

## Top physicists attend Windsor conference

Apparently elite physicists are just like the rest of us. After a week-long conference at the University of Windsor some of the top physicists in the world plan to don those infamous bright-blue Maid of the Mist capes and go where many average Joe's have gone before: Niagara Falls. <br>

BY THE WINDSOR STAR JULY 23, 2008



Apparently elite physicists are just like the rest of us.

After a week-long conference at the University of Windsor some of the top physicists in the world plan to don those infamous bright-blue Maid of the Mist capes and go where many average Joe's have gone before: Niagara Falls.

"Some (conference goers) want to go to Niagara Falls," said Savely Karshenboim, co-chair of the conference, who splits his time between the D. I. Mendeleev Institute for Metrology in Russia and Max-Planck-Institut für Quantenoptik in Germany.

"I've visited Canada before so I've already gone. Once in life it's necessary. Just like if you are in Paris you must go to the Eiffel Tower -- but once is enough."

Most of the 60 physicists, in Windsor for the fifth bi-annual International Conference on Precision Physics of Simple Atomic Systems, also plan on visiting Pelee Island.

The conference, which kicked-off Monday and runs until Saturday, is sponsored by the International Union of Pure and Applied Physics. The union boasts four Nobel Prize winners among its ranks. While none of the Nobel winners were able to make it to Windsor two members of Nobel Prize winner

Ted Haensch's working group are here this week.

Past conferences have been held in Florence, St. Petersburg, Rio de Janeiro, and Venice.

Karshenboim's co-chair, U of W physics professor Gordon Drake, said it's a credit to the university that the conference is being held here.

"We brought (the conference) to U of W because of our expertise in this area," said Drake. "To bring the best physicists in the world to Windsor is sign of our reputation in this field."

Besides visiting tourist spots, the physicists are set to attend a slew of lectures, information sessions, and informal gatherings to discuss everything from what researchers can learn about the world through high precision measurement, to whether fundamental constants have changed over the course of the earth's history.

While the physicists aim to tackle some big topics this week, the main goal of the prestigious event is simply to create a sense of togetherness.

"People who study what we study is a small community, but often we don't get to talk to each other," said Karshenboim. "This conference creates a possibility to have informal discussions ... to create a community, to exchange ideas."