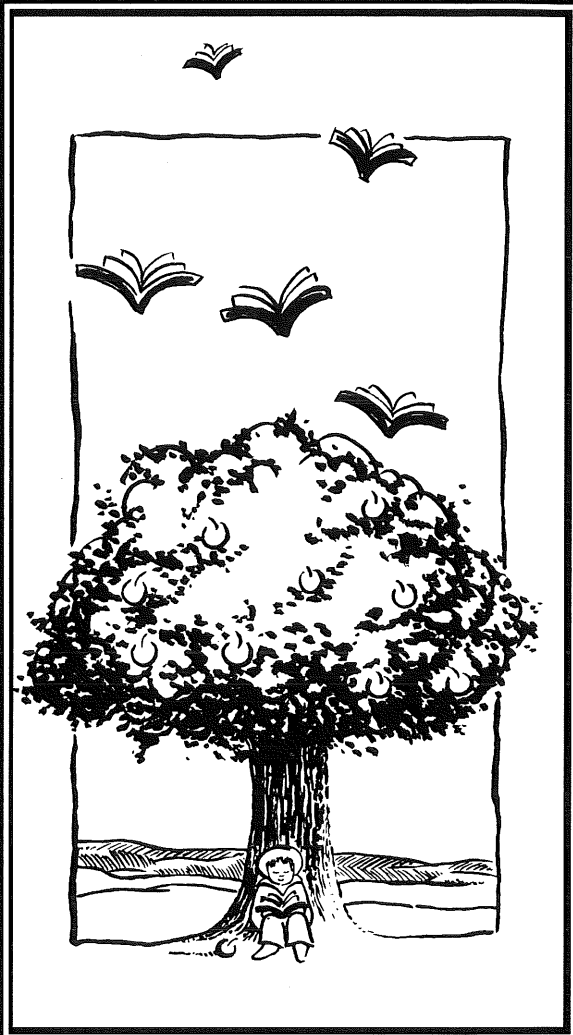


I Remember



△ ၆၆၂၆၂၆၂၆

Itkaumayuktaga

Itkagijuami

Ni Kiskae Sin

Ganaldaii

Kenahndi

Kenáhdí

K'ét'áá Kenandih

Henázní

J'ai souvenance!

A Learning Experience

If I recall correctly (hey, I'm not that old!), this story began during the 1964-65 school year in Inuvik where I was a resident of Stringer Hall, attending Sir Alexander Mackenzie School. But I know I was in the sixth grade. At this time my parents had moved to Holman from Coppermine. In those days communication with our parents was very difficult and minimal. Very few communities had telephones then. I had to write letters to my parents if I wanted to hear from them.

So I began to write letters to my parents — in English, of course. Although I was fluent in Inuinnaqtun I had not learned the writing system. Schools never taught it then; English was the language to teach! My letters took a loooong time to reach Holman as the sched plane flew in only once a week. I kept writing faithfully hoping that they were receiving my letters and that I would soon receive some mail. I don't remember exactly how many I did receive, perhaps only two. Disappointment was starting to set in and motivation to continue writing was almost nil.

Then one day a thought came to my mind. Aha! Now I knew what my problem was! All that time I had been writing in English and my father was the only parent who was able to read it. (He attended residential school before my time in Aklavik.) "How about if I wrote to Mom instead of to Dad?" I asked myself. So that's exactly what I did. I immediately had another problem. I did not know how to write in Inuinnaqtun.

Anyway, I painstakingly attempted my first letter to Mom. What a tough job it turned out to be trying to use the English alphabet to write in my language. The alphabet did not seem to represent the sounds of my language, and I kept confusing the two languages.

Reading With My Son

When my son first went to Joamie School, it was my first time for one of my kids to go to school. I never really thought about reading any books.

When my son brought a book home, he asked me if I can read it. I said let me see it. It was written in English, and I wasn't very good at reading but I tried my best. My son asked me how come you can't read very well. Maybe because I didn't go to school or I was shy to read. So I started to read more English books.

Next my son brought home Inuktitut books, and I read it all the way through, but I couldn't understand it all. I had to ask my mother and sisters. I try to read and write as often as I can so I can tell what's in the books and what it means.

My son likes Inuktitut books because he can read them. He sometimes asks me what it means. My daughter goes to school now, and she understands what she reads about. She learned it from her brother.

