

AVENTIS PRIZES FOR SCIENCE BOOKS NEWSLETTER: LONDON BOOK FAIR EDITION

Welcome to the latest newsletter for the Royal Society's Aventis Prizes for Science Books.

Our panels of illustrious judges have been meeting over the last month to discuss the entries for this year's awards and have chosen a longlist for the General Prize, details of which are below, and are finalising the shortlist for the Junior Prize, which will be announced on 20 March.

The General Prize shortlist is to be announced on 11 April, ahead of an evening event at the Royal Society where Steve Jones, 1994 Aventis Prize winner and member of the 2006 judging panel will be delivering a lecture entitled 'Why Creationism is Wrong and Evolution is Right'. The event is free to attend, and is unticketed – more information is available on the Royal Society website www.royalsoc.ac.uk/events .

Congratulations to everyone involved in the publications below – I hope you enjoy each and every one of them as much as the judges did. We'll be in touch with more news about the Royal Society's Aventis Prizes for Science Books later in the month.

Happy reading!

Scott Keir

The Royal Society

LOGLIST ANNOUNCED FOR ROYAL SOCIETY'S AVENTIS PRIZES FOR SCIENCE BOOKS 2006 GENERAL PRIZE

Winner announced 16 May 2006

The Royal Society has today announced the longlist for this year's Aventis Prizes for Science Books' General Prize, which celebrates the very best in popular science writing for adults.

The formal announcement was made at London Book Fair by Fiammetta Rocco, literary editor at the Economist and member of the General Prize judging panel.

The five-strong judging panel selected a longlist of thirteen books:

Electric Universe – How Electricity Switched on the Modern World - David Bodanis (Little Brown)

Collapse – How Societies Choose to Fail or Survive - Jared Diamond (Penguin Allen Lane)

The Elements of Murder – A History of Poison - John Emsley (Oxford University Press)

The Gecko's Foot – Bio-inspiration – Engineering New Materials from Nature - Peter Forbes (Fourth Estate)

The Silicon Eye – How a Silicon Valley Company Aims to Make All Current Computers, Cameras, and Cell Phones Obsolete - George Gilder (WW Norton)

Parallel Worlds – The Science of Alternative Universes and our Future in the Cosmos - Michio Kaku (Penguin)

Power, Sex, Suicide – Mitochondria and the Meaning of Life - Nick Lane (Oxford University Press)

Venomous Earth – How Arsenic Caused the World's Worst Mass Poisoning - Andrew Meharg (Macmillan)

Empire of the Stars – Friendship, Obsession and Betrayal in the Quest for Black Holes - Arthur I. Miller (Little Brown)

Seven Deadly Colours – The Genius of Nature's Palette and how it Eluded Darwin - Andrew Parker (Simon & Schuster)

The Truth About Hormones – What's Going on when we're Tetchy, Spotty, Fearful, Tearful or Just Plain Awful - Vivienne Parry (Atlantic Books)

Stalking the Riemann Hypothesis – The Quest to Find the Hidden Law of Prime Numbers - Dan Rockmore (Jonathan Cape)

The Fruits of War – How War and Conflict have Driven Science - Michael White (Simon & Schuster)

Fiammetta Rocco, on announcing the longlist, said, "This year's submissions were of remarkably high quality, which made the job of picking out just a dozen books especially difficult. In fact, the longlist has 13 books because we didn't want to lose a single one. The diversity of subjects, the excellence of the writing, the singularity of individual voices; all of these contributed to remind us that writing, and reading, about scientific ideas can be a tremendously exciting experience."

Chair of this year's General Prize Judging Panel, Nick Ross, added: "This stuff is so accessible it is sometimes hard to put down, and the science is so absorbing and surprising it can make fiction seem dull. Science writing used to be full of impenetrable jargon, but these books are a joy."

The longlist includes **Jared Diamond** , who is looking for an unprecedented third success in the General Prize after winning in 1992 and 1998 for 'The Rise and Fall of the Third Chimpanzee' (*Hutchinson Radius*) and 'Guns, Germs and Steel' (*Jonathan Cape*), respectively. No author has ever won three of the Royal Society's Aventis Prizes.

John Emsley is also a previous General Prize winner, after the 1995 success of his book 'The Consumer's Good Chemical Guide' (*WH Freeman*), while **Michael White** appears on the longlist for the second time after making the 2002 shortlist with 'Rivals' (Secker and Warburg).

The General Prize judging panel consists of broadcaster and journalist Nick Ross, (chair), Johnny Ball, broadcaster and science populariser, Steve Jones, researcher, lecturer and winner of the Aventis Prizes in 1994, Anjula Mutanda, consultant psychologist on ITV's 'This Morning' and Fiammetta Rocco, award winning journalist and literary editor at the Economist.

For more information on the Royal Society's Aventis Prizes for Science Books please visit the website at www.aventisprizes.com.

The Prizes are managed by the Royal Society, the UK national academy of science and generously supported by the Aventis Foundation, a German charitable trust established by a predecessor of sanofi-aventis, a world leader in pharmaceuticals.

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