



SIGMA XI NEWSLETTER

Iowa State University
January 2011

SIGMA XI NATIONAL LECTURER

DNA at the Dinner Table: The Global Politics of Genetically Modified Food

Dr. Lisa Weasel
Associate Professor of Biology
Portland State University

Thursday, February 24, 2011
8:00 p.m., South Ballroom, Memorial Union

Lisa Weasel is the author of [Food Fray: Inside the Controversy over Genetically Modified Food](#). She is interested in the social dimensions of science and technology, particularly how issues of ethics, equity and politics relate to the life sciences. Her work encompasses a broad range of interdisciplinary topics, from feminist science studies and gender equity, to public engagement with science, to the relationship between biotechnology and sustainable agriculture and food security in the developing world. Dr. Weasel earned a PhD in molecular biology from the University of Cambridge.

Abstract: *Globally, disparate consumer responses to genetically modified foods have brought into focus numerous schisms between science and society. While on the surface, these responses appear to be directed at genetically modified food products and technologies themselves, in-depth analysis reveals that such reactions are often motivated by deeper tensions between science, technology and society that extend beyond the bounds of genetically modified foods alone. Based on fieldwork at sites of "crisis" over genetically modified food around the world, this presentation will highlight the intersection of social, ethical, and political forces with the practice and application of biotechnology. These tensions, and others like them currently taking place in different scientific arenas, call for a reconsideration of concepts of scientific literacy and public engagement with science, in order to promote ongoing and constructive relationships between science, technology and society, and provide a new lens through which to view the science associated with genetically modified foods.*

CALENDAR

January 2011: Forms for the nomination of Associate and Full Members, and for the promotion of current Associate Members, in either PDF or MS Word format, may be found at the Sigma Xi website, see www.sigmaxi.org/member/join/nom.shtml. Guidelines for the various categories of membership may be found at www.sigmaxi.org/member/join/qualification.html, and see further discussion below in this newsletter. Please type or print when filling out the nomination form. Nominations may be sent to Paul Sacks, Secretary-Treasurer of the ISU chapter by e-mail (psacks@iastate.edu) or by sending paper copies to Paul Sacks, 396 Carver Hall, Iowa State University, Ames, IA 50011. Please contact Paul Sacks by e-mail or by telephone at 515-294-8143 if you have any questions about the nomination procedures.

February 14, 2011: It is requested that nominations should be submitted, as described above, by this date for timely review by the Committee on Membership.

February 24, 2011 (Thursday), 8:00PM: National Sigma Xi Lecturer Lisa Weasel will deliver the lecture '*DNA at the Dinner Table: The Global Politics of Genetically Modified Food*' in the Sun Room of the Memorial Union. A reception will follow.

March 1, 2011: Invitations to membership will be sent to those whose nominations have been approved by the Committee on Membership.

March 21, 2011: Deadline for receipt of acceptances from nominees for membership or promotion.

Mid-March, 2011: The Spring Newsletter will contain Initiation Banquet details, and a ballot for the election of members of the Executive, Membership and Nominating Committees. Let President Steve Martin or any other member of the Executive Committee have your suggestions for candidates (including yourself).

April 11, 2011: Deadline for receipt of ballots for election of committee members.

April 28, 2011 (Thursday): The Annual Initiation Banquet will be held in the Scheman Building. At this event, the initiates (who are the Chapter's guests at the banquet) formally become members of Sigma Xi, and the following awards are presented: the Zaffarano Prize for Graduate Student Research, the Karas Dissertation Award, and the Lester Earls Awards for Undergraduate Research Scholars. We start with a social hour at 5:30, followed by dinner and the necessary initiation formalities. The evening will conclude with an address by the retiring President, Steve Martin, at 8:00PM, *New chemistries for new lithium batteries for a green future: Why the Chevy Volt only goes 40 miles on a charge.*

NOMINATIONS

This is the call for nominations for the promotion of Associate Members to Full Membership, and for the initiation of new Associate and Full Members. We urge you to recognize the achievements of colleagues, and of students who are well along in Ph.D. or M.S. programs, by nominating them for the appropriate membership level, or for promotion. Undergraduates may also be nominated, usually as an Associate Member, and will be designated as Undergraduate Research Scholars.

