

Connections

Volume 29 Number 2 Fall 2008

Keeping Nature in Mind: A New Environmental Music Festival Takes Flight

How to Host a Festival

Be the Change You Want to See

No Doubt About Doubtful Sound



Left to right: Environmental singer/songwriters Peter Lenton, Ashley Moffat and Joyce Saunders of the Wilderbeats, and Remy Rodden appearing at the "Nature in Mind Music Festival" held in Lethbridge this spring.

The newsletter of the Global,
Environmental & Outdoor
Education Council



To promote involvement in
quality environmental and
outdoor education

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Cover photo by Susan Spiess

Editorial

GEOEC—What's the Connection?

From time to time someone questions why our council combines what appear to be three disparate subject areas (global, environmental and outdoor education) into a single organization. Heck, we've even debated this topic at our executive retreat. This may be old ground for some readers, but as we bring in large numbers of new members, it is important to clarify what the connections are between the strands in GEOEC.

There is no doubt that many GEOEC members have a commitment to the environment and to environmental education. Many of these folks were involved decades BAG (before Al Gore) and have seen a growing awareness that humanity is part of the natural world, not above it. We don't have to belabour the point about how important environmental education is—it's a matter of survival, not only for our species but for many others—but we still face numerous challenges in infusing environmental education where appropriate in the curriculum. The magnitude of the challenge and the massive inertia of current educational structures do not diminish the importance and the urgency of the task. With only a few short years left to avoid a major extinction event, we need to get to work.

So what are the connections between the environment and global education? Unless you successfully deal with the issues surrounding development, trade, quality of life and standard of living on a global scale, you are going to find it very difficult to make any progress toward stabilizing the environment. If you don't do something to stabilize (or, better yet, enhance) the environment, it will be very difficult to make progress in development, trade, quality of life and standard of living. Unless we commit to aligning our behaviour with our concepts of social justice on a global scale, the actions that will be taken to resolve or adapt to changes in the environment may well be extremely unpleasant. (You might want to cast your mind back to the old moral dilemma scenarios of the '50s and '60s: Who do you let into your lifeboat or fallout shelter?)

And where does outdoor education enter the picture? I'll forgo romantic musings on the cleansing and healing power of nature and cut to a practical concern. If, at some time in the future, I'm going to give power to someone to make decisions regarding the fate of the world, I want that person not only to have a knowledge of what nature (the outdoors) is, I want them to have an appreciation for it. I want that person to have seen the stars at night, not just a sodium glare reflected from city smog. I want that person to have walked beside a stream from which you can drink unfiltered water. I want that person to have listened to a forest in the wind and felt a paddle in their hand as he or she finish a stroke. I want that person to have walked across a mountain valley, rather than merely have driven through it or flown over it. I want it to be clear what needs to be protected—the real things that we are in danger of losing—rather than abstractions we've seen on a video screen.

About 10 years ago I ran across Jerome Seymour Bruner's mantra for constructivist learning:

Learning is doing.

Learning is doing something.

Learning is doing something with other people.

Not only is it important that learning be active, purposeful and social—if it isn't, you have to question whether learning is occurring at all. Like Thomas Dewey, I don't believe that education is preparation for life, it is life. And if education is life, one of the proper studies is what the environment is, how we relate to it and how we relate to the people with whom we share this planet. That's why I don't have a problem with the integration of three disciplines in one council, the GEOEC.

—Noel Jantzie

Schedule for Submissions

Connections seeks articles on the following topics:

Theme: Change

Deadline for submissions: April 30, 2009

Everyone talks about change, but what does this really mean? What changes do we need to see in global, environmental and outdoor education to reflect a changing world? What changes have you seen in the curriculum during your career as a teacher? What changes still need to take place? How are the demographic changes taking place in education going to affect our areas of interest?

Connections also requires submissions for the following regular features:

- What's happening (and where)—sharing events and programs related to global, environmental and outdoor education.
- Resource features—highlighting resources related to global, environmental and outdoor education, including people and organizations with resources available to teachers.
- Photographs of the natural world, people and children in nature, global friends and neighbours, and education in action.

How to Make a Submission

Sending submissions by e-mail is ideal, but you may also submit articles, artwork and photographs by regular mail (on disk or as hard copy). Please include a short biography and your mailing address. You must receive parental permission to print photographs of children or student work (see the form at the end of this issue).

Send submissions to Noel Jantzie, 61 Hawkwood Blvd NW, Calgary, AB T3G 3A8; e-mail gnjantzie@shaw.ca.



Seeking an Editor

As of June 2009, the position of editor will be vacant unless some enterprising GEOEC member steps forward into the journalistic breach. If you are interested in becoming editor or coeditor, please contact Noel Jantzie at gnjantzie@shaw.ca for further information. Volunteers are also welcome to work on the spring 2009 issue.



GEOEC Business and News

A Message from the President

Greetings to all GEOEC members. I trust that you had a great summer. I am sure many of you had some time to spend in the great outdoors.

Conference 2008 in Nordegg was a great success. The many teachers who attended provided positive feedback. We look forward to next year's conference in Jasper in April. Suzanna Wong's group has been working hard planning the conference. We hope that many of you attend. They are always inspirational.

