

Scientists step off pedestal for Ig Nobel Awards

Researchers with imaginative achievements honoured at 15th annual Harvard ceremony

MISTY HARRIS
CANWEST NEWS SERVICE

Canadian scientists and their atom-splitting comrades around the world are gearing up for the 15th annual Ig Nobel Prize ceremony, sort of an MTV Awards for the science community that honours imaginative academic achievements that "make people laugh, and then make them think."

This year's event, which takes place Oct. 6 at Harvard University, will include an opera based on the concept of infinity, a win-a-date-with-a-Nobel-Laureate contest, and a 24/7 lecture series in which top thinkers explain their subjects first in 24 seconds, then in just seven words.

"The Ig Nobel Prizes bring scientists down off their pedestals and help the public understand that they're real people," said Albert Teich, director of science and policy programs for the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

"Even though they're intimate with black holes or really under-

stand how genes work or know how to give enemas to mosquitoes, they can also laugh at themselves."

Marc Abrahams, whose book *The Ig Nobel Prizes 2* comes out this week, said his goal in creating the awards was to "tempt people to be a little more curious about things they would normally stay away from."

Take, for example, the research interests of this year's guest speaker, Kees Moeliker, a Dutch ornithologist, won the Ig Nobel in 2003 for documenting the first scientifically recorded case of homosexual necrophilia in the mallard duck.

"Every once in a while, there would be someone who had done something that just smacked you in the head in such an odd way that it seemed a shame the world would probably never pay attention to it," Abrahams said. "That was the idea behind these prizes."

Although this year's 10 honourees remain secret, Abrahams revealed they hail from "slightly more than four continents,"

with one boasting a "strong Canadian connection."

Previous Ig winners associated with Canadian institutions include Ramesh Balasubramanian, a professor at the school of human kinetics at the University of Ottawa, for his research into hula-hooping dynamics; Peter Barss, formerly of McGill, for his medical report entitled *Injuries Due to Falling Coconuts*; and B.C. scientists Ben Wilson and Lawrence Dill for their analysis of fish flatulence.

"I was absolutely delighted (to win)," recalled Dill, a professor of behavioural ecology at Simon Fraser University.

Colin Cameron, an electrochemist with Defence Research and Development Canada, jokingly said he plans to win his own Ig one day by genetically engineering a lobster that doubles as a bicycle pump.

"Everyone is out doing stuff like figuring out nuclear fusion, curing cancer, feeding the world's hungry and so on," Cameron said. "While those folks bumble away in their overcrowded science wasteland, we truly trendy scientists work on important things, such as the comb over."

NASA plans to revisit the moon by 2018

ASSOCIATED PRESS

CAPE CANAVERAL, FLA. - NASA hopes to return astronauts to the moon by 2018, nearly a half-century after men last walked the lunar surface, by using a distinctly retro combination of space shuttle and Apollo rocket parts.

The space agency presented its lunar exploration plan to the White House on Wednesday and on Capitol Hill on Friday. An announcement is set for today at NASA headquarters in Washington.

The fact that this successor to the soon-to-be-retired shuttle relies so heavily on old-time equip-

ment, rather than sporting fancy futuristic designs, "makes good technological and management sense," said John Logsdon, director of George Washington University's space policy institute.

"The emphasis is on achieving goals rather than elegance," said Logsdon, who along with other members of the Columbia Accident Investigation Board urged NASA to move beyond the risky, aging shuttles as soon as possible.

"It has several elements to it. One is to say that the people who did Apollo were pretty smart," Logsdon said Friday.

The crew exploration vehicle's first manned trip will be to low-

Earth orbit, probably no earlier than 2012, leaving up to a two-year gap between the last shuttle flight and the debut of its successor.

In January 2004, just five months after the Columbia accident board's report, President George W. Bush called for the retirement of the space shuttles by 2010 and the creation of the crew exploration vehicle for ferrying astronauts to the international space station and ultimately to the moon and Mars.

His main overriding goal: to land astronauts on the moon by 2020.

On the Net: www.nasa.gov

Don't tape it.

Don't worry about reloading discs either, just record into a high capacity hard disc drive, then you can burn to DVD with no quality loss!

