

Stories

Compiled by Rick Clements

This is a collection of stories that I have found. I found many of them on Scouting related discussions on different computer networks. I have used some of them at campfires and as part of Cub Scout ceremonies. - Rick Clements

INDIAN STORIES

WHY THE CHIPMUNK HAS BLACK STRIPES

Once upon a time, long ago, the animals had tribes and chiefs just like the people. Porcupine was the head chief of all the tribes because nothing could ever get near enough to hurt him.

One night, Porcupine sent out word calling all the animals together for a great council of the tribes. He had a very important matter for them to consider, he said. From far and wide, from treetops and holes in the ground, the animals came hurrying in answer to their chieftain's summons.

They built a great blazing council fire in the forest and seated themselves around in a big ring. Then Porcupine stood up to address them. His quills quivered and gleamed in the firelight, and for a minute or two, he did not speak. He looked very much worried indeed.

"I cannot decide," he said, finally. "I cannot decide whether or we shall have night or daylight all the time."

Well, that started a great commotion. Everyone had something different to say. Some wanted it daytime always and some wanted it night. They all talked at once, and they all talked very loud

so you could not hear what any of them were saying, except Bear. He rocked to and fro on his hind legs, trying to drown out the others by rumbling in a big deep voice, "Always night! Always night! Always night!"

A little chipmunk who had been sitting on the outskirts of the council became annoyed. Chipmunks hate to sit still for any time. "You can talk all you like," he shrilled out in his tiny squeaky voice. "You can talk all you like, but the light will come whether you want it or not. The light will come."

The other animals did not pay any attention to him but went on bawling and roaring and growling until they were hoarse. Chipmunk danced with excitement on the outskirts of the crowd shrieking, "The light will come! The light will come!"

And before they knew it, a faint flush had crept up the sky, and the golden disc of the sun rose above the tree-tops. Shafts of sunlight touched the tops of the open space where the council met. The fire looked weak and pale. It was daylight.

An astonished silence settled upon the gathered council of the animals. Could it be possible that it was daylight whether they wished it or not?

A shrill voice suddenly piped up from the edge of the assembly.

"What did I tell..."

"Grrrrr!"

Chipmunk was gone like a flash through the trees with Bear after him. Bear was clumsy and Chipmunk so quick that he slipped into a hold in a tree before Bear could catch him. But, just before he disappeared, Bear struck at him with his paw.

The black stripes that run down the chipmunk's sides today show where Bear's claws hit him long ago at the council when the animals tried to decide whether they should have darkness or daylight all the time.

HOW DOGS CAME TO THE INDIANS

Two Ojibwa Indians in a canoe had been blown far from shore by a great wind. They had gone far and were hungry and lost. They had little strength left to paddle, so they drifted before the wind. At last their canoe was blown onto a beach and they were glad, but not for long. Looking for the tracks of animals, they saw some huge footprints which they knew must be those of a giant. They were afraid and hid in the bushes. As they crouched low, a big arrow thudded into the ground close beside them. Then a huge giant came toward them. A caribou hung from his belt, but the man was so big that it looked like a rabbit. He told them that he did not hurt people and he like to be a friend to little people, who seemed to the giant to be so helpless.

He asked the two lost Indians to come home with him, and since they had no food and their weapons had been lost in the storm at sea, they were glad to go with him. An evil Windigo spirit came to the lodge of the giant and told the two men that the giant had other men hidden away in the forest because he like to eat them. The Windigo pretended to be a friend, but he was the one who wanted the men because he was an eater of people. The Windigo became very angry when the giant would not give him the two men, and finally the giant became angry too. He took a big stick and turned over a big bowl with it. A strange animal which the Indians had never seen before lay on the floor, looking up at them. It looked like a wolf to them, but the giant called the animal 'Dog.' The giant told him to kill the evil Windigo spirit. The beast sprang to its feet, shook himself, and started to grow, and grow, and grow. The more he shook himself, the more he grew and the fiercer he became. He sprang at the Windigo and killed him; then the dog grew smaller and smaller and crept under the bowl.

The giant saw that the Indians were much surprised and please with Dog and said that he would give it to them, though it was his pet. He told the men that he would command Dog to take them home. They had no idea how this could be done, though they had seen that the giant was a maker of magic, but they thanked the friendly giant for his great gift. The giant took the men and the dog to the seashore and gave the dog a command. At once it began to grow bigger and bigger, until it was nearly as big as a horse. The giant put the two men onto the back of the dog and told them to hold on very tightly. As Dog ran into the sea, he grew still bigger and when the water was deep enough he started to swim strongly away from the shore.

After a very long time, the two Ojibwa began to see a part of the seacoast which they knew, and soon the dog headed for shore. As he neared the beach, he became smaller and smaller so that the Indians had to swim for the last part of their journey. The dog left them close to their lodges and disappeared into the forest. When the men told their tribe of their adventure, the people thought that the men were speaking falsely. "Show us even the little mystery animal, Dog, and we shall believe you," a chief said.

A few moons came and went and then, one morning while the tribe slept, the dog returned to the two men. It allowed them to pet it and took food from their hands. The tribe was very much surprised to see this new creature. It stayed with the tribe.

That, as the Indians tell, was how the first dog came to the earth.

-- An Ojibwa story, thanks to Harold Stein

HOW FIRE CAME TO THE SIX NATIONS

Often, around the fire in the long house of the Iroquois, during the Moon of the Long Nights, this tale is told.

Three Arrows was a boy of the Mohawk tribe. Although he had not yet seen fourteen winters he was already known among the Iroquois for his skill and daring. His arrows sped true to their mark. His name was given him when with three bone-tipped arrows he brought down three flying wild geese from the same flock. He could travel in the forest as softly as the south wind and he was a skillful hunter, but he never killed a bird or animal unless his clan needed food. He was well-versed in woodcraft, fleet of foot, and a clever wrestler. His people said, 'Soon he will be a chief like his father.' The sun shone strong in the heart of Three Arrows, because soon he would have to meet the test of strength and endurance through which the boys of his clan attained manhood. He had no fear of the outcome of the dream fast which was so soon to take. His father was a great chief and a good man, and the boy's life had been patterned after that of his father.

When the grass was knee-high, Three Arrows left his village with his father. They climbed to a sacred place in the mountains. They found a narrow cave at the back of a little plateau. Here Three Arrows decided to live for his few days of prayer and vigil. He was not permitted to eat anything during the days and nights of his dream fast. He had no weapons, and his only clothing was a breechclout and moccasins. His father left the boy with the promise that he would visit him each day that the ceremony lasted, at dawn.

Three Arrows prayed to the Great Spirit. He begged that soon his clan spirit would appear in a dream and tell him what his guardian animal or bird was to be. When he knew this, he would adopt that bird or animal as his special guardian for the rest of his life. When the dream came he would be free to return to his people, his dream fast successfully achieved.

For five suns Three Arrows spent his days and nights on the rocky plateau, only climbing down to the little spring for water after each sunset. His heart was filled with a dark cloud because that morning his father had sadly warned him that the next day, the sixth sun, he must return to his village even if no dream had come to him in the night. This meant returning to his people in disgrace without the chance of taking another dream fast.

That night Three Arrows, weak from hunger and weary from ceaseless watch, cried out to the Great Mystery. 'O Great Spirit, have pity on him who stands humbly before Thee. Let his clan spirit or a sign from beyond the thunderbird come to him before tomorrow's sunrise, if it be Thy will.' As he prayed, the wind suddenly veered from east to north. This cheered Three Arrows because the wind was now the wind of the great bear, and the bear was the totem of his clan. When he entered the cavern he smelled for the first time the unmistakable odor of a bear: this was strong medicine. He crouched at the opening of the cave, too excited to lie down although his tired body craved rest. As he gazed out into the night he heard the rumble of thunder, saw the lightning flash, and felt the fierce breath of the wind from the north. Suddenly a vision came to him, and a gigantic bear stood beside him in the cave. Then Three Arrows heard it say, 'Listen well, Mohawk. Your clan spirit has heard your prayer. Tonight you will learn a great mystery which will bring help and gladness to all your people.' A terrible clash of thunder brought the dazed boy to his feet as the bear disappeared. He looked from the cave just as a streak of lightning flashed across the sky in the form of a blazing arrow. Was this the sign from the thunderbird?

Suddenly the air was filled with a fearful sound. A shrill shrieking came from the ledge just above the cave. It sounded as though mountain lions fought in the storm; yet Three Arrows felt no fear as he climbed toward the ledge. As his keen eyes grew accustomed to the dim light he saw that the force of the wind was causing two young balsam trees to rub violently against each other. The strange noise was caused by friction, and as he listened and watched fear filled his heart, for, from where the two trees rubbed together a flash of lightning showed smoke. Fascinated, he watched until flickers of flames followed the smoke. He had never seen fire of any kind at close range nor had any of his people. He scrambled down to the cave and covered his eyes in dread of this strange magic. Then he smelt bear again and he thought of his vision, his clan spirit, the bear, and its message. This was the mystery which he was to reveal to his people. The blazing arrow in the sky was to be his totem, and his new name - Blazing Arrow.

At daybreak, Blazing Arrow climbed onto the ledge and broke two dried sticks from what remained of one of the balsams. He rubbed them violently together, but nothing happened. 'The magic is too powerful for me,' he thought. Then a picture of his clan and village formed in his mind, and he patiently rubbed the hot sticks together again. His will power took the place of his tired muscles. Soon a little wisp of smoke greeted his renewed efforts, then came a bright spark on one of the stick. Blazing Arrow waved it as he had seen the fiery arrow wave in the night sky. A resinous blister on the stick glowed, then flamed - fire had come to the Six Nations!

-- An Iroquois story, thanks to Harold Stein

TAIL OF FIRE

So long ago that the time could not be counted by suns or moons, a band of Cowichan Indians was drying deer meat in the sun. They spoke of how good it would be if they only had a small sun to warm them when the big sun left to let darkness come. They thought that they would never get that thing because what they wanted would take much power and magic, more than even their most powerful shamans had.

As the people wished and talked, a little bird chirped loudly close by. It flew close to the people and they saw that it was a beautiful brown bird with a bright red tail which seemed to flicker even when the bird sat still. The bird looked down on the Indians from a branch just over their heads.

'What do you want, little bird?' asked an old man who had power to speak with birds.

'Nothing do I wish, Wise One, but I bring you what you wish,' it replied. 'I have something which is called fire on my tail, which is hot like a small sun. It will comfort you when the winds of winter blow, cook your meat, and bring cheer when the sun has gone, but it must be earned. Tell your tribe to meet me here when the sun comes again and ask each one to bring a little dry branch with pitch pine on it.'

Before the people could ask why, the bird suddenly disappeared. 'We should obey the wishes of that bird,' the old man counseled. 'It may bring much good fortune to us.'

When the sun shone again, the people awaited the coming of the bird. Each carried a pine branch with pitch pine on it, as they had been told. A loud tweet made the people look upward. The brown bird sat on a branch above their heads, though nobody had seen it come. It asked in a language that all understood, 'Are you ready?'

They answered, 'Yes!'

'Then you must follow me, and the one who first catches up with me will be given fire, but only if the one who does so is one who does right, is patient, and tries hard without losing courage. Come!'

The bird flew off over rough ground and thick forest. The chase proved too hard for many and they gave up. Over fast-flowing streams and dangerous marshes and swamps, the bird flew. More and more of the people had neither the strength nor courage to keep on and they were forced to drop out of the chase. 'Too hard!' 'Too difficult!' 'Too dangerous!' they gasped as they fell on the ground to rest.

At last one young warrior got close enough to call to the bird, 'Give me of your fire, little bird. I have followed you far and well and I have done no wrong.'

'It is not as you say,' said the bird, flying higher and faster than before. 'You think only of yourself. That is bad. You shall not have my fire.'

A second young man caught up with the bird. 'Share your fire with me,' he called. 'I am a good man.'

'A good man does not take that which belongs to another,' the bird answered, flying faster and faster. Soon, seeing it was no longer followed, the bird flew to the ground and perched beside a woman who was nursing an old man who looked very sick. 'Bring a dry branch with pitch pine on it,' said the brown bird. 'Fire have I on my tail and you shall have it. It will keep your sick man warm and cook your food.'

The woman was afraid of a bird that could speak. When she found her voice, she said, 'You are good, little one, but I deserve not a magic gift. What I do, I do because it is right. The inner voice tells me that I must take care of one who is sick.'

'Much good I know you do,' said the bird, 'and it is greater good than that done by many people because the good you do, you think is only your duty. Come, bring a branch and take of my fire. You think first of others, so you may share the gift with them.'

The woman gladly brought a branch and lit it at the little fire which flickered on the bird's tail. Since that time, the Indians have had fire.

-- A Cowichan Story, thanks to Harold Stein

THE FIRST MOCCASINS

There was once a great chief of the Plains who had very tender feet. Other mighty chiefs laughed at him; little chiefs only smiled as he hobbled past; and though they did not dare to smile, the people of the tribe also enjoyed the big chief's discomfort. All of them were in the same canoe, having no horses and only bare feet, but luckily very few of them had tender feet. The unhappily medicine man who was advisor to the Chief-of-the-Tender-Feet was afraid and troubled. Each time he was called before the chief he was asked, 'What are you going to do about it?' The 'it' meant the chief's tender feet.

Forced by fear, the medicine man at last hit upon a plan. Though he knew that it was not the real answer to the chief's foot problem, nevertheless it was a good makeshift. The medicine man had some women of the tribe weave a long, narrow mat of reeds, and when the big chief had to go anywhere, four braves unrolled the mat in front of him so that he walked in comfort. One day, the braves were worn out from seeing that the chief's feet were not worn out. They carelessly unrolled the mat over a place where flint arrowheads had been chipped. The arrowheads had long ago taken flight, but the needle-sharp chips remained. When the big chief's tender feet were wounded by these chips, he uttered a series of whoops which made the nearby aspen tree leaves quiver so hard that they have been trembling ever since.

