



Chalk Talk

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PLEASE SHARE CHALK TALK WITH YOUR COLLEAGUES !!!

Letter from the Editor

Dear Subscribers:

This week, Steve Paikin, Host of TV Ontario's current affairs program, ['The Agenda'](#) posed the questions, "Are we a society of scientific illiterates? And what can we do about it?" He interviewed American science reporter and Pulitzer prize winning author, Natalie Angier, on this topic and her new book, ["The Canon — A Whirligig Tour of the Beautiful Basics of Science."](#) Ms. Angier articulated the concern held by many in the scientific community about the lack of interest in, knowledge of and even indifference for Science.

This concern would seem justified when you consider that North America appears to be falling behind not only in science literacy but in its ability to produce future leaders in scientific research and discovery. The most recent science literacy study conducted by the [Programme for International Student Assessment \(2003\)](#) ranked scientific literacy among 15 year olds in [OECD](#) countries and found Finland and Japan topped the list, with Canada trailing in the 11th spot and the U.S. falling to a dismal 22nd place.

Scientist, professor and author, Carl Sagan, expressed that he was, "*often amazed at how much more capability and enthusiasm for science there is among elementary school youngsters than among college students.*" Ms. Angier and her colleagues agree that somehow something that was both naturally fun to learn and



necessary to know has become "boring" and removed from our daily lives. A few years before his death, in an observation about the modern world, Carl Sagan observed that "*We live in a society exquisitely dependent on science and technology, in which hardly anyone knows anything about science and technology.*" Ms. Angier argues that the more successful science has been at discoveries beneficial to our lives, the more mechanization and technology have made us feel distanced from the natural world.

This week's issue of **Chalk Talk** has information about how your students can increase their science literacy and interest in all kinds of science by participating in a series of fun, interactive science-based webcasts.

CoEd Communications is dedicated to supporting the important work of teachers by providing resources on a range of topics for the class-

'BIG LIVE EVENTS' — All Summer Long!

Since March 2, 2007, Discovery Channel.ca's **Big LIVE Events** webcasts have provided science teachers and students across Canada with a ring-side seat to a variety of interesting, and sometimes out-of-this-world, LIVE, science-based events, including a Lunar Eclipse with astronomer **Sara Poirier** and science journalist **Peter McMahon**; the FIRST Robotics Canadian regional championships, with *Daily Planet* host **Jay Ingram**



and *Daily Planet* producer/former sportscaster **Lori Belanger**; and the Canadian National Concrete Canoe Challenge hosted by TV's *Survivorman*, **Les Stroud**. [See below for more information on upcoming events from June to August!]



NEW! If you missed seeing any of these inaugural live events the first time around or would like to view all or part of them again, all of the events are now archived on the [discoverychannel.ca](#) website. Simply go to [discoverychannel.ca/liveevents](#) and select the broadcast you'd like to watch.



Remember, these live science events, **available ONLY on the Internet**, are great opportunities for students and teachers to interact in real time with the personalities and experts and include interactive live chats and web-exclusive video segments related to the live event.



(From Top: Sara Poirier, Jay Ingram, Lori Belanger, Les Stroud)

Educators and Students can have direct input into the topics covered during the program by submitting questions to the experts either, **in advance** by emailing webcast producer/presenter, Peter McMahon, at [pmcmahon@discovery.ca](#), or by logging onto the event page located on the DiscoveryChannel.ca homepage. Questions will be answered LIVE on camera during the webcast and the name of the teacher, class, school or club will be mentioned during the show!

ATTENTION SCIENCE ENTHUSIASTS!

resources on a range of topics for the classroom. We invite you to visit our website at 4edu.ca to view the many free teachers' resources on offer.

[As always, we'd love to hear your thoughts.](#)



Mary Kovack

ATTENTION SCIENCE ENTHUSIASTS!
Local or national science associations and clubs are invited to reproduce this 'Big Live Events' feature and summer schedule in your own newsletter or to post this entire Chalk Talk issue onto your website. If you require text or graphics in a different format, please contact Mary Kovack at maryk@coedcomm.com.



www.discoverychannel.ca

Big LIVE Events

2007 Summer WEBCAST Schedule

There are two more **Big LIVE Events** scheduled for the school year — first, there is LIVE coverage of the **Launch of the STS-117 Shuttle to the International Space Station**, scheduled for June 8, and the **LIVE Implosion of the Lakeview Power Plant** which will take place on June 25.

