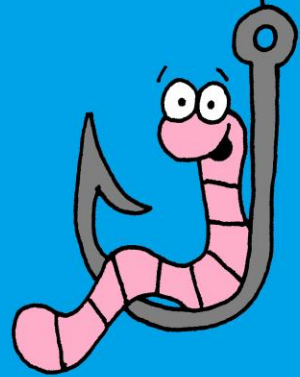
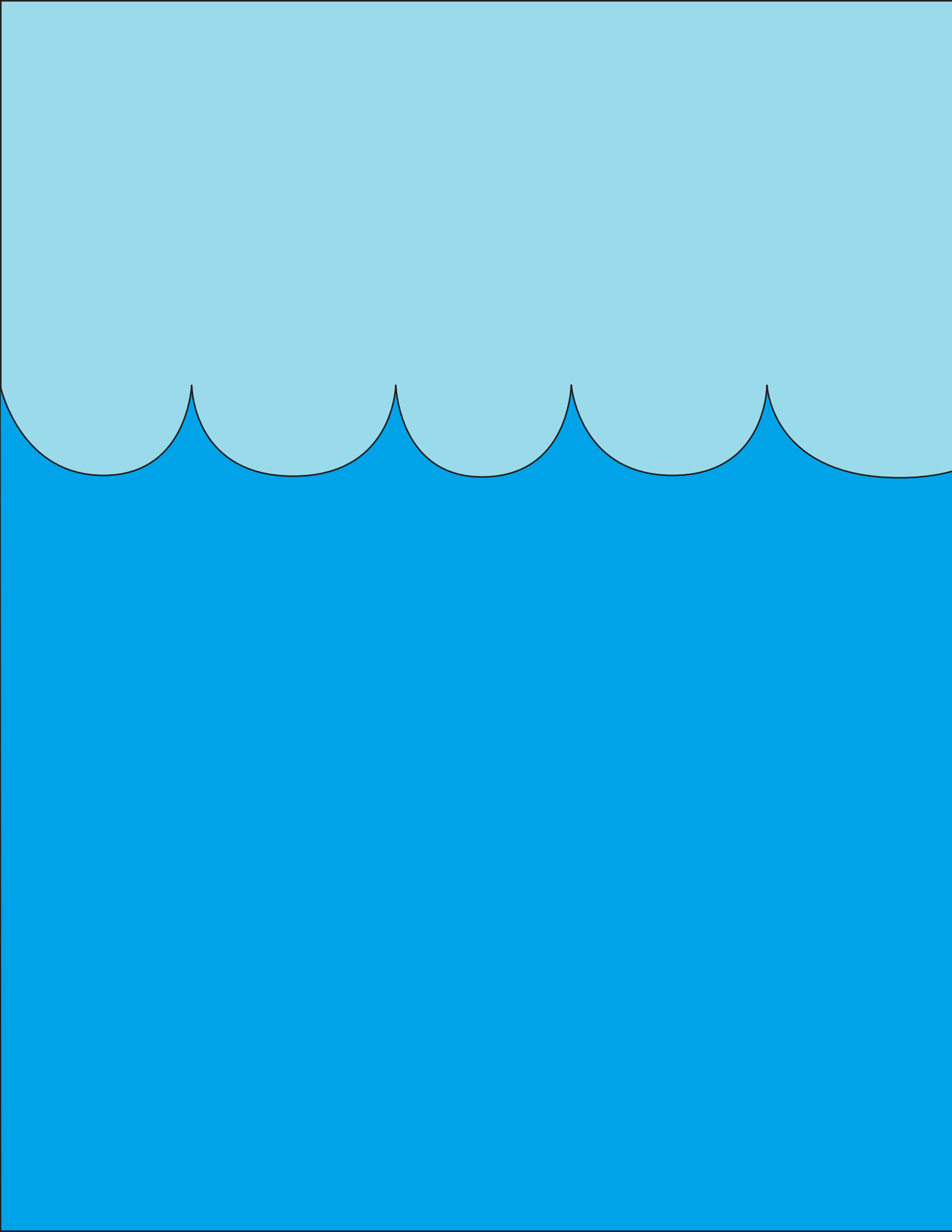
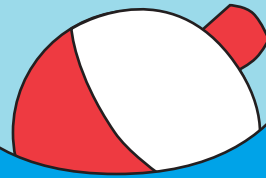


# A FISHY TALE

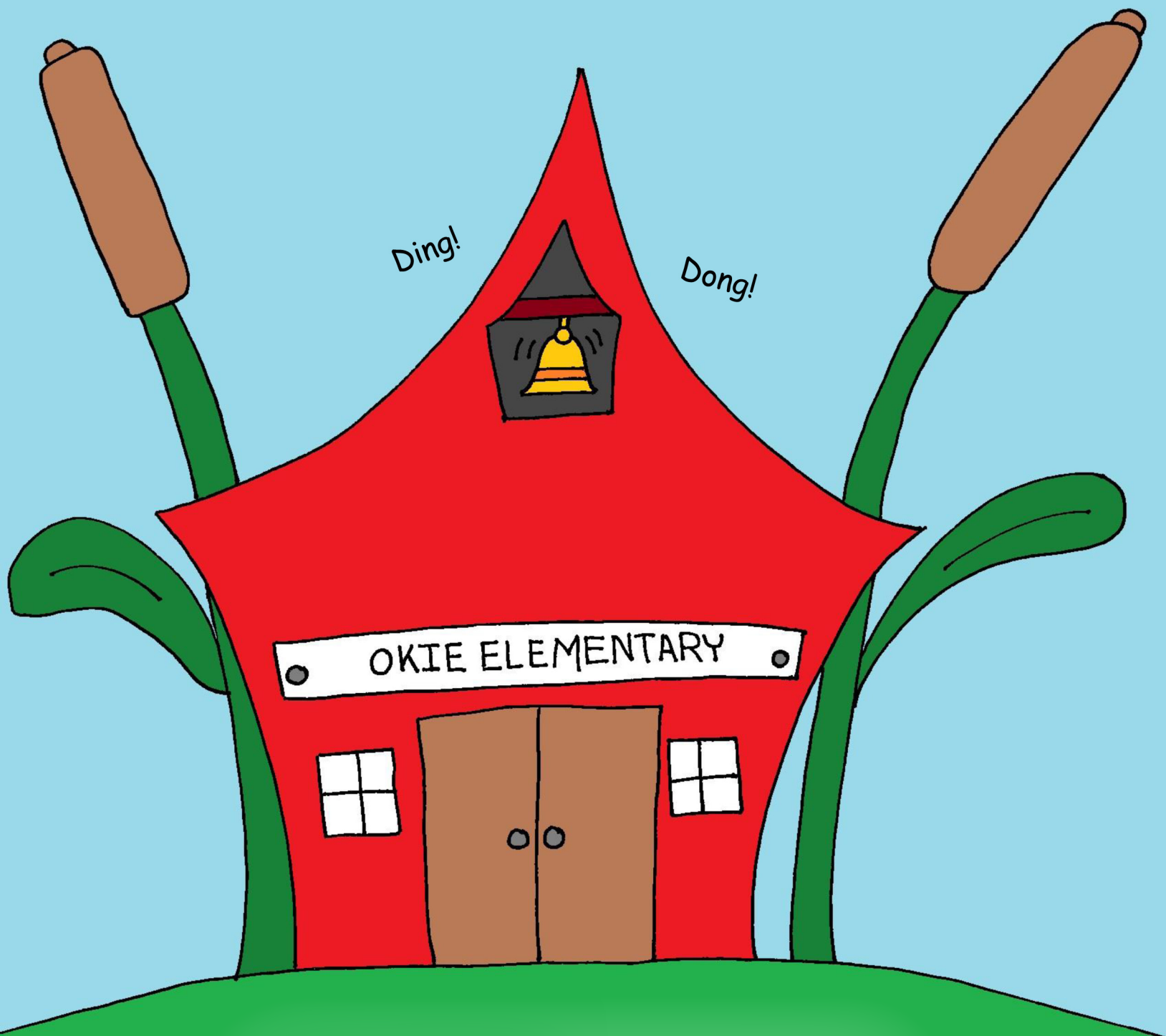






# A FISHY TALE

BY PAM BALDWIN



Ding!

