

Report of the Committee on Publications for the Year ending June 30, 2004

During the fiscal year 2004, Sigma Xi's members began to reap the benefits of new publications-related services evaluated and planned during the previous year. With the launching of the full-featured Internet service called *American Scientist Online* in May 2003, the Committee on Publications' scope of advisory responsibility expanded. During the 2004 fiscal year, the Web site itself grew to include a substantial content archive and range of additional features; a second electronic newsletter was launched, and the business program associated with the site began to generate modest revenue. The year saw increases in *American Scientist* advertising, newsstand and nonmember subscription sales as well as income from permissions and royalties. A survey indicated that members value their magazine very highly.

Operations

As the fiscal year began, the Web site, a joint venture with Lane Digital Services, had launched with somewhat more than one year of full magazine content and one e-newsletter, *Science in the News Weekly*. An unusual effort by the staff built the archive of back-issue content to six and one-half years' worth (1998-present) by the end of the year. As this project was being undertaken, Editor Rosalind Reid was departing for a 12-week stay as the first Journalist in Residence at the Kavli Institute of Theoretical Physics at the University of California, Santa Barbara. The magazine staff nonetheless managed to continue to produce high-quality issues of the print magazine and complete a move of the offices to their new location shortly after Ms. Reid's return in November. Among the features added to the site since the completion of the archive are Digital Object Identifiers and hyperlinks that connect *American Scientist* to the body of online scholarly literature through the CrossRef service. The second e-newsletter, *Scientists' Bookshelf Monthly*, launched in August, providing links to book reviews, author interviews, announcements of new books, interesting reviews elsewhere and other items of interest to readers of *American Scientist* book reviews. The electronic newsletters are provided free of charge and have attracted modest support from advertisers. Each has steadily built an audience over the course of the year. At the start of the 2005 fiscal year, the *Weekly* had 4,553 subscribers, the *Monthly* 2,648. The site overall experienced fairly steady growth in visitor traffic. The monthly visitor count increased from 82,098 the first six months of the fiscal year to 92,467 the second half.

The magazine's three-year printing contract with The Lane Press expired with the May-June 2004 issue. Managing Editor David Schoonmaker sought competing bids, and after considering them recommended accepting a favorable new contract offered by Lane that will save approximately \$30,000 per year. Mr. Schoonmaker also has arranged for Sigma Xi to reap considerable savings by purchasing its own paper, rather than using paper purchased by the printer.

The staff welcomed two new members during the second half of the fiscal year. Barbara Aulicino was promoted to Art Director when Tom Dunne departed in April to resume his freelance career; she is replaced by Stephanie Freese as Graphic Artist. Mia Smith was promoted within Sigma Xi to replace Lil Chappell, who retired in May as Editorial Associate in charge of permissions and operations. As the year closed, Amos Esty had been hired as Assistant Book-Review Editor to replace Frank Diller, who was preparing for a move to Ohio.

Finances

The average circulation per issue fell slightly during the fiscal year, to 85,157, but outside circulation increased. Approximately 74 percent of readers are members of Sigma Xi, a decline from 76 percent in 2003. Nineteen percent purchase the magazine on the newsstand, and 7 percent are non-member subscribers. Nonmember subscription revenue for fiscal year 2004 was \$257,474, an increase of 8.7 percent.

This was a strong year for *American Scientist* on the newsstand and in advertising sales. The average newsstand sell-through rate, the percentage of distributed copies sold, was 34 percent, 3 percentage points higher than the industry average. Revenues from single-copy sales reached a record of \$140,254, an increase of 32 percent from fiscal year 2003. Sigma Xi's magazine is sold in every state in the U.S. and in 40 countries. It is available in 96 percent of all Barnes & Noble bookstores and 87 percent of all Borders bookstores, among others.

Fifty-nine pages of advertising were sold during the fiscal year, bringing in near-record revenues of \$223,319. This was an increase of 8.6 percent, compared to an industry average of 6.3 percent. Toyota, Subaru, the U.S. Army, book publishers and software companies were regular advertisers during fiscal 2004. Because no commissions were paid on these sales, fiscal 2004 ranks the best year ever for Sigma Xi's net advertising income.

Additional magazine income was generated by the republication of more than 30 translated articles in European magazines. After payments to authors, net revenue from reprints, royalties and permissions totals \$30,567.

First-year income from advertising, site licensing, commerce and subscriptions for *American Scientist Online* totaled \$50,716, of which \$28,827 is recorded as revenue for fiscal 2004. Advertising sales totaled \$25,686. Twenty-three site licenses to institutions in the U.S. and abroad were sold, bringing in \$5,460. Additional Online income consists of a share of sales generated by a Barnes & Noble store, The Scientists' Bookstore, and sales of subscriptions and merchandise including single copies. The site increased annual online sales of magazine subscriptions by \$17,216.

Other Staff Activities

Among the staff's professional activities were talks and workshops given by Ms. Reid during her time in California. Ms. Reid also serves on the advisory board of the Image and Meaning Project at MIT. Toward the end of the year she visited Havana for a week of interviews with scientists on Cuban science and presented a slide talk at the University of Havana. Other staff professional activities included: judging two competitions, the Maryland State Distributed Education Clubs of America marketing competition and the Sally Ride TOY Challenge (held at the Sigma Xi Center), and attending the annual meetings of the Society of National Association Publications, National Association of Science Writers, American Association for the Advancement of Science and Society for Scholarly Publishing as well as the annual Circulation Management Conference and the Lane Press Publishers' Roundtable.

Committee Activity

The Committee on Publications met June 10, 2004 in Research Triangle Park, North Carolina. J. Madeleine Nash was welcomed as a new member, replacing Roger Hanlon. In addition to an operational review, the committee considered survey data and progress toward the goals of Sigma Xi's Strategic Plan. The committee endorsed the staff's efforts to stay within the net-expenditure guidelines established in the business plan for *American Scientist Online* while online revenues grow.

Respectively submitted,

Lawrence M. Kushner, Chair

Howard Ceri

Dennis Flanagan

J. Madeleine Nash

Rosalind Reid

Patrick J. Sculley

A. F. Spilhaus, Jr.