That night the poor medicine man was given an impossible task by the angry chief: 'Cover the whole earth with mats so thick that my feet will not suffer. If you fail, you will die when the moon is round.'

The frightened maker of magic crept back to his lodge. He did not wish to be put to death on the night of the full moon, but he could think of no way to avoid it. Suddenly he saw the hide of an elk which he had killed pegged to the ground, with two women busily scraping the hair from the hide, and an idea flashed into his groping mind. He sent out many hunters; many women were busy for many days; many braves with hunting knives cut, and women sewed with bone needles and rawhide sinews.

On the day before the moon was round, the medicine man went to the chief and told him that he had covered as much of the earth as was possible in so short a time. When the chief looked from the door of his lodge, he saw many paths of skin stretching as far as he could see. Long strips which could be moved from place to place connected the main leather paths. Even the chief thought that this time the magic of the medicine man had solved tenderfoot transportation for all time - but this was not to be !

One day, as the big chief was walking along one of his smooth, tough leather paths, he saw a pretty maiden of the tribe gliding ahead of him, walking on the hard earth on one side of the chief's pathway. She glanced back when she heard the pitter-patter of his feet on the elk hide pathway and seemed to smile. The chief set off on the run to catch up with her, his eyes fixed on the back of She-Who-Smiled, and so his feet strayed from the narrow path and landed in a bunch of needle-sharp thorns! The girl ran for her life when she heard the hideous howls of the chief, and Indians in the distant village thought that they were being attacked by wildcats.

Two suns later, when the chief was calm enough to speak again, he had his medicine man brought before him and told the unhappy man that next day, when the sun was high, he would be sent with all speed to the land of shadows.

That night, the medicine man climbed to the top of a high hill in search of advice from friendly spirits on how to cover the entire earth with leather. He slept, and in a dream vision he was shown the answer to his problem. Amid vivid flashes of lightning, he tore down the steep hillside, howling louder than the big chief at times, as jagged rocks wounded his bare feet and legs. He did not stop until he was safely inside his lodge. He worked all night and until the warriors who were to send him on the shadow trail came for him, just before noon the next day. He was surrounded by the war-club armed guards. He was clutching close to his heart something tightly rolled in a piece of deerskin. His cheerful smile surprised those who saw him pass. 'Wah, he is brave!' said the men of the tribe. 'He is very brave!' said the women of the tribe.

The big chief was waiting just outside his lodge. He gave the guards swift, stern orders. Before the maker of magic could be led away, he asked leave to say a few words to the chief. 'Speak!' said the chief, sorry to lose a clever medicine man who was very good at most kinds of magic. Even the chief knew that covering the entire earth with leather was an impossible task.

The medicine man quickly knelt beside the chief, unrolled the two objects which he took from his bundle and slipped one of them on each foot of the chief. The chief seemed to be wearing a pair of bear's hairless feet, instead of bare feet, and he was puzzled at first as he looked at the elk hide handicraft of his medicine man. 'Big chief,' the medicine man exclaimed joyfully, 'I have found the way to cover the earth with leather! For you, O chief,

from now on the earth will always be covered with leather.' And so it was. -- A Plains Indian story, thanks to Harold Stein

WHY THE MOUSE IS SO SILKY

One day, on his wanderings in the land of the Swampy Cree, Wesukechak, know as Bitter Spirit, saw a big, round stone lying beside the rocky path. Because Bitter Spirit could talk and understand the language of nature, he always spoke to the birds and beasts and many other things. Now he spoke to the stone. 'Can you run fast?' he asked.

'Oh, yes,' answered the stone. 'Once I get started, I can run very fast.'

'Good!' Bitter Spirit cried. 'Then you must race me.'

'I will,' answered the stone, 'if you can push me to where I can start.'

With great difficulty, the maker of magic did so, and without waiting, the stone started to roll downhill, going faster and faster.

Wesukechak caught up with it almost at ground level and mocked it as he ran past. 'You are a turtle,' he laughed. 'You cannot travel fast.'

The stone was very angry but did not reply.

Bitter Spirit ran and ran until he was so tired that he fell down on his face and slept soundly. The stone caught up with him at last and rolled up his legs and then onto his back, where it was stopped by his shoulders. It could roll no further. Being a big and very heavy stone, it held Bitter Spirit on the ground so that he could not move. The maker of magic had awakened in pain when the stone rolled onto his legs but he could not escape in time. 'Roll off my back, stone,' he shouted angrily. 'You are heavy; I hurt, and I cannot move.'

'You mocked me when you passed me,' said the stone, 'but you see I have caught up with you. Now that I have stopped, I cannot move until someone sets me rolling again. I must stay here.'

For many, many moons, the stone rested on the back of Bitter Spirit and the maker of magic could not help himself to get free. At last, Thunder decided to send some of his bolts of lightning to smash the stone and set Bitter Spirit free.

'And so, O stone, you are punished for holding me here so long,' cried the wondermaker as he continued on his way.

His clothes had been torn and worn, so Bitter Spirit threw them into a bark lodge which he saw nearby, ordering that they be mended. They were thrown outside so quickly and had been so well repaired that Bitter Spirit cried out in surprise. 'Who are you in that lodge? Come out, so that I may see and reward you.' The maker of magic was much surprised when he saw a lithe mouse creep out of the lodge. It was an ugly, fat, rough-haired little creature in those days, with a short, stubby nose.

Bitter Spirit picked the mouse up very gently and stroked its little blunt nose until it became pointed. 'Now you will be able to smell out your food better,' he said.

Next, he brushed and combed its rough hair with his fingers until the hairs of the little creature became soft as down and smooth as the fur of an otter. 'Now you will be able to run more easily into little holes in tree trunks when your enemies come,' Wesukechak said, and so it was.

To this day, the mouse is soft and furry and it sniffs daintily with its long nose.

-- Thanks to Harold Stein

WHY THE OPOSSUM'S TAIL IS BARE

It must be remembered that the animals which appear in Indian myths and legends are not the same as those which exist now. When the world began, animals were much bigger, stronger and cleverer than their present counterparts but, because of man's cruelty and aggression, these left the earth and took the rainbow path to Galunlati, the Sky Land, where they still remain. The animals which came after them - those we know today - are but poor, weak imitations of those first creatures.

In the beginning, before this happened, all living things - men, animals, plants and trees - spoke the same language and behaved in much the same way. Animals, like people, were organized into tribes. They had chiefs, lived in houses, held councils and ceremonies.

Many animals had characteristics which we would not recognize today. The rabbit, for example, was fierce, bold and cunning, and a great mischief maker. It was through Rabbit's tricks that

the deer lost his sharp wolf-like teeth, the buzzard his handsome topknot of feathers and the opossum his long, bushy tail.

Opossum was very proud of his tail which, in those days, was covered with thick black fur. He spent long hours cleaning and brushing it and composing songs about its beauty and vigor. Sometimes, when he walked through the village, he carried his tail erect, like a banner rippling in the breeze. At other times, he swept it low behind him, like a train. It was useful as well as beautiful, for when Opossum lay down to sleep, he tucked it under him to make a soft bed, and in cold weather he folded it over his body to keep himself warm.

Rabbit was very jealous of Opossum's tail. He, too, had once had a long bushy tail but, during the course of a fight with Bear, he had lost most of it and now had only a short fluffy tuft. The sight of Opossum strutting before the other animals and swirling his tail ostentatiously, filled Rabbit with rage and he made up his mind to play a trick on him at the first opportunity.

At this time, when the animals still lived harmoniously together, each had his appointed station and duty. Thus, Frog was leader in the council and Rabbit, because of his speed, was employed to carry messages and announcements to the others.

As was their custom from time to time, the animals decided to hold a great council to discuss important matters and Rabbit, as usual, was given the task of arranging the gathering and delivering the invitations. Councils were also occasions for feasting and dancing and Rabbit saw a way of bringing about Opossum's downfall.

When Rabbit arrived with the news of the meeting, Opossum was sitting by the door of his lodge engaged in his favorite occupation - grooming his tail.

'I come to call you to the great council tomorrow, brother Opossum,' said Rabbit. 'Will you attend and join in the dance?'

'Only if I am given a special seat,' replied the conceited Opossum, carefully smoothing some untidy hairs at the tip of his tail. 'After all,' he went on, grinning maliciously at Rabbit, 'I have such a beautiful long tail that I ought to sit where everyone can see and admire it.'

Rabbit was almost beside himself with fury, but he pretended not to notice the jibe and said, 'But of course, brother Opossum! I will personally see to it that you have the best seat in the council lodge, and I will also send someone to dress your tail specially for the dance.'

Opossum was delighted by this suggestion and Rabbit left him singing the praises of his tail even more loudly than usual.

Next, Rabbit called on the cricket, whom Indians call the barber, because of his fame as an expert hair-cutter. Cricket listened with growing amazement as Rabbit recounted his conversation with Opossum. Like all the other animals, he found Opossum's vanity and arrogance very tiresome.

He began to protest, but Rabbit held up a paw and said, 'Wait a moment. I have a plan and I need your help. Listen...', and he dropped his voice as he told Cricket what he wanted him to do.

Early next morning Cricket presented himself at Opossum's door and said that he had been sent by Rabbit to prepare the famous tail for the council that evening. Opossum made himself comfortable on the floor and stretched out his tail. Cricket began to comb it gently.

'I will wrap this red cord round your tail as I comb it,' he explained, 'so that it will remain smooth and neat for the dance tonight.'

Opossum found Cricket's ministrations so soothing that he fell asleep, awakening just as Cricket was tying the final knot in the red cord which now completely swathed his tail.

'I will keep it bound up until the very last moment,' thought Opossum gleefully. 'How envious the others will be when I finally reveal it in all its beauty!'

That evening, his tail still tightly wrapped in the red cord, Opossum marched into the council lodge and was led to his special seat by a strangely obsequious Rabbit.

Soon it was time for the dancing to take place. The drums and rattles began to sound. Opossum stood up, loosened the cord from his tail and stepped proudly into the center of the dance floor. He began to sing.

'Look at my beautiful tail!' he sang as he circled the floor. 'See how it sweeps the ground!'

There was a great shout from the audience and some of the animals began to applaud. 'How they admire me!' thought Opossum and he continued dancing and singing loudly. 'See how my tail gleams in the firelight!'

Again everyone shouted and cheered. Opossum began to have just the merest suspicion that all was not quite as it should be. Was there possibly a hint of mockery in their voices? He dismissed such an absurd idea and continued dancing.

'My tail is stronger than the eagle's, more lustrous than the raven's!'

At this the animals shrieked so loudly that Opossum stopped in his tracks and looked at them. To his astonishment and chagrin they were all convulsed with laughter, some leaning weakly on their neighbor's shoulders, others rolling on the ground in their mirth. Several were pointing at his tail.

Bewildered, Opossum looked down and saw to his horror that his tail, his beautiful, thick, glossy tail, was now balk and scaly like that of a lizard. Nothing remained of its former glory. While pretending to comb it, the wily Cricket had snipped off every single hair.

Opossum was so overcome with shame and confusion that he could not utter a sound. Instead he rolled over helplessly on his back, grimacing with embarrassment, just as opossums still do today, when taken by surprise.

-- A Cherokee story, thanks to Harold Stein

RABBIT SHOOTS THE SUN

It was the height of summer, the time of year called Hadotso, the Great Heat. All day long, from a blue and cloudless sky, the blazing sun beat down upon the earth. No rain had fallen for many days and there was not the slightest breath of wind to cool the stifling air. Everything was hot and dry. Even the rose-red cliffs of the canyons and mesas seemed to take on a more brilliant color than before.

The animals drooped with misery. They were parched and hungry, for it was too hot to hunt for food and, panting heavily, they sought what shade they could under the rocks and bushes.

Rabbit was the unhappiest of all. Twice that day the shimmering heat had tempted him across the baked earth towards visions of water and cool, shady trees. He had exhausted himself in his desperate attempts to reach them, only to find the mirages dissolve before him, receding further and further into the distance.

Now, tired and wretched, he dragged himself into the shadow of an overhanging rock and crouched there listlessly. His soft fur was caked with the red dust of the desert. His head swam and his eyes ached from the sun's glare.

'Why does it have to be so hot?' he groaned. 'What have we done to deserve such torment?' He squinted up at the sun and shouted furiously, 'Go away! You are making everything too hot!'

Sun took no notice at all and continued to pour down his fiery beams, forcing Rabbit to retreat once more into the shade of the rock. 'Sun needs to be taught a lesson,' grumbled Rabbit. 'I have a good mind to go and fight him. If he refuses to stop shining, I will kill him!'

His determination to punish Sun made him forget his weariness and, in spite of the oppressive heat, he set off at a run towards the eastern edge of the world where the Sun came up each morning.

As he ran, he practiced with his bow and arrows and, to make himself brave and strong, he fought with everything which crossed his path. He fought with the gophers and the lizards. He hurled his throwing stick at beetles, ants and dragonflies. He shot at the yucca and the giant cactus. He became a very fierce rabbit indeed.

By the time he reached the edge of the world, Sun had left the sky and was nowhere to be seen.

'The coward!' sneered Rabbit. 'He is afraid to fight, but he will not escape me so easily,' and he settled to wait behind a clump of bushes.

In those days, Sun did not appear slowly as he does now. Instead he rushed up over the horizon and into the heavens with one mighty bound. Rabbit knew that he would have to act quickly in order to ambush him and he fixed his eyes intently on the spot where the Sun usually appeared.