Dong!

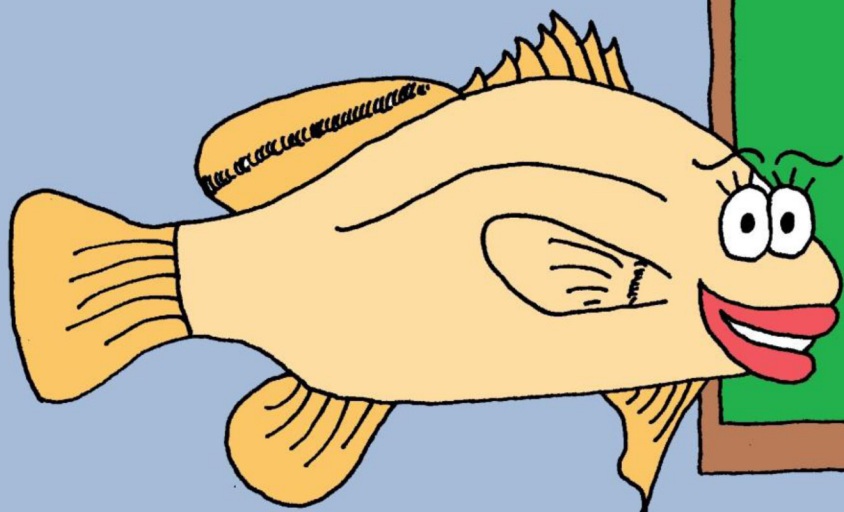
OKIE ELEMENTARY

Ding! Dong! Ding! Dong!

The bell at Okie Elementary rang as the end of the school day had finally come.



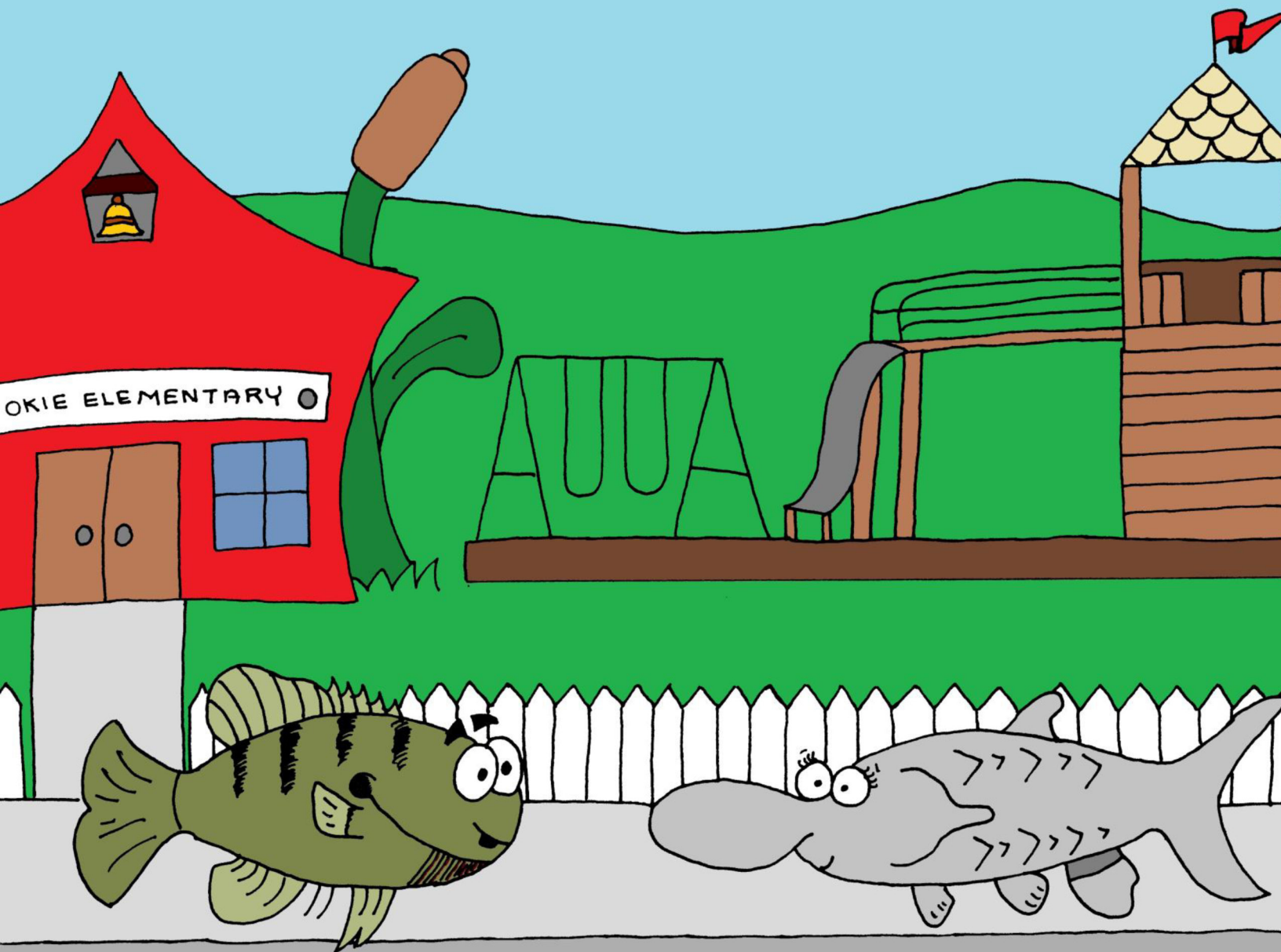
Aa Bb Cc Dd Ee Ff Gg Hh Ii



### Women & Children:

- ✓ one meal a week of predator fish
- ✓ smaller size of fish
- ✓ Always view DEQ's lake specific advisories

