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YOUNG ISLAND SCIENTIST

Newsletter of the
Society for the Advancement of Young Scientists

17 SEPTEMBER 2012

2013 SCIENCE FAIR: Sunday April 14 – Monday April 15

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Vancouver Island Regional Science Fair - Since 1962

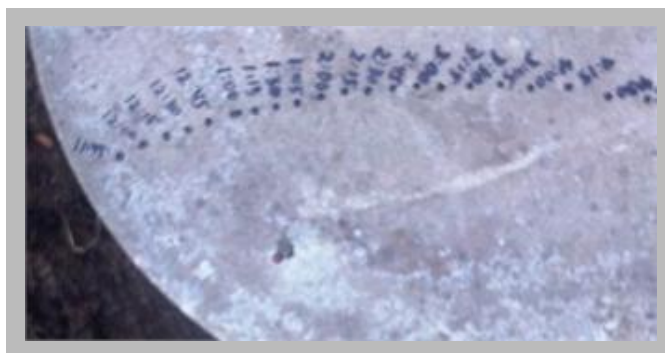
Students from Grade 4 to Grade 12 are invited to do projects in science and innovation and present them at the Vancouver Island Regional Science Fair, at the University of Victoria, April 14-15, 2013. Students may register after a school-based science fair, or individually, at web.uvic.ca/~virsf/. The fair is organized by the Society for the Advancement of Young Scientists.

Back-issues of this newsletter at web.uvic.ca/~virsf/newsletter.php

Choosing a Science Fair Topic

Fall is approaching and so is...Gasp! Science Fair!! The libraries quickly empty of the copies of "Top 101 Science Fair Project Ideas" and talking about your project becomes taboo, lest some one steal your topic taken from page 48.

The President's Lab Bench



How are you supposed to choose a science fair project topic? There is a whole world of science out there!

Certainly, it has to be something you're interested in. That's much more important than being "scientific", because science is everywhere. Think of a question about the fun things you do. I love to see projects about sports and music. I love to see projects about food or pets. Projects on toys are cool.

Don't set your heart on a topic that's too big, difficult or expensive. Remember that collecting data is just one part of a successful project, so keep it simple.

Do talk with people about topics and for help. It is fine to have a mentor, such as a teacher, parent, adult friend or university professor, to act as your coach in the same way adults do for a sports competition.

Take a look at the [prizes you could win at the Science Fair](#). We had out thousands of dollars of prizes every year. I need to point out that we were unable to offer any [Royal Astronomical Society of Canada](#) prizes last year because there were no astronomy projects! Not only do they offer a book to the student, the prize

also includes a presentation by the RASC in the winner's classroom. So please, somebody, think of an astronomy project. [There's so much that can be done](#). For fun this summer, I made a sundial (in the photo above). With it and a good watch, I measured my latitude and longitude to within a couple of degrees. I wonder what I could have done to make it more accurate?

There is a whole world of science out there.

But these recipe-like projects are rarely appealing to students or the fair judges. Choosing an original, creative topic is one of the most difficult parts of working on Science Fair. Projects can either be [experiments, studies or innovations](#).

Experiments come from asking "What if..." questions, studies are generated by wondering "Why..." and innovations are often a result of thinking "How can I improve...".

My advice to my students has always been to start asking questions about the world around them and think about topics that interest them. This means that they have to get out and about! For example, if baking is your hobby, what if you baked your favorite recipe without one of the ingredients? What if you played your favorite sport with different or altered equipment?

Make your project count this year by selecting a topic that interests YOU!

Lauren Hudson is a science teacher at St. Margaret's School, currently on maternity leave.

Science Fair Topic Websites

[Canada-Wide Science Fair projects:](#)

Search through all the projects presented at the CWSF since 2005.

[Science Fair Resources](#) from Smarter Science at Youth Science Canada.

[BC Science Fair Foundation Mentorship Program:](#)

for grade 7-12 students. Application for mentors must be submitted in the autumn.

[California State Science Fair](#) or [here](#):

Hundreds of project summaries as submitted to a huge Science Fair.

[All Science Fair Projects:](#) Impressive collection of project ideas from a wide variety of websites with index by category and level.

[Science Fair Adventure:](#) Many good ideas for apparatus, but you have to make a good experiment.

One of 20 Under 20



Michael Peters from the Vancouver Island Regional Science Fair has just

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

Sponsor Profile: Mickey Hajash



Interview by Andrea Chan

In your high school years you were very involved with sports. What was your favourite sport?

I played baseball, football, track and field, hockey, and basketball. But my favourite would have to be track and field. I loved to run. My father never wanted me to become involved in any sport; he wanted me to work on the farm. So, at night after working on the farm I would practice.

How did you decide what to take in university?

