



Chalk Talk

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PLEASE SHARE CHALK TALK WITH YOUR COLLEAGUES !!!

Letter from the Editor

Dear Readers:

As this is the last issue of **Chalk Talk** for this school year, I thought I'd let you in on a secret that I've harboured for more than a decade. I am *in love* with Rex Murphy. Yes, **that** Rex, the [CBC](#) broadcaster, renaissance man and passionate master orator, who, other than Don Cherry, must have the most recognizable face and voice in



Canada. I don't know if it's those piercing blue eyes, or that east coast accent, or the hair, all I know is that by the time I realized it, I was too far gone. Furtively, I began planning my free time on Sunday afternoons to coincide with **Cross Country**

Checkup, so that I could enjoy his weekly radio program without interruption. His regular political commentaries on **The National** are 'must-see TV' for me. I just can't get enough of him.

Once, on a cold Spring day, I found myself in the same elevator with Rex — just him and me. There he was, unassuming in a double-breasted wool navy blue pea jacket, that most keen observer of what it means to be Canadian, whose insight, curiosity, and intellect makes me proud to be a Canadian. For years he has illuminated our lives and sparked a bonfire of conversations about who we are as a nation while listening with interest and humour. I stood next to him totally awestruck, star-struck and dumbstruck — the latter being particularly unusual for me. This moment to remember ended when he exited at the 7th floor and I proceeded to the 11th.

This week's issue of **Chalk Talk** features winning essays written by students across Canada about lives that had a significant impact on us in 2007.

On behalf of all of us at CoEd Communications, I wish educators across Canada a wonderful summer break. We'll be busy putting together the September issue of **The Source**.

I'll be back in late August with more great **free** educational resources and programs. Until then, be safe and take a moment to visit our website at www.4edu.ca.



[As always, your thoughts are appreciated.](#)

Mary Kovack

A&E Classroom's Essay Contest — Winners!

[A&E Canadian Classroom](#) congratulates the winners of its 2007 'LIVES THAT MAKE A DIFFERENCE ESSAY CONTEST' which challenged students in grades 5-12 to write an original 300 word essay on the life of a person they believed made the biggest difference on Canadian society in the past year.



Students competed in two categories: Grade 5-8 and 9-12. A grand prize of \$5,000 and first place prize of \$2,500 were awarded to one student in each category. An honourable mention was awarded in the grade 5-8 category this year. As well, the winning students' teachers each received \$1,000 for use in their departments and the winning schools received an A&E prize package including a television, DVD player and classic A&E DVDs.

A national panel of judges composed of seven education experts and A&E representatives judged the submissions. Education sector judges included Mark Bridges, Patricia Elliot, Francie Maroosis, and Rose Dotten, Linda Chamot (Ontario); Beverly Buchan and Larry Mikulcik (Saskatchewan); Robert Nicholson (Prince Edward Island); Susan Harrison (New Brunswick) and Karin Paul (British Columbia).

The winning essays were chosen on the following criteria: persuasiveness (33%), creativity (33%) and relevancy (33%). The winning students wrote about people whose lives had been both newsworthy and had impacted Canadian society in diverse areas, ranging from bullying to the Environment, political satire to the Holocaust.



In a world where there is much discussion about how aware young people are of the important issues and how willing they are to become involved in making a difference, these thoughtful and poignant essays demonstrate significant reason for optimism. The local media which covered presentation of prizes at the winners' schools demonstrated enthusiastic support for these 'good news' stories. **To read the winning essays, see the feature, below.**

Educators are encouraged to set aside time in their social studies, current events, civics, literacy and history curriculum for the beginning of the coming school year to have their students participate in **next year's contest which begins September 1, 2008 and closes December 1, 2008.** [Go to A&E Canadian Classroom](#) for complete contest information.

[Source: A&E Canada]

A&E's 'LIVES THAT MAKE A DIFFERENCE' ESSAY CONTEST — 2007 Winners

Grand Prize, Grades 9-12: Geneva McSheffery, Grade 12 student, Riverview High School, Riverview, New Brunswick



Canada has a national treasure in **Rick Mercer**. For more than a decade, he has entertained the country and engaged us in current affairs through his clever sense of humour and political satire. Rick Mercer's work always attracts a lot of attention from Canadians. *This Hour Has 22 Minutes*, the news satire program he helped create, has become a Canadian television classic. Mercer's *Talking to Americans* drew 2.7 million Canadians to their televisions, designating it the highest ranked comedy special in CBC history. *The Rick Mercer Report* was the second highest rated arts and entertainment program on the CBC during its second season. *Rick Mercer Report: The Book* debuted at number three on the Globe and Mail bestseller list. Clearly, Canadians pay attention to what he says. His weekly television program, *The Rick Mercer Report*, showcases Canadian accomplishments. Whether he is having a sleepover at 24 Sussex Drive or off-roading with Newfoundland Premier Danny Williams, Mercer invites us to journey with him around the nation and offers a fresh glimpse of newsworthy faces. By showcasing different regions of our large and diverse nation, Mercer increases Canadians awareness of the country as a whole. Rick Mercer has had a positive impact on Canadian society. For thirty minutes every Tuesday evening, Mercer engages Canadians in the nation's political scene through his non-partisan, no holds barred brand of humour. He isn't merely entertaining us, he is leading us closer to a definition of our national identity.



