

Chalk Talk

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Letter from the Editor

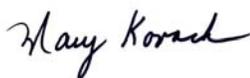
Dear Educators,

In the 1985 movie, [My American Cousin](#), much is made of the cultural differences between Canadians and Americans. As a naturalized citizen who immigrated to Canada as a baby and then was raised in a border town across from a large American city where I had relatives, I identified closely with the experience of the young girl in the film. A wonderful great uncle of mine who lived about a mile away on the other side of the border would visit us often and loved to muse about the differences between our two countries. It was hardly a secret that he envied our health care system and many of our other public institutions. He deeply respected Canada and was fascinated by the way the U.S.'s melting pot approach contrasted with our Canadian mosaic. For me, visiting him was a bigger than life experience, always busy and exciting — he owned, of all things, a candy store with chocolate bars we couldn't get in Canada!

I've often thought back on those conversations and wondered what my life might have been if we had immigrated to one of the other countries where my parents' siblings had gone in the 1950's — Switzerland, France, Argentina, Australia — or if they had not emigrated at all. I've never taken my citizenship for granted and have spent much of my life trying to understand what it means to be Canadian. I've travelled our great country from B.C. to the Maritimes and hope someday to experience our furthest eastern coast in Newfoundland the Far North. Every place I've visited, I feel that I've found another piece of the puzzle that is Canada. Travelling abroad, I have never found a place that is like it, better or more beautiful.

This week's **Chalk Talk** features information on resources to help you plan a school trip that will bring your students up close and personal with our nation's capital, where our history is alive and well and available to be discovered. 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 www.4edu.ca to view the many free teachers' resources on offer.

[Let us know your thoughts.](#)



Mary Kovack

A Class Trip to a World Class Capital



Spring has finally arrived and with it planning for year end school trips is on the minds of educators and students across Canada. There can be no more ideal class outing than to visit Canada's Capital Region.

Ottawa, Canada's Capital, is more than a city; it is an expression of the country in general and a gathering place for its citizens. Canada's Capital Region belongs to all Canadians. Even more importantly, it represents the seat of government, a place of national symbols. It is Canada's face to the world and provides a cultural showcase for our diverse talents.



[The National Capital Commission](#) (NCC), a Crown corporation created by Parliament, is dedicated to making the Capital accessible to all Canadians. The NCC endeavours to support learning in young Canadians about the richness of Canada's Capital, through various activities and resources.

The NCC offers a downloadable pre-visit kit **Get Ready for the Capital** is the perfect tool to excite students about an upcoming visit to Canada's Capital Region. This comprehensive classroom kit holds four self-contained activities, including a **Scavenger Hunt**, that are designed to prepare students for what they'll see and do in Canada's Capital. To view this kit, [click here](#). For more information on a free guided **Walking Tour** and other programs for school groups, see the **Website of the Week** feature, below.



[Source: NCC online]

Canada's Capital offers World Class history, culture, beauty, attractions and most of all FUN for students of all ages!

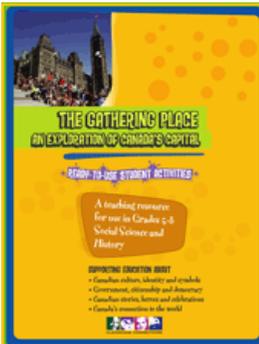


Ottawa's museums, public institutions, parklands, markets and natural beauty are the perfect place to make great class trip memories. Where else can students experience a 19th century Canadian village, sit in the gallery of the House of Commons, take a photo next to a dozen three-story high totem poles, be surrounded by First and Second World War military planes, feast on deliciously sweet Beaver Tails and see more tulips than anywhere else in Canada — all in one day? Ottawa has truly got it all! For more information — www.canadascapital.gc.ca.



The Making of the Capital — Walking Tour

The NCC's **free** guided walking tour, **The Making of the Capital**, offers an easy-paced, interactive guided tour, which tells the story of how the Nation's Capital has evolved from a rough-and-tumble town into a very special and sophisticated region. Beginning at the centrally located Capital Infocentre (across from Parliament Hill), an enthusiastic guide leads student groups on a 90-minute or 60-minute learning adventure that includes Parliament Hill, goes down to the Rideau Canal, past the National War Memorial and back to the Infocentre via the hustle and bustle of historic Sparks Street. The 90-minute tour features a visit to the Bytown Museum, where your group is greeted by a costumed guide who will help you discover the stories behind the engineering marvel of the Rideau Canal. Both the 60-minute and the 90-minute tour interpret the numerous landmarks, sites and symbols that showcase Canadian history and achievements, and provide a fun and enriching walking experience through the streetscapes, sights and sounds of the Capital. Visit www.canadascapital.gc.ca/education or call 1 800 461-8020 for more information and booking.



