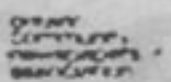


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The echo always has the last word

Some school children and adults are familiar with a game seldom played in school.

It is a fun, silly game that passes the time on a Friday afternoon — a time when the children are usually restless in anticipation of the coming weekend, and the teacher is drained from the past week.

The teacher instructs the children to sit in a circle before whispering something into the ear of a student. The child then repeats to the next student what the teacher whispered, who in turn retells the tale or statement, and this process is continued until each child has had an opportunity to hear his/her predecessor. When the last child has heard the tale, he or she is required to retell it aloud, so the whole class can hear the story.

Often, the children and the teacher laugh at the resulting story. It usually becomes twisted and embellished with additional information, and often original material has been left out. It is an entertaining game which makes the children giggle and laugh. The teacher laughs too, but not as loud.

The game is actually an exercise designed to teach the children the nature of rumours. The children come to realize hopefully how rumours, gossip and unfounded stories can grow from some harmless statement.

It can be argued that this benign sort of story-telling plays a positive part in developing a child's imagination, but only to a point. Most parents do instruct their children to tell the truth and reinforce the behaviour with both reprimands and praises.

Storytelling played a central role in the progress of humankind. Religious beliefs, traditions, the group's history and learned observations were discussed and shared among generations while members sat around the mystical camp fire. Long before pens and paper, yarns were spun and tales were told. The stories were usually untrue, but the idea behind each story was one that united or enhanced the group's beliefs and helped them to survive. Storytelling was an absolute necessity to a group's existence.



But what would happen if tomorrow all the adults went down to the beach, sat in a circle, and conducted the same exercise?

Or what would be the result if the teacher (let's call him/her the "elder") phoned up one group of adults and instructed them to pass on a story to other groups?

No longer is it necessary to "make the story bigger," or embellish a story to ensure that others will heed the message or idea of the story. As humankind progresses, knowledge and experience leaves storytelling for other functions.

Today, in many places, traditional storytelling has been replaced by useless, malignant, and maligning gossip. It makes one shake a bewildered head to hear some of the stories and innuendo circulating in this area.

See "Let's" on page 5

You are invited to write a letter to the editor.

The purpose of "Letters to the editor" is to provide a forum for public discussion on any subject. Your letter can state a fact, or present ideas or suggestions on any issue about which you or others feel strongly.

Letters are greatly encouraged; however, the editor reserves the right to edit content as a last resort if deemed necessary.

Address letters to:

Letter to the Editor
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P. O. Box 579
Terrace Bay, Ontario.
P0T 2W0

All letters must be signed.

Bombs and guns and Nuclear Subs

There's something about making weapons that brings out the true boneheadedness of man.

Consider the Lunge bomb.

It was an anti-tank weapon devised by some Japanese military genius back in the early days of the Second World War. The Lunge bomb consisted of a long spiked pole with a grenade attached to it. Theoretically a Japanese soldier would run up to a tank, ram a spiked pole into its flank (don't ask me how -- this ain't my concept) and retire to a safe bunker while the grenade did the rest. It was all academic anyway, since the safety pin had to be pulled before the soldier made his lunge. As soon as he rammed the grenade against the tank, it blew up -- and so did the soldier.

Russian strategists refined the idea with the Dog Bomb. They strapped mines onto dogs that had been trained to look for food underneath tanks. The dogs were taken to the front lines, pointed toward the advancing German tanks and told to "go fetch". Diabolical, da?

Diabolical nyet. The Soviets forgot that the dogs had been

trained to recognize Russian, not German tanks. The dogs did a U-turn, scampered under the Russian tanks behind the lines and blew them to smithereens.

