

This fall marked the first year anniversary of the Science Media Centre of Canada... and we barreled right past it at breakneck speed!

By all accounts, it has been a tremendously successful year.

Standing Room Only Annual General Meeting (AGM)

We held our second AGM this October 17th at the Canada Science and Technology Museum in Ottawa – where journalists, scientists, and supporters gathered in the shadow of the steam locomotives in the museum's Train Bay. For those of you who couldn't make it - you missed a fantastic event. More than 220 attendees enjoyed the highlight of the AGM- a talk by celebrated Canadian science fiction author Robert J. Sawyer. Sawyer regaled the audience with stories from behind the scenes of science fiction writing, and his thoughts about communicating science to the general public.

Board Chair Glenn Brimacombe led the business portion of the AGM. Mr. Brimacombe introduced our platinum sponsors, Ontario Ministry of Economic Development and Innovation represented by David Ayotte, Director of Communications and Blair Dickerson, Vice-President of External Relations and Communication for the Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC) who both spoke of their commitment to the continued success of the Science Media Centre of Canada.

Our Services In Growing Demand

The interest and support for the SMCC continues to grow. Currently more than 280 journalists in Canada have registered with our service. To date we have sent out over 300 releases – ranging from Heads Up emails to expert comments on breaking news. This year we've presented 12 webinars or web briefings on everything from stem cell research in Canada to earthquake preparedness, from the Royal Society of Canada's end-of-life report to animal health. We've held four in the last month alone.

On November 9, we partnered with MaRS Discovery District in Toronto to 'bump it up a notch', by 'webcasting' one of our briefings from their studio. Canada Excellence Research Chair Dr. Adrian Owen and his colleague Dr. Damian Cruse, both of the University of Western Ontario, presented their research on the detection of awareness in vegetative state patients using a portable, bedside EEG.

The research was being published later that

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evening, but in conjunction with the Lancet, the SMCC was able to provide the webcast before press time, to enable journalists and reporters an opportunity to better cover the story. More than 20 journalists signed in to the webcast, from Canada, the U.S. and the U.K., representing media outlets like Reuters, Canadian Press, Washington Post, ABC, NBC, the Guardian, BBC, New Scientist, PostMedia, CTV, CBC and Discovery. The webcast directly generated over 80 stories, making it our most successful briefing to date. The story made it to Number 6 on Google News in Canada that evening (Number 1 in health), and was covered in the UK, Australia and New Zealand. We extend our sincere thanks to MaRS for their patience and hard work in helping us pull together such an undertaking on the media timeline. Also thanks to our international Science Media Centre partners, particularly in the U.K. for getting the word out to their journalists.

Our embargoed webinar on the Royal Society's End of Life Report held just a few days later, also garnered tremendous interest with media outlets including the Globe and Mail, Le Devoir, CBC and CP attending and resulting in at least a dozen stories.



Funding from the Ontario Ministry of Economic Development and Innovation has allowed us to continue the development and implementation of our Journalism 101 workshops - introducing entry -level and mid-level scientists to the culture of journalism. November 21st found us at McMaster University hosted by long time supporter and SMCC steering committee member, the Associate Vice President and Dean of Graduate Research, and Canada Research Chair in Cognitive Neuroscience, Allison Sekuler. The Journalism 101 bootcamps are led by venerable science journalist and Editorial Advisory Committee chair, Peter Calamai. Providing wisdom, tips and anecdotes were Jim Handman, executive producer of CBC Radio's

Quirks and Quarks, Hannah Hoag, freelance writer for Nature, and Rob Davidson, television reporter and producer. These bootcamps are growing in popularity, you can find out more about them on our website.

www.sciencemedia.ca



Our Montreal Office is deftly handling requests from the francophone media, thanks to Stéphanie Thibault, who joined us in September. Steph is working out of space in part provided by the Association des communicateurs scientifiques du Québec. Stéphanie comes to us from a freelance science communication background, and has already helped organize our website and set in place a social media strategy, all while doing the usual media officer job of responding to journalist queries, producing and co - hosting online briefings and scouring the country for great science stories and expertise.



The SMCC has gone west. After Alexis Cooper, our summer intern, paved the way, the Vancouver Aquarium generously offered to house our west coast media officer. A huge thank you is extended to Alexis who has returned to her native Australia where she works a senior communications officer with the Chief Science Advisor for Australia. In mid-October, Lesley Evans Ogden bravely took up the mantle of west coast media officer. Lesley is a freelance journalist and scientist, and has already brought her considerable editorial prowess to bear on our releases.

Ami Kingdon, SMCC's media officer in Ottawa continues to spearhead many of our services including webinars and backgrounders. Her backgrounder on radiation in the wake of the Fukushima crisis received international recognition.

Getting the Word Out!

To help roll out the carpet for our westward expansion, the SMCC held two launch events this summer, one in Calgary and one in Vancouver. In Calgary, the indefatigable Jay Ingram – former host of Discovery Channel's Daily Planet and SMCC Champion – headed a panel including CTV medical reporter Karen Owen, University of Calgary researcher Gwendolyn Blue, University of Alberta's prion researcher Valerie Sim and Dan Johnson, University of Lethbridge biologist.

In Vancouver, Jay again hosted our panel, leading a lively discussion with our panelists; TRIUMF's Marcello Pavan, Jennifer Gardy (microbiology researcher at UBC, former Globe science blogger, and TV presenter), and Candis Callison, UBC School of Journalism. Thanks again to the Vancouver Aquarium for hosting our launch event!

You - Our Supporters – Charter Members and Funders

This year marked the close of our Charter Membership drive – originally set up as pre-implementation support. We are proud to have the support of 130 charter members from across Canada from the public, private and not-for profit sector, many continue to provide us with annual contributions.

We are also thrilled to welcome new support from our Patrons, and particular thanks to our platinum sponsors, the Ontario Ministry of Economic Development and Innovation and Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council. We couldn't do this without you.

We are continuing our \$2.5 million fundraising campaign and have already moved past the \$600,000 mark. With the help of two dedicated fundraisers, we have developed a fantastic Case for Support, which has been taken up by our team of keen volunteers. We hope when you are called you will do whatever you can to help SMCC take its operations to the next level. We've done a lot of great things in our first year, but we need your financial support to allow us to meet growing needs.

We look forward to our second year of operations, and we can't wait to see where it takes us!

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The Science Media Centre of Canada is an independent, not-for-profit organization that exists to raise the level of public discourse on science in Canada by helping journalists access the experts and evidence-based research they need in order to cover science in the news. The SMCC is supported by our platinum level sponsors: Ontario Ministry of Economic Development and Innovation & Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council (NSERC) as well as over 125 Charter Members and ongoing support from our patron organizations.



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