

A touch of gold fever

By JACKIE PLEASANTS

Mining is the way of life to those involved, and to Dr. Bob Seraphim the exploration, promotion and the possibility of striking it big are just as exciting today as miners found it during the days of the gold rush era.

Seraphim is one of the principals in Sumac Ventures, the new name for the mining operation at the old Union mine site about 45 miles north of Grand Forks.

Originally under the Seraphim, Fred Clark leadership, the company was named Pearl Resources. That changed to 24K and eventually, to allow it a place on the Vancouver exchange, it became Sumac Ventures.

The mine development has been two-fold. One has and still is, the underground exploration for gold and silver. The second part which proposed the use of cyanide to leach gold and silver from old mine tailings, made headlines when a local group protested the use of cyanide in a watershed area.

That issue has yet to be totally solved. Although both appeals were unsuccessful in stopping the process,

word still has not been given by the provincial government on a go-ahead for next spring.

The last news Seraphim received came from MLA Garde Gardom in a letter Nov. 3. Gardom noted that his office has been advised that their permit to work the old tailings dump at the Union mine is expected to be finalized by the end of November. No further word has been sent.

While the heap leaching process has not been finalized, the company has continued with underground exploration, below the old mine area. Seraphim, as president of Sumac, recently reported two minable gold-silver ore shoots have been exposed in the #4 sub-level of the mine.

The #4 level is about 130 feet below the previously mined slopes on the company's Union Gold Project.

The first shoot assayed 0.514 ounces gold and 18.5 ounces of silver per ton, over a width of three feet and a strike of 30 feet. The second ore shoot assayed 0.28 ounces of gold and 14.7 ounces of silver per ton over a 2.9 foot width and a strike length of 10 feet.

These assays, reports

Seraphim, are consistent with the old mining records from the #3 level, about 130 feet above this sub-level.

Raising on a third shoot returned assay values of 0.38 ounces of gold and 13.7 ounces of silver per ton over a 3.7 foot width for the first 35 feet of raise length. This raise, says Seraphim, is continuing towards the #3 level, about 100 feet above, where previously mined ore averaged 0.50 ounces of gold and 13 ounces of silver per ton over a strike length of 60 feet and 5.5 feet of width.

The assay results, although of utmost importance in seeing the mine continue, are not the only results Seraphim and fellow officials Clark and John Carson are interested in.

Seraphim especially, appears to delight in

"having fun" through the exploration of mining possibilities.

Asked what was the most appealing part of the mining industry, Seraphim replied that he had heard his kind described as people who "wanted to be paid to go camping."

The great outdoors is very much part of the mining day-to-day routine. No one could be accused of a luxurious lifestyle in connection with the small exploratory mines in the Grand Forks area.

Cook tents, cold trailers, bunking in a log cabin with all the conveniences several hundred yards away, can only appeal to those either working for a living or those who feel a closeness with the outdoors.

Roughing it, getting back to a natural life-

(Continued on page 13)



SUMAC PRESIDENT...Robert Seraphim and mine manager Tom Drown at the Union Mine, principal producer of the historic Franklin Camp.



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The old Franklin camp comes to life again— from page 12 —

style, appears to appeal to Seraphim and his kind. Sitting around the cook tent table, feet on the woodstove, backs turned against the -18C draft coming through the tent flap, Seraphim and friends down their campstove coffee while reminiscing about hunting trips, and oldtime mining stories.

That's the good part of the business, as well as what can be high rewards, that means min-

ing to this group, but there are drawbacks to today's form of mining from Seraphim's point of view.

He's particularly concerned with the red tape that government has placed on the mining industry.

Seraphim uses the Sumac development as an example of the type of government controls that are costing possible development and employment.

To get to the stage Sumac is at right now, Seraphim says took since Oct. 31, 1984. During that time there have been 111 steps through government bureaucracy and a total of 83 people to deal with.

To demonstrate the problem, Seraphim took a roll of paper to both the Social Credit leadership convention and to the election debates. That roll of paper indexes all the steps and stretched well over 12 feet.

It isn't necessarily the regulations that worry Seraphim, he is concerned about overlapping ministerial involvement.

There are endless numbers of ministries that are involved in each mining application, he says. In a way they protect their own inter-

ests, better than those of the people of the province or proposed mining permits.

To this end, Seraphim is now part of a committee which has until early next year to come up with suggestions on how to trim the red tape.

Seraphim wants to see regulations set, so that once they have been

met the companies can move ahead.

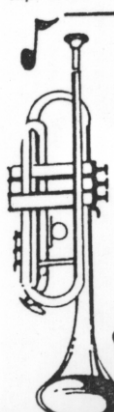
It's definitely a cost-cutting free enterprise spirit, but it is also one that smacks of the prospector making his way through the mountains and along the creeks to carve out his own part of paradise. A place to retreat to; a place to earn a living from, and with any luck, a place to strike it rich.



OVERLOOKING BURRELL CREEK...above the old Union Mine site where Sumac Ventures is exploring for gold and silver. Explorations above the Union mine area is also being done for platinum. Despite a dip in temperatures and a layer of snow, work continues at both sites.



PUTTING IT ON PAPER...Bob Seraphim unrolls his list of the steps necessary to get the Sumac Venture off the ground. Seraphim is busy working on cutting the red tape in the mining industry.



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