Sarah Papatsie is a mother of four and lives in Iqaluit.

He Wants Books

When I was young and first able to read, apparently I became occasionally obsessed with finding “paper” or “books” to read.

My father who worked as a janitor at the two classroom school often spoke about the many hot summer days when I would show up to visit him at work and then spend hours in the library “reading” and browsing through books and publications.

It was recalled by certain elders that I was one little boy who when tired of playing outside in the long winter nights would often come alone to their homes and sit quietly on the floor by the door. After awhile they would amusingly scold each other for not providing me with reading material right away and someone would rummage around for comics and magazines which they knew I had come for. They would paint verbally a picture of a little Dene boy in winter clothing sitting by the door close to the woodstove quietly reading comics.

It was not so long ago that the first school was built in Fort Good Hope and not so long ago that books came available. They remember me as the first avid reader. I remember the houses, the comics, the magazines...

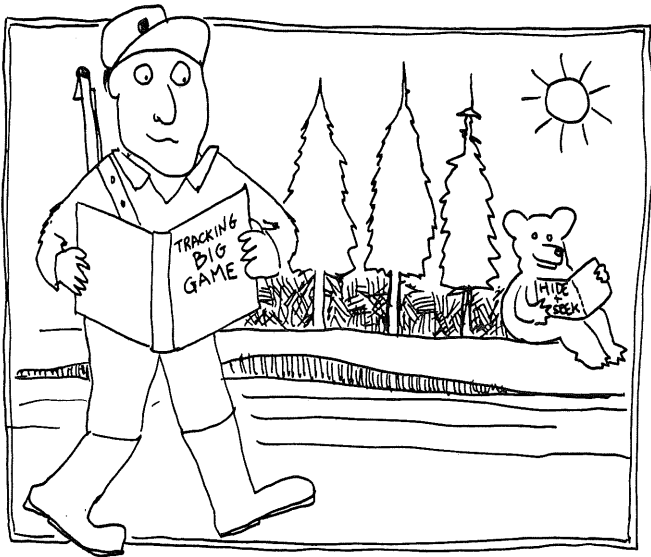
Stephen Kakfwi is from Fort Good Hope. After serving as the president of the Dene Nation, he was elected to sit in the Legislative Assembly. He continues to represent the Sahtu and to serve as a Cabinet Minister.

When I Was Young . . .

When I was young and first started attending public school at the Aklavik Day School, I loved to read. During my elementary school years, I think I read every book that was in the school's public library. I used to take out 3 to 4 books at a time. It got so bad that when my dad told us to turn out the lights at night, I would read under the blankets using a flashlight. No wonder that today I need bifocal glasses to read!

When I started writing, I used to get my "b's" and "d's" mixed up, and used to print my name "Frebbie" instead of "Freddie". The kids used to tease me about that and some of them still remind me of that today.

Fred E. Koe is the Member of the Legislative Assembly from Inuvik.



What Is My Name?

I remember when I was in kindergarten in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. I couldn't write or spell my name. Next to me was a girl who was writing her name. So I started to copy her name. The teacher said, "Lisa, that isn't your name." She wrote my name down at the top of the paper. I started to copy my own name. Since then I can write my own name Lisa.

Lisa Mackenzie is a student at Chief Jimmy Bruno School in Edzo.

My Library Teacher

She had a few gray hairs. She usually had no expression on her face, but everyone knew she liked what she did. Her name was Miss Hardie, and she is the lady who read to us and taught us how to read.

She would sit each class on the carpet in a circle and send one student to pick out a book that she would read to us. She read short stories and if there was no more time, she would continue the next time we saw her. She was our library teacher.

Kooyoo worked for ten years and has just gone back to school in Iqaluit.

The Letter

It was summertime, because we were back from school. We were on our way to Drybone Bay by boat. The boat was full — my mom and dad, Alizette, Louise, me, the twins, my brother, and the little ones. We'd left Yellowknife and were on our way. My mum pulled out this letter she had picked up at Weaver and Devore in Old Town. Both Louise and Alizette wanted to read it for her. They were trying to outdo each other to see who would get to read it.

