

Life Member News is a twice-yearly newsletter for Sigma Xi's honored Life Members, intended to keep you up-to-date with news about Sigma Xi and its members.

We also e-mail monthly updates and member news. If you have not been receiving these e-mail updates and would like to receive them, please e-mail kgreenaway@sigmaxi.org.

Also, in the interest of saving trees, if you would prefer to receive this newsletter by e-mail as a PDF, please e-mail that request.

The Mission of Sigma Xi:
To enhance the health of the research enterprise, foster integrity in science and engineering, and promote the public's understanding of science for the purpose of improving the human condition.

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Career Focus: George A. Doumani (1957)

My career started with five expeditions to Antarctica during and after the International Geophysical Year (IGY), working at the Institute of Polar Studies at Ohio State University. Then I moved to the Library of Congress, at the Congressional Research Service, where, for 12 years, I provided advice and assistance to Congress in diverse subjects in earth and environmental sciences. From the mid 70s to the mid 80s, I was active in the transfer of technology to developing countries in Africa and the Middle East. In 1985 I accepted an appointment as director of the Peace Corps in Yemen, and then returned to Washington as director of the Office of Technology Policy at the Department of Energy, followed by a brief service at the National Science Foundation as director of Earth and Environmental Sciences Programs in the Directorate for Education and Human Resources.

I retired from NSF in 1991, and pursued some consulting work domestically and overseas. Eventually I got tired of knocking on doors to secure contracts, but wanted to stay professionally active regardless of pay. In 1995 I stumbled on a program funded by the Environmental Protection Agency, where seniors are hired (albeit at a pittance) to benefit the agency from their experience, without participating in policymaking or administrative and managerial functions. I said "hallelujah, I'll take it."

So, I am now an Environmental Protection Specialist, working with a team in the Office of Water, on the implementation of requirements in sections of the Clean Water Act. The Act requires all states, territories, tribes, and interstate commissions to submit to EPA a report every two years on the quality of their waters. EPA then would compile a summary report, in a standard format, on the nation's water quality and submit it to Congress.

I am a "grantee," and since I am not an "employee" of EPA, I am free to maintain my other professional activities as long as they do not conflict with my work at EPA.



Challenges and frustrations, or, advantages and disadvantages: As the electronic and digital age prevailed, I, like other seniors, was, and still am, confronted with major challenges. These include the flood of information; keeping up with all the publications from the many professional organizations to whom I belong; and meeting the challenges and frustrations of my computer.

During my years on Capitol Hill, I maintained numerous files of scientific and technical issues. When a member of Congress or a staffer called for assistance in a particular salient subject, my hands automatically reached to my desk drawer where the relevant file was, and provided the answer to that request. Although I still maintain that filing habit, I am constantly reminded of the eighth wonder of the world – GOOGLE. To Google has become an official transitive verb in the English dictionary, and stacking professional publications and magazines has become obsolete. But discarding them, including *American Scientist*, and visiting the Web site is always a heartbreaking decision.

These electronic challenges often turn into frustrations. Calls for papers for presentation at conferences and symposia stipulate that "no slide projectors will be available." What would I do with the stacks of slides I collected on five Antarctic traverses and other projects throughout the world?

And speaking of slides, where I am accommodated with a projector for a presentation, I am immediately reminded of my "old generation." As I show the trials and tribulations encountered during Antarctic winter and summer traverses, the first question from the "younger" audience is "didn't you have a GPS?", and the second is "didn't you have a laptop?" The look on my face draws loud laughs from the audience.

Another challenge is *scanning* the slides to convert them to disks. That's easier said than done, considering the time it would take to scan the hundreds of slides in my collection. The bright side, I promise myself, is that I will have something to do if and when I decide to retire.

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Career Focus: Doumani

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Now comes the challenge of health in old age. Despite the entire struggle to stay active professionally, physically there are certain realities that have to be accepted and are beyond one's control. Most important is one's memory. A few years after my "retirement," I had cardiac bypass surgery, and I made the decision to finally publish my Antarctic diary before things go into oblivion. The result was my book *The Frigid Mistress: Life and Exploration in Antarctica*. Also, my consciousness of cognitive impairment prompted me to volunteer in a research project in mild cognitive impairment (MCI) at Georgetown University Hospital. As degradation of instant recall becomes a challenge, I have more incentive to stay mentally active as well.

Besides my current work at EPA, I still have time to be productive in my other interests. Although I am considered too old to return to Antarctica, in 2003 I lectured on a tourist ship that travels from Ushuaia at the tip of South America to the Antarctic Peninsula. That "expedition" was nostalgic and invigorating, considering that my previous expeditions were on the continent proper. That tour was done despite my wife's objection and, when I returned to Washington, she greeted me with "I hope you got Antarctica out of your system." I don't think I ever will.

