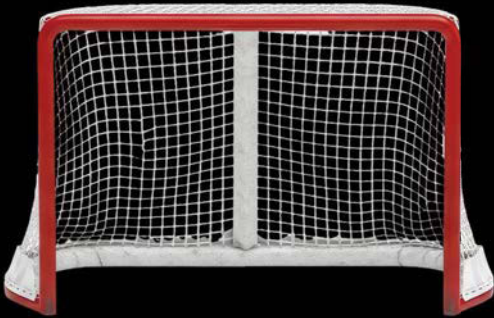


# ICE HOCKEY



BRENDA BROWN



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A fan cheering at the NHL  
Heritage Classic, 2003



# TRADITIONS

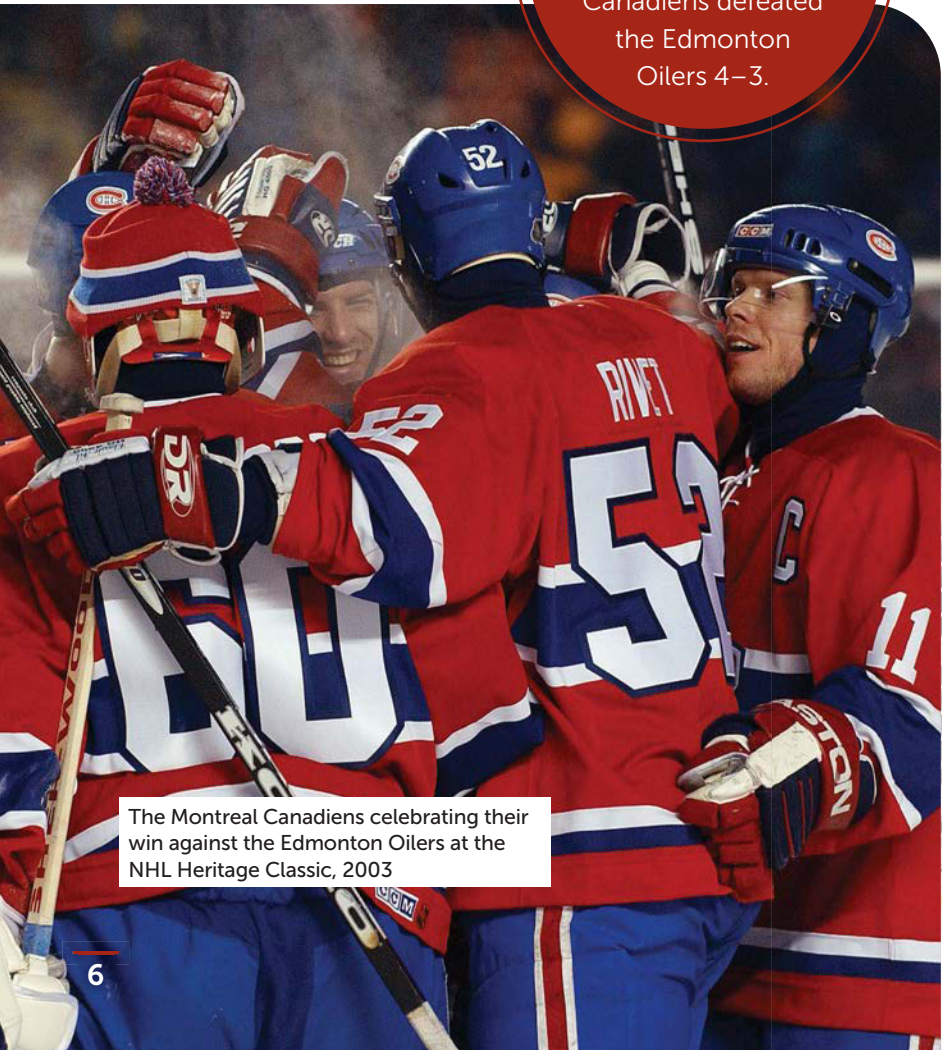
It was November 22, 2003. The temperature was below zero in Alberta. This is a province in Canada. Over 56,000 people packed into a stadium there. It had no roof. But that didn't matter. Everyone came bundled up. They were ready for the cold.

Fans wanted to be part of history. They were there to watch ice hockey. An NHL game was being played. That stands for the National Hockey League. This was a regular-season game. But it was the first one ever played outdoors. It wouldn't be the last.



