



Chalk Talk

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PLEASE SHARE CHALK TALK WITH YOUR COLLEAGUES!!!

Letter from the Editor

Dear Readers,

“The Energy of the Mind is the Essence of Life.”

— Aristotle, Greek philosopher/scientist

The axiom that *all politics is local* could just as easily apply to global politics. A recent example of this phenomenon took place with **Earth Hour** on March 29. This ‘little idea’, which originated in Sydney, Australia in 2007 and captured the imagination of average people, became, in just one year, a grassroots movement which inspired more than 150 cities world-wide to ‘power down’.



As often happens with similar ‘big’ problems facing our world — famine, disease, and war — the scale of the effects of global warming on the Environment can be overwhelming, making us feel helpless and unable to take tangible action. At minimum, Earth Hour provided us with the opportunity to express our awareness of the problem and willingness to become part of the solution.

I participated in a 20-block walk, by candlelight, through my neighbourhood, joined by hundreds of local residents. In a way it recalled the blackout which struck much of southern Ontario and the Northeast U.S. a few years ago. That was true darkness. This was different. In deliberately choosing to be ‘unplugged’ for an hour, it was a symbolic gesture demonstrating our desire to ‘do’ something. It was a small thing but it felt empowering, reminiscent of the scene in the movie, **Network**, where people threw their TV sets out the window, shouting, ‘We’re angry and we’re not going to take it anymore’. Will Earth Hour represent a watershed moment? Will it inspire us to create the world we want and make it sustainable?

New ideas and solutions begin with knowledge. This issue of **Chalk Talk** features educational resources that provide valuable information on a variety of energy and related environmental issues. CoEd Communications is dedicated to supporting the important work of teachers by providing classroom resources on a range of topics. We invite you to visit our website at 4edu.ca to view the many **free** teachers’ resources on offer.

[As always, we welcome your thoughts.](#)

Mary Kovach

All about Energy. All in one Place.

New! The Centre for Energy Information has launched a [consumer section](#) that offers information, stories and tips on energy and the environment.



Canadian Centre for Energy Information

It is difficult to imagine how we can begin to solve the environmental challenges we face, until, and unless, we understand energy, renewable and non-renewable sources. [The Canadian Centre for Energy Information](#) provides extensive information about Canada’s energy system. Visit their website — named “Top Energy Info Source, Print or Web” at the Energy TV Awards held November 23, 2007 — to learn why stable and sustainable energy development is crucial to our way of life. These stakeholder-reviewed, fact-based educational resources assist teachers in the areas of science, technology, society, the environment and the economy.

Energy Literacy Series

The Energy Literacy Series examines 10 energy sources through the use of interactive and technology-based teaching materials, and will be correlated with curricula from all provinces. For more information check out www.centreforenergy.com/els.

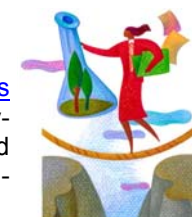


Oil and Gas Learning Resource Series

FREE to teachers, these curriculum-linked learning resources were created by teachers for teachers. Go to www.centreforenergy.com/k-12.

Careers in Energy

Visit www.centreforenergy.com/careers for a searchable database of energy-related occupational descriptions and corresponding educational requirements.



Tomorrow belongs to those who discover eco-friendly energy sources and solutions to sustain and protect our precious natural resources. Education will make all the difference. To learn more about the essentials of energy, teachers and students are invited to check out www.centreforenergy.com today!

[Source: [Canadian Centre for Energy Information](#)]

$E = mc^2$
Energy equals mass times the speed of light squared. — Albert Einstein, Physicist, 1879-1955

Statistics Canada's latest on the Environment at www.statcan.ca



Commuting: Reversing a century-long trend, the latest Census results reveal that fewer people are driving cars to work. According to the **2006 Census**, the percentage of Canadian workers who drove to work was 72.3 per cent, down from 73.8 per cent in 2001, a departure from a century-long trend of increasing automobile use. The numbers also show gains for public transit, carpooling and cycling. Read more details in "**Commuting Patterns and Places of Work of Canadians, 2006 Census**" at <http://www12.statcan.ca/english/census06/analysis/pow/index.cfm>. Lots of tables and graphs help tell the story for each province. Excellent maps of major cities are available from the side-bar: they show a city's commuting distances and the proportion of people who use a sustainable mode of transportation to get to work. You can compare Canadian cities' commuting patterns at a glance!

