

Write On!



*A compilation
of prize winning entries in the
Alberta Womens' Institutes
Creative Writing Competition*

2003

WINNERS ALL!

Each year, Alberta Womens' Institutes sponsors a Creative Writing Competition open to the more than 1000 members in the organization.

The contest consists of seven categories: Play, Poetry, Children's Fiction, Adult Fiction, Memoir, Travel, and Essay. Any member may enter once in each category.

Entries are judged by professional writers and awards are given out at the annual AWI Convention.

Awards may be given for First, Second and Third place but, if the judges determine there is none deserving first place, they may award a lower placing or none at all in that category.

Each year, as members cheer the winners, many wish they could read the entries, so the Executive have asked all members who enter the contest to agree in writing that their story, play or poem may be used for AWI fundraising. As a result, this booklet is made possible.

We hope you will enjoy the many and varied writings it contains. It may give you some ideas as to what is judged to be 'a winner'. Maybe it will inspire you to give it a try yourself and enter a future competition.

Our AWI is a talented group of women, this booklet highlights just one aspect of their accomplishments.

READ ON!

Index

Drama:	
Choices	2
Memoir:	
One Teardrop	14
The Bath	16
Castles and Chasms	20
Poetry:	
Island Farewell	24
Western Sculptures	25
Goodbye My Friend	26
Child Fiction:	
Donny Binky	27
The Adventures of Tiggletoes and Friends	30
Adult Fiction:	
A Love Story	35
The Honour of it All	39
Non Fiction:	
Journey to Freedom	41
My Brother Charles Frederick	45
Essay:	
Global warming	51

DRAMA

OVERALL WINNER OF THE COMPETITION

Choices

by 'Bushman's Daughter'
Marilee Kosik, Darwell, W.I.

SCENERY

A modern kitchen (Katherine's)

Counter, table, chairs,

Door: opening to foyer.

Counter arranged so that 'dishwasher' is behind it and out of audience's sight,

Electric coffee pot, ready to pour.

Refrigerator: containing pizza box with a slice of pizza in it.

A carton of milk & jug of orange juice in 'fridge

Mugs in cupboard...spoons, sugar, etc. on table

Small mirror over sink.

CAST

Grandmother (Sarah Brent)

age 65+

very "motherly" looking, gray hair
wearing a flower print dress and
sensible shoes.

Katherine Miller (Sarah's daughter)

age about 40

wearing a businesslike skirt &
blouse

hair coifed and make up on

Sara Miller: (Katherine's daughter)

age 16

very modern young miss

tight, low-rise jeans

skimpy top with bare midriff

Kimberley (Sara's friend)

age 16

'mod' attire

Time: Late morning

Katherine just enters her kitchen as doorbell rings off stage

Katherine goes out to foyer and immediately returns with Grandmother who has just arrived....Grandmother sits at table

Katherine goes to coffeepot, gets two mugs from cupboard and pours coffee.

Katherine: Coffee, mom?

Grandmother: Yes, I suppose so. You look like you're ready to go out. What is it this time? You're never home

Katherine: Let's not get in to that again, mom. You know I work.

Grandmother: Oh yes, I know, all right. I just don't know why. Gerald certainly makes a good income. There's no need for you to work.

Katherine: It's not all about money. I need to be a person, not just a wife.

Grandmother: Well! In my day, wife was good enough.

Katherine: But it's so demeaning. I want to be my own person, not just someone's wife or somebody's mother.

Grandmother: Talking about being a mother...where is that daughter of yours?

Katherine: Oh she's still in bed, I guess. It is Saturday, after all.

Grandmother: Heavens! It's past ten o'clock. What a time to be getting up! Young people didn't get to laze around like that when I was young.

Katherine: (*exasperated*) Yeh yeh, I know. Up at the crack of dawn, do chores, have breakfast and then walk five miles to school (*sarcastic aside*) and it was likely uphill, both ways

Grandmother: Scoff if you like, but things were different then...better, too.

Sara enters

Katherine: Oh, here's Sara now.

Sara: 'Morning Mom. 'Morning Grandma.

Sara roots in the fridge and comes out with some cold pizza, puts it on the table, still in the box, pours a cup of coffee and sits down to eat.

Grandmother: What in heaven's name are you eating?

Sara: Pizza.

Grandmother: Pizza! That's no kind of breakfast...and coffee! You should have a good healthy breakfast...with milk.

Sara: (with a grin) Pizza's healthy Grandma... protein, vegetable and grain...

Grandmother: (with a disapproving look at Katherine)
Harrumph! That job takes so much of your time you can't even cook a decent breakfast for your daughter!

Katherine: Sara is sixteen years old. She can cook herself breakfast if she wants. She doesn't do much else. Which reminds me, Sara, you were supposed to empty the dishwasher last night. It's still waiting. As soon as you finish breakfast, get at it!

Sara gulps down the remainder of her coffee, goes to the sink and dumps the pizza crust and box in the garbage. .

Sara: Why do I have to do everything around here?

Katherine: I hardly think that emptying the dishwasher can be called 'everything' Get at it!

Sara: All right! All right! I'm on it!

(Sara starts to unload dishwasher)

Grandmother: *(shaking her head)* Such a fuss about emptying the dishwasher, When I was your age we had to carry the water, heat it, wash and dry the dishes and then put them away. You young people are spoiled

Katherine: We didn't have a dishwasher at home, either...or many other conveniences. That's another reason I work, to help provide my family with some conveniences.

Grandmother: And when are you home to enjoy them?

Katherine: That reminds me. I have to run in to the office for a few hours. A shipment is expected.

Sara: But mom...it's Saturday. You promised you'd take me shopping so we could get that new outfit I want.

Katherine goes out and quickly returns with her suit jacket, purse and briefcase.... looks at her self in mirror over the sink and pats a few hairs into place.

Katherine: Well, you'll just have to wait, won't you? I'm sorry, but it's important I go in for a few hours. You finish that dishwasher and tidy up in here. Then you go up and get your room cleaned up. Don't be running off to the mall, I don't want you hanging out there like some of those kids I've seen Oh, and you'll have to find yourself something for supper. Your father is golfing this afternoon and I'm meeting him there for dinner so we won't be home. You behave yourself. See you later, mom.

(Katherine leaves...you hear the outside door close.

Sara: *(complaining)* Empty the dishwasher. Clean up the kitchen. Clean my room. Get my supper. What am I...a maid? I might as well be in jail; don't go to the mall, be home early, do this, don't do that.....

Grandmother: (*interrupting*) Now Sara, it's not that bad. You have a lovely home, all the conveniences, and a room of your own. Why, when I was your age...

Sara But that was centuries ago!

Grandmother: (*amused*) Well, not quite that long.

Sara: But things have changed. This is the 21st century, not the dark ages.

Grandmother: But some things remain the same. Values.... like honesty and love and commitment

Doorbell rings and Sara goes out to answer it. You hear girls' voices from the foyer

Grandmother: (*to herself*) I know I'm out of touch, but I do worry about what's happening in the world. The young people of today seem to have no goals...

(Sara returns with her friend Kimberley)

Sara: Grandma, this is my friend Kimberley. Her mom is working today, too, so she came over to hang.

Kimberley: Pleased to meet you Mrs. ____? Sorry I don't know your last name. I know its not 'Miller', like Sara's.

Grandmother: No, I'm Mrs. Miller's mother...my name is Sarah Brent.

Kimberly sits down as Sara gets them both a glass of milk and another coffee for her grandmother. Conversation continues...

Kimberley: Really! Your name is Sara, too. That's rad! I wasn't named after anyone in my family.
So what do you do, or are you retired now?

Grandmother: (*chuckling*) No, I'm afraid one doesn't get to retire from my job. I'm a wife, mother and grandmother...I will be until I die.

Kimberley: Oh. You mean you never worked?

Grandmother: That question is almost insulting, young lady. If done properly, those three jobs are more work than anything you could do outside your home...but more rewarding, too.

Finished with pouring drinks, Sara sits.

Sara: But didn't you ever get bored, Grandma?

Grandmother: I never had time to be bored. As your mother reminded me, we didn't have many conveniences so there was a lot of work. When I did have time, I always found something interesting to do with it.

Kimberley: Like what?

Grandmother: Well, when I had time, I loved to pack a lunch and take Sara's mother and her brothers down to the creek for a picnic. Then, when they got a bit older and got involved in things at school, I too got busier. With four children in various activities I was never bored. Hockey games, Soccer games, dance recitals, school concerts... What fun it was.

Sara: Mom and Dad almost never see any of my games. Doesn't matter, I guess. The only reason I even play is because it's right after school and there's nothing to come home to, anyway.

Kimberley: I thought of taking dance, but Mom's busy and I would need costumes and rides to competitions and all that stuff.

Grandmother: *(smiling in memory)* Oh, costumes! I remember costumes...costumes for dance, costumes for skating. Sometimes my living room looked like a department store with all that material hanging over the furniture.

Sara: You mean you SEWED the costumes?

Grandmother: Well, money was short and I could sew quite well,
so...

Kimberley: Geez! My mom would never do that. She wouldn't have time.

Grandmother: Well, I guess that's one of the good things about not working out of the home. But, as you see, being a wife and mother surely didn't mean I didn't work.

Sara: Didn't you ever have a job? What about before you married Grandpa?

Grandmother: In those days, girls stayed at home until they married. We lived on a farm and there was plenty to do. In fact, when my brothers went off to war, my sister and I took over some very unladylike jobs...much to my mother's concern. But it had to be done and everyone had to do his or her part.

Kimberley: But I remember reading about women working during the war.

Grandmother: Yes, wartime meant that many young women did take jobs out of the home. With the men overseas, women took over their jobs in factories and assembly plants and some even joined the forces. A school friend of mine even joined the air force and became a pilot. Women didn't fly in combat, but she flew new planes to Britain as replacements, thereby freeing a man for a combat role. Oh it was exciting times...I often thought I'd like to do something like that.

Sara: Why didn't you?

Grandmother: Well, as I said, there was much to do on the farm. My parents needed me and the country needed our produce, so I did feel I was doing something important. Anyway, I chose to stay there. I guess that's what life is...it all comes down to choices.

Sara gets up and refills drinks as needed.

Sara: What do you mean?

Grandmother: Well, I chose to stay on the farm. Then when I married your grandfather, I chose to stay at home. When the children grew up I chose to remain a housewife and donate my spare time to worthwhile causes. It has been a good life. Others chose differently and that's OK, too. Society needs different things from different people and if we all chose the same route, there would be many things left undone.

Kimberley: Don't you ever wonder what you might have missed?

Grandmother: Yes, I guess we all question our choices at one time or another. Sometimes I wondered if I had made the right one. I guess the only way you know for sure is when you can look back and say, "It was good" ...and my life has been good.

Sara: I wish my mom had chosen to stay home.

Kimberley: Yeh...mine too

Grandmother: No, for them it wouldn't work. They are another generation and what worked for mine isn't fulfilling to theirs. I'm sure that many times they question their choices, too. Sara, I remember your mother calling me in tears to come stay with you because you were ill and she couldn't get time off. She was so worried about you. I'm sure that's one time she questioned whether her choice had been the right one. We all find that our choices sometimes make us unhappy...even angry... but, if it is the right choice overall, we adapt.

Kimberley: But how do you choose what you want to do for the rest of your life?

Grandmother: Well, choices - good choices - are made by weighing all the pros and cons, then making the best decision FOR YOU. That's the important

thing...it must be YOUR choice. You cannot live someone else's life.

Sara; But the 'rest of your life' is so long. How do you know whether you'll still want that choice when you get old?

Grandmother: We all reevaluate our choices at certain points in our lives, when you marry, when you have children, when your children leave home, when you retire. Choices can be changed. It's your life after all.

Sara: So really, it's no big thing. You can change your mind anytime you want.

