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Chalk Talk

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PLEASE SHARE *CHALK TALK* WITH YOUR COLLEAGUES !!!

Letter from the Editor

Dear Subscribers,

This April 28th, EXPO 67 'Man and His World' will mark its 40th anniversary. One of the great disappointments of my childhood was not having had the opportunity to join my classmates on a school trip to be a part of this wonderful international event which coincided with the year long celebration of Canada's Centennial. What a celebration it turned out to be! Attendance hit 50 million people — a record for a World's Fair that still stands today. Upon their return, my teacher presented a lecture and slideshow to the entire school which featured geometrically-shaped architecture, a monorail, multi-media technology, fashion trends, not to mention, an innovative housing project called 'Habitat' which looked like a stack of square cardboard boxes. One of the most memorable slides was of a huge, futuristic dome made up of triangular tubes containing a multi-storey building. I was struck by the idea that a whole world could be contained within this beautiful sphere.

A few years later on a school trip to Quebec City's 'Carnaval', I saw the former grounds of EXPO 67 from my window seat on the train. The iconic sphere which had been the U.S. Pavilion stood out in the landscape as it had during The Fair. The geodesic dome, designed by Buckminster Fuller, was and is the largest of its kind, and today is home to Environment Canada's Biosphère.

This week's issue features information on live and interactive programming now available through the Biosphère. 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.

Let us know what you think!

Mary Kovack

Mary Kovack

Environment Canada — Biosphère

Environment Canada's Biosphère — Canada's first Ecowatch Centre — opened on June 6, 1995, World Environment Day. A showcase for environmental education and originally the site of the U.S. Pavilion at EXPO 67, the sphere had been restored to include the erection of a new building inside the dome, incorporating three of the American pavilion's four original platforms. The Biosphere's mission, in keeping with the philosophy of its visionary creator, Buckminster Fuller, is to instil in the public a responsible, action-oriented attitude towards the environment

The Biosphere's educational mandate is to make young people aware of the major environmental issues, relating in particular to water, ecosystems, climate change and sustainable development. The Biosphère offers a variety of **Youth Programs** based on play, experimentation and creativity which encourage students to apply teamwork, co-operation and problem-solving skills to environmental protection. For more information on Biosphère's educational resources and activities, click here.

As of March 1, 2007, the Biosphère offers schools across Canada the opportunity to participate in live and interactive **Environmental Distance Learning** programming. [See details below]

[Source: Environment Canada's Biosphère website]

If success or failure of this planet and of human beings depended on how I am and what I do ...

HOW WOULD I BE ?
WHAT WOULD I DO ?
- R BUCKMINSTER FULLER

NEW! Environmental Distance Learning — "Clean Air and Climate Change"

— Offered by the Biosphère, Environment Museum and National Centre of Expertise in Environmental Education

Renowned for its Youth Programs since 1995, Environment Canada's Biosphère, located in Montreal, Quebec, is now offering high schools and colleges across Canada **Environmental Distance Learning**, using videoconferencing technology. The **live and interactive** educational activity "Clean Air and Climate Change" is offered as part of this new service.

"Clean Air and Climate Change" is tied with Provincial Education Programs and is made available to classes to discuss the very latest scientific information about air and climate, the impacts on Canada and its regions, and what we can do about it. The general objective of the activity is to make students more aware and proactive concerning their environment.

The videoconferences' format offers **direct access** to an expert on the subjects of weather, climate, and climate change. These live and interactive activities are conducted from our state of the art broadcast key wall studio and include animated graphics.

This new Environmental Distance Learning' s activity is totally **free of charge**! Your only requirement is the technical ability to receive videoconferences in a room with a capacity of one, two or three classes (up to 100 students). It is also possible to link several schools from different regions of Canada at the same time, allowing students to exchange thoughts about clean air and climate change that are unique to their regions and lives.