### Fast Fact

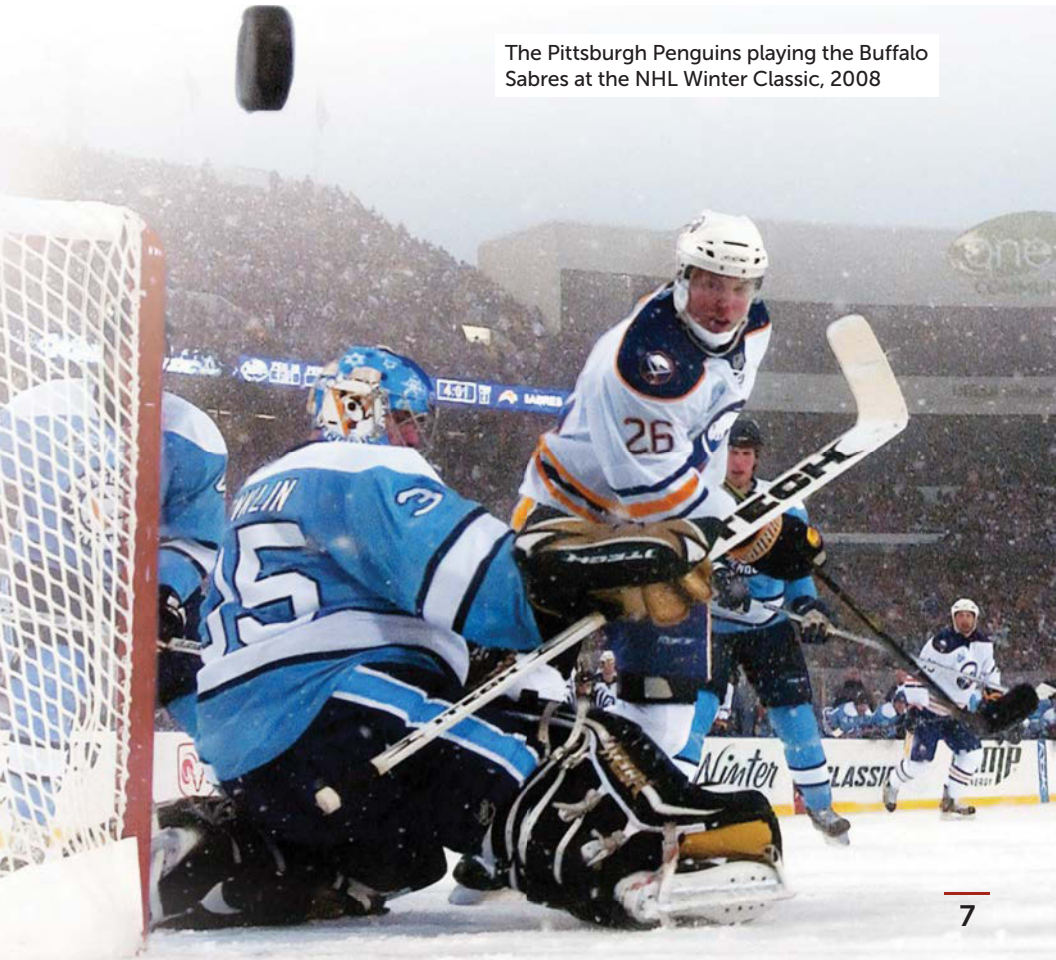
In the 2003 outdoor game, the Montreal Canadiens defeated the Edmonton Oilers 4-3.



The Montreal Canadiens celebrating their win against the Edmonton Oilers at the NHL Heritage Classic, 2003

The tradition went on. It was January 1, 2008. The first outdoor NHL game was played in the U.S. This took place in New York. More than 71,000 fans showed up. It was freezing. Snow fell during the game. This game had a name. It was called the Winter Classic.

