

November 2008 K-12 STUDY CANADA Resource Notice

Greetings
Teachers!

I couldn't resist sending this out in time to add a Halloween touch. Besides, I know your thoughts will be full of election decisions and news next week! Certainly the re-election of Prime Minister Stephen Harper's minority in mid-October was a less intense experience for Canadians. It's an interesting juxtaposition that you could also pose before students. They will be surprised to learn about Canadian rules governing election campaigns and the differences between the systems of government.



I wanted to also announce that the Fall 2008 issue of the K-12 STUDY CANADA resource flyer is currently being printed. The new flyer--focusing on the Northwest Passage--should arrive in your mailboxes soon, including the enthusiastic geography specialist that I met at the National Council for Geographic Education conference a few weeks ago (and who are now part of this listerv). Welcome aboard!



Of course, the upcoming annual National Council for the Social Studies conference is where Canada will shine like Cinderella at the ball! As announced earlier, details about the *Canada is Coming to NCSS!* outreach program are on the homepage of www.k12studycanada.org. It includes a unique opportunity for Houston-area teachers to attend local workshops being led by Betsy Arntzen and Craig Harding the week before. At the conference itself, attendees can expect the highest profile ever afforded any world region with a remarkable eighteen sessions on Canada included in the schedule! A stellar "Team Canada" of Canadian educators will arrive in Texas from as far away as Victoria (BC) in the west, Yellowknife, (NWT) in the far north and Halifax (NS) in the east. If you plan to attend the conference, please stop by our exhibit in International Alley or at our table during the President's Breakfast to say hello. We all look forward to meeting you.



I have been so impressed by what many of you are doing in your classrooms that I have decided to add a new "teacher feature" that profiles innovative best classroom practices. Bill Belsey, a 5th grade teacher at Springbank Middle School (Calgary, AB), is the first educator to be profiled this way. His classroom website is simply a marvel to behold so I hope you'll take time to explore the projects he's been working on with students in his class. It can be so motivating to see what is possible in classrooms this way! **[If you'd like to recommend a teacher, please do send me an email.]**



Wishing you well and offering only treats below. **Tina Storer PS. Don't forget to vote!!!**

Western Washington University and the University of Washington jointly perform K-12 STUDY CANADA outreach as a US Department of Education-designated National Resource Center for Canada in the United States, funded under Title VI. Annual Embassy of Canada grants also provide support.

1) HOW TO GET "PEACE TREE" SPIRIT IN YOUR ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

I recently previewed a 48-minute fictional film called "The Peace Tree", by Canadian director Mitra Sen. A winner of twelve international awards, including the Liv Ullmann Peace Prize, the film is a charming and important exploration of how children from diverse cultures and faiths learn to appreciate each others' cultural celebrations and religious holidays. Because the film shares the message that our many differences can be bridged by our common wish for peace in the world, it is a "must have" for elementary school film collections.

I am mentioning the film now so that you can consider incorporating the spirit of "The Peace Tree" during the fall multicultural festival and holiday season. Other classrooms around the world, inspired by the film, have built similar peace trees and learned valuable lessons in social cohesion and pluralistic religious expression. In fact, Toronto Mayor David Miller proclaimed June 1 as "Peace Tree Day" as a result of the films' positive impacts and the peace tree's value as a symbol of unity through diversity. To mark the day, children from schools across Southern Ontario created symbols from their diverse cultures and faiths and brought them to City Hall to hang on the city's first Peace Tree. Learn how to do so at <http://www.peacetreeday.com/makeapeacetree.htm>.

To learn more about the film, visit www.sandalwoodproductions.com/peacetree. For additional details about the Peace Tree initiative around the world, visit: www.peacetreeday.com. To order the film and a 220-page teacher's resource packet called "Celebrating the Peace Tree Spirit!", contact films@sandalwoodproductions.com (with a cc to sandalwoodproductions@gmail.com).

2) THINKQUEST: INTERNATIONAL PROJECT-BASED PROGRAM FOR TEACHERS LIKE YOU!