Grandmother: No. That's what your generation believes about everything, change your mind, change your job change your marriage. I heard the term "disposable generation" and it fits. Instead of just quitting things that become difficult, you must learn to work at it and make it better...not just get rid of it.

Kimberley: Which is it, then? I'm confused. Do we make choices? Do they matter? Can we change them? What are you saying?

Grandmother: (*thinking, and speaking slowly*)
What I mean is that choices are important. It's important to make a commitment to your choice and not give up too easily or too soon. But you're right, sometimes choices must be changed. When you are reviewing your life and your choices, don't think short term. Look back over a few years, at least, and decide if your choice has been more good than bad or vice versa. If it has been mostly bad...change. If more has been good, then reconfirm the choice you made. Short term, there are always times when things seem extremely good or bad so you must look at the big picture.

Sara: So you think the choices our moms made are right?

Grandmother: Yes and no. They're right for them, I'm sure, but that's not the right choice for everyone.

Kimberley: And sometimes they wish they had chosen differently?

Grandmother: Of course. Many times I'm sure they wish they could stay at home, attend a game, have friends over for afternoon coffee and things like that but, over the long run, they believe they're doing the right thing.

Sara: Well, I think your choice was better. You were at home.

Grandmother: It was right for me. But, of course, there were some scary things about it. I didn't have much education and had never held a job. What if something had happened to your grandfather? I couldn't have supported the family. And times when he was out of work, I couldn't be much help. With only one income we didn't have the things you enjoy and there was always the worry that we could lose even what we had. Many times I saw your mother's friends doing and having things we couldn't afford. Parents always want the best for their children and I often felt guilty that I couldn't give mine all they wanted.

Sara: So that's why mom works?

Grandmother: That's likely a big part of the reason. But, as I said, choices have pros and cons. She can buy you clothes, provide a lovely house, lots of things you want but I'm sure there are many times she feels guilty because she isn't here for you...feels that she's missing out on a lot of things.

Kimberley: Gosh...it sure seems hard to decide. I guess I want both.

Grandmother: Well, we learn that we can't have it all. That's why

we make choices. We decide what's most important then adjust our choices to meet most of our needs, it's the best any of us can do,

Sara: Sounds hard.

Grandmother: Yes, I suppose it is. That's part of growing up, though. Nothing in life comes easy...we do the best we can.

Grandmother glances at her watch and gets up to go

Now, girls, I really must go. I'm volunteering at the children's ward this afternoon and I mustn't be late.

*Grandmother walks to the door,
Sara gets up to follow and Grandmother turns back for a moment)*

'Bye girls. Sara, remember to do the things your mother told you, (*smiles*) I'm afraid that's not a choice.

Kimberley: 'Bye Mrs. Brent

Sara: 'Bye Grandma

Grandmother leaves. Girls sit back down.

Kimberley: Wow! Your grandma's neat. I thought old people just sat around waiting to die or something. She's OK

Sara: This whole thing about choices sure gives me a headache, though. How do you know what to choose? Grandma thinks women should stay at home and mom thinks women should work. What should I do?

Kimberley: I think what she meant was that we have to choose our own path. I think I'd stagnate if I stayed at home like she did.

Sara: But I don't want to be some flippin' tycoon like my mom, either.

Kimberley: You know, maybe that's something we have that they didn't. Your grandma stayed at home and knows the good and bad of that. Our moms chose the exact opposite and they seem to be happy with that. Because of them, and what they have learned, we can use their experiences, compare all the pros and cons of their choices and then take the best from both to make our choices...maybe somewhere in the middle.

Sara: Yeah...I see. Maybe that would work.

Kimberley: Well, we have a couple years before we have to make any definite choices. It was sure interesting to talk with your grandma though wasn't it. I liked what she said about choices and commitment.

Sara: Speaking of commitment...guess I'd better get busy with my chores. Want to hang and give a hand?

Kimberley: Sure.

They walk from the room.

Sara: *(Just before she passes through the door)*
You're right. Grandma is an OK old lady. I'm kind of glad mom called me Sara...it's a good name.

Curtain

THE EXPERTS SPEAK

"Can't sing. Can't act. Slightly bald. Can dance a little."...A film company's verdict on Fred Astaire's 1928 film test.

"Everything that can be invented has been invented."...Director of the US Patent Office, 1899.

FIRST PLACE: MEMOIR

One Teardrop

by The Sassy Senior

Liane Maitland, Winterburn W.I.

It was a gray dingy morning. There was no wind. The rain had fallen for two days now, matching the mood of the world after the catastrophe of September 11, 2001! Each raindrop fell straight down, like a bomb directed onto a specific target. They flowed into each other as they hit the concrete, to fill the dips, holes and gutters in translucent puddles of leaden rain water.

My friend Syd, an American from California, deposited his coins into the ticket machine at the General Hospital, and braced himself for his visit to his old Uncle Arch, a recent stroke victim, who had recently been transferred there from the Glenrose. Once an independent senior citizen, Arch now was in a position of almost complete helplessness, and his family was all so far away. His nephew resided in San Clemente, California, and his beloved sister, Vi, who had taught him how to be an independent 'special needs' individual, lived much farther away in England. Syd had had a very difficult week, as his stepfather had passed away in England only days before--and he was unable to be with his Mother due to the cessation of air flights. Vi, his mother, had requested that he travel to Edmonton and help Uncle Archie, her brother, cope with his disabilities. For three days he had been busy with interviews with hospital staff, looking after financial situations, and trying to console Arch over the loss of his life-skills, as he had known them, and also the loss of his brother-in-law, in England. Now it was time to head back to the States, and say goodbye to Arch.

"This is going to be tough," rationalized Syd, "but I will make the best of it." And with that, he reluctantly left the parking lot and made his way through the downpour and into the old red brick building which had once been a very active city hospital. Syd had purchased a huge bouquet of flowers for the nursing staff, in appreciation for their cooperation and care. It was a mass of colours--Crimson and brilliant yellow gladiolus mixed with Teddy-bear sunflowers of golden yellow and brown and really the only bright thing visible on this bleak day. After a nice visit, and coffee at the cafe downstairs, it was time for a 'heart-to-heart' pep talk, and instructions as to being as positive as possible about his 'situation'. Farewells were exchanged, but not before tears ran down Arch's cheeks, and Syd felt a big lump rising up in his throat

"See you Arch," Syd tried to respond cheerfully--"I'll keep in touch"--and with a sad feeling he turned and walked out of the room.

The rain was still coming down as he approached his blue Saturn in the parking lot. He quickly jumped into the car and prepared to leave when he noticed something under his windshield wipers. Annoyed that someone would put a flyer, or such, on his windshield--he angrily went to retrieve the paper and throw it away. "What the heck is this?" he questioned in his mind. He became aware that his attitude at this very moment was not the best, but as he looked at what he had removed from the window he could not quite comprehend just exactly what it was. As he unfolded what appeared as a red stick-like object, he became aware of the fact that it was a small Canadian flag in which had been placed a ragged piece of paper that was an entry form for some kind of a contest. He turned the paper over and realized that some words were scribbled on the back. The message he read impacted him so greatly, that the raw emotions evoked over the last few days broke forth like a dam collapsing, and tears of both sadness and compassion trickled down his cheeks. Those words were directed to a complete stranger with an American license plate and read--"I hurt and I cry, and mourn what happened to our neighbours! From Darlene--a Canadian." Syd, the 'typical' American macho man, had been brought down to his knees!

I met with my old friend that evening, to say goodbye--and this was the first thing he had to tell me about, and show to me. Tears fell down my cheeks, and I was overwhelmed with the sympathetic kindness of one stranger to another. I thought about the last few days of the bombardment of news casts I had witnessed, in which nations, peoples, literally millions have rallied around the victims, rescue workers, government officials, etc. "To what costs must people suffer in order to have mankind respect and care about each other!" I choked out in our ensuing conversation. "It makes no sense whatsoever!" I really believe that this is the end of our world as we, the people, know it today. This planet will never be the same!

So Darlene, whoever you are, you did a wonderful thing by taking a moment, to identify with your fellow man, and to help us realize that in all things in life we are 'one'. I pray that all the single tears that have fallen, in fear, in grief, in shock and terror will blend together to become a floodway to wash away the evil in this world, And, Oh Lord, God, let us not forget to be kind!

SECOND PLACE: MEMOIR

The Bath

by 'Bushman's Daughter'
Marilee Kosik, Darwell, W.I.

Eight o'clock in the morning and I poured my first coffee of the day. Twenty men had been fed, twenty lunches packed. From the doorway of the 10X40 foot trailer that served as kitchen, dining room and cook's quarters for the far northern construction camp, I watched my sister-in-law trudge through the early spring mud and snow from her small camper across the yard. I was more than ready to sit and visit over a 'cuppa' with the only other white woman in the settlement.

"Good morning", she greeted me while struggling to remove her 'Goodyear sandals', now weighing some ten pounds each from the accumulation of gumbo. "Boy, am I fed up with this place. We've been here nearly a month and still have at least two more weeks to go."

"Yes," I agreed as I poured her coffee, "I never appreciated all my civilized conveniences until now."

"What do you miss the most?" she asked. "I was thinking about that over breakfast this morning and each time I thought I had come up with the definitive answer, some other inconvenience reared its ugly head."

Putting the pot back on the stove, I quickly answered, "Right now I'd like nothing better than an electric coffee pot and maybe a toaster and microwave to simplify the breakfast and lunch making routine here."

"A TV would be nice," she countered. "I do miss it."

"Even a regular newspaper would be great," I added. "By the time we find out anything, the NEWS is old! Sometimes I feel so cut off I wonder if the world is still out there!"

"Oh yes," she groaned, "and a real telephone. Sitting out in a cold truck trying to get a connection, then watching every word you say because so many are listening seems hardly worth the effort."

"Well," I laughed, "that's probably the only entertainment those isolated people get...listening to the radio phone."

"All these things are sure inconvenient," she summarized, "but what, really, do you miss the most?"

"Well," I pondered, "having just finished washing dishes for a crew, I look back to my days of hot & cold running water...."

"The muddy, cold trip to the three-walled outhouse makes me long for my nice clean, warm, private sweet smelling bathroom." she interrupted.

"And," I continued, "how nice it would be to have a sink where used water ran away, instead of having to cart it out and dump it!"

"You're right," she agreed. "No running water is the worst. There's nothing I long for more than a bath!"

"Oh yessss," I moaned. "I dream of soaking in a tub. It's weeks since I had more than a 'possible'!"

Diverted momentarily from her idea, she paused to ask, "What's a 'possible'?"

"That's what my granny called a sponge bath," I replied. "You take a small basin of water and, starting from your face you wash down as far as possible, then from your feet wash up as far as possible and then you wash 'possible'. It's not very relaxing, but you do get cleaner and it doesn't use much water."

"Well, we agree that a bath is the thing we miss the most...so lets have one," she exclaimed! "Lets have a bath!"

"How do you propose to do that?" I questioned. "Sorry to burst your bubble but you know we can't use water from the tank for anything but essentials. Anyway, where would we have a bath? No bathroom or, for that matter, a bathtub around here."

"We could do it," she insisted. "We could melt snow in that old square washtub, then just lock the door here in the cook shack and each have a quick bath while the other keeps guard. The men won't be back from the site until after dark. We'll have lots of time. Come on. Lets do it!"

Caught up in her enthusiasm, and my very real desire for a bath, I rashly agreed. Twenty minutes later, anyone who may have passed by would have been entertained by the sight of two white women, dressed in their Assumption 'going out attire' of coveralls and gumboots, each carrying a track shovel in one hand and an old square wash tub between them.