Presentations' availability, length and content can be adjusted to individual school schedules and can last one or two class periods, from 50 to 75 minutes. **For the current school year, the activity is available from March 1st to June 15, from 12:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. (EST - EDT as per March 11th).**

For more information about Environmental Distance Learning and the "Clean Air and Climate Change" activity, visit www.biosphere.ec.gc.ca, click on Activities for Groups, then Youth Program and Distance Learning or click on the following link: http://www.biosphere.ec.gc.ca/Activites_pour_les_groupes/Programme_jeunesse/Education_a_distance-WSA1D06BB1-1_En.htm

Facts & Figures: EXPO 67, The Sphere and R. Buckminster Fuller

Photo: Henry Shrub

Photo : Pierre Goulet

(top) **R. Buckminster Fuller at EXPO 67**
(bottom) **Interior shot of the Geodesic Sphere**

- Self-taught, inventor, engineer and architect, Richard Buckminster Fuller (1895-1983) holds a unique place in the history of contemporary American architecture. His avant-garde philosophy can be summed up as seeking maximum efficiency for minimum effort.
- In 1963, Fuller approached the American government to design the U.S. pavilion for Montreal's World Fair in 1967.The America pavilion, as high as a 20-storey building, soon became 'the' focal point on the Île Sainte-Hélène site. In the space of six months it was visited by 11 million people, making it the busiest pavilion at Expo '67. Its six inner floors, on the theme 'Creative America ', contained several hundred artefacts and works of art bearing witness to American genius, and some of the space rockets actually used in the Apollo program. However, everyone agreed that the highlight of the presentation was the building itself.
- The huge sphere, with a diameter of more than 80 metres, was imposing from the outside but discreet from the inside. At night, it was transformed into a sparkling jewel that dominated the landscape.
- Built from triangles, which Buckminster Fuller considered the perfect form, the geodesic dome demonstrated that it was possible to create a liveable space using only one-fiftieth of the materials normally used in a conventional architectural design. The triangle is a natural mathematical figure that, in combination with other triangles, provides maximum efficiency with minimum structural effort. By assembling a series of identical geometrical units that are both self-supporting and light, Fuller obtained a dynamic construction in which the individual components contribute to the overall structure. While each component is independent, it cannot exist without the others.

[SOURCE: The Biosphère —Architectural Work, Environment Canada website]

In the News

Bondar to review ecology education -- Tess Kalinowski, Education Reporter,*TheStar.com*, March 2, 2007

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Canadian astronaut Roberta Bondar will head the province's first sweeping review of how schools teach about the environment and conservation. The curriculum review will consider how environmental education can be applied to all subjects from kindergarten on. "I want kids to feel uplifted about themselves. I believe nothing is ever too late. I don't think we're at a point where (damage to the environment) is irreversible," said Bondar, following a Queen's Park announcement yesterday at Norseman Junior Middle School in Etobicoke.

Maintaining Canada's knowledge advantage demands greater post-secondary participation -- The Canadian Millennium Scholarship Foundation, News Release, February 21, 2007

Published today, the report, entitled Why Access Matters, exposes the twin challenges of a changing economy and an aging population. To meet these challenges and maintain its knowledge advantage, Canada will need to graduate more students even as the youth population begins to decline. This means that participation in post-secondary education must be improved among youth from groups that are presently under-represented in our universities and colleges, particularly low-income youth, Aboriginal Peoples and those whose families have no history of higher education.

Earth to reveal the dark side of the moon; Eastern Canadians, Web viewers may see a coppery, three-dimensional full moon – Paul Taylor, *The Globe & Mail*, March 2, 2007

Tomorrow night, sky watchers in Eastern Canada will be treated to a rare celestial event: The full moon will rise above the horizon while it is in the middle of an eclipse. The normally bright lunar surface will be transformed into a coppery brown or eerie reddish colour as it passes through the shadow of the Earth -- the first total eclipse of the moon since October, 2004. Saturday's eclipse begins around 3:18 p.m. EST -- before the moon has actually risen above the eastern horizon for viewers in Canada. That means Canadians won't be able to see the entire celestial show. Even so, a lunar eclipse is a multi-hour event, and viewers in Eastern Canada should still see a good portion of it. As for tomorrow's event, the **Discovery Channel** plans to do a **live webcast** starting at 6 p.m. EST. "If you are in a part of the country where you can't see it because of the weather or the time zone, you will still be able to catch it here," said Peter McMahon, a Discovery Web producer. The website is http://www.discoverychannel.ca .

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