



# Chalk Talk

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## Letter from the Editor

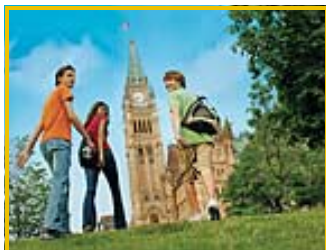
Dear Subscribers,

There is nothing like a school trip for expanding a student's world-view while creating life-long memories. At younger ages, it can be a visit to a museum, a science centre, local landmark or nature walk in one of Canada's many provincial parks. These forays out of the classroom are looked forward to with eager anticipation.



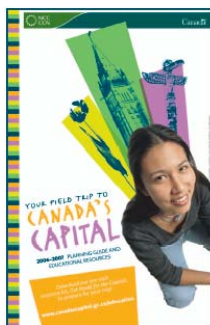
As we get older, the trips become more

complex, traveling longer distances and requiring overnight stays. And if we're very lucky we might even have the opportunity to visit a location or attend an event of provincial, national or international significance. How often I have heard my friends and colleagues wax poetic about having travelled with their class to such august events as *EXPO 67—Man and His World*, the *Montreal or Calgary Olympics*, Quebec's *Carnaval*, or the *Calgary Stampede*. I visited Ottawa twice on school trips and was struck by the beauty and quaint charm of Parliament Hill perched on a cliff overlooking the Ottawa River. I remember being bowled over by the Peace Tower and perhaps, due to my own lack of awareness, I was less impressed by the reporters interviewing cabinet ministers and party leaders.



A few years later, on another school trip to Ottawa, and much better prepared having studied the Parliamentary system, I recall sitting rapt in the public gallery during Question Period. Pierre Elliott Trudeau, the Prime Minister at the time, sat in a grey suit with a red rose in his lapel, jousting with the opposition in a raucous 'business as usual' display of Parliamentary Democracy. What I didn't know then was that I was witnessing a bit of my country's history — *live*. I've enjoyed many visits since, for business and pleasure, in all seasons, but none has stayed with me the way those school trips have.

## A Capital Idea — A Field Trip to Ottawa



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 us as the seat of government, a place of national symbols, it is Canada's face to the world and provides a cultural showcase for Canada's 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's new 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. The kit holds four self-contained activities that are designed to prepare students for what they'll see and do in Canada's Capital. To view this kit, [click here](#).

In addition, the NCC offers a teaching resource for use in grades 5 to 8 Social Science and History, entitled, ***A Gathering Place: An Exploration of Canada's Capital***, which provides comprehensive information on Canadian culture, identity and



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In past issues of *Chalk Talk*, we have offered classroom resources for teaching Canadian heritage produced by **The Dominion Institute, Veterans' Affairs, The History Society, Heritage Canada and Parks Canada**. Still, there can be no substitute for actually being there. 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.

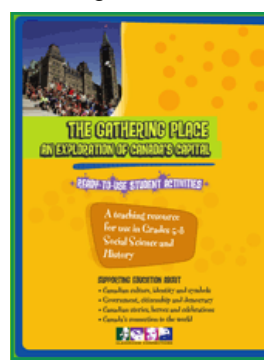
CoEd Communications is dedicated to supporting the important work of teachers by providing classroom resources on a range of topics. We invite you to visit our website at [4edu.ca](http://4edu.ca) to view the many free teachers' resources on offer.

As always, your feedback is important to us.