ThinkQuest is a *FREE*, safe and protected online learning platform used by 397,000 students and teachers in 60 countries. Visit www.thinkquest.org to learn more about how the program develops 21st Century learning skills and global collaboration among students. It includes the following technology components:

1. ThinkQuest Website Competition: students around the world develop an education website on topics of their choosing. Winning teams assemble at *Oracle Open World* every September in San Francisco. Three age categories - U12, U15, U19. Runs September to April.
2. ThinkQuest Narrative Competition: students use the project workspace to publish narratives on issues of global importance. Begins January 2009.
3. ThinkQuest Library: an award-winning library with over 7,000 website projects grouped in a variety of categories.
4. ThinkQuest Project Workspace: teachers use the workspace tools to integrate project learning into curricula. Primary teachers may open these projects up to other schools around the world (or keep them private).
5. Professional Development: teachers are invited to participate in free training events, including *Getting Started with Projects* and the *Project Learning Institute*. They can arrange these events in your city if there are a minimum number of participants.

Sign up to get your school involved in this technology-enabled learning opportunity. Visit www.thinkquest.org for an online application or contact 613-783-4520 / mona.hafez@oracle.com with questions.

3) CANADA'S IMPORTANCE AS A MARKET FOR EXPORT & OTHER ECONOMIC INFORMATION

Western Washington University is home to a Border Policy Research Institute that recently published a "Border Brief" with the State University of New York at Buffalo that considered some economic issues of interest to high school social studies teachers. The brief includes many full color charts and graphs that consider the commodities that are exchanged, the issues with border bottlenecks, and ultimately the role Canada plays as an export market for our goods. The observations on these two vital crossing points also provide a unique way for students to consider how economic policies are applied.

You can download the September 2008 issue titled "Adapting the Border to Regional Realities: Observations on Exports at Buffalo & Blaine" at http://www.wvu.edu/bpri/files/2008_Sep_Border_Brief.pdf.

4) O CANADA! THE TRUE NORTH STRONG AND FREE!

A leader in social studies education recently reminded me that I should direct readers to the *Newspaper in Education* supplement that I wrote two years ago. The sixteen-page article, published by newspapers across the country, serves as a compact and useful tool for introducing students to Canada. The publication is still posted on our homepage but can also be downloaded directly from <http://www.k12studycanada.org/files/CanadaSupplement.pdf>. The supplement includes a variety of information about our northern neighbor that I think you will appreciate (if not already familiar with it). Pre-printed copies will be distributed at the annual NCSS conference in Houston. Stop by our International Alley booth to pick one up!

5) LIBERTY, USA

To complement the *Project Canada* road-trip documentary introduced by me last month, I wanted to draw your attention to a National Film Board of Canada-produced documentary called *Liberty, USA*. The film, directed by Alan Handel, involves a road trip with pit stops in six towns in America named "Liberty". Audiences are introduced to a rich group of characters grappling with some "hot button" issues that lie at the centre of how Americans define freedoms in the 21st century. I missed its premier on CBC Newsworld last month but it is described as providing "a window on America - and its founding value - during this extraordinary Presidential election period. We see American liberty – both its accomplishments and frustrations – through some of the memorable citizens of *Liberty, USA*." If it's appropriate for your senior level classroom, you can learn more about the film at: <http://nfb.ca/collection/films/fiche/?id=56242>.

6) CANADIAN GEOGRAPHIC E-NEWSLETTER

I subscribe to both National Geographic (NG) and Canadian Geographic (CG) magazines because they make learning so visually compelling. Some of you may not know about the latter. If you're content with online exploration of the magazine, then you should subscribe to the CG e-newsletter at <http://www.canadiangeographic.ca/newsletter/default.asp>. You will receive up-to-date information about climate change in the North, endangered species, regional issues in Canada and much more every month. The electronic version is sometimes better than the hard copy—especially when, like this month, it offers interactive tours of Canada! Explore things for yourself at <http://www.canadiangeographic.ca>.

