

Santa's Boots

by Ed Ogle

The Reverend Carl Bingham, Anglican Priest in charge of the mission at Coppermine, decided his second year in that settlement to introduce the kids to Santa Claus.

To give the thing a bit more mystery, he ordered a complete uniform with facial mask. It all fitted beautifully except the shoes and he couldn't see how that would make any difference.

As he planned the ceremony, the children would first come to the afternoon services. Then Santa would come out and hand them each a gift as they filed past the old clump of a tree someone had brought in a 100 miles or so from Copper.

"This will get the little mugs", Father Bingham said. "They won't know what to do about a real Santa. They'll never know".

Of course they knew. From the first boy in line to the little girl at the end of it, each Inuit kid accepted his surprise gift and politely said, "Thank you very much, Father Bingham".

"Hells bells", the preacher said later. "I don't know how they found out so fast".

One of the village ladies said, "Mister Bingham, there isn't a kid in town who doesn't know that those are Father Bingham's kamiks (boots)".

Background Information

Talk about the Christmas season. Does everyone celebrate Christmas? Discuss Santa Claus and why there are so many different Santas around at Christmas. Finally, talk about whether or not it was a good thing to introduce Santa Claus to Inuit children.

Questions

1. What kind of a priest was Reverend Carl Bingham?
2. What does the word mission mean in this story?
3. What was the priest doing at Coppermine?
4. Use the word ceremony in a sentence.
5. Use another word for file in the sentence, "Then Santa would come out and hand them each a gift as they filed past the old clump of a tree".
6. Why do you think a tree had to be brought in from 100 miles away?
7. Where do the Inuit people live?
8. What does the word polite mean?
9. How did the children know that Reverend Bingham was Santa Claus?
10. Do you think the Inuit children learned the true meaning of Christmas just by learning about Santa Claus?



Bus Stop

by Jaswinder Bolebains

Today I saw a beautiful girl at the bus stop. She was so pretty that I couldn't stay away from her. I was staring at her for at least 15 minutes. I was thinking to make my move, but there were so many people, so I didn't talk to her because I was shy. After a while my bus came, and I started walking toward my bus. As I was walking, she was walking right behind me. As I sat on a seat, she sat beside me on the seat, and she said "Excuse me, you know what time is it"? And I ran to the store across the street to ask the time. When I came back, I saw the bus was gone, and so was the girl.

Background Information



Have you ever seen anyone that you've liked right away?
How did you feel? How did you act?

Questions

1. Where did Jaswinder see the beautiful girl?
2. Why didn't he make his move?
3. What does the word shy mean?
4. What question did the girl ask him?
5. What did he do?
6. Make the word bus plural.
7. How do you think Jaswinder felt when he got back to the bus stop and the bus and girl were gone?
8. Should Jaswinder have gotten off the bus? Why or why not?
9. Why couldn't Jaswinder talk to the girl first?

The Wish I Got

by Fred Miranda

Yesterday I read the girls two books. The first book I read to them was The Big Honey Hunt and the second was Stop that Ball. Before I started reading, I decided to make the stories a little more interesting by becoming the characters in the stories. Boy, Tracy and Michelle's eyes were poking out of their heads when I was reading the books to them.

I'm beginning to notice that my reading is getting faster. Later on that night when I was in bed, I realized that my dream came true. A month ago, I was watching TV in the living room; Holly was reading a bedtime story to the girls on the sofa. When I heard her reading that book, I turned off the TV; she was reading so beautifully that I said to myself, "Boy, I wish I could read as good as that".

As I was lying in bed thinking about that, I felt tears running down my face. I just realized that I had just read that book the same way she did. Boy, I was so happy and excited, I couldn't go to sleep. By the time I went to sleep it was one o'clock in the morning.

Background Information

Talk about the special relationship between parents and children and how important it is for them to do things together. Did your parents read to you? Also discuss the frustration that a person might feel when reading isn't easy.



Questions

1. What were the names of the books Fred read to his kids?
2. Why were the children so excited?
3. Why do you think that reading to his children was so important to Fred?
4. Use another word for poking in the sentence, "Tracy and Michelle's eyes were poking out of their heads when I was reading the books to them?"
5. What is beginning to happen to Fred's reading?
6. What was Fred's dream?
7. Why do you think reading to kids is so important?
8. Who is Holly?
9. What time was it when Fred went to sleep?
10. What does the word realize mean?



Prince Rupert

by George Moody

When I was about five years old I was put in a boarding school for a short time. I can still remember this time. We each had a tiny, tiny shelf to keep our things in one place. I thought someone would take mine. We were put to bed so early I often wet the bed, for which I was spanked. I hated to take a bath; we were all put together in huge tubs where everyone could see. I was so embarrassed. The school was on an island; one night my mother came out in a boat and stole me away. What a grand night that was!



Background Information

Talk about boarding school. Discuss the effects of taking children away from their parents without their permission. Talk about the problems with these boarding schools and why they were started in the first place.

Questions

1. How old was George when he was put into school?
2. Why did he wet the bed?
3. Did George enjoy boarding school?
4. What is the long form of the word tub?
5. Why do you think George had to go to this school?
6. Use the word island in a sentence.
7. Who came and rescued George?
8. Why did his mother have to steal him from the school?
9. Was George happy that his mother came and got him?

Remembering

by Gladys Farley

Remembering the very first day at Invergarry School. It was a big change in my life. I was taken by surprise by the warm welcome I got from my teachers, Sheila, Mark and Gary. They have helped me quite a lot in my reading and writing. I feel like the person I've always wanted to be. I don't feel left out. Times have really changed since last time I was at school, and that's a long time ago.

When I heard about Invergarry School I then thought that's just what I need. So here I go. It's the best possible thing that happened to me. I'm really happy I did. I know that I've improved in my writing, spelling and reading. I have more confidence in myself. I'm sure with my teacher's help I will improve as I go on. I'm looking forward to that day when I'm the person I've dreamed about. Me.

