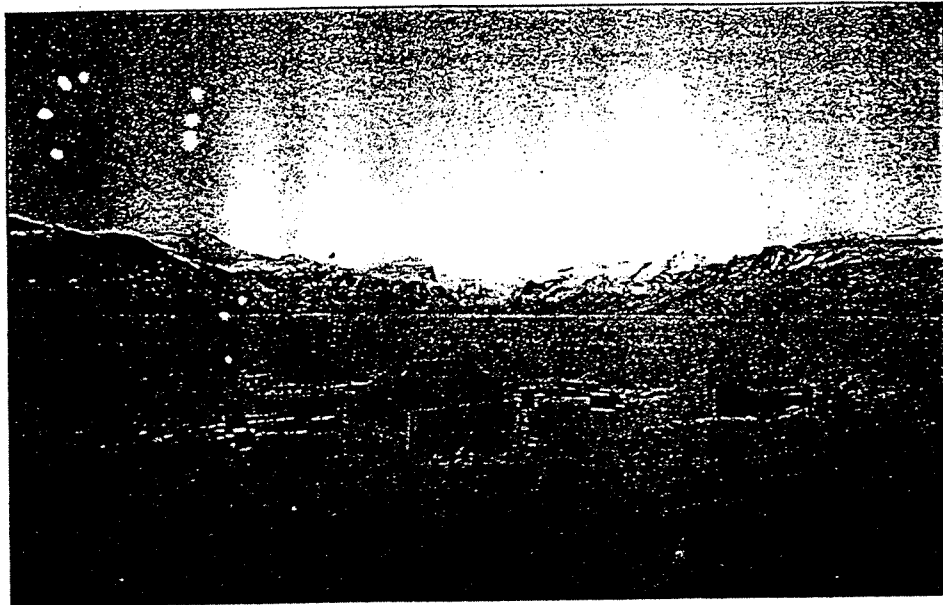


Specialty Feature

Baffin Island – It's Worth a Visit

P. Ralph Crawford, BA, DMD



January - Pangnirtung, Baffin Island (Photo: P.R. Crawford)

When Canadians think of Baffin Island – Canada's largest island and the world's fifth largest – most conjure up images of bitter cold, isolation and primitive living conditions. But to Ottawa dentist Dr. Ellwood Mitchell and his wife Vivi-Ann, Baffin Island means warmth, a sense of purpose, and adventure.

For the Mitchells, the Island's warmth comes from its Inuit inhabitants – who are kind, generous and trusting people – while the sense of purpose comes from delivering dental care that is much appreciated. The adventure, an added bonus to someone who loves the great outdoors, comes from living in the North.

Dr. Mitchell, a 1958 graduate of the University of Toronto, practised dentistry in downtown Ottawa until 1991, when he took a one-year sabbatical to fulfil a 30-year-old dream – to practise his profession somewhere in Canada's remote territories.

The dream must have been worth the wait. At the end of his first year in the North, Dr. Mitchell sold his big-city practice. Although he's "retired," he

now spends more time on Baffin Island than at his home in Ottawa.

For three months each winter, Dr. Mitchell is in Pangnirtung, a community of 1,050 people just south of the Arctic

Circle. He spends three of the four fall months, and one in the spring, in Igloolik, an island hamlet of 950 off the Melville Peninsula near the 70th parallel.

The 10,000 residents of Baffin Island are part of the larger community of Inuit people who recently negotiated land and self-government agreements to establish the territory of Nunavut. To be formed by dividing the Northwest Territories in two, Nunavut will cover nearly one quarter of Canada's total land mass.

Today, the Inuit are a people in transition. Although many are skilled in the traditional ways, as hunters and gatherers, others are involved in the wage economy and the technical infrastructure of their communities.

In Baffin Island, medical services are provided by nurse practitioners at modern health centres. Dental clinics, complete with modern – if somewhat basic – equipment form part of the health centre network.

