

DISASTERS!

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*It's a beautiful day in the mountains, but beware—
snow can turn deadly in the blink of an eye.*

AVALANCHE!

MAGAZINE ARTICLE BY BILL CORBETT

Entombed beneath half a metre of snow, Josh McCullough figured this would be a lousy way to die. Gasping for air, an incredible weight on his chest, all he could do was wiggle his fingers to enlarge his tiny breathing hole. And think. After a few seconds of sheer panic, it seemed the 21-year-old Calgary snowboarder had a long time to think.

"I said goodbye to everyone I knew," Josh recalls. "I had really strong images of how people would react when they found out I was dead." Then everything went black.


In fact, Josh was well prepared for his expedition into mountain back country. He had taken avalanche courses. He was wearing a transceiver and carrying a shovel. When the avalanche hit, he wasn't even snowboarding. But he made two critical mistakes that day in December near Rogers Pass in the interior of British Columbia.

First, he didn't know that recent snow had made conditions much worse than the avalanche hazard signs had indicated. Second, he was alone while his friend had gone by snowmobile to pick up another friend.

Josh was snowshoeing just above the packed track on a small, 35° slope—and that's likely how he triggered his own burial. He heard a loud "whoomph" and immediately knew he was in trouble. The avalanche hit in waves—the first pinning his feet, the second buckling his knees, and the third

GOALS AT A GLANCE

- Identify and sort proper nouns.
- Draft a first-hand account.



slamming the back of his head. He was completely covered with snow.

Josh awoke to hear digging. His friend had come back 10 minutes later, seen the slide, and—luckily—turned his transceiver to “receive.” Picking up a strong signal, he started digging frantically. He quickly unearthed Josh. Blue in the face, very cold and badly shaken, Josh was otherwise all right despite being buried 15 minutes.

He was lucky. Many Canadian skiers, snowboarders, and snowmobilers do not survive avalanches. The number could be reduced, however, with more training and common sense.

Mountain lovers get caught in avalanches for two main reasons—enthusiasm and ignorance.

Some people get too enthusiastic when they reach fresh powder snow, and look for thrills on dangerous slopes. Others take shortcuts instead of following safe routes up and down the mountains.

Ignorance claims more lives, often for easily avoidable reasons. Too many people forget to check the daily avalanche forecasts, don’t carry safety equipment, or don’t know how to use it properly.

“One of the biggest mistakes people make is simply not realizing they are at risk, that an avalanche could happen here,” says Banff avalanche consultant Clair Israelson. “Often, they don’t recognize that it doesn’t have to be super steep to slide, or else they wrongly think they’re far enough from steep slopes to be safe.”

When signs say the avalanche hazard is Extreme, people tend to be more careful. Most accidents happen when the hazard is Moderate or Considerable, because people take more chances.

So how should you minimize the risk of getting caught in an avalanche?

1. Take avalanche courses from certified instructors. You will learn how to use shovels to test the snow conditions, and how to use transceivers to locate companions, if they are buried. You will also discover how to choose safe routes for ascending and descending slopes.

2. Join an outdoor club that stresses safety first. Never go into the mountains by yourself.

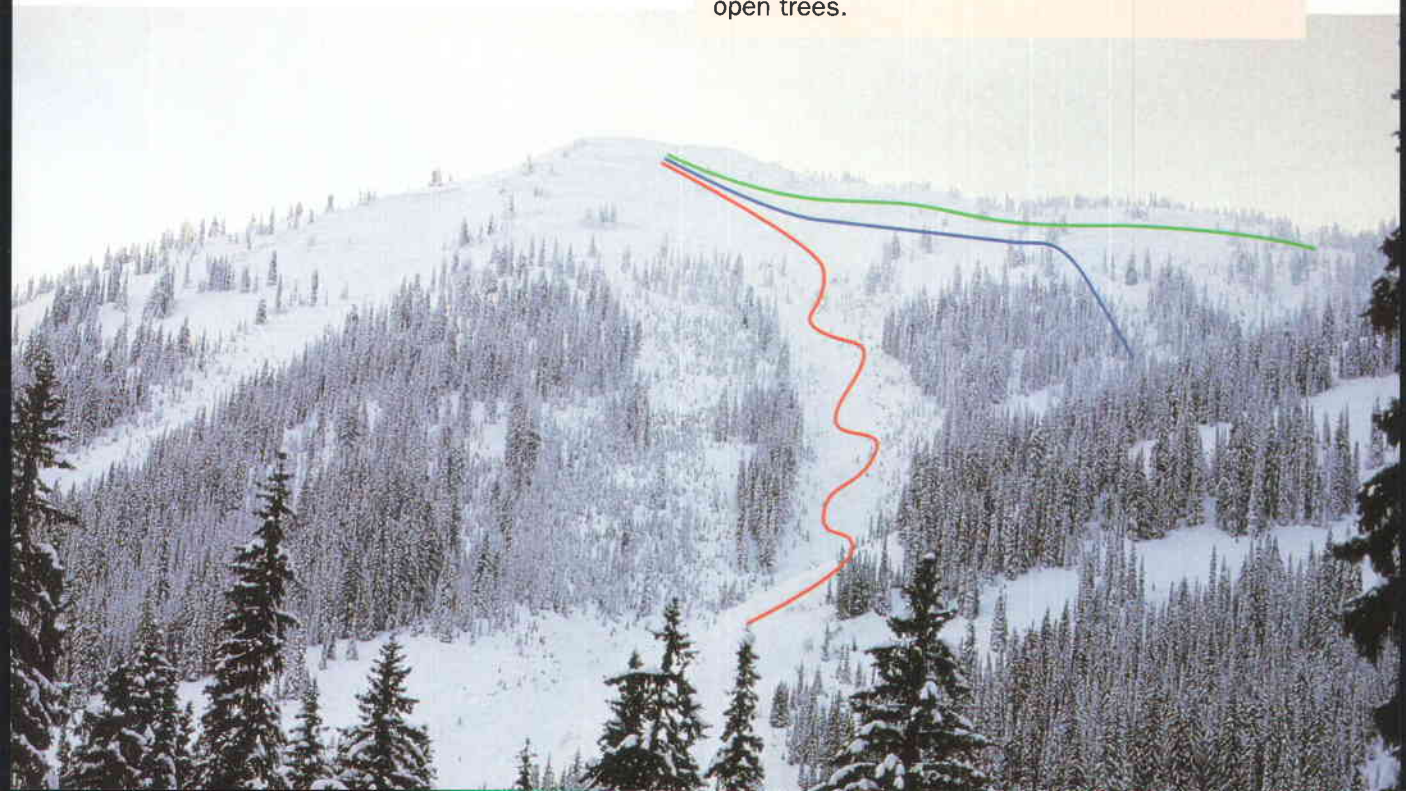
3. Refer to the twice-weekly reports by the Canadian Avalanche Association for

ROUTE SELECTION IN AVALANCHE TERRAIN

GOOD ASCENT ROUTE: Through trees to ridge. Follow ridge to summit.

POOR ASCENT ROUTE: Switch backing up slide path.

CAUTIOUS ASCENT ROUTE: Avoid slide paths. Stay in open trees.



conditions in Canada's western mountains. (Currently there is no formal system of avalanche forecasts in central and eastern Canada.)

4. When the avalanche hazard is Considerable to Extreme, stay home or stick to groomed trails or ski area boundaries.

Paul Norrie is a professional ski guide based in Banff. He recommends, "Always be thinking and looking around. Always treat the mountains as if you're going to be surprised."

What if you're hit by an avalanche, despite all precautions? If there is no escape, use swimming strokes to stay as high as possible in the stream of snow. As the avalanche slows, try to fling one hand to the surface and use the other to clear an air space in front of your mouth. If you are buried, you now have to relax to preserve oxygen.

If you're unburied, you'll have to rescue the victims. Using a transceiver, an experienced

CANADIAN AVALANCHE ACCIDENT STATISTICS

- **90% of fatalities are males, typically in their twenties.**
- **43% of those killed are back country skiers.**
- **Perhaps 80% of avalanche fatalities are triggered by the people caught in them.**
- **About 25% of avalanche fatalities are caused, not by suffocation or hypothermia,* but by physical injuries.**
- **41% of recreational avalanche accidents occur in the Rocky Mountains of Alberta and British Columbia, 39% in the Interior Ranges of British Columbia, and 16% in British Columbia's Coast Mountains.**

***hypothermia:** abnormally cold body temperature caused by exposure to cold air or water.

person should be able to find a victim in 2 minutes. Try to dig the person out in less than 5. With a 5-minute recovery, there's a 90% chance he or she will be alive. After 5 minutes, brain damage can start. Beyond 15 minutes, the survival rate falls below 50%.

Master these rescue skills, and one day someone like Josh McCullough could be eternally grateful.

Oh So Silent

FIRST-HAND ACCOUNT OF AN AVALANCHE INCIDENT

by Wayne Grams and Sandy Wishart

On the Haig Glacier at an elevation of 2740 m we waited, hoping for a break in the swirling clouds. My wife, Sandy, and I had spent the day, Easter Sunday, ski touring up the French Glacier to reach the plateau of the Haig. Our goal was a long, deep powder ski down the Robertson Glacier. All that kept us from that dream run now was a 150-m climb up a steep slope to the Robertson Col.

I had been this way several times before, but never had I seen the slope entirely snow-covered. Winds usually kept most of it a bare scree* slope even in winter. When visibility improved slightly, I left Sandy in a safe position on the glacier and started kicking steps directly up the slope with my skis strapped to my pack. I was struggling in the new snow about a quarter of the way up the slope when I saw a crack suddenly tear across the snow high above me. As if in slow motion, snow slabs started

to slide toward me. I had no time to register anything but astonishment at this unfolding scene. Then I felt myself tumbling down in a white whirl of snow. At first I was rolling on the surface of the avalanche, but in moments it had swallowed me whole.

When it stopped there was dead silence. I felt unhurt and, thinking my left leg might be higher than the rest of my body, I tried to kick it up, perhaps to the surface. It wouldn't budge. In fact, I couldn't move at all. The snow held me in its firm grip. I was breathing fast from struggling on the slope and from sheer panic. Keep calm, slow down your breathing, I reminded myself. Easier thought than done in this situation.

Sandy, I knew, was safe and now everything depended on her finding me. Did I have enough air until then?—Unaware, I slipped into unconsciousness.

* **scree:** loose, fragmented rock lying below a cliff or bluff.

I watched in disbelief as the avalanche carried Wayne down the slope and out of sight. I waited for the avalanche to stop, then I quickly skied up and over a roll fully expecting to see him, but all I saw was snow, and it was oh so quiet.

Frantically I pulled out the earphone to my avalanche beacon and was able to clearly hear the steady signal from Wayne's beacon. He had to be near! I skied out onto the avalanche debris, pulled off my pack, took off my skis, and got out my shovel. Without letting go of the earphone, I ran over to dig in a hollow spot that looked like a place where Wayne would be buried. After randomly shovelling for a while, I realized I wouldn't be able to find him this way. I started back toward my pack, but fell into several waist-high hollows and struggled to crawl out. I felt so helpless and cried out in desperation. I couldn't believe this was happening to us. I thought about how just last night Wayne and I



were both enjoying a visit with my family and looking forward to this trip. I briefly wondered how I would cope without Wayne in my life, and how I would be able to tell anyone that I couldn't find him.

Finally, I got focussed and realized that I had to use the avalanche beacon properly. I could hear the steady signal of Wayne's transceiver. By continually turning down the volume, I zeroed in on his location. Using a ski pole to mark the spot, I started digging.

A metre down I hit his ski tip. I had forgotten he had strapped

his skis to his pack so I imagined his body to be upside down or twisted. I kept digging, then realized that I could hear Wayne's laboured breathing. I cried out, "Hang on, Wayne, I'm coming." A metre and a half down, I exposed the top of Wayne's toque. I dropped the shovel and used my hands to uncover his face. He was still breathing! I touched his cheek and felt that it was still warm and saw that his colour was good. I told him he

"I couldn't believe this was happening to us."

was going to be OK. He didn't respond. I moved the snow off his chest to help him breathe easier, then kept on digging.

Finally, Wayne "woke up" and reached out his hand to mine, held it for a moment, and said, "Thank you for finding me." His voice was strained, as if he had been shouting and had gone hoarse. Though groggy and disoriented, he said he was OK. As I tried to make the hole bigger, Wayne struggled periodically to try to move, but his right side was still pinned. He was breathing very fast, and I tried to calm him down, and encourage him to breathe deeply and slowly. Finally, his right arm and right leg were free and the snow released its cement-like grip. I helped him to stand up in the cavernous pit that was about 2 m deep and 2 m wide.