This year will be busy as well. The executive spent a weekend in September working on the GEOEC website to provide you with more opportunities to find environmental resources to support your

classroom. A group of Green Street Program presenters will be providing provincewide workshops to actively engage students and teachers in environmental learning and global education. We participated in the Beginning Teachers' Conferences in Edmonton and Calgary, presenting workshops and encouraging new teachers to become members of our council.

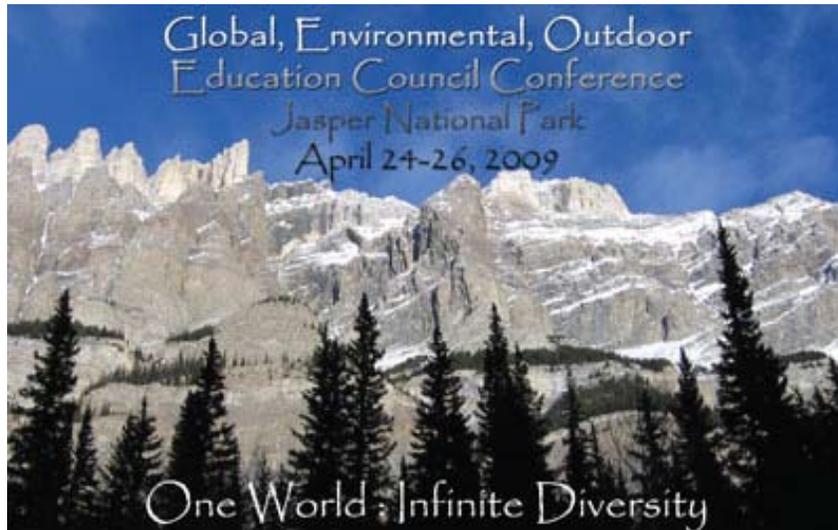
We are still looking for volunteers to help us. If you have great websites that you think should be linked to our website, please let us know. If you are interested in becoming a Green Street Program presenter and would be willing to give workshops in your region, contact us. I know that Suzanna can

always use more help to organize the conference. Our executive needs a president-elect. We would be happy to receive your suggestions on how we could help you in the classroom. This council is here to help you become more effective environmental, global education and outdoor education teachers, and we offer the opportunities for all of you to connect at our conferences. We need your help to accomplish this.

Have a great year of teaching. See you at the 2009 conference in Jasper on April 24–26. I hope that all of you encourage your colleagues to become members of the GEOEC.

—*Rita Poruchny*

Conference 2009



Make plans for the 2009 GEOEC annual conference. Are you ready to walk the mountains with Ben Gadd? Be prepared to find out about sneaky bees, icefield bunnies and why the biggest mountain is not the highest. A long-time resident of Jasper National Park and author of the *Handbook to the Canadian Rockies* (the bible for tourists and outdoor enthusiasts), Gadd will be the keynote speaker and will be launching his second work of fiction at the GEOEC Conference in Jasper, April 23 to 26, 2009.

The theme of the conference is "One World: Infinite Diversity," and more than 30 full- and half-day workshops, keynotes and other related activities have been scheduled at the Palisades Centre or the Sawridge Inn. To reduce the

carbon footprint of the conference, the organizing committee has attempted to secure speakers from within 100 miles (160 kilometres) of the conference site.

The second keynote will be delivered by Bradley Young, director of the Aboriginal Involvement Program at the Foothills Research Institute. Young was raised in the Muskego Cree zone of refuge at Crossing Bay, Manitoba. A member of the Bear and Loon Clans, he was the first indigenous student to earn a combined credential in Native studies and environmental conservation studies at the University of Alberta. His session is titled "From the Canoe to the 4x4: An Indigenous Reflection on Community Values, Education, and the Future of Our Shared Environment." A dynamic

speaker, committed community role model, husband and father of four, Bradley is a mediator between cultures and, at his core, is a student and protagonist of and for the natural world.

Early-bird registration is \$200 prior to January 15. Full registration is \$250. Full-time postsecondary students can register for \$125. The conference registration includes a wine and cheese reception on Thursday night, Friday and Saturday lunches, nutritious snacks, a Friday night barbecue, and a Saturday night banquet and dance. Register on the GEOEC website (www.geoec.org).

Accommodation is available at the Palisades Stewardship and Environmental Training Centre; e-mail palisades.centre@pc.gc.ca or call 1-780-852-6192.

Dormitory accommodation with breakfast is provided for \$70 per night plus GST.

Hotel bed and breakfast accommodation is available at the Sawridge Inn in Jasper at \$119.00 single or \$139.59 double occupancy per night per room (taxes not included). Quote group reservation number ATD02Z. For further information, visit the GEOEC website or contact Suzanna Wong at suzawong@telus.net. Remember to bring your own beverage cup.

Call for Award Nominations

The Global, Environmental & Outdoor Education Council of the ATA will honour those people who have contributed to global, environmental and outdoor education at the annual conference in April. As a member of the council you have the opportunity to nominate a deserving individual for recognition. There are three categories of awards:

Appreciation of Service Award

The Appreciation of Service Award is presented to member and nonmember individuals and organizations in acknowledgement of service contributing to the professional growth of GEOEC members.