First Place, Grades 9-12: Keerat Sidhu, Grade 12 student at Seaquam Secondary School, Delta, British Columbia

Truth Hurts — Once, vicious storms, sinking cities, and mass epidemics were topics reserved for fantasy. Theses ominous phrases would reach our ears only to be brushed aside for deadlines and soccer games. "Global warming", the mantra of those who foresaw the future, was deemed fanatical by the wary public. The effects of climate change were imminent, yet a severed connection remained between driving the new SUV and the eventual melting of the polar ice caps. Minimal visual and interactive mediums explained how our actions impacted the world, until former **US Vice President Al Gore** produced a high-profile documentary that greeted us on television, on the Internet, in magazines, and at the cinema. Canadians were finally able to comprehend the detrimental effects society posed upon the environment. Gore slapped North America's face with *An Inconvenient Truth*, illuminating the irrevocable changes of a climate in crisis. The film stirred controversy and the conversation across Canada, transcending generations as it captured our attention. With the recognition of a 2007 Oscar, the desire to display the film in schools greatly increased, allowing the polluters of tomorrow to familiarize themselves with a harrowing fate. These simple viewings were enough to morph the minds of a technology-crazed generation, haunting students with their overwhelmingly vital messages about repairing a problem handed to them by their predecessors. Al Gore's *An Inconvenient Truth* launched a large-scale project that forced Canadians to reflect upon their actions and bear the guilt and responsibility for mankind's incessant conquering of the natural world. Al Gore has candidly stated that our lives depend upon the sustainability of the earth, a point that has been easily overlooked. The documentary's claim is clear: if the planet is not considered an utmost priority, surely blue skies and lush forests will become the new topics for fantasy. How inconvenient, indeed.



Grand Prize, Grades 5-8 — Zachary Langille, Grade 8 student, T.R. McEwen Public School, Oshawa, Ontario

One Race, the Human Race — Once again, the eighty-three year old stood before our school and began her story. We could hear a pin drop. For over fifty years she was silent about her horrendous experiences. In 1996, she finally found the courage to speak about the Holocaust. She's a remarkable woman striving to heal the world, one school at a time. Her name is **Eva Olsson**, a Holocaust survivor who has been to Hell and back. I first heard about her in grade four. How could the words of an eighty-year-old woman have had such a powerful and positive impact on me? Eva's goal is to teach children about peace and tolerance. We shouldn't be discriminated against because of skin colour or religion. She describes hatred as poison that destroys one's health. We all deserve to be treated with respect and dignity. We are all from one race, the human race. Her mission has taken her over 36,000 km and she has spoken to more than 300,000 people all over Canada. She has received over 9,000 letters from people who were inspired by her message. In writing her national best selling book "Unlocking the Doors" Eva continues to spread her message. Eva lives with the past, but she uses it to teach Canadian children about tolerance and peace so that history will not repeat itself. Eva's positive attitude and commitment drives her to continue her mission to teach students. It is ironic that so much has been learned from a woman who was forbidden formal education by her religion. How fitting is it that Nipissing University would award her with an Honourary Doctorate Degree for her contributions to the Betterment of Mankind. Dr. Eva Olsson has changed my life and continues to prove that she heals 'one school at a time'.



Zachary Langille and his teacher accept A&E prizes

First Place, Grades 5-8 — Kirsten McVey-MacMillan, Grade 8 student, Highland Park Junior High School, Halifax, Nova Scotia

Pink Shirts for Peaceful Schools — On September 21st, 2007 there was an explosion of pink in Nova Scotian Schools. In Central Kings High School, a local student was bullied for wearing a pink polo shirt to school, the bullies said he was “gay” and threatened to beat him up. When two students heard, they decided to start a stir at their school, and went out and bought more than 50 pink T-shirts, tank tops and other articles of clothing for any students who wanted them. Soon after, many other schools joined in, especially when a campaign on a popular internet site, Facebook, informed students of the issue. The next day at school, there were hundreds of students wearing pink. It didn’t matter if they were wearing just pink socks, or had died their hair and gone all out. The simple gesture was enough to prove that we can stop bullying. The support was not only at the boy’s own school, but all around Nova Scotia. More than 8,500 kids joined the internet group, so you can

NEWS
 'I really believe in the pink-shirt message'