Background Information

Talk about school experiences: as a child and an adult. What's it like to go back to school as an adult? What are the benefits to going back to school as an adult? Finally talk about how important high self confidence is.



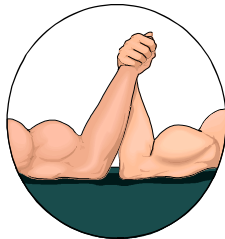
Questions

1. What was the big change in Gladys' life?
2. Why was she surprised that she got a warm welcome?
3. What do you think would be different now from when Gladys first went to school?
4. What does the word possible mean in the story?
5. What was the name of the school?
6. Use the word improve in a sentence.
7. Why do you think Gladys felt left out?
8. What do you think the following sentence means? "I'm looking forward to that day when I'm the person I've dreamed about. Me."
9. What were Gladys' teachers' names?
10. Put the word dreamed into the present tense.

Arm Wrestling

by Glen Carnie

Well, let me tell you where I have been hiding for the last month. I took a week off school before everybody else, so I could get some money for Christmas, which helped me a lot. At work you really are supposed to work 80 hours for two weeks, but little Bob and I did 80 hours in five days, and the rest of the week we were on time and a half, for those two weeks we had 136 hours. I think I had the best time I ever had because it was fun. We always were laughing all the time.



There is a guy at work named Jeff, and he and I get along great. One day we were fooling around and he said, "Let's arm wrestle". There wasn't any way I could win, so as I was losing, I decked him with my opposite fist. He was stunned so I threw his arm down, and the littlest guy in the whole warehouse won. But, as for Jeff he had a black eye, and intends to get revenge.

Background Information

Talk about Christmas, how it can be a strain on the wallet and how some people have to get extra work over the holidays. Has the true meaning of Christmas been lost because of this? Also talk about the world of work. Do many people enjoy their jobs and have fun with the people they work with?

Questions

1. Where has Glen been hiding for the last month?
2. Split the compound word everybody into two words.
3. What does time and a half mean?
4. Why was this the best time Glen ever had?
5. Why do you think Bob was called "Little Bob"?
6. Why do you think Glen had no chance to beat Jeff?
7. What kind of contest did they have?
8. How did Glen win the contest?
9. What does the word revenge mean?
10. Which fist did Glen use to hit Jeff?
11. What's another way to say littlest?



The Restaurant

by Gregory Scott Grant

I had dinner at the restaurant last Thursday night. There were four people at the restaurant. What I had for dinner was wonton soup and some lemon chicken. Janet was amazed how much food I ate at the restaurant. I ate like a horse, and found I had the appetite of a donkey. I wouldn't touch the washroom with a ten foot pole because it looked like a pig farm.

Background Information

Talk about eating out. Do you like to eat out? Is it expensive? What type of restaurant do you like to eat in? What do you do if you go into the bathroom and it's filthy?



Questions

1. When did Gregory have dinner at the restaurant?
2. How many people were in the restaurant?
3. Do you think Gregory liked the food? Why?
4. Use the word amazed in a sentence.
5. What kind of animal is a donkey?
6. What does a pig farm look like?
7. What do you think Gregory did about the dirty bathroom?
8. What does appetite mean?
9. What's another word for washroom?

Joy of Birth

by Heather Albanese

When I had Thressa, I was nineteen years old. I was terrified about going to the hospital. I was in the labour room for twenty-four hours. There was a lady in the labour room, who was across the room, and all she did was cry. My mother told me before I left her at home, "If you are going to scream, you put a pillow over your face. You do not let anyone hear you".

I did what my mom said.

When I was ready to have the baby, I went into the case room, and they put me in the position to have the baby. I watched it all. It was so beautiful to watch a baby that you have created being born. After three pushes, out came the baby. The nurse put this little girl on my stomach while she was still attached to the umbilical cord. It is the most beautiful feeling I have ever had in my life.

Background Information

Talk about giving birth and whether or not you have gone through it. What do you think it feels like? How would you or did you feel bringing a new life into the world? Finally, talk about what it would be like to have this experience at such a young age.

Questions

1. How old was Heather when she had Thressa?
2. What does labour mean in this story?
3. Why do you think the lady in the room across from Heather cried all the time?
4. How long was Heather in the labour room for?
5. Why do you think that Heather's mother told her to scream into a pillow?
6. What is the umbilical cord?
7. Do you think giving birth was a good experience for Heather?
8. What was the sex of the child Heather had?



At the Hospital

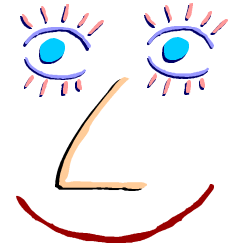
by Heather Albanese

I work at the hospital on Mondays and Fridays. When I started there I was getting paid for it. That lasted for six months. Now I go and do not get paid for it. I like it a lot. The people there are so nice to me I read the paper to them. They know I am going to school to upgrade my reading.

These people have given me more than I give them. They take me for what I am. We take them out on bus trips and tomorrow we will be doing a tea for them, and I will work out in the garden with them tomorrow before the tea.

Background Information

Volunteering is a healthy thing to do. It helps the people you help, it helps the community in general and it helps you. Talk about why volunteering is so important and how it can help a person feel good about themselves.



Questions

1. How long was Heather paid to work at the hospital?
2. What does she read to the people there?
3. Why do you think Heather likes going to the hospital?
4. What does upgrade mean?
5. What have the people given to Heather?
6. What kind of trips do the people take?
7. What else does Heather do for the people she helps?
8. What does the word tea mean in this story?

A Funny Thing

by *Monika Kessler*

A funny thing happened to me at Christmas Eve. Can you imagine, I broke my front tooth, actually it was my cap. I looked like a witch and did not know what to do. All the dentist's offices were closed. I told my sister that we would come to her place as always on Christmas Day. But how could I go when I looked like that? I phoned her and asked what to do. She said not to worry, but to come and bring with me what I could save from my tooth.



She glued it together and cemented it in the best she could. Now I was happy. I had my front tooth again. As I listened to the radio I heard the song, "All I want for Christmas is my two front teeth". I could identify with that kid whole heartedly.

