John Adams, James Bowdoin, John Hancock, and other scholars to provide practical solutions to pressing issues. Their election brings the Caltech total membership to 86.

Thomas Palfrey, Caltech’s Flintridge Foundation Professor of Economics and Political Science and also a Caltech grad (PhD ’81), specializes in the study of voting and elections, economic and political theory, public and experimental economics, and game theory. A central focus of Palfrey’s research is how people devise strategies when faced with incomplete information. He has applied game theory to examine voting behavior in committees and elections, and bidding in auctions.

Michael Dickinson, the Zarem Professor of Bioengineering at Caltech, studies animal physiology and behavior. He has become well known for Robofly, a mechanical fly that sprang from his work on the neurobiology and biomechanics of fly locomotion.

Throughout his career, Dickinson has used a variety of tools, such as wind tunnels, virtual reality simulators, high-speed video, and giant robotic models, to determine how the poppy seed-sized brains of these tiny insects can rapidly control aerodynamic forces.

“The Academy honors excellence by electing to membership remarkable men and women who have made preeminent contributions to their fields, and to the world,” says Academy president Emilio Bizzi. “We are pleased to welcome into the Academy these new members to help advance our founders’ goal of cherishing knowledge and shaping the future.”

An independent policy research center, the Academy currently focuses on science, technology, and global security; social policy and American institutions; the humanities and culture; and education.

Dickinson and Palfrey will be inducted into the Academy at a ceremony on October 11, at the organization’s headquarters in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Zorthian and Feynman: A Conversation In Art

An exhibit to document one of the most famous artist and scientist collaborations in the history of Southern California, between artist and public personality Jirayr H. Zorthian and Caltech and Nobel Laureate physicist Richard P. Feynman, will be open June 29 to August 31, 2008 at The Armory Gallery.

Zorthian’s most important artistic influences may have been on Feynman. Feynman was extremely open to exploring new areas of inquiry beyond his world-famous expertise in science. Zorthian agreed to teach Feynman to draw, and Feynman agreed to teach Zorthian physics. The science instruction did not continue long, but Zorthian’s influence on Feynman led to the physicist’s life-long involvement in art making.

The Armory Gallery is located at 145 N. Raymond Avenue, near Old Pasadena.
Public Events at Caltech

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Zhen-Gang Wang Receives Feynman Prize for Teaching

Zhen-Gang Wang favors the tried-and-true chalkboard for his classroom lectures on thermodynamics and polymer physics. The clarity of these lessons and the admiration of his students have won him this year’s Feynman Prize for Excellence in Teaching at the Caltech.

"What I teach is traditional topics, so I use traditional means," remarks Wang, a professor of chemical engineering, adding that he was very pleasantly surprised by the news. "Excellent board work" is just one of many praises listed in student evaluations of Wang’s classes. "He engaged me as no lecturer ever had before," says Andrew Downard, who came to Caltech from Notre Dame University for graduate studies in chemical engineering. "The class is a journey to seek the truth with basic postulates and a passionate expert in the field to help steer us."

The Feynman Prize is Caltech’s most prestigious teaching honor. Winners are selected by a committee of students, former winners, and other faculty.

"I love teaching," says Wang, adding that he finds a sense of nobleness through training the next generation of scientists and engineers. "I enjoy research and I am devoted to it, but it feels more like a hobby. But my research is theoretical; it doesn't have an immediate impact on society. Through teaching, I feel like I’m having a more direct impact."

The Feynman Prize is Caltech’s most prestigious teaching honor. Winners are selected by a committee of students, former winners, and other faculty. It is named after legendary Caltech physics professor Richard Feynman, who wrote, "I don't believe I can do without teaching," in his book Surely You're Joking, Mr. Feynman!

To read this story in its entirety, please go to http://mr.caltech.edu/media/Press_Releases/PR13157.html.

For the latest news and information, please visit Caltech’s website at www.caltech.edu.