

Lectureships Gain New Support and Café Dimension

Sigma Xi's Distinguished Lectureships Program, begun in 1937, continues to gain support and to branch out in new directions after more than 70 years. Each year, the program offers Sigma Xi chapters a chance to host visits by researchers who are at the forefront of science and technology.

Recent developments include a bequest from **Calvin A. Lang** (SX 1952) and a new affiliation with public television station WGBH in support of the Science Café movement.

A biochemistry professor at the University of Louisville, Lang developed the mosquito as a unique laboratory organism for biochemical studies of growth and aging. A longtime Sigma Xi supporter, he was president of the Louisville Chapter in 1975 and twice served as a Distinguished Lecturer.

He and his wife, Helen, established a named Sigma Xi Grant-in-Aid of Research. Recently, the Society learned of his bequest of about \$50,000 for the Lectureships Program.

The Lectureships Program is funded by membership dues, with additional sponsorship from the American Meteorological Society, the National Academy of Engineering and the Society for Risk Analysis.

WGBH in Boston recently joined the list of sponsors. The first WGBH-Sigma Xi Distinguished Lecturer will be neurobiologist **Matthew A. Wilson** at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Thanks to support from WGBH, Sigma Xi will offer a limited number of grants to Sigma Xi chapters to assist in holding a Science Café with Wilson as the featured speaker.

Since 2002, Sigma Xi and WGBH have been partners in promoting these informal gatherings at restaurants, pubs and coffee shops, where scientists and engineers share their research with members of the public. Last year, the WGBH Educational Foundation, in association with Sigma Xi, launched sciencecafes.org as a comprehensive resource for café organizers and participants. •

From the President

Working Together



As your incoming president, I find myself not only as the keeper of those admonitions spoken so long ago to promote friendship in science, but also in a unique and exciting position. I am fortunate to share these first steps with our new executive director. We are only just beginning to appreciate all that Jerry Baker's leadership will mean for our members, chapters and the Society, and through Jerry's efforts, I am confident Sigma Xi will experience much success in advancing our mission.

As we begin our work, the words of Henry Ford are instructive, "Coming together is a beginning, staying together is progress and working together is success." Our future already contains some of each of these as your Board of Directors met in April and grappled with the budgetary struggles that the Society has and continues to face. And as Mr. Ford directed, when faced with difficulty, "Don't find fault, find a remedy; anybody can complain." With increased use of technology, an award-winning magazine, a dedicated staff, working chapters, a membership that represents the heart of the research community and a truly exceptional home for the Society at the Sigma Xi Center, the board has recognized that maintaining all of these components represents increased costs supported by a smaller membership and income.

With these challenges clearly stated, the members of the board have pointed us toward a future that includes sustaining the character and strength of these components in the short term, followed by growth of our endowment, programs and membership in the years beyond. The board has balanced these worthy components against a budget that has been whittled to its core. We have reviewed, researched and argued, but ultimately we worked toward identifying the solutions to our financial situation. With the budgetary philosophy established at the April 2008 board meeting, we are moving towards a significant reduction in draw on the Society's endowment for FY2009, and we have positioned ourselves to approach a balanced budget in FY2010 without further draw on our endowment.

The Board of Directors will be asking the membership at the November 2008 Annual Meeting to approve an increased dues rate. This was not an easy decision. We understand that, in today's economy, this may represent a challenge to each of you who must justify the value of your Society membership against the expenses of those memberships in the many professional organizations to which you also belong. If you believe, as I do, that Sigma Xi is a uniquely vital element of the research community and of the research life; is an organization that, like no other, recognizes and fosters that spark of love for science among members and our society at large; and that provides a companionship among its members that is meaningful and worthy of continuing, then my membership, and yours, must continue. These intangibles are worthy of our support. We zealous companions must ensure that Sigma Xi continues to mentor and support our members at all stages of their scientific careers and strengthens our ability to not only attract new members but also well serve our present members. The members of the board are very positive about the future stability of the Society and the Sigma Xi Center. The energy of our membership has in the past and will again bring friendship in science to an exemplary place among scientists and engineers, and we will have much to celebrate as the days pass.