Background Information

Talk about something funny or embarrassing that has happened to you. What did you do? Should you let something embarrassing stop you from doing something you want to do?



Questions

1. What happened to Monika on Christmas Eve?
2. What is a cap in this story?
3. Why were all the dentist's offices closed?
4. How did Monika's sister fix her tooth?
5. What word is phone short for?
6. Which tooth did Monika break?
7. What does a witch look like?
8. Use the word identify in a sentence.
9. Do you think Monika would have stayed home if her sister couldn't fix her tooth?
10. Why did the song mean something to Monika?

The War

by *Nicolina Amato*

I do remember one time with my Daddy. A beggar lady came to the door to ask for a piece of bread and my Daddy looked at the beggar and went into the house where he had a basket hanging on the wall. He gave some bread to the lady. His eyes got full of tears.

It was 1943. I didn't know that times were hard but I do remember well the lights and the noise from the war. The whole town was scared. They used to hide in a tunnel that they dug themselves. My mom didn't go anywhere because she believed that her time would come no matter where she was.

Background Information

Talk about World War II. What was the war about? What was life for people who fought in the war and for those people who stayed behind. Talk about why it's necessary to talk about the war and how hard it was on people.



Questions

1. Why did Nicolina's dad give the beggar some bread?
2. What other meaning does the word tears have?
3. Why would the people of the town hide in tunnels?
4. What's another word for beggar?
5. Why wouldn't Nicolina's mom hide?
6. How do you think Nicolina felt about the war?
7. What's another word for scared?

My First Child

by Ruby



When I gave birth to my first child my husband and I were ecstatic. I went to the hospital as I had labour pains. I waited for the birth of my baby. In the meantime, I went to the maternity lounge. A man was sitting in a chair watching television, obviously waiting for the birth of his wife's baby. All of a sudden I started having labour pains. Well, that man freaked out because I was having severe pain. He probably didn't realize what women had to go through to have a baby. He immediately left, with a scared look on his face. He thought I was going to have the baby right there. I finally gave birth to a fair, blonde, soft baby girl. She was the apple of my eye. I always wished for a blonde baby girl, and my wish came true.

Background Information

Talk about having a baby today and what it was like for couples to have children many years ago. Were the husbands allowed to participate in the birth many years ago? Are they allowed now? Can the birth of a baby be scary? Finally, talk about wishing for certain things. What can happen if your wish doesn't come true.

Questions

1. What does the word ecstatic mean?
2. Where did Ruby go as she waited for the birth of her baby?
3. What is a labour pain?
4. Why did the man freak out?
5. What was the man doing when Ruby saw him?
6. What did Ruby's baby look like when she was born?
7. What does immediately mean?
8. What does apple of my eye mean?
9. Do you always get what you wish for?
10. What do you think Ruby would have done if she had a dark haired baby boy instead of a blonde girl?

Other activities: write about this same story from the frightened man's point of view.

Susan Aglukark Is Becoming A Star

Susan Aglukark is a Canadian singer. She is Inuk. She grew up in the Northwest Territories.



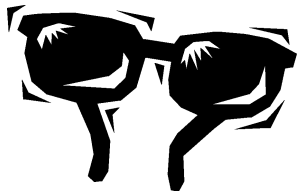
After high school, Susan moved to Ottawa. She worked there for a few years. Then she became a singer and songwriter.

In 1992, Susan made an album called Arctic Rose. Some of the songs on this album are about problems such as abuse and suicide.

Susan has a new album. It is called This Child. Susan sings in both English and Inuktitut. She combines Inuit chants and pop songs.

Susan is becoming a star. She has many fans.

Susan is also a popular speaker in the North. She talks to young Inuit about her life.



Background Information

Singers today are from many ethnic groups. There are Irish singers, African American singers, Indian singers and Inuit singers. But popular music has not always been this way. For many years you would only hear white male singers on the radio. Talk about this. Should people from all backgrounds be popular singers? Why or why not? It is hard to keep a culture alive when there are no role models for children from the same culture. Talk about your role models growing up.



Questions

1. Where did Susan grow up?
2. What was the name of the album Susan made in 1992?
3. What does she sing about?
4. Why do you think she chooses those subjects to sing about?
5. What is another word for album?
6. What languages does Susan sing in for her second album?
7. What are fans?
8. What is a chant?
9. Why is Susan becoming a star?
10. Why do you think Susan speaks to young Inuit about her life?

Not to Worry

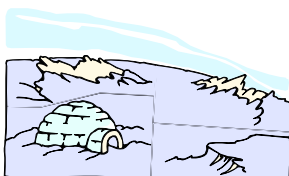
by Ed Ogle

In the interest of speeding communications with native settlements, NWT Commissioner Stuart Hodgson leased a jet. The first time he used it in landing at one of the central Arctic Eskimo settlements, the Eskimos took it in stride but not exactly the right stride.

When the commissioner got out of the plane and started to say hello to some of his old Eskimo friends, one of the community's leaders spoke up. "Don't worry, Mr. Commissioner, our boys are out looking for them now."

"Looking for what?", Hodgson asked.

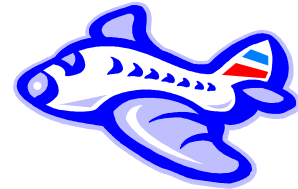
"Your propellers", the elder said. "We noticed as soon as we could see your plane that they were missing."



Background Information

Talk about technology and how easy it is to be unfamiliar with new things. Also talk about living in rural areas, away from cities and even towns.

Would you know about new things if you never saw them?



Questions

1. What does NWT stand for?
2. What was the NWT Commissioner's name?
3. What is another word for Eskimo?
4. How do you think that leasing a jet would speed communications with native peoples?
5. Where is the central Arctic?
6. Why were the people looking for propellers?
7. What is an elder?
8. What is a commissioner?
9. Do you think the Eskimos had ever seen a jet?
10. Why do you think the commissioner wanted to speed communications with the Eskimo settlements?

