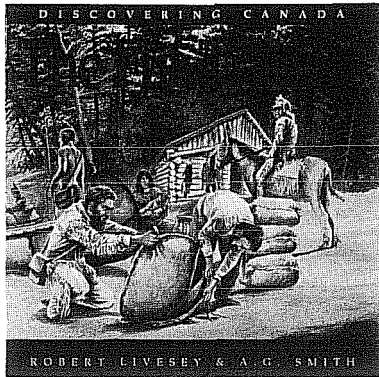


## MINI-REVIEWS

**The fur traders.** Robert Livesey and A.G. Smith. Stoddart, 1989. 96 pp., \$9.95 paper. ISBN 0-7737-53044.



This book is a useful addition to Stoddart's *Discovering Canada* series. The back cover invites the reader to "Learn History and Have Fun!" and the authors have struck a good balance between information and activities. The activities include making a birchbark basket, a beadware necklace, or a miniature canoe. A crossword puzzle and a *Voyageur* board game are included, and information on making maps. The informative side begins with an account of the habits of beavers, and then a general chapter on hunters pro-

vides a glossary of such terms as *entrepôt* and *pemmican*. Attention is given to the role of women in the fur trade, important figures like Pierre Radisson and David Thompson are discussed, and events such as the Seven Oaks Massacre are covered. The native tribes of the subarctic, Plains and Northwest are separately discussed.

A little more attention to the role of the fur trade in Canadian history might have been useful. While children need not be introduced to the intricacies of Harold Innis's *Staple Thesis* of Canadian development, there is more significance to the fur trade than the explorations of the LaVérendrye Brothers and Alexander Fraser. One other reservation: the profusion of activities impedes narrative flow. The abundant illustrations by A.G. Smith are adequate but not inspired. The index is subdivided helpfully into "Activities," "Illustrations," "Mini Facts" and "Personalities." It is rather anti-climactic for the work to end with a discussion of the personality of Archibald Belaney, "Grey Owl", who seems included less for his work on conservation than for his impersonation of an Indian. This is a serviceable book, rather than a brilliant one.

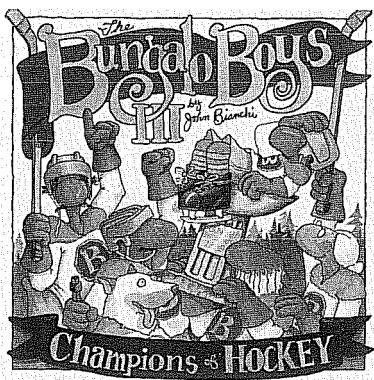
**Bert Almon** is a professor of English at the University of Alberta, Edmonton.

**Wheniwasalittlegirl.** Rachna Gilmore. Illus. Sally J.K. Davies. Second Story Press, 1989. 24 pp., \$5.95 paper. ISBN 0-929005-01-5.

There is a touch of dreariness in the story of *Wheniwasalittlegirl*, the alter ego of the small girl narrator's mother. The title tells it all, almost. The mother

throws constantly at her child just what readers would suppose. The grandmother sets the story straight. The idea is more to an adult's sense of reality than to a child's. Still, even though the story may miss its audience, it is written by someone with a knack for story telling. Sally J.K. Davies is a talented new illustrator who in this book presents an unfamiliar technique, watercolour on crumpled paper. Not bad.

**The Bungalo boys III: Champions of hockey.** John Bianchi. Firefly, 1989. 24 pp., \$4.95 paper. ISBN 0-921285-16-7.



Bianchi's background as a cartoonist serves him well in the hilarious Bungalo books. Work in animation also may have helped refine his skill for action portrayal. The story is unleashed nonsense as Ma Bungalo and her big nosed boys take on three penguins and three HUGE bruins in a pond version of Canada's national sport. The vocabulary and the sounds are authentically Canadian, and in "60 minutes of teamwork" the Bungalo Birdbath, symbol of hockey supremacy, remains in Bungalo's hands.

This book is a minor work of art – very minor – but it does what it sets out to do. It provides a uniformly exciting and joyful experience.

**Franny and the music girl.** Emily Hearn. Illus. Mark Thurman. Second Story Press, 1989. 24 pp., \$5.95 paper. ISBN 0-929005-03-1.

This book is a collage of colours, textures, materials and, yes, words. The artists have collaborated very closely to produce a picture book in the best sense of the term. Hearn's text, simple but lively, says enough, but not too much. Thurman's artwork, painting and collage, runs like an obligato over around the text, touching here, moving away, touching again. These are happy children, filled with joy, not above playing pranks, quick to anger, but basically your good garden variety kids. The book is one of the best in its presentation of handicapped children as what they are – children.

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