

The OAPT Physics Conference May 31-June 2 2007

Ontario Science Centre

by Rolly Meisel

The Ontario Association of Physics Teachers (OAPT) held its annual conference at the Ontario Science Centre from May 31 to June 2 of 2007. This report contains highlights and selected photos of the conference. To view the complete program, visit <http://www.oapt.ca/conference/2007/program.html>.



The Ontario Science Centre offered interesting distractions before delegates even reached the front entrance.

The conference opened with the traditional BBQ dinner, served on the patio of the Science Centre, overlooking the ravine. Krystyna Kedzia smiles in anticipation as she loads condiments onto a hearty "bear paw" burger.





Thursday evening's opener featured a series of short, snappy, and fun demonstrations presented by Rolly Meisel. Delegates learned important life skills, including how to hang a spoon from your nose.

The keynote speaker Thursday evening was Bob McDonald (foreground), host of the lively CBC science show [Quirks and Quarks](#), introduced by outgoing OAPT president Paul Passafiume (background).

Bob spoke on the unusual topic of **Vacations in Space**, well-illustrated by selections from Bob's vast collection of interesting pictures.





The evening session was followed by the traditional wine and cheese mixer, providing delegates time and opportunity to confer with each other on the art of teaching physics.

Concurrent with the wine and cheese reception was the judging of the [OAPT Photo Contest](#), organized by **Al Hirsch** (who also generously donates prizes), and **Diana Hall**. Al is shown inspecting some of the entries. Students submit photographs of physical phenomena according to an established set of rules.





Friday's sessions included a presentation by Canadian astronaut [Bjarni Tryggvason](#), speaking on some of the basic physics applied to space travel. Bjarni (left) is presented with a token of appreciation by incoming OAPT president James Ball.

Demonstration personnel from the [Ontario Science Centre](#) offered several sessions with a wide variety of demonstrations. The eggs will end up in the water glasses.





Audience participation was encouraged, as OAPT member John Caranci demonstrates the surprising comfort of a bed of nails....

...while sustaining an acceptably low level of damage to his skin.





Diana Hall learns the secrets of the construction of a [homopolar DC motor](#) using one AA cell, wire, #12 screw, and rare earth magnet.

Ernie McFarland adds emphasis to a point in his talk **Energy: Where on Earth are we Going?**, a frank discussion of the effects of increasing energy consumption and global warming, but with the reassuring inclusion of practical ways to deal with these problems.





Norbert Bartel included the rare newspaper ad shown as part of his talk **Testing Einstein's Universe**. The ad offers private tutoring by **Albert Einstein** in physics and mathematics. The last line entices students with a free trial hour.

Saturday's sessions included a whirlwind of discrepant events and demonstrations, many of them involving flames and explosions, by physics teacher Ben Law.



A fitting closing session for the conference was provided by long-time OAPT member and presenter Jim Hunt., speaking on the fascinating topic of [anamorphic art](#).

Planning for next year's conference at **Ryerson University** is already under way. Visit the [OAPT web site](#) for announcements.