Considerations include service, events, hosts, materials, sponsors, affiliate organizations and departments that have been of significant benefit to the council.

Award of Merit

The Award of Merit is presented to member and nonmember individuals and organizations in recognition of exemplary teaching, leadership or service in the field of global, environmental and outdoor education.

Considerations include teaching, leadership or service representing a significant commitment of effort and time; effective influence on the development of global, environmental and outdoor education in a region, province or nation; contribution to the awareness and understanding of an environmental ethic; or extension of teaching practice, research, legislation or funding in global, environmental and outdoor education.

Distinguished Fellow Award

The Distinguished Fellow Award is presented to a member in acknowledgement of outstanding achievement and distinguished service in the field of global, environmental and outdoor education. Considerations include years of service, significance of achievements, effect of leadership and commitment to the council's development and operations.

How to Nominate

Please contact GEOEC past president Kathryn Satterfield at Kathryn.Satterfield@cssd.ab.ca prior to February 28, 2009.

Join the GEOEC Executive and Make a Difference

All positions except past president and president are open for election annually. If you are interested in seeking one of these positions, please contact Past President Kathryn Satterfield at Kathryn.Satterfield@cssd.ab.ca.

Elections will be held at the annual general meeting (AGM) during the 2009 conference. The PEC liaison and ATA staff advisor positions are appointed by the ATA's Provincial Executive Council.

Past President

- Act as advisor to the president and the executive board in general.
- Ensure that the executive operate in accordance with the constitution.
- Act as keeper of the historical records as the council historian.
- Solicit nominations from membership for each of the table officer positions.
- Coordinate the GEOEC's recognition of individuals and organizations, and solicit recommendations and nominations for awards at least two months prior to AGM.
- Report annually and maintain a registry of awards presented by the GEOEC.

President

- Maintain liaison with ATA personnel, PEC representative and staff officer assigned to the GEOEC.
- Call, set agenda for and chair all meetings of the table officers and executive board.
- Arrange for the old and new executive board to meet near the end of term of office to pass on information and receive files.
- Submit an annual written report about GEOEC activities to the ATA.
- Attend annual seminar for presidents of specialist councils.
- Submit written reports at executive meetings as required.
- Keep executive informed of developments.
- Become past president on July 1, 2011.

President-Elect

- Assist the president as required and act in the absence of the president.
- Maintain liaison with committee chairs and report to table officers.
- Become president on July 1, 2011.

Secretary

- Take minutes of all table officer and executive board meetings.
- Send minutes and action plans to executive, ATA staff advisor, PEC representative and GEOEC community liaisons.
- Have copies of previous year's AGM minutes available at the current AGM.
- Handle correspondence and communication in conjunction with president.

Treasurer

- Take charge of all money received and/or collected by the council, and disburse funds as authorized by the table officers.
- Keep accurate record of the financial affairs of the council for both the account held at Barnett House and the current account.
- Provide a statement of account to each meeting of the table officers.
- Have books ready for audit by Barnett House at the end of each fiscal year (June 30).
- Attend annual seminar for treasurers of specialist councils.
- Present audited financial statement to the AGM.
- Provide consultative services to the conference director.

Professional Development

- Assess needs, make recommendations and provide inservice opportunities to GEOEC members in addition to annual conference.
- Establish, maintain and recommend a list of resource people.
- Submit a report of PD activities to the AGM.

Public Relations/ Membership

- Deal with issues relating to the image of the GEOEC and environmental education focusing specifically on outside groups.
- Actively promote membership among interested members of the public.
- Work with the conference committee to ensure that they have an up-to-date membership list and that the conference is promoted to nonmembers.
- Coordinate the development, interpretation and implementation of public relations policies.
- Submit a report on PR/membership activities to the AGM.

Publications

- Coordinate and act as editor for any publications that pertain to the goals and objectives of the GEOEC.
- Attend the annual seminar for specialist council editors.
- Submit a report of publications activities to the AGM.

Conference Codirector 2010

- In consultation with the table officers, plan and carry out an annual conference program that is to be outlined in the fall and published at least two months prior to the conference.
- Keep a conference file. Pass this file on to the conference director-elect.
- Attend annual seminar for conference directors of specialist councils.
- Submit an audited financial statement to the table officers within two months following the conference. Present this statement to the executive board at the first fall meeting.
- Submit all financial records to Barnett House on or before June 30 for auditing.

Conference Director-Elect 2011

- Serve as a member of the conference steering committee in preparation for the following year.
- Assist the conference director as required.
- Note: It is not essential that this person attend executive meetings.

Community Liaisons (two positions)

- This is a nonvoting appointed position, created to facilitate sharing of experience and knowledge between community (nonformal) and school-based (formal) educators. It acknowledges the significant contribution of nonformal educators to global, environmental and outdoor education.

Where to Go for Council Resources: www.geoec.org

Are you looking for the latest in lesson plans or just curious about links to affiliated organizations? The GEOEC website is there for you. Our award-winning website has updated information about the council and its programs as well as links to other global, environmental and outdoor education sites. As part of our commitment to reducing the amount of paper generated by council activities, we are making an effort to put more material on our website. Note that the most current information will almost always be found there.



