

Chalk Talk

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PLEASE SHARE CHALK TALK WITH YOUR COLLEAGUES !!!

Letter from the Editor

Dear Readers:

I think you'd all agree that it's been an eventful summer. From the bouts of extreme weather which resulted in the wettest summer on record in parts of Canada, to the nomination of the first African American candidate for President of the United States, we are living in interesting times.

My 12 year old son and I sat in front of the TV to watch Barack Obama address a crowd of more than 70,000 in Denver. After a long day of baseball followed by a pre-season hockey tournament game, his initial excitement at being a witness to history-in-the-making waned as sleep overtook him. When I nudged to wake him at the end of the speech, he mumbled that "maybe history would be more interesting later when it was taught in school". I told him he'd likely feel differently about having missed most of it when he got older.

Like many of you I, too, watched the Beijing Olympics with interest. After a slow start, Canadians athletes exceeded our expectations. I



thoroughly enjoyed the enthusiasm of triple gold medal winning Jamaican runner, Usain Bolt, and the joyful silver medal win of 41-year old swimmer Dara Torres. But the big story was the record-breaking 8 gold medals won by swimmer, [Michael Phelps](#). (pictured, left)

By all accounts, Phelps was an awkward child. Not able to sit still, he was teased, even bullied, by other kids. The doctor who diagnosed Michael with [ADHD](#) at age 5, told his mother, Debbie, that her son would never be able to 'focus' on anything. Refusing to be discouraged by this prognosis, Debbie, a teacher and middle-school principal, worked hard with her son on his schoolwork and enrolled him in swimming. Ironically, Michael's extra long torso, arms and large feet, combined with his high energy level, made him ideally suited to becoming, as his coach predicted, the best swimmer in the world.

With elections looming on both sides of the border it promises to be a fascinating Autumn. Promises will be made by candidates on a range of concerns from the Environment, Energy, and the Economy to Education, Health and

A&E Classroom's Essay Writing Contest!!

Attention all teachers, students, school principals and librarians! A&E's 'LIVES THAT MAKE A DIFFERENCE ESSAY CONTEST' [formerly 'Biography® of the Year Essay Contest'] invites students in grades 5-12 to write an essay based on someone they think has made an important impact on Canadian society. Students can win cash prizes and audio-visual equipment for themselves and their schools.



Students in grades 5-12 may enter [A&E Canadian Classroom's](#) 'Lives That Make A Difference' essay contest by writing and submitting an **original essay in 300 words or less on who they think made the greatest impact on Canadian society in 2008**. Each entry must include the student's name, complete address, postal code, telephone number, age, grade, name of teacher, school, school address, and local cable system (if known). Send entries to: LIVES THAT MAKE A DIFFERENCE ESSAY CONTEST, c/o Temple Scott Associates, 250 The Esplanade, Suite 301, Toronto, Ontario M5A 1J2. **Contest begins September 1, 2008 and ends December 15, 2008.** [Click here](#) for full contest information.

Two winners from each grade level — 5th-8th grade and 9th-12th grade — will be selected.

5th-8th Grade level

- GRAND PRIZE (1):** Student: \$5,000 Cash Prize
- Department/Classroom of Teacher: \$1,000 Cash (Cdn.) for use in the classroom.
 - School: A&E Television Networks Video Library. (Includes 25" Colour TV, DVD Player, and 3 Classic DVD Box Sets - Est. Retail Value: \$800 Cdn.)

- FIRST PRIZE (1):** Student: \$2,500 Cash Prize
- Department/Classroom of Teacher: \$1,000 Cash (Cdn.) for use in the classroom.
 - School: A&E Television Networks Video Library. (Includes 25" Colour TV, DVD Player, and 3 Classic DVD Box Sets - Est. Retail Value: \$800 Cdn.)

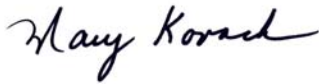
9th-12th Grade level

- GRAND PRIZE (1):** Student: \$5,000 Cash Prize
- Department/Classroom of Teacher: \$1,000 Cash (Cdn.) for use in the classroom.
 - School: A&E Television Networks Video Library. (Includes 25" Colour TV, DVD Player, and 3 Classic DVD Box Sets - Est. Retail Value: \$800 Cdn.)

National Defense. The choices made by the winners will have a significant impact on our lives and our world. This week's issue of **Chalk Talk** has information about an excellent essay writing contest that will inspire your students write about Canadians who make a difference.