Once Wayne was standing, I looked at his watch and saw that it was 6:30 p.m.! It had been an hour and a half since the avalanche happened. He was shaking uncontrollably from cold

and shock. I cut steps to get out of the pit, brought my down jacket to him, then hugged and rubbed him to warm him up. Soon he was able to crawl out of the hole and stand up.

I tried to give him some water, but he was shaking so violently he couldn't bring the bottle to his mouth. We knew it was getting late, and that we had to get moving. I helped Wayne put on his skis and pack. His poles were gone so I gave him mine.

"He
was shaking
uncontrollably
from cold and
shock."

Meanwhile, the sky had cleared. The setting sun bathed a few lingering clouds in golden and purple hues. Around us the mountains stood serene and beautiful, supremely unaware of the drama that had just unfolded. To me, it felt as if someone had been watching over us, and I gave thanks. We looked for a moment at the slope that had caused us such grief, then set off for home.

Wayne Grams and Sandy Wishart both work for Kananaskis Country and live in Canmore, Alberta. They still enjoy life in the mountains.

1. RESPONDING TO THE MAGAZINE ARTICLE

- a. What two mistakes did Josh McCullough make when snowshoeing? What did he do right?
- b. What do you think was the main reason—enthusiasm or ignorance—that Josh was caught in an avalanche? What about Wayne Grams? Support your opinions with evidence from the article.
- c. Why is “Oh So Silent” an appropriate title for Wayne and Sandy’s first-hand account of an avalanche and rescue?
- d. Make two lists. First, list ways to avoid being caught in an avalanche. Second, make a list of strategies to help you survive an avalanche.

2. LANGUAGE CONVENTIONS PROPER NOUNS

List six of the **proper nouns** in this selection. Note how they’ve been given an initial capital letter, and how some don’t have an apostrophe—like Rogers Pass—where you would expect one. Sort your list of proper nouns into the four categories in the definition: Person, Place, Organization, Period of Time. To provide an example for each category, you may have to include additional proper nouns not used in the article.

A **proper noun** is a noun that identifies one particular person, place, organization, or period of time.

3. WRITING A FIRST-HAND ACCOUNT

Why do you think first-hand accounts like “Oh So Silent” are commonly used in magazine articles and news stories? Create a first-hand account based on an exciting event in which you were involved. Begin your draft with a powerful opening sentence that will hook your reader. “I saw a tornado” is less interesting for your reader than a description of a swirling wind sweeping everything in its path. Describe the action you witnessed, and any emotion you experienced. Use strong verbs, specific nouns, and vivid adjectives and adverbs to make your reader believe in your story. When you are finished your draft, share your account with another classmate.

SELF-ASSESSMENT: Did your first-hand account capture the feeling of the experience? How could you make your account more exciting?

4. MEDIA PULL QUOTES

Many magazines use a feature called a *pull quote* (see box on page 182) to catch the reader’s eye and make the article seem more interesting. Reread “Avalanche!” and “Oh So Silent” and suggest two phrases or sentences that could be used as additional pull quotes. Explain to a partner why you made those particular selections.

*You've seen on TV the damage an earthquake can cause.
Could the same thing happen here?*

Earthquakes

Rock the World!

MAGAZINE ARTICLE FROM YES MAG

by Barbara Saffer

You may not be able to feel it, but the continent you live on is in constant motion.

Scientists explain continental movement by the theory of *plate tectonics*. Plates are thick slabs, like pieces of a jigsaw puzzle, which make up the crust of the Earth. These plates float—like rafts on the sea—on a layer of hot, mobile rock called the *mantle*. We don't usually notice the motion because plates move very slowly—about as fast as your fingernails grow.



Earthquake survivors in Golcuk, Turkey.

On occasion, however, we are jolted into remembering. Where one plate slides beneath another, volcanoes spit out masses of fiery

lava. Where plates collide, earthquakes rock the world! As residents of Turkey well know, (see photo) an earthquake is a sudden shaking of the Earth's surface. Hundreds of thousands of earthquakes jiggle the planet every year. Most are small and do little damage. A major tremor, however, can cause enormous damage.

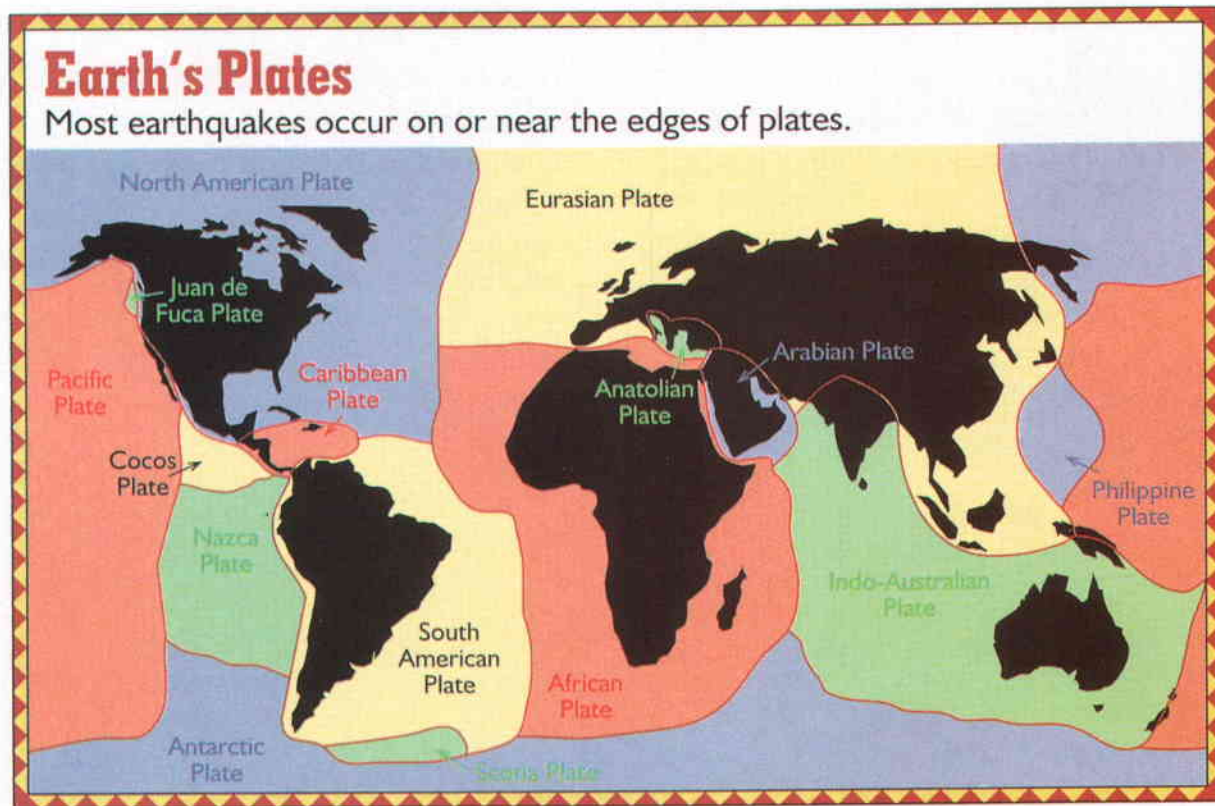
GOALS AT A GLANCE

- Create a glossary of technical terms.
- Develop a magazine article including visuals.

How Earthquakes Happen

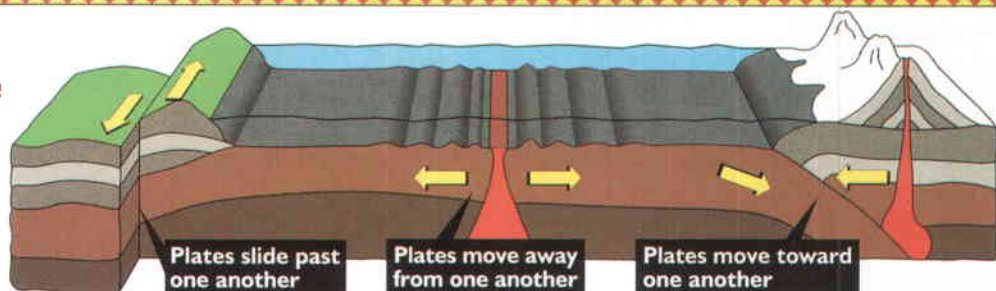
Earthquakes occur when the thick plates of the Earth's surface crack or break suddenly or slide past one another. Most earthquakes occur near plate boundaries. This is where the slabs slide together, drift apart, or creep past each other. These motions are slow and cumbersome, and plates often get stuck as they try to scrape past each other.

If a plate is trying to move, but can't, the plate bends and builds up stress. When enough stress has built up, the plate breaks, forming a *fault*. It's like bending a pencil until it cracks. The pieces of broken plate recoil—and quickly slip up, down, or sideways along the fault. This releases the stored energy and sends shock waves in all directions.



Pass Your Plate Please

Tectonic plates can move three ways in relation to one another.



These *seismic* waves rattle the ground, resulting in earthquakes. Often, stress builds up along the same fault again and again, causing earthquakes to re-occur in the same area. A famous example of this is the San Andreas Fault in California.

The spot where rocks begin to move along a fault is called the focus of the earthquake. The focus may be shallow or deep, ranging from close to the Earth's surface to a depth of about 700 km. The point on the Earth's surface directly above the focus is the *epicentre*. Earthquake tremors are generally strongest near the epicentre.

After a major earthquake, the initial shock waves are often followed by a series of smaller tremors, called *aftershocks*, which can last for days or weeks. Aftershocks occur when the Earth's crust near the fault "settles" into a new position.

With all that shaking, it's no wonder earthquake tremors can be destructive. In addition to damaging buildings and other structures, earthquakes can also cause tremendous secondary damage from fires, floods, rock slides, mud slides, avalanches, and *tsunamis* (huge, destructive ocean waves).

A Quaking Time Line

1556 One of the most deadly earthquakes in recorded history claimed approximately 830 000 lives in China.

1700 Aboriginal accounts and geological evidence suggest that a massive earthquake of 9.0 on the Richter scale hit the Cascadia region, affecting areas from Vancouver Island to Oregon.

Measuring Earthquakes

by Kathiann M. Kowalski

While thousands of earthquakes occur every year, only a tiny percentage of them cause significant damage and injury. In fact, the vast majority can barely be felt by most people.

Scientists use two scales to measure earthquakes. The Richter scale was developed in 1935 by Charles Richter. It measures the strength (or magnitude) of an earthquake. The scale is *logarithmic*, meaning that each whole number represents a 10 times

increase in strength from the previous number. For example, a 4.0 earthquake is 10 times stronger than a 3.0 earthquake, and 100 times stronger than a 2.0 earthquake.

The Modified Mercalli Intensity Scale, expressed in Roman numerals, focusses on how earthquakes are experienced by people and buildings in particular locations. At Level I, earthquakes are not even felt, while at Level XII, major damage and injuries occur.

In the year 132 Chinese geographer and astronomer Zhang Heng invented the world's first instrument to detect an earthquake and the direction from which it comes. The 2-metre-wide bronze device used a system of levers and a pendulum. When a tremor occurred, a ball was released from a sculpted dragon's jaws and dropped into the mouth of a sculpted frog below.



1856 Italian physicist Luigi Palmieri invented a sophisticated earthquake recorder that makes a permanent record, called a *seismogram*, of the earth moving.

1880 English engineer John Milne travelled to Japan where he studied earthquakes. He developed the modern *seismograph*, used to detect vibrations caused by earthquakes. In 1898, Milne's Instrument Number 10 began operating in Victoria, British Columbia, making Victoria one of the oldest seismic observatories in the world.

Where Canucks Feel Quakes

by Kathiann M. Kowalski

What time is it when everything around you starts shaking and rumbling? It's time for an earthquake. The catch to this riddle is that no one knows exactly when or where an earthquake will occur.

Scientists do know that approximately 97% of the world's earthquakes occur near plate boundaries.

Did You Know?

- The largest earthquake ever measured occurred in Chile in 1960. It hit 9.5 on the Richter scale.
- More than 1000 earthquakes are recorded every year in Canada, but we don't feel most of them.
- In 1949, the strongest earthquake in Canada so far this century rocked the area around the Queen Charlotte Islands in British Columbia. It measured 8.1 on the Richter scale.