Looking around the yard, churned up by trucks and caterpillar tractors, we agreed that we would have to go further afield to find snow. Our first destination was the snow banks left by the men when they cleared the site. After slugging through the mud to the nearest bank, we met our first bump on the road to BATH. The reservation was populated by seemingly hundreds of dogs, allowed to roam free now they were no longer needed for

transportation. Every shovel of snow uncovered another yellow stain! Well, we decided, we would have to go further yet. Surely if we headed into the forest we would find clean snow. Still enthusiastic, we entered the sparse scrub that passed for a forest at this latitude. We soon realized that with spring on its way, although there was snow here, most of it white, there was not as much as we expected. Nevertheless we grazed our way farther and farther, getting a shovelful here and there, slowly accumulating a full tub of snow.

Although it was some distance back to camp, lugging the now heavy tub and lifting our gumbo-clad boots, we struggled gamely. After all, it was worth the hard work. We were going to have a bath! Back at the kitchen we lifted the tub to the stove and lit the two burners below. Now we would just have to wait till it melted and got hot. As Georgina made coffee for our wait, I rounded up towels and soap for the big event.

They say a watched pot never boils but, when the pot is filled with snow, it surely does shrink. Imagine our chagrin when all our hard earned snow was reduced to a mere inch and a half of water! Disappointed but still game, we found pails and returned to the hunt for white snow. Three trips to the bush and back with loaded pails again filled the tub with snow and we sat down, again, to wait. An hour later, that tub of snow had become three inches of water! Time was flying and we still hadn't created enough water for a decent bath. Tired and discouraged, we nevertheless returned to hauling pails of snow to our tub. Our morning enthusiasm had waned but we were determined. We had progressed this far; it was no time to quit! 'The Bath' had become a quest!

By mid afternoon, after refilling the tub with snow three more times, we had a decent level of water thawed and it was slowly warming. Tired, discouraged and dirty from our travails, we wanted, in fact needed, that bath more than ever. Testing the water temperature one last time, we deemed it ready. I gathered a few sheets from the cupboard to cover windows, took one last look around the camp and seeing the lot empty, locked the door. Just as we were lifting the tub down from the stove and anticipating the decadence of a real bath, our dreams were rudely interrupted by a sharp knock on the door!

Not expecting anyone to be around for some hours yet, we looked askance at each other but neither had any idea, I pulled back the sheet at the lower corner and peeked out to see a muddy and disheveled truck driver on the step, just raising his hand to knock

again. I recognized him as a driver for KAPS Trucking but was puzzled that there was no rig in sight. One rule of the north, however, is hospitality, so I opened the door, albeit reluctantly.

"Thank heavens," he exclaimed. "I'm mired in the mud about three miles down the road with a broken axle. I radioed the company and they are sending in a replacement and a mechanic on a chopper but, since there's nowhere they can set down where the truck is stuck, I told them I'd meet them at PK's yard and walked up here to wait for them. It was farther than I thought and that mud is a killer to walk in. I'm tired, disgusted, and generally stressed. I don't know when the chopper will get here, how long it will take to get unstuck and repaired and back on the road. I'm already about 12 hours late at Peace River and not out of this darn place yet. It's not unusual to have two or three breakdowns on a trip up here. Please tell me you have a hot coffee on the stove! "

Somewhat reluctantly I invited him in.

For the remainder of the afternoon, while stealing surreptitious glances at our bathtub resting, and cooling, in the corner, we carried on a desultory conversation and poured coffee. We listened and looked for the expected helicopter, hoping it would come soon. I knew I couldn't put this poor fellow back out in the cold, but will admit that the thought did cross my mind--often. Eventually his help did arrive. Not even stopping for coffee as they were fast running out of sufficient light for flying, he climbed in and they were gone. Finally!

"Now," I said, "let's have that bath!"

"Have you looked at the time lately?" Georgina asked as she struggled into her boots to head home. "It's after five and if you're going to get supper on the table for the crew, you'd best get at it. I guess we'll have to postpone the bath till tomorrow. "

What a disappointment, after all that work. I was crushed. I prepared the meal, working around the tub on the floor. I washed dishes and prepared the kitchen for breakfast, heating water in pots, as my 'boiler' was full of bath water. Each time I stepped around that tub or even noticed its existence I was further depressed. Waiting till tomorrow seemed such a let down after all the enthusiasm and hard work.

Next morning after breakfast chores, we did get together and did have our baths. It was wonderful, such luxury! Although somewhat uncomfortable and hurried, it was everything we had imagined and hoped for. We "oohed" and "aahed" in pleasure as we soaked and splashed and, wonder of wonders, even washed our hair. For the first time in a month I felt really clean. Although I

continued the rest of my tour making do with all the inconveniences of the bush, memories of 'The Bath' always lightened my mood:

Sometimes still, thirty years later, when I am soaking in a full tub of water filled from a faucet in my private bathroom, I remember that bath. It reminds me to never take my modern conveniences for granted.

THIRD PLACE: MEMOIR

Castles and Chasms

by 'Patricia Williams'

Ruth McCullough, Darwell. W.I.

Two main characters in this biography, are my Mother and Brother. The year was nineteen-hundred and fifty-two, when I was all but thirteen years old.

My brother, Roger, was at that time three years younger than myself. He had grey-blue eyes, short dark hair, and had a freckled face. His hobbies were building model boats, was a member of the Sea Scouts, and sang for the church choir. He had a restless out-going personality and enjoyed being a great tease.

My mother was a woman in her forties, at that time, and wore her hair up in a bun. She was a teacher by profession, saw service in World-War-Two, and had a great love for classical music. She had a great sense of fun, was a keen conversationalist with all those who touched her life, and had a devout personality.

It was raining hard, when Roger and I looked out the front room windows of our house on the out skirts of the City of Belfast, Northern Ireland. The holidays had come, for there would be no school tomorrow.

My Mother had decided to take us both away with her. We decided to head upstairs to bed, for it would be an early rise for all. the next morning, as the bus in which we would be traveling left the City center at seven o'clock in the morning. Yes, we were indeed going on a trip, along the beautiful Antrim Coast road to a place called Dunseverick.

The morning dawned bright and sunny, and we rose immediately. Our bags packed and waiting in the hall below,

contained an assortment of warm clothing, raincoats, rubber boots, stout shoes, socks and writing materials.

We took a taxi to the Bus Station, then, with a lot of other passengers, boarded the bus. The bus wound its way through the outskirts of Belfast, past the Cave-Hill Zoo, which we all had visited many times before, and out to the scenic and winding Antrim Coast road.

My brother by now had shifted to a seat behind us, and sat with his nose against the window pane looking out at the small fishing-trawlers gathering their daily load of fish, in from the bay.

Soon we came to the town of Antrim, and on past some high grassy mounds, which were the burial grounds of the Irish Chieftains of long ago. The bus stopped at the town of Bushmills. Famous for its hospitality to the tourists and its Irish Whiskey. Bushmills is known for its geographical rock formation, known as "The Giant's Causeway". Legend has it, that an angry giant, named Finn McCord, threw a heap of rocks into the Irish Sea, from Fingal's Cave, off the Northern coast of Scotland, so that they landed in the coastal waters of Bushmills County Antrim.

Pretty soon we were climbing again. We could see where the Irish sea had narrowed into a channel where the Northern coast of Scotland showed the outline of the Mull of Galloway peninsula, in the distance, were very visible to us, as it was a clear sunny day.

As we looked out, we could see little blue flowers, which grew wild and were known as Dunseverick Geraniums. Small white daisies dotted the cliff tops. The bus rounded the corner of the road and came to a standstill in front of a tall white two story house, with a large vegetable and flower garden surrounding it. Our hostess came out to greet us.

Mrs. Morris was a middle-aged woman and had been widowed during World-War-Two wore her dark hair short. She was a friendly soul. Mrs. Morris had two teen-aged daughters, Deidrie and Bridie, who both wore their hair down to their shoulders, in braids, and helped their mother with the chores around the house. Along with several other guests that had come to stay, we sat down at the long oak table for supper, and ate heartily.

The next morning my Mother inquired of Mrs. Morris on 'whether there were any tours going out from where we were?'

Mrs. Morris told her 'that there were two qualified guides in the district, who were willing to drive the tourists to where they wished to go'.

"The tour to Dunluce Castle and Carrick-a-Reed rope bridge, was to take place early Tuesday morning," she said,

We had a day in hand to recover from our long trip, so Mother suggested 'that it might be a good idea to spend Monday, biking half a mile down the road to see the old ruins of Dunseverick Castle'.

I could see that my brother didn't care to go. So far as he was concerned, 'he would have preferred to be hanging around with fishermen on the wharf, get in their boats with them and sail away;'. or so he fantasized. Later in life, he was to become a Petty Officer in the Royal navy. We finally cajoled him into going with us.

All along the road we saw black and white dairy cattle, known as "Friezians" in that part of the country. They are known as Holsteins over here. About half a mile up the road we went down into a gully, and there stood the remnants of Dunseverick Castle. Only its shell was left standing through time. A huge Albatross was winging its way high above the ruins, and the waves lashed endlessly against the weed-draped rocks on either side. Some fishermen were out there, trawling in the heavy swell, all dressed in their Macinalls and great rubber-boots, but they were too far from shore.

We had done a lot of walking that afternoon, so when supper-time rolled around, we were hungry. We purchased a number of post-cards, wrote on them, sent them away to relatives in England, played dominoes for a while then went to bed. The next day was Tuesday. A small bus from the village arrived with the two guides aboard.

A brisk wind was blowing as we rambled our way through the country-side, and on up to the scenic ruins of Dunluce Castle. It had been one of the many fortresses which had been built during the thirteenth century to form the last citadels of resistance against invaders. The guide explained 'that its end was more memorable than its beginning' for part of the castle fell into the sea during a Christmas banquet, in the year sixteen hundred and thirty-nine.

We could see that it remained a wild and forbidding ruin. We had brought lunch with us, so we sat down on the grass and ate it. Boarding the bus again, we went back the way we had come. We stopped several miles back from Dunluce Castle, got out and went into a field nearby. When we got to the other side of the field, we were indeed on the cliff's edge, and were told by the guides to stay close to each other, while going down to Carrick-a-Reed rope bridge to the gorge, below.

My Mother, who had really no head for heights, decided

not to venture down, remained up top in the field, with several other women. Round and round we went, down the wooden steps that skirted the base walls of the cliffs above us, with only open hand rails on both sides that came between us and the sea, far below. Then, all of a sudden, we came to a halt on a wide platform. There, over the chasm, a rope bridge was slung.

If ever there was a time to admit that you were afraid of heights, now would have been the time to admit it, or one would have been a fool to attempt to cross. In the centre of the bridge were four large planks. The whole bridge shimmied and swayed as we went across and followed our leader, like lambs to the slaughter. Far below we could catch a glimpse of the boiling rage of sea spray, spuing its way upward, hundreds of feet below, the gulls ever present in its constant mist. The rope bridge was fastened securely to an island, on the other side of the chasm.

Soon it was time to cross back over, swinging and swaying in the wind as we went, and on up to civilization again. "What an incredible experience," I thought to myself, well satisfied with our homeward trek up from the gorge below. My Mother rose from where she had been sitting, came over to both of us standing upon the cliff's edge.

"How did both of you manage down there?" she asked curiously, taking us by our hands. Relieved, she heaved a soft sigh.

"Gosh it was great. A bit nerve-racking at times," I said honestly. "At first walking across the rope bridge seemed very scary, but then, when I made up my mind to complete the challenge, I felt good!" Roger just took the whole adventure in his stride, 'couldn't have cared a darns worth', kept his mouth shut.

Our time at Dunseverick, was coming to a close. It was raining when the bus pulled up to the curb outside the garden gate. We all said our 'good byes' to Mrs. Morris and her two daughters, thanking them for such a wonderful stay. Then, boarding the bus, we set out for home. I think we must have all slept during the return trip, for the air was very humid and heavy along the Northern Coast.

Tired out, when we arrived back, we again took a taxi to our home, and thanked Mother for a wonderful and exciting holiday, before going to bed.