GEOEC Hits the Green Street: Environmental and Global Education

The 2008/09 school year will see GEOEC members fanning out across the province to deliver a series of workshops on “Engaging in Our Communities as Global Citizens.” Workshops have already been held at the two Beginning Teachers’ Conferences in the early fall and presentations have been made at several specialist councils. Teachers who attend the workshop receive a package of teacher information and class activities as well as order forms for the free student material available from the Canadian Teachers’ Federation.

The Green Street Program endeavours to provide opportunities to actively engage students and teachers in environmental learning and global education. This workshop encourages students to take personal responsibility for the environment. It fosters a commitment to sustainable living and promotes an enduring dedication to environmental stewardship. The program links Canadian schools to reputable environmental education organizations across the country. Green Street is sponsored by the

Canadian Teachers’ Federation and the ATA’s Global, Environmental and Outdoor Education Council.

Workshops can be delivered in 75-minute, half-day or full-day formats and are free. If you are interested in joining other schools to provide a workshop or if you

have an opening at a district professional development event, you can book the Green Street presentation through Janey Kemp at Barnett House; phone 780-447-9400 (in Edmonton) or 1-800-232-7208 (toll free in Alberta).



Articles and Features

Keeping Nature in Mind: A New Environmental Music Festival Takes Flight

Peter Lenton

Let us assume that really caring about nature and living in a way that respects the phenomenal diversity and fragility of the web of life lead to action. And that music really is the universal language that connects us. Then connecting caring people and environmental musicians from

across Canada would certainly bring about an exhilarating celebration of environmentally literate lifestyles infused with creativity. Welcome to the first “Nature in Mind Music Festival,” an inspiring gathering of like-minded artisans and positive energy that must have caused

Lethbridge, Alberta, to pulsate with a brilliant glow on GPS screens last February.

My intuition was tingling. Something about this gig was very different. I felt slightly out of my comfort zone, yet strangely willing and comfortable at the same time, sure that something new and fantastic was happening. As a former teacher who now uses music to celebrate various curricula through interactive concerts and artist-in-residencies, I needed to be a part of whatever was going to transpire. I had no idea how extraordinary the voyage would turn out to be.

February 19, 2008, 5:30 PM. I walked into the Lethbridge Public Library to do my sound check for the first concert evening and was warmly greeted by a sea of smiling faces. Within a few minutes a young lady confidently walked up to me and gently announced: “My name is



Left to right: Environmental singer/songwriters: Remy Rodden, Paul Butler, Ashley Moffat and Joyce Saunders of the Wilderbeats, and Peter Lenton.

MaryAnn Spiess, and would it be OK if I played violin with you on your 'Kid Hearts' song tonight?" After a decade of *edutainment* touring, I've seen my share of wonderful and unusual situations. Still, I must have seemed just a little surprised, I asked, "At the concert tonight?" She nodded earnestly and said, "Yes, if that's okay with you." I responded, "Well, we better run through the song then." As one who strives to embrace serendipity whenever possible (and who was already mildly entranced by the welcoming atmosphere and optimistic attitude of the volunteers I met), it just seemed like the most natural thing to do. It was meant to be.

So we stepped into the hallway between the library and the concert theatre, and I struggled a little to

recall the version of "Kid Hearts" that I had recorded over seven years before and that had brought tears of joy to David Suzuki's eyes (but that's another story). Any artist will tell you that these songs tend to evolve when you sing them a couple of thousand times in concert.

However, MaryAnn, who I later learned was only 12 years old, had learned the violin parts from the original *Passengers* CD. So with her gentle reminders we recalled the original version of the song, and I was amazed. She really did know the violin parts, and what finesse! I believe we rehearsed it twice and then we just knew—we were ready. This was the turning point for me. The moment I let go of the riverbank and let myself go, the rest of the festival was a wild ride indeed!

Imagine yourself suddenly hearing a long lost song and instantly remembering the exact words, almost as though your brain was a jukebox or your mind was playing back an incredibly accurate tape recording. If music is the universal language, why not tap its potential for gently encouraging environmental literacy, and local and global community building? This is only one of the remarkable accomplishments of a brand new music festival in Canada.

The vision was grand and ambitious. Bring together dedicated global, environmental performers and educators from all over Canada. Add stage time for local musicians and poets, illustrators and storytellers, naturalists and talented educators, and artisans working in various disciplines. Schedule celebrations in diverse niche and public communities all around Lethbridge. Invite educators from the traditional First Nations and explore innovative, alternative methods for lifelong learning. Capture glimpses of the whole week-long experience on video and then take it to the world! Those were the first verbal brushstrokes that were used to paint a picture of the inaugural "Canadian Nature in Mind Environmental Music Festival," held February 2008, in Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada.

As one of the environmental singer/songwriter educators invited to share my *Peter Puffin's Whale Tales* concert, I was humbled. And afterward, I was honoured to be asked to recall some glimpses of a unique and powerful river of events



Peter Lenton accompanied by the Lethbridge Children's Choir.