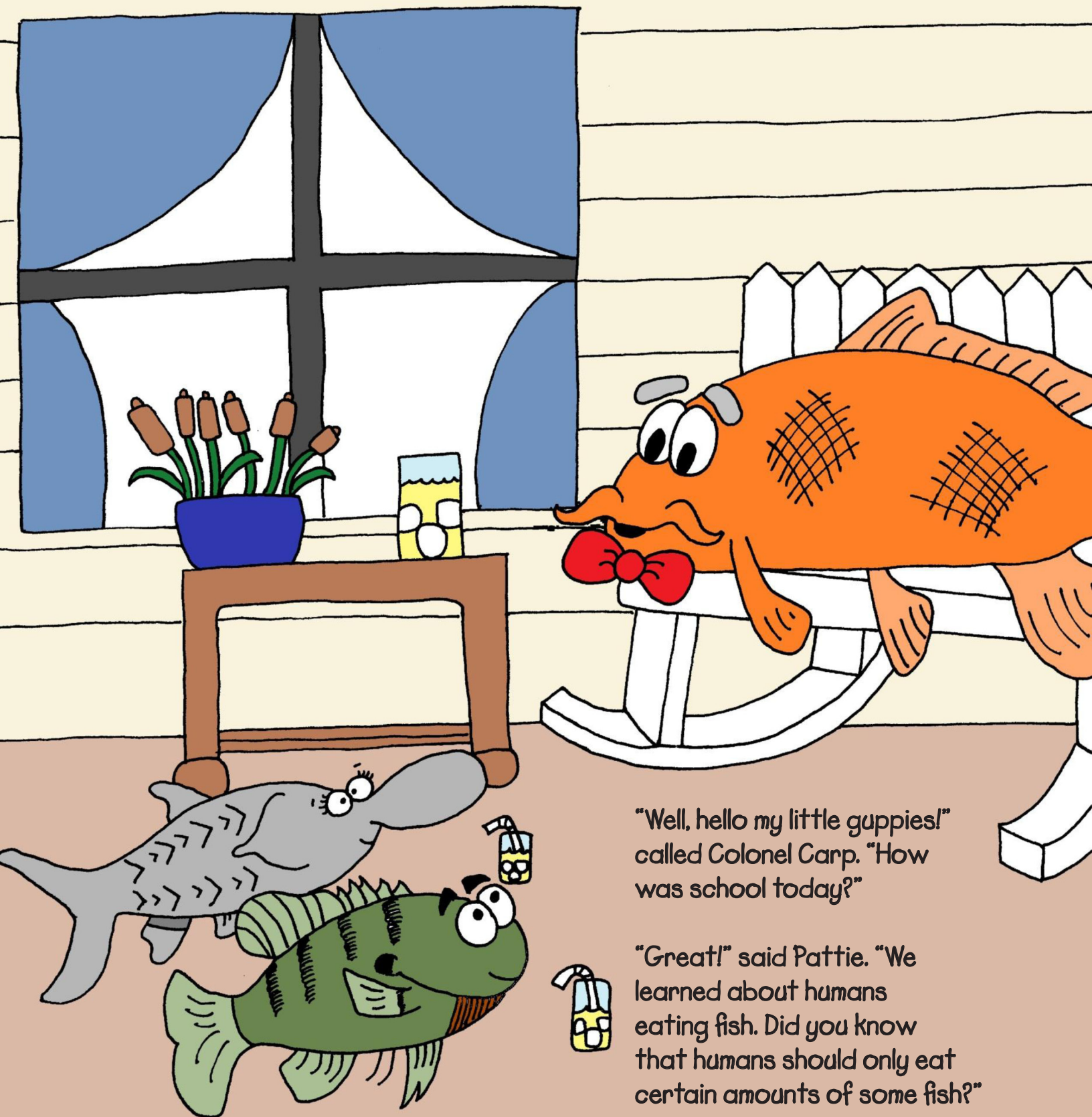
As school teacher, Debbie Drum, dismisses her class she says,  
"Don't forget to discuss with your parents what we learned  
today about humans consuming mercury in fish!"



Gilley Bluegill and Pattie Paddlefish rush to the door to start their swim home.

"I can't believe there is so much information about fish consumption for humans!" exclaimed Gilley. "Who knew humans needed to know which fish have high mercury levels and which have low?"

"I know!" Pattie said. "Let's stop by Grandpa's house, Colonel Carp, to talk to him about it."



"Well, hello my little guppies!" called Colonel Carp. "How was school today?"

"Great!" said Pattie. "We learned about humans eating fish. Did you know that humans should only eat certain amounts of some fish?"

"Yes, I did. People have to be careful about mercury levels in fish. Children and women who are pregnant have to be super careful. They can only eat one meal per week of some fish," explained Colonel Carp.

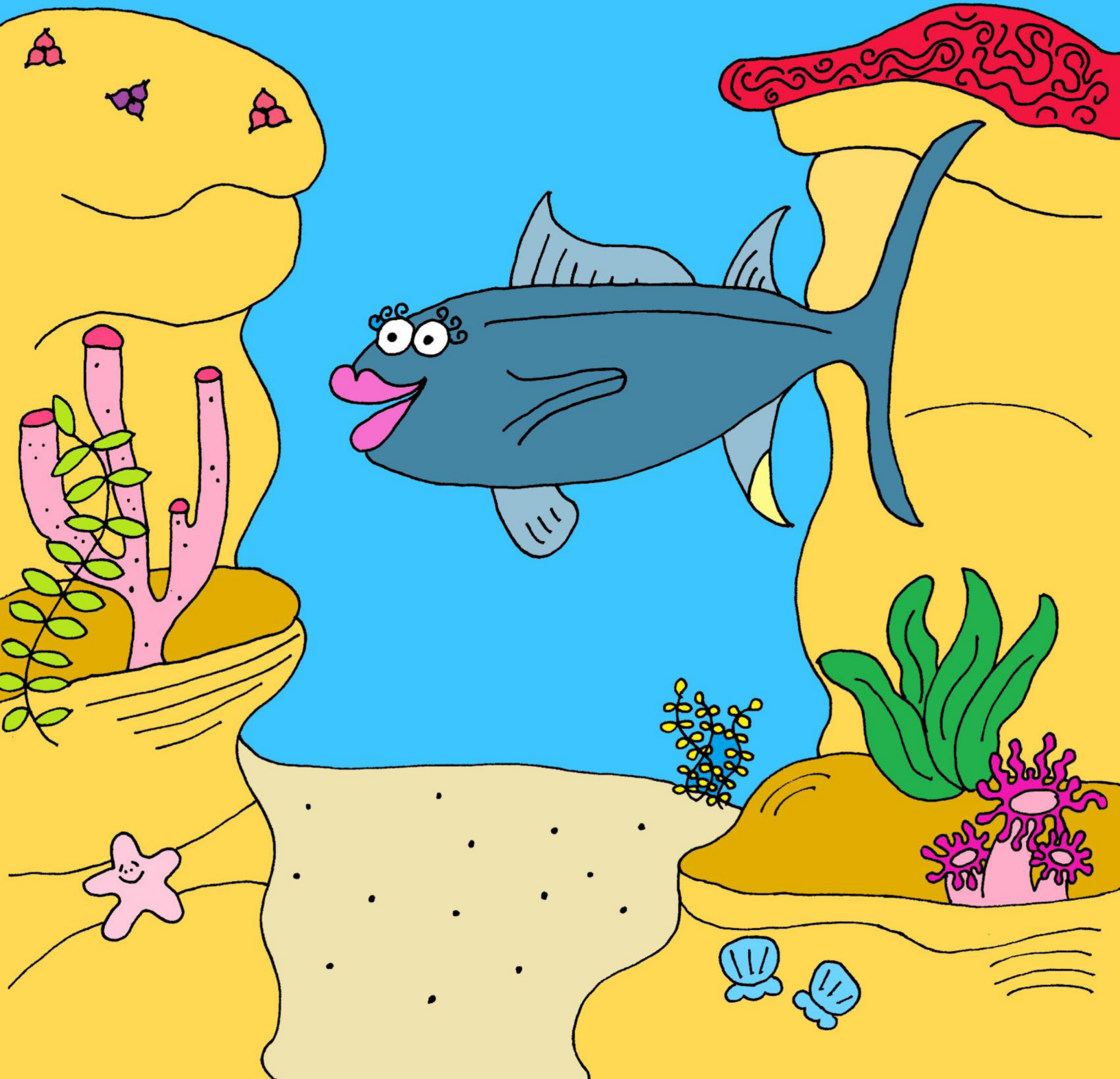
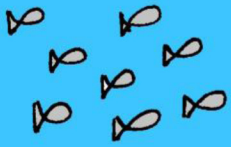
"Whoa!" shouted Gilley and Pattie.