Sun, however, had heard all Rabbit's threats and had watched him fighting. He knew that he was lying in wait among the bushes. He was not at all afraid of this puny creature and he thought that he might have some amusement at his expense.

He rolled some distance away from his usual place and swept up into the sky before Rabbit knew what was happening. By the time Rabbit had gathered his startled wits and released his bowstring, Sun was already high above him and out of range.

Rabbit stamped and shouted with rage and vexation. Sun laughed and laughed and shone even more fiercely than before.

Although almost dead from heat, Rabbit would not give up. Next morning he tried again, but this time Sun came up in a different place and evaded him once more.

Day after day the same thing happened. Sometimes Sun sprang up on Rabbit's right, sometimes on his left and sometimes straight in front of him, but always where Rabbit least expected him.

One morning, however, Sun grew careless. He rose more leisurely than usual, and this time, Rabbit was ready. Swiftly he drew his bow. His arrow whizzed through the air and buried itself deep in Sun's side.

Rabbit was jubilant! At last he had shot his enemy! Wild with joy, he leaped up and down. He rolled on the ground, hugging himself. He turned somersaults. He looked at Sun again - and stopped short.

Where his arrow had pierced Sun, there was a gaping wound and, from that wound, there gushed a stream of liquid fire. Suddenly it seemed as if the whole world had been set ablaze. Flames shot up and rushed towards Rabbit, crackling and roaring.

Rabbit paused not a moment longer. He took to his heels in panic and ran as fast as he could away from the fire. He spied a lone cottonwood tree and scuttled towards it.

'Everything is burning!' he cried. 'Will you shelter me?'

The cottonwood shook its slender branches mournfully. 'What can I do?' it asked. 'I will be burned to the ground.'

Rabbit ran on. Behind him, the flames were coming closer. He could feel their breath on his back. A greasewood tree lay in his path.

'Hide me! Hide me!' Rabbit gasped. 'The fire is coming.'

'I cannot help you,' answered the greasewood tree. 'I will be burned up roots and branches.'

Terrified and almost out of breath, Rabbit continued to run, but his strength was failing. He could feel the fire licking at his heels and his fur was beginning to singe. Suddenly he heard a voice calling to him.

'Quickly, come under me! The fire will pass over me so swiftly that it will only scorch my top.'

It was the voice of a small green bush with flowers like bunches of cotton capping its thin branches. Gratefully, Rabbit dived below it and lay there quivering, his eyes tightly shut, his ears flat against his body.

With a thunderous roar, the sheet of flame leaped overhead. The little bush crackled and sizzled. Then, gradually, the noise receded and everything grew quiet once more.

Rabbit raised his head cautiously and looked around. Everywhere the earth lay black and smoking, but the fire had passed on. He was safe!

The little bush which had sheltered him was no longer green. Burned and scorched by the fire, it had turned a golden yellow. People now call it the desert yellow brush, for, although it first grows green, it always turns yellow when it feels the heat of the sun.

Rabbit never recovered from his fright. To this day, he bears brown spots where the fire scorched the back of his neck. He is no longer fierce and quarrelsome, but runs and hides at the slightest noise.

As for Sun, he too was never quite the same. He now makes himself so bright that no one can look at him long enough to sight an arrow and he always peers very warily over the horizon before he brings his full body into view.

-- A Hopi story

THE INDIAN & THE SNAKE

As a young boy, often times, Indians are sent away, in search of a vision. This was the case of this one particular young Indian boy. He started to go up to the top of the mountain in search of his vision ... And as he climbed up the mountain, the air got cooler and cooler ... And he came upon a snake laying in the path. The snake was shivering, and said to the young Indian boy. "Please help me ... I can't move, I am so cold that I can no longer make it any further down the mountain." The young Indian boy said to the snake "No way! You're a snake, if I pick you up, you'll bite me!" The snake replied ... "No, no I won't, I promise I won't bite you if you'll only pick me up and help get me down the mountain..." So the young Indian boy picked up the snake, put him in his shirt, continued climbing to the top of the mountain in search of his vision ... When he got back down to the bottom of the mountain, he reached in, took out the snake, and the snake bit this young Indian boy. The boy replied to the snake "Hey! You bit me, you said that if I'd help you out, that you wouldn't bite me!" the snake replied to the young Indian boy ... "But you knew what I was when you picked me up!"

-- Thanks to Brad George, SM BSA Troop #23 OKC/OKLA

SPIRIT ANIMAL

As scouts we often visit the woods, but don't really spend a lot of time in the wilderness, especially not alone. One often wonders what it would be like to spend long periods of time alone in the woods. Could you cope?

Our native Indians believe that one advantage to spending time alone in the wilderness, is that you might meet your spirit animal. They believe that everyone has their own specific spirit animal, and to meet your spirit animal is to make your life more complete. An Indian might be canoeing alone across a lake, when he spies a bear on the shore. And as the bear looks into his eyes, he'll just know, that that's his spirit animal. Of course you can only meet your spirit animal when you're alone.

One kind of white man often spends a lot of time in the bush, and that's a trapper. It's a very lonely existence, spending weeks on the trap lines, as you go from lake to lake, trail to trail, collecting furs. They tell the story of one particular trapper who worked in the Haliburton area. One evening he was sitting near his campfire enjoying his coffee just after sundown. He'd had a good day, a lot of good furs, and now he was almost ready for bed. He stared into the embers of the campfire as it slowly faded away, thinking of how bright the fire was and how it always made the surrounding area look so very dark.

He thought he saw something at the edge of the fire.... No it was nothing. Then he saw it again. At the edge of the firelight was a raccoon, sitting very still and staring at him. "That's odd", he thought, "this isn't how raccoons normally act." He hissed at the raccoon, but it wouldn't go away. So he ignored it for a little while, expecting it would move on. After a few minutes he glanced back, and the raccoon was still there staring at him with those eerie animal eyes. This time he picked up a rock and threw it at the raccoon. "WHAT!?", he thought, "I could have sworn I hit that coon!", but the rock seemed to have passed through the animal.

The trapper was now getting very nervous. He completely ignored the spot where the raccoon had been (or maybe still was). He put out the fire, and headed in darkness for his tent, the half full moon in the clear sky illuminating the way. "A good night's sleep and everything will be fine in the morning", he thought. Something caught his eye and his head jerked sharply to the right. There it was on the side of path: the raccoon, sitting still and staring at the trapper. He ignored it and quickly turned away. BUT there it was on his left now. He hurried on to the tent now, only a few yards away, looking only at his feet. As he reached the tent he glanced up. THERE IT WAS. the raccoon sitting between him and his tent!

About three weeks later they found him running through the woods, nearly naked and his body had been heavily bruised and torn. He'd been living like a wild savage, eating dirt or leaves, even worse than most animals. Although he spent the next twenty years in an insane asylum, he never regained the use of his mind. Some say he just snapped after spending too much time alone, especially in the woods..... Some think he met his spirit animal.

-- Thanks to Blair Madore, University of Waterloo, Canada

WHY THE WEASEL IS NERVOUS

The weasel, Sihkooseu, once played a bad trick on the Bitter Spirit, Wesukechak. That is why they are not friends.

The important chief Bright Nose, Wastasekoot, of the Swampy Cree tribe, had a lovely daughter who was admired by many chiefs who wished to marry her. Though she loved one of the chiefs, her father decided to hold a council and the first chief to guess her secret name could marry her. She agreed because she thought that the only one who knew her name was the one she loved.

Bitter Spirit decided to enter the contest with everyone else. Since he did not know her name, he made a plan to discover it. He went to the old net maker, the spider, and asked him to call on the girl and, by some trick, discover her name. Spider agreed. He climbed a tall tree, spun a long thread, and floated on it until he neared the camp of the chief with the beautiful daughter. Then he floated down onto the top of the chief's wigwam, peeped down, and saw the father and daughter talking about the contest, and heard the chief whisper to his daughter, 'Nobody will ever guess that your secret name is For-ever-and-ever.' In this way, the Spider discovered her name. He was very pleased with himself at learning this so soon, and set off to tell his friend.

Spider walked many days through the forest because there was no suitable flying wind. He began to worry that he would arrive back too late. Then he saw the weasel and begged his help. He asked Weasel to hurry and tell Bitter Spirit the girl's secret name and Weasel agreed. But as Weasel started running, he began to think things over and decided to use the information for himself instead of telling it to Bitter Spirit as he had promised. The more he thought about this, the more he liked the idea.

Weasel went to the chief's camp when the guessing contest was being held. One by one, the guessers failed. Since the girl's suitor knew her secret name, he felt safe and did not go early, so Weasel was there before him. When Weasel's turn came, he told the chief that the girl's name was For-ever-and-ever. The chief was amazed and the daughter fainted. Being honorable, the chief accepted Weasel as his son-in-law-to-be and set the date for the marriage. Weasel was very happy, so happy that he forgot about his mean trick.

The spider finally reached home and asked Bitter Spirit when his wedding was to take place. Bitter Spirit replied that he did not go to the council, since he did not have the name in time, but he had heard that Weasel had won the girl.

Spider was very angry and told Bitter Spirit what really had happened. Bitter Spirit became very angry and told the girl's father about it. Then the chief became angry with Spider for

listening and with Weasel for his trick. He decided that they were all at fault and his daughter could choose for herself. The happy girl did so.

Weasel heard that he was to be punished, so he ran away. He ran and ran. Even today, he stops and listens and trembles, as though Bitter Spirit is still chasing him.

-- A Swampy Cree story, thanks to Harold Stein

THE GREAT FLOOD

Long before missionaries ever arrived in the New World, the Indians had ancient legends of a great flood, similar to that of Noah. This is the one the Cowichan tell.

In ancient times, there were so many people in the land that they lived everywhere. Soon hunting became bad and food scarce, so that the people quarreled over hunting territories.

Even in those days, the people were skilled in making fine canoes and paddles from cedars, and clothing and baskets from their bark. In dreams their wise old men could see the future, and there came a time when they all had similar bad dreams that kept coming to them over and over again. The dreams warned of a great flood. This troubled the wise men who told each other about their dreams. They found that they all had dreamed that rain fell for such a long time, or that the river rose, causing a great flood so that all of the people were drowned. They were much afraid and called a council to hear their dreams and decide what should be done. One said that they should build a great raft by tying many canoes together. Some of the people agreed, but others laughed at the old men and their dreams.

The people who believed in the dreams worked hard building the raft. It took many moons of hard work, lashing huge cedar log canoes together with strong ropes of cedar bark. When it was completed, they tied the raft with a great rope of cedar bark to the top of Mount Cowichan by passing one end of the rope through the center of a huge stone which can still be seen there.

During the time the people were working on the raft, those who did not believe in the dreams were idle and still laughed, but they did admire the fine, solid raft when it was at last finished and floated in Cowichan Bay.

Soon after the raft was ready, huge raindrops started falling, rivers overflowed, and the valleys were flooded. Although people climbed Mount Cowichan to avoid the great flood, it too was soon under water. But those who had believed the dreams took food to the raft and they and their families climbed into it as the waters rose. They lived on the raft many days and could see nothing but water. Even the mountain tops had disappeared beneath the flood. The people became much afraid when their canoes began to flood and they prayed for help. Nothing happened for a long time; then the rain stopped.

The waters began to go down after a time, and finally the raft was grounded on top of Mount Cowichan. The huge stone anchor and heavy rope had held it safe. As the water gradually sank lower and lower, the people could see their lands, but their homes had all been swept away. The valleys and forests had been destroyed. The people went back to their old land and started to rebuild their homes.

After a long time the number of people increased, until once again the land was filled and the people started to quarrel again. This time they separated into tribes and clans, all going to different places. The storytellers say this is how people spread all over the earth.

-- A Salish story, thanks to Harold Stein

THE ORIGIN OF THE WINDS

Long ago, when the world was still quite new, there were no winds at all, neither the gentle breeze of summer nor the fierce winter gale. Everything was perfectly still. Nothing disturbed the marsh grass on the shore and, when snow fell, it fell straight to earth instead of blowing and swirling into drifts as it does now.

At that time, in a village near the mouth of the Yukon River, there lived a couple who had no children. This made them very sad. Often the woman would sigh and say, 'How happy we would be if only we had a child!'

Her husband would sigh too and answer, 'Yes, if we had a son, I would teach him to stalk bears and seals over the ice-floes, and to make traps and snares. What will become of us in our old age with no one to provide for us? Who will give festivals for our souls when we are dead?'

These thoughts troubled them deeply and on many a long winter evening they sat in the flickering firelight, imagining how different life might be if they had a child.

One night the woman had a strange dream, in which she saw a sled pulled by three dogs, one brown, one white and one black, draw up outside her door. The driver leaned from his seat and beckoned her. 'Come,' he said. 'Sit here by me. I will take you on a journey.'

Wondering and fearful, the woman did as she was told. No sooner had she seated herself than the driver cracked his whip and the sled rose high into the air. Through the night-black sky they flew, faster and faster, past stars sparkling like hoar-frost. The woman was no longer afraid for she knew that this must be Igaluk, the Moon Spirit, who often comes to comfort those in distress.

Suddenly the sled stopped and the panting dogs lay down to rest. On all sides, as far as the eye could see, lay a great plain of smooth ice, the glittering expanse broken only by one small stunted tree.

Igaluk pointed and said, 'You who so desire a child, look at that tree over there. Make a doll from its trunk and you will find happiness.'

Before she could learn more, the woman awoke. So vivid was her dream that she at once roused her husband. She told him what she had seen and begged him to find the tree.

The man rubbed the sleep from his eyes. 'What would be the point?' he grumbled. 'It would only be a doll, not a real child.' But the woman persisted and finally, for the sake of peace, the man shouldered his axe and set out to look for the tree.