Envirostats: A StatCan quarterly bulletin, Envirostats allows you to read up on the latest environmental issues. The Spring issue of EnviroStats at <http://www.statcan.ca/english/freepub/16-002-XIE/16-002-XIE2008001.htm>, features articles on the following:

- **Disposal of household special wastes:** (<http://www.statcan.ca/english/freepub/16-002-XIE/2008001/10539-en.htm>) a 2005 survey found that many households are putting waste items like dead batteries, expired medication and leftover paint in their regular garbage, despite environmental and health risks.
- **Is composting organic waste spreading?:** (<http://www.statcan.ca/english/freepub/16-002-XIE/2008001/10540-en.htm>) According to this study, composting is on the rise in Canada. The average Canadian sent 51 kilograms of organic waste for composting in 2004, compared with just 32 kilograms in 2000. [Note: The PDF version of Envirostats is available for download on sidebar.]



Also, check out **Human Activity and the Environment**, (<http://www.statcan.ca/english/environ/index.htm>), Statistics Canada's leading publication tracking how Canadians interact with their environment, offering great maps, tables, lesson plans.

[Source: Statistics Canada]

Alberta's Solar Decathlon Team — *Up-date!*



Congratulations to Alberta's Solar Decathlon Team of students, faculty and staff who have been selected as a finalist to compete in a 10-day international competition to be held in Washington, D.C.!

- **The competition:** *The 2009 Solar Decathlon* – a high-profile international competition among 20 selected university and college teams.
- **The task:** To design, build and operate the most attractive, practical and energy-efficient solar-powered home.
- **The team:** Students, faculty and staff from University of Calgary, Mount Royal College and Southern Alberta Institute of Technology.
- **The goal:** To become the first western Canadian team to enter and win the 2009 Solar Decathlon International Competition.



[The Team's Solar Powered Home Design](#)

Pioneering innovative housing solutions in Alberta, this dynamic and dedicated team of students, faculty and staff will be submitting a house design that incorporates wood, water, stone and light to reflect Alberta's natural landscape. The decathlon includes 10 contests in architecture, engineering, market viability, communications, comfort zone, appliances, hot water, lighting, energy balance and getting around. **For more information, see [Alberta Solar Decathlon](#), [Solar Decathlon](#) and [Advantages of Solar Energy](#) on [The Canadian Centre for Energy Information's](#) website.**

Education News & Related Articles

[Greenhouse Gas: Experts call for national carbon tax](#) – Martin Mittelstaedt, Environment Reporter, *The Globe & Mail*, April 10, 2008

“The federal government should convert its 10-cent-a-litre excise tax on gasoline into a national carbon tax on all fuels that damage the environment, two of Canada’s top public policy experts say. In a report released yesterday, University of Calgary professor Jack Mintz and Simon Fraser University professor Nancy Olewiler joined a growing chorus of tax experts, environmentalists and provincial officials in arguing that the country needs some kind of charge on carbon dioxide emissions to reflect the damage caused by the greenhouse gas. If adopted, it would give Canada what amounts to a national environmental tax, applied with an intention similar to those of taxes levied on alcohol and tobacco - to reduce consumption and defray some societal costs.”

[What did Earth Hour teach us?](#) — *Earth Tones* by Sophia Dore & Andrew Laursen, METRO NEWS [OTTAWA], April 07, 2008

“Earth Hour 2008 has come and gone. Canada as a country did well, with more than 150 cities signed up to take part, which was one of the highest participation rates in the world. ... Since Toronto and Ottawa reported their power decreases in different ways we can’t tell whether they ended up about the same. In Halifax, power usage stats have not been reported as yet but the McDonald Bridge, City Hall and Grand Parade Square all went dark. Our personal Earth Hour went well. Despite the best efforts of one member of this writing team to hook the TV up to the stationary bike, we ended up turning off the lights, having some family over, lighting candles and chatting. What did it all mean? Did it really make a global environmental impact? Was it, as some have claimed, mere tokenism? If we think of it in terms of cutting power usage it really meant very little. The amount of energy saved during Earth Hour was not enough to make an impact on worldwide energy budgets. However, if we think of it in terms of what may yet be accomplished then maybe it meant more. Many companies that cut their power usage did so by turning off unnecessary lights. Presumably, in the run-up to Earth Hour, they examined their energy usage in order to determine which lights, etc., were unnecessary. This increased consciousness that some of their power usage is unnecessary may lead to some decisions to keep unnecessary lights off on regular, non-Earth Hour nights.”

[Students share knowledge about eco-issues at fair; Scarborough student does project on solar cars](#) – Danielle Milley, THE MIRROR [Scarborough, Ontario], April 8, 2008

“Carmen Yau knows that by sharing her newfound knowledge of solar cars she can be a part of the solution to better the environment... The Grade 7 student shared her project on solar cars with hundreds of fellow students from across the Toronto District School Board who visited the Eco-Quest Fair at Quest Alternative School in Riverdale. “

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