Other Activities: write a story from the Eskimos' point of view. How do you think the people reacted to seeing an air plane without a propeller?

The One That Didn't Open

by Ed Ogle

At Pagnirtung one Christmas when weather kept any plane from landing, the air force advised the RCMP family at Pang that their Christmas order would be dropped at the landing strip Christmas evening. Included in the 13 packets to be parachuted was one Christmas tree (there are no trees of any sort at Pang).

With the tree, it was felt there was no need for a parachute because the tree would naturally fall butt end or heavy end first anyhow.

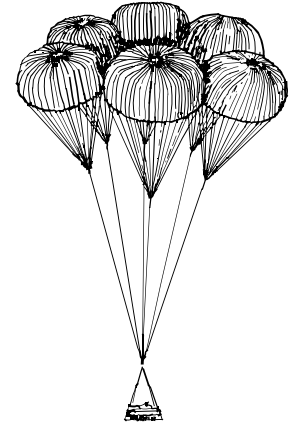


On Christmas Eve (well, afternoon really, there being little difference because it would be another six weeks before the sun would light up anything other than the far distant horizon) at a few minutes after two, the big transport plane flew over Pang, coming as low as 500 feet to buzz the city. Everyone got out his dogs and or sleds and headed for the flat area that normally would serve as a airfield but was crisscrossed with ice chunks about the size of a good bungalow.

After a few passes to assess the situation, the parachutes started rolling out of the plane at about 1000 feet. The tree came first and just as expected it fell nicely, butt down, and hit flat on a piece of bare rook and every needle on the tree kept right on going.

The parachutes let the other stuff down gradually except for parachute number 13. No chute opened there and the package struck only a couple of hundred feet away with a crunching noise. "That", said the wife of the RCMP constable, "will be our cutlery, dishes and glasses".

She was 100% right.



Background Information

Have you ever experienced living in a very cut off area? What do you think it would be like to live where you would have to have supplies dropped by plane. What would be good about it? What would be bad? Also, think about a time for you when everything went wrong. How did you handle it?

Questions

1. Why couldn't any plane land at Pagnirtung?
2. Why do you think there are no trees at Pang?
3. What is a parachute?
4. How was the family supposed to get their supplies?
5. Why was the sun only lighting up the far distant horizon?
6. Why do you think that parachute number 13 didn't open?
7. Use the word horizon in a sentence.
8. How low did the transport plane go?
9. How did people get around in Pang?
10. Why was the flat area crisscrossed with ice chunks?
11. Where do you think Pang is located in Canada?

With the Deer's Own Teeth

by Ed Ogle



An old codger named Frank Whatom didn't like living any nearer other people than he had to. Frank was an old prospector who had simply become a hermit.

He lived in a half cave, half cabin some ten miles back in the bush near a place called Little Fort, in British Columbia.

Frank knew how to take care of his simple needs and didn't care whose toes he trod on. He was in the habit of shooting a couple of deer each fall to preserve and store and provide him with meat when he was snowed in.

This particular fall, he got his deer all right, but at the same time, he found he couldn't eat it. During the summer, the last of his diseased old teeth had fallen out.

He decided he'd better go into town and buy some of those "store-boughten" teeth as replacements. He was both astonished and mad to discover such teeth cost \$50. "No way", he said, and found some heavy plastic that he thought would do they job. Taking that home with him, he pulled the deer's teeth and with the plastic made himself a new set of teeth and ate the deer with it's own teeth.

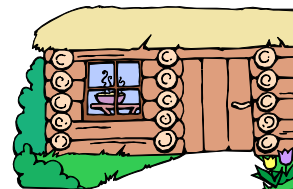
I asked if the new choppers really worked and Frank grinned and bearing half of them said, "sure they work". He munched on an apple as I watched. "Not only do they work", he proclaimed, "I'm the only man in all Canada with genuine buck teeth"

Background Information

Do you know anyone who doesn't like to live near other people? Why do you think people would choose to live by themselves, with no friends, no family? Do you think it's better to live simply or with lots of stuff? Finally, talk about false teeth. Where you have to go to get them, how much they cost, what they might be made of.

Questions

1. What does the word codger mean?
2. What is a hermit?
3. Where did Frank live?
4. What did he do to get meat for the winter?
5. Why couldn't Frank eat his deer meat?
6. Use the word preserve in a sentence.
7. Why do you think Frank decided to live by himself?
8. What happened to Frank's teeth?
9. How did he solve his problem?
10. How would you solve a problem like Frank's?



A Dream

by Edie

Last night, I had a dream. It was about my Aunt Sandy, her 3 year old boy, and two girls aged 8 and 9 respectively. My aunt was drinking at her home. She lit a smoke then fell asleep, and dropped the lit smoke. It fell to the floor. The house was old so it burned very fast. My aunt was on the couch when Adam, her son, came crawling out of his room. He tried to wake her, but she wouldn't wake up. The two girls woke. They felt the door. It was hot so they jumped out of their bedroom window. When the ambulance got there, the girls were fine; however, their mom had died from the fire, but their brother lived until they got to the hospital. He was pronounced dead on arrival. The two girls are living with their dad, my uncle. He treats them like Cinderella and he's the stepmother.

When I woke up I was sitting on my bed. Charlie, Jodi and Eric were talking in the living room. This story that I have told you about my aunt from my dream is true. To me every dream means something. Having this dream I felt like I was there. I still have the newspaper clippings from almost 6 years ago.

Background Information

Talk about dreams. What is the strangest dream you've ever had? Do you believe that all dreams have meaning? How do you figure out what a dream means?

Also think about fires. How can house fires start? How can you escape a house fire?

Questions

1. Who did Edie dream about?
2. How did the house start on fire?
3. What is another word for smoke in this sentence, "She lit a smoke then fell asleep..."?
4. Why do you think the old house burned so fast?
5. Who was rescued from the fire? Who died?
6. What does the word crawling mean?
7. How did the two girls know there was a fire in the house?
8. What does the word pronounced mean in the story?
9. How does the uncle treat the two girls?
10. Do you think this dream meant something? What?