7) TEACHER FEATURE: BILL BELSEY & THE COOLEST CLASS IN CANADA

Bill Belsey (Springbank Middle School, AB) is one of North America's foremost experts in applying innovative technology in classrooms and is one of the educators hoping to build networks with American teachers as part of the **Canada is Coming to NCSS!** effort in Houston this month. He takes "hands-on learning" takes to new levels in his classroom and you'll see what a mean when you visit his fifth grade classroom at www.coolclass.ca/frameset.html. Click on "Sharing Knowledge" and then select from the drop-down menu above to discover—and I hope be inspired by-- a series of stellar classroom projects. The end-products of students' efforts show how clearly engaged they have been in the curriculum and serves as motivation for those among us who have not yet used much ICT in our own classrooms. [That's "information and communications technology" for dinosaurs like me]. The tools used in Bill Belsey's classroom can help make learning much more meaningful, interactive and just plain fun!

Bill Belsey's award-winning efforts to counter bullying in schools can also be seen at www.bullying.org. Because November 16-22 marks Bullying Awareness Week, it is only fitting to also direct you to <http://www.bullyingawarenessweek.org> where you and students can learn how to stand up to bullying.

As the clincher, visit http://www.myhero.com/myhero/hero.asp?hero=belsey_calgary_05 to read what a student had to say about Bill Belsey. It just doesn't get better than this!

8) CANADIAN RECIPE OF THE MONTH

Yam Latkes [from *The Canadian Cookbook: History, Folklore and Recipes with a Twist* (Edmonton, AB: Lone Pine Publishing, 2006)]

We [Canadians] have our Jewish population to thank for the bagels with lox, Montréal smoked meats and latkes we love to nosh on. Canada's first Jews arrived in the 1780s and settled in Québec. Russia's pogroms of the late 1800s and subsequent anti-Semitism in Eastern Europe sent more Jews to our shores; they were later joined by holocaust survivors and North African Jews. About 350,000 Jewish people now live in Canada, with nearly half of them residing in Toronto and another quarter in Montréal. Potato pancakes originated in the Slavic nations and were adopted by the large Jewish communities who lived there; the word latke is of Russian origin. The oil used to fry these traditional pancakes—an integral part of the Hanukkah celebration—celebrates the miracle of Hanukkah oil. When the Maccabees defeated the Syrian army in 165 BC and reclaimed the Temple of Jerusalem, they found only enough oil to light their menorah (the Jewish candelabra) for 1 night, but it miraculously burned for 8.

Ingredients:

2 lbs (1kg) yams, such as garnet yams, peeled
1 yellow onion peeled
1 egg, beaten
2 tbsp (30 ml) flour
¼ cup fresh herbs (dill, thyme, rosemary, whatever is on hand)
sea salt and pepper
oil for frying

Directions:

- Grate yams in batches. Squeeze out as much liquid as possible; this step is vital for crispy latkes (bundling in cheesecloth works well).
- Place yams in a large bowl and grate in onion. Stir in egg, then add flour and herbs. Season with salt and pepper.
- Heat oil in a large skillet and fry each latke until crispy and golden, turning once.

[You can make latkes as small or large as you like. Serve with sour cream, mushroom gravy or apple sauce.]

Tip: You can jazz up latkes by grating in vegetables such as carrots or parsnips or adding in garlic or even grated apple; just be sure to keep the bulk of your mixture starchy. To make a more traditional latke, use russet potatoes. For a different texture, try different graters.

9) RUTH WRITER'S REVIEW OF CANADIAN ADULT LITERATURE

Tales of the Yukon -

Berton, Laura Beatrice. *I Married the Klondike*. Toronto: McClelland & Stewart, 1961.

Berton, Pierre. *Klondike: The Last Great Gold Rush, 1896-1899*. Toronto: Anchor Publishing, 1972.