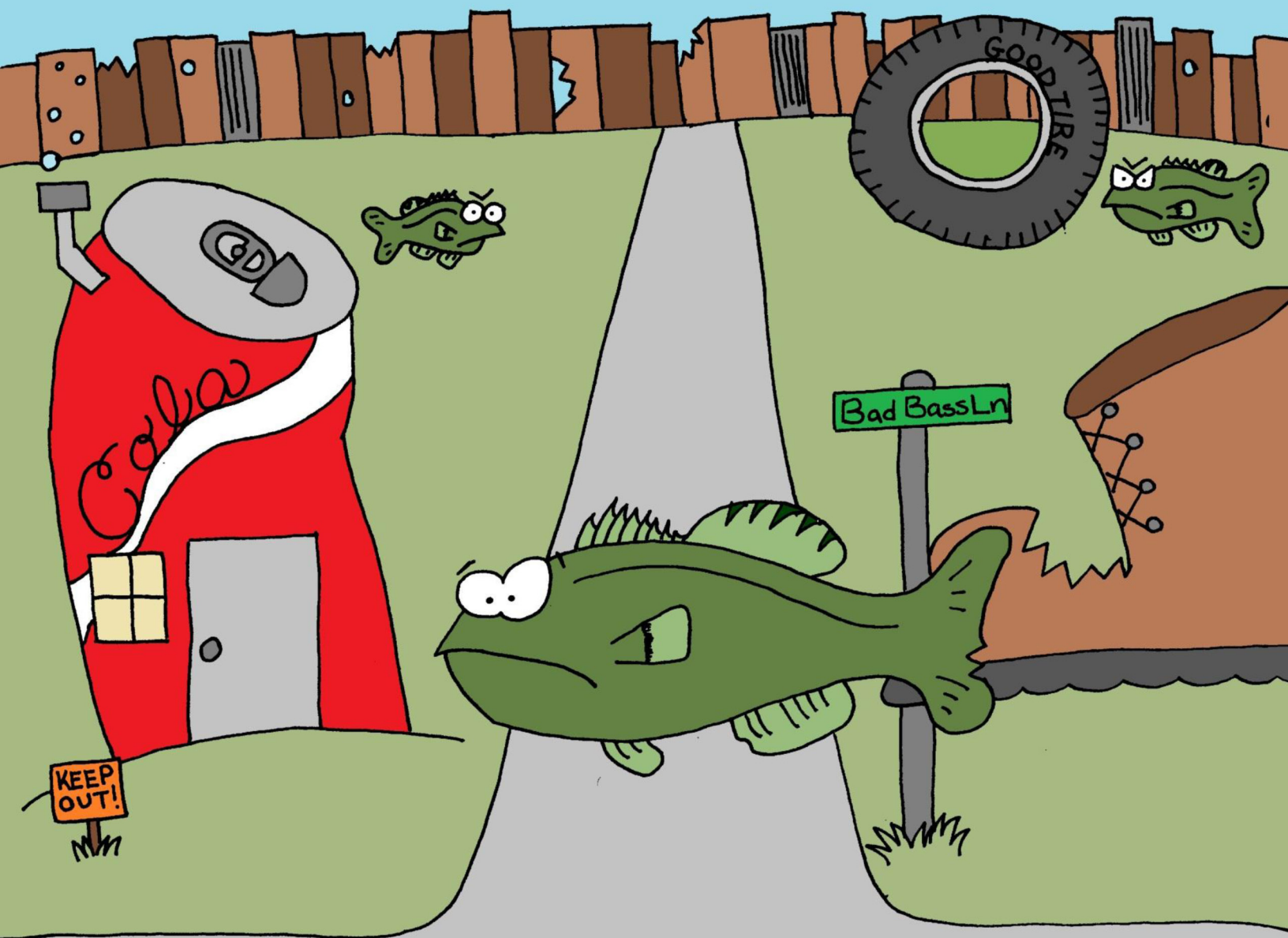




"My friend, Simon Salmon, from the Atlantic said you have to be really careful when buying fish from the store," continued Colonel Carp. "He said that you should never eat shark or swordfish."

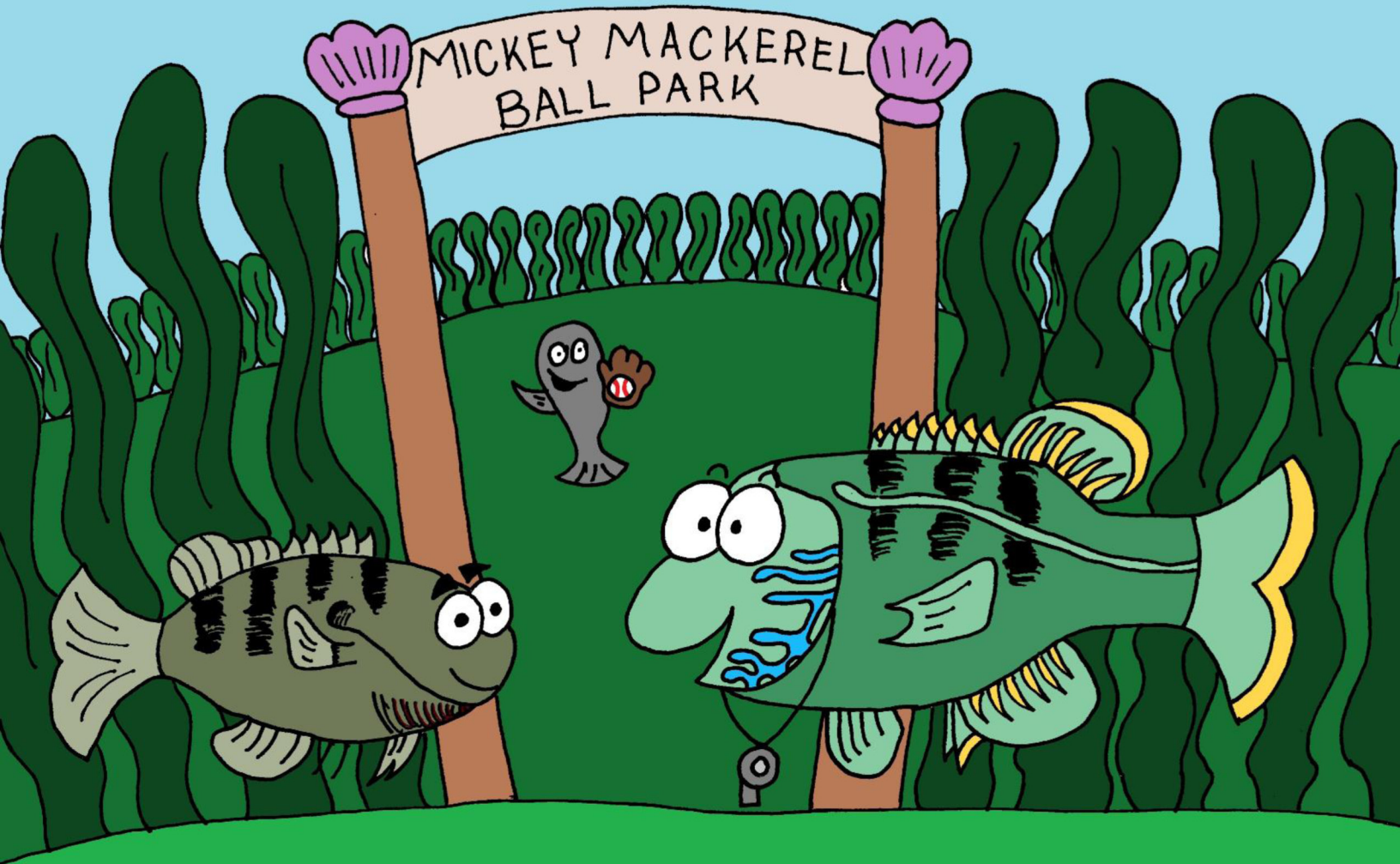
"Our foreign exchange student from the Pacific, Tina Tuna, said you need to be careful too," said Pattie. "She told us that fish from the ocean such as light, canned tuna, shrimp, and salmon are safe for humans to eat."





