



Volume I
P.O. Box 30

THE COBALT LODGE

Newsletter of the Cobalt Historical Society



Autumn 2001
Cobalt, ON P0J 1C0

Greetings from "Ontario's Most Historic Town"

This is 2001 — what a year! In a province-wide contest hosted by TV Ontario's studio 2 program three leading Canadian Historians made Cobalt their unanimous choice as "Ontario's Most Historic Town Of The Century".

Historians Ron Brown, of Ghost Towns of Ontario, Dorothy Duncan, Executive Director of the Ontario Historical Society, and Desmond Morton, of McGill University Faculty, all agreed that it was Cobalt that built the new industrial economy of Ontario. In a field of over 100 entries Kingston placed second and Petrolia was third.

The TV Documentary was aired on June 7, 2001 and will be repeated on later dates. Dolores Dore, Daughter of Cobalt resident Anna & Joseph Tittone, John Boyd & Gino Chitaroni, Cobalt Councillors, and Steph Palmateer, Town Administrative Officer submitted much of the Historical data. They did a good job!

A REVIEW OF 2001

Our good luck started the moment we began our membership drive. Replies and money came from 160 individual and corporate members from Seattle, Washington to London, U.K.. In addition, 15 local corporate members agreed to be maintenance sponsors at individual sites on the Heritage Silver Trail.

In early spring, Gino Chitaroni through his company Blackstone Development submitted a comprehensive brief to PARKS CANADA requesting their consideration to designate the Cobalt mining camp as a "National Historic Site". A representative from Ottawa arrived in early June, toured the area, and was fascinated with our landmark sites. As a result a government Historian was assigned to carry out a complete survey of the area during the month of August. His ensuing report is to be completed in Autumn 2001 and will be reviewed by the board of Parks Canada at their 2002 spring meeting. Winning recognition as a National Historic site would ensure Federal assistance in protecting and preserving our sites and history.

On June 26, 2001, Dan Newman, Minister of Northern Development and Mines visited Cobalt and announced our successful application for Phase II funding for the Heritage Silver Trail. A sum of \$328, 000.00 will be provided by the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund. On September 21, 2001 our Federal Member of Parliament, Ben Serre, arrived in Cobalt with a cheque from Fed Nor in the amount of 262, 800.00 to compliment the grant from the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund.

In addition to these cash awards, the Town of Cobalt and the Township of Coleman are committed to substantial amounts of "in-kind" contribution by way of labour, equipment, and materials. With this team effort we should be able to complete the Phase II projects in time for the 2003 Centennial Celebrations.

2001 was a good year for our society!

A HISTORICAL SUMMARY 1998-2001

1998 – A joint session of Cobalt and Coleman Councils led by Mayor Hank Lafleur and Reeve Colleen Belanger appointed a 5 member interim board to form the nucleus of the Cobalt Historical Society. From Coleman, Reg Holdsworth and Betty-Anne Lacroix, from Cobalt Jackie St.Laurent and Pat Anderson, and Merv Lavigne from Haileybury. The first priority was monitoring the on-going Phase I restoration of the Heritage silver Trail.

1999 - Application submitted to form a non-profit corporation; successful. "Letters Patent" for "The Cobalt Historical society Inc." issued April 30, 1999. Phase II funding application drafted and submitted to the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund.

Trail site restoration continued with emphasis on the Colonial adit; Concrete retaining walls at portal , steel mesh barriers at unsafe underground openings, a new underground lighting system.

The Northern Ontario Heritage Foundation informed us in October that our Phase II funding application was "deferred" for 1 year while they reviewed the tourism benefits of our Phase I improvements.

2000 – Phase I funds were exhausted. Trail site maintenance by Volunteers and Public Works staff of Cobalt and Coleman. We were accepted into the Ontario Historical Society. Local corporations, SMC (Canada) LTD, Boart-Longyear, Wabi Iron and Steel, Blackstone Development, and Agnico Eagle Mines LTD., provided interim funding to repair and restore several interpretive signs at Trail Sites.

Preparations for re-applying for Phase II funding underway. Page 1 tells the story from here.

A Message from the Mayor

On behalf of Council and The Town of Cobalt, I would like to congratulate the Historical Society on their continued efforts to preserve our treasured past. This year funding announcements from Federal and Provincial governments combined with ongoing support from the society's membership make it possible to develop our tourism opportunities.