In addition, the NCC offers **A Gathering Place: An Exploration of Canada's Capital**, a teaching resource (pictured, left) for use in grades 5 to 8 Social Science and History, which provides comprehensive information on Canadian culture, identity and symbols; Government, citizenship and democracy; Canadian stories, heroes and celebrations; and Canada's connection to the world. To download this resource, [click here](#).

[Source: NCC online]

From writers, musicians, and actors to politicians, hockey players and astronauts, Canada's 4th largest city is the birthplace of more than its fair share of celebrated Canadians. Here are just a few famous Ottawans:

Paul Anka
 Alanis Morissette
 Rich Little
 Lorne Greene
 Bruce Cockburn
 Paul Langlois
 Tom Green

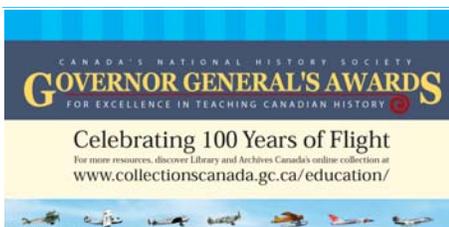
Margaret Atwood
 John Gray
 Dan Akroyd
 Mike Bullard
 Mark McKinney
 Tom Cavanaugh
 Jon Dore

Dominic LeBlanc
 Stephen Lewis
 Justin Trudeau
 Bob Rae
 Alexa McDonough
 John Manley
 Dalton McGuinty

Steve McLean
 King Clancy
 Mike Gartner
 Denis Potvin
 Rod Brind'amour
 Rick Vaive
 Randy Robitaille

To discover many more, [click here](#).

**Governor General's Awards
 History & Social Studies Teachers
 Apply Today!**



Canada's National History Society is now seeking nominations for the Governor General's Awards for Excellence in Teaching Canadian History.

Prizes

Six recipients are awarded \$2,500, a medal and a trip to Ottawa for two, to attend the Awards ceremony and presentation by Her Excellency. An additional \$1,000 is awarded to the recipients' schools. In addition to the cash awards and recognition, recipients enjoy two days of unforgettable experiences which have included, Vice-regal ceremonies and luncheons with her Excellency, receptions in the





Senate, recognition in the House of Commons; as well as private tours of Parliament Hill, Rideau Hall, the Library and Archives Canada Preservation Centre, and the Mackenzie King Estate. (Classroom Poster, shown left)

Here is how to apply:

Rules: <http://www.historyociety.ca/gga.asp?subsection=rul>

Form: <http://www.historyociety.ca/gga.asp?subsection=nom>

Information: prixgqawards@historysociety.ca 1-800-861-1008

Deadline for Submissions: May 8, 2009



Education News & Related Articles

[Game on, John A.; Canada is going through a crisis of historical amnesia. Thomas S. Axworthy suggests an unlikely cure: video games](#) -- Thomas S. Axworthy, *National Post*, April 8, 2009

Canada has a crisis of historical amnesia. We are losing our ability to inspire our youth with our national story. No other Western nation does a poorer job of teaching history than Canada. I am not alone in my critique. Dominion Institute founder Rudyard Griffiths, author of the stimulating new book *Who We Are: A Citizen's Manifesto*, writes : "I would argue that the absence of the traditions that evoke the civic legacy of past generations haunts us like a lost limb. We know from certain periods in our history that Canada is a nation that is greater than the sum of its regions and linguistic groups. We know that the totality of who we are is larger than the programs and institutions of the government of the day."

[More technology, fewer textbooks touted for kids](#) -- Kristin Rushowy, EDUCATION REPORTER, Parent Central.ca, *TheStar.com*, April 29, 2009

Outside school, students are totally wired. Inside, they "power down." But schools risk turning off a generation of learners if they don't use technology to keep them interested, warns a paper to be released today by the Ontario Public School Boards' Association. "If their social lives are electronic, how can school life be paper and pencil? ... We'll have trouble reaching them, and they'll have trouble learning," said Trustee Howard Goodman of the Toronto District School Board.

[National Graduates Survey](#) – **The Daily**, Statistics Canada, April 22, 2009

More than 80% of college and university students who graduated in 2005 and did not pursue further studies had found full-time employment by 2007. In general, earnings increased by level of study. In 2007, two years after graduation, just over one-quarter of those who owed student debt at the time they graduated had paid it off. In 2007, two years after they had graduated, a higher proportion of graduates with a master's degree were working full time than college graduates or those with a bachelor's degree or a doctorate. The pool of graduates with a master's was higher in 2005 than it was in 2000 for both men and women. However, the employment rate among master's graduates remained stable for men at 94%, while it rose for women, from 89% in 2002 to 92% in 2007. Consequently, among graduates with a master's degree, the gap in employment rates between women and men nearly closed. [To read more...](#)

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