My mum had a funny, knowing smile on her face, as she watched these two girls fight over the letter. She let Louise take the letter, and Louise quickly opened it up. She had a surprised look on her face when she found out she couldn't read it. My mum laughed.

My mum laughed because the letter was in Dogrib syllabics. Louise just stared at the letter. Alizette said, "Let me look at it." Then my mum took the letter and started to read to them in Dogrib. The letter was from my sister Helen who was at the Charles Camsell Hospital in Edmonton. Even though my sisters heard the letter, they had to look at it and look at it. It was hieroglyphics to them.

Rachel Crapeau lives in Detah. You can hear her on CKNM-FM radio.

Nih̄t'è wedanichì

Here is Rachel's story in Dogrib:

Łik'è h̄ot'e, nih̄t'èk̄ò ts'ò nàts'ide ı̀lè. Elà t'à K'òtiacheht'á ts'ò ts'eède. Elà dàḡoḡo. Sem̄o, seta, Liza, Louisa, sı, nàt'ı̀ike, sechi xè sedè negechàlea. S̄oḡmbak'è gots'ò nàts'eèhde ı̀lè. Sem̄o nih̄t'è wet'áèhchì ı̀lè eyi t'a kàıḡa. Nih̄t'è geaḡı t'áx̄oḡ Liza, Louisa nih̄t'è k'eyagihti. Gigh̄o am̄i gakwe nih̄t'è k'eyagihti gen̄ıḡo ı̀lè.

Sem̄o detì nàke goghàı̀ndà ı̀lè. Gogh̄o nàvedlò nıḡo. Dii nih̄t'è Louisa niyèchi ayı̀là. Louisa nih̄t'è kàıhdla. Nih̄t'è k'aèht̄o t'áx̄oḡ yegh̄o enı̀shà diè. Yek'eyahti xa diè. Sem̄o yegh̄o nàvedlò.

Dàanigh̄o nàvedlò h̄ot'e sıi nih̄t'è T̄ıch̄oḡ k'è dek'eèht'è ı̀lè. Louisa ek̄i nih̄t'è k'e k'eèt'ı̀. Liza adi, Wek'aihta. Sem̄o gogha nih̄t'è k'eyahti, hazh̄oḡ ayı̀i wek'e dek'eèht'è. H̄ot'e ne ı̀lè hagòèhdi. Eyi nih̄t'è semba Elıa gots'ò ayı̀là h̄ot'e ı̀lè. İ̀nda k̄ondeè ts'ò ı̀lè, eyak̄ò TB gha wheda ı̀lè. Sem̄o nih̄t'è gogha k'eyahti. H̄ot'e diıḡ'e kò semba nàke t'aèḡo gots'ò nih̄t'è k'e k'egeèt'ı̀. Gigha łàdıı yati xogeaḡı while.

Sharing

When I was in kindergarten, my teacher Nowdla Arnaquq used to read stories to us. Whenever she would finish a story, we used to tell her to read another, and she would usually read one more to us. We used to enjoy her stories because she would make us laugh and giggle. One of my classmates used to cry when the story finished. When we went to grade one, she and her family moved to Pond Inlet.

When I was in grade three, my Inuktitut teacher Annie Pudloo used to read to us too. She would read to us every day, and we really enjoyed her stories. She taught us how to make books, so we could read them to our parents and sisters or brothers. I used to enjoy making books.

Whenever I babysat at Susan Black's, her daughter Jessica would ask me if I could read a story to her. I would say, "I'll read you a story before bedtime." She would say, "I want you to read a story right now," but I said, "Not right now," so she would cry. When I tried to calm her down, I would say, "I'll read you three bedtime stories only if you stop crying," so she would stop crying. When it was bedtime, I read three stories to her. When I finished reading, she used to tell me to read again, so I would read one more story.

Jeannie Korgak lives in Iqaluit.