Off Canada's west coast three plates interact with each other: the North American plate, the Pacific Plate, and the Juan de Fuca (Wan-da-Foo-ka) Plate. "About 2/3 of Canada's earthquakes are in western Canada or in the western Arctic," reports seismologist Garry Rogers of the Geological Survey of Canada in Sidney, British Columbia. "We locate and catalogue 1000 to 1200 per year in the West."

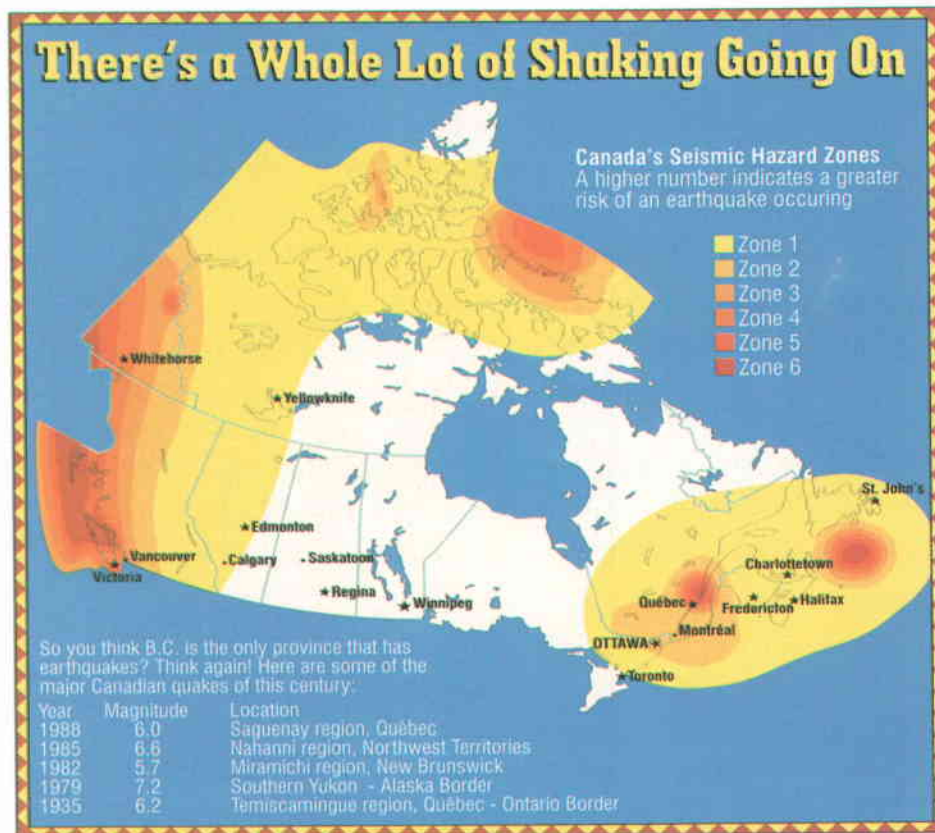
Nonetheless, notes Rogers, "Earthquakes can affect most of Canada's population." Three percent of the world's earthquakes occur within plates. Most of the earthquakes occurring away from plate boundaries occur along or near ancient fault zones, like the Ottawa valley. These represent zones of weakness where

1902 Giuseppe Mercalli, an Italian seismologist, came up with a scale to rank earthquakes based on how they affect people and structures. His scale uses Roman numerals from I—when people don't even notice the earthquake—to XII—when there is massive damage.

1935 American seismologist Charles Richter developed a scale to measure the energy released by an earthquake—its magnitude. While earthquakes measuring less than 3.0 on the Richter scale might not be felt, earthquakes measuring over 8.0 result in massive damage.

failure is most likely to occur due to *crustal stresses*. This helps explain the Ste.-Agathe-des-Monts earthquake that shook people from Ottawa to Montreal on July 30, 1998. It had a magnitude of 4.4 on the *Richter scale*.

Scientists are studying methods of predicting earthquakes, such as measuring stress along faults and observing animals, which act strangely before quakes. As of now, however, there is no reliable way to predict earthquakes. ♦



1960s A theory called plate tectonics was developed. This theory suggests that the Earth's crust and part of the upper mantle—called the *lithosphere*—are made up of plates that “float” on a layer of hot mobile rock.

1998 A deadly tsunami caused by an off-shore earthquake killed and injured thousands in Papua New Guinea. Tsunami hazards have prompted the United States to install sensors in the Pacific which will determine waves of tsunami height. The data will be transmitted to a satellite which will send in the information to tsunami warning centres.

1. RESPONDING TO THE MAGAZINE ARTICLE

- a. List three new things you learned about earthquakes from this article. What else would you like to know?
- b. The time line provides a brief history of earthquakes. Which information do you find the most interesting? Why?
- c. Look at the headings and captions. Do you think the use of humour is appropriate in this context? When might it not be appropriate?

2. VISUAL COMMUNICATION EXAMINE VISUALS

Many magazine articles like “Avalanche!” on page 176 and “Earthquakes Rock the World!” include visuals such as charts, photos, diagrams, and maps. Look at the visuals included with this selection. What kind of information is presented in each one? How does each of these visuals help you understand the topic better? Next time you write a magazine article or report, include visuals to help readers understand your topic.

3. WORD CRAFT TECHNICAL TERMS



Create an illustrated Earthquake Glossary. First, find the technical terms presented in the article in italic type and write them down. Try to figure out their meaning from their context in the article. For words you are unsure of, consult an encyclopedia (book or electronic) and/or the Internet. Write your definitions so that your readers will understand the meanings easily. You may wish to illustrate your glossary.

4. MEDIA MAGAZINE ARTICLES

With a small group, discuss the two magazine articles that begin this unit. For each article, consider the purpose, intended audience, content, style, and visuals. What strengths and weaknesses do you see?

Together, choose another type of disaster, such as volcanoes, or the sinking of the *Titanic*. Develop a magazine article about the disaster. Begin by researching your subject carefully. Each group member could develop one part of the article—background information, coverage of the disaster, sidebars, visuals (illustrations, maps, charts, and so on), or the glossary. Discuss how these sections should be organized and designed for the greatest effect. Post your completed article on a Disaster bulletin board.

GROUP ASSESSMENT: Does your magazine article give enough information to answer the questions most readers would have? Is it interesting? Did you include visuals that help to tell the story? How could you improve your article?

*Some of the most
destructive disasters
have been turned into movies
for our entertainment.*

CANNED CATASTROPHES

SPECIAL EFFECTS IN DISASTER MOVIES

NON-FICTION BY JAKE HAMILTON

Volcanoes. Twisters. Asteroids. Explosions... For almost as long as films have been made, audiences have flocked to see one disaster after another on the big screen.

People seem to be fascinated by images of destruction—the bigger, the noisier, and more terrifying, the better. A film director, of course, can't just wait until a real catastrophe occurs. (It's hard to predict when the next twister will whirl by!) That's why special effects are essential to every disaster movie.

Special effects (SFX) is the art of making the impossible into a fantastic reality. Since 1902, when Georges Méliès first impressed an audience with cinematic special effects, there has been a dizzying explosion of SFX breakthroughs. From camera trickery to digital technology, the history of special effects has always pushed the boundaries of human imagination, and keeps today's audiences glued to their seats in starry-eyed wonder.

GOALS AT A GLANCE

- Develop a movie proposal.
- Evaluate special effects in a movie.

NATURAL DISASTERS

A building rips apart when struck by lightning, a battered car floats down the main street in a torrential flood, tractors fall from the skies during a spectacular tornado. These are just a few of the many breathtaking set pieces conjured up by special effects experts to show the destructive power of the world's natural disasters. Miniature models, full-scale explosions, and matte paintings have all been used in films to portray the effects of violent storms, destructive earthquakes, and erupting volcanoes. For a minor effect, wind machines and rain heads are employed. For extreme effect, recent films such as *Twister* (1996) and *Dante's Peak* (1997) have used computer-generated images (CGI) to visualize the dark side of nature in all its terrifying glory.

TERRIFYING TORNADOES

Tornadoes have been made for films in various mechanical ways, including the use of fog

machines. But for the film *Twister* (1996), the latest in computer-generated technology brought the power of the dark



An image from *Twister*.

side of nature to the screen. Using a combination of real weather footage shot in Tornado Alley, Texas, and some revolutionary CGI, the film captures the terror of such high winds. The digital twisters were added to real footage, filmed months in advance, of actors running for cover.

FLOODED

Filming the action scenes in huge water tanks for the disaster film *Hard Rain* (1998) was a soggy business. All the filming equipment on set, from the boom microphones to the camera

Up to their necks in water on the set of *Hard Rain*.

cranes, had to be covered in plastic to prevent damage from the large quantities of water used. In turn, the actors were playing their roles up to their necks in water, and special safety teams were kept on standby to look after them.

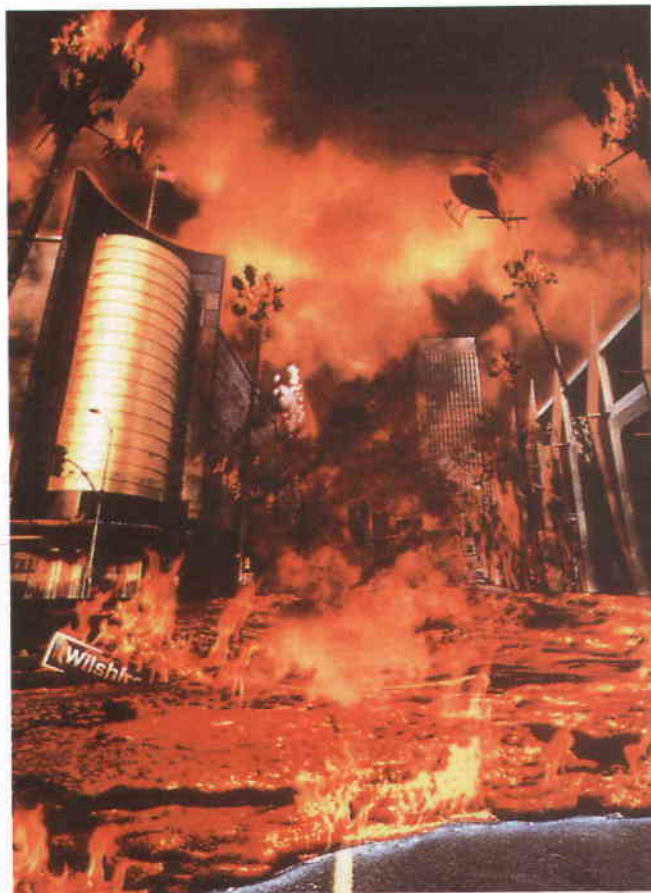


IN THE HOT SPOT

Los Angeles, California, is one of the warmest climates in the United States, but in the film *Volcano* (1997), the temperature soars through the roof! An underground volcano engulfs the city in lava, turning it into a molten mass.

Los Angeles streets awash in lava in *Volcano*.

Using both miniature models and full-scale buildings, the crew filmed the destruction of Los Angeles streets, later adding huge lava rivers with the aid of digital technology.



CREATING A STORM AT SEA

Filming disaster scenes on location is a complicated affair. For the climax to the movie *The Mosquito Coast* (1986), Harrison Ford and his screen family have to face a destructive monsoon storm as they float downriver on a makeshift raft. Even though the seas were calm, the special effects team created a

Finished scene from *The Mosquito Coast*. Harrison Ford wrestles with the raft in turbulent waters.