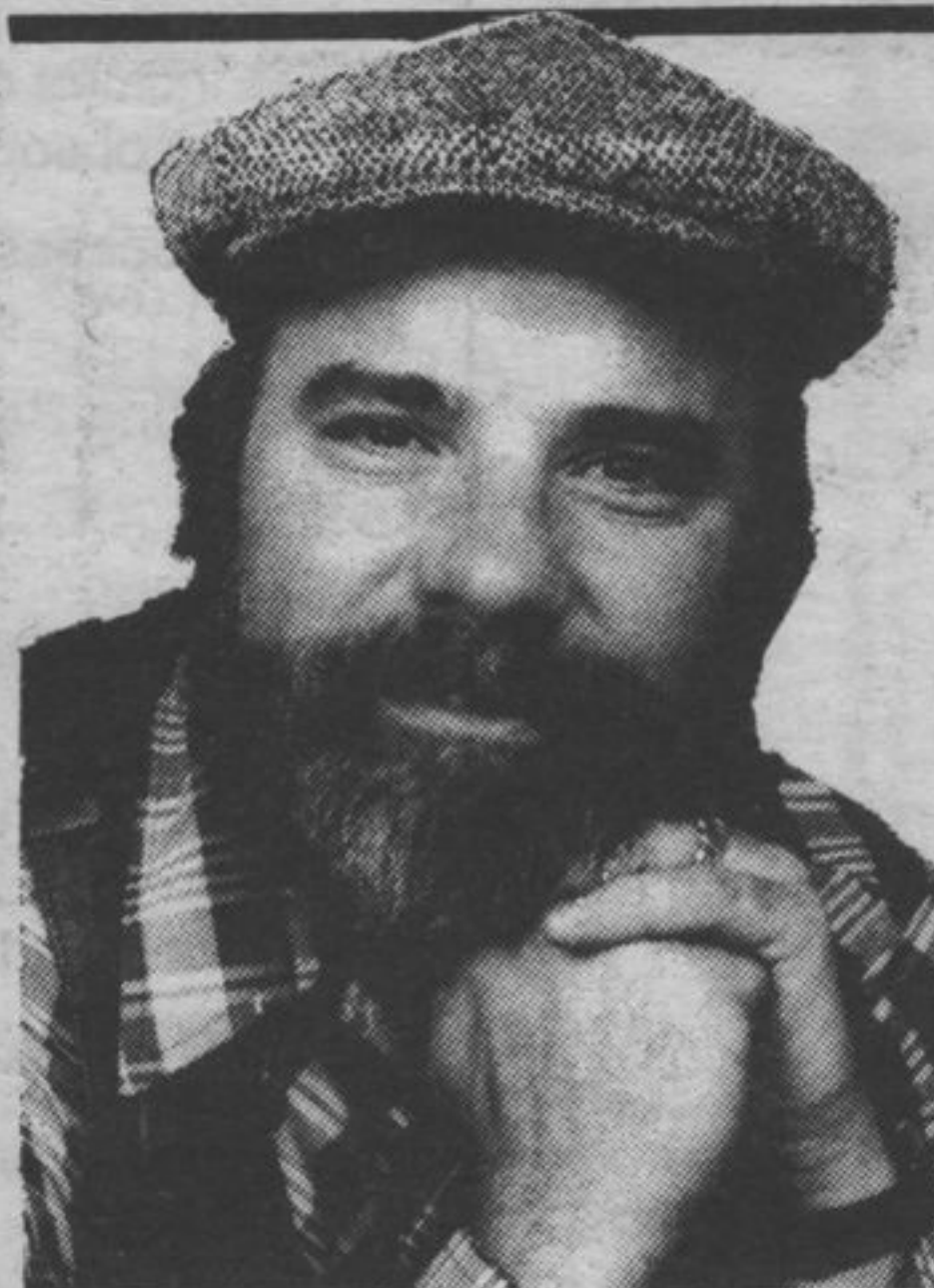
Our guys didn't do a whole lot better.

Consider Britain's infamous 'sticky' bomb. It was a grenade with an adhesive coating which was supposed to make it stick to the side of enemy vehicles or structures--and it probably would have, if anybody's ever been to get one of the damn things off their hands. The famous sticky bombs usually stuck to the mitt of the poor Tommy who was trying to get rid of it.

Warfare a la Keystone Cops has not been confined to hand grenades. Most of the truly colossal military bungles are shrouded in the mists of government secrecy, but a few slipped buy the military censors. Such as the case of the HMS *Trinidad*.

On patrol in the Arctic, the British cruiser flushed a German warship and fired off a torpedo. The British watched breathlessly as the line of bubbles snaked

inexorably toward the German warships belly. Then a bad thing happened. The line of bubbles began to ...curve gently to



Arthur Black

starboard. The British crew of the *Trinidad* watched as the gentle curve of bubbles became a huge buttonhook...The

Torpedo was coming back home.

And it did. The HMS *Trinidad* was struck amidships and knocked out of action for the rest of the war. Why? Because no one had figured out that the ice-cold Arctic water might freeze the oil used to lubricate the torpedo's steering mechanism.

I'd love to report that Canada is above this sort of Colonel Blimpish bumbling, but that's not the case. When it comes to military snafus, Canucks are in the front lines.

Last year U.S. Armed Forces discontinued the use of the M-16 rifle, a weapon that was cursed by G.I.'s in Vietnam for its balkiness and inaccuracy. Does that mean the end of the M-16?

Hardly. The Canadian government likes it so much we bought the rights and now make our very own M-16's right here in Canada.

At a cost of \$1,314 per rifle -- which is only about twice as much as we'd have paid if we'd bought them direct from the U.S. Oh

well, it's less insane and a whole lot cheaper than Canada's most recent military absurdity-- ordering a fleet of nuclear submarines to ride herd on our icebergs. Twenty years ago the American's sent a supertanker, the S.S. *Manhattan*, through the Arctic. Our government nearly hemorrhaged for fear that it might leak some oil and destroy the fragile Arctic ecosystem. Now the government plans to unleash nuclear missiles on the same delicate environment.

The submarines, which experts say will cost us more than Canada's entire defence budget for 1987, aren't available yet. They're being built by other military experts in Europe. Last month, a brand new multi-million dollar British submarine made headlines around the world before it even hit the water. A huge component of the submarines top deck had been welded on upside down. "The instructions weren't clear" said a spokesman

Good luck, Arctic.
Good luck, world.