QUOTE

It is difficult to say what is impossible because the dreams of yesterday are the hopes of today and the reality of tomorrow

R.H. Goddard, Rocket Engineer

FIRST PLACE: POETRY

Island Farewell

by 'Bushman's Daughter'
Marilee Kosik, Darwell W.I.

The winsome, murmuring breath
Of the softly blowing breeze
Wafts a subtle scent of pine
As it whispers through the trees.
The gentle breezes call my name.
Come back again. Come back again."

The raging surf, far below,
Pounding on the rocky shore,
Sends its message to my ears
In its violent throaty roar.
The restless waters call my name.
"Come back again. Come back again."

High above, the eagle soars,
Riding currents in the sky.
Swiftly diving on his prey,
On silent wing, with fierce cry,
The soaring eagle calls my name.
"Come back again. Come back again."

My heart is heavy laden
For I have no urge to roam.
But I must leave this island,
The only home I've known.
My island homeland calls my name.
"Come back again. Come back again."

No matter where I wander
Yet my heavy heart will yearn.
My soul will ache with sadness
Till I can, again, return.
"I will," I cry through tears of pain,
"Come back again. Come back again".

SECOND PLACE: POETRY

Western Sculptures

by "Patricia Williams"

Ruth McCullough, Darwell W.I.

The autumn days of earthen mould,
Turns loden green into brilliant gold.
The skies return to their laden gray
Where cougars leap and the marmots play.

The hoar frost drapes the forest Pine
Swift blows the wind with her lonesome whine.
The clouds hang heavy, for winter's blow,
Eor the deer and the moose will thrive on snow.

The caribou herds, on their northern trail
Leave hoof-prints in the howling gale.
Where the ptarmigan drums a tune to his mate,
In the silence which longs for her wintery wait.

Soaring mountains, of untamed quest,
Softened by mantles of snowy-vest.
Waterfalls frozen in sculptured, white.
Truly, a most magnificent sight.

THIRD PLACE: POETRY

Goodbye My Friend

by Shirley Vise

Abee, W.I.

Hitched to the wagon are four fine steeds,
Bred on the farm for strength and speed.
Up front is their master sitting tall and proud
Hat on firm, reins in his hands sure and strong,
The horn goes, into the barrels with a figure eight,
Out on the track they come, hooves pounding like thunder,
Heads outstretched, bodies lean into the harness
pulling their drivers into the turns with all their might,
Down the track they come heading for home.
Lines waving, drivers shouting, these are the ponies of pride
that don't miss a stride.
Many races have come and gone,
but this race is something special,
The driver bows his head, removes his hat,
he waves at the crowd in a special way
as he rides into the sunset this final day.
Saying, "Thank you, Lord, now please take me home.
"Goodbye my friends."
A tribute to all of the drivers who have driven
into that final sunset to be home with their God.

FIRST PLACE: CHILDREN'S FICTION

Donny Binky

by "Bushman's Daughter"

Marilee Kosik, Darwell, W.I.

Billy was a small boy. He lived with his mother and father in a small house on a small farm. Although there were many animals on the farm, there were no other little children nearby. Billy's mother and father worried that Billy was lonely. But Billy wasn't lonely. He had a friend. His name was Donny Binky.

Mother and Father couldn't see Donny Binky. The animals on the farm couldn't see Donny Binky. Visitors to the farm couldn't see Donny Binky. Only Billy could see him because, you see, Donny Binky was invisible. He was Billy's invisible friend.

When Billy went to play on the swings, he always left the high one for Donny Binky. As Billy pumped his legs to make the swing go higher and higher, Donny seemed content to just sit there. Billy would cheer on his friend by saying, "Come on Donny, let's go higher." But Donny's swing remained still. Mother and Father watched Billy swing. They heard him talking but they didn't see anyone with him.

"Who is he talking to", asked Mother?

"I can't see anyone," answered Father. "Maybe he is just singing to himself".

When mealtime came, Billy always left an empty chair for Donny. Mother and Father really couldn't understand why one chair should be empty. Billy insisted it was for his friend, Donny, but they could not see anyone. Billy would eat his lunch and then he and Donny went back to play. Everything Billy did, he made sure that Donny Binky was included.

In the sand pit, Donny Binky played with Billy's best truck on the roads they built. As they roared up and down the big hills and dumped their loads at road's end, Billy talked to Donny on his toy CB.

"Donny Binky, this is Billy," he would announce, holding the CB to his mouth. "I am just loading at the gravel pit. See you on the way over to the place we dump." Then Billy would listen carefully to the CB, and although it seemed to those watching that no one answered, he would nod and say, "Roger that, Donny. Over and out!"

At night Billy always made sure that there was room on his

bed for Donny Binky. Sometimes Mother and Father would worry about Billy having an invisible friend.

"Do you think it's wrong?" Mother asked "Is it unhealthy for Billy to think he has a friend when there really isn't anyone there?"

"I'm sure it's perfectly all right," Father answered. "This 'friend' really doesn't seem to encourage Billy to bad behavior or anything like that. Actually, since this Donny Binky came into his life, Billy seems happier and better behaved. At least," he laughed, "Billy sleeps all night in his own room, now. I guess his invisible friend isn't afraid of the dark."

So, Billy spent the summer playing with his invisible friend. He and Donny Binky had picnics under the big tree down at the end of the yard. Billy always told Mother what Donny wanted to eat, and Mother, not wanting to upset her boy, packed the extra sandwich or treat. Sometimes, when Father had time, Billy and Mother and Donny Binky would join him to go swimming at the nearby lake. At the lake, Billy would play in the shallow water but keep looking out towards the deeper part of the lake.

"Why isn't Donny Binky playing with you?" Mother asked.

"Oh," said Billy, "he can swim quite well, you see, and told me I shouldn't follow him out to the deep part until I could swim, too."

Once, when the whole family went to town, Billy became quite upset. Mother had bought him a pair of shoes. He tearfully told her that Donny Binky didn't like the style she had chosen. For once exasperated with this invisible friend, Mother rather harshly told Billy that she, not some invisible person, would be the judge of what she bought for him. Later, on the way home, after some conversation in the back seat of the car, Billy informed Mother that Donny Binky was sorry she was angry with him and promised not to interfere again.

Sometimes, when Billy got into trouble, he would try to say it was Donny Binky that had done it. For instance, when he left Father's hammer out by the fort that he and Donny Binky were building, he told Father that Donny must have forgotten it there. Father did not accept this as an excuse and told Billy that if Donny Binky was his friend, then he, Billy, should be sure that Donny obeyed the rules, too.

Too soon, summer ended. This was a big exciting time for Billy. He was starting school. Every morning he would board the big yellow bus that took him to the school in town. At school he

met many other little boys and girls his age. It was the first time he had ever had any real, visible, friends. Nevertheless, every day when the bus stopped at the gate, Billy would run up the drive, calling to Donny Binky and soon they would be off playing somewhere in the yard.

Then, as time went on, Mother and Father noticed that some days Billy did not play with Donny Binky when he came home from school. Some evenings Billy did not reserve a chair for Donny Binky at the supper table. Some nights Donny did not need a space in Billy's bed. It seemed that sometimes, Billy's invisible friend was not even there.

Mother and Father were relieved that Billy seemed to be outgrowing his invisible friend. They were sure that Billy would be much better off with real friends. Although they had accepted Donny Binky because it made Billy happy, they had, of course, been concerned. Billy, though seemed to be confused and, at times, sad that his friend was seldom around anymore.

"Mother," he said one day. "Do you think Donny Binky is mad at me? I haven't seen him for a week. Why do you think he has gone away?"

Bending down to give Billy a hug, Mother carefully chose her words. "I think, Billy," she began, "that Donny Binky was your friend all summer because you lived away out here and had no other friends. He knew you were lonely so he came to be your friend. Now, though, you have made many other friends at school and you don't need Donny Binky anymore."

"But," cried Billy, "I really liked him and he could have still been my friend, too, even if I have other friends now. Why couldn't he have stayed?"

Coming into the room in time to hear Billy's cry, Father leaned down to hug both him and Mother. "You know what I think, Billy?" he asked. "I think that Donny Binky knows you don't really need him anymore. I think he has gone off to find another little boy who is all alone and lonely, to be his invisible friend until he goes to school."

"Do you think he'll ever come back," sobbed Billy.

"Well," answered father, "I'm sure if you are ever really lonely or sad, he will be close by. But, as you grow up, you will meet so many other friends that you'll forget him."

"No," said Billy in a grown up voice, "I might never see him again but I'll never forget Donny Binky. He was my friend."

SECOND PLACE: CHILDREN'S FICTION

Adventures of Tiggletoes and Friends

by 'Patricia Williams'

Ruth McCullough, Darwell W.I.

In a field by the lake, stood an old tumbled down shack. Its rafters and boards bleached from the sun and the rain, lived Mrs. Tiggletoes, the white Pecan Duck.

She had been staying there, for well nigh two years, and was alone, miserable and frightened ever since she had lost her mate, in a tussle to a gigantic Owl. The hut was filled with sweet smelling hay, which farmer Boles had left for his cattle to feed on in the fall.

Even her neighbours, Victor and Victoria Vole, had given her a hard time, when she had first come, and she knew it!

"I've nowhere else to go," she said sadly.

"Oh well," said Victoria briskly, "if you behave yourself we'll share. Won't we, Victor?"

Victor grunted, "Guess so,"

"Thank you," quacked Tiggletoes, "I promise to!" She picked at some straw with her beak.

"Keep your eyes peeled and yourself under cover," Victor continued nervously. "When Oliver Owl is about, nobody feels safe."

She eventually became accepted and no more was said.

It was a bright sunny morning in late June. The blue sky was cloudless. Tiggletoes wandered closer to the water's edge, glancing at her reflection as she looked down. She put her beak in the water. Yes, it was warm. not a ripple. The mayflies hovered in droves above her as she fought to drive them out of her coat. She looked towards the bull rushes which skirted the banks, spied a family of mallards swimming with four ducklings trailing behind.

Further off a pair of snipes nested, their eggs well hidden beneath their down, listening for the sound of the Owl and other predators. They had a cozy little nest out there in the reeds, hidden completely out of sight.

The Duck family moved in closer, hoping to see who the stranger was. They turned to greet her, swishing up the water in eddies and swirls as the spray splashed over them, caught a glimpse of the magnificent white duck before them.

"Hello, my name is Drew," he quacked fearlessly. "this is .

my mate, Daphne, and these are our ducklings," he said proudly. "Come and join us?"

Quite a family, thought Tiggletoes, enviously hoped for a brood of her own. "Hey," quacked Tiggletoes, "wait for me!" Slipping her breast into the water, floated happily out to them.

"Welcome," said Drew, "what is your name and where are you from? Daphne and I flew from away up north. We're on our annual vacation!"

Mrs. Tiggletoes told them her name, then put her head down sadly on her slick wet breast and looked in the direction of the shack. "I live in that shack over there. Before that I'm afraid I got lost. The Voles have been nice enough to me, I suppose."

A fair-haired boy with freckles appeared from the bushes, his fishing pole in one hand, half carried a lunch pail with the other. He dropped the pail right out of his hand and went on his way to the Pier. Some sandwiches tumbled out on the grass.

"Yum," thought Tiggletoes, "a free feed," brightened with curiosity to explore its contents. She clambered up the bank and out of the water. By now Drew, Daphne and the ducklings had reached the shore, wondering if there would be anything left for them, of this unexpected spread.

"I'll share with you," Tiggletoes quacked happily, standing aside to let her new found friends scoop up some crusts.

"How about me?" barked Owen the Otter, standing bolt upright on his little hind legs eager for a treat. Earlier that afternoon Owen had been having a nap in his mud hole in the river bank. He came bounding up, there was a little left, and gladly dug in. Owen patted his tummy, "I'm full, that was good! Now I can go for a swim." With that he said his farewell, oozed his tail in the water, dived deep drenching them all as he went.