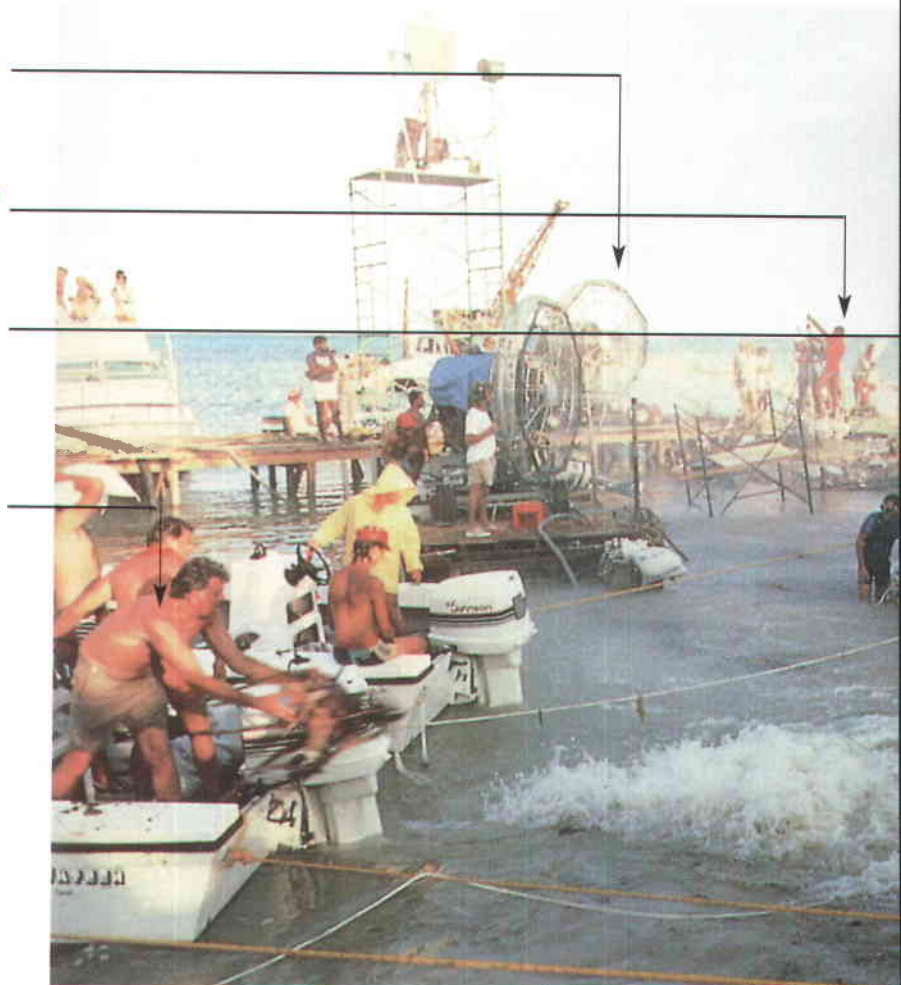
chaotic scene in stormy waters. They filmed with waterproofed equipment and wore waterproof or diving suits.

Huge wind machines are used.

Waterproofed cameras capture close-ups.

The sound technician has to get close to the actors.

Film crew revs boat's engine to create turbulence in the water.





FRIGHTENING LIGHTNING

Lightning is virtually impossible to capture on a film shoot. Instead, filmmakers have learned

to rely on storm effects generated on the computer.

Forked lightning can be created and manipulated on screen, and the accompanying thunderclaps reproduced in a sound studio. Movies such as *Ghostbusters* (1984), *Jurassic Park* (1993), and *Cape Fear* (1991) have used computer technology to good effect, producing spectacular and unforgettable storms on screen.

CGI elements let rip in *Ghostbusters*. Computerized lightning is combined with real film footage.



On the set of
The Mosquito Coast.

NOT SO NATURAL DISASTERS

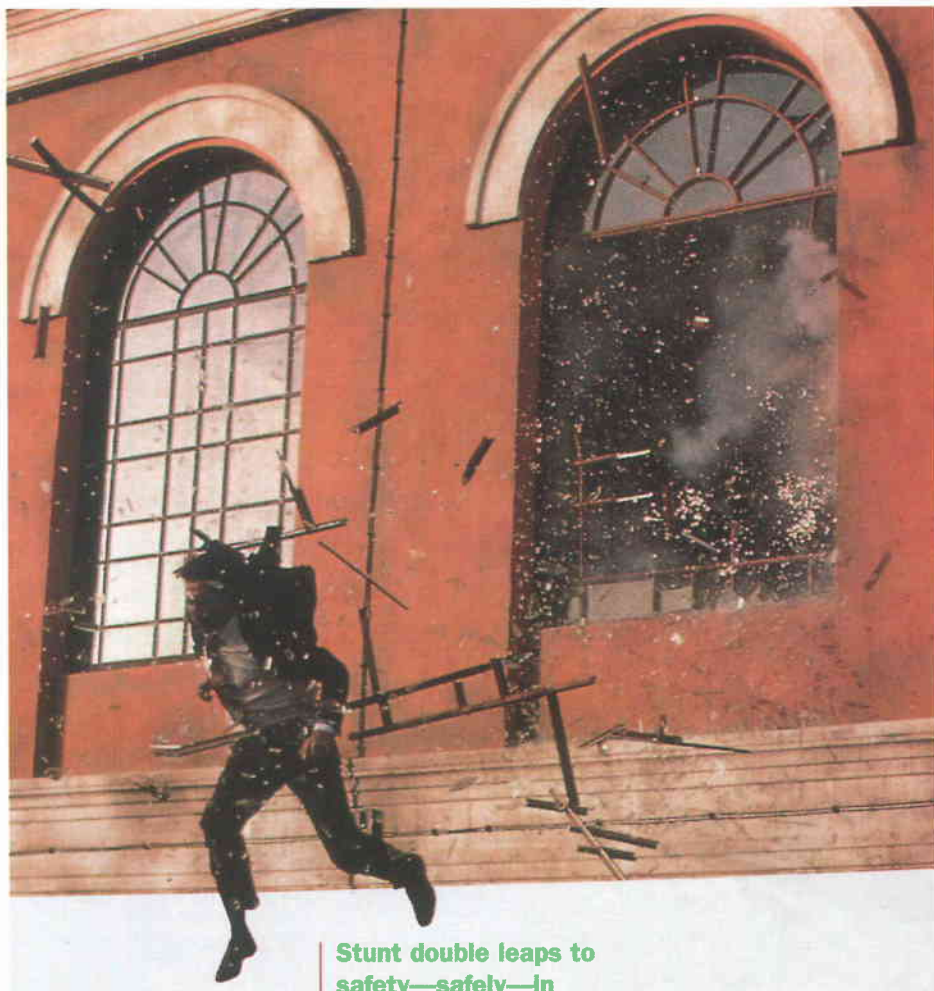
CRUISING OUT OF CONTROL

Big-budget explosions do not always have to be undertaken with huge sets, expensive cars, and detailed preparation. For the film *Speed 2: Cruise Control* (1997), a luxury boat sails head-on into a tourist resort causing

Attention to detail by the modelmaker makes this scene very convincing.

widespread destruction and chaos. The filmmakers decided to use a miniature model for the climactic scene, making sure that the hotels, beach houses, and luxury boat looked completely lifelike. Tiny explosives were inserted into the models.





LEAP OF FAITH

The fictional hero James Bond must always be prepared to escape disaster by jumping through a window or falling off a charging tank. In *Goldeneye* (1995), Agent 007 leaps from a huge glass window to escape his killers. The stunt was performed by Pierce Brosnan's stunt double, who

Stunt double leaps to safety—safely—in *Goldeneye*.

was outfitted in protective clothing and padding. The glass he falls through is made of sugar glass, which will not cut him. There is a soft mattress out of shot to break his fall, and the jump is timed to give the camera crew the best angles. As always with stunts, the action is meticulously planned and tested in advance.

SPECIAL EFFECTS GLOSSARY

Camera trickery: a way of creating special effects by using a variety of lenses to distort the picture.

CGI (computer-generated images): images created by a computer that take the place of real scenery or events.

Digital technology: advanced technology involving computers.

Film footage: an amount of film made for showing.

Matte paintings: background paintings used to create a setting.

Miniature models: small scenes of a movie landscape built when a film cannot take place on location.

Rain head: a device used to create rain.

Sound studio: the place where sophisticated sound effects are developed.

Stunt double: a person specially trained to perform acts that might be too difficult or dangerous for the actors.

Wind machine: a machine used within a studio to create violent weather.

1. RESPONDING TO THE ARTICLE

- a. What are some of the special effects movie producers use to re-create disasters? What was the most surprising special effect you learned about?
- b. Why are computers so important in creating convincing special effects?
- c. Why do you think people are so fascinated by disasters that they spend millions of dollars making and watching movies about them?

2. LANGUAGE CONVENTIONS EXPRESSIVE ADJECTIVES

Reread the first paragraph of the “Natural Disasters” section and find five adjectives that you think are especially expressive. Why do you think Jake Hamilton uses so many adjectives in this passage, and throughout the whole piece? Is his use of adjectives appropriate and effective? Why?

Create a list of twenty expressive adjectives—ten from “Canned Catastrophes” and ten of your own. Add to your list when you encounter other strong adjectives. You can use your list to help you with your own writing.

3. MEDIA MOVIE PROPOSAL

Create a proposal for a thrilling new disaster movie. As you write, imagine that you are trying to convince a movie producer to make a film based on your idea.

Your proposal should

- describe, in an exciting way, the time and place of the disaster
- provide an exciting story line
- describe the main characters who undergo the experience (and list actors to play those parts)
- contain expressive adjectives to convey the terrifying effect of the disaster

PEER ASSESSMENT: Exchange your movie proposal with a partner. Give each other helpful feedback. Would a producer be convinced that your story line would make a good movie? Would the producer be interested in your characters? impressed by your descriptive writing? You should also explain why your film would be popular.

4. MEDIA UNDERSTAND SPECIAL EFFECTS

Watch a favourite disaster movie, or a new release you would like to see. Pay attention to the special effects. Can you figure out how they were done? You may want to focus on one or two scenes in particular. Using the information provided in “Canned Catastrophes,” determine how the scenes might have been created. Were you impressed by the scenes? Why or why not? Report your findings to the class.

THE FOREST FIRE

POEM BY
CHARLES G.D. ROBERTS

The night was grim and still with dread;
No star shone down from heaven's dome;
The ancient forest closed around
The settler's lonely home.

There came a glare that lit the north;
There came a wind that roused the night;
But child and father slumbered on,
Nor felt the growing light.

There came a noise of flying feet,
With many a strange and dreadful cry;
And sharp flames crept and leapt along
The red verge of the sky.

There came a deep and gathering roar.
The father raised his anxious head;
He saw the light, like a dawn of blood,
That streamed across his bed.

GOALS AT A GLANCE

- Create a radio news report.
- Analyse ballad form.

It lit the old clock on the wall,
It lit the room with splendour wild,
It lit the fair and tumbled hair
Of the still sleeping child;

And zigzag fence, and rude log barn,
And chip-strewn yard, and cabin grey,
Glowed crimson in the shuddering glare
Of that untimely day.

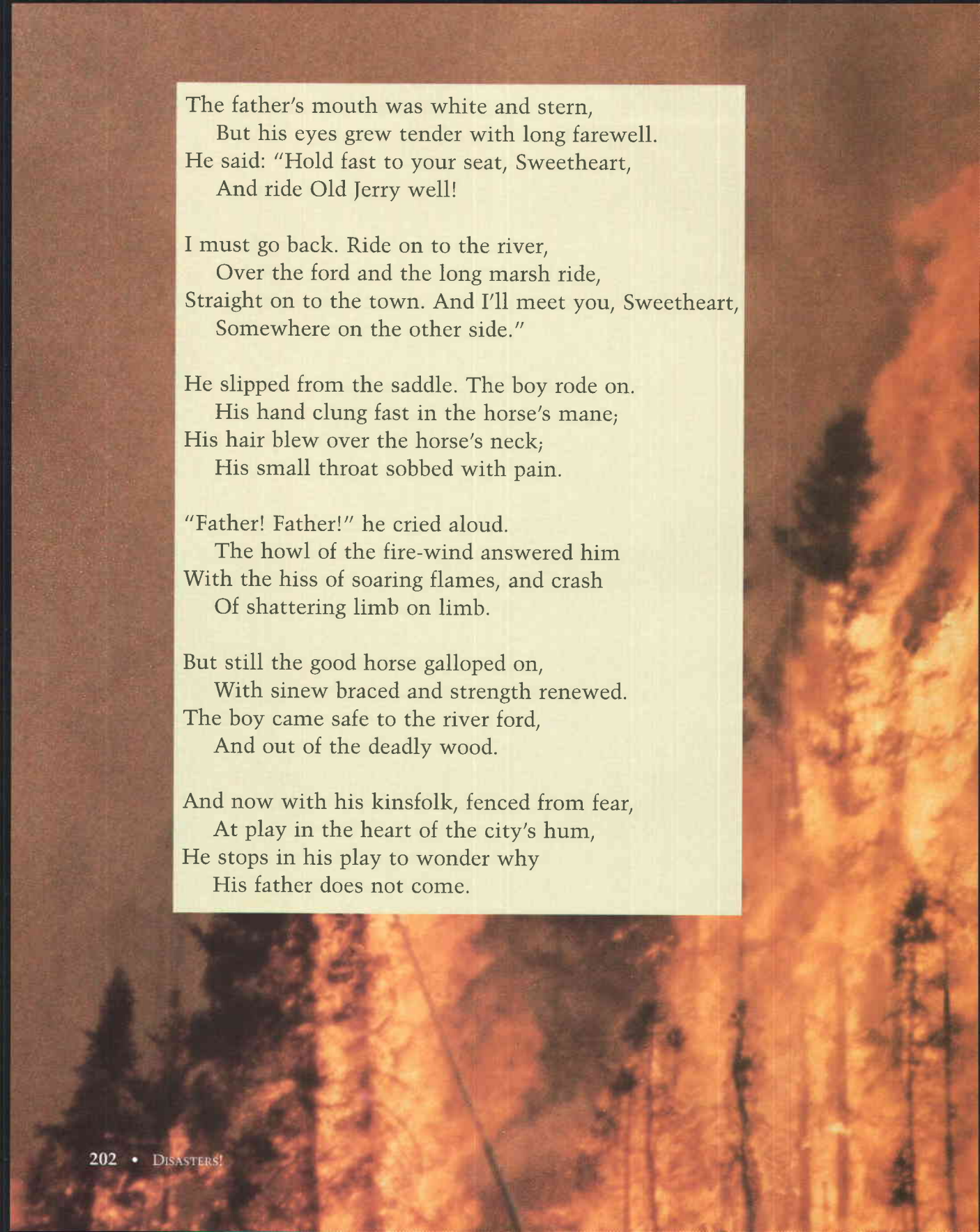
The boy was hurried from his sleep;
The horse was hurried from his stall;
Up from the pasture clearing came
The cattle's frightened call.