At the edge of the village where the snow lay thick and untrodden, he saw a bright path stretching far into the distance. It was now full day, yet the path shone like moonlight and the man knew that this was the direction which he must take.

For many hours he journeyed along the path of light until at last, on the horizon, he saw something shining very brightly. As he came nearer he saw that it was the tree of which his wife had spoken. The man cut it down with his axe and carried it home.

That evening, while he carved the figure of a small boy from some of the wood, his wife made a little suit of sealskin and, when the doll was finished, she dressed it and set it in the place of honor on the bench opposite the door. From the remaining wood the man carved a set of toy dishes and some tiny weapons, a spear and a knife, tipped with bone. His wife filled the dishes with food and water and set them before the doll.

Before going to bed, the couple sat and gazed at the doll. Although it was no more than six inches high, it was very lifelike, with eyes made from tiny chips of ivory.

'I cannot think why we have gone to all this trouble,' said the man gloomily. 'We are no better off than before.'

'Perhaps not,' replied his wife, 'but at least it will give us some amusement and something to talk about.'

During the night the woman awoke suddenly. Close at hand she heard several low whistles. She shook her husband and said, 'Did you hear that? It was the doll!'

They jumped up and, by the glow of their hastily lit lamp, they saw that the doll had eaten the food and drunk the water. They saw it breathe and its eyes move. The woman picked it up in her arms and hugged it.

They played with the doll for some time until it grew sleepy. Then they carefully returned it to the bench and went back to bed, delighted with their new toy.

In the morning, however, when they awoke, the doll had gone. Rushing outside, they saw its footprints leading away through the village. They followed as fast as they could, but at the edge of the village the tracks stopped and there was no trace of the doll. Sadly the couple returned home.

Although they did not know it, the doll was traveling along the path of light which the man had taken the day before. On and on he went until he came to the eastern edge of day where the sky comes down to meet the earth and walls in the light.

Looking up, the doll saw a hole in the sky wall, covered over with a piece of skin. The cover was bulging inwards, as if there was some powerful force on the other side. The doll was curious and, drawing his knife, he slashed the cords holding the cover in place and pulled it aside.

At once a great wind rushed in, carrying birds and animals with it. The doll peered through the hole and saw the Sky Land on the other side, looking just like earth, with mountains, trees and rivers.

When he felt that the wind had blown long enough, the doll drew the skin cover back over the hole, saying sternly, 'Wind, sometimes blow hard, sometimes soft, and sometimes not at all.' Then he went on his way.

When he came to the south, he saw another piece of skin covering an opening in the sky wall and bulging as before. Again the doll drew his knife and this time a warmer wind blew in, bringing more animals, trees and bushes. After a time the doll closed up the opening with the same words as before and passed on towards the west.

There he found yet another opening like the others, but this time, as soon as the cords were cut, the wind blew in a heavy rainstorm with waves and spray from the great ocean on the other side. The doll hastened to cover up the hole and instructed this wind as he had one the others.

When he came to the north, the cold was so intense that he hesitated for some time before he dared to open the hole in the sky there. When he finally did so, a fierce blast whistled in, with great masses of snow and ice, so that the doll was at once frozen to the marrow and he closed that opening very quickly indeed.

Admonishing the wind as before, the doll now turned his steps inwards, away from the sky wall and traveled on until he came to the very center of the earth's plain. There he saw the sky arching overhead like a huge tent, supported on a framework of tall slender poles. Satisfied that he had now traveled the whole world over, the doll decided to return to the village from which he started.

His foster-parents greeted him with great joy, for they feared that he had gone forever. The doll told them and all the people of the village about his travels and how he had let the winds into the world. Everyone was pleased for with the wind came good hunting. The winds brought the birds of the air and the land animals, and they stirred up the sea currents so that seals and walrus could be found all along the coast.

Because he had brought good fortune as the Moon Spirit had predicted, the doll was honored in special festivals afterwards. Shamans made dolls like him to help them in their magic and parents also made dolls for their children, knowing that they bring happiness to those who care for them.

-- Alaskan Eskimo legend, thanks to Harold Stein

RABBIT AND THE MOON MAN

Long ago, Rabbit was a great hunter. He lived with his grandmother in a lodge which stood deep in the Micmac forest. It was winter and Rabbit set traps and laid snares to catch game for food. He caught many small animals and birds, until one day he discovered that some mysterious being was robbing his traps. Rabbit and his grandmother became hungry. Though he visited his traps very early each morning, he always found them empty.

At first Rabbit thought that the robber might be a cunning wolverine, until one morning he found long, narrow footprints alongside his trap line. It was, he thought, the tracks of the robber, but they looked like moonbeams. Each morning Rabbit rose earlier and earlier, but the being of the long foot was always ahead of him and always his traps were empty.

Rabbit made a trap from a bowstring with the loop so cleverly fastened that he felt certain that he would catch the robber when it came. He took one end of the thong with him and hid himself behind a clump of bushes from which he could watch his snare. It was bright moonlight while he waited, but suddenly it became very dark as the moon disappeared. A few stars were still shining and there were no clouds in the sky, so Rabbit wondered what had happened to the moon.

Someone or something came stealthily through the trees and then Rabbit was almost blinded by a flash of bright, white light which went straight to his trap line and shone through the snare which he had set. Quick as a lightning flash, Rabbit jerked the bowstring and tightened the noose. There was a sound of struggling and the light lurched from side to side. Rabbit knew by the tugging on his string that he had caught the robber. He fastened the bowstring to a nearby sapling to hold the loop tight.

Rabbit raced back to tell his grandmother, who was a wise old woman, what had happened. She told him that he must return at once and see who or what he had caught. Rabbit, who was very frightened, wanted to wait for daylight but his grandmother said that might be too late, so he returned to his trap line.

When he came near his traps, Rabbit saw that the bright light was still there. It was so bright that it hurt his eyes. He bathed them in the icy water of a nearby brook, but still they smarted. He made big snowballs and threw them at the light, in the hope of putting it out. As they went close to the light, he heard them sizzle and saw them melt. Next, Rabbit scooped up great paw-fuls of soft clay from the stream and made many big clay balls. He was a good shot and threw the balls with all of his force at the dancing white light. He heard them strike hard and then his prisoner shouted.

Then a strange, quivering voice asked why he had been snared and demanded that he be set free at once, because he was the man in the moon and he must be home before dawn came. His face had been spotted with clay and, when Rabbit went closer, the moon man saw him and threatened to kill him and all of his tribe if he were not released at once.

Rabbit was so terrified that he raced back to tell his grandmother about his strange captive. She too was much afraid and told Rabbit to return and release the thief immediately. Rabbit went back, and his voice shook with fear as he told the man in the moon that he would be released if he promised never to rob the snares again. To make doubly sure, Rabbit asked him to promise that he would never return to earth, and the moon man swore that he would never do so. Rabbit could hardly see in the dazzling light, but at last he managed to gnaw through the bowstring with his teeth and the man in the moon soon disappeared in the sky, leaving a bright trail of light behind him.

Rabbit had been nearly blinded by the great light and his shoulders were badly scorched. Even today, rabbits blink as

though light is too strong for their eyes; their eyelids are pink, and their eyes water if they look at a bright light. Their lips quiver, telling of Rabbit's terror.

The man in the moon has never returned to earth. When he lights the world, one can still see the marks of the clay which Rabbit threw on his face. Sometimes he disappears for a few nights, when he is trying to rub the marks of the clay balls from his face. Then the world is dark; but when the man in the moon appears again, one can see that he has never been able to clean the clay marks from his shining face.

-- Thanks to Jim Speirs

HONEYED WORDS CAN'T SWEETEN EVIL

Big Blue Heron was standing in the marsh looking at his reflection in the water. He raised his black-crested head to listen.

Two little White Weasels had come along to the river. They were mother and son. When they saw Blue Heron, they stopped to look.

'What a beautiful big bird-person!' said the son.

'He is called Blue Heron. He carries his head high!'

'Yes, Mother, he is tall as a tree. Were I so tall, I could carry you across this swift river.'

Blue Heron was pleased to hear himself so praised. He liked to hear other say that he was big.

He bent down low and spoke to the two. 'I will help you go across. Come down to where you see that old tree lying in the stream. I will lie down in the water at the end and put my bill deep into the bank on the other side. You two run across the tree. Then use my body as a bridge and you will get to the other side.'

They all went to the old tree lying in the water. Blue Heron lay down in the water at the end and stuck his bill deep into the bank on the other side. Mother and son White Weasel ran lightly and quickly across the log, over Blue Heron, and were safe and dry on the other side. They thanked Blue Heron and said they would tell all the persons in the woods how fine Blue Heron was. Then they went on their way.

Old Wolf had been standing on the riverbank watching how the weasels had gotten across.

'What a fine way it would be for me to cross the river. I am old and my bones ache.'

When Blue Heron came back to the marsh, Wolf said to him, 'Now I know why you Blue Herons are in the marsh - so you can be a bridge for persons to cross the river. I want to go across, but I am old and my bones hurt. Lie down in the water for me so I can cross.'

Blue Heron was angry. He didn't like being called a bridge. Old Wolf saw he had spoken foolish words and decided to use honeyed words.

'You are big and strong, Blue Heron, and that is why your body is such a fine bridge. You could carry me across like a feather.'

Blue Heron smiled at Wolf and said, 'Old Wolf, get on my back and I'll carry you across.'

Wolf grinned from ear to ear thinking how easily he had tricked Blue Heron.

He jumped on the bird's back and Heron went into the rushing river. When he got to the middle, he stopped.

'Friend Wolf,' said Blue Heron, 'you made a mistake. I am not strong enough to carry you across. For that you need two herons. I can carry you only halfway. Now you must get another heron to carry you the rest of the way.'

He gave his body a strong twist and Wolf fell into the water.

'You wait here, Wolf, for another heron to come and carry you to the other side.' Then he flew into the marsh.

The water ran swiftly. No heron came, so where did Wolf go? To the bottom of the river...

Since that day, no wolf has ever trusted a heron.

-- Algonquin Legend, thanks to Jim Speirs

THE GREAT FATHER MOSQUITO

One time there lived a giant Mosquito. He was bigger than a bear and more terrifying. When he flew through the air, the Sun couldn't be seen and it became dark as night. The zooming of his wings was wilder than a storm. And when he was hungry, he would fly into a camp and carry off an Indian or two and pick their bones clean.

Again and again the Tuscarora tried to destroy the wild beast but their arrows fell off him like dew drops off a leaf. They did not know what to do.

So the chief and the medicine men in the tribe ordered a big meeting to pray to the Great Father in Heaven to take pity on them and help them destroy the monster Mosquito. They burned great fires and they sang, and they danced and they prayed.

The Great Father in Heaven, the Sky Holder, heard their loud cry for help and decided to come to their rescue. He came down from the sky, looking for the monster to do battle with him and destroy him.

The great Mosquito heard this and he knew he could not beat the Sky Holder, so he decided to run away. He flew and he flew and he flew so fast no one could see him. He was faster than lightning. The only sound was the wild zooming of his wings through the air. But Sky Holder was after him just as fast.

The giant monster flew around lakes, over rivers and over mountains toward the East. Sky Holder kept after him, never tiring.

When Sun was going down in a red mist at the end of the sky, the great monster came to the large lakes of the East. He turned to look and saw the Great Father was coming nearer.

Swiftly and wildly, at the speed of eagles, the monster flew toward the Salt Lake and there the Sky Holder reached him. The battle was short and the monster Mosquito was destroyed. His blood spattered and flew in all directions. And... a strange thing happened. From the blood were born small mosquitoes with sharp stingers.

No sooner were they born than they attacked Sky Holder without fear. They stung him so hard he was sorry for what he had done, but he could not undo it. These small mosquitoes with the sharp stingers multiplied a thousand fold.

It happened long ago, but to this day we have thousands of mosquitoes with sharp stingers.

-- Tuscarora Legend, thanks to Jim Speirs

THE ESKIMO INDIAN AND HIS FOX WIFE

Far up in the cold North, where winds blow sharply and snow falls thickly, an Indian hunter lived all alone. His only friends were Sun, Wind, Snow and Stars.

When he got up in the morning, he had to prepare his own food and clean his house. When he came home, he had to scrape his own skin- clothing and his skin-boots and hand them out to dry. And he had to do his own cooking and washing. It was not an easy life for him.

One day, when daylight was sinking into darkness, he came home and stopped at his door. To his great surprise, everything was in order as it had never been before. The earthen floor was swept and the food in the pot was steaming hot and ready to eat. Everything was in order as if a good wife had done it.

Who had done it ? He looked all over - everywhere - inside and outside. There was no one around. He ate the good food and lay down to sleep, wondering who had done this good deed for him.

The next morning he went out to hunt as he always did, and when he came home... he found his home all in fine order again, and his food was ready for him - just as the day before. His skin- clothing was scraped and his boots were hanging up to dry. Again he looked and looked to find who was so kind to him, but he couldn't find tracks anywhere. He just couldn't understand it.

Day after day the hunter found his house and clothes cared for. Then he said to himself, "I must find out who does all these things for me. Only a good wife would do it and I have no wife. Who can it be? I must find the person."

Next morning he went out hunting as he always did, but he only went a little distance and then turned back and hid near the house to watch.

Pretty soon a sleek fox with a long red tail came loping along. It ran right up to the house and went in.

"That fox is going into my house to steal my food," the Indian said to himself.

He crept up to his house and looked in, ready to slay the fox. But when he saw what was there, he stopped in great surprise.

Right in the middle of the room there was a beautiful girl, dressed in the finest skin-clothes he had ever seen. And on the wall he saw hanging... the skin of a fox!