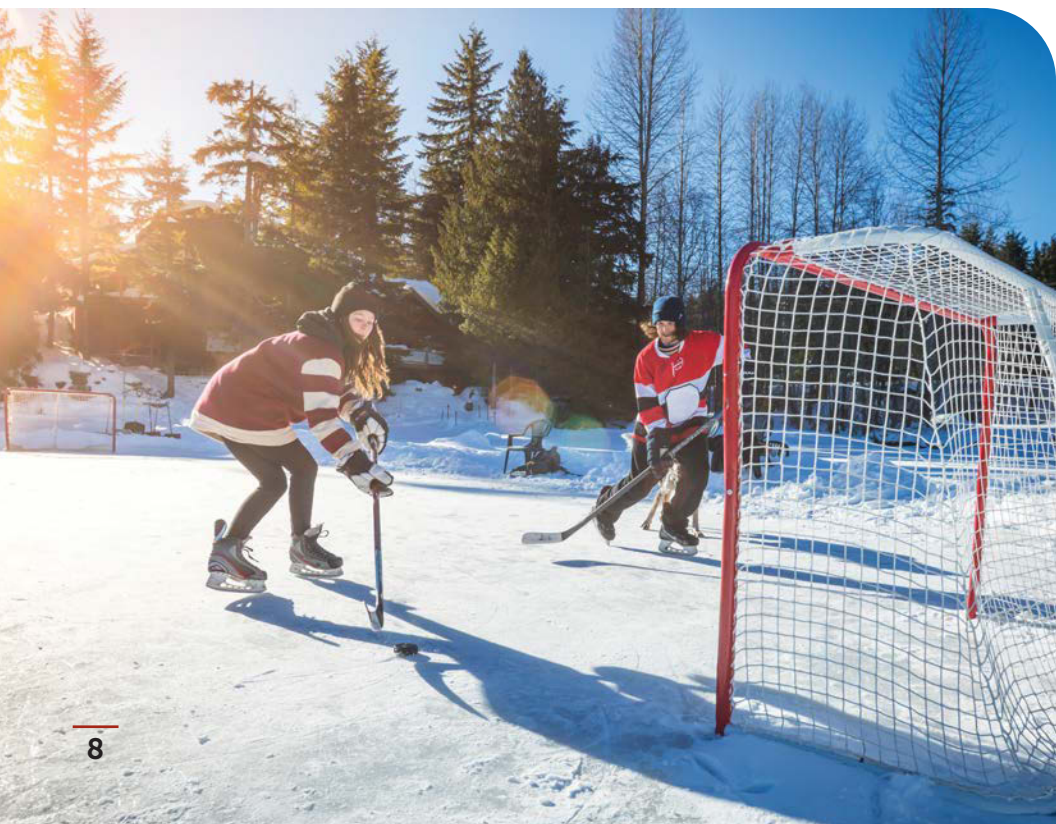
Now the Winter Classic happens every year. It moves from city to city. Many NHL teams have hosted it.



The Pittsburgh Penguins playing the Buffalo Sabres at the NHL Winter Classic, 2008

Most NHL games are played indoors in warm arenas. But outdoor games aren't new. They bring back memories for some players and fans. The games remind them of pond hockey.

Many players grew up with the sport. Some played on outdoor **rinks**. Others skated on frozen lakes and ponds. This was called pond hockey. Their love for the game grew. Some had a dream. They wanted to win an NHL championship. Lifting the Stanley Cup became real for a select few.



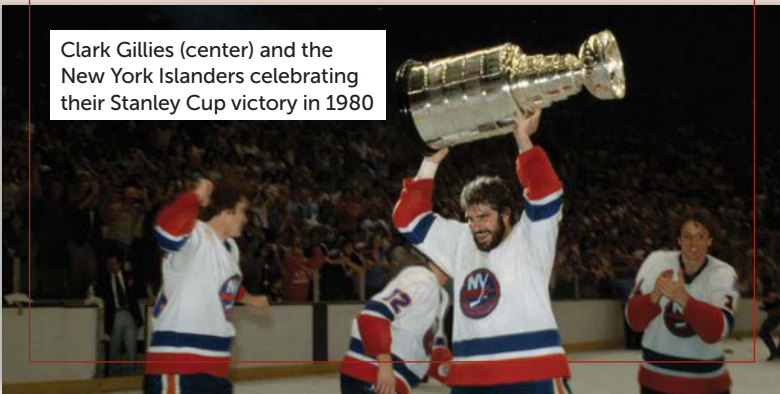
## The Stanley Cup

The Stanley Cup is the oldest trophy awarded in professional sports in North America. Originally, it was only awarded to Canadian amateur teams, beginning in 1895. During the 1917–1918 season, the Toronto Arenas was the first NHL team to win it.

After winning, each team member gets to spend a day with the trophy. Some players have done interesting things with it.

