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It's worth knowing

1. Noble Nobels

Alfred B. Nobel was born on 21 October 1833 in Stockholm and died on 10 December 1896 in San Remo. On 27 September 1895 he wrote his Will: "I, the undersigned, Alfred Bernhard Nobel, do hereby, after mature deliberation, declare the following to be my last Will and Testament with respect to such property as may be left by me at the time of my death... The whole of my remaining realizable estate shall be dealt with in the following way: the capital, invested in safe securities by my executors, shall constitute a fund, the interest on which shall be annually distributed in the form of prizes to those who, during the preceding year, shall have conferred the greatest benefit to mankind. The said interest shall be divided into *five equal parts* [emphasis added, W.O.], which shall be apportioned as follows: These five fields are following: physics, chemistry, physiology or medicine, literature, and fraternity between the nations (promotion of peace)."

2. Ignoble Nobels

The **Ig Nobel Prizes** is a kind of parody of usual Nobel Prize. The main goal of the prizes is to "honor achievements that first make people laugh, and then make them think." The prize is given out in early October each year for ten unusual or trivial achievements in scientific research. The Ig Nobels were created in 1991 by Marc Abrahams, who is the co-founder and editor of a bi-monthly magazine *The Annals of Improbable Research*. This journal is published since 1995. During the first inaugural Ig Nobel prize ceremony in 1991, the Prize was awarded to Erich von Däniken for his barmy book *Chariots of the Gods? Unsolved Mysteries of the Past*. In 2000 Andre Geim was awarded for an experiment with a live frog magnetically levitated. The same A. Geim in 2010 jointly with Konstantin Novosielov were awarded Nobel Prize in Physics "for groundbreaking experiments regarding the two-dimensional material graphene."

3. Non Nobels. A cuckoo egg in a decent bird's nest

In 1968, on the occasion of 300th anniversary of Swedish National Bank, Sveriges Riksbank, the “Prize in Economic Science dedicated to the memory of Alfred Nobel” was established, endowed by Sveriges Riksbank. Moreover, this bank pays the very Nobel Foundation’s administrative expenses associated with its prize. It is rather common opinion that this prize was nothing else as the public relations coup by economists to improve their reputation. Hazel Henderson, known advocate for equitable ecologically sustainable human development, held that the prize was established to legitimize the economic profession as a science. The surviving Nobel family members are strongly against misusing the name of Nobel, as it degrades and cheapens the real Nobel Prize. The prize of Swedish Bank is considered as a cuckoo egg placed into another very decent bird’s nest. The name of this prize was officially changed more than ten times. The last, English, version from 2006 sounds as follows: *The Sveriges Riksbank Prize in Economic Science in Memory of Alfred Nobel*.

4. Alternative Nobels

This interesting, prestigious, very useful, and not widely known prize was established in 1980 by philanthropist Jakob von Uexküll (born in 1944 in Uppsala). The official name of this prize is *The Right Livelihood Award*, it is awarded for outstanding vision and work on behalf of our planet and its people. Its goal is to “honour and support those offering practical and exemplary answers to the most urgent challenges facing us today.” The prize is awarded in the following fields: environmental protection, human rights, sustainable development, health, education, and peace.

The ceremony of awarding takes place in the old Parliament building in Stockholm, in the days before traditional Nobel prizes. It is promoted as an “Alternative Nobel Prize,” but it is not a Nobel Prize, and it does not have any organizational ties to the awarding institutions of the Nobel Prize.

The first prize in 1980 was awarded to Hassan Fathy “for developing an architecture for the poor”, and to the organization PLENTY international for “carrying, sharing and acting with and on behalf of those in need at home and abroad.”

Usually there are four winners, one of the laureates could receive an honorary award (with no money prize).

In 2015 Honorary Award received Tony de Brum and the People of the Marshall Islands (Marshall Islands), “in recognition of their vision and courage to take legal action against the nuclear powers for failing to honour their disarmament obligations under the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and customary international law.” The three Laureates, which share the cash award (SEK 3 million), are listed below.

1. Sheila Watt-Cloutier (Canada): “for her lifelong work to protect the Inuit of the Arctic and defend their right to maintain their livelihoods and culture, which are acutely threatened by climate change.”

2. Kasha Jacqueline Nabagesera (Uganda): “for her courage and persistence, despite violence and intimidation, in working for the right of LGBTI people to a life free from prejudice and persecution.”

3. Gino Strada/EMERGENCY (Italy): “for his great humanity and skill in providing outstanding medical and surgical services to the victims of conflict and injustice, while fearlessly addressing the causes of war.”

Among the laureates there are so famous personalities as Herman Edward Daly (1996), Bill McKibben (2014) – environmentalist, leader of anti-carbon campaign group 350.org, author of *The End of Nature*, Vandana Shiva (1993) – one of the leaders of the International Forum on Globalization, Ken Saro-Wiwa (1994) – a Nigerian writer, environmental activist, who led a nonviolent campaign against environmental degradation by the Shell company in Ogoniland, executed in 1995.

One can, however, rightly observe that this prize is the prize in economics, but as a science of right economy, founded on one of the Noble Eightfold Path of Buddhism, which is translated into English as “right livelihood.”