Tiggletoes and the Mallards greedily pecked the remaining crumbs away with their beaks.

"Where do you live?" she inquired.

"We've made a nest for our little ones up in one of the gardens, close by the lake," Daphne chimed in, her head in the direction of their homeward path.

"No sign of Oliver?" she worried, thought she could hear his voice high above the trees.

"Coast clear," squawked Tiggletoes and Drew, together.

"Gather your family, Daphne, come on!"

What a lovely afternoon preened Tiggletoes stopping to fight off the flies in her down. They waddled up a path, which led

through a grove of willows, into a wonderland of delight, catching sight of a tall house in the trees with red cedar siding and green shingled roof. The garden was hemmed in by several hedges, all neatly boxed and trimmed by their owner, Mrs. Green. A three-tiered flower bed graced the center of the lawn. Splashes of red, white and purple petunias encircled their borders. The Wren house, red with white walls, sat atop a steel pole in the middle. Tiggletoes waddled up to the flower circle. No doubt Jenny Wren was in residence there, fractious too, and backed away with concern. Jenny Wren was an angry and bossy little queen of her patch, besides, she had babies.

"My, this is lovely, how breathtaking," she sighed, watching the bees buzz angrily around the white lilac tree in the shade.

Esmeralda Humming Bird was sipping her sticky syrup from the feeder by the kitchen window. She swooped again, for one final feed, flew instantly away at the sound of their approach,

"Mrs. Green is very kind to us," Drew went on.

"That's so," gulped Daphne, half gobbling away on a worm, squirming wildly.

"We'll go along to see Willy-Wood-Duck, and see whether he's in," Drew said importantly, showing off his family, as he swaggered down the lane.

Tiggletoes, Daphne and the ducklings followed obediently.

Will Wood Duck lived in an old broken-down slither of a trunk, much the worse for wear. He certainly was in no mood for visitors today, as Freddy the Fox had been on the prowl and he had narrowly escaped his doom. They approached with caution. He flew at them, as expected, barely missing Daphne by a feather's breath. They took their leave, hurriedly made their way back to Mrs. Green's place.

Tiggletoes and the Mallard family made their way to the back garden. They went over in the direction of the swings.

"Meow," moaned a sad and lonely voice. It had come from behind the tool shed. "Come to see me, have you?" said the cat sarcastically, opening one of his sleepy green eyes to his visitors. "I'd keep out of sight if I were you. Oliver's around, you know! Can't you hear him whooping in the trees?" said he cat stretching his sinewy neck up, his ears pricked, in the direction of the sound.

"What's your name?" Tiggletoes timidly wanted to know.

"Just call me Dumpster," he replied sadly, closing his eye again, remained comfortably seated on his green mossy log. He

was a handsome black and white patterned feline, his showy white socks gracing his feet, sat like an ornament on a shelf.

"Nice to know you," said Tiggletoes and ducked for cover as the Mallard family whizzed by.

"We're going home," quacked Drew with his family behind him. "See you tomorrow, goodbye."

She was alone now. All was strangely silent. Suddenly, without warning, Oliver flew in making a spectacular landing, lighting on the weather vane with ease. His large oval eyes, dilating, seemed to be looking everywhere, His stout feathered neck, pivoting and revolving from side to side, looked like a statue standing still. Tiggletoes cringed underneath the carrigana hedge.

"Who would be his next victim?" she wondered helplessly.

Mrs. Green had seen him out of the kitchen window. She went outside to bring her small black dog in, who she found quivering in the grass. She grasped him anxiously, taking him up in her arms, opened the back door.

Oliver stayed put. His speckled eyes glared sullenly. No way was he leaving without his supper, or so he thought. He had big dreams, no doubt!

Again she went out, bringing with her a pan and spoon to make as much noise as was possible to scare the varmint away. What a clatter and worse! This was it. Oliver's ears were ringing. They hurt. He was a selfish bird, at the best of times, preferred to have his own little kingdom to himself, sheepishly flew off and was never seen, no more.

Tiggletoes headed for the house by the lake and dove under its foundation for safety. There were already occupants inside. Four hungry kittens and a hissing cat...Oh bother! That was no good!

Tiggletoes made a deal with their difficult mother, quickly groped the edge of an old coat to snooze on and fell asleep. She awoke to the barking of dogs echoing close by. "What now?" she thought. "Just my luck!" She stuck her head underneath her wing.

A terrier, german shepherd, black spaniel and a sandy-haired dog were yelping furiously. They were down on their front paws sniffing her scent. Was she far enough in, fervently hoped so, and quaked.

"Tara, Duke, Barney and Panda!" scolded their owners sternly. "Get out of there! Come here!" Their voices boomed as the dogs took no notice. The dogs bounded off in gay pursuit and were gone by the time she crawled out. She crawled out cautiously,

looking this way and that.

Daylight was fading fast, late evening was coming on in earnest. The lonely Loon's were still out there on the lake, shrilling their haunting tune. The last rays of sunset were showing a dusky pink, as Tiggletoes turned up the shadowy path leading to the shack, in the meadow and, unperturbed, fell asleep in the hay.

Alberta Women's Institute A Short History

In 1897, the first Women's Institute was organized at Stoney Creek, Ontario, by Adelaide Hunter Hoodless.

Its aim was to improve the knowledge of rural women. to work 'For Home and Country', the organization's motto.

The first Alberta Women's Institutes (AWI) Branch was formed at Lea Park (near Vermillion) in 1909

In 1919, a Federation of Womens Institutes of Canada (FWIC) was formed by Mrs. Emily Murphy (aka Janey Canuck) of Edmonton, Alberta, who became its first President.

Mrs. Alfred Watt, who moved from British Columbia to England in 1914, took the idea of Women's Institutes with her. She organized the first Women's Institute in Wales in 1915. From there the movement spread rapidly throughout England and Scotland.

Mrs. Watt went on to form the Associated Country Women of the World (ACWW) and became its first president in 1933.

ACWW now boasts approximately nine million members in ninety countries.

With its association with the U.N.. ACWW works to educate women throughout the world and thereby improve conditions in their countries.

2004 is the 95th anniversary of Alberta Women's Institute. Let's celebrate the many accomplishments.

FIRST PLACE: ADULT FICTION

A Love Story

by 'Bushman's Daughter'

Marilee Kosik, Darwell, W.I.

He heard me as I stepped into the small clearing and turned to watch me approach. In the late evening twilight, his features were indistinct, but I would have known him in total darkness. Tall and slender, his bronze complexion, raven wing of ebony hair, a slightly hooked nose and high cheekbones all attested to his heritage. He was so handsome that my breath caught in my throat as I thought of how I loved him.

"Hi, Bright Eyes," he whispered as I approached. "You're late. Is everything all right?"

"Just the same old thing," I answered. "My folks put me through the third degree about where I was going, with who, and when I would be back."

A small grimace, almost of pain, crossed his handsome face as he led me to our favorite perch overlooking the northern lake.

"What did you tell them?"

"Don't worry," I murmured as I snuggled close and kissed him lightly. "I gave them a line about paddling over to East Bay to do some evening fishing. They bought it."

"I wish you'd just be honest and tell them we're seeing each other. I hate sneaking around every time we want to be together."

My folks operated a fishing lodge and Neil worked as a guide for another camp on the lake. Native people worked at our camp, too, and both my parents frowned on prejudice but I instinctively knew that actually dating an *Indian* would be stepping over the line. Neil and I had been seeing each other all summer and I was sure he loved me as much as I did him. I, too, hated the sneaking around but, if I wanted to continue seeing him, I would have to continue my lies.

"I don't like it, either, you know. It's hard to always come up with inventive lies and then remember what I said so as not to get tripped up. But, if we want to be together, there's no other way."

Abruptly, Neil stood up and wandered down to the shore. I followed, but his stiff back made me hesitate to touch him. For

some time we stood side by side, not speaking or touching, gazing over the water. The reflection of the newly risen moon created a golden highway that stretched to the horizon. Although the lake was calm, small ripples on the surface reflected tiny pin pricks of light that sparkled like diamonds sprinkled over the surface. The lake, in all its moods, had always calmed me but tonight I couldn't ignore the tension I felt between us. I stood in silence.

Without even looking at me, Neil asked, "Are you ashamed of me, Beth?"

"No! Never!" I cried as I reached for the security of his embrace. "I love you. You know I do. But..."

"But you're ashamed to tell your parents about us," he interrupted as he shrugged me off.

He turned to me. His eyes dull with pain and shoulders slumped in defeat, he sighed, "I can't go on like this, Beth. It's just no good." He turned and walked away.

In shock I stood and stared at his retreating back. I felt shattered. I never expected this. We loved each other. He couldn't just walk out of my life! Suddenly I realized that if I didn't do something, he would, indeed, keep going. In panic I raced to catch up to him.

"Wait," I begged as I grabbed his arm. "You can't just walk away. I love you. Doesn't that mean anything to you?"

He just shrugged off my hand and continued down the path. Stumbling in his wake, nearly blinded by tears, I tried to make some sense of it all. What was happening? We had been so happy. What had gone wrong? The hurt was nearly unbearable and the fear was even worse.

"Please tell me what I did to make you angry," I pled. "If you really loved me you wouldn't walk away like this. I've never done anything to hurt you. Why are you doing this?"

Turning to me, his face ravaged by anger, he snarled, "You ask me why? Do you have any idea how demeaning it is, how insulting, that the girl who claims she loves me is ashamed of me?"

"But I'm not," I sobbed. "I'm proud of you. You're handsome, smart, hardworking, ambitious ...everything a girl could want."

"But not good enough to meet your parents."

Hoping to make everything right between us again, I threw myself into his arms and tried to kiss away his anger.

"I will tell them," I whispered. "Soon."

"How soon?" he asked, not returning my kiss.

"Pretty soon," I hedged. "Now let's forget all that and

just be together. You haven't even kissed me yet tonight."

"I'm sorry, Beth," he replied as he again pulled away. "I can't. I feel so dishonest; it makes what I feel for you almost dirty. I want more than just hurried kisses on the sly."

"I'll go away with you," I cried. "We can go live in the city and as soon as I'm eighteen we can get married and be together forever."

"No", he answered. "What sort of a life would it be? No family, no friends....we'd soon come to hate each other. No Beth, what I feel for you is too good, too pure to dirty it with deceit. I don't want a relationship built on a lie. If you don't believe in us enough to tell your parents, then we're finished."

With one last look, he turned and disappeared into the forest. I knew he really meant what he said. He was so honest, so open; he wouldn't change his mind. As I stumbled back along the path to the lake, my tears flowed unchecked and my chest hurt as if my heart had been broken. All the way home, to the rhythm of the paddle strokes I repeated over and over again, "He'll come back, He'll come back" but I knew he wouldn't....not unless I was willing to tell my folks.

Back home, I hurried up to my room. Throwing myself across my bed, I cried until there seemed there were no tears left to shed. My parents would never understand. I couldn't tell them. I had to accept that our love was over but it hurt so much. In my childish hysteria, I thought I'd die.

I didn't, of course. I went on living my life and returned to school that autumn. Everywhere I went I looked for him, but he seemed to have disappeared. I heard that he had left town. Other boys asked me out, but I refused. As the weeks went by, I attended school, did my chores and spent the rest of the time in my room, brooding. In the spring when graduation time approached, I couldn't even become enthusiastic about that. What did it matter? I didn't have any plans for my future anyway, not anymore.

One spring day, my mother called me to the kitchen. When I walked in, she pointed to a chair and told me to 'sit'.

"Now," she began, "tell me what in heaven's name is wrong with you. You've been moping around here all winter like someone kicked your favorite dog. I left you alone about it, hoping you'd either get over what ever it is or that you'd come to me, but you did neither. Graduation is next week and you haven't shown any interest in it at all. In fact, you don't seem to have any interest in anything these days. What's wrong with you?"