CoEd Communications is dedicated to supporting the important work of teachers by providing information on a range of topics for the classroom. We invite you to visit our website at www.4edu.ca to view the many free teachers' resources and programs on offer.

[Your thoughts are appreciated.](#)



Mary Kovack

FIRST PRIZE (1): Student: \$2,500 Cash Prize

- Department/Classroom of Teacher: \$1000 Cash (Cdn) for use in the classroom.
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[Note: Due to Provincial restrictions the contest is void in Quebec.]

Note — **NEW for 2008!** The contest deadline has been extended to **December 15, 2008** allowing educators more time to schedule the activity into their social studies, current events, civics, literacy, and history curriculum so that more students are able to participate in this exciting essay competition. Go to [A&E Canadian Classroom](#) for complete contest information. [Links to 2007 winning essays, below.]

A&E's CANADIAN 'LIVES THAT MAKE A DIFFERENCE ESSAY CONTEST'

Educators: Your Students will be Inspired by the 2007 Winning Essays!

Grand Prize, Grade 5-8

[Zachary Langille](#) — Grade 8 student, T.R. McEwen Public School, Oshawa, Ontario — wrote passionately about 80-year-old Holocaust survivor, Eva Olsson, and her tireless 50 year campaign to bring the message of hope, tolerance and peace to school children across Canada.

First Prize, Grade 5-8

[Kirsten McVey-MacMillan](#) — Grade 8 student, Highland Park Junior High School, Halifax, Nova Scotia — documented the courage of students, David Shepherd and Travis Price, who stood up for a student bullied for wearing a *pink* polo shirt, using the Internet to raise awareness.

Grand Prize, Grade 9-12

[Geneva McSheffery](#) — Grade 12 student, Riverview High School, Riverview, New Brunswick — recognized the importance of political satirist, Rick Mercer, whose keen observations about our large and diverse country not only entertain us but help to define our national identity.

First Prize, Grade 9-12

[Keerat Sidhu](#) — Grade 12 student, Seaquam Secondary School, Delta, British Columbia — examined the controversy created by former U.S. Vice President, Al Gore, and his award-winning documentary, *An Inconvenient Truth*, and its impact on Canadian environmental policy.



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.



CLASSROOM

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, [click here](#).

A&E Canadian 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](#).

[School's back and it's a day of firsts](#) – Noor Javed, ParentCentral.ca, *TheStar.com*, September 02, 2008

“There is always a certain anticipation about the first day of school. A feeling that steals away your sleep the night before, yet allows you to wake up with a smile. It's spurred, often, by the realization that what lies ahead is the start of many new beginnings, new friendships and lessons to be learned.”

[Secrets of an 'outstanding' prof](#) – Louise Brown, *TheStar.com*, September 04, 2008

As college and university students across Canada return to campus, there is a growing focus on the quality of teaching, not just research. Faced with demanding "helicopter parents" whose children are paying record fees and expect value for their money, most institutions are working to buff up the undergraduate experience – including the lecture hall. More and more, good teachers like [University of Toronto, English Professor, Nick] Mount are being tapped for their secrets.

[Who cares about writing, anyway? We all do, of course. But when it comes to teaching effective writing, we talk a better game than we play](#) — Sunny Marche, Associate Dean of Graduate Studies, Dalhousie University, *University Affairs*, April 2008

“Notwithstanding our video culture and the YouTube generation, the written word continues to matter in profound ways. There are very few vocations, or avocations come to that, where writing is not vital. It matters in literature. It matters in business. It matters in engineering (think of your user manual). It matters in your personal life. The digital life so eagerly embraced by young people demands *more* effective writing, not less, with e-mail, text messaging, instant messaging, and document exchange replacing face-to-face communication. The opportunities for misunderstandings using digital communication are manifold. Better writing is part of the answer.”

[Who cares about writing? We do! A writing studies professor offers a spirited reply to a rhetorical question from an associate dean of graduate studies](#) — Dr. Susan Drain, 3M Teaching Fellow/Writing Coordinator, Department of English, Mount Saint Vincent University, *University Affairs*, June-July 2008

“Those of us in the field of writing studies are delighted to find a positive response to the question “Who cares about writing, anyway?” (*University Affairs*, April 2008) We are more used to complaints about our students' deficiencies, and faint hopes that someone somewhere (the schools? the writing centre? the English department? divine intervention?) will rid the university of the plague of error, the distraction of disorganization, the scourge of non-standard usage, oh, and while we're at it, could we solve the problem of plagiarism, too?”

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