Photos by Susan Spiess

and experiences that carry and inspire me to this day.

I remember being dropped off at the Calgary airport and seeing Remy Rodden's smiling familiar face. He is a deeply committed and talented singer/guitarist/educator from Whitehorse, Yukon. He was with Joyce Hildebrand, one-half of the mischievous Wilderbeats from Halifax, Nova Scotia, at our agreed-on rendezvous location. We loaded up all our guitars and gear into a van driven by festival co-organizer Paul Bohnert for the drive to Lethbridge.

Within minutes, the usual pleasantries shifted into scheming about how to stoke the success of the upcoming days and take the show on the road across Canada. As presenters, we were immediately welcomed into planning the delivery of the scheduled events, and we could feel the energy levels rising. Something truly remarkable was being born. Someone announced that "the train has left the station!" The first week of the "Nature in Mind Festival Tour" was beginning. A dedicated group of committee members and families had been planning and preparing for months while we and other artists were descending upon Lethbridge! The second guitar-slinging, harmonizing Wilderbeat Ashley Moffat was en route from eastern Canada. Todd Butler, from Vancouver, was on his way to piggyback his festival appearances with a keynote address at the South Western Alberta

Teachers' Convention Association (SWATCA).

The realization of the extent of the vision playing out before us started to appear. We were all presenting at SWATCA on Thursday. The festival had cleverly been scheduled to coincide with this enormous gathering of educators from all over the lower third of Alberta.

The next five days dissolved into a wonderful blur of exhilarating concerts, interactive workshops, tasty storytelling-infused meals in local homes and warm, rustic cafes, backstage jams and late-night singalongs, and meetings with countless local people who were welcoming and genuinely excited to be involved in this festival.

Toward the end of the long string of concerts, the impromptu backstage jams spilled onto the stage as musical artists began joining each other in the spotlights, adding a harmony here and an extra guitar and harmonica there. Todd Butler added his own vocal sound of a boom box under a hip-hop rap about hippos by the Wilderbeats. And the whole entourage of artists sang and played "Peace Like a River" to close the last concert with an über-high-energy, four-part harmony finale! There are rumours of a DVD being in production.

If commitment to reducing our ecological footprint is rooted in emotional connection to the flora and fauna that need our help and if taking action to care for the habitat and natural resources like

water and oxygen that support all life can be facilitated by connecting like-minded educators, artisans and community members, then the model for the "Nature in Mind" celebrations should be replicated far and wide! In fact, as you read this, plans are evolving for a second annual series of events in Lethbridge, and people are scheming to take this unique festival framework on the road to other communities. We hope you will connect with us through the website (<http://sayee.ca/festival.htm>).

There is definitely an intoxicating allure about the spaces in southern Alberta. And there is a joyful energy and a faith in the people's hearts that great successes are happening and ongoing accomplishments are possible. Your energy and ideas are needed, so jump in and join this growing phenomenon keeping nature in mind!

The second "Nature in Mind Music Festival," will take place in Lethbridge, Alberta, February 10–20, 2010. Tickets will be available October 1, 2009. Stay tuned to <http://sayee.ca/festival.htm> for details. And please share the news and songs.

Peter Lenton was pleasantly surprised when he was awarded the GEOEC's Distinguished Fellow 2008 award "in recognition of a career of outstanding achievement and distinguished service in the field of global, environmental and outdoor education."

How to Host a Festival

Peter Lenton

So often we journey away from such life-affirming and changing events, bodies tired and hearts full. If only we could pause to consider why the experience was so effective and apply this wisdom to future celebrations of learning.

1. **Tap artists and the creative process** to teach all school subjects, build capacity for positive change and increase citizen ownership of environmental and social issues and good causes in your community.

2. Find a roster of **multidisciplinary artists** (for example, musicians, painters and writers) who are comfortable presenting in various spaces to different segments of your local population. “Nature in Mind Festival” artists presented in libraries, schools, PD sessions for teachers, formal theatre concerts and many informal settings.

One innovation was to have local writer Cassandra Meierhofer and illustrator Brian Meierhofer create a new environmental storybook called *Jenny’s Amazing Journey* that also served as the program and showcased the visiting and local artists. People would surely love to keep such a gorgeous story and collection of watercolour paintings as a

keepsake of a wonderful festival and could use it in class to teach various curriculum concepts.

This book is a living story that grows each time students and parents read it and add their own ideas.

3. **Invite local artists** to perform at the same events as the guest artisans to create a cross-pollination of local and global ideas, artistic approaches and the chance to boost your local arts scene.

4. **Encourage collaboration** between visiting artists. Get them to share ideas and collaborate with each other and local artists in settings where the general public feels free to participate, too.

5. **Schedule time for visiting artists to explore the natural surroundings** of your community with local guides, so that they might incorporate your region’s unique character into their practice.

6. **Invite artists to stay in people’s homes**, interact with the locals and have unscheduled time for new collaboration. The fruits of these processes might even reach the local performance stages during your festival.

7. **Plan every event around food.** From homemade treats at meetings, to backstage

refreshments, to potluck dinners and postconcert dinners, food brings us all closer together.