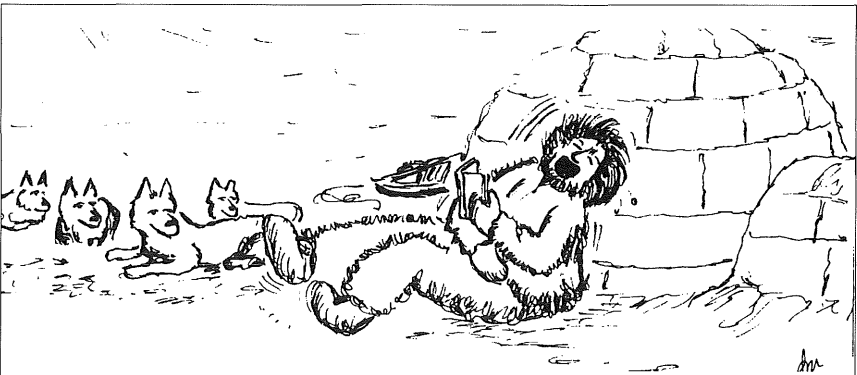
Aunt Lindy's Diary

More than one hundred years ago, my grandma's Aunt Lindy got a diary for Christmas. She was a farm girl who hired out to other families to help with housework. There were six girls and two boys in her own family, so they didn't need her at home.

For a year, she wrote a few sentences every day about what she did. She wrote about visiting friends and about going to prayer meetings with one man or another. She wrote about spending a whole day hauling water and washing clothes by hand. On a quiet winter night, she wrote about hearing the sleigh bells from far away. Aunt Lindy fell in love with Mr. Hudson that year, but there was a crisis in October. Her last entry for the year was about her Christmas wedding to a different man. There can be a lot of drama in a few simple words.

I'm glad Aunt Lindy wrote about her life so long ago. Her words reach out and bring us close together.

Charlotte Babicki works for the NWT Government in Yellowknife. She is on the NWT Literacy Council board.



Steve McGovern

Reading Memories

At the age of 10, I attended school in Inuvik and stayed at Stringer Hall. What I remember most was not being able to read the letters my mom wrote to me. I thought they were very private letters and would have liked to read them again when I felt homesick. I had to let someone else read for me. Now that I can read and write in both English and Inuvialuktun I feel that there are no barriers that I cannot overcome.

Beverly Amos is an interpreter-translator for the Inuvialuit Communications Society in Inuvik.

Here is Beverly's story in Inuvialuktun:

Taigurnirtigun Itqariyatka

Qulinik ukiunikama ilisariartuami Inuvingmun tukkumablunga Stringer Hallmi. Itqarivagara amaamangma aglangman unamnun. Taiguyuittunga taimani allanik taigutiuarpaktuami. Uvannik taigusukpaktuami ilangma takusulivialukaptigik. Qangma aglaan taigurpaliqtuami aglagpaliqlungalu Taniktun Inuvialuktunlu ayunrirtuam qangma.

The Happy Hand

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In life, doing really good is not easy at first, but we are soon rewarded. Learning how to read and write is hard at the beginning only. Very soon we enjoy it. We can read what the others are saying. We can tell others what we think and how we feel. Writing a letter is like talking to somebody, reading the answer is exciting.

When I was very young, I learned how to read French. There were, then, no real books at first, just charts on the wall with the letters a e i o u and the other letters arranged by sounds. After a few days in school, we put those letters together for simple words like papa, mama. More charts, more words, and we knew how to read. We put those words on our slates — no paper yet — and we knew how to write. We were proud of ourselves.

Then many years later, I learned in this country how to speak English. It is very different from French. One day I asked a Sister, a good teacher, if there were some rules for the pronunciation of the words. She said, “Yes, there are rules, but,” she added, “the best way not to make mistakes in reading is knowing every word.” I have tried that ever since.

I enjoy using the few languages I know — French, English, Slavey, Latin, and some Greek — five languages like the five fingers in the hand. They help one another with pleasure — the complete happy hand.

Father Denis, O.M.I., came to the NWT from France in 1938. He first lived in Fort Good Hope where he learned English and Slavey. Since 1968, he has been the priest at St. Theresa of the Child Jesus Church in Fort Franklin.

Thank You, Grandma

The whole idea of reading was first introduced to me by my grandmother Qt'e. I used to watch her read in Slavey.

When my grandmother lived in the bush with us, some of my aunts and other relatives would write to my grandmother on a nice piece of paper bag. They wrote to her on many different topics. They would write about how the people were, who was in, who became new parents — all these things they wrote of. My grandmother would lay the paper out flat in front of her and read it to us.

Once she finished reading to us she would say, “Now I will write back to them.” She would take a wooden pencil, sharpen it well, and wet the end. She would tear out a small piece of brown paper bag and lay it out flat in front of her, and she would start to write.

