulate them and their families. The following are the introductions that were offered during the presentation of these awards each year.

2006: Frank and Karen Hawker

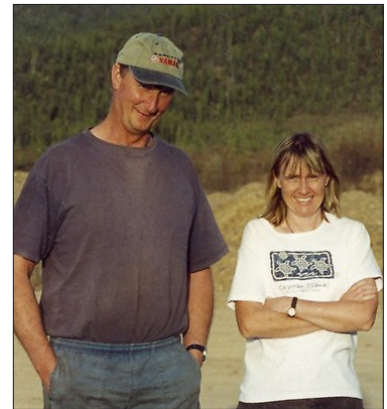
For 2006, we honour a family of Klondike Placer miners. The Hawkers have made extraordinary contributions to the Yukon's placer industry through their volunteer efforts and on-going support of the association.

In 1991, coming for a second time to Canada, our Mr. and Mrs. Miner of the Year and their family brought with them to the Klondike new techniques and technologies from New Zealand, and a willingness to learn the quirks of the Yukon placer field. Quietly, but certainly, they have been dedicated volunteers at all KPMA events. Frank has served two terms as a director of our association.

Frank and Karen have mined in many areas of the Klondike. They are thoughtful and careful miners who bring an efficiency and thoroughness to their mining. This has allowed the Hawkers to successfully work some non-traditional areas.

As recipients of the Robert E. Leckie Reclamation Award in 2003, Frank and Karen were recognized by government and regulators for outstanding reclamation on their Sixtymile mining property. They are strong proponents of careful mine planning and progressive reclamation to reduce both costs and work required to restore the mine site to a productive area.

The Klondike Placer Miners' Association is proud to honour Frank and Karen Hawker as Mr. and Mrs. Miner 2006.



Frank and Karen Hawker

2005: Joe and Wendy Fellers

The KPMA honours Joe and Wendy Fellers for their work for the association over the last many years.

In the mid-1960s, Joe Fellers came to Dawson City, where he met Dawson City-born Wendy Hakonson. They were married in 1968. The Fellers bought out Ivor Norbeck in 1974 and mined one season on Dominion. From there, they spent a further 16 years on Sixtymile River and Big Gold and Glacier creeks. Joe and Wendy mined with their two sons, J.J. and Will. In 1990, they moved to Kirkman Creek. They have mined at Ballarat and Thistle creeks, and continue to mine on Kirkman Creek with Will, his wife, Melanie, and their two sons.

Joe and Wendy Fellers have been generous contributors to the community of Dawson City and to the mining community. Since the inception of the Yukon Quest sled dog race, they have annually donated four ounces (120 g) of placer gold as the prize for the first musher into Dawson City. They make many other donations towards their hometown activities, including for the skidoo club races, the horse show and the tow-rope on the Dawson City ski hill.

Wendy serves on the KPMA board of directors and has been instrumental in re-inventing our association's fundraising activities. The 'Mining and Dining' dinner and auction has been hugely successful for the past two years, thanks in a large part to Wendy's determination and energy.

Wendy, Joe and their family have been, and continue to be, very supportive of the KPMA members and Dawson City citizens.

2004: T. Alex Kapyt



Al Kapyt

This year we honour a dedicated Yukon ambassador and friend, the late T. Alex Kapyt.

The Klondike Placer Miners' Association wishes to pay tribute, and honour a man who was, in every respect a Yukon ambassador. Taras Alex Kapyt — Al to his friends — was the consummate committee member. As such, he dedicated a great deal of his life and energy to the promotion and improvement of the image and future of all Yukon enterprises. He was a firm believer in Yukoners, and was determined to advance the image of the Yukon entrepreneurial spirit everywhere he travelled.

The placer industry was a beneficiary of a precious portion of Al Kapyt's unflagging energy and enthusiasm. Beginning in 1985, Al took his position of chair of the Implementation Review Committee (IRC) and the Yukon Placer Committee (YPC) with utmost seriousness.

Al believed in the process of consultation and was determined that all parties at the table could reach a reasonable agreement, a daunting task that occasionally failed, despite best efforts. He was a champion of balanced and just regulations for the Yukon placer industry. He never gave up.

Al's job as chair of IRC and YPC was not easy. Over almost 20 years, he chaired many long hours of negotiations that were often difficult and emotional. Throughout it all, he was the soul of diplomacy, justice and fairness. He met adversity with patience and a sense of humour. He was determined that a way could be found for all stakeholders to reach balance, to both preserve the Yukon's environment and to advance the its placer industry. Al would not give up when lesser people would have run for cover.

