



Elephant Thoughts

# The To- Be-Named Newsletter

Winter 2006

## ***Happy 2006 to everyone, and welcome to an exciting new year at Elephant Thoughts!***

As part of our ongoing commitment to keeping our membership informed, we will be producing a quarterly newsletter to keep you up on all things ET. Along with news on all of our ongoing and upcoming projects, we'll also be including great science lessons that you can use right away, and opportunities for you to help out. Plus, our brand-new, fully re-designed website is officially here! Check it out at [www.elephantthoughts.com](http://www.elephantthoughts.com). Also, flip to the end of each newsletter for contact information, and drop us a line if you have any ideas or suggestions, or any ET news to share. We can't wait to hear from you!

## **First Things First...**

Elephant Thoughts is proud to announce that as of November 2005, we have officially become a registered charity! This is amazing news for the organization, and will open many new avenues for us, particularly in the area of fundraising. Big thanks to Ron Farano and his team of lawyers at Gardiner Roberts who helped to make this dream a reality. Please read on for more information about our first big project as a charity, and how you can donate in a very special way!

## **Annual General Meeting**

On a balmy November weekend at the end of last year, some key members of Elephant Thoughts met at the Nordic Highlands farmhouse in Duntroon, Ontario. A packed agenda included branding and marketing, upcoming projects, volunteer opportunities and First Nations programming, as well of a variety of other items. Between planning sessions, amazing food and the mud-slinging Hummer tours of Blue Mountain, some important progress was made. Among other things, the

### **Food For Thought**

*Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed people can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.*

~ Margaret Mead

unveiling of our new logo, the creation and adoption of our new tagline - "Inspired Education Everywhere",

and the creation of this newsletter to keep members informed. You will also see new developments on the website, new membership perks, and you will soon have more opportunities to get involved in Elephant Thoughts on a variety of different levels. Thanks to everyone who took time out of their busy lives to attend and to share their ideas and expertise! Keep your eyes on the newsletter later this year for information about the 2006 AGM.

"Inspired Education Everywhere"

## Announcing... Our First ET School!

As many of you know, we have thus far been supporting several small schools in India, and we will be continuing this support, as well as adding more schools to our list as we are able. However, the dream of Elephant Thoughts has always been to build schools in areas where children don't have access, and we are happy to announce that plans for our first school are now underway.

The school we are building will be in the village of Bunkalung, India, in the Himalayan region of Darjeeling. On our recent trip to the area, we were lucky enough to see the chosen site and meet the landowner. We will be building the school complete with computers, black boards, desks, textbooks etc., at a cost of \$70 000 CDN. The blueprints have already been approved and everyone involved is very excited!

All donations over \$50 will receive a charitable tax receipt which you can apply to reduce your personal taxes, but we would like to give you the chance to be a part of this school for a lifetime. For a donation of \$250 we will put your name on a tile and it will become part of the wall of the school. For a donation of \$1000+ you will get your name on a brass plaque with the other major donors and be a part of the evolution of Elephant Thoughts forever.

Since there are so many teachers out there who will be receiving this, we have decided to open up a little competition that will help your kids get involved in the building of a school, helping out kids in the third world, and get some of our fabulous programming to boot. Here is the contest - have your school fundraise for the building of the school and we will provide a video of the school in different stages of the development to every participating school and right up to meeting the first students on video. The top fundraising school will receive \$1500 in Elephant Thoughts science programming and a copy of the video, as well as facilitating pen pals with the school if you wish.

### Quick Facts

Average Years of Schooling for Indians:

1.8 for females, 2.9 for males.

What an opportunity! If interested in taking part in this program, please let Jeremy know and he will provide marketing material to get it kicked off.

Donations can be sent to: Elephant Thoughts, 179 Marsh St., Unit 2, Clarksburg, ON, NOH 1J0. Cheques should be made to Elephant Thoughts. Please remember to include your return address so we can send the tax-deductible receipt. If you have any questions, please email Lisa Farano at [lisa@elephantthoughts.com](mailto:lisa@elephantthoughts.com) or Jeremy at [jeremy@elephantthoughts.com](mailto:jeremy@elephantthoughts.com).

