

# John Seagrave

January 2, 1959 - October 8, 2005

Yellowknife writer John Seagrave was the voice of the last generation of men who traded fur and sold goods to the natives and the Inuit at Hudson's Bay Company trading posts across the Canadian arctic. John died on Saturday, October 8 at age 46. John's humorous yet moving stories - published in *Chicken Soup for the Soul* collections and his own 2004 collection *The Hudson's Bay Boy* - chronicled his journey from the poorest streets of inner city Toronto to northern outposts such as Kugluktuk, Baker Lake and Coral Harbor. "*The Hudson's Bay Boy* is a highly significant book because it fills the gap between the HBC's glory days and its disappearance from the Canadian North (in the 1980s)," HBC historian Peter C. Newman wrote in the book's introduction. "Seagrave emerges as one of the Canadian North's great storytellers."

Born on January 2, 1959 to Irish immigrants who became Toronto factory workers, John himself appeared destined for life on the assembly lines. After graduating from high school, he went to work at a factory that manufactured hockey pucks. "It was grimy, sweaty work, and I could not help worrying about the black, rubber-like compound that came out whenever I blew my nose," John wrote. "I was sure there was better life out there somewhere." There was a better life for John and he found it in the communities of the Canadian North and later with his wife and children in Yellowknife.

John found his way out by signing on with the Hudson's Bay Company in 1978. He worked as an outpost manager from 1979-1994, when he married Lisa Staples. Together, they owned and operated a local native art store, Gallery of the Midnight Sun. John has two sons, Luke and Josh, from a previous marriage, two daughters Anna and Josephine and a foster daughter Pheobe Betsedea. John was predeceased by his mother Cecelia and survived by his father Joseph, brothers Peter (Colleen) and Richard (Lauri) and sisters June and Mary. As well as his wife of ten years Lisa, he leaves Lisa's parents Brian and Marjorie Staples and Lisa's brothers David (Lily) and Chris (Steve). He will be missed by his nieces and nephews Meaghen, Connor, Jack, Ned, Joseph, Daniel, Isabelle and Tommy. He will also be missed by aunts, uncles, cousins and the many friends he made in Yellowknife and in his travels throughout Canada.

A celebration of life will be held on Saturday, October 22 at Northern United Place beginning at 12:30 pm. We are grateful for the gesture of flowers, but in keeping with John's love of literature and stories, the family requests that in lieu of flowers, please make a donation in John's name to your local public library.

*Remembrance is the final act of love.  
John will always be remembered.*