The Gun and the Coat

by Ed Ogle



Long ago when the North was still prowled by only the occasional white man hunting the Northwest Passage (to China) or by the odd whale hunter, an Eskimo camp was visited by a ship.

The captain wanted some white fox furs. All he had to trade for them was a gun and a coat.

The gun was good enough for its time, far better at killing seals than the Eskimo harpoon or bow and arrow.

The coat was a great fuzzy fur-trim job on deep Russian blue cloth with epaulettes and glittering medals down the left front.

One Eskimo with good skins bought the gun.

Another Eskimo had enough skins to pay for the coat.

The Eskimo who bought the gun became the best hunter in the band and was respected by all.

But the man who bought the coat wore it all around the camp and kids ran up to see it and touch it. Wives suggested that a man with such a coat might sway any woman's heart, and the man with the coat became the most admired and happiest Eskimo along the

coast.

The man with the gun finally couldn't stand it any longer. He told his wife he was going to trade the gun for the coat. She said, "Don't even think about it".

But the Eskimo with the gun couldn't stand all the admiration the man with the coat was getting and went ahead and traded his gun for the coat.

Wearing the coat, he hurried to his igloo but a bear noticed him and followed him in. When he got inside the igloo, he cried to his wife, "There's a polar bear following me, what should I do"?

His wife said, "Shoot him with your coat".

Background Information

Talk about Canada's past: the fur-trade and the way that the settlers and explorers dealt with the first people. Then talk about greed and the saying, "the grass is always greener on the other side of the fence". What can greed do to a person? How do you control it?

Questions

1. What is the Northwest Passage?
2. Why would the Eskimos want the gun and the coat?
3. What is a harpoon?
4. Why did the man who bought the gun decide to trade it for the coat?
5. What is an epaulette?
6. What is the difference between admiration and respect?
7. What colour is a polar bear?
8. Do you think the man was scared of the bear?
9. Was his wife happy that he traded the gun?
10. What did she say to him?

My Forgetfulness

by Helmut Kraft

It's embarrassing for people who are middle-aged or older who forget what they have done yesterday, today or a second ago. As a youngster, I laughed secretly about the forgetfulness of my parents and the older people I came in contact with.

Now I can see many grins on my children's faces as I roam through the house trying to find items that I had in my hands moments before, but had forgotten where I had left them. I swore to myself that I should be better organized and lay things away in their proper places, to find them when needed. However, I always look first in the place where I had dropped those items.

I waste my time finding things and then when the day is over, I say to myself: the time now must go more quickly than in my youth when I could accomplish much more in a day. I have looked many times for my glasses through the house; looking twice in the same place, and after giving up and complaining to my wife about my absent mindedness, she would find the glasses in the places I had searched before.



Now the classic thing in my life is, after searching a long time for an item and finally finding it, I store it in a place that I surely would remember the next time.

Now it is lost forever. I wish that I would forget where the fridge is. That would do my health good! These are habits that I have learned over the years.

I have become dependent on my wife to find almost everything for me. Lately, my wife also has the problems that we all encounter, and we both get frustrated over a simple little matter.

I don't know how people remember names of people whom they have recently met. I have a real problem remembering names, so forgive me if I forget your name. I wrote it down, but I forgot where!

Background Information

Are you forgetful? How do you feel when you've forgotten something simple like where your keys are or maybe your glasses. Talk about aging. What are you most afraid of as you get older?

Questions

1. What is embarrassing for older people?
2. Why would Helmut laugh as a youngster?
3. What's another word for grin?
4. Where is the first place Helmut looks for his lost item?
5. Do you think Helmut is frustrated because of his forgetfulness?
6. How does he lose something a second time?
7. What is the word glasses short for in this story?
8. What is absent mindedness?
9. Why would he like to forget where the fridge is?
10. Who does he depend on to find his things?



Higher Learning

by Ed Ogle

It soon became apparent to educational leaders in the Northwest Territories that a truly Northern University needed to be established. When Northern Affairs started to take an interest in Northern education in the early fifties, about ten percent of native children went to school. Within a decade, that percentage had been pushed to nearly 90 percent. Even though the dropout rate remained high, the percentage of those completing high school began to grow.

A Northern University, geared to the programs these kids needed, alert to their employment opportunities, yet tough enough to give the education required if the recipient decided to join the mainstream of Canadian employment in the South, was needed.

The little port town of Tuktoyuktuk, which had become the center of oil exploration in the area, was strongly considered as a possibility for a university in the western part of the Arctic.

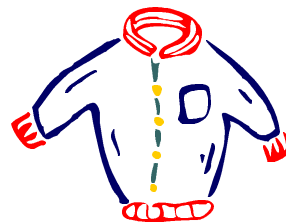
The kids in that area were ready and willing. In a very short time, half the population of Tuk appeared wearing promo material: tee shirts and sweat clothing, bearing the decal, TUK U.

Background Information

Talk about the difference between the northern and southern parts of our country. Did the people of the North have the same opportunities as people in the south? Also discuss whether or not a university geared toward a specific kind of people is a good thing or a bad one.

Questions

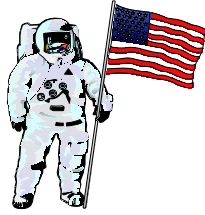
1. What percentage of children in the north went to school in the early 1950's?
2. Why do you think the dropout rate remained high?
3. How many years is a decade?
4. What kind of programs do you think the kids needed?
5. What does the word recipient mean?
6. Why would the northern kids want to "join the mainstream employment in the South"?
7. What kind of town is Tuktoyuktuk?
8. Where is Tuk located?
9. Use the word population in a sentence.
10. What is the word promo short for?
11. Why do you think the kids were so excited about the school?



Child of the Moon

by Ed Ogle

Duncan Pryde, one-time Hudson's Bay trader and for a while a territorial legislator, was making a dog run from Coppermine to Cambridge Bay with a couple of Eskimos when the Americans put the first man on the moon.