"Now, y'all swim along! But remember to stay away from Bass Neighborhood. Bass are predator fish and have higher levels of mercury. People should only eat one meal per week unless a lake specific advisory from DEQ says otherwise," said Colonel Carp as he waved goodbye.



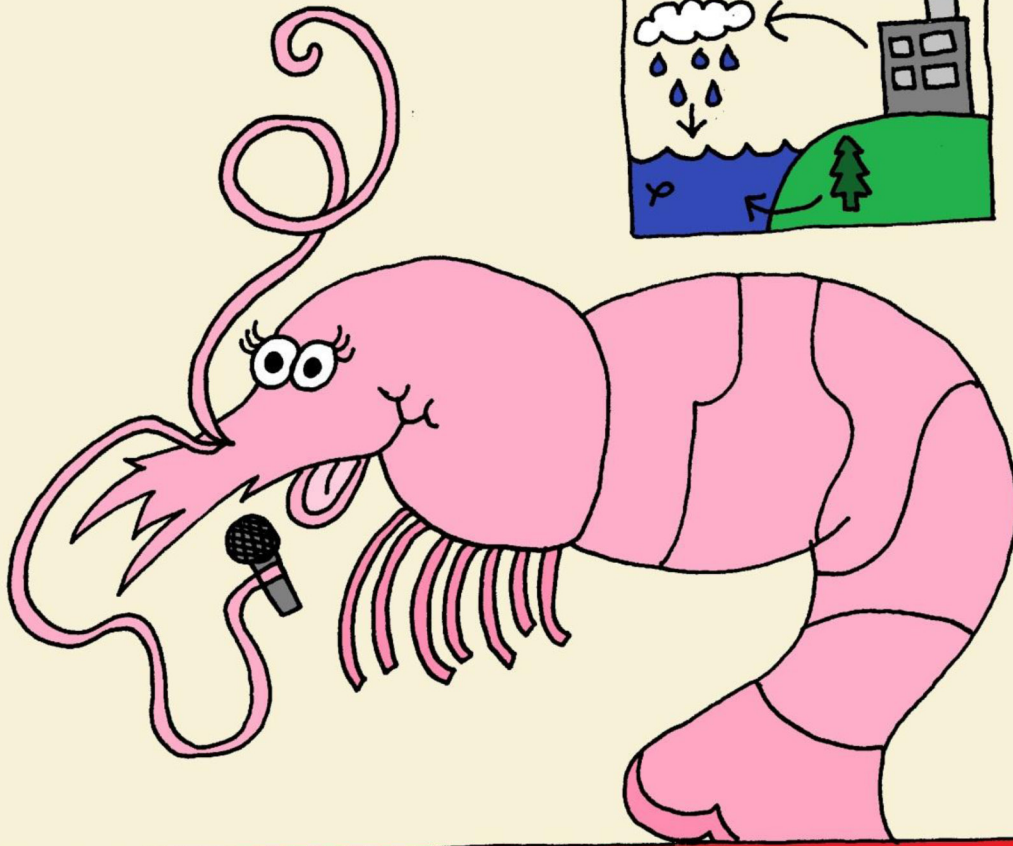
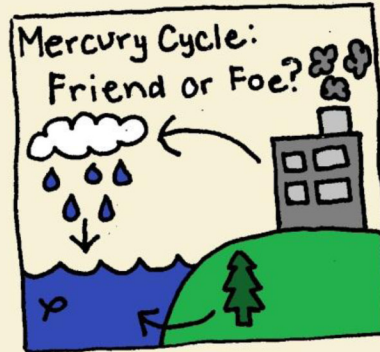


As Gilley and Pattie swam towards home, they met Sonny Green Sunfish as he was coaching baseball practice.

"Good afternoon!" shouted Sonny. "Did you learn anything new today at school?"

"We learned about mercury in fish," said Gilley.

POND OR  
SEA NEWS



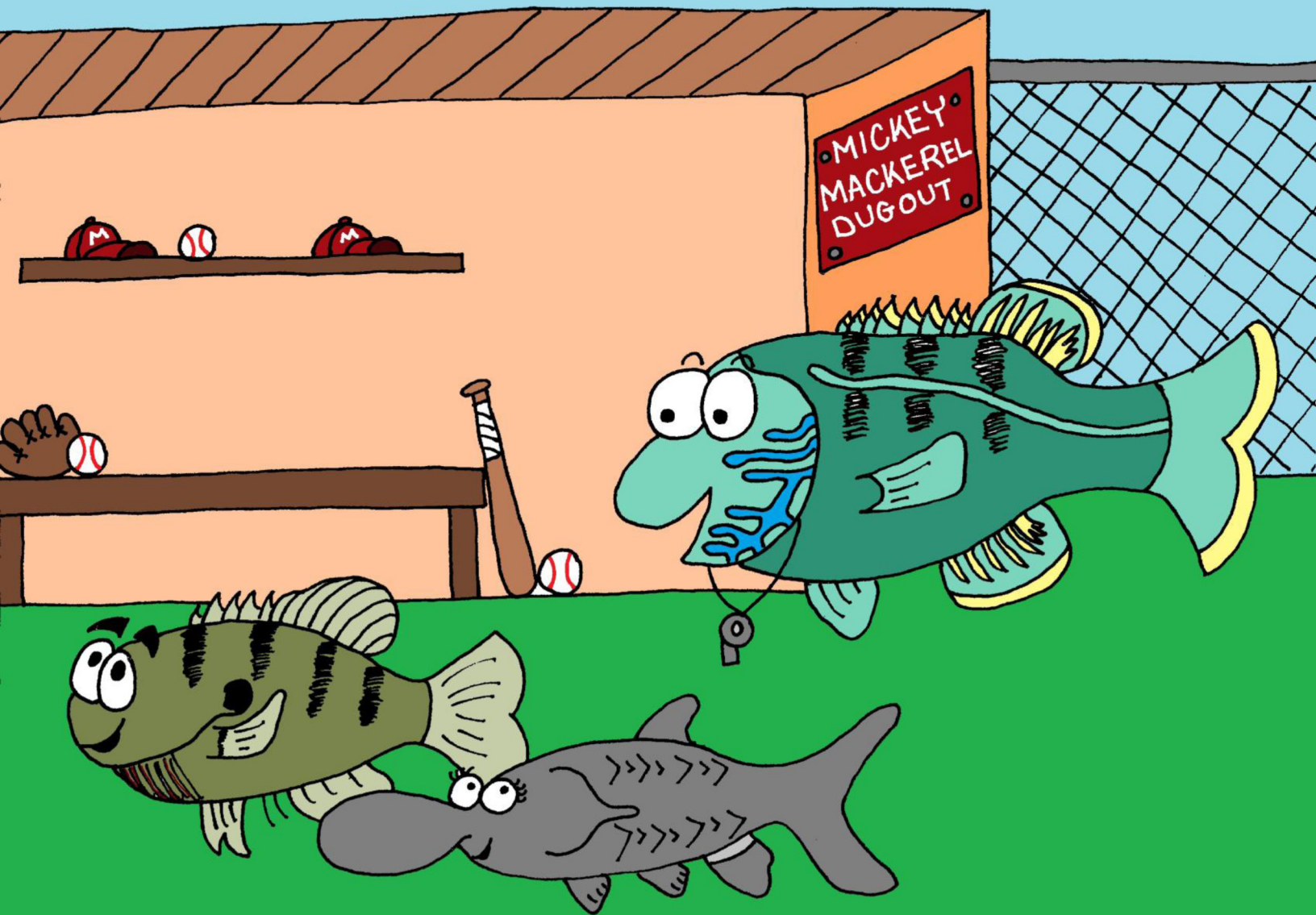
LATE BREAKING: DEQ issues fish consumption advisory!

