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# YOUNG ISLAND SCIENTIST

Newsletter of the  
Society for the Advancement of Young Scientists

20 MAY 2013

**2013 SCIENCE FAIR: Sunday April 14 – Monday April 15**

## In This Issue

[2013 Science Fair Evaluations](#)  
[Canada-Wide Science Fair Report 1](#)  
[Canada-Wide Science Fair Report 2](#)  
[Sponsors](#)  
[Web Resources](#)  
[Contact Information](#)  
[The President's Lab Bench](#)  
[TEAM VANCOUVER ISLAND 2013](#)  
[Andrea Chan, Matt Treble, Grade 10](#)  
[Lauren Ebata, Grade 7](#)  
[Vicki Kleu, Grade 11](#)  
[Nathan Kuehne, Grade 9](#)  
[Lisa McQuarrie, Grade 9](#)  
[Ann Makosinski, Grade 10](#)

## 2013 Science Fair Evaluations

This year we had 216 Grade 4 to 12 participants presenting 171 projects. 36% were repeat participants.

For the 4th year in a row, we asked the Vancouver Island Regional Science Fair participants: "What was the best thing about the fair?", "What was the worst thing about the fair?", and "Do you think you will enter next year? Why?".

The participants liked the judging (15%), seeing the other projects (25%), and talking about their projects to the public and other participants (21%). A third of the participants said the best thing was the show put on by Prof. Brolo and Prof. Moffitt of the UVic Chemistry Department. 8% said they loved everything! "Everyone was so happy and the judges weren't so scary."

Fully half the participants said there was too much waiting around. This proportion has been slowly decreasing over the years, but we still have work on making this aspect of our Science Fair better. A quarter did not like aspects of

## The President's Lab Bench

The failure of the polling companies to predict the British Columbia provincial election offers us a "teachable moment" for scientific literacy. Political polling is possibly the only widely-publicized news item that provides proper statistical uncertainty estimates. Late opinion polls in BC suggested that the NDP and Liberals would receive 45% and 36% of the vote, with an uncertainty of 4%, 19 times out of 20. The final tally in the election was in fact 39% NDP and 49% Liberal. There will be much discussion among pollsters and pundits about how the predictions got it so wrong. But looking beyond that, let us rejoice that the public is actually getting acquainted with confidence intervals, samples of populations, and methods of normalizing bias. It's all like one big science fair project! We see our science fair participants to do real science, which doesn't always work like it says it should in the text books. But in the process of dealing with real data, failures lead to breakthroughs.

Our 2013 Science Fair year now comes to an end, and we all - participants, parents, teachers, organizers, volunteers, sponsors - now start thinking about the new year! The 2013 Vancouver Island Regional Science Fair was our biggest ever. The team we sent to Canada-Wide Science Fair in Lethbridge Alberta did the best ever. Fundraising is going well, our volunteer base is up, and relations with the University of Victoria are excellent. Let's keep up the good work!

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

## TEAM VANCOUVER ISLAND 2013

Here is the wonderful students we sent to the Canada-Wide Science Fair in Lethbridge Alberta. They are all champions!

**Andrea Chan, Matt Treble, Grade 10**

the judging, so we have to make sure that this central portion of the fair is done in the most positive way possible.

But with 70% saying they want to participate again next year, and another 19% saying maybe, we clearly do a good job of exciting and motivating these young scientists. "I love this experience and enjoy the excitement, nervousness and the fun."

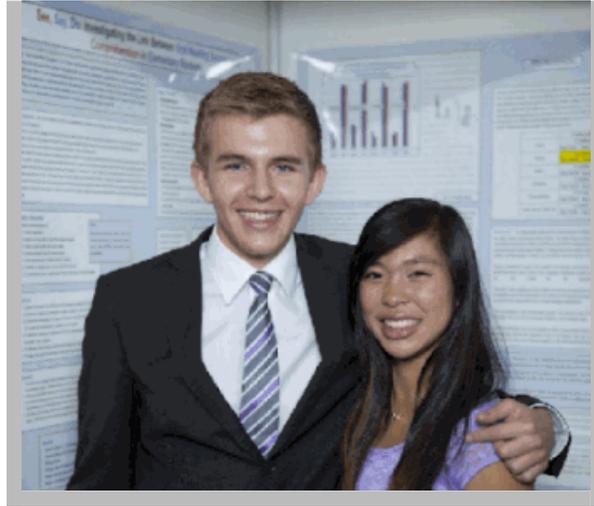
### **Canada-Wide Science Fair Report 1**

Returning as a finalist to the Canada-Wide Science Fair has been the best part of my year! With the event being held this year in Lethbridge, Alberta, it was quite a different experience from last year's in Prince Edward Island. It's always amazing to be a part of such an energetic team such as Team Vancouver Island. This year's finalists and delegates really connected and made the trip exciting! I was insanely impressed with seeing the other finalist projects from all over Canada as each one had amazing scientific thought, method and awesome results. As a team, we all tried to leave an impression on the other delegations so that they will never forget "Team Vancouver Island" (hopefully in a good way). This trip was fantastic and every single part of it was due to how insanely awesome our team was! None of this could have been possible without all the outstanding sponsors who funded our trip. So with a big thanks to each individual sponsor and every person who made the Canada-Wide possible, I want to thank you for helping make what was definitely one of the best weeks of my life!