The boy was snatched to the saddle-bow.
Wildly, wildly, the father rode.
Behind him swooped the hordes of flame
And harried their abode.

The scorching heat was at their heels;
The huge roar hounded them in their flight;
Red smoke and many a flying brand
Flew o'er them through the night.

And past them fled the wildwood forms—
Far-striding moose, and leaping deer,
And bounding panther, and coursing wolf,
Terrible-eyed with fear.

And closer drew the fiery death,
Madly, madly, the father rode;
The horse began to heave and fail
Beneath the double load.



The father's mouth was white and stern,
But his eyes grew tender with long farewell.
He said: "Hold fast to your seat, Sweetheart,
And ride Old Jerry well!

I must go back. Ride on to the river,
Over the ford and the long marsh ride,
Straight on to the town. And I'll meet you, Sweetheart,
Somewhere on the other side."

He slipped from the saddle. The boy rode on.
His hand clung fast in the horse's mane;
His hair blew over the horse's neck;
His small throat sobbed with pain.

"Father! Father!" he cried aloud.
The howl of the fire-wind answered him
With the hiss of soaring flames, and crash
Of shattering limb on limb.

But still the good horse galloped on,
With sinew braced and strength renewed.
The boy came safe to the river ford,
And out of the deadly wood.


And now with his kinsfolk, fenced from fear,
At play in the heart of the city's hum,
He stops in his play to wonder why
His father does not come.

1. RESPONDING TO THE POEM

- a. What are some of the frightening events caused by the forest fire in the poem? Do you think the poet does a good job of describing them? Why or why not?
- b. Why do you think the father sent his son on alone to escape from the forest fire? How do you feel about his decision?

STRATEGIES

2. MEDIA RECORD A RADIO NEWS REPORT



Assume that you are preparing a radio news report about a forest fire blazing near your community. Radio news reports are much shorter than newspaper reports. The time limit is about ten seconds on air, which is about eight lines of printed script. Here are some pointers:

- Your report should cover all the five Ws: *who, what, where, when, why*.
- The first sentence should grab the listeners' interest.
- Listen to some radio news reports to get an idea of how they sound.
- Tape record your report for presentation to the class, remembering to read slowly and clearly.

SELF-ASSESSMENT: Did you include all the important details? Did your audience understand your report? Did the audience ask any questions that could have been answered in the report but were not?

3. POET'S CRAFT BALLAD

"The Forest Fire" is a **ballad**, one of the traditional forms of poetry. Read the first two stanzas of the poem aloud to get a sense of the *rhythm*. Rhythm is the arrangement of beats in a line of poetry, created by the accented and unaccented syllables in a word. In each stanza, which lines rhyme?

With a partner, choose a sequence of four stanzas and prepare an oral reading that captures the spirit of the lines. For an extra challenge, add one extra stanza of your own. Your stanza should follow the same pattern of rhythm and rhyme, and should fit into the story at that point.

A **ballad** is a narrative poem that tells an exciting story in a series of vivid pictures. The stanzas are usually four lines each with a regular pattern of rhythm and rhyme.

*Music can't overcome
a major
disaster.
But it can
sometimes
help the
victims
cope.*

Ballad of Springhill

SONG BY EWAN MACCOLL AND PEGGY SEEGER



-
2. In the town of Springhill, you don't sleep easy;
Often the earth will tremble and roll.
When the earth is restless, miners die;
Bone and blood is the price of coal,
Bone and blood is the price of coal.

GOALS AT A GLANCE

- Locate and present background information.
- Plan a music video.

3. In the town of Springhill, Nova Scotia,
Late in the year of fifty-eight,
Day still comes and the sun still shines
But it's dark as the grave in the Cumberland Mine,
Dark as the grave in the Cumberland Mine.
4. Down at the coal face, miners working,
Rattle of the belt, and the cutter's blade.
Rumble of rock and the walls close round;
The living and the dead men two miles down,
Living and the dead men two miles down.
5. Twelve men lay two miles from the pitshaft,
Twelve men lay in the dark and sang.
Long hot days in a miner's tomb,
It was three feet high and a hundred long,
Three feet high and a hundred long.
6. Three days passed and the lamps gave out,
And Caleb Rushton, he up and said,
"There's no more water nor light nor bread,
So we'll live on songs and hope instead,
We'll live on songs and hope instead."
7. Listen for the shouts of the bareface miners,
Listen through the rubble for a rescue team—
Six hundred feet of coal and slag,
Hope imprisoned in a three-foot seam,
Hope imprisoned in a three-foot seam.
8. Eight days passed and some were rescued,
Leaving the dead to lie alone.
Through all their lives they dug a grave,
Two miles of earth for a marking stone,
Two miles of earth for a marking stone.

SPRINGHILL MINER

HERITAGE MINUTE TRANSCRIPT

by *Patrick Watson*

Opening shot shows a stocky, generous-looking man speaking to the camera.

On-Screen Caption: Springhill, Nova Scotia

Man:

Nine of us were trapped together in the mine, after the "Bump." We lay by a pipe to breathe. My leg was broken. Percy was dying beside me. (He shakes his head as if to say it was clearly hopeless.)

But I said, "Come on boys, The Lord is watching for us." And I started singing. Then we all sang.

Eight and a half days. No food. Even drank our own—you know. And I just *happened* to shout into that pipe when the draegermen* were passing by.

Some good folks in the United States gave us survivors a free holiday in the South. Said I couldn't stay with the others cause of my colour. The boys were gonna refuse. I said, "No, we'll all have our holiday, then we'll be together again." And we were.

Seventy-four died in that bump. But that was life around the Springhill Mines. Closed now. So much death. But my! Didn't we sing those hymns. *Together*.

On-Screen Caption:

A Part of Our Heritage
Maurice Ruddick 1913-1988

* **draegermen:** coal miners trained in underground rescue work.



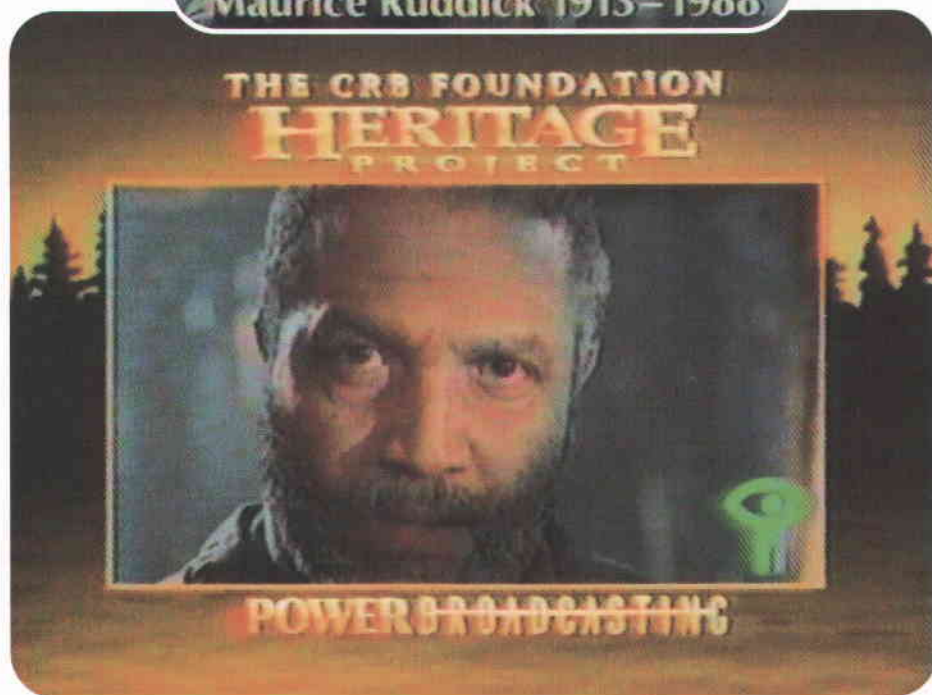
A Part of our Heritage



Springhill, Nova Scotia



Maurice Ruddick 1913-1988



1. RESPONDING TO THE SONG AND SCRIPT

- a. Combining information from both the song and the script, explain to a partner what you think happened to the men in the Cumberland mine.
- b. According to the song, who is the hero of the Springhill Disaster? According to the Heritage Minute, who is the hero? What are some possible reasons why the names are different?
- c. Compare the two accounts of the Springhill Disaster, considering subject matter, purpose, and mood. In point form, note the similarities and differences.

2. RESEARCHING LOCATE BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Working with a small group, create a list of questions you have about the Springhill Disaster—questions that aren't answered by the song or script. Together, use your research skills to find the answers to your questions. Present your findings in the form of a page of background information that would help a reader have a better appreciation of the song and script.

3. MEDIA PLAN A MUSIC VIDEO



What would a music video of “Ballad of Springhill” look like? In a small group, make a plan for the video. Your plan should contain a description of one or two images you would use for each stanza of the song. You might create illustrations to show what some or all of the images would look like. Join with another group and compare your plans. What are the similarities and differences between them?

SELF-ASSESSMENT: After your discussion with the other group, reconsider the images you chose for your video. Would the images help the viewer understand the song? Do they reflect the meaning and the mood of the lyrics?

*When disasters strike, we count on the news media
to keep us informed.*

TUNING *in to the* NEWS

NEWSCAST FROM CTV NEWS WITH LLOYD ROBERTSON

Opening Shot of Newscaster Sandie Rinaldo.

Sandie Rinaldo: Good evening. Many Canadians were teased with a taste of spring this weekend as the mercury rose in most parts of the country. But in Québec the sun's warm rays had a darker side. As temperatures shot up from zero to almost twenty degrees, water levels rose and rivers spilled their banks, forcing evacuations in the southern part of the province. The worst hit areas are near the Chaudière River south of Québec City, and along the Châteauguay River near Montréal. That's where CTV's Rosemary Thompson was today and she files this report.

Cut to Rosemary Thompson.

Rosemary Thompson (reporter): Flooding swept through the Châteauguay Valley leaving 500 homes under water.

Pull back camera to include unidentified man.

Unidentified Man: In some areas it looks like a big lake.

Cut to Rosemary Thompson.

Thompson: Farmers struggled to get livestock to higher ground.

Pull back camera to include Bill Bryson.

GOALS AT A GLANCE

- Scan text to locate specific information.
- Script and present a TV newscast.

Bill Bryson (farmer): I haven't had any sleep for twenty-four hours. One more day of this and we're going to have water in the barn, yeah. The local firefighters tell us it's rising two and a half centimetres an hour.

Close-up of Rosemary Thompson.

Thompson: Getting around isn't easy. This is the second time this season the Maloche family was forced to leave their home. In January it was the ice storm, now a surprise spring thaw. Our trees were damaged by the ice storm, he says, now this. We've had it. When the power went out in January, everyone wanted hydro crews to rescue them. Now this hydro truck needs rescuing. Helicopters are going into areas cut off by the flood water to airlift the stranded. One hundred people have left their homes. Three highways are closed. Now you've got a 4x4.

