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## Celebrating the legacy of the Chem Guys with one final, explosive show

For 25 years, they thrilled young audiences with noisy, sometimes gooey, quirky, corny, informative and always explosive events. Now, the incomparable Chem Guys are preparing one final science show — and they're going out with a bang!

John Eng and Wayne Lipka from the University of Lethbridge's Department of Chemistry & Biochemistry have been performing as the Chem Guys since the early 2000s. Their shows range from classroom demonstrations to large annual events, intended to inspire excitement about science and specifically chemistry. Throughout their journey, they have performed at venues such as the National Science Fair, the Science Commons opening, and as opening acts for *Bill Nye the Science Guy*, *MythBusters* and many more.



Now, with Eng planning to retire after 40 years of teaching and research activities, they are taking the stage for one last time on Thursday, April 9, at 6 p.m., at the Co-op Centre for Sport & Wellness — [The Chem Guys Final Show](#), a special presentation of the Owen Holmes Lecture Series. A final show unlike any they've done before, the Chem Guys look to leave a legacy by raising funds for a new scholarship that will benefit future chemistry and biochemistry students.

"I always wanted to leave something behind to the institution," says Eng. "This is a way to give back to the community and the institution and my academic unit."

What has carried the Chem Guys for so many years has been good chemistry, scientifically and personally. Their shows have revolved around a key motto — chemistry is fun — and their purpose has been to engage audiences, specifically youth, to reduce the fear of chemicals and encourage excitement about chemistry for all ages.

“What we do is try to make chemistry approachable, not so scary. There’s so much fear out there. People say, ‘Oh, we don’t want chemistry. We don’t want chemicals.’ We want to dispel that myth,” says Eng.

Lippa concurs, saying the Chem Guys have always been about inviting everyone into the world of chemistry.

“The best way to learn chemistry is to do chemistry. The best way to understand chemistry is to do chemistry,” he says. “I can’t tell you how many times I hear, ‘I hated chemistry in high school.’ So, we try to make it enjoyable. When we do shows for kids, they’re always super excited, but somewhere along the way, that excitement can fade. We try to bring it back for all ages, to get everyone excited about chemistry.”

It's impossible to quantify how influential their “chemistry is fun” approach has been over the years, but it certainly made an impression on alumna Danika Dorchak (BSc '18, MSc '22), who was inspired to pursue both a bachelor’s and a master’s in science.

“Everyone has experiences they look back on as defining moments that have shaped their entire life trajectory,” says Dorchak. “Watching the Chem Guys was one of those moments for me. Their excitement and energy showed me that chemistry is fun, and it ignited my own passion for STEM.”

Tickets for The Chem Guys Final Show, are free for children 15 and under, and \$10 for general admission, with proceeds going towards the establishment of a new scholarship to benefit future chemistry and biochemistry students. Visit [go.uleth.ca/chemguys](http://go.uleth.ca/chemguys) for more information.

To view online: <https://www.ulethbridge.ca/unews/article/celebrating-legacy-chem-guys-one-final-show>

**Attached Photo:** John Eng, left, and Wayne Lippa, right, create an explosion.

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*Our University’s Blackfoot name is Iniskim, meaning Sacred Buffalo Stone. The University is located in traditional Blackfoot Confederacy territory. We honour the Blackfoot people and their traditional ways of knowing in caring for this land, as well as all Indigenous Peoples who have helped shape and continue to strengthen our University community.*