"It's nothing, mom..." I began.

"Don't give me that," she interrupted. "Is it a boy?"

She looked at me with such love and concern that suddenly I wanted to tell her. I knew it was too late for her to help but I wanted all the lies between us to be over. Throwing myself into her arms I started to cry.

She waited patiently until I had gained some control then asked again, "Will you tell me what's wrong?"

From the security of her embrace I told her everything. I told her of meeting a boy last summer, a native boy, and of falling in love. I told her that knowing her and dad would disapprove of him, I had insisted we sneak around. I even told her how I had offered to run away but he'd refused.

"If he really loved me, wouldn't he have taken me?" I sobbed.

"No." mom answered, "Not if he's as decent and honorable as you describe him. He sounds like a wonderful young man; why did you think we would disapprove?"

"He's an *Indian*," I choked. "I can't see you and dad approving of that."

"Wherever did you get the idea that we'd disapprove of his race?" she asked. "Haven't we always taught you and your brothers that intolerance and prejudice are wrong?"

"Yes", I agreed, "but I thought you meant it in a more casual way...not as part of the family. Anyway, although you might have allowed me to see him, I'm sure dad would never have approved."

"I don't think you know your father very well," she said. "He's a bigger man than that. Why don't you go down to the dock and talk to him? You might be surprised."

Neil was gone. What we had was over. Because I had been such a coward he had given up on me. Why hadn't I shown my pride in him by acknowledging him to my parents? Even if they had refused to allow me to see him, I would have been no less lonely and miserable. Even though I knew it was too late for us, suddenly I wanted to tell my dad all about him. Although Neil would never know, I wanted to honour him with the truth.

As I started down the path, I saw a strange boat tied to the dock and my father talking to someone in it.

Looking up as I approached, Dad called to me, "Do you know this young man? He says he loves you and believes you love him, too, but I've never seen him before...is it true?"

Then I was running. Ignoring Dad's startled look, I swept

past him and right into Neil's welcoming embrace. Through laughter and tears, our words tumbled over each other.

"I can't believe it; you came back!"

"I'm sorry I left. I missed you so much."

"I was wrong to ask you to sneak around. I finally told mom and she wasn't angry."

"I spoke to your dad; he seems to understand."

"Where were you? It doesn't matter...you're back."

As sanity returned, we realized that Dad, who, by then, had been joined by Mom, was still waiting for an answer.

"Oh yes," I answered. "I do know this man. Yes, we do love each other. Mom...Dad, I'm proud to introduce you to the most wonderful, honorable and loving man in the world. Meet your future son-in law, Neil Tracker."

SECOND PLACE: ADULT FICTION

The Honour of it All

by "Gardener"

Liane Maitland, Winterburn W.I.

They were just a pair of simple surgical scissors that I had used in my profession thousands of times over the years, but these were different! In one moment in time, the intended utilization of this medical instrument changed me forever. With their use, I entered into a distinctively satisfying and new era of my life.

My daughter was having her first child! Her husband and the rest of the family were pumped with excited anticipation of this addition to the household. Three weeks more of 'cooling our heels'! My son-in-law was away on a buying trip, and had arranged to have all business completed soon, so that he could take off time to be with his wife for the baby's arrival. But Mother Nature had other ideas! The unexpected jangle of my telephone, in the middle of the night, started my heart thumping up into my throat. "Trouble!" my brain yelled. I quickly grabbed the portable phone that lay so innocently on my bed table.

"Mom! Mom! Something's happening!" my daughter cried through the receiver. "My water broke---and I'm having pains. What shall I do?"

Instinct took over. "I'll be there as quick as I can. Just 'hold on!'"

In 15 minutes and an above your average 'speed limit' drive, I packed a very uncomfortable young woman into my car and rushed to the hospital.

Events escalated. Mom would have to be the expectant Dad's stand-in!

As a health care professional for many years, I have viewed a multitude of medical situations from just that standpoint. Some emotions can surface on many of those occasions, but none so strong as the emotions that filled mind and body, as I watched my daughter give birth to my first grandchild! This was MY BABY having a baby! Each of her pains was my pain. Every tear flowing down her cheeks were my tears, too. "Will everything be O.K.?" I wondered apprehensively. My imagination ran wild as I visualized sad situations I had witnessed in the past. My little bit of knowledge was becoming a detriment to the situation I was now involved in.

Suddenly circumstances became tense. The child's birth was imminent. Everyone seemed to be moving in slow motion. My heart seemed to stop, and no breath was taken till I became aware of a discoloured tiny baby who, at this moment, looked nothing like the little 'bundle of joy' I was expecting! "A healthy baby girl!" the doctor announced and, with that, she plunked the little one on her mother's chest. With that motion, I heard music to my ear--the first wail of my granddaughter.

Pinker now, with that first breath, I viewed, in awe, the miracle of nature. My daughter cried with tears of relief and joy.

"Hey Grandma," the obstetrician questioned,, "since Dad isn't here for the occasion, how would you like to do the honours?" I had no idea what she was talking about.

"Do what?" I questioned.

"Why, cut the babies cord," and with that she handed me the surgical scissors to cut the cord that was clamped off with two clamps about four inches apart.

With pride in my heart, I graciously accepted, feeling a little guilty that the baby's Dad was not able to be doing this important job. But this was my kith and kin--my first grandchild and, as I cut that life connection, I became a very special person with very big responsibilities to this wee baby and her life to be.

I became a Grandma!

Quote

Positive anything is better than negative nothing.

Elbert Hubbard, American Writer

FIRST PLACE: NON FICTION

Journey to Freedom:

for Marie and Slavo

by 'Crystal'

Liane Maitland, Winterburn W.I.

The storm had moved in late that afternoon. She could hear the wind howling and watched the snowflakes being whipped around in big swirls as she peered out the partially frosted window. She shivered in response to the raw nipping numbness of white that chilled her heart. "It is so very cold," she thought forlornly. "We have no boots, no heavy coats or mitts. How will we manage?" Drained, Marie plunked herself down on the worn uncomfortable chair in the small motel room. She looked over at the two small children sleeping on the rollaway cot and sighed with relief that they had both finally nodded off.

Suddenly the dam ruptured as tears began to stream down her cheeks. She could hardly grasp the events of the last few days. In a way, she almost believed that this really wasn't happening and that she was only having a bad dream!

It was Dec. 24, 1968. They had just eaten their first real meal in Canada. Marie had prepared a very simple supper with groceries purchased with the fifteen dollars they had received from the immigration officer that morning. An almost unwilling contentment was evident amongst Jana, Slavo and Slavo Jr. as their tummies had attained gratification for the first time in two days! At long last the children were asleep. With some shame, she recalled the scene she had made at 'immigration' earlier that day. With two hungry kids clinging to her and Slavo desperately trying to communicate their needs to people who did not understand their language, she lost control! She fell on her knees weeping and begging them to send her and her family back to Germany. "My children are crying with hunger--we have no money or warm clothing. It is so cold here. Please, I plead with you to send us back!!" Slavo gently drew her up and enveloped her in his arms, not knowing how this all would be resolved. Waves of homesickness for the country they had once called home overwhelmed them both as they each sought to appease each other's grief.

"Things WILL be OK." he reassured her in their native Czech. "Tomorrow will be better--I just know!" With that they

left with the 15 dollars given them, were able to purchase some food--and returned to the small motel.

The Communists had taken control of Czechoslovakia on Aug. 18, 1968. Slavo and Marie knew instinctively that they could not live under this regime. They began immediately to plan their escape. Communication with a relative in Germany offered safe haven there till arrangements to immigrate to Canada could be made. Visas were required to travel in Germany--with permission given only by place of employment. This involved a scheme in which the family feigned a relative's wedding in Germany that was to occur on the 22nd of December. Slavo and Marie worked at the same factory--he in management and she as a designer and inscripitor of the beautiful patterns one sees on Czechoslovakian lead crystal vases. The deception was accomplished successfully and they obtained two visas--one for Marie and one for Slavo and the children. Thus, on Dec. 14, with correct documents in hand and with train tickets purchased, a small single suitcase was quickly packed! Four toothbrushes, toothpaste, one pair each of p.j.'s for the children and a change of underwear for Slavo and Marie were placed in the bag. The last item was a beautiful and expensive crystal vase--(supposedly the wedding gift)-- but really, an investment for their future in Canada.

With a sick feeling beginning to form in the pit of her stomach, she realized that she must rely on her complete trust in Slavo's courage and, with that understanding, they boarded the train for Germany. The kids were excited because they were going 'to a wedding!' But Slavo and Marie's thoughts were focused only on family, friends and their comfortable home and contents--and all the other things that were being left behind. They peered back into the night, through the misty train window as if to get a last glimpse of what their life had been. The engines huffed and puffed their way out of Novy Bar, Czechoslovakia, and away from everything they had ever known. Marie turned away from Jana and Slavo jr. and drew a long sad breath that wrapped itself around a heart-rending sob, so Slavo clutched her hand. Images of the many possible scenarios that might ensue filled her mind. It was too late to turn back. The children were soon lulled to sleep by the clickety clack of the train wheels, but sleep was not viable for the parents. Hours passed and they became increasingly uneasy as the train approached the Czech/German border.

The train stopped.

The Russian border patrol embarked on a check of all documents of passengers aboard. Baggage was searched. Time

stood still for Marie and Slavo. The events that followed took place like a slow motion movie with no heartbeat or breath taken through the whole inquisition! Armed guards perused papers, interrogated everyone and checked the single suitcase. Explanation of 'the wedding' was given, with the vase identified as a gift for the bride and groom. Miraculously, the patrol moved on. Their journey to freedom had successfully begun!

Their arrival in Edmonton on Dec, 21 was a rude awakening to a family with that single suitcase, only the clothes on their back, 13 dollars in Canadian currency and the inability to speak English. It was extremely cold with lots of snow, not at all like the place they had left. All Marie and Slavo felt was just a huge void. They searched each other's eyes with the same question, "What have we done?" But this was a new beginning in a free world with no oppression! They were taken to a downtown hotel room and 'dropped off'! Shortly after, confusion ran supreme. The fire alarm sounded and the hotel was evacuated. Words cannot describe the emotions felt as they stood shivering in the cold night, holding the children close under their coats, before the all clear was given and they were able to return to their room.

Sleep did not come easy that night!

24 hours passed with no communication from anyone. Everyone was hungry and Marie pacified the kids with the packages of crackers she had taken from the airlines. Finally Slavo reluctantly went to the restaurant to purchase two bowls of soup. This was a great challenge, with the language barriers and unfamiliarity with currency, etc., but nevertheless very rewarding as they watched the kids hungrily devour one bowl, while husband and wife shared the other. Never has a bowl of ordinary soup tasted so good. Tummies again were nourished.

Next day, Christmas Eve day, they were moved to the Pan American Motel to a small housekeeping unit with one bed and a rollaway cot. The Salvation Army came by with a few supplies, but soon the family was left alone again.

Once more, Marie was completely overwhelmed! Tears, loneliness, anger and grief bubbled over and flowed like lava from a volcano. How could she carry on?

A knock was heard. "Who could this be?" thought Marie, trying to appear 'in control' as she opened the door. A whoosh of crisp biting coolness engulfed her. There stood an elderly man dressed in a heavy parka--mitts on his hands and carrying a small

artificial Christmas tree dotted with a few colored lights and a single decoration of a tiny two-inch angel's head on the very top spike of the tree.

He spoke Czech, to the complete delight of the whole family. He explained that he, too, was a Czech immigrant of a number of years and that he had sought out a family such as theirs to welcome to Canada at this special season!

It was as if the world had turned!

