

## Report of the Committee on Publications for the Year ending June 30, 2005

The fiscal year 2005 was one of considerable change and innovation in Sigma Xi's flagship publication and its online services. The year saw several staffing changes, considerable growth and interest in electronic newsletter services, a redesign of portions of the print magazine, a popular new file-download service for members, an in-house technology upgrade, implementation of new workflow and cost-saving measures, a surge in foreign-language article republishing and the publication of a special supplement and new article anthology.

The year was not a positive one on the business side, as revenues failed to meet expectations and problems with newsstand distribution forced a change in distributors. And the Committee mourns the loss of its most senior member. Dennis Flanagan, who served as Chair for 14 years, died January 14, 2005.

### Operations

*Editorial Operations:* With three new members and extensive preparations in place as the fiscal year began, the editorial staff undertook in August an upgrade to Macintosh Operating System X and the Adobe Creative Suite desktop-publishing software. The transition allowed a switch to a PDF (Portable Document Format) workflow that has saved about \$900 in prepress costs per issue. New Art Director Barbara Aulicino used the new software to accomplish a handsome redesign of the departments in the front and back of the magazine that allows more editorial content per issue and provides more flexible, modern and attractive page layouts. Finally, the May-June issue featured a special pull-out supplement, "Doctors Without Orders," highlighting the results of the Sigma Xi Postdoc Survey.

The magazine was honored with two awards this year. In the Excel competition sponsored by the Society of National Association Publications, *American Scientist* received a Gold Award for the feature article "The Evolution of Jealousy," published in the January-February 2004 issue. The March-April 2004 issue was honored with an Award of Excellence in the APEX Awards for Publication Excellence competition sponsored by Communication Concepts, Inc.

In the spring, Sinauer Associates published the fourth edition of the magazine's most popular article anthology for undergraduate teaching, *Exploring Animal Behavior*.

As a cost-saving measure, and after surveying authors for input, the editorial staff suspended the production of free author reprints at Lane Press after a budget analysis showed that orders for extra reprints were no longer covering the cost of the free service. Reprints are now prepared in-house and sold at cost, and authors are being provided a PDF version of their article. *American Scientist* added a much-requested new feature, downloads of feature articles and Engineering columns in PDF format, in October 2004. By the end of the fiscal year, articles from 2001 to present were available free to Sigma Xi members. Also online, the staff launched a new e-newsletter, *American Scientist Update*. This newsletter announces the contents of each new issue and provides links to content and to news on the Sigma Xi Web site. It has produced savings and improved timeliness by replacing a mailed news release to journalists. Among the other rapidly expanding online offerings are staff-written author interviews and "Scientists' Nightstand" columns.

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 end of the fiscal year, *Science in the News Weekly* had 5,972 subscribers, the *Scientists' Bookshelf Monthly* 4,176, and *American Scientist Update* 1,191. The Web site overall experienced fairly steady growth in visitor traffic. The monthly count of unique visitors increased from 82,092 in fiscal year 2004 to 92,004 in FY2005.

One new editor joined the staff during the fiscal year. The vacancy left by Senior Editor Michael Szpir's fall departure was filled after an interim period by Fenella Saunders, a former editor at *Discover* and *NYU Physician* magazines. Following Kate Miller's resignation as associate publisher, Katie Lord, formerly business development manager, took over her responsibilities, along with direction of Sigma Xi's marketing and communications, in April. Karen Miller was hired as marketing assistant to help with advertising and circulation on a four-day-a-week basis.

### Finances

*American Scientist's* average circulation per issue fell slightly during the fiscal year to 83,719 (as indicated by the Audit Bureau of Circulation. Publisher's Statement for the six months ending June 30, 2005), but outside circulation increased. Approximately 73 percent of readers are members of Sigma Xi, a decline from 74 percent in 2004. Nineteen percent purchase the magazine on the newsstand, and 7 percent are nonmember subscribers. Nonmember subscription revenue for the fiscal year was \$235,557, a decrease of 8.5 percent. Unfortunately rising postal rates, a steep increase in paper prices and an increase newsstand draw late in the year (for which revenues will appear in FY06) strained the manufacturing budget at the same time. Fiscal year 2005 was not a strong year for *American Scientist* on the newsstand or in advertising sales. The average newsstand sell-through rate, the percentage of distributed copies sold, is estimated to be 21 percent, 7 percentage points below the FY04 sell-through. Revenues from single-copy sales were \$107,407, a decrease of 23 percent from fiscal year 2004. After experiencing major problems with Disticor, the magazine's distributor since 2001, a new distributor, Curtis Circulation, was hired beginning with the January-February 2005 issue. 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, and we have added more than 40 airports to the distribution outlets.

In an attempt to increase advertising revenues, James G. Elliott Co. was hired as advertising representative beginning with the January-February issue. Forty-three pages of advertising were sold during the fiscal year, bringing in revenues of \$170,478. This was a decrease of 24 percent from the previous year. The U.S. Army, book publishers and software companies were regular advertisers during fiscal 2005.

A bright spot in the magazine's income was the republication of 55 translated articles in European magazines. After payments to authors, net revenue from reprints, royalties and permissions totals \$43,693, an increase of 42.9 percent. *American Scientist Online's* support from Sigma Xi's endowment is paid back with earnings from the Web site. A combination of cost containment and increased income shrank the net cost of the online service to under \$135,000 for the year, a more than \$30,000 decrease from FY04. Income from advertising, site licensing, commerce, file downloads and subscriptions for *American Scientist Online* totaled \$50,786. Advertising sales alone totaled \$31,484. Forty-four site licenses to institutions in the U.S. and abroad were active in FY05, and the total revenue brought in was \$14,168.

Additional Online income of \$3,646 included sales generated by a Barnes & Noble store, The Scientists' Bookstore and sales of subscriptions, merchandise including single copies, and PDFs. In total, 2,087 "free" PDFs were downloaded by members; 238 PDFs were purchased by the public. Subtracting the 50-cents-per-download charge by Lane Digital Services, the net income from the new PDF downloads was \$1,428.

### **Other Staff Activities**

In November, Editor Rosalind Reid conducted on the committee's behalf an Annual Meeting workshop on open-access publishing in science. Attendees expressed an interest in adopting publishing issues as a chapter program topic, and Ms. Reid will participate in the first chapter-sponsored symposium on publishing at Lehigh University in November. In activities sponsored by other organizations, Ms. Reid represented Sigma Xi and the magazine in the role of presenter or chair at the XII International Conference of Science Editors, Mérida, Mexico (October); the Conference on Nordic Science Outreach, Copenhagen (January); the Echo Foundation Initiative, "A Gathering of Nobel Laureates: Science for the 21st Century," Charlotte, NC (February); and MIT's Image and Meaning 2 Workshop, Los Angeles (June), in addition to a workshop presented in support of a new-chapter initiative in Mexico City.

Other editorial staff members participated in alternative-career symposia for scientists and National Association of Science Writers activities. Business staff exhibited on behalf of *American Scientist* and Sigma Xi at the Association of College and Research Libraries, BioIT World and Joint Assembly (earth-sciences societies) conferences to promote the magazines, site licenses and Sigma Xi.

### **Committee Activity**

The Committee on Publications met June 11, 2005 in Research Triangle Park, North Carolina. In addition to an operational review, the committee discussed the Bugliarello Prize and hosted the incoming and outgoing chairs of the Committee on Public Understanding of Science for a luncheon discussion.

Respectively submitted,  
Lawrence M. Kushner, Chair

Howard Ceri  
J. Madeleine Nash  
Rosalind Reid  
Patrick J. Sculley  
A. F. Spilhaus, Jr.