- Many have eaten food out of the Cup. Some of these foods include hot dogs and a giant ice cream sundae.
- Clark Gillies won the Stanley Cup four times with the New York Islanders in the 1980s. He used the trophy as a dish for his dog.
- In 1996, Sylvain Lefebvre won the trophy with the Colorado Avalanche. On his day with the Cup, Lefebvre and his wife had their daughter baptized in it.

Clark Gillies (center) and the New York Islanders celebrating their Stanley Cup victory in 1980

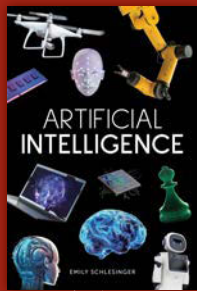




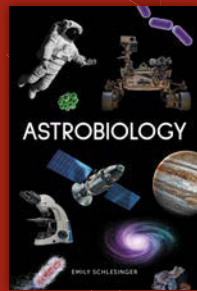
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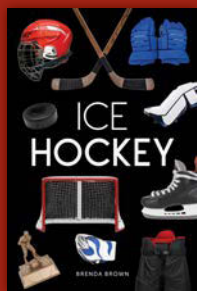
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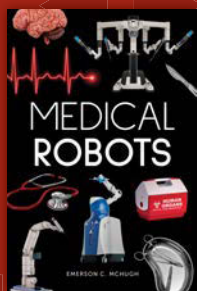
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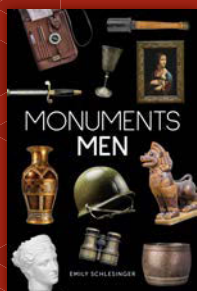
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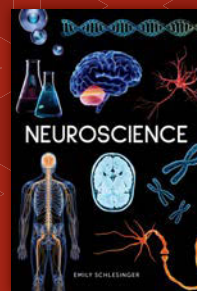
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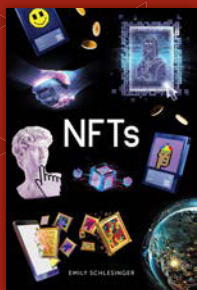
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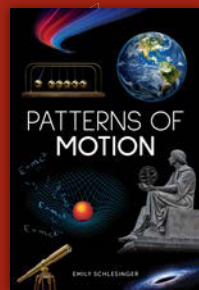
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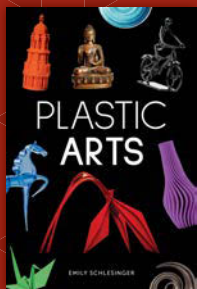
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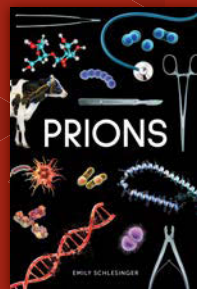
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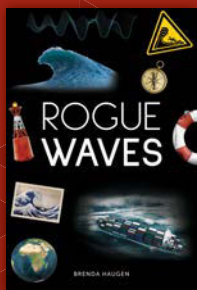
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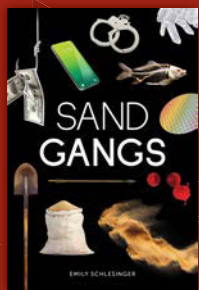
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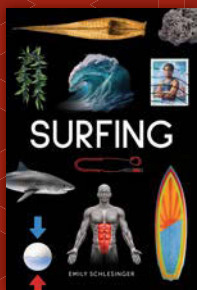
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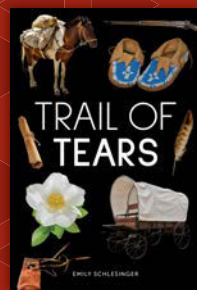
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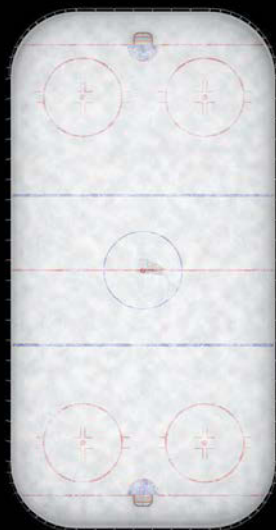
# ICE HOCKEY

The temperature is near freezing, but the energy in the outdoor stadium is electric. Spectators cheer as two teams of fast-moving players glide across the ice.

The puck zips from one end of the rink to the other. There are big hits and tough penalties. A sudden-death goal wins the game. From humble beginnings as a simple stick-and-ball game, ice hockey has become a thrilling and beloved sport watched by millions.



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