Kroetsch, Robert. *The Man from the Creeks*. Toronto: Random House of Canada, Limited, 1998.

Recommended Internet Sites - <http://www.robertwservice.com/index.php> and <http://www.rangewriter.org/danmcgrew.htm>.

After visiting Dawson City in the Yukon this summer, I was hooked on the topic of the 1898 gold rush known as the Klondike. Upon my return, I discovered three totally different approaches to this experience by various authors. Please pick up any one of these and you will not be disenchanting. Who knows? Perhaps you will enjoy all three as I have.

The first two books identified above are written by mother and son, although the son is much more famous. Mrs. Laura Berton experienced Dawson City after the rush was long over and was only a recent memory in the minds of the few who remained. In 1907, this 29-year-old teacher left Toronto to teach kindergarten in the Yukon Territory for a year or two. She fell in love with the North, with a man who lived there, and made Dawson City her home for a quarter of a century. *I Married the Klondike* is a fascinating memoir and look at a town that, at one time, was the largest west of the Mississippi (and nicknamed "Paris of the North" for obvious reasons). For Laura, it no longer resembled the rough and tumble mining town of only a decade earlier but had all the amenities of the best cities in North America. It was, by then, a declining community where few continued to search for gold. This easy-to-read autobiography solidifies the reasons she lived in the community for so many years.

Her son Pierre, born in Dawson City, became the best-known historian of Canada. His prolific works chronicled the nation of his birth. *Klondike: The Last Great Gold Rush, 1896-1899*, winner of the Governor General's award, details the trials and dilemmas of those who journeyed north decades before his birth to get rich quick. Little did these men—and women—realize this journey could be their last. This non-fictional work at times reads like fiction for it amazed most logical folk how anyone could survive the journey to the gold fields. Berton explains, in detail, the chance original discovery of gold in 1896 and the birth of Dawson City in 1897. The boom occurred the following year in 1898 due to the rigors of the route to the northern reaches of North America and the lack of communication lines to the south.

Berton included incredible descriptive passages about the infamous Chilkoot Pass with its stairs of ice straight up the mountain, the perils of Dead Horse Pass, and the impossible trek across the glacier outside Valdez. He also relates the events of the "carnival summer of 1898" when most gold seekers arrive, albeit too late. Readers will learn of fascinating historic figures like the wicked Soapy Smith who "mined the miners" and Sam Steele of the Mounties who tried to protect them by requiring each to transport a ton of goods to Dawson City before entering Canadian territory. He also explains about the queens of dance hall row, the men who came as paupers hoping to leave as millionaires, and those who became millionaires only to lose it all and leave as paupers.

Kroetsch's novel, *The Man from the Creeks*, takes an interesting approach to the history of Dawson and is perhaps the most compelling of the three books. He bases his fictional account on the Robert M. Service poem "The Shooting of Dan McGrew," perhaps one of the greatest money-making poems of all times. He explores the story of the Klondike through the eyes of a fourteen-year-old boy traveling with his mother Lou to Dawson City. Stowaways on a boat, the pilot discovers them and puts them ashore with a kind supporter in the middle of nowhere en route to the North. Kroetsch, another winner of the Governor General's Award, richly describes their journey up Chilkoot Pass and the long winter spent along a lake where they meet the girlfriend of Dan McGrew. His descriptions of the experiences of this unlikely trio evoke both humor and tragedy as well as success and pathos. They become the very human faces of those described in Pierre Berton's history of the Klondike.

Again, any one of these books conveys the real difficulty of getting to Dawson City and the realities of life people faced on arrival in those early years. Simply pick your favorite format—memoir, non-fiction or fiction. You will not be disappointed.

PS: If you ever get the chance to visit Alaska, take the extra time, money, and effort to journey to Dawson City. If you dare travel the Top of the World Highway (and through a town named Chicken, Alaska, with its winter population of six), you will catch just a glimpse of the challenges faced by the men and women who journeyed to the creeks flowing into the Yukon. Take the risk...you will not be the first!

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