I ask your continued support in ensuring the longevity and bright future of Sigma Xi as we "come up higher."

Ann H. Williams

Robert Boily to Receive John P. McGovern Award

What distinguishes **Robert Boily** of Laval, Quebec, Canada, from other science communicators is that his influence has been felt far beyond the realm of science education. He has been a catalyst for research and development projects that have had major scientific, economic and social impacts in Canada and abroad.

Boily will receive Sigma Xi's 2008 John P. McGovern Science and Society Award in recognition of his contributions to science and society and his role as a prominent spokesperson for the public understanding and appreciation of science. The award consists of a medal and a \$5,000 honorarium.

Boily is president of Inforex, which he founded in 1996. The company specializes in research, analysis, interpretation and communication of international strategic intelligence in science and technology. Working with research and development teams (industries, laboratories), government organizations and financial entities (banks, venture capitalists), Inforex provides the knowledge necessary to move innovation-related projects forward.

Boily's career spans more than 30 years as a researcher, analyst and communicator. Over the years, he has conducted more than 700 science and technology knowledge projects, supporting research initiatives totaling more than \$350 million dollars. His work as a senior consultant to government, research laboratories, industry and academia has had an even broader impact.

Because he communicates science to decision-makers having the authority to make things happen, Boily has been influential in the launch or completion of hundreds of science and technology projects, many having important implications for our future, especially in the areas of health, energy and environment.

Born in 1957 in Laval, he studied industrial electronics at the University of Montreal's Polytechnic School, as well as



optics, optoelectronics and semiconductors in Rochester, New York, and Toronto. He received a B.A. in education from the University of Quebec in Montreal, and both M.A. and Ph.D. degrees in the psychology of learning from the University of Montreal.

Boily began his career at Kodak Canada, where he worked for 10 years in the micro-imaging department. In 1989, he was appointed a senior specialist of research, analysis and communication at the Quebec Government Research Center in Montreal.

His many honors include fellowship in the Royal Society of Arts, the World Academy of Art and Science, the World Innovation Foundation and the American Association for the Advancement of Science. A member of Sigma Xi, Boily is also a life member of the Royal Canadian Institute for the Advancement of Science.

He has served on several boards and committees related to science, technology and research ethics and is the only non-U.S. citizen to have received the Armed Forces Communications and Electronics Association Award for Meritorious Service. •

Intel International Science & Engineering Fair Winners



Sigma Xi Award winners are shown here (left to right): Back row, Second Place winners Manapas Hararak, Tanavorakit Bangkeaw and Pheemaddej Prasitwarawej from Thailand; and First Place winners Elie Bochner and Shai Chester from the United States. Front row, Third Place winners Ye Zhao and Weichao Zhai from Singapore, with Sigma Xi President James W. Porter.

Along with the excellence of the student projects, what characterized this year's Intel International Science and Engineering Fair in Atlanta, Georgia, was an increase in the percentage of winners from developing countries previously less well represented in the winner's circle. Both the judges and presenters commented that the "internationalization" of science was now beginning to see its full expression in successful youth science programs worldwide.

Even for Sigma Xi's top prize winners this trend was clear. Sigma Xi President **James W. Porter**, who presented the Sigma Xi awards and had the privilege of meeting with the students and some of their parents following the ceremony, viewed this as a confirmation of Sigma Xi's emphasis on international growth in the Society. "Our first place awardees were from the United States, the second place winners traveled from Thailand and the third place recipients were from Singapore," he reported.

Judging took place over a four-day period. Given the high-level of the competition, decisions were never easy. Sigma Xi's evaluation team was led by **Norm Thomson**, president of the University of Georgia Chapter of Sigma Xi. •