Preserving our vibrant past can leave a lasting legacy for future generations. It is encouraging to see what has been accomplished to date. I look forward to future partnerships with your organization. I wish you continued success, congratulate you for your achievements and thank those who support your efforts.

Keep up the great work!

Andre Belanger

A Message from the Reeve

The first phase of refurbishing and revitalizing the Heritage Silver Trail was administered by the Township of Coleman. Blackstone Development Co. was awarded the contract for the project. The Works Department from the Township of Coleman and Town of Cobalt were instrumental in providing equipment, labour and material.

Due to Councilor Albert Chitaroni's dedication and persistence, mining artifacts were acquired for the Heritage Silver Trail.

Phase II will be administered by the Cobalt Historical Society. The Township of Coleman is happy to be part of this worthwhile heritage project. Council wishes the Cobalt Historical Society every success in this endeavor and assure them that the Township of Coleman will assist in any way should they need it.

Colleen Belanger

A Message from the president — Since our incorporation in 1999 many exciting events have occurred. Phase I of the Trail restoration is complete and Phase II should be done by 2002 in time for the Centennial. The designation of Cobalt as Ontario's Most Historic Town of the Century was a boost for the Heritage Silver Trail and the Cobalt Mining Museum.

Our first membership drive brought in 160 individual and corporate members; an excellent beginning that shows "The Cobalt Connection" is alive and well. My thanks to past president Merv Lavigne and our intern Robert Julien for organizing our first newsletter and for inspecting the Heritage silver Trail. And, thanks to all of you for your interest in our society and the Cobalt camp.

Reg Holdsworth

From the Cobalt Mining Museum — The 2001 season was a busy one. The Colonial mine Adit Tour saw an increase of 250% over last year with 850 visitors. Museum visitation and gift shop sales were also up. Being voted "Ontario's Most Historic Town of the Century" played a major role.

Two new exhibits are now in place - - A room dedicated to Dr. H.A. Dunning commemorating his years of service to Cobalt and area and an exhibit citing Mario Chitaroni's participation in the Nagano Olympics with the Italian Olympic Hockey Team.

Museum hours June 1 to September are 9 a.m. to 5p.m.; October to June from 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. For tours, gifts, or information call (705) 679-8301

Anne Fraboni, Curator

From the Bunker — The Bunker Military Museum of Cobalt consists of seven rooms of military artifacts housed in the former Cobalt station, a historical building itself. At the south end is an anti-aircraft gun and there are three murals on the west-facing embankment. Although closed for the season, tours can be arranged by appointment. In September we had the Ontario Park Rangers, in October the ESSM high school from New Liskeard and in November two groups of students from St. Patrick's school in Cobalt. The children showed great interest in all the displays and asked numerous questions. It was a delight to be with them.

Gladys Wilcox

Cobalt High School Seniors Reunion — The weekend of August 12 – 13, 2000 saw 200 former students, all graduates before 1950 renewing old friendships and joining in the festivities.

Saturday the 12th, started with coffee and buffet lunch at the high school auditorium; an evening dinner and social at the community hall followed. On Sunday August 13, small groups were organized for brunch and tours of the mining museum and the Heritage Silver Trail. A goodbye luncheon at the community hall found everyone exchanging promises to meet again in 2003.

This reunion, the first since 1976, was organized in March by Paul MacMillan and Vivian Hylands of Cobalt in cooperation with Kathleen Moss Pritchard and friends in Bethesda, Maryland. Former students as far away as Brazil, the Southern U.S. and Western Canada were contacted by letter, telephone, newspaper, and Internet.

The Cobalt spirit was never more apparent than at the Saturday gathering where friends met and renewed the sense that Cobalt is a special place.