Cut to unidentified man.

Unidentified Man: Yeah. I would have continued but it's just that you can't tell where the road is or not, you know.

Close-up of Rosemary Thompson.

Thompson: This region floods every year, but never like this. In some places the river is three metres higher than usual. Last weekend there was a huge snow storm. Thirty centimetres of snow covered this field. In the space of forty-eight hours it melted. And there's rain in the forecast for Monday and Tuesday.

Cut to Jean Beaudette.

Jean Beaudette: We can't say that there won't be any problems. We cross our fingers.

Cut to Thompson.

Thompson: Hoping for a calmer passage to spring. Rosemary Thompson, CTV news, Ste.-Martine, Québec.

1. RESPONDING TO THE NEWSCAST

a. This newscast reports on a flood using the five Ws of reporting.

Find answers to the following questions:

- Where did the flood take place?
- When did it happen?
- Who was affected by the flooding?
- What did people do?
- Why was the flood caused?

b. What other questions does the article answer? What other questions do you think it should have answered?

STRATEGIES

2. MEDIA TV NEWSCASTS

In a small group, look at “Tuning in to the News” and list the characteristics of a typical TV newscast. How are TV newscasts different from newspaper articles or radio newscasts? How are they the same?

With your group, prepare a script for a TV newscast of a disaster. Your script should

- contain all the essential information about the disaster
- indicate who is speaking the lines
- briefly describe the camera shots

To enhance your newscast, create drawings of the physical damage caused by the disaster. Present your newscast to the class, with different group members taking the roles of the announcer, reporter, eyewitnesses, and so on.

Incorporate your drawings into the newscast.

SELF-ASSESSMENT: Did your newscast answer all the questions that viewers might have? Did you help your audience understand the full impact of the disaster?

When John Isaac travels to war zones with his camera, he knows that danger is always part of the job.

Photojournalist:

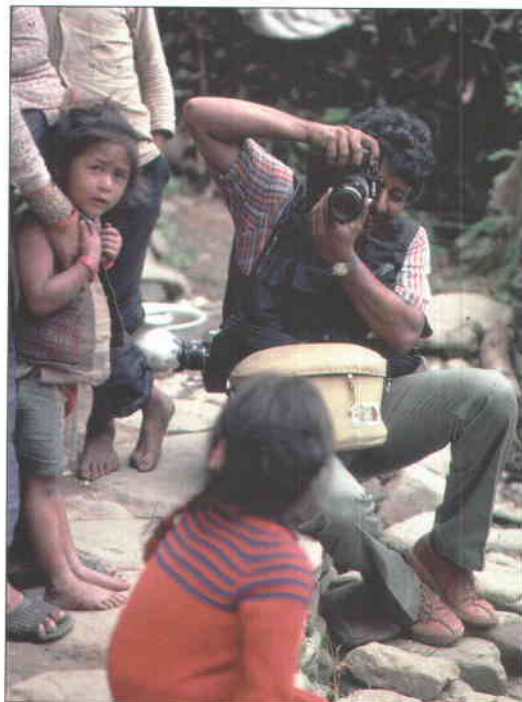
In the Middle of Disaster

Profile by Keith Elliot Greenberg

As a photojournalist, John Isaac often finds himself in danger. In disaster zones around the world, he records the effects of war on the lives of ordinary people.

John—who lives close to UN world headquarters in New York City—didn't grow up dreaming of taking pictures of war scenes. He was raised in the city of Madras, in India, and moved to New York in 1968. After applying for a number of jobs, he became a UN messenger. Meanwhile, he spent his spare time taking pictures—a hobby he had loved since childhood.

When the UN had a photography contest for employees, he entered a photo he had taken in India. John not only won first prize, but also a job in the UN's photography department.



John takes many chances as he tries to photograph the effects of war.

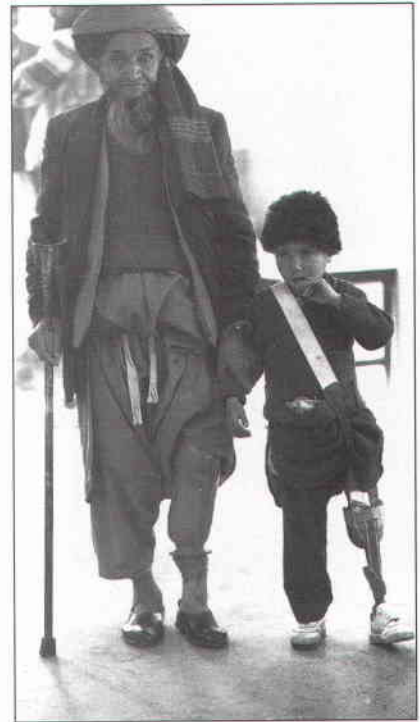
GOALS AT A GLANCE

- Evaluate photographs.
- Create a photo report.

For several years, he worked at UN headquarters. There, he took pictures of the General Assembly—the place where United Nations representatives from around the world debate issues and vote on proposals.

In 1968, John was invited to accompany a UN mission to Lebanon in the Middle East. Israel had invaded the country and now UN forces were trying to supervise a peaceful withdrawal. Because UN soldiers were trying to calm the situation, they were known as “peacekeepers.”

A man and boy support each other as they learn to walk with artificial limbs in Afghanistan.



John shown with Palestinian refugees.





John knew very little about the circumstances in Lebanon. "I didn't even realize I was going to a war," he says. "I was just happy to be flying to another country on a big assignment."

One of his first tasks was travelling with UN diplomats who were paying a visit to Yasser Arafat, head of the Palestinian Liberation Organization, or PLO. Arafat has many enemies, and he didn't want people to know the location of his hideout in Lebanon's capital of Beirut. John was blindfolded, so he wouldn't know where he was being taken. When he arrived, he immediately put his camera to his eye and started snapping.

A Nepali girl poses for the camera.

"It was my first big assignment, and I was really excited," he explains. "We were on a block of apartment buildings. There were about 150 windows on the block, and every one of them was stacked with sandbags, with machine guns pointing out. Nobody wanted me to show where Arafat was staying."

On the same trip, John had his first brush with death. As he drove down a street, a large rocket-propelled grenade shot in front of him. It blew a hole in a wall and blasted through a building.

"I'm not embarrassed to tell you that it was scary," John admits. "Every time something like this happens, it scares me. But I've always felt like I had a shield around me. Other war photographers have told me the same thing. It's like a guardian angel watching out for you."



John's camera captures the sunset on a beach in India.



The next year, John found himself in Cambodia in Southeast Asia. Vietnam had invaded the country, and over forty thousand people were fleeing. John took a touching photograph of an elderly woman who'd left everything behind as she escaped to Thailand. The UN released the picture and several major magazines printed it.

One day, John received a telephone call from a woman in California. She'd seen the photo of the old lady, and recognized her. It was her grandmother, but they'd lost touch five years before. With John's help, the family was united again.

"That was one of my happiest moments," he says. "I felt that by being there and taking that picture, I helped an entire family." ♦

John's moving portrait of an elderly Cambodian refugee and child.



1. RESPONDING TO THE PROFILE

- a. Why do you think John Isaac likes and continues to do such a dangerous job?
- b. Discuss why a war zone can be considered a disaster area. Refer to the text and John's photos. What effects does war have on the lives of ordinary people?
- c. If you were a photojournalist and you could go anywhere in the world to do a story, where would you go? Explain your choice to a partner.

2. MEDIA EVALUATE PHOTOGRAPHS

With a few of your classmates, decide which of John Isaac's photos is the best in each of these categories:

- most dramatic
- most informative
- most moving (emotional)

For each choice, write a brief description of why the photo is effective. Do you think it's true that people remember certain photos longer than they remember words they've read? Why do you think this might be so? How do photos influence our view of people and places in the news? Discuss the questions as a group, and then summarize your ideas for the class.

3. MEDIA CREATE A PHOTO REPORT

Working independently or with a partner, choose an event to cover as a photojournalist. You could bring a camera to a school field day, a holiday parade, or another local event. Take pictures from several viewpoints: wide angle shots to get the whole scene, shots from high and low angles, and close-ups to capture interesting details. Make sure to show people's faces reacting to the event. Select a variety of your best photos and arrange them in logical order to create your photo report. Add captions that will help viewers understand the five Ws: *who*, *what*, *where*, *when* and *why*.

SELF-ASSESSMENT: Do your photos show what you hoped they would? Is your photo report interesting and complete? Do the captions help the photos tell their story?

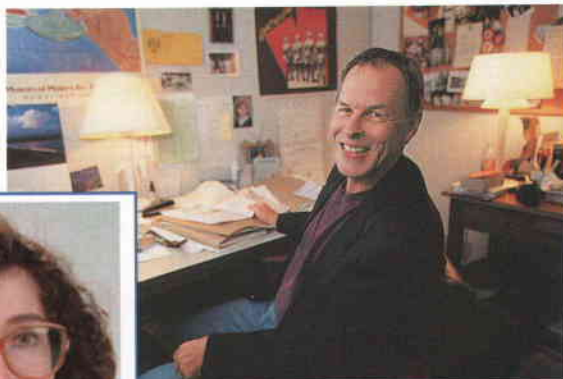
4. RESEARCHING CAREERS IN JOURNALISM

From reading about John Isaac, you have learned that photojournalism is a rewarding, but sometimes dangerous career. Some other careers in journalism include news reader, sports reporter, crime reporter, news reporter, and travel writer.

What other journalistic careers are there? Remember that journalists work in newspapers, magazines, radio, and TV. Which job would you prefer? Explain why.

Choose one of the careers to research. Investigate what skills, education, and experience you would need. Determine the salary earned, the working hours, travel requirements, and anything else you would like to know. Write up your findings on a large card, and pin it to a class Job Board.

Linden MacIntyre, broadcast journalist on the CBC's popular program *the fifth estate*.




Olivia Ward is a journalist with the *Toronto Star*.



Kevin Newman is a popular TV journalist.

HOW TO WRITE A NEWSPAPER ARTICLE

A stylized illustration of a person with dark hair, wearing a yellow and blue jacket, sitting and reading a newspaper. The person is shown in profile, facing left. The newspaper is held open, and the person's hands are visible. The background behind the person is a blue and yellow sunburst pattern.

Goals at a Glance

- Create a newspaper article.
- Use the inverted pyramid structure.

Newspaper articles have to provide accurate information, and they also have to be interesting to read. Following a few suggestions can help give professional flair to the newspaper article you write.

Find and Learn the Story

To write a good newspaper article, the first thing you need is an interesting story. Consider telling about a current event in your school, city, or province. Once you have decided on the topic, the next thing to do is to find good sources of information about it. If your story covers a local event, try to interview those who are involved. Take notes as you collect the information.

Analyse the Information

Now that you have the information, sort through it to find the answers to the five Ws—*who, what, where, when, and why.*

Newspaper articles should be *objective*, which means they should give facts, not opinions. Remember, it's your job as a journalist to find answers for the questions your readers will have.

Write the Article

Your news article should begin with a *lead*—an introductory paragraph that tells the most important details about the news story. It answers the five Ws. Next comes the *body* of the article. This part is where you develop or explain the main facts given in the lead. The details in a newspaper article are given in what is called the *inverted pyramid* (right) structure. The most important and interesting information comes first in the article since most people read only the first parts of it. Less important details come at the end. Read the following newspaper article to help you understand the inverted pyramid structure.

PROCESS

Nine Killed in New Year Tragedy

BY NUNAVIK.NET

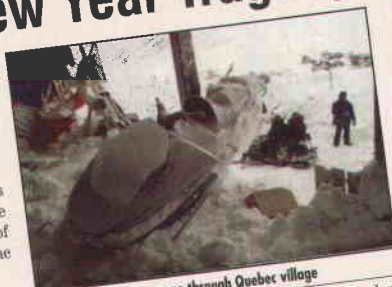
KANGIKSUALUJUAQ, QUÉBEC / JAN. 2 / 99

A deadly avalanche swept through the northern Québec village of Kangiksualujuaq in the early morning hours of New Year's Day. It has left at least nine people dead.

About 500 hundred people were in the town's gymnasium, celebrating New Year's Eve, when the avalanche hit. The avalanche smashed down one of the walls, leaving one to three metres of snow in the gymnasium.

Most people were able to get out by themselves. But the avalanche killed nine and injured about twenty-five people. Some of the injured are reported to be in serious condition. Fifteen of them will be transported to hospitals in Montréal and Québec City for treatment.