8. **Capture (video) the whole experience.** Beyond the educational, entertaining, well-received concerts, some of the most thrilling moments happen behind the scenes. In the dressing rooms, during a walk by a local river, amid the relaxed atmosphere of a late-night jam session, keep the cameras rolling.

9. **Celebrate local sources** for every aspect of the festival—from locally grown and prepared foods, to local facilitators and venues, to resource people who know the local geography and people. Make as many people as possible feel that they were integral to the festival’s success.

10. **Encourage rest and then quickly seek feedback** while the event is fresh in people’s hearts and minds. Invest lots of time creating comfortable spaces and conduits (remember—with great food) for people to offer impressions and suggestions about what worked and what could be done even better. Collate and share the responses. Find ways through e-mail and face-to-face meetings to stay connected with the new community that has grown around your event.

Be the Change You Want to See

Lisa Lozanski

We've all heard the line "be the change you want to see in the world." But it turns out that being the change is a lot harder than talking about the change, which is what many people prefer to do. I have worked in a variety of education-related positions—in a school, a university and now in Alberta Education—and I continue to be amazed at how much we talk about social, political and economic change and how little we live it.

What do I mean when I say "live it"? I mean that we make concrete changes in our lives that reflect our commitment to global change. We buy products from socially and environmentally responsible companies. We waste less paper, food, water and <insert almost any item here>. We walk more and drive less. I'm not asking for unreasonable sacrifice, just for people to notice how their work environments and lifestyles affect those on the other side of the planet.

I hear a lot of "we need to prepare our youth to take on the challenges of the 21st century," and I'm beginning to think that this means that we have given up on those challenges ourselves. We have pawned them off on our 15- and 16-year-olds, hoping that while they ride the rollercoaster of adolescence, they will be able to

come up with a solution to global warming or world poverty.

Luckily for us, some of our 15- and 16-year-olds are already rising to the occasion. On April 30, 2008, students of varying ages from around the province and around the world participated in the 2008 Video Conference for Hope, a day-long video conference meant to celebrate education and learning that allowed students to exchange information about their lives and schools, debate the effectiveness of international aid and, through creative writing and wall murals, imagine a better world. To add to this valuable dialogue, many participating schools are raising funds to build a school for Esteli, Nicaragua. Over \$10,000 has been raised to date, and fundraising activities will continue until June 30, 2009. At the end of the school year, the schools will present this money to Change for Children, an Edmonton-based nongovernmental organization (NGO) working with the educational community in Esteli.

When asked why it was important to participate in the Video Conference for Hope, one student from Queen Elizabeth High School spoke passionately about how the opportunity to communicate directly with students from other parts of the planet makes all the difference. "You cannot be ignorant

about something that's right in front of your face" said the Grade 11 student who helped host the conference.

Terry Godwalt, director of the Global Education Centre at Queen Elizabeth High School and lead organizer of this event, agrees. "One of the biggest struggles we have with helping to foster a global conscience in our kids is moving beyond their spectator and video-game mentality. Every day they are bombarded by tragic images in movies, news and video games that they simply turn off and make disappear with one flick of the remote. The Video Conference for Hope is different in that it links our students directly, face to face, with those in need. We allow kids to go beyond the images to foster relationships."

An event like this is important because hope is one of the most important things we can teach our youth. And when I say teach, I mean not only discuss and encourage, but model. The challenges of the 21st century are our challenges as well, and we are not helpless in addressing them. Godwalt modelled this attitude when he began to organize an event that focused on all the good things that youth bring to the world (that is, the strength of character shown by student refugees, messages of peace and

... Articles and Features ...

human rights, and musical talent) and gave his students an outlet for positive action. The Video Conference for Hope is truly aptly named.

Unfortunately, as Godwalt points out, the negative and dramatic media often focus on natural disasters, war, famine and disease. Though these are important events, they do not give us the whole picture of what is going on in the world. To balance these skewed images of the world and check engendered stereotypes, it is critical for Alberta students to

build personal relationships with their peers in other countries and from other cultures; to learn about their counterparts' families, schools, traditions and values. It is as important to know their humanity as it is to know their circumstances.

Personal connections can highlight the importance of our decisions, from our day-to-day choices to our national policy, because through them we can imagine their effect on our friends Anya, Tariq, Jose or Marcela overseas. I congratulate Terry

Godwalt and all of the other organizers of this event for creating a space where students can meet one another and lay the foundation for future relationships. Such classroom initiatives give me hope about our ability to change the world, youth and adults alike.

Are you and your students interested in participating in the next Video Conference for Hope? Find out more at www.changeforchildren.org.

Lisa Lozanski is the global education advisor for GEOEC.

*Students in Esteli,
Nicaragua.*



Photos by Fiona Cavanagh

No Doubt About Doubtful Sound

Sharon Vogrinetz

After a restful night at sea, we awoke to a wonderland of waterfalls. Doubtful Sound, the second largest fjord in Fiordland National Park on the southwest coast of New Zealand's South Island is transformed after a rainfall.