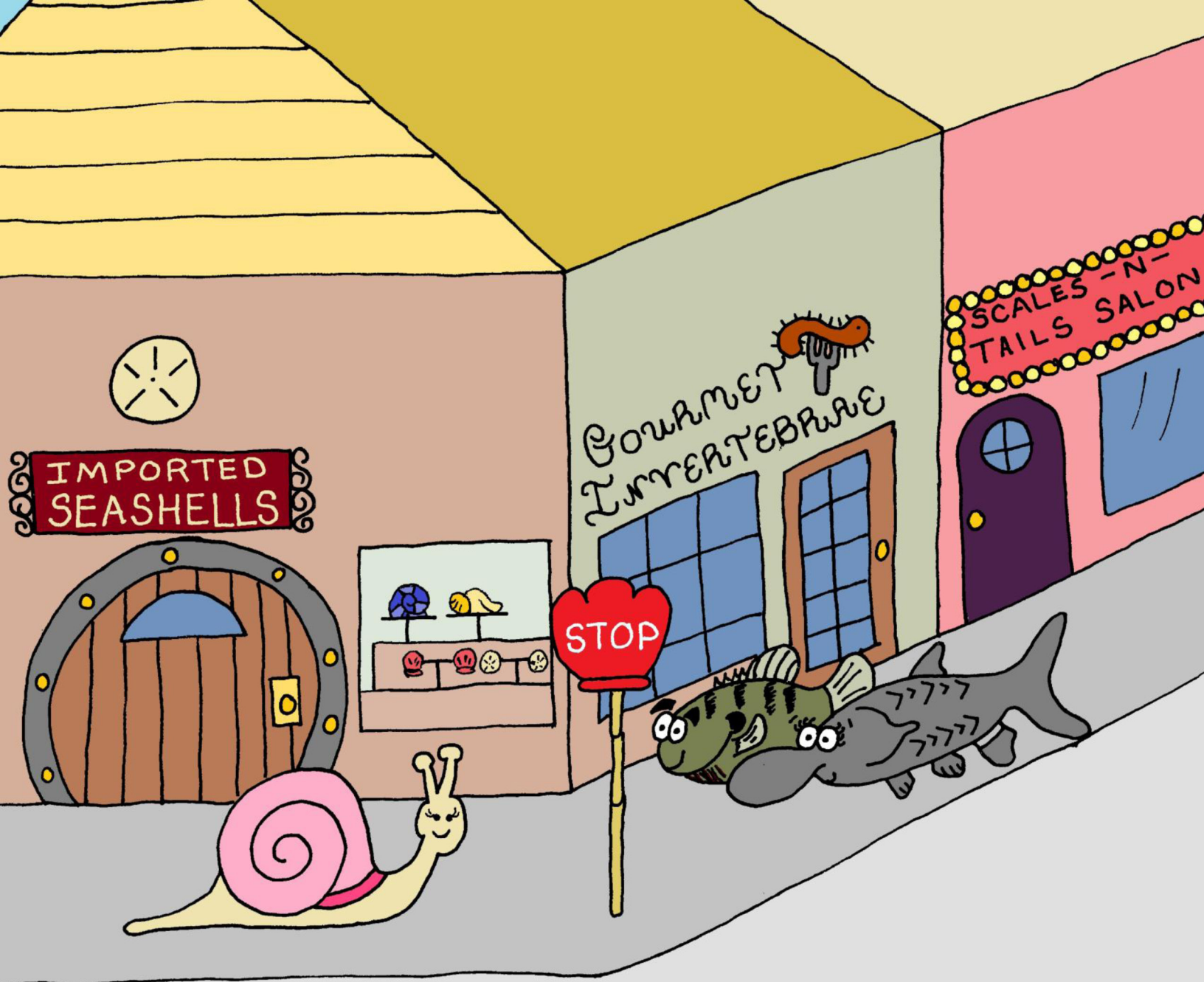
"Oh, that is very important for humans to know," described Sonny. "I was watching Sherri Shrimp on the news last night, and she was describing the Mercury Cycle. It explains how mercury can accumulate in fish. Mercury can be deposited into water from several natural or manmade sources. The mercury then builds up in the muscles of some fish making them unhealthy to eat."



"Very interesting!" said Pattie.

"Well I should get to practice. Be careful going home!" said Sonny.

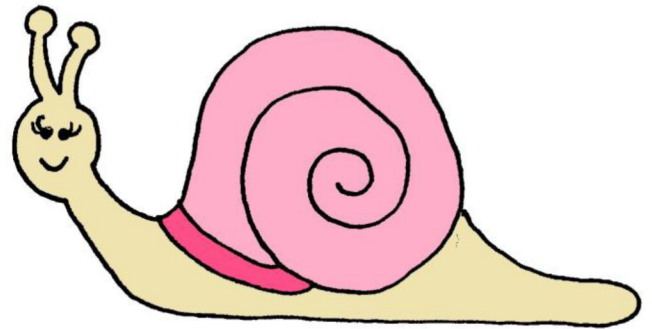
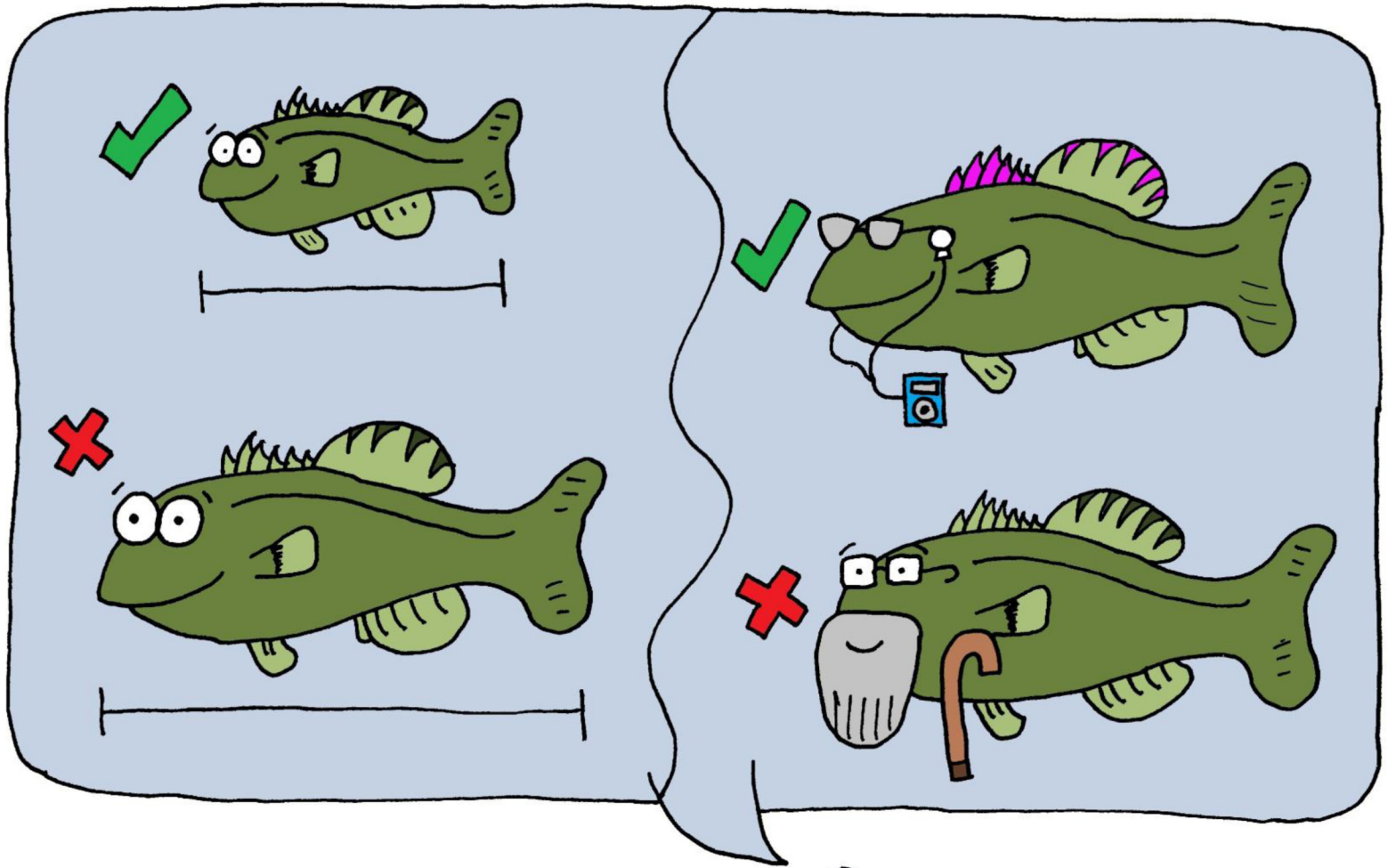