The village has two nurses and one doctor. Some of the residents have medical training, but more qualified personnel are needed. A small plane



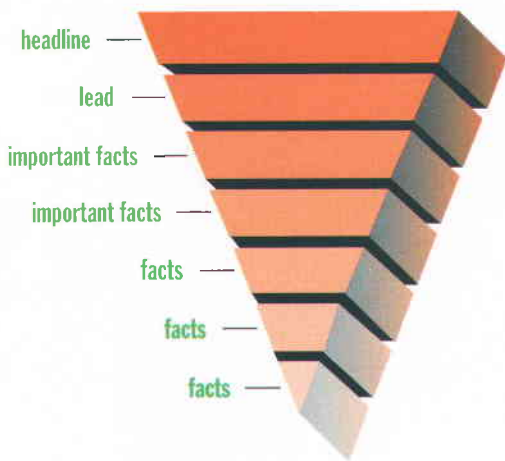
Deadly avalanche sweeps through Québec village

with supplies and medical personnel landed the day of the tragedy, and two other aircraft carrying rescuers and search dogs are on their way. A blizzard has made getting other aid into the community difficult.

Kangiksualujuaq is an Inuit village of about 700 inhabitants, roughly 1500 km north of Montréal.

Include a Byline and Placeline

The byline tells who wrote the article, and the placeline tells where the story takes place. These are written underneath the headline in a smaller font.



Write a Headline

The headline is what will attract the reader's attention, so it needs to be written as a large, bold-print title. A clever headline will draw more readers to your article.

Photographs and Captions

If possible, include a photo, or perhaps a drawing, to attract attention, and to help tell your story at a glance. The *caption*, usually a short sentence, explains the photograph.

Self-Assessment

Review your article, using the checklist below:

- Is my headline eye-catching?
- Does my lead include the answers to the five Ws?
- Does the body of my article adequately develop the details of the story?
- Is the information arranged in the inverted pyramid structure?
- Are any important facts or details missing?
- Is my article objective? Does it report the events fairly without stressing one opinion?

*Gwaii Haanas**

P o e m b y J e n n y N e l s o n
P a i n t i n g b y E m i l y C a r r

When I grow up, my father says,
the Big Trees will be gone.

I want to see the trees
my father's seen.

I want to travel on the water
Watch the otter
slide into the sea.

I want to see how small I am
beside old Chini Cedar Tree.

I want to see the things
Grandfather's seen.

I want to know the forest
through my toes, as my foot goes,
on moss, on beach, on rock,
on rotting wood.

I want to feel the forest
with my eyes and hands and nose,
wet clothes.

Sounds of tree-bird,
sounds of silence,
smell of mushroom, smell of
cedar,
following the creeks that run
red and quiet.

Water falls.
The forest calls.

I have a need
to see the Trees.
My father's seen.
Leave some for me.

GOALS AT A GLANCE

- Compare ideas suggested by a poem and a painting.
- Make connection between literature and personal experience.



Plumed Firs

RESPONDING TO THE POEM AND PAINTING

- a. What is the speaker in this poem pleading for? What do you think has motivated this plea?
- b. In what ways are the poem and painting well suited to one another? Are there aspects of the poem that are not represented in the painting? If so, what are they?
- c. Are there natural environments in your local community or elsewhere in the world that you think may be gone when you grow up? Discuss how you feel about this.

***Gwaii Haanas**: the name for the South Moresby area in the Queen Charlotte Islands of British Columbia.

How much does it matter if the banana slug from Borneo is an endangered species? Not at all, if you ask Francine Scrounge.

Every Day Is Earth Day

**Play by
Steven Pricone**

CHARACTERS

Francine Scrounge

Her Employees

Michael

Lynette

Students

Michelle

Candice

Melissa

Dodo Bird

Martha, *passenger pigeon*

Banana Slug

Box Turtle

Old Francine

Four Cockroaches

Off-Stage Voice

SETTING: *Francine Scrounge's office, with large desk and chair centre. On it are vase with artificial flowers, stacks of paper, and intercom. Huge window behind desk on rear wall shows city skyline.*

AT RISE: *Standing with her back to audience, Francine Scrounge looks out through window. She turns and faces audience, leaning on desk, arms wide apart.*

GOALS AT A GLANCE

- Recognize media bias.
- Produce a play.

Francine (*Proudly*): It's like a dream—*my office, my building, my company*. When I think how I started out, making Air Jaguar sneakers out of endangered jungle cat hides—and now this! I'm powerful! (*Michael enters.*)

Michael (*Sheepishly*): Ms. Scrounge, tomorrow is Earth Day, and well...I promised my little boy Anthony that I'd take him on a hike in the woods and show him a day of appreciation for nature. May I...

Francine (*Interrupting; sharply*): Earth Day? Little boy? (*Angrily*) You listen to me, you little loser. You get paid a good salary to work here, don't you?

Michael (*Meekly*): Yes, ma'am.

Francine: Our business is to make this world a better place!

Michael: (*Ironically*): By manufacturing endangered sneakers, ivory toothpicks, and plastic containers for insecticides?

Francine (*Fiercely*): Be proud of it! (*Excitedly*) Michael, I'm working now on a deal with an auto maker to bring back leaded gasoline engines. Think of it—we'll make millions!

Michael: But we can't go back to leaded gas—it pollutes the air!

Francine (*Sarcastically*): Perhaps you didn't hear me, Michael. Millions! "Money Day" is what you should be celebrating! Every day is Money Day around here.

Michael: But...

Francine (*Intensely*): Don't forget, Michael. Play your cards right, and you and your little boy will never have to worry about money. (*Michael nods sadly and exits in defeat.*)

Lynette (*Entering*): Ms. Scrounge, your ten o'clock appointment is here. It's those school kids.

Francine (*Annoyed*): Oh. Well, send the little brats in. (*Lynette exits. Francine shakes head.*) Public relations. I hate it. (*Michele, Candice, and Melissa enter.*)



Candice: Thank you for letting us see you today, Ms. Scrounge. We know you're busy.

Francine (*Annoyed*): Well, of course I'm busy. What is it—some dumb school newspaper interview? Autographs? The secret of my success?

Michele: Actually, we understand you bought four hundred hectares in the rain forest, and your company is chopping it down to build a plantation. (*Pulls out long sheet of paper*) We have this petition.

Francine (*Ignoring Michele*): Oh! It's a beautiful sight! All those trees lying on their sides, clear, vacant land as far as the eye can see. It's part of my newest marketing brainstorm—cigarettes for dogs. It'll make millions!

Melissa: Ms. Scrounge, do you know how important those trees are to the Earth? To us?

Candice (*Pleading*): You can't destroy the rain forest!

Melissa: It's the home of endangered species, like the jaguar and the howler monkey.

Francine (*Who has been listening without interest*): Oh! That reminds me...(*Into intercom*) Lynette, make a note that I need a stuffed howler monkey to put next to my mounted condor. (*Girls look at each other in disbelief.*)

Michele (*Upset*): Ms. Scrounge, I'm appalled. As human beings we have a responsibility to all life forms on Earth. Especially endangered life forms.

Francine: No, you're wrong. We have a responsibility to ourselves. Whoever has the most toys wins. (*Sarcastically*) Well, this has been a rare pleasure. I'm sure your science teacher is very proud of you. Now, if you'll excuse me I have to return to the "real" world. The world where humans win.

Candice (*Passionately*): Humans don't have to win. We all can win!



Francine: What are you, a bumper sticker? Get out! All of you! I've lost my patience with you.

Candice: I'll leave this petition with your secretary.

Francine: You do that. *(As girls exit, Francine speaks into intercom.)* Lynette, these little do-gooders will be giving you a petition. Shred it! *(Girls look at each other in amazement, glare at Francine.)* Then call Brazil and buy four hundred hectares and have them put up a factory to manufacture spotted owl repellent. *(Disgusted, girls exit. Francine falls into chair, spins around gleefully.)* Power! I love it! *(Yawns)* It takes a lot out of a woman to run the planet with such gusto. I'm exhausted. *(Leans back in chair, putting her hands behind her head. Musing):* I wonder how panda fur oven mitts would sell...*(Closes eyes, goes to sleep)*

Off-Stage Voice: And with that, Francine Scrounge fell into a deep sleep. She didn't usually nap during business hours, but this

was a special day...a special nap...with a special dream. *(After a few moments, Dodo Bird enters.)*

Francine: What? Who? *(Stares at Dodo)* Who the dickens are you?

Dodo: I am the ghost of endangered animals past.

Francine (Amazed): Why, you're a dodo bird! You're extinct!

Dodo (Insulted): I beg your pardon! I do not stink.

Francine: No, no! *Extinct!* *(Peering more closely at Dodo)* What are you doing here?

Dodo: I am an apparition. This day you shall be visited by three apparitions who will show you the error of your ways. You have done wrong, Francine Scrounge.

Francine: Error of my ways? Done wrong? I think not, bird.

Dodo: You don't see that all life resonates as one. There is a web of life that links us all, a spirit...

Francine (Breezily): Listen, dodo, as I always say—and you may



quote me in the spirit world—
adapt or become extinct.

Dodo: As a human, the most highly evolved creature, you have a responsibility to the planet...a responsibility to use not only your considerable intelligence, but your common sense and compassion.

Francine: Hey, don't blame *me* for extinction. Extinction is the way of nature. Animals disappeared long before we humans appeared. It clears out the losers for us winners!

Dodo: But in this century even the "winners" are dying out. Extinction is at an all-time high.

Francine: So is the stock market!

Dodo (*In sombre tone*): Humans are messing things up. (*Points across stage*) Francine Scrounge, look at the past. (*Martha enters.*) This is Martha, the passenger pigeon.

Martha (*Opening wings wide*): I was once the most abundant bird in North America. We numbered in the billions.

Our nesting colonies measured thirty-three kilometres across. John Audubon reported once that we made the sky "black with birds" for three days straight. (*Drops wings*) Then in the mid-1800s, the humans chopped down our nesting sites and we were hunted, *slaughtered* by the millions for food...I was the very last bird of my kind. I was kept in the Cincinnati Zoo until I died in 1914—(*Ominously*) the last of my species, never to be seen again.

Francine (*Callously*): How much did they get for a barrel of birds back then?

Dodo (*Disgusted*): Is your heart a change purse?

Francine: Look, Martha bird, your story is really sad—especially the part about having to live in Cincinnati—but in case you haven't noticed, my life has not been affected one bit by your extinction. I can still sit by the pool on hot days and sip cool drinks.

Martha: In the last two hundred years, hundreds of species have



been erased from history just in North America alone—the Eastern elk, the Wisconsin cougar, the...

Francine (*Dismissively*): Yeah, yeah. I'm telling you guys, adapt or become extinct.

Dodo: The world is slowly being affected by the loss of plant and animal species, at a rate of hundreds per year. You just don't see it...yet! (*Dodo and Martha exit.*)

Francine (*As they exit*): Go! Good riddance! Who needs your guilt? I have a world to control. (*To herself*) Wow! This is some dream. I wonder if I could do a hostile takeover in my dreams? (*Goes to desk and presses intercom*) Lynette, get in touch with those two big companies and ah...the entire country of Italy. Tell them I'm offering sixteen dollars and seven lire as a takeover bid for a whole bunch of them.

Banana Slug (*Off-stage*): Francine Scrounge...this is the ghost of endangered animals present. You are greedy, selfish, and you cheat at games.

Francine (*Looking about; confused*): Who said that? (*Banana Slug enters.*)

Slug: I am the ghost of endangered animals present.

Francine: What on earth are you?

Slug: I'm a banana slug! Haven't you ever seen a banana slug?

Francine: Can't say that I have. You look like a skinny pickle.

Slug: You are the one in a pickle, Francine Scrounge. Over one hundred organisms are becoming extinct each year. And you care not.

Francine: Why should I?

Slug (*Philosophically*): Each life form is a note in the symphony of life. As each note disappears, the music is less beautiful. With each falling note it's more empty...until...silence.

Francine (*With an attitude*): So tell me, what's endangered? Is it the redheaded slithy tove from the jungles of Borneo? That's real significant.

Slug: Try the tiger!



Francine (*Genuinely surprised*):
The tiger? Tony the Tiger? Tigger?

Slug (*Nodding*): Only six thousand left. Poachers kill them and they're losing their habitats.

Francine: But there have always been tigers.

Slug: There were always passenger pigeons.

Francine: Who else is endangered?