"Who are you?" the Indian cried. "What are you doing here? Why do you clean my house? Did you cook my food? Is it you who cleaned my skins and boots ?"

"Yes, I have cleaned this house and cooked your food. I have scraped these skins and dried your boots. I have done what I do well," the beautiful girl said. "Now you see how life can be made easier. I hope you are please. I do what I can do well. Then I feel happy and proud."

"I am pleased," said the hunter. "Will you stay with me all the time? I would be proud to share this life and my home with you. Then I too could do what I do well."

"Very well, I will stay. But you must promise never to complain about me, or to ask from where I came."

The hunter promised. From then on, they were happy to be together as husband and wife. He did the hunting while she prepared the skins and took care of their home.

Everything was fine. They were good and hard workers.

One day, the man smelled a strange, musky odor that he did not like.

"Woman," the man said, "there is a strange, musky odor in the house since you have come here. You must have brought it with you."

"Yes, it came with me, and it is a good smell."

"Where have you brought it from?" asked the hunter.

"You have broken the promises you made! You said you would not complain about me. And you promised not to ask from where I came. Now I must leave you."

The woman threw away her skin-dress and put on her fox skin that had been hanging on the wall. Then she slipped out of the house as a fox.

From that time on, the man lived alone. He had to do everything himself, just as before the Fox Woman had come to him. And she never returned.

-- Labrador Eskimo Legend, thanks to Jim Speirs

THE LOON

The Indians in the Pacific Northwest traveled mainly by water, because the forest were so thick it was difficult to travel by land. This story tells how they were able to find their way back to shore.

One day, a little girl went deep into the forest. She walked until she found a family of loons. She stopped and played with the loons. In fact, she stayed for several days, becoming good friends with the loons. They taught her many things. But, soon, she new it was time to return to her family, so she said good bye and returned to her village.

In time, this little girl grew to be a Mother and then Grandmother. One day she was out in a canoe with her two Grandchildren. All of the sudden the fog rolled in. [pause] They couldn't see the shore. [pause] They heard a splashing off in the distance. [pause] The children thought it was a sea monster. [pause] But, the Grandmother new it was something far worse. [pause] It was hunters from a tribe farther north. If they captured them, they would take them as slaves. The children would never see their family or village again.

The Grandmother told the children to get down in the canoe and be quiet. The other canoe passed by them with out seeing them. The children were still hiding in the bottom of the canoe. But, how would they find their way back to the village? [pause] How would the avoid the hunters in the other canoe?

The Grandmother started to sing. This was a strange song. The Grandmother sung often, and the children new all of her songs. They thought. The children looked up. Where their Grandmother had been sitting, there was a giant loon. It spread its wings and flew out of the canoe. It circled the canoe and then flew off. The children watched it fly off into the fog. Soon, the loon returned and circled again. When it left, this time, the children followed it. It lead them safely back to their village. For you see, only the loon has eyes that can see though the fog.

When the Grandmother was a girl, playing with the loons, they thought her a song. If see ever sang that song, [pause] she would change into a loon [pause] FOREVER. So when the Indians were canoeing in the fog, they always listen for Grandmother loon to guide them back to shore.

-- Thanks to Chief Lalooska, recorded from memory by Rick Clements

THE RAVEN

Long ago, near the beginning of the world. Gray Eagle was the guardian of the sun and moon and stars, of fresh water, and of fire. Gray Eagle hated people so much that he kept these things hidden. People lived in darkness, without fire and without fresh water.

Gray Eagle had a beautiful daughter, and Raven fell in love with her. At that time Raven was a handsome young man. He changed himself into a snow-white bird, and as a snow-white bird he pleased Gray Eagle's daughter. She invited him to her father's lodge.

When Raven saw the sun and the moon and the stars and fresh water hanging on the sides of Eagle's lodge, he knew what he had to do. He waited for his chance to seize them when no one was watching.

He stole all of them, and a brand of fire also, and he flew out of the lodge through the smoke hole.

As soon as Raven got outside, he hung the sun up in the sky. It made so much light that he was able to fly far out to an island in the middle of the ocean. When the sun set, he fastened the moon up in the sky and hung the stars around in different places. By this new light he kept on flying, carrying with him the fresh water and the brand of fire he had stolen.

He flew back over land. When he had reached the right place, he dropped all the water he had stolen. It fell to the ground and there became the source of all the fresh-water streams and lakes in the world.

Then Raven flew on, holding the brand of fire in his bill. The smoke from the fire blew back over his white feathers and made them black. When his bill began to burn, he had to drop the firebrand. It struck the rocks and went into the rocks. That is why, if you strike two stones together, fire will drop out.

Raven's feathers never became white again after they were blackened by the smoke from the firebrand. That is why Raven is now a black bird.

-- This story is from a tribe in the Puget Sound area recorded in Indian Legends of the Pacific Northwest

GHOST STORIES

HE WHO FOLLOWS ME

This is a ghost story I taped from an old-time radio program. I didn't tape the credits, but I know the name of it is He Who Follows Me, adapted for radio by Richard Thorn. I find an old diary at a flea market for about fifty cents, and copied the story down into it. I then take it to camp with my troop and tell them it is the diary of my late great Uncle Bill. Then, I simply start reading it to them. Granted, much of this is too detailed to be part of someone's REAL diary, but the Scouts are wrapped up in the story too much to notice.

March 3, 1938

Today, Helen and I came across one of the delightful old southern mansions. We decided to stop and make a study of the place. Helen was especially interested in taking some color pictures to illustrate our lecture series in the fall.

Although no one was home, we felt that no one would mind us taking a look around the place. We both felt it a shame that the owners let the place rundown. It was probably beautiful in its day. It could still be renovated, but not without a lot of money being spent.

After some shots of the house from the front and side, I noticed a building in back of the house. No one was to stop us, so we moved back there to take a look. The grounds of the back was more shabby than the front, but seeing how much needed done, it would be impossible without major construction work. Part of the mansion was still livable, though not very secure.

The building we were nearing didn't seem so worn down. It was in remarkably fine condition. It was built a lot later than the house was, I estimated it as no more than twenty years old. It was made of stone, gray stone. Somebody probably had lived in the old house not too long ago, and during that time constructed this building. But we both still felt it a shame that they let what must have been a wonderful place rundown like this.

We both stopped in front of the stone building. Helen made the observation that it didn't have any windows, something I had noticed too. I told her it was probably used for storage. It was then that Helen pointed to the broken padlock on the door. Our curiosity getting the best of us, we decided to check inside, to make sure everything was all right.

The massive heavy iron door swung open reluctantly. We stepped inside. Although there were no windows, light entered the structure through a skylight in the ceiling. The cold, damp musty air chilled our bones. Helen looked around the room, and laid her eyes on a large stone block in the middle of the floor, right where the light was coming down from the skylight. This was not a storehouse by any stretch of the imagination. This was a mausoleum, and the stone case on the floor was a sarcophagus, a stone coffin. There was nothing else in there, but Helen, and I to an extent, felt crowded.

Helen wanted to get a picture of the sarcophagus, with the light laying over. We didn't think there was enough light for our camera, but we decided to try.

After the first shot, we heard movement outside and a man yell to us. I explained that we saw that the lock was broken and decided to explore. He told us that he wasn't mad, but that we still shouldn't of came in here, because "he" wouldn't like it. When I pressed the man to tell me who "he" was, he answered "the thing that sleeps in that stone coffin."

"This man must be crazy," I thought. He asked us why we didn't pay attention to the warning. Not knowing what he meant, he took us outside and showed us the writing above the door. "IF YOU ENTER HERE, INTO THE REALM OF DEATH, I SHALL FOLLOW YOU, AND BRING HIM WITH ME." He said it was a shame that we didn't see it, because we didn't know what we were getting ourselves into.

I once again apologized and told him we didn't want any legal trouble. He said we were already in enough trouble, none of it being legal, because it didn't matter to "him." This time, Helen asked about "him," and the man went into his story. "They called him Mr. Thomas when he was livin'. They call him The Dead that Walks now that he's dead. He cam to get that name because people around he 'as seen 'em, at night. He is dead, but they did see him walkin'. I know, cause I seen him myself." "I know you ain't believin' what I'm tellin' ya. I don't care

what you believe. But you listen to what I'm sayin' now. If I was you I'd get as far away from this place as I could. Not just this place, but this town, this part of the country."

I didn't understand the urgency, so the man continued with the story, hoping to convince us.

"Old Thomas came from some place in Europe. I say "Old," but he really wasn't old. Just seemed that way. He bought the house and grounds here and had them cleaned up, till the place looked like it was brand new. Then he started buildin' this here buildin'."

"There was something funny 'bout Thomas; somethin' in his eyes. Made ya frightened of him. His eyes, they looked like the eyes of a dead man."

"He never acted like anyone I ever knew. He was always talking about death, always tellin' me how he could come back after death. I was the caretaker then, just like I am now."

"After this building was completed, I use to watch him at night. He'd come out here. It seemed as though he was in some sort of trance. He'd stay out here for hours. And when he'd come back to the house his eyes would glisten and shine, so you couldn't hardly look at him."

"A week before he died, he told me that as long as I live, I was to take care of this place. 'Cause if I didn't he'd come back an kill me. Then he died. Just like that. He was put in here, in that coffin."

"One night, about two months later when the moon was full, I heard a noise. And when I had come out to look I saw the door to this place open, and him come out. I could hear his footsteps, something queer and draggin'-like. Then he turned around, and I could see his face in the moonlight: pale and pasty. Sick lookin'. Those eyes of his seemed like to burning coals of fire."

"He seemed to be lookin' at me. I heard him say, 'They have disturbed me, and the moon has awakened me. I shall follow them.' That's what he said. I heard him just as straight as your hearin' me. And then, he vanished into the night."

"Towards morning, I heard his footsteps again. I heard that big iron door closin'. And I knew he was back."

"The next day I heard Ralph Cummins died the night before, screaming something about not meanin' to go into the mausoleum. I knew who killed him."

"This has happened again and again for the last ten years since he's been dead. Folks around hear say he'll follow you around wherever you go if you come inside here."

"Why haven't you been killed?" I asked, thinking I have caught him in his lie.

"Cause he needs me, Hee hee. He ain't gonna kill me. But if I was you, I get out of this part of the country."

March 3, Later.

I sit here and write these words. It is late and the moon has risen full in the sky. Helen is standing by the window looking out.

For some reason, I am frightened. Yet I know that a few months from now I will laugh at the memory of my fright. However, in the morning, I do believe that we will leave this place. Helen is glad. She doesn't not believe the caretaker's story, but she is concerned, just as I.

March 3, Still Later.

When I joined Helen at the window, a husky man appeared on the street below. He looked up at us.

The thing I noticed first was his face. Pale and pasty looking. Helen was startled by his eyes -- two bright coals of fire, just as the caretaker had described.

The man down in the street, whomever he was, left after about ten minutes. He has given us quite a fright. If I had felt any doubts as to whether we should leave this place they have all been dispelled now. I don't know what to believe.

Helen has just gone to bed. I think I shall do the same.

March 4, 1938.

Upon settling down to sleep last night, we heard footsteps coming from the room above us. I called down to the desk clerk, who only told us that the room above ours was unoccupied.

We left the hotel a short time after hearing the steps. We went immediately to our car and drove all night and all day.

We are stopping now in a motel almost one-thousand miles away. It is reassuring to know that he cannot possibly follow us.

I am very tired. I will go to bed and get an early start in the morning.

March 5, 1938.

Last night was not very comforting either. We heard the same footsteps outside our room, and Helen saw the man's face at the window.

This morning when I went into pay the bill, the man who owns the motel said that a strange pasty-faced man had been in earlier and told him to tell me that he would follow me.

March 11, 1938.

It is impossible to get any material together that will help me in my work. Everywhere we go, he's there also.

March 16, 1938.

The clerk told us this guy had said it was OK for us to go ahead because he was going to follow us.

March 22, 1938.

He left a message with the lady at the desk lady telling us that he would be in touch.

April 7, 1938.

He left another message at the desk. The manager had the nerve to ask me if he was a friend of ours.

April 18, 1938.

Another disturbing night without sleep. More footsteps from the hall outside.

April 29, 1938.

Expecting it when we went to check out this morning, I asked the clerk if there were any messages. The clerk said a husky man in a white suit came by and said he'd follow us.

May 15, 1938.

I don't know what to do anymore. We cannot stop for the night without him showing up. The only sleep we get anymore is in the car while on the road.

May 30, 1938.

Helen and I argued again today. Since we've been on the run, that seems to be all that we can do. She suggested we go home. I fear that he will stalk us there, too. She felt it was the only place left to turn. I didn't know what to do or say, so we left for home.

June 23, 1938.

We arrived home this evening. I called Gary as soon as we got home. He said he'd be out within the hour to see us.

June 24, 1938.

Gary wasn't able to help us in any way. I did not really expecting any help. I was hoping he would be able to offer some concrete suggestion as to what to do. However, last night was the first night in months that we haven't been aware of his presence.

Maybe Helen is right. Perhaps he won't follow us here.

July 3, 1938.

We have not seen, nor heard, anything unusual since we first came home. I feel as a man might feel who has been given a new lease on life.

July 10, 1938.

Still nothing.

August 19, 1938.

For the past two months, a feeling of peace and security has enveloped the house. Helen and I have been able to go around with no sense of danger or dread. But last night that feeling was shattered...

[At this point I tell them a clipping from the newspaper was inserted into the diary. It was a clipping of a funeral notice for my Great Aunt Helen. It was, of course, too old and fragile to bring on the camp out. (WINK WINK.)]

According to one of their family friends (Gary?) my Great Uncle Bill went upstairs to investigate some footsteps, leaving my Great Aunt Helen downstairs alone.