Now that the International Polar Year (IPY) has started, previous work during the IGY provides an important reference and background for current research. One important accomplishment of global dimensions was the fossil collections and stratigraphic mapping that correlated perfectly with those of other Southern Hemisphere continents. We proved the theory of continental drift and reunited Gondwana. My personal account of those discoveries has just appeared in the July issue of *The Polar Times* magazine. Staying active, I also sent a short article to the Geological Society of America's *GeoTales* 3, scheduled for publication in October of this year. And last, but not least, this contribution to *Life Member News*.

Some seniors are determined to "die on their feet." I add to that, "if I cannot stay on my feet, I shall stay by my computer." Make your life-long career an exciting journey, reflect back on your accomplishments, and say "WOW! WHAT A RIDE!"

George A. Doumani is a Life Member living in Washington, D.C., and still consults for the EPA. He was elected to Sigma Xi 50 years ago after finishing his studies at U. C. Berkeley.

Life Members in the News

Harvey Bender (inducted 1957), professor of biological sciences and director of the Human Genetics Program at the University of Notre Dame, has been named a "Distinguished Hoosier" by Indiana Gov. Mitch Daniels. The award, one of the highest honors given by the state to its citizens, was presented to Bender by Indiana State Sen. Joseph C. Zakas on July 18.

For the past 15 years **Ken Field** (1974) has organized the Norman J. Field Lectures in Science, an annual free public lecture series in Tinton Falls, New Jersey in memory of his father, and co-sponsored by the Rutgers Chapter of Sigma Xi. The next lecture will take place on October 18, and will be presented by **Diana Reiss** (2007) of NY's Wildlife Conservation Society, who will discuss her results in the area of elephant and dolphin self-recognition. For further information, visit www.FieldLecture.org.

Germano S. Iannacchione (2004) has been appointed the new head of the Physics Department at Worcester Polytechnic Institute.

Katepalli Raju Sreenivasan (1981) has been elected to the National Academy of Sciences in recognition of his distinguished and continuing achievements in original research. Sreenivasan is a university professor of physics and mechanical engineering at the University of Maryland, College Park, and in 2003 was appointed as the third director for the Abdus Salam International Center for Theoretical Physics (ICTP) in Trieste, Italy.

John H. Weisburger (1948) was honored recently in connection with the 100th Anniversary meeting of the American Association of Cancer Research, to which he was invited. He was also made an honorary member of the Japanese Society of Cancer Research.

Phoebe D. Williams (1984), RN, PhD, FAAN, professor at the University of Kansas School of Nursing, was named the 2007 Distinguished Alumnae at the University of Pittsburgh School of Nursing.

WGBH, Sigma Xi Launch New Science Café Web Site

The WGBH Educational Foundation, in association with Sigma Xi, has launched a comprehensive Web site at www.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 is when Sigma Xi chapters around the country started holding informal public discussions in restaurants, pubs and coffee shops, drawing on themes presented in the PBS television series *NOVA scienceNOW*, produced by WGBH. Science Cafés help the public to connect with science. Scientists and engineers share their expertise in a relaxed, friendly setting. Anyone can present a science café, and organizers can now get help in all aspects of planning and promoting these lively and educational events—from publicizing and supporting them, to choosing topics, speakers and venues. The sciencecafes.org site also features an interactive map to locate where around the country cafés are being held. If you would like to organize a Science Café, contact scicafe@sigmaxi.org for more information.

Sigma Xi Report: Scientific Workforce Must Develop Global Competence

If the U.S. is to remain a leader in science and technology, our scientists and engineers must be able to work with researchers around the world, so that they can tap into and actively participate in the creation of new knowledge and innovation wherever and whenever it is occurring. That is among the conclusions of a 67-page report called *Embracing Globalization: Meeting the Challenges to U.S. Scientists and Engineers* published online by Sigma Xi and funded by the National Science Foundation. Highlights of the report appear as a special insert in the September-October issue of *American Scientist* magazine. You can access both the highlights and the full report at: www.sigmaxi.org/global.



Gifts of Appreciated Securities

After cash, appreciated stocks and bonds are the easiest assets available to donors to support the mission of Sigma Xi. Making a gift of securities is simple and offers a number of important tax benefits.

When you sell an appreciated stock, the sale triggers a tax (*capital gains tax*) on the realized gain, i.e. the difference between what you paid to purchase the stock (*cost basis*) and the stock's value at the time of the sale. If you give the stock directly to Sigma Xi, Sigma Xi is not liable for the payment of any capital gains tax because Sigma Xi is tax-exempt as a qualified 501(c)(3) charitable organization. Moreover, you can take a charitable deduction on your tax return. It's a win-win opportunity for everyone – except the taxman.

How Gifts of Appreciated Securities Benefit the Donor

When you make a gift of appreciated securities, you receive an income tax charitable deduction for their full fair market value. You pay no capital gains tax on the appreciated portion of the gift. The example in the table below illustrates the value of a gift of appreciated securities.

