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James—I think the World Science Festival already has gotten too much attention/credit. I think it would be better to focus on the winner and on us. Here are some suggestions. Also one factual error – Ben is from the University of Innsbruck, which is in Austria, not the University of Austria.

Also added the fact that people can see his video, bio and pix at our website//Liz.

Physics Grad Student's Video Wins Stony Brook University's "Flame Challenge"

Or

Thousands of 11-Year-Olds Pick a Winner in Stony Brook University's "Flame Challenge"

WINNER OF "THE FLAME CHALLENGE" ANNOUNCED AT WORLD SCIENCE FESTIVAL

Video explaining a flame chosen from more than 800 entrants worldwide

STONY BROOK, NY, June 2, 2012 (Embargoed until June 2, 2012 at 3 pm eastern time) –The winner of "The Flame Challenge," a month long contest for scientists to explain a flame to an 11-year old

A physics PhD student has won Stony Brook University's worldwide "Flame Challenge" with a 7 1/2 minute cartoon video that explains a flame using humor, serious science, and a catchy theme song with lyrics like "pyrolysis" and "chemiluminescence." Ben Ames, a 31-year-old American studying in Austria, won over more than 800 entrants worldwide.

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Noted actor Alan Alda announced the winner and presented Ben with his Flame Challenge trophy at an event, sponsored by the Center for Communicating Science at Stony Brook University and spearheaded by famed actor Alan Alda, was announced at the World Science Festival in New York City on Saturday, June 2. The contest, sponsored by Stony Brook's Center for Communicating Science, challenged scientists to explain "what is a flame" to 11-year-olds. More than 6,000 children from 131 schools around the world served as judges. The winning entry, a video by Ben Ames, was chosen as the best overall by a panel of 11-year olds worldwide.

Alda, a founding member of the Center for Communicating Science and a Visiting Professor in the School of Journalism at Stony Brook, asked the question, "What is a flame?" as an 11-year old and was dismayed with his teacher's answer, "It's oxidation." "That was a discouraging moment for me personally, but decades later I see the failure to communicate science with clarity as far more serious for society," said Alda, in his guest editorial, "[The Flame Challenge](#)," appearing in the March 2 issue of the journal [Science](#), which kicked off the contest.

This contest garnered worldwide attention with more than 800 submissions from 31 countries and scores of 11-year old judges, 6,000 in total, from Alaska to Australia and Belgium to Brentwood, N.Y. "It was tremendously exciting to see how game the scientists were to take on

Comment [E1]: Or people will think it's Brentwood CA, which is better known

such a difficult challenge - and very moving to see how eager the kids were to learn from them," said Alda.

The winner, Ben Ames, ~~originally grew up in from~~ Kansas City, Missouri, ~~majored in applied physics at the University of Utah and~~ is pursuing his PhD in quantum ~~physicsoptics~~ at the University of ~~Innsbruck~~, Austria. His research involves exploring how atoms interact with light on the miniscule quantum level. "When I learned about this wonderful contest, I had finally found a project where I could put all of my interests to use," said Ames, referring to his love for science and passion for music, film and the performing arts. "I locked myself in my basement for a solid week, writing, narrating, animating and composing every element of the film."

[You can see the winning video, along with all the finalist and honorable mention entries, at flamechallenge.org. Photos and biographical information on the finalists also are posted.](#)

With the success of ~~this year's contest, "The Flame Challenge," Elizabeth Bass, Director of the Center for Communicating Science at Stony Brook~~ plans to hold a ~~science challenge~~ Flame Challenge every year, with a different question each time. ~~Insert~~ We are really looking forward to seeing what questions 11-year-olds want scientists to answer next, "quote here," said Elizabeth Bass, Director of the Center for Communicating Science. "Ee've learned a lot from this contest about how scientists can answer them in a clear and interesting way." Children can send questions ~~Ideas for the subject of next year's challenge can be sent to~~ communicating@stonybrook.edu.

The Center for Communicating Science, located in Stony Brook's School of Journalism, gives workshops and presentations for scientists at universities, laboratories and meetings around the country. At Stony Brook, it has developed a series of innovative Communicating Science courses being taken for credit by master's and PhD students from more than a dozen science disciplines.

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