When I was in high school, some oil workers did a seismic survey near our farm. The boss saw that I was interested and athletic, so he arranged for me to get a scholarship to the University of Oklahoma to study about the oil industry. Because of war conscriptions, I instead went to the University of Alberta to take mining engineering because it was close to geophysics.

How did you use your science training in your career?

My university training gave me the fundamental information I needed when I started at Imperial Oil. Most of my science training actually happened while I was working. And over my career, I trained many other new employees on the job.

You travelled a lot after university. What places did you travel to and where was your favourite place to live?

Working for Imperial Oil, and then its parent company Standard Oil (Exxon), took me to around the world. The company treated me well and gave me many opportunities. I worked all across western Canada, New York, Baghdad, Houston, London, Singapore, and many more. I loved living in England the most.

Why do you support the science fair?

My friends asked me! After I retired, I thought "many people were so kind to me, I need to give back". So I started giving out scholarships. So far our foundation has given out 239 scholarships. I have worked for the United Way for 25 years, and I work with Rotary to support good work in our community and

been selected as a recipient of Youth in Motion's Top 20 Under 20 awards. He joins 6 other science fair alumni to receive this distinction.

The Top 20 under 20 celebrates 20 young Canadians who have demonstrated a significant amount of innovation, leadership and achievement.

Michael is the first BC Hydro Scholarship recipient at his regional science fair; he attended the CWSF in 2007 and 2010 and was part of Team Canada at the Intel-International Science & Engineering Fair in 2008. He is currently attending The University of British Columbia in the Health Sciences program.
(from [Science Fair Foundation BC](#))

Sponsors



SAYS wants to extend a heartfelt thanks to the people, companies and organizations

around the world, especially eradicating polio.

Andrea Chan is a grade 10 student at Lambrick Park Secondary School. Last year, she and her partner Matthew Treble represented Vancouver Island at the Canada-Wide Science Fair with their project "Big or Small; Narrow or Wide: Text Presentation for Early Readers"

Canada-Wide Science Fair 2012



With health science projects leading the way, 77 participants from 14 regions throughout BC and the Yukon presented at the Canada-Wide Science Fair in Charlottetown, PEI - May 12 to 19, 2012. BC & the Yukon returned home with 1 platinum, 4 gold, 5 silver and 32 bronze medals as well as 14 special awards and 49 scholarships for a total of \$144,350 in awards and scholarships.

(from [Science Fair Foundation BC](#))

The next Canada-Wide Science Fair will take place in Lethbridge, Alberta, May 11- 18, 2013.

Science in Your City



About seven years ago, while waiting at Patricia Bay for a float plane to take me to Sechelt, I wandered up the road and discovered the Department of Fisheries and Oceans' Institute of Ocean Sciences and, just across the street, the Canadian Coast Guard's Marine Communications and Traffic Services building.

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:
<http://web.uvic.ca/~virsf/SupportSAYS.html>

Important Dates

SAYS Autumn meeting

Tuesday October 9, 2012, 7:00 p.m. in the UVic Chemistry Lounge (Elliot 401).

Registration deadline for VIRSF

Wednesday March 27, 2013
<http://web.uvic.ca/~virsf/>

Vancouver Island Regional Science Fair

Sunday April 14 & Monday April 15, 2013

Contact Information

President: Randy Enkin

RandyEnkinScienceFair@gmail.com

WebMaster: Gordon Greeniaus

GordonGreeniausScienceFair@gmail.com

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Science Fair Information

Local:

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

Provincial:

Science Fair Foundation BC:
<http://www.sciencefairs.ca/students/>

National:

Youth Science Canada:
<http://www.youthscience.ca/get-started>

Share this email

To a recent immigrant from landlocked Alberta, these were fascinating finds. The [Coast Guard's MCTS](#)'s vital work assists in marine navigation and helps to ensure that the busy coastal waters of British Columbia are safe for all ocean-going vessels. It is available for tours which may be arranged and booked in advance.

The [Institute of Ocean Sciences](#), to quote from its site, "...is the centre for research on coastal waters of BC, the Northeastern Pacific Ocean, the western Canadian Arctic and navigable fresh waters east to the Alberta border," and it is "...also home to the [Pacific Geoscience Centre](#), the main centre in western Canada for monitoring earthquakes." It is open to the public from 9 am to 3 pm, Monday through Friday. Tours can be arranged, and its public areas are well laid out with informative displays, an immense table map of Vancouver Island, etc.

For any Canadian, but especially for residents of Vancouver Island, the IOS is a fascinating learning resource. It's a little out of the way, but well worth the trip:

9860 West Saanich Road
Sidney, British Columbia
250-363-6500
(on Patricia Bay, at the west end of Victoria International Airport)

by your intrepid science newshound, Manuel Miles

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