



Chalk Talk

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PLEASE SHARE CHALK TALK WITH YOUR COLLEAGUES !!!

Letter from the Editor

Dear Subscribers,

Is it possible for an idea to change the world? I know that I am not alone in believing this to be true. As young people, we are inspired by the words, ideas and actions of great, heroic people, whether it be by Martin Luther King's visionary "[I Have A Dream](#)" speech, or by Terry Fox's indomitable run to raise money for cancer research, or by the courage of a single student to stand in front of an armoured tank in Tiannamen Square.

Full of energy and idealism, students can be motivated to take action when it comes to issues that they can relate to. During this March Break, as always, I was struck by the fact that the most crowded areas of museums and science centres are those having to do with planet Earth and the environment.

Undoubtedly the reason for this is the excellent job educators have done in classrooms across this country to increase awareness of and interest in environmental issues. Students learn how their actions will affect the world they will inherit and acquire skills that allow them to weigh various sides of issues, and become better equipped to make informed decisions.

In response to a recent *Chalk Talk* which featured climate change, Judy Troy, a grade 5/6 English teacher at Keswick Public School wrote to us to recount discussions she had been having in her classroom. I have reprinted some of her message in this week's *Quote of the Week*. **If you are having similar discussions in your classroom, write to us and let us know. We hope to feature these emails in the Earth Day issue of Chalk Talk.**

This week's issue provides an up-date on the progress of the Youth Eco-Parliament involving thousands of high school students from Europe and Canada and salutes those school groups and educators that are participating in this exciting project.

CoEd Communications is dedicated to supporting the important work of teachers by

Paying It Forward



As of the new year, 14 groups of grade 9-11 students across Canada, have had the opportunity to participate in **The Pro Europe Youth Eco-Parliament**, sponsored by CSR (Corporations Sharing Responsibility). [The Pro Europe 2006 Youth Eco-Parliament](#) is an international educational platform that was launched in 2004.

During its first year, the Eco-Parliament gave some 3000 European students involved in environmental projects the opportunity to work collectively to create a document of resolutions and proposals for action to protect the environment: the *European White Paper for the Environment*.

Building on the excellent work done on the initial project, 14 Canadian school groups have been discussing environmental issues with 100 European Youth Eco-Parliament groups and collaborating on a new environmental project.

All classes are expected to participate in debates on local environmental issues, undertake local environmental action plans and engage in collaborative open letter writing to interested parties related to the environmental debate.

The program culminates with a delegation of up to five Canadian students attending the October 2006 Paris Pro Europe Conference, with their letters and local project descriptions.

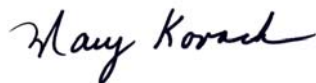


Canada is honoured to be the first non-European participant in this exciting and rewarding international exercise that links environmental democracy with local action and with high profile political and corporate engagement.

For more information on this exciting program, please visit their website at <http://www.eyep.info>.

CoEd Communications is dedicated to supporting the important work of teachers by providing resources on a range of topics for the classroom. We invite you to visit our website at 4edu.ca to view the many free teachers' resources on offer.

Your feedback is important to us. Let us know what you think!



Mary Kovack

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QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"Many interesting points were discussed regarding the Arctic, animal habitats and the potential extinction of particular species due to the loss of their nesting/breeding grounds. The students were all seriously concerned for this huge problem and we recognized that there are things we can do to slow down this process."

— Judy Troy, grade 5/6 English Teacher, Keswick Public School, Keswick, Ontario, in discussion with her students on the topic of Global Warming



Canadian School Groups participating in 2006 Youth Eco-Parliament:

- S. Bruce Smith School, Jackie Underhill, Edmonton, Edmonton School District 7
- Cochrane High School, Stephanie Bennett, Cochrane, Rocky View School Div.No.41
- Assumption Junior Senior High School, K. Henderson, Cold Lake, Lakeland RCSSD No. 150
- Ashcroft Secondary School, Josie Wilson, Ashcroft, School District 74(Golden Trail)
- Island Oak High School, Hilary Walkley, Duncan, Independent School
- Tantramar Regional High School, Nancy MacKinnon, Sackville, School District 2
- Hants East Rural High School, Teresa Kewachuk, Milford, Chignecto-Central Regional SB
- Cape Breton Highlands Academy, Bruce Miller, Terre Noire, Strait Regional School Board
- Kiilinik High School, Patti Bligh, Cambridge Bay, Kitikmeot Education Council
- Thousand Islands Secondary School, Randy Givogue, Brockville, Upper Canada District SB
- George S. Henry Academy, Brian Roche, Toronto, Toronto District School Board
- Lower Canada College, Virginia Robertson, Montréal, Independent School
- École Walter Murray Collegiate, Cathy Johnston, Saskatoon, Saskatoon PS School Div. 13
- Lachute Vocational School, Charlene Seale, Lachute, Sir Wilfred Laurier School Board

Education News



[Humans spur worst extinctions since dinosaurs](#) — Reuters, March 20, 2006

Humans are responsible for the worst spate of extinctions since the dinosaurs and must make unprecedented extra efforts to reach a goal of slowing losses by 2010, a U.N. report said on Monday. A rising human population of 6.5 billion was undermining the environment for animals and plants via pollution, expanding cities, deforestation, introduction of "alien species" and global warming, it said.

[Adapting to hotter world](#) — The London Free Press, Editorial, March 23, 2006

Welcome to the first day of spring -- that is, if we can recognize it after Canada's warmest winter in recorded history. Between December and February, this country experienced temperatures 3.9 degrees above normal. In Alberta, Saskatchewan and the Territories, it was six to eight degrees above normal. The last 10 winters have been warmer than normal — Environment Canada climatologist Bob Whitewood.

[Hot doom — World waking up to reality but it may already be too late](#) — Bill Kaufman, The Calgary Sun, March 20/06

The past few weeks of dire greenhouse gas news has either been a huge conspiracy by scientists everywhere to beggar rich nations or a torrent of inescapable reality-based data. It's a rare day that goes by without more harrowing revelations on the global warming front -- evidence handily roasting the denial of skeptics. For the second year in a row, arctic sea ice has failed to re-form, or even return to its long-term average rate of decline.

[Federal environment minister says Canada will not opt out of Kyoto](#) — Chris Morris, Canadian Press, March 14, 2006

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Despite Prime Minister Stephen Harper's public misgivings about the Kyoto protocol on climate change, the federal environment minister says Canada will not opt out of the accord. Rona Ambrose said Tuesday the Conservative government will work within the protocol, but she said there is a need for a separate, made-in-Canada solution to achieve significant reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and pollution.

Facts & Figures — The Earth at a Glance



- Located in the **Solar System** on the outer edge of the galaxy, **The Milky Way**, the Earth is about 4.5 billion years old.
- The Highest Point is **Mount Everest** at 29,028 feet above sea level. The Lowest Point (on land) is the **Dead Sea** at 1,320 feet below sea level with water so salty it is unable to support life. The Deepest Point on Earth is the **Mariana Trench** in the Pacific Ocean at a depth of 35,802 feet.
- The Earth is 70% covered by water — 97% is salt water, 3% fresh water — of which only .3% is usable by humans. Of the 326 million cubic miles of Earth's water, rivers, which supply almost all humans' drinking water, represent only 300 cubic miles.
- Earth's air is composed of 78% nitrogen, 21% oxygen, 1% other content including Argon(97%) and greenhouse gases such as carbon dioxide(3%).
- The **Greenhouse Effect** is vital to maintaining the Earth's climate and life-sustaining warmth. The Sun's heat is trapped within the atmosphere by greenhouse gases, mostly carbon dioxide (created by natural and human causes) which increased in recent decades causing the Earth's average temperature to rise by one degree from 60 to 61° F.

[Source: [Ecology.com - The Earth at a Glance](#)]

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T 416.955.9526
F 416.955.0815

THE COMPANY FOR EDUCATION COMMUNICATIONS INC.

66 George St., 3rd floor • Toronto, ON, Canada, M5A 4K8 • www.coedcomm.com • info@coedcomm.com