Having Al at the head of the table ensured that meetings were well organized in every detail, ran on time and stuck to agendas, and that negotiations would remain on the high road. And, of course, that there would be doughnuts. He tackled dissent from all sides with patience and stoic insistence on justice, seldom giving way to emotion.

Al Kapyt was the soul of integrity in all aspects of his life, and we shall be hard pressed to find his equal.

To those of us who were fortunate enough to know him personally, he has left many rich memories. Al enjoyed a good joke and sharing fine scotch with good friends. We will miss his smile, his charm, his ability to put all at ease, and his genuine interest in everything about those around him. Al would put aside his own problems and ask, with sincere concern, about ours. Even during his last days in hospital, Al put aside his pain and asked with keen interest about the negotiations for the recovery of the Yukon Placer Authorization. Al gave generously of himself to so many people in so many ways.

And so here we are, 10 months after Al left us, voicing our pleasure at having known him, our honour at having worked with him, and our regret at having lost him.

Thus, the Klondike Placer Miners' Association and the Yukon placer industry wish to recognize the efforts of the late T. Alex Kapyt in his pursuit of fairness and justice. His outstanding contributions to the people of the Yukon will be greatly missed by his many friends. In recognition of his many achievements, we are honouring T. Alex Kapyt as the Klondike Placer Miners' Association 2004 Miner of the Year.

2003: Tara Christie



Tara Christie

The Klondike Placer Miners' Association is pleased to announce Ms. Miner for 2003 — Tara Christie.

Tara is a working partner in Gimlex Gold Mines, with her parents, Jim and Dagmar Christie, and her brother, Sheamus. She holds two degrees from the University of British Columbia, a Bachelor of Applied Science in Geological Engineering, and a Master's degree in Geological Engineering with a specialty in geotechnical and geochemistry. She maintained honours throughout her post-secondary career, winning over 30 scholarships and prizes. She graduated at the top of her class in geological engineering and was awarded the Dr. Aaro E. Aho Gold Medal and honourarium, and the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists' award for demonstrating great promise.

In 2001, Tara became president of the Klondike Placer Miners' Association — a volunteer position — to help guide the mandated review of the Yukon Placer Authorization (YPA). She showed an amazing capacity for taking on any challenge with remarkable optimism. Tara courageously carried the message of responsible placer mining to many Yukon communities and First Nations governments, in the hopes of developing lasting working relationships with the industry. She completed the review of the YPA and, against all odds, helped forge a consensus with the very divergent groups on the Yukon Placer Committee.

When the Minister of Fisheries and Oceans Canada announced the decision to withdraw the YPA on December 16, 2002, the whole placer industry was thrown into a tailspin. Tara's optimism and unflinching faith in reason and the good will of Canadians wouldn't let her give up. She threw herself into the challenge of injecting common sense into politicians and the public. She travelled tirelessly between Ottawa, Vancouver, Whitehorse, Dawson City and the family's mine on Dominion Creek, advocating the message of responsible placer mining balanced with sound environmental protection practices.

Tara is adept at all aspects of placer mining and exploration, and is as comfortable at the keyboard of a computer as she is at the controls of an excavator. She has been working alongside her family for most of her life: planning and running exploration programs, mapping, scheduling, managing crews and operating mining equipment. Tara has proven herself to be a brilliant and determined negotiator and lobbyist. She has shown patience, diligence and humour in the face of overwhelming odds. Throughout the last year, Tara Christie has done the impossible: she has put the Klondike on the map in Ottawa. The KPMA and the placer mining community owe Tara a debt of gratitude.

We are proud to honour Tara M. Christie, B. A.Sc., M. A.Sc., as Miner of the Year.

Miners of the Year for 1981 to 2006

- 1981: Mary and Ole Lunde
- 1982: Margaret Bremner
- 1983: George and Agnes Shaw
- 1984: Lorne and Paula Ross
- 1985: Edward Bleiler
- 1986: Ian Bremner
- 1987: Art and Noreen Sailor
- 1988: Marion Schmidt
- 1989: Norman and Sandra Ross
- 1990: Lowell and Lyn Bleiler
- 1991: Alex and Mary Seely
- 1992: Murray and Donna Crockett
- 1993: Frank and Bonnie Taylor
- 1994: Ken and Joan Tatlow
- 1995: Stuart and Judy Schmidt
- 1996: Pete and Ruth-Ann Risby
- 1997: Gordon and Brenda Caley
- 1998: Peter and Margaret Erickson
- 1999: Mike and Kim McDougall
- 2000: Bruce and Elaine Cowan
- 2001: Dr. James and Dagmar Christie
- 2002: Randy and Laura Clarkson
- 2003: Tara Christie
- 2004: T. Alex Kapyt
- 2005: Wendy and Joe Fellers
- 2006: Frank and Karen Hawker