She would start out with what she wanted them to buy her. She would also tell how many moose my father killed. She would write of the condition of the river and the water and also of what my mother was sewing. My grandmother had so much news. Sometimes my grandmother would write to my Aunt Lucy asking her to make slipper uppers. My aunt would write back in Slavey and send the uppers with her letter.

It was indeed because of my grandmother that I started to take a liking to reading. Thank you, Grandma!

Ethel Blondin-Andrew (Sheleh) was elected in 1988 as Member of Parliament for the Western Arctic. Ethel has a background in education, training, culture, and communications. Reading is one of her favourite activities to relax and learn — it never ends in the world of reading.

Máhsi ʒehtsʉ

Here is Ethel's story in Slavey:

Ediri ʒerih̄tł'é k'əgots'ede s̄i ale s̄ini setsʉ Qł'e béredi la sedaá Denek'é ʒerih̄tł'é k'e gode begháihdá. Setsʉ nahéhé dech̄ta nágwé n̄idé senóʒ keh gots'é nahéhot'ine ʒéhdá keh k'ola nezó ʒerih̄tł'é yúwé henaorahch'i k'eh yets'í ʒekeretł'é. Godi gúlí ʒefekéch'á káraʒah ghó yets'í ʒekeretł'é. Dene gogha dágóht'e chu ghó yets'í ʒekeretł'é, am̄i ʒeyáıı gots'é am̄i bezha góh̄ı chu ghó ʒareyóné eyi ghó Setsʉ ts'é ʒekeretł'é. Setsʉ nezó nitéyiʒa gots'é nahets'é yek'egode.

Deʒerih̄tł'é ghó ʒanaqt'é n̄idé kadi sini gots'é ʒenaruhtł'é hadi. Dech̄ı ʒerih̄tł'éch̄ıné nezó nak'á gots'é yeló nagohtse gots'é ʒerih̄tł'éwé henaorahch'i gots'é nezó debə nitéyiʒa gots'é ʒeretł'é.

Ayíı segha nákuhdí n̄ıwe n̄idé gok'eníyeretł'é. ʒabá ʒıts'é danéht'e whek'é n̄idé chu ghó ʒeretł'é. Tu dáıt'e chu godí, tsáwé ghó chu gógode, ayíı ʒamá náʒenelu hadi ghó ʒeretł'é. Setsʉ begodí ıʒ, Senóʒ Lucy chu ıáhtare ʒehtsʉ yets'é ʒeretł'é, gots'é ket'a segha nehts'ı yéhdı. Senóʒ ʒehtsʉ ts'é naʒeretł'é n̄idé ket'a k'ola yets'é níyele.

Setsʉ ts'ıh̄ʒóné la ʒerih̄tł'é k'e gots'ede negorıʒó. Máhsi ʒehtsʉ.



Terry Hill

The Bookworm

I have always been a big reader. Indeed, the very name by which I am known comes from the fact that I read a lot as a child. People know me as Ben, but that is a nickname given to me when I was 11 or 12 by a young friend. We were arguing about some fact or other. When it was discovered that I was right, he got angry and dubbed me a bookworm. From that it became Benny the Bookworm, after a cartoon character. It stuck. Today, it's just Ben. Only my mother and sisters call me by my real given name. Everyone else calls me Ben, short for Benny the Bookworm.

“Ben” McDonald is a staff member at the Union of Northern Workers in Yellowknife.

**Kispin ōma nihiyiwiwin pikskwīwin ikā
tawanihtā mitoni kwayas koyi ayamīhcikī
ēkwa masinayhikī asci.**

This Cree message was contributed by Harry Lawrence of Yellowknife. In English it says: You can learn to keep your languages strong. Learn to read and write.

I Like to Read

I grew up in the bush. When I was nine years old, I broke my arm so I was sent to Edmonton. I didn't understand or speak English. I didn't understand what the doctors and nurses were saying to me when I first arrived. However, after a while I started understanding English. I stayed at the hospital for about three months. The children at the hospital were sent for lessons every day, so I started attending with them.

After three months, I was sent to Fort Resolution. My parents had moved there with the family. When I arrived, my older sister had started school so I started too. That's where I learned how to read.

