

# The COPUS Clarion

A monthly newsletter of the COPUS network Volume 2 Issue 6 June 2008

*The Coalition on the Public Understanding of Science (COPUS) is a grassroots effort linking universities, scientific societies, science centers and museums, advocacy groups, media, educators, government agencies, businesses, and industry in a peer network having as its goal a greater public understanding of the nature of science and its value to society.*

## Building a Community Web Site for Year of Science 2009

COPUS is now developing the Year of Science 2009 Web site – a portal to connect the public to the activities and resources that you are preparing in celebration of YoS09. The Web site will be built around 12 similar, but unique, modules of content following the thematic scheme outlined on the Web site at [www.yearofscience2009.org](http://www.yearofscience2009.org). COPUS participants are invited to get involved in the development of the content by contributing resources, organizing activities, and engaging strategic partners to identify and share the best resources available to engage the public in science. This is your opportunity to highlight your science and outreach activities to a broader audience. Do you have podcasts to share? An idea for an online contest? Content for a Kid's Corner? Wild and wonderful photos that represent your science? Colleagues willing to answer a few FAQs? Great stories or videos that you cannot wait to share? This site will be highly interactive and engaging, and we need your help! What would you like to contribute?

The public portal will also:

- create a centralized directory of events that participants are organizing during the Year of Science 2009;
- feature articles about “Why Science Matters”;
- provide links to scientific society meetings that will be engaging in public outreach activities during 2009; and
- provide access to other community celebrations of science such as the International Year of Astronomy and the International Year of Planet Earth.

For additional information about how your organization can participate in the development of this community resource, please contact Sheri Potter at [spotter@aibs.org](mailto:spotter@aibs.org).

**YEAR** 2009  
*of* **SCIENCE**  
Explore. Empower. Engage...

## Featured Programs: Science Festivals

### Cambridge Science Festival

*Contributed by John Durant, Director, MIT Museum, and Executive Director, Cambridge Science Festival*

#### Recipe:

- (1) Take one science city;
- (2) Carefully extract the juiciest parts, making sure to retain all the most enthusiastic graduate students, and as many superstar researchers and Nobel Laureates as you can find;
- (3) Mix thoroughly with generous quantities of actors, artists, broadcasters, critics, curators, entrepreneurs, exhibitors, impresarios, inventors, musicians, raconteurs and writers;
- (4) Add a good quantity of civic leadership and a teaspoon of organizational flair, and bake for several months; and
- (5) Serve as more than 200 separate courses over 9 days in spring, making sure that all sections of the community get plenty to eat.



*Tornado made by MIT students—one of 40 interactive demonstrations at the festival.*

*cont. on back*

## Welcome New Participants!

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| - American Astronomical Society   | - International Institute for Species Exploration               | - San Diego Science Alliance   |
| - American Ornithologists' Union  | - Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory                        | - Science Cheerleader  |
| - Bay Area Science and Innovation Consortium (BASIC)                    | - Massachusetts Academy of Sciences                             | - Science with Mr. Noon  |
| - BIO IT Coalition  | - MIT Outreach Task Force                                       | - TalkingScience   |
| - Cal Teach   | - Museum of Northern Arizona                                    | - The Ohio State University Colleges of the Arts and Sciences Community Partnerships |
| - Clark Fork Watershed Education Program                                | - National Alliance of State Science and Mathematics Coalitions | - The Southwestern Association of Naturalists  |
| Montana Tech of the University of Montana                               | - National Watch and Clock Museum                               | - The Technology and Culture Forum at MIT  |
| Department of Technical Outreach  | - New England Wildlife Center                                   | - UC Berkeley Center for Science Education @ Space Sciences Laboratory               |
| - CoCoRaHS Department of Atmospheric Science, Colorado State University | - NOAA Environmental Visualization Lab                          | - University of Connecticut in Stamford  |
| - College of Science and Technology                                     | - OpenWetWare   | - University of Oklahoma   |
| Southeastern Louisiana University                                       | - Orlando Science Center  | Darwin 2009 Steering Committee   |
| -I.S. 291   | - Personal Genetics Education Project                           |  |

## Cambridge Science Festival, cont.

This, in essence, is the Cambridge Science Festival (for details, see: <http://www.cambridgesciencefestival.org>). We launched our first Festival in April 2007, in the belief that what festivals have long done for art, literature and music, they can – and should – do for science and technology. Our aim was to throw open the laboratory doors in our particular science city, so that the whole community could celebrate what makes Cambridge – a small, not particularly prosperous city in Massachusetts – a truly world-class place.