## India Trip - December 2005

*'Twas the night before Christmas  
When off they all flew,  
A gaggle of girls, with Steve and Jeremy, too  
They winged through the air  
On a passenger plane  
To Delhi, then Mirik  
The teachers they came*

*They brought with them workshops  
And candies galore  
They drank lots of thomba  
And shopped at each store  
They mingled with locals  
And hiked through the hills  
Not forgetting their Deet  
Or malaria pills*

*The trip was amazing,  
Rewarding and fun  
And each was quite sad  
When the journey was done  
But we've brought back our memories  
Pictures and gifts  
And a feeling that we helped  
Give people a lift*

*For that's the thing ET is really about  
Spreading knowledge to all  
And of course, helping out  
So while this trip  
Was once-in-a-lifetime, we know  
We hope that our small part  
Helps ET to grow!*

**(Please see the next page for some pictures of our amazing trip to India in December!)**

## Welcomes and Introductions

By this point you're probably wondering: "Who is behind this incredibly perky piece of literature?" Please, bear with me – I'm like this all the time! My name is Emily Hastings-Speck, and I have the pleasure of being ET's newly-appointed newsletter and communications gal.

ET is also pleased to welcome two new directors, Mandy and Steve Bridson. Mandy and Steve are both teachers in the Collingwood area, and were instrumental in organizing our First Nations Science program this summer.

Congratulations also to Cory Lohnes, who is our new head of operations for the Georgian Triangle, and to Kristen Caughill, our marketing guru who designed all our new materials, including the great new logos. Last but certainly not least, we need to mention John Millar, who is our new fundraising expert – he is invaluable!

As ET grows, we will be needing more and more people to fill a variety of roles, and that means the more members, the better! Please help us in our membership push by passing information about ET to as many teachers as possible. Pass this newsletter along, or have them visit our website!

## Name Our Newsletter

You may have noticed that our newsletter is still without an official name – we need your help! We're looking for a simple, catchy name that reflects Elephant Thoughts as an organization. E-mail me at [emily@elephantthoughts.com](mailto:emily@elephantthoughts.com) with your best suggestions, and the winner will be announced in the next issue!



The monastery in Mirik – the largest one in Asia!



Some of the Indian teachers doing a poetry reading.



The whole Canadian gang at the Taj Mahal.

## Science You Can Use NOW!

Each issue, we will be including in a fun science activity that teachers put to use. Got a great lesson plan you think other teachers might like? Go to our website ([www.elephantthoughts.com](http://www.elephantthoughts.com)) and submit it. Lesson plans will be reviewed and archived for members to use, and your lesson could be featured in our next issue! Read on for our first suggestion.



### “Simple Explosions” OR “Hands-Off Splatter Painting”

This one is simple, cheap, and all ages enjoy it. Exciting for the kids and with only a little bit of prep work, it’s a great way to talk about the properties of gases and chemical reactions. It also makes a great, messy art activity, which the kids always love! Be sure to do this one OUTSIDE in a large open space.

**Background:** The basic principle is that the solid (Alka Seltzer) and the liquid (hot water) create a reaction that produces a gas. The gas fills the available space, blowing the lid off and causing an explosion. You could first show students how the reaction looks in an open glass, so that they can see the bubbles forming and escaping. Then have them create a hypothesis as to what would happen if the bubbles were enclosed.

**Supplies:**

- ~ Alka Seltzer Tablets (generic work fine and are cheaper)
- ~ empty film canisters (clear ones work best)
- ~ hot water
- ~ food colouring (if desired)
- ~ large sheets of art paper (if desired)

## Directions:

1. Draw a line around bottom of film canister about 1 cm from bottom. This helps you to fill the film canister over and over again without having to measure each time.
2. Place a sheet of art paper on a solid surface, such as a driveway or other paved area.
3. Put a few drops of food colouring in the bottom of the film canister.
4. Fill up to that line with very warm water. You could fill up a container of hot water into a pitcher and take it with you outside so that you don’t have to keep running in and out for water.
5. Place one quarter of an Alka Seltzer tablet in the canister and immediately secure lid, turn upside down and place it in the middle of the paper.
6. Stand back and wait for the "explosion" as the gases build up and the film canister bottom goes FLYING, sometimes as high as 20 feet!

**Fun Tips:** Try this activity in the winter when there is snow on the ground, and forget the art paper. Tramp down an area of snow to make a solid surface, and let the kids splatter the snow with colours. (You may need to keep hot water in a thermos to do this!)

## Contact Information

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