Once I learned how to read, I was always reading. Sometimes I used to read one book in one day. I remember how my mother used to get mad at me because I was always reading and not doing my chores. I remember this one time, I really wanted to finish this book that I was reading, so I hid behind the smokehouse to finish reading the book. I could hear my mother calling me but I didn't answer. I just kept reading. Later, when I finally finished reading the book, I went into the house. Boy, was my mother mad at me.

Ever since I was a child, I have enjoyed reading. Even now I enjoy it very much. I'm glad I know how to read because it's benefitted me a lot and still is.

Sabet Biscaye is now an Assistant Deputy Minister for the Government of the NWT in Yellowknife.

ᶖerehtł'ís K'asti Basthi

Here is Sabet's story in Chipewyan:

Nánis niya. ᶖełóta segháy kú, segán náte t'á, yunághe sełtı. That'in dístth'ailu, thatin tthi yastile. Nádórelya - u, nérs - u, sets'én dáiyéłtı húlí, tadáihedi sí benoresníle. Hat'e húlí, nades t'á hadhër - u, thatin yati dístth'a ᶖaja. Tagh zá húk'e xa náidhër. Sekui ᶖeya kye náde sí, dzi hënt'u, ᶖerehtł'ís hóneltèn t'á, si tth'i dënexél naisda.

Tagh za t'á Denínu Kúe ts'én naséłtı. Setihkui Denínu Kúe ts'én sekui xél ᶖedíhıas k'é. Sare ᶖerehtł'ís kye húníłthër k'é t'á, nist'agh t'á si tth'i ᶖerehtł'ís kye húníłthër. ᶖeyër ᶖerehtł'ís k'asti huresdën.

ᶖerehtł'ís kasti kóresha ᶖaja t'á, hetł'as ts'én ᶖerehtł'ís kasti. Nok'e ᶖıłá dzi k'e, ᶖıłagh ᶖerehtł'ís kasti nast'é. Benasní, sets'ı ᶖamá nok'e sets'én nolch'ugh ní, ᶖerehtł'ís kastay gha thida - u, t'ası hestsile t'á. ᶖıłagh benasní, ᶖerehtł'ís kasti nost'é yisthën t'á, bériye t'és nánesı, sets'ı ᶖama bech'azi. Sekasil dístth'agh húlí, t'asásıle. ᶖerehtł'ís kasti nast'e ᶖuhdı yıs dasja. Sets'éts'ılch'e sı.

Sekui hesı si ts'én ᶖerehtł'ís kasti basthi. Dı huli hást'e. ᶖerehtł'ís kasti kóresha sí bet'óriłthër - u, bet'óriıa t'á, seni.

How I Learned to Speak Slavey Again



I spent many years in Grollier Hall in Inuvik getting an education, and every summer I would go home to Fort Norman. It was fun at first but towards the end it turned more and more difficult. I was getting better at the English language but my shutoa got'ine (mountain) language was fleeting. I would go home for the summer months and talk with my dad about hockey, Bobby Orr and the other great hockey players and games I'd seen. With my mother I tried to talk about the A, B, C's of school. Little did I realize that they had no idea what I was talking about. They spoke mostly about living off the land, the beauty of the land, the rivers, the mountains, and stories of living in the bush, but I never quite understood what they were talking about. This went on until I finished school.

When I got home, I got a job with the Government. I had to talk and be with people who spoke mostly Slavey and, much to my surprise, I found it quite difficult. I realized I could talk the talk but could not walk the walk. I needed to learn the language so the stories, the language, and the tradition could make sense once again. I was told the best way to do this was by spending all or most of my time with the elders who spoke only Slavey and to ask questions. I sat with these elders and they talked about everything elders talk about and more. They sensed that I was trying to learn something from them, and they went out of their way to help. Whenever they were trying to tell me stories, I must have had this funny look on my face. They would stop and say do you know what this word or this phrase means? Usually my non-response would indicate the negative, then they would patiently explain whatever it was that needed explaining.

New Books

My first reading memory goes back a long way to the village where I was brought up, Marieville, Quebec. At that time, I was going to elementary school with nuns from the Presentation de Marie — the convent, as we called it. Each week we crossed the school yard to venture into this new world, the place with beautiful books! For years the same lady served us and made sure, with infinite patience, that we had brought back all the books we had borrowed. I will never forget those years, the smell of new books, and the rush for the shelves to be the first to choose!