"We were getting the poop on a short wave radio, and by standing outside our snowhouse, we could see the swift-moving satellite passing through the sky", said Pryde. I said, "Isn't that something, a man on the moon"?

"My Eskimo friends didn't seem to think much of the idea," Duncan later recounted, and I finally asked them why.

Said Ooksoot, "This may be new to the white man, but Eskimos have been doing this forever".

"A man on the moon"? Sure, said Nalovok. "Medicine men do it all the time".

"They seemed to believe it", Pryde said later, "so I asked them how".

"It's one of the best ways to get a baby for a man and wife who can't seem to make one themselves", Nalovok suggested. It seems that when a couple in that situation approach the medicine man, usually he will agree to look into the situation. He always finds two or three things wrong, things that

preclude conceptions, and sets about to right them.

Regardless of what else is wrong with the couple, the medicine man usually finds it necessary for him to spend the night with the woman in question. Sometimes it is necessary for him to spend several nights. Then, if everything goes well, he will announce he is going to the moon to arrange for the baby. He'll take a couple of dogs and disappear behind some nearby hill or dune and be gone until the next day when he reappears.

Sometimes he will ask, "Did you see me rising through the air yesterday on my trip"? And when the baby comes just nine months after the medicine man ordered one from the moon, no-one is surprised at all.

Background Information

Every culture has their own legends for things: the beginning of the world, where man and woman come from and many, many others. Talk about these kinds of stories. Do you know of any?

Questions

1. Who put the first man on the moon?
2. What is a short-wave radio?
3. Why weren't the Eskimos impressed that a man had landed on the moon?
4. What is another word for swift?
5. What is a medicine man?
6. What problem are they talking about?
7. How do you think the medicine man solves the problem?
8. Does the medicine man really go to the moon?
9. Why do you think the Eskimos believed the story?
10. What is another word for recounted?

Other Activities: write down one of the legends you know.



How to Cope

by Olga Hyde

When suddenly something changes in our lives it is painful. If somebody dies, like a friend or family, it is very sad. I can feel grief; it is like an empty space. I feel that something is missing and then I think it is gone forever.

This topic is just right for me because I feel very sad. Last week our house was sold and the moving out day was on February the 24th. I call it "Friday the Thirteenth".

The people who bought our home had a problem with the sale of their own house, so they couldn't pay us. Our lawyer told us not to move out if we didn't have the money. He told us to wait.

At about 4 o'clock the lady came in with a very bad attitude, and I got intimidated by all of the people with her. We had to rush and just dump everything in our truck and leave. Well, I felt very sad in the beginning because I knew I didn't have a home anymore and besides that, I wasn't going to live like a family because I couldn't find a place to move to, since it was not the end of the month; I had to wait.

My daughter has gone to live with a family in Surrey, my little poodle dog "Angel" has gone to Vancouver with a friend. My husband has to sleep in a van to watch over some things, and myself, I'm living in Richmond with a friend, and my furniture and my plants are in storage. I felt very sad especially the

day when I woke up alone in a strange bed.

Next day on Saturday, I noticed that I never put my oil paintings on the truck, and for me, they are very special. These people were so intimidating and we had to leave in such a rush that I forgot my paintings. I recovered only half of them because they were already hanging on the walls. I was really sad that I would have to lose them. The worst is that we haven't had the money for the house, and the buyers are happy while I am feeling grief because my family is all scattered in different places, and it is the only family I have in Canada. And I do not know how to cope with this problem; it makes me feel very sad. I never felt homeless before and I find it very painful.



Background Information

Have you ever been bullied? What did it feel like? Talk about things you can do to stand up for yourself. Also talk about bad luck; days that you've had that nothing seems to go right. How do you cope?

Questions

1. What happened to Olga?
2. When did she have to move out of her house?
3. Why didn't she stay until she got the money?
4. What does the word intimidate mean?
5. Why would she call moving day "Friday the Thirteenth"?
6. Where did her daughter, dog and husband go?
7. Why didn't they have a place to move?
8. Use the word especially in a sentence.
9. How many paintings did she get back?
10. What do you think Olga should have done to fix the situation?

To the Last Ha'Penny

by Ed Ogle

Eskimos are quick to recognize a good thing. At Cape Dorset (several years ago), the head of the welfare department, Olive Chesworth, came to town and was still full of all the glories she had seen on her vacation trip to England. She told about pubs and cathedrals, the fast life in gay old London and the craggy moors of Scotland.

Johnny Williams, an Eskimo welfare official who was 25 years old at the time and his wife were so taken with their chief's description of England that they asked her if there was any reason an Eskimo couldn't go.

She said, "Well good God, no". They asked if she thought they would have as good a time as she did, and she said no reason not to. She then went to her library and pulled out several books on England.

So Johnny and his wife took the advice of Mrs. Chesworth and went over. They had a marvellous time and so reported on their homeground when the holidays were over.

Mrs. C. said, "Johnny, there was one thing I forgot to tell you and that was about the crazy English money system. How did you handle that"?

Johnny said, "Oh, that was no trouble at all. I just held out my money in my hand and those people just took what they needed. English people are very honest, you know".

Background Information

Vacations can be very relaxing, but they can be full of stress too. Where is your favourite place to go to? Have you ever travelled somewhere where you had to use a different kind of money?



Questions

1. What does a craggy moor look like?
2. Where did Olive go on her vacation?
3. How old was Johnny when he went to England?
4. What is welfare?
5. Why do you think Johnny and his wife asked if there was any reason an Eskimo couldn't go?
6. Why did Olive pull books on England out of her library?
7. What's another word for marvellous?
8. What's another word for holiday?
9. How is the English money different from Canadian?
10. Do you think Johnny and his wife got ripped off? Why or why not?



Seen 'em, Hell

by Ed Ogle

Another “nice but dull” guy I met in Canada was an old farmer named Walstrom who at 80 was still farming near a town called Peace River (in Alberta).

