

Chalk Talk

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Letter from the Editor

Dear Readers,

Our Story Begins Here ... is the slogan used by [Pier 21 — Canada's Immigration Museum](#) to describe the experience of people who left the land of their birth to become part of the Canadian **mosaic**. That's what it was called when I was growing up — Canada distinguished itself from the American 'melting pot' approach to assimilation — before the concept of multiculturalism rose in the 70's and finally came to fruition as an [Act of Parliament in 1988 with the passing of Bill C-93](#).

Though my family's **Canadian** story began at Pier 21, we, like hundreds of thousands of immigrants, have a 'back' story that brought us to the decision to 'choose' Canada. My parents and their ancestors had lived in a small hilltop town in central Italy for centuries. This farming village had never enjoyed much affluence but they had always been able to make do. World War II changed all that. That soil, which my Dad would say "ran through our veins", could no longer sustain its people. Ravaged by war and needing decades to rebuild, my parents looked beyond their country, packed up their children and the 'best' of their few belongings, leaving family, friends, culture and language, and voyaged across a vast expanse of water that they couldn't have imagined in their wildest dreams.

After seven days on the ship, 'Il Conte Bianco-mano' [translation — Count White Hand], my family arrived in Halifax Harbour. Although Italy is a relatively small country [though my Dad, who had only ever traveled Italy on foot, thought it was large], Canada was about to redefine 'big'. Upon arrival, immigrants were vaccinated, given a loaf of bread, water, \$10, and then boarded trains, which in our case, transported us to our destination in the Niagara Region. My mother who had just spent seven sea-sick days caring for 2 small children looked forward to the train ride. For a day and a half the train stopped in towns and cities nestled among what she referred to as "forests" — nothing but trees for hundreds of miles.

This week's issue of **Chalk Talk** features an exciting new NFB website that offers hundreds of films documenting Canada's multicultural stories. As well, you will find information about National Forestry Week.

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.

NFB — Across Cultures/D'une culture à l'autre



Jazz and cinema unite to pay homage to the Black men who worked on Canada's trains... Two Arab women in Montreal bravely take a stand against domestic abuse... A cinema-vérité classic takes us into an early 60's Alberta Hutterite community.

These are just some of the films now available at www.nfb.ca/acrosscultures — an innovative new Web site that explores the great multicultural experiment that is Canada.

From first-person immigrant stories to animated history lessons, from exposés of past injustices to compelling current documentaries, **Across Cultures** features 120 films from the celebrated collection of the National Film Board of Canada— presenting a vibrant online record of one of the most multicultural societies on earth.

What forces have contributed to this diversity? What is the history of immigration to Canada? How have specific communities enriched Canada's culture and economy? What obstacles have they faced?

With **Across Cultures**, Canada's public producer provides a forum to explore these questions. Established in 1939 with the aim of reflecting Canada to Canadians and the world, the NFB maintains this historic mandate in the Internet age — drawing upon its remarkable catalogue to create this engaging Web-based educational resource.

Offered free of charge, the site is tailored to the needs of secondary level classrooms, contextualizing films with a wealth of supplementary material — teacher guides, a glossary of useful terms, articles and essays, and interviews with such noted filmmakers as Colin Low and Nina Beveridge. **Cinema and Representation**, an added special feature, charts how the NFB's view of cultural communities has evolved over



room 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.

[As always, your feedback is important to us.](#)

Mary Kovack

Coming Soon! 'Website of the Week'

As editor of *Chalk Talk*, I spend a good deal of time sourcing the best, free, curriculum-based educational materials and programs, available in print and online, produced by Canadian government departments, associations and corporations. Beginning next week, [in this space](#), we will be launching a new feature that will bring into focus websites of great diversity and complexity which offer extraordinary classroom resources. We'll work in partnership with the NFB, Statistics Canada and environmental/science organizations to show educators how to navigate these sites in order to identify and better utilize all that they have to offer. — MK

Colin Low and Nina Beveridge. **Cinema and Representation**, an added special feature, charts how the NFB's view of cultural communities has evolved over the decades.

Celebratory or contentious, elegiac or startling, they all form pieces of Canada's fascinating and ever-shifting cultural mosaic. **Across Cultures** is an exciting new resource for exploring this diversity. Users can view entire films or excerpts highlighting specific teaching points. The site provides over 40 titles with closed captioning and described video to meet the needs of users with hearing and vision loss.

Across Cultures: www.nfb.ca/acrosscultures.

French-language version:

www.onf.ca/duneculturealautre.

For a full list of NFB educational resources:

www.nfb.ca/education

Order the latest **NFB Learning Resources Catalogue** now! It's free! Online at www.nfb.ca/store; or E-mail customerservice@nfb.ca; or call 1-800-267-7710 or 514-283-9000(Montreal).

[Source: National Film Board of Canada]

FOCUS ON ANIMATION ANIMACAT'S HOUSE

Elementary teachers will want to check out **Animacat's House/La maison de Chanima** — a website where children, aged 5 to 8, can learn while playing games and watching short animated films online. A teacher's guide is also available. Go to www.nfb.ca/animacat.



Invitation to Educators — Discover Diversity at NFB's 'Across Cultures'



"Canada is one of the most culturally diverse societies on Earth—and I am proud to announce an exciting new Web site that explores this great national experiment in multiculturalism.

Across Cultures—now online at nfb.ca/acrosscultures—features over 100 films, all selected from our vast and respected collection, that highlight the many communities that have contributed to this diversity.

As the nation's public producer, the NFB has been reflecting Canada in all its aspects for almost seven decades. Whether it's the overlooked heritage of Black Nova Scotians, the wartime internment of Japanese-Canadians or the contested place of women within contemporary Islam, our productions have documented Canada's ever-evolving mosaic. A varied selection of these films, along with teacher guides and other supplementary materials, is now available online.