When he got to the room that the noise came from, he found it empty. Going back downstairs, he found Helen, dead, with her eyes wide open.]

August 23, 1938.

I sit here in the empty house, writing this. I know that Thomas will come for me too. I write this in the hope that someone will find it. Read it. And maybe understand my death.

It is lonely here. Yet, suddenly I feel as if I am not alone. Someone is hear with me.

He is here, in this room with me. I am afraid to turn to meet him. Those eyes of his burning in to me. Yet, I must. I pray that someone reads this. Perhaps he will

[The August 23 entry was the last he ever made. I simply close the diary and let the scouts wonder. I simply tell them that my Uncle Bill was found just like my aunt. The coroner could not determine a cause of death, but our family knows what killed him -- The Dead that Walks. --

THE CREMATION OF SAM MCGEE

by Robert Service

There are strange things done in the midnight sun
By the men who toil for gold,
And the Arctic trails have their secret tales
That would make your blood run cold.
The northern lights have seen queer sights,
But the queerest they ever did see
Was the night on the marge of Lake LaBarge
I cremated Sam McGee.

Now, Sam McGee was from Tennessee
Where the cotton blooms and blows.
Why he left his home in the south to roam
'Round the pole, God only knows.
He was always cold, but the land of gold
Seemed to hold him like a spell,
Though he'd often say, in his homely way,
He'd sooner live in hell.

On a Christmas day we were mushing our way
Over the Dawson Trail.
Talk of your cold--through the parka's fold
It stabbed like a driven nail.
If our eyes we'd close, then the lashes froze
'Till sometimes we couldn't see.
It wasn't much fun, but the only one
To whimper was Sam McGee.

And that very night as we lay packed tight
In our robes beneath the snow,
And the dogs were fed, and the stars o'erhead
Were dancing heel and toe,
He turned to me, and "Cap", says he,
"I'll cash in this trip, I guess,
And if I do, I'm asking that you
Won't refuse my last request."

Well, he seemed so low I couldn't say no,
And he says with a sort of moan,
"It's the cursed cold, and it's got right hold
'Till I'm chilled clean through to the bone.
Yet 'ta'nt being dead, it's my awful dread
Of the icy grave that pains,
So I want you to swear that, foul or fair,
You'll cremate my last remains."

A pal's last need is a thing to heed,
And I swore that I would not fail.
We started on at the streak of dawn,
But, God, he looked ghastly pale.
He crouched on the sleigh, and he raved all day
Of his home in Tennessee,
And before nightfall, a corpse was all
That was left of Sam McGee.

There wasn't a breath in that land of death
As I hurried, horror driven,
With a corpse half hid that I couldn't get rid
Because of a promise given.
It was lashed to the sleigh, and it seemed to say,
"You may tax your brawn and brains,
But you promised true, and it's up to you
To cremate those last remains."

Now, a promise made is a debt unpaid,
And the trail has its own stern code.
In the days to come, 'though my lips were dumb,
In my heart, how I cursed the load.
In the long, long night by the lone firelight
While the huskies 'round in a ring
Howled out their woes to the homeless snows
Oh, God, how I loathed the thing.

And every day that quiet clay
Seemed to heavy and heavier grow.
And on I went, though the dogs were spent
And the grub was getting low.
The trail was bad, and I felt half mad,
But I swore I would not give in,
And often I'd sing to the hateful thing,
And it hearkened with a grin.

'Till I came to the marge of Lake LaBarge,
And a derelict there lay.
It was jammed in the ice, and I saw in a trice
It was called the "Alice May".
I looked at it, and I thought a bit,
And I looked at my frozen chum,
Then, "Here", said I, with a sudden cry,
"Is my crematorium."

Some planks I tore from the cabin floor
And lit the boiler fire.
Some coal I found that was lying around
And heaped the fuel higher.
The flames just soared, and the furnace roared,
Such a blaze you seldom see.
Then I burrowed a hole in the glowing coal
And I stuffed in Sam McGee.

Then I made a hike, for I didn't like
To hear him sizzle so.
And the heavens scowled, and the huskies howled,
And the wind began to blow.
It was icy cold, but the hot sweat rolled
Down my cheek, and I don't know why,
And the greasy smoke in an inky cloak
Went streaking down the sky.

I do not know how long in the snow
I wrestled with gristly fear.
But the stars came out, and they danced about
'Ere again I ventured near.
I was sick with dread, but I bravely said,
"I'll just take a peek inside.
I guess he's cooked, and it's time I looked",
And the door I opened wide.

And there sat Sam, looking calm and cool
In the heart of the furnace roar.
He wore a smile you could see a mile,
And he said, "Please close that door.
It's fine in here, but I greatly fear
You'll let in the cold and storm.
Since I left Plumbtree down in Tennessee
It's the first time I've been warm."

There are strange things done in the midnight sun
By the men who toil for gold,
And the Arctic trails have their secret tales
That would make your blood run cold.
The northern lights have seen queer sights,
But the queerest they ever did see
Was the night on the marge of Lake LaBarge
I cremated Sam McGee.

THE WITCH OF COOS

Robert Frost

I staid the night for shelter at a farm Behind the mountain, with a mother and son, Two old-believers. They did all the talking.

MOTHER. Folks think a witch who has familiar spirits She could call up to pass a winter evening, But won't, should be burned at the stake or something. Summoning spirits isn't "Button, button, Who's got the button," I would have them know.

SON. Mother can make a common table rear And kick with two legs like an army mule.

MOTHER. And when I've done it, what good have I done? Rather than tip a table for you, let me Tell you what Ralle the Sioux Control once told me. He said the dead had souls, but when I asked him How could that be--I thought the dead were souls, He broke my trance. Don't that make you suspicious That there's something the dead are keeping back? Yes, there's something the dead are keeping back.

SON. You wouldn't want to tell him what we have UP attic, mother?

MOTHER. Bones--a skeleton.

SON. But the headboard of mother's bet is pushed Against the attic door: the door is nailed. It's harmless. Mother hears it in the night Halting perplexed behind the barrier Of door and headboard. Where it wants to get is back into the cellar where it came from.

MOTHER. We'll never let them, will we, son! We'll never!

SON. It left the cellar forty years ago And carried itself like a pile of dishes Up one flight from the cellar to the kitchen, Another from the kitchen to the bedroom, Another from the bedroom to the attic, Right past both father and mother, and neither stopped it. Father had gone upstairs; mother was downstairs. I was a baby: I don't know where I was.

MOTHER. The only fault my husband found with me-- I went to sleep before I went to bed, Especially in winter when the bed Might just as well be ice and the clothes snow. The night the bones came up the cellar-stairs Toffile had gone to bed alone and left me, But left an open door to cool the room off So as to sort of turn me out of it. I was just coming to myself enough To wonder where the cold was coming from, When I heard Toffile upstairs in the bedroom And thought I heard him downstairs in the cellar. The board we had laid down to walk dry-shod on When there was water in the cellar in spring Struck the hard cellar bottom. And then someone Began the stairs, tow footsteps for each step, The way a man with one leg and a crutch, Or a little child, comes up. It wasn't Toffile: It wasn't anyone who could be there. The bulkhead double-doors were double-locked And swollen tight and buried under snow. The cellar windows were banked up with sawdust And swollen tight and buried under snow. It was the bones. I knew them--and good reason. My first impulse was to get to the knob And hold the door. But the bones didn't try The door; they halted helpless on the landing, Waiting for things to happen in their favor. The faintest restless rustling ran all through them. I never could have done the thing I did If the wish hadn't been too strong in me To see how they were mounted for this walk. I had a vision of them put together Not like a man, but like a chandelier. So suddenly I flung the door wide on him. A moment he stood balancing with emotion, And all but lost himself. (A tongue of fire Flashed out and licked along his upper teeth. Smoke rolled inside the sockets of his eyes.) Then he came at me with one hand outstretched, The way he did in life once; but this time I struck the hand off brittle on the floor, And fell back from him on the floor myself. The finger-pieces slid in all directions. (Where did I see one of those pieces lately? Hand me my button-box-it must be there.) I sat up on the floor and shouted, "Toffile, It's coming up to you." It had its choice Of the door to the cellar or the hall. It took the hall door for the novelty, And set off briskly for so slow a thing, Still going every which way in the joints, though, So that it looked like lightning or a scribble, From the slap I had just now given its hand. I listened till it almost climbed the stairs From the hall to the only finished bedroom, Before I got up to do anything; Then ran and shouted, "Shut the bedroom door, Toffile, for my sake!" "Company?" he said, "Don't make me get up; I'm too warm in bed." So lying forward weakly on the handrail I pushed myself upstairs, and in the light (The kitchen had been dark) I had to own I could see nothing. "Toffile, I don't see it. It's with us in the room though. It's the bones." "What bones?" "The cellar bones--out of the grave." That made him throw his bare legs out of bed And sit up by me and take hold of me. I wanted to put out the light and see If I could see it, or else mow the room, With our arms at the level of our knees, And bring the chalk-pile down. "I'll tell you what-- It's looking for another door to try. The uncommonly deep snow has made him think Of his old song, The Wild Colonial Boy, He always used to sing along the tote-road. He's after an open door to get out- doors. Let's trap him with an open door up attic." Toffile agreed to that,

and sure enough, Almost the moment he was given an opening, The steps began to climb the attic stairs. I heard them. Toffile didn't seem to hear them. "Quick!" I slammed to the door and held the knob. "Toffile, get nails." I made him nail the door shut, And push the headboard of the bed against it. Then we asked was there anything Up attic that we'd ever want again. The attic was less to us than the cellar. If the bones liked the attic, let them have it. Let them stay in the attic. When they sometimes Come down the stairs at night and stand perplexed Behind the door and headboard of the bed, Brushing their chalky skull with chalky fingers, With sounds like the dry rattling of a shutter, That's what I sit up in the dark to say-- To no one any more since Toffile died. Let them stay in the attic since they went there. I promised Toffile to be cruel to them For helping them to be cruel once to him.

SON. We think they had a grave down in the cellar.

MOTHER. We know they had a grave down in the cellar.

SON. We never could find out whose bones they were.

MOTHER. Yes, we could too, son. Tell the truth for once. They were a man's his father killed for me. I mean a man he killed instead of me. The least I could do was to help dig their grave. We were about it one night in the cellar. Son knows the story: but 'twas not for him To tell the truth, suppose the time had come. Son looks surprised to see me end a lie We'd kept all these years between ourselves So as to have it ready for outsiders. But tonight I don't care enough to lie-- I don't remember why I ever cared. Toffile, if he were here, I don't believe Could tell you why he ever cared himself. . .

She hadn't found the finger-bone she wanted Among the buttons poured out in her lap. I verified the name next morning: Toffile. The rural letter-box said Toffile Lajway.

WHITE EYES

In fact, there's a Boy Scout camp not far from where this occurred.

The San Bernardino Mountains contains a lot of wilderness regions which saw substantial activity about 100 years ago. Here, miners and loggers worked to bring materials down to the Los Angeles basin. But, like most industries of that time, there was a high profit motive, and workers lives were not as important as they were now.

One day, a mine tunnel collapsed, trapping a number of men within. They were able to survive, after a fashion, by drinking water which seeped into the tunnels, eating rats, mushrooms, and their dead co-workers. They worked from within to dig themselves out, confident that on the other side, others were digging from the outside in. Well, maybe not that confident, since the mining company was not known for its compassion.

Well, it took them a while, but they finally managed to dig themselves out. Then, the formerly trapped miners found two surprises. First, since they had lived in darkness for a long period of time, they could no longer stand the sunlight, and their eyes were pure white---no color except for their pupils, which were dilated. Second, not one man had lifted a shovel to dig them out.

They then made a pact, these men, to take revenge on those who had abandoned them. Soon after, mysterious instances of men being killed in the mountains occurred. These men were usually found mauled, bloody and torn. Close examination showed the teeth marks on them were from human teeth. One man was even beaten by his arm which had been torn off at the shoulder.

Soon thereafter, the mining company went out of business: No one was willing to work in those mountains, and even groups of men at night were at risk. Rumor had it that the White-Eyes were out for blood.

Now, since this happened about 100 years ago, and since only men were working in the mines, there should be no more White-Eyes around. So, we're safe---or are we? Several years ago, a hiker was found mauled on the trail, with human teeth marks.

Embellish the story as you wish! You may even want to adapt it to your locale. But beware---when I told this story to a group of campers at summer camp once, some boys (in my troop, first timers, and other troops there) were scared out of their wits, especially since it occurred so close to where they were at.

-- Thanks to Mas Sayano Assistant Scoutmaster, Los Angeles Area Council

WRAP WRAP WRAP

Like many of you, I was brought up with the ghost story by the campfire. We waited anxiously to hear another good one. (I must say that this was before such movies as Freddie came on -- Movies weren't that bold yet.)

Being on the other end of the campfire, I find myself mixed. When a SM must stay up all night with a new scout because the story was too real puts it in a different light. Now, don't get me wrong. Out of the two troops that I've been associated with, both love the ghost stories.

However, we have adopted a philosophy in telling the stories. When the audience is populated with young scouts, we add parts to the story that break the mood somewhat, yet still give the thrill that the scouts seek. Then as the Scouts mature, work them into the good wall hangers.

As an example, I've enclosed a story that I've had good results with in many groups. I'll just hit the highlights here, then expand a little at the end.

----- story -----

A Troop sets camp in a secluded area by a lake in the mountains. Just at the edge of the clearing stands an old trapper's cabin. As all SM's do at the campfire, this SM tells the following tale:

Many years ago this land was sacred hunting ground for the (pick your tribe) Indians in this area. The game in this field was always plentiful -- until the white man came and built that cabin. The tribe elders were enraged at this encroachment, and sent their best warriors to oust the intruder.