We were thrilled by the positive response from the wider community: during our first Festival, around 15,000 people attended 150 different events across the city. As I write, we've just completed our second Festival. This second year was even bigger and, dare I say, even better than the first; we've not yet finished collating the numbers, but already we know that considerably more than 15,000 people attended way more than 200 events across the city.

Highlights this year, for me anyway, have included: 'Lunch with a Laureate', a series 5 lunchtime conversations between a Nobel Prize-winning scientist and members of the public; 'Powers of Ten', an oratorio about scale in the universe performed by the North Cambridge Family Opera; QED, a play about the life of physicist Richard Feynman, produced by the Catalyst Collaborative; and the closing 'Curiosity Awards', in which more than 100 school students from across our community were honored for their curiosity by Harvard & MIT genomics researcher Eric Lander.

We're committed to cooking up the Cambridge Science Festival annually; and we're thrilled that other cities across the United States appear to be developing a taste for the same sort of dish in their own regions. The New York 'World Science Festival' is scheduled for the end of May 2008; and colleagues on the west coast are actively planning for the launch of the San Diego Science Festival in March 2009. We're actively collaborating with San Diego, and (among other things) we're looking to the possibility of creating a web portal and associated resources that would help other cities to start their own science festivals.

Why bother? Because science is so inherently important, so intensely interesting and so directly relevant to people's lives; and because, by throwing opening the laboratory doors, science festivals can create genuinely inspirational experiences – for everyone, but especially for the potential scientists of the future. Heaven knows that, with so many problems and challenges facing the United States in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, inspiring the next generation of young scientists seems like a pretty important thing to be doing right now.

*Science Festivals are a fantastic way to support a multidisciplinary, locally connected community of peers in working together to engage the public in science. They can take many shapes and sizes but offer dynamic opportunities for peers and colleagues in a community to think strategically about the way they promote and communicate the science that is happening in that local area to the public. The authors of these articles are working together to build a communication network that will support sharing of ideas and best practices, offer advising and mentoring support, and develop programming and fundraising partnerships; to help other communities learn from their experiences and plant seeds for more festivals in more communities during Year of Science 2009.*

## San Diego Science Festival

Contributed by Larry Bock

**SAN DIEGO REGION'S FIRST  
SCIENCE FESTIVAL:  
LAUNCHED IN MARCH OF  
YEAR OF SCIENCE 2009**



### **More than 250 Free Events Already Scheduled!!**

Have you ever wanted to sit down and chat with a Nobel Laureate? Did you know that red wine not only goes well with steak, but also has anti-aging properties? Have you ever wanted to uncover the mysteries of baseball's knuckleball? These and other intriguing questions will be answered at the Inaugural San Diego Science Festival (SDSF), the biggest celebration of science the West Coast has ever seen!

The Festival will descend on San Diego with events throughout the county in March and April 2009 with something for everyone, from the smallest child to even the most established scientist. The first of its kind on the West Coast, the San Diego Science Festival promises to be *the ultimate multi-cultural, multi-generational, multi-disciplinary celebration of science.*

Inspired by international science festivals that draw crowds in the hundreds of thousands, the goal of the San Diego Science Festival is to increase community awareness of science and inspire our nation's youth to consider science-related careers. At the same time, the science festival will unite our community and showcase the amazing science and innovation taking place throughout San Diego.

Still curious? Want to participate, host an event, compete in a contest, volunteer, earn community service hours or help sponsor the event? Learn more at [www.sdsciencefestival.com/](http://www.sdsciencefestival.com/).



*From left to right: John Dolhun, MIT Club of Boston, prepares a chemistry show at Science Carnival; John Durant, speaking at closing ceremony of the Cambridge Science Festival; and Dr. Eric Lander, Director of the Broad Institute of Harvard and MIT, presenting Curiosity Awards to 117, K-12 students.*

**Questions? Comments? Ideas?** Contact Sheri Potter at [spotter@copusproject.org](mailto:spotter@copusproject.org).

Support for COPUS planning workshops was provided by the National Science Foundation under grant numbers EAR-0606600 and EAR-0628790 to the University of California Museum of Paleontology. The cognizant fiduciary body for COPUS and the Year of Science 2009 project is the American Institute of Biological Sciences Inc., a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization, which is providing staffing support, IT, and other resources. The Geological Society of America, the University of California Museum of Paleontology, and the National Science Teachers Association are also contributing funds for COPUS and the Year of Science 2009. The Steering Committee welcomes support from additional scientific organizations and is also pursuing funding from federal agencies and private foundations.