Peace River town is located in a vast area of Alberta and British Columbia which is called “the Peace River Country”. This area is considerably bigger than most U S states, and is magnificent farming land. It was settled much later than most Canadian farm lands, partly because of its location and because the good land was enclosed by miles and miles of muskeg and scrub forests.

After the U S built the Alaska highway during World War Two, the country opened up. With the new road running right through the area, both Canadian and American homesteaders settled in the Peace River Country.

It seemed to me to give us a good story no one had adequately covered before. I spent a week or so, half of which I had to admit to getting my car out of the gumbo mud they built their roads on leading into the Alaska or Alcan highway. However, I was most impressed with the area’s future and what already had been done there.

My last day in the region, I met this old geezer named Walstrom who had been farming up there over 50 years. “Gosh”, I said, “Mr.

Walstrom, you must have seen some real changes up here”.

He stared at me in disbelief and said, “seen them? Hell, Sonny, I made them”.

Background Information

Older people have a lot of information to share. They have lived longer and seen more than most of the rest of us. If you want to learn the history of our country, talk to an older person.

Questions

1. How old was Walstrom?
2. Where is Peace River located?
3. Why do you think this land is great for farming?
4. What is muskeg?
5. When was the Alaska Highway built?
6. What were homesteaders?
7. What’s another word for gumbo?
8. Why do you think that Ed was so impressed by this part of the country?
9. How long had Walstrom been farming?
10. What do you think Walstrom meant in the last sentence?

Other Activities: write down a story that you’ve heard from an older person.



Dawson City Sissies

by Ed Ogle

A few summers back, I was in Dawson City, the old site of Canada's greatest gold rush. I bumped into a man who had been there when Dawson had 40,000 people and was the liveliest town in North America.

Now only about 750 people made Dawson their home all year round, but the place still attracts loads of tourists every summer. Quite a summer show is staged as can-can girls dance their famed high kicking steps and open gaming is allowed at Diamond Gerties.

Well the man I met that night was one of the few survivors of that boom. He had made his money by supplying coal to the shacks of gold miners. Black Mike agreed to go to Diamond Gerties with me. I was hoping to get him high enough on overproof rum to tell me some old stories about the place. He knew them all.

At Gerties, the gambler needs to buy tickets for the game tables, the can-can show and anything else he wants. I told Mike to sit down and watch the girls kick up their legs. He settled down to watch but before I could get my tickets he came shuffling over.

I said, "What's the matter, Mike, girls no good"?

Mike said, "Damn sissies".

I said, "What do you mean, sissies"?

Mike said, "That's all, sissies", and

he looked at me, "wearing panties they are".

Makes you wonder about the old days, doesn't it!

Background Information

Talk about Canada's gold rush. You might have to get some information from somewhere else. Talk about how we sometimes make the "old days" seem very innocent, pure and boring.

Questions

1. Where was the site of Canada's greatest gold rush?
2. How many people live in Dawson now?
3. What is a can-can girl?
4. What's another way to say open gaming?
5. What does the word boom mean in the story?
6. How did the man Ed met make his money?
7. Why do you think Ed wanted to hear old stories about Dawson?
8. Why did Ed have to get the man drunk to tell the stories?
9. What do you have to buy tickets at Gerties for?
10. Do you think that the past was boring? Why or why not?



Loving Torment

by DA

A slender woman sits by the window looking over her shoulder watching the rain beat against the pane. As the drops fall, a single tear falls from her cheek. She moves her eyes slowly down towards her body; the first thing she sees are the bruises and cuts on her arms and legs, a bandage on her knee. She slowly and softly moves her hand and instead of feeling skin, there is a bandage tight against her ribs.

The tired soul turns to the window looking up at the sky which hung like a gray curtain, no sun in sight. As she glanced at the glass, she caught her reflection; a face swollen and cut with black and blue marks. It barely resembled her face. She hangs her head in her hands, wondering how to get her strength, to face her children and family.

Background Information

Talk about abuse. How a woman can stay in an abusive relationship. What could drive her to finally leave. Finally talk about how some stories are written without a clearly stated purpose and how sometimes you must make an educated “guess” about the true meaning of the story.



Questions

1. Where do you think the woman is?
2. What is she watching?
3. What is wrong with her body?
4. What is a bandage?
5. Where are your ribs?
6. Why do you think the soul is tired?
7. Use the word reflection in a sentence.
8. What in the story, “hung like a grey curtain”?
9. What do you think happened to the woman?
10. How do you think the woman will get the strength to face her children and family?

Other Activities: Write a story about a family who has a secret. Try to describe the secret without telling what it is. For example: a hidden pregnancy could be described as a young girl spending 9 months with a far away aunt.

Justin's Story

1. How I went to Rideau Regional Center.

I was a baby with cerebral palsy because I did not have enough oxygen at birth. They thought I was a very sick baby. For a long time the doctors did not know what was wrong with me. I was sent to a doctor in Toronto to find out what happened. The doctor said I should go to an institution. The doctor's thought that I was not smart. I went to Rideau Regional Center in Smith Falls for 17 years.

2. What it was like.

I did not like to live in an institution. I could not go out, always in the same place, seeing the same people. One hallway at the center is about seven eighths of a mile long. There were too many handicapped people, at one time 2000 all living together. I slept in a cubical with 4 other men on a ward of 30 people. The food was not very good as compared to my home now. When I wanted to go out with my friends I had to get the Administrator to sign a paper. Once he did not let me go with my friends for 2 months. I was very angry.

3. How I got out.

When I was at Rideau Regional Center, the psychologist had me do some tests. The results of these tests showed that I could make my own decisions. Then I was prevented from going on a trip with Norman and some other friends. I was very angry. Norman asked if I

wanted to get a lawyer. I said yes. I could not see Norman for 2 months and I could not go out with him for 1 year. My lawyer, David Baker, arranged for an assessment for me at the Hugh MacMillan Center for one month.

4. The Hugh MacMillan Center

I was happy to hear about the Hugh MacMillan Center in Toronto. This is a very good center which helps people like myself to get communication aids and inserts for wheelchairs. They have a lot of experience with people who have many physical limitations.