The leader of the raiding party had seen this intruder, and knew him to be an old man with little spirit, so instead of harming him, they decided to scare him out. The Indian crept up to the house and gently wrapped on the wall.

This attracted the attention of the home owner, but finding nothing there, he went back to his work. Again the Indian wrapped on the wall. This cat and mouse game went on for the majority of the night. The white man was becoming afraid of this mystery noise, so he reached for the shotgun he kept over the mantle. The next time the Indian wrapped, the man was prepared and decapitated the Indian with a single shot. The tribe elders, on seeing how easily the white man conquered their best, banned all people from setting foot in their sacred hunting ground. To insure this, the medicine man called on the spirit of the be-headed warrior to guard the land. It is said that on dark rainy nights, the warrior can still be heard prowling around the old home.

Once the story was told, the SM bade the boys good night and all turned in.

As can happen on spring nights, a thunder cloud began to build and soon the campers found themselves in a wind that was taking the tents away, and drenching them with cold ice water. The leaders decided that the safest thing would be to seek shelter in the old house. The boys eagerly moved into the old house, except for the troop cook -- he was thinking of that old Indian and really didn't want any part of the house. So, just in case he took two of his biggest pans with him for protection.

The storm raged on, but the boys had settled down inside the cabin. Suddenly, a faint noise could be heard, wrap, wrap, wrap. Most of the boys didn't hear it, but the cook heard it well. Soon all the scouts were up listening to the wrap, wrap, wrap. The SM went over to the side where it appeared to be coming from and the noise stopped. (A number of cycles here to build up the suspense. However, the cook was given pans for a reason -- he's the skittish one of the group and is liable to swing at anything.) The noise has grown in volume and intensity, and the SM has realized that he must go outside and fix whatever is loose on the house. He takes the senior scouts with him, which unfortunately is the cook. (Suspenseful) they walk around the house and find that the wrapping noise is coming from a hole in the stone fireplace. The SM carefully inserts his hand into the hole and removes a roll of wrapping paper going wrap, wrap, wrap.

-end of story-

Now to expand on the concept. 1. The corny ending will take the stress off of the story, helping reinforce the thought that it is not real. Besides a laugh is a good thing to create at a campfire. 2. The whole story can be spiced up to make it as thrilling as you want. It won't take too much imagination and a little acting to keep them on the edge of their seats. 3. The cook is a pressure release in the story. He is very high strung and can swing at anything from his own shadow to the scoutmaster. Use him in humorous ways to take the edge off of the story as you go. 4. Taylor the story to your group. If your group is young and gullible, use the cook a little more. If they are seasoned campers, pour on the suspense. We usually find a good mix works wonders. Keep in mind

that young boys/girls can fix their minds on something like this very easily and they will not sleep in the wood, especially new Scouts.

You'll know you did well when you hear that catch phrase wrap, wrap, wrap echo around the camp for the next few days.

HUMOUROUS STORIES

A NIGHT NEAR THE TOOTH

I didn't EXACTLY stay on the Tooth of Time. We were running late when we stopped Shafer's Peak and the danger of walking fast down the narrow trail with sheer drops on each side in the falling darkness finally overcame us. We set up a dining fly in a wide spot and placed our packs (with little food) away from us. Some settled under the fly, and some under the stars.

Our scoutmaster and a couple of the boys took a miniature radio out to an overlook for a bit of news. It was to be an eventful night! One of the boys was prone to nose bleeding but had not had problems ... until now. In a fainting sway he nearly pitched over the side. Instead he body checked our small scoutmaster. With a yell that summoned two of us by name but in a tone that revealed the emergency, we jumped from our sleeping bags and (almost) streaked over to carry the boy back to his bag. He was fine.

As we slept, a deer or two came silently through our "camp" pausing astride one camper who awoke and missed seeing the stars! The sure footed animal moved on without incident (unlike burros near water!). We were sleeping peacefully despite a rising wind in the early morning darkness.

The wind had loosened a corner of our fly and it was flapping in the breeze. About that time, two hikers bound for sunrise on the tooth, heard the flapping and thought the shadows contained a hungry bear. As is procedure, they drew out their mess kits and clanged the pieces in a horrible racket to scare the bear! Our scoutmaster came out of his MUMMY bag without unzipping it! It scared US silly! We all thought we had a bear in our midst!

We were all a bit anxious about not making our designated camp but it simply was unsafe. Still, this story is repeated around our campfire with each new batch of scouts in our troop. OH, and we did get to see sunrise over the tooth!

-- Thanks to Andy Webb

CAMPFIRES

**From A Fine And Pleasant Misery
by Patrick F. McManus**

The campfire was of two basic kinds: the Smudge and the Inferno.

The Smudge was what you used when you were desperately in need of heat. By hovering over the Smudge the camper could usually manage to thaw ice from his hands before being kippered to death. The Inferno was what you always used for cooking. Experts on camp cooking claimed you were supposed to cook over something called "a bed of glowing coals." The "bed of glowing coals" was a fiction concocted by experts on camp cooking. As a result, the camp cook was frequently pictured, by artists who should have known better, as a tranquil man hunkered down by a bed of glowing coals, turning plump trout in the frying pan with the blade of his knife. In reality, the camp cook is a wildly distraught individual who charged though waves of heat and speared savagely with a long sharp stick a burning hunk of meat he had tossed on the grill from twenty feet away. Meat roasted over an Inferno was either raw or extra well done. The cook, if he was lucky, came out medium rare.

SECURITY GUYS

Two summers ago, when I was deputy director of the CIA, a friend and I traversed the Olympic Mountain Range in Washington State, hiking 70 miles north to south. Snow in August, ice axes in hand, fording rivers with ropes and in the swift current nearly being carried downstream pack and all; watching with middle-aged sadistic pleasure as my much younger security escorts struggle up the trail.

Or the summer before, canoeing 50 mile long Ross Lake in Washington near the Canadian border in overloaded canoes in a driving wind and rainstorm, foot high swells threatening to capsize us, wondering if we'd escape with our lives.

Then having the security guys, also struggling, paddle up alongside to report that they had a radio call from Washington ... and "could I get to a secure telephone?" This when I thought I might never even see the shore again.

But this message gave me a determination to survive ... if only to get back to Washington and find out who had placed that call.

-- Part of a story by Robert Gates, in Scouting Magazine

WESTERN STORIES

THE BALLAD OF JOHNNY O'DELL

Wild are the tales of the Pony Express
And most of them are true if I don't miss my guess.
But wildest of all tales that they tell
Is that of fearless young Johnny O'Dell.

Johnny was little, but he was a man
Whom none could outride, outshoot or outplan.
Ride, he could ride anything that could run
And could outdo any man with a gun.

Back in those days there were men in the West
And Johnny O'Dell was as good as the best.
Only the bravest could carry the mail
Through terrible dangers that haunted the trail.

Dangers there were on the night I describe,
For Johnny encountered an Indian tribe.
Blackie, his horse, gave a new burst of speed.
No Indian pinto could equal that steed.

Bullets and arrows whizzed over his head
As into the foe and right through them he sped.
Outlaws had raided the station ahead
The horses were stolen, his partner was dead.

Onward went Johnny over the trail.
For such was the life when you carry the mail
Rivers they forded for bridges there were none
While crossing one stream he was stopped by a gun.

"Halt!" cried a man on the bank of the creek-
As together they fired by the light of the sun.
Still lay the stranger whom Johnny had met,
For all that I know he is lying there yet.

Onward went Johnny into the West,
As a spot of crimson appeared on his vest.
Together they continued their hazardous ride,
The powerful horse with the brave man astride.

Into the town of Red Gulch did they go,
As blotches of blood marked their way through the snow.
This was the end of the perilous trail
Through bullets, and arrows; through blizzards and hail.

Johnny dismounted and cried with a wail,
"Oh, Darn it all, I've forgotten the mail!"

STORIES WITH A MORAL

IF ONLY ...

Won Lee was a stone cutter who lived in ancient China. He cut large stones and he cut small stones. He made them into ornaments for gardens. Some he cut to build houses. He was proud of his work, but sometimes he would think, "If only I had more money" or "If only I had less work."

One day, Won Lee was walking home from work. The sun was very hot and he was tired, so he sat down at the side of the road. He felt the heat of the sun and thought, "It's the sun that gives us the daylight, the warmth to grow our crops. Surely the sun must be the most powerful of all things."

Won Lee said quietly to himself, "God, if only I could be the sun. I would love to feel what it is like to be the most powerful, the greatest of all things."

God answered Won Lee. "You may become the sun." He said. And Won Lee became the sun. He felt wonderful; so strong and powerful. He shone down on the world far below.

After a few days, a puffy white cloud appeared in the sky. It drifted about and, when it came near Won Lee, it blotted out his rays and cast a shadow on the world. Won Lee was sad. Surely this cloud was more powerful than he? "If only I were the cloud. That would make me the greatest of all things," he said.

God heard, and again He answered: "Won Lee, you may become the cloud." So Won Lee floated about the sky feeling very grand.

One day, Won Lee saw a great black cloud coming his way. Soon it surrounded him, and he saw the black cloud dripping droplets of water. The drops fell on the earth and made a mighty river.

Won Lee thought that this black cloud must be very powerful to swallow up a cloud and turn itself into a river, so he said, "If only I were the river. How mighty I would be. Then I would be truly happy."

Again God heard and answered: "Okay. You may be the river."

So Won Lee flowed along, feeling the mighty rush of water. Then he came to a bend in the river. There was a great boulder jutting out into the river. The great boulder held the river, swirling it back on itself.

Won Lee thought, "The rock! The rock! At last I have found the mightiest of all things. If this rock can hold back the raging river, then it is the greatest. If only I were this great big rock, I would be happy."

So God made Won Lee into the boulder and he stood there, holding back the water and feeling very great and happy. Then, one day, along came a man who cut a large piece off the boulder. Won Lee was sad. No longer was he the greatest if this man could come along and cut him up.

"If only I could be the man who cut up the stone, I would surely be the greatest," Won Lee thought.

And God said to Won Lee: "But you are the Stone Cutter!"

-- Australian Scout magazine

WINTER CUB STORY

During our 1991 (Feb) winter camp, I was called to tell a story during campfire. The weather outside was bitterly cold (-25 Celsius) and the wind was howling. I hadn't given a story much thought, because I usually have one tucked away in the back of my mind for all occasions. This time I was stumped. After a couple milliseconds, the brain kicked in and the light went on. We were inside the main cabin for an indoor fire. I turned the lights down low, leaving only a small spotlight on the Wolf's head above the fireplace. I got a chair, turned it around & sat down on it backwards. The atmosphere was somber, and quiet. You could hear the wind howling outside.

-- Start of Story

Years ago, right here at this camp, a Cub pack, much like ours came out for the weekend. As with most every pack, there's always one Cub, who's much better than everyone else in his camping skills. This Pack had an exceptional Cub, who everyone looked up to, to help them out if they were having any problems. This Cub could walk farther than anyone else, catch bigger fish, make a better snow-fort to sleep in, start a fire with one match every time, could snowshoe faster than the leaders, and many more skills. Everyone would ask him for help, because he was so good. The leaders relayed on him to help teach all the Cub skills, and he did it with a smile on his face. Everyone liked him because he was so friendly.

Saturday night, he and a few of his friends decided to sleep outside in a snow fort. The Cub helped everyone to get settled, before turning in himself. The Camp Chief came out to check on them periodically, so no one would get cold. In the middle of the night, the Cub was awoken by the call to nature. He woke up a couple of his buddies to go with him, as he knew that no one should go anywhere without a buddy. His friends told him that since he was the best Cub in the pack, and knew so much, that there was no chance for something to go wrong. You all know, that flattery is great for one's ego, and this Cub was no different. He got dressed and ventured outside to one of the biffies, to complete his task.

After he had done, he got dressed again, and started back to his snow fort. But when he opened the door to the biffie, he saw that a storm had moved in. He started to return to his fort, but the tracks he had left had been blown over by the storm. He tried to find his way back, but the wind was driving the snow in his eyes and he couldn't see anything. He walked as fast as he could to where he thought the fort was, but he couldn't find it. He walked, and stumbled in the storm for what seemed a long time, when he realized he was in trouble. He remembered the first rule when lost in the winter: stop and build a fire. He found a spot to dig out a cave in a snow bank, and crawled in. He had an emergency kit with him, and quickly had a fire going.

The next morning, everyone awoke to find a clean, crisp layer of white snow had covered the camp. It didn't take long for the Cub's friends to realized that he was missing, and they ran to tell the rest of the camp. Everyone got dressed in their warmest clothes and quickly started a search party. They scoured the entire camp for hours, but couldn't find the Lost Cub. For the rest of the day, everyone searched for him. They called the police to help, but still couldn't find him. For days, search parties combed the area looking for the Cub, but he was never found.

It was a sad year for that Cub Pack. They had lost a great friend. In the Spring, they gathered again at the camp to search for the Cub's remains. Again, everyone searched everywhere, but couldn't find him.

I often walk through these woods at night, and often think about the Lost Cub. It's been said that if you are walking alone through these woods at night, you may feel a cold draft shiver down your back. It maybe the Lost Cub reminding you to get a BUDDY!

-- End of Story

I've told this story a couple other times, and have gotten the same re-action; sadness & remorse from all. It's really helped to emphasize the "buddy system" in our Pack. I still get questions from older Cubs - Was that story real? I never answer.