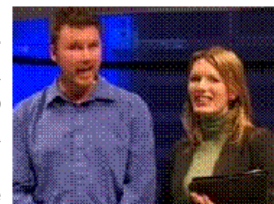


The Shuttle Show

A Space Shuttle launch like you've never seen before...as a talk-show. Online science presenter Peter McMahon and astronomer Sara Poirier entertain a revolving door of guests to talk about everything from how to become a space tourist to what's for dinner these days in the final frontier. Oh yeah, and they'll cover the launch of Shuttle mission STS-117 LIVE!

<http://www.discoverychannel.ca/liveevents>

June 8, 7 pm ET



(From Left) Peter McMahon, Sara Poirier



Blown up real' good

Lori Belanger hosts the LIVE implosion of the **Lakeview Power Plant** in Mississauga, Ontario. Take a look at the death of this 1,000-foot-long behemoth from land, air and water, while learning about the science and technology behind safely pulling off one of the largest such demolitions in North America. Log on and turn up your speakers when we press the button, LIVE!

<http://www.discoverychannel.ca/liveevents>

June 25, 8-10 am ET

And Big LIVE Events will not be taking a summer break! Check out discoverychannel.ca/liveevents often in the coming weeks for details on exciting live events that are currently in the works:

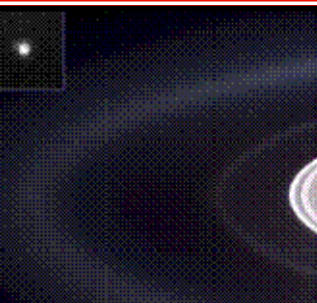
- **Dino Dig LIVE** with world renowned paleontologist Philip Currie — July
- **Mars on Earth: LIVE webcast** with NASA researchers in the High Arctic — late July
- **Perseid Meteor Shower LIVE** from a Meteor Crater — August 12.

Don't miss the opportunity to be part of these fun, exciting and interactive learning experiences! To view the complete **WEBCAST SCHEDULE**, go to www.discoverychannel.ca/liveevents.

Quotes of the Week

"The surface of the Earth is the shore of the cosmic ocean. From it we have learned most of what we know. Recently, we have waded a little out to sea, enough to dampen our toes or, at most, wet our ankles. The water seems inviting. The ocean calls..."

"We embarked on our cosmic voyage with a question first framed in the childhood of our species and in each generation asked anew with undiminished wonder: What are the stars? Exploration is in our nature. We began as wanderers, and we are wanderers still. We have lingered long enough on



[Source: "Cassini", NASA.gov]

the shores of the cosmic ocean. We are ready at last to set sail for the stars.”

“Who are we? We find that we live on an insignificant planet of a humdrum star lost in a galaxy tucked away in some forgotten corner of a universe in which there are far more galaxies than people.”

— Carl Sagan, ‘*The Pale Blue Dot*’, 1994

News & Links

[The science of teaching: How do you know which teaching techniques are most effective in the classroom? Elementary, says this Nobel Prize-winning researcher: you use the scientific method to provide evidence of what works best and why. He’s about to test his theories on undergraduate science students at UBC.](#) – Frances Backhouse, *University Affairs*, May 2007

In 2001, Dr. Wieman was co-recipient of a Nobel Prize in physics for creating the world’s first Bose-Einstein condensate, a form of matter that allows scientists to study problems of quantum physics as if they were looking through a giant magnifying glass. These days, the passion that fuels Dr. Wieman is an ambition to transform science education. In his view, the traditional way of teaching undergraduate science is badly outdated. For example, an extensive body of research, including studies by his physics education research group at the University of Colorado, shows that students typically see science as less interesting and less connected to the world around them at the end of a conventional introductory science course than they did at the beginning. Instead of learning key concepts and investigative skills, they simply memorize facts and problem-solving recipes that have little usefulness beyond passing exams – a sobering conclusion that’s supported by the 1999 National Academy of Sciences report, *How People Learn: Brain, Mind, Experience, and School*.

[More music, better schools](#) – Erin McGuire, *Planet* reporter, *BNP*, [TheStar.com](#), May 17, 2007

When you think about what sets humans apart from other animals, you probably think of things like opposable thumbs, or having a higher level of intelligence. But do you think of our ability to write and produce music using instruments? Could it be that music is such an important part of our lives, some people take it for granted and don’t consider what life would be like without music?

[Students use videoconference to link natural science and art lessons — Province invests in technology to enhance student learning and skills for the 21st Century](#) – Alberta Government News Release, May 4, 2007

Grade 5 students at Rideau Park School in Edmonton and Irvine School in Irvine used the latest videoconferencing technology to take a science-focussed art lesson from celebrated Canadian wildlife artist Robert Bateman in Victoria , British Columbia.

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