	DONOR SELLS STOCK, THEN DONATES PROCEEDS TO SIGMA XI	DONOR GIVES STOCK DIRECTLY TO SIGMA XI
Appreciated value of stock	\$50,000	\$50,000
Cost basis	\$5,000	NA
Taxable capital gain	\$45,000	\$0
Tax payable on capital gains (20%)	\$9,000	\$0
Donor's Net Charitable Deduction for Gift to Sigma Xi	\$41,000	\$50,000

Alternatively, for securities that have declined in value, it is generally more advantageous to the donor to sell the securities and then donate the cash proceeds to Sigma Xi. In this way, you can establish a tax loss to offset any taxable capital gains that you might have *and* you can still claim a charitable deduction for the cash gift to Sigma Xi.

Life Member, But Not Retired

In our first issue of the twice-yearly printed *Life Member News* we asked for what you believed to be your critical contribution to research science or engineering. Your responses are not only confirming the true value of contributions Sigma Xi members have made to the health of the research enterprise, but many of you also pointed out to us two key factors: first, that many of you are still working, even into your seventies and eighties; and second, that a number of you believe that retired Sigma Xi Life members still have much to offer.

Martin E. Gordon (inducted 1964) was one of the first to contact us. Still active as a clinical professor of medicine, and chairman of the Board of Trustees for the Cushing/Whitney Medical Library Associates, Yale University, School of Medicine, Gordon cites his own commitment to developing and coordinating the quarterly visit of Connecticut's BioBus to Yale University. The BioBus is designed to stimulate students' further interest in science and real-life applications of what they learned while aboard, by touring a diversity of research laboratories. The program is offered every quarter by outstanding Yale scientists, sharing their knowledge with selected exceptional honor high school students of Connecticut.

Gordon asked what is the possibility of Sigma Xi organizing a pro-active "Never Retiree's Life Membership." He believes the treasure trove of our many talented members remains latent, and yet many could be eager to stimulate others. "Might there be an opportunity to 'mine' this wealth" he asks, "sharing of themselves for others?"

Gordon also volunteered to assist in Sigma Xi's potential planning efforts to organize the Life Members in directions that will be beneficial in preventing "lethargic longevity apathy and to renew the neuronal flow."

What are your views? Do you believe Sigma Xi would be well advised to create a program whereby our Life Members could be more fully engaged? Would *you* like to get more involved in Sigma Xi Life Member affairs? Please let us know your thoughts, by e-mailing Kristen Greenaway at kgreenaway@sigmaxi.org, or write to her at Sigma Xi. And many thanks to those Life Members who have already responded via August's eBlast.

AMEX's GivingExpressSM

You may have recently received an e-mail from American Express promoting its GivingExpressSM program. The program allows you to make tax-deductible donations to your favorite charities – which we hope includes Sigma Xi – and earn one Membership Rewards point for each dollar you donate when you use a card that's enrolled in the Membership Rewards program. To find out more about the program, go to www.americanexpress.com and do a search for "GivingExpress."



Daily Science News

Every weekday, we round up science-related news stories from the mainstream media. *Science in the News Daily* goes out by e-mail to more than 10,000 scientists, decision-makers, journalists, educators, students and science aficionados. It's your electronic science section, a professionally edited news portal. If you would like to subscribe to the *Daily*, please visit: www.sigmaxi.org

Pension Protection Act

A reminder about the Pension Protection Act of 2006, which gives new tax incentives for charitable gifts to donors who will be 70½ or older on December 31, 2007. This new law allows you to use funds from your IRA to make a lifetime charitable gift, *tax free, but only up to December 31, 2007*. Currently, this age group is required by law to take at least the minimum distributions from their IRAs and to pay income taxes on those distributions. Under the 2006 Pension Protection Act, if you transfer those distributions to your favorite charity, you will avoid paying income tax on them. Should you be interested in this option, we have drafted a sample letter that you may send to your IRA custodian, entitled Request for Direct Charitable Distribution from an Individual Retirement Account. If you would like a copy of that letter, or further information on the Pension Protection Act and its benefits, please e-mail Kristen Greenaway: kgreenaway@sigmaxi.org, or call her on 800-243-6534, ext 210.

If you would prefer to receive Life Member News by e-mail as a PDF, please e-mail Kristen Greenaway, editor, at kgreenaway@sigmaxi.org

Sigma Xi Seeks New Executive Director

The Society is seeking applications for the position of executive director at the Society's headquarters here in Research Triangle Park, NC. For additional details please contact Ms. Yolanda Thorpe-Harris, director, human resources at the Society's address, or by e-mail at hrdept@sigmaxi.org.

If you would like to include any news of your own in the next issue of *Sigma Xi Life Member News*, please e-mail Kristen Greenaway, editor, at kgreenaway@sigmaxi.org. The deadline for any material for the next issue is February 27, 2008.

What's
your
news?

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