When I arrived I met with several therapists and doctors to decide about my assessment. My 2 friends Carol, Norman and I were there. At this meeting we decided on a one month assessment. I was afraid to be there that long.

The nurse took me to my room. I saw a psychologist and then I was introduced to the school. I found the school very interesting. I learned how to use the computer and I got to know a friend. I learned some reading, writing and more Blissymbols as well as math.

My lawyer wanted to use this assessment during my court case. While I was in Toronto I went to visit Sue O'Dell, a woman who has CP and requires a lot of help like I do. She lived in her own apartment with attendants on call. I was afraid for her but she was doing well.

Besides the assessments at the Hugh MacMillan Center I was assessed by 6 other psychiatrists. These tests and assessments made me afraid. I developed severe stomach pains during this time. Some of these doctors did not think I was smart. I found this hard. I did not like this.

It was hard for me to do these tests because I could not read, I could not understand and I had trouble pointing to my symbol board.

5. The Court

For two full days I sat through the talk of psychiatrists who tried to prove that I was not smart. They gave me names like a “vegetable”. Some said I was like an infant. On the third and following days, many people came to the stand to say that I was capable of making my own decisions. My social worker, other psychiatrists, the psychologist from Hugh Mac Millan Center as well as my Bliss

teacher who knew me for six years, all spoke on my behalf. They showed clearly that I could make my own decisions. I

also went up on the stand and was questioned by all lawyers and Judge Matheson.



Shirley McNaughton who founded the Bliss Communication Institute translated my answers as I pointed to my Blissboard. I was very hot and sweating. I cried and took a bit of a break before finishing. My friends and my family cried too. They were very proud of me! After my testimony, everybody knew how I wanted to live my life.

Thursday afternoon the following week we went to court again. I was feeling afraid and excited! The Judge said I was a thinking human being and had a part to play in our community. I was very happy and

excited and that night I could go out for supper with my friends. I did not sleep that night.

6. Finding a place.

After court I went to Participation House in Hamilton for 3 weeks on March 14, 1982. I found that this was a big home for 36 people with disabilities. I did not have anything to do. I felt bored. I talked a lot with a friend who had lived at Rideau Regional on the same ward as myself. I was happy to have her to talk with. I did not like to live there too much. On May 10, I came to Foyers Partage in Ottawa for one month. I went to school at McArthur Highschool. I was very excited and happy about this home. I went back to Smith Falls and decided to move to the home on Booth Street, June 17, 1983.

7. Living in Ottawa

I love going out, to shopping centers, for walks downtown and in parks. I like going to some football games and spending time with friends. I go to McArthur Highschool. I find it interesting especially math, life skills and history. In the summer I worked on the computer at the YM-YWCA and go to the summer program with the City of Ottawa. We do different activities like fishing, lawn bowling, camping, go to horse races, Upper Canada Village and Ottawa Exhibition. I have also gone on several trips to the Maritimes, Vancouver, Germany and Nicaragua.

Since I have been in Ottawa I have gotten two computers. One to talk face to face with, the other one to write my stories and do my homework. I got these through the Hugh MacMillan Center in Toronto.

When I came to Ottawa I had a severe curvature of the spine and had to wear a very large brace. I could not sit up for very long. I had a operation at the Civic Hospital. Since the operation I no longer wear the brace and can sit up all day and my back is straight.

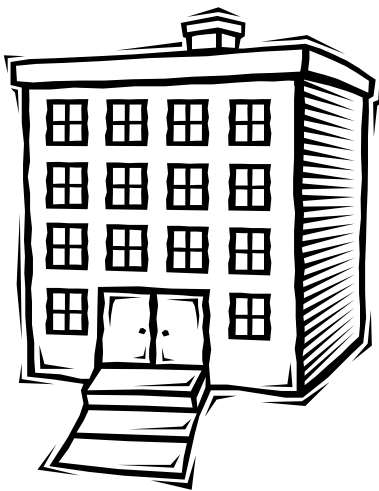
I live in a small home with 4 other people and I have my own room. Some people work in the house, others go to school, work on computers, do silk screening, help people in Nicaragua. People in my home also do pottery,

swimming, play soccer and
bowling.
I love it in Ottawa.

Justin

Background Information

Talk about how it might feel to have no control over your life. How it might feel to have others make every decision for you. Would you fight to be independent? Should a person with a very significant physical disability be completely independent? Why or why not?



Questions

1. How did Justin get Cerebral Palsy?
2. Why do you think the doctors wanted Justin institutionalized?
3. How many people lived in the institution?
4. What was the food like?
5. Use the word prevented in a sentence.
6. What made Justin get a lawyer?
7. What do you think the assessments proved?
8. Do you think the judge was right to give Justin his independence? Why or why not?
9. What is a Blissboard?
10. What does the word curvature mean?

Two Ears Have I

by Doug McInnes

In the mirror one early morning, after sleeping very sound, I touched my right ear with my hand, and guess what I found. Looking back I saw, that my hand now was on my left ear, my right ear on the other side, I'm sure the glass was clear. This can't be right I thought, because without a glass to see, to touch my ears I find, they're both where they should be. If I could take my ears off, to change from side to side, they would not fit my head at all, no matter how I tried. To look into the glass again, would I see back of my head? No of course, I'd see my face, and backs of ears instead. But if you want to make it right, just turn your head around, and all would be correct again, right back where they were found. The moral of this story is, "Don't tamper with your head", leave your head alone my friend, and change your mind instead.

Background Information

Have you ever read a story that seems to make little sense? Does it usually turn out to be a joke? Talk about how a mirror reflects the opposite of what it sees. What does that make you think of?

Questions

1. What did Doug find when he looked in the mirror?
2. If his ears didn't change position, what changed?
3. What's another name for mirror?
4. Why do you think Doug was looking in the mirror?
5. How does a mirror work?
6. What is a moral?
7. What does the last line in the story mean?
8. Use the word tamper in a sentence.

