



Richard Gallagher, Editor and Publisher of The Scientist, spoke at the May 14 event.

## “...an impressive event and a very enjoyable day”

Two Cornell University [Center for Life Science Enterprise](#) faculty won awards for best communication of their research to a general audience at a first-ever poster competition associated with the May 14 symposium on Public Engagement and Science Communication. Poster judges from the community were recruited from [Wegmans Food Markets](#), [TCAD](#) (Tompkins County Area Development), [Ithaca Bakery/Collegetown Bagels](#), and the [Franziska Racker Centers](#). Others who also volunteered their time included representatives from the Ithaca [Sciencenter](#), the [Museum of the Earth](#) and many regional companies.

Due to the breadth of Life Science Enterprise, the event fostered interactions between scientists from different disciplines as well as making the science more approachable. One enthusiastic attendee said, “I actually understood most of the technology on the posters!”

[Geoffrey Coates](#) (Chemistry and Chemical Biology) won the \$10,000 first prize for his poster that explained a new route for the synthesis of biodegradable polyesters from renewable resources. A tactile poster by [Gary Harman](#) (Horticultural Sciences, Geneva) demonstrated oil spill products based on agricultural by-products and won the \$1,000 travel award for second place. Finalists were [C. Drew Harvell](#) (Ecology & Evolutionary Biology) with her eye-catching poster on novel antifungal compounds from corals, and [David Putnam](#)'s (Biomedical Engineering) succinct poster describing his fascinating work on an innovative controlled drug delivery technology which led to the founding of a new start-up biotechnology company.

**“ the taxpayers who support our science have a right to know how it could be of benefit to them”**

Showcasing displays from faculty research projects funded by the Center for Life Science Enterprise in 2006-2007, the symposium also featured an animated panel discussion by Cornell faculty members [Graeme Bailey](#) (Computer Science) and [Steven Strogatz](#) (Theoretical & Applied Mathematics) with Paul Bartishevich, founder and President of [Finger Lakes Productions International](#). Moderated by Center Director [Kelvin Lee](#), the panelists revealed whom they admire as good science communicators and examined public engagement from the perspective of advising students, creating 90-second radio science bites, and presenting interesting seminar talks.

Keynote speaker Richard Gallagher, Editor and Publisher of [The Scientist](#), gave examples of reasons why it is important to engage the public. Many reasons are echoed in the [faculty survey](#) on Public Engagement and Science Communication recently administered by the Survey Research Institute to determine what factors facilitate or impede communication of science to the public (over 350 faculty have already responded to this ongoing survey). Gallagher also discussed ways researchers and the journalists covering scientific research are actually quite alike. Slides of his talk are posted on the [Center for Life Science Enterprise](#) website (click on news tab to view).

One faculty member said, “I hope you have the poster sessions again, I think it was a bit of an eye-opener for some people who are used to presenting to an expert audience.”