Suddenly, Gilley and Pattie swam into Evelyn Escargot.

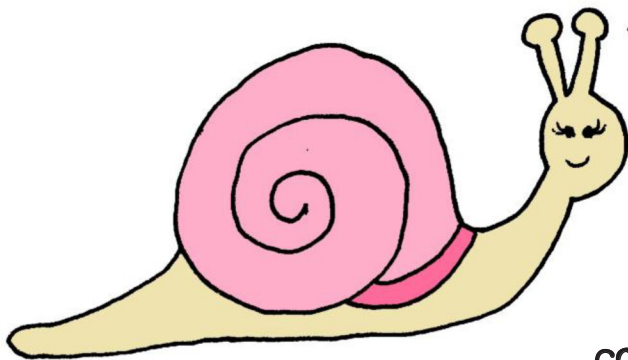
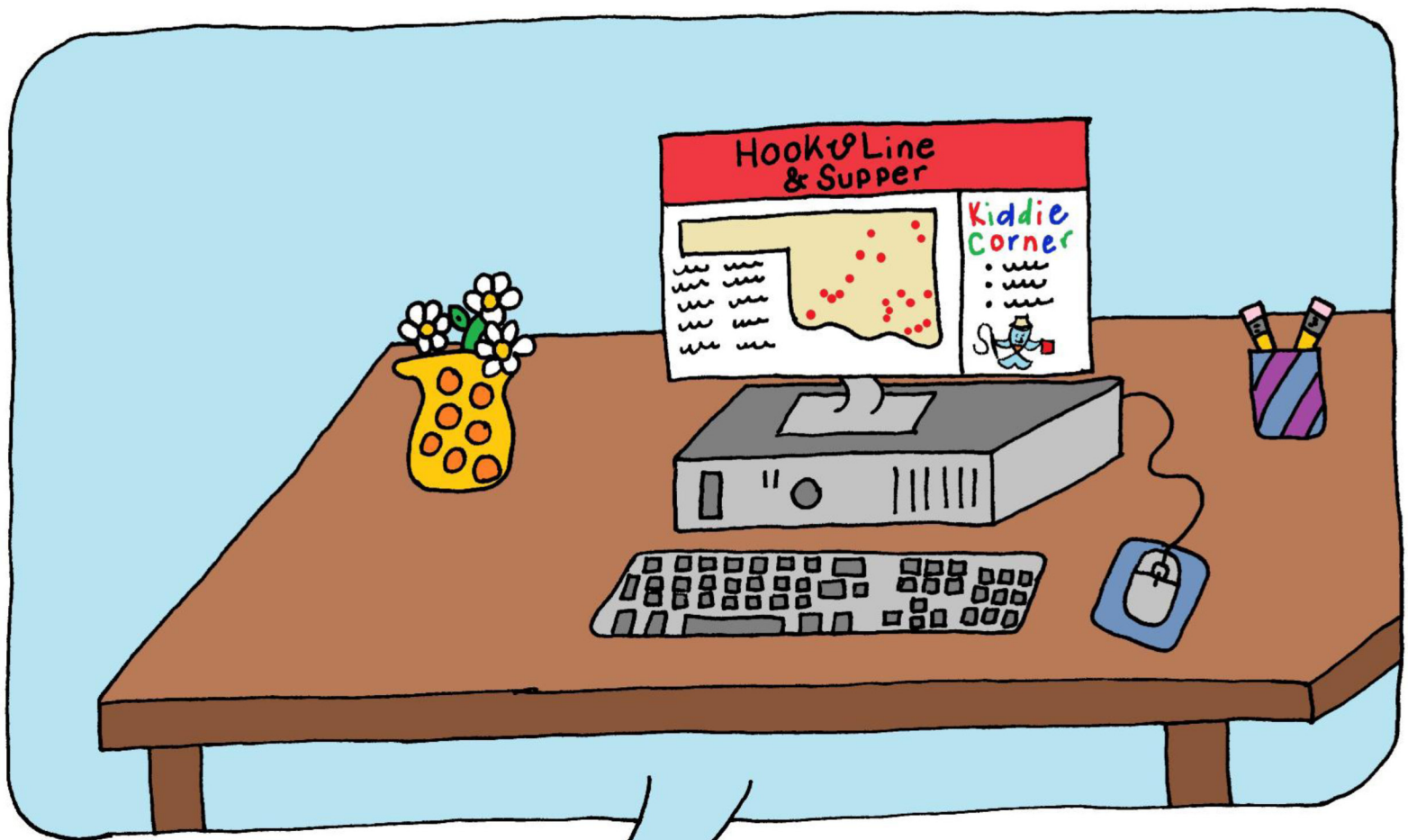
"Hello, little swimmers!" said Evelyn. "Could you help this slow, old snail cross the street? I am too slow to make it by myself."

"Sure," Pattie and Gilley said. "Mrs. Escargot, did you know that humans should eat smaller portions of certain kinds of fish?"



"Most certainly!" Evelyn described. "Here in Oklahoma, an important fact to know is what size of fish to eat. Smaller fish are healthier to eat because they have not accumulated as much mercury. Although larger, older fish, especially predator fish, are fun to catch, they aren't as healthy to eat. Fishermen can still enjoy catching them but unless they want to keep them as a trophy, it is best to put them back in the water and let someone else have fun catching them too."





"You really know a lot about fish consumption, Mrs. Escargot. What else do you know about people eating fish?" Gilley asked excitedly. "Oklahomans like to eat crappie. They usually have moderate levels of mercury, so they are safe to eat from most lakes but may be too high in a few lakes. Humans should check DEQ's website to make sure," explained Evelyn.



"I didn't know that, Mrs. Escargot," said Pattie. "What other fish in Oklahoma should humans think about before eating?"

"Well, humans have to be especially careful when eating catfish. Channel catfish usually have lower amounts of mercury making them safe to eat, but flathead catfish can have high levels. That is why it is very important to check with DEQ's advisory lists and see which ones to eat."