Guidelines for the various categories of membership may be found at www.sigmaxi.org/member/join/qualification.html. Criteria for initiation, for an undergraduate, is a GPA of 3.50 or better, and evidence of research potential by recognized involvement in a research project by at least part authorship of a research report, a presentation at a technical meeting or an actual reviewed research paper in which the student appears as one of the co-authors. A letter of recommendation from the faculty member in charge of the research is also useful. Both nominators and students (graduate or undergraduate) should be aware that membership in Sigma Xi can be listed on the student transcript as recognition of the student's research accomplishments.

Sigma Xi is the only national honorary society which has research experience as a condition for membership. However, Sigma Xi does not confine its interests solely to science- or technological-related research, but addresses issues of concern to many outside the immediate research community. Thus, Sigma Xi should have significant appeal not only to those directly involved in research, but also to those who are interested in solutions to science-related social, economic and/or educational problems - e.g., environmental issues, or the quality of science and mathematics education in the elementary and secondary schools. On a more personal level, each dues-paying member has a subscription to the *American Scientist* which carries articles covering a broad spectrum of topics.

The nomination form may be downloaded from www.sigmaxi.org/member/join/nom.shtml and filled out by hand or electronically and sent to the Secretary-Treasurer. Two nominators are required for a nomination; the Secretary- Treasurer will be happy to serve as a second nominator; self nominations for promotion will be accepted and considered from Associate Members who may have difficulty obtaining two nominators.

NOTES and ANNOUNCEMENTS

- Sigma Xi is observing its 125th anniversary this year, having been founded at Cornell University in 1886. The Iowa State University chapter of Sigma Xi is observing its 90th anniversary this year. Look for some historical observance at the April banquet!
- At the Sigma Xi National meeting which took place in Raleigh, NC in November it was approved to keep the regular Sigma Xi dues unchanged for the coming year (2011-12). Regular members of the Iowa State University Chapter are charged \$106, of which \$95 is dues to the national organization and \$11 is for support of the local chapter. The initiation fee for new members increased from \$15 to \$20 while the fee for promotion from Associate member to Full member was decreased from \$25 to \$10. The membership year is July 1 to June 30.

- Also at the Sigma Xi National meeting Kelley O. Sullivan of the Pacific Northwest National Laboratory was elected as 75th president of Sigma Xi. She will serve as president-elect for 2011-12 and then as president for 2012-13. Also, Gus Buchtel of the University of Michigan was elected as Associate Director for the North Central section, which ISU is part of.
- Also at the Sigma Xi National meeting a change in by-laws was approved to allow for direct election of national Sigma Xi officers by electronic means. Previously voting was restricted to those members attending the national meeting.
- Also at the Sigma Xi National meeting Harry Weiss, former Secretary/Treasurer of the ISU Sigma Xi chapter, was presented with the 2010 Evan R. Ferguson award, in recognition of outstanding service to the society and its mission.
- Contributions to Sigma Xi in excess of dues are tax deductible. Almost all of Sigma Xi's educational, program and leadership development funding each year comes not from dues but from charitable donations received from members. See <http://giving.sigmaxi.org/> for more information.

QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, CONCERNS? Contact Paul Sacks, Secretary/Treasurer, 396 Carver Hall,
294-8143, psacks@iastate.edu

OFFICERS OF THE CHAPTER

President	Steve Martin
President Elect	Diane Birt
President Emeritus	Steven Kawaler
Secretary-Treasurer	Paul Sacks

COMMITTEE ON MEMBERSHIP

Mark Gleason	2008-11
Carol Vleck	2008-11
Amy Bix	2009-12
Nick Christians	2009-12
Thomas Sauer	2010-13
Curtis Struck	2010-13

Executive Committee

Steve Martin	2008-11
Harry Horner	2008-11
Diane Birt	2009-12
David White	2010-12
W. Sue Fairbanks	2010-13
F. Chris Minion	2010-13
Paul Sacks	2010-13

NOMINATING COMMITTEE (one-year terms)

Jay-Lin Jane Thomas Jurik
Charles Schwab