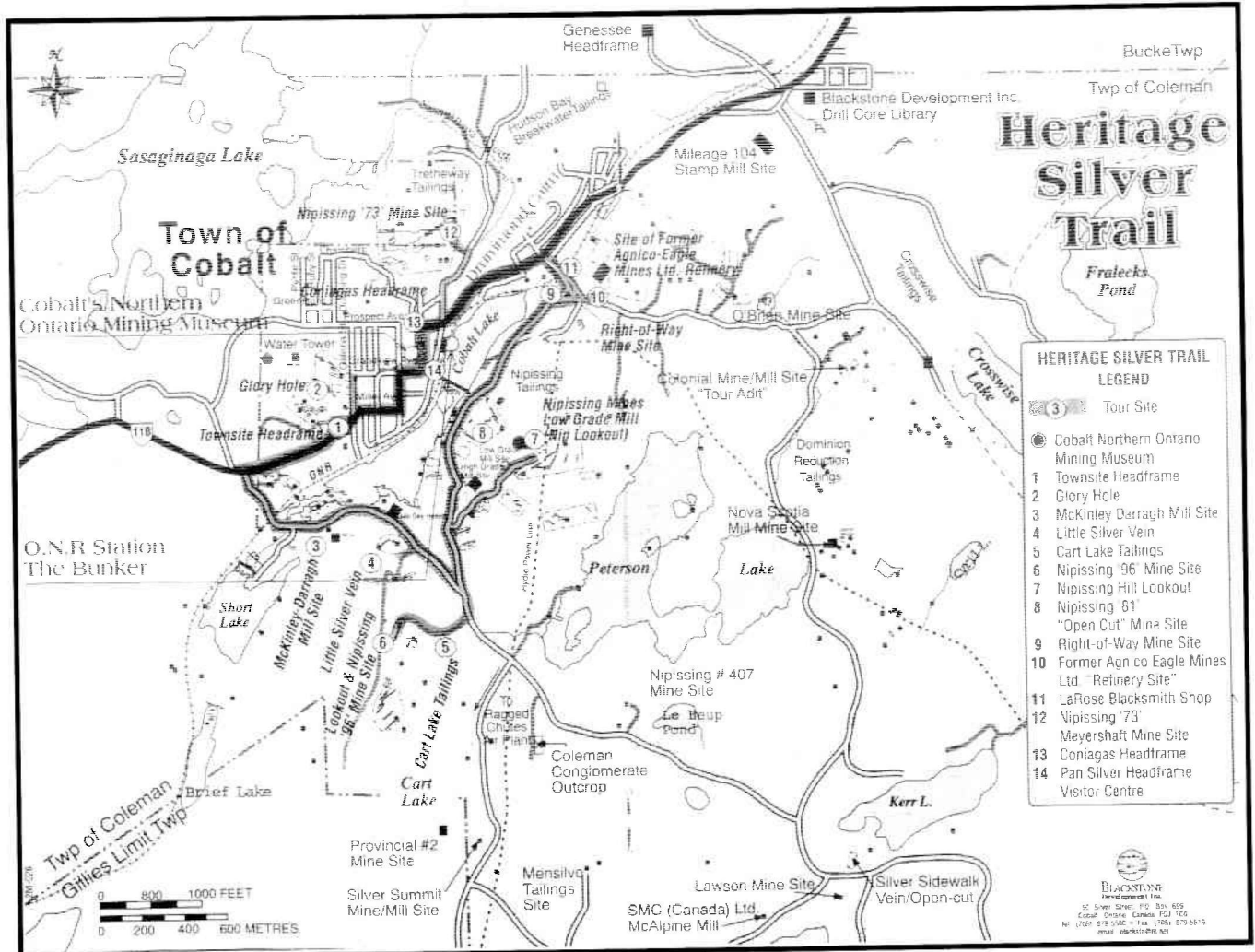
Vivian Hylands

The Cobalt Public Library — What the Cobalt Library has for the tourist or anyone just wanting to find out about the past; Old newspapers on micro film, (Cobalt and North Bay Nugget: 1909-1943), Temiskaming Speakers: 1905-1940, The Northland Post: 1910-1940, Porcupine Historical Society, (Frank Lendrum columns: 1946-1963), Indexes to the Silverland and Ste. Therese Cemeteries, Videos of Cobalt that can be viewed in the library, Collections of photos and newspaper articles, plus a large display of paintings for sale by local artists, Historical books by local authors.

Glenda McAnaul

BOARD OF THE COBALT HISTORICAL SOCIETY INC.

President, Reg Holdsworth; Past President, Merv Lavingne; Secretary-Treasurer, Dan Cleroux; Directors, Doug McLeod, Jack Church, John Boyd, Vivian Hylands, Gladys Wilcox, Ron Beeson, Peter Blakey, Vic Legault, Honorary Director, Frank Burpee, Seattle, Washington.



SMC (Canada) Ltd. **McAlpine Mill Site**

Coleman Rd. P.O. Box 710 Cobalt, ON P0J 1C0
Tel: (705) 679-5600 Fax: (705) 679-5657

email: smccan@ntl.sympatico.ca
website: www.smccanada.com