Reaching Doubtful Sound isn't easy; it starts with a one-hour cruise across Lake Manapouri followed by a 22-kilometre bus ride over Wilmott Pass. Light rain was falling, which is no surprise on a coast that averages over 5 metres annually. We were fortunate that the clouds blew away as we approached the summit of the pass, allowing a spectacular view of Deep Cove and the Fiordland Navigator. By 2 PM we were boarding the Navigator, a 70-passenger ship, for an overnight cruise in the Sound. The sun accompanied us as we headed to the mouth of the sound to observe the fur seal colony.

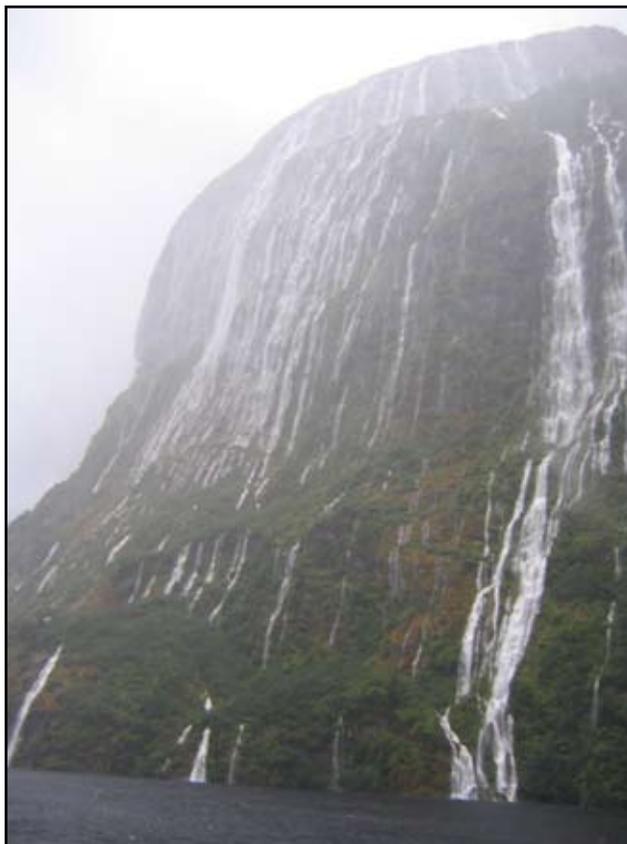
Dave, the naturalist on the ship, outlined the research he has been doing on the Doubtful Sound dolphin colony. There is a large pod of Hector's Dolphins who live year round in the sound. They migrate from one arm to another depending on the water temperature. That day it was a chilly 8° Celsius, and Dave was hoping we'd catch sight of a dolphin. His hopes were in vain. But the seals were plentiful, and we had the chance to view a few frolicking

in front of the ship on the way back inland.

The ship anchored at the head of a long arm for the night. We had the opportunity to tour the area by tender craft or sea kayak. After being assured that this was the ideal spot for beginners, we carefully climbed into the kayaks and headed out over the still water. The only sound was the splashing of paddles

and the voices of kayakers calling their friends. We were able to paddle right up to the shore and enjoy the lush flora and even paddle under a few fallen trees. The birds were plentiful, but so were the sand flies (black flies to Canadians), and we were glad the ship had offered Deet before we set out.

Upon return to the ship, an invitation was given to the brave



Twelve times the height of Niagra Falls, these cascades frame a spectacular entry into the Sound.

(foolish?) passengers interested in swimming in the Sound. I had worn my bathing suit kayaking, and the water that splashed over me seemed fairly warm; a dip would be fun! Wrong! Instant brain freeze! I have never been in water so cold without a wetsuit, and I quickly clambered back up the ladder and into a hot shower. But at least I can say I *swam* in Doubtful Sound.

It started raining overnight; over 50 millimetres had fallen by dawn. During our return trip that morning, the rain continued, converting the entire sides of the mountains into waterfalls. One large cliff near the mouth of Hall Arm looked like the overflowing top of a claw foot

bathhtub. This cliff was over 1,200 metres high, 24 times the height of Niagara Falls. Even Dave was impressed—this was the most water he had seen in his many years here. Even though it was windy, cold and wet, I stood on the deck for two hours, *soaking up* this once-in-a-lifetime experience. (Note: The Gore-Tex jacket stood up well, but from the hemline down, well, at least wet clothes are a bit insulating!)

The wonder of it is that within an hour after the rain stops, the entire cliff is dry. There are only about three waterfalls in the entire arm when it's not raining. The runoff looked polluted as it was stained

