



Chalk Talk

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Letter from the Editor

Dear Subscribers,

I don't know where the old adage of "children should be seen but not heard" comes from, but not only would it be a total waste, I'd say we ignore the voices of children at our peril. Today's children will inherit the earth and the formidable challenge of ensuring its sustainability. The better informed they are, the better equipped they will be to make the right decisions on how to care for it.



In past *Chalk Talk* issues, we have explored how important it is to instill young people with an early interest in how their world works. Whether it be the

involvement of students in **Student Vote**, **Census at School**, **Envirothon** or **Youth Eco-Parliament**, getting them to join the debate about what kind of world they want is a good thing.

This week's issue provides an up-date on the progress of the **Youth Eco-Parliament**, which involves thousands of high school students from Europe and Canada. Congratulations to all schools, educators and students who participated across Canada. Job well done! We are pleased to announce and recognize the schools and educators whose teams have advanced to the next stage of this initiative. We have also included details on some of the projects that were selected for presentation at the October 2006 Paris Pro Europe Conference.



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Youth Eco-Parliament—Canada's Finalists

As of the new year, 14 groups of grade 9-11 students across Canada, have had the opportunity to participate in **The Pro Europe Youth Eco-Parliament**, sponsored by CSR (Corporations Sharing Responsibility). [The Pro Europe 2006 Youth Eco-Parliament](#) is an international educational platform that was launched in 2004.



During its first year, the Eco-Parliament gave some 3,000 European students involved in environmental projects the opportunity to work collectively to create a document of resolutions and proposals for action to protect the environment: *the European White Paper for the Environment*.

Building on the excellent work done on the initial project, 14 Canadian school groups have been discussing environmental issues with 100 European Youth Eco-Parliament groups and collaborating on a new environmental project. All classes participated in debates on local environmental issues, proposed local environmental action plans and engaged in collaborative open letter writing to interested parties related to the environmental debate.

Six Canadian students, one from each of the schools whose projects have made it to the finals, will attend the October 2006 Paris Pro Europe Conference, with



their letters and local project descriptions. Finalists and a brief description of their projects are featured below.

Canada is honoured to be the first non-European participant in this exciting and rewarding international exercise that links environmental democracy with local action and with high profile political and corporate engagement.

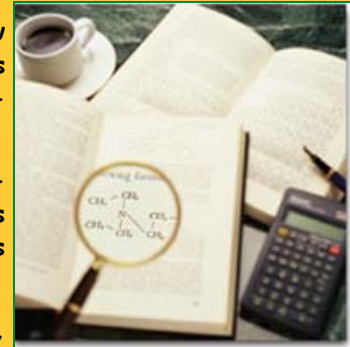
For more information on this exciting program

Mary Kovack

Mary Kovack

Youth Eco-Parliament—Announcing the 2006 Canadian School Group Finalists & Projects:

- S. Bruce Smith School, Jackie Underhill, Edmonton, AB, Edmonton School District 7 — “S. Bruce Smith Keeps It Clean” studies the implementation of several community programs such as reducing weekly car and paper usage and analyzes the impact of the removal of trees and vegetation by housing developments.
- Cochrane High School, Stephanie Bennett, Cochrane, AB, Rocky View School Div. No.41 — “CHS Sustainable Development Projects” hopes to increase awareness of renewable technology (solar & wind) to reduce dependency on fossil fuels.
- Ashcroft Secondary School, Josie Wilson, Ashcroft, BC, School District 74(Golden Trail) — “Eco Challenge” proposes cleaning streams and riverbanks in order to repair spawning grounds for indigenous salmon species.
- Cape Breton Highlands Academy, Bruce Miller, Terre Noire, NS, Strait Regional School Board — “Litter—That’s Rubbish” takes a close look at the impact of a generation of solid battery waste on local and global environments and promotes recycling of used batteries.
- Kiilinik High School, Patti Bligh, Cambridge Bay, NU, Kitikmeot Education Council — “Stop Ocean Pollution” raises awareness of the issues around ocean pollution in the Arctic.
- Lachute Vocational School, Charlene Seale, Lachute, QC, Sir Wilfred Laurier School Board — “Action & Awareness” focuses on recycling and reducing the eco-footprint by the introduction of a school composting program, reducing paper usage and cafeteria waste.



The difficulty lies not in the new ideas, but in escaping the old ones'

- John Maynard Keynes

Facts & Figures —Reduce, Reuse, Recycle



- 17 million Canadians (nearly 2/3 of us) have access to recycling.
- In 1990, about 459,000 tons of materials were recycled in Canada.
- Each Canadian throws away about 1 ton of waste materials every year.
- Packaging makes up about half our garbage by volume, one-third by weight.
- Landfill sites account for about 38% of Canada's total methane emissions. Methane is 20 times more potent as a greenhouse gas that carbon dioxide.
- About 1/3 of our waste is paper and paperboard. Another third is yard and kitchen waste. The rest is divided among glass, metals, plastics, textiles, wood and other materials.

[Source: Environment Canada, The Green Lane™]

Education News & Links

[The 4 R's - Reduce, Reuse, Recycle, and Recover — Garbage gone but not forgotten!](#) — Environment Canada, The Green Lane™

“Recycling is just one way to reduce wastes. To be really effective, we have to incorporate the 4Rs *Reduce, Reuse, Recycle and Recover into our daily routine*. Reducing the amount of waste we produce is by far the most effective way to battle the flow of garbage into the landfill.”

[Canada's education secret](#) — Margaret Wentz, *The Globe and Mail*, May 23, 2006

"In Edmonton, over 11,000 parents send their kids to public school." says Araya McBeath, who recently retired as superintendent of the city's school district.

[Canada's education secret](#) — Margaret Wentle, [The Globe and Mail](#), May 23, 2006

"In Edmonton, even billionaires send their kids to public school," says Angus McBeath, who recently retired as superintendent. Today, he advises schools across North America on the Edmonton model."

[Best practices in teaching science](#) — Brian Wagner, *University Affairs Magazine*, May 2006

"Teaching science offers significant challenge, including low student interest, varying levels of students' math literacy, and a need to deal with abstract concepts. However, there are many excellent science teachers who have developed ways of engaging students in science and enhancing their learning of scientific concepts. In their book *Analyzing Exemplary Science Teaching*, editors Steve Alsop (of York University's faculty of education) and Larry Bencze and Erminia Pedretti (both of OISE at the University of Toronto) set out to identify the common qualities and traits by investigating specific accounts of teaching successes by recognized science teachers in Canada, Australia and the United Kingdom. The book is about teaching science in the secondary system."

[Who speaks for children?, many ask](#) — Julie Mannell, [The Toronto Star](#), May 25, 2006

"For the voices of children to be heard, NGOs and child rights activists will have to step up says a Brock University political science professor. Charles Burton added that the western government and the people are both responsible for children's rights since the government is essentially the people."

Facts & Figures

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