

Science Café Site Launched

The WGBH Educational Foundation, in association with Sigma Xi, has launched a comprehensive Web site at sciencecafes.org to promote the growing Science Café movement in the U.S.

The joint venture is the product of an ongoing partnership that began in 2004. That's when Sigma Xi chapters around the country started holding informal public discussions in restaurants, pubs, coffee shops, science museums and other venues, drawing on timely topics from the PBS television series *NOVA scienceNOW*, produced by WGBH.

From a handful of gatherings a few years ago to more than 50 around the country today, the café format has proven that people of all ages and backgrounds enjoy talking about the latest developments in science.

"By taking science to the people, Science Cafés help to personalize and demystify complex subjects, bringing science into everyday conversation, where it truly belongs," says Roger Harris, Sigma Xi director of membership. "This new Web site is a powerful resource that will bring this community together and help new cafés get started."

Sciencecafes.org is designed to assist in all aspects of planning and promotion, from publicizing and supporting these events, to choosing topics, speakers and venues. The site was created with the input of many Science Café organizers and also features an interactive map to locate where meetings are being held.

The new Web site is an outgrowth of the first national conference of Science Café organizers held at the Sigma Xi Center in 2006.

Correction

The last issue of *Sigma Xi Today* incorrectly reported that John Ahearn had become the first Executive Director Emeritus of Sigma Xi. Thomas Holme was the first to receive the title.

From the President



Networking in Orlando

Sigma Xi has long been known for guiding and encouraging the next generation of researchers. Our Annual Meeting and Student Research Conference, to be held November 1-4 in Orlando, Florida, has become a shining example of that.

Typically, several hundred bright, motivated undergraduate and graduate presenters from the U.S. and abroad come together at our student conference for an eventful two days of science and socializing. They present and discuss their research. Many are further inspired by the interest others show in their work.

It's a learning experience, affording an opportunity to interact and network with other students and Sigma Xi members. Again and again we hear that this is one of the most valuable aspects of the meeting. Interaction with others helps students share and better understand their own work. They also come to appreciate the ways that Sigma Xi can enhance their academic experiences.

Outstanding student research projects are recognized at an awards ceremony, and conference participants also attend workshops, participate in panel discussions and hear talks by leading scientists, including Sigma Xi award winners.

For many students, this conference represents their first scientific meeting, which carries special significance. As another important step on the path to a research career, it is rewarding both personally and professionally.

This is what the founders of Sigma Xi had in mind back in 1886 in establishing a society whose motto is "Companions in Zealous Research." And it is as important today as it was then.

We hope to see you in Orlando!

James W. Porter

It's nearly the end of the tax year.

Would you like to know how you can help support Sigma Xi's mission and achieve the maximum income tax deduction?

Your gift *can* make a difference.

Please call Kristen Greenaway, Director of Development, at 800-243-6534, e-mail kgreenaway@sigmaxi.org or return the reply card that is inside the back cover.

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Young Investigator Award-Winner

Lise Abrams, an associate professor of psychology at the University of Florida, is investigating memory and language processes and the effects of aging on them. Her research focuses on naturally-occurring retrieval problems, such as word retrieval failures and spelling errors, both of which increase with normal aging.

She will receive the 2007 Young Investigator Award at the Sigma Xi Annual Meeting and Student Research Conference in Orlando, set for November 1-4. The award includes \$5,000 and a certificate of recognition. Sigma Xi members within 10 years of their highest earned degree are eligible for this award.



Abrams is the director of the university's Cognition and Aging Laboratory. Her research represents some of the most important current research in cognitive aging, providing new

knowledge about fundamental cognitive changes during normal aging and contributing to the development of a better-specified model of language and memory.

As an undergraduate at Pomona College, Abrams double-majored in psychology and mathematics. She then received a National Science Foundation Graduate Fellowship, earning her M.A. and Ph.D. in cognitive psychology from the University of California, Los Angeles.

First Bugliarello Prize Announced

American Scientist magazine has awarded North Carolina State University researchers Fred Gould, Krisztian Magori and Yunxin Huang its first George Bugliarello Prize for their article on "Genetic Strategies for Controlling Mosquito-Borne Diseases" in the May-June 2006 issue.

The Bugliarello Prize honors a superior interdisciplinary essay, review of research or analytical article published in *American Scientist*. It includes a \$5,000 cash award.

Gould is a professor in the N.C. State departments of entomology and genetics. When the article was written, Magori and Huang were both postdoctoral researchers in Gould's lab.

The judges wrote that "Authors Gould, Magori and Huang have earned the Bugliarello Prize with a clear and thoughtful discussion of important research that addresses challenging questions facing global human society. They ask: Can science save millions of lives by sensitively deploying genetic engineering against disease-spreading insects—yet do so without upsetting the ecological balance of the planet? These authors have performed a vital service by articulating the scientific, ethical, social and policy challenges presented by their research into control of mosquito-borne diseases."

In their *American Scientist* article, the three described laboratory techniques for adding specific genes to the mosquito that make it unable to transmit the parasites that cause malaria or dengue fever.

2007 Honorary Members

K.C. Cole and **Rosalind Reid** will be inducted as Sigma Xi's newest honorary members at the Society's annual meeting.



An award-winning journalist and author, Cole teaches science journalism at the University of Southern California, where she is a visiting professor. She has

been a science writer and columnist for *The Los Angeles Times* and is the author of seven nonfiction books—most recently *Mind Over Matter: Conversations with the Cosmos*.

Her articles, which have been featured in *The Best American Science Writing*, include contributions to *The New Yorker*, *The Smithsonian*, *The New York Times*, *Newsweek* and others. She has developed and taught courses in science and culture at Wesleyan University, Yale and UCLA.

She has also been a regular commentator on science issues for KPCC-FM and also for NPR's Science Friday. Her many awards include the American Institute of Physics Science Writing prize and the Elizabeth A. Wood Science Writing Award from the American Crystallographic Association. Cole is currently working

on a philosophical biography of the late physicist Frank Oppenheimer.



Rosalind Reid has been editor of *American Scientist* since 1992. Under her leadership, the magazine has won a number of awards and launched a suite

of online services. She also presents workshops for scientists on communicating research in words and pictures.

She has been a co-organizer and presenter for Image and Meaning, the MIT/Harvard-sponsored series of collaborative workshops aimed at improving the visual expression of science.

In 2003 she was the first Journalist in Residence at the Kavli Institute of Theoretical Physics at the University of California, Santa Barbara.

Reid holds a master's degree in public policy sciences from Duke University and was an award-winning reporter for daily newspapers in Maine and North Carolina. She came to Sigma Xi in 1990 after six years as assistant news director at North Carolina State University. She is on leave this fall as a Fellow at the Initiative in Innovative Computing at Harvard University.

John McGovern

Sigma Xi was saddened to learn of the death of John P. McGovern (SX 1949), a world-renowned allergist in Houston for whom the Society's McGovern Science and Society Award is named. He was 85.

McGovern founded the McGovern Allergy Clinic in Houston, as well as the John P. McGovern Foundation, which endowed the Sigma Xi award that bears his name.