*Matt Treble, Grade 10, Lambrick Park High School*

### **Canada-Wide Science Fair Report 2**

Acting as delegate for the CWSF 2013 has been the highlight of my school year and a life-changing experience. Honestly, I was a little uncertain about what it would be like spending a whole week with a group of students, but by the end, I was sad it was over. Our amazing group of seven finalists made the week for me. Their spirit, humour, humility and scientific brilliance left me in awe. I saw transformations in the finalists over the week. The gain in confidence and the realization that they are capable of 'big things', is something that I hope they all remember. I couldn't

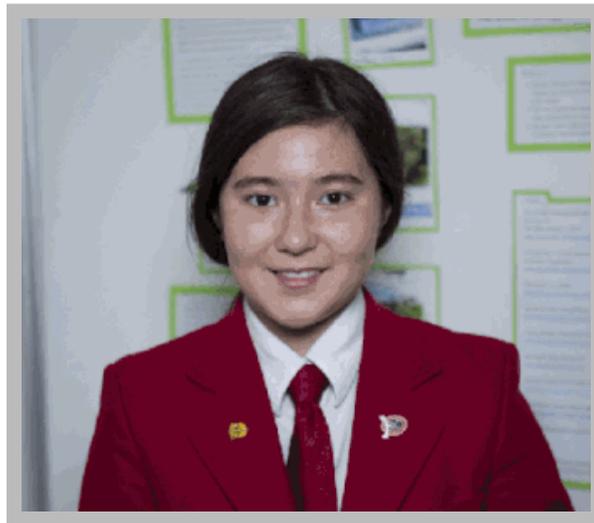


### **See, Say, Do - A Plan to Improve Reading Comprehension in Young Readers**

Stories were written at the grades 1, 3, and 5 levels. All stories had ten comprehension questions associated with them. The grades 3 and 5 stories had manipulatives including an introduction read to the students, photographs or models. Percent oral reading success was compared with comprehension. We are currently checking to see if hearing the story prior to reading it aloud improves comprehension.

*Excellence Award - Intermediate - Gold Medal*

### **Lauren Ebata, Grade 7**



### **Oil in the Undergrowth**

Motor oil, kerosene, gasoline and a mix of all three were placed on trays containing moss, fern and grass and monitored over a 2 week period and compared to an untreated control. The reaction to the treatments varied by plant species. These results suggest that the reaction by different plants to a range of oil distillates is variable.

have been more proud hearing our students' names called up to the stage to accept their medals. In particular, mentoring Nathan Kuehne throughout this process and seeing the look on his face when he won a silver medal will be a moment I will never forget. A big thanks goes out to all of our sponsors of the Vancouver Island Regional Science Fair, and in particular Glenlyon Norfolk School for supporting Nathan and me. I can't wait to do this again!

*Erin Dallin, Science Teacher, Glenlyon Norfolk School*

### Sponsors



### Web Resources

Local:  
Vancouver Island Regional Science Fair: [web.uvic.ca/~virsf](http://web.uvic.ca/~virsf)

Provincial:  
Science Fair Foundation BC: [www.sciencefairs.ca/Resources/Students.aspx](http://www.sciencefairs.ca/Resources/Students.aspx)

National:  
Youth Science Canada: [sf.youthscience.ca/](http://sf.youthscience.ca/)  
Canada-Wide Science Fair: [cwsf.youthscience.ca/fairs/current](http://cwsf.youthscience.ca/fairs/current)

### Contact Information

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## Vicki Kleu, Grade 11



### Fully Biodegradable Adsorbent Pads to Clean Small Scale Marine Oil Spills

A reusable and fully biodegradable pad was built to adsorb spilled outboard motor oil in our harbors. The pad, currently being patented, adsorbs nearly fifty times its weight in motor oil and 90 to 95% of this oil can be easily wrung out. An additional 3 to 5% of the oil could be washed out of the pad using a canola oil rinse.

*Excellence Award - Senior - Silver Medal*

## Nathan Kuehne, Grade 9



### Biochar Optimization for Plant Growth

Radishes, lettuce and peas were grown in varying proportions of biochar amended soil (0%, 10%, 30%, 50%) in order to determine the best growing conditions. Results indicated that radishes, lettuce and peas prefer 30%, 10% and 0% biochar, respectively. These results show that plant growth is dependent on pH, related to phosphorous availability in the soil. Implications for agricultural practice and commercialization are given.

*Excellence Award - Intermediate - Silver Medal*

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## **Lisa McQuarrie, Grade 9**



### **Does Armouring Protect or Harm Our Beaches?**

Both a controlled model beach experiment and a full-scale beach experiment were conducted to determine the impacts of foreshore armouring on a sandy beach near Victoria. The results show that foreshore erosion is a critical component of natural beach processes. Armouring the foreshore can remove the sand source and increase beach erosion. When coupled with climate change, implications on foreshore development can be severe.

## **Ann Makosinski, Grade 10**



### **The Hollow Flashlight**

Using four Peltier tiles and the temperature difference between the palm of the hand and ambient air, I designed a flashlight that provides bright light without batteries or moving parts. My design is ergonomic, thermodynamically efficient, and only needs a five

degree temperature difference to work.

*Challenge Award - Energy - Intermediate*

*Excellence Award - Intermediate - Gold Medal*

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