

309 words, column #19  
Java Talk  
(for August 30, 2007 to September 5, 2007)

### **Every Age Is The Best Age**

#### *There and Then, Here and Now*

Earlier this summer, Enoki Kunuk, an 81-year-old hunter from Igloolik, Nunavut, decided to go on a short trip (four or five days) to hunt for caribou about 100 kilometres north of the hamlet. However, he became stranded when his snow machine got stuck, because of the melting snow and ice, and it was too far to walk home. Amazingly, he survived just fine, without any assistance, using his own supplies and by eating fish from the river and plants from the tundra, until the searchers from his community finally found him a month later. Then the community had a big celebration because he was home again.

This week, I am traveling up island, by train, to spend a very short summer holiday in Parksville. I love this beach. When I was a kid, I spent most of my summer holidays with my aunt and uncle and five cousins who lived right across from Qualicum Beach. As long as an older cousin helped us to the other side of the highway, we younger ones had free rein playing on the beach until suppertime. We just weren't allowed to go swimming without grown-ups. Also, we rarely had to wear shoes during the summer and were proud of our toughened feet. We could walk on barnacles, if need be. Even back in Victoria, we could travel out on our own to play. I suppose we always had a wide community of parents and other adults who knew us well enough to provide any needed drinks of water or whatever. Even the neighborhood dogs were safe to go wherever they wanted, too, although not to the school grounds on school days.

Anyway, if my column doesn't show up next week, please send out the search parties. Like Enoki Kunuk, I would be relieved to be found, and we could celebrate my good feet!

Deidre Hill