EMERSON COLLEGE
 The Halifax-based Emerson College has a reputation for its liberal arts education. It's also known for its commitment to social justice. In 2007, the college's students and faculty organized a "Pink Day" to support the fight against bullying. The event was a success, and the college's message resonated with students and faculty alike. The college's commitment to social justice is a key part of its identity, and the Pink Day event was a testament to that commitment.



imagine how many people actually wore pink to support just a one-bullied student. Not only did this gain interest in schools, it also caused a stir all over North America. Many newspapers talked about it, and other schools started their own pink day. Ellen Degeneres mentioned it on her famous talk show, and other celebrities, such as Yoko Ono wore pink. I find it remarkable that children, teenagers and adults, alike, all went out of their way, to help stop bullying. **David Shepherd, Travis Price** and the other students involved showed that when we all work together to get a positive message out, we can become unstoppable.

Honourable Mention, Grades 5-8 — Liam Carmichael, Grade 5 student, Kings County Academy, Kentville, Nova Scotia

Central Kings Pink to Send Bullies a Message — I chose **David Shepard** and **Travis Price** for my essay. They are two grade 12 Students at Central Kings Rural High School in Cambridge, Nova Scotia. On the first day of school a grade 9 student showed up wearing a pink shirt. Then 9 or 10 older students mocked him, called him a homosexual and threatened to beat him up. The next day David Shepard and Travis Price decided to do something about bullying. They used the internet to suggest people wear pink. They bought 75 tank tops for male students to wear, and the next day at school, they handed out the tank tops. David and Travis made sure there was a tank top for the bullied student to wear. They also brought a pink basketball to school and pink material to make headbands and armbands. The bullies became very angry, so angry that one was throwing chairs in the cafeteria. These two boys made a huge impact on students in their school, schools in Nova Scotia, and even schools in Canada. Students at Bible Hill Junior High in Truro (420 of them), dressed in pink to spell out the word pink. The premier of Nova Scotia, Rodney MacDonald, even realized the importance of what these boys accomplished. He designated the second Thursday of every school year as “Stand up Against Bullying Day”. Students are asked to wear pink on this day. They had support from the public and were interviewed by many newspapers and on CBC Radio. This story shows how the actions of two boys in a small town sent a message not only in their own school, but in communities all around the world. They showed other people how important it is to respect one another.



Bring Great Ideas into Your Classroom

A&E Canadian Classroom offers a commercial free and copyright cleared block of programming designed for classroom use. A&E Classroom airs Monday through Friday from 8:30 to 9:30am NT/ 8 to 9am AT/ 6 to 7am CT/ 5 to 6 am MT and 4 to 5am PT.



Twice each year, **A&E** develops support materials to help you incorporate A&E Classroom into your history, literature, performing arts, science and social studies curricula. The **A&E Classroom Calendar** provides six months of scheduling information and program descriptions. **A&E Study Guides** include classroom activities and discussion questions for select programs. Additional Study Guides are available online. For more information about A&E Canadian Classroom, go to <http://www.aetv.com/class/canadianclassroom/index.html>.

A&E Classroom and the support materials have been developed as a classroom resource for Canadian educators to use **free of charge**. For additional information, please call 1-800-722-6146.

A schedule of upcoming program air-dates is available in A&E Classroom’s **"Idea Book for Educators"**. This free resource guide is printed twice a year and offers educators a six month programming calendar, program descriptions, and lesson plans to accompany some of the programs. To order your copy of "The Idea Book for Educators" [click here](#).

Statistics Canada — Newsworthy ... Everyday

Study: Organized sports participation among children (2005) – The Daily, StatCan, June 3, 2008

“A smaller percentage of Canadian children participated regularly in organized sports activities in 2005 than in 1992, and the decline was larger for boys, according to a new study. The study found that participation in sports rose with household incomes and the education levels of parents. It also showed that sports participation rates among children were highest in smaller towns and cities, and that children in Canada’s three

largest cities were least likely to participate in organized sports on a regular basis. The study, "Kids' sports," published today in the June 2008 edition of Canadian Social Trends, examined trends in participating in regular organized sports among children aged 5 to 14, using data from the 1992 and 2005 General Social Survey (GSS)."

[Participation and Activity Limitation Survey: Education experiences of children with disabilities \(2006\)](#) — **The Daily**, Statistics Canada, May 27, 2008

"More than 40% of Canadian children with disabilities aged 5 to 14 received some form of special education during the 2005/2006 school year, roughly the same proportion as reported in 2000/2001, according to a new report. The report, based on data from the 2006 Participation and Activity Limitation Survey (PALS), assessed the educational experiences of children aged 5 to 14 with activity limitations ranging from learning disabilities to mobility activity limitations. Survey data showed that 163,730 children with disabilities attended school in 2005/2006. Of this group, 43.1%, or 70,600, were attending special education classes. The majority, 62.4%, attended these classes on a part-time basis, while the remainder attended on a full-time basis."

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