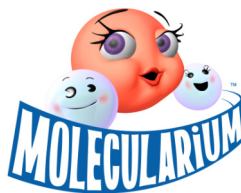


For Immediate Release

Monday, July 18, 2005



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“MOLECULARIUM™: RIDING SNOWFLAKES” WINS DOMIE AWARD AT DOMEFEST

“Molecularium: Riding Snowflakes”, a magical, musical adventure into the world of atoms and molecules, won the Domie Award for Best Show Excerpt at DomeFest 2005 on Saturday night, July 16, 2005. “This is only the beginning,” responded V Owen Bush (NanoToon™), Molecularium director. Thirty-six submissions from nine countries were judged on aesthetics, innovation, storytelling, and full dome production quality.

Prominent digital dome theater directors and producers, major distributors, scientists, and International Planetarium Society members gathered at the LodeStar Astronomy Center in Albuquerque, New Mexico for this annual, international digital-dome theater festival. “DomeFest is all about innovation, about pushing envelopes of storytelling, design, art, technology and techniques for the exciting and seamlessly unlimited medium we call ‘FullDome’ ”, said David Beining, DomeFest 2005 chair and LodeStar director.

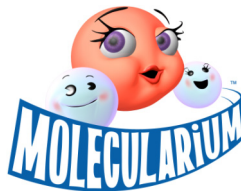
Presentations on the making of “Molecularium™: Riding Snowflakes” were delivered Sunday by Bush, Kurt Przybilla (NanoToon) - producer, and Professor Shekhar Garde (Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute) - lead scientist. “Molecularium combines the use of characters and story with real scientific simulations to create an innovative, immersive experience that everyone really enjoys,” explained Kurt Przybilla.

The number of venues and applications of digital dome theater are rapidly growing, particularly in the entertainment, scientific research, and education sectors. At DomeFest 2005, FullDome applications were demonstrated in real-time, premiers were screened, and meetings about the future and standards of this medium were held. “By merging technology with art, education, and community, we are developing a teaching tool that explores molecular science in a way that can be understood and enjoyed by people of all ages,” commented Professor Garde.

<More>

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The Molecularium was conceived by Professor Linda S. Schadler, who asked, “If you can go to the stars, why can’t you go down to the molecular level?” Molecularium was developed as a major effort of the education and outreach program of Rensselaer’s National Science Foundation (NSF)-funded Nanoscale Science and Engineering Center (NSEC) for Directed Assembly of Nanostructures. First, a short pilot program was created to teach K-3 students simple concepts such as: (i) everything is made of atoms and molecules and (ii) the three states of matter: solid, liquid, and gas.

The pilot program’s success spurred the creation of a twenty-three minute, Hollywood-style animation, featuring characters based on atoms that constitute the world around us. The NSEC, directed by Richard W. Siegel (the Robert W. Hunt Professor of Materials Science and Engineering of Rensselaer), engaged Bush to direct the Molecularium show. A multi-disciplinary team of more than 75 entertainment professionals, scientists, educators, students, and museum curators joined forces to make “Riding Snowflakes.”

Professor Siegel remarks, “Our NSEC at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute is proud to have been the spawning ground for a new venture, Molecularium, to excite children of all ages about science and to enhance public science literacy. The special collaborative environment in our NSEC and at Rensselaer has proved to be fertile ground for such an endeavor. The NSF and their strong support for the confluence of research, education, and outreach have made this effort possible.” Molecularium will soon be distributed widely to permanent and portable dome theater venues in museums and schools around the U.S. and abroad.

For more information:

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