[Let us know your thoughts.](#)



Mary Kovack



itled, **A Gathering Place: An Exploration of Canada's Capital**, 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]

## DID YOU KNOW...?

*Under the authority of the National Capital Act, the NCC is responsible for designing, building, maintaining and preserving federal assets in the Capital Region in a way that will **inspire Canadians with pride**. The NCC owns more than 470 square kilometers of land in the region (nearly 10 per cent of the whole), and are responsible for the care and maintenance of a varied collection of national treasures and cherished federal lands including parks, heritage buildings, and museums.*

**Plan  
Preserve  
Develop**

[Source: National Capital Commission online]

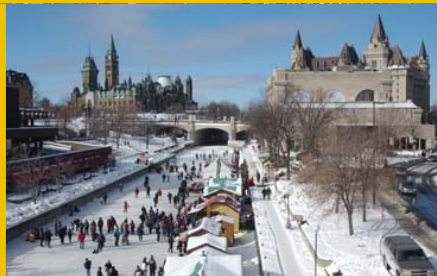
## Origins of the name "Ottawa"

The name "Ottawa" is Aboriginal in origin but there are varying explanations of exactly where it came from. It is generally thought to be the Anglicized form of the name of an Aboriginal people living west of Ottawa, variously referred to as Outaouac, Outaouais, or Outaouit. The Ottawa people were great traders and the river may have gotten its name from the fact that it was the river used by the Ottawa people, or perhaps the river leading to the nation of the Ottawa.

[Source: National Capital Commission online]



## Facts & Figures — Canada's Gathering Place



- Ottawa is one of four capitals (with London, Johannesburg and Budapest) that are neo-Gothic in style and spirit. The complex, picturesque quality of Gothic design distinguishes these from neo-classical Rome, Paris and Washington, which are characterized by a spirit of monumental grandeur.
- Canada's Capital straddles the border of two provinces (Ontario and Quebec), contains two major cities (Ottawa and Gatineau) and has two official languages (English and French).
- The Rideau Canal (built through the wilderness from 1826 to 1832 to link Ottawa to the Great Lakes) was one of the great engineering feats of the 19th century. In winter, a section of the Canal (7.8 kilometres) becomes the world's largest skating rink.
- This is one of the world's coldest capitals, with mean January temperatures of -10.7° Celsius.
- Ottawa and Gatineau are home to eight national museums, storehouses of Canadian culture.
- The Central Experimental Farm, a 500-hectare federal government agricultural research facility, was founded in 1886 and today is a "farm in the city."
- Over a million tulips bloom in the Capital region in the spring. The original bulbs were a gift from the Dutch in appreciation of Canada's role in the 1945 liberation of the Netherlands.

[Source: National Capital Commission online]



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[Source: National Capital Commission online]

## Education News

[Young and cashless boomeranging home](#) — Jim Coyle, *The Toronto Star*, October 7, 2006

“The most compelling of such arguments is made by Tamara Draut in her book *Strapped*, an account published earlier this year of why 20- and 30-somethings these days can't get started. Simply put, it's harder, she said. A college degree is the new high-school diploma, the minimum needed just to get looked at for any job with prospects. But it costs a fortune to get that degree and young people frequently graduate with crippling debts.”

[New poll reveals awareness of demographic influences on Canada's public education system](#) — Preliminary results of a study — [Demographic Changes in Canada and Their Impact on Public Education](#), News Release, The Learning Partnership, September 28, 2006

“Results of a new poll, released today by The Learning Partnership, reveal that while more than half of Canadians (53%) identify immigration as having the greatest impact on Canada's public education system, there is less appreciation for the impact that rural population shifts and the growth of aboriginal communities are having on public schools across Canada.”

[Despite advances, students no better: poll \[Ontario educators\]](#) —Zosia Bielski, *National Post*, Monday, August 28, 2006

“Teachers say respect from parents and students has plummeted over the years, even though they believe they are better equipped as educators than ever before, according to a poll released today by the Ontario College of Teachers. The annual State of the Teaching Profession poll asked 1,000 college members to compare learning today with their own memories -- either as students or teachers, depending on their age. Although 61% of respondents felt that textbooks, resources and facilities are better today than they were in the past, many thought students' academic skills were status quo. One-third thought basic reading, writing and math skills weren't at all better than those of students of the past, regardless of standardized testing. Teachers also reported declines in student behaviour, social skills and quality of family life.”

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