JVC



20G Hard Disk Drive Camcorder

NEW TECHNOLOGY

Over 24 hours of video, 25x optical zoom, 16x9 wide mode & SD card Slot and much more GZMG20

2.5" LCD Screen
999⁹⁹

Tech nology! Sale

If you have questions on new technology Come see us... We have the answers

The Biggest brands with the newest technologies now available

Panasonic

800 watts home theater kit with 6 speakers including subwoofer



SAVE \$100 699⁹⁹

* Dolby Digital DTS 5.1 decoder • DVD-audio ready discrete 6-channel input • 360° sound • Front and rear tower speakers include speaker stands • 3 digital inputs • 4 audio inputs and 1 audio output SCRT17

6.1 channel dolby digital High-end Home Theater Receiver



harman/kardon SAVE \$200 499⁹⁹

High Current Dolby Digital DTS/ES Receiver with wide range of processing options VMAX Virtual Surround sound AVRI35

24 Months No interest
On selected items. Details in store.

JVC

IAV HDTV COMPATIBLE



30" Flat screen 16:9!

Digital comb filter 10bit 2D Y/C • Universal remote control of 800:1 • 2 video component inputs • 5 programming video adjustments AV30WS85

New!

999⁹⁹

Benq

HDTV COMPATIBLE



DVD Recorder Free! LGR435 \$300 value.

32" LCD Screen!

Thin panel / Wall-mountable

• 1366 (x3) x 768 resolution • Contrast ratio of 800:1 • S-video and components inputs • 3D digital filter DV3250

SAVE 700\$

1999⁹⁹

Panasonic

HDTV COMPATIBLE



Combo DVD / VCR Recorder Free! LGVR435 \$400 value.

42" Plasma!

Thin panel / Wall-mountable

• 3D colour management • Real black drive system • Motion pattern noise reduction • High definition multimedia interface HDMI TH42PD50

SAVE \$711

2788⁹⁹

CENTRE HI-FI

The right service, the right selection and guaranteed... Best prices!

MASCOUCHE 163 MONTÉE MASSON (450) 474-8448	ST-LEONARD 6925 JEAN-TALON (514) 237-1111	LAVAL 3056 HIGHWAY 440 (450) 808-0361	WEST-ISLAND 979 BOUL. ST-JEAN (514) 696-9135	SOUTH SHORE 3929 TASCHEAU (450) 445-5473	SOUTH SHORE 157 BOUL. DES PRÉFÈRES (450) 371-3300	VALLEYFIELD 50 DUFFERIN (450) 856-1300	VILLE ST-LAURENT 3500 CÔTE-VERTE (514) 856-1300	DOWNTOWN 385 ST-CATHERINE W. (514) 288-1300
MONTREAL 6800 CÔTE-DES-NEIGES (514) 344-4445	MONTREAL 1580 MONT-ROYAL E. (514) 523-0055	PLAZA ST-HUBERT 7140 ST-HUBERT (514) 273-0655	ST-LEONARD 580 METROPOLITAIN E. (514) 254-3800	LASALLE 7077 BOUL. NEWMAN (514) 368-9922	ROSEMERE 401 CURE-LABELLE (450) 434-3771	TERREBONNE 1424 BOUL. MONDY (450) 964-2241	ST-JEROME 800 GRIGNON (450) 436-5839	LACHENAIE 290 MONTÉE DES PIONNIERS (514) 885-7109

OPEN MONDAY TO FRIDAY UNTIL 9PM

Will all precautions taken in the making of this add, some mistakes may be found. The corrections will be displayed in stores. These offers are available for a limited time only. *Available financing subject to credit approval on the Centre Hi-Fi card only (Financiere Wells Fargo). Applicable taxes are payable at the time of purchase. 24 AND 36 months financing. Ex on a \$1,000.00 purchase: 24 equal payments of \$41.66 without interest, payable upon receipt of monthly invoices. Unpaid balance subject to an annual 28.9% interest rate, payable upon of monthly invoices. 120 days no interest no payments. No interest if paid in the 120 days following your purchase; unpaid balance subject to an annual 28.9% interest rate. Details in store. Illustrations may be differ. All prices in this ad are available on new purchases only. Cannot combine 2 promotions. All items are not available in all our stores.

more than you came for

NEW & ONLY AT THE BAY

Volage

Purchase a Volage bra or camisole & get a matching panty FREE

Offer ends October 8th

Available at: St. Catherine St. W., Anjou, Carrefour Laval, Fairview Pointe-Clair, Gatineau, Rosemere & Rockland.

10% off your purchases* all day at any of the Hbc Family of stores when you open an Hbc account

*On approved credit only. Some exceptions apply. Ask a sales associate for details.