Someone understood them and what they were going through! Chatting excitedly, everyone trying to get a word in edgewise (even the children) it was soon understood that they were all to come with him to share Christmas dinner, along with his wife. Arriving at an acreage north of the city, Marie and Slavo felt the warmth and friendliness of these two wonderful people who had just popped into their new life. Contentment and peace filled their hearts. Presents for the children magically were found under the tree--a truck for Slavo Jr. and a doll for Jana. The innocent children seemed to have little awareness of what had just taken place, as they excitedly clutched at the wonderful gifts given them by the friendly gray-haired couple who soon would become their Canadian Grandma and Grandpa! Now these special new friends insisted that the family stay with them till the New Year and, later, were to become the catalysts that helped their fellow countrymen establish a small apartment and meager furnishings in Edmonton. He convinced Slavo to take English classes that also offered a wage of 75 dollars a month, to aid in living expenses. Every weekend, for years to come, this new immigrant family would be driven out to the acreage--participate in yard work, housework, anything they could help with--and then enjoy the bounties of good food, pure friendship and, best of all, was the sharing of memories of their old homeland. Slavo Jr. had the most glorious job of sitting on Grandpa's lap as he 'helped' drive his Choo Choo (the garden tractor) around the lawn! And so began the Czech family's new life in Canada, in a very much better atmosphere than had been originally.

The crystal vase, an exquisite and valuable piece of art strangely enough was of little interest to any people in this country--so was never sold. Marie keeps this vase in a very special place of honour to this very day.

I had the extreme fortune to become a friend of Marie's over 12 years ago. I found her to be a very charming, interesting and knowledgeable lady. I always noticed her special attention and consideration of the Christmas season, recognizing that many of us

share the same feeling. But for Marie—it always appeared to be something ‘more’ than what we enjoy. Witnessing her beautifully decorated house on more than one Christmas season, and partaking of the most wonderful cuisine imaginable.

I always wondered about her Christmas tree. It was decadently adorned with unique ornaments, crystals, and delicate baubles that befitted an example right out of Martha Stewart—but on the very top of the tree sat an old, tiny, two-inch angel head with arms. “It just doesn’t fit” I questioned in my mind. Little did I realize the significance of it all till I was recently told the story I have just written.

Now I understand completely.

SECOND PLACE: NON FICTION

My Brother Charles Frederick

*by Betty Welter
Grande Prairie W.I.*

Charles arrived in early Oct., 1930. My sister and I were so excited to have a baby brother. I was nine and my sister younger. Mother had told us about the expected arrival a few months earlier. This was a difficult pregnancy and Mother was in the hospital one month before and two weeks afterwards. Snow came early in September that year and we traveled the seven miles into the hospital to visit first with horses and democrat and later on a cutter. Crops were all out under the deep snow, some in stooks and some grain uncut and squashed flat. The depression or “dirty 30’s” had definitely begun and what an anxious time this must have been for my parents.

Mother and Charles eventually arrived home in the cutter on a cold blizzard day, we girls were delighted. I wanted to pick him up every time he squeaked. Mother diplomatically changed this, of course. All speed records were broken, I’m sure when returning home from school to see that precious baby,

Our household gradually settled down, he was a very happy and contented baby. Mother gradually got her strength back as the days sped by. Weather also improved, wind turned west, snow all melted, grain in stooks dry enough to thrash. My parents must

have been relieved to have the grain in the bin despite the fact that prices fell lower and lower to about 35 cents a bushel, I believe. Yes, times were tough all over the world which I didn't quite understand but remember how concerned my parents were.

Winter slid by with very little more snow falling and not too cold as it had all come in September and early October. However, economic times got worse and worse. No market for grain, cattle, pigs, eggs, butter or nearly all farm produce, least we weren't hungry as dozens of city dwellers certainly were.

Charles was growing very quickly, now smiling, laughing, gurgling and cooing and we adored him. In July, Mother had a severe kidney infection and was confined to her bed upstairs for several days. I was in my glory as I had Charles to fully take care of. I bathed him, changed and dressed him and just took him up to be nursed and back down with me. Dad was in and out with the farm and garden work. Charles loved the feel of the green grass under his bare chubby little feet as he learned to walk, giggling and squirming all the while. Boots and shoes were a real nuisance to him for several years I recall. Typical boy!

He created numerous laughs as he learned to talk and communicate with us. One choice moment we all enjoyed was when Mother was doing the washing on the scrub board and Dad was working in the green house close by. They were sending him back and forth with silly messages till Mother had to attend to another duty and said, "Tell your father the discussion is now closed," Charles toddled off to the greenhouse with this message, "Dad, Mother is cussing the clothes."

We had a fenced house yard plus a larger barn yard and grain fields beyond. Charles was confined to the former with his little wagon, trucks, cars plus a big collie dog. Alas, one day he was missing and we were all frantically searching for them both. The gate was open to the barn yard--why, who knows. I suggested to Mother that I would climb up in the hay loft in the barn for a better view. Sure enough, he and the dog were wandering down through the tall grain. I could just see the tip of the dog's tail. He was soon rescued and scolded but difficult to be cross with the cutest little blonde blue-eyed boy! How he escaped through both yards unseen remained a mystery.

One spring after a very heavy winter snow fall we had quite a natural dugout full of water in the pasture. No real swimming pools within miles in our area then, so this was the chance. Mother sent for little cotton bathing suits for us from Eatons at 50 cents each I believe. One sunny afternoon off we went to our own wee

pool. My sister and I on one side to get undressed in the bushes and Charles on the other side. Suddenly a frantic shriek of, "Betty, come here!" Horrors, he had stood on a very active ant hill to undress and was covered with the creatures and they really do bite. They were quickly washed off in the water but somehow our swimming adventure had a sour note.

The spring he was five he wandered away once more briefly in the pasture. We could hear him calling, giggling and making quite a racket and rushed out to investigate. He had found a batch of wild baby ducks in the grass and had picked them up in his hat to come and show us. They were the cutest, softest, squirmiest little creatures and had got down inside his shirt and were scrambling round his waist tickling and scratching him as he struggled along. What a sight and what a shot for a movie camera, which didn't even exist then, of course. We quickly rescued the ducklings and put them back in the grass where he thought they had been. Another scolding but he maintained they were so cute and cuddly and he wanted to keep them.

Charles was alone quite a lot while we were at school and invented an imaginary little friend, 'Porgy', Dad made a small play house in the tree border in the house yard and he and Porgy spent hours together in the wonderful world of make-believe. he would come to get cookies from Mother for them both--somehow they all disappeared.

He started school in the little country school 1.5 miles from home. Long before school busses and my sister and I were finished public school and were taking our high school by correspondence at home. He seemed so little trudging off by himself and we would go part way with him, or go to meet him at day's end. Two other little boys lived either side of our farm and the three had great fun together and were affectionately called the "Three Musketeers."

Mother suffered a heart attack the following fall and was gone, We were all devastated to say the least. Charles seemed so young and lost and depended on me more than ever. I stopped correspondence and agreed to manage the house as best a teenager could. My sister continued on with lessons. The winter seemed long and dreary and I felt sorry for my father. Being a widower with three children to support was quite a task. Charles really missed Mother and in the spring Dad got a tiny fox terrier puppy from a breeder in town. Badger was his name and he was cute, all white except black spots over his eyes. What a pair those two were plus what mischief they managed to indulge in. Now Badger

occupied the tree house with Charles and Porgy.

As the years slid by Charles joined a Scout troop organized by the Presbyterian minister. The boys had a wonderful time and I'm sure there wasn't one complete uniform amongst them all as finances were still a problem. They went camping for a few days down by the Wapiti River. Their standards were almost non-existent compared to today's rules and laws. It was a great experience, the boys thoroughly enjoyed the camp and Charles certainly did justice to our meals on his return.

Our district organized whist drives in the school house once a month which were well attended. One occasion Charles begged Dad to let him come with me to the card party. So off we walked to the school house on a cold snowy night. All went well and we were home after midnight and he was tired. Saturday was always busy at our house. I was baking bread, Dad bagging potatoes in the root cellar. Charles was pretty sleepy in the A.M. and was trying so hard to prove to Dad that he could be up late and still carry out the jobs assigned to him. After lunch I had the bread in the pans rising in the warming oven on the wood stove. Dad needed assistance in the root cellar. Down I went leaving Charles with specific orders to keep the wood stove stoked, put the bread in the oven at a given time. I would come back and take it out an hour later. As I started for the house, there was no smoke coming out of the chimney. Also, the fire was nearly out. Some of the bread was collapsed in the oven and Charles was asleep on the couch. He insisted he had stoked the fire as he put the pans in the oven. With further investigation we found that he had put two blocks of wood in the water reservoir on the stove and left one pan in the warming oven. Poor Charles--it took days to live that episode down.

Every once in a while Charles and I would have supper early and walk the six miles into town to see a movie. Spencer Tracy and Boy's Town pictures were enjoyable and he loved them. We sat down for the two hours and rested, out at nine, sometimes get a lunch and walk home. One night in March a terrific blizzard came up while we were in the theatre but we didn't hear it inside. What a shock when we walked out as the temperature had drastically dropped plus a strong N.E. wind with heavy drifting snow faced us. Now what to do? Dad hadn't a phone and we could come on two different roads home and how would he know where we were. We quickly started out and decided to go the two miles on the highway as when we turned south the neighbour's field was fenced and we could be guided by this if visibility worsened. The wind was howling, blowing snow and walking more difficult every

step. Luck was with us as Mr. Thompson was driving out to his farm home close to the airport and stopped beside us. I called him by name and he said, "You know me but I don't recognize you and what are you two kids doing out on a night like this?" We quickly identified ourselves plus where we were going and he knew Dad well. He told us to get in and he would drive us home. We were so grateful as we had only walked about half way and were really tiring. Now we were concerned that he might get stuck getting back to the highway, he took it in his stride anyway. Dad was so pleased to see us and quite frantic when the storm blew up and didn't really know what to do. Needless to say we didn't attempt to walk in to another show that winter.

As time went by I was married and lived in town. Charles now had to attend high school in here, biked back and forth on a gravel road in fair weather and stayed with us when necessary. He adored Margaret, our first daughter, and loved to look after her every chance he could. He enjoyed high school, social life and was really growing up with after school jobs. In summer holidays he had employment cutting brush on the road allowances and helping Dad on the farm. He was really interested in joining the R.C.M.P. He submitted his application, had several interviews, passed his medical and personality test required then. However, he was 1/2 inch too short and the doctor who performed his medical suggested he go out to a lumber camp for the winter to work. He was just eighteen and being outdoors working in the bush, living and eating in a bunkhouse would add to his height. He was with the Ross Lumber Co. out towards Nose Mountain, home over the Christmas and not again till spring break-up. Worse luck as he hadn't grown at all and was so disappointed.

Off he went to Edmonton and found employment with the Journal, working nights. Housing was scarce and he had a tiny room on the third floor of an old house. It was hot and uncomfortable trying to sleep during the day plus 'batching' which he had never done.

He wasn't happy at all there and joined the Navy as an electrician apprentice. His comments were, "They don't care how tall I am." He was stationed in Cornwallis, N.S. for basic training and later on in Halifax. He really enjoyed the military life and also his electrician's training. He was posted to the "Ontario" and had some wonderful trips while learning the trade at sea. One three month excursion right from Halifax down the east coast of the U.S. though the Panama Canal and all around S. America with

shore leave at several of the large ports en route and back to home base. Charles wrote very interesting letters home describing so many humorous incidents sight seeing, etc. He was also stationed at Esquimalt in B.C. for several months and while there sailed to Hawaii and had ten days in port as guests of the American navy. He had so much to tell us when he did get home on leave several times. He met and was engaged to a little girl in Halifax and planned to be married the following year. Tragedy intervened and he was killed in a motor cycle accident in October. He was twenty three. He was buried in the Fort Massey cemetery in Halifax with a full military funeral. Such a drastic blow for our family, especially Dad as he was so sad and upset for months. Who says life is fair? I couldn't help but think what a waste of a young life that the family enjoyed so much while he was with us.