Slug: The black rhino and giant panda number less than two thousand apiece. Unless drastic conservation measures are taken, they both can be gone in just five years.

Francine (*Wistfully*): You're making me remember all those animals I loved so as a little girl.

Slug: Like box turtles?

Francine (*Excited*): I had a box turtle! I named her Leona. I fed her worms and blackberries.

Slug: They're endangered, too.

Francine (*Shocked*): No!
(*Box Turtle enters.*)

Francine: Leona?

Turtle: No, sorry. My name is Ferdinand. My kind used to be so common. Now our habitats are shrinking and we're sold off into the slavery of being pets. We're all going, right before your eyes, Francine. Will you do nothing?

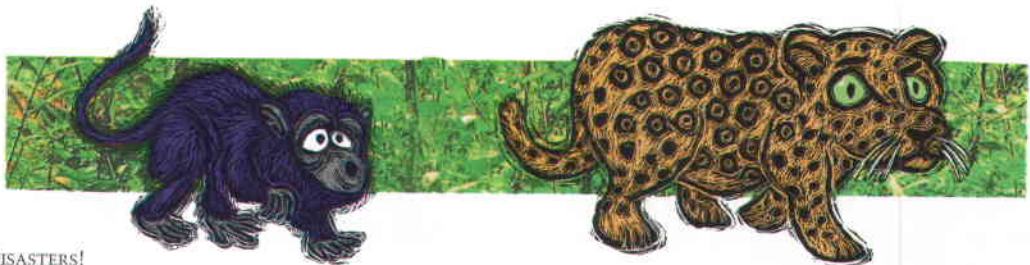
Francine (*Flatly*): I merge, I invest, I manufacture. I don't have time to think about...are you sure *tigers* are endangered?

Slug (*Nodding*): Along with the African grey parrot and the hippopotamus.

Francine (*Surprised*): The hippo!

Slug: Its teeth are being used as a substitute for elephant ivory.

Francine: Gosh, I have a bicycle made of ivory. It's giving me a little tinge of guilt, to see these animals, hear their stories. When I was a little girl I had a stuffed hippo. I slept with it, and...(*Snaps out of it*) Hey, wait a minute, slug. You know all about my childhood. You're telling me all this to make me feel guilty! How dare you invade my memories!



Slug (*Shrugging*): Be that as it may, they are still endangered—each one. More notes going...going...(*Slug and Turtle exit.*) going, until all you can do is whistle alone. (*Exits*)

Francine: What a downer! Dumb slug, ruining all my fun. How can I enjoy all my power, when... (*Crunching sound is heard*) Who's there? (*More crunching*) Who is that? (*1st Cockroach enters, crunching on celery stalk and reading from paper. Cockroaches are constantly crunching on something as they speak their lines throughout the rest of the play.*)

1st Cockroach: Is this the Scrounge Building, 17 Centre Street? I'm looking for a Francine Scrounge. (*Looks up*) Is that you?

Francine (*Haughtily*): Don't tell me. You're the ghost of endangered animals future. Well, I'm ready for you. That banana slug made me a little sentimental by tapping into my memories, but I'm ready for you, bug! You're not going to intimidate me! I'm

Homo sapiens, and I run things around here!

1st Cockroach (*Impatiently*): Sure, sure, whatever you say. (*Looks at watch*) Look, let's get on with this.

Francine (*On intercom*): Lynette, bring me a can of industrial-strength bug spray...Lynette? Lynette?

1st Cockroach: Save your voice. This is the future, remember? There've been some changes. (*He walks to window, beckons Francine.*) Come here. (*She goes to window.*) Remember that symphony the banana slug referred to? Well, look what you guys have done to it. (*Points out window*)

Francine (*Looking out*): It's a mess! Where are all the people?

1st Cockroach: You mean the *Homo sapiens*? Sorry, you've all been driven underground. You can't handle the air any more. The ozone layer is gone...lead is at a level of two percent.



(2nd, 3rd, and 4th Cockroaches enter during 1st Cockroach's speech. Francine turns toward them, with a start.) Yes, we have you to thank for that. (Cockroaches applaud, then look out window.)

2nd Cockroach (*Enchanted*): Isn't it beautiful?

3rd Cockroach: I love the air.

1st Cockroach (*To FRANCINE*): You guys are manufacturing your own air and water. Most species are gone. Plants are rare now, so you must also manufacture your food.

Francine (*With disdain*): And you cockroaches have taken over, I suppose?

1st Cockroach: You say that as if it were a bad thing.

2nd Cockroach: Listen, we *always* ran things.

3rd Cockroach: We were here before the dinosaurs.

4th Cockroach: Nice sort of creatures. Clean. Dominating without being boorish.

(*Shakes head*) A shame about that asteroid.

3rd Cockroach: And we'll be here long after the likes of you is gone.

2nd Cockroach (*Looking at his watch*): Which could be any time now.

Francine: And just *how* is it that you have survived?

3rd Cockroach: Oh, we don't ask for much. A little garbage here, a little decaying matter there. We've even adapted to eating plastic. (*Rubs stomach*) Yum! What I wouldn't give for an empty pop bottle right about now.

Francine: Plastic?

1st Cockroach: Sure. As we always say, "Adapt or become an appetizer." (*2nd Cockroach exits.*)

Francine (*Fearfully*): But what about me? What has become of me?

1st Cockroach: You? (*Checks paper*) Oh, you're still around.



Francine (*Relieved*): Thank goodness.

3rd Cockroach (*Pointing*): See? (*2nd Cockroach pushes in wheelchair in which Old Francine sits.*)

Francine (*Horrified*): Oh, no! That can't be me!

1st Cockroach (*Nodding*): But it is. Seems your illness was traced to environmental contamination, something to do with the lead content in the air.

3rd Cockroach: It's serious, but curable.

Francine (*Desperately*): Then cure me! Cure me!

Old Francine (*Hoarsely*): They can't. The cure would have come from a tropical plant that was never discovered.

Francine: Why not?

Old Francine: It grew in the tropical rain forests of the Amazon. One construction site destroyed the very last ones. It's gone now (*Sighs*) like so much else.

2nd Cockroach: Ironic, isn't it?

Francine (*Shaken*): But we humans are so smart, so powerful.

1st Cockroach: Oh, "power" doesn't last long, Francine.

Francine (*Moving away from window, meekly*): Does this have to be? Must this be our future?

1st Cockroach: The future is what you make it, sister. It's changing all the time. Everything you do *now* shapes it.

3rd Cockroach: So, do your thing. We don't care. We're not going anywhere. We're adapting masters.

1st Cockroach (*Checking watch*): Well, we're done here. I hope we brought a little ray of sunshine into your day. (*Cockroaches exit, pushing Old Francine off. Francine watches for a moment, then shakes head mournfully. She takes another disbelieving look out window,*



then sits down at desk. She stares out into audience and puts her head down on her hands and goes back to sleep. After a moment, Michael enters.)

Michael: Ms. Scrounge...(Notices her asleep) Oh! (Francine awakens with a start.)

Francine: Michael! Are you a ghost? I mean...

Michael: I'm sorry, I didn't know you were asleep.

Francine (Flustered): I wasn't. I was just resting my eyes. (Rubs eyes wearily) What is it, Michael?

Michael (Boldly): Well, this Earth Day deal with my little boy, it really means a lot to me—and to him. I know your feelings on it, but I'd like you to consider changing your mind. (Eagerly) I'll make it up to you. I'll work a holiday, a double shift, if you'd prefer—

Francine (Rushing to window and looking out; to herself): It's all still here. (Sighs in relief)

Michael (Quizzically): Ms. Scrounge? Is something wrong?

Francine: No, nothing, Michael. It's just—ah—the weather seems brighter than they forecasted today.

Michael: Um...so what about Earth Day, Ms. Scrounge?

Francine (Hesitating): I need to think about it, Michael. I'll get back to you if I...change my mind.

Michael: I'll be waiting, Ms. Scrounge. (Checking watch) But it is getting late.

Francine (Thoughtfully): Yes, I realize time may be running out. (Michael looks at her, confused, then exits. Francine remains with back to audience as curtain slowly closes.)



1. RESPONDING TO THE PLAY

- a. This play is a **parody** of the famous Charles Dickens story *A Christmas Carol*. Discuss with your class how understanding that story helps to explain Francine Scrounge's name, the appearance of endangered animals past, present, and future, and the role of Michael and his little boy, Anthony.
- b. Why does Francine Scrounge prefer to forget about Earth Day? What finally makes her more aware of the seriousness of environmental problems?
- c. What parts of this script did you find amusing? Do you think humour helps Steven Pricone get his message across to audiences? Were you convinced by his message? Explain.
- d. Do you think Francine's attitude toward the environment has changed by the end of the play? With a partner, discuss some positive things Francine could do if her attitude has changed and she wants to take responsibility for the environment.

A **parody** is a humorous imitation of serious writing.

2. MEDIA BIAS IN THE NEWS

In groups of three or four, check your local and national newspapers, listen to the radio news, and watch the news on TV for about a week. How many news items concern environmental issues? After each group presents its findings on this question, hold a class discussion. For items you read, heard, or saw, which side did the media take on the issue? Did you recognize any **bias** on the part of the media? Draw a conclusion from your findings.

Bias is an opinion that may interfere with a fair judgment on an event or situation.

3. LANGUAGE CONVENTIONS PARENTHESES

Steven Pricone uses parentheses () to provide directions to the actors and set designer in "Every Day Is Earth Day." Writers use parentheses for other purposes as well. Look through the selections in this book, and in other pieces of published writing, to discover some other examples of how parentheses are used. Create some sentences of your own that show the functions parentheses can perform. Make sure your sentences are punctuated properly.

4. ORAL COMMUNICATION PRODUCE A PLAY

With your classmates, prepare a dramatization of the play “Every Day Is Earth Day” using the following suggestions:

TIPS

- **Choose a Cast:** Select actors to play each part. Read the play together a few times, and discuss any lines you do not understand. Share your ideas for presenting the play, and appoint a director to keep notes of your decisions.
- **Rehearse Your Parts:** Learn your lines well by reading them aloud over and over. (This will take extra work if you decide to memorize them completely.) Pay careful attention to the stage directions (notes in italics and parentheses). They will help you interpret your character properly. Practise your lines often with other actors so that you learn which words come immediately before each of your lines—these are your cues.
- **Make Costumes and Find Props:** At least two people should be in charge of making costumes and finding props—furniture, books, telephones, and so on. The actors should begin practising with costumes and props as soon as possible.
- **Rehearse the Play:** With your director, decide where each actor should enter, stand, move, and exit. Your actions should be consistent from practice to practice, and your voices should be loud enough to be heard by the whole audience. Be careful to deliver your lines at the right time so that everyone stays on track.
- **Dress Rehearsal and Performance:** Have your classmates watch your final, fully costumed rehearsal to give you feedback about how you’re doing. Then polish your play and present it to your audience with confidence!

PEER ASSESSMENT: Ask for feedback from your audience. Could all the actors be heard? Were their facial expressions and gestures in character? Were the costumes and set funny? Did the production run smoothly? What could have been improved?

REFLECTING ON THE UNIT

SELF-ASSESSMENT: MEDIA

As you worked on the unit, what did you learn about

- analysing visual information?
- writing a newspaper article?
- special effects in movies?
- writing and presenting a TV news script?
- using technical terms?
- evaluating media bias?
- creating slogans?
- using the five Ws of journalism?
- preparing and conducting an interview?
- producing a play?

MEDIA ANALYSE MEDIA COVERAGE

Disasters get a lot of attention. Do you think this is a good or a bad thing? With a partner, make a list of the positive and negative aspects of the way disasters are covered in the media. Together, create a short opinion piece that summarizes your point of view about media coverage of disasters. Read your opinion piece aloud as part of a Speaker's Corner on this topic.

WORD CRAFT TECHNICAL TERMS

Review your illustrated glossary of technical terms. Research other technical terms that are related to the subjects of the unit, and add those terms and definitions to your glossary. Compare your glossary with one prepared by a classmate. Did you select the same terms? Are your definitions logical and easy to understand?

ORAL COMMUNICATION DEVELOP STRATEGIES

As a class, discuss the different types of disasters you learned about in this unit—natural events and those caused by humans. What causes these disasters? What can be done to prevent them? Create a list of five strategies for preventing and/or dealing with one particular kind of disaster.

HUMOUR

Ha

Ha

Ha

Ha



Why did the
chicken cross
the road

Comics



free!



"Laughter is the shortest distance between two people."
Victor Borge