France Benoit works for the Department of Education in Yellowknife.

Here is France's story in French:

Des Livres Neufs

Mon premier souvenir de lecture remonte aux visites à la bibliothèque municipale du village où je fus élevée, Marieville, dans la province de Québec. A cette époque, j'allais à l'école élémentaire chez les soeurs de la Présentation de Marie; au couvent, comme nous disions. Chaque semaine nous traversions la cour d'école pour nous aventurer dans ce monde nouveau, cet endroit plein de beaux livres à lire! Pendant des années la même dame nous servait et s'assurait, avec une patience infinie, que nous avions bien rapporté tous les livres empruntés. Jamais je n'oublierai ces années, l'odeur des livres neufs et la ruée vers les rayons afin d'être la première à choisir!

My Mother Telling Me Stories

When I was young, my mother used to tell stories to me before I went to bed. These stories were passed down from her mother. There were no books, but my mother remembered what was told to her then she passed those stories down to us.

As my mother was reading to me before I went to sleep, I would usually ask her what was going to happen and what else did she say. I would keep asking her, then she would finally tell me. This went on for I don't know how long, but it is my childhood memory.

Now that I am no longer a child, sometimes I remind my mother that I used to enjoy her telling stories. I kind of tease her to tell me again, but she won't. She says that I am now grown up and it was a long time ago. But I am sure she remembers.

Koalie Ataguyuk is attending Arctic College in Iqaluit. He hopes to become a welding apprentice.

Learning Feels Good

When I was first reading and writing it was kind of complicated for me. Sometimes teachers said to me to read or write that paragraph for them, but it was pretty hard for me to do that. Now I am getting there slowly. It's pretty nice to understand how to read and write, because if you don't, you don't understand what's going on around you. When people say good things to you about when you read for the first time, it's a good feeling. But it takes time to learn how to read and write.

Glen Tutcho is 20 years old and lives in Fort Franklin. He goes to upgrading at Adult Ed and hopes to finish grade 12 and then get into an apprenticeship.

The Wonders of the Written Word

At the age of 6, my father, Awa, was the first person to show me the wonder of the written word. He taught me syllabics so I could write a letter to my Grandfather who at the time lived in another camp. I eagerly read the replies to my letters.

My fascination grew with the written word. When I was 11 years old Father Fourier, O.M.I., Igloolik taught me Roman Orthography. I learned to read both Inuktitut Syllabics and Roman Orthography fluently before any schools opened their doors.

Learning to read in English opened up a wealth of information to me. I was able to read in depth about other peoples, events, etc., around the world. I could read when and what I wanted.

Today reading is still a great passion, far more useful than television.

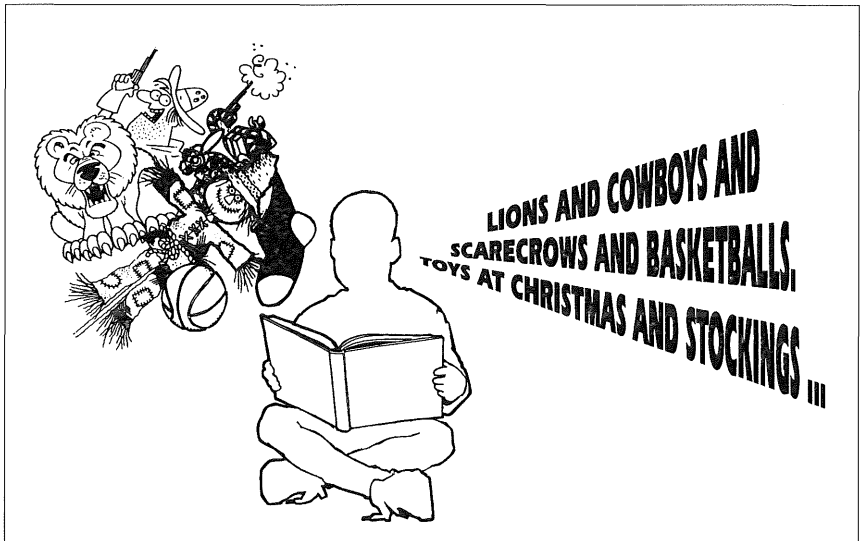
Reading in both languages has been my greatest asset and I owe much to my father and Father Fourier for introducing me to the wonders of the written word.

