



Chalk Talk

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Letter from the Editor

Dear Subscribers:

“Facts. Facts. Facts” is the mantra of history teacher, Dorothy, in the new movie, [The History Boys](#). But we quickly discover that there is more to history and to education than just teaching the facts. **The History Boys** is an intelligent, thought-provoking story that has at its centre a compelling debate about the real meaning and value of education. Is education an opportunity to bask in the glory of knowledge and the joy of learning, as is argued by the story’s English teacher, Hector, who uses imagination, role-playing and interactivity to teach the students? Or is education a place to prepare for success, as expressed by the story’s Headmaster who brings in a pragmatic, goal-oriented teacher and Oxford graduate to whip the students into shape for their entrance exams to Oxford and Cambridge?



These two mentors battle for the hearts and minds of the students. While Hector encourages them to “immerse themselves in art and culture and think for themselves”, Irwin, who knows how the ‘game’ is played, stresses the importance of provocative arguments, assuring his students that “saying something controversial rather than something true” will get them noticed.

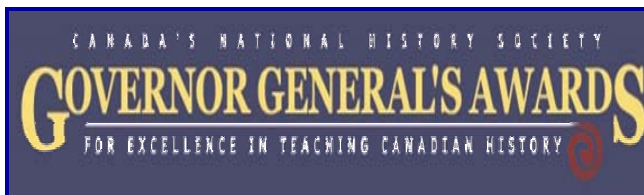
The story, which was originally written and performed on-stage in the mid-1990’s, is as relevant today as it was then, perhaps even more so in order to achieve the delicate balance between getting an education for education’s sake and the imperative to get a good job and be successful.

CoEd Communications is dedicated to supporting the important work of teachers by providing resources on a range of topics for the classroom. Visit us at 4edu.ca.

[Your thoughts are welcome.](#)

Mary Kovack

Governor General’s Awards for Excellence in Teaching Canadian History — Apply Today!



Are you an educator with a passion for Canadian history who uses creative and innovative techniques to involve your students in learning about and understanding their heritage? If this sounds like you, 2007 could be the year that you join the list of distinguished educators who have received the Governor General’s Award for Excellence in Teaching Canadian History. The Awards, which were established in 1996 by Canada’s National History Society (CNHS), recognize teachers from elementary and secondary schools who have inspired and challenged students to learn about their country’s remarkable past.

Canada’s History Society invites educators from elementary, middle, and senior levels to participate in the Awards, provided that their work features Canadian content with an explicitly historical dimension. Teachers can present themselves or a group, or be nominated by a student, parent, or colleague. The application deadline is April 28, 2007. **Apply today at historysociety.ca or call 1-800-861-1008.**



Candidates are urged to apply by submitting an original lesson plan or project description, along with supporting student work, evaluation of the student work, and a statement of their teaching philosophy.

Six Recipients Awarded \$2,500!

Six recipients will be awarded \$2,500, a medal and trip to Ottawa for two, to attend the Awards ceremony and presentation by Her Excellency, the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean.

Six Schools Share in the Winnings!

An additional \$1,000 is awarded to the recipients’ schools.

Picture Yourself at Rideau Hall!

In addition to the cash awards and recognition, recipients enjoy two days of unforgettable days including Vice-regal ceremonies with Her Excellency, cocktails in the Senate, private tours of Parliament Hill, Rideau Hall, Library and Archives, Gatineau Preservation Centre, and the Mackenzie King Estate.

Quotes of the Week

All quotes are from the movie *The History Boys* (2006), based on the Tony Award winning play of the same name, written by Alan Bennett, and adapted for the screen by director, Nicholas Hytner.

"History. It's just one bloody thing after another."— tagline from the movie

"All Human Knowledge is precious whether or not it serves the slightest human use." — originally written by poet, A.E. Housman, quoted by Hector, the English/classics teacher

"In an examination truth is not at issue. Better, to come up with an argument unique enough to defend Stalin." — advice given by Irwin, the hotshot Oxford grad, brought in by the ambitious Headmaster to prep the school's star pupils for Oxford and Cambridge entrance exams.



2006 Governor General's Awards for Excellence in Teaching Canadian History — Front row (l to r): Jennifer Johnson-George; Deborah Morrison, President and CEO, CNHS; Her Excellency, the Right Honourable Michaëlle Jean; J. Douglas Barrington, Chairman, CNHS; Antony Caruso. Back row (l to r): Blake Seward; Julie-Catherine Mercadier; Kim Chagnon; Mary Scott; Greg Miyanaga

Free lesson plans, posters and on-line resources available through the education link at www.historysociety.ca. Order yours today!

AT A GLANCE — The Governor General's Awards for Excellence in Teaching History



Rideau Hall

- To-date, 128 Canadian Educators have been honoured with the Governor General's Award for Excellence in Teaching History.
- His Excellency, the Honourable Romeo LeBlanc presented the Awards from 1996 to 1999.
- Her Excellency, the Honourable Adrienne Clarkson presented the Awards 2000 to 2004.
- Her Excellency, the Honourable Michaëlle Jean presented the Awards in 2005 and 2006.
- 10 of the Awards Ceremonies have taken place at Rideau Hall. In 1999, the Awards were presented at the Citadelle in Quebec City.

Education News

[Engaging students in research; An undergraduate examination of inquiry-based learning at the University of Calgary](#) -- Sona Sandhu and Carina McDonald, *University Affairs*, January, 2007

"Inquiry-based learning refers to teaching and learning that is active and problem-driven, rather than primarily passive and lecture-based. It is not a new method of teaching, nor is it a new concept at Canadian universities. While numerous studies have examined inquiry-based methods, there are few readily available internal reports on inquiry-based learning at individual Canadian universities."

[Up to communities to save small schools: Minister](#) — Canadian Press, thestar.com, January 12, 2007

"Plummeting enrolment in parts of Ontario means communities are going to have to get creative if they want to keep their local school open as the province's population and economy shifts, Education Minister Kathleen Wynne told the province's Catholic school trustees Friday. Demographics and a changing economy that's moving away from traditional manufacturing jobs means schools across the province have fewer young people attending school, Wynne said."

[Schools learning to handle cellphone; Distraction in class. But parents want children to be able to reach them](#) — Brenda Branswell, *The Gazette*, November 21, 2006

"Now that cellphones are almost as common as knapsacks, managing their use among high school students is another issue for schools to deal with. Some Montreal-area English high schools ban them outright inside the building; others put strict limits on their use. The distraction factor is obvious - a phone ring-

dents is another issue for schools to deal with. Some Montreal-area English high schools ban them outright inside the building; others put strict limits on their use. The distraction factor is obvious - a phone ringing in class or students text-messaging one another, the modern version of passing notes in class.”

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