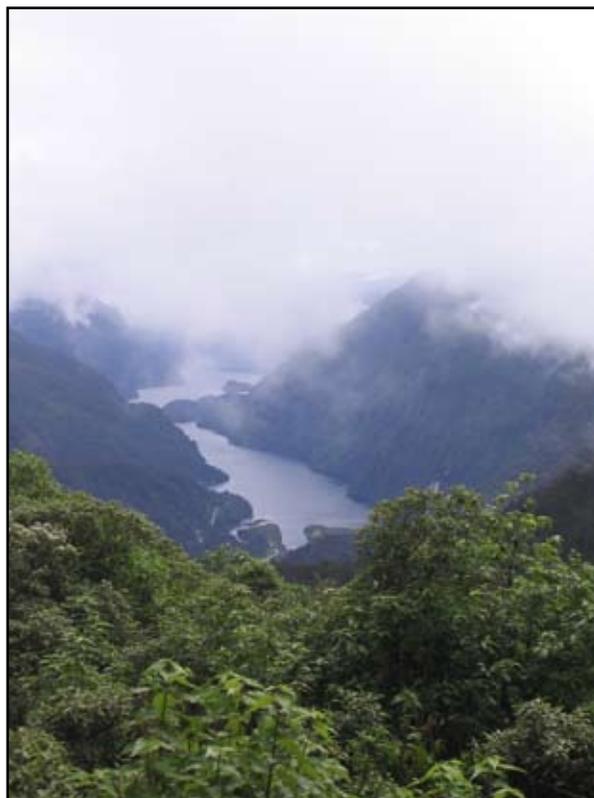
dark brown, but the colour is actually caused by the tannins in the vegetation. Surprisingly, the slopes were well vegetated. Imagine how tenacious the plants must be to survive regular onslaughts of runoff.

This cruise was recommended to us as the one thing we must do in New Zealand. It was the highlight of our entire trip, and I would encourage anyone fortunate enough to travel Down Under to visit Doubtful Sound.

Sharon Vogrinetz is ATA coordinator of Teacher Welfare and the staff advisor on the GEOEC executive. She visited the Doubtful Sound in February 2007.



A great way to explore the Sound.



Doubtful Sound from above.

Photos by Sharon Vogrinetz

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The Alberta Teachers' Association (ATA) requests the permission of parents/guardians for the reproduction of photographs depicting their children and/or the reproduction of work assignments completed by their children. The photograph/work will be reproduced in the Global, Environmental and Outdoor Education Council (GEOEC) newsletter, *Connections*, and is intended for teacher professional development.

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We have recently begun posting archived issues of *Connections* on the GEOEC website (www.geoec.org/newsletter). Are you willing to have your child's written work posted on the Internet as well?

- Yes, I agree to have my child's written work posted on the GEOEC website.
- Yes, I agree to have my child's written work posted on the GEOEC website, using a first name only.
- No, I do not want my child's written work posted on the GEOEC website.
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Please fax or mail forms to

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The Alberta Teachers' Association

Global, Environmental & Outdoor Education Council

Mission Statement

To promote involvement in quality global, environmental and outdoor education

Objectives

- To provide a vehicle for Alberta teachers for professional development and communication in global, environmental and outdoor education
- To study and make professional recommendations about global, environmental and outdoor education issues
- To network with other provincial organizations that have similar concerns

Membership

- Regular member—Active and associate members of the Alberta Teachers' Association as specified in ATA bylaws are entitled to full privileges of council membership including the rights to vote and to hold office.
- Student member—Student members of the ATA are entitled to all benefits and services of council membership except the right to hold office.
- GEOEC members may also choose to belong to the Canadian Network for Environmental Education and Communication (EECOM) for an additional fee.
- ATA members may join the GEOEC without charge as their choice of one free specialist council membership included in the ATA annual fee.
- ATA members and subscribers may also sign up for a GEOEC membership and pay a fee determined by the GEOEC executive. From time to time the executive may decrease the fee to provide incentives for membership recruitment.

Subscribers

- Persons who are not ATA members as specified by ATA bylaws receive all the benefits and services of council membership except the rights to vote and hold office. Subscribers do have the right to serve as community liaisons on the council executive.

Publications

- The GEOEC recognizes the wide range of interests among members and strives to foster the exchange of ideas and provide information and articles relating to the various components of the elementary and secondary curricula through the publication of *Connections*.
- The GEOEC maintains a website (www.geoec.org) that publishes timely information and provides access to like-minded organizations and individuals.

Annual Conference

- The annual conference features a blend of activities, indoors and outdoors, ranging from hands-on workshops to social gatherings. All grade levels are represented in sessions. The emphasis is on practical information and application. The annual general meeting of the GEOEC is held in conjunction with the conference.

Executive

- Volunteer teachers are elected to serve on the GEOEC executive.
- Contact the president or past president of the GEOEC for more information.
- Elections take place at the annual general meeting during the annual conference.

Workshops

- Various activities and workshops are organized by the GEOEC either as stand-alone events or in conjunction with other organizations.

Join Now and Become Involved in the Global, Environmental & Outdoor Education Council

EACH ACTIVE MEMBER OF THE ATA MAY OBTAIN ONE ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP IN A SPECIALIST COUNCIL INCLUDED (NO EXTRA CHARGE)! SIGN ON AS A MEMBER AT WWW.TEACHERS.AB.CA AND SELECT GEOEC FOR YOUR FREE MEMBERSHIP. NOTE: ALL COMPLEMENTARY MEMBERSHIPS MUST BE RENEWED EACH SEPTEMBER.

Name _____ Alberta Teaching Certificate No _____

Address _____ Postal Code _____

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New membership

Renewal of membership

\$25.00 Regular membership

\$12.50 Student membership

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Make cheque payable to the Alberta Teachers' Association and mail it with the application to the Association at 11010 142 Street NW, Edmonton, AB T5N 2R1.

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