-- Thanks to Randy Carnduff

THE RABBI & THE SOAP MAKER

A Rabbi and a soap maker were walking along and the soap maker questioned the Rabbi by asking, "What good is religion? There's been religion for a long time, but people are still bad to each other"

The Rabbi was silent until they saw a boy who was dirty from playing in the street. The Rabbi asked the soap maker, "What good is soap? We've had soap for many, many years and people still get dirty"

The soap maker protested the comparison and insisted that the soap had to be used in order to keep people clean. "Exactly my point", said the Rabbi. "Religion", he said, "has to be applied in order to do anybody any good."

THE KOOLAMUNGA TEST

Long ago, somewhere in Africa, a little place called Koolamunga had a Scout troop but no Cub Pack. When the missionary, John Cristy, sent out word that he was going to start a pack, all the boys who were too young to be Scouts rushed over to join.

John looked out at rows and rows of faces - black, white, brown, yellow, and some so dirty you couldn't tell. It was impossible to start a pack with 40 or 50 Cubs ! "You can't be a Cub until you are eight," he said, "so would everybody younger please go home."

Nobody left. The six and seven-year-olds stood as tall as they could and tried to look tough. John realized he would have to sort them out some other way. So he told them the Cub Law. And then he said, "Next week, we will have an obstacle race. You can all come, but I shall start the pack with the 12 boys who do their best to keep the Law during the race."

A big crowd gathered on race day. The Scouts came along to help John pick his 12 Cubs. John designed an obstacle course so tough that it automatically eliminated the boys who were too young. The others had to run half a kilometer downhill to the river through prickles and a mangrove swamp with knee-deep mud. Then they had to swim across the river. On the other side, they had to climb a steep bank, go along the top, cross over the river again by a fallen tree bridge, and finally climb 300 m up the hill to the finish.

"This is not a race," John told them. "It's a test to see who can really do his best to keep the Cub Law." And he was already sorting them out. Some jabbered away and didn't listen to the rules. One put his foot over the starting line. "Ready, steady, GO!" John shouted, and off they went.

Very soon, some of them were yelling and swearing at the prickles. In the swamp, some gave up, pretending they were hurt. One boy thought he would be clever and sneak along the bank instead of swimming across the river.

A small boy caught his foot in a floating branch and thought it was a crocodile. John didn't blame him for yelling, but noticed a red-headed boy swim back to pull the branch free. Then he saw a white hand shoot out and duck a black head. That settled the white boy's chances, but the black face came up smiling and the boy swam on without complaint. On the tree bridge, there was a good deal of bumping, some by mistake and some by mistake-on-purpose.

Only 20 boys finished the race, and the first 12 home were sure they would be chosen. But the Scouts put aside those who had cheated or taken short cuts, those who had pretended to be hurt, and those who had sworn or lost their temper.

John chose only boys who had done their best to keep the Cub Law. There were 11 of them. For the 12th, he chose a boy named Peter who was watching but hadn't taken part in the race. John knew his mother was ill. She'd asked Peter to look after the younger children to make sure they didn't fall into the river, and he did it without a grumble.

And who do you think he asked to be his sixers ? He chose the red-haired boy who had turned back to help with the crocodile that wasn't a crocodile, and the black boy who came up smiling after being ducked.

And that's how the 1st Koolamunga Pack began. If you'd been there, would you have been one of the 12 chosen ?

-- Leader Magazine, January, 1989

MISCELLANEOUS STORIES

THE FARMER

There was this farmer who had many fields. And throughout all his fields, he worked very very hard at keeping all the animals away, and as such, out of his crops that he worked very very hard to plant.

And ... He was successful in keeping all the animals out. No birds, no deer, NOTHING got through all his wire fences and traps that he had set out to keep the animals out.

As time went on, this farmer got more and more lonely. So lonely as a matter of fact, that one day, he went out into his fields, held his arms out wide and called to all of the animals to come. He stood there all day and night with his arms out wide, calling to all the animals, but you know what, none of the animals came ... No, not one. ... And what was the reason none came?

All of the animals were afraid of the farmers ... new scarecrow out in the field.

-- Thanks to Brad George

HE DREW

This Poem was written by a Grade 12 Student who committed suicide some 2 weeks later.

He always wanted to explain things.

But no one cared.

So he drew.

Sometimes he would draw and it wasn't anything. He wanted to carve it in stone or write it in the sky. He would lie out on the grass and look up in the sky. And it would be only him and the sky and the things inside him that needed saying. And it was after that he drew the picture. It was a beautiful picture. He kept it under his pillow and would let no one see it. And he would look at it every night and think about it. And when it was dark, and his eyes were closed, he could still see it. And it was all of him. And he loved it. When he started school he brought it with him. Not to show anyone, but just to have it with him like a friend. It was funny about school. He sat in a square, brown desk. Like all the other square, brown desks. And he thought it should be red. And his room was a square brown room. Like all the other rooms. And it was tight and close. And stiff. He hated to hold the pencil and chalk, With his arm stiff and his feet flat on the floor, Stiff. With the teacher watching and watching. The teacher came and spoke to him. She told him to wear a tie like all the other boys. He said he didn't like them. And she said it didn't matter. After that they drew. And he drew all yellow and it was the way he felt about morning. And it was beautiful. The teacher came and smiled at him. "What's this?" she said. "Why don't you draw something like Ken's drawing? Isn't that beautiful?" After that his mother bought him a tie. And he always drew airplanes and rocket ships like everyone else. And he threw the old picture away. And when he lay alone looking at the sky, it was big and blue and all of everything. But he wasn't anymore. He was square inside And brown And his hands were stiff. And he was like everyone else. And the things inside him that needed saying didn't need it anymore. It had stopped pushing. It was crushed. Stiff. Like everything else.

-- Thanks to Heather McCaslin, Troop Scouter

SCOUTING STORIES

WEBELOS

Hear now the Webelos legend; The tale of the Webelos tribe; The tale of Akela its Chieftain.

'Hoo', called the owl in the darkness and Mowglie, the Indian boy Lay in his tipi and listened to the rustle of trees in the night.

'Boom' went the deep muffled beat of the great ceremonial drum; the braves of the tribe were convening, He wished he could answer that call.

Quick, like the flight of an arrow; Quiet, in the hush of the night; Before a great fire ring they gathered Awaiting Akela their Chief.

Here in the great council ring fire On top of the cliff there they met. Here often they come for decisions Here, too, the Great Spirit they sought.

Here they sought help from the Spirit On hunt or on warpath; in peace. Here they met their Chief Akela; Awaited his final decrees.

Now with the 'boom' of the big drum All was quiet, the night was quiet still. The great ceremonial fire, when lighted, illuminated the hill

The tom-toms began, set the rhythm, Akela stepped into the Ring. First low and slow, then ... like thunder... The beat as he danced near the fire.

Dancing with grace, full of gesture, In costume he told of his life. He told of the strength of his father, The powerful 'Arrow of Light'

'Kind Eyes' his mother, taught those things that only a mother can know. He once save her life with his arrow; His father helped fashion his bow.

The tom-toms beat on and his dance Told of trips to the forest, where wolf Taught him the ways of the wild life of the ground, of the tracks, ways to food.

Through dancing and gesture he told how he next faced the Bear and learned The meaning of Courage; and then He became a young Scout on the trail.

Akela, the Wise, closed his dance. By sign and by gesture he told How the Tribe can be strong only when The boys of the Tribe are quite strong.

He said this, 'The future is hidden But if we are strong and are brave, If we can teach our boys to be square, Our tribe will continue to be strong.'

"Let us name our tribe for the Bobcat, The Wolf and the Bear and the Scout, The Webelos Tribe we'll be called and The strongest of all we will be."

Akela thus ended his dance The beat of the tom-tom was stilled. In silence the warriors stood, Then gave the great guttural "HOW"!

The fire burned low, all was still. No sound broke the hush on the hill, Save the crackle of embers and all The mysterious half- noises of night.

The braves raised their right hand toward heaven. "Living Circle" was formed with their left. The Webelos pledge was then given; "To live and help live" was their pledge.

This, then, is the Webelos legend. This, then, is the reason they're strong. They honor the pledge which they make; "To live and help live" is their goal.

-- Arranged from the prose by Milton Klint, Salina, Kansas

AKELA'S TEST

I found this as a skit in a 1962 edition of The How To Book Of Cub Scouting. I modified it for an advancement ceremony. I changed the main character from Brave Heart to Akela. I also changed the events a little to fit the advancement ranks we had. I left it as a ceremony when I included it here. You can use it as a ceremony or change it into a story or skit.

Baloo: Akela had to pass a test to prove himself worthy of becoming chief. All the braves were given four arrows. These were special arrows, once they had been used they would shatter. They could only eat food they had caught themselves. The brave who stayed out the longest would become chief.

Akela: I walked far from camp and stopped at the side of a clearing. I waited all night for a deer to come by. I took careful aim and shot. It provided me with food for many days. Its hide provided me with clothing.

Baloo: This showed that Akela had learned the basic skills he needed. It also showed the virtue of patience. The rank of Bobcat indicates the Cub Scout has learned the basic skills. Will _____ come up and join us by the campfire. Your parents will join you later. _____ has earned his (their) Bobcat badge(s).

Akela: I walked along the trail near the stream. There, I came upon a friend laying in the trail. He had used up all his arrows and was starving. I saw a squirrel in a nearby tree. I wanted to save my arrows for bigger game, but my friend was starving. So, I shot the squirrel for my friend.

Baloo: This showed Akela had learned the value of friendship and that he was unselfish. The Wolf badge indicates the Cub Scout has learned new things as he travels the trail of Scouting. Will _____ come up and join us by the campfire. _____ has earned his (their) Wolf badge(s).

Akela: As I followed the trail by the stream, I came face to face with a huge bear. It growled and started running toward me. I strung my bow, took careful aim and when he was near I shot and killed him. He provided me with food for many more days. His heavy coat provided me with shelter from the cold nights.

Baloo: This showed Akela is brave. This is also why honor the Cubs at the next level of accomplishment with the Bear badge. Will _____ come up and join us by the campfire. _____ has earned his (their) Bear badge(s).

Akela: The hunt from the bear lasted for many days, but soon I had to continue on to search for more food. I came upon a wolf that had just killed a deer. The wolf saw me and ran off. I was hungry, but I had promised to only eat food I had killed, so I continued on.

Baloo: This showed Akela's honesty. To earn the Webelos badge, the Cub Scout must learn the Boy Scout law which includes honesty. Will _____ come up and join us by the campfire. _____ has earned his (their) Webelos badge(s).

Akela: I was many days from our camp. I needed food to give me the strength to make it back to camp. So, I tracked the wolf I had seen before. I took my last arrow, took careful aim and missed. I was scared because I had no food or arrows. As I started back to camp, I prayed to the great spirit. Suddenly, I saw the arrow; it was still whole. I followed the wolf's trail again. I took aim and shot him. I now had enough food to return home.

Baloo: Akela learned that sometimes you have to ask for help. Our Cub Scouts sometimes need help also. Their parents provide that help. So, will the parents please come up and stand behind their sons.

-- Thanks to Rick Clements, Cubmaster, Pack 225

STORY TELLING

These are general guidelines to try. It will take some trial and error to find what works for you. I've seen things work great for someone, but I have been unable to make them work. I have been able to adapt them and make them work.

WHEN TO TELL STORIES

The following suggestions are from Blair Madore.

- Only do it at camp, and not all the time. It keeps them wanting more.

- Never repeat a story. Never read a story (exception: the diary story that was posted earlier- great idea!). [At Webelos Resident Camp, I saw a story read with very good results. It was Cub Scouts by Patrick F. McManus. This is an other case of what works for you.]

- Wait for it to be very dark and the campfire to be nothing but embers. Insist on complete silence. When the story is over end the campfire. Send the scouts to bed immediately (or after a quick mug up).

- Never tell them "it's just a story". If they ask if it's true, try lines like "What do you think?"

CHOOSING A STORY

You can write your own story, use one that's written or modify a story that's written. But, the final story needs to fit both you and your audience. As the workbook The Entertaining Speaker from Toastmasters International says, "It should suit your personal style and outlook on life. If you aren't comfortable with a story or a set of funny lines, your material won't go over well as part of an entertaining speech."

If you are writing an entertaining story, your personal experiences are a good starting point, but you don't have to stick to the facts. You can stretch the facts, combine different events or even modify a joke to fit. Also, a story doesn't have to be funny to be entertaining; the ghost stories and the "Winter Cub Story" are entertaining by being dramatic.

If you are using an existing story, the workbook Storytelling from Toastmasters International offers the following points to consider.

- The age of the audience. Are your listeners adults, teenagers or children? Different age groups prefer different types of stories.

- The type of audience. Are your listeners boys, girls, men women?

- The social and intellectual levels of your listeners. Generally, younger children enjoy stories with plot and action. Older children and adults like stories with more humor and interplay with characters. All ages enjoy rhythm and movement of event in stories. Stories should be well paced, with few slow and no dull spots.

You also need to consider how your story will fit with other events. For example, if the story will be used at the beginning of a campfire, it should have a lot of excitement and energy. If the story will be used near the end, it should be quieter and more thoughtful.

Stories are usually better told than acted out. If you act them out they become more of a skit. I had the instructor at Pow Wow (a Cub Scout leader training session) tell us that it's better to just stand than incorporate any movement. My experience tends not to agree with that; gestures -- if they are natural -- add to the story.

The gestures also depend on the audience. A friend of mine, who is a seminary student, said he was taught that elementary school age children like more gestures and movement. That agrees with the following statement from Gestures: Your Body Speaks from Toastmasters International.

You may, on occasion, have to adapt your gestures to fit the size and nature of your audience. The larger the audience, the broader and slower your gestures should be. Young audiences are usually attracted to a speaker who uses vigorous gestures, but older, more conservative groups may feel irritated or threatened by a speaker whose physical actions are too powerful.