Dental treatment consists of the normal dental office routine, i.e. preventive, restorative, periodontal, endodon-



National School of Dental Therapy Field Clinic, Igloolik, Baffin Island. (Photo by Darryl Gershman)

tic, and surgical services, as well as removable prosthodontics. No fixed prosthodontics or orthodontics are available, however.

Some schools employ dental therapists to provide standardized preventive and restorative services for children. Dr. Mitchell reports maintaining a good rapport with the school therapists, who often refer their more difficult cases to him.

The caries rate is very high among many of Baffin Island's children, whose diet is often high in sugar and pre-prepared "southern" foods. "However, with more communities on fluoridated water, enhanced public service announcements on radio and TV, stressing healthier life styles, and the cooperation of the community health representatives, (Baffin Island) is seeing increased interest in good oral care - particularly among the young mothers," said Dr. Mitchell.

For the Mitchells, the Baffin Island experience is a "family affair." Vivi-

Ann, a registered nurse who worked for years as a dental assistant in the Mitchell's Ottawa practice, isn't ready to retire either. Along with a local interpreter/receptionist, she and her husband provide typical five-day-a-week dentistry to Island residents.

Life in Baffin Island has been good to the Mitchells. In both Pangnirtung and Igloolik, they live in modern accommodations and enjoy many of the amenities found in their Ottawa home. They welcome the opportunity to interact with the local people, and like to go hunting, fishing and camping. It's a learning experience, too, as many of the local residents are happy and proud to share their rich knowledge of traditional survival skills.

For those who are less fond of hunting and fishing, particularly the camera enthusiast, Baffin Island provides ample opportunities to venture into one of the most pristine natural environments in the world. It is the land of the seal, walrus, narwhal, polar bear and mag-

nificent bowhead whale.

Respect for the environment and ecosystem is learned easily - it's a natural by-product of "living on the land," as the locals say. A number of communities are located close to some of Canada's most remote, but beautiful, national parks. Camping and hiking are popular in the summer, as well as snowmobiling in the winter.

The rewards of living and working in the North have been worth all its hardships for Ellwood and Vivi-Ann Mitchell. They are valued and respected members of their community, and recognized as members of the Island's total health care team. They are awed and challenged by a land of beauty and adventure. And they invite others to enjoy the same stimulating and exciting experience.

For information on dental services on Baffin Island, write Dr. Joe Firak, Baffin Regional Health Services, Iqaluit Health Clinic, P.O. Bag 200, Iqaluit, Northwest Territories, X0A



Your avenue
for giving,
to enhance
the performance
and prestige
of Dentistry.

1815 Alta Vista Drive
Ottawa, Ontario
K1G 3Y6
(613) 731-0493

Show you care
about dentistry.
Send your tax deductible
contribution today.

We now accept



CDA Retirement Savings Plan

Unit values: (Funds are valued weekly)

Fund	Unit values as at	
	December 31, 1992	November 30, 1992
Bond & Mortgage Fund	100.67067	100.06827
Common Stock Fund	18.08007	17.62614
Money Market Fund	62.69306	61.82856
Balanced Fund	36.91339	36.50557

G.I.C. Fund Term	*Interest rates as at	
	December 31, 1992	November 30, 1992
1yr	6.60%	6.75%
2yr	6.85%	6.85%
3yr	7.35%	7.35%
4yr	7.35%	7.60%
5yr	7.85%	8.00%

(*rates subject to change without notice.)

Total Assets (market value) of the Plan as of	December 31, 1992		November 30, 1992	
		167,846,021.97	\$166,649,185.30	

For further information:

Write:

or phone, toll free:



CDSPI
Retirement Services Dept.
Suite 710
100 Consilium Place
Scarborough, Ontario
M1H 3G8

416-296-9401
1-800-561-9401
Metro Toronto
Service in English
Extensions:
252, 253, 254
Service in French
Fax.

1-800-665-9401
1-416-296-8920