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YOUNG ISLAND SCIENTIST

Newsletter of the
Society for the Advancement of Young Scientists

26 NOVEMBER 2012

2013 SCIENCE FAIR: Sunday April 14 – Monday April 15

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The President's Lab Bench

I am a science fair parent. Over 12 years, my three children did 20 science fair projects. As well as being fun and teaching them a lot about science, it got them using computers, organizing big projects and practicing speaking to grown-ups.

They got to travel across Canada and it helped their university scholarship applications. I volunteer with the Society for the Advancement of Young Scientists because I want to help other kids have the opportunity that my kids had.

What can a parent do? Start by getting involved in your children's science education. The wonderful [BC Year of Science website](#) has a whole page on ideas for parents and grandparents. One of my favourite websites for helping students choose a science fair project, [Science Buddies](#), also has a constructive page for parents.

Help your child figure out something they can study that will be truly interesting to them. You can be your child's coach and mentor, without doing their project! Help them practice their presentation before they go before the judges.

It is important to know about safety and ethics in science fair projects. The Vancouver Island Regional Science Fair uses the same policies as those of [Youth Science Canada](#). In particular, if your child hopes to use animals or humans in their project, it is essential that they do the work ethically, including getting "informed consent" forms signed before experiments are done. Contact us if you need guidance.

Consider volunteering with the Society for the Advancement of Young Scientists. We are a group of enthusiastic scientists, educators and parents who organize the Vancouver Island Regional Science Fair, now in its 52nd year.

Finally, consider making your tax-deductable contribution to

Profile: Gerry Poulton, Science Fair Guy



When kids see Gerry Poulton out in the street, they say - Hey that's the Science Fair Guy. He has handed out awards to over 4000 participants at the Vancouver Island Regional Science Fair!

He joined the University of Victoria as an

organic chemist in 1970 and has had a distinguished career studying chemicals produced by living systems. His work has had application to developing antibiotics and understanding cancer. Gerry is recognized as one of the best educators at the university, with teaching awards from the Faculty of Science in 1997 and campus-wide in 1999.

Gerry was a judge at the 1972 Vancouver Island Regional Science Fair, and has been volunteering ever since. In the Society for the Advancement of Young Scientists, he has held the roles of Chief Judge, Fair Chair, and Treasurer. For the last 35 years, he has been the Master of Ceremonies at our awards celebration. He was recognized by Youth Science Canada with a Distinguished Service Award in 1989.

Playing squash is another of Gerry Poulton's passions. He is currently the top 70+ player in North America and number 3 in the world! What makes him most proud is that he is still getting better. He is more fit than ever, and even sneakier!

When asked why he has invested so much of his time and energy to the Science Fair, he responded "I get the enjoyment that the kids get out of it". Gerry Poulton is a pillar of the Vancouver Island Regional Science Fair.

An Ideal Science Fair schedule

November: Choose your topic. Start to do some background research.

December: Do some pilot studies - first attempts at doing the research. Develop the components of your project. Start working on your project outline.

January: Collect data for the experiment. Develop and build if you are doing an innovation.

February: Finish the experiment or innovation. Start work on the report and display.

March: REALLY finish the work. Register by Thursday March 7, 2013. Report due by Thursday March 28, 2013.

April: Finish the display. PRACTICE your presentation. Have a wonderful time at the Vancouver Island Regional Science Fair at the University of Victoria, Sunday April 14 and Monday April 15, 2013.

the Society for the Advancement of Young Scientists. On top of the expenses of putting on the science fair and the prizes, we pay all expenses for the finalists we send to the Canada-Wide Science Fair. We are allowed to send up to seven students, but some years we do not have sufficient resources. Your help, by enabling a young person to participate in the CWSF, can change someone's life!

Randy Enkin, President of the Society for the Advancement of Young Scientists

Innovation Exploration 2012



For 23 years, the [BC Science Fair Foundation](#) and [BC Innovation Council](#) have brought all the BC and Yukon Regional Science Fair finalists together in October to explore career possibilities in science and technology.

By Ann Makosinski

Innovation Exploration 2012 was a wonderful experience I'm sure no one will forget. On Thursday, October 25th, all of us Vancouver Island Science Fair finalists met in the early morning and caught the ferry to Vancouver. After getting off, we checked in at the luxurious Coast Coal Harbor Hotel. We left for Science World as soon as we received our registration packages. There were many activities at Science World, from virtual skiing to playing a harp without strings. Afterwards, we enjoyed a pizza dinner followed by an introduction to a group of experienced scientists from all fields. We asked them questions and advice, and discovered that one of the scientists even has an asteroid named after him! After the event ended, we went for an evening stroll downtown, enjoying some delicious gelato along the way. Back at the hotel, we worked out in the fitness center, then jumped straight into the pool, where we met some new science buddies.

Sponsors



SAYS wants to extend a heartfelt thanks to the people, companies and organizations that support the Vancouver Island Regional Science Fair (VIRSF). Their support allows us to hold the fair each year.

Would you like to support the Vancouver Island Regional Science Fair? Get more information here:

web.uvic.ca/~virsf/SupportSAYS.html

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[Like us on Facebook: Vancouver Island Regional Science Fair](#)

Science Fair Information

Local: Vancouver Island Regional Science Fair: web.uvic.ca/~virsf

Provincial: Science Fair Foundation BC:

The next day, all of the BC Science Fair finalists headed over to Simon Fraser University, where we had a tour of the campus. We ate a catered lunch with ice cream made with liquid nitrogen, after which half of us headed over to the BC Institute of Technology, while the other half went to the Centre for Surgical Excellence Institute. At BCIT, we toured the campus and engaged in various scientific activities ranging from spectroscopy to examining blood cells. At CESEI, the students had medical related activities, which included resuscitating a Human Patient Simulator. We had another great dinner and presentation at the Museum of Anthropology on Astronomy.

On the following day, we were on the ferry, sadly heading home. Overall, it was a wonderful experience and I hope another Innovation Exploration will be held again for more to enjoy!

Ann Makosinski is a grade 10 student at St. Michael's University School. Last year, she represented Vancouver Island at the Canada-Wide Science Fair with her project "The Piezoelectric Flashlight"

Science in Your City



Sky Watchers Program / Greater Victoria School-Based Weather Station Network

Environment Canada has an online program that can be used by schools or home schoolers to teach elementary and middle school students about weather forecasting and related studies. Their [Skywatchers website](#) has lesson plans, games and experiments, and [activities](#) which include a "[virtual tour](#)" of a weather office. The "[Teachers' Corner](#)" has lesson plans,

www.sciencefairs.ca/Resources/Students.aspx

National: Youth Science Canada:
smarts.youthscience.ca/

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teachers' guides and weather curricula. The site offers students free posters to assist and encourage them in "weather watching" and such information as a well-illustrated essay on the formation of cyclones. Although this programme is designed for use in grades 4 through 6 it will still be of interest to older students. "...with information relating to weather stations, weather elements, severe weather in Canada, ultra violet radiation, air quality, and a host of other topics," there is much to be learned and enjoyed by all.

More locally, check out the [University of Victoria's School-Based Weather Station Network](#) developed by professors Andrew Weaver and Ed Wiebe. They have set up weather stations on 182 schools in the region and you can see weather maps in real time. So far they have stored 4,285,579,787 observations, and more by the time you are reading this! Imagine making your own weather observations and then seeing what is happening around the whole region!

The old saying goes, "Everyone talks about the weather, but no one does a thing about it," but now one can interact with it and at least be knowledgeable when talking about it.

by your intrepid science newshound, Manuel Miles

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Website: web.uvic.ca/~virsf/