We did meet his fiancée, who was a legal secretary, and she spent her summer holidays with us here in Alberta the following August. we have kept in touch down through the years and she passed away last winter in Winnipeg and was a dear wee soul.

MEMORIES: are treasures you can take out to cherish when things are tough.

Some of my 'cheerup' memories are:

- The comforting sound of 'Pop' shaking down the coals and adding wood to the fire in the early morning while I was still abed.
- A small friend who brought me her only doll to comfort me while I was ill.
- Walking in the bush with my step-father as he talked about nature... and I learned about life
- My husband trying to sneak into the hospital with a giant stuffed tiger for our son's birth with, unnoticed by him, a striped tail hanging out of the bag.
- My adult son's speech at our 25th anniversary
- Exploring a pond with my grandchildren and listening to them explain the miracles of tadpoles turning into frogs.

THESE ARE MINE....

SIT DOWN AND WRITE A FEW OF YOUR OWN.

THEY ARE INSURANCE AGAINST SAD DAYS.

THIRD PLACE: ESSAY

Global Warming Causes, Signs and Effects

*by 'Bushman's Daughter'
Marilee Kosik, Darwell W.I.*

The earth is getting warmer! The 20th century was the warmest, globally, in the past 1000 years and the 1980's and 1990's were the warmest decades in history. This change in climate will affect our environment, our economy and the way we live. A panel of international scientists has predicted that average global temperatures could rise by as much as 1.4° C to 5.8° C by the end of the 21st century. In Canada, average temperatures in some regions could rise by as much as 5° C to 10° C (Government of Canada publication).

In this paper I will discuss some of the causes and indicators of these phenomena and how they will affect our environment, health, commerce and life style.

The climate is changing due, mainly, to human activities that are altering the chemical composition of the atmosphere through buildup of greenhouse gases, primarily carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide. The heat trapping property of these gases is undisputed. Energy from the sun drives earth's weather and climate and heats the earth's surface. In turn, the earth radiates heat back in to space. The above-mentioned gases trap some of this outgoing energy, retaining heat. This greenhouse effect is necessary to keep the earth at a comfortable temperature for life. However problems may arise when the concentration of these gases increases.

Since the beginning of the industrial revolution, atmospheric concentrations of carbon dioxide have increased nearly 30%, methane concentrations have more than doubled and nitrous oxide concentrations have risen by about 15%, increasing the heat-trapping capability of the atmosphere. Scientists believe that the combustion of fossil fuels and other human activities are the primary reason for increased concentration of carbon dioxide. Although plant respiration and decomposition release more than ten times the CO₂ released by human activities, these releases had been in balance with nature. What has changed in the last few hundred years is the additional release of carbon dioxide by human

activities. Fossil fuels burned to run vehicles, heat homes and produce power are responsible for about 98% of carbon dioxide emissions in the free world, 24% of methane emissions and 18% of nitrous oxide emissions. Increased agriculture, deforestation, landfills, industrial pollution and mining also contribute a significant share. In 1997, the US emitted about one-fifth of total global greenhouse gases. Governments and scientists agree that most warming over the last 50 years is due to burning coal, oil & gas for energy. CO2 accounts for 80% of global warming pollution. Around 23,000,000,000 tonnes of CO2 are spewed into the atmosphere every year...that's more than 700 tonnes per second! 2001 was the second warmest year on record, beaten only by 1998, which was the 23rd warmest year in a row.

Throughout the world we see many signs of global warming.

Warmer temperatures increase melting of mountain glaciers and also cause sea water to expand. Largely as a result of these effects sea level has risen 4 -10 inches over the past 100 years. At the present rate of warming, sea level is projected to rise from 6 inches to 3 feet in the next century. On average, 50 to 100 feet of beach are lost for every foot the sea level rises.

Snow cover in the Northern hemisphere and floating ice in the Arctic Ocean has decreased. Arctic snow cover has declined 10% since the late 1960's. Over the past 150 years the majority of monitored mountain glaciers have been shrinking. Most glaciers at lower latitudes are disappearing and some scientists predict that the majority of all glaciers will be gone by 2100. Europe's alpine glaciers have lost half their volume since 1950. The US government predicts there will be no glaciers left in Montana's Glacier National Park by 2030.

Coral reefs in 32 countries experienced dramatic bleaching. Bleaching results from the loss of microscopic algae that both color and nourish living corals. Increase in water temperature by 2-3 degrees F. has been linked to bleaching. Other factors do contribute to bleaching...nutrient and sediment runoff, pollution, coastal development and severe storms. At the current rate of degradation, the entire Great Barrier Reef could be dead within a human lifetime.

Since the 1950's the extent of northern hemisphere spring and summer sea ice decreased by about 10-15% and researchers have measured a decline of about 40% in the thickness of Arctic sea ice during late summer and early autumn. Pine Island Glacier, part of the west Antarctic Ice sheet thinned by up to 5.2 feet per

year between 1992 and 1999. We all read about the collapse of the Larsen B ice shelf in Antarctic last year. An ice shelf 200 meters thick and 3,250 square miles in size collapsed into small fragments. During the 20th century, the annual duration of lake and river ice cover has declined by about two weeks.

Wildlife trauma, relocation, and/or adaptation are already being noted.

Spring now arrives earlier in many parts of the world. Earlier thaw dates for rivers and lakes, earlier dates for plants blooming and leafing, and earlier animal egg laying, spawning and migration are all being recorded. Earlier spring may disrupt animal migrations, alter competitive balances among species and disrupt procreation.

Sea ice regulates exchanges of heat moisture and salinity in the polar ocean, and provides key habitat for wildlife. A loss of sea ice leaves coasts more vulnerable to storm surges and erosion and alters the habitat of marine animals such as polar bears, ring seals and beluga whales, possibly affecting their numbers and/or distribution.

Researchers reported in 1999 that a decline in the health of polar bears during the past two decades might be linked to higher temperatures in Hudson Bay and to the early breakup of sea ice. As one of their primary food sources, polar bears hunt ring seals in the spring months on the sea ice. During the past 20 years warmer temperatures have broken up the sea ice three weeks early. This leaves the bears three weeks less time to hunt and store fat for the summer, and many starve. Polar bears become 10kg lighter for each week earlier they must stop feeding. Cubs born during this time may also starve as mothers have less body fat stored to sustain them and their cubs. Warm temperatures may collapse the dens, killing mother and cubs within. Unseasonable weather has increased mortality of ringed seal pups, therefore even less food for the bears.

Other species are threatened. Scientists report a decline of 50% over the past 25 years in the population of Adelle penguins near Palmer Station on the Antarctic Peninsula, possibly due to changes in sea ice and snowfall. An increase in insects is threatening caribou and reindeer populations.

Plants and animals generally react to consistently warmer temperatures by moving to higher latitudes and elevations. Recent studies reveal that some species have already started to shift their ranges. Many populations and species may become more

vulnerable to declining numbers and extinction if warming occurs faster than they can respond or adapt, or if human development presents barriers to their migration.

Along with the impact on nature and wildlife, global warming will put pressure on many aspects of human life.

A greater demand for air conditioning puts demands on power plants, which will in turn use more cooling water, putting more demand on scarce water situations. As glaciers shrink and disappear, summer water flows will drop sharply, disrupting an important source of water for irrigation and power in areas that rely on mountain watersheds.

Our health systems will be stressed due to effects of warming. Heat waves and periods of extremely warm weather lead to increases in heat-related illnesses and death, especially in urban areas and among the elderly, the young, the ill and the poor. Warmer temperatures allow mosquitos that transmit diseases such as malaria and dengue fever to extend their ranges and increase both their biting rate and their ability to infect humans. There have been mosquito-borne disease outbreaks in previously unexposed highland communities where temperatures have risen during the last century. Flooding from rising sea level could sweep toxins into previously unpolluted areas. Heat stroke and respiratory conditions due to increased smog and many diseases related to warming will increase.

For instance, Rita Colwell, National Science Foundation says, "Cholera epidemics can now be related to climate events such as ocean warming events such as EL Nino. High temperature and high sea level drives cholera levels up."

Parts of Canada, Alaska, Siberia and the Antarctic have been experiencing warming well above the global average for the past few decades. (Note: greenhouse gases tend to accumulate over the poles). Melting permafrost is forcing the reconstruction of roads, airports and buildings and is increasing erosion and the frequency of landslides. Reduced sea ice and ice shelves, changes in snowfall, and pest infestations have affected native plants and animals that provide food and resources to many people in those areas.

Because heat increases evaporation, soil moisture has decreased in many regions and intense rainstorms have occurred in other regions. Worldwide precipitation has increased by about 1% in the last century. High latitude areas are seeing more increase in rainfall while precipitation has actually declined in many tropical

areas. Global warming could spark regional conflicts as large numbers of environmental refugees are driven from their homes.

As the climate heats up, droughts are expected to become more frequent and severe in some locations. Sustained droughts make wildfires more likely, and crops and trees more vulnerable to pest infestations and disease. In the Canadian Maritimes it has been noted that many plants are blooming earlier, making them vulnerable to late frosts. Forests are being affected. Northern tree lines will advance north into tundra areas. Forests sensitive to drought may be adversely affected. White spruce forests in Alaska have already experienced extreme stress due to temperature rises, and spruce bark beetle, usually controlled by winter freezing, have caused the death of 2.3 million trees in Alaska, the largest loss due to insects ever recorded in North America. Steven McNulty of the National Forest Service says, "Western alpine forests are likely to disappear, threatening the environment and the timber industry." Aspens, birch and maple may decrease by 90%. Loss of forests means loss of habitat for much of our wildlife. Costs of fire fighting and decline of the timber industry and food production will affect us all.

Water levels in the St. Lawrence River may drop even more. From 1988 to 1991, a 30 cm drop resulted in a 15% decrease in tonnage handled at the Port of Montreal and they project the river will lower another 1.25 meters. Costs of transportation on imported items will increase, as more ships are required to ship required commodities.

In coastal zones, rising sea levels inundate wetlands and low lying areas, erode beaches, intensify flooding and increase salinity of rivers, bays and groundwater tables. Many ocean shores are currently eroding at 1-4 feet per year. In June 2000 the Federal Emergency Management Agency estimated that about 1/4 of homes and structures within 500 feet of the Great Lakes shorelines will be overtaken by erosion in the next 60 years. As homes and resorts on beaches around the world are taken over by rising seas, insurance rates and real estate costs will be adversely affected.

David Pimental of Cornell University says, "Consequences for real estate are likely to be serious. With the projected one-meter sea level rise, almost 15 meters of shoreline may be lost. Cropland is expected to decline by 30 percent while population is projected to double by 2075, leaving many people hungry."

Rising sea levels increase the salinity of both surface and ground water. As salt water reaches further upstream in major rivers, the existing intakes for cities would draw salty water during

droughts. Aquifers that are recharged in areas that are presently fresh could become salty. This salt-pollution of our aquifers and other water supplies will further reduce the availability of potable water.

North Pacific salmon populations crashed after ocean temperature in the region rose 9F above normal. Food shortages linked to warming seas led to hundreds of thousands of seabird deaths off the coast of California. Our fishing industry may be devastated by such events.

Our health, quality of life and environment will all be irrevocably and adversely impacted if something is not done to slow and, hopefully, stop this process.

Global warming is an issue that we must take seriously. It is so immense and complex a problem that many of us feel there is little we, as one person, can really do to make a difference. It is important that we do something. Small changes in climate mean a lot! In the past ice age, average temperatures were only 5 degrees cooler than they are today! Scientists project a possibility of a 5.8 degree increase in temperature by the end of the 21st Century. So how concerned should we be? Do the math.

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