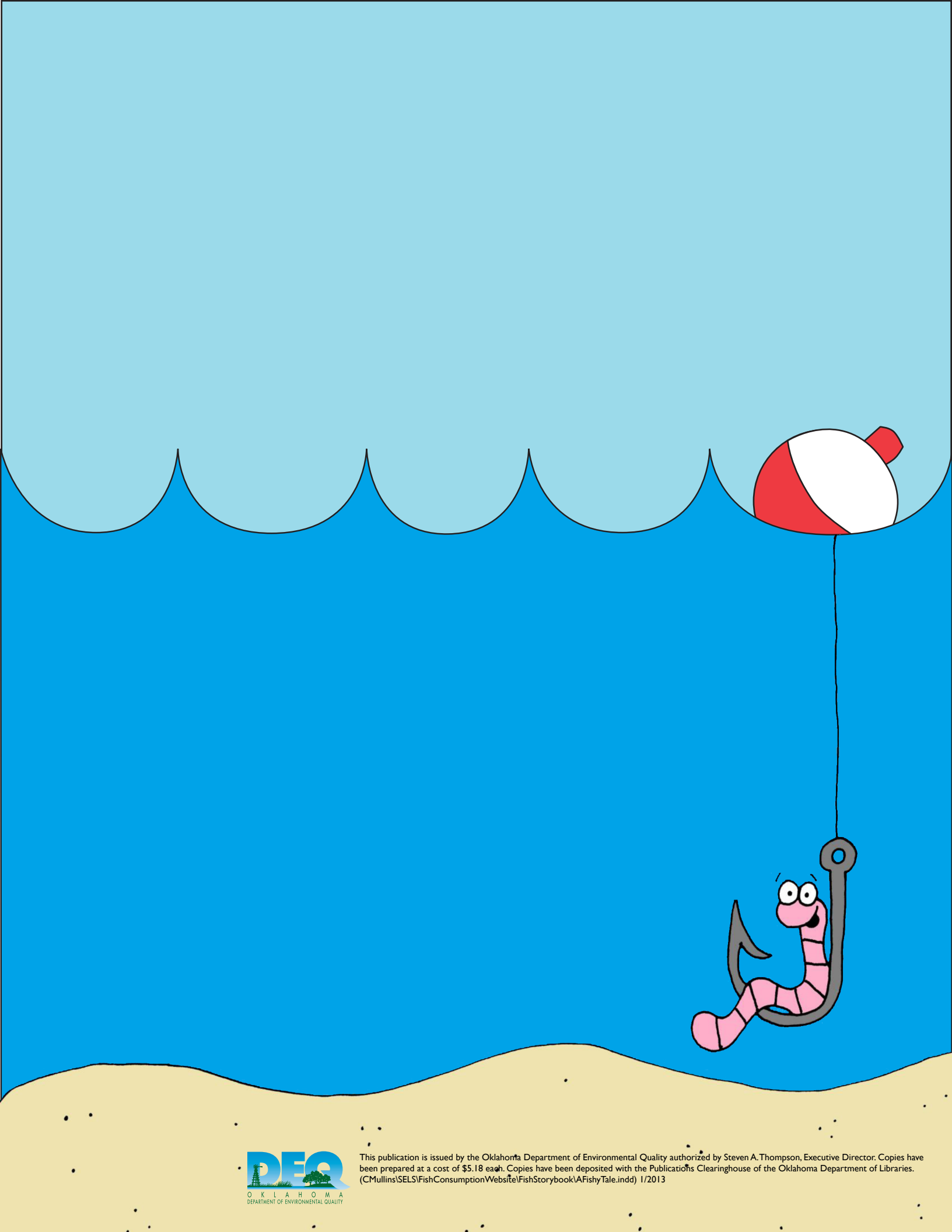
"Wow!" shouted Gilley. "Thank you for all the information, Mrs. Escargot!"

"Thank you for helping me across the street!" smiled Evelyn.

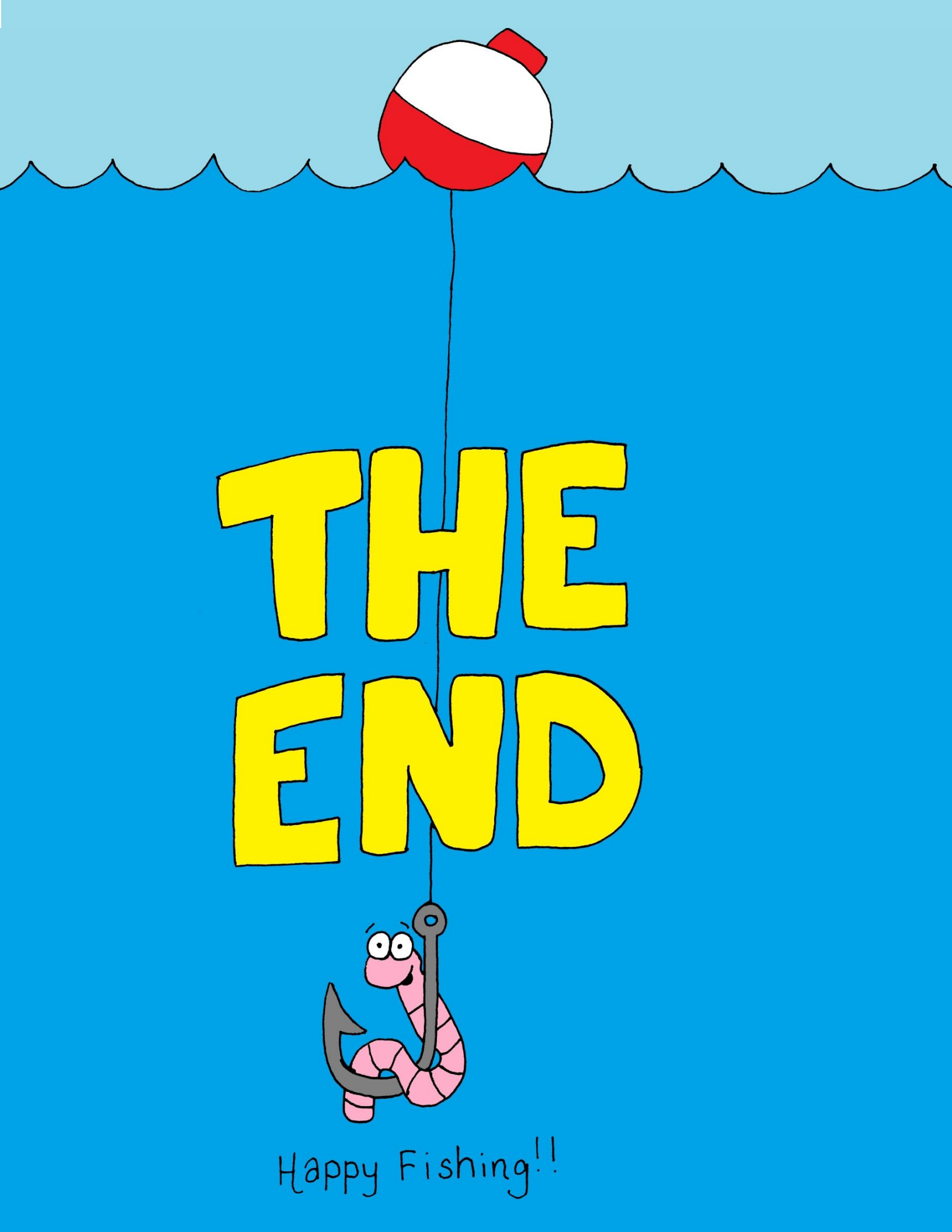


As Gilley and Pattie swam home, Gilley said "We will also have to go to DEQ's website that Mrs. Drum suggested and learn even more facts."

"I know," said Pattie. "I can't wait to tell Mom and Dad all the information we learned today!"







THE  
END

Happy Fishing!!