James Arvaluk represents Aivilik in the Legislative Assembly. He is the Minister responsible for Education, Culture, and Employment Programs.

Look at Books

When I was in grade 3, my teacher Mrs. Brown would always point out to us how the book looked. Does it look like a nice book to read? Then slowly, she would turn the page for all of us to see, and to make sure we were paying attention, which we all were. Mrs. Brown was one of my favourite teachers when I was attending Nakashuk School, a couple of months before I left to go to Allen Island. She told me to remember always to make sure you look at books because they are very important. Books are the future for everyone. The world will be learning from them. A book will show you how things are happening.

Atchina Uniuqsaraq is attending academic studies at Arctic College.



Rob Butler

Learning in McPherson

Learning to read and write was first taught to me by my cousin Florence Peterson of Fort McPherson. When she was a child, she and a few other children who lived in McPherson year round were taught by the missionary's wife in her home. There was no school in McPherson then. I was too young to attend the classes, so I used to sit outside until school was out and then question Florence about what she had learned in school. As soon as she got home, Florence taught me what she had learned that day. This went on all winter.

The next fall I would be old enough to go to school, and I would be sent to a residential school in Aklavik. In June each year, the Indian Agent came to Fort McPherson to pay Treaty to the status Indians. My mom told me when my dad went up to receive our treaty money, he would hand me my \$5 and I was to give it back to the Indian Agent. She said if he would give my money to the government in Ottawa and ask them to build a day school in Fort McPherson, I would not have to leave home at such a young age to attend school. Lo and behold, the following fall we had a two-room day school built and from then on the younger children didn't have to be sent away from home to attend school.

This is how I started to learn to read and write. A million thanks to people like my cousin Florence for being instrumental in my learning. I'm still learning and have just completed a university linguistics course. So all you young and old who read this story, remember you are never too old to learn and being literate is cool and rewarding.

Sue Look reads and writes in Gwich'in as well as English. She works for the government in Yellowknife.

Here is Sue's story in Gwich'in:

Tr'òochit edinehtleh kak giniinkhii ts'at idiniht'òò dai', sheejii Florence Peterson gashuuniltin. Ashik gwinoo T'eet'it Zheh danh Getr'onahtan zheh gòò'arii kwaa, aiits'at giinkhii tr'iinjoo azhik tr'iininkat zheh gwireh t'igiinchuu aii dizheh gwizhit goanahtan. Jitii sheejii gik'anjii aii uu'ee nadik ts'at gashuunatan. Khaii tthak juu didin.

Aii khaints'an atat gehshitr'ohantan geenjit shighaii gwit'èelyaa. Aii gwinoò June nan zhik Treaty tseedhoh diitsan tr'ahts'ih. Azhik neegwidadhat danh nit'ih nekhwa tseedhoh uujih ji' vah natchiindik ts'at nitseedhoh aii dinjii vitsan nayahts'ii, aiits'at jii shitseedhoh Ottawa gwizhit Government vitsan nayahts'ii ts'at nekhweenjit getr'onahtan zheh tahtsah vanuu, shahan shah nuu, aiits'at akòò diva'nuu. Aiiit'lee niinshuuk kwaa srah tr'ihchòò k'adilak aii kak vah getr'onahtan zheh gwigwidal k'atr'ilik. Aiits'at at'arah getr'onahtan zheh nitr'igwiinshah, khaii gwitchih. Aiiit'lee atat tr'iinin vighaii leih kwaa getr'ohanahtan eenjit ih'oh natr'itahzhik kwah.

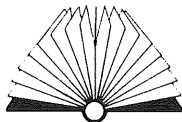
Juutsants'at tat edinehtleh ik'iniljik, sheejii Florence gwiintloh masih òòjihnuu Tthehee gashitr'ònahtan ts'at tthehee gik'iniljih.

Juudin tthak jii kak giinkhii ts'at gwik'it tthehee ginakhwatr'onahtan nòdhan ji' akòò dakhwo'in. Edinehtleh kak tr'igiinkhii ts'at itr'idant'òò hah gwitchil'ee ts'at shòh tr'iinlih.

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