



Student Pugwash USA

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Young Voters Challenge Presidential Candidates to Address Science Issues

Washington, DC (September 3, 2008): After receiving more than 1,500 entries from young people highlighting the importance of science and technology in this year's elections, Student Pugwash USA today announced the winners of its 2008 Election Multimedia Contest for Cash.

Bryan VanDuinen, 19, a student at the University of Michigan, was awarded the grand prize of \$2,000 with a strong appeal to the next President and Congress to create an energy independence initiative modeled on the Apollo Program. Top honors for a video entry went to Jace Perrodin, 19, of Colorado Springs, CO for his appeal to U.S. leaders to prioritize funding for adult stem cell research to help cure disease. All winning entries are available on Student Pugwash USA's website, www.spusa.org.

Student Pugwash USA sponsored the contest as part of the organization's 2008 election resource, *From Electrons to Elections*. The online guide, available at www.spusa.org/2008vote, is a non-partisan resource designed to educate young voters on science, technology, and health issues, and engages them through blogging, YouTube videos, and polls. The guide grew out of a 2007 survey of young people conducted by Student Pugwash USA, in which over 80% of respondents called for greater emphasis of science and technology issues by the presidential candidates.

Physicist Walter Kohn, Ph.D., recipient of the 1998 Nobel Prize in chemistry, led the panel of scientists and policy experts that judged the entries' ability to synthesize scientific issues with public policy prescriptions. The judging panel also included The Honorable Sherwood Boehlert, former chairman of the Committee on Science in the U.S. House of Representatives; Kyle Gracey, a Master of Public Policy and Environmental Science candidate at the University of Chicago; and Margaret Mellon, Ph.D., director of the Agriculture and Biotechnology Program at the Union of Concerned Scientists.

Contestants emphasized their goals of raising public awareness of the science issues that will profoundly impact Americans in the next several years. "Our dependence on fossil fuels is the primary cause of the most significant crises of our time, and yet the general public remains largely ignorant of the scope and interconnectedness of these problems," said VanDuinen.

Young people ages 16-25 from all 50 states and three U.S. territories created essays, videos and audio entries in response to Student Pugwash USA's challenge to highlight a science, technology, or a health issue for the next U.S. president and Congress to tackle. Nearly half of the contest entries examined health issues such as health care reform, HIV/AIDS and obesity. Other submissions addressed a range of issues including climate change, renewable energy, nonproliferation, and science education.

Student Pugwash USA, a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization, engages students to promote the socially responsible use of science and technology. More information on *Emc² Contest for Cash* and Student Pugwash USA's 2008 election guide, *From Electrons to Elections*, may be found at www.spusa.org/2008vote.

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