Across Cultures is the latest in a series of free educational Internet resources created at the NFB—ranging from **Focus on Animation** and **Aboriginal Perspectives** to **Documentary Lens** and **Images of a Forgotten War**. Seizing the possibilities offered by new communication technology, the NFB is reframing its collection for new digital platforms—engaging the hearts and minds of a whole new generation of

Canadians. I invite you to join us on this learning adventure." — **Tom Perlmutter, Government Film Commissioner and Chairperson of the National Film Board of Canada**

[Note: Teachers can order **Across Cultures** poster (as shown) and bookmarks at education@nfb.ca.]

Canada's Multicultural History — NFB Films — Suggested viewing list from 'Across Cultures'

- **The Hutterites** (French version **Les Huttérites** available on French site) is a classic 1964 black and white cinema vérité by celebrated filmmaker Colin Low shot in a Hutterite colony in Alberta. An interview with the filmmaker about the film is available in the Cinema and Representation section)
- **Our Street Was Paved with Gold/Une rue de lait et de miel** (1973), a film by Albert Kish, reflects on the immigrant communities that have given The Main, or St. Lawrence Blvd in Montreal, its unique character. He reflects on having grown up there as a child and how a whole new set of immigrants continue to enliven the neighbourhood.
- In **Who Is Albert Woo?** (2000), filmmaker Hunt Hoe examines media stereotypes of Asian men with humour and insight through a survey of film clips, interviews and personal commentary.

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- In [Who Is Albert Woo?](#) (2000), filmmaker Hunt Hoe examines media stereotypes of Asian men with humour and insight through a survey of film clips, interviews and personal commentary.
- Both [Minoru: Memory of Exile/Minoru: souvenirs d'un exil](#) (Michael Fukushima, 1992) and [Shepherd's Pie and Sushi](#) (Craig Anderl and Mieko Ouchi, 1998) tell the stories of the filmmakers' parents' experiences of racist treatment and internment of Japanese Canadians in Canada during WWII. Micheal Fukushima utilizes animation in [Minoru: Memory of Exile](#), while actress and filmmaker, Mieko Ouchi reflects on her own experience playing the role of an interned Japanese Canadian in the feature film, [Shepherd's Pie and Sushi](#).
- [Speakers for the Dead/Au nom des morts](#) (Jennifer Holness and David Sutherland, 2000) and [The Road Taken](#) (Selwyn Jacob, 1996) both unearth the buried histories of Black Canadians. [Speakers for the Dead](#) reveals the turmoil stirred up by desecrated graves and underlines the hidden history of Blacks in Canada. [The Road Taken](#) documents the experiences of Blacks who worked as sleeping-car porters on Canada's major railways from the early 1900s through the 1960s.

National Forestry Week — September 23-29, 2007



Canada's Forest: Tradition and Transition — There is no doubt that along with being world-renowned for our ice and snow, Canada enjoys a reputation as a 'land of trees'. As one of Canada's defining natural features, it comes as no surprise that Forestry is the founding industry of Canada, enjoying both an historical legacy and a continuing tradition. However, our forests and our forestry industry and our outlook towards Canada's forest, water and wildlife resources are all undergoing change. [National Forestry Week](#) [formerly **Forest Fire Prevention Week**], sponsored by the Canadian Forestry Association (CFA), is not just an opportunity to **hug a tree** but a great time to learn more about our forests, how you can participate in activities to protect and preserve them for future generations. [Click here](#) to check out all of the CFA's excellent classroom resources.

News & Related Articles

[Newcomers settling in](#) -- Richmond schools have first settlement program for new immigrants in B.C. – Eve Edmonds, *Richmond News*, [canada.com](#), September 14, 2007

It's been a long time coming, but the Richmond school district now boasts the first settlement program in the province. "It's federal funding that will go to all the districts, but we are the first to actually have the program up and running," said Tony Carrigan, co-ordinator of Richmond's Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS). Schools have cultural interpreters; however, their mandate is to build cultural harmony within the district -- that means initiating long-term programs that foster multiculturalism, for example. "This (the SWIS program) is intended to be more immediate and short-term, dealing with the specific needs of a family".

[These farmers CAN see the forest for the trees; It sounds too good to be true. But experiments at Guelph University have resulted in double the crop yield in drought years](#) – Cameron Smith, Environment, [TheStar.com](#), September 15, 2007

A farming practice that results in better soil, more earthworms, much higher capture of carbon dioxide, less nitrogen runoff, more birds and insects, and double the crop yield in drought years – it sounds too good to be true. Yet this is exactly what experiments at Guelph University are suggesting. The most astonishing conclusion is that if farmers adopted the practice throughout the 455,000 square kilometres of marginal or degraded land currently being farmed, Canada could come within a hair's breadth of meeting its Kyoto commitment with an 18.6 per cent reduction in the nation's CO2 emissions. The practice is called intercropping – planting crops between rows of trees.

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We are the Company for Education Communications. We specialize in developing, producing and evaluating school resources and award programs. Working in conjunction with Departments/Ministries of Education, school district/boards, associations, teachers and subject specialists across the country; we provide free, curriculum-based educational resources to Canadian classrooms.

The opinions, conclusions and other information expressed in the preceding content do not necessarily reflect the views of and are not endorsed by CoEd Communications.

📞 416.955.9526
📞 416.955.0815

THE COMPANY FOR EDUCATION COMMUNICATIONS INC.

66 George St., 3rd floor • Toronto, ON, Canada, M5A 4